

## Unsustaining

Timothy Morton

“Sustainable capitalism” might be one of those contradictions in terms along the lines of “military intelligence.” Capital must keep on producing more of itself in order to continue to be itself. This strange paradox is fundamentally, structurally imbalanced. Let’s consider the unit of capitalism: the turning of raw materials into products. Now for a capitalist, the raw materials are not strictly natural. They simply pre-exist whatever labor process the capitalist is going to exert on them. Surely here we see the problem. Whatever pre-exists the specific labor process is a kind of lump that only achieves definition as valuable product once the labor has been exerted on it.

What capitalism makes is some kind of stuff called capital. The very definition of “raw materials” in economic theory is also “stuff that comes in through the factory door.” Again, it doesn’t matter what it is. It could be sharks or steel bolts. At either end of the process we have featureless chunks of stuff—one of those featureless chunks being human labor. The point is to convert the stuff that comes in to money. Industrial capitalism is philosophy incarnate in stocks, girders and human sweat. What kind of philosophy? If you want a “realism of the remainder,” just look around you. “Realism of the remainder” means that yes, for sure, there is something real outside of our (human) access to it—but we can only classify it as a kind of inert resistance to our probing, a grey goo. (I’m using a term suggested by thinking about nanotechnology—tiny machines eating everything until it becomes said goo.)

It’s no wonder that industrial capitalism has turned the Earth into a dangerous desert. It doesn’t really care what comes through the factory door, just as long as it generates more capital. Do we want to sustain a world based on a philosophy of grey goo?

Nature is the featureless remainder at either end of the process of production. Either it’s exploitable stuff, or value-added stuff. Whatever: it’s basically featureless, abstract, grey. It has nothing to do with nematode worms and orangutans, organic chemicals in comets and rock strata. You can scour the Earth from mountaintop to Marianas Trench. You will never find Nature. That’s why I put it in capitals. I want the reader to see that it’s an empty category looking for something to fill it. Grey goo.

Capitalism did away with feudal and pre-feudal myths such as the divine hierarchy between classes of people. In so doing, however, it substituted one heck of a giant myth of its own: Nature. Nature is precisely the lump that pre-exists the capitalist labor process. Martin Heidegger has the best term for it: standing reserve, *bestand*.

*Bestand* means “stuff,” as in the old ad from the 1990s, “Drink Pepsi: Get Stuff.” There is an ontology implicit in capitalist production, then, which is strictly materialism as defined by Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> Funnily enough, however, this materialism is not fascinated with material objects in all their manifold specificity. It’s just stuff. This viewpoint is the basis of Aristotle’s problem with materialism. Have you ever seen or handled matter? Have you ever held a piece of “stuff”? Sure, I’ve seen lots of objects: Santa Claus in a department store, snowflakes and photographs of atoms. But have I ever seen matter or stuff as such?

Aristotle says it's a bit like searching through a zoo to find the "animal" rather than the various species such as monkeys and mynah birds.<sup>2</sup> Marx says exactly the same thing regarding capital. "The 'expanded' form [of the commodity] passes into the 'general' form when some commodity is excluded, exempted from the collection of commodities, and thus appears as the general equivalent of all commodities, as the immediate embodiment of Commodity as such, as if, by the side of all real animals, there existed *the Animal*, the individual incarnation of the entire animal kingdom—or as if, to use an example from commercial capitalism, by the side of all real spices, there existed *the spice*."<sup>3</sup> As Nature goes, so goes matter. The two most progressive physical theories of our age, ecology and quantum theory, need have nothing to do with it.

What is *Bestand*? *Bestand* is stockpiling. Gallon after gallon of oil waiting to be tapped. Row upon row of big box houses waiting to be inhabited. Terabyte after terabyte of memory waiting to be filled. Stockpiling is the art of the zeugma—the yoking of things you hear in phrases such as "wave upon wave" or "bumper to bumper." Stockpiling is the dominant mode of social existence. Giant parking lots empty of cars, huge tables in restaurants across which you can't hold hands, vast empty lawns. Nature is stockpiling. Range upon range of mountains, receding into the distance. Rocky Flats nuclear bomb trigger factory was sited precisely to evoke this kind of mountainous stockpile. The eerie strangeness of this fact confronts us with the ways in which we still believe that Nature is "over there"—that it exists apart from technology, apart from history. Far from it. Nature is the stockpile of stockpiles.

So again, I ask, what exactly are we sustaining when we talk about sustainability? An intrinsically out of control system that sucks in grey goo at one end and pushes out grey value at the other. It's Natural goo, Natural value. Result? Mountain ranges of inertia, piling higher every year, while humans boil away in the agony of uncertainty. Just take a look at *Manufactured Landscapes*: the ocean of telephone dials, dials as far as the eye can see, somewhere in China. A real ocean—it lies there at this very moment.

Societies embody philosophies. Actually, what we have in modernity is much, much worse than just instrumentality. Here we must depart from Heidegger. What's worse is the location of essence in some *beyond*, away from any specific existence. To this extent, capitalism is itself Heideggerian! Whether we call it scientism, deconstruction, relationism or just good old-fashioned Platonic forms, there is no essence in what exists. Either the beyond is itself nonexistent (deconstruction, nihilism), or it's some kind of real away from "here." The problem, then, is not essentialism but *this very notion of a beyond*. Think of what Tony Hayward said. He said that the Gulf of Mexico was a huge ocean, and that the spill was tiny by comparison. Nature would absorb the industrial accident. I don't want to quibble about the relative size of ocean and spill, as if an even larger spill would somehow have gotten it into Hayward's thick head that it was bad news. I simply want to point out the metaphysics involved in Hayward's assertion, which we could call capitalist essentialism. The essence of reality is capital and Nature. Both exist in an ethereal beyond. Over here, where we live, is an oil spill. But don't worry. The beyond will take care of it.

Meanwhile, despite Nature, despite grey goo, real things writhe and smack into one another. Some leap out because industry malfunctions, or functions only too well. Oil bursts out of its ancient sinkhole and floods the Gulf of Mexico. Gamma rays shoot out of plutonium for

twenty-four thousand years. Hurricanes congeal out of massive storm systems, fed by the heat from the burning of fossil fuels. The ocean of telephone dials mounts ever higher. Paradoxically, capitalism has unleashed myriad *objects* upon us, in their manifold horror and sparkling splendor. Two hundred years of idealism, two hundred years of seeing humans at the center of existence, and now the objects take revenge, terrifyingly huge, ancient, long-lived, threateningly minute, invading every cell in our body.

Modern life presents us with a choice:

- 1) The essence of things is elsewhere (in the deep structure of capital, the unconscious, Being).
- 2) There is no essence.

At present I believe that the restriction of rightness and coolness to this choice is one reason why planet Earth is in big trouble right now. And I believe that the choice resembles a choice between grayish brown and brownish gray.

That's why I believe in a third choice:

- 3) There is an essence, and it's right here, in the object resplendent with its sensual qualities yet withdrawn.

And that's why I believe we are entering a new era of academic work, where the point will not be to one-up each other by appealing to the trace of the givenness of the openness of the clearing of the lighting of the being of the pencil. Thinking past "meta mode" will at least bring us up to speed with the weirdness of things, a weirdness that evolution, ecology, relativity and quantum theory all speak about. This weirdness resides on the side of objects themselves, not our interpretation of them.

When we flush the toilet, we imagine that the U-bend takes the waste away into some ontologically alien realm. Ecology is now beginning to tell us of something very different: a flattened world without ontological U-bends. A world in which there is no "away." Marx was partly wrong, then, when in *The Communist Manifesto* he claimed that in capitalism all that is solid melts into air. He didn't see how a kind of hypersolidity oozes back in to the emptied out space of capitalism, a hypersolidity I call here *hyperobjects*. This oozing real comes back and can no longer be ignored, so that even when the spill is supposedly "gone and forgotten," there, look! There it is, mile upon mile of strands of oil just below the surface, square mile upon square mile of ooze floating at the bottom of the ocean.<sup>4</sup> The cosmic U-bend is no more. It can't be gone and forgotten—even ABC News knows that now.

When I hear the word "sustainability" I reach for my sunscreen.

### **The End of the World**

When Neo touches a mirror in *The Matrix* it adheres to his hand, instantly changing from reflective surface to viscous substance. The very thing that we use to reflect becomes an object in its own right, liquid and dark like oil in the dim light of the room in which Neo has taken the red pill. The usual reading of this scene is that Neo's reality is dissolving. If we stay

on the level of the sticky, oily mirror, however, we obtain an equally powerful reading. It's not reality that dissolves, but the subject, the very capacity to "mirror" things, to be separate from the world like someone looking at a reflection in a mirror—removed from it by an ontological sheet of reflective glass. The sticky mirror demonstrates the truth of what phenomenology calls *ingenuousness* or *sincerity* (I'm thinking here of the work of Ortega y Gasset, Levinas and Graham Harman). Objects are what they are, in the sense that no matter what we are aware of, or how, there is, impossible to shake off. In the midst of irony, there you are, being ironic. Even mirrors are what they are, no matter what they reflect.<sup>5</sup> In its ingenuous sincerity, reality envelops us like a film of oil. The mirror becomes a *substance*, an object. Hyperobjects push the reset button on sincerity, just as Neo discovers that the mirror no longer distances his image from him in a nice, aesthetically manageable way, but sticks to him.

The beautiful reversibility of the oily, melting mirror speaks to something that is happening in a global warming age, precisely because of hyperobjects: the simultaneous dissolution of reality and the overwhelming presence of hyperobjects, which stick to us, which are us. The Greeks called it *miasma*, the way blood-guilt sticks to you.

Why objects, why now? The philosopher Graham Harman writes that, because they withdraw irreducibly, you can't even get closer to objects.<sup>6</sup> This becomes clearer as we enter the ecological crisis—"How far in are we?" This anxiety is a symptom of the emergence of hyperobjects. When you approach them, more and more objects emerge. It's like being in a dream written by Zeno. This strange paradox becomes clearer as we enter the age of ecological crisis—"Has it started yet? How far in are we?" is the question on all our lips, precisely because we *are in it*, precisely because it *has started*.

It's November 2010. You are waiting at a bus stop. Someone else ambles up. "Nice weather, isn't it?" she asks.

You pause for a moment. You wonder whether she is only saying that to distract you from the latest news about global warming. You decide she isn't.

"Yes," you say. But your reply holds something back—the awareness that for you it's not a particularly nice day, because you're concerned that the heat and the moisture have to do with global warming. This holding back may or may not be reflected in your tone.

"Mind you," she says. "Oh, here it comes," you think. "Funny weather last week, wasn't it? I blame global warming."

We all have conversations that are more or less like that now. Just as after 9/11 objects to which we may have paid attention—an Exact-O-Knife, some white powder—suddenly gained a terrible significance, so in an age of global warming the weather—that nice neutral backdrop that you can talk about with a stranger, in that nice neutral backdrop-y way we might call *phatic* (after Roman Jakobson)—has taken on a menacing air.<sup>7</sup>

In any weather conversation, one of you is going to mention global warming at some point. Or you both decide not to mention it but it looms over the conversation like a dark cloud, brooding off the edge of an ellipsis.

This failure of the normal rhetorical routine, these remnants of shattered conversation lying around like broken hammers (they must take place everywhere), is a symptom of a much larger and deeper ontological shift in human awareness. Which in turn is a symptom of a profound upgrade of our ontological tools. As anyone who has waited while the little rainbow circle goes around and around on a Mac, these upgrades are not necessarily pleasant. It is very much the job of humanists such as ourselves to attune ourselves to the upgrading process and to help explain it.

What is the upgrading process? In a word, the notion that we are living “in” a world—one that for instance we can call Nature—no longer exists in any meaningful sense, except as nostalgia or in the temporarily useful local language of pleas and petitions. We don’t want a certain species to be farmed to extinction, so we use the language of Nature to convince a legislative body. We have a general feeling of ennui and malaise and create nostalgic visions of Hobbit-like worlds to inhabit. These syndromes have been going on now since as long as the Industrial Revolution began to take effect.

As a consequence of that Revolution, however, something far bigger and more threatening is now looming on our horizon—looming so as to abolish our horizon, or any horizon, in fact. Global warming, the consequence of runaway fossil fuel burning (as we all know ad nauseam), has performed a radical shift in the status of the weather. Why? Because *the world* as such—not just a certain idea of world but *world* in its entirety—has evaporated. Or rather, we are realizing that we never had it in the first place.

We could explain this in terms of the good old-fashioned Aristotelian view of substance and accident. I’m sure you are familiar with the idea that for Aristotle, a realist, there are substances that happen to have various qualities or *accidents* that are not intrinsic to their substantiality. In section Epsilon 2 of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle outlines the differences between substances and accidents. What climate change has done is shift the weather from accidental to substantial. Here’s Aristotle:

Suppose, for instance, that in the season of the Cynosure [the Dog Days of summer] arctic cold were to prevail, this we would regard as an accident, whereas, if there were a sweltering heatwave, we would not. And this is because the latter, unlike the former, is always or for the most part the case.<sup>8</sup>

But these sorts of violent changes are exactly what global warming predicts. So every accident of the weather becomes a potential symptom of a substance, global warming. So all of a sudden this wet stuff falling on my head is a mere feature of some much more sinister phenomenon that I can’t see with my naked human eyes. I need terabytes of RAM processing speed to model it in real time (they were just able to do this in spring 2008).

There is an even spookier problem with Aristotle’s arctic summer. If those Arctic summers continue in any way, and if we can model them as symptoms of global warming, it is the case that there *never was* a genuine, meaningful (for us humans) sweltering summer, just a long period of sweltering that seemed real because it kept on repeating for say two or three millennia. Global warming, in other words, plays a very mean trick. It reveals that what we took to be a reliable world was actually just a habitual pattern—a collusion between forces

such as sunshine and moisture and us humans expecting such things at certain regular intervals and giving them names, such as Dog Days. We took weather to be real. But in an age of global warming we see it as an accident, a simulation of something darker, more withdrawn—climate. As Harman argues, “world” is always presence-at-hand—a mere caricature of some real object.<sup>9</sup> What Ben Franklin and others in the Romantic period discovered was not really weather, but rather a toy version of this real object, a toy that ironically started to unlock the door to the real thing.

Strange weather patterns and carbon emissions acted on scientists to start monitoring things that at first only appeared locally significant. That’s the old school definition of climate: there’s the climate in Peru, the climate on Long Island, but climate in general, climate as the totality of derivatives of weather events—in much the same way as inertia is a derivative of velocity—climate as such is a beast newly recognized via the collaboration of weather, scientists, satellites, government agencies and so on. This beast includes the Sun since it’s infrared heat from the Sun that is trapped by the greenhouse effect of gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>. So global warming is a colossal entity that includes entities that exist way beyond Earth’s atmosphere and yet it affects us intimately, right here and now. Global warming is a prime example of what I am calling a *hyperobject*, an object that is massively distributed in space-time, and radically transforms our ideas of what an object is. It covers the entire surface of Earth and most of the effects extend forwards up to 500 years into the future. Remember what life was like in 1510?

You are walking on top of lifeforms. Your car drove here on lifeforms. The iron in Earth’s crust is distributed bacterial excrement. The oxygen in our lungs is bacterial out-gassing. Oil is the result of some dark secret collusion between rocks and algae and plankton millions and millions of years in the past. When you look at oil you’re looking at the past. Hyperobjects are time-stretched to such a vast extent that they become almost impossible to hold in mind. And they are intricately bound up with lifeforms.

The spooky thing is, we discover global warming precisely when it’s already here. It is like realizing that for some time you had been conducting your business in the expanding sphere of a slow motion nuclear bomb. You have a few seconds for amazement as the fantasy that you inhabited a neat, seamless little world melts away. All those apocalyptic narratives of doom about the “end of the world” are, from this point of view, part of the problem, not part of the solution. By postponing doom into some hypothetical future, these narratives inoculate us against the very real object that has intruded into ecological, social and psychic space.

If there is no background—no neutral, peripheral stage set of weather, but a very visible, highly monitored, publicly debated climate—then there is no foreground. Foregrounds need backgrounds to exist. So the strange effect of dragging weather phenomena into the foreground as part of our awareness of global warming has been the gradual realization that there is no foreground! The idea that we are embedded in a phenomenological lifeworld, for instance, tucked up like little hobbits into the safety of our burrow, has been exposed as a fiction. The specialness we granted ourselves as unravelers of cosmic meaning (Heideggerian *Da-sein* for instance) falls apart since there is no meaningfulness possible in a world without a foreground-background distinction. Worlds need horizons and horizons need backgrounds, which need foregrounds. When we can see everywhere—when I can Google Earth the fish

in my mom's pond in her garden in London—the world—as a significant, bounded, horizonizing entity—disappears. We have no world because the objects that functioned as invisible scenery for us, as backdrops, have dissolved.<sup>10</sup>

*World* turns out to be an aesthetic effect based on a kind of blurriness and aesthetic distance. This blurriness derives from an entity's ignorance concerning objects. Only in ignorance can objects act like blank screens for the projection of meaning. "Red sky at night, shepherd's delight" is a charming old saw that evokes days when shepherds lived in worlds, worlds bounded by horizons on which things occurred such as red sunsets. The sun goes down, the sun comes up—of course now we know it doesn't, so Galileo and Copernicus tore big holes in that particular notion of world. Likewise, as soon as humans know about climate, weather becomes a flimsy, superficial appearance that is a mere local representation of some much larger phenomenon that is strictly invisible. You can't see or smell climate. Given our brains' processing power, we can't even really think about it all that concretely. You could say then that we still live in a world, only massively upgraded. True, but now *world* means significantly less than it used to—it doesn't mean "significant for humans" or even "significant for conscious entities."

A simple experiment demonstrates plainly that *world* is an aesthetic phenomenon. I call it *The Lord of the Rings* vs. The Ball Popper Test. For this experiment you will need a copy of the second part of Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. You will also require a Playskool Busy Ball Popper, made by Hasbro.

Now play the scene that I consider to be the absolute nadir of horror, when Frodo, captured by Faramir, is staggering around the bombed-out city Osgiliath when a Nazgul (a ringwraith) attacks on a "fell beast," a terrifying winged dragon-like creature.

Switch on the ball popper. You will notice the inane tunes that the popper plays instantly undermine the coherence of Peter Jackson's narrative world.

The idea of *world* depends upon all kinds of mood lighting and mood music, aesthetic effects that by definition contain a kernel of sheer ridiculous meaninglessness. It's the job of serious Wagnerian worlding to erase the trace of this meaninglessness. Jackson's trilogy surely is Wagnerian, a total work of art or *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which elves, dwarves and men have their own languages, their own tools, their own architecture—this is done to fascist excess as if they were different sports teams. But it's easy to recover the trace of meaninglessness from this seamless world—absurdly easy, as the toy experiment proves.

Stupid Kids' Toy 5, Wagnerian Tolkien movie Nil. What can we learn from this? "World," a key concept in ecophenomenology, is an illusion. And objects for sure have a hidden weirdness. In effect, the Stupid Kids' Toy "translated" the movie, clashing with it and altering it in its own limited and unique way.

In Lakewood, Colorado, residents objected to the building of a solar array in a park in 2008 because it didn't look "natural."<sup>11</sup> Objections to wind farms are similar—not because of the risk to birds, but because they "spoil the view." A 2008 plan to put a wind farm near a remote Scottish island was, well, scotched, because residents of the island complained that their view would be destroyed. This is truly a case of the aesthetics of Nature impeding

ecology, and a good argument for why ecology must be without Nature. How come a wind turbine is less beautiful than an oil pipe? How come it “spoils the view” any more than pipes and roads?

You could see turbines as environmental art. Wind chimes play in the wind; some environmental sculptures sway and rock in the breeze. Wind farms have a slightly frightening size and magnificence. One could easily read them as embodying the aesthetics of the sublime (rather than the beautiful). But it’s an ethical sublime, that says, “We humans choose not to use carbon”—a choice visible in gigantic turbines. Perhaps it’s this very visibility of choice that makes wind farms disturbing: visible choice, rather than secret pipes, running under an apparently undisturbed “landscape” (a word for a painting, not actual trees and water). (And now of course there are wind spires, which do reproduce a kind of aesthetic distance common in landscape painting.) As a poster in the office of Mulder in *The X-Files* used to say, “The Truth is Out There.” Ideology is not just in your head. It’s in the shape of a Coke bottle. It’s in the way some things appear “natural” — rolling hills and greenery — as if the Industrial Revolution had never occurred. These fake landscapes are the original greenwashing. What the Scots are saying, in objecting to wind farms, is not “Save the environment!” but “Leave our dreams undisturbed!” World is an aesthetic construct that depends on things like underground oil and gas pipes. A profound political act would be to choose another aesthetic construct, one that doesn’t require smoothness and distance and coolness.

Standard ecological criticism depends upon different concepts of “world.” Indeed, it derives this concept from philosophical thinking about climate, for instance in the proto-nationalist thinking of Humboldt and Herder, or from biological racism that says that I’m white because I was born in a northern climate. This concept is by no means doing what it should to help ecological criticism. Indeed, the more we see and know about ecology, as is inevitable in an era of ecological crisis, the more of that sheer meaninglessness we have. What an irony: the more data we have, the less it signifies a coherent world.

It’s Heidegger, more than anyone else, that generates the concept of world for contemporary ecological philosophy and cultural analysis. In particular, in “The Question Concerning Technology” and “On the Origin of the Work of Art,” *world* is what is created or “enframed” by equipment. This definition has given rise to the now pervasive doctrine of “worlding,” whereby cultural artifacts embody the world in various ways: to a hammer, everything looks like a nail, as they say.

Now for a kick off, there are many reasons why, even if world were a valid concept altogether, it shouldn’t be used as the basis for ethics. Consider only this: witch-ducking stools constitute a world just as much as hammers. There was a wonderful world of witch-ducking in the Middle Ages. Witch-ducking stools constituted a world for their users in every meaningful sense. There is for sure a world of Nazi regalia. Just because the Nazis had a world, doesn’t mean we should be preserving it. So the argument that “It’s good because it constitutes a world” is, to use the technical term, bogus. The reasoning that one should not interfere with the environment because doing so interferes with someone’s or something’s world is nowhere near a good enough reason. It might even have pernicious consequences. So I’m afraid we must part with Donna Haraway, whose ethics insists that nonhumans are worthy of our care and respect because they constitute worlds, they are in the worlding

business. I part company with Haraway here, just as she parts with me, since she thinks that what I'm proposing by contrast is "exterminism"—getting entities oven-ready for destruction. To which I reply, how can you get an entity that doesn't exist ready for destruction?

The second area of concern is historical, namely the way in which current ecological crises such as global warming and the Sixth Mass Extinction Event have thrown into sharp relief the notion of *world*. It is as if humans are losing their world, and their idea of *world* (including the idea that they ever had one), at one and the same time. This is at best highly disorientating. In this historical moment, the concept *world* is thrown into sharp relief by circumstances demanding conscious human intervention. Working to transcend our notion of *world* is important at this moment. Like a mannerist painting that stretches the rules of classicism to breaking point, global warming has stretched our *world* to breaking point. Human beings lack a world for a very good reason. This is simply because no entity at all has a world, or as Graham Harman puts it, "there is no such thing as a 'horizon'."<sup>12</sup>

Let's think about one way in which global warming abolishes the idea of a horizon. This would be the timescales involved—yes, timescales in the plural. There are three of them. We could call these, in turn, the frightening, the horrifying, and the petrifying.

- 1) Frightening timescale. It will take several hundred years for cold ocean waters (assuming there are any) to absorb about 75% of the excess CO<sub>2</sub>.
- 2) Horrifying timescale. It will then take another 30,000 years or so for most of the remaining 25% to be absorbed by igneous rocks. The half-life of plutonium is 24,100 years.
- 3) Petrifying timescale. The final 7% will be around 100,000 years from now.

There is a real sense in which "forever" is far easier on the mind than these very large timescales, what I call very large finitude. Hyperobjects produce very large finitude, scales of time and space that are finite and for that reason humilatingly difficult for humans to visualize. Forever makes you feel important. 100,000 years makes you wonder whether you can imagine 100,000 anything. It seems rather abstract to imagine that a book, for instance, is 100,000 words long.

The "world" as the significant totality of what is the case is strictly unimaginable, and for a good reason: it doesn't exist.

What is left if we aren't the world? Intimacy. We have lost the world but gained a soul, as it were—the entities that coexist with us obtrude on our awareness with greater and greater urgency. Our era is witness to the emergence of a renewed Aristotelianism, an *object-oriented ontology* that thinks essence as right here, not in some beyond. It's precisely the magical amazement of things like stones, beetles, doors, red hot chili peppers, Nirvana, Bob Geldof, quasars and cartoon characters in the shape of Richard Nixon's head that truly has to be explained, not explained away. Three cheers for the so-called *end of the world*, then, since this moment is the beginning of history, the end of the human dream that reality is significant for

humans alone—the prospect of forging new alliances between humans and nonhumans alike, now that we have stepped out of the cocoon of *world*.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, tr. Hugh Lawson-Hughes (London: Penguin, 2004), 45–47.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 213, 217.

<sup>3</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 124.

<sup>4</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/oil-bp-spill-found-bottom-gulf/story?id=11618039>

<sup>5</sup> Graham Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), 135–6.

<sup>6</sup> Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics*, 86.

<sup>7</sup> Roman Jakobson, “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), 350–377.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 158–159.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 2002), 127.

<sup>10</sup> Harman, *Tool-Being*, 21–22.

<sup>11</sup> *Lakewood Sentinel* (July 31, 2008), [http://www.milehighnews.com/Articles-i-2008-07-31-207468.114125\\_Residents\\_upset\\_about\\_park\\_proposal.html](http://www.milehighnews.com/Articles-i-2008-07-31-207468.114125_Residents_upset_about_park_proposal.html); *Lakewood Sentinel* (August 7, 2008), [http://www.milehighnews.com/Articles-i-2008-08-07-207541.114125\\_Solar\\_foes\\_focus\\_in\\_the\\_dark.html](http://www.milehighnews.com/Articles-i-2008-08-07-207541.114125_Solar_foes_focus_in_the_dark.html); *Lakewood Sentinel* (August 14, 2008), 1, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Harman, *Tool-Being*, 155.