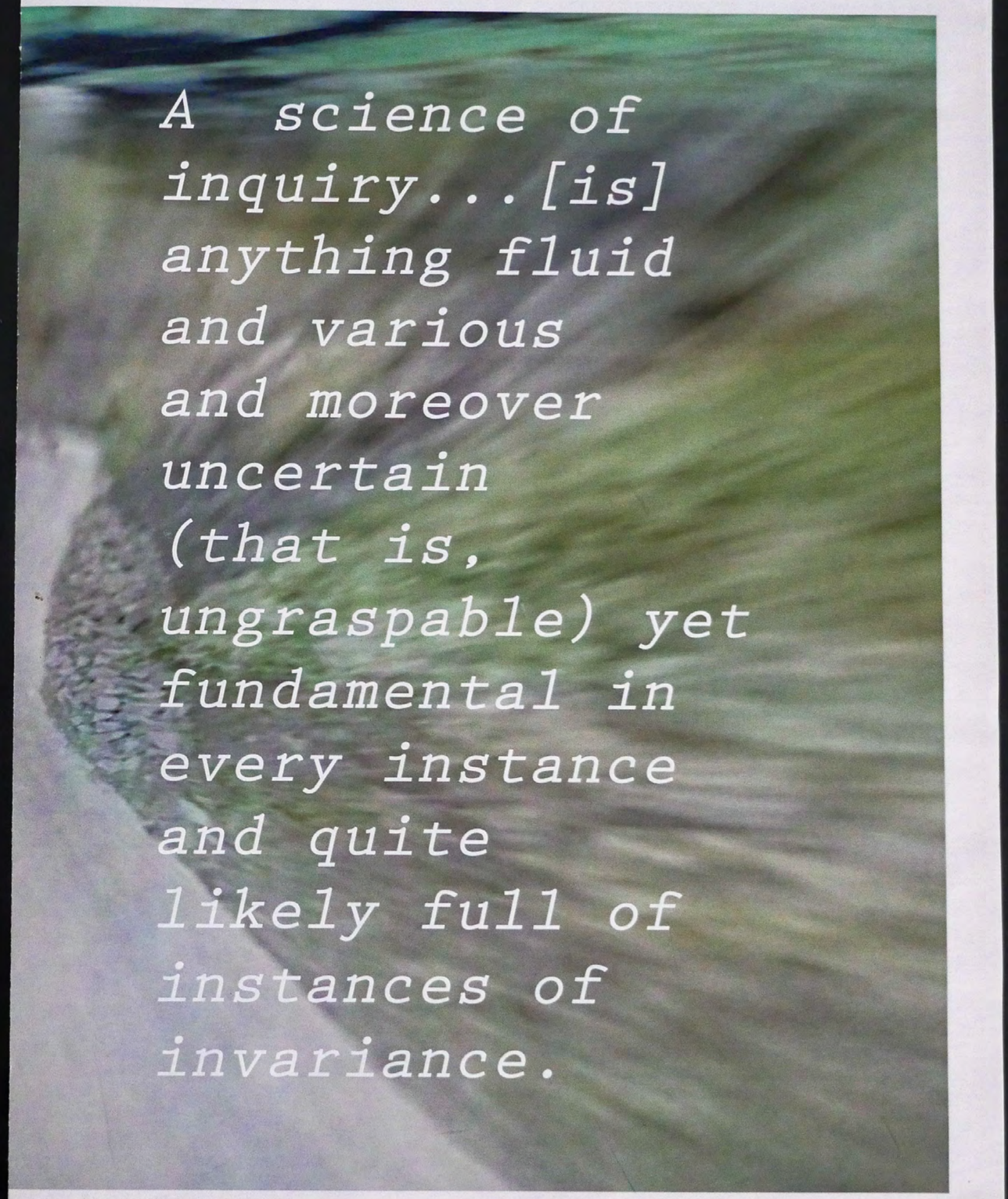
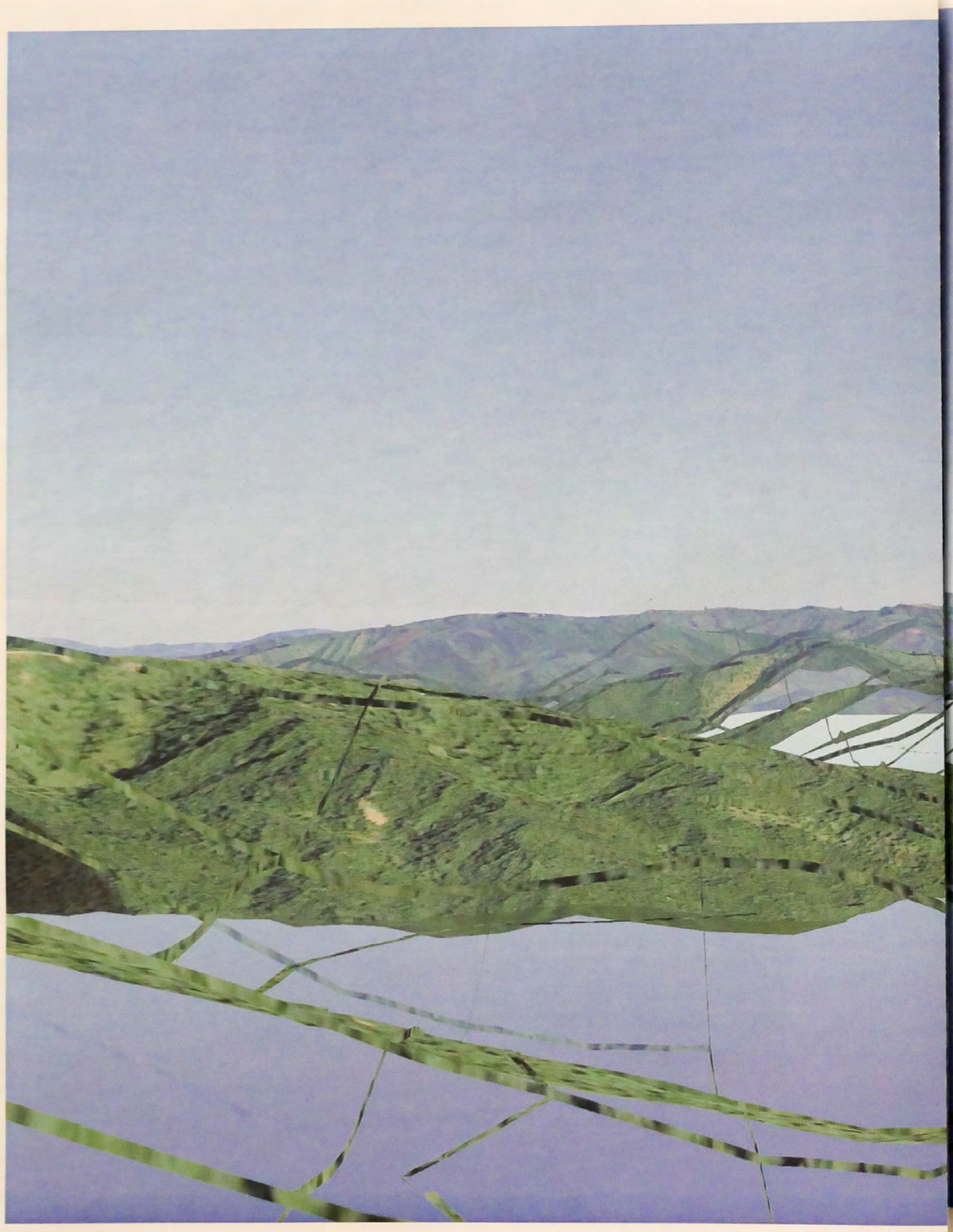
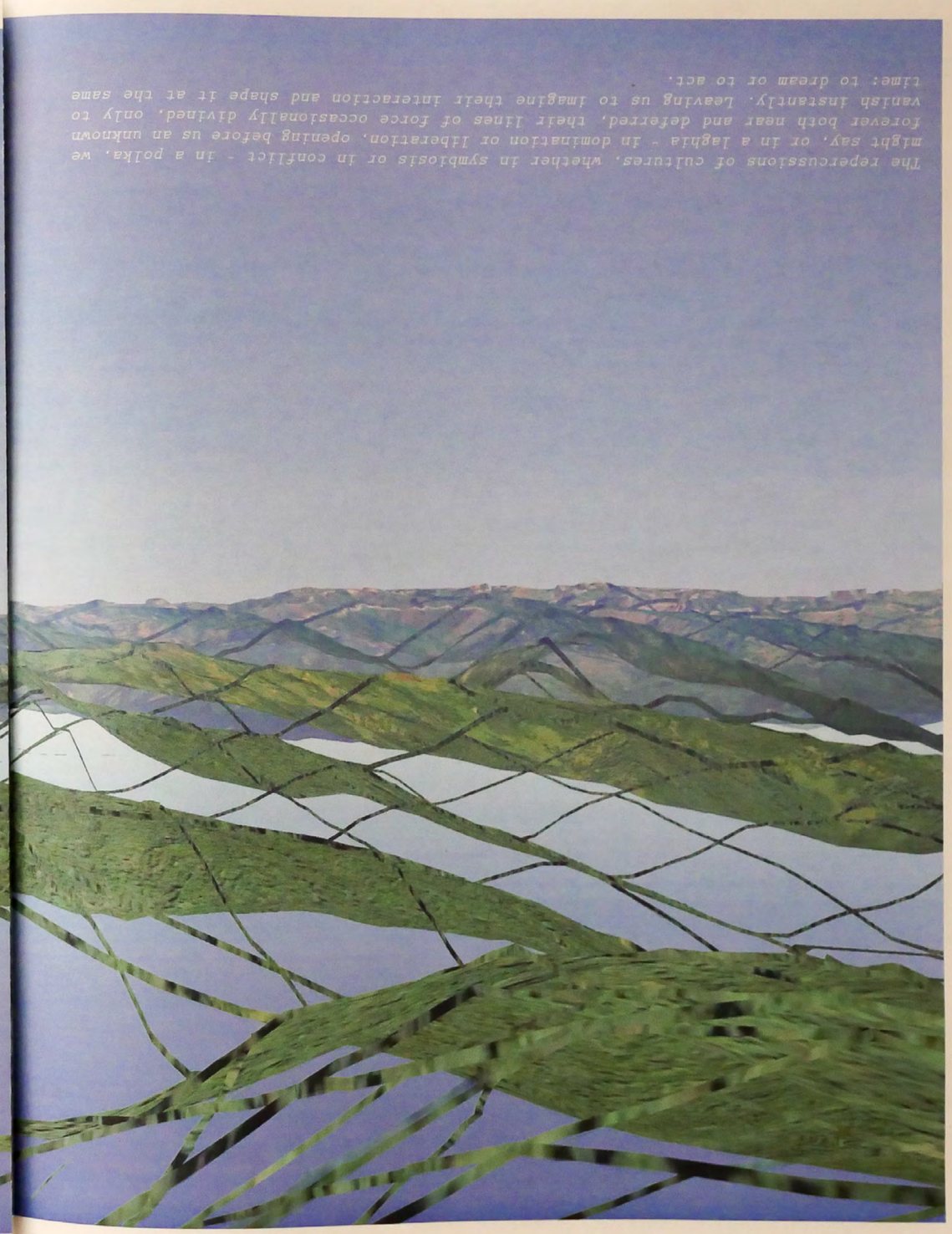

A science of
inquiry...[is]
anything fluid
and various
and moreover
uncertain
(that is,
ungraspable) yet
fundamental in
every instance
and quite
likely full of
instances of
invariance.

The repercussions of cultures, whether in symbiosis or in conflict - in a polka, we might say, or in a laghia - in domination or liberation, opening before us an unknown forever both near and deferred, their lines of force occasionally divined, only to vanish instantly. Leaving us to imagine their interaction and shape it at the same time: to dream or to act.





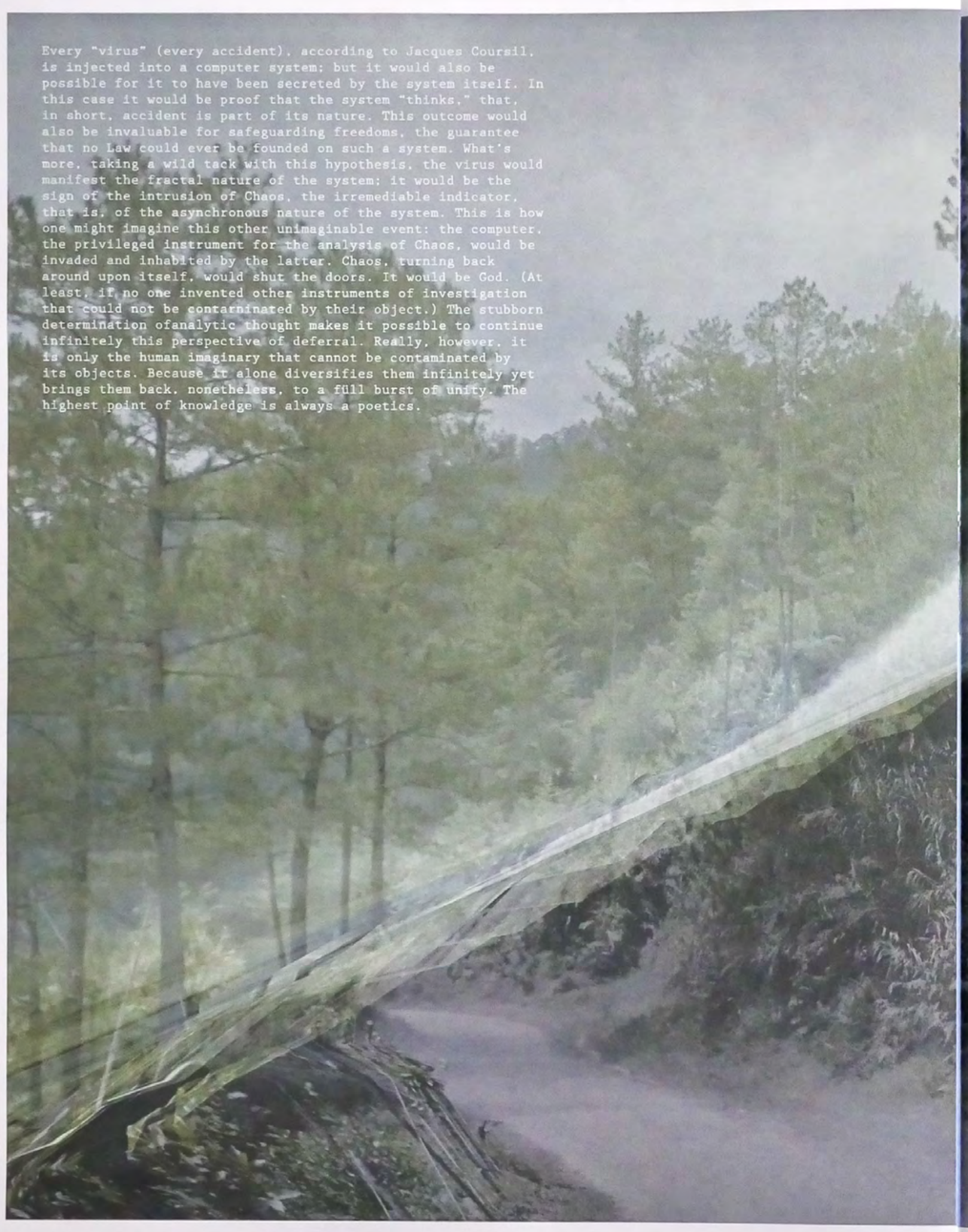
Let us venture two of the directions in which the strengths of science either operate or become exasperated.

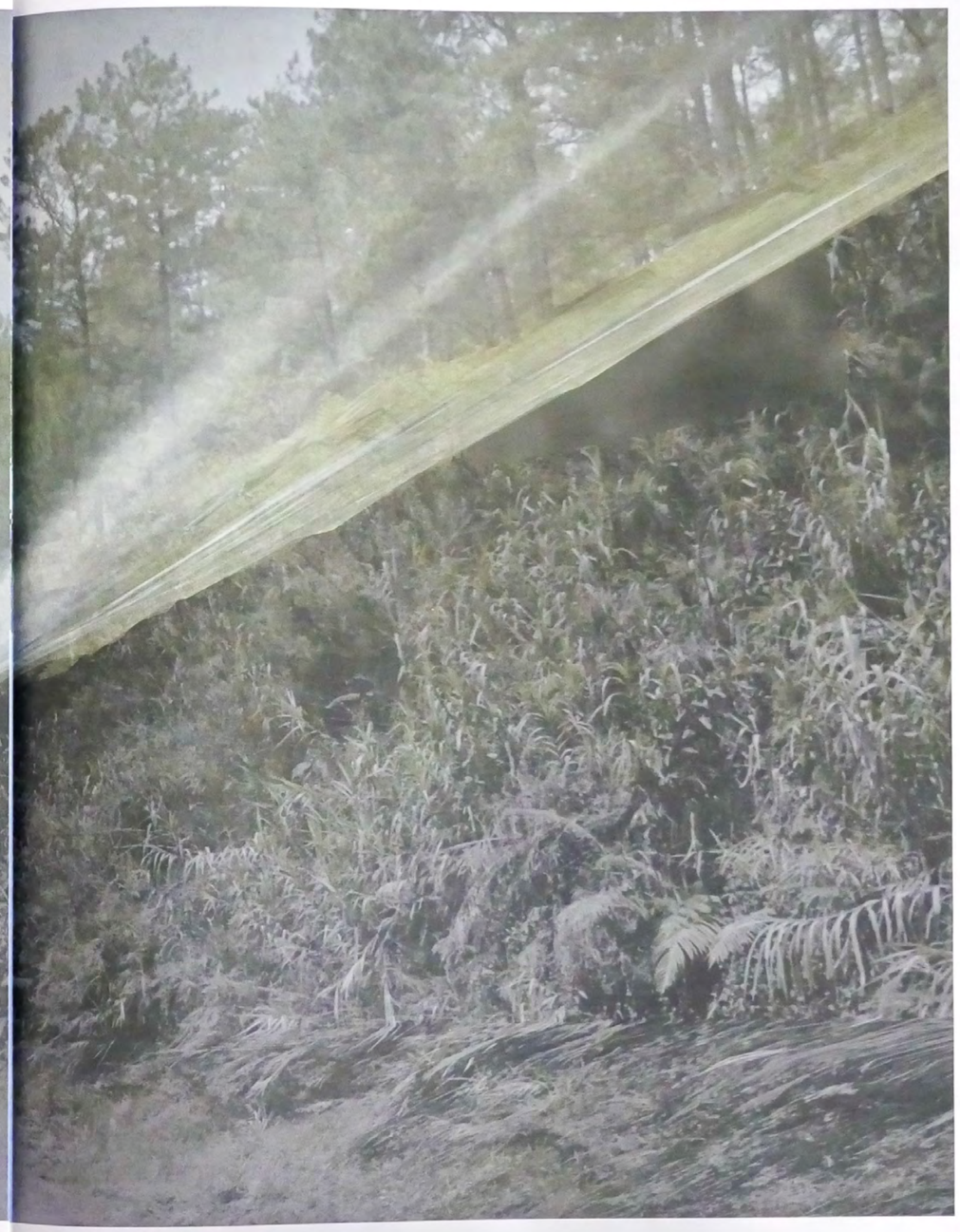
First, there is the directly technological application, which tends to reactivate a "projective linearity" and sets things up, if not for getting to "the bottom" of the matter (possibly something it will never achieve), at least for discovery or conquest, which are one and the same, of the galactic spaces. Technological thought is clear about the fact that it will never exhaust the yield of the universe but doesn't let this scare it off. On the contrary, it is stymied by the mystery of the infinitely small (of the "prime element"), dreading the discovery there of an infinitely receding limit.

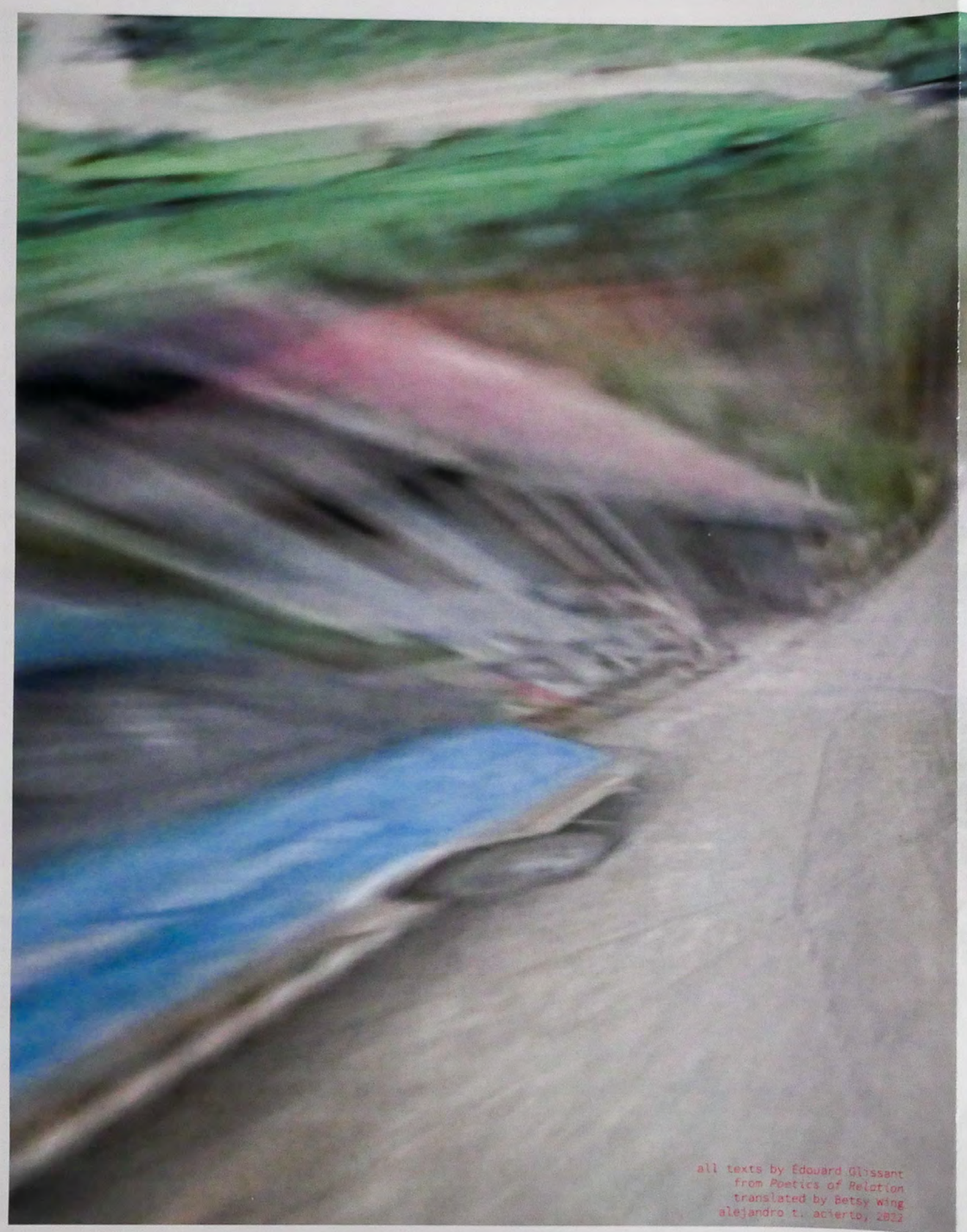
The Unified Field Theory constructed by Einstein attempted to bridge these two dimensions of the universe and define its undifferentiated unity. But, for the time being, "dominant" scientific thought has apparently renounced either supporting or delving into this theory. It seems, rather, to have returned to the comfortable empiricism that provides immense technological power, having decided to devote itself principally to "exploration," and preferably in the realm of the infinitely large.

This tendency, morever, has become increasingly based on attempts to imagine or to prove a "creation of the world" (the Big Bang), which has always been the "basis" of the scientific project. The old obsession with filiation carves out a new adornment for itself. Linearity ties in. The idea of God is there. And the notion of legitimacy reemerges. A science of conquerors who scorn or fear limits; a science of conquest.

Every "virus" (every accident), according to Jacques Coursil, is injected into a computer system: but it would also be possible for it to have been secreted by the system itself. In this case it would be proof that the system "thinks," that, in short, accident is part of its nature. This outcome would also be invaluable for safeguarding freedoms, the guarantee that no Law could ever be founded on such a system. What's more, taking a wild tack with this hypothesis, the virus would manifest the fractal nature of the system; it would be the sign of the intrusion of Chaos, the irremediable indicator, that is, of the asynchronous nature of the system. This is how one might imagine this other unimaginable event: the computer, the privileged instrument for the analysis of Chaos, would be invaded and inhabited by the latter. Chaos, turning back around upon itself, would shut the doors. It would be God. (At least, if no one invented other instruments of investigation that could not be contaminated by their object.) The stubborn determination ofanalytic thought makes it possible to continue infinitely this perspective of deferral. Really, however, it is only the human imaginary that cannot be contaminated by its objects. Because it alone diversifies them infinitely yet brings them back, nonetheless, to a full burst of unity. The highest point of knowledge is always a poetics.







all texts by Édouard Glissant
from *Poetics of Relation*
translated by Betsy Wing
alejandro t. acierto, 2012

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