A

CLINIC

FOR THE

EXHAUSTED

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

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Michael Spooner, August 2011
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Edmond & Corrigan
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Abstract

This PhD by project entitled A Clinic for the Exhausted will examine a method of inventing in the present an architectural practice concomitant to the realisation of an architecture grounded in an immutable unknown; an architecture that departs from the finite architectural object, the imposition of an architect or the illusory status of a fictional community. Traversing a field of research comprised of architectural, cinematic, literary, and philosophic intensities (to name but a few), this project will minister to the open and uncloseable implications of an impersonal architecture that is faithful to a community whose arrival is not simply overlooked, but is preserved without negation.

A Clinic for the Exhausted argues that by fostering an architecture without foreclosure and of unforeseeable effect, a community in the present could minister to the practices of an unknowable constituent, thereby entrusting the unknowable with a share in our contemporary condition. By asking after a community that is dispossessed of an accountable presence, this research attempts to ascertain the degree to which one can act on behalf of the unknowable. In establishing the ethical dimensions that the fundamental question of an unaccountable life proposes, this research engages with an aoristical sense of the question of a life in the univocity of a propositional space that assumes the surfeit of excess: exhaustion. The difficulty posed by a community without omission appeals to the indelible space of the Clinic, a space that confronts in excess of any particular place or any particular person, the no-where that is particular to no-one. The research submits that the task of those who claim the specularity of the Clinic, that is an audience from whom no-one is exempt, lies in extending the practice and the procedures that the irreducible question of a life harbors. Thus, the realisation of an architecture that claims the question of a life must also claim the dimensions of the Clinic, a scale that cannot overlook the unevidenced.

Hence, the manner in which the project is undertaken is a radical methodology that affirms the contemporary sufficiency to abstain from that which is already known. The PhD will propagate the momentum of a single encounter between two architects - a letter from Howard Raggatt to Peter Corrigan - displacing the field of thought that gave rise to it in such a way that the interminable persistence of an unevidenced event - a building that takes flight in the image of an ocean liner - can never be held to account. Typifying this attempt to admit the unknowable will be an arsenal of lucid moves, uncanny conjunctions and casual assertions that will continually avow the effusiveness by which the research sets out to meet the unmeetable. This method offers more than an alleged impractical epistemic impasse, a claim that would fail to realise that the very suggestion of unassailable proof; a demand to explain, excuse or account for instances of interpretive indecipherability, remains untenable and is conditional on withdrawing from the question of a life. It is via the felicitous incisiveness of the prose, drawings, and images that compose this research that an atemporal experience of an unaccountable experience will be perpetuated.

A Clinic for the Exhausted is offered as an exemplary architecture amidst the mass of existence, an enveloping reticence that evokes the relations of those who remain nameless.
A
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BOOK 1
Thinking provokes general indifference. It is a dangerous exercise nevertheless. Indeed, it is only when the dangers become obvious that indifference ceases, but they often remain hidden and barely perceptible, inherent in the enterprise. Precisely because the plane of immanence is prephilosophical and does not immediately take effect with concepts, it implies a sort of groping experimentation and its layout resorts to measures that are not very respectable, rational, or reasonable. These measures belong to the order of dreams, of pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkeness, and excess. We head for the horizon, on the plane of immanence, and we return with bloodshot eyes, yet they are the eyes of the mind.

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 1

With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, the broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow.

Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer* 2
PREAMBLE

In 1990, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) would begin the procurement process for a new building to complete a gap in the university’s Melbourne city campus between Swanston Street and Bowen Lane. The commission for the proposed building, eventually to be known as ‘Building Eight’, would be appointed to the Melbourne architectural practice of Edmond & Corrigan working in conjunction with Demaine Partnership.

The university’s brief required Edmond & Corrigan’s proposal to address a short fall of some 40% in space, contingent on accommodating the School of Architecture and Design, the School of Business, and School of Planning as well as provide a home for a new university library and café. More importantly, the building was to present a public face for the university along Swanston Street, Melbourne’s civic spine, that would, “make overt its cultural contribution to the community,” completing a task that had stalled some seventeen years before with the Australian architect John Andrews’ unfinished Student Union Building. Andrews’ building marked a gap between the incomplete fortress of the Casey Wing (1967-75) by Bates Smart McCutchen, which had initially intended to extend the full length of RMIT’s Swanston Street frontage but of which only three of the proposed blocks were built, and the much earlier Storey Hall (1884-87) subsequently renovated and extended by the Australian architectural practice Ashton Raggatt McDougall, (known by the acronym ARM), in

1 Demaine Partnership is a Melbourne based practice founded in 1938. Peter Corrigan had gone through the University of Melbourne Architecture course with a director of Demaine, Dominic Kelly during the early 1960s.
3 Howard Raggatt, Ian McDougall and Stephen Ashton are the founding members of the Melbourne architecture practice of Ashton Raggatt McDougall. ARM came about in 1988, and was the result of the various early partnerships between the respective directors. ARM has produced some of the most controversial public buildings in Australia, most notably Storey Hall at RMIT University in Melbourne, The National Museum of Australia in Canberra, and most recently, the Melbourne Recital Hall. Both Raggatt and McDougall completed their Masters of Architecture in the initial Masters by Invitation program inaugurated by Professor Leon van Schaik at RMIT to facilitate a critical review of work undertaken in practice. This was a major turning point in architectural education in Australia, but also, directed an emerging stream of architectural practices to engage and prospect the causes of their respective practices. Both Raggatt and McDougall were instrumental in furthering the early architectural culture in Melbourne. Most notably, McDougall and Richard Munday founded the Australian Architectural journal, Transition, published from 1979-2000. Transition was named after the eleventh chapter of J.M. Freeland’s Architecture in Australia: A History. As van Schaik tells us, the early editions of Transition were put together in a house in St. Kilda where both McDougall and Munday were, “forced to wash up in order to work on it, all the while taking phone call messages from Peter Corrigan [who featured on the editorial board] relayed as often as not by Norman Day, from some more salubrious spot. (The house in St Kilda belonged to Peter Corrigan’s mother, a territorial fact which has given rise to debate about the genesis of Australia’s Journal of Architectural Discourse).” While the role of Peter Corrigan’s mother in the advent of Transition and the discourse on architecture in Australia from the mid-seventies remains circumpect, there can be no less a conspiratorial plot for A Clinic for the Exhausted...
1996. In 1990, Andrew’s building sat truncated, with only three of its intended ten stories completed, the seventeen year lapse in its completion softening none of its difficult circulation and harsh street presence. Subsequently, the scale, height and depth of Edmond and Corrigan’s proposal would be largely driven by these other buildings: the Casey Wing, with its own tightly stacked floor plates, would determine the new building’s floor stacks, while Andrews’ building, with its structural limitations and awkward diagonal layout would determine the new building’s height and entry circulation. During the development of the brief an inevitable increase in the building programme meant an increasingly larger floor plate would need to be accommodated within the final building. Any proposal by Edmond and Corrigan would have to meet not only the heavy expectations of the university and its prominent site, but would have to do so within the difficult constraints of assimilating the incomplete accretions of past architectural endeavours.

Towards the closing stages of Building Eight’s construction, the university’s commissioning process and Edmond & Corrigan’s design development along with the building’s general sense of civic place in the sphere of Melbourne architecture was richly detailed in historian Conrad Hamann’s monograph on the firm of Edmond & Corrigan entitled Cities of Hope (1993), followed by Leon van Schaik and Nigel Bertram’s Building Eight: Edmond and Corrigan at RMIT (1996), a three volume monograph composed of a volume on Building Eight’s design development, a volume of essays on Building Eight commissioned for the publication, and a volume that collected the writings of both Peter Corrigan and Maggie Edmond, all housed in a gold or silver lucite slip-cover. It is the intention of this preamble to concisely attend to the episodic historical development of Building Eight, so as not to offer a knowingly elucidated examination of the given architecture that can be read back into some general indictment of by reiterating McDougall in an interview: “At least the first cover [of Transition] was also inspired by those of the medical journal Lancet.” Raggatt’s thesis is published as: “NOTNESS: Operations and Strategies for the Fringe” in, Fin de Siecle? and the Twenty-first Century, ed. Leon van Schaik, (Melbourne: 38South Publications, 1993). McDougall’s thesis is published as: “The Autistic Ogler” in, Transfiguring the Ordinary, ed. Leon van Schaik, (Melbourne: 38South Publications, 1995). For notes regarding Transition see, Leon van Schaik, “Ten Years of Transition,” Transition, No. 29, (1989), 29-33; Melinda Payne, “Reading the Journal: Moments in the History of Transition, Transition, No. 59/60, (1998), 6-27.

fig 2

diagram of historical conditions
the broader examinations of Building Eight plumbed by Schaik, Bertram, and Hamann. This research will endeavour to illuminate what is best described as the proliferation of images and architectural turns that make Building Eight a difficult endeavour to ‘pin down’. The rhetoric of the preceding paragraph arises because Building Eight can, simply, be read as a collision of citations from various architectural, literary and fine art heritages. Every instance of Edmond & Corrigan’s brazen sampling finds itself loosened from the original contexts which gave rise to it, and are thrown into a social, economic and cultural economy that presents itself as Australian. However irrefutable an assertion of what is or is not ‘Australian’ that attaches itself to a discussion of a prominent example of ‘Australian Architecture’, it is necessary to realise that Edmond & Corrigan’s oeuvre makes no claim to an authentically Australian Architecture. Instead, their work suggests a lengthy discourse on Australian myth making; the tenuous readability of the traces and inscriptions of the various fragment in Building Eight suggesting an awareness of a less-than-certain path through a less-than-certain territory. As Schaik writes in his foreword to his and Bertram’s edited monograph, Building Eight proceeds by, “plundering fields of cultural provenance.”

As a consequence of Schaik’s statement, our investigation of Building Eight could be implicated in an inventory recording the many ‘thefts’ with which it might be charged. But, an unsuspecting audience should not allow themselves to become an unwitting historian of Building Eight, preoccupied with the building’s objective historical narratives as a means to determine the extents of how we come to advocate for or against its architecture. It is necessary that the doubt that is present in any interpretation must articulate and further enable our passage through what Peter Corrigan, the architect, foregrounds in his architecture and teaching as “difficult coded knowledge.”

Every fragment hence arises as the topos of the struggle between disassociation and recognition; a measure of the void between an audience’s reluctance to follow, and their inability to bring themselves to discredit the architecture that confronts them.

The architecture that prevails in Building Eight attends to Corrigan’s argument for a place-based knowledge that refutes the demands of explication that would systematically determine the extents of his architecture based on an inventory of historical motifs and narratives. Such an approach would effectively and problematically orientate Building Eight toward a reflection on the past, and fail to discern the tenuous claim of an Australian Architecture to be just that, Australian. Instead Building Eight, by the insistence and extent of Corrigan’s infringements, what belongs to his own palatable impudence, gathers the artefacts of a past, stages them in a present, and assumes the position of an architecture that has yet to emerge. This does not surmise the naivety of utopic ideas of architectural progress or determine an origin for, or a conclusion to, Australian authenticity. It is the anticipatory

4 Schaik & Bertram, Building Eight: Edmond and Corrigan at RMIT, Vol. 1, 10.
5 The full paragraph reads: “If an art work aspires to an embodiment of a social organization, a community, it needs to establish connections between the rules (underlying) and their manifestations in the real world. It is necessary for an audience to be able to make comparative inferences with their own lives. The potential audience will more readily attend if it sees its own preoccupations dealt with in the art work. This is not to be misunderstood as kitsch. Difficult coded knowledge, not taste, is involved.” Peter Corrigan quoted in Richard Munday, “Passion in the Suburbs”, Architecture Australia, (Feb/March, 1977), 52. This paragraph also sits at the front of Conrad Hamann’s monograph on the firm of Edmond and Corrigan, Cities of Hope. A re-issue and update of this publication entitled, “Cities of Hope Revisited” and “Cities of Hope Rehearsed” is currently being prepared by Edmond and Corrigan.

Sanford Kwinter argues similarly that: “As every thoughtful architect knows, an object is never other than an object in disposition. When musical composition emancipated itself from its prison-house within the acoustically generated spectrum of the classical chromatic scale, it allowed one to rewrite the rules for controlling tones and sounds and combining them into structural relationships. One of the most important things that we learned is that we can’t always or initially hear these relationships, and yet we know that they both exist and serve a critical (audible or supra-audible) function. What we don’t access literally without ears, we can actually lean to access through a transformation in the organisation of our human apparatus – a new posture or attitude, a new distribution of attention, a new form of physical listening. Concepts were then, and remain today, the primary walking sticks with which we navigate new space and reshape ourselves. There is no reason to deny architect the power of this extraordinary transformative engine. Concepts are the architecture of hope.” Sanford Kwinter, “Concepts: The Architecture of Hope,” Harvard Design Magazine, No. 19 (Fall 2003/Winter 2004), 1-4.
play of ablation, substitution and quotation, as Corrigan meanders across the entire edifice of culture that advances the unruly nature of his disjunctions. Which determines what holds what together in an architecture of continual displacement further entrenched in Corrigan's autobiographical apparatus is of little relevance to the speculations of this preamble and the proceeding undertaking. In order for an audience to realise the conditions by which Corrigan's architecture operates across the extent of the whole of a potential architecture requires knowing what any such method divests itself of in the cutting out and into of another; of the space it carves from itself for itself. That is, to recognise that Building Eight generates interpretations that advance far beyond what one interpretive dimension could fathom; it is an architecture that opens the surface coherence of its edifice by enfolding through the dimensions of itself, never closing one space off, but prospecting space from within the enveloping impasse of its own excessive gestures: a space "commensurate with our capacity for dreaming."6

Building Eight is an architecture that exhibits a complex narrative structure, involving difficult histories which are apt to being disrupted. From the repertoire of Building Eight's architectural transmogrifications can be derived an affective atlas that is characterised by a conflation, expenditure and displacement of meaning across an open surface of cultural references. The methodology that pertains to this architectural accretion examines how a proliferating series of images continues to elucidate how Building Eight can refute being known and conscripted by a collection of frozen historical events. It is this attitude that informs the proceeding introduction and, the opening out of this PhD as it traverses a contemporary re-imagining of Building Eight and architect Peter Corrigan that was presented as the winning entry to the journal Architecture Australia and its inaugural Unbuilt Prize.

6 Project statement by Peter Corrigan. Peter Corrigan with Michael Spanner, Edmond and Corrigan: A City of Hope, Now + When, Venice Biennale 2010. Corrigan’s thesis is founded in the figure given form in Ernst Bloch’s The Principle of Hope as that of a man who is not content, the dreamer. For Bloch, day-dreaming is not a discontent by which what is lacking can be wholly filled through an indiscriminate material wealth. For Bloch, this discontent is a challenge to the present conditions in which any person whatever may find him or herself; discontent has as its core foundation the dignity of life, a refusal to accept one’s social deprivation and a preparedness to go against the grain. Bloch’s dreaming is an excursion into one’s passing shadow. It confirms Corrigan’s ‘dreaming’ not as an acute mystification, but, as a vital epistemic process; what opens life to the lateness of a utopianism by which the dreamer is who can never finally be content. As Bloch states, it is a model of utopia which is “transcendent, without transcendence.” cf Geoghegan, 149. See Principle 33, “A dreamer always wants even more”, in Ernst Bloch, The Principle of Hope, Pelvane Two, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice & Paul Knight (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 451.
In 2007, the journal Architecture Australia commenced the publication of a series of features considering the role of important works of architecture from both international and Australian architects that had fallen short of being built, but had contributed to the dialogue on Australian Architecture. It also re-established, in a new format, a competition program that had first been initiated in the 1990s for unbuilt works of Architecture. The inaugural first prize of the reinstated Unbuilt Prize was awarded to a project entitled A Clinic for the Exhausted. The jury commented that they were torn between the project’s “last-century picaresque roman-a-clef tongue-in-check cockamamie self indulgent absurdist magic-so-called-realism” that raised the spectre of post-modern irony, and its appearance as “a painstakingly referenced and affectionate homage to that remarkable architect – Peter Corrigan” that was presented via the project’s appropriation of Building Eight. Most telling were the judge’s examination of whether an entry to the Unbuilt Prize could be entirely improbable in terms of buildability or whether the competition should only consider those projects that had intended to become concrete realities but had failed to make it off the drawing board.

Preceding the competition, Architecture Australia had published, as part of its unbuilt series, a review by the Australian architectural historian Peter Goad of Edmond & Corrigan’s Australian Pavilion for the Giardini delle Biennale, commissioned in 1979 by Franco Belgiorno-Nettis, Transfield founder and also the founder of Sydney’s Art Biennale, with the backing of Venetian authorities. This was a project that had subsequently failed to materialise, stalled by the lack of support from Australian authorities. It was hard to tell how to take the winning entry of the Unbuilt Prize seriously against the background of this and other, perhaps more serious work featured in the competition: was the winning project only a wild imaginary extrapolation of Corrigan’s Building Eight? Or was it something more hopeful, like Venice, a city bourne afloat?

The winning project for the re-inaugurated AA Unbuilt award, A Clinic for the Exhausted drew out what was called a ‘discontinuous genealogy’ that traversed the architectural conditions of Building Eight through John Andrews’ Student Union and Bates Smart McCutchen’s Casey Wing but exaggerated a sense of the unfinished, the fragmented and the unbuilt through an identification of Building Eight with the mythical Ship of Theseus, whose timbers were progressively replaced as they rotted away. The ship presents a paradox, that is the question of identification and meaning with which Building Eight concerns itself. The term ‘discontinuous genealogy’ is a reference to the same procedure, the ‘dis|continuous genealogy’,

A CLINIC FOR THE EXHAUSTED

Peter Corrigan, in the garb of another self

FOR THE

exhausted
discontinuous genealogy

mebourne flooded

abandoned city interior

Note: Right-hand section is flipped to show the mirror world of the other side of the world
....I have thrown a twig into the ocean for the drowning sailor

With Love,
The Author

The stage is a setting for an act apart, the reconstructing of Building Eight by Edmund and Corrigan as a boat disenchanted with its ocean home, a genealogy of Corrigan's directions. But the mechanisms of Corrigan work here to, that reveals a ship as the greatest reserve of imagination. And there is only enough for one room at a time, because as Kafka remarked that's all we ever really need. From a tower Icarus found entry into the void, the moment captured as always been a boat. This one raises bodies from the waters of Greenaway's Seine, only to emerge from the ocean. A boat-barrow-boat.

Like the first notes of advantage if the need ever arose. Gehry's donkey, being the golden ass that it is floated away and we have been left with only a Rhinoceros - Fellini's lovesick one at that. Beneath his iceberg roof, the Rhinoceros enclosure theatre

An abnormal dark and rage for compasses are present in my Peregrine's Emissaries, the archetypal of Starling work here. Rheumatismally, at the fag end of the house stood Ferdinand's costume of the theatre.
by which the architect and academic Douglas Darden would conceive of his own theoretical architectural projects. Darden would superimpose a series of images, imbued with their own radical identities and figures, to create a dense montage which he termed the ‘composite ideogram’. In the ‘composite ideogram’ some areas of the original images would remain discernible, while other areas would become a dense black. Darden’s resulting architecture could not in any one way be grasped from the constellation of figures in the composed image, nor was it systematically built up from each of the figures contained within each of the images used. It was as if each of the images shared a voice, and as though the ‘composite ideogram’ was a snapshot of the detritus at the foundations of the fallen Babel. The procedure of the ‘dis/continuous genealogy’ permitted Darden to build a labyrinth up around himself, the ‘composite image’ only a precariously maintained tower from which he may take a measure of no one position across an unclear path.

This may, to an audience of this text, suggest that it remains unclear what path the lineage of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* takes. Certainly, the self-portrait of the eighteenth-century French draughtsman Jean-Jacques Lequeu in the guise of a hysterical bare breasted women labelled as ‘Peter Corrigan’, perhaps in reference to Corrigan’s thefts of Lequeu’s studies for Peter King’s *Mahoney Masques*, confirms a less than direct sense of logic in the project. It has been contended that Lequeu’s appearance in history is nothing more than the sly reckonings of the surrealist Marcel Duchamp, who slipped into the Bibliothèque Nationale de France all that we know of him; an eighteenth-century architect conceived by the *zeitgeist* of the early twentieth century. (Perhaps not, some would say, though as many as who would deny this argument would hope it true, not least because of Duchamp’s own penchant for female attire). The same impetus to invent Peter Corrigan as a lady, (if we could imagine a bare breasted Corrigan a ‘lady’ not least as the *same* image of an ‘architect’), is what is conceived by the text beneath the portrait.

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as that which has already been written, irrelevant of this author. It is also perhaps no coincidence that
Darden uses a similar though no less affronting image of Lequeu's bare breasted nun to conceive of his
own self-portrait. The beautifully conceived frontispiece to his monograph portrays a moustached and
bespecked Darden framed by an architecturally conceived capital ‘D’ (also drawn from a Lequeu image,
this one originally the frame of an opening from which a female nude almost tumbles from in her
pursuit of a small bird) dressed in a nun’s habit exposing two perfectly round breasts, the nipples peaking
just over the top of his blouse. Across Darden’s Duchampian procedures, Duchamp’s Lequeu, Lequeu’s
nun now labelled Peter Corrigan, we traverse a complicated citing that envisages Peter Corrigan as the
potential rather than any deducible Peter Corrigan; but which in all cases, is an architect, as evidenced
by a swag of fabric that decisively informs us in Darden’s case that this is indeed ‘Douglas Darden,
Architect’. It is this resistance to a nominalisation, wherever nominal, that exaggerates the paradox of
the Ship of Theseus so that it can not be excluded from Building Eights architectural imaginary. It is the
paradox of the ship in which resides this PhD undertaking, as both the site of a vivid naming and as a
revolutionary turning through of a voice.

A Clinic for the Exhausted presents Theseus’ ship morphed into a collage that depicts Building Eight as
the stern of an ocean liner, “in readiness to depart its concrete foundations and sail the urban oceans of
the world.” ‘This composite image’ appears at first simply too obvious to amend itself to Darden’s own
thinking. But what this building-boat composite realises is the vision of an infinitely rapid movement
through the innumerable images that compose A Clinic for the Exhausted, rather than the circumscribed
number offered by Darden’s own accounts. In comparison to Darden, A Clinic for the Exhausted makes
further demands on its audience, because every digression from one image to the next, marked by the
exertion necessary to discern each and every image across the grotesque excess of images, sustains the
genesis of this one image. That is, rather than being hampered by the excessive density of images, the
building-boat makes evident at the outset the encirclement of references from which it differs, as though
its realisation can only be sought from the tossing sea of images from which it distinguishes itself.

The accompanying AA Unbuilt project text points to “the ship as the greatest reserve of imagination,”
reiterating the French philosopher Michel Foucault’s assertion that the boat is a “heterotopia par excellence.”
The ship and by extension Building Eight is presumably considered as neither a utopia nor a dystopia, but an
other place, or ‘heterotopia’, located just beyond our habitual architectural preconceptions. From the outset,
A Clinic for the Exhausted, perhaps unknowingly, exaggerates a claim on the spectacle of an ocean liner made
in a letter published in Schaijk and Bertram’s monograph on Building Eight. The letter, dated 22 December
1993, is addressed to Peter Corrigan from Howard Raggatt, who as director of ARM was commencing the
redesign of Storey Hall adjacent to Building Eight. The letter outlines Raggatt’s hopes for the proposed renovation
of Storey Hall against the backdrop of the adjacent Building Eight. Raggatt, who admits in the letter to the
possible influence of alcohol, tenders, on taking note of Building Eight’s illuminated interior, the image of
Building Eight as it “began to lift off as though released from its anchors, or set free from its foundations,
now departing like a P&O liner.”

22 12 93

Dear Peter

On walking past your building the other night - it must have been after the Butlers Lunch - I propped against the Oxford wall and realised that you have indeed made a building after the heart of Nathaniel (I think it was) whom our Lord referred as a man without guile. Your building seems to stand without guile.

I began to see it as a segment of a new City wall, a pretty wall, the wall of a new Jerusalem, sparkling, inexplicable and yet gritty, hopeful as though hope could still be so easily achieved.

And indeed a joyful wall no longer seemingly concerned with mere seriousness; a wall that cries out yes yes yes, like Molly instead of No, or Not. In that light I found it moving that here was a little bit of that great city we shall someday see. Your building is a lovely vision of that blessed city but these are not hopes to interest many.

Hopefully our little building down the street can be a gate for that same wonderful city. But I suspect if there's going to be a dozen gates to this city, our little gate will not be for the pure and simpleminded, but more likely for the dreadfully earnest, for the doubtful or for those ashamed of their silent joy. And its certainly a gate than lost its single pearl or will it be reinstated on that day.

Anyhow as I watched your building, your wall, lit up inside with lots of lights, it began to lift off as though released from its anchors, or set free from its foundations, now departing like a P&O liner, streamers, bells and whistles, never to return but waiving to everyone and calling yes yes yes but perhaps I was merely drunk, or still dreaming under a Nathaniel like fig tree.

Anyhow it was nice to walk past pretending to discuss these matters with a close companion imagining them dressed in white and longing for that new City for the guileless, and buildings no longer saddened by the necessity of secret joy.

I'm looking forward to the party when we're in. How I can see it as a city of Hope.

Best Regards for Christmas

Howard R.

Image removed due to copyright

Thus, what was initially an unattributable sleight of hand in A Clinic for the Exhausted is ordained by Raggatt’s conspiratorial wink. It establishes his letter as a sort of instruction and his vision as evidence of an intoxicating malady. Both construe a space wherein Building Eight and Raggatt can not help but indulge each other a little further. That is, A Clinic for the Exhausted is not without reserve to any and all of the circumstantial evidence that might be traced across the dispersion of its images, but neither does it surrender its logic to Raggatt’s letter or any other. At the same time, Raggatt’s vision becomes but another subtle deceit sustaining the gestures of A Clinic for the Exhausted that place Building Eight and ocean liner on the same page. In some sense, the impeding ocean is both the cause and result of the transfiguration of Raggatt’s conceptual Oedema; it is his liquid intake that exceeds him: it is his intoxication that keeps the narrative afloat and what spills out into the street, picking up Building Eight in his ensuing depiction of an ocean liner launch.

What will become apparent in the reading of the textual component of this PhD, and in a review of the architectural drawings that are presented as the outcome of another kind of research, will be the references and allusions, interwoven with false paths, to a myriad of artifacts and images drawn from this project’s association with architectural, literary, cinematic and philosophic heritages. At best, what is evidenced by the preamble and prologue and by the text and drawings of the AA Unbuilt entry, hints at what is yet to be interpreted – the scrap of a hull, a well-known architectural landmark – the composite image that is imagined describes them as vividly as possible. But, from the outset any examination would fail to unravel the narrative and offer one or other as unassailable proof of a measured outcome. What is offered, by way of the textual and drawn description here in this project, are multiple bifurcating or forking paths along which any ensuing conjecture can be orientated, sustaining the irresolvable polyvalent accents of an appropriated boat and an appropriated building without any approach approaching an end.

Raggatt’s letter masks the considerable instability of his vision, and his gestures. Our task presently is to survey the conjunctures of his letter with the text in this thesis without either becoming conditioned and thus would expose both projects as an ally of the other. To do so without conceiving of this text as a copy of that letter or as what renders the letter understandable, the audience of this text must understand what Paul Zumthor has posited as the provisional territory of a text’s mouvance. Zumthor situates his term within the scholarship of troubadour poetry, emphasising that mouvance displaces the intentions of any scholarship that would subordinate a particular mode of individual lyrical identity to
the production of a text produced after the event of the troubadour’s voice that it resembles. The lyrics of troubadour song come down to us across multifarious translations by different scribes who collated their own transcriptions of lyrical works in song-books. It is the scribe who, through their own historicising interpretations, prospect the lyrics of the troubadour in such a way that it establishes each version of the transcribed song, every resulting composition, as their own, but which through the impetus of scholarly examination collects and collates into groups based on each composition’s digressions from or towards a constellation of possible variants that might compose a named troubadour’s voice. By some degree of coherence, any one collection is therefore able to be attributed and said to be the work of a single scribe and a single troubadour. Mouvance exemplifies the drifting of the troubadour’s voice as it is poised on the threshold of any number of translations, at once scholarly but also, that conjoin with the possibilities of being over come by a Medieval voice that eludes closure. At the tip of the scribe’s pen:

[...] an element of spontaneity is generated and projected in the text through what we wrongly take to be rigidly fixed forms, providing an exuberance with which both reciter and listener are associated. This particular characteristic predominates over all that has been referred to, not with anachronism, as the symbolism and moralism of medieval works; it excludes from the text any suggestion based on the specific duration of an existence. The text is a consumer article, which, as a result, is intended to flood the world on which it imposes its own order.

The sense of mouvance in Raggatt’s correspondence is obvious. His letter is not a mirror to which A Clinic for the Exhausted can be held up to, and from which can be drawn a referential correlation between boat and building that is materialised in his vision. The letter as it is, allows the audience the satisfaction of knowing how Raggatt permitted himself to be deceived. To any closed narration corresponds, and what will henceforth encumber this text, the incongruity of a litany of like structures, the modulations of his textual mouvance moving through the work in such a way that the malevolence of the innumerable shifts and the density of associations, dissolves into Raggatt’s watery advance. That is, through a continual appropriation and repeated re-assemblage of Raggatt’s text this PhD is want to burst the very margins that confine his confession to a letter.

To expand our claim that Raggatt’s letter offers itself as a page from a song book we must further examine the portrait that Raggatt offers against the traits of the troubadour. The troubadour was a lyricist, active from the twelfth to mid-fifteenth century, who composed courtly love poetry on the back of another text, from the texts of autors, or authorities such as well known ancient texts. The troubadour’s song adhered not literally to these text but procured the authorial text on the basis that the troubadour’s themselves were not the author of their song, and that their voice was hence appropriated from somewhere else, sung on behalf of some other cultivated paternity solicited from the unobservable and atemporal something that confirm the depth of tradition that harangued their language. As Zumthor contends, “the “work” floats, offering not a fixed shape of firm boundaries but a constantly shifting nimbus.”

The ethos of mouvance recognises, by way of soliciting the troubadours own endlessly deferred lyrical gait, how any one song comes to be linked to a provisional authority whilst also considering the litany of cumulative digressions by which any variant of song makes as its tradition:

The work spreads both temporally and spatially beyond the time needed to absorb it aurally. This comes about not merely by virtue of the text’s physical movements as it circulates in

manuscript or in the mouths of reciters and is handed down to posterity, but also as a result of an essential instability in medieval texts themselves. The mobility this implies is of a more fundamental order than that due to mere circulation.3

Troubadours sing of and in the voice of a man who believes himself to be the one true lover of a lady that cannot be named, except through various pseudonyms. The troubadour’s goal is to be the best singer amongst the many who also claim the same, that they are the lady’s one true love, contending, as does all the others, that each rival singer are all hauzeners, or flatterers, false lovers intent on making good with the lady, without any intention of truly loving her. Laura Kendrick informs us that the troubadour tradition of competitive imitation as a way of distinguishing their voice amongst the many others emerged in some circles as a game whereby a messenger who read, mimed or sang the verse, brought about a series of incessant interpretations as to the meaning of the song:

Sometimes this wrapping up comprised a whole series of interpretations, each more ingenious than the last, as each interpreter competed in demonstrating his prowess at entendre and dire, at understanding and explaining the verse. The game of interpretation did not always proceed soberly and reasonably. By using and abusing the techniques for interpreting Latin poetry and Scripture taught in religious schools – exegetical techniques of etymologising and figurative interpretation as well as grammatical analysis of the inscribed letters – the facetious troubadours dissected their own vernacular texts in order to discover (trobat) as many meanings as possible in the verbal matter, by various combinations of its letters and sounds into words and phrases and by various constructions of the literal and figurative meanings of these. During the course of these interpretive games, the troubadours fabricated a literary language; they treated words as matter and used artisanal metaphors – planning, polishing, soldering, refining, weaving and interlacing, colouring – to describe their labor on the forms, sounds, and sense of the vernacular.4

The open and variegated tongue which troubadours used meant that one interpretation always beget another different interpretation and that the richness of the possibilities assured that the one rule of the game was that no one game could come to completion. Ambiguous liaisons, such as Building Eight and ocean liner constituted by Raggatt’s letter, proliferated everywhere in troubadour verse, and constitute here, in this project, not so much the carnivalesque body of the Medieval period but a corrigansque body; Raggatt’s letter is accompanied by the lewd gestures of the nun, briefly exalting not an abstinence, an architectural Asceticism, but the opposite, a claim to the over indulgent, terrifically lusty, and perhaps profoundly accommodating of any and all egregious excesses which may befall the architect Peter Corrigan. A Clinic for the Exhausted draws comparisons with the reported founding of “a mock monastery of prostitutes, complete with abbes and liturgical song” by the troubadour Guillaume IX at Niort, in Western France, “a real place that also means “no where” according to a playful etymology (ni-ort).”5

The thesis and the projects which compose the extents of A Clinic for the Exhausted are a seemingly haphazard archive of architectural, filmic, fine art and literary references that manage a perpetual displacement from one point of reference to the next, rapid digressions side stepping a seemingly linear path of description. It is a narrative that will mobilise blocks of bewildering connections entailing a

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3 Zumthor, Towards a Medieval Poetics, 45-46.
number of returns, backtracks and double-backs, forever taking leave of a place in-place of another. Marked by a method of appropriation that proliferates throughout, Foucault’s ship is thrown to the very precipices of the space that it encloses. *A Clinic for the Exhausted* is an architecture of spontaneous improvisation; its circumference is what passes through everything, and what casts a ship forward in its wake, approximating both building and boat in the penumbral light—the illuminated windows of the awakening ship and the cover of darkness that tends to Raggatt’s vision—of a no-where that is particular to no-one.

Covertly, under the guise of another’s authority, this project ventures forward, the illicit implication of Corrigan’s passing silhouette capturing the attention of all who wish to delineate themselves. The function of the introduction shifts as a consequence, from detailing the many ways one could approach the work of this PhD, through appropriation or any other form of description, to narrating the conditions by which Raggatt’s associative powers gives way to the free play of the contraband bestowed in a letter back to Corrigan, the key testimonial as to the incarnational powers of Raggatt’s convergence with the swell. Raggatt warns you from the outset that it is his inebriation that spills everywhere. But, let me preempt those who would understand Raggatt’s moment of enthusiastic complicity with a liquid excess, or the humour that derives from it, as the result, quite literally of one too many drinks. No amount of liquor, however strong, would be, purely on its own, enough to push Building Eight from its foundations. It is as if he has excessively borrowed, too frequently appropriated, his *incipit* to the prologue, an honest invitation to an exigent audience to join him, to partake of the same excess, to reappropriate his aesthetic, his voice, his uneven gait, his gestures, with the same, if not similar conflicting sense accorded to a man impartial to the conviviality of an alcoholic beverage.6

It will be apparent to an audience that, thus far, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* does find its port of departure in Building Eight by Edmond and Corrigan and its transgressive resemblance to an anonymous ocean liner. Nevertheless, this PhD project is not only about Building Eight, though Building Eight does remain readily available by its *mis-en-scene* with Australian and particularly Melbourne centered architectural discourse. The argument of the thesis does not concern itself with attesting to the built legacy of motifs that may account for Building Eight’s resemblance to an ocean liner.

*A Clinic for the Exhausted* draws on the protean transfiguration of the detritus on the horizon, the remains of all that is left from the sudden collision of Building Eight and ocean liner, for the furtherance of Raggatt’s canticle. The content of Raggatt’s letter are to be read aloud, a voice that bears you aloft only to throw you back into the tumult of that night. Furthermore, it is this detritus that underscores the development of the four projects, each identified as a component of a ‘clinic’—a term that will be returned to at a latter stage—that compose this PhD by project. Three architectural investigations compose the project as a whole, under the title of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*: The Unbuilt Project that serves, by some measure, as a precursor to this PhD, and the architectural explorations completed

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6 As Deborah N. Losse points out, Medieval writers found ways of outlining to the reader their relationship to authorial figures, and to their appropriation in the text. In the prologue to *Gargantua & Pantagruel*, Rabelais makes clear that he addresses and dedicates his writing to his friends, “Most noble boozers” parodying the traditional dedication to the lords of the land. Further into *Gargantua & Pantagruel*, there is the suggestion that “Every honest booser, every decent goasy gentlemen, everyone who is dry, may came to this barrel of mine, but need drink only if be wishes. If they wish, and the wine is to the taste of their worshipful worship, let them drink frankly, freely, boldly, and with stint or payment.” The author Guillaume Bouchet, in the prologue to his compilation of dinner conversations believed that there was enough in the title of the publication, *Les Serées* “to suggest why this book smells more of wine than of oil.” For an examination of the shift in authorship from Medieval to Renaissance texts see, Deborah N. Losse, *Sampling the Book: Renaissance Prologues and the French Conteurs*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994), 32, 65, 70.
during the tenure of the PhD: *The Swimming Pool Library* and *The Landscape Room*; along with this thesis, textual in form, and the final public exhibition and presentation, that will place them all into adjacency. As a consequence of the suspicion that *The Swimming Pool Library* and *The Landscape Room* will be met with from the audience, due in part to a perceived impenetrability, this thesis is offered as a lifeboat.

As you, the audience, will come to understand, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* asks the audience how much they are willing to risk so that boat and building may share a life.

The philosopher Gilles Deleuze commenting on the originality of Nietzsche, explains how the moment of sharing, in this case between patient and psychiatrist, though it is no different than anyone who confesses all to the page, must distinguish itself from the simple and prosaic contract between two people. Deleuze states:

> There comes a point where it is no longer about translating, or interpreting ... There comes a point where you will have to share, have to put yourself in the patient’s shoes, go all the way, and share his experience. Is it about a kind of sympathy, or empathy, or identification? But surely it’s more complicated than that. What we feel is rather the necessity of a relation that would be neither legal, nor contractual, nor institutional... Perhaps, the only conceivable equivalent is something like “being in the same boat”... We’re in the same boat: a sort of lifeboat, bombs falling on every side, the lifeboat drifts toward subterranean rivers of ice or towards rivers of fire, the Oronoco, the Amazon, everyone is pulling an oar, and we’re not even supposed to like one another, we fight, we eat each other. Everyone pulling an oar is sharing, sharing something beyond any law, any contract, any institution. Drifting, a drifting movement...\(^7\)

The thesis suggests that it is not a question of stopping said violence, fleeing some incomprehensible danger, or of starting again, taking leave of what has already been promised by the very undertaking of a PhD. Rather, this thesis contemplates how to take up a univocal call for *A Clinic for the Exhausted’s* escape into the world without divulging what occurs off-screen, terminating the very mechanism of its approach, and breaking the almost essential trust that is necessary for author and an audience to share.

The *Prologue* set off with the intention of offering a way of suspending the familiar landscape of reflection that would arise as a result of the appearance of Building Eight in *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, by permitting a path through the detritus of its own historically determined limits, before opening into the clear ocean expanse envisaged by this introduction. This *introduction* clarifies the intentions of the PhD and presents the audience with an outline of the proceeding chapters that continue across the unfettered contours of Raggatt’s inebriation, tangling up everything and everyone in the same improvisation. It gathers his letter as a conceptual force indistinguishable from the generosity of its audience and the curiously wide arcs of the author. It does so by extending an invitation to the audience outlining how they should realise a share in the thesis.

The first chapter, *An Epidemiology of Illness*, serves to make the audience aware of the fast approaching task of an author apprehending an unthinkable audience which has informed this author’s writing practice. It does so by playing back and forth between Plato’s conception of the *pharmakon* as

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explored by Jacques Derrida, in his essay, Plato’s Pharmakon and the hypochondriac character of Argan, who features in Molière’s play La Malade imaginaire. The pharmakon contemplates the conceptual hinge, an epidemiology of illness, by which Argan’s and Socrates’ illness throws open the possibility for further improvisations across the text. An Epidemiology of Illness is compelled to turn the audience, and in turn the author, out onto the street as giddy conspirators in an unfathomable act.

Roussel’s Epigenetic Landscape suggests how other practitioners and how other approaches and methodologies – particularly those of the French playwright, author, poet and one time actor, Raymond Roussel – situate this thesis’ proposition that a life is implicated in any practice, architectural or otherwise. This second chapter puts to the audience that the practice of a life threads through this exegesis. Furthermore, it deploys Roussel’s procedures to cumulative effect, producing more and more parallel images, such that an infinite number of conceptual lenses are made available where by an audience may observe the uninterrupted movement that keeps life afloat. In doing so, it makes a claim to the generosity of the audience, suggesting that the audience’s task lies in extending the life, the practice and the procedures it harbours, even when the ability to keep one’s head above the water remains uncertain.

For What it’s Worth, the third and final chapter of Book 1, offers the audience the means by which they could verify what is conveyed in the undertaking of this exegesis by both author and audience, through an allusion to another’s worth. The text argues that a value that might promise a resolute explication of a consistent ambivalence to each and every audience remains always out of reach, by the very fact that the emergence of a life astonishes all parties involved, and furthermore, always surprises itself. It contributes to the thesis’ ongoing argument, by theorising a conceptual equivalence that does not locate a life in either coherent or incoherent manifestations that would in turn allow a demand on its worth to be made and therefore include or exclude it from any such claim to a life. This chapter argues that there is no prototype of knowledge production, hence it is framed by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s conception of a life born on its back – not a life unable to valorise its existence, a life born on the back foot – but admitting to being unwilling to answer either way. Most notably, this chapter finds a correlation between the concept of kairos, or the will-to-invent, and the teaching methodologies framed by the early nineteenth century figure of Joseph Jacotot, who, via the philosopher Jacques Rancière’s book length examination of his life, solicits the audience’s and his own desire to interpret, without recourse to a concentration of knowledge. This chapter puts forward that ‘knowing’ is always a futile attempt to exploit the accents of appropriation and that the lacuna of ‘not-knowing’ remains an irreducible amplification of Corrigan’s ‘difficult coded knowledge’ that lets everything and everyone go out to sea.

A Clinic is an intermediary passage between Book 1 and Book 2, marked out in this publication by a sudden appearance of an elephant. It presents the two projects completed during the tenure of the PhD, The Swimming Pool Library and The Landscape Room through a series of loose documents comprised of plans, sections and images. It should be stated up front, that the purpose of this exegesis is not to superficially register every digression, or unravel each loosely connected analogy, or for that matter to frame each project by the number of references. The purpose of this PhD has always been to conceive of a space in which every digression may tumble over each other, distributing the audience in turn and allowing them to share in some of Raggat’s characteristics by confusing the biographical with the circumstances of A Clinic for the Exhausted’s composition.
The audience is encouraged to explore the two projects as they undertake the reading of Book 2, composing *The Pathology of Excess* and *An Emerald Sepulchre*.

**The Pathology of Excess** returns to the question of the opening line of this project, *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, in particular to the terms ‘Clinic’ and ‘Exhausted’ that act as a cornerstone for the PhD. It accomplishes the task of exploring how the two terms have come to name the venture thus far, and how, as they are deployed throughout the text, they can account for the vertiginous impulses of the PhD composition as a nebulous whole.

**An Emerald Sepulchre** is a conclusion of sorts, for it does not resist the urge to make further demands on the audience. It sets about reiterating the journey made by the audience up to this point, but it does so through the constellation of the discursive practice accomplished by *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. This conclusion assails the *mise-en-abyme* of the horizon, throwing the audience into a sea of songlike sickness. It is this chapter where the return voice becomes unmistakably that of a swimmer.

*But, my dear audience, before you embark let alone drown, this might be an opportune moment to offer a more formal invitation in the guise of a letter….*
An Invitation
You, the audience, will be forgiven if you were to only seek out every manner of possible relationship between this boat and that building. An audience that conceives of such a mirror, comes to find itself as all that separates one from the other, because, it is only you who are able to distinguish what respective position boat or building take on either side of the reflective surface. The presence of boat or building is not one of the mobility of an exchange, of each having made the acquaintance of the other. In the knowledge that they risk anonymity, both remain partially out of focus, to the centre of the periphery where no virtue of resemblances could pin-point the face of the other. However, the line of social capital shared between ship and building does mean that each could in turn perceive a purpose for the other. This is not a matter of composing a list that documents the evidence at hand, that Building Eight or ocean liner are merely idol-chatter, or worse are not incorporated into the concerns of this thesis. Building Eight and ocean liner do remain, at once between the lines, and, as a trace, an impression on the page, (not as text, but one may imagine as though a green carnation, picked by a long lost lover, is found to have once been pressed in a favourite tome) since without either the confounding glance of the text from one to the other could not be perceived.

By what instrument would it be possible to determine the sensations felt by every sailor who finds another sailor beautiful? The answer is presented with a certain uniqueness beyond the indignity of claiming an ocean liner and Building Eight as objects of their desire for one another. While neither boat nor building can shy away from this desire, each must recognise a confounding uncertainty as a condition of their desires extraordinary escape: a measure of the immeasurable. It is a question of approximate distances, a matter of duration determining in such a way, the certainty of a peripitus. ¹ It should be noted that the peripitus was a type of maritime log-book, a very early technique to navigate trade routes. The book recorded the coast through the textual description of its features and the approximate distance between them. Because the method relied on land features viewable from the position of the ship, it could not be used to navigate the open ocean without the risk of becoming disorientated. Subsequently, the peripitus is not a world view; it hugs the coast and does not venture much further. But, neither does it privilege this edge, for the objects on its list, their description and the duration between – that is the spatio-temporal experience of the passage of the ship – is determined by the first hand accounts of those on board. The peripitus is a measure, but one that lies beneath your feet, or in the embrace of a fellow shipmate.

Within what terms do the exaltations that premise the outline of a city, anticipate the affairs of an ocean going theatre? ² Sailors have always understood that the crossing of the line effects alchemical transformation, a rite of passage for those on board,

² It is the same belief that allows Cusk to exclaim to Kayerts on entering a jungle clearing that: “In a hundred years, there will be perhaps a town here. Quays, and warehouses, and barracks, and — and — billiard-rooms. Civilisation, my boy, and virtue — and all.” in Joseph Conrad, “An Outpost of Progress” in, The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’ and other stories, (London: Penguin, 2007), 240.
heralded by a feverish King in disguise. This ritual, the crossing of a line, understands that any crew can only be comprehended in the hysterical laughter which manifests itself around his name. And it is in his name that a declaration, once made, asserts the crews belief that a city can and will be built, foundations for which will be born in the hollow of the ocean. This answer should not be met with admonishment, and accusations that the author of this text pursues an easy evasiveness. On the contrary, laughter is what estimates the distance covered on a single tack; it submits a life to a single common event, this ships slow advance to the shore.

Who must offer an explanation if the audience remains incomprehensible to those on stage? Of course, the theatre, even an ocean going one, is a borrowed life, for it is distinguished only by those generous enough to take part; the audience, practically all of whom will matter, and those on stage, for whom it does matter. It might be suggested that in reading a theatre takes shape, not least in the steepness of its pews which force every member of the audience to look down upon what is acted out in the text. Looking up from the page, every actor is, subsequently a victim of its audience, whom, “stronger than alcohol,” is the reason for one too many improvisations and one too many borrowed scenes, “carrying away both rudder and anchor.” As written in a previous letter, a drunken man stumbles on, but a “dreaming drowned man sometimes goes down.” This text “dead-drunk and sodden with water,” discloses an I, will admit into the theatre those with a particular symptom, an accursed numbness of the legs…

3 The ‘crossing of the line’, is a ceremony held on a ship to mark the crossing of the equator. Various versions of the ceremony are present in maritime history, though its undertaking continues, particularly in the Navy’s of the world. The general procession of events begins the night before the ceremony, when a mysterious figure comes aboard and who declares himself an emissary of Neptune. He reads a proclamation warning everyone on board that they are entering Neptune’s domain. The following morning, those for whom the journey marks their first equator crossing, are collected and brought forth to stand in front of a court. The court is made up of various senior members of the ship, with the Captain dressed up as Neptune, and the remaining staff as various familiars such as mermaids. Each would-be-victim is charged with the crime of entering Neptune’s domain without permission. Humiliating punishments are dished out to the offending parties, who, on completion of said humiliation are given a certificate signed by Neptune that gives them leave to enter his ocean domain.

4 Neptune and Apollo, punished for rebelling against Zeus were ordered to serve as mortals for a year. Disguised as builders they were given the commission to construct the walls of Troy.

5 “though if ever there was a continual theatre in the world, playing by night and by day, and without intervals between the acts, a man-of-war is that theatre, and her planks are the boards indeed.” Herman Melville, White Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War, (London: John Lehmann, 1952), 97.

6 Melville recounts after having witnessed a theatre production aboard the man-of-war, the Neversink, the emotive spectacle of the, “officers mingling with the people in applauding a mere seaman like Jack Chase”, one of the characters of Melville’s journey. He felt that the suspension of the normal hierarchal structure during the plays performance may continue after the event, but was witness, the following day, to a return of the uncompromising attitudes of the officers, having “shipped their quarter-deck faces again,” a term “expressive of the facility with which a sea-officer falls back upon all the severity of his dignity, after a temporary suspension of it.” Melville, White Jacket, 101.

7 “carrying away both rudder and anchor”, “Stronger than alcohol, vaster than music”, “dreaming drowned man sometimes goes down” and “I whose wreck, dead-drunk and sodden with water” whole and in parts are derived from Rimbaud’s poem, The Drunken Boat. The poem is narrated by a boat that, lost to the sea, recounts, or thinks out loud to the reader, the slow and evocative passage of its drowning. Barthes positions Rimbaud’s drunken boat as the opposite of Jules Verne’s ship as house or enclosure. Barthes writes of Rimbaud’s boat: “the boat which says ‘I’ and, freed from its concavity, can make man proceed from a psyche-analysis of the cave to a genuine poetics of exploration.” Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. A. Lavers (London: Vintage, 2000), 67. For Rimbaud’s poem see, Arthur Rimbaud, A Season in Hell and The Drunken Boat, trans. Louise Varèse, (New York: New Directions, 1961)
An Epidemiology of Illness
Plato's Imaginaire Or Socrates' Pharmacy?

In the *Phaedrus*\(^1\), the philosopher Socrates compares writing to a *pharmakon*. He believed that writing undermined speech by allowing the speaker to imitate control over a discourse. The term *pharmakon* is here used by Socrates to mean poison, but it can paradoxically also mean remedy. Socrates supports his thesis by recounting the myth of King Thamus who is presented with the gift of writing by Theuth. Theuth offers writing as a cure for his people's forgetting, but Thamus accuses him of offering a poison for the memory. Theuth is another name for the Egyptian god Thoth.

Thoth is the son of Ammon-Ra, the Egyptian sun-god that remains hidden from view by the sheer brilliance of his name. Thoth is Ra's scribe, and so stands near him on his solar-ship. But he also executes his will, for he is what puts Ra's speech into words. He is consequently the origin of the plurality of languages. Thoth as god of writing is also the god of death, for he is required to keep account of the dead. He not only records the weight of their souls but also counts out the life that has been led by the soul. As Ra's messenger, he is a substitute for Ra's absence. The moon is often ascribed to him, as the place holder and reminder of the luminance of the sun. Subsequently his position is marked with a certain ambivalence that on more than one occasion causes him to go against his father. In the course of one such fortuitous moment Thoth is able to give more time to Nout so that she may give birth, having previously been denied this by Ra. But his role as the place holder of Ra means that he is often also involved in plots to usurp the throne. Thus Thoth helps Nout's son Osiris to the throne, only to conspire with Seth, Osiris' brother to put him on the throne. In the ensuing trickery Osiris is dismembered, but is sewn together by Thoth and returned back to power, but only when Thoth turns against Seth. Thoth is at once a god, doctor, pharmacist and magician, but his claims on trickery and contingent allegiances make him also the inventor of games of chance. As Jacques Derrida writes:

Thoth extends or opposes by repeating or replacing. By the same token, the figure of Thoth takes shape and takes its shape from the very thing it resists and substitutes for. But it thereby opposes itself, passes into its other [he is] the god of non identity [...] He is thus the father's other, the father and the subversive movement of replacement. The god of writing is thus at once his father, his son, and himself. He cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences. Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither a king nor a jack, but rather a sort of joker, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play.\(^2\)

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Thoth’s recording of Ra’s conduct may be thought of as the origin for the periplus, for Thoth makes a map from every word, a map which paradoxically becomes the means for a successor to claim Ra’s role.

As recounted by Plato in the Phaedrus, Socrates’ diatribe on the poison of writing begins with him asking his fellow protagonist to reveal what is beneath his coat. This character, named Phaedo, having not learnt his speech by heart is hiding a text written for him by another named Lysias. Phaedo is asked by Plato to turn his coat out. A turn coat is someone who hides his allegiance by concealing telling signs or badges. The pharmakon could be construed as a sleight-of-hand that attempts to turn Phaedo’s cloak into a forlorn uniform for a ‘battalion of hope’ drawing a comparison of signatures and handwriting, that, if found to be a forgery, could rather tell against someone.

Socrates is condemned to death for speaking out against the Athenian gods. In the last passages of the Phaedrus, Socrates is given a deadly tincture of hemlock to drink. He is instructed to walk around till his legs get heavy. When they feel so, Socrates returns to his bed where, on having his feet pinched, he admits to no longer feeling his legs. He dies soon after. Socrates death is an example of the inconclusive meaning of the word pharmakon, for the word, contrary to Socrates condemning of writing, does not distinguish between good and bad, as it finds a meaning as both poison and cure. Socrates is forced to take the poison, but only because the remedy he speaks of for the failings of the Athenian state is itself seen as a poison by the authorities who identify what Socrates has said with the same mechanical properties of a poison that damages the body – he is charged with corrupting the youth of Athens. Socrates understands the means of his death, not as a poison – though it will certainly kill him – but as a cure, or respite for the soul as it continues into the afterlife. Socrates’ death reveals how a pharmakon is what is brought to bear against a pharmakon, and in all cases, allegiances are never confirmed: the pharmakon, like Phaedo’s concealing cloak, merely “turns its surface over.”

Socrates is a healthy man who welcomes death. But in the pursuit of both sides of Phaedo’s cloak, we must observe the metamorphosis of Socrates’ pharmakon. The ‘other side’, is not what is exposed in the actual gesture of the cloak being turned, because the cloak always re-establishes the same side when presented to the observer; the pharmakon always slips away in broad daylight. It always presents a side to be seen, and a side to be obscured, but it does not enable both sides to be concurrently hidden or exposed. This is not to suggest that if Phaedo consecutively expose the coat’s interior and exterior over and over again, that he would reveal the same side previously observed only moments before. The pharmakon makes an audience aware that the cloak’s observed side which perfectly imitates the side previously seen and now hidden, is not the same; that is, the same is the same only in so far as what separates one from the other. The side that would relieve the observer of their failure to know the side presented to them in the recourse to past knowledge of a side understands this newly observed side, not on its own terms,

4 Stendhal, in his autobiography, recounts how as a child he forged a letter and its authorizing signature, inviting his Grandfather to enroll his son into the battalion of Hope. The Battalion of Hope, was a paramilitary organization that taught young boys to bear arms, installing in them the political aims of the French revolution that marked the end of the Eighteenth Century in France. Stendhal’s poor attempt is discovered, and he is forced to confront his dead mother’s sister-come-fathers-lover, Séraphie, whom he has no qualms in letting us know his hatred of, and Monsieur Torté, the copy clerk installed in the family home whom uncovered Stendhal’s forgery. There is a brief exchange, during which Monsieur Torté is reproached by Stendhal for speaking to him in a manner reserved for family. On initially being found out Stendhal observes: “I was in the moral situation of a young deserter about to be shot. The act of committing a forgery rather told against me.” Stendhal, The Life of Henry Brulard, trans. J. Sturrock, (New York:New York Review Books, 2002), 131-135.
5 Phaedo 115a-118a, see also Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 93-128.
6 Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 93.
but through a curative regression. The side previously observed and now thought of as a precedent can only offer itself in comparison to the observed side, in such a way that they are conceptually placed side by side, edge to edge for assessment. But, paradoxically, a side still escapes the other side of this cloak patched together from so many sides: a side still remains unobserved. To the observer Phaedo’s cloak is irreversible, because a side will always remain hidden.

Socrates owes his life to the pharmakon but his death is not a formula; the pharmakon is not simply a choice between the many combinations of symptoms that distinguish a healthy or sick man relative to their acceptance or perseverance in the face of death. While Socrates’ corporeal state relents and gives way, any exception to choosing between life and death necessitates acknowledging the seeming irrationality that allows a cure and a remedy to pass through each other. The pharmakon is donned as a disguise so that its wearer can convince themselves that they have succeeded in passing the pharmakon off unnoticed. It must operate as a palimpsest, a double system of language; below and above, under and over, erasing and inscribing, so that no dispute could resolve which side is the side, and therefore the side that is commensurable with the arguments in support of or in opposition to it. An increment is the scale by which a text is liberated from another and, that which describes how voices escape from the noise of the world. The pharmakon is the transformation of this common measure. The pharmakon always offers a cure and a remedy, and a precedent for each in turn; the palimpsest is composed of an exposed and obscured language and for each a comparison. If only for the reason of the irreversibility of the pharmakon, speech and writing must also be placed side by side so that every edge - an edge only in name, as every edge constitutes another side - touches. That is, the pharmakon gathers every side that has come before as evidence; every facet of Phaedo’s cloak is extended and stretched out, ideologically composing a cloak par excellence. It is a surface, like a sheet of beaten gold, of inimitable thinness allowing one to see straight through to the other side, and yet still remain hidden. It is as though it had two authors, who under a different light come to the conclusion that they occupy the one surface and the other author is merely their reflection. Of course each is certain of their ascendancy beyond mere reflection, and this could be construed as though both authors are divided. But each author in silent solidarity with the other embraces the pharmakon’s gestures in the most intimate of betrayals, exposing every side to the other.

Socrates is not a pharmakon: he is only served one. If a healthy man is of no use, then an ill man can also offer no resolution. What of an ill man who believes himself to be healthy, or a healthy man who believes himself to be ill? By both measures the hypochondriac is found to be the closest figure, more so than the knowing sick man, or the knowing dying man, or the dead man, because a hypochondriac, by their conceptual efficacy, is always a man dying in either case. This conclusion anticipates the evidence that an ill man and a healthy man, who convince themselves otherwise, find themselves sharing a language. Of course each is certain of their ascendancy beyond mere reflection, and this could be construed as though both authors are divided. But each author in silent solidarity with the other embraces the pharmakon’s gestures in the most intimate of betrayals, exposing every side to the other.

7 Arthur Kleinman, a medical anthropologist, differentiates disease as physical malfunction from illness, which “includes secondary personal and social responses to a primary malfunctioning (disease) in the individual’s physiological or physiological status (or both). Illness involves processes of attention, perception, affective response, cognition, and valuation directed at the disease and its manifestation (i.e., symptoms, role impairment, etc.). But also included in the idea of illness are communication and interpersonal interaction, particularly within the context of the family and social network. Viewed from this perspective, illness is the shaping of disease into behavior and experience.” Arthur Kleinman as quoted in, Mary Burgan, Illness, Gender and Writing: The Case of Katherine Mansfield, (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), xiv.
of the ill man and the well man, marked by the appearance of the illness, argued as real or imaginary in either case, borrow all of their resources from their illness. Their illness is invariably not a fiction: the hypochondriac leads an exemplary life, because his is a life that goes by no other name than his illness.

The hypochondriac presents life as a perpetual sickroom. There can be no stepping out of this room because any outside must be observed on the hypochondriac’s terms. That is, every turning out merely displays another complication, is proof of another malady, incrementally different than the last, but always the same is confirmed: hypochondria. There is nothing outside or beyond the cloak of illness that could be observed without it becoming, inevitably, lost to the shadows of this space. But, do not think that the hypochondriac is an innocent victim – such a life requires cunning to negotiate between the absolutes of health and illness, without ever being caught up in either. The hypochondriac is always reticent to explain their illness, but when offered to comment, the surplus of their domain, allows the hypochondriac to make of incessant medical intervention and curative powers their recourse to a legitimate illness. The hypochondriac undertakes the epidemiology of illness itself, of the rarefied sensations that constitute the affective walls of the sickroom as a life.

Molière's pharmakon: Le Malade imaginaire

Let us scrutinise the role of Argan the hypochondriac in the play by Molière, Le Malade imaginaire (1673). It has been suggested that Molière’s play was a response to a script by Boulanger de Chalissay, entitled, Élomire Hypochondre, ou les Médecins Vengés, that had caricatured him as a hypochondriac, Élomire’s name being an anagram of ‘Molière’. The play presents Élomire as a poet and comedian who believes that he suffers from every disease and avarice, and that they are the result of his ridiculing of the medical profession in his plays. Every doctor he visits, in the disguise of a Turk or Spaniard so that he may not be known, though his imitation of them is such that the doctors see through his ruse, seek their revenge by offering differing opinions, so that Élomire has no hope of finding an agreed, and therefore shared opinion which he could follow, or else the doctors declare him completely incurable. The final consultation concludes by the doctor committing every disease and trouble imaginable on to him, so that he falls to his knees and begs pardon from the doctors for ever having made fun of them. Pardoned by the doctors, a celebration ensues, that leads Élomire, still in disguise, to be mistaken by a wandering policeman for a Spanish assassin. He is forced to escape through an open window, followed by howls of laughter from the amused profession. The frontispiece to the play shows Molière miming the posture, gestures and expressions of his Italian teacher Tiberior Fiorilli, who had been Molière’s master in the art of Scaramouche, the roguish clown of the Italian commedia dell’arte. Specific moments of the play further reveal its target as Molière. Élomire, is charged with marrying his own daughter, a reference to Molière’s marriage at age 42 to Armande Béjart, aged 18, who claimed to be the sister of his former mistress Madeline Béjart, though was suspiciously thought to

8 I have referred to the script of Le Malade imaginaire as provided by: Molière, The Misathrope and other plays, trans. J. Wood, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1959). All quotations drawn from this script will refer to the act and scenes within which it takes place, and not the page number so as to allow, as the case maybe for different translations of the play to be referred to.
11 His mistress was notorious, both for her acting on stage, and for her amorous actions off stage with members of the elite, and as such would make an appearance in the colourful and tawdry collection of biographies the Historiettes of Gédéon Tallemant de Réaux a contemporary of Molière. As Howarth points out, there was some confusion surrounding Armande Béjart’s relation to Madeline Béjart due to the apparent difference in age between them which led to speculation that they
be Béjart and Molière’s daughter; and Éléonore’s cough\textsuperscript{12} a reference to the tuberculosis Molière suffered from, and which was the source in 1667 of rumors of Molière's death when he was forced to close his theatre due to the severity of his illnesses.

*Le Malade imaginaire* was to be the last play Molière would write and play in, and would also frame the last moments of his public life.\textsuperscript{13} As the principle playwright, producer and director of *Le Malade imaginaire*, Molière planned to occupy the role of Argan, the perpetually ill protagonist. But, during the plays fourth performance, Molière was taken ill on stage, and would later succumb to his illness.\textsuperscript{14} Commenting on the perceived focus on Molière’s death after the fourth performance, Barnwell states that such texts “have tended to obscure its [*Le Malade imaginaire*] nature and conception as a divertissement and to encourage the most somber and bitter interpretations, as though the playwright foresaw exactly what his fate would be and as though its hero were, like himself, really a sick and perhaps dying man.”\textsuperscript{15}

My intention in this exegesis is not to take sides. Whether Molière knew or did not know does not interest me. Arguments for or against Molière’s knowing or not knowing are in turn, the language of prophets, because both arguments argue for a point of view that can only ever be that of Molière. Any evidence for or against the relationship between Molière’s illness and his illness on stage must remain circumstantial. Accusations that I have interfered with the truth for my own argument, and that I have not been rigorous in my scholarship, would fail to see that my interest lies not in writing after Molière, but in how within the conceptual framework of his writing and theatrical practice his illness can function and what, if any, allegiances can then be made to my own writing practice. I do not intend to become, nor do I wish myself to appear here as a ‘Molière scholar’. My intention is to speculate that, every writer, philosopher or artist is infected by, and suffers the same ailment, whatever that may be at the time, as Molière. Furthermore it is my contention that an audience to what is produced partakes of the same epistemological sickness, and that this is the cause of the audience who take to the stage. My argument is clarified in the conceptual space forged in the *théâtre*, the seating on stage made available for an exclusively male breed of noblemen, an audience who themselves wished to be seen by the audience, and shared the same visual promenade as the actors.\textsuperscript{16} “This does not exclude the audience who do not

\textsuperscript{12} Scott, Molière: A Theatrical Life, 219.

\textsuperscript{13} *Le Malade imaginaire* was written during a period in which professional competition had taken its toll on Molière’s career at the Royal court. His position, in comparison with earlier years, had been drastically exhausted by 1672, when Louis XIV’s new favourette Jean-Baptiste de Lulli, who had also been a collaborator with Molière writing music for several of his plays, was given the opera privilege that initially forbade plays with music being produced without permission of Lulli, but would eventually also come to restrict the number of singers and musicians that could perform in rival theatres, including Molière’s own, Scott, Molière: A Theatrical Life, 234-237. After Molière’s death in 1673, Lulli as director of the Académie Royale de Musique, would dispose Molière’s Troupe du roy from the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. The theatre had initially been renamed by the King for Molière’s use following the demolition of the Salle du Petit-Bo. Nowarth, Molière: A playwright and his audience, 9-20 note 40. For an account of the reaction following Molière’s death, and to his question of his burial to the archbishop, had made sure the archbishop knew of his wishes. Molière would, subsequently be buried at night, without pomp and ceremony so as to avoid a scandal. Scott, Molière: A Theatrical Life, 250-259. It was Molière’s teacher, the actor Tiberior Fiorilli who was said to have provoked Louis’ interest in the theatre. An anecdote tells of Fiorilli picking up a crying Dauphin so as to amuse and distract him to such an extent that the Dauphin was reduced to laughter, which caused the child to wet the actor’s suit. (Gundolf, Molière and the commedia dell’arte, 25) *Le Malade imaginaire* would not, however, have an opportunity to play at court till after Molière’s death. H. T. Barnwell, *Le Malade imaginaire*, (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1982), 10.

\textsuperscript{14} For the different accounts and details pertaining to Molière’s last performance refer to: Henry Phillips, “Molière: The Empty Chair” in ed. Marin Crawley, *Dying Words: The last moments of Writers and Philosophers*, (Amsterdam:Rodopi, 2000), 23-38. For an account of the reaction following Molière’s death, and to his subsequent inclusion into the myth of French nationhood see: Scott, Molière: A Theatrical Life, 254-264.

\textsuperscript{15} Barnwell, *Le Malade imaginaire*, 10.

\textsuperscript{16} Herzel offers as a description of these men and how their presence was treated by Molière: “the presence on the stage of spectators, seated in straw-bottomed
wish to appear on stage. Athena Vrettos relates the story of a particular performance of *La dame aux camélias*, with the actress Sarah Bernhardt in the lead role:

In the fifth act, at the most dramatic moment, when the entire audience was so silent that you could have heard a pin drop, Margueritte Gautier, dying of consumption, coughed. Immediately an epidemic of coughing filled the auditorium, and during several minutes, no one was able to hear the words of the great actress.\(^\text{17}\)

During the nineteenth century medical discourse included the susceptibility of the reader to be affected by what they were reading. It was argued that women as the gender cursed with the more sympathetic traits, were particularly vulnerable to the pathology of the visual and textual spectacles they were privy to. The profession also argued that if texts could impinge on the reader’s health, then certainly other texts, more appropriate to the moral and bodily make up of the community, might ascertain the well-being of its audience.\(^\text{18}\) The arousal of an illness by the exposure to the symptoms through visual or textual spectacles was summarized by Sir James Paget in 1875 as neuromimesis, or nervous mimicry.\(^\text{19}\) This belief would also be applied to the sociology of the crowd that emerged during the nineteenth century. The adjacency of the different classes, on top of the growing textual and visual spectacles on offer meant that a greater number of individuals were at risk, and that exposure could become epidemic if individuals did not curate what they saw and read so as to preserve the integrity of their moral and bodily selves.\(^\text{20}\) However, it was not unusual for carnivals, and their ensuing urban spectacle to celebrate the end of extended periods of disease such as the plague and for them to subsequently become fixed events on the social calendar.\(^\text{21}\)

Thus, any further comment on *Le Malade Imaginaire* must not only acknowledge, but also have permission to be deformed by the play’s notoriety.

**Argan’s imaginaire**

An audience of *Le Malade imaginaire* finds that at the end of the play, the hypochondria Argan agrees to allow his daughter Angélique to marry her lover Cléante, but only if Cléante becomes a doctor. From the very beginning of the play Argan has sought to marry Angélique to a doctor with the clear aim of providing a ready excuse for his maladies. Argan’s brother-in-law Béralde proposes that it would be

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\(^{19}\) Vrettos, *Somantic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture*, 83.


\(^{21}\) Christensen in a footnote points out the ‘festoon di ringraziamenti’ that celebrated as annual recurrences the end of plagues. Christensen, *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: Our Feverish Contact*, 296, note 38. He also points forth Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Masque of the Red Death’ as an example of a literary Dance of Death: “The thousand guests of the Prince who live in barricaded isolation from the plague raging outside the castle believe that their wild dancing is exorcising the plague. Ironically the dance instead mimics the spread of the contagion which is present amongst them, until ‘one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall.” Christensen, *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: Our Feverish Contact*, 15.
Molière’s comedy appears at first, as a macabre medical pantomime interspersed with musical musings. But it must also be understood that throughout *Le Malade imaginaire* the double is being played. Argan is both ill and not ill, at once imitating illness, and yet so wholly believes in the cures and remedies that sustain him that it is only his health that could send him to his death. As such his illness is construed as an “illness of the imagination.” Argan is an *imaginaire*, someone whose “behaviour is governed not by empirical reactions of the real world in which they live, but by the preconceived notions, the intellectual abstractions, which they constantly substitute for the direct experience of reality.” This makes Argan an apt target for those who wish to take advantage of him; to collect money from him such as Béline, (the step mother to Argan’s two daughters), the apothecary Monsieur Fleurant and the physician Monsieur Purgon; to reveal his own duplicity, (as when his opinionated maidservant Toinette impersonates a doctor); or to reveal the intentions of those who take advantage of him, (such as when he plays dead so as to reveal Béline and Angélique’s true feelings for him). So concerned by and obsessed with his illness that confines him to his sick-room, an opulent Parisian bourgeois cell, that it determines the extent of the directionless space he finds himself confined to: “Mr Purgon said I was to walk up and down my bedroom twelve times each way on a morning but I forgot to ask him whether he meant crosswise or lengthwise...” His obsession is further confirmed through the less and less convincing nature of the impersonations that he allows himself to be coerced by. When no amount of persuasive argument will change his mind on his health, his wife’s deceit or his daughter’s marriage, Béralde and Toinette have no other way but to resort to using Argan’s obsessions against him. Béralde tries his best to convince Argan of his superstitions and goes so far as to take the extreme opinion that he should let nature takes its course and he will be cured. This may or may not be Béralde’s true opinion as his intention from the very beginning of the play is to convince Argan to allow Angélique to marry Cléante and not to treat Argan’s ideas on medicine and doctors. Whatever contradictions are

22 Barnwell informs us this was the Carnival held three weeks immediately preceding Lent. Barnwell, *Le Malade imaginaire*, 9. Howarth’s remarks on the setting of Molière’s play recall that: “previous writers of comedy had observed the convention, dating from the theatre of the ancient world, according to which the social life of the characters portrayed, their arguing, bargaining, quarrelling and love-making, had all been carried on in the open street.” Molière had kept to this convention for much of his early plays, with some exceptions, but had largely sought to move the characters indoors so that may acquire a certain social identity affable to the audience of the time. Refer to Howarth, Molière: A playwright and his audience, 123.

23 Howarth quoting J. M. Pelous in, Howarth, Molière: A playwright and his audience, 91.


26 Barnwell, *Le Malade imaginair*, 34.

27 For a detailed scene-by-scene analysis of the role Béralde as raisonneur plays in *Le Malade imaginaire*, refer to Chapter 6 of Michael Hawcroft, Molière: Reasoning with Fools, (London: Oxford University Press, 2007). It is also worth noting that while Béralde offers an extreme position to that of Argan’s own, this opinion should not be construed as Molière’s own. As Hawcroft asserts: “As far as Molière himself is concerned, we know that one of his best friends was a doctor, Maxvollain, and that he petitioned the king on his behalf; we also know that he followed his doctor’s advice for treating his tuberculosis the fresh air of Arcueil, where Molière rented a house, and a milk diet. But we have no statements made by Molière giving his general views on doctors or medicine.” Hawcroft, Molière: Reasoning with Fools, 191-192. Scott also takes this position, noting that Molière had himself undergone bleeding, was good friends with two other doctors beside Maxvollain, and Molière’s writing was drawn to doctors because of the ease by which they could be ridiculed: they spoke a mysterious jargon, wore funny clothing, rode mules, they were not over all very effective in curing people, and that only 110 of them were present in Paris. Virginia Scott, Molière: A Theatrical Life, 241-242. Gundolf points out that...
apparent — in the image of a doctor who looks exactly like Toinette, (who only moment ago had left the room) and where now a doctor stands where she had once stood— they are not only ignored by Argan, but are actively avoided through the logic of the imaginaire: sudden changes in dialogue when he foresees he will not get his own way.28 These swift and multiple movements, dispersed throughout the scenes of the play, have a powerful cumulative effect that culminates in the mock ceremony that accepts Argan into the medical profession, and his delusions into the street.

**Molière’s imaginaire or Argan’s Pharmacy?**

Molière, severely suffering from tuberculosis of the lung, in playing the role of Argan doubles the dichotomies that establish the play’s themes of appearance and reality: he is an ill actor playing at being a healthy man who is playing at being ill. Throughout the play Molière must be as convinced as Argan of his illness. But Argan’s illness is sustained by his reliance on the medical profession that discourages Argan from finding a sustained health. Molière imitates Argan so well that it is an extraordinary moment when Argan invites Molière to die a painful death for his blasphemous portrayal of the medical profession. For these “roles-within-a-role,”29 Molière must play two roles, that of the ill actor on stage playing well and that of Argan the healthy bourgeois gentleman playing at being ill, and a third, as the playwright who is condemned by his own words. In turn, he must use three different voices: as ill actor, as hypochondriac Argan, and as the playwright who provides the voices and commentary on all the actors on stage and in his own audience. Subsequently, he not only speaks to the audience in his role as playwright, but his voice, suggestive of a contagion, moves quickly through the various characters he gives voice to. As Allan Conrad Christensen points out, a reader is not a passive vessel for the text to inhabit, that they may themselves come to “contaminate the text,”30 the reader surprisingly infecting the authors voice, and in the case of the actors in their performance and in the case of Molière as Argan, via a ventriloquist act that displaces his voice, the playwright’s voice, for his own.

Language is invested with mythic or occult powers throughout the play.31 From Argan’s willingness to pay Fleurant’s bill due to the politeness of the language he uses to describe the treatments in the opening act; an enema, described as an “emollient to lubricate, loosen and stimulate the gentlemen’s bowels”32 to Purgon’s curse on Argan when his assigned treatment is indefinitely delayed. Purgon goes on to advise Argan that he will be incurable in four days, during which he will pass through a genealogy of diseases up to his death: from bradypepsia to dyspepsia to aeppsy to lientery to dysentery to dropsy. Physicians have the power over life, death, and purse through their use of language. Instructions are given to Argan and further dominate his every thought; from the number of steps he must take and in which direction, to the number of salt grains on a meal, to the frequency of his bowel movements, nothing escapes his rapt attention, everything is measured or accounted for. But the doctors also find that they must conduct themselves in a particular manner, under the direction and duress of the medical profession which they all follow without fault. The soon to be doctor, Thomas, Argan’s candidate to marry Angélique, is also

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29 The plurality of the roles Molière undertakes is suggested by Albert Bernel whom notes the similarity, in some cases complete, of a number of Toinettes lines to that of Scapin’s in Molière’s *Les Fauxbourgeois de Scapin*, while Argan’s responses also aligns with that of Argante from this earlier play. Bernel suggests that the origin of the similarity between the names of Argan and Argante, is found in the actions of the characters who are antagonistic towards family and servants. This is emphasized by the term ‘aigre’ or ‘contest’ that invariably appears in their name. See, Albert Bernel, *Molière’s Theatrical Bounty,* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), note 1, 182.
30 Christensen, Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: Our Feverish Contact, 201.
32 *Molière, Le Malade imaginaire*, Act 1, Scene 1
obedient to his father, Dr. Daifoirius, from whom he asks permission for every conversation. However, this position of authority is constantly under threat. Toinette, instead of rebelling against Argan’s self-motivated choice of Thomas, usurps his role as head of the household. She will also assume the authority of the doctors when she successfully imitates one, including the use of their privileged language. These incidents continually reinforce throughout the play the authority of the theatre. Angélique and Cléante met at a play, and are able to declare their love for one another via a small opera; Béralde, Argan and Toinette perform a small scene so as to reveal Béline and Angélique’s true feelings and even dissection become as a spectacle to witness, as Thomas invites Angélique to observe on.

Every action opens onto another which replicates the discourse of Molière’s own sickroom. The sickroom is where Argan’s illness is forged on stage, but it is also from where Argan threatens to evoke in the members of the audience the same legitimacy as his hypochondriac. Reminders of the illusory presence of the sickroom are presented in a series of theatrical and musical interludes that are interspersed with the action of the play. Each interlude is conceived as a performance-within-a-play, which in a variety of ways is used to highlight Argan’s sick-room as a space harmonious with the themes of appearance and reality envisaged by his illness, themes which are confirmed throughout the play’s length. The first is the prologue that places Molière’s praise of the King’s military success as an eclogue that tells of a singing competition between two shepherds to decide who can compose the best story of Louis’ victory. Both shepherds are crowned winners, and given a crown of flowers and thorns, a gesture that is taken up again in Argan’s own conferring ceremony at the end of the play. The competition ends by offering Le Malade imaginaire as a play-within-the-prologue. Argan’s world is subsequently caught up in the conventions of the rural fête in which this competition takes place. Argan does not know this at the beginning, too focused on his bills and bowels he is unaware of his presence in the middle of the fête. He becomes more and more attuned to the conventions of the competition as he masters the arrangement of the fête’s theatrical instruments. Argan’s mastery of the fête’s conventions is revealed in the finale that admits the carnival in the street onto the stage.

Act I ends with Toinette suggesting her lover Polichinelle as a possible messenger to deliver to Cléante knowledge of Angélique’s impending engagement. The stage is cleared, and Polichinelle appears, serenading an unseen lover all the while battling violin music that keeps interrupting him from an unknown source. As the lover of Toinette, Polichinelle is connected with the spoken world of Le Malade imaginaire, but he communicates through the language of the prologue’s pastoral scene. Punchinello’s advances are ridiculed as ‘cunning’ and ‘false’, meant to deceive his lover, who is warned that only someone who is mad trusts the word of a lover. For Punchinello, his advances are a symptom of the lovesickness he suffers from. His lovesickness is a variation of Argan’s hypochondria. Furthermore, the violins, which are considered a very real threat by Punchinello, appear to him as if there was another unseen character on stage ridiculing him. This character is constituted in the musicality of its voice, and through Punchinello’s angry conversation with them – first through shouting at it, and then through the playing of the lute he has been using to accompany his serenade. Eventually the Nightwatch come upon him, and arrest him for his impertinence, continuing the violins’ own musical interrogation through their chorus. Punchinello, unable to pay the bribe money necessary for him to be released, is instead forced to undergo the humiliating punishment of having his nose tweaked and his backside

33 Hubert, Molière & The Comedy of Intellect, 267.
struck by each Nightwatch. Punchinello, counting time with each tweak and stroke, in effect takes up
the musical language of those who have thus far condemned him. He finally offers up the payment for
his punishment to stop and is released. Like all patients, unable to bear the unnecessary treatments they
must undergo, he is still forced to part with his money.

In addition to the play and its interludes, there is an impromptu chorus between Cléante and
Angélique. Cléante, in the guise of music teacher is asked alongside Angélique to entertain the guests
of Argan. Cléante proposes a short pastoral opera that evidently presents, via the story of a shepherd
recounting his love for a shepherdess, an opportunity for Cléante and Angélique to declare their love
for each other. The singing of the initial pastoral scene at the beginning of Le Malade imaginaire enters
into the spoken language of the play, and going further still, offers a brief window by which the initial
pastoral scene may be played out in Argan’s cell. Cléante prepares Argan for what he is about to hear,
describing the impending duet as a “rhythrical prose or a sort of free verse such as their feelings and the
occasion might suggest to two people conversing together and speaking impromptu.” But the play is
interrupted by Argan who notices that the sheets of music before Cléante and Angélique have no words
on them, and then suspects the reality of this so-called impromptu performance.

Act 2 ends with a troop of male Gypsies, who appear dressed in costume as female Moors, being invited
on stage to entertain and calm Argan with songs that praise young love, instructing Argan, as though they
offered a prescription or musical cure for him from Mr. Purgon. The scene is important, for it is at this
moment that the pastoral scene that initially announced Le Malade imaginaire bursts through to inhabit
Argan’s closed world. The extent of the imitation present in the interlude – males playing females, Gypsies
playing Moors, Moors singing in French and dancing in French style, alongside the overall presence of
actors doing so, is still not enough to cure Argan, though it does appear at least to have the same effect as
a laxative, forcing Argan off stage in such a hurry he forgets his walking stick. The extreme measures by
which it will be necessary to confront Argan will lead to the absurd conferring ceremony at the end of the
play. Béralde advocates for the ceremony, in part because each of the players may also take part, as a form of
divertissement for each other, and because it is the time of the Carnival. Moments before the stage is fl ooded
by the carnival performers Béralde asserts: “We can each take a part and so give the play for each others
amusement. After all, it’s carnival time.” Molière’s symptoms take an unforeseen turn as Argan’s space of
captivity is transformed into a theatre and the extent of the stage is swelled by the carnival.

The audience at the beginning of the play is not aware of how Molière intends to compose the play.
Like Argan they are forced to follow the different rhythms of spoken word and operatic voice, across
very different imitations, whereby each note, and each scene, postulates some form of deception. The

35 For an account of the different linguistic registers – musical and spoken word - and their employment by Molière within La Malade imaginaire, refer Nicholas
36 Molière, Le Malade imaginaire, Act 3, Scene 5.
38 Molière, Le Malade imaginaire, Act 3, Scene 14.
39 The spatial and temporal shift from a romantic rural mythological scene fl iled with the sounds of elated singing to that of a bourgeois interior that echoes with
the description of bodily af fl ections and cures; a street scene with a fi gure absurdly duelling with a musical enemy and then a confrontations between Cléante as music
teacher and Argan; and the dramatic shift from spoken to operatic language, has often caused Le Malade imaginaire to be understood as an incoherent performance.
Contemporary performances of the play often omit the pastoral prologue and the Polichinelle performance, while translations of the play, if not wholly omitting these
passages, only provide a brief synopsis, or downplay their relevance. For my own part, it took an extensive search to fl nd a copy of Molière’s play that included the
actions and words to these interludes. Most copies omitted them, others labeled their appearance or at best provided a few sentences summarizing what should take
place. However, as Moore has concluded, it is clear that far from being incoherent, an audience in seventeenth century France would have been perfectly capable of
following the arrangement and reconciling each part with the play as a whole. This should not and does not exclude a contemporary audience from understanding

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final reunification of Angélique with Cléante, and Argan’s illness with the medical profession, is not a universal conclusion to the gestures apparent in the play. Béralde and Toinette get their way, but then, this is all they set out to do. At no point was the purpose of the play to reveal to Argan his malady. Argan is never able to master his illness; he is only ever caught up in it. That is, his illness is not enough to sustain every scene. Certainly, it is able to function in them, so that in each his illness is taken up using a different approach. His illness is what is dispersed across both the space and time of Le Malade imaginaire; it is what is continually encountered. We may believe that the repetition of his symptoms amount to, or at least establish a singular illness that is called hypochondria. It is true that his illness is what functions between the musical parentheses, but is also what puts in place these interludes. While the cérémonie des médecins may share some of its attributes with the opening prologue, this serves only to show that there is no final unity that could characterise Argan’s malady. Argan is able to deploy his illness so that he may validate his aberrant behaviour, to himself and everyone else; but there is nothing that would expose Argan. At best the cérémonie des médecins offers a glimpse of this madness, but this is quickly obscured by Béralde who attributes the reason for the performance not to Argan, but to the carnival that catches everyone, including the audience, unaware. The audience is coerced into displacing a reason for Argan’s illness, and the interruption produced by the carnival continues this displacement. Beralde’s comment establishes the necessary disruption which permits the audience to spontaneously derive the mechanisms by which a conclusion can be delayed. As Cléante quickly suggests, defending against Argan’s accusation that Angélique and himself have performed their song without words and so that there love for one another “they’ve recently invented a method of writing notes and words all in one.”40 Cleanete’s improvised answer frames the rules that operate within Argan’s sickroom, his ‘notes and words all in one’ exhibit, by means of delaying Argan, and allowing the narrative to continue, the symptoms of hypochondria that describe being ill and healthy all in one.

Molière’s death, almost on stage, construes his own claim that he is the author of the play. The miasmic countenance of Molière as he writes, narrates and acts out his role as Argan, exposes Molière to the same epidemiology of illness that contaminates Argan’s persistent hypochondria. If it is an ill Molière who writes of a sick Argan, then it is Argan’s continuing claim on everything and anything that will confirm his being ill that catches Molière the playwright off-guard. Molière adopts the position of a reluctant amanuensis, a scribe who copies the intonation of another, Argan; who turns the page for the virtuoso performer, himself; and whose image is made available to every member of the audience who risks being put on stage. Argan and Molière, each contaminates the other; each can lay claim to an illness that is real; each must also present themselves as an out, as a potential cure for their illness. Molière takes ill on stage, while Argan still remains healthy – and yet Argan’s claim to sickness falls true, on stage, in front of an audience who could not claim otherwise even if his proprioceptive gestures assent to him being well. Molière and Argan exceed themselves, the always-other-side that would confirm the authorship of La Malade Imaginaire, from beginning to its end, to the claim of a life of incurable health. The sickroom is an unfathomable space, without edges, even though Molière and Argan find themselves surrounded on stage.

The audience must recognise that an illness, rather than as a narrative conclusion, supposes an alchemical transformation of every sensation that accumulates at the furthest reaches of a life; a

40 Molière, Le Malade imaginaire, Act 2, Scene 5.
hypochondriac’s life is flattened out because there is nothing but the illness. Their illness is sustained by their illness and for that reason their existence is always in jeopardy, which is to observe firstly; that a hypochondriac, by virtuality of their illness, (because that is all there is) is always at risk of succumbing to their hypochondria and secondly and most crucially, to observe that they are always very nearly exposed for what they are, a hypochondriac.

A Declaration of Love

To understand any space that negotiates between two absolutes – Argan and Molière, health and illness, audience and actors, theatre and street, doctor and patient – in which characters confess to doubling one another’s actions, we must return to a scene of revelation that marks the beginning account of Socrates’ death by Plato.

Socrates’ death, recounted by Plato must confront the inconsistency of his text, for he records his own confession; Plato is noted as maybe not being in attendance due to illness. Plato writes and has Phaedo say, “I believe that Plato was ill.”41 The Phaedrus places Plato both in sight of and in the sight of another, so that he may appear out of sight. Plato, albeit by another name, makes an account of Socrates’ last moments as he reclines in his cell. Plato appears, as a clinician would, beside the bed of Socrates, to administer to his patient.42 But Plato is only present because he writes himself into the text so that he may be written out and as a consequence take-up in bed ill. And yet, he is able to claim, from above the text, himself as the author of the Phaedrus. A crime is committed, but it is not Socrates who is poisoned, rather Plato, taken ill by his own hand. But Plato’s attempt to murder is committed against the murderer, himself, who, in turn escapes the text, remains above the act, may confess to it without a conviction. Plato is the author, the murderer and the murdered. Above all else, Plato is he who conceals himself between the pages; the succession of acts, thus far etched across the page, revealed in the absurdity of a Borgesian vademecum, a handbook where “each apparent page would open into other similar pages; the inconceivable middle page would have no ‘back’.”43 The Phaedrus conceives of a radical logic that takes care of the middle and hopes the rest will take care of itself. As Derrida explains the pharmakos were members of a city who were sacrificed if anything bad, such as disease, befell the cities inhabitants. Their sacrifice was characterised as a cure for the beleaguered city. They were in some cases no more than domesticated pets, housed and feed by the city for the purpose of sacrifice. Their sacrifice consisted of them being been taken to the limit of the city and ritualistically beaten to death. As Derrida concludes, “the ceremony of the pharmakos is thus played out on the boundary line between the inside and outside.”44

Socrates’ death is played out in a cell that isolates him from the rest of the city. But this city limit is not the limit found on the outskirts of a city, but a cell that is presented as a more insidious threshold, inside the city. Socrates’ cell is composed in the fold of the city around him. Phaedo’s cloak, the Phaedrus itself, is the very device that had to be mobilised so that Plato and Socrates could clandestinely share more than the same bed. Socrates and Plato share a cell that enables them to claim a poison as a cure, a consequence of which is the revelation of an unqualifiable and imagined illness that he is afflicted by.

41  Plato, Phaedo, 59a
43  Borges amends the contrary observation of a single book with an infinite number of pages opposed to a vast library, as described in his Library of Babel, to Letizia Alvarez de Toledo, who describes a handbook where “each apparent page would open into other similar pages; the inconceivable middle page would have no ‘back’”. Jorge Luis Borges, The Library of Babel, (Boston: David R. Godine, 2000), 39, note 6.
44  Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 130-134.
It is true that, at the very least, an audience who have been privy thus far to the movements of the text could accuse the author of inciting the mantic arts, but as the following comment from the Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne suggests, further improvisation on my part can be brought to light. As Montaigne writes:

Plato was therefore right to say that to be a true doctor would require that anyone who would practise as such should have recovered from all the illnesses which he claimed to cure and have gone through all the symptoms and conditions which he would seek to give an opinion. If doctors want to know how to cure syphilis it is right that they should first catch it themselves! I would truly trust the one who did; for the others pilot us like a man who remains seated at his table, painting seas, reefs and harbours and, in absolute safety, pushing a model boat over them.\(^{45}\)

Phaedo recounts that the day before Socrates’ trial, the Ship of Theseus had been crowned by the priest of Apollo. This was the ship that had taken Theseus to Crete and back, a journey which had ever since been re-enacted, in part, by a visit to Delos to pay thanks for his return. From the time the ship was crowned to its return to home port, it was deemed that no condemned man should be put to death and that the city of Athens must remain pure.\(^{46}\) Socrates’ ship is composed in the turning out, over and eventually the turning-in of Plato’s spatio-temporal excess. The following paragraphs will testify that the authoring of this text perpetuates entirely, the structures of uncertainty and exchange of the pharmakon.

In The Thief’s Journal, the French writer Jean Genet, as author of the semi autobiographical account and as its main protagonist, finds a family lineage in the plant ‘broom’ which is written genêt in French. Genet writes: “I am not sure that I am not the king – perhaps the sprite – of these flowers. They render homage as I pass, bow without bowing, but recognize me. They know that I am their living, moving, agile representative.”\(^{47}\) Derrida offers further thoughts as to the substance of Genet’s name: “Genêt names a bush – with yellow flowers (sarothamus scoparius, genista; broom, genette, genêt-à-balais, with poisonous and medicinal properties, and distinct from dyer’s broom, genista tinctoria or genestrolle, used for making yellow dye.”\(^{48}\) Genet’s botanical twin exhibits the same attributes of the pharmakon – it is both a medicinal plant, and potentially poisonous – but was also associated with the introduction of colour, further coinciding with the meaning of the pharmakon to mean paint, “not a natural colour, but an artificial tint, a chemical dye that imitates the chromatic scale given to nature.”\(^{49}\) It may also be used in reference to the flowers perfume, in the same way that make-up masks the sight of death so that the corpse may imitate the living, the pharmakon “perfumes it.”\(^{50}\) Leslie Hill, summarising Derrida’s remarks in Glas, suggests Genet’s namesake exposes his autobiographical methodology:

[…..] one that involved the author [Genet] not in renouncing his signature, the better to redeploy it elsewhere, but conversely, in taking it upon himself to sign everything in sight and mark it, patently and ubiquitously, secretly and cryptically – the one because of the other, the other because of the one – with his own inimitable, fragrantly or flagrantly malodorous monogram\(^{51}\)

For Molière the actor, a perfect white face was very telling\(^{52}\) while Argan turns a white face yellow.


\(^{46}\) Plato, Phaedo, 59b-59c


\(^{49}\) Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 129.

\(^{50}\) Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 142.


\(^{52}\) Venetian Ceruse was a form of white pigment, used as a cosmetic to lighten the face. The mixture contained lead, and subsequently, slowly poisoned the user over
and back again. Genet, in turn, stains the page, tints it, shades it, simultaneously brings it to light and conceals it from the sun, and does so without giving himself away. But, as Ra found out, the shadow of a lunar twin comes with a cost, the ever present threat of usurpation; Molière, Argan, Plato and Socrates appear increasingly alike. They all inhabit the measureless expanse of their illness like a gilt and glazed sepulchre. The sickroom of *Le Malade imaginaire* and the *Phaedrus* are immaculately conceived within the city from which both Molière and Plato are simultaneously kept out, held back and housed within, only to be expelled. In the middle of the *Phaedrus* lies Socrates’ cell; from the middle of *Le Malade imaginaire* Argan lays out his illness. Both conceive of a *lazaretto*: what is set outside, inside, aside.

**From the Sickroom to the Street: an Ascent into Lunar Sea**

As has been already stated above, the clinic, far from its modern understanding, was spatially determined by a clinician that visited patients in their beds. The clinic, as such, operated within the intimacy of the patient’s sickroom, the parameters of which were consolidated till their illness was what rendered, in its entirety the extents of the patient’s life. For the author of this text to swell the space of the clinic beyond a veiled horizon as though its existence was to be understood as only the ‘sailor’s etiquette’, is to be charged with excess. To ignore the théâtre’s Plimsoll line, would be to turn out all those who would reside in their *lazaretto* on the sea and nowhere else. We know that every crime, however small the murder, has a price when at sea. To put the turns of Phaedo’s cloak another way: to make a jack tar a canvas shroud, is to make the audience into a life long prisoner of the sea. It would be reasonable if the audience of this project, with the ever present portrait of Peter Corrigan, made comparisons to the imperfect muttering façade, not least to “a bit of a wreck in the mid Atlantic.” But to drag a charnel house across our path, from one horizon to another, does no more than draw a Circean poison: do not mistake a rusted hull for a swimmer’s corpse. And, to all those who are pre-occupied with the shallows: a thirst that will account for some, but not all, pulls bones from Aesop’s breath. Argan’s *lazaretto* gathers around it a language, and a musicality composed from what is at hand, and carries the action from the stage into the street. Argan is entirely reliant on the donning of the props of others, and of his own, echoed in the various imitations that precede his own conferring ceremony, and in regards to his performance it must also include his own illness. That is, the *pharmakon* provokes and stimulates an audience such that even Molière is caught in the act

The audience of the play administer to the actor’s malady because the actor draws the force of their performance from an audience who legitimise an actor’s illness on stage, and certain to a claim to a malady the audience submit to the symptoms of the actor’s illness. Even if the audience, and not only the play, was composed of doctors, they would not be immune to the possibility of mimicry as the American neurologist Silas Weir Mitchell points out. Mitchell took Paget’s mimicry further to include doctor-patient relationships, and as Adreas Vrettos notes, he emphasised his point through an a prolonged period of use. In the tradition of the French farce, actors would have their faces whitened with flour. Gundolf, “Molière and the commedia dell’arte,” 22.

53 A yellow flag raised over a ship warned others of disease on board, though generally it was to inform others that the ship has not yet been cleared from quarantine.

54 The OED defines a *lazaretto* as: A house for the reception of the diseased poor, especially lepers; a hospital or pest-house; A building, sometimes a ship, set apart for the performance of quarantine; and in a nautical context, a place parted off at the fore part of the ‘tween decks, in some merchantmen, for stowing provisions and stores in. “lazaretto.” The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 29 Nov. 2010 <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50130833/50130833>.

55 Sailors and ex-sailors were traditionally hired to work the back stage mechanisms including the curtain. Refer to, Martin Harrison, ed., The Language of Theatre, (New York: Routledge, 1998).


57 “The mind is not all that different from those dogs in Aesop which, decrying what appeared to be a corpse floating on the sea yet being unable to get at it, set about lapping up the water so as to dry out a path to it, and suffocated themselves.” Montaigne, “On Experience,” 1211.

58 A yellow flag raised over a ship warned others of disease on board, though generally it was to inform others that the ship has not yet been cleared from quarantine.
analogy with the invisible structures that bind audience and actor:

Mitchell stresses the specular nature of the sickroom using rhetoric that persistently invokes theatre and audience as a model for doctor-patient interaction. His lengthy chronicle of case histories, which ranges from a physician who unconsciously mimics the facial contortions of a patient suffering from “unilateral grimace” to men who experience sympathetic morning sickness at their wives’ pregnancies, to an entire infirmary of school girls who involuntarily adopt each other’s symptoms until separated and sent to different hospitals, is laced with theatrical terminology. Although Mitchell insists that their pain is real and their behavior, in most cases is inherent and involuntary, he describes these patients as “actors” in a “pathological drama,” and claims “the actor receives… from a too sympathetic audience, hints which enable him the better to sustain his part”. Sympathy here is thus doubly dangerous – it initiates the patient’s symptoms through the act of watching and it perpetuates them through the act of being watched.58

By some unreliable measure, an audience risks being smitten with Argan’s affliction, only because they are the cause. From Argan, an illness perpetuates, coaxes Molière’s illness up on stage and into the gestures of the actors. Argan’s illness, what springs from his lips and is thrown out in by his gestures, alters the scale of his sickroom on stage, enlarges the proportions of his illness, gathering the audience in its wake, and putting the audience in doubt of their own health. Argan’s illness is what will draw Molière and his audience forever near, that will cultivate further Argan’s illness on stage and will expedite the collapse of audience and playwright into lunacy, into the cérémonie des médecins: not to finish them off, but to sustain them till the very end. The cérémonie des médecins propels Argan into the city, and draws the city up onto the stage. Each member of the audience is thus given the opportunity to succumb to the sensations that prevail throughout Argan’s illness, admitting them, alongside Argan, into the carnival that maintains no authority at all.

Betrayed to the sea, the audience is what is brought together from the multitude only to emerge indistinguishable from the origins of their genesis. The position of the audience coincides with that of a reader of a text, who Montaigne ascertains, should be a good swimmer, so that they do not drown in the author’s thesis.59 The coming and going of voices on stage form a chorus that chronicles every audience member’s successful attempt of its passage. It is a declaration that marshals the claim that “they must be a good swimmer.”60 It assures every member of the audience that they risk finding themselves at sea, an ambassador, sent across a directionless landscape through an act of betrayal. That is, the audience is what is collected in the image of a singular figure of Leggatt,61 from Joseph Conrad’s short story, The Secret Sharer: he who through some avarice escapes one boat by swimming to another only to share, briefly, in the captain’s cabin, off bounds from the rest of the crew, an unspoken life: “With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, the broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow.”62 The audience who comes on board, becomes confused with and by the actors on stage and with the ship itself, invariably attempt, through the aperture of the théâtre, to stake out an unspoken desire, in a minutiae

59 Montaigne writes: “[…]and that coincides with what was said about the writings of Heraclitus by Crates: they required a reader to be a good swimmer, so that the weight of his doctrine should not pull him under nor its depth drown him.” Montaigne, “On Experience,” 1211.
61 The name was derived from the Old French LEGAT, and was brought into England in the wake of the Norman Invasion of 1066. The name may have been given to an official elected to represent his village at the manor court, as the origin and meaning of the name Legatt was also occupational, ‘the legate’ an ambassador, or deputy that speaks on behalf of some other authority. In Roman mythology Triton is the messenger of the god of the ocean Neptune and appears the night before the crossing of the line ceremony to warn all those aboard that they are entering Neptune’s domain.
of intimate relations. Leggatt’s appearance in this text marks a short detour for the purpose of obliging its audience the reason that permits his name to be heard. As Cesare Casarino makes clear:

A cursory etymological excavation of that enclave named Leggatt reveals it filled and resonating with two intertwined Latin echoes: *legatus* (messenger, harbinger, envoy, ambassador) and *ligatus* (bound, fettered, captured, confined). In between *legatus* and *ligatus*63

Leggatt is who stands in place of and carries within him another’s thoughts, but who may also be confined by those thoughts: “Leggatt stands as an imprisoned messenger.”64 In the course of this PhD an audience may rebuke its author for not citing every thing; for not raising the attention of the audience to every flicker of white on the horizon.65 But, it should be noted that as every would be authority is taken by surprise that an amputee may no longer be able to distinguish what belongs to them and what doesn’t and every sudden appearance of that diseased appendage delivers the spectre of a cure to the patient, the symptom points in no one direction, for a symptom on the horizon touches all extremities.66

An unobservant mast-watch does risk losing their footing and consequently falling. As Melville writes: “with one half-throttled shriek you drop through the transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever.”67 Beneath this ship, and perhaps in line with its tall mast, if one may take into account the long shadows that fall when determining the distance of a ship from shore, are the protruding legs of an unfortunate Melvillian-Icarus. Icarus as has already been speculated fell from his perch on a ship and not from the sky.68 If Icarus’ flailing legs are the result of the lines that surreptitiously form between ocean surface and mast-head, could not a sailor in the fly of this ocean going theatre, be pulling the strings?69

On the other hand, Melville turns the job of manning the mast-head into the image of a man with stilts long enough to allow him to navigate the ocean as if he were the ruler of this domain. Melville writes: [... you stand, a hundred feet above the silent decks, striding along the deep as if the mast were gigantic stilts, while beneath you and between your legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old Rhodes. There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves.70

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64 Casarino, Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis, 280.
65 The repercussions of having a day-dreaming look-out are their failure to take much notice of what they should be watching for. Melville’s narrator mimics the crude rebuke given to such a person by fellow shipmates “Why, thou monkey,” said a harpooner to one of these lads, “we’ve been cruising now hard upon three years, and thou hast not raised a whale yet.” Whales are scarce as his teeth whenever thou art up here” Herman Melville, Moby Dick, ed. N. Hayford & H. Parker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1967), 140.
66 In Plato’s Pharmacy Derrida sets out to show the indeterminate nature of the pharmakon, by undermining Plato’s claim on writing as a pharmakon and his own philosophical privilege that positions it as a feature of the Sophistic domain. To do so Derrida turns to the writings of the Sophists which describe speech as a pharmakon, because, like an ingenerating drug, it has a deeply felt effect on the person, while for Plato writing is a pharmakon that does quite the opposite of the pharmakon, because it dulls the memory. But as Derrida explains, Plato’s claim against the Sophists is not merely that they commit to memory their speech, but that “within such reserve the substitution of the mnemonic device for live memory, of the prosethesis for the organs; the perversion that consists of replacing a limb by a thing, here, substituting the passive, mechanical ‘by-heart’ for the active reanimation of knowledge, for its reproduction in the present.” [108] The problem lies with the fact that the speaker must recall something already committed to the past. The writing is not present in the here and now of the very act of speaking, but must be recollected from the written text that has already been written out of the present. Derrida concludes by showing that the binary distinctions Plato makes about the pharmakon can no longer be seen as reliable as the man who derides writing as a pharmakon unwittingly offers speech up as a pharmakon. See the section ‘The Pharmakeus’ for Derrida’s extended dismantling of Plato’s argument, and the section‘The Pharmakeus’ for an elucidation on Plato’s conflicting claim to the pharmakon. Montaigne offers a cursory summary of the conflicting use of a pharmakon: “And how many have still died of it with three doctors by their arses? Precedent is an uncertain looking-glass, all embracing, turning all ways.” Montaigne, “On Experience,” 1234.
67 Melville, Moby Dick, 140.
68 An alternate myth of Icarus has Persephone pull him from the edge of a ship Dadekus builds to escape the island of Crete.
69 The term to fly was a nautical term used with reference to the hoisting of a ship’s sail. Theoretically it was used to refer to anything that was raised or lowered from the flies the area above the stage that held scenery and lighting. It was common for sailors and ex-sailors to ensure the successful maneuvering of these elements. Refer to, Harrison, The Language of Theatre...
70 Melville, Moby Dick, 36-137. Melville also offers, on seeing the sails of the ship dancing across the ocean: “The three shrouded masts looked like the apparitions of three gigantic Turkish Emirs striding over the ocean.” Herman Melville, White Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War, (London: John Lehmann, 1952), 294. In Master Alcofribas’ account of the genealogy of Pantagruel, the giant Hurtali survives the Biblical Flood. He does so by sitting astride Noah’s Ark, “as small children do on
There is however, no one in the top mast of this ship. The narrative thus far has already suggested that he has fallen, then might this also be the case of the sailor who once stood at the mast head? Could we contend that it is an unaware sailor who both pulls the strings and is displaced by them. And, might he have rather felt his way down the vertical lines, as a spider would, with their many legs, mistaking the vibrations of his own movements as he displaces the ship for another. And might these lines also suggest those of Melville’s as he stalks across the ocean, oblivious to the fact that they are his own legs! Does this not suggest that each leg of the proliferating number of legs, are numb to the realisation that they all share a life…?

A day dreaming sailor’s stride is nothing more than a periplus, the passage of an insurmountable number of legs that compose the sensations of the ocean surface. Melville’s mast-watch is able to measure in one single gesture the distance of an ocean in the shortest amount of time, and yet, everything that lies before him remains accounted for. This is not to suggest that had a leg been taken off, our journey would be shorter, for every leg is measured by an imperfect distance. The audience is not only a witness, but also an accomplice to the poisoning of the author of the play, and, in part to his death. But the audience is not abandoned they are merely thrown overboard, before taking up again in the sickroom that becomes at once an image of a boat, a moving fold, like the trough of an outgoing tide, that takes everything briefly out to sea. Argan’s lazaretto, a space folded from the heterogeneous surface of the ocean, is a topological space that delays indefinitely, in assuming that one ship embroils them all, not least the Ship of Theseus, Molière’s death.

The cérémonie des médecins takes up the stage and all of Molière’s mechanisms, and puts it into the street, carrying across the threshold of the théâtre the audience as doctors, and an audience who take a share of Argan’s illness, permitting them to indulge in the carnival. Molière’s theatre is taken up in the image of The Panathenaic Ship, the ship-floating that carried the peplos, or robe of Athena during the Great Panathenean Festival of Athens. The festival was centered on the celebration of the goddess Athena, who as the mythical origin of the birth of Athens’, was enshrined in a large sculpture that was installed at the centre of the Parthenon complex. Every four years, a newly woven peplos was dedicated to Athena and displayed in the Parthenon. It generally featured the exploits of Athena and Zeus against the Giants, woven in saffron and hyacinth coloured thread. During the festival the peplos was suspended from the masts of the Panathenaic Ship as a sail. The Athenian philanthropist Herodes Atticus provided one such ship for the festival that was in part used to inaugurate the Panathenean stadium he had rebuilt, and which after the festival, found a site for display in a building adjacent the stadium. The Sophist Philostratus, in his Vitae Sophistarum provides a description of the path of the procession and of Heroes’ ship-floating:

Moreover, I have been told the following facts concerning this Panathenaic festival. The robe of Athena that was hung on the ship was more charming than any painting, with folds that swelled before the breeze, and the ship, as it took its course, was not hauled by animals, but slid

71 With Le Malade imaginaire, Molière took full advantage of the new mechanisms installed in the Théâtre du Palais-Royal that allowed for the rapid scene changes without some form of theatrical bridge. Traditionally, stage sets were often composed of existing scenery and props that remained from previous plays, rather than having new stages designed and incurring further costs to the production. For a description of the original stage set and production schedule for Le Malade imaginaire refer to: Powell, “Practices in the Theater of Molière,” 34-36. For a detailed description of make up of Molière’s stage sets, refer to: Roger W. Herzl, “The Decor of Molière’s Stage: The Testimony of Brissart and Chauveau,” PHMA Vol. 93, No. 5 (Oct., 1978), 925-954. For details pertaining to the renovation of the Palais-Royal, including the installation of theatrical stage machinery and its use in the production of Le Malade imaginaire refer pages, 949-951.

forward by means of underground machinery. Setting sail at the Kerameikos with a thousand oars, it arrived by the Pelasgikon, and thus escorted passed by the Pythion, to arrive at where it is now moored.73

Phaedo succumbs to the odious smell of saffron, his cloak strung high, suspended as a sail for the performance of the pharmakon. Socrates’ death, re-enacted with no resolution; an imperfect imitation the perfect imitation because Molière still dies, admittedly always baptised under another name, but it is always the same. The pharmakon exasperates to the point of delirium, the swimmer’s flimsy grasp on the ocean’s still surface.

_A Clinic for the Exhausted_’s vast domain can only be distinguished momentarily, in the enigmatic shifts in attention that underscore the gestures of this thesis thus far. _A Clinic for the Exhausted_ is seemingly fraught with the encrustation of found objects that might suggest the hand of a rocailleur and the grotto homes of ocean deities. Certainly a grotesque seascape may form in the mind, but the listless bow of this ship as it gropes the blurry shores does no more than describe the sudden and hallucinatory appearance of a Venetian landscape that has already been intimated in the preamble, and in the course of the lazzereto. This is not to say that land has been found, for the appearance of any destination must adhere to the provisional nature of a city in the desert.74 To assist the passage of this project further it must turn to the excess of Molière’s patron, Louis XIV, King of France, who during his reign held notorious and fabulous fêtes at the Palace of Versailles as demonstrations of his power. The fêtes of 1664, 1668 and 1674 remain the most spectacular and memorable due to their scale and expense. During the final event of the fête of 1674 held to celebrate the re-conquest of France-Conte from Spain, and following on from a week of extravagant food, fireworks and amusements, guests were provided with much quieter entertainment, but that was no less magical that the previous days:

Their majesties stepped aboard beautifully decorated gondolas, followed on to the water by the rest of the court, who boarded a flotilla of other vessels all suitably decked out. The surface of the canal resembled a looking-glass. Spaced around the banks were 650 illuminated statues and between them an assortment of fishes, lit up by coloured lights, apparently watching open-mouthed as the greatest of kings floated by, the sovereign not just of France but also of their watery realm. When the boats reached the pool at the junction of the main and transverse canals their passengers were thrilled by the appearance, at the Trianon extremity, of Neptune in this chariot pulled by marine horses and accompanied by Tritons. Then, turning towards the Ménagerie, they saw Apollo, at the reins of his sun chariot, rising into the air accompanied by four female figures representing the hours of the day. Finally, at the farthest end of the Canal, there was a palace, which seemed to have been built on the water out of crystal, with mosaics evidently composed of rubies, emeralds and other precious stones. It was with some reluctance, says [André]Félibien, that the court left this nautical kingdom, padding slowly back up the length of the Canal to the accompaniment of violins.75

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74 “Now, if he only followed the wise example set by those ships of the desert, the camels; and while in port, drank for the thirst past, the thirst present, and the thirst to come - so that he might cross the ocean sober” Melville, White Jacket, 46.

75 Ian Thompson, _The Sun King’s Garden_, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 149.
A Turn: from periplus to periplum

_A Clinic for the Exhausted_ has thus far asserted an imaginative exercise that could be perceived as a rational breakdown, an emphatic account of an author having gotten carried away by the project’s enigmatic self-deception. Such suspicions would fail to recognize that the energies that depart this PhD may make available practices that may entirely elude the author of _A Clinic for the Exhausted_. An author who traverses the lunar sea of his text will find that their gestures cede to the soft shadows that envelop the gloomy edges of a lucid théâtre. Let us then ask after the author, in the knowledge that even the author, like Molière and Plato, are marked by the circumstances of their undertaking.

He could be described as a man removing his hat,76 which is to draw your attention to every man who may offer themselves as a gentleman, only to snatch your hat from the top of your head.77 We could, if time allowed, measure each ruse against another, so that the degree of consanguinity may be determined. But the degree of imitation is such that each imperfection confirms the copious pseudonyms offered in part to distract if not to entertain us on our path. However much propriety prescribes that an introduction be made, there is every determination that an effort will be made to write around him. For, as well as an early form of maritime navigation, the _periplus_ was an ancient Greek maritime battle maneuver. The term meant ‘sailing around’, and quite literally referred to the out flanking of the enemy’s line of ships.78 Like Leggatt, the swimmer is but no-one, a man who never wears a hat, and yet might it be said that this is what is inferred by who ever proclaims themselves Captain?79 The _periplus_ is what strikes the very thing it sails around, that is, it always sails around the center of the ocean, but also strikes it, is always an impression recorded by the captain, yet always in such a way that it can be assigned to no one. As Mikhail Bakhtin explains:

> The most interesting example of this carnivalesque game of negation is the famous “History of Nemo,” _Historia de Nemine_, one of the most unusual pages of Latin recreational literature. Radulfind Flaber, a French monk, composed the _Historia de Nemine_ in the form of a sermon. _Nemo_ is a hero whose nature, position, and exceptional powers are equal to those of the second person of the Trinity, that is, the Son of God. Radulfind discovered the great _Nemo_ in a number of Biblical, Evangelical, and liturgical texts, as well as in Cicero, Horace, and other writers of antiquity; the word _nemo_ (nobody), which in Latin is used as a negation, was interpreted by Radulfind as a proper noun. For instance, in the Scriptures _nemo deum vidit_ (nobody has seen God) in his interpretation became “Nemo saw God.” Thus, everything impossible, inadmissible, inaccessible, is, on the contrary, permitted for _Nemo_. Thanks to this transposition, _Nemo_ acquires the majestic aspect of being almost equal to God, endowed with unique, exceptional powers, knowledge (he knows that which no one else knows) and extraordinary freedom (he is allowed that which nobody is permitted) [ … ] _Nemo_ is the free carnivalesque play with official negations and prohibitions. This image is spun from freedom; it is the liberation from all the restrictions that oppress man and are consecrated by official religion. Hence the exceptional attraction of

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76 Scott offers us, by way of Molière’s protégé Michel Baron, an account of an unaware subject of caricature by Molière: “Baron remembered for instance, Molière’s irritation with him when he returned empty handed from Jacques Rohault. He had been sent to borrow a hat to be used as a costume piece for the Philosophy Master in _Le Bourgeois gentilhomme_, a character modelled on Rohault, but he made the mistake of telling Molière’s old friend why the hat was wanted. Molière was not pleased.” Scott, _Molière: A Theatrical Life_, 246.

77 Molière’s doctor friend Armand de Mauvillain, was not without controversy: “Mauvillain was considered a heretic by his colleagues and was actually suspended from the Faculty of Medicine for four years for snatching off the Dean’s hat during a heated discussion.” Scott, _Molière: A Theatrical Life_, 241.


79 The anti-hero of Jules Verne’s, _20,000 Leagues under the sea_, is Captain Nemo of the Nautilus. In Latin, _Nemo_ means ‘no one’, and is a reference to Homer’s hero _Odysseus_ answer to a request by the giant Polyphemus to state his name. Verne’s work continues a longstanding medieval literary tradition.
this came for medieval man. All the endless gloomy sentences: “no one may,” “no one can,”
“no one knows,” “no one dares” are transformed into gay words: “Nemo may,” “Nemo can,”
“Nemo knows,” “Nemo must,” “Nemo dares.” The authors of the revised texts heaped up
more and more freedoms, liberties, and exceptions on behalf of their hero […] No one can have
two wives, but Nemo is allowed bigamy. According to the Benedictine rule, it was forbidden to
talk after supper, but Nemo was an exception, he could talk […] Thus from the highest divine
commandments to minor restrictions and limitations of monastic life, Nemo’s independence,
freedom, and power remained unrestrained.80

The Captain is always made the exception; a spatial and temporal excess, but it is the paratactic that
marks the continuity of the passage from periplus to periplum. The term periplum clearly derives some
of its intentions from the periplus. As Hugh Kenner explains, the periplum is, “the image of successive
discoveries breaking upon the consciousness of the voyager”, [that it is] ”the voyage of discovery among
facts, whose tool is the ideogram, is everywhere contrasted with the conventions and artificialities of the
bird’s eye view afforded by the map.”81 The ship is not the centre of two lines intersecting, measured in
longitude and latitude. It is rather a youthful immeasurable entropy: day-dreaming is a matter of staying
where one is. As Melville’s protagonist warns of the effects of the ocean on ‘absent minded young
philosophers’, they can become “lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious
reverie is this absent minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses
his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul.”82
A swimmer may demand several times over that, at the very least, they should be in the margins and not
under foot! But, looking upon the imbroglio of glimmers that draws the horizon line from up high any
author could be forgiven for hearing only faintly a swimmer within the echoes of the waves beneath.

The dualistic nature of this proposition does not want to give the impression that the periplus and
the periplum, the audience and the author, the swimmer and the captain, erase each other; rather it is
to always suggest a blending of great expanses. For this PhD is what lingers in the liminal, what is
suspended within a mettisage of still surfaces. A swimmer, on his back, views only the sky, feels only the
sensations of an ocean expanse, and confuses one with the other. It is to one of these swimmers we will
now turn to, a swimmer who tried to realise the infinite expanse of their floating world.

80 See, Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans Helene Iswolsky, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 613-615.
81 The term periplum was coined by Ezra Pound in the Cantos. See; Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1985), 102-103.
82 Melville, Moby Dick, 140.
2

Roussel’s
Epigenetic Landscape
A View from Roussel’s Window

In 1896 eighteen year old Frenchman Raymond Roussel wrote and published, at his own expense, a six-thousand line poem in alexandrine verse entitled La Doublure.1 The poem describes a romance between an unaccomplished actor, Gaspard, and a women named Roberte whom he can only see when her rich boyfriend is away. The poem opens with Gaspard dressed in theatrical costume at the end of a performance; he has, once again, fumbled his scene and mumbled his lines which incurs the mocking laughter of the audience. To console Gaspard, Roberte recommends that they both leave Paris for Nice to partake of the festivities of the carnival.2 Two-thirds of the alexandrine couplets tell of Gaspard and Roberte masked, carrying confetti and shovels, as they navigate the carnival in Nice. Roussel’s language focuses on the papier-mâché floats, carnival masks and gestures of the festival as it slips into night, and immerses the reader into the spectacle and false appearance that dominates the carnival. The last scenes of the poem are spent down by the sea, before ending with Gaspard lamenting the loss of Roberte who has up and left him. The poem finishes with Gaspard, made up in the costume of Mephistopheles – the devil’s physical stand-in, who speaks for the devil, and who makes himself everyone’s lover by deception – and stranded in a booth, working for a travelling theatre that has set up at a fair in Neuilly.

Roussel’s early literary technique evident in La Doublure’s images of the carnival, but also exhibited in other early work, including La Seine, a seven-thousand line verse play with five-hundred speaking parts and Les Noces, a twenty-thousand line unfinished poem describing soap bubbles blown by a child, are composed of “descriptions of a terrific accuracy,”3 such that what is conceived is a literature wholly described by a series of “exhaustive observations.”4 This technique presents to the audience nothing outside an inventory of observations, and thus nothing that could reveal some hidden moral or ethical agenda behind the work. As Alain Robbe-Grillet states: “Roussel describes, and beyond what he describes, there is nothing.”5 The observations can be conceived no other way as the audience is confronted with the only way by which Roussel could write. Privy to Roussel’s descriptions the

2 As Ford points out, Roussel had attended, with his mother the Carnival in Nice since aged thirteen however, Roussel’s descriptions do not match precisely with the actual floats presented in 1896.
3 Vitrac, “Raymond Roussel” 49.
4 Ford, Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams, 49.
5 Ford quoting Robbe-Grillet in, Ford, Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams, 49.
audience is caught up in the unrelenting mobility of the text as it confronts, without fail, every colour, texture sound or gesture rendering with acuity the inimitability of every object and scene, in such a way that no hierarchy could place any description above or below the other. Robbe-Grillet describes Roussel’s approach in these terms:

We are in a flat and discontinuous universe where everything refers only to itself. A universe of fixity, of repetition, of absolute clarity, which enchants and discourages the explorer […] The clarity, the transparency, exclude the existence of other worlds behind things, and yet we discover that we can no longer get out of this world.6

Roussel conceived La Doublure as “a novel in verse,”7 his preface advising the reader that, “as this book is a novel it must be begun at the first page and finished at the last one.”8 Roussel’s sage advice might have offered at least some confidence to any eventual readers of La Doublure, for while politely praised by Marcel Proust,9 the poem failed to find an audience. This lack of immediate success would bring on in Roussel a severe depression which would lead him to become a patient of the psychologist Dr. Pierre Janet. Janet reported Roussel’s case, some years later, under the name of ‘Martial’, the given name of a character from Roussel’s later novel Locus Solus.10 Martial, according to Janet, was wholly convinced of his impending glory. Martial is quoted by Janet as aphorising: “I shall reach great heights, I have been born for a blazing glory.”11 Janet mentions the intensity by which Martial worked on his first work, a poem, that can only have been Roussel’s La Doublure:

[…] he worked assiduously almost without ceasing, day and night, with no feelings of fatigue […] he lost all interest in anything else and has great difficulty in interrupting his work in order to eat from time to time. He was not entirely motionless, he took a few steps, then wrote a little, but he remained immobile for hours on end, pen in hand, absorbed in his reverie and his sensations of glory.12

Martial’s collapse begun when walking out from his residence after the poem’s publication, the people in the street failed to notice the radiance streaming from him, and after he had so fastidiously kept hidden this radiance in his cell above the street as he wrote the poem. Martial confessed: “I did indeed have to take precautions, rays of light were streaming from me and penetrating the walls, the sun was within me and I could do nothing to prevent the incredible glare.”13

Roussel, after his initial treatment with Janet, (with whom he would remain in contact with throughout his life), would repeatedly try to re-capture this first euphoric radiance that had appeared during the writing of La Doublure. His substantial wealth accrued on his father’s death, the means by which he self-funded the publication of his works and theatre productions, also allowed him to travel the world. His travels however appear not to have been for the purpose of influencing his work. Michel Leiris, one of the few people to have known Roussel and had continuing conversations with him in

7 Ashberry, introduction in, Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, ix.
8 Vitrac, “Raymond Roussel” 49.
part because Roussel was a client of his father, suggests that Roussel’s travels were for the intention of, “paying serious attention only to the panorama which unfolded within him.” The French surrealist André Breton, quoting Leiris, explains that: “in Pekin, [sic] Roussel shut himself away after the most cursory visit of the city. Just as he had stayed in the cabin of his ship writing, when he had the opportunity of going ashore in Tahiti.” It could be suggested that this was in large part because of Roussel’s inability to conceive of these new landscapes, and that, it was about reconfirming existing narratives not once, but several times over so as to establish what Leiris termed a “cult of precedents.” Roussel’s obsessive behaviour whilst traveling and writing extended to wearing his collars just once, his shirts a few times, ties three times, and everything else fifteen. Leiris commenting on Roussel’s peculiarly relationship to these new environments explains that:

“Everything that is new disturbs me,” he would say, and so profound was his horror of change that, according to Charlotte Dufrenê, it would happen that having once performed a certain act, he would perform it again because the precedent thus formed had the force of an obligation.

This is not to say that Roussel did not like travelling, in fact it appears that he sought to distance himself from any obligation to stay put. An article in La Revue de Touring-Club de France, in August 1926, featured a “very luxurious and practical house on wheels devised by M. Raymond Roussel.” The article explains that: “The car is really a small house. In fact it comprises, by means of an ingenious system: a sitting room, a bedroom, a study, a bathroom and even a small dormitory for the staff of three man-servants (two chauffeurs and a valet).” Such was the caravan’s innovation that it would earn the praise of both Benito Mussolini and Pope Pius XI. The latter, unable to leave the Vatican, instead sent out a adviser which caused Roussel to comment, conjuring the most humorous of images, on why he could not have just driven his caravan into the Vatican. Roussel’s pride in his invention was evident. he confided to Roger Vitrac that: “It is very agreeable;” enabling him to: “stop where I please and go on when I please, a regular land yacht.”

Towards the end of Roussel’s fifty-six year life span, his continuing desire to recapture the glory he had felt while writing La Doublure would cause him, enabled by his wealth, to procure an extensive range and sum of barbiturates that he would self-medicate with. The extent of his narcotics abuse would be revealed on his death (it has been argued from an unintentional overdose, as a suicide or even at the hands of his chauffeur, who had apparently tried to blackmail Roussel’s nephew and heir by revealing Roussel’s supposed homosexual relationship with the chauffeur) in a hotel in Palermo, Italy

14 Michel Leiris’ father, Eugène Leiris, was Roussel’s stockbroker. The family knew him well enough to have nicknamed him ‘Ramuntcho’. He would also play piano and give readings of novels to entertain Leiris’s family, particularly his children. François Caradec, Raymond Roussel, trans. Ian Monk (London: Atlas Press, 2001), 74-76.
18 Leiris quoted in Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 113. Following his involvement in WW1, Roussel took to wearing the same clothes continuously, having noticed how well his army uniform had worn. “After beating all the records for elegance,” he told Charlotte Dufrene, “I am now going to beat all the records for inelegance.” Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 171.
19 Leiris, “Conception and Reality in the Work of Raymond Roussel,” 75.
21 F.T., “M. Raymond Roussel’s House on Wheels — Full-scale Motorised Camping,” 149.
22 Vitrac, “Raymond Roussel,” 52.
23 Vitrac, “Raymond Roussel,” 52.
in 1933. Found partially dressed, it appears Roussel had dragged the mattress from the bed onto the floor because of his fear of falling out of bed24 and, placed it opposite the bolted door that was shared between his own room and the room of his travel companion of some twenty-three years Charlotte Dufrêne. Dufrêne’s role throughout these years appears to have been to mask Roussel’s true sexuality from public scrutiny.25 Dufrêne had, in the days leading up to his death, taken it upon herself to keep a diary of his barbiturate consumption. The daily inventory is worth quoting in full, firstly, so that the extent of Roussel’s search to recapture the sensations of glory he had felt during the writing of La Doublure might be realised and secondly, to suggest that the relations of the first proposition extend from La Doublure, across his literary oeuvre, and onto Dufrêne’s scrap of paper, his last work. The list begins Sunday 25th June, and the last entry is Thursday the 13th July, the day before the morning of the discovery of his body:

That evening at six o’clock, Roussel took 6 Phanodrome tablets, then again, the same number at half past one in the morning. On the 26th, he began at ten past five in the afternoon with 8 Hipalene; he took two more of these and immediately after that 4 more at half past nine; 30 others “in all during the night”. The 27th: one and a half bottles of Veriane. The 28th: at sixteen-thirty hours, 3 Rutonal tablets, three more at eighteen hundred hours, twelve more during the night: “18 in all without sleep”; or rather, with three hours sleep. The 29th: is the great Soneryl day: 4 at seventeen hundred hours, 4 at eighteen-thirty hours; sleep at twenty-two hundred hours, “wonderful euphoria” for twenty-four hours. The 30th: “Somnothyril 19 without euphoria”, but with six hours sleep. The 1st July: one bottle of Neurinase. The 5th: two bottles of Veronidin. The 6th: he returns to Soneryl: 16 tablets, nine and a half hours sleep, “very great euphoria”. The 7th: at half past nine in the evening, 6 Hypalene, then 18, then 3 Soneryl; “a good state of euphoria”. The 8th: 20 Somnothyril tablets and a bottle of Neurinase: without eating, but in a state of euphoria all day. The 9th: 11 Phanodorme tablets. The 10th: two bottles of Veronidin at twenty-one hundred hours; a good sleep. The 11th, at the same time: 34 Rutonal tablets; three hours sleep. The 11th, at the same time: 34 Rutonal tablets; three hours sleep and then “marvellous euphoria”. The 12th: one and a half bottles of Veriane; a little sleep and then “excessive euphoria”. Thursday, 13th, the last note: Soneryl.26

Roussel’s illuminated cell in which he writes above the street, compels us to revisit the vision of another: Raggatt’s malady, his own, is posited in the street looking up at Building Eight’s illuminated interior. Just like Roussel, Raggatt finds that his affliction fits onto a scrap of paper – his confession at least addressed to someone. On one side the image of an ocean liner, on the other the elevation of

25 De Roussel’s homosexuality, Foucault states: “Between cryptography and sexuality as a secret there is certainly a direct relationship. Let’s take three examples: When Cocteau wrote his works, people said, “It’s not surprising that he flaunts his sexuality and his sexual preferences with such ostentation since he is a homosexual.” Then Proust, and about Proust they said, “It’s not surprising that he hides and reveals his sexuality, that he lets it appear clearly while also hiding it in his work, since he is a homosexual.” And it could also be said about Roussel, “It’s not surprising that he hides it completely since he is a homosexual.” In other words, of the three possible modes of behaviour – hiding it entirely, hiding it while revealing it, or flaunting it – all can appear as a result of sexuality, but I would say that it is related to a way of living. It’s a choice in relation to what one is as a sexual being and also as a writer. It’s the choice made in the relationship [Page break] between the style of sexual life and the work. De reflection it should be said that because he is homosexual, he hid his sexuality in his work, or else it’s because he hid sexuality in his life that he also hid it in his work. Therefore, I believe that it is better to try to understand that someone who is a writer is not simply doing his work in his books, in what he publishes, but that his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books. The private life of an individual, sexual preference and his work are intertwined not because his work translates his sexual life, but because the work includes the whole life as well as the text. The work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work. Michel Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel, trans. C. Raza, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1986), 183-184.
26 Sciascia, “Acts Relative to the Death of Raymond Roussel,” 132. The actual page is replicated page 130.
Building Eight. On one side, the image of those aboard waving goodbye, and on the other, Building Eight bound to the inertia of its built predicament. Roussel, dominated by his desire to reclaim this glory finally falls prey to himself, and it is no different for Raggatt, who in his letter to Corrigan admits that he may have gotten the better of himself. Whereby Roussel’s moment of glory is followed by ingestion, Raggatt has it the other way, his liquid intake disclosing the constellation of Building Eight and ocean liner, bathed in a mysterious light. But how, may you ask, can Roussel and Raggatt, standing at either end of a curious spectrum be introduced to the other? Is this not just a protracted back-pedal permitting one image to unfold another for the benefit of the author?

Given the prominence of Building Eight and the ocean liner evident in the preliminary passage of A Clinic for the Exhausted in the AA Unbuilt entry, and evidenced further by the preamble, prologue and introduction of this PhD, an alliance with Michel Foucault’s account in the publication Death and the Labyrinth of Roussel’s literary work offers the possibility of an explanation that attends to the simultaneous approach, intersection and dispersion immanent in the dual events – in the textual gathering here and now of A Clinic for the Exhausted with Roussel’s project of writing, and the imperceptible forces that bring Building Eight into unforeseen adjacency with an ocean liner. Seized by this opportune diversion, A Clinic for the Exhausted envisions a continuous circular voyage, dispatching both Roussel and Raggatt’s projects - an encounter with every point along the continuous mobility of their literary horizons - into the molecular flows of this exegesis.

Raggatt and Roussel treacherous encounter will be pursued across a shared landscape, a smooth space that can, ultimately, “only be explored by legwork.” It is the assertion of this chapter to proceed like Roussel’s writing whereby every instance is as persuasive as the last. Every enumeration henceforth gives the ‘green light’, enables both Raggatt and Roussel to preempt the critics of their work, because this is not a history of a certain individual, but rather potential histories affirmed by the throng of the crowd. According to the sense of this seascape, there is no determinate location by which we may have recourse to make our way. Hence Roussel’s Epigenetic Landscape will be cut short at the middle of this compendium. Conceived as a demonstration of the Borgesian vademecum, this one leaf textual disruption inserted between Book 1 and Book 2 will counterpoise the drawings and images that compose The Swimming Pool Library and The Landscape Room.

Mobilising a Methodical Treatment of Chance

Two almost identical sentences were used to compose the beginning and end of Roussel’s novel Impressions d’Afrique (1910). Roussel began the creative process of writing the novel with the sentence

27 The ‘Epigenetic Landscape’ was a model for the contingent morphology of form, first put forth by Conrad H. Waddington in his publication, Strategy of the Genes (1953). The model is described by an undulating surface, the epigenetic surface, determined by an assemblage of bonds that have one end fixed to its underside and the other to a plane located beneath it. The epigenetic surface is itself highly malleable, its undulating surface an expression of the array of connections that secure themselves randomly to the underneath of its surface from a matrix of points on the fixed plane beneath. The ties also link to one another, drawing a three-dimensional matrix which results in every change in any one parameter being measured by the whole. On top, the epigenetic surface appears as a surging ocean surface, the evolution of a given form – its initial representation by Waddington takes the form of a small marble at the mercy of this surface - is determined by how it makes its way across this surface, the depth of the troughs determining paths, while the peaks mark out possible thresholds which the rolling marble may overcome by its own force, and therefore realise alternative developmental pathways. Sanford Kwinter, in his seminal essay Landscapes of Change: Boccioni’s Stati d’animo as a General Theory of Models introduces time to our understanding of the epigenetic model, conferring a certain conditionality upon the marble’s progress, on account of the deviations in the contours of the surface as a result of the bonds beneath which have the ability to shift, and which occasion the appearance of the peaks and troughs that the marble consequently navigates. See: Sanford Kwinter, “Landscapes of Change: Boccioni’s Stati d’animo as a General Theory of Models”, Assemblage 19, 1993.


29 John Ashberry in his introduction to Foucault’s Death and the Labyrinth gives a summary of Impressions d’Afrique as follows: “A group of Europeans has been shipwrecked off the coast of Africa. Talou, a tribal king, is holding them for ransom. In order to distract themselves until the ransom money arrives, the trav-
‘the white letters on the cushions of the old billard table’ (les lettres dub lance sur les bandes du vieux billard) juxtaposed against ‘the white man’s letters on the hordes of the old plunderer’ (les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard). The simple displacement of one letter results in a radically shifted sense, what is found in the first sentence of Impressions d’Afrique by the word billard, finds an identical form in the approximation of the word pillard meaning plunderer in the final sentence. From these two words, Roussel would grow each sentence, selecting words for their resemblance but differing meanings. The resulting sentences would then set out a potential narrative that could fill the almost imperceptible dislocation of meaning imposed by Roussel’s grammatical disjunction. Having read the first sentence of Roussel’s text, a reader would unwittingly realise the final sentence, and would proceed knowing the narrative that they had yet to know. Nevertheless the void over which billard now refers to pillard exposes an area of doubt that marks the “neutral space of language.”

As Foucault states “the uneasiness is not dispelled [by the narrative inbetween] since the indecision is infinite.” On reaching the objective in the expression of the final sentence, the narrative returns us to its starting point, to the confusion of language that manifested the movement of the narrative in the first place.

The narrative between the two points of reference marks the rhythm of Roussel’s procedure, and maintains the contrapuntal movement from the sentence inhabited by billard to another inhabited by pillard. This is not however a simple linear progression charting the minor etymological differences, a homogeneous meter that exposes a hidden account of a narrative genealogy. Neither is it the case that the first sentence picks up the second sentence or vice versa. No order of association that could diametrically oppose one sentence against another could organise the principle by which Roussel’s narrative progresses. It is the rhythm of Roussel’s language that systematically immobilizes the manner by which difference can incriminate an account; the narrative is the incommensurable differentiation located between billard and pillard. Foucault acknowledges this process within Roussel’s latter novel Nouvelles Impressions d’Afrique (1932) in which “the sequence of comparisons, similes, distinctions, metaphors, and analogies filters one, monotonous, persistent meaning through countless words and objects, through endless repetitions which affirm, in 415 verses and over 200 examples, that what is big must not be confused with what is small.”

In Impressions d’Afrique (1910) “what is big is not small” is inverted to produce a narrative from which pillard and billard can do nothing to escape from each other; the narrative “articulates the impossible by amassing evidence with the most meticulous attention to detail.” In Nouvelles Impressions d’Afrique the detail is managed by the stuttering use of parentheses inside of parentheses, blocks of parenthesis that apprehend “lists of gratuitous gifts; idle suppositions; objects that have the form of a cross; or others that are similar in appearance but not in size, and which one must be careful not to confuse.” The narrative inexplicably changes direction; “sometimes as many as five pairs of parentheses ((((())))) isolate one idea buried in the surrounding verbiage.”

...
Roussel’s novel *Chiquenaude* (1900) extends the tumultuous play between the first sentence and the last beyond the productive repetition of the sentence, allowing the potential transmutation of one sentence by another to resonant throughout the plot. Foucault provides a synopsis:

one evening a music-hall comedy is being performed, but it’s not opening night (it’s the repetition of the reproduction). The spectator who is going to narrate the play has composed a poem which will be recited several times on stage by one of the characters. But the famous actor who has the part has fallen ill: an understudy will replace him. Thus the play begins with “*les vers de la doublure dans la pièce fe Forban talon rouge*” (the verse of the understudy in the play of Red Claw the pirate). This Mephisto twice removed appears on stage and recites the poem referred to above: a vainglorious ballad in which he boasts of being protected from harm by a piece of magical scarlet clothing that no sword can pierce. In love with a beautiful girl, one night he disguises himself – a new imitation – as her lover, a highwayman and an inveterate duelist. The bandit’s protective genie, his clever alter ego, discovers the devil’s plan in the reflections of a magic mirror which unmask the impersonator by repeating his image; he then takes the magical garment and sews inside it a lining made from a piece of moth eaten material of the same colour, a flawed lining. When the bandit returns to challenge the devil to a duel, confronting his double played by an understudy, he has no trouble piercing the formerly invulnerable material with his blade, now separated and severed from its power by an imitation, to be exact, “*les vers de la doublure dans la pièce du fort pantaloon rouge*” (the moth holes in the lining of the material of the strong red pants)²⁶

Roussel’s initial game of counterpoint that composed *Impressions d’Afrique* according to the play between sentence, is reproduced in *Chiquenaude*. What is initially avoided in *Impressions d’Afrique* is however celebrated in *Chiquenaude*, not only in the return of the first series of words in the last series, but within the premise of the plot that envelops the characters in a play of resemblances and mistaken identity. The path of the narrative is marked by the temporal duration of each sentence. As such, the movement of the narrative between billard and pillard, becomes, in *Chiquenaude* dimensional, the aforementioned objects become at once a quality and a property of the narratives rhythmic texture. Both sentences do not explicitly mark the end or beginning of *Impressions d’Afrique*. Roussel uses the two sentences to construct a framework for his novel, but they are not explicitly written on the first and last page, but find themselves, implied by the narrative: pillard finds itself present in its associations with the actions of the characters that inhabit the plot, and billard becomes the force that sets in motion the narrative. Roussel elaborates the plot from the chaos between these two sentences, exposing the “whole brilliant and vibrant surface of words;”²⁷ simultaneously opening the genus of the word billard and pillard and, fathoming future territories in which the plot can take place. Foucault provides a description of Roussel’s undertaking:

Each word of the eponymous sentence is associated with a kindred realm: from billard to billard cue, which often bears an inlay – a monogram of silver or mother-of-pearl – the initials of the purchaser, who during the game reserves for himself the exclusive use of it; which leads us to the word chiffre (initial/number). Each of these words will be treated as seminal words, used in an identical form but with a radically different meaning.²⁸

³⁷ Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 34.
³⁸ Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 34.
Roussel’s literary procedure descends further and further into the specificity of each word and its accoutrements, the plot of the novel realised in the projection from one specificity with its genus in the first sentence, to another specificity with its genus in the other sentence, the milieu sliding across the void that separates the two sentences “independent of any coherent meaning” and exploring the molecular “wake of the motion of words” that ensues both sentences rarefied being, not exterior to the chaos between, but within the chaos. Hence, the movement that launched the sentences with the intention of a pure and homogenous outline of each other is marked by a periodic repetition of the procedure which launched the narrative. Retracing his steps, Roussel would construct further passages to inhabit the plot from the matrixes of singular words derived from the composition of a found sentence: “The folk song ‘J’ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière’ (I’ve got good tobacco in my tobacco pouch) gives ‘Jade, tube, onde, aubade en mat à basse tierce’ (Jade, tube, water, mat object, to third base)” which goes on in part, to describe in Impressions d’Afrique a jet of water emanating from a jade tube watched over by a young poet who recites his poetry through a megaphone of mat silver metal. The movement from one sentence to another, from a sentence to a series of autonomous words enfolds the point of origin, that is, the source of the movement is not replaced by a contrivance, it is not irretrievably lost, rather, an origin can be found in the excess of a claim to potentially be found anywhere. Foucault finds no reason why “knowledge of the actual text from which it [Roussel’s transformative process] starts is at all necessary,” believing that the existence of an origin that remains unknown “throws the reader into a state of being uncertain.” That is, the found sentences are “homonymous to the initial words, but heterogeneous among themselves.”

Death in Venice

Georges Perec and Harry Mathews’ in their article “Roussel and Venice: Outline of a Melancholy Geography” illustrate a possible response when confronted by a seemingly haphazard array of evidence. Their article investigates five sheets of paper bearing an outline for a verse play found stitched into a Renaissance-era book printed in Venice that had once been owned by Roussel. They deduce that the book had originally been bought in Venice in 1895 by his mother, Marguerite Roussel, with whom he was travelling at the time. Marguerite Roussel was there to visit a childhood friend whose son, Ascanio, then aged sixteen, Roussel, then aged eighteen, subsequently befriended during their three week stay. Analysing the five pages of coded text left behind the authors conclude that Roussel and Ascanio had fallen in love. They suggest that the remainder of Roussel’s literary output was decisively influenced by this brief relationship and Ascanio’s death the following year. The premise is founded on authors’ suggestion that Roussel would spend the remainder of his life avoiding Venice during his extensive travels and, in his failure to name the city in his writing. Perec and Matthews’ claim that this is a procedure by which Roussel avoids coming to terms with the location of his desire, Venice, and the death of his lover, Ascanio. Their essay proposes a map derived from a comparison between the literary

39 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 35.
40 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 36.
41 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 41.
42 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 181.
43 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 181.
44 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 181. Emphasis mine.
45 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 35.
topography of his books on one hand, and the topographic reality of Venice on the other, a "Venetian
mirror," that produces a figure much like Roussel’s own monograph, the letter ‘R’ and its mirrored
double. In the first instance the centre is Paris, while in the second, the centre is the hotel where he and
his mother stayed during their visit to Venice. The allusion, within what amounts to an ongoing literary
confession to a network of physical locations permit Roussel to explore the site of his desire till his death
without, as it were, revealing its true significance to himself or any other; masking his great love with a
coded language, and burying it further within the complexity of his writing technique. The plot of the
found play is revealed by the authors to be the story of a young man who is wrongly accused of killing
his fiancé but is afterwards saved when her final words, having become trapped in the water within the
pipes of the house are released from the showerhead, incriminating the family boatman. The young man
is freed and his fiancé revived. Perec and Mathews’ conclude that the narrative of the play takes place in
Venice, with a set quite literarily composed of the Renaissance-era book, and roles which for all Roussel
had set to cast himself in. They also suggest that while Roussel only ever writes the letter ‘V’ in the
scant plot outline, it stands for ‘voyage’ and in turn ‘Venice’, and that the play, unable to bear his grief,
must include Venice by its absence. Roussel’s desire to erase Venice is continued through into the text,
whereby, Perec and Mathews’ suggest, Roussel merely replaces the word ‘gondolier’ with the word
‘boatman’. Furthermore, they argue that the young girl’s sudden resuscitation constitutes Roussel’s life
long failure to grieve for his young lover.

Perec and Matthews’ scholarly article is convincing in its breadth, in the collection of the specific
details, and demonstrates well known Rousselian procedures in a newly found work. However, the
entire premise of the article remains a parody. They argue that anyone intending to write on Roussel
is a task filled with anxiety; it remains impossible to acknowledge the full thickness of his literature or
fathom the bottom of his writing procedure. Both authors suggest, by way of their scholarly article,
that any critic with just such intention sets out to fail, and that accordingly the task of any critical
text on Roussel becomes one of accommodating the potential of an origin yet to emerge rather than
reducing his writing to a series of key sentences. That is, any audience of Roussel will not find the key
statement or the key image by which his entire literary oeuvre could be unlocked and revealed, because
every sentence or image offered by Roussel’s work is left open to another, and so on. While Roussel’s
posthumous confessional text, How I wrote certain of my books, outlines the origins of some key sentences,

46 They argue that anyone intending to write on Roussel’s literature does so knowing full well the complexities of his writing method, the existence of original
images and sentences not found, not to mention the peculiar life of the author, and are subsequently
unable to fail to see something as they navigate their research. To progress through Roussel’s writing
is a task filled with anxiety; it remains impossible to acknowledge the full thickness of his literature or
fathom the bottom of his writing procedure. Both authors suggest, by way of their scholarly article,
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posthumous confessional text, How I wrote certain of my books, outlines the origins of some key sentences,

48 Bernard Magné offers an insightful glimpse into Perec’s literary games. On having an article included in the exhibition catalogue for Maps and Figures of the
Earth, held at the Pompidou Center in 1980, Perec responds to his interviewer: “The last fake that I made, no one identiﬁed it [laughter]. It’s in a catalogue
on cartography. … I wrote a text on cartography that I did not sign and where I appear in tiny letters at the end, as transla-tor. I appear in the index [of the
catalogue, as a contributor]. People leafing through the index said to themselves: ‘Well, what’s he doing in this catalogue?’ They search but they don’t ﬁnd … Right
there, that is the height of fakery. No one even knows that it’s a fake.” Bernard Magné, “Georges Perec on the Index,” trans. Peter Consenstein, Yale French Studies,

Douglas Fogle, in turn offers another delightful moment of a counterfeit activity, and I include it here as it seems pertinent to the passage of this
chapter: “[Mel] Bochner, who like [Bruce] Nauman, began experimenting with photography in 1966, had originally compiled a list of quotations about photography
as part of an article that he submitted to Artforum in 1969 under the title ‘Dead Ends and Vicious Circles’. When the article was rejected for publication, Bochner
brought together a number of these quotations to form his “theory of photography.” Presented on note cards in a manila envelop-e, the nine photographs of handwritten
quotes that constitute this work, the Misunderstandings: A Theory of Photography (1967-1970), were derived from purported sources as wide-ranging as Marcel
Duchamp, Mao Tsetung, and the Encyclopaedia Britannica. The problem was, however, that three of these citations were fabrications by the artist (it is still unclear
which ones), slipped like a virus into the discussion of the truth function of photographic representation,” Douglas Fogle, “The Last Picture Show” in, The Last Picture
and the manner by which Roussel’s procedures progressed, it is Foucault who reminds us that even this book is still written by him, that it is also part of his literary output, and that we have no way of knowing that it has not undergone the same or a different literary transformation at the hands of Roussel. At best, an audience of Roussel’s work can conceive of nothing but the excess of what is before them. As both Père and Matthews attest:

Any attempt to explain Roussel stumbles over the obstinate fact of his unfathomable method. Our claim that the hypothetical play whose possible origins we have attempted to describe is the last, posthumous metonym of a trip to Venice around which the delusion of writing was organised derives not from any illusion that our arguments define Roussel but, in the last resort, from the incomparably Roussellian emotion the traveller feels when standing on the steps of the Evangelisti, he discovers for the first time the city of which Roussel was the mental architect.

Roussel’s ‘I’, an apparatus like no other, continuously tracing an imperfect line across a perfect surface. But for the fact that his work went unnoticed, the “dispassionate lucidity” of Roussel’s language that discloses potentially emotional scenes in unaffected descriptions, manifested itself in the form of his self-beautification removing any need to convince an audience of his greatness. It should come as no surprise then that Roussel’s first published work, a poem, written the same year as La Doublure, and entitled Mon Âme should share with La Doublure Roussel’s self-confessed title of his finest achievement. Mon Âme concludes with the lines: “At this explosion deriving/From my universal genius/I see the world bow/Before this name: Raymond Roussel.” His name: a confession made in the hope that he may once again confirm his residence in a city of glory. Leslie Hill observes:

Roussel’s work becomes a kind of celebration of his own name […] the author’s name […] is the only verbal unit to retain, paradoxically, its identity with itself, although it too in the later version of the poem [Mon Âme] was to suffer a transposition into that of Victor Hugo. Roussel becomes here, like Hugo, an orgiastic devourer of the dictionary, metamorphosed into a reincarnation of literature itself in the shape of its most splendidly prolific and self-confident demiurge. Chance and destiny meet here in the ‘échéance’ of birth.

Foucault regards Roussel’s assemblage as a machine that becomes ever more complex with every new inter-relation of word and image. It should be noted that Roussel was an able pianist, having been admitted into the Conservatoire National de Musique in 1893. Inseparable from the machines growing complexity is the mechanical noise of Roussel’s uncouth assemblage as it becomes louder and louder, so that even a faint resonance of the rhyming register that set the machine in motion cannot be heard. Furthermore, no intervening text could separate Roussel’s sensation of glory and the description of the barbiturates he dies from. This gap is the brevity of Roussel’s own literary affair, a compositional ambivalence that attempts to divide his literary output and the final list of barbiturates. Between the labyrinthine text that trawls but never again brings to the surface his initial claim to glory, pen held over paper, and his death marked out by Dufrêne’s list of barbiturate and their various effects,
there is nothing. As the literary critic Pierre Macherey writes it is; “Roussel who is sick in language, who is suffering from the sickness of language itself, from a sickness of which literature exhibits the exemplary marks.”

Foucault argues against Janet’s diagnosis that Roussel’s complex language can be explained by his apparent illness because his anxiety concerns the failure of the public to see the same luminance he had expelled while writing and not the sensations he felt while writing. Roussel’s language is therefore not a symptom of his subsequent illness rather, his illness is the concern of his sensation of glory that emerged as a thickened and entangled literature that remained unrecognised. The foundation of his initial literary greatness was to elude Roussel for the rest of his life, as though on walking out the door of his apartment he misplaced the master key for which he would forever remain looking for. His language is certainly fore-grounded by his illness but it is also silhouetted by the original sensation of his literary achievement. Neither his illness nor his literary output offers a suitable or complete explanation for his language which Roussel made apparent through his incomplete confession in How I wrote… as both allow the revelation of his language as though it cannot reveal itself, but must, as it were, take a form under a certain number of veils. It is between his illness and his work that Roussel’s language speaks. It is in the void between that Foucault suggests any conversation with Roussel must begin; not as though Roussel’s literary work masked his illness, as Janet would have it, or as though Roussel’s language spoke only of an eccentric and therefore easily dismissible interior monologue.

It should be recognised that Roussel, from where he stood, spoke the truth. Roussel exposes the inability of language to concern itself with one thing, revealing the “proliferating emptiness of language,” what Foucault would define, in relation to Roussel’s poem La Doublure, as a “tropological space.” As Foucault contends, language is necessarily open ended because it has the ability to claim one figure while also claiming another, and it is this that Roussel takes advantage of, illustrated at the start of this chapter by the title of Roussel’s poem ‘doublure’ which can refer to a double, an understudy or the lining of a piece of cloth, while bringing to light the remarkable moment when language could not know what it was talking about. Foucault elaborates in The Order of Things:

[… ] at the base of spoken language, as with writing, what we discover is the rhetorical dimension of words: that freedom of the sign to alight, according to the analysis of representation, upon some internal element, upon some adjacent point, upon some analogous figure. And if languages possess the diversity we observe in them; if from the starting-point of their primitive designations, which were doubtless common to them all owing to the universality of human nature, they have not ceased to develop according to the dictates of differing forms; if they have all had their own history, fashions, customs, and periods of oblivion; this is because words have their locus, not in time, but in space in which they are able to find their original site, change their positions, turn back upon themselves, and slowly unfold a whole developing curve: a tropological space.

57 Refer to the chapter “The Enclosed Sun” in, Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth.
58 As Macherey states, Foucault rejects Janet’s hypothesis, believing instead that “Roussel’s works are to regarded as the site for the emergence of truth.” Macherey, The Object of Literature, 213.
59 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth,165.
60 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 118.
Tropological space is where every language means nothing because, according to Foucault, language has as its foundation only the nothing from which it emerges. Equally the nothing gives space to a language of nothing that is the origin of all language. Thus, Foucault concludes his account of Roussel’s literary contribution by suggesting that Roussel’s procedures for writing exposes the reader to the void from which all language emerges, and therefore from where all his commentators and critics speak from. As a consequence, the commentators and critics come to share in the circumstances of Roussel’s literary output; as Foucault concludes: “it makes his illness our problem. It enables us to speak to him in the context of his own language.”

On his world tour, in 1921, Roussel spent time in Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania. A postcard from Roussel to Dufrène, copied from the original by Leiris, shows Collins Street in central Melbourne, and reads:

You would not like Melbourne, for it is full of handsomes [sic] cabs. I adore it, for I love this form of locomotion. I have already used the candle-powered heating, for it is winter here; during the first part of the crossing, I think they would have melted without my lighting them. As my room faces due north, I have the sun all day. There are delicious oysters and as there is nor in the month, it is the perfect season for them. One evening, I intend to eat kangaroo soup, which is a great Australian speciality. Horse races are a passion. There are seven tracks in Melbourne and every other city likewise; as for towns, they all have at least one. This is the home of Melba; her real name is Armstrong and Melba a stage-name taken from Melbourne. Here, there are two sea resorts called Brighton and Menton. What was the point coming so far if it was just to go to Brighton and Menton, which I have already done! A thousand tender thoughts. Raymond.

David Wills has pointed out that where Roussel means Mentone he leaves the ‘e’ off, instead referring to Menton. This could be the result of Roussel’s hand, or it may be Leiris who provides us with a transcription of the postcard, not least the possibility that the ‘e’ has been lost in translation from the original French, and paradoxically finds itself translated back into French. (menton translates from the French into the English for ‘chin’). Wills, like Foucault, concludes similarly that with any of Roussel’s texts, ”it can never be a matter of anything other than minor divergences that are potentially enormous digressions” and that this makes Roussel’s postcard, “as much a model for his books as anything else,” and that, as Perec and Matthews also suggest, permits him to construct a narrative that explores the fringes of Roussel’s literary oeuvre for:

if life contaminates his [Roussel’s] art as soon as he signs it, and does so even more explicitly once he begins to explain the excursionary procedure for it, and if the procedure contaminates the impressions of Australia written on a voyage in 1921, then we would equally expect that procedure to contaminate all his work.

Wills proceeds to almost ‘find’ Roussel in a painting by the Australian painter Charles Conder, A Holiday in Metone, offering by way of Roussel’s own geographical displacement an excuse for the lapse between the year of the paintings conception in 1888 and Roussel’s own worldly travels in 1921. The

63 Foucault, Death and the Labyrinth, 167.
64 Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 175.
66 Wills, Prosthesis, 266.
67 Wills, Prosthesis, 275.
picture displays a beach, divided into foreground and background by an elevated pier. In the foreground sits a woman in a chair reading, her back towards a dapper figure in a hat, while between them lying prone across the sand is a man, his lower leg partially obscured by his reading material. Wills suggests that we might convince ourselves of finding Gaspard and Roberte from La Doublure or that the painting presents the same over-determined description in Roussel’s poem La Vue. We could speculate further on the characters – Roussel’s mother in the seat, her son upright and watching a part of the ocean beyond the canvas, or, Dufrené reading over her diary, the prone figure of Roussel stretched out in the sand crippled by the list of barbiturates – but Wills refrains. But, unlike Perec and Matthews, Wills takes care to pace out his excursion to Menton/Mentone in full sight of his readers and only after he has told them what he is about to do, informing his readers that: “I wish to give to the latter’s fictional extravagances a certain autobiographical sense, although by no means a traditional or psychobiographic one, and so reinforce the idea that he dies choking on an excess of words.”

Roussel’s life as much as his text, remains unconfined by parenthesis; unclosable, always unlocked or slightly ajar; parenthesis that frame not only the tightly packed and closely bound words, but also his room, enclosed on all sides, or on his death at the foot of a door between two rooms. Hence, what allows Wills’ own text to drift becomes a game of ‘hangman.’ (A game that requires the right letters to be selected to spell out a word designated by a certain number of place holders. Every wrong letter derives a new line that composes first the scaffolding and the noose, and then the body, arms, legs and heads of a figure. The word must be spelled out before this sketched figure is completed and thus hung, thereby losing the game). The ambiguously present ‘é’ in Roussel’s postcard provides no end to his game, because an indeterminate line amends itself to Wills’ hung man. In the moments of his own death Roussel was said to have ejaculated, his erection the result being the same as if he had been hung. Roussel’s ‘é’ a line that amends itself to the convicted man as his erection, or taking it away, realising Roussel’s erection but only one of his legs.

Before his father’s bedside dresser that displays the barbiturates that allowed him to sleep, and in the bedroom where his father would take off his false leg, Wills’ stumbles on, his text encountering the boîte à surprises, a timber box contained within the bedside dresser that held amongst other things the licorice throat lozenges his father would give him as a child. Wills’ text uses the same propositional procedure that Roussel used in the novel Chiquenaude that allowed one word to be connected to another by the preposition à to realise the constructions dual meanings in the narrative. Wills’ box is but another Rousselian contamination, for the boîte à surprises conveys, in the slip of intonation and accent, the French word for limping – boîtier – and thus, Wills conjures both the movement and sound of his father’s gestural gait.

Let us return to the motif of the ‘doublure’ that gathers the introduction into a manifest form. The poems carnivalesque theme, realised not least by Gaspard the actor and understudy, (admittedly not a good one in either case), is a trope for the impulses behind the production of this exegesis. In his death Roussel is revealed as just the same, if not an understudy to them all: at a presentation of Impressions d’Afrique at the Théâtre Fémina in 1911, the title page informed the audience that they were about to see a play by M. Raymond Raissel; Robert Montesquiou included him in his book La Trépidation, under the name Edmond Russel; in the first draft of Locus Solus he names the journalist as Raymond Noussel, and has Cantarel, the figure of the inventor, in the publicity handouts for the play, request the audience

68 Refer Wills, Prosthesis for the following occurrences: menton translated as chin, 267; the painting by Conder, 269; Gaspard & Roberte, 272; La Vue, 272.
69 Wills, Prosthesis, 269.
70 Wills, Prosthesis, 278-285.
read the book that he has just written under the pseudonym Raymond Roussel; while the Italian police,
completing an inventory of the hotel room where he died, ascribe bound copies of Locus Solus to one
Armand Roussel; he collected letters from namesakes, including Blanche Roussel and Henri Rousselle,
and sent copies of his books to a namesake, Raymond Roussel; he was to once sit as a jury foreman for the
trial of Louis Rousselet who had been charged with the attempted murder of his lover, and murder for
killing the policeman who had come to arrest him. And, in every rhyming couplet of Roussel’s titles, in
the double ‘s’ and ‘ou’, do we not see the double ‘R’ of his monogram, or, in the raiś, raiśes, rayons and rouūes
of his half-submerged name?71 Roussel’s affliction impinging on Charlotte Dufrêne, whose real name was
in fact Marie Frédez, Charlotte was her middle name whilst Dufrêne was supposedly elected by Roussel
for her.72 Ultimately, each in someway partakes of the other, an understudy and, no less a usurper.

Since that one moment, when Roussel’s very being illuminated the page he was writing on, he has
been forever an impersonator, his own understudy to his illness and to this initial luminance. Conceived
behind closed curtains, and born into the world, without anyone’s knowledge, a language introduced
only after his death. But, the understudy was always the role he was born to play, for it was always where
his glory was secure, his final act, not the finale, but the realisation, that his death offered an eternal
return. “I only knew the feeling of success,” Roussel confesses, “when I use to sing to my own piano
accompaniment and, more especially, through numerous impersonations which I did of actors or of
anyone else. But there, at least, my success was enormous and unanimous.”73

Every impersonation, every lyric subject, like each of Roussel’s imitations, are stitched in to the
other, a lining turned out only to simultaneously be brought inwards which, in their coming together,
marks the hinge around which Roussel’s roulette turns, permitting a game of chance. Does not Roussel’s
‘land yacht’ so perfectly gather his self-confessed hero Jules Verne’s ocean going home with the euphoric
‘I’ of Rimbaud’s drunken boat? 74 A narcotic autobiography where from every window a different
landscape with a different city can be seen, and that, as an effect of the author’s speed, makes every city
pass tirelessly into his own.75 Does not the fact that there is more than one assembled, propose, through
sheer numbers that is, of all possible impersonations, the atmosphere of a festival? From outside his
window, as Roussel played out his last great mystery, he would have heard the roar of the crowd rushing
from the fascist demonstration celebrating the arrival of the Italian air-force to the fête in honour of

71 Hill suggests that Roussel’s ‘procedure’, by way of its rhyming “roots perhaps in the double R of Roussel’s monogram — make it unlikely that the recurring ‘bo’ and ‘ou’ of many of Roussel’s titles (La Doublure, Impressions d’Afrique, La Poussière de Soliels) are entirely due to chance.” See: Leslie Hill, “Roussel and the Place of Literature,” The Modern Language Review, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Oct., 1979), 823-835. Note 1, 835. Goodman finds that “it is hardly surprising that the four syllables of the writer’s names seem to surface everywhere in the text. One can only speculate as to whether the repeated use of ‘rais’ and ‘rayons’ (rays), disguised in various permuted form, is calculated anamorphic play or an over-determined semi-constitutive that has been incorporated into “Marxist” delusional system.” Laine Goodman, “Le Corps-accord rousselien: Machines à composer” Espirit créateur, 26, no. 4 (1986), 52, as quoted in, Wills, Prosthesis, 270.

72 For further explanation of these instances, refer to the excellent, Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 119; Edmond Russel, 151, 163; Raymond Russel, 194; Armand Roussel, 245; Blanche Roussel, Henri Rousselle, Raymond Roussel, 217-218; Louis Russel, 289; Marie Frèdez, 111, 346. Furthermore, a large canvas painted in 1902 by Francois Flameng decorates the ceremonial stair case of the Masséna Villa, owned by Victor Masséna. The painting portrays his wife, Princess d’Essling and her young son, Prince André Masséna alongside other family members. On the right, between two classical pillars is the Duchess of Etchegoin, (Russell’s sister, Germaine Roussel); opposite, is the Duc d’Etchegoin (Russell’s brother-in-law, Charles Ney, father of Michel Ney, Rousselle’s only heir on his death). Cardac points out that “in the background, a person, two small to be identifiable, can be seen at the first-floor window of a white house with a terrace, behind a blind, looking at the scene from a distance. This onlooker probably depicts the artist, Francois Flameng (1856-1923); but, as certain Roussellians suggest, why not Raymond Roussel?” Caradec, Raymond Roussel, auteur, 73.73 Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, 28; also, note 52, 44.

73 Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, 28; also, note 52, 44.

74 For the admiration Roussel felt for Jules Verne’s work, and his influence on Roussel’s own writing refer to : Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, note 17, 35-36. Roussel’s reverence for other writers also included the work of Victor Hugo, and Pierre Loti, see: Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, note 26, 34-37.

75 As Winkfield points out, Roussel was “an avid reader, he was fond of taking long car drives buried in his book (or rather the relevant pages which he’d turn out), never once glancing at the landscape whizzing past”. See: Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books, note 20, 36-37
Santa Rosalia, which included a “competition of fantastic allegorical lights on boats and barges on the stretch of water in front of the Foro Umberto.” Is not Dufréne’s diary not merely the double uncem of such a list offered to us by Argan as an opening into Roussel’s own imaginaire? And, does not this list merely preface the publication of Roussel’s own key confession prepared in advance of his trip to Palermo and published on his death as How I wrote certain of my books? And if not Roussel then certainly the fact that his hypochondriac mother lived in constant fear of death and sickness and routinely travelled with a doctor, is evidence enough? What does it suggest if we are to know that Argan’s chair, no less a throne than any other, from Molière’s original performance is still used, at least a double of it, at every performance of Le Malade imaginaire at La Comédie-Française? Were not Molière’s upgrades to the theatre to allow quick scene changes, exactly what Roussel’s procedure presented on stage and off? Should not Roussel, like Socrates, die soon after a bath, assured of his immortality? Is not Roussel’s confession a vademecum, when he advises the readers of his novel Impressions d’Afrique, on a slip of green paper, that those “not initiated in the art of Raymond Roussel are advised to begin this book at p. 212 and go on to p. 455, and then turn back to p. 1 and read to p. 211.” Is not this green slip the same green that Molière was forever wearing on stage and off, whilst Roussel’s green veins distinguish him in comparison, no less than an emerald man, a l’homme aux rubans verts? And would not such a title be followed by a Rousselian…
list of every nuance possible: vert naissant, vert gai, vert brun, vert de mer, vert de pré, vert de gris, merde d'oie, celadon...?82 And, does Roussel, like Molière, not play the part that he wrote for himself: "to Raymond Roussel, given by his namesake"?83 Should not the festival so perfectly be sending off Roussel’s own great ship, described by Robert Desnos’s inscription: “To Raymond Roussel | Definite calculation of the tides | Mathematics of constellations | Triangulation of destiny’s continents | Trigonometry of dreams | Measure of time | Figure of silence,” below this, inscribed in ink, a small pen drawing depicting a boat at sea.84 Could this boat serve to illustrate that he dressed for his only part?85 Is not the noise, what every would be reader can hear from their desk or chair on reading his text, an open window and reading light substitute enough for a sky illuminated with lanterns or fireworks each, in some small way replicating Roussel’s own green lumiance; the sound of Roussel working early in the morning echoing into the night, his literary loom driven by paddles describing a certain festival ship-float already disclosed?86 And before the audience should rebuke me for so many propositions, so dismissively put, let me once again refer to Leiris, who knew Roussel much better:

It was extremely difficult to get him to speak of his own work. From time to time, an isolated remark... But, in a sustained manner, it wasn’t possible. Charlotte Dufrêne, his confidante, had spoken to me of this trait, and I had occasion to find it out for myself. He had a gimmick for avoiding potentially bothersome questions, meaning those concerning his work. He would speak first! He would ask news of all sorts of things! The last time I saw him, he asked me questions about all the members of my family and friends of the family whom he had known, in a way that was perfectly mind-boggling. It was because I had tried to question him...87

A Return to Venice…

_A Clinic for the Exhausted_ is comparable with Roussel’s literary procedure by way of the heterogeneous narrative that is suspended in the antinomy between two points of reference. Furthermore, the narrative fragments that fall outside of the attributes of Building Eight and ocean liner are developed through an association with the ‘random language’ that is ‘methodically treated’ that Foucault argues Roussel’s work aptly demonstrates. The prevalence of dispossessed artifacts in _A Clinic for the Exhausted_ that involve an opportune departure away from the localised context within their respective fields of literature, architecture, philosophy or the like, is because of the need to imagine and accomplish the world differently, sharing in some of the resonance or movement evident in the expatiated flight of Raggatt’s monstrous progeny. Roussel’s procedures proliferate his literary larceny, what was gathered from “anything at hand.”88 Stolen away by Roussel, the reader is none the wiser. Raggatt exposes himself

82 Lawrenson, “The wearing o’ the Green: yet another look at ‘lhomme aux rubans verts’,” 145-164; 166, note 15.
83 Inscription in a copy of Locus Solus addressed to a namesake. The full inscription reads “to Raymond Roussel, given by his namesake, who will preciously keep his witty letter.” Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 218.
84 Caradec points out that below this inscription is a small pen drawing depicting a boat at sea. Caradec, Raymond Roussel, asterix, 279.
85 Roussel took the part of one of the sailor’s in the 1912 production of Impressions d’Afrique. This is the only part he is known to have played in any of his theatre productions. Leiris, copying Dufrêne’s comments, notes that: “He loved blue tunics and sailors’ uniforms with red pompoms,” while Michel Mey spoke of fights in sailors’ bars. Caradec, Raymond Roussel, 18; 109.
86 Roussel uses métier (profession) aubes (dawns) to realise métier (loom) à aubes (blades of hydraulic wheel), concerning in the process the loom the engineer Bedu has constructed on the shores of the Tez in Locus Solus. See: Roussel, _How I Wrote Certain of My Books_, 7, for Roussel’s explanation; and, Foucault, _Death and the Labyrinth_, 64, for an explanation of the mechanisms of the loom and its relationship to the procedure by which it comes into being. Foucault further identifies in métier à aubes, Roussel’s own penchant for hard work. According to Dufrêne, Roussel “worked an average of three hours every morning, often with the curtains drawn, by electric light, starting and finishing at the same time, just like a clerk in his office” See: Foucault, _Death and the Labyrinth_, 64; Roussel, _How I Wrote Certain of My Books_, note 30, 39.
87 Gobeil, Leiris, & Lovitt, “Interview with Michel Leiris”, 46. See, 46-49, for Leiris’ comments regarding Roussel’s influence on his own writing, and Roussel’s suicide.
88 In listing the sentences on which he would perform his literary procedure, Roussel confesses that: “I used anything at hand”. Roussel, _How I Wrote Certain of My Books_, 13.
to the same charge, when heprocures the ocean liner to spirit Building Eight away. But, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* does not operate with the intention of tracing Building Eight, imitating its form through out the project, nor does the ocean liner prescribe how we could know of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. On their own both are unable to resolve the impasse that saw each become an instrument of the other. The image of a building casting a shadow across the ocean would not have been enough to realise the absence of an ocean liner stealing away into the night. When and if the ocean liner does exhibit itself to an audience’s undertaking of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, it does not appear as how they might contend to know what an ocean liner is. The ocean liner is not purely an addition to Building Eight, nor is its appearance simply an expression of Raggatt’s surplus constitution. *A Clinic for the Exhausted* expresses the ocean liner through the competing articulation of Building Eight. Like *pillard in Impressions d’Afrique*, the ocean liner is caught up in the cumulative effort of the innumerable observations that cultivate and further the architecture of Building Eight. The artefacts and ideas that compose the field of knowledge regarding Building Eight invoke Roussel’s “haze of associations,” and function, much like the monogrammed billiard cue from whence was derived the word chiffre, according to their own rules of self-formation. Each architectural tableau that is accorded the title of a ‘Clinic’ within the undertaking of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* marks the conscientious accumulation of artefacts and ideas that constitute the many edges of building and ocean liner. Every tableau then comes to the aid of the movement between Building Eight and ocean liner and is also struck by Raggatt’s lone delirium. How a collective impression can be conveyed, drawn under the title *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, is realised by penetrating the specularity of Raggatt’s glance as it passes through the conjunction of ocean liner and building. It is the severe brevity with which Raggatt’s revelation draws together Building Eight and ocean liner that abandons the need to condition every artefact and idea.

Foucault identifies in Roussel’s work “a certain way of making language go through the most complicated course and simultaneously take the most direct path in such a way that the following paradox leaps out as evident: the most direct line is also the most perfect circle, which in coming to a close, suddenly becomes straight, linear, and as economical as light.” The Ourboric passage of Roussel’s work anticipates this project’s engagement with Raggatt’s letter as it traverses every circumstantial accent of ocean liner and Building Eight. As Roussel’s text came to its beginning-end, as *pillard* reaches out to touch *billard* through the multicursal structure of the found sentences that traces the narrative of *Impressions d’Afrique*, and as our ocean liner reaches its destination from whence it departed, weighed down by the wealth of artefacts and ideas that it has plundered, their paths become straight and linear. Each curve is not unfolded and laid out so that the path taken may be revealed. Instead the circle is revolved around its other axis, reducing the angle of perception, and reducing the curve to a line. While the original curve is unseen, it is however felt. Surrendering to the space of Roussel’s work and life, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* is distinguished by the founding of new endings, and the starting of old beginnings, perpetually narrating the history of its own obsolescence.

Raggatt’s initial perception that confused building and boat is amplified within the molecular circumstances of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. Like the diffusion of *billard* and *pillard* into the self-propagating movement of their own continual association in the course of their numerous appropriations, Building Eight and ocean liner become the hinge from which the curvature of *A Clinic for the Exhausted’s* innumerable paths can revolve around. Building Eight does not substitute the ocean liner’s capacity to

89 Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 32.
90 Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 31.
draw a passage from its own potential movements, nor is Building Eight subservient to the movements of the ocean liner. The line that appears to strike each respective edifice is not the basis for a differentiation of Building Eight and ocean liner, but marks the inadvertent proximity of each artefact in the labour to emulate the other. One line constitutes the undermining of the sources of another that returns with full force the gesture of Raggatt’s initial line. This is not a case of one line following after another and so on; it belies the imperceptible distance of proximity that realises their actions simultaneously across the undertaking of A Clinic for the Exhausted. The many lines that compose Building Eight and ocean liner do not exhibit the same impression, the same felt force as one another. Instead, every line further dissolves the symbolic boundary that would seek to compare building and boat, stretching open the void between the eponymous figures of Building Eight and ocean liner such that the measure of their passing into one another is extended.

In as much as the convoluted theatricality of Roussel’s procedures could be acknowledged as an appropriate method of comprehending A Clinic for the Exhausted, (particularly as it discloses elsewhere other than in his text his literary conventions,) the expressive potential of a method that strays from passive agency to a lucid self-deception must recognises the performative potential of Roussel’s manuscripts to go further than a cast of artefacts and a set of procedures. Framing, by way of Roussel’s own procedures, the contrivance of Raggatt’s text permits A Clinic for the Exhausted the experiential opportunity to lay Building Eight and ocean liner on the same page. This becoming-ocean liner is defined as an inflection that registers the sudden change in Raggatt’s perception as it opens up across the surface of Building Eight. As Bernard Cache explains an ‘inflection’ is what “designates a pure event of curvature where the tangent crosses the curve,”91 it is an intrinsic singularity between the extrinsic singularities, what we know as Building Eight and ocean liner. Because Raggatt’s drunken state permits only pure sensations he erases the coordinates of the axis by which we could claim his vision in Cartesian space and makes evident the encirclement of references and possibility which otherwise would be lost to sobriety; As Cache informs us, “inflection is the sign of images that are strictly defined while being ungraspable.”92 Raggatt’s immersion suggested by a state of awareness that “concentrates only on inflections,”93 coincides by chance and necessity with the opportunity that Building Eight take flight. The allusion in A Clinic for the Exhausted to a spilling out and spilling over is called into being by Raggatt’s conceptual Oedema which is then demonstrated by the ornate procedures of Roussel’s literary output. The conjunction of Raggatt and Roussel’s text propagates the relations of Roussel’s ornately conceived monogram of his mirrored initials: JR. The primary image of Building Eight as ocean liner, the inflection characterised by the slippage from one image to another marked out by Raggatt’s glancing blow, is not a final or closed image; as Cache explains furthers: “This perception is necessarily fleeting and variable, since we can’t be come “used to it”. We can’t settle into it through the determination of a best reaction, it is a mobile image in which an unlocatable position eludes our comfort.”94 Hence Raggatt’s gaze, as it conflates the dimensions of Building Eight and ocean liner, is forestalled by the specularity of the inflection on the horizon and traced by the undertaking of his letter to Corrigan.

The line that marks the in between by which the image of Building Eight as ocean liner is constructed also intercedes in the intercalary space that marks Roussel’s turn from his own luminous ‘inflection’

92 Cache, Earth Moves, 102.
93 Cache, Earth Moves, 16.
94 Cache, Earth Moves, 16-17.
to the ‘infection’ of Rousselian procedures which contaminate his own literature, the writing of others, and thus what must also make this exegesis suspect: the inf-|-ection, a single ‘I’, that tempts the reader to posit the primacy of the biographical occasion in the task of interpretation, and that underwrites the operation of their authorship. *A Clinic for the Exhausted* is embodied in Perec and Matthews, and Wills’ virtuoso performance, but its expression is inseparable from the nature of its own emergence, an intimate knowledge of the phenomenon of Roussel’s desire to have sought through his writings a consideration of his very subject; as Roussel explains: “one writes to become someone other than who one is.”95 By mobilising the compositional equivalence of Roussel’s literary space, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* lies within the event of its speaking out but with the recourse to an unlimited space which can readily be written on, appropriated, used by *any* and *everybody*.

Raggatt’s letter blurs this vision, his ‘eye’, by representing the realm of uncontrollable resemblances as a register of his narrating voice, an uncertain lyrical subjectivity, which he selects as a cure for the differentiated relation between the subject and the object of vision. This is not to say that his cure would in fact absolve him of this vision. Like Argan’s tawdry inclusion into the profession, Raggatt’s cure is one that allows him to sustain his manifestation just that bit longer. Furthermore, Raggatt as the narrator of this story is duplicitous, because he is not only the one who orchestrates the becoming-ocean liner of Building Eight, but he is also the one that transcribes it to the page. He is his own amanuensis. It is the scribe that allows the slip from infection and inflection, Mentone and Menton, to pass into one another, introducing, by a lapse in concentration or an overzealous stroke of the pen, sporadically infecting the story with an ‘I’.

To what extent that Roussel’s language can be scrutinised, separated or associated with the mechanisms that underlie the progress of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* is an endeavour that would evidently, (if we are to take into account the alignment and subsequent examination here) be caught up in a Rousselian refrain of its own. Nevertheless the experiment does not leave either Roussel’s work or that of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* indifferent to the heedlessness of such an undertaking. Both projects are staked on the surfeit of excess which they induce unto themselves, a certain insistence and resistance to the conditions, junctures, fractures that are poised, always doubly ready to address everyone and to draw a close.

The following text will address the unmeetable dimensions of this PhD, to the extent that the deforming potential of an ‘I’ that unmoors Building Eight from its concrete foundations initiates a practice that wields the power to think otherwise.

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95 Foucault, answering a question from the translator Ruas that regards Roussel’s turn to theatre from writing to gain popular success, believes that Roussel had also sought popular success with his writing. Foucault states: “There’s a beautiful passage in which he said that after his first book he expected that the next morning there would be rays of light streaming from his person and that everyone on the street would be able to see that he had written a book.” Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, 182.
For What It’s Worth
And is it a privilege of my present age or the misfortune of my whole life that I always see myself from behind, when in fact I’ve always had my back to the wall?

Jean Genet, *Prisoner of Love*¹

His whisper was getting fainter and fainter, and all the time he stared straight out through the port-hole, in which there was not even a star to be seen. I had not interrupted him. There was something that made comment impossible in his narrative, or perhaps in himself; a sort of feeling, a quality, which I can’t find a name for. And when he ceased, all I found was a futile whisper.

Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer* ²

A Question of the un/known

The philosopher Gilles Deleuze has stated that the outcome of his efforts to study a history of philosophy through the aggregate interpretation of other philosophical practices amounts to a “sort of buggery or (it comes to the same thing) immaculate conception.”³ Deleuze conceives an image of himself “taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous.”⁴ By taking a position out of sight and according an immaculate conception as the result of his transgressive collaboration Deleuze opens up the categorisation of his offspring to the monstrous. The designation of the monstrous is taken up by the unpredictable dimensions and variability of Deleuze’s procedures, as well as the radical condensation of unknown categories that would denote the offspring’s species-formation as monstrous. The monstrous in turn frames any discourse — including this one — that emerges as a consequence of the evidential impasse incurred by Deleuze’s model of transgression with his accomplice. It will, therefore, be necessary for this text to address further the terms by which the monstrous at once binds and liberates any additional account, and, furthermore, how it may come to underpin the future circumstances of this thesis.

Teratology, or the science of monsters was founded by Etienne Saint-Hilaire and his son Isodore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Teratogenists, as Marie-Hélène Huet explains, believed a monster was something that could not carry out certain roles, such as the means to procreate. To them monstrosity was another classification of science, normalised by its inclusion into the ordering system of the scientific gaze, and within the economy of moral and physical heredity resemblances. A particular example of categorizing was Ernest Martin’s *Historie des monstres depuis l’antiquité jusqu’à nos jours* (1880), which uses the terms ‘simple monsters’ and ‘complex monsters’. Camille Dareste in his *Production artificielle des monstruosités* (1891) provided a more detailed model of Martin’s simple and complex classifications. Dareste determined four categories, *hemiterata*, being slight anomalies, and *heterotaxia*, *hermaphrodisms*, and *monstrosities* of a greater complexity. These in


³ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. M. Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). 3. Slavoj Žižek imprecates the Jewish legend of the birth of the Messiah to illuminate Deleuze’s sense of buggery and immaculate conception. Žižek goes on to explain that “God wants to give birth to the Messiah, but knows that all of the forces of evil are waiting in front of the vagina of Shekina to kill the Messiah the minute he is born. So God goes at night to his mistress, Lilith, the symbol of evil, and penetrates her anally (the expression used can also mean that he pess into her vagina). The Messiah will come from Lilith after anal sex: this is the way God tricks the forces of evil, by bringing the Messiah through evil.” See, Slavoj Žižek, *Deleuze and the Lacanian Real*, http://www.lacan.com/zizrealac.htm, 09 September 2009. Also refer to: Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.)

turn were again divided, in such a way that hemiterata found itself composed of autosites, omphalosites and parasites. Experimentation thus became essential to the mapping of heredities and extended to producing ‘monsters’ in the laboratory.5

These interpretations compiled and outlined the development of the theoretical concerns of the monstrous that, at least by the end of the nineteenth century, frame it as what no longer could be defined alone as the uncategorisable. The monstrous reflected a measure of what could not be explained through experimentation, expressed according to categories of monstrosities further classified by their level of complexity. Of these classifications, monstrosity was subsequently included as a sub-category. The monstrous was itself appropriated into the language of classification that marked the vocabulary of science, and simultaneously found itself the collective marker for the unknown. For the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, a language that marks the oscillating passage between an impression and its use as a universal referent straddles a temporal and spatial divide where “creatures are irreparably astray.”6 This gap, between the universal and the particular, establishes the same fraught passage negotiated by the monstrous; the lack of visible monstrosities does not diminish the discursive rupture that it occupies in a language that would mark out its claim to a vocabulary and that would epitomise the circumstances of its life in the limbo of the un/known. Deleuze’s offspring is therefore not a life in jeopardy requiring a gesture that would deliver it to the known or unknown, but is an ambiguous sense that can never be ascertained, that can never be wholly known or unknown.

The monstrous is a language that exhausts language, because each context in which it would be uttered with full certainty is undermined by its presence seemingly elsewhere and, which disencumbers it of the necessity to betray itself to meaning. The monstrous takes place in the potential of its own domain. It is a language according to Agamben that has “completely achieved its “declension” in cases and moods and is now “stretched out on its back” exposed and neutral.”7 It appears that the supine is a metaphor for the type of language that would determine the origins of Deleuze’s offspring. But, the metaphor remains without an origin for every name would attribute the offspring to someone else: the monstrous is what marks the emergence of the philosopher’s offspring and denial of its emergence. The monstrous laments being called by name, convinced otherwise that it goes by any other and can thus only be pursued entirely through pseudonyms. It is this labyrinthine ambiguity, Agamben contends, that makes every wanton liaison with language appear “always on the verge of ending up in bed.”8 The monstrous is a language that divulges itself in the unmasking of a threshold that cuts across the symptomatic spatial and temporal excess of its own monstrosity.

An expression that cannot be nominated by its form or its content alone is the result of what takes place between Deleuze and the other philosopher, a monstrosity or something entirely un/known and therefore monstrous. However, Deleuze’s pose and his surprise at the resulting offspring demonstrates a paradoxical outcome between two parties whereby the other party has no sense of their role as co-conspirator. Lost to the onanistic pleasure of their proximity the resulting emissions from each party’s complicity in the act are exploited by the other party. Any subsequent offspring begets knowledge

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7 Agamben, The Coming Community, 59.
8 Agamben, The Coming Community, 6.
of only one of the philosophers who takes part. The other is a necessary but unaware participant in
the production of an offspring that remains anonymous to their initial close confinement within an
unthinkable act of deception. But, as Deleuze further explains, “the child was bound to be monstrous
too, because, it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions.”
As a consequence of Deleuze’s intimate distance with another, a procedure which charges Deleuze with
making a baby behind the accomplices back, the philosopher comes face to face with the incongruities
of his own supine position. Hence, both parties remain open to the possibility of not knowing; that
every emission evades detection including all that is brought forth from their liaison. Thus, in effect the
monstrous is analogous to what is seized in advance of the emergence of Deleuze’s prodigal offspring
and, that which is perpetuated in a life born on its back.

By co-opting the science of monsters that is found to have a correlation in the expressive potential
of Deleuze’s oanistic procedure this text will postulate that the mutable coordinates of production that
operate in “making a baby behind one’s back” cannot be ignored because such movements remain
unevidenced. By transposing all of the resources of the monstrous, this text argues for what is elided in
a language that arches its back.

The Peculiarly Difficult Task of Remaining Hidden

In Metamorphoses, Ovid tells of two lovers Pyramus and Thisbe, who live next door to each other but
remain separated by parental opposition and a wall that is shared by their respective family homes. The
wall however exhibits a crack that permits them to communicate to each other, to arrange a meeting
and which leads ultimately, through a series of misread signs, to their deaths. During the passage of
whispers through the wall no face stares back that could identify from whom they originate. Pyramus
and Thisbe’s desire hence remains unacknowledged by any physical recognition, nevertheless, the desire
that springs forth is not unknowable because they escapes the embrace or glance of the other. Their
whispers secure a space to conjugate their exchange in the crack in the wall. This encounter enables
Pyramus and Thisbe to hesitantly describe a meeting in an intimate divulgence of whispers that oversteps
any perceptible fatigue engendered by their segregation on either side of a solid wall. A gap in a solid wall
describes the imperceptible caesura of Deleuze’s coital embrace; the resulting contrary figure of desire
that is squeezed out from Pyramus and Thisbe’s intimate separation gives way to an image of monstrosity.
The alignment of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe with an image of monstrosity corresponds with
Cesare Casarino’s account of the ‘voice’ of those who whisper:

“To whisper, in fact, is not only to speak in a lower volume but also to speak with a different
kind of voice altogether – namely, with a voice that has lost its recognizable uniqueness, that no longer
belongs to a specifically nameable body, that can be spoken and shared by anybody.”

10 I am indebted to a now lost reference for this terminology. I can only offer a scholarly consolation by deferring to Paul Carter’s The Lie of the Land in
which Carter, having lost the origin of a reference, quotes the Renaissance writer Montaigne: “I am so outstanding a forgetter that … I forget even my own words
and writings … If anyone wanted to know the sources of the verse and exemplar that I have accumulated here, I would be at a loss to tell him.” Paul Carter,
11 For an extended synopsis see: Louis Marin, Sublime Poussin, trans. C. Porter, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 85-92. A more contemporary,
and perhaps, more appropriate figure of the consummate homosexual desire exhibited by Deleuze is found in the scene from the film by Jean Genet, Le Chant
d’Amour, that portrays two convict lovers whose cells are brought together by a stone wall through which they pass smoke from each others mouth through a straw
inserted into a small hole in the mortar. The airy, formlessness of the convicts smoke offers a visual description for what passes between both parties, and what can
remain hidden from others. The wall does not permit the two convicts to come face to face literally, in which case, there is no face to face meeting. However, it
is the wall that brings them face to face, that through its placement and its lamentable continuation as it moves between, gathers the two convicts on either side.
12 Casarino, Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis, 216.
That which 'no longer belongs to a specifically nameable body' reiterates the conceptual parameters of the monstrous whilst 'a voice that has lost its recognizable uniqueness' anticipates the production and staging of various monstrosities which included the realisation of the monstrous as a specifically nameable body within the evaluation of the unnameable. The monstrous formation of Pyramus and Thisbe's love and its inception in the whispers that are buried in an impermeable interlocutory space, suspends their desire momentarily in a lexical uncertainty, a double bind that conceives of each whisper as an origin and ultimately what is deprived of an origin. In order for Pyramus and Thisbe to be convinced of the others desire, the medium of communication must function in such a way that any whisper that is allowed to establish a legitimate self-identity must also be overcome. An overcoming does not necessarily mean to throw out, to ignore or to compete with the wall that separates. It suggests that any moment of 'conception' must celebrate the mechanisms that allow either figure, Deleuze|other philosopher, Pyramus|Thisbe, to liberate the other, to mobilise the other, to think themselves otherwise. Every other, in some way, is redolent of the other: the unassailable paradox of the monstrous is that it is always a pseudonym for itself and another self. Thus the task of this text is to make an audience an accomplice.

Pyramus and Thisbe must risk everything, including themselves, if they are to realise the numerous utterances of desire introduced by an elaborate correspondence of pseudonyms. The whispers do not annotate an original desire that is elaborated from Pyramus and Thisbe having known of one another, nor do they then reproduce the greater collective fiction of desire simply because of the lack of any philosophical predicates that could ensure the extravagance of Pyramus and Thisbe correspondence in the wall. If Pyramus and Thisbe have any chance of asserting the parameters by which the successive utterances embody their desire, they must take up the same radical discourse undertaken by the Teratogenist: as Huet explains, "the teratogenist creates his won field of experimentation, imagines a new experimental domain." Pyramus and Thisbe must capitalise on the spatial and temporal site of immanence that is marked out in the elaborate embodiment of identity that emerges from the pseudonym. The experiential and the experimental must acknowledge a pseudonym that is more than an inscription from a lover to a beloved scribbled across the face of an accomplice. A pseudonym evokes the lover by name, an incantation that bears an image of the not-named on its back, on the side not seen and not heard. The beloved returns this gesture in turn, but the beloved’s failure to be seen to call out by their lover is mirrored in the pseudonym that presents itself as an epitaph for the one who is not-named. The pseudonym prevents the lover from being seen, but simultaneously, is also what the lover stands against. The pseudonym is the background and the other side of this background, what stands with their back to the wall, the lover’s side, which by all measure remains imperceptible; it is the pseudonym that is never seen in the round. The pseudonym is a pretense for what stands for and in lieu of, and simultaneously occupies the place of the lover. Louis Marin, elaborating on the function of the epitaph, ultimately traces the course of the pseudonym evidenced in the enfolding of Pyramus and Thisbe’s whispers:

this motif, which the expression “in the place of…” designates, is the key motif of the autoptic; in the double sense of “what is in the place of…, in the place in space occupied by…” and “what is being substituted for…., what replaces as its delegate, stands in the stead of…,” the “in place of…” defines, in its ambiguity, the deep structure of representation and, more generally, of the sign as reflexive-transitive. But it is also the mainspring of strategic
mechanism, since in the same place and owing to this substitution, the “same” dies and is born at the same moment, a form of the divine dream of being the author of one’s self.14

The pseudonym uncovers what is unsaid in the gap of the wall, without ordering or reducing how Pyramus or Thisbe could avail themselves with a legitimate naming of their desire. A gap in a solid wall is not something that the two worlds of Pyramus or Thisbe on either side of the wall can make sense of. A solid wall cannot have a gap if it is to be understood as solid. A gap in a solid wall is conditional on the shades of whisper that mingle within the barriers that keep Pyramus and Thisbe apart. The play of light and shadow that materialise across the spatial and temporal corporeality of Pyramus and Thisbe’s whispers, hint only of the lubricated movements that accompany Deleuze’s willingness to propagate - the shifting, slipping, dislocations faithful to the minuet of desire in the smallest of gaps in an otherwise solid impasse.15 The pseudonym entails the very traits of the offspring composed entirely of the divergent gestures performed by Deleuze. The pseudonym seizes the offspring provisionally beyond the gesture of a wall by revealing the closeness of the oscillating movements of desire between accomplices. It is here between the whispers, in the countless instances of a language that cuts across the face of an ill-fated collaborator that Deleuze, in his nocturnal solitude, comes face to face with the gap of his ownistic emissions. Deleuze, like the protagonists of Ovid’s tale contemplates a threshold at the limit of two outsides, as himself and in place of another, at once the conjugate space of that threshold and the dehiscence that initiates the multiple testimonies to an outside. In claiming the emergence of a monster Deleuze speaks of a marred surface that gives almost everything away; in his decree of an immaculate conception he scrutinises the spectrum of desire envisaged by the imperceptible whispers. Wedged between the two genealogies of the monstrous, what is held forth, a pseudonym as much as a collaborator.

Not-knowing: how we might know what we don’t yet know how to know...

The rhetorical what is it worth is the privileged ground of knowing’s modus operandi, as the instrument with which to combat a experimental path of expression. It is an interjection that endeavours to make tangible and plausible a task that cannot be comprehended outright. The question of who or what ‘worth’ is (in that the appellation in this text fails to discern outright worth as a preposition or as a proper noun) does not suddenly reveal something hidden about worth, nor is the question of worth an oppressive intrusion that counters the consequence of not knowing. Instead what worth is fails to manifest itself in a category that could be assailed by critical or subjective judgment, finding itself indeterminately an answer and a question. Any testimony to either would compose nothing but outright conjecture, because the intimate question of what worth is established in a query of knowing, suspends itself in the belief that it can ultimately establish, at the least an allegorical significance, and subsequently persuade another that such a position distinguishes it as legitimate. What worth is fails to emerge because, a comprehensive and exemplary answer is at odds with the question of worth maintaining, as a matter of definition, that it does not know, and furthermore, fails to identify, as an imperative to knowing, the extent to which what worth is may invest in not-knowing as a strategy to affirm its own struggle to account for itself.

Irit Rogoff in her essay “Academy as Potentiality” confesses that she attests to sometimes having

14 Marin, Sublime Poussin, 199.
15 The minuet was a popular eighteenth-century French style of dancing that prefigures contemporary ballet. It became popular because “it was the only one [dance] that could be performed to any music in the appropriate meter, rather than a specific tune.” See: Sarah R. Cohen, “Watteau’s Fête Galante and the Artful Body” in, Antoine Watteau: Perspectives on the Artist and the Culture of his Time, ed. Mary D. Sheriff, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 94-105; 98.
no idea what to say, when existing structured knowledge does not offer her the means to negotiate a newly discovered path of expression. Because subjective expression cannot be foreseen or attested to by existing bodies of knowledge to have clear and comparable outcomes that are the result of an investigative process, the expression is deemed foreign or at the least subjected to an interrogation via existing accepted models of knowing and expression. Rogoff’s expression of ill-comprehension as a legitimate recourse to knowing is subsequently excluded. 16 Brian Massumi has noted that contemporary institutions have often derided a result that is a subjective expression, reducing it to a model of “uncritical subjectivism,” personal treachery that is evaluated as irresponsible, narcissistic or egotistical within the framework of existing models of assessment that can attest to the rationality and therefore the comprehension of what is being communicated. The validity of an expression is hence determined by saying and meaning mirroring, representing and describing each other, the expression anchored to a context, the content of the expression fundamentally predetermined by an object, systematically perceived an arm’s length away so that a reliable exchange of information could take place between subjects. Nevertheless, Massumi acknowledges that putting expression into context is fundamentally limited by the fact that meaning is not produced in isolation, but is rather a consequence of an array of subjectivities and objective structures brought together on an irredeemably incoherent plane of meaning, across which meaning emerges as the temporal event of a field of complex factors not clearly defined exterior to this event and which, paradoxically, include the domain of meaning in which the expression takes place. Meaning is not inherent to the object of that form, or to any definition that would fix to a final or agreed upon form a meaning; rather, it occupies the vast domain of a potential meaning that is inherently subjective. Massumi argues that the casual faith held for a system of a mirrored exchange constituted the way in for post-structuralist and post-modern discourse to engage in the discursive correspondence of meaning; in an excess of signification. He argues that post-modern discourse, while operating by parody and irony to expose the absurdity of the limits of the existing expression-content system, conversely held the existing system as a back drop to their own activities so that their political imperative would remain comprehensible. Without a correspondence between expression and form, post-modernism would become unanchored. Further to this, he identifies in post-modernism’s re-centering of speaking and writing subjects nostalgia for the return of the author, whose death had been their initial call to action. The preliminary questioning of the expression-content model by post-modernism had merely seen it re-appear without question; the post-modern subject is reproduced as an expression of the initial system that afforded it a foundation. Consequently there was little room to cultivate a truly expressive subjective agency outside the existing system, and the opaque power relations of post-modern discourse. Equally though, Charles Altieri understands both the post-structuralist and post-modern discourse to be as politically disabling as each other. He believes that the post-structuralist treatment of the subject as an “irreducibly indeterminate principle of free play”18 failed to understand the complex historical and social paradigms that would allow disenfranchised subjects to forge an identity. Subsequently, the post-modern account of the subject imagined by identity politics failed to understand how identities could be pursued from the political affiliations that ran concurrent to the exemplary distinctions of race, class and gender, particular when it came to understanding the multiple associations that a subject may engender when describing their identity. It did not take account of the making with the process of identifying with or resisting these categorical reductions.

Rogoff argues that the fact that we locate ourselves in a particular condition through these different affiliations, identifies a paradigm shift from criticism as a "form of finding fault and of exercising judgment according to a consensus of values," through critique as an operation of "examining the underlying assumptions that might allow something to appear as a convincing logic" to a model Rogoff terms "criticality." Criticality is located away from the assured model of expression-content, instead "operating from an uncertain ground of actual embededness." Criticality is not an account held outside the role of critique rather, it makes apparent how the post-modern subject believed itself to be a consequence of its own choice similarly failing to see itself as an expression of the very system it had set out to lampoon. Criticality sits in parallel to the structuralist claim on critique but, "wants nevertheless to inhabit culture in a relation other than one of critical analysis; other than one of illuminating flaws, locating elisions, allocating blames." The notion of creativity, as Rogoff writes, has centered on "old fashioned notions of inspiration without articulation, slightly less old fashioned notions of the importance of analytical and critical proficiency all vie with contemporary pedagogies of actualisation, embodiment, and criticality as the lived out consequences of knowing," that all co-exist around a complacency or exasperation that imagines the domain of not knowing. The model of critique in which "the manifest of cultures must yield up some latent values and intentions through endless processes of investigation and uncovering" and the model of critical analysis which "attempts to turn the latent of hidden conditions and unacknowledged desires and power relations into a cultural manifest" assumes that all true expression must contain meaning, and that only through the modal variances of critique and critical analysis can this be uncovered. Critical judgment manoeuvres expression through the no-man’s land of not knowing and not meaning. In doing so it fails to understand the complex associations of desire that manifest themselves in being creative. Deleuze suggests that, as a consequence of the criticism faced by the opposition of universal or individual knowledge, we have lost interest in the prospect of the subject and that a renewed effort to re-conceptualise the discourse surrounding the term is necessary so that the subject can "confront the field of questions to which they are in answer." In an attempt to engage the subject, this text will pursue an alternative to knowledge sourced creativity that corresponds to Rogoff’s pursuit of “how we might know what we don’t yet know how to know,” in the expressive potential of not-knowing.

**Kairos: an Excursion between Theory and Practice**

The potential of not-knowing is observed in the practice of the early nineteenth-century French educator Josep Jacotot. Jacotot observed the teaching of Latin, mathematics, and law, before being offered a position teaching French Literature at the University of Louvain, Brussels, following his exile from France after the Restoration. Jacotot’s university lecturers would come to be held in high regard by his French speaking students, to the extent that he began to gather further admirers who wished

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20 Rogoff, “Academy as Potentiality,” 17.
23 Rogoff, “Academy as Potentiality,” 16.
24 Rogoff, “Academy as Potentiality,” 16.
27 Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kirsten Ross. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991). As Kristin Ross notes in her introduction, throughout the text it remains difficult to distinguish the voice of Rancière and that of Jacotot, or in fact the potential of a third protagonist. Consequently, I have rendered all concepts as that of Jacotot, at once so as not to suddenly introduce Rancière, or to have to explain how and where one voice separates from the other, if at all this could be done without diminishing the value of this text to the exegesis presented here.
partake of his lectures but who did not speak French. Equally problematic was that fact that Jacotot had yet to grasp Flemish and thus had no way to communicate consistently with the newly acquired member’s of his audience. There was no vernacular means to communicate between the parties without the use of a translator to mediate the passage from one language to the other. It was therefore necessary for Jacotot to determine a commonality which could resolve the quandary brought about by the success of his lectures. Communicating via the translator Jacotot requested the students purchase the bi-lingual edition of the twenty-four volume novel *Télémaque* by the French author Fénelon which presented, without conferring the regulatory of a line by line comparison, on one page the French text and on the opposite a Flemish translation. Jacotot asked his students to learn the French text without offering any aid beyond the irregular adjacency of the translation presented in the book, and then asked the students to write about what they had read, verifying their arguments through references to the *Télémaque*. The result exceeded his expectations. Far from childish representations they had achieved grammatically correct sentences containing complex ideas, all in French, a language they previously did not know but had learnt without the aid of Jacotot, whose position of authority had partially lain in the fact that he was a native French speaker.

Jacotot’s claim to authority was also determined by his command of French Literature, a skill which required him demonstrating a measured teaching, taking his students from the basic to the most complex literary idea without however, the student ever surpassing the knowledge that bestowed on Jacotot his privileged position as an explicator of the texts he taught from. Jacotot’s student was forever to remain a student in relation to his authority because his position could never be anything but contrary to the students position if the activity of the institution was to make sense. The difficult circumstance in this instance, was that Jacotot’s newly found audience had not been provided with a class in French grammar beyond the provision of *Télémaque*. Jacotot could not teach them because he, like his student remained ignorant of a language, unable to speak in Flemish. To ‘know French’ would have required the students to be given an explanation of the rules that frame the construction and dissemination of the French language. But the students were given no more than a request from Jacotot that if they wanted to ‘know French’ then they needed to ‘know the *Télémaque*’. Jacotot’s mastery was not played out in his ability to recount to his students his own knowledge of the French language. His presence had only been necessary so as to prompt the student who did not know French, to realise their capacity to do so within the pages of the *Télémaque*. In doing so, Jacotot had enabled the students to break the existing hierarchy of explication that had served to subordinate their intelligence to his own. The student’s intellectual capacity, traditionally linked to an unfolding of knowledge perpetuated in a coherent system that subordinated the will of the student to the intelligence of a master, was drawn-out, exposed and subsequently affirmed via the knowledge acquired from the translation of the *Télémaque*. Jacotot’s experiment had exposed the institution to an epistemological crisis. The ability to not only learn French, but to do so without an explanation from the institutions appointed authority, had raised a question over just who really enabled knowledge. Additionally, Jacotot had inadvertently unbound the mechanism which saw his knowledge as the apex that authored the student’s intellectual capacity and their will to learn.

To test the hypothesis that the master’s role was not that of explication but rather enabling the student to realise their own intellectual capacity, Jacotot set out to teach two subjects he was completely incompetent in - painting and piano - to his French Literature students. Jacotot believed that to enable a student to conceive of their intellectual capacity, their master must be able to think themselves capable
of teaching even though they remain ignorant of the knowledge to do so. This required the master to realise that “any human work of art is the practice of the same intellectual potential” and, that each member of the community could equally partake of their intellectual potential which remained the origin and not the final aim of their intellectual emancipation. Jacotot’s method suggested that “in the case of shoe-makers making shoes etc, they must also be, in their manner, grammarians, moralists, or physicists.” He argued that to emancipate and to be emancipated, it was necessary to “extend each ‘persons affairs’ to the point where it is part and parcel of the common reason enjoyed by all.” The generosity of emancipation was labeled by Jacotot as *panecastic*, drawn from the Greek *Pan* meaning “everything” and *hekastos* meaning “everything in each,” their unhyphenated conjunction determining the suggestion that “everything is in everything.” Jacotot’s hypothesis proposed that the student’s intellectual awareness was conceived through their confrontation with a community as a whole: “understanding must be understood in its true sense: not the derisive power to unveil things, but the power of translation that makes one speaker confront another.” To teach painting and piano, Jacotot was robbed of his ability to speak with authority to his students, for his authority had only ever been confronted from within the language of French Literature, while his students, having been confronted with French Literature in French, were now to undertake leave of this subject for others they had no knowledge of. While the students had achieved the learning of French this had been enabled by the strength of their desire to learn French Literature from a French speaker. Jacotot’s proposal robbed the students of their language and their will to learn, faced with the prospect of a skill they had not previously manifested any interest in learning. But, Jacotot’s everyday experience of “translating and counter translating thoughts into words and words into thought” showed that language was in itself to be always robbed of a language and to be in turn capable of “perpetual improvisation.” Furthermore, Jacotot had already shown that his role was not to imbue knowledge, but was to enable the student’s will to conceive of their intellectual capacity.

Jacotot’s epistemological improvisation devises a way for an expression to be comprehended without being universalised. His desire to cultivate in his students the aspiration to invent was enabled by his establishment in the provisional excess of his own will-to-invent, in *kairos*. *Kairos*, as Eric Charles White argues, must be understood as a “principle of invention” because “it implies that there can never be more than a contingent and provisional management of the present opportunity.” *Kairos* can only ever be bound by the irreconcilable tension between tradition and innovation, between the knowledge of past experience and the knowledge that is always yet to come. Because it does not rest within a closed system that would see its objective as already founded and bound to the progress of historical experience *kairos* is subsequently not a statement of truth. Equally, *kairos* is not an arbitrary statement that could be dismissed. Its ‘truth’ is an instant of itself, which in turn is bound to the proliferation of method that determines the very course of its improvisations. Its ‘truth’ is always provisional because every appeal to a statement of coherence implies a particular improvisation which in turn befalls the very method that gave rise to it in an infinite series of improvisations. This is not to say that it remains incoherent, and that

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28 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 36.
29 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 34.
30 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 39.
31 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 27.
32 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 64.
33 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 63.
34 Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, 64.
it abandons tradition for the irrationality of anything goes. As White explains, kainos will:

slide undecidedly between the promise of a transtemporal knowledge and an admission of its inability to transcend the historical determinations of its own occasion. At once a theory and a practice, it remains caught in an inevitable double bind between an intention to “speak the truth” about the endlessness of interpretation and an awareness that every “truth” (including the one that would posit “no-truth”) is historically determined.37

It is not necessary for this text to recount the methods with which Jacotot taught painting or piano. Jacotot’s method cannot be translated by this investigation into an authorial representation made anew, but neither does his method seek to devalue the importance of knowledge whose imperative is derived from a scholarly examination. There is much that could be speculated in the discrepancy between being able to draw or play the piano, and to be a virtuoso of either. Jacotot does however put to work a method, but rather, like his students, learns of it not from the beginning but in the midst of it. In this case, the case of the Télémaque should not be seen as a universal method, it is merely a fragment of a method observed and recognises that “to speak about Télémaque they [the students] had at their disposition only the words of Télémaque.”38 In every case of emancipation, the master asks the student to firstly mediate any of their claims in the appropriation of what is in front of them and secondly to attune their improvised compositions to the same temporal conditions that enable such revolutionary autonomy that demands an altogether different kind of relation between that person’s will and their intellectual capacity. For Jacotot, emancipation is a method of deciphering, but it is one that functions through an indirect discourse: appearing here and there only to be taken up, again and again in another mode, resisting any self-representation.39 It is Jacotot who is subsequently caught up in his improvisation as he proceeds to teach what he does not know without any knowledge of how to do so.

What is a Measure of Not-knowing

In the essay “Composition and Interpretation” Hans-Georg Gadamer discusses ambiguity in the face of poetic language, believing that “the ambiguity of poetic language answers to the ambiguity of human life as a whole [and that] interpretation seems to be a genuine determination of existence rather than an activity or an intention.”40 Gadamer locates this ambiguity and the resulting unease as the condition of an interpretive gesture. He argues that this gesture embraces the paradoxical, offering itself as nothing more than our surprise at coming face to face with ourselves as the condition of such a gesture. As Gadamer explains, “what a gesture expresses is ‘there’ in the gesture itself [and] reveals no inner meaning behind itself, [however] what the gesture reveals is the being of meaning rather than the knowledge of meaning.”41 Consequently the language of interpretive gesture is not the interpretation of a subjective interiority but rather “the interiority of rapt attention wholly absorbed in the enigma of our existence.”42

The ridiculous and essential vocation of Jacotot is not only felt but reiterated as a condition of Gadamer’s own improvised composition. The will-to-invent by which Gadamer’s essay not only sets

out but also partakes in, and which is assured by the potential of subsequent interpretations, effaces all possibility of a truth returning to an original concrete translation. Thus every text is a translation, including this one, that begets the existence of a truth in an action that turns a back to any truth. This further implies that every improvisation is adhered to a monstrous emergence, because every interpretation presents to an audience the ineradicable stain that stigmatises what is born on its back. Hence, any qualification that demands to know the content of the translated composition, also negotiates an encounter with the monstrous conception of each and every improvisation, including their very own gesture to faithfully translate the spectacle presented to them. Improvisation is unable to be evaluated by any other attribute than the monstrous, because attributes that could render one translation as this or that remains unable to establish where this or that takes place in the satiety that is accorded to the ceaseless supposition of what that demonstrates the affective force of a gesture of not-knowing.

Personally identifying with the confounding experience of what worth is outlines the proleptic functioning of what as an appeal that orientates the will-to-invent alongside the emergence of incomprehension in a chain of monstrous improvisations. As Jacotot’s initial use of the Télémaque suggests, the will-to-invent is provisional on finding how contested paths may be shared and how points of intersection may be located. This is not to say that homogeneity is sought, and that this homogeneity takes place in the domain of the addressee or from the source of the address. There is no ‘monstrous voice’ that can contain the innumerable variances of tonal inflection that take place in the emergence of incomprehension. What is not an empty space of full and total agreement. Accounting for the value of these improvisations requires the employment of everything at hand so that every gesture may be conceived of as decisive, recognising that any improvisation be given credence within the gestures it tries to maintain and taking into account that the generosity of each gesture credits an audience with knowing it as well as it knows itself.43 Conversely, as has already been presented in the case of Roussel’s posthumous confession, an audience cannot be reassured of what worth is by it alone, without doubting the degree to which what worth is exaggerates the limits by which it makes its self in its attempted improvisation. Furthermore, what worth is is irredeemable in a catalogue of comparisons that would awaken, as evidence enough, a historical contingency, because what worth is has always yet to find a gesture by which any of its improvisations could be confined. Nevertheless, it does remain possible to accomplish, but only hesitantly, a mis-en-scene that does not diminish the improvisations that encompasses what worth is and the territory it occupies for itself.

For Jean-Luc Nancy, a model of attesting to an account which cannot be reduced to a unanimous decision of who or what is and is not speaking, and what is meant by this account in clear and comparable outcomes that attest to a shared proposition, is an urgent contemporary need. Nancy locates his argument in the word ‘art’ and what it may or may not encompass within the contemporaneity of its continual sense making. While art can be identified in the tangibility of its attributes, in what art composes, no category could define what art is, yet, art finds itself in a sense obligated to a unity defined by its practices. The composition of art itself remains exterior to categorisation but nevertheless it can be expressed as such as art.44 Art marks a context that is yet to come, nevertheless it remains contingent on the tangibility of its contemporary limits. While Gadamar believes that the artist “discovers on behalf

43 As Rancière / Jacotot point out “this is the true modesty of the ‘genius’, that is to say, of the emancipated artist: he employs all his art, all his power, to show us his poem as the absence of another that he credits with knowing as well as he.” Rancière, The igno rant Schoolmaster, 70.
of all an image that acquires uncontested validity” the attributes which exist as a consequence of art’s contemporary situation cannot define what this image is. ‘Art’ cannot be invoked and then applied to the problem of knowing what ‘art’ is, neither can ‘art’ affix an identity or meaning to ‘art’ according to what the resulting expression resembles or is separate from. Rather, art is constituted as such, in the contrapuntal specificity of its own dimension in a cloud of not-knowing.

For Rogoff, art is a question of performing, it is a question of ‘what an artist is’, which enables the broadening of the pronoun ‘what’ to include other forms of creativity bound by shared cultural issues and knowledge production with that of art, including architecture. The durability of kairos, with its contradictory array of impermeable and vulnerable defining structures prevents any expression from manifesting or designating a signification that is known and which therefore, paradoxically, prevents it from attesting to the unknown. It operates from within a vague context, an uncertain duel, diagrammatically played out between the known and unknown of expression and content. Kairos risks much on this uncertain ground, yet remains unable to attest to this risk. Certainly the un/known is a risk, but the risk lies in the inability to express this risk. Kairos locates the tools to answer the demand of the question of what art is, away from historically predetermined models of assessment and pre-existent categories, and instead locates it in the performativity of what an artist is, in the hallowed ground of no-man’s land. However, no model answer to what an artist is that had traditionally been agreed on as the outline of an artist can be relied on, including the methodologies that supplied us with the certainty of our models of coherence. What is ‘this’ and ‘that’ which gestures to the ‘artist’ and inextricably can no longer contain the designation of ‘artist’.

What worth is challenges a distinction of its value via the forms and attributes of its expression; kairos invents itself by interrogating itself. Thus, a response to the question of what worth is conditions a return to the aforementioned statement of ill comprehension by Rogoff. What, as felt by the perplexity of what worth is is distinguished by Sianne Ngai from its use relative to that which could encompass it. Ngai locates it in the interrogative demand intensified via its exclamation (What!) and in a demand for repetition (What?). Ngai conveys the fact that, “what” paradoxically expresses a state of inexpressiveness. Here the term’s sense-making agency resides in its impotentiality, or inability to refer and represent, since what it expresses is precisely a situation in which whatever “what!” is being uttered in response appears to defy expression.” Thus, what worth is is asserted as ubiquitous within the understanding that what is the self-determining agent of expression. What assumes in the phrase what it is a logic of its own, that is “at once relative, interrogative and potentially stupefying in its affective force.”

What as an interrogative pronoun raises a question when it actively seeks to escape the formal distinctions by which we qualify and categorise something. What, as an exclamation at the sudden loss of knowing, and as a consequence of the proliferating improvisation, does not demand an answer: what improvises, in turn offering an invention equal to that of the invention presented to it: what, “deceptively simulates an inability to respond or speak at all.” What is not an oppressive entity that counters and opposes the consequence of the un/known, but raises “the significant question of how we might respond

45 Gadamer, “Composition and Interpretation,” 70
46 As the title of her essay states, Rogoff examines the question of what a theorist is, but this does not prevent us here in this text from evaluating how other practices might also be asked after.
to what we recognize as ‘the different’ prior to its qualification or categorisation (as “sexual” or “racial” for instance), precisely by pointing to the limits of our ability to do so.”50 When faced with the deep uncertainties of existence, not-knowing is offered as a way of commandeering the sensations the generality of a life as such, transmuting it, by way of a legato improvisation that underscores the will-to-invent, into a lyrical onomastics, an unattributable suchness.

I daresay Freya is pretty rotten. On the other hand The Secret Sharer, between you and me, is it. Eh? No damned tricks with girls there. Eh? Every word fits and there’s no single uncertain note.

Joseph Conrad to his literary agent 51

“As long as I know that you understand” he whispered. “But of course you do. It’s a great satisfaction to have got somebody to understand. You seem to have been there on purpose” And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, “It’s very wonderful.”

Joseph Conrad, The Secret Sharer 52

Not-knowing, Knowing as such.

Grammatically as such is successful in finding a level of coherence only if, in carrying forward the argument, it references a prior gesture. On account of the affective inconsistencies exercised by what’s proleptic function in an exclamation of incomprehension, a coherence that enables the passage of past, present and future to be laid on the same page amounts to a rhetorical game of persuading someone outside the game to play, that the idealisation it presents, in all its looseness, is coherent. Coherence is pursuant to Deleuze’s engagement with another, to the firmness of the hold, to the stickiness of the participant’s parts. What determines a valid means of coherence is that all the pieces of the claim join up and fit together without any gaps in between and implies no room for interpretation or play. Coherence that is orientated by this assumption is pointed out by Sylviane Agacinski as being incorrect as “those who share are also divided among themselves.”53 There is no singular determinate ‘we’ that could account for its label of coherence after the fact of the coming together of separate parts. Sense must be made, not of form, but by an action of forming organised around the opening-up of self-questioning to the receptiveness of others. The question of what worth is is paramount to the will-to-invent that includes others. Consequently whoever or whatever interrogates what worth is through the questioning of its freedom, does so by also putting the question of what worth is to itself. Ngai explains that the language encountered by what “is language that, in undermining conventional patterns of grammar, syntax, and sense, threatens the limits of self by challenging its capacity for response, temporarily immobilising the addressee as in situations of extreme shock or boredom.”54 Confounded by what worth is, the addressee

51 Casarino quotes a letter from Joseph Conrad to his literary agent that compares Freya of the Seven Isles and The Secret Sharer. Freya is determined a failure purely on it both being named after and its narrative being centered on a women. However, The Secret Sharer, as Casarino explains “plays the kind of “tricks: at which he [Conrad] is so good, namely, tricks with boys — and hence the narrative “is it”. Such an italicised “it” marks here that unspoken, goes-without-saying, no-need-to-mention event that happens “between you and me: that takes place between two men. For “it” is the sublime of the closet itself.” Casarino, Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis, 218-219.
is forced to exclaim there inability to respond, in doing so, the incommensurable assumption of worth is broken down in what; in the momentary sharing of language. This provisional identification with what shifts the principle of assessment from a descriptive to a productive identification.

What worth is is situated in the formal gesture of an address of apparent incomprehension that confounds the ability of what worth is to respond. It is not what worth is that instigates the incomprehension; rather the incomprehension emerges through the lived experience of its foundations in the very freedom of what worth is. A measure of coherence that would account for what worth is, is engendered in the material process of the making of what as a statement of bewilderment. The argument for the function of as such emerges when the capacity to communicate though a solid wall of seeming incomprehensibility and impenetrability becomes the only means by which to emancipate a life.

For Agacinski, what as an expression of incoherence is “a shared weakness,” defined as “the existent’s experience that the subjectum hides itself and that the existent is not therefore its own subject.”55 What is a gesture of non-disclosure, a refusal to affirm an allegiance to one or other of the inexhaustible number of categories - what being the actual of the irreducible suchness of as such - that requires what worth is to use all possible means as a support. Agacinski writes:

to relate to the body of the other as an object that can be used, that one can instrumentalise or think of as a means, is a way for subjective consciousness to reappropriate this outside, to prevent the other’s flesh from infringing on its own, to prevent its ’own’ body from spilling over onto another’s.56

At stake is the figure’s stickiness and firmness, borne out of a shared surprise in finding itself responsible to another, “by chance someone else’s support.”57 What’s proleptic function is contemporaneous with a person who finds themselves a support for another. By exceeding all the possible objections and answers in anticipation of either becoming applicable, as such fashions a way to simultaneously prevent itself from losing control and enable what worth is to attest to a level of coherence. Agacinski argues that, “responsibility is conceived of from the perspective of a new experience of the question, which is also a new determination of freedom, insofar as the question is the decision that most properly belongs to spirit and its freedom.”58 The phrase what is it worth is neither the means to understand the observer’s own awareness, or a plea from an observer that desires to identify what the observer directs its exclamation of incomprehension to: what is not a rhetorical invitation to negotiate. What worth is forces us to ask after it, to locate our expression of incomprehension within and not exterior to its own questioning of what worth is. The criteria for knowing the origin of the expression does not exist within our affiliation to what something is or is not determined by the social conditions in which what worth is presents itself, neither can we affirm the question via a response that is the result of either what is observed or heard, has said or done as a means of that saying or doing. To distinguish what worth is, the full force of what that is emerging in the expression of incomprehension must be felt.

55 Agacinski, “Another Experience of the Question, or Experiencing the Question Other-Wise,”16. The subjectile is “the word or the thing [which] can take place of the subject or of the object – being neither one or the other.” The neologism can be broken into its consubstantial derivations. Subjectile is expressed by etymological movements of the origins of the word subject: in Latin subjectus meaning ‘to lie beneath’ and subjectum which is the subject of a proposition. Derrida locates this shift in the shared suggestion of the ‘-jec-’ whose origins lie in jacere, latin for ‘to throw’. Further to this, the suffix -ile, expresses an innate potential that is sustained in the act of being thrown between subjectus and subjectum. See, Jacques Derrida, “Maddening the Subjectile,” Yale French Studies, o. 84, Yale University, 1994, 154-171.
56 Agacinski, “Another Experience of the Question, or Experiencing the Question Other-Wise,”17.
57 Agacinski, “Another Experience of the Question, or Experiencing the Question Other-Wise,”16.
58 Agacinski, “Another Experience of the Question, or Experiencing the Question Other-Wise,”19.
What worth is employs what it happens upon, dislodging the ability of its context alone – its 'location', its 'voice', the extent of its 'body' – to govern what it expresses, and therefore what it could be. In doing so it identifies itself with Nancy’s “desire for feeling and for feeling oneself feel”59 rather than a cultural longing that would confuse what worth is with the known or unknown. What worth is necessarily undertakes an improvisation so that what can be felt in the making with another through the plurality of what could be. Rather than asking what worth is by way of its performance, the other who puts the question to what worth is is included in the expression of what worth is that is not yet known by either party. The other comes to share with the initial gesture some resonance or movement evident in the expatiated flight between the material substances that composed the initial gesture of incomprehension and what worth is. The other is no longer exterior to what worth is may be, but is intimately folded into its very improvisations.

What worth is must define its own context for expressivity, a desire to feel, using not just pre-determined languages but whatever means are available, extra-linguistic forces comprised of gestures, props and the voice of others. In doing so what worth is does not renounce or transcend the existing communicational models of expression, but confronts a situation by validating existing patterns of production, and placing what worth is at the centre of its own configuration, feeling itself feel.

Paramount to this intimacy as an event of what worth is formation, is the rejection of any assumption that the mode of expression is the reproduction of a concluding form from which can be derived a logical homogenous process that, consequently, may account for the final product. Instead what worth is is composed of the plurality of the different forms of knowing, which sees one form, known or unknown, pass into others.60 A discursive drift frames the non-resemblance of the known or unknown. For the known and the unknown to rearticulate themselves, they must be prepared to allow further expressions to mark the substance of the existing system and conversely shed other expressions that have concluded participating. In doing so, what worth is remains an event of this passing between the known and the unknown that opens in to the simultaneity of being both one and other.

What worth is is a priori to the improvisation of language, subjects and institutions that may wish to constrict its excesses, yet, these are the bodies that permit the movement of its expression into the world. Nevertheless, what worth is remains fundamentally without a narrator, as it is only provisionally arrested from its movement by any gesture. Furthermore, what is always looking further ahead to another destination, to another materialisation without ever arriving or materialising. What worth is disregards the moral principle of its virtue –worth – that would have it take a past, present or future tense. What worth is is a collaborator, its evasiveness construed by imperceptible changes in direction that constitute

59 The inclusive disjunction that all ‘art’ is met with is the source of Nancy’s expression. Art, as he states, “brings forth a desire that is neither the desire for an object nor the desire for a meaning but a desire for feeling and for feeling oneself feel – a desire to experience oneself as irreducible to a signification, to a being or an identity. A desire to enjoy, in sensibility, the very fact that there is no unique and final form in which this desire would reach its end.” Nancy, Philosophical Chronicles, 61-62.

60 Massumi recounts Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s encounter with Michel Foucault’s example of the prison, as an illustration of the specificity of content and expression. The pronouncement of guilt by a judge is an expression that fundamentally shakes the substance of the prisoner’s body, both of whom contribute to the form of the prison, for “there is no resemblance between a pronouncement of guilt and an imprisonment. Instead both contribute to the content of the prison regime. Deleuze and Guattari restate Foucault’s analysis that the prison system emerged from a discourse on ‘delinquency’, rather than a discourse on what a prison is: “There was no essential connection between delinquency as form of expression and the prison as form of content. There is no logical or teleological reason why that particular articulation had to be. Its power was the cumulative result of a thousand tiny performative struggles peppered throughout the social field. The connection was made, and it was made collectively, under the control of no individual subject.”

61 As Massumi points out: “Delinquency’ would subsequently migrate, extending to a new form of content: the school.”
a play of resemblances and mistaken identity. Despite this amoral position, one must actively pursue how one contributes to a share of the world. The ability to participate in the movement and speed of the improvisation is established by the necessary failure of signification to mean. Any action that performs does so momentarily within an abstract territory, whose effect is only felt outside the act that immediately takes place. The gesture’s volubility performs through the preceding gesture, a territory marked out by a chain of reverberation. What is always an expression uncharacteristic of the context in which it finds itself. Language, whether non-verbal or verbal, is pushed to its cutting edge, to a state that remains always yet to become, because the expression has always moved on, has already shifted its context at the very moment in which its preceding context gains the ability to attest to a meaning. That is, while what worth is cannot be owned outright, one can play within it.62 It therefore remains possible to express the momentum of what worth is by deforming the temporality of the play – stretching and twisting Deleuze’s lascivious contortions further.

**What worth is is Worth Not-knowing.**

An account of what worth is cannot be mediated by a text that would frame ‘worth’ according to existing or future classifications; hence this account occurs, takes place through the concrete modalities of that expression. The singularity of this account via an emerging field of resemblances moves what worth is towards the particular which becomes taken up by the interjection the that had initially denied it any signification in the shared expression of what. Not only does the potentiality of what worth is lie in its singularity, as an event of its emergence, it also materialises in the potential to share a particularity informing a collective yet to be known.

What worth is will emerge at the limits of this project, where the orthodoxy of a PhD undertaking is forced to address the collective expression of the what in a dialogue where no common ground can be assumed, and where what worth is has manifested the terms by which any occupation is possible within a context in motion. There is no nostalgia for what worth is to resemble what we already know, because what worth is is an event of a contemporenaety that is always working inbetween the limits of our knowledge, slipping between the known and the unknown. The contingent poesie63 of the phrase as such offers a way of suspending the familiar landscape of evaluation that accord the open space of contemporary modes of assemblage with the shifting mix of inter-multi-trans-referential prefixes into coherent configurations of collaboration; or the closed space of subjective experience that renders the role of any accessory or accomplice merely a task or a tool in the production of an outcome. Rather than proceeding to ‘know’ what worth is via what is being expressed through a reified assessment that would seek to reconcile the model of collaboration with the principles of coherence and incoherence, what galvanises that which gave rise to it, the potential of a failure to know, in a returning gesture that at once preempts any question of its claim to coherence and reiterates the underlying strategy of collaboration that renders apparent the intentional contradictions when faced with an outcome that exceeds the existing capacity of comprehension: not-knowing provides a stage for the arraignment of what worth is, incriminated in an improvisation, as such.

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62 Play, as John Huizinga explains, “only becomes possible, thinkable, and understandable when an influx of mind breaks down the absolute determinism of the cosmos” that play is rather a “stepping out of ‘real’ life into a temporary sphere of activity” and that “with the end of play its effect is not lost; rather it continues to shed its radiance on the ordinary world outside.” Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A study of the Play Element in Culture (London: Maurice Temples & Smith, 1958), 22, 53.

**Interlude**

An elephant, seemingly inconspicuous, is the pretense for a creative correspondence between two cursed performers. The dimensions of the elephant infer a bias that would designate each performer their fair share, that the elephant could be divided in two, right through the middle. Faced with an allegation that aligns its generosity to either performer, the elephant conceives itself as nothing more than a scrim that traverses the narrow divide of proximity, an infinitely thin body that, in its passing between, draws the seen and unseen together. The elephant’s wrinkled vestiges secure space enough to conjugate an exchange. Inscribed across its surface is the trauma of each performer who, with their every gesture contemplating the space of the elephant’s threshold, pursues an opening through a solid impasse, repeatedly testing the elasticity and strength of the grey galliot. As a result of the confusion of the elephant’s scale the extent of the hide does not anticipate which performer is installed in the back or the front, for it cannot be determined as to whether the elephant has not been reduced to two backs or two fronts. Occasionally, to flaunt their progress or to steal a glance, one performer manages to pull back the drape in the hope of hearing the prophetic peal of trumpets - let the walls of Jericho fall! But, at most only a whisper is heard, each intonation claiming victory over the din of the other; what is at stake reduced to nothing more than a no-man’s land drawn in by, or released to, the breath of the other. In the texture of a hide we find a suggestion of a certain diagram, a complex plane that apprehends, on the back of an elephant, an encounter with a character of potential worth.
A CLINIC FOR THE EXHAUSTED

BOOK 2
The Pathology of Excess
... in this puzzle called The Approaching Ship, one piece is shaped as a boy playing with a dog; another is a servant, bowing to a women; and there are a dozen fancy symmetrical ornaments that resemble mountings for drawer pulls or brass doorknockers. The figure pieces are randomly aligned in respect to the picture itself, but there are also pieces that strictly follow the picture’s contours. A woman’s silhouette cuts across the fir tree, spanning half its width and also taking in some of the sky to its right. Just behind her is a form-fitting piece that follows the tree but also her head. The puzzle is an intermittently random imposition of pictures and fragments on a single larger picture. Some pieces repeat the shapes of the The Approaching Ship, and others are scattered about by the puzzle makers so that they spread evenly throughout the picture, without attention to how they overlap depicted forms.

James Elkins, *Why are our Pictures Puzzles?*¹
OUR APPROACH: CAST IN
THE IMAGE OF A BOAT

The description that introduces this section of text is drawn from James Elkins’ book *Why are our Pictures Puzzles?* and focuses on a children’s jig-saw puzzle that is titled *The Approaching Ship*. This jig-saw puzzle is composed of interlocking tiles that have the shape of known forms and the tiles with an ill-formed silhouette whose shape can be found in many other jig-saw puzzles. Elkins’ synopsis of *The Approaching Ship* calls attention to the exemplary figures of the former tile, such as a boy, a dog or a female silhouette. These pieces are not on their own able to complete the final composition that describes the image of a ship approaching a seaside town if not accompanied by the later tiles that remain more difficult to discern from one another, though their ill formed shape is able to describe both the silhouette that allows the individual figures to be discerned and the space that lies between each of the figures that composes the remainder of the jig-saw. The tiles that present identifiable shapes are able to designate a known figure distinct from their inclusion in the jig-saw puzzle’s overall composition, and yet the jig-saw puzzle in its completed form fails to ascertain a hierarchy between the multitude of forms grounded by the other tiles and the image of a ship approaching and its ground in the collected tiles under the title *The Approaching Ship*. Every occurrence of the figures that breach the context of the jig-saw puzzle and every more-or-less indistinct jig-saw tile reiterates to the audience who engages the jig-saw assemblage that their comprehension must oscillate between the identifiable and the formless, if any approach is to be posed by *The Approaching Ship*.

An approach embroils every creative endeavour and thus in turn tasks this exegesis with an approach. But an approach is what is always to be approached, that is, no sooner has an approach been elucidated, then one is again tasked with the effort of an approach. Thus an approach across that extends across the extent of this undertaking is elucidated under the aegis of the jig-saw puzzle’s title, *The Approaching Ship*. An approach implied in the distant proximity of Elkins’ jig-saw tiles and in the image of a ship as it construes a fleetingly prophetic approach brought forth from the apprehensive certainty that there is indeed an approach to be had, that all the tiles will fit. The persistence of the wake of the jig-saw’s stationary ship is what will move the argument made here in this text some way towards disclosing how an approach is caught up in the jig-saw puzzle’s expression of an approaching ship.

This text continues knowing of the ship’s contradictory ground in a jig-saw puzzle where each tiles derives a place in which to fit. That is, each tile is apprehended by the pace of the approaching ship’s immobility, a condition which penetrates the duration of the jig-saw puzzle enough for the title *The Approaching Ship* to bear them all. Indefinitely the edges of the tiles approach each other according to how jig-saw puzzles are composed, via the habitual momentum of two dimensional folds of the orthodox puzzle edges, each formed or unformed extremity fitting alongside or reaching out to, or pushing in the soft edges of another. The jig-saw tiles bring together and are brought together by virtue of the approaching ship: it is therefore the ship that offers an approach in turn. The tiles are voyagers held in their stationary advance by the ship’s latent passage of the jig-saw puzzle’s watery expanse.

What then is the significance of Elkins’ jig-saw puzzle to the particularity of an approach in this PhD undertaking? Cast astray across the different permutations of formed and ill-formed puzzle tiles, an approach is moved in
response to the whim of the pictured ship’s swell, and is soaked by it, forced to lie where it has been cast in the totality of our own puzzle, *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. But, *this* text that attends to Raggatt’s letter has thus far resisted becoming fixed to this one or that of its multiple modalities and has continuously eluded the particularities and various instances that construct its approach. Raggatt’s ship is threatened by the violence that would have cause to distinguish each fragment of this text, (a practice that would break this approach and cut its passage short) and yet, as aggregate formations, objects and scenes that could potentially compose an approach, are voyagers borne by it. Every tile of *this* project in turn, comes to find itself both as surface and support for the another. To throw something out, to cast out, is to ask for a response, to ask for someone else to build upon a proposed approach. The same approach imagined by Elkins’ jig-saw puzzle is applied to the image of Raggatt’s ship; they are both what engender the respective movement of the other in this text, and equally, they are the support for this texts own approach offering itself to itself as an approach, all the whilst a ship draws forever near.

Elkins’ ship is what exposes our approach here in this thesis to a continual repotentialisation that, like the extent of Roussel’s literary output, submits this approach to a constant and necessary advance. Confronted with the horizon, a ship emerges as the liberating potential of a stationary approach, not cautionary, but what rushes ahead via an unregulated velocity, a potential encounter sustained ad nauseum; a movement distinct from the sedimented and the absolute. It is this movement that the next section seeks to address, a movement that forces both ocean and sky to turn around the image of an open boat as it approaches.
ON THE WAYWARD MOVEMENT
OF AN OPEN BOAT

In the opening passage of the *Essais*, the Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne depicts the nausea that afflicts him during a journey by boat. It is not upon a rough stormy sea that he feels nauseous, but rather, in “that slight jolt given by the oars stealing the vessel from under us, I feel my head and stomach troubled, I know not how, as I cannot bear a shaky seat under me.” Montaigne fails to ascertain the form of his seasickness, however, his nausea can be described in the movement of the ship and the mapping of its effects. Richard Scholar suggests that it is in his prose that Montaigne undertakes a lexical elucidation of the boat’s disconcerting movements in the hope of apprehending a fragment of what seasickness is. As Scholar argues,

[Montaigne’s] writing starts in experience before moving towards explanation and back again, with the movement to and fro of a boat upon water [reflecting] the restless attempt to capture, evaluate, and test human experience of the world.

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2 During the course of this section on Montaigne I will quote from three different sources, not to appear indifferent to the scholarly task, but to gather together the various translations in such a manner that the various inflections of the translators may confirm the presence of a voice, an inconclusive authority.

3 “I cannot now long endure (and when I was young could much less) either coach, litter, or boat, and hate all other riding but on horseback, both in town and country. But I can bear a litter worse than a coach; and, by the same reason, a rough agitation upon the water, whence fear is produced, better than the motions of a calm. At the little jerks of oars, stealing the vessel from under us, I find, I know not how, both my head and my stomach disordered; neither can I endure to sit upon a tottering chair. When the sail or the current carries us equally, or that we are towed, the equal agitation does not disturb me at all; ’tis an interrupted motion that offends me, and most of all when most slow: I cannot otherwise express it. The physicians have ordered me to squeeze and gird myself about the bottom of the belly with a napkin to remedy this evil; which however I have not tried, being accustomed to wrestle with my own defects, and overcome them myself.” “On Coaches” in, Essays of Michel De Montaigne, ed. Cilliam C. Hazlitt, trans. C. Cotton, 1877. Made available, Project Gutenberg, 2006, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm> accessed 02 August, 2009.

Montaigne’s pursuit of an illness in symptoms borne by the grammatically contingent mobility of his text and that exceeds its initial itinerant passage of a boat in the ebbs and flows of an ocean, suspends any credulous or dismissive claims of seasickness in the calm waters between the open ocean and the shoreline, in the middle region between two ever receding thresholds. Montaigne’s ‘middle region’ is best described in a parlour game recounted in Of Vain Subtleties, one of the essays included in the Essais. The intention of the game was to link two opposite limits together without rendering an existing middle term. This game traces Montaigne’s own concern regarding the judgment of the two extremes of readers that may commit themselves to studying the Essais. According to Scholar:

the middle region between those two extremes appears here as the natural place for the readership of the Essai. But the rules of the game mean that this region must remain defined only by the groups of readers that it does not contain. So the middle region is left undescribed.

For Montaigne, the middle region implies a “quasi-conversational situation” in which the author addresses and hopes to be read by individuals in an exclusive and intimate manner. Montaigne likens this point of contact to a good friendship or sex, both of which, “delight in the sharpness and vigour of its intercourse” The purpose of Montaigne’s writing becomes one of recording this vigour as it takes place, as though he were talking to this friend or lover, and subsequently to the reader whom he seeks. The writing conjures an other and conjoins Montaigne and an other as they are wrought,

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7 Scholar, The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe, 252.
8 “I like a strong, manly fellowship and familiarity, a friendship that delights in the sharpness and vigour of its intercourse, as does love in bites and scratches that draw blood.” Montaigne as quoted by Scholar, The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe, 252.
stretched and bent into a single figure by the near and far reflections exploited in the gymnastic prowess evidenced by Deleuze’s actions, and in the jig-saw tiles of the *The Approaching Ship*. All parties however remain unable to anchor this middle ground. As Montaigne’s effort to define his close friendship with the French writer and poet La Boétie in the essay *On affectionate relationships* exhibits, the middle region is not so easily straddled or surmounted: “If you press me to tell you why I loved him, I feel that it cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I.”

What ever takes the place of their commitment to each other, it encompasses both Montaigne and La Boétie. As Scholar points out, having exhausted an explanation without providing one, Montaigne is forced to provide an account of his experiences of the friendship in his writing. Montaigne can only point out that the initial founding of the friendship was beyond anyone’s control, and that, if any explanation be found, it is in the positive effect the friendship has had on each party reflected by Montaigne’s writing which serves to capture some of the friendships force. In *On educating children*, another of the essays that are included in the *Essais*, Montaigne responds to the observation of someone who lives out the very inability to express themselves, believing that their struggle is not a failure to deliver an explanation as though held before its expression. Montaigne understands it as an alchemical conception, the person’s stammering and stuttering the very passage of the expressions conception, as though they are “licking an imperfect lump into shape.”

Montaigne’s search for an all embracing explanation of his friendship with La Boétie concludes in its attribution to an unknowable and inexplicable force,
via his turn to the phrase _je ne sais quel_, the adjective form of _je ne sais quoi_ (I know not what). The indefinite sense of the phrase is further complicated by Montaigne’s exclamation in _An Apology for Raymond Sebond_, _Que sais-je?_ (What do I know?); his argument proceeding much like the parlour game described above, from one extreme to another: Montaigne does not know nothing, nor does he know everything, and therefore Montaigne must question whether he knows what he does know and in turn whether he does in fact not know what he does not know. The declaration ‘I know not what’ is an attempt by Montaigne to capture some of the momentum that initially saw the two become friends. In doing so it reasserts Montaigne’s conclusion that, “our friendship has no other model than itself.”

Montaigne’s recourse to the rhetorical questioning of his knowledge is not a claim to an illiteracy of his friendship but is instead the means by which he may fathom the cumulative particularities of a complex exchange that composes a friendship. As Montaigne recounts in _On educating children_ of his own writing:

> Yet I know myself how valiantly I strive to measure up to my stolen wares and to match myself to them equal to equal, not without some rash hope of throwing dust in the eyes of critics who would pick them out (though more thanks to the skill with which I apply them than to my skill in discovering them or to any strengths

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12 I will use _je ne sais quoi_ broadly in the affirmative to refer to “something that is experienced but cannot be explained [...].a certain something, that is experienced as immediately present while remaining forever alien to explanation, something really inexplicable and inexplicably real” and not in its negative operation where it refers to “a non-entity, a mere word empty of sense and reference.” A taxonomy of the various historical occurrences and how they differ from one another in their use and lexical force can be found in, Scholar, _The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe_, 33-39.

13 “Montainge’s famous _Que sais-je?_ (What do I know?) constitutes the skeptical relativist formulation of the paradox: I do not know nothing, I do not know everything, I know neither nothing … nor everything. Still, the interrogative phrasing destabilizes learned ignorance, and with it the position of a theoretical subject: I do not know whether I know what I know; I do not know whether I am ignorant of what I do not know.” Louis Marin, _Sublime Poussin_, trans. C. Porter, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 217.

14 Montaigne as quoted by Scholar, _The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe_, 270.
of my own). Moreover I do not take on those old champions all at
once, wrestling with them body to body: it is a matter of slight,
repeated, tiny encounters.15

Montaigne does not try to hide his thefts; instead he brazenly tries them
on in the guise of his own text. This passage from On educating children exceeds
not only the intentions of Montaigne’s critics, but also his own authorial
vision which is viewed self-consciously: “I have not, nor do I desire, enough
authority to be believed. I feel too badly taught to teach others.”16 Montaigne
likens such a methodology to the collection of nectar by bees from different
flowers to make honey. In the mixing of the different scents the bees make
a honey that is all of their own, a substance for which they are not obliged
to recount the origins. Montaigne’s own writing does not limit itself to
the already said, but also proceeds by the self-propagating accumulation of
misunderstandings that distinguishes itself in the indefinable lexical character
of the je ne sais quoi.

Montainge’s turn to the je ne sais quoi remains contingent on allowing a
panoramic movement that allows him to discern the whole of his friendship;
his open boat on which he suffers his nausea recalling the first use of a camera
pan in Thomas Edison’s film, The Return of the Lifeboat (1897). During the
filming, the camera operator reframes a shot so as to keep the approaching
lifeboat in frame as it comes ashore riding the crest of the breakers and in
doing so draws our attention to the space outside the frame, to the action that
occurs off screen. The camera’s eye, no longer able to contain the inadvertent
assemblage, (the movement of each artefact in the scene), fails in the labour
to emulate the ship’s speed, and forces us to recognise the ineffable nautical
advance of this open boat. The je ne sais quoi carries, in its incessant return

without terminus, without recognition and without deception, the possibility
of a life shared between two shores. From between a shore and a horizon,
from between building and boat, an approach is discerned, approaching.

*A Clinic for the Exhausted* is composed of the production of this text and the
design projects, both of which realise the PhD. Yet, it also resists establishing
an order in production: that the projects are the outcome of a text, or that
the text is established as a description of the projects. *A Clinic for the Exhausted*
traverses the game of two opposites that is offered up by Montaigne; building
to ocean liner, Plato and Molière, Argan and Socrates, Roussel and Raggatt
(to name a few that have been encountered) are themselves privy to the rules
of Montaigne’s game as they navigate the complex interleaving of filmic,
artistic, literary, philosophical and architectural practices, inhabiting the gaps
that appear in even the most densely imagined of practices. By mobilising
the will-to-invent this project bears a necessarily *corriganesque* body that
admits to an encounter on more than one occasion with a Deleuzian spirit.
The outcome of any practice and thus what governs the success (or failure)
of any PhD undertaking including this one - a body of work – cannot be
distinguished from the practice of said body, from a body that works. Akin
to Montaigne’s boat, a body of work improvises the movements of a practice;
whilst it is Montaigne’s nausea that assures him of his own body that works;
the *je ne sais quoi* attended to an encounter with forces that may enable the
body to put into practice strategies and approaches that may otherwise have
been excluded in the imposition of the governance of said body that include,
in the example of Montaigne’s friendship with La Boétie, the production of
relations without explanation. But the ability to verify the extent of this
body’s approach is not diminished; rather the vitality of Montaigne’s parlor
game attends to an audience’s encounter with the force of an immanent
approach in *A Clinic for the Exhausted.*
The following text will address how the sense of the terms ‘clinic’ and ‘exhaustion’ is to be seized in so far as they are aligned with the title of this project, *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, and to what extent they have borne the research undertaken. With this text I wish to approach some of the methods which may enable us to encounter the forces of an immanent approach, thus the concluding remarks will intend to mobilise such methods within the compositional characteristics of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*.

AN ITINERANT LIFE

In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag explains that during the mid-eighteenth century illness became “the vehicle of excess,” 17 in particular, tuberculosis “became a trope for new attitudes toward the self” 18 and was essential in “promoting the self as an image.” 19 Sontag mentions the German romantic Novalis who suggested that what was really interesting was a sickness “which belongs to individualising.” 20 During this period tuberculosis become the means by which the patient could gather their illness into an enquiry on the self. By the nineteenth century tuberculosis had developed a much different image and was then “celebrated as the disease of born victims, of sensitive, passive people who are not quite life-loving enough to survive.” 21 The sufferer of tuberculosis was claimed to have already been exhausted by life without having lived it. They were “a dropout, a wanderer in endless search of the healthy place,” 22 in search of an environment that could help ‘dry out’ their lungs. The tuberculoid patient’s health became synonymous with the process of individualising, for it they were ever to claim health, they would

have to find a healthy place, a place that could therefore contain the patient and permit them a life.

The passage of tuberculosis through its historical tropes is marked out by how each individual patient remained tethered to their individual symptomatology. Not only are the circumstances of a disease correlated by their collapse into the multiplicity of symptoms that fail to privilege one trope over another, but the infected patient becomes heteronymous with the pathology of disease itself. As Foucault states in *The Birth of the Clinic*, written at approximately the same time as his study on Raymond Roussel:

> For classificatory medicine, presence in an organ is never absolutely necessary to define a disease: this disease may travel from one point of localization to another, reach other bodily surfaces, while remaining identical in nature. The space of the body and the space of the disease possess enough latitude to slide away from one another. […] These movements, which are accompanied by symptomatic changes, may occur in time in a single individual; they may also be found by examining a series of individuals with different link points: in its visceral form, spasm is encountered, above all, in lymphatic subjects, while in its cerebral form it is encountered more among sanguine temperaments. But in any case, the essential pathological configuration is not altered. The organs are the concrete supports of the disease; they never constitute its indispensable conditions. The system of points that defines the relations of the disease to the organism is neither constant or necessary. They do not possess a common previously defined space.23

**Montaigne’s adoption of the *je ne sais quoi* to attend to the unaccountable**

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appearance of his nausea claims with its use the provisional space of the convalescent; a patient that succumbs to a space without specificity. In so doing the phrase also attends to the vitality of the patient borne across the extent of a space that is exceptional in that this space admits to no intrinsic feature that could distinguish it and thus cut short the patients convalescing. The convalescent is a patient that endures a life borne by what continually differs, that begets the impossibility of Montaigne’s return to shore. Despite the discernible differences between the image of a boat and that of a patient, their acquaintance is necessary in that what must in some way take place turns aside the expanse between so as to keep this experiment going. By surveying the assemblage of a boat and the foggy lungs of a tuberculosis patient, this project realises, what was only an instant ago unfathomable, a practice that saturates the material life of both boat and suffering patient and which harbors a shared felt force obliging us to go that much further.

WHAT IS OUR SHARED EXPERIENCE OF EXHAUSTION

Jan Verwoert in his essay Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Defy the Pressure to Perform, identifies in the convalescent’s ceaseless pursuit of health the possibility to contest the demand to perform. Verwoert claims exhaustion as the instrument with which socio-political capital persuades you to constantly perform well beyond your abilities and that, through the violence of an incessant crisis and the poverty of expectation, entails you saying “I can” to each and every demand made on you. The suggestion that one can’t work, that one cannot go on performing the task asked of them, certainly interrupts the economy of expectation generated by the demand, but the demand will eventually be affirmed, because an “I can’t” also entails an awareness that one can: that one can say “I can’t”. To deny the mutability
of the “I can’t” and the “I can” for an ulterior end – productivity - is to fail to see that they are couched in the shared experience of each other. Drawn in to the vicinity of each other, an exhaustive “I can’t” and an exuberant “I can” are offered up as a deliberate squandering of one’s artistic, monetary, or intellectual capital, opening ourselves up to the unexpected appropriation by others within the provisionality of the community that the “I can” and “I can’t” gather. It means that those in the midst of appropriation infer a debt to someone else. This is not a debt that could form the outlines of a new contingent economy, or a return of the threat of economic or social ruin. The debt accorded recognises that one’s own practice is always in some way, shape or form, transformed by another who has enabled you to practice in the way that you do. Verwoert acknowledges in the appropriation of a debt to others the difficulty and importance of care, on the basis that care is a “surplus that can never be justified”24 and is always an “unconditional demand.”25 He considers care as an ideal approach with which to structure an assemblage of exhaustion and exuberance on. Importantly, he identifies that the premise of care invested in debt does not in any way diminish the prospect of saying no, or “I can’t”.

The state of convalescence is ventured by Verwoert as lying within the latency of permitting time for oneself, a space in which one is made aware of the necessity to care for oneself. This does not necessarily mean stopping work altogether, rather it describes what can be forged inspite of the demand to perform in a particular manner and whereby a prescribed end would entail an assimilation back into the system that initially made the demand to perform. Verwoert identifies the pitfalls of a cycle of exuberance and

24 Verwoert, “Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Defy the Pressure to Perform,” 103.
exhaustion prevalent in the mixture of political, economic and cultural revolutions that confess to attending to a community that has been disappointed by a failed regime, only to exhaust the initial exuberant claims of difference that distinguished them as other to the previous regime. To enable the passage beyond exhaustion, Verwoert maintains, may also mean pushing yourself so that “you simply incapacitate yourself to a degree that no-one can possibly still expect anything of you.”²⁶ In considering the dynamics of serial revolutions, Verwoert asks us to suspend the process at the point of exhaustion. It is here he argues where the moment of latency, a state of convalescence, enables us to be fully aware of the one thing we all share in, the experience of exhaustion. By escaping the strictures that would mandate how and when we perform, the state of convalescence and model of exhaustion do not, as has already been argued, inhibit our ability to actively go against the grain. It is rather the practices of the convalescent that carve out through the means of exhaustion a space where we may dedicate ourselves to others and, to the potentiality of a Life.

This text will now examine the gestures by which exhaustion assumes the dimensions of a practice of care, before focusing the text on how improvising an equivalence of care suggests the space of the Clinic.

ON EXHAUSTION

In his essay *The Exhausted*, Gilles Deleuze pursues “the formless or the unformulated;”²⁷ that which answers the demand to choose, with a preference not to choose. Deleuze’s essay ascertain that there is no longer any possible answer, because the inclusive disjunction that is a preference not to

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²⁶ Verwoert, “Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Dely the Pressure to Perform,” 108.
choose “exhausts the whole of the possible.” For Deleuze, exhaustion has nothing to do with tiredness, exhaustion precedes the individualising of a thing. Tiredness, Deleuze suggests, would have us choose between things, between names or actions, construing a collection of objects and subjects. Exhaustion is instead, the radical sense of plentitude in the momentary state of living the very condition of being without subjects or objects. As Deleuze writes: “only an exhausted person can exhaust the possible, because he has renounced all need, preference, goal or signification.” Deleuze suggests that this procedure is taken up through three languages.

The first language seeks to exhaust the possible by discovering every permutation and combination that a selected number of gestures permit. Deleuze illustrates this language via an examination of Samuel Beckett’s play *Quad*. *Quad* describes the movement of four figures who trace lines that lie between four points of a square, drawing out through their movement every configuration of lines and points, but without their progress allowing the figures to come into direct contact. This means that as the figures cut across each others path along the diagonals from corner to corner they are forced to side step each other, avoiding contact and as a consequence the point of intersection that marks the centre of the square. Language two of Deleuze’s taxonomy of exhaustion is enumerated in the instance of the failure of each figure to reach the centre. He argues that the centre delineates a gesture’s potential to reach the limit of a gesture itself. Deleuze insists that this is further demonstrated in Beckett’s TV play *Ghost Trio*, in which a series of objects are shown in close-up. Guided by a woman’s voice as the camera cuts from one to the other, each image suggests that on seeing only a portion of the object we are now aware of the whole - a door, a window, a pallet - even though the full extent of each remains obscured by the close vision of the

camera. Traversing between these three images is the play’s protagonist, a man whose character traits remains non specific, he is singularly a man, but also, a formless concept of a man, echoed in his return to a slumped position at the conclusion of any passage he undertakes. Near the end of the play, the man looks at a reflection of himself in a mirror that had been excluded from the initial description of the room. The narrator is startled by this action as it exposes her voice’s redundancy in the control of the man’s movements. The narrator’s surprise recurs when the camera takes an interest in the mirror, and she is surprised by the sudden reflection of the protagonist’s face detached from the confines of the room. The mirror marks an unseemly encounter of a face floating in another space; but as Deleuze argues:

The limit of the series does not lie at the infinity of the terms but can be anywhere in the flow: between two terms, between two voices or the variations of a single choice in a point that is already reached well before one knows that the series is exhausted, and well before one learns that there is no longer any possibility or any story, and that there has not been one for a long time.30

Thus the mirror characterises the threshold of the third language enumerated by Deleuze as rendering both image and space. The image is what returns, as in the case of the man’s face in the mirror, but always incomplete, as though his portrait was slightly larger than the frame in which it stands, or slightly decomposed, detached from its initial ground in the room and cut from the body of the man, “like the smile without a cat in Lewis Carroll.”31 The image’s deterioration can not be determined by the tracing of its parts, because what follows does not return the appearance of the series in its entirety. The image then spans the atonal model of silence, the sudden inability to burden what appears with a name that we may know it by. Simultaneously,

30 Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 157-158.
31 Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 168.
it is also the fragmentation of space. The mirror marks the man’s awareness of the space of his being, and also, in the partial disclosure of his face, a space beyond the frame of the mirror. The frame not only cuts a partial image of the man in his space, but offers a totally Other space detached from the space that the man inhabits. In the process, the man’s face is disfigured, that is, the Other man, his double in the process of the man’s recognition of his reflection effaces his own. What the mirror offers is a face for the character. As a result, space is not so much a specific space, it is “any-space-whatever.” Deleuze argues that space is not represented by an ensemble of things that inhabit space, but rather, the image is what points towards a space. Deleuze suggests that the man’s face gestures towards both a space and character, both of which are intimated as beyond the action of the play.

The third TV play by Beckett that Deleuze examines is entitled …but the clouds…, and is conceived as an arrangement of things - door, closet, sanctum. However, each thing does not differentiate the space through the use of real objects like Ghost Trio’s mirror but are brought about through spatial gestures that open the west as a door to look onto the open road, the east to the space of a closet, and the north to a sanctum designated by a desk that is not there. The sanctum is not a physical space, composed of windows and doors, but a mental space. All of these gestures point towards a directional space beyond: the door opens to a road, the closet where the character swaps his clothes and the sanctum to which the character can withdraw. Space is illuminated, outlined by a narrating voice and carved by directional movements of the character from within the dark surrounds. For Beckett, space is brought about within a “mental existence.” Thus, through a collection of established points of view that fade in and out of one another the audience is led from one mental space to another, traversing the black void.

32 Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 160.
33 Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 169.
that surrounds each space. The spaces are not evoked by the naming of them – they do not appear under a select idiom. The female face that is conjured and fills the screen disappears in the same breath of its invocation, its image always to appear moving away from its origin. The image does not supply a story – it does not contain a beginning, middle and end - nor does the image have a content of its own that is, anymore than the mirror of Ghost Trio effaces what is in front of it. The image remains silent.

Beckett’s silence is not the lack of sound, but rather a voice that is impersonal, that does not belong to any one and is unable to name itself or others. The impersonal voice registers the thickness of utterances that constitutes the noise of language, a sound that reveals no particular sound, and thus no particular language. It is only in the madness of such a proposition that the image emerges, in the pre-individual silence of nothing. Subsequently, for the gestures of the exhausted to come to fruition, both space and image must reach their limit. Nevertheless, as already indicated in the invocation of …but the clouds… the image’s temporality does not extend beyond its emergence. The appearance of an image can never be the conclusion of a gesture; it is not something whose location can be pinpointed and knowingly evoked at a moment’s notice. As Beckett’s protagonist realises it is more likely that it does not appear, and even when it does, we continue our intonations, "because we are never sure we have succeeded in making an image."34

Deleuze concludes his episodic structure of exhaustion with Beckett’s Nacht und Traume. Beckett’s play centres on a male figure afflicted with the inability to speak, hear, move or sleep. Though he finds himself unable to sleep, he can still dream of himself wrested from his afflictions, in the reflected image of his ghostly double that manifests itself next to him. No language is employed in the conjuring of his Other, all that the audience can hear is at

34 Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 161.
first the humming followed by the singing of Franz Schubert’s _lied_ or song, _Nacht und Traume_, which gives the play its title, its intonations returning the audience back to the image of a dream and a solipsistic realisation. For Deleuze the truly exhausted person is the insomniac who dreams of insomnia: “in the dream of insomnia, it is a question not of realising the impossible but of exhausting the possible.”35 The insomniac character must fabricate his dream, he must dream himself dreaming if he is to conjure the image of his double.

Beckett’s insomniac participates in the ‘how’ by which the exhausted dispenses with, enumerates, emphasises and accentuates language. It is an approach that is applicable to _A Clinic for the Exhausted_; an indivisible polysemy made material through a chain of figurations ascending and descending outwards as a collection of tidal sensations that facilitates the emergence of the exhausted in the madness of the proposition. The insomniac is who offers an approach in an approach that exhausts all approaches.

**THE CLINIC: AN AMBILIOQUY**

The clinician traced a patient’s symptoms out in their entirety so that within the intimate unity of an illness’s divergent movements they could claim to have laid out the course of the patient’s physical exhaustion. It is the clinician who is apprehended and drawn out in the duration of the gait of the figures who pace out the permutations of movement in _Quad_. As Foucault writes:

> The formation of the clinical method was bound up with the emergence of the doctor’s gaze into the field of signs and symptoms. The recognition of its constituent rights involved the effacement of their absolute distinction and the postulate that henceforth the signifier (sign and symptom) would be entirely transparent for the signified, which

35 Deleuze, _Essays Critical and Clinical_, 171.
would appear, without concealment or residue, in its most pristine reality, and that the essence of the signified — the heart of the disease — would be entirely exhausted in the intelligible syntax of the signifier.36

As the clinician’s gaze interrogates the temperament of the tuberculosis patient they realise the patient’s illness in the individualising act which conditions a community of exiles: a gesture towards another space. It is across the duration of any one place that the tuberculoid sufferer’s illness is sustained, in the provisional state of convalescence that embraces the patient’s life. Health is what would efface the image of their illness, but it is also what pervades and sustains the convalescing patient because it is health that frames their stay, but it is also the frame that cuts, that sends them on their perpetual displacement from one space to another; an illness indistinguishable from a climate, an illness that erupts in the midst of the patient’s compound. The image of hypochondria offered in the opening of this thesis dispenses with the clear cut evaluation of what is an exemplary health or illness and determines how the state of convalescence and the movement of exiles resist being distinguished from each other; that the hypochondriac will always remain unsatisfied when either is offered as a conclusion. In the narrating voice of …but the clouds… we can discern the etiology of hypochondria that takes place between the clinician and the patient who remain always in sight of each other.

The clinician’s eyes appear as if they were the ghostly hands tending to the dreamt figure in Nacht und Traume, and that, within the contingent circumstances of this clinic, discover the figure of the sufferer who dreams himself somewhere else, whose affliction finds attention in the violence of another space, a place that is spaced out, or paced out if we may remember Argan’s curative gait, in his exile from one convalescing state to another. The tuberculosis sufferer would seem to affirm Maurice Blanchot’s belief that:

36 Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception, 91.
Night, the essence of night, does not let us sleep. In the night no refuge is to be found in sleep. And if you fail sleep, exhaustion finally sickens you, and this sickness prevents sleeping; it is expressed by insomnia, by the impossibility of making sleep a free zone, a clear and true resolution. In the night one cannot sleep.37

The distinction between illness as an image of selfhood and an image that dissolves the individual, is mirrored in the gestures of Elkins’ description for a distinction been an image as Subject and an image as Anti-Subject.38 For Elkins an image can be determined to have a ‘Subject’ if it “declares or is taken to declare, a single narrative, theme, or genre”39 often the title of the image is enough to declare the structure of the image’s meaning, even if that meaning remains open to its extension. An ‘Anti-Subject’ is an image that “begins with a determinate subject then becomes a cipher” a palimpsest that prompts a “retreat from the obvious, unambiguous primary meaning.”40 While the terms remain distinct and are specific to the context within which Elkins argues them, Subject and Anti-Subject encompass, in the reality of image making, the possibility of an ambiguous application. Thus, as Elkins goes on to argue, an image that has “a single meaning can be so quietly articulated and so bewildering rich that it can be difficult to name” and congruently “a flight from meaning can produce a nebula of partly cognized possibilities.”41 Elkins names the ambiguous discourse between these two extremes as an ‘amboquy,’ a term which he applies to “a work that declares a single subject, and then dissolves into a partly illegible orchestration of multiple meanings, provoking

37 Maurice Blanchot, The Space of Literature, trans. A. Smock, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 266-267, italics my emphasis. In making his own assertions regarding exhaustion Deleuze refers to Blanchot’s conception, however, in his notes refrains from quoting this paragraph in its entirety. Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 171, 206, note 85.
38 For a detailed analysis of these two terms, as well as the term ‘Not-Subject’, refer to Chapter 5, On Monstrously Ambiguous Paintings in, Elkins, Why are our Pictures Puzzles? On the modern Origins of Pictorial Complexity, specifically 126-130.
and then confounding any determined interpretation.”42 The dissolution of any particular grammar into the inconsistency of grammar, informs what Elkins determines as the ambiloquy’s governing principle: that there can be “no grammar in the ambiloquy.”43

The ambiloquy is offered as a way of addressing the degree with which this project embraces the assertion made by Foucault, (stated above), that the clinic was a universal relationship of mankind with itself:

It is in the clinic, it was said, that medicine found its possibility of origin. At the dawn of mankind, prior to every vain belief, every system, medicine in its entirety consisted of an immediate relationship between sickness and that cure that alleviated it. This relationship was one of instinct and sensibility, rather than of experience; it was established by the individual from himself to himself, before it was caught up in a social network: ‘The patient’s sensibility tells him whether this or that position makes him more comfortable or torments him’. It is this relationship, established without the mediation of knowledge, that is observed by the healthy man; and this observation itself is not an option for future knowledge; it is not even an act of awareness (prise de conscience); it is performed immediately and blindly; ‘A secret voice tells us here: contemplate nature’; multiplied by itself, transmitted from one to another, it becomes a general form of consciousness of which each individual is both subject and object; ‘Everyone, without distinction, practiced this medicine … each person’s experience were communicated to others … and this knowledge passed from father to children’. Before it became a corpus of knowledge (un savior), the clinic was a universal relationship of mankind with itself.44

44 Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception, 55.
Care cannot be organised into a top down approach, as doing so would fail to recognise the circumstance by which care takes place in the Clinic, a space that makes a claim to the particularities of the community, and the initial pre-individuating void that enveloped the community as a whole. The grammar of care is realised as an ambiloquy because care is that which can declare the extent of its undertaking, at the same times it is claimed by an abstract mass whose voice carves a space left open beside one’s bedside for the realisation of the totality of human endeavours.45

STRADDLING THE THRESHOLD
OF NOT-KNOWING

The clinic lies between the particularities of Montaigne’s incoming break and the generality of the ocean surface and simultaneously moves away from a single origin, towards a middling of them all. It sustains the radical practice of care that enables this endeavour to gestures towards the horizon of the impossible. To apprehend the conditions of the horizon requires conjuring a panoramic movement that is distinguished in Marcel Duchamp’s Door: 11 rue Larrey (1927). Duchamp’s door gestures towards the parenthesis of Roussel’s tropological space, never simply open or closed. Beyond one door always lies another, and thus the threshold that the horizon offers is replete with hinges; a diagram that might arguably be imagined by Russian Architect Konstantin Melnikov’s triple functioning door of the same year: never simply opened and closed, but with the potential to claim a new condition in excess of the

45 In order for audience to comprehend some of the narration, they need to be made aware that the ‘sick-bay’, the part of a man-of-war where the ill seamen was placed, and what served in lieu of a hospital on land, was located adjacent to the sleeping quarters of the watchmen. All that separated the watchmen’s hammocks from the ‘sick-bay’ was a thin perforated screen. In lieu of this project’s impending confrontation with the space of the clinic, as a space located adjacent to the bed of the ill, the approach of the ship is always towards the ‘sick-bay’, the space that may confirm the extent of an approach in A Clinic for the Exhausted. See, Herman Melville, White Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War, (London: John Lehmann, 1957), 309.
Confronting this complex of thresholds requires us knowing that:

What defines the act of medical knowledge in its concrete form is not, therefore, the encounter between doctor and patient, nor is it the confrontation of a body of knowledge and a perception: it is the systematic intersection of two series of information, each homogeneous but alien to each other – two series that embrace an infinite set of separate events, but whose intersection reveals, in its isolable dependence, the individual fact. A sagittal figure of knowledge.

The progression of doors describe a series of culminations, of disruptive transformations, sutures that occur in the alignment of uneven edges of one door with another; their hinges attending to the durational force of a threshold without origin or end: exhaustion is hence understood as an encounter with the open and closed as the movement of exile and the contingency of and as the condition of a state of convalescence. Thus a horizon of the impossible is imagined, a mettisage of still surfaces that swing not from the edges of an immense door frame but from subtle imperceptible deformations that carry through an infinite number of planes, describing them as though they were entirely made of contours; geometric lines that describe the topography of nowhere in particular. This gesture discloses the practice of care at the limit-

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46 Duchamp’s door was located in his Paris studio, and is a single door leaf that operates across two door frames located between studio and the bedroom, and the studio and the bathroom. The frames are set ninety degrees to each other, so that the door leaf pivots from the shared edge of both frames. As the door is opened its swing carries the door from one frame to the other. Melnikov’s door is located in the Melnikov House, and is a door located at the bottom of the stairs used to navigate the two cylindrical volumes that describe the house. The door operates much like the door on Duchamp’s studio, by carrying a door leaf through a series of frames, but goes further by providing three noted points of operation: opened against the entry hall wall it allows free entry to the entire house; located in the first frame it shares with another leaf it closes the entry hall off from the remainder of the house, and; in the final position, again shared with another door leaf, it permits passage from the entry hall to the stairwell, but closes off the ground floor. In turn, the other door leafs that it shares the frames with at each successive point, establishes an array of open and closed states. See, Juhani Pallasmaa & Andrei Gozak, The Melnikov House, trans. Catherine Cooke, (London:Academy Editions, 1996), 23. Also, Dalibor Vesley, Architecture and Surrealism, Architecture Design, (March/April 1978).

47 Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception, 30.
horizon of the clinic: an invitation to address those who cannot be arrested by any contour.

Daniel W. Smith in his introduction to Deleuze’s *Essays Critical and Clinical* explains that an address directed to those missing from the pantheon of contemporary practices does not ask after the return of those who are already known, a return of the same, of those who have taken leave of the shore only to disembark some while later on the same shore. It is a matter of “contributing to the invention of a people who are missing,” asking after those modes of existence that have yet to emerge. This does not exclude those who may already exist but conceive of themselves as missing from the cacophony of utterances that make a demand for a life. It is, in each case, “an utterance that expresses the impossibility of living under domination,” asking after the demand to perform, to choose, or to condition the field of possibilities in such a way that one could offer no contradiction to the arrangement held out in front of you or, that would draw a close to other sensations around which a community may emerge.

The extraordinary task of this PhD has been to ask after how we might care for those who will remain missing. Certainly the mutable *ambiloquy*, and the chimerical *je ne sais quoi* have been sought out for their elliptical ability to reach toward those who cannot be asked after by name, but neither term can encapsulate in their entirety those who wield the clinic’s horizon as a veil; those who perpetuate inspite of the demand to practice otherwise; “an exhausted community, or a community of the exhausted.”

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50 Verwoert, “Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Delfy the Pressure to Perform,” 110.
An attempt will now be made to cast an audience into the constellation of the clinic’s gilt and gemmed edifice; the sixth and final text which embraces, without apology, the principles of the clinic, and manifests this PhD’s ineffable undertaking.
An Emerald Sepulchre
A TORTOISE

Duc Jean des Esseintes’ ritualistic self imposed exile away from the grotesque and senseless bourgeois world of the city, in Joris-Karl Huysman’s decadent novel *A Rebours* (1884), illustrates the folding-in of the outside that composes the space of the ship from the surface of the ocean. Disgusted by the bourgeois excesses of Paris and the noble set he has been born into, Esseintes shuts himself away in a house in the country to forge an existence in the experimentation and contemplation of aesthetic and learned disciplines. One of Esseintes’ experiments, his unfortunate tortoise, (a description of which can be seen to fall under the shadow of Jorge Luis Borges’ curious taxonomy of animals appropriated from a certain Chinese Encyclopedia), provides an exemplary allegorical diagram of the ocean fold with which this text can pursue its own senseless search for reason. The tortoise forms a wreck at the depths of Esseintes’ self enforced lazaretto, but is also what might furnish this project here with a *Narrenschiff* or a ship of fools, a contrivance that impels Essenties’ experiment to go that little further. The rationale behind this texts appropriation of the tortoise is prescribed by Esseintes’ own experiment, by which he vainly attempts to enliven the splendor of an oriental rug by forcing its navigation by something drab, a lumbering inelegant tortoise he purchases for the task. Esseintes, unable to reconcile the tortoise’s lugubrious hues with the purpose he intended has each scale on its shell superficially and superfluous decorated, first in gold, and then in gemstones so that the rug’s threads may be subdued by the grander and richer

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1. Foucault uses this passage from Luis Borge’s “The Analytical Language of John Wilkins” to illustrate the possibility of new systems of classification and validity, but also to confront the limits of our own systems of coherence and sense making. Refer, Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), xvi.

2. *Narrenschiff* or the ship of fools, existed as European medieval boats that were often entrusted with the insane who had been removed to the outskirts of a city. They were often accused as an easy and perhaps only form of transport between cities that could offer spiritual or medical treatment. Refer, Michel Foucault, *The History of Madness*, trans. J. Murphy & J. Khalfa, (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 8-12.
object of the tortoise. Resplendent with Esseintes’ senseless disavowal of the outside, the tortoises’ gold and bejeweled scales reflect the elusive luminosity of a night sky, the oriental rug framing an opening in Esseintes’ citadel. Given over to this oriental surface, the tortoise becomes a peculiarly vexed vessel, the validity of its enumerations and its emergence within the fold of its exiled interior corroborated by the bourgeois fancy of an outside. Unable to draw air under the weight of its shell the tortoise fails to live out its monstrous life in Esseintes’ monstrous experiment. It is only after Esseintes’ accounts the results of a series of further experiments, including the tortures of a removed tooth and the consumption of a symphony of liquors, that he notes the lifeless carapace of the tortoise in the corner of the room; his observation offering no further need to reflect on it.

Esseintes’ tortoise is an unknown species that remains uncategorisable, its monstrousness revealing its terrifying existence because while it may never speak it is able to proclaim its existence: an etymological search of the word ‘proclaim’ derives the Latin *proclamare*, meaning ‘to cry out.’ Any admission into the world is thus caught up in an infantile endeavour to confess a presence, to be heard. Esseintes’ experiment presents a case in which a cry is heard and thus a form can be adopted, at once terrifying because the form is monstrous but more so because the cry challenges its own formless state via the dissenting voice of a monstrous reason, that the cry must be echoed from an adjacent form, that its force must be drawn from something and from somewhere. Esseintes’ experiment exposes the means for expression not by an excess of

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3 As Jacques Derrida forecasted at the end of his essay “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences,” it is only at the very limit of signification that we can hope to confront our contemporaneity. This contemporaneity is identified within what Derrida notes as “the yet un-nameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.” Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” in, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass, (London: Routledge, 2005), 351-370; 370.

signification, but rather because of a latency in a dissenting voice, *in excess* of a voice. This writing experiment will thus attempt to throw a voice.

A voice is anticipated by the pitching and rolling of Edison’s lifeboat as it traverses its precarious passage beneath a sky characterised by the flight of birds and above a wreck that would lie amid the ocean’s vast depth. But, the lifeboat offered by this text cannot be assured of its ability to float. The degree to which the horizon secures the suturing of ocean depth and sky, describes the lifeboat’s spectral being. That is, the lifeboat cannot be sought outright, as though pricking one’s ears or opening one’s eyes could alone confront the horizon’s aleatory existence. Perhaps in prolonging the appearance of a lifeboat in this text we could describe a myriad of oily glimmers that animate the variegated surface of its approach but, the horizon’s elusiveness forbids any assurances of any conjecture. The lifeboat beseeches the unfathomable space between horizon and offing, but does not leave a mark, its demand on the space only assured by its self-effacing advance. The boat is roused and a life held forth, by its own voice, in a gesture that heralds the very utterance of the word ‘lifeboat’.

Formerly the word *test* was Latin for a medieval clay vessel used to verify precious metals, and was related to the Latin word for shell, *testa*, from which we derive the Latin for tortoise, *testudo*. Perhaps then it is only our good fortune that our vessel, a lifeboat, procures Esseintes’ tortoise shell, for it is the lifeboat, under its own breath, that assays itself. The tortoise shell is upturned by the prospect of a lifeboat, releasing a cry that appeals to itself without reduction, inasmuch as it exceeds who or what would curtail its freedom.

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5 Michel Serres reveals the origins of ‘test’ as Latin for “an ancient beaker or resistant earthen pot used for assays or for testing of gold.” Michel Serres, *The Troubadour of Knowledge*, trans. S. F. Glaser & W. Paulson, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 79. As the OED points out, testum, or an earthen bowl was the collateral form of testa, a pot or shell, from which the word testudo Latin for ‘tortoise’ derived its origin.
to disclose itself. It is a voice that cuts off its own retreat, its final return; a voice that exceeds the question of its existence: not a utopic conclusion, but in whose finality is poised a question in turn, a voice indebted to an existence secured in an immanent life. The tortoise conjoined with its precious armour poses as a gilded troubadour, who holds forth an account of the viscous fluidity of its voyaging, whose song discloses as sort-of-evidence of a lifeboat, a voice that accounts for all who find themselves at sea.

Without complaint Esseintes’ tortoise is turned on its back, the plastron that once pressed against the ground now prone to the sky. A faint ring of gold is visible as it skims the surface of the ocean, the shells convex mass of glittering gems a cosmic kaleidoscope for the flight of who knows what beneath the waves. Assembled upon exclamations of *buon fortuna*, the tortoise becoming lifeboat, the turning over and through of Esseintes privileged experiment, realises the prophetic cries of *buon viaggio* that accompany its impromptu turn as a gilded instrument of an impromptu minstrel. Fatherless, motherless, brotherless, sisterless, a voice realises a traveler rowing against the vast inertia of an expression that gathers in the univocity of the muttering and murmur of the cosmic swell, echoed and further amplified in the sonorous thorax of the tortoise’s carapace. A gilt edge, the maddening persistence of the ocean’s horizontal surface, reveals a spectral effect on the horizon, that etches the contours of a shell-bird, what through the atmospheric mirage of expression

6 Maurice Blanchot quoting Rabbi Nachman of Breslau who commanded “It is forbidden to be old!” suggests that we can understand the intention behind this statement as “one is forbidden to reject being renewed, forbidden to confine oneself to an answer that would no longer pose the question — in the end (but there is no end) writing only to erase what has been written, or more precisely writing it by erasure itself, keeping exhaustion and the inexhaustible together: the DISAPPEARANCE that is never worn out.” However, Blanchot contends that Breslau avails himself still to the possibility of an ending. Blanchot insists that the “always yet to be born, birth in debt to itself,” is a chance which obscures itself so that it cannot be put to use. Maurice Blanchot, A Voice from Elsewhere, trans. C. Mandell, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 24-25.

7 The term ‘shell-bird’ is from D.H. Lawrence’s collection of poems Turtles, specifically from the following stanza from the poem ‘Baby Tortoise’: “Nay, tiny shell-bird,| What a huge vast inanimate it is, that you must row against,| What an incalculable inertia.” What a huge vast inanimate it is, that you must row against, What an incalculable inertia. The use of the contraction shell-bird is to gather the forces of the boat, the upturned tortoise shell, with the uplift of Building Eight as it takes off according to Raggatt’s account. It is also to realise Lawrence’s vast inanimate
and reveals an apparition on the horizon unobstructed by a shapeless fog: a domed carapace mistaken for a hat tied to a green coat whose tattered fringe stains the edge of the ocean. The coat does not describe, nor does the gilded hat distinguish our shell-bird. Nevertheless one may, perhaps, ascertain that they had been purchased together by some discerning gentlemen, or by two, whose taste followed a single path. The green over coat shadows a tortoise without the certainty of land, a tortoise in extremis, as the silhouette of a tortoise shell mid-flight in the calm of the ocean and in excess of the folds of an ocean-ship; a mock-turtle flung into the inertia of a horizon, an oscillating datum that marks the potential of an ocean’s expanse. The shell-bird emerges as a pregnant green bend.\footnote{As Nancy states, the image does not find its origin in the sky, rather “it proceeds from it, it is of a celestial essence, and it contains the sky within itself.” The sky is the light of the image, is the image or the sky appropriated for the image. Further, “the image that contains the horizon also overflows it and spreads itself out in it, like the resonances of a harmony, like the halo of a painting.” It is the distortion of the sun as its circular form become elliptical against the presence of the horizon or the smudge that sustains the golden light of the sun after it has gone. The green ray is an optical phenomenon that is exhibited as the last rays of the sun pass through the denser air and are ‘bent’ procuring momentarily a green flash in the last moments of the sun disappearing behind the horizon, green and blue light waves curving more than other colour frequencies. Jules Verne made popular this phenomenon in his novel The Green Ray (1882) in which Miss. Helena Campbell, who is to be married to Mr. Aristobulus Ursiclos by the wishes of her uncle’s Sams and Sib, goes in search of the green ray in the hope of effecting its mythical powers that are said to reveal not only the desire of another, but the truth of one’s own heart. The Green Ray, perhaps, agrees with Nancy’s ascertain that “the intimate is expressed in it [the light that is the sky]” and that “the image touches me, and, thus touched and drawn by it and into it, I get involved, not to say mixed up in it.” The protagonist Miss Campbell, at the very last moment, misses the opportunity to see the green flash as she is preoccupied by the eyes of her saviour Oliver Samuel who has been revealed through his heroic actions as her true love. Subsequently, the green ray as a phenomenon does not offer itself as an exemplary concept that reveals or actualises a pre-ordained potentiality on the part of Miss Campbell, but rather, the green ray is written in the very gestures of Miss Campbell’s not seeing the green ray, that is, the green ray is the experience of potentiality. Refer, Jean-Luc Nancy, The Ground of the Image, trans. J. Fort, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 6-7; on potentiality see, Giorgio Agamben, Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy, ed. & trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 216-217. For the original see, Jules Verne, The Green Ray, (Holicon, PA: Wildside Press, 2003).}
At the threshold of an impending collapse of life and boat, the middle region is resigned to the exceptional, to a gesture that enables the phrase *je ne sais quoi* to operate within the obligations of language. The expression *je ne sais quoi* is not burdened by attributions that would distinguish it as either interior or exterior to an acceptable mode of expression, and which could then be evidenced within a structured body of knowledge. The phrase further evades any simplification that would interpret it as either subject to individual knowledge by deriving the terms by which it makes sense from a previous encounter with the unknown, indescribable, or ill defined. An account that would ascertain the dimensions of the *je ne sais quoi* would fail to go beyond a preconceived idea, as per a likeness, of what it may be and where it may fit by finding an equivalence amidst accepted forms of expression. The elusive scale by which the phrase encompasses the whole of its potential litany of like figures cannot be broken down into its constituted elements or measured by its neologic actions; it is a phrase that determines more than the sum of its parts but does not accord them a unity. Thus, to seek a source in the plurality of ends and beginnings of a boundless sense would only reflect the demise of Esseintes’ tortoise: the failure of a sedentary life to propagate its own amorphous potential, to labour under the pleasure of a leaden sea.

The sagittal plane of the horizon that separates and brings into correspondence – a horizon that is both an axis and a pedestal – a shipwrecked depth and the luminous heavens, ascertains the tortoise shell’s shifting untoward movement in the middle. The gilt radiance that springs from its golden surface penetrates the depths, illuminating Foucault’s discarded heterotopic ship, as the dark watery hues offer the exposed underside of the tortoise’s scales a confrontation with the cosmic shimmer of the plane above. The multiple lines that turn around this hull mark the extravagant folding over, in and out of a figure that is expressed in an encounter with the Isle

of Tools, in the Renaissance writer Rabelais’ satirical narrative *Pataguel and Gargantua*. The Isle is where monstrous trees grow decorated in all manner of tools and weapons that, on dropping and striking the ground, are instinctively sheathed by the long grass. In odd cases these surprising trees sprout tools that are a composite of different known implements, for which purpose and situation remain obscured. On the protagonists’ taking their leave from the Isle, the narrator takes note of the peculiarity of the island:

As we returned to our ships, I spied behind I know not what bush, I know not what people doing I know not what together, and I know not how either, for they were sharpening I know not what tools, which they had I know not where, and in I know not what manner.10

Tied to the movement of a luminous ‘turn of phrase’ that evokes Leon Battista Alberti’s concept of circumscription (*circonscrizione*) defined as the study of the ‘turning of the outline’ (*l’attorniare dell’orlo*),11 the baroque ship is a litany of half-formed and half-felt movements that evokes the untoward motion of Montaigne’s nausea; a gilded relic that lies at the bottom of des Esseintes’ ocean fold caught up in the genesis of creatures of the deep and exhibited alongside Victor Hugo’s “pieces of darkness [that] undergo unknown polarizations, come to life, compose nobody knows what [on-ne-sait-quel] form and soul with the miasma and then head off as larvae through vitality.”12


11 As James Elkins states: ‘Alberti’s orlo — as distinct from edges, contorni, and other concepts etc — should be nearly invisible because it represents that invisible datum of sight, the visual ray that gives us edges of things.’ The orlo defines an openness to the actions of the artist beyond the surface of the mark and the definite mark, that captures with it, the modal functioning of the representations of light (splendor as the brightest, umbra as the ground colour, and lumen as an inbetween) However, as Elkins shows, the hierarchical evaluation of the modes of light while in themselves are fixed, can be reproduced with the ‘loaded brush technique’ that creates a greater variety of tone through the thickening of paint that homogenises the distinct tonal range of splendor, umbra and lumen. See, James Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36-42.

The shell-bird is transposed onto the mobility of the ocean swell just as the baroque ship is a voyager of the sea; a restless swimmer flung, in full regalia, to the middling of the ocean swell, to compose, nobody knows what. The vestiges of hat and coat are cast forward to turn over and over, the shell-bird’s silhouette discerned as nothing more than a shimmering green edge coiled around the peaks and crest of the open ocean. The iron carapace of the baroque ship – seemingly gilt in the light of the setting sun it describes the contours of a hat – fails to follow the rolling movements of the rags it is tied to. Instead, it remains where it is, to tread the depths, abandoned by the lolling troubadour, to perhaps, once again, capture the centre of a virtuoso encounter that can exacerbate the pathogenesis of Esseintes’ unfortunate tortoise.

This text makes a claim on Foucault’s initial principles of the ship as “the greatest reserve of the imagination” and as the “heterotopia par excellence”\textsuperscript{13} and, implicates the tortoise’s shell in the transgressive act of the ocean surface with the ship and its species of space as a conceptually affective womb of Foucault’s ocean-ship. The subsequent upturning of Esseintes’ abandoned tortoise is not an attempt to transcend the space of Foucault’s ship, or to make the ship a final entity from which to procure all models of the unthinkable. The upturning is an attempt to found the heterotopic space of the ship on a stochastic reproduction of the initial fold of the ocean, rendering any figure formless and indecipherable within the layered transparency of an ocean-ship construction \textit{sfumato’d} mid-horizon. The hull of the baroque ship is the outcome of a deceitful refiguring of the adjacent surfaces in which the initial tortoise found itself enveloped; a hull emblazoned with gemstones, paradoxical cysts that describe Esseintes’ abhorrent desires in a gypsy tortoise. The baroque ship is the sum of the tortoise’s horizon. The shell-bird is what

\textsuperscript{13} Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 27.
is expelled in a *gravitas* exclamation, a moment, when the golden touch of the sun excites a yawn from the tortoise’s abandoned vestiges;¹⁴ an illuminated flash that secures our approaches perpendicular flight bearing the tides horizontal advance.¹⁵

Privy to the whispers of Pyramus and Thisbe’s, and at the mercy of Deleuze’s frothing and fretting, the baroque ship procures as its model the Greek island of Delos whose trembling form disturbs the thick opiate of fog. The baroque ship usurps the gilded remains of Esseintes’ failed encounter that afforded the unfortunate tortoise its experience at the limits of an outside, and transgresses the passage in exile of Foucault’s ocean-ship; an outline that describes a tortoise shell being rowed slowly forward. The shell-bird describes what slips out between Foucault’s wrecked ship and an Apollonian flight along the horizon, a golden mirage that dances across the ocean surface, oars turning in their stirrups.¹⁶

By interrupting the interiority of the ship by virtue of it being an outside that turns in on itself along the line that navigates the passage between a double

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¹⁵  This line goes by several names, a line of flight, line of becoming, line of escape and a line of deterritorialization. The line is what carries two objects into proximity as an assemblage, but it does not, as a line that would connect them, offer a solution to their coming together but only a general causality. The line effects a deterritorialization that marks a passage from the plane of heterogeneity (of transcendence, of organisation), where the two objects are distinguished, to the plane of consistency (of immanence) whereby they enter into composition. Deleuze and Guattari as an example point to an orchid that appears as if it is a wasp so that it may attract an actual and specific wasp to complete the orchid’s pollination and the dissemination of the orchid’s own pollen. The wasp takes the orchid to be an actual wasp and seeks to mate with it, but in doing so mates with the orchid. In the case of the orchid the mating is successful. Both wasp and orchid find themselves in such a proximity that what distinguishes them as an orchid and wasp no longer apply: “A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points.” Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London & New York: Continuum, 2004), 222.

image, the shell-bird secures a pure horizon, depriving any claimant of the ability to seek, once again, a space for the tortoise in the folding of an outside. The shell-bird that slips out from the golden mirage of an indistinguishable number of folds, the baroque ship conceived of a tortoise shell immersed in the golden light of a troubled sky, and presents an absolutely unique and vivid exclamation that claims nothing but itself. The shell-bird is but a green silhouette against a fiery horizon, an outline that should not be confused with the walls of Paradise and its hope of redemption, but a solvent hope. Ordained by the appearance of a golden mirage the shell-bird is a green that is singularly intense.

17 Agamben states that a being cannot be reduced to a morally deterministic variant of what is and is not abhorrent, and that would impart, a latent divine will regarding the being. Rather, the beings value can only be determined by the immanence of its life, as Agamben avows, “the taking-place of the entities, their innermost exteriority.” Giorgio Agamben, The Coming Community, trans. M. Hardt, (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 14. Agamben’s comment is reflected in the footsteps of the baby tortoise, as its initial momentum is overtaken by that of Lucretius’ clinamen: How vivid your travelling seems now, in the troubled sunshine | Stoic, Ulyssean atom; | Suddenly hasty, reckless, on high toes. Lawrence, Tortoises, 12.

18 As Jules Verne writes of the green ray phenomenon: “it will be green; but a most wonderful green, a green which no artist could ever obtain on his palette, a green which neither the varied tints of vegetation nor the shades of the most limpid sea could ever produce the like! If there be green in Paradise, it cannot but be of this shade, which must surely be the true green of Hope!” Verne’s hope without Paradise gestures towards Nietzsche’s ‘being as a debt to God’, that, in turn is promoted by Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze finds in the coded moral order of religion, a system that offers an unsustainable life of solvency through an obedience to the hierarchical structures put into place by religion as representative of God, to whom religion offers access through the regulating power of redeeming that assembles a dominance over all actions and gestures. For Deleuze religion is an example of a transcendent life model, in that case determines the good that positions someone closer to god and possible redemption and identifies the evil which would seek to undermine not only this passage but also the work of the decoding body of religion that orchestrates the status quo. In opposition to a transcendent model of life that would seek to distinguish objects and subjects, Deleuze proposes the concept of a haecceity, a term that embodies an immanent model of life in an ethics that is the lived expression of the deterritorializing non-relational order, in the becoming that is conceived through a combinatorial rather than ordering gesture exemplified in religion’s transcendent model. Refer to: Gilles Deleuze, “To Have Done with Judgement” in, Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 126-136; on the concept of a haecceity refer, Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, 287-292.

Hope is positioned by the work of Edmond and Corrigan, in proximity to a combinatorial architecture that considers the disorder and impurity of the city and surrounding suburbs, the ‘difficult coded knowledge’, as a relevant image with which to ‘live out’ an Australian architecture, in opposition to an architecture confined in a single sweeping gesture that would allocate its place firmly in the bush, or isolated on a red plane. Inversely, the descriptions of Building Eight as a ‘City of Hope’, a title first aligned with Edmond and Corrigan’s Athan House (1987), and which leads itself, in plurality, to the title of Conrad Hamann’s monograph on Edmond and Corrigan, epitomizes an architectural expression of
The intensity of the green is paralleled by Ulysses’ exchange with Polyphemus, when, called upon to identify himself he veiled and unveiled his identity by answering to ‘no man’. Ulysses, by way of his deceptive reply and his rogue action of blinding the Cyclops, decenters perception. Thus, this text envisages the baroque ship as a ceaselessly moving piece of darkness that, floating before the fovea like so much cosmic dust, mars perception with a spectral green flash. The shell-bird marks the confrontation with the spectral intensities of the green flash, in the play of light across the retina realised at the edge of blindness. The passage of the baroque ship that draws out the threshold between the sky and the ocean is overwhelmed in a virtual flash of green; the shell-bird a measure of its own brilliance. The expediency with which such a hallucinatory datum is consummated, instantly the self effacing action of the charred centre the mark of the Cyclops’ eye and the instrument that would prick it, is continually staged in the unfathomable and discordant meter of this text’s ocean score; endeavouring to liberate the nucleus of the horizon’s unimaginable contiguity and envisage an ocean that is unencumbered by depth, it is still able to realise the temporal modulations of the tides that touches on all sides, for this text has no one side. A surface imparted with parallel lines that divide the constant into a series of traversable depths, and the unconquerable flight of violence that compels even the volunteer into no-man’s-land; the Cyclops is truly blinded not by the actions of a-man or no-man but rather, by the fleeting glimpse of no-man’s-man.

this life. Hope finds itself an exemplary methodology in the design studio’s Peter has taught at RMIT since 1979, in which, as Vivian Mitsogianni has already enumerated, Peter is very much in the background offering the students the opportunity to unfasten their opinions in the questioning of judgement and the will-to-invent and which, perhaps hopefully, engenders the student to an architecture without resolution in architecture, but, central to Deleuze’s claim and also Miss. Campbell’s passage in The Green Ray, to a life of continual invention. See, Conrad Hamann, Cities of Hope: Australian Architecture and Design by Edmond and Corrigan, 1962-92. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993),138; Vivian Mitsogianni, “The Laughter of Liberation/The Authority of Vision,” RAIA Gold Medalist 2003 Peter Corrigan: a life through architecture, Architecture Australia, Vol 92, No.2, (April/March 2003), 88-89.
I, PETER CORRIGAN

The early nineteenth century ‘broadsheet’, Foucault explains, served to amend certain murderous crimes alongside the reporting of important historical events so as to exaggerate the degree to which the unremarkable crimes could claim the same equivalency with the extraordinary historical events of the time. Foucault argues that it was the broadsheet that served as the frontier for the two side presentation of murder; on one side the irredeemable monstrosity of a criminal and on the other, the sanctioned and ordained killing during that other important historical event, war. It was this ambiguous simultaneity that described on the same sheet an unconscionable action and an acceptable action and, which allowed the broadsheet to determine a crime’s historical mileage.

The broadsheet presented the murder and burial written from the point of view of a witness to the crime, a witness who remained nameless and without attribution. The description was followed by a verse, narrated in first person by the murderer, and often set to an existing or well known refrain so as to enable the song to “travel from singer to singer” and thus everyone was “presumed able to sing it as his own crime by a lyrical fiction.” The confessional refrain of the verse magnified the crime to such an extent that every person who sang it ‘became’ the criminal, stood in for, and in place of the murderer, which resulted, via its recitation, in the ‘singer’ being charged with the crime. It was as though the verse perpetually put an entire community of singers in doubt, propelling the verse to an almost invisible and secret

enciphering of a society of murderers. The refrain of murderer infiltrates the refrain of a lover, as the line draws the troubadours into sight: taking a song not of your own declared as the truth, truer than any others, and which organises the historical conditions for its flight and reinterpretation beyond any one author.

The murderous verse lines were organised in a particular format. In the first lines we would hear the murderer confess their error plainly, as a matter of fact, before calling forth their own punishment. The murderer, as Foucault explains, “assumes for himself a law.” We then hear the murderer openly confesses to the heinousness of their crime, and the resulting horror which they install in themselves by way of their own disgusting nature. But, this horror does not allow for the horror others may feel, because “he makes no concession to his own monstrosity.” Finally, at the moment of the murderer’s impending execution the criminal calls forth justice and their own death.

Foucault recognises that the verse does not decide upon a moral verdict or conclusion begat by the community’s disgust because, “the speaker displays his murder for all to see, isolates himself in it, summons the law, and calls for both memory and execration.” Foucault’s argument is located in the confession of one Pierre Rivière who, having sought to release his father from years of domination, butchered his mother, brothers and sister with a

20 Foucault’s society of murderers echoes the society of thieves which swarm the decks of a ship at sea. As Melville writes: “To enumerate all the minor pilferings on board a man-of-war would be endless. With some highly commendable exceptions, they rob from one another, and rob back again, till, in the matter of small things, a community of goods seems almost to be established; and at last, as a whole, they become relatively honest, by nearly every man becoming the reverse. It is in vain that the officers, by threats of condign punishment, endeavour to instill more virtuous principles into their crew; so thick is the mob, that not one thief in a thousand is detected.” Melville, White Jacket, 50.
21 Foucault, “Tales of Murder,” 208.
22 Foucault, “Tales of Murder,” 208.
23 Foucault, “Tales of Murder,” 208.
sickle. During the confinement leading up to his trial Rivière, at the request of the judge, wrote down how and why he had undertaken the crime. His confession emerged as the central paradox of his court case where it was argued that the heinousness of the crime committed meant that he must be found insane. It was counter argued that his confession, which had begun so matter of fact – *I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother...* 24 – pointed utmost to his sanity, the letter written in a style specific to no one in particular that is, attributable to any other person who could conceive of the facts without having done the deed and thus, it was argued, exposing the coldness by which Rivière undertook the killing. The fact that Rivière could write a confession only reinforced the argument that he was not insane, and moreover, that the callousness of his account clearly demonstrated, without contravening the earlier statement, that he was a monster. Rivière’s confession parallels the broadsheet’s verses, but with Rivière instead improvising his own verse which he then reads aloud from, taking the place of anyone and everyone who might have taken his place.

The divestiture of Peter Corrigan’s name at the same time as it adhere itself to the passage of this text is done so in excess of his name – *I, Peter Corrigan*. His name can not articulate the various instances of Peter Corrigan that invariably proliferate throughout *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. His name, as it is distinguished by an alternate genealogy of Building Eight, is not a rubric for who or what in fact ‘Peter Corrigan the architect of Building Eight’, is; but one can not but be suspicious of his name, because it confirms the ready availability of Building Eight. In both cases, Peter Corrigan and Building Eight are taken away as and when they occur, are withheld, not by some reticence of the author of this text, but by a hypercathexis that ministers to the undertaking of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. Identifying every collaborator, and apportioning their stake in a crime against either Peter Corrigan or

Building Eight would fail to discern the suspicious activity that gathers in the streets below a window that flickers with light. Raggatt is bound to a pseudonym, a witness to the crimes against Building Eight, and a victim of his own crime. *A Clinic for the Exhausted* imagines his letter as a sort of discursive broadsheet.

Raggatt does not and cannot attest to the scale of the potential perceptions that the name Peter Corrigan gathers on the horizon of his vision. The horizon does not designate Peter Corrigan the architect, the theatre designer, the costume designer, the educator, or the many predicates that would at once exclude his naming and could ascertain the truth of any utterance and thus an immediate ability to conceive of a legitimate economy of perceptions in Raggatt’s letter. The horizon from a distance approaches, a speed that describes the imperceptible intimacy of the furthest extents of Raggatt’s perception. Peter Corrigan is the consequence of what is put into distance, a gesture that conceives everything on the horizon and that realises the horizon as an indiscernible palimpsest of contours that reiterate Raggatt’s initial appeal to Peter Corrigan. Thus Peter Corrigan is bizarrely instantaneous, a divine figure rendered through a time immemorial sfumato’d layering that likens itself to Elkins’ description of Christ portrayed in Michelangelo’s sketch *Christ on the Cross*: “wrapped in a thickened air made of faint lines, and those lines spread out and dissipate into blank paper as if the figure of Christ were trembling in a tub of water and sending tiny ripples out to each other.”

To effect Elkins’ description above, Peter Corrigan is forced to overcome his name and his pseudonym, and in doing so escapes any arrest within categories that would want to carry his name. He does so not by stepping out of the conditioning of his name, or substituting one condition for another. Rather, from a distance Peter Corrigan is heard a call beckoning towards the shell-bird, desiring an impossible touch.

Exploiting Elkins’ image of Christ nearly drowned, this text discovers Peter Corrigan in the remoteness of a bath tub, a name that yields to the movement of the ocean without a ship and a ship without an ocean, and is struck by seasickness. Displaced at the cost of Corrigan’s particulars the tub simultaneously assumes the folded surface of ocean and ship and is framed with a horizon line that fills the tub to overflowing. Ship and ocean pass entirely into the image of Peter Corrigan. This text imagines a change in fortune; the ship capsized as a consequence of Raggatt’s emphatic epistolary gesture casting an audience out, so that they too may embark upon the waves in the immobile passage of a bathtub’s becoming-lifeboat. Both tub and lifeboat are not simply bound by their similarities, neither is the result of, or the representation of the other. It is the tub that breaks the repose of ship and ocean and takes the horizon further out to sea. The pulling of the oars are present but not in an intelligible form. The offering’s sweep of ocean and its aberrant effects are not prevented by the impetuous assurance that both ocean and ship have been thwarted. In an amusing exchange, it is Fate who interprets, in an intimate and strange sympathy with Montaigne, the operation of the lifeboat.

Commandeering a coat in the hope that it may catch a last gasp of wind and propel the bathtub in any direction, an audience is tied to the movements of tide, wind and waves. It is only by chance that the cast iron refuge, corresponding with the rolling of the waves, appears to strike the ever present horizon, a shore nonetheless, whereupon, it may be seen as an iron bound shadow or a pale grey carapace, foundering the boat apropos of a miraculous alignment. For, whoever is at the oars is forced to turn their head to see where they are going, an approach that is shored by the ever present vision of the horizon that marks the centre of the vision of a sun that contemplates the generous shallows that would welcome them ashore.
Peter Corrigan’s appearance in *A Clinic for the Exhausted* is not an accident nor is the navigation of Raggatt’s letter; to know how they are included requires the suspension of the laws of aesthetic or scholarly evaluation that substantiate any claim in the emergence of a methodology that in turn borrows the attenuation of said authority; it is to observe that an audience’s authorial evaluation includes varied, unfamiliar, if not unknowable provisions for comprehension. The audience’s negotiation of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* contests the deflationary tendencies of a scholarly impasse that would exclude the ecliptic passage of Raggatt’s letter and the perceptual inattention to the appearance of Peter Corrigan’s name. What is at stake within this project’s shift in attention from the revelation of the scholarly, is the proliferation of an ambiguous position implicit in the uncounted and uncountable experience of the audience’s incomprehension. An attempt to map the verbosity of this text or the various illicit inclusions that are bound to the generosity of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, fail to cause Peter Corrigan to tremble further. The text peaks and troughs, thickening its surface with contours till the frequency and density of the rhetorical devices and insurmountable subsumptions are indiscernible from a calm and flat surface that gave Montaigne’s stomach such complaint, and to what could not be given form.26

Representation of Building Eight as an exact copy in *A Clinic for the Exhausted* remains impossible as whomever demonstrates evidence of sameness succumbs to the coincidental movements – Raggatt’s drunkenness, Montaigne’s nausea, Deleuze’s indifference – immanent in its production.

26 Our protagonist corresponds to the protagonist in Samuel Beckett’s radio play *Embers* (1957): “The protagonist, who we hear walking on pebbles close to the sea, evokes sound-memories that respond to his call. But soon they stop responding, the potentiality of the sonorous space being exhausted, and the sound of the sea engulfs everything.” Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 205, note 61. Deleuze explains that the thickness of a surface, of the plane of composition, need not be understood as deep or pronounced, but that a composition is, quoting the painter Seurat, “the art of ploughing a surface” bringing to the surface independently of anything other than the surface itself: “one no longer covers over; one raises, accumulates, piles up, goes through, stirs up, folds.” Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 194.
To trace or diagram, or to speak or gesture in a way that could distinguish the tonalities of the gilded hull of *A Clinic for the Exhausted* an audience must borrow the nausea of its condition. Images of Building Eight that arise in the wake of an approaching golden fog do not constitute the extent of *A Clinic for the Exhausted*; alone, it could never render the vividness of his baroque ship. Raggatt’s ‘eye’ remains a witness to Peter Corrigan’s bath time quivering, a movement consistent with Cornelius Castoriadis’ consideration of the German word for ‘eyelid’, *lider*, in the context of the epitaph twentieth century German poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote for himself:

*Rose, oh reiner Widerspruch, Lust
Niemandes Schlaf zu sein unter soviel Lidern
(Rose, O pure contradiction.
Joy of being no one’s sleep under so many lids)*

Rilke gives ownership of the lids to no one eye— the lids belong to the shroud, the coffin, the earth, the life just led of the dead man and the people who knew him. A multiple of lids cover no one’s incumbent eyes— not nothing, but no one thing or person in particular. Through a path of perception strewn with covered eyes, no-one encounters the poem’s arbitrary expression, to never find one eyelid that could encompass the eyes of so many. Instead, no-one is the dramatised potential of being every witness for every exception that may emerge. Peter Corrigan is but no one in particular—not a logical image that would accept all titles at once, as though amassed they could forcefully seize Peter Corrigan and constitute who or what he is— but no one of them, not any of them, a no-man’s-man.

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27 Deleuze rhetorically asks: ‘Why should the novelist believe he is obligated to explain the behavior of his characters?’ then goes on to answer: ‘It is life that justifies; it has no need of being justified.’ Deleuze, Essays Critical and Clinical, 81.


29 Castoriadis illuminates this expression via the polysemy of Greek inscription *leisus d’ homōs apeonta noōi pareonta bebaiōs*, (Consider how the absent (neuter plural: absent things) are present with total certainty. Bebaios, on unshakable foundations) focusing on the syntax of *noōi*, as the indirect object of *nous* meaning ‘thought’ or ‘mind’. Castoriadis continues
AN EPITHET IN VERSE

It is only by stepping into the otherwise excluded middle that an audience may pass into A Clinic for the Exhausted, simultaneously gathering the wayward movements of the ocean into a felt force and, like the flâneur, embark at a pace taken up by the baroque ship in its personified voyage. Building Eight determines A Clinic for the Exhausted’s ‘rate of knots’, upturned it is no less embellished than that of Esseintes’ gilded tortoise. Against Building Eight a prudent score is composed, from which an epitaph for a long departed tortoise is transcribed.

The wake that circulates beyond Peter Corrigan serves to impose a gestural gait that is reconciled in his location, in amongst the wake of the tortoise’s passage. Esseintes’ gilded tortoise establishes a poor ship in Building Eight. Nevertheless, Building Eight does not replicate or copy the gestures that circulate behind it – it does not copy the discourse or assumptions that embellished the John Andrews’ Student Union Building beneath the colours and forms of a glorious stadtkrone. Any expectation that A Clinic for the

the semantic exploration of derivative terms to nous — or “the ability to make present to oneself with total certainty what is not there” and upon the inscriptions for ‘what is not there’. Nous, is understood to collect both terms, ones and apear, making “objects present even when they are physically absent,” connecting it not only to memory but also imagination. Citing the difficulty of a singular interpretation of the noun noōi, Castoriadis states: ‘it is by means of the nous that the absent becomes present; it is locative: they become present in the nous: it is “ethic” (“for the sake of”); the absent become present “for” the nous; it is the dative of the object: the “make itself present” applies to the nous; and it is of course eminently subjective: things absent are present “to” the nous, not in the sense of a place, but of a subject before whom the absent becomes present.” Castoriadis, Figures of the Thinkable, 31.

30 “At its exaggerated height, the flâneur was said to pace himself behind the fashionable amble of a pet tortoise.” Rob Shields, “Fancy Footwork: Walter Benjamin’s Notes on Flaneurie” in, The Flaneur, ed. K. Tester, (London: Routledge, 1994), 65.

31 Conrad Hamann identifies several parallels between German expressionist architecture and that of Edmond and Corrigan’s, one of those being the stadtkrone, or ‘urban crown’, “which envisaged urban life symbolically summarized in and illuminated by a central urban institution that is resolved into a form dominated either by the crystalline or by movement, or by both.” Hamann, Cities of Hope, 11. This is further elaborated by Peter Kohane, whose “terraced mountains” fosters Howard Raggatt’s initial image of Building Eight as the wall of the biblical city of Jerusalem. See, Peter Kohane, “Clothing...
Exhausted follows or extends the agenda that is suspended between Building Eight and its deictic centre gives way to A Clinic for the Exhausted’s ambiguous image of Building Eight. The stadtkrone condemns Building Eight to the incessant roaming of the shell-bird, ensconced in the portrait of a gilded city lying on its back.32 The tortoise imagines the distant gleam of a port-city drowned in a city, turns out the stadtkrone, in turn a hat; Building Eight, in the depth of a reverie and transgressed by a horizon, a half convincing corona muralis. Corrigan’s advance, in spite of himself, assails the See33 of Raggatt, crowning his horizon with a dense atmospheric corona navalis. The stadtkrone’s erroneous orbit gathers the confused glimpses of a bird flying below into a miscreant plumage for Building Eight, a carapace that turns about Raggatt’s waist, a crown worn through, to yield an astonishing mitre.34 All those hats represent a tidy little capital. The hat exchanges its gentlemen owners who, bathed in perpetual sweat fret about the elusiveness of rules and conclusions, for the bare head of a very serious individual; a conjurer who, pulling things from his hat performs, bereft of any other name, a hat trick. A Clinic for the Exhausted asks: where did you get such a hat? Two gentlemen, removing their hats to wipe the sweat from their brows, is nothing more than a pseudonym cutting up the same old hat.35 But what are the worth of initials if they

32 Melville describes the man-of-war as a city afloat, the ships features describing the layout of a park that fronts a palace, a walled garrison town, or a suspect house whose basement describes an infinite depth filled with ugly creatures. He also describes the ships as like “the lodging houses in Paris, turned upside down.” Melville is echoed in the following quote from Raymond Queneau: “The roofs of Paris, lying on their backs, with their little paws in the air.” Melville, White Jacket. 82. Raymond Queneau as quoted in Georges Perec, Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, ed. & trans. J. Sturrock, (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 40.


34 A mitre is an ornate headdress worn by a bishop, with its origins in an ancient Greek term that referred to a headband, and also a piece of armour worn around the waist. A mitre is also a form of join which is derived from the joining of sails. “mitre | miter, n.1”. OED Online. June 28, 2011. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.rmit.edu.au/new/Entry/120308?rskey=vDMj9u&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed June 28, 2011).

resemble so many others? Taken out of a pair of hats, a ship officer’s uniform: Lieutenant, Captain, and Admiral - a commotion then, a little gasp - all are suitors and swindlers who, with a touch of the hat, (a tipping of the hat), reveal themselves a tiny bit cut, lame because they can only smell the sea, their hat cast from the ocean, and with eyes blinded by the sight of gold.

Raggatt’s letter chronicles the ocean liner’s stationary advance, the hat’s rent, the infirmity of the horizon’s pensive being between ocean and sky. Raggatt’s letter is an earnest valise that anticipates Building Eight’s impending passage. Building Eight has no knowledge of whether it is moving away or towards the horizon, or both simultaneously. Raggatt, witness to the wake of Building Eight that projects before it, remains blind to the deviations it encounters. He can only survey the horizon line in the knowledge of what is at stake, as a fleet in being, knowing the violence and cost of a final encounter. It is the tortoise that is the collaborateur, that gives almost everything away. It reveals to Building Eight its singular digression without recourse to the particularities that bear its future narrative. It is only when the ocean liner accepts its ‘aimless state’ and Building Eights ‘takes to the open sea’ that they may realise a collective expression beyond the amalgamation of their distinct forms. The baroque ship thus impedes their reconciliation in the paternal authority of Peter Corrigan and a voyage without recourse to the particulars of Building Eight or ocean liner.

This text’s employment of Esseintes’ tortoise is grounded in the capriciousness of the deity of fortune Tyche who, born of the ocean, gathers every movement and every sound that constitutes its alchemical passage of Raggatt’s letter upon a gilded and gemmed pyre. The emergence of the shell-bird is however eminently more that the subtle mingling of the tortoise’s gemstones. The shell-bird is what is issues forth by this text extolling the
virtue of Tyche, driven by neither want nor necessity, steering the shadow of a stake or pole to once again blind Chronos. The baroque ship is, with Prometheus glaring from its shadow, what touches the shell-bird’s flame in passing; The flame leaves a hallmark on the baroque ship which is acutely aware of the shell-bird’s vocal enquiry. The shell-bird is a blind hope, launched, to break in its formidableness, across the deck of a vessel yet to come, a gilded ark that would throw off the trappings of its ocean home. It offers both parties the opportunity of a passage in a ritornello that proceeds from the middle out: a wake that accompanies the virtual passage of death; that concedes a wake behind in the reticulated water of an approach; and realises a wake that casts the ropes of good fortune before taking leave. It is a collective enunciation, a wake that keeps watch by turns; to turn out, to be rid off and to expose, advancing the shell-bird’s eulogy for the tortoise. The tortoise is a troubadour who sings of the ocean’s fluid praxis, raises his voice

36 According to the OED, “stere” has its etymology in “Old English stéor (also stýr) strong feminine, action of guiding or governing (also, correction, punishment); a neuter “stere rudder” is inferred from the comb. stéoresmanstere n. The immediate Germanic cognates are: Old Frisian stiure, Middle Low German stiere (whence late Middle High German stiere, modern German stiuer), Middle Dutch stiere, stiere (modern Dutch stuur), Old Norse stír rudder, ster, ster, ster ( < Germanic type *steurjo-stere); Old High German stýri neuter, rudder, stern ( < Germanic type *steurjo-stere), a different ablaut grade of the root (“stýr” is found in Old Norse stýr-stere, pole, stake (compare Greek σταυρός cross). The notion is of a stiff, upright pillar or post used in steering. Included in the familiar emblems of Tyce’s was a ships rudder. See, “stere, n.2”. OED Online. June 2011. Oxford University Press: http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.rmit.edu.au/view/Entry/189619?rskey=TMASPq&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed June 28, 2011).

37 “Prometheus: Indeed my friends feel pity at the sight of me | Chorus: Did your offence perhaps go further than you have said? | Prometheus: Yes; I caused men no longer to foresee their death. | Chorus: What cure did you discover for their misery? | Prometheus: I planted firmly in their hearts blind hopefulness. | Chorus: Your gift brought them great blessing. “[PV 238-243] Castoriadis’ translation effects a dramatic change in existing translations which count the first line as ‘the foreseeing of death’. Earlier translations contrast Prometheus’ lines after, not least of which is that they ‘saw to no avail’. As Castoriadis argues, what Prometheus gives to mortals, as fire, is not the ability to predict their death, but rather to understand the ontology of death as an expression of their mortality. However, the humanity before the flame, to those who wandered the earth not seeing and not hearing, though they had eyes and ears, and who had abandoned themselves to confusion and purposelessness dwelling beneath the ground, would have been crushed under the weight of knowing such mortality and are given, consequently, a ‘blind hope’. It is a hope that is ‘relative to what anthropos does and is able to do in his life’ constituted by “the knowledge of death and the potential of a prattein/poiein, making-doing/creating […] not as a gradual process, but as a sudden passage from beforehand to afterward as the consequence of the decision and action of [Prometheus].” See, Castoriadis, Figures of the Thinkable, 9-11.
to the cacophony of the sea, to realise, adrift on its parched waves, other voyagers who might share in its vocation, other companions in distress. His is a ballad which tells, in a single breath, of their first meeting...*near my lips, on my lips, turning on my lips...* sound edging forward, to pick a sailor off the sea and to send them all spinning. The sailor relies on the candour of the watchman to comprehend, under a single green eyelid, the parting of ship and ocean. The watchman’s panoramic sight does not resist the turning of the horizon, it is without punctuation, goes on turning but is punctuated by the infinite, by the duration of a single *yes*, the troubadour’s language of *yes*. “*Yes I said yes I will Yes.*”

The punctuating call of *‘yes’* is the moment that the sailor, under a seemingly self-inflicted duress, allows himself to sink to the bottom of the open boat, tired by the turning of the oars. Overwhelmed by a verbose passage, the interjection marks a period of recovery, the *‘yes’* giving consent to conjugate with others also at rest. Whether by instinct or observation, the corresponding description of the sailor’s biding renders his uniform a pearl grey, for an imperfect pallor, a shell of celadon, is what is obtained by a consumptive as their vestiges. But, a return is in the offing, for a convalescent *turns* his attention elsewhere; the *‘yes’* is what passes before him. An event that hangs motionless over the water, the image of a man leaning over one side of a boat swearing softly to the sea; *a voice that is thrown by the ocean’s own breath.*

38 As Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay point out, “the term Occitan (medieval literary language) accords with the broad subdivision of medieval Romance languages according to the word for *‘yes’*, a subdivision recognised in the Middles Ages: in the North of France, the word *oïl* (now *oui*) gave rise to the langue d’*oïl*, in Italy there was the langue de *si*, and in the Midi the langue d’*oc*.” Simon Gaunt & Sarah Kay, eds. The Troubadours: An Introduction, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2. The quoted phrase comes from James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Molly Bloom’s famous soliloquy. My intention here is to draw a relationship between the struggle of Bloom’s conscious as she finally gives in to her desire, with the moment before Building Eight as ocean liner in Raggatt’s letter takes off, “*never to return but waving, to everyone and calling, yes yes yes*”. Furthermore, I am compelled to ask after the indeterminate interpretive task of the troubadour that are inextri-
cably woven through a language of *yes*, and which forges a proximate passage in the culminative moments of this thesis.
Raised to the spectacle of a horizon, the patient’s crutches fall back, his vestiges shimmer with the full sun upon them, his hat verging on a cast iron black. But his is a carapace that will not corrode. By virtue of his dexterity, by the degree of his tossing and writhing implicated in the embrocating of the waves that buff its surface to a radiant gold, the carapace is assured, not least by the Erythraei’s refrain. The coat and ocean constitute a watery quarrel. Each resists domination, not by violence, or confrontation but avails itself to senseless attack, an inundation of incisions that at once splits in two too many times, and simultaneously closes the space between. It is an instantaneous division, a cleaving together. Floundering against the swell that gurgles about him, the sailor is obliged to keep his head up so that, borne up or down, even a stifled cry, marred by the rolling movements of a liquefied ground, is awakened by a golden touch. The ocean going troubadour reveals the same steady voice of Menmon; a voice catapulted backwards, not as an echo of another, but a voice that meets the setting sun. Achille’s breath warms the shell of a tortoise.

OF EXCESS: THE BAROQUE SHIP

Any deficiency in this text being able to attest to the scale of an upturned tortoise shell as a gilded ship disenchanted with its ocean home (an argument that is not simply a transcription of what is known regarding the ocean, or

39 In the early 80’s, Jean-Luc Nancy alongside Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe would preempt in part the work on community through their initial exploration of the term ‘with-drawing’ that expressed not a backing away but a retracing of the political stakes of a community. However, as Nancy contends, the failure to reconcile this term to community was “evidence precisely of the impossibility of founding a politics upon a well understood community, just as it is impossible to define a community from the starting point of a politics thought to be true or just.” See, Jean Luc Nancy, “The Confronted Community” trans. Amanda Macdonald in, Postcolonial Studies, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2003), 23-36, note 4. Nancy would contend however in relation to an essay on the sublime “How would I trace any figure at all, if I did not anticipate its unity, or more precisely, if I did not anticipate myself, the one who presents this figure, as its unity? There is a kind of fore-sight or providence at the heart of reason” Jean Luc-Nancy, “The Sublime Offering” in, Of the Sublime/Presence in Question, eds. Mark C. Taylor, Rodolphe Gasche, & trans. Jeffrey S. Librett, (State University of New York Press, 1994), 25-53; 31.
the misgivings of an author as he navigates an unmapped ocean interior)
cannot be redeemed within a concluding statement that reveals its cause as
the misapprehension of an image of a tortoise shell and an image of a ship
resembling each other. In the author’s impending jostle to ascertain not
only the dimension of their confrontation but also those pertaining to the
original misconception’s happy surprise, the tortoise and ship are deformed.
It is the creative uncertainty of their confrontation that establishes a text that
is too unruly to be contained in the meter of a logical enquiry. Erupting
from outside the ship and ocean’s previously circumscribed existence is a text
indiscernible from their amorphous dimensions in the rhythmic movement
of the ocean swell. Thus, the text’s metamorphosis encompasses the patterns
and gestures employed in the ship and ocean’s flirtatious minuet that gave
cause to each slipping into the next bound to the continuous meter of
their impropriety. However, the text exceeds the capacity of the nautical
movements of the ship and ocean’s spatial confrontation. It tears itself from
the murmur of the ocean, a crack, revealed in the momentary release of a
faint scream from an unfathomable horizon.

The image of the tortoise that conversely occupies and advances this
narrative does not ally itself to a sequence of reposes that could be used to
measure the sequential exchanges of the tortoise’s encounters. Nor from the
image of the tortoise can their be discerned an ichnography that would plot
the many uncanny alibis that claim to offer a true bearing on the tortoise’s
mythos: as the progeny of a Labroustian temple, 40 and Herodotus’ city of

40 The French architect Henri Labrouste in 1829 described through text and drawings the ancient Greek colony of
Paestrum. Labrouste argued that the seafarers that begat the colony, having survived their journey, would have built the
Temple of Neptune first even though its architecture described the proportions and exhibited the detailed carving that
expressed the popular Academy opinion on the natural and progressive refinement of the Greek architectural orders, which
would have seen the temple built later than initial colonization. For a discussion on Labrouste in relation to Building Eight
RMIT, refer to: Peter Kohane, “Everyday Life and Architectural Polychromy: Romanticism and the Buildings of Edmond &
Ecbatana; the chrysoberyls, peridots, sapphires and other stones designating a cosmopolitan landscape of cities, the tortoise’s scales drawing feudal borders and the gilded surface a continent reflecting the rays of a sun that rises and sets beyond its embellished edge. Any image must acknowledge the turn from periplus to periplum that is conceived by way of the map told of in Jorge Luis Borges’ short story ‘On Exactitude in Science’ and that coincided point for point with the dimension of the empire it traced thereby covering a province in an entire map and thus becoming useless to all who would hope to use it; the peplos is thus what is left to assist us as we narrate our passage. The baroque ship usurps the madman’s pseudonym as “passenger par excellence, the prisoner of the passage” as an instrument with which to endow the horizon. The hereditary vestiges, indifferent to their previous owner, coincide with the swell that turns back onto itself, able to touch the very limit of their being, to confer the coat on a gentlemen, a no-man’s-man. Unfathomable in his excess, first manipulating and then defying any conjecture regarding a conclusionary

41 Herodotus writes of Ecbatana: “...he compelled the Medes to make one fortified city and pay chief attention to this, having less regard to the other cities. And as the Medes obeyed him in this also, he built large and strong walls, those which are now called Aghatabana, [Ecbatana] standing in concentric circles one within the other. And this wall is so contrived that one circle is higher than the next by the height of the battlements alone. And to some extent, I suppose, the nature of the ground, seeing that it is on a hill, assists towards this end; but much more was it produced by art. The circles are in all seven in number, and within the last circle are the royal palace and the treasure houses. The largest of these walls is in size about equal to the circuit of the wall round Athens; and of the first circle, the battlements are white, of the second black, of the third crimson, of the fourth blue, of the fifth red: thus are the battlements of all the circles coloured with various tints, and the two last have their battlements overlaid one of them with silver and the other with gold.” Herodotus, The Histories, trans. D. L annmer, trans. G.C. Macaulay, (London: Penguin Books, 2004) Book 1:98. 39. Peter Kohane believes that Henri Labrouste would have had knowledge of these descriptions when undertaking the polychromatic illustrations of his imaginary ancient Greek city of Agrigentum. Kohane also notes Corrigan’s potential knowledge of both Labrouste’s work, and Herodotus’s description after an interview with Corrigan in which Corrigan mentions the letter from Howard Raggatt that interpreted Building Eight as a section of the wall of a ‘New Jerusalem’. In the biblical account of the ‘New Jerusalem’, the city is composed of pure gold, its twelve walls are made from jude set upon foundations adorned with precious stones and each wall is interrupted by a single gate made from a pearl. Refer, Kohane, “Everyday Life and Architectural Polychromy: Romanticism and the Buildings of Edmond & Corrigan,” 21; And; Kohane, “Clothing the Institutions,” 55, note 17.

42 Foucault, The History of Madness, 8-12.

43 “Far off, so far, like a madness, under the horizon’s dawning rim.” Lawrence, Tortoises, 45.

44 “Traveller, | With your tail tucked a little on one side | Like a gentleman in a long-skirted coat”. Lawrence, Tortoises, 13.
form, the shell-bird designates his exemplary articulation of an unmediated architectural potential, of a ship liberated from an ocean and an ocean liberated from a ship.

IN EXCESS: THE SHELL-BIRD

This text suggests that to be where we are is to have understand an accumulation of things seen, of voices heard, of places been. Grounded in the initial intimacy, the forcing of two carnal houses, of Esseintes’ citadel and Foucault’s ship, our voyage constitutes a determined sedimentation, of a crack forced in vain. ‘Here’, without seeming to have been apprehended by the antiquarian giant Chronos, is an immaculate conception conceived in the froth and spittle of the waves. This text is here having abandoned land, not once, but twice,; a ‘here’ that drifts aimlessly; a ‘here’ indistinguishable from the imperceptible expanse in the offing. But, the infinite is not a backdrop to where this text is found, a ‘here’ that could be the sum of the parts. Both life and boat enter into a sumless aggregate; are ‘here’ brought together from the multitude and emerge amongst the denizens of the sea.

Discerned thus far our approach to ‘here’ is strewn with absurd actions, and marred by lethal blows. A hatchet, now raised, irks the comfort of those who have made it here, and wish to continue. Do we digress from hospital, or from Institution? Here we cannot tell. Though an answer has been sought, and a clinic, of a kind, under the hubris of a ship of fools, is as much known. The cause of our affliction, whether the result of old age or pathological, remains obscured, though we are burdened by some end in mind. We, addressed as ‘no-man’s-man’ and who refuses to stir without his hat. Slow, perhaps dim-witted, the iron dome perched atop our head and a space described by a watery circumference, all belie an acrobatic agility that appeals to a Harlequin’s somersaults, cartwheels and back flips. A crack, across the hat’s face, by some unnoticeable degree, indicates
an escape; having once belonged to someone with a much smaller skull. Taken to its limit, forced down to accommodate the larger, the sound of a voice calls by name this life, though it is not immediately intelligible in every sentiment proffered by this text. Having availed ourselves to the use of so many, each blow that cuts, bruises, and incapacitates, registers our horizon and gestures to the flight of birds, and the undertaking of an ocean genesis.

But, the green coat is not forsaken. It is made useful by its scale, for unlike the hat, which is too small, the coat is too big. It finds itself spread the length of the carapace; a galliot obscuring the actions of the rest beyond its expanse; or in the peculiar image of a pharos, a wedding veil embroidered with unimaginable detail. Borges’ map lacked the necessary power of the tides to weave, to turn through the scarcely surveyable immensity of the ocean; geography invaded its expanse. But, as a single eye, the pharos illuminates, points to itself and exposes that which cannot be seen. The pharos sutures the seen and the shrouded, blinds itself with the iridescence of its foresight, a passage made without degrees of longitude and latitude, an emerald ray that issues forth through the dense fog. Fixed to this axis, the gentleman vaults the troughs and skim the peaks, his hat an indication of his gilt raiment. That is, it is the rest that are left at the mercy of the pharos’ keeper, to drift, sight unseen, into the infinite. From the shadows of an approach grows a house with an emerald green hearth.  

45 As Michael Frayn states “Buildings are like snail-shells, the residue of last years growth, the record of last years traffic” and that through this traffic we construct a “carapace of character” that we both identify with, and seek recognition for, irrelevant of the actual and deducible of our economy. I am indebted to van Schaik for this reference, which he credits in one of his ideograms entitled, “Perceptions: The Stories we tell ourselves, c. June 2008. How we put ourselves in the place of being Architects.” Schaik intends, by his use of Frayn’s term ‘carapace of desire’, to identify the ambitious role architects take in the negotiation of both local and global frameworks. Michael Frayn, The Human Touch: our part in the creation of the universe, (England: Faber & Faber, 2006), 21, 214.
EPILOGUE

This PhD began in earnest by highlighting a life bound to an unbelievable passage of a building. Its intention was to attend to an architecture framed by the radical compositional forces of exhaustion directed towards the question of a life; a life that does not depend on successive degrees of a life, or the inclination of a life burdened in moral servitude, or bound by the threat of exposure according to a particular cultural affray. A life is a life without proclivity, without the tools to realise the disclosure of a life. This research contends that the question of an exhaustion that combats that which would cleave a life from an architectural mandate, also concerns an unquestionable sharing out indistinguishable from our intensive effort to progress the assertion of a life embodied in the elsewhere of an architecture, in the passage of ocean liner and Building Eight from which this project departs.

The structure of the PhD was an attempt to even the eye of an uneven ‘I’ whilst confronting the orthodoxy of a PhD undertaking, within the dimensions of A Clinic for the Exhausted. Thus it also risked obscuring the conditions of its own genealogy. Giorgio Agamben provides us which an outline of these conditions as it manifests itself at the limit of a creative endeavour:

Holderlin wrote on the brink of madness: “I fear that I might end like the old Tantalus who received more from the Gods than he could take.” And “I may sat that Apollo struck me.” Or the note found in Van Gogh’s pocket on the day of his death: “We, as for my own work, I risk my life in it and my sanity has already half melted away in it.” Or, Rilke in a letter to Clara Rilke: “Works of art are always the product of a risk one has run, of an experience taken to its extreme limit, to the point where man can no longer go on.1

This dimension of A Clinic for the Exhausted began in the account of a letter that problematised the departure of Building Eight by furthering the theatrical temporality of Raggatt’s mouvance. Thus even here, in the conventional intimacy

of an epilogue, the dimensions of this endeavour will remain indiscernible from what establishes *A Clinic for the Exhausted*. Roussel has made us acutely aware that any epilogue is made in the vicinity of an open possibility of resistance to the present conditions, including its closure. To all those awaiting a final irreproachable conclusion that would withdraw from the nuances of language that have made an open demand on its audience, there has never been made available the provisions to sustain the terms of a final answer without the project also challenged with a charge of apostasy.

In as much as a life is not what draws attention to itself in a particular life, so the petition to the space of a clinic is not what procures a particular clinic. A clinic straddles the threshold of the opening and closing of exhaustion that distinguishes the extraction of the architectural conditions of a life in this exegesis. The movement of the threshold of exhaustion impoverishes the mechanism with which the exegesis could be argued to concern an architecture in the corresponding realm of a clinic. An architecture apropos of a clinic is always in excess of the borders of a clinical architecture. It is an architecture that converges around a non-specific existence, constituted in the momentary configurations of a clinic that abruptly turns to address the question of anyone-what-so-ever and who resides any-space-whatever. A clinic is an attempt to ascertain the complicity of everyone in the domain of a life. Each and every certainty of a life constitutes the provisionality with which *A Clinic for the Exhausted* sustains an architecture across our undertaking. Thus, in the first book of this PhD the hypochondriac was called upon to do other than determine an illness. Taking up the exemplary posture of the hypochondriac assured this text of the necessary means to straddle the interval between building and ship, and to argue via the pharmakon, that a clinic is inseparable from a terminal turning out, a gesture that determines the movement of exception that excludes no-one-what-so-ever.  

2 A clinic evokes a life that cannot be witnessed constituted by Agamben’s description of the Muselmann; the figure depicted by Primo Levi in his accounts of the camps during World War 2. Levi informs us that over time every camp inhabitant found themselves no longer able to discern the punishment of the SS guards from the extreme cold of their environment. But, the lazzarini of the figure labelled derogatorily by the other camp inhabitants as a Muselmann constructs a political figure that cannot bear witness to the unseeable horror of the situation.
I am aware, as the author of this text, that I have left the closing moments of this PhD to appeal to the audience that has been tasked with verifying my claim to an architecture in *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, and thus I am also aware that this could leave me open to an alleged scepticism as to the importance of the audience and their role in an undertaking that is premised on an unmeasured sharing out. But, it is also what I have left to do that permits me to do otherwise. My analogous remarks thus far should be understood within the frameworks of Montaigne’s use of the term *je nais sais quois*: what is carefully framed to omit the obvious demands to address a final conclusionary configuration, to instead write on it (much like the way almost all of Montainge’s essays are entitled, commencing with the preposition ‘on’). To write on the audience reveals no

they find themselves in. By applying the camp inhabitants indifference to the cane and the cold to the Muselmann’s state of apathy Agamben renders the Muselmann with an exceptional life: “Because of this, [the Muselmann’s indifference] the guard suddenly seems powerless before him, [the Muselmann] as if struck by the thought that the Muselmann’s behavior […] might perhaps be a silent form of resistance. Here a law that seeks to transform itself entirely into life finds itself confronted with a life that is absolutely indistinguishable from the law, and it is precisely this indiscernibility that threatens the lex animae of the camp.” [Agamben, 185]

Doubtless, apathy underscores the burden of a life that falls under domination, and that would offer a cynical attitude to the questioning of such a life: this project’s deference to the Muselmann’s indifference could surrender itself to the same fatigue, making the Muselmann a purely narrative device. But, my intention for the appropriated figure of the Muselmann is not to conflate the surrounding ethical designations of their lived experience with the gestures I have made thus far and those I intend to make further in the closing remarks of the project. Rather, *A Clinic for the Exhausted* proceeds on the basis that to encounter the Muselmann is to encounter an epistemological impasse that has the potential to become a site of alarming productivity if appropriately navigated. But more than that, the characteristics of the Muselmann constitutes an uncanny if not radical form of mutiny. To speak of mutiny requires that we first recognise the inherent menace of its name, that it must go unnamed, that the threat of bearing witness to it might cast it into the air like a disease. As Eve Sedgwick explains, “the terms in which mutiny can be described must be confined to references that evoke recognizant knowledge in those who already possess it without igniting it in those who may not.” [Sedgwick, 101]

The Muselmann appears at the threshold of the law, that which empowers the guard discharging his sadistic violence designed to subjugate and therefore prevent at the level of the individual and the collective the prisoners appearing at the threshold of his authority, and yet, it is apparent that the figure of the Muselmann emerges from the same biopolitical machine. The Muselmann also posits an important association with their initial impressment into the camp - a biographical detail wielded in the formal identification of Jewish, homosexual or degenerate - and that exploits the separation of camp life and the inchoate experience realised by the Muselmann and is made inspite of their location at the juncture between the unimaginable sadism of the guard, and their rejection by the other prisoners. But the performative conditions that establish the non-locatable at the juncture of two extremes is, in *A Clinic for the Exhausted*, less an outright aggrandisement of the Muselmann’s indifference to their situation, than a experimental prosthesis, an alternate armature of their performance; one that turns around within the confines of its own limits; an inexorable space undisclosed to itself and that demonstrates the immeasurable persistence of apathy correlative to the degree of exhaustion assumed by those in authority. Subsisting in the camp, and in the midst of the cold and the cane, the Muselmann realises an indiscernible life via the inadmissible profundity of exhaustion. Refer to: Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 185; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2008), 100-104.
one profile of any individual audience member. Like the *periplus* ventured in the invitation or the *Isle of Tools*, the *on* turns the audience towards a becoming-landscape in the midst of an insurmountable existence, and thus to realise an audience’s becoming ocean-liner: as Herman Melville wrote, “a ship is a bit of terra-firma cut off from the main.” My intention behind the examination of so many obtuse characterisations was to penetrate the difficulty of an instance of an audience: Molière enabled this research to realise that an audience is composed of those who cannot be turned out onto the street in their entirety, which in turn conferred the project with an unremarkable audience born in spite of a Deleuzian virility, an intimacy that does not exclude those who turn their backs on any or all of the action on stage, or off. Finally, Roussel bound an audience in the beautifully austere gesture of a mutiny that maintained the tremor of an existence.

*A Clinic for the Exhausted* is thus an attempt to grasp the impossibility of an architecture having stolen the architect out from under a coat and a hat, and with which we could realise our legs as distant promontories left to the rising waters; as monuments to him, he who so awkwardly disposed through the text might now, right now, appear at the edge of this undertaking, ringing his calloused hands, searching with bloodshot eyes, and confessing... now, and at every juncture of this PhD, I must confess that the project has always been at risk of a confrontation with the privileged figure of Peter Corrigan.

How then is an architecture manifested here in a document entitled *A Clinic for the Exhausted*? In reply I will have recourse to the answer Deleuze and Guattari give when they ask “How can a moment of the world be rendered durable or made to exist by itself?” I submit that this question is pertinent not only to painting, music and writing, but to any creative endeavour, including the undertaking of an architecture. Deleuze and Guattari respond:

3 “... it is a state in itself; and the captain is its king.” Herman Melville, *White Jacket or The World in a Man-of-War*, (London: John Lehmann, 1952), 35.

Virginia Woolf provides an answer that is as valid for painting and music as it is for writing: “Saturate every atom,” “eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity,” everything that adheres to our current and lived perceptions, everything that nourishes the mediocre novelist; and keep only the saturation that gives us the percept. “It must include nonsense, fact, sordidity: but made transparent”; “I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate.” Through having reached the percept as “the sacred source,” through having seen Life in the living or the Living in the lived, the novelist or painter returns breathless and with bloodshot eyes. They are athletes – not athletes who train their bodies and cultivate the lived, no matter how many writers have succumbed to the idea of sport as a way of heightening art and life, but bizarre athletes of the “fasting-artist” type, or the “great Swimmer” who does not know how to swim.5

Which is not to say that ‘the great swimmer who does not know how to swim’ is without provision for swimming, for this statement parallels the serial navigation of Jacotot, Rogoff and kairos made by this PhD. Deleuze draws on the figure of the swimmer and the sea to articulate the relations that constitute learning. He writes: “To learn to swim is to conjugate the distinctive points of our bodies with the singular points of the objective Idea [the sea] in order to form a problematic field.”6 The swimmer learns to swim, not outside the sea (not by learning the gestures of swimming on land), but in the differential relations of their body in contact with the movement of the ocean: “This conjugation determines for us a threshold of consciousness at which our real acts are adjusted to our perceptions of the real relations, thereby providing a

5 Deleuze & Guattari, What is Philosophy?, 172. The ‘great swimmer’ is a remark orientated towards the Becketian character of Franz Kafka’s short story The Great Swimmer. The swimmer, having successfully won a medal at the Olympics confesses, on returning home, that not only does he not know how to swim, but that he now finds himself at home in another country, where he does not understand a word that is said to him. The swimmer is able to ascertain that a sash hung around his neck is written with the title ‘The Olympic Champion’, but admits that it is “written in a foreign language.” It is, as Deleuze & Guattari write, “to be a sort of stranger within his own language.” Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, Kafka: Towards a minor literature, trans. Dana Polan, (Minneapolis & London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 26. For the text of The Great Swimmer refer to, Franz Kafka & Daniel Slager, “Fragments,” Grand Street, No. 56, (Spring, 1996), 117-122.

Ronald Bogue, deciphering Deleuze and Guattari’s argument, explains that consciousness alone does not permit us a way in to the problem, because consciousness reinforces the knowledge and the problem as a priori perceptions. Bogue goes on to suggest that it is only through “involuntary confrontation with something other does thought engage difference” and “what provokes difference are signs,” paralleling Deleuze’s statement that “to learn is indeed to constitute the space of an encounter with signs.” The effect of signs can be understood as the sudden shock the body of the swimmer is faced with when first entering the sea. The attendant case of Raggatt as he is faced with the prospect of Building Eight disappearing on his watch, was an opportunity to procure a pedagogical strategy that would enable everyone who does not know how to know to do so without an knowledge of how to do so; to operate at the limit of the swimmer’s domain. Far from lamenting a less than athletic prowess the drowning man is not exempted from the swimmer’s fluid praxis, because it is the drowning man who cuts across the throng of existence.
Deleuze and Guattari argue that all becomings, “tend towards becoming-imperceptible.”\footnote{Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi, (London & New York: Continuum, 2004), 308.} Becoming-imperceptible is the over-coming of the organic life, with non-organic life “without cessation or condition”\footnote{Gilles Deleuze, “The Greatest Irish Film (Beckett’s ‘Film’)” in, Critical & Clinical, 23-26:26.} discerned by the three virtues of imperceptibility, indiscernibility, and impersonality. Following on from Virginia Woolf’s desire to “saturate every atom”\footnote{Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 309.} they contend that becoming-imperceptible requires us to “Saturate, eliminate, put everything in,”\footnote{Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 309.} so that what is can dissipate entirely into the world. Becoming-imperceptible is paramount to becoming-everybody and everything - everybody and everything unable to lay claim to a subjective or an objective end. Becoming-imperceptible thus entails “making the world a becoming,”\footnote{Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 309.} entering into an immeasurable aggregation with the world. The authors’ relate this to the confession of Paul Morand’s protagonist in his novel \textit{Monsieur Zero}: “I am a man who flees by swimming under water, and at whom all the world’s rifles fire ... I must no longer offer a target.”\footnote{Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 308.} Such a life would describe a man whom “succeeds in getting drunk on pure water”\footnote{Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 315.} or, as Deleuze notes of Beckett’s Murphy, “like a cork floating on a tempestuous ocean;”\footnote{Deleuze, “The Greatest Irish Film (Beckett’s ‘Film’)”, 26.} Thus the proximity of Raggatt’s enduring drunkenness along with the abandoned vestiges of Esseintes tortoise enables this text to grasp every untoward movement of the drowning man’s vital Oedema, a movement from which no-one is exempted.

This epilogue argues that the problem of an architecture that cannot forsake the passage between ocean liner and Building Eight is foregrounded in the movements of the drowning man. Let us return the elements clinched in the closing moments of Book 2, and that are furnished by the following annotation:

On the death of the mollusk, the shell that serves as its house becomes
the counterpoint of the hermit crab that turns it into its own habitat, thanks to its tail, which is not for swimming but is prehensile, enabling it to capture the empty shell.19

The drowning man abounds unencumbered by the shores of Building Eight and ocean liner, balancing on the horizon in the exaggerated posture of the swimmer. The green ray, the hearth at the heart of the drowning man’s becoming-imperceptible, grasps the tortoise to interrogate the fluid praxis of a man thrown overboard, (because it is the appearance of green that confirms both the greatest curve and which entails the fold of our ocean surface). Simultaneously the green ray is the possibility of confessing in excess of the drowning man’s domain. And it is this confession that allows us to proffer, in spite of the principle of the convalescent’s perpetual displacement, a clinic as that which exempts without exception. This is what the confession of the remarkable figure of the drowning man discloses: a clinic converges on the threshold of exhaustion; exhaustion is that which is cut through and interleaved with the undertaking of an architecture; and what establishes an architecture in *A Clinic for the Exhausted* was making a life exceptional.

THE END

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19 Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 185.
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List of illustration sources

Fig 1

Fig 2
Diagram of Building Eight’s genealogy. Diagram by Michael Spooner.

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5
Michael Spooner, A Clinic for the Exhausted, Competition panels, Architecture Australia Unbuilt Prize 2007

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8
Transcription of letter from Howard Raggatt to Peter Corrigan, 22 December 1993. Transcription by Michael Spooner

Fig 9

Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 12
Raymond Roussel with his mother and an elephant on the shores of Lake Kandy, Sri Lanka. Reproduced from Mark Ford, Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), Figure 10.