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Creation and Innovation

So far, we have spent time detailing the work and the relation that constitutes critical practice, or Theory-Practice as we have referred to it throughout this book. In this chapter, we will consider two resources within the theoretical tradition that might help us think about the ways in which critical practice is productively creative: writing by Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Derrida. As the readings that follow demonstrate, mobilizing a term such as ‘creativity’ is not a simple or neutral act. It comes with considerable conceptual baggage from the history of its use across several languages.¹ In particular, the idea of ‘creation’ is inseparable from both a theological inheritance and an understanding of production that comes from the philosophical history of materialism. In its Modern sense, that is to say, it’s re-invention by Romanticism, creativity moved from being the work of gods to the God-given attribute of humans. This internalization of creativity was closely linked to the eighteenth-century trope of the imagination. The figurative shift in imagination from Hobbes’ ‘decayed sense’, as a poor substitute for the world, to Wordsworth’s ‘auxiliary light’, that bestows ‘new splendour’ on the world, can be traced through Coleridge’s invention of ‘fancy’ and Kant’s production of the faculties.² Romantic creativity, however, was an internal function of the mind, that while not creating the new, saw the world in a different way. Today, creativity refers mostly to making new things, and is an attribute of everyone from creative artists working on creative writing programmes to management consultants with teams of full-time ‘creatives’. The situation is summed up in economics by the phrase ‘the creative industries’, which implies originality on an industrial scale. The interiorization of creativity as a function spirit in Romanticism has been transformed into the dematerialized materiality of economic exchange in contemporary capitalism in which creativity has a value and comes at a premium. This is a complex inheritance and the now ubiquitous sense of creative economy that really describes a mode of production that is anything but creative, or even necessarily productive, needs to be rigorously

distinguished from the possibilities of critical practice discussed in this book. Accordingly, we will treat both the theological and material dimensions of this genealogy; the two are not separable.

Ex nihilo: In the beginning was Nancy

In Act I of *King Lear*, the ageing monarch invites his three daughters to proclaim their love for him and so obtain a third of the kingdom that is their inheritance. Goneril and Regan who have no affection for the king but know-how to flatter an old fool duly step forward and secure their share of the part of the deal. The youngest daughter, Cordelia, is appalled by her sisters' hypocrisy and refuses to join in the flattery. In response to Lear's solicitation, 'what can you say to draw/A third more opulent than your sisters?' she replies 'Nothing, my lord'. Expecting more from his favourite daughter, Lear is astonished, 'Nothing!' 'Nothing', confirms Cordelia.³ 'Nothing will come of nothing: speak again', demands the King. This remarkable scene is a study in the problem of creation and its description. The exchange between Lear and his daughter ups the ante in a race to invert value. Cordelia is expected to outdo her sisters but offers literally 'nothing', the terms of nullity is exchanged between parent and child, heightening the value and impact of nothing, reinforcing its meaning as an absolute rather than a relative bid against the sister's extravagant flattery of Lear.⁴ Cordelia refuses the economy of inflation, 'Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave/My heart into my mouth' (1.1.91–2). Words fail her, she has nothing to say, but her love for Lear is not absolute zero; on the contrary it far exceeds that of her sister's meaningless excess, 'I love your majesty/According to my bond; nor more nor less' (1.1.92–3). This is a contract without limit, which one cannot put a price on, there is no supplement, no additional payment to make. Outside of this bond there is nothing to add. Yet Lear takes this nothing as an annihilation, making that bond null and void. The King reminds Cordelia that this nothing risks riches, 'mend your speech a little, Lest it may mar your fortunes' (1.1.94–5). That is to say, this nothing risks the future, her fortune and destiny, inheritance and destination. And yet she insists on her nothing, 'But goes thy heart with this?' (1.1.105) because this nothing is the value of truth, 'So young, and so untender?' says, Lear, 'So young, my lord, and true' (1.1.107–8), replies his daughter. The nothing is only absolute because for Cordelia the truth is absolute and she will not trade with her sisters or strike a bargain with her Father. The truth is beyond measure for Cordelia but she sticks to her price tag of nothing. For Cordelia, the issue

is the truth and nothing but the truth. The furious Lear takes her nothing and divides it in two, granting her share of the spoils to her sisters, but nothing does not in fact come from nothing, Cordelia still has her future husband, 'thy truth, then, be thy dower', says Lear (1.1.109). His daughter may find it difficult to pay her bills with truth but she retains her value as a human as Lear disinherits her 'I disclaim all my paternal care' (1.1.114). It is in fact, Lear who is reducing himself to nothing, divesting himself of sovereignty, banishing his beloved daughter and the faithful Kent, to retain only the symbolic display of kingship, 'only we still retain/The name, and all the additions to a king' (1.1.138–9). As the play unfolds these additions are taken away from Lear, one by one, as he comes to realize the folly of this exorbitant economy, in which 'nothing' stands for absolute value and absolute power counts for nothing.

It is then, a complex matter to say, 'nothing comes from nothing', because as the story of Lear shows a great deal of significant consequence can come from nothing. In Shakespeare not only does something come from nothing but the entire business and traffic of the play comes from this nothing. There is literally much ado about nothing in this drama. Nothing is more important here than nothing, everything comes from nothing. For the pagan Lear, all his troubles start with the denial of a proposition of '*creatio ex nihilo*', creation out of nothing. 'Nothing will come of nothing' is a refusal of the theological possibility of the *ex nihilo*. In this sense, Lear is with Parmenides, *ex nihilo nihil fit* (out of nothing comes nothing) or more likely an adapted literary source.⁵ This nothing has a history. In *De Rerum Natura* ('On the Nature of Things', Lucretius tells us 'that nothing's brought/Forth by any supernatural power out of naught' cautioning against a divine explanation for laws of nature, 'nothing can be made from nothing [*Nil posse creari de nihilo*]'—once we see that's so/Already we are on the way to what we want to know'.⁶ *Ex nihilo* is contrasted in the tradition with *creatio ex materia* (creation out of existing matter), *creatio ex deo* (creation out of the being of God) and *creatio continua* (the ongoing divine creation).⁷ It runs from classical sources to the imaginary of theoretical physics, nothing could be more theologically inscribed than the *ex nihilo*, nothing could be more metaphysical than this nothing. Here is an absence, a nothing that initiates an entire history of presence, the something that comes from this nothing.

One of its most recent thinkers, Jean-Luc Nancy, takes it up in his 2007 text, *Le création du monde ou la mondialisation*, translated into English as *The Creation of the World or Globalization*.⁸ In the first part of that book, 'Urbi et Orbi', Nancy begins to set out a thinking of the becoming global of the world, as this runs through Marx as a formative stage in the development of capital. He also attends

to question of the world as it emerges as a problematic in modern philosophy since Kant in response to the experience of an industrialized humanity. For Nancy, every turn in that philosophical inheritance is theological, because the very question of the 'world' as such cannot be understood outside of a pre-existing metaphysical and theological frame of reference. However, the world for Nancy is not to be conflated with the question of the universe or with the problematic of a *habitus*. There is a tension then between the making of a world and the creation of a universe, and between the emergence of a world and the purpose of place or community. In this space, that is neither local nor universal, resides the problem of the world as a problem for philosophy and the discourses of reason that seek to suggest a rational principle for all things. Nancy quotes Angelus Silesius that 'the rose grows without reason', that is without purpose and independent of rationality.⁹ We need to be careful here of the translation of '*mondialisation*' as 'globalization', given the French word predates the English sense and carries within it idea of a peopling of the world as a process of the expansion of culture, humanity and nations.¹⁰ Accordingly, if the world (*le monde*, also the people) is like the rose of Silesius, growing without reason, then that is also a problem for philosophy and rational accounts of political economy. In fact, there would be a tension between the model of globalization that we recognize in a more or less contested way today, as the suppression of alternative world-formation and a *mondialisation* that grew without reason or independent of the reasons of globalized capital.¹¹

Our interest here lies less in the issue of globalization than in what it tells us about creation on Nancy's terms. Having sketched out the theological context of thinking the problem of the world. He notes:

If 'creation' means anything, it is the exact opposite of any form of production in the sense of a fabrication that supposes a given, a project, and a producer. The idea of creation, such as has been elaborated by the most diverse and at the same time most convergent thoughts, including the mystics of the three monotheisms but also the complex systems of all great metaphysics, is above all the idea of *ex nihilo* (and I do not exempt Marx from this, to the contrary: while his understanding of Christian creation is only instrumental, for him value is precisely created...). The world is created from nothing: this does not mean fabricated with nothing by a particularly ingenious producer. It means instead that it is not fabricated, produced by no producer, and not even coming out of nothing (like a miraculous apparition), but in a quite strict manner and more challenging for thought: the nothing itself, if one can speak in this way, or

rather *nothing* growing [*croissant*] as something (I say 'growing' for it is the sense of *cresco*—to be born, to grow—from which comes *creo*: to make something merge and cultivate a growth). In creation, a growth grows from nothing and this nothing takes care of itself, cultivates its growth. (p. 51)

Nancy then offers the arresting statement that 'the *ex nihilo* is the genuine formulation of a radical materialism, that is to say, precisely, without roots'.

This passage will bear some commentary. Nancy is offering us a thorough rethinking of creation and so creativity per se. Creation, and we might say creativity, is not the act of a producer or an outcome from a chain of production or a making ('fabrication' to use Nancy's chosen term here). This, to begin with is to challenge a certain materialist understanding of the world and so of the creative act.¹² Rather, creation is *ex nihilo*, something is created from nothing, this is the trope that runs through the Abrahamic tradition and lands in Marx in more or less explicit ways. There is no producer instead nothing grows as something, a cultivation of nothing as something. The use of '*croissant*' in the French perhaps suggests the lunar cycle, in which a full moon grows out of seemingly nothing. This is then nothing that becomes something, but also something that was always there as nothing growing as something. If it is the basis of a 'radical materialism' it is because it upsets the idea of the 'radical' itself, a radicalism without radicalism, or a radicalism without roots, or, origin. This is another materialism, perhaps a materialism of the Other: this radicalism without origin.

Nancy is then presenting something of a challenge to the other materialisms that dominate the present theoretical scene, this is not the muscular Maoism of a Badiou or a return to political economy.¹³ Rather, Nancy points out the moment of difficulty in the Marxist formulation of matter, 'by conceiving of itself as a reversal of the relation of production, Marx's revolution presupposed that this reversal was equivalent to a conversion of the meaning of production (and the restitution of created value to its creator). What we have begun to learn is that it is also a matter of creating the meaning or the value of the reversal itself. Only perhaps this creation will have the power of the reversal' (p. 54). It is not enough merely to reverse the relation of production from Creator to Created in order to upset that relation (and so restore value to the creator). Rather, one must question the value of the reversal itself. The reversal does nothing to dislodge the onto-theological gesture inherent in this understanding of creation, and so creativity. Only an understanding of creativity that started from the premise of questioning the meaning of any reversal can disrupt the onto-theology at the

heart of materialism. This is a creativity without origin or roots, without duty or obligation to a certain materialist tradition. We might say that this creativity as the growth of nothing as something is an inscription or grafting (although these are not Nancy's words) of nothing, *ex nihilo*, as something: matter *ex nihilo* matters.

In the second section, 'On Creativity', of this short book Nancy makes a diversion via Kant that illuminates this problem creating value in the questioning act of creation itself. Nancy says, apropos of the *Third Critique*, 'consequently, what indirectly appears as a new problematic of 'creation' is the question of a judgement about ends that would not be only a judgement extrapolated beyond the limits of the understanding, but also, or rather, the judgement of a reason to which is given in advance neither end(s) nor means, nor anything that constitutes whatever kind of 'causality known to us' (p. 66). The issue in understanding creation is not to be found in origins or ends in a chain of production, causality, or intention, but in judging (i.e. critiquing and questioning) the end of creation. By this we mean not only the something Created, grown as/from nothing, but also the end of a certain model of creation, as well as the purpose of creation, to what end does one create? Creation without ends is creativity without purpose or use, at least a purposeless purposiveness.¹⁴ This is art, or, the rose that grows without reason. Accordingly, such a judgement cannot ground itself in reason or end in reason. This judgement exceeds, or cannot be saturated by, rationality, both a madness and an act of faith in the value of the *ex nihilo*. Art exists without reason and cannot be exhausted by rationality. Why did you make this? No reason. Why do you like this? No reason. Nancy continues, 'the judgment about the "ends of all things" must be concerned with a condition of being that would not depend on causality or finality, nor consequently on mechanical consecration or subjective intention. By destituting the creating God and the *ens summum*—sufficient reason of the world—Kant also makes clear that the reason of the world pertains to a productive causality. He opens implicitly and outside of theology a new question of "creation" (p. 66). This is true up to a point, Kant has given us an opening into creativity as a question that is distinct in orientation from the Abrahamic algorithm that underscores the onto-theology of Marx, for example, but the question of creation can never be disassociated from the metaphysics of religion. There is no escaping the orbit of theology on this question, especially when judgement without rational telos or finitude leaves us in the realm of faith. Faith and reason are not strangers in judgement.'¹⁵

Whenever we begin with the question of creation we are in the midst of a certain vocabulary of the religious and part of the history of a theology that we

cannot escape.¹⁶ To say that Kant opens up an understanding or creation outside of religion or to imagine that Nancy's discourse on globalization is anterior to the onto-theology he takes aim at would be to offer a foreclosure that repeats the structure it seeks to outflank. Nancy is, of course, not a creationist. He is not tied to creation as an anchor but instead he works around creation in order to allow another thinking of the material, or, to allow the other to be thought once more in the material. However, it is a useful gesture on Nancy's part to begin the thinking of creation and so creativity without a producer, that is without agency, intention, or appropriation. This is a creativity in which nothing grows as something. Nancy goes on to comment:

What we have said thus far forces us to posit that the principle, not of all phenomena but of the *totality* of phenomena and of phenomenality itself, or the ontological principle of the phenomenality of the thing in itself, precisely cannot be a principle of production; it must be that which appears indirectly as a 'creation', that is to say, a provenance without production. It is neither procession nor providence, nor project, a provenance without a *pro-*, prototype, or promoter—or else a *pro-* that is *nihil* in the very property of *pro-*venance. (p. 66)

A provenance comes with a history; that is the point of such a guarantee of authenticity. Here we have a history and provenance that is literally nothing, a provenance without origin, or a provenance that has its origin in nothing [*pro-venir*, to come from nothing, if you will]. The 'pro-' here also suggesting an advance or projecting forward, a futurity (from *pro-venir* to *a-venir*, a pro-mise not of the past or heritage but of future worth) and also indicating substitution (pro-noun). But this is 'a *pro-* that is *nihil*', a future that comes from nothing or a nothing that grows as a future, a future guarantee ('*pro-*venance') that comes from nothing, a guarantee without guarantee. We have then not only 'provenance without production' as Nancy puts it but a 'pro-duction' that is not a production, something that comes from nothing, or a nothing that grows as something like the prologue to a production of *King Lear*. The stakes here are large, including the 'the *totality* of phenomena and of phenomenality itself', something comes from this nothing, the future is a nothing that grows as something. In fact, everything comes from this nothing. Creation in Nancy is only the beginning, as a starting point for thinking a radical new materialism and phenomenality itself.

However, as we know in the beginning there was not nothing but the word [*logos*] and the word here is 'creation', this most metaphysical and theological of terms that names the beginning. It gives us to think another nothing, not

creation out of an absolute vacuum, like a God, but another proposition concerning creativity, which as a phenomenon is not production with origins, ends, and use-value, but a growth as nothing, but a nothing that is something of import and consequence, like Cordelia's claim. There is a whole culture invested in the idea of art as a model of production, with its authors, makers and theorists. But what if the presentation of production where only ever a care for the growth of nothing, art without essence or wellspring or utility? Creativity in this sense would be the process *in media res* of the undoing of process itself. Such an understanding of creation would make it an important moment in the deconstruction of production, insofar as such a deconstruction proceeds from production itself, and is perhaps its most active resource. Any act of creation would be the simultaneous launching and interruption of production that recuperated itself in the presentation of production while equally causing that model of production to wear away as the condition of its presentation. There will be no escape from this onto-theology just as it will be opened and endlessly ruined by creativity. We might say here, that on these terms, creativity is deconstruction. That is not to say, that creativity is an operation that is applied to production but rather the resources within production that escapes the ends of production by demonstrating the divisibility within production, in which its ruin is most active resource. It is for this reason that we encounter in creativity that moment of blindness or unknowing that is the interruption of the self-same by the Other as an event of art. We cannot absolutize this Other, there is nothing mystic about art, this break or intrusion by the Other is part of an economy of recuperation and re-launch but one that cannot secure its origin or satisfy its ends.¹⁷

This is not a melancholy of making or a negative gesture of withdrawal, rather it is to describe the active and affirmative growth of creativity and creativity as a growth and care for the Other. The Other resides in creativity, opening it endlessly to its own contradictions as its very resource, just as that creation places the Other in an economic relation to the self-same that inscribes both in the work of art as the source and reserve of art itself. Art is then a materiality that has its roots in nothing, a nothing that grows as something, a *creatio ex nihilo* that provides the material for another materiality. A novel, a poem, a painting, a film is not like a kettle, a car, or a house. Their meaning does not depend solely upon matter or even reference to a material world that exists per se. Their meaning as art in fact depends upon the suspension of reference between the reality they present and a material world. No one actually mistakes *Ulysses* for a map of Dublin. A kettle, a car, or a house can be a work of art but its meaning and existence as art is not derived exclusively from their materiality.

The materiality of art is the nothing of creativity, this moment of suspension, blindness, or unknowing, and the interruption and deferral of utility.

However, and equally, one should be careful not to imagine that art in this sense is an aberration, a unique form of signification that stands apart from the material world. If it were it could be dismissed accordingly. Rather, art opens up the material world in productive ways, ones that we seldom see in advance or have barely begun to think about. Art is not the supplement to experience in the world but the very way in which experience the world itself. Creativity is then not a special gift or an operation to be enacted in the world but is the means by which the world both presents itself and undoes itself in its presentation. If we stay close to Jean-Luc Nancy for a moment, we might note his comments in the appendix to *La création*, entitled '*Ex nihilo summum* (Of Sovereignty)', in which he says, 'the *ex-nihilo* contains nothing more, but nothing less, than the *ex*—of existence that is neither produced nor constructed but only existing [*étante*] (or, if one prefers, *étée*, 'made' from the making constituted by the transitivity of being). And this *ex nihilo* fractures the deepest core of nihilism from within' (p. 71). This nothing is not a nihilism but the resource of existence. Existence exists without reason, without origin, or without ends. It is the relation of all things to one another that constitutes that existence, but relation is not production, relation on the contrary is not a thing, it is a question of difference. Meaning, and so existing, lies in the relation, as a nothing that grows as a something, not in the construction or production of objects. It is not an idealism to say that the meaning of a novel and its existence as art does not depend solely upon or even as its construction as ink on bound paper. Its meaning both as art and as an opening of experience is elsewhere. Insofar as, creativity is the resource for the concession of art, it is the means for the active inauguration of experience of the world. It is the condition of being human.

Let there be no misunderstanding here. This is not an argument that dismisses the material in the name of an idealization of an absolute other. Rather, it is one that puts in play another possibility of the material as an experience that grows from the nothing of difference, and finds its most active consideration and translation in the work of creativity that delivers us art in all its complexity. It is in this route to experience that comes from the care for and growth of this significant nothing that we become human and so at the same time separate ourselves from the material not as an escape from it but as a denaturation of it. While the *ex nihilo* defers our ends, existing without reason, the human reinstates them, as a gesture of finitude within a denatured world. In this way, the infinite possibility

of creation is recuperated into the self-same of being human within the world. This is the effect and consequence of creativity, both its outcome and its ruin, which impels it to continue beyond itself in a growth that is not necessarily an enlargement or development. Nancy suggests, 'with this becoming human, this movement appears to itself as its own principle and its own end. That is to say, properly without principle and without end since it proceeds from an initial detachment, which one can name 'human condition' and whose permanence involves an extreme instability and mutability of what has thus been detached (contingency forms the necessity of this 'history'). And which is what we can call, feigning to believe that there would have been first a pure and stable 'nature', denaturation. And one could then say that 'humanity' is the indexical name of the indefinite and infinite term of the human denaturation' (pp. 86–7). This denaturation and detachment finds its form in art through creative practice, here *techné* and *praxis* provide the means for an extrication from the world that is also the most profound engagement with the world. It is a separation that does not provide security or certainty of understanding but rather inscribes the instability and mutability of the aporias of art as an effect of difference into the condition of humanity and its history. This is not a pure denaturation but one that leaves us inextricably linked to the material in our extrication as humans while presenting that relation as a relation in the mode of creativity as an experience of the world. Creativity then is not merely the reserve of the artist but the resource of everyday living that finds its humanity in contingency.

The invention of the other

We have just noted the ways in which Jean-Luc Nancy's thinking of globalization might provide us with a set of resources to think about the problem of creation and creativity. Throughout this account of Nancy, I have stressed the role played by the Other, the not-me, in the act of creation to suggest that creativity is always otherwise to itself, disruptive and unpredictable. However, while this is in keeping with the wider terrain of Nancy's thinking, we will not find a reference to the Other in Nancy's book on creation, this will have been an invention of my own. Nancy's reluctance to use that term is notable in this book even if the schema of creation he describes is decidedly one based upon the effects of difference in the world. This may be a consequence of recent theoretical trends in which alterity is very much out of fashion in preference to a return to an certain unquestioned

materiality, which views the material as a value in itself, conferring value on the man-made to ward off the seemingly ethereal power of difference.¹⁸ In what we might take as his own account of creativity, '*Psyché: Inventions de l'autre*', Jacques Derrida is not so inhibited about invoking the name of the Other.¹⁹ '*Psyché*' is just one of the moments in Derrida's writing where he treats the question of creation, or, we might say gets creative within creativity. One might think equally well of the reading of *khora* in Plato as it plays out both in Derrida's essay on Hegel of the same name, we addressed in the introduction to this book, and in his mobilization of the term in his collaboration with Bernard Tschumi on an architectural design for the Parc de la Villette in Paris.²⁰ There is an obvious connection between *khora* as a metaphor of midwifery in Plato and with the *ex nihilo* as a concept of growth and care in making of the world. Both rely upon a feminization of the tropes of philosophy, turning the question of creativity to the matrixial in preference to a model of creator as pro-genitor, producer, or seminal influence. We might note the importance of such metaphors as the way in which our experience of the material is determined by the production of meaning in our everyday lives.

Throughout the pages of this book we have been at pains to identify the moment of doubt, uncertainty and unpredictability that is integral to the creative experience. In so doing, we have not been satisfied to surrender to mysticism or accept a regressive vocabulary of genius as if creativity were some kind of magical practice. Equally, it is not enough to attempt to assemble a meta-language for creativity, which would continue to separate a critical or theoretical discourse from acts of making, production or invention. The whole point of this study is to examine the moments when the borders of theory and practice are erased and fall away in the interesting spaces of creativity in which art and philosophy combine across the demarcations of genres. Rather than establishing another technical terminology for creativity, we are interested in the ways in which metaphor might result in metamorphosis, figures lead to new figurations, and tropes result in new material inscriptions that open themselves up to their own disfiguration in which the condition of their own possibility is their ruin. We are seeking to recover at the edges of idiom and genre, another understanding of praxis that eludes the Western tradition's misreading of Aristotle, in which *episteme* and *techne* would be separated as distinct realms.²¹ This is not necessarily a clear or secure place to be, but it is the complex space experienced by makers as theory-practitioners. The struggle to know in the midst of unknowing is the challenge of such a praxis.

Derrida himself is no stranger to the question of another writing beyond the genres of philosophy and literature. We will find this desire to invent a constant theme in Derrida since the 1968 essay on ‘The Ends of Man.’²² However, the text on ‘*Psyché*’ from 1984 provides us with a considered concentration on the issue of what it might mean to create new work in art and philosophy. It begins with a distinction between invention and improvisation. In the case of the latter, there might be nothing new at all, nothing might be more rehearsed than improvisation as anyone who has ever answered a question at a public event might attest. In response to the challenge of inquiry in public, one might fall back upon what one knows already, has said before or rehearsed on another occasion. If you do that sort of thing often enough, there really is no question you have not heard before, and no answer you have not given before. The skill of improvisation lies in making a rehearsed answer seem spontaneous. Invention, on the other hand—let’s say an invention worthy of the name—does different work. It begins by assuming a disruption with the past, a breaking with previous modes and conventions. ‘An invention,’ says Derrida, ‘always presupposes some illegality, the breaking of an implicit contract; it inserts disorder into the peaceful order of things, it disregards the proprieties’ (p. 1). Invention is disruptive. Accordingly, it must spell the end of the old order and herald in another future even if the invention itself cannot survive its own disruption. However, insofar as invention emerges from the old order ‘it has to exploit a largely common stock of rule-governed resources and possibilities in order to sign, as it were, an inventive proposition’ (p. 4). This is a question then of inheritance, tradition, and history, of who inherits in a legitimate way and who thinks beyond inheritance but with the resources of that tradition. Invention is a question of the illegitimate or the bastard. This is the double bind of invention, it is both natural and unnatural. Invention presupposes originality, engendering, and is associated with genius, thus with genealogy and the natural. While, equally, invention requires a patent, a claim on legitimacy, rights, and a contract. This emphasis on the law and legitimation leads Derrida to suggest, ‘there is no natural invention’ (p. 5). Invention then opens itself to the other; it requires the countersignature of the other.

Invention is an event, that is to say, on Derrida’s terms, it is singular and unrepeatable, unpredictable and arising from nowhere or nothing, but it brings about something new. An invention does not take place without an inaugural event but something comes as a result of that event. Accordingly, the *ex nihilo* of the event inaugurates the future of a possibility, that is to say, one in which

the invention is recognized and legitimated through acceptance, convention, and inscription into a common history. Invention then belongs or returns to the culture and heritage from which it first emerged as an illegitimate offspring. Disruption becomes the new normal, as invention is marked from the beginning by its openness to repetition, exploitation, and recuperation, when Napster becomes Spotify, or the avant-garde appears on the university curriculum. It is the event that ties invention to the other. On the one hand, every invention imagines that something comes for a first time, arrives, *avenir*. But equally, for an invention to be unique this first time must also be its last time, after that although it is repeatable, it is no longer an invention. It is recuperated back into the economy of the self-same. This is where the *ex nihilo* of Nancy and the event of Derrida differ. The latter recognizes difference as an effect of a wider play of difference in which the Other initiates but is retrieved by the same resources that enabled its release, the former runs the risk of absolutizing the other as a resource of infinite disruption. In this sense the other would not just be disruptive but it would be wholly destructive and ruinous without limit or possibility of return. Invention, in Derrida's sense, however, would be another term in that chain of non-equivalent substitutes for *différance* that performed according to a logic of the quasi-transcendental, in which the condition of the possibility of invention is the limit of its own impossibility.²³

Whenever we talk of invention or the event in Derridean terms, I am reminded of a twelve-line poem by Seamus Heaney, 'Lightenings viii', from the late collection *Seeing Things*.²⁴ It is part of a longer meditative cycle, 'Lightenings', but stands on its own as an example of the event as a commentary on the event. It is based upon a fabulous incident reported in the annals of the Irish monastery of Clonmacnoise, fabulous both in the sense of the miraculous and of a fable or story to be recorded and retold. It begins:

The annals say: when the monks of Clonmacnoise
Were all at prayer inside the oratory
A ship appeared above them in the air.

The poem opens by referring to its own status as a report, 'the annals say', legitimizing itself through history while contributing to that tradition just as it fakes and departs from that inheritance. The colon after 'the annals say', introduces the rest of the poem as if it were a report or summary of the annals rather than an invention of the poet, who places himself in a tradition of Irish writing, while sitting outside that genealogy as if he were a witness to a report. The *as if*, is crucial to understanding this poem and the idea of the inaugural

or invention, which happens *as if* for the first time. It is as if the poet were a scholar or an annalist, as if poetry carried the same legitimacy as history, as if the two idioms could be separated. The poem relies on the performance of the *as if*, to predicate the truth of invention and the invention of truth. While history and historiography might be inseparable from the figurative dimension of language, being every bit as fabulous as the tales of *Tir Na Nog*, this poem, and a contemporary or modern poem at that, separated from this history by centuries, presents itself both as a report from the annals and a fiction that draws its difference from the annals upon a differentiation that itself might not have grounds for legitimation. The confusion is important and necessary as tradition inaugurates its own disfiguration. Invention here draws upon the resources of the very inheritance it both disrupts and re-inscribes.

The monks are at prayer, a state of both contemplation and of beseeching with respect to the future, *je vous en prie*, as the French phrase might render it. One of the aspects of prayer is precisely this request for an alternative future. While the monks are all at prayer, individually or together, they are minding their own business and in a line of direct communication with God. They might have been addressing the future but they were not expecting the one that comes, as the ship appears above their heads in the oratory. It is as if, while speaking to God and keeping themselves to themselves (they have come to Clonmacnoise to address the almighty but also to be away from everyone else) they catch sight in their peripheral vision of an alternative fabulous. This is the sailing ship that moves above them, occupying a space where their prayers were directed, as if it were a result of their bequest and an intervention or intercession that interrupts the line the communication to God. This is a fabulous craft, one that floats not on the sea but in the air, moving not with wind in its sails but through the clouds and across the sky. It has somehow 'appeared' above them, materializing while passing through the solid walls of the oratory, out of a clear blue sky, as it were:

The anchor dragged along behind so deep
It hooked itself into the altar rails
And then, as the big hull rocked to a standstill,

The monks may direct their thoughts to heaven but at least they had the security of imagining themselves to be on *terra firma*; however, this event disrupts physical and metaphysical planes, as the monks find themselves at the bottom of the ocean relative to the crew of the ship. They are no longer in their oratory, speaking directly to God, but deep below another plane of existence, 'the anchor dragged along so deep' that it hooks the altar rails, their telephone mast to God

is lower than anchor of this ship. The altar rails, like debris on the sea floor, impede the journey of this vessel that seems to have wandered into shallows. The monks who were deep in prayer now find themselves deep in trouble, as their contemplation is shown to be inadequate to the marvels of the universe, their depth is just another's shallows, their transcendence is just another's impediment.

Here tradition is interrupted by invention, the monastic life at prayer is disrupted by the appearance of the fabulous air ship, but equally invention is bound and hooked by the altar rails of the oratory, tied and snarled in the old order of convention and routine. Something must be done to break the impasse:

A crewman shinned and grappled down the rope
And struggled to release it. But in vain.

The ship has come to a standstill, the forces that drive the ship and cause the big hull to rock as it strains against the brake of the altar rails, create a tension that cannot easily be broken. The struggle is in vain. Like the flying fish in Valerio Adami's *Portrait après Glas*, which illustrates the principle of the quasi-transcendental in Derrida's book, neither in nor out of the water, ambient in both and mastered by neither, the crewman descends from the ship to encounter the other world that is the real world of Clonmacnoise. His struggle with the rope may equally be a panic at his moment of encounter, this chance meeting with the other. How odd monks at prayer must seem to an ethereal sailor. Yet he cannot escape, there is an inertia that ties one reality to the other:

‘This man can't bear our life here and will drown’,
The abbot said, ‘unless we help him’.

The abbot displays remarkable presence of mind to recognize a struggle as a panic, seeing in the face of the other his own bewilderment reflected back. The traditional must help the new to arrive, the monks must set the sailors free; one plane of existence must facilitate the other.

However, this is not straightforward altruism on the abbot's part. He does not want the sailor to drown on his altar, to die in front of the monks, disrupting further and forever traumatizing their oratory and way of life. The abbot might see immediately that there is more in heaven and earth than he has dreamed of in his theology, but equally he knows straight away that these two worlds cannot coincide. The man will drown here and that would be a terrible responsibility to bear but equally the ship must be set free and allowed to sail on its way. Only then can the monks return to normal and the abbot have any hope of controlling his flock, returning the monks to their routine of contemplation, reasserting

the status quo. This disruption will become a permanent parabasis 'unless we help him,' and so the resources for invention and the fabulous must come from the routine and the traditional in order to project that invention forward and equally to protect the old order from endless interruption and ruin. It is a decision that the abbot makes in an instant, perhaps without evidence that sailor cannot breathe the air of Clonmacnoise or bear the life of the monks, but he acts nevertheless, making a decision on the basis of faith. It is a faith that is bifurcated, informed at once by a desire to help the drowning man but also a belief in the value of the old order that must be protected from the risk of the fabulous:

... So

They did, the freed ship sailed, and the man climbed back
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.

The monks act to help the sailor, saving the other from the threat of their own selves.

For the sailor of the airship the monastic life of Clonmacnoise constitutes an encounter with the marvellous, as much an event in the life of the boatmen as it is in the history of the monastery. While the annals will record this moment as a fabulous occasion, equally the sailor will remember this unique moment that appears for the first time but also for the last time. It is the uniqueness of the encounter that makes it marvellous, the sailor's experience of the event ('as he had known it') constitutes the phenomenality of the thing that arrives out of a clear blue sky. The relative perspectives of the monks and the sailors define the relation that makes the event; that is to say, the event as an event is determined by the relation, the nothing, rather than the material circumstance. On another occasion monks freeing the anchor of an airship from their altar rails might be a quotidian occurrence. The monks might find themselves in the flight path, a repeatable or iterable incident, a matter of the ordinary or the established order. This encounter is made marvellous by its unique nature, for the first and last time, for both monks and sailors. At the same time, the poet is re-inventing a fable from the annals, re-recording the records, borrowing a story and presenting it in a lyric form that is entirely predictable both from the longer 'Lightenings' sequence and the extended corpus of Heaney. Indeed, so familiar is the lyric voice here that we might say that it arises automatically from the established poetic technique, working blind with a re-inscription of the material of the Clonmacnoise narrative. By exploiting the resource of the Irish literary tradition, Heaney is securing the authority and prominence of that tradition.

The poem then, while presenting an event as an incident of the fabulous, as an allegory of invention, works on every level to establish that the event relies as much on recuperation as it does on disruption. The old order not only helps the other to arrive but in so doing is taking steps to protect the legitimacy of that order, threatened by the very thing that arrives.

Where is the original invention here? Is it in Heaney's Nobel Prize winning lyric? Nothing could be more tied to the established order of literature and institutions than this.²⁵ Is it in the annal, which only records what others have witnessed? The annals of Clonmacnoise now only exist in the form of a seventeenth-century copy, another iteration of the event. Is it in the history of Clonmacnoise as a reputed and self-reported site of miracles, self-nomination being a notoriously unreliable mode of designation? Or is it in the incidence of ships sailing through the air, repeated and re-inscribed through Irish literature since Bishop Patrick of Dublin recorded or invented at the end of the eleventh century the *mirabilia* of medieval Ireland, including '*de naui que uisa est in aere*' ('Of a ship seen in the air'):

A king of the Irish once attended an assembly
With quite a crowd, a thousand in beautiful order.
They see a sudden ship sail the sky,
And someone who casts a spear after fish:
It struck the ground, and swimming he retrieved it.
Who can hear of this without praising the Lord above?²⁶

This might be the source that Heaney loosely and with poetic invention refers to as 'the annals', although incidents of flying ships appear in the *Annals of Ulster*, *Tigernach*, and the *Four Masters* as well as the seventeenth-century copy of the annals of *Clonmacnoise*.²⁷ Such literary archaeology can be left to the cultural historians, the origin of the story is not the issue here. Rather, this recording or inventing of the story of King Congalach and another sailor of the sky, who swims through the air to recover their spear, suggests that the event of the fabulous is iterable. This is not to belittle Heaney's poetic achievement or the 'originality' of his verse, rather it is to suggest the complicated relation between invention and tradition, divergence, and re-inscription. Both the English-language poem of Heaney and the Latin verse of Bishop Patrick are fabulous inventions; that is to say, inventions of storytelling and so inventions of language. At the root of fable/fabulous, as Derrida reminds us, is *fari* or *phanai*: to speak 'as inventions of the same and the other, of oneself as (of) the other' (pp. 8–9). The economy between invention and tradition, creativity, and history, might then be a co-creation

between the same and the other, between the me and the not-me. Invention is co-invention with oneself as (of) the other. The marvellous in creativity comes not from sailors swimming in the air to spear fish, but in the struggle, in vain, in the inner space of co-invention between self and/as other.

However, this is again not to propose creativity as a form of mysticism or magic. While we invent stories we also invent machines, and the question of creativity cannot be separated from the problem of *techné*, which as we saw in our previous account of Aristotle, might be translated as craft in the sense of Heaney's lyric art, but which we cannot separate here from *poesis* or *epistémē*. There can be no easy separation between the *Fabula* or *factio* on one side of the fence, and *techné*, *epistémē*, *istoria*, and *methodos* on the other, that is between the fabulous and know-how, knowledge, research, method, and procedure. *Techné* can also be translated as art, which must necessarily incorporate all of these idioms, particularly on those occasions where Theory and Practice explicitly or more openly meet in self-declarations of critical practice. On the one hand, we might begin to suspect that theory-practice is an example of the performative demonstration of the very thing it asserts, and as such contains a tautological element essential to its condition. On the other hand, in theory-practice there is no choice to be made between *techné* and *epistémē*, or between the fabulous and the methodological, not because there is no choice to make but because the issue is undecidable. That is 'undecidable' in a strict sense, not as a matter of indecision or delay in seeking sufficient evidence, but rather it is a question of a structural 'infinite and thus untenable acceleration' of undecidability as an impossibility, as Derrida says of de Man (p. 12).²⁸ This impossibility is the condition of possibility of theory-practice, and we might say of all art more generally. In theory-practice, there can be no easy distinction between the conceptual and its articulation, between meta-language and language. Language must already be conceptual, and the conceptual must be from the start figurative, denomination is figurative language. Accordingly, the crisis for theory-practice, that is its enduring definition, is its own performative contradiction, in that it posits a schema of distinction that its work then sets out to undermine. The end of theory-practice is to undermine any dichotomization between the two realms from which it derives its resources. The untenable acceleration of any distinction between theory and practice is the very purpose of theory-practice, while at the same time taking the metaphysical division as axiomatic for any point of departure. The end of theory-practice must be to annul the need for theory-practice. In such a place, where impossibility makes the possible, we have the conditions for the most decisive and productive understanding of the wider economy between

the fabulous and the technical that determines invention, and perhaps art itself, if art were not already part of that traffic.

However, it should also be stressed that the recuperation of invention by the established order is not straightforwardly a victory for tradition or a conservation of the old. Rather, following the accommodation of invention as a repeatable act capable of legitimation or of reinforcing the order from which it emerged, that very order cannot ever be the same again. As the price of conserving itself the order has opened itself to its own ruin. It has become something other than itself and the incorporation of this other within provides the resources for the undoing of the order in its entirety. The something that arrives changes the space that opens itself to it. In the question of theory-practice it is not merely a question of recuperating a new idiom of making within the protocols of institutional literary study or academic art appreciation, the work of theory-practice in this home is to open all the windows and doors to let new light in. This is because theory-practice must place this question of unreadability at the centre of an academy that neither reads nor practices. To say that the academy does not read, is not to say that the academy is not full of busy people in libraries, making copious notes, productive of 'new readings'. Rather, it is to say that the academy does not entertain, indeed it goes out of its way to exclude or expel, the question of reading itself as an impossible act.

Once the principle of unreadability has been established a certain order of the academic is ruined forever. To say that the academy does not practice, is not to say that the academy does not open itself up to art, music, film, writing practitioners. It does, and institutional histories tell us that it always has done. Rather, it is to say that in accommodating practice, domesticating it within academic norms, the academy actively discourages the moment of practice which makes it practice and which escapes academic meta-language, namely the moment of blindness and unknowing that is another experience of unreadability. Nothing could be more at odds with academic protocol than to recognize such a moment and to value it within institutional cultures and hierarchies. Nothing could be more problematic for a machine of reason to entertain something unreasonable, something that reason can approach but cannot account for, something if not irrational then at least non-rational, something other to the discourse of reason that would seek to describe it. Hence, in theory-practice worthy of the name, it is not merely a question of the oscillation between the constative and the performative in order to produce instability in the order of things. Rather, as Derrida says of invention, 'this instability constitutes that very event... whose

invention normally disturbs, as it were, the norms, the statutes, and the rules. It calls for a new theory and for the constitution of new statutes and conventions that, capable of recording the possibility of such events, would be able to account for them' (p. 13). The event of invention leaves the established order needing to explain what has just happened to it. In this way, the protocols and dynamics of established discourses must change, 'it calls for a new theory', and a new way of recording and accounting for that which has arrived. Everything has changed even as the established order must work over time to convince itself that everything remains the same. Unreadability and undecidability are not a question of choice, technique, or method, rather they are a structuring principle of irreducible impossibility central to any creative practice worthy of the name.

Theory-Practice, critical practice, art practice, or, creative practice is in no way belittled by accepting that it is impossible. For any kind of art *possibility* itself is the greater risk, the danger of becoming an approach, a method, or set of rule-governed procedures. This would be the very death of art, including the pedagogy of art, which cannot be reduced to the transmission of technique, laws, or even theory. The pedagogical space of the studio, and perhaps the pedagogical space in general, would be another venue for the arrival of the other as an event (although this would require another book-length study to demonstrate). Rather, the importance of theory-practice lies in its self-declared encounter with the problem of the impossible.²⁹ To know the impossible would be the only thing worth knowing, and yet experiencing the impossible is the very moment of theory-practice, just as theory-practice would seek to collapse any distinction between experience and knowing. It is this set of ambitions that makes theory-practice impossible, opened in perpetuity by the impulsion to experience something other than itself, constituted as it is by its own nominative aporia. To say that theory-practice is an experience of the impossible is to say that it is an experience of the other, 'the experience of the other as the invention of the impossible, in other words, as the only possible invention' as Derrida puts it in '*Psyché*'.

Psyché is the French term for a distinctive double mirror on a revolving stand. In such a mirror, beauty can be laid bare and the soul reflected back to the sitter. Lacan makes play on the term in his essay on 'the mirror stage'.³⁰ Similarly, Derrida works with the multiple meanings of '*psyché*' and with its relation to the mythical story or fable of Psyche and Eros in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* in which Psyche loses her fiancé Eros for wanting to see him even though it is forbidden.³¹ Derrida's essay is also a salute to Paul de Man, his own mirror image, the other

that installs itself in the history of deconstruction. The reference to '*psyché*' is central to both de Man and Derrida, and to our concerns here. It is a question of the two selves that confront one another in the moment of theory-practice, the me and the not-me, and the distance between them, the impossibility of seeing oneself and touching oneself at the same time. Derrida quotes de Man's reading of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* in late text 'The Concept of Irony': 'this novel tells the story of two lovers who, like Eros and Psyche, are never allowed to come into full contact with each other... When they can touch, it has to be in a darkness imposed by a totally arbitrary and irrational decision, an act of the gods.'³² Clélia has promised the Virgin Mary never to see Fabrice again, so they only meet in the night, under the cover of dark. 'The myth', says de Man, 'is that of the unovercomable distance which must always prevail between the selves, and it thematizes the ironic distance that Stendhal the writer always believed prevailed between his pseudonymous and nominal identities' (p. 19). The lovers in Stendhal's novel manage to have a child, so one wonders how 'unovercomable' a distance this really might have been.

However, the point for de Man is that the distance between the self and the other, that is between the self and the other, of oneself as (of) the other, is a 'permanent parabasis.' That is to say, it is an irresolvable and irreducible interruption. The parabasis is that moment in Greek tragedy when all the actors leave the stage and the chorus addresses the audience. It is a moment of self-reflexivity and alienation. To speak of a permanent parabasis is to suggest a constitutional suspension of referential terms in which the other and the self-look at one another, even address one another, but are constantly alienated from each other in a touching that does not touch and a seeing that does not see. When in the context of theory-practice we are referring both to the other that theory is to practice and to the oneself as the other who creates, there is then a double rupture that runs through this phenomenon. Both theory and practice reflecting each other in a mirror without touching, and a practice that is theory-practice that interrupts itself in an encounter with itself as (of) its own other. And yet, making still takes place, the lovers pro-create in the dark, this 'pro' carrying the sense as outlined for us by Nancy, of a provenance without history. This is then a 'pro-creation', of bastard children, as in Stendhal, in the dark, fumbling blindly, according to memory and technique, to give life to a creation without certainty or security.

The future then depends upon precisely these circumstances of unknowing and of the impossible. The future arrives but is never experienced as such; it

always lies ahead of us in an unknowable and unpredictable fashion.³³ Similarly, the possibility of theory-practice relies upon a certain futurity, of the possibility of a future other than the circumstances of the present. Indeed, it is a necessary impulse of invention that it seeks to create another future. The resources it has to give birth to that future are the circumstances of the now, or, the resources of the tradition from which invention emerges. Accordingly, we need to recognize that any invention is hybrid; that is to say, following Bhabha's own inventive mobilization of Derrida, newness enters the world through hybridity, the merger and cross-pollination of the existing.³⁴ In this sense, invention can only ever be a hybridization through procedure, model, or variation. That is a technical manipulation of what already exists. Here we might suggest then that there is something machine-like about invention. We have previously suggested that the condition of unknowing that sits at the core of our investigation is what defines us as human. These aporia and their frustrations are the human condition. However, we must recognize that this experience is importantly machinic and instrumental. If invention is the hybridization of the existing, then the moment of invention does not necessarily require a spark of creative, human genius. It could just as easily come about as a consequence of the random collision of ideas under the appropriate circumstances. A room full of monkeys with type-writers will eventually produce the manuscript of *Hamlet*. The invention of stories and the invention of machines require the same resources and come about in the same way.

The invention of machines and the machine of invention are not easily separated. On these terms, there would be an important and necessary link between invention and death. This would be to take the question of creation further than Nancy who proposes a creation without producer. To have a form of automated invention would be to think of a creativity that was mechanical and random, throwing out invention as a computer generates numbers, algorithmically, in a generation without generation. This would be a creativity that was entirely technical, a *techne* of pure technicity. Such an element clearly resides within the description of invention that we have offered here. It would be a version of invention that re-invented invention itself, or at least, reminded us of the role of the death drive within creation.³⁵ There is much to say about the balance between inspiration and perspiration in creativity and the need to turn up at work every day, in order to produce that masterpiece. Writing, for example, is habitual and has little to do with any Romantic notions of genius or unique talent. The 'practice' in creative practice is probably the more salient of the two

terms. On these terms, writing or making would be a repetition compulsion that pointed the way to dusty death, with each page an attempt to delay its onset and a welcome of its warm embrace. If art defines the human condition then it is only on the condition that there is something inhuman installed within it. Invention requires a certain relation to automation, technique, process and method. In this sense, creativity is not just about an encounter with the myself as other to myself, but with the wholly other of the machine.³⁶ We might say that creation is less a question of intelligent design and more a matter of artificial intelligence.

Recognizing the wholly other within creativity is an important step in moving us beyond the Romantic heritage that informs much of our understanding of creative acts. In practice, if we can use that phrase with all its possible resonances for us, the modes of invention as fabulation and invention as hybridity are inseparable. The point of Derrida's essay, which we could profitably dwell on at greater length, is that invention should not limit itself to what is 'inventible'. That would be to invent what is already possible, predictable, producible, masterable and so on. To make another Super Hero film in an existing franchise or write another Emergency Room based drama is not invention worthy of the name. Invention must do the impossible and invent the uninventible, and in so doing transform the idea and discourse of invention itself. Invention then cannot be tied to what is possible, the uninventive, if you will, of the 'I can'. For Derrida in this essay, the other is not inventible in this sense, it cannot be subject to a masterable possibility under the rule of the I as something that can be invented. Rather, this other impossible invention is of the other, the other is invention. That moment of encounter or arrival of what comes, unpredictable and without conditions, is invention and irreducibly of the other.

In his account of invention Derrida cites examples from art and music but also techno-science and medicine, invention is a multidisciplinary activity for Derrida. For this reason, among others, Derrida prefers the formulation that invention 'finds something for the first time' (p. 23). There is something of the accidental, automatic, and unprecedented that is encapsulated in this idea of the event as an original finding. Accordingly, whether one considers invention as the object that is found or the act of discovering, 'invention does not create an existence or a world as a set of existents, it does not have the theological meaning of a veritable creation of existence *ex nihilo*' (p. 24). Rather, this version of invention discovers what was already there but was not found or produced as *techné* as a configuration of existing or available elements. Here, we might say that something only comes of something, as one of the threads of

the heterogeneous modes of invention. We might also note that this sense of the inaugural event in which invention occurs does not create an existence, either invention finds for the first time something that already exists, or, invention of the uniquely fabulous for the first time is also for the last time. Invention, in this sense, would be the reserve of the human, while creation was the act of God. We might also say that Nancy's use of the *ex nihilo* is an attempt, hampered as it is by its own theological flavour, to shift the register of creation away from a model of production that has its roots in the inheritance of monotheism. In Derrida's essay, something must come from something, but that thing, both in the sense of what is created and the resources of creation, is the event of the arrival of the other.

Thinking invention, on these terms, is then a considerable task, one that asks us to imagine new idioms of understanding that see what cannot be seen, touch what cannot be touched, account for what cannot be predicted. This includes the recognition that 'the other' as a concept is an invention of philosophy, and thinking invention creatively will call on us to preserve the work of this term by not wearing it out or setting it in play anew in order to name the experience that cannot be phenomenalized. It will require a significant degree of self-reflexivity and an openness to thought and experience that some modes of creative practice might consider luxurious or self-involved. That does not of course place them outside of the aporias of creativity, rather in turning a blind eye to their own blind spots they demonstrate precisely the need for such an investigation. If theory-practice has a privileged role to play in our consideration of invention and creation then it is because it is itself part of a history and system of conventions and conceptual orders that ties techno-science to the humanities as the heir of the questions of humanism. What it means to be human is the proper subject of theory-practice as a creative art. Accordingly, it must open up the question of the human not in order to repeat the androcentrism of science but to suggest that the idea of the human that runs through humanism and science is inadequate because it does not fully account for what it does in fact mean to be human. In the creative act, for example, we must recognize and understand the role of the other and the irreducible importance of the wholly other in the acts and objects of invention. That is to say, it must question a whole programmatic of invention that runs from fine art to techno-science that seeks to programme, plan or proscribe invention. Invention cannot be invented in this way, nor, can creativity be created. Equally, invention and creativity must, as we have discussed, be recuperated into the history and tradition from which it

emerges to disrupt. Accordingly, a true invention that rethought and displaced this enclosure of invention would require its own institutions and other vistas of support for properly creative and critically creative spaces. It would require us to reinvent the conditions of invention beyond programme or proscription and at the same time not surrender to an idealist future that abandoned the academy or the state to its own worst instincts. Theory-practice then has a considerable amount of work to do, transforming and mutating the host, which both sets it in play and inevitably recuperates its inventive possibilities to a regime of measurement and management.