

## editorial

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The tag of this issue of *Cultural Studies Review* echoes Latour's challenge for a recall of modernity. This 'recall' will enquire into what has gone wrong, repair, and move on through an existing postmodernity which is nothing but 'an interesting symptom of transition' that can be used to 'bring about the end of modernism more quickly'. The site of this transformation is Latour's familiar-seeming world where the effort is not simply to know but to be 'capable of a sustained existence in one place'. No simple call for ecological reform is being made in Latour's evocation of sustainability, but rather the imagining of a deeply pluralistic thinking where the planet will be brought together again without the old divisions into culture and nature, modern and not-modern. Most of Latour's solutions to the problem of modernity rest upon an extended idea of 'diplomacy': one that is passionate, rational, ecological, mechanical, modest, scientific and driven on 'our' side by the declaration: 'This is what we have decided to hang on to for grim death'. A recall of modernity will build a thinking space, perhaps a space of some chagrin where the original European moderns can decide what matters more than life to 'us' (for did 'we' really invent modernity?) and begin a new diplomacy from that point. Latour simultaneously makes us ask who 'we' are—a question which must include a nuanced appreciation of the colonial/settler/new imperialism nexus—and our commitment to the positive possibilities of unfulfilled or unexplored potential within 'modernity'.

What matters more than life to us? This question is characteristic of a philosopher who, as Graham Harman discusses in his article, offers an expansive alternative to postmodernity which also engages with the particularity of the workings of cultures. We can see that care for the particular in Liz Jacka's subtle, sustained analysis of the ABC where analysis is itself

an actant. Perhaps what matters more than life itself is simply to sustain the conditions that encourage multiplicity and unity (which the ABC once exemplified). Or perhaps the examples must be even more concrete, like the appreciation in one small place of the ways in which the emotions and corporeality provide new ways not just of knowing but, as Fitzgerald and Threadgold show, of changing how a 'service' works. Or is it the re-evaluation of an Australian thinker like Sommerville so that we can put her to use in different ways? Or the act of translation, as Muecke and Delers and Chambers show us here? And in the work of Adorno on cinema we have, as Brenez reveals, a set of intellectual pathways to understanding what should matter in cinema, 'simultaneously sabotaged by the industrial conditions of its production and safeguarded by avant-garde painting and music'.

Does the collection of these articles in this journal as indices of a tradition of knowledge exchange and of the refinement of thought and public discussion matter more than life itself? This is not to hide the processes that produce the articles—the effort of reviewing, the variable resources, the rush, the unspoken hierarchies, or the precious collegiality in the form of extra-curricular labour which enables these productions. Why is it that for many cultural studies academics there is a commitment to more than just the job?

Perhaps the seemingly hyperbolic rhetoric of Latour—'what matters more than life itself to me'—works particularly well at this moment in time. In a straitened university environment many of us have already written courses in an atmosphere of shortage where we make decisions amid equally, seemingly melodramatic thinking: If I am teaching the only humanities subject, what *must* a student know? If, in the next administrative restructure I find myself no longer with disciplinary colleagues, does our new assemblage at least produce new forms of thought through a shared idea that students should think? Perhaps *Cultural Studies Review* is particularly well placed to reflect the 'sustained curiosity' which can inaugurate an academic diplomacy that is simultaneously 'natural' and 'cultural'. We aspire to become a model of 'tact', 'pluralism' and 'openness'. So what matters more than life to cultural studies? An answer might help us ward off various ad hoc attacks, but, more importantly, it might sustain a con-vo-cation of allies who can negotiate diplomatically what is at stake for the future.