

Paul Magee

On scholarly subjectivity and the possibility of a poetics there



Cure for Pain (detail), ex de Medici 2010-11

Georges Canguilhem, while examining the doctorate that would later be published as *The History of Madness*, saw fit to label Michel Foucault as 'poet.' But what particular stylistic features of Foucault's writing might such a nomination refer to? An immediate difficulty in approaching this question concerns the surprising lack of scholarship on Foucault's style. The paper theorises that this lacuna is due to an opacity as to just what normative scholarly style in the humanities is. It attempts to remedy this confusion as prolegomena to an overall project to rethink creative writing's potential identity with scholarship, beginning with a consideration on Anthony Grafton's recent work on the form and origins of the footnote. Just what is a footnote, the paper asks, and why do novels almost always lack them? Why do poems? And what happens in Foucault's?

Paul Magee is Associate Professor in Poetry at the University of Canberra, and his most recent publication is *Stone Postcard* (John Leonard Press, 2014). During semester 1, 2014, he is Visiting Fellow in the SLLL, working on a theoretical monograph on the topic of poetic judgement. This paper is part of that writing.