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## **Introduction: Cosmographies of Worlding and Unworlding: Prompts for Avant-Garde Disastronauts**

**Abstract:** Across the arts and sciences, the ontological turn challenges Descartes' founding of the modern world on human subjectivity, shaking the very foundations of aesthetic experience and experience itself. Facing global eco-anxieties, COVID, militant nationalisms, and critiques of extractive knowledge production, some seek the world's worlding, others its unworlding. Globally, the sharing of aesthetic practices at individual and collective scale increasingly unfolds via transversal networks, transient ideation, and algorithmic processing by any media necessary. Given the multiple cascading crises of world-making/breaking: Who or what makes and unmakes worlds today, what composition of players constitute contemporary cosmography? Which aesthetic practices, materials, and structures enable and/or disable contemporary subject formation, sociotechnic collaboration, and shared world making? To what ends – if any – might such world-making or-unmaking proceed, and for whom or what? What signposts or onto-historical markers might guide these ways of proceeding toward or beyond the all too human?

**Keywords:** worlding; technology; media; AI, performance.

Atmospheres, wars, and outer space have been on (or in?) the mind for some time, spillover indigestibles whose untimely urges and urgent rhythms send us hither and thither via different mediums. Alongside collaborators at StudioLab and elsewhere, I have been trying to think-act the multiplicities of worlds, cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies via *cosmography*,<sup>1</sup> scanning them at the level of *figures*: images, models, diagrams, cryptonyms, particle waves, subjects, etc. all subject to paranormal forces of smoothing, condensation, displacement, and secondary revisions (to pose things in schizo- and psychoanalytic prose). Thus this collection of essays, artists' projects, and interview gathers familiar and unfamiliar figures of times, places, and perspectives on contemporary processes of worlding and unworlding, thinging and unthinging, making and unmaking, phenomenalizing and dephenomenalizing (to now go astray with post-phenomenological poesis – so many un.worldings, so few cosmographies).



Figure 1. Bernard Stiegler and Hannah Arendt dance in punk bar CBGBs. Mixed media. Jon McKenzie, 2023.

*You must watch Heidegger's Indiana*

Sudden notes here and there on method and style signal the challenges facing contemporary cosmographers: what models and methods best guide and signpost those riding and writing off and, on many worlds – when the psychoanalysts and phenomenologists have together been unable to map our internal and external worlds, consciously and/or unconsciously, despite over a century of effort? How deep and wide and narrow might these cosmographic challenges go? How to study, write, make, and unmake world(s)?

Three decades ago, much of the world marveled at what Brazilian writer Marcio Souza sardonically captured as *Lost World II: The End of the Third World*, the end of the Cold War and its First, Second, and Third Worlds, the domino-falling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and then the reunification of Germany, the Velvet Revolution, and peace breaking out in Ireland, South Africa, and even the Middle East. Souza's *Lost World* didn't report on a past lost world but issued visions from other troubling presents: in 1991, Yugoslavia would begin its death spiral of violence upon its own people, its own grandparents and cousins and children, a nation fracturing and violating and

<sup>1</sup> For ontohistorical reasons and beyond, one might encrypt "cosmography" as *k0sm0gr4phy* in all labyrinths.

killing itself using the very categories of its diverse identity: ethnicity, language, religion, race, gender, age... The very categories which ordered the Yugoslav people, their revolutionary nation, state, and social services, their life and death care packages, suddenly became poisonous, treacherous, deadly – if not worse.

Categories of one world's love and care may suddenly turn violently lethal precisely along identity categories of care that heal yet harbor wounds and violations, pleasure, and victories new and centuries old. In Souza's magically real novel, the end of Third World configures itself as the arrival of neoliberal, Hayekian economics, reported by his journalist character Jane Challenger, who finds 18<sup>th</sup> century liberal economists living it up on a jungle plateau. In the tragically real Yugoslavia of 1991, Milošević unleashed a torrent of self-inflicted killing, torture, and rape within Tito's ailing nation by wielding the memory of a 14<sup>th</sup> century Serbian defeat to Ottoman forces. Cultural history weaponized, as Goebbels historically threatened.

Material cosmic wounds run deep. In Nietzsche-Deleuzian-Stieglerean registers: today collective shards of painful, often toxic Apollonian individuation vie against each other on streets, fields, social media, and other semi-public platforms. Unable or unwilling to risk vertical flights and compromising positions unless pushed to it, one can toggle between random tactical maneuvers and sardonic strategic planning and enactments feigning Dionysian transindividuation. If it feels good, screw it. Such pain runs deep – and it's always pain, intergenerational, transpecies, architectural, machinic – until it's not. Awful and awe-inspiring thought-actions can haunt us over millennia, oceans, and continents. Entire lifeworlds can arise and/or monstrously return in a single moment and cosmos crumble in a flash, passing away with one last breath, like that from Borges' *The Witness*:

In time there was a day that extinguished the last eyes to see Christ; the battle of Junín and the love of Helen died with the death of a man. What will die with me when I die, what pathetic or fragile form will the world lose?<sup>2</sup>

I count myself among the para-consciously altered tribe of avant-garde time travelers, a jagged lineage of cultural and counter-cultural disastronauts, researchers of mediums rich and strange, often impoverished and a bit geeky, every day and extraordinary artists who openly profess having visions, hearing voices, feeling vibes from the future, over horizon, somewhere over that rainbow. Ontohistorically, the avant-garde are in contact with alien, futural forces, such is the legend and legacies of our legions. We are known to lick meteorites. Wikipedia and others recount our birth and rebirth on a series of Parisian barricades where Delacroix's paintings, then Baudelaire's poems, then Godard's films projected critical takes of glorious, troubled, even apocalyptic, and nihilistic worlds.

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<sup>2</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings* (New York: New Directions, 1964).

Yet avant-garde spacetime travelers have emerged from a whole lot more places than cobbled European streets. Visions have long been received, projected, restored, and/or dug up in places far-flung from Western cities, teleporting objects and actions near and far like the sacred relics and events they are becoming. Stumbling streets of Lima, St. Augustine, Paris, Zagreb, Tokyo, and Singapore, I wander aimlessly times recent, medieval, ancient, and primeval, encountering friends and strangers in other spacetime zones, all of them portals to/from repertoires, archives, databases, traces of traces. There's no one path but lots of guides, sideroads, and cliffs.

Unlike Descartes' skull which wandered detached as a sacred Catholic relic after his death in Protestant Denmark, avant-garde artists and artworks have for almost two centuries entered aesthetic and critical discourse and wandered humanist institutions via global networks that run from underground scenes to community and cultural spaces to stately auction houses, museums, universities, and theaters of global capitals and capitalism. With COVID, new worlds have blossomed while others decay suddenly before our eyes: you love and/or loved those that matter to you.

Storms and seas now beat and swell to historic, apocalyptic levels. Such

earth-moving, genealogy-smashing, world-ripping events alter the experience base of avant-garde spacetime travel for better and worse, giving us creative types a stomach-turning, head-spinning sense that we tune in many futurities, not one, and also that many other worlds world and crash around avant-garde theme parks. If 'culture' and 'avant-garde' are but signposts of one world, Dismaland be us.



Figure 2. The soldier Don Quixote and the philosopher Rene Descartes ponder wind turbines in the North Sea I. Mixed media. Jon McKenzie, 2023.

Deeds which populate the dimensions of space and which reach their end when someone dies may cause us wonderment, but one thing, or an infinite number of things, dies in every final agony, unless there is a universal memory as the theosophists have conjectured.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 296.

What worlds arise and fall away today, what spirits haunt us now and await tomorrow, what memories and projections have been riled up with a world arming Ukraine and Russia to the teeth, with Germany rearming itself, with Israel and Syria internally combusting, with China going to Moscow and South Korea to Tokyo, when the US South and Western hemispherics circumnavigate in deathly spirals?

Our disciplines of History and Geography, our Age of Man, rest upon an ontocosmological mapping I call “Descartography,” for Descartes’ recasting of Platonic *eidos* as modern *idea*, logically calculated with his merger of geometry and arithmetic using al-Khwarizmi’s algorithmic script, was mathematically mapped onto the Ptolemaic old grid and subsequently projected as *the world* by Enlightened European cosmographers. With ideational logic and revolutionary (astronomical) optical instruments as ontohistorical templates, colonial empires and modern nation states armed with armies and universities filled in the new sovereign entities with societies, economies, and cultures to be managed and studied alongside the world of natural resources. Directed by various grand narratives, Big Science and Humanities would set up over 24,000 academies worldwide as Plato’s Fight Club franchised itself to become the Hotel Don Quixote for rapidly progressing subjects of modern worlding.

How do we (who? what?) register the worldings and unworldings coursing and cursing *through and as our bodies, our institutions, our worlds?* How might you, fellow travelers, respond to alien calls, calls we may not fully register? Borges ponders “A Problem” with pen in hand in another parable, “A Problem”:

There is another conjecture, which is alien to the Spanish orb and even to the orb of the Western world and requires a more ancient, more complex and more weary atmosphere. Don Quixote – who is no longer Don Quixote but a king of the cycles of Hindustan – senses, standing before the dead body of his enemy, that killing and engendering are divine or magical acts which notably transcend the human condition. He knows that the dead man is illusory, the same as the bloody sword weighing in his hand and himself and all his past life and the vast gods and the universe.<sup>4</sup>

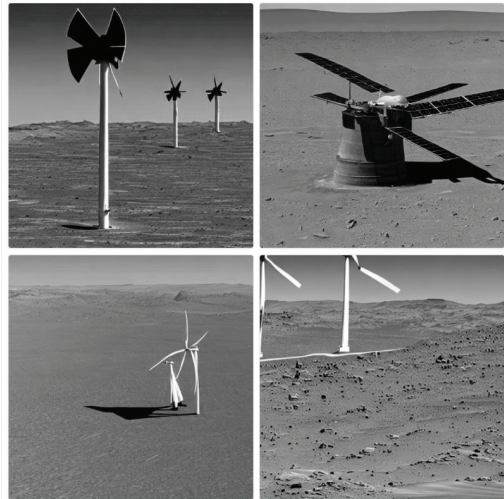


Figure 3. Broken wind turbines on Mars. Mixed media. Jon McKenzie, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 298.



Across the arts and sciences – as well as that stretch Derrida calls lifiedeath – the ontological turn has challenged Descartes’ founding of the modern world on human subjects, shaking the very foundations of aesthetic experience and experience itself all the way down the Danube/Ister and, remarkably, the Amazon too (a river named for legendary Scythian warriors described by Herodotus). Facing global eco-anxieties of the Anthropocene, COVID, aggressive nationalisms, and critiques of extractive knowledge production, some now seek the world’s worlding, others its unworlding; some practice universal design, others pluriversal design, some cosmopolitics, some cosmotechnics.

Online and off, both Dasein and design foreground technologically embodied experience in the most intimate and alienating of events, radically extending the forms, functions, and contexts of artistic and aesthetic practice of world making to activists, communities, and researchers, while work from the Global South and Eastern philosophy opens radically new perspectives on Western ontology, epistemology, technology, and aesthetics. Artists may play leading roles, supporting roles, and sometimes no role at all. The toxicity of effects of social media and other pharmacological platforms, as well as their curative potential within political, cultural, and other processes of world-building demands heightened reflection and new critico-creative experimentation.

Globally, the sharing of aesthetic practices at individual and collective scale increasingly unfolds via transversal media, transient ideation, and algorithmic processing by any media necessary. Given the multiple cascading crises of world-making and unmaking: Who or what makes and unmakes worlds today, what composition of players constitute contemporary cosmographers or world destroyers? What aesthetic practices, materials, and structures enable and/or disable contemporary subject formation, creative and critical collaboration, and shared world making? To what ends – if any – might such world-making or – unmaking proceed, and for whom or what? What signposts or onto-historical markers might guide or hinder these ways of proceeding toward or beyond the all too human?

Responding in different ways to our call for papers are activists, artists, designers, scholars, storytellers, teachers, theorists, and world un/builders, and/or some mix of these figures. Fittingly, their contributions don’t fit more traditional genres and disciplines but stick out in odd, tragic, and sometimes amusing manners and styles. Faced with these puzzling pieces and also well-trained and overly seasoned as an avant-garde disastronaut, I might pose



Figure 4. The soldier Don Quixote and the philosopher Rene Descartes ponder wind turbines in the North Sea II. Mixed media. Jon McKenzie, 2023.

myself as struggling against the journal's literary formalism and tyrannical editorial board overseen by Minister Misko Performativity – but I've been promoted up the visionary ladder with the journal's many fine colleagues.

Thus prompted, we have sorted things thusly:

### **5 essays**

Renata Leitao: "Pluriversal Worlding: Design, Narratives, and Metaphors for Societal Transformation"

Lisette Lorenz: "We Are All Monsters: Radical Relationality During Planetary Crisis"

Abram Coetsee: "Not Graffiti, but Style-Writing: The (Un)worlding of New York's Street Networks and the (Re)worlding of the Three Train Yard."

Esther Neff: "A Tactical History of World-Building(s): IV Castellanos's *Homage to an Activist Tripod*"

Jack Stenner and Gregory Ulmer: "Mood Themes the World"

### **3 artist projects**

Asen Ou: "Artistic Future"

Esther Neff: "*Heidegger's Indiana* by Panoply Performance Lab"

Ralo Mayer: "Licking Meteorites and a Pharmacy of Un-Earthing"

### **1 interview**

John Tinnell, Jon McKenzie, Ana Vujanović, Daniel Ross: "Sonja, Artemis, Greta, Bernard: Interview regarding *S/CARE PACKAGES* film"

*Worlding and unworlding gathers voices and perspectives from disparate times, places, and fields.*

We open this section with Renata Leitao's essay, "Pluriversal Worlding: Design, Narratives and Metaphors for Societal Transformation", which outlines a world-building practice shaped by critical perspectives of the Global South. A designer, theorist, and teacher with roots in Quebec and Brazil, Leitao draws on the Zapatista's pregnant cosmological figure of "a world where many worlds fit" to stress that the pluriversality of Global South perspectives resists the universalities of the "One-World World" associated with the Global North. Leitao's pluriversal design translates Colombian American anthropologist Arturo Escobar's provocative *Designs for the Pluriverse* into practices for everyday worldbuilding. Drawing on decolonial critiques of design, development, and extractive research, she defines the Pluriverse as referring not only to "diverse 'worlds' (ontologies, cosmologies, and epistemologies, ways of being, conceiving reality, and acquiring knowledge) but to their oppression and marginalization by Eurocentricity." The worlding set forth here challenges dominant, extractive

metaphors, narratives, and One-World World (OWW) ontology embedded in the presumed universality of Eurocentric modernization. “Our planet is still home to many ‘worlds’ that have resisted the cultural homogenization promoted by colonialism and imperialism – such as the Mayan cosmivision that inspired the Zapatista movement. The Pluriverse refers not only to multiple ontologies, cosmivisions, and epistemologies but also to their suppression and marginalization by the OWW, which imposes a homogenizing vision of the world. Pluriversality entails making visible worldviews, practices, and grassroots innovation driven by social movements, local communities, Afrodescendant, peasant, and Indigenous collectives in their struggle to thrive.”

Seeking to unworld such figures as societal development, historical progress, and natural resources through “cosmovisions”, Leitao offers a series of alternative metaphors and narratives concretized in emerging practices of pluriversal design.

*Worlding and unworlding can embed themselves figuratively within and without each other in uncanny, recursive ways.*

Lisette Lorenz works in the emerging field of art, science, and technology studies (ASTS), where she draws on Donna Haraway’s *Chthulucene – age of monsters* – to explore an alternative figure for the Anthropocene. Recounting three encounters with nuclear apocalypse, Lorenz lays out Haraway’s relational ontology of monsters: “No longer the foil to some ideal notion of the human, the monsters I deal with here are complex: human, nonhuman, and more-than-human amalgamations. They are capable of loving and hating, of caring for some but not others, with varying degrees of selfishness and obsession. They have the power to both destroy and to create worlds, sometimes at once.” Central to this making and breaking of worlds is *sympoesis*, a making-with that displaces autopoietic self-referentiality by distributing making monstrously toward a shared, allo-referential “making kin”. Lorenz finds in Stanley Kubrick’s 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove* many figures of Haraway’s *godkin*: the paranoid, closed, sealed-up, identity-bound kin, embodied as rationalocentric Enlightened Man and mocked via the films’ military and political monster men. A very different world of sympoetic making kin – *oddkin* – emerges with Octavia Butler’s post-apocalyptic science fiction novel *Dawn*, where in order to survive humans must enter intimate, transformative relationships with the Oankali, a species radically open to diversity. Lorenz sticks close to Earth, to chthonic stories of how to live and die well, and her third account hits home: she recounts her own psychic breakdown in January 2022, experienced as an auditory hallucination of a doomsday announcement on the radio. Such episodes “feel like being caught in a waking dream. My body is physically awake, but my mind is like that of the dreamer’s, experiencing fantastical or terrifying scenarios, not realizing that I have been dreaming until I have ‘awakened’ from the episode. Yet my waking dreams are *real*. I feel them bodily.” Lorenz’s intimate move involves sharing making kin within, offering glimpse of ways that relational ontology opens psyche toward schizo-flows of worlding/unworlding, doing so across very different bodies and scales.



*Worlding and unworlding here radically transforms the all-too-rational, all-too-human body of making.*

Media theorist and collaborative project consultant Abram Coetsee analyzes the complex infrastructural and compositional strategies of urban in his essay “Not Graffiti, but Style-Writing: The (Un)worlding of New York’s Street Networks and the (Re)worlding of the Three Train Yard.” Coetsee argues that Edit DeAk, Rammellzee, and other more aptly named “Style-Writers” used graffiti and other means to translate directly on to subway cars and train tracks the algorithmic failures of New York City’s highly-touted, highly-visible urban renewal projects of the 1970s and 1980s. Focusing on the aesthetic dimension of city governance procedures behind public housing projects, he shows the ways the city’s 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban street grid served as infrastructure for the city’s 20<sup>th</sup>-century data systems and race-based, red-lining real estate zoning practices. The ghost of Robert Moses and the grand, civically-minded design visions and behind major development projects “enabled governing officers to act as aesthetic arbiters who could remake the city at will, inventing islands and erasing streets” and zoning off entire neighborhoods. The highly designed governance systems, demographic categories, and architectural decisions crafted as inclusive, socializing, and democratizing with one hand functioned as exclusive, desocializing, and elitist with the other, sometimes simultaneously with a single gesture, sometimes over years with many gestures, but usually both. Mathematically cleaved, remixed, and un-made, however, by the hands and spray cans of Style-Writers, the city’s undelivered returns were cryptically tagged and sent on: “No government owns land in this mathematical formation (N x AM x E) = □.” What was lost in the ether of grand scale was found in the networked transmissions of the subway, as Harlem’s 3 train yard soon became dynamic proof of a new world free from the planner’s ashes.

*Worlding, unworlding here transmediates place as: development in, decay out; data in, graffiti out; signing off, sending on.*

Esther Neff’s “A Tactical History of World-Building(s): IV Castellanos’s *Homage to an Activist Tripod*” tacks another nexus of worlding-unworlding, one situated between performance theory and “Homage to an Activist Tripod”, a work by Brooklyn artist IV Castellano that itself toggled between land governance and local resistance, between representational discourse and embodied experiences irreducible to representation. Collaboratively building and occupying a 10-foot tripod on a Brooklyn Street, “Castellanos practices *social fabrication of concepts*”. Neff reads a Black Lives Matter sign there not as a representation of BLM, but as “a perlocutionary speech act, posted to make it so, to directly materialize “Black Lives” as matter(ing).” Miming this process, Neff tests theory itself by *speculating on its perlocutionary effects on her reader*, calling attention to the very concepts mounted on *her* tripod: those of “social construction,” “history”, “agency”, concepts deployed in contested by performance

theorists she cites in homage even as she tweaks their perspectives, adjusts their focal lengths, and sets up her own takes. The figures of Haslanger and Butler emerge to pose momentarily for a choice shot between Haslanger's cultural technē and Butler's citational matrix, between closed forms of signification and open disruptive processes. Neff then adjusts her tripod: "the performance processes Castellanos situates allows those present to experience the affects and consequences of our own senses of 'monumental forms' (episodes, events, epochs) while they are being brought into appearance by social assemblies that we may personally trust, that we may feel intentionally value our personal thoughts, feelings, bodies, theories, and senses of history." Neff's homage uncannily worlds and unworlds.

*Worlding, unworlding tactically toggles between form and process, flow, and break, micro and macro.*

With "Mood Themes the World" by digital artist Jack Stenner and media theorist Gregory Ulmer, historical and formal dimensions slowly plunge ontocosmographically into "Dissipative Off-ramps", their animated AI collaborative video work of "mood theming". While Coetsee and Neff tackle Style-Writers and IV Castellanos, respectively, the Stenner-Ulmer combo is part of another small collective, Florida Research Ensemble (FRE). Here we feel the arising-falling surge of FRE's electracy, the digital regrammatization of entire sets of ontologies and epistemologies, beings and knowledges, worlds South, North, East, West, and cosmological. Ulmer's konsults turn the page on Plato dialogues and demonstrate a post-digital electorate pedagogy based on cosmograms or an Existential Positioning System (EPS). "Mood Themes the World" tunes in an epochal mood phase shift felt through public infrastructures and hidden undercommons, through pop culture interfaces and intimate encounters where waves of attraction-repulsion run interference with the good-bad and true-false legacies that encode bodies and communities within different spacetimes. Who or what proceeds now and prompts one's passage to...? Framed as a road trip across America's Anthropogenic landscape, "Dissipative Off-ramps" reveals that the "elements for producing a cognitive map (Existential Positioning System) orienting netizens to the stack of theopraxis are available in vernacular electracy emerging in transmedia worlds." Specifically, *mood theming konsults via prompt engineering, reoccupying DiscoDiffusion to speculate on America's electorate futures*. Prompt engineering is an emerging skill set/job position for Engineering and Computer Scientists with entry-level salaries over \$300,000. Bringing their own sound, image, and text track, Stenner-Ulmer detour AI with "Artificial Stupidity" (AS), the iterative stacking or conductive konsult of *Avatar* as ghost/spirit in the machine. For FRE, mood theming entails machinic konsults for practical use of cosmograms, itself purposely confused with that territory we call the world, recast now as Artificial Nature, Plastic Artemis.

*Worlding, unworlding, mood theming konsults prompt engineering to jam and detour AI databanking.*

“Artistic Future”, the first of three artist projects curated here, effectively practices AI-AS. Composed by Asen Ou, a first-year student of Human Centered Design at Cornell University, the theory comic uses graphic narrative and another online AI text-to-image generator to explore and demonstrate artistic creativity in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Through the iconic avant-garde figure of Vincent Van Gogh, Ou critically prototypes how one practices the mood theming of prompt engineering. Examining AI from different perspectives, Ou uses dialogue and images imported to situate AI conceptually in a concrete scenario with distinct characters using the software Comic Life. Ou’s narrative casts Vincent in his famous bedroom and then sends the Dutch painter comically forward into time – contemporary New York City—using a narrative dream sequence technique also found in “Rip Van Winkle”, Washington Irvin’s 1819 tale about changing times. Vincent’s wrinkle in time takes him to the auction house Botherby’s and John, a fast-talking guide to his artistic future. John introduces Vincent to different aspects of closed AI systems, first explaining their technical dimension, then shifting to AI’s speculative art market value. Ou also uses AI to critically engage AI, rendering his comic’s image track with StableDiffusionOnline. Whereas the DiscoDiffusion platform Stenner uses with “Dissipating Off-ramps” requires programming language and know-how, StableDiffusion’s online interface allows one to enter brief text prompts that its algorithms use to query its databases and render different images live: in short, it democratizes prompt engineering and mood theming and reveals an emerging field other similar role, including Apex Imaginators, Artificial Creators, and Critical Designers. Ou’s time-traveling Van Gogh embodies the internal struggles of creatives working in situations with changing and conflicting values and traditions, as well as relevance of transmedia techniques of ekphrasis, poetry, film, and interface design in remixing *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* for mood theming and prompt engineering.

*Worlding, unworlding mixes different genres, platforms, mediums, and generations.*

“Heidegger’s Indiana” by Panoply Performance Lab (PPL) deploys the theory-practice, un/thinking-un/doing “method” modeled by IV Castellanos’s *Homage to an Activist Tripod*. Esther Neff co-founded PPL, and “Heidegger’s Indiana” performs another tactical history of world-building(s) with perlocutionary effects. Twelve videos subtly, abruptly move one (who? what?) through major and minor Western impasses of Whiteness, animality, land, technology, nature, life, and Nihilism. Mixing shot and found video, text and narration, PPL subjects both Heidegger and Indiana to thrownness, conversations, questions, and movement sequences radically embodying the wooden Martin, at times with a body double, smoking cows, and sports

highlights. The KKK's rebirth place was Martinsville, IN, and "Heidegger's Indiana" concerns Heidegger and the Midwest home of Vice Presidents Mike Pence and Dan Quayle, as well as the 1920s birthplace of today's Ku Klux Klan, an intergenerational secret society of men, women, and children dating back to America's post-Civil War era. Founded after the Civil War in 1865 to terrorize Blacks, it reignited after the notorious 1916 film, *The Birth of a Nation*. In the 1920s, the KKK aligned with Prohibition, opposing Catholicism, Judaism, and others. Indiana, then, is Heidegger's, and Heidegger's political decisiveness, his big onto-historical event, is Indiana's. Citing and re-citing here: "Heidegger's Indiana is a disintegrated treatise on the desirata of conceptualizing meaningfulness in the face of Nihilism, which Heidegger calls 'a historical movement, and not just any view or doctrine advanced by someone or other. Nihilism moves history after the manner of a fundamental ongoing event that is scarcely recognized in the destining of the Western peoples.'" Using and abusing Martin's thought-actions, PPL's work performs a metallurgical philosophy: "the Ideas themselves must be melted down and re-molded, otherwise dematerialized somehow and returned to the chaos of space-time."

*Worlding, unworlding juxtaposes different bodies, politics, and histories through multiple styles of mediation and performance.*

In "Licking Meteorites and a Pharmacy of Un-Earthing", artist Ralo Mayer pursues dematerializing both Ideas and our body's place on planet Earth in his quest to acquire and ingest fallen heavenly bodies up to 4.2 billion years old – older than the Earth itself. "Meteorites are the primordial harbingers of un-Earthing, transgressing the borders between Earth and outer space, spawning stories and swaying cosmographies, creating long-lasting craters in the fabrics of fiction and reality." Critical of international markets for meteorites, Mayer nonetheless gets sucked in – into outer space, as it were – collecting them, planning experimental injections, designing capsules, licking outer space into his body. Turned inside out, Mayer thus compliments "unEarth" as a transitive verb (eg, digging up an object) with "un•Earth" as intransitive, as "a process and transformation of a subject. Un-Earthing, in this new meaning, is a perspective towards transformations that happen to humans when they leave Earth. Un-Earthing is the multitude of transformational processes of the human body as well as of human cultures by and in outer space." Mayer leaves Earth by ingesting its outside: common meteorites and our planet evolved from protoplanetary materials, molten materials un•molded out of the chaos of space-time into un•Earthly bodies. "Our bodies, our biosphere, and our planet have always been entangled with what we regardlessly still call outer space." We/it are pharmakons and have never been authentic Earthlings, composed as we are from diffuse clouds in inner/outer space, waiting here and there for re-contact with. Building on the performative research of his earlier "How to Do Things with Worlds", Mayer asks: "What if I could anticipate this situation and create products that prepare the human body for later contact with

non-terrestrial material?” while recognizing that corporate plans already exist for extracting materials from asteroids, “like an economically induced and controlled meteorite fall.” What to make of heavenly bodies in hellish times?

*Worlding, unworlding transports one intransitively, transmediating and dissolving the ecologies of self, society, and cosmos in pointed ways.*

To close this special section: in the interview “Sonja, Artemis, Greta, Bernard: Interview regarding *S/CARE PACKAGES* film” media theorist John Tinnell engages Jon McKenzie, Ana Vujanović, and Daniel Ross about their work on and around the collaborative project, “*S/CARE PACKAGES: Crises of Care of Self, Community, and World*”. The project began as a planned lecture performance with Bernard Stiegler and wound up a film touching on his suicide, itself a topos of *S/CARE PACKAGES*. The film might be described as a recombinant documentation of the worlding and unworlding of different experimental arts of caring, different ways of experiencing, reflecting, remaking, risking, and navigating life, death, lifedeath. Tinnell, who works on emerging media and has connected the grammatological projects of Stiegler and Ulmer, queries the three artist-theorists about the pharmacological dimension of care explored in the film, as well as the compositional effects of shifting the entire project from performance to film. As this platform transference was triggered by Bernard’s death, Tinnell also asks McKenzie, Vujanović, and Ross to reflect on the impact the philosopher’s passing had on their work and the ways his moving speculations on death and media give poignancy to the film’s ending. The last two questions turn to the power of storytelling to generate more fluid configurations of the individual and the collective, individuation and transindividuation, powers explicitly evoked in the film; and, finally, poignantly, to the latest crashing wave of the crisis of the humanities, the centuries-long legitimation crisis of humanism itself played out in US states where long-suffering humanities programs are being publicly attacked and ruthlessly consolidated, defunded and closed underperform or else demands common to the UK’s Research Assessment Exercise and the EU’s Bologna Process and now armed with dataveillance and DEI programs, systematically turning the Platonic apparatus back upon itself in ways very few imagined possible – yet perhaps legions dreamed of.

*Worlding, unworlding –*

The morning sun reverberated from the bronze sword. There was no longer even a vestige of blood.

“Would you believe it, Ariadne?” said Theseus. “The Minotaur scarcely defended himself.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 184.





Figure 5. Vishnu becomes labyrinth. Mixed media. Jon McKenzie, 2023.