Honour

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Honour

ABSTRACT:

Do I honour the work or the person? And if I honour the person, how do I then honour the work?

These questions have preoccupied me for some time, and they are brought sharply into focus in the work and person of Timothy Mathews. The etymologies of the term are disputed but indicative – *honor* from the Old French, *honestus* from the Latin, and *onus*, a moral weight or duty. In Greek, it is *filotimo* – a love of values, worth, and esteem. And this is where my intervention in this volume sits most comfortably: in the space between the sensuous space of a love of art, and an understanding of its values. In writing about honour, I am also thinking about the creative practice of honouring tied up in critical writing; a practice deeply embedded in Mathews' own writing and work.

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Some questions:

How do I honour the work? How do I honour the person?
And if I honour the person, how do I then honour the work?
And if I honour the work, then what of the person?

These questions have preoccupied me for some time. As a writer, and a critic, and a scholar, they sit somewhere deep at within my thinking, feeling, expressive self.

They are also brought sharply into focus in the work and the person of Timothy Mathews. The person, who is a gentle and supportive friend, peer and mentor for me and many others. And the work, which sits with fond admiration and wry mistrust astride the branches of poetry, academic writing, and art criticism. How to do it, then, this work of honouring? How do I begin?

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Why not begin at beginnings, linguistic origin stories? There is some comfort in etymology: it is at least a place of roots and grounds. The etymologies of *honour* are disputed but indicative — *honor* from the Old French, *honorem* from the Latin, or Cicero's nominative *honos*, describing honour, dignity, office or reputation.[1] And from here, honour grows, lengthening its roots and unfurling its first shoots. *Honestus* is the adjectival Latin for what is honorable and respected, but it is also entwined with honesty, the Old French *onesté*: either honour received from others, or in its figurative senses, uprightness, probity, integrity and virtue.[2] Honour also takes on the flavour of ethical and moral imperative: the *onus*, the moral weight or duty to uphold the state/polity/public realm, was first postulated by the Roman linguist Varro in its homophonic relationship to the Latin vocative declension, *honos*.[3] The solidity of *onus* brings honour closer to the ground than the more freestanding, upholding visions of *honos* or *honestus*. *Onus* is heavy, weighted against its oppositional moral pairing, shame.[4] And moral pairings are often bound by other kinds of oppositional binaries: honour and shame become foundational myths which encode and embed the wielding of gendered power. As Unni Wikan pointed out over 35 years ago, the magical, evocative qualities of honour's etymology "has diverted the anthropological treatment of honour away from a concern with meaning in everyday life towards normative moral discourse, among men."[5] Honour's tentative shoots are already winnowed by the tools of masculine moral norms. In contemporary Greek, honouring as an action, process, or everyday mode of living, becomes *filotimo* – literally a love of honor, of values and value,

[1] 'Honor | Origin and Meaning of Honor by Online Etymology Dictionary' <https://www.etymonline.com/word/honor> [accessed 14 April 2020].
[2] 'Honest | Origin and Meaning of Honest by Online Etymology Dictionary' <https://www.etymonline.com/word/honest> [accessed 14 April 2020].
[3] 'Onus est honos qui sustinet rem publicam.' Marcus Terentius Varro, *De lingua Latina* (Intratext Digital Library), bk. X: 16 <http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0231/_P5.HTM#WL> [accessed 19 September 2017] .
[4] Michael Herzfeld, 'Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems', *Man*, 15.2 (1980), 339 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2801675>.
[5] Unni Wikan, 'Shame and Honour: A Contestable Pair', *Man*, 19.4 (1984), 635–52 (p. 635) <https://doi.org/10.2307/2802330>.

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worth and esteem, embodied in oneself and one's community.[6] Love, *fili*, -philia, is a different tool, more pliable perhaps than the pugilistic heavyweight, *onus*, but no less socially demanding. *Filotimo* is allied to honesty, to social participation, to ethical obligations, to love, and to value; equally it is conjoined with (female) chastity, social expectations of gendered and class-based norms, relative assertions of hierarchy and status and socio-political demand.[7] Its investment in socio-cultural values means that *filotimo* too moves inexorably towards the reinforcement of patriarchal (hetero)normativity.

It need not always be so; and yet, so often, it is the case that patriarchal social norms restrict honour's shape and growth, and sometimes choke it entirely. I am unwilling to uphold honour's restrictive position as a moral imperative, not least because its warped conclusions tend to reproduce patriarchy's violent and misogynistic ends.[8] According to many honour-based narratives, women have no honour of their own, only that which might be taken, or which they are bound to protect.[9] Ultimately, neither my gendered writing subjectivity, nor my feminist writing position will tolerate honour's heteropatriarchal moral values, which would in any case remove me from the *doing* of honour by virtue of my gender. I do not write to *defend* honour, nor to deploy honour as a morally justifying position from which to enact power. There are other ways to honour; lived ways of being rather than entrenched codes of doing.

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How long will it take to cultivate a feminist language of honour?
Perhaps once we have uncoupled the term from its implicit bond with violence.
And when will that be?

[6] Herzfeld, pp. 343–49.
[7] Herzfeld, pp. 343–45.
[8] Veena Meetoo and Heidi Safia Mirza, '"There Is Nothing 'Honourable' about Honour Killings": Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30.3 (2007), 187–200 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2007.03.001>.
[9] Herzfeld; Meetoo and Mirza.

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There is a sense of ethical obligation, lightly held, in this intervention on honour. I am not *bound* to honour, nor honour-bound. My relationships to honour as a noun, adjective and verb are more pliable, feeding its earth rather than building its iron trellis. Honour is a fertile ground in which to cultivate love and value. Spacious enough to traverse more than two millennia and countless cultures, albeit too often diverted for patriarchal harvest. And love and value are the phytogenic equivalents of the branches in which my short contribution to this collection lies. This piece is a symbiotic parasite, resting between the love of art, and an understanding of its values, fostered and enriched by the work of Tim Mathews, and the artworks about which he has written. It is also a meditation on the spacious, earth-rich creativity of honouring, fashioned by the practice of critical writing. It is looser, more imaginative, and yet more emotionally precise than a piece of academic prose in its attempts to conjoin love and value with art, literary criticism and life-writing. As Tim puts it himself, "questions about art are questions about life: about the point at which things begin to mean [10]." I see the written expression of these questions partly as a practice of writing slant, rather than in academically rectilinear terms.[11] It is also a creative practice of critical writing deeply embedded in Tim's own writing, in its enduring attempts to be truthful to the sense of things that yield themselves unwillingly to thought or language. It is also fundamental to processes of creative non-fiction writing.[12] And so I honour this practice by writing it: *slantwise*.

[10] Timothy Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti: The Art of Relation* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), p. 1 <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755603633?locatt=label:secondary_bloomsburyCollections> [accessed 4 May 2020].

[11] This is inspired by the work of poet Emily Dickinson, and the injunction in her poem 1263: 'Tell all the truth but tell it slant' Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson — Emily Dickinson, R. W. Franklin*, ed. R.W. Franklin (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005), https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674018242. This piece also owes an implicit debt of gratitude to women and non-binary writers such as So Mayer, Anne Carson, and Hélène Cixous. Please see also Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola, *Tell It Slant, Second Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill Professional, 2012).

[12] See Miller and Paola.

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Is writing slant a way of honouring, then?

And who or what does it honour?

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There is a distinction, and an important one, between the person and the work; the artist and the art; the writer and the writing. A line. I am looking for that line in between. Tim asks in *Alberto Giacometti: The Art of Relation*: "Where is the line crossed from a transient perception to a moment of wonder or wound?"[13] And I am drawn to think laterally, of the line in Marguerite Duras' screenplay for Alain Resnais' film *Hiroshima mon amour*, where *she*, *elle* Emmanuelle Riva, says to *him*, *lui*, Eiji Okada, "because even at that very moment, and even afterward, yes, even afterward, I can say that I couldn't feel the slightest difference between this dead body and mine. All I could find between this body and mine were obvious similarities, do you understand?"[14] This line resonates between language (a labour exerted between writer Duras and translator Richard Seaver) and across time; it is a line in between. This line is also a time doubled between the wartime Nevers of Elle's memory and the post-war Hiroshima in which she articulates it; doubled again between the efforts of co-authorship between Duras' screenplay and Resnais' film, whose initial torturous beginnings were not fiction but documentary.[15] The film and the screenplay brush the surfaces and textures of death, love, trauma and survival, in particular the impossibility of representing any of these things, or of existing without peril in between them. Film and screenplay have also become a nexus for iterations of trauma theory in French Studies, Film Studies and beyond.[16] Often in these studies, in the attempt to extricate or make visible the

[13] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, p. 1.
[14] Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, trans. by Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 65.
[15] Emma Wilson, *Alain Resnais (French Film Directors)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 48–50.
[16] See Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2016), pp. 26–58; Kyo Maclear, 'The Limits of Vision: Hiroshima Mon Amour and the

line between life and death or between life and the work, the line itself becomes indistinguishable. You can't *see* the line. It curves in on itself, becomes the infinite repetition of unresolved trauma.[17]

Nonetheless, there is a line between life and death, life and afterlife, in the words written by Duras, or presented on screen by Emmanuelle Riva's astonishing, luminescent performance. Life and work. A line of humanity between suffering and life and suffering and death, where protagonist *Elle* situates herself as unable to suffer because she is already dead; unable to suffer the humiliation of tonsure and imprisonment for collusion with her German soldier lover because she is already dead with him; indistinguishable to herself as collections of matter, dead and alive. There is a name for this: grief. There is another name too: depression. And another: post-traumatic stress disorder. And another: dissociation.

They are all common medical terms, which do little to convey the emotional and sensory experiences of them. *Elle* recalls the sequence of her indistinguishability from death while she is very much alive, remaining, surviving, in a Hiroshima which has itself also survived, albeit altered beyond imagining, both represented in its museum, and impossibly fractured by the unalterable event of the nuclear detonation on 6 August 1945. So much scholarship about the film has rested on the indivisibility of public and private trauma, amnesia and shame. In other circumstances, and on a different topic – the art and writing of Alberto Giacometti — Tim speaks of this too: "trauma and translation seem to invite each other in. The unrepeatable moment of suffering begs for translation; translation replies, but repeats the oblivion of suffering; the there-ness of suffering is forever not here."[18]

And now both writer and director of *Hiroshima Mon Amour* are dead: Duras in 1996; Resnais in 2014. Both are committed to history, and to remembering and forgetting and writing and re-writing the canons of French literature and cinema. Duras' writing and Resnais' filmmaking both emphasise the collapse of the living into the dead, the spoken into

Subversion of Representation', in *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, ed. by Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 233–48.

[17] See Caruth especially on this.

[18] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, p. 30.

the unsaid; on the indivisibility between the implied absence of meaning in silence, gaps, caesura, and their overwhelming, almost deranging pervasiveness of meaning [19]. Tim writes about this always-suffering presence and absence of meaning. He describes Duras' depictions of the "extraordinary capacity of men and women to articulate both thought and the timeless anxiety that stifles it, to both sublimate and project their own suffering," noting Julia Kristeva's particular fascination-fixation for Duras's continuum of textual portraiture [20]. There is the line again, blurred. The indivisible line, both indiscernible and observed, between the place of writing, and thought, and the place of suffering and sublimation, or, maybe, *passion*, in both its violent and its sexual connotations.

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Where is the line again? Between the work and the person?
I've lost it, somewhere in the space of suffering.
And when I am lost, I turn to music to find a new thread.

***

Where is the line with you, sings Björk on her 2004 album *Medúlla*, inspired by the work of experimental composer and singer Meredith Monk. Björk wrote the majority of the album while pregnant with her second child, recording some of it in brief, frantic segments away from her infant daughter.[21] She describes her motivations for this album as embodied: "I wanted it to have a strong feeling of blood and heart and meat… the lower half of the body to merge into the music."[22] It is difficult not to call upon the imagery of maternity, of bloody feminine pro-creation, and sexuality, visceral and palpating, reaching the underside of the bodily places most attuned to language: beneath the head, the ears, the eyes, mouth and throat. The word medulla itself refers to the inner core of organs: the marrow, the pith (the

[19] See Martin Crowley, *Duras, Writing, and the Ethical: Making the Broken Whole* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 58–60.
[20] Timothy Mathews, *Literature, Art and the Pursuit of Decay in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 144.
[21] Shana Goldin-Perschbacher, 'Icelandic Nationalism, Difference Feminism, and Björk's Maternal Aesthetic', *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture*, 18.1 (2014), 48–81 (p. 63 n50) <https://doi.org/10.1353/wam.2014.0003>.
[22] Goldin-Perschbacher, p. 63.

medulla oblongata being the part of the brain concerned with basic function: heartbeat, breathing, spinal column). The lower half of the body speaks internally, with or without lines of distribution. *Medúlla* is an album predominantly made up of polyphonic and multi-layered vocal sound, recorded, edited and/or post produced, including the contributions of indigenous Nunavut throat-singer Tanya "Tagaq" [pronounced "Takh-wah"] Gillis, human beatboxers Rahzel, Shlomo and Dokaka, vocalists Robert Wyatt, Mike Patten and Gregory Purnhagen, and the Icelandic and London Choirs.[23] It is an album of few words, some Icelandic, some English (including an untitled poem by e.e. cummings) but mainly and mostly indiscernible made-up sounds.

Many of *Medúlla's* polyphonic textures are collaborative journeys in performance, composition, programming and production. In the 14 tracks of the album, there is no single line, save the sonic beginnings and ends of each song; certainly no line between the creative consciousnesses brought together across acoustic time and space, and the collective endeavours in the work's development after 2001 as a mode of active resistance against the incipient Anglo-European ethnonationalisms precipitated by the terrorist acts of 9/11.[24] Honouring her experiences within the private realm, Björk effects a network of creative practices to dispute the encoded mythologies of racism, white supremacy, and islamophobia that, by 2004, had once again embedded themselves insidiously within the Euro-Western public psyche. Honouring is also a process of *dis*honouring the social codes which precede; in particular the codes that equate motherhood with loss, regional and national identity with jingoism, self-preservation with violence. *Medúlla* is an album written from the body, seeking expression in plural voices but not especially in textual language. The line between voice and speech is blurred, as is the line between personal embodiment and resistance to surges of ethnonationalist sentiment in the Global North at the turn of the millennium. As is the line between what is rationally articulated and what is screamed. Or sung. Honouring is not always able to distinguish quietly, non-eruptively, between the person *doing* the honouring, and the person *being* honoured. Sometimes what is being

[23] Victoria Malawey, 'Musical Emergence in Björk's Medúlla', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 136.1 (2011), 141–80 (p. 141) <https://doi.org/10.1080/02690403.2011.562717>.
[24] Goldin-Perschbacher, p. 62.

honoured is neither a person, nor a work, nor even a place, but a feeling. In those instances, honouring is more like a relation, a sense of esteem, an attention to some moral or ethical truth beyond the grasp of what is directly attributable to, or even within the realm of the rational. *Medúlla* was doing this work in 2004; it weaves a line between my listening self, and the start of my academic career, where I was learning to write and think between what can be said or written or thought, and what cannot.

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How is the person woven into the work, into the response to the work?

Like a skein of fabric, a loose toile, waiting for a hand to bind and gather it, among all the other hands and threads that made up its raw materials.

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The first time I heard Tim speak at a research seminar in 2004, I felt a sensuous power to his writing. Without realizing how it might sound, I blurted out this observation in the cold overhead light of a seminar room. In my typical back-to-front fashion, my ability to recognise the sensuousness of language and art kicked in long before I had read Susan Sontag's essay 'Against Interpretation' and its final declaration: "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art."[25] Much later, and far too late, I realized how my then-naiveté crossed paths with erotics as a strategy against hermeneutic interpretation; an attitude which is implicit, and sometimes explicit in Tim's writing. But at that particular moment, more than forty years after Sontag's clarion 1964 essay, my speaking of the sensuousness of writing on a university campus which so often forbids bodies and their embodied expression was a gauche blunder, that brought about laughter in my peers, and my own acute embarrassment.

[25] Susan Sontag, 'Against Interpretation', in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), pp. 3–14 (p. 14).

I wonder now about the timeliness of that flash of discovery for me, and how it chimes with discursive transitions in aesthetics, critical theory, philosophy, literature and art in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Erotics and sensuousness are still uncomfortable companions in current academic discourse, though for different intellectual, embodied and political reasons to the ones Sontag had in those foundational moments of the 1960s. Erotics are, of course, a site where feminist critique gained traction, in theoretical and philosophical traditions also, but always fraught with tensions concerning whose erotics are being played out, and at the risk of eliding of overshadowing whom. As Carla Kaplan put it in 1996, feminist literary criticism may "provide an outlet for a female erotics that is otherwise repressed, but it may also lead to identifications with narrators or authors which cannot be borne out, which are based on false assumptions or unrealistic hopes."[26] Identifications based on false assumptions or unrealistic hopes can sound a lot like whitewashing, bad faith, blithe ignorance of the many underlying strands that make up a voice and its expression.

Feminist erotics are always concerned with power as well as meaning, drawing attention particularly to the places where power twists or misshapes its communicative capacities. And erotics are fiercely difficult to articulate, capable of great insight but also very seriously challenging to existing, usually patriarchal power structures. They are not simply metaphorical in their use, or abuse. In the Higher Education sector, the misuses of the erotic are becoming apparent after many decades of suppression. They are only recently coming to light via the work of organisations such as the 1752 Group, who are at the heart of transformational change in university structures, policies and attitudes towards staff-student sexual misconduct.[27] That change is hard-won, often built from the determination of the very few who, supported by profoundly invested networks of mutual support, challenge the patriarchal power structures at work across the sector. It takes courage to speak out about misuses of the erotic, just as it takes courage to speak about the erotic at

[26] Carla Kaplan, *The Erotics of Talk: Women's Writing and Feminist Paradigms* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 13.
[27] Anna Bull and Rachel Rye, 'Institutional Responses to Staff Sexual Misconduct in UK Higher Education', *The 1752 Group/University of Portsmouth*, 2018, 35.

all. Or, in my case, an eruption of foolhardiness. I guess I need not be ashamed, and yet I am.

And yet, in intersectional feminist and black feminist writing the erotic has found space for a different kind of relation between speakers and writing, texts, art and politics. Audre Lorde's coruscating essay on 'The Uses of the Erotic', an essay so powerful that every sentence becomes its own explanation, insists upon the power of the erotic "that rises from our deepest and non-rational knowledge."[28] She accounts for the erotic as specifically and particularly feminine in sensation and expression, but also as a gateway between the political and spiritual dimensions of life: "For the bridge which connects them is formed by the erotic — the sensual — those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passions of love, in its deepest meanings."[29] After I had listened to Tim's polyvalent, poetic, sensorially acute writing on Giacometti, and after I had unwittingly spoken, the shame, and the instinctive, if somewhat delayed social reflex I experienced to suppress, poste-haste, my acknowledgement of sensuousness in the writing, is what I have been working with ever since. With the implicit and often explicit assistance of feminist philosophy, phenomenology, and art writing, I have, in a sense, always been working, unknowingly, with Lorde's sense of the erotic as both power and knowledge. I think this is what Lorde means when she says that "The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge."[30] Lorde's erotics are both a coda to and a complete rewriting of Sontag's imperative. An erotics not simply for 'reading' art, but also for making thought.

Lorde identifies, so aptly, the ways that the erotic is as empowering as it is dangerous for women, too often susceptible to being drawn off by the forces of patriarchy, to flatten and diffuse women's own power to speak for themselves. Despite the feminist and feminist-aligned work within literary criticism, speaking of the erotic, or even of the sensuous, is a fraught act. On hearing Tim's work read aloud that evening many years ago, I reached out

[28] Professor Audre Lorde and Professor Cheryl Clarke, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Reprint edition (Berkeley, Calif: Ten Speed Press, 2007), p. 53.
[29] Lorde and Clarke, p. 56.
[30] Lorde and Clarke, p. 56.

with emotion, and returned with a sense of the boundaried intellectual environments which permitted and did not permit certain kinds of speech. No-one shamed me; I did it all by myself. Or rather, I did it within the paired binaries of honour and shame that we know construct the social environments within which honour dwells. And yet, Tim's approach to writing gave me hope that it might be possible to meet with these boundaries (the intellectual and the emotional, the seen and the felt) again and again, in order to challenge them. The meeting of this edge is what propelled my research towards embodied sense-making, and non-dualist, holistic approaches to philosophy, thought, and film theory.

Sensation is the place from which my doctoral work emerged: not thinking via a Cartesian head-on-a-stick, mind without a body, but thinking from within a mind-body, holistically entwined, *en-worlded* by an earthly environment. The embodied, enworlded phenomenological approaches of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Don Ihde, Luce Irigaray, Vivian Sobchack, Michael Marder, Laura U. Marks, Fred Moten, offered and still offer an alternative to the dimensional flatness of textual hermeneutics, whether the object of study is indeed a text, or a film, or a work of art.[31] In phenomenological terms, the shapes and forms of the world experienced is every part as important as the shapes and forms of the body which thinks in relation to it, and inseparably from it. *How* the body thinks, how it reaches out to make sensuous and sense-making contact with the world, how it draws its world near to find a means to express and interpret that sense; these things became the subject of my research on cinematic subjectivity, which unwittingly found shared audiences with the emergence of a new wave of film-phenomenologies: Martine Beugnet, Jennifer M

[31] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. by Michael B. Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993); Don Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) <https://iupress.org/9780253205605/technology-and-the-lifeworld> [accessed 4 May 2020]; Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. by Mary Beth Mader (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999) <https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/irifor> [accessed 4 May 2020]; Vivian Carol Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Fred Moten, *The Universal Machine*, Consent Not to Be a Single Being, v. 3 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

Barker, Kristi McKim, Davina Quinlivan, Lucy Fife Donaldson.[32] I cite these figures as a means of showing the bridge, the line of connection between one kind of sensorial textual encounter with Tim's work, its sensitive acuity to sensation, its openness to feminist interpretation, and a branch of critical phenomenological investigation that bore me out upon it into new fields.

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Where, again, is that line between the person and the work?

What is anecdote and what is critical practice?

Where is the distinction between honouring, and weaving someone else's thoughts into one's own writing?

Or rather:

How might I harness the valences of *honour* in order to *be* honouring: Tim, his work, his writing, this volume?

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Honour appears more than once in Tim's book, *Alberto Giacometti: The Art of Relation*. First, in reference to Sophocles' vision of Oedipus who "points to his masks of honourable ruler and father […] only to find another imposed […] the one who cannot be trusted to safeguard the principles of honour and social living."[33] The point of this is pointing itself: the ability to identify what is at stake for another human embodied in art form, yet unable to identify one's own faults and failures. And yet Antigone, daughter of Oedipus, is in

[32] Martine Beugnet, *Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Kristi McKim, *Love in the Time of Cinema*, 2012 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK ; New York: Palgrave, 2011); Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014) <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-the-place-of-breath-in-cinema.html> [accessed 4 May 2020]; Lucy Donaldson, *Texture In Film*, Palgrave Close Readings in Film and Television (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014) <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137034809>.

[33] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, p. 2.

Sophocles' earlier play the one who violently ruptures conflicting codes of honour situated between sovereign state and family. Not because she is weak, nor lacking in foresight or insight, but because she refuses not to mourn her dead brother.[34] The metaphorical figure of Nick, in Anne Carson's translation, *Antigonick*, is the figure who sits, observes and measures all the events that unfold towards Antigone's inevitable death, and its bloody aftermath. And Antigone is the one who mops up every fault, failure, and fear of the generation that precedes her, as she states to her sister Ismene in Carson's opening: "Whoever it was whoever we are dear sister/ever since we were born from the evils of Oidipous/what bitterness pain disgust disgrace or moral shock have we been spared."[35] In Carson's translator's note, she writes, "dear Antigone, /I take it as the task of the translator/to forbid that you should ever lose your screams."[36] Antigone does not create logic, nor does she stop at pointing: she refuses, she breaks apart what stood in place of 'honour' before her. She screams.

I find myself in dialogue with Tim's writing, but also in dialogue with translations across art and literature, myth and trauma. In particular, with the ways that feminist irruptions and interruptions tend also to destroy what was hitherto perceived as 'honourable'. Oedipus was not honourable, though he believed himself to be so, enshrouded — ha — not quite, but exiled from the shroud of a proper death, by his own Ego. Tim the writer sits alongside Sophocles the writer, seeing both Oedipus' own self-blindness and the self-blindness that is a part of the human condition: the Ego. Antigone, particularly Carson's Antigone, rips apart both honour and Ego, she refuses anything other than death, while gasping for life that was never hers. And in place of breath, all that is left are screams. Not so far, then from the silent screams of Duras and Resnais and Samuel Beckett and Maurice Blanchot and Bertholt Brecht, all of whom feature in Tim's book on Giacometti. But instead of screams, the epilogue of *Alberto Giacometti: The Art of Relation* begins with love. A suggestion of love, in fact, pertaining to Luce Irigaray's formulation of love in *Être deux – To Be Two.*[37] Love is always relational: I love *to* you. I appreciate Tim's generosity and space-giving to love and

[34] Anne Carson, *Antigonick*, Reprint edition (New York: New Directions, 2015).
[35] Carson, p. 1.
[36] Carson, p. 1.
[37] Luce Irigaray, *Être deux* (Grasset, 1997).

other inconvenient emotions in his writing. In particular, affects that become such a fundamental part of 20th century European philosophy: love, shame, dishonour, alienation. On the very last page of *The Art of Relation*, Tim writes of honour: "Trapped in masks, in untold models and distances, Giacometti together with anyone tries to honour life."[38] There is a mysticism in this honour, an unknown relation to bodies unknown, from bodies unknown. It is, perhaps, the kind of mystical bridge that might bear some relation to Lorde's erotics, bridging the known with the unknown. I can see that mysticism in the writing of Blanchot and Barthes, Irigaray and Walter Benjamin; in all of the figures, in fact, who return in relation to Tim's writing. Lorde's erotics are feminine, but not essentialist: they move and pitch and swell.

What is writing with no space for love? What is academic writing with no space for love? Love is a space sorely tried for its academic participants, squeezed between two equally violent systems of power: the newer corporatized climate of the neoliberal university, and the older, feudal, misogynistic climate of the monastic institution. How to make space for embodiment, and sensuousness, in a way that does not become so entangled in the machinations of power that there is no space for it at all, except in screams or in silence? I realise, not for the first time, that my own writing has for years tried to service a debt to sensation and emotion. But the *onus*, the moral obligation to acknowledge the space between body and mind actually need not be a weighted space, but rather, a bridge. A bridge between the political and the spiritual like Lorde's erotics, wherein knowledge resides. A bridge to scream from, in memory of Antigone. The bridge of feminist post-phenomenologies, combined with insights from neuroscience and evolutionary psychology, Eastern philosophy, indigenous philosophies, cultures and practices, dance and movement studies, which all suggest that body *is* mind, and mind is body. This is not something new, but very, very old.

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Honouring is an embodied relation. Isn't it?

[38] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, p. 238.

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Erin Manning, in her work on movement, art and relationality, *Relationscapes* perceives relation as affective and psychosomatic movement; elastic, always in process. She writes: "relation cannot be foretold; it must be experienced. This experience is affective. Its modes will always change, perishing when no longer relevant, opening the way for new modes that continuously affect our becoming-dance. […] The essence of a relation is not its content per se but its capacity to become more-than and to create more-than."[39] Implicit in her argument is what happens to the nature of rectilinear time, and rectilinear argument, when relation is emphasised over and above destination. Ever-changing relations — to art, aesthetics, writing — are not commensurate with strict delineations of goal-driven research parameters. They cannot be foretold (and thus, perhaps, cannot be hypothesized). They must be experienced, and thus, perhaps cannot be described at one and the same moment. They are not fast; instead they are slow, meandering, oscillating. They are journeying, vagabonded, untethered. Which seem, to me, to be qualities deeply endorsed by Tim's writing, his approach to writing, and his espousal of creative-critical practice, risk-taking, and intellectual adventure.

I suppose that, in honouring Tim's work, I am thinking not so much about the 'work', the so-called series of publications, or even about a particular set of insights, so much as a set of practices, of labours, and indeed of honouring relations. These relations are very often about the practices of writing and coming to writing — the shared but different concern of so many philosophers, writers and artists of twentieth century France, not limited to Blanchot and Beckett, Irigaray and Duras, Barthes and Benjamin and Giacometti and Apollinaire, about whom Tim has written extensively. And yet, for a long time I didn't see these questions about the relational practice of writing as *existence itself*. I mean that they were and are existential questions, for me, relating to my personal, relational, writing self.

[39] Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), p. 41.

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Writing as being. Questions about art are questions about life.[40] This is what I feel in and for myself when I write. I was a writer before I became an academic. And I will likely be a writer until the day I am no longer able to articulate my thoughts on a page – and probably long after I cease to be an academic in the current orchestration of the neoliberal university.

So what is this relational honouring process, then? In academic circles, we honour by writing. The *Festschrift* is a commonly used term for such a publication – celebrating through script. Writing is a source of joy, and I feel too often that this is forgotten somewhere in the miasma of contemporary academic life. And yet in a Festschrift, the writing and honouring is a serious sort of joy. Serious, critical play. The playful labour of criticism. When did the word *critic* become so dirtied? Critical thinking is what I have always upheld – was always taught to uphold – as the gold standard of a university education. But when are we taught how to love, how to appreciate, 'critically'? How to honour without doing so senselessly? How to sense the weight and worth of a thing, to acknowledge its joy and even one's own love of the work? And sometimes, when there is no other choice, to burst asunder and at speed the world as it is known. Walter Benjamin attributed this power to film, but I am not so sure that mechanical reproduction has this capacity itself.[41] Film in relation to art, and to humans, might have that relational capacity, however, to capture and to break apart.

I wonder whether this is perhaps why description, in its fullest sensory and contextual substance, is so fundamental both to anthropological and philosophical phenomenology; to Clifford Geertz in his work 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' and to Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his ongoing investigations of bodily relations to the world and to art (in *The Phenomenology of Perception* and in *Eye and Mind*) and to Iris Marion Young in her feminist phenomenological unworking of existential phenomenology in *On Female Body Experience*.[42] Description, itself a practice of detailed writing and interrogative

[40] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, p. 1.
[41] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, trans. by Hannah Arendt, Pimlico (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 211–44.
[42] Clifford Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–30; Maurice Merleau-Ponty,

observation, becomes a means of comprehending the philosophical relationship to a concept, a context, a movement, a gender. 'Use every sense' is advice often given to the creative writing student, and this is at heart, I believe, a phenomenological invitation. But how often is the same advice offered to the academic writer? Sense and sensuousness are both bound up with practices of writing and practices of being. They are profoundly philosophical; they honour the materiality of the world in which we find ourselves.

What sense, then, is honour? I don't mean what use is it – I mean, with what senses do I honour, do I embody the process of honouring? With my hands on the keyboard, with my voice in speech, with my critical but above all personal appreciation of the possibility of writing another way. Close to poetry; close to but not overshadowed by art writing. When I delivered a workshop in June 2017 at Tim's home institution, University College London, on embodied and object-oriented writing practices, I could see the networks of honour that have sprung up partly in Tim's name, made fresh by new generations of scholars. But even more importantly, I saw this network as a set of interweaving pathways towards the creativity of critical writing practices, especially, and almost always, in relation to visual and material cultures. Honouring is about finding the sense-ful, sensuous desire lines of thought and writing, and then straying from the path to find new sensory landscapes, as Sara Ahmed suggests in *Queer Phenomenology.*[43] I believe this straying from the path to observe, and live anew, is what Tim does – has done – and why, in writing about honour, and processes of honouring, I am also writing about Tim.

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'Eye and Mind', in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 121–64; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Paul Kegan (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) <https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Phenomenology_of_Perception.html?id=q3HwhfjRmswC&redir_esc=y> [accessed 4 May 2020]; Iris Marion Young, '"Throwing Like a Girl": A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility and Spatiality', in *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 27–45.

[43] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2006).

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I fear that my intervention here lacks the scholarliness and linear rectitude that are the fundamental cultivating tools of academia.

I fear I am walking away from the fields that academia has ploughed.

I am afraid that it won't let me go.

I write slant. Or slant writes me: I can no longer tell the difference.
It writes itself slantwise.

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'It': academia, writing, whatever, is not a force, though it is an ideology, since ideologies are formed via institutions. In the writing that comes closest to what I might call my own, I fear daily accusations of a lack of rigour, as if prose-poetry were ever anything other than ruthless in its pursuit of truth. It helps, in amongst these grumbling fears, to appreciate that Tim's writing is not unafraid. It acknowledges the author's uncertainty, and his humility in the face of the mystical, unanswerable questions of life. We are all connected. We are each alone. We are each alone interconnectedly. Like Tim's reading of Giacometti's *Tête sur tige*, and the paradoxal *being singular plural* – together and yet alone, but paradoxically together in this singularity, of Jean-Luc Nancy's philosophy. Or in more direct citational relation, between Nancy's understanding of proximity without intimacy in Rembrandt's *Noli me tangere*, and Tim's encounter with Giacometti's sculpture, *La Main.*[44]

Like Tim, I was raised in a school of French thought. I am grateful to it, indebted in many ways. But by writing about ways of being that are also ways of honouring, I cannot ignore the debt owed, like all offshoots of creativity, by academic scholarship to writing. A debt owing does not have to be repaid; sometime the debt is too inconceivably large. Sometimes acknowledgement of the debt is enough. It is like a thanking of forebears, who can no longer witness — like Giacometti's sculptures, or Sophocles' Antigone — but to whom we

[44] Mathews, *Alberto Giacometti*, pp. 90–98.

bear witness, observing, sensing, reworking, translating. I think that what Tim has done, throughout his writing life, is to honour art and writing, with honesty and appreciation, often transformational, never static. Honesty and appreciation are not mutually antithetical, and both operate in relation to one another; an embodied relation, just like honour. So, it behoves me, as one writer, in relation to another, to continue that practice of honouring. By writing, and honouring, and honouring and writing. I write, and in this, I honour.

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