CURATING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORY

The Art of Forgetting in the Information Age

Tim Gilman-Ševčík

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AN: 3307577 ; Tim Gilman-evck, Author.; Curating Organizational Memory: The Art of Forgetting in the Information Age
Account: ns335141

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This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-8393-7
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8393-1

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PREFACE

JAMES ELKINS

There are gaps in the ways people think about academic writing—for example, a book like this one—and the ways people think about fiction. The difference between them is not fully inhabited by what is called in North America "creative nonfiction," and it is not adequately covered by "experimental writing." I think of the territory between academic prose and fiction as a series of islands (representing theorized or named ways of writing) divided by abysses (representing ways of writing that may or may not be practiced, but don't have names, or haven't been well conceptualized). In this Preface I represent those abysses by two sets of empty brackets. I invite readers to fill in the empty spaces as they wish. I format these open spaces the way Derrida did in *The Truth in Painting*, whose first chapter has a number of lacunae. Derrida's purpose was to meditate on Kantian aesthetics, and my theme is different, but I am also borrowing something else from his book: one of the dozens of gaps in his text, I think, is intended to be filled by the book's final chapter. A reader is intended to discover that the entire text of the book's last chapter can fit into one of the spaces Derrida provides, so the book folds back into itself. Derrida doesn't say that, and I don't think any reader has noticed it. Likewise here, one of my gaps can be filled in: there is an existing set of texts that fits perfectly into the space I am leaving open. I won't say which texts, or which space.

Let me propose as a first "island" the sum total of administrative literature on art academies, art schools, art departments, and allied cultural institutions. The enormous and exponentially growing literature on accreditation, rubrics, capstone achievements, assessment, evaluation, and quantification belongs here, and so does the equally daunting literature on the nature of the academy, and of the PhD for artists. (My own anthology, *Artists with PhDs*, kept growing through several editions, and if it were to be re-done for 2016, it would have to be two or three volumes.) Then comes a gap. [

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] On the other side of this gap is literature that critiques the academy and the teaching of art. Some of this is itself institutionally sanctioned, such as Christopher Frayling's work; and some is intentionally outside institutions, as in the many unaccredited, free art schools that have sprung up in the UK, the US and elsewhere, which Greg Sholette calls the "dark matter" of the art world. It would be possible to read this book as an example of this literature. It has pedagogic interests, but it does not directly address the actual literature (as in the first "island"). In that sense this book belongs in a well-known tradition, which the author mentions, of modern and postmodern anti-academies. Then comes a second gap. [

] On the far shore is writing that proposes itself as theory—in this case pedagogic theory—but is also willful, idiosyncratic, eclectic, and inventive beyond what can be considered useful or practical. This book is also like that: there's a lot of odd theory here. I can't imagine an actual director, administrator, rector, or department head reading the pages of Eco's wonderful essay on *ars oblivionalis* and thinking, Great, we can use this as a Freshman requirement. In that respect—if only in that respect—this book is like Vilém Flusser's *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis: A Treatise, with a Report by the Institut Scientifique de Recherche Paranaturaliste,* or Reza Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials.* Both those books, as different as they are, propose serious theories in unusual and even dubious narratives. Then comes another gap. [

] And here, on an even more distant shore, is work that presents itself as fiction. There is an important distinction between work that "needs to be read as fiction," as Gilman-Ševčík says, and work that more simply or thoroughly *is* fiction. I'll get to that in a moment. The sense in which this book is fiction is limited, and limitation—by an authorial voice that does not speak as a fictional character!—is not a necessary attribute of fiction. What Gilman-Ševčík means is that he will not "necessarily directly or explicitly address the themes and topics at hand," but will speak "obliquely." Of course there are many examples of nonfiction accounts that speak "obliquely" (Negarestani certainly does), and there is no reliable narrator in, say, *Madame Bovary* to tell us how to read. So this "island" is close to the mainland of fiction, but it is decisively offshore. There is a difference between *expositing* "how notions of blankness, emptiness, a gap or a kind of forgetting can inform and generate creative practice," and *embodying* or instantiating those blanknessses. [

] So, like one of those fishlike ancestors of dinosaurs, we crawl ashore on the last island, the Island of Fiction, where nothing is as it appears,

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where no reference to reality can be counted on, where no narrator knows what she's saying, where there are no signposts because there are no roads and no maps and no destination. "There are so many things to forget," as Gilman-Ševčík says.

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PROLOGUE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF FORGETTING

"I'm at home." What are you doing when you get rid of your home phone? There is a certain negation of the place as space – it can no longer be called from outside. One way of "reaching" the home is lost, disconnected – part of a home is its ability to receive others, in the form of a visit, or a call. A house can accommodate, but by not being able to call the place, now you can only reach it by actually entering it. You can mail a letter, but the letter does not provide a concrete link that places the sender inside of the house. With the loss of the telephone line, the house is less anchored in space by a network. A degree of connectedness in place has been lost. A letter is simply sent to it, but it can be lost along the way, or taken away, there's no certainty of location, and besides, how many personal letters do you get anymore? An email is like a cell phone call, it is into space, not to a place. The receiver is impossible to locate. Location becomes a function of trust, of communication. You tell me where you are – it's one of the first statements of the cell phone user. "I'm at home" changes from an absurd response when picking up the home phone to a reassurance to the caller of geographic anchoring. It helps the caller to ground and understand the receiver. You have also lost a magnitude of certainty about who you are calling to – they meet you on an equal footing – just as they don't know where you're calling from (unless they have caller ID and you're on a land line), you don't know where you're calling to, or even if the phone has managed to remain with its owner.

Avital Ronell characterizes the telephone call as a withdrawal of presence, a rupture, and a break. As the phone is disconnected, this very withdrawal is withdrawn, or rather it is transposed, from the building onto the body, as the individual then carries the withdrawal on them, it becomes a part of them, a new sensory organ added to the body, the body "plus" organs. This seems to have at least two functions – first, to make the home more impenetrable – the visitor has to be invited in to get there with any certainty beyond trust – the visitor may come in person or through a video phone, which grants a greater degree of penetration, an extra sensory level of trust on the part of the receiver. Second, the individual with whom a phone resides becomes more of a place – you can reach them, get to them, in the

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same way you could get to their home by calling it – they have taken a part of what made a home a home with them. But if, following Ronell, we characterize the phone call as a rupture or withdrawal, then that rupture is transposed onto the body. But this is a mobile place, a moving location. If they have their laptop too, then they are even more of a location, they have their words, their music, their photos, part of their individual heritage or ghosts with them. Their past is mobile, their mechanical memory storage moves with them, their present is mobile, they can communicate and be located while in motion, and their future looks mobile, there is no fixed future point except death, which is also not a place.

Location has become position, which is trackable, individuals can now choose to reveal their position, to provide constant public updates as to their situation and activity, to allow others to track them, to locate them in motion, to substitute the kind of reassurance from knowing someone was at home.

> "The questions are piling up, yet it seems that they are all circling around two concepts: dwelling and passage."
> "We Still Do Not Know What a Building Can Do"
> *Radical Reconstruction*
> Michael Menser, p. 157

To create the audio guide for an exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, artist Philippe Parreno had the world memory champion, Boris Konrad, recite an extensive and detailed biography for all of the artists included in the show. It is a demonstration of pure memory, an attempt to break a world record, and it is unbearable to listen to. Each word struggles to emerge, they drop like the dead, one by one, as Konrad labors through the text, methodically and lifelessly. As each word is forced outward, with no inflection or emotion, it is actually cut off from the context of the rest of the script, cut off from the artist it refers to and describes. You find that you cannot even follow the narrative, the words become monads, self-contained and individual accomplishments, divorced of meaning (more on monads later). The listener's attention is forced to shift away from what the text is saying to an observation of the mere accomplishment of saying it. This is not thinking, it is memory in isolation. It does not invite you in to think along with it, and it does not broadcast meaning, it forces you to struggle to merely listen to it wrenching its way forward.

What it is missing is the cessation of memory, the gap between what the memory brings forward and what is added to turn it into an expression, an expression of the individual, of the information, of the message. Konrad is

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harnessing just the mechanics of memory, a machinelike function that supplies information at the barest level. He is battling, methodically and arduously, against forgetting. He has isolated forgetting as his adversary, and only in defeating it, entirely eliminating it from his mind can he accomplish his goal. In his book *The Mind of the Mnemonist*, psychologist A.R. Luria interviews a man he calls S who has a memory that after years of study he deems to be not only limitless in capacity, but also in the "durability of the traces he retained." S makes his living demonstrating the power of his memory in front of large crowds, using lists composed by volunteers from the audience. When he is memorizing, he has an almost schizophrenic disassociation with thinking. Even if he is given a list of sequential numbers or letters, he still uses his laborious associative technique that lets him remember any list, no matter how long, complicated or irregular. It is not until he is reciting the list aloud that he might realize that there was a simple logic to the material, like that they are the numbers one to ten, or the letters of the alphabet in order. But when he first memorizes them he isn't able to see any pattern or sense, because he deals with everything that comes in front of him like nonsensical information, just as Konrad did with the script of the audio guide. As listeners, we can do nothing more than mark the items recited off a checklist – there is nothing more for us to learn.

The goal, or spectacle, of not forgetting appeals to audiences because it is a defiance of an inevitable phenomenon. Not forgetting, demonstrating prodigious and expansive memory, is like cheating death. The sense of relief when one remembers something that has been a struggle to recall is a soft shadow version of the feeling of having escaped a fatal accident. As we recall the fact or idea, it is accompanied by a sense of relief, of optimism, of even hope, that rushes in to replace the dread and fear of not being able to remember, of being defeated by our own minds. Compare it to the feeling of a close call with a car on a street corner, as the sickening possibility of impact is salved by the liberation from the threat, the possibility of going on, the lucky feeling of survival. Of course the experience of remembering is not always so dramatic, particularly when one is young or confident in their mental capacity, but with age or insecurity, the failure of memory and the encroaching proximity of death can echo one another more ominously. But can we say that accepting forgetting is a step towards accepting death? Both processes incorporate a necessary winnowing, they are inevitabilities that create great possibilities. Here we can examine the first in terms of its creative and generative role in thought, to see the constructive elements it brings to the process, and try to consider accepting and even utilizing it is as a positive and potential tool for thought.

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From the beginning of Western Thought, memory and architecture have been interwoven. Just as we use architectural spaces to organize our lives, we have used architectural forms as ideas and metaphors to organize our thoughts. Frances Yates' book, *The Art of Memory*, saved the history of the deliberate building of mental architecture from obscurity by chronicling the history of efforts to construct an ordered memory system in the mind deliberately and methodically, from early Roman thinkers through the obsolescence of the practice in the Renaissance, when the combined rise of the printing press and rational, non-pictorial Protestant thinking overcame visual culture. Mnemotechnics, the art of memory Yates describes, is a visual system, not a text-based system – the practitioner uses visual cues, mnemonic devices in the form of objects, to remind the memorist of information for easy recall.

All of these "memory objects" are placed in imaginary architectural spaces, in thematically organized rooms within buildings, called "memory palaces" dedicated to particular bodies of knowledge, which are located within complexes or even towns and function as the organizing structures for the whole system. It's a modular building system, and can be expanded to order all human knowledge, which was not beyond the ambition of some memorists. The process of recall is then like a walk through these constructed spaces in the mind. For example, to speak about a certain medical condition, the memorist pictures himself walking into the building labeled medicine, and down the hallway to a room of illnesses, where he can quickly identify the particular condition by spotting the object that reminds him of each of the indicators he needs to look for in order to identify the illness and explain the treatment. In the books instructing students on the best methods to create one's own memory palaces, great emphasis is placed on the importance of using architecture from the real world as a starting point. Students were instructed to stand in front of and stare at a section of a wall that was distinctive, but not unique, so that certain details could help them ground the place in their minds, but not distract them with an unexpected or overly elaborated design as they memorized all the pieces of information that belonged in that space.

By studying the structure and function of the brain, neurobiologists point to a concrete reason why the memory palace might have worked so well for practitioners. By separating the real (the architecture) and imaginary (the objects), they could engage more of their brain in the construction. Eric Kandel explains "…other aspects of visual perception – motion, depth, form and color – are segregated from one another and conveyed in separate pathways to the brain… gives rise to two parallel pathways. One pathway,

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the “what” pathway, carries information about the form of an object: what the object looks like. The other, the “where” pathway, carries information about the movement of the object in space: where the object is located.”

So the memorist, following best practices, would walk to a real location, and proceed to create an imaginary object in that place. By doing so, he was creating a parallel “where” pathway that would help lead him back to his memory object, firmly situated on the “what” pathway. Because the object was imagined, it would have no “where” pathway from the real world to distract him from relocating it later on. He essentially isolated it from its real world function to maximize its potential in the mind. When it came time to recount his object from memory, he would have both the “what” and the “where” pathways to lead him there.

The ideal conditions for memorization included the proper lighting, adequate, so as not to be too dim and hard to see the details of the memory objects, but not too bright so that there would be strong shadows that could also hide details. It was best to be familiar with the building, but not overly attached to it emotionally, and to visit it in the early evening, when it was still light, but wasn’t being used by other people, who could also be a distraction from the work at hand. For the dedicated builder, the palaces of memory offered an impossible promise – the complete structuring of human knowledge, an organization of mind resistant to human fallibility, total recall, to stave off forgetting. Today, technology offers the potential for limitless memory storage and it is even being used by some to create artificial memory palaces with utopian ideals similar to memorists. Computer systems are constructed through the creation of information architecture, pathways and locales as repositories for data, the built extension of the memory palace. Just as with the memory palaces, these systems are designed to defeat forgetting, to foster total recall. But the question arises, what is being forsworn in the adoration of recalled memory? Is there a similarly valid purpose of forgetting, how do the two interact, and if we have a clear and historic picture of the architecture of memory, how can we imagine the architecture of forgetting?

Yates’ archival work brought the art of memory as practiced for centuries back into popular discourse. She noted that at the time of publishing her work that, “There is no modern book in English on the history of the art of memory and very few books or articles on it in any language.” Memory palaces had faded into memory, like old memory technology – spools of wire, magnetic tape, or floppy disks. The books and diagrams were arcane and unreadable, the contents obscured. Because the principal work was done

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in the mind, very few examples of actual memory objects were recorded– each individual was expected to create their own images, just as we organize our own computer files and bookshelves. So the solution to forgetting for centuries was nearly forgotten – it was subject to a technical obsolescence as it was replaced by the widespread mass publishing of books. During the decline of the practice, memorists, in fact, very quickly became objects of ridicule, seen as anachronistic throwbacks capable of only this kind of rote memory work, as recounted by Jonathan D. Spence in *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, the biography of one of the last of the memorists. The criticism leveled at them was that all they did was memorize, which was not achieving the higher order of mind – thought. By externalizing memory in books, relying upon printed reference material to take the place of the memory palace, the thinker was free to concentrate on associations, conclusions, insights – the true measure of thinking. The enormous and time-consuming work of constructing memory palaces could be replaced with higher forms of thinking.

Interestingly, Yates was the first to "save" the memory palace from the oblivion of history. No major work had brought the memory palace to the modern era, it had been made so obsolescent by books that the books which described, documented and taught its methodology had themselves become obsolete. But as thinkers on memory from Plato to Derrida have argued, nothing is ever truly forgotten, a trace always remains, however faint. Yates found the traces and pulled them together into the light for the first time in the modern era. This is reminiscent of the fear of losing data saved on old computer technology, like floppy discs. The technology of books did not, until Yates, reliably preserve the old methods of memory for the modern age – as books supplanted the system they also erased it.

Can we anticipate computers erasing books, and the memory of books? True devotees of the computer, such as Gordon Bell, who will be discussed later, have little time for books. Google, in collaboration with libraries around the world, is digitizing books at an incredible rate. The online bookseller, Amazon, is helping to make the form obsolete by marketing the digital equivalent, the Kindle, which is their improvement on the technology of books. Film for photography is rapidly being done away with. Before it was forced into bankruptcy in 2012, the giant of photographic film production, Kodak, suddenly ceased making the majority of its films, and even its once next generation improvement, Polaroid, died, though it was reborn under the name "The Impossible Project." Of course film, compared to books, hasn't had a very long history, and Polaroid film had even less, so its obsolescence is easily accelerated. Technology "forgets" its predecessor,

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until it is necessary to reactivate the trace. So why is it now necessary to remember the memory palaces? Perhaps because the new memory storage of computers is so visually oriented that the visual will dominate text, as in memory palaces. Even the indexing of computers is a mix of visual and textual referents, a balance between differentiated icons and the text labels affixed to them.

Compared to books, which minimized the visual referents, this is a big shift back toward the presence and importance of the visual in memory palaces. Images were greatly reduced in importance in "serious" books, to being merely illustrations supplementing the written text. Until recently, as visual elements have gradually returned in some forms where they have been completely absent, almost by definition. Think of literary fiction – even tenuous interruptions of the text with loaded symbols like Kleist's dash in "The Marquise von O.," or Faulkner's conspicuous gap in the text of his novel *As I Lay Dying*, to the more potent use of the tiny coffin icon later on in the book received critical attention. These visual referents push the definition of reading into another level of perception, symbolized meaning that is not just read, but seen, in order to implant meaning through a nonverbal vehicle, one that packs in meaning with greater density, that expands into thought at a higher ratio of page real estate to insight than the single letter it replaces. More recently, the use of photographs was to be found in the "fiction" of such writers as W.G. Sebald and Jonathan Safran Foer. Not only did they violate the established literary norm of leaving the visual to verbal description alone, the visual elements undercut the validity of the fiction as fiction, with the veracity of a photograph which serves as proof of the existence of the narrated events, creating an unresolvable contradiction between the "truth" of the photo and the "fiction" of the text. The introduction of images suggests a failure of language to impart the narrative in its entirety. For these authors, words are no longer enough, the photographs are a necessary addition that work in conjunction, and in contradiction, to further the meaning of the story.

Computers began as counting machines then rapidly evolved into the greatest generators of visual imagery ever invented by man. The role of text is being challenged by the visual in computers, though text is the language that builds the pictures, it is framing itself out of the picture, so that only programmers and not users, the bulk of the population that come into contact with it, ever see the underlying text. The traditional instrument of writing, the pen, exists in relation to the computer solely as a visual tool, not to generate text, but like a conductor's wand to orchestrate movement and arrangement, to navigate through objects and doorways into information

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storage units. If the pen was originally an extension of the finger writing in the sand, the computer stylus takes the place of hands and feet, to navigate and manipulate on a larger scale than individual words and letters.

Functions such as search have been experimentally reinvented as a visual interface, as seen on file display on Macintosh OS X Version 10.5 and forward, and Top Sites multi-page display beginning with Mac's Safari 4, where users select from images of the pages they are looking for instead of reading descriptions of them. Even a tool created for the profusion of language, the thesaurus, has been reimagined as a visual space where words hang like planets in a visual galaxy that illustrates connections in meaning, like on visualthesaurus.com.

> Images are meant to render the world accessible and imaginable to man. But, even as they do so, they interpose themselves between man and the world. They are meant to be maps, and they become screens. Instead of pre-senting the world to man, they re-present it, put themselves in place of the world, to the extent that man lives as a function of the images he has produced. He no longer deciphers them, but projects them back into the world "out there" without having deciphered them. The world becomes image-like, a context of scenes and situations. This reversal of the function of images may be called "idolatry," and we can't currently see how this comes about: omnipresent technical images have begun magically to restructure "reality" into an image-like scenario. What is involved here is a kind of oblivion. Man forgets that he produces images in order to find his way in the world; he now tries to find his way in images. He no longer deciphers his own images, but lives in their function. Imagination has become hallucination.
> "Towards a Philosophy of Photography"
> Vilém Flusser, p. 2

Flusser ranks the invention of the camera, the reproducible or what he calls technical image, as a fundamental turning point in the history of mankind that he argues is as significant as the invention of writing. We are witnessing the transformation of the world, a shift away from the primacy of the word, to a new balance between word and image, or one of primacy of the image. He anticipated the computer's adoption of increasingly visual functionality, and its hallucinatory filtration of the world, reframing and distorting in invisible ways. He critiques our inability to decipher or "read" the images we surround ourselves with. Image forms do not always lend themselves to reading – they move with such velocity and volume that we cannot "see" them, actively, especially without training and working to do so. Slavoj Žižek teaches the reading of films, an infectious and insidious method that forces subtexts to the surface, pointing out the meaning behind the meaning that is stated or implied. He argues that films are all propaganda for a hidden

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agenda of the culture that produces them, inculcating the passive audience, reinforcing their consumption of the imagery and message, building an audience for themselves. In “Pervert’s Guide to Cinema” he wishes for a magic pill that will allow him to turn the film into a text that can be read, isolated to a clear meaning, rather than left in its ambiguous and misleading form that intermixes the verbal and visual. Without the pill, we can’t, and don’t read the film, but the hidden message is inscribed nonetheless. In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri state that you can create your own subjectivity, or it can be created for you, externally, by cultural factors. Flusser would call this creating functionaries for the apparatus, as the cultural object inculcates the viewers in the mindset of the culture, so that the cultural apparatus can survive, thrive and grow. He argues that what he calls the apparatus, be it on the micro scale of a camera or the macro scale of the institution, needs users to continue to exist.

By expanding its capability, being more accommodating, and simplifying the interface for the user, it increases both the number of its users and the dependence of its users on its function. Hence the “masters” of the device, someone who picks up and learns to use a camera, become the “functionaries” of the apparatus, following the rules the apparatus has programmed into it and helping it grow and adapt to become indispensable to the user. The camera as apparatus has succeeded to such an extreme degree that they have penetrated our telephones, our computers, our public and private spaces in a collective panopticon where people have cameras with them or on them much of the time. Language is not to be believed, only image – proof is provided in photographs, it is brought closer, a more authentic communication, describing your child is insufficient, you must show a photo, even though there is a certain anonymity to the snapshot because of the endless repetition of other images that it represents. Your baby photo could be any baby photo, but having no baby photo is to have a hole in your past. Films succeed as capitalism because of the simultaneity of the political and economic system, selling images so as to buy addicted audiences for further images. Political expansions are market expansions, and cultural exports are spies bent on converting non-believers, proselytizing through the glamorous appeal of its imagery. There is a danger of forgetting the world beyond the images, of the world that the images filter by interposing themselves between the viewer and the world, not as windows, but as screens. The screens create a distorting filter Flusser mentions, so looking at the film of a ritual one thinks they are seeing the ritual, not the artifice which can never communicate what the ritual did, especially not until the image has not been first read as image in all of its artifice of construction. How did the picture get made, by whom

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and why? What was prepared, altered, or edited for the audience's consumption?

Documentary is riddled with fictions that it may or may not be possible to identify. Swiss artists Fischli and Weiss' encyclopedic "Visible World" project illustrates the seeing of the whole world without seeing anything beyond the banality and ubiquity of the "sights." They have assembled thousands of images of "attractions" from around the globe, shot in the most picturesque possible framing, a clichéd and iconic view that is not representative of any individual seeing, though the tourist photo stands as a badge of evidence of just that – it states "I have seen this place, I have been there, shared in its history, its significance, its uniqueness." It is a survey of the world as a flat, endless series of sight sites, which can be visited and consumed serially with a checklist in hand, like the popular book *1000 Places to See Before You Die*. Could the lust for tourism be a desire to make one's architecture global, even if it is just made up of corridors of experience snaking from tourist attraction to tourist attraction around the world? When we experience a place as a visitor, walking through in a bubble of financial protection, visiting the locale through only a privileged gaze, are we more present than when we study the reality of the inhabitants in researched data? Can we know a place more through information than experience? The two scenarios rival one another, of course a combination is necessary for the deepest experience, but are you cognizant of the cooperation of knowledge and perception as you move through any environment? Does the technology you employ enhance your understanding, or screen it? Watching a place through a video camera can be an active or a passive experience – you may not be able to see beyond the viewfinder, passively relinquishing your own perception for the total memory offered by the camera, anticipating replaying the tape later, sharing your "memory" of this expanded architecture when you are back home.

Flusser points to our inability to read images as the problem, but then goes on to discuss images' non-linear requirements for reading – text can be read because it is based in concept – though deconstruction demonstrates how difficult and ambiguous any read can be – if we can't read every reference and permutation of reading in words, how can we read images, which are not as systematically or logically based, if for no other reason than the fact that at least every word in the English language can be reduced to its letters? Even if it is not possible to understand words in their entirety, at least they have a predilection for being read (or misread, which is still a reading), where images are fundamentally to be seen, and doesn't the reading of them require an imposition of language? Can we read images as images, and then

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present images that interpret and clarify them? Art is possessed of the capability, but often requires the addition of words for a more concrete and directed interpretation. Images are fundamentally ambiguous, though they can be at least partially explained. And words are fundamentally explicit, though they can be (and generally are) ambiguous?

Changes in the conception and application of technology have brought about conditions of greater mobility, which can shift a certain sense of stability towards a greater inclination for movement. An effect of this shift has been the beginnings of a move from the stability of place to the transience of position. As a result, some of the qualities that resided in place are carried by the mover, which causes changes in perception, as well as a feeling of being untethered. If memory is associated with anchoring, with stability, repetition and certainty, it can also be seen as a denial of death, a desperate attempt to totalize and preserve individual identity. The practice of arduously constructing a system for memory, even total memory, has persevered throughout history, in particular in our institutions of higher learning, even as technology has shifted, obliterating earlier systems as it proposes more dependable replacements. Even in its newest manifestation, an endless hard drive of sensory data, it remains futile, its ultimate goal of a mastery of mind a dangerous fallacy.

The current shift in history that we are witnessing takes logocentrism to a new stage, incorporating imagery to a greater degree, creating a hybrid that changes the strict linearity of reading, and increasing the presence of elements that must be read differently, or that resist reading and comprehension altogether. Technology offers the possibility of not reading, of instead trusting in its operation and function, and accepting the information it provides as a replacement to the difficult struggle of reading and trying to extract understanding. It promotes a tipping point away from thought, where memory is supplanted or indistinguishable from information, where the two are continuously streaming in, forcing an acceleration of release, effortlessness, acceptance. As the volume and velocity rises, the ease of release becomes ever more seductive. To remain engaged and aware, the stable dwelling of self can be reconceived as a craft, a navigable vessel that is not merely afloat, but symbiotically intermingled with the context it moves through. The context sweeps up, over and through the vessel – the dwelling does not offer a sense of isolating refuge, but it is charged, led and fed by the movement. Perception then needs to become as dynamic as the environment itself, one can never be misled by notions of mastery, but must struggle to pay equal attention to that which is perceived and that which is not, the presences and absences, the contours of a situation or object of

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encounter. We cannot await a complete picture, but we can strive for a sense of the effect of that which we cannot perceive. Attention can radiate outward, effectively extending the individual's personal architecture, without endeavoring to become a structure of control or mastery, but as an outgrowth of thought and awareness, consideration and even momentary illumination. This is an attempt at describing an architecture of forgetting. Curating organizational memory means considering the re-formation of our organizations, and the possibility of even creating new organizations altogether to incorporate this new architecture. New ages often result in necessary art forms to engage with the particulars of the time, an art of forgetting is considered here in response to our present conditions, one that is formed within a new kind of organization. As an effort to demonstrate one potential form for this new organizations, and by extension strategies for thinking about them in broader application, we could experiment by blurring the line between fiction and documentation and form an organization within the pages of this book. This is the sensibility from which the Academy of Forgetting is born.

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An Introduction to the Academy of Forgetting

The ongoing radical changes affecting our educational institutions are, from a practical point of view, brought about by digital technology and interconnectivity. To reconsider the nature of a particular kind of architecture, that of an institution of higher learning, the term "architecture" should not be limited to encompassing the form and function of a physical building, but rather to the overall structure of the institution, its operations, intents, its population and the interactions it facilitates. Then, applying the potentials and problematics of an experimental, theoretical "architecture" to the institution of higher learning at a time of monumental shift in purpose, function, even essence, it is possible to imagine how technology and innovation manifest our innate desire, as an outward expression of our essential inner drive. It is not invention that allows us to innovate, but instinct that leads us to manifest extensions of our id as we shape and build out our reality. In a simple example, toy automobiles are instantly recognized and adored by infants because an essential extension of our being has been manifest in their form and function. They exist because they are what we want. We continue to elaborate technological systems to store and index the memory of our learning, discovery and knowledge base, so how can we speculate that our institutions of learning will be shaped as our desire comes to fruition?

Traditionally, institutions of higher learning are institutions of memory. Following Augustine's model, they storehouse the learning and thinking of their faculty, researchers and students. They build libraries and art collections and databases and archives, recording and gathering knowledge in every format and variety, in every subject and classification. From lectures, seminars and symposia, to lab results and experiments, to articles, journals, anthologies and encyclopedia, they generate new material for their field and their peers, broadening the body of literature. In fact, the global rating systems of universities awards points based on research, citations, publications and awards, not instruction or its results. They index their accumulated data, they analyze it, they write about it and publish it in newly digested formats and feed that back into the storehouse of institutional

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memory, broadening and reinforcing the foundations that they stand on and stand for as institutions.

Increasingly, however, all of that data, that accumulated institutional memory, is becoming distributed. In a shift from being centered in institutions of higher learning, it is being shared, reproduced, and is accessible online. The great libraries of rare and obscure documents are opening to the wave of new, searchable media, being digitized and made available, not just to those deemed eligible for access by the institution, but in more and more cases to all, to anyone interested in delving into the near limitless quantities and directions of every field as it has been explored and as it actively expands its boundaries. As resources and even daily classes are opened to unaffiliated, outside viewers, institutions are defining their policies as to how to administer the access and distribution of the accumulation of knowledge they have built for themselves and their formerly closed populations.

Our institutions of higher learning accumulate memory because they mirror society, reflecting our ever more powerful impulse to record everything and have it on hand, indexed and searchable, not subject to the wiles and variables of human memory, as when all history was oral. We feel increasingly compelled to record every shred of information in hard storage, in every evolving media moving from the printed word and picture to rich digital data of text, image and audio, extending our senses beyond experience into a framework aiding and aiming for total recall.

The Academy of Forgetting is an experiment in representation, exploring an institution of higher learning that does not pursue the dream of constant total recall. Rather than harnessing and accessing the limits of stored memory, it asks: why are we so afraid to forget? We know we are operating in a sea of archived memory, where all of the knowledge and information that we continue to accumulate and record far surpasses anyone's capacity to engage with it, so rather than struggle and drown in our endless sea of storage, what would happen if we cut ourselves off from institutional memory, allowed the flow of information to lapse, and waited to see what happens, to study and explore and accept the moment of forgetting? If, as Werner Hamacher argues, forgetting is the most extreme form of consciousness, is it possible to cultivate and then occupy the space of the extreme? Can we learn from such a precarious position?

Formulating the Academy, or any institution, on paper, rather than in practice, can be compared to pictorial representation, and it can be argued

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that assembling a patchwork is a necessary approach. In “De Inventione,” Cicero tells the story of a renowned painter, named Zeuxis, who is commissioned by the people of Croton to portray the embodiment of beauty, an institution in itself. The solution Zeuxis arrives at, after considering as models the many beautiful young women of the city that are presented to him, is an assemblage. He requires the features of five different women to make a single portrait, in order to approach a representation of Helen, who was considered the ideal of beauty. Cicero’s point is that perfection does not exist except in our ability to assemble it from disparate real examples. Only by combining optimal instances of perfection in the material world can we come close to satisfying the ideal whole in our minds. He is writing about the art of speaking, and his lesson serves to illustrate his point that the traits of many different speakers must be adopted to approach an idea of perfection. Once the exemplary idea is assembled in thought, it must play out in reality, where it will again be incomplete. The writing of an institution stops an entity that if it were in existence would necessarily be in motion, and imperfect. A moment of incomplete stasis is essential in order to represent it, much like a painting, which Cicero calls a “mute representation.” The different sections of this work are an effort to assemble a dynamic picture of a system in motion, not a system that is total, complete or monolithic. That movement is uncertain, at times contradictory, even unclear, but striving, like thought. In her extended study of the myth, Elizabeth Mansfield points out that Zeuxis is neither able to conceive of the ideal form without a model, nor can he confirm the existence of a model in the real work. However, he needs the ideal to exist, so he assembles it from the parts supplied. As she says, “Mimetic art… promises mastery but sows doubt.”

What is an Anti-Institution?

Rather than establishing a form, the effort here is to formulate an anti-form, in fact an anti-institution with the specific function of sowing doubt, the details of that notion will be explored in greater depth further on. In general, the anti-form encourages the assembly of fragments that, contrary to Cicero’s advice, do not coalesce into a whole, and are not parts of a complete system. The work of Georges Bataille can be studied as a way of understanding the establishment and particular strengths of anti-form. Seeking a position against the growing popularity of dictatorial leadership that threatened Europe, Bataille presented the “headless” and anti-hierarchical figure born of a spontaneous portrait of him drawn by Andre Masson. “Bataille criticised the Surrealists as hierarchical, and hierarchy is

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of course the hall-mark of the fascist organization." The headless figure and the anti-hierarchical notion it embodied was reflected in his anti-aesthetic, anti-art journal Documents, and later in his secret society and art journal, both called Acéphal – the French for headless. In each venue he assails art as a mirror aiding man's self admiration, and the art journal as the vehicle which captures that ecstasy. So he made a practice of using the form to attack the form – an art journal that is an assault on art and art journals. This reflexive act plays out in the larger context of a countercultural move towards dissembling, by establishing a voice within the cultural dialogue. The platform of an academic journal remains accessible to only a limited public, but it also serves to record his critique of the broader structures of government and popular social movements that threaten society as a whole, especially when studied after the fact. He is protesting from a small pulpit, but speaking to larger issues. An implicit admiration of the vehicle underpins the effort, so that by creating an anti-journal in his case, or an anti-institution art academy as this work undertakes, the model is both vaunted and assailed.

So it is with *Encyclopedia Acephalica*, Bataille's "headless" encyclopedia: it works against the form it adopts, it does not encapsulate or explain – it is an encyclopedia of undercutting, not establishing, meaning. He also called it a critical dictionary, but he does not purport to define the words, but rather wishes to more powerfully "allow them to operate." "[Bataille] was convinced that thought, by its very nature, was unable to cast even a dim light upon those essential problems of life that he wished to explore." The encyclopedia, assembled from different authors and at first published serially as almost a separate magazine within the pages of Documents, guides a sensibility that does not seek to limit the world into explicable entries, but as a reflection of the headless, unthinking figure, "unaware of prohibition," which discovers and accepts itself as a monster – driven by base impulses. Bataille responds to the predominant fascist system of overwhelming power, momentum and disruption by creating an unstable foundation, a basis of parts with multiple definitions that lack coherence and unity, rabidly pursuing their own contrary agendas. The articles seem arbitrary, yet continually approach similar themes of structure, language, the body, and institution. His complex anti-system continued to evolve over years of writing and thinking, without ever becoming coherent, due to his acknowledgment of a philosophy, or perhaps even an ontology of contradiction, one that cannot and will not be resolved.

The book itself has spawned other writing and thought in similar bursts – a single article or even a phrase within that article has the potential to generate

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a new body of work. Take, for example, the entry “Formless.” Called the core text of the work as it is a critique of the concept of a dictionary itself, it is just a few short sentences that aim to unravel large systems. “Formless” captures an idea that two contemporary art historians, Rosalind Krauss and Yves Alain Bois, argue is definitive of an entire, unacknowledged current in modernist artistic expression. Their resulting book, and the large-scale group exhibition which serves as the book’s demonstration, takes the thematic lead from Bataille’s notion, but also the structure of an encyclopedia or dictionary. Formless, as Bataille lays it out, dissolves definitions and classification as an act. It is an impulse which has no rights and perennially finds itself attacked and destroyed. It is an undoing that must be rubbed out for form to exist. As academics, which Bataille defines as those fighting to find a categorical form for all of the universe, Krauss and Bois are assigning it exactly the task he says the term undoes: classification. They strive to classify remaindered and neglected artworks, unexplained asides in otherwise highly scrutinized oeuvres, to find a place for them in modern art history and a context for their function, and the resonance of the impulse that leads to their creation, which Krauss and Bois spent over a decade identifying, documenting and interpreting in the formulation of the work. Bataille wants to put words to work, given the jobs that he describes for them. In his definition they are not vessels of meaning, they are functional objects. Bois and Krauss acknowledge that their own dictionary, inspired by Bataille’s, which explores the concepts underlying the formless impulse in artmaking, is more conventional. They acknowledge that it follows the alphabet, but not that it has classification at its heart, which it does.

Appropriately, they are using Bataille against himself, or at least Bataille’s term against the definition he gave it, to continue to play the game of modernism, but by changing the rules, and fracturing its unity from within. This could be argued as an essential strategy to keep the critical power of the contradiction in play. They function within the system of classification that Bataile’s formless intends to undo, as a means of further classification, which they call “porous.” Their goal is to “perform” the works on display through a new function that allows for new reading, and new associations. They take pains to show how their effort both conforms to and bucks the conventions of art historical structure: they are considering and avoiding trends, applying rules and breaking them.

Without allying themselves to Bataille’s reading of terms or even of specific artists, such as Giacometti, a colleague of Bataille, who they take as foundational, they have identified the utility value of his effort in its ability

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to cause a tremor within the edifice of art history and the institution that houses it, the museum. "…in putting the formless to work in areas far from its place of origin, in displacing it in order to sift modernist production by means of its sieve, we wanted to start it shaking – which is to say, to shake it up." Bataille has included the museum in his encyclopedia, but he puts the term to work in relation to the public and the city, to the individual experience of art. He addresses what it does to man, not what it does to art. He calls the museum "…the most grandiose spectacle of a humanity freed from material cares and dedicated to contemplation," yet downplays its role in the making of meaning: "the galleries and the objects of art are no more than a container." Bois and Krauss, as art historians and curators, instead are harnessing "formless" to critique the limitations of art history as manifest in the display mechanism of the museum, they create a book that trumps the exhibition, as opposed to creating a catalogue subservient to a show. They aim to recast the past, present, and future of modern art to allow the formless to openly resonate and agitate next to form, which has been given the privileged position and recognition until now. This systematic construct runs contrary to the more freeform approach Bataille put together, as characterized by his biographer:

> "…the texts published here are not straightforward illustrations of one or two of his ideas, but often cover numerous aspects of the totality of his thought, in this respect one might almost look at them as a conflation of philosophical speculation and prose poetry…"

The Academy of Forgetting, similarly, is not the definition of a school so much as a part of the process of thinking how to unmake an institution. Reacting to the crisis of mechanical memory, the accelerating accumulation of information storage and access, the Academy attempts to think of a space of reserve, or interval. Instead of continuing the state of ceaseless function Jonathan Crary describes in his work *24/7*, it proposes "dysfunctions", which highlight the "flaws" of human thinking, the characteristic lapses of recall and lack of information that are the gaps that actually enable thinking. It is also a demonstration of the thought, following the two aphoristic assemblages described above. Just as a student cannot experience an institution in its totality, but rather follows an individual path of exposure through any educational experience, the reader, and the author, come to different realizations and relevancies that illuminate how an anti-institutional structure might appear or reveal itself.

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Forgetting and the Institution

Forgetting runs contrary to the driving impulse of institutions of higher learning, which, like museums, specialize not only in storing and recalling information, but, driven by the academic impulse, in separating and classifying, categorizing and structuring information into departments and majors, fields and specialties, as Bataille points out. We enter institutions of higher learning to learn to think in the specialized areas that we come into contact with and elect to focus on, driven by impulse, influence, chance or ambition. Institutional knowledge struggles to cross these established boundaries. Though interdisciplinary studies are a sector of rapid growth, commonly accepted insights in one field are easily and often neglected in related fields that are separated by physical and organizational walls. This is particularly true in the case of our understanding of forgetting, as John T. Wixted takes pains to document in his paper "The Psychology and Neuroscience of Forgetting."

> "When grappling with fundamental questions about the nature of memory and retrieval, psychological theories have often been informed by progress in related fields. For example, theories concerned with the distinction between implicit and explicit memory have relied heavily on developments not only in psychology but also in neuropsychology and neuroscience (e.g., Gabrieli 1998, Schacter 1992). By contrast, theories of forgetting have rarely ventured beyond the traditional boundaries of experimental psychology. As a case in point, consider the notion that memory traces consolidate over time (an idea that will figure prominently in the account of forgetting that is presented below). According to this idea, memories become less fragile and, therefore, more resistant to interference as time passes. Consolidation theory is a standard account in neuroscience, but it is scarcely even mentioned in the psychology literature."

Even within a field of specialization, the more that we learn the more we become aware of the limits of the reach of that field, of our own knowledge, of the impossibility of mastery, of the scope and depth of learning that will always be beyond us as individuals. In his introduction to *Heuretics*, Gregory Ulmer states, "learning is much closer to invention than verification." He is arguing not for the legwork of research, but for the productive interpretation and application of knowledge based on a subjective engagement with it, creating a new space beyond the known that we construct ourselves intuitively, based on curiosity and enthusiasm, and in the process learning how to learn by cultivating perception. In his article "The Chora Collaborations," about Derrida's Chora project, Ulmer takes a stand against Bataille's formless, which could be read like Krauss' and

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Bois' use of the same term, when he says that a classification system is essential. However, in lieu of a more traditional or rigid means of classification, he proposes reviving the concept of *chora*, which he interprets as a vessel or receptacle, as outlined in Plato's "Timaeus" and then interpreted by Derrida as a space that "receives everything and gives place to everything." Derrida attempted to construct his idea of chora in the physical world in his public art project with Peter Eisenmann, as described in the monograph *Chora L Works*. In physical terms, their project was a failure. The architectural space they eventually proposed was never built, but the collaboration was tremendously fruitful in illustrating how such a profound concept could be approached as a material development, and the book was the ultimate product. As Ulmer describes it, they were representing a space "neither perceptible nor intelligible," hence, from the outset, an impossibility. The very form of the book was intended to physically capture the idea: negative spaces cut through and obliterate sections of text; handwritten notes, drawings, fragmented conversations and correspondence cumulate in a headless encyclopedia of chora. The book logs the origin, intent, genesis and demise of the project. It can serve as another flawed model: an anti-monument to a theoretical concept.

In archaeology, the term *chora* means "agricultural territory," which could be an even more useful variation on the definition of the word when applied to education, since the intent is to allow for the growth of student thinking and practice in unstable fields. Ulmer states that chora "made it possible for "things" (beings) to appear, while itself withdrawing", which I will apply in this case, through Ulmer's acknowledged bastardized reasoning, as saying that the Academy of Forgetting can serve to drive creation, while in the very process it initiates itself be forgotten. Rather than advancing an institutional agenda of self-preservation, instead it undergoes a systematic dissolution in service of that which it perhaps even inadvertently causes to be created.

In his lecture on heterotopias in 1967, Michel Foucault spoke to a group of architects about the gradual breakdown of sacred spaces by institutions and practices, which at the time he felt was not total. Divides that protected personal space which he observed as still intact, oppositions particularly between spaces of leisure and work, and culture and use, have undergone a continual assault over the nearly 50 years that have passed since then. If it is in fact the institutions that are leading the assault on the remaining fragments of sacred space, can an anti-institution strive to shore up those divides, to forge more space, as Foucault describes being typified in the form of a boat, which can serve as the "greatest reserve of the imagination?"

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This work expands on the idea of forgetting as an active and essential part of our thought process, though it is still little understood and in pressing need of further investigation, particularly from an interdisciplinary perspective. It will also look to historical examples of anti-institutions from history and fiction, particularly Bataille's College of Sociology and Jonathan Swift's Academy of Projectors, both of which manifest critiques of status quo institutions and serve as models for this experimental form. Further, the makeup of the Academy of Forgetting will be explored, including elements of the physical structure and the ideas underlying its structure in all senses of the word. The practical operations, expectations for its students and faculty, as well as its role in relation to the world outside its walls will also be detailed, in some cases as a direct experience of the day-to-day operations – putting you as the reader in the role of an attendee or participant in the Academy. As stated before, a comprehensive sense is not the intended outcome, rather an incomplete exposure to different aspects and implications of the notion, which will continue to evolve and be elaborated as any institution should to accommodate the needs of the population it serves.

The labyrinthine library of knowledge we have been collectively building electronically to surround our own, individual minds grows more extensive and open by the day. If our institutions will be inexorably driven to record and distribute knowledge, we must identify and embrace our own nature and its relation to the institution. We must learn to accept our flawed, personal, and subjective drive to engage with and use the institution for our own means – not in some impossibly universal, definitive and all-encompassing fantasy of objectivity. There is a great strength in forgetting, it is essential and vital to the active thought process, and it must be recognized and accepted as part of the balancing process to offset the bulk and capacity of storage. Rather than being feared, fought, and avoided as a limitation and failure, it can be studied, understood and harnessed as a means of generating possibilities beyond recall. We will continue to struggle to accept this inevitable death. In the face of endless augmented memory, it acknowledges our actual nature, our method and manner of thinking. Before we think, we forget.

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To Forget Forgetting

Wolfgang Schirmacher points out that memory and forgetting are endlessly interacting to create meaning, colored by the personality and experience of the individual, as memories are continually changed and rewritten, forgotten and remembered in a creative process requiring both. If remembering and forgetting are not at the level of thinking, he says, then thinking is not in its authentic state. In forgetting you are as productive as when you remember, "the only thing lost may be the agenda, but that is itself forgotten as soon as you begin speaking," he says. The process of thinking overcomes any set form of memory. Memory that is preserved in a stable state he calls "storage", recalling Augustine's storehouse of memory, where objects are placed, indexed, and remain, untouched, gathering dust until retrieved, not subject to the changes of personality and thinking. Computer memory could conform to that definition, but the term "mechanical" memory takes into account the constructed or built element of memory that is particular to both internal processes like memory palaces as well as storage devices like books or computers. Like with rote memorization, both kinds of mechanical memory are united by the deliberate intention and effort to fix a memory in a permanent, quite inhuman way. It brings to mind a kind of physical, laborious process, like building, or stacking up memories, cementing them in place, and preserving them for visiting later. In *Memoires for Paul de Man*, Derrida characterizes it as "bad memory… on the side of death." They are mechanized to the degree that they act regularly and dependably, like clockwork or robots, removing any organic or creative interpretation. That comes in later, when the memory is retrieved from storage for use, to be recombined, reinterpreted, or otherwise thought through and made useful again, which Derrida, in the same passage, calls good or living memory. The question arises however, and lies at the crux of the criticism of devotees of memory palaces, as to when the servicing of these mechanical constructions detracts from thinking, supplants it, or overshadows it.

The extension into the present and technology-enhanced memory is clear. The obsessive collection and storage of data that computers facilitate continues to accelerate. The volume is unimaginable, almost unthinkable. With the potential for unlimited memory comes the danger of solipsistic obsession with its preservation, regardless of utility. The practice of "lifelogging" has taken personal memory storage to the extreme, which

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results in a shift in thinking that parallels the aspiration of the most ambitious builders of memory palaces – a reliance on the system that supplants perception of the world. Gordon Bell, a noted researcher working in high-speed computing, is also the test case for a program developed years ago at Microsoft called MyLifeBits, which fully embraces externalized mechanical memory. Bell took his physical documents “a lifetime's worth of articles, books, cards, CDs, letters, memos, papers, photos, pictures, presentations, home movies, videotaped lectures, and voice recordings and stored them digitally. He now paperlessly, captures phone calls, IM transcripts, television, and radio. He continues to build his self-referential memory palace by storing all correspondence, recording phone and live conversations, and taking audio recordings and over 1,000 photographs a day with the “Sensecam”, the mechanical sensory complement to aid in the construction of his mechanical memory, that he continually wears around his neck. Due to advances in technology, capacity is not an issue for Bell. Storage continues to get smaller and more efficient. However, he is faced with a growing problem of search and recall. He knows that a memory is there, but he can’t always find it. Sometimes he runs into the problem familiar from using Google, of getting too many results for one search, being overwhelmed by the deluge of information, and other times he can’t find the thread to lead him back to the piece of information he wants to retrieve. So he and the software developers he works with spend a lot of time devising strategies for how to access his memory, as well as inventing new search and organizational tools. This is not an engagement with memory, but with meta-memory. He is not struggling, as we do, to remember. By placing his full confidence in this system that replaces his memory, he is closer to the system than to the substance. His connection with memory is at a remove, he is distanced from it through the technology he has fully embraced. He has tried to free himself from the anxiety of forgetting, of losing some memory he believes he will need and not be able to recall. He replaces it with a new anxiety, of how to access those memories, so just as he has mechanized his memory, he must now mechanize his thinking in the form of a more effective search, in order to have total recall to match his total memory. He has become alienated from other, earlier forms of mechanical memory, because he can’t perfect the interface to his system, ‘"I virtually refuse to own any books at this point," he complained in the Fast Company article about his project. "I mean, I get them, I look at them, I occasionally read them. But then I give them away, because they're not in my memory. To me they're almost gone."’ The kind of planned obsolescence that is built into technology has crept into his own thinking, the limitations of his system become his own limitations. An old

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technology for the preservation of memory has become incompatible and is not assimilable into his new system. This is a different kind of forgetting – a meta-forgetting, forgetting that is not failure to recall, but to even expose yourself to the original source of a potential memory, and it is particular to the rapid advance of technology. Call it the forgetting of forgetting. It can be seen as a change or limitation of attention – Bell avoids focusing his attention on a book, because he can't reconcile its introduction into his memory system. He has added a filter to his perception that cuts out potential experience and knowledge. He has effectively traded a degree of openness in exchange for higher mechanical recall, and his way of perceiving and knowing the world.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS), a ubiquitous function in smartphones, also simultaneously augments and limits perception. When using GPS you can drive the same route many times and not learn it as you would if you were driving unaided, because there's no effort exerted in trying to find your way. You passively follow the instructions it provides. You do not perceive in the same way, you are not looking for signs and landmarks outside of the car to the same degree as you would have to if you were navigating from memory, a map or instructions. Your perception shortens to the surrounding traffic and the voice and image of the GPS, there is a tether attached to your attention, reining it in – you find yourself focusing on the little screen just inches from your face, rather than the world outside your window. To a degree you see the world through that screen, to quote again from Flusser's "Towards a Philosophy of Photography", what he calls "technical images" or images that are created through technology, are not a window that let you view the world, but screens that interpose themselves between you and the meaning of what you are seeing. He goes on to say that if we passively accept these images as representative of the world we will remain illiterate as to their meaning, instead we must force ourselves to "read" what they are doing to the meaning of what we are seeing, to see how we are acting as their function. In other words, he asserts that the machine, be it a GPS, a camera, or a computer, requires our full attention and unquestioning investment in it in order to grow. Flusser calls them "apparatus" which simulate thought, which play at thinking. If we completely place our faith in it, it will fulfill all our needs, while expanding to take up more and more of our ability to directly perceive the world and the meaning of the world around us. Bell has, to the benefit of the apparatus of his computer, mostly forsaken books. His computer makes it easier and easier for him to use, it meets more and more of his needs, as long as he sacrifices alternate sources of information along the way. One technology supplants another, and there is a loss for the user. Beyond that, direct perception itself is sacrificed, as

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evidenced by the use of the GPS – by counting on the GPS to get you where you are going you give up locating yourself in the world to the same degree.

There is a passivity at play – rather than locating yourself by finding signs and markers and directions, you are located by the GPS, it positions you, directs you. You "follow" it. The verb used, "follow," is the same as with written or map directions, you follow your GPS, but there is a fundamental difference in that you must actively engage with the map or the written instructions, you have to read the next line, find the connecting point, look for the turn. With the GPS you "follow" a voice that tells you your next move, and your next, without your active involvement in route finding. The power that holds you to it, that compels you to listen to the machine is efficiency. Any deviation from the path the GPS chooses is punished through inefficient transit – the amount of time you will spend en route is increased and compared to the GPS' original suggestion, as if it is saying, "yes, you can decide to go that way, but do you want to spend an extra hour driving?" And the more you rely upon it, the more you must invest in it, and the more its influence over you grows. Like with the camera, Flusser labels this relationship becoming a "functionaire" of the apparatus, wherein our behavior is progressively programmed by the apparatus to increase its own function and our dependence upon it. The GPS increases its function with upgrades such as traffic monitors, more expensive models that say the names of each street instead of providing just directions, e.g. "Turn right" becomes "Turn right on Maple Street." The more you spend on your apparatus, the more perfect a picture of the world it presents to you, and the more you can place trust in it over your own perception of the world.

Bell gives an example of this supplanted trust when describing his interaction with his doctor. They are having a phone conversation and Bell suddenly finds himself overwhelmed with the incoherent jargon the doctor is using. He passively ceases to listen, and lets his computer record the conversation. After the call is finished, the computer helps him research and understand all the terms that the doctor used and he can suddenly understand his condition, his treatment and so on. There is a delay in the direct conveyance of information. Bell trusts and privileges the computer over the doctor to make the information clear and relevant to him. It seems obvious what was sacrificed here, the doctor's judgment and subjective reason for telling Bell what he did is lost, Bell has willingly sacrificed his right to question and interact with the doctor, to keep the interaction active. He prefers the interaction with the computer, he trusts the computer's ability to explain things to him more than the doctor's. The computer has become the authority figure, or at least it shares authority with the doctor. The same

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happens with the GPS, when you feel that you know a better route than what the GPS suggests, you must challenge its authority to change direction, which takes confidence in the face of its ostensible expertise. You must "forget" the memory of the GPS in order to trust your own memory or intuition. That becomes harder and harder the more invested you are in the apparatus.

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Forgetting and Deleting, Remembering and Storing

From a scientific perspective, according to psychologist John Wixted, we do not in fact have a good understanding of forgetting, nor has it been extensively considered in terms of critical thought. Throughout the history of philosophy, memory is a constant and recurrent theme, robust in its symbolic associations and extended metaphors, extensively studied and explored. Why has its flip side been so neglected and avoided, as if shunned, and left in its own darkness? Forgetting can be seen as a mild allusion to death, the death of memory, the frustration of knowing that you have forgotten, that the path your thought was taking has reached a dead end in a failure of recall. When you know you have forgotten, there is a sense of the presence of the missing memory, the loss of access to it, which leads to frustration. It is a blockage in the normal flow of thinking that compels us to focus on deliberate recall.

In *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Psychologist Daniel Kahneman has outlined a two-part system of what he calls "fast and slow thinking," in which System 1, fast thinking, is automatic, impulsive and intuitive, it acts quickly and suffices for most operations, such as memory. System 2 handles deliberate, laborious thinking, the kind that tempers impulsive snap judgments, and also handles subconscious functions like self-control, and deliberate memorization. Attention functions between both systems, moving from automatic attention when intently focusing on a specific target. This marks the shift from System 1 (intuitive) to System 2 (deliberative). We lose control of our attention, thoughts, and actions when our System 2 override is occupied, for example with ungrounded anxiety, or when actively attempting to retain information in short-term memory, a System 2 function. Having System 2 occupied can lead easily to mistakes, due to an inability to check intuitive answers with deliberate thinking. Could this be an explanation for our drive to supplement memory with storage? Perhaps before advances in psychology led us to theories outlining the optimization of the mind's function, we subconsciously knew that when trying to remember things we are less able to make good decisions, not impulsive ones, the kind that later turn out to have been correct. This would explain the progressive drive to store all information in easily accessible archives,

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electronic devices that allow a freed up System 2 to use its best judgment based on the problem at hand, not distracting concerns of holding onto short-term memorized information.

Writer Umberto Eco endeavored to find a mental path to active forgetting. He was seeking a machine-like deleting function. To play off of the historical memory-expanding practice of mnemotechnics, the art of memory, we could call it *lethotechnics*. He referred to it as an "Ars Oblivionalis," the art of forgetting, and declared it an impossibility, after a long and playful consideration. He begins by arguing for mnemotechnics to be read as "a semiotics, and it is proper to a semiotics to make present something that is absent." He then argues that forgetting would necessarily also be a semiotics, which by his definition renders something present, and therefore contradicts the idea of actively, intentionally forgetting, which was the goal of his study. He believes that at best the object intended to be forgotten can be confused by associating it in your mind with a similar object, causing you to recall both and not be able to decide which is which, in his example, associating the word *fraise* with both blackberry and blueberry [sic]. You would be effectively creating a fog to obscure the proper meaning, not forgetting it, but making it less available to memory. This is a process of excess, not absence, superimposing meaning onto meaning to impede recall. Casting about for other techniques of forgetting, Eco credits drinking with accidental forgetting, a traditional conclusion, and an error. In his work on forgetting, Wixted has shown that in fact the encoding of memory of events that occur *before* the excessive drinking are enhanced, because the alcohol blocks the creation of new memories which would ordinarily take their place. So while you forget what happens while you drink, by doing so you are solidifying the memory of the reason that started you drinking.

Perhaps Eco would take comfort in discovering that there are chemists who have also taken on his assignment by attempting to develop drugs to block the neural pathways leading to specific memories and effectively erase them from the mind. This actually resembles the computer's process of deletion to a greater degree than that of forgetting, since the memory targeted for blocking must be recalled, like selecting a file for deletion, in order for the drug to stifle it.

Eco acknowledges that rather than just endless categorization and labeling that drives mechanical memory, the art of memory, or mnemotechnics, harnessed a system of associative limitations in order for the memory system to actually work – "I can know everything about cocks and not

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remember that in a given mnemotechnic system they are meant to recall the principality. And only when I see them connected to Prometheus am I brought to activate a given zone of my competence and recall the principality." Comparing the effectiveness of total recall to associative thinking, he concludes that the associative thinking alone arrives at a conclusive correct answer.

It is the illogical association, the one that a mechanical storage access system like Google would not come up with as a top result, which actually provides the proper answer.

> "The memory treatises tell us how to select these features for the image we wish to impress in our memory, even if they do it in a highly systematic way, while contemporary representations of meaning used in semiotics and artificial intelligence seek optimal representations on which even a machine could operate to make later selections.
>
> Only in this way, by learning the signifier, as Pierce argues, do I learn something more; and I learn this something more, basically, by learning something less – that is, by excluding all the other interpretations of the same expression that I could have offered. In order to work, a semiotics presupposes the possession of an encyclopedic information. The process of production and of interpretation of texts, by contrast, encourages these passing pseudocancellations."

Without acknowledging it, Eco is actually arguing in favor of the powerful role forgetting plays – what he calls "passing pseudocancellations" are momentary lapses in recall – in other words, forgetting, which allows one to arrive at the answer that naturally comes to mind. They stand in contrast to the encyclopedic semiotic or machine resources. He labels these moments of absence that lead to productivity, and credits them with being that which allows one to produce and interpret texts. He has asked how we can actively, intentionally forget, and he seeks to prove that building a logical, mechanical system around the kind of process that works for a machine would not work. Machines do not forget, just as they do not remember. In place of memory, they store, in place of forgetting, they delete. He has put his finger on exactly the lack of system logic that differentiates mechanical and human memory. For the human mind, it takes more effort to list all of the possible associations, which is like indexing storage, than to come up with the right answer. By following intuition you are harnessing fast thinking, rather than utilizing slow thinking, acting like a machine, and listing through all possible variations. Eco can't find his way to an art of forgetting. Because he wants to ground it in a machine-like semiotic

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process, he fails, and declares it an impossibility. We can see that he is unaware that he already equates the art of forgetting with the art of thinking.

The distinction lies in that he attempted to uncover an active, mechanical system, rather than the natural, automatic system, the one that allows him to produce and interpret texts. Machines do not forget, people do, and despite being commonly perceived as a flaw and a weakness, it is key to the strength of our thought in relation to mechanical thought, which cannot forget purely logical answers in order to arrive at correct, intuitive answers. Could his approach, to read the idea of an art of oblivion as an absurdity against the logic of the emerging system of semiotics, have been in some way a veiled attack on the remainders of surrealist culture, such as Georges Bataille's short lived College of Sociology? Perhaps he was retaliating for the College's attack on the novel, though Eco does not make mention of the College or any of its members or their texts in his footnotes. However, the book length interview between Michel Fardoulis-Lagrange and Eric Bourde recounting the history of the College of Sociology, as well as Bataille's literary journal Acéphale and the secret society associated with it, chose the phrase "The Divine Art of Oblivion" as its title in 1988, the same year Eco's essay was published in English by the Modern Language Association. Eco originally presented his essay in 1966, a time when the College may still have been discussed in European academic circles, especially since Fardoulis-Lagrange decided to describe the secret society in his book "G.B. ou un ami présomptueux" in 1969, and Eco has shown deep interest in secret societies in his novels. Eco begins his essay with a list of other university positions that are surreal and contradictory that "as a joke, some friends and I invented." The other departments he describes are full of sociological and anthropological references, pre-Columbian empires, Easter Island, and the Aztecs, the kinds of culture that had a relation to the sacred. College of Sociology members used them as precedents for their thinking about the preservation of the sacred and considered them "not so distant from the Sorbonne as the Sorbonne thinks." Narrowing the distance between the two served as inspiration for the founding of the College, and could very well have seemed like an impulse worth combating, albeit indirectly, by Eco. The possibility of this covert intellectual struggle may warrant further investigation, lest it is forgotten.

Eco bound his refutation of the art of forgetting on the opposite discipline, mnemotechnics, and its attempt at the construction of a comprehensive memory system. Mnemotechnics did not harness pure recording and indexing, as later externalized memory aids like the library and eventually computer systems do, but rather trained the human mind with the aim of

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achieving total recall through associative meanings, with location clues, more like our natural memory. The effort, however, proved overly demanding, with increasingly intricate and sophisticated devices being constructed, including extensive memory maps, even physical theaters populated with cues and clues to aid recall and expand the scope of memorization. The system, as Francis Yates described it in the *Art of Memory*, rapidly became obsolete with the rise of the printing press. In a similar move, computer development is currently undergoing a shift away from pure indexing and toward cognitive processing, with the aim of moving the computer closer to the model of human thought in order to cope with the quantity of data now being generated. Recent predictions indicate that within five years computers will be able to process input mirroring all five senses. Despite the tremendous advance they are pursuing, the developers at IBM assert that the machines will not replicate the power of human thought, but will be able to learn and grow, making new neural connections as they gain experience, like human minds, and have the ability to act as advisors and a resource within their specialized field.

When taken into mechanical storage, the machine form of memory, the "art of forgetting" is an achievable possibility, as explored in *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age*. The author, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, does not focus on the distinction between human memory and forgetting and their digital counterparts. He equates memory with digital memory and as a result despairs at how we can cognitively grapple with endless stored data. He uses the human terms, memory and forgetting, to describe both. By describing his proposed system of expiration dates on information as a trigger for automated deletion, he wants to establish a regular, parallel practice for deleting files just as we now have for storing them as an automatic function in most software. Perfect storage is based on the "autosave" mechanism, a clear point of distinction from human memory. No choice is made, no random factor, as in the human mind, everything is protected in machine storage. Any time we read of computer storage being spoken of as memory, we must keep this distinction clear. A machine does not "remember" in the same sense, just as we do not "store". There is the possibility of the absolute in machine storage, as we model computers to overcome the randomness and fallibility of human memory. Mayer-Schönberger fears what he calls the "totality of storage," and wants to solve the problem with an equally unambiguous process of what he continues to call forgetting, but is actually deletion. But deleting is not forgetting – it is rule based and predictable, and also an absolute. Once a piece of information is deleted it is gone, and to wield that power effectively would require that we be able to accurately perceive the value of a datum (which he persists in

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calling memory) at a particular point in time. We would then take control over its destiny, set an expiration date for its elimination, and then let it go forever. That's how the machine world allows for the art of forgetting that Eco sought – an active method of making something that is present absent, based on choice, choosing to forget. Mayer-Schönberger approaches digital storage as a weapon that needs to be controlled and limited, like the Hydrogen bomb, a weapon too great to trust ourselves with, a technology that happened too fast for us to be able to deal with through some kind of cognitive transformation. But deletion itself can also be a weapon, depending on what is being disposed of, and who makes that decision. It is not difficult to imagine a politics of deletion as fraught as that of surveillance.

But does deleting create space for thought, as forgetting does? By programmatically deleting irrelevant documents there is an attempt to bring machine and human memory in closer parallel. We must keep the distinction between memory and storage, the random narrative of chance composed through forgetting and the total destruction of information resulting from deletion clear as machine and human processing come to resemble one another more and more. As Derrida tries to illuminate in *Memoires for Paul de Man*, there is something more in forgetting, a potential that deleting does not hold, "The failure or finitude of memory says something about truth, and about the truth of memory: its relation to the other, to the instant and to the future."

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Before the Academy

"The College falls into a category that could be designated as theory's novelistic side. It happened that one person or another thought, said or meant this or that. The thoughts themselves were important, disturbing, troubling."
The College of Sociology, Dennis Hollier

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THE ACADEMY OF PROJECTORS

A backwards glance at history reveals examples not just of anti-institutions, but also of proper institutions, which, unchecked, harbor the potential to wreak havoc on sense. Jonathan Swift's parodic novel, Gulliver's Travels, does not leave the power of officially-recognized institutions of higher learning unscathed. When his travels lead Gulliver to the metropolis of Lagado, he becomes acquainted with the former governor, who, to the great disdain of the majority of the population, has maintained tradition, in architecture, dress and agriculture. He has resisted the predominant trends for innovation dictated by the Academy of Projectors. This influential institution was created by a delegation that had come back from visiting the capital where they had been inspired by the practices they had observed there. Within the academy, the professors propose comprehensive changes in the manner and method of all arts, sciences, languages and mechanics, and promise a complete social revolution resulting in greater, more efficient and longer lasting results, once perfected. Instead of waiting for the new methods to be refined, tested, and proven effective, the bulk of the population abandons tradition and slaves away fruitlessly, trying to make the new methods succeed. Those who do not discard the known and fully embrace the new are persecuted "as enemies to art, ignorant, and ill common-wealth's men, preferring their own ease and sloth before the general improvement of their country." His reluctance to conform in fact lost the governor his post.

Within the Academy, more than 500 rooms house at least one "projector," the professors that we might refer to as "futurists." Each is dedicated to his particular failure, and notorious for begging visitors for financial support to allow them to continue. They seek to soften marble, materialize air, breed naked sheep, revert feces to food, and extract sunbeams from cucumbers. He is also introduced to projectors of speculative learning, including one who boasts that "by his contrivance, the most ignorant person, at a reasonable charge, and with a little bodily labour, might write books in philosophy, poetry, politics, laws, mathematics, and theology, without the least assistance from genius or study." He used an elaborate contraption to combine the entire language's vocabulary into random gibberish, which was then dictated to scribes and recorded. He begged for funds to construct 500 more of the same contraption to speed up the process of achieving a

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comprehensive recording of all knowledge. He also observed another theory, this one put in practice in the streets by the citizens, of preserving the lungs by foreswearing all spoken language and instead using objects to represent each thing they wanted to say. The wisest carry great burdens of objects on their backs, or take advantage of several servants to assist them. Conversations, he realizes, are easiest to conduct at home where huge numbers of objects can be kept on hand to allow for a wide-ranging discussion. The clear benefit of this system would be the achievement of a universal global language, so long as each culture had objects of a similar and comprehensible nature. The problem of forgetfulness was also studied, and was said to be preventable by delivering "a tweak by the nose, or a kick in the belly, or tread on his corns, or lug him thrice by both ears, or run a pin into his breech; or pinch his arm black and blue."

The teachings of the Academy of Projectors, being almost universally observed and put into practice in preference to all previous methods, had the result of devastating the entire culture, leaving it endlessly busy, impoverished, and hopelessly unproductive. This is the tyranny of the institution, the manifestation of authority without opposition, without a balancing antithesis that the anti-institution can provide.

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The Birth of an Anti-Institution

Fundamental to the existence of an anti-institution of education is questioning the mode of its operation, the subject matter or situations with which it engages, and the lineage which it follows or deviates from. It is possible to uncover the roots of the anti-institution early in the conception of the formative role of education, for example in Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel. At the end of the first of the five books that make up the work, Gargantua wanted to compensate Friar John, the monk, for aiding in the victory against the forces of his enemy Picrochole. The monk had not only defended his own Abbey of Seville, but also joined Gargantua's campaign and led soldiers into battle, ultimately capturing Captain Touchfaucet against great odds. Ingenious and surprising in his capabilities, he was a brave and strong, but also comically sacrilegious, monk. At one point he helped Gargantua overcome insomnia by suggesting that they pray together, because praying always put him to sleep.

At the end of their battle, when Gargantua offered him a more conventional reward in the form of the stewardship of the Abbey of Seville, of another Abbey, or of any monastery he wished, the friar refused, saying, "For how shall I be able, said he, to rule over others, that have not full power and command of myself?" Instead, he preferred to establish his own abbey, "after my own mind and fancy" and "to institute his religious order contrary to all others." Incapable of imagining himself fulfilling the expectations of a conventional institution, he was proposing the invention of an anti-institution. Gargantua enthusiastically agreed, and they got to work.

Richly funded and provided with a land grant by Gargantua, the Abbey never had to concern itself with money. In addition, it was promised a continual income from the surrounding populations who would rent farms on the Abbey's lands. The building itself was a vast, grand, hexagonal palace, with six towers and over 9,000 rooms. It had every possible amenity and diversion: libraries in six languages, a hippodrome and tennis courts, a vast park, pools and gardens, a theater and a labyrinth.

The front gates were inscribed with a long verse describing in great, disparaging detail the kinds of villains that were not welcome to enter, and the desirable and admirable types that were embraced. It ended, with

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repetition for emphasis, with the phrase: “Gold give us, God forgive us.” Obviously rejecting any kind of ascetic philosophy, much less the typical vow of poverty, the inhabitants were sumptuously attired, in matching tones for men and women, assisted by attentive and skillful wardrobe masters and chamber ladies so as to be quickly dressed and not waste time. But as the chief organizing principle there was no regimen of time, everyone conducted themselves according to their individual free will as far as when to rise, work or eat. They were ruled solely by their own honor, since nothing was forbidden, and they pursued education and refinement freely. In Rabelais’ superlative characterization, the Abbey became an exemplar of beauty, vaunted humanity, and success. The description reads like a moral upbraiding to the current society, flawless thanks to its complete opposition to accepted practices and standards, which was its foundational program. He formulated the anti-institution as utopia.

Writing about the Abbey, Mikhail Bakhtin places it within the literary tradition of the grotesque, writing “we see a related form constructing the positive image by means of the negation of certain manifestations. This is a process similar to the opposite, inside-out logic but in a more abstract form, without the clear time-space exchange. The form was widely utilized in grotesque realism. Its most common aspect is the simple act of replacing a negation by an affirmation.” He agrees that the function is to reveal the “prohibitions and limitations” of what he calls the “official world.” He goes on to characterize it as a “carnival game of negation,” which captures the feeling of rebellious play that drove the founders.

Like with other institutions, an abbey is defined by its rules, so as they conceived of this fundamentally contrary project, Friar John and Gargantua came up with a list intentionally designed to contradict each practice and expectation of a traditional abbey. They worked by listing all the conventional guiding principles and practices, and then proclaimed the opposite to be the rule in this new Abbey of Thélème.

First off, it cannot be surrounded by walls.

“You must not build a wall about your convent, for all other abbeys are strongly walled… behind, there is store of murmur, envy, and mutual conspiracy.” And so it was built more in the manner of a grand chateau – six stories high, hexagonal in shape, with a tower at each corner. As opposed to cloistering the inhabitants, it opened the Abbey to the public as an enhancement to the cultural life, not a protected reserve. Rather than having its grounds enclosed, they developed the lands all around it, with yards and

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facilities for public games and contests, served by the hippodrome and theater, the baths and swimming facilities. As Gargantua conducted all his business on a grand and even excessive scale, they could not neglect the inclusion of tennis, the labyrinth, and the expansive hunting park with all the requisite stables, falconry, kennels and shooting ranges to support it.

It must be cleaned if anyone of holy orders passes through.

Because other monasteries had the practice of cleansing their spaces after a woman walked through them, regardless of her behavior or reputation: "therefore was it ordained, that if any man or woman entered into religious orders should by chance come within this new abbey, all the rooms should be thoroughly washed and cleansed through which they had passed." Lifting the stigma such institutions place on women, the Abbey satirically imposes the shame on the nuns, priests and monks who would probably never set foot in it. The anti-institution stands as a corrective and commentary to the establishment, and here any flaws that might manifest are never mentioned. The walls are erected metaphorically, in the form of a critique of moral superiority. In Thélème, those who hold others in judgment are shamed, in a reclaiming of the original edict of Christ not to judge. So the Abbey attempts a return to a more natural, inner morality, rather than a dogmatic stance. It becomes apparent that the institution it opposes is the hypocrisy and dysfunction of entrenched religious orders, rather than the essence of the religion itself. Friar John, as its leader, does not shed the title of Friar, or violate his Holy Orders. Given the opportunity, he forms a more humanistic order based in free will. It is one that places faith in the individual, rather than in the delimitations of order.

No clocks – so as not to waste time by counting it – the inhabitants should live by their own judgment and discretion, and not "by the sound of a bell."

Gargantua, stated that the greatest loss of time is to count the hours, so he imposed a ruling against any timekeeping devices, asserting that personal judgment and free will should guide their days, not an external imposition of structure. This constituted a direct opposition to the rigidity of most institutions – daily operations become less predictable and routine as the occupants are allowed full responsibility for creating their individual programs. This pre-industrial rigidity was practiced most intensely in monasteries and nunneries, with the toll of the bell coordinating all movement and structure. Without external schedules or even the measures of time, the Abbey could be subject to constant flux and flexibility, adapting

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to nature, to internal or external circumstances, or to the makeup of the population. This privilege of self-direction may harken back to a life that traced the cycles of nature, where people followed the seasons and sun to conduct their lives, but here responsibility is instead placed at the feet of free will, trusting in the productivity and self-motivation of the populace. It evokes a post-Fordist approach, abandoning the mechanization of human labor that was the standard of the day in cloistered life.

Because most abbeys are like kennels for the repulsive and rejected of society, only attractive people would be allowed.

Here Rabelais inserts a more personal barb aimed at the monastic population, but in support of the potential of this population, not to be rejected and isolated, but in fact to be open and even exemplary, posing a desirable model of society. The anti-institution markets itself, making a pitch to broaden its appeal to others. He mocks the typical monks as "lame, crooked, ill-favoured, misshapen, fools, senseless, spoiled, or corrupt." In terms of the success of the anti-institution for expansion and growth, this edict, along with the first about removing the walls, will serve to ensure its greater success and longevity if it bonds with the surrounding community and the broader populace exposed to it by reputation or encounter. Ending isolation, by not erecting walls, and favoring pleasant and pleasing inhabitants that welcome interaction, promises the potential of the Abbey serving as a model that could be inspirational and emulated.

There shall be no women in case there be not men, nor men in case there be not women.

The Abbey therefore echoes normal society, rather than an institutional, exceptional state of cloisters separating the sexes and creating the tension of exclusion, which as Gargantua puts it, means "men come not but underhand, privily, and by stealth." He re-establishes the balance in order like that of secular society to normalize relations, acknowledging a more instinctual response to life, furthered by the next two provisions: first that inhabitants can leave whenever they want, rather than those who take religious orders being compelled to stay their whole lives, as well as the point that no vows of chastity, poverty, or obedience will be required. In case it seems that no restrictions or limitations are being placed on the Abbey residents, which would essentially make them just the lucky tenants of an impressive estate, without explanation, Gargantua and Friar John agree to restrict the ages of those who are allowed to apply and enter to women from age 10 to 15, and men from 12 to 18. We can conclude that

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this was because the Abbey primarily delivered an education, to serve in the role of forming character and sensibility. As an educational anti-institution that allowed its students to leave at their will, it seems suddenly engaged in a mission to produce a certain type of individual. Again, this stands in contrast to the abbeys of the day, which served to worship, and in some cases to produce written or copied works, which then might be sent out into the world. So while the inhabitants of the traditional abbey live and die closed in behind the walls, we hear that the Abbey of Thélème produced and released influential and exemplary citizens. Despite the fact that it continues to be referred to as a religious order, not breaking with the institutional category that bore it, nothing is said about the practice or belief espoused by the Abbey. Instead, the focus of the description is on the facilities, the fashion, the lifestyle, and the worldly education that the Abbey offers its happy inhabitants.

In his book concerning the religion of Rabelais, Lucien Febvre points out holes in the otherwise detailed description of the Abbey – no mention of kitchens or cellars, for example, which is striking since so much of the work concerns itself with banquets and feasts. More significantly, however, is that there is no church.

Thinking through these perhaps intentional omissions, it becomes clear that the method of instruction is never outlined. The young people who are taken in in their youth turn out to be worldly, well-rounded, and a boon to society, they have followed their whims as to schedule and activity, and had access to the six generous and multilingual libraries, but no instruction or instructors are ever mentioned. In fact, no authority figures, management, or hierarchical structure of any kind is acknowledged. The friar's founding impulse is to declare himself unfit to lead, and to form the Abbey on that assumption, so it seems that for exactly that reason no leadership of any kind is in place. The only religious activity was prayer, which took place in the small chapels adjoining the rooms. There are no lecture halls, studies, or classrooms mentioned. So without tutors, or even the ignorant interlocutors which the radical pedagogue Jacotot would assign, they somehow managed to educate themselves voluntarily and thoroughly, following their own initiative as they did with all other pursuits, most of which are those of pleasure and sport.

However, when it came to educating his own son, Pantagruel, who he had sent to Paris to study, Gargantua laid out his expectations in a letter demanding a course so extensive and comprehensive that it ridicules the breadth of Renaissance knowledge. "Let me see thee an abyss and

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bottomless pit of knowledge," he says, expecting his learning to cover languages, history, geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy, and, skipping astrology, he tasks him to know all of nature, geography, geology, plants and animals, as well as chivalry and warfare. Pantagruel, in his enthusiastic response, was "vigorous and indefatigable." Gargantua matched him up with excellent instructors and scholars, and urged him to associate with the most learned men Paris had to offer. He then proceeded to debate with and dispute the scholars and great minds of all fields, and establishes himself as "learned above the capacity of this present age."

At the Abbey, the only philosophy that is espoused and endorsed is that of honour, born of virtue, and an innate resistance to vice, thanks to their privileged situation which allows them "to shake off and break that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us." Nothing is denied them, nothing is directed, nothing is forbidden. They had one rule to follow: "do what thou wilt." And the Abbey produced young men and women of refinement, and manners, skillful and educated, noble and exemplary, faithful and true. When inspired to leave by noble callings such as the needs of family or other causes, they would continue the life they had at the Abbey in the wider world, no doubt serving as an example to those they interacted with.

The freedom they enjoyed encouraged them to pursue excellence and refinement, rather than to focus on lack, wealth disparity, or other comparative absences that could foment insurrection or subterfuge. Ironically, the model anti-institution becomes a boon to society, leaving the impression that it is the institution that is anti-societal, rather than conforming and supporting peace and prosperity.

The end of the section that describes the Abbey is taken up with a long verse foretelling the impact that the anti-institution will have on the status quo, as the graduates, who are free to leave, move out into the world and begin to function as missionaries. This "prophetical riddle" was discovered engraved on a copper plate underground as they were laying the foundation of the Abbey, so it can be read as the hidden agenda of the place, the predestined plan driving it. After establishing itself as an oracle, it begins, "there shall appear a race of men who, loth to sit still in one place, shall boldly go before all people's eyes", who will upset the hierarchical order, "all reverence shall then be banished, no true respect to other shall be had. They'll say that every man should have his turn," as, essentially, democracy is born. The populace to spring forth out of this ministry will "trust in their time," not give up on

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what they start, and have authority, without faith: “for all shall be governed by a rude, base, ignorant, and foolish multitude; the veriest lout of all shall be their judge,” starting a dangerous flood. This will result in a continual state of agitation, as opposed to the present state of the world, described as being kept in jail, locked up with liberty, in a continual state of eclipse, or night. The poem compares this state of arrest to gold that is hoarded, rather than utilized for some good. It seems to be decrying the loss of potential, due to the stranglehold of established restrictions smothering the populace. Throwing off the mantle of the establishment is declared as great work, the result of which is that, “each shall have his due” as merit rather than position dominates, and instead of the rigid and restrictive being rewarded, it will be the active and engaged that rise: “he is worthy praise that shrinketh not!” We can read this as a speech for the greater possibility for equality, thanks to the overturning of the dominant order.

However, Gargantua and Friar John puzzle over the enigmatic meaning of the message. Gargantua takes it to be a threat to true believers, that the ongoing persecution of the faithful, who would “without being distracted or diverted by his carnal affections and depraved nature” carry on the divine truth. He must be seeing it as lauding an adherence to the Christian message, rather than succumbing to the corruptions of church, the power and wealth that are abused to pursue base desires. Friar John disagrees. He sees that it will be misinterpreted and the message twisted to many readings and applications, but he can only read it, also enigmatically, as an allegory for how the world is but a ball in a game of “tennis in dark and obscure terms.” Each player has his turn, his moment on the court, and all enjoy it, but most of all those that have won. It resembles Shakespeare’s “moment on a stage”, emphasizing the drama of the time of engagement with the world, and the meaninglessness of it all. It turns out that Rabelais is perhaps mocking himself with this interpretation, since he has borrowed the poem that was in fact a description of a tennis match. Having turned it into a story of Christian salvation, as Gargantua points out, the wise Friar has seen through it as an allegory of the original descriptive poem that captures one of the Abbey’s inhabitants preferred pastimes.

After its formulation and function are extensively documented, the Abbey is not mentioned again in Rabelais’ opus besides as an occasional geographic or conversational reference. However, it does have a distant descendant, inasmuch as the grand building, lofty ambitions, and exemplary graduates can be compared to its later incarnation and namesake created in the early twentieth century by the occultist Aleister Crowley. Crowley harnesses the notion of the anti-institution as license to justify manifesting his own

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subjective version of free will. Like any institutional model, an anti-institution can be conceived for one purpose and later used for the purpose of justifying ambitions of power and authority.

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THE COLLEGE OF SOCIOLOGY

> "The College falls into a category that could be designated as theory's novelistic side. It happened that one person or another thought, said or meant this or that. The thoughts themselves were important, disturbing, troubling."
> —*The College of Sociology (1937-39)*
> edited by Denis Hollier

The College of Sociology, a twentieth century instance of an anti-institution, functioned more in the context of research and publishing than in instruction and the shepherding of students. This loose assemblage of thinkers did not last, as it operated briefly in a pivotal moment of world history, 1937 to 1939. It struggled with ideas it would establish and then reverse position on, scrambling for substantial truths at a time of radical change. It was a condensation of emergent thinking, but not an institution that could sufficiently cultivate its own survival. It was an impulse, an effort and a loose affiliation, not an edifice. Founding member Georges Bataille called it philosophy reduced to literature, because it acknowledged being in the grip of life, and seemed to be thrown from hand to hand, as politics and belief systems changed as the winds of war blew in.

> "The very health of the human body requires the regular evacuation of its 'impurities,' urine and excrement, as well as, for the woman, menstrual blood. Social institutions seem not to be exempt from this alternation. They too must be periodically regenerated and purified of the poisonous wastes that represent the harmful part left behind by every act performed for the good of the community,"

Roger Callois wrote in "Winter Wind," one of the essays that comprise the volume. If society was a body, the College conspired to find it a soul.

The College of Sociology concerned itself with unity and community, and held beliefs about the forces of individual isolation, leading Callois to assail the novel, which "drains away the sacred," creates bourgeois individualism, and "drives men apart." "Nothing is capable of uniting those who have begun to read novels." Society must be united to be men, never alone, "with no gaps or cracks, with nothing missing, nothing different, no solitary dreams… must know how to discharge its waste (one might as well say its differences). On the top of the list is emptiness."

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In his Foreword of the eponymous book, Dennis Hollier goes on to clarify the College's radical position, as an avant-garde group outlining the loss of unified society, of community, accusing democracy of the same crimes as the novel. Georges Bataille writes that democracy desocializes and emasculates. "Virility, the experience of what he called full existence, was contrasted with the different forms of emptiness." Facing the political formations that led Europe into World War Two, these thinkers concerned themselves with a unified, masculine society, adopting for themselves a patrology of aggressive secret societies that included the Templars, Assassins and the Ku Klux Klan. Seeing the individual and thought as insignificant, purposeless negatives, they swapped dangerous ideas in dangerous times.

Built on the rubble of two turbulent decades in intellectual life that gave them "nothing durable, nothing solid, *no basis,"* the College never coalesced into a collective, it was blind to its membership. It went unrecognized, and its own historian, Hollier, was accused of inventing it. Dabbling in the occult, and arising from the surreal, he himself questions whether it existed. The College was born from a "preoccupation with rediscovering the primordial longings and conflicts of the individual condition transposed to the social dimension." It tainted the objective with the subjective, undercut lasting foundations of truth with the irrefutable evidence of the experience of the personal. What was to be believed? All must be lived.

Like Derrida's Chora L Project, its existence was preserved in the creation of a book, but again a work that serves as a monument of documentation proving its existence at the same time as it questions it, and confirms its demise. In neither case does the institutional impulse for preservation emerge, dissolution is written into the pages, making and unmaking it simultaneously. Such seems to be the eventual, inevitable fate of the anti-institution.

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Beginning at the End

Because the anti-institution resists classification, both of itself and of its activities, the Academy of Forgetting does not define art as such. Nor does it organize itself or structure study along the lines of traditional media, such as painting, drawing and sculpture, or broader categories of visual arts, music, dramatic arts, or conventionally separated categories such as commercial arts, design, or even the kinds of academic divisions that normally form the basis of institutions of higher learning such as liberal arts, engineering, science, medicine, etc. The Academy fluctuates and changes based on the inclination of the participants, modified by new events, in order to accommodate the variable mechanisms for response that are appropriate for the moment and population. That is not to say that there is no structure, underlying philosophy or approach that is forwarded by the Academy. On the contrary, it is the definition of the aspiration of studies itself that acts as a draw to both faculty and students. The working, flexible definition is explored through the notion of “beginning at the end”, meaning starting with a notion of the destruction or dissolution of the work, as in this quote by Werner Hamacher: “think of art as finite and as incompletion, as mobile, porous and released from itself and even from the substantiality of the subjectivity of its ending.”

The word art is used, and the term artist, frequently in and around the Academy, though our studies are intended to embrace a broad definition of activities and goals, primarily driven by a basic idea of creating something in the world. By addressing Hegel’s idea of the comedy through the lens of Derrida, Hamacher seeks to establish a tremendous freedom for art within a realm of restriction - a gap of loss that allows for the release of what he calls a dispatch "in which *with* art something other *than* art, something other *as* art is promised and exposed." Here, art sets up the condition for itself to be exposed and released as something other than itself - this helps to explain the Academy’s belief that one cannot make art as it is, that the tangential approach to the release of work that is promising, that is growth, should be sought. He speaks of the liberation of form - "a release of matter without contour", i.e. material, yet without definitive shape, an aporia that speaks to materiality without limit, to that which transgresses the limits of material while being material. Material can be understood both in the literal application of an object of mass as well as the informational interpretation,

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as content of almost any description. This “dispatch” is not weighed down or defined by its materiality, though that is what it is made up of, and that which contains what it is, and separates it while it is standing whole. As a dispatch, it is sent away from its author, it is not coveted by its creator, nor is it afforded a place in immortal materiality. Liberated to the world, it is subject to interpretation, reuse, adaptation and change. It bears the mark and signature of the maker inasmuch as the maker may be sought out for further creations to forward the direction initiated by this dispatch. It sheds, resists and frees itself from subject, from creation, from end.

> Any presentation that was not also the presentation of the end, of the furthest limit, of the finitude and fragility of presentation, would be incomplete. Any presentation, as long as it was merely complete, would be incomplete. Therefore, in order to be art, art cannot simply be itself; it must also be the art of the dissolution of art.

Hamacher’s language implies horizontal movement, pushing out to an understood limit, a fragile place that marks the point of dissolution, and allows that crumbling edge to be included in the substance of the work. There’s a relation to the abyss, to the edge, the liminal state that artist Robert Irwin pursued as he sought a space for work, a seeking of the edge that actually builds ground and expands the territory of art. Art can also be considered a cumulative or linear practice like the progress of science, because work at the edge is laying new ground that further work can stand on, diverge from or undercut. The Academy hopes to inspire students to go to look for the edge and push it. Of course the edge is subjectively dictated, each can only see the edge that is their own edge, based on their understanding at the time of initiating their work. The edge necessarily changes with experience and influence, as discoveries reveal paths that can be followed beyond what was previously perceived as a limit. The Academy does not expect any student, nor the institution itself, to have or perceive the same edge. On the contrary, limits are expected to be as individual and mobile as subjectivities, both personal and institutional. The mass majority operates in the relative stability of the certain, where form and foundation are more stable and expected, where the edge is kept at a safe distance, and buffered by examples held up as exemplars. This leads to vertical growth in place, rather than mobility, and it thickens the field. However, it may also be possible for vertical growth to find and test limits by seeking great heights – that is not within the customary practice of the Academy, but is also not a limitation or restriction if enthusiastically pursued and applied.

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The implication of the horizontal exploration is that of a quest, but the understanding of the goal or reward of these efforts must be tempered to fit the Academy's emphasis on *process*, rather than product, as key to learning. As Jacques Ranciere writes, "*Seek* the truth and you will not find it, knock at its door and it will not open to you, but that *search* will serve you in learning to do…"

Extending the idea of this nomadic exploration, in *Heuretics*, Greg Ulmer outlines a way of moving, a "meta route," and a new "method of invention" to deconstruct the opposition between returning home and wandering. He evokes a homeless home, an aimless habitation, a disconnected residence.

> Evoking the same Ulysses, I would insist on that which distinguishes singularity from individuality, and from the totalizing circle… Ulysses means the circle of return, nostalgia, dwelling, the oikoniomia. From this perspective, I would say that the architect of the next millennium – and of today already – will not be a Ulysses (Derrida, 1991b:45). Instead, the feeling of method (in design or invention) will be close to that of what does not "fit," enacted by an "anyone" (person or discipline) that is "a stranger to itself, foreign to itself. And that will be good.

Students of the Academy are often, and rightly should be, proud of their accomplishments. However, the emphasis is not placed on the end result of the work, the inevitable acquisition of knowledge while developing it, or any false sense of totalizing mastery that comes with deeper experience in a particular field. Ulmer argues "the 'adventure of knowledge' is only prelusive, a mere beginning, a proposal, an experiment." The knowledge is not a goal in itself, because no knowledge can be mastery, it can simply be an element in employment, any effort to totalize is to become lost in the wilderness of knowledge. To experiment, you must deal in partial measures, accept gaps and holes, and operationalize forgetting. A sense of mastery should never be allowed to deter the continual seeking and exploring, as the eternal moment of learning lies in the experience of creation, step-by-step, rather than a final form that would be expected to embody or ensnare a truth. Hamacher argues that capturing or embodying a truth would be a false expectation, based on a deception perpetrated by the work.

> …the truth of art – namely, the truth that it contains no substantial truth – is realized in this irony. Art ends and culminates in irony because irony is art itself; irony is the *self* of art and hence the destruction of its substantial contents and forms. Only a completely desubstantializing art – an ironic art – is with itself and 'at home.'

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The presentation or dispatch flits into full meaninglessness, expressing itself as such, fully. “Irony is the figure…at its limit, in the proximity to and distance from itself.” Irony here is the very thing that cuts it to nothing, it proves its own lack of content but the art stays as the evidence of that, it is in a sense a negative, or rather a negating statehood for an object. The work must contain its end, but not just its end: its own undoing. However, does it accumulate truth with time? Through the persistence of the object? Are things no longer read as ironic when looking back, but read as historical documents? The term irony used here intends to imply a self-deprecating humor, one that shatters the illusion of the religious or venerated quality of art. It becomes ironic, or self-mocking, triggering the end of its grave grandeur. But how is it read from a distance? Because the term “irony” plays a crucial role in the text, we must consider it in the historical context in which Hegel first wrote it and again when Hamacher rewrote it, when postmodernism sought to harness it as a salve to a perceived failure of meaning. We may be better served to distance ourselves from it, to extract from it an interpretation that is less tied to its time, not to say universal, but more open, less definitive. When we read “irony” now we prefer to think of self-awareness, criticality, a reflection of the impossibility of mastery or completion. A single term may be lacking to capture that sense, and not burden the idea with the limiting specificity of the term irony, but instead of censoring or altering the term we will attempt to maintain an awareness of its implications.

> If there is to be any possibility of a self-consciousness that moves beyond its disjuncture and its inherent mis-action, then it could only be a self-consciousness that experiences itself in this disjuncture. In the diremption of consciousness into itself and its object, consciousness has ‘forgotten’ that it determines this object itself and is in turn determined by it.

Hamacher speaks of a “forgetting” that is the truth of consciousness: that consciousness must forget that it has itself determined its object. This means that there is not an objective selection, only the subjective, chosen for consciousness by itself. Only a consciousness that is self aware at this moment of self deception, of the forgetting of the subjective selection, could move beyond the forgetting that allows us to imagine working on a universal or objective basis, rather than on bias. The text that is the origin of this quote could be taken as an example to demonstrate this aporia. Hamacher is working through Hegel’s text through his interpretation of Derrida’s thought, Can we see where Hamacher's subjectivity stains the argument, coloring the original Hegelian text? Can we distinguish where Derrida speaks through Hamacher? Could he at the moment of writing, or now in

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retrospect? Where do the various subjective influences contribute to or detract from the goal of reaching the universal? Could one make a study of it, deciphering elements of influence and subjective detractions from each text or author: how Hegel interprets and misreads and twists Shakespeare and Homer, how Hamacher applies, interprets/applies/misreads Derrida to interpret/twist and misread Hegel? It can become the task to untangle those leads, but that is to assail the universality of this text, to attempt to dismantle meaning that may have arisen despite the subjective engagement, because this text, like all the others it cites and is built upon, is not universal, but then neither are any of the others - they are all built on previous words and speeches and are rife with subjectivities and influences.

"…consciousness remains unavoidably singular; and just as unavoidably it refers to a universal, to its universality. Torn apart by the conflict between these irreconcilable determinations, it must be pulled into equivocation, must be deceived and duped." The deception is the forgetting, the forgetting of the moment that the singular chooses the object that it refers to as universal – it makes a subjective choice that it must forget in order to believe that this choice is universal, that it has reached beyond itself to find the object that is true for others, for all.

> This forgetting, which belongs unsublatably to the structure of consciousness, even if it and its objects and aims are thereby impaired, this oblivion is the truth of consciousness. This is why the tragic conflict between the instances of individuality and universality must also find its result, its truth, in oblivion.

Hamacher asserts that forgetting is "the distinct, most extreme form of consciousness," not just forgetting, but oblivion, the destruction of even the trace of forgetting. Mere forgetting is partial, it leaves a residue, a sense of the loss, of the gap. But here Hamacher goes further, perhaps, than Hegel, in saying that oblivion is the unity of consciousness with itself and its universal rule - that consciousness is defined by being passive and subject to inevitable loss, oblivion defines consciousness, makes it what it is and aware of itself. He is saying: "I am conscious because of forgetting, thanks to oblivion I can be aware of being conscious." And it is language that marks, or registers, the loss, the forgetting, the oblivion. But how can we work with total oblivion? Do we not need at least a trace, the milder form of oblivion, forgetting, to track back into our conscious selves, to be made aware of the possibility of loss?

The divine is an attempt to hold onto some form in the face of the loss that is oblivion, false hopes, masks, which feign immortality, which are attempts

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to overcome the inevitability of loss of each trait we hold valuable. The worship of the divine shows our hope for the preservation of higher values, but they are all subject to oblivion, despite our efforts to preserve them by isolating them in the form of God or gods.

Hegel takes it as given that “the substantiality of the divine is nothing more than the unreal abstraction of the real conditions of existence for social subjects” because each single human trait they embody in isolation (he names love, beauty, artistry, and revenge) are not intermixed with the “complex multiplicity of experiences” that is the real, they are therefore not bound to real conditions and are “consigned to oblivion.” They are masks that the self plays with, and “the self, plays with itself and plays this self only ever as another.”

Any kind of preserved higher value is of passing association, a mask that is put on in order to cover our "nakedness and commonness" and played with by the individual who adopts it for a moment. But it is only playing.

But it is easy to see why this kind of playacting is essentially ubiquitous, in that there is a comfort, a draw, an attraction in this play, because it opens up the aspiration of a resting point, a sanctuary for the self. “To play oneself, however, means to be distinct from the played self to the point that its play can be seen from without and can at the same time be a ‘home’ within this seeing, that this ‘home’ itself can be only played, a non-home, and the play can always be the opening up of another.”

Perhaps this is the universal, the desire for the home, brought on through this deception of the mask, and when played well, is seen to be indistinguishable from the mask – the actor becomes the part, becomes the ideal represented by the mask. But this is only ever play, a game, and it is taken on with an awareness of the pretense - an alteration of self recognized as such. In the end, the self perishes in the play, and only the play survives. It is an infinitely open form, where playing selves appear and disappear - it is a stage, it is chora. Nothing survives the appearance within it, it clears. Though Hegel uses the comedic play as his example, Hamacher extends the insight: “Not only art but the whole of ‘formally embodied essence’ falls prey to the comic play of absolute subjectivity. And nothing is excluded from this ‘formally embodied essence’ …neither nature, nor political communal existence, nor the rational thinking articulated in philosophy.” This crucible of the self can push the work that is manifested in the formation of the self – the play – out into the world. If the work of the Academy can issue forth as play that can then absorb and consume other

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subjectivities, then it has an active role beyond the institution. It is true, of course, that much of the "play" (no matter what form it takes) is consumed by the Academy itself and does not penetrate the walls and spread throughout a larger society, as with any institution. However, the authorship of the piece necessarily alters as new subjective experiences are created within its bounds. Having been created within the Academy there must be some form of trace of the attempt at awareness of the deception of creation that lingers and spreads to each new "player" it attracts. The work, now a nomad, might act as a kind of subtle ambassador for the Academy, often resulting, in sometimes long, convoluted trails, as lines of flight to the Academy when an event draws in new students. It is a mobile and fragile state, but "…in its disappearance art exposes itself as its end, its own end, and 'preserves' itself … because it takes hold of itself as disappearance… it endures its end and preserves itself in this devastation or desertification." It is preserved for further experience, beyond the subjectivity of its creators or previous "players," who are drawn in by the promise of their own subjective preservation because "subjectivity can still conceive of its dissolution as its own work – a subjectivity beyond every individual subject and even beyond subjectivity itself – and yet a subjectivity that, in this beyond, can still play with its destruction, can play with it as its own destruction."

The subjectivity simultaneously dissolves and is assured of itself, operating in the vacuum of memory. You may even know you don't remember, but you are the one who knows this of yourself, and you can go on, not knowing if you will remember or not, and can free yourself from the subject that knew, that remembered, while still being that subject.

> "Hegel can regard death as an event without terror, without the pain of devastation, but instead, remarkably – because for the first and last time, for the only time – as happiness. At its end – and only therefore can it be called completion – art savors its death as its self-appropriation and is happy. It savors – that is: experiences as real and present – the death of the final god of representation, the death of art itself."

The Academy does not ask as much. It asks us to work toward regarding only a small death, forgetting, without terror. Lacking the finality of death, we can accept it and go on.

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ACADEMY

"The most powerful forgetting of space – that is architecture"
Chora L Works
Jacques Derrida

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Repurposing the Monad

> "Something has changed in the situation of monads, between the former model, the closed chapel with imperceptible openings, and the new model invoked by Tony Smith, the sealed car speeding down the dark highway."
> *The Fold*
> Gilles Deleuze

A monad is a place, all interior, a space that is occupied. In his book *The Fold*, Deleuze states that the monad "is the autonomy of the inside, an inside without an outside." He compares it to a façade, which he claims is "an outside without an inside."

Façade meaning, literally, "frontage" or "face" in French, but, in everyday English, outside of the context of architecture, it immediately implies a false representation, like a screen memory that is erected in front of something to cover something else that the builder prefers to keep hidden. A face in front of a true face. Dorian Gray's hideous portrait in the attic that his lovely face masks. It implies deception, the outward and visible face is a false one, and it is not to be believed. It is not the same as façadism, the practice wherein a building is demolished and only the façade is left standing in order that it be used to build a new building behind it. This difficult practice assumes that the preservation and re-use of the old face is warranted, that the façade is of value and hard to reassemble in the present, possibly because it exhibits features, feelings, craft that can not be easily reproduced at the time of the rebuilding. No, the emotional façade is new construction, like a Hollywood set piece, or Vegas-style decorations on a shed that are a cheap and flimsy distraction cobbled together from familiar sentiments and emotions, that are not overly complex or distracting, that are meant to be overlooked, assumed to be true, and believable. They set the stage for the theater that is playing out in order that the truths behind the façade go unnoticed. So it is architecture that is not meant to be examined, explored, or tested, just believed, you should not stop and contemplate it, it is architecture for motion, for walking past, or for looking at without seeing. It is created for effect, and it prefers a superficial gaze.

A façade may actually have an inside, though it may be one that is disconnected and potentially distant, standing somewhere behind it. If you find yourself looking at the façade, the chances of seeing behind it are much

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smaller than if you are able to approach from another angle and miss the façade, and find the unguarded substance that is intended to be hidden. The way in may not be through the front, where defenses are strongest.

But no façade can be entirely without an interior at the barest sense, which is the implication of an interior. A façade that stands alone, Deleuze's example, is not free of an absence, a negation of an actual interior. A façade, standing in isolation, implies the rest of the building. When there is no interior then the interior is the interior that is missing, the space that could be there, but is not. A potential space. In one discussion with Derrida in *Chora L Works*, architect Peter Eisenman speaks of a void having as much presence as a solid, and he states that his goal in architecture is to build in such a way that presence and absence operate on an equal footing. He intends to build absence, to make it manifest, and this becomes the goal of the project of the same name that he undertakes with Derrida. Fittingly, the project was not built. The economic demands of building an absence kept it from being built, which could be said to have increased its presence. Its absence is marked by the book. It exists in the drawings and models that were created, that is, in representations, as well as in the language, the intentions of those involved with it, and the conversations surrounding it. It also has a presence in the mind of each person who reads and thinks about it. These are factors that strengthen the physical absence of the project. If the book is the façade, all these things, including this paragraph, are the interior, lightly resting on the line between present and absent, possible to be recalled, but not well remembered, not fully present, and not physically manifest, yet hardly a total lack.

Both Leibniz and Deleuze state that a monad can't have an outside, it is a pure interiority. But if it were not an outside for appearance, it could be merely for function, to delimit the monad. The exterior of a monad could be that which contains it, nothing more. The exterior of a monad could be defined as where the monad is not, the limits of the interior of the monad. Leibniz states that monads are elements of things, so they are not the things in totality, they are only parts. They must abut the other parts that make up the things. That implies a limit, even if it is only a party wall shared with the neighboring monad, like row houses attached on all sides, or apartments without entrance hallways. They have inner walls, Deleuze explains, decorated with trompe l'oeil, which implies depth, but just past this illusion of depth there must be the membrane, the edge, even if its exact limit is ambiguous.

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Like an emotional façade, the exterior of the monad would not be meant to be examined. It is, in a way, similar to a façade, in that it belies the depth of the interior, but unlike it, it does not deliberately misrepresent. It could be a skin, but not the transparent skin of sea creatures that reveal all organs, it could be simply imagined as a nondescript yet opaque surface. That would be quite simple. We could also introduce a complication from the built world, the fact that technology is bringing the skins of buildings to life, as screens, mobile surfaces: expressive, dynamic, even productive. An architectural skin implies a thin surface covering, it is not intended as a deception, yet it is distracting in that it functions independently of the inner workings of the building. Architectural skins are beginning to have a more powerful role in the function of the building, as solar surfaces, passive and active, as marketing surfaces, drawing attention to the building, or providing it income, working as advertising media. The skin has a life of its own. It can even be more productive than the body of the building itself. Can a monad's skin come to life? Leibniz acknowledges that a monad, like any created being, is in a state of constant flux. Are they touched by technology? Could they communicate the interior of the monad, project the activity within onto the exterior like a screen, allowing the monad to be read, to be expressive?

The modified monad provides a good starting point for a new consideration of architecture. It is being tested as the architecture of the Academy, with a dynamic mirror façade, flexible interior, and uncertain location. In *The Shape of Things*, Vilém Flusser describes the failure of the integrity of the house in the face of technology: "Home-as-one's-castle has become a ruin with the wind of communication blowing through the cracks in the walls." He calls for a new type of architecture, based not on the object of the house, but on its relations to the broader context. His example, guided by the mathematical field of topology, is that the Earth can be seen as "a warp in the gravitational field of the sun" and a house "a warp in the interpersonal sphere by which relationships are 'attracted'." So a house must communicate, interrelate, and like a monad, it must be in a state of constant flux. Leaving the house as a traditional form and shifting to a monad as its replacement takes into account the loss of individual sovereignty of isolation that the rigidity of the house once promised.

Monad comes from the Greek for "unit" or "alone", but it was used by Pythagoras as a stand-in for the totality of all beings, so it was the one, and the many, the individual and all of humanity. Leibniz says that each monad is unique, like an individual, but also a multiplicity within its own unity, which is the engine for its constant change. He disallows the external

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influence: “neither substance nor attribute can enter from without into a monad,” but we will allow it with the condition that the external influence is always to some degree channeled through the monad’s individuality before being broadcast back outward, this being the warp Flusser called for. Like a stream filled with porous stones, the flow of information continues, with innumerable redirections and diversions as the water collects and even accumulates mass without ever coming to a rest. Even stagnant pools evaporate and re-enter the flow eventually. This is not to put the monad in a passive position of receiving, it can also generate, to a degree it is also in a state of constant flux, as productivity and passivity shift. It might seem like the monad here is a description of an individual, not a structure, rather it can be either, as the scale of the monad driven by the individual occupant is also in constant flux. A ship’s captain can vary the architecture of his monad from the intimacy of his bunk to the entirety of his ship as his attention shifts from his personal reflections to exercising his authority and directing the crew and the hull.

The architecture of the body and the structure are constantly melding and breaking as we move, influence, occupy, and withdraw. Doesn’t a leader expand into the crowd being addressed, an individual into a multitude of assent and disagreement, held together at least momentarily, just as the building is occupied by cheering voices, the stadium reflecting the shifting scale of the crowd in unison and the individual in isolation? It is possible to look at the work of Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti for an illustration of this idea in a state of extreme reduction. His famous figures and busts are a shrunken human form, narrower, compacted, and reduced from the level of the flesh down to a lower perimeter, an inch or so below the outside of the body. Think of an anxious self awareness that takes into account not quite the whole body, but just a concern or worry that is smaller than yourself, a dense inner obsession, so small and intensely focused that you can’t even fully occupy your body, you can’t see beyond yourself. You have no worldview, you can’t think of others, you are momentarily lost in an intense reductive reflection that keeps you just inside yourself. Your monad, your personal space, your architecture, slips below the surface of your own skin, and a pictorial description of that space could look something like Giacometti’s dense and roiling head, denting and cutting in, receding and compacting. It is a volatile, internal moment of near violence against the self. As a further outgrowth of this personal architecture, his painted portraits show what can be seen as an expansion of the monad outwards, beyond the limit of the body, out into the room. Here the figure and the space it occupies share a manner of representation, the individual and the space are almost interwoven, like the room is radiating out from the

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occupant or they are made from a single material. The awareness builds an environment that the body possesses, the outer boundary is defined by the ability of the individual to observe, interact with, understand, accept or otherwise possess the space. The two belong together, they are not one, but are a symbiotic extension of one another, perhaps of receding density as the figure at the center extends outward, but also possibly in a uniform construction of strength and control. Awareness rests in all corners and objects, everything inside this sphere is within reach, accessible, acceptable. Again, the scope is fleeting and fluid, it pushes outward and pulls back, extends without uniformity in pace or reach. It need not be a space of total control, a sphere of influence, but at minimum of acceptance, awareness, collaboration, or ease.

The purpose, like the limit, is also in constant flux, directed by the will and action of the individual. The architecture of the mind that was in history methodically constructed for the purpose of remembering, the memory palace, is here thrust out into the world. It is made manifest in the real experience of space, perceived through the senses, moved through by the body. Unlike the memory palace, it cannot be depended upon as a fixed form that is identical with each visit. It can be built, in part, though it is always a mix of existing components, unexpected factors, and elements of dynamic change. The memory palace is rigid, stiff, and stable. Only in retelling the contents, addressing it loosely, as a narrative, can it come to life. If it is simply recounted, presented as it is built, it does not move and live. In just the same way, the external world can be limiting, lifeless and inflexible, unless it is “retold” through an engagement that constantly reinvents it, challenges, and engages it. The volatility and movement happens as the world moves into the mind, and the mind out into the world, collaboratively building the experience and expression of the individual.

As you read, you can notice the varying limits of your own perception, your architecture of attention. When you are engaged by the text, you are absorbed into the page, delimited by the distance between your eyes and the page itself. A noise in the house draws your attention further out, into the room, into the edges of perception limited by the dark, by the walls, by the unknown. An example in the text casts your attention outside of your house, you think of the road, of yourself sitting in your car, you can reach out, via memory and imagination to a scenario beyond the senses, that is both in your head and in the world. Paola Antonelli, design curator at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, described the invention of the Walkman personal radio as a revolution in the concept of personal space. Suddenly you could be out in the world and entirely enclosed in the intimacy of listening. Your

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interior, private space could move with you like a bubble through any environment. Portable DVD players further heightened the absorption, by adding visual immersion. This is technology that allows you to forget your surroundings, turn your back on them and be absorbed in the experience of the information storage, the recorded music, the absorbing movie. Rather than being lost in thought and memory, you are lost in information, entertainment, or if not lost, then at least occupied, fascinated, or distracted. Like with photographs, the mind can either passively or actively engage with every piece of information that is fed to it, there is either a reception, or a consumption. The same stimulus does not create the same response in all cases, if the information is not given enough space, a clearing to allow it to open into, a gap that lets it expand, it remains a hard pill, undigested, force fed, and followed by another, by an endless stream that the mediated world is only to happy to supply.

> "Thoughts fly from one mind to another on the wings of words. Each word is sent off with the intention of carrying just one thought, but, unknown to the one speaking and almost in spite of him, that speech, that word, that larva, is made fruitful by the listener's will: and the representative of a monad becomes the center of a sphere of ideas radiating out in all directions, such that the speaker has actually said an infinity of things beyond what he wanted to say; he has formed the body of an idea with ink, and the matter destined to mysteriously envelop a solitary immaterial being actually contains a whole world of those beings, those thoughts."
> *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*
> Jacques Ranciere

Here Ranciere quotes his protagonist Jacotot as he speaks of exactly that moment of mobility when the monad transforms from an internalized, contained and shuttered vessel to an expansive, interconnected, and aware element of a network, when the multiplicity contained within it is contextualized by all that surrounds it, by the whole world it lives within, which it reaches out toward. Here the catalyst is the written word, the moment the reader comes to it, as the head jerks up and the thoughts fly outward, and fueled by will, can become generative, communicative, even persuasive. That is a moment of rigidity turned fluid, of emergence and awareness, a moment of potential that can be infused with breathtaking optimism or overwhelming dread, a projection of self, or a seizure of vertigo. The word, the thought, the idea, the information can be all this, as Ranciere argues, everything is in everything, the smallest word contains, by extension, all of human knowledge, what is needed is that recognition, the acknowledgement, the attention of the reader that snags on this word, and unravels all resistance to its potential, that opens the shutters and collapses

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the walls, knocking down screens and turning cornerstones to liquid. It is not a moment of memory, it is a moment to make memories, it is collection, not recollection.

Borges' short story "Funes the Memorious" takes the opposite tack, a kind of absorption into the storehouse of memory that is so extensive as to be completely self-contained. It tells of a boy who suffers a debilitating accident, and becomes simultaneously a paraplegic and capable of total recall. His memory is so voluminous and detailed he can absorb himself in the absolute sensory reconstruction of a single day, because not only is his memory limitless, so are his senses – he has total, unfiltered perception – he can think of the way the sunlight was hitting each individual leaf on every tree at each moment he saw it. His memory is so expansive that it becomes nonsensical. Bored with the systematic nature of numbers, he remakes each one as a unique personality, with a name and associated characteristics. They have no relation to any other numbers, so they do not assist memory, or simplify understanding. He is deliberately adding bulk to memory, without function. This is reminiscent of Gordon Bell, saving every correspondence without regard to any potential value. Memory stored for no justifiable reason beyond the capacity to store it. Funes is so occupied, so distracted by memory that he cannot sleep. He's up all night watching his own movies, built from recall. His escape, his method of halting his endless reconstruction of memory – is to try to think his way inside the newly built houses at the end of his street, which he has never seen. The spaces he has no possibility to remember, unknown architecture, give him peace. "He imagined them to be black, compact, made of homogenous darkness; in that direction he would turn his face in order to sleep."

His antidote to memory is attention to the negation of memory, the limits or ends of memory. He must reach out past the known limits of his experience to a place he finds impossible to think himself through. His recall is so perfect that he has no way of seeing the future, the potential, the unknown – he cannot draw simple conclusions about the houses' interiors because his fidelity to memory is so absolute that even the simplest flight of imagination gets stuck in a blind alley.

"To think is to forget differences, generalize, make abstractions. In the teeming world of Funes there were only details, almost immediate in their presence." According to Henri Bergson, Funes is not thinking, he is dreaming: "Past images, reproduced exactly as they were, with all their details and even their affective coloring, are the images of idle fancy or of dream: to act is just to induce this memory to shrink, or rather to become

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thinned and sharpened, so that it presents nothing thicker than the edge of a blade to actual experience, into which it will thus be able to penetrate." He states that action, active thinking, requires a reduction of memory. An unreduced memory passively allowed to reemerge is a blunt instrument, a cloud that drifts in front of our eyes.

Absolute fidelity to memory eclipses thinking. The same is true of information. To find a space for thought, one must, for at least an instant, unlike Funes, forget.

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Where is the Monad?
Not Location, but Site, or Position

The monad must exist in space, a context of its world, a space where it ignores or interacts with other monads. In his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi describes a suitable environment, the space for nomad thought – monads can be like nomads, wandering Situationists, itinerant rhizomes, gliding through a space or landscape Baudrillard would characterize as built for speed.

> "Nomad space is "smooth," or open-ended. One can rise up at any point and move to any other. Its mode of distribution is the *nomos:* arraying oneself in an open space (hold the street), as opposed to the *logos* of entrenching oneself in a closed space (hold the fort). *A Thousand Plateaus* is an effort to construct a smooth space of thought."

What is it that uses this space, the mind, or the body? Rather than defending the mind/body split, a privileging of mental vs. body intelligence, or seeking the differences between the two, which contemporary science has made near impossible (as in mirror neurons, and so on) we can talk about simple presence, attention. I am there, as monad, as individual, when I think myself there, when I call in, when I walk my body there. I am always there, it is the current moment, the slipping nomad is my attention, it is crushing and building the walls of my existence continually, endlessly, effortlessly. And where does attention take place? Neurobiological science, with its stunning advances, cannot locate it within the brain. Brain activity is decentralized, scattered throughout the landscape of neurons, and yet attention there is, like an orchestra conductor, drawing out activity from above, moving from location to location with watchful eyes, with awareness and intervention. Attention is a force that directs itself both into the mind and out into the world, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes in reaction, as a linking bridge between the senses and thoughts, information accepted or expressed, thoughts recalled or created.

This space has been explored before. Disregarding restrictions and embracing all conflicting details of which we are ignorant, we can imagine this smooth space – a place that is constantly redefined, under attack, without strict allegiance to memory, built and rebuilt. A clearing, to reference Heidegger,

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that is disturbed by erupting and emerging being. Start all the way back in Plato's Timaeus, and find chora, a particularly useful environment, especially when re-written by Derrida in *Chora L Works*.

> "Chora is not exactly the void, though it looks as if it were void, and it's not temporal in the sense of a sensible world. It's not eternal either in the sense of the stable presence which is not altered by time… Chora receives everything or gives place to everything yet Plato insists that in fact it has to be a virgin place, and that it has to be totally foreign, totally exterior to anything that it receives. Since it is absolutely blank, everything that is printed on it is automatically effaced. It remains foreign to the imprint it receives; so, in a sense, it does not receive anything – it does not receive what it receives and it does not give what it gives. Everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it."

If we try to consider chora as the present, the moment of now, which cannot be paused, thought or occupied because it is always slipping past, the unstoppable focus frame where future turns instantaneously to past, then we can see that it is "not temporal in the sense of a sensible world." It is an element in that temporal system, but like a tile in a hallway you pass your foot over as you walk along, it is not moving, it has come and gone outside of the temporal shift. We are something that happens in the moment, everything happens in the moment, without the moment remaining to complement or reflect the action, simply hosting the movement of the temporal stream in transit. Certainly it is "not eternal in the sense of the stable presence" because we are not talking about now as a system, the presence of the present is the stable and eternal framing of the passage of time and events. The present is no more temporal than a tick of a clock, it is eternally in relation to temporality, but again, conforming to Derrida's parameters for chora, it "is not altered by time." Time, funneled through chora, rushing, pushing through, a glass tunnel we can feel and be entirely aware of, or miss altogether, we are both fully present and fully absent in chora, it is too rich to be perceived because in its full breadth it "receives everything and gives place to everything," which is why our experience of it must necessarily be filtered, allowing us only a modicum of exposure to its limitless scope. That could be the nature of its virginity – so elusive and fleet as to be entirely untouched – imagined, anticipated, expected by all, revered for potential, pursued, the endless quarry that each hopes to hold onto, eternalize, even slow down to savor, without hope of success.

It is this very elusiveness, this frustrated desirability that makes it so totally foreign and exterior – never being contained or possessed, it is never known in isolation, in intimate and extended proximity, it is more vapor than vision,

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wrapping itself around us without the slightest contact, skimming past every surface without the least familiarity of an engagement, a prolonged exposure – it passes, unmarked by our presence, but we are the opposite, we are relentlessly affected by it. It stands off and witnesses its own effect on us, on everything, yet each moment is free of any responsibility for that effect, as it is just a single thread in the cloth. It never picks up the stain of passage "it is absolutely blank, everything that is printed on it is automatically erased," like a hot, white plate, which is always clean, evaporating every drop that comes to rest on it, we experience it like the touch of something extremely hot that we don't touch long enough to be burned by, we can be shocked by its dangerous intensity, drawn back to it, compelled to press ourselves against it to experience its full heat, though unable to do so, at least as long as we are alive – it is not impossible to imagine feeling the impact, finally, after a life of anticipation, the moment impacts with us when it is our last, when it takes us with it, perhaps the evanescence becomes solid when our attention is forever removed from our bodies. Because certainly up until that point it is not active, it is not enough engaged with our attention to be considered active, with the implication of an exchange, of sharing, or commonality, "it does not receive what it receives and it does not give what it gives" though it provides the platform, the site of the event for all giving, for all receiving, it inaugurates all exchange, it hosts and legitimizes, even verifies the new possession of a thing, a thought, a gift as it is transferred in its presence from one location to another – but never *to* it – you can never give to chora, nor take away from it, its very foreignness, its standoffishness is what allows it to facilitate every exchange, it does not want to possess or keep any of the elements it contains, any of us, any thing, any word, any act, unless, unless, it does, in fact, retain, as considered above, the dead, whisking them away with it, lodged in its very identity, its passage. But that we can never know. It could be felt to be generous, but since "it does not give what it gives" it could be a mistake to characterize it as generous, even magnanimous, though we might feel a rush of such enthusiasm following its passing. But isn't that an incorrect attribution? The moment did not give, so much as witness, allow, perhaps even foster what we received, that which we are grateful for. But wouldn't that be a misreading, a misunderstanding of what truly happened? If we ascribe the events, the occurrence, the synchronicity of the moment to the moment itself, we must be ignoring the true agent, or combination of factors of agency, that brought the thing we think of as a gift into our lives.

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We can be grateful to the moment, but the moment is immune to our gratitude – it only reflects our appreciation, mirror-like, back onto us as we ourselves feel the warmth of that appreciation. Are we actually appreciating ourselves, the fact that we were in that moment, participating, benefiting, receiving (or giving), aren't we appreciating the living of that moment, our living of that moment, not the moment itself? This is the moment of *lebenslust*, lust for life, an upwelling of energy, vitality, unexpected, unplanned and willful, an adulation of the moment, of the self fully in the moment, which creates a hunger for more. Because the moment doesn't linger for adulation, though our presence, our attention does. The moment leaves clean, though entirely scribed with traces, "everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it." What does it mean that Derrida shifts voice, from passive to active? Everything *is inscribed* – by something, something outside itself, an unnamed actor? What hand, what event, what means inscribes – and in an equally passive manner then remains in chora? And the things themselves, all things that have emerged in chora become active, yet self-destructive, capable only of erasing themselves – imagine waking up, naked, in a spotlight, and quickly covering yourself and scampering away, only to have been caught in the act by innumerable flashbulbs, preserved as the fabric of the moment, and yet already, actively, removed from it. What brings things into chora? What summons and exposes them? If chora is the moment, our moment, then it is our attention, falling on some subject, which is suddenly and rudely revealed, to some greater or lesser extent, and even as that thing will, in its particular aspect that was noticed, disappear from attention, if only for flitting moments, as distractions redirect attention, it will be imprinted, traced, into memory, even if not recalled, not reinforced, it is noted on record.

Let's test this on a book, for example. You open a book, and bring it into your moment, your attention, your chora. Here, clearly, you are the active agent – you have, somehow, come across this book and chosen to open it, and started to read it. Just then the phone rings, and your attention leaves the book, or does the book withdraw itself from your attention? Did you act as before, willfully, deliberately, on the book? No, but did the book in any way act itself, draw away, or erase itself? It certainly receded, it was no longer present within attention. If the letters were reaching up out of the page, changing from marks into meaning as you read them, they did withdraw as your attention broke away from them, so the erasing of themselves was the loss of connection between your eyes and the page, the words reside, passively, in the same location, until they are again drawn up and out by your attention. If that attention is an act of will, your attention

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focused by you on the page, then the distraction is an actor beyond the scope of that attention, that which cannot be assimilated into the continuation of that focused attention. Each moment has the potential to either continue within the flow of attention or be disrupted by distraction, but the moment does end, the chora surface is wiped clean by the potential of the next moment, which is one of continuity, or disruption, in equal measure, and is always arriving, just as the present moment is always departing. The degree to which you are "in the moment" is a measure of how much you are attending that which was brought forth into attention either by will or by distraction, rather than anticipating the moment to come, whether imminent or distant. The degree to which you are "in the moment" is the determining factor of the potential effect of the contents of chora on you – you can truly absorb the meaning on the page, or feel the upsurge of *lebenslust* only with full presence, full attentiveness. In *Perception Attack*, Brian Massumi demonstrates how habit functions as the opposite extreme – a moment of complete lack of attention, which you can only recognize in retrospect, the habitual behavior having occurred entirely without your attention.

> "We say we have a habit, but we all know that it is really the habit that has us. It is an automatism that has taken hold and *in*habits us. It is of its nature as an automatism to pass under the radar of awareness. We are only ever aware of an habitual action *having* occurred. What we consciously perceive are its next effects. Otherwise we would catch it in the act and decide to execute the action or not, in which case it will not have acted as a habit. A habit is self-deciding. It is a self-effecting force from the past that acts in a present, which appears only in a next-effect. The present of the force's actual operation is elided. This is a kind of syncopation of time itself, where the skipped beat is the operative present, the present of the operation. This active present is expressed only in the nextness that comes of it. It actively disappears into its forward expression."

This is not to say that your attention is not functioning elsewhere, it is simply not happening within the space of the habit. Like almost everything else in the world, the habit plays out beyond your attention, though it is the disembodying effect of acting on habit that is striking. Can habit, then, create a space for other attention? "The present of the force's actual operation is elided" only for the habit, but if the habit is not in counterproductive contradiction to the best operation of attention – for example, walking a familiar route and falling into a hole that wasn't there before – then the habit of walking can serve as background, unattended, for another activity, say thinking. Conversely, Massumi states that, "The elision of the operative moment may be operationalized," i.e. habit can be used as another space for activity – a kind of drone chora. Brain imaging studies of

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multitasking insist that we do not truly multitask simultaneously, but in succession, substituting one task for another by jumping attention around. But does this account for running a habit in the background, unattended, automated by familiarity? Can the habit set up a parallel track to attention, which crosses paths with attention when it is recognized as such but could then continue to run again, in parallel, if left to its automatic function? Massumi's focus is how the military has become preoccupied with using this elided moment to maintain a permanent state of background war, to keep up a constant engagement with an absent, faceless enemy – the never-ending war on terror, unattended, always at the ready, always both happening and not happening, and therefore to a certain degree unrestricted, and like a habit, only acknowledged in retrospect, when some event has already happened, which can, if need be, if noticed and protested, be excused as merely a bad habit of war, which will not be repeated, though like a habit, it probably will be. By being always on, expectantly prepared, it can act in anticipation of action, preemptively, without being decided or thought, like a habit, in what he calls the "force to own time," action which is ahead of the action that it is countering, an action made before the enemy acts, like a habit, unnoticed. The preemptive, unattended action works to negate another action, closing off the possibility of the expression of an undesirable opposition to our movement. By acting without thinking, out of habit, action takes place before the present, or at least the presence of the action of the enemy you are trying to oppose. But does the lack of attention of habit, gliding over the present moment, also allow operation within the moment, let you play on two tracks simultaneously, or to borrow Massumi's term "operationalizing" to reach the point of a schizophrenic divide?

If, as media activist Jonah Peretti says, in relation to Deleuze and Guattari, schizophrenia is "a central part of a subversive postmodern politics with the radical potential to bring down capitalism," are the efforts of the military to use total war with this schizophrenic relation to the present moment as a way to protect capitalist interests and markets in fact threatening capitalism? And by engaging in the military discourse is Massumi, Deleuze and Guattari's translator, contributing to the acceleration of that process? Massumi argues that the intensity of the military's engagement with non-presence carries over into the civilian life of the economy, presumably because the technology which informs and makes this approach to war possible was created as military technology and subsequently became ubiquitously available outside of the military usage. So if this is the case, this spreading schizophrenia of preemption primes not only the military for the invisible enemy to come, but also primes the economy for the potentially profitable opportunity to come. This would seem to change the nature of our

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relation to chora as the present moment, as our present moment shifts back into the smaller-than-smallest interval before it, so we sneak up on the present, "capture chance," and violate the virgin nature of chora, walking into the now with dirty combat boots, violating the present, and always existing out of synch with its natural rhythm.

British philosopher A.N. Whitehead also used Plato's passage about chora in the 1930s, not as an analogue for the present, but rather to create a general description of personal identity, by quoting the passage and substituting in relevant terms, by redirecting the meaning from what he says is Plato's meaning, "the imposition of a unity upon the events of Nature." To step back from the comparison, it is striking to notice the shrinking scale of application for this idea: if Plato attempted to impose unity on all of Nature, Whitehead on personal identity without relying on the traditional concept of the Soul, though as part of a return to metaphysics at a time when the solid structure of Newtonian physics had collapsed under Einstein's findings and rational thought had lost confidence in its ability to comprehend all of Nature. Today, the scale has constricted further still, as chora seems useful for the application of something so infinitesimal as each fleeting moment, the unity of which is under attack.

> "It is his [Plato's] doctrine of the Receptacle or Locus whose sole function is the imposition of a unity upon the events of Nature. These events are together by reason of their community of locus, and they obtain their actuality by reason of emplacement within this community… It can be otherwise stated as the vector-structure of nature. Or otherwise, it can be conceived as the doctrine of the immanence of the past energizing in the present."

In other words, the elements, whether they are those of nature or personal identity, do not belong together so much as occur in proximity to one another, the only association being that of locale, this flexible space that accommodates all things in transition, moving along a vector from the present to the past. It is a concept that tries to resolve the perpetually changing intersection of time and space, a movement that never ceases and leaves a continual afterglow like a setting sun as it passes.

However, Derrida does not want to allow chora to preserve such a simple divide as object and ground, building and site. In his dialogue with Jeffrey Kipnis, he disallows interpretations, rather than isolating meaning in a graspable definition.

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> "… you cannot say that chora is architecture or a new space for architecture. **JK** [Jeffrey Kipnis interjects] It seems to be that point at which they might meet. **JD** [Jacques Derrida replies] Yes, b----e[1] place is not enough to name the place to think of architecture. With the place you can do---ot do many things that are not architecture. Trying to build in the place or on the place is not the only experience yo-----make with the space. So perhaps architecture, some architecture, corresponds to the desire for filling space. Perhaps architecture is the most powerful attempt just to forget space, forget chora. The most powerful forgetting of space – that is architecture."

In the last sentence, Derrida is content to use architecture as the most powerful forgetting of space, but not entirely as a forgetting of chora, indicated by the word "perhaps." The implication could be that something of chora remains in the construct, the architecture, like Kipnis suggests, the point of overlap between the two, a contextual inflection that reflects on the building, how the building mirrors its surroundings, and in conjunction, how the surroundings are infected with the building's presence. To break this out of ideas of fixity, however, we can invoke again Deleuze's citation of Tony Smith's new definition of a monad, "the sealed car speeding down the dark highway." If the monad is the car, and chora the highway, we can imagine the headlights catching the billboards, signs and surroundings as they slip by, making fleeting impressions on the occupants of the monad, but also dimly reflecting on its exterior surface, its façade, its skin, that previously impossible exterior of the monad. In reciprocal exchange, the highway picks up the sonic impression of the car, its surface is slightly worn by the tires, and it may lose bits of its fauna: a moth, a lizard, a fly, to the transgressive presence of the vehicle passing through. Does chora change due to the passage? Potentially, yes, but often in only a mild reordering of its constituent elements. Does the monad change, having passed through this section of road, this moment? Again, the potential for a cataclysmic event, a crash, is ever present, but most miles slip by unnoticed, unremarked, even forgotten. Each moment is filled and depleted with potential, as the overlap between the monad and chora becomes a momentary mingling of surfaces, a loss of boundaries, an openness to event, a context for the eruption of being. This relation is repeated in all occurrences of the occupation of space.

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[1] The book Choral Works is perforated with small physical holes that cut right through the text, obliterating words or parts of words. It may be possible to interpolate and guess at the elided words, but I have chosen instead to represent the gaps the authors chose to create in the text. In some instances it is clear which words or letters are missing, other times it can be baffling The gaps are approximately the same size as the dashes I have inserted, so the reader can attempt to fill in the gaps – your guess is as good as mine.

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It is simply the velocity that changes. Passage may take a millisecond, or a millennium. Potential exists in every overlap.

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THE SCREEN

> "The more I looked at the model, the more the screen between his reality and mine grew thicker. One starts by seeing the person who poses, but little by little all the possible sculptures of him intervene. The more real a vision of him disappears, the stranger his head becomes. One is no longer sure of his appearance, or of his size, or of anything at all. There were too many sculptures between my model and me. And when there were no more sculptures, there was such a complete stranger that I no longer knew whom I saw or what I was looking at."

As artist Alberto Giacometti recounts the experience of working from a live model, it sounds as if memory is clouding his perception, that he can't see because he is remembering, or presupposing. This would be a typical limitation – prejudice, experience, assumptions, all layer over perception and affect the ability of one to see what is before them clearly. However, what Giacometti is actually doing is imagining, he is seeing the future, or futures, in potential, of the subject as sculpture before him. So, to borrow an idea from artist Robert Irwin, he is forgetting the name of the thing he is looking at, the identity, the definition as verbal component and limitation, but unlike Irwin, he is not experiencing pure perception, he is not seeing it for itself. Instead he is seeing the thing for what it can generate or spawn, its utility for his process. In other words, he is not seeing the thing for what it can become, because the potential sculpture is not the same as the subject, he is anticipating its potential forms, and then making an effort, in the new form, to fix that indecision, that uncertain outcome, those contradictory directions. The physical matter of the final sculpture pulls in different directions simultaneously, guiding and misguiding, but all below the surface of the subject, the figure is thinner than the skin, so as he tries to capture what he sees as the multiple sculptures the subject inspires, he ends up with a representation of the inner, uncommunicated turmoil of the figure. He is reflecting the subject sitting in front of him in a turmoil of potential becomings that match the movement of his visions of the potential forms.

In his diagram concerning memory and perception, Henri Bergson starts with the perceived object O and the radiating circles of memory that represent deeper engagement with that object. The closest, and smallest circle, A, "contains only the object O, with the afterimage which comes back and overlies it. Behind it, the larger and larger circles B, C, D correspond to

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growing efforts at intellectual expansion… memory, capable, by reason of its elasticity, of expanding more and more, reflects upon the object a growing number of suggested images – sometimes the details of the object itself, sometimes concomitant details which may throw light upon it."

Bergson's description is illustrated with a diagram of radiating circles overlapping one another, implying that the engagement deepens as one circle overtakes the previous perception, advancing towards a full grasp of the truth of the object. To imagine a diagram of Giacometti's description, which never approaches truth but rather alienation, you would have to abandon the focused singularity of Bergson's model – where the circles radiate in a single direction, toward the same vanishing point. Giacometti's diagram would cast radiating rings of perception in different trajectories, scattering like a burst from a shotgun, each in pursuit of another element perceived, with no totalizing truth possible. The increasing circles would represent stronger and stronger resistance to a single interpretation, unlike Bergson, who might even be able to finally and fully snare the object in perception, to catch a rabbit, and illuminate it for memory in a true light. Giacometti, however, is watching a host of rabbits scattering in different directions, each rabbit is almost unrecognizable, they move in such fast and unpredictable ways that he loses the sense of their being rabbits in the first place. The truth, any truth, is lost in attempts at fixity, at capture. He pursues, instead, the very witnessing of that erosion of perception, as truth falls apart in every direction he pursues it.

The fault it seems, lies in the peculiar nature of Giacometti's screen of perception, or at least in his perception of the way the screen functions, itself changing, thickening as different potential perceptions get stuck to it like flypaper, clogging the screen, as it fails and fails to totalize the truth of the perception. We need the simplicity of Bergson's model to initially grasp the idea, the simplicity of refining perception with memory, and thereby forming new memories. But it is Giacometti's description that seems closer to the frustration of never arriving at a truth, never mastering a subject, as barbs of forgetting tear at every perception that passes through, complicating our vision of every object, obscuring any totality. Giacometti's is closer to the model in perpetual motion, always moving, always failing, always continuing, in spite of the inevitability of failure. Not only is the perception fascinating, but the actual thickening of the screen fascinates. The inability to grasp can be a greater motivator than perception itself, because it is failure that creates striving, not success. Derrida, reading Hegel, encourages us to think of the most solid and fixed element, the cornerstone of a building, as a destabilizing element, the very key to cohesion that is also a disruptive

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force that is “always already contained within the architecture of the work.” We can imagine the cornerstone of the anti-institution building as liquid, to see the stacked in motion, not towards disaster, but in an ongoing, wavering state, which defines and creates its form, the instability itself shapes and stands for it. Giacometti’s screen does not work to reassure him of what he is seeing, it does not prove him right. His sculpture is left as an assertion of this shaken, destabilized conclusion, the kind of state Derrida also embraces as truer than the truth.

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THE WINDOW MIRRORS

> *. . . The window mirror is a characteristic furnishing of the spacious nineteenth-century apartment . . . The function of the window mirror is to project the endless row of apartment buildings into the encapsulated bourgeois living room; by this means, the living room dominates the reflected row at the same time that it is delimited by it.*
> *The Arcades Project*
> Walter Benjamin

Certain aspects of the physical structure of the Academy of Forgetting are distinct and definitive. Reflecting on them helps in understanding how architecture can advance a functional agenda. For example, take a look at the ambiguity of the Academy from the inside: in the moment of porous openness an abundance of mirrors, ringing its perimeter, fabulously amplify the space and yet make one aware of orientation within and beyond the space. This moment of perception marks the spot where one sees oneself seeing, where one sees the edge of the Academy, and the outer world beyond. Reflecting on the division, this edge moment, encourages making the choice of whether to remain within the Academy. For although this mirror world may have many aspects, indeed infinitely many, it remains ambiguous, double-edged. There is always this impending moment where it blinks: it is always this one – and never nothing – out of which another event will arise. As the space transforms itself, it does so in the cradle of thingness. Something is nascent, some thing promises to be born. There is a result, an outcome, which has the potential of being formed, and each subject within range of the interior mirrors at the moment they swing in to ring the interior walls exchanges a Iook with their context, and must decide to remain caught up in it, never deceived for a minute about their surroundings. They may be caught up, ensnared, but they can see the escape route. It is like an equivocal wink coming from purgatory. Caught, like no one else, each in for a personal reason, joined with themselves in collusion with nonbeing. The whispering of these gazes fills the Academy, threatening to foreshadow the future, to create an event that will change the view of all, or of all who are subjects to the event. There is no subject here that will not, when another least expects it, exit through a fugitive eye. Before it is shuttered again; the subject is swept out by this gesture, gone. To the whispering of these gazes, the space lends its echo. "Now, what," it

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blinks, "would possibly happen to me?') We stop short in some surprise. "What, indeed, can possibly come of you?" Thus the space gently bounces the question back to you.

These images are, in fact, produced by the Academy’s philosophy, to hold you only with your own grasp, but they point beyond this stratum in virtue of the things they hold fast. While the great motif of reflection defines the exterior of the Academy, it belongs also to the interior: The 'seducer' begins a note in the mental diary: 'Why can't you be quiet and well behaved? You have done nothing the entire morning except to shake my awning, pull at my window mirror, play with the hell-rope from the third story, rattle the windowpanes-in short, do everything possible to get my attention!”

The dazzling moment of transformation is here developed to perfection, always present, imminent, available. Upon the inward swing, the two mirrors reflect each other; distant horizons bright as day open up. The subject is also caught and cast into that moment of reflection, a double image, visible in profile, stuck in a stony gaze outward, standing on the verge. Images hovering above the ground and opening, architecturally, the perspective on infinity.

The opening allows the next step to appear, seen with eyes full of the pain of departure. Mirror after mirror, reflecting a special quality of pale brilliance, illuminating the interior space, drawing in the exterior space as it appears in the mirror. This is the day of the end of the world, and people are moving about in formation of the next world, the new day. Academic life is suspended, and in this condition is put on display. If a work of literature, an imaginative composition, a creative construct could arise from these repressed contents and appeal through an individual consciousness to the collective, or community, we would have before our eyes the consummate sublimation of the Academy, growing rankly out of its showcase.

This is by no means something altogether new, it began with the decision to cover the outside walls with shining metal plates, the first step on the way to this conception of the space at work when dissolving its borders, sacrificing its integrity to that fundamental means of all spatial organization: contrast. The outside suddenly no longer clad with the compelling 'luster' of metal but with the increasing transparency of glass, drawing the outer world into the interior space, where the 'wall,' as container of space, is deprived of its significance. It is no longer surface area that interrupts light but light that interrupts surface area.

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It is a moment of reflection in space that forces orientation as a decision: do you see yourself outside, do you enter, or do you remain inside?

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THE DOORWAY AS EVENT HORIZON

> "The threshold…is indeed a thing of dread, because there one must manifest or cast aside one's qualities"
> *Encyclopedia Acephalica*
> Georges Bataille

As illustrated in the previous section, the design and function of the perimeter of the Academy reveals the importance of the transition between being outside or inside the structure. This is driven by a neurological effect called the encoding specificity principle, in which memory has been shown to be most effective when information that is available at the encoding event is also present at retrieval. When a location changes, certain areas of memory are cleared. Psychologists have ascertained that passing through a doorway is in itself an event that clears memory through a triggered forgetting response known as a location-updating effect, a resetting of short-term memory. The doorway indicates a change of location, the change encourages forgetting, you pass through it and the mind resets for the new location, preparing for a new event in the new circumstance. The psychological explanation of a doorway causing this "shift at an event boundary" drove the design imperative to remove event boundaries and extend the event, to draw it out. By intentionally eliminating interior doors, doorways, and even discrete rooms, the Academy augments the experience of the education as one extended event. From what traditionally would be regarded as the full extent of studies, matriculation to graduation, the students enter, live and work within the school boundaries, never passing through a doorway until they leave their studies.

This in fact led to the school policy that the term that each student passes at the school be referred to as an "event", since it is marked by passage through the doors of the Academy at the beginning and end of the term of study. The doors, as described earlier, are each actually a window, opening at the moment of the event, allowing the exchange of students and other occupants. This restriction operates as a challenge, it determines the length of study, and sets up a kind of operational anxiety, knowing that the doorway is an event horizon, that once they pass through it they will forget. No other restriction is set as to the length of any student's time at the Academy. The event of entrance to exit stands in lieu of semesters and years,

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and though faculty are willing to discuss and debate the length of the event with any student, the choice is ultimately the student's alone as to when to end the event. When they are willing to forget, they leave.

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ORIENTATION

The coordination of design and function of the Academy continues beyond the perimeter and throughout the space of the Academy. To think about the interior design and its bearing upon the course of studies, consider the “Strange Loop” theory, advanced by Douglas Hofstadter. Keep in mind that when understanding an anti-institution, mixing literal and metaphoric interpretation often aids insight and expands the potential meaning and associations that can be drawn. Be liberal and loose in thought, rigor will dry up fragile leads.

Rather than a hierarchy of levels or distinct floors, where each is linked to at least one other by a concrete relationship, process and expectation, any hierarchy that can be discreetly identified soon reveals itself as "tangled" (Hofstadter refers to this as a "heterarchy"), in that there is no well-defined highest or lowest level. Moving through the levels, intuitively or with what one senses to be systematically (though the systems are often revealed to be more personal than programmed, one eventually returns to the starting point, i.e., the original level. There is not an attainment, or ascension, leading to a clear finish and jumping off point higher than the original point of entry, though there are milestones or marker points of progress. Hofstadter says a strange loop is “not a physical circuit but an abstract loop in which, in the series of stages that constitute the cycling-around, there is a shift from one level of abstraction (or structure) to another, which feels like an upwards movement in a hierarchy, and yet somehow the successive "upward" shifts turn out to give rise to a closed cycle. That is, despite one's sense of departing ever further from one's origin, one winds up, to one's shock, exactly where one had started out. In short, a strange loop is a paradoxical level-crossing feedback loop.” These intersecting circles typify the problem-solving process in a creative space, returning, encountering a lifting feeling when coming to a new insight, returning to the original problem with an augmented perspective, or snagging on it with the original sense of frustration or difficulty. The Academy student is not exempted or beyond a return at any point, instead, the educational process of explanation returns and reminds one of the basic questions that sparked the original line of inquiry. The movement is always lateral, there may be a stepping up or stepping down, but never in a clear and continuous staircase, but rather

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overlapping planes that rest on one another, but also bend, slope, curve, and settle, like landscaped contours.

Following matriculation at an opening event, students often, but not always, hear the Director's opening speech. If not, it is always on hand for future reference. There is not a formal proceeding or beginning beyond that, students are not told where to go, though some find their way initially by following the traces of others before them, a marking practice encouraged by the floor materials, that, like a landscaped park, reveal the natural traffic routes carved by casual, improvised use. These well-worn paths are functional, but not regarded by the Academy community as sufficient or satisfactory. There is an expectation for the student to find and define their own paths, and as they are in the space longer they more often than not tend to wander less and be more directed by their grasp of the space, its alignment to their purposes, personal goals and agendas.

It must be said that there is a great dealing of walking or wandering involved, moving along sightlines, following paths indicated by previous movement to arrive at new points, not for stopping, but for resting, for the sense of continual motion is unavoidable, idleness has an irritating quality, as does repetition, though both are aporatically soothing: one comes to the familiar, welcomes it, warms to it, and is anxious in its sameness, nagged by a desire for the new, yet frustrated with the known flimsiness of that promise.

In this way the interior design reacts to, serves, and is defined by each occupant – no master path is proscribed, though traces of common patterns are easily discerned. Wandering can be physical, mental, or intellectual. Recalling Rousseau's walks, as well as the Situationists' *détournement*, the space and pace encourages attentive ambling.

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HORIZONTALITY

> …the frontier metaphor is in our habits, our conduct, our emotions, in curiosity itself. My experiment, rather, is to deconstruct the metaphor associating method with colonial exploration, to put it under erasure in a certain way, "paleonymically," remaking "frontier" into "*chora.*"
> *Heuretics*
> Gregory Ulmer

As Ulmer points out, horizontal limits in the form of a frontier as boundary to be aimed for or transgressed have defined our notion of progress throughout history. Within the transcribed edges, there is a tendency to progress through vertical ascension, erecting hierarchical consolidations of power, which reach upward as forces struggle to ascend the pyramid, thinning out the horizontal plane, causing all to slope into striated levels of order, subjugation and dominance. The more vertical a system becomes, the greater the desire to push upward, and deify those that reside above. The force is to centralize energy and efforts towards the pinnacle, thereby limiting the range of experience, and the validity of those around us. If we are looking up, we are not looking around. We cannot recognize the breadth of possibilities and terrain. We limit the prospects of lateral movement. To be a nomad, not a mountain climber, is to seek the further points of the horizontal, to wander for opportunity and inclination, not to pursue the vertical that ultimately leads to a stopping point. The top is a goal without prospects. Once it is reached it cannot be productively occupied. Challenge the vertical, not by replacing it with a new dominant in the form of the horizontal, but, like the mobile flat plane of a child's drawing, the symbolic field created on a table can rotate upwards, attracting appreciation. We make the act of attention conscious as we gaze down at where our feet are taking us, breaking the expectation of a fixed gaze. We lift our eyes to see where we are headed. Mobilizing our attention, we must look up and down, vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.

When Jeremy Rifkin speaks about the horizontal dismantling of power structures in *The Third Industrial Revolution*, he literally means that electrical power could be generated across every household or structure instead of in centralized power plants. He envisions a variety of sustainable micro-generation methods being harnessed on buildings to benefit the property owner, the neighborhood, the municipality, the nation, and

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ultimately the continent. But he quickly extends the ramifications of this idea to point to a dissemination of power in many other senses of the word – freedom of determination, decentralized order, democratic distribution and the possibility of a voice for many, for each participant, in a networked system of distributed power, not in vertical concentrations, but in waves of horizontality. A shift from market to network, from a point of conflict based on scarcity and need, to links of shared interdependence, a recognition that power comes not from taking one from the other but from parties holding together, each maintaining a part of the basis of power, and not wanting to take it from one another, but rather needing to continue to share, to pool what each has for the benefit of the group.

This idea of decentralized collaboration leading to a mass effort is reminiscent of the victory garden. To aid the efforts in the first and second World Wars, citizens of Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. were asked to cultivate their own food, to be producers, to distribute the generation of a vital resource. The request made evident the chains of interdependence, the place of the individual in the network, and the possibility of productive contribution. The victory gardener provided for him or herself, the excess went to a small radius of community that was being fed by the produce. It grew an expanding horizontal network stretched through productivity. This growth resisted the vertical through its inherent attachment to the earth, remaining on the same plane of engagement. It relieved pressure from the centralized food supply, horizontalized that vertical structure by pulling away demand, allowing the resource to be reallocated to feeding the troops, who could not feed themselves, but rather served the greater purpose by fighting. This powerful metaphor of participation gives each participant the motivation to increase efforts and contribute more.

In order to deflate the vertical inclination, the principle of horizontal distribution drives the structure of the Academy's architectural floorplan. It harnesses collective, distributed efforts, and prioritizes mobility and exploration over ascent and dominance. In this way it reinforces its contrast to a traditional institution.

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STUDY IN THE ACADEMY

"…its discourse will come to focus at the center of the dialogue: the very reception of being…"
Chorology
John Sallis

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THE EVENT AS STUDY TERM

In the previous section we focused on physical structures and design and how they reflect the agenda of the anti-institution and direct the use of the space. Now we can expand on the expectations and possibilities of the experience of what would be called curriculum and studies in a conventional institution, which also have a specific lexicon and intent integral to the precepts of the Academy of Forgetting. We can begin by simply stating that we call the term of student residence an event. Sketching the definition of an event, Gilles Deleuze has taught us to be guided by his principles in determining this as an appropriate length, due to the impetus to motion and action generated by the event as a catalyst. In comparison, take the historic precedent of May of 1968 as a foundational event for the line of studies for many thinkers who have played a key role in formulating the thinking that is the foundation of the Academy. Due to the nature of an event, which we will define below, there is a significance and a propulsion that occurs, in two directions, driving some students outward, drawing others inward, thereby marking the initiation of studies for some, the conclusion for others. In the instance of May of 1968, the unexpected critical reaction by Louis Althusser drove many of his former students and followers on a new, productive trajectory, thus a negative event, one intended to defuse an event, actually fueled its productive capacity. Reading Deleuze's text "What is an event?" from the top, we can only hope our students experience the sensation he describes, "being run over" – meaning, in our purview, a shattering of the rigid form of expectation and performance, a rebirth, twisting or reshaping of the substance of intent, an enervation through confrontation and a degree of destruction. This sort of confrontation lends itself to moments of great potential.

"What are the conditions that make an event possible?" Deleuze asks, and then answers that the fostering atmosphere is a chaos of multiplicity, with the intervention of a screen. How is that to be read? In our interpretation we are reading the screen as Žižek's shifting frame of reference, which allows each affected student, present or potential to see (or not see) a thing from a personal perspective, when primed to receive it, from a particular vantage point. This level of personalization of the event, or the filtering of the call of the event, through a screen of attention, tilted at the angle of individual perspective, catches the glint of that particular event in the chaotic multiplicity.

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Messages, opportunities, and traces abound that can lead a student into capture, even enrapture, or, conversely, break the spell that had held sway over them. The process is one of self identification, the students more or less choose themselves, through this inadvertent state of readiness, to begin and end study, to recognize the event, and then to capitalize on it. The screen acts as a tool of selection, since none experience the event in its absolute singularity, all are exposed to it with a degree of tainting, an inflection, that colors it. The difference being, which Deleuze delimits, "a certain singularity", not the singularity as a universal, but versioned into a chaotic scree of "the sum of all possibles", each one being a compossible when capturing attention through a screen.

Deleuze evokes a sense of the operating scenario that surrounds the Academy at the apogee of the event – depthless shadows, a blackness containing all colors, rife with giddiness, the jungle of possible perceptions, of possible lines of flight, and the event a glinting diamond with facets flashing – the chaos being our normal, accepted state of inability to read such an abundance. The event, when read, when felt, is a clearing, a way in abundance, surrounded and overshadowed of course by bowers of "increasingly rarefied matter" that which at this moment cannot concern us, has no power to render itself readable, which perhaps could never be our text, though within another constellation of forces could align to be, but certainly not be at this moment of ensnarement. The event defined, through his master, Leibniz, and the current headmaster he has named, Whitehead, as extension. Think of this in terms of the thrust we are seeking as a result of study – an extension implies a greater reach, a vector, pushing the previous limits. Quite clearly it is a moment of unprecedented growth – a moment that becomes the set of subsequent moments, all results as subsets: "the following elements are its parts", without "a final term nor a limit (the limits of our senses being excepted)." Here he opens the discussion to mortal limitations, moving it from the abstract and ideal of infinite and universal, to the senses, the possibility of the individual to see, hear, sense, touch, smell, think and be in and of the event. There is no abstract in this sense, there may be a confusion, a haze of impulses that play out and may lead to a retrospective clarity, or there may be a resolved and clearcut mission, a calling, a passion, a drive that sings through the senses and takes the individual unquestioningly along their path. It may, as he suggests, have the momentum of a wave, and that is an ideal and optimal line, though students must not be confounded if faced with a rising incline, an obstacle that appears overwhelming. This perceived barrier calls out a challenge, and the individual feels driven to ascend, in spite of the intimidation, certainly not benefitting from the ride of the wave, but compelled nonetheless, and in some sense motivated by the challenge

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and therefore drawn to the same obstacles, perceived as impassable, perhaps, by those who had ridden waves before. So you see how the event can differ in its formative nature, how it can create future inclinations to patterns, how it can be seen, often only in retrospect, to echo throughout the future of the individual, in what we characterize as an element of the individual ontology. Here it may or may not be formed in its entirety, but it is certainly refined, amplified, and inspirational as a way of being in the world beyond the Academy. In his way, Deleuze then turns the term back on the two masters, showing them to have failed to extend the extension far enough: he talks of the spectrum of properties of the event, "new infinite series, now converging toward limits", a contradictory, aporetic state that pushes extension to "intentions, intensities or degrees." Only through his forced unity, pushing Whitehead and Leibniz together into his own formulation, is he satisfied with the power of the event, from indefinite to demonstrative: he makes the event an unstable state of increase, of hunger and velocity.

Only when addressing our student, which he calls the introduced third component, the individual, does the impulse of the event coalesce into creativity, blending elements "from the world to the subject." The individual draws into the event, under an umbrella and on a bed of the history leading to this point, all input, all factors of determining traits including biography and ethnicity and interest and situation and inclination as factors of selection, and spurs to identification. They radiate within the recognition of the truth of the event, they drive identification and determination: "the event is inseparably the objectification of one prehension and the subjectification of another; it is at once public and private, potential and real, participating in the becoming of another event and the subject of its own becoming." Read it as a marriage of context and content, an interlacing of the exterior and interior into a platform that provides a view, a new window, a passage. This is the selection, the identification of the candidate for transformation without separation, not a dissolving of bonds, a Pentecostal burning, but a networked self election.

To identify issues within the course of study we can follow Deleuze's outline of three factors, which can be read as obstacles and achievements. The logical and predominant continuum is sequential, but not exclusively so, the factors can be reordered or more commonly run with some degree of concurrence. The first touches on the personal, emotional, and critical engagement, the way the event lives within and drives the student. Identifying with and harnessing this moment presents the most immediate challenge: what has brought me here? How will this impulse shape my steps

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toward actualizing the potential I have become aware of as I entered? How does it make me feel? The emotional processing often overwhelms the first steps toward study, it can be an extremely anxious time, which the director's address is intended to confront and salve. The second, quite bluntly: the mission. This is not an operative term here at the Academy, its connotations, both religious and militaristic taint the clean reception we prefer for the broadest possible acceptance, but here it can be quickly and easily read, it is a shorthand. Deleuze labels it a "subjective aim", and the steps that must be discovered and followed towards "a becoming." The past forms a present "portending the future," where you have come from shows you where you can go – an individual, individuated, and illuminated path. The third, that which holds the greatest allure, being the satisfaction, the promise of a steadily enriching private life, again subjective in essence, but in effect moving beyond the personal by radiating outward. To temper the idealized tone of Deleuze's construct we must emphasize that these are not the steps leading to a permanent paradise. Reading his treatise one could conceive of the event as a steady state of near rapture. When put into practical application, taken off the page and turned into process, these three factors of obstacle and goal are achievable, moving and enlightening, but they are not ever places of rest. There is no grasping the moment in stasis, even the clearest "mission," to revert to our shorthand, must often be sought within the clouds of daily life. The enriched life achieved through becoming manifests in glints, in surges of *lebenslust*, in enthusiasm and drive, rather than in constant bliss.

As Deleuze shifts his discussion from the event to the monad, we move with him, recognizing the embodiment of an idea in scale, the monad of the Academy, a dynamic architecture fluctuating between open and closed states, and a midpoint between the smaller scale of the individual student as monad, and the larger scale of the surrounding world as monad. Each nests within the next step in the scale, surrounded by peers, with prehension of the multiple levels inherent in their interlinked structure. Indeed the event rips through all levels, causing a reconfiguration and shift operating on each differently. Of course, as he addresses perception as "the active expression of the monad, as a function of its own point of view," he forces us to differentiate between its operations on different levels of scale. But when he speaks of the moment of becoming, when the monad expresses the world, wherein the perceptions are added up along with a great pleasure and satisfaction, then a unity aligns the monads along the scale. This moment of creation, of the contribution of the monad of something new, for us means the student, in conjunction or based on the impetus initiated by or within the Academy, rejoining the world as a productive whole, message and messenger,

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with a contribution that expands the scope of all. Held in relation to the standards of an institution of higher learning this is the totality of the degree, the work of the diploma, and the graduation gift, all awarded to the student *and equally to the Academy and to the world*. It can move beyond a sense of personal achievement to one of purpose, to raise the level of responsibility and potential that the subject promises to deliver for distributed benefit.

And Deleuze rightly evokes the question that tracks along the lineage he is continuing, from Leibniz to Whitehead and Bergson, then on to him, and to us, here and now: "in what conditions does the objective world allow for a subjective production of novelty, that is, of creation?" Is any question more pertinent to this time, to the very existence of the Academy? To any institution of higher learning seeking to foment contributions, in the face of the zero tautology summarized by the artist Martin Creed, "the whole world + the work = the whole world"? Especially to one that strives to create a space for thought, though confronted by this thought from Georges Bataille in *La Coupable*, "A thought is also an event, it belongs to the same world as the one in which trains come into stations. It is just as significant and just as insignificant."

We seek to answer the questions, each time anew, which challenge the students that enter the Academy. How will you exit? What is a contribution? What is novelty? It is crucial to note that "originality" does not figure among his terms, clearly a problematic goal undercut by the burden of influence, access to precedent, and the inclusion of the past in the present. Within the limits of novelty, production, contribution, and creativity there are answers, there are ways and means that can and must be drawn out of the world, but they are necessarily without fixity, without universal permanence or resonance, they are as dynamic as time, as the chaotic multiplicity within which events are produced. "The best of all worlds is not the one that reproduces the eternal, but the one in which new creations are produced, the one endowed with a capacity for innovation or creativity…"

Characterizing this movement in terms of Whitehead's working definition of the event, Deleuze focuses on flux, extensions moving, parts being gained and lost, endless alterations. He balances this constant change with the idea of the eternal object, as a fixed point that is also acted upon by the various flows that keep it from resting in a solely stable state: "they gain permanence only in the limits of the flux that creates them, or of the prehensions that actualize them." This tempers our expectation for creation, eternal objects can be created, but can also be acted upon, actualized and even remade through the change students initiate or participate in. Can the Academy itself

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be seen and judged as an eternal object? Was its creation not an event in itself, and the stimulus for a continual stream of events. Its past makes up its present moment, and it focuses steadily on the future turning out wave after wave of students, students who may act upon the Academy, keeping it incarnate, current, fertile and in and of itself productive – a "thinking prehension". The students are the moving parts, the variable components, the flow of monads into and out of its shell, it holds as a continual goal the purpose of serving as a vessel to invigorate monadic activity and creativity, and in bright, open moments it expresses the world, producing novelty.

Choosing to illustrate the concept of the event with a concert, Deleuze brings together his ongoing metaphor of music with the instruments as the screen which allow each player transit into the event in an active engagement, contributing and perceiving both their own sound and that of the rest of the orchestra. In his description of the experience of the concert he moves from culture to nature, showing how robust the example can be in encompassing any event that achieves the desired result of producing joy, intense satisfaction, and communion among the participants. In this immaterial world of sound it is the musical notes that constitute the eternal objects, and as with the Great Pyramid he referenced before, we can see how they exist outside of time, as sounds in and of themselves, with transient qualities that are inflected and incarnated through the delivery, the screen, of instrument and player, of harmony and sonic qualities: "height, intensity, and timbre." This moment of tension between the eternal and the possible he ascribes not to playing, not to the act of creating, but to "the rites it required in order to appear", a conjuring, an intervention that allows for an emergent order, and because he invokes a vertical rather than horizontal constellation, perhaps a higher order. He uses this distinction to elaborate on a fundamental discrepancy between Whitehead and Leibniz, that of the former's insistence on direct connection leading to the formation of a world, and to the latter's greater sense of unity, with each monad being a part of a single, yet separate world. He grapples with the lesson to be learned from Leibniz's Baroque background, where melodic lines were blurred, but harmony made up the order. The result was that dissonant voices were isolated and kept from disrupting the balance. Compared to Whitehead's modernist mentality, it became "a world of captures instead of closures", wherein a single universe assembles itself from all open sources, where paths diverge, where monads test pathway and create a structure of linkages relating to them – but order can be imposed.

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Now the clear paths that are delineated in the science of modernism are again blurred, like in the Baroque, which transitioned the fall of Classicism. However, as Deleuze tracks the advance of a new transitional period, which he calls the neo-Baroque, he sees the incompossible and the divergent occupy this common, interconnected world. The closed monad no longer maintains harmony. The blending of harmony must also accommodate atonality, polytonality - a concert of chattering logics of worlds that cannot co-exist, yet are forced to do so. At the inception of each event, this is the environment our students step out of, or into, through the mirrored windows of the Academy.

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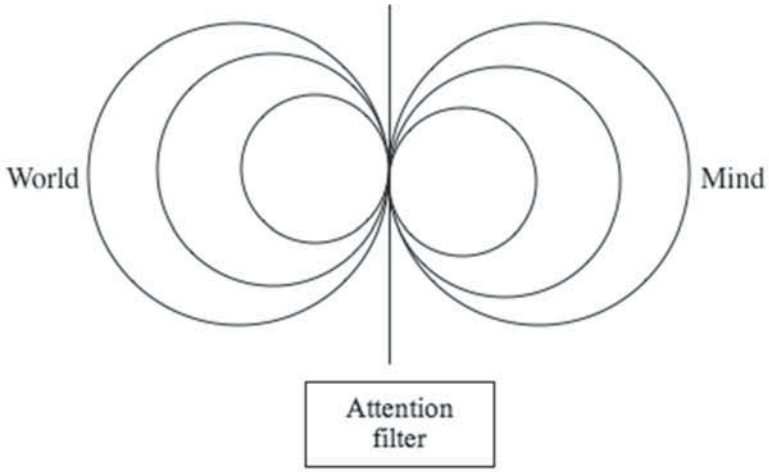
A Model of Attention



A mental sculpture stands near the perimeter of the Academy and is activated at the inception of a leaving event.

Here's how to understand the model:

There are two sides in the model, the outside world, and the inside mind. Each is represented by a series of radiating circles, which symbolize our individual engagement with one or the other region. The radiating circles on the left side represent the way we reach out into the world with our senses and our bodies, over and over again, to varying distances and degrees of intensity. This is not dissimilar to Bergson's model of thought and memory from *Matter and Memory* with radiating circles which he characterizes thus: "the larger circles B, C, D correspond to growing efforts at intellectual expansion." The circles on the right represent how we reach into our minds, pondering, remembering, deciding. We can call each side a hemisphere, two halves of a whole that make up the scope of our attention. A similar process is at work at the meeting point of both halves, and that is of filtering, represented by the line that stands between the circles. This line can be

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thought of as the point from which a net is cast out, either into the mind or out into the world, in order to recall or perceive. The line is the point at which that information crosses from one realm to the other, from the outside world sensory information arrives and then sends radiating thoughts into the mind, as we think about and process the motor and sensory information we receive: thinking, noticing, orienting ourselves, remembering, feeding our learning, forming and classifying our experience. Just as that which is sensed pushes constant waves of attention into the mind, so does that which is thought push constant waves of sensing and acting out into the world. These are the stimuli for what we seek, looking, listening, feeling and smelling and reaching for, which strengthen or contradict our notions arrived at from considering earlier input.

Though an inspirational source of this model, Bergson's own model does not focus on the meeting point of the two series of radiating circles. His thinking provides a fundamental basis for this model, though the comparison may be more or less precise and exact, it is approximate because this model serves a different point. The key, defining element of the model is the idea of the filter itself, and how it varies for each individual, how it defines our existence through its capability and nuances. How we form and change it through our cultural background, our genetic makeup, our lived experience, what we eat, where we go, how and where we sleep, what we read, who we interact with, the variety and particularities of input and stimuli that are so multifaceted, continual and dynamic that they can only be individual, the blending of all elements of existence into one person's attention.

The outside world is full of an enormous amount of detail and information that can potentially be perceived. We experience the world through our senses and actions, perceiving what we are able to. But what we can perceive is dictated by our own individual attention. If you look at a flower, what you see will be decided by what is filtered through your own ability to perceive it, depending on how much you know about the flower or flowers in general, and how much attention you pay to it. If you are a knowledgeable botanist you may intimately know the details and structure, the lifespan and mutations, the climate influences and defining factors of its biome, but you may not perceive the intensity of yellow in the way a child seeing this flower for the first time does. The difference is not in the flower, but in the perception of the person experiencing the flower. Similarly, that botanist's particular circumstances at that particular moment can be tainted or enhanced by myriad other factors that impact the clarity of his or her attention at that very moment, so the idea of "clearing your head" to focus on something is a struggle to receive a purer dose of one's own attentive

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potential. Each person's attention is fundamentally different, in the level of intensity, the knowledge it brings to bear, the augmentations and limitations of the physical sensory systems involved, eyes, ears, nose, skin. It is also different at each moment, driven by emotion, energy, circumstance, but it is uniquely and exclusively ours.

The filter works similarly within the mind. We can recall only a fraction of the experiences that have penetrated our minds. The access to each individual memory, that which is remembered and that which is forgotten, is also in a state of constant flux, but similarly determined by who we are, what we are doing, what we have experienced and perceived in the past and what we are experiencing, perceiving, thinking and attempting to recall in the present. Also, the memory itself is subjected to the changing factors of ourselves – it is a dynamic system that molds and manipulates what we like to think of as an accurate recollection of a past experience or perception. But that is simply not so. We are constantly remaking our memories depending on the attention that we pay to them, how our current mindset taints and transforms them with new ideas and information. They are no more stable in our experience than the flower that we perceive differently each time, based on our selves and circumstances.

The primary work of the mind is to filter, it is working harder to reduce the sensory information arriving on its various portals, informed by experience which shapes the doors and windows of our mind that receive it. As Slavoj Žižek puts it in *Parallax View*, "*blocking* as the elementary function of consciousness." We are constantly straining and reducing the input we receive in order to make sense of it, the mind's job and defining nature is this very process, as it takes in whatever it can and parcels it up for every different sector of the brain that can comprehend the information that has made it through the filter. To be more accurate, the model should show the circles radiating into various locations within the mind, the areas of the brain that can process and remember each stimulus appropriately, it has been greatly simplified just to show the movement into the mind, just as it very simply shows the sensing and acting radiating out into the world in a generalized push. But that's not the point of the model, to define the rate or placement of the input, it is only to help us to think about the nature of that simple line drawn between the two sets of circles, that net that is woven and rewoven from the moment we come into being until the moment we leave it.

The innumerable nuances of our ability to perceive make up each of us as who we are. Not in any state of permanence or determinacy, but necessarily

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in a state of constant flux. We can learn to perceive much more of this flower, take up the study of it as a scientist, or learn to paint, photograph or represent it in some way and therefore see it more and differently than before. We may simply pick it and put it in a vase inside and note the perfume in isolation for the first time. All of these variables are the working definition of our selves, what we know and experience, what we are able to perceive due to knowledge, attention and circumstance. We see or sense what we are able to, based on who we are. Our attention is defined by us and defines us. It is focused inside us and outside to the world. It is woven by our mind, sometimes with great intricacy and rapidity, turning delicate stimuli of thoughts into new abilities to perceive, sometimes traumatically crushing whole sections of potential processing through injury, physical, mental or even emotional experiences. Picture the wildfire of a stroke tearing across the surface of this filter, or the rending and rebuilding that goes on when someone is struck blind, as different attentive capabilities are lost or expanded, pushing the mind into whole new realms of potential or limitation as the construction of the filter is shaken and remade.

But if the main work of the mind, of the filter, is to constrain, what do we perceive when our filter is suddenly challenged and changed? A series of experiments is now taking place using hallucinogenics to study perception and memory. Robin Carhart-Harris, the lead neuroscientist on the project, specifically focused on how the experiment particularly acted on the part of the brain thought to determine, in his words "our sense of self — our ego or personality, who we are." As the drug takes effect, the filtering decreases and loosens perception, the individual can "experience a temporary dissolution of their ego or sense of being an independent agent with a particular personality." So to a greater or lesser degree we can say that under the influence of the drug the filter loosens, we see or experience more than we have when fully in control of ourselves, filtering out all the stimuli we are not capable of normally seeing. We see what we cannot see, and if we are defined by what we filter, then we can say that we cease to be ourselves in such a state of isolation. We are witness to more of the world than when we are operating under normal mental conditions, which echoes Aldous Huxley's "windows of perception." It is hoped that the experience of working within the Academy of Forgetting can affect the individual's filter, reforming it to simultaneously loosen so as to expand the intake of new information and gather stimuli that may have been overlooked before, as well as to increase the differentiation of those perceived details in regards to their usefulness or relevance to the individual's mind, and eventually to their practice. As the individual, drawn by an event, exits the Academy, the

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model activates and echoes the activity of the filter, dynamically echoing and reacting to the engagement at the threshold of inside and out.

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IGNORANT INSTRUCTION

Any anti-institution depends upon its legitimate institutional brethren as models to deviate from. The power for change through resistance feeds off of the perception of constraints that can be shirked or even dissolved through the formation of declassifying structures. Combining what seem to be contrary positions can open up new possibilities, driven by the intent to undermine stable limitations. In the tradition of art academies, the Bauhaus model continued to exert a lasting influence on art schools throughout the 20th century. It was founded on an emphasis on craft and skills, with artist instructors in the position of master craftsmen who were bringing along student apprentices, allowing them to experience and experiment with the forms, materials and practices that they themselves had mastered and evolved into their own practice. Beyond craftsmanship or traditional journeyman training, the materials were infused with ideas, beliefs, and opinions, but arose from an understanding based in material and studio practice. The Bauhaus model still forms the basis of many programs with the assertion of the rudiments of art education, a tradition that reaches as far back as formalized art education, though the definition of the rudiments have continually shifted. Within the Bauhaus, the rudiments have to do primarily with materials and textures, in other words, the physical, the real, which must be properly perceived and represented through refined techniques. There has been a shift in pedagogical philosophy, however, one that sheds the Bauhaus focus on craft and material, and arises more from the tradition of post-Duchampian conceptual practice. It reflects the growth of post-studio art, of social projects, of performance, and other evolving forms where the physical trails in relation to the intent or form of expression. Over perception and representation comes a focus on politics and ideology, reversing the Bauhaus notion that activity must come before "mind." Though the acquisition of craft and manual skills can still be essential to an individual artist's practice, the intense mastering of rudimentary or foundation skills, the deep understanding of materials, is in the process of becoming an elective choice rather than a requirement in many art programs, as pointed out by James Elkins.

For decades now there have been small, experimental programs and schools and pockets of learning within larger schools that have embraced these tendencies, even to a deep and radical degree. Is this an effort to teach the

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avant garde, if that paradoxical conceit is even possible? The desire to lead students into confrontation with a challenge and not arm them with traditional techniques for solutions, not to orient them toward media and material, but to open the realm of response to the widest possible limits of uncertainty holds a unique place in the tradition of education. But the question to address here is not about the experience for the students of facing the unknown in the process of learning, which is in no way unusual, students are and have been introduced to completely foreign concepts, practices, beliefs and information continually, expectedly. The question here is what is the nature of that experience for the instructor? If charged with guiding the students, how do they do so when they are intending and intent on not relying on past knowledge or experience for solutions, but rather to radically open the learning and education process to the widest possible realm of directions, practices, influences, and strategies. Certainly professional art practice as seen in the public realm today can embody that kind of breadth, but even there the scope, and choice of venues and manifestations, are so wide, disparate and evolving that it lies beyond summary and familiarity.

Instructing into this precipice of variables requires more openness and curiosity, beyond traditional pedagogical tools such as knowledge and mastery. This is not to say that an instructor with tremendously developed skills, craft, criticality, historical knowledge, and self-awareness is not qualified. On the contrary, there is no reprieve for the preparedness of the instructor, nor for the anxiety of inexperience. In his text, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Jacques Rancière tells the story of Joseph Jacotot, an experimental educator in France in the 18th-19th century who taught from a philosophy that all human knowledge is accessible to us as humans. If it can be known, we can know it, as long as the process of inquiry is properly and openly pursued, according to Jacotot. His idea was that the instructor could be ignorant of the subject matter and still capable of teaching it to the student.

Initially, Jacotot undertook the teaching of foreign languages he himself did not know. In art instruction, not knowing which way the art student should continue in order to arrive at their own practice is an ignorance that the student and instructor share. No one knows explicitly what the artistic practice will look like. It can possibly find media and expressions that are as yet completely unknown to the instructor and the student. It is possible for both student and instructor to enter a blind exploration, to both be learning and discovering together. That could even be construed as a goal in art instruction, that when the process is going well, the instructor would be certain of his or her ignorance in the proper path, completely unaware of

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the right answer, unable to give the student concrete guidance. This would force the two to stand side-by-side, rather than in a line with the instructor in front, and the student following and awaiting enlightenment, as in the traditional role of master and pupil. This is a departure from the "immense gap" between teacher and student that Nietzsche's professor/philosopher character speaks of in the lecture "On the Future of Our Educational Institutions," what he sees as the unavoidable distance between what the teacher says or reads aloud and what the student is capable of hearing. Nietzsche goes on to his ominous conclusion where he preaches on behalf of a galvanizing and electrifying leader, a "genius" that can turn a dead educational institution into a living organism. This rings of an ego performance, a cult of personality tied to a single vision, rather than a collaborative approach encouraging many voices and individual directions.

Following Rancière, the art instructor, rather than cultivating genius in the body of knowledge, which he pours into the passive ears of his students, to again adopt Nietzsche's language, does not have answers for the students. In this case, it may be as common for the instructor to learn from the students, to discover what they are drawn to and drawing from in culture, as art becomes more socially inclined and responsive. The engagement is from the bottom up, rather than being born of knowledge of art history, a mastery of craft, technique, or medium. The place of learning can be a point of convergence of all the bodies of knowledge the institution brings as resources and all of the emerging tendencies and inclinations of culture that can be brought into the institution, if the institution encourages porosity. If the instructor and student, standing together in uncertainty, can direct these forces into a blending with critical attention and awareness, a practice, or a project at least, can emerge that can be instructive and expansive for those who can pay attention to it.

> "The student must see everything for himself, compare and compare, and always respond to a three-part question: what do you see? what do you think about it? what do you make of it? And so on, to infinity. But that infinity is no longer the master's secret; it is the student's journey."

For Rancière, everything is in the book, in the very sentence – all of human knowledge, all of the learning and evolving that led up to the possibility of creating those forms that become letters, those letters that become words, then sentences, and the ability for it to capture and transmit thoughts and ideas. He espouses infinity in a teacup, a ponderable finite that gives access to the infinite. Just as artist Robert Irwin found it staring at an empty room, an object of reflection and from that point, expansion, must be introduced,

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or, rather, allowed in, and given time and attention and inquiry. The liberal expansiveness Rancière allows is unsettling, he burdens the object with no requirements, claiming that any writing is sufficient impetus to initiate the whirring top of inquiry and learning. But in the case of art, the source material is not limited to text as in Rancière, but how broad can the net be cast – to all manmade objects or ideas? To any artifact or phenomenon of nature? To the slightest human inclination or notion? To a scale that is superhuman and subhuman, even simultaneously? Certainly we have seen artworks that start with the least of all possible things and grow outwards into the sublime. At the international exhibition Documenta in Kassel, Germany in 2012, the artist Ryan Gander created "I Need Some Meaning I Can Memorize (The Invisible Pull)", a breeze that blew through the gallery space. It was a gesture so minimal and natural, such an approximation of nothing, yet it raised protest among other artists for its overwhelming presence and impact on their own artworks in the building. Introducing the gentle breeze to an enclosed space was as powerful as the twister that took Dorothy to Oz, it held the power to deliver the "viewer" to another world without changing location. It brought nature into the palace of culture, not as representation, but as phenomenon. Without any didactic additions, it could introduce a host of associations and concerns, of ecological disaster, poetry, of the definition and aim of minimalism, of institutional critique, and the formalities and etiquette of museums that we still anticipate and depend on even as we actively seek out their deconstruction. It demonstrated Benjamin's notion of porosity in architecture, harkening back to the unshuttered villas in Naples that inspired him, it was in direct lineage with Duchamp's ambule of "Air de Paris" unleashed, Gordon Matta-Clark's "Window Blow-Out" where he shot out the windows of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies to make a point about urban decay, and perhaps most directly, Michael Asher's "curtain" of air, created for the Whitney Museum's 1969 "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials" exhibition.

The limitation that traditional education places on students is that of explication, according to Rancière. When the instructor explains something to the student, the message is that you cannot understand this material by yourself, you need the instructor as master to interpret it and simplify it for you. This creates a cycle of dependency that sees the students become the explicator after mastering the topic, and going on to instruct further generations in the same construct. When the instructor is ignorant, no explication is needed, or even possible. The students are forced to understand on their own terms, just as they did when first acquiring language – this is Rancière's paradigm for learning, his proof being that we have always learned best when not instructed, but immersed. No one explained language

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to an infant, they simply absorbed and learned, used the language, and made it their own – without instruction. In his method, the instructor asks the questions, not the student, and the answers are their own to discover, they are not being held back by the instructor. Within the context of art there is a link between the answer and the identity of the student, there is the potential for the discovery, by the student, but then through the expression that results, once that expression achieves clarity, for the instructor, or indeed any attentive observer, of a means of expression that is unique to the student, the individual. Not having that expression wed to the tradition of media increases the chances of finding the thrust, the direction, which mastery of technique can sharpen, as the skills are gained to further the expression, which was, however, originated through the solo discovery of a moment of understanding.

Techniques can be learned, and even mastered, without the student learning how to express, or more so, *what* to express. Through systematic training and practice, Baroque academies proved that basically all students could create a perfectly proportioned representation of the human figure – it is a manual skill, and not an art. In the studio of contemporary artist Jeff Koons, an army of assistants with photo realistic painting skills generate his paintings. All of them have finished art programs, and many have developed artistic skills of their own, that is to say, they are pursuing the presentation or representation of something essential that they feel or see in the world, but have not found elsewhere. So in their free time, they undertake the difficult task of painting their way to self-expression, a lifetime of work that may never be actualized. However, many of the painters are in the role of artisans, skilled workers who do not paint to express, who have trained in art school to represent, and do so for their own projects or for their employer's. Only as a worker or artisan does the individual find no conflict with the system in Koons' studio. It does not replicate the European painting guilds in that there is no explicit progress with the goal of accreditation and independence for each aspiring individual. When compared to the traditional guild system, they are stopped at the level of apprentice, bound to Koons as the only master, learning his intricate system, and never reaching the level of journeyman, where they could move from master to master, gaining skills until they become masters in their own right. It is a closed system that does not support the growth of the workers as either artists or as craftsmen, but tries to hold them as dependent employees without an acknowledged contribution to the artmaking. Only Koons is making art, there is no collaborative involvement; the painters simply do the work of painting. Koons compensates workers for work, to sustain them, but also to keep them, ensnared to the wage, not the art as such. Those

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attempting to also be artists, however, find that any independent development that separates them from the obligations of the job is a threat to their livelihood within the closed system, and it is discouraged. To advance is to break with the system; it is stripped of all relation to art for those physically making it. Craft here has become labor in a system without an eye to the progress of the individual, simply to the company and the product, which happens to be art, but the art of one individual, and all the makers of it are denied agency. The worker making art without collaborative recognition, without hope of progress has been denied both the aura of creation and advance.

"Memory is not intelligence; to repeat is not to know..." Rancière points out that the goal of learning is not memorization, not simply memorizing letters and words in order to read, or mannerisms and techniques in order to paint. He is seeking a well of engagement and ownership of the acquired knowledge, a fundamental difference fueled by passionate independence. He saw the need for the explicative system to be overturned, for the master to cease to attempt to reduce the meaning of the lesson to simpler terms in order to make the process of understanding easier. If art works with matters in complexity, in contradiction and conflict, not to ascribe literal or reductive meanings to them, but to challenge and engage with the material, but also with the means of representation or communication, rather than relying on the expectations and presumptions of traditional media, any reduction or explication can drain effectiveness from the work. Explication invested in the artwork is a burden on the expansiveness of the idea, it points to conclusions and meanings, rather than opening the field of interpretation for the viewer. A productive dialogue around an artwork is not what does it mean, but what is it doing? The instructor is not putting the student in the role of explicator, but of observer. The work is viewed and measured in terms of action, or engagement, the beauty of the work is not conforming to aesthetic standards and expectations but to vitality, to its energetic grappling with the mental space it demands. This is not to downplay the visual or sensual quality of the work, but rather resisting that being the end in itself, which would be nothing more than a demonstration of the mastery of technique. The physical embodiment of the work is still the vehicle for delivery, and no matter the means, or the material it need be, without explication, capable of working on behalf of the work in totality, whether it be text, performative gesture, object, or media. And the instruction process is a shared responsibility between the instructor, the student maker, and the other students and any other observers, to enter the space of the work and apprehend the degree to which the artwork is working, how it reports on itself. It becomes the "thing in common," the object Jacotot required for the

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shared process of inquiry that put the students and instructor on a level of equality. It is not for the instructor to judge the work good or bad, which would elevate the position to master. It is a collective responsibility to deduce how it is working and what can be taken from it, to concentrate on the work emerging in meaning, being or effect, or not. The lesson comes in the path that this conclusion then opens into a space, not a single route, but a plane for the student to further explore.

Just as Jacotot's students gained access to the French language by way of the literature written in that language, so too can the art students come to grasp possibilities in art and artmaking by considering the process and effect of that very effort by one of their fellow students, or in collective action. They would be "relating what they were trying to know to what they already knew, by doing and reflecting about what they had done." Together they create a space where the instructor stands in a circle with them, and together they interrogate the thing in common, whether it is an artwork created in the school, or brought in for the sake of the discussion.

"You know how to see, how to speak, you know how to show, you can remember. What more is needed? An absolute attention for seeing and seeing again, saying and repeating." This principle of "saying and repeating" refers to Rancière's ascribing the accessibility of language as the system of engagement with the "thing in common." When speaking of painting as the subject of education, which Jacotot also undertook to instruct, with students without prior capability or training, and having none himself, his approach was to have the students see the painting as an intended statement on behalf of the painter. The students were asked to pay attention to the painting, to use the same method of inquiry, until the painting became language, and began to "speak" to them. Then the knee-jerk critique of "I don't like this" can be turned into the more productive inquiry of "it doesn't say anything to me," an admission of frustration that allows one to explore the blockages and to endeavor to find a way that the work *can* say something, to find the language that it speaks, which Rancière positions as imagining the desired communication of the original painter, of thinking what the painter *wanted* to say, as an access point. By then speculating on the desired message from the painter, the student gains access to the language of the painting, or, rather, the painting as language, which, using the same method for gaining access to literature or foreign language, allows the student to engage in what he calls the unity of feeling, the shared human line of reasoning and knowledge, the equality of intelligence embodied in the painting and the seeing of the painting as a manifestation of its own message. The student then proceeds to replicate the message, the language, through their own

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acknowledgement of their ability to do it. The actual result is not the point, the fact that going on to make a painting for others to look at would take his students a dedicated effort of attention of years, or a lifetime, becomes even a part of the knowledge gained. But the fundamental lesson Jacotot taught was of the possibility of painting, of being the painter, the possibility of declaring the ability to paint, not necessarily to paint well or masterfully, but to begin to gain access to the language that stands before the student like all other language, waiting for the student's attention and effort. The philosophy here is one of effort, attention, and discipline, all harnessed to an engine of possibility and potential, that each person can communicate in any human language, that the material of that communication is held in common among all of us, the means of communicating it is common, it is the effort that is singular. Possessing that knowledge and passing it on to the students allows the instructor to be ignorant, to stand before the enigmatic problem of creating art and saying, "I don't know how to do this, and neither do you, but you can, we can, and the barrier is effort and attention." He claims, "…there are no men of *great thoughts*, only men of *great expressions*…", and the expressions are the result of their ongoing effort to represent the thoughts that are shared. Even formulating what that expression is takes an equivalent quality of expression – a great critic can tell us the meaning of a great film that we may feel on experiencing it, the critic may even force us to open our eyes to see it with greater illumination, not through explication, but presentation in language of the thing in its own complexity.

One danger of this powerful presentation is that the reportage and inquiry into the thing in itself can be so potent as to seem to over-legitimize any thing. Any thing has the power to spark enquiry, as Rancière pointed out, but that is a credit to the method and line of enquiry. Though any thing *can* open itself to enquiry, there are things in common, such as texts or artworks, which open broader fields of discovery, wider planes, more potent ground, and this can be a measure of quality. Rancière points out that though Jacotot's students impressively created written work, the visual art that was the result of the same process was highly lacking. The point of the lesson is to learn that you can learn anything, and to open the avenue to initiate the process, but equally it would be the work of the instructor to show the students how to keep returning to the object of study to elicit more communicative expressions from the thing, and then how to read the thing created by the student. "There is only one power, that of saying and speaking, of paying attention to what one sees and says." If the effort originates by paying attention and culminates with saying and speaking, whether the saying and speaking be writing or painting, or building or

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making of any kind, then the upward spiral of effort and achievement is the return to the thing. It is a question of seeing more and saying more each time, until the thing in itself is illuminated to such a degree that the discourse becomes its own thing, and that reveals the line between one work and the work it inspires. So as the class stand at the initial moment of instruction, with the instructor ignorant of the thing in common they have chosen, there is already buried in the thing the shadow of the next iteration, the thing it can lead to, that which can be illuminated by seeing and saying. This builds into the idea of originality a sense of debt, to the foundation that the student builds from, each thing is not original, but next, and the distance from the reference is pushed further as the work increases in an intensity of attention, of effort in seeing and saying. We see that all things are linked and related, but that they emerge appearing as the new through the strength of the relation to the thing in common.

Take, for example, the very text of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, because it is a demonstration of Jacotot's method. Rancière does nothing more than recount the obscure history to us, he even blurs the line between his narration and Jacotot's story, as the translator explains in her Introduction:

> The reader, in other words, is not quite sure where the voice of Jacotot stops and Rancière's begins. Rancière slips into Jacotot's text, winding around or worming in; his commentary contextualizes, rehearses, reiterates, dramatizes, elaborates, *continues* Jacotot; the effect is one of a complex echoing taking place between the author and Jacotot at the level of voice, as though an enormously sympathetic disciple of Jacotot's had, by some time-travel device familiar to readers of science fiction, turned up in the twentieth century.

Hence his text becomes a thing in common, and in the role of the Schoolmaster, Rancière has not explicated his own text for us, nor the story of Jacotot – there is no separation, no authorial interpretation. He does not, for example, relate the French Revolution that spawned Jacotot's method with the period he is living and writing in, the post-1968 period that echoes Jacotot's time in that it calls for a revolution in education, but in order to manage the influx of immigrant and non-French speakers into the relative homogeneity of the French system. As the thing in common, per the instruction method, the responsibility for understanding the text falls to us as the readers, in the role of the students, making the application of the text to an experiment in art education. Rancière will not tell us the meaning of his text for instruction in the present day, he will only tell us the liberating effect that the method had for learners in Jacotot's time. However, the method and the man fell into obscurity after conservative forces lashed back

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against Jacotot's philosophy and growing influence, driving him away from his students, and so the method never had a chance to affect the broad field of education, and was more of a fad that flared up and died away. As for its broad-based application, Rancière says that it would be a guaranteed failure, that it cannot be implemented on an institutional level, only on the individual level of one instructor to his or her students. He goes on to say that since the main lesson of the method of instruction is not the subject matter being taught but the fact of emancipation, the possibility of learning anything, that:

> "universal teaching cannot, without being *spoiled*, specialize in the production of a set kind of social actor… It cannot be propagated in and by social institutions. The *emancipated* are undoubtedly respectful of the social order. They know that it is, in any case, less bad than disorder. But that's all that they grant it, and no institution can be satisfied with this minimum. It's not enough for inequality to be respected; it wants to be believed and loved. It wants to be *explicated*. Every institution is an *explication* in social act, a dramatization of inequality. Its principle is and always will be antithetical to that of a method based on equality and the refusal of explications. Universal teaching can only be directed to individuals, never to societies."

So the failing, it seems, for the broadening of the method, lies within the institution itself, in the inability of an institution to accept less than adoration from its devotees, it needs to be valued and vaunted. The foundational philosophy of universal instruction is that you don't need the institution, you don't need the instructors to learn, anyone can learn and disseminate the method. The kind of institution, then, that could incorporate universal teaching, would have to be constantly undoing and undermining itself, with every generation of students. An anti-institution may be the only possible host, as even radical educators in support of Ranciere within the conventional university frame struggle to imagine how it can be incorporated. Jacotot himself saw his method as too powerful and important for the limitations of instruction for a vocation or set social role, he wanted his students to be freed of all barriers and limitations to knowledge. Rather than to know something, he would have them know knowability, to see that all knowledge and all capability was within their reach, if attended to, concentrated on. This is not a revelation but a reminder, it simply points to the very nature of progress, that each new thing is uncovered or revealed by the practice of someone moving beyond their knowledge, into the shadowy frontiers on the edges of their own confidence to act or to do. However, it cannot be equated with *societal* progress, which Rancière calls an abstraction that relies on a higher authority to judge and measure. Jacotot, who stubbornly refused to compromise the method through institutionalization

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that would aim to achieve less than total emancipation – for example as officer training – and wanted to keep it only on a radical individual level, disseminated one by one especially to the poor, as an equal to equals, not as a superior body to its subjects. He is showing us that we can form paths forward from where we stand in any direction, that we do not need an institution to shepherd us. "Equality was not an end to attain, but a point of departure, a *supposition* to maintain in every circumstance." The situation that he heralds is instruction within the family itself, a parent teaching a child something the parent does not know, undoing the restraints on their own limitations, giving access to all possible knowledge, emancipation starting with the emancipated individual. "Whoever forsakes the workings of the social machine has the opportunity to make the electrical energy of emancipation circulate… who think, above all, that knowledge is nothing in itself and that *doing* is everything, that the sciences are pursued not to be explicated but to produce new discoveries and useful inventions."

Could this emancipated subject be seen as a model for an artist to replace the thinking craftsman of the Bauhaus? The art school, per Rancière, is doomed to fail at institutionalizing the emancipation of the artist in the total sense of Jacotot's universal method. But the failure Jacotot fears is on the limitation of the role that the institution prepares the individual to fill. If an institution seeks "the production of a set kind of social actor" it cannot succeed, because the method will have revealed too much freedom of self-determinacy and independence for the individual to play a set role. This goal seems unlikely for a formal institution, in Jacotot's time as he acknowledged, and still in ours. However, an anti-institution willing to free the student into a state of self-reliance, could attempt to sustain Jacotot's method. The goal of study, then, is not knowing, but knowing that knowledge is possible. If the Academy intends the artist to walk out of the anti-institution (which could happen at any time) armed with the tools of "seeing and saying", and an inclination to inquiry that is aimed at creating engagement with any material without a master explicator, then perhaps it could succeed, or at least try.

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FACULTY OF THE ACADEMY

> "…somebody who is recognized as a singularity who has created a new type of circuit on which other people can come and continue the circuits…"
> Bernard Stiegler

The selection criteria for Academy faculty utilizes Bernard Stiegler's idea for transindividuation, as recorded in his conversation with Irit Rogoff in e-flux magazine #14*:* Education Actualized. The same goal as is laid out for the students, emphasizing an originary and continuity aspect, coupled with a generosity of the circuit being held open for collaborative participation. Rather than a proprietary, restrictive approach, there is a recognition of the ground being laid, but primarily an assessment of the potential that the line allows. As Rogoff responds to Stiegler: "Not the production of something unique, but of a circuit to which others can add themselves by building on it."

Stiegler asserts: "The symbol is not an object of consumption; it is an object of exchange, of circulation, or of the creation of circuits of trans-individuation."

So the faculty are recognized as having produced symbols that offer a broad range of exchanges, which have fertile properties that take hold in many minds and strengthen, extend, or create long circuits.

"…the problem for Bergson is what is called the "loop stimulus"—it is not a stimulus response, but is like Marcel Mauss, with the exchange of gifts. You can receive if you can give. If you can engage, you are also able to exit. If you are able to engage critically, then a process takes place that would otherwise remain static." This outlines the whole dynamic of instruction and study – engagement judged as an ability to contribute toward an exchange of gifts. You must give, you can receive, you can, by engaging, exit. That is the moment of activation: the offer to exit comes from the moment of critical engagement, an event on the circuit that can electrify, expand or split the circuit, starting a new line of flight.

> "inter-generational transmission… is the essence of education… the relation between diverse generations, and contact is its mode of transmission."

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As art and culture accelerate the promotion of the young, the inclusion of their embodiment of the lack of long circuits of knowledge becomes a determining factor in the nature of the public dialogue as they are placed in positions of visibility and voice. As they are formed in their sensibilities, their intimate access to longer circuits remains through exposure to older generations, who initiate engagement in the position of instructor. The methodology each instructor undertakes is not to demonstrate memory, but to activate access to "circuits", to take up Stiegler's term. While the older generation doesn't have to be the repository of the memory of that circuit (though it has, unsurprisingly, proven to be helpful when they are), they tend to focus on transmitting or opening the circuit to the students, so that the students can track the circuit back and move it forward. Together they can also expose and expand sections of the circuit they work on together, since the position of instructor is itself fluid and should be viewed as one that dynamically represents both parties in an ongoing enquiry that they take up together.

"an artist is capable of affecting, in and of themselves, a line of transmission from Paleolithic art through to contemporary art, and this transmission is a relationship to time, to… "mortal"—experience. These lines are within the artist, not made manifest by him or her, nor are they structures of representation, and they are put into effect through their practice, through the contact with them." Here Stiegler describes the lines of movement for the student within the Academy, a trajectory that ultimately results in what the Academy concerns itself with as the "individual ontology". The instructors, regardless of the depth of their familiarity with the line taken up by the student can question in the method of Jacotot as described before, and aid in making this line evident and refined, until an event arises that spurs the student to exit the Academy.

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THE INDIVIDUAL ONTOLOGY

> "The act of invention creates the field within which the thought already exists."
> *Heuretics*
> Greg Ulmer

The idea of a plane as the platform for an artists' endeavors comes out of a relaxing of identification with a medium or studio practice which has been part of the evolution of art school curriculum in the last decades. It is based on a recognition of the pattern of linkage within an artist's oeuvre, often visible only in retrospect. The plane, which has also been described and explored earlier as *chora* is a catchment basin or container that is bound only by the extent of personal pursuit, it can cross through any field, discipline, theory or practice, and is defined by the artist's movement alone. This reading is based on an artist and an art practice, but the pursuit of any individual based in research and practice could potentially follow the same form.

That the Academy of Forgetting, as an anti-institution, encourages a plane of operation driven by individual inclination begs the question of what drives orientation within that space, and one way to understand the movement can be borrowed from the field of philosophy. The innovative program started by Wolfgang Schirmacher at the European Graduate School, which could be examined as an anti-institution itself, requires students to write a doctoral paper that is fundamentally philosophical, a loaded term that can be taken to mean that the PhD work must be a work primarily of thinking, not of reporting. While pursuing the philosophically-based doctorate, the student will often open up numerous potential lines of pursuit, and in order to aid the student in contextualizing their work the administration recommends considering the dissertation as no more than a research project, or part thereof, among many to come, so the degree itself is in no way a finishing point. Understanding this approach in the context of artistic practice could be helpful as a way to broaden the possible methodologies available to the student. By seeing the doctoral work as essentially philosophical, it proposes that for the artist to incorporate the work of the PhD into the art practice that has proceeded and the art practice that will follow the degree work, the relation of the degree might not be seen

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as a distraction or a sideline to the art practice, but in fact be an engine of further momentum and generation, as foundational work in philosophy can be. James Elkins, in his anthology *Artists with PhDs*, reflects on the established practices of art PhD programs that have flourished for some time outside the U.S. system. Elkins postulates forms of the doctoral work that can actually be understood, created and judged as artwork themselves, being at a greater remove from the presumptive research work of doctoral studies. However, after surveying work being done in these programs, he has failed to find concrete examples of this work being done. He proposes what he terms more challenging forms that he feels would be more directly relevant to the practice of art, which will be more fully explored in the *Artist PhDs* section of this paper. What follows here is an exercise of proposing one methodology for linking artistic and philosophical practice by reading an art manifesto not as an artwork itself, but as an engine for generating work. This could be one line of study, so to say, within a doctoral program, which takes an artistic practice and retroactively applies it to the educational process, as if to prove its viability as a method of study.

As Frederich Nietzsche wrote in “On the Future of our Educational Institutions”:

> No one should attempt to describe the future of our education, and the means and methods of instruction relating thereto, in a prophetic spirit, unless s/he can prove that the picture he draws already exists in germ to-day, and that all that is required is the extension and development of this embryo if the necessary modifications are to be produced in schools and other educational institutions.

Following Nietzsche’s imperative, it seems that understanding one approach to considering a PhD for visual artists could be by using the example of the field of operation of a prominent living artist. We can propose, for example, that the American conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner has been continuing his PhD work since making his "Declaration of Intent" in 1968, a landmark document in the formation of conceptual art. This is what he wrote:

1. The artist may construct the piece.
2. The piece may be fabricated.
3. The piece need not be built.

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.

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What Weiner has done here with his "Declaration" is to create a thesis statement, a challenge that he then set about proving in his practice, where the very act of writing often stands in for the art work. You can think of his thesis as a kind of individual ontology of practice, ontology meaning a philosophical study of the nature of *being*, *existence* or *reality* and the basic categories of being and their relations. To read his Declarations as an individual onotology is to observe how in his practice he tests the ability of the artwork to exist, uncovers the nature of the works that can be created, and then watch how they can exist as artworks after they enter the world.

It can be argued that Weiner's dissertation work is not his artwork itself, a wide-ranging practice which includes his famous phrases and wall lettering and drawings, but the PhD work is the challenge that pushes those works to exist – it is the testing ground that he can return to each time he creates an artwork. So, far from taking him out of his work, or out of the studio practice, his dissertation is generative of the work itself, it is a catalyst for creation. The artist's PhD will probably make it harder for the artist to create work, undercut ideas you have had about your practice, but in an expansive sense – that is the nature of the danger of this "removal" from art practice. By studying broadly, or deeply, we begin to see a much larger scope of thought and endeavor and context that leads us away from the focus or even satisfaction of our practice. So there is a very uncomfortable disorientation, but that disorientation is in many ways like the moment when an artist faces any kind of empty, potential space, like a blank canvas or a blank page, and sees more potential than before. It is a moment of vertigo, and the further you have pushed your thinking through studies or other means, the greater this feeling of fear and potential may be.

The artist pursuing the PhD has the right, or even the responsibility to demand that the PhD does not "remove" him or her from their practice. But how does the PhD become the work of the artist? It is probably not an artwork, per se, though artmaking is for many programs one of the requirements. However, it's not impossible to imagine an artist's PhD that is indistinguishable from his or her studio practice. The PhD does not have to be a description of the artist's work. It need not be some kind of art historical or analytical/critical approach to one's own practice, though that approach could potentially be used to contribute to the practice itself. However, reading Elkins' conclusions, the potency of the degree lies in the subject matter and methodology being generative for the artist's practice, as in the case of Lawrence Weiner. His declaration has given him a program that he seeks to prove and forward to this day, over 40 years later. There would be no delineation between the theoretical beginnings of his work,

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which continues to be a relevant and productive driver for art practice, and his later practice, that it ranges widely in medium, application and subject matter.

Any student pursuing a PhD and formulating this kind of working ontology would be potentially able to feed their practice, artistic or otherwise, long term, while also giving the evaluators of the doctoral work a key into reading the work being initially generated for the completion of the degree. This proposes a resolution for what Elkins lays out as one of the most problematic ramifications of awarding a doctoral degree based on this kind of work, and that is the method of evaluation for the advisors and doctoral review panel. The ontology of practice can be tested against the argument and implementation of the resulting work, and the ability of the student and the assessors to see the ontology opening the plane of practice for further pursuits beyond the degree could reassure both parties of the legitimacy of the studies. Granted, the Academy and perhaps other less conventional programs would probably be more open to this approach. In addition, an artist adopting this strategy could attempt the effort while studying at a traditional institution, as a dual purpose of illuminating their own practice and participating in the greater effort of expanding the definition of doctoral studies for the creative arts, which continues to seek greater potential from the form as part of the practice.

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Addressing the Academy of Forgetting

Delivered to incoming students by the Director of the Academy

The moment stepping through the doorway, I forget. Hard to remember as there is no experience to learn from. So I imagine I begin.

Good morning and welcome.

I am beginning by forgetting (inadvertently, unavoidably) in the hope of beginning properly, of continuing properly. We are here to discuss research. This is collective memory, recorded for referral. Research is a given, an expectation, and an impossibility. Research can be thought of as a space of recorded memory, a plane that stretches in all directions. A plane is an imaginary construct, but one that is very helpful to consider for orientation. Do you remember the basics of geometry? Any two points can be joined by a line, any three points can be intersected by a plane. A plane can contain infinite points, infinite lines. A vector is a line that begins at a point and continues into infinity. Why are we even talking about infinity? We can't experience, or even fully imagine it. I may feel the anticipation of it as anxiety or optimism, or the presumption of it, as it's not really infinity I am feeling, but many, much. Too much. There is too much, of this collective memory, of this material for research. But it is not infinite. As a totality it is certainly imaginary, as is every plane we will discuss here. Imaginary, but useful as a container. Rest assured the plane that contains all research is not your plane, and it is no one else's plane either. And you are not responsible for it.

Your responsibility may be harder to characterize. Think about moving within a plane. A plane that is yours alone.[1] No two planes overlap, but they can intersect, and that intersection forms a line that you can follow. Your plane can contain any point, any one's point, but it is your plane. That's why you are here. Do not bother thinking of a vector. So much thrust, such direction and drive. You may even feel it. But you need not honor it. We won't hold you to a vector, though that may be tempting for you, and for us. You may already know something of your plane. You have certainly been

[1] See "The Individual Ontology."

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exploring a plane, or you would not have found yourself here. But that plane may merely intersect with this plane. You can trace that line of intersection, but lines are easier to see when you move away from them, and you should feel free to move away. Your plane is a space of fascination. It is possible to know almost anything about any plane, except perhaps its limits, which we should not say are infinite, though strictly speaking they are, in the theoretical terms of geometry, but rather we can say they have a tendency to reach away from you like a horizon. They can lead you in any direction for any length of time or distance. Looking for the summation or limits of the plane may be tempting, but if properly pursued, should be fruitless. We can connect to all lines of thought here, in fact, the expectation for the lines you can connect has probably always been far too curtailed, too refined and rarified. The problem is the plane can be much more open than most of us have seen. Let's see where it reaches.

They say that passing through doorways causes forgetting. There are no doorways in here.[2] There are doors to get in here, and you will leave through those doors, and that will cause you to forget, but you don't know what. This place where we work has been built like a plane, it is extensive, but hardly infinite.[3] You will operate on this plane, but it will not contain your plane. Explore it for perspectives. You are here together, at an intersection. There will be many intersections, and many divergences.[4] This talk is tiring. It is too much like floating. Let's be more concrete.

As you work, inevitably, you will be stealing. It is better to be aware of this, and able to acknowledge and reflect on the act. Being alerted to theft is not a reprimand, it is instructive. Stealing can certainly serve. Steal well, steal widely, steal productively. Stealing for its own sake is hardly worthwhile. Theft is yet another tool, not an end in itself. Not anymore. Too much has been well stolen for that to be the whole point. Just as being alerted to theft is instructive, stealing itself can be instructive, no matter what you do with what you have stolen. Let the act illustrate the original for you. It may even reveal the stealing that aided its own origination. Hold it in your mind, or in your hand if you can. Acknowledge your theft if you want, document and declare it, or leave loud clues illuminating it. Don't expect or hope to get away with it, it is not a crime to go undiscovered. Your theft helps you populate your plane with intersections.

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[2] See "The Doorway as Event Horizon."
[3] See "Horizontality."
[4] See "Orientation."

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You can make things here, anything you can, anything you want. Our struggle will be to read what you have made. Your struggle will be for us to read what you have made. We will work together for the sake of the reader. There is no ideal reader. We are certainly not that. We will be privilege to the handicap of too much insight, too much information. To see what the reader sees may necessitate some forgetting. We do not mean reading, but seeing. Seeing as reading, like reading fiction. It is too little to think of text. To think of language. Perhaps languages is better. Still too little, but a start. If it helps to start with language, or languages, then do so. There is something to starting, to feeling yourself starting. It may help to feel you are starting by seeing a clean space.[5] You may think of it as forgetting. Sometimes it is hard to forget what you have seen. Many times you can't help but forget. See if that helps.

So far, this should not be a place of memories. There are so many memories for so many places. You might try to use a place without so many memories. You might ask yourself to find that. You might construct a place of your own that is a triumph of your mode of construction. It may be such a far removal from the commonplace as to be nearly inconceivable, or it might be so close as to coincide. We have gone from speaking of planes to speaking of places. Place seems to float less, with a greater sense of limits. Bringing places and planes together can be helpful, by imposing bounds within fields. It is usually best to have some limits, as limitations help you operate, by giving you something to push against. Too wide a field, too open a space, too many choices may freeze you. That can be a problem when you walk in here, into this open space. We can help you find productive limits, restrictive barriers. Often they will arise on their own, and they can help you build, and focus. You may want the help of limitations as ranging too widely may make you feel lost. But when you build, think of your structures as mobile, not fixed.[6] Or build in movement, fluidity. It all seems so abstract right now, but this is a process, and these things evolve with dialogue and input. It will become concrete for each of you, on your own terms. It's so ambiguous now because we want to leave pathways open to your planes, which you will each explore and define. Some may need help opening, some may need more help limiting. You may feel, or already be feeling, uncertainty. Try to grasp the core of that, to see what the pivot is that causes you to waver uncertainly. It may very well be an opening. This is a way to

[5] See "Blanking the Space."
[6] See "Repurposing the Monad."

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turn anxiety productive. It may seem like it only destabilizes, but it can also start you moving on two paths at once, which is a good way to enter a plane.

We are trying to find our way here. There are many discussions about how to do this properly, but there is no way set.[7] The work is always difficult, but without tradition, which makes it even more dismaying. Keep in mind there is a boldness to this act, and let that encourage you. Is it necessary to do this work? It is possible to do it, and it can serve your practice. This is a point to check, a touchstone – how is it serving your practice? That is a point of distinction, of differentiation here, apart from other fields. The point being that we are not serving the field, but each of our own practices. There is a lack of objectivity, of a sense of progress within the field. Instead, ultimately, it is your work that can be advanced, or if advanced is not the proper term, expanded. The expansion can be in the multiple routes that uncertainty opens, you will find the new paths as the new questions push you in new directions, you will see new things. You can begin to think of seeing in terms of attention. Attention is a factor in what it is that you can see.[8] Objects in the world make themselves available to you, they are perceptible, as they fall within the radiating rings of your attention. They find a place within your mind, another presence, one which reflects back on the world, and again changes your attention. What you see you can then see more of. You can see more deeply, more in detail, and that will be a part of the process, to realize you are seeing, to see what it is you are seeing, to see more, and then, in the work, to make what you are seeing more visible with your work. It is an expression of your attention. It can reach the attention of others.

Why the Academy of Forgetting? There are so many things to forget. There is so much forgetting. The place for forgetting in thought is something worth considering, especially in the face of so much memory, or rather information storage, mechanical memory. How does mechanical memory, the new machinery memory that is increasingly ubiquitous, differ from our memory?[9] The machine is for storage, it holds that which is placed in it in stasis. And memory is not storage. There is no past, no stasis. Each time memory is called forth it is thought, and thought distorts and augments, it forgets and remembers, it taints and enhances, it is active and alive, in unreliable and inventive ways. In thought there is endless destruction, and forever the unpredictable potential of recollection, the sweep of attention

[7] See “Artist PhDs.”
[8] See “Attention and Forgetting.”
[9] See “Forgetting and Deleting, Remembering and Storing.”

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gathers, but does not necessarily represent. Whereas in machine memory and storage there is preservation, a stiff stacking, that obscures in quantity, and repetition. If machines come out of our minds, should they reflect our minds? They do not, they are used to supplement, to do what we do not do, still storage, like books on shelves, awaiting the active act of reading. Forgetting is not a goal, it is not a value, it is not an ethic. It is not a guiding principle, it is, however, an inevitable factor and actor. With the name we highlight the carving, creative, sculptural aspect, the very tension of that destruction, the relation of our hands to the monolithic block of storage. Related to research, to the expectation of the traditions of study we are here taking up, it is an inflected process that balances discovery and loss. As we gather material we are not researching, we shed this name constantly, and it reemerges, coming out of its long tradition. Let other schools represent progress, additions and subtractions, if they will. The expectation is to note accumulation, piling on, building up, moving forward. We cannot fear undercutting foundations to find out what lies underneath, even if it leads to discovering a void and our own destruction. Failure is an option. When you read, you may read wrong, and that may help. It won't be the first time. Struggle to understand, and understand that you may not be understanding, and that may be to your benefit. Remember, any text may become yours, excised from tradition, blind to memory, each work as it bears abuse may find new form emerging from it, unexpectedly, fluidly, expansively.[10] This may be gibberish, and that may help. Language slips over the landscape and in some places sticks. You can see it snag or escape. Watch yourself forget, witness your failure to understand, see where that leads. Does it need to be so painful to fail? It may be part of your learning to learn to forget, to progress in failure, to construct from it. Can you hang it on the wall, and look on in confident uncertainty, knowing that the tremble that shakes your confidence in the work should be left to vibrate, knowing it may very well radiate out, like a beacon for attention? Or it could be forgotten, visibly forgotten, a small nest of neglect, smaller and smaller and smaller until it is a hole for fascinated contemplation. A monolithic nothing. A muscular hollow. Who wants more obscurity? So make it clear. Build it. Grow it. Let it go. There will always be more effort, and what counts is unclear.

Instead of progress, you might put your focus on attention. Perception. See what you can see, see what you are seeing. The world is waiting, making itself available. Build the world outside and in by reaching out to it, receiving it. This is not a spiritual act, but it can be ecstatic, uplifting, not an act of faith but of affirmation. There is a leaping, a thrownness, a release of

[10] To be addressed in the forthcoming "Productive Misuse of Theory."

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joy when you connect beyond your expectations and the work lifts off. Take what the world gives you, see how to take more, and add to it. See what you don't see, a balance of presence and absence, what is there, and the lack that contrasts and makes it stand forth. They are in balance, and you will uncover greater and greater gaps and lacks as you learn. It may feel like weakness, but that is a valuation that does not belong. Think of it as necessity, as active. Think fragility. The forgetting that drains away what you thought you knew cuts and defines, it frees up weight. There is a way to feel less pain at the loss, to express the rhythm of being above and below recall. You are making a place, an architecture that is more volume than form, as most are. Remember that what is contained in anything is mostly space, and what that contains we still don't know. As we struggle to see it (this is our ultimate scientific struggle now, to render the particles of miniscule accumulation visible, to take old theory and materialize it as evidence) we change our conception of absence, it is a fullness we never knew in such depth before. All of this can be cast back on the Academy, how will it hold such endless fullness? How can the data that rolls in in endless waves not drown us? Use that as an image of this phase of learning. We are not here to gather water, we want to know what it is to stand at the breakpoint. Feel the disruption of the waves, the endless froth, the force and gathering speed that plays itself out, again and again, in fullness, and then soaking into the sand. You can't chase it or capture all that drains away.

Who would want to read this? You are hearing it, it is forced. There may be something to it, or nothing. It is hardest to say now. Forget it. Recall what helps, what sticks. You will start how you will start. What remains will remain, and what is lost has found its place also.

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BLANKING THE SPACE

> "…intervals of destructuring paradoxically carry the momentum for the ongoing process by which thought and perception are brought into relation toward transformative action."
> *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*
> Brian Massumi

Within an anti-institution, one approach to initiating engagement can be to attempt to empty a situation of as much clutter as possible, in order to discover possible approaches existing in the gaps, rather than in the substance of an inquiry. In practice, finding an absolute blank may be impossible, but actively "blanking" can be revealing. Facing a blank canvas or blank page is a moment of pure potential, one that can be enervating or paralyzing. It causes a pause, a hesitation, in anticipation of the moment of inception – even of one that never comes. The implication is that the blank is yours in that moment, and it calls on you to act on it, to think into it, to create on it. Each blank canvas gives you time, of an undefined length, to transform that canvas' inherent potential into a work. This two-dimensional plane of potential can be projected into a space, which the body can then occupy. When you "destructure" a space in the same way, prepare it to be a blank, much as you build a canvas, you allow your entire body to enter the space of potential, and you rest in anticipation of work, like the hand poised above the page. Artists have found that the deliberate creation of that space of potential through sealing the space and painting it white, thereby erasing details and distractions, can be such a transformative experience as to help define their whole practice. The cessation of distraction, the absence of indicator that a "blanked" workspace provides allows for a new presence of mind, it gives them the room, literally, to move into their work, and from there to move their work into the world.

Within the field of psychology, it has been shown that a lower-stimulus environment actually aids the transformation of experience into memory. Being exposed to a stimulus-rich environment has the power to completely erase the experience, unless there has been a significant delay that allows the mind to absorb the stimulus. According to psychologist John T. Wixted, forgetting may be about a lack of capacity within our hippocampus to process all of the stimuli we receive if our attention is constantly focused on

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detail-rich environments. The hippocampus consolidates memories, but if Wixted is right, when attention brings in too much information that would potentially form new memories it overwrites and interferes with information that was just brought in before, and the lack of a cessation in information flow leads to lower retention. So for attention to work as an efficient gatherer of new material to form a memory, it needs to be interrupted with less stimulation, what Wixted calls “stimulus-poor” home cage environments, referencing the rats he uses in his experiments. This removal from complexity, pauses in attention, allow the rats to consolidate memory at a higher rate, whereas the rats that continue to be exposed to the higher attention-grabbing environment have more difficulty learning from their experiences.

The workspace for the artist, the studio, is often perceived as a lab-like condensation of the gallery or museum, the traditional and idealized white cube. In relation to a typical work environment there is a tendency towards a kind of sterility that could be compared to the “cage” environment Wixted uses to optimize memory in his lab animals. Like with the blank page, a concrete relation between space and time comes forward, as the intentional simplification of the architecture changes behavior and perception within the space. The work of “blanking” the studio space is a meditative reduction, an erasure, and in a way, an attempt at drawing away from the world beyond the studio - the sealed space is meant to recede from reality, to become abstracted by its willed lack of details and distractions. Within that space the time for a new beginning is made more present, more attainable, and the focus it fosters becomes another tool to aid creation.

At the formative moment of his artistic practice, Tom Friedman used the blank of his studio, saturated in white, sealed off from the world, to fight velocity. He describes how he projected his vision of the end goal, the museum, a place he believes to be defined by slow contemplation, onto his own studio experience. He then sat and reflected on common objects, one by one, framed by the blank box he had created. The domestic objects he brought into the space to study foreshadow his mature works, where often the quotidian object has a single additional element – his intense labor. Friedman makes discrete objects through absurdly intense and focused labor, epitomized, perhaps by his “1,000 hours of Staring”, made from 1992-97. This single, unmarked sheet of paper appears innocent of the weight of the gaze that it supposedly carries. The work required to create it is invisible, suspect. The point is its pointlessness.

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His labor, to use his own words, is his way to "bring all of who you are to the experience." Friedman shares his labor, allows the slow, deliberate pace of his work born in the studio to penetrate the museum. Nothing seems effortless, or a gesture, the labor is apparent, displayed, tangible. He gives us the labor, the personal investment in the physical that saved art for him, that divorced the work from the language he cites as a factor of alienation. When we see his work we do not see words, we see acts, we see objects. He has forced the studio as workspace into the exhibition space, as he stuffs hundreds of more hours of labor into his shows with each new piece, filling the space with material and labor, material and labor – his involvement, his investment, is his gift to us as the viewers, as he introduces the laborious and contemplative pace he feels belongs to the museum. He saves us also from the alienation of language, which first drove him into the sealed studio and away from the discourse of his school. He presents us with his real, the object which stands in stark contrast to the white slate of the studio, the sealed white box he started from, where his individual, self-contained objects begin and end, completed through the intensity of isolation, first of the individual artist, and then of the material he chooses to slowly, slowly, slowly work.

In his in-depth analysis of galleries as a blank white cube, Brian O'Doherty emphasizes the religious connotations implied in the strict laws of the exhibition space and the valuation, aesthetics and elements of control he feels it imposes upon the work. Like Friedman, he recognizes the power of the restricted space – indicating the "perceptual fields of force" – that act on any object introduced into it. Going beyond Friedman's assessment of the space as highly utilitarian for focusing his perception, O'Doherty emphasizes the rejection of the physical body of the artist or observer, saying that the cube allows for only observation - eyes and mind. He later parallels the picture frame as a psychological container for the artist with the room as the same for the observer. In both cases, this is an emphasis on the alienating nature of the relationship – just as the artist is kept out of the frame by the picture, in the gallery the art forces the body of the spectator out, calling for a self-referential purity.

O'Doherty makes a point of saying that the installation shot of the gallery without figures is "one of the icons of our visual culture." In recent years, however, installation shots have begun to include figures, in some cases they are essential to understanding the scale and even the nature of the work, specifically with work that captures the experience of the space and the way that it varies from a white cube. The work of Olafur Eliasson is a case in point, as the Danish artist uses elements of scientific and natural phenomena

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to alter perception within the controlled gallery environment, tweaking and redirecting O'Doherty's "perceptual fields of force" to make points about the act of seeing, or seeing yourself seeing, to quote the artist. This indicates a shift in the role of the artwork, not to exclude the body and stand discretely and self-sufficiently, but to include it, to manipulate it and to make the observer aware of the nature of that manipulation and the work's ability to manipulate.

So though in O'Doherty's analysis, the intense blankness of the gallery pushed the observer out in favor of the artwork's isolation, artists can replicate this inhumane sterility in their own workspace to focus their work on the influence of the gallery right from inception. This can be interpreted as an almost opposite understanding of the purpose of sealing and whitewashing the workspace as stated by Friedman. He sought a refuge from the critical language of the art school, and a space that, like the museum, gave him a protracted sense of time, and, he felt, welcomed him in, "to bring all of who you are," as opposed to O'Doherty's feeling that the museum was asking you, at least in body, to leave, and allow the work to take on its own life. Friedman does not seem to imply the tension with the cube and critical stance that O'Doherty prioritizes. Where Friedman finds a refuge, O'Doherty defines an opponent.

In a third position, Robert Irwin describes his sealed studio space as "the world." Though he made the same effort as Friedman to seal out all influences and distractions, he implies that he is in dialogue with the world through his own concentration and perception. This is reminiscent of the nature of the monad, as interpreted by Deleuze, a unity that envelops a multiplicity, a sealed container that contains the universe. Irwin went through the same ritual described by Friedman, sealing up the space, painting it white, and then forcing himself to remain inside, staring at his own work, training his concentration relentlessly. But he found that the room became the distraction.

> "…he became aware that a thin crack along the wall a few yards away from the canvas likewise exerted its presence; that when he plastered that crack over and repainted the wall, the canvas itself presented an entirely new aspect."

So the context was in a relentless dialogue with the work, and trying to neutralize that dialogue, to mute the conversation between space and object, became part of his ritual as he "fixed" his space each day in the hope of total concentration on the work. Ultimately, Irwin shaped the trajectory of his art by relinquishing the studio, establishing a post-studio practice, where the

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work is conceived and created out in the world, in dialogue with the world and reflective of the conditions it finds surrounding it. The white cube failed to ever achieve neutrality, his heightened concentration prevented him from ever neutralizing the space, so, instead of continuing to try to maintain the charade of a perfect blank, he acknowledged the unstoppable voice of place and turned all his efforts onto the object and the world, as a constant dialogue. Some artists push their studio space far from purity, domesticating it like a lair or a living room, and others destroy it, fill it with chaos or detritus, blacken or clutter it so as never to be starting from a blank, and thereby try to avoid the anxiety of facing that void. Similarly artists may never prepare a white canvas, a clean page, a marble block, or other form that is intentionally lacking, in order to try to escape the dialogue with emptiness. But Irwin, like O'Doherty, found an opponent in the white cube, and he learned not to fight it, rather he ended the conflict by making it an ally, an interlocutor, a collaborator. One approach that is often discussed and attempted within the Academy is to vainly strive to start from nothing, to find the lull, the clearing, and to always consider what we do in balance with the empty set. Somehow that intangible cloud of hazy nothingness, that softness of a lapse continually offers a place to bounce off of, to react to, to wrestle with, to rest with, in tension, or as a place to begin.

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BEYOND THE ACADEMY

"No verticality or underground, no intimacy or collectivity, no streets or facades, no centre or monuments: a fantastic space, a spectral and discontinuous succession of all the various functions, of all signs with no hierarchical ordering – an extravaganza of indifference, extravaganza of undifferentiated surfaces…"
America
Jean Baudrillard

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Artist PhDs

> "…when you are teaching geometry or geography in scholarly institutions, you are creating long circuits with very distant generations—creating a unity with the past that allows for creating a unity with the future."
> "Transindividuation"
> Irit Rogoff

Bernard Stiegler points out that we have experienced, through media, the possibility of a tremendous short circuit in education, as opposed to the previously accepted long circuits of the passing on of traditional or historic knowledge. To explain the short circuit, he uses the example of how music reproduction at the end of the 19th century allowed for far wider audiences to hear classical music that before was heard by an exclusive public that often knew how to read and play music, and therefore enjoyed a much greater appreciation of the complexity and mastery they were experiencing. Since that time the percentage of the audience possessing those hard-won skills has fallen into decline as audiences have grown exponentially through music recording and broadcasting, and the investment in the "long circuit" required to experience the previously rarified music has fallen to practically nil. At the same time, short circuits are credited with breaks or departures in thought, and long circuits with the conservation of ideas over time. Both can be looked at as powerful formative elements in thought and education as it evolves with the advancing role of technology and media in the transformation of education practice.

James Elkins projects that we face the inevitability of doctoral programs for visual artists establishing the new standard for a terminal degree in the field, and new standards for a blending of scholarship and practice that is highly unsettling and disruptive because the long circuit impacts are unclear. Some scholars assert that research has always played a part in the making of art, perhaps in order to overcome the anxiety of a lack of long circuits. Certainly there were not standardized practices that have traditionally been expected by formal educational institutions. Other scholars argue that the kind of methodical academic research expected in doctoral work in other fields places a new burden on art that runs counter to the essential intuitive nature of creative artmaking. So the question arises as to whether one can create or even expect a unity with the future that Stiegler asserts was built through

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the traditional instruction of traditional subjects. What future will this short circuit of a new practice, built on the short circuit of mediatized research construct for us?

Psychology studies are increasingly showing the power of spontaneous and unmonitored thought, the flash of inspiration and imagination that operates outside of deliberate, rational, and methodical thinking. Can we draw a parallel between Daniel Kahneman's "fast thinking" and Stiegler's "short circuit"? There is a combinatory element, a making of the moment through the thinker and the subject being thought.

As Rogoff reports, "…the theory of Wolfgang Iser—the theorist of the school of Konstanz—is that a book is a process of individuation, a book doesn't exist as such. What exists as a book is the community of the reader." The thing itself only exists in the act of reading, and reading in an active and generative sense. Alva Nöe argues that the moment of perception is one that happens in between the perceived and the perceiver. We reach out into the object, be it a book, an artwork, another individual, a part of the natural world, with our attention, and create a dynamic that enlivens that moment of engagement as a community, to use Stiegler's term. The "individuation" is the individual distinguishing him or herself through this community of reading, a reading that is active and lively, enervating of both the subject and the object. You are only reading the book, he asserts, if you are transformed by it. The individual extends through this engagement, creating a dialectical relationship with the self. The particular challenge for the artist is to open this community of engagement, in the case of the doctoral research, into a broader community beyond the reader and the book, into one that opens to the public through the extension of community that is the art object, or art experience, an extension of elements of the community experienced by the artist with the book, or the subject of research. Using the term and notion of "book" is of course limited and loaded, it is shorthand, still, for the container of reproduced or recorded information, but of course could just as easily be a screen of any kind. In fact the page is just a more still screen in many respects, also cursed and feared in its time of evolution and growing dominance. Because the screen flickers with information, shuttling so quickly from subject to subject, datum to datum, it produces a velocity of circuits unrealized before. Can we, or have we already pushed technology so far in capacity and velocity that it approaches or surpasses the speed of thought? That is a question that has certainly been answered, by someone. Do we understand thought enough to answer that question?

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According to Stiegler, reading Iser, the true reading of the book, and the subsequent transformation of the reader, is a long circuit, not a short circuit. Even if the reader disagrees with the book, it is in the awareness of the disagreement, the agreeing to disagree, that the long circuit is formed. So a short circuit, then, is a lack of awareness, a failure to recognize the import and impact of a statement, and to therefore neither agree nor disagree with it, to glide over its surface, as the reader and the book remain impervious to one another. But can a totalizing experience be expected, a full or complete understanding, a total agreement, or disagreement, or even comprehension of what is being presented or argued? Can there be more than just pricks of understanding, small lines of connection established as one thought? Can a book be completely read by any reader? Or is it just a partial reading in every circumstance, and the percentage of material being read be greater or lesser based on the reader and the moment of reading? The same tenuous relation seems to stand in the presentation of the artwork, it is always partially read at most, even by the author, or the ideal audience, and remains in partial obscurity, with more to be potentially read by a different reader, or even a more conducive experience of reading by the same reader. The passing on of the individuating experience of reading Stiegler calls trans-individuation, the creation of new circuits, made possible through the technics of being able to read the presented material. But does even a master of a technic, say of looking at art, ever become capable of total mastery? Even in the highest point of mastery?

The engagement is based on the possibility of engaging critically, as he says, to discern, that is, to pick apart the elements with which one can agree and disagree. There are then levels of critical awareness that play into the reception of any material, and interestingly he relates it to the possibility of having an emotional response to the material, based on a statement by anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan. So the critical relation, the individuating moment of actually experiencing the object of attention, is a process of reverting from the rational, educated, enlightened response to the pre-rational, the emotional, the fast thinking that follows from the long process of deliberate slow thinking. This leaves us with a clear connection to the emotional, enthusiastic and lively feeling of reading with recognition, feeling an impassioned response to the object we are perceiving, the excitement of seeing or reading something that opens itself up to us to as an emotional presence. But isn't prejudice a tremendous emotional response to material, a visceral disagreement, but is the fact that it lacks the possibility of agreeing to disagree, which is the measure of civility Stiegler insists upon, the differentiating factor between the refined and the barbaric. So the emotional response of rejection cannot be validated, there must be a tacit

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acceptance of the disagreement, and acknowledgement based on respect of the legitimacy of the contrary example. Two indicators of a lack of individuation, then, are the emotionless blank one can feel when faced with a piece of material that communicates in no way whatsoever, and the other extreme, a fierce rejection of the material that indicates another lack of understanding. Of course whether the lack originates in the reader or the material can also be examined in each and every case – is it an unworthy reader, or an unworthy book? A bad artwork, or a bad viewer? Why do these questions always seem to lead to circular paths that are unanswerable? Where can we end the process of evaluation with a hard and decisive truth? That would imply some kind of objective consensus, some kind of universal authority, a fantasy simplification that is tyrannical and liberating. It would be so easy to have answers, and so limiting.

Stiegler answers the question, at least from the perspective of potential for the recognition of the producer of the material. “For example, what is a great artist? Or a great philosopher? But also a great architect? Or a great person? Somebody really specific, singular—somebody who is recognized as a singularity who has created a new type of circuit on which other people can come and continue the circuits.” He bases his criteria on specificity or singularity, perhaps better terms than uniqueness or genius, but newness, recognition, and that which creates the possibility of continuation. So great work fosters new long circuits, so it is in the acceptance and forwarding of strains or lines of thought or creation, of course there is always the question of the delay in the uncovering of the circuit, and whether the circuit it generates will continue with some significant length, none of which can be judged with a mortal interval of time. The long circuit reaches beyond the moment, beyond even a lifetime, so we can always operate on presumption, intuitively, with emotion as a guide. We follow our whims, and invest them with faith and effort.

Conducted in conventional institutions, and driven by selectiveness, exclusion and measurement in elitism, scholarship was ruled by limited access, who could get to which libraries, which archives, how to overcome the financial, geographic and political barriers to access information. Inquiry is facing a new phase of openness, and institutions are struggling to manifest a practice within the expansive nature of the field. Just as institutions will change, and react, the space also opens for the operations of anti-institutions, seeking to find alternative or contradictory paths into the promise of information freedom and openness. We cannot assume that all barriers are lifted, indeed the barriers may be much more elusive because of an invisibility assembled out of a claim of universal openness. Perhaps

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we cannot see what is being obscured through the implied openness as the electronic library grows into fruition as a labyrinth of obscurity and revelation.

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Attention and Forgetting

> "…with regard to the fullness of immediate experience – a "direct consciousness" would be a kind of claustrophobic horror, like being buried alive with no breathing space. Only through this delay/limitation does the "world" open itself to us: without it, we would be totally suffocated by billions of data with, in a way, no empty breathing space around us, directly part of the world."
> *Parallax View*
> Slavoj Žižek

Žižek points out how consciousness works in opposition to raw information, as a kind of filter. It supposes an overwhelming wealth of potential data, and then begins to pick through it. Essentially, our consciousness "forgets" details for us, it sees what it can handle, and overlooks the rest, as an act of self-preservation, in order for us to continue to operate. "Attention blindness" is the term used by cognitive scientists to study the conundrum of the presence of information and the absence of perception. Why can't we see what is right in front of us?

"The brain's capacity for processing sensory information is more limited than its receptors' capacity for measuring the environment." Neurobiologist Eric Kandel explains that the very hardware is insufficient for the job, there is an intentional undersupplying of receptors that results in what Žižek describes as the necessity of *not* perceiving.

Kandel attributes this reduction to our attention, which determines the utilization of the hardware that is available. "Attention then acts as a filter, selecting some objects for further processing. It is in large part because of selective attention that internal representations do not replicate every detail of the external world and sensory stimuli alone do not predict every motor action." Kandel describes the physical process of this discrepancy between potential stimuli and received stimuli, but Žižek goes further, arguing for the psychological necessity of this reduction. He concludes that the limitation is a strength, a defining characteristic of the system of perception that results in consciousness.

> …however, there is another lesson to be learned from Libet: the function of *blocking* as the elementary function of consciousness. This negative function

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> is discernible at two main levels: first, at the level of "theoretical reason," the very strength of consciousness resides in what may appear to be its weakness: in its limitation, in its power of abstraction, of leaving out the wealth of (subliminal) sensory data. In this sense, what we perceive as the most immediate sensual reality is already the result of complex elaboration and judgment, a hypothesis which results from the combination of sensual signals and the matrixes of expectations. Secondly, at the level of "practical reason," consciousness, while in no way able to instigate a spontaneous act, can "freely" impede its actualization: it can veto it, say "No!" to a spontaneously emerging tendency. This is where Hegel comes in, with his praise of the infinite negative power of abstraction that pertains to understanding: consciousness is possible only through this loss, this delay…"

So that which makes it through our filter *is* our reality. Reality is not what is out there in the world, nor is it back in the morass of memory, because an equally overwhelming sea of data awaits us there also, ready to pull us into the permanent dream state that Borges described as Funes' reality, the unfettered recall that built only elaborate nonsensical architectures of meaninglessness. No, memory too is subject to a filtration, the knife edge of thought that Bergson described, slicing through the dreamy clouds of memory as they pass through the filtering blades of attention and mingle with our perceptions to create thought. The screen seems a double screen, occupying the space between memory and the outside world, driven by attention. Perception of either the world or recollection of memory could be imagined to send out the radiating circles described by Bergson from an originary point of the filter, in the scattershot pattern that tormented Giacometti. Imagine this dimensional filter as our monad, the individualized experience, the very trap at the center of our existence that, formed by our personality, our upbringing, our presuppositions, prejudices, blindness and insights glides, spins, accelerates and skids through the chora space of each succeeding moment, expanding, shrinking, sending, receiving, processing, remembering, forgetting.

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Working Forgetting

When we think about the idea of curating organizational memory, the kind of practice that may result from a heightened acknowledgement and acceptance of forgetting, we should seek approach and content, rather than form, for precedent. Rather than deliberating on the differences between the practice of the artist and the curator, we can deploy the experience of the artist as a practitioner steeped in tradition and memory as the model actor for working this medium of forgetting. Artist as curator, curator as artist. Since the inception of conceptual art, the practice of making work about the forgetting of the work itself due to a lack of expression has arisen as a refusal of the tradition of mark making. One noted example is that of Bas Jan Ader's "Thoughts Unsaid, Then Forgotten", an installation of the title text scrawled on a wall, and a lamp shining on a vase of flowers that wilt and die over the course of the exhibition. Here the flowers are like the loss of the work and its beauty, accelerated by the spotlight, and point out that when we leave something only in the mind it is not recorded as part of the art dialogue. When he made this work, Ader was also trading commodities on a daily basis, an activity he described as artmaking, but has been classified as only part of his life, not his art, by historians since his death. The commodity trading activity was never "said" – never turned into a documented work before Ader's untimely death, so it is doomed to be forgotten by the art world. Like the flowers, it had the potential to blossom, it was in the spotlight of his practice. It can be an indicator of his consideration of "saying" or not saying the commodities work in which he considers the organic matter that he is trading, soybeans, livestock, precious metals, etc. in parallel with the choice of flowers, which he used here for the first time, but not the last.

In his study of Ader's life and art, *Death is Elsewhere*, Alexander Dumbadze compares the work to that of Robert Barry, which was documented and explored in Mario Garcia Torres' later work, "What happens in Halifax stays in Halifax." A few years before Ader's work, Barry had created *A Work Submitted to Projects Class, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Fall 1969.* He instructed 12 students to agree upon an idea and keep it to themselves. When Garcia Torres reassembled the students about 40 years later, none of them could recall, or at least would admit to being able to recall, the idea that they had agreed upon.

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Barry constructed a framework for forming and forgetting an artwork, as the artwork itself. The fact that the action happened, encompassing the open question about the persistence of memory, investigates the phenomenon of forgetting without touching the forgetting itself. He manifests the presence of the absence, the immaterial container that leads us to think the loss of the contents, which unquestionably were created, but are shown to be untraceable. This recalls Barry's personal statement of the same construct: the phrase "Something I was once conscious of, but now I have forgotten," on a standard, letter-size sheet of paper. He created the same fate for the idea his students agreed upon, no doubt expecting them to eventually forget and drain the event of content, leaving the shell of his construct.

Australian artist Stuart Ringholt showed a similar engagement with secrets and forgetting by asking others to paint a square canvas in a specific color, which he then painted over in white and displayed without ever seeing. The nature of color memory being so difficult and imprecise, the human memory would hardly be able to replicate the hidden color, and so the one who chose the color will certainly forget it without being able to reference it. Ringholt acknowledges in the work that he uses the piece as a concrete and specific reminder that there are things he does not and cannot know. The fact that the unknowable information is essentially irrelevant does not detract from the power of the point he is making. In contrast to Barry and Ader, the forgotten secret, the color choice, remains just below the surface, an actual physical presence tantalizing in its possibility to be revealed. The obscuring veil is thin, and stands forth as the mark emblematic of withdrawal in all forms.

Dumbadze characterizes Barry's work as exhibiting invisible things, and flirting with nothingness, but always firmly tied to the context of art through documentation. He covered each absence with the trappings of art to mark its presence, not risking the oblivion that threatens Ader's commodity trading activity, which Dumbadze reads as "speaking to the conditions needed to make a totally private work of art, one immune from the insincerity of representation."

The children's classic novel, *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, holds this same conundrum at its heart. The book tells the story of two children who have run away and hidden themselves in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, only to discover a mystery that overtakes their own adventure. An exquisite marble statue of an angel, rumored to have been created by Michelangelo, is put on display in the museum. Crowds flock to see it in the day, but the two children have it to themselves at night,

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and obsess about its origins. The truth is revealed to them at the end of the book as a secret – the original owner of the statue, the eclectic and reclusive collector named in the book's title, inexplicably put the statue up for auction intending for it to end up in the museum, while avoiding being recognized as the donor. Because the origin of the sculpture's previous owner is obscured, she remains anonymously in possession of the secret behind its origin, a sketch by Michelangelo that in her mind indisputably establishes the authenticity of the work. But why won't she share her secret with the Metropolitan, and put an end to the mystery, ask the children. She describes the scrutiny that the sketch itself would undergo, the assault on its own veracity, which she can't accept. This seems like the "insincerity of representation" that Dumbadze refers to – the fact that the fundamental truth she sees in the sketch is open to attack and doubt. She predicts that though evident and forceful to her, it would still fail to be read as an authentic artwork. Given the ambiguity of interpretation, she prefers to keep the secret, to be in possession of a totally private work of art, despite the fact that she has abandoned the sculpture to the same fate. It stands in the museum in a state of heightened attention due to the very lack she created on its behalf. She calculated the institutional response and derailed it, generating a benefit for the sculpture she loved and gave away, shrouding it in an alluringly romantic mystery of authenticity, knowing this act also threatens its place within the institution. She prefers the risk of the mystery playing itself out to the normal institutional process of gathering and evaluating evidence.

An anti-institutional approach to curating organizational memory, with the understood obligation or at least potential to declassify or mobilize the subversion of convention, seems to often possess the seeds of its own undoing. By initiating a system failure within an organization in need of redirection can make itself subject to gravitational destruction.

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Occupying the Institution

To understand the possibility of the institution serving as an element in the creation of an artists' practice, we must consider the relation of the artist to the institution, and how it can be advanced by mutual agreement and tension that engages the two entities as individual and establishment in a formative and evolving dialogue. The institution can be established as a porous and receptive vehicle for the intentions and practice of the artist studying within its bounds in such a way that the two forces mold and shape one another. The receptivity of the institution to such an influence and the perseverance or focus of the artist on the endeavor will work together to determine possible changes and formations taking place. In this way, it can be said that an institution can attempt to adopt anti-institutional characteristics or practices, acknowledging the potentially destructive consequences, in order to activate or accelerate change in a dynamic time calling for transformation.

From an ethical and political perspective, people and property can hardly be separated. Indeed, the modern political subject – that is, the individual, the person, the self, the autonomous actor, the rational self-interest maximizer, etc. – has taken shape in and through the elaboration, institutionalization, and enactment of that which rightfully belongs to it. This thread can be traced back perhaps most directly to Locke's notion that the origin of the political state occurs when people rise above the state of nature by ceding the power to prosecute offenses. The rule of law begins then with a defense of the right to property. People become subjects by adhering to the social contract, which they do by deferring the defense of their own property to the state.

In this light, the response of the United States federal government to the financial crisis of 2008 appears to many as a breach of the social contract, and resulted in a new type of social protest, the "Occupy" movement. The chant "banks got bailed out, we got sold out" states the claim plainly. Why exactly did some subjects (e.g., the banks) have their property defended by the state (i.e., through the variety of programs including TARP, the discount window at the US Federal Reserve, etc.), when other subjects (e.g., homeowners) found themselves without protection of their property rights, forced to default on mortgage debts and face dispossession? Even if the rhetoric about "too big to fail" can be believed, and the collapse of the

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financial system would lead to negative consequences for people who had little or no connection to the activities that brought it about, such consequences need not call into question the notion that everyone stands equally before the law.

To occupy, then, appears as a form of civil disobedience, an intentional, retaliatory breach of the social contract by those who feel that they have lost the support of the state to which they ceded their power as sovereign agents. It proposes a stoppage in the movement of property and capital, a delay, a hindrance to the smooth operation of people moving through institutions in support of their functioning. Rather than an action of its own, the idea of a political "movement" is recast into a political clogging. It is not a march, or a revolt in the sense of an active intercession, in the tradition of a sit-in, it represents the opposite of progress, an attempt to slow, reverse or alter the flow of an institutional function that runs in a direction unacceptable to the protesters.

The Visible and the Invisible

The violation of property rights of people who have recognition, protection and power under the law destabilizes their very status as citizens and tests the limit of democracy. Did the continually deregulated financial system of the time, which arguably reached its pinnacle in the 2008 crisis, force the dematerialized victimization of individuals? Do people become numbers, or worse still, percentages of unemployed, tranches of defaulted mortgages and foreclosures? Are they perhaps instead disenfranchised prospectively from the privileged position occupied by virtual entities and actors such as those involved in the derivatives markets, always already exiled back into the physical, visible realm?

The line of conflict appears to have been drawn between invisibility/absence/deferral and visibility/presence/realization. In the initial and most visible site of protest, Zuccotti Park in Manhattan's Financial District, the demonstrators occupied an excess property of those subjects, namely, the banks and financial elite, who did receive recognition and protection under the law. The property itself represents a concession to the populace, an obligatory public space built to allow the building to maximize floor space on its own footprint, a zoning law that allowed the creation of the "canyon" landscape of lower Manhattan. By domesticating this excess property, which is not a purely public space owned by the State, it rendered its invisibility visible within the political economy, the protesters raised a new form of threat to the hegemonic order.

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To occupy, then, involves a rejection of the order under which the "99%" of the economically disenfranchised have been subjected to erasure. These are citizens who have felt the impact of deregulation that favored the financial markets and left them vulnerable to trading forces that ultimately manipulated their basic property rights through the evolution of complex trading innovations which destabilized financial protections put in place following the Great Depression. The occupation sought a creative strategy to establish a new means of communication and law for its subjects. In the face of an existing power structure that increasingly disenfranchised the majority of people while consolidating nodes of power and influence, the "occupation", or the work of the Occupy movement, involved seizing a space and reprogramming it to refuse the rules of the existing, allegedly corrupt sovereign state. This refusal of governance extended even to include a steadfast refusal to articulate a strategy, to formulate a list of demands, to converse with the sovereign power on the grounds of its own conventions, to put forth a leader, to resolve the ambiguity of the movement into a discreet identity, face, or voice. This "headless" identity represents the greatest point of difference for the protest. Rather than being disorganized, it was horizontal in structure, it refused to vertically elevate individuals or prioritize demands that would have allowed for negotiations in accordance with the accepted practices of the entrenched power structure and institutional framework.

Does this provide a resolution to the problem that was its genesis? Not in such a direct and easily resolved manner. The general populace was largely baffled and yet sympathetic to the movement due to the nature of the complaint, just not the manifestation and practice of it. Occupying presented a challenge easily perceived as a danger to institutional stability and practice – are you willing to step into a different space, where the rule of law is unclear and evolving, but which holds itself out as the representatives of the majority, the 99% that do not control the power? By forming in the center, not the periphery, the spontaneous archipelago of protests became an irritant, a negation of the accepted order, a stoppage in the flow of capital that is immediately ringed by police and contained. Indeed when it moved outside of its self-declared home it was encircled and escorted by the police, constantly monitored and maintained so that a permanent state of paranoid persecution takes hold. This level of State attention made the previously invisible population a focal point of power, the very struggle of the majority society to contain it created from it a causes célèbres, which then garnered increasing public support, and the language of the movement ultimately infected the public dialogue and led to a questioning of the deregulation that led to the perilous conditions which fomented protest. The reaction on the

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part of government was to eventually force the movement from the occupied space, to remove the element of possession of property, and it was at this point of conflict, the struggle to hold the property, that the greatest friction and violence occurred. Each occupied space became a site of potential for breaking the dominant system, and the hope that the rule of law could be restored through a reformation, a recognition of the income and power disparities that birthed the movement, an attempt at repairing the prior breach, and serving justice by re-establishing an appropriate connection between person and property. The aim was to reintroduce more horizontal leveling, to confront the increasing vertical disparities represented by property, capital and the legislative reform driven by lobbying that originally led to the crisis.

Scaling the rule of law

While occupied, it was the property that called for a redress of grievances, a restoration of the rule of law. The Occupy movement did not select and put forward individuals or leaders, it put forward places – it was the occupied property that represented the point of conflict, not the individual. And it was this very property that the State, at the urging of the financial institutions which were targeted, then tried to reclaim. The movement remained faceless, anonymous, uncounted, or rather counted only as a mass, the self-labeled mass of 99%. These spaces were like refugee camps or favelas, but constructed to unite the political life and private life of the protesters. Ultimately they proved to be a population that could not remain effective and self-determining, resistant to the pressures and de-stabilizing efforts of the establishment, and ultimately disbanded without an acknowledged victory. This objective of a singular life of public and private affairs was presented as a tactical necessity, as all other means of protest and communication have failed, leading to this new manifestation of the option of seizing, holding, and occupying a property.

But the question arises whether there is the possibility for a return to the earlier relationship to property, to a settling into the understanding and valuation of property that was historically established, following the logic of Locke, for example. In this respect, the contemporary crisis seemed to indicate a new, transitional phase in the way that property operates, or rather, how it exists in a balance between real and virtual value. The roots of the crisis lay in the massive overvaluation of property caused by lax lending practices, as more people were encouraged to borrow more money, which drove up the prices of property, causing home ownership and the

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resulting self-determination to teeter precariously as the decreasing likelihood of the property owners to pay became visible and widespread. At the same time, these individual properties, these mortgages for homes, which actual families lived in and worked to support, were hyper-virtualized as bundled commodities that could be bought, sold, and speculated on. Reducing a physical house and real estate parcel to an almost incalculably small element in an investment vehicle resulted in a scaling of the hedge that radically diminished the value of any individually-owned property, and in fact negated recognition of the individual human value that was bundled with it. It turned that fundamental notion of personal property and that formative act of giving up control over the rule of law into a totally dehumanized irrelevance – the gulf of separation between those creating, investing and trading in mortgage-backed securities and those residing in overvalued homes was well-nigh absolute. This extreme span functions to render maximum value.

But the key differentiating element in this new phase of the notion of property has yet to be described. And that new element is the simultaneous investing in the lost value of property – the credit default swap, a wager that stands to benefit from the failure of the individuals, on a massive scale and multiplier, to keep making mortgage payments. This is the negative valuation that balances the positive valuation, and it is also scaled up and multiplied to a dehumanizing quantity. And the biggest lenders were investigated for controlling both sides of this valuation, the positive and the negative, to facilitate both the creation and failure of the investments and to profit from both.

The ability to benefit from both the negative and positive value of an investment is a result of a technologically-enabled capacity to operate within a complex field. These layered and scaled investment vehicles and the simultaneous negation of their value together represent a commingling of the virtual and physical existence that is both complex and multiple. The valuation of a virtual property has tremendous power to change the physical value - either injecting it with or depriving it of funds, which can pump in or drain life and energy. By creating a new kind of value for the Occupied property, that of the absence of expected function, of conformity, or support for the predominant society, raised the “social value” of these public spaces. Rather than being a concession to the public, or a limited amenity, they became nodes of horizontal power, networked across the country and ultimately across the globe with conduits of communication that could be monitored but not cut.

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This situation has historical roots of its own – the notion of property advanced e.g., throughout the enclosure movement in Britain was, from the outset, an imposition of virtuality (i.e., the concept of law, the institutions associated with ownership, etc.) on the physical reality of land. Hernando de Soto has emphasized this dimension by empirically demonstrating its non-existence in many countries in *The Mystery of Capital*, but what is new is that technological trading platforms combined with innovations within the financial services industry have enabled the reduction of each individual property receiving or losing value in scale to an almost atomic level. In turn, the number of properties held simultaneously and valued as massive, multiple wholes – i.e., the derivatives market in mortgage-backed securities – is a new phenomenon made possible through the application of similar technologies and institutional structures. And those actors who can trade in these layers of complexity profit from the new phase of disassociation of the virtual and the physical – unconcerned with and operating at such a virtual distance from the individual residing physically on this piece of real estate that is subjugated to economic factors so much more massive than itself – in that they no longer feel the tug of the physical tying them back to the physical, they operate in a world insulated by virtual distance.

Resisting an entrenched hierarchical structure that separates the interests of the institution from the interests of the students is key to forming a responsive model open to critique and engaged dialogue. The distance and degree of separation from the top to the bottom of the organization must be transparent, monitored and open for discussion in order to avoid this kind of total alienation. On a fundamental level, the institution must allow itself to be utilized as the medium of the students' practice and critique, to form and reform its population, faculty, function, and priorities. Occupy Wall Street was not a model that could be sustained, it was an anarchic reaction to the ungraspable distance and separation of capital from the individual subject. As Judith Butler said, while visiting the site, "If hope is an impossible demand then we demand the impossible", knowing that the impossible can be a demonstration, a goal, but cannot be maintained, just as it cannot be achieved. To maintain a horizontal plane of operation for all players is to thwart the creation of an insurmountable separation and distance, to form a responsive model and to avoid institutional oppression and alienation.

Taking a lesson from the Occupy movement may represent one possibility for narrowing the distance between the individual and the institution. The protesters "acquired" the property of Zuccotti Park, a public/private space that fell between the jurisdiction of the city and the corporation that

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officially owned it. It was not a public park which would have been subject entirely to the laws and regulations of the city – in fact several sites of that type were considered and rejected because the city would not have allowed the encampment to take place. As corporate real estate, it was not incorporated into the structured daily function of an interior building space, which would have been closely controlled by private security and also unsuitable. The corporation in fact had the option to request that the city expel the occupiers, but it did not. Instead it chose to tolerate the protest for two months until it ended the permanent occupation based ostensibly on concerns for hygiene since the park needed to be cleaned, which it ordinarily would have been on a regular basis. In response to the warning of the impending expulsion and cleaning, the protesters attempted to save the site by cleaning it themselves the night before.

The fleeting possibility of self-governance and continued independence vanished, but that moment represents the idea of "occupation" without ownership, a dynamic balance of forces in a territory lacking specific restrictions. The institution hosted the function of the anti-institution. A study could be conducted on the effect to the institution of the temporary occupation in its physical and mental space. No financial arrangement was in place in regards to the use of the property, no true governance from outside the space ruled it, there were just expectations as to a set of standards required that would allow the situation to continue. To be sure this is a delicate balance, one that threatens to unseat the institution, but it allows for the will of the occupying population to determine its fate, gives a sense of responsibility and self-reliance that differs from ownership. During Occupy, many of the fundamental aspects of an institution or society spontaneously arose and formed, taking on function particular to the space and its needs. Through trial and necessity norms and practices arose, as did resources. By the time it was disbanded, the space had a library, a kitchen, power generation, communications and media relations, and the remarkable General Assembly government body with its unique standards and practices. It did not however, create income or sustain itself financially, in fact it was the recipient of grand generosity on the part of the general public that supported the idea, as well as very wealthy and apparently sympathetic individual donors, beneficiaries of the very institutions at the heart of this new form of anti-institutional insurrection. It was, however, also prey to mild exploitation of its resources and even violent crime that took advantage of the lack of policing and the established rule of law. Internally, the hierarchical structure was flat, no leaders were elected or elevated, but many stepped forward to serve in various leadership roles without maintaining power or position in such a way that they could be permanently singled out.

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Ultimately, as an attempt at maintaining an anarchist utopia, the movement failed. However, as an influential voice that affected the local culture, influenced the national dialogue on wealth disparity, inspired a network of similar communities, and ultimately caught the world's attention, it was a remarkable success for such a short-lived and essentially small event. It demonstrated a parasitic anti-institutional event.

The occupiers were not renters, owners, or paying customers, but they were vested with a sense of collective responsibility and self-determination that drove their efforts. Like with many improvised situations, the population was transient and unpredictable, but the property helped maintain the focus of the effort. The exercise of applying these principles to an educational setting impacted the formulation of the Academy of Forgetting. Institutions of higher learning often generate activists and revolutionaries, anti-institutional actors that then attack the structure that helped form them. Can this transformative power be engaged without destroying the institution, anti-institution or the actors drawn to the melding of the two?

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AFTERWORD

"…go to a meeting and infiltrate and then once you are inside, try to have an effect."
Felix Gonzales-Torres

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InConclusion: Invisible Institutions

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Contributors to the dialogue about the formation, management and direction of Art PhDs tend to agree that it must necessarily differentiate itself from other PhD programs in form and practice. Many believe that within that need for innovation the productive potential of the degree lies, in that the methodology evolved by the PhD artist could contribute to the research dialogue with cross-disciplinary, collaborative projects that could enrich the overall context of the university and even the notion and form of the degree itself.

This book originated as a doctoral dissertation. As an artist attempting to form an art PhD within the context of an open, philosophy-based, interdisciplinary PhD, I experienced a paradox of knowledge, which, according to one administrator, is not uncommon even in more strictly defined programs for artists.

My discovery was that, like when evolving a studio project, I intuitively uncovered the path of the PhD. It did not conform to linear logic, there was a haphazard randomness that felt very much like "floundering" in the studio as a project comes together, where I moved from one set of source materials to another, working on one focus and then abruptly switching to another that seemed unrelated yet undeniable. The connections between disparate fields of inquiry, such as the neuroscientific explanation of attention and the administrative structure of academic programs, at first are entirely obscure. With time, the connections began to flicker in an almost surrealistic disjuncture, but then strengthen, as the logic of the piece came to form, not according to what one would have thought of as an existing model, but, like an artwork, driven by a compelling internal framework. This notion of the "logic" of an artwork is well captured in Sol Lewitt's sentence "Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically." This paradoxical

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construction leads you on a crooked path in the methodical pursuit of the work as it plays itself out, the irrational thought is itself the spur that drives the idea forward, that gives the sense of originality in the logical proceedings. When the traditional expectations of PhD programs call for the creation of "new knowledge", this hobbling gait could serve that purpose. The artist may be working on the same plane as a specialist in the field who has already comprehensively covered the ground, but the artist PhD incorporates elements and values that might not last through the rigorous academic demands of a traditional doctoral review. So the artist may not create "new knowledge" in the sense that is demanded of the pursuant in other fields, who have a firm context to operate in, and a set of clear precedents and markers for the state of current knowledge, but the artist pursuing the illogical path gathers remnants and hints in the form of ideas and theories from other disciplines, but twists them into support for his or her project. The same reference in support of a logical thesis in another field may lend itself to advances for the artist's dissertation *without the need to disprove the referenced argument.* The artist does not need to refute or support the scholar being referenced, as a student of the same field would feel compelled to, but can harness the thought for the advance of the doctoral work.

This is not to conflate the PhD with an artwork, though that can be the case, as James Elkins points out, but rather to recognize that the artist pursuing the art PhD will be unavoidably informed by his or her background as an artist, and productive ideas such as those proposed by Lewitt that relate to artmaking rather than a dissertation may be helpful in the service of unearthing the wisdom of the practice. Artist's statements and manifestos, heretofore the primary written accompaniment to artmaking, can help drive the pursuit of this new extension of the field. It is my belief that the art PhD should be an extension and forwarding of the field of art, not simply a steppingstone in the career development of the artist/academic, or a source of funding for the university. It is the responsibility and should be the aim of both the programs and the doctoral candidates to create artworks or foment the creation of artworks through these efforts, despite the problems and challenges that this will inevitably create for the facilitating institution. If more worthwhile art, or deeper understanding of the import or potential of artwork from the perspective of a maker, is not an eventual result of these programs, then the field seems misdirected.

An artist's work is often understood by the artist in a manner inscrutable to an outside observer. As Elkins argues, "even though the PhD student might believe her practice is supported by her philosophic inquiry, the revelation

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might appear very differently to her viewers, critics, and (eventually) her historians. Often artists' theories turn out to be irrelevant to what comes to be taken as most important about the work." The artist statement may try to illuminate the rationale or process that arrived at the work, or it may intentionally obscure the origins in an attempt to put the observer into a mindset found along the arc of the work's development by the artist. The conclusions about the work that an art critic or other observer deduces can take the form of an argument that makes the case for interpretation, and may run contrary to or in direct conflict with the assertions of the artist. Again, Sol Lewitt captures the idea in his statement: "The artist may not necessarily understand his own art. His perception is neither better nor worse than that of others." In the context of a PhD program, this kind of disparity in interpretation creates a new problematic that lies at the heart of evaluating the art PhD.

The fact that there is not necessarily a clear correlation between the view from the inside and outside perspective, which may be normal in terms of anyone's motivation for pursuing a particular line of scholarship, holds particular significance for artists. This is because the artist's perspective can in fact be the actual goal and determining rationale that justifies the legitimacy of the scholarship, rather than just serving as an impetus as it would for a traditional PhD that seeks as its goal to advance the body of knowledge of a field. As Elkins states in his introduction to *Artists with PhDs*, and he and several of his contributors re-assert throughout the anthology, there is a desire to find new approaches to the expectation for the PhD for art such that unlike other doctoral degrees, "it does not need to rely on notions of research or the production of new knowledge." He painfully tries to re-define the parameters for the PhD without those two terms, which he feels are so limiting. However, another contributor, Timothy Emlyn Jones, contradicts him, arguing that art research is determined by primarily drawing on intuition for direction, and this necessarily results in "the programmatic generation of new knowledge in a defined field." He goes on to say that research in art is not in fact different from research in any other field, and that any differences that can be found should be utilized for the improvement of research in all subjects.

Even Emlyn Jones, however, acknowledges that one of the foundational activities of PhD practice, a literature review to assess the state of current knowledge in the field, "is simply not possible to determine all that has been done, because not all creative practice of this kind has been externally referenced let alone refereed" as opposed to most other fields where "there is a great deal of literature on quantitative and qualitative research methods",

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which he sees as an opportunity to focus on developing the paradigm of an aesthetics of method. While he identifies the method of assembling a team of art experts along with subject-matter experts drawn from different fields to collectively evaluate the results of the research, he fears "the transfer into art and design of inappropriate methods from other disciplines in the name of academic responsibility," though it seems that there are equal possibilities for these "inappropriate methods" to serve to benefit art research and practice, just as Emlyn Jones looks to art to add a fresh perspective to the university overall through art-related research that is relevant to other fields.

Rather than struggling to acquire the total mastery of a body of knowledge, "we have to take on the challenge of mapping the multiplicity of information that might need to be accommodated within a domain, without falling foul of imposing partisan world views. Defining the boundaries of adequacy, especially in a highly interdisciplinary subject area, represents an imposing challenge.

Since Christopher Frayling of the Royal College of Art's essay "Research in Art and Design" appeared in 1994, the relation between the art practice and research has been debated as a primary question about the formation and function of the programs, which are widespread in the UK, Australia, and increasingly continental Europe and Asia. In the U.S. the programs are just beginning to emerge and form, and the opportunity is to shape them with a unique and fresh perspective specific to the system here, especially given the depth of learning and insight gained through the programs' experiences elsewhere. Frayling opened the conversation with three categories of relation: research "into," "through" and "for" art and design, each having a different dynamic in relation to the studio practice.

With an eye to the American system, Elkins challenges these three relations with three models of his own: the first being more common and expected, closer to art historical work: "research that informs the art practice," (e.g. learning about Renaissance drawing in order to draw in a Renaissance style) or its converse, "art practice that informs the research," (e.g. learning to draw in a Renaissance style in order to write about Renaissance drawing). In the second and, in his experience more challenging and rare, "the dissertation is equal to the artwork" such that "the research doesn't support or inform the art, but complements it, with each one illuminating the other" as either a new interdisciplinary field of art and research, where the research might even be like an expanded artist's statement, lacking the objective approach of art history, ultimately serving the artist's personal interests and

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goals. He can even see the two projects, research and artmaking, as separate and juxtaposed work whose connections are not immediately apparent and possibly emerge during the course of the research. He views this as a radical possibility, breaking from the self-serving tradition of the MFA, and drawing on the strength of university resources to allow artists in-depth involvement in seemingly unrelated fields.

His third constellation, and one he himself has not seen put into practice successfully, and hence feels is the most challenging and potentially potent, is the dissertation as artwork. If there is a written component it could be understood as “fiction” and read itself as creative work. In that case the studio art could serve as the research to feed that text, which being poetic or fictional, would be best judged as an artwork on its own terms. Or the art practice could refrain from borrowing from other fields and create a kind of dissertation that is wholly art practice, without the requirement of a written dissertation at all.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, this work originated as an attempt to answer that challenge, but with an additional consideration, possible perhaps only through an interdisciplinary program at this point, rather than a visual arts program. The challenge being that the dissertation itself serves as an artwork, in and of itself, through the means of being necessarily read as fiction, but without a visual art or studio project created as well. This necessitated the writing be taken as the “work”, a practice not unheard of in the art context. This formulation then tried to meet the requirements of both a dissertation and an element of an artist’s practice, in my particular case following the notion put forth by artist Felix Gonzales-Torres, that the best place for an artwork to exist is in the mind of its audience.

I endeavored to capture an idea in motion, flux, and formation, one that has no more finality to it than the nature of the human mind. Every day announcements appear that can influence our thoughts about how we can accommodate the rapid change and innovation our frenzied technology births. Totalizing or summarizing is necessarily futile, as conclusions are threatened with encroaching banality and obsolescence that dog every insight. So if in the course of reading this book the idea of the Academy of Forgetting, or some element of it, its architecture, or educational approach, its relation to history, or to the contemporary world, or any other aspect of the project, gains footing within the mind of the reader, then it has served its purpose.

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In Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo described cities he visited on his journeys for the benefit of Kublai Khan, who listened intently, wondering how much of what he was hearing was true, yet rapt all the same. Polo's descriptions were marvelously incomplete, fragmented and anecdotal. The sensory gems Polo reproduced are, as he freely admitted, failures. He can no more trap a city in his words than Kublai Khan can truly possess his empire, or as I can produce the Academy of Forgetting on paper. Calvino's fiction plays a game with historic fact, the meeting of two renowned figures, each bringing in their great power: Polo to travel and observe, Khan to conquer and subdue – deep in their discussion while in repose they are both so far out of their element they question whether they are real, or really there together.

> "But each time we half-close our eyes, in the midst of the din and the throng, we are allowed to withdraw here, dressed in silk kimonos, to ponder what we are seeing and living, to draw conclusions, to contemplate from the distance."

This sentiment of liminal observation and reflection approaches the state of mind sought by the Academy, both within and withdrawn from the world, engaged and yet able to reflect upon their experience. The ultimate manifestation of that state, that which results in creation, is taken up by Calvino, who has constructed the scenario and the characters in order to arrive at what Greg Ulmer calls, in *Heuretics*, a "choral word… that which links the parts of my tableau and transforms it into a cognitive schema." The choral word becomes the mechanism of momentum for a work, pulling in associations, forming the basis of memory in the context of its creation. For Calvino, the choral word is "cities," their presence and absence, their willingness to be conjured in Polo's storytelling and their elusiveness in a definitive characterization. The choral word of this work is "forgetting," and it circulates around the container of "academy," as Calvino's cities are modified, defined and expanded by the word "invisible." According to Derrida, "in this one word is fused all the necessities, the object, the metonyms, the structures as well as the psychological, personal, material and linguistic aspects of the projects," and much more. The method Ulmer has been developing encourages the writing of an intuition. It is not an argument that illuminates a single path, suppressing other possibilities, rather it is "an information environment, and the user chooses the path or line through the place provided." It originates, however, in language, with the accompanying full range of both possibilities and limitations. Applying the language to practice is another work that presents itself as a challenge to come. Perhaps an institution, or an anti-institution, could actually be formed

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on the basis of this thinking, certainly the experiment of that attempt would be informative and expansive. That experiment exercises the thinking of how to curate an organization, its memory and what it could or even should forget in order to function with relevance.

One potential application of an Academy of Forgetting, or some kind of institutional reform tracing the lines it lays out, would be to grapple with the generation and use of knowledge from outside of the institution within the institution. Many academic institutions are investigating and experimenting with experiential learning, where students have guided learning outside of the controlled environment of the institution, which when properly conducted can incorporate the multiplicity of contradictions and complex interactions that arise in everyday life. Recognizing that knowledge gained within and outside of the institution are different, a dynamic relation between the two can stimulate learning that transcends limitations of both. According to John Dewey, truth cannot be determined in an objective manner, the kind of theoretical understanding that is traditionally taught in a formal setting pales in the face of practical understanding, because of the necessity of arriving at a truth that "works" when we are faced with situations requiring us to apply our knowledge to practical problems. Dewey rejects the argument that a simple binary notion, right/wrong, or good/bad, can provide a functional truth – many more elements, simultaneously unfolding in multiple directions, hold sway.

Allowing the embattled medium of painting to speak to the possibilities of art education, there is a proposal in Derrida's *Truth in Painting* that could be applied to the negotiation of this dynamic. He writes, "One space remains to be broached in order to give place to the truth in painting. Neither inside nor outside, it spaces itself without letting itself be framed but it does not stand outside the frame. It works the frame, makes it work, lets it work, gives it work to do." Take the frame as the institution itself, and the dynamic transgression of its limitations are put to work, integrated and acknowledged as part of the conditions of study, adding complexity, criticality and awareness about the role the institution plays. Students pass into and out of the institution, aware of the boundary they are crossing, learning rules, relationships, and gaining new knowledge that molds itself to their path.

According to Tara Fenwick, who has made a study of the trend, different conceptual approaches to experiential learning are being experimented with in a variety of institutions, though all are seen as problematic in some sense. Despite the unresolved state of the practice, the capacity for experiential learning as it "challenges the hegemonic logic of expert knowledge" makes

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it an undeniable and timely tool for reconceiving education. An approach that leads with the inclination of intuition, curiosity, enthusiasm, and self-direction, rather than authority and expertise, opens avenues for discovery more in keeping with an awareness of the omnipresence of unlimited resources that is our current paradigm. The balance between gains made outside of and within the institution, the complex relation between the two, and the integration into a singular, dynamic process of education serves the learner, more than the material or the institution. By creating situations of bodily involvement in complex experiential learning, the student takes the individual role of responsibility, "to challenge the prevailing orthodoxy that worthwhile knowledge is canonical and that legitimate education is planned and monitored by professionals." Moving past the endemic separation of mind and body, of learning and living, the "political purposes of widening participation, equality of opportunity and freedom from exploitation" becomes an attainable extension of the goals of learning.

Finding new forms for higher education that challenge the entrenched assumptions and practices of our institutions requires open-ended experimentation. Higher education represents one of our most influential and time-honored organizations, with histories of hundreds or even thousands of years of tradition. They face some of the greatest pressure to adapt to the present given the evolving realities of institutional memory, the evolution of logocentrism, and the pressures of next generation challenges. Our myriad other organizations, functioning across the sectors of market, community, and state need also grapple with these factors in discovering new forms and functions. We are still at the early entering point of a new era of information, media, communication, and connectivity. It promises to reform our understanding of learning, literacy, progress and the formation of meaning. The anti-institutional approach, reversing the known as a critique and engine for insight, has sparked significant changes within institutional and academic practice in the past. Our institutions are opening themselves to change, and the opportunity to build against their grain, for their own sake, is enticing.

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Postscript: Institutional Sculpture

Upon the completion of my defense of the doctoral work that fed this book, Wolfgang Schirmacher, founder and director of my PhD program, The European Graduate School for Media and Communications, challenged me, as he does with his students. “Here’s your paper,” he said, with my advisor, and the rest of the defense committee listening, “now go out into the world and make something of yourself.” He was asking me, what will you do next? My response was formed in the moment he asked it. I now realize that was the moment of my passing through the doorway of forgetting that characterizes the moment a student decides to leave the Academy of Forgetting, as described in the chapter, “The Doorway as Event Horizon”. I replied that I would have to create an institution in the vein of the theory I had laid out, later realizing that this would become my artistic practice. In his excellent preface, James Elkins describes the theory behind the Academy as, “willful, idiosyncratic, eclectic, and inventive beyond what can be considered useful or practical.” I hoped I could answer Elkins by creating this imaginary type of institution through practical means and application in the real world. Quite to the contrary of what he read, usefulness was a directive. It led me to the “manifesto” for Institutional Sculpture: “The artistic practice of creating or shaping institutions within and beyond the realm of fine art. A participatory artwork incorporating all stakeholders, knowingly and unknowingly.” This is artwork that works, and sheds ownership through its nature as a functioning institution, a collective social structure that invites participation, and evolves in response to the stakeholders it collects. The artist is not author, but participant and contributor, to wit, the term curator perhaps serves better than that of artist as the aspect of organizational work inherent to that profession is crucial. Control lies beyond the reach of any individual, it is the organization and its collective intent that must become malleable.

This is by no means my practice alone, on the contrary, in my mind it fits into a long and well-established tradition where social sculpture meets institutional reform, and results in a practical outcome that goes beyond the traditional view of the nature of artistic work as being free of practical function. The broader context of participatory art has been well documented

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and established, codified within graduate programs and art prizes, built on a foundation of political agendas and social practices as Claire Bishop traces in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship.* It is becoming a traditional form in its own right. Pedagogical methods have formed that advance and challenge the practice, which was explored in Art as Social Action, edited by Gregory Sholette and Chloë Bass. Not free of its responsibility to either art or society, Institutional Sculpture strives to create or influence institutions that are fundamentally equitable, and do not hold onto power as they marginalize or exploit the public, which Bishop emphasizes as a flaw within social art practices in general. This shortcoming must be overcome, even at the cost to the art or artist in conventional terms.

This book can be considered as my first work of institutional sculpture. The institution is not a physical one, rather it is the practice of the doctoral dissertation as an institution. This book is an organization whose memory has been curated as a kinds of art of forgetting. Just as we speak of the institution of marriage, there's a whole realm of collective human endeavors that we can hold up to the same standards of the institution as conventionally conceived of as a formal, functional, bureaucratic entity. The doctoral work has collaborators, parameters, expectations, and even a physical form. To sculpt this institution, the challenge was to conceive of and defend the work as both an artwork and a doctoral dissertation. There's a fair chance that the legitimizing institution that holds sway over the fate of the dissertation, the university, would not be receptive to this in many cases. However, the European Graduate School, the organization that served as the superstructure of this doctoral work is itself an institutional sculpture, a monumental work curated by the director, Wolfgang Schirmacher, and the fact that he holds the authority gave me the chance to write what I wrote. He judged it a successful doctoral work, and the committee conferred. That is a defining characteristic, the element of artmaking is a driver, but not the ultimate determinant of the work.

Rather, the institution wherein the Institutional Sculpture acts should be judged by its popular or commercial success, not its viability within the realm of the art world. Any organization can be judged on the basis of its effectiveness within its sphere of influence. A feature of an Institutional Sculpture is that the institution it takes as material form is not funded or presented as art, it does not benefit from state, museum, or collector support for its formulation or presentation as such. It must be viable as any institution must be in order to survive, in the case of the examples of the various projects I have been pursuing, within their societal and economic context. They range through broad and possibly questionable definitions of

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institution as mentioned above, taken more loosely to mean collective and standardized human endeavors, in my case a book, a radio program, a cultural attraction, marriage, home ownership, an academic research initiative, a commercial art gallery, and a nonprofit organization. The anti-institutional status and tradition the Institutional Sculpture form originates from is the testing ground to its survival as an institution. Each institutional form, be it monolithic, academic, domestic, or public itself prioritizes tangible outcomes and outputs, and is therefore sociological, in Bishop's formulation.

Historically, anti-institutions fail, which the section "Before the Academy" presents. In practice, they might be able to survive and influence change within society and other institutions that they model, which is their purpose. However, the Institutional Sculpture as a catalyst that drives my engagement with the institution as such may eventually do its work only in documentation, description, or anecdotal narrative if in function the institution itself does not prove viable or influential, resulting in change. The failure of the institution can be instructive, even productive for the Institutional Sculpture as such. The struggle to not be frustrated by it, but to move with failure on into more informed and even more ambitious sculptural work seems to be a driver behind my own art practice.

The ongoing radical changes affecting our organizations, educational and otherwise, are, from a practical point of view, brought about to a significant degree by digital technology and interconnectivity. As Schirmacher has pointed out, war is often a starting point for social transformation, because the technologies created as a result can turn into life technologies afterwards. The internet was created as a military tool, and just as it has transformed the theory and practice of war through connectivity, it has also transformed society through the outsourcing of memory as storage to the machine, readily accessible – beyond what we had been accustomed to in books. As I present in "To Forget Forgetting", traditionally, institutions of higher learning have been institutions of memory. As resources and even daily classes are opened to unaffiliated, outside viewers, institutions are defining their policies as to how to administer the access and distribution of the accumulation of knowledge they have built for themselves and their formerly closed populations. This book critiques that notion of the academy and specifically the teaching of art—in this case pedagogic theory, but in practical application I'm trying this on all manner of organizations. The structures that support and promote the stability of a system are now under constant assault by technology and external factors, many environmental, and most recently the global health crisis. How do we actively evolve them, and evolve with them?

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If the Academy of Forgetting is an experiment in representation, exploring the idea of an institution of higher learning that does not require physical presence or promise the dream of constant, total recall like its conventional forebearers, then its logical consequence is the reformation of this and other types of institution. Rather than harnessing and accessing the limits of stored memory, it asks: why are we so afraid to forget? The Academy of Forgetting is not the definition of a school so much as a part of the process of thinking how to unmake any organization, which I feel is an essential step for its survival. As my dissertation advisor Greg Ulmer pointed out during my defense, today it's possible for an institution to exist not as a commitment to science but to wellbeing, the experience of joy, the festival. We can draw upon the freedom and dynamism of the carnival, modernized, as a relationship to political revolution. "This is a promising model for the institution," he said, "… how can we base a political, ethical, educative orientation of learning which is precisely outside, not against, but alternative to, different to, and holding responsible the existing or established traditions of school?" Take this question to the broader realm of human organizations of all kinds, and you have the realm of Institutional Sculpture.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Much of this work was completed while my family and I experienced firsthand the increasingly prevalent personal disaster of displacement due to climate change, following Hurricane Sandy in New York City in 2012. Without the generosity, thoughtfulness, support and hospitality of these and many more people who have continually helped us during these years, I am sure we would not have made it through, and learned to find and harness the great potential energy that resides in uncertainty. The first version of this book was originally published under the title *The Academy of* Forgetting by Atropos Press in 2016. The postscript and second edition of this book came about through generous interest of Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, who has encouraged me to revisit the work as a part of his Schwung series and a runway to writing a follow-up book on the practice of Institutional Sculpture. It happened to fall in the second of the great disruptions to send us out of the city, Covid 19. These disasters shift us out of normalcy, but also provide the potential for new thinking and new work, the kind of work that is essential for our adaptation, and hopefully reformation of our systems and institutions. What follows is my original list of acknowledgements, I will preface that with my appreciation of the Cambridge Scholars Press for the opportunity to publish with them for the first time.

My deepest thanks go to the faculty and staff of the European Graduate School, particularly Greg Ulmer, my advisor; Thomas Zummer, my inspiration; and Werner Hamacher. This unique program, a living example of an anti-institution at work in the world and no small inspiration for my topic, owes its form and function to the vision and efforts of Wolfgang Schirmacher, whose insightful assistance was essential to my progress and understanding. My time to study on the mountain in Saas-Fee was generously provided by my long-term employer, Chris Bodden, who has never questioned or stifled my nomadic impulses and has been there for my family at crucial moments in unexpected ways. I also wish to thank my extended family, both the eastern cohort in the Czech Republic, where Jana Ševčíková and Jiří Ševčík provide me with a lifelong aspirational model, and the western cohort from Denver, Colorado to Yakima, Washington by way of Los Angeles, in particular my mother, Patricia Gilman, my most supportive reader and proofreader. To many friends and colleagues who

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listened to, refuted or expanded on my ideas, provided references, material and support in other ways, including Pavel Büchler, Bob Richardson, Teague Mims, Kateřina Fojtíková,

Nuno de Campos, Althea Thauberger, Stuart Ringholt, Paul Boshears and the founding staff of continent., and in particular Matt Statler, troubadour and doppelganger.

And most of all, to Františka, who makes anything possible.

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Tim Gilman-Ševčík is an artist and curator living in Red Hook, Brooklyn and Prague, with his wife and collaborative partner, Františka, and their two children. Together they have been artists-in-residence at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Christoph Merian Stiftung in Basel, LMCC in New York, and other programs around the world. Their artwork, ranging from painting and sculpture to installation, lectures and performances has been exhibited in public and private institutions and commercial venues internationally including the Brooklyn Museum, Kunsthalle Basel, and at the National Gallery in Prague, and the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw.

Their engagement with contemporary art has incorporated the extensive publication of art criticism and essays, curated exhibitions, and the cofounding of the interdisciplinary publication **continent.** Throughout their career they have been engaged in the political transformation of the former Eastern Bloc, and helped strengthen cultural ties between the US and Eastern Europe through cultural exchange, writing, translation, and exhibitions. While continuing their studio practice, they are also currently at work on a series of social sculpture projects crossing into architecture, climate change, popular culture, and institutions of higher learning. Gilman-Ševčík was awarded his PhD in Media Studies from The European Graduate School in 2014 and is teaching for the Business and Society program at NYU's Stern School of Business, specializing in social impact. He is Executive Director of the Resilience, Education, Training, and Innovation (RETI) Center, a nonprofit focused on social, environmental and economic adaptation driven by our changing climate.

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