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Introduction: Antinomies of the New Imaginary

> Come with me and you'll be
> In a world of pure imagination
> Take a look and you'll see
> Into your imagination
> – Gene Wilder (1933 – 2016)

Gene Wilder's death this year elicited a tremendous outpouring of grief worldwide. For many, his face – that frizz of curly hair; bright blue eyes with an impish twinkle; and the grin, halfway amused, halfway smug, like he's in on a joke you're not quite privy to – is inseparable from his greatest performance: in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. The film in which he performed that role, made in 1971 and based on the 1964 novel by Roald Dahl, is one of those formative fictions in which children of a certain age indulge outlandish flights of imagination (isn't it every child's fantasy to enter a world made entirely from chocolate?). I can remember seeing the film one Christmas when I was maybe 8 or 9, at my grandparents' house in Tasmania, that island on the southernmost tip of Australia. I was totally captivated by the world into which the protagonist, Charlie, was granted entry with his golden ticket, behind the rusted gates that heretofore remained closed to the public: the production of Wonka's sugar-coated confectionary, a mysterious secret kept from the salivating masses. While first watching the film that Christmas, crossing those gates with Charlie into the forbidden city – full of magical possibility – was the biggest thrill; it would only be years later when re-watching the film as a university student that the factory began to represent something else entirely: something less paradisiacal insofar as I could see more plainly the price of whatever enjoyment had been promised by Wonka and his factory, where satisfaction for the few is surcharged with immiseration of the many.

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Analogously, we might recall here one of the more dramatic manoeuvres, in this vein of demystification, from Karl Marx's magnum opus. In *Capital*, at the end of chapter six where Marx shifts critical focus from the exchange of commodities to the forces of production, we are shown precisely what is to come, the subterranean abode of industrial production:

> Let us therefore, in company with the owner of money and the owner of labour-power, leave this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in full view of everyone, and follow them into the hidden abode of production, on whose threshold there hangs the notice 'No admittance except on business'. Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital is itself produced. The secret of profit-making must at last be laid bare.[1]

It is precisely "business" that underscores Wonka's decision to grant a handful of predominantly wealthy children and their chosen guardians access to his chocolate factory; the candy-man capitalist is on the hunt for a chosen successor to continue carrying out his confectionary empire, a worthy heir to the Wonka franchise.

The thrill of the film's opening, its *Bildung*-like narrative, is Charlie's "escape" from nigh-on Dickensian poverty. His is an impoverished multi-generational family inhabiting the cramped one room (recall: two sets of grandparents head-to-toe in the same bed; the mother working all through the night as a washer-woman; and sweet Charlie, a celluloid successor to Tiny Tim, ecstatically happy when receiving for his birthday a single bar of chocolate). Although I may not have understood the various ideologies underpinning this pre-Thatcherite narrative of industrial aspiration, my sympathy was automatically aligned with Charlie and his grandfather, the underdogs in a game orchestrated by the capitalist, Wonka, in which they compete against the sons and daughters of a global ruling class for the affections of an eccentric industrialist. Of course, Charlie wins the competition – his final victory sealed by an act of company loyalty; returning the gift of a pre-sucked gobstopper – and so he and his grandfather are quite literally shot skyward into the upper echelons of wealth via a golden lift, all the while looking down upon the slums from which they came. It was one of those early encounters – up there with so many other stories by Dahl – which

[1] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes, Penguin Books, London 1990, p. 280.

are totally engrossing not least because they capture a world of fantasy underwritten in equal measure by pleasure and fear. And while I may not have fully understood the extent of exploitation presented in the film – singing, dancing production lines of orange-skinned and unpaid labor – even at a young age you can readily sense the sinister underbelly of this magical world. And that brings us much closer to the present.

Gene Wilder's death coincided with our beginning to edit the essays included in this collection – specifically, I was watching a televised replay of one of the most recognizable songs from the film, "Pure Imagination," and it made me think about the essays comprised herein. The lyrics invite their listeners into a world of pure fantasy, one in which wish-fulfilment is assured, and the images accompanying those lyrics deliver up a scene oversaturated with *jouissance*: every tree, rock, blade of grass made edible and promising the most pleasurable sapor; all of which is counterpoised to Wilder's melancholic vocals and the slightly unnerving, slightly uncanny ringing of bells in the background, as if there were something more malevolent lurking just below the fantastical surface of things. This surface, furnished by a harmonizing rhyme scheme which reaches perfect euphoria in the final couplet, "Living there you'll be free | If you truly wish to be." That malevolence is, of course, brought into focus when the piggish Augustus Gloop is swallowed whole for his gluttony, being sucked up a chocolate tube. Indeed, Gloop's swift dispatch via the industrial chute announces the material (and deadly) substrate of Wonka's so-called "pure imagination." The dream-like rapture of this song is ironized not only by Gloop's punishment for giving way so completely to his desires; it is also sharply juxtaposed in the following scene with that unforgettably traumatic paddle-steamer ride through the bowels of the factory as Wonka himself recites an equally terrifying incantation: "Not a speck of light is showing | So the danger must be growing | Are the fires of hell a'glowing? | Is the grisly reaper mowing?" If the preceding introduction to Wonka's factory had all the makings of paradise then this is the nightmarish underside of that fantasy: memorably, the scene is intercut with near-subliminal imagery of actual slaughter.

It would not be overreaching to suggest that imagination, in Wonka's first song, is straddling two seemingly contradictory realms; if we take "Pure Imagination" out of the film's broader context, then we are presented on the surface with lyrics that suggest a truly utopian social-dreaming, a world responsive to willed trans-

formation, but if we put the song back in its filmic context then we encounter a hymn to capitalist enterprise. If imagination + capitalism = paradise, then what has been presented is a paradise for the capitalists (and indeed, Charlie cannot imagine his place in this paradise until he is inaugurated into Wonka's class); or as Kafka once put it: "Plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope – but not for us."[2] This, we can now begin gesturing toward the essays to come, is Juliet Flower MacCannell's point exactly when she describes present-day "fantasies of egalitarianism" via the world of fashion. In her view, a visual regime "shaped by the masculine universal" trends toward "images of 'equal enjoyment' for all meaning actual misery for all except the One who alone fully enjoys." In this, the imaginary functions like that familiar topological structure from Lacan (Moebius strip, mustard pot, Klein bottle etc.,) capturing the minimal difference between fantasy and reality, the ego's ideal and its fragmented actuality.

It's not just psychoanalysts who have been preoccupied with the imagination, and with the imagination as antinomial force. While Lacan's formulation is at the forefront of editorial consciousness with the present collection, various other imaginations join it to the ends of both conceptual aid and critical challenge. It should go without saying that philosophy has always been attached to this concept, from Aristotle's phantasia as distinct from perception; through Kant's fissiparous consciousness; right down to speculative realism's various flights of quasi-fictional invocation, whose deeply subjective imaginings trouble their claims to a world of pure objects. Political theory, with its recently renewed emphasis on manifold utopianisms, has once again turned to that concept as a constitutive force of social dreaming, which must now as ever weigh itself against both the neoliberal consensus and the challenge of concrete political change. And, while imagination is key to aesthetics as both productive and receptive, it finds articulation with regard to specific artistic forms, perhaps most notably in the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's account of the imagination's esemplastic unity, itself the antithesis of a more ephemeral fancy.

What might be most useful to our reading here – of the imaginary, imagination, image or otherwise – is Derrida's deconstructive mode both because imagination in its various forms and figures begins to appear as a supplement to reality

[2] Quoted in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Random House, New York 2007, p. 116.

insofar as it occupies a zone of radical ambivalence or indeterminacy, and moreover our interpretive method for reading the imaginary must itself approach this double-bind. Significantly for Derrida, and for us, there is something inherently imaginary about the supplement insofar as it is indeed an image: "the supplement has not only the power of *procuring* an absent presence through its image; procuring it for us through the proxy *[procuration]* of the sign, it holds it at a distance and masters it." Moreover, for Derrida, "this presence is at the same time desired and feared."[3] This topological description of the supplement as image brings us very close to the manner in which Joan Copjec describes the "imaginal space" in Abbas Kirostami's films:

> What appears in the world, without being of the same substance, is a radical elsewhere, an other scene, which turns our heads, orients or magnetizes us such that we turn away from the world. What suspends itself in the finite world is not flimsy fantasy but precisely the fully real extension of the ego through its relation to this other place. Extension in this sense characterizes not some thing (*res extensa*) but relation; ego extends beyond itself and towards what is other to it.

Each of these essays in one way or another take part in a discussion of the imaginary and offer new insights into how we might conceive of this realm and of the dual nature of fantasy in our own emergent virtual culture, saturated as it is with images and underwritten by an economy of commodified *jouissance*.

We might now begin to see why the imaginary – as a question, leitmotif, critical frame, repeated structure, or simply form – emerges as a sort of narrative unconscious from a collection of papers with their genetic commonplace in a conference whose titled thematic was "Reason + Enjoyment." That is to say, the imaginary might be seen to function at the very nexus of these two seemingly opposed terms and that the plus sign, between the two, can be taken either as the minimal difference cutting them in two or as their combined form; here the plus sign might also be conceived in terms of an excess in the supplementary sense we have just described: "whether it adds or substitutes itself, the supple-

3 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1997, p. 155.

ment is *exterior*, outside of the positivity to which it is super-added, alien to that which, in order to be replaced by it, must be other than it."[4]

While the authors in this volume engage variously the vicissitudes of opposition or addition – reason + enjoyment; object + subject; inside + outside; capitalism + utopia; realism + affect; space + time, idealism + actuality; aesthetic + political; melancholy + hope – what is remarkable is that so many are concerned with this question of imagination, either as an admission to the world of images, as a mediating interface, or as the symptom of utopian potentiality. And, certainly, what is striking is that there is indeed nothing "pure" at all about imagination, as Wonka's song might suggest via the proto-deconstructive logic of its form. Imagination, and its incumbent pleasure, is indeed contaminated at every turn by the reality principle: culture, media, spectres haunting past, present and future. By locating these precise points of contamination, antinomy, demystification, we might begin, collectively, to partake in what MacCannell has aptly designated "refashioning the new imaginary."

The lion's share of this volume is organized, roughly, in two sections. The essays that comprise the first half take the world of images as their object of criticism and in divergent ways explore film, photography, painting, animation, literature. These essays all have something to say about how imagination comes to be mediated by an aesthetic regime and how this relation illuminates the various antinomies I have been gesturing towards. The second half includes several essays that hone in on the political valences of an imaginary ideal; how we might conceive of new realities. Partitioning these two sections, one on aesthetics the other on politics, is an essay by Henry Sussman, which operates as an interface or mediator between the two halves of the collection by offering a sort of metacommentary on our method via an injunction to a playful and indeed plastic intelligence that, according to Henry Sussman by way of Hofstadter, has the ability "'to make sense out of ambiguous or contradictory messages,' and 'to synthesize new concepts by taking old concepts and putting them together in new ways.'" We might even take a certain liberty here, substituting the imaginary for intelligence, and borrow from Sussman our stated objective: "to track the vicissitudes and transformations of [imagination] as it addresses major conundrums in a range of sciences and arts, tackles technological challenges in

[4] Ibid., p. 145.

different spheres (sound-reproduction, cybernetics), and accommodates itself unprecedented media."

1. Aesthetics

Joan Copjec's essay, "The Imaginal World and Modern Oblivion," takes the cinematic output of celebrated Iranian auteur Abbas Kiarostami and unveils his formal fidelity to "the imaginal world" as it is conceived at the intersection of Islamic religion and philosophy. The encyclopedic breadth of her essay spans a multitude of histories – Islamic religion and philosophy, Christianity, art, and cinema to name but a few – in order to trace the genealogy of "the imaginal world" as it evolves as a mediating relation, or "interstice," between the human and divine; the sublunary and spiritual; the intelligible and the sensible. Copjec shows, how the "imaginal world" is not just another space or dimension but is itself the proper name given to that "material apparition" which inexists in this world and which materializes epiphanic forms out of the medium of images. In particular, the extimate surface of "the imaginal word" sediments in the cinematic materiality of Kiarostami's films – in the repeated topologies of zig-zags, the detemporalization of scenes, and the minimal distances, created by a tension between Kiarostami's longs shots and the close up, where the "subject's passionate attachment to her own otherness" is found. All of this is framed by Kiarostami's "realist impulse," insofar as Copjec argues his is a cinema that seeks to unveil an "illuminated reality."

Carol Jacobs probes the problematic of realism, and a "fidelity to reality," in her essay, "A Tripp to the London National Gallery," which takes up W. G. Sebald's relatively obscure piece from 1993, "Like Day and Night: On the Pictures of Jan Peter Tripp." Jacobs looks closely at Tripp's large painting, "Déclaration de guerre," by way of Sebald so as to reexamine the incommensurability between symbolic language and visual imagery, literary fiction and the painted canvas. Beginning with these two compositions, Sebald's writing and Tripp's painting, Jacobs' narrative expands vertiginously outward, taking in a multitude of contextual citations, whilst folding inward and upon itself in a performative deconstruction that simultaneously affirms the irreducibility of each artistic medium and concedes the inseparability of media as such. Via various instances of doubling, Jacobs puts into question the material residues of a reality that in-

heres both inside and outside the artistic frame, thereby generating a chiasmus wherein reality is illuminated both from within and from outside the artwork.

The materiality of a medial surface located at the perimeters of an artwork is taken up again in “The Spectre In The Screen,” wherein Alan Cholodenko conjures forth the haunting presence of animation, as both a technical process and a cultural logic, to elaborate a new theory of spectatorship. Here the scopic field becomes the mediating place-holder for the “*tache*, stain, spot, blind spot, spectre, scotoma,” and which generates its own affective intensity, namely: mourning and melancholy. Building on a theory of the uncanny, evolved here into what Cholodenko calls “the Cryptic Complex of film animation,” this essay calls for not merely a psycho- but a “psuché-analysis” of filmic animation, namely an analysis of the specters that flitter about in and of the frame. Within this theoretical matrix, the work of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard evolve together into the metallic endoskeleton of the Terminator.

Questions of affect and genre converge in Robert Sinnerbrink’s essay, “Planet Melancholia: Romanticism, Mood, and Cinematic Ethics,” which provides a philosophical examination of Lars von Trier’s 2011 film, *Melancholia*. Sinnerbrink is attuned to the film’s dual interests in cinematic romanticism, which he sees as indebted to German romanticism more generally, and in the aesthetics of cinematic moods, which finds form in its portrait of psychical melancholia. For Sinnerbrink, the concatenation of these forms produce their own uncanny detemporalization: “Melancholia is a mood that imbues the world with a distinctive sensibility, congealing the present, […] as well as opening up an uncanny, ‘prophetic’ dimension of temporal experience.” This essay ultimately finds its destination in the greater question of ethics, and in how cinema can do ethics, hypothetically prompting aesthetic, moral-psychological and even cultural transformation. “Despite von Trier’s reputation as a cynical manipulator and the film’s critics describing it as a stylised exercise in nihilism,” Sinnerbrink concludes, “Melancholia reveals, on the contrary, the profoundly ethical dimensions of our aesthetic experience of cinematic moods.”

Knox Peden’s essay, “Cube-Shaped Planet,” examines a set of recent and not-so-recent works of fiction and criticism – principally, however, Paul Bowles’s 1949 novel, *The Sheltering Sky* – in order to develop its argument about the status of intention within what has been described as an age of the Anthropocene. Us-

ing Bowles as a case study, Peden's charge "is to explore the kinds of desires involved in rethinking the world as no longer divided between spheres of causes and reasons, which is to say divided between events that are natural in the sense that they are ultimately explicable as instances of natural laws, and events that are actions, i.e. that can only be explained by appeals to some kind of agential motivation that is not beholden to predictive schemata." This division – which finds articulation throughout the history of philosophy and emphatically with Kant – is examined here precisely as a point of ambiguity, and which is articulated by a whole set of dislocations within the works examined, including diachronic and synchronic conflicts which congeal antinomy in "singular images," fraught character relations, split narrative trajectories, aesthetic forms and figures and the trouble with representing their obverse formlessness.

With "Syllable as Syntax: Stéphane Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés," Justin Clemens sketches out a sequence of hypotheses regarding the foundations of Mallarmé's masterwork in a new relation forged between syllables and syntax. According to Clemens, building on a rich history of literary criticism, Mallarmé confronts ordinary language with mathematics so as to produce a new, third thing, namely the poem. "Mallarmé," argues Clemens, "accomplishes this through a syllabarization of writing, that is, by decomposing and reconstructing the minimal bond that binds letters in order that they make words and, in this reconstruction, extends this operation of binding across the surface of the page itself." Clemens thus presents the poem as an atomical structure insofar as Mallarme's own "mission to purify verse" reveals the irreducible structure of poetry which at one and the same time constitutes its essence. In other words, what materializes at the irreducible interstice between syllables is the most chaste form of all: the pure poem.

To be sure, it is the "expanding thresholds of mathematics" that allows our own mediating interface, "Parables of Playful Intelligence," by Henry Sussman, to engage the systematic and cybernetic underpinnings of intelligence itself in the era of digital convergence. At the core of this far-reaching essay is the insistence of the primacy of media and mediation to thought and being. Beginning, then, with the question of therapeutic healing, Sussman maps the systems through which any sort of psychical amelioration must proceed. "The most visceral and indispensable virtual window or clearing for healing that I could invoke," he insists, "is movement itself, particularly over and against the stasis ensuing from

subjection to multiple gravity-sinks of rigidity, from thwarting, writ or delivered systematically." This logic of momentum, which serves as a counter to the inertia of melancholia, and the peripatetic sentences with which it is performed generate their own feedback loops with multiple antecedes, but most resoundingly in Zen philosophy and in the computational ontologies of Douglas R. Hofstadter.

2. Politics

In "Refashioning *Jouissance* for the Age of the Imaginary," Juliet Flower MacCannell adapts Lacan to and through sartorial fashion in the historical present. This essay argues that Lacan's insight about sexual difference, that it is an effect of both psychical and bodily logics that guide the subject's relationship to *jouissance*, ultimately derives from a reading of Freud's group psychology. Building on these contentions, MacCannell shows that the cultural logic of late capitalism, or postmodernism, is dominated by an ultimately masculine model of *jouissance*, one bound up in managerialism, that might yet be countered by the utopianism of its feminine obverse. For MacCannell, all of this is exemplified in the world of fashion, where a specious flattening out of sexual difference – which, for Lacan, was a point of origin for capitalism – simply means eradicating the feminine. "Where,“ this essay asks, "are the images of a *jouissance* that proceed from the feminine side of sexuation?"

Julian Murphet's "Rosa Plus Emma: Political Pleasure and the Enjoyment of Reason" refashions this question of *jouissance* and its political capabilities in his examination of the apparent antinomy between reason and enjoyment, between categories of economic analysis and the culture of gleeful activism, in modern leftist thought. This essay sets out to elaborate a full semiotic square of "capitalist unreason" and "left rationalism," and in so doing it draws into relation two of the key strategies for anti-capitalist negation: Bolshevist puritanism and Anarchist liberty. Between these two, however, Murphet finds a hero in the figure of "an antagonist of Anarchism who is further still from the centralising tendencies of Leninism, while somehow effecting in her own position the very negation of capitalist immanence itself" – namely, Rosa Luxemberg.

The following essay, "Reasoning the Disaster," by Laurence Simmons shifts the historical focus forward into the "future anterior" by interrogating the figure

of catastrophe in order to understand how we might begin to think through the disasters confronting our historical moment. For Simmons any project that attempts to come to terms with thinking the disaster, must at first register the event's own syntax and grammar; in other words, we must first understand its singular temporality insofar as catastrophe is always, already caught in a sort of temporal feedback loop between the future and the past. Drawing predominately on the work of Jean Pierre Dupuy, and particularly his theory of "projected time," Laurence weaves his own argument through the labyrinths of philosophy, rhetoric, deconstructive semiotics, biblical fable and back again into contemporary cultural crisis. Simmons' owns presentational style consists of detours, deviations, turns, and returns to demonstrate the circuitous logic of catastrophe and its negative imprint, non-catastrophe, and proposes that: "before the disaster occurs, it can only not occur; it is in occurring that it begins to have always been necessary, and therefore, that the non-catastrophe, which was possible, begins to have always been impossible."

Jelica Šumič Riha takes Lacan's "Kant with Sade" and squares his presentation of two "incompatible couples"; on the one side Kant and Sade and on the other Sade and Epictetus. Sade, therefore, becomes a mediator between reason and enjoyment insofar as his is the proper name common to the "unheard of relationship between desire and will at the end of analysis." From here Šumič Riha explores a further coupling, or "two modalities", which are generated by the encounter between the subject and the "Other's will to desire." These modalities, Sade's and the Stoics, are examined by Šumič Riha in order to situate the conditions upon which the Other might be subtracted from the equation laid out by Lacan and thereby shifting ethics away from desire and onto an ethics of the drive. It is in this reasoning that Šumič Riha proposes we might be able to contemplate a non-perverse transgression of the pleasure principle.

Rado Riha refocuses this question of enjoyment within the locus of "pure reason," and specifically Kant's second Copernican turn. In so doing Riha shows the moment where Reason works actively on itself in order to excavate the "thing" of thought. In Riha's words, "by being concerned only with itself, reason is, paradoxically, brought to the point that it steps outside itself into the realm of objective reality, there precisely where, prior to the accomplishment of its self-critique, it could not find itself." Here Riha unfurls with meticulous precision the way in which Reason thereby enters the world of objectivity where

the "reflecting power of judgement" casts its indifferent gaze over reason and illuminates the "*material trace*, of that present absence of the thing itself." This kernel of "the thing of thought" returns us to the drive from which the previous essay left us; and importantly, for Riha, this drive should not be conceived purely within the domain of irreducible singularity but more precisely as a "universally valid singularity," whereby the inexistence of the thing of thought marks the empirical world as a "*world for all*."

This demarcation of drive within the realism of collectivity foregrounds Sigi Jottkandt's essay, "Repetition and Inscription in Europe's Dream-land," which speaks thematically to the multitude of papers we have assembled here: images and imaginaries; cinema; melancholy; the social dreaming of utopic fantasy; collectivities; inexistent forms; the troubled sexuation of *jouissance*; temporal discontinuities; poetry and mathematics. Specifically, it speaks to Slavoj Žižek's recent interventions into the refugee crisis and the intervening question, "What is Europe?" Jöttkandt places this question, and the traumas of displacement, homelessness and the crossing of territories it betokens, against the frame of inscription and so brings philosophy, aesthetics, and politics to bear on the biopolitical exigencies of the lived present. Jöttkandt redoubles Žižek's question by asking "What if all that remains of 'the political' is the empty gesture of the inward *turn* - a sort of global 'Brexiting' of all intersubjective relations that, in mimicking the churn of the maelstrom, at best slows down our capture by the pleasure principle or, at worst, initiates an unstoppable chain reaction that cannibalizes every last limit, eviscerating all thought." In response to this question, Jöttkandt concludes with the medium with which, with Joan Copjec we began this volume, namely cinema and the predominance of the image, both as symptom of our "vorticidal streaming of experience," and as the singular form that might capture the sorts of trauma we are dealing with today: as a medium that may open up another dream-land from which a new Europe might emerge.

Adam Bartlett's essay provides an epilogue to this collection by posing a question that has shadowed many of the other essays comprised herein: how to think the irreducible relation between reason and enjoyment? While this relation has been consistently characterized in the essays by reference to its non-rapport, and so marked as unknowable, untenable, unthinkable, Bartlett attempts to get at the very fact of this disjunction by interrogating knowledge's production and reproduction within the university discourse. "Like nowhere else, universities –

the social bond as social body – serve at the pleasure of the master and do so very well […] It creates after all, the means of the surplus the master requires: graduates, who make the correct accusations (sometimes called critique), which is to say, they correctly enjoy." To counter this state of affairs, Bartlett introduces another "double site of non rapport" in the form of an almost pseudo-couple, Plato and Lacan, who by their powers combined unlock a way of thinking an un-colonized truth into knowledge. For Bartlett, the university is also the site of a radical exception insofar as it constitutes the exact place where knowledge confronts its own inner being. "Between truth and knowledge, or thought and opinion, the analyst and the university, happiness and satisfaction, there is a minimal difference that makes all the difference." What is required to expose this difference is nothing less than punching a hole in knowledge so as to get to that impasse where the truth materializes as something outside of the state apparatus. In more than one way, then, this epilogue is an apposite end to a collection that seeks to stretch the bounds of knowledge, disciplinarity, and critique. But it also calls into question our own relation to truth as producers and reproducers of knowledge. Particularly at a moment when more than ever before the university discourse is threatened by economic rationalization, managerialism, and bureaucracy. In light of this, Bartlett's essay asks how are we to submit ourselves "to the limits of knowledge," and in that death "recommence: should something happen"?

Conclusion

We end where we began, and thus begin where we end, historically speaking: between Gene Wilder's 1971 rendition of Willy Wonka and his death, in 2016; between these two chronological points – arbitrary bookends to an individual's lifetime – an entire historical cycle has occurred. Our penultimate essay speaks to the European crisis, and certainly melancholy persists as an affective energy throughout this entire collection; so I want to end by briefly gesturing towards the shared global crisis we currently inhabit, its melancholic mood and also its antinomy: the hope, or desire, that springs from a resurgent utopianism and which tends to re-emerge at these precise moments when a system of systems is faltering. The real accumulation that typified Robert Brenner's "Long Boom" of 1948 until around 1973, born of industrial manufacture, collapsed in the force of capitalism's signal crisis; and yet, in the following decade capitalism reemerged, restructured and reconstructed, as a newly financial operation; but, more recently, in the twenty-first century, finance itself, that autumnal phase

of an accumulative cycle, has given way to an unmistakable winter: a terminal crisis.[5] If, in 1971, Wilder's song voiced the melancholia of witnessing the breakdown of capitalist manufacture, his death seems to mark the endpoint of manufacture's successive phase, finance capital. And if, in 1971, images gave the lie to the abstraction of the symbolic, grounding his utopia on a field of material exploitation, now and more than ever the imaginary comes to the fore as a necessary medium for political conceptualization: in this subsequent, terminal crisis, the crisis of our very present, the mode of production might, at last, be faltering once and for all, but what remains is to properly imagine the alternatives.

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5 Robert Brenner, *The Economics of Global Turbulence: The Advanced Capitalist Economies from Long Boom to Long Downturn, 1945 – 2005,*London: Verso, 2006. Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origin of Our Times,* Verso, London 2010.