

## Breatharian 'Pataphysics A Tinfoil Hat for Eldritch Priest

*Ted Hiebert*

“Ha ha!” said the dog-faced baboon, then turned away, continuing the conversation he had been having with himself about the escape velocity of an idea relative to its sedimental mood. It was to become a recurring theme.

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### Hedonic Tones

In *Boring Formless Nonsense*, Eldritch Priest tells a beautiful story about sitting in a coffee shop at the airport, distracted from a conversation with his wife by a CD skipping in the background—a sound he took at first as a moment of experimental music: “skipping CD or not, I heard a saxophone and drum duet.”<sup>1</sup> The story is striking because of its simplicity, the kind of moment that we all have probably experienced in some way, except what makes Priest’s version unique is that he continued to insist upon it well after the fact. He realized that even though he was wrong and it wasn’t experimental music—at least not in a formal way—the absence of experimental intentionality behind the music was not prohibitive to a form of listening that hears experimentation, even when none has been actually composed. Experimentation is in the ear of the listener,

most genuinely expressed not when listening on purpose but when seduced by sounds as they happen.

Like Priest, I am interested in the things we hear even when that is not what we're listening to—when what seems like a mistake is really something else. It's background music that becomes deviant, finds its way into earshot and from there plants itself into the mind. It would be easy to say that it's a delusion, a false sound, a misperception, but it also seems to be something more—a felt thought, perhaps. Priest calls it “sorcery,” a term that is apt, but inadequate unless we also devote ourselves to its study, unless we find ways to not just put ourselves in its path but to create spells of our own. For me, *Boring Formless Nonsense* is a book that understands this relationship—a book of spells—and this essay is an attempt to invoke one of its animating characteristics.

I am also interested in the book as a form of background music, or at least I am curious to think through what it would mean to treat *Boring Formless Nonsense* as a book whose destiny is to provide a background hum—a sensation that lingers long after the specific articulations of the text are forgotten. It's decidedly not the question of what arguments the book makes but rather of the disturbances it creates, not what one hears but what one feels. Not ideas. Emergent moods. I'm curious about how the book might be seen to emit what Priest calls a “hedonic tone,” the affective state associated with a context or phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> But I am not so interested in the common use of hedonic tone to delineate a positive or negative valence of mood; rather I am interested in the generative potential of moods themselves.<sup>3</sup> For these are the feelings that linger. When the ideas are gone and I forget what precisely a book had to say, I remember its mood.

It might be simply a mnemonic device used in order to not entirely forget a text—categorizing general waves of affect that begin to systematize my book shelf. If so, my library is not organized alphabetically, or by topic, but by affective register. Books that have the same mood go together. This is why, on my shelf, Leonard Orr's new age manual for ways to combat mortality (first, he says, by simply refusing to believe in death<sup>4</sup>) sits next to William Rawlins's treatise on friendship (in which he insists that friendships are not grounded in rational thinking<sup>5</sup>). It is why Baudrillard's *Intelligence of Evil* sits next to Nietzsche's *My Sister and I*—the former a treatise on delirious method,<sup>6</sup> the latter a contested translation with no German original, purporting to share Nietzsche's thoughts in his final delirious days.<sup>7</sup> And it is why, on my shelf, *Boring Formless Nonsense* does not sit next to other books on sound or technology, but instead is sandwiched between Alfred Jarry's *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician* and Andy Warhol's autobiography, providing a sorcerer's link between the "science of imaginary solutions" and an artistic life of sustainable eccentricity. I may not know exactly what they have in common, but for whatever reason it just feels like they go together.

To this mood—this hedonic tone—of *Boring Formless Nonsense* I attribute a certain paradoxicality. It is not just a tone, or if it is, it is one that cannot be heard directly. Perhaps it is like background music, or like a binaural beat in which two audible sounds (or intelligible voices) cancel each other out, leaving the sensation of a perception that couldn't actually happen. With binaural beats such an interference pattern can invoke sounds that are physiologically inaudible, impossible sounds that are nonetheless heard despite their

technical impossibility. Yet this kind of sound—sound that can't be heard—also cannot quite be represented and so must be approached obliquely. It is most easily identified not by the conclusions it shares but by the resonant parts—the individual parts that do not add up to the whole but which interfere with each other in order to create a lingering sensation (sorcery, again). To speak about such a tone, then, is not to try to represent it or to critically engage in some simulated synthesis of an idea, but more simply to attempt to recreate it. To start with the parts and the moods they provoke, then to move on from there to explore the possibilities that interference creates, such as to attempt to engage the hedonic amplitudes of the text itself.

It's hard to know what to call such a method. For the moment I will call it Breatharian 'pataphysics—an idea that will be elaborated in three parts: through an examination of the transductive potential of tinfoil hats; an exploration of the performative powers of lies that want to be real; and, the metaphor of photosynthetic ingestion as a way to make imaginary encounters self-sustaining.

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“Ha ha” he proclaimed victoriously, looking around and seeing nothing, his gamble of staring at the sun having finally paid off. When asked to elaborate, he had nothing to add. He was otherwise preoccupied with all the things he couldn't see.

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## Tinfoil Hats

In 2005, a group of graduate students at MIT—Ali Rahimi, Ben Recht, Jason Taylor and Noah Vawter—ran a series of frequency amplification experiments on tinfoil hats, looking to see whether the rumblings of conspiracy theorists had any truth to them and if aluminum foil could really provide a shield between the mind and the world of electronic signals looking to harvest private thoughts. In theory, the aluminum foil creates a rudimentary Faraday cage around the brain, capable of deflecting predatory scans and other forms of mind control, a theory that provides some explanation for how a ridiculous fashion accessory might actually serve a serious purpose. To do so they built three different varieties of aluminum hats, put them on, and proceeded to scan the hats as well as their own brains for frequency modulations as they blasted their heads with various electronic signals: sweeping ranges from AM radio to RFID, television to radar, microwaves to cellular, communication satellites to government exclusive frequency bands, and using a high-end network analyzer and a directional antenna to measure and plot the results.<sup>8</sup>

The idea of the tinfoil hat initially comes from Julian Huxley's 1927 story about a machine designed for mass telepathy, built as an experimental mind control apparatus to help control a growing population.<sup>9</sup> In the text, the machine is used to hypnotize the masses on a broad scale, giving social and political suggestions and implementing a certain psychic order through the powers of projected voice. To protect themselves from the radiating influence of the telepathic broadcast, the inventors of the machine don aluminum hats, specifically designed to protect their minds

from the voice of the apparatus, and by extension from the prying gaze of algorithmic surveillance. It is a theme taken up by some conspiracy theorists and also written about in psychological scholarship and media studies, often invoking Huxley indirectly, through the idea of an “influencing machine,” a term that comes—according to Christopher Turner—from Victor Tausk (a student of Sigmund Freud) who first noticed a tendency in some patients with schizophrenia to personify feelings of persecution in the form of an autonomous mind control machine. Turner muses that those who suffer from schizophrenia may be less delusional than is generally assumed; indeed, they may even be technological savants, able to perceive a certain background noise that the rest of us have somehow learned to tune out.<sup>10</sup> Something similar might be suggested for these insightful students at MIT, undoubtedly engaged in a study of play but in-so-doing also carving out serious territory for the playfulness of study.

In Huxley’s book the aluminum hat worked to prevent the wearer from machine-broadcast trans-cranial induction, to a certain extent at least. In the MIT experiment the results were more complicated. The tinfoil hat, it turns out, is a paradoxical object. On one hand, Huxley and the conspirators he inspired are (at least partly) right: the MIT study found that wearing a tinfoil hat actually *does* serve to protect the head from a significant number of frequencies, particularly those in the range of radio waves. On the other hand, the irony is that the aluminum headpiece also amplifies *other* frequencies—those associated with exactly the bandwidths most feared by conspirators—allocated to government agencies and mobile phone corporations. Here are the MIT study’s technical details:

For all helmets, we noticed a 30 db amplification at 2.6 Ghz and a 20 db amplification at 1.2 Ghz, regardless of the position of the antenna on the cranium. ... Conclusion: The helmets amplify frequency bands that coincide with those allocated to the US government between 1.2 Ghz and 1.4 Ghz. According to the FCC, These bands are supposedly reserved for “radio location” (ie, GPS), and other communications with satellites. The 2.6 Ghz band coincides with mobile phone technology.<sup>11</sup>

The study goes on to suggest that it would make sense that the idea of the tinfoil hat as a frequency shield may in fact have been perpetuated by the government to attune the general public to a certain form of broadcast receptivity. Tinfoil hats may block radio waves but they amplify satellite communications and cellular signals.

Putting aside the irony of these results, what is most important to this study is not actually its conclusion. Instead, it takes a certain playfulness in the face of data to even propose such a study, and more still to actually try it.<sup>12</sup> Even better if one has access to expensive equipment, but only because it intensifies the irony, and the message that the tinfoil hat is not just a tinfoil hat. In the hands of Rahimi, Recht, Taylor and Vawter, the tinfoil hat is a metaphor for speculative engagement. To read the tinfoil hat as a metaphor is to claim that it is both itself and something else. It is something that actually does have an effect—amplifying certain signal frequencies while blocking others—which is to say that it is not only an object of conspiracy delusion, even if engagement with such fictions

are part of its functional history. At the same time it is also something that *creates* the effect it is designed to engage, amplifying conspiracy tendencies by indulging the hat in the first place. The effects of a tinfoil hat might be (partly) hallucinated, but they are also (partly) real—and indeed it would be a poor hallucination that presents itself as anything other than real in the first place.<sup>13</sup> Hallucinations, like tinfoil hats, rely on the collapse of such distinctions.

When the tinfoil hat is engaged in this way, the result is to actually put it on differently—not only as a shield but as a listening device specifically designed to amplify the background noise of creative and speculative living. Not an accessory designed to protect the wearer from influence, but an opportunity to attune to the crazy possibilities of broadcast frequencies—a creative catalyst for what Priest, following Brian Massumi, calls “transductive momentum,” or “the impetus to carry on transitioning.”<sup>14</sup> Priest explains this idea using the metaphor of surfing the web, caught up in the momentum that carries a user from one link to the next. Wearing a tinfoil hat does this too, except that one no longer even needs to click the links—attuned as one becomes to the frequencies themselves, amplified as they are both by the tinfoil apparatus and by the conscientious imagination. Putting on a tinfoil hat might even extend this concept and proverbially let the web surf us, which it ostensibly does already (think of algorithmic surveillance, data harvesting and biometric tracking) but which the hat then foregrounds as a conscientious part of the relationships one builds.

Most importantly, however, is that being mediated by an apparatus—the hat—also makes the idea of experimental thinking more accessible since it provides a device to transport the wearer beyond the constraints of logical

thinking. It is to insist that the adoption of an alternative way of thinking is as easy as making a hat out of aluminum foil, putting it on, and allowing this intervention—eccentric though it may seem—to serve its purpose as *catalyst*. The tinfoil hat is both a performative apparatus and a catalyst for trans-cranial self-induction given the time to play out its own persuasions and possibilities of becoming real. The tinfoil hat, when seen as an object with performative complexity, becomes a metaphor that is also a mood. And this mood has a tone. The hedonic tone of the tinfoil hat is the realization that affective charge can be altered—technologically or psychologically—with only the help of a metaphor, a modicum of transductive momentum, or even just a simple apparatus. To attune to the tinfoil hat is to listen to myriad illogical voices coming both from without and from within.

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“Ha ha,” thought Bosse-de-Nage, uncharacteristically keeping his opinions to himself. He wondered, though, whether someone around him would hear them anyways, or see the expression on his face. He wasn’t disappointed.

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## Pinocchio Syndrome

It may seem like a convoluted fantasy but in some ways the destiny of fiction is always to challenge the boundaries between the imaginative and the real. It’s less complicated than it seems: conspiracy theory is less an assault on the

quantifiable than it is an attitude towards truth, a mood-massage or a background tone that sets the context for the world as we understand it. It's not that different from what happens when we watch a movie, when the lights come on and we walk outside feeling slightly disoriented—except with a movie or a novel the feeling eventually fades. But why not consider this as an opportunity then, a chance to learn how to initiate and sustain different attitudes towards the world? By embracing the mood-altering possibilities of daily engagements we can live a hedonic lifestyle without being forced to reconcile contradictions among competitive truths. In this way, fiction trumps truth by setting the mood in which truth takes place. We wear tinfoil hats even if we don't see them—emperors' tinfoil hats—and they set the stage for the signals we receive, those we tune out, and those that we live by. But Priest knows this, and insofar as this essay is a meditation on Priest as much as it is on speculation, it seems important to note that he has his own tinfoil hat that he wears—a sorcerer's hat—which is to say a hat that wears him. Her name is Karen Eliot.

Karen Eliot is not a person but a shared persona. Priest describes her as “a multiple-use name that composers and artists ... use to gather the figments of their collective imagination under one appellation ... ‘Eliot’ belongs to nobody and is no *one*... [Her work] circulates contradictions and inconsistencies in a way that keeps doubt about the status of her reality in play.”<sup>15</sup> Karen Eliot is a paradox, and there is some uncertainty as to who is the real person, since she comes alive only through a combination of animation, collaboration and clever obfuscation, writing music and essays as well as reviews of her own and other's work (and sometimes works that don't even exist). And yet, she

does come alive—not just as a fiction but in the form of the artworks and ideas that emerge through her activities. Priest calls these artifacts “reality machines”: no longer simply catalysts for influence (like with Tausk’s “influencing machine”), these artifacts, wherever they come from, actually manifest a reality of their own.

Without these “reality machines” to give her substance, Eliot suffers “recurring episodes of feeling as though she is completely artificial or invented.” Priest qualifies such a state of mind as “Pinocchio Syndrome,” a marker of situations when fictions are grounded in a desire to become real.<sup>16</sup> Distinct from the character in Carlo Collodi’s original story of Pinocchio, Eliot may first seem like a puppet but she is not: there is no literary distance between Eliot and her audience (or between Eliot and Priest) and no immediate frame that signals her imaginary status in advance. She is not a fiction contained within a story, but one that evolves into the stories in which she participates. Eliot becomes more real by confusing the distance between reality and fiction, thereby inverting the idea of fiction as a function of life and supplanting it with just the opposite. Karen Eliot—at her best—is a fiction that creates the realities in which she engages. Or as she puts it, the goal is to “make everything as fictional as I am,” not so much in an attempt to become real as to make the world around her more imaginary.<sup>17</sup> Eliot’s version of Pinocchio Syndrome is not one of a fiction that wants to become real but just the opposite—a story of how the real wants to be imagined, and indeed comes alive most dynamically at exactly the moment when it begins to break with the constraints of truth in favor of aesthetic and relational complexity.

Consider that the story of Pinocchio is not only a story about a wooden boy that wants to become real. It is a story about lies, and the way that lies manifest in direct and tangible ways: most simply in the growth of Pinocchio's nose. In the story of Pinocchio, a lie is never simply a lie but a catalyst for physiological growth—impossible though that might seem from the perspective of the real. The destiny of a lie well told is to rupture the smooth contours of consensual reality, revealing in the process that reality has always been deeply indebted to the manifestations of fiction. Seen in this way, Eliot is not only a lying puppet focused on her own status as imaginary but a mobilized fiction that is the manifest lie of Priest and his collaborators. Not just a nose that grows, in the case of Karen Eliot the lie gives birth to a fully formed person. And consequently, Pinocchio Syndrome is less convincing as a mere state of subjectivity than it is as a methodological approach synthesized through the use of lies to create tangible real-world scenarios. A lie may not be real but the reality it creates is. In Priest's words: "Counterfactuals can in a sense be lived, lived in terms of the sense they make of a state of affairs."<sup>18</sup> That is, lies are not accountable to truth so much as they are generative of relational experience.

This matters because there is also another form of Pinocchio Syndrome, one that the German psychotherapist Michael Titze associates with gelotophobia, the fear of being laughed at. For Titze, this is not the private anxiety associated with thinking of oneself as a fiction (or of wanting to be real) but a public anxiety about having one's fictions noticed by others. Pinocchio Syndrome is a form of impostor mentality—less a form of self-doubt than a fear of one's failures being discovered by others. According to Titze, gelotophobia is a form of anxiety that manifests as a

state of “puppet-like” immobilization, social paralysis and rigid body movements.<sup>19</sup> This is a related but inverted form of Priest’s version of the syndrome, since gelotophobes do not suffer from a literal desire to be real as much as they fear not being taken seriously (i.e., being thought of as laughable). The treatment, predictably, is to learn to laugh at oneself. Titze proposes “humordrama” as the remedy for gelotophobia, in essence arguing the classic psychoanalytic claim that confronting one’s phobias directly is the most effective way of subduing them, a strategy “designed to invalidate the perfectionistic attitude of individuals who want to avoid situations that might make them appear ridiculous.”<sup>20</sup>

To extend the comparison would be then to agree with Karen Eliot that the goal of (and treatment for) Pinocchio Syndrome is not to make oneself impervious to the laughter of others but rather to make oneself laughable, proving the point by being the first one to do so—laughing out loud and making light of both oneself and the world in the process. Perhaps even more importantly, learning to laugh at oneself is the dethroning of the reality of the world. In this, Pinocchio Syndrome takes on a relational component, a self-reflexivity in which Eliot becomes aware that her fabrications create a certain transformative effect. And one might well catalyze Eliot’s notion of “making everything as fictional as I am” as a form of laughing at the reality of situations—in effect perverting Titze’s psychological treatment by deploying it as a generative strategy rather than simply as a coping mechanism. To do so is not a malicious co-optation of therapy as much as it is a way to laugh at oneself as a pre-emptive strike against the real, fulfilling Baudrillard’s demand that we disbelieve in reality and strive to make the world more unintelligible.<sup>21</sup>

To take this lesson from Eliot and Titzze, would be to think of humordrama (or drama in general) as a form of lying—needling the reality of a situation by pretending to be someone that one isn't for the purpose of effecting temporary performative change. To think of Pinocchio Syndrome in this way is to contextualize experience within an economy of lies, emphasizing the way in which effects can be strategically created independently from intelligible causes, with no necessary link to a quantifiable real. Not a desire to become real but the desire to realize a fiction of oneself that invalidates and supersedes one's regular states of performance. The hedonic tone of Pinocchio Syndrome is the mood that emerges when one gives oneself permission to laugh knowing that lies create growth and fictions manifest with real effects. To attune to Pinocchio Syndrome is to treat oneself like a voodoo doll, an object of vicarious intervention designed to be performatively activated by a pre-emptive imagination.<sup>22</sup>

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“Ha ha,” he said, but it was unclear to those in the room whether he meant it as an expression of humor or whether he was, in fact, laughing at them. He preferred not to clarify.

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### Breatharian 'Pataphysics

In Alfred Jarry's *Exploits & Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*, Dr. Faustroll's companion, Bosse-de-Nage—the ass-faced baboon—speaks many times but has only one

line: "Ha ha."<sup>23</sup> It is tempting to read this as a release valve to a densely coded text, a laughter to remind us to lighten the mood of the conversation, to inject a sense of purposeful irony, or to fulfill the 'pataphysical demand that one take nothing serious except (and not even) 'Pataphysics itself.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, in the contradictory demands of a 'pataphysical approach such a laughter will always be both playful and violent, laughing at oneself not only as a gelotophobic pre-treatment but as a strategy for undermining the reality of the world. This is not benign humor or idle laughter, but just the opposite: a performative gesture and an insistence on a certain situatedness that only affective response can guarantee, as a humordrama, or a dramatic flair—and in this as a pre-emptive strategy for embracing the imaginary and sabotaging the real.

'Pataphysical laughter is the intense awareness of an absurd duality that gouges your eyes out. In this sense it is the only human expression of the identity of opposites (and, amazingly enough, it expresses this in a universal language). Or rather, it signifies the subject's headlong rush toward the opposed object, and at the same time the submission of this act of love to an inonceivable and cruelly felt law of becoming ...<sup>25</sup>

From a 'pataphysical perspective, humordrama is not simply a treatment but a general rule, and taking exception to the dictates of the real is the performative norm. According to Andrew Hugill, the paradox of 'pataphysical laughter is the way it combines extreme ambivalence with utter seriousness, a kind of thinking that "deflates any notion of

a transcendent reality while at the same time allowing for personal transcendence through the imagination.”<sup>26</sup> This is laughter as an aesthetic opening, and aesthetics as an embodiment tactic. To take this line of laughing one step further—out of the novel or off the stage and into the real world—would be to propose a form of “Breatharian ‘pataphysics,” a mode of imaginary engagement no longer designed simply to undermine or produce the real but to actively ingest the imaginary, in as literal a way as possible.

Technically, Breatharians are those who claim to live off of the energy of the sun—a certain type of yoga practitioner who gets up at dawn to stand as the sun rises and move their eyes rhythmically from side-to-side allowing the light from above to enter their bodies, and nourish their minds. The practice is grounded in the idea of the sun as a celestial energy source, to which the trained and intentional mind can attune. When done properly, the Breatharian method claims that one will need no other nourishment than the energy consumed by gazing at the sun. In fact, prominent Breatharian practitioners, such as Wiley Brooks, go as far as to claim that such a practice can lead to both physical and spiritual immortality.<sup>27</sup> Some insist that they have not had to eat for 40 years or more—a claim that has never been (scientifically) proven but which makes grand strides for the project of living through the manifestation of beautiful fictions. It gets tricky however when one learns that some practitioners have died through an excess of fidelity to their alimentary program, or that seminars teaching the particularities of the practice cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 to attend.<sup>28</sup> Brooks himself—often thought of as the spokesperson for the philosophy—is also known to indulge in a McDonald’s Quarter Pounder from time to

time.<sup>29</sup> This all to say that there are distinctly two sides to the Breatharian question.

On one hand, the promises are beautiful—as poetic as they are spiritual—proposing a way of living that is as environmentally sensitive as it is ecologically attuned (neither plants nor animals are consumed in this tradition). It might involve learning a particular form of yoga and training oneself to think in a particular way, so as to counteract the reality syndrome from which we suffer and according to which the laws of physics and physiology will not be denied. But promise it does, such as to constitute a beautiful example of aesthetic thinking taken to performative ends. A chance to live out a possible manifestation of life that we would never have otherwise thought possible. To do so, one need only align with the illogic of Breatharian encounter. It is to make of oneself a fiction that lives by what would otherwise seem to be an impossibility.

On the other hand, it might be a lie.

To merge these lines of thinking—the potential lie and its real promise—is to situate an existential version of Pinocchio thinking. It is to propose Breatharian 'pataphysics as a form of hyperstitional ingestion, the purposeful succumbing to fiction and taking it as real, until it becomes the situated tone through which one lives. It is to become a hedonic light eater, standing at attention to the sun, silent only in order to harmonize with the resonant sounds of an imaginary universe.<sup>30</sup> It might be ironic, or it might not. It might be a lie, but it still performs its truth. Breatharian 'pataphysics is the ingestion of impossibility as an essential nutrient of speculative thinking and being. This is not really art any more, nor even sorcery, nor even a form of voodoo enacted on the Pinocchio doll that is oneself. It is more of a

hoax, but as Priest eloquently points out, a hoax is both “the event that it says it is *and* the event that it is not. It is neither true nor false but both, a duplexity that allows one to say two things at once: *to tell the truth by lying.*”<sup>31</sup>



*Two people looking at each other with crossed eyes (a tinfoil hat for Eldritch Priest), Ted Hiebert, 2013. Stereographic image.*<sup>32</sup>

And the point in the end is that in order to understand the ideas one needs to put oneself in their way. That's the tinfoil hat through which one accesses both sounds that are there but can't be heard, and sounds that aren't there but that one hears anyways. That's Pinocchio Syndrome in which one moves towards embodied action as a performative lie that generates its own sustainable reality. That's 'pataphysical laughter too, which puts itself in the way of any serious conclusion in favor of always unsettled systems of engagement. That's the Breatharian promise—that, and immortality—crossed wires of a delusional performance that can neither be verified nor disproved and which thus can only be engaged or ignored. Breatharianism, when seen as an ideology with creative complexity, becomes not just a metaphor but a possible perspective to which one can attune. All that is required is a sense of belief despite impossibility, a complete disregard for the truth, and a modicum of personal recklessness. Not logic. A mood. The hedonic tone of Breatharian 'pataphysics is the conceit that one can live on the power of the imagination alone, even when there is no proof, no reason, and no clear line of logic supporting the suggestion. Breatharian 'pataphysics is an ingestive strategy for the consumption of imaginary possibilities.

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“Ha ha” he said, crossing his eyes until he saw two versions of the world. When he did he laughed again, having discovered someone standing in the space between the two, staring intently back at him.

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## Notes

- 1 Eldritch Priest, *Boring Formless Nonsense: Experimental Music and the Aesthetics of Failure*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 116.
- 2 Ibid.,70.
- 3 See, for example: Carsten K.W. De Dreu, Matthijs Baas and Bernard A. Nijstad. “Hedonic Tone and Activation Level in the Mood–Creativity Link: Toward a Dual Pathway to Creativity Model” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 94, No. 5 (2008): 739-756.
- 4 Leonard Orr, *Breaking the Death Habit: The Science of Everlasting Life* (Berkeley: Frog, Ltd., 1998).
- 5 William K. Rawlins, *Friendship Matters: Communication, Dialectics, and the Life Course* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992)
- 6 Baudrillard argues, among other things that we are better off refusing to believe in the real, lest we find out at some later time that it has all been a hoax. See Jean Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil, Or the Lucidity Pact*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005).
- 7 I read *My Sister and I* primarily as a text that adds a beautiful ambiguity to Nietzsche’s thought, a text framed by some as Nietzsche’s last text written well into his period of madness, and by others (most importantly Walter Kaufmann, the most notable translator of Nietzsche’s work) as a fraudulent text that undermines and contradicts the bulk of Nietzsche’s thinking. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *My Sister and I*, trans. Oscar Levy (Los Angeles: Amok Books, 1990).
- 8 Ali Rahimi, Ben Recht, Jason Taylor, Noah Vawter, “On the Effectiveness of Aluminum Foil Helmets: An Empirical Study,” Wayback Internet Archive, (2005), <http://web.archive.org/web/20100708230258/http://people.csail.mit.edu/rahimi/helmet/>
- 9 Julian Huxley, *The Tissue-Culture King*, (1927) <http://www.revolutionsf.com/fiction/tissue/index.html>

- 10 Christopher Turner, "The Influencing Machine," *Cabinet* 14 (Summer 2004), <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/14/turner.php>
- 11 Rahimi, et al., "On the Effectiveness of Aluminum Foil Helmets."
- 12 For Priest, "being ironic doesn't first mean being critical; being ironic means being playful." See: David Cecchetto, Marc Couroux, Ted Hiebert and Eldritch Priest, *Ludic Dreaming: How To Listen Away from Contemporary Technoculture* (London: Bloomsbury, Forthcoming 2017). This quote from chapter 7: "Imaginary Magnitudes and the Anoriginal Hypocrisy that Vanishes in the Meantime."
- 13 For more on this argument see: Ted Hiebert, *In Praise of Nonsense: Aesthetics, Uncertainty and Postmodern Identity* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012).
- 14 Priest, *Boring Formless Nonsense*, 162.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 215-17.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 220.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 221.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 242.
- 19 Waleed Salameh and Michael Titze, "The Pinocchio Complex: Overcoming the Fear of Laughter. An Interview with Dr. Michael Titze," *Humor & Health Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1 (January/February 1996), [http://www.michael-titze.de/content/texte\\_e/text\\_e\\_02.html](http://www.michael-titze.de/content/texte_e/text_e_02.html)
- 20 Michael Titze, "Treating Gelotophobia with Humordrama," *Humor & Health Journal*, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (October 2007), 3, <http://www.centroadleriano.org/publicaciones/geloto.pdf>
- 21 Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil*, 156.
- 22 Priest speaks of art as a form of voodoo (see Priest, 200) but by linking this concept to Pinocchio Syndrome my intention is to push past art to suggest voodoo as a psychological and performative strategy for setting up alternate forms of encounter with the world.
- 23 Alfred Jarry, *Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor, (Boston: Exact Change, 1996).

- 24 Luc Étienne, “Faut-il prendre la ’Pataphyque au serieux?” November Organum du College de ’Pataphysique website, Accessed May 2015. My translation.
- 25 René Daumal, “Pataphysics and the Revelation of Laughter” (1929), cited in Andrew Hugill, *’Pataphysics: A Useless Guide* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012) 145.
- 26 Hugill, *’Pataphysics: A Useless Guide*, 17.
- 27 See Wiley Brooks’s blog, *The Breatharian Institute of America*. <http://www.breatharian.com/>
- 28 Hugo Stamm, “Von Licht ernährt – bis in den Tod,” (“From light-fed – to the death”), *Tages Anzeiger*, April 25, 2012., <http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/leben/gesellschaft/Von-Licht-ernachrt-bis-in-den-Tod/story/28039574>
- 29 Toby McCasker, “Breatharian Leader Wiley Brooks Lives On Light, Air, And Quarter Pounders,” *Vice Magazine*, March 17, 2014, <http://www.vice.com/read/breatharian-leader-wiley-brooks-lives-on-light-air-and-quarter-pounders>
- 30 See Cecchetto, Couroux, Hiebert, and Priest, *Ludic Dreaming*, Chapter 2: “Nietzsche in B-flat: Attuning to the ’Pataphysics of Data.”
- 31 Priest, *Boring Formless Nonsense*, 281.
- 32 This image is a tinfoil hat in the sense that it requires reciprocal engagement for activation. The image is a stereographic photograph, which means that the two images have been captured from slightly off-set angles, in order to mimic the parallax gaze of human vision. It is also a rudimentary method for simulating 3D imagery. To view the picture, a viewer needs to cross their eyes and focus on the area of overlap that emerges (due to divergent angles of vision) between the two images. When they do, they will see my face—with eyes crossed—in 3D.