



TOO MUCH OF EVERYTHING

To be illuminated is to pierce the future with a desperate gaze that vanquishes omens and exposes the future as nothing but an illusion, what can be yet to come is a void that is absolutely full, where everything that has ever been still is, and where everything that will ever be, is already here? Let the fire of love devour the future and past and deliver me into the jaws of a perpetual present.
 – Roger Gilbert-Lecomte, paraphrased by David Rattray's *How I Became One of the Invisible*

If everything were accessible it would be an archive.
 – Ariana Reines, *The Problem of Knowledge in Animal Shelter 1*

A world that is absolutely full... This feels tightly bound to its opposite proposition, that the world is a void, that the fullness necessarily demands its own expansion, as though there can only be more if we are already at the brink, at the extreme edge. The more you drink the thirstier you become, this idea, etc. Filled up on nothingness. Who said we should drink nothingness itself? (I've never felt anything on a larger scale than the human scale; I have mediated all my own experiences and feel like this equips me very poorly to discuss anything.)

Slavoj Žižek calls the universe, a *positively charged void*. Then worries that there is absolutely nothing going inside of him and this is why he's so hyperactive, always talking to generate a kind of frenzied distraction so nobody is ever drawn to suspect that really it is empty space resting behind the commotion. So here is the paradox that holds the idea of the void together – just because there are things, does not mean that there isn't nothing. Or, that one of the foundational Western philosophies, expounded by René Descartes, *Cogito, Ergo Sum* is not as conclusively true or self-evident as it appears. We can think and still believe that those thoughts are contained within an overwhelming nothingness. Somebody asked me once: if I had the opportunity to steal any one artwork from the gallery institution that I work in with no possibility of getting caught, what would it be? Martin Creed's *Lights Off*. When we consume so much, what stands out is nothingness. This year there was an exhibition at the Pompidou in Paris called *Voïds, a retrospective* – many pockets of nothingness encased in a museum. Around the same time of *Voïds* I flew to Los Angeles with no express purpose, no one there who I knew, nothing specific I wanted to see, just an urge to jump into the void. The one-week period from when I booked my ticket to when I was sitting on the plane was therefore marked by the feeling of being excited about nothing. I had no references that my imagination could draw on, no projections of future-fantasies, just the elation of empty space.

The way Žižek sweats gives the impression that he is leaking, that he can't be contained.

Like always, the truth is a slippery surface that cannot be leant on for any period more than perhaps the time it takes to articulate anything and by then it has slid around but in its way we have words which we come to understand as the only possible conduit to deliver the rapturous sunken time, the madness that occurs in the mind, into a world that other people inhabit. The shared space of language. So we talk. The compulsion to speak or scribe can overpower the anxiety of saying something that will pin us down too tightly and when we talk this conveys a confident sense that we are alive. Speech is an indicator of life, not necessarily truth. What usually stands in the place of truth is the radiation of all the things we desire to be true, and everything else that has come before this to feed the hungry present. *For in the midst of the most intimate confidences, false shame, delicacy, or pity always impose a certain reticence. We come across precipients or morasses, in ourselves or in the other person, which bring us to a halt; in any case, we feel that we would not be understood; it is difficult to express anything exactly; perfect unions, for that reason, are rare.* Frédéric Moreau, Gustave Flaubert's voice in *The Sentimental Education*, describes the holes of language, and what a frail base it is that we conduct relationships with other humans upon. It is a quick descent from the autumnal radiance of Mount Dandenong down to the suburbs that lie below it, with names that are taken from the natural world and still contain some of its violence, like cockatoo. Nick Mangan and I were driving down, sunshine pouring through trees, gradually concrete flatness spreading itself out in front of us. We were talking about the movement of people, people delivered into lives where there is little choice and a lot of squeeze. In fact it almost doesn't matter what we were talking about because what Nick said next spanned all fields of relevance: *well they didn't know they were going to be born...* No one chooses to be born and this is perhaps why we shouldn't expect anything else from the world except for madness. We're all born into conditions that were built up with no consideration that we may have to live through them. There's a word for that, no? Is it called universal?

I began reading all the books that Chris Kraus makes reference to in her cataclysmic novel *I Love Dick*. In the dictionary a cataclysm is described as 'any violent upheaval, an extensive flood, deluge.' I had the feeling of levies bursting open with a furious weight when I read this book. The most shocking thing is that she is willing to make the obvious explicit, she speaks and speaks and passes over all kinds of slippery truths. She gives language to things that never seemed graspable to me or said what sometimes transpires in feelings but never could stand the discern of written language. *"You may be brave, you said to me that weekend, "but you're not wise." But Dick, if wisdom is silence it's time to play the fool.* And she plays it so well, turns herself inside out with all the contradictions and contentions that this can bring. Sweating and scratching at his nose, Slavoj Žižek explained to Ying, Nick and me how radical it is to say what everybody already knows to be true. Take off the mask, not to reveal a face, but to reveal the many layers of masks underneath it. So, obsessed with this novel I wanted to excavate its depths. Also I can recognise in this project my frequent desire to hand over methodologies of choice to something other, something that is not derived from my own logic, to remove my individual will from a particular scenario (I didn't know I was going to be born...). *We can only be happy when we do not have responsibility,* says Žižek. I decide to read these books because of the relationship that is created between them by Chris not because of a specific interest in each book's possible content. The authors did not know their work would be drawn into this world of association by a woman who wrote her first novel without even knowing she was writing a novel, only knowing that she had reached a point of desperation and needed to develop it so began writing what she called 'dumb letters.'

There is a constant exchange between the material and the immaterial, how they always reference each other and co-exist to create what we call *depth*, this idea often compels me to make things as they are described in books. One day I will release a collection of clothing that is wholly taken from outfits or clothing items as written about in novels. There is no such thing as an autonomous book, it is always read which always introduces another consciousness other than the authors and therefore we are in constant collaboration with written language. The space between the words and the brain at any given point is usually less than a meter, but what can happen in this space feels infinite. Language is articulate but meaning is elastic.

Žižek: Everything is contingent.
 Thinking about Cristiano Ronaldo, looking out the window of a car, where the internal mass feels bigger than the shell, I thought maybe I could write a book about him that would perfectly explain people's separation from themselves. And I wonder what it means to be constantly re-imagined but never in control of what kind of person you are in other people's cognitive spaces. Two nights ago I dreamt about Ronaldo and during the dream our natural flow of conversation would be interrupted by my sudden realisation of the situation I was in and I would feel a wave of things that I wanted to explain to him. This wave was propelled by the anxiety of not wanting to let this chance slip through, but my anxiety is like a solvent and he vanished more with every anxious beat of my heart inside my chest, inside my sleep. The moment when I realised what was happening, the possibility of it continuing to happen ceased completely.

This is a terrifying morass for any person who lives with desire. How do we realize what we want if its articulation inevitably leads to its destruction? It seems especially impossible when consciousness equates to *being*. *Žižek: sometimes these two things important things should remain secondary, that is, even if we destroy them, the laws are also destroyed. Nothing is the possibility of its own negation. When something is absent, only then are we granted the possibility of its presence. Being constantly articulated by something is the only time that it will truly disappear.* One of the best pieces of consciousness is one which David Foster Wallace's captured perfectly in his address to a group of young students.
There are these two young fish swimming alone and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the same way. One asks the other, "Hi, what's the name of your father?" "My father's name is 'How's the weather?' " "And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them asks over at the other and goes, "What the hell's name?"

Life Support
 June 2009



26, 27, 28. ...fabrics interseason, from Surface Tapisserie N°1, 2006
 29. Christopher L.G. Hill, You Can't Steal a Gift, Installation at Gambia Castle, 2008
 Pat Foster and Jen Berean courtesy Murry White Room, Melbourne
 Heinz Peter Knes courtesy Crone Galerie, Berlin.
 All other images courtesy the artists.



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- BLESS
- Chris L.G. Hill
- Emmeleine de Mooij
- Kinga Kielczynska
- Melanie Honaja
- ...fabrics interseason
- ffXXed
- Heinz Peter Knes
- James Deutscher
- Matt Hinkley
- Olivia Barrett
- Pat Foster and Jen Berean
- Rob McKenzie
- Sibling
- Slow and Steady Wins the Race
- Co-ordinated by ffXXed

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