1 The Studio: A Queer History

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1. The Studio: A Queer History

Looking at the history of studios, the first observation is how pliable the space of the studio has been and is becoming. The scope of what constitutes a studio has been endlessly debated and reconfigured: sometimes a private, inward space of contemplation, seclusion, and creation and other times a public, outward space of collaboration. Think here of the seemingly insurmountable gap that separates the studio of Alberto Giacometti, which was once described by Alexander Liberman as a physical embodiment of the artist’s private work process and his personal ego (Liberman 1960), and Andy Warhol’s Factory, which manufactured art through collective processes overseen by the artist-as-celebrity rather than artist-as-genius. We might also juxtapose the living collage of Kurt Schwitters’ studio or Francis Bacon’s studio as “compost heap” with the emptiness of Mark Rothko’s sterile, puritanical studio (O’Doherty 2007). A similar list can be compiled for the scholar’s studio. On the one hand, there is the quiet, orderly, and solitary studio of the Renaissance humanist who sits lost in thought, versus the rather chaotic, noisy, and cluttered studio of the alchemist as scholar juggling various experiments and familial relationships (Algazi 2012). And, at the furthest edge of recognizability, the term “studio” came to mean “drawing” during the early modern period, while during the twentieth century, it became associated with the artist’s body itself. In short, the space of the studio seems to defy clear definition and boundaries.
In order to understand the pliability of the studio, we offer a brief (and necessarily incomplete) survey of verbal and visual depictions of studios from the Middle Ages up to the contemporary moment. This means we will run the gamut of what counts as a studio in order to draw out certain aspects of the idea of the studio that, we feel, are essential for understanding its pliability. In this sense, we see images of studios—from ancient to modern, from written to visually depicted/photographed—as the studio reflecting on its own possibility, its own potentiality. Agamben once wrote, “Lo studio è l’immagine della potenza—della potenza di scriverer per lo scrittore, della potenza di dipingere or scolpire per il pittore o lo scultore [The studio is the image of potentiality—of the potentiality to write for the writer, of the potentiality to paint or sculpt for the painter or the sculptor]” (2017, 13). In this sense, depictions of the studio throughout history are not an attempt to actualize the potentiality of the studio (in terms of specific outcomes whether they be scholarship, works of art, or other products) so much as to capture the moment when the potentiality for thinking thinks itself, or when the potentiality for painting paints itself. Using our terminology, such depictions attempt to make intelligible the open-ended pliability defining the potentiality to think, write, sculpt, or paint manifest across historical forms of studios.

From Studio to Studioing

The history of the studio/study is composed of social, cultural, and economic drift, revealing its essential pliability. The studio (also referred to as the studiolo, museum, or studorium) spread from high-ranking scholars of the Middle Ages, to Renaissance artists, to teachers and country pastors, ultimately becoming a rather common feature of middle-class households. In other words, over time, strict dichotomies between the wealth of courtly studios and those of the lower classes began to erode. In addition, courtly and aristocratic studios, such as Leonello d’Este’s, were not always private affairs, but were opened up for visitation by scholars of various ranks and
also artists who in turn popularized the notion of the studio to a wider public (Thornton 1998). As recorded in the writings of Benedetto Varchi, the act of drawing came to resemble the act of thinking (designo could equally mean the drawing and form of an idea), and artists and scholars began to look similar and occupy similar studio spaces despite potentially different social backgrounds—cramped with books, drawings, scientific devices, and various classical statues/models (Cole and Pardo 2005). In addition to crossing boundaries between craft and contemplation, by the late sixteenth century in Europe, the studio was no longer an “extraordinary privilege” of the rich and influential but had also become part of scholars’ and artists’ homes, “even humble ones” (Algazi 2012, 18). In other words, the diffusion of the medieval studium (which applied equally to a monk’s cell or the library of a religious house) to secular estudes of fourteenth-century courtly aristocracy in France, to the studioli of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian scholars, demonstrated the pliability of the idea of the studio.

Pliability in this context has three meanings: first, in terms of use; second, in terms of actual, physical space (extension in relation to size and shape); and third, in terms of location. Despite such variety and heterogeneity, we want to hazard some generalizations that will enable us to pinpoint how it is that the potentiality of the studio preserves itself across diverse manifestations. Instead of erasing the plasticity of the studio space by providing a rather reductive definition, we want to generate criteria that can take into account the pliability we have been describing. What is it about the studio that makes it so pliable in the first place? What are the minimum conditions that enable studios to be called studios while also keeping open the seemingly indeterminate potentialities of studios for reconfiguring themselves? Our assumption in posing this questions is simple: that there are sufficient commonalities across studios that make the term intelligible as an open-ended idea. If collections such as The Studio Reader or The Studio chart the rhizomatic diffusion of the studio, then we want to gather together the various strands and organize them around three dimensions. These dimensions can
then serve as the basic or minimal criteria for defining the specific pliability/potentiality of the studio.

First, while clear distinctions are fuzzy, a studio is a space separate from a workshop, a gallery, a classroom, and the more overtly “functional” parts of the home (like the kitchen). It is not a place where apprentices are taught or where art is displayed for public viewing or where the household is managed by the paterfamilias. Studios, in this sense, are a way of partitioning off a space from certain obligations that are oriented toward instruction, commerce, and management. They are spaces wherein expertise (of the teacher), value (of the merchant), and authority (of the household manager) are in some sense deactivated or rendered inoperative. Two early examples of this can be found in the studio spaces of Tintoretto and Michelangelo (Cole and Pardo 2005). In both cases, the studio was reserved for working on designs and prototypes and was a privileged space for contemplative activities as distinct from the artistic labors of the workshop where assistants were taught and major commissions carried out.

Sadly, the majority of depictions of early studios show them as isolated spaces dominated largely by men and guarded by a dog from intrusion by women and children. The privacy and solitude that the studio seems to offer is, therefore, the privilege of men at the expense of women and children who must be shut out. In reflecting on Edmund Husserl’s writing desk, Sara Ahmed points out the gendered dimension of his studio space. Extrapolating from Husserl’s description of his writing desk, Ahmed writes, “The study, the room dedicated to writing or other forms of contemplation, conjures up such a vivid image of a masculine domain at the front of the house” (2006, 30). At stake in Ahmed’s phenomenology of Husserl’s phenomenology of his writing desk is how such spaces are formed against an invisible backdrop of other household spaces occupied by women and children that are erased through Husserl’s phenomenological reduction of the desk. In this way, the desk becomes the property of certain male bodies at the exclusion of women, who are relegated to other rooms of the house (such as
the kitchen). The studio and its equipment, including the writing desk, are oriented toward certain male bodies that are called to take up writing and contemplating.

Certainly Ahmed’s description is a persuasive one, pointing toward the gendered history of the studio. Taking up Ahmed’s theoretical position, we would like to further queer the notion of the studio in two senses. First, we want to highlight the marginal or minor tradition of female scholars at work in the studio, as witnessed in the depiction of Christine de Pizan sitting at her desk accompanied with her dog from 1407 (Cole and Padro 2005). Stated simply, there is nothing intrinsic about the studio that binds it necessarily to male bodies. 1 Second, while it is historically accurate to emphasize connections between male privilege and the studio, we would like to offer a counter reading in which the studio is a space that interrupts the management of the household by the male sovereign, suspending his authority to rule over others. Granted, the studio was (and is) defined by a certain amount of seclusion from the shared family quarters (thus securing the silence needed for contemplation, even if such security could never be guaranteed), perhaps we could also read the presence of the dog in many depictions of the studio not as guarding the male studier from others (unwanted intruders) so much as guarding others from the powers of the paterfamilias, now rendered inoperative in and through the act of contemplation.

At stake in the idea of the studio is that it deactivates relationships marked by authority (of teacher over student or husband over wife) and commerce (as the exchange of goods for money) in the name of contemplation and experimentation. The theme of deactivation permeates images of studio spaces and is, in some ways, epitomized in the figure of the sleeping dog at the foot of the scholar or artist. As Algazi argues, the dog articulates a specific form of scholarly solitude: “not simply the wish to be alone, to avoid others’ company, but to have company at will without entangling oneself in a

1. See also the essays collected in Selmi 2008.
The dog and scholar are intimate yet somewhat indifferent to one another. In other words, the relationship between the scholar and the dog can be read paradoxically as a relational nonrelation or a relation of being together by being mutually indifferent to one another, or mutually indifferent to obligations defining specific, functional roles between teachers and students, husbands and wives, artists and patrons. Without exaggerating this point too much, the implication here seems to be that the studio offers a free space where a noninstrumental contact between self and other becomes possible, liberated from economic relations of management, instruction, or commerce.

Another important dimension of the studio is that it was originally conceptualized as a space of radical innovation and experimentation that was a-disciplinary in spirit (indeed, they preexisted the disciplinary demarcations that define the current state of affairs in the academy). The artist-as-student was positioned somewhere between craftsman and scholar, and the studio as the artist’s space also implied a space of study and scientific research. Leonardo da Vinci’s studio is paradigmatic in this sense. It is where he experimented with new pigments, with dissection, and with various scientific and alchemical principles. His notebooks as studios could be read as equal parts research manuscript and artistic expression. In sum, the studio was, as Michael Cole and Mary Pardo summarize (2005), a kind of microcosm that could just as easily be a place of contemplation as a place of painting, an anatomy theater, a laboratory, a kitchen, and a monastic cell. For a more contemporary example of this a-disciplinarity, we can turn to Marcel Duchamp and a famous description of his studio. Herbert Molderings highlights how Duchamp used the studio to experiment with epistemic objects (such as readymades) that did not function to illustrate existing knowledge but rather to exemplify devices that generate “unknown answers to questions that the scientist still cannot formulate clearly” (2007, 150). The studio for Duchamp was therefore a place neither of art nor science but rather an experimental zone that existed in the gap that separates and combines the two distinct disciplines.
The readymades objectified a new kind of nonknowledge that could not be easily subsumed within the calculative reasoning of science or the aesthetic canons of art. The studio, as Molderings aptly states, was a “laboratory of experimental perception and theory” (151).

And finally, in the early Renaissance, studios were not retreats from the outside world. Although it is common to think of the studio as hermetically sealed and secured against outside intrusion, this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, studios offered unique contact points between inside and outside. By 1600, the studiolo was also referred to as a museum and was associated with collecting. As Cole and Pardo (2005) point out, the studio became a “sort of microcosm” that could contain any number of books (on a wide range of topics, ancient and modern, scientific and religious), instruments (globes, clocks, pens, inkwells, and armillary spheres), and artifacts (signet rings, mirrors, cabinets of wonder, and exotic items from around the world), each gesturing beyond themselves toward a world that was present in its absence. Indeed, we would argue that the studio is not a retreat from the world but rather a suspension of the world so that it can be studied. Thus, the world exists as a virtual idea in the studio, and this ensures that the studio is always already oriented beyond itself.²

The contamination of the hermeticism of the studio continues as a theme and practice throughout the centuries. For instance, artist’s studios in the twentieth century were not sealed, sterilized envelopes reflecting the genius of the artist back to him or herself

2. While it is important to point out that the collections that filled studio spaces were, at least in part, the result of colonialism (and an attending desire to order and classify the world), it is also important to note how the marvelous assortment of natural objects, human artifacts, magical implements, and scientific instruments found in studios present fluid and ambiguous meanings that undermine any attempt to characterize them neatly in terms of “meta-realities” such as colonialism, oppression, or possession (Kemp 1995). These collections refused to submit to precise categorization (as status symbol, for instance), and thus embody a distinctly pataphysical potential for igniting curiosities that betray colonialist agendas.
so much as permeable membranes shot through with the objects of the world. Thus, as O’Doherty points out, many studios were littered with various magazines, books, and odd bits and pieces of culture, all of which referenced the outside world while at the same time suspending the immediacy and necessity of this outside world. Indeed, the main question artists such as Fancis Bacon asked, according to O’Doherty (2007, 21), was: “Could it be used?” Just as the scholar suspended the world in order to study it, so too the artist brought the outside into the studio, freeing up the outside for new use beyond everyday functionality.

Although the studio can be read as a spatial inscription of a withdrawal from the world and the rise in a new, modern sense of the private individual (Webb 2007), it might also be interpreted as the impossibility of such a construction, as the individual is always already contaminated by the outside. Dora Thornton (1998) makes a similar point in that the studio has always been oriented around a broader public—conveying a certain amount of worldly esteem upon the owner—even if it was oriented toward a private, internal world of thought and creation. Thus the studio was, in some ways, a paradoxical space wherein the very mark of privacy, solitude, and inwardness was itself a public performance dependent on those who were absent from the studio. Sometimes such solitude was literally and intentionally broken as with the “convivial study” (Thornton 1998, 120), which was a space to be shared with and visited by scholars, artists, orators, collectors, and poets, but even if this was not the case, the “isolation” of the studio was, in some way, gesturing beyond itself toward a virtual community.

Here we find a complex relationship between inside and outside, self and other inscribed in the paradoxical space of the studio. Inspired by Kafka’s work, Deleuze and Guattari describe a solitary “artistic singularity” as someone who desires “both to be alone and to be connected to all the machines of desire. A machine that is all the more social and collective insofar as it solitary . . . [by] tracing the line of escape, [it] is equivalent in itself to a community whose conditions haven’t yet been established” (1986, 71). The artistic
singularity and the virtual community form two sides of a collective assemblage, even if the “objective conditions of this community are not yet given.” (84). In their book *Dialogues*, Deleuze and Claire Parnet return to this idea and link it directly to the studio. They write, “When Godard says he would like to be a production studio, he is obviously not trying to say that he wants to produce his own films, or he wants to edit his own books. He is trying to say just ideas, because, when it comes down to it, you are all alone, and yet you are like a conspiracy of criminals. You are no longer an author, you are a production studio, you have never been more populated” (Deleuze and Parnet 1996, 15–16). One becomes the studio—a collective assemblage that is both parts internal and external, singular and plural. This assemblage is criminal in that it only appears on stolen time, or rather time *freed* from official business (in the middle of the night, when one cannot sleep . . .). In sum, the studio is a space for connecting up multiple desiring machines that turn inward and outward; circle around private practices of self-cultivation and public performances of one’s knowledge, creativity, and ingenuity; interrupt one’s responsibilities and official duties in order to constitute a new kind of virtual and criminal community lived through the potentiality for contemplation that is cradled by the studio. There is always a virtual community present even if that community is unnamed and unknown (or to come).

Additionally, it is important to remember that one of the first conceptual models for the early modern scholar’s studio was the hermit’s wilderness retreat. For instance, in the last years of the fourteenth century, the Florentine notary Ser Lapo Mazzei described his experience of sitting in his *studio* as “the happiness of the good hermits on the mountain” (cited in Webb 2007, 167). In the hermit’s experiment with solitary, mountain dwelling, the scholar found a model for the “cultivation of perplexity, or losing one’s way in order to find one’s way” (Wood 2005, 62). This quest for “voluntary bewilderment” (62) is, as Christopher Wood argues, the origin of the modern studio. And the studio never lost this connection with the idea of the wilderness. Indeed, as artists began to
turn increasingly toward natural sciences and observation, they traveled outside, transforming nature itself into a studio.

Another example of the porous relationship between inside and outside that defines the space of the studio is found in the history of the camera obscura. Astronomers in the sixteenth century used pinholes in darkened studios to study solar phenomena (Renner 2004). The studio—even as a black box—was never sealed from the outside. Rather, the inside became a projection screen or a technology for observing the outside. Thus there is a push and pull between inside and outside, inwardness and outwardness, singularity and plurality that is at the crux of the studio. If Wood argues that the studio is a kind of “nonplace” that is in constant dialogue with the pasture, the medieval workshop, and the modern university, then such a nonplace is less utopia than a-topia, or a place that is a-part of other places (both inside and outside). As Agamben might argue, it is a special limbo wherein ideas are neither saved nor damned but rather blissfully left “without destination” (1993, 6). Again, easy dichotomies between inside and outside, privacy and publicity, nature and culture that the studio seems to reinforce are actually rendered inoperative by the studio.

Many of these traits are exemplified in depictions of the decisively queer studios of those “bad scholars” known as alchemists. Depictions of the alchemist’s studio contradict the more or less secluded study of the (male) scholar. Instead, the studio is bursting with energy and activity. Experiments are undertaken by male alchemists and their wives, thus undercutting the gendered division of labor often found in images of scholarly studios. Children, apprentices, servants, and others mix and mingle in relation to a shared activity of experiment. If these images, as Algazi argues (2012), were read at the time as illustrating what not to do as a scholar, our point is somewhat different: studios are spaces wherein scholars can and do go astray, places in which categories, roles, and divisions of labor are mixed, and where hierarchies and dichotomies (such as inside and outside) can be rendered inoperative. Rather than merely the antithesis of the well-ordered, secluded
space of the scholar, we see the alchemist studio as exemplifying latent tendencies within the studio itself. Think here of Duchamp’s studio as a more contemporary variant of the alchemist’s workspace. The various activities that defined and still define such studios—everything from observation, experimentation, illicit exploration, and contemplation—convey the pliability of the studio as a paradoxical space of queer transgressions (sometimes despite itself).

Although studios were part of the compartmentalization of space during the early modern period (especially in relation to the household), these were also boundary-crossing spaces. In sum the studio is (a) a place wherein power can be deactivated (beyond the economic management of households or classrooms), (b) an a-disciplinary zone of experimentation, and (c) a paradoxical location (un)bounded by divisions of public/private, inside/outside (they both inaugurate such divisions while simultaneously embodying their impossibility or permeability).

Finally, there is the time of the studio. In his book titled Autoritratto nello Studio (2017), Agamben touches upon the unusual temporality of the studio. Dwelling in the studio offers a uniquely paradoxical sensation of time captured in the phrase “festina lente” (69) or making haste slowly. This is the time of contemplation opened up by and through the inoperativity and a-disciplinarity of the studio. When in the studio, one is lost in the ritual of study (see chapter 2) in which one feels equal parts progressing and digressing, patience and anticipation/eagerness. Time seems to both stop and accelerate when in the studio. O’Doherty (2007) also gives a paradoxical formulation to studio time as a “mobile cluster of tenses, quotas of past embodied in completed works, some abandoned, others waiting for resurrection, at least one in process occupying a nervous present, through which, as James Joyce said, future plunges into past, a future exerting on the present the pressure of unborn ideas” (18). This is not a linear time of productivity in which projects are undertaken for commission and work progresses toward a final end. Instead, the temporality of the studio is nonlinear, queer, a multiplicity of tenses all intersecting with one another. The works
all seem to be suspended—some abandoned, others waiting for resurrection, and others occupying a “nervous present” in which their completion does not seem certain (or even desired). In this sense, the studio is a peculiar kind of time machine that de-completes what is completed, and completes what is de-completed in various tenses that do not seem to exist. O’Doherty summarizes: “Time is reversed, revised, discarded, used up” (18). In this sense, the work of the studio is really work on and with time as its medium. Backward and forward, before and after, earlier and later can no longer be strictly separated and divided, leading to paradoxical phenomenologies of slow haste and progression through digression. Stated differently, the time of the studio is as pliable as its spatial dimensions. And if this is the case, it is incorrect to think of the studio simply as a space (a container) of actions. Instead, we ought to think of the studio as a process: the process of studioing.

It is the idea of the studio as studioing that we wish to rehabilitate in this book. The result is not an attempt to return to the studio as it has been historically configured. Instead, it is to redeem those features of studioing that maximize its pliability. In this sense, we agree with some aspects of the poststudio movement in the arts that argue that the studio is too restrictive and exclusive (often attached to a romantic notion of the solitary, male genius), opting instead for thinking about art-making as a collaborative, social practice, dispersed throughout communities while also complicating any strict separation between production and distribution (Caroline Jones 1996; Caitlin Jones 2010). These are valid points that we want to hold onto. High modernism, in particular, transformed the studio into an object, a fetish, that ends with the celebrity artist in his celebrity studio. As O’Doherty warns (2007), this reification of the studio—as a product for art world consumption—is a domestication of the studio as a radical process. At the same time, we find the essential aspects of studioing—as an experimental zone that prefers not to abide by the rules defining classroom norms, household management, or market economization—still having potentiality for new uses.
From Studioing to Pataphysical Time
Machine and Back Again

The studio as a space adjacent (to instruction, management, and commerce) is also a pace adjacent (to the time of production, which is more or less linear and governed by deadlines, outputs, and contracts/obligations). The s-space of the studio is therefore a-part of the household, university, or workshop, meaning that it is a part that has no part, containing within it time that might be lost and activities that might not be productive. It is a space-time in which the scholar-artist loses him or herself in contemplation or experimentation that does not have an end or perhaps does not even desire one. As adjacent, the studio opens up to and makes manifest a pataphysical dimension with various institutions (such as the household). To studio is to experiment with virtual space-times that are neither here nor there, inside nor outside, past nor future. This pataphysical dimension of the studio has already been consciously explored by artists themselves. Take for instance Edward Krasinski’s studio, which he turned into a pataphysical experiment full of alchemical magic capable of suspending the laws of physics all the while embracing impossible solutions (Mytkowska and Pryzywara 2004). To conclude this chapter, we will expand on the theoretical possibilities opened up by Krasinski and others, reframing the idea of the studio as a kind of pataphysical space-time machine and studioing as a practice of tinkering with temporality.

On the one hand, we agree with Phillip Zarrilli when he writes that the studio is a space and time defined by a “fundamental paradox” (2002, 159). For Zarrilli, this paradox can be broken down into various questions that, in one way or another, ensure that the studioing remains a practice without ends or goals. The studio, on this reading, is a perpetual premise or question rather than a declaration or decision. Stated differently, the studio, according to Zarrilli, is a pure means (without end) rather than a means directed toward an end, or even an end in itself. Concurring with Zarrilli, we have been highlighting the pliability of the studio as an open potentiality—as
manifest in images and descriptions of various studios throughout history, each of which becomes a meditation on the ability to think or to create. At the same time, we reject Zarrilli’s insistence that the studio be defined in terms of a specific metaphysics that would connect it to an eternal Law that is transcendental, necessary, and universal. Instead, we want to develop the thesis that the essential paradox that Zarrilli highlights is not metaphysical so much as pataphysical, meaning that it emerges from a suspension of metaphysical Law in order to reveal new possible modes of thinking, acting, creating, and being from that which remains in limbo (and in this sense is anarchic).

It is worthwhile noting that pataphysics was established in an a-disciplinary fashion, first appearing in Alfred Jarry’s Ubu plays. The origin in theater is not accidental or inconsequential but rather situates pataphysics as a radical practice unconcerned with the norms or standards of hard science, or even those of art itself. Still, this is not so much a repudiation of science as it is a demonstration of how pataphysics exists beyond any particular method or genre. Pataphysical dimensions are opened up concurrently with those of “reality” and “common sense,” allowing for unexpected resonances across disciplines and experience. The pataphysical dimension is in a sense overlaid onto the everyday world, revealing latent potentialities. Jarry’s book *Exploits & Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician* both seeks to define and enact pataphysics through an unconventional form that is novelistic, pseudo-scientific, taxonomic, philosophical, bureaucratic, dialogic, and epistolary by turns. It begins with a visit to the good doctor by the bailiff, Panmuphle, who is delivering an official notice of warrant. But the bailiff quickly has to abandon his official duties and leave behind his stamped papers so as to go on a fantastical journey with Dr. Faustroll. What appears to be a bed actually turns out to be a peculiar space-time machine that Dr. Faustroll describes as a floating skiff that can travel to distant lands (and perhaps alternative time periods) without actually leaving Paris. Thus, the pataphysical space of the skiff as space-time machine renders inoperative
divisions between inside and outside, here and there, private (a personal bed) and public (a collective skiff).

Accompanying Dr. Faustroll and Panmuphle are, as the doctor explains, “some beings who have managed to escape your Law and your Justice between the lines of my seized volumes” (1996, 17). The skiff is in exodus from official Law, both in terms of state law and laws of physics, opening up a “universe supplementary to this one” (21). In this sense, there is something that is equal parts imaginative and fugitive about the experimentation with space and time that Dr. Faustroll undertakes. It does not reside within the coordinates of any known system of measurement, and does not obey any known law of humanity or nature. Thus it is fitting that the journey begins with the abduction of a bailiff, who in turn gives up trying to record the strange events that unfold as “retained for the Law and Justice” (14).

The investigation undertaken by the travelers follows the tenants of an unnamed science of pataphysics that challenges existing rules and regulations regarding what counts as knowledge. Neither inductive nor deductive, pataphysical investigations search for singularities. As Dr. Faustroll states, it is the “science of the particular” (21). Since science concerns the search for laws, not only does pataphysics interrupt existing Law and Justice but also the search for Law and Justice as appropriate ends. Instead, what emerges is an engagement with particulars as particulars (or peculiarities) that can only be examples of themselves (without comparison or measure). In emphasizing the particular, the goal is not so much to generate synthesis across particulars so much as to produce alchemical relationships between particulars to see what emerges, even if the chain reaction might, as Deleuze warns (1995a), explode the faculties. In this sense, pataphysics fully embodies an a-disciplinary and feral approach to experimenting with the boundaries defining what is real.

To suspend Law and Justice means that restraints and ordering principles and practices are left idle so that ideas and techniques can suddenly be opened up for new uses. For Dr. Faustroll, science,
math, symbolism, and occult practices all collide in the form of pataphysical experimentation on the fringes of reality. The time that opens up within such spaces is one that is discontinuous, interrupting divisions constituting or structuring a certain, linear flow of events from beginning to end, from potentiality to actualization, from past to present to future. Experientially, one is caught in a slow haste, or a rhythmic drifting back and forth, where progress and regress are never clearly defined or delineated. As such, there is no clear exit from the pataphysical experiment once it ensues. This is a time of suspension, when clocks cease to function, and where time as an arrow bends back on itself.

While more can be said about pataphysical exploration of a supplementary world in exodus from Law and Justice, what we want to emphasize here is the connection between the pataphysical spacetime machine of the bed-as-skiff and studioing. Considering the frequency with which studios were located in or adjacent to bedchambers in the early modern period, it is perhaps not surprising that Jarry takes up his bed as the locus for a pataphysical (if not alchemical) experimentation in studioing. Furthermore, just as modern artists such as Phyllida Barlow, Graham Sussin, Simon Starling, Keith Tyson, and Keith Wilson describe their studio practice as a kind of journey or travel (Wood 2005), so too does Jarry’s pataphysics produce its own kind of journey that plays with the very parameters of inside and outside, production and display, private and public, distance and nearness, past and future. Through pataphysical appropriation and experimentation, Dr. Faustroll’s bed is freed from its function as a private space and time for sleep and unleashed for new, collective uses by his motley crew. It is, in other words, a pataphysical epistemic object for producing (queer) nonknowledge. Likewise, studios have a similar potential: taking up objects from the outside world and rendering them inoperative in order to experiment with perceptual and epistemic possibilities. In both cases, we are presented with paradoxical locations outside familiar coordinates of inside and outside, public and private. Temporally, both offer a confluence of tenses that projects the past
and the future into the present. And finally, we find the deactivation of divisions of labor and subject positions as an underlying continuity between Jarry’s pataphysical experiments and the history of the studio. The bailiff finds the Law inadequate, the doctor is a doctor of a science that has no name and is “illegitimate,” and the traveling companion, Bosse-de-Nage, is a talking baboon that thinks he is human. This motley crew of mis-fits does not seem to have a destination or a destiny. Instead, they are adrift in the pataphysical universe of singular islands, each stranger than its predecessor, riding on a skiff that is mobile in its immobility.

Early on in the book, Faustroll explains that the “skiff is not only propelled by oar blades but also by suction disks at the end of spring levers. And its keel travels on three steel rollers at the same level” (Jarry 1996, 17). A sieve of intricate meshes that can progress on land or water, the skiff would be at home in an alchemist’s studio, or that of Duchamp. One could also imagine a drawing of such a vessel among Da Vinci’s renderings of inventions, machinery, and military equipment. Elsewhere, Faustroll offers another definition of pataphysics as “the science of imaginary solutions” (22). The skiff presents itself as a remedy for Faustroll’s legal troubles, navigating a pataphysical dimension that has been superimposed onto his daily life. The absurd utility of the vessel stems from its status as “imaginary solution.” Within pataphysics, the problems themselves can be real or imagined, but the solutions are always situated in a zone where such divisions are meaningless. Studioing occurs within this zone a-part from all others.

Although Jarry focuses on Dr. Faustroll’s bed as a pataphysical space-time machine, we would also like to highlight how Dr. Faustroll’s library seems to be designed to throw into high relief the pataphysical potentials latent in the collections of books, objects, and devices that characterize the clutter of studios. Close to the beginning of Jarry’s Faustroll, the character Panmuphle lists the books contained in the pataphysician’s library. As Ben Fisher has argued, this catalogue is a rather “perverse selection” characterised by a “deliberately idiosyncratic quality” (2001, 26–27). While
Fisher argues that the catalogue can be interpreted as evidence of the eclecticism of the Symbolist style in general, he is also careful to emphasise the irreducible singularity of Jarry’s manner of organising the library (thus interrupting any attempt to form generalizations out of particulars). Of course, Jarry’s list is presented in alphabetical order, but this convention only manages to throw into relief how such order is artificial if not absurdist, ultimately suspending its own appearance of “order.” Instead, the books (high and low literature, religious and scientific, historical and fictional) set up the conditions for odd encounters and a-disciplinary forms of nonknowledge. Just as studioing queers objects (suspending destinations and functions), so too does Jarry’s library queer the books that it contains, disorienting them through strange juxtapositions and unauthorized intimacies. In short, the pataphysician’s studio—composed of odd devices (the skiff), books, and experimentations with time and space—is not a studio but the paradigm of studioing, meaning that it makes studioing as a process intelligible precisely because of its extreme deviance.

But we can press this thesis even further. The river upon which Dr. Faustroll’s skiff drifts is not a river of water so much as a river of “ethernity” (Jarry 1996, 104), which is “circularly mobile and perishable,” a “luminiferous ether,” an “elastic solid” (104). Ethernity is not fixed and immobile (like eternity), but nor is it simply a chemical ether with physical properties that can be identified and measured by science. Instead, it is a pataphysical substance that exists before the very coordinates of space and time are divided up and calculated out. Studioing (as an experimental, a-disciplinary, a-topic, and paradoxical suspension that is a-part from that which it is a part) emerges out of ethernity, and ethernity is made manifest in and through studioing. In this sense, the pliability of the studio that we have emphasized in this chapter is a material manifestation of ethernity as an elastic solid, as a spatial and temporal process of emergence that bucks up against the homogenous, organized space and time defined by any metaphysical Law.

The virtual sphere of ethernity will, in our project, connect the
studio to the equally elastic and circularly mobile virtual sphere of postdigital space and time. At this point, we can return to a problem that Caroline A. Jones once posited to artists concerning the relationship between their studio practice and emergent social, technological, and artistic transformations brought about by advanced digital and information systems. At the end of her book *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*, she provocatively speculates: “Chances are, artists won’t be drawn back to the studio—but if they are, it will be a radically different place than it was in 1948. Machines are now so deep in our imaginary that we are cultural, if not yet biological, cyborgs; we are soft-wired for technology in our desiring machines” (1996, 373). Through technological advancements, studioing has become increasingly socialized and expanded beyond the traditional notions of the studio, thus putting the very concept at risk of being eclipsed by poststudio practices. Yet our wager is that emergent postdigital spaces maximize the essential pliability of studioing, disseminating it and stretching it even further than artists and scholars have henceforth imagined. The internet, in particular, is a *technology* of ethernity that makes studioing a new possibility for a wide array of participants. Simply put, postdigital interplay between digital, biological, cultural, and artifactual dimensions of experience need not be seen as erasing the studio but rather extending and intensifying the potentiality of studioing. In the next chapter we will explore the implications of this for postpandemic e-learning in the university.
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