

# AMONGST OTHERS

A Speculative Re-reading of Keepsakes

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"How much better is silence; the coffee cup, the table. How much better to sit by myself like the solitary sea-bird that opens its wings on the stake. Let me sit here forever with bare things, this coffee cup, this knife, this fork, things in themselves, myself being myself."

Virginia Woolf - *The Waves*

"... identity ... can only affirm itself as identity to itself by opening itself to the hospitality of a difference from itself or of a difference with itself. Condition of the self, such a difference from and with itself would then be its very thing ... the stranger at home."

Jacques Derrida - *Aporias*



'Mother and I', Family photograph with a plastic bag full of soil that has the same weight as my own at birth inserted to the image, 2014

## The Exhibition

He woke up to a morning of a night in which, again, he couldn't take out the trash. As he came closer to the age of his grandfather when he died, the mundane task of taking the trash out became a task of counting. Counting the hours, days, weeks, bottles, glasses, envelopes, spoons, boxes, cables, small tables, large tables, a mirror in the shape of an eye, lightbulbs, curtains, eggs, nails, photos, carpets, years... He tried to remember if his father too had a similar reaction to this age when he was that young. Can a moment get stuck, he thought, repeat itself for generations, like the edgings on a trousseau or like the mark of an ambitious piece of writing left on several papers below the top one? Can a moment spiral? No, he corrected his thought; can a moment be vertical?

Each week's trash was not only a summary of the week of his life but it was also his life's week transforming itself into material. The crunched blue water bottles reflecting once untouched dirty fragments of life, pizza cartons from lazy evenings resting uncomfortably -barely fitting in the trash can- reminding the discomfort of laziness... And throwing them out was almost impossible. Facing his stubbornly isolated life -aren't all lives solitude, he continued his thought. Maybe this is the reason why people have the urgency to become families; so no one can be sure how much trash they lived on in one week. And perhaps that resolved the mystery for him; how, even the wrong people could become families.

His habit of storing his trash was quite meticulous and rather different than the rest of the conventionally good middle class citizens. He had five different containers. The first container was for the packages of the solid food. The one next to it was for

packages for liquid food. One was for what was left from his food. The flowers he bought every two weeks would find themselves here, just before they die. Flowers like everything else, smell the most vibrant when they are about to die. He used this allegory to cover up the food smell of this container. The other one was for what was left from his drinks. This one very often ended creating a mess because of holes that somehow always appeared at the bottom of the bag. In time, a number of bags holding the liquid, cumulated to three bags on top of each other and he knew he had to stop at this number. Maybe four was a reacquiring number in his life. He had four aunts. He lived in four different houses. He was in fourth grade when he refused the existence of God. He had four moles; one under his foot, one between his nostrils, others in less interesting body parts. He had four things he kept over the years, four objects. The last container was for everything else. Paper bits and pieces from non-eatable products were thrown here. Also the small trash in his toilet would end up here with its own plastic bag tied up with a knot.

He found his body projected on the liquids, the solids, the wrappings, packages, strings, seeds. This uncanny reflection wasn't just formed by the connection between the similar physical attributes of the objects that were facing each other. But his body -perhaps to be considered as the fifth kept object- faced a rebound in this intimate pile of things. This very feeling was achieved and recognized by him over years and years of monologues. Realizing day by day, even after they become incommensurable, things could still be recognized, held and kept... His very existence charged everything his shadow touched, not transforming the objects around him but yielding to them, becoming one of them.

He spent his late morning in his thoughts and the rest reading other people's thoughts. He quickly prepared his late lunch and finished it even quicker; a habit left from his previous work. He gazed upon the brochure of the exhibition to be sure once more where it was located. The brochure was printed on a slippery paper. He would be more pleased if it was printed on matt paper with the texture of a letter buried in history. Although he hated things mimicking qualities of old times, paper was fine. Most of the time he would take a moment to gaze upon his house one more time before leaving the house. The couch, two carpets, lamps standing on delicate legs, lamps hanging from the ceiling, lamps standing on tables with bent necks, books in piles, magazines piled on top of each other of which some transformed into a coffee table carrying vases with yellow and brick coloured flowers in them, boxes with more boxes in them, pillows and strategically placed blankets suggesting potential comfort... He took his coat folded on his left arm, opened, closed and locked the door with the other as he walked away with the determination of knowing exactly where he was going and almost knowing what he was going to see there.

'What a static day', he thought. Even the birds were taking a break from flying, on unexpected ridges. The weather felt like iron dust. He passed by people with umbrellas, people with shopping bags, leather bags, with children, with bikes, ugly ones with ugly scarves -would the scarf still look ugly on a beautiful woman?-, people with wrist-watches in a hurry, people with wristbands calmer... Buses, bikes, cars, cabs passed him, reflections of buildings, sky, faces, dust, weak sunlight passed him, carried on them. Trees every five meters, flowers more often, street turns, traffic signs became milestones as he walked them by. He hoped the entrance wouldn't be packed with people while passing a bakery, a supermarket and then a bookshop. He knew once we are somewhere before the new arrivals, the fact that they couldn't possibly know how long we were there before them, we quickly put on the habit of stretching time, pretending we have been there for centuries and everything is almost ours. This in turn translates into weird gazes and unkind body gestures to unwillingly make room for the one entering the room just then.

He walked with smaller but faster steps while passing by children playing football. He always got anxious by the thought of returning a missed ball. Balls reminded him of rejection when he was the youngest and shortest in his class. The distance wasn't intimidating since he could locate the gallery from the people, some smoking passionately outside, some did not but were probably there more for the conversation. He entered being a bit annoyed by his coat's weight as it was claimed unnecessary by the last sun rays of fall. He felt the same annoying bodily sensation couple of minutes ago for a couple of steps when he walked next to a man carrying a birthday cake in a transparent box. 'Was there one candle for each year?' he wondered. 'What colour were they?' He entered the gallery wishing he was smaller, confirming his thoughts on stretching of time. He started gazing upon things and pass through them quietly. First it was mainly people. Then people were not everywhere but in small groups leaving occasional gaps in the panorama of the gallery. He came closer to where the crowd was the densest. Now on his left there was a big wooden table, possibly oak. Looked heavy. The table's weight found opposition at his unnecessary coat, like someone carrying bags of groceries and someone carrying a child passing by each other on the street. The table was a little worn out but still trustworthy. You would lean against it while it supported your torso and smell its scent, if the room wasn't so crowded with elegant men and women. Some nervously sipping their and sometimes each other's drinks. Some moved through some memories, searching for that one true memory. They were forced to seek the memories by the table, on which a large punted writing was carved meticulously, assumingly with a pocket knife possibly left from someone's father. It read 'at the table are great-grandfathers and grandchildren.'

It took him a moment next to the table, to return to his bodily senses. He was startled by the simple gesture the table had to offer. How an object could refer to time when it is trapped in one moment, moving eternally and vertically, speeding up, cutting everything into waves... He found it electric. He felt his shoulders were smaller than they used to be. 'Is this what time feels like?' He was ready to leave because he was going to come back. As he left the room and walked down the hallway to see the other work, he recognized an other piece of writing, this time on the hallway wall. It was the definition of the word 'plateau'. It was in sand colour and much smaller than the writing on the table. Gentle. Gentle in a sense that it almost wanted to be unseen, like a clue of a riddle given to someone much shier than us.

plateau (ˈplætəʊ)

n, pl -eaus or -eaux (-ˈplætəʊz)

1. (Physical Geography) a wide mainly level area of elevated land
2. a relatively long period of stability; levelling off

vb (intr)

3. to remain at a stable level for a relatively long period

At the end of the hallway he stepped down a couple of stairs to a very small room with a mirror. Memories, much like a mirrored room, appear to multiply. But on the contrary it exhausts its very being into infinite number of images, creating nothingness, changing every image from one another, one particle at a reflection. He couldn't decide if the mirror was hanging there by a decision or was it an untouchable mirror with sentimental value, remained unchanged in every exhibition? A couple of steps later he had to climb up two more steps. Now he was at sea level. He recited an inner monologue which echoed from an ancestral place of remembrance; 'The sea is at the same level at every corner of the world'. He realized what plateau really meant. 'Loneliness is a plateau'. He fixed the collar of his shirt.

After the steps he was confronted with the last work, in the windowless room, in front of him. There was one painting lid from behind. Large enough to surrender to and small enough to get closer. Patterns and colours resembled a rotting leaf, part of a

landscape it pursued its short life in. The only exception was the large white brush stroke near the middle. It was determined, unkind, sudden. The light coming from behind veiled it like the sun does when there is nothing but sky, land and sounds. Looking at the whole painting felt like watching objects under water in a low resolution movie, archaeology of mankind, discovering himself in, through, between objects. The painting was uncannily familiar. This sudden familiarity unfolded, carrying him to the past, when he first got his hands around his grandfather's glasses. The glasses were a carrier of that one moment between other moments, one bullet of all bullets, one gun of all guns, so sharp and so fragile, blood and what happens to it with time. He remembered looking from the same glasses as his grandfather. He realized the brutal allegory, which his grandfather hasn't seen from the same stained glasses. When the stain was there he no longer was. The glasses were the witnesses of a crime. The glasses were the crime. The glasses were a movie compressed into that one image. A movie called life; someone's whole life, the whole life. The glasses were his grandfather, the glasses were human. In its new form, the glasses -like the very painting he was standing in front of- were free, open to fresh air, brutally fragile, belonging to everybody.

He was left with his own thoughts again. He was here and in the morning, young and old, tired but sure, claiming his whole day a perfect circle. He was breathing slower than before. He wanted to catch the same speed of breath as his thoughts, like when we try to synchronise breaths with someone in an intimate moment. He tilted his head a little bit to the left, thinking; how the rest of the world outside the gallery was actually the gallery, how the gallery was the street it was on, the small garden it looked over, the fences, the children, the windows, plastic bags, shoelaces. An endlessly spinning white cube, in pitch black and a black one in blinding white. Everything impregnating each other with characters, prospects, moments; giving birth to each other endlessly. No species or origins. Life eternally. Life amongst others.

## Preserved Memory, Keepsake, Life Amongst Objects

Where do our thoughts lead us when we are trying to define our life? Is it from A to B, a journey with a timeline? How do we grasp it as a whole? With milestones, spans of time, countries, cities, neighbourhoods, houses, cafes, people, smells, images, objects, atoms, particles? How do we dissect it; childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age, where we are, who we are with? We are always amongst objects. We witness the existence of things. We witness their being and becoming, instead of their dissolution into time; the survival of things in contrast to human finitude. We witness things getting old even when they are polished to look artificially new. We gradually start to think that these things will never lose their timeless qualities. We gradually build an urgency to own the image of these things, framed and preserved for us to eternally gaze at them. We build an urgency to be sure we will never lose them. From this urgency of keeping, a dominant, brutal and complex object forms; the keepsake. It is brutal because grief is directly bound to the object. 'Grief is the footprint of something that isn't us. It is the archaeological evidence of an object.' (Morton, 2013, p.18)

Keepsakes are something given and/or kept. They are a memento, objects that evoke memories of a person or event with which it is associated. Further from its definition, further from the objects associations, these objects and images of the personal past or the image of a deceased person can no longer be separated. Objects enable 'a sophisticated and realistic sense of self' where 'self love yields to objects love and gives rise to an image of the self mediated by the external world.' (Clewell, 2004, p.45) Beyond the interrelations we have with objects, the keepsake becomes the image of the accumulation of a lifetime in itself, the image becomes the com-

pression of a movie called life. Keepsakes do not 'embody memories of past events but have themselves become embodied memories; objectified and condensed as a thing.' (Rowlands, 1993, p.147)

In the case of keepsakes, the inseparable integrity of the object and the subject transpire from death. Death has the defining power to shape the character of objects and the status of an object as a possession. A person's death has the capacity to transform the nature of their possessions, it heightens their desirability and their maintenance is unambiguously restricted as a consequence of death (Weiss, 1997, p. 168). All objects; a broken chair, a skirt, earrings, a piece of paper or even an unidentifiable object inherited from the lost person, despite these object's uselessness, outmodedness or material lack of value, can gain an irreplaceable prominence and immaterial value. Irreplaceability of the subject yields to irreplaceability of the object. This mergence creates a third object, different from both the original subject and the original object. This new object becomes a container of the others. From that moment of birth, it is no longer possible to see where one object/subject ends and the other begins.

But what is an object? Objects cannot be reduced to simply superficial crusts to a deeper underlying reality, they cannot be depleted by excessive 'mining' like the idea that there is no underlying object beneath either the qualities or the relations. According to Graham Harman, the originator of 'Object Oriented Philosophy', whether physical or fictional, everything is equally an object. With a force coming from this simple yet complex thought, hierarchical categories of ontology are flattened. The subject is also an object and therefore the focus shifts from the limited human access to objects, to the limited access of all objects. Objects, perhaps because they always remind us of human finitude, were for a long time claimed uninteresting things that are only communicating with as on a transpantine level. They are also not 'individualised entities that are directing attention away from a pre individual realm'. Their self-defining autonomy separates them from other objects. They -although some objects might speak more loudly than others- are real, discrete, self-contained, interesting entities. The ontology here is object oriented. (Jackson, 2011, p.136)

'Object Oriented Philosophy,' is coined by Graham Harman in a 1999 lecture and later transformed into Object Oriented Ontology (OOO) by the suggestion of Levi Bryant. Forged concurrently to the explosion of Speculative Realism, Object Oriented Ontology (OOO) posits that ontology is a mess of objects equally corporal and incorporeal, artificial and natural. 'No single object is deemed ontologically inferior or superior, authentic or inauthentic; they must all be held accountable. Any object's actual relationship towards another has an equal validity to any other single relation;

whether a relational neighbour in a configurative system, the object's distinct or elementary parts or an object's mediated connection.' (Jackson, 2011, p.136)

Let us continue by asking a question; how do we define a keepsake -an object so clearly inseparable from the subject it belonged to and the subject it is kept by- in an object oriented thinking, where the object is freed from the subject's determining mind, body and gaze? If we reconsider Jean-Francois Chevrier's useful maxim; 'Every object is a thing, but not every thing is an object' from the perspective of our protagonist, the keepsake, it would probably transmute into; Every keepsake is a thing and an object.

I believe that, to be able to capture the keepsake in more depth, we need to look into the differences and similarities between the thing and the object. The Heideggerian description of the thing is, an entity that is 'assertive of its independence, as its presence as well as nearness'. Heideggerian 'nearness' is a type of distance which deals with visibility. In other words 'nearness' is what makes thingness of a thing appear. Representation itself cannot cause nearness into being. The reason is that we can only represent what is assigned and visible to us which is strained through our own accord. Things are withdrawn from us, some parts never appear. This is why Heidegger insists that 'the 'thing' must be distinguished from the Kantian 'object'. The Kantian object is a product of ideas and representation of the thing.' (Daston, 2004, p.16) Objects on the other hand, are everywhere in equal measure, neither near nor far. (Hudek, 2014, p.14) Nearness comes to being when we examine the object without distance.

Keepsakes are objects that are 'near' to us. Because they are independent, they resist appropriation, use and presentation. This creates a unique stand between us and the keepsake, a stand without distance, making the keepsake's position in the world of objects special. Although Hudek posits that objects bare the risk of being cancelled out; keepsake -a thing and an object- even though it stands outside of language and consciousness, doesn't 'bare this risk which is inflicted by the rational subject who believes erroneously in the uniform accessibility of objects.' The reason for this perhaps is the fact that the essence of the keepsake and the act of keeping depends on the conscious awareness of the subject in this very inaccessibility. This awareness of inaccessibility enables us to have a certain access to keepsakes. Therefore we can say keepsakes are paradoxical objects.

## The Paradox, The Allegory and The Transformation of The Subject into The Object

Let's try and go back to the birth of a particular keepsake; my grandfather's glasses. Glasses are objects that carry a strong 'affordance' and a symbolically charged meaning of use. Affordance is the potential action an object makes possible while making other potential actions invisible for the subject. When we see a pair of glasses, our hands are immediately drawn to its movement and functions. Eyeglasses are something we are very accustomed too. We easily accept them because they are there to make things more visible to us, clearer. They are windows with an ever-changing view. When my grandfather left his english class that day in 1982 (after the military junta in 1981), he was still wearing his glasses. He needed his glasses to read and write for a classroom full of students. Perhaps he forgot he was wearing them. Most of the time we do. Seeing things clearly is something we get used to very easily. He stepped outside to walk home. The aggressor approached him and ended his life in a split of a second with a gun, aiming at his left eye.

With this action from a distance, an object was transmitted to another one. Not just as a layer of blood on the eyeglasses but also on a much deeper level. The metaphysical paradox here finds a reflection also in the physical level. The eyeglasses that are kept from that moment to this were no longer the same glasses grandfather saw the world from. When the keepsake was born, he wasn't there anymore. He never looked from the glasses of the keeper; an allegory of the paradox.

From this transformation of one object to the other, the distance the eyeglasses had with its keeper disappears. The mutability that shifts inaccessibility to accessibility is

an essential part of the keepsake. The paradoxical core of the eyeglasses assimilates itself, creates a shift in speculation. The glasses act as a 'potentially active agent that engages with viewers as if the keepsake was the person and its viewers are mere things.' We witness the replacement of the grandfather with the glasses and the reversal of spectator, an epistemological polarity. (Daston, 2004, p.13-17) Perhaps the necessity to stress the objectivity of an artefact by theorists of material culture accustomed to is an avoidance of the paradoxical qualities of the artefact. But the paradox here is not a source of a problem. It is the opposite. It feeds itself, adds to the objects' independence and it is an inseparable element of the object. This element is where the real illusions are. Hence 'What constitutes pretence is that, in the end, we don't know whether it's pretence or not.' (Lacan, 1981, p.48)

The pretence here perhaps directly relates to the phenomenon of the keepsake having the power to loyally keep the colour, texture and sight of those whom we have lost, even better than these people themselves, making the spectre of the deceased person visible to others. Because things speak the truth in the purest form; 'the most indubitable truth conceivable.' To give an example, if we look at the miracles in the Judaeo-Christian tradition we realize that they were most of the time worked in things. Crippled bodies being repaired, water turning into wine... The reason why truth was purest is that it was 'uttered by things themselves, without the distorting filter of human interpretation.' (Daston, 2004, p.13) It is perhaps why keeping is a post-mortem ritual carrying the implication that death has to be negated and separated from the sphere of the living without rejecting it all together. The glasses are a space-time where we are interrelating to the illusion that the object enables renunciation of death and also enables us to vitiate death. Vitiating death is our ultimate desire and we try to achieve it by enriching life with objects. The keepsakes' function is remembering death by trying to forget it.

## Causality and Object as the Protagonist in Negotiation with the Past

The glasses are an elegiac object. They treasure death and illusion, containing lost objects: the glasses and the grandfather. The lost objects are there; in traces, colour, form, stains, cracks... They are withdrawn, yet there are traces. These traces interact with each other, they reconfigure relations the glasses have with its surrounding, with its keeper. 'Yet the objects from which they emanate are withdrawn.' But the objects' resemblance to a complex structure doesn't mean it can be intersected. The real object is complete, determinate.

According to Harman every object exists in two different realms; two principal strategies for devaluing the philosophical import of objects. Objects can be undermined by claiming they are 'shallow fiction of common sense, and that the real action happens at a deeper level'. The scientific explanation of the object -that it is made by tinier components, particles- can be an example to undermining. Objects can also be over-mined. We are doing that by claiming that there is nothing beneath what appears in the mind. Social constructionism posits no independent reality outside of language, discourse or power which can be an example of over-mining. He posits, objects are in between these two extremes, that these two extremes are not two different objects but sides of the same unit.

Objects have a certain depth that cannot be exhausted by other objects or subjects. An object cannot be induced to practise or theory. Objects withdraw from each other as well, not just from us. 'Withdrawal means that at this very moment, this very object, as an intrinsic aspect of its being, is incapable of being anything else: my poem about

it, its atomic structure, its function, its relations with other things... Withdrawal isn't a violent sealing off. Nor is withdrawal some void or vague darkness. Withdrawal just is the unspeakable unicity of this lamp, this paperweight, this plastic portable telephone, this praying mantis, this frog, this Mars faintly red in the night sky, this cul-de-sac, this garbage can. An open secret.' (Morton, 20013, p.16). Timothy Morton postulates that this open secret is 'causality'.

Causality, though, is 'a secretive affair', it is a secret that is out in the open. In Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis, the 'thing' is called 'the true secret'. He propounds that the thing withholds a secret that is unavailable to objects as well as subjects. I believe that Lacan's true secret and Morton's open secret are bound together at their causation, their 'causality'. The secret, 'the thorn tips of reality' are hiding in plain sight. All objects are open secrets.

Within this open secret, causality is also withdrawn. Things are permanently encrypted. Causality is not a concept to demystify objects complexity or to explain what exactly is withdrawn from us. Causality is actually in the core of the withdrawal, it is in the core of the object. If objects cannot be reduced to their material qualities, to their relations, to their functions, if objects are intrinsically withdrawn, there must be a region, a liminal space in which objects can interact, affect. This liminal space is where causality ensconced itself. Morton calls this the 'aesthetic dimension'. In the aesthetic dimension, causality is not in between objects but between an object's essence and its appearance. There is a rift, a separation between a thing and its appearance.

The glasses of my grandfather, the third object that is different than both the grandfather and the glasses are also withdrawn from us through its rift. Its birth is connected to events that are not contiguous. Because the relation the grandfather had with his eyeglasses are not contiguous with the reconfigured; there is a new relation between the keeper and the keepsake. A living being doesn't estimate its time, doesn't perceive its end and when it finally ends it is not there to be found. Therefore these events can never be contiguous since when the third object was born neither of the old objects were there. Bertrand Russell argues that: 'When there is a causal connection between two events that are not contiguous, there must be intermediate links in the causal chain such that each is contiguous to the next, or such that there is a process which is continuous.'

Morton postulates that Russell's argument is in fact a definition of what he calls the aesthetic dimension. Action at a distance happens all the time if 'causation' is aesthetics. He even goes further with a beautiful sentence and says that 'conscious-

ness-of anything is action at a distance'. Using the elementary examples of mirror neurones and entanglement he continues; 'Thus to be located "in" space or "in" time is already to have been caught in a web of relations. It is not that objects primordially "occupy" some existing region of space-time, but that they are caught in the fields of, and otherwise "spaced" and "timed" by other entities.' (Morton, 2013, p.21)

## From Keepsake to Artwork

The idea that objects do not 'primordially "occupy" some existing region of space-time, but that they are caught in the fields of, and otherwise "spaced" and "timed" by other entities can lead us to the answer; yes, to an interesting question asked by Robert Jackson; 'Can artworks retain autonomy of expression, where humans are no longer present?'

Keepsakes, similar to an artwork, dematerialises the object. They can no longer be induced to their material components, their exchanged value or their fashionability amongst other objects. Both keepsakes and artworks are autonomous, unified and independent. Since both of them are separating objects from their material qualities perhaps they belong together and perhaps we should gaze upon and relate to a keepsake the same way as we are doing with an artwork: with open eyes and open hearts, ready to surrender to its essence, rendering, freeing and finally bringing the object to its own time, saving it from the nodes of subjects understanding of time.

Why don't we see the glasses as a painting? Aren't the glasses a good example of how a painting can be autonomous without the presence of the subject? What is also at question here is whether the paintings are experienced as paintings or as objects and what decides their identity is the shape they hold in confrontation to the demand. Let's think of the space between us and an art object that affects us. In the encounter, in the relation, we can sense a liminal space between us and the art object, which is non-temporal, non-local, where it is not possible to distinguish between the real and the unreal which created by the object's 'sensuality'. (Morton, 2013, p.19)  
The object's sensuality according to Harman is 'the unification in consciousness and

the shifting surface qualities of things from the intentional domain.' [...] 'Intentional objects are always already present.' (Harman, 2009, p.195) This dimension is right in front of the object: causality, the aesthetic dimension. The relation here is from 'the dark and inward into the tangible and outward, a task which it always comes out short, given the infinite depth of things', thus the aesthetic dimension provides art with what is necessary to make it a system of 'expressive signs whose function was not to tell us about things but to present them to us in the act of executing themselves.' Art is what lets us see the 'impossible depth of objects' (Harman, 2005, p.105).

The encounter with a keepsake has similarities to the encounter with an art object that we cannot overpass. These carriers of grief, these 'stuck' objects, from time to time appear in our lives. Their secretive, sensual, elegiac spectre that surrounds them, also ensconces in their aesthetic dimension, their causality. The glasses of my grandfather, similar to a painting, doesn't wait for the subjects gaze to gain meaning. They are part of a daily ritual of a man; him reading about a murder case in a newspaper, putting it aside before washing his face, wiping them occasionally with his shirt... They perhaps make you wonder if he had a wife, a son, a daughter. What did he like to read most? What did he like to watch? When looking closer the stains appear, sudden, in a rush of a moment, right there. They perhaps resemble a little girl's face, cartoonish, abstract. Colours borrowed from remnants of time, it is life what is unfolding from this object, it is not a surface for projections. We don't see a painting as resolved patterns and relations. We don't see a keepsake as its resolved past life, we don't dismantle it in our minds. They confront us directly, as themselves. 'Every entity throws shadows of itself into the inter-objective space, the sensual space that consists of relations between objects.' It has a field around it that also surrounds the viewer, it emphasises that time and space are emergent properties of objects. Eyeglasses have an aesthetic dimension. They have causality. Aesthetics is not limited to interactions between humans and artworks. It happens when dust emerges on tables, when a tree falls, when a bullet stains an eyeglass. Everywhere we look, aesthetic-causal events are occurring. Through the tools provided by Object Oriented Ontology, aesthetics are freed from its ideological role between objects and subjects. (Morton, 2013, p.19-25)

## Amongst Others

The Turkish author Orhan Pamuk insists in the last words of his novel *The Museum of Innocence* that we should possess the objects in our lives with desires similar to a novelist or an artist, not as a collector or with an obsession to make arrays from these objects. The world is already full of objects to put in space like displays, museums, rooms, homes (Pamuk, 2012, p.557). But space also shouldn't just mean a box, the way Kant defines it. Space is emitted by objects. The act of possessing and the act of keeping an object because it can be part of a story or a novel, can propose a new path around the node. We need a new path because when we grab objects with strong hands between our thinking and the world that we want to understand, the act of grabbing only deepens the abyss.

The keeper interrelates to a keepsake in a similar way to how we interrelate to an artwork, or the way an artist arrives to an artwork through the keepsake. The objects' emitted space can open up new paths to unknown territories: plateaus. In this transformation, or rather in this shift in relation to the keepsake, art is not a simulation of the object but it is a 'tuning'. Coming from the real object, this interpretation cannot be correct or incorrect. The artwork doesn't exhaust the real object. Art attends to the inner structure of the object allowing itself to be taken by it. 'Tuning is the birth of another object: a tune, a reading, an interpretation. ... Every tune becomes an elegy for the disappearance, that is, the fundamental ontological secrecy, of an object or objects.' (Morton, 2013, p.23)

It appears that we don't just live amongst objects but we actually need them. We owe them the understanding of extinction which is a phenomenon a living being

can't otherwise experience. When I look at an object I see a great deal of humanness, the human effort to escape our humanness. Being a living body, like a photograph's exposure to light, finds its opposition, its equal weight in exposure to death. Death is not a limit or a horizon. Death is the self-transformative, critical power; it continues to shine upon bodies, objects, (un)conscious bodies. What shines upon them is not simply a piece of information, it is a sudden clarification between things and themselves, between each other; trashes to weeks, water to wine, galleries to gardens, glasses to paintings, the resistance to death, the resistance of humankind. I think this is not something other than what we call art.

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