



In Search of the Ineffable

Ryan L. Moule

Ineffable

adjective

too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words.

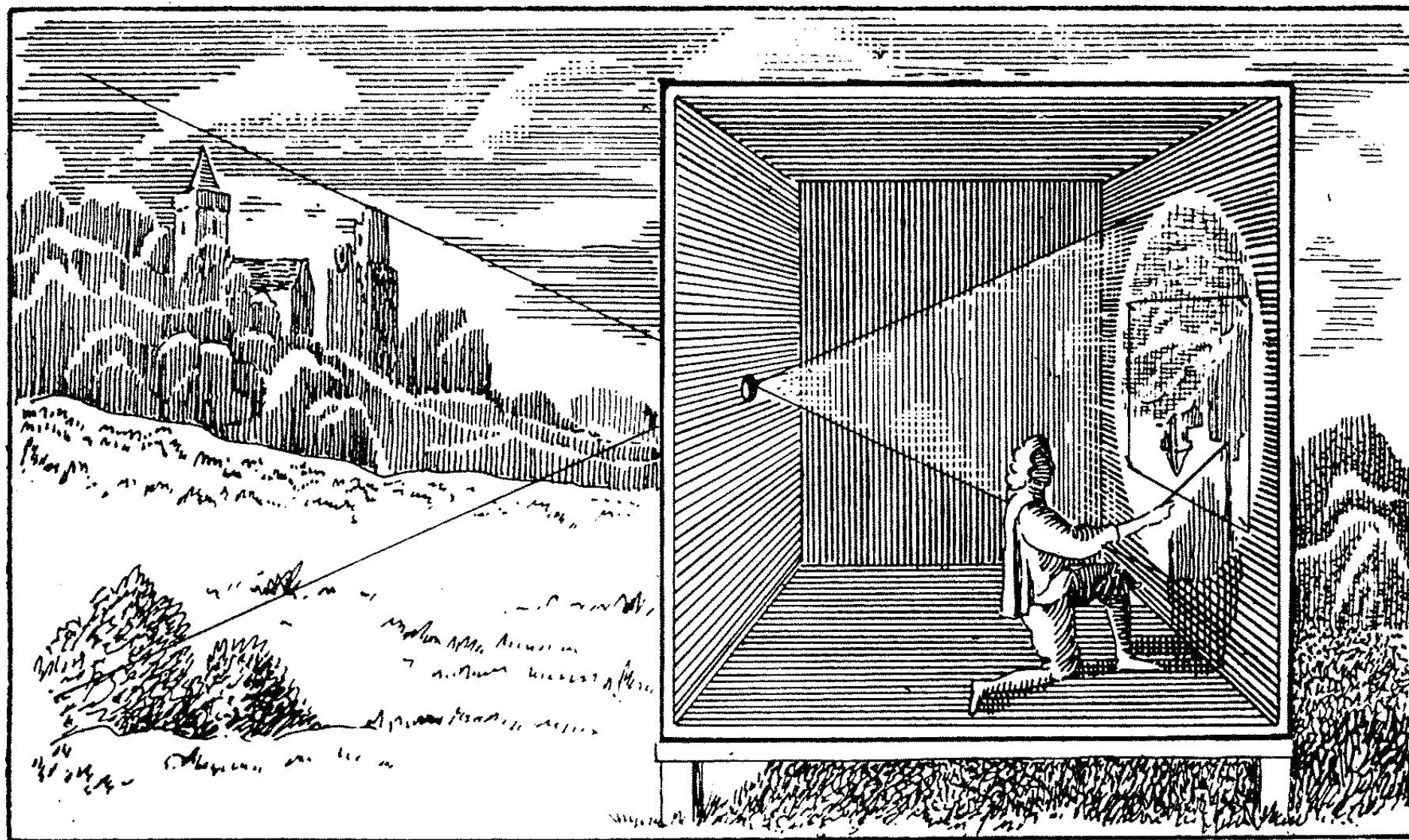
Not static/ fixed

Not language orientated

‘Experiential’



For nearly 200 years, artists have rejected representation and searched for more direct ways to understand human psychology and experience.



Over the last few years, it has become almost commonplace to argue that human thinking does not conform to a picture/sentence model. This was a model in which people proceed by conjuring up a conveyor belt of representations, each of them seemingly as forensically detailed as a case being put forward in a court of law. They then put these templates into operation as carefully considered actions.

In the new model, human thinking is action-oriented—scrappy, deeply embodied, heavily influenced by affective radiations, surfing on the cusp of activity, very often nonconscious and not necessarily centred on language. It slides. It is often loose, a yarn made up of partings as well as presences.

We are not what we thought we are. We need new patchwork models of being human that understand the to and fro of 'dividuality' and the way that experience flits by, only momentarily joining up before it moves on, a task that can only become more urgent as the human species reaches over 7.4 billion. Think of all that thinking. We need models that understand that much of that thinking is nonconscious and does not require explicit representation. And we need models that understand how that thinking ebbs and flows, travelling through many bodies at once.

POSTMODERNISM

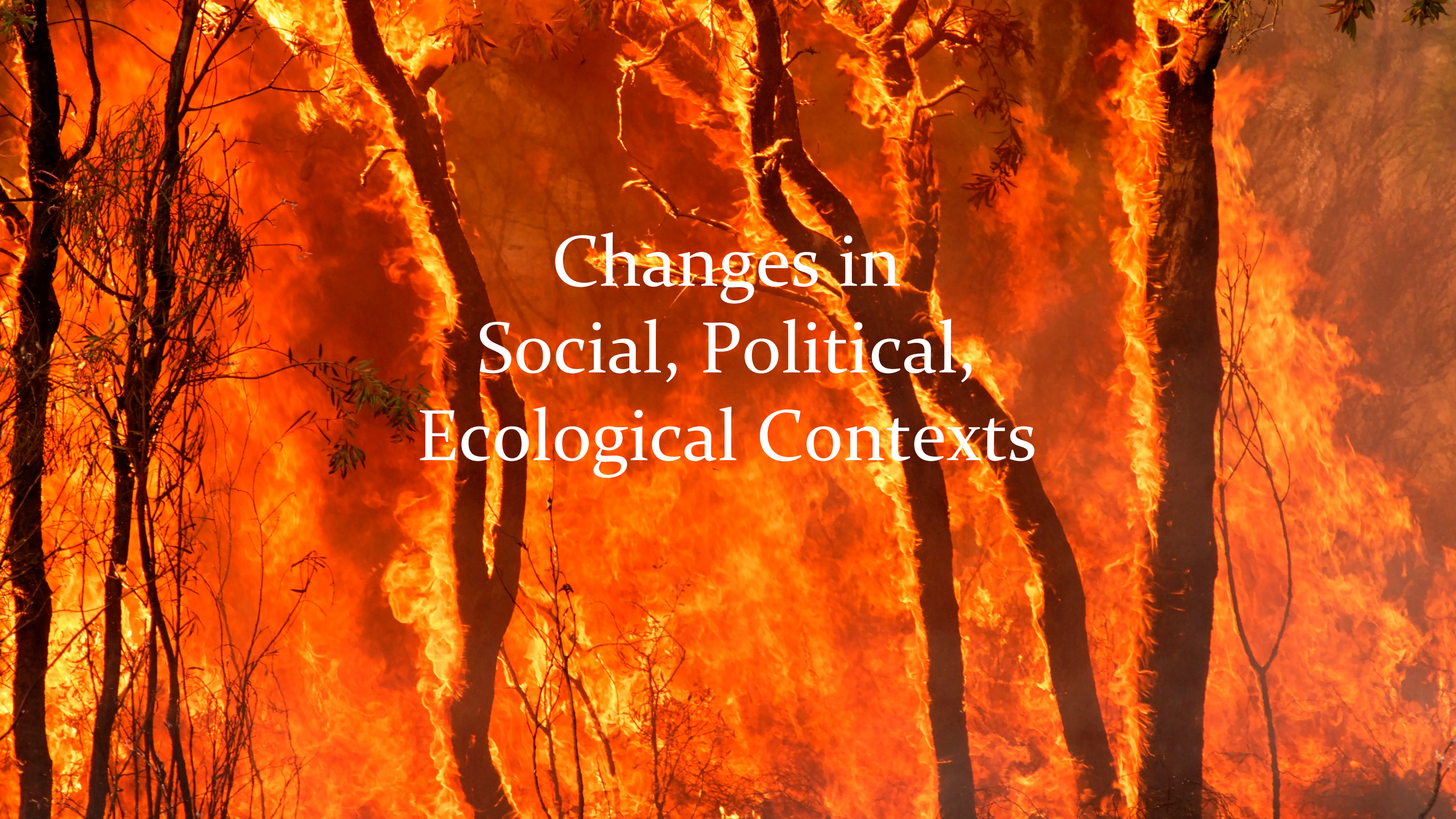
OR,
THE CULTURAL LOGIC
OF
LATE CAPITALISM



FREDRIC JAMESON

... what we need is a new vocabulary. The languages that have been useful in talking about culture and politics in the past don't seem adequate to this historical moment.

(Jameson on postmodernism quoted in Stephanson 1988, 12-13).

A dramatic photograph of a forest fire. Intense orange and yellow flames are consuming the trunks of several trees. The fire is very bright, filling the background with a fiery glow. The tree trunks are dark and silhouetted against the bright flames. The overall scene is one of destruction and intense heat.

Changes in Social, Political, Ecological Contexts

ME TOO

The image features the text "ME TOO" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The "O"s are replaced by a female symbol (a circle with a cross at the bottom) where the central vertical bar is a raised fist. This graphic is centered on a solid pink rectangular background.





new generations of artists increasingly abandon the aesthetic precepts of deconstruction and pastiche in favour of ethical notions of reconstruction, myth, and metaxis.

These trends and tendencies can no longer be explained in terms of the postmodern.

Fredric Jameson once noted that superficiality was the “supreme formal feature” of late twentieth century culture.

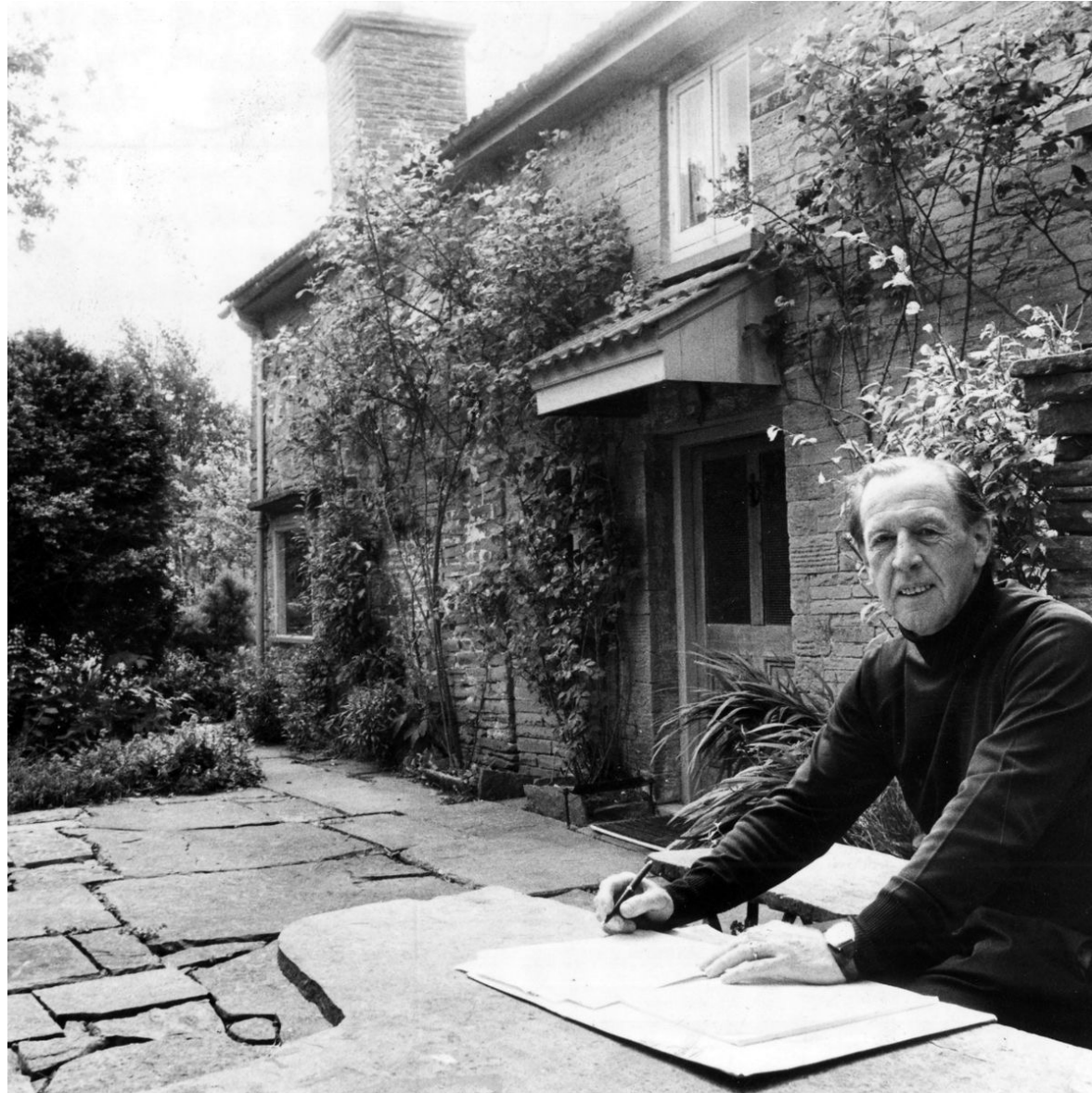
Jameson’s suspicions of this “new depthlessness,” as he called the development, were confirmed everywhere.

Is this it?

Art is a conduit for understanding the non-representational (ineffable) nature of being.

It's what Raymond Williams called, 'A structure of feeling'

(A Preface to Film, 1954, Raymond Williams)



Welsh writer, Raymond Williams outlined such 'structures of feeling' in, *A Preface to Film* (1954) as that which 'lies deeply embedded in our lives; it cannot be merely extracted and summarized; it is perhaps only in art – and this is the importance of art – that it can be realized and communicated, as a whole experience'

(Williams, 1954, 40.)

Structuralism

system of signs / everything is a language system

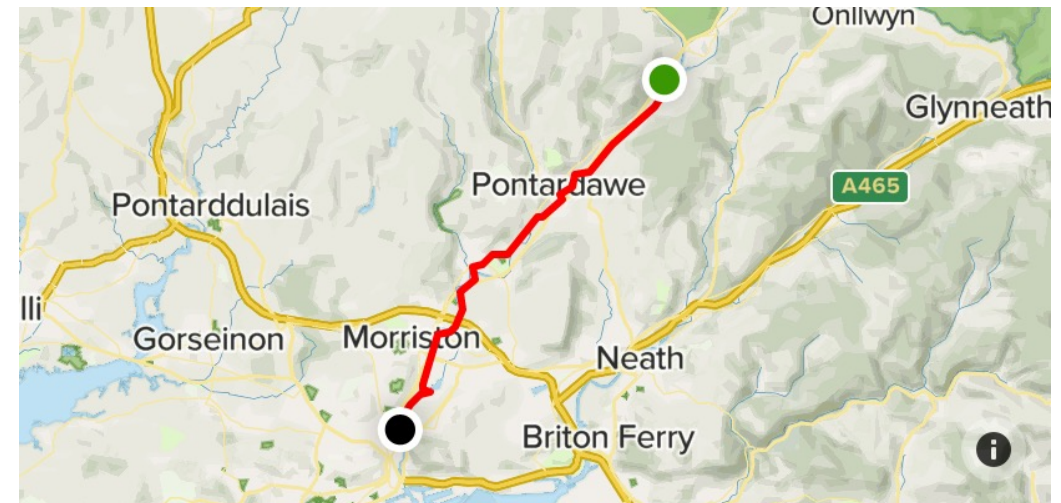
Poststructuralism

acknowledges language cannot be 'objective' but
overflowing with possible interpretations.
Poststructuralism refuses to reduce life to language and
celebrates the multifaced nature of interpretation.

Phenomenology

- Emphasis on the living body
- Grounding philosophy in 'lived experience'
 - 'Study of essences' – Merleau-Ponty
 - Primitive contact with the world
 - 'Back to the things themselves'

Flux / Becoming



Psychoanalysis

Jacques Lacan

The Symbolic

From language to the law, taking in all the social structures in between. It is a good part of what we call 'reality'. It is the impersonal framework of society. Most of us are inscribed within the Symbolic before we are born; we are given a name, belong to a family, socio-economic group, gender, race and so on. We are imprisoned by the symbolic as it forms its own 'closed world' as a system, instead of reflecting experience, words constitute it.

We become automous in the symbolic – driving a car for instance.

The Real

The Order of the Real describes those areas of life which cannot be known. Before things become enmeshed in language.

A cut in the surface of the Symbolic.

A cut or crack in experience that reveals that which is
'beyond' representation.

A cut or crack in experience that reveals that which is
'beyond' representation.



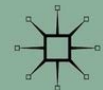
ART ENCOUNTERS

**DELEUZE
AND
GUATTARI**

THOUGHT BEYOND REPRESENTATION



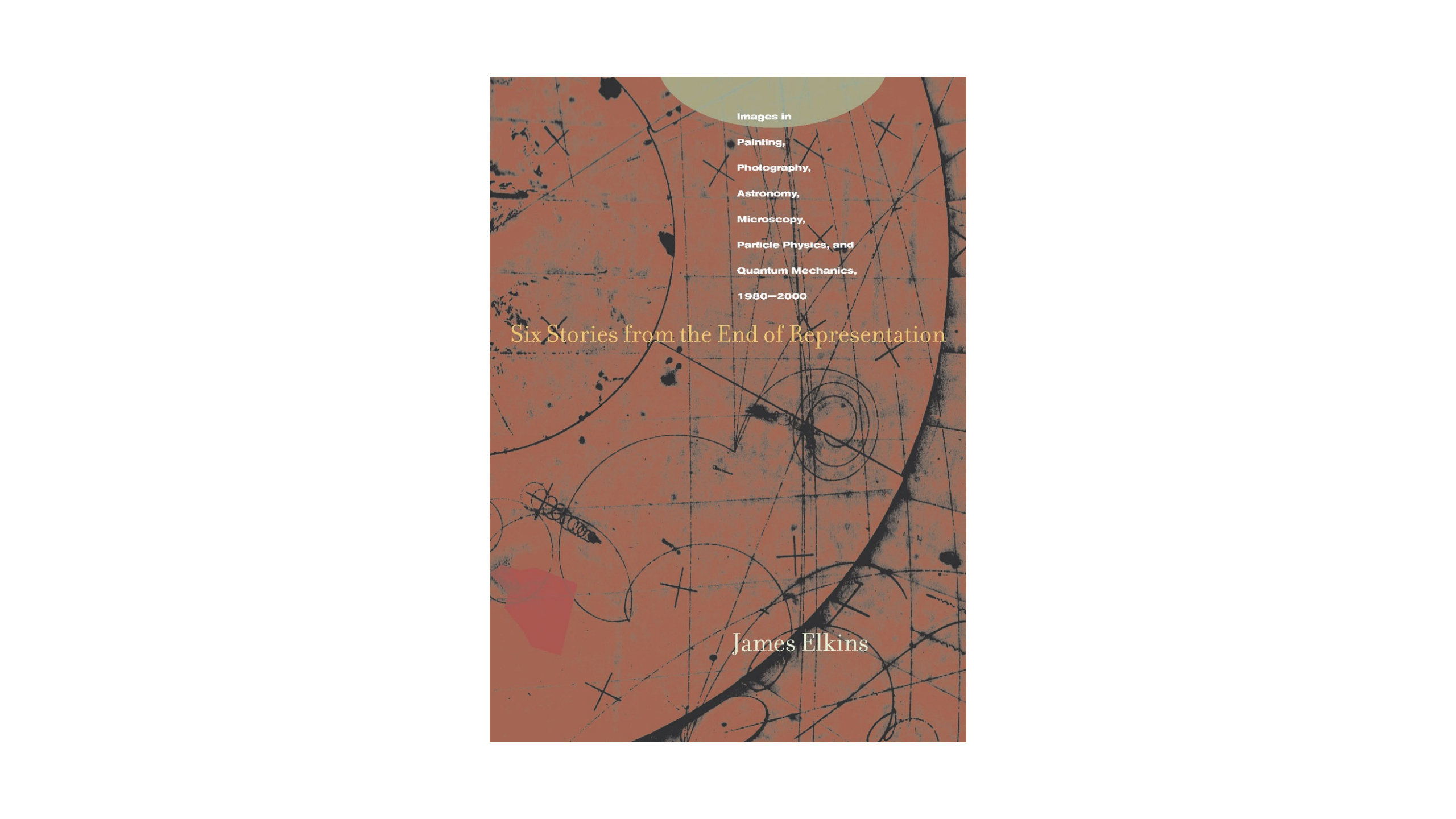
SIMON O'SULLIVAN





Sublimity refers to the moment when the ability to apprehend, to know, and to express a thought or sensation is defeated. Yet through this very defeat, the mind gets a feeling for that which lies beyond thought and language.

The Sublime, Phillip Shaw.



Images in

Painting,

Photography,

Astronomy,

Microscopy,

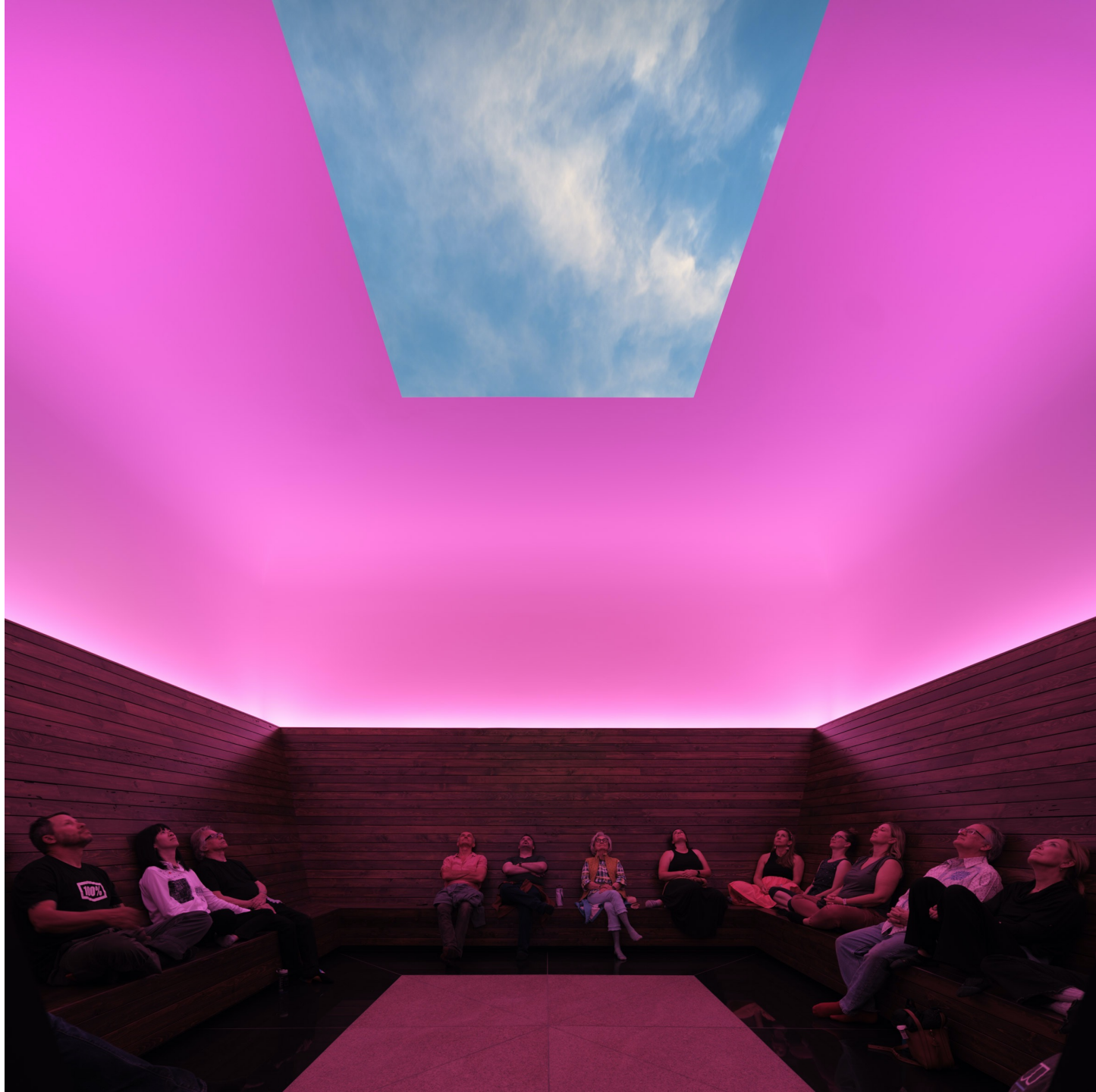
Particle Physics, and

Quantum Mechanics,

1980–2000

Six Stories from the End of Representation

James Elkins









Hauntology

A ghost from the past, visiting
the present in order to address
the future.























