

Readings in a Rumour of the End of Art



Garry Barker  
Michael Belshaw  
Joanna Geldard  
Richard Miles  
Tom Palin



## Readings in a Rumour of the End of Art

Garry Barker  
Michael Belshaw  
Richard Miles  
Joanna Geldard  
Tom Palin

Workshop Press: Leeds



## Readings in a Rumour of the End of Art

Gary Barker  
Michael Bellamy  
Richard Miles  
Joanna Goldsack  
Tom Paine

© 2012 by the authors of this book. The book authors retain sole copyright to their contributions to this book.

This edition published by Workshop Press: Leeds  
10 Newton Grove Leeds LS7 4HW

ISBN: 978-0-9569494-5-5

Cover image photographer: Freya Kruczenyk  
In Ruins: 2011

Workshop Press: Leeds

## Preface

The roundtable discussion, transcribed in the following pages, took place at Leeds College of Art in the summer of 2011 and was based on two reading groups undertaken earlier in the year – one on Jacques Derrida's *Justice of Mercy* and the other on Peter Godwin's *The End of Art Reading in a Rumour of the End of Art*. The roundtable was a response to a request from the Leeds College of Art to contribute to a new resource for students and staff alike and in the hope that further research might be encouraged.

## Readings in a Rumour of the End of Art

### A Transcript of a Discussion

The roundtable was a response to a request from the Leeds College of Art to contribute to a new resource for students and staff alike and in the hope that further research might be encouraged. The roundtable was a response to a request from the Leeds College of Art to contribute to a new resource for students and staff alike and in the hope that further research might be encouraged. The roundtable was a response to a request from the Leeds College of Art to contribute to a new resource for students and staff alike and in the hope that further research might be encouraged.

If we made the claim that history has come to an end would that claim be made before or after the end? This begs the question of whether we think of an end in terms of death, for which 'before' and 'after' have no rational bearing. The concept of temporality or time out of joint recurs throughout the discussion – now as a question of historicity, now as the familiar metaphor of a river. Another interesting problem that came up for discussion was the status of language. What are the consequences of thinking of language as a self-referring system, and if endism is determined by language, should we not be surprised when it appears to be circular, or at least unresolved? This suggests allegory, duality and repetition are at the heart of endist thinking.

If the end of art is such a rich and interesting topic can this usefully be taught to art students or does it remain an academic puzzle. We have become accustomed to the idea that art cannot be taught. Is this simply a manifestation of the end of art? Moreover is the end of art forever a theory or is it a kind of practice?



## Preface

The roundtable discussion, transcribed in the following pages, took place at Leeds College of Art in the summer of 2011 and was based on two reading groups undertaken earlier in the year – one on Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* and the other on Eva Geulen's *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour After Hegel*. Common to both texts is the topic of 'endism' and the broad aim was to explore this as an issue for art and to consider its consequences for pedagogy. The transcript has been edited with a view to making it a useful resource for students and staff alike and in the hope that further research might be undertaken in this area. As well as editing the text we have included endnotes, an introduction, and suggested further reading on the topic. As will become clear endism is a perplexing concept once one has overcome the temptation to tie it to dates: we cannot speak of the end of history in the way we speak of the end of the Second World War. This is the underlying problem that shapes the discussion. Mindful of this problem, the participants approached endism according to a number of related themes.

If we made the claim that history has come to an end would that claim be made before or after the end? This begs the question of whether we think of an end in terms of death, for which 'before' and 'after' have no rational bearing. The concept of temporality or time out of joint recurs throughout the discussion – now as a question of historicity, now as the familiar metaphor of a river. Another interesting problem that came up for discussion was the status of language. What are the consequences of thinking of language as a self-referring system, and if endism is determined by language, should we not be surprised when it appears to be circular, or at least unresolved? This suggests allegory, duality and repetition are at the heart of endist thinking.

If the end of art is such a rich and interesting topic can this usefully be taught to art students or does it remain an academic puzzle. We have become accustomed to the idea that art cannot be taught. Is this simply a manifestation of the end of art? Moreover is the end of art forever a theory or is it a kind of practice?



To put it another way, what are we to make of the suggestion that studying art contributes to its demise?

These are some of the troublesome questions addressed in the roundtable, any one of which might be taken up in further study – practical or theoretical. Initially they arose in the reading groups and were debated there among the following members of staff: Garry Barker, Annette Beaumont, James Beighton, Michael Belshaw, Andrew Broadey, Susan Carter, Joanna Geldard, Andrew Joskowski, Dorothy King, Madeleine Newman, Tom Palin, Debra Roberts, Marcel Swiboda, Lee Wainright.

... all of whom would like sincerely to thank Louise Thaxter for producing the draft transcript of the roundtable discussion.

## Introduction

In 1989 the American academic Francis Fukuyama published a book, *The End of History?*, in which he argued that liberal democracy had finally overcome its principal opponent, communism, and that therefore major historical developments, including ideological conflict, had come to an end. In the same year the cultural scientist Samuel P. Huntington applauded Fukuyama's analysis of the end of the Cold War. In his article 'The End of Ideology' he coined the name of the genre to which *The End of History?* belonged, arguing that 'Endism is oriented to the future rather than the past and is unambiguously optimistic'. With the triumph of the multiculturalism in the following decade 'endism' gained currency, spurred on by an astonishing number of publications predicting the end of everything – nature, religion, time, the world, etc. That said, endist arguments have been around for a very long time. Indeed it may well be said that religious endism in the form of eschatology, or 'the end of days', is firmly rooted in many religions. Moreover, such religious arguments resonate with those of contemporary science and cosmology in such a way that the latter often almost to be allegories of the former. Whether it is in the shape of four horsemen, an asteroid or global warming, we have endlessly fascinated by our own demise. For all that, the word 'endism' doesn't yet appear in the Oxford English Dictionary.

The roundtable discussion addressed the topic of endism according to Jacques Derrida's *Spacetime of Man* and Eric Guelser's *The End of the Reading is a Reader After Hegel*. Derrida's book is in part a critique of Fukuyama's thesis and hence a critique of the hegemony of liberal democracy. Derrida recognises Fukuyama not only as a neo-conservative but also as a 'neo-evangelist' in his use of eschatologically loaded phrases such as 'the Promised Land of liberal democracy'. By unifying the end of conflict under such a heading Fukuyama condemns all subsequent, post-historical injustices to the status of equilibria. The rhetoric of Fukuyama's argument leads Derrida to conclude, 'the end of History is essentially a Christian eschatology'.<sup>1</sup>

In Christian discourse one would distinguish sharply between body



## Introduction

In 1989 the American academic Francis Fukuyama published a paper, 'The End of History?', in which he argued that liberal democracy had finally overcome its principal opponent, communism, and that therefore major historical developments, driven by ideological conflict, had come to an end.<sup>1</sup> In the same year the political scientist Samuel P. Huntington applauded Fukuyama for his analysis of the end of the Cold War. In his article Huntington also coined the name of the genre to which 'The End of History' belonged, arguing that 'Endism is oriented to the future rather than the past and is unabashedly optimistic.'<sup>2</sup> With the approach of the millenium in the following decade 'endism' gained currency, spurred on by an astonishing number of publications debating the end of something – nature, religion, time, the world, and art. That said, endist arguments have been around for a very long time. Indeed it may well be said that religious endism in the form of eschatology, or 'the end of days', is firmly rooted in many cultures. Moreover, such religious arguments resonate with those in contemporary science and cosmology in such a way that the latter seem almost to be allegories of the former. Whether it is in the form of four horsemen, an asteroid or global warming, we seem endlessly fascinated by our own demise. For all that, the word 'endism' doesn't yet appear in the Oxford English Dictionary.

The roundtable discussion addressed the topic of endism according to Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, and Eva Geulen's *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour After Hegel*.<sup>3</sup> Derrida's book is in part a critique of Fukuyama's thesis and hence a critique of the hegemony of liberal democracy.<sup>4</sup> Derrida recognizes Fukuyama not only as a neo-conservative but also as a 'neo-evangelist' in his use of theologically loaded phrases such as 'the Promised Land of liberal democracy'. By unifying the end of conflict under such a heading Fukuyama condemns all subsequent, post-historical injustices to the status of squabbles. The rhetoric of Fukuyama's argument leads Derrida to conclude, 'the end of History is essentially a Christian eschatology.'<sup>5</sup>

In Christian discourse one would distinguish sharply between body



and soul or spirit. In contrast Derrida considers the ghost or spectre, which, he says, is *neither* body nor spirit *and both* body and spirit. This is a familiar move in deconstruction and it signals the idea that the spectre is an 'undecidable'. The spectre in question here is Hamlet's father's ghost. Shakespeare's tragedy provides Derrida with a number of rhetorical figures with which to approach Marx's writing, not least of which is Hamlet's remark to his companions on hearing of his father's murder from his ghost - 'The time is out of joint'. For Derrida this phrase points up Marx's concern with the drama of revolution and the analysis of exchange value because it figures the error of identity according to what one commentator has called a 'constitutive anachronism'.<sup>6</sup> Marx lamented that the revolutionary act depended on precedents in the form of spirits of the past. 'And just when they seemed engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language'.<sup>7</sup> For Marx one must forget the past in order to act anew. Yet the spirits of the past have a habit of haunting the present just when revolution promised a new beginning. The inverse of this problem can be seen in the case of the commodity fetish.

The commodity fetish is illustrated in Marx's figure of a wooden table which, understood in terms of exchange value, goes beyond its use value as a 'sensuous thing' and takes on a spectral appearance as an apparition. 'A commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it satisfies human needs, or that it first takes on these properties as the product of human labour. It is absolutely clear that, by his activity, man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary sensuous thing. But as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a

thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will.'<sup>8</sup> On the one hand the revolutionary act is in error if it depends on precedents in the form of spirits of the past, on the other hand the 'sensuous thing' is in error when it is haunted by the commodity. For Marx then the revolutionary act needs to rid itself of the spectre of the past, just as the 'sensuous thing' needs to be rid of the spectre of the commodity. But for Derrida the specter is the ineluctable effect of 'time out of joint'.

It is well understood that Fukuyama draws on Hegel for his analysis of the end of history – a point that Derrida seizes on: 'The model of the liberal state to which [Fukuyama] explicitly lays claim is not only that of Hegel, the Hegel of the struggle for recognition, it is that of a Hegel who privileges the "Christian vision"'.<sup>9</sup> It is Hegel who serves to connect the two texts discussed in the reading groups, but, as implied in Derrida's remark, there is more than one Hegel. This becomes clear in Geulen's study *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour After Hegel*.

The key statement on the end of art appeared in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*: '...art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.'<sup>10</sup> As Geulen shows, we cannot be certain that Hegel said this because the lecture was transcribed by a student. Hence we are dealing with a rumour, albeit one we must take seriously. The end of art is also a rumour because it has no beginning – just as endism is a characteristic of many cultures, so art has always been drawn to its own end. Moreover, a rumour is a kind of simulacrum – it has no recognisable origin, and its repetition is always a repetition of a repetition; which is to say it is always 'out of joint'. This observation separates Geulen's study from those that seek a final decision on the end of art because, as a rumour, the end of art is also a paradox – 'With the end of art, it seems immediately obvious that the unity and identity of this object cannot be found in it itself, but only in claims about it.'<sup>11</sup> Geulen identifies two ways of reading the end of art – the anti-aesthetic and the aesthetic – each of which can claim an Hegelian pedigree. The former claims are recognised as 'radically temporalising the end'<sup>12</sup> by declaring the end of the end and



abiding in the paradox of a 'constitutive anachronism'. The latter anticipates a rehabilitation of aesthetics when all talk of the end of art has come to an end. In this sense Hegel's rumour, far from being true or false, turns out to be a kind of hermeneutic circle. Interpreting the end of art as a discourse brings it into being: 'only ex post facto, now, is Hegel's position as the founder of this discourse legible.'<sup>13</sup>

Geulen's book traces the development of the end of art in a loosely chronological way from Hegel to Heidegger by way of Nietzsche, Benjamin and Adorno. But it is to Hegel's contemporary and friend, the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, that she returns in the final chapter, bringing the discussion full circle. In his poem 'Voice of the People' Hölderlin, like Marx, is concerned with historical precedents, in the form of legends, for human action – specifically the self-destruction of a town 'under the spell of a repetition compulsion'.<sup>14</sup> Geulen's reading, like Derrida's, teases out the necessary anachronism that Hölderlin's poem reveals. 'That the "marvelous legend" is not merely the object of interpretation but is simultaneously the result of interpretation, is apparent from the inversion of the chronological sequence of the events the poem depicts. The later event precedes the earlier.'<sup>15</sup> The end of art submits to the same spectral logic: whether we call it a thesis, a rumour or a legend – art's self-destructive impulse is the object and result of interpreting 'the end of art'.

## Round Table Discussion Transcript

### The End of Art

Present:

Garry Barker, Michael Belshaw, Joanna Goldard,  
Richard Miles and Tom Palm

MB We are meeting today to discuss the themes of two reading groups that we conducted in the second semester. The link between the two books – *Spencer of Marx* by Jacques Derrida and *The End of Art* by Eva Geulen – was 'endism', and we are going to discuss this idea as it relates to both art and politics. *Spencer of Marx* was a challenge to Francis Fukuyama's views on the end of history, and of course the endism in Geulen's book is the end of art, so we're going to combine themes from both sources and see where that takes us.

GB These sessions have often been about Hegel, and Derrida was quoting him extensively when we were reading through *Spencer of Marx*, so it has been interesting for me to return to Hegel and read further – going back into his work and reading *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and trying to get a sense of what was underlying all of this, and it seems to me that there's a real fixation in Hegel's thinking. On the one hand he's one of the first philosophers to deal with history and materiality and yet at the same time he's concerned with other things that he believes that philosophy must deal with: the spirit, and the idea of something that transcends us, and when we were reading Derrida we were constantly asked to focus on this duality. You've also got Hegel's master/slave dialectic, which is again another duality, a duality that means as you think the master takes over, the voice of the slave opens that otherness – so the master can never take full control; there is always a situation that as the power of the master evolves, the slave is somewhere finding the strength to revolt and push back.<sup>12</sup> That sort of conflict seemed to me



standing in the paradox of a 'consciousness anachronism'. The latter anticipates a rehabilitation of aesthetics when all talk of the end of art has come to an end. In the sense Hegel's rumour, far from being true or false, turns out to be a kind of hermeneutic circle. Interpreting the end of art as a discourse brings it into being: 'only ex post facto, now, is Hegel's position as the triad of this discourse legit.'<sup>13</sup>

Geulen's book traces the development of the end of art in a loosely chronological way from Hegel to Heidegger by way of Nietzsche, Benjamin and Adorno. But it is to Hegel's contemporary and friend, the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, that she returns in the final chapter, bringing the discussion full circle. In his poem 'Voice of the People' Hölderlin, like Marx, is concerned with historical precedents, in the form of legends, for human action – specifically the self-destruction of a town 'under the spell of a repetition compulsion'.<sup>14</sup> Geulen's reading, like Derrida's, traces out the necessary anachronism that Hölderlin's poem reveals. 'That the "marvellous legend" is not merely the object of interpretation but is simultaneously the result of interpretation, is apparent from the inversion of the chronological sequence of the events the poem depicts. The latter event precedes the earlier.'<sup>15</sup> The end of art submits to the same spectral logic: whether we call it a theme, a rumour or a legend – art's self-destructive impulse is the object and result of interpreting 'the end of art'.

## Round Table Discussion Transcript

### The End of Art

#### Present:

Garry Barker, Michael Belshaw, Joanna Geldard,  
Richard Miles and Tom Palin

**MB** We are meeting today to discuss the themes of two reading groups that we conducted in the second semester. The link between the two books – *Specters of Marx* by Jacques Derrida and *The End of Art* by Eva Geulen – was 'endism', and we are going to discuss this idea as it relates to both art and politics. *Specters of Marx* was a challenge to Francis Fukuyama's views on the end of history, and of course the endism in Geulen's book is the end of art, so we're going to combine themes from both sources and see where that takes us.

**GB** These sessions have often been about Hegel, and Derrida was quoting him extensively when we were reading through *Specters of Marx*; so it has been interesting for me to return to Hegel and read further – going back into his work and reading *The Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>16</sup> and trying to get a sense of what was underlying all of this and it seems to me that there's a real friction in Hegel's thinking. On the one hand he's one of the first philosophers to deal with history and materiality and yet at the same time he's concerned with other things that he believes that philosophy must deal with; the spirit, and the idea of something that transcends us, and when we were reading Derrida we were constantly asked to focus on this duality. You've also got Hegel's master/slave dialectic which is again another duality; a duality that means as you think the master takes over, the voice of the slave opens that otherness – so the master can never take full control; there is always a situation that as the power of the master evolves, the slave is somewhere finding the strength to revolt and push back.<sup>17</sup> That sort of conflict seemed to me



to go right back to Hegel's worry about the fact that really he was an atheist and yet at the same time was trying to deal with the Christian leftovers or Christian ideals that still come through and shape his thinking – that in itself has a deeper issue and the deeper issue is Hegel's awareness of his own mortality; Hegel's awareness of the 'death' business. When I went back to reading Hegel he has a lot to say about death and what it is as part of the human condition; somewhere this awareness of death is something of an essential component of the human condition, and for us to be aware of life, it is actually at its height, at its highest level of awareness, when we know death faces us; when we know that death is the end of it.<sup>18</sup> In revisiting Hegel I had this sense of going through a reading of an approach to death, and that the reason why we keep coming back to it is because it gives us the most heightened experience of what it is not to die – to be alive – so the death of art has to be faced in order for us to be aware of what art really means to us. If we lose it, through its extinction, in some way we become more aware of what it actually is to us.

**MB** That's an interesting point. Would it be right to say that in Hegel, the idea, even of the death of art, is just a prelude to something moving on – to something further down the line as it were? I wonder whether or not we could find a contrast in the writers that we've been looking at in those that see this in terms of continuity, this 'rising to the absolute' on the one hand, and writers on the other hand, like Nietzsche, who see death in terms of finitude.

**JG** I think so – in the prologue of Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*,<sup>19</sup> he actually talks about an awakening<sup>20</sup> and dealing with the tragic. In that particular sense he deals with the death of 'a style'<sup>21</sup> of art and culture (namely German Romanticism) – he is echoing Hegel there but he then takes that as a repetitious nature that continues from Baroque to German Romanticism. He uses that jump, and how it's mirrored, as the allegory for

modernism. There is a key word he uses in the prologue – 'awakening'. By finalising and tying off German Romanticism within a timeframe it actually allows the suspension of the idea as an awakened 'idea'<sup>22</sup> and I suppose, it's not even a rebirth, it is just an aliveness to a new beginning. It continues as 'idea' or fresh objectivity. German Romanticism is transformed through Benjamin's critical encounter.

**GB** But that tragedy, perhaps, is part of that other awareness – that God, Christianity, the big 'other' doesn't really exist – and that is the tragedy of the human condition; a tragedy that for Hegel, who is sort of mourning the fact that perhaps God doesn't exist, is at the centre of his problem with atheism.<sup>24</sup> But as you move further on, writers like Benjamin accept it and say 'this is the state we have, it's accepted now'.

**JG** Well he actually ties off that idea of perfection. He refers to that part as Hegel's wish,<sup>25</sup> and he calls for it as an end in *trauerspiel*.

**MB** Can I just ask a question? What is Benjamin's idea of the idea?

**JG** Yeah. It's really hard actually. It's one of those things that slips away from me and I occasionally get an idea of it. My interpretation is that he fixed down the connection between thought and thought becoming an idea; that as you thought, the structure of it became idea. The reason he's labelled German Romanticism as *trauerspiel* is because by labelling and fixing it, he pins down that as a thought idea; a political and cultural thought idea and, in so doing, almost ends it – closes the curtains<sup>26</sup> on his theatre, if you like, in order to allow for a free space stage for the idea to re-occur in other contexts even for it to happen again. Does that make sense?

**GB** It does when you include language.



**JG** I pinned it down to the use of language<sup>27</sup> and the significance of speech in the representation of death, yes.

**GB** These are people who started to come to terms with the linguistic turn; they became more aware of the fact that we are conditioned by language, that we are limited in terms of what we can say within any particular language, and what we can use. And I think that we're going through that period historically where that becomes central to the debate about what can possibly be said, so that the drama, the theatre of text, is played out around language.<sup>28</sup>

**JG** I also think by calling it thought as idea he opens up a space with that language to allow for interpretations<sup>29</sup> that are more allegorical, in the sense that they are less fixed by the cultural and political norms of that period. It's like he uses the language to both fix and liberate.<sup>30</sup> By fixing it he liberates that space for allegory and idea. In fact he is talked about alongside Vidler<sup>31</sup> in terms of the creation of that space; that spatial anxiety for an uncertainty and an instability as a result of... as a result of what? Tying off, cutting loose – it's almost like he cuts loose and says; that's fixed in German Romanticism and it failed. The whole allegory of that failure, and the tragedy of it, he re-pictures in modernism, he re-pictures elsewhere, but the playout of it isn't exactly the same. But by tying it off and cutting it loose as style and how it failed, these are pockets – they overlap but they're not the same. I think that's how he starts talking about simultaneity<sup>32</sup> in that chapter as well.

**MB** So allegory there could almost be contrasted with Hegel's idea in so far as allegory as a double story, as a twice-told tale, as a story in an unending tension that cannot be resolved. Would that be a legitimate contrast do you think, to make between Hegel's idea of resolution which moves things on, and someone like Benjamin who talks about allegory as a sustained tension?<sup>33</sup>

**GB** I think there is a clear difference there but you have to remember that Hegel almost is aware of his own failure; he posits a viewpoint that we need to move on towards an idea of wholeness. We have this philosophy replacing art at a high level but then you get the sense that he doesn't know where to go from there, because he's heading towards some wholeness which is always brought back by his other concern, which is his groundedness in history and in materiality.

**JG** Does he almost epitomise that very allegory that Benjamin then... his whole actual structure and thought process, as himself, is almost Benjamin seeing that within Hegel, actually almost pitting the allegory as Hegel?

**GB** You could almost say that is the hindsight of history; that what Benjamin is able to do is look back at Hegel with an awareness of his dilemma. Perhaps a lot of these people are doing that – they're seeing Hegel's dilemma and from that awareness open out different ways of answering that dilemma. That's why I think duality occurs so much at the centre of so many of these responses to thinking about the end of art.

**MB** We came across an interesting allegory in the Hölderlin poem. The idea that the poem *The Voice of the People* was sort of a repetition or a restaging of one tragedy or one drama in a later one, rather like the way that the New Testament is an allegory of the Old Testament. So allegory is sort of spread across time; not so much as continuity but as episodes that are repeated. I think the difference between continuity and repetition is one that features in a lot of issues we've been looking at.

**JG** But is it the structure that is repeated? The style and form of it, the materiality, clearly isn't. Can we equate that to how Benjamin talks about the reproduction of the reproduction? That, that whole allegorical thinking is reproduced, it is revisited, it is restaged, but in its form, its



vision, its materiality, it does actually appear differently. Therefore, it could be said that it's the death of art in one sense because it's repetitious, but it's not the death of art because its form is still unstable.<sup>34</sup>

**GB** In the middle of that there's always that sense of the striving for the other, the striving for that wholeness, spirituality or whatever it is. In Benjamin perhaps that starts to come out as the 'aura'; that he starts to see that as a necessary part of the human condition in that we want to place a type of spiritual value on something. At the centre of that whole thing of commodity exchange is a similar sort of problem to that we have already uncovered.<sup>35</sup>

**RM** Well, when Benjamin talks about 'aura' he is really commenting on the fetish, or even myth in a broader sense, that is, something that mediates, replaces, or simply gets in the way of direct human experience, and as such could be figured to find its equivalent in the concept of commodity fetishism, particularly the reading of commodity fetishism, reification, etc. that you find in Lukács.<sup>36</sup> Also, seeing as we're talking about 'aura' now, I'm interested in returning back to something that you said Jo when commenting on Benjamin and the 'reproduction of the reproduction'. Famously, Benjamin argues 'that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the 'aura' of the work of art'<sup>37</sup>, and that ultimately the withering of 'aura' is progressive, in various ways. Someone like Adorno, on the other hand, sees only negative consequences for art in the age of mechanical reproduction, particularly capitalist mass production. For Benjamin, the emancipatory aspect of reproduced art is that it not only shrivels 'aura' but the reproduced artwork can be recontextualised and brought into different spheres, for different ends. Is this what you meant by 'leading to a new beginning'?

**JG** Absolutely, it lifts it out and suspends it above that

historicity and its original connections, and that's what he releases as a new beginning, and he liberates, and almost the reproduction of the reproduction actually recreates a new space.

**RM** Yes, and I think that this is why Adorno and Benjamin had that famous disagreement.<sup>38</sup> Where Benjamin sees the possibility of a new beginning in reproduction and recontextualisation, Adorno is more pessimistic, seeing only the alienation and degradation of art. I've never quite decided which is the correct position actually.<sup>39</sup>

**GB** George Steiner was quite interested in this. He talked about the fact that there was a wonderful moment where after going through that process of awareness, where all those supposedly spiritual developments towards something like the big other or whatever... you have to come back to the fact that there is a reality out there and you have to strip that spiritual stuff away.<sup>40</sup> Steiner states that there is something grander about that acceptance of material reality than there is about that thing that we all want; in Lacan's terms, the 'big other'. We have to overcome the sense of the big other in order to live the life of now. If we don't live the life of now, we're avoiding reality.

**JG** Benjamin says something similar, he calls that history the historical shadows, and he talks about that place of reproduction; a mirror world. And there's an infinity with mirrors; when you bounce them off each other there's an infinity that evolves out of them, and he talks about that reproduction of the reproduction as that mirror world, and the history and our understanding of style and form in that place, in a particular time period, as that shadow. However, he also makes it quite clear that these shadows, while we refer to them as other,<sup>41</sup> are not rooted in a material reality, the reproduction of the idea makes them as such. We cannot separate the absolute from



experience, thus the shadowy nature of the repetition is firm. The idea continues. Which I think is quite an interesting jump across to Derrida and hauntology, that history itself is a spectre and a shadow and it casts a certain shadow, a stylised shadow, a characterised shadow that is written by politics, bourgeois, cultural aspects... by pulling the curtain down and putting that on a stage<sup>42</sup> he then allows this mirror world for us to explore in a new dimension.<sup>43</sup> I'm not sure that any of us really grasp that, I certainly don't! Once you start thinking of it like that it becomes very exciting.

**MB** Well the commodity fetish is a good example of the spectre in that it is both alive and dead at the same time.<sup>44</sup>

**GB** There's also that thing of whether the way that we interpret life is something that we can resolve through rational thinking, or whether it's an emotional dilemma. I think this is a crux here because images like the spectre presuppose that we are attuned to an emotional understanding of a rational response, and again that becomes another duality.

**JG** But then some of Benjamin's work does actually rest on the cognitive processes that Freud did use to do with dreamscape and that use of the phantasm – he did allegorise all of that and he did ground himself in some of Freud's cognitive processes. That rationalising of the conscious and unconscious he did use, and he goes on to use throughout his work. I was saying earlier; it's like *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* and *trauerspiel* is the beginning of his vision of this stage and this theatre, whereas the arcades project at the end of his life latterly really visualises his struggle of processes and ideas as allegory and he brings in that spatial anxiety of architecture, that spatial anxiety of time, that idea of monument and ruin and all those aspects. When I think of it like that, it's no wonder it took so long to write and that it was never finished! Because actually it

encompasses many of the things that we're talking about in all of that, including even, I don't think Benjamin ever gets to where Hölderlin is with poetry but there is a sense of a poetic language in the visual stimuli that Benjamin uses as allegory and it's like he never quite got to what Hölderlin arrived at, which is perhaps what you're saying about this resolution of the emotional as well...

**GB** What I would say to that is that Freud's response is a rational response to an emotional dilemma, while Hölderlin's is actually an emotional response to a rational dilemma.

**JG** But then doesn't he resolve Hegel's failure?

**GB** I think what we do is we play out in tragedy our own conceptual worries each time we approach the subject of Hegel's failure.

**MB** I think one of the interesting things about what's coming out in the way that you're discussing this, is that for Hegel of course, art is left behind in favour of philosophy, and philosophy has to be rational. But for Benjamin, as you're describing his work, and for Nietzsche, it's more of a philosophical continuation of art, rather than art into philosophy. I think that makes room for a discussion of tragedy as well. Of course, there is in a sense a philosophy of tragedy that begins with Schelling, and I think Hölderlin is a deeply philosophical poet, and that's certainly Hegel's perspective on tragedy. I think it would be useful to reflect on an interesting remark from Geulen's book where she says 'tragedy is after all that genre in which death is meaningful and meaningless at the same time'.<sup>45</sup> That seems to be a very telling thing to say. It's obviously paradoxical but it highlights the view of death as sheer finality. But at the same we can't accept or comprehend that finality so we're caught in a kind of double bind of believing something, and believing that it's not so at the same time. That again



comes across as like the allegorical in the sense that it is a thing in tension rather than a thing in resolution.

**RM** That's interesting; the notions of tragedy and failure that you are discussing are quite relevant to Adorno's notion of autonomy in art. Stepping back a bit, the orthodox Marxist reading of end of art under capitalism is that, with the rise of capitalism, and subjected to the market and the subsequent division of labour, art is lost; art ends and is replaced with 'art production'<sup>46</sup> – its more or less bankrupt replacement. Adorno, in prioritising the autonomy as art's ultimate defence against such conditions of production, somehow knows, as a dialectical materialist, that autonomy is impossible – It's impossible to step outside of capitalism, and the conditions of labour within the social system that you're born into. However, the 'truth-content' of the work of art is perhaps found in that struggle for autonomy, no matter how futile, or at least in the dialectical tension between the struggle for autonomy and its impossibility.<sup>47</sup>

**MB** Is it an endless tension rather than a resolution?

**RM** Yes, this endless tension is central to Adorno's 'Negative Dialectics'<sup>48</sup> – the idea that something is never resolved. It's exactly the opposite of Hegel's dialectic where synthesis is always achieved. Here, you're at an impasse, with the two sides of the dialectic constantly negating each other and held together in a situation of co-dependency, with the emphasis on the negative connotations of the word co-dependency, rather than a synthesis.

**MB** Is that a kind of idea, or an understanding which then puts the receiver of that idea in a position of action? That one has to act, in the face of that?

**RM** Well of course Adorno was heavily criticised in '68 for not actually having what the 'soixante-huiters' could

recognise as a praxis – he wasn't on the barricades as it were and was subsequently accused of inaction and simply talking about revolution in the academy. Adorno's defence was that his praxis was through 'open thinking', that is, resisting the corruptions of an increasingly mediated and administered capitalist social system through thought; his philosophy and writing was in itself a kind of praxis.<sup>49</sup> But that's very different to the philosophy of action as described on Marx's tomb,<sup>50</sup> with its emphasis on realising philosophy in social change. It's not 'the point is to change it'. Instead, it's almost a strange deadlock to be held while you're waiting for the revolution to come, but in Adorno there is never any direct programme, or route offered to achieve this. I suppose this is that peculiar tension that we were discussing before.

**GB** That's a very old dialectic; the difference between acceptance or struggle goes right back. The interesting thing that I was looking at in terms of Hegel was that he was very interested in Luther.<sup>51</sup> Through Luther you get to a struggle in the way that you position yourself in relation to the Catholic Church – you develop an internal religious argument. But there are two strands of Christian debate: one is to struggle to sort out, get rid of all the crap, to use rationality to get there, to define a purpose; but you've got another strand, that Meister Eckhart type of strand, which is one of acceptance, that acceptance of duality. You could say it's more the Buddhist strand of the Christian tradition. So you've got these two strands; one which you could say ends up in dialectical materialism and the idea of action, and another one that says we can overcome all this stuff in the world as long as we just, in the acceptance of it, embrace it and understand it intuitively, and that understanding transcends the need for action.

**RM** Yes, Garry. Definitely, as I mentioned before, for Adorno, the task for the radical thinker is to resist, to



produce forms of knowledge and philosophy, that cut through the veil of reification, educating the revolutionary proletariat who ultimately will turn that thought into action, realising it in revolution.

**GB** But what's interesting in relation to that is how many Buddhists lie at the centre of radical change. If we look at some of the changes in South-East Asia, it's often been Buddhist priests that are at the centre of revolt; making very dramatic stances like burning themselves in public.

**RM** It's the classic tactical contrast between non-participation and direct action that you still find today with various protest movements and revolutionary anti-capitalists.

**TP** I don't think the Geulen text ever deals directly with the issues that you're discussing. It exists within a layer of theory – as something that is a theoretical possibility. With regard to the dualities that you're talking about; it's the maintenance of two opposites that keeps a system in place, though a system with perhaps shifting parameters. The end of art as an idea needs to be maintained in order to understand both the end of art and, in fact, art as art. The later sections of the Geulen text address the perpetuation of the end of art as idea; they don't deal with the coupling of the end of art as idea with an event in time and with identifiable coordinates. The end of art is separated from the possibility of it charting an event – that's what gives it life and meaning.

**JG** I think that links with Benjamin as well because he restages the idea as drama and he almost creates a staging for action to take place. In fact I think he's almost pre-empting the need for encounter to engage with, not necessarily this acceptance or struggle, but something in between to encounter what is; to encounter what is of the now in that space, in that stage, in that time free from both the historicity of what's gone before and liberated

from a context in order to create that beginning.

**MB** If it's a beginning it's a very odd one isn't it, because the word that we've not yet touched on is rumour. The full title of Geulen's book is *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour after Hegel*. A rumour, like a myth, is something that has no beginning. It's somehow like a river in constant passage.

**JG** But doesn't that support what Tom was saying about that mainstream – about it having to be sustained within, well say, the river; the stream of cultural dialect.

**RM** The Geulen text introduces a reading of Adorno's philosophy which, predictably I suppose being a more or less orthodox Marxist, I've never picked up on, which is that Adorno's writing, the presentation of his philosophy, is in some way a parody of the end.<sup>52</sup> That its apocalyptic tone is a rhetorical invention, in some way a performative. This is an interesting, and perhaps irritating, reading of Adorno's work, but it did get me thinking of endism more generally, and in particular the concept of endism in the Derrida text. To assign an end, one needs a beginning, and the security of this binary is something that Derrida attempts to deconstruct. As I've said before, Adorno is not proposing any concrete political programme – its just bleak, its just the apocalypse and perhaps, taking Geulen's lead, Adorno, in assigning the end of human culture, in emphasising the apocalyptic nature of its demise under capitalism, maybe he is trying to underline the purity of humanity, or of human culture, unalienated, pre-capitalist society seem purer. Maybe he has to make the apocalypse seem more dramatic to make this origin, the purity of which could perhaps be doubted, seem more authentic. That's not in Geulen specifically, but something that I've been thinking about which perhaps comes close to bringing both texts that we've been reading together.

**TP** That's close to what Garry was saying earlier—about



death defining life, giving it meaning and purpose. In the last chapters of Geulen's text, she considers the significance of the river to both in Hölderlin and Heidegger<sup>53</sup>, and invokes the end in attempting to establish the meaning of the present. In so doing she draws from the end, from death, the apocalypse or a similar finality, but also from the source of the river. So an understanding of the present has to draw from two directions. The present exists between something, not in relation to an end alone; it exists in relation to both end and beginning.

**RM** Perhaps this is close to Derrida's notion of 'hauntology' also? This is something Derrida returns to throughout 'Specters of Marx'; that every beginning and every end is already haunted. Most traditional Marxist theory seems to want to assign an end, and to do this it seems necessary to assign a fictitious utopian origin. This is most explicitly revealed by Derrida in his immaculate deconstruction of the use value / exchange value binary towards the end of 'Specters of Marx'<sup>54</sup>— that notion that there once was a pure society, a pure idea of human use value without and outside of the possibility of exchange, is itself phantasmagorical — it is an invention, it is fictive, it is haunted.

**MB** And also a kind of rumour. I think these questions keep coming back to the idea of perpetual repetition. We are always talking about a simulacrum of an idea as the end of art. I can see now why Geulen used that word — 'rumour'. When we began talking about this topic, we inevitably thought of the end of art as something that could be posited at a certain date because we habitually think in terms of dates going from one year to another to another — and if there is something called the end of art it must have happened some time. What we seem to be gravitating towards is the idea that the end of art, as a rumour or as a simulacrum, is something that cannot occur at any one time. I suppose if we think of it this way,

one of the ideas that we come up against in Geulen's writing is that the moment of the end of art, let's say for the sake of argument that it was Hegel's own moment in history where he sees art displayed in museums — therefore inauthentic in itself — that moment also coincides with the moment that art is studied. When it becomes studied it becomes created retrospectively. It comes into being after the fact, belatedly, and 'out of joint'.

**RM** In Adorno's terms 'administration' as opposed to 'culture'... 55

**GB** There's also another side of rumour which also in normal layman's parlance is called gossip; tickle-tackle as it would be in the Midlands. The thing about that is that it leads very quickly to a false consciousness; it leads very, very quickly to 'we think this is going on' — it's spread by gossip and yet it's not founded on anything. That type of false consciousness; therefore you could mirror with certain aspects of theory that are tickle-tackle, that are actually almost like theory as gossip. So many of these issues are developed by people conversing around a sort of hermeneutic point and you get further and further away from reality; you get further and further away from material practice.

**TP** I saw the use of rumour as some kind of acknowledgement of a dislocation between an event and the language of an event that follows it. So, in a sense, the imprecision of language or the failure of language lies in its inability to replicate or document an event, and the further it sits from that event the greater the space between the language that describes it (the event) and the thing that happened. So rumour for me, in my reading of Geulen, was that acknowledgment of a space, and of the inaccuracy, inadequacy and imprecision of language.

**JG** I think she was hinting at that through Nietzsche as



well, because of the tragedy of the tragedy and she arrives at the end of that chapter calling that parody almost the attic comedy – the comic tragedy. So that the tragedy of the tragedy isn't just the initial mourning of a tragedy, the tragedy becomes through rumour sort of comical and continues to be parodied and inaccurate and then suspended and out of joint?

**TP** It attains a life of its own doesn't it? Irrespective of any link with history. It attains a life within discourse which is unsatisfactory to some but I think that's what the Geulen text is pointing towards, especially through Hölderlin in the last chapter.

**JG** I think Nietzsche being so tragic and final in that sense is the funniest out of this chapter because it arrives at the most comical; he does almost have the last laugh with it.

**GB** It's interesting as you move through that, we move towards poetry and poetry then becomes a model for an ability to reconcile these different elements. It can accept allegory as part of its form, but its own form is also a duality. So it can be a way of understanding through a more flexible format, the dilemma of the limitations of language-based philosophical discourse. Going back to Derrida, he often, in order to answer his points, goes back to Shakespeare. It's the poetry of Shakespeare that allows him to understand the nature of tragedy and through that particular poetic language, there is an allowance for duality. The problem with prose is it has a linear construction, which is always looking for an end, while poetry is able to cope with the complexity of shifting relationships between emotion and logic.

**JG** Does that also link back then to Tom's description of the present in terms of it being a space that uses the past and links to the future; it can't be just the present in isolation. Perhaps poetry allows to take in the language of

the now but also to recapture and use the allegories of the past, the narrative of the past...

**GB** I think that links very closely to Yeats. Yeats, when asked about how he came up with a particular poem stated "I made it out of a mouthful of air". He made it out of its becoming, which is the now, the present tense, but actually it's also history because each moment of now is composed of memories of all the other poetry read and all that lies behind the articulating mouth as it opens.<sup>56</sup>

**TP** My feeling is that the end of art as a statement or an idea is a poetic one, one which, as I've said, isn't intended or expected to chart a series of events. Perhaps there is a parallel here. As the river draws from its source and destination in order for it to be understood as river, so the end of art as thesis must draw from Hegel (as its source) and from the fabled end of art (as its destination) – in so doing it acquires its meaning. But that perpetual meaning doesn't lead to an event, it doesn't chart an event, it doesn't document a thing.

**MB** It's very interesting isn't it, because it's almost as though we are participating in Hegel's rumour by discussing this, that we are somehow allegorising what he is already started off, or what he has not necessarily started off himself but somehow put his finger on, in a way. We're not talking about Hegel or anyone else in the past, that we are actually sort of participating in re-describing that past in the act of discussing it.

**TP** Maybe we could also separate Hegel from the people who followed him, because they're interpreters of Hegel. Unlike Hegel, they have Hegel as a starting point.

**GB** But then Hegel himself is an interpreter of other people. He talks about relationships between Goethe and Kant, both signifying for him two different Germanic traditions in terms of a way of understanding the world.<sup>57</sup>



You get the sense that what Hegel's trying to do is to reconcile them. How do I understand Kant, but at the same time how do I understand Goethe? They both threaten him and yet they both at the same support where he is. Also, in the middle of that there is Luther. They are all writing in the German language, and contributing to the idea of how German thought is constructing a view of the world, and we've got to remember, going back to nationalist politics at the time, the way the German nation was forming itself into a shape and that that continuation politically, would eventually become the breeding ground for Hitler and the Third Reich.

**JG** I remember an artist describing to me how one of his rules for making art was to take the chance occurrence, as it occurred in his previous piece of work, on into his next piece and I think there is an element with all of these that there is a sense of a series of inter-collated circles. They're overlapping and interlocking at various points and they're not linear, they're not necessarily linear time-based. They are linked and inter-collating at the point of idea, at the point of concept. I think that is very interesting what Geulen does with this book because the order that she has put those authors in is not to do with that linear sense of time. It is to do with a series of turning points, or seems to be to do with a series of turning points of understanding the materiality in history, the visual form, the visual culture. It's a series of turning points in our understanding of endism.

**MB** The Nietzsche chapter is called 'Nietzsche's retrograde motion' and there is a sense that Nietzsche and Hölderlin do make this point of turning back. Wherein Hölderlin in the *'Voice of the People'* poem talks about the failure of the town by the Xanthos that saw itself as somehow repeating the past as an event. But then the remedy to that, for Hölderlin, is the position of poet that interprets that event or interprets that allegory, so that interpretation is a way not of passing on to a moment of

the future but a way of looking back. Roughly speaking that's what Nietzsche does; the retrograde movement in Nietzsche is a way of understanding tragedy as a tragedy of a tragedy in the sense that it's an interpretation of the death of tragedy rather than a repetition of it in terms of an event. It was Hölderlin who cautioned against the German nation of the Volk seeing itself as Greek, seeing themselves as latter-day Greeks, and he cautioned that in his 'declining fatherland' essay.<sup>58</sup> For me that is an interesting way of summing up the end of art as a rumour; that it's not going to happen, nor has it happened, but is always in a gap between those two things, a little bit like the river, which is a very rich image in Hölderlin's work.

**GB** So it is always repeated isn't it? For somebody the dawn tomorrow is going to be the first dawn they will ever experience, for other people they will have seen that dawn many times before and for some people it will be the last one they will see. That cyclic tradition is actually at the core of so many of our religions, so many of our ways of thinking. Our own awareness of a start and an end is reflected in agriculture, we plant seeds, they grow into plants, we harvest in autumn, winter comes and we plant the seeds again in spring. All of those cyclical moments are a part of some sort of phenomenologically understood, embodied experience as well as being an intellectual one.<sup>59</sup>

**JG** I think that word experience is crucial in what you've just said because I do relate that to how Benjamin uses theatre. Theatre as experience – it's not theatre about just what's on the stage – it is about whether those people in the audience are objective or subjective in order of their own cultural experience and he does question whether we can actually step outside of that subjectivity in our own time. I think your reference to experience there is quite interesting because if we label it as experience and we label it as a possible repetition of, there is a closing and understanding of it, closing and beginning, closing and



beginning; and understanding that it is cyclical.

**GB** Which is very interesting in relation to Benjamin's final monument, which is right on the coast.<sup>60</sup> You have this experience of a tunnel that you go into, that then extends itself over the cliff top. You go through that and it really is quite spectacular. You come to the end and you experience the moment of the sky/cliff top over the sea, which is a phenomenal experience.

**MB** I wonder if we shouldn't be critiquing the idea of sheer experience? If, as you were saying before, someone has a first dawn. Well, they don't have a first dawn until they've had a second one. Experience, that is the time of experience, is out of joint. It's not something that you grasp in the immediate present. I think that is why the end of art as a topic is so interesting because it is likewise out of joint.

**RM** That's right – in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*.<sup>61</sup> Marx argues that, for man under primitive communist conditions, everything was aesthetic; every single aspect of life – walking through the woods, picking up a stick... pure experience, then humans get gradually alienated from their core species being, their ability to experience, and of course alienated from other humans as capitalism develops. However, this is again, close to the assignation of a pure origin that Derrida attacks in *Specters of Marx*. To retrospectively find an idea of 'art' in such societies, in contradistinction to alienated, capitalist 'art production' would be even more problematic.

**GB** But that's the mourning isn't it – you're actually mourning the loss of that ability to experience in some way. Because of the linguistic turn, we believe that we never really have any unmediated experience outside of language and its structures, and there is a sense of mourning directly related to that.

**RM** But that's not necessarily art is it?

**GB** No...

**TP** Mike's tragedy of tragedy is interesting because it is a way of dislocating language from event – it is language of language of an event. There's a stage or place removed from an initial event that can be understood as what it is that is tragic, or even as a platform for an understanding of tragedy. Such a space or platform allows for the possibility of freeing the end of art thesis from itself, and having it attain endlessness – perhaps as a rumour of itself.

**JG** I agree and I think it's why Guelen also put Benjamin between Nietzsche and Heidegger there because she does align Benjamin with Nietzsche on that aspect that it's a use of language that defines endism, but it's the encounter that Benjamin touches upon in the staging that links so nicely in to Heidegger. She then goes on to the next chapter to explain that circulatory thinking that we were talking about which appears so frequently in Heidegger.

**TP** Isn't it an attempt to free language of its historicism in some way?

**JG** Yes – so it becomes just idea, but Benjamin sees idea as a structure; as a map; a constellation, if you like, that is suspended above that historicity. It can link into it but it is not its literal counterpart.<sup>62</sup>

**TP** Language isn't a tracing of events; it doesn't document cleanly in the way that is commonly presumed. It sits above events and is free flowing – it moves above events.

**GB** But if art is going to renew itself, it sometimes has to free itself of its trap within language because all it will be able to do is to repeat endlessly the structures of the



language that it uses to articulate itself.

**JG** Which maybe makes a case for that reproduction of the reproduction and out of context that we often criticise that lack of context so much but sometimes if you have established that context, to then remove it from context there is a sense of liberation that is occurring there rather than the entrapment of that language. 63

**GB** And as people who deal with art and design pedagogy...

**RM** I was wondering if we could bring this back to pedagogy maybe now, almost to summarise...

**GB** We need, as pedagogic practitioners, to recognise that our job perhaps is to question languages of discourse and the acceptance of the way that practice is understood, so that when students are developing their own practices they have levers for change, they have support when trying to articulate their own experiences of the world, support in developing experiences that are not always shaped by an acceptance of the dominant thought patterns of the time.

**RM** Well you're talking about ideology there Garry aren't you... the task for us as educators is to smash ideology; not just unpick and interpret it but to evidence ways in which students can challenge dominant ideologies and the status quo.

**TP** But it also problematises the whole linkage of theory and practice... in the assumption that theory arises out of practice, or impinges upon practice, or that practice is a justification of theory. If we think of practice as event, and think of theory as language of an event then the relationship that I described earlier could be seen to exist between the two...

**RM** Of course, as a Marxist, praxis is what we're aiming for which is the unity of thought and action, or more specifically thought realised in action.

**GB** And between the two the one big issue is just awareness, and that is what you are trying to grow within, I would have thought, our student body. A sense of awareness of possibility. Without that awareness of possibility what you get is poor art, fakery and repetition, which I think is what Benjamin somewhere was talking about.

**RM** Of course we are in a situation now where there is no government funding for art education. Students will be paying £9000 – art education has been commodified and the relationship between student and teacher has fundamentally shifted, possibly forever, to that of consumer and service provider. I don't know if that means the end of art education, in tandem with the end of art? 64

**MB** That's an interesting problem isn't it? For a number of decades now we've lived in the period of institutional critique and I think it's long been understood since Bill Reading's famous book that universities are kind of like transnational companies, so we've all been in... 65

**RM** Education factories! 66

**MB** We've all experienced education as commodity...

**RM** Again that brings us back to Derrida doesn't it? It's doubtful whether any pure, utopian, art academy ever existed! We like to think of maybe the 60s art schools as these kind of free spaces but of course they weren't.

**MB** I wonder whether the implications of some of the things we've been saying can be brought to bear on what



we might call the teaching studio, at least in terms of art, not necessarily in terms of design but in terms of art.

There's a sense in which what goes on in the art studio today, or always has, is a kind of double-bind, in that art, as we've sometimes been told by people like James Elkins, is unteachable – cannot be taught – but at the same time must be taught.<sup>67</sup> It almost makes an allegory of the quote that I mentioned before “tragedy is after all that genre in which death is meaningful and meaningless at the same time”, It could be said that the teaching studio is the scene of tragedy if art teaching is meaningful and meaningless at the same time.

**TP** We could move it right back to Jo's point at the beginning of the discussion, with idea – that we could have a notion of art as idea and we could have art as thing. In an ontological respect this is an oppositional situation, with the divide unbridgeable.

**GB** Which is interesting in terms of the way that some institutions put performative practice at the centre of their understanding of what goes on. So in some ways one could say that an understanding of one's role within a tragedy, and of how you actually play it out, is more essential than a logical understanding of where you are, or even a philosophical understanding of where you are – it is all in fact just something we play out.

**JG** I think it is being prepared to take the encounter and be the actor on a stage and actually going through a series of endings. No practitioner actually goes through a process without coming to endings within their own practice. It's almost their awareness of those endings – we're saying there's a problem with theory and practice – but actually they can only become aware of those endings within their practice if they have the language with which to begin to define that as repetitious, that as parody... So maybe there's a sense that counter play in the practitioners studio is there; that actually as much as they

are trying to become, or make, or create something new that they are in at the same time ending, and that they have to go through that process of ending in order to open up the possibility and there is no chance of finding that possibility unless they place themselves in the performative, risk taking, unstable, uncertain, exposure of that practice.

**TP** I was just thinking about Heidegger's notion of *Lichtung* <sup>68</sup> or 'clearing' – as a space in which being is allowed to show up in its being, or as being. This perhaps informs my conception of the studio as the place in which things are allowed to exist as the things that they exist as, or in the form that they exist, or as what they are. Being careful to avoid the term art...

**GB** Except the studio itself is just so occluded by myths of what the studio is...

**JG** It is, yes, it comes back to an institutional...

**RM** It's a space of ideology...

**MB** There wouldn't be a notion of studio as studio in Heidegger's thought.

**JG** They release that uncoupling of language again, yes

**MB** I think you said earlier on, or in your notes, that the clearing for Heidegger was like the river; the source and the destination and the moment and the flux. Could you enlarge on that?

**TP** I'll try to...

**MB** It would be really interesting to understand the teaching studio in terms of Holderlin's river.

**TP** Yes, this goes back to Hölderlin's river, and to



Geulen's analysis of the river. I said that it could be seen to parallel history in that to Hölderlin, events seem held between and defined by origin and destination. I used Heidegger's 'clearing'; I considered that double projection as something that was close to Heidegger's 'clearing', which allowed for a space. It was an infinitesimally thin space but it was a space or a butting of source and destination that in Heideggerian terms could be called a 'clearing'. It actually wasn't a space at all, not in terms of a location. It was a meeting of two other things.

**MB** Sort of an overlap, an imbrication of two things.

**RM** In a peculiar way for me the art institution, the art academy, the studio are spaces where art meets an end, in the same way as the museum signals the death of art for Hegel. The institutionalisation of art within the academy necessitates the death of 'art' in one way or another. Paradoxically though I'm an art educator, and I go on being that.

**MB** A double-bind.

**GB** Going back to the master/slave dialectic, which I think this is very much about. We switch roles, and what we do is become aware that as one form of ideology takes over it leaves a space underneath it for its attack, for its reversal. In some ways what we remind the students of is that although we are partly the master, in terms of that dialectic we also as our own masters have our frailties, we carry our own oppositions. Though we are seen in one way as teachers we are also very aware that we stand for something that is the opposite of what we are.

**RM** That's very interesting Garry.

**MB** We've talked about the teaching studio but we haven't talked about the idea of teaching the history of art or the history of design, certainly the history of art.

**JG** I was just going to come to that.

**RM** The stuff of dust and filing cabinets...69

**JG** You alluded to it when you responded to my synopsis about... we've got Benjamin's *trauerspiel* here at the beginning when he was first attempting to be a professor; that was his professorship work; that was him entering into the academy. By the time he gets into the arcades project he's already firmly established this idea of the phantasm<sup>70</sup> and of this shadow play and he uses all that materiality of 19th to 20th century to illuminate that, but he uses what is within our own time to illuminate the structure of what is really going on. I think there's an element where we as art educators have to almost take on a bit of that approach. We use those allegories and that understanding and that labelling and that visual language in order to identify these myths and phantasms that do end up as ruins – and monumental ruins.

**GB** So, therefore, shouldn't we start our first lecture with the fact that art is dead?

**JG** Then you allow the practitioner to walk amongst the ruins as ruins, to appreciate them monumentally; to appreciate them as myth, as phantasms, as a structure but also to encounter the space between. To actually look at the spaces between language and materiality, to look at the spaces between institution and their sense of being in the studio.

**RM** But that's not how art history works though is it?

**JG** No...!

**RM** Art history is dominated largely by a particular kind of bourgeois, right-wing thought. It's about the assignation of fictive origins as I've said before, phantasmagorical ends, mystifications and hagiographies,



and just like all history is played out to the tune of the ruling class. Eventually this fictive ideological nonsense achieves a consensus and then becomes fact and then becomes history.<sup>71</sup>

**TP** Yet art history is just history; it's not a history of art, and only adds to what history is and can be.

**MB** It's history with pictures.

**JG** That's why I like the use of the word phantasm because phantasm in itself is illusory, it is illusion. It's not real, it's not fact; it is interpreted, it is part of a narrative.

**RM** So the primary task of us as educators is to make students realise that – to pick through reification and ideology.

**TP** Or we could consider teaching a rumour of art history, or a rumour of art. If we declare art dead at the beginning of a lecture series we can then talk about the rumours of it, how they have become manifest and the relationship of such rumours to (art) events.

**GB** And what we end up doing is writing within in the margins a type of annotated hermeneutic practice.

**TP** But do we acknowledge that there's something outside of this history that we can't teach?

**JG** Yes and that's their place to be in it and to and explore it – that's their possibility and by presenting it in that way as possibility, how much more exciting for them?

**TP** As with Wittgenstein's unsayable <sup>72</sup> – it's beyond the pale!



and just like all history is played out in the race of the ruling class. Eventually this fierce ideological intercourse settles as a consensus and then becomes fact and then becomes history.<sup>20</sup>

TP Yes art history is just history, it's not a history of art, and only adds to what history is and can be.<sup>21</sup>

MB Yes history with pictures.

JG That's why I like the use of the word *phantasm* because *phantasm* is that is history, it is fiction. It's not real, it's not fact, it is interpreted, it is part of a narrative.

MB So the primary task of us as educators is to make students realize this – to pick through fiction and ideology.

TP Or we could consider teaching a seminar of art history as a seminar of art. If we declare art dead at the beginning of a lecture series we run into all about the reasons of it, how they have become pictures and the relationship of such reasons to (art) events.

GB And what we end up doing is writing within in the margins a type of annotated hermeneutic practice.

TP But do we acknowledge that there's something outside of this history that we can't teach?

JG Yes and that's their place to be in it and to and explore it – that's their possibility and by presenting it in that way as possibility, how much more exciting for them?

TP As with Waples's essayable 22 – it's beyond the

subject. Thomas W. Waples, *History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

Benjamin Sachs, *The World of Thomas Tupper Drama*, Trans. John University of Chicago & New York: Verso, 1978).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

— *On the World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

#### FURTHER READING

Benjamin Sachs, *The World of Thomas Tupper Drama*, Trans. John University of Chicago & New York: Verso, 1978).

— *On the World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).

Thomas Waples, *The World of Art: Contemporary Art and the Fate of History* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1996).



Adorno, Theodor W., *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Benjamin, Walter, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Trans. John Osborne (London & New York: Verso, 1998).

Danto, Arthur, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

— *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in a Post-historical Perspective*, (

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

— *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1981).

Derrida, Jacques, *The Truth In Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington & Ian McLeod (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Derrida, Jacques et. al., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinkler (London: Verso, 1999).

Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

Heidegger, Martin, *Holderlin's Hymn: 'The Ister'*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

— 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) pp. 143-206.



Holderlin, Friedrich, *Essays and Letters*, (London: Penguin, 2009).

Kuspit, Donald, *The End of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Luhmann, Niklas, *Art as a Social System*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Marx, Karl, *Capital: An Abridged Edition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Muses*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Stuart Sim, *Derrida and the End of History*, (London: Icon Books, 1999).

Szondi, Peter, *An Essay on the Tragic*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

1 Francis Fukuyama's seminal argument appears in his paper, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, Vol. 16, (Summer, 1989), pp. 3-13. The thesis was later developed in his book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).

2 Samuel P. Huntington, 'No Exit: The End of History', *The National Interest*, Vol. 17 (Fall, 1989), pp. 3-11.

3 Jacques Derrida, *Speters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New Internationalism*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Kowledge Critica, 2006); Eva Geulen, *Reading in a Room after Hegel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

## REFERENCES

4 Derrida, *ibid.*, p. 75.

5 *ibid.*, p. 76. For a useful guide to *Speters of Marx* and related topics, see Stuart Sim, *Derrida and the End of History*, (London: Icon Books, 1999).

6 Roberto Lacan, 'The Time is Out of Joint', *Diacritics*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995), p. 38.

7 Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

8 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 163.

9 Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

10 Geulen, *op. cit.* p. 11.

11 *ibid.*, p. 7.

12 *ibid.*, p. 5.

13 *ibid.*, p. 12.

14 *ibid.*, p. 145.



<sup>1</sup> Francis Fukuyama's seminal argument appears in his paper, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, Vol. 16, (Summer, 1989), pp. 8-13. The thesis was later developed in his book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, 'No Exit: The Errors of Endism', *The National Interest*, Vol. 17 (Fall, 1989), pp. 3-11.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* Trans Peggy Kamuf (Routledge: Oxon, 2006); Eva Geulen, *The End of Art; Readings in a Rumor after Hegel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Derrida, *ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p.76. For a useful guide to *Specters of Marx* and related topics, see Stuart Sim, *Derrida and the End of History*, (London: Icon Books, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Ernesto Laclau, 'The Time is Out of Joint', *Diacritics*, vol. 25, no 2 (Summer 1995), p.88.

<sup>7</sup> Derrida, *op. cit.*, p.135.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol.1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), p.163.

<sup>9</sup> Derrida, *op. cit.*, p.75.

<sup>10</sup> Geulen, *op. cit.* p.11.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.145.



15 *ibid.*, p.146.

16 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

17 The Master-Slave dialectic can also be read as an internal debate, one that leads to self-awareness. 'On approaching the other it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as another being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for this primitive consciousness does not regard the other as essentially real but sees its own self in the other.' *ibid.*, p.111.

18 Georges Bataille & Jonathan Strauss, 'Hegel, Death and Sacrifice', *Yale French Studies*, No. 78 (1990), pp. 9-28. Bataille insists on 'the continual connection between an abyssal aspect and a tough down-to-earth aspect' of Hegel's philosophy. p.17.

19 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Trans. John Osborne (London & New York: Verso, 1998).

20 Howard Caygill, *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 51. This can also be understood as the object or foci of art in a given time becoming subject to a critique in Kantian terms but is transformed through critical encounter. In other words Benjamin's criticism of German Romanticism through the criticism of tragedy and mourning reflects the limitations of German Romanticism. In so doing the doctrine is established and the object/art subject can be approached anew – in a sense an awakening.

21 Sigrid Weigel, *Body and Image-Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*, trans. Georgina Paul (London: Routledge, 1996). More specifically the characteristic form of material output in relation to art of the time – not images, Benjamin deals in images as writing rather than representations and gives us some insight to how language becomes the description, place and site for concept as image. He refers to the function of image as a constellation of resemblances and beyond form.

22 Shoshana Felman, 'Benjamin's Silence', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.25, No. 2 (Winter, 1999), p.229. Awakening as the redemptive quality to be found in mourning and also the signature call to immortality and an act of silence after the event / drama / tragedy is latent in Benjamin's writings.

23 Susan Sontag, *Under the Sign of Saturn* (London: Penguin, 2009) p. 116. *Trauerspiel* literally translated is sorrow and Benjamin's work is of the melancholy, or under Saturn. He found this in the allegory of German Romanticism and Modernism. His work on memory is not to recollect but to read the present by understanding the past. This is key in understanding tragedy as Benjamin uses the example of Baroque *trauerspiel* which he saw as an expression of a vision of history as tragic drama, an attitude making history tragedy. Benjamin uses *mise-en-scène* to describe how history merges into the setting. This idea of tragedy helps in understanding the past and the reinvention and repetition of tragedy; the present as yet another stage for another tragedy.

Benjamin separates the idea of this image from materialism and form by setting it on this stage and, in so doing, moves away from a material history to a history of ideas which are repeated and become ahistorical, which he later explores in Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', in *Theodor Adorno & Walter Benjamin: The Complete Correspondence 1928-1940*, ed. H. Lonitz, trans. N. Walker (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

24 Slavoj Žižek, 'The Big Other Doesn't Exist', *Journal of European Psychoanalysis*, No. 5 (Spring-Fall, 1997). In this article Žižek unpicks Lacan's use of the term 'Big Other'. In particular, Žižek states that 'the subject blames the Other for its failure and / or impotence, as if the Other is guilty for the fact that it doesn't exist'.

25 The collisions such as image-desire are unresolved tendencies within Benjamin's work on *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* where philosophical, religious and political trajectories continually interrupt each other and often create mutual destruction, and it is therefore understandable that Geulen calls this chapter 'Counterplay'. See Caygill, *op. cit.*, p.52.



<sup>26</sup> See Sontag, op. cit., Part of the remembering and melancholia – to understand the present via the past. Benjamin was engaged with Durer and Klee on the importance of history, memory and melancholia and this is significant in understanding his idea on the role of tragedy.

<sup>27</sup> Rodrigo Duarte, 'Benjamin's Conception of Language and Adorno's Aesthetic Theory', *Kriterion*, Vol 46. No. 112 (2005). Benjamin's theory rests on the premise that language should communicate spiritual essence or the incommunicable through the relational space of speaker and listener, hence the use of theatre as presentation for presenting the unspeakable of tragedy and trauma in history.

<sup>28</sup> *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, ed. Richard Rorty (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967). The relationship between philosophy and language is seen as inseparable and it is argued that we cannot state anything outside of the language that we use.

<sup>29</sup> Interpretations of *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* focus predominantly on the extended themes of Hölderlin's essays on the representation of death.

<sup>30</sup> See Caygill, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Vidler, 'Interpreting the Void', *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspective*, eds. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.288. Vidler refers to Benjamin's concept of the Baroque and Modernism's allegory of an end to architecture in relation to spatial history.

<sup>32</sup> Guelen op. cit. pp.76-81. Simultaneity in reference to the pathos of renewal simultaneous with the sorrow of departure thus contradictory evaluations found as structure underpinning Benjamin's approach to history. Furthermore, Guelen addresses simultaneity between method and object as only temporal, and this

temporal nature as evident in all areas of Benjamin's exposition.

<sup>33</sup> Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, op. cit. In particular, see 'Allegory and Trauerspiel'.

<sup>34</sup> Caygill, op. cit. p.57. The reproduction of the idea in infant forms; Caygill isolates this to the reference of origin in the work of the mourning play, which in turn identifies a patterning of phenomena that changes over time. In this way we can grasp better Benjamin's idea of the idea, or the reproduction of the reproduction.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art In The Age Of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1999), p.221. 'the authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced'.

<sup>36</sup> See György Lukács, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin, 1967).

<sup>37</sup> Walter Benjamin, op. cit. p.215.

<sup>38</sup> Adorno questioned whether mechanical reproduction would automatically lead to the emergence of a popular progressive art. Whilst Benjamin saw the collective experience offered by the cinema as heralding a shift from an auratic to democratic culture, Adorno clung to his particular idea of autonomous art as critique of capitalism. In particular, he critiqued Benjamin's dismissal of *l'art pour l'art* as undialectical and simplistic. The debate is best summarised in Adorno's 'Letter to Benjamin' in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) pp.520-3.

<sup>39</sup> For Adorno, meaning is determined at the point of production. Therefore, the consumption of mass culture is a passive process, whereas for Benjamin there is the possibility of active consumption, where meaning is created at the point of reception.



There is a useful comparative summary of Benjamin's and Adorno's respective positions in John Storey, *Cultural Theory & Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 4th edn (UK: Prentice Hall, 1997) p. 55.

40 George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle. Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture* (New York: Yale University Press, 1972).

41 The shadow as catastrophe is a recurring theme within Zionism, which Benjamin heavily analysed with Strauss. See Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe* (London: California Press, 1997).

42 This can also be understood as rupture, where the absolute, or the idea of the experience, is a paradox, awakened at the point of death. Derrida, op. cit. p.3.

43 This dimension is contemporaneity itself; there is a kind of death, and it is necessary in order to be contemporaneous. However, this can also be understood, through Derrida, as an inheritance. Benjamin inherits Hegel's problem and opens out, Derrida inherits Marx's critique whilst identifying Marx's own inheritance as haunted.

44 The commodity is a "thing" without phenomenon, a thing in flight that surpasses the senses (it is invisible, intangible, inaudible, and odorless); but this transcendence is not altogether spiritual, it retains that bodiless body which we have recognised as making the difference between specter and spirit.' Derrida, op. cit. p.189.

45 Geulen, op. cit. p.55.

46 This term comes from Marx's famous, but fragmentary, discussion of Raphael in *The German ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970). For an interesting discussion about how this fragmentary comment, which points to the possibility of the unhindered development of artistic talent under communist conditions of production, was developed into a doctrinaire, orthodox Marxist aesthetic theory in Stalinist USSR,

see O.K. Werckmeister, 'Marx on Ideology and Art', *New Literary History*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Ideology and Literature (Spring, 1973), pp. 501-519.

47 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. & trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

48 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton. (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).

49 This debate is addressed by Adorno in his 1969 essay 'Resignation', reprinted in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991) pp. 171-5.

50 The famous eleventh 'Theses on Feuerbach', which reads 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' is inscribed on the grave of Marx, Highgate Cemetery, London.

51 Slavoj Zizek & John Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*, (London: MIT Press, 2009). Zizek and Milbank attempt to illuminate the continuing paradox of God becoming human and trace the debate back to Hegel's struggle with atheism.

52 Geulen, op. cit. pp 90-111

53 Hölderlin's Hymne "Der Ister". Lecture Series by Martin Heidegger, University of Freiburg, 1942.

54 Derrida, op. cit. pp 200-4.

55 See 'Culture and Administration' in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, op. cit. pp. 107-131.

56 W. B. Yeats, 'He Thinks Of Those Who Have Spoken Evil Of His Beloved' in *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London: Wordsworth Poetry Library, 1994).  
'Half close your eyelids, loosen your hair,



And dream about the great and their pride; They have spoken  
against you everywhere,  
But weigh this song with the great and their pride;  
I made it out of a mouthful of air,  
Their children's children shall say they have lied.'

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Bungay, *Beauty and truth: a study of Hegel's Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). Goethe always remained suspicious of Hegel's philosophy, in particular his thesis that both beauty and truth can be understood systematically and that art, as a type of truth, embodied the society's beliefs ran counter to Goethe's Romantic ideals, but Hegel, it has been argued, was attempting to synthesise Goethe's position with Kant's views on aesthetic judgement and was disappointed in Goethe's responses to his aesthetic philosophy.

<sup>58</sup> Friedrich Hölderlin, 'The Declining Fatherland' in *Essays and Letters by Friedrich Holderlin* (London: Penguin, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> Mark Johnson & George Lakoff, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (London: Basic Books, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> The Walter Benjamin Memorial is located in the coastal Catalan town of Portbou where Benjamin died from a morphine overdose after being told he would be denied passage out of Spain and would be deported to a concentration camp.

<sup>61</sup> Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. Dirk J. Struik, Trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964).

<sup>62</sup> See *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Continuum, 2005) p.183.

<sup>63</sup> See Felman, op. cit. pp. 201-234.

<sup>64</sup> The Coalition Government's HE White Paper of June 2011,

'Students at the Heart of the System' sets out a vision for the future of HE where the burden of payment and responsibility is shifted to the individual, meaning that fees will be trebled and paid for through an unsustainable student loan system, coupled with an increasingly instrumental attitude that values Higher education only through its ability to serve business and the economy. This has been felt most severely in the government's decision to withdraw all the funding from arts and humanities degrees. The HE White Paper (2011) is available <<http://bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Jun/he-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system>> and probably best read in tandem with the 'Alternative HE White Paper' (2011) commissioned by the Campaign for the Public University 'In Defence of Public Higher Education' available <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/interactive/2011/sep/27/higher-education-alternative-white-paper>> An excellent essay by Martin McQuillan, 'For the Love of the University: A Useless Argument' presented as a keynote presentation at The British Library and Royal Holloway, University of London, 18.11.11 does an excellent job of circumscribing the various debates and implications of governmental policy for arts and humanities Higher Education. Available < <http://www.thelondongraduateschool.co.uk/blog/free-text-available-martin-mcquillans-for-the-love-of-the-university/>>.

<sup>65</sup> Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996)

<sup>66</sup> The concept of the university as factory has gained currency again with the rise of various global protest movements. One of the more interesting critiques of the academy can be found in the work of the Edu-Factory Collective, particularly in their book *Towards a Global Autonomous University* (New York: Autonomedia, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> James Elkins, *Why Art Cannot Be Taught* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

<sup>68</sup> In German *Lichtung* means a clearing (for example, a clearing in



the forest), deriving from the German word for light (*Licht*), it is sometimes also translated as 'lighting'.

<sup>69</sup> The reference is to a statement by Clyfford Still, reprinted in Harrison and Wood, op. cit. pp. 580-1.

<sup>70</sup> See Margaret Cohen, *New German Critique*, No. 48 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 87-107 and Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Projects*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (New York: Belknap Press, 2002). Originally derived from Vyacheslav Molotov's magic lanterns but later adopted by Benjamin to describe the experience of the Arcades project. In his essays he associates this with a material commodified culture expanding on Marx's ideas on the power of commodity. Here we can see how the materiality of history and the end of art as powerful commodity in the language of history and meaning can be supported by this idea.

<sup>71</sup> For an excellent discussion of this process see E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 1-24.<sup>72</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961; originally published in German, 1921). The circumscription of what can and cannot be known, seeking to delineate the limits of language and outlining what is meant by the mystical.



the forest), deriving from the German word for light (*Leuch*), it is sometimes also translated as 'lighting'.

12 The reference is to a statement by Clifford Sisk, reprinted in Harrison and Wood, op. cit. pp. 580-1.

13 See Margaret Cohen, *New German Critique*, No. 46 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 87-107 and Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (New York: Belknap Press, 2002). Originally derived from Vygotsky's 'Volokhov's magic lamp' but later adopted by Benjamin to describe the experience of the Arcades project. In his essays he associates this with a material commodified culture depending on Marx's ideas on the power of commodity. Here we can see how the materiality of history and the end of art as previous commodity in the language of history and meaning can be supported by this idea.

14 For an excellent discussion of this process see E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 1-2. Also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968; originally published in German, 1922). The explication of what can and cannot be known, seeking to delineate the limits of language and nothing more is central to the project.

Henry Barker  
Barnard, MA

Henry Barker is an artist with a long standing interest in visual narrative conventions and the interrelationship between signifier and signified in art practice. His work references both traditional pictorial narrative traditions that acknowledge debts to Poussin, Blake and Goya, as well as contemporary readings of allegory. He is currently editor/publisher for the Workshop Press: Leeds which is focused on the publication of artists books and texts that relate to but don't operate within academic knowledge conventions.

Michael Bishaw  
BA, MPhil, PhD

## BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Bishaw teaches contextual and theoretical studies at Loughborough University and the University of Huddersfield. Following his Ph.D. on 'Art, Writing and Autobiography', his research has focused on artists' statements, the teaching studio and the fiction of the artist. He co-chaired a session - 'The Artistic Studio as a Subject for Art' at the CAA Annual Conference in New York (2003) and gave a paper at 31st Congress of the Comité International d'histoire d'art, Montreal, 2004 - 'The Studio in the Museum: Meta-Site and the Embodied Spectator'. Recent articles include 'Artists' Statements: The Fate of the Name', *Word and Image* and 'Fictions of the Studio', *The Journal of American Literature*. He is currently working on theories of the 'end' of art.



**Garry Barker**

DipAD, MA

Garry Barker is an artist with a long standing interest in visual narrative conventions and the interrelationship between ekphrasis and fine art practice. His work references both traditional pictorial narrative traditions that acknowledge debts to Breughel, Blake and Goya, as well as contemporary readings of allegory.

He is currently editor/publisher for the Workshop Press: Leeds which is focused on the publication of artists books and texts that relate to but don't operate within academic knowledge conventions.

**Michael Belshaw**

BA, MPhil, Ph.D

Michael Belshaw teaches contextual and theoretical studies at Loughborough University and the University of Huddersfield. Following his Ph.D. on 'Art, Writing and Autobiography', his research has focussed on artists' statements, the teaching studio and the fiction of the artist. He co-chaired a session - 'The Artist's Studio as a Subject for Art' at the CAA Annual Conference in New York (2003) and gave a paper at 31st Congress of the Comité international d'histoire d'art, Montreal, 2004 - 'The Studio in the Museum: Meta-Sites and the Embodied Spectator'. Recent articles include 'Artists' Statements: The Fate of the Name', *Word and Image* and 'Fictions of the Studio', *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*. He is currently working on theories of the end of art



**Joanna Geldard**

BA, MA

Currently Contextual Studies Lecturer for Interdisciplinary Art and Design at Leeds College of Art and Associate Lecturer for Context at Derby University in Fine Art, Applied Arts and Cloth & Culture. Professional Practice includes working with research interests in body, space, image, alternative performance strategies, the 'wanderer' and art in restricted/ unusual spaces.

Research interests include: the body in landscape, delivering a paper in May 2012 at The Affecting Landscape Conference on '*Benjamin, body and silence*'; Performance and performativity in the visual arts; Spatial practices; architecture and the body; Psychogeography; Text, image and idea; artist/curator positions, altermodernism.

**Richard Miles**

BA, MA

Richard Miles is Head of Contextual Studies at Leeds College of Art. He is also a political activist and Branch Secretary of Leeds College of Art UCU. His research interests include Western Marxism, in particular the work of György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, and the function of art in moments of revolutionary social change. He is currently researching into art education in post revolutionary Cuba and has recently delivered conference papers concerning the effects of commodification on UK Higher Education and models of education outside of neo-liberal capitalism. In addition, he is an enthusiastic record collector and semi-professional salsa dancer.

**Tom Palin**

BA, MA

Tom Palin is a Painter, and Lecturer in Fine Art & Contextual Studies at Leeds College of Art. His work explores the boundaries of representation as a shifting dialogue between the materiality of oil paint and the processes of involuntary memory. He has been the recipient of awards that include: The Hunting 'Young Artist of the Year' (Royal College, 2000), The Feiweles Trust Bursary (Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2002), The Gilchrist-Fisher Award for Landscape Painters (Rebecca Hossack, 2004) and Alumni (Liverpool University, 2005). *Pride of Place: A Painter's Perspective* was published by Yorkshire Sculpture Park in 2002.







This transcript of a roundtable discussion took place at Leeds College of Art in the summer of 2011.

Its remit was to respond to two texts that the group had been reading. *Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx* and Eva Geulen's *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour After Hegel*.

Common to both texts was the topic of 'endism'. As art and design educationalists, the reading group were reflecting on this as an issue not only for the production and reception of art but also its consequences for pedagogy.

The reading groups initially consisted of the following members of staff:

Garry Barker, Annette Beaumont, James Beighton, Michael Belshaw, Andrew Broadey, Susan Carter, Joanna Geldard, Andrew Joskowski, Dorothy King, Richard Miles, Madeleine Newman, Tom Palin, Debra Roberts, Marcel Swiboda and Lee Wainright.

The final roundtable discussion was led by Michael Belshaw and included Garry Barker, Richard Miles, Joanna Geldard and Tom Palin.

Cover image: In Ruins: 2011  
Photographer: Freya Kruczenyk

