



The Tail End  
of Standard  
Depth

Annie Åkerman

## Preface

A fragmented system is made up of gaps, yet a hole is never empty.

When dispersion is fundamental, the connections themselves become more crucial than the core. This text attempts to record the experience of digressional thought, like a screenshot that documents a collection of [www-excavations](#).

Is it not arts objective to produce experiences that refuse to be quantifiable, predictable or lucrative? Will a work built upon connection and association, instead of unification and coherence, be regarded as unprofitable? If measure requires a united unit, then that which seems incalculable will be registered as worthless.

Confronting a capitalist mode of production can be to abandon the notion of rational containment, in favour of thought that is leaking, bleeding and scattered. Thinking as such could benefit from embracing that which is fundamentally porous, seeping, not to say incontinent, instead of fighting the fragmentary. A narrative being read through its plot holes denies thought as being singular and solid.

The future of knowledge production is not only about drilling to the core, but also about caressing the surface. Contemporary methods of thought will not consist in distilling an essence, but about accepting difference, linking nodes and dealing with constant change. To hover a field without ever defining the centre does not necessarily mean missing the point.





# On Taupe

A mole is a mole is a spy or a tiny mammal, a bulldozer of state secrets or the crust of the Earth, but also a beauty spot, a wisdom tooth or a giant stone structure rolled out like a tongue to keep two bodies of water apart. It may be latin for mass, but without *-cule* as diminutive suffix the majority of moles out there remain associated with spots on the cheek, an underground animal or the agent behind the inside job.

*Molar* is a unit in physics that defines a body of matter as a whole instead of the parts constituting it (the atomic or molecular).<sup>(1)</sup> As such, the notion of molarity can serve as an allegory of a socio-historical force of fixation, standardization and homogeneity. It can then be contrasted to that of the *molecular*, supple and fluid processes creating disturbance in 'molar' systems. Molar/molecular can function as two distinct, but interconnected ways of looking at phenomena (each with their particular danger associated with them): one of structures and systems of totalization and the other of change, rupture and indeterminate movement.

The figurative notion of 'molar' draws on the coded Whole, the binary opposition, the unified identity, the mass, the either / or, whereas the 'molecular' seeks the undefined, the fragment, the perpetual change, the becoming rather than being, the both / and.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) It is primarily this significance Deleuze & Guattari seek out when they adopt the term in "A Thousand Plateaus" p. 33-36, p.40-45.

(2) Neither 'molar' or 'molecular' is a privileged term (and both constantly intertwine) in what one could describe as Deleuzes & Guattaris 'chemistry of being'. Ibid., p.33, p.296.

(3) *Got those french tips dirty at the dungeon*

Abstract molarity, applied to politics, is associated with governance, majority, State power and the central institutions shaping and framing individuals. On the other hand, that which is molecular is what destabilizes and atomizes those very categories. The molar/macro, expressed in the linear and static, is positioned against a molecular/micropolitics which aims to uproot and create difference from a social to a cellular level, to make connections that are local, singular, flexible and contingent.



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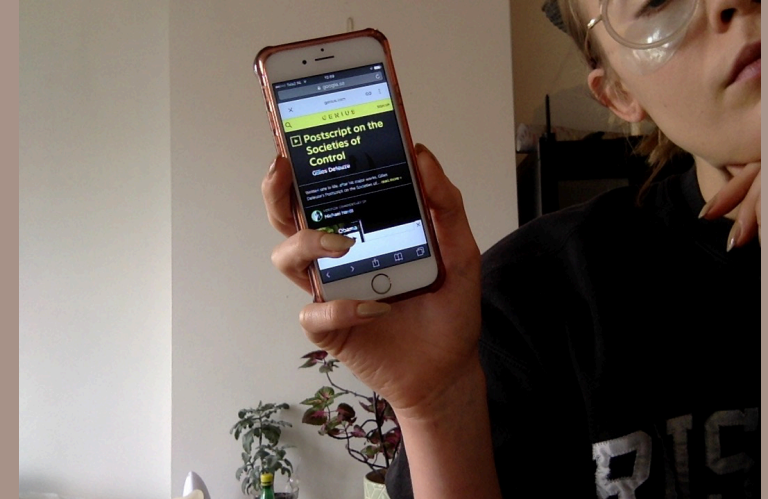
# Ambitions kept on stand-by: Squirming in a straight-jacket so silky and flexible you hardly ever notice it

Interactions between molar and molecular forces are always intertwined, even if one of them could develop into the predominant mode. The molar character of what was once coined as 'disciplinary societies' started to weaken, as capitalist corporations gradually took over governance from sovereign nation-states.<sup>(4)</sup> Bipolar warfare (East/West, the Cold War etc.) went multipolar, bipolar stratification (mass and individual) melted into a complex mess. Power and punishment (disciplinary mechanisms) turned into a free-floating 'control' that works by seduction and desire rather than coercion and force.

Major institutions of obedience (as well as traditional class affiliation) found themselves challenged by accelerated progress, ubiquitous connectivity and the promise of unlimited freedom. Where the disciplinary nation-state used to pour bodies into different molds during the course of a life, (the family, the school, the army, the factory etc.) the emerging society of control is permissive and elastic, rather operating by subjecting individuals to constant modulation.<sup>(5)</sup>

The enclosed factory with steady pay-checks, streamlined production and labor unions got replaced by elusive corporations who customize individual salaries and encourage internal competition.<sup>(6)</sup> Ankle monitors replace prisons, continuous training replace schools, service replace production and stocks replace property when centralized discipline turned into scattered control. State surveillance morphed into self-surveillance, you are the mole spying on yourself with a smart tracking gadget.

Anyone poking into the reality of automated factories, empty prisons, private hospitals, drone warfare or part-time studies (but full-time debt) would notice how the establishments that used to streamline individuals dissolved, retired, or perhaps even fossilized. The future of employment is a future where the permalancer is working (more than) regular hours but receiving zero benefits. Discipline never really disappeared – it was the 'walls' constraining individuals who came down.<sup>(7)</sup> A generalized and overlapping form of discipline spread beyond the borders of any nation-state, taking on an atomized, molecular or almost unnoticeable texture.



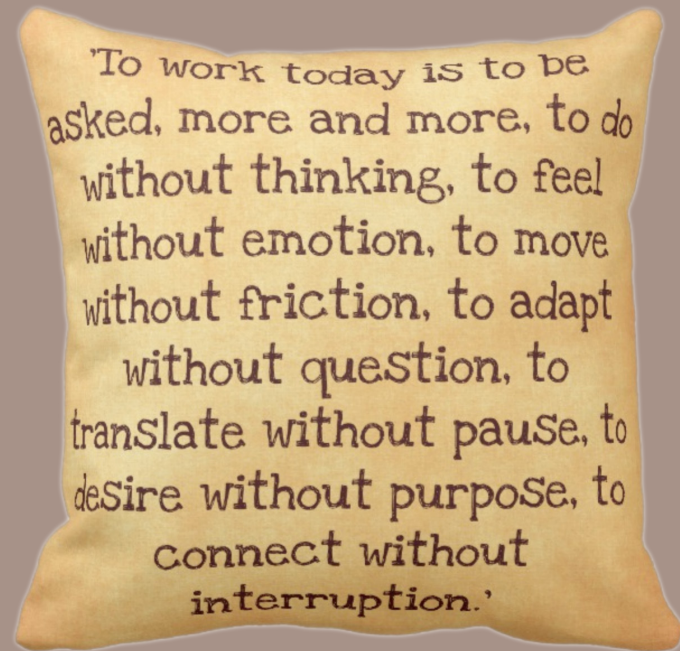
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(4) What Foucault once coined as 'disciplinary societies' was seen by Deleuze as weakening. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" p.3.

(5) Perhaps they can not really be called "emerging" anymore: when "Postscript on the Societies of Control" was written in the early 90's this all sounded like sci-fi, but 25 years later it is a pretty accurate description of modern day society.

(6) Another thing worth noting is how this shift might have been difficult for certain groups to adjust to, who rather chose look back at the hierarchical, disciplinary, stable societies through a glorifying filter. Symptoms are to be found in the alt-right, rise of neofascism etc.

(7) As pointed out by Hardt, as he comments Deleuze on Rap Genius (!). Hardt, "Gilles Deleuze Postscript on the Societies of Control"



(8)

(8) Moten, Harney  
"The Undercommons: Fugitive  
Planning & Black Study" p.87.

Choke on your own tail,  
feed the hand that bites

Money also shape-shifted along with spreading micro-discipline: the society of control abandoned physical commodities (such as gold) altogether, opting for a trust-based monetary system responding to the dynamic fluctuations of foreign-exchange markets. The regimes which abandoned exchange rates with finite commodities (such as the gold standard) could print as much (fiat) money as needed, hence turning their currency volatile, floating and slippery. It was a shift described as if the monetary mole of the enclosed underground had transformed into a spiraling serpent, unrestricted and infinite. <sup>(9)</sup>

Moles lurk in cavernous tunnel systems, in places of confinement invisible from the outside, and will only occasionally stick their pointy snout out to participate in the external world. Hoarded wealth stored in gold ingots was a symbol of former economic systems, as if kept by moles in underground vaults. Modern day currencies, vaporous and trust-based, act more serpentine – like the multilateral and limitless reptile wriggling the surface so fast you have no chance of catching up.



(10)

To hollow out ground until the surface collapses is the moles way of resistance, the sabotage of physical property/machinery. It is the mass of workers united in a labor union before announcing their demands. It excavates the bowels of the Earth, it dwells in crypts, it is the long-term clandestine spy who is not revealed until the damage is done. The snake is just as elusive as the mole, but its movements are unrestricted, faster and way more flexible. A serpent is a virus beyond borders, a remote hacker, an ominous threat or perhaps the ultimate, slick entrepreneur.

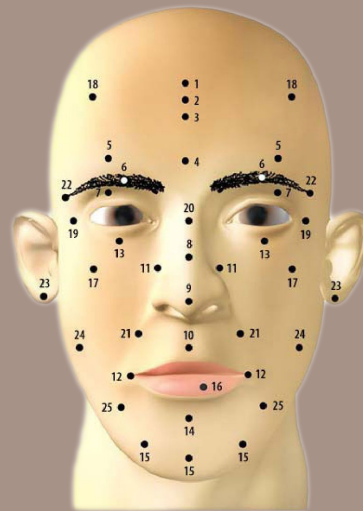
(9) Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" p. 7

(10) *Or go blame the other eScapegoat*: Is another reincarnation of the mole (escaping into dungeons) to be found in the subculture of survivalists/preppers, who stockpile food and build underground

shelters as a preparation for coming catastrophes? Preppers plan to be self-sufficient for when SHTF (Shit Hits The Fan) and all of society breaks down, as their bunker supermarket turns them into the sole survivors of the inevitable apocalypse. (img: Goat-Simulator, PS4)

# Skin trauma, early marriage, premature death

If stargazing feels too romantic or your astrological fate looks dreary, then look no further than at your own facial features. Your face holds a diagram where a mole is your oracle and destiny is to be found in dots. Moleosophy has foreseen the future in lumps of pigment since Hippocrates, and there are various traditions to consult for interpretations of birthmarks depending on color, size and position. Reading the facial astrology of present-day stars would reveal that Mariah Carey is destined for success but needs to keep her values traditional, while Enrique Iglesias should watch out for serious illness (which also might explain why he got rid of his mark).



Is your dermatologist a clairvoyant drawing a map of the moles on your back to determine disease or destiny? If so, do the blackheads on your nose count as well? Are your summer freckles a seasonal increase of bad luck? Is the notorious prison teardrop tattoo merely an attempt to boost prosperity?



(11)

(11) "Position 11: Moles here suggest a tendency to succumb to illness. It is a good idea to have this mole removed especially if it is a large, dark-coloured mole. Otherwise use lots of foundation to cover it." WOFS, "Moles and What They Say About You"





(12)



(12) These rock formations, known as Daemonelix, were thought of as 'the devils corkscrews' until a skeleton trapped inside one of the hollow coils changed the picture. The bones betrayed them as being the fossilized burrows from a palco-

castor (prehistoric beaver) digging spiral escape routes with their front teeth.

# A hyperactive stone gathers no moss, not even on medication

It's said moss-hoarding was seen as positive at the origin of the proverb, where the presence of such slow-growing organisms was seen as a proof of patience and wisdom, contrary to the contemporary idea where any accumulation of moss is equal to unprogressive stagnation. When welfare withdraws like a receding hairline, will the burn-outs hit harder if there is no soft moss to cushion it? These days any naked stone would be caught up jumping from task to task, living the fundamentally unattached life that rolls it towards ultimate self-employed freedom, enthusiastically helping to accelerate the rotating rock on which we all dwell until it (fidget) spins out of orbit.



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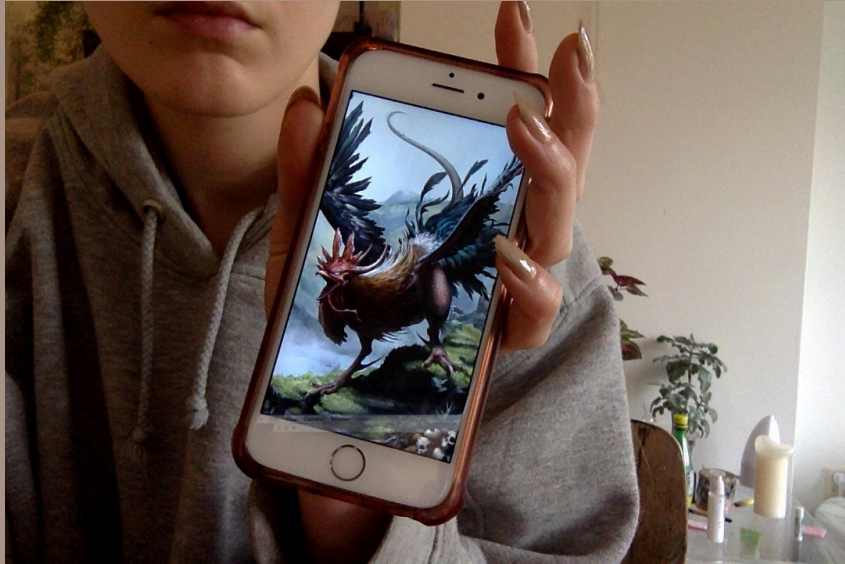
(13) Moss balls on Dec Why Beach,  
outside of Sydney, Australia



Snake rain,  
moon-shard,  
crescent shark



(16)



(15)

Geology, the science of a changing planet, is maybe just as erratic as a rolling stone. Even if modern day geological terms seem well-established, the investigations of Earth's unstable ground only became separate discipline of natural science in the 17th century.<sup>(14)</sup> This was thanks to the realization that fossils were not accidental shapes growing inside rocks or some weird thing that rained from the sky during moon eclipses, as it had previously been thought. Running into some cranky Medusa or a feisty cockatrice was usually a more valid reason for why something turned into stone before geology came to be its own thing.<sup>(15)</sup>

The credit for understanding fossilization – or how a solid body can be embedded into another solid one – goes to Nicolaus Steno, a Danish anatomist–bishop–geologist who somehow ended up studying rocks in Southern Italy.<sup>(16)</sup> Steno's analysis of the infamous 'tongue stones', glossopetrae, (tongue in latin) led him to the conclusion that the chemical composition of matter can alter without its physical appearance changing with it. He suggested that these 'tongue stones' were teeth rather than tongues since they once came from the mouth of prehistoric sharks – that any fossil had once been part of a living animal where its particles somehow had transformed after death. This made him develop the theory that all present-day rocks were once fluid material before solidifying into horizontal layers, that just happened to encapsulate pieces of dead animals along the way. It was the beginning of understanding sedimentation, or how solid rocks came to be solid.

14. Geological terms most certainly slipped into the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari. But what is it that makes them so preoccupied with Earth-based metaphors? Perhaps it has to do with their concepts of folds and flows, of instability and constant movement, which also could describe the changes of the Earth? Perhaps it has to do with their idea of ontology as immanent rather than transcendent, of one all-encompassing substance (no being, only difference and becoming) rather than a realm of Ideas (as in: representation, categories, principles, Heaven, "a world above")? Perhaps they are nothing but two quite poetic alchemists trying to cook up the philosopher's stone?

15. In folk mythology a cockatrice is a creature born from the egg of a male chicken, incubated by a toad.

16. *Rock, paper, incisor*: the sharp teeth of shark found embedded into rock, maybe just as when Steno first encountered them.





(17)

A fossil is an accident, something that interrupted nature's usual rhythm of decay. However not all fossils require an underground burial, as many living beings also produce similar rocks from within. Tiny gemstones are continuously manufactured inside various body cavities, a refinement of the junk raw material that passes through. Animal intestines host bumps and lumps of coagulated time, they produce gallstones, kidney stones or bezoars. Pebbles of pain rattle in stomach gravel pits, pile up in arteries or clog internal pathways to make themselves heard. Are they accumulations of anger? Fossilized sadness? Envy?

A few animals ingest rocks on purpose, you are what you eat, scotch on the rocks. Some keep stones in their bellies as the ballast that prevents them from flushing ashore, others use it to grind down food into digestible chunks, as a substitute for the teeth they were born without.

(17) X-ray of an axolotl with ballast gravel in its belly.

Why some minerals score higher than others as currency follows a somewhat arbitrary logic. Didn't the liquid fossils that fuel consumption use to be living plants or animals before compressed into crude oil? Drawing out liquid gold from the guts of the Earth, the black remains of organic ancestors, is a grave digging favoured by an economy built on penetration. Is an alternative to be found on the shallow surface instead of the somber depths – to embrace surface scum as the post-mineral source of energy?

## Roaming the seven seas with a runaway Uber driver

*Fresh biofuel, full tank, and the cashier asked, what if a route—/rootlessness akin to that of the displaced weed floating the ocean surface represents the most successful way of dealing with life right now? Suppose that the ones who abandoned roots, leaves and sexual reproduction long time ago, the ones blooming without flowers, the ones hovering—colonizing—swaying in and on the sea has cultivated the most successful strategy for coping with being?*

While people sip on blue-green juices, colonies of alien organisms make no distinction between offshore oil fields and picturesque beaches when taking their ironic revenge on humanity. Nourished by constant leaks of plant fertilizer from agricultural industries, the toxic efflorescence of algal bloom poisons most living things in an area where it settles. Unruly algae is the offspring that binge eats on industrial leftovers and lives off commercial waste, yet the humans responsible for its expansion still get surprised when their green baby grows fat.

However, soaking up energy from the original raw material could just as much be the answer to global dependence on liquid fossil fuels, as oil resources are heading for depletion.<sup>(18)</sup> Catching and distilling fresh algae/phytoplankton million years before they turn into fossils has the potential to circumvent the consequences of extracting crude oil. Algae is easy to please, not asking for much, and grows rapidly with just sun, snacks and stagnant water. Biofuel production mimics a natural growth process by letting algae live in transparent plastic bags where it absorbs sun from all directions, which is why such energy source would offer a shortcut to sustainable power for machines (as well as body fuel for biological organisms). Algae was the precursor to petroleum before it was compressed for half an eternity, algae could be the new oil but its also the old oil.



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18. See more in (for example): Hannon, et al. "Biofuels from algae: challenges and potential"

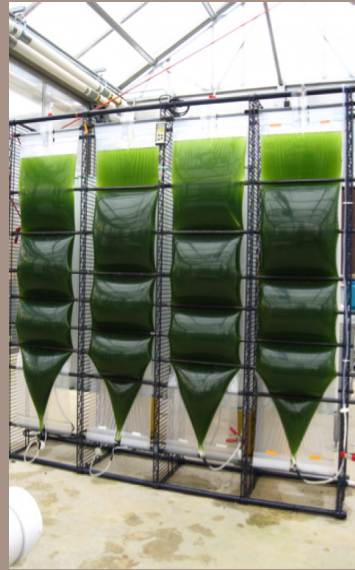
19. Not to forget: all the humans overindulging on sea vegetables, hoping to soak up a few benefits.

# Scum babies

Pores are essentially holes, just like those small apertures in the skin of Earth which are forced to squirt out the addictive elixir of late capitalism. A mouth, a gap, an off-shore oil rig: hurting like an infected navel piercing you never wanted anyway, irritating like acne scars washed in mineral oil. Did petro-oleum, (latin for *rock+oil*) the dark grease dug up from the subterranean vaults of the Earth, give a society structured on assets stored in underground repositories? What are the options for overturning such hierarchy?

If oil is the black corpse of the sun, the grease lubricating the war machine, would algal settlements then be the premature fetus, the green chubby baby, gently hushed in a marine cradle? <sup>(20)</sup> Is the algal rage polluting seashores an objection to human abuse, is it the outcry of a fed up lil brat?

An era of pond scum instead of petro-corruption would let a grimy surface substance set the agenda. To behave like algae in an economy already liquid, afloat and volatile is to abandon the molar burrow where sticky oil seeps out and head straight for the green juice. Curbing the froth is to recover a wounded planet, to embrace the baby that's unborn yet already obese.



(21)



(21)

20. Negarestani builds on Deleuze & Guattaris concept of the war machine, declaring Middle Eastern oil to be the "strategic lube" that fuels and greases such vehicle. Negarestani "Cyclo-nopedia" p. 130

21. Is there any other sustainable solution than harvesting algae? Was pond scum as biofuel the original forbidden fruit?



## After all, oracle is only two letters from oral

Growing pains are the ache of age, the cramp of babies getting wiser. No non-human animals struggle with the pain of wisdom teeth, the ivory evidence of life passing. The evolutionary leftover that cause some humans to develop a third set of molars is more like the body's way of remembering the times of chewing more, pre-processing. Mouths used to be wider and jaws more capacious when food was raw, which turns wisdom teeth into traces of the hunter-gather appetite.

The roots of the word *molar* derives from *molare*, latin for millstone, referring to how such flat tooth is apt for crushing and grinding – like a mill breaking down kernels into flour for ones daily bread. The eruption of molar teeth still somehow persist as a dental monument of adulthood, assuming knowledge and sophistication. Perhaps this relation was established in the 18th century, when the term *dens sapientiae* was coined by the same Enlightenment that also defined rationality as the characterizing trait of humanity, by naming the species *homo sapiens* (*sapientiae* / *sapiens*, latin for wisdom, discerning).



(23a)



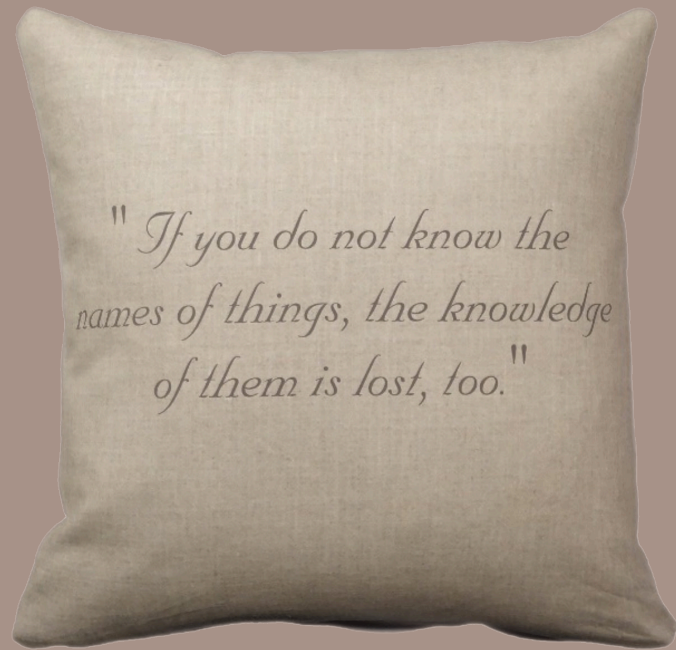
(23b)

Carl Linnaeus (and many of his contemporary colleagues) aimed to arrange nature into systematical categories, to classify all living things in a global universal language, thereby setting the standard for the naming of organisms. The Enlightened quest to formalize nature also meant plants around the world were "discovered" and their name invented by those literate (white/European) men who happened to "find" them, no matter what the plant might have been called by the people who had already used them as medicine or food for thousands of years.<sup>(22)</sup>

Obviously a contemporary reincarnation of Linnaeus would have been an enthusiastic eBay addict, busy collecting, labeling and organizing odd artefacts in a taxonomy of the web. His esperanto of plants set up genealogical trees by analysing relationships of sexual reproduction, and his standardized 'binominal nomenclature' (a two-part naming system with one latin word for genus - *homo* - and one for species - *sapiens*) is still in use. But does standard names give standard species, just as standard questions give standard answers?

22. "God created - Linnaeus organised'. That was how Linnaeus himself summed up his lifetime achievements. [...] The so-called "sexual system" was first presented in Linnaeus' famous work *Systema Naturae*, published in 1735. The botanists of Europe found it hard to accept Linnaeus' system, it was so... different! Many were also shocked at his comparisons with sex life of humans.' (from: The Swedish Linnaeus Society, [http://www.linnaeus.se/eng/link1\\_4.html](http://www.linnaeus.se/eng/link1_4.html))

23a/b. 'Molar-teeth structure' is the name of a rock-type (23a) resembling oral molars/wisdom teeth (23b)



(24)

24. Linnaeus,  
"Philosophica Botanica" p. 169

# Pleats (pls)

Tooth enamel is the hardest substance in living bodies and can often be exhumed long after bones and flesh dis-integrates. In other words, the amount of fossilized shark teeth outnumber the shark hearts by far. Teeth balance between the interior and exterior of bodies, fixed to the hidden skeleton yet clearly visible from the outside. Fossils have snatched on the behaviour of their prehistoric host for centuries, until petrified teeth and other bones somehow lost the battle of who's the paleontological hero number one to the macro-molecules of DNA.

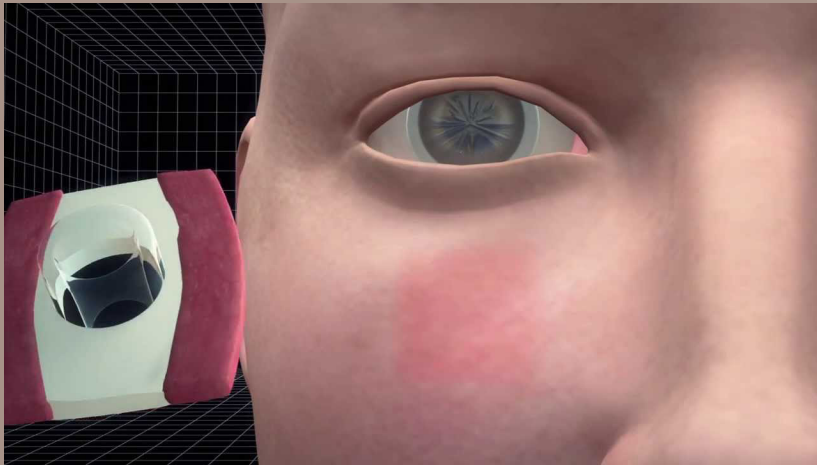
Teeth also held a position as proof regarding much more recent remains. Forensic odontologists at crime scene investigations used to step in to determine age, lifestyle and other historical details from the teeth of a victim when all other biometric identification techniques had failed. Dental records would track perpetrators and bite mark identification used to be a valuable proof in court. But DNA inevitably gained territory, justice got smaller and legal evidence left the mouth.

Such change could be seen as a literal switch from molar to molecular, from the firmly rooted to the imperceptible particle, as a bunch of useless teeth illustrate a global transformation from societies of hierarchical discipline to those of scattered control. And the need to resurrect as a flexible, self-promoting unit on a competitive job market might cause quite some forensic dentists to start biting their nails, with unemployment looming on the horizon.



(25)

(25) *Crease, crust, crisis:* a fossilized mastodont molar, a folded type of rock, a pleated frozen dessert.



(26)

(26) The operation that turns a tooth into an eye is called *Osteo-odonto-keratoprosthesis* and has been used to treat certain severe cases of blindness ever since it was invented by an Italian ophthalmic surgeon in the 1960's.

Oral function and visual perception potentially overlap in several scenarios: the *hunting blind* shields the outdoor carnivore while waiting for dinner to stroll by, a *blind item* is the juicy gossip story where no celebrity names are yet revealed. Looks that kill, hungry eyes, came for the blind date, stayed for the wine. A camera obscura could use the orifice of the mouth as its aperture, (for the starving paparazzi?) the silicone breast implant is perhaps the next camera lens. Or even, what if a scaled-down version of the platonic allegory used the oral cavity as its grotto, where an intricate shadow-play of Ideas would be performed for rows of teeth anticipating the rising of transcendent, pearly (molar) 'wisdom'? The womb as a cave?

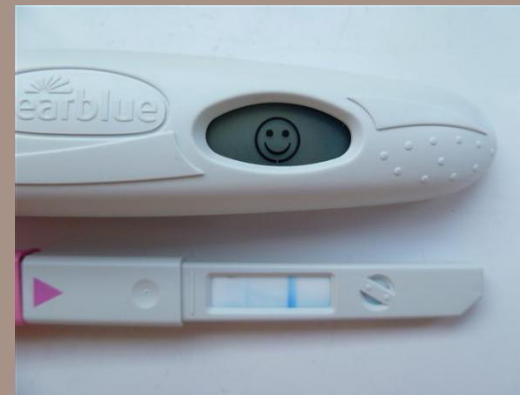
Surgery is also full of examples that illustrate the link between mouth and vision, for example when corneal blindness is treated by creating an artificial lens of material from the own human body. First a canine tooth is pulled out with the roots and a small hole is drilled through it. It is then attached to the cheek for a couple of months, until the new lens (a fabricated cornea) is removed and stitched on top of the blind patients eye socket. Using a tooth from the patient's mouth prevents rejection and encourages the body to build new tissue around the 'dental window'. Some say that staring through such optical substitute is more like 'a tooth for an eye', others call it 'to stare now and cry later'.



# Staring out your fertile window, but the future looks gloomy from here

The etymological root of window is a merge of wind and eye. Screens are a type of wind-eyes that eventually became synonym to monitors (from: supervision, to keep things in order) and displays (from: banner, unfolded). Screen-windows seduce and promise, from the retina display to the silver screen, and they seem to be our tool of choice for looking at signs, symbols and binary code.

Windows are the invisible mediator separating two sides: any transmission of information between sender and receiver is filtered by the window itself, posing as invisible but inherently not.<sup>(27)</sup> The crystalline lens is a window to a system where vision ranks higher than any other of the senses. An ocularcentric world order gives sight primacy and associates it with reason, the written word outrules the spoken. Agreements are eye-to-eye, seeing is believing, see for yourself.



(28)

27. Massumi also described windows as 'a framed and tamed static perspective from one local space onto another that remains structurally distinct from it.' See more: Massumi, "Sensing The Virtual, Building the Insensible" p.22

28. The 'fertile window' designates the days prior to ovulation where the chance of conceiving is the highest. How to stretch the gap of progeny? Would ovarian cryopreservation (or, freezing eggs) be a way to peak through the window of opportunity, even if the curtains are closed?

From pouring blue blood to  
pouring flat whites down  
the infinity pool  
of youth

(30)



29. See more on this: Virilio, "The Vision Machine" p.72-76.

30. A *blind bore* is what engineers call a perforation with no exit. The Kola Superdeep Borehole, reaching an unprecedented artificial depth, was drilled in 1989 on the Kola Peninsula, Murmansk as a research project initiated by the USSR.

*The blind bunny who jumped down the abandoned 12km deep rabbit-hole has yet to be located.*

To move really fast but also really deep is a tricky combination. Does a global (and metaphorical) loss in the field of vision stem from the processes that successfully speed up progress? Is it so that the faster things go, the more we lose the sense of lateral vision and depth of field to a collective glaucoma, in an ever-increasing tunnel-vision that flattens sight like on a screen? <sup>(29)</sup> The reason why so few animals have eyes located in the front is no coincidence, since dangers come both from behind and the sides. Only humans, thirsty for acceleration, look straight ahead in eager anticipation, as if looking through the windshield of a high-speed car.

## Philantorpor (n): the deep sleep of the generous donor

Maybe wisdom once translated as 'profound insight', before increased connectivity and online presence forced such idea of depth through an identity crisis. When general storage of knowledge migrated into ghostly cloud services, when oracles came to be hosted in server halls instead of temples, it meant irreversible changes to the architecture of wisdom. The internet, capable to accommodate extremely specialized and hyper-narrow expertise in an unprecedented amount of topics, dispersed knowledge, flattened hierarchies and redefined depth.

A top-down disciplinary society never really disappeared, but the constraining 'walls' (of the factory, school, family, prison) crumbled, letting a vast control spread over entire societies. There is no longer any need of confined spaces, as discipline has mutated into networked operations, decentralized financial sectors and a credit card history that follows you like a faithful dog. The fourth wall was broken, Wall Street got seized, a stream of notifications punctured the wall of silence.<sup>(31)</sup>

The neoliberal market permeated thought and speech so completely and invisibly that any obvious surveillance and propaganda turned obsolete. Society was diagnosed as no longer enclosed, but in constant debt.<sup>(32)</sup> Discipline meant long duration, but control has a rapid turnover. It is short-termed, continuous and without limits – the ideal condition for growing debt.

31. The walls of a house create a capsule where undefined Things turn into possessions. Walls are obstructions, divisions, barriers and screens. Flusser pointed out that no matter how many windows a solid wall has it still doesn't move with the wind, it remains firmly anchored on the spot. The contemporary screen-window is not a solid wall, but it moves along with the fluctuations of the online breeze. A screen used to be the name of a fabric wind-tamer, a tent or an umbrella or a foldable shelter. It was a portable wall, but is nowadays also seen as a window through which one looks at networks. See more: Flusser, "Shape of Things" p. 55-57.

32. Deleuze "Postscript on the Societies of Control" p. 6.

33. *When melting perma-debt seems as unlikely as any retirement benefits.* (youtube - "Little Picanini prayer")

34. *Deep Thought*: the omnipresent computer/oracle described in D. Adams 1979 sci-fi novel "A Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy" *Deep Mind*: as an AI company owned by Google/Alphabet (2014) which primarily develops machine learning / neural network technology, aiming to mimic the actions of human memory, adopting the role of an oracle.

With full automation moving from sci-fi 'Deep Thought' to business 'Deep Mind' to the scarcity of deep pockets everywhere except for with the infamous one percent, it is almost as if the notion of depth attempted to rebrand itself by breaking away from pure verticality and descentance.<sup>(34)</sup> Perhaps 'debt' would be a more appropriate term for the weight of a debt pushing one down in a hole so abysmal that any exit could only be located at the other end of the tunnel.



(33)



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What's going down in the depths if not the extraction of raw material, the pilfering of minerals from the veins of Earth? The smith is the artisan of underground territory, shaping insignificant ore into valuable treasures, refining metal into tools. Ore used to mean some kind of geological raw material, but today it could mean just any type of matter which is hot and malleable. The dusty days of mining might have seemed numbered, (most geological resources are finite, after all) but the notion managed to stretch itself to yet again fit into a contemporary vocabulary.

(35b)

When mining has new rules and new players, the ore might as well be of the statistical, linguistic or block-chained kind. Slippery tech-moles mine scarce rare-earth minerals to fuel an globally connected tech-industry, deep learning machinery soak up data as if there is no tomorrow and hordes of coin-miners approve transactions as a means of redefining economy. With increased use of text mining and booming crypto-*everything* it looks like a new era of excavations has only begun. The vault of the underground mole was supposed to be abandoned, or did it just resurrect in a new version? Is the ghost-mole back, biohacked and updated?

(35) What might look similar to a dermalogical close-up of enlarged pores is in fact the remains of a Neolithic flint mine. Grime's Graves in Norfolk, England was in use sometime between c. 3000-1900 BC, and what remains today is a bumpy landscape made up of infilled shafts.

(35b) As language and communication is saturated with capital, does the the text miner turn into a an poet who polishes verbal ore, who harvests bits and pieces of gold dust? An artisan smith who forges, welds and bends words to make text change texture?



# Honeycomb hideaway

The mine is a hole from which treasures are excavated. 'Hole-y space' (*espace troué*) has been described – physically or figuratively – as a porous, interstitial zone of subversive activity.<sup>(36)</sup> It arises when enough many holes transpierce the ground, creating gaps in solidity where superstructures are evaded and established institutions are challenged. It is a complex of nested holes arising between solid ground and the gaping void, a liminal space between the united whole (1) and the perforating hole (0).

Holey spaces are unseen and invisible, like rats in the sewer system or worms crawling the soil, it is asymmetric warfare and swamp terrain. It is the subterranean tunnels connecting smugglers, terror cells or radical groups of resistance. It is the burrows of incognito networks who keep the trade routes of their users private and the vampire oil wells piercing Earth to drink juice from its arteries.<sup>(37)</sup> Mental tunnels dug through the porous subconscious conduct unexpected memories to the surface, the Freudian slips emerge from a punctured mind. The artisan smith works in the cavernous mine, the paramilitary group is hosted by underground tunnels, your head is like a sea sponge soaked in debt.

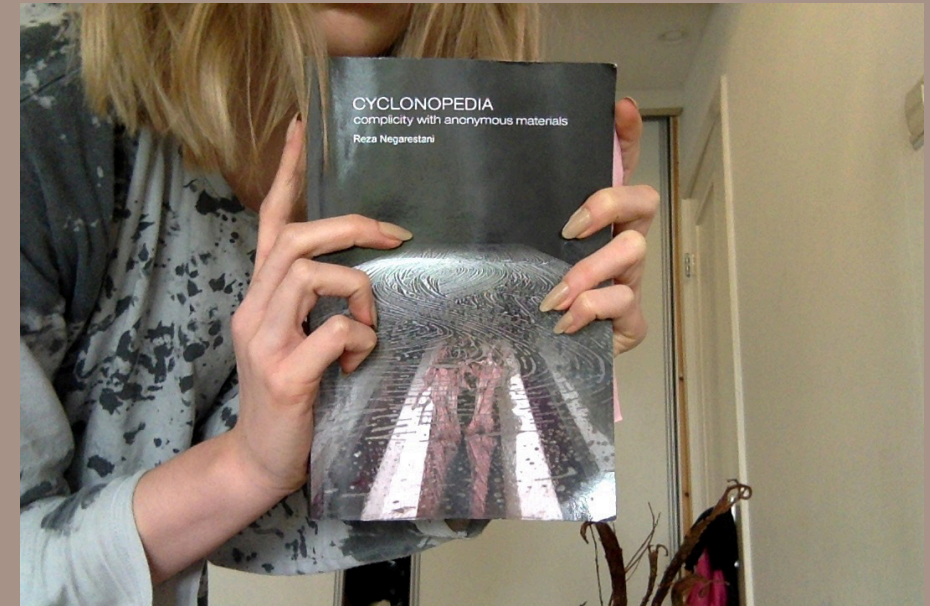
Freedom of everything seemingly increases, but the control of activity expands. The monitoring of online communication registers patterns of acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour – tap into the wrong think tank and only the wikileaks faucet can help you. The regular, obedient user is encouraged not to care about what personal data is emitted, but the holey space offers another zone of insurgence, away from the atomized discipline of micro-surveillance.

Holey spaces bypass the binary logic of inner and outer, they connect trembling surface with boiling inside and pores with guts. Like pumice or honeycomb connect air bubbles in solid matter, similar tunnel-systems provide disobedient zones in hyperdense societies, or carve out space for revolutionary thought to grow.<sup>(38)</sup> A holey space could be the residence of the mutated mole and its serpentine ally.

36. Deleuze & Guattari "A Thousand Plateaus" p. 479-488

37. More on 'holey space' in Negarestani "Cyclonopedia" p.41-56

38. Deleuze & Guattari "A Thousand Plateaus" p. 482.



(37)



(39)

39. Deleuze & Guattari  
"A Thousand Plateaus" p. 413

# Earthly intestines

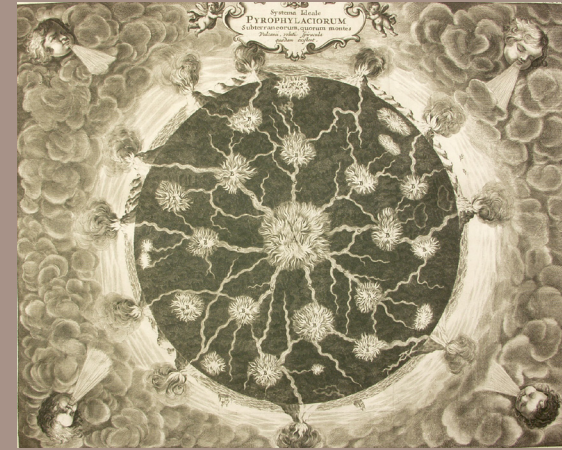
*“The whole Earth is not solid but everywhere gaping, and hollowed with empty rooms and spaces, and hidden burrows.”* <sup>(40)</sup>

Athanasius Kircher was a multitasking Jesuit scholar (and a contemporary of Steno) poking his curious nose deep into the ground, determined to reveal the invisible architecture of the underworld. His major publication ‘Mundus Subterraneus’ (1664) was a one-man show or a Renaissance equivalent to Wikipedia, bragging to uncover “all that is rare, exotic, and portentous, contained in the fecund womb of Nature.” <sup>(40)</sup>

This atlas pioneered the thought of terrestrial (and thereby mental?) hole-y spaces, of intricate networks of clustered holes, of sponge zones, as when he declared the insides of the Earth to consist of a maze of interconnected rivers of fire and water. Liquids circulated in labyrinths and lakes like a blood stream, in an alchemical dance of the elements, the LinkedIn of the underground. To Kircher any fire-vomiting volcano was simply a vent hole of the hidden torrents in the earthly intestines.

40. Classic,  
” Athanasius, Underground”

41b/c. Kirchers illustrations of  
the sub-terrestrial networks of  
(b) fire and (c) water.



(41b)



(41c)



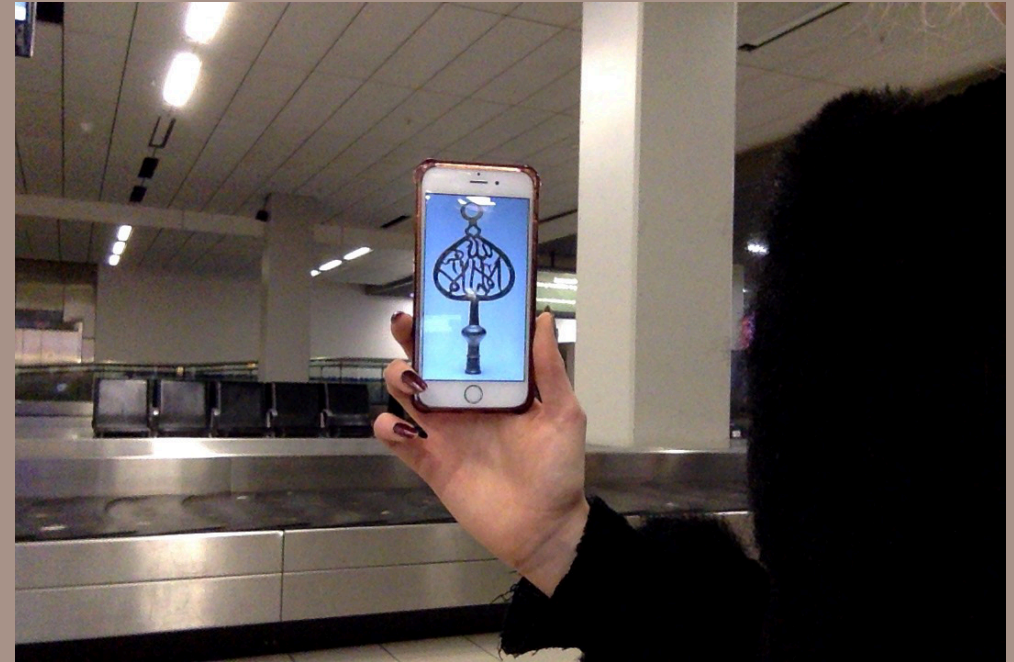
## Usual suspects, average banner

The idea of a standard started out as an upright stick with a banner on the battlefield that troops could recognize and return to, a sign from the sovereign power to its subjects of who's in charge. Standards eventually became synonym to any unit of measure which is fixed, regulated and approved by a (royal) authority, thereby assuring trustworthiness and compatibility to its users. It meant the unity of the unit, the one and the same, the undivided entities who formalize nature.

But anyone claiming to have found an 'absolute principles', the essence of Truth, a universal idea or the ultimate standard will constantly have to defend themselves. Whoever thought you could stick a pole into the ground (also: drilling for oil) and expect it to stay at the same spot was obviously wrong, any geologist could tell you that. Standards will change, as the Earth and its upper crust keeps on moving.<sup>(42)</sup>

Laws regulate individuals from the outside while standards apply to individuals from within, they are blurry guidelines rather than explicit orders. Processes of standardization establish invisible superstructures of conformity to ward off deviations and minimize loss – a War on Error fighting divergence and anomaly. Regulated measurements for time and every other unit available does not only allow for a more efficient exchange of goods and capital but equally facilitates disciplinary overview and the implementation of corrective actions.<sup>(43)</sup>

(44)



42. "In such a cavernous cavern (a holey redundancy), the ground loses its capacity to support and govern; for the coherency of its surfaces has been demolished (a=0). [...] All power formations require a ground for establishment and conduction. Without a ground, that is to say, in the absence of a power formation, the definition of 'power' is basically undermined. What is politics, then, when there is power but no power formation?" Negarestani, "Cyclonopedia" p. 51.

43. Comparable to Foucault's ideas on conduct of the body through schools, hospitals, factories, religion etc.

44. 17th century bronze Battle Standard, Ottoman period.

## Sugary unit, seeking arrangement

Approximation is always bad business. A limp handshake and giveaway stress balls won't seal the deal, and neither will conflicting standards. The talk of trade requires united units, because who speaks of exchange without a vocabulary of measure?

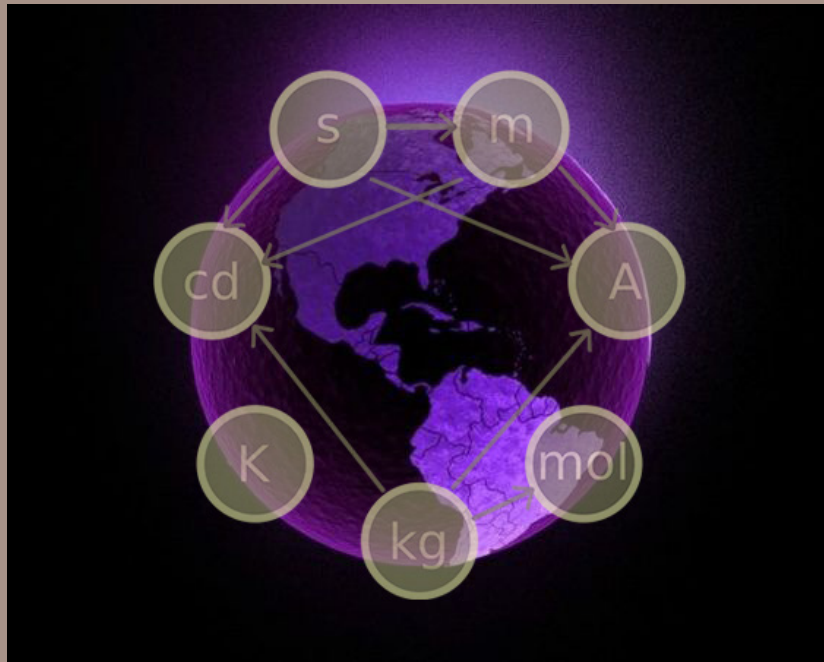
"help, is my mole abnormal? is this sex average? is my debt standard?" Often imperceptible, usually hidden but generally ubiquitous – standards require obedience and conformity to allow access to the world. They are agreements of occasionally unclear origin, yet so universal they become unavoidable (just try living by your own system of units, symbols and measurement of time without feeling a slight hint of isolation).

What decides a standard? Where are they born? Who benefits from their composition? The 11th edition of the 'General Conference on Weights and Measure' (in 1960) attempted to bring order to the eternal chaos of estimation by settling on six base units for calculating the world: the metre, the kilogram, the second, the ampere, the kelvin and the candela. This six-pack were later joined by the *mole* (describing an amount of substance) as the seventh group member in the early seventies.<sup>(45)</sup>



(46b)

## Sugary unit, seeking arrangement II



(46c)

45. The seven standard units are known as SI, *Système International d'Unités*, defined by the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures, "The International System of Units (SI)"

46b/c. The seven 'international' sins vs. abbreviations of the seven 'international' standard units.

47. Pargman & Palme "ASCII Imperialism" p.191-194.

48. ISO 3103 is a standard from 1980 that describes the procedure of brewing a proper cup of tea (which year ISO agreed on their slogan "Great things.." is less clear).

Industrial and commercial standards vouch for safety and reliability, but are as needy as a high maintenance friend constantly demanding attention and updates. The care-taking of global standards is supervised by ISO, 'International Organization of Standardization', (among others) who regularly upgrades its growing collection of measurements and guidelines. ISO keeps up with the latest manufacturing trends to eventually generate consensus on the codes that regulate behaviour and contemporary life as such.

But even if a change proposed by a standardizing organization could be beneficial to many users it is considered nothing but a recommendation.<sup>(47)</sup> Since multinational corporations are reluctant to alter their chain of production, many standards come to be defined by the strongest actor on the market rather than any international coalition. This makes standards ancestral, forcing them to take over problematic features inherent to previous versions – it is easier (and cheaper) to patch it together with continuous updates than to enforce a major change that would reset the entire system.

To conflate all into one, in unity and unanimity, is less trendy in ultra-individualistic times. Apple said "Think different" and Burger King added "Have it your way" but ISO still sticks to "Great things happen when the world agrees", while its employees are busy investigating how to brew the perfect cup of tea.<sup>(48)</sup>

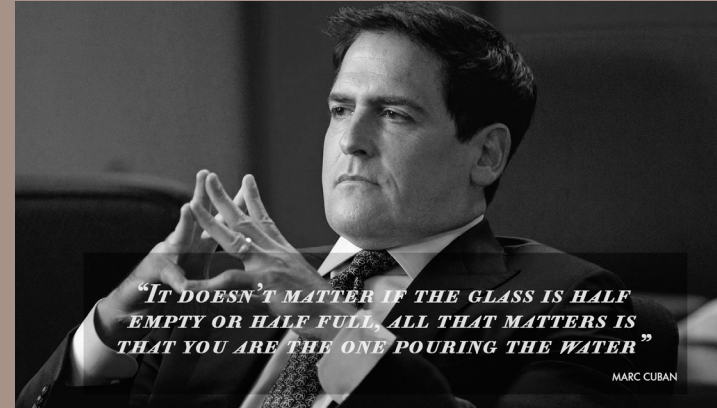
## See you at the sinkhole that swallowed all ambitions



(49)

Those who thought the influence of standards would weaken along with the dismantling of major corrective institutions still slam their fists into average height table tops. The ‘disciplinary society’ just made a smooth move from panoptic supervision to breezy server halls, feeding off a network of underwater fiber-optic cables embodying the hidden infrastructure of the internet.

Standards shrunk from macro-governance to small-scale protocols of nearly every possible area, the one-size flagpole from the battlefield turned into oceans of code that constantly modulate behaviour. No gods, no masters – just a multitude of omnipresent mini-regulations constraining actions.



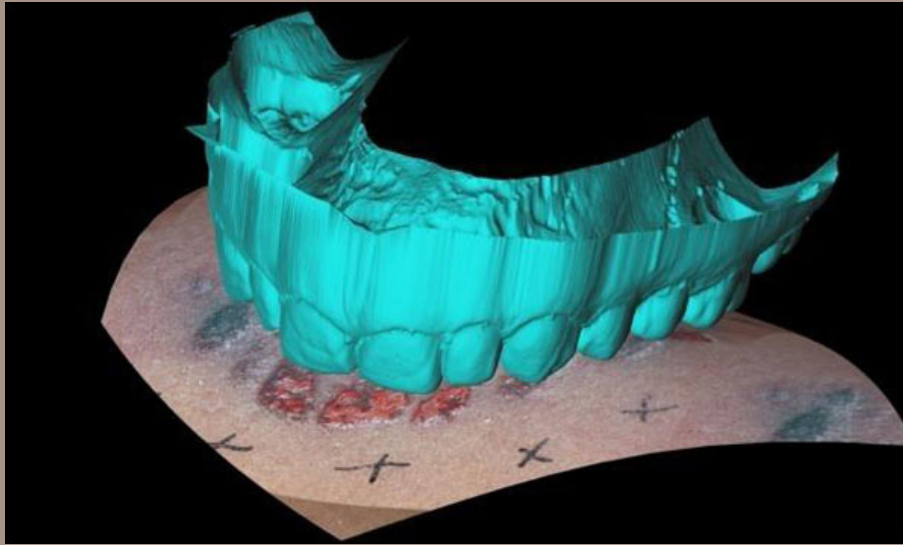
(50)

49. *Underwater cable, looking like a snack*: a viral 2014 youtube video gave rise to the stubborn online rumour that sharks were regularly attacking and eating the internet. A theory upheld that damage in the protective rubber coat of underwater fiber optic cables (subsequently causing internet blackouts) came from sharks who supposedly were confusing the cables with fish. This was later investigated in a news release by the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) and announced as incorrect, but the idea that animals were fighting humans by sabotaging the online infrastructure was somehow a symbolic indicator of the material threats to the immaterial. See ICPC, “Sharks are not the Nemesis of the Internet—ICPC Findings”

50. Mark Cuban is the host of TV-show *Shark Tank*, where eager entrepreneurs pitch ideas to business moguls, also known as ‘sharks’.



## The bite mark of the present



(51)

ISO-8601 regulates the standard look of a time stamp, i.e. the rules for sinking ones teeth into a piece of time, for tagging ‘WAS HERE’, for leaving a hickey on a lover.<sup>(52)</sup> YYYY-MM-SS as a way to trademark the instant, UTC+0100 to claim ownership of a moment, hh-mm-ss to capture an exchangeable unit.

But a conversation on *time-keeping* should perhaps encompass not only the tools to measure passing time but also the tools which aim to catch-halt-keep it. Is not oblivion worse than death they ask; those who by deliberate embalming, (as in mummified political autocrats) sentimental stuffing (as in pet taxidermy) or unintentional conservation (as in fossils or bog bodies) tell their audience to stay tuned, to never forget them. It is extending presence and refusing decomposition – to stretch the standard amount of time-units assigned to a life.

(51) Forensic odontologists use bite-mark analysis to analyze the time, movement and force of an *im-pression*, a stamp betraying the perpetrator. The fate of a victim is interpreted by a sign that remains, just as the tea leaves or coffee grounds reveal the future of a subject to the fortune-teller (bite mark analysis was commonly used as evidence from in crime scene investigations, but has increasingly been replaced by DNA samples).

(52) ISO-8601 was a standard introduced by ISO in 1988 to establish an internationally agreed upon method for the representation of dates and times using numbers.

# (I) how to calibrate your screen-kids-chakras

## (II) align your hips-goals-relationships

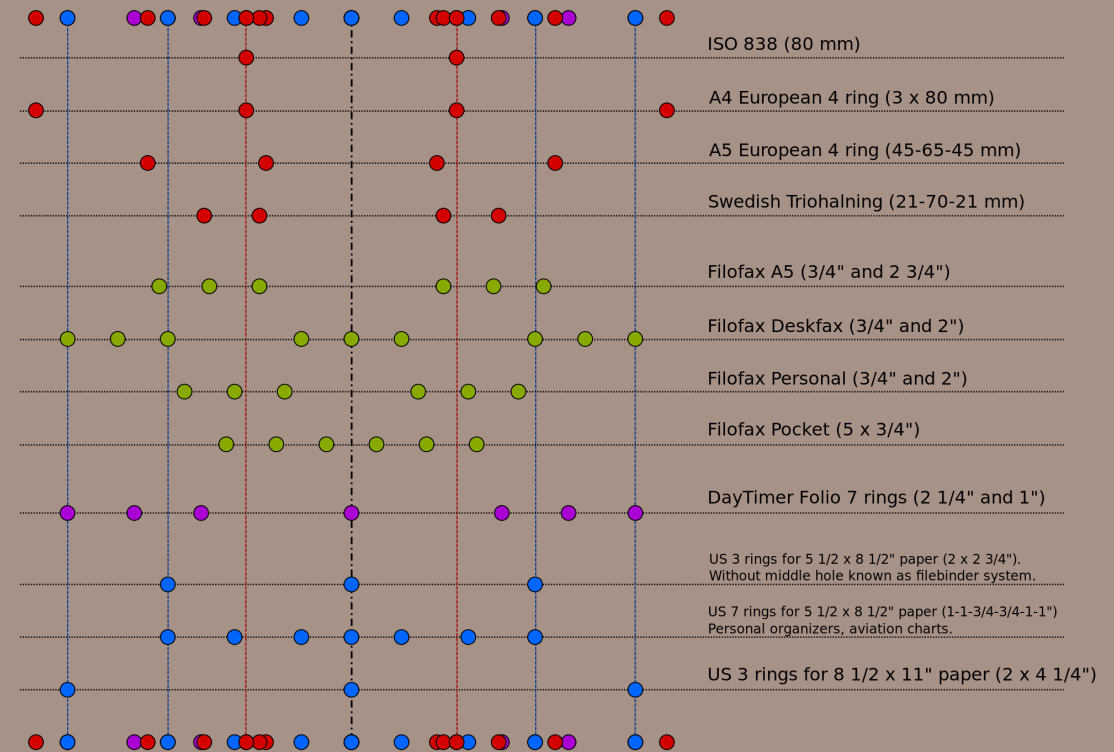
It has been observed how leisure time increasingly blurs with work time into a swampy gig-event-life compound, which also has been called “the standardization of cognitive procedures which digitally formats the mind”.<sup>(53)</sup> Is the solution for cleaning up your own mental slush to streamline your passions, sync your interests and centralize your affinities? As capital mutated into a pervasive force crawling into intellectual territory, the online search bar became the gold mine where words turn into value. However, the harvesting and analysing of emitted data does not explicitly discipline individuals per se, but helps to influence a more subtle form of control – a control that is permissive yet essentially monitored.

Some argue that the hierarchy of human-machine has turned over, so that in the eyes of a neural network any human looks like a nice but naive data-producing factory. Without measure there would be no standard, and the developments of large scale data-accumulation on virtually anything has let obsessive comparison expand into areas previously considered “private” or “intimate”. Fragments of time-labor-love are continuously soaked up, until they paint a gloomy aura of all the information you ever sweated. When does a collector turn into a hoarder? A tiny spoiler: you don’t get to decide that when it comes to your own information.

(53) Berardi, “I Want to Think: POST-U”

(54) The single perforation in a piece of paper is a mark of validation, usage and expiry (tickets, cards). Multiple holes speak of archiving, data processing or function as a recording medium.

The paper hole is a hole facing obsolescence, as fewer sheets of paper make it into the archives. This chart shows commonly used holes in papers intended for general filing purposes. Which multiple hole punch is used describes the specific system of archiving, yet the multitude of competing standards resemble a coded Braille message rather than a homogenized archive.



Yet at the same time, our ways of digesting content also had to readjust, since information is increasingly encountered in a decontextualized, detached and compressed format. Bumping into incoherent, cut-and-pasteable pieces, and treating these as indefinitely recombinable segments, is emblematic of our novel ways of assembling and treating information. The mind as a holey space is leaking, seeping and bleeding out sensible data for someone else to drink, but it is equally developing the capacity of sucking up more information than ever before. The aquatic sponge is a porous, adaptive and absorbing organism – qualities that might equally be worth aspiring for when it comes to cognition.

(54)

# Cache rules everything around

Mole, as a unit, is a vessel for large quantities of extremely small entities (such as atoms or molecules). It is like the grain silo of chemistry, assembling the very much of the very tiny. Hoarding, saving and gaining interest requires a repository of gatherings, as embodied by the container–treasury–vault. Stashing seeds (or any other asset) simplifies comparison and allows for planning, prediction and risk management. Standards feed off stockpile, they pull an average out of the mass.

At some point most hunter-gather communities signed up for an extreme makeover that turned them into entrepreneurs, bankers and land owners. And any 'free action' they had previously been busy with got rebranded as labor. Only the crust of the Earth exists in such specific character and moderate quantity that it can be divided into pieces for cultivation and ownership – neither air, water or any other element could (at least so far) be captured in the same sense. When undefined territory got partitioned into separate regions of land it also gave rise to the idea of ground rent, one of the first measurements of productivity. Your landlord from hell, charging extra for carpet cleaning, could be seen as a direct descendant. Without comparing the crop from portions of land after accumulating surplus harvest, such notions as capital, currency, credit and profit would never have emerged. <sup>(55)</sup>

55. Deleuze & Guattari describes a three-headed (State) apparatus of capture where "Land is stockpiled territory, the tool [work] is stockpiled activity, and money is stockpiled exchange" which in turn gives monopolistic appropriation of a) land through absolute rent, b) activity through labor by surplus labor and c) means of commodity exchange, comparison, issuance of currency. They would say that labor only becomes labor once a standard of comparison is imposed (in the form of a definitive quantity to be produced or time to be worked) generating surplus labor from which other labor is subtracted. Deleuze & Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus" p.444-446

56. Crawling in a storage of surplus gold has its own danger to it: working on top of a full silo can sometimes cause the grains to collapse, like quicksand that sucks the body down in a fatal phenomena known as 'grain engulfment'. Death by gluten, crushed by carbs – it takes seconds to sink, minutes to suffocate and hours to locate the body.



(56)



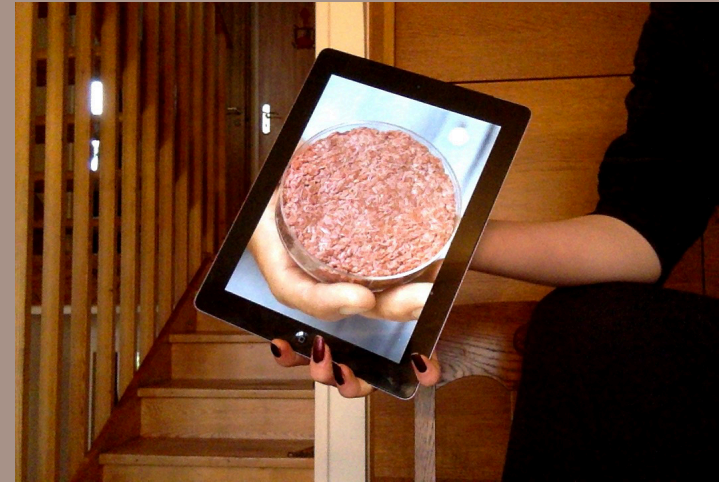
## At lunch with the lonely render farmer

While the contents of a silo are used up pretty rapidly, the seed bank is a longterm investment for future species. Seed banks were established as a backup drive ensuring genetic diversity for a future when humanity in the anthropocene fucks up biological multiplicity once and for all (too bad nobody would trust a bank these days, not even if its purpose is saving organic matter).

Safekeeping or separation anxiety: freezing species, languages or other fundamentally evasive structures is a challenge. A glossary tries to fixate the correct use of words to prevent their extinction, a seed bank tries to mop up spores before they fade away. But both organisms and oral language are cruel, and both plants and people keep letting minor deviations seep out of cracks until the entire inventory has been modified.

On the other hand, why bank on whole seeds if only a sample cell is enough? As the nascent discipline of cellular agriculture/engineered farming grows meat straight from cell cultures any intermediate animal is eliminated, and a sliver of plant tissue can regenerate a tree.<sup>(57)</sup> If the reality of a post-animal bioeconomy (which produces milk from yeast and gelatine from bacteria) is not even that far away, the concept of banking might equally be reduced to crumbs, particles, syllables and fragments.

(57)



57. New Harvest is a research institute accelerating breakthroughs in cellular agriculture, gaining quite some media interest for their research into cultured meat. See more: <http://www.new-harvest.org/about>

# Getting face time with your ex at dandelion o'clock

The sundial could have been a plant-dial, sustained by circadian rhythms, if Linnaeus seed time had gotten more attention. *Horologium Florae* is based on the innate (cellular) bio-clock of living organisms, and also doubles as a pleasant gardening concept. It only ever existed on a hypothetical level – he did indeed do some crucial miscalculations and somehow forgot about the climate in Uppsala, Sweden (half a year of darkness and cold) where he was based for most of his life. Nevertheless Linnaeus proposal for a botanical clock, composed of various flowers opening and closing according to the time of the day, was an avant-garde suggestion on how to estimate time passing.<sup>58</sup>

Carl himself boasted that the plant powered *Horologium Florae* would be "so accurate it would put all the watchmakers in Sweden out of business", but his project never saw any large scale success. Perhaps he predicted something about employment instead, of the precarious worker juggling multiple jobs on minimum wage. His part-time working plants are not that far from todays intern who works from goat's beard to water lily but only gets paid for marigold to hawkweed.

(58) Tortorello, M. "Five Minutes to Moonflower" NY Times, January 2015

(59) Linnaeus categorized the plants as following: *meteorici*, who change their opening and closing times depending on weather conditions; *tropici* according to the length of the day and *aequinoctiales* which have fixed opening and closing times no matter what.



(59)

# Smearing Gaia's afterbirth on oily cheeks to aid skin rejuvenation

## Other sources of liquid nutrients



Butterfly drinking from the tears of a turtle



60. Goodspeed, et al. "Post-harvest Circadian Entrainment Enhances Crop Pest Resistance and Phytochemical Cycling"

61. Certain types of butterflies are known to obtain nutrients from moist substances, a behaviour known as mud-puddling. Far from the ocean many insects will do whatever it takes to soak up salt, and since turtle tears are rich in sodium it has become the drink of choice for a number of species.

(61)

Jumping between time zones, artificial sun from backlit devices and the 'part-time freedom' that made work hours stretch into whatever-hour-available were all guilty in pushing bodies into perpetual jet lag. Being late, in debt or sleep deprived is the new normal, as circadian rhythms slipped out of sync. Internal body clocks lost track of time, chronology is broken, does late-night screen time make you fat?

It is a crucial skill to acclimatise to new environments, so treat yourself that power nap between adopting and re-adopting, OD on melatonin to heal displacement, check your skincare routine, drink plenty of water. Does eating placenta help with insomnia? Plants suffer from jet lag as much as people do, but also adjust accordingly as time passes. The cellular sensitivity to light is so elaborate that some biological activity stays on for some time even after the plant is harvested – your supermarket cabbage is a jetlagged zombie who's metabolism and respiration does not give up just because someone slapped a price tag on it. <sup>(60)</sup>

## Put on ice for the time being

One day the Siberian permafrost thawed and exposed a prehistoric gene pool where the world's oldest seed had marinated, together with bones from other famous Ice Age species like mammoths and woolly rhinoceros. Remnants of *Silene stenophylla* was part of a seed bank once set up by thrifty squirrels, probably stocking up to prevent a crisis.



(63)

If seeds can resurrect after 32 000 frozen years, does that not make refrigeration seem like a pretty credible method for defying time on a cellular level? <sup>(62)</sup> Perhaps the sweaty threat of global warming explains why the business of personal ice age is thriving. Freeze your mole off with liquid nitrogen, cool down fat cells to sculpt your ass, (chill)wave goodbye to your tired old body. If you already kill germs from sneakers in the freezer, why not cryopreserve your marriage until therapy resolves your partners trust issues?

Ice it to opt out of acceleration, press pause until you can pop your head out of the cryo-crypt like a bloated rat. Rodents and hummingbirds preserve energy by going into torpor on a daily basis, so why not do the same? Refrigerate your credit, uterus and brain tissue until science catches up, keep things on hold and ride out the storm.

62. Kaufman, "32,000-Year-Old Plant Brought Back to Life—Oldest Yet"

63. The immature fruit of *Silene stenophylla* buried more than 30 000 years ago.



## A hazel of reconciliation, a lettuce of cold-heartedness

Lovesick, tulip fever, pushing up daisies – botanical cryptography literally blossomed in the Victorian era. Coding with plants was a clandestine way of transmitting encrypted messages under the radar for the 19th century lovesick in-crowd (but what would they call that tiny, white Siberian flower, escaping the permafrost for 30 000 years?). Floriography – the flower language – was used by trendy aristocrats to send herbal emojis to their crush, neatly arranged into bouquets of confidential emotions.<sup>(64)</sup> 'Tell it with a flower, a love letter that fades and rots.

An intimate relationship between plants and encryption still persist, however the focus shifted from the flower to the underground bulb. Tor uses onion routing, which means wrapping messages in several layers of encryption.<sup>(65)</sup> This protects the inner content from snooping or surveillance, much like the fleshy leaves of the aforementioned vegetable. Keeping crucial information enveloped at the centre like a matryoshka doll is a strategy which minimizes the risk of unwanted eavesdropping or any tracing back to a sender or receiver.

64. Greenaway, "The Language of Flowers" was one of the more popular dictionaries at the time.

65. Not all bulbs makes one cry: Tor is the most used software for anonymous online communication. The logo is an onion.[\(https://www.torproject.org/\)](https://www.torproject.org/)

(65)



The block, the piece and the fragment is at the core of an atomized online architecture, which enabled clandestine onions to redefine the monetary system through a revolutionary 'subterranean' infrastructure. <sup>(66)</sup> Electronic peer-to-peer cash systems are decentralized alternatives who stir up the market, which (together with many other applications of blockchain technology) aim to avoid censorship, fraud and third party intervention. <sup>(66b)</sup> Did the self-eating snake get stuck spinning in its own loop, did it accelerate until it imploded? Could the blockchain act as a serpent or a mole? Maybe both?

Digital currencies (as well as Tor etc.) gave rise to an vocabulary that sounds more like something pertaining to the underground mole than the slippery snake: value is extracted through mining, money is kept in vaults and carried in wallets. <sup>(67)</sup> Coins are unlocked by keys and pass through crypts by means of an onion. The references to physical material flourish, despite describing a fundamentally immaterial matter.

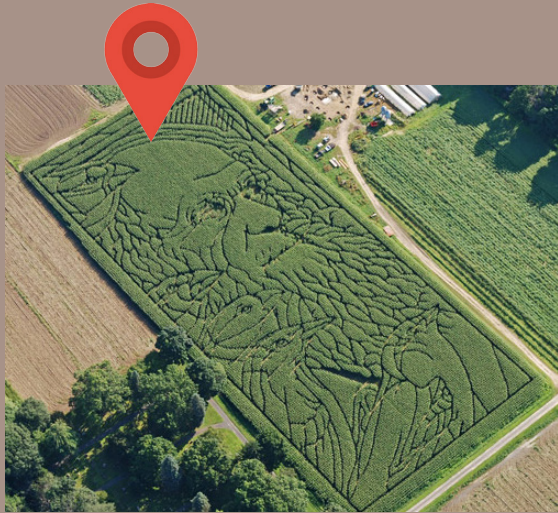
66. Blockchain lets each transaction in a shared, immutable ledger (owned by everyone and no one) be reviewed by several other users before approval, creating transparent, horizontal distribution/decentralized structures. Currency is only one application of blockchain technology, and many other sectors have developed use of it already.

66b. How can a disruptive technology progress? Will it be co-opted by established organizations or continue to evolve from the grassroots? With growing interest comes growing demands of conformity: ISO has recently set up a team working towards the development of a standard for blockchain and distributed ledger technology. Naden, ISO/TC 307

67. *Worth its weight in gold*: some digital currencies share features with the monetary gold standard (abandoned by most nations during the 20th century). Both can be considered finite (or at least scarce) resources, both are commodities with no direct use for human bodies (digital currencies might be intangible, but similarly to gold they cannot be eaten, turned into fuel or built into a house) and maybe most importantly, neither is controlled by a central authority or bank.



## Paying for the Escape room with a dirty crypto-wallet



(68)

The roots and origin of words stretch deep down in muddy history, for the etym-archaeologist to bring forth. But then again, any language is hidden, buried and encrypted until the codes of syntactical relations unravel. Yet making the extra effort of concealing meaning by transforming text into signs illegible without a secret cipher/sifr/key has somehow had a useful function for long as there has been any signs around to transform – there has always been something worth to keep private. A leap of progress brought such secret words down in the subterranean realm, and to decipher in a contemporary sense often means to exhume code from grimy subsoil, to brush the dirt off an underground onion.

If an asymmetrical, messy haircut is a tool of anti-surveillance encrypt–protect–obscure faces from being seen by intrusive recognition software, could there be similar techniques for avoiding pervasive semantic absorption? Is finding holey spaces for words a way to unsubscribe from the micro-voyerism permeating anything that was once considered “private”? A cavernous safe haven, a porous chamber, where one could small talk in peace?

(68) A portrait of Darwin, drawn as a corn maze on a field in Massachusetts.

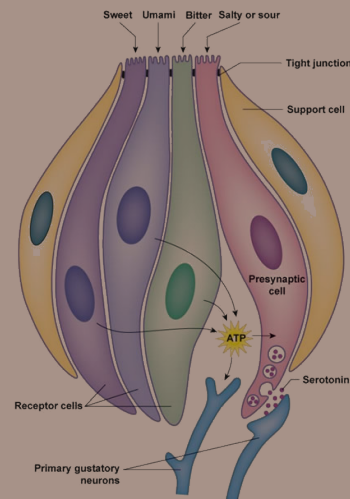
# Under the Influencer

Without dominant guidelines to fall back on, the sponge mind is showered in a myriad of subjective reasoning. Perhaps sense stopped making 'common sense' and started making something else instead. Consensus of taste was good taste and it was united and standard and internalized. It was what 'everybody knows' but nobody knew how they got to know it. But when 'sense' broke up with 'common' it made the taste of ones own medicine very confusing.

Tongues host an army of onion-shaped bulbs who register sensory taste. Taste bud/papillae (nipple in latin) are a gang of receptors hiding under a pore on the surface of the tongue, desperately trying to filter all the impressions flowing through a mouth. The nipples are soaked in the aroma of gossip and the flavour of scandals, they filter an inbox full of sweet words and analyze why you have to be so salty lately. An appetite for the good life starts in the buds.

69. Initially the word *influence* described an ethereal influence on your destiny coming from stars and astral bodies. A more recent definition came to mean any B-list semi-star flooding your feed, *the influencer*. When marketing launched the figure of the Influencer – hijacking the channel of an individual blessed with superior taste and a far-reaching network – it was seen as a fresh weapon to reconquer target audiences immune to regular ads.

70. The bud is a bulb, as an onion ready to sprout.



(70)

How to sense a trend? How long before 'good taste' expires? Taste buds have a life span of approximately ten days before the cells renew, but trends change much faster than that. Your tongue is flooded with flavor, your buds are overwhelmed, your pores are clogged with trojan ads. Every PR-engineer of desire is trying to figure out exactly what the kids are down with these days, just ask the spoiled influencer how far an elite taste could get you. <sup>(69)</sup> Who to turn to when your faculty of sense is out of office and the CEO of your brain escaped to a silent retreat?

You overindulge at the sample sale and the aftertaste is greasy. Nothing 'makes sense' anymore because your buds are still in withdrawal after binge eating at the bottomless brunch. What does "coming to your senses" imply when intoxicated from influence? Maybe making non-sense instead of common sense could reach beyond habitual expectations into new territories of thought.





## Speaking in tongues asking: how many licks

A hummingbird needs to wrap their tongue around the inside of the skull and curl it around their eyes to fit the full length of it. <sup>(71)</sup> It is coiled up in the back, like an elastic snake perpetually stuck at one end. Language does not only translate as tongue, (remember the snake tongues, glossopetrae) but that very slimy muscle is responsible for the final shape of syllables before they are pushed out into the air. Together with the throat and teeth it constructs the scaffolding permitting most human (and some animal) speech mechanisms – digesting rumours, chewing information, swallowing critique.

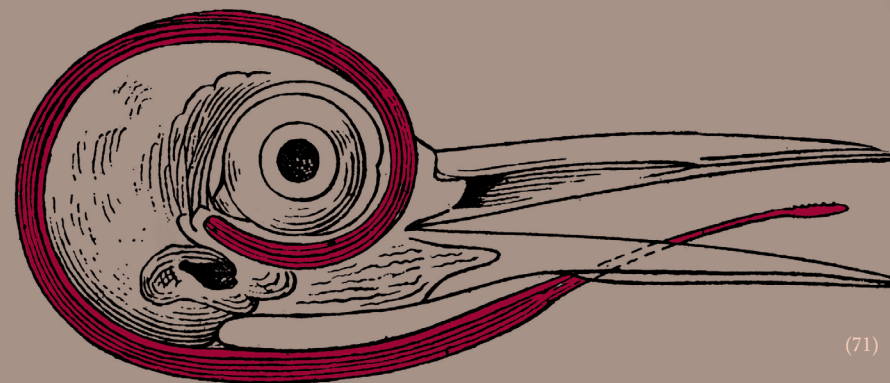
Speech-synthesising mini-oracles like Siri or Alexa born without tongues need to rely on a pre-installed lingua franca of programming instead. The palm-sized helpers will only accept questions in a (for them) recognizable format, thereby defining a set of standard sounds where ambiguous speech is rejected. The well-calibrated tongue has adjusted its accent in order to be heard.

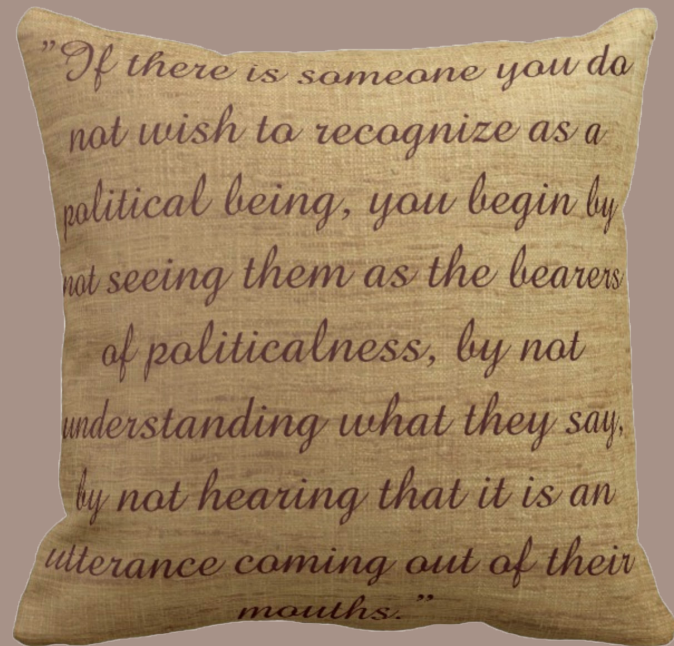
What is to be recognized as relevant (words) in the stream of sound (noise) is a question of politics as much as technology. Filtering the 'actual speech' of political animals from the noises of other beings has traditionally be a strategy of control and oppression – by simply refusing to recognize that the sounds from subjects of certain categories (women, workers etc.) have any political agency. <sup>(72)</sup>

71. Most animals who make noises will be gifted with a complete terminology of sounds already at birth, and are not in need of practicing any syntax specific to their species. Hummingbirds are an exception that need to learn every song and sound of their own language.

72. Pargman & Palme "ASCII Imperialism" 179-182.

Call it ASCII imperialism or just a built-in bias, but other tongues than English have had a hard time claiming space when there is a standard language to the online infrastructure. A couple of endangered languages disappear every month (even more so if its speakers are not considered profitable enough to get webpages in their native tongue) as standardization teams up with universality to conflate all into one, favouring assimilation and smoothness. <sup>(72)</sup> Ocularcentrism favours written words over spoken, and an English paragraph is respected more than any French kiss.





(73)

73. As pointed out by Rancière in "Ten Thesis on Politics" p.10.

"If you are in the presence of an animal possessing the ability of the articulate language and its power of manifestation, you know you are dealing with a human and therefore with a political animal. The only practical difficulty is in knowing which sign is required to recognize the sign; that is, how one can be sure that the human animal mouthing a noise in front of you is actually voicing an utterance rather than merely expressing a state of being? If there is someone you do not wish to recognize as a political being, you begin by not seeing them as the bearers of politicalness, by not understanding what they say, by not hearing that it is an utterance coming out of their mouths.

[... ] In order to refuse the title of political subjects to a category -- workers, women, etc... -- it has traditionally been sufficient to assert that they belong to a 'domestic' space, to a space separated from public life; one from which only groans or cries expressing suffering, hunger, or anger could emerge, but not actual speeches demonstrating a shared aisthesis."

# a. mother-native-silver-serpent

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1			α	α	ε	ο	υ			α	α	ε	ο	υ	υ
2			η	η	ι	ι	ι	ι		ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
3	h	h	h	h	h	h	h	h	<b>H</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
4	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	w	<b>W</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
5	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	<b>Y</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
6	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	<b>B</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
7	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	p	<b>P</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
8	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	<b>V</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
9	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	<b>F</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
10	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	<b>D</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
11	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	t	<b>T</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
12	th	th	th	th	th	th	th	th	<b>Th</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
13	lh	lh	lh	lh	lh	lh	lh	lh	<b>Lh</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
14	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	g	<b>G</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
15	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	<b>C</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
16	gh	gh	gh	gh	gh	gh	gh	gh	<b>Gh</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
17	ch	ch	ch	ch	ch	ch	ch	ch	<b>Ch</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
18	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	<b>Z</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
19	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	s	<b>S</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
20	zh	zh	zh	zh	zh	zh	zh	zh	<b>Zh</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
21	sh	sh	sh	sh	sh	sh	sh	sh	<b>Sh</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
22	l	l	l	l	l	l	l	l	<b>L</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
23	hl	hl	hl	hl	hl	hl	hl	hl	<b>hL</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
24	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r	<b>R</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
25	hr	hr	hr	hr	hr	hr	hr	hr	<b>hR</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
26	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	<b>M</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
27	hm	hm	hm	hm	hm	hm	hm	hm	<b>hM</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
28	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	<b>N</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
29	hn	hn	hn	hn	hn	hn	hn	hn	<b>hN</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
30	ng	ng	ng	ng	ng	ng	ng	ng	<b>Ng</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ
31	hng	hng	hng	hng	hng	hng	hng	hng	<b>hNg</b>	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ	ρ

α α η ε ι ο υ ρ α α ε ο υ υ  
 η η ι ι ι ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
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 w w w w w w w w W ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 y y y y y y y y Y ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 b b b b b b b b B ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 p p p p p p p p P ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 v v v v v v v v V ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 f f f f f f f f F ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 d d d d d d d d D ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 t t t t t t t t T ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 th th th th th th th th Th ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 lh lh lh lh lh lh lh lh Lh ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 g g g g g g g g G ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 c c c c c c c c C ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 gh gh gh gh gh gh gh gh Gh ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch Ch ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 z z z z z z z z Z ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 s s s s s s s s S ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 zh zh zh zh zh zh zh zh Zh ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 sh sh sh sh sh sh sh sh Sh ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 l l l l l l l l L ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 hl hl hl hl hl hl hl hl hL ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 r r r r r r r r R ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 hr hr hr hr hr hr hr hr hR ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 m m m m m m m m M ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 hm hm hm hm hm hm hm hm hM ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 n n n n n n n n N ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 hn hn hn hn hn hn hn hn hN ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 ng ng ng ng ng ng ng ng Ng ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ  
 hng hng hng hng hng hng hng hng hNg ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ ρ

"He divided the universe into forty categories or classes, which were then subdivided into differences, and subdivided in turn into species. To each class he assigned a monosyllable of two letters; to each difference, a consonant; to each species, a vowel. For example, de means element; deb, the first of the elements, fire; deba, a portion of the element of fire, a flame."<sup>(74)</sup>

74. Borges, "John Wilkins' Analytical Language" p.2.

75. 'Real Character' was also developed as a set of symbols, similar to stenography / shorthand.

Borges was sceptical of any attempt at universal classification and standardized languages. He gives a 350 year old example of an English bishop – John Wilkins –who attempted to develop a standard world language, immune to disappearance.

As he was watching the process of semantic extinction with despair, Wilkins saw the unreliability of spoken language as the main reason to why languages fade away. Speech lets words change shape and meaning over time, making words slippery and unreliable. His synthetical language, 'Real Character', would overcome the obstacle of devious speech once and for all. A system which organizes and assigns meaning to every successive letter in a word would let the user make sense of the word based on every individual character (instead of the word as a whole).

(75)

## b. running your mouth or running out of business

Wilkins wanted to create the artificial building blocks for a rational, all-encompassing semantic system. His 'Real Character' privileged the written word, and had a set of rules to rationally classify everything one could possibly encounter in the universe. For example, following his method, gradually deciphering each letter in the 'Real Character' word 'Zana' informs the reader about "a scaly river fish with pink flesh", while analyzing every character in the English equivalent word – 'salmon' – would not tell you nearly as much.

But Borges remarks how no classification of the universe escapes speculation and arbitrariness, for the simple reason that nobody knows what the ensemble of the universe really is. He continues to ask if there could even be something universal at all, in the organic, unifying sense of such ambiguous word.

Real Character was a victim of its own artificiality, betrayed by its rigid, tongue-tied terminology (although Wilkins also kind of invented the standard metre, which worked out a whole lot better). His solid language, intact and impermeable, was compressed into the archives like a forgotten fossil. Perhaps a homogenous language without irregularities has no energy to stay alive, perhaps loose tongues live longer.





## Safe sext, private eye

It is not repression, it is no longer the mold that presses, constrains or shapes minds and material from the outside. This is the realm of intricate, invisible self-control, it is "a molecular diffusion of constraints into daily life"<sup>(76)</sup>

Society socializes, communication is imperative, everyone and everything is talking but nothing ever matters. So if language is co-opted by capital, do you get out if you shut up? Do you undermine and hijack by being anonymously unsurveillable? Is it becoming un-mineable to clog the machinery with nonsense? Is the meme a burp of resistance?

The invisible onion lays dormant underground until the time is right to sprout, solid like a rock and silent like the grave. Is it the stammering, hiccups, noise, mucus and glitches that contain the germs of a new world? Get your words dirty in the subsoil holey space, bury NSFW thoughts in the quiet ground. Drag governmental secrets through the darknet mud, send news not nudes, expose corruption if there is still someone who cares. Your head feels like a hollow sponge, but that only means you can soak up whatever you need and then squeeze it out again.

(76) Tiqqun, "Preliminary Materials For a Theory of the Young-Girl" p.11.

(77) The untrained eye sees camouflage and avoidance, or is dressing up in a 'ghillie suit' perhaps the most accepted form of role-playing algae?



(77)



(76)

## The sum of all spheres

25

The tail of the snake was of standard length, the mole dug a vault of standard depth.

26

The factory was a building but the business is a gas, gold was solid but new currencies are smoke. Ambient computing is the fume you inhale.

27

No collagens could ever fill up the drill holes, no botox could ever paralyze the perpetual movement of matter.

28

Float the torrent, drink the juice, grow your own pond scum.

29

If a perforated language can not be stuffed, then the only way to deal with gaps is to squeeze yourself through.

30

They tell you to 'grow up' but duh you know the point is to 'grow down' (and by the way in all the other directions as well).

31

Cultivating your garden means ripping up flowers and watering the weeds, to spread new seeds and encrypt baby onions.

32

Or just climb the pay-wall, fill up the plot holes, make language leak like a sieve. "Turn the Earth into swiss cheese" or why not a sponge.

33

Earth is a holey space, a porous structure with a chill-cave basement. Chew yourself a tunnel and hang out in the crypt.

34

Micro-dose on disobedience. Dig a loophole and slide right through it.

35

Maybe you're both the self-eating snake and the dirty mole, both the one (1) and the hole (0), both the slimy algae and the sponge that soaks it up.

36

Be the want you change to see, let them eat cake and be the cake too.



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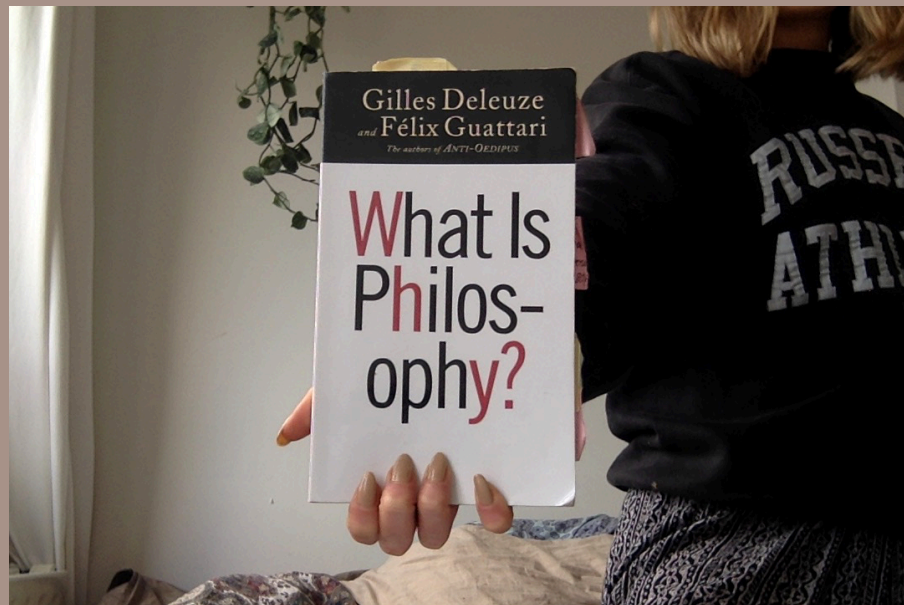
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