

In search of a new realm. Metamodern and object-oriented ontology as two sides of same philosophy

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Abstract. *Object-oriented ontology and metamodern cultural theory are two most vivid innovations in philosophy. They emerged and developed separately, and they lack evident common aspects. Nonetheless, when it comes to their simultaneous application, they do have some elements that allow us to consider them within a single worldview model. In this essay the authors strive to consider new ontology and metamodern as two sides of the same coins that are not only connected but also mutually enriching and complementing.*

Key words: *object-oriented ontology, metamodern, oscillation, new sincerity, anthropocentrism, posthumanism, metaphysics, epistemology, correlationism*

Throughout the whole existence of human rational thought, ontology as a field of philosophy has been one of the fundamental ways to describe existence from the point of cognizing subject. Ancient Greek concept of the human learning the world through cognizable objects has not changed in the past 2000 years. And one of its key ideas (same applies for philosophy in general) is to search for some basic convention about the essence of the objects in this world. Aristotle in his “Metaphysics” implied something like that:

We have said in the Ethics what the difference is between art and science faculties; but the point of our present discussion is this, that all men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things; so that, as has been said before, the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the masterworker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive.

Clearly then Wisdom is knowledge about certain principles and causes.³

The aim of ontology is to give a fundamental unified idea of what the existence is and how it is revealed to a spectator.

Philosophers had no doubt that everything that has an ontological status is being cognized, can be cognized or postulated (not being cognized though) by our mind. It is important to mention that according to some researchers the transcendental (things that our mind is ready to recognize as existent) also has its ontological status since the human holds divine nature being a God's creation. However, "hold" does not equal to "know" and we exist with only the feeling and phenomenon of God, «two cities remain intermixed and intermingled with each other until they are finally separated at the last judgment».⁴ René Descartes points out correctly that we constantly cognize, sometimes even for no particular reason. We do that just because we are curious.

Mortals are possessed by a curiosity so blind that they often lead their minds through unknown paths, without any ground for hope, but simply venturing on the chance that what they seek might lie that way...⁵

Our cognitive curiosity leads to the anthropocentric paradigm: I strive to find the truth of the world, I make the results of the search mine and only I am in charge of what is mine in the experience. Here "I" does not mean a particular individual but the human mind globally. We constantly think that this world and philosophy strives to create approaches with clearly defined and described instruments of cognition. Naturally, the instruments should target things with ontological status that are given in either potential or complete form of existence. Here emerges the question of implicit/explicit and «unbeing being», entering the transcendental sphere but as it was already mentioned even the transcendental can have ontological status and thus it does not break usual definition of "reality" as something that is really present.

This approach worked well in classical philosophical paradigm because as long as we are in the reality we cognize and work with it. But the challenges the human had to face in end of XX century caused a seemingly-indestructible foundation of ontology to erode. The first precedent was Edmund Husserl's «Back to the things themselves».

However, everything said here by the empiricist is based on misunderstandings and prejudices no matter how well meant or how good the motive which originally guided him. The essential fault in empiricistic argumentation consists of identifying or confusing the fundamental demand for a return to the "things themselves" with the demand for legitimation of all cognition by experience.

With his comprehensible naturalistic constriction of the limits bounding cognizable "things," the empiricist simply takes experience to be the only act that is presentive

of things themselves. But things are not simply mere things belonging to Nature, nor is actuality in the usual sense simply all of actuality; and that originally presentive act which we call experience relates only to actuality in Nature.⁶

Philosophical phenomenology leads the human to a new reality where instead of naturalistic orientation we are offered to practice Epoché (“bracketing” anything that was known before the object of cognition was met) and phenomenological reduction (disabling our natural attitude step-by-step in order to clear the mind and get the purest knowledge). Why this approach does not reinforce the ontology but weakens it? At first glance that is a perfect way to draw attention to the “beingness” of reality, treat it with even more awe and respect by removing everything personal and redundant.

The answer to that is the ideas of Jean Baudrillard: hyperreality and simulacrum. Simulacra that are fake copies without the original create new reality but are not founded on anything. This unfounded reality becomes hyperreality that strives to give a feeling of existence but if the human tries to go further they will bump into void. And here is the irony: phenomenological reduction denied everything “human” so a human being could see the world as it is. But it turned out that the conditions of “pure world” do not save the cognizing subject from facing the uselessness of their cognitive acts. Now they ask not the world but themselves: who am I? If Baudrillard’s “world of things” has so much influence over people, can we still consider them subjects in this world? Anthropocentric principle in ontology and epistemology fades more and more. Anthropocentrism goes through the same stages as image, according to Baudrillard:⁷

1. Initially, anthropocentrism was the only way since the human did not know anything about the world (is the reflection of basic reality).
2. Next, anthropocentrism causes a “know something” feeling that the human discovered some essences of religion and science. They are used to explain the reality (It masks and perverts a basic reality)
3. Humankind forms philosophy and methodology of cognition and explains different things not explicitly but implicitly (at this stage the reality we strive to perceive is doubted—is it real at all?)
4. At last we are in a situation when this world does not exist, it is replaced by entities without real analogues (advertisement, social media). Reality is in the human’s hands, but it has nothing in common with actual reality. Anthropocentric epistemology deals with empty objects and even though we strive to keep improving our cognitive and thinking abilities we have nothing to work with.

This way globalization, unification and commercialization became harbingers or postmodern epoch that declared the death of the author and moreover, the subject.

The human gives up his role of the initial point in understanding and interpretation to the product that is to be interpreted by the human. This radically shifts the accents in understanding and perceiving this artificial world we created.

In classical ontology subject not only exists but is active in its cognition that targets the reality and is personal and internally-conditioned. Object-oriented ontology defies this concept. We had mentioned a similar situation in philosophical phenomenology where any social and ideological add-ons were “bracketed”. As Louis Althusser fairly noted, the human is not the initial point, but the result of theoretical reflection and we cannot explain social things through a human being.

The upcoming epoch of the new ontology is meant to conciliate us with the death of the subject and give a new vision of how we can interact with reality. Manuel DeLanda, for instance, suggests the concept of “the new ontology for social sciences” where the meaning of “individual” changes and “individual entities” emerge.

However, despite the fact that the term "individual" can be thus correctly applied to species it still carries with it a host of connotations which must be eliminated.

Besides its association with organisms, it also carries connotations of individual personhood, with its linkages to problems of consciousness, free will and the like. It may therefore be clearer to speak of "individual entities" instead of "individuals", using the term not as a noun but as an ontological qualifier.⁸

No “human” any more, only an individual entity that is defined by its population, context and reality.

There is one more project that seems the most interesting and operable in the context of hyperreality and anthropocentrism—objective-oriented ontology (OOO). OOO representatives criticize correlationism (in OOO that is the link between the reality and mind), try to overcome it and get the ontology out of the bonds of the human mind, break the subject-object link. On that Quentin Meillassoux says:

Correlationism rests on an argument as simple as it is powerful, which can be formulated as follows: there can be no X without a givenness of X, and no theory about X without a positing of X. If you speak about something, the correlationist will say, you speak about something that is given to you, and posited by you. The argument for this thesis is as simple to formulate as it is difficult to refute: it can be called the “argument from the circle”, and consists in remarking that every objection against correlationism, is an objection produced by your thinking, and so dependent upon it.⁹

We cannot imagine this X without ourselves because we do not know the actual reality and cannot separate the pure features of reality from those emerging during our interaction with it. Here emerges the issue of “privileged access” that is endowing the human with some features or privileges compared to other things in the world by different philosophical realms.

Meillassoux offers a different way of thinking that allows us to get away from correlationism. We must admit that physical laws of reality are no necessity but just a result of our observations and explanations. We cannot state that our representation of the Universe is absolute true, cannot deny the idea that everything can work differently. Our idea of causal relationship is just **ours**, expectations and confirming results are not guarantee but just facticity. A rationalist knows that it is impossible to prove the principal necessity of these laws. But we can accept the facticity of their occurrence, thus the facts can change. Looking for correlations makes no sense since they are substantial and momentary, they do not reach the level of general ontological concepts that could be called categories, universals or at least noumena. Laws of nature for Meillassoux are contingent, not unnecessary.

OOO understanding is not full without Graham Harman. For him the human mind is just one of myriads. Dividing the world into physical and spiritual is of no use since from that point of view the whole nature is opposed to the human as spirit carrier. Probably the human has some features of existence that let them make complex impressions about the reality, but what makes anyone conclude that the human is “better”? Why idealists reckon that the reflection of idea happens in very (or at least only) human mind? Why Immanuel Kant thinks that the human is destined to not realize things-in-themselves?

We criticize Kant for his assumption that the specter of
the thing-in-itself haunts only human beings. After all,
any object is finite in its ability to enter into relations with
other objects, and therefore any relation—including simple inanimate
causal interaction—is nothing more than a translation
of the thing in itself into its own finite plane of this relationship.¹⁰

Harman’s book “Speculative Realism: An Introduction” that we cited here literally turns the world upside down. Before, the human imagined themselves as epistemological summit (they were the cognizing subject, they notice all the connections of this world) and now emerges the viewpoint that everything including the human is only a set of objects and this set is uncountable. The human as substantial mediator is no longer necessary. New objects can appear on their own in their interaction without the influence of mankind. It is worth mentioning that Harman distinguishes two object types—real and caricature. Real are the objects as

they really are. Caricatures are sensational ones that are interacted with. In “Guerrilla Metaphysics” he states:

It cannot be said that stone and fire simply collide with the qualities of other objects: fire does not burn away the “whiteness”, “combustibility” or “cottoniness” of cotton, just as stone does not destroy the “brittleness” or “glassiness”. On the contrary, fire burns cotton, and a stone breaks a window. Yet these objects do not completely touch each other, as each of them hides additional secrets that the other cannot, such as when the light scent of cotton and the ominous glare of fire remain deaf to each other's songs. In short, inanimate causality is driven into the same mysterious middle ground as the no-man's-land of human perception, belonging neither to qualities nor objects, but only object-oriented, even at the mysterious level of tangible elements.¹¹

That is how OOO builds a completely new world that ontologically has no place for the subject and many objects. Lake surface rippled by the wind is ontological phenomenon that is as real and valuable as our idea of why an apple inevitably falls down. It does not matter if a human sees the surface or the apple since we do not have the privileged status of spectator but rather included into this system along with others. Mankind has finally discovered how to get away from anthropocentrism without destroying everything philosophy had acquired and refusing previous experience. We just need to discontinue believing that the human is a stating and universalizing point.

Interesting enough, the ideas of OOO and other “new ontology” projects are actively used in history and archaeology. Prehistory theoreticians (for instance Benjamin Alberti¹² or Bjørnar Olsen¹³) believed the ideas to be precise and meaningful enough to describe the world that's complicated to the modern human. The world where magical thinking prevails, and particular artifacts of the past are spiritualized or at least have the ability to interact with a human being and everything human. Husserl's «Back to the things themselves» now obtains ironically-historical context since before philosophy appeared prehistoric societies knew what modern philosophy gets to know in a hard way. Even the procedure of archaeological research requires to consider the artifacts as actual and active participants of restoration of the past. Archaeologists are quitting to consider a number of objects as “complex of objects” but regard them as “assemblage” where researchers and finds play equal role. A simple stone tool is no more a mute source of information but an independent object with a set of features that is involved in both prehistoric and archaeological research processes. “Rock metamorphicity”, “hardness”, “polishedness”, “life cycle”, “traces of use” and “characteristic typological markers” become the features that are revealed by the find depending on its individual will and correct, thoughtful choice of methods

of communication, which is up to the researcher. This will not lead to a global reconsideration of archaeological reality but will reduce the contrariness in the production of archaeological interpretations of particular subject or assembly in general, which means less subjectivity in studies. These ideas in archaeological theory are based not only on processual and postprocessual experience that reflects the discussion on postmodern as epistemological system but also on Graham Harman's thoughts.

Harman's world is static since the objects are not relative to each other in their existence. Here emerges the smart relativism: sensual objects (caricatures) interact and create motion. During cognition the human faces the results of this motion but keeps in mind that everything that they experienced about a thing does not give the idea of what this thing is. This is true for features of objects that cognition interacts with real features are unavailable in experience since we face only sensual ones. This system is not isolated; it exists in constant tension between different poles. According to Harman the tension between sensual objects and their quality forms time and space is formed by tension between real objects and sensual features. Eidos is tension between sensual object and real feature and unknowability is tension between real object and real feature. This quaternary system is speculative but explains well why unknowable is unknowable but eidos is still available for cognition.

OOO denies the idea of the privileged cognizing subject but makes the human much more important and valuable. Everything becomes indeed very relative and mankind in this system loses fulcrum since absolutism does not work in OOO. Nevertheless, it opens completely new ways to interact with the world and culture and allows living in hyperreality without an urge to overcome it. The human as a cognition process participant becomes more sincere and true since instead of urge to subdue the world there is an attempt to comprehend the rules and norms of the new game of understanding. Moreover, these are not just rules and norms but particular level agreements under which familiar concepts are reconsidered.

Such state of affairs has led to an interesting oddity, which has to do with the human strategies of cognition and being in the world. The postmodern that created the idea of the death of the subject also formed the background for object-oriented ontology and accustomed us to perceive ourselves (an individual) as we were detached from the world, unable to get to the hardly reachable truth and interact with it in any way. Since we are enclosed inside our own worldview and cannot go beyond our perception, we are unable to understand *The Other*. Naturally, lack of understanding leads to the loss of trust and ability of making agreements.

As a result, the cultural situation that created post-humanistic ideas and caused new ontological shift also induced the structure of feeling that hinders us from cognizing the objects and interacting with them. Without the ability to trust and make agreements and most important—without the faith in these attempts, the being of an individual in the new ontological reality lacks instruments of communication with it. This way the cultural logic of postmodern does not correspond to cognitive demand

of XXI century and simply does not work. The “death of postmodern”, which was declared barely before its birth, has started to make its appearance in particular entities of culture—mainly in literature, movies, art, and virtual reality creations.

Following the argumentation of Fredric Jameson, who is known by the most systematic attempts to describe postmodern as phenomenon that can be described at all (as opposed to ultimately abstract and subjective description by Ihab Hassan¹⁴), appears a new structure of feeling that naturally replaces the old, postmodern, which he defined as lacking the depth of perception of the future.¹⁵ Question is, how do we describe and comprehend it so it would fit the philosophical and cultural demands of the XXI century, which are associated mostly with ontological shift?

Attempts to discuss the culture of the XXI century are fruitless if they base on the changes in the ways of constructing a narrative—virtual realities, interactivity, distribution of cybertext and other discoveries of cyber epoch. The reason is not that these strategies were developed long before the appearance of the modern culture¹⁶, but rather that when we describe the instruments for translation of the structure of feeling (or cultural situation) we are far from describing the cultural situation itself and do not say anything about how an individual entity feels, cognizes and interacts with the world. That is why cybermodernism and digimodernism by Alan Kirby are left out of the new ontology and he understands their flaw: “at least so far, is a cultural desert”¹⁷ empty without the interactive characters.

Same thing makes discussions on post-postmodern or still unfinished postmodern ineffective and irrelevant—new cultural situation and new structure of feeling require new terms to describe it and postmodern toolkit can’t do that (nevertheless, postmodern still has great influence on everything that happens now and will happen in culture until another global shift in the human mindset). Since the beginning of the last decade of the previous millennia this was postulated, first of all, in fiction literature. The harbinger of the new feeling was David Foster Wallace who was the first to say about the new sincerity and how to stay together despite the walls of perception that separate us.^{18, 19}

Now it seems that the idea of the new sincerity indeed reflects a particular cultural situation. Since it is pretty concise it reflects it as a specific aspect of larger constructs rather than as a standalone concept.

Among all the available ways to describe post-postmodernism the most popular and effective is metamodernism by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker. First of all, due to “width of swab”—theoreticians from Netherlands based on philosophy, theory of literature and Jameson’s ideas of structure of feeling and created a model that simply incorporated many others by absorbing them as particular component of metamodern worldview or interacted with some of their aspects. Same destiny was meant for the ideas of “new sincerity” that were absorbed by metamodern “return of affect”²⁰ and Raoul Eshelman’s performatism that “has similar broad pretensions to explaining post-postmodernism in regard to literature, art, photography, architecture and theory”; Eshelman mentions, however, that the

latter “describes works of art, literature, architecture and so on, in terms of specific techniques and the implicit norms regulating their usage and does not apply these to politics or societal discourse”, returning thus rather to the methodological strategies than to the structure of a feeling and any kind of cultural logic.²¹

Despite metamodernism theoreticians quit attempting to build a strategy they formed sufficiently systematic approach to the description of the new structure of feeling and consider it to come from humanistic demands of the human and the humankind.²³ The current situation together with threat of terrorism and humanitarian disaster calls us to action and consequently gets us out of postmodern cul-de-sac. After the deconstruction of postmodernism comes the desire to reconstruct.²⁴ Reconstruction is impossible for a single human. No social processes, humanitarian actions or mankind saving activities cannot be successful for one person since the era of postmodern superheroes is over (just like the epoch of ancient Greek Demigods and romantism’s dawn conquerors). This means that we need to go back to the society, structure, communication. It is necessary to unite again, create new spaces and new models together. But is it possible in the atmosphere of misunderstanding and mistrust where communication is destined to fail? And is it possible in the world of constant irony and postmodern skepticism? Vermeulen and van den Akker say “no” and that means they call to search a new way to communicate and build the system of trust.

The “new sincerity” by Wallace becomes the foundation, the basis for the system of trust. It was reconsidered as the idea of the “return of the affect”, the new sensuality and the return to emotions of naïvete and nostalgia. The sincerity of the individual entity gives the reason to suggest that The Other is also sincere, to trust it and believe in the possibility of constructive communication. Same way we can get back the faith that a particular truth over the horizon is reachable. Naturally, it is distant and invisible by itself. In order to start the movement towards the aim it is necessary to believe and assume its existence and availability. By rebuilding and reobtaining the system of trust the metamodern “return of the affect” gets us back the ability to make agreements, to communicate and cooperate rather than do things alone. The human after postmodernism becomes progressively more sincere and true, and consequently, they are more likely to understand the other instead of conquering it and approach the target along with the other instead of stepping over it. Metamodern affect becomes the foundation of the new structure of feeling that defines the cultural logic of post-postmodern world and frames our mechanism of cognition and perception of The Other individual entities.

One of the most important elements of metamodern feeling is the eternal and continuous oscillation between many opposing ideas. First and most important opposites are modern and postmodern experiences — the need for (re-)construction returns us to naïve and optimistic truths of modern that predicted a happy end in different manifestations for the humankind. The experience of the XX century proves that such truth is unconstructive, does not lead to the happy end and blind faith in

them is silly. The oscillation between naïve, a bit artificial faith in the assumed reachability of the truth and the understanding that it is truly illusory (that means the constant doubt in rationality of applied efforts) becomes the main difference between metamodernism and other structures of feeling of Contemporary time. The thing is that a metamodernist rationally understands two poles simultaneously and is present at both of them at the same time. But the situation calls to action *as if*²⁵ it can lead to the desired and achievable result.²⁶ Ironically, the strategy of sincerity of the XXI century is the pretending, naïve suggestion about the possibility of sincerity and constant doubt that this suggestion is justifiable.

With such set of descriptive characteristics (need for constructivity; strive for social; to “be with”; return of the affect: oscillation) metamodernism becomes a convenient tool for the description and research of phenomena of the modern literature. When it comes to the search of its expression in other forms of art it is necessary to look for and form an auxiliary toolkit that would allow describing the means of expression of this very metamodern feeling. The ideas and concepts adopted from other methods of post-postmodernism description will be of use here: performatism double framing and interactivity, incorporation of digimodernism etc. Some modern culture phenomena can barely be described by the means of the model, and some are easier to think of from the position of postmodernism. This becomes the main point of those who criticize the metamodernism as idea—in terms of interaction with the world it supposedly makes no sense beyond the postmodern paradigm. Vermeulen and van den Akker don’t claim that though, they just describe the new structure of feeling that appeared at the beginning of the new millennia.

Its fundamental difference from previous postmodern one is the return to the sincerity and the ability to make agreements, created by this sincerity. The need for this ability to make agreements is so high so the metamodernist is able to assume and act “as if” the collective system of the perception of the world is not only real but also reachable within a particular project. It is easily explainable why it is needed in social or cultural terms but the question of how the “new ability to make agreements” interacts with the achievements of modern philosophy was put aside since the structure of feeling itself is beyond the “ontological shift”. But it is there only until the question arises—how individual entities interact with each other in the world of object-oriented ontology. The interaction of objects through an “active mediator” (before it was exclusively the human) is no longer possible—when we assume their autonomy and independence from our presence, we endow them with ability to act, assume they have will. The interaction of equal objects is the result of an agreement, their mutual desire. These agreements are not possible with brute force or the enclosed isolation of postmodern. That is why the acceptance of the main OOO prerequisites required a shift in the perception of the world—an invention and appearance of the new, metamodern feeling. Moreover, the metamodern “as if” finds its practical application—when we make agreement with individual entities we act “as if” we percept their desire directly, with understanding, despite non-typical and non-obvious means of its expression.

Ultimately, metamodernism, as a strategy of perception of the reality, receives its role not only as a cultural project but also as a part of the actual philosophy. Moreover, it transforms from an attempt to systematically describe the phenomena of culture as they are to the almost only available strategy of cognition and perception in the world of the new ontology. Sincerity, affect and the ability to make agreements, which metamodernism has reinvented, become things we *really need* to exist in the upcoming epoch of posthumanism. OOO also benefits from interaction with metamodern and gets a practical tool for implementation of postulated equity of individual entities. This instrument matches not only philosophical and cultural logic of the time but is also connected to a particular situation in society and art, has its expression in literature and movies, theory of science and economical processes. Using it as an epistemological foundation for the perception of the being after proclaimed “end of the history” seems like an efficient method to implement that “ontological shift”. And that means that it finally offers cognitive instruments for living in the world where the human has no privileged status of the “subject” along with the objective to overcome and conquer the reality. The new sincerity becomes the instrument that can release the human from the burden of anthropocentrism.

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Notes

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16 For more information on the cybertext narrative strategies and their historical development see: Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic literature* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

17 Alan Kirby, “The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond,” *Philosophy Now* 58 (2006), https://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond.

18 David Foster Wallace, “E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 13(2) (1993), 151–194.

19 David Foster Wallace, “Certainly the End of Something or Other, One Would Sort of Have to Think,” in *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays* (London: Abacus, 2007), 51–59.

20 Alison Gibbons, “Contemporary Autofiction and Metamodern Affect,” in *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth after Postmodernism*, ed. by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), 117–130.

21 Raoul Eshelman, “Contemporary Autofiction and Metamodern Affect,” in *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth after Postmodernism*, ed. by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), 199–200.

22 Timotei Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, “Misunderstandings and Clarifications,” *Metamodernism*, June 3, 2015, <http://www.metamodernism.com/2015/06/03/misunderstandings-and-clarifications/>.

23 “The ecosystem is severely disrupted, the financial system is increasingly uncontrollable, and the geopolitical structure has recently begun to appear as unstable as it has always been uneven. CEOs and politicians express their “desire for change” at every interview and voice a heartfelt “yes we can” at each photo-op. Planners and architects increasingly replace their blueprints for environments with environmental “greenprints”. And new generations of artists increasingly abandon the aesthetic precepts of deconstruction, parataxis, and pastiche in favor of *aesth-ethical* notions of reconstruction, myth, and metaxis. These trends and tendencies can no longer be explained in terms of the postmodern. They express a (often guarded) hopefulness and (at times feigned) sincerity that hint at another structure of feeling, intimating another discourse. History, it seems, is moving rapidly beyond its all too hastily proclaimed end”, see: Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, “Notes on Metamodernism”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 2 (2010), e1.

24 Imtraud Huber, *Literature after Postmodernism: Reconstructive Fantasies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 7.

25 Vermeulen and van den Akker reference here to the famous Kantian “*as if*”.

26 “... The ship sinks and the sailor, the judge, has to set sail for one island whilst understanding that each island has its value. For us metamodernism is this moment of radical doubt, of constantly, at times desperately, repositioning between the islands, finally choosing one”, see: Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker, “Misunderstandings and clarifications”, *Notes on Metamodernism*, June 3, 2015, <https://www.metamodernism.com/2015/06/03/misunderstandings-and-clarifications/>.