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‘In the Realm of Ends: The Fate of Moveable Type’
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In the Realm of Ends: The Fate of Moveable Type

<div align="right">Daniel Lewis</div>

There is something strange, perhaps, in producing a journal called 'Moveable Type' that has never appeared in print, or been anywhere near a press. How or why the editors of the first volume landed on the name is lost to history, or at least in need of some research. But what is certain is that the journal, born (enrolled?) in the (academic) year 2004-5, is a child of the Internet. A thoroughly digital native; assembled, uploaded, published, downloaded and read—one hopes—online. There is, perhaps, a further irony in the fact that, until recently, *Moveable Type* was a repository for papers delivered at the UCL English Department's annual graduate conference, and so a record of the spoken word. And last year, the journal made a tentative move into the realm of podcasts. From the oral to the written to the digital, from written record to sound recording. We appear to be leaving the Gutenberg Galaxy.[1]

Of course, most people in formal education or work today will still find themselves within that galaxy's gravitational pull; with at least one foot still caught in the Gutenberg Parenthesis: an exceptional period in human history when the vast majority of knowledge was formed not orally but through literate learning, set in motion by Fritz Gutenberg's adaptation of the ancient technology of the screw press, for more lucrative purposes, nearly 600 years ago.[2] Even as we transition into an 'age of 'secondary orality'', as claimed by Walter J. Ong—a new oral culture, propelled by telecommunications and the Internet, with some of the charm and danger of the old, 'in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its use of formulas'—we remain under the influence of the written word, whether printed or processed.[3] And nowhere is this 'more deliberate and conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print'[4] more conscious and deliberate, or expected to be, than in higher education and in departments such as ours where we are still very much under the sway of the relatively sobering technology of the book—or its conceptual descendant, the text—as well as the duty, as the Book of Common Prayer has it, to 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest'.[5] But how long will its reign, and regime, last?

Marshall McLuhan, for whom the printing press is the prime mover of our galaxy—the instigator of our current *Weltanschauung* (and possibly *Weltschmerz*)—has noted that long

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[1] See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

[2] See Lars Ole Sauerberg, 'The Gutenberg Parenthesis — Print, Book and Cognition', *Orbis Litterarum*, 64 (ii), (2009), 79-166. Early on, Gutenberg used his press to produce indulgences—grants which were offered and often sold by the Catholic Church for a reduction in the punishment one would have to undergo for one's sins in Purgatory. The abuse of indulgences came under attack by Martin Luther, a theology professor at the University of Wittenberg, whose *Ninety-five Theses* or *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* of 1517 has long been considered the spark of the Protestant Reformation, thanks in large part to the new possibility of rapidly reprinting and publishing the document.

[3] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 2, 133.

[4] Ibid., p.133.

[5] *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent.

practical and conceptual hangovers have always accompanied the arrival of radically new technology. The motorcar was once considered a 'horseless carriage'. In the early eighteenth century, he notes, 'a "textbook" was still defined as a 'Classick Author written very wide by the Students, to give room for an Interpretation dictated by the Master, &c, to be inserted in the Interlines' (O.E.D.).', which reveals the survival of an essentially monastic tradition whereby the classroom 'tended to be a scriptorium with a commentary' and the student 'an editor-publisher.'[6]

Perhaps the long half-life of these old tools and systems should come as no surprise. Old technologies do not disappear overnight or, it seems, over two centuries. As Derrida has said of the book, 'there is and there will be co-existence and the structural survival of past models at the very moment when the genesis of new ones is opening up new possibilities.'[7] Nothing is entirely lost to history. However, we should not mistake the partial survival of these models for the congeniality of the new conditions. Technologies, when they are really new, and not just gimmicks, are and often aim to be disruptive. They save time; they reduce labour (though not necessarily work); and they create value, while ruthlessly and relentlessly questioning the value of all that went before, as well as the values of those who have yet to come to terms or to grips with them.

As McLuhan writes elsewhere, in 1962:

In the electronic age which succeeds the typographic and mechanical era of the past five hundred years, we encounter new shapes and structures of human interdependence and of expression which are "oral" in form even when the components of the situation may be non-verbal.[…]It is not a difficult matter in itself, but it does call for some reorganisation of imaginative life. Such a change of modes of awareness is always delayed by the persistence of older patterns of perception. The Elizabethans appear to our gaze as very medieval. Medieval man thought of himself as classical, just as we consider ourselves to be modern men. To our successors, however, we shall appear as utterly Renaissance in character, and quite unconscious of the major new factors which we have set in motion during the past one hundred and fifty years.[8]

Could it be that we are just beginning to feel the shocks of the Information Age on our shores, here, at the university, and particularly those of us in the humanities, that great (re)invention of the Renaissance? Have we underestimated, for example (and a trivial one at that), the impact the Ctrl+F 'search' function has had on our understanding of books and what they are for, especially those deemed to be of literary value? Are they to be pored over and intuited, or unpicked, harvested and mined? And if both, in what order and to what extent?

At the turn of this century, the literary theorist Franco Moretti openly embraced the large-scale 'distant reading' practices information technology would make possible, suggesting that what has kept the study of literature back, and from understanding what it is for, is a lack of understanding about what it is—the nature of the beast. This shortcoming he largely attributes to literary departments' (utterly Renaissance?) provincialism: their confinement to a few key texts in the Western canon, and those works produced in its shadow, as well as to their own hallowed methods of interpretation. Perhaps even their devotion to interpretation itself.

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[6] McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.173.

[7] Derrida, qtd. in Martyn Lyons, *The Typewriter Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), p.5.

[8] *Gutenberg Galaxy,* p.3.

A frustration with literary criticism's sample size has been echoed by others in the academy, even at the institution largely responsible for making close reading standard practice. The late Eric Griffiths, a fellow at Cambridge, once complained to his students of a general 'over-concentration on a narrow range of examples, and how such over-concentration warps our thinking' when 'the collection of an appropriately wide range of instances is essential to making progress in conceptualization'.[9] Yet if, in principle, what we need is 'a keener attention to a greater variety of examples', how are we to source a sufficient pool of them in the time allotted us not only as an undergraduate or professor, but on Earth?[10] We certainly need something more than a working knowledge of one or two foreign languages, as Griffiths had, and the age-old time-saving device of the canon. If, in terms of literary data, bigger is better then, as Moretti writes, 'Reading 'more' seems hardly to be the solution'.[11] But then again, once computers are brought into play, neither does reading itself.

A precursor to Moretti's ideas, the psychologist Colin Martindale, attempted to demonstrate that, 'in principle, one could study the history of a literary tradition without ever reading any of the literature', arguing (or boasting) that 'the main virtue of the computerised content analytic methods I use is that they save one from actually having to read the literature.'[12] In the face of such claims, Moretti's assertion that 'world literature is not an object, but a *problem*', as well as his advocacy of applying models borrowed from economic history to the study of literature, becomes itself increasingly problematic for those seeking, not to save their students from actually having to read the literature, but to save their departments and their own methods from being swallowed up by other disciplines.[13] When does such text analysis go from being a means to an end—an aid for testing its limits and 'evaluating the robustness of the discussion that a particular [interpretative] procedure annunciates', as Stephen Ramsay has more recently written—to being an end in itself?[14]

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[9] Eric Griffiths, *If Not Critical,* ed. by Freya Johnston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.83.

[10] Ibid. p.84.

[11] Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', *New Left Review* 1 (2000), 54-68 (p.55).

[12] Colin Martindale, *The Clockwork Muse* (Basic Books, 1990), p.14.

[13] Moretti, p.55.

[14] Stephen Ramsay, *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 2011), p. 17. Ramsay is somewhat more conciliatory in his approach than Martindale in suggesting the continuities between computer-aided text analysis and traditional interpretative methods. He argues elsewhere 'that critical reading practices already contain elements of the algorithmic. Any reading of a text that is not a recapitulation of that text relies on a heuristic of radical transformation. The critic who endeavours to put forth a "reading" puts forth not the text, but a new text in which the data has been paraphrased, elaborated, selected, truncated, and transduced. This basic property of critical methodology is evident not only in the act of "close reading" but also in the more ambitious project of thematic exegesis. In the classroom one encounters the professor instructing his or her students to turn to page 254, and then to page 16, and finally to page 400' (p. 16). However, as my later comments suggest, there is a school of thought that would replace emphasis on the recapitulation of texts as a way of evaluating our readings. Writing a year before Ramsay, Timothy Bewes advocated for 'reading with the grain' based on the implication of the writings of Badiou and Ricoeur—the first to identify the Marx-Freud-Nietzsche 'school of suspicion'—that 'we see (or read) most clearly, most truthfully, when we acknowledge that the only moment that can be said to contain the truth of the object, or the text, is the moment of our encounter with it.' This requires rereadings attentive to the temporal rather than spatial (extractable) aspects of the text. Timothy Bewes, 'Reading with the Grain: A New World in Literary Criticism', *differences* 21 (iii) (2010), 1-33 (p. 11).

Such an external threat to the humanities in general but to the study of literature in particular, and especially English literature, might be a caveat to those who believe the threat to be largely internal, the result of a particular way of reading perceived as cool and distant: the method often referred to as critique which, with roots in the work of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, looks to demystify an author's ostensible project or an audience's understanding of it—and which the sociologist Bruno Latour thought, twenty years ago, had 'run out of steam'.[15] One of the most his vocal acolytes, Rita Felski, has herself critiqued such 'critical detachment' as 'not an absence of mood but one manifestation of it—a certain orientation toward one's subject, a way of making one's argument matter.'[16] A mood influenced, one might add, possibly since the turn of the millennium by an ongoing sense of individual and collective anxiety, at a time when 'knowledge producers within and without the academy are challenged to articulate why they do what they do—and, we suggest, when they might be done', as Seth Rudy and Rachael Scarborough King have recently written.[17]

What has been deemed self-defeating critique may have been adopted by scholars, however unconsciously, precisely under the pressure of being forced to contemplate their purpose and survival—their 'ends'. Such cool professionalisation and intellectual streamlining may be our most effective tool for showing not only that our interpretations are more than run-of-the-mill but also that they get us somewhere. If 'a firm sense of both purpose and outcome could help scholars demonstrate how they are advancing knowledge rather than continuing to spin their wheels',[18] then it is possible that the answer to 'the humanities quandary', as Judith Butler has written—'in which no one knows who is speaking and in what voice, and with what intent'—has been with us for some time.[19]

The greater irony, however, is that the 'low-key affective tone' Felski attributes to critique may in fact be the heritage of the printed word, as McLuhan would seem to argue in a passage worth quoting in full for its continuing relevance to our contemporary debates.[20]

Perhaps the most significant of the gifts of typography to man is that of detachment and noninvolvement—the power to act without reacting. Science since the Renaissance has exalted this gift which has become an embarrassment in the electric age, in which all people are involved in all others at all times. The very word "disinterested," expressing the loftiest detachment and ethical integrity of typographic man, has in the past decade been increasingly used to mean: "He couldn't care less." The same integrity indicated by the term "disinterested" as a mark of the scientific and scholarly temper of a literate and enlightened society is now increasingly repudiated as "specialisation" and fragmentation of knowledge and sensibility. The fragmenting and analytic power of the printed word in our psychic lives gave us that "dissociation of sensibility" which in the arts and literature since Cezanne and since Baudelaire has been a top priority for elimination in every program of reform in taste and knowledge. In the "implosion" of the electric age the separation of thought and feeling has come to seem as strange as the departmentalisation of knowledge in schools and universities. Yet it was precisely the power to separate thought and feeling, to be able

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[15] Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* 30 (Winter 2004), pp.225-48 (p.225).

[16] Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p.6.

[17] Seth Rudy and Rachael Scarborough King in *The Ends of Knowledge* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), p.1.

[18] Ibid. p.7.

[19] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life* (London: Verso, 2004), p.129.

[20] Felski, p.6.

to act without reacting, that split literate man out of the tribal world of close family bonds in private and social life.[21]

It is significant, in this context, that in her latest book Felski should argue we should turn our attention to our involvement with works of art—the way we get 'hooked' on or by them; to keep in mind 'the phenomenological thickness of aesthetic response'.[22] For Felski, this is explicitly a search for solidarity, a greater involvement with other people—an attempt to bridge the 'gulf between scholarly and lay response', between what 'we' do and what 'other people do (the naïve, the unschooled, the sentimental)'.[23] But it is also, we might say now, a search for a second innocence: an attempt to bridge the gulf between thought and feeling; to return to a time before we knew what we wanted, or lacked, or knew exactly what we were doing. In her own way, Felski wants an end to a certain kind of knowledge; the end of an era, even. Many of her case studies fall outside the realm of the strictly literary: Matisse, Joni Mitchell's 'River', *Thelma and Louise*. We are not in fifteenth-century Mainz anymore.

But even this project owes a debt to print. Pursuing an impossible task, Felski finds herself engaging in the literally extraordinary (extra-ordinary) thing that we, not just on this side of gulf, have the inclination to do: go back, go over, recap, research. McLuhan strangely downplays our appetite and ability—particularly as post-typographic man, with our manifold ways of storing the past—to think twice. To go from first thoughts to having second ones. 'Print taught men to say, "Damn the torpedoes. Full steam ahead!"', McLuhan claims, but it has also given him the opportunity to turn back.[24] The printed word may have been the 'architect of nationalism', giving us a sense of space while also motivating us to travel across it and take it up—regardless, in many cases, of who or what was already there —but, if so, it also enabled us to dismantle the concept and condemn the atrocities perpetrated in its name.[25] If, as a result of compromising single-mindedness to be of two minds, humanity is more 'hampered and hesitant', it is also, to revive Ong's terms, more conscious and deliberate.[26] We are Janus-faced people, heading into the future even while looking into the past; slowing down, or trying to, even as we speed up. We almost no longer need to be told to 'inwardly digest'; we have the appetite for it.

The speed of change can make us lose that appetite or feeling—even our feeling for (a lost sense of) feeling—making us unresponsive, or responsive in narrow, predetermined ways, like a train on its tracks. The sheer fact of speed itself can, along with rampant individualism, 'deaden the modern body', as Richard Sennett has claimed E. M. Forster foresaw in his depiction of life in London in *Howards End*.[27] But—or as a result—it can also compromise, or warp, our thinking. A passage from another book based in a bustling metropolis, Berlin, and published on the other side of the First World War—*Fates Behind Typewriters,* a 1930 autobiographical novel by the German author Christa Anita Brück— makes this point clearly.

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[21] *Understanding Media,* p.173.

[22] Felski, *Hooked: Art and Attachment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), p.25.

[23] Ibid. pp.4, 79.

[24] *Understanding Media,* p.178.

[25] Ibid. p.170.

[26] Ibid. p.178.

[27] Richard Sennett, *Flesh And Stone* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company: 1994), p.324.

Tempo, Tempo, faster, faster.

Man funnels his energy into the machine. The machine, which is he himself, his foremost abilities, his foremost concentration and final exertion. And he himself is machine, is lever, is key, is type and moving carriage.

Not to think, not to reflect, on, on, fast, fast, tipp, tip, tipptipptipptipptipp tipp. . .[28]

This heady passage summons history, or tempts fate. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see where this particular runaway train of thought(lessness) is headed: more war, which happens to be what accelerated the development of the typewriter in the first place. The first serialised models were produced by the gunmakers Remington during a slow sales period after the bonanza of the American Civil War. 'The typewriter became a discursive machine-gun', claims Friedrich Kittler. 'A technology whose basic action not coincidentally

'The super-fast Olivetti'. An advert from 1923

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[28] Christa Anita Brück qtd. in Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter,* trans. by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.222.

consists of strikes and triggers proceeds in automated and discrete steps, as does ammunitions transport in a revolver and a machine-gun, or celluloid transport in a film projector.'[29] It is perhaps not coincidental either that the production of typewriters should have been fostered by companies which also manufactured modes of transport, especially cars, which we might place next in the line of exhilarating but potentially deadening technology. The typewriter which graces our front cover was developed by Adler (German for eagle) which is often credited with producing the first truly streamlined commercial car, the Adler 2.5-litre, the most talked about model at the 1937 Berlin Motor Show and much admired by Adolf Hitler. In fact, the car was nicknamed the 'Autobahn Adler' after the recently turbocharged construction of Germany's motorways, the majority of which still have no official speed limits. 'Germany is a motor-minded country', said a British reviewer.[30]

Yet the typewriter is also clearly linked to a much older piece of technology: it is essentially 'nothing but a miniature printing press'.[31] But also, in reality, nothing less than that; the greatest advance on that technology since Gutenberg's modifications and nearly as revolutionary. In fact, it sparked something of a sexual revolution. For several reasons, women to began to enter for the first time in their thousands into the workplaces that had previously been all-male environments—not least because the typewriter's longest lasting innovation, the keyboard, happened to be particularly suited to the generations of women who had been kept busy at home with piano lessons. 'Prior to the invention of the typewriter, all poets, secretaries, and typesetters were of the same sex', Kittler notes elsewhere. 'The Gutenberg Galaxy was thus a sexually closed feedback loop.'[32] Taking over as secretaries and amanuenses, women broke the old discursive loop as well as out of those close family bonds. Brück, writing from the perspective of one of the liberated 'New Women' of the Weimar Republic, addresses her book to those 'women who are not interested in motherhood', the kind the Nazis would seek to suppress.[33]

But, as is evident from the tonally ambiguous passage above, the dangers of unthinking forward motion, as of certain political movements, were already present. As words get transposed into pure rhythm and sound, it becomes increasingly hard to tell who is in charge—who is conducting and who is the conductor, user and thing used. Just as with 'the opacity of agency in car driving', the typewriter deadens the body by giving the impression of turning living matter into plastic and metal, and vice versa, worrying the dividing line between man—or, rather, woman—and machine.[34] For a time, this (con)fusion was registered linguistically: in English, the word typewriter referred both to the machine and to the one typing—'a source of countless cartoons' in mid-century America.[35] An advert from the same period, for the 1959 Chevrolet Biscayne, draws out a family resemblance between these seemingly discrete 'extensions of man' (man being decidedly gendered here): the car, the typewriter and the…typewriter.[36]

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[29] Kittler, p.191.

[30] Anon., 'Berlin's Great Exhibition', *Motor Sport* 8 (iv), (March 1937), 134-36 (p.134).

[31] Hubertus Streicher qtd. in Kittler, p.228.

[32] Kittler, p.184.

[33] Brück qtd. in Kittler, p.222.

[34] Adam Gopnik, 'The Driver's Seat', *New Yorker* 90 (46) (2015), 48-55 (p.52).

[35] Kittler, p.183.

[36] *Understanding Media,* p. 3.

A 1959 advert for the Chevrolet Biscayne

Like many adverts, though, it also plays on or into the daydreams, or thoughts, of a working population who now included women possessed of newfound agency and dissatisfactions. It could be a fantasy of remote work (before its time) or, perhaps, of authority; being able to write without being dictated to. It also promotes a fantasy of stillness; of not moving or, perhaps, of not being moved. Such an impression is obviously an effect of the medium, not to mention more than a modicum of twenty-first century nostalgia. To a certain extent, as John Berger once noted, all 'publicity is essentially *eventless*' and 'extends just as far as nothing else is happening'.[37] But it also feels like an effect of the typewriter which seems to have ground everything to a halt; the stationary as a sort of

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[37] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), p.153.

model for that which stays still while the world reforms around it.[38] The still point of a turning world. Consequently, it is tempting to make something of a talisman of this image, one of Bartelby-esque resistance on the cusp of a countercultural decade: the newly socially mobile woman who decides to vacate the vehicle, choosing to get out rather than get ahead. A modern-day scrivener, a century after Melville's creation, who would prefer not to do as she is told.

In her disinterest in the gleamingly symbol of the mobile future behind her, we could place her next to the *Angelus Novus* or 'angel of history' as described by Walter Benjamin— one of the architects of critique, writing just ten years after Brück in 1940, the year he would took his own life to avoid capture by the Gestapo. Another emblem of resisting and refus(e)ing history's forward march, of turning (one's) back:

His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us, he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm.[39]

This moment of suspended animation and active recuperation, in the midst of unrest, mirrors the situation of our woman who, finding this storm anything but irresistible, chooses to weather it by making words, or forming thoughts, in a moment of rest—which makes it equally tempting to make her representative of the scholar or, at least, the thinker, whose definition could be: one who *takes time*—to reflect, revise, look into, look back, ponder, pause, freeze, stop.[40] Taking time to get (back) a sense of it.

It is this activity which seems to link what we do across different disciplines as well as what 'we' do and what people outside of the academy do, and which transcends the more obvious differences in what we choose to look at, watch, listen to or read. And, for now, within the humanities at least, many of us are also bound by the fact that a lot of the time we take is devoted to the painstaking work of making sentences, as well as working them out. Writing and reading, rewriting and rereading, again. A task which may look or feel, to all intents and purposes—or to those pressing them on us—like spinning our wheels.

Of course, such activity is what we have been engaged in in putting together this journal, though rarely in such Arcadian surroundings as our typist. (No plug sockets in paradise). As if to justify our ways, in our final article Liam Kennedy-Finnerty mounts a defence of the time-consuming, labour-intensive art of essay writing—and, by implication, marking and

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[38] One obvious objection here, apart from the typewriter's much-touted portability, is that it is a piece of technology that, like the printing press, only made a difference in the manner in which it was used. But what Friedrich Kittler achieves in his writing on the device is to show the impact the typewriter had on the course of material and intellectual history even as an idea. His series of case studies—sketches towards an 'unwritten literary sociology' of the 20th century based on the machine—showing the relationship of various (male) writers and thinkers with their typewriters, human and non-human, is compelling. (p. 214). See especially pp. 214-231.

[39] Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940,* trans. by Edmund Jephcott and others, eds. by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p.392.

[40] This is, after all, the principle of the sabbatical, as of the sabbath: rest with a purpose.

editing—against the rise of AI text generators such as ChatGPT. Concurring with Elaine Scarry's belief in the 'lifesaving' nature of beauty, Kennedy-Finnerty argues our writing should not only bear witness to our existence in time and space but in bodies. Something which, of course, AI cannot do (yet). While in effect bringing us full circle—Kennedy-Finnerty also invokes Benjamin and Felski, though to slightly different ends—the article acts as a counterbalance to our penultimate piece which is a refreshingly positive evaluation of the integration of AI in the theatre. Linking the latest technology to the age-old use of puppetry and marionettes, and focusing on a trio of recent productions reimagining Shakespeare—perhaps the byword for traditionalist theatre—Abhik Maiti aims to demonstrate how AI enables actors, directors and even audiences to achieve performances on stage bodies alone cannot.

Both of these articles help to underline concerns readers will find threaded throughout the entire journal. The pieces display an interest in ends and limits—spatiotemporal, bodily and mental, real and imagined—while our articles seem particularly preoccupied with how technology might bind us to or free us from them, which is appropriate as we choose the topic of "movement" to nod to our title in celebration of our fifteenth publication. Jennifer Kenyon finds E. M. Forster and Louis MacNeice attempting to cross national and personal borders in their radio broadcasts to India either side of 1947—that is, just before the end of British rule and the Partition, and just after the beginning of independence respectively. While MacNeice manipulated the medium to create a sort of sonic utopia, Forster drew attention to his physical presence in the studio 'as a means of highlighting the possibility of more transcendent connections'. However, Kenyon argues, both writers' projects suffer from their unacknowledged or unrealised limitation of having been launched from the heart of a flagging empire seeking to spread its soft power. Mike Fu similarly examines people trying to foster communities unrestricted by geography, in this case, through the medium of the print magazine. Drawing on interviews and exchanges with the founders of *Banana* and *Sine Theta,* Fu traces the efforts of young members of the Asian diaspora reaching out for connection both within and beyond the places they call home and how the publications' emergence intersects with the 'shifting cultural politics' of the past decade.

Questions of identity also come to the fore in a couple of pieces that aim to relate the much contested limits of the self to racial identity. Of what do they consist, how are they formed and how do they maintain their integrity—and should they? Lisa Van Straten applies Stephen Clingman's notion of navigational identity, whereby the self is intimately tied to the movement of bodies in space, to Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* to demonstrate how its protagonist 'seems to construct for herself a liminal, container-space to serve as a foundation for and reflection of her in-between white creole identity, even though this containment simultaneously gives rise to a paranoid sense of being closed-in' and leads to a self-denying 'state of paralysis'. Van Straten goes on to nuance Clingman's concept to include the gaze, how one is looked at and looks, as integral to the understanding of identity and the self. This expanded idea of the self as grounded in yet also exposed to the vagaries of interpersonal exchange bears similarities to Nancy Selleck's model of the early modern self as not primarily in opposition to but interchangeable with an other. Thomas Langham makes use of this model in his examination of *Othello* and its 1962 film adaptation, *All Night Long,* which transposes the action to a London warehouse and utilises jazz as a site of collective identity formation imperilled by white appropriation and ownership of performance spaces. However, the film shows the survival of black creativity and

community, Langham argues, though its revision of one of the most well known deathly endings in theatre.

Deathly endings and dead ends on screen are also considered in our first two articles. Emily Round considers two seminal horror flicks, the original *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *It Follows,* both of which prominently feature cars and foreground the vulnerability of bodies, especially women's. While exploring the significance of the films' post-industrial settings—the forgotten corners of rural Texas and the dilapidated centre and the more well-to-do suburbs of Detroit, respectively—Round shows how their characters are engaged in the habit of trying to run away from or outrun the very present threat of economic precarity and ruin. Ultimately, the 'films present the collective crisis of capitalism as the ultimate horror' in its 'constant process of deferring disaster by sacrificing the stability of some to guarantee the security of others.' Christopher O'Hara considers what happens when local economic horror becomes global and ecological, through the lens of the post-apocalyptic novel *On the Beach* (1957) by the Australian author Nevil Shute and its film adaption, released in 1959—the same year as our Chevrolet Biscayne—in which the inhabitants of Melbourne are awaiting the fallout of a nuclear war that has decimated civilisation. Here, nobody runs, partly because there is nowhere *to* run, but cling to their old way of life; the debris of capitalism, especially cars which function as 'social cocoon[s]' providing the comfort of nostalgia, protection from confronting the present and false hope for the future. O'Hara reflects on our current precarious moment which might be defined less by hyper-mobility than 'hyper-stasis'; by staying put and waiting for the inevitable rather than valiantly fighting on.

Nestled in among these pieces is Laura Thorn's article on private and public space in *The Changeling* which brings us back to a consideration of liminality and containment, but also to the place of the book in the early modern period. Thorn investigates the role the domestic and the spaces within it—especially boxes and closets—play in the seventeenth-century tragedy, relating them to contemporary notions of enclosure and disclosure and the readability of women's bodies, which Thorn finds exemplified in the tradition of the 'closet book' which partook in the 'popular early modern process of publicly establishing something as a secret' in order to reveal it.

Being entrapped—whether in the place you live or the body you were born in—is a thread picked up in our reviews section. *Asylum,* a memoir by Edafe Okporo, offers 'an in-depth exploration into the often-hidden parts of the asylum process' which are particularly fraught for a gay black man from Nigeria, as Alisha Mathers shows. Exposing the limits of international refugee rights, Okporo also shows the political limitations of his new home, the United States, where one might shed one's status as queer or as a migrant but not one's race. Violet Kupersmith's *Build Your House Around My Body* also seeks to display the lingering effects of a dark past, uncovering the history of French colonisation and Japanese occupation in Vietnam which is 'particularly written on the bodies of women' through a reworking of the tropes of Gothic fiction. Although, Alex Carabine writes, the way the novel summons its ghosts 'speaks to metamorphosis, rather than restraint. It may be true that the past is ever present, but the ways in which the characters bear the weight of their past is transformative.'

Carabine rings the brighter note that can be heard elsewhere in this section. Jordan Casstles bears witness to the dissolution of Gruppo di Nun, an Italian collective with feminist roots, in a review of *Revolutionary Demonology*—a collection of anti-cyber-fascistic 'theoryfiction' (to which Casstles offers a helpful introduction for those unfamiliar with the genre)—but also to the creative supernova that so often accompanies such disbanding. As

Casstles writes, the 'sheer poetry' and 'linguistic pyrotechnics on display within this book are worth the price of admission alone.' Similarly, William Burns gains entry into and finds much space for thought in Ian Patterson's 'ambulatory poetic[s]' and lively enjambments in *Shell Vestige Disputed*—a title and collection which holds out the possibility, however worn or faded, of breaking out of confinement and launching on to a different future. And our reviews editor Olivia Ho assesses Emma Warren's *Dance Your Way Home,* a consideration of dance floors, dancehalls and general dance spaces across the world, concluding that—with nightlife in many places under siege—to 'move with each other is vital to a sense of shared humanity'.

Our two creative pieces, too, refuse to stay still. Karen Jane Cannon's fleet-footed verse in 'The Forest Navigator' generates a sense of lyrical uplift, even while studying a creature found 'hanging upside down', while 'Cost of Living', a short story by Mark Gorham about working the supermarket floor, is a *perpetuum mobile* of ennui-busting antics and mental fidgeting. A sense of playfulness is also sustained by the photographs which punctuate the journal: shots of Casa Battló by Antoni Gaudí, an architect whose imagination was captured by a sense of nature's infinite variety. (He once declared his magnum opus, the Sagrada Familia—under construction now for 141 years—would have no straight lines.) In a closing commentary, the photographer Chelsea Ko links the images of the house to the French philosopher Georges Bataille's thoughts on the ecstatic 'merry-go-round' of sexual desire in his theory of eroticism—'a movement that struggles, against the will to restrain it, to its impossible completion.' And so the wheel keeps turning.

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