INCOGNITUM

HACTENUS

art philosophy horror

vol.1

Real Horror

Contents

Editorial
Caryn Coleman and Tom Trevatt

Welcome to the first issue of *Incognitum Hactenus*.

> *Incognitum Hactenus* is a new quarterly journal featuring writing on art, horror, and philosophy. Conceived as an ongoing investigation into each sphere and its crossovers, the journal publishes new work by leading international scholars, artists, filmmakers, curators, musicians, and designers. With a focused interest in that which finds an affiliation with horrific contemporaneity and the exposure to radical thought, *Incognitum Hactenum* reveals the twisting of contingency (that which comes from outside) as it produces new monstrosities. We aim to tear asunder the fleshy belly of the established and expected.

Following programming *The Real Horror Symposium* in London (October 2010), it became apparent that we had only begun to scratch the surface on the many layers in which modes of thought on art, horror, and philosophy exist in response to each other. Extending from Graham Harman's reading of cult gothic novelist H.P. Lovecraft in his essay "On the Horror of Phenomenology" and the notion of Weird Realism, *The Real Horror Symposium* addressed this reciprocal relationship between the expression of horror and reality. The symposium showed that while many dialogues on horror overlap, merge, and diverge, there has not been a designated outlet for writers, artists, and curators that would give voice to this new strain of thinking. Thus, Incognitum Hacetnus came into being.

Meaning "not known yet or nameless and without origin until now", we find inspiration in *Incognitum Hactenus*' definition as "a double-dealing mode of time connecting abyssal time scales to our chronological time, thus exposing to us the horror of times beyond" (Reza Negerastani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*). Within the structure of non-linearity, outside of constraints of what has come before, we aim to establish the

primary locus for those interested in the realms of horror, art, and philosophy.

The first issue of *Incognitum Hactenus* provides a permanent record of the presentations, screenings, and performances by the London-based artist, writer, and curator participants in *The Real Horror Symposium*: Amanda Beech, Carl Neville, Ben Rivers, and Simon Clark. Also included are contributions by U.S. writers Steven Shaviro and Ben Woodard. Currently, each journal issue will be available for download via PDF format on our website which will also include bonus material such as artist film features. Moving forward, *Incognitum Hactenus* will be curated, addressing topics such as capitalism, historical trauma, and popular culture among many others. We also plan to produce *Incognitum Hactenus* in a special published edition available in Europe and the United States.

As enthusiasts for each element that makes *Incognitum Hactenus* what it is, we are thrilled to have the support and contribution by others obsessed with the weird and unusual aspects of horror, art, and philosophy. Special thanks go out to to all the contributors for taking part in the *The Real Horror Symposium* and subsequently this edition, Joshua Y'Barbo for assistance during the symposium itself, Jason Mojica for continual support and everyone who has encouraged us along the way.

Again, welcome to *Incognitum Hactenus* - we hope you enjoy the discussion.

Caryn Coleman and Tom Trevatt

Martin
Carl Neville

George Romero's "Martin", which was made in 1976, is one of best films of 70s. It's not just great for a horror film, but a great film by any standard and certainly Romero's best. "Martin" is in many respects a quintessentially 70s movie, a complex film in which several antagonisms are played out, a film which revolves as so much 70's cinema does around conflictand disillusion. In many respects its an anti-horror movie, or at least attempts a subversion of the traditional vampire movie. It doesn't do this in any kind of facile way, like "Love at first bite" a parody vampire comedy that came out around the same time or by emphasising the trashy, camp and erotic elements of the vampire legend as in the earlier "Blood for Dracula" but rather through forcing the vampire movie into a pretty straight social realist frame. In some respects "Martin" is a meditation on the problems of being a Vampire in 70's America as well as on the problem of adequately representing the vampire in a movie in that unhappy land, and at that particularly unhappy time.

As has already been noted, in the 70s there is a shift to realism in horror, but also a general shift within the films of the decade, this realism isn't just in the greater liberty in depictions of sex and violence but in the way in which films seek to demythologize and expose traditional authority figures, icons and institutions. Horror-wise the two most obvious or at least famous examples are probably "Rosemary's Baby" and "The Exorcist", maybe we could also include "The Omen". There's also an emergent set of low-budget films, now retrospectively tagged with the marketing term"Grindhouse" that start to develop in the early Seventies too, the two most famous or infamous examples of which are Wes Craven's Last House on the Left and Tobe Hooper's The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. The crucial difference here is that The Exorcist, Rosemary's Baby and The Omen believe in the existence of evil while "Last House on the Left" and "Texas Chainsaw" are more concerned with the psychopathology of everyday life, whether this is in the form of Manson-family style clans killing for kicks or backward, backwoods hicks running around with chainsaws.

Martin locates itself between the two, and in many ways enacts a battle between them, both in terms of its style and its content. And this is one of the crucial tensions in the film, Martin's status as a vampire is never really resolved. The film won't decide on the problem of evil by either opting for a religious, supernatural explanation or by completely psychologising it.

The meaning of Martin, the character, then is something that is effectively fought over by Cuda the traditional Old World grandfather and his modern, progressive granddaughter who rebels against the family mythology. His age, Martin claims to be 84, is the only real manifestation of his non-human status, his only potentially supernatural quality and Romero hangs on to this ambiguity. There's a sense, in Martin's profaned world, a world in which there is "no magic any more" that the director, having already stripped Martin of all the trappings of the traditional vampire and the film of most of the cinematic conventions of the horror movie, is holding out against out-and-out realism, and allowing for a thin thread of fantasy, a thread of hope to survive, an idea which is re-expressed at the very end of the film.

Nausea

In 70's horror cinema in general, the main affect of films of the era is less one of out-and-out horror and more one of nausea: a queasiness, a sense of dread.

This affect is produced in a number of ways: partly through budget constraints, the use of 16mm film, lots of location shooting, naturalistic lighting. Partly through limited competence, duff acting, poor scripts, unimaginative camerawork, poor sound recording and so on. Also, it's an offshoot of increasingly liberal attitudes toward screen sex and violence and the need to constantly up the ante in terms of blood and guts, which, combined with advances in make up effects make the gore more plausible and visceral. The films then partly take on some of the quality of the documentary form and some of the taint of pornography. Deep Throat, the first really mainstream porn movie, was shot on 16mm for instance, (though so was Martin which admittedly does wonders with the format.)

Commercial pressures, among other things, mean the films become increasingly graphic and misogynist, culminating in truly grim stuff like William Lustig's "Maniac" and Fulci's "The New York Ripper". This is also partly a pressure exerted on them by the fairly unashamed Italian cinema of the seventies whose films push remorselessly more and more toward the real as the decade progresses, from the gratuitous use of autopsy footage in "Superbeast" in 1972, through animal slaughter in the Cannibal movies and then the uses of real death (though it is disputed) in the later Mondo Movieslike "Savage Man Savage Beast", which in turn produces American responses: "Faces of Death" and then onto the hyper-exploitative "Traces of Death."

In lots of ways the mere existence of the films feels kind of sordid and unhealthy, they're the symptom of a sick society perhaps, but also that they've crossed a line in terms of acceptable representation. The real in some ways must remain sacred and these films effectively exploit this ultimate horror for commercial gain What kind of people would make these films, what kind of people would consume them.

But there is another slightly more artful and interesting way in which they achieve their effects. This is most evident in the works of technically really competent stylists like Polanski, Freidkin or indeed Romero, but is even there in films like "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and "Last House on the Left" and it's the use of expressionist techniques, low angles, extreme close up, angular framings, buildings lit from below that loom up over the characters and so on. So there is a kind of repression of thefantastic elements within a realist frame, and this kind of knitting of the expressionistic elements into an overwhelmingly realist presentation adds to the sense of reality itself being infected in some ways. Any kind of catharsis of horror, the frisson of the uncanny, any potentially liberating making strange of the world is trapped and sublimated. So the horror is always there under the surface of the films realism, just as these films argue it is under the surface of real life, whether that is in the form of animalistic atavistic human drives or the world of the devil. When you look closely enough you see that reality looks like a horror movie. Martin in particular uses this technique a lot especially in the series of fantastic shots as Cuda leads him through a seemingly deserted Pittsburgh.

Vampire

Martin, it has to be acknowledged, even by his admirers, is a pretty crap vampire. The traditional Vampire, especially in the form of Dracula (Martin is given the jokey moniker "The Count" on the radio phone in show he gets involved with) is a seductive figure, with his burning eyes, mesmeric exoticism and commanding manner, representing a kind of urbane hyper-masculinity. In this sense he's an archetypal male fantasy figure, the ruthless seducer whose authority no woman can resist and who makes slaves of all he seduces, thus handily protecting the ego from the fear that she might run off with someone with a bigger set of fangs. But if Martin, who is weak and cajoling, is far removed from your standard-issue Prince of Darkness his victims are a long way from being traditional fangfodder too.

The women in "Martin" are in fact rather threatening and there is a strand of wistful anti-feminist conservatism in the movie, a part perhaps of Romero's nostalgia. There are two flashback or fantasy sequences in Martin, one of him being driven out of his previous home, the other an earlier reflection in which the siren song of a willing victim leads a much more confident- seeming Martin up to her bedchamber. There is a nostalgia here for an age when women were more reliably docileand men knew what worked, when the

sexual equation between vampire and victim was firmly inthe vampire's favour. Modern, liberated women need to be forcibly drugged before you can getthem, and even then they fight like hell. Modern women make a vampire's life much more difficultand so eventually Martin moves on to tramps, who seem a safer option, though even they prove abit too sparky for our increasingly weary hero.

Ruins of America.

"Martin" is of course also fundamentally a vision of America and it's a country in which everybody is adrift, except perhaps for the grandfather, Cuda.

Mrs Sabatini for example is terminally bored, unhappily married, Martin's first victim is in transit, heading elsewhere as is he, his second attempted victim is clearly unfaithful, the sympathetic granddaughter leaves with the unreliable blue collar stiff played by effect's man Tom Savini, and though she promises to write back, she never does, leaving Martin with the radio phone in show for company. He achieves a limited notoriety, though even that proves finally to be disappointing.

The America of Martin is a kind of post-everything America. Post Kennedy assassination, post Vietnam, post Watergate, post Oil Crisis, an America which has repeatedly lost its innocence and it sinfluence and now seems to be in terminal cultural and economic decline. This is the 1970s as a kind of killing ground for the American dream, a point of maximal disillusion before neoliberalism comes along and re-enchants everything. There's a superb sequence in which Martin watches some cars being crushed, both of them, the mythical figure of the vampire and the great symbol of American freedom and prosperity contemplating each others' obsolescence.

So one film it might be instructive to compare Martin to isn't a horror film at all but John Shlesinger's "Midnight Cowboy". In fact "Martin" is a kind of Midnight Vampire. Both films offer up two images of a more innocent past adrift in the anomie and chaos of American decline. Both films are reflections of masculine anxieties about what modern women want. One major difference is that while Joe Buck foolishly believes that the traditional image and allure of the cowboy still has some traction in contemporary America and is brutally disillusioned, Martin himself is a force of disillusion.

There's a relatively famous sequence, a brilliant pastiche of silent movies, in which Martin stalks Cuda through a fog-shrouded Pittsburgh in full vampire regalia, then reveals himself to be just plain-old-Martin underneath, taking out the fangs, smearing the make-up and so on. It's at this point, interestingly, that Cuda labels Martin a monster, precisely in the act of revealing himself as real and not the fantasy that Cuda's belief requires. Here again it is the real which is horrifying, sour, deflationary, mocking.

Martin has no belief in himself as a vampire, there is no magic in the world anymore. This is partly Martin's purgatory and Americas in the 1970s, the absence of consoling fantasy, the failure of the old myths. It's impossible to live too close to the real for too long, its monstrous to insist upon it thisis finally why Martin must be destroyed, the real must be erased, covered over, buried and faithmust stand watch over its grave.

The real monster

This leads on to the question then of who the real monster is in "Martin". While Martin does some awful things he's largely a sympathetic character. Fundamentally then its Cuda the grandfather who takes Martin in to either save or destroy him, who is the terrifying figure. The man who truly believes and who acts without compunction on his belief, the figure of fanatic who won't be disillusioned or swayed. The man of faith.

Ultimately it's faith that triumphs. The final shot, over which the credits roll, is of a crucifix backed by voices from the radio phone in Martin has participated in. In fact the radio is a kind of vampiric force in "Martin", an invisible creature of the night, feeding on the pain misery and fantasy of these lost and lonely souls floating through a ruined America. Martin has been involved in the phone in for a while until realises the kind of cynical permissiveness of the host, who tries to get him into the studio and tells him regarding his vampirism; "whatever gets you through the night". The future, the final shot suggests with uncanny acuity, belongs to these two forces, faith and conservatism and the cynical-permissive aspects of the entertainment industry.

Romero's own position on this is ambiguous. He appears in the film as a worldly priest who certainly enjoys a nice glass of wine and who infuriates Cuda with his equivocating over the existence of evil for example, yet on another level the film is an elegy for a bygone age and a certain form of cinema that Romero's own work had made increasingly untenable. It should be remembered here that Romero's favourite film is Powell and Pressburger's high-culture, technicolour confection "The Tales of Hoffman", a film that's about as far away from "Dawn of the Dead" as you could possibly get). But certainly Romero yearns for a little fairy dust to be sprinkled on American life once again, and the final voice on the radio show, which says " I have a friend who I think is the Count" does suggests a kind of continuation of Martin's legacy, the possibility of a more romantic re-enchantment. In reality of course this re-enchantment was already underway, "Jaws" and "Star Wars" are upon us and Reagan and Reaganomics are almost here. So there is a grand reimagining of America, a new kind of mythic quest already underway as Martin is mourning the decline of the old.

Of course that dream has now also died.

Terror! (2006)
Ben Rivers

Ben Rivers uses the archive of horror cinema as a modifiable object. While the basis for his own artist films are typically original, his 2007 work Terror! is a true love letter to horror film. Sourced entirely from the giallo and slasher sub-genres (1970-80s) they include Lucio Fulci's The Beyond, John Carpenter's Halloween, Dario Argento's Susperia, and dozens more. By establishing a dialogical relationship between his own work and these movies through montage, Rivers carefully negotiates this particular period of horror history and, by fluently speaking the language of horror cinema, he conflates the past with the present to create a new process of looking making what Sergei Einsenstein termed an "intellectual montage" (proposing that a new idea can emerge from a sequence of shots unintended by the original footage). For Rivers this new emergent idea directly involves the audience.

The selected scenes featured in Terror! build upon a structural frame of familiarity through a progressive sequence that increases in intensity and absorbs the viewer in its rhythm. Rivers' filmic montage (and homage) to the influential giallo and slasher movies inverses storylines and audience participation and exemplifies Steven Shaviro's 'zombie time' terminology in his essay Contagious Allegories: George Romero: 'the slow meanders of zombie time emerge out of the paralysis of the conventional time of progressive narrative. This strangely empty temporality also corresponds to a new way of looking, a vertiginously passive fascination. The usual relation of audience to protagonist is inverted' (1993, 99).

Rivers establishes linearity by editing similar scenes together: houses in the fog, people calling out for each other, the mysterious opening of doors, shots of keys, and even bits of comedy. Each sequence builds incrementally, simultaneously acknowledging that the audience knows these are "only movies" but still provoking some serious unease. For those who recognize the sources, the palpable suspense produced by the alternating tension

between this conglomeration of references continues just until the moment when the one questions whether or not the violent resolution will ever come. Then Rivers provides a brilliant release with the most fantastic eruption of surplus gore; a bloody violent collage that is completely satisfying if not totally thrilling.

Written by Caryn Coleman on the occasion of the screening of *Terror!* at *The Real Horror Symposium*

Film still from Ben Rivers' *Terror!* (2006), courtesy the artist

For a clip of the film, please visit:

http://incognitumhactenus.com/2011/10/26/benrivers-terror/

Knowing Horror
Amanda Beech

This short paper argues that the Real Horror is that horror cannot be real, in short, the image has no access to a metaphysics, but moreover a horror that knows this, and expresses this fact as its claim to another form of realism does not escape this bind to referencing reality either. Such a theory of the image will result in camp, kitsch and formula because its aim is contradictory. This paper demonstrates these problems of knowledge, image and horror as a means to think past the idealist habits that theories of the image produce through the genre of horror, and to think towards a realism that can account for the problems of representationalism without giving up on the image itself; that is, its rhetorical function.

First let's entertain the following description of the relations between horror, the image and knowledge.

> Horror as an experience and an image

> Horror as the condition that describes the limits of our mastery, the edge of rea son, the place at which we no longer control our environment, or our future.

> Horror as the description of a negative space that stands for that which we do not have access to.

Following these points, horror becomes emblematic of 'the nothing'. It is here when we see that horror is a referential term that ironically is capable of invoking a relation to the thought of the inaccessible or non-relational. A key problem of horror then, as something that references the infinite, is that it asks us how we can speak of absolute alterity without reproducing this as presence – without reconditioning it to another form of finitude. This is where the image of horror must live out its own contradiction, for an image must - if it follows the standard of horror - refer to and invoke the unsayable, the unfilmable, the

unconscious – let us say the anti-image. This is a paranoiac theological schema that would tell us that images are the work of the devil, since their illusions originate from and potentialise forms of domination we cannot imagine, understood precisely in this way because of their power in the political realm.

This schema of representation holds within it the problem of a formal hierarchy in as much as it dictates a formula of the real where, the more ambiguous the image, then the more it resists meaning, and duly the closer to reality it becomes. It also assumes that we have a clear view of an intact and pure world as our foundation that is corrupted by images.

In Critical Theory, we have seen the identification with language itself as indicative of the place of the real, where language as our essential technology is understood as alienating and beyond our control, despite it being made by us. This paradox lies at the heart of Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment, where we see core connections between the image, its ability to manifest power and its (albeit) negatively construed correlation to reality. Adorno and Horkheimer's work looks to how this dimension of language-power figures a crude, barbaric and miasmic nature in a kind of post-political reality that desublimates individual identities to the equivalence of a barbaric totality. The base of the operation is Hollywood, and as we know this highlights a deeper irony where these two sides have shared a mutual popularisation. For Adorno real horror is the horror of the given, where the banalities of everyday life contains within them the absolute horrors of Auschwitz.

This image of world beyond us, in fact is a story that narrates our relationship to ourselves and the world as presentation: it narrates our alienation from ourselves. Here, the impossibility of 'knowing self' becomes correlative to the impossibility of 'knowing reality'. Self and reality share a terminus that means that the image can only be for us and by us. If we follow this logic through, this means that we are back to the old cliché that the greatest fear is our own nature! The many horror films that use mirrors, to tell us this are too many to mention where the self is represented as an other, real self – a monster. Here the big error is easy to spot: an ontological relativity is produced despite claiming its empirical impossibility. This is where we encounter the space of horror that resides in a mistaken understanding of subjectivity, reality and the image. What we see emerging here is a central problem; the de-ontologised real of our reality, namely a conception of a post-metaphysical world, is correlated to the forces in our lives that we identify as dominant and pervasive, and beyond our mastery.

So why must this be the case? If we seek to speak about realism as a vista of the non relational then surely we must overcome the tendency to essentialise the real to the image whether this be metaphysical or immanent, because by doing so we guarantee that there are types of existence that we cannot say anything about. I'm wondering where

the knowledge sits that can make such a claim, and it is here where the arrogance of this epistemology envinces this as its singular and grounding illusion.

Crucially, for Adorno and Horkheimer, a knowledge that knows the dialectic is capable of transcending the horrors of similitude, but it is here where this knowledge is expressed where we encounter a key problem. This is centrally because this knowledge is married to a form of mysticism, and significantly this is most evident when it comes to an understanding of art. Here art's re-politicised form is correlated to what is considered to be its essential nature; that is, art's politics is conditioned upon the natural ambiguity of the image.

And, it is important to dwell for a moment on the contradiction that this twofold status of the image produces. On the one hand the image is considered as the site of a constructed reality that takes the form of nature, and on the other hand it is considered as the means to transcending it. It is the prime symbolic referent to dominance in the world of the given and it has the ability to invoke the fact of in-access to a deeper unconditioned reality. To achieve this double operation of truth telling and deceit, the image is compelled to become the primary figure for a politics that it claimed it had no access to in the first place. It is asked to be both the guarantee and cause for political transformation. In thinking these asymmetrical demands together the image is mystified further towards a concept of a deeper and mystical nature. Problematically, such a conception of the image can only serve to set the limitations both for itself and politics.

To make some early conclusions; the first point I'd like to make about these approaches to meaning is that they assume too quickly that the work of producing meaning is tied to a theory of causation.

Second; at the same time and in direct contradiction to this, they assume that the image is naturally free.

If we take these two points together, the image can only be understood as mutually weak and special or evil and banal, a tool for power, but at the same time the figure for freedom. In this schema the last stop for the image is unreason. Ironically, it is such a statement that has defined the conditions of art's politics for generations.

Third; what is common and also worth focussing on when we look across these materialisms, which try to think through the conditions of the world without us, is that they all are subtended by an impoverished theory of meaning. The potential for the image to produce meaning through mediation is denied since this is confused as a dominant representationalism, where the image is fixed, unfree and shackled to the demon of a primary referent. I will open up this point a little further below, but for now we can begin to see in much sharper focus how an image of knowledge that illustrates our relation to language as a

form of knowledge is a result of the intended and failed aim to think contingent reality.

The same problem of nature is as present in dialectical approaches to the image as much as in phenomenology, where the embodiment of the image as affect holds within it the attempt to be free from the conditions of representation. Therefore, I want to argue that this understanding of a politics of the real that finds its home in a world of affect, phenomena and experience, nevertheless remains inspired by a theory of knowledge. This is why we get so many art works telling us that a nonrepresentational image can achieve this reality through embodying images as a form of nature, but a representational image cannot because it cannot escape its mediating function. We can see this when, built into this logic of horror is the notion that the image can allow us to access a reality only if it is unfettered by the heaviness of mediation. An effect of this paradoxical thinking against the image with the image is that the empirical world is made strange, since this presence of the nothing is immanent to it, lurks within it and is something that happens to us. Our given reality has an alienating quality that we cannot fathom. So, we live with a dilemma of the image, we cannot trust the given, but that is all we know.

This strangeness is harnessed in a non-representationalist culture where reality is the manufacturing of the relativity of chaos in the world of the given and is represented to us often in an aesthetics of dissonance, arrhythmic atonal music, base materialism, punk and other visions of affectual excess. These images are first and most obviously problematic because they are understood easily as genres, the very categorisation they had hoped to dispense with. This tendency to genre happens because their claim to nature falls within standard understandings of the relation between accessing reality and political instrumentality. By this I mean that the realism of embodied affect links this understanding of nature to the essence of democracy.

Integral to this logic is that the image is set against thought, and vice versa, and this distinction is claimed when the image is endowed with two aspects: on the one hand the inherent inaccessibility of reality is naturalised to the image as a property of it, and on the other hand, the image can also draw this out in forms of representation. This process underscores a separating out of reason and the imagination. We can think a world that is beyond us but as soon as we begin to picture it, it we are only capable of describing this relation in dialectical form. What happens as a result of this is that images that are interested in horror tend to describe the paradox of this 'given nature', in forms of self-conscious descriptions of the finitude of the image, which harbour an immanent relationality. Images and stories spring from this that tell us about the torsion of knowledge, where the condition of contradiction becomes the figuration of horror. This space of contradiction dwells on subjective experience and takes pleasure in describing the limits of what it means to be human. And, in aspiring to invoke an unmeasured nature beyond us, a world that we cannot master, the image ends up as a weird reflection; the mirror of our nature. It finds its form in a Kantian-style psychosis of mimetic compulsive

gestures that resides in the pleasure of a twisted and masochistic anthropocentricism. The tension established in phenomena is matched to an underlying imagined reality.

The types of image-thought that respond to horror in this way must be poetic. They must master the rhetoric of presence and absence in a match of tensions in an aesthetics of constraint. This is made clear in Graham Harman's essay "Horror of Phenomenology" (Collapse Volume IV 2008) where a '(one legged) realism grasps the weird tension in the pheonomena themselves' (364). For Harman this is a realism that misses the 'genuine hiddenness of things' and in that sense the virtual world can only be that place of weird metaphoric-poetic phenomena. Whilst this virtual world built on a material plane does not provide access to the metaphysical dimension, it is nevertheless important to note that the whole point of this aesthetics of a cubist, processional phenomena of aesthetic experience acts as an isomorph of this metaphysical dimension, and that it is explicitly set in relation to it. Our recognition of this relationalism in parallel, where the image is an effect of the causal power of this space, is exacerbated because the world we are presented with is altered and strange. In that sense, Harman's 'weird realism' tells us that images are non-relational in one sense, but that these forms of images – the works of Lovecraftian architectures, for example – are capable of representing some form of relationship to the real. Grasping the phenomena of 'inaccess' is the horror that Harman invokes, and this privileging of phenomenal experience in the processional unfolding of images in time assumes that this form of image production can (and also that one must) surpass the problems of representationalism. What it does not account for are the mediating properties of this type of image production; their properties of semblance. As such, rather than being a 'weird realism', this theory of the image as being multi-perspectival, disorientating and time-based seems moreover to occupy the standard definitions of realism in artistic practice, following the logic of a tragic pheneomenology that I have just narrated. Here, the image is seen to function by accessing its own internal reality, demonstrated outwardly in an aesthetics of multiple forces co-existing in one plane; that is, its essential qualities which are actually defined by, are an effect of, and are set in relation to the reality of 'the great outdoors'.

What Harman perhaps misses here is that his theory is a theory of the image, and this tends to reside in simile rather than metaphor. This ends up neutralising the potential that the image may have since it remains attached to the real as its negative referent, which is a special and alien product of reality. To rehearse this point: The horror that describes the real of the image as a series of non-relational entities, where the being and appearance of images are distinct, abstract and chaotic, remains significantly different to the horror that is used to describe this 'non' or even 'weird' relation that results in the thing it had hoped to overcome: That is; furthering the life of stable forms and theories of representation. Co-incidentally, this theory of the image as a self-theorising entity provides us with other familiar (subjective) traits of the horror genre: decadence and privacy.

Alternatively (and I'd like to briefly insert this into my argument), I would identify the un-registered potential for the image as force as understood as action and semblance, and in its substance as claim-making in a more singular sense; that is, these images, despite their presentations of uncanny perspectives and groundless nature, have direction that are set against rather than for such a poetics.

Collecting these thoughts together we can see that the consequences of horror already point us to: a) an impoverished theory of the image; b) the necessity of the image; and, c) the split between reason and the imagination. It also requires that we must rethink these normative distinctions between expressing the nature of an image and its operations and in addition we must ask whether or not these qualities of the image should be a subject that art is interested in expressing and focussing upon anyway, since this approach to connecting a philosophy of the image as key to its politics is a form of naïve-finitude that harbours a (bad)faith in the infinite.

Horror in this way is always naive, since it dwells within the subjective and the finite whilst aiming beyond them. In that sense it pictures the edges of 'the human', its borders and its outline, a kind of abstract portraiture in a fun-house mirror. Horror struggles to move past its connection to finitude and most particularly a conception of finitude that sits within a theory of knowledge as becoming. In this way it is hard to see horror outside of a theory of scepticism, outside of a conservative genre, and moreover capable of grounding itself in a world of non-fiction – the realm of the political.

How can we move past the contradiction that we are claiming access to something that we also claim we have no access to in the first place? And, would this be a real horror? Well no, because the conjunction of reality and horror denies the very claim of realism, that is the radical unbinding that contingency in an absolute sense potentialises. Real Horror, then, is an oxymoron. It prevents us from thinking a world that is not for us, because it problematically assumes that this world is a world without us. In this sense it cannot escape its core humanism. It also misses the opportunity to talk about a world that is not for us, and therefore cannot entertain anything but the ideal forms of correlation even when they try to avoid this by producing a contorted aesthetics of torsion. These images of process, temporality, change, chance and collision, bring us to a form of chaos that refuses to understand itself in terms that might be as capable of being expressed in serenity and stability as that of instability and flux. After all, these are the futures of such a radical unknown. Whilst horror in its typical sense locates the image of a spectacular catastrophic time as a marker of our living with that dark space, it cannot understand the promise that such unknown spaces also harbour; that is, that the quotidian is also a part of this reality.

We could say this to the most 'social realist' versions of horror from the 1980's, where Hammer Productions produced its long running iconic series of shorts, Hammer House of Horror, including episodes such as The House That Bled to Death (1980). This nar-

rative and others were set in the anaestheticised greyness of England's dank suburban ter-races, when people shopped at empty Fine Fare supermarkets and Thatcher and Reagan were in power. But this presence of banality in horror, as we know, is the most careful device, for it is this that generates and partners the horror to come. Horror is real affect here, and works on its audience because the banal rubs up against the 'everyday'. This is successful since the everyday is all the more recognisable because it is 'poor'. As such we can see that the aesthetics of horror rely upon the claim to some description of 'world' through a formal arrangement of clashing polemics that make up the spectacle of a co-existing public and private space, which (equally spectacular in nature) form another space - horror.

Horror rests upon a combination of the 'rich image' (dramatic catastrophe) and the 'poor image' (the banality of experience) united in contradiction. But whilst horror is master of this aesthetic collision in space, it cannot comprehend the problem of time. This is to say that horror cannot face the time that promises us an equality of normativity and difference as non-contradiction. Understanding the possibility that stability is as likely to happen as much as instability, is so often misunderstood by horror genres in their varied forms of expression, because it is produced and presented back to us as a balance of op-posing forces. The irony then is that horror tends to present us with a form of stability across these categories – a kind of stability that it assumes is absolute impossibility. To engage thoroughly with this more radical contingency would mean that these categories of stability and instability, or normativity and difference, do not share the same space/time and are instead processional in nature. Moreover, we would also need to re-think the very parameters of meaning with an interrogation of what we understand as definitive of these categories anyway. This is all the more prescient when by now we can fully com-prehend a crisis of difference, where a concept of difference is commensurate with the status quo of global financial capital as much as it is associated with the standardisation of artistic critique underscored by identarian politics. It is here where our assumptions about knowledge, the things we know to be our ground and our principles are tested and a re-comprehension of language and its politics is urgently called for - not as an effect (either negatively or positively proposed), but rather, as cause. For now, to return to my central point, horror, as I have hoped to show, is and can only be a space of contradiction.

I hope that these final points make it easy to see what is difficult about a theory of hor-ror: That it redraws the primacy of finitude to our ideal focus – whether this is written as transcendence or immanence - where a finitude that haunts us remains the hinge to the door of our becoming. In that sense we are not 'after finitude'* at all, and even worse the world of the given is now more standardised than ever, because horror remains our per-sonal horror. This demands more attention to what we perceive as and understand to be the register of our finitude as fact, and perhaps more significantly here, how the finitude of images operate.

Picturing a world that is outside of human access then risks sustaining the traditional dualism of fact and fiction. This distinction in turn serves to secularise this de-ontologised world to the realms of private fantasy. I would like to think that we can assume a thought of a realism that can think language as capable of meaning and that one can think after finitude as a dimension of the non-tragic. This would mean that we can also think finitude without referent. This is a language that produces different facts and with that different laws: A language that is capable of surpassing the idealism of knowing or experiencing the unknown, either as phenomena or picture, and instead meets the requirements of a yet to be known that is unknowable.

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* I refer this term to the general work of thinking a non-tragic non-humanist dimension of life, but in particular to Quentin Meillssoux's book After Finitude (2008) that highlights the problem of image-making in the context of absolute contingency precisely through the fact that it goes unmentioned. For more discussion on this see my essay; 'Curatorial Futures with the image: Overcoming scepticism and Unbinding the Relational' Journal of Visual Arts Practice, 2011, Volume 9.2: pp. 139-151, Intellect.

A Nature to Pulp the Stoutest Philosopher: Towards a Lovecraftian Philosophy of Nature
Ben Woodard

The possibility of Lovecraftian philosophy (and a philosophy of nature) is at least a three-fold weirdness:

1-Lovecraft's own philosophical views were bitingly materialist following in the footsteps of Hugh Elliot, Bertrand Russell as well as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer while making dismissive remarks about Bergson, Freud and others. Lovecraft's enthusiasm for Nietzsche was actually more Schopenhauerian than it appeared as evidenced in his piece Nietzscheism and Realism.[i]

2-Lovecraft's reception 'among the philosophers' has been fairly limited with only a few scattered remarks from Deleuze and Guattari and philosophical-literary treatments by Michel Houellebecq, ST Joshi, and others. Though it seems to have begun to change with Speculative Realism and other connected thinkers – as even Badiou has expressed his appreciation for Lovecraft.[ii]

3-This relationship of Lovecraft to philosophy and philosophy to Lovecraft is coupled with Lovecraft's habit of mercilessly destroying the philosopher and the figure of the academic more generally in his work, a destruction which is both an epistemological destruction (or sanity breakdown) and an ontological destruction (or unleashing of the corrosive forces of the cosmos). These demolitions are a result of a materialism which border on supernaturalism in Lovecraft's cosmos, a materialism which operates within an onto-epistemological indistinction. This indistinction, which runs throughout weird fiction on the whole, means not only that being and knowing are indistinct and cannot be pre-determined by thought, but that it is difficult to separate being and thinking formally from one another.

Or, in other words, the horrorific entities and forces of Lovecraft's fiction (while rigorously materialistic and part of a real nature) simultaneously test the limits of knowing on a small scale – 'do I know what X is?' – as well as on a large scale 'can I know what X is?' as well as ontological limits, of questioning the very possibilities of is such as in the horrific phrase 'what is that?.'[iii]

This indistinction, as Lovecraft engages it, can appear as supernaturalism, as what he describes as nature wavers between nature-as-we-know-it and nature-as-it-is both of which rend humanity simultaneously in thought and flesh. In addressing Lovecraft's texts, this paper sets out to propose a philosophy of nature in which the formal isolation of rationality is undone by the processes of an acidic materialism, a rationality which Lovecraft cements in the level headed philosopher and dust-coated academic.

First we will account for nature as ruthless cause and then articulate the effect of Lovecraftian nature as madness. This statement presupposes a discord between the being of nature and the faculties of reason and representation. Whereas much of contemporary philosophy is happy to collapse the being/knowing distinction several recent thinkers are challenging such bland normativity. As Ray Brassier has put it:

> "the metaphysical exploration of the structure of being can only be carried out
> in tandem with an epistemological investigation into the nature of conception.
> For we cannot understand what is real unless we understand what 'what' means,
> and we cannot understand what 'what' means without understanding what
> 'means' is, but we cannot hope to understand what 'means' is without
> understanding what 'is' means."[iv]

The relation of thought and nature is simultaneously obvious (of course nature is the ultimate cause for the processes of thinking) and poetically irreducible (my thoughts, feelings, etc can never be the result of only gray matter). It is this troubling two-headedness which manifests itself as the aforementioned duality of nature-for-us and nature-in-itself. Take the following from the closing passages of Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space":

> "What it is, only God knows. In terms of matter I suppose the thing Ammi
> described would be called a gas, but this gas obeyed laws that are not of our
> cosmos. This was no fruit of such worlds and suns as shin on the telescopes and
> photographic plates of our observatories. This was no breath from the skies
> whose motions and dimensions our astronomers measure or deem too vast to
> measure. It was just a colour out of space—a frightful messenger from unformed
> realms of infinity beyond all Nature as we know it; from realms whose mere exist
> ence stuns the brain and numbs us with the black extra-cosmic gulfs it throws
> open before our frenzied eyes."[v]

Nature, as a malicious force, plays a hellish joke on the arctic explores of At the Mountains of Madness" and continuously tests the characters of Lovecraft's tales. From the closing lines of "The Dunwich Horror":

"It was—well, it was mostly a kind of force that doesn't belong in our part of space; a kind of force that acts and grows and shapes itself by other laws than those of our sort of Nature."[vi]

The irruption of another sort of nature is also found in "The Shadow over Innsmouth:" "It was the end, for whatever remains to me of life on the surface of this earth, of every vestige of mental peace and confidence in the integrity of Nature and of the human mind. Nothing that I could have imagined—nothing, even, that I could have gathered had I credited old Zadok's crazy tale in the most literal way—would be in any way comparable to the daemoniac, blasphemous reality that I saw—or believe I saw. I have tried to hint what it was in order to postpone the horror of writing it down baldly. Can it be possible that this planet has actually spawned such things; that human eyes have truly seen, as objective flesh, what man has hitherto known only in febrile phantasy and tenuous legend?"[vii]

The commentaries of both Michel Houellebecq and ST Joshi point that despite the fantastic contours of Lovecraft's manifestations they are never supernatural but are supernormal due to an acceptance of extreme probabilities[viii] that is, the extreme (but still strictly materialist) creations of Lovecraft are still physically possible. Or, as Michel Houellebecq writes: "What is Great Cthulhu? An arrangement of electrons, like us. Lovecraft's terror is rigorously materialism. But, it is quite possible, given the free interplay of cosmic forces"[ix]

Lovecraft's quiet mocking of the academic at the hands of tumultuous nature takes a particularly devastating turn in "The Strange High House in the Mist." In the story the professor of philosophy Thomas Olney moves to Kingsport and, after some consideration, decides to explore the house in the distance. Suffice it to say that the poor stout philosopher loses his spirit there and becomes a good citizen with his disciplined thoughts. Given the story's place in Lovecraft's later work, it is difficult to square the fate of Olney with the author's materialism.[x] The house, I want to argue, is the obscured object caught in the recurring cycle of materialism, an object which consumes Olney's philosophical ennui. Donald Burleson in Lovecraft: Disturbing the Universe writes: "The status of the house is as oscillatingly unstable as is the spacing of the opposition between inside and outside"[xi] To bring the house closer to the discussion at hand, it functions as a liminal space, as an objective mirroring of the onto-epistemological indistinction functioning in horror (and that horror functions within), a place where (since we are operating within Lovecraft's appropriately soulless materialism) culls the consciousness from those who dare to enter. Lovecraft reduces the subject to no more than a meat bag whose thought process is one of many natural processes. Since thought is a natural process, and thereby nature thinks (in a distinctively Schellingian vein), thought is nature's attempt to become an object to itself, an impossible task given the arrow of time, thought can never catch up to the production of nature.[xii]

The attempt of thought to capture nature in Lovecraft's world leads directly to madness and epistemology is the formal circumventing or at least softening of such a possibility.

From "The Lurking Fear":

> "I waited while he leaned out and tried to fathom Nature's pandemonium."[xiii]

One of the better known passages of Lovecraft is the opening passage from "The Call of Cthulhu" a passage which is resoundingly epistemological:

> "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. "[xiv]

Yet, in other instances, Lovecraft seems to err more towards the epistemological damage and less about the ontological weirdness of nature itself and more the epistemological softness of the investigator.

In "From Beyond": "That Crawford Tillinghast should ever have studied science and philosophy was a mistake. These things should be left to the frigid and impersonal investigator, for they offer two equally tragic alternatives to the man of feeling and action; despair if he fail in his quest, and terrors unutterable and unimaginable if he succeed."[xv]

From "At the Mountains of Madness":

> "Every incident of that four-and-a-half-hour flight is burned into my recollection because of its crucial position in my life. It marked my loss, at the age of fifty-four, of all that peace and balance which the normal mind possesses through its accustomed conception of external Nature and Nature's laws."[xvi]

From "The Dunwich Horror":

> "Then the germ of panic seemed to spread among the seekers. It was one thing to chase the nameless entity, but quite another to find it. Spells might be all right but suppose they weren't? Voices began questioning Armitage about what he knew of the thing, and no reply seemed quite to satisfy. Everyone seemed to feel himself in close proximity to phases of Nature and of being utterly forbidden,

and wholly outside the sane experience of mankind."[xvii]

One of the more complex passages is found in Lovecraft's "The Unnameable":

> "Manton remained thoughtful as I said this, but gradually reverted to his
> analytical mood. He granted for the sake of argument that some unnatural
> monster had really existed, but reminded me that even the most morbid
> perversion of Nature need not be unnamable or scientifically indescribable [...]
> if the psychic emanations of human creatures be grotesque distortions, what
> coherent representation could express or portray so gibbous and infamous a
> nebulosity as the spectre of a malign, chaotic perversion, itself a morbid
> blasphemy against Nature? Moulded by the dead brain of a hybrid nightmare,
> would not such a vaporous terror constitute in all loathsome truth the exquisitely,
> the shriekingly unnamable?"[xviii]

Lovecraft questions the possibility of thought to represent the unnatural suggesting, some-
what paradoxically, that the possible is always unthinkable or, perhaps more accurately,
unpredictable.

Lovecraft's fiction then cross-wires while also separating apart representation and non-
representation while, perhaps taking a Schopenhauerian path, unites them both in a mad
materialism which, at varying proximities, induces madness. The fact that Lovecraft's
weird horror operates as (and within) onto-epistemological indistinction, does not negate
the distinction between thought and materiality, (or will and representation)[xix] it merely
cracks open the former to the destructive forces of the latter. Lovecraft is one of the few
thinkers who appreciates the weakness of thought in the face of non-domesticated mate-
rialism something that even Deleuze did not fully appreciate as he believed the philoso-
pher could return from the land of chaos.[xx]

For Lovecraft there is no separation as chaos is the world only veneered in the illusion of
sanity. Blake, from "The Haunter in the Dark" has the following experience while staring
at an old stone, an experience which can only be called transcendental paranoia:

> "He saw towers and walls in nighted depths under the sea, and vortices of space
> where wisps of black mist floated before thin shimmerings of cold purple haze.
> And beyond all else he glimpsed an infinite gulf of darkness, where solid and
> semi-solid forms were known only by their windy stirrings, and cloudy patterns
> of force seemed to superimpose order on chaos and hold forth a key to all the
> paradoxes and arcana of the worlds we know. Then all at once the spell was
> broken by an access of gnawing, indeterminate panic fear. Blake choked and
> turned away from the stone, conscious of some formless alien presence close to
> him and watching him with horrible intentness. He felt entangled with some-

thing—something which was not in the stone, but which had looked through it at him—something which would ceaselessly follow him with a cognition that was not physical sight."[xxi]

The reality of horror is the justification of this paranoia's materiality.

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[i] See H.P. Lovecraft "Nietzscheism and Realism" and other essays in Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography, and Miscellany ed ST Joshi (Hippocampus Press, 2006)

[ii] In the opening of Essays Critical and Clinical Deleuze writes: "Writing is inseparable from becoming: in writing, one becomes-woman, becomes-animal or vegetable, becomes-molecule to the point of becoming-imperceptible. These becomings may be linked to each other by particular line, as in Le Clezio's novels; or they may coexist at every level, following the doorways, thresholds, and zones that make up the entire universe, as in Lovecraft's powerful oeuvre" (Minnesota Press, 1997, p 1).

See also Deleuze and Guattari's "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible" in A Thousand Planteaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, as well as Michel Houellebecq's Against the World, Against Life as well as ST Joshi's Decline of the West.

For several Speculative Realist texts on Lovecraft see Collapse vol. 4 as well as Reza Negarestani's Cyclonopedia. Badiou's brief remarks on Lovecraft were made at the European Graduate School in August of 2008. In personal interaction Badiou expressed fondness for "The Colour Out of Space"

[iii] For a longer text on Lovecraft and realism see "Thinking Against Nature" in Speculations vol 1

[iv] Brassier, Ray, "Concepts and Objects" in The Speculative Turn (Re.Press forthcoming)

[v] "The Colour Out of Space," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 616

[vi] "The Dunwich Horror," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 667

[vii] "The Shadow Over Inssmouth," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 853

[viii] S. T. Joshi, H.P. Lovecraft: The Decline of the West, (Berkley Heights: Wildside Press, 1990), p 89

[ix] Michel Houellebecq, H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life, (San Francisco: Believer Books, 2005), p 32

[x] This materialism is excluding Lovecraft's early Poe stories such as "The Alchemist"

[xi] Donald Burleson, Lovecraft: Disturbing the Universe (The University Press of Kentucky, 2009), p 97

[xii] See "Speculative Realism" especially Iain Grant's presentation in Collapse v. 3

[xiii] "The Lurking Fear," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p. 231

[xiv] "The Call of Cthulhu," in in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 355

[xv] "From Beyond," in in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 115

[xvi] "At the Mountains of Madness," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 744

[xvii] "The Dunwich Horror," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 663

[xviii] "The Unnameable," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 259-260

[xix] Nick Land's mad black Deleuzianism, ia arguably the most Lovecraftian philosophy as it is a rabid materialism in the form of the production of production thereby accompanying Lovecraft's radical becomings.

As Brassier has recently argued however, Land collapses productive materiality and productive intellection without having the privileged forms of thought of Bergson and Deleuze (or phenomenological access via Heidegger etc) in order to account for individuation. In other words, Lovecraft's shift between nature-for-us and nature-in-itself operates in an onto-epistemological indistinction which itself in the intersection of at least two sets of processes (that of thought as a process of nature and the formative forces of material nature beyond human purview) which, unlike Land, still maintains the separation of reality and appearance.

[xx] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, What is Philosophy?, (Columbia University Press, 1996), p 201-202

[xxi] "The Haunter in the Dark," in H.P. Lovecraft The Fiction Complete and Unabridged, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p 1009

She Tied the Tag Around My Toe
Simon Clark

She tied the tag around my toe

She tied it tight, she tied it real slow

I was stiff, cold, naked and blue, she had work to do

She cut me clean in two

She lay me on a metal bed

She bore a hole into my head

She took a piece of my brain for some tests

This lady, she's the best

And then she pulled my ribs apart

She sliced her scalpel through my cold heart

I wish that I could have her

But she works in a morgue, and I'm her cadaver

So it ain't right for her to get with me

What would she see in a stiff like me?

What would she see in me?

Watch the video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHHPnXDFp3E

Transcendental Monsters
Steven Shaviro

This entry was originally posted on The Pinocchio Theory on Wednesday, June 25th, 2008

In a brilliant article that draws surprising parallels between Husserl's phenomenology and the "weird fiction" of H. P. Lovecraft, Graham Harman (2008) argues that Lovecraft's tales of unrepresentable monsters cannot be read in a Kantian register. Although at first sight "Kant's inaccessible noumenal world seems a perfect match for the cryptic stealth of Lovecraft's creatures" (337), in fact these monsters, "however bizarre. . . still belong to the causal and spatio-temporal conditions that, for Kant, belong solely to the structure of human experience. . . The terror of Lovecraft is not a noumenal horror, then, but a horror of phenomenology" (340-342). Lovecraft is a materialist, and there is nothing transcendent or supernatural about his monsters. Indeed, the true source of horror for Lovecraft is that, however much the monstrosities whose presence he evokes exceed all powers of human apprehension, so that they are literally indescribable and unvisualizable, they still belong to the same world as we do. Like us, they are empirical, contingent entities; they do not "float into the world from nowhere" (Whitehead 1978, 244). To think of them as "mystic beings," noumenal, supernatural, or otherworldly, would in fact be a way of palliating their horror. For such a perspective would turn the sheer arbitrariness of their appearance into something ineluctable and fated, and therefore in some sense justified or "rational."

Now, what Harman says about Lovecraft's Old Ones is in fact true of Capital as well. For all its excess and monstrosity, Capital "like Cthulhu is a body, and thereby an entirely empirical phenomenon. It "appears as [our society's] natural or divine presupposition" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 10), and "the energy that sweeps through it is divine" (13); yet capitalism is still a contingent, historical process, one that could have been otherwise. It has not existed forever, and it need not last forever. As Ellen Meiksins Wood cogently demonstrates, capitalism is not the "natural realization of ever-present tendencies" (2002, 3), such as the alleged innate human impulse to "truck, barter and exchange" posited by

by Adam Smith (11). For it is not an inevitability, but rather much like the advent of Cthulhu the fortuitous result of a contingent encounter. Capitalism was born out of the "extrinsic conjunction of these two flows: flows of producers and flows of money. . . On one side, the deterritorialized worker who has become free and naked, having to sell his labor capacity; and on the other, decoded money that has become capital and is capable of buying it" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 225). Both of these "flows" arose out of the decomposition of feudalism; but many other flows did as well, and there is no special reason, or structural necessity, why these two particular flows should have become more prominent than all the others, nor why they should have become conjoined with one another. The encounter that gave birth to capitalism need never have happened; and in any case, it happened only once (224).

Wood, more historically precise than Deleuze and Guattari, shows how it was only in post-feudal agrarian England that recourse to the market became, not just an opportunity (as it was for late medieval merchants in Italy, and early modern financial speculators in Holland) but an absolute imperative for both landowners and workers. "Markets of various kinds have existed throughout recorded history and no doubt before, as people have exchanged and sold their surpluses in many different ways and for many different purposes. But the market in capitalism has a distinctive, unprecedented function. Virtually everything in capitalist society is a commodity produced for the market. And even more fundamentally, both capital and labour are utterly dependent on the market for the most basic conditions of their own reproduction. . . This market dependence gives the market an unprecedented role in capitalist societies, as not only a simple mechanism of exchange or distribution but the principal determinant and regulator of social reproduction" (2002, 96-97).

In other words, there are markets without capitalism, but there is no capitalism without the absolute reign of the market. As Wood puts it, "this unique system of market-dependence means that the dictates of the capitalist market its imperatives of competition, accumulation, profit-maximization, and increasing labour-productivity regulate not only all economic transactions but social relations in general" (2002, 7). And this is the key to what I have been calling the monstrosity of capital. It is utterly contingent in its origins; and yet, once it has arrived, it imposes itself universally. Capitalism might never have emerged out of the chaos of feudal, commercial, religious, and State institutions that preceded it, just as Cthulhu might never have stumbled upon our planet. But in both cases, the unfortunate encounter did, in fact, take place. And it is only afterwards, in its subsequent effects, once it has in fact arrived on the scene and subjugated all its rivals, that capitalism is able again, much like Cthulhu to present itself retro spectively as an irresistible and all-embracing force. Capitalism arose "in a very specific place, and very late in human history" (2002, 95). But once it arose, it made market relations compulsory: as Wood says, the so-called "free market" became an imperative, a coerced activity, instead of an opportunity (6-7).

This puts an altogether different light upon the philosophical question of how to categorize monstrosity. Harman convincingly shows that Lovecraft's horrors cannot be regarded as noumenal. But this is really just arguing against a straw man. For a proper Kantian reading of Lovecraft's stories as well as of Marx's Capital, and of capitalism must claim, not that the monstrosity in question is noumenal, but rather that it is transcendental, which is an entirely different matter. Kant always carefully distinguishes the transcendental from the transcendent. A transcendental condition is one that is universal and a priori, but that applies only to experience, and does not transcend or go beyond experience. That is to say, it emphatically does not refer to noumena, or "things in themselves." The transcendental is not quite empirical, since it is not found within experience. But it is also, at the same time, nothing but empirical, since it can only be referred to experience. The transcendental is thus a strange borderline concept, neither containable within contingent, empirical existence, nor extending anywhere beyond it. At this border or limit there is indeed, as Nina Power puts it, an "eerie proximity of Kant and Lovecraft," due to Lovecraft's "internalisation of Kantian categories in the name of transcendental horror" (2007).

Kant says that a transcendental condition, such as time, "cannot be annulled" (1996, 86), but also cannot be represented directly. It can only be referred to indirectly, "by means of analogies" (88). We might well say, therefore, that the transcendental resists any sort of empirical description. When we try to describe it nevertheless when we seek to evoke what Proust called "a little bit of time in its pure state" we run into the same sorts of difficulties as Lovecraft's narrators do when they try to describe the monsters they have encountered: "the very point of the descriptions is that they fail, hinting only obliquely at some unspeakable substratum of reality" (Harman 2008, 339). Yet this "unspeakable substratum" is not itself (as Harman amply demonstrates) transcendent, absolute, or otherworldly. It is a feature of our world, and only of our world. Such is the aporia of the transcendental: we encounter something about which we do not know how to speak, but which we also cannot pass over in silence.

This can best be grasped by contrast to Kant's account of morality. Kant says that the moral laws that we must obey are in fact laws that we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves: they have been decreed by our rational, noumemal selves. But in the case of the understanding, there is no such rational agency, and no such noumenal authorization. The understanding is not autonomous, because it is confined to an empirical world that it cannot master. The constraints that it encounters are not ones that it has legislated, but ones that are already presupposed by the very fact of its existence. As Deleuze puts it, commenting on both Kant and Bergson, it is not that time is inside us, but rather that we are inside time: "it is we who are internal to time, not the other way round. . . Time is not the interior in us, but just the opposite" (1989, 82).

This sense that we ourselves are the effects of forces that are not ours, forces that surpass

us and remain indifferent to us, could well be a formula for horror. Of course, neither Kant, nor Bergson, nor Deleuze presents it this way. But Benjamin Noys convincingly argues that "the vortex of seething time" is the ultimate form of horror for Lovecraft, exceeding any particular instance of one monstrous race of beings or another (2008, 282). What appalls us is less the inhumanity of Cthulhu, and the anteriority of the Old Ones with regard to us, than the larger truth of which these are merely symptoms: the utter "detachment of time from any relation to humanity" (281). More generally, we may say that monstrosity is transcendental because the very idea of the transcendental as a condition to which we are subjected, but which we cannot locate, describe, or circumscribe in any way is itself horrific and monstrous.

For Kant, of course, time itself does not have a genesis or a history, since all histories and all becomings must necessarily unfold within it. From a Kantian point of view or, for that matter, from a Heideggerian one our subjection to time is a general existential condition, one that must apply to all beings conscious of their own finitude. However, does such a formulation do justice to the uncanniness of the transcendental, the way that it ambiguously both belongs and does not belong to the empirical realm? Deleuze notes that post-Kantian thought criticized Kant's "transcendental deduction" for being incomplete. The post-Kantians "demanded a principle which was not merely conditioning in relation to objects but which was also truly genetic and productive" (1983, 51-52). That is to say, they sought to define the transcendental as an ongoing process of construction, rather than as a fixed structure that is always already in place. The transcendental is actively "genetic and productive," because it is a "synthesis," a conjoining or putting-together, and not just a fixed result that has already been synthesized. Time as a transcendental condition is not just produced once and for all. It must be synthesized continually; and this ongoing action of synthesis, or production, is itself the experience of temporality to which we find ourselves subjected.

When Deleuze redefines the transcendental as an ongoing, genetic and productive synthesis, he moves from Kant's transcendental idealism to what he instead calls transcendental empiricism. A synthesis defines the conditions of empirical existence; but it is itself an empirical process, immanent to the phenomena that it governs. For every synthesis is a contingent encounter of forces. It is a rearrangement or rearticulation of the empirical field but one that arises from within that very field. Synthesis therefore paradoxically defines an a priori that nonetheless could have been otherwise. And this is precisely the way in which the monstrous body of Cthulhu, or the monstrous body of capital, is a transcendental horror. In both cases, we move from a contingent, empirical encounter, to the imposition of a transcendental condition. Cthulhu might have missed our planet entirely, and the market might have remained an adjunct to other forms of economic activity, and f political and social life. But once Cthulhu has arrived, or once the market has imposed its relentless pressures at the very heart of the socius, there is no turning back from the full measure of monstrosity.

Notes on Contributors

Amanda Beech

Amanda Beech makes artworks, writes and collaborates on curatorial projects. Her work explores the relationship between democracy and violence in neo-liberalism by scrutinising the forceful rhetoric within narratives of freedom, which play out in philosophy, politics, literature and popular culture. Constructing narratives that take in particular biographies, sites, social mythologies and mixing them with the bounds of philosophical inquiry, her work operates as a space of seductive power, will and force – a world that emphasizes decisiveness as its guiding principle and that deals with our share in it. She is a member of the steering committee of The Political Currency of Art research group, and Co Director of the research group Curating Video. Her most recent exhibitions include The Edge of Luxury Form and Actuality at Fold, London and Sanity Assassin at Spike Island, Bristol.

Simon Clark

Simon Clark is an artist/writer/musician living and working in London. He is currently working on a practice-based PhD at Goldsmiths College. The provisional title is The Kiss of the Dead; Towards an Undead Sublimation of Melancholia.

As an undergraduate at Leeds University Simon was a member of the Leeds 13 – a group of art students who used a public art grant to fund a holiday on the Costa del Sol. The national press reacted with bilious outrage before the students revealed that the holiday was in fact an elaborate simulation and the money had never been spent. During his MA in Art Practice at Goldsmiths, Simon wrote a collection of morbid songs and short stories called Sad, Sad Songs of Wretchedness and Death. After graduating he performed this repertoire live at many international art events including the New Wight Biennial at UCLA, Late at Tate Britain in London and the Sonar Festival in Barcelona. As part of the Curare Quito project in 2007 he was invited to compose and conduct an original piece of music especially for a deconsecrated church in Quito, Ecuador. His essay The Undead Martyr is included in the book The Undead and Philosophy published by Open Court Press.

Caryn Coleman

Caryn Coleman is an independent curator and writer living in Brooklyn whose curatorial practice explores the intersection of film and visual art with an obsessive focus on horror cinema's influence on contemporary artists. This is the basis for her online writing project The Girl Who Knew Too Much and upcoming exhibition programming Contagious Allegories: horror cinema and contemporary art at the Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles (2013) and The Art of Fear artist film screening at Nitehawk Cinema in Brooklyn. She is currently the Curator for the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts 'Art & Law' Residency program. Coleman received her MFA in Curating with distinction from Goldsmiths College in London.
thegirlwhoknewtoomuch.com

Carl Neville

Carl Neville was born in Barrow-in-Furness in 1970 and has been an avid film enthusiast ever since. He took an MA in Creative Writing in 1998 and since then has written five unpublishable novels and one publishable polemic on recent British film, "Classless", for Zero books. He blogs at "The Impostume" and in collaboration with others at "…and what will be left of them?" and is currently working on a short book provisionally entitled "Closed Shops: British Films of the Seventies."

Ben Rivers

Ben Rivers (lives/works in London) studied Fine Art at Falmouth School of Art, 1990- 93. He recently won the Baloise Art Prize in 2011 for his film Sack Barrow and was shortlisted for the 2010 Jarman Award. Rivers has been the recipient of a number of commissions including LAFVA 2007 for which he made two films Origin of the Species and Ah, Liberty! and Vauxhall Collective commission 2008 making I Know Where I'm Going. He has exhibited widely at international film festivals and galleries including Sack Barrow at the Hayward Gallery (London), Slow Action at Picture This (Bristol) and Matt's Gallery (London), Nought to Sixty at the ICA (London) and solo shows at A Foundation (Liverpool) and Kate MacGarry (London). His first feature film Sack Barrow recently screened at the New York, Venice, and London film festivals. www.benrivers.com

Steven Shaviro

Steven Shaviro is the DeRoy Professor of English at Wayne State University. He is the author of Passion and Excess: Blanchot, Bataille, and Literary Theory (1990), The Cinematic Body (1993), Doom Patrols: A Theoretical Fiction About Postmodernism (1997), Connected, Or, What It Means To Live in the Network Society (2003), and Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics (2009), together with numerous articles on film and video, cultural theory, American popular culture, and science fiction. He blogs at The Pinocchio Theory:
http://www.shaviro.com/Blog

Tom Trevatt

Tom Trevatt is a curator, writer and artist based in London. His research is focused on recent post-continental thought, specifically around developments in Speculative Realism and the zombie. Siting these in relation to curatorial and art practice as beyond the human, his work operates in the strange, monstrous juncture between thought and artwork. Recent exhibitions include The Rise and Fall of Matter at Collective/David Roberts Art Foundation, London and The Accidents of Form at LoBe, Berlin. He is currently organising a series of symposia in Paris, London and Limousin, France to explore research around Speculative Realism and art. He is on the programming committee for Treignac Projet, France. A recent essay PETROZOMBIE appears in Madame Wang issue 2 to be released 5th November.
http://theexhibitionarycomplex.tumblr.com/

Ben Woodard

Ben Woodard recently completed a masters degre in philosophy at the European Graduate School. He has published several essays combining nature philosophy, Speculative Realism, and weird fiction. He blogs at naughtthought.wordpress.com and his first monograph Slime Dynamics: Generation, Mutation, and the Creep of Life is forthcoming from Zer0 Books.
http://naughtthought.wordpress.com/

Incognitum Hactenus vol. 1