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Thinking in a Weird Green Light, or, Between Total Recyclability and the Toxiconomy
by Brad Tabas

Hyperobjects are the true taboos, the demonic inversion of the sacred substances of religion.

Timothy Morton, The Ecological Thought

In our neo-liberal economy, the unrecyclable is that which can be exchanged but not used. Despite its very literally toxic status, the unrecyclable does not stand outside of the market, since the principle of the market is circulation, re-cycling, and this occurs even with respect to that which cannot or ought not to be recycled, just as systems, thanks to the laws of entropy, include precisely that which leads to their negation. The exchange value of the unrecyclable lies in the very real sums that we accept to pay to distance it from our sight and immediate contact, thus mitigating but not alleviating the effects of its slow violence. Above all, the market puts value on transactions that allow us to ignore the unrecyclable. We willingly pay to extend its period of latency, our delusions of its distance, our hope that recycling will somehow come to include the unrecyclable as well.

Confronting the unrecyclable demands a change in our thinking. It demands a rethinking of economics—both economics as usual and green economics. Coping with the unrecyclable demands thinking ecological economics without relying on recycling, philosophical or otherwise, which is the knee-jerk save-all of green economists. But it is not just the economy; it is ecology and even anthropology that are challenged by the unrecyclable. In the weird green light of the unrecyclable, there is no possible return to Mother Nature, no hope that things will go well in a world returned to Gaia. In relation to the unrecyclable, the cycle of pollution and restitution that according to Michel Serres underlies the very formation of the self and of property, even of society, needs to be reimagined. Including the unrecyclable in reality, adapting ourselves to dealing with a reality in which there is the infinitely toxic, the utterly unrecoverable, becomes terrifying. Being biocentric in a world where the unrecyclable is real becomes either suicidal or delusively idealist.
How, then, do we think the unrecyclable, rethink ourselves in terms of the unrecyclable, confront the unrecyclable, respond to the deepening of society’s problem with unrecyclables? In the following, I suggest that we must embrace a weird species of philosophical realism, a dark ecology, a melancholic and object-oriented way of thinking that must from the first seem somewhat improper, inassimilable, even incoherent. This dark ecology demands that we see the unrecyclable as something deep and particular, something inaccessible yet real, or rather accessible only insofar as it presents itself through horror, through a horrified imaginary that resonates because it plumbs a reality that is itself and in principle inaccessible to any self-possessed experience. These objects of horror are incompatible with nature, and so are inassimilable to any cosmology or order, they cannot be placed, they only displace, rendering homes unhomely and dwellings uninhabitable. Thinking our world in such a manner renders it strange and terrifying, an aftermath, an incomprehensible posthuman place in which our practices survive on the limit of the senseless, hemmed in or surrounded by alien others beyond our access. Dark ecology forces us to accept the unrecyclable as part of lived reality but also forces us to recognize that it is a part apart, a living death, an actually existing negation. Confronted with the unrecyclable, there are no solutions, only resolutions, speculations, hopes, and attentiveness.

I.

Most contemporary philosophy, influenced by scientific positivism, thinks of the unrecyclable in terms of risk. Living with risk is living with unknowing, with knowing about known unknowns (Beck, 104). Speaking of unrecyclables in terms of statistics seems to avoid forcing us to make ontological claims. So speaking allows the unrecyclable’s half-lives to have only a half-reality.

While such suspended judgment is laudable from the point of view of the scientific method, ethical action and ethical responsiveness require more of us. We must do more than suppose that there are probably unknowns. We must say more than that it is likely we will not win the Lotto, since we have a choice: either to keep buying tickets hoping for the day in which work will not be necessary, or to get to work, always hoping that winning remains possible. Inclining towards the latter option implies believing that there is such a thing as a reality beyond the statistics and believing also that this reality is to some degree accessible to us. But that said, it is also clear that insofar as the unrecyclable is the extremely toxic, something like the equivalent of the face of the Medusa, we cannot suppose that we have this access but must rather posit that thing as real but withdrawn. In that withdrawn reality we can always posit alternative valences, other possibilities in the coming to sensual presence of that withdrawn real ob-
ject that might—so we hope—alter our original judgment regarding the object’s withdrawn toxic essence. In other words, taken strictly, the laws of hermeneutics deny access to the essence of the unrecyclable, but the ecological imperative demands that we act, and act as if the unrecyclable were real, ultimate, and unavoidable.

Non-toxic hyperobjects like Styrofoam cups can help us think the phenomenology of the unrecyclable. Even if these objects do not annihilate us immediately, speculation refers us to our own annihilation when we encounter them. As Timothy Morton writes, these objects are “more real than reality itself” (The Ecological Thought, Kindle location 1697), because they contain futurity, a persistence in being that dwarfs our human lifetimes, indeed, a persistence in being that will most likely continue beyond the lifetime of any member of the human species, and so will outlast any projections and imaginations that human beings might make about them and their reality or lack thereof. Because of the known asymmetry between what we hold that we can know about unrecyclable objects and what we hold that we can experience about them, our claims about their reality must always be speculative, and our grappling with their real essences and qualities as they persist beyond experience must be imaginative.

Yet if we say that our knowledge of the unrecyclable is but a speculation, and that our knowledge of it is only via imaginative play, are we not thus saying that these unrecyclable objects are merely in our head? Not at all, for it is precisely the claim of realism about the essences of these objects which forces us into this contorted position, uncomfortable as it might be to those accustomed to the clarity and distinctness of Enlightenment rationality. More to the point, any non-realist account of the unrecyclable, namely any account that supposes concepts might be adequate to thinking the recyclable, immediately inserts the unrecyclable within mental reality, and so transforms it into something that can, like all concepts, like all re-presentations, be recycled. That said, a standard scientific or dogmatic realism that posits knowledge elsewhere than in the imagination and via the mediation of metaphors and figures that try to figure an unfigurable because defiguring thing can no better succeed in thinking the unrecyclable than an idealism in which all that is real is merely a correlate of the human mind, since it falls naively into what Kant calls transcendental realism, unwittingly confusing ideas with things, and so supposing that it has stepped out of itself and into reality without even recognizing that it has done so.¹ The ordinary realist forgets to include the autonomy of the object into his or her speculation; he or she always projects the object as a known known, not an autonomous reality but a predicate of the knower.

What is currently described by object-oriented thought as correlationism, but which might more generally be associated with the common doctrine that societies construct their mental realities, reduces objects to pure phenomena, nothing other than concepts without

The Unrecyclable
grounds. Traditional realism, to the contrary, supposes that it has grasped that which underlies—the ground—something more real than the phenomenon, but in doing so at once removes all specificity or interest from the phenomenal object, substituting for it a more basic substrate that is the known, a substrate that can be infinitely recomposed because it is eternal or ultimate, and hence a substrate that cannot, in principle, be unrecyclable. In the language of object-oriented ontology, these two approaches overmine or undermine the object.2

Object-oriented thought does not pin down the object, reducing it in either direction. It orients itself towards the object, in this case the unrecyclable, without finally searching for guarantees that its insights ultimately correspond with empirically verifiable knowledge claims. Object-oriented thinking thinks the object in terms of its withdrawal, what we might otherwise describe as the manifestation of its own autonomous reality, its appearance to us as a known unknown. It allows us to explore the object in its withdrawal through imagination and metaphor, hence respecting the withdrawn nature of the object while at the same time remembering its non-negatory presence. Object-oriented ontology thus allows us to think the unrecyclable, albeit at a cost, namely our comfortable assumption that reality must align with human knowledge and that all reality is the reality apparent to human beings.

Not unlike animistic thinking, object-oriented ontology respects the idea that bears, stones, and even unrecyclables are animate. Like Others, which at least since Levinas we imagine as confronting us with faces intimating the infinite, objects themselves have ungraspable depths and present us with these depths via a kind of magical animation that allows them, despite their withdrawal, to engage in reality, to take part in a world, to enter into connections and communions with other beings. Object-oriented thinking thus departs from the dominant Western sense of reality, that is to say a reality in which objects do not speak or think, and have no personality or capacity to act. Object-oriented thought extends personhood to all objects, makes them actors, gives free play to the imagination in determining how objects might act or interact, might do or forebear, might haunt or taunt vicariously.

Hunter-gatherers and other animists are able to consistently think the mentality of other creatures, reserving access to these mental spaces to magicians and other sorts of dream insight, thus actually staying closer to phenomenological realism than traditional Western realism, since it is only in this case that the reality of vision is given its due within thought as within experience. As Tim Ingold has argued, this kind of realism about non-human minds contributes to a way of world-making that is intrinsically ecological, in the sense that every mind is bound up in a set of relations that can never be subtracted or analytically separated from the experience of being in an environment, but only encountered within ongoing and ever pre- or sub-conceptual exchanges with that environment and its alien others, what he calls a “poetics of dwelling” (57). This poetics is not pure imagination but is rooted in
reality, though it is—nevertheless—rooted in a reality that is withdrawn from any conceptual access. Indeed, in the light of the concept and reason it appears to be mere superstition. Nevertheless, as weird as this brand of realism may be, its anthropological analogues suggest that it does emerge out of a faithful obedience to experience and its limits, a devotion to the Husserlian imperative to pay attention “to the things themselves.”

Thus far, what I have said about object-oriented thought relates not merely to unrecyclable objects but to all objects, since object-oriented ontology holds it to be true that both bears and basketballs are autonomous and withdrawn from human sensual perception. That said, the difference between these objects and unrecyclable objects is not located with respect to their status as objects but really only depends upon what kinds of object they are, and—of course—the kinds of interactions objects can have with human subjects. Because of the necessarily withdrawn essence of all real objects, it is necessarily possible that there may be something unrecyclable or toxic when related to humans and other beings in objects that do not seem to possess this quality and vice versa. That said, one can mark a difference between unrecyclable objects and other objects with respect to the causal relations that we are willing to attribute to them.

One of the strangest features of object-oriented thought involves the paradox of relationships between objects. Since all objects are withdrawn from one another, no two objects touch or enter into contact. Nevertheless, objects do enter into relations. When two ordinary objects encounter, this encounter is aesthetic, sensual, even if its ultimate explanation must remain magical, inexplicable. In the case of normal objects, the sensual images of the object possessed by subjects seem intrinsically accurate or adequate. In other words, encounters with normal objects enrich one’s sense of living in a world or cosmos, an ordered and orderable totality. The encounter with the unrecyclable allows no such ordering, no such sense of adequacy. The metaphors generated in the comprehension of unrecyclable objects remain inassimilable, inadequate, and deranging. They squirm in the mind; they douse everything in a weird green light.

Speaking of the unrecyclable in object-oriented terms is always to speak in what Graham Harman has called “black hole metaphors” (Weird Realism 260). These metaphors imagine the broken down place in the phenomenal network that corresponds to a noumenal object that cannot even be accessed phenomenally except in terms of absence. These metaphors compare two or more known things in a way that is mutually but only partially illuminating, since “one of the terms is completely and deliberately unknown” (239). The unrecyclable is a Martian hoot-owl dragon child threatening the very fabric of our existence, one might say. Black hole metaphors, common in the work of Lovecraft and other horror fiction, imaginatively elaborate not the familiar in terms of the familiar, the smiling flowers and the sobbing rain, but rather the existentially
unhomely and the endlessly estranged. They render present to us unknown essences in their absolute distance, “inscribing” them in our consciousness in an indelible fashion—as realities.

It is not merely horror fiction but also recent poetry that has endeavoured to think—and that is to say to render thinkable in sense, affect, and intensity—the unrecyclable. Necropastoral, a genre recently discovered or rebooted by Joyelle McSweeney, takes up as one of its central preoccupations the imaginative knowing about the withdrawn reality of these deathly objects, evoking them as what Reza Negarestani has called “( )holes,” presenting them to us as King Prion and other monstrosities. Christian Hawkey’s Ventrakl gives us a good sense of this delirious groping within the dark, this profound imagining of life with withdrawn death everywhere:

TOTENBERG
No one home. Summer inheres.
A monad shells out sonatas
And Ewoks along some never-ending Walden.

The dense, inner weight of ferns is one way
You might light the interior of an ant’s blue tunnel;
Otherwise, night’s leaflessness trembles beside you,

Cruel as a starless branch. Therefore,
the stranger
Trembles in the darkness. No wind. Light’s black furnace.
The silver voice in the mouth of a housefly. (95)

Out of where in the mountain of death comes this silver voice? How do these images fit together but in paradox? What is evoked here other than some nameless terror, some weird presence of some Other, violent but also familiar, distant but also proximate? The poem is suffused with a weird green light. It is a poetic space lit as by a Dan Flavin sculpture. It upsets us and prompts thinking, offers no certitudes and a number of paths outwards, traces prompting translations to other realities and other crimes. As Joyelle McSweeney writes: “The image emerges when the surface oversaturates. Goo, stain, gelatin, blue, green, kissing/pity, the stunted uncles of stain-force. Between the ‘binary ears,’ the mush gelatin of brain matter, the registering spectre also known as ‘trauma light.’ Wave a hand through me, I am barely here. ‘Bright pearls cluster—as if glued—around/The newly opened eyelids of an infant.’ Art plants eggs in its own eyes” (n. p.). So sings the silver voice in the mouth of the housefly, that withdrawn aspect of a reality nevertheless real, burgeoning, without us, ever menacing in the voice, as a void. There is no neat and smiling homely image correlating with “light’s black furnace”; there is only the oversaturation, the surface that is too much surface, thus indicating its own banality before the real and as yet unrevealed or unrevealable depths.

Out of such tortuous turns of phrase there is a possibility but no felt likelihood that something will emerge that is well known, familiar, homely. But there is at the same time “satisfaction,” fullness, resonance, sounding, hollowness, and terror. Something is really there, a source—
in the case of Hawkey’s poem a real source—namely a poem by Trakl that has, thanks to the inaccessibility of German for Hawkey, been translated, resonated, imagined, but left distant, a testimony in a certain way to the distance that Trakl himself is exploring, the distance of death. Thus the encounter with a real and unfamiliar being yields throbbing antennae and unending unfamiliarity, a sense, possibly only a simulacrum, of the known unknown. The unrecyclable appears, then, when thought through the imagination, not as the deer appears to open to the animist hunter, giving itself to him, revealing its anima, but as a neganimation, a living deadness that takes all we can give of attention and imagination and yet never provides us with a sense of adequate control or sovereignty. To these presences, the monads, the Ewoks, the endless Walden, we cannot ask and they will not tell, yet they loom up at us, confronting us, but also avoiding us, present on the edges between ourselves and some outside, an outside that threatens, that includes a past that does not fold nicely into any comprehensible future. There is no answer here: there is inquietude, like the potential poisons in my body fat waiting to bring about my death, but not yet there and yet forever there, building up, building up in each apple, with each piece of food or quaff of water, a particle of this, a particle of that.

II.

Why submit ourselves to this terrifying delirium, all the more horrifying now that it is not the postmodern play of infinite textuality but dead-serious grappling with a toxic reality? Why not merely go on doing philosophy or neoliberalism as usual? In the next two sections I want to explore two scenarios, two ways of thinking and living emerging out of allowing ourselves to think the unrecyclable first in overmining then in undermining terms.

Correlationism, i.e. the belief that all that is real is only so in relation to the knowing subject or the network in which that knowledge is happening, is the dominant form of overmining subscribed to today. According to this viewpoint, there really is no such thing as unrecyclability, because all that is is to a certain extent always already a representation, utterly without essence, withdrawn or otherwise. An implicit subscription to this belief in the infinite recyclability of representations is why neoliberalism and politics as usual is quite compatible with overmining, since the basic neoliberal take on ecology—recycling—is nothing but this denial of essence rendered into practice, or rather illuminated as a mode of repressing the unrecyclable via an addiction to the ideology of total recyclability. Far from hating and fearing waste, neoliberalism thrives on waste, indeed demands the endless creation and proliferation of waste. According to Edward Humes, waste is America’s leading export. The Chinese buy American waste paper and metal by the ton, turning waste exporters into billionaires. Buying new and more, expanding the economy, depends upon throwing out the old, seeing it as used up, wasted, disposable. But there is nothing inherently keeping Americans from willing that all of this might be recycled.
Neoliberalism loves recycling and even upcycling—since it is the fantasy that all can be recycled or upcycled that keeps it going. Americans love making waste to the tune of 102 tons per year (Humes, Kindle location 102), but they also love buying recycled when they can, and doing so calms them, lets them think that their way of living is sustainable, or at least can be made more so. Maybe this is because Americans themselves are the product of a kind of enormous recycling program. Emma Lazarus’ famous articulation of the American dream as it is proclaimed at Ellis Island is all about gathering and reviving the human wastes of the world:

“Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!”
cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired,
your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost
to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”
(n. p.)

Europe’s trash became America’s treasure when they came to the “new world” in the hopes of starting over again, plastic bottles beginning their existence again as Patagonia-brand fleece jackets. Making trash may be the consumption that fuels the economy, but recycling is the hope of keeping that economy going . . . forever. It is recycling that permits one to think endless growth, consistency in change, and the metaphysics of presence within the all-that-is-solid-melts-into-air world of late capitalism.

We feel good about recycling, but perhaps we should not. Do not get me wrong: it is great to recycle, great to upcycle, but buying into reusing prompts the forgetting of the unrecyclable, because it perpetuates the impression that there is no such thing as essence, hence leading us deeper into our forgetting of the unrecyclable and its inconvenient consequences. The more we run our green economy, the more recycling we do, the more we risk creating unrecyclables. It is not the same thing to simply not recycle something that might be recycled and to produce objects that can by no means be recuperated. Nuclear waste from reactors, for instance, can be reused. But as John D’Agata points out, the problem is that this recycling only creates something manifestly more dangerous, more radioactive, more imperatively prompting the revision of our mode of living (86-87). In China, photographer Edward Burtynsky documents how a recycling operation in rural China actually involves the accumulation of unrecyclables. In his photos we see piles of toxic waste that remain after the computer parts are “recycled,” masses of material that despite their very ordinary-looking presence are actually causing cancers to proliferate and worse. Buying recycled only implies that a part has been recuperated, forgetting also a part that is in practice buried or shipped out of sight, circulated as a kind of accursed share.
The ideology machine of capital is invested in forgetting this excess. All is reduce/reuse/recycle, and when that fails even the wasted no man’s land of Chernobyl is reintegrated into reality as a tourist destination, a theme park that allows us to imagine that even the most catastrophically contaminated can be reintegrated, re-inserted, re-zoned. Even Fukushima has been looped in, live streamed, seen in real time, reintegrated. Because it is still there: still over there, or not even over there. Over here, inside us as outside of us, present, but as a breakdown—even if or as the knowledge-correlate-network strives to fix what is broken, to reintegrate this part that is no part, this eerie outside in. But keeping it in the loop allows us to deny essence and suppress the unrecyclable by upholding the correlation between mind and world as the only reality, the only criterion of existence.

Seen from the viewpoint of the market, toxic waste is slowly augmenting in value. It is calculated that centralizing all of America’s toxic waste in Yucca Mountain would have cost the government almost a hundred billion dollars. That would have been public funds, though most of the beneficiaries would have been private corporations and individuals. The drivers hauling waste to Yucca Mountain love to have jobs, just as mine workers ruining their lungs with coal dust were happy to have the precious opportunity to thus spend their lives, miserable and employed. And that is but the tip of the iceberg: the more waste that we produce, the more money and time and energy will need to go into dealing with it, because this is not just shortsighted economic egoism—we all must be willing to pay to optimize the circulation of unrecyclables, for failing to do so is a matter of living longer or more briefly. Yet at some point the value of the unrecyclable becomes maximal; the horror of its reality as an essential and real Other causes a shift of perception, something like the flip from relativism to religious fanaticism experienced in modernity. It is at this point that the toxiconomy is born, causing the eclipse of the optimism of the green economy but bringing no more realism into our mode of engagement with the unrecyclable.

III.

Undermining involves the idealization of the real, treating of the real as ideal and accessible to the mind beyond any phenomenon. The toxiconomy is born when, rather than grasping it as a mere appearance, the unrecyclable becomes known as an absolute essence, something akin to a monotheistic god. Once there is no more energy for denying the unrecyclable, no more ability to senselessly circulate it, neoliberalism must totalize it, turning it into that which is the most real, the most absolute, the basis and foundation for all rational action. Thus the prices paid for waste management will be no longer relative but absolute. In the toxiconomy, the market itself turns around the demand for circulating the unrecyclable. Here, governance is no longer about freedom and desire; it is the totalitarian imperative to control that which if not controlled must kill. Rather than buying
televisions, we will invest in saving ourselves from the toxic waste produced in making them. Rather than looking at politics as a means to progress, politics will soon be devoted to keeping toxins under control, and keeping those touched by the toxins out of power. The first world will battle the third world, the rich will battle the poor, and all will struggle against all in an era in which the containment of the toxin will rule over all exchanges. This is the ultimate articulation of biopower, the final stage in the politics of life.

The black dawn of the toxiconomy has already begun its ascent, revealing its rule over us like a tyrannical sovereign, cruel and bizarre as Jabba the Hutt, that master of a planet populated by enormous fanged worms hidden in the sands, visionary manifestations of the toxic waste repositories that populate the American deserts just a few hours from Hollywood. But this sovereign is one only in the eyes of each ideologist, for claiming to know the unrecyclable in this manner is always a transcendental realist illusion. Thus the very claim to understand the commands of the hyperobjects as univocal assertions will always be a source of conflict. There is no direct access to the unrecyclable; there is only access to its withdrawal and black hole metaphors offering us aesthetic appreciation of its revelation. All claims to the contrary are but undermining, ideological violence-mongering. There is a brilliant, dark, and delirious chapter in Annie Dillard’s *The Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* devoted to perceptual mysticism, the art of trying to see objects, a chapter that we could take as emblematic of the best that we might be able to do in struggling to grasp the content of the unrecyclable while trapped within the philosophical paradigm of the underminer.

Dillard, seeking nature or god as much as experience with objects, tells us that she “used to be able to see flying insects in the air” (17). We might right away suspect that this blindness is a function of decreasing eyesight, though we are just as likely to suspect that she is talking about a kind of moral loss of attentiveness, and she herself reinforces this, suggesting that she simply “lost interest” or “dropped the habit” of seeing the insects. She can, after all, see birds (as she notes). And some people (but not her) “can look at the grass at their feet and discover all the crawling creatures” (17). The specialist “can find the most incredibly well-hidden things” (19). In all of this lurks the fantasy that there is something knowable or visible to be seen, not just oozing or murk, but something namable and companionable, something grounding and directing as opposed to unstable and unholy. Dillard is fatally attracted to this dream of total vision, this Emersonian reverie of transparent eye-ball being; she quotes Stewart Edward White’s recommendation that “as soon as you can forget the naturally obvious and construct an artificial obvious, then you too will see deer” (20) and achieve vision that will give theological or dogmatic authority to the hallucinations of speculative reason.

In Dillard’s account this inability plays a role in a spiritual journey towards conversion. But in the toxiconomy each conversion must
oppose all others, and each faction must arm itself in the name of its death object in the defense of life. The horrible crossing of death dreams, however, only amounts to more and immediate death, no longer the mediated slow violence of the toxin but the simple horror of heads severed like chopped cabbages and lives swallowed up like swigs of water.

There is no ground but ungrounding, nothing to see but holes. Yet in these gaps the unsuspecting see more than black holes, for the toxiconomy is an affair of the gods, an encounter with factions and their beliefs in their knowledge of the known unknown, each raising up their vision of ecological rightness as a justification for ‘divine’ violence. The toxiconomy is at once the rule of the sublime unrecyclable object and an absence of rule, a total chaos initiated by the belief that to deal with the unrecyclable we must have a rule, must have total illumination in light’s black furnace.

IV.

We cannot live with the green economy, and we will live much less once the turn towards the toxiconomy is complete. We cannot be overjoyed to think the unrecyclable, for in granting it reality we also shatter all of our Edenic hopes and fantasies, our hopes of reunion with a Gaia that we might love, a nature we might wish to inhabit. Amidst the monadic sonatas of the unrecyclable we cannot learn new ways of dwelling; instead, we find only discomfort and anxiety. We hate the trust that we must place in the mantic imaginations of poets, artists, and magicians. We hate giving up our ordinary representations and the cosmetic masking that they initiate; we hate sojourning amidst black holes and weird metaphorical access to terrifying withdrawn beings. But we find ourselves in this unworld, this acosmos held in place by petroleum-derived cosmetics. Like the blue tunnel of the ant, inhuman and incomprehensible intrusions “confound our limited, fixated, self-oriented frameworks” (Morton, Ecological Thought 271). We are condemned to melancholic existence, a humiliated living-on as a half-life. Unrecyclable objects are in our midst, so we will acknowledge ourselves as ever more alien, ever more infused with otherness, ever more unknown, ever more displaced because placed amidst a real that repulses our will to experience and fills our imaginations with torturing affects and intensities. But there is an ecological imperative to be obeyed, and at least in the acknowledgement of the unrecyclable we do what we ought or prepare ourselves for the taking of responsibility, the impossible hospitality for this unwelcomed stranger. Amidst the clamor of the flies’ sonatas a golden harmony dissipates noxiously. Better to love this than the siren songs of the overminers and underminers. Something . . . a ghostly trace, a stranger stranger,

Gaps.

Regular straining.

Great rips in the febrile goods.

Gapes. (Duncan 469)

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1 I have discussed this point elsewhere, notably in a piece in *Ozone* (1: Spring 2013). The best account of this point in the Kant literature is to be found in Allison.

2 Probably the most concise account of overmining and undermining is to be found in Harman’s *The Quadruple Object* (7-20).

3 On the notion of the cosmetic, see the work of Cédric Lagandré.
Works Cited


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