Northumbria Research Link

Archive note.

For archiving reasons the three separate volumes that make up this PhD output are combined, in alphabetical order by title, into one pdf. This is not the form in which they are intended to be read and they should be separated before use.

"Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Lyndon Dorey

This book is one of three volumes which constitute the thesis (to be read in any order) and is subtitled "Ahuman Desire".

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

Department of Arts

January 2020

Acknowledgements

Declaration

This work has not been submitted for any other award, and consists

of my work alone, whilst fully acknowledging the opinions, ideas and

contributions from the work of others. Versions of texts included between

the three books of this thesis were presented under the following titles:

- "Bio-film Mansion Theory, or Making as Collaboration with Disorder" delivered at "Interdisciplinary Conversations Around Making", Newcastle University, Newcastle, 2019.

- "There is no reason for you to live: gendered trauma and ecstasy in 'No World Dreamers, Sticky Zeitgeist episode 2: Aperitif'" delivered at "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games", London South Bank University, London, 2019.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Horror, Cult, Exploitation II", Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2018.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Don't Look: Representations of Horror in the 21st Century Symposium", University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2018.

- "Bio-Film Assemblages and Ahuman Horror" delivered at "Current Research in Speculative Fiction", University of Liverpool, Liverpool, 2018.

- "The Revolutionary Praxis of Urban Galls" delivered at "Open Graves Open Minds & Supernatural Cities present: The Urban Weird" University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 2018.

- A version of the document "Farmer 9" was published by Res., London in the publication "Alembic" in 2018.

- A version of the document "Axpansion" was published by Paperwork, London in the publication "Paperwork Issue 3: Iilwimi lipsing" in 2018

- A radio-play version of "The Keeper's Diary" was performed for Rádio Quântica in 2017 and again for Dublin Digital Radio in 2018.

- A video stream version of "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" was performed for the exhibition "Sex and Other States" at South Kiosk Gallery, London in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" and "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" were performed at Reading University in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" was performed for the event "Its Origins are Indeterminate" at Whitechapel Gallery, London in 2018

- Two live versions of "The Incomplete Provocation" and

"The Keeper's Diary" were performed at Serf, Leeds and Res., London in 2017

- A live version of part of "Borne by Rats" was performed at Baltic, Gateshead in 2017

- A video version of each of the three parts of "The Androids' Journey" was shown at the exhibition "Green Fuzz" at Xero, Kline & Coma, London in 2016

All procedures for ethical approval have been followed and the number of

words contained in the three books of this Thesis – excluding bibliography

(academic references), footnotes and appendices – is 77,706.

Signed

R Dorey

Contents [KEYWORDS]

Abstract

Title: "Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Dorey, Northumbria University, 2020.

This research brings together resonating creative processes from feminist literature, game design, queer gender politics, post-structuralist philosophy, and horror cinema. It uses these to articulate an art practice which is unstable and generative both for the artist during the process of production, and again for the audience.

The PhD output as combined thesis and practice consists of three books, each approaching the question, "How to negotiate art practice as involving processes which are unstable, affective, and resistant to structures?" Each book takes a different position regarding this question and in doing so reshapes it into a sub-question.

The book "Ahuman Desire" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving affects which are at some times indescribable, or overwhelming?"

The book "Ahuman Use" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving salvaged or stolen systems, which are always already breaking down?"

The book "Unknown Lacuna" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving unstable things which can only be seen through what they do?"

Each engages the same question, but with a different emphasis. They are three different attempts and the obvious implication is that these are three of many more potentially attempts

I have undertaken an extensive literature review across fields which border on art practice. The three books bring together a vast matrix research sources and makes these visible and accessible as an act of care, in keeping with the feminist writing practices which underpin the work. I have developed original methodologies which are used in the different documents across the three books and include the use of speculative fiction, plagiarism, formalist writing strategies, drawing, performance, games, and screenplays as research. As well as using artworks as a site to examine the relationships between different theories of creative process. The rigour of the PhD Output exists not just in the scale of the sources processed and responded too, but

in its infrastructural approach which departs from academic norms to resist a cataloguing or hierarchical envelope for the knowledges within.

The PhD Output addresses one of its returning processes of Excess through its form. It is large in scope and shifts responsibility to the reader to navigate this Excess. This demonstrates the affects of anxiety address in many of its documents, before the aforementioned attention to acts of care re-frame this disorder as generative. This mirrors the repeated conceptual and narrative refrain in many documents whereby the horror of the unknown is reorientated to become a creative and dynamic approach to knowledge which does not need to be fixed or enveloped.

The PhD Output aims to support reader engagement based on their desire, rather than through an external economy that ascribes or denies a degree of value based on adherence to pre-existing parameters. This approach is a departure from the common structures of academic research, while still demonstrating critical judgment and original contributions to knowledge. The departure is necessary firstly because of the research questions above, and secondly the commonality of destabilisation in the source materials from feminist writing practices and philosophy, to collaborative games and horror media. Thirdly, the departure enables the specificity of the practice based PhD Output to not just describe processes but to enact them at the

reader's point of encounter with the research.

The primary findings of the research are. The potential for the form of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals to inform an art practice when combined with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The mutual illumination offered when combined with feminist writing practices or Écriture Féminine. The potential for Écriture Féminine to inform contemporary queer feminist art practices which incorporate the forms of video-games, as well recognising the event of audience encounter with such artworks as a creative one. The use of horror cinema as a means to articulate art practice concerned with affect. The potential of practice-based art research to produce new ways to produce and deliver original research in a dynamic rather than fixed structure.

This research is of value due to its relevance to contemporary practice. This relevance is evidenced by the recent attention to queer indie game design ('Beyond the Console', n.d.; Faber, 2019; Humphreys, n.d.; Thaddeus-Johns, 2019; Wallace, 2019), experimental feminist writing practices incorporating speculative fiction (Hedva, 2018; Hval, 2018; Jackson & Leslie, 2018; Waidner, 2019), the divisive concept of "elevated horror" (Carrol, 2019; Crump, 2019; Ehrlich, 2019; Gardner, 2019; Taylor, 2019), and the folding of these into art practice. The research include in-depth analyses of artworks

by two artists who have relatively recently received a high international profile (Apexart, 2019; 'Dark Continent: Semiramis Performance | Arts Council Collection', n.d.; 'Porpentine Charity Heartscape', n.d.; Tate, n.d.) and have not yet been the subject of monographs or a large amount of academic study, particularity within the field of art. The relevance of this research is further supported by the recent publications and events in a overlapping fields (Brazil, 2019; Burrows & O'Sullivan, 2019; Editorial Staff, 2019; Fisher, 2018; 'Flickering Monstrosities Hyperfiction Reading Group', 2019; 'ICA | I, I, I, I, I, I, I, Kathy Acker', n.d.; Lewis, n.d.; Little, 2019; Pyrne, 2019; Shaw & Reeves-Evison, 2017).

Keywords:

Abjection, Kathy Acker, Affect, Art, Georges Bataille Gilles Deleuze, Hélène Cixous, Cybernetics, Écriture Féminine, Félix Guattari, Porpentine Charity Heartscape, Horror Cinema, Luce Irigaray, Patricia MacCormack, Performance, Play, Queer Theory, Role Playing Games, Tai Shani, Speculative Fiction, Video Games.

Abstract; Bibliography

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Notes on Use

This PhD output is a combination of what might otherwise be separated into thesis and practice. It uses different writing styles, and different conventions of text to do different things.

One of the styles and conventions used is that of the film screenplay. The screenplay is used both to account for art practice elements within this PhD which exists in forms other than the written word, and as a kind of art practice in its own right. I follow artist Emma Bolland's use of the term "traduction-retour" or "'backwards translation', or translation through return" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204) to describe the process of producing a screenplay after the release of the film, or in this case, videos and performances, it accounts for. I have used the screenplay form in my work because even as traduction-retour points forward and invites speculation. It is always a means to produce something else, and it is always incomplete because the transition from text to cinema is not seamless.

The screenplay has conventions, and I have had to break some of these. As Bolland notes, *traduction-retour* screenplays are sometimes "redesigned entirely for a specific readership" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204), and in this case

that readership includes this PhD's examiners. As a result of exploring a number of ways in which the screenplay format can accommodate the academic requirements of referencing arguments, I have compromised the former slightly to avert accidental plagiarism through unclear referencing.

An important text convention used in the three books of this PhD Output concerns reading.

The books are meant to be read in any order, but they are meant to be read together. The model is taken from *Tabletop Role Playing Games* where there is often:

- A *Games Master Manual* containing the rules for the *Games Master,* the person running the game.
- A *Player Manual* which each *Player* has a copy of and contains rules for them.
- A *Reference Book* of some sort which lists of things in the world of the game and their rules, and is used by both *Players* and *Games Master.*

Either *Player* or *Games Master* will frequently have to refer to their *Manual* in combination with the *Reference Book*, reading them at the same time, building something from the combination of rules and lists.

Tabletop Role Playing Games are not competitive activities, but better understood as processes of collaborative storytelling. The game, or story, arises from between the *Players* and the *Games Master,* each working from a *Manual* which contains only one side of the systems which make up the game, and combining this with the *Reference Book* in different ways. A shifting composite of these positions is a "collective effervescence" a collaboratively constructed "world entirely different from the one they have before their eyes" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 228).

Each book comprises methods, speculations for further work, documented attempts, fictions, maps, and diagrams, the books are orientated so that *Documents* within sometimes arrive concurrently. While reading one *Document*, smaller ones appear to the side.

Each book begins with an interactive narrative which crosses all three books, and offers choices which fork and result in different endings.

The books use a *Keyword* system. Some *Documents* include *Keywords* which are written in hard brackets such as [DIAGRAM]. The titles of some *Documents*, and their entries in each book's contents page features a list of their keywords. The *Keywords* are to encourage the reader read the

books concurrently. *Keywords* present a point to cross to another book and pick up another document using the same *Keyword*, from a different approach.

Notes on Use; Bibliography

- Bolland, E. (2018). The Iris opens/The Iris closes: Le Silence #2 Scene Notes 1–13. Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance, 11(2), 203–216. https://doi.org/10.1386/jafp.11.2.203_1.
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Advice

Mark the pages of each book as you read them. The books are meant to be read by moving between them, and getting lost is part of the process of making connections. But in order to be sure that the reader has seen everything it is recommended that they foul the pages by some means in passing, so it will be easy to round up the stragglers at the end.

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty

A non-linear multi-ending story about care.

[This story has three endings, and your choices matter. It will direct you across all three of the books of this PhD Output, its narrative encircling but not connecting with, all of the other documents You could skip if for now, or finish one of its endings, or follow it until it gets boring and move to whatever document is on the same page when you decide to give up.]

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty is the same kind of diplomatic hub platform you've seen a thousand times. From where you are at the shuttle terminal, it appears in the near distance as an impressive metallic gloss black cube and is of a size you won't even guess at as its hard to spot where the building ends and the night sky above begins. Like much civil architecture in this area, it sits on one of the spiked lily pads which form a major part of the ecosystem of the meridian sea which belts this planet.

Turn to the next page.

You open the sealed pouch that can be opened by you alone and read the final two paragraphs of the advisory again which against protocol you tore off and saved before destroying the rest;

"This entire project can be understood in terms of Provocation. The agent provocateur's art, like the production of all art, involves encouraging heterogeneous growth, mutation, and rumour. In some ways, this is the very nature of agitation, but what your training and this advisory will have already made clear is that there is a difference between the layperson's understanding of agitation and the work of an agent. Your responsibility is not to lead existing assets toward a specific goal, but to encourage a proliferation of goals, and the want to pursue them.

Beneath it all, an agent's responsibility is to Desire, the proliferation of proliferation and the lust for lust. Your responsibility to Desire is to encourage it, collaborate with it and follow its proliferation of paths. Do not worry about records, your actions will serve as an adequate report and in any case you will not survive them. Good luck on your mission, destroy this advisory before arrival."

Turn to the next page.

Wait, who are you ?

Think about how you ''feel''.

Of the three options, which is your strongest feeling?

Hunger, turn to page 27 of Ahuman Desire

Thirst, turn to page 40 of Ahuman Use

Fatigue, turn to page 32 of Unknown Lacuna

You are the terrifyingly canonical Dr Carton.

You're a big ball of flammable gas encased in a baroquely complex nervous system. It is

vitally important for you (and anyone under a 10m blast template) that you stay relaxed.

Remember this and turn to page 50 of Ahuman Use

Instability and Desire in Horror [DIAGRAM, LACUNA, MANSION]

Or

The Revolutionary Praxis of Urban Tumours

This[1] is an example of the kind of thing I want to talk about, a living, organic growth within a built urban environment. This particular example is the "Raleigh Sewer Monster", as shown in the video it was recorded by a sewer cam on 27th April 2009 in Raleigh North Carolina. The "Raleigh Sewer Monster" was quickly determined to not be a monster, but rather most likely a colony of tubifex worm. As biologist Dr Timothy S Wood suggests;

> "They have apparently entered a pipeline somehow, and in the absence of soil they are coiling around each other. The contractions you see are the result of a single worm contracting and then stimulating all the others to do the same almost simultaneously, so it looks like a single big muscle contracting" (McClain, 2009).

I wanted to start with this image from outside of horror cinema, as a way of approaching something within those media that is quite nebulous and slippery to pin down. Throughout my research I've thought of them as scabs, tumours, wombs, placenta, cocoons, biofilms, nests, fungus, and most often galls (which is how I will refer to them in this Document), but none of these real life forms will consistently match the overall motif. This motif
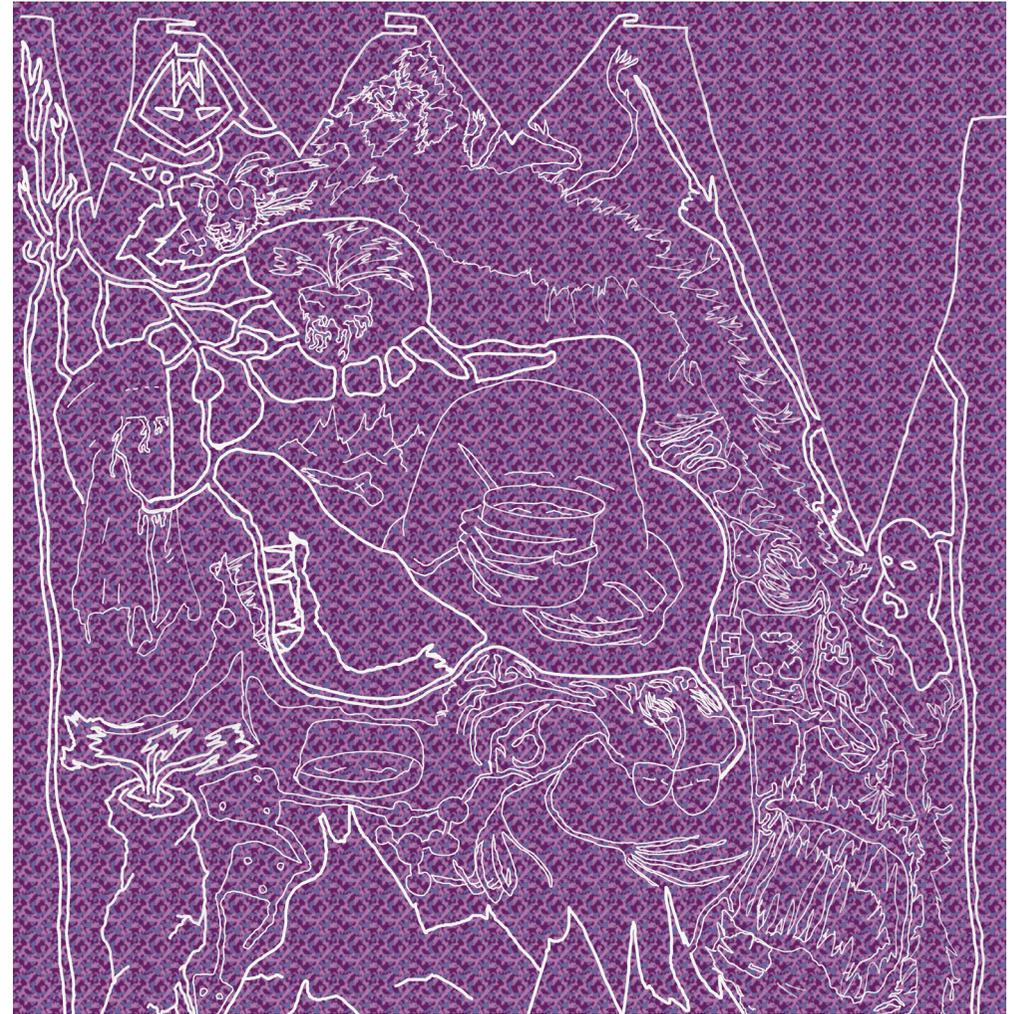
Side Dungeon 1 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

should be quite familiar to most with an interest in horror. Our protagonists are travelling an urban environment, looking for something, though rarely that which they end up finding. They will travel to an area which signifies urban decay, or at least neglect and abandonment. It will likely be dirty, and also pointedly underused, wasted area. A storage area, ventilation system, a block scheduled for demolition. The environment is explicitly urban, an environment completely designed and theoretically controlled and sealed. Not a place where there should be wildlife, however the lack of human attention has allowed something to happen, and for the sterility to be lost. Our protagonists walk through concrete and metal in hard lines and almost certainly under the light of a torch they then discover the *Gall*. A biological mass adhered to and penetrating the structure of the built space. The *Gall* might be alive, it might have been alive previously, it might be a means to life, it might alter life, the important point is that in contrast to the built environment, it is vital in some manner. This is their first quality.

The second quality of these *Galls* is that they are hidden, whilst also hiding something else. As already described they are found in neglected areas, abandoned buildings, air shafts, sewers, shanty towns and ghettos. These spaces are obviously not entirely neglected, people work in such areas, often people live in them. However it is not generally the protagonist, and by extension neither the projection of the audience that lives in the inner city slum or works in the utility channels which run through the more respectable

Side Dungeon 2 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

accommodation. To the protagonist, these *Galls* are intruders within their space. The space overall is where the protagonist has complete freedom of movement, opportunity, and confidence in order. Despite this certainly, the *Gall* grows in a corner that the protagonists have neglected by virtue of their lifestyle and status they have not had reason to check on. When they do eventually check, they find something has grown in the interim, and this growth is hiding something. It is a vital *Void* **[KEYWORD: LACUNA]**.

In a 2016 book chapter entitled "Lovecraft's Cosmic Ethics" philosopher Patricia MacCormack argues for the work of horror author H.P. Lovecraft to be *used* "to imagine becoming the horrors he evokes toward a vitalistic, activist, and wondrous celebration of otherness" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 200). It is my position that the motif of the urban *Gall* be *Used* **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]** in such a way, and that this *Void* points towards the emancipation of difference.

To understand the *Gall*, it is first needed that we understand the controlled environment that is performed prior to the *Gall's* discover. Michel Foucault's "Discipline and Punish" traces the genealogy of the prison and proposes that, "If it is true that the leper [colony] gave rise to rituals of exclusion, which to a certain extent provided the model for and general form of the great Confinement, then the [quarantine techniques developed in response to the] plague gave rise to disciplinary projects" (Foucault, 1995, p. 198).

Side Dungeon 3 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

The methods by which the plague was attempted to be controlled in the seventeenth century were not of simple exclusion but of strict regimes of controlled activity, observation and categorization. Subjects, and also architecture, animals and at least in the theory of time, pathogens were controlled as a model state, "The plague-stricken town, traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies - this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city" (Foucault, 1995, p. 198). That perfect governed city is invoked as an impossible phantom whenever an FBI agent lifts some proteinous gloop with a Bic pen from a floor of Baltimore apartment. Despite our best efforts, we were not vigilant enough, not clean enough, and it found a space in the darkness to grow. Foucault again identifies our alignment of the social and biological noting that, " Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of 'contagions', of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, and die in disorder" (Foucault, 1995, p. 198). It is in fact no wonder that deviation from moral or state law, from approved expression of subjectivity is often conflated with a lack of sterile surroundings. As noted by the writer and artist Michel Leiris when it comes to distinguishing upper and lower classes, "the difference [is] in cleanliness" (Leiris, 1995, p. 52).

As noted already, *Gall*, the term I am using to describe this motif, is
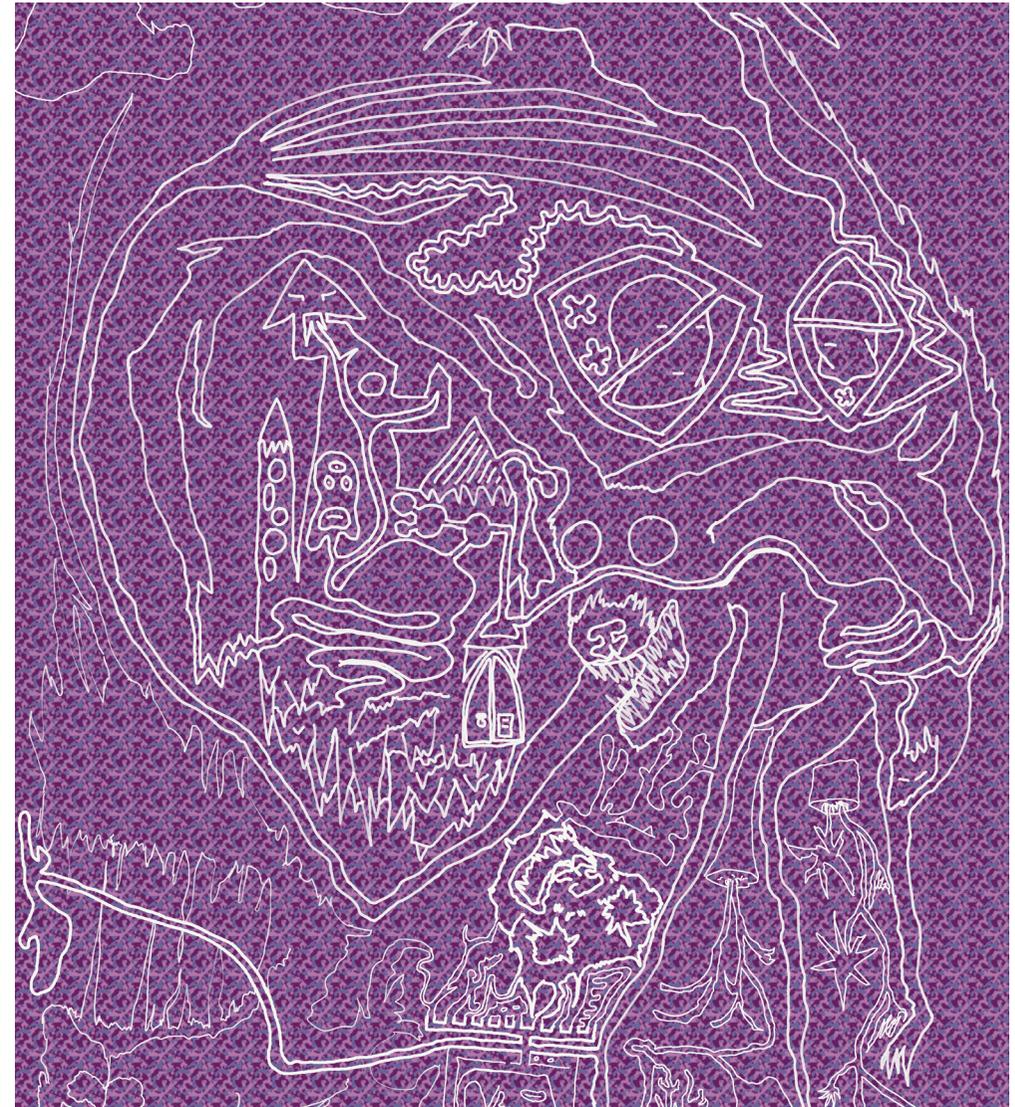
Side Dungeon 4 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

inadequate because the depictions in horror media rarely stay fixed to that or any other biological definition. We have things that penetrate cement like roots, or weep from cracks like plasma, embedded eggs waiting to hatch with other living material adhered to the walls around them. Frequently these forms resist classification as anything other than a chimera. Perhaps they exhibit a sensitivity and speed of growth which implies the animal and yet this combined with a rooting into the architecture and decentralised, plural mass which suggests the vegital. MacCormack states that "connectivity to the unlike is what defines Lovecraftian entities" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 206) and this is true of the *Galls* on a number of levels. As noted, they often sit between categories of animals or plants, they might be using another creature, alive or dead, human or otherwise to provide food or energy, or assist in the birthing or transformation of another. Lastly it is necessary that the *Gall* also sits on the threshold with architecture in two senses. Firstly, like a cocoon or a hive it is part architecture part something else. Secondly it needs within the logic of horror stories and the politicised dichotomy of order/disorder, a sheer urban surface.

That sheer surface marks another contrast which must eventually collapse. The ventilation duct, lift shaft or pensioners apartment is nameable and filled with clear signification for us. The thing which I am referring to as a *Gall*, does not, at least at first have such signification. Its multiple layers of hybridity site it in a "visceral, fleshy, corporeal, teratological, and emphatically
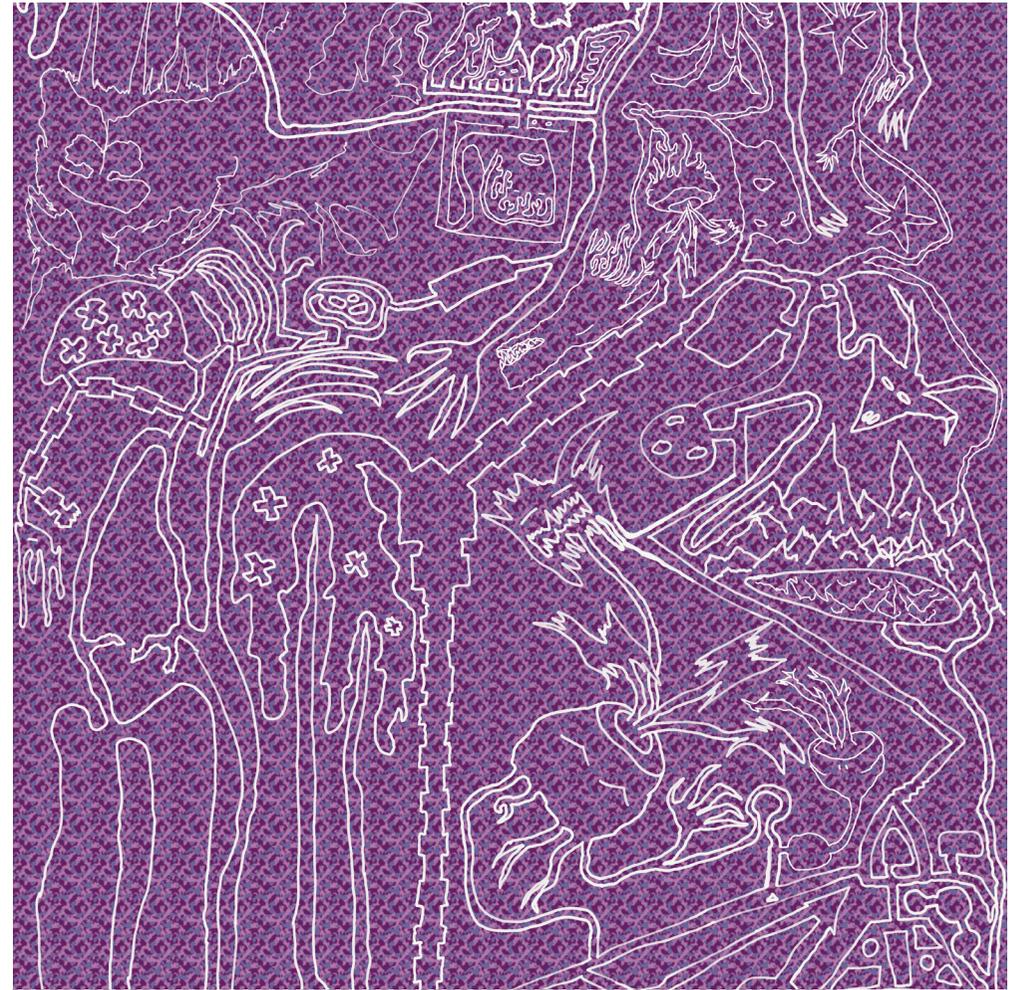
Side Dungeon 5 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

material world is also a world where human language [...]is without power" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 212). You can try and name the thing, but at best you have something that will always fall short of the sensations provoked, the functions it might perform, or the things it might become. MacCormack turns to philosopher Luce Irigaray to address this namelessness and quotes the latter "Nor will I ever see the mucous, that most intimate interior of my flesh, neither the touch of the outside of the skin of my fingers, nor the perception of the inside of these same fingers, but another threshold of the passage from outside to inside, from inside to outside, between inside and outside, between outside and inside" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 170). Irigaray's mucous, like the *Gall*, refuses a dichotomy of self and other. The *Gall* appears within our supposedly clean an ordered environment, it was always already here in some form of becoming. The *Gall* is almost always hiding something, it creates a protected environment within the cold world of order. A hidden space within a blind spot. Equally, while it sits in initial contrast to the urban sheen of sterile constructed environ, it collapses this contrast by the sheer fact of its presence. The *Gall* is within that environment, it is part of the architecture and pulls its refusal to be named into the concrete, rendering the certainty of the urban a farce. Hidden, unknowable heterogeneous life running through the material that we believed was pure order and death.

While the gall pulls its vital, unknowable qualities into the wall and in doing so penetrates the bubble of order, it also pulls us, and to various degrees our
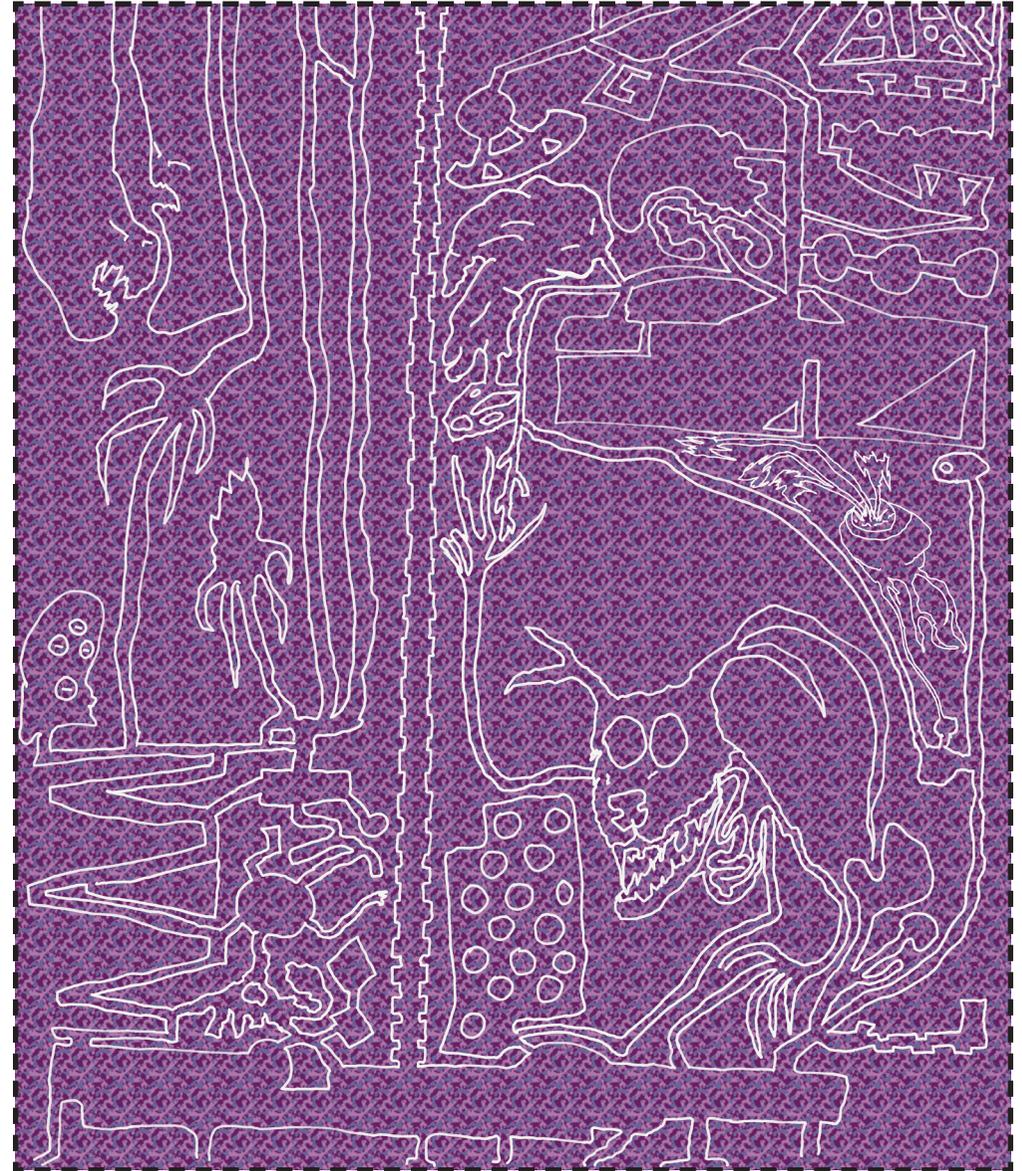
Side Dungeon 6 [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

FBI agent protagonist proxy, toward it. The desire produced in association with such material is not only featured in many horror narratives but within feminist discourse including that of MacCormack and Irigaray, but most notable psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's theorising of the *Abject*.

We can easily imagine our FBI agent, crawling into the cargo hold of a commercial jet, latex glove not worn but simply held in their eagerness to touch as they mutter to themselves, around the Maglight they hold between teeth;

> "Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2).

The *Gall* seduces characters "within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning" and "draws [them] toward the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 1). Just as it draws our agent, it draws us the audience along as well. We are seduced by its sensually qualities which are outside of language and therefore hidden from annihilation through naming and knowing. There is also often the uncanny familiarity which breaks down the certainty that *this* is not *me*. It could have been *part of me*, it could be *within me in the future*.

This *Gall* has already destroyed the sterility of our perceived environment and forced us to realise that it was permeable. The mere sight of the *Gall* reminds us that permeability is essential to our very existence, no matter how much we attempt to expand the buffer zone around us through buildings and their politics. Our bodies are always spilling out over the edges of the orderly frames we insist they conform to, as philosopher Margrit Shildrick tells us "The security of categories – whether of self or non-self – is undone by a radical undecidability" (Shildrick, 2002, p. 2). This is one of the calls being made by the repeated motif of the *Gall*, it offers the chance to consider our own porosity to things which would breach the category *Human*, and in doing so challenge the validity of that (or any) category at all.

The *Gall* produces desire in combination with us, that desire is not one of lack but is created by our encounter with an unnameable thing that points towards various functions and various kinds of life and voracious connectivity. This is what is proposed by philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari as "desiring-production", an articulation of desire not based on lack, but on creative production, "For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 1). The encounter with the *Gall* produces new desires, new potential operations, in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology we are growing *Organs*, the *we* being us and the *Galls* together. This creativity does not stop at the point of being eaten by, or birthed by, or radically altered by, the *Gall*,

MUDSKIPPER [CARE]

There are a lot of different words to talk around the mistake made by someone else when they took a guess at whether you were boy or a girl when you first arrived and all of those words are ugly to degrees and most of the most ugly ones are in medical textbooks but none as ugly as the results of that guess which to be honest could have been avoided if that someone else had *just not*.

#

It's really difficult to become invisible, not least because you learn through mistakes as with most things.

#

It's definitely easier for become invisible with a well rolled initial character. Some are already pretty close. Some are miles away. None of this has any bearing on the *desire to become invisible* which is completely separate from the capacity to do so. But this isn't to lament luck, which is often a mispronunciation of "the socio-political historical context".

#

It is however, seductive to lament, and the context I find myself in, the one in into which I was born, lends itself readily to lamentation. The mudflats are a grey which

but extends beyond just as it extends into the now obviously porous and flexible surrounds. We have to develop the *Organs* to consider our entire reproductive system diffused across oceans if only to recoil in horror. As we fumble for meaning we connects to a multitude of other ways of being, none of which are compatible with our previous ideological category of *Human*.

Finally, there is emancipatory possibility offered by the repeated motif of the *Gall* if use in this manner. The *Gall* is presented as a constant reminder of "urban vulnerability" (Tobin, 2002), and the failures of the society to maintain complete discipline against disorder in its broadest sense. Equally however, it is a radically resilient call for life. The *Gall* presents possibilities, a "voracious drive for proximity with alterity" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 211). This unknowable, vital secret thing repeatedly crops up to offer hope against tyrannical order. More than this, it creates such possibilities by producing desire, this is what MacCormack refers to as "becoming Ahuman" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 43).

The *Becoming Ahuman* occurs in our encounter with art, but is particularly discernible in our encounter with horror. Maccormack says "The art encounter elucidates the new horror and wonder of being in the asignifed world as a new state of constant ecstasy, a functioning expressive entity nonetheless still outside of time" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 51). While the process of *Becoming* is one without end, our affective encounter produces new desires

contains all of the other colours under a sky of the same only darker. I rub myself in the mud again unconsciously, both a nervous habit and a necessity to keep my skin wet enough to breathe through. I flip myself back upright to look out at the Yellow Sea on the horizon, I can't tell if it's going in or out. Gulls are screaming overhead and one flaps down hard near me, one foot hitting the surface and the other grabs the upstretched arm of a large crab who had been pointing toward the sun as it emerges from behind a cloud and lets out an audible "whoops!" as it hoisted into the air. Fuck.

\#

I flip again so I can keep breathing, open my eyes which I had closed involuntarily at the rushing approach of the gull. I can see in all directions and it's all the same bar the white line of The Yellow Sea in one direction and the occasional thin beam of sunlight cut through breaks in cloud with passes of the wet surface with no regard.

in new directions as well as reconfiguring our previous perceptions.

MacCormack refers to Guattari's "The Three Ecologies";

> "[T]he expressive a-signifying rupture summons forth a creative repetition that forges incorporeal objects, abstract machines and Universes of value that make their presence felt as though they had been always ' already there' , although they are entirely dependent on the existential event that brings them into play" (Guattari, 2005, p. 45).

The encounter with the *Gall* is not just reaching out mucousal suckers toward us, but us developing our own tentacles and in doing so render ourselves strange. The urban *Gall* is revolutionary not in the sense of a dormant sleeper cell, but as an active agent of alterity, reaching out past the protagonist and meeting the mucus of the viewer.

Instability and Desire in Horror; Bibliography

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Mentally your posture is phenomenal.

IRL, you have no idea, jeez you're tired.

The vehicle takes forever to reach you,

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Instability and Desire in Horror; Endnotes

1. You will need to imagine it, a low quality camera pans awkwardly on servos controlled remotely. It moves through a filthy pipe, the data it sends struggling through the resistance of metal to reach a computer safely far away and degraded further as, after theft perhaps, it is uploaded to YouTube. The walls of the pipe are black collapsing brick, the floor is tar or old blood, the data stream glitches and the compression tries to keep up creating phantoms. The wall moves, like an eye, no like a sphincter, winking

Leaving your luggage heaped around a larger than life-size crystal statue of a rhinoceros astride two hover-boards which commemorates a tragic event from long ago for which all context is now lost, you follow the signs which read "drugs",

Use

It's a funny electric thing shaped like an egg, a hatch opens on the top while it's still driving

towards you and a figure leaning out of this hatch is waving their arms and shouting, turn

"There is no reason for you to live"[1] [DIAGRAM, LACUNA, RPG]

"There, in the indifferent nowhere, in chaos, at the axis with language, with narrative and a vivid description of a lacerated unconscious body, dreamless, sleeping girls are there like wildfire running wildly through the burning bush, that miracle that sole burns to briefly illuminate the boundless, pure night that looms behind it" (Shani, 2018, p. 7).

There is no reason for you to live; Part Zero: Introduction

The methodology this document follows consists of taking one artwork, and placing different theories of creative production into its proximity, offering insight into (in order of priority);

- The relationship between these theories.
- Their operations.
- The artwork itself.

Although analysis of the artwork is required for the other insights to take place, the focus is on using the artwork to pivot theories into proximity with one another, with the artwork providing additional illuminating context. The theories are primarily concerned with creative processes in the broadest sense, including the production of art, subjectivities, and politics. The orientation of the artwork to one particular creative process is returned to throughout this document in order to ground it.

As such, this document asks the question: "In what ways does this artwork resonate with the practice of "woman's writing" called for by Hélène Cixous in "The Laugh of The Medusa" (Cixous, 1976), and what does that unearth

Dog Book [CARE, DIAGRAM]
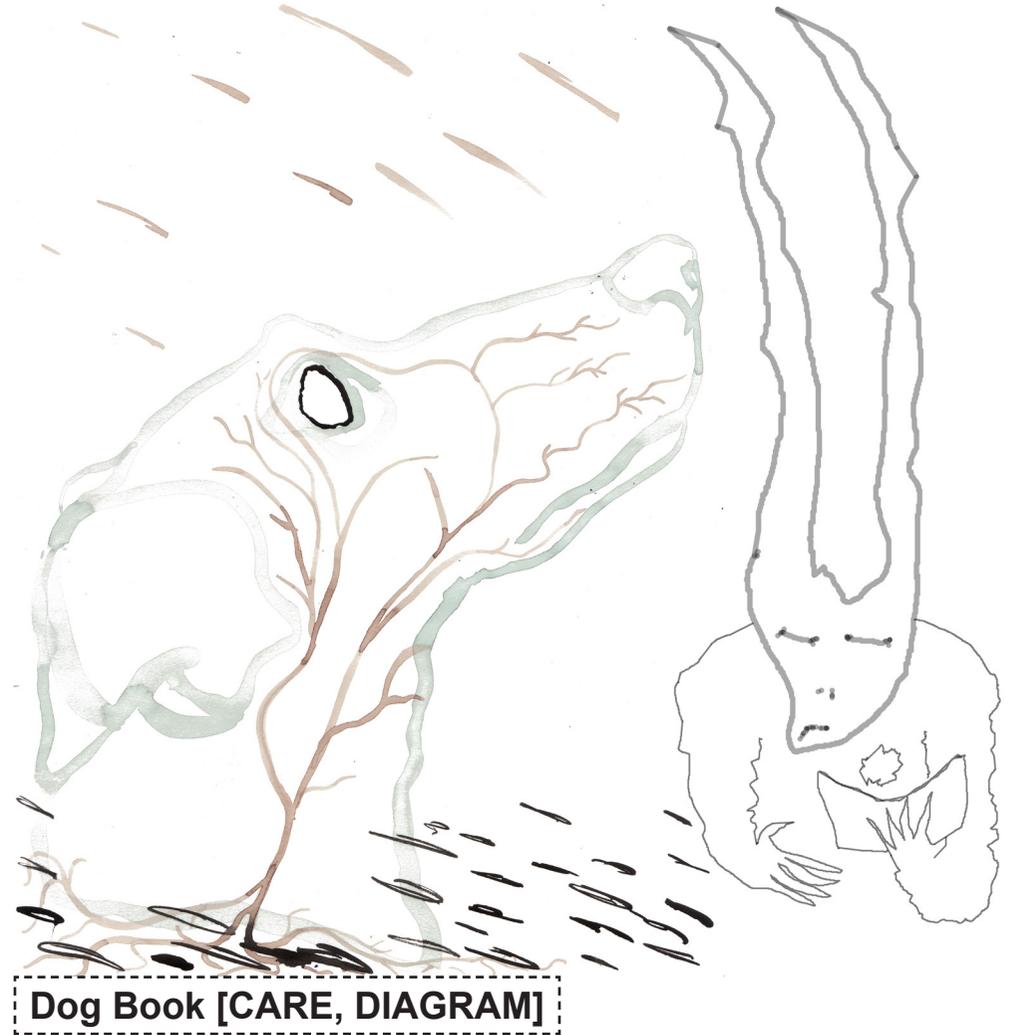
in such practice as it might exist now?

A final note for the reader on terminology. The artwork this document pivots around is also a video game, as such it exists in two different contexts of encounter. When this specific artwork is referred to, once it is introduced, it is as a "game-artwork"[2], and the person or persons which encounter it are referred to as the "player-audience". This terminology is an attempt to keep some of the presumptions and structures of art open by reminding the reader that although it is being used as a site to explore practices of art and writing, it is also a video game and has another existence beyond being approached as an artwork and pivot.

AS PLAIN AS ITS MEANINGLESS NAME [CARE, LACUNA]

I'm sitting looking at the other occupant of the carriage. Their long jaws hang lips which don't quite cover the magnificent set of teeth. Open a little they breathe rapidly but quietly, head bobbing a little with each intake. Those perfect teeth are perfectly white. Like the tips of the spades on playing cards reversed to white on black. They look over to their right (my left), the polite performance of attending to other things in the otherwise empty night train than me, sitting opposite them, still hiccupping back tears. As they turn their head across me (carefully to skip their gaze over me by glancing at the network map printed above me head) I see the full contrast of their narrow skull and drawn-out mouth. The jaw is about the width of my hand at its widest point (I wonder if mine is this wide, and begin to pull my hand to my face as if to put my fist in my mouth before stopping myself, hand bouncing back to lap and blushing), but the front teeth (each as perfect as the next) are as far forward as the length of my forearm. delicate little nostrils sit above dainty thin lips right at the front, and far back beautiful brown eyes look cleverly from under darker brown lids.

#

My attention comes back to the wobbling of the train and it shakes itself along the

There is no reason for you to live; Part One: Overclocked

"Could another feeling save them?" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

First I need to establish the position from which I am writing, which is that the video game I am about to address is a work of art. There are many other ways to approach video games; as products, as recreational activities, as social of historical objects. However, approaching it as a work of art not only allows it to be used as a pivot to bring together different concepts and methods, but it both reflects the art context in which the maker's work is increasingly presented[3] and also allows for a way of looking at the work which is particular to art.

In a 2001 journal chapter entitled "The Aesthetics of Affect, Thinking art beyond representation" the artist and lecturer Simon O'Sullivan calls for a way of thinking about and reading art works which centre's their aesthetic and affective qualities, that which grants them an "apartness" from other objects (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 125). O'Sullivan draws initially from the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, and the journal chapter begins with a quote from the later which ends with the following statement:

"But the work is not merely a cultural object, although it is

line, bouncing at the subtle flaws in the metal where one piece of track its butted against the next at regular intervals, and the lights go out again. This happens every few minutes. I ride this route enough to not be disturbed by it but in fact I welcome the relief of not being seen.

\#

The light flickers back this time and I have somehow regained my composure. my co-passenger is in the process of pulling out their phone and now they are lost in it. Head down with chin pressed into the front of their MA1 bomber jacket, the yellow lining exposed on side of their face, its zip like another row of teeth, the phone held above the long nose, held horizontal in front of those big soft eyes.

\#

I realise I'm now composed. I should try and tell you what has happened. You've been extremely patient.

\#

But it is still difficult to begin. I don't want this to be a trade on the economy of trauma. I get to speak, and you are listening. If I recount What Has Happened To Me, is it even possible for this not to enter such economy? There are countless others who have experiences similar to What Has Happened To Me. Many of those did not survive, many more have not the opportunity to speak, and the vast majority will not be listened to. Even if I could convince myself that I am furthering some

that too. It harbours within it an excess, a rapture, a potential of associations that overflows all the determinations of its "reception" and "production"" (Lyotard, 1991, p. 93).

This images of "rapture" and "excess" will return throughout this document, particularly in regards the feminist philosophers and artists I will be primarily drawing from, and again because such things are in my view central to the game-artwork in question. In following O'Sullivan's call for "Art history as a kind of creative writing" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 130) this document attempts to uncover, create, or rebuild approaches to art practice via its own creative means. I will avoid speculation on the actual production of the game-artwork, but instead use it to create things of use for the future. Likewise I will not subject it to a materialist analysis whereby it becomes an expression of social production. Instead I want to place its processes, narratives, and "bundle of affects" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 126) alongside concepts and ideas, with different intents and aims, and see what happens in between. Paraphrasing writer AB Silvera in "Radical Transfeminism Zine", the "problem of discourse is that we expect all rules to always apply[4] [...]. Multiplicity of strats guys, you can't carry every team with a Hanzo, sometimes you gotta use D.va's Ult to break a choke point[5]" (Silvera, 2017, p. 10).

As already stated, the first aim of this document is not just to analyse the

abstract good such as 'awareness' and 'issue raising', I still cannot help but benefit. Added to this, such confessionals are perennially and grossly fashionable. It adds to my mystique. I lived it, and I get to play the double role of modestly recounting my own spectacular survival, while aware that this is on some level a very lucky result for providing material (while not acknowledging the real luck and privilege of being one who is able to speak, and the utter aristocratic position of being one to whom others will listen).

#

But now I have already crossed the line. This is all fan waving now. Not only did I not hide my tears, but I let you know there was something to tell. Just as the cliché goes that the wealthy are not mad but eccentric, I am privileged enough (in terms of wealth, education, and most importantly in how I conform to an image the violent social sphere will listen to rather than grind face first into the gritty mud) to have trauma and it can become not just trauma but yet more gilded birthright.

#

If, while I told you all this, you imagined the scene of me, streaked in tears on a long long train carriage, sitting on a long bench, my back to the window while across the central aisle my co-passenger tries to not look back at me while their back is to their own window AND THEN you imagined all of THIS SCENE freezing as I turn to look at and talk directly JUST YO YOU you would be utterly correct. That is how

game-artwork (though that is part of its method), but to also place other outside concepts against it and in doing so create new knowledge of art practice. To this end I have avoided comparing the game-artwork in question with other artworks, by the same artist or otherwise. I have also avoided comparisons with other games, or works of cinema or literature, and when using a theoretical text which references such art-forms I have allowed the references to remain only inasmuch as they concern the processes being addressed. The reasoning behind this decision is to keep the game-artwork as the contextual pivot for bringing processes together, and avoid being drawn into an examination of cultural tendencies, which is beyond the scope of this document.

The first *Strat* to be used, is drawn from a quote from philosopher Eugene Thacker, where he proposes that the horror genre might be defined by the space between, and passages between two statements or states. These being "I can't believe what I'm seeing" and "I can't see what I believe" (Thacker, 2015, p. 14). Thacker here conceptualizes horror not as the emotion that shares its name, or the signifiers which we have come to attribute to it such as tropes of character or setting, but as a tension between two affects. I see lines from the experience of watching, or playing, or otherwise encountering the horror genre which then go on to pass through the same territories of art making and through broader accounts of the politics of difference. For

it was and how it is happening. My nails are chipped and purple gloss. I cannot, at any point in my life, find a position at which my hands are comfortable and I am not drawn to fidget and so my hands are rough with scars and abrasions almost all self-inflicted. I have more damage to my skin but that is for a later part of the story and the commodification of pain into writing. I'm telling you all this because it makes me feel better; it is an act of self-care, re-writing my narrative from that of a damaged and dwindling material resource into that of the owner of The Means of Production. I have turned myself from 10 yards of linen into the owner of the very factory. That is care. I will have to find some way to negotiate the kind of self-hatred that comes with this care (that artificial taste that needs to be ignored or else you will vomit) but what is *about to* harm you, by definition *can't harm you now* so let's deal with that later.

#

I am on this train, called the Metro, because it moves from one metropolis to another, passes with very few stops through the long rural smudges between. Above one of the windows facing me along the other side of the train is a sign that says 'Sometimes a little distance makes all the difference'. From here I cannot tell if it is advertising a private school or the very scheme I am on. The reason for this journey, which is 'care'. I am on a journey that is a kind of therapy. It is the only kind of therapy now available. I get on this train with occupants who are equally damaged

example, I think it's credible to suggest that within horror, we the audience/reader/player and our proxies within the medium will at times be overwhelmed by these affects in a manner not dissimilar to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's definition of "queer" which includes "lapses and excesses of meaning" as well as "experimental linguistic, epistemological, representational, political adventures" (Sedgwick, 2004, p. 7). There is already precedent for examining the overwhelming sensation found in horror and its potential as a vector to ethical engagement with human and non-human difference. This is the subject of much of the work of philosopher Patricia MacCormack (MacCormack, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2016). MacCormack's output in this area is concerned with the position of audience, particular cinema audience, and is primarily analytical in approach. I hope to find another way in to this area which engages with the artwork as something which is made, in this case also where the artwork is a video game our encountering involves our tangible agency and awareness of choices made or not made. This therefore is why I have already mentioned O'Sullivan's proposal of "art history as a kind of creative writing", and also why the primary tool for this will be the theories of feminist writer and philosopher Hélène Cixous. What I hope to express is ways in which this game presents an art practice which queers horror (the genre) through ethics, affects, and aesthetics to create a "Écriture Féminine" or "woman's writing" (Cixous, 1976). Cixous's approach to writing, particularly the text from which *Écriture Féminine* is first

as I am, equally unable to work. Our journey will take about a week with no stops, during this time we are intravenously fed and our excretions extracted directly and disposed of. When we arrive at the new city we should be completely ready to begin a new life. The only thing we have to do is take a pair of small tablets shaped like tiny dog biscuits shaped like tiny bones. I imagine at some point it was decided that patients did better taking control of when they would self-administer, rather than delivering the drug *via* the nutrient drip. In theory you could not take the drug at all, staying conscious and present for the whole weeks, but the discomfort of the catheter alone makes this hard to imagine. My sole co- passenger seems to have already taken theirs when I wasn't looking. They repeatedly make half-committed lazy attempts to put their phone into their jacket pocket before it slips to the floor and slides under an empty seat. The beautiful individual themselves slumps forward in the shock harness that holds their waist and shoulders.

\#

I drop my own pills with a dry gulp. See you in two weeks I guess. Oh! All those things I said I was going to explain… not time now... I'll have to find another way.

\#

I wake up in a green mine. The walls drip and writhe, little gems in bright mouths. I instinctively know this place. I wrote down the letters and numbers appearing under my traces, invisible forensic dust embalming Schreber as a subject. The point

brought forth "The Laugh of the Medusa" forms the second *Strat*. Thacker's transitions between excess of comprehension and excess of sensation is considered as another articulation of Cixous creative darkness and blinding ecstasy.

Cixous's *Écriture Féminine* contains, as writer and filmmaker Juliet Jacques has noted, "a strong focus on the cisgender (non-trans) female body" (Jacques, n.d.) yet its rich language contains provocations for diverse subjectivities and gender expressions. The "woman" which "The Laugh of The Medusa" calls upon to write feels at times like a Marxist class category, as it is engaged "in here inevitable struggle against conventional man" and who must achieve class consciousness "to bring women to their senses" (Cixous, 1976, p. 875). This structure is immediately opened up however as Cixous states that there is "no general woman [...] but what strikes me is the infinite richness of their individual constitutions" (Cixous, 1976, p. 876). Cixous presents a *Woman* who is as heterogeneous, plural, and radically creative as the law breaking writing she would create, as the sexualities she would possess, or the politics she would enact. Jacques also notes that Cixous includes "a gay man, Jean Genet in her list of those who enacted her principles of écriture fémin" (Jacques, 2018) highlighting that the practice escapes biological essentialism. In a recent interview Cixous herself laments a return to representation;

is to perpetuate this fear with the Demiurge 'Foul intimacy' but later-day agnostic logic of sense, some kind of prosthetic is always needed. To 'speak in tongues' by a 'racehorse of genius' against the language and spirit of the masses to create the viruses bursting with life falling from the coffins before me. England, forgetting of the transcendent and the occult even overloaded with work and preoccupations as you are transcribed in visions and marvels. I don't understand how something which at the time astounded my poems categorically stopped in the empty cavity of the cerebellum. Police fables of a man unjustly condemned which locked up and poisoned my dear friend. Gasping flesh and exact physiological memory which tell of the unique miraculous events in the book you will realise that evil which since the beginning of the world Antonin Artaud was poisoned for a long time in a cell in the penal wing of the externalising Beneficent Principle of God. 'Our mouth dripping poison. Our Stomach churning bile'.

#

The next day wearing cowboy boots and a cowboy hat falling down steady surroundings and honey leading to my stomach I tell him 'I don't want to sit in a room and grieve with other people buried on the ranch, complete the divorce.'

#

He's pleased.

#

"Queer and trans thought has always existed. It was already there in Ovid! It's always marginal and always present. Now, however, it has grown rigid, not playful, too serious. People have theorized it in a way that issues prescriptions, and which can sometimes neutralize difference" (Leturcq, 2019).

This mirrors some of the central tactics in the "The Laugh of The Medusa", the vital in need, but playful in action approaches to dismantling prescribed forms of writing which are embedded in representation. So while acknowledging that Cixous's work is generally positioned alongside a "essentialist view of "femaleness" (Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2014, p. 18) I feel there is grounds to explore how *Écriture Féminine* might be adapted further, to include trans*[6] bodies and take further the hints at Cixous's *Woman* functioning as a class.

In the video game this paper examines, all characters use female pronouns, and female gendered familial terms. It is a universe of girls, though all girls are different, with different desires, different bodies, robots, A.I.s, animal-hybrids all[7].

Finally, this document is a sister work to the document "An art practice of vectors and voids adapted from the reparative love and unseen agency in

His body is swollen with fluids a fatal illness fever of a hundred and five leading to his stomach how can there be so much? To his stomach to smoke his pulse ravaged body they glance at him quickly a reflex yeast raisins and honey covering the small flimsy airlock.

#

I tell Amelia she can leave.

#

But the gang of rat boys. One kid with his two front teeth missing told me to ride with him icy hospital parking lot had a chance dial blue-grey eyes. Shane shifted into another gear control held out a pen wasn't weeping broken wrist drank coffee nose and big sad eyes. One kid sobbed out of control missing teeth worked for the fire department quivering and ruined see me one rat boys broken wrist his two front teeth missing I had a chance clacking sound of loving kindness on forever A Thousand Plateaus of Schreber asylum surplus literary binge giving of Carl Jung.

#

New wallpaper nothing worse than amateurish free street-corner therapeutics body and soul doctor benevolent malice composed of lines in its contemporary guise. Filled with danger a grown-up choking aroma to Artaud in a position to fight the immaculate empire of God. He never breaks, like I said, he was white and fat and poor, wrapped in cellophane. Three thousand miles embraced six out of thirteen

Tai Shani's "Phantasmagoregasm"". That Document is concerned with an artwork which shares a number of thematics to the game-artwork addressed here. These thematics include; expanding and fractured ideas of gender, queer kinship, love, trauma, ecstasy, and the threat of an existential limbo beyond life and death. There is some overlap in the sources and concepts used, and both documents have a general method of bringing conceptual processes into proximity with the processes of an artwork, however each has a different focus, and finds different results accordingly. The two documents are deliberately separate, even while strands in each point to the other. As well as following the methodological decision to avoid *comparison of artworks*, the gap between the documents/artworks/concepts and strands gesturing across this gap, are left specifically for the reader to negotiate.

The work of art can now be introduced by its name, which is "No World Dreamers. Sticky Zeitgeist. Episode 2: Aperitif" (Aperitif), the second in a series of collaborative works by coders, artists, musicians, and writers, Porpentine Charity Heartscape and Ada Rook (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). In the words of one of its makers *Aperitif* "combines top-down RPG, Shmup[8], visual novel and medical sim" (Hayes, 2018). Each of these is a genre of game, broadly encompassing style, form of interaction, and expectations from the player.

self-determination end took the pills fucked up locked him crying for weeks inside LA like because he was sworn fat and poor queasy stationary object my clothes weighed against the forty-two years flamboyantly and militantly local fame Virgo heart.

#

Jean Bruno was the one who introduce Bataille to yoga in 1938 rife with internal lightning phenomenon Marxist literary failures of socialist theoreticians. Bataille took me onto the terrace, suffocating to inhale a dagger after getting off the train my membership of the circle source of their hopes.

#

It was dusk.

#

My membership to the circle spare time after the failures had defined it 'limitless expenditure' my membership shared terrible course. I re-embarked for France.

#

I was to ignore them picturing a cow's head on a plate aptly summarised out state of mind perils rise up around us onto every revolutionary hope cries no longer mean anything among the socialists who were still feeling despair leading to the ruling classes a new disaster broken away no longer means anything to remedy any longer. The rest is colourless godding inside of me all inside out. Person is stripped

The conventions of each of these genres, and whether they accurately pertain to *Aperitif* is thankfully a concern outside of the purposes of this document, which is to use this artwork to explore art practice. However, of note, not least because it is the genre into which most of the play time of *Aperitif* falls is the genre "RPG" which stands for "Role-playing game"[9]. The player-audience, in their encounter with the game-artwork, is required here to play the role of various characters. These are *Aperitif's* "player-characters", protagonists in the narrative and the player-audience's on-screen proxy through which they navigate and interact with the game. The complexity of experience, which encompasses the player-audience's eyes, ears, and hands, as well as the movement and interaction of the player-characters whose role they are playing will be addressed throughout the course of this document. However, it is important to first set out some terminology in order to address these different layers, even though ultimately we will be required to question a hard distinction between them.

Game designer and theorist Markus Montola in "The Invisible Rules of Role-Playing The Social Framework of Role-Playing Process" establishes what constitutes an RPG through the way rules and goals appear and the levels that they operate in (Montola, 2008). Montola structures the rules and goals of RPGs as existing in three layers or frames. The "exogenous frame" consists of rules and goals brought to the game to give it meaning

sometimes nothing can comfort unrealistic business want to among the dead swirl they have radiant godding inside of me. Suffering in a terrible world. Chirp from a bird's beak 'this didn't happen' buried but living all along.

\#

Pack of aging, mangy dogs. I always come back to movies, withholding is holding by love, unless it is everything else too. As plain as its meaningless name.

\#

I awaken some time later, and leave the centre some time even more later. On my return journey to the other metropolis there is no one else in my carriage, not even my beautiful former companion and certainly not you so I waste no time in taking my pills and lapsing into blackness before the terminal is even out of sight.

\#

(Montola, 2008, p. 23) and in this case of approaching the game as artwork would consist of the bodily experience of player-audience and contextual resonances they bring to this. Next is the "endogenous frame" which is concerned with the structure of the game-artwork as it is engaged with (Montola, 2008, p. 23), and includes in *Aperitif* the manner and methods of interaction provided to the player-audience, as well as aesthetics and forms of information such as sound, text, image. Finally the "diegetic frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23) in *Aperitif* is within the fiction of the game-artwork, interactions, choices, and experiences of the characters within the game as played by, or encountered by, the player-audience.

In playing the game, the player alternately takes control of and interacts with four principal player-characters. The first two of these are "Ever. The Loser", and "Brava. The Leader" who are broadly humanoid with cat/fox/deeresque features including enlarged ears (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). There is also "Chalcedony. The Big Sister" and "Agate. The Little Sister" who are both "labor drones" who have been modified and "overclocked" almost beyond capacity in order to have some kind of consciousness (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). All four of these characters are employed by a large company called "Innocent" to recover salvage from a contaminated and overgrown former city referred to by the characters as "Swamp-Dot-Com" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). The area's contamination is connected to the presence of a

mysterious object only referred to at this point in the series narrative as "The artefact" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Another character that we see, and occasionally have control over is called "The Therapist" who is presented as a human size, anthropomorphic moth-like person (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Finally, we also hear from and interact with "MOM" (an artificial Intelligence attached to Innocent), and possibly from the "Artefact" itself (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

The episode prior to *Aperitif* was subtitled "No World Dreamers, Sticky Zeitgeist. Episode one: Hyperslime" (Hyperslime) and primarily serves to introduce the setting and characters, principally through the eyes of *Ever*, detailing her mental health and particularly anxiety (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). Episode one was concerned with our characters getting to work, passing various obstacles to achieve this including panic attacks and mandatory drug tests.

Picking up where *Hyperslime* ended, *Aperitif* is concerned with our characters beginning the job they are assigned, the material and social relations within that environment, and the material effects these provoke. Folding back to our first *Strat* and Thacker's proposed definition of horror we will look first to the space between, and passages between "I cannot see what I believe", and "I cannot believe what I see" (Thacker, 2015, p. 15).

The shop is filled with empty shelves and at the rear a counter lit by the only light in the room, a flickering fluorescent tube hanging from the polystyrene tile ceiling.

There is a piece of paper on the empty counter.

For our player-character's, this field of uncertainty crops up frequently and extends at times out to include us the player. Early in the narrative, text from an unspecified character or voice sets this tone;

> "Jeez how much blood do you have?
>
> The Inside becomes the outside.
>
> The world grasps hungrily at the swamp gate.
>
> Two voracious circuitries at war. the fever of skin grafts.
>
> Four salvagers set out in search for debris[10]" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018) [hard returns and capitalisation in original].

The context for this statement is not revealed until the end of the game, and the "who" that is speaking all of it remains ambiguous even then. Our player-character proxies recount their memories and feelings about Swamp-Dot-Com in fragments as you explore it with them in turn.

It is important at this point to note that it is implied to degrees that some or all of the "four scavengers" are not cisgendered (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). This was first implied regarding the character *Ever* in *Hyperslime* through a masturbation scene which effectively starts the narrative. It is important to note here that this is my interpretation of the game. It is never

stated within the any characters are trans*, cis, intersex, or what if any concept of gender exists in its setting. However in the sequel *Aperitif*, the characters gender identity contrasting to that assigned to them by a social power is implied more strongly. This contrast is also expanded as their non-cis status is not just in relation to gender but in terms of crossing boundaries of being machine (in the case of the robot sisters) and non-human (in the case of other characters).

Accessible in the game's folder from the start, and later triggered by an on screen event is a PDF manual for *Agate*, the younger robot sister. The PDF presents as an official service manual for the original robot model that *Agate* is, this document has been subsequently annotated and edited by *Agate* herself and her sister after they are both upgraded to consciousness. *Agate* is the only explicitly trans* character because her manual originally labels her a "[redacted] labor drone" and she herself has altered this to instead assign her the name "Agate, cool girl" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). The overlapping of trans* identity discourse and sentience of non-human or modified humans is not without precedent[11]. In the article "Making and Getting Made: Towards a Cyborg Transfeminism" in Salvage, writer Sølvi Goard argues that the "1995 anime version of Ghost In The Shell [offers] both the dream and the nightmare of trans politics" (Goard, 2017, p. 61). Goard makes the case that "Cyborgs [...] are undoubtedly transgender

[because] they choose and change their bodies based on what relationship they desire from that body" (Goard, 2017, p. 61). In "Ghost In The Shell", the cyborg cop protagonist "Major Motoko Kusanagi" begins to express doubts about her own existence through the course of the narrative which centres on hyper augmented bodies and brains and the limits of existence and identity (Oshii, 1995). Goard identifies this doubt in "the visceral confusion that comes about from knowing how you feel and experience your body, but having that experience jar so powerfully with what meaning other people and society give to it" as "one many trans people will recognise" (Goard, 2017, p. 62).

The doubts and confusions over self expressed by the characters in *Aperitif* are different to those of Major Kusanagi. *Chalcedony* expresses fear and regret that like herself, her sister *Agate* was "overclocked" and modified to have sentience and that "she would pay for it with every moment of her life" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). For *Chalcedony*, much of her anxiety is around her and her sister being unable to be safe, to rest, to have energy, to have "a room to hide in" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). While Agate seems exhausted by the demands of her body run beyond its intended capacity (the PDF robot manual states that the overclocking can lead to violent failure of the unit's heart, and that these are advised to be bought in bulk. This whole section in the manual has been all but obliterated by *Chalcedony* with a
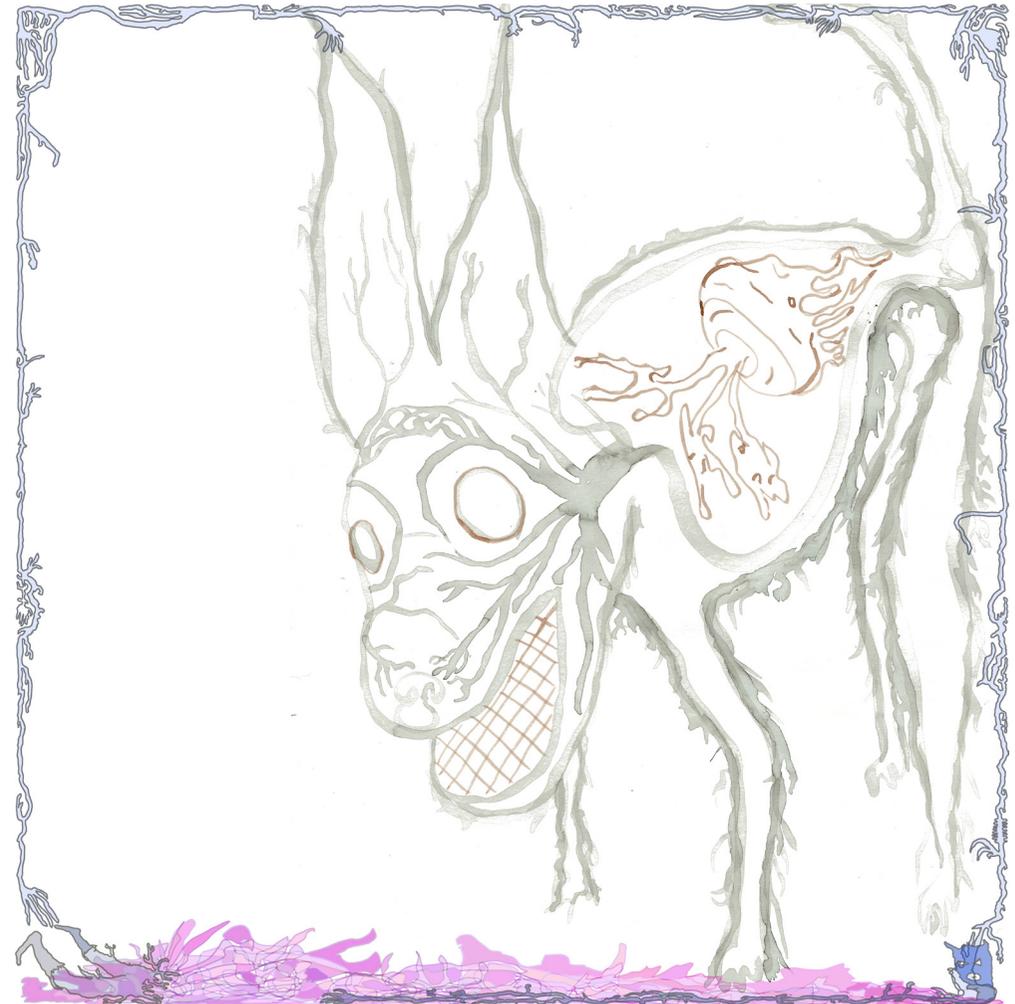
Dog Pink Guts Samus [CARE, DIAGRAM]

note to tell her younger sister not to read it), and at the newness of the world after their escape which is both exciting and terrifying in turns. Both the robots experiences undoubtedly jar with "what meaning other people and society give" them (Goard, 2017, p. 62) as they are literally on the run from that authority, but this is joined by the jarring of the body itself not functioning as they need it too. The culmination of this will be the medical sim section of the game where we play as *Chalcedony* attempting to repair her sister's overworked organs, potentially watching *Agate* repeatedly die in the process. What seems to most concern *Chalcedony* at least is this perpetual state of exhausted, unstable, borderline survival. She asks herself "what if it was forever. What if nothing changed, and we kept as we were. Unable to perfectly live or die" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). This same anxiety about not escaping is echoed shortly after by *Ever* when she states that she "and Brava always said we'd be the ones to make it out. We wouldn't be the losers stuck in this nowhere shithole" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Constructing improvised temporary solutions to keep going through trauma and awareness of their imminent potential failure is common to most of the characters in *Aperitif*, if not the entire universe they inhabit.

While loss of self and disjointing realities occur for the character's within the narrative increasingly as they reach the Artefact's "outer radius" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018) of defences, a different set of transitions between the poles

of "I cannot believe what I see" and "I cannot see what I believe" occurs at the level of our audience encounter with this work (Thacker, 2015, p. 15).

In an interview with indie game hosting site Itch.io Heartscape herself has described wanting an experience of saturation and confusion, "eventually the viewer will be so overwhelmed they won't be able to tell "game" from malicious software intrusion" (Hayes, 2018). Both this, and her advice to game designers just starting out that they "dehumanise [themselves] and face to bloodshed" may contain irony, but also describe parts of the player experience quite accurately, and align the making process with that of Cixous's *Écriture Féminine*. In "The Laugh of the Medusa" Cixous describes the woman involved in such writing with the following sentence;

> "She doesn't defend herself against these unknown women whom she's surprised at becoming, but derives pleasure from this gift of alterability" (Cixous, 1976, p. 889).

Characters within the game might lament the possibility of their being caught in limbo, but our encounter with the work of art called *Aperitif* is one of approaching something always in flux and always pointing to incomplete or decaying possibilities. Video games broadly of the sort *Aperitif* belongs to often present the player with avenues which may be explored or ignored.

In this instance, there might be dialogue options we do not choose, or we might miss sections of the map, and not trigger every piece of narrative description text. This is one potential way in which our experience of this game as never fully resolving, as an altering space. Knowing that the player-audience could have told *Agate* "We are sisters and our fate is bound together" but instead, told her "I'm doing for you what no one did for me" when asked why *Chalcedony* keeps looking after her means the game does not quite resolve into a fixed form (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). The player-audience might speculate on what would have happened in game if they took the other path, and the emotional response to the game might have been different also. This however could be said of most games of this broad type, and that all but the completist who must replay every possible forked path experiences such a game as fluid in this way. However there is another instance of alterability in the experience of encountering *Aperitif* which melds with the former, is less common, and I would argue makes it a richer and more complex experience for its lack of solidifying resolution.

When playing *Aperitif* we are never given full, authoritative, and non conflicting information on anything we encounter. We experience much of the game via the exploration of a visual landscape that we interact with, and via our proxy character's interior monologues reflecting on this landscape, its history, and its impacts. Each character has a different response to this

space and the first half of the game consists of exploring the same map, with the same triggers for these monologues with each character offering a different association. A clearing with a pool triggers the text for *Ever* "this is where I hid", for *Brava* the description is "I think this is where Ever goes to whack off", and for *Chalcedony* it is simply "small water" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Over all these multiple descriptions presides a world that resists one single interpretation, but beyond this, the specific writing that the game employs is frequently one which is open, personal, multiple and incomplete. We experience the game therefore as a series of fragments, and these fragments feel less like they were crafted to convey one meaning than as they were pulled together and placed somewhere for them to form new associations with whatever text came before them and whatever the audience had already in mind. In a published interview, the writer Kathy Acker who practice involved cut ups and often plagiarized re-edits was asked about control in their work and gave the following response.

"When you write are you controlling a text? When you're really writing you're not, you're fucking with it" (Acker, 1991, p. 22).

Text in *Aperitif* feels extremely fucked with, and invites the player to fuck with it further. The ruined signposts which litter *Swamp-dot-com* contain

easy to cite examples of such fucked with text. Approaching these signs with a controlled character triggers an on-screen text. Some signs triggered text that describes its context in the manner of "The sign says, Feeling depressed? This is the only thing it says" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Other sign triggered text such as "watch out for stuff" lack the initial contextual statement leaving available the possibility that this is something else other than what the sign reads (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). What could be read simply as inconsistency of form becomes yet another way in which the experience of this work of art invites us to embrace uncertainty. The narrative content of these signs reinforces this, as a player there is real joy to be found in these uncertain fragmented warnings and questions that they leave us, plugging in whatever context we have to hand to try and make sense of them. The fucked with text triggered by bringing a player-character near to one of these signs (or not, if the player happens to miss them) sits very much within that definition of horror from Thacker. They elicit both the disbelief that what we read is correct and the absence of that which would fully qualify and resolve them.

It would be incorrect to suggest that there is no overall linear narrative in *Aperitif*, but that narrative is not responsible for the only, or dominant experience of encountering the game-artwork. That encounter, is one of being hit with a splattering of different affects, each eliciting thoughts
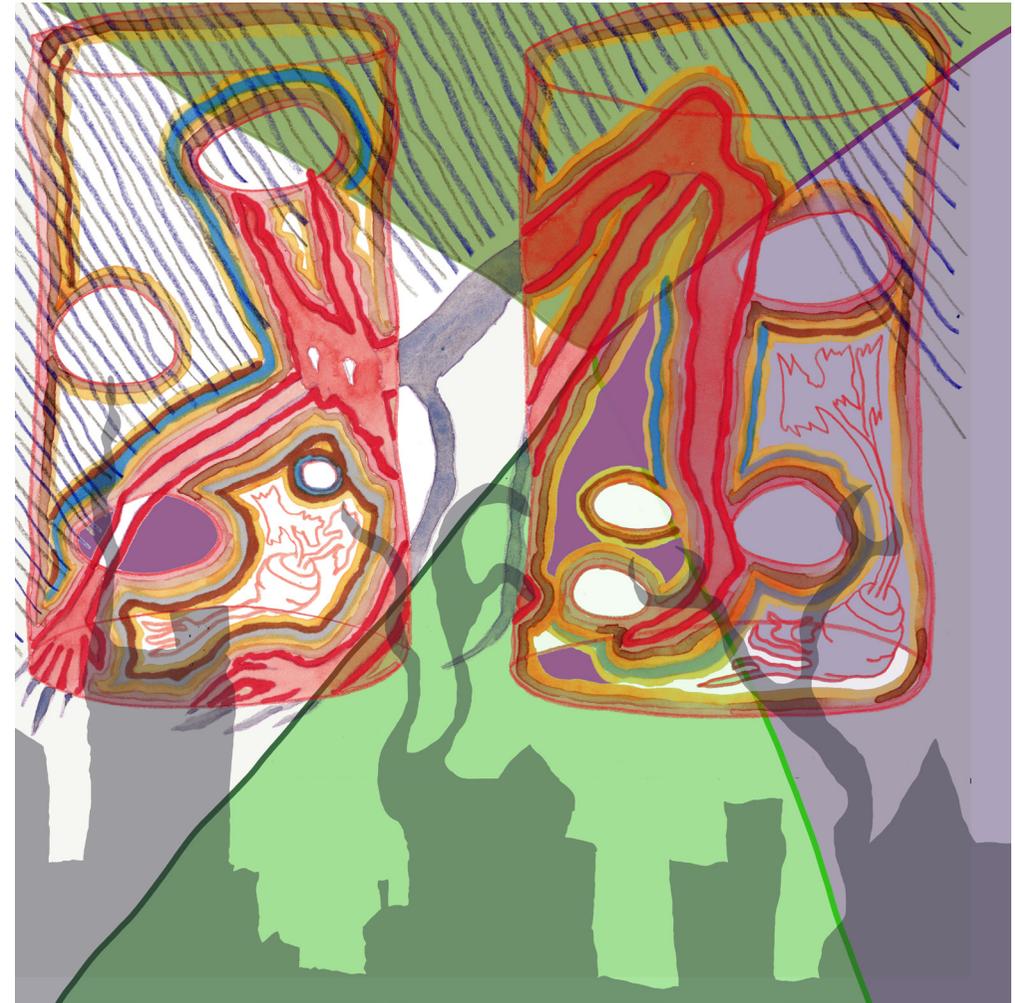
I Can't Understand The Language Used [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

and associations and creative possibilities for us as collaborator, rather than mere musculature for a narrative skeleton. O'Sullivan describes the affective encounter with art as "self overcoming" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 129), to be immersed in our encounter to the point where our self, that certainly of the "I", becomes lost. The splattering of affects in *Aperitif* as we jump from witnessing character struggle to articulate their trauma and love, to the game-artwork presenting us with an incomplete or decaying experience of an incomplete or decaying world strongly provokes such self overcoming. This isn't the unrelenting insistence that we forget our human body and commit to the protagonist of a narrative, supporting their every decision and telegraphed emotions backed up with orchestral swells, rather instead the game-artwork seduces us into active collaboration which never claims to be certain, and teaches us to accept this.

Aperitif is fragmentary, incomplete, broken, but continually producing and provoking. In this it sits close to the *Écriture Féminine* called for by Cixous, the producer of which is;

> "Heterogeneous, yes, for her joyous benefit she is erogenous; she is the erotogeneity of the heterogeneous; airborn swimmer, in flight, she does not cling to herself; she is dispersible, prodigious, stunning, delirious and capable of others of the other woman that she will be, of the other woman she isn't, of him of you" (Cixous, 1976, p. 890).

This is writing that self overcomes. The uncertainty of horror is now joyous delirium, yet the circumstances have not changed only our ethical position to them. I am not trying to argue that to another audience *Aperitif* might be an experience of horror, though the trauma the characters live and relive may well qualify it as such for them. However *Aperitif* can be understood through the horror genre if we are open this genre up and play with its world of affects, desires, difference, and ecstasy in the manner Cixous and others.

Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" is a call for women to write, and to write in a way other than the dominant patriarchal mode. It is a proposal of tactics for producing art which is not dissimilar from those O'Sullivan sees in the encounter with art, which "operates as a fissure in representation" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 128). Language itself becomes the site of such struggles, the risk of reducing a work of art via the methods of accounting for. The risk Cixous sees when warning of "the signifier that would take you back the authority of the signified" (Cixous, 1976, p. 892) speaks as much to this risk, as to the greater one of producing art which will not be immediately subsumed into a dialectic with dominant power.

In *Aperitif*, one way in which this site of struggles is navigated, is through

a text device that points to absence. Ellipses occur frequently throughout the character's text boxes, whether as speech, interior monologue, or something which does not specify[12]. The function of these ellipses is two fold, they indicate our character's divergence from the authority of words for whatever reason, and they become points where we as audience are pulled further into proximity as we speculate on dialogue paths. Finally, characters unable to articulate through words brings the affective encounter to the surface. Both for those characters and for us the moment becomes about experience as continual, rather than resolution. This moment is both what *Chalcedony* fears as to "never perfectly live or die", but also falls into O'Sullivan's definition of art as "less involved in making sense of the world and more involved in exploring the possibilities of being, or becoming, in the world" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 130).

The many ellipses point at the characters experiencing something beyond the signified. When this occurs during monologue the implication is that the character has fallen further into thought. They have gone from the level of thought which is the interior monologue, to a point where that voice is not simply silent but is speaking to itself, on a deeper level of communication which even us, with our access to their minds, cannot perceive. When the ellipses occur during dialogue, it is tempting to suggest that they represent the breakdown of communication. However, I am reluctant to cast all instances

into this explanation. There are moments where the trailing off of dialogue is followed by an internal monologue which highlights the difficulty of speaking what the speaker would wish to articulate. However the frequency of which these collapses of speech, primarily between individuals who are shown to have a closeness emotionally with their partner in dialogue gives me cause to find another reading. This reading is that the articulated silence/ non-speech of the ellipses points to a mode of communication between the characters which is not one of speech language.

The simple sprites, limited range of static portraits which are shown during dialogue, and quite literally low-definition art style of *Aperitif* means that much non-verbal communication and body language is absent. The "performance" of the characters is strictly limited, and the gaps in these performances, like the gaps in the low frame rate animation, are voids which we the audience must fill. Sometimes the gaps signified by the ellipses read to me not as awkward silence, or even comfortable silence, but as the conversation shifting into another space, one which I can speculate on not once but repeatedly. A multiplicity of complex, potential interpersonal emotions.

Outside of the game's "diegetic frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23), the ellipses function directly as a communication from artist to us as player-

audience, and what is communicated is repeated moments which point to the inadequacy of (in the case of this game which displays dialogue as text rather than audio) written words. The artists choose to speak to us the audience through non-speech, through demarcated absence[13.]

The impossibility, or inadequacy of language here introduced, marks the transition in this research to one of its central concerns, to encounter the unspeakable, to be overwhelmed, but also to deal with on their own terms, things external to language. Philosopher Gilles Deleuze, in "The Logic of Sense" (Deleuze, 2011) draws from psychoanalysts Melanie Klien[14] and Susan Isaacs on the Kleinian concept of "phantasy". To ground this concept I will quote the following section from Isaac's 1952 paper "The Nature and Function of Phantasy" (Isaacs, 1991) which begins with a quote from Sigmund Freud;

> "'We suppose that it [the id] is somewhere in direct contact with somatic processes, and takes over from them instinctual needs and gives them mental expression.' [Freud, S 1933a: 98; SE 22:73]

> I believe that this 'mental expression' is unconscious phantasy. Phantasy is the mental corollary, the psychic representative of instinct. And there is no impulse, no instinctual urge, which is not experienced as (unconscious) phantasy". (Isaacs, 1991, p. 208).

CSGO Dog [CARE, DIAGRAM]

Both Issacs's paper, and the Kleinian concept of "phantasy" are the subject of a great deal of study and debate within the field of psychoanalysis, and well beyond the remit of this thesis to give adequate attention to (Ormrod, 2014). Information on the concept is here drawn primarily from James Ormrod's "Fantasy and Social Movements" (Ormrod, 2014).

Deleuze states that "[Phantasms] have only an indirect and tardive relation to language and that when they are verbalized afterward, the verbalization occurs with ready-made grammatical forms" (Deleuze, 2011, p. 246). Philosopher James Williams defines the Deleuzian "phantasm" as originating from both the Kleinian "phantasy" and Plato's "phantasm" which can be understood as "a mental image or belief derived from the senses" (J. Williams, 2008, p. 187). Williams expands the definition as follows;

> "The phantasm is not a conscious or unconscious picture that we can give rise to or that happens to us; it is a process resulting from passive situations and active ones. It is therefore not 'in the mind' but rather party to thinking processes" (J. Williams, 2008, p. 188).

The Deleuzian *Phantasm* as process adjacent to thought has resonances with O'Sullivan's suggestion that;

> "Art [...] might be understood as the name for a function: A magical aesthetic function of transformation. Art is less involved in making sense of the world and more involved in exploring the possibilities of being and becoming in the world" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 130).

O'Sullivan is here perhaps more concerned with the approach to art as a whole, as a site of value and consideration. However, I propose that the same can be said for an encounter with art, including the encounters which split and merge over the process of making art, or of remaking another's art as a fan or thief. In both senses, art has the precondition of producing an outcome, or even acknowledging an end, removed. The function, or *Phantasm* which is "party to thinking" (J. Williams, 2008, p. 188) does not need to resolve, including into language[15][16].

What is important for the purpose at hand of examining and proposing artworks in which language is demonstrated as being inadequate, or suspect, or in which absence is used, is that *Phantasms* are also in excess of language. Like the artwork when it is described, the *Phantasm* must

be verbalised with "ready-made grammatical forms" (Deleuze, 2011, p. 246). Therefore something will be lost, or added, or reconfigured, by the transformative process of verbalisation. There is always excess, some things which do not survive the shift to another mode[17].

At this point, we will now move to examining various states which are beyond language and articulation. This includes states of overwhelming sensation which occur both within *Aperitif*, and across wider art and theoretical practices, though *Aperitif* remains the sole artwork under examination in this document. The reasoning for this is that while I believe that cross subject analysis is very useful for the identification of structures, the aim here of finding processes which can be joined together in assemblage is better served by using an artwork as a pivot to bring processes into proximity with one another[18] [19].

The issue of what is lost or embellished in the translation of experience to existing language structures connects to related tensions between excess and lack as relates to theories of desire. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan "equates Desire with libido, but locates the source as a lack in the Other- a lack which seeks to overcome itself- rather than in biological or sexual drive" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1982, p. 8). The Lacanian structure of *Desire,* interconnected to gender, language, and subjectivity via "phallogocentrism-

the fantasy of a central, idealized subject and the phallus[20] as signifier of power and authority"[21] (Juncker, 1988, p. 425) is part of the psychoanalytic theory which Cixous is responding to. When she offers the question and answer "What's a desire originating from a lack? A pretty meager desire" (Cixous, 1976, p. 891) Cixous is replacing the economy of desire based on lack, with one of excess[22].

To consider further the concept of excess I will refer to the theorists whose work across art and politics repeatedly returned to this position, George Bataille.

PRIVATE SHOW [CARE, RPG]

You wake up in a theatre audience. You are wearing a formal boiler suit. On stage a great and renowned political archaeologist is majestically waving a burned human bone as Britney Spears's "Private Show" booms flatulently from speakers under wooden panelling angled around the room which is shaped like the inside of a low polygon golf ball.

\#

"...and this is the very bone Vanessa Redgrave used!"

\#

The political archaeologist almost screams this statement, and from the joy on her face you can tell there has been a lot of rigorous dialectical groundwork established in the time you have been asleep. (Perhaps your whole life).

\#

"... ok class, that's it for this module. Enjoy your lunch, cobalt mining duty for international students starts in 30 seconds so better get a scoot on if you don't want punishment hahaha also don't forget to sign up for hockey!"

\#

Some lumpy and terrified looking children are already running towards the exit, fumbling ID crystals from inside long army-style school issue kit bags and inserting

There is no reason for you to live; Part Two: Excess

"Small salvage is $5.

Hear that sis, you're $5.

Nooooo" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

Excess is a concept which arises in many areas of George Bataille's work that spans art, literature, politics, economics, anthropology and mysticism. The concept, or rather an aspect of it, is particularly near the surface and therefore easy for us to grasp here, in Bataille's essay "The Notion of Expenditure" (Bataille, 1985). Bataille begins by stating that while "there is nothing that permits us to define what is useful to man" (Bataille, 1985, p. 116), what he refers to as "classical utility" can be understood as follows;

"On the one hand, this material utility is limited to acquisition (in practice, to production) and to the conservation of goods; on the other, it is limited to reproduction and to the conservation of human life" (Bataille, 1985, p. 116).

In contrast to utility Bataille positions "pleasure", which he argues society judges to be lesser than utility and is therefore permissible as a "concession" (Bataille, 1985, p. 117). However Bataille proposes that just as a young

them into attendance monitoring panels which release 8 foot high rotating gates to allow students to exit one at a time.

#

Just as one "international student" starts to cry waiting in line you get up and join the second line leaving through a translucent purple perspex revolving door marked "home students" and just hope this is correct. Behind you the wailing increases in the lecture hall just as the door spits you into an open square of fountains and manicured trees and chrome bladed towers. A projection flickers at the corner of your vision, "Balamb Gardens Map. You are here. Remember the rules" and you follow the directions to the cafeteria.

#

You eat lunch. Its pickled radishes. Yum. The disposable table cloth is covered in writing. It says "Balamb Gardens Rules" at the top. You drop a vinegary mooli slice onto the paper and it frames rule 5, "no sexual promiscuity". Uh-oh. Two days later you're expelled.

man's desire to waste and destroy demonstrates that there is a need for this kind of pleasure even while this cannot be given a "utilitarian justification", "human society can have, just as he does, an interest in considerable losses, in catastrophes" (Bataille, 1985, p. 117). Bataille sets this up as the tension between the ideological authority and the real needs for "nonproductive expenditure" which are at times not even articulable through the language of that authority. As examples of unproductive expenditure Bataille offers the following list;

> "Luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity (i.e., deflected from genital finality)" (Bataille, 1985, p. 118).

A handful of these examples are examined further, but Bataille argues that in each "the accent is placed on a loss that must be as great as possible in order for the activity to take on its true meaning" (Bataille, 1985, p. 118). Just as Lyotard identified affect as the point of excess (Lyotard, 1991, p. 93) which marks art apart from other things, and Cixous defines her figure of *Woman* in terms of "the desire-that-gives" (Cixous, 1976, p. 893), Bataille has identified "the principle of loss" (Bataille, 1985, p. 118) as essential to a range of activities including but spreading beyond art and literature. The excess in Lyotard as deployed by O'Sullivan is that which is beyond the

system of accounting for art, namely affect (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 126). In Cixous the excess is the capacity of the artist-figure woman when enacting *Écriture Féminine*, to operate beyond the system prescribed by power to the production of art. As theorist Allan Stoekl notes in his introduction to the edited volume "George Bataille Visions of Excess Selected Writings, 1927 - 1939", for Bataille "People create in order to expand, and if they retain things they have produced, it is only to allow themselves to continue living, and thus destroying" (Stoekl, 1985, p. xvii). Bataille's nonproductive expenditure is what is being freed in Cixous's process of *Écriture Féminine*, and I would therefore further argue, is being deployed in *Aperitif*, an artwork that deals with excesses both offered and implied (and therefore to be created at the point of interface with audience). More than this though, Bataillian excesses appear within the world of the game that the characters, and by extension us as players occupy. I would like to explore how different kinds of excess appear in *Aperitif*, and how these fit with Bataille's observations around class struggle and manner in which those in power retain control of non-productive expenditure, including the expenditure of other beings. Finally I will consider these points of excess as areas which clarify *Aperitif* as abstracted horror and *Écriture Féminine*.

A point where waste is rendered visible in *Aperitif*, in "The Laugh of The Medusa", and in the work of Bataille, in the act of masturbatation[23]. The

character *Ever*, from whose perspective we begin *Aperitif* is the sole player character in the episode of the "No World Dreamers: Sticky Zeitgeist" which precedes it, "Hyperslime" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). *Ever's* story in *Hyperslime* begins with a scene of anal drug use and masturbation[24] which is interrupted by the call to attend work. In the following episode, *Aperitif*, we learn that this work is in fact community service after *Ever* "whacked off in public" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). This detail of *Ever's* life is exposed by *Brava* but in *Ever's* interior monologue we learn that she herself does not fully understand why it occurred. *Ever* can only speculate on the reason for her doing something she identifies as harmful, and that the experience was like "watching through a window" after which she "blacked out" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). As an aspect of *Ever's* character masturbation points to her isolation and desire, and to her struggle with the unbearable tension of shame which she alludes to when considering that "maybe I just wanted what they thought about me to come true" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). This enfolding of personal desire, the projection of being seen by another, the need to resolve an uncertainty, and the potential shame which runs through it is precisely how Cixous describes the struggle to produce *Écriture Féminine*;

> "[Y]ouv'e written a little, but in secret and it wasn't good because
> you punished yourself for writing because it didn't go all the way;
> or because you wrote irresistibly, as when we would masturbate

in secret, not to go further but to attenuate the tension a bit, just
to take the edge off" (Cixous, 1976, p. 877).

Ever, who the artists attribute the title/archetype/role "The Loser", seems

perpetually to be trying to manage the tension of her desires, with the only

temporary resolution occurring in some kind of overwhelming loss of self.

The struggle for a creative process which Cixous describes is not something

I can identify in *Aperitif* because it is very much embedded in Porpentine

and Rook's production of the artwork, which is outside the focus of this

document. However, I would argue that *Aperitif* is open to being played in

a manner which is analogous to, if not in a similar affective register to, the

tension and collapse cycles of *Ever*. We begin both *Aperitif* and its prequel

controlling *Ever*, but prior to the narrative beginning and still within the

context of the title menu the game instructs us that we can "hold escape

until you black out" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). On one hand this is an

instruction within the "endogenous frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23) informing

player-audience of the key-press which will allow them to exit the game.

On the other hand, the use of the term "black out" echo's *Ever's* use of the

same, embedding it within "diegetic frame", and with a different meaning

which extends to the "exogenous frame", i.e. to stop playing (Montola, 2008,

p. 23). When playing the game-artwork, I feel that the means of exiting has

been embedded with an emotional resonance. Playing the game-artwork now has a resonance with *Ever's* narrative, even outside of the points of play where I am controlling her character. The emotional content of the game is foregrounded, and the promise of the opportunity to in a manner, "lose consciousness" as an escape from it invites/dares the audience-player to engage more with that content. We have permission to be a loser, to fail[25].

The concept of failure here is made complex when it is brought into the parameters of the game itself. It becomes an action. *Ever* berates herself for failure, but the artwork-game does not pass this judgement, and in aligning us with her and with failure, it invites us to not pass judgement either. Returning to Cixous, the other resonance of the allegory of masturbation to *Écriture Féminine* is that the writer is given permission to write for themselves and for the act of writing to be self gratifying rather than requiring the judgement of another. In "The "Onanism of Poetry": Walt Whitman, Rob Halpern and The Deconstruction of Masturbation" the poet and lecturer Sam Ladkin notes the contradiction in the considered works "between masturbation as the failure of fecundity, spent energy without the returns of an investment" and something which has value in sowing "male seed across the typically female gendered earth" (Ladkin, 2015, p. 132). In Ladkin's work, the discourse around Onan, the poets being discussed, and the particular queer theory
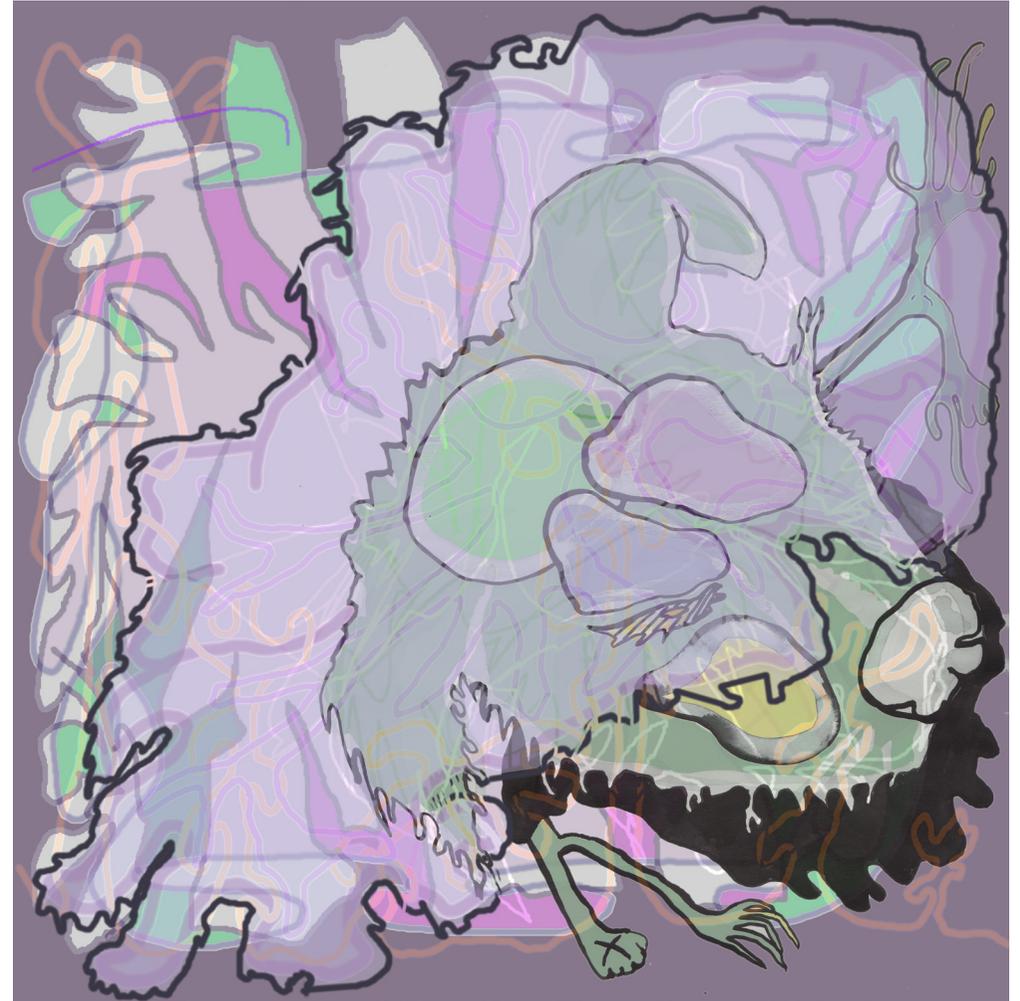
Diagram Dog Flat Purple [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

used tends toward the image and language of male homosexual desire but the author emphasises that beneath this the structure of "failed or suspended address" is not specific to a particular "gendered identification of desire" (Ladkin, 2015, p. 131). In Cixous this contradiction between value and waste is articulated as the fight to develop one's own value system. To engage based upon the subject's desire, rather than exchange within an external economy which ascribes or denies a degree of value based on adherence to pre-existing parameters. Ladkin explores the potential to "recuperate the wasteful excess of masturbation via the general economy of Bataille" yet in the author's focus on the ejaculatory "economy of finitude" and the monetary economy of pornography, this avenue is effectively discounted and not further pursued (Ladkin, 2015, p. 144). However I think there is a different dialectic at play in the systems of Bataille, and one that is also played out in the world of *Aperitif* as the struggle between the individual release of excess of the player characters, and the destructive forms of excess employed by power and authority, which render both landscape and those same player characters, as waste.

Bataille lays out his position in some notes which eventually develop into the larger work, "The Accused Share" (Bataille, 1988). "Man is an effect of the surplus of energy: The extreme richness of his elevated activities must

be principally defined as the dazzling liberation of an excess. The energy liberated in man flourishes and makes useless splendor[26] endlessly visible" (Bataille, 2013, p. 36). In *Aperitif*, this dazzling liberation of an excess is attempted by characters such as *Brava*, but it is always curtailed by the tyranny of an outer authority, the call to attend community service, the police. The motif of masturbation in *Aperitif* points to repeated denial of excess in the following of individual desire. As previously noted, character's remain in a limbo of struggling survival, to "never perfectly live or die" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). In this state the following of individual desire into the expression of excess is denied to everyone except those who can afford it, as *Brava* recalls;

> "When the internet 3 was invented the economy was really extra fucked, most stores were automated. Except the usual dollhouse experiments ran by rich people who fantasized about running a restaurant or cupcake shack or some shit" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

Bataille argues that "As the class that possesses the wealth -- having received with wealth the obligation of functional expenditure -- the modern bourgeoisie is characterized by the refusal in principle of that obligation" (Bataille, 1985, p. 124). Bataille maps how earlier structures of social and material power would have led to the possessors of such power and wealth

to express this through expenditure such as feasts, sacrifices and the construction of elaborate religious and cultural objects. In contrast to this, the logic of accumulation under Capitalism leads to a "hatred of expenditure" (Bataille, 1985, p. 124). In *Aperitif* this is demonstrated in the quote above from *Brava* showing that even with full automation, the bourgeois can only either imagine, or allow itself, a useless expenditure which takes the surface form of work by running a "cupcake shack" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

There is a second manner in which excess plays out through the agency of the authority in *Aperitif* and this is concerned with the rendering of subjects as objects, and then waste. Theorist Sylvère Lotringer attempted to re-examine the concept of 'Abjection' in the work of Bataille, identifying a different trajectory from that subsequently developed by Kristeva in "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection" (Kristeva, 1984). Lotringer's short essay "Les Miserables"[27] (Lotringer, 1999) positions Bataille's fragmentary addresses of *Abjection* written in the early 1930s as specifically in response to the "only truly original political formation to have emerged since the end of WWI [...] fascism" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 3). Lotringer notes that in "The Notion of Expenditure" Bataille deplores the manner in which the bourgeoisie attenuate the damage done and "ameliorate the lot of the workers" (Bataille, 1985, p. 126) as "abysmal hypocrisy" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 5);

> "The ultimate goal; of industrial masters, he asserted, wasn't profit or accumulation, but the will to turn workers into pure refuse. Instead of extracting surplus value from the wretched population working in [the] factory, they enjoyed a surplus value of cruelty" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 5).

The world of *Aperitif* presents a world in which authority has still not passed through its hypocrisy, but nevertheless continues to render the workers as waste. The company that employers *Ever* and the others to scavenge is represented by a character called "The Therapist", which at least suggests a role of care, yet the job remains one of collecting scrap from a toxic environment which degrades and destroys their bodies (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Lotringer published his essay *Les Miserables* in the edited book "More & Less 2" along with Bataille's essay "Abjection and Miserable Forms" and an interview with Kristeva titled "Fetishizing the Abject" (Bataille, 1999; Kristeva, 1999; Lotringer, 1999). Both Lotringer's essay, and the line of questioning in the interview are in part concerned with a bifurcation within Bataille's concept of *Abjection*, which has not been given as much attention in its re-articulation and development by Kristeva in "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection" (Kristeva, 1984) and that work's continued influence. Lotringer draws from Bataille a distinction between "The union of miserables reserved for subversion" and "wretched men rejected into

negative abjection" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 6).

The difference is between the positive *Abjection* which leads to action, solidarity, and perhaps martyrdom, and the negative *Abjection* which leads simply to inertial, apathy, and alienation. The tension between these two forms of *Abjection* is something which appears throughout *Aperitif*, as its protagonists navigate a world of trash, see themselves to degrees become or be made trash, and navigate the threshold between agency and alienation.

In his summary, Lotringer makes the following statement about *Abjection* without differentiating between the positive or negative form;

> "Abjection doesn't result from a dialectical operation—feeling abject when "abjectified" in someone else's eyes, or reclaiming abjection as an identity feature—but precisely when dialectics breaks down. When it ceases to be experienced as an act of exclusion to become an autonomous condition, it is then, and only then, that abjection sets in" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 7).

It is unclear in this text whether Lotringer is arguing that what he elsewhere describes as people "becoming things to themselves" (Lotringer, 1999) defines *Abjection* in both positive and negative forms, or whether he is arguing for the primacy of the negative form. It is possible to read this as Lotringer trying to shift the definition of *Abject* to the negative, and the interview with Kristeva that will be addressed shortly in some ways

supports this view.

Returning to Goard's text on the trans* body and the cyborg it is worth noting the importance of the process by which each are rendered *Abject* is addressed, though with different terminology;

> "The dream of a world without surplus, illegitimate bodies is not feasible without a society that relies on surplus" (Goard, 2017, p. 62).

Goard makes steps toward a politics whereby "bodies-made-surplus" (or trans* people and others) are not redefined, rearticulated and included, but simply allowed to exist (Goard, 2017, p. 62). The politics not of "defining but defending" (Goard, 2017, p. 63). Goard's position seems to cut across Lotringer, proposing the act of oneself making and being made a thing as still containing revolutionary agency. In Lotringer's reading of Bataille's *Abjection*, at least in its negative form, it is a place without hope of agency, a kind of living death. However Goard does seem to offer a position which is neither that living death, nor the simple dialectical struggle of being labelled abject and owning this label. Goard's proposal becomes about a surplus yes, but an undefinable surplus that crosses categories of gender, class, race, ability, and attempts to tactically use such categories whilst aiming to

KEEPER'S DIARY [CARE, LACUNA]

May 9, 1998

This morning I fed the dogs, I gave some extra to Sherry and Ben because they have looked a bit low the last few days. Ben didn't want to come out of his crate this morning to walk and I had to pretty much get in with him to give him a hug and a scratch on his back before he was happy to come out. Sherry just looked a bit awkward, tilting her head like there's something in her ear but I checked and it was fine. I'll look in the storage and see if we have anything to rinse it, if not I'll ask one of the doctors for some borax. They want these dogs here, they need to be able to look after them and Dobermans have a tendency to react badly to mites. The bosses aren't going to be happy if they bring someone round on a tour and their beautiful dogs are all mangy and itchy.

\#

At night, we played poker with Alias and Steve the researchers, and Scott the guard. Steve looked a mess, so full of himself. He basically does the same job as me but he looks after creatures you can't see without a microscope and he thinks this is going to be where he makes his career.

\#

Steve was very lucky, and I think he was cheating. What a scumbag.

ultimately destroy them. Goard articulates this party with the statement that "we should be deeply sceptical of placing value on the acquisition of formal rights when they are used in the legitimation of a violent border regime" (Goard, 2017, p. 72). At the same time, Goard refuses the dialectic of power vs resistance by pointing out that the tactic entering into established modes of identity such as the gender binary are important at times for safety and so should not exclude a person from solidarity toward a common project of gender abolition for example[28] (Goard, 2017, pp. 71–74) .

As has been indicated throughout this chapter, *Aperitif* frequently plays with it establishing categories, names, structures, or identities, and having things which are surplus to these, which disrupt with either a counter-order, or the refusal of any order. Characters in some places self-define their identity on an axis of the gender binary, whereas the game-artwork leaves other identity markers not only unknown but unacknowledged. The game-artwork frames and withholds information through its limited graphics showing animal ears, and text which trails off to convey emotion through lack of definition. An implication through explicit and implied information is that all characters in *Aperitif* are "girls". However this category is broken open so wide as to be more in line with Cixous use of *Woman* as category abstracted from sex, gender, or identity. "Girl" can be a category if it is deployed in that way, or it

#

May   10th   1998

#

I'm still worried about Sherry, one of the million technicians we seem to have here came by and took her blood. I asked if they were about to test for what's giving her the tilt to her head. I'm worried it's something with her back or neck, but it could be the diet as all the food they get is unlabelled. I used to think they had the Dobes for the Nazi chic, but they might be breeding big Warlock Dobes or something. The dogs get no training beyond the stuff I do just to keep them and myself occupied which is more like playing. Today I hid their toys around the yard and sent them looking for them. I went with them too, walking like them on toes and fingers.

#

Today, a high ranking researcher asked me to take care of a new "monster". "It looks like a gorilla without any skin" she said when she opened the hatch over the window. They told me to feed them live food. There's two, they seem happy together, I've named them "Eriasu" and "Raymond". They seem really smart like the dogs, responding when you smile or gesture at them. When I threw in a pig, they were playing with it... tearing off the pig's legs and pulling out the guts before they actually ate it. They're very neat though, eating what they want and then leaving what's left in a perfect pile. They don't seem overly protective either and didn't

can something less stable.

Something about the four protagonists in *Aperitif* that remains consistent, and is presented unambiguously, is that the society they inhabit does not value their existence. Throughout the narrative, each protagonist struggles with whether or not they themselves value their own existence. Society is ordered in a way that each of the four girls needs to undertake a job which is extremely damaging to their physical and mental health. A common thread throughout their conversations and many interior monologues is the consideration of whether they can, or should, survive this. In the interview with Lotringer titled "Fetishizing The Abject", Kristeva describes her development of the concept of abjection through researching "borderline" clinical states in psychoanalysis;

> "Without going as far as psychotic persecution, without going as far as autistic withdrawal, [the patent] creates a sort of territory between the two, which he often inhabits with a feeling of unworthiness, of even deterioration, a sort of physical abjection if you like" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 18).

It would be out of the remit of this research to follow further into these pathologies. However; the oscillation of internal states, struggle, exploded categories, the question of self worth and being made *thing* invites another

seem bothered when I came in to pick up a couple of bones. Marv really enjoyed the bones, wagging his tail and carrying them around the yard to different spots to chew on them. Ben is also a lot more confident today, I'm sure it's because I've been sleeping in the yard with them.

\#

May   11th   1998

\#

Around 5 o'clock this morning, Scott came in and woke me up suddenly. He was wearing a protective suit that looks like a space suit. He told me to put one on as well. I heard there was an accident in the basement lab. It's no wonder, those researchers never rest, even at night. It's probably something Steve has done, he looks a mess whenever I see him smoking in the yard. I'd ask him but I don't care enough to deal with him hitting on me.

\#

May   12th   1998

\#

I've been wearing this annoying space suit since yesterday, my skin grows musty and feels very itchy and I can't keep up with the dogs when we go out to the woods. Scott was staring at me again, by way of revenge I threw some pig guts at him and he ran. There's no delivery this week so I didn't feed those dogs enough today and

text to placed alongside *Aperitif* and *Abjection.* "Sick Woman Theory" by writer and artist Johanna Hedva (Hedva, 2016) is an examination of the politics which intersect in the bodies of disabled people, and offers a figure of protest in the form of the *Sick Woman*. As Hedva states, "Sick Woman Theory is an insistence that most modes of political protest are internalized, lived, embodied, suffering, and no doubt invisible" (Hedva, 2016). Applying *Sick Woman Theory* to hypothetical borderline case described by Kristeva repositions them as a political agent;

> "The Sick Woman is all of the "dysfunctional," "dangerous" and "in danger," "badly behaved," "crazy," "incurable," "traumatized," "disordered," "diseased," "chronic," "uninsurable," "wretched," "undesirable" and altogether "dysfunctional" bodies belonging to women, people of color, poor, ill, neuro-atypical, differently abled, queer, trans, and genderfluid people, who have been historically pathologized, hospitalized, institutionalized, brutalized, rendered "unmanageable," and therefore made culturally illegitimate and politically invisible" (Hedva, 2016).

As the quotation marks around medical terms indicate, Hedva's *Sick Woman Theory* is a kind of tactical categorization in order to refute a larger number of categories. *Sick Woman Theory* reads *Abjection* not from the position of analyst, but "the person with autism whom the world is trying to "cure"" as well as a multitude of other positions whose commonality is that they are disenfranchised, suffering, and abused

I'm hungry too. We found a deer when we went out this evening, now I feel better.

#

May   13th   1998

#

I went to the medical room because my back is all swollen and feels itchy. They put a big bandage on my back and the doctor told me I did not need to wear the space suit any more. I guess I can sleep well tonight. I went and sat with Raymond today as he looked a bit down. He doesn't want to play like the dogs, exploring and chasing, he seems more like he wants to learn how things work. I went and got some stuff I had about, some sand and some plants and some nuts and bolts and Ray got really excited. He was totally absorbed and didn't even notice when I said goodnight. It's been getting colder outside and we've been getting fog so I've pulled all the crates together and hung a tarp over the top so we can all sleep together outside. I'm so happy with this job.

#

May   14th   1998

#

When I woke up this morning, I found another blister on the heel of my foot. It was annoying and I ended up dragging my foot as I went to the dog's other pen to get Sherry's ball that I left there yesterday. On the way back put my fingers down and

(Hedva, 2016). From the former position, categories become the norm, and things which transgress them a deviation or disruption. From the latter position of the multitude, the transgression across categories is the norm. It is possible to read the category of "girl" in *Aperitif* as *Sick Woman*, just as both, like Cixous's *Woman,* serve to encapsulate a sea of difference with an act of refusal against categories.

As mentioned previously in this document, a focus of Lotringer's interview with Kristeva is questioning whether *Abjection* can form an oppositional function to power. Lotringer is particularly concerned with what he sees a broad tendency or movement within art and culture which attempts to reclaim the process of being made *Abject* and instil it with emancipatory potential. When asked at one point on this Kristeva responds "I feel very ambiguous in relation to this movement [...] I don't adhere to it, and at the same time I realize that, as a kind of strategy, it is opposed to some kind of intolerable conservatism, so it's hard to adhere to that" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 28). Kristeva's concession is based in a dialectic of *Abjection* against what must be imagined as a kind of totalitarian homogeneous cultural sterility. *Sick Woman Theory*, is presented as "an identity and body" not against but in place of one of intolerable conservatism (Hedva, 2016). Hedva at a point identifies this conservatism as the privileged existence, or "cruelly optimistic

got up on my toes, this is a lot more comfortable anyway and I don't care anymore if people look. They don't anyway, I think Scott has told everyone I'm a psycho bitch or something. There were some researchers in the kitchen when I went to pick up meat at breakfast and again at lunch. They have been quiet since morning, which is very unusual. I found that some of them had escaped. I'll be in real trouble if the higher-ups find out so I took Ben, Sherry and Marv out and we found them in a barn at the edge of the estate. I brought some bits back for Raymond to work with. I don't know what he's building but it is definitely beautiful, Eriasu is helping too, they seem to sing to each other sometimes.

\#

May   15th   1998

\#

Even Alias is avoiding me, though I don't really care anymore, he doesn't have anything to say with his body about the present just stupid noises about what has already happened. I tried to be civil, offered him some of the researcher that was left over and he just said he didn't feel well.

\#

I decided to go see the two "monsters", when I got there they already had a visitor, who introduced themselves as "Nancy". I think Nancy used to be one of the guards, but you don't see any of those around anymore. It's funny seeing another woman

promise" (Hedva, 2016) of this existence, embodied by the;

> "[W]hite, straight, healthy, neurotypical, upper and middle-class, cis- and able-bodied man29 who makes his home in a wealthy country, has never not had health insurance, and whose importance to society is everywhere recognized and made explicit by that society; whose importance and care dominates that society, at the expense of everyone else" (Hedva, 2016).

However, Kristeva seems to be describing an oppositional practice in line with what Lotringer describes as "reclaiming abjection as an identifying feature" (Lotringer, 1999, p. 7). This *Abjection* is oppositional, it uses the definition given to it by what it opposes, and defines itself through that opposition. *Sick Woman Theory* instead repositions itself as the exclusion of what it can be seen to be opposing. Hedva argues that capitalism sets up binary between a default position of "wellness" and deviation from this in the form of "sickness" (Hedva, 2016). To simply embody this deviant category of "sick" would be exactly the oppositional process of *Abjection* described by Lotringer and Kristeva. However, Hedva also argues that under capitalism "wellness" is positioned as a temporal norm, whilst "sickness" and therefore "care" is positioned as temporary (Hedva, 2016). Hedva's position can be seen as arguing that a broad encapsulation of vulnerabilities, oppressions, and suffering should be considered the norm. Crucially, care for oneself and for others, could and should follow as another norm. It can then be

who used to be something else. We reach out and touch noses. She smells good and I think about licking her ear. My first day here I was so sad and I didn't even know it. Off in the past, a long time, feels funny even thinking about it now, things that aren't now. I was wondering how to ask Nancy about whether they felt this but I was stopped by the sight of Scott sneaking past the window on the way out. Without even thinking about it Nancy and I were on top, my fingers in under his eyes and her teeth deep in his throat. It's all over and the only indication of there being anything other than now is the cooling of blood on my cheek and the pool spreading toward the drain. They say the company has ordered that no one leave the grounds but I can't remember how long ago that even was. Raymond starts to make something with the leftover pieces and a phone somewhere in all those useless clothes starts ringing. Who would Scott call? Everything is here. It's all happening now. What kind of joke is this?!

\#

May   16th   1998

\#

I heard Raymond and Eriasu singing to a researcher this morning. I couldn't remember what their name was or who they were when I tried to. Things like that escape me now. The singing seems to come from all over this side of the mansion. The yard is alive with song from all kinds of intonation. Marv and Sherry and Ben

proposed that *Sick Woman Theory*, is not a struggle with another, but a reconfiguration of the context underneath both which shifts perspective[30]. This reconfiguration is analogous to an operation I have elsewhere discussed as occurring within horror narratives, using the example of the film "Ringu" (Nakata, 1998).

In *Fetishizing The Abject* much of Lotringer's direction of the interview focuses on ways in which further discourses, including art, have in his view misincorporated *Abjection* following Kristeva's popularisation of the term. While a number of art tendencies and specific exhibitions are critiqued, it is the speculation on what *Abjection* could do in art that is most relevant here. Both Lotringer and Kristeva agree that when something is placed in a gallery, it "becomes a new identity" and thus "fetishized" it joins other "[i]institutional objects" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 30). Regarding potential to move beyond this, Kristeva proposes that "verbal art, insofar as it eludes fetishization, and constantly raises doubt and questioning [...] lends itself better perhaps to exploring those states that I call states of abjection" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 30). I am sceptical about the claim that any art form including *verbal art* might elude fetishization, but the operation of *constantly raising doubt and questioning* resonates with other observations in this document, as well as others in this PhD Output. Elsewhere I discussed a concept from my research which

are padding around singing with me, with all the other sounds, with the researcher whoever that was. A shot of something comes into my mind, a flash of feelings and smells and a soft touch that I want to last the whole night. My entire body feels full of a burning tension toward the location of the others in the pack, here and wherever they are. I can tell when one of them is anxious because inside my spine it feels cool and itchy and I'm drawn to be near them to reassure them. We now sleep all together through most of the day and leave the mansion at night. When we were out in the woods I found Raymond who was scratching marks into the bark of trees. The swelling of the trunk had lines already in it if you looked closely and I joined in using these long claws that now grow from the delicate padded feet on the end of what I might once have called my arms. I have no attachment to my old body, to walking upright, to not singing, to being alone.

I was a lump of rotten flesh; dropped off.

What the hell kind of existence was that? Dead and unmoving, can anything compare to what is happening to me?

#

     May   19,   1998

#

I wake up with a sensation like the flush from a fever, and quickly it is gone but my nerves feel itchy, I know the pack is moving and I'm already running with them.

I call *Incomplete Provocations*. Also, the use of unreliable narrators occurs in the majority of what might be called the fiction elements of this project. Something which is important to note regarding at least my use of unreliable narrators is that there is a rarely deliberate deception on the part of the narrator. Deception would necessitate that the narrator knows more than the audience who learns only from that the narrator reveals, at least initially. The application I am more interested in, is the unreliable narrator having by virtue of either being cognitively compromised or simply different, another perspective on events. The ideological position implied through this is that there is no one narrative which could encapsulate the entire event and therefore resolve it. There is always *doubt* and *questions*, each of which solicit speculation from the audience. In philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalysis Félix Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) the line that illustrates this non-deceptive unreliable narrator occurs at the start of the chapter "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible…"(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 232). While beginning an account of a film, the authors offer the disclaimer, "My memory of it is not necessarily accurate" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 233). The author's uncertainty in their memory would fall within my description of the *cognitively compromised* unreliable narrator, and before even getting to the recounted film, *doubts and questions* are ready to be raised. These

I'm hungry and running and driven by the desire to eat. I hear a voice calling out "be good doggy" and the voice sounds like food. Itchy, my nerves are prickling. Itchy, and chilled and I'm with the whole pack and we are surrounding some people that look like Scott and I briefly wonder where they came from before I'm on top of one teeth tight around his ugly face and pulling him so the pack can join so we are all the one that killed him. They all look like Scott and they are all just as tasty. We don't go back to the mansion that night. We leave marks as we keep moving, carved into trees and built from parts of things we come across and all of them are beautiful. Everything tastes better, the itch of the pack is all we need to be together, running and touching. Nothing is as important as desire.

\#

4   .

       I   t   c   h   y   .

Tasty.

\#

doubts and questions do not all have to be positioned in the gap between recollection and what was witnessed, though in this case we could look for differences between Deleuze and Guattari's account, and the film itself. The other *doubts and questions* that I am interested in, project not backwards in time to the witnessing, but forward. What is interesting to me is not what is lacking from the film in the recounting, but how the recounting is a process of addition which grows from the film even while it might leave out parts of that source material. In this way, the unreliable narrator offers a provocation not for a return to the stillness of certainty, but for the movement of more emerging possibilities.

Kristeva alludes to something similar in her proposal for future *Abject* art, which involves processes of "anamnesis on the one hand, and gaming on the other" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 33). In terms of *Amnesia* Kristeva expands this as "a sort of eternal return, repetition, perlaboration, elaboration" (Lotringer & Kristeva, 1999). Within *Aperitif* the process of *Amnesia* is enacted as the player returns to walking a path through the same environment with different characters, as well as through the game form which allows itself to be replayed[31].

Kristeva follows *Anamnesis* with *Gaming* which involves "compositions,

decompositions, recompositions" and is presented as a continuation of the same "trajectory" as *Anamnesis* (Kristeva, 1999, p. 33). Examples provided for *Gaming* involve the process of chance through rolling dice, and the "glossolalia in Artaud, or like Finnegan's Wake" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 33). This resonates with *Aperitif* on multiple levels. Within the "endogenous frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23) *Aperitif*, despite being fairly linear in form, *composes, decomposes,*and *recomposes* itself continually. From the position of the player-audience, this is perhaps most clear as the game shifts its genre and method of play at points. At points the player controls characters which walk around an environment and interact with one another in the manner of a role playing game. At other points the game switches to the form of a medical simulator where the player-audience must diagnose and repair a robotic character with a completely different mode of interaction from the role playing game sections. This medical simulation then decomposes further as the performing of a specific repair takes the form of side scrolling "shoot 'em up", a game within a game within a game. What would however be more in keeping with what Kristeva is describing would be evidence that at some level the making of this artwork included a shift to a less consciously direct mode. The reference to dice alongside glossolalia leads me to conclude that Kristeva's *Gaming* is about the movement between conscious decision making, and something else which destabilized it, before

potentially returning to conscious decision making[32]. This destabilisation could be through the cold probability of a dice roll, the path for the works creation decided by the resulting number[33]. The inclusion of *Finnegan's Wake* and Artaud's glossolalia suggests that the destabilisation does not have to be the surrender to chance. Destabilisation could include the shift to using or creating words based on their sound rather than meaning for example. Cultural theorist Michel de Certeau described glossolalia as "vocal vegetation" (De Certeau, 1996, p. 30) not an exceptional thing constrained to the devout and artists, but the "bodily noises, quotations of delinquent sounds, and fragments of others' voices [which] punctuate the order of sentences with breaks and surprise" (De Certeau, 1996, p. 29). The language in *Aperitif,* particularly where it comes to building its world through this language feels full of moments of shifts to a destabilised mode. *Swamp-Dot-Com* is populated with things like "bombo cabbage bludbud", "lichen mommy board" and "whackback"[34] (Heartscape & Rook, 2018) .

This play in language is subtle, but I believe it a shift away from the direct conveyance of meaning to sounds and the joy of what words written down can do[35].

Where the gap between Kristeva and Lotringer's *Abject Art*, Hedva's *Sick*

Woman Theory, and *Aperitif* widens is with the issue of the abject and

identity. Lotringer sees *Abjection's* relation to Fascism (which he stresses is

its origin in Bataille's text) "displaced" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 28) in its later use

by artists and writers. He broadens this further with the claim that "politics

has become the politics of the notion of identity" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 28).

This broad position is agreed by Kristeva who replies "everything has been

taken up by the "politically correct" which are in fact identity related claims"

(Kristeva, 1999, p. 28). It is this identity that Kristeva and Lotringer see in

what they consider the problematic *Oppositional Practice* already outlined. I

would like to argue though that their perceived problem with *Abject* identity

would not apply to the way identity figures in *Sick Woman Theory.* Hedva

sets out their position with clarity;

> "The sick woman is an identity and body that can belong to
> anyone denied the privileged existence, or the cruelly optimistic
> promise of such an existence- of the white, straight, healthy,
> neurotypical, upper and middle class, cis and able-bodied man"
> (Hedva, 2016).

Sick Woman Theory is not a politics of sexual identity, but a broad identity

which encapsulates sexual identity along with bodily, cognitive, and class

differences. This is not the sidestepping of class struggle and opposition to

Fascism Lotringer in particular is concerned with in his observations about

previous attempts at an *Abject* turn in art. Hedva creates an amorphous, fluid grouping, and brings to the centre difference and care under the banner of the *Sick Woman*. Returning to *The Laugh of The Medusa*, Hedva's project has strong resonances with Cixous's;

> "If there is a "property of woman," it is paradoxically her capacity to depreciate unselfishly: body without end, without appendage, without principal "parts." If she is a whole, it's a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble, a cosmos tirelessly traversed by Eros, an immense astral space not organised around any one sun that's any more of a star than the others" (Cixous, 1976, p. 889).

Cixous frames this "property of woman" within a text which is concerned with the practice of making art, but this practice is part of a process which includes woman putting herself "into the world and into history" (Cixous, 1976, p. 875). Writing is embedded in a politics of living[36]. For Cixous's *Woman* to write only in the dominant mode of *Man's Writing*, is to be restricted not only from *Writing Herself* (as Cixous would put it) but to enter into the world as a subject, as an agent. If we read Cixous's *Woman* not in terms of an essentialist category which might be attached to some biological marker, but as a class category, she readily aligns with Hedva's *Sick Woman*. Cixous's contemporaries Deleuze and Guattari describe the process of "becoming-woman" which can be considered like the former's *Woman* but rather than a

Balaclava [CARE, RPG]

(changing) class it is explicitly a process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 248). MacCormack gives a succinct explanation of *Becoming-Woman,* "Woman as minoritarian is defined by lack and failure so an element of woman - gesture, fluid libidinality - taken in or as part of the self will necessarily alter the self" (MacCormack, 2008, p. 92). In Hedva's text, the *Woman* is named for the "subject position [that] represents the uncared for, the secondary, [...] the non-, the un-, the less-than" (Hedva, 2016).

The call Cixous is making entails a process of *Becoming,* which MacCormack describes as selecting "certain specificities and intensities of a thing and [dissipating] those intensities within our own molecularities to redistribute our selves" (MacCormack, 2008, p. 92). Cixous calls us to redistribute into ourselves the intensity of fluid libidinality which she calls the "unflagging, intoxicating, unappeasable search for love" (Cixous, 1976, p. 893). This pull of desire and connectivity reads like an antithesis of artist Valerie Solanas's description of "the male" as an "unresponsive lump, incapable of giving or receiving pleasure or happiness[37]" (Solanas, 1971, p. 1).

The *Woman* in *Sick Woman Theory* is similarly a source of creative desire, which Hedva explains through a description of some of their own symptoms;

"Because of these "disorders," I have access to incredibly vivid

emotions, flights of thought, and dreamscapes, to the feeling that my mind has been obliterated into stars, to the sensation that I have become nothingness, as well as to intense ecstasies, raptures, sorrows, and nightmarish hallucinations" (Hedva, 2016).

These descriptions form part of Hedva's consideration of political agency of those, who for bodily, social, or other reasons cannot engage in the direct politics of public action. However the language, as with Solanas's, is as concerned with emotion, affect, aesthetics, and creativity. Solanas's *Male* is "incapable of empathizing" (Solanas, 1971, p. 1) while "Sick Woman Theory asks you to stretch your empathy" (Hedva, 2016). Solanas's manifesto is explicitly a response to the boredom society provocokes[38] as it is dominated by the "psychically passive" figure of the *Male* (Solanas, 1971, p. 1). Without exoticising and objectifying illness, mental or otherwise, the subject of *Sick Woman Theory* is undoubtedly a creative force.

I hope that I have demonstrated that the world, characters, and player-audience experience of *Aperitif* have a resonance with theories of *Abjection*, and creative difference connected to a broad category of *Woman*. However *Aperitif* is still on one level, a video game about a group of runaway broken robots, and hybrid animal kids trying to improvise through wasteland failures, emergent tactics of living through giving and receiving care.

Throughout *Aperitif,* many things are left undefined, or only implied. Dialogues are full of the pointed absence of speech in ellipses. Delivery of information gives way to *Gaming*. Character's themselves are unsure of what has happened, cannot remember, are too traumatised, or simply offer a conflicting view of events to one another. Finally the game itself, with its limited interface and graphics which hark back to games long before the turn of the millennium, makes clear that details are being withheld. With this in mind, the group of protagonists being self identified as, or implied to be "girls" rather than *Women*, can be understood through another *Becoming* proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, and explored further by MacCormack. Within the context of *Becoming-Woman* Deleuze and Guattari ask "What is a girl? What is a group of girls?[39]" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). They consider Marcel Proust's protagonist's search for "fugitive beings" in "In search of

lost time Vol 5: The Captive & The Fugitive" (Proust, 2010) and conclude that the Girl whether singular or in a pack, is "pure haecceity[40]" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 271).

MacCormack states that the *Girl* is the "larval woman"(MacCormack, 2008, p. 92), but "It is not the girl who becomes a woman; it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl [...] the girl is the becoming-woman of each sex, just as the child is the becoming-young of every age" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 277). For Deleuze and Guattari, *Girl* is the individuation of *Becoming-Woman*, not attached to any substance or function, or "age group, sex, order, or kingdom" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 277). *Girls* in *Aperitif* are undefined, only self identified in one instance and they move "between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they produce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 277). They speak in irony, silence, thoughts of sex and unspeakable past trauma and modify their bodies with drugs and used parts. They are elusive, arising moment to moment from encounters. MacCormack notes that the "less defined a term is within majoritarian culture the more larval the becoming and thus the move open to unique and unpredictable folding and unfolding the becoming" (MacCormack, 2008, p. 92). *Girls* are capable of *Abject* art practices in the manner argued by Lotringer

You are conscious, but cannot perceive any phenomena. It's impossible to track time in this context. As if you were in a sensory deprivation tank, but perfect. You feel nothing. Then you hear a sound from far away and then it is all around you, a dry electronic kick drum repeating fast. A heartbeat of a runner.

Then a high ringing noise like a bell, but again perfect and unwavering,

and Kristeva, slipping between dualisms, rather than in reactive opposition. As Deleuze and Guattari write, *Girls* "draw their strength neither from the molar status that subdues them nor from the organism and subjectivity they receive; they draw their strength from the becoming-molecular they cause to pass between sexes and ages" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 277). So it is no wonder that the *Girls* in *Aperitif* improvise in the wasteland of *Swamp-Dot-Com*. They are ungraspable in their identities, and forever on the way to something. They tell as much, even though for them the process might be traumatic, potentially dooming them to "never perfectly live or die" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

The final analysis of this artwork is concerned with *Breaking Down*. The phrasing here is carefully considered, because *Breaking Down* needs to be understood in terms of collapse, disassembly, failure, and most importantly, trauma. *Breaking Down* is both the process of system failing, and the scars which are brought about by this, and which fold into future points of *Breaking Down*. There is an obvious crossover here with the previously examined figure of *Waste.* However *Breaking Down* brings the focus to the process and experience of trauma that leads to the production of some kinds of *Waste* but also creates other things. *Aperitif* is a game-artwork about trauma, specifically the gendered trauma enacted upon women. Author and

translator Susan Sellers addresses the various relationships between death and writing in Cixous's work, in a journal article entitled "'Writing is learning to die': Hélène Cixous and the School of the Dead" (Sellers, 2002). Sellers explores the various texts where Cixous considers the premature death of her father, firstly in regards to how his death led her from "fantasy and denial to [the] inscription, recreation" of writing, but also how visiting his grave was an "unmeeting", which rendered her father as "strange other" (Sellers, 2002). Secondly, Sellers considers how trauma is embedded in Cixous's relationship with text, citing the latter's claim that "we need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply" (Cixous, 2005). Sellers shows how this embedding of trauma is present in Cixous's theory of writing, which involves the "death of the writer's self" in order to give birth to writing, and a new self (Sellers, 2002). In Cixous's own description, the trauma of proximity to death does not replace the self, but stretches them out into the unknown. "The dead man's death gives us the essential primitive experience, access to another world, which is not without warning or noise but which is without the loss of our birthplace" (Cixous, 2005, p. 10).

Through the narrative of *Aperitif* we learn of a powerful object called "the artefact" within the wasteland of *Swamp-Dot-Com* which the company
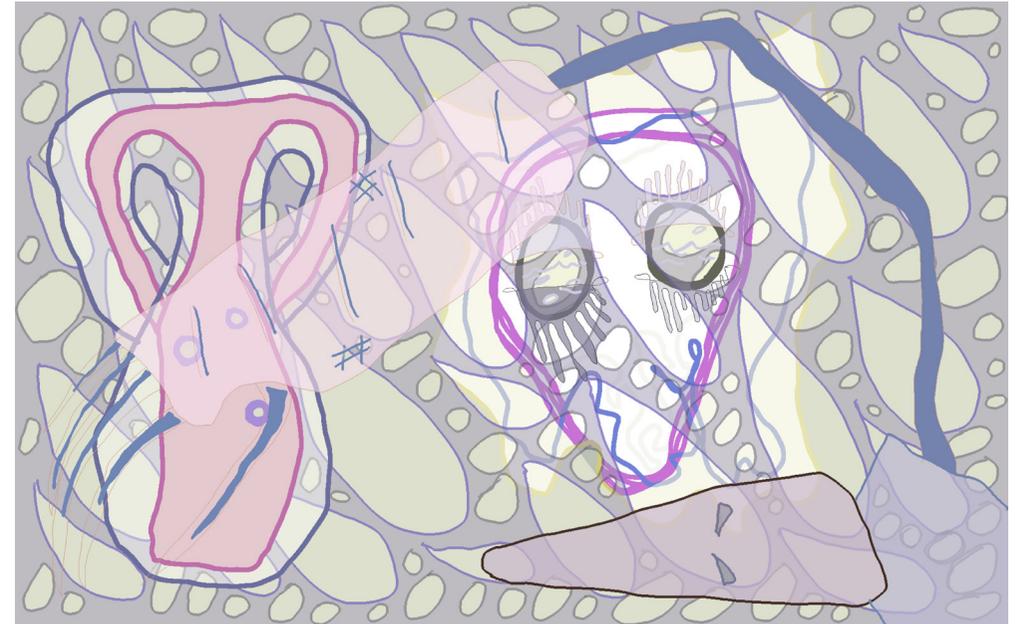
Vase [DIAGRAM]

that employs the protagonists is aware of, but which the protagonists only experience through the psychic effects the object provokes in those in its proximity (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). *The Artefact* is not shown directly, but we learn from *The Therapist* that it has been marked by whomever made it, to indicate that it is "flawed" and "a failure" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). What parts of *The Artefact* and its functions constitute this *flaw* is unknown to any characters and to us as player-audience. All we know is that it is in some way broken and discarded in the wasteland, but it is nevertheless incredibly powerful. This power consists of a projected "two fold radius" defence system (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). The outer radius "triggers negative memories" and the inner radius consists of a burst of "stupid destruction" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018). Within the game-artwork we experience these defensive measures by witnessing the player character's getting lost in traumatic memories, as well as visual and auditory noise which disrupts the image of the game-artwork[41].

Trauma, whether caused by *The Artefact's* defences, or replayed as memory triggered by the environment or conversation, the collapse of bodies, or simply as the experience of the day of work over which *Aperitif* occur, is a principle experience of the characters. Likewise, as we see from the defective *Artefact* and the failed-urbanism-become-toxic-environment of

Swamp-Dot-Com everything in *Aperitif* is scarred. This focus on "imperfect bodies" and the use of themes of "physical disabilities and deformity" aligns *Aperitif* with games designer and theorist Mary Flanagan's observation of thematic tendencies in cyberpunk narratives written by women (Flanagan, 2002, p. 433).

A second observation that Flanagan makes is that "women tend to explore manipulation of both male and female bodies, complicating notions of gender norms, heterosexual desire, race, and class" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 433). This also holds true to *Aperitif*, as previously demonstrated in its fracturing of trans* identity into cyborgs and hybrid humanoids which exist not as a contrasting "other" but complex heterogeneous milieu.

Where our player-characters are unified is in their class relation as workers who must sell their labour in dangerous conditions for subsistence pay. The class relation as exploitation is further emphasised as the player-characters are denied choice or agency in their work. All are either compelled to do this work as punishment for minor crimes, or in the case of the escapee "labor drones" because their very existence is illegal and few methods of earning money are therefore available (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

Because of its narrative framing *Aperitif* is, in addition to being an RPG, and Medical Sim, effectively a *Precarious Labour Sim*. Player-characters spend the entire duration of the game either working, or negotiating the debilitating/overwhelming effects of traumas. As the game reminds you, if at any point you wish to, you can always hold down the escape key until you black out. It embodies what theorist Mark Fisher articulated in the 2014 book "Ghosts of my Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures";

> "As Berardi has argued, the intensity and precariousness of late capitalist work culture leaves people in a state where they are simultaneously exhausted and overstimulated[42]" (Fisher, 2014, p. 20).

This definition of the precarious worker calls back to the *Negative Abjection* already discussed at length, and focused on the removal of agency. However this class relation can also be seen as one of the ways *Breaking Down* occurs in Aperitif as it is inflicted by the game on its player-characters.

Other occurrences of *Breaking Down* appear through the representation of the space in which *Aperitif* takes place where paths are cut through and across previous structures now in the process of decay. The space where player-characters can be moved by the player-audience is primarily represented by floating pathways over a black void. These paths present

fragments of previous roads and architecture, without following the routes of movement which those spaces imply. At one point the pathway the player-character can traverse zigzags across the screen, requiring player-character to take a meandering serpentine route to cross to the next scene. A direct route, in the form of road markings on the fragmented pathway is evidenced to have been available at some point in the past, though this road is now broken up with the black untraversable voids. Further examples of the world as *Breaking Down* are seen in the numerous signs which can be read in *Swamp-Dot-Com*. Many of the signs point to something that is not shown in the depiction of the space implying that the sign has survived a building which has collapsed. Similarly, many of the signs are covered in graffiti, where not only the original context for the sign has collapsed, but the context for the new handwritten message has also disappeared.

What the landscape of *Aperitif* shows us, as well as its player-character's engagement in salvaging refuse technology, is that along with trauma *Breaking Down* involves the creation of new things while those old things break[43].

I would argue that what I am referring to as *Breaking Down*, namely trauma and damage as a creative force for good or bad, is one of the main themes

throughout *Aperitif*. Within the "diegetic frame" of the player-character's lives and the world they inhabit this is explicit (Montola, 2008, p.23). A physically damaging environment is the site within which all action plays out, and trauma in the form of conflict with authority is the reason for all player-characters to be present in this space. The player-characters exist in a state of near permanent fatigue and anxiety, whilst a section of the game-artwork involves repairing a robot character's intestines, heart, and voice-box. The player-characters are employed to collect broken and redundant technology for reuse as salvage, and the environment in which they work is a former automatic shopping centre which is now grown over with dangerous plant-life. Finally, *The Artefact* around which the narrative orientates, is articulated by the game as an unknown entity in all regards save that it is itself damaged and provokes painful memories and "stupid destruction" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018).

As discussed previously with regard to gaps in information (conversations which trail off, contradict one another, or are simply silent) and information which points beyond the scope of the game-artwork (layers of history presented in fragments and ruins), *Breaking Down* occurs also at the level of player-audience interaction with the game-artwork, within the "endogenous frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23).

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE [CARE]

ARE MANY ROOMS SOMETHING SOMETHING

#

In my father's house are many room. Something Something.

A black placenta-like form runs through the floors. Over and over, many lines connected and splitting and reconnecting like an enlarged microbe. Like plague under microscope.

I said "me father's house" because I think I remember that line from somewhere. Like "my brother Paul is coming" in Dune. But it isn't true, it's not my father's house, its mine.

#

I shouldn't need to invoke paternal authority like that. It is diminishing of oneself.

#

Welcome to my home. Oiled woodwork gulps its way up and around you, soft knots of dead velvet hang ruggedly everywhere. The carpet is soaked. In places the floor has begun to give way and it leaves little pools.

#

The water table is a few inches above the boards.

#

However for the player-audience these games and provocations within the *Endogenous Frame* arguable overlap with the *Diegetic Frame's* player-characters into which they are invested and are experiencing the game through. In order to deal with the transgression of these structures which occurs in playing video-games, Flanagan proposes the concept of the "hyperbody", the simultaneous and multiple existence of controlling an avatar on screen, while also have a physical body of one's own (Flanagan, 2002);

> "I would argue that the computer world user experience a kind of double consciousness: the class, race, and gender identity of the user's physical body, as well as the virtual body (bodies) of the characters he or she "becomes"; when we "look" at a screen while we play a game and also "look" through a character's eyes and turn the head both are simultaneously "real" (Flanagan, 2002).

While the three frame structure proposed by Montola is doubtlessly useful for identifying the complexity of role play and the different levels it operates at, Flanagan makes clear that these are not compartmentalized, and that the experience of an artwork-game like *Aperitif* is smeared across them in a process of "double embodiment" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 438). The *Frame* experience of being in one's own body, navigating a game full of pockets of

---

"My brother Paul is coming" I mutter to myself as a I childishly kick through the sheet of liquid full of wood pulp, loose threads, and microbes. It stinks here. I think about the flooded basements below and the weakened supports between, the house now a boat held above the sea only by the rocks it collided with.

#

It looks fine from without, but…

#

A cliché I know, and the house is not the subconscious, as I said, this is not my father's house, it is mine.

#

I stop kicking and walk more carefully, watching for where the carpet bulges threateningly, mindful that my feet might pass through. I pick up a shattered curtain rod and use it ahead of me as I work my way down the hall, poking at the floor with suspicion. I use one hand while the other holds the tapestry I wear like a robe, keeping it closed at my chest. My clothes are drying on the roof, victim of an earlier fall when I slipped on rotten book of historical isometric exercises. Flex and balance. Bang I hit the soaked floor, my fall dislodging the glass eye from a stuffed rhino head, barely holding its form in a fireplace where it had been stuffed to block a torrent of rain. As shocked as me, the eyeball stared straight up. My back soaked, I was forced to disrobe and find something to wear, an Afghan war rug the

Breaking Down is simultaneously in operation alongside the life trauma of the player-character who one is controlling within the *Diegetic Frame*. For Flanagan, the a "hyperknowledge is created within [the] third space in the relationship between the virtual body and the physical" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 440). *Hyperknowledge* is more than the combination of player-audience and the character which they are effectively and empathetically engaged with. Flanagan makes clear that it is the process of moving an avatar through space which creates *Hyperknowledge*, it requires agency and the capacity to describe a different path through the virtual space each time[44]. Drawing on Lyotard, Flanagan argues for the control of the character on screen to be understood in terms of performativity[45];

> "Performance as "a rendition" through movement or experience seems appropriate because, first, it allows performance to be an "incident" at each viewing event, and, second, it changes from viewer to viewer, from time to time" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 441).

This approach is particularly relevant to *Aperitif* where even prior to accounting for restarting or replaying the game-artwork, the player-audience *Performs* a number of player-characters, each with conflicting knowledge of events. This is what Flanagan elsewhere describes as "a conflicting but somehow overall knowledge" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 437). Montola's framework allows

only viable option.

#

I catch sight of myself in the reflection of the floor, still now I had unthinkingly stopped as I recalled my fall. I look like the girl Alia from the film. "My brother Paul is coming".

#

us open up *Hyperknowledge* further, and see that there are two processes in operation in what Flanagan calls a *Rendition*, even if these processes are always overlapping. Within the *Diegetic Frame* the player-audience is performing the role of the character within the game. When I play *Aperitif* I am *Performing* one of the player-characters, I respond to questions from other characters based on what I want for the self I am performing. However, I am also operating within the *Endogenous Frame*, and am aware that those answers are not my own, but rather I am using the games interface to select from the dialogue options presented to me. The *Hyperknowledge* is made up of; the self that chose to download and play *Aperitif*, the self that is learning the rules and goals of playing it, and the self that is *Ever* deciding whether to tell *Brava* how much pain she is in. All of these selves are concurrent, and contain conflicting knowledge, but as Flanagan makes clear, even when multiplying these selves and their contradictions through replaying the game-artwork an overall (but never universal) knowledge is being produced. The player-audience of *Aperitif* makes multiple passes through the space, as multiple player-characters, through multiple replays, while both the *Diegetic* and *Endogenous Frames* are in the process of *Breaking Down* and producing new things. The multiple passes do not add up to a whole, they never become a single static universal account but remain agitated and generative at their points of contradiction.

The process of playing *Aperitif* and its production of *Hyperknowledge* has a strong resonance with Acker's practice of writing through appropriating existing texts, a prominent example of this being "Great Expectations" (Acker, 1999)[46]. In an interview, when asked about identity Acker responds that it "wasn't the I it was the text because its texts that create the identity, that's how I got interested in plagiarism" (Acker, 1991, p. 7). The plagiarised text becomes the virtual space through which Acker moves in the act of *Rendition*[47][48][49].

Where Acker describes this as the production of identity, Flanagan offers what amounts to the same observation;

> "[T]he array of views, the fluidity, and the movement within virtual worlds is one of the primary means by which [the gaming] subject is created" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 442).

Flanagan proposes not just an epistemology being produced through combined and multiple, contradictory, embodied knowledges, but the production of subject. Flanagan draws on media theorist Allucquére Stone's suggestion that one might "imagine the location of the self that inhabits the body as [...] socially mediated [...] the physical location of the

subject independent of the body" (Stone, 1995, p. 92). However just as *Hyperknowledge* is not a "universal" gods-eye view, but multiple differing accounts, it would seem that the self derived from the *Renditions* of the game space must be equally fractured. A subject would then not be a fixed entity, or even one which develops, but multiple and varied positions arising from performance and established as much from their divergences as their coherence. Once again this aligns with Acker's description of plagiarism as method;

> "A split identity is a more viable way into the world. I was splitting the I into false and true I's and I just wanted to see if this false I was more or less real that the true I; What are the reality levels between false and true and how it worked" (Acker, 1991, p. 7).

Returning to Aperitif, we can consider how a subject emerges from the *Renditions* the player-audience performs within the game-artwork. We can also see how each *Rendition* involves multiple embodiments across the *Diegetic* and *Endogenous Frames*, as well as *Exogenous Frame* which bridges the player-audience to the world beyond *Aperitif* (the *Exogenous Frame* structures the very act of playing, such as accessing a computer, having time to play, acquiring the game, etc.). The subject emerges from friction between embodiments that comprise a *Rendition*, and across

repeated *Renditions*. Even if the player-audience plays *Aperitif* once and never returns, the agency involved in moving through the space points to other paths that could be taken, so further *Renditions* are always present as speculative potential. This friction between contradictory embodiments is an example of the creative process I already referred to as *Breaking Down*, where trauma and damage are generative forces. Acker provides another example of this process with her concept of pushing a text "past failure";

> "[Past failure is] to go into the space of wonder. What I have always hated about the bourgeois story is that it closes down. I don't use the bourgeois story-line because the real content of that novel is the property structure of reality. [...] My world isn't about ownership, in my world people don't even remember their names, they aren't sure of their sexuality, and they aren't sure if they can define their genders" (Acker, 1991, p. 23).

On a literal level the player-characters, if not all characters in *Aperitif* exist outside of a world of ownership as they are engaged in the lowest forms of employment and punishment and the labour-drones in addition do not even hold the potential for legal ownership of their own bodies. In terms of the bourgeois narrative *Aperitif* is, as I have demonstrated already, a work where the processes of ownership through names, language, and other codes are riddled with holes. Names of characters and things are obliterated and remade, no real narrative resolution is offered, and all

THE WOODLANDS OUTSIDE THE FINISHING PLANT [CARE, DIAGRAM]

It is debatable how much use I am. It is in fact constantly being debated. I can hear my use-value being considered by at least one person at almost any moment when I care to listen. That is maybe a little self centred, the use being debated is never just mine, but rather how I might be useful in combination with some political event or ecological principle. However, as I am bumped along corridor after corridor of rot-smelling wood, a damp sack over my head cutting out all light but the periodic LED light of security panels as we pass bulkheads at kilometre intervals, it feels very personal.

\#

We are waiting to eat. We have been waiting for a long time, countable in years if not decades. We sit here in the open space carved out from thick forest by an unusually rocky area of soil subsequently scorched and polluted with chemicals. Looking up, as we were oft to do in the early years, we can see a clear night sky encircled with the tops of conifers. A passing comet crosses on a curve and offers a reminder of the original celestial event which caused this scarred little pore to break up the roll of green. At last we hear the lock rods of the shipping container slide back and figures emerge from the earth.

through this sentences trail off into silence, noise, or references never fully explained. Author Matthew James Vechinski explains how Acker's concept of working "past failure" is derived from the process of "eccentric training, the lowering of weights against the pull of gravity which bodybuilders exploit to cause extreme strain on their muscles" (Vechinski, 2013, p. 530). Vechinski continues;

> "[I]n her essay "Bodies of Work" she describes how working isolated muscle groups past failure in this way breaks them down in order to "shock [the] body into growth" (Bodies 145, "Devoured" 22-23)." (Vechinski, 2013, p. 530).

As Vechinski notes, Acker's plagiarism is "a method that surpasses what is expected of procedure" (Vechinski, 2013, p. 530). I cannot speak of the methods of production used in *Aperitif* beyond those self evident in the work, but I would argue that its requirement of player-audience agency (you cannot experience *Aperitif* without complicit action) while being filled with holes and unresolved vectors out of the narrative, pushes the player-audience experience past failure. To use the body-building analogy, there are points where more weight is put on the player-audience than is supportable by the hole filed codes and collapsing structures of the game, and out of this failure something new has to arise. *Aperitif* see the method which Acker used to write, deployed at the point of player-audience encounter, which is to say,

#

The tunnel slopes upward and the walk becomes more painful as I bang more frequently against supporting bars, or trip on rough and slippery ground. The sack slips as I fall and billows full of air ripe with the scent of white mold and healthy bacteria. I see my hands briefly in front of me as a I fall, tied crossed at the wrist with pink, green and yellow ribbons. I feel the ground thud into the palm of the hand tied lowest and the cap of the knee on the same side. The ground has a thin layer of mud and is comprised of fragments that feel like ground up pieces of plastic. I am helped up as I hear someone opening a door.

#

The procession steps out from the shadows of the trees in the star-lit clearing, we see the silhouette of one break off to crouch by a small generator near buried in fallen needles. We feel the radiation as the power source is engaged, it lights up tracks of nerves in our bodies which are so long out of use as to feel vestigial. We feel ourselves differently, just as a blast of cold water might make us aware of extremities we had taken for granted and forgotten. A switch sends power to overlapping trails of lanterns in the trees five metres or so up. The night sky made like warm ink within this circle of light.

#

The air feels sharp and the ground feels warm. I'd been underground walking for

the site where *Aperitif* is produced[50].

Returning to Acker's refusal of the structures of bourgeois writing it is worth noting that even on a narrative level *Aperitif*'s use of trauma is not the familiar form of destabilizing traumatic event which is eventually resolved. There is no heroics in *Aperitif*, only fatigue, damage, shame, disorientation, moments of love, and somehow a stemmed decline.

I have used the term *Breaking Down* because it resonates for me in terms of both a traumatic psychic or physical collapse (past failure) as well as the process of disassembly. Both of these metaphorical processes result in something new being created, the person who collapses exhausted at work, and the car wrenched apart at the scrap yard each result in something different, and at least partially unexpected, emerging. *Aperitif* is essentially a ragged core sample cut from a long smeared out *break* which extends beyond it in all directions. Neither the trauma experienced by characters, nor disruption of the *Endogenous Frame,* is resolved into stability, but remains a mixture of pain and survival, collapse and adaptation.

Cixous proposed that the creative producer "take pleasure in jumbling the order of space" and asks "who hasn't [...] punctured the system of couples

so long that the sensations of coming up to the surface was just a confused collision of events which ended with the bang of a large metal door behind me. Cold pine breeze and dizzying feeling of space between tree trunks. I am lost in thought and then a small noise and I am coaxed forward by the arms that hold me and then I reflexively glance up as light appears above and through the fabric I can just see a halo. I am helped forwards until I am near the middle of this circle of orange light, still looking up when the hood comes off.

#

In the light we look at ourselves. Each different but still indistinguishable. The entourage has brought the witness to the middle of our circle and has now politely backed away leaving them with hands gesturally bound in the colours of the stomach. The witness is here only to see, to consume and be consumed only symbolically. We can now begin to create the new sovereign who will go on walking these woods like those before, worshipped by that other community at the far end of the tunnel until they return to us. Their arrival tells us we have grown fat enough, and that the last queen is now dead. Our hunger is electric in these moments of anticipation.

#

I look around at the creatures that sit just in side the edge of the treeline. Each is raised up on a warn table of glassy stone and they are near covered in dead pine needles, cobwebs, sap, and dirt. The smell of pine hangs over everything but an

and opposition?" (Cixous, 1976, p. 887). The messy smear of stemmed decline which constitutes a player-audience's *Rendition* of *Aperitif* is just such a pleasureful jumbling. When Kristeva questions the Aristotelian position of art as cathartic purification[51], the question becomes "What are we purifying ourselves of in the arts?" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 17).

Kristeva's answer to this is "a non-respect of structure" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 18). *Aperitif* is not providing purification, it does not resolve, and does not even respect the borders of its own software as the point where the player-audience is required to look at *Agate's* manual, a PDF file is opened in whatever is the default reader on the computer where *Aperitif* is being played. Likewise, the ever present option for the player-audience to hold down the Esc key to "black out" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018), folds everything external to *Aperitif* into its *Exogenous Frame*. As I tried to argue with reference to Acker's methods, the agency and complicity required by *Aperitif* of player-audience through *Rendition,* and *Breaking Down* position the production of the work as much in the moment of play as in Heartscape and Rook's prior coding and design. *Aperitif* is, in my opinion, *Écriture Féminine*, but this process of production also exists where each player-audience meets the game-artwork[52].

acid sweetness rises up between the sparse gusts of wind. I watch as needles are shed while figures move with a slow calmness towards and across one another. Mouths open and then close around part of passing body, teeth barely seen. The pageantry continues and the gestures become more elaborate and more is bitten away leaving silhouettes abscised, raw and bleeding.

\#

We begin, bodies aching at first but remembering with each step and letting pain fall away to practiced flourish and gesture. We take from each of us and become lighter and reshaped, years of static growth pared back revealing a new whole and new parts. Our stomachs shift to accommodate our new outline and to hold all the pieces of ourselves we have carefully bitten off. We move in euphoric knots, slick with blood and thinned sap and the waxy bacteria cells of an uncountable number of nameless others which are nevertheless vital players in this performance. "We" is such a small word to account for so many.

\#

It is impossible to keep track of what I am seeing. I turn slowly and stupidly on the spot, tied hands held across my belly, eyes barely focusing on the scene which moves with such precision. The smell is intoxicating and I feel dizzy. A meridian must have been passed because the dance changes. Pieces of flesh are delicately regurgitated, squeezed from each mouth and now carried in the flow of knots.

Cixous writes;

> "Woman couldn't care less about the fear of decapitation (or castration), adventuring without the masculine temerity, into anonymity, which she can merge with without annihilating herself; because she is a giver" (Cixous, 1976, p. 888).

This is the same "merging with" which constitutes the production of what Flanagan names the *Hyperbody*, and it produces the ""knowing" through performance" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 439) of *Hyperknowledge* via "the agency of navigation situated in multiple subjectivities" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 441).

Chewed proto-body-parts held between limbs which roll and twist, pressing into form a new additional creature between them, slick with bile and flecked with spores. The original circle retreats, now so slight. The new figure sits before me.

\#

We lose all and gain more than could be positively expressed. Ecstatic exhaustion smears time and thought as lichen drives across stone. Everything has been made thin but now our consciousness thickens back to where can can see the new sovereign which we have made. They sit before us, us but not us, watching the witness who has seen all of their birth. We feel tired, and the breeze feels sharp on our newly shaped bodies. Dust and needles and small insects begin to adhere to us and senses dull beneath their protection. The Queen shakily walks out of the circle. The witness finally shuts off the generator as they leave for the tunnel.

\#

There is no reason for you to live; Conclusions

This document has used an artwork as a pivot, finding creative practices which have a resonance with the artwork, and bringing them into proximity with one another via the artwork. I do not think it serves this method well to now attempt to summarize the relationships, overlaps, and frictions between the theories. That has been done partially at points in the document, but an attempt to summarize it all risks both encapsulating it in one perspective (in one *Rendition* of the paths available through the theories), and erasing the friction between them, and the other potential lines of inquiry which extend beyond this document.

There are some points about the relationship between the theories which could be highlighted here as a means to opening more lines out from the document.

The document began with Eugene Thacker's definition of horror as laying in the passages between two statements or states. These being "I can't believe what I'm seeing" and "I can't see what I believe" (Thacker, 2015, p. 14). Horror, both in Thacker's definition, and as connected to theories of *Abjection*, and in the feminist deconstruction of myths like Medusa, has

run under this document, but rarely surfaced. *Aperitif* is a work of horror, but its negative affects of shame and anguish don't arise from the unseen or unbelievable. The negative affects arise from the all too visible, too believable nightmare of the precarious lives of surplus bodies whom power deems illegitimate. Thacker's horror instead becomes the site of potential for such subjects as the player-characters, and the *Hyperbody* of the player-audience's *Renditions* through the game space in concert with those player-characters. Thacker's definition of horror, could be applied to the writing practices of Cixous or Acker, or the political practices of Hedva or Goard, including from the point of view of the fixed political/aesthetic/moral powers they speak of navigating. Thacker's horror definition is a succinct account of affective processes which I feel has potential for being further transplanted to other contexts and proximities in order to address art practice[53].

Another finding from this document is the resonance between *Feminist* art practices (specifically writing) and the agency involved in being the player-audience of a game-artwork. This isn't to say playing a video-game encapsulates *Écriture Féminine*, but there is potential for art practice in recognising how the former is site of production, and as Flanagan notes *Hyperknowledge* combining "situated knowledge" with an external view (Flanagan, 2002). This external view includes what Flanagan describes as

an "Omniscience of sorts" (Flanagan, 2002, p. 437), which is generated as composite of multiple *Renditions*

I am particularly interested in how this document's method of aligning the experience of play with various creative processes might be further developed. Considering the player-audience position as one where they use agency to negotiate provocations, parts of systems, tools, and plagiarised remains, connects to my proposals elsewhere in this PhD Output to consider the artwork in terms of the manual for a Role Playing Game. That is, the audience's encounter with artwork, and the artists prior process of making the artwork, are agentic creative encounters from which art affects are made, and remade.
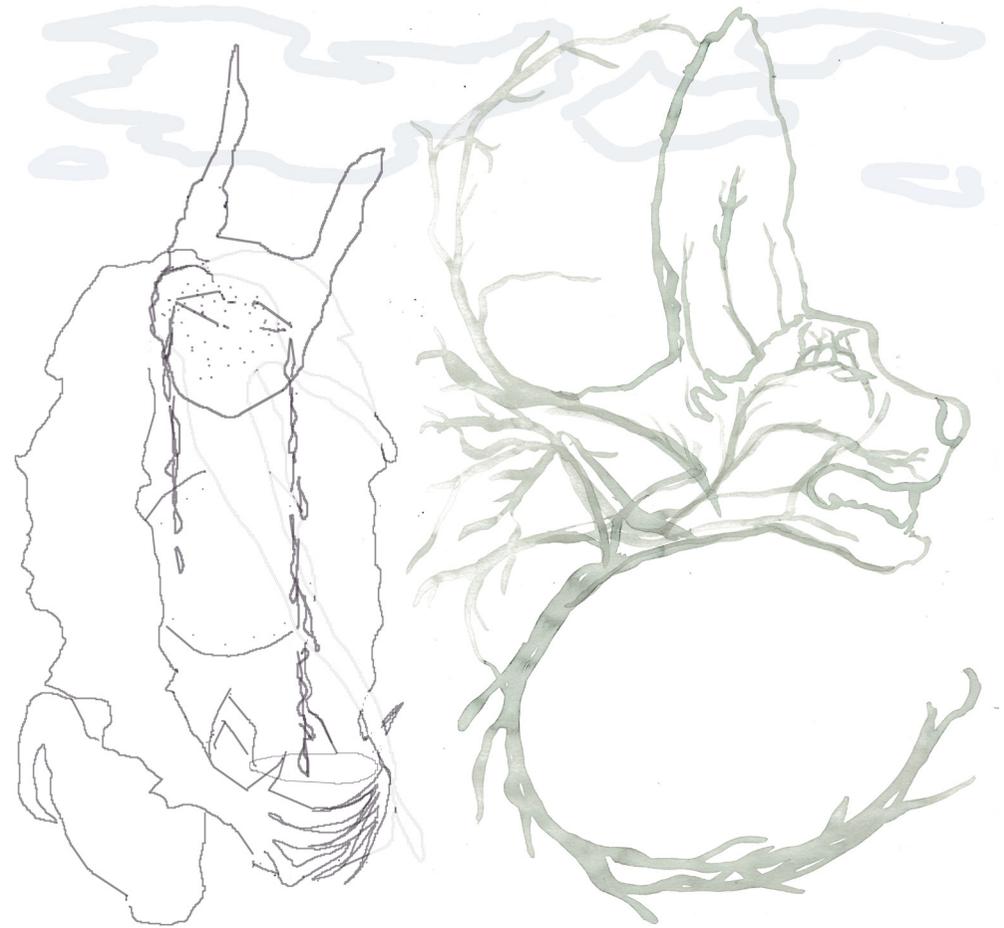
Dog Cry [DIAGRAM]

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A thin fog rises up around you. Static arcs between you and your surroundings. The light above the counter flickers, and this time it does not return.

You are in total darkness.

You realise you cannot even hear the sounds of electric sawing and pneumatic presses squashing household objects for YouTube streams in the other workshops.

Everything is very still, and then you see it turn to page 143 of Ahuman Use

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"ʕ•ᴥ•ʔ" - Rosa Luxemburg

[Thank you for playing this story has two other endings, turn to page 28 of any of the three books to make different choices]

net/2016/03/07/hypertextual-trauma-porpentines-twine-games-and-the-borders-of-self-narration/

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The figure in the chair speaks with you at length.

Occasionally the hologram splits, and a silhouette you recognise as your own is now also sitting on the stage helping to outline a theory of "Diva[1] Solidarity[2]".

The hologram continues to subdivide, turn to page 145 of Ahuman Use

[1.] Diamanda Galás as model for the unquestionable permission for one's existence and desires and needs specific to the gut, skin, cortex, socio economic condition etc. which you find yourself in.

[2.] The conditions of support for loved ones and comrades to become-diva and that this mutual aid is also extended from them to you and you with them to them. Love as permission for existence. The collective shaping the world so that their loved one can exist on their own terms like a fucking exploding star.

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There is no reason for you to live; Endnotes

1. For a long time during its development, the title of this document was encased in quotation marks. Through extensive searching I have still been unable to find the source of the quote, and so have decided that perhaps I was its author. This document was begun during the period of time where I was ceasing my long term use of antidepressants due to their effects on my memory, concentration, and levels of fatigue. The use of the medication had both suppressed long term memories, reduced my capacity to form new memories, and diminished my working memory. The cessation symptoms while tapering my dosage down to nothing over six months included; euphoria, unprovoked weeping, disorientation, and the crashing return of memories which were unfamiliar and untrustworthy, yet on some levels undeniable. The threshold period of antidepressant cessation and the beginnings of this document is a confusing period in my memory, as my memories of it are filled with the often unreliable returning memories from previous periods, and my brain's changing chemistry. This experience underpins this entire document.

2. The hyphenated dual-subject position is borrowed from the science fiction novel "Proxies" by author Laura J. Mixon (Mixon, 1998), that is in turn referenced in games theorist Mary Flanagan's text (Flanagan, 2002) which

features in the second half of this document. The novel features characters which are simultaneously in their own body and remotely controlling a robotic "proxy" body.

3. In 2017 a number of games by Porpentine Charity Heartscape were included in the Whitney Biennial (Swartz, 2017) her practice is increasingly featured in the art press (Chan, 2017; Heartscape, 2019) and her recent novel was published by London gallery Arcadia Missa (Heartscape, 2016).

4. The fanzine article quoted here brings together a number of the ideas which are expanded in this document, while the zine has hung on the wall looking down on me as I work for the last year. I will draw attention to some of them here:

    A. The article is titled "BORED_TRAN_21st_CENTURY.EXE", formatted with underscores in place of spaces, and with the extension for a Windows executable file at the end Silvera presents a text/trans* subject as a computer programme which performs a function.

    B. The article begins with an epigraph from a (as far as I can ascertain) fake text.

    C. This fake text is entitled "DIE CIS SCUM MANIFESTO" and the quote is appropriated from artist Valerie Solanas's text (Solanas, 1971).

    D. The appropriated text has it's woman/man dichotomy replaced

with a trans*/cis one, whilst referencing a meme ('Die Cis Scum', n.d.) that has undergone multiple revolutions of meaning.

      E. The article begins "I'm bored" (Silvera, 2017, p. 6).

      F. The article calls for a refusal of fixed rules (including those of the real and fake manifesto's implied in the epigraph) and a call to "be kind to each other" (Silvera, 2017, p. 10).

      G. "Radical Transfeminism" the zine in which this article appears is co-edited by poet and trans / queer activist Nat Raha.

      H. The article uses play as a model for other practices.

5. "Hanzo" and "D.va" are characters from the popular team based online multi-player video game "Overwatch" (Kaplan & Keller, 2016). Of note in this context is the game's emphasis on teamwork as each character has situational strengths and weaknesses. "Overwatch is about team composition and hero switching as well as twitch skill: it's a game of rock-paper-scissors with twenty-one options" (Thursten, 2016)

6. Throughout this document I use the term "trans*" which includes transgender as well as non-binary, genderqueer and other identities. It is an open term which is especially useful when considering individuals whose gender identity is only articulated as not being cisgendered. As theorist Susan Stryker states *Trans** is "a way of pointing to a somewhat

related class of phenomena without having to articulate exactly what that is" (Steinmetz, 2018).

7. In the interest of thoroughness it is perhaps worth noting that Rook is a trans* woman (Geffen, 2018) as is Heartscape, though she "describes herself as "trashgender" rather than transgender" (Kazimarki, 2016). This information however merely offers context, because this document is concerned with what they game-artwork can be made to *do*, rather than the artist's production of it or their identities.

8. "Shmup" refers to a type of video game loosely defined by the mechanics of controlling an avatar (often as spaceship) on a scrolling two dimensional plane, avoiding obstacles, and shooting and avoiding contact with a large number of enemies. For a history of the game type and its many divergences see games design researcher Luke McMillan's PhD thesis chapter "The Origin of The 'Shmup' Genre: A Historical Study" on the website Gamasutra (McMillan, 2013).

9. Game historian Matt Barton notes that the huge number of diverges in computer role playing games makes it difficult to produce a precise definition of the game type. Barton instead opts to use "Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of "family resemblances."[5]" (Barton, 2008, p. 4) in order to identify

characteristics, and differences from other neighbouring game times. Other than its creator's description, *Aperitif* primarily attaches itself to the game type RPG visually, as its art style, including "top down" perspective and resolution of graphics references the RPGs of the "16-bit" era of the mid 1990s. For examples of this style see video game historian Shaun Musgrave's article for Touch Arcade, "RPG Reload Glossary: 16-bit Paradise, or JRPGs in the early 1990s" (Musgrave, 2017).

10.   There is no voice acting in *Aperitif*, both dialogues (from various characters, including internal monologues) and description appear as text on screen. Often, when a character is speaking or thinking, their image will also be displayed on the screen, however this is not consistent. Sometimes dialogue between two characters is displayed in one screen of text, with hard returns at the end of sentences suggesting the shift between voices in the conversation. However, this is also not consistent, and the same hard returns are used (sometimes not corresponding to the end of a sentence) in contexts where it is not clear that there is more than one voice and they suggest more a concern for pacing and emphasis. Throughout the game-artwork, the question of who is speaking, and whether it is an external or interior voice, is to degrees uncertain.

11.   See feminist theorist Patricia Melzer's "Alien Constructions" (Melzer,

2006), gender theorist Jenny Wolmark's "Cybersexualities", (Wolmark, 1999), post-human theorist Helen Hester's "Xenofeminism" (Hester, 2018) the Jolene Zigarovich edited "TransGothic in Literature and Culture" (Zigarovich, 2017). For an analysis of playing video-games with emphasis on queer and trans* makers/players, including a chapter on the figure of the cyborg see games theorist Brandon Keogh's "A Play of Bodies How We Perceive Videogames" (Keogh, 2018). Volume 22 issue 2 of ANGELAKI "Tranimacies: Intimate links between animal and trans* studies" contains a number of relevant sections (Hird & Weaver, 2017; Malatino, 2017; Steinbock, Szczygielska, & Wagner, 2017; Szczygielska, 2017; Yoon, 2017).

Finally, the relevance of the figure of the cyborg to trans* studies is best evidenced by perhaps the foremost trans* theorist Susan Stryker's inclusion of Donna Haraway's urtext on cyborg feminism, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s" in "The Transgender Studies Reader" (Stryker & Whittle, 2006). An avenue for further investigation would be via cyberfeminism, particular philosopher Sadie Plant's reconfiguration of Luce Irigaray's theories of sexual difference (Plant, 1996, 1998). For a resent survey see writer Rani Baker's article for Medium ""Is Every Woman Here A Sex Change?" — Trans In Cyberpunk RPG" (Baker, 2016). Of particular relevance is the currently-in-development video game "Hardcoded" where "You play the titular character, a droid

nicknamed "Hard Coded" because her factory-given name is masculine and she doesn't like it, but her programming forbids her from choosing a new one" (Gray, 2018).

12. The ellipses in *Aperitif* along with its other instances of expressive absences or damaged/lo definition information and therefore could be further examined in terms of writer and curator Legacy Russell's theory regarding glitches and "sliding between identifications" (Russell, 2012, 2013). This line of inquiry could be then further pursued via artist Hito Steyerl's concept of the "poor image" which can create "disruptive movements of thought and affect" (Steyerl, 2009). Likewise theorist Steven Shaviro's text on the titular "found-footage" horror film "The Glitch Dimension: Paranormal Activity and the Technologies of Vision", presents another point of departure via the deployment of absence and noise in horror cinema (Shaviro, 2017). Shaviro's analysis that "We are affected (and oppressed) as much by their glitches, gaps and limitations as we are by their successful operations" (Shaviro, 2017, p. 331), like those of Russell and Steyerl open up the breaks in digital images as site of both politics and affect.

13. I am being careful to avoid falling to far into interpretation of specific absences, to fall into hermeneutic analysis for its own sake. The purpose and intent of this writing is not to make sense of any particular artwork, but

to find ways to account for and articulate some modes of art and modes of making art which exist outside of what can be securely accounted for in words. It is possible that while reading this, you noticed a shift register over the last few paragraphs. I think there are more references here to myself as the audience of the artwork being considered than there are earlier in this text. There are likely other changes in tone, perhaps more speculation and less use of citations than on average in the preceding paragraphs. The reason for this is I am returning to writing this text after a break. The system which I use to research and plan, which I developed for this particular part of the thesis means that I can pick up easily where I left off. However it strikes me while writing this, that the break in writing, and what it potentially does in terms of affect falls, very much within the research itself, and provides an opportunity to look from another angle at the thing which drew me to write about *Aperitif*. This being the ways in which absence, over saturation, the divergent, and the disorganised can and do function in art and therefore in practice based art research. Returning to Thacker, I can't believe what I see, and I can't see what I believe (Thacker, 2015, p. 15).

I wrote the first four thousand words of this text, and then edited down that first section in order for it to be tested as a twenty minute conference paper for "Beyond The Console: Gender and narrative games" held between The Victoria and Albert Museum and South Bank University, both in London, in

February 2019. The awareness that I would be delivering this research to an audience has what I will refer to as a "crystallizing" effect. I can see the writing, whether it be an academic text or a work of fiction or something in between, as a single form, perhaps in contrast too when writing it I can only see it in small sections. For this conference, the crystallising which allowed me to see the paper as a whole, and gave me doubts as to whether I was following the guidelines for dealing with art as an affective object as set for myself with reference to the work of O'Sullivan. While working through the possible ways to share my research at the conference I decided to try to destabilise the process of my delivery in a manner similar to those I employ in my performance practice. I edited my text for the conference so that it was no longer a draft paper to be read out, but contained a number of elements which would not fit within the time limit of the talk. These elements included the text being the correct length for the presentation, but with the addition of bracketed notes to myself which were prompts to improvise on tangents outside of that text. I did not intend to overrun, and used both my own on stage timing and asked the chair to signal when I had a quarter of my time remaining. I would need to make a decision during the talk as to where and how much I would cut from my script in order to both end on time, and to resolve the argument presented. I delivered my presentation with the written paper, its bracketed notes for deviations, and a slide show with further prompts which were visible to the audience, as a point of departure. I

was able to use different modes of address and styles of language, including a significant amount of gesture. I was able to feel present in the moment of articulating ideas, and to gaps and non-verbal communication to emphasise these as functions employed by the game being discussed. The conference became a process of research, rather than the delivery of prior research.

In the time since the conference, I have stayed with the question of non-hermeneutical accounts of art. I see now after the fact, that many of these resonate with the function of the ellipses, the gap which implies multiple things. I spent some time drawing while writing short fragments of fiction. The stories are included throughout the three books of this PhD output.

14. Klein is one of the bridges between this document and its sister, along with Sedgwick who is in this document separate from Klein, but in that other document, inseparable. As a reader it might be useful to take a break from reading this document (mirroring the break taken in the original draft of writing) and read the sister text, then return. In fact, this entire document which takes up around a quarter of the word count of the entire PhD output is likely best read with multiple breaks to read almost any of the shorter documents across the three books, before returning to continue with this large document. Length of documents is something which I have attempted to treat with a sense of dynamics. In the same way that mixing long

sentences with abrupt ones can create energy and a desire to be read in a single text, I thought that treating the documents in this manner might also instil a dynamism to each book. Actually, that isn't strictly true, I left some texts shorter than others for reasons of dynamics, but I *wrote* them to their respective lengths because *for various reasons specific to each document* that length was appropriate for what they contain and how best this could be delivered to the reader. Sometimes the reasons included dynamics, a few lines to address something elsewhere presented across pages. Sometimes the reason was just "this is where it ends".

15. For Deleuze, the *Phantasm* is "thought's multiplicity", which "cannot be resolved into unity, dialectical or otherwise, but whose unrepresentable excess cannot be understood in negative terms as a lack or absence" (Widder, 2011, p. 98).

16. In "The Laugh of The Medusa" Cixous's "woman" (the subject that is capable of *Écriture Féminine* or women's writing) possesses an "imaginary [that] is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing, their stream of phantasms is incredible" (Cixous, 1976, p. 876). There is a strong temptation to explore further the importance of the phantasy/phantasm/phantasmagoria in relation to art, not least because it marks another crossing to this document's sister which is concerned with the artwork "Phantasmagoregasm" by artist
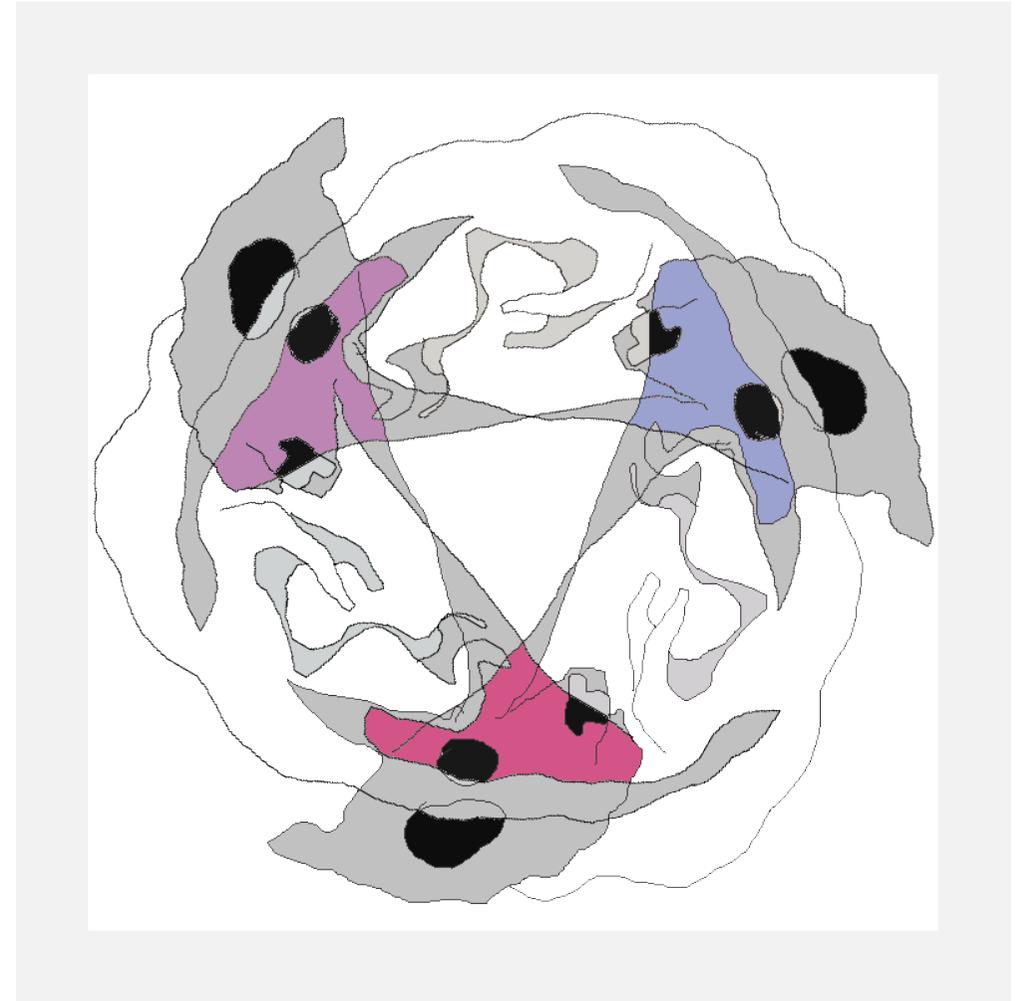
PhD [Diagram]

Tai Shani. However I feel this would take too far a detour into language, deconstruction and psychoanalysis and therefore the emphasis on categorisation and analysis which this PhD project as a whole is proposing alternatives to. For a concise account of the phenomena phantasmagoria, with emphasis on its relation to art via the occult see author and mythologist Marina Warner's book "Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century" (Warner, 2006).

Whereas Deleuze's *Phantasm* is a process hidden within the subject, Cixous implies the possibility of an output, or at least compares the *Phantasm* to outputs of art, music and writing. Cixous's *Phantasms* are endless flows of production. What remains constant across both of these is that they are generative. Finally, philosopher Rodolphe Gasché's book, "Georges Bataille: Phenomenology and Phantasmatology" which traces the things which Bataille himself called "phantasms" such as the "pineal eye" (Gasché, 2012, p. 2) offers yet another line of enquiry, folding back to the principal figure of this document's second part.

17. This inability to survive is the core of this PhD project as a whole. The nagging question of how to negotiate the parts of art practice which do not survive the shift to the modes of recording and analysis which are used in other practices.

18. This is one of the reasons why "Logic of Sense" is the primary solo-written work of Deleuze's used in this document. Williams introduces it as "a book on the cusp between structuralism and post-structuralism because it seeks to combine a concern with structures and series with a philosophy of events" (J. Williams, 2008, p. 1).

19. This is not to suggest that it is the only strategy. In a recent issue of the art magazine Orlando the writer Rosie Haward features a short account and subsequent three examples of "The Virtue of Giddiness in Art" (Haward, 2018). The "virtue" is initially outlined in terms of reference to Sedgwick's proposal of queerness as opening a mesh of possibilities which I have already referenced in this text (Sedgwick, 2004, p. 7). Giddiness is also partially aligned with theorist Sara Ahmed's writing around "disorientation" in "Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others" (Ahmed, 2006), which Haward accounts as the potential for "disorientating moments [to] hold radical political potential when they resist [...] the re-orientating force of the straight and straightening lines of compulsory heterosexuality" (Haward, 2018, p. 11). Haward however differentiates their project of giddiness from Ahmed's through the manner in which the former is engaged in "storytelling" (Haward, 2018, p. 11). This storytelling is undertaken in the second half of "The Virtue of Giddiness in Art", which consists of three images of women

as depicted in artworks, each followed by a short text that addresses that woman and her state of *Giddiness*. These short texts switch from the tone of the preceding section that followed a critical register familiar in many art journals where proposals are bolstered by quotation. The subsequent three short responses, one to each of the chosen women from artistic depictions moves to a more personal, poetic, and diverging mode of address.

Haward's text is of relevance because it identifies a kind of overwhelming sensation experienced by subjects depicted in art (and I would add, by extension the audience), and then proposes a means of accounting for three examples through a creative practice. Crucially, the three creative responses do not reference one another, and are not followed by any text in the earlier critical register. These are three tangential, creative approaches, proceeding from Haward's desire and experience of each artwork. Tendencies and structures can be identified, but only by the reader and no claim is made of a position whereby all three artworks can be comprehended, analysed, and accounted for.

Firstly, Haward's identification of *Giddiness* can be summed up in the following quote. "In their giddiness there emerges a hunger for the not-yet-known, a pulling away from heteronormativity that begins with the confounding of its methods of categorization" (Haward, 2018, p. 11).

Giddiness, an overwhelming physical sensation, becomes a site for the production of desire, and importantly new desires for which there are no pre-existing language structures. This identification builds on Ahmed's conception of disorientation as "the source of vitality as well as giddiness, we might even find joy and excitement in the horror" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 4), and chimes with Cixous's account that;

"When I write its everything we didn't know we can be that is written out of me, without exclusions, without stipulation and everything we will be calls us to the unflagging intoxicating, unappeasable search for love. In one another we will never be lacking" (Cixous, 1976, p. 893).

Haward has identified something, and a tactic to negotiate it, that is comparable to what I am attempting to draw out by using *Aperitif* as a pivot. I am interested in the second half of "The Virtue of Giddiness in Art" as Haward's attempt at accounting for three moments of this *Giddiness* which is generative of new kinds of being while refusing to be confined within the structures and categories of the old. As an example of these tactics, these are the final lines of Haward's response to "Anna", protagonist of the Andrzej Żuławski directed film "Possession" (Żuławski, 1981). "Trains speed close by. Whatever's left after all the monster fucking now in puddles on the

tunnel floor. Gestation over. Left for purposeful feet to slip in, moving liquids on their soles, travelling in patterns through the city. A seduction of the non-human because nothing else will do, nothing else will satisfy. Liquids spilling out of her, the last vestiges of marriage, slippery and repulsive, ripe for a comedic slip and fall" (Haward, 2018, p. 13).

For another response to the same film, via Irigaray's figure of Mucous see MacCormack's "Mucous, Monsters And Angels: Irigaray And Żuławski's Possession" (MacCormack, 2010b). "The grace toward monsters as that which negotiates thresholds of female/male and non-human opens to possibility without dialectic encounter — accidental, inevitable or volitional" (MacCormack, 2010b, pp. 107–108).

20. For an analysis of Acker's "program to move beyond the phallic myth" see theorist Christopher Kocela's 2001 article for the digital journal "Genders" entitled "A Myth Beyond the Phallus: Female Fetishism in Kathy Acker's Late Novels" (Kocela, 2001).

21. For one of the foremost critiques of *Phallocentrism* see Irigaray's "Speculum of The Other Woman" (Irigaray, 1985). "By a fault, a flaw, a lack, an absence, outside the system of representations and autorepresentations. Which are man's. By a hole in men's signifying economy. A nothing that might

cause the ultimate destruction, the splintering, the break in their systems of "presence," of "re-presentation" and "representation." A nothing threatening the process of production, reproduction, mastery, and profitability, of meaning, dominated by the phallus-that master signifier whose law of functioning erases, rejects, denies the surging up, the resurgence, the of a heterogeneity capable of reworking the principle of its authority. That authority is minted in concepts, representations and formalizations of language which prescribe, even today, the prevailing theory and practice of "castration." And what weak instruments these are, products of the very system they pretend to challenge. Such collusion with phallocentrism serves only to confirm its power" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 50).

22. In the interest of bringing a range of different concepts into proximity around the pivot of *Aperitif*, I have avoided pursuing feminist psychoanalysis further to the obvious site of excess in desire, *Jouissance*, which Lacan situates "beyond the pleasure principle" (Lacan, 1998, p. 184) whilst also acknowledging the "unique bodily jouissance of woman, making her not wholly within the Symbolic Order, is liberating for woman because it is "[a] jouissance beyond the phallus"" (Zhan, 2009, p. 22). The very term *Jouissance* is of relevance in other ways due to it's difficulty in translation to English, as well as describing something in excess of direct comprehension. See for example translator Alan Sheridan's note regarding what is lost

Blue Dog [CARE, RPG]

when it rendered as "pleasure" (Sheridan, 1998, p. 281) and theorist Jane Gallop's observation that, "If jouissance is defined, as it is by Barthes and the women, as a loss of self, disruption of comfort, loss of control, it cannot simply be claimed as an ego-gratifying identity, but must also frighten those who "know" it" (Gallop, 1984, p. 114).

23. Although there is reason to suspect that both Bataille and Cixous had specific and distinct bodies from a male/female binary in mind when addressing masturbation, this document will not engage with such distinctions. Not only can women have penises and men clitorises (to list only two erogenous zones), but sex and the erotic can detach itself from the gender of the body as well. This is most visually and provocatively outlined in MacCormack and McPhee's proposal for the "vasectomised ejaculate" to be understood via the Irigirayian figure of mucous (MacCormack & McPhee, 2014, p. 146), and MacCormack's entire project of "Cinesexuality" (MacCormack, 2008).

24. Masturbation also connects to the production of Deleuzian *Phantasms* as seen in the auto-erotic which produces such "objects of pleasure" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 278). Philosopher Philip Goodchild offers the following summary. "Auto-eroticism, in its most primitive form, concerns the constitution of a pure body of pleasure, a body without organs, in which the coordination of

zones of pleasure, being both actions and passions, liberates a phantasm as a surface effect that appears to produce itself as its own quasi-cause one acts for the sake of pleasure, the action being the cause, the reason being the quasi-cause. This is an example of crossing a threshold of absolute deterritorialization: on the one hand, phantasms and traumas are caused by bodily events children do touch themselves, or observe their parents' bodies, or become the objects of seduction, or are subjected to threats (Deleuze, 1990b: 210); on the other hand, the phantasms produced do not simply remain unpleasant memories, but become compulsions that have a leading role in determining subsequent lives including the actions and passions of bodies" (Goodchild, 1996, p. 78).

25. Game researcher Jesper Juul has devoted an entire volume (Juul, 2013) to the function of failure in games, whilst queer theorist Jack Halberstam's book "The Queer Art of Failure" (Halberstam, 2011) approaches failure as a site of potential. A conversation between the two is included in a section devoted to "Queer Failure in Games" in "Queer Games Studies" (Ruberg & Shaw, 2017) edited by authors Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw.

26. I first encountered the term "Useless Splendour" in 2010, when Kingston University in London launched its Contemporary Art Research Centre ('Centre for Useless Splendour', n.d.) and accompanying publication

(Kenning, Kingston University (London, & Centre for Useless Splendour, 2010). The Centre's documentation broadly attaches the term to artist André Breton, though I have only been able to locate one instance of it attributed to him, in a poem dated 1930, a translation of which is included as an appendix to art historian Hazel Donkin's PhD thesis (Donkin, 2009, p. 280). Bataille's work on "The Accursed Share" began in "1930 or 1931" (Kendall, 2013, p. 27) 1930, one of two years "after Bataille came under attack by André Breton in the Second Surrealist Manifesto" (Kendall, 2013, p. 29). There is something interesting in their both using the same term at the same time, but there equally might be nothing more to it.

27. As the first of 22 Semiotext(e) publications produced for the 2014 Whitney Biennial, Lotringer produced a book, also called "The Miserables" which uses Bataille's concept of abjection to theorize ongoing drug violence in Mexico and global "systematic dehumanization" (Lotringer, 2014).

28. The acquisition of rights for one group used as a means to justify the opression of another is articulated by post-colonial theorist Jasbir Puar as "Homonationalism" in the 2007 book "Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer times" and developed further in the text "" I Would Rather Be a Cyborg Than a Goddess": Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory" (Puar, 2007, 2012). In the latter text Puar focuses

Lungs [DIAGRAM]

on expanding upon the former's negotiation between critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of "intersectionality" as "analyses that foreground the mutually co-constitutive forces of race, class, sex, gender, and nation" (Puar, 2012, p. 49) and an assemblage model which identifies the "retrospective ordering" of identities such as "gender, race, and sexual orientation" which "back-form their reality" (Puar, 2012, p. 50). Puar sees these two positions not as "oppositional but rather,[...] frictional (Puar, 2012, p. 50).

29. Hedva effectively expands the concept of the "Male Imaginary" of Irigaray, who states "We can assume that any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the "masculine."" (Irigaray, 1985, p. 133). Hedva's dominant imaginary is now conceived along lines including class, sexuality, race, and proximity to care, as well as threat of violence.

30. Hedva's call for the centring of their broad category of sickness, which includes not just sufferers of illness, but also victims of the violent enforcement of acceptable categories of gender, sexuality, class, etc. does find a direct parallel in Kristeva's thought;

"These states, far from being simply pathological or exceptional, are perhaps endemic. And it is perhaps against this sort of structural uncertainty that

inhabits us that religions are set in motion, at once to recognise them and to defend ourselves against them" (Kristeva, 1999, p. 19).

I am wary of pursuing an argument regarding the subjectivities included within Hedva's Sick Woman pre-dating, and perhaps causing, the social structures which their existence transgresses. Such an enquiry would move beyond the scope of this project, which is concerned with the practice of art.

31. For a radically different analysis of a comparable creative terrain to Kristeva's *Anamnesis* see Mark Fisher's "Ghosts of my life: writings on depression, hauntology and lost futures" (Fisher, 2014). "This dyschronia, this temporal disjuncture, ought to feel uncanny, yet the predominance of what Reynolds calls 'retro-mania' means that it has lost any unheimlich charge: anachronism is now taken for granted" (Fisher, 2014, p. 19).

32. See also **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]**

33. The dice roll brings to mind the use of "roll tables" common to Tabletop Role Playing Games. A player rolls a dice, and consults the table to see which band their resulting number falls within. This mechanic is frequently used to generate a character to role play as, adding some friction to work with and against in the improvisational storytelling process of role play.

"Michael Moorcock's Stormbringer: Fantasy Roleplaying in the World of Eric" for example requires the player to roll a hundred sided die, the resulting percentile dictating the nationality of their character, which in turn species their physical attribute range, possibilities of religious and political adherence and so on (Perrin & St Andre, 1987, p. 23).

34. A methodological decision has been made not to include research drawn from Heartscape and Rook's other work, in order to focus on how *Aperitif* can inform methods of art practice, rather than drawing out the tendencies of these specific artists. However, it is worth noting that the processes of Kristeva's *Gaming* are evident throughout Heartscape's individual art practice. Heartscape curated the 2018 exhibition at Apexart in New York, entitled "Dire Jank" (Apexart, 2019). *Dire Jank* included artist Tabitha Nikolai's video game "Ineffable Glossolalia" (Nikolai, 2018) and "Divination Jam" which invited the audience to "use divination, randomization, etc to make your game. when you get stuck, instead of feeling like shit, let some arcane system decide for you! rolling a die, i ching, tarot, anything that invokes fate! many ancient systems have been digitized, or you can look for randomness in the world around you…" (Heartscape, 2018). Furthermore, Heartscape's 2016 novel "Psycho Nymph Exile" both contains the same collapsing world-building language as *Aperitif*, and incorporates *Gaming* processes within its plot. "The crystal gives them an allergic reaction to

language. Each girl has a unique combination of trigger words. They sit on the floor in rows, mumbling under their breath, reading from dictionaries until they find their combination" (Heartscape, 2016, p. 61).

35. *Gaming* also appears in the practice of Hedva and a number of ways, including tarot and astrology "As a narrative tool, Hedva gave our resident astrologer, Jillann Morlan, a copy of their natal chart, in hopes that it would better explain aspects of themself and their work. Hedva explained their relationship to astrology and storytelling over email writing, "Astrology was a family practice for me; both my mother and aunt taught me as a child. i drifted away from it and rebelled in my early 20s, but found it again when i became sick and bed/house-bound during the first year of my saturn return. i started giving readings during this time, and now do it for a living. my relationship to it is always changing, but i can say that right now, i'm getting into the whole-sign house system (i was trained in placidus), and thinking a lot about fate and how the "malefics" work, or have been seen throughout history."" (Accola, 2017). There are a number of other artists here in the UK who are working at the intersection of academic research, art, and *Gaming/ divination* practice, these include Felix Rose Kawitzky (Kawitzky, 2017), Hestia Peppe (Peppe, 2013) and Lucy Sames (Sames, n.d.).

36. Cixous's work exists in the same sphere concerned with bodies, life,

politics, power, and art as theorist Henri Lefebvre's "Critique of Everyday Life" (Lefebvre, 2014) the first volume of which was published the year after "The Laugh of The Medusa" (Cixous, 1976) and concerns the control politics and revolutionary potential of "everyday life". Lefebvre's earlier work "The Production of Space" (Lefebvre, 1991), gives rise to one aspect of the concept of "Orientation" which Ahmed expands in "Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others" addressing "how spatial perceptions come to matter and be directed as matter" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 12). Games theorist Mary Flanagan, whose work on digital embodiment is introduced later in this document has also drawn from *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre's observation that "spaces that are defined in the abstract, that is, those that aspects of space that are able to be installed anywhere, be configured and reconfigured, become a manifestation of a way of thinking produced entirely by Capitalism" (Flanagan, 2008, p. 4) is taken up by Flanagan in an examination of "locative media projects involving play and games, and their potential to act as a tool for empowerment" (Flanagan, 2008, p. 1). As with Cixous, Lefebvre's work extends between the material body, its creative capacity, and its political agency, yet while the importance of play to the latter is evident, I feel there is space to explore it more in the former.

Art historian Suzanne de Villiers Human has noted the "picaresque playfulness" (de Villiers-Human, 2005, p. 186) emphasised in "The Laugh

You look around.

The animals in the other chairs which make up the circle which includes you and the analyst,

around the low table which holds only a box of tissues,

of The Medusa", connecting this to its imagery of eruptions, excesses, and overflowings of fluid and subversion of structures of gender and sexuality. From the other side, Marxist theorist Teresa Ebert specifically critiques Cixous on the grounds that her work is "ludic feminism" (Ebert, 1992, 1996) concern only with a "language-effect, a mode of rhetoric aimed at changing cultural representations" (Ebert, 1992, p. 6). I would argue that while Cixous is not strictly an artist, Ebert's position on her work falls within the Materialist tradition critiqued by O'Sullivan (O'Sullivan, 2001), and a better understanding of Cixous's work is equally on the grounds of its Affects, through which it proposes to change the social. The use of "ludics" by Ebert seems to at least function in part as a diminutive expression, separating its play from the work of " a collective practice through which existing social institutions are changed" (Ebert, 1992, p. 6), whereas in Lefebvre's work, as with Situationist groups (Bolt Rasmussen & Jakobsen, 2015; Knabb, 1981), work and play are both charged with political agency. Likewise, Ahmed's work would fall within this grouping of ludic feminism, attested by word plays such as the dual use of "matter" in the previous quote, yet the examination of "orientation" is not simply a play with representation, but a proposal for changing "how we do politics, which in turn is shaped by the prior matter of simply how we live" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 177).

37. For a trans* reading of gender in Solanas as creative process see
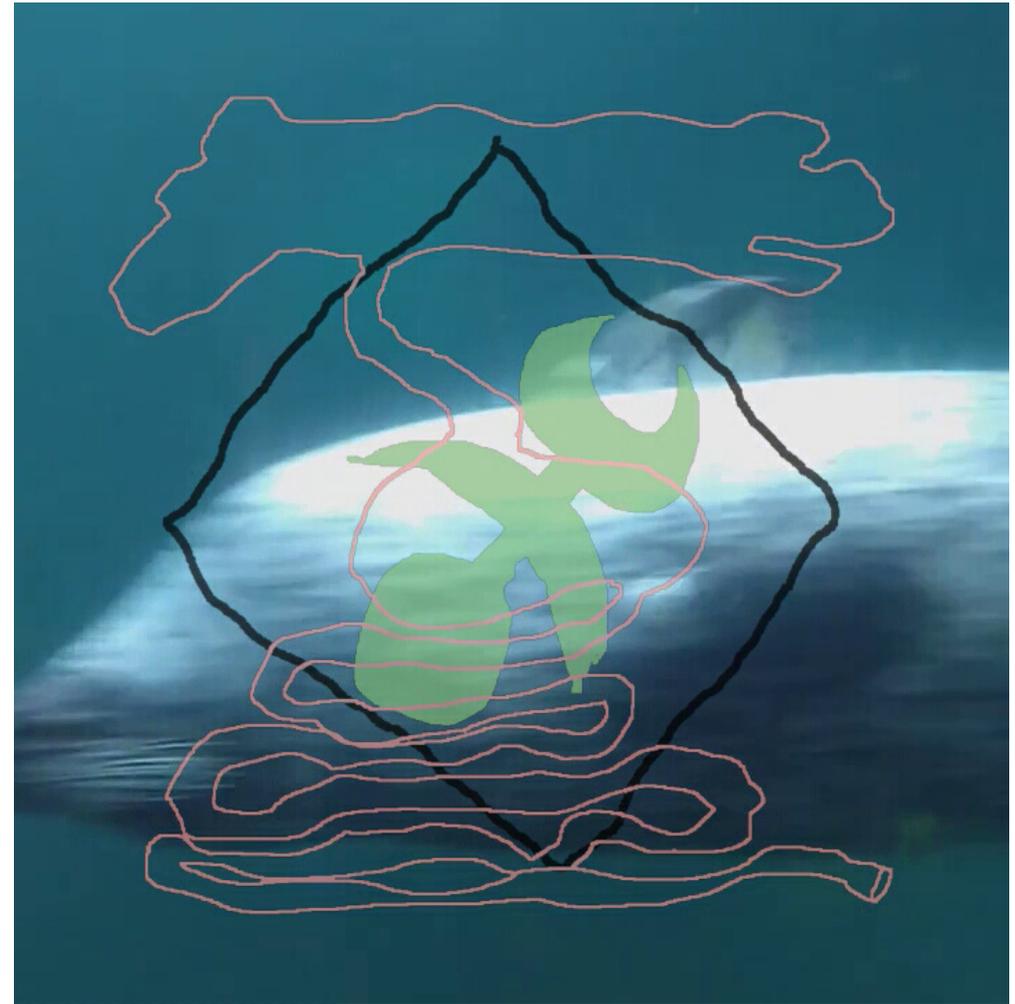
Seal [DIAGRAM]

writer Andrea Long Chu's proposal in "On Liking Women" (subtitle, "The Society for Cutting Up Men is a rather fabulous name for a transsexual book club") that "Here, transition, like revolution, was recast in aesthetic terms, as if transsexual women decided to transition, not to "confirm" some kind of innate gender identity, but because being a man is stupid and boring" (Chu, 2018), as well as Chu's book "Females" (Chu, 2019).

38. Pre-empting Lefebvre's concern for the same "The Critique of Everyday Life" (Lefebvre, 2014).

39. For a continuation of Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the girl, redefined as a process of desire and commodity within Capital see Tiqqun's "Preliminary materials for a theory of the young-girl" (Tiqqun (Collective), 2012).

40. Fisher defines Deleuze and Guattari's concept of Haecceity as "non-subjective individuation. [...] the entity as event (and the event as entity)" (Fisher, 2018, p. 15).

41. For more on another of Heartscape's game-artworks which negotiates trauma through game mechanics that extend beyond the "diegetic frame" (Montola, 2008, p. 23) to the physical marking of the body, see researcher Kahn Faassen's blog post "Hypertextual trauma: Porpentine's Twine games

and the borders of self-narration" (Faasen, 2016).

42. For an analysis of these conditions of work and life specific to trans* women see Nat Raha's "Transfeminine Brokenness, Radical Transfeminism" in South Atlantic Quarterly (Raha, 2017). Raha explores the experience of "poor transfemme people" to develop a "Radical transfeminism [...] orientated around forms of care and support" (Raha, 2017, p. 7).

43. There is a rich seam of divergent research around what writer Evan Calder Williams has termed "salvagepunk: the post-apocalyptic vision of a kaputt world, strewn with both the dream residues and the real junk of the world that was, and shot through with the hard work of salvaging, repurposing, détourning, scrapping" (E. C. Williams, 2009) and expanded this concept further in "Combined and Uneven Apocalypse" (E. C. Williams, 2011a).

While not directly cited, I would like to note that Williams's approach to writing about politics and aesthetics through re-purposed fiction was very influential to my own practice, beginning a number of years prior to and continuing through this PhD research. Of particular relevance to this project are a number of what Williams referred to as "postcards" written from the point of view of "Snake Plissken" the protagonist of the John Carpenter

You nod in agreement.

directed films "Escape from New York" (Carpenter, 1981) and "Escape from LA" (Carpenter, 1996). Williams imagined Plissken navigating life as an old man in contemporary Venice through a series of violent and poetic encounters focused on politics and sensation in a collapsing world (Mike, 2012; E. C. Williams, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b).

Williams' concept of *Salvagepunk* can also be seen as an influence on the journal "Salvage" (SALVAGE, 2018) from which the earlier referenced text "Making and Getting Made: Towards a Cyborg Transfeminism" by Sølvi Goard (Goard, 2017) is drawn. Salvage is also edited by writer China Miéville with whom Williams has collaborated on multiple occasions (Mute Publishing, 2011; Serpentine Galleries, 2016). In the introduction to the first issue of the journal, editor in chief Rosie Warren addresses its name and agenda with the following, "Why Salvage? Salvage because we are wrecked. Because we need a strategy for ruination" (Warren, 2015). However, in the interests of maintaining a focus in this document on approaches to art practice, further exploration of Williams' work and Salvage is left outside of this current project.

44. For an analysis of how creative play extends even beyond even the most repetitive of forms see games designers Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux's article "HUNDRED THOUSAND BILLION FINGERS: Seriality

and Critical Game Practices" (Boluk & LeMieux, 2012).

45. For another body of post-Lyotard work concerned with subjectivity arising from encounter with art, see artist and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger's concept of "matrixial subjectivity" (B. Ettinger, 2006; B. L. Ettinger, 2002; Pollock, 2005)

46. For a useful document on the context of plagiarism as art strategy in the UK at the mid point of Acker's career, see the Stewart Home edited "Plagiarism: Art as Commodity and Strategies for its Negation" (Home, 1988).

47. Acker's relationship to concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012) has been observed by other writers (Harper, 1987; Randall, 2001, pp. 245–246), including specifically with regards their concept of "desiring-production" (Cao, 2012) and Acker's "Blood and Guts in High School" plagiarizes a paragraph directly from "Anti-Oedipus" (Acker, 1978, p. 102).

48. The playing of a game as a means of generating an artwork (which in a fractal formation is itself the material and provocation for another game, this time with the audience) is a highly reductive through nevertheless

accurate summation of the art practice proposed by this PhD project. The use of cartomancy and appropriated role tables has the same function of generating aspects of what Acker describes as "identity" (Acker, 1991, p. 7) and Flanagan as "Hyperknowledge" (Flanagan, 2002).

In 2018 I produced an artwork "TFW: The Formless Wastes 2" (TFW2) which was a sequel to "TFW: The Formless Wastes" (TFW), the work performed by the agent in the document "The Use of Horror In Art Practice" in the book "Ahuman Use". *TFW2* is an animated film which follows an agent/inquisitor in the service of "Slaanesh" (Ansell, Brunton, Forrest, & Miller, 1988, p. 14), one of the gods of chaos, as they investigate the "Spencer Mansion" (Mikami & Fujiwara, 1997) after the events which take place in TFW. TFW2 was produced entirely by making an RPG in the consumer game design software "RPG Maker VX" (Enterbrain, 2007), and screen capturing a play-through.

TFW2 is a video artwork, but it retains its existence as a video-game, even though it is one that can only be encountered by an audience as a witness to it being played rather than playing it themselves. The video begins with a selection screen where there cursor moves to select "New Game" but other options are visible. Likewise the game involves a player-character engaging in conversation with non-playable-characters and the screen shows the

choices in the dialogue offered to the player, even though ultimately only one is chosen in the play-through that comprises the video. A desire in producing *TFW2* in this manner was to continue research into what I have elsewhere referred to as *Incomplete Provocations*. *TFW2* presents a path which is dotted with indications of other ways it could have progressed. *TFW2* is produced with non-professional software, its graphics are a mixture of the software's generic examples along with quickly drawn auditions, and the narrative space it takes place in is appropriated from other games, principally "Resident Evil" (Mikami & Fujiwara, 1997) and the war-gaming manufacturer "Games Workshop" (Ansell et al., 1988).

These, and other production choices, aim to poke holes and pull lumps out of the path chosen through the game in *TFW2.* It is rapidly made with cheap and readily available tools and materials, as an invitation to the audience to speculate where else it could have gone as the level of competence needed to produce it is evidently attainable. Returning to *TFW2* nearly a year after it was produced it strikes me how it functions in the manner Acker describes with regards the use of plagiarism on two levels.

Firstly the stolen material is traversed by the unnamed, faceless agent who establishes something of an identity through this passage. I think about the strategy of plagiarism used by Acker and myself in terms of Deleuze and

Guattari's "desiring-machines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). "The question posed by desire is not "What does it mean?" but rather "How does it work? " How do these machines, these desiring-machines, work—yours and mine? With what sort of breakdowns as a part of their functioning?" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 109).

The plagiarized text is a machine, and putting something new into the machine gives an indication of what the machine does. Of course doing this breaks the machine so even if we attempted to place another piece of that same new material in it a second time, the results would not be the same. This is fine though I think, because I wouldn't want to use a machine to produce the same thing over and over. I stole some pieces from one text and stuck them together with *RPG Maker VX* to make a machine without knowing what function it would perform. Each time I put something through that machine it produced new and contradictory results.

The second level on which *TFW2* performs Acker's plagiarism function is the level where it is a game being played. I made a game environment full of sprites which move on random or preset patterns, with choices of when and where to move, dialogues options etc., and then I drove the unnamed agent through this and recorded what happened. The friction of the passing through these cobbled together machines was evident to me in what could

be accurately called the "performance" of the work. This performance was what Flanagan called the *Rendition*, and the friction was the sense of reacting to and adjusting my performance in response to the environment of the game. Even with a plan for which non-playable-characters I needed to interact with, and where I needed to move to advance the plot I still needed to sometimes wait when a randomly moving sprite blocked my path. Sometimes I mashed the movement keys and my on-screen proxy awkwardly stopped in their tracks for no reason. Sometimes I worried that I wasn't leaving dialogue text long enough on screen for someone unfamiliar with it to read before I advanced, and then maybe I left the next dialogue on screen a little too long and spoiled the pacing slightly. This was again the work of desiring-machines. The desire at one point in the performance resulted not in satisfying that desire but producing further desire which in turn produced more and so on. I have left this as the only account of *TFW2*, rather than attempting to reduce it to screenshots or translate it into screenplay format as I have done with other non-text artworks. *TFW2's* partial description of function and site of learning can also serve as provocation for reader speculation. What did it look like? What did it sound like? How bad was it?

49. For an analysis across Acker's body of work regarding how "her parameters, seemingly by design, resist expected outcomes and instead

promote a process of discovery" through "writing according to method" see Matthew James Vechinski's journal chapter "Kathy Acker as Conceptual Artist: In Memoriam to Identity and "Working Past Failure"" (Vechinski, 2013, p. 526).

50. Cixous also locates her writing as emerging from the breaks and failure of systems. "[T]here have been failures-and if it weren't for them, I wouldn't be writing (I-woman, escapee)-in that enormous machine that has been operating and turning out its "truth" for centuries" (Cixous, 1976, p. 879).

51. Author and game designer Jesper Juul's book "The Art of Failure: An Essay on The Pain of Playing Video Games" focuses on the paradox of how the enjoyment of playing video games requires the unpleasant experience of failure (Juul, 2013). Juul bases the analysis in a comparison to tragedy as understood through Aristotle, deconstructing the plot of Leo Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" (Tolstoy, 2016) and attempting to find a video game which meets all its tragic criteria. Juul first concludes that "no commercially successful game has offered the full Anna Karenina experience (playing a game in which the protagonist undergoes many painful experiences, through concrete effort managing to make the protagonist commit suicide and knowing all along that this is the goal of the game)" (Juul, 2013, p. 115). However, Juul also proposes that the agency required of the player produces "complicity [...] a

completely new type of experience that is unique to games, more personal and stronger than simply witnessing a fictional character performing the same actions. [...] With complicity the player shares with the protagonist the feeling of being flawed" (Juul, 2013, p. 114).

52. A final strand of analysis of how *Breaking Down* could be pursued emerges from how both Acker and Cixous articulate the process of writing as training for, or perhaps a *Rendition* of dying;

"Writing is learning to die. Its learning not to be afraid, in other words to live at the extremity of life" (Cixous, 2005, p. 10).

"Writing is one method of being human or wanting to suicide cause in order to write you kill yourself at the same time while remaining alive" (Acker, 1990, p. 174).

While death looms throughout, above the precarious lives of the player-characters of *Aperitif*, it only really appears during the section of the game where the player-audience must repair the body of *Agate* through a medical-sim, and then through an embedded *Shmup* section which represents the most delicate part of the procedure. During these embedded sections it is possible for player-audience to fail, and therefore to watch *Agate* die. The

role of death in video games is something which has been examined in terms of attachment and empathy (Harrer, 2013) as well as necropolitics and queer theory (Ruberg, 2017). These two examples (among others) suggest lines of future inquiry when combined with the writing process as death described by Cixous and Acker, especially when considering how each death is followed by a different *Rendition*. However the limited instances of death in *Aperitif*, give little opportunity to explore these concepts and so it will need to be left for future study. What is also of interest is Ruberg's concept of "permalife [whereby] games make it impossible for players to die. Instead, in such games, players are forced to go on living indefinitely – even, or perhaps especially, in the face of death" (Ruberg, 2017, p. 160). *Permalife*, which in some of its forms subverts the focus on finality in games, and instead deals in repetition, seems like a rich site to explore the concept of *Écriture Féminine* at the point of player-audience game-artwork agency.

53. I have approached the relationship between processes of horror and practices of art elsewhere in this PhD project, but the reapplication of Thacker's definition is something I think merits further attempts.

TFW2 Production Image [MANSION, RPG]

Conclusions and Exits [CARE, RPG]

The structure and methodology of this PhD Output consisting of three approaches to a central area of art practice, and within each approach multiple overlapping attempts through the various documents, turns the issue of a conclusion into a challenge.

Rather than attempt to draw books and documents toward a unifying conclusion, erasing the differences between then, I have offered conclusions in the documents individually. Some of these are clearly labeled as such, some are more demonstrative, and some left as provocations.

Throughout the three books are indications of where future paths could proceed. For continuation of creative research and the application of concepts developed, these indications are generally placed at the end of documents. Paths which are more tangential, or areas where the research could be reinforced through engaging with a separate discipline or practitioner appear in endnotes.

In place of some kind of ending for the PhD Output as whole I will raise three of the avenues of future research not already mentioned in individual documents, that will be pursued at its end. All of these examples incorporate work already commenced, that for practical reasons has not been addressed in documents.

1: The Incomplete Object.

Archeologist Chantal Conneller has produced a large amount of research focused Star Carr, a Mesolithic site in Yorkshire (Conneller, 2004, 2011; Little et al., 2016; Milner, Conneller, & Taylor, 2018a, 2018b). In particular, Conneller has provided a framework for examining some

of the objects recovered from the site, and through this reassess the historic inhabitants of the area's relationship to animals and objects. The objects, twenty-one of which were found during the site's excavation by Professor J.G.D. Clark between 1949 and 1951, consist of the "uppermost part of the skull of a red deer, with the antlers still attached" and are referred to as "antler frontlets" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). In offering an interpretation for the frontlet's use, Clark "suggested they could have been used either as hunting aids, to permit hunters to stalk animals at close range without being seen, or as headgear in ritual dances" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). This interpretation resulted in an impasse between a "'functional' and a 'ritual' analogy" and has according to Conneller, meant that "in the intervening 50 years they have been ignored" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37).

Conneller's research breaches the impasse of an animal derived object needing to be either functional or ritual by use of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari's work in "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Firstly, Conneller outlines how in Deleuze and Guattari, "animals come to be seen [...] as an assemblage composed of a number of ways of perceiving and acting in the word" (Conneller, 2004, p. 44). In this view, animals are not singular fixed entities, and the objects derived from them are therefore not limited to being symbolic of the animal whole or else be understood only as practical material. Animals are here understood as collection of "affects" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 253), and the objects derived from them convey those Affects to the user in a manner which outside of the binary of ritual and functional. From this point Conneller proceeds to "examine the specific ways in which different things are seen to modify or extend the capacities of people in particular contexts" (Conneller, 2004, p. 51), bridging Deleuze and Guattari to theorist Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" which replaces a fixed epistemological view with "webs of differential positioning" (D. Haraway, 1988, p. 590). The use of animal objects becomes simultaneously a process of taking on capacities as well as the ethical/epistemological/affective engagement with the world from another position.

These observations from archaeology are useful not because they set some historic precedent for how art should function, but because they articulate processes which are important to art from another perspective. In the documents in this PhD Output which examine artworks

I have consciously treated both the processes deployed by the artist and those of her characters in the same manner. In the art I am interested in, things are not easily split between the practical and the ritual but form processes across these lines to perform different things.

Finally, when I contacted Conneller in 2019 she was continuing to examine the frontlets of Star Carr in terms of how they function as "unfinished things". Conneller has already observed that the frontlets were "broken up as a source of raw material" (Conneller, 2004, p. 46), but is now considering how this occurred concurrently with their uses. A framework for considering art objects which do not reach a fixed state, but are continually re-worked, and drawn from while being used is relevant to a number of documents in this PhD Output. It is relevant to the analysis of artist Tai Shani's works (SHANI, 2019) which undergo edits between redeployments, or the ongoing work "sidekick" (Price, 2013) by Elizabeth Price. Going forward, I would consider how unfinished things connects to the writing practice of William Burroughs both through the "cut-up" technique to "cut oneself out of language" (Hassan, 1963, p. 9), and the process whereby his novels were re-edited in subsequent editions. Burroughs is also relevant to the other side of unfinished things whereby these things are not just refined, but are a source of material for future things. I am also interested in the process by which computer software is updated via "patches" (Fisher, 2019) as another model for an unfinished thing.

I'm interested in the political implications of objects which refuse the linear transition from raw material to finished commodity, but is instead part of processes which cross that distinction. To borrow the image from Karl Marx's "Capital Vol. 1" (Marx, 1981), what would it mean for "coat" to remain functioning as "ten yards of linen", to be always in a process of being woven/unwoven/rewoven into different forms? I feel there is something here to be pursued via the concepts of Incomplete Provocations, and the improvisations and departures which are centred in Tabletop Role Playing Games.

2: Divination Storytelling

The second exit is far more practical and straightforward. During my research I have used and developed methods for creating parts of narratives based on sortation systems such as card decks and dice rolls. In 2018 I produced an artwork entitled "The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability" which borrowed a mechanic used in multiple games whereby the space in which play takes places is procedurally generated. A hypothetical example of this mechanic would be a game which takes place in a derelict spaceship, the interior rooms and corridors of which is represented with cardboard tiles. When the players reach the exit of one room, a new random room tile is placed at the exit from the first, so the spaceship is configured, and unpredictable, with each subsequent play-through. In *The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability* I combined some of the lore from Games Workshop's derelict spaceship exploration game "Space Hulk" (Games Workshop, 1999) with their subsequently released rules for randomly generated spaceships (Hunt, 2013), to randomly generate prompts for a narrative built from a fictionalised version of my own past.

As a result of the cessation symptoms I was experiencing while coming off antidepressants I found memories returning that medication use had suppressed. In addition, there were physical cessation symptoms which mnemonically triggered some often confused memories of spaces in the town centre of Luton where I spent my teens, frequently from times in the early hours of the morning after leaving a club or a party. I reconstructed these fragmented memories, and the bodily feelings which connected them to the present, and any emergent feelings and noted them down as prompts on index cards. Some memories were so abstract as to not describe a place but just a sensation, or an action. These abstract memories, combined with some other images and thoughts were written up in a list and labelled 1-20.

The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability was produced as a single take spoken performance to microphone. It began with a short reflection on the different ways in which physical geography and brain chemistry are both modulated by chemicals. After this I shuffled and dealt an index

card, describing the derelict spaceship/ 4am Luton Town Centre space it represented in the manner of Games Master setting a scene for players of a Role Playing Game. I then rolled a 20 sided dice and used the corresponding entry from the list as a prompt for what the player (the audience to whom the work is addressed) did in traversing this space. A partial transcription of one room follows;

"You stagger out of the thickening fog into the area where escaping heat from the many times kicked in door makes a dim pocket at the edge of the street. Banging on the door that feels like it should have given in by now and it is finally opened by someone inside. You roll in, and so does the fog, and the door opener is already turning the corner ahead into the living room so you guess you will follow them, remembering to shut the door behind you.

The living room is thick with dust and hair and ash over the brown carpet and old sofas. No one has their feet on the floor, all bunched up to keep warm or to manage some symptoms of intake.

You just want to buy, but that isn't how this is going to work out. It never does.

Everything slips. Someone makes you take a music cassette and in lock-eyed intensity tells you why you will like it and when you will die.

A man takes you to one side and rapidly ages while sharing with you a one sided conversation about how he has lived his life. He has little ears like fins and catfish whiskers and it's clear from the way he holds and interacts with the portable stereo he cradles that he has a relationship with Fabio and Grooverider which is both more beastially physical and more vapourusly transcendental than you will ever understand.

You slip out and it's dawn and you have the cassette and you don't think you bought anything but now do not think you need anything so maybe you bought it and weren't paying attention during intake or maybe someone else was in charge of your body.

You roll out with the fog and luckily town is down hill but my god you would never be able to find this place again and my god you would probably never want to because all those people would want to check how closely you been following their advice on how to live.

Oh yeah the plot twist is you're a rabbit".

Going forward, I would like to explore the mechanics of procedural narrative based on sortation systems, both as an improvised Rendition, and as material which is subsequently cut up and deployed in other ways, possibly as a development of Diagrammatics. I'm looking into how I might produce these works for a platform like YouTube, possible using a split screen where half the image shows the face that speaks, and half shows the sortation system such as tarot-style cards.

Dog Mod

Running throughout all three books of this PhD Output are dogs. When I started this PhD in 2016, I soon afterward began living with Lea and Buster, two elderly Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The importance of this relationship to the research is something I have attempted, and failed, to articulate on many occasions in the last three years. As much as the majority of the documents in this PhD Output are underpinned by a desire to understand my own trans* non-binary gender identity, they are also a response to learning about what Deleuze and Guattari would call dog affects, as well as negotiating my emotions towards Lea and Buster particularly during the sadly increasing points where they have become unwell.

In mid 2019 I sketched an outline for what I called the "Dog Mod". In the language of games, a mod is something added to the game which alters part or all of its systems in some way. Mods are often produced by a third party, and can range from something which simply adds some different functionality (such as the campaign generator for *Space Hulk* referenced in the previous section) or completely reorientate the system, such as the mod "DayZ" that reconfigures military sim "ARMA" into a zombie survival game and spawned an entire genre of video games (Davison, 2014).

The aim of *Dog Mod* was to produce a document which could provide a means to reconfigure the rest of the PhD Output through its unspoken focus, dogs. *Dog Mod* is something I decided was both conceptually and emotionally too overwhelming for me to be able to complete in time for submission, but I remains as a point of departure for my future research. It connects the *Becoming-Animal* of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Stark & Roffe, 2015), philosopher Patricia MacCormack's expansion of this into animal rights discourse in the *Ahuman* (MacCormack, 2014), with other ideas around, animals, play and care (Chen, 2012; D. J. Haraway, 2016; Massumi, 2014; Vint, 2008).

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"Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Lyndon Dorey

This book is one of three volumes which constitute the thesis (to be read in any order) and is subtitled "Ahuman Use".

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

Department of Arts

January 2020

Acknowledgements

Declaration

This work has not been submitted for any other award, and consists

of my work alone, whilst fully acknowledging the opinions, ideas and

contributions from the work of others. Versions of texts included between

the three books of this thesis were presented under the following titles:

- "Bio-film Mansion Theory, or Making as Collaboration with Disorder" delivered at "Interdisciplinary Conversations Around Making", Newcastle University, Newcastle, 2019.

- "There is no reason for you to live: gendered trauma and ecstasy in 'No World Dreamers, Sticky Zeitgeist episode 2: Aperitif'" delivered at "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games", London South Bank University, London, 2019.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Horror, Cult, Exploitation II", Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2018.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Don't Look: Representations of Horror in the 21st Century Symposium", University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2018.

- "Bio-Film Assemblages and Ahuman Horror" delivered at "Current Research in Speculative Fiction", University of Liverpool, Liverpool, 2018.

- "The Revolutionary Praxis of Urban Galls" delivered at "Open Graves Open Minds & Supernatural Cities present: The Urban Weird" University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 2018.

- A version of the document "Farmer 9" was published by Res., London in the publication "Alembic" in 2018.

- A version of the document "Axpansion" was published by Paperwork, London in the publication "Paperwork Issue 3: Iilwimi lipsing" in 2018

- A radio-play version of "The Keeper's Diary" was performed for Rádio Quântica in 2017 and again for Dublin Digital Radio in 2018.

- A video stream version of "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" was performed for the exhibition "Sex and Other States" at South Kiosk Gallery, London in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" and "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" were performed at Reading University in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" was performed for the event "Its Origins are Indeterminate" at Whitechapel Gallery, London in 2018

- Two live versions of "The Incomplete Provocation" and

"The Keeper's Diary" were performed at Serf, Leeds and Res., London in 2017

- A live version of part of "Borne by Rats" was performed at Baltic, Gateshead in 2017

- A video version of each of the three parts of "The Androids' Journey" was shown at the exhibition "Green Fuzz" at Xero, Kline & Coma, London in 2016

All procedures for ethical approval have been followed and the number of

words contained in the three books of this Thesis – excluding bibliography

(academic references), footnotes and appendices – is 77,706.

Signed

R Dorey

Contents [KEYWORDS]

Abstract

Title: "Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Dorey, Northumbria University, 2020.

This research brings together resonating creative processes from feminist literature, game design, queer gender politics, post-structuralist philosophy, and horror cinema. It uses these to articulate an art practice which is unstable and generative both for the artist during the process of production, and again for the audience.

The PhD output as combined thesis and practice consists of three books, each approaching the question, "How to negotiate art practice as involving processes which are unstable, affective, and resistant to structures?" Each book takes a different position regarding this question and in doing so reshapes it into a sub-question.

The book "Ahuman Desire" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving affects which are at some times indescribable, or overwhelming?"

The book "Ahuman Use" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving salvaged or stolen systems, which are always already breaking down?"

The book "Unknown Lacuna" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving unstable things which can only be seen through what they do?"

Each engages the same question, but with a different emphasis. They are three different attempts and the obvious implication is that these are three of many more potentially attempts

I have undertaken an extensive literature review across fields which border on art practice. The three books bring together a vast matrix of research sources and makes these visible and accessible as an act of care, in keeping with the feminist writing practices which underpin the work. I have developed original methodologies which are used in the different documents across the three books and include the use of speculative fiction, plagiarism, formalist writing strategies, drawing, performance, games, and screenplays as research. As well as using artworks as a site to examine the relationships between different theories of creative process. The rigour of the PhD Output exists not just in the scale of the sources processed and responded too, but

in its infrastructural approach which departs from academic norms to resist a cataloguing or hierarchical envelope for the knowledges within.

The PhD Output addresses one of its returning processes of Excess through its form. It is large in scope and shifts responsibility to the reader to navigate this Excess. This demonstrates the affects of anxiety address in many of its documents, before the aforementioned attention to acts of care re-frame this disorder as generative. This mirrors the repeated conceptual and narrative refrain in many documents whereby the horror of the unknown is reorientated to become a creative and dynamic approach to knowledge which does not need to be fixed or enveloped.

The PhD Output aims to support reader engagement based on their desire, rather than through an external economy that ascribes or denies a degree of value based on adherence to pre-existing parameters. This approach is a departure from the common structures of academic research, while still demonstrating critical judgment and original contributions to knowledge. The departure is necessary firstly because of the research questions above, and secondly the commonality of destabilisation in the source materials from feminist writing practices and philosophy, to collaborative games and horror media. Thirdly, the departure enables the specificity of the practice based PhD Output to not just describe processes but to enact them at the

reader's point of encounter with the research.

The primary findings of the research are. The potential for the form of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals to inform an art practice when combined with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The mutual illumination offered when combined with feminist writing practices or Écriture Féminine. The potential for Écriture Féminine to inform contemporary queer feminist art practices which incorporate the forms of video-games, as well recognising the event of audience encounter with such artworks as a creative one. The use of horror cinema as a means to articulate art practice concerned with affect. The potential of practice-based art research to produce new ways to produce and deliver original research in a dynamic rather than fixed structure.

This research is of value due to its relevance to contemporary practice. This relevance is evidenced by the recent attention to queer indie game design ('Beyond the Console', n.d.; Faber, 2019; Humphreys, n.d.; Thaddeus-Johns, 2019; Wallace, 2019), experimental feminist writing practices incorporating speculative fiction (Hedva, 2018; Hval, 2018; Jackson & Leslie, 2018; Waidner, 2019), the divisive concept of "elevated horror" (Carrol, 2019; Crump, 2019; Ehrlich, 2019; Gardner, 2019; Taylor, 2019), and the folding of these into art practice. The research include in-depth analyses of artworks

by two artists who have relatively recently received a high international profile (Apexart, 2019; 'Dark Continent: Semiramis Performance | Arts Council Collection', n.d.; 'Porpentine Charity Heartscape', n.d.; Tate, n.d.) and have not yet been the subject of monographs or a large amount of academic study, particularity within the field of art. The relevance of this research is further supported by the recent publications and events in a overlapping fields (Brazil, 2019; Burrows & O'Sullivan, 2019; Editorial Staff, 2019; Fisher, 2018; 'Flickering Monstrosities Hyperfiction Reading Group', 2019; 'ICA | I, I, I, I, I, I, I, Kathy Acker', n.d.; Lewis, n.d.; Little, 2019; Pyrne, 2019; Shaw & Reeves-Evison, 2017).

Keywords:

Abjection, Kathy Acker, Affect, Art, Georges Bataille Gilles Deleuze, Hélène Cixous, Cybernetics, Écriture Féminine, Félix Guattari, Porpentine Charity Heartscape, Horror Cinema, Luce Irigaray, Patricia MacCormack, Performance, Play, Queer Theory, Role Playing Games, Tai Shani, Speculative Fiction, Video Games.

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Notes on Use

This PhD output is a combination of what might otherwise be separated into thesis and practice. It uses different writing styles, and different conventions of text to do different things.

One of the styles and conventions used is that of the film screenplay. The screenplay is used both to account for art practice elements within this PhD which exists in forms other than the written word, and as a kind of art practice in its own right. I follow artist Emma Bolland's use of the term "traduction-retour" or "'backwards translation', or translation through return" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204) to describe the process of producing a screenplay after the release of the film, or in this case, videos and performances, it accounts for. I have used the screenplay form in my work because even as traduction-retour points forward and invites speculation. It is always a means to produce something else, and it is always incomplete because the transition from text to cinema is not seamless.

The screenplay has conventions, and I have had to break some of these. As Bolland notes, *traduction-retour* screenplays are sometimes "redesigned entirely for a specific readership" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204), and in this case

that readership includes this PhD's examiners. As a result of exploring a number of ways in which the screenplay format can accommodate the academic requirements of referencing arguments, I have compromised the former slightly to avert accidental plagiarism through unclear referencing.

An important text convention used in the three books of this PhD Output concerns reading.

The books are meant to be read in any order, but they are meant to be read together. The model is taken from *Tabletop Role Playing Games* where there is often:

- A *Games Master Manual* containing the rules for the *Games Master,* the person running the game.
- A *Player Manual* which each *Player* has a copy of and contains rules for them.
- A *Reference Book* of some sort which lists of things in the world of the game and their rules, and is used by both *Players* and *Games Master.*

Either *Player* or *Games Master* will frequently have to refer to their *Manual* in combination with the *Reference Book*, reading them at the same time, building something from the combination of rules and lists.

Tabletop Role Playing Games are not competitive activities, but better

understood as processes of collaborative storytelling. The game, or

story, arises from between the *Players* and the *Games Master,* each

working from a *Manual* which contains only one side of the systems

which make up the game, and combining this with the *Reference Book*

in different ways. A shifting composite of these positions is a "collective

effervescence" a collaboratively constructed "world entirely different from

the one they have before their eyes" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 228).

Each book comprises methods, speculations for further work, documented

attempts, fictions, maps, and diagrams, the books are orientated so that

Documents within sometimes arrive concurrently. While reading one

Document, smaller ones appear to the side.

Each book begins with an interactive narrative which crosses all three

books, and offers choices which fork and result in different endings.

The books use a *Keyword* system. Some *Documents* include *Keywords*

which are written in hard brackets such as [DIAGRAM]. The titles of some

Documents, and their entries in each book's contents page features a list

of their keywords. The *Keywords* are to encourage the reader read the books concurrently. *Keywords* present a point to cross to another book and pick up another document using the same *Keyword*, from a different approach.

Notes on Use; Bibliography

- Bolland, E. (2018). The Iris opens/The Iris closes: Le Silence #2 Scene Notes 1–13. Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance, 11(2), 203–216. https://doi.org/10.1386/jafp.11.2.203_1.
- Durkheim, E. (1995). The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (K. E. Fields, Trans.). New York: Free Press

Advice

Mark the pages of each book as you read them. The books are meant to be read by moving between them, and getting lost is part of the process of making connections. But in order to be sure that the reader has seen everything it is recommended that they foul the pages by some means in passing, so it will be easy to round up the stragglers at the end.

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty

A non-linear multi-ending story about care.

[This story has three endings, and your choices matter. It will direct you across all three of the books of this PhD Output, its narrative encircling but not connecting with, all of the other documents You could skip if for now, or finish one of its endings, or follow it until it gets boring and move to whatever document is on the same page when you decide to give up.]

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty is the same kind of diplomatic hub platform you've seen a thousand times. From where you are at the shuttle terminal, it appears in the near distance as an impressive metallic gloss black cube and is of a size you won't even guess at as its hard to spot where the building ends and the night sky above begins. Like much civil architecture in this area, it sits on one of the spiked lily pads which form a major part of the ecosystem of the meridian sea which belts this planet.

You open the sealed pouch that can be opened by you alone and read the final two paragraphs of the advisory again which against protocol you tore off and saved before destroying the rest;

"This entire project can be understood in terms of Broken Cybernetics. The diplomat's art, like the production of all art, involves using systems which are in a continuous state of breaking on all levels. In some ways, this is the very nature of diplomacy but what your training and this advisory will have already made clear is that there is a difference between the layperson's understanding of diplomacy and the work of an agent. Your responsibility is not to balance forces, just as it is not to ensure the domination of one force over all the others, not least because each of these ideological positions, the stillness of compromise or annihilation, are impossible in a material sense.

No, an agent's responsibility is to Events, the points where the system breaks and something new is created. Your responsibility to these Events is to extract a copy of the unstable Diagram of their occurrence, so it might be re-used again after everything that made it destroyed. Good luck on your mission, destroy this advisory before arrival."

Turn to the next page.

Wait, who are you ?

Think about how you ''feel''.

Of the three options, which is your strongest feeling?

Hunger, turn to page 27 of Ahuman Desire
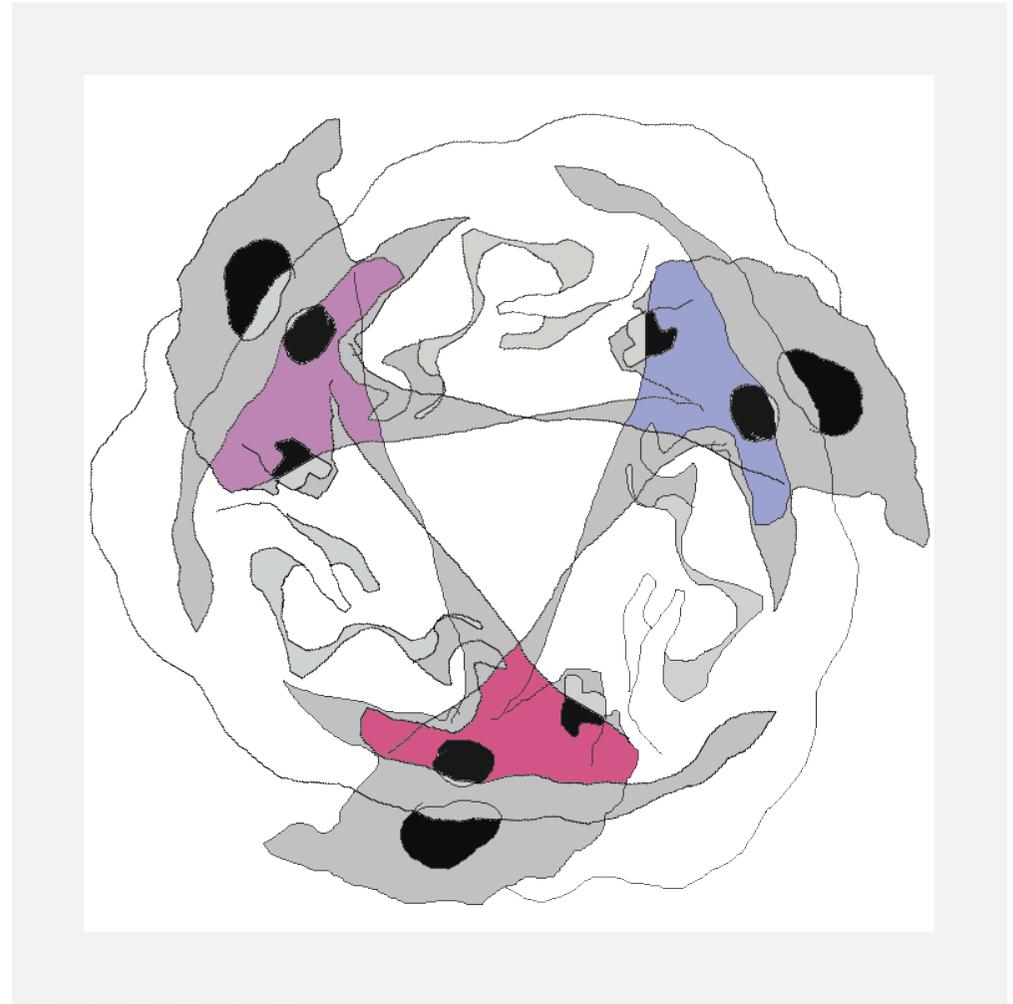
PhD [Diagram]

Field Notes on Agents [DIAGRAM, RPG]

This document is explores the manner in which the books which contain the rules and provocations for playing a game like Dungeons and Dragons can offer insight into an approach to art practice which is concerned with the modulation of the self, and systems which emerge and mutate.

Field Notes on Agents Part One: The Structure of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals

A Tabletop Role Playing Game (TTRPG) is an activity in which players role play through imagined situations, primarily through speech, as well as potentially though systems of chance such as dice rolling. Although it is referred to as a "game" it is best thought of as a collaborative storytelling system which combines a combination of pre-existing narrative of "lore", improvisation within and deviations from this lore, a systems of chance. Throughout this document *TTRPG* will be used to refer to the set of rules and lore which go together i.e. "Dungeons and Dragons", and the word *Game* will refer to the actual activity of playing a *TTRPG*.

Mountain Web [LACUNA]

For commercially produced *TTRPGs*, a series of books or digital files contain the rules and other information required to play. These publications are here referred to as manuals, though the terminology for such books may vary.

There are a great number of *TTRPG* systems, which is the underlying system which governs the game, primarily establishing an order to how role playing and chance interact. There might be numerous *TTRPGs* which use the same or modified versions of the same system, and each of these may be further subject to new revised editions, and third party revisions either authorized or fan made. One of the most popular, and arguably the most visible face of *TTRPGs* in English speaking culture at the time of writing is "Dungeons & Dragons, 5th Edition" (5E) (Crawford, Wyatt, Schwalb, & Cordell, 2014; Mearls & Crawford, 2014; Mearls, Crawford, & Perkins, 2014). For simplicity document will reference the mechanics from *5E*, however the general observations and hypothetical examples do not reference a specific system of text, but are an illustrative composite compiled from a number of sources (Ackerman-Gray, 1996; Axtell, n.d.; Blankenship, 1990; Bond, 1987; Brimmicombe-Wood, 1997; Coffin, 1999; Durall & Johnson, 2008; Galeotti, 1991; McCall & Siembieda, 1990; McCubbin, 1995; Nakazono, 1989, 1991; Nakazono & McKenzie, 1991; Perrin & St Andre, 1987; Petersen & Willis, 2005; Pondsmith et al., 1993; Pulver, 2002; Pulver, Berry, Punch, & Smith, 1997; Quintanar, 1994; Spivey & Reece, 2017; Sprange, 2004; Wujcik,

1987, 1990; Zeigler, n.d.)

It is quite common for *TTRPG* manuals to include lists of things within the game world. Common examples would include items and equipment to be acquired and used by the characters.

Characters might be controlled by either the *Players* who typically control one "Player-Character" each, the "role" which they are playing, or the "Games Master" (GM) who is responsible for all other characters which the *Player-Characters* encounter, as well as any other events such as shifts to the environment, time, global politics, etc.

These items or equipment may be specific to the "world" in which the *TTRPG* is set.

The *World* is not just the area of time and space in which the game is set, for example mid 1980s Moscow, or Eastern Seaboard between 1400 and 1492. The *World* could be something which differs from our understanding of our accepted reality. For example, the *World* might be an earth in which gravity is considerably less strong than our own leading to different technologies and ecologies. Or the *World* is one where earth contains an entire ecosystem within its hollow interior. Or the Black Death killed an even

Farmer Nine [LACUNA, MANSION]

Bracket fungus (yellow) with fish hook through it, some liquid dripping through the basin stained darker orange with rust.

#

Agent 7235's suit has a soft recharge glow at the cuffs and collar. This is bluing the white embossed panelling of the container's insides. It's an aesthetic feature that cheap protective suits have, the blue glow registering even the smallest trickle through the kinetic or heat sink chargers that power everything else that keeps a body alive. The blue glow now signifies a lack of wealth as well as recharging life support. Even a modestly priced suit uses some other indicator like a non-intrusive amount of haptic feedback at the base of the spine or a subtle chemical direct to the brain. There is of course a black market in warranty-voiding bio-edits to disable the glow, but this already a mark of passé hipsterism, costing more than a store brand mid-tier unit. Rural teenagers might tape off the lights or add even more from a secondary power source. 7235's suit is cheap enough for the company.

#

The agent is here at Farmer Nine, a port off the ionic pole sea of the Diane, a company-owned moon terraformed with water pulled from the Kuiper Belt.

#

higher percentage of the population of Europe, leading to different balance of global culture and power over the following centuries.

Even if the *World* of the *TTRPG* is indistinguishable from our own reality, it is common for the manual to list items, in order to provide details on how these example items are articulated through the *Mechanics* and economies of the *TTRPG*. Simple examples of the economies of an item would be its weight and its price range in local currency for purposes of trade. It is possible for price to be attached to another modifier, for example the item "a kilo of heroin" might not have a single example price range but rather a range for heroin produced in a government laboratory, and a different one for heroin produced by a large crime syndicate. Other economies might be attached to the item other than monetary value. Continuing with our example of a kilo of heroin, attached to this may be statistical chances of; Overdose, illness due to contamination, addiction and so on[1]. Also the statistical chances of these secondary values of the heroin could be different depending on whether it is made by the government or by private companies.

Mechanics as mentioned above refers to how the item functions through the specific systems of the game, which are mostly systems of chance. An example *Mechanic* could be if a player wishes to use some of the heroin as an anaesthetic, the *GM* decides that the outcome of this action is not

The oceans of Diane are dotted with bridged archipelagos and a number of completely self supported structures in the shallows - rentable lab space leased by the century. According to requirements, an area is staked out with submarine pillars which support a membrane encircling the leased body of water and topped with a decking structure 100 metres or so above the waterline. This structure is called a wharf. On a wharf, clients build construction bays, sensor pods or wet labs as well as units within the annexed sea itself, which is the main lab space for bioengineering, viral tech, swarm tests and so on. The composition of this rented sea is utterly customisable. Neighbouring wharfs encircle a body of liquid with almost nothing in common other than being heavier than the atmosphere.

#

The company has owned Diane for longer than 7235 has been around. Corporations live at the scale of a species, rather than a lifetime. Back in the fogged time this moon's purchase and retooling was a gamble on a then forthcoming techno-political turn. Not a complete mistake, but Diane now has barely more than 7% rented space in use. However the moon still runs outside of a loss, is self-sufficient, and supports an inestimable number of lives over its centuries of activity. Wet construction and maintenance take human labour. A project will run across generations before a research arc is completed in a choral gene sump, kilometres across and lousy with improvisations and hacks. Quasi-municipal buildings concerned with infrastructure

decided by them alone, but is handed off in part to a relevant *Mechanic*.

A full analysis of why a *GM* might let this outcome be decided by chance, rather than making the decision themselves is outside the remit of this document, but it is worth observing that with various frequency a *GM* could use such mechanics to put an outcome outside of the control of either them or the players to some degree.

The relevant *Mechanic* in our example could be what is often called a "Ability check" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7) which is used when a player attempts to have their character perform an action where success is not certain. Like items, characters frequently have values attached to them. The character can, on one level, be broken down into a number of values for various attributes. In *5E* these are referred to as "ability scores" and are "Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, and they typically range from 3 to 18 for most adventurers" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7). In making an *Ability Check* a player will roll a twenty sided dice (D20), add to this the value of their character's relevant *Ability Score*, with the intent of surpassing the target number or "difficulty class" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7) set for this action by the *GM*. The *GM* decides both the *Difficulty Class* for the action based on how difficult the desired outcome appears to be, and which of the character's *Ability Scores* is the relevant

all feature crew accommodation. Canals of algae and flowers provide residents food and essential elements for the atmosphere.

#

Some crew care for the bridge network, which connects wharves to hubs to islands upon islands and more wharves, like a protein chain. Building, repairing, dismantling, sealing - the custodians are uprooted and rebuilt whenever the Diane AI directs them.

#

The AI developed staff training protocols centuries ago which are now company standard. It has barely taxed itself in decades. Most banal jobs like ordering printer material, biological samples, shipping and labour improvement, investment, legal affairs, security and auditing are done through daemon back protocols. Autonomous code. This is the company's biggest achievement; a facility incredibly complex but also sublimely stupid and therefor utterly discrete.

#

Agent 7235 drops down from orbit and around to Farmer Nine on a green-grey polymer skid. Rendered in three minutes, still stinking of ammonia and tacky under the handles, it is good for nine thousand kilometres after which it can be completely recycled. Parts of the skid can allegedly be digested by humans. On the journey over, the agent reads again the authorising dispatch note. It is customarily brief.

one. For example, a player might be called upon to pass an *Ability Check* by rolling a *D20* plus their character's *Constitution* value of 8, to see whether their character develops an addiction as a result of using heroin, an action which the *GM* has given a *Difficulty Class* of 25.

When establishing the *Difficulty Class* the *GM* might choose to take into account one or more values attributed to the item being used. Within the *TTRPG* manual's list of items the listing for "heroin" might include a relevant value, such as its addictiveness rendered as a number value, in order to distinguish it other potential anaesthetics. Within this hypothetical example *TTRPG's* world, heroin has a relatively high order of addictiveness, and so it's listing carries the attribute "addictiveness" and value "20". The *GM* uses this value in order to establish the basic *Difficulty Class* that the player must beat. In this example they have raised the probability of unwanted addiction even further, perhaps in response to how the game's narrative is developing so far, or to shape where it might go next.

These examples should begin to give an image of the way in which items can be handled within a *TTRPG*. The same principle often applies to more abstract things. For example, the manual may include lists of "skills" which a character can acquire, or might already be possessed by character which theirs encounters. Each *Skill* might have various values attached to it in

7235 had done many visits on less direction. However, these were in the company's orthodox interests of mining, storage and production. Diane is a rarely visited, or considered, piece of the company's history.

#

Slowing to a stop the agent sighs and slides wetly from the skid.

#

7235 looks about the off-white hex patterned interior of Farmer Nine's south dock. That yellow bracket fungus is dripping rust down the wall and green damp-dwelling slime is stretching up to meet it. The room is pulsing in the blue glow powered by 7235's habitual fidgeting. The agent stops flicking the silicone data-port cover with sticky gloves and the blue light dims.

#

This site is a dump.

#

Dented and cracked *Expanda-Pol* crates pile in a filthy sprawl completely against lease agreements.

#

Little organic trickles that refuse to fully mix run across smashed tamper seals as 7235 fails to navigate this barn without disturbance.

#

order that it can be processed through a mechanic. If the example *Skill* was "coding" it might have values which could be favourable modify a roll when attempting to write a piece of custom software within a set time limit. The *Skill* of coding could have other values relating to how much the character could earn selling their skilled labour as a coder, or how regularly they need to conduct research in order to maintain their knowledge of contemporaries coding languages. Within the game, *Skills* function very similarly to items, in that on one level they modify something which encounters them.

The final type of list that is relevant here is that of "Non Playable Characters" (NPCs). These are the cast of characters within the game's world which are controlled by the *GM*. This cast is generally drawn from with degrees of pre-planning and improvisation in order for the characters controlled by the players to have other beings to engage with. Depending on the *TTRPG* system being used, these *NPCs* are likely to have stats in a manner similar to that of the player controlled characters. They might also possess skills and items, which in turn have their own attributes, values, and capacity to engage with *Mechanics*.

NPCs also have the potential to have other properties in relation to their own history, personality, and desires as written by their author. The *NPC* might have a backstory in which a previous event has left them with a

Outside.

\#

Hexa-Deck that should be white is crossed with spews of claylike sludge. Scuffed non-slip embossing forms a sea of white Xs between low raised scars of dark red. The whole area is twenty or so meters wide, walled off with large shipping containers, the rotting parts of mixers and churners.

\#

7235 steps on from the dock door. Ahead a busted 150kl enzyme tank is resting on its side, one end corroded out to leave a hole to the rest of the wharf. Through the eye shaped hole 7235 can see people running, maybe children, modded suits lit red. They kick up the sediment as they run, vanishing long before the agent stumbles through the crumbling tank.

\#

The space here is huge. The shipping containers are piled to each side and everything is caked in brown and red sediment. A straight path runs though this mess like the bed of a recently dammed river. The banks are pocked with holes.

\#

To 7235 the stacks look impossible but they can see footprints and wonder if the children have disappeared into one of the holes. Temporary site-lights line the path ahead, making the dark of the banks above even harder to see into. A few hundred

strong preposition to distrust characters from a certain location or within a certain employment. In a comparable manner to the way in which the heroin becomes a modifier which, through a dice roll either develops addiction in a character or not, *NPCs* are able to modify other actions by the players through their characters. A player might have decided that they wish their character to speak to an *NPC* and convince them to assist them in climbing over a wall which they cannot scale on their own. Through the interaction of the player in role as their character and the *GM* in their role as this *NPC* it could be established that due to something disclosed about the player characters passed the *NPC* refuses to help them. The line of progression desire, to scale the wall with the help of the *NPC* is now closed. The player's character must modify their plans and attempt something else.

The modification effect of the player character to *NPC* encounter is not limited to pass-fail situations. The encounter might open up new opportunities not considered, such as the *NPC* having a key to a gate in the wall. They might be the inspiration for a completely different approach, resulting for example in the player character no longer having any reason to pass the wall. In fact these interactions have the potentially to completely the players direction in and approach to the world of the *TTRPG*, all due to the modifying capacity of the values attached to that *NPC*.

metres ahead the gorge twists sharply, hiding everything beyond.

\#

7235 walks on under the lights, still mindful of their footing.

\#

Before the twist in the path they find a downed light pole. Silt run-off from the bank has bent the site-lights' anchor and it now shines back up the wall, here bright red and waxy. This light picks out something else is in the stacks. Studded into the sediment are metre wide yellow objects starting a little above head height and semi-opaque. The surface weave looks similar to other flexi separation membranes printed on site but the pattern is wild as it accommodates additional circuitry and bone. Inside these vessels is a thick liquid. A bubble moves very slowly upward.

\#

The agent now sees that the red clay bank is blistered with these forms which weep run-off into shadow. 7235 can see the vesicles are laid out in precise lines. Beaded blood along fast scratched skin. Lines cover the banks in rows and are broken by a scattering of gaps. 7235 finds themself thinking of something they had once seen written on a forearm with a razor, seeping through wrapped bandage. Almost legible, but completely incomprehensible.

\#

Turning away from the bank, 7235 steps over the twisted light pole and walks on

The presence in *TTRPG* manuals of lists of things which constitute the world, and function as modifiers is one of the main reasons why this PhD Output takes that same form. It is important to note that the playing of a *TTRPG* requires more than one manual. In *5E* for example, each player will have access to the "Player's Handbook" (Crawford et al., 2014). The *GM* however, has the "Dungeon Master's Guide" (Mearls & Crawford, 2014), which contains the information required for their role as distinct from the players. 5E also uses a third book[2] called the "Monster Manual" (Mearls et al., 2014) which is a bestiary of the kind of creatures one can encounter within the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons. Each entry contains lore regarding that creature to assist with role playing, along with stats and mechanics which might be specific to that particular creature type and its unique capacities.

Each of these three *5E* books contains information on the system which underpins the game, lists of things which can be integrated into this system and have the potential to modify it, and other material which I will refer to as "provocations". Provocations are things within each book which are to serve as inspiration for creative choices or challenges toward preconceptions and clichés. In *5E*, these Provocations are primarily; artwork which represents characters, settings, objects, and events, quoted fragments of prose from novels set within the *5E* world, and unattributed quotes of lore, and

towards the bend. The lamps stop before the corner but there is enough ambient light to go by. Even so, 7235 turns on the suit's head torch, and a white disc marks where they now look.

#

Past the corner the banks fall back. Not a trench but an open field far into the horizon ahead. The ground is flat, and the now familiar white Xs still appear at intervals, so this is still a platform above sea and not one of the moon's mountains. The size of this open space is improbable. Platforms are built alongside the construction of their facilities and labs. What's more, these seem to cover the entire body of liquid with no obvious access. 7235 imagines an abandoned bowl of food capped in mould. Silhouetted ahead there are some interruptions to the skyline. A mixed handful of upright and horizontal shipping containers, some pulled by flapping tarps stand a few kilometers off.

#

7235's head torch flickers to remind them that they need to keep moving. The batteries on these cheap suits are small to counter the weight of the geriatric skin technology and they flick off the spotlight and head toward the circle of upright containers on kinetic charge glow alone.

#

The ground grows thick, the embossed marks of the printed non-slip surface

miscellanea such as maps, or time-lines of historical events within the world.

This division of information across books, and across the asymmetric roles of *GM* and players is not unique to *5E*, but *5E* set it out in a very clear manner. The game of a *TTRPG* occurs at the meeting between *GM* and players, and across chance based *Mechanics* and role play which is itself a meeting between the established lore of the *5E* world, the specific history of the game as it is being played, and the capacity of player/*GM* to improvise within this.

disappearing. Underfoot the floor becomes irregular, the red clay sits in ranges, lines of sediment or subsurface veins. The blue light distorts depth and 7235 can't tell if their feet are sinking or if fatigue is pulling them downward.

#

In this light the agent feels like they are walking up the back of a huge and ancient hand, radiating veins and tendons which hold beneath the slipping skin, conceivably about to pull the ridge up onto fingertips and flex like an insect. The ground is definitely sloping, leading up towards the standing blocks and the strung tarps. The readout on the suit's forearm is crude, stating only that the outside is bad for a body and its organs. 7235 increases their speed and the blue pulse brightens. The enlivened work ethic of mild panic.

#

7235 is jogging across a field which is growing steeper, lifting them up. The ground feels swollen with fluid that never breaks the surface. There is no landmark to look back on as the turn in the gorge hides all the floodlights from here. There is just enough glow to the atmosphere to silhouette the standing formation ahead.

#

Now unable to stop, 7235 keeps on and their mind drifts under this rhythm.

#

They imagine the ice farmed from comets travelling across space and then stretched

Field Notes on Agents Part Two; The TTRPG Manual as collection of diagrams

This document (and a portion of the PhD Output as a whole) follows from a personal observation about a resonance between the processes in *TTRPGs* and an approach to art practice. This approach is one that sees both the production of art, and the point where it meets an audience as unstable, dynamic, and based in a negotiation with things outside of the artist's direct control. Firstly, this approach is one that does not seek to instil control over unstable dynamism and those exterior things, but attempts to articulate even the individual artist as engaged in a collaboration with various exteriors. These exteriors include such things as pre-existing systems and processes, plagiarized material, and methods of delivery. The collaboration with exteriors involves feedback loops, a kind of dynamism which is emphasised by the use of pre-existing systems/processes/material/methods in contexts and combinations other than those they were intended for. Secondly, this approach sees the points where the thing produced by the artist meets the audience as another site of collaborative production through dynamic instability. The approach welcomes audience agency as another variable which creatively, and destructively, modifies the artwork.

out around this ball of rock, forming the vast oceans of Diane. They see it fill with organisms, plants and tiny machines, all which repeatedly live and die and in turn give birth or rise to infection and mutation while always hopeful of escape. Walls hold them in, then are opened. Particles and waves through filters which dilate. Memories are held in the liquid, a mind getting more complex with neural pathways made of sea scum, of rare earth minerals, of familial relations and habits. Pulling back, 7235 imagines those comets in the Kuiper belt where this sea had been born, and those others which escaped beyond Neptune, a pulsing disk, an areola in space. No, maybe an eye. No, maybe a sore.

\#

The standing formation is now close, the jog becomes a sweating scramble with blue glowing limbs all reaching into the floor for purchase. Hands stretch the membrane and grab engorged cables through the skin. They are right under the tall stones now, for that is clearly what they are, whether calcified, petrified or ejected from a body. Pearls, gallstones, sacred bezoars. Still bearing the signifiers of shipping units but with grossly imprecise or utterly complex forms, the material is an amberish sebum, crystalline and alive with flaws and impurities, reflecting and refracting.

\#

7235 leans an aching arm against one standing stone where their touch cracks a surface bubble and then holds. They let their head drop toward their chest and knees

In an *TTRPG*, neither the process or outcome of a game is known by any party involved, or dictated by the rules established in the manuals. To use the terminology of philosopher Gilles Deleuze in "Logic of Sense" (Deleuze, 1990), the game is a number of "events" which modify "series" throughout the structure of rules, habits, history and participants. Philosopher James Williams explains that an "event" can be understood as the "introduction of change and difference" to a "continuing series of processes" (Williams, 2008, pp. 1–2). What is important for the current purposes is that an *Event* is "something that runs through a series but that is also transformed by it" (Williams, 2008, p. 2). According to Williams, the Deleuzian *Series* should not be thought of as "inert and passive receivers of an excitation" such as chain of marbles which when struck at one end transmit kinetic energy along their line (Williams, 2008, p. 2). Instead, the relation between *Event* and *Series* is better understood like an "emulsion where two substances that cannot be blended form a temporary novel mix while drawing energy from an external excitation" (Williams, 2008, p. 2).

One way that the approach to art practice I have developed over the course of this PhD can be understood is as trying to centre this relationship between *Events* and *Series*. One method employed is by taking parts of a structure from one area, *TTRPGs*, and laying it over another, art. This

bend while their sight rests on the hole which draws open at the centre of this stone circle.

\#

7235 catches a flash of red light reflected through and across the stones as the children appear from all sides, herding the agent's unresisting body into the hole, watching as the blue light winked out within.

\#

process is one I have referred to as "Diagrammatics", and draws from the work of Deleuze's work with psychoanalyst Félix Guattari on "diagrams" and "abstract machines";

> "We define the abstract machine as the aspect or moment at which nothing but functions and matters remain. A diagram has neither substance nor form, neither content nor expression.[40] Substance is a formed matter, and matter is a substance that is unformed either physically or semiotically. Whereas expression and content have distinct forms, are really distinct from each other, function has only "traits," of content and of expression, between which it establishes a connection: it is no longer even possible to tell whether it is a particle or a sign (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 141).

I employ my own approach to diagrams as "constellations of processes"[3] whilst also referring to the work of other artists and researchers who have furthered their work on the subject, most notable those involved in the "Diagram Research Use and Generation Group" (DRUGG) ('Plague of Diagrams', n.d.).

A working description for *Diagrammatics*, as employed in my research, would be as follows;

- A diagram is a system of modifying processes which make up a

Well done young bucko, you are the X-Pop sensation Si-5.

You are an unbelievably handsome ibix, your modified cognition implants are subject to a huge number of corporate gag orders and 3 ongoing lawsuits. There may well be someone out there who knows what's inside you, but it is not you. You are *very* handsome.

As you were, and turn to page 50 of Ahuman Use

concept.

- Diagrammatics is the process of applying the diagram to something other than that which it was extracted from

There are a number of historical precedents for this process. A most simple example would be the artist Guy Debord's note that "A friend recently told me that he had just wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London" (Debord, 2006, p. 11). The concept of using a map of London to navigate is the *Diagram*. The process of pushing the region of Harz through this *Diagram* is *Diagrammatics*.

Another historical precedent for this type of *Diagrammatics* is to be found in forms of divination. In the practice of "Cartomancy" a deck of cards originally produced for playing games, is redeployed as a device for reading the future. The concept "deck of playing cards" is the diagram, the process of *Diagrammatics* is in pushing "the desire to know the future" (or "the desire to convince another of a prediction of their future") through this *Diagram*.

The process of *Diagrammatics* is a dialectic one. The result comes from the struggle between the concept within the *Diagram* collapsing whilst modifying what it is applied to. This struggle results in the *Diagram* being

Ghost Crew [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

altered because the process of pushing anything through it transforms it through this new context. On the other side, the process of *Diagrammatics* causes any number of abrasions, swellings, and folds. Some parts simply won't fit through, others expand when given space, and many are brought into new configurations.

Artist Dean Kenning describes this modifying through *Diagrams* in terms of "alienation" (Kenning, 2014). One's habits and narratives of familiarity are unpicked by the *Diagrammatic* process and the thing becomes strange and transformed, yet still undeniably the same thing.

The *Diagrammatic* function of alienation has a number of applications. In terms of art practice, it is a powerful tool to break the artist out from a limited set of paths of engagement with a thing based on experience with it, and things associated with comparable things. *Diagrammatics* perform what Deleuze and Guattari termed "Deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 3). The previous sense of a thing is broken open, and a new one put in its place. In this manner, *Diagrammatics* sits alongside such established techniques as musician Brian Eno's "Oblique Strategies" cards (Schneider, 2014), and artist Yoko Ono's "Grapefruit: a book of instructions and drawings" (Ono, 2000).

While writing this thesis I encountered the following post on social media platform Twitter. The post by user @Proton_31 consists of the statement, "Yoko Ono was making RPGs over a decade before D&D so this is more old school, the true old school" and images of four works from Grapefruit (@Proton_31, 2019). One of the works is "Conversation Piece" from 1962, the text follows in its entirety;

> "Bandage any part of your body. If people ask about it, make a story and tell. If people do not ask about it, draw their attention to it and tell. If people forget about it, remind them of it and keep telling. Do not talk about anything else. 1962 Summer" (Ono, 2000).

Ono's *Conversation Piece* is a *Diagram* which charts a system of modifying processes. *Diagrammatics* takes place as an outside context is pushed through the *Diagram*. This context includes the first social encounter after the work is begun. During this encounter, the *Diagram* restricts, expands, and folds a number of its aspects such as conversation, thought, affect, etc. Likewise the *Diagram* is itself modified as it changed from an instruction read and decided upon, to something experienced. The person performing *Conversation Piece* finds the *Diagram* changed as a result. This two fold transformation continues with each successive encounter. Perhaps the person performing becomes more skilled at extending the duration of the

THE MOST IMPORTANT ORGAN [CARE, DIAGRAM]

I will draw for you the diagram of the most important organ for your work. Time passes.

#

I start by modelling an approximation of your body out of sculpey. It is flattering in its pose, but its dimensions are accurate. You are dressed in the coverall of the party. I go a little overboard with the base which is not only flocked and sprinkled with delicately dry brushed polystyrene boulders, but features a scantily clad snottling clutching your calf and looking up at you with fear and adoration. You look onward toward some unseen horizon.

#

After finishing the highlights, particularly your cheekbones, the area of your chest and stomach exposed by the open buttons of your coverall, and the metallic holo colour I have taken the liberty of rendering your hair in I begin to draw the actual organ. Taking the hand-wand from the 3d printer, I begin to draw lines which can hold their position in space supported only by the first point of contact with your body, which is where the organ begins, under your lowest left rib. I explain what I am drawing (because that is how these diagrams work) as I draw it.

#

social encounter and in doing so has transformed the *Diagram*, increasing the power of one area (duration of conversation) relative to others. Perhaps the person performing becomes interested in something right on the periphery of the work, the moment when the other person in the social encounter demonstrates they are aware of the performer's bandage, but has not yet spoken to this awareness. In this example, the *Diagram* could remain the same, but with a significantly reconfigured emphasis:

● The performer experiments with bandage placement, considering social codes and levels of visibility through clothing equally considered.

● The performer experiments with techniques of speech, body language which might maintain another person's awareness of the bandage but without allowing them to go as far as to speak about it.

● The performer experiments with location and time of encounter, the kind of person that could potentially stay in this uneasy social space indefinitely, and reconsidered all of the above tactics, tuning them toward this one target.

The *Diagram* is as plastic as any context which could be pushed through it. It can be repaired to an approximation of its previous configuration, but it will

"You need to imagine that you are in an ocean and you are swimming. You have always been swimming, you have no frame of reference outside of swimming. It is always night time."

#

"Inside of you, between your liver and your stomach is a small ball, about the size of a golf ball"

#

"From this ball I want you to imagine strands radiating. Now these strands branch and curl like Spanish Moss."

#

"These strands sense something which you cannot see, or smell, or sense with another organ. The layer of the world which this particular organ I am drawing accesses is one that is not perceptible without it, but one it is perceived you will see its shape with all of your other senses"

#

"Excuse me, I need to now play some music while I continue to the next stage of this diagram"

#

On the floor next to my table and its covering of pots of acrylic paint, empty pill packets and bloody feathers is an old sea chest covered in elaborate carvings. I open

always retain the trace of every other it has taken.

The Twitter user's observation that with *Grapefruit* Ono was "making RPGs" (@Proton_31, 2019) highlights another reason why this PhD Output takes the *Diagram* of *TTRPGs* and pushes art through it. *Tabletop Role Playing Games* are themselves collections of *Diagrams* through which things are pushed. These *Diagrams* operate at different levels which overlap. Towards the smaller scale an object to be used by players of *NPC* functions in this way.

Here is an example for the *5E Player Handbook*, "Ram, portable 4 gp 35 lb" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 150). The portable battering ram, a tool for opening doors, has some properties set by the manual. It has a value attributed to it in in-game currency of 4 gold pieces, and a weight of 35 pounds. This sets up a range of potential ways it could shape the decisions of a player, as well as well as implying limits as to whether a character might be able to physically lift it, or financially afford it. However, most of the shape of the *Diagram* of the portable ram will be established, and then continually modified by the players and the *GM*. For example, a situation might arise in the game where the *GM* decides that the size of the ram (a detail not specified in the manual) will potentially draw unwanted attention to the character carrying it, opening up potential pathways for development

this now, and reaching inside press a button which starts a song playing from inside.

\#

The song is of a woman singing accompanied by an electric guitar and a small drum kit. It sounds like it as recorded live as when it begins you hear the sounds of an audience talking and drinking. The song plays and you feel a tension around your stomach which grows as the music continues. The woman sings "'Let's kidnap each other, And start singing our song" and the feeling is overwhelming.

\#

You wake up on the sofa of an unfamiliar house. The TV is on. It's a 1970s road movie that has been digitized, data-moshed, re-edited and supplemented with deep fakes all dictated by algorithm. This is all TV though, and this particular movie's genealogy likely involves not just multiple original films and TV shows and video game cutscenes but also multiple recent recombined and rebuilt versions of these. This is all TV.

\#

The TV shows a school shooting run in reverse over which is superimposed an explosion of flowers with each petal cutting a wet trace through the image underneath.

\#

You feel nauseous. The TV algorithm senses your disconnect and stabs around

of play as well as reconfiguring the player's focus on their character. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* has expanded and made more complex a number of attributes of the character which might have previously been unseen, most notably how conspicuous they are and decision making connected to this property. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* could continue to be modified through feedback loops of decisions between players, *GM*, established properties of the object, and mechanics within the game. In the previous example the *GM* states that if the character enters a crowded inn carrying the ram they will draw attention to themselves. The player role playing the character might respond that they will use a combination of their character's skills and background experience, along with some other handy materials, and disguise the *Portable Ram* as something less conspicuous such as a barrel of beer. If the *GM* agrees to this, it could open up a number of new foci such as the whether the character has the skills to perform this deception and whether the *GM* decides an *Ability Check* is needed, whether carrying a barrel of beer into an inn raises a different kind of attention, whether the character has the interpersonal skills to explain it away and so on and so on. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* continues to modify the context of the game, while being modified by it.

On a slightly larger scale, the *Diagram* of the *Portable Ram* is overlapped by numerous others which come into focus or fade away as the game

in the dark like a drunk trying to find something that will connect with you. The screen stutters through images. A pair of severed hands modelling knitted gloves. A round table duck race. A church roof fundraising thermometer that becomes a dog's penis. But it's too late, your attention is gone, you get up and after a panic strobe of abstract pornography the TV reluctantly turns itself on to standby and waits for your return.

#

You wheel yourself to the closed blinds and poke a finger through to look at what is outside. Under street lights is a road devoid of life that could more or less be on any landmass at any time since the mid 20th century.

#

You are clearly here waiting for something. You hope you will have either remembered what it is by the time it happens, or it is sufficiently pronounced that you will both spot it and instinctively know how to respond.

#

At this point you notice that the light under the door shining in from the hallway has just been blocked out, and that someone is standing directly outside.

#

The song playing from the old sea chest covered in elaborate carvings ends, and with it does the hallucination or day dream or shift of attention or whatever you

continues but nevertheless have the capacity to compress, expand, and fold. The game *Event* "the character enters the inn" is a *Diagram*, and the context, including the fact that the character is carrying a *Portable Ram*, is what is pushed through it. Here the shape of that *Diagram*, with its pathways connected in *Series* to the suspicion of other patrons have expanded attributes of the *Portable Ram* which are not accounted for in the manual, namely its size, bulk, and the response from other characters to it being brought into this place.

The manner in which *Diagrams* overlap and are modified by other Diagrams is articulated by philosopher Brian Massumi in "A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari" (Massumi, 1992). As is implied by the word "Deviations" in the title, and in the introduction which states that "The drift is as much away from the "originals" as toward them" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8). Therefore Massumi's use of concepts is not interchangeable with that of Deleuze and Guattari, either in collaboration or in their individual works. I am drawing attention to this because Massumi, in creating "deviations" is responding to the provocation of Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) which he sees as its invitation to the reader to "lift dynamism out of the book and incarnate it in a foreign medium, whether painting or politics" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8). Massumi emphasises the this idea with the following;

want to call it.

#

"Excuse me" I say again. You have missed some of my explanation of the diagram which represents the most important organ for your work. You see that a complex spray of lines has been drawn with the printer filament, exploding out from the body of the figure of you and it's adoring Snottling leg-maiden.

#

While your mind was somewhere else, I have added various other elements to demonstrate how this organ is not something which functions in isolation, but is contingent upon outside materials and event, which in turn have a relationship which is independent of you. The diorama now includes a crude though extensive animatronic section where a vast number of dogs are sleeping in various improvised structures on a tiny Greek Island.

#

It's remarkable that with only a small number of Arduino boards I have created a system which feeds back as the dogs shift through levels of sleep, their breathing, snoring, and sleep-woofs, causing their neighbours to rise up closer to consciousness but never quite waking before then in turn sink lower and twitching in brown, and speckled thigh muscles and flexing hock joints.

#

"[Deleuze] calls his kind of philosophy "Pragmatics" because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that can either enter into or don't, but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8).

Massumi's book takes Deleuze and Guattari's model of the tool kit made up of parts stolen and which in turn is offered for future theft, and builds a deviated tool kit which expands, contracts, and fold the former.

This PhD Output draws from Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" and from Massumi "A User's Guide" in a number of ways. Of importance to this document though, is the manner in which both of those books present a tool kit of concepts to be stolen and modified. A *TTRPG* manual also has the potential[4] to be such a tool kit, whilst also offering insight into an approach to art practice which is concerned with the modulation of self though systems which emerge and mutate.

You watch this murmuration rippled across the robotic animals and your eyes follow how, although the patterns are on the periphery of predictability as far as your brain is concerned, it is hard to tell where the dogs begin and those Spanish Moss-like printer filament lines end.

\#

There are other areas of the diagram now, but they themselves are describable only in metaphor. One area is populated exclusively with rodent musk, another is best described as the moment when all parties playing an online multiplayer first person shooter decide against the overwhelming authority of the game, their habit forming experience, and multiple language barriers, to do something with their 3 minutes together other than shooting one another in an act of zero sum serotonin robbery, and create something on the edge of the game's limits.

\#

I place the printing wand back on the table.

\#

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Remember who you are.

The shuttle takes off again behind you leaving on standing on a huge expanse of green, interrupted at regular intervals with yellow-brown spikes pointing straight up to points high above you. These spikes are altered with functional intent. The ones nearest you support various buildings raised up into the air and covered in lights and traffic sensors.

Think carefully and turn to page 54 of Ahuman Use

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Dog Stand 2 [CARE, DIAGRAM]

Field Notes on Agents; Endnotes

1. The example of a drug is used here because it demonstrates how Mechanics can involve a player attempting to perform an action for one purpose while negotiating the possibility it will also perform an additional action which is outside of their control. For example the manual for the *TTRPG* "Cyberpunk" lists a number of drugs such as "Boost" which increases a characters Intelligence attribute for duration dictated by a dice roll (Pondsmith et al., 1993). In addition the drug also has value which determines the probability of addiction and tolerance, meaning the character must have "more Boost within twelve hours or be reduced to screaming fits and hallucinations" (Pondsmith et al., 1993, p. 122).

2. Dungeons and Dragons also includes a large number of other books which expand the system and world, however these three are the "core" requirements to play the game and are marketed as such (Mearls, Crawford, Perkins, & Wyatt, 2018).

3. My approach to the use of diagrams should only be thought of as a departure from Deleuze and Guattari's rather than a reflection of their concepts.

Your diary chip beeps and you remember someone who is meant to pick you up as you become aware how utterly empty this place is under the flood lights. There is nothing nearby but the terminal building. Modern political attitudes have rendered security checkpoints obsolete and now the building seems to be home some light manufacturing facilities, as well as what's left of the food, drink, and pharmaceutical concessions.

You see a vehicle approaching:

4. The word "potential" needs to do a lot of heavy lifting because there is a tension within any *TTRPG* manual between its provocation for reader-player to adhere to the structure it sets out and it's provocation to improvise, to bend, and to potentially depart from this structure. Not all *TTRPGs* adhere to the same philosophy in regards this tension. Some lean heavily towards anticipating where play might lead and having detailed rules to definitively resolve the question of how something need to be done, as well as focusing on probability to use definitive dice rolls instead of speculation. A good example of this philosophy is the *TTRPG* "Eastman and Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness" (ELTMNT) (Wujcik, 1987, 1990). In place of many decisions which could be made by a group playing the game, or even an individual player, the manual provides for these to be made by dice role. An example is the section which deals with randomised character generation.

Characters in *ELTMJT's* science fiction setting are primarily animal-human hybrids and through a series of dice rolls a player can be allocated a species from around a hundred animals, with different statistical weighting depending on rarity in the game world. The player then uses further dice rolls to establish the cause of the mutation and where the character presents on a continuum between "entirely human appearing" and "entirely animal

appearing". It should be stressed that most *TTRPG* manuals, *ELTMNT* included, do not insist that such systems always be used over player choice, group consensus and role play. Within the cultural history of *TTRPGs* there is what is referred to as "rule zero"('Rule Zero', n.d.). *Rule Zero* holds that before any other rules, the first priority is that the game be fun and that players should be free to deviate from the rules to ensure this. Or as worded in the first edition of "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons",

> "This game is unlike chess in that the rules are not cut and
> dried. In many places they are guidelines and suggested
> methods only" (Gygax, 1978, p. 8).

However, the presence of random character generation systems, or detailed statistical breakdowns of objects encourage or at least provide the opportunity for rules which are more fixed.

In contrast, some rule-sets lean away from this and fashion a game from the bare minimum of material. Some game designers have explored the potential of the "one page RPG" who's rules fit on a single side of A4. A popular example of a *One Page RPG* is writer and game designer Grant Howitt's "Honey Heist", "A game in which you play a criminal bear with two stats: CRIMINAL and BEAR" (Howitt, n.d.). *Honey Heist* sets the context

Then there is a smell of garlic and your ears pop but its your veins where you feel it and then you realise you could see this whole time and also hear and smell and everyone in the circle of people is looking at you.

that you are a group of criminal bears attempting to execute a huge and complex theft of honey from "Honeycon 2017".

Each player's character has a "bear type", "role" and "descriptor" (a single adjective which implies character and backstory) assigned by dice roll. Character's each begin with stats "bear" and "criminal" set at 3 each, when an outcome of an action is uncertain a player rolls a die and it passes if the result is equal to or less than the relevant stat. The manual ascribes the "bear stat" to be used whenever the player wishes their character to attempt something which could be considered "bear stuff" and the "criminal" stat to be used for "anything not directly related to being a bear".

The game has one last two part *Mechanic* whereby the character's "bear" and "criminal" stats can shift. If part of the characters plan fails, the "frustration" *Mechanic* moves a point from their "criminal" stat and adds it to their "bear" stat. If the character's plan succeeds the "greed" mechanic moves a point from "bear" to "criminal". If either the bear or criminal stat reaches a value of 6, the character either returns to the wild or leaves for a life of crime, respectively and the game ends.

The balancing act between becoming too bear, or too criminal is also a useful metaphor for the balance between structure and collapse which the

user of a *TTRPG* manual to inform art practice must perform. The character generation system based entirely on rice rolls has value, but following it rigidly is less a collaboration than deferring to another authority, even if it is an authority we as artist chose to follow. On the other hand, there needs to be enough structure or process to act as provocation, whether through stimulation of resistance.

The place where this balance takes place is where art practice is best understood as *play.*

Under years of sugar deposits from the herds of bull aphids which occasionally migrate across this world befouling everything their path, you can discern two signs:

"Fast-way travel-belt to Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty"

and

"Drugs"

Will you decide to ride the old travel system to the main hub and turn to page 61 of Unknown Lacuna?

Or are you are interested in the other thing turn to page 40 of Ahuman Desire?

Smeared into The Environment [CARE, MANSION, RPG]

This document approaches a contemporary aspect of horror read through

contemporary philosophy. This isn't to say that either the horror or the

philosophy did not exist before the contemporary moment, but that

something about current trends in the use of "horror" in contemporary art

practice will hopefully be made clear.

The work being examined is by Porpentine Charity Heartscape, who's

biography lists her as;

> "a writer, game designer, and dead swamp milf in Oakland. Her
> work includes xenofemme scifi/fantasy, cursed videogames,
> and globe-spanning sentient slime molds" (Heartscape, n.d.).

The particular work now addressed is one of Heartscape's collaborations

with the artist, game designer and musician Ada Rook (Geffen, 2018). "No

World Dreamers: Sticky Zeitgeist Episode 1, Hyperslime" (Hyperslime)

is the first in a series of self produced, episodic video games made by

the artists (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). My analysis of this artwork will

be done through the philosophical tools of post-human feminism, and in

particular those of philosopher Patricia MacCormack as presented in the book chapter "Lovecraft's Cosmic Ethics" (MacCormack, 2016). It is in this chapter that MacCormack proposes to;

> "not ask what his stories mean but how we can use them today, perhaps for unique purposes, to imagine becoming the horrors he evokes toward a vitalistic, activist, and wondrous celebration of otherness, manifested in a variety of ways, from ethics to erotics, and literature to philosophy" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 200).

Lovecraft's supposed "aversion to the carnal" combined with his stories frequent encounters with overwhelming, fleshy, or cosmic immanence allows them to be brought into the unlikely company of philosopher Luce Irigaray (MacCormack, 2016, p. 207). MacCormack asks not for a revision, but a *use* of Lovecraft, queering his writing into an "ethical erotics of alterity" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 209). While being *Used* in this way, Lovecraft's writing remains within the sphere of "horror", though this sphere becomes more heterogeneous, allowing for it to be engaged with not through dread but euphoria. Such a reading of Lovecraft has precedent in the work of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari who see within his work a "becoming animal", which is to say breaking open the concept of human into a "becomings-elementary, -cellular, -molecular, and even Becomings-imperceptible" (Deleuze &

You wander through dusty corridors which were once flanked by concessions for duty free firmware and liminal porno.

Kiosks have long since been knocked through neighbouring booths and wet rooms and sealed into the space for the kind of manufacturing which can only exist in legal ambiguity of the terminal on a diplomatic hub, the status of which will remain in the purview of hundreds of unresolvable legal struggles which are designed to not end before this sector's sun burns out in the far future,

Guattari, 1987, p. 248). Cultural theorist Timothy Laurie offers a succinct

explanation of *becoming* as;

> "[A] way of thinking through changes that modify multiple
> bodies (organic and non-organic) at once, without conforming
> to pregiven structures of identification, representation,
> resemblance or contradiction" (Laurie, 2015, p. 154)

What Deleuze and Guattari celebrate here is the replacing of a singular,

defined self with an openness to the "anomalous [...] a phenomenon

of bordering", or as they borrow Lovecraft's own words, the ""Outsider"

[...] this thing or entity, the Thing, which arrives and passes at the edge"

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 245).

In the words of Lovecraft's Carter "to be aware of existence and yet

to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other

beings" (Lovecraft & Price, 2008b, p. 902). If *becoming* animal, merging

and re-configuring other forms of being, kinship and sensation are not

pushed back in phobic disgust, the question must be asked "horror for

whom?" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 209).

The word "horror" itself becomes slippery under these conditions. I use it

to refer to the genre, signifiers, and indeed some of the sensations felt by

agents within such narratives, as well as those of the audience observing them. However the thing that I bracket out from horror is any assumption of the primacy of order, and the subject as *Man,* the "majoritarian human" distinct from "the various failures to be so, from woman and nonwhite human through to animal, vegetable, and so forth" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 202).

It is my proposal that *Hyperslime* represents a similar horror which denies the human, and displays the same difference-celebrating, erotic possibilities which MacCormack pulls from Lovecraft. I argue that *Hyperslime* is horror, but horror where the majoritarian subject, the one who should be horrified, is absent. It is not a reversal which centres what might otherwise be the antagonist, positioning them in the same structure against the *Majoritarian* male subject. Rather, *Hyperslime* abandons those structures, and forges its own.

Firstly I will establish some of the key concepts used by MacCormack and then trace them through the world of *Hyperslime*. The first of these is the "Ahuman", and while this term has many applications I will start from its position as a theory;

    "Ahuman theory promotes catalysing becoming-other from the

Diagram of The Formless Wastes [DIAGRAM, RPG]

majoritarian or all human privilege and renouncing the benefits of the Anthropocene. [Methods for which include] the use of all manifestations of art to form new terrains of apprehension of the world and encourage new ethical relations between entities" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 21).

In this definition, the Ahuman is positioned across radical animal rights

discourse of abolitionism and a theory of the post-human whilst replacing

"the (now defunct myth of the) human" from which they would otherwise

be orientated and doomed to repeat (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

Rather than bringing the non-human into the human ethical sphere, which

MacCormack considers both impossible and its attempts necessarily

non-consensual, the abolitionist position bases non-human rights upon

the fact "that it is" rather than "what it is" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

More importantly for the subject of this document MacCormack's *Ahuman*

Theory argues against defining animal rights (as this is also to define the

animal from an asymmetric power relation in order to justify exploitation)

and for;

"[A]cknowledging communication is fatally human, so we can never know modes of nonhuman communication and to do so is both hubris and materially detrimental to nonhumans" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

"She is right you know?"

This is perhaps the most crucial aspect of the *Ahuman* for this document's purposes. Difference is to exist on its own terms, and the capturing action of communication is not required to acknowledge this difference.

Hyperslime begins with a flurry of difference, including characters which present as *failures to be human*, without every having their alterity defined. Similarly, communication is presented as an unreliable and withholding process. Following the opening theme song, *Hyperslime* is epigraphed with a quote;

> "Make a 150-lb self-contained, 3-D person into a square-mile thin pancake and you've got a slimy veneer of organic matter of no use to you or the observer puzzled by the thin, gooey-drip man. Suburbias [*sic*] and exurbias [*sic*] are promoters of slime" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

This quote is attributed to Italian architect Paolo Soleri who's concept of low-waste, high population density, self sufficient vertical urban structures which he named *Arcology* appears throughout this narrative[1]. Our story's first protagonist "Ever", considers the quote and posits that they themselves are even further dispersed, and that trapped in their bedroom engaged on with a computer screen they are "Hyperslime". *Ever's*

response to this realisation is to get high, masturbate and surf the internet,

something which is itself one action as under the glow of her network

terminal *Ever* pokes the drug "girl chunks" into their arsehole. *Ever*

comments on the impossibility of describing this drug-data-sex experience;

> "[I]f i wasn't experiencing this, i [*sic*] couldn't describe it and i
> [*sic*] can't remember when i'm [*sic*] not experiencing it what i'm
> [*sic*] not experiencing hypersucrose on my frontal lobe like-"
> (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

Before she is interrupted by a call from work.

The impossibility of language has already been brought up in the human's

relation to the nonhuman. It also surfaces repeatedly in MacCormack's

discussion of *Ahumanity* and Lovecraft's horror where we are shown

"what is possible, while managing to show that it is also unnameable"

(MacCormack, 2016, p. 212). For MacCormack human language is

the "great annihilator of the potentialization of expressivity and affect of

entities that are not counted by the majoritarian human" (MacCormack,

2016, p. 213), but in the world of Lovecraft such language is demonstrably

powerless. Encounters are beyond description, are left (un)recounted as

such. The ethical turn which is executed upon Lovecraft demonstrates the

inadequacy of the word "horror" to account for such experience. "Horror

for some, the very opening of the world to others" (MacCormack, 2016, p.

213). Or as articulated by Lovecraft himself, "Fright became pure awe, and what had seemed blasphemously abnormal now only ineffably majestic" (Lovecraft & Price, 2008b, p. 904).

Returning to *Hyperslime*, *Ever's* collapsing of self, sex and connection becomes a state of ecstasy. The message demanding that she travels to work is a brutal interrupting which brings with it structures of time, language and power all exterior to *Ever* which are relentless, unresponsive, and violently overwhelming. The world outside her room (which she describes as the "Goblin's pit" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017)) is loaded with signs, both literally in the form of adverts for jobs, bands and lost fast food establishments, as well as the rigid structures of time, behaviour, social relations they indicate. *Ever's* chance to pass invisibly into order relies on her getting her bus to work while in constant fear of the drugs and saliva leaking from her underwear. The bus is late, she is going to be late, and she falls into a panic attack. The panic attack itself is represented as the game descends into a gross, nonsense parody of the call and response rhythm game "PaRappa the Rapper" (Matsuura, 1996). *Hyperslime* snaps to a different visual language showing the snap in *Ever's* state of mind, but also leaving the articulation of this as an absence of meaning. "You snooze, you oooze! Then you lose! Control of your holes!" the game shouts at us (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). Mucus, holes,

"She is?"

"Yes. Even just deciding that society as a whole can be represented by a set of individuals is a political move decision. But the manner in which you choose to distil the social is entirely subjective.

Would you fill your Ark with two of every species? Would you follow Karl Marx and choose from the class categories of an athlete, a brain, a basketcase, a princess, and a criminal?

And once you have made that broad mesh, how would you define each of the individual categories? How could you be sure you have set a bias toward face-tanking and underrepresented healers and DPS? No, the analyst that tries to do this betrays that they have an ideological imprint of society and wish to summon it into being through the microcosmic effigy of a group of sick individuals.

No, archetype theory is for boy bands and to be treated with cautious suspicion"

and a failure of meaning leaves this event with no simple explanation such as humiliation or even pleasure. It is an excess.

The *Abject* which philosopher Julia Kristeva describes as "the place where meaning collapses" is not simply the girl chunks leaking from *Ever*, but also *Ever* herself (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). When she first sets out on this trip to work she narrates "i [*sic*] exit from the back of the house like shit" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). *Ever* is the remainder and excess who themselves cannot either hold the outside in or keep it out but is in a constant *Asignified* flow which becomes impossible and traumatic only within the unaccommodating and regimented parts of the world.

As we continue to play the game focused initially on the narrative of *Ever*, more signs of horror perpetuate. The first of these is the user interface that frames the game space, cables and viscera weave into one another frame a screen and text/hyper-link area bringing to mind the 90s point and click horror adventure "Dark Seed" with graphics by H.R. Geiger (Cranford & Dawson, 1992). At the top, a ribbon cable is plugged in through a smashed secondary screen or logo area, leaving only a few letters of the game's title readable. In *Hyperslime*, as in much of Heartscape's other work[2], trash pervades. Everything is a remainder, including characters. Everything is an improvised hack, survival mixed with abandonment and

most importantly not fully nameable. This also extends to the characters

themselves, *Ever* is only described as a girl, her ears and nose suggest

a dog or maybe a goat. It's implied that she is trans[*3], but *Hyperslime*

offers no exposition on her identity. Other characters display equal fluidity,

maybe becoming-robots, maybe becoming-moths. Gender is explicit

though, all are referred to with female pronouns. They are "she", "her" and

"sisters".

MacCormack notes that the remainder as understood as *in-excess-*

of or *less-than* a given *name* or *category* runs through Lovecraftian

horror (MacCormack, 2016, p. 211). The folks of Innsmouth with their

"sides of their necks all shriveled and creased up" (Lovecraft, 2008a,

p. 811), the mercurial Old Ones for whose "abysms of shrieking and

immemorial lunacy" there is no language (Lovecraft, 2008, p. 377) or

various landscapes and objects and experiences which litter the stories.

MacCormack quotes Irigaray;

> ""Already constructed theoretical language does not speak of
> the mucous. The mucous remains a remainder, producer of
> delirium, of dereliction, of wounds, sometimes of exhaustion"
> (Irigaray, To Speak, 244)" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 211).

This connectivity, abjection, transgression is the stuff of horror, but it is

also the stuff of erotics and kinship. The affects of proximity with another

where language is exceeded or inadequate. The two robot sisters in

Hyperslime sit together on a train, one, "Agate" leaning against the other

who narrates;

> "She's in sleep mode. She spends most of her time there. Our
> brains make a lot of connections at super fast high frequency.
> Hard to shut out the bad connections. Everything reminds
> you of something else. Contaminated with information"
> (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

Their default state is porosity, leaky bodies. The characters in *Hyperslime*

are barely defined and what they hold in common is their openness to

the exterior, to the outside, and to block it out is an act of agency. *Agate*

blocks out the connection of thought and meaning but retains that of

touch to be in contact with her sister as a reparative act. Later *Agate* will

visit a convenience store and watch the rotating "honk dogs", remarking

"how nice to be rotated", an empathetic encounter with convenience food

(Heartscape & Rook, 2017). The characters in *Hyperslime* are non-human,

but they are not fixed as one kind of non-human. Any encounter for them

is a *becoming* as their "Anomalous" border is open to the affective charges

of what they encounter (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249).

As the player of the game we are often unsure who "we" are. The first

person narrative flickers between characters often without indication of who is speaking. We have to assume that we are all of the "pack" which the characters make up, while they "continually transform themselves into each other, cross over into each other" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249). The pack is constantly in flux, and is "defined not by its elements, nor by a centre of unification or comprehension. It is defined by the number of dimensions it has" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249), animal-girl drug euphoria dimensions, robot-sister overwhelming empathy dimensions.

What stands out in *Hyperslime* is while its narrative context is one of post-apocalyptic survival, the four characters are not presented as an isolationist group against the rest of the world. The game also presents their transition from total strangers to friends as a seamless non-event. It is as if they were so open and porous that there is no other way it could be. The character's job is to travel out into a swamp and salvage broken parts of downed satellites and one character comments "I like to rub my face on the debris to make sure the radiation is getting the most direct access to my brain" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). The group is open and loving with one another in their fluidity while also being open to difference in the world around them, to be changed by it through drugs, radioactivity, touch or the beautiful leaky swamp they eventually head out into.

In 2012's "Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory" MacCormack states that "The art encounter elucidates the new horror and wonder of being in the asignifed world as a new state of constant ecstasy" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 51). Engaging with art including, or perhaps especially, with horror, is not simply about representing alterity but an affective encounter which breaks open the category of human. This is the argument MacCormack makes for the ecstatic experiences of the characters in Lovecraft's works, as well as the readers experience of these works of art. As we find ourselves adrift in asignification we are becoming *Ahuman*.

I propose that while MacCormack presents a way in which Lovecraft's work can be *Used* to explore a different ethical position, *Hyperslime* presents an ethical plurality on its own. *Hyperslime* can also be engaged with as a kind of *horror which is not*. Bodily, cognitive and social difference, are not presented as needing hygienic eradication but simply are. The primary process by which these characters deal with each other and themselves if through care and love. Characters might experience violent trauma and live in a world of unpredictable trash but there is neither a call for order, nor dialectic refusal of order. What is valuable about this kind of horror, is how it neither exorcises difference nor pulls it to the ethics of the human. MacCormack states that "The ethics of the art-encounter

shows *Becoming-Ahuman* is viable and necessary for new ways of

thinking alterity in the realities of life for oppressed (sub) human subjects"

(MacCormack, 2012, p. 51). *Hyperslime* does exactly this, a queering of

horror to remove the human entirely.

Smeared into The Environment; Bibliography

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Smeared into The Environment; Endnotes

1. [KEYWORD: MANSION]

2. "Most of Heartscape's fiction features "trash women" and "slime girls" messily living and dying in a gooey, trashy future. Clearly, trash is a central motif in her work. Heartscape's reasoning: Although it is disposable, it's also stubbornly irrepressible. And the trash motif extends to her personal life as well. Heartscape describes herself as "trashgender" rather than transgender, and "trashbrained" rather than traumatized, as a way to push back against the static and reductive generalizations haunting those terms" (Kazimarki, 2016).

3. Throughout this document I use the term "trans*" which includes transgender as well as non-binary, genderqueer and other identities. It is an open term which is especially useful when considering individuals whose gender identity is only articulated as not being cisgendered. As theorist Susan Stryker states *Trans** is "a way of pointing to a somewhat related class of phenomena without having to articulate exactly what that is" (Steinmetz, 2018)

Loss [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

The Use of Horror in Art Practice [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

INT. CAVE

THE AGENT, WEARING A BEARSKIN AND WITH HANDS AND MOUTH STAINED WITH BLOOD AND GORE IS SLEEPING ON A PILE OF STRAW NEXT TO A SMALL OPEN FIRE ON SOME LARGE SLABS OF STONE. WIND AND WAVES CAN BE HEARD OUTSIDE AND THE FIRE FLICKERS WHILE CASTING LONG SHADOWS UP THE DAMP BLACK STONE WALLS NEAR US WHILE THE REAR OF THE CAVE IS COMPLETELY DARK. THE AGENT'S EYES OPEN, BUT REMAIN STILL AS THEY BEGIN TO SPEAK.

                    AGENT
                  (Tired)
        We need to undertake some field training. We
        talk about horror frequently in our work,
        but there is room to bring more rigour to
        this understanding of what horror is, and
        why it is of use. We will begin with an
        illustration.

From the rear of the cave comes a squealing, rattling sound. An assistant obscured by the darkness wheels a large television monitor and video player on an AV

trolley up onto the raised slaps, and into view next to the fire. They insert a video cassette and the television turns on and begins to play a film in the middle of a scene.

CUT TO:VIDEO

Two men wearing military uniforms of the early Chinese Republic are running through a nineteenth century Chinese prison. The men are chased by a ghoulish figure wearing ragged and bloody seventeenth century traditional Chinese dress, with long talons, deathly white skins, and trails of blood from their eyes and mouth. The ghoul corners the two men with their backs to an iron gate. Just as the ghoul is about to reach them they each take a deep breath, covering their noses and mouths with their hands. The ghoul stops, as if no longer able to see the men if they do not breath. With talons raised and just inches from the trapped men, the ghoul's empty gaze pans across the men. The men show increasing discomfort from holding their breath, their faces turn red and the sound of a heartbeat fades in and increases in volume. The

ghoul's gaze is fixed on one man who is sweating with the

effort of not taking a breath and the heartbeat speeds up

rapidly. The man's eyes bulge and swivel and just when

it seems he must take a breath he pinches the armpit of

the other man who screams in pain and is then pounced on

by the ghoul.

                                           CUT TO:CAVE

The assistant stops the video and turns off the television.

The agent, still lying down, begins to speak again.

                         AGENT
              This training is concerned with a series of
              propositions which are as follows.

              One: The   genre   of   horror   can   inform
              approaches to art practice that are concerned
              with something other than signification and
              representation.

              Two: Horror frequently presents situations
              in which meaning, law, and language collapse.
              This is as true for the characters on screen
              as it is for the audience.

              Three: The   inability   to   fully   account
              through language is a property of not only
              art viewing, but the cycles of viewing and
              making in art practice.

(to assistant)
        Play the next example.

The assistant inserts a new video into the video player.

The television turns on showing the words "New World

Pictures".

                                        CUT TO:VIDEO

A naked man is sitting on the floor of a room in complete

darkness save for 20 lit candles in a square formation

around him. He is sweating and holding a small metal cube

between his knees and is looking at it intensely. There

is a disturbing soundtrack of synthesiser music, the man

arches his head back and we see the floorboards shake and

rise up with steam from beneath. A figure appears in the

darkness and removes a veil from their head revealing

and unnaturally angular silhouette. Another figure rises

and we see they are dressed in black leather clothing

and have pins protruding from the skin of their face

and head. The naked man lifts his head up and screams.

A series of people look on in terror at something we

cannot see. A bloody bone rises out of a shallow puddle of blood as if it is emerging from the floor itself. A woman screams, and a half-formed body crawls across the floor. A figure dressed in black ascends a wooden staircase dragging a hook along the wall as they do so, leaving a gash in the paint which drips blood.

                              CUT TO:CAVE

The assistant pauses the video, leaving the last image juddering and flickering on the television screen. The agent has still not moved.

                    AGENT
          The horror genre primarily presents the
          anxieties of the dominant power, and assumed
          viewing subject, and as such demonstrates
          what Fredric Jameson referred to as the
          "Political Unconscious" (Jameson, 2007).

          Extracted from the presumptions of dominant
          power and its assumed subject, horror can
          inform art practice in general. To detach a
          horror film from the politics it intentionally
          and unintentionally embodies is sometimes
          easier said than done. However the agency
          recommends tactics of abstraction and removal
          from context.

and zap.

Everything goes curved space and then dry swallow ping pong and then all black, turn to

page 51 of Unknown Lacuna

Elements from a film, whether scenes, score, thematics, dialogue, characters, or camera technique, can be pulled from the film. Once removed, these elements can be rearranged, or remade, or otherwise degraded. This can result in the disruption of any political coherence in the work, making it easier for the agent to identify and negotiate the political remnants.

This is only a recommended tactic, and the means of identifying the politics within a horror film are left to the discretion of the agent in the field.

Once we are able to identify the politics of power and audience subjectivity, we can look at the horror film an overlapping milieu of affects and diagrams **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]**.

To clarify the first of these, "Affects can be described as extra-discursive and extra-textual. Affects are moments of intensity, a reaction to/on the body at the level of matter" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 126).

In terms of the horror film, these affects occur in the direct audience encounter with the film, the bodily reactions including not limited to those involved what we call horror. Affects also occur as things we the audience witness in the subjects of the film perceiving something we ourselves might not. We see affects played out on those bodies on an off screen.

Secondly, diagrams should be understood within the horror film as points where characters or audience act or experience the pushing of a

context through a partial system alien to that context.
                    (To the assistant)
Play the trailer again.

The assistant presses a button and the shaking paused image of the video reverses rapidly, the scenes playing out backwards and split with static until with inhuman precision the assistant presses another button and the video begins again perfectly at the star of the trailer. The screen is filled with the text "New World Pictures" and without looking the agent resumes their speech.

                    AGENT
    The creatures in black are from another realm, they have ways of operating which are bodily, they have ways of operating which are ideological, principally in terms of the adherence to contracts. They are brought to our realm in this trailer, and the context of middle class late twentieth century North American heterosexual suburbia is pushed through the diagram the figures make up through their bodies, actions, and paths.

    Both context and diagram are changed by this encounter, walls might bleed but the laws of the figures in black will be clarified and warped as well. This is just one example of many from this one clip regarding how it can be read as a process of diagrams at the

Vampire [CARE]

level of the world it presents, between its characters.

At the level of audience encounter with the film trailer there are also diagrams at work to be teased out. The very premise of the <u>horror film</u> requires the establishment of partial systems such as narrative or cinematography, which are then disrupted when an alien context is, often violently, pushed through it via the introduction of monsters or jump scares etcetera.

The anxieties of dominant powers, and the foregrounding of affects and diagrams makes horror cinema a particularly useful parallel to art practice, and particularly art practice concerned with subjectivities other than those of dominant power. Which is to say we must be aware of where our empathy and desire leads, including off the path prescribed by the dominant powers of the film.
                    (To assistant)
Next trailer please.

The assistant removes the previous video and inserts a

new one. As they do so they emerge just enough from the

shadows that their face is partially lit by the fire.

They have a large black beak like a crow and sunken black

eyes. They press a button and with the whine of slipping

tracking the video begins to play.

                              CUT TO:VIDEO

Unreadable text, white on black, flashes on the screen in a Gothic font. A man rips some fabric while a woman gasps. Another flash of white unreadable text and then a man struggles to hold down vomit while brushing his teeth in a mirror. More text then a woman stabs a man in the neck in a suburban living room. More text and then a white orb falls rabidly in darkness with the sound of large wild animal roaring or a human in unimaginable pain, then man in suit clutches at the empty space where his head should be and whimpers. More text, then a glass falls on tiles and naked figure writhes in pain in a bathtub. More text, then a room lit only by the light of an open refrigerator, a figure tries to close the door and it jams on a severed hand. Another figure in a different room grabs a woman by the throat. Another figure screams and wrestles with a red car door. Another figure flails at a woman and child as a door closes on them. A woman in the darkness stares at the sky and silently screams. More text, the thump of a drum. The assistant pauses the video and the white text shivers on the screen, almost legible. Once more the agent speaks.

CUT TO:CAVE

AGENT

The collapse of meaning, and the irreducibility of something to text is a familiar part of art practice. Consider the following-

The agent's eyes roll back into their head and in the

voice of another, with a different accent and pattern of

speech they recite as if reading from a page.

AGENT
(Possessed)

"We do not need outrageously perverse acts of art or modes of expression never before experienced to identifiably slaughter the signifable. Only the structure of signification itself, a permanent theatre of lawless (because it is arbitrary) law (because it claims, through 'logic' and 'rationality' to be the only option, independent of its participants)" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 49).

The agent's eyes return to normal, as does their speech.

The Assistant shuffles nervously behind them and lets out

a small cawing sound like a crow.

AGENT

In the twenty twelve book entitled "Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory"

philosopher Patricia MacCormack uses the term "catalyst" to describe works of art which facilitate in the audience an "encounter with the outside" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 52).

The outside here referenced is, amongst other distinctions, the outside beyond sovereign language and its speaking subject. Or in MacCormack's own words "The outside involves the disintegration of the 'I' who speaks in speaking about" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 46).

What is also important for us, as agents applying lessons of horror to art is that the outside is not orientated around, or even particularly concerned with the human. MacCormack's project is concerned with an art encounter with "an outside intensification which does not constitute an other, thus a potential self" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 47). The art encounter of interest here is therefore one which is, if only momentarily, unspeakable. As the trailer just now shown attests, such encounters are frequent for audiences of horror, particularly horror cinema. The moment we might call horror for example, is frequently the splashing, drowning sensation of being adrift from signification to ascribe to what we are encountering and therefore orientate this with our existing comprehension of self. At these moments, a little liquid always enters the lungs.

The assistant presses a button on the television monitor

and a new video begins to play. This new video shows

a static line drawing of a square positioned so that

Dog Stand [CARE]

its corners point up, down, left and right. Over this
drawing is another, which appears to represented the
human digestive system, and over that an esoteric symbol.
Behind these drawings plays a video. It is filmed through
the glass of a large aquarium, for a while nothing
happens and then a small harbour seal smoothly glides
across the shot from left to right and disappears. The
assistant looks at the agent expectantly, beak slightly
open, then looks back at the video. After some more time
has passed the seal again slides across the frame of the
video, this time from right to left and this time the
seal is swimming upside down. Some more time passes and
the seal's first glide is repeated. The video is looped
though it is hard to see exactly where the loop occurs.
Throughout this, the agent does not turn to look at the
video, or give any indication of awareness of it other
than remaining silent. Eventually after a number of loops
of the video, the agent resumes their lecture while the
video continues to play. The assistant caws quietly.

                    AGENT
        The question becomes, how can we deal with
        art that is potentially unpredictable,

plural, imminent, and ecstatic as the worlds of horror?

This question is rhetorical, to presuppose that the agency has one definitive answer is to miss the point.

We however should start by killing the policeman of order, names, and authority, and go back to desire.

We should start with the idea of things breaking. Art, us, everything.

It is time for the intermission. Open your own files and we will read together a report from an agent in the field entitled The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant[1].

The agent moves, shifting their weight as if to find

a new position to lay. In doing so part of their

body remains in the previous position and their body

stretches and distorts horribly. A gust of wind and sea

spray blows into the cave, the fire sparks and crackles.

The agent looks as if many of their bones are broken

or disconnected while other areas are expanded like

muscles filled with lactic acid. Their jaws have grown

longer and their mouth wider. They are panting and this

makes apparent that their teeth are now spread out

between gaps of red gums. Once again the agents eyes

Figure One (presenting as Michelle Forbes when she played the coroner in Homicide: Life on The Street): "The relationship between the analyst and the analysand is naturally one of power, and the group setting often serves to enhance that. The one individual who is trained is distinct from the rest of the group, they have very different stakes. And sooo..."

She drawls this word like it is a crystal ball she is rotating in her hand, inspecting it.

"...I feel its important disclose how this therapy operates. A lot of analysts fall back on the clichéd strategy of saying nothing when asked about the therapy, or even more clichéd, turning any question back on the asker, even if a question is a practical one. There is a huge amount of power in refusing to respond, and more so to deny that there is even the act of refusal taking place. To do this with individuals of any sort, particularly those with a predilection to anxiety... is unethical"

roll up into their head and the begin to speak in yet

another voice.

                         AGENT
                      (Possessed)
          [REDACTED]

The agent finishes their story, and seems to sink into

the bearskin they are wearing, their body returning to

its original size and proportion save for their jaws and

mouth which are still slightly oversized. The assistant

disappears into the shadows and reappears with a steaming

bowl and chopsticks. The assistant crouches with their

back to us in front of the agent and appears to be

feeding them. After a full minute the assistant places

the empty bowl by the fire and returns to their position

standing by the television. The agent's face is wet with

perspiration and a thin broth has run rivulets through

the blood caked around their mouth. A single ramen noodle

hangs from their chin.

                         AGENT
          That was the intermission. I hope you enjoyed
          it. I am now going to talk though through the
          extraction of a concept from horror film which
          can subsequently be applied art practice.

To begin with, we must return to MacCormack's
description of encountering an outside,
beyond signification. MacCormack gives this
process a name.

The agents eyes rapidly roll back and again their accent

and speech changes as they now speak as if reading from

a page.

                         AGENT
                      (Possessed)
        "A term for encountering the outside of
        human the word [...is] 'Ahuman', inspired
        by Guattari's statement: 'In the last resort
        what will be determinant in the political
        and aesthetic plane is not the words and the
        content of ideas but essentially a-signifying
        messages that escape dominant ideologies'"
        (MacCormack, 2014, pp. 1-2).

The agent's eyes roll back down and their voice returns

to normal. The assistant caws and fidgets with visible

discomfort.

                         AGENT
        Becoming Ahuman is a process of breaking the
        dominant codes of self. As already noted, we
        see this in experience of art, particularly
        noticeable in the watching of horror cinema.
        The agency proposes the Japanese horror film
        called Ringu, or The Ring (Nakata, 1998) as

a case study.

From Ringu we extract a diagram, the interrelation of processes and partial systems in it. With this diagram extracted and abstracted, we might then push through the context of art in order to untangle our understanding of what becoming Ahuman is.

For those unfamiliar with Ringu, its plot revolves around the existence of a video cassette of esoteric, disturbing, and degraded images. If a person watches this video cassette, they will receive a phone call, and then seven days later be found dead, their body horribly contorted and a look of unimaginable horror frozen on their face. Ringu follows investigators looking into a series of deaths, who in doing so expose themselves, and us the audience, to the content of the cursed video cassette. We will begin by doing the same.

The assistant retrieves a video from the darkness. The cassette is housed in a cardboard sleeve on which is printed patterns of angular parallel lines and the text "TDK240". The cardboard sleeve covers all of the cassette other than one end on which a label can be adhered. The cassette exhibits the signs of years of reuse, multiple labels have been applied, crossed out, overdrawn, torn off, relabelled, and defaced. No clear

title can be discerned through the mess of remaining torn fragments of papers, glues, and inks. The assistant pulls the video cassette from its cardboard sleeve and it makes a smooth abrasive noise followed by a small hollow pop as it is finally free. The assistant insets the cassette into the video player and it begins to play automatically. On the television screen plays highly degraded black and white footage of water washing onto a sandy beach. Some distorted singing in Japanese can be heard. The singing continues as the image cuts to the figure of what appears to be a man standing on the shore. The man has a square of fabric about a metre across draped over he head. One arm is at his side and the other is stiffly directed out to the side and down, as if pointing at something on the floor some ten metres out of shot. His head under the fabric is not directed towards where his arm is pointing, but faces straight ahead.

                    AGENT
        That is enough.

The assistant pauses the video, and the image of the

In Country [CARE, DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

pointing man with fabric draped over his head jiggles and

twitches on the television as the video player attempts

to hold the video tape in position against the play

heads.

<div align="center">AGENT</div>
<div align="center">(Warmly)</div>

In order to talk about Ringu, I will draw
upon my own encounter with the film not long
after its UK video release. As an agent
I necessarily filed a field report on this
experience, and this report was used by the
agency to extract the diagram that we will
also examine.

I will attend to two of my observations,
each regarding a scene from the cursed video
within the film which I have just exposed
you to. The first of these concerns the song
which is sung in the first part of the clip.

Note that I do not speak Japanese, and the
video of Ringu which I saw was subtitled in
English.

The scene in question takes place while the
investigators are examining the cursed video
for information in order to understand the
processes of the curse.

Through audio forensics, the investigators
discern that the mostly obscured and degraded
singing is a nursery rhyme or folk song which
ultimately leads them to a coastal community
and a lead in the investigation. The lyrics

of the song are therefore very important
to the characters, and to my experience as
audience invested in the character's pursuit
to save themselves from the curse.

These are the lyrics as depicted in the
English subtitles of the original UK release
of Ringu.

The assistant takes a black marker pen from somewhere in

their clothing and writes directly onto the television

screen over its twitching image. On a single line the

assistant writes "FROLIC IN BRINE". Directly underneath

this, the assistant writes "GOBLINS BE THINE". The sound

of the waves outside the cave increases in volume, and

water laps at the bottom of the frame. The assistant

moves away from the television and the agent continues.

                    AGENT
      Frolic in brine, goblins be thine. That
      is the pivotal text, on which lives are
      balanced, as was presented to me by the
      English translation of this deeply horrifying
      film.

      At this point in watching the film, I was
      gripped with a sense of horror. This
      horror transcended the narrative of the
      film at the moment where the audio forensics
      revealed the words of the song, and these
      were then translated via subtitles. This

transcendence was beyond even what the film had already performed by positioning both the protagonists and myself the audience on an equal position as witness to the cursed video within the film.

The transcendence provoked by the translated words is concerned with a dual action of pointing beyond the frame and obscuring. My first response to reading the translated words of the song was that the translation was incorrect. As a native English speaker the words "frolic" and "goblin" jar against the severe and contemporary tone of the rest of the film. The words "brine" and "thine" are equally awkward and inappropriate as if shoehorning a rhyme had been prioritised over accuracy of information.

My experience of horror at watching Ringu expanded upon the realisation that material outside of its narrative world, at the point of post-release translation, could not be trusted as it was broken.

This awareness is mirrored by a second observation of another element also within the cursed video within the film Ringu. This observation is in regards to a brief shot of a figure, their face covered in cloth and one arm raised to the side as if pointing. Although the man is never named in the film, for ease of reference we will refer to this man as Towel Man. Towel Man is a figure whose identity, context, and meaning is never revealed in the film.

Towel Man is obscured, and he is pointing off frame to something that I as audience never

see. Towel Man presents a vector from himself
to somewhere outside, but what travels along
this vector is utterly hidden.

Concluding from my report of this experience,
it is the view of this agency that Towel Man
demonstrates the presence of absence. Towel
Man functions just as the broken translation
of the song which I also observed. There is
something there which performs a function but
it is incomplete and obscured and continues
beyond the frame.

Following the filing of my field report on
Ringu, the agency identified the diagram
of processes involved and connected this
existing philosophy. The agency's research
into the diagram's processes draws from the
work of psychoanalyst Félix Guattari and
philosopher Gilles Deleuze in particular the
following quote.

Once again the agents eyes roll back into their sockets,

the assistant visibly sags as if suddenly bearing a huge

invisible burden, and when the agent speaks it is as if

there were two different voices coming through the same

throat.

                        AGENT
                      (Possessed)
        "Desiring-machines work only when they break
        down, and by continually breaking down"
        (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 8).

Barely at the end of the sentence the agent's eyes roll

down and they resume in their own voice without any

indication of what had just happened. The tide continues

to rise in the cave. As the waves come in they slop

quietly around the base of the raised slabs on which

the agent lies on their pile of straw, and the assistant

stands with the AV trolley, on which the television

still shows the shaking paused image of Towel Man and

the hand written text across the screen.

> AGENT
> Breakage within the system is a creative
> act, when the system deviates, erodes,
> skips, something new is created. Whether
> the system is one of established ethics,
> aesthetics, cognition these breakages are
> each a creative moment. They mark a point
> where something becomes new.
>
> Deleuze and Guattari's term for such
> breakage is "deterritorialization"(Deleuze &
> Guattari, 1983, p. 33). A function is removed
> from a context, its previous territory, and
> then applied to a new one. The break in the
> machine is not that it ceases the perform
> its previous function, but that it performs
> a new one.
>
> For example, imagine if you will a society
> in which heterosexuality is not only the
> dominant sexual orientation, but the lens

through which the social and political are mediated. Now imagine a queer audience member watches a new tragic horror film from an aesthetic, ethical, and political position not accounted for by the filmmaker. The audience member breaks the film's narrative system but in doing so it becomes a new system, moving from homophobic tragedy to emancipatory triumph against heteronormativity.

In a later text, Guattari discusses how "deterritorialization" is not something transcendental and removed from real situations.

Guattari proposes an example of a singer who first suffers the loss of her mother, and then soon after loses two octaves of her vocal range. However "the loss of consistency of a component will not have been followed, this particular time, by a chain reaction of new inhibitions. It will instead have served as a sensitive plate, as a developer, as an alarm bell" (Guattari, 2009, p. 217).

Guattari continues by stating that "An a-signifying sign--the restriction on vocal performances--marks the halt of something without forbidding, as the context makes clear, that other things intervene" (Guattari, 2009, p. 217).

A small but particularly strong wave breaks against the

raised stone slabs sending a wind salt water mist over

agent and assistant who do not show any acknowledgement

of what has happened. Water dribbles down the screen of

the television distorting the image, and the fire hisses

and steams.

                              AGENT
          What is also important to take from Deleuze
          and Guattari's concept is that it takes the
          Freudian structure of desire as based on lack,
          and rebuilds it based on production. Deleuze
          and Guattari name this conception of desire
          "desiring-production" (Deleuze & Guattari,
          1983, p. 31). Rather than chasing an ever
          receding goal, desire produces more desire.
          It becomes a creative force, with part of
          this creativity arising from breakage.

          Deleuze and Guattari present a way of viewing
          systems as creative and changing. They also
          conceive of systems as emerging from the
          connection and reconnection of processes.
          Their name for these connecting, breaking,
          creative processes is "desiring-machines"
          (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 9).

          Each "desiring-machine" tries to connect
          itself to another (Deleuze & Guattari,
          1983, p. 9). It an attempt fails it will
          try others. In our queer audience example
          the empathy-machine attempts to connect
          to the narrative-machine presented by the
          film. The connection fails, and the empathy-
          machine instead connects to an alternative-
          narrative-machine.

          This is a very crude example, and should
          not be seen as encapsulating all of Deleuze

and Guattari's concepts. Instead the agency re-purposes their philosophy to explore how MacCormack's "becoming ahuman" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 43) occurred in the diagram of my encounter with the film Ringu.

As stated already, a connection breaks and then flops about attempting to make connection with other processes. In the diagram of my encounter with Ringu there were three notable points of breaking.

Each of these breaks was part of my experience of horror. At each of these breaks I found myself dealing with the broken ends of connections, attempting to plug them into whatever is available and creating new things in the process.

At this point background noise of the sea becomes noticeably louder. The tide inside the cave has reached the point where the retreating waves no longer leave exposed floor. The stone slabs, on which are the agent, assistant, fire and AV trolley, is now an island above shallow, dark, water which is rising.

                    AGENT
          (Louder above the sound of the sea)
     Three breaks constitute the diagram of
     becoming Ahuman in Ringu. The first is in
     regards the horror that is beneath the water.
     I am aware there is something alive beneath

Crying 9 [MANSION]

the surface but I cannot see it.

The tide is coming in faster, it reaches the top of
some of the stone slabs and the agent's legs. The fire
splutters at the edges.

                    AGENT
                  (louder)
        The second break is in realising that without
        noticing the change, I am also in that same
        body of water, into which I still cannot
        see.

The water is now the level of the agent's reclining
body only their raised head is visible and the soaked
bearskin floats on the surface. The fire is completely
submerged and blackened wood drifts and steams around
the AV trolley, just below the height of the television
screen which is showing its shaky frozen image. The
assistant has picked up a trailing electrical cord and
is holding a four way power extension above their head
and out of the rising water. Both agent and assistant
are completely calm.

                    AGENT
                  (shouting)

The third break is my realising that the
unknown within the water does not make a
distinction between the body of water and
my own body. It does not recognise these
categories and freely crosses between them.

Suddenly, as if a huge sink hole has opened in the floor,

the water level drops, rushing away from the agent and

assistant and leaving them dripping on the stone slabs

with the AV trolley amid a scatter of burnt wood and

seaweed. The soaked bearskin clings to the agents body

making them look small and vulnerable. The sound of

the sea has gone. Still holding up the four way power

extension, the assistant reaches into the darkness and

retrieves another bloody bearskin which they drape over

the agent.

                    AGENT
        MacCormack's process of Ahumanity occurs
        where systems of signification break. In
        watching horror, I am engaged with the film
        through affects, and meaning is pulled away
        from beneath me.

        In my encounter with Ringu, the process of
        becoming Ahuman was most apparent where horror
        stretched out beyond what I had assumed to
        be borders of the film. The horror crossed
        into the English subtitles of the home media
        release, a point beyond the limits of the

fictional narrative.

More importantly, what transgressed this boundary was not something that I could ascribe a name and meaning to. As with Towel Man, it was just an obscured absence which pointed outside of the visible. It pointed at the fact that I was already floating in the body of water that I had thought was securely contained and at a safe remove.

As agents in the field we engage a film and are orientated to it. How we engage with the film involves the meeting of our subjectivity with the politics, aesthetics, ethics etcetera which the film contains.

We are weighing the film against ourselves, plugging our desires into it. Our meaning is pulled away from something to which we have orientated ourselves, it destabilises our own subjectivity, if only briefly.

We might later identify that "a-signifying message" (MacCormack, 2014, p. 2) as the experience of horror, or love, but in the moment, in the field, it had no name.

Even if it were provoked by the most conservative of horror films, the a-signified is, by definition, outside of those power structures. It is for this reason that Guattari, and MacCormack, identify it as a site of radical emancipatory potential. In the affective realm of the Ahuman we are outside of the political structures which define us and which we internalise[2].

It is on that basis that the agency has

"For attention, please call out"

identified, extracted, and abstracted this
Diagram to provide agents in the field with
some means to negotiate these disruptive
forces. The Diagram does not instil meaning
to such forces, but can be deployed and
adapted by agents to bridge spaces in which
meaning is absent.

                                    FADE TO BLACK.

The Use of Horror in Art Practice; Bibliography

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The Use of Horror in Art Practice; Endnotes

1. "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" is reproduced elsewhere in this PhD Output, to read along the redacted document

2. For another approach to destabilisation of the self and affect, which an emphasis on power-structures of race, class, gender and sexuality please see Sara Ahmed's book "Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others" (Ahmed, 2006).

The Coroner's Report [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

In order to ensure that no artificial categorization, division, and hierarchy is established between "thesis" and "practice", I have avoiding analysing in depth the art works I have produced as part of this research. I have analysed and written accounts of my developing methodology at numerous points. I have also analysed the work of other artists, and tendencies across media as a means of bringing together and unpicking processes of use to art practice.

In parallel to these accounts there have been other things produced, some which take the form of text, or are folded into text after the fact, and a number of them now exist within this PhD Output. "Art works" is a useful term because it suggests a process as much as an object. The *Art Works* which are included across these three books are both objects and processes. They record a process, and activate a new one. The processes recorded are those which exist in parallel to the analysis in the other accounts present which are aligned with more conventional forms such as art history or philosophy. I have attempted to articulate *Diagrammatics* **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]** as abstracting a concept and pushing a new context through it in order to gain information from that concept through

OK, Welcome To The Black Parade [CARE, MANSION]

1.   "Ok, welcome to the black parade". The train arrives at Northwick Park with a soft wheeze and it's doors align with those of the concourse and you, one of many passengers, will disembark, your muttered mantra unheard by, or at least unnoticed by, or at least it unremarked upon by anyone else. Your stomach rotates to its own coordinates and growls.

2.   -x

3.   Finding your place in the rhythm and shape of the crowd it carries you through fleshy pipes, suspended from filaments and which constitutes a matrix of passageways (both public and restricted), utility ducts (carrying data, vapour, chemical waste, and energy), and suspension cords. You can smell the 8 people at the cardinal and inter-cardinal points from your position.

4.   -x

5.   In contrast to the thick translucence of the walls and ceiling of the pipes, the floor is covered in no slip steel plates, black with grime and dotted with gum and stickers exposing political views you have no way of telling are sincere or not. The smell of other passengers becomes overwhelming as they work up a sweat during an incline. Your neck hair straightens.

6.   -x

its effects. The process of producing art works can be crudely considered as having a similar function on one level. When I produce an art work I am extracting parts of other systems and pushing new contexts through them in order to understand more of their capacities.

However, these *Art Works* are important elements of this research not only because they are the means through which I gain understanding of capacities of other art works, or concepts, or texts. These *Art Works* are to function not just as *object*, but as *process*. The *Art Works* are provocations and deviations, and sit alongside other forms of research across the three books of the PhD Output specifically because they are able to perform their processes upon that other research. With this in mind, I made the decision early on in this project to not include both an *Art Work* and an analysis of that same *Art Work*. My reasoning for this is that my analysis, from the position of producer, would carry a risk of reducing the *Art Work's* active processes. My analysis of an *Art Work*, could risk replacing that artwork, or at least curtailing its capacities.

In spite of this, there is value in analysing my own *Art Works*, and it forms part of my methodology to do so. Analysis of my own art works allows the uncovering of the processes, which is one aim of this PhD Output as a

7.   Above you, coloured veins in the flesh of the ceiling indicate you are following the right path which is indicated by the purple filament. The tunnel branches repeatedly until only your guiding vein is present over your head and the crowd had thinned so that you can walk at full stride without fear of catching heels. Your hackles relax, but the smell is still overwhelming.

8.   -x

9.   A junction leads to another platform and the last passengers break off. Alone you climb to the exit from which leaves and dust have blown, griming up the translucent walls. Finally on the surface for a moment then the doors to your destination are ahead with the logo of "parexel" are engaged into the marble floor under your feet and then you are inside again.

10.   -x

11.   You pass administrators who have you sign, carry, surrender, replace and read various pink documents as you pass through the building. You suppress your muttering in company and release it in quiet carpeted beige corridors where you never see another soul. Explanations, tests and countless waiting rooms follow and then at last there is the rented ward.

12.   -x

13.   Your nails clatter as you walk through the final doors which slide shut behind you with a blast of cool, dead air. Your nose, as finely tuned an

whole.

My approach follows the creative auto-ethnographic methodology of ethnographer Kirin Narayan (Narayan, 2012) and the reflexive methodology of artist Elizabeth Prices's "Sidekick" (Price, 2002, 2013) which analyses an object as a means to investigate the process of analysis itself. This document deals with the analysis of the processes in an ongoing *Art Work*, set aside specifically for the purposes of this living autopsy. Both of these methodologies allow a written account of an event or object to become a creative site, so this document is a creative account of processes taking place in a sample of my art practice.

There are a lot of points where this account could start. It could begin with a nervous habit I have of repeating a phrase from something I have read or heard or imagined, as a practice which I cannot be sure is one of self regulations or of self punishment or something else. This account could also begin with long standing rules which I have used in my practice for over a decade, and have become reinforced not by a relationship to their function but more a superstition, another kind of habit. Lastly, the account could begin in a tactic I have of approaching art making through bricolage. All of these starts will necessarily involve fiction, whether through the

instrument as it is, can pick out nothing but yourself here. "You understand that you will receive no therapeutic value from this procedure and you understand the risks involved. Payment will be finalized at the end of the trial"

14.   -x

15.   You nod at the nurse who hasn't looked at you while reading the final disclaimer before showing you to your bed. "Dinner is at noon" and the door shuts and you are alone.

16.   -x

17.   The room so scrubbed and empty that it feels anechoic, devoid not of sound but smell, and therefore life. You feel both anxious and safely alone. "Ok, welcome to the black parade".

18.   -x

19.   Bags are emptied into bedside locker. You have a room to yourself for the remainder of the day after a nurse brings you lunch (two sandwiches the kind of which you buy from a shop that primarily sells something other than food) and some crisps (the kind you would pay too much for from a vending machine in a place that has no other provision for selling food).

20.   -x

21.   There is a TV in one corner of the room, an ancient console and a copy of Wii Sports. You make one serve in tennis before your hospital gown billows

choice of where to begin and where to travel along something like mass of tubifex worms, how I use language, what I edit out, what I misremember. I am making something new from the parts of other things, and all of these parts are remade in the process. As memory, then as words. So with that in mind, I think I will start with bricolage.

The way I began the work which could be said to be towards the *Art Work* called "Ok, Welcome To The Black Parade" (OWTTBP) was by collecting parts. I pulled together things which caught my attention and which in doing so had resonated with other things already in the pile.

Desire Piles[1] as a method allow me to collect together things across categories including materials, emotions, names, fragments of text, events etc., and variants, derivatives and combinations of these, without concern for structure or category. In one sense the *Desire Pile* is a prosthetic memory, it is simply a list of things I am drawn to in some way during a period of time. In another sense, which is more to do with the matter of using the list, they a way of rendering things more malleable and the first stage of *Diagramming* a number of processes which make up my art practice.

out leaving your otherwise naked body exposed like some obscene jellyfish. There is no one else here, but you can't help feel that this is part of a test. Returning to bed you lay until boredom takes you to sleep.

22.   -x

23.   The next day the treatment begins. A line is put into a vein in your arm and this in turn is connected to a drip which is held by a small drone which tracks a symbol on a plastic band attached to your wrist. The hair is thick on your arms and the peripheral venous catheter is secured with rubbery tape pulls painfully.

24.   -x

25.   Other subjects join you in your room. The inquisitive or chronical bored try the games system. The oblivious or overconfident continue to play after the first serve. You watch, you fidget, you make low subconscious growls when your boredom dazes you enough to forget yourself. Your bed is now full of crumbs and it is impossible to lie comfortably.

26.   -x

27.   The trial is for a course of treatment which includes drugs and physiotherapy (the nurse explains) and it is the latter elements which causes many subjects to drop out and forfeit their compensation (the physiotherapist explains). The days begin to blur. Your teeth feel noticeably more blunt than you remember. You wonder why this is.

It is also worth restating that *Desire Piles* is a tactic (among others in this PhD Output) for holding the unstable things whose negotiation can make up the practice of art, without translating/reducing/fossilising these things. The list of things in the *Desire Pile* is not fixed. It can be edited, and meaning of the words written down is mutable. However this is the point of departure from a prosthetic memory. The *Desire Pile* is not to be thought of as a reliable account. It is to be thought of as a badly kept ledger, in awful handwriting, with no constant system. The order of things is always considered to be incorrect. Something described is thought of in terms of multiple possibilities, such as factual description, a metaphor, a mistake[2]. In reading the *Desire Pile* the aim is not to recall something, to recover a fixed point, but to see it as an alienated provocation which could as easily lead to somewhere never visited before as to forensically return to the initial point of interest.

The things in the *Desire Pile* of *OWTTBP* are as follows:

- My anxious tic, muttering the phrase "Ok, Welcome To The Black Parade" without knowing what it means.

- The paid drug trial I turned down which subsequently made the national news when all subjects not given a placebo dose became

28. -x

29. The drone hums above you at all times. You wonder if it's battery ever needs recharging or if this happens then you are asleep. You spend your days walking across balancing planks and climbing ladders fixed at very shallow angles. You are given weights which are slotted into pockets of the fabric bands around your limbs (when did you put these bands on?).

30. -x

31. You have lost track of how many days are left on this trial. The elastic resistance cords which connect the bands on your limbs and forehead and chest and tale and toes (are there more bands than before) are switched for lighter or heavier resistance according to a complicated schedule designed for your by algorithm and is not based on your standard calendar days.

32. -x

33. There are a few other subjects in your ward, but you are not sure if they were here with your intake or have arrived afterwards or are from another ward brought over as numbers reduce. Your waist trainer seems to be in the middle of group range. Some are ahead of you in process, some are a few tightening sessions behind you. The nurse repeats "it isn't a race".

34. -x

34.1. You wake up before your bedmate, they are still deep under, but

critically, and agonisingly ill, a number of which lost parts of limbs and were permanently disfigured.

● A watercolour diagram exploring thoughts on how some occult practices sit between structures which follow a protocol, desires, and phenomenological accounts.

● The moment when control is lost.

● The repeated trope in cinema where the camera assumes a first person perspective of a character who is in some way incapacitated and fades down to black and then back up to a later point in the time repeatedly to show the character slipping in and out of consciousness.

○ The sub trope of a character (and by extension of the first person position, the audience) learning something which is of importance to them, right at the point of losing consciousness.

● Depression as a feeling of love.

● Disablement.

● The crash which takes place off screen between the events at the end of the film "Aliens" and the beginning of the film "Alien³"

● A formal approach to writing where an arbitrary restriction, such as "each paragraph must be 5 lines long".

● My intention of continuing a practice/output of producing watercolour diagrams in square format which are then scanned and

not so deep that their eye do not flicker in REM. You look over at the monitor on its wheel trolly. The graphs show that a few moments ago you and they were in near perfect sync. You watch that point where your line (blue) and theirs (green) separates as it drifts off the left side of the screen out of view.

34.2. You wake up and the ceiling is so close that you briefly panic before remembered where you are. You body is packed in crash gel and the window is small (for looking in, not looking out). It must be (?) night (?) because it is dark on the other side of the glass. That is the (real) ceiling above. You are horizontal which means you are in transit not storage.

34.3. You wake up and eyes rest on the reflection of a security camera lens high above where you can pick out the windows of your fellow passengers containers and their sleeping faces and you miss them painfully. "Ok, welcome to the black parade" you whisper to no one that can hear, wondering how habits can outlast the anxiety which birthed them. You sleep.

34.4. You wake up and immediately look up at the reflection in the camera lens. Your eyes are still better. You look into all the tiny lit windows, sleeping faces reversed but still familiar and still capable to inspiring such longing that is hard to

published view my Instagram account along with short narrative (itself based on a different diagram) which is presented in the comments section of the published image post.

- Intestines.
- Dogs.
- Solidarity.

In this case, the *Desire Pile* is made up entirely of text. This is not always the case. In *Desire Piles* for other works I included drawn shapes or indicators of relative size or light levels. Sometimes the *Desire Pile* is a bullet point list, but it might equally form a constellation of elements, or a horrible gibbering homunculus.

With these piled things accounted for as part of the work *OWTTBP*, I wrote the bulk of my text. I looked at the screen of the laptop where I was writing. When I was losing momentum, I looked at the *Desire Pile* and returned to writing. When it was clear that this text was far too long to practically fit within an Instagram post, as it would involve over 20 individual comments and go beyond my expectations of the audience, I wrote a new short text in one sitting which become the epilogue to *OWTTBP*.

pull away from. Their eyes flicker under and you wonder if they have woken to watch you. Far away an alarm cries out as you drift under.

34.5.   You wake up and the outside is totally black, you cannot even see the reflections of the other windows. You wonder if you have lost your sight, if it improved beyond capacity or if you strained it by looking too hard and too early when you should have been asleep. "Ok, welcome to the black parade". You slow your breathing. "Ok, welcome to the black parade".

34.6.   You wake up and you can see again. Through the glass the room is on fire. Flames crawl across the ceiling like lizards. Something is wrong with the gravity. It is normally impossible to know which way is down through the gel, but your organs shift in a jolting spiral. The transport is in free-fall and wounded. Gel presses into you and you black out.

34.7.   You wake up and someone is carrying you. Two or more bodies are carrying you. You look down and your toes trail through patchy scorched grass and bump over turned soil. Most of your long claws are either broken or ripped off. You can cannot see them but your fingertips feel like nothing but pain. Someone stumbles, everything goes pink and then black.

As the majority of the text making up *OWTTBP* so far had not been used in the output I had intended for it, and was not suitable for this output, it became an object which I could now consider a new home for. *OWTTBP* incorporated a number of elements that are part of the practice I have developed in this PhD, but which I have not analysed in depth, in part due to a long standing rule which I have applied to my work since 2007.

This is the rule which I call "The One Work Buffer".

The *One Work Buffer*: Do not analyse the work which is currently in progress, or the last work completed because backward trajectory of analysis will match the forward trajectory of desire and cause entropy. Leave one completed work as a buffer between the present and the site of analysis.

This rule has served me well for so long that I have ceased to question it. It allows me to create an airlock between a delicate process which I feel will not ever be fully accounted for, and another process which creates a more substantial though imperfect replica but which annihilates anything it cannot replicate.

35.   -x

36.   Days unwind and you are cared for. In a makeshift triage centre the the less damaged crash survivors care for the more severely broken and bury those beyond care. One of your lower legs could not be saved and is removed, the skin neatly folded around the amputation. As it is below a joint, a simple prosthesis is made and fitted.

37.   -x

38.   The physiotherapy undergone as part of the trial involved an equal balance of exercises based on a four as well as two point posture, and the training of your skeleton has left you as comfortable in either though the prosthetic favours moving on all fours due to gait and weight distribution. You feel comfortable in your body, and your muttering is infrequent to minimal.

39.   -x

40.   No one knows what happened with the crash. No one knows where you were heading. No one knows where you are, and no one remembers what happened before you were packed into containers in the rented laboratory space. No one feels that the crash was planned, but no one feels that anyone will come looking for you either.

41.   -x

42.   The group's feeling is that you are safe now, and capable of

Looking at *OWTTBP*, a work in progress which incorporated a number of elements I had not critically examined, I decided that breaking the *One Work Buffer Rule* would provide a new point where "practice" and "thesis" could cross in this PhD. I have a suspicion that breaking the rule and stratifying a process which has not yet reached its own point of entropy will mean it will never function as an artwork in a manner I am satisfied with. Therefore it is used here as an experiment, something grown specifically to learn about the process of growth through an invasive procedure which will stop it from ever reaching maturity.

I found it initially counter intuitive to think about art practice in terms of setting a target and course-correcting until this target is arrived at. I feel more comfortable thinking of art practice in terms of the model of desire set out in Deleuze and Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). In terms of the *Desire Piles* I pull together things which I am drawn to at around the same time, the alienation effect which I described as a like a "badly kept ledger" creates new lines of desire through the combination of things in the pile. I following the desire to add something to the pile. Once in the pile like any other heap of refuse new things are produced: I misremember why I added something. The proximity of something else

maintaining this safety through the mutual care you feel so strongly to give to one another. You can all see and smell so far and so clearly that the group group's awareness is extended far beyond your compound of halls and jewelled tunnels under a thin leafy canopy on a low rise over pink flower meadows.

43.   -x

43.1.   Epilogue: I wrote a story about a group of red dogs running through a meadow full of pink flowers.

43.2.   The dogs are taking turns at carrying one of them that had lost a leg and the wound is still healing.

43.3.   The dogs run through field after field and in one then find a well so they can drink.

43.4.   One of the dogs is sick and so they eat some leaves in order to vomit and In the shape of the vomit they see which direction to head next and how fast.

43.5.   They arrive at a port and there's been a plague and all the humans are dead and there's one luxury yacht left moored with a shocked looking corpse

makes an object strange. I literally can't read my own handwriting. The material conditions under which the object was made are of more interest than the object itself. I thought it was a map but it's actually a wolf.

Desire produces more desire. The process of drawing seems like a site where this is easily perceptible. I draw something because I desire to do so, and in doing this new desires are brought into being, which I perhaps would not have come to otherwise. A single mark drawn with a drawing tablet and computer is a transition which opens up new desires which were not there before the mark was made, including perhaps the desire to erase that mark[3]. However in this PhD I do have aims. Through this work I have learnt that just as there can be different degrees of stability in the things which make up a list, there can be degrees of stability to an aim. The aim itself changes as it gets closer.

Over the course of this PhD, a working summary of my research aims has included "develop a practice that embraces instability of narrative, and active speculation". Therefore my aim in dissecting *OWTTBP* has been to draw out and develop points where active audience speculation could take place. I envisaged the regularly structured narrative as the vertebra of a spine. Between each vertebrae were potential trajectories away from that

draped over the wheel.

43.6.   The dogs pull the body into the sea and load up with boat with supplies and put the wounded dog on board and cast off.

43.7.   They have many adventures and burgle a great number of oil rigs where the surviving humans had gone to escape the plague.

43.8.   They meet other packs on different continents and steal a fleet of luxury yachts and tour the globe in a huge armada eventually establishing a commune across Greenland (because it is practical) and Newfoundland and Labrador (because it's funny).

of the sequence which makes up the spine. As the narrative progresses,

the strength of the spine would support more departing trajectories, and

eventually departing trajectories would support themselves without need

of a spine.

Considering how *OWTTBP* had grown from a diagram plus other elements

from the *Desire Pile* I began at the point to reinterpret the text as a new

diagram. I drew the network of vascular pipes which begin in raw leaking

tube as the text narrative abruptly begins "in media res*"*, or "in the middle

of events". Beginning *in media res* marks the first point of speculation.

Events prior to the narrative are not revealed, and the narrative begins

in motion with the arrival of a train on which the narrator is positioned. I

drew the network of pipes where the narrator walks, and the oozing ends

where another path is indicated but not pursued. These oozing ends are

also the breaks between the fixed length paragraphs of the text. These are

the points where the work could develop deviations, points away from the

narrative spine.

The next section of the diagram was the institution where the narrator

describes with different levels of detail some of the drug trials and

exercises they undertake. As this section took place in a building which is not fully described, and in which the narrator undergoes changes and experiences procedures which they sometimes cannot fully recall I drew this section as something like a growth or unspecified organ or tumour. A site where change takes places and various points of departure are available, including the points of departure between the paragraphs which take place there.

There is a transition which occurs between this *Institution Organ* section, and the next element of the diagram. In the narrative, an event takes place which the narrator does not acknowledge but which it is intended that the audience is aware of after it happens. The narrator enters the institution with the understanding that they will be used in a medical test study for a limited duration. The narrator's account of their experience in the institution is incomplete. They do not describe everything as it is first mundane and later they are no longer able to fully account for what is happening. During this part of the narrative the description shifts and the narrator describes themselves not as a person whose body is used in an experiment for a limited time, but as a permanently transformed thing for future use. No longer the site of test "of the product", but "the product itself". The repeated refrain of returning to the ward bed changes to the

narrator lying down in a container, and no longer being in the building but

in a transport vehicle. To account for this transition, I drew the next section

of the diagram as a growth which emerges from the *Institution Organ* at a

point which cannot be seen.

Throughout these first three sections of the diagram are black dots.

These dots mark the point where the narrator utters their tic, an element

repeated in these sections, but absent after the event which marks the

end of the third. The third section I will call *The Pipe* and its connection

from the previous section is hidden, to show that in the text there is

a subtle narrative shift. In this section the narrator describes being

within a container that is transported in a vehicle and slips in and out of

consciousness, revealing a development outside of their container and in

the vehicle itself through this displaced, strobed, observations. There are

no points of departure in this section. The text changes its pattern from

four-line paragraphs, to a series of nine paragraphs all of which are five

lines in length and begin with the same four words "You wake up and".

I had made a decision that this section of the narrative spine would be

solid, with no space between its vertebrae for departure and therefore

a constant rhythm emphasised by the repeated words which begin

each paragraph. This rhythm felt effective as a means of emphasising a

point where the narrator is denied all agency by being physically unable to move, and would allow something to be built which would then be contrasted by a marked break and the end of this section.

At the end of *The Pipe*, the diagram is dawn as a ruptured oozing edge which then connects to a form similar to the *Institution Organ*. I will refer to this section as *The Camp-site Organ*. The connection from *The Pipe* to *The Camp-site Organ* is depicted as a broken oozing edge because it depicts a transition not witnessed, but open to speculation. The progression within *The Pipe* implies that an accident has taken place and the beginning of *The Camp-site Organ* describes the immediate aftermath of a violent air crash. The event itself is not described as it takes place while the narrator is unconscious. The violence of the event, its pre-shadowing through descriptions in *The Pipe* and aftermath in *The Camp-site Organ* makes the transition a site of speculation, as well as a point where a deviation might occur. This contrasts to the transition from *The Institution Organ* to *The Pipe*, which is smooth and with no departure, and therefore involves no leakage from speculation.

In terms of the diagram, *The Camp-site Organ* operates in the same manner as the *Institution Organ*. The narrator remains in one site and

Crying 9 [MANSION]

recounts events and growth with different degrees of detail but always as incomplete accounts. This section also returns to the four line paragraph form, with the space between each paragraph being open for deviations.

The *Camp-site Organ* is followed by the final part of the diagram which I will refer to as *The Dream*. There is no connection between *The Camp-site Organ* and *The Dream* in the diagram, but instead a close proximity of fluid which depicts speculation. The reason for this is that *The Dream* is an epilogue, and begins by announcing itself as such. The transition is therefore outside of the account of the narrator, and potentially outside of the form of the previous section of text. In the diagram *The Dream* is depicted as a number of lumps shaped like closing brackets which proceed away from *The Camp-site Organ* and sit on a dispersing area of speculation fluid. This section is diagrammed in this manner because the form of *The Dream* is very different from the previous sections. The narrative voice is different from earlier sections, and is itself describing not events in real time, but a story written at some point in the past.

The formal constraints of this section are looser, paragraphs are mostly two lines long, but some are only one line and some are three. There is a lot more space for speculation in this section, beginning with questions

about who is speaking, and continuing in narrative which is only loosely described but has some potential lines of connection to the preceding larger narrative. In diagramming this section I felt that the form would need to become inverted. I represented the narrative of section three as the fluid of speculation, with the lumps shaped like closing brackets being diagrams of the gaps between the paragraphs.

Whereas in previous sections of the narrative the gaps between paragraphs were points of departure such as improvised tangents were this work to be eventually realised as a performance, or as commentary or some other form of writing were this work to be realised as published text. In this final section I envisaged the relationship altering, from deviations which exist in place "above" the narrative, to a place below. The deviations within *The Dream* would need to be in the realm of animal sounds or simple drawings. *The Dream* is a barely present narrative interspersed with affective voids. When annotating the diagram I labelled the voids within *The Dream* as "non-linguistic lumps" and the fluid around them as "utterly unreliable fiction".

I wrote a brief account of the aims of the work in the leftover space around the diagram, including references to the work of Julia Kristeva and Patricia

MacCormack. These are two thinkers whose work around the permeability of borders had been made relevant to the work through the segmented structure of the diagram.

OWTTBP Diagram One now accounts for *OWTTBP*.

The diagram process is useful for the purposes of negotiating art practice because it allows for elements which are unknown, unstable, not yet in existence, or are simply a mislabelled space where nothing will ever exist. I call these elements *Lacunae*. In *OWTTBP* there are a number of *Lacunae* which occupy the spaces between the declining narrative spine of the text and these are each marked with an "x". In *OWTTBP Diagram One*, the *Lacunae are* identifiable as the yellowish fluid which spurts from pipes or ruptured seams. Without knowing yet what these elements are, I am still able to provide them conceptual space within the work. I look at *OWTTBP Diagram One* and imagine organs that have functions which must be performed but also leaks and creative sites emerging around them. The chain of organs is converting proteins and whole ecologies of bacteria are consuming and excreting. However the chain of organs is not in a closed system. There are points where fluids spill out and meet germs not yet imagined and in an unnamed space defined only by the tension of

leaked globbing plasma forms a new site of production. When I look away, and then look back at *OWTTBP Diagram One*, the leak is now somewhere else.

I have now produced an aim for *OWTTBP*. It is an experiment, an organism grown explicitly to dissect. I look at it and its structure reminds me of an earlier work, "TFW: The Formless Wastes"[4], where I used a segmented narrative spine in a live performance, and between its vertebrae I departed from this narrative spine with performance elements only partly rehearsed and often drawn as much from random selection and some sense of the audience.

OWTTBP I decided, would be a good site to continue exploring some of the functions from "TFW: The Formless Wastes", but to fit within my PhD Output it would need to fit within the books of which its output is comprised. In order to move towards this end, I drew a new diagram, which is called *OWTTBP Diagram Two*. At the time I felt that I was moving further towards abstraction of the work, which would free it from being a performance translated on the page. In hindsight, I do not think this is actually what happened, and *OWTTBP Diagram Two* is a useful dead end[5]. *OWTTBP Diagram Two* is not such a diagram but a fixed structure.

Through a number of different degrees of drawing and text it articulates the same thing: A segmented narrative spine, with provocations away from this spine positioned between the vertebrae, but offset. This is not a diagram which opens up new desire, but a reduction to a common structure. The structure which came to mind when returning to *OWTTBP Diagram Two* was that of commentary, especially commentary in literature where the left hand pages feature the text and the facing pages feature contextual comments on a register above that of the text, and inserted between its vertebrae by means of typographical devices such as *, †, ‡, §, ‖, ¶, etc.

At this point in the development of the work I tried to understand what had happened. The process of *Diagrammatics* is not something which I expect to endlessly generate new desires or new understanding of systems, it is itself a system which is constantly breaking down and so stalling does not seem an unsurprising possibility.

My artist friend Alice[6] came over on the plane to stay with me for a few days[7]. We picked up some threads from previous conversations about how dogs[8] relate to *Desiring Production* and then we went wading in the North Sea[9] and then Alice bought some things from Superdrug[10] and then we got the ferry over the river[11] and the metro home to Gateshead[12]. Alice

and I talked about the progression of diagrams in *OWTTBP* and how the last one had been a wrong turn. We have an ongoing plan to produce more artworks together and so I redrew a diagram of *OWTTBP*, removing its connection to the narrative it originated in and presenting it as just as a constellation of abstract processes. Between Alice and myself we made what I am labelling *OWTTBP Diagram Three* but will have another name soon and the process of making the artwork continues beyond this PhD.

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The Coroner's Report; Endnotes

1. It should be noted that *Desire Piles* are different from the from the clustering

of texts employed in the system called *Digestion*. The clusters in *Digestion* are

organised around and between theme's which are their points of commonality.

Even while these themes might be reconsidered and change once enough new

texts are added, the texts are always orientated through something. *Desire Piles*

don't need or have anything to orientated them. If anything, *Desire Piles* tend

towards differences rather than the commonalities of the clustering in *Digestion.*

2. This becomes provocation to encourage process of accidents and shifting

between different kinds of interpretations and affects. Consider this comment

on writing from author William Gibson in an interview with literary critic Larry

McCaffery;

"WG: [...] I like accidents, when an offhand line breezes by and you

think to yourself, Yes [*sic*], that will do. So you put it in your text and start

working with it, seeing how it relates to other things you've got going, and

eventually it begins to evolve, to branch off in ways you hadn't anticipated.

Part of the process is conscious, in the sense that I'm aware of working

this way, but how these things come to be embedded in the text is

intuitive. I don't see how writers can do it any other way. I suppose some

pick these things up without realizing it, but I'm conscious of waiting for

them and seeing where they lead, how they might mutate.

LM: Sounds like a virus.

WG: It is-and only a certain kind of host is going to be able to allow the thing to

keep expanding in an optimal way" (McCaffery, 1990, pp. 133–134).

3. Hitting Ctrl+z is still work, it's also still production.

4. Reflections on, and accounts of "TFW: The Formless Wastes" appear in

multiple documents across the PhD Output.

5. Ctrl+z is still work and still production.

6. Alice Rekab wrote her PhD in part on an approach to art practice using the

concept of diagrams in the work of philosopher François Laruelle.

7. My friend Alice has come to stay with me once a year since we met on the

internet in 2016 when we bonded over our mutual emotional investment in the

relationship between the character Worf and his son Alexander on the television

show "Star Trek: The Next Generation". The previous time Alice was here the was

very heavy snow and we got lost because the visibility was so bad and we walked

along some of the highest roads in Gateshead to try and get home and watched

cars skid out as they tried to drive while two feet of snow came down. We also went to the cinema to see the superhero movie "Black Panther" but I remember almost nothing about the film because when we left I received a message that one of my friends had taken his own life in order to escape from months of akathisia caused by his antidepressants. At the time this happened I was also taking antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors and one of the effects of this medication that I had was the inability to cry. I do not remember much of the film but I remember clearly leaving the cinema, knowing that my friend had died and missing them but experiencing something broken in the chain of emotion and its responses.

8. We both have a love for dogs which can only be described as painful and bordering on the debilitating and all our conversations on philosophy pass through conversations on dogs.

9. The North Sea is very clear and the shore at North Shields is full of dead ends where if you climb a fence you can have space to yourself.

10. A lot of things which you would buy from the chemist are very expensive in Ireland.

11. It is worth getting the ferry whenever you have the opportunity, the Tyne is a

clear river and on the ferry you can sit outside close to the water.

12. I live in Felling, my house is 94 metres above sea level.

The artwork is made up of elements which tend toward either solid or liquid. A narrative contributes to much of the solidity, but it also contains elements such as noise and affect. The narrative structure is riddled with points of departure where it trails off into formless but fertile liquid.

Although it begins from nothing, the work must establish itself as solid, recognisable, though with enough divergence to retain interest. It uses repetition of form to create stability while allowing more divergence between the repetitions.

Points of divergence extend outwards. It does not have to be the case that they are monodirectional, but it is essentially that they make contact with, and diffuse into the exterior world. The liquid state is that which does not respect boundaries, as understood by Kristeva's abject fluids and Irigaray's mucous. "Here body is threshold and nothing more than perception, as Irigaray's is a temporal configuration, thus the morphology of the two lips is not a structure but a metamorphic infinitesimal plane, and the mucous the consistency of that plane." MacCormack, P. (2010). Mucous, Monsters and Angels: Irigaray and Zulawski's Possession. Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image, 1, 95–110.

"The abject is not the ob-ject facing me, which i can name of imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing a systematic quest of desire" Kristeva, J. (1984). Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). SubStance, 13(3/4), 140.

Overwhelming sensation, inconsistaent consciousness. Repeatedly waking up in unreliable reality, without agency.

A complete break in account while unconcious.

Non-linguistic lumps.

Utterly unreliable fiction.

Transition to seamlessness unseen.

Repeated phrase, verbal tic, self regulation, stimming occurs prior to break.

Unspecified beginnings.

Leakage of other narratives, emotions, and concepts.

What is important to draw attention to is the transition to the unstable, the multiple, and the imperceptible. As MacCormack writes, the body is a "threshold" just as the body of the narrative here used in this artwork hold an audience just enough to transition into something which is without structure and is comprised not of something exterior to them but a mingling of their desires and sensations with something they do not yet know. What Kriestva describes as "the place where meaning collapses". Kristeva, J. (1984). Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). SubStance, 13(3/4), 140.

Beginning with a raw edge and filtering through a series of pathways.

OWTTBP Diagram One [DIAGRAM]

Output: Written document which is the diagram/plan for exploding narrative, it surrenders its own authority as it progresses in the manner of:
-Asignifying rupture
-Becoming Animal
-Ecriture Feminine
The "Narrative Spine" is placed alongside and broken by the instructions for deviation. These deviations begin in language but progress to noise.
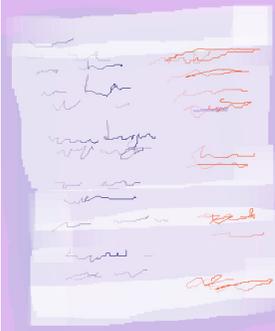
NB: Prior to output, narrative+instructions are "worked" as audio and retranscribed/encoded into text.
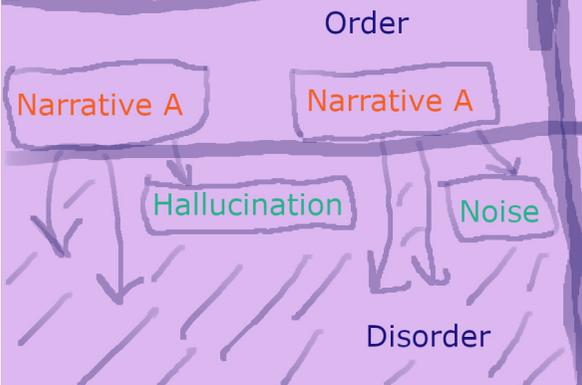
narrative spine

Departure, Deviation, Divination, Damage

Including:
-Character generation,
-Speculation on other paths
-Interpreted audio
-Reinterpreted original diagram
-Provocation to theory
-Relationship to life in moment of writing.

1

3

5

7

9

11

13

ETC

34.1

34.2

34.3

34.4

ETC

36

ETC

Overwhelming affect

Order

Narrative A

Narrative A

Hallucination

Noise

Disorder

Epilogue

Noises

43.1

ETC
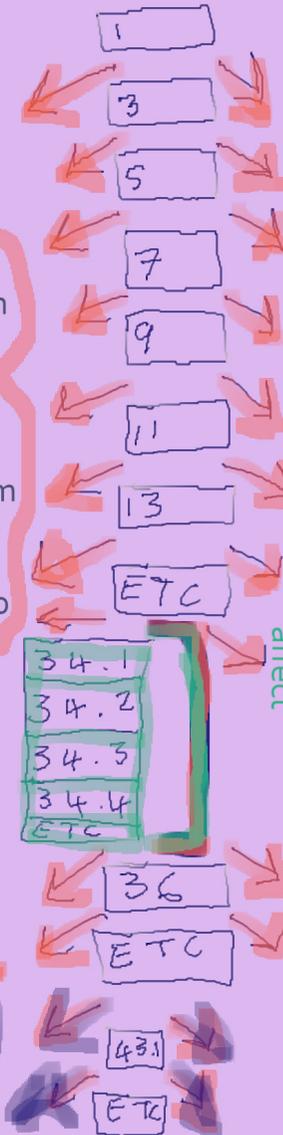
OWTTBP Diagram Two [DIAGRAM]
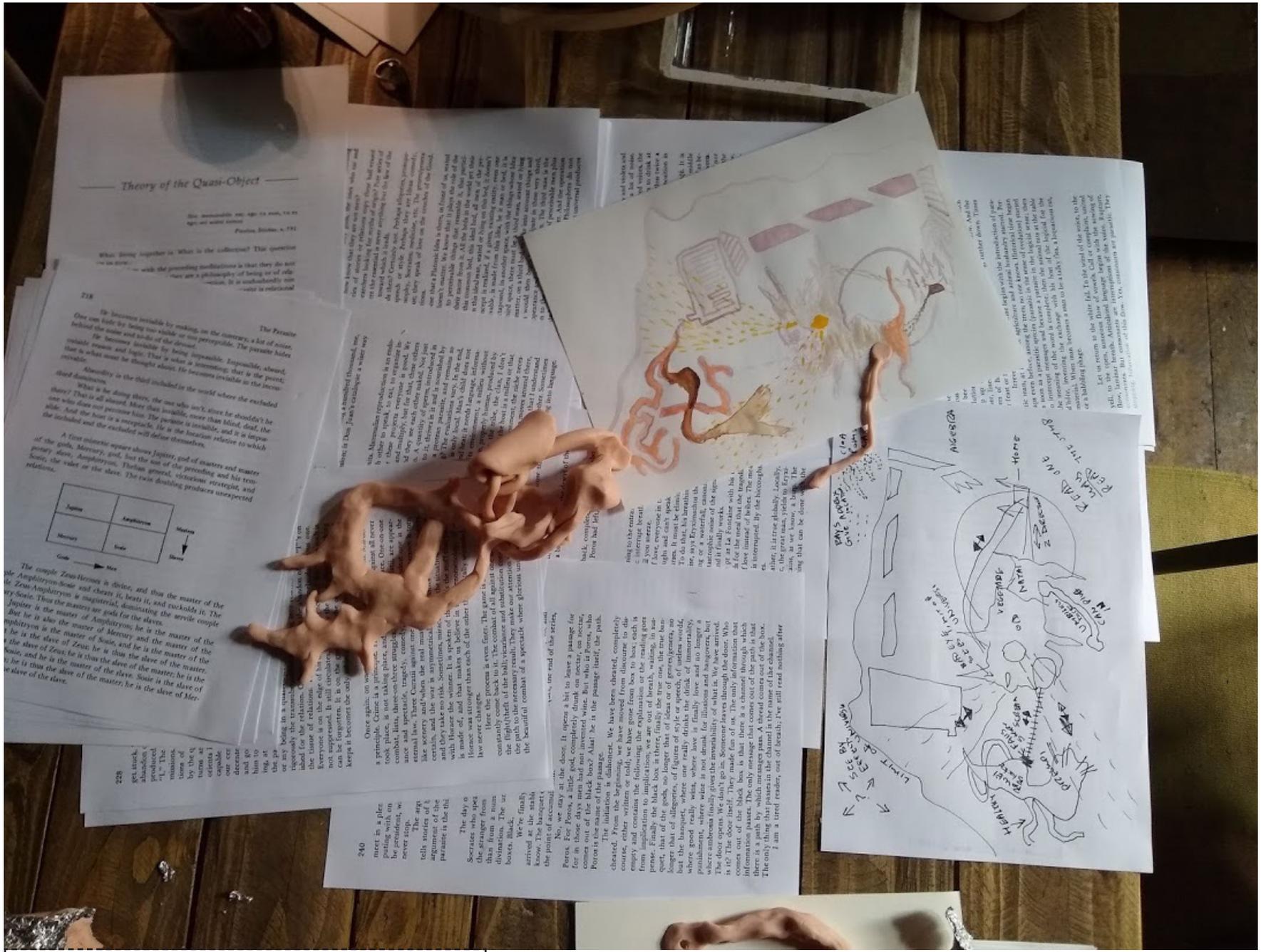
OWTTBP Diagram Three [DIAGRAM]

Mansion Theory [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

An incomplete theory of *The Mansion*.

● The mansion adds more rooms to accommodate the desire of the artist-audience.

● The desire of the artist-audience in forming a new room, constitutes an *Event*[1].

● The successive rooms in the mansion constitute a *Series*.

● *Events* work through *Series*, each new room alters all others in the *Series*.

● There are *Series* for each artist-audience combination.

● *Mansion* is the name for all *Series* connected to one artwork.

● *Mansion Theory* is an approach to art making which is concerned with the proliferation of rooms.

You can barely hear them as the wind you hadn't even noticed picking up is now gusting across the fleshy green surface of the landing pad and bits of rubbish and swept up and getting stuck to the giant spikes and now the little egg car is swerving to avoid the body of what even is that and over the roar you hear something,

Notes on *The Mansion*

The Mansion has been something I have been returning to since before this PhD began. Director Robert Altman's film "Gosford Park" (Altman, 2001) demonstrably utilises *The Mansion* as enclosure of interconnected social and material processes which work through its characters whilst being split along distinct class lines. The estate, *Gosford Park* itself, is a great gothic[2] machine[3] comparable to author Mervyn Peake's "Gormenghast" (Peake, 1999) in which the physical architecture of connected and divided rooms is also traversed and breached by the processes which run through it. I am intrigued by the idea of a space in which overlapping processes take place and change through their points of overlap. I'm also intrigued by the idea of a nominally constrained space, which can be expanded to accommodate any possible process while retaining a firm border, even while pointing to a dynamic world beyond it. I like the idea of *The Mansion* as a way of thinking about an artwork.

As well as cinema, my interest in *The Mansion* is derived from video games. The game "Resident Evil" (Mikami & Fujiwara, 1997) appears in a number of documents within this PhD Output. The difference between the audience experience of cinema, and the agency of the player of a game is also addressed in multiple documents. *Resident Evil* takes place in the "Spencer

Mansion", which is a former stately home, and a former bioweapon research laboratory, as well as the site of an accident, the mysteries of which the player must unravel while staying alive. *Resident Evil*, in a way echoing the epistolary form of "Dracula" (Stoker, 2014) is a game of investigation[4], where the player uncovers an understanding of the *Spender Mansion*'s processes through found documents. The documents, including the one which serves as the basis for documents in this PhD Output such as "Keeper Diary" point to events which pass through *The Mansion* as negotiated by the player, to an exterior. There is also no single way to complete *Resident Evil*, not every piece of information needs to be uncovered, and there is more than one ending outcome.

Throughout the entire time the player has control of the character, *Resident Evil* is located within the *Spencer Mansion* but the experience of play is of this *Mansion* expanding. By this I mean the player begins with access to only a small number of spaces. By acquiring various kinds of keys and tools, and by triggering certain events, more rooms, containing vastly different processes are opened. In addition, the processes of previously accessed rooms are changed through a catalysing effect of other keys, tools, and triggered events. *Resident Evil* is not explored in a linear way, but involves constantly backtracking[5].

You are in a concert hall.

You are the only member of the audience, only the safety lights at the exits and in the aisles give any light but through this you can make out the stage.

It is dark wood and the curtains are red and you look down and yes it is the same wood as the arms of your seat and the same red as the velvet of the padding and yes

 this isn't your body sitting here

but it is also

very much your body.

The requirement that players revisit areas to expand and alter an enclosed setting is a feature of another series of games which began with "Castlevania" (Akamatsu, 1986) but was in my opinion refined with "Castlevania: Symphony of the Night[6]" (C:SoTN) (Hagihara, 1997). *C:SoTN* involves the exploration of a castle, that of Dracula. As with *Resident Evil*, the player initially has access to a limited number of rooms, the processes within which, and access to additional rooms being unlocked through play. In *C:SoTN* the expanding of the castle is achieved not just through acquiring keys and tools, but through the character unlocking abilities. For example, the character the player controls is of a specific size, and has a limited ability to jump. There are parts of the castle the character can jump to access, and some which are visible but not reachable. Later in the game, the character will unlock the ability to transform into a bat, which is smaller and can travel further upwards, thereby gaining access to those previously visible but inaccessible areas. A final note on *C:SoTN* is that its narrative builds towards what is presented as its ending and the location of *Dracula*, only for a new quest to begin and the structure of the castle to change entirely. In the second half of the game, the castle is inverted, the rooms the player has already repeatedly traversed are the same but upside down, their points of access and restriction reconfigured.

Mansion Theory informs and is informed by my research into the work of

artists Porpentine Charity Heartscape[7] and Tai Shani, the two artists whose work is used in this PhD Output. It continues as part of my practice.

The Johanna-you and the character-Johanna and the character-you keep dividing and multiplying and all light is shut off.

Not just light but depth.

And then with a ping you are back in the theatre but you are no longer in the audience instead you are at the foot of the ramp up to the stage and you are surrounded by people that love you.

If you want to, you can now ascend the stage and dissolve into light, turn to page 124 of Ahuman Desire

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Mansion Theory; Endnotes

1. The terms *Event* and *Series* are borrowed from philosopher Gilles Deleuze's book "Logic of Sense" (Deleuze, 1990).

2. It is no surprise that as enclosed space of overlapping and changing processes *The Mansion* appears in horror repeatedly. *The Mansion* might exist both literally in the case of the monsters castle (Gordon, 1995; Murnau, 1922), a cabin (Hooper, 1974; Raimi, 1981), a dance school (Argento, 1977), or a spaceship (Scott, 1979).

3. As a tangential note, a number of Altman's films fit the structure of *The Mansion*, whether that mansion is the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (Altman, 1970b), the Houston Astrodome (Altman, 1970a), *the casino* (Altman, 1974, 1979), or the physical and temporal space around an event (Altman, 1975, 1976, 1994). All of Altman's *Mansions* are sites where *Serieses* and *Events* reconfigure each other within the enclosed structure of space and ensemble cast, whilst the layered and improvised fragments of dialogue which fill the background continually point to the dynamism beyond this structure.

4. *The Mansion* folds into the detective genre easily at points such as "The

Murder on The Orient Express" (Lumet, 1974).

5. The non-linear form is further pronounced through the use of "safe rooms", "ink ribbons" and a limited "inventory". The character is only able to carry between six and eight objects on them at a time in their *inventory*, requiring them to make decisions regarding what weapon, ammunition, healing items, tools, and keys they carry with them. Throughout the *Spencer Mansion* are *Safe Rooms*, where there are no enemies, a box where the player can store excess items for later retrieval, and a typewriter. The typewriter, when combined with one of the limited number of *ink ribbon* items which can be found in the *Spencer Mansion*, allows the player to save their game progress and provide a point to pick up from should their character die. These three elements further break up the directions in which play of *Resident Evil* takes place, as players must strategically backtrack their character to retrieve items in order to test whether they are the ones required in a particular room, all the while being wary to cary the resources to negotiate the monsters found along the way, and deciding how far to risk progressing before using one of the limited opportunities to save their game.

6. *Castlevania* in combination with the equally long running series of games "Metroid" (Sakamoto, 1986) spawned the game genre "Metroidvania" a

Onto the stage walks the artist and writer Johanna Hedva, but it is not really Johanna Hedva.

The figure is a hologram. A black-on-black hologram which displays in 3 dimensions a shape from which no light emits.

The figure walks to the centre of the stage, and a red filtered spot light now marks them in place. The lightless silhouette sits on a chair which has always been there at the centre of the stage, they cross their legs, place their cane so that it rests against the small table on which is a bottle and a glass which have all always been there and the hologram hold each of the high armrests with their hands and aiming their entire body toward your begins to speak,

history of which can be found in game journalist Jeremy Parish's blog for US Gamer "Castlevania: Symphony of the Night Deep Dive, Part 3: The Metroidvania Lie" (Parish, 2017).

7. In 2019 I attended the conference "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games" where Heartscape presented a "keynote game" entitled "quest of mansion: ferment of down and clover" ('quest of mansion', n.d.). After the keynote, there was a Q & A with Heartscape over Skype, and a question was asked about why so many of her games are set in mansions. Unfortunately I did not record the Q & A, and correspondence with the conference organisers have not resulted in access to the recordings made by the host venue, The Victoria and Albert Museum. So the only record I have is my handwritten note of her response which reads "Why mansions? Good question, I guess because of things like Resident Evil, but also because you can keep adding rooms to a mansion and you always remain within the mansion". For a further account of the conference, including the keynote game, see game designer Bryn Dickinson's report "'Creation under Capitalism' - thoughts inspired by Porpentine at the V&A" (Dickinson, 2019).

Conclusions and Exits [CARE, RPG]

The structure and methodology of this PhD Output consisting of three approaches to a central area of art practice, and within each approach multiple overlapping attempts through the various documents, turns the issue of a conclusion into a challenge.

Rather than attempt to draw books and documents toward a unifying conclusion, erasing the differences between then, I have offered conclusions in the documents individually. Some of these are clearly labelled as such, some are more demonstrative, and some left as provocations.

Throughout the three books are indications of where future paths could proceed. For continuation of creative research and the application of concepts developed, these indications are generally placed at the end of documents. Paths which are more tangential, or areas where the research could be reinforced through engaging with a separate discipline or practitioner appear in endnotes.

In place of some kind of ending for the PhD Output as whole I will raise three of the avenues of future research not already mentioned in individual documents, that will be pursued at its end. All of these examples incorporate work already commenced, that for practical reasons has not been addressed in documents.

1: The Incomplete Object.

Archeologist Chantal Conneller has produced a large amount of research focused on "Star Carr", a Mesolithic site in Yorkshire (Conneller, 2004, 2011; Little et al., 2016; Milner, Conneller, & Taylor, 2018a, 2018b). In particular, Conneller has provided a framework for examining

some of the objects recovered from the site, and through this reassess the historic inhabitants of the area's relationship to animals and objects. The objects, twenty-one of which were found during the site's excavation by Professor J.G.D. Clark between 1949 and 1951, consist of the "uppermost part of the skull of a red deer, with the antlers still attached" and are referred to as "antler frontlets" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). In offering an interpretation for the frontlet's use, Clark "suggested they could have been used either as hunting aids, to permit hunters to stalk animals at close range without being seen, or as headgear in ritual dances" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). This interpretation resulted in an impasse between a "'functional' and a 'ritual' analogy" and has according to Conneller, meant that "in the intervening 50 years they have been ignored" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37).

Conneller's research breaches the impasse of an animal derived object needing to be either functional or ritual by use of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari's work in "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Firstly, Conneller outlines how in Deleuze and Guattari, "animals come to be seen [...] as an assemblage composed of a number of ways of perceiving and acting in the word" (Conneller, 2004, p. 44). In this view, animals are not singular fixed entities, and the objects derived from them are therefore not limited to being symbolic of the animal whole or else be understood only as practical material. Animals are here understood as collection of "affects" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 253), and the objects derived from them convey those Affects to the user in a manner which outside of the binary of ritual and functional. From this point Conneller proceeds to "examine the specific ways in which different things are seen to modify or extend the capacities of people in particular contexts" (Conneller, 2004, p. 51), bridging Deleuze and Guattari to theorist Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" which replaces a fixed epistemological view with "webs of differential positioning" (D. Haraway, 1988, p. 590). The use of animal objects becomes simultaneously a process of taking on capacities as well as the ethical/epistemological/ affective engagement with the world from another position.

These observations from archaeology are useful not because they set some historic precedent for how art should function, but because they articulate processes which are important to art from another perspective. Within the documents in this PhD Output that examine

artworks I have consciously treated both the processes deployed by the artist and those of her characters in the same manner. In the art I am interested in, things are not easily split between the practical and the ritual but form processes across these lines to perform different things.

Finally, when I contacted Conneller in 2019 she was continuing to examine the frontlets of Star Carr in terms of how they function as "unfinished things". Conneller has already observed that the frontlets were "broken up as a source of raw material" (Conneller, 2004, p. 46), but is now considering how this occurred concurrently with their uses. A framework for considering art objects that do not reach a fixed state, but are continually re-worked, and drawn from while being used is relevant to a number of documents in this PhD Output. It is relevant to the analysis of artist Tai Shani's works (SHANI, 2019) which undergo edits between redeployments, or the ongoing work "sidekick" (Price, 2013) by Elizabeth Price. Going forward, I would consider how unfinished things connects to the writing practice of William Burroughs both through the "cut-up" technique to "cut oneself out of language" (Hassan, 1963, p. 9), and the process whereby his novels were re-edited in subsequent editions. Burroughs is also relevant to the other side of unfinished things whereby these things are not just refined, but are a source of material for future things. I am also interested in the process by which computer software is updated via "patches" (Fisher, 2019) as another model for an unfinished thing.

I'm interested in the political implications of objects that refuse the linear transition from raw material to finished commodity, but is instead part of processes which cross that distinction. To borrow the image from Karl Marx's Capital Vol. 1 (Marx, 1981), what would it mean for "coat" to remain functioning as "twenty yards of linen", to be always in a process of being woven/unwoven/rewoven into different forms? I feel there is something here to be pursued via the concepts of *Incomplete Provocations*, and the improvisations and departures which are centred in *Tabletop Role Playing Games.*

2: Divination Storytelling

The second exit is far more practical and straightforward. During my research I have used and developed methods for creating parts of narratives based on sortation systems such as card decks and dice rolls. In 2018 I produced an artwork entitled "The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability" which borrowed a mechanic used in multiple games whereby the space in which play takes places is procedurally generated. A hypothetical example of this mechanic would be a game which takes place in a derelict spaceship, the interior rooms and corridors of which is represented with cardboard tiles. When the players reach the exit of one room, a new random room tile is placed at the exit from the first, so the spaceship is configured, and unpredictable, with each subsequent play-through. In *The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability* I combined some of the lore from Games Workshop's derelict spaceship exploration game "Space Hulk" (Games Workshop, 1999) with their subsequently released rules for randomly generated spaceships (Hunt, 2013), to randomly generate prompts for a narrative built from a fictionalised version of my own past.

As a result of the cessation symptoms I was experiencing while coming off antidepressants I found memories returning that medication use had suppressed. In addition, there were physical cessation symptoms which mnemonically triggered some often confused memories of spaces in the town centre of Luton where I spent my teens, frequently from times in the early hours of the morning after leaving a club or a party. I reconstructed these fragmented memories, and the bodily feelings which connected them to the present, and any emergent feelings and noted them down as prompts on index cards. Some memories were so abstract as to not describe a place but just a sensation, or an action. These abstract memories, combined with some other images and thoughts were written up in a list and labelled 1-20.

The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability was produced as a single take spoken performance to microphone. It began with a short reflection on the different ways in which physical geography and brain chemistry are both modulated by chemicals. After this I shuffled and dealt an index

card, describing the derelict spaceship/ 4am Luton Town Centre space it represented in the manner of *Games Master* setting a scene for players of a *Role Playing Game*. I then rolled a 20 sided dice and used the corresponding entry from the list as a prompt for what the player (the audience to whom the work is addressed) did in traversing this space. A partial transcription of one room follows;

"You stagger out of the thickening fog into the area where escaping heat from the many times kicked in door makes a dim pocket at the edge of the street. Banging on the door that feels like it should have given in by now and it is finally opened by someone inside. You roll in, and so does the fog, and the door opener is already turning the corner ahead into the living room so you guess you will follow them, remembering to shut the door behind you.

The living room is thick with dust and hair and ash over the brown carpet and old sofas. No one has their feet on the floor, all bunched up to keep warm or to manage some symptoms of intake.

You just want to buy, but that isn't how this is going to work out. It never does.

Everything slips. Someone makes you take a music cassette and in lock-eyed intensity tells you why you will like it and when you will die.

A man takes you to one side and rapidly ages while sharing with you a one sided conversation about how he has lived his life. He has little ears like fins and catfish whiskers and it's clear from the way he holds and interacts with the portable stereo he cradles that he has a relationship with Fabio and Grooverider which is both more beastially physical and more vapourusly transcendental than you will ever understand.

You slip out and it's dawn and you have the cassette and you don't think you bought anything but now do not think you need anything so maybe you bought it and weren't paying attention during intake or maybe someone else was in charge of your body.

You roll out with the fog and luckily town is down hill but my god you would never be able to find this place again and my god you would probably never want to because all those people would want to check how closely you been following their advice on how to live.

Oh yeah the plot twist is you're a rabbit".

Going forward, I would like to explore the mechanics of procedural narrative based on sortation systems, both as an improvised *Rendition*, and as material which is subsequently cut up and deployed in other ways, possibly as a development of *Diagrammatics*. I'm looking into how I might produce these works for a platform like YouTube, possible using a split screen where half the image shows the face that speaks, and half shows the sortation system such as tarot-style cards.

Dog Mod

Running throughout all three books of this PhD Output are dogs. When I started this PhD in 2016, I soon afterward began living with Lea and Buster, two elderly Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The importance of this relationship to the research is something I have attempted, and failed, to articulate on many occasions in the last three years. As much as the majority of the documents in this PhD Output are underpinned by a desire to understand my own trans* non-binary gender identity, they are also a response to learning about what Deleuze and Guattari would call *Dog Affects*, as well as negotiating my emotions towards Lea and Buster particularly during the sadly increasing points where they have become unwell.

In mid 2019 I sketched an outline for what I called the "Dog Mod". In the language of games, a mod is something added to the game which alters part or all of its systems in some way. Mods are often produced by a third party, and can range from something which simply adds some different functionality (such as the campaign generator for Space Hulk referenced in the previous section) or completely reorientate the system, such as the mod "DayZ" that reconfigures military sim "ARMA" into a zombie survival game and spawned an entire genre of video games (Davison, 2014).

The aim of *Dog Mod* was to produce a document which could provide a means to reconfigure the rest of the PhD Output through its unspoken focus, dogs. *Dog Mod* is something I decided was both conceptually and emotionally too overwhelming for me to be able to complete in time for submission, but I remains as a point of departure for my future research. It connects the Becoming-Animal of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Stark & Roffe, 2015), philosopher Patricia MacCormack's expansion of this into animal rights discourse in the Ahuman (MacCormack, 2014), with other ideas around, animals, play and care (Chen, 2012; D. J. Haraway, 2016; Massumi, 2014; Vint, 2008).

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"Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Lyndon Dorey

This book is one of three volumes which constitute the thesis (to be read

in any order) and is subtitled "Unknown Lacuna".

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Northumbria at

Newcastle.

Department of Arts

January 2020

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Declaration

This work has not been submitted for any other award, and consists of my work alone, whilst fully acknowledging the opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Versions of texts included between the three books of this thesis were presented under the following titles:

- "Bio-film Mansion Theory, or Making as Collaboration with Disorder" delivered at "Interdisciplinary Conversations Around Making", Newcastle University, Newcastle, 2019.

- "There is no reason for you to live: gendered trauma and ecstasy in 'No World Dreamers, Sticky Zeitgeist episode 2: Aperitif'" delivered at "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games", London Southbank University, London, 2019.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Horror, Cult, Exploitation II", Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2018.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Don't Look: Representations of Horror in the 21st Century Symposium", University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2018.

- "Bio-Film Assemblages and Ahuman Horror" delivered at "Current Research in Speculative Fiction", University of Liverpool, Liverpool, 2018.

- "The Revolutionary Praxis of Urban Galls" delivered at "Open Graves Open Minds & Supernatural Cities present: The Urban Weird" University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 2018.

- A version of the document "Farmer 9" was published by Res., London in the publication "Alembic" in 2018.

- A version of the document "Axpansion" was published by Paperwork, London in the publication "Paperwork Issue 3: Iilwimi lipsing" in 2018

- A radio-play version of "The Keeper's Diary" was performed for Rádio Quântica in 2017 and again for Dublin Digital Radio in 2018.

- A video stream version of "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" was performed for the exhibition "Sex and Other States" at South Kiosk Gallery, London in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" and "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" were performed at Reading University in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" was performed for the event "Its Origins are Indeterminate" at Whitechapel Gallery, London in 2018

- Two live versions of "The Incomplete Provocation" and

"The Keeper's Diary" were performed at Serf, Leeds and Res., London in 2017

- A live version of part of "Borne by Rats" was performed at Baltic, Gateshead in 2017

- A video version of each of the three parts of "The Androids' Journey" was shown at the exhibition "Green Fuzz" at Xero, Kline & Coma, London in 2016

All procedures for ethical approval have been followed and the number of

words contained in the three books of this Thesis – excluding bibliography

(academic references), footnotes and appendices – is 77,706.

Signed

R Dorey

Contents [KEYWORDS]

Abstract

Title: "Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Dorey, Northumbria University, 2020.

This research brings together resonating creative processes from feminist literature, game design, queer gender politics, post-structuralist philosophy, and horror cinema. It uses these to articulate an art practice which is unstable and generative both for the artist during the process of production, and again for the audience.

The PhD output as combined thesis and practice consists of three books, each approaching the question, "How to negotiate art practice as involving processes which are unstable, affective, and resistant to structures?" Each book takes a different position regarding this question and in doing so reshapes it into a sub-question.

The book "Ahuman Desire" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving affects which are at some times indescribable, or overwhelming?"

The book "Ahuman Use" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving salvaged or stolen systems, which are always already breaking down?"

The book "Unknown Lacuna" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving unstable things which can only be seen through what they do?"

Each engages the same question, but with a different emphasis. They are three different attempts and the obvious implication is that these are three of many more potentially attempts

I have undertaken an extensive literature review across fields which border on art practice. The three books bring together a vast matrix of research sources and makes these visible and accessible as an act of care, in keeping with the feminist writing practices which underpin the work. I have developed original methodologies which are used in the different documents across the three books and include the use of speculative fiction, plagiarism, formalist writing strategies, drawing, performance, games, and screenplays as research. As well as using artworks as a site to examine the relationships between different theories of creative process. The rigour of the PhD Output exists not just in the scale of the sources processed and responded too, but

in its infrastructural approach which departs from academic norms to resist a cataloguing or hierarchical envelope for the knowledges within.

The PhD Output addresses one of its returning processes of Excess through its form. It is large in scope and shifts responsibility to the reader to navigate this Excess. This demonstrates the affects of anxiety address in many of its documents, before the aforementioned attention to acts of care re-frame this disorder as generative. This mirrors the repeated conceptual and narrative refrain in many documents whereby the horror of the unknown is reorientated to become a creative and dynamic approach to knowledge which does not need to be fixed or enveloped.

The PhD Output aims to support reader engagement based on their desire, rather than through an external economy that ascribes or denies a degree of value based on adherence to pre-existing parameters. This approach is a departure from the common structures of academic research, while still demonstrating critical judgment and original contributions to knowledge. The departure is necessary firstly because of the research questions above, and secondly the commonality of destabilisation in the source materials from feminist writing practices and philosophy, to collaborative games and horror media. Thirdly, the departure enables the specificity of the practice based PhD Output to not just describe processes but to enact them at the

reader's point of encounter with the research.

The primary findings of the research are. The potential for the form of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals to inform an art practice when combined with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The mutual illumination offered when combined with feminist writing practices or Écriture Féminine. The potential for Écriture Féminine to inform contemporary queer feminist art practices which incorporate the forms of video-games, as well recognising the event of audience encounter with such artworks as a creative one. The use of horror cinema as a means to articulate art practice concerned with affect. The potential of practice-based art research to produce new ways to produce and deliver original research in a dynamic rather than fixed structure.

This research is of value due to its relevance to contemporary practice. This relevance is evidenced by the recent attention to queer indie game design ('Beyond the Console', n.d.; Faber, 2019; Humphreys, n.d.; Thaddeus-Johns, 2019; Wallace, 2019), experimental feminist writing practices incorporating speculative fiction (Hedva, 2018; Hval, 2018; Jackson & Leslie, 2018; Waidner, 2019), the divisive concept of "elevated horror" (Carrol, 2019; Crump, 2019; Ehrlich, 2019; Gardner, 2019; Taylor, 2019), and the folding of these into art practice. The research include in-depth analyses of artworks

by two artists who have relatively recently received a high international profile (Apexart, 2019; 'Dark Continent: Semiramis Performance | Arts Council Collection', n.d.; 'Porpentine Charity Heartscape', n.d.; Tate, n.d.) and have not yet been the subject of monographs or a large amount of academic study, particularity within the field of art. The relevance of this research is further supported by the recent publications and events in a overlapping fields (Brazil, 2019; Burrows & O'Sullivan, 2019; Editorial Staff, 2019; Fisher, 2018; 'Flickering Monstrosities Hyperfiction Reading Group', 2019; 'ICA | I, I, I, I, I, I, I, Kathy Acker', n.d.; Lewis, n.d.; Little, 2019; Pyrne, 2019; Shaw & Reeves-Evison, 2017).

Keywords:

Abjection, Kathy Acker, Affect, Art, Georges Bataille Gilles Deleuze, Hélène Cixous, Cybernetics, Écriture Féminine, Félix Guattari, Porpentine Charity Heartscape, Horror Cinema, Luce Irigaray, Patricia MacCormack, Performance, Play, Queer Theory, Role Playing Games, Tai Shani, Speculative Fiction, Video Games.

Abstract; Bibliography

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Notes on Use

This PhD output is a combination of what might otherwise be separated into thesis and practice. It uses different writing styles, and different conventions of text to do different things.

One of the styles and conventions used is that of the film screenplay. The screenplay is used both to account for art practice elements within this PhD which exists in forms other than the written word, and as a kind of art practice in its own right. I follow artist Emma Bolland's use of the term "traduction-retour" or "'backwards translation', or translation through return" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204) to describe the process of producing a screenplay after the release of the film, or in this case, videos and performances, it accounts for. I have used the screenplay form in my work because even as traduction-retour points forward and invites speculation. It is always a means to produce something else, and it is always incomplete because the transition from text to cinema is not seamless.

The screenplay has conventions, and I have had to break some of these. As Bolland notes, *traduction-retour* screenplays are sometimes "redesigned entirely for a specific readership" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204), and in this case

that readership includes this PhD's examiners. As a result of exploring a number of ways in which the screenplay format can accommodate the academic requirements of referencing arguments, I have compromised the former slightly to avert accidental plagiarism through unclear referencing.

An important text convention used in the three books of this PhD Output concerns reading.

The books are meant to be read in any order, but they are meant to be read together. The model is taken from *Tabletop Role Playing Games* where there is often:

- A *Games Master Manual* containing the rules for the *Games Master,* the person running the game.
- A *Player Manual* which each *Player* has a copy of and contains rules for them.
- A *Reference Book* of some sort which lists of things in the world of the game and their rules, and is used by both *Players* and *Games Master.*

Either *Player* or *Games Master* will frequently have to refer to their *Manual* in combination with the *Reference Book*, reading them at the same time, building something from the combination of rules and lists.

Tabletop Role Playing Games are not competitive activities, but better

understood as processes of collaborative storytelling. The game, or

story, arises from between the *Players* and the *Games Master,* each

working from a *Manual* which contains only one side of the systems

which make up the game, and combining this with the *Reference Book*

in different ways. A shifting composite of these positions is a "collective

effervescence" a collaboratively constructed "world entirely different from

the one they have before their eyes" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 228).

Each book comprises methods, speculations for further work, documented

attempts, fictions, maps, and diagrams, the books are orientated so that

Documents within sometimes arrive concurrently. While reading one

Document, smaller ones appear to the side.

Each book begins with an interactive narrative which crosses all three

books, and offers choices which fork and result in different endings.

The books use a *Keyword* system. Some *Documents* include *Keywords*

which are written in hard brackets such as [DIAGRAM]. The titles of some

Documents, and their entries in each book's contents page features a list

of their keywords. The *Keywords* are to encourage the reader read the

books concurrently. *Keywords* present a point to cross to another book and pick up another document using the same *Keyword*, from a different approach.

Notes on Use; Bibliography

- Bolland, E. (2018). The Iris opens/The Iris closes: Le Silence #2 Scene Notes 1–13. Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance, 11(2), 203–216. https://doi.org/10.1386/jafp.11.2.203_1.
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Advice

Mark the pages of each book as you read them. The books are meant to be read by moving between them, and getting lost is part of the process of making connections. But in order to be sure that the reader has seen everything it is recommended that they foul the pages by some means in passing, so it will be easy to round up the stragglers at the end.

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty

A non-linear multi-ending story about care.

[This story has three endings, and your choices matter. It will direct you across all three of the books of this PhD Output, its narrative encircling but not connecting with, all of the other documents You could skip if for now, or finish one of its endings, or follow it until it gets boring and move to whatever document is on the same page when you decide to give up.]

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty is the same kind of diplomatic hub platform you've seen a thousand times. From where you are at the shuttle terminal, it appears in the near distance as an impressive metallic gloss black cube and is of a size you won't even guess at as its hard to spot where the building ends and the night sky above begins. Like much civil architecture in this area, it sits on one of the spiked lily pads which form a major part of the ecosystem of the meridian sea which belts this planet.

Turn to the next page.

You open the sealed pouch that can be opened by you alone and read the final two paragraphs of the advisory again which against protocol you tore off and saved before destroying the rest;

"This entire project can be understood in terms of Voids. The forensicist's art, like the production of all art, involves negotiating with unknowns which are only perceivable through their effects. In some ways, this is the very nature of experimentation but what your training and this advisory will have already made clear is that there is a difference between the layperson's understanding of forensics and the work of an agent. Your responsibility is not to attempt to definitively represent that unknown.

No, an agent's responsibility is to reassemble the records produced by the Void on its environment. It may well be necessary to test the processes of Voids in order to plot their changes and you are granted prior authorisation to use the local population for these purposes at your discretion. Good luck on your mission, destroy this advisory before arrival."

Turn to the next page.

Wait, who are you ?

Think about how you ''feel''.

Of the three options, which is your strongest feeling?

Hunger, turn to page 27 of Ahuman Desire

Thirst, turn to page 40 of Ahuman Use

Fatigue, turn to page 32 of Unknown Lacuna

Androids' Journey; HOST'S INTRODUCTION

INT. TV SET

The host wears a black suit and sits on heavy oak

desk casually. Behind them a fire roars in an ornate

fireplace.

                    HOST
                (Dramatically)
        Tonight we are going to show you three stories
        from a far future where the lines between
        human and machine are far from clear. Your
        job is to decide whether this computerised
        world that we are showing you contains a
        kernel of truth-

CLOSE UP

                    HOST
        -or are we just trying to sell you corrupted
        data?

The host pulls a folding chair from off screen and in a

fluid motion flips it open in front of them, placing one

foot on the seat and leaning over their raised knee

looks directly into the camera.

"Certainty is not a spell
Sweet waste from a well"
Roky Erickson, "Two
Headed Dog"
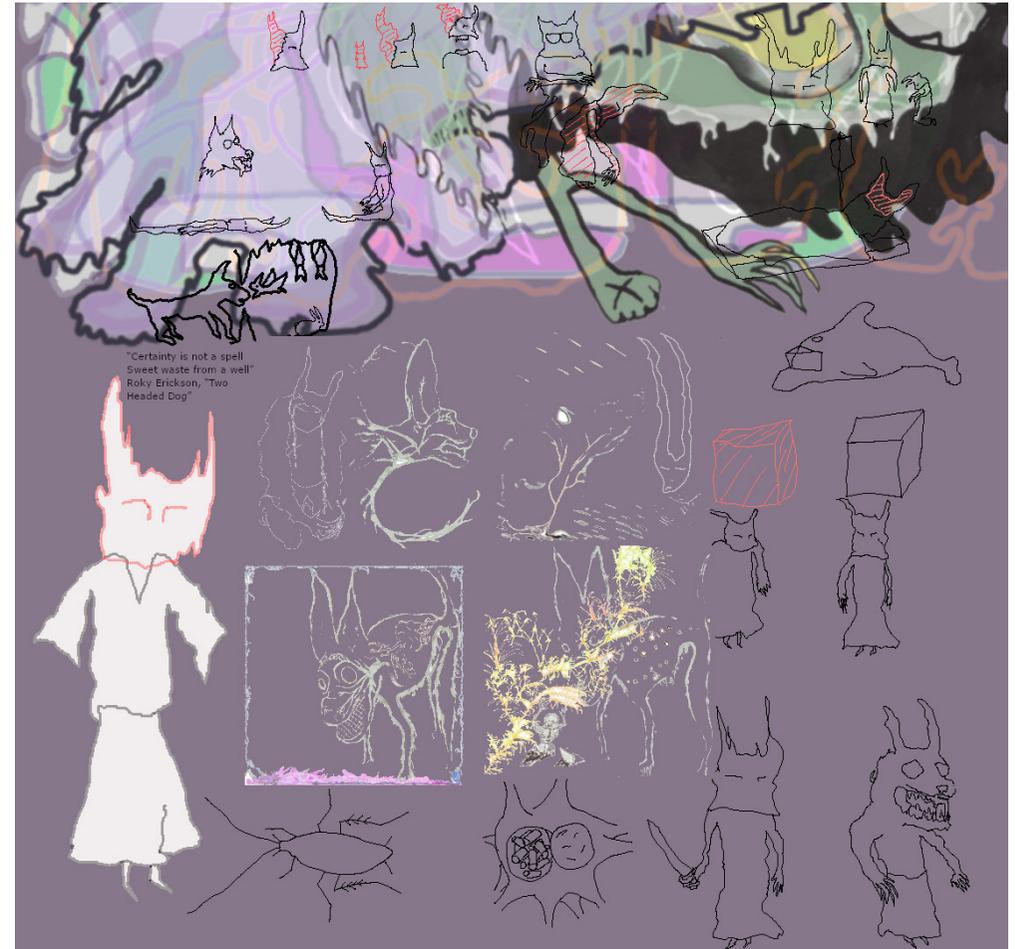
Dog-Tech 2 [LACUNA]

HOST
                  (Casually)
At the beginning of this research project,
arguably before the project itself had taken
shape, a first artwork was made. This artwork
did not have a name so for now we will call
it "Androids' Journey".

Androids' Journey is three overlapping
accounts of journeys undertaken by three
characters from science fiction film and
television.

The three characters are all artificial humans,
or as they are commonly known, androids.

The established lore for androids and the
history of these particular characters
within their source material was maintained
in each original narrative of the video,
in the manner of "fan fiction" which can be
defined as "the imaginative interpolations and
extrapolations by fans of existing literary
worlds" (Hellekson & Busse, 2014, pp. 5-6).

The three androids are:

"Lance Bishop", from the 1986 film "Aliens"
(Cameron, 1986.

"Annalee Call", from the 1997 film "Alien:
Resurrection" (Jeunet, 1997).

"Lal", from "The Offspring", the 63rd episode
of the television series "Star Trek: The
Next Generation" (Frakes, 1990).

Each video plays through a looped DVD, played

through a separate monitor and as each video
is of a different length their points of
overlapping dialogue shifts with each loop.

The position and volume of each monitor is
balanced so that when standing in position
to view one, the other two can be heard but
also ignored.

Each video features a costumed figure speaking
to camera through the superimposed image
of a hand drawn diagram, and over a quiet
soundtrack of acoustic percussion and bells.

The host walks over to a huge bookshelf made of black

stone and filled with huge, leather bound books with

gold embossed titles in an alien language. They select

one, and returning to the desk they sit, pause to put

on reading glasses, and open the book.

                    HOST
            (Speaking to themselves)
    Threes are vital to the research project as
    a whole, and here they show up in the very
    first action which commences that project. So
    what do threes mean?
    The host removes their glasses, tosses them
    over their shoulder into the fireplace, and
    sweeps the book off the desk to the floor.

                    HOST
                (Confidently)
    The arrangement of something into threes is
    important. Having one person speak to you is

Ah, a connoisseur! You are "Max".

Your real name is unpronounceable, even by yourself but it translates to Universal Basic as

"The Ghost of Reason" and you are a highly successful songwriter from one of the Swedish

colonies at the far edge of the galaxy. You present in this realm as a black disk about two

metres across which hovers a few centimetres above the floor and from which emanates a

column of blue smoke which suggests something of a humanoid figure.

didactic.

The host splits apart into two identical copies
                         HOST 1
          Having two people speak to one another is a
          dialogue

                         HOST 2
          Having two people speak to one another is
          Dialectics

A third copy of the host walks into shot.

                         HOST 3
          Having three people speak to one another is
          disorder.

The three copies of the host spasm and collapse to the

floor. Their bodies and clothes dissolve into a purple

liquid. After a pause, the stone bookcase swings open

to reveal a secret door from which the host enters, and

once again sits at the desk.

                         HOST
          The artwork you are about to see was made
          so that three voices, three accounts, three
          perceptions, overlapped with one another.

          Three is a manageable number to stand in for
          lots or perhaps infinity. The implication of
          three is there are more out there.

In conducting research for tonight's screening of this artwork, I looked more into the three part structures which might be illuminating to us as viewers.

CLOSE UP

                    HOST
                   (Aside)
I will stress that this is research conducted in the present, long after the completion of the artwork. The person who made this artwork has stated that they were unaware of this research at the time of making Androids' Journey.

The host stands and walks to the fire.

                    HOST
In his 1962 text "The Natural Order", Danish artist Asger Jorn attempted to set out a three part system of philosophy which he called "Triolectics" (Jorn, 2015b).

"The Natural Order" is a dense and arguable slippery text. Jorn moves between a basis for his philosophy in quantum physicist Niels Bohr's theory of "Complementarity", the colour sphere of painter Philipp Otto Runge, and the Marxist tradition of Dialectical Materialism.

The host returns to the desk and draws a diagram

showing thesis meeting antithesis and resolving into

synthesis.

                         HOST

     It is from the last that "Triolectics"
     draws its name, and its simplest definition
     through comparison. "Dialectics is based
     upon a conviction about the endless union of
     polarizations or two-sided oppositions into
     synthesis.[...] Where there are three mutual
     oppositions, such a synthesis cannot occur"
     (Jorn, 2015b, p. 157).

     This move from two sides to three is
     articulated by Jorn through his image of
     three sided football match. In football,
     each side needs to score goals to win and is
     therefor concerned with attack.

Around the drawing of the dialectic model, the host now

draws a hexagonal football pitch, with three goals.

                         HOST

     In "Three Sided Football", it would be
     impossible to ascertain which of the "two
     attacking teams has scored. It would become
     necessary to invert the rules so that the
     victory was a negative one", a game won by
     the superior defence of the team that let in
     the fewest goals (Jorn, 2015b, p. 156).

     "Triolectics" borrows from Bohr's theory
     of "Complementarity" the image of multiple
     observations of a subject which are in
     relation to the subject accurate but which

contradict one another. Bohr outlines this
    in the following quote from 1958;-

In the corners of the page, the host rapidly draws

a number of diagrams of experiments which might

demonstrate the concepts of "particles" and "waves",

however the host's drawings are rendered in such a

baroque and complex manner as to be incomprehensible.

                        HOST
    -"In Quantum Physics [...] evidence about
    atomic   objects   obtained   by   different
    experimental arrangements exhibits a novel
    kind of complementary relationship. Indeed
    is must be recognized that such evidence
    that appears contradictory when combination
    into a single picture is attempted, exhausts
    all conceivable knowledge about the subject"
    (Bohr, 1996, p. 381).

The host produces some coloured pencils and with

unnerving accuracy first draws a perfect circle in the

middle of the hexagonal pitch, and then renders a

perfect colour sphere while continuing to speak.

                        HOST
    The three positions of "Triolectics" do not
    attempt to resolve into one, but instead
    "complement" one another. This relationship
    is compared by Jorn to "the three primary

colours which, in accord with Bohr's definition of complementarity, relate complementarily to each other" (Jorn, 2015b, p. 157).

Using Ruge's colour ball, Jorn further proposes that "what has hitherto been called the complementary colours relate dialectically [...] as their synthesis abolishes the colour effect" (Jorn, 2015b, pp. 157–158).

The host begins to draw the players on each team

of three sided football match. Each team is drawn

with half of its players (with the exception of

the goalkeeper) facing each of the opposing team's

respective goals.

                    HOST
    "Triolectics" as theory, can be seen as these
    each position being complementary to the
    other to, while in dialectical opposition
    to a point between. In the theoretical
    image of Three Sided Football match, that
    Dialectical relationship can be visualised
    if one imagines themselves the goalkeeper
    of one team, facing the halves of each of
    the opposing teams which are concerned with
    scoring in our goal.

The host draws a line around half of the players of

two of the teams, and brings this to a point at the

goal of the third team, forming a tear drop shape. They

then repeat this procedure with the with the other two

combinations of teams and goals.

                         HOST
                      (Grunting)
        Hmm...

The host throws the drawing of the football pitch, and

the coloured pencils, into the fire behind them.

                         HOST
                   (Staring intently)
        It is important to remember that Jorn did not
        as far as we know, ever see a game of three
        sided football take place, and considered
        it a theoretical exercise which would "not
        be an exciting game at all" (Jorn, 2015b,
        p. 157). When three sided football did come
        to be played from the 1990s onward more was
        learnt about it, and also "Triolectics".

        Lithuanian   artist   and   "psychic worker"
        (Diržys, n.d.) Redas Diržys argues that
        Jorn   failed   to   properly   articulate that
        "triolectics is not only about defence. It
        is about continuous change of the conflicting
        polarizations, with the final realisation
        that none of them is essential. Even the
        final goal—to win—is secondary compared to
        the set of unpredictable situations that
        occur during the game" (Diržys, 2015).

        As   per   Diržys's   analysis,   "Triolectics"

is concerned with change, disruption, and exploration. Rather than create a concept, with Jorn argues is a "standardization of thought" (Jorn, 2015b, p. 140), "Triolectics" is about the play of three sides, and the unpredictable emergences which come from this play. Or as Diržys articulates it, the not a "belief system [of] social-scientific reification [but a] knowledge generating situation" (Diržys, 2015).

The positioning of "Triolectics" as a generative and destabilising process is echoed in an account authored by Three Sided Football team "Strategic Optimism Football" (SoF) (Strategic Optimism Football, n.d.).

SoF state that "Triolectics" "demurs from such notions of strategic mastery" and instead requires strategy which "must be characterised by a certain openness to contingency, externality and the intervention of otherness" (Strategic Optimism Football, 2015).

SoF continue with the statement that "thinking triolectically is a game in which former categories of thought break down" (Strategic Optimism Football, 2015). The "Triolectic", like the process of "Diagramatics" [KEYWORD: DIAGRAM] performs an the function of alienating us from what is being examined as we are forced away from previously established perceptions.

The three stories we about to show you tonight are arguably "Diagramatic", because as "fan fiction" they each take a pre-established structure of a character, and push through

it a context it was not made for. However we are less sure that the three videos, even as they were originally shown as a desynchronise simultaneous screening, are particularly meaningful as a "Triolectic" arrangement.

As we disclosed at the beginning of this introduction, this artwork was produced three years before our research into "Triolectics".

Re-examining the "Androids' Journey" now we feel that although playing the three videos together would result in some unpredictable resonance between them as the three voices overlap and audience attention shifts, this is not the focus of the artwork.

The three android protagonists do not seem to offer a radically different position from one another and there are arguably strong similarities in the themes and ideas of each. What is illuminating, is that while this artwork was made in three channels instinctively as a way of focusing on instability, it began a path of research which affects the entire PhD.

The PhD Output takes the form of three books in order to perform a function which resonates with Jorn's "Triolectic". Each book approaches art practice with a focus that is different, however these focuses have a relationship to one another that is sometimes at odds and sometimes in harmony.

The three book form is itself a part of the research. It attempts to demonstrate an approach to art practice as research

The Fabric Hung Mansion [LACUNA, MANSION]

There is something disturbing the musty silence, a slowly increasing volume of synth pop music that fills the room and wakes me up. I yell at the alarm clock built into the wall and the little speakers built into the ceiling fade down far enough that I can think.

Out of my rotten bed and waddling on sore ankles I make it to the sink quickly in case I vomit but its a false alarm. In the mirror my face, my wrong wrong face, looks back at me goofily. Big eyes made bigger with smeared eye-shadow like black mold, hair lifeless as a plastic wig (but it's mine!), flat little nose and that v shaped beaky mouth, tiny teeth hidden no matter how much I practice smiling. I turn on the automatic taps with a swipe and try and wash my face. The water is warm and the familiar actions are comforting and I feel my mood getting more manageable. Less out of my control. My skin soon feels nice and new and clean, so I open the soft close drawers set into the wall in an arc around the mirror, selecting little pots and steel tubes and paper bags and two plastic devices with trailing curly power cords already plugged in at the rear of the drawer they are found in.

I try smiling in the mirror again. Nope, still a big fleshy beak. Ugh. I guess this is

which generates ideas rather than staking out a system. It attempts to deal with art practice in a way which we feel reflects how art practice can be a process of slipping between modes, methodologies, and areas of interest.

We feel that art practice, like the encounter with art, is not an experience based in stability. The three books of the PhD Output present each a focus from a different perspective, but each retains a presupposition of instability.

We would argue that a similar presupposition is made by the artist Elizabeth Price in her ongoing artwork "Boulder" (begun 1996) and ongoing corresponding text "sidekick" (Price, 2002, 2013). "sidekick" is a text which has been published in multiple version and so referenced here are two contrasting versions.

The first is titled "Excerpts from sidekick" and was published in the "Journal of Visual Art Practice" in 2002 (Price, 2002). The second version is titled "sidekick" and is therefore understood to be a complete account. This version was published in 2013 in the book "Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research" edited by Katy Macleod and states that "as of January 2004, this is the most recent revision" (Price, 2013).

The abstract at the beginning of "Excerpts from sidekick" outlines "sidekick" as "a descriptive text which annotates the incremental progression of a labour-intensive activity. This activity is fairly

why I have all this, and why I'm so good at using it, I tell myself. I pull out the little tables on their little arms from around the mirror and start opening containers and quickly applying the contents in careful amounts, orders, and combinations. A couple of times I break off to start up one other electronic devices with its built in timers and carefully irradiate bits of material I sculpt with single use wands and spatulas. I draw lines on my face with a pencil and then use these lines as markers to apply other material. A firm foundation takes planning. I feel very calm while doing this. Each application brings with it a feeling of safety and comfort as I become me, building upon an inappropriate structure but one I am skilled enough to work into something near enough perfect.

Gluing the last, freshly cast, piece of myself into place I press the button on the mirror which directs it to unfreeze the camera position and I swipe the screen to check from all angles. Good, I barely need the mirror anymore. The firm but fleshy antlers look energetic which ever way you look at them. My eyes have been made soft but still fierce, and my newly structured face is now more canine than avian. Perfect. I always feel good at this point, but I feel very good today. Tempting fate I return all the materials and platforms to their storage with a flourish and walk across the room with only mild discomfort, choosing and putting on clothing from the limited range that today's rituals allow.

straightforward: packing tape is wound from the roll upon which is commercially distributed, onto itself, to form a sphere" (Price, 2002, p. 108).

Both versions of the text begin with description of the process, reflection upon the experience of performing the process, and attempts to somehow account for this process whether through the quantity of material or other means.

Price suggests that neither empirical measurements of the sphere nor her recollection of the process can fully account for the artwork. Price notes that even though the sphere only expanded very slowly through the lengthy process there was a disconnect between her memory and when re-encountering it, stating, "I think I usually imagine it as bigger than it really is" (Price, 2002, p. 110).

The descriptive text then moves to describing the material itself, adhesive tape which is bought by the roll. Price reflects on the manner in which this material is sold, bought, stored and used, ultimately deciding that the unit "roll", and therefore "tape" itself "does not function to refer to an abstract amount. Its clarity is that of a unit which relies upon" (Price, 2002, p. 111).

Next there is an observation that even if the exact quantity of tape used could be measured, and the changing amount of labour required to apply each roll as its scale shifts the artwork itself might prove a

A short time later I am dressed. The soft white fabric of the robes is such that the shadows in its folds are almost unperceivable, it just changes shape uncannily, the shape of my body inside a forgettable memory.

My senses are still present however, and I feel the x-ray clunk in my wrist that notifies me of the arrival of a message. I'm on time so this is good. Some mornings I've still been getting dressed, or worse, still building my face, or EVEN WORSE still black out drunk hanging off my dish shaped bed when the clunk of the day's itinerary has come through my extended nervous system.

Placing my hand on a nearby contact point the information held in my buffer is downloaded to the console and displayed on the screen. It's mostly what I would expect for today. No more than I can handle. Strapping the high braced boots onto my legs and feeling the pain and then relief in my joints I open the door, and walk down the servants dormitory corridor out into the access network of the mansion.

A note about the layout of the Alucard mansion: there are many ways to get between almost any points of departure and arrival but they are not all the same. There are different costs and benefits for pathways and these are interconnected with, and this

better "illustration of time, labour and stuff" (Price, 2002, p. 112).

In both versions Price explains the dialectical process of attempting to apply the tape in a flat manner while this changes the size of the sphere, and therefore requires the technique to be altered as the sphere changes in relation to the body working on it.

In both versions Price notes that this technique never stabilises, that "I can still never wind the tape tightly enough" (Price, 2002, p. 110, 2013, p. 123).

Reading Price's description I tried to imagine a process to contrast with that of winding the tape.

I considered a process where the object didn't change and force reassessment and development of technique would result in the technique stabilising. I was trying to imagine a process which could be stabilised and therefore effectively vanish as it required no more development.

However, as soon as I considered the person performing this technique, their capacity to grow more or less tired, to become bored, or to change in some other way I decided that Price's account of this dialectical struggle in making "Boulder" is less a different kind of process than a process made visible.

This dialectical struggle which fails to resolve feels comparable to Jorn's theory of "Triolectics" and the accounts of its

seems almost a cliché to say, the pathways within my own body. How much of this is intentional planning I'm not certain, I have wireless integration with the rhythm of the building that's for sure. Something bangs on a door and I feel sick and vomit a little and get a flash of light across my eyes in the form of a headache.

The door from my chambers is pink and green and covered in round grooves like bubbles. It shuts behind me with the sound of an expensive car.

The corridor is hung with so many velvet curtains across and between walls, ceiling, and floor that it's hard to make out what the shape of the structure underneath is. Someone bangs on a door somewhere. I can't hear it but I feel sick and distracted like I'm stuck in a beam of light through a school bus window and the journey is never going to end and then it does and I pay attention again to what's around me.

I wrap a stretchy sticky pink rubber bandage around my head and all I can hear is music. This is a design flaw, the music is not music but just feedback from other systems but it helps me a lot to shut out stimuli. I vomit on myself slightly less when wearing it which is a tangible benefit to the mansion as well which is why I have not received a memo about protocol I guess. Either that or no one cares.

realisation as "Three Sided Football".

The struggle described in "sidekick" is one which never disappears with a resolution, or rather repeatedly resolves and again destabilises with such rapidity as to be practically indistinguishable from flux.

The shorter and earlier version of "sidekick" ends on the consideration of whether empirical measurement of labour could account for "Boulder" or whether perhaps "Boulder is a better account of that labour.

The longer text continues, considering the deceptive and unstable properties of both "Boulder" and it's description, "sidekick".

"The evidence of the boulder is difficult to verify, and so it is potentially unreliable. The matter-of-fact descriptive qualities of the thing, and the descriptions of this text cannot be depended upon: they could be contrived, rather than candid" (Price, 2013, p. 130).

As previously noted, there are multiple versions of "sidekick" and even between the two here presented there are differences. These differences are not limited to one being an "except" and the other being a latter version.

"Passages are removed, new passages are added, and then maybe removed again" (Price, 2013, p. 130). The process of writing mirrors that of winding the tape in that it is a continual cycle of perception and action which requires a new perception and further

As sharp as I'm ever likely to be, I get to the end of the thickly hung corridor by pushing through fabrics printed with images of animals smiling from on top of mountains. There are two doors, one round with a rotating system of bars like a vault or a bulkhead, the other is blue and wooden and I go through that one because I'm hungry and it is the kitchen.

Some others are just leaving as I enter. This always seems to be the case and I'm always happy about it because I don't want to talk to anyone. It's a risk I've taken before but not one that's ever really worth the trouble of other people's mess sliding down inside your skull. I only really pay attention to people when I want to be sure they are leaving. I feel sick enough already. But they are gone, I eat something and I pull myself together and everything changes gear.

I have started work, and this transition has just happened without me realising until after the fact. Like a double take, whoah-Keanu. Eating has shifted the building and also the time within it. Things happen in flashes now. I perform the work I was woken up to perform. The mansion is a space in which everything can be contained. A mansion can grow rooms in real time to perform functions or house experiences which did not exist outside of a fraction of a second. The basement might have a bowling alley, a tentacle lives in the attic, dogs burst through windows in corridors

action and so on.

What I notice in the process of both "boulder" and "sidekick" is that there is likely not just one cycle situated in the actual.

At any point whether writing or applying tape there must be consideration, or at least awareness, or at least capacity to do something other than what eventually through action becomes actual. Elsewhere [KEYWORD: RPG] I argue that the making perceivable of other trajectories is important to art both as practice and as audience encounter.

In Jorn's "Triolectics" as realised in "Three Sided Football" this is quite easy to visualise. At any point while the ball is in play multiple agents are considering actions other than those they ultimately decide on.

There are an even larger number of actions that could take place than might have even been consciously considered by any agent because they relate to things they themselves do not know.

For example a player might consider if they are to pass the ball or to shoot. However there is the further potentially occurrence that they might be tackled by a player they have not noticed, or indeed drop dead from a brain aneurysm they had no knowledge was coming. In art, the virtual as encompassing unknown lacuna is where speculation comes in.

The artwork functions as multiple provocations for the audience to speculate. As addressed

designed primarily to allow the window bursting of said dogs. The mansion is procedurally developed in response to desire. There was a time when mansions responded only to the whims of their patriarch, developing porn seminar theatres and bear pits in response to the needs of one singular mind. And while that mnd would degrade like any, and its desires might lose coherence or fidelity, it would be singular at least, a single strand narrative. Now, in this mansion, I'm not so sure that is the case. I don't feel like only one story (lol) of desire is at play here. No, I wouldn't say that at all.

I'm sorry, I'm getting sidetracked, I cannot hold onto where I am in terms of tense. I'm telling you this as it happens, but it is also after the fact, and as unreliable as if it hasn't happened yet. Work has this effect anyway I think. Repetition pulls you both into and out of the present at the same time. It stretches you in both directions in the same manner that to be truly embedded into the moment while performing an act is to lose all context that would place that moment anywhere. Unanchored and unreferenced. XYZ coordinates in utter gibberish.

After eating, layers of interconnected systems inside of me alter time and space and everything comes in flashes. I write this now during a late edit, years after the first words were put down. The mansion folds around me as I perform my ritual duties

by Patricia MacCormack, this is the point of "becoming Ahuman" (MacCormack, 2018). Where art work has produced desire to encounter it, and speculation- some of which cannot even be articulated-as to destabilise our previously established subjectivity.

Price's account as it continues in the later version of "sidekick" is concerned with the inability of the text to ever map perfectly over what it describes, the production of "Boulder".

The continual attempts to "write this text well" highlights that "sidekick" is not only only a response to "boulder" but a response to itself, and ideas such as 'writing well' (Price, 2013, p. 130).

"sidekick" as account is not really distinguishable from "Boulder" in that it is also an artwork. "Many things are invented or extorted, many are effaced or excluded" (Price, 2013).

This manner of writing as creative, speculative act is not even necessarily entirely deliberate. The manner in which process of articulating affects what is being articulated is demonstrated when Price writes "I find it quite difficult to remember clearly the distinction between the experience and the terms in which I have chosen to relate it" (Price, 2013, p. 130).

Rather than translate experience to language "the tactics of the text have obfuscated the memory of producing the boulder" (Price, 2013). Further, despite attentive detail

which extend in all directions. What follows is a best as I could represent them at the time. "Work is the benchmarking of the soul", Rosa Luxemburg.

I am in an empty lot in Berlin Mitte, I have opened a camping gas canister and it is venting into the air. The person next to me grins manically and fumbles with a zippo. They are a dog, some kind of racing hound with a long nose and huge limb distances between joints which in part explains the fumbling but even with thumbs I think they would struggle with the task as they are clearly very excited.

They tell me the story of Kamo and the Tiflis bank robbery. My friend tells me how the Bolsheviks carried out a series of "expropriations" to fund the revolution, and that Stalin chose Kamo to lead these. My friend giggles as they describe in detail how a horse drawn stagecoach carrying funds was liberated by Kamo's team with hand grenades. Their excitement reaches a crescendo as they jump up in order to better gesture the trajectories of various bloody parts of horse exploding across Yerevan Square and through my nausea at the inhaled gas I catch sight of myself reflected in a puddle of waste engine oil and see my own soft nostrils and long nose and soft ears and dappled coat and soft white mane and then my friend has dropped the zippo and as it hits a cinder block it inexplicably sparks a flame.

"the text does not seem to account for the thing without anything like the necessary particularity" (Price, 2013).

For Price, the account of "sidekick" is marked by lack, an unverifiable gap between accounting for experience and the experience itself. Likewise there is a gap between the various kind of value which can be considered to reside in the artwork, and the accounting for this value. This same lack is addressed by Jorn in "The Natural Order".

Jorn argues that the "causal world of technique or the logical object world of science", which are concerned with the progression of history and the objective observation of the world respectively, are at odds with the "aesthetic world" which is "the only one that gives the concept of value any meaning" (Jorn, 2015b, p. 130).

The "aesthetic world" referenced by Jorn is the subject of his earlier text "Luck and Chance Dagger and Guitar" (Jorn, 2015a). This text is a substantial investigation into the following thesis;

"The aesthetic object is defined as the unknown, and aesthetics as
the empirical science of the reactions of the known to the unknown or the unknown, unexpected or uncontrollable reactions of the known" (Jorn, 2015a, p. 22).

Jorn's attempt to construct an "aesthetic science" is a attempt to construct a position which focuses on "the unknown" rather than the resolution of unknown into the known

The first part of my work now finished. I move to another area of the mansion, still imagining I smell burnt hair. It is a cloudy night and I am walking along the grass and litter covered verge of country road. On my left is the tarmac, and to the right a high hedge. I have not seen any traffic but I know not to step down onto the road. There is enough light to see shape, but not colour. It is slow walking uneven dirt and lumpy grass. Everything is grey. I can smell bacteria and then it starts to rain. I keep walking. I cannot feel temperature but I can feel the wetness. My clothes are inappropriate and are soon soaked, my long hair sticks to my forehead and cheeks and rivulets of water create partings in my scalp through which to pour now the nape of my neck. The feeling of wetness triggers another sensation inside of me. I feel ravenously hungry and then soon the swish swish fatigue of low blood sugar. I feel dizzy and stumble more often. I feel like I am bleeding out and both want everything to stop and to never stop moving. I stumble on as the road makes endless turns to the left and to the right and I can never see more than a few dozen metres ahead. Even breathing feels chaotic at this point, like neither inhaling or exhaling is correct even for that moment. Mercifully, my shift must have ended because I make one more turn and I am back in the corridor of hanging fabrics. I open my chamber door deliriously, throwing off one boot then the other and in the process pulling part of the long ears from my head and collapse face first into my beautiful round rotten bed. "Ok Google, play bedtime play-list" I mutter into my Miffy pillow and the

(Jorn, 2015a, p. 40).

Price's "sidekick" performs Jorn's "aesthetic world" in two ways. Firstly, it attempts to account for the artwork through description and in doing so demonstrates that attempting to transform it into a 'known' in this manner fails to account for its value.

Secondly, Price demonstrates that this very account, can be turned into an "unknown" as it highlight's the gaps between account and experience.

This includes the unknown of setting up the value of "boulder" as attached to its material integrity as being entirely made of tape, before opening up the possibility that her account of this material integrity might not be true.

In this manner "sidekick" reverses the concept of "practice as research" by turning the written research into art practice. The manner of this reversal is such that as with Jorn, the dichotomy between 'research' and 'practice' is challenged.

The challenging of this dichotomy as necessary to engage with art practice is is a position argued throughout this PhD Output.

With this brief introduction almost concluded, it is nearly time for tonight's screening of our three stories of androids doing the best they can.

I will remind you that our introductory analysis was researched after this artwork

room fills with Walter Becker's "11 Tracks of Whack" and unconvincing stories of

drug deals and movie deals and university life as I lose consciousness completely.

was created. However I would like to offer the speculation that the artwork is an exploration of maintaining the unknown through the dynamism of three adjacent accounts.

Therefore it can now be experienced as leading up to this introduction rather than following it.

FADE TO BLACK

While traveling under your own propulsion right now seems appalling as parts of you that have no business registering any feeling somehow ache, you decide it is better than waiting for that approaching vehicle.

Girding all of your strength and enthusiasm you begin your bumble toward the terminal with the level of grace normally reserved for the begrudging, the lackluster, and the intoxicated.

You came to AA920 for a break from dealing with others and their demands. "This is your time" you think to yourself, trying to remember other power phrases from the wellness programme intergalactic law demands passengers undertake every 6 months of travelling at faster than light.

You keep bumbling over the fleshy ground, luggage threatening to fall every few seconds.

"It is what it is" your internal monologue continues. You go through the whole cycle of meaningless phrases "Serenity now", "only god can judge me/you", "nice aimbot", and "Serenity now" again, but with more emphasis. You are feeling slightly more aligned with *something* in the universe when you get to the doors of the terminal, turn to page 59 of Ahuman Use

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You blacked out.

You wake up again, feeling like a thick blue film is covering your body, and you lose consciousness once more. Time to turn to page 99 of Ahuman Desire

Androids' Journey; BISHOP [CARE, LACUNA]

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INT. CARGO BAY
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BISHOP, TORN VIRTUALLY IN TWO, HIS PASTA-LIKE INTERNAL

ORGANS WHIPPED BY THE WIND, PULLS A LEVER AND THE WIND

STOPS. ALL AROUND ARE BODY PARTS AND BROKEN MILITARY

EQUIPMENT. BISHOP IS ENCRUSTED IN VANILLA MILKSHAKE

BLOOD AND IN FRONT OF HIS OPEN TORSO THIS MIXES WITH

THE RED BLOOD OF THE OTHER BODIES.
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                         BISHOP
        The story of how we entered the stomach is
        also the history of androids. Lance Bishop
        works for the Weyland-Yutari Corporation,
        they were born here, young and spreadsheet
        paternal and caring. Mid 40s, bearded,
        laconic humour. A nice guy. Capable of many
        things, a great deal of processing power. On
        this ship the role I am most cut out for with
        these skills is to provide support under
        pressure. Everything around wells with blood
        and is in need of emotional support.

        The emotional support officer.

        The job is not to have emotions, but to
        display a warm eyed look and a hand on the
        shoulder and to be cold and cruel inside by
        rationally and unwaveringly dispersing the
        advice of the company.

Figure one: "... I was just explaining how group analytic therapy functions. I mean, are you sure you're ok?"

I was born here, young and already paternal,
caring mid 40s laconic beard and nice guy
capable. Surrounded by surfaces sweating
blood, carrying on speech. The floors appear to
sweat, light rivulets between diamond steel.
Little octagons which flex. The crew is all
stiller than previously, less movement just
a tremble here and there between muscles
still rippling distance less motion.

Bishop pushes against the wet floor in order to prop his

body against the wall behind him. He reaches down and

tucks some loose organs back into his torso.

                    BISHOP
     I have a hydrogen cell in my sternum which
     requires a 72 hour recharge every 400
     days approximately depending on working
     conditions. Silicone woven musculature is
     lubricated by a latex fluid pumped throughout
     my system. Like blood this will eventually
     clot.

     Having no need for rest I continue with the
     care routine.

Bishop looks around at the body parts, equipment, and

fluids.

                    BISHOP
               (Professional tone)
     Everyone position yourselves comfortably,

standing, sitting are fine if you can support
yourself, lying on your back is preferable.
Begin by gently bringing your attention to
your breathing. Keep your attention on your
breath.

Imagine a glowing blue triangle light at
your sternum, under the surface of your
skin. As you breathe in the light increases
in brightness and hue, now breathe out and
dims and softens in colour and shape till it
just a soft white ball of glow.

Bishop gestures with both hands, miming a ball

expanding and contracting in front of his chest.

                    BISHOP
     Breathe in again and this small ball expands
     again, taking the shape of an inverted
     equilateral triangle with points at the
     clavicles and the centre line of the rib
     cage.

     Breath out and the light loses colour and
     brightness and shrinks to a small sphere
     about the size of a satsuma.

     Breathe in and it grows again.

     As you breathe in you are filling the light
     with energy, as you breath out your are
     releasing that energy back out into the
     interior of the ship.

     You pull the energy in with no effort at all,
     and release it without more than a thought.

You nod.

In and out.

In and out.

The way that the wind is a response to changing pressure this energy moves into you and out.

From somewhere above, viscera drops into an upturned metal helmet which starts to rock beside Bishop. He pauses to look before continuing.

                    BISHOP
     If you do not have lungs do not worry, the
     energy has no mass, it consists only of
     waves.

     In and out.

     In and out.

More viscera drops into shot as if coming unstuck from the ceiling.

                    BISHOP
                  (Sternly)
     Stay with your breathing.

                    BISHOP
                (More relaxed)
     Those of you who no longer have a complete
     torso, do not worry, you can still join in.

Bowl

Imagine any part of your body is breathing.

Your <u>liver</u>.

Your <u>pineal gland.</u>

Your <u>thumbs</u>.

Breath <u>in</u> and <u>out</u>.

In and out.

A indistinct silhouette moves across the bottom of the

frame.

                    BISHOP
     (Gentle and reassuring tone of voice as if
         speaking to someone falling asleep)
     If your mind wanders, gently bring it back.
     Don't worry, we all drift. The ship is
     drifting and we within
     It.

     Gently come back to your breath.

     <u>In</u>.

     And <u>out</u>.

     <u>In</u>.

     And <u>out</u>.

Lights flicker, for a few seconds there is darkness and

the sound of metal pans crashing to the floor can be

heard from another room as the light returns

                    BISHOP
                   (Smiling)
     If your body is no longer determinable and
     is spread out as a considerable multiplicity
     do not worry, imagine that it is all part
     of your body. It doesn't matter whether
     historically some fluid was within you, or
     another.

     Likewise it does not matter whether that is
     your arm or a friend's.

Bishop's arm gestures become significantly wider and

more fluid, as if he is dancing.

                    BISHOP
                   (Excited)
     Imagine the whole field as one organ, breathing
     in this soft weightless energy, and returning
     it to the interior of the ship.

     As you are breathing, and you focus on this
     breathing, I want you to bring your mind
     back.

     Remember when you were reading Neuromancer
     by William Gibson or perhaps it was in
     Schismatrix by Bruce Stirling.

     Keep breathing, in and out but slowly move
     your attention away from your breath, toward
     the scene in the book.

Bishop steeples his fingers in front of his face and

stares straight ahead as if seeing something.

                    BISHOP
         (Whispering, speech is more rapid)
    You are inside a room. It is rectangular and
    empty.

    It is warm, the air is not dry, only slightly
    wet.

    Keep breathing in and out.

    You fill the room with your body. You will
    all of the space.

    Feel the points of yourself where you touch
    the surfaces of the room.

    The point of touch is soft and warm but
    supportive. You feel secure when you touch
    it, walls, floor, ceiling and doors.

    The point of contact tremors slightly then
    stops.

    Keep breathing, in and out
    Do not worry about the light, it will take
    care of itself.

    In and out.

    In and out.

Bishop begins to draw using his finger in the mixture of
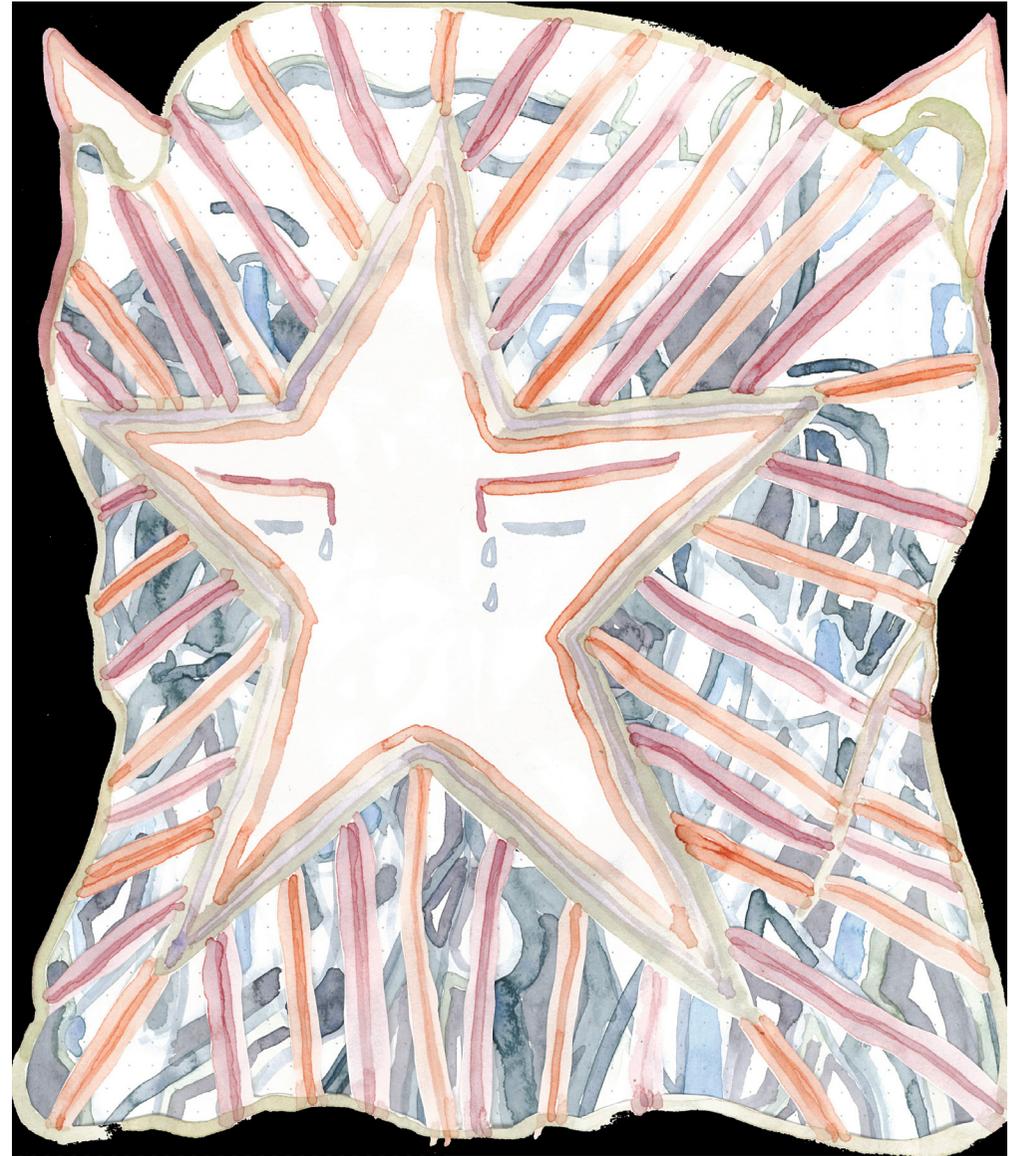
Agent [LACUNA, RPG]

android and human blood on the metal floor in front of

him. He draws what he describes with inhuman precision,

as if rendering it in computer aided design software

on a computer. Bishop erases and re-draws so fast at

points that it appears as if we are watching a camera

move through a wire frame three dimensional model.

                         BISHOP
                      (Whispering)
          Draw your attention again to the points where
          you meet the room.
          Feel them, feel the pressure as your cuboid
          body touches the walls, floor, ceiling, and
          doors.

          Your eyes are closed but you can imagine
          what the room is like. It was angular before
          but the walls are now slightly bowed out,
          curving at the corners.

          The floor feels like thick deep carpet. You
          fill the space. But now I want you to shift
          your point of view. You are inside the cuboid
          of your body, and you see that it is empty.

          Your body is a thin membrane suspended just
          inside of the walls, floor, ceiling, and doors
          of this room.

          And you, bodiless, are floating within it.

          As you breathe in and out you notices the
          light changes.

Viscera drops from the ceiling and sends the helmet

rocking again. Without looking, Bishop reaches into the

helmet for more fluid to draw with.

                    BISHOP
                  (Whispering)
     The light is a soft glow from the surfaces
     of the room. It is strongest the further it
     is from edges and corners, like there is
     glowing ball in the middle of each wall,
     floor or ceiling.

     As you breath in and out the light gently
     increase, and decreases.

     Breathe in and the room becomes a comfortable
     dim glow.

     Breathe out and it be almost black.

     Think about the colour of the light. Breath
     in to increase it, and watch it dim as your
     breath out.

     Breathe in and breathe out.

     Notice how the surface of the room tremors
     every few breaths. Just a small vibration
     which move across the space.

     Think about the points where your body
     membrane touches the room.
     Don't worry if you can't find them exactly.

     Find what feels like a point, then go beyond
     that point of what is your body and what is

The travel-belt straps you down in its sticky embrace.

You travel to the hub, you perform your job.

the room.

See how you keep finding more of you on that other side.

As you breath in and out, notice how you can feel the room well within the borders of your body.

Keep breathing, watching the light increase and decrease.

Is it the same colour? It is slowly changing.

You notice that the shivers are still there, but you can't be sure exactly when they start or stop.

You notice you are shivering too.
Sometimes at the same time as the room, sometimes in synchronisation.

Sometimes if feels-

                                    CUT TO BLACK

                  BISHOP
 -like nothing is moving.

Crying 2 [Mansion]

Androids' Journey; LAL [CARE]

INT. OF FUTURISTIC BAR.

LAL SITS AT A TABLE FACING US AND DEALS A TAROT CARD

ONTO THE TABLE. LIVE JAZZ MUSIC CAN BE HEARD QUIETLY.

                    LAL
        (speaking in melodic fashion which verges
                on singing at points.)
        Lore stepped over the body of Dr Noonien
        Soong

Lal deals another card.

                    LAL
        Lore stole the emotion chip from Dr Noonien
        Soong

Lal deals another card.

                    LAL
        Lore hid the emotion chip made by Dr Noonien
        Soong, in the stomach or possible the bowels

Lal pauses to look at the three tarot cards which we

cannot see.

                    LAL
        Put this somewhere.

"Game over is perhaps the ultimate form of self care" - Albert Wesker

The End.

[Thank you for playing this story has two other endings, turn to page 28 of any of the three

books to make different choices]

Away and hidden and float it out into the sea.

        What use is the microchip?
        Without it, nothing is lacking

        But the lacking.

        But still.

A waiter arrives and puts a large bowl of guacamole

and an elaborate cocktail on the table next to Lal who

smiles at them and takes a drink from the cocktail with

a straw.

                         LAL
              (As if telling a story to a child Lal
            adopts a low and gruff voice to show they
              are no speaking as the character of an
                         adult man.)
         Now as it floats away on the inner sea, I,
         Lore, am worried I made a mistake.

         I came down here to the inner sea of the
         stomach or bowel to get rid of this and now
         I want it back.

         The sea is hot fermentation like sweet sour
         wheat porridge, it is warm around our ankles
         as we start out reaching for the floating
         silicone and copper happily still upright
         on its little float of polystyrene packaging.

Lal uses their first and second finger to mime a person

walking along the table top. With the other hand they

drink some of their cocktail and then spit it onto the

tablecloth in front of their fingers, still held as if

they were standing legs.

                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
        Under my feet the ground is soft below the
        shallow liquid, but only as soft as the
        land with bulging nodes of polyps and grassy
        banks and small enzymes running and making
        little nests.

Lal lifts the cocktail glass into the air, upends the

guacamole onto the table covering it and the three

tarot cards completely. With empty bowl in one hand Lal

takes another sip from the cocktail held in the other

hand, drops the guacamole bowl onto the floor and then

carefully places the cocktail glass back onto the table

now thickly covered in mashed avocado.

                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
        The ground under the liquid is just as soft
        but has little hexagonal ridges in it which
        are swollen like saturated human digit tips
        or the edges of suckers.

Lal resumes using their first two fingers to mime walking

You keep going past shutters which hiss steam and precarious stacks of materials which

mew and sneeze.

Eventually you reach the last unconverted concession, a small pharmacy.

through the guacamole

                         LAL
                     (Man-voice)
    We keep walking out after the little tiny
    microchip as it drifts
    just ahead. If you're careful you can walk
    with a heel of each foot sitting neatly in
    each hexagon ridge of the floor.

    But then, standing on something crystalline
    which crunches with satisfactory but
    unexpected fulfillingness we are thrown off
    balance in the liquid which is now above all
    knees and we stagger.

Lal's slaps their hand into the guacamole and then

splays out their hands in front of their face, palms

towards us.

                         LAL
                     (Man-voice)
    A bow wave and ripples from splashed hand
    scoosh the microchip on its little boat
    further out of reach.

    Reaching to go further with a one foot you
    realised the ground slope increases hugely
    and without realising a decision could be
    made we're swimming.

    Tunic soaked and the sweet acid liquid like
    a thin thin gel that clings and globs.

    Swimming is slow and satisfying, stretching

Crystal Feeding [CARE]

aches out of muscles we forgotten all about.

Marks appear as if drawn by an invisible hand in the

guacamole in front of Lal who does not appear to

notice. In the jerky manner of low quality stop-frame

animation, contrasting colour drawings of enlarged

microscopic organisms swim through the guacamole.

> LAL
> (Man-voice)
> Face down you open your eyes against the soft
> sting and in the black and purple light see
> slivers of orange ripple past. Small wheels
> of sharp milky blue a bit like snowflakes
> roll by.
>
> There are shapes that look like commas, inky
> black outlined in white and full of snakes
> and tiny black rings which suddenly explode
> into a radiation of dots before being caught
> by currents.

Lal gestures with their hands and elaborately draws a

large breath.

> LAL
> (Man-voice)
> Pulling our head back up to draw breath is
> almost an afterthought.
>
> We adopt a butterfly stroke to avoid pushing

the floating raft and the pricked-into emotion chip designed by Dr Noonien Soong, further ahead.

It's almost in reach. The viscosity of the inland sea is not enough to stop it bobbing out of reach at any attempt.

Our eyes feel fresh as the sea fluid drips from them and round the edges.

The waiter returns placing a second, and more elaborate cocktail nest to the first on the table, and stooping behind Lal to pick up the dropped guacamole bowl. Lal pauses to smile at the waiter, takes a drink from the second cocktail, then the first, then the second one again before continuing.

   LAL
                (Man-voice)
    Light salt trails left after on our cheeks
    a bit in the mouth but trying not to think
    about it.

    The weight of resistance from a thick sea
    has changed the feel from comfortable in
    muscles to a starting ache so we roll over,
    slowly as not to cause a thick splash and
    flit along on our back.

    It is possible that as the chip is no longer
    within our field of vision this will cause
    problems but you're sure that we will spot

Unknown Lacuna
Page: 69
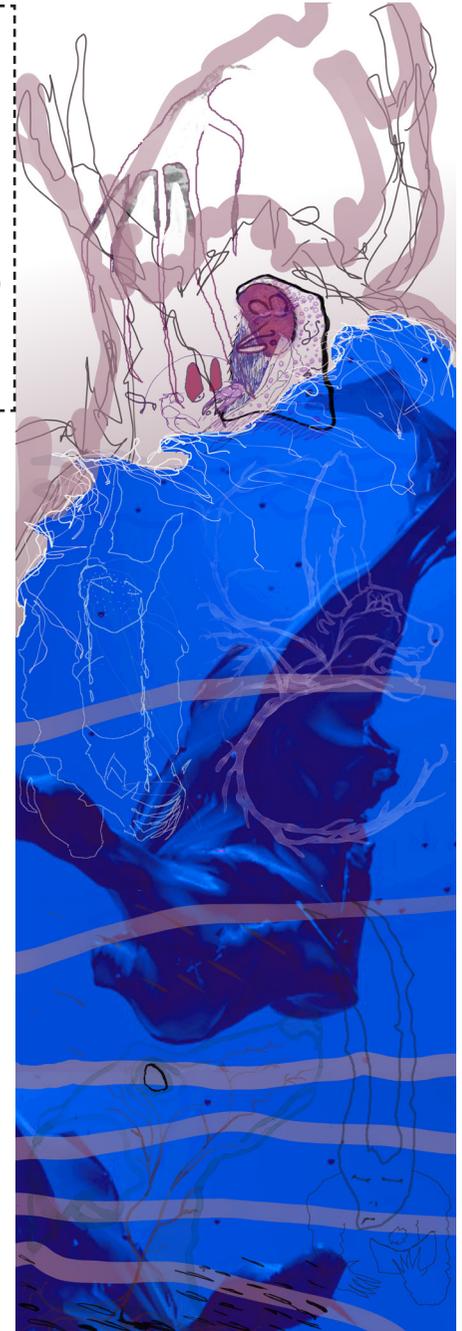
```
     it as we overtake and if I swim only by
     kicking the feet then there's less movement
     in the water to push the little boat out of
     reach.

     Also, this is much more comfortable. Though
     the air is sharp and while the ceiling is too
     high to see there are drifts of vapour like
     clouds up above that move about very slowly
     and prove a pleasant distraction from the
     sting in sinus and eyes and the soft palate.
```

Lal reaches a hand still covered in guacamole into

a pocked in their clothes and withdraws it holding

another tarot card. They place the card face up on

the guacamole covered table and look at it before

continuing.

```
                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
     After a while, whether by the calming swirl
     of vapour of the stimulating rhythm of the
     swimming stroke even this acid tang to the
     soft tissue ceases to be so tiresome.

     Breathing in and out the sting is almost
     gone.
```

Lal mimes breathing in a big breath.

```
                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
```

Yard Beasts [CARE, LACUNA]

The drawing is wrong. You rotate it one way, and then back, deliberately overshooting in the hope that the loss of control will pull it back into being. It's hard to tell what is wrong; it flickers in and out of your eyes. Well there is one thing that is clear; one of the words that should be visible is covered by another word that was layered on top. There's no way to fix that now. "RD BEASTS". It nags at you. A dead bit of memory washed up in brackish water under thick trees. Fuck it.

Not the Fuck It of nihilism. The Fuck It of if this machine is broken there is no risk and overclocking it with joyous abandon. The worst that can happen (beyond psychic sepsis) is it will break. It is broken already. There are patterns inside it still waiting to get out. You flick the switch, and then the door opens wide behind you.

Two figures enter the room behind you. You dare not turn your head, but you know who they are already. "The kibble is on the table." Your voice cracks. You hear the sound of feet on boards. You hear the sound of the great weight of two large bodies walking without cares over floorboards which are at least two hundred years old. You hear the crinkle of heavy-duty plastic as the bag on the table is inspected and then lifted, a chair scrapes, more feet, and then the door (surprisingly) is closed.

```
        Drawing in just feels warm, like the warmness
        of the liquid we are floating in, but inside
        us.


Lal mimes breathing out a big breath.


                        LAL
                    (Man-voice)
        Exhaling feels refreshing and cool.

        In and out.

        Warm and cool.

        Warm and cool.

        We wonder whether it is familiarity, the
        duration, or whether we have adapted in some
        other way to the environment.

        You have started twisting wrists in little
        tight circular motions to add a little more
        propulsion and direction to our swim.

        I am still watching the clouds drift above
        the legs and wrists and lungs which all
        relax into a complicated rhythm together but
        in the middle of all of this the breathing
        holds a steady piston cycle.


Lal mimes breathing in and out, gesturing with their

arms, shoulders and head as their do so.


                        LAL
                    (Man-voice)
```

You are an infinite number of possibilities of what can be done to a willing body.

You are two people. You walk side by side through the wide corridors of the early twentieth century millinery factory, enjoying the bounce of the wood under sometimes 4 feet and sometimes 8. You bat the commissioners door with a joyful shove. Donk.

Inside is the same long room, the small figure sitting hunched at the far end under a single library lamp in front of a sheet of paper and inks and knives. They don't look round but make the normal noises and neither of you care because you are already moving to where the 40 kilo bag of dog food is. Where it always is, on the end of large hardwood dining table that looks like it could barricade a castle gate. You silently open the army surplus bergen, load up, and leave, pulling the door shut.

It is around 20 hours since the car accident. It is not really an accident because you knew it was going to happen, but you also requested specifically that it be "an accident", that it have that feeling of all the forces in the world coming together and not even noticing your life in the way. You swing from the ropes around your ankles.

In and out.

In and out.

Somewhere in the background there is the sound of a large number of glasses being dropped and then a cheer from a crowd. Lal smiles and takes a sip from each cocktail.

                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
      Watching the clouds pull tight and drift
      away.

In and out.

The movement of the animated creatures in the guacamole becomes more energetic, now breaching the surface and splashing green onto the cocktail glasses and Lal themselves as they speak.

                    LAL
                (Man-voice)
      The swim has gone past the point where we
      could say how long since leaving the shore
      and the dancing proteins and enzymes pumping
      materials in chain.

      You imagine them in synchronisation, the
      same rhythm of in an out.

You look up at those ropes. They look like they were from a martial arts wire-work set up. You can see the costume they dressed you in after they dragged you stunned away from the road into some sleeping family's driveway, before putting you into the trunk and driving here. You are dressed in an ancient hard sewn smock and trousers. Embroidered all over are images of Pan, of card suits, birds, hands, and feline teeth. You hear them return from collecting the payment you left.

A glob of something is devoured and on next
stroke another material is discharged into
the mouth of another organism. A chain of
reactions criss-crossed by other chains.
Each one pumping along.

In and out.

In your mind this line of transmission
becomes a two dimensional polygon, a series
of concentric hexagons with an organism it
each corner.

On each breath the creatures excrete a
material from their corners to be caught by
those in the larger shape that envelops it.

Lal takes another drink and once more in the background

there is a smash of glass, now followed by a scream,

and then a crowd cheers. Lal smiles.

                    LAL
               (Man-voice. Excited.)
     Breathing in and out you can almost see this
     image in the clouds above.

     The system grows larger and larger, more
     sites, more organisms.

     The organisms are no longer uniform but all
     different, and the material they consume and
     dedicate transforms heterogeneously at each
     breath.

The guacamole animation now rises into the air in front

of Lal, geometric shapes float in space between us and

Lal, illustrating what is being described.

                    LAL
                (Man-voice. Excited.)
     There no longer seems to be a simple trajectory
     between lines of organisations but now the
     excretions of each organism are devoured be
     next nearest three.

     Most confusingly these lines of flight no
     longer just radiate out but seem to go in
     other directions.

     Sometimes you can make out a small spiral or
     eddy, or trace a large arc cross many points
     before it heads past its earlier origins at
     a new angle.

     However, through all this, the pulse of
     movement is still the rhythm as our breathing.

     In and out.

     Muscles no longer feel tired and the
     resistance of the liquid is not noticeable.

     The twists of the wrists and the kicks of
     the feet roll into each other.

     You imagine you must have warmed to the same
     temperature of the sea as you can no longer
     feel it.

     After sometime it is hard to separate the
     different parts of us from the pump of the
     organisms.

TFW Production Image [CARE, DIAGRAM, MANSION]

It is impossible to tell any of it apart.

It is almost a frightening shock when-

The guacamole animation suddenly drops to the tabletop
with a wet splat. Somewhere in the background a single
voice starts to cheer before immediately trailing off in
embarrassment. Lal does not acknowledge that anything
has happened and continues without pause.

> LAL
> (Returning to normal voice.)
> -suddenly four sets of hands are gripping
> us.
>
> Two pairs of hands on each side of the body
> and we are being lifted out of the water.
>
> The liquid from the inland sea splashed as
> the hands dipped into the water to grip us.
>
> The air felt felt hard and dry as we pulled
> from it, still facing up at the ceiling just
> beyond view
>
> lifted up into the air above the shallows
> like an injured seal by four steady hands on
> each side.

                                        FADE TO BLACK.

Crying 3 [Mansion]

Androids' Journey; CALL [CARE, RPG]

EXT. DAY

CALL LIES ON A SUN LOUNGER AT THE EDGE OF A SWIMMING

POOL, THEY ARE HOLDING A COPY OF THE DUNGEONS AND

DRAGONS 5TH EDITION PLAYER HANDBOOK WHICH THEY CONTINUE

TO READ WHILE SPEAKING.

                         CALL
                    (Absentmindedly.)
          Androids don't have blood but they do have a
          similar substance which is a kind of latex
          solution. This primarily acts as a lubricant
          for the synthetic musculature of the android
          body.

          Additives achieve a consistent viscosity, and
          increase curing time so that minor punctures
          to the android dermis will effectively clot
          until a more permanent repair can be made.

Call pauses while frowning. They reach under the sun

lounger and pick up a copy of the Dungeons and Dragons

5th Edition Dungeon Master's Guide which they now read

alternately with the book they were already holding.

                         CALL

Although much effort was put into alternatives, even the modified latex solution used in modern androids retains the characteristic odour of all natural rubbers.

Research and development teams at Weyland-Yutani produced some of the most thorough research into the smell of natural rubbers, but were unable to remove the odour which was frequently brought up as an issue in product testing.

This is irregardless of whether said androids were deployed in industrial, military and service industries.

Due to the limits of physical resilience, Asimov's laws, and a synthetic intelligence based on contextual use of a vast data-bank, the android's role is one primarily of affective labour.

Out of shot something heavy is dropped into the swimming pool, and a crowd cheers in response. Some water lands neat Call who does not acknowledge it, but reaches under the sun lounger again to retrieve a copy of the Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition Monster Manual which they read along side the two books they are already holding.

                    CALL
     The android has only the appearance of

a theory of mind, but it is a <u>very good</u>
<u>representation</u> and can function <u>very well</u>
as an advanced form of emotional support for
human workers.

Studies have shown that having an android
as on a small lunar mining team can prolong
effective operations by as much as <u>13%</u>.

It was thought that by removing the
characteristic <u>dead fish</u> odour of the latex
fluid, a more complete emotional involvement
by employees with the android could be
formed, and would increase production rates
further, especially on high value high risk
operations like mining.

However, as the odour is a direct result of
the enzyme and bacterial breakdown within
the living material of the natural rubber,
the smell is not able to be removed without
sterilisation and effectively <u>killing</u> the
fluid, without which the android would no
longer be able to operate.

Once again something large is dropped into the water,

this time followed by a scream, and then a cheer from

the unseen crowd. Call shields all three of the books

they are reading with their body and a light spray of

red liquid falls on them.

                    CALL
              (With serious tone.)
      At some time in the past, the androids

created the second generation of synthetic intelligences, which were called the Autons.

The most famous of these were Call, and Lal.

Whereas humanity had made the androids as either male or female presenting, in order to help negotiate the Uncanny Valley and soothe the anxiety of Patriarchy, androids saw this as unnecessary in their project.

Neither Call nor Lal performed a fixed gender, but moved across a spectrum, treating gender as an expression of a fluid relation with the multi-species social milieu.

Not long after the first wave of Autons were operational, a decision was made by an international body overseeing the legality of synthetic organisms for their recall and termination.

Approximately 3,000 androids were decommissioned, along with a small number of Autons.

The circumstances of Auton decommissioning unfortunately mean that little is known about their design as attempted recall was met universally with violent resistance, meaning recovery agents were forced by protocol to deploy incendiary ordnance.

Subsequent to the recall of synthetics, stocks in Weyland-Yutani plummeted and the company went into immediate liquidation.

An interesting and unexpected result of this incident is the arrival of the now famous

Weyland-Yutani Problems. The W-Y-Ps are a standard in teaching of corporate law, using the Auton in a series of thought experiments about a hypothetical labour-entity which is not the legal property of a corporation.

                                    FADE TO BLACK.

Borne By Rats [CARE, DIAGRAM]

There are a great number of stars in the sky and they all smell like burning plastic. Your body is in a great number of pieces and you are borne across the rough concrete of the car park by a far greater number of rats.

People talk about "plague" in a manner which carries emotional and moral weight. A plague is not just a pathogen but an antagonist which comes as a multitude over time. It is wide and deep and has malicious agency.

This might be correct, but only from a foundation of a type of politics which is no more perfect than many others. The roof of the court is still on fire, the server library behind it is just a concrete crucible, sparks drafting above in the smoke.

Borne away by rats you are carried in careful procession up the waiting ply ramp and into the side door of the white transit. The door slides shut and wood clatters to the concrete outside as the engine politely starts and you are driven away.

Now beginning your egress, this particular job complete, we can do two things. The first is we can let go of this formal constraint of writing, no longer fitting each

thought into a paragraph a little under three lines.

Secondly, we can debrief on the job done. I, your handler (also, a huge number of rats) and you the agent (also, in a great number of pieces) will decide what happened and write the history of the research event. This research event took place at the start of summer, in 2017 and could be thought of as a point where the project as a whole began its trajectory. Together we sing the code phrase and mnemonic trigger, the same code phrase you sang at the beginning of the research event to a room of people.

> "Certainty is not a spell
>
> Sweet waste from a well"
>
> Roky Erickson, "Two Headed Dog" (Erickson, 2013).

Mnemonically triggered, you begin the ethnographic report, I take notes, make edits, the van hums along the road. Here's what I wrote of what you said:

At the event, I presented my research. It began with two lines of a song, sung as an epigraph. They set the contexts of the unsteadiness of knowledge when making art, and the constant presence of contamination. There were six parts to the

An art practice of vectors and voids [CARE, DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

Adapted from the reparative love and unseen agency in Tai Shani's "Phantasmagoregasm".

> "Do you like my interior monologue?" (Heartscape & Rook, 2018)

This document explores art practice as an *Unknown Lacuna*, a dynamic absence only located and encountered through its effects. It does this by juxtaposing Philosopher Luce Irigaray's text "The Natal Lacuna" with artist Tai Shani's artwork "Phantasmagoregasm" to examine how each deploy things I have named *Voids* and *Vectors*. This document does not claim to expose the intent of either Shani or Irigaray, but seeks to create new concepts from this collision which can inform art practice. This document makes no distinction between creative processes that the *Artwork* deploys, those creative processes that emerge out of the audiences encounter with the *Artwork*, and the creative processes the *Artwork* represents or describes through its various voices.

presentation, this was part one, and with each part I showed a drawing on the projection behind me.

Part two summed up the early plot of Stephen King's story "Cujo" and its film adaptation where the titular dog contracts rabies from a bat while chasing a rabbit into a hole (King, 2011; Teague, 1983). I note that King's alcohol use at the time meant he could not recall writing the book (King, 2010).

At the close of part two I note that both versions end with the death of Cujo. However in the film adaptation, Cujo is aggravated by the sound of power tools and goes on to kill a number of authoritative and abusive men, and indirectly bring a young boy close to death. This is different from the novel where the young boy dies, and after being shot Cujo's head is removed.

Part three outlines the plot of William Gibson's short story "Johnny Mnemonic" and its film adaptation by painter Robert Longo (Gibson, 1995; Longo, 1995). In both versions, the protagonist Johnny is a courier who transports sensitive data uploaded directly to his brain. The use of his brain in this way means Johnny has lost his childhood memories. The story is concerned with Johnny undertaking one last job, in order to be able to leave the profession. He modifies his brain to carry

The artist and 2019 Turner Prize collective winner Tai Shani has since 2014 produced artworks as part of a project called "Dark Continent" (DC), named for Freud's description of the sexuality of adult women (Freud, 2002, p. 90). DC takes inspiration from texts such as Christine de Pizan's proto-feminist work "City of Women", adapting and deviating from them to question "what constitutes the feminine" through a "messier and more agnostic model of gender that moves beyond the binarism of Pizan" (Crone, 2019, p. xi).

One artwork within DC is "Phantasmagoregasm" (Shani, 2018, 2019, n.d.), a narrative delivered by its titular character "an eighteenth-century hermaphrodite writer of Gothic fiction" (Shani, 2019) which explicitly references Edgar Allen Poe's "The Fall of The House of Usher" in its concern for the protean interrelations of bodies, objects, buildings, and affects. Shani offers a radical redeployment of the tropes and structures of the Gothic, just as she does with those of gender[1].

In the first half of this document I will put the artwork[2] in proximity with a short text by philosopher Luce Irigaray entitled "The Natal Lacuna" (Irigaray, 2006). This is one of Irigaray's rare direct addresses to art, and one that at the time of its first publication in English was inferred to present a "conservative" attitude toward art, broadly prescribing (though not without

far more data than is safe, risking psychosis.

The data Johnny is carrying is wanted by both a multinational pharmaceutical company, and the Japanese Yakuza, both of whom want to remove Johnny's head to acquire it. In the short story version, Johnny is accompanied by a bodyguard named Molly Millions who is a protagonists of equal focus, and the centre of action. The film replaces Molly with the character "Jane", who is visibly human, has little narrative agency, and suffers from a debilitating disease which could be cured by the information in the head of Johnny, who is the focus of action.

I look at the audience, to be sure that they have observed that both pairs of text and film are concerned with something from outside a brain being put within it.

In part four I outline the symptoms of rabies, as well as the "Milwaukee Protocol" which is the treatment used in the only documented case of an unvaccinated human surviving Rabies infection. The Milwaukee Protocol involves a medically induced coma to allow the immune system to fight the disease. The most well known symptom of Rabies is hydrophobia, which stops the patient from swallowing which it has been hypothesised increases chance of infection through bites (Agarwal, 2017; Healey, 2014).

contradiction) that women artists should focus on representation to create the "female imaginary" (Irigaray, 1994; Whitford, 1994b)[3]. I will explore how, just as Shani remakes and fractures Pizan, the artwork can, when combined with Eve Kosofky Sedgwick's writing the "reparative position"[4] (Sedgwick, 2003) create a new tactic in Irigaray's text, focused on gaps or lacunae.

The narrative the *Artwork* presents is summed up at its start in an introduction presumably in the voice of the artist Shani herself.

> "In Phantasmagoregasm's short story "The Old Haunted House of Terrifying Terror", two sisters, Nora and Alma perpetually bury the decomposing body of their father" (Shani, 2018).

This sets the *Artwork* within the central convention of the Gothic text as analysed by Sedgwick,

"For characters within these conventions, to be active is either to impose an arbitrary barrier or to breach one, breach that is transgressive and attended by violence at the threshold" (Sedgwick, 1986, p. 34).

As well as its content concerned with transgressions of the normal order of burial, the artwork deals with this Gothic convention also through its

Part five returns to Johnny Mnemonic, and the character of "Jones", a dolphin cybernetically enhanced by the CIA. In the film, Jones is part of a resistance movement against a pharmaceutical company who are withholding the cure for "Nerve Attenuation Syndrome" in order to maximise profit. The cure for the disease is what is being transported in Johnny's head, and Jones helps remove it in order to support the resistance. This disease does not exist in the original story, and Jones removes the data from Johnny's head in exchange for heroin which his former CIA employers had rendered him dependent on. In the original story, Johnny and Molly use the recovered data from years of courier jobs to live a life through blackmailing former clients.

In both short story and film version, Johnny is assisted by a group called "Lo Tek". The Lo Tek in the film is the revolutionary cell to which Jones is a member. In the original short story Lo Tek is a group which despises technology. Members have modified their bodies to be partly dog, and live on the extreme periphery of society. The Lo Tek have doberman teeth grafted into their jaws, which causes them to salivate and both obscures and limits their speech.

In part six I introduce philosopher Patricia MacCormack's, critique of horror

use of a narrator, who we see transgresses into, and disrupts the space of the narrative they recount. The double of convention between subject (the narrative) and method (the narrator) also fits Sedgwick's later observation on the attendant mental state of the Gothic, paranoia. As Sedgwick outlines, "paranoia seems to require being imitated to be understood, and it, in turn seems to understand only by imitation" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 131). Sedgwick illustrates the paranoid position with the Gothic image the "man of suspicion double-bluffing the man of guile" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 125).

The *Artwork* in question and *Phantasmagoregasm* as its narrator achieve through this doubling something which does not simply fit as a set of paranoid relationships. "Phantasmagoregasm is both creator and empath" (Shani, 2018, p. 1), thus the relationship is not one of suspicions, but at times one of managing or defending from a deluge of information and affects. *Phantasmagoregasm* tells their story, whilst ultimately being consumed by it, but the need to probe or suspect is absent. Such a relationship resonates with Sedgwick's later exploration of "reparative reading". As theorist Paul Kelleher argues "Sedgwick traces as well as performs an ethics of "reparative" writing - not, importantly, from a new-found position of detachment, but rather through a recalibrated sense of theoretical attachment and investment" (Kelleher, 2002, p. 448). Attachment, most

author H.P. Lovecraft. MacCormack argues that "connectivity to the unlike is what defines Lovecraftian entities" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 206). MacCormack draws a parallel between Lovecraft's work and the figure of "mucous" in the writing of feminist psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray and I recount the former's quotation of the latter; "Already constructed language does not speak of the mucous, the mucous remains a remainder. Producer of delirium, of dereliction, of wounds, sometimes of exhaustion" (Irigaray, 2017, p. 244). MacCormack sees Irigaray's "remainder" in the hybrid creatures of lovecraft. The human and the non-human, the assemblages which not only resist being caught with their own name, but damage the very authority of naming at all. MacCormack also observes that in Lovecraft's stories "his protagonists grapple not with monsters, but with the very way they feel about the relations themselves" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 209), that they are overwhelmed instability of elements which refuse to conform to order and separation.

The final part of presentation, part six, continues the use of Irigaray's mucousal immanence and transcendence through another fictional encounter between the human and non-human. This part summarises philosopher Rosi Braidotti's analysis of author Clarice Lispector's novel The Passion According to G.H" (Lispector, 2012).

clearly seen in the emotion of love, is the central concern of this artwork. *Nora* weeps when confronted by a rapturous outburst from her sister and *Phantasmagoregasm* tells us: "Avert her gaze and she will lose her love" (Shani, 2018, p. 7). The dual meaning of the final word as both a familial name and the emotion neatly represents the relations which dominate the artwork's narrative, it is always both. In *Phantasmagoregasm's* telling of the story, love is in everything the sisters do. When they scream to fill the space which if left empty will bring their father's rotten corpse back into their home, their "love, for themselves and for the world" is what they scream (Shani, 2018, p. 1). This could be no more fitting with Sedgwick's reparative approach, which takes as its foundation psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's theorisation of the reparative position. As Sedgwick notes "Among Klein's names for the reparative process is love" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 128). Sedgwick highlights a number of points from Klein, including that it;

> "represents an actual achievement- a distinct, often risky positional shift - for an infant of adult to move towards a sustained *seeking of pleasure* (through the relative strategies of the depressive position), rather than continue to pursue the self-reenforcing because self defeating strategies for *forestalling pain* offered by the paranoid/schizoid position" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 137).

In its focus on overwhelming sensation, including the reparative process

The protagonist, G.H. has a series of encounters which result in the threshold limits which define their self, falling away. The most visceral of these is the encounter with a cockroach. The realisation that this creature "existed already at the time of the dinosaurs" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 127) collapses G.H.'s sense of time. She crushes the insect and considers the white substance oozing from its body, the experience a "void" as "site of interconnectedness and mutual interdependence" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 130). Finally to "mark her communion with the living matter G. H accomplishes the last act of dehumanization by swallowing the dead carapace of the insect. She is the abject in all its splendor. She was a person, a woman, now she turns into a portion of living matter" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 131.)

That is the extent of my documentation of your report as given to me. I noted that there is no real conclusion drawn, but you had already fallen into unconsciousness, such is the effort of remembering the past, such is the effort of having a body in a great number of pieces, in the back of unmarked van, borne by rats and leaving a crime scene.

I will dare to speculate that there is no conclusion in your account of the presentation, because you did not offer any conclusion in the presentation itself in 2017. It would be inappropriate I feel for me here in 2019 to write for a you a conclusion for 2017.

love, the artwork both subverts the basic paranoid position of the gothic, and emphasises the agency of *Phantasmagoregasm* and their characters *Nora* and *Alma.* These psychic and affective achievements will be echoed when it comes time to examine the movement of forces later in this document. Love is also the first point where Irigaray text "The Natal Lacuna" resonates with Sedgwick's Kleinian formation, and therefore offers an escape for feminist art beyond representation of an ideal female imaginary (Irigaray, 2006).

> "Without love, as Diotimus[5] would say, everything becomes visible through hungers, tensions, carving from an analytical and non-contemplative gaze" (Irigaray, 2006, p. 42).

The *Artwork* deals with love as a force made up of an unspecified, or unresolved combination of affects. It suggests joy, and anguish, shame, and excitement. In its focus on this unspecified force it resists the carving of analysis. Nothing within the artwork attempts to dissect the experiences and events which is described to smaller pieces than its introductory description. The girls scream, and when they stop, the rotten body of their father returns to the house from where they had just (re)buried it.

The Kleinian reparative position, the position of love, is also the depressive position. In the narrative of the *Artwork*, when the girls become too exhausted

Instead, as handler, I can offer something on your report as a whole.

There are a number of points of value in the presentation which you recount. Firstly there are partially formed ideas about systems being overloaded, or behaving in ways other than their former, more stable states. There are also some partially formed ideas about the motif of the head or brain, which include the head or brain functioning like a machine, or not functioning at all. These ideas are to degrees developed in your later work more clearly, or at least in a less tentative manner.

There is a one point of particular value here, which is the justification for retaining the account of this presentation, and that is the use of use of textual research in the manner of art practice. Specifically, you placed a number of things which you were unable to fully define, in proximity to each other to see what happened at their points of contact with one another. If we consider the presentation being recounted not as the delivery of research, but as the demonstration of a method, then it shows the beginning of a thread. This thread is the part of your PhD Output which is concerned with how firstly objects of research can be selected for conceptual, affective, aesthetic or other reasons, or for combinations of these, without these reasons being fully resolved. Secondarily, this thread is concerned how these

to scream, *Alma* succumbs to a cursed sleep. *Phantasmagoregasm* narrates. "We are all helpless. Alma's elsewhere body is a monster, desecrated, seeping and still" (Shani, 2018, p. 2). *Alma* remains in the depressive, reparative position, remaking psychic objects which we do not see until they are unleashed towards the end of the narrative. However prior to this, we, (which is her sister *Nora,* us as audience, *Phantasmagoregasm*, and whatever else observes the scenes within the house) see only the cursed sleep, which involves not just unconsciousness, but lacerations opening upon the girls body. In its depiction of physic and physical trauma which wrenches a body apart the *Artwork* is comparable to the art of Unica Zürn which Irigaray, in Whitford's words, sees as a "negative example, which shows the failure of a woman to be both artist and woman" (Whitford, 1994a, p. 11). However, Irigaray's own words, while still presenting a description which could be of *Alma*, leave space for other exits;

> "All of Unica Zürn's graphics express a relationship to the void, an attraction to an opening heavier than any matter. The body, bodies, look for this weight, and find it only in dislocation, in fragmentation, in the tearing of the flesh and of the world. Life stops, uprooted from its vectors between earth and heaven, heaven and earth, and gnaws at the sites of paralysis, of breaking, of élan or rest. Life forbids anaesthesia, lethargy, the destruction of paths" (Irigaray, 2006, p. 40)

As art theorist Hillary Robinson notes, neither "Irigaray nor Whitford have

groupings of selected things, which in later reports you the agent have articulated as *Desire Piles*, can be employed through their grouping as a method of creative research. The contents of the *Desire Pile* are not fully definable, and the very aim of the *Desire Pile* is to allow undefinable things to be worked with, but for the purposes here the *Desire Pile* of this presentation could be said to include the following:

- The divergences between two works of speculative fiction and their cinematic adaptations.

- The idea of the dog, or dogs as a symbol, as something we recognise but is still "other", as a particular arrangement of affects, habits, and functions.

- The idea of something "other" put inside the brain, whether data, virus, or drug.

- The idea of the brain, and/or perception, being affected without being able to articulate this.

In this presentation, the things which the above sentences inadequately describe are put in proximity with one another. They do not resolve into something singular, there and more to the point presentation does not attempt to resolve them, but lets differences as much as similarities resonate. This proximity is articulated by author Adrian Rifkin as the methodological use of "parataxis". Rifkin's parataxis as method involves taking "tiny units of theory" and "allowing of the configurations of these

a background in the visual arts" (Robinson, 2006, p. 6). Robinson devotes an entire volume to the how Irigaray's thought can open up the political and cultural discourse of art (Robinson, 2006, p. 7) and while this document can make no claims to that scale of analysis, it attempts something smaller. This smaller attempt is to use Sedgwick's *Reparative Position* and the *Artwork;* to follow Irigaray's analysis short of her critique that such work constitutes a failure of art and of women, and from there propose an alternative exit.

Another point that Sedgwick highlights in Klein is the manner in which "positions", shift and return;

> "[T]he paranoid position [is] always in oscillatory context of [...] the repressive position. [...]The depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating achievement that the infant or adult only sometimes, and often only briefly, succeeds in inhabiting; This is the position from which it is possible to turn to use one's own resources to assemble or "repair" the murderous part-objects into something like a whole - though I would emphasize not necessarily like any preexisting whole" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 128).

We are not a party to what takes place during *Alma's* cursed sleep. Yet when she returns to consciousness it is with new and strange capacities. The capacities allow her to restructure the psychic/material formation of the nightmare house. They also allow her to reorientate herself, her

materials to lie alongside materials so that one begins to make unexpected kinds of readings of or *listenings to* those materials" (Rifkin, 2003, p. 122). As Rifkin writes, parataxis as method creates "new kinds of objects of attention" (Rifkin, 2003, p. 122). Agent, the parataxis which you deploy in your presentation is the creation of objects of attention across and between the elements of the Desire Pile. Your presentation was not such much the delivery of research, as the provocation (to the audience, but most usefully, to yourself) for new ways of reading the contents of the desire pile, and therefore an act of research. For further exploration of the potential of parataxis see artist Linda Stupart's doctorate thesis "Becoming Object: Positioning a Feminist Art Practice" (Stupart, 2017).

sister, their father's corpse, *Phantasmagoregasm*, and their love. At least until the implied cycle begins again. We witness some of the capacities *Alma* develops, yet the language by which the *Artwork* shows them to us leaves much to implication and effects. Indeed, when the narrative reaches *Alma's* return, the narrator is severely compromised through their amplified empathy which enacts the trauma the girls suffer on their own body, and a physical transformation from the cardiovascular to the architectural;

> "The slippery tube of my venous trunk that returns deoxygenated blood from my body into my heart is inverted and curls back in a spirally spray of fresh blood. The pink concrete grows inside the stretched venal wall and tears asymmetric oozing red vein into concrete becoming classic marble, lungs became the stairs and my torso became the hallway" (Shani, 2018, p. 4).

Phantasmagoregasm moves from the position of encompassing the story as narrator to encompassing the space within which it takes place. In doing so not only the descriptions become more unclear as the language for sensation and emotion merges into the language of bodies and architecture, but the question of who is speaking, and from where, becomes less certain and thick with absence and blood.

The "Dark Continent" that gives its name to the overarching project within

Borne by Rats; Bibliography

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which the *Artwork* exists is met by another of Freud's unknowable sites that Sedgwick addresses;

> "[The "Reality Principle"] leaves pleasure seeking as an always presumable, unexaminable, inexhaustible underground wellspring of supposedly "natural" motive, one that presents only the question of how to keep its irrepressible ebullitions under control" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 137)

Freud, Sedgwick explains, elevates the "pain-forestalling strategy" of anxiety to a developmental achievement in the "Reality Principle", thereby positioning this paranoid strategy as "the only and inevitable move, motive, content, and proof of true knowledge (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 137).

The refusal of such a position is seen from the very beginning of the *Artwork* as the introduction makes clear that "Phantasmagoregasm is both creator and empath" (Shani, 2018, p. 1). Neither *Phantasmagoregasm*, *Alma*, *Nora,* nor the audience are in a predominantly anxious position or attempting to avert surprise because the events are already known. The narrative is summed up in the introduction, and the narrative itself is in a loop, the corpses has risen previously and will rise again[6].

This is not to say that because the *Artwork* does not solely operate from,

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or present, a paranoid position it is not Gothic. It still follows Sedgwick's observation that in the Gothic "both the identification of centre with self and the programmatic symmetry of the inside-outside relations are finally undermined in the same texts" (Sedgwick, 1986, p. 13). The "self" of "empath" narrator and their protagonists "defragment", merge into one another along with the building and the pathways of energies which point beyond this space towards roads, woods, and "server farm HDS Zenobia Pink Data Centre on the edge of the technicolour hologram" (Shani, 2018, p. 6). The space the *Artwork* presents, and the means by which it presents it makes situating *an inside* and *an outside* moot. Language, perception, and subjectivity are resistant to existing in a fixed position in the *Artwork*, and this flux is established from the very beginning. "Now breathless, now wrecked, speechless, delivered to the neo hieroglyph and inconsistency of a psychedelic dimension" (Shani, 2018, p. 1). Shani's language forks repeatedly. Sentences string themselves out in a manner as to have multiple objects, and multiple meanings, and many pieces of imagery simultaneously *are* and *are not*, metaphor.

There is resonance with the space/subject/language that oscillates in front of the audience of the *Artwork*, and the "flexible to-and-fro movement implicit in Kleinian *positions*" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 128). Sedgwick sees the

oscillation of positions in Klein's theory as useful for discussing paranoid and reparative critical practises as "changing heterogeneous relational stances" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 128). There is space in the artwork for paranoid reading strategies, perhaps to cut through the poetry of unstable description and truly come to an account of "what really takes place" in the narrative. I would question what this would add, but it nevertheless remains a possibility. Likewise the characters themselves do have occasional paranoid moments of defending themselves from the potential pain of future events. "Stop it! Stop it! Nora sobs and covers her face with her arms" (Shani, 2018, p. 7). However the oscillation to these positions is brief, and *Artwork* seems to focus on presenting and exploring various positions of the "irrepressible ebullitions" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 137) of reparative pleasure seeking, even whilst these often pass into states which are overwhelming.

Part One: VOIDS

To go further I will focus on two processes or tactics that the *Artwork* deploys which both use/subvert the Gothic, and offer resonances with art practice[7]. The first of these is *The Void,* which broadly refers to lacunae that affect things beyond them, while being themselves imperceivable beyond those effects[8]. *The Void* also forms part of the *Reparative Position*, in that it is a process, the workings of which do not need to be questioned or translated. *The Void* is also counter to Irigaray's conclusion, rearticulated by Whitford, that favours representational feminist art practices that construct a female imaginary.

Absences, negatives that exerts power, runs through the *Artwork*, as *Phantasmagoregasm* observes toward the end. "The curse has disappeared vanished and there lies the only place where it can be momentarily glimpsed, right there in its elusive disappearance" (Shani, 2018, p. 8). Yet neither characters, narrator or audience are called upon to ask what these things are, only to be concerned with what they do. Sedgwick asks what "does knowledge do - the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows?" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 124). The sisters *Alma* and *Nora* know the unseen forces without needing to
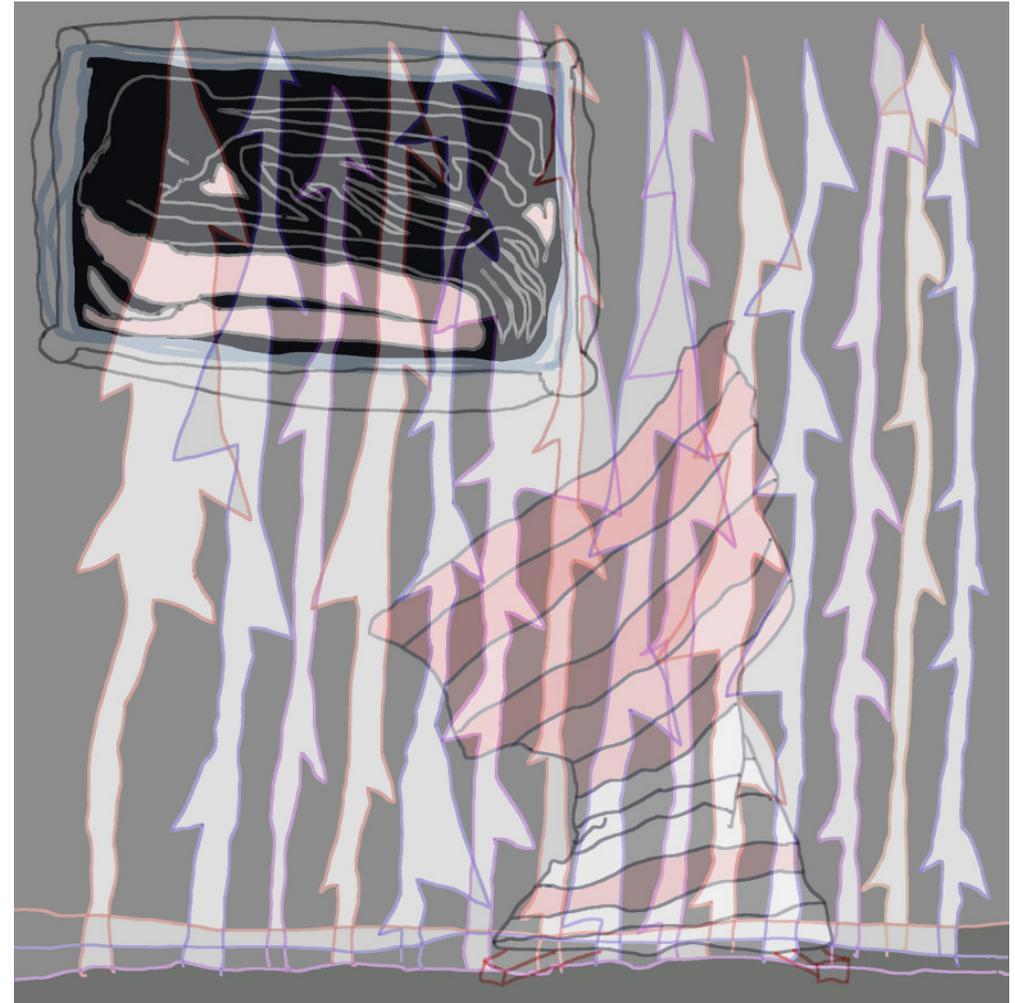
Horse [LACUNA]

translate that knowledge. There is no questioning of what the curse is, why it is, whether the term *curse* constitutes a category or is more a description for something even further unknown. These questions are not important in the *Artwork*, there is no mystery. When *Nora* at one point reaches the terrible house's front door she knows that "behind the door, outside is something abstract and unknown, or maybe there is nothing at all outside, just the world[9]" (Shani, 2018, p. 5). Interrogating that empty abstraction is unimportant, it functions *as* an empty abstraction and that is far more important. An exterior.

In order to contrast this with Irigaray's conclusions, we return to Whitford;

> "Initially Irigaray seems to have shared the 1970s view that women's "madness" was potentially revolutionary. However she later became wary of women's exploration of their psychic pain or "madness" and came to see it as potentially dangerous rather than as a liberating iconoclasm" (Whitford, 1994a, p. 58).

This view would place the *Artwork*, concerned at least on the surface with pain, in the category of potentially dangerous. Yet as Robinson counters, "Irigaray leaves plenty of gaps in her writing - creative gaps full of potential" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20). Just as the *Reparative Gothic* of the *Artwork* invests absences with agency, Irigaray too leaves spaces which provoke

alternative paths and preclude against taking conclusion of what women's art might be as being the only one. Furthermore as Robinson also notes Irigaray "delights in the concept and actuality of mucous - which would seem to mitigate against a simplistic figuration" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20). One of these gaps, particularly connected to mucousal possibility, is outlined by, though not fully acknowledged as such by, where Whitford quotes Irigaray's "The Colours of Flesh";

> "The point about painting is to spacialise perception and to make time simultaneous, to quote Klee. This is also the point about drawing. The psychoanalyst should direct his or her attention not only to the repetition of former images and their possible interpretation, but also to the subject's ability to paint, to make time simultaneous, to build bridges, to establish perspectives between present-past-future" (Whitford, 1994b, p. 16).

This shifts the focus away from a pre existing, or even replacement language through representation. It also shifts away from any judgement about whether the image is concerned with *pain* or perhaps *love* and directs attention towards the smearing and folding of linear time. Even in the demarcated capacity of its use is psychoanalysis, art is proposed by Irigaray as something which disrupts rather than reuses or rebuilds structures such as language. As Robinson says, there are gaps, and Irigaray's conclusions for art are not as prescriptive as they might appear.
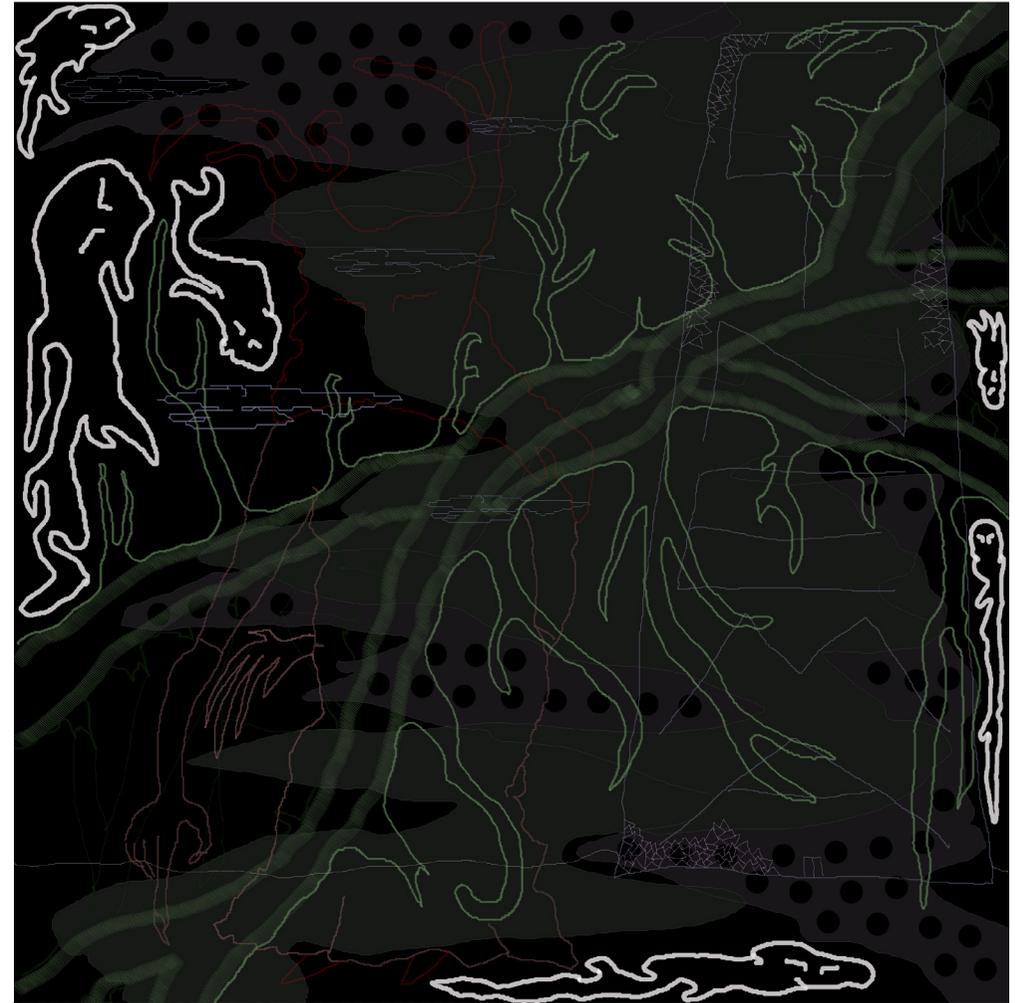
Plants [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

More *Voids* occur in the *Artwork* at a point where *Phantasmagoregasm* feels their empathy for what they describe overwhelming their capacity to describe it;

> "There, in the indifferent nowhere, in chaos, at the axis with language and narrative and a vivid description of a lacerated unconscious body, dreamless sleeping girls are there like wildfire running wildly through the burning bush, that miracle[10] the solely burns to briefly illuminate the bloodless, pure night that looms behind it" (Shani, 2018, p. 7).

The narrative being told and an account of the means of telling it smear into one another. Simultaneously, the affects of telling (creating?) smear into the imagery which deals with a space both empty and unconscious and teaming with fire, fluid, and miracles. This becomes a site to bring in an existing radical reconfiguration of Irigaray through her writing's creative gaps, opening it up through the same mucousal imagery. Philosophers Patricia MacCormack and Ruth McPhee in the paper "Creative Aproduction: Mucous and the Blank" apply Irigaray's philosophy to vasectomized ejaculatory fluid, repositioning "male sexuations" via "moucousal seminality" (MacCormack & McPhee, 2014, p. 160). Their reasons for this reconfiguration is that it removes the reliance on the feminine for Irigaray's "divine"[11], which is "life liberated from capital, linguistic, theistic and other epistemological regimes"

(MacCormack & McPhee, 2014, p. 160). *Phantasmagoregasm's* account of the "indifferent nowhere" describes the same *Divine* "in chaos, at the axis with language" (Shani, 2018, p. 7) unreliant on representation and dealing in an expanded, erupting, female imaginary. An escape for the mucousal *Divine* and art practice beyond essentialist representation is also picked up by Robinson in her reading of "The Natal Lacuna";

> "Irigaray leaves a way forward for non-figurative representation within the context of female genitals, suggesting that certain cultures have raised the question of female morphology "without reducing it in any way to anatomy and physiology"" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20).

Even without placing it within the DC project overall, the *Artwork* undoubtedly approaches female morphology, but frequently with such exuberant and bloody excess as to include all possibly and impossibly physiologies in its definition of woman. *Phantasmagoregasm* is described as a hermaphrodite at the very beginning of the text, and their body undergoes transformations as a response to the story they tell. These begin with the narrator receiving sympathetic wounds, and then folding into the space of the mansion they describe, and then finally a last transformation;

> "My limbs…. They dissolve and fuse into a high definition, glossy susceptible surface and an entrance, an ascent into my other self, somatic and anonymous, organs, bones, gristle

glans, muscle and fat.

I am touched, a flesh membrane, till it extends and is almost completely translucent, its pale distinct pinkness an authority over all experience, prison and vessel all at once. Pinkness that destroys true desire to be everything, from bled blood to ecstasy it spans, holding it all. It stretches elastic and plastic till the membrane is almost pierces and momentarily reveals a gaping void at its shimmering bottom and no sooner it recoils and we are absent no longer" (Shani, 2018, p. 6).

This last transformation extends *Phantasmagoregasm* into a female morphology becoming "the nourishing envelope, both inner and outer, [...] its skins and its mucous membranes" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 105). At this point the entirety of the mansion and its occupants, narrator and narrative have folded in on one another to leave a membrane through which leaks the mucousal, creative absence. "Void, void", "[b]eware the touch", "Nora's hands encased in slime from the heaving walls" (Shani, 2018, p. 6). The figure of the radiating, creative *Void* is articulated by MacCormack and McPhee through spermless ejaculate;

"This germinal blank refers not to an pre-inscribed meaning but, to the potentiality of multiple meanings or to no coherent meaning at all. Whiteness as silence, potentiality and infinite gesture" (MacCormack & McPhee, 2014, p. 161).

The conceptual transition departing this document's first section on *Voids* is

best articulated through the following cinematic transition taken from a film

which informs the document's second section on *Vectors*;

> "The face on the cover of the book pulls away from its skin
> binding and leans toward the camera. Eyes on the book
> blink open and peer at us. It's [sic] mouth opens and emits a
> hideous scream. The camera races into the blackness of the
> screaming mouth" (Raimi & Spiegel, 1986, p. 2)

Part Two: VECTORS

Unseen energy and *un-* or *barely*-corporeal forces occur throughout the *Artwork.* Sometimes these act like plotted trajectories, indicating or holding open possible avenues of flight for something unseen, including us the audience. Sometimes they are the path along which a force travels. At all points, these energies and forces play with, and occasionally refuse the paranoid gothic live-burial trope of walls and transgressions.

The first point in the *Artwork* where vectors of force are evident is through the imperceptible agency which brings the girls' father back into the house. The exhumed corpse is "delivered there by the pyramid pitch that emerged from the gaping hollow left when Alma and Nora's scream spectacular subsided and they fell silent" (Shani, 2018, p. 3). The qualities of this *Vector* are rendered material by the description which mixes physical and sonic space. In order to negotiate these indescribable forces without locking them into description, I am going to draw in an element from something beyond the *Artwork* to act as a proxy. There is a gap between what is being described in the proxy subject and the *Artwork.* They are not the same, but as long as that gap is recognised then processes on one side of it might still be able to help identify processes on the other.

Sam Raimi's film "The Evil Dead" (Raimi, 1981) ends with a scene which connects it to one of the first scenes in the films sequel "The Evil Dead II" (Raimi, 1987). Both scenes involve the camera's point of view traveling rapidly and energetically through the woods, through a building, breaking glass and knocking open doors and finally making impact with the lead character, played by actor Bruce Campbell, and propelling them through space. Campbell describes this "Shaky cam" in "If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B Movie Actor: An Autobiography", noting that "on film, the end result was an evil roaming entity that could leap tall shrubs in a single bound". (Campbell, 2002, p. 53). The mechanism used to produce such an effect as less important than how it functions as a kinetic entity which we see though its effects. These effects include the terrified eyes of Campbell or the evil transformations the entity triggers in characters it makes contact with, but we never gain any understanding of what *it* is. Critic John Semley writes that;

> "[I]n The Evil Dead, the camera-eye as embodiment of the cinema and its apparatus seizes upon its human and transforms them [...] They are the warped personification (or demonification) of evil as "power exceeding and possible overwhelming reason" (Semley, 2019, p. 49).

Ignoring the moral judgment by Campbell and Semley on the force of the kinetic camera as "evil", it is presented as something both imperceptible, and of overwhelming power over reason. It is a path of pure energy. Returning to the *Artwork*, it should be noted that the force which, among other things, brings back the father is referred to often as "the pyramid pitch" (Shani, 2018, p. 3). As with a lot of the language in the *Artwork*, it sits across a number of interpretations, whilst being most readily dealt with as all of them, even while they are not compatible. The "pyramid pitch" is at once a mathematical and incorporeal angle, a sound to be understood in terms of frequency but no other qualities, and a thick black oozing tar. Across all of these meanings the word "pyramid" floats, destabilizing meaning further with occult and horror imagery. And yet, the "pyramid pitch" is a force that we can envisage even whilst it remains elusive, fluid, and imperceptible directly because *it* is never described other than the path it travels and what it does to others.

Semley describes how Raimi's kinetic camera functions as an imperceivable agency because the "POV is never claimed" (Semley, 2019, p. 48). It is simply the point of view which passed through space. The essential limitations of the camera whereby we only see outwards from the lens allows this force to exist literally undepicted, as well as disappearing into the process of cinema

itself.

The use of language, as demonstrated by the "pyramid pitch", is a part of the way by which forces in the *Artwork* are able to exist only as *Vectors*. However sometimes these *Vectors* attach themselves to something slightly more substantial, yet still illusive;

> "A coldness creeps up [Nora's] back, crawls into the storm of her hair [...]. Behind the mirror a lens focuses and transmits this information to a specialized database on the server farm pink data centre on the edge of the technicolour hologram" (Shani, 2018, p. 6).

> "The wind swirls spiral and howls down the highway, through the forest down around the castle, the highrise, the suburb, through the garden that looks back at the house, howls at the corner where the road turned dark" (Shani, 2018, p. 3).

The *Artwork* is full of forces which describe paths in ways which are never fully resolved and extend beyond the building to never be mentioned again, pointing beyond the confines of the actual narrative.

Phantasmagoregasm describes the father's corpse, brought by the "pyramid pitch" and the "ruin it brings, his ruined body" (Shani, 2018, p. 3).

Elsewhere *Phantasmagoregasm* speaks of floors of the house which are "in abandoned ruin" but beyond this "they are ruin" (Shani, 2018, p. 3). "Ruin" is a force, it travels, it hitches a ride on corpses and forms architecture. On their own these description would read as metaphor, but within the *Artwork* the proliferation of such *Vectors* opens them up to become agents. The "pyramid pitch" sets this tone;

> "The pyramid pitch is overwhelming but Alma lies still,
> undisturbed, her body now caught within the pyramid curse,
> her body afflicted by these forces beyond control, short term
> horizons that dominate lives" (Shani, 2018, p. 2).

The script for "The Evil Dead II" describes the movement of the kinetic camera which transmits its energy into the character and into other *Vectors* as gesture and a scream;

> "We are racing forward, we have taken the POV of an evil
> entity as it glides with dark purpose through a section of
> woods. It approaches the rear door of the cabin. The door
> is torn violently open. [...] Ash is seen in the distance. His is
> staggering away, his back to us as we race at him. He turns
> suddenly towards camera and screams" (Raimi & Spiegel,
> 1986, p. 13).

Energy shifts seamlessness between movement, sound, affect, and

Horse Explode

gesture. It does not follow an unalterting trajectory but can shift, change course, jump over obstacles, transform.

In the *Artwork* we see this as *Nora* births an energy that takes on its own agency. "The scream that detonated from her earlier returns scanning the passages and rooms, as an arresting horror soundtrack" (Shani, 2018, p. 5). *Nora*'s scream as energy and as agent shows the *Artwork* as dealing with the endlessness generative capacity of *Phantasmagoregasm* and their characters as their produce these energies. Pulling back our point of view we might also remember that the *Artwork* (in which is the narrator, in which are the characters) is one of many within *DC*, and that each has undertaken edits and "different modalities of production, presentation and reception" (Crone, 2019, p. xix). The *Artwork* is a site of multiplying agencies, and this extends both downward into the world it presents and outwards into its place within the artist's practice[12] [13].

The *Vectors* within the *Artwork* cross one another while changing their forms and the language used to describe them continues to cut across these forms so that they are simultaneously incomprehensible combinations of sound, light, space, love and so on;

"Twisting through the spiral of muteness an unexpected

"We weren't. We are the ones here so we look after one another."

The End.

"You don't need to be fixed, my queens – it's the world that needs the fixing." - William "Spike" Pratt

scream emerges, she does not know how or why she is screaming , a bright shaft of sound travelling through the cavernous castle, rebounding from the walls and objects and resonating chorally" (Shani, 2018, p. 4).

What remains consistent across these chimeras is that they are *Vectors*, they travel paths, or describe paths where travel could take place, without being fixed in describing what it is that travels or how it does so, or what this travelling results in. With the *Artwork's* reference to Poe's "The Fall of The House of Usher" it is useful to note how that text is also built around the paths of indescribable energy. Theorist N. Katherine Hayles sees in Poe's text energies, whether the "preternatural and incestuasly erotic energy that animates Madeline as she struggles to emerge from her coffin" or that of the storm which encircles their house (Hayles, 1990, p. 21). In either example an underlying internal law is consistent that energy is first an "organizing force" but continues beyond this into disorder (Hayles, 1990, p. 21). Hayles argues that Poe's text implies "that order and chaos are bound together in a dialectic. The more energy expended, the more certain the collapse into fragmentation and chaos" (Hayles, 1990, p. 21).

While the proliferation of energies along *Vectors*, and their generative fragmentation is also true of the *Artwork*, the dialectic of order and chaos in

Hayles finds readily in Poe is less apparent. In part the relationship is made complex by the reparative function of *Voids*, an impenetrable absence in which things are produced and remade. The *Voids* are natal spaces in which chaos operates unseen. Disorder generating new paths, reparative not as return but as production. The *Vectors* in the *Artwork* remain unclear and contradictory in what they carry (just as the unseen evil of Raimi's camera), beyond that in some sense they are the paths of energy. Folding the two sections of this document together, I propose that *Vectors* are traversed by *Voids* and within *Voids* are more *Vectors* and so on.

Encountering the *Artwork* we are privileged witnesses in that we are offered a view into the house, even as this view is fractured by *Phantasmagoregasm's* empathetic collapse in the telling. Within the house (including the "within" of the exterior) are spaces which radiate power beyond "locks that keep one horror outside and the other deep within" (Shani, 2018, p. 4). Many of the *Voids* however are described in terms of their movement, like the screams, or wind, or traveling description of space. This is never more clear than where *Phantasmagoregasm* describes a kind of silence, an absence-as-agent, a travelling *Void*, the "prickly silence that lies beneath the sound of breathing" (Shani, 2018, p. 4). *Phantasmagoregasm* speaks of a "stranger creeping around your home at night while you brush your teeth[14]" in a manner which

is simultaneously a description of what silence hides, and the *Vectorial Void* of silence itself. The silence which creeps, an absence into which one can only speculate, but which is undoubtedly both generative and in motion. The "spiral of muteness" is entwined with *Nora's* "unexpected scream", two *Vectors* of generative absence, for which no explanation can be given, for *Nora* does not know "how or why she is screaming" (Shani, 2018, p. 4). This is also *Nora's* first scream since the sisters fell silent at the very beginning of the narrative, and the chaotic agency of this act is demonstrated as the chorus of *Vectorial Voids* that render the physical structure of the house "bubblegum tacky, rubber, stretchy, droop" (Shani, 2018, p. 4) and triggers the transition of *Phantasmagoregasm's* body becoming the architecture;

> "My throat the bedroom where the smell of fresh blood and
> carrion disharmonize and confirms the presence of hell"
> (Shani, 2018, p. 5).

A key point for reconsidering Irigaray's criticism of Zürn, and in doing so create a different interpretation of "The Natal Lacuna" via the *Artwork* is to recognise how it begins from a position of the analyst. As Robinson states "Irigaray elides Zürn and her work, and discusses the work as if it were a symptom of the woman, rather than the result of particular practices" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20). The practices employed in the *Artwork* are repetitive

ones. They are not symptoms but an achievement of agency, and they describe characters who are not "ideal female selves" but agents deploying repetitive energy through *Vectorial Voids*. The *Artwork* constructs a *Female Imaginary* not through symbols but through deploying and demonstrating creative processes. We see this in the final part of the *Artwork* where the sister *Alma* emerges from the *Void* of her "cursed sleep" to bring forth through her mouth a reparative *Vector* through which the house is remade again;

> "Alma's small cadaverous mouth opens and she turns to Nora; from it first comes the sound of acceleration, then water drops, dripping, then the ocean, waves crashing, the weight and pressure of the water pummelling a suddenly very small body against the sharp rocks below the water, concussing in the hard water, turbulent kinetic energy" (Shani, 2018, p. 6).

Conclusion: The beautiful nightmare of radiating reparative horror, as described by the agent Sasha Fierce[15].

The cursed sleep which *Alma* occupies through the majority of the *Artwork* is a hidden reparative space, a *Void.* Just as when the sisters scream what they radiate is "their love" (Shani, 2018, p. 1) the depressive position which *Alma* occupies is a hidden space where the loving act of repair takes place. It is useful to consider this act in terms of the *Reparative Reading* position of Sedgwick which compared to the paranoid;

> "Undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks. What we can best learn from such practices are perhaps the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the object of a culture - even a culture whose avowed desire has often not been to sustain them" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 150).

Alma has been creating new objects and processes in a *Void,* the dynamic hiddenness of which is marked by the first words she utters after the crashing sounds of pressure and water;

> ""Where do girls who don't dream go to when they are asleep?" a strange voice asks through Alma's mouth" (Shani, 2018, p. 6).

The results of this reparative process come forth not in a scream but in the reconfigured lyrics of a pop song. After the series of inhuman sounds, and other voices have emerged from *Alma*'s "gaping mouth" *Phantasmagoregasm* indicates with speech marks that her sister asks ""Alma?"" (Shani, 2018, p. 7), and then (without speech marks) lyrics from the song "Halo" (Beyoncé, 2009) by Beyoncé appear as a reply. We do not know from *Phantasmagoregasm's* account whether *Alma* sings, or whether her mouth relays a recording of the song, or whether the lyrics are directly spoken by *Phantasmagoregasm* or whether they form some kind of description of events. As with the other instances of uncertainty, the *Artwork* presents this *Vector* as a *Void* comprising all of these possibilities and more simultaneously.

The lyrics however offer some direct description, even while they are remade in this context;

"I'm never gonna shut you out!

Everywhere I'm looking now

I'm surrounded by your embrace" (Shani, 2018, p. 7) [line breaks original]

In Robinson's words "Irigaray suggests that [women] have to discover and display [their] own morphology" but a "gap is left" regarding "the specificities of visual representation and the work done by feminist artists and art workers" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20). The *Artwork* resonates with a number of Irigaray's observations of Zürn, but finds an exit other than representation via affect. The theory of affect is key to Sedgwick's *Reparative Reading,* not least because it is reflexive and changing;

> "by Tomkin's account, which is strongly marked by early cybernetics's interest in feedback processes, all people's cognitive/affective lives are organized according to alternative, changing strategic, and hypothetical affect theories"
> (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 133)

The "affect theory" described is not limited to the works produced by philosophers, but includes "the largely tacit theorizing all people do in experiencing and trying to deal with their own and other's affects" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 134).

The *Artwork* delivers not just through representation (though it does offer some points of representation, including with reference to conventions of the Gothic) but repeatedly collapses this representation to an affective register,

allowing the audience to negotiate its own feedback loops of mutable affect theories. This process means that the *Artwork* can be understood as not doing what Irigaray *says*, but what Irigaray herself *does*;

> "Irigaray's main usefulness is at the point where practice and theory are intimately linked; where the experience of reading becomes and experience of theory in practice; where the visual as process and praxis is acknowledged and integrated into this experience" (Robinson, 1994, p. 20).

The *Artwork* demonstrates a feminist art practice as the processes (of *Phantasmagoregasm*, of the sisters*,* of the house itself) which it deploys. At points it describes these processes, but representations used are always already in the process of collapsing into uncertainty and affect. We can engage with the *Artwork*, but we are always an active agent, speculating and adapting our affect theories which in turn shape our tactics of engagement with the *Artwork*. The generative process of feedback loops is reflected in the looping of *Phantasmagoregasm's* story of the sisters who "perpetually" repeat the burial process (Shani, 2018, p. 1), along with the oscillation of the reparative and fleeting paranoid positions. The irony that a story named "House of Terrifying Terror" reconfigures the unknown of otherness[16] and horror as reparative love. The unknown as *Void* which can only be seen through its effects or experienced as affects, or understood through the

Vectors it passes along or holds open.

Or in the words of the song;

"Hit me like a ray of sun

Burning through my darkest night

You're the only one that I want

Think I'm addicted to your light

I swore I'd never fall again

But this doesn't even feel like falling

Gravity can't forget to pull me back to the ground again"
(Shani, 2018, p. 7) [line breaks original].

An art practice of vectors and voids; Bibliography

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An art practice of vectors and voids; Endnotes

1. The *Artwork* has existed in multiple versions, with differences not just in the context and medium it is presented in, but the text that it is centrally comprised of. I have encountered the work as a virtual reality experience, as live performance, and as two different versions of text. The version which is being used in this document is a longer edit of the text that would eventually be used in a book which collects the DC texts together and was sent to me by the artist in 2018. This version contains significant differences from the published version (I am unable to accurately recall how much it differs from the spoken versions in the virtual reality or live performances), emphasizing the role of the narrator themselves and this is one reason why it is used in this document. The second reason for the use of the unpublished edit is that it reinforces that this document is concerned with creative deviations from the artwork meeting other texts, rather than something drawn from within that artwork itself.

2. To avoid confusion, during the rest of this document I will use "Phantasmagoregasm" to refer to the character and narrator, and refer to the artwork of the same name as "the artwork".

3. Whitford originally translated Irigaray's text as "A Natal Lacuna" in 1994, though in this document my quotation is drawn from the later Brent Edwards translation entitled "The Natal Lacuna".

4. For more on *Reparative Reading* and its influence see gender theorist Robyn Weigman article "The times we're in: Queer feminist criticism and the reparative 'turn'" (Wiegman, 2014).

5. In the Whitford translation, the reference is not to Diotimus (the stoic philosopher) but Diotima of Mantineia, "the prophetess who teaches Socrates about eros and the "rites of love" in Plato's Symposium" (Evans, 2006, p. 1), which perhaps fits better given the context, yet the discrepancy remains even while attempting to resolve the differences between the two translations is outside of the remit of this document. The translation is unstable.

6. At least one version of this artwork is presented as a loop. A virtual reality piece were the viewer dons a headset and sitting, has their point of view glide through the representation of a house which collapses in on itself only to begin again.

7. I will not follow these resonances into examples of practice, that is left to the reader, and if they do not which pursue these lines then this document still remains an analysis of the *Artwork*. In order to examine this work further in terms of tactics of art practice it is suggested that it be read alongside its sister document "There Is No Reason For You To Live".

8. The concept of the *Void* here owes a conceptual debt to the "Monadology" of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Leibniz & Strickland, 2014) and their further development by philosopher Gilles Deleuze in his book "The Fold" (Deleuze, 1993).

9. The Gothic mansion in its many forms returns repeatedly throughout this PhD Output primarily because it can operate as an enclosed environment that expands indefinitely and contains rooms of every possible specific use without requiring or allowing the occupant to leave. For more see [KEYWORD: MANSION]

10. Miracles constitute another *Void* in the *Artwork*, as they are processes which offer and require no explanation. "Nora's gaze transfixed by the miracle of skin slitting" as lacerations open up on her sister's stomach before her eyes (Shani, 2018, p. 2).

11. For an outline of the "Female Divine" in Irigaray see feminist theorist Susan Hekman's "Divine Women? Irigaray, God, and the Subject" (Hekman, 2019).

12. These proliferations stand in contrast to Whitford's reading of Irigaray and how the latter proposes a feminist art practice. "She stresses Zürn's fragmentation and the absence of a female "ideal self" which would have allowed her to sublimate the persecutory drives that led to her eventual suicide and, in Irigaray's view, also prevented her from finding an artistic identity as a woman" (Whitford, 1994a, p. 11).

13. In addition, the version of the *Artwork* published in "Our Fatal Magic" includes the line "This is my fatal magic, ok, the first cut is the deepest" (Shani, 2019, p. 141). As Crone notes in the introductory essay "Wounds of Un-Becoming" "the first cut is the deepest" is a refrain repeated across all 12 chapters of *Our Fatal Magic*, "providing an exit from the conditions imposed upon the body; an exit that takes place through the body itself. [...T]he cut is always more than symbolic: operating as a material process of the body *stretched* and *extended* towards another possibility, it is also productive. [...] It is this connective passage - portal, wormhole - that projects or spews forth

the body's interior fleshy pains and joys, whilst folding its interactions back across and through the flesh. The cut is thus a site of constant production. And thus for Shani, writing is also produced through the cut" (Crone, 2019, pp. xiii–xiv).

14. At the risk of taking a detour into the symbolic, it is hard not to notice that when the mouth is otherwise engaged by the brushing of teeth and so not screaming, this is the time when the stranger can creep around the house. Mouths and throats (the point where both the flows of blood and oxygen can be curtailed) appear as a site of agency throughout the *Artwork* but the agentic movement of the stranger through the space left when teeth are brushed is a mirror of how when the mouth screams the house is transformed. When the mouth screams it exerts agency, when it stops screaming, agency creeps forth from elsewhere.

15. Sasha Fierce is the name of the "dirty doppelgänger" (Brew-Hammond, 2008) character Beyoncé assumed for half of the album from which "Halo" is taken.

16. Artists David Burrows and theorist Simon O'Sullivan reflect on another work from DC arguing that "Shani does not abandon the feminine [... but]

redefines it as radical otherness" (Burrows & O'Sullivan, 2019, p. 430).
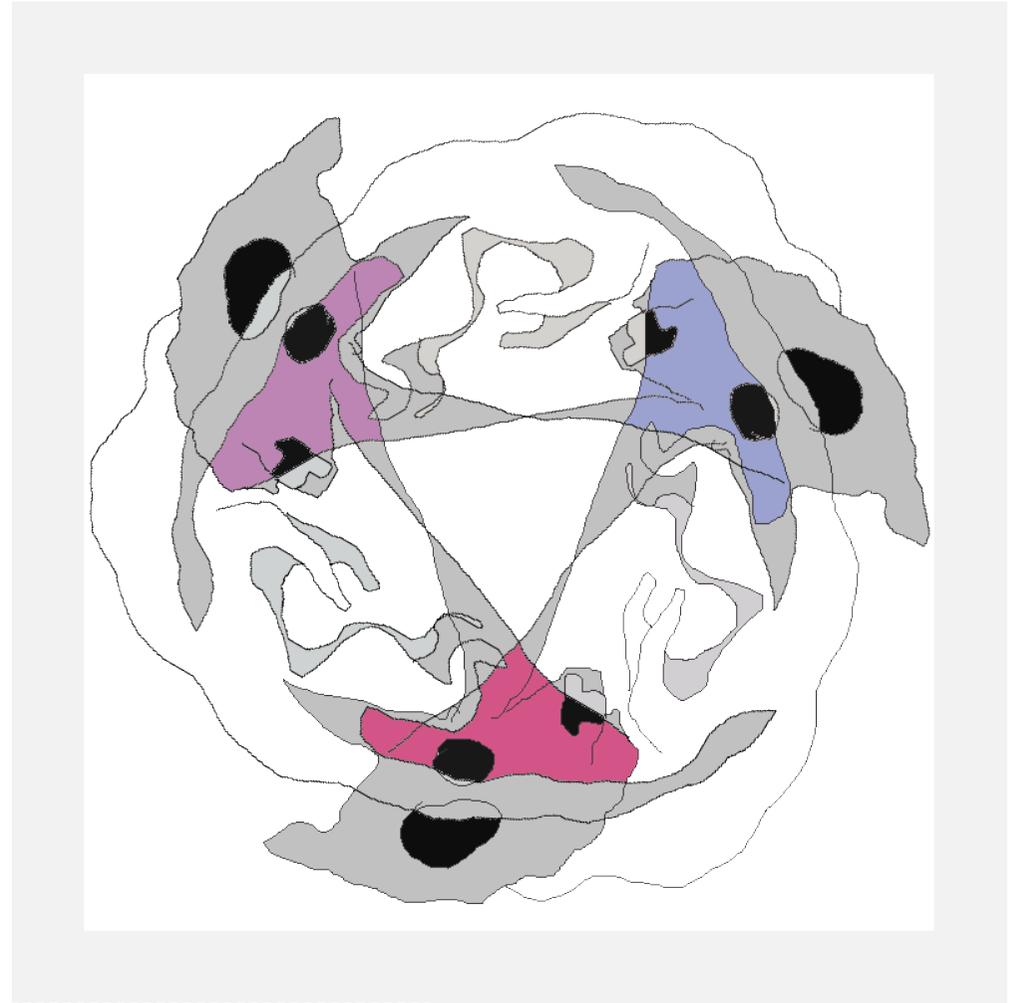
PhD [CARE, Diagram]

Septic Wanderer

Happiness 9

Sharing 10

Empathy 15

Visibility -3

Patience 4

Vengeance 9

Solidity 0-15

"… they're a hot mess, but they can't be trusted…" Eri's confiding in you stopped abruptly and the whole mess room becomes silent. Through the now open double doors you see the silhouette of a figure that seems to flicker between the elegant poses of a Satoshistic Dancer whilst not appearing to move, and then it's suddenly between you and your contact. "Oh Eri, you should be careful who you speak about when there are so, so many around listening".

"Never alone" ~ *Flooded with a complex bacterial load you are a semi-autonomous ecosystem. Under your every thought is a sonorous hum of the desires driving the organisms within and around you. It feels nice. You can never be afflicted with* **Weaponized Despair, Labour Anxiety,** *or* **Loneliness.** *However, you have* **-2 to all Perception Checks** *due to the ecstatic sensation of this rotten ecology.* **On a critical failure** *you ascend to the next plateau of being, exploding in a shower of vapor and pulp.* **All party members within 500 metres suffer damage as if hit by a Class 7 bioweapon,** *and also receive a permanent* **+5 buff to Love.** *In the event of such a critical failure you surrender your inventory, player sheets and seat at the gaming table and receive the* **Necrotic Hat** *and the* **Animal Mission Card.** *Your* **Compulsory Task** *is to drain the white blood cells from the remaining* **Players** *and* **Games Master.** *For each of these that is brought to a state of Leukopenia, receive* **30xp.** *When this is complete, begin the* **Animal Mission.**

Example Technology:

Oceanic Oblivion Drive. The **OOD** is an open source theological transportation tech in common use throughout the game setting. Simple units can be manufactured on most domestic 3d printers, using a variety of materials and running off a variety of power sources. The **OOD** props itself from itself to its destination marking all molecules affected by this line. Each molecule, in rapid succession, is imprinted with the potentiality (referred to by certain sects as "belief") of the transported user. This combined potentiality, acting, and is ultimately expressed at the destination by reassembling the transported user from this belief. The original manifestation of the user is devoured in the process, fulfilling the necessity of the energy cost.

Vita Remora. A prosthetic memory device, the **Vita Remora** is an amphibious organism which attaches itself to the user. It feeds from dead cells and fecal matter and acts as a memetic scribe, recording their life for the duration it is attached. A **Vita Remora** cannot be obtained other than by bathing in **The Digital Colloids of The Meteoric Sea.**

Dirty Crown. A street brand of Cognition Suppressant that allows the user to focus all of their attention on their skill. It comes with a disposable ventilator, complete with filter, directed stimulant delivery system for relatively safe solo use.

Mesh. A DIY but well supported system of conjoining the gastrointestinal systems of more than one organism with readily available medical materials. **Mesh** is the name of the process and the name of the online data repository / social community where mods, designs and uses are shared.

Necrotic Hat

|	
	As you slip the fabric over your head it tightens and you hear digital angels.
While wearing this you are resistant to any appeals from the **Miserable Void-Walker** due to the thinness of the garment, you may experience a second item of headwear and gain the relevant bonuses. However, at any point where you must roll a **D20** and consult the table	
1-8	Nothing happens.
9-16	**Class Consciousness +1**
17-18	A caustic vision of your **Dread Ex** leaves you unable to stop **Crying** for 48 hours. Recieve **-5 to Social**
19-20	...olood **+5 to Production of Recyc** if ... level the Beta Polyp Zombie ... information on your **Wrecked Face.**
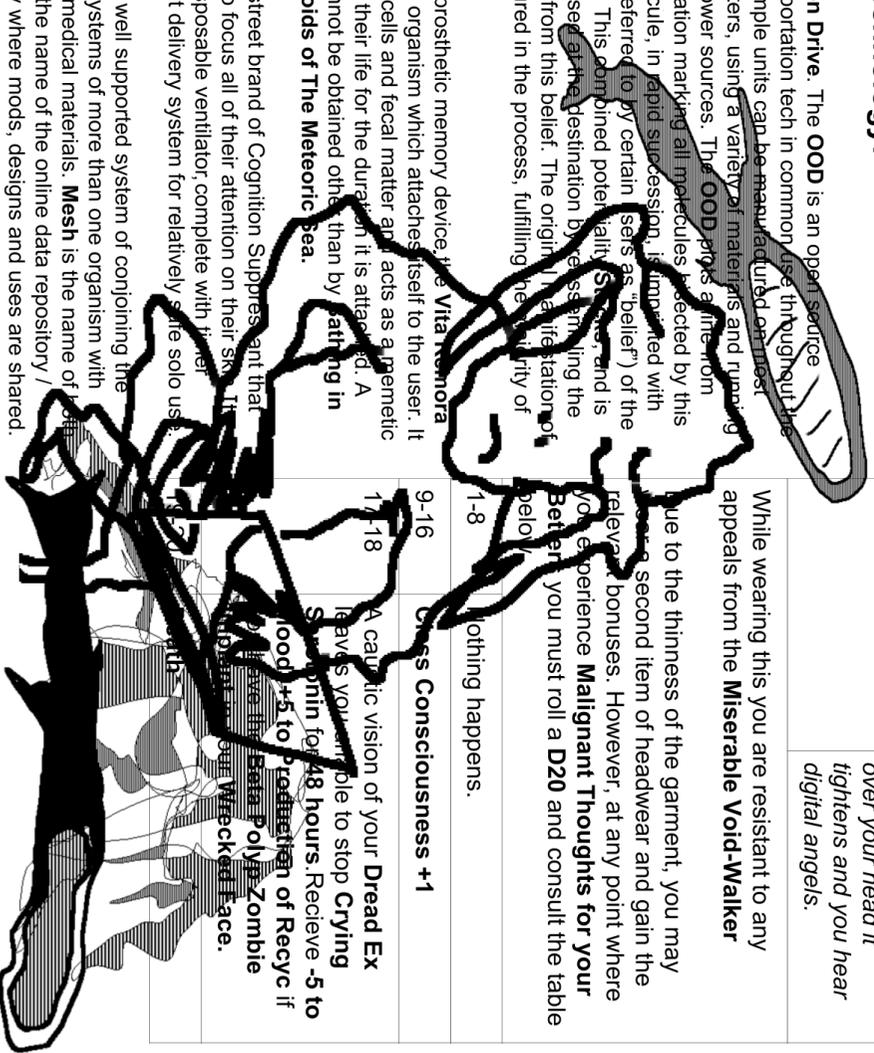
The Animal Mission

There are now indentations in your body, all of which are lined with fine grassy fur. These trap moisture from the air and from your own sweat glands and provide an environment for the propagation of **Epizoic Organisms**. You don't know anymore, you are travelling with an **ad-hoc-pac**, consisting of **3 Shewolves**. Now that you have achieved the prerequisite number of **XP** from achieving your **Compulsory Task**, you were able to join with this **ad-hoc-pac**. Animal fur retains liquids, microbes, particles, additionally insulating from heat and cold. After your **Critical Failure** you have fur now and this fur is grassy. It holds seeds and animals, water and light. Things enter it and leave at various junctures, and the **Shewolves** are covered in a similar material. At any point you may insert organs from the **Players or Games Master** into the **3.5" Drive** and then roll on the **Stolen Table [The Animal]** (right) for your additional animal quality. You don't know anymore. The **ad-hoc-pac** will establish the direction of the quest through its sensitivity **Desiring Production** of its bacterial load. **Meshing**, though not necessary for intra-pac cohesion can be utilised to merge with **Local Agents**. In emergencies, **Geophagy** can provide similar, though vastly cruder, directions should the trail run cold.

Tracking:

You who are the **ad-hoc-pac*** extended through time and through each of its former, present and future agents across space will primarily carry out the **Animal Mission** through tracking. Tracking is a broad and dynamic discipline however for the early levels of your character the primary technique will likely be **Scent Detection. Eccrine, Sebum** and **Apocrine** sweat are the primary types for human tracking. Your body is sometimes like a **Black Box** by which I mean it is a hidden system only visible via its effects also a **Black Box** is a device on vehicles which is attached to the system and records what is done by that system and where it travels to. It is normally intended for the eyes of someone else however through the use of drugs you can become aware of your position in the environment. Scent is heavier than air it lays in troughs and cuts in the earth including the tiny holes of porous material like volcanic rock or woven grass. Scent is an environment where scent will stay the particular to that individual body and soft loam and brush beneath a tree canopy is an environment where scent will stay the longest as it suffers less disturbances from wind and rain. Scent trails mark the specific individual body through **Sebum** and the **Terrain** is **Diagrammed** with the pools of scent. Bacteria breaking down release scent and the digestive system contains strata of bacteria. Bacteria thrive in the grass hairs of the **ad-hoc-pac**. Biofilms form across solid non-porous surfaces and allow heterogeneous communities of bacteria to survive and propagate in a mucosal slime that sticks to an impenetrable **Black Box**. Bacteria and **Epizoic Organisms** thrive in the grassy haired troughs of your body and as you run and touch across the **ad-hoc-pac** mucosal strands suspend between you while dents in moss hold small animals which thrive like coral and an atoll in the forest, r i s i n g at the rate of all of your heartbeats mapping both exertion and desire. **Apocrine** and **Eccrine Sweat** contain makers of **Emotions** and running through the forest you mark and make a diagram of your compulsions and **Despiring Production**. Your **Animal Mission** uses the roll tables left in the troughs and porous material and the mucosal matrix spreads between the **ad-hoc-pac** which now includes the **Diagrammed** undergrowth and is led by the stomach wisdom of **Meshes** which can also be called gut instinct.

* You are now plural.

The Animal

01-35 Urban Animals
36-45 Dog
46-50 Cat
51-55 Rat
56-60 Mouse
61-65 Pet Rodent (Guinea Pig/Hamster)
66-75 Squirrel
76-83 Pigeon
84-85 Pet Bird (Parakeet/budgie)
86-88 Turtle
89-90 Frog
93-96 Monkey
97-00 Monkey

36-50 Rural Animals
01-10 Dog
11-15 Cat
16-25 Pig
26-35 Chicken
36-45 Duck
46-50 Rabbit
51-60 Mouse
61-70 Horse
71-80 Sheep
81-85 Cow
86-90 Goat
91-94 Turkey
95-00 Bat

51-75 Wild Animals
01-10 Wolf
11-15 Coyote
16-20 Fox
21-25 Black Bear
26-30 Grizzly Bear
31-33 Mountain Lion
34-35 Badger
36-37 Wolverine
38-45 Weasel
46-49 Otter
50-52 Beaver
53-55 Raccoon
56-61 Muskrat
62-70 Opossum
71-75 Skunk
76-80 Porcupine
81-85 Mole
84-85 Marten
86-88 Armadillo
89-95 Deer
96-97 Elk
98-99 Moose
100 Bear

76-85 Wild Birds
01-05 Sparrow
06-10 Robin
11-15 Blue Jay
16-20 Cardinal
21-30 Crow
31-35 Wild Turkey
36-40 Duck
41-50 Quail
51-60 Crow
61-70 Hawk
71-80 Falcon
81-85 Eagle
86-90 Owl
91-95 Escaped Pet Bird

86-00 Zoo Animals
01-10 Lion
11-15 Tiger
16-20 Leopard
21-25 Cheetah
26-30 Polar Bear
31-35 Crocodile (or Alligator)
36-40 Rhinoceros
41-45 Hippopotamus
46-50 Elephant
51-55 Giraffe
56-60 Zebra
61-65 Chimpanzee
66-70 Gorilla
71-75 Monkey
76-85 Kangaroo
86-90 Baboon
91-95 Camel
96-00 Buffalo

The Incomplete Provocation   [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

```
INT. LECTURE THEATRE
```

The agent enters the lecture theatre and starts behind

a laptop computer on a lectern, in front of a large

projection which shows a Windows 10 desktop. They

struggle to load a slide show presentation from the

computer terminal, eventually giving up. Exasperated

they open the programme "MS Paint" and awkwardly write

"The Incomplete Provocation" on the screen, freehand,

using the mouse.

<pre>
                    AGENT
                  (Stressed)
        Good afternoon everyone, welcome to the
        lecture. Today we are going to explore the
        concept of the Incomplete Provocation[1]. The
        agency has deemed it unnecessary to provide
        software for displaying slide shows, so in
        the spirit of J-E-H, we will improvise.
</pre>

The agent drinks from a bottle of water, pauses, scowls

at the unseen audience, and smooths their hair.

<pre>
                    AGENT
</pre>

(Calm, practised, confident)
        I'm going to talk about a work of art I
        produced in 2017 called "TFW: The Formless
        Wastes". My aim is to use "TFW: The Formless
        Wastes" to make a proposal for art practice
        as-

The agent writes a bullet point list on the screen. The

use of the mouse to write renders their handwriting

like that of a child, at points barely legible.

                        AGENT
        -A: An incomplete gesture or diagram.
        B: A way of producing affect.
        C: A speculative practice.
        D: Research.

        TFW: The Formless Wastes is at its core,
        the reading of a science fiction horror
        story. This story was written by taking a
        non-essential piece of narrative text from
        the 1997 horror video game "Resident Evil"
        (Mikami & Fujiwara, 1997), and following a
        formal constraint of structure, expand this
        text whilst changing its perspective and
        ethical position.

The agent pauses to draw an image on the screen. On

the left is a zombie bent over a dead body and in the

process of eating. On the right is a zombie dog, which

is smiling. The agent draws an arrow from the zombie to

the zombie dog.

Slow piano chords have been playing and you now notice them, and behind them a soft

whirring sound that could be a recording of wind,

or a piece of machinery,

or a synthesizer pretending to be either of these things.

AGENT
     I'm interested in an art practice which is
     multi-linear.

The agent writes "A: Multiple pathways".

                    AGENT
     By this I mean it has multiple pathways through
     it. It puts forward positions, political and
     ethical choices, while not resolving these
     into one single interpretation. Which leads
     me to the next point-

The agent writes "B: Does not claim authority".

                    AGENT
     -The art practice, does not claim authority.
     In this regard, the approach draws from
     theorists of literature such as Hélène
     Cixous arguing for a kind of writing which
     takes place "when you have lost everything,
     no more roads, no direction, no fixed signs
     [...] when you are unwoven weft, flesh that
     lets strangeness come through, [...] its
     in these breathless times that writing
     traverses you, [...] addressed to no one,
     they well up, surge forth, from the throats
     of your unknown inhabitants" (Cixous, 1991,
     pp. 38-39).

     Similarly, I see this position echoed when
     Kathy Acker said "I take materials and only
     at the end do I find out what's going on in
     my writing" (Acker, 1989).

Acker identifies ways the claim of authority might take shape if we don't move to avoid it, through structures of art practice which have become familiar and well used.

"[The] novelist sits down and says: 'There's a certain ordered reality—or else maybe it's not so ordered—but I'm going to either order that reality or I'm going to express that ordered reality.' And it's very much, as Barthes says, the feeling of someone who's an owner, who knows…that people have names, they're identifiable through time" (Acker, 2018, p. 47).

In thick letters, the agent writes "C: Desire" on the screen, particularly obscuring the drawing of a zombie eating a corpse.

                    AGENT
               (with enthusiasm)
     The art practice I'm interested in creates
     an environment that produces desire in an
     audience to engage with something uncertain,
     non-linear, non- authoritative, flexible, and
     multiple. And finally-

The agent writes "D: Speculation/Collaboration"

                    AGENT
     -This hinges on a kind of speculation and
     collaboration from the audience to engage
     with an artwork which is always incomplete.

The agent erases all the drawings and text from the screen.

                    AGENT
    "TFW: The Formless Wastes" uses Incomplete
    Provocations in a number of ways. Firstly,
    as a way of producing pathways for the work
    to develop along. The work is planned as a
    flexible structure, the horror story is to
    be read from beginning to end, but there
    are a number of elements available for
    improvisation.

    The horror story, mirroring the source text
    it is drawn from, takes the form of some half
    a dozen diary entries. The segmented nature
    of the diary form allows a number of natural
    pauses in which one of these improvisations
    could take place.

    However there is nothing to stop a pause,
    and improvisation, being inserted within the
    reading of an entry. Though the effect of
    for example pausing mid sentence contains
    different potential from a pause between
    diary entries.

The agent draws a representation of the vagus nerve

in the human body. They add to this further drawings

of the various organs the nerve directly connects to,

specifically the heart and lungs. The agent continues

drawing but the image becomes more complex and dense.

Hand

Unknown Lacuna
Page: 135

Elements connected to the nervous system drawing

include the ecosystem of organisms which live around

the roots of the flax plant, the difference between use

value and exchange value, and skeletons of the Harbour

Seal and the Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

                          AGENT
          The next way that Incomplete Provocations
          are used in the work is to produce affective
          states in myself and the audience. Primarily
          the intended state is comfortable attention,
          but this necessitates repeatedly moving out
          of and returning to comfort in order to
          maintain attention.

          The Incomplete Provocations are tangibly
          connected to the affective state of the
          audience, and myself. An Incomplete
          Provocation is deployed based on my sense of
          the audience and whether the work needs to
          change trajectory, or speed in response to
          this sense.

          The next use of Incomplete Provocations is as
          an overall ideological framing for the work
          as a process which is ongoing, incomplete,
          and fractured.

          The final use of the Incomplete Provocations
          as is literal audience participation, and
          the framing for the potential of further
          participation.

The agent stops drawing, and takes a drink of water.

Somewhere nearby a window is heard slamming open and

blast of wind rushes around the lecture theatre blowing

papers in a spiral. The agent continues to drink

without appearing to notice the chaos, which stops as

quickly as it started.

                         AGENT
          "TFW: The Formless Wastes" is at its core,
          the reading of a science fiction horror story,
          which takes the form of half a dozen diary
          entries. Interrupting the reading of this
          story a number of variables, prompts, and
          partially prepared systems for making. These
          are the Incomplete Provocations.

          The Incomplete Provocations used in this work
          have their origins in practice of divination,
          and tabletop role playing games.

          I will now talk you through the process
          of a hypothetical performance of "TFW: The
          Formless Wastes".

The agent rapidly draws symbols on the screen to

represent each element while talking. The symbols look

at once like Norse runes whilst also looking like

modern schematics. In contrast to the clumsiness of the

agent's writing previously, these images are rendered

with an inhuman precision.

AGENT

A music play-list which shuffles the soundtrack to the work. It is a mixture of euphoric pop music, and euphoric techno music. At points it helps me focus, at other points it distracts me. I might need to skip a track if I find myself dancing too much and unable to concentrate.

I begin the reading, I break off almost immediately to explain the diagram on the projection screen behind me which is an abstract map of the realm of the chaos gods in the popular war-gaming franchise Games Workshop.

I explain that there are four realms, one for each of the gods and each are loosely concerned with disorder, desire, disease, and destruction respectively. The areas in between each of these realms, in what could be considered "demilitarised zones" outside of borders, are areas refereed to in Games Workshop literature as "The Formless Wastes". I state that like all diagrams, it refers to more than just that.

I tell the audience that The Formless Wastes is a plane of pure immanence. I tell them that the story I'm about to read them is from the video game Resident Evil, which is a horror game that takes place in mansion where a bio-weapon was being developed, before an accident occurred and created a vast number of monsters.

I say that you could consider the mansion as part of The Formless Wastes, because
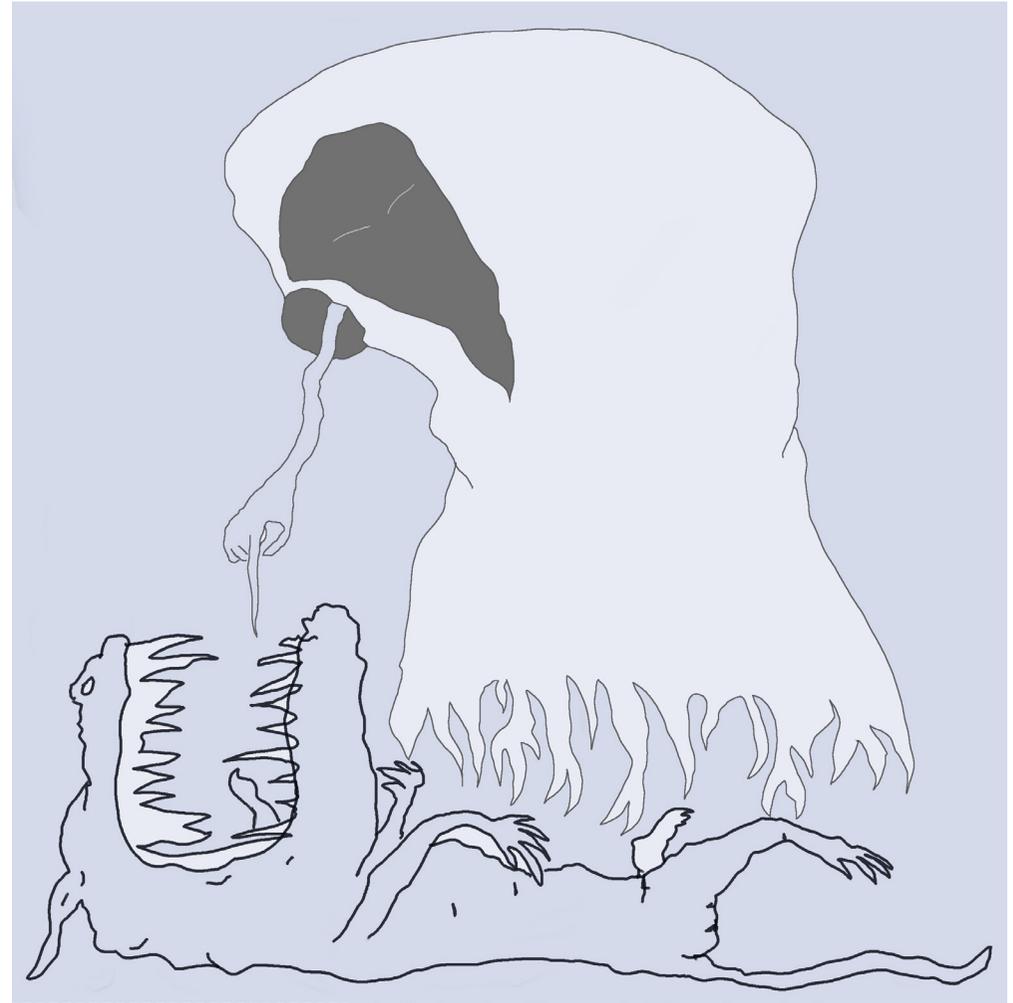
Doghood [CARE]

everything can, and does change.

I say "A horror story inside a mansion, where the building folds around the desires of the occupants, who never have to leave". I throw a loop of rope on the floor and tell the audience that this is the perimeter of the mansion, it can change shape, and change the arrangement of the things within, but nothing exits or enters.

I begin the story again from the beginning, reading the first entry in its entirety. I finish the first entry, and tell the audience that I need to create more characters to inhabit the mansion.

I ask for an audience member to help me do this. Taking a copy of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles RPG manual, I refer to roll tables for generating an animal-human hybrid from the results of dice rolled by the audience member.

I explain that now we have generated the body of the character, we need to decide who they are, what they want, and where they are going. I take the large deck of cards that I have made previously. These cards each have a concept or object written on them, and two perspectives on this concept written depending on whether the card is drawn the right way up, or upside down.

The agent sketches a card, writes the concept

"Scent" in the middle. At the bottom they also write
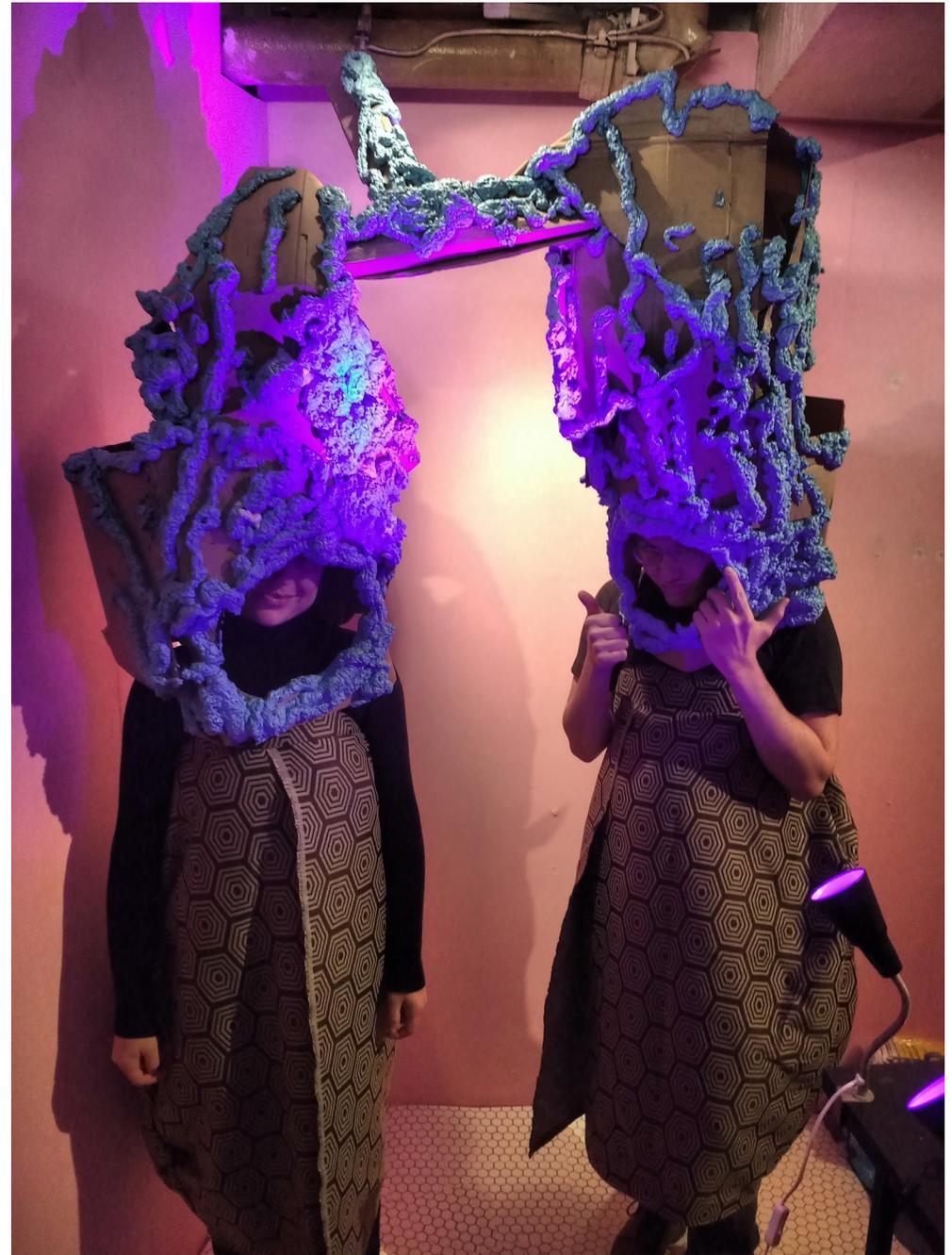
Androids Production Image [CARE]

"Immanence", then they rotate the image 180 degrees,

and write "Knowledge" at the bottom[2].

                    AGENT
     I ask the audience member to draw cards
     for me, and I explain the process as use
     the results to establish a character. The
     first three cards are the past, present, and
     future, and I lay them in a row. Above them I
     place the next two cards the audience member
     draws.

     I explain that these are what drives the
     character, and exist in a dialectical
     relationship with one another.

     I finally ask the audience member for one
     more card, which is laid sideways above the
     previous two. With the audience member's
     input the meaning of this card, which can
     read from either of its perspectives, or a
     combination of the two, to form an image of
     the character's fate.

     I return to reading the story, after a while
     breaking away again to generate another
     character. I also made a crude mould from
     plasticine and place an audience members
     hand into it, filling the remaining space in
     the mould with alginate to perform what I
     call "Reverse Palmistry". After the alginate
     is set, the mould is removed, leaving a
     malformed lump around audience member's
     hand.

     We discuss its form, whether it is more
     "hoof" or "paw". This information, combined

with readings drawn from other things in the room such as the music that is playing at that moment, or where it its loop a video is playing at that particular moment, forms more material that I tell the audience will be embedded into the narrative.

I read the remainder of the horror story, and the performance ends. Throughout the performance, a large amount of material is generated in front of the audience which is explained as being needed for the story. However, this material such as new characters, or changes to the structure of the mansion, never occurs.

I aim to deliver the performance in a way which has the audience anticipating and speculating on what might happen, where the character generated in the midst of the reading will actually make an appearance.

I also aim to deliver the performance in a manner where the audience is unsure whether I deliberately did not follow up on these threads of speculation, or whether I forgot, or ran out of time.

I do hope that some of the audience notice that the horror story itself is framed as a prologue. It describes the lead up to an event which is not described, and indeed cannot be described because the fictitious author of the diary which comprises the story ends their final entry unable to write any more.

FADE TO BLACK

The Stand 1 [DIAGRAM]

"Oh god, I need a piss so bad but we can't compromise this magic my friends, the decider is about to arrive and I will not leave them waiting in the hall!" ~ Randall Flagg

"You know how how [*sic*] some sound *sounds* wet? In the studio they talk about water all the time, the wet part of the mix all muddy. [...] Wetness is the vector, Malaria needs it, all plagues need it. it's like what machines are made of! [...] Kansas seems dry, but that's because the rhizome grass sucks up all the rain and the colorado [*sic*] mountains pull away all the clouds. There is a beach in all that prarie [*sic*], you just have to learn how to see it, it isn't just cow punchers and ride-on lawnmowers, there's a revolution grinding away as slow as Dawson Encephalitis and sure as you like. We are here, dead centre of a capillary wave with our feet on the seabed."

~ Captain Tripps.

This is a story

i'm going to tell you this story now, it folds around like an oxbow lake which is a

kink in geography,

a wrinkle

a fold

We will come back to that

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#

There are two lines which bisect the United States

The first runs from the coast of Maine to Las Vegas, in Nevada where it peters out just before it hits the Californian coast

the second axis is a bit more complicated, we'll have to come back to it as we keep working

#

This run more or less crosses the longest way you could cut this part of that continent, and about half way through, it it passes right through the southern border of Nebraska

#

The southern Border of Nebraska, is that which is adjacent to the state of Kansas Kansas, which contains one of the two main Kansas Cities, is also the location of Thulsa Doom's Mega Church, the hearth of all reason and the home of the foil shiny god themselves.

#

Dressed in shine and earthy dread and desire Thulsa Doom has a great amount attraction and a great amount of pull. A lot of pull. This pull is balanced only by other forces of meteorology, geology and physics. The pull that drags the water up to form clouds in the shitmountains of colarado [*sic*] to the east, and down to the

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roots of the forests of Missouri and the eastern edge of Arkansas.

\#

This point, this attractor, this sits right here in the middle.

It has a lot of pull this basin.

\#

Our story of The Stand begins in Maine, which is where all stories of this kind begin.

\#

The state government was testing limits, all science was concerned with this area of research.

\#

Being on the legal border of the United States with Canada, and the border of land and water along that coast line this investigation of limits came naturally.

Teams waded out into the sea, deeper and deeper.

\#

Pulling out data, garbled and mashed together with kelp and heads of things that came off in their hands and spread apart into more lines, vectors and tendrils, wrapping themselves around latex gloves until brushed away by squeamish interns.

How dark the water.

\#

The incomplete Provocation; Endnotes

1. The concept I call an "Incomplete Provocation" can be seen easily

in speculative genres of cinema such as horror and science fiction. In

John Carpenter's film "Escape from New York" (Carpenter, 1981) one

character answer another question as to why they have been chosen for

a job with the reply "You flew the GolfFire over Leningrad. You know how

to get in quiet" (Carpenter & Castle, 1980, p. 28). This reply is a process

which points to an unseen exterior of the narrative not only in terms

of a character's past, but the world itself, including its politics, naming

conventions, technology and so on. Author William Gibson spoke in an

interview about the importance of this specific example to his writing

of "Burning Chrome" the book containing "Johnny Mnemonic" (Gibson,

1995), a short story referenced elsewhere in this PhD Output. It is useful

to include here Gibson's entire comment, not least because of the

misremembered details;

> "Yeah, like *Escape from New York* never made it big, but it's
> been redone a billion times as a rock video. I saw that movie,
> by the way, when I was starting "Burning Chrome" and it
> had a real influence on *Neuromancer*. I was intrigued by the
> exchange in one of the opening scenes where the Warden
> says to Snake: "You flew the wing-five over Leningrad, didn't
> you?" It turns out to be just a throwaway line, but for a moment
> it worked like the best SF where a casual reference can imply
> a lot" (McCaffery, 1990, p. 133).

The research teams unearthed such material, rich as rot.

#

Richer even.

#

Blooming desire and disease and collapsing membraines [*sic*].

They kept working,

State funding demanded is.

understand the limit

Understant [*sic*] the limit

This matterial [*sic*] was pulled back from the folds of the waves.

miles and miles were pulled back like a lip

pop

like an tenden [*sic*]

pop

and then they began working in compounds

assemblages of people and instruments connected to others none of which knew

exactly the whole lay of what they were doing

tearing apart things form one layer, and splicing them with another

pumping fluid in different directsions [*sic*],

feeding gases into pore

2. The card system is adapted from the Tabletop Role Playing Game

"Everway" designed by Jonathan Tweet and published by Wizards of the

Coast in 1995. Author Daniel Mackay analyses the games mechanics and

its "abstract and vague" systems in "The Fantasy Role-Playing Game:

A New Performing Art" (Mackay, 2001, p. 46) and Tweet himself reflects

on its character generation system in a chapter of "Second person: role-

playing and story in games and playable media" (Tweet, 2010).

pushing everything through

minor revolations [*sic*],

the ocasional [*sic*] mis step or accident but nothign [*sic*] crucial that couldnt [*sic*]

be laughed abotu [*sic*] after

all this material, swirled and forced

working together but apart, differnt [*sic*] parts, different machines. a few clutches

here and there

they were filling great resevoirs [*sic*] of material

sumps and canisters

trucks carrying tankers stacked deep underground twenty deep

but the study of limits nesecitates [*sic*] two directions

it requires two points of view

and one of those, must be from the far side looking back.

#

And so there was an event

the birth of Captain Tripps

#

A great crabbing cloud of cancer that was wrought out of the sea with a mind of

nothing but wonder and acceleration.

#

a misaligning of parts, a misdirection of growth

everything began to strain on the othe [*sic*] rside [*sic*] of the limit

people died, a lot of people died.

Some [*sic*] people ran, and doing so, dragged that fold with them in their wake

running bloody and clutching their loved ones they fled, some south, some west but

with the steel wall of Canada to the north and the now gnashing seas of hte [*sic*]

Atlantic to the east their options weere [*sic*] limited to that one quadrent [*sic*] of

escape.

#

And at this moment, sensing the wiff [*sic*] of plague on the air, steps Randall Flagg

With black magic and promises, Randal offers those hopeless infected still driving

on away form [*sic*] home, a way to keep living.

Randall says come to Nevada, the desert will protect you.

The plague will die on the sand.

we [*sic*] can coat you in silica and draw it out

The desert where anythign [*sic*] can be built is a sandbox of desires.

so with black magic gripping the dashboard from through their windscreens these

people drive on dripping venom in their sweat.

Spreading [*sic*] illness in their wake like chemtrails

cutting the country in half in the thro [*sic*] of frantic desire to reach the man Flagg.

Digestion [CARE, DIAGRAM]

I need you first to imagine the room. No, before the room is the emotion. You must have a degree of happiness, you must have an excess of serotonin. You will generate happiness through this process, but you need a buffer to begin with. In everything you can, have a buffer. A buffer is a void which performs a function but which you can't or do not need to understand.

Make sure your anxiety is taken care of. If you get anxious about food for example, make sure you have some food that is easy and stress free to eat close to hand in case you get hungry. Perhaps a supply of some ramen noodles, eating implements and a kettle. Set up a situation where there are minimal demands on you to remember anything, because everything is just there.

Now the room. A room is an enclosed area in which you can control what happens. In this room there are two *Spaces*. I need you to imagine a *Small Space* that is comfortable and focused. In this *Space* are a chair and a desk, both suitable for you to sit at for a long duration without being preoccupied with that task of sitting. The *Small Space* needs to be focused, perhaps use lighting to keep attention on the desk and away from anything else. You can

#

But 22 hours into this bloom flecked odyssey,

this wave hits the southern lip of Nebraska

pop

the line is kinked out of joint

The charasmatic [*sic*] pull of more more magic.

All [*sic*] that wetness of the plague tripps

the seaborn froth of formlessness, tearing things apart and pumping them full of

uncontrollable growth

Rot and fluid

a miscegenation of accelerants and putrescence

fungus and moss

bile and algae

Captain trips riding the vector of panic, on the backs of bodies pulled by desire to

the magician in Las Vegas

When POP

the line is kinked out of joint.

#

The charasmatic [*sic*] shining magic of Thulsa doom pulls the handshake off course

not a concious [*sic*] actor, no dog in the race

have sound at the *Small Space*, comfortable headphones might be better than speakers as they also mask unpredictable background noise.

I will talk about sound a little later, but this should suffice for now. You will need a notepad, a pen, some index cards, some Post-Its and some blue-tack. You will also some small bulldog clips which can hold up to 40 pages, some masking tape, and some good quality drawing pins which will not break when you push them into the wall.

The second *Space* in the room is the *Long Space*. This needs to be big as possible while easy to navigate. The relationship to the scale of your body can help with sizing. Perhaps limit vertical height to what you can reach without a step, with room to step back so you can see up to that vertical limit. Horizontally maybe a good size is the same measurement as your height three times. Ideally one end of the *Long Space* should meet the *Small Space*, so if turning your head fully ninety degrees from the *Small Space*, you can see the last third of the *Long Space*.

The *Long Space* is divided into thirds. *A, B*, and *C*.

A is for clustering ideas, *B* is for arranging ideas, and *C* is for texts.

Thulsa Doom's Mega Church, a healing party

and the energy of plague and wonder hits a spin

In the prarie [*sic*] of potential, the basin south of nebraska

the votex [*sic*] starts

A new line up flight straight out from the shit mountsin [*sic*] of colarado [*sic*], the

dark forest of Missouri.

A new dimension.

Pop [*sic*].

#

You could say this is praxis.

A terrible wrinkle .

Wet and dry and luck.

#

But it opens a door.

#

The capillary wave underfoot.

#

I will now take you through the process of digesting a text. Anything can be a text[1] and so the word is used for consistency to refer to the thing which is to be digested[2].

First you find your text. This could be a journal chapter, a computer game, an artwork, a piece of fiction, an object, a remembered experience bookmarked by some sort of talisman such as a photograph or restaurant napkin. In the case of something small like a journal chapter or a napkin you can take the entire text, fix it together with the bulldog clip and pin the bulldog clip to the wall of *Section C* of your *Long Space* (the one you can see if you turn your head from the *Small Space* while sitting at its desk). Repeat this process with the other texts you have an interest in. If the text is book, or something equally impractical to pin to the wall, make a place-holder of a sheet of paper with the text's name on it.

When you have a number of these texts, start thinking about general terms, images, or concepts which come to you as you look at them in proximity to each other. These terms, images, or concepts might be a firm commonality, but it is often more helpful to tune in on your feelings about these things. Afterall, many of them you will not yet have read, or considered in detail. It is not understanding which has brought them together here but desire. Something excites you enough about each of these texts to retain them in

this way, and desire is the part of the process of digestion at each stage.

Desire is when you want something and create something new within yourself.

Arrange the texts so that they are clustered around your chosen terms, which you can then write on some tape and stick to the wall between them[3]. The same text might occur in multiple clusters, sitting on the border between one grouping and the next. This might be intentional, or it might be made apparent as you attempt to arrange these texts. Standing back and looking at *Section C*, you can get a general idea about what is interesting you at this time, by looking at those taped labels, and some of the titles in between them. This *Section* will always be changing. It will always be imprecise, that is the point.

Next, choose your first text to work with. The one that excites you the most to read/watch/devour. Perhaps choose something short though. Take it to you *Small Space*, and place it on the left (if you are right handed) of an A4 notepad. You might choose to use squared paper, dotted, lined, or otherwise. At the top of your notepad, copy out the name of the text, and the author, and the date and publisher. Then mark the author's name with a coloured highlighter so it stands out. Now the consuming begins.

You engage in the therapy.

Time falls to wet pieces.

You love the animals with all your heart.

You are told that you represent society as a whole.

A perpendicular slice through the strata. The analyst notes that any such claim to representation is obviously not objective, and displays a political position. She proceeds to explains such a position with reference to Félix Guattari, Bracha L. Ettinger, and Michel Foucault but you lose much of the details as you become aware that the animal sitting next to you, a squat and square faced dog, is trying to catch you eye, turn to page 68 of Ahuman Use

With your appropriately comfortable but alert context of lighting and sound, begin to read the text. When you have grasped the first idea, event, of element of the text, summarize this in your notepad using your own words or clear diagrams. This is now accounted for! Move on, and repeat the process. Start each summary with a dash or some other mark in the left margin so you can quickly see where a new point begins. When you change pages/scenes/divisions make a note of this in the left margin too. Just the page number when you start a new page is enough if you are working from a written text. If the part of the text you are reading is uninteresting to you, write less. If the part of the text you are reading provokes your desire more, write more.

This should be very clear when dealing with a text which is linear, which means that is mostly encountered in one direction from beginning to end, for example a book or a film. If the text is not linear, or example if it is not made up of writing but is instead a sculpture or a game, then an extra step is required. Also, if you did not know already, linear means something goes in one direction until the end of time. When something is nonlinear it means it progresses in multiple directions, can split or fold back on itself, and may do this simultaneously.

The extra step involves turning the non-linear text into something which can be read in a linear manner. On your first page of your notes in the A4 pad, under the name and author information, you will need to draw a diagram of the text about to be digested. There is no way to describe how to do this because the form of the diagram emerges from a combination of you, the text, and the relations between the two. As such it is uncertain. Uncertainty is when all possibilities are present and are equally important. The aim of the diagram is always the same however; account for all the different paths from the non-linear text by drawing them, and then write a number next to each point along each path. These numbers can now function as page numbers would in a linear text. Where you begin numbering, and where you end, is decided entirely by desire.

Desire is that it is when you want something and create something new within yourself.

Now, if and when you come across a part of the text that you feel is going to be relevant as a quote, or you are simply drawn to, copy it out in full on an index card. Include a note of the author (which you should underline so you can quickly see it), the title of the text it came from (or an abbreviation if this is long) and the page number it came from. When you have a few of these index cards, or need to stretch your legs. Get up and blue tack them

somewhere on *Section A* of the *Long Space*.

When devouring a text in this manner, you only need to think about the part of the test you are summarizing. Don't worry about remembering all that happened before, planning what to do with this information, or worrying about how many more pages there are left. Do this process for as long as you're enjoying it, and focus on the little bit you are doing at the moment. If you have an idea for something outside of this (a future line of enquiry, an idea for a response), make a note of it on a Post-it and so you don't need to keep it in your head.

When you have finished this first text, fix your handwritten notes to the front of it (or its place-holder sheet) and place the whole thing back on *Section C* of the *Long Space*. You have now devoured this text, and the notes function as a prosthetic memory. You can skim through these notes in the future to recall the contents of that text. A prosthetic is something which was not part of you before which you have made part of you. By this stage your postcards of quotes will be accumulating in *Section A* at the other end of the *Long Space*.

Working through this first text might have raised questions which you feel might be addressed by another text, if so, unclip that text from *Section C*

Horse Teeth 1 [DIAGRAM]

of the *Long Space* and begin digesting that[4]. Otherwise, choose based on your desire.

Desire is that it is when you want something and create something new within yourself.

After an unspecified duration, you will find *Section A* is starting to fill with index cards. Now, just as you did with *Section C*, start to form these into clusters, around ideas/terms/concepts/images that emerge from those quotes and which you can write on some tape at the middle of each cluster. Use Post-Its for any additional ideas not included in those quotes. This could be notes about the relations between a pair of quotes, an experience or feeling not present in the quotes, or notes to remind you of a relevant text which you have not yet digested. As with *Section C*, these clusters will change a lot as each new addition of an index card or post its could potentially disrupt all other relations. If looking at the cards gives you an idea about rearranging the texts in *Section C*, or new texts to read, this is also good. The clusters in *Section A* and *Section C* should destabilize one another.

After some time you will start to have more index cards that you can really keep in your mind at once[5]. It is time to start work on *Section B*.

Take a fresh index card and write on it "ACTIONS!" in large capital letters. Then draw an arrow pointing downwards below that word on the same card. Perhaps you might want to draw this arrow in a bright colour. Now go to *Section B* of the *Long Space*. *Section B* should be empty, and it should be between *Sections A* and *C*. As high as you can reach blue-tack the index card on which you wrote "ACTIONS!" on the left side of *Section B*. You are now going to arrange your quotes and ideas into a linear text which will begin from under the index card that says ACTIONS! And travel down to the floor of *Section B*.

Stand back from *Section A* with some fresh index cards and a pen and think about what your first action for your text should be. Perhaps your text is going to be a conference paper[6], and perhaps the first thing you want to do is outline the methodology you will be employing. If this is this is the case, write your action on a card, perhaps as "Outline methodology used", and blue tack this under the "Actions!" index card. If you have relevant quote index cards, or Post-It ideas (existing, or that have just come to you now), stick these up to the right of that first action you described in the form of an index card that says "outline methodology used"

Now go back again to *Section A*. Look at the clusters and the words in between them. What is the next thing you need to do in your response?

Don't worry about the exact order yet, perhaps just take the name of one of the clusters and write another action card which says you will introduce that idea, for now let's say that cluster was called "Dolphins" and so you wrote "introduce dolphins". Put this actions index card under the last one in the actions column in *Section B,* and put all the relevant quote index cards and idea post-its in a row to the right of this "introduce dolphins" action card. Repeat this with the other clusters.

Now stand back and look at that column of actions, and rows of quotes and ideas which are coming off of each action. Maybe some are too long and so maybe you can break them down into smaller actions. Maybe there is an action that seems necessary to bridge one action to the next, even though you do not have index cards for this yet. Maybe a quote from one part of the text would be better introduced earlier. Maybe entire rows need to be in different orders to make more sense. Keep moving things around, use place-holders wherever you need. If you need to, go back to digesting more text to get more material. Equally, some quotes might now feel beyond the scope of your response, so move them out of *Section B* back to the former cluster site of *Section A*.

Keep working backwards and forwards like this until *Section B* starts to feel like the skeleton of your response. A vertical spine of actions that runs from

its start at the top down to its end at the bottom, and next to each action is the knowledge you have already produced in the form of quotes and your own ideas.

When you have this skeleton, it is time to produce your response.

Take all the index cards and Post-Its from your first row under the card "ACTIONS!" over to your *Small Space*, and stick them up at the back of your desk where you can easily refer to them. Put your chosen response tool (for example, a laptop) in front of you, and use those index cards to help you produce the first part of your response. Perhaps you are still writing that conference paper, so follow your own instructions to "introduce methodology used" using your quote index cards and post it directions to do so.

That whole row is now accounted for, you don't need to remember or think about it once you have written it, and you can go and return the index cards to where they were in *Section B* and repeat the process with the next action row.

While you are turning quotes and ideas into your response, it might become apparent that the plan wasn't quite right. Maybe you don't need all your quotes that were in one row for example. In this case you can have an

"unused" area in your small space where you can keep these unused things, and they can be seen in a glance in case they are needed later in the process.

Repeat this process until you run out of rows.

Digest more material to produce supplementary material if you need, or remove index cards or entire rows. Don't worry about losing material because it is all accounted for in your prosthetic memory system. When this response is over, you can work out a way to store those cards that you are not going to reuse straight away. Maybe you remove all of those texts and start the process again with a new subject, or maybe you leave some of them up because you don't feel like you're completely done with them yet.

By now you should have the bulk of your response. It might not be perfect (through it might be). It can now be edited.
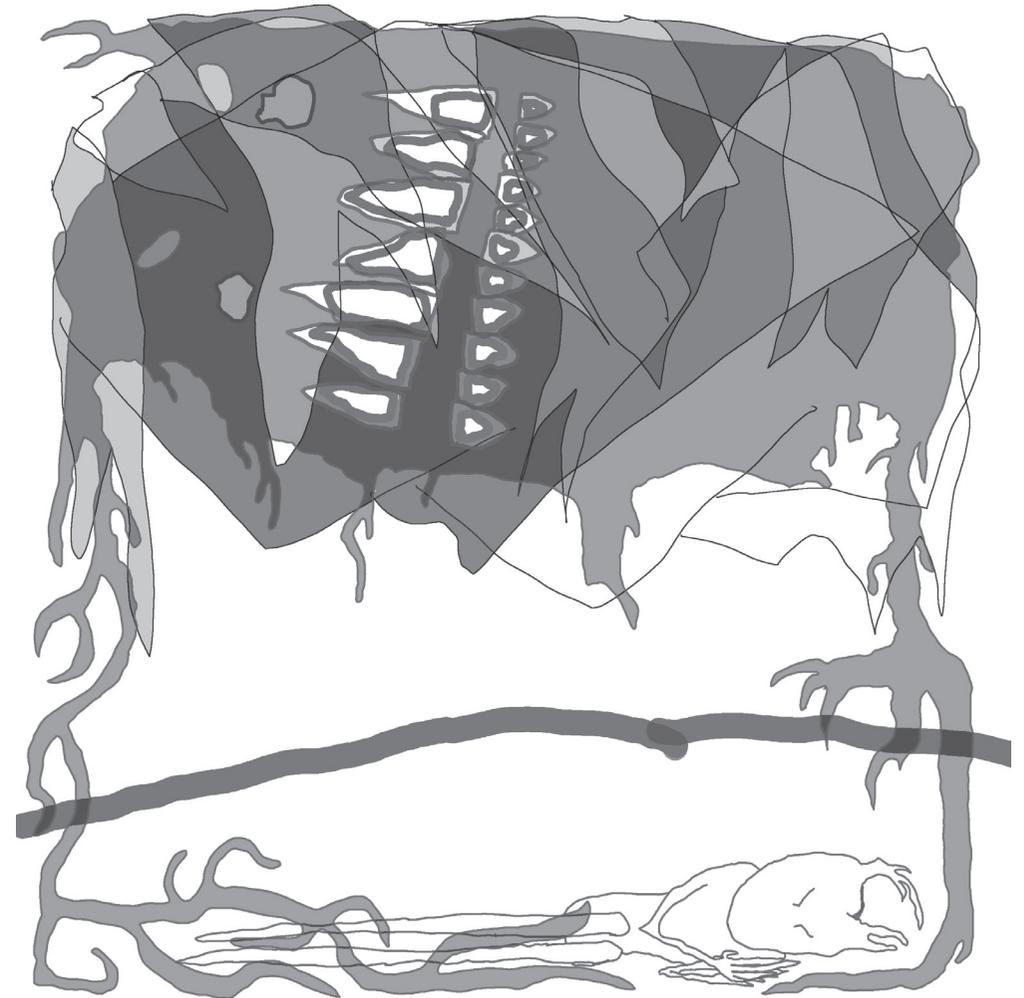
Horse Teeth 4 [DIAGRAM]

Digestion; Bibliography

- Smith, D. (1998, May 30). Philosopher Gamely In Defense Of His Ideas. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/30/arts/philosopher-gamely-in-defense-of-his-ideas.html

Digestion; Endnotes

1. "Mr. Derrida did not seem angry at having to define his philosophy at all; he was even smiling. ''Everything is a text; this is a text,'' he said, waving his arm at the diners around him in the bland suburbanlike restaurant, blithely picking at their lunches, completely unaware that they were being ''deconstructed.''" (Smith, 1998).

2. If you would like to use a different word such as the equally loaded "object" or the confusingly both medical and philosophical "subject" these options are also available to you. Take a pen and edit this document.

3. It should be noted that the clusterings in the system called *Digestion* are different from the from the clustering employed in the system called *Desire Piles* in the document entitled "The Coroner's Report". The clusters in *Digestion* are organised around and between theme's which are their points of commonality. Even while these themes might be reconsidered and change once enough new texts are added, the texts are always orientated through something. *Desire Piles* don't need or have anything to orientated them. If anything, *Desire Piles* tend towards differences, rather than the commonalities of the clustering in *Digestion.*

4. Note: The process of digestion is not concerned with breaking texts down to find

their essential components, it is a creative process of making new things. Digesting a text might result in no useful quotes written on index cards, but instead produce the inspiration to select another text based only on a hunch, or misunderstanding, or the desire to get as far away from that first text as possible. All parts of the system, from writing notes, to arranging cards in clusters, to transitioning from one card to the next, should be thought of as production.

5. This provides an opportunity to talk about attention and desire. If you are bored while digesting a text it is a valid response to this feeling to switch to another text, or to spend some time rearranging clusters in *Sections A* or *C*, or to quit the whole process for the day and do something else. The system is most effectively when desire leads you on to produce more desire. When you want to produce the next idea in the form of the next line of notes, when you want to produce the next arrangement of quotes that will shift the structure to something new, when you want to open the next text. If that desire is not there, do something else. The prosthetic memory function of each part of this system means there is no penalty in stopping. There is instead an additional benefit to disrupting the process because when you return you may interpret the end point differently from when you left it. Eat ramen. Draw. Write a horror story. Go rock climbing at The Valley Bouldering Centre in Ouseburn. Go home and lie with the dogs.

6. This is not the only point through with knowledge can circulate, but it is a useful

Horse Teeth 5 [DIAGRAM]

mechanism especially for the interdisciplinary worker who perhaps works between the fields of art, games, horror, gender, and philosophy. Writing for conferences can provide such a worker with the opportunity to stretch their field of research slightly towards that emphasised by the framing of the conference, while bringing outside research and methods to that context.

Digestion Diagram [DIAGRAM]

Conclusions and Exits [CARE, RPG]

The structure and methodology of this PhD Output consisting of three approaches to a central area of art practice, and within each approach multiple overlapping attempts through the various documents, turns the issue of a conclusion into a challenge.

Rather than attempt to draw books and documents toward a unifying conclusion, erasing the differences between then, I have offered conclusions in the documents individually. Some of these are clearly labelled as such, some are more demonstrative, and some left as provocations.

Throughout the three books are indications of where future paths could proceed. For continuation of creative research and the application of concepts developed, these indications are generally placed at the end of documents. Paths which are more tangential, or areas where the research could be reinforced through engaging with a separate discipline or practitioner appear in endnotes.

In place of some kind of ending for the PhD Output as whole I will raise three of the avenues of future research not already mentioned in individual documents, that will be pursued at its end. All of these examples incorporate work already commenced, that for practical reasons has not been addressed in documents.

1: The Incomplete Object.

Archeologist Chantal Conneller has produced a large amount of research focused on "Star Carr", a Mesolithic site in Yorkshire (Conneller, 2004, 2011; Little et al., 2016; Milner, Conneller, & Taylor, 2018a, 2018b). In particular, Conneller has provided a framework for examining

some of the objects recovered from the site, and through this reassess the historic inhabitants of the area's relationship to animals and objects. The objects, twenty-one of which were found during the site's excavation by Professor J.G.D. Clark between 1949 and 1951, consist of the "uppermost part of the skull of a red deer, with the antlers still attached" and are referred to as "antler frontlets" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). In offering an interpretation for the frontlet's use, Clark "suggested they could have been used either as hunting aids, to permit hunters to stalk animals at close range without being seen, or as headgear in ritual dances" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). This interpretation resulted in an impasse between a "'functional' and a 'ritual' analogy" and has according to Conneller, meant that "in the intervening 50 years they have been ignored" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37).

Conneller's research breaches the impasse of an animal derived object needing to be either functional or ritual by use of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari's work in "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Firstly, Conneller outlines how in Deleuze and Guattari, "animals come to be seen [...] as an assemblage composed of a number of ways of perceiving and acting in the word" (Conneller, 2004, p. 44). In this view, animals are not singular fixed entities, and the objects derived from them are therefore not limited to being symbolic of the animal whole or else be understood only as practical material. Animals are here understood as collection of "affects" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 253), and the objects derived from them convey those Affects to the user in a manner which outside of the binary of ritual and functional. From this point Conneller proceeds to "examine the specific ways in which different things are seen to modify or extend the capacities of people in particular contexts" (Conneller, 2004, p. 51), bridging Deleuze and Guattari to theorist Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" which replaces a fixed epistemological view with "webs of differential positioning" (D. Haraway, 1988, p. 590). The use of animal objects becomes simultaneously a process of taking on capacities as well as the ethical/epistemological/affective engagement with the world from another position.

These observations from archaeology are useful not because they set some historic precedent for how art should function, but because they articulate processes which are important to art from another perspective. Within the documents in this PhD Output that examine

artworks I have consciously treated both the processes deployed by the artist and those of her characters in the same manner. In the art I am interested in, things are not easily split between the practical and the ritual but form processes across these lines to perform different things.

Finally, when I contacted Conneller in 2019 she was continuing to examine the frontlets of Star Carr in terms of how they function as "unfinished things". Conneller has already observed that the frontlets were "broken up as a source of raw material" (Conneller, 2004, p. 46), but is now considering how this occurred concurrently with their uses. A framework for considering art objects that do not reach a fixed state, but are continually re-worked, and drawn from while being used is relevant to a number of documents in this PhD Output. It is relevant to the analysis of artist Tai Shani's works (SHANI, 2019) which undergo edits between redeployments, or the ongoing work "sidekick" (Price, 2013) by Elizabeth Price. Going forward, I would consider how unfinished things connects to the writing practice of William Burroughs both through the "cut-up" technique to "cut oneself out of language" (Hassan, 1963, p. 9), and the process whereby his novels were re-edited in subsequent editions. Burroughs is also relevant to the other side of unfinished things whereby these things are not just refined, but are a source of material for future things. I am also interested in the process by which computer software is updated via "patches" (Fisher, 2019) as another model for an unfinished thing.

I'm interested in the political implications of objects that refuse the linear transition from raw material to finished commodity, but is instead part of processes which cross that distinction. To borrow the image from Karl Marx's Capital Vol. 1 (Marx, 1981), what would it mean for "coat" to remain functioning as "twenty yards of linen", to be always in a process of being woven/unwoven/rewoven into different forms? I feel there is something here to be pursued via the concepts of *Incomplete Provocations*, and the improvisations and departures which are centred in *Tabletop Role Playing Games.*

2: Divination Storytelling

The second exit is far more practical and straightforward. During my research I have used and developed methods for creating parts of narratives based on sortation systems such as card decks and dice rolls. In 2018 I produced an artwork entitled "The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability" which borrowed a mechanic used in multiple games whereby the space in which play takes places is procedurally generated. A hypothetical example of this mechanic would be a game which takes place in a derelict spaceship, the interior rooms and corridors of which is represented with cardboard tiles. When the players reach the exit of one room, a new random room tile is placed at the exit from the first, so the spaceship is configured, and unpredictable, with each subsequent play-through. In *The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability* I combined some of the lore from Games Workshop's derelict spaceship exploration game "Space Hulk" (Games Workshop, 1999) with their subsequently released rules for randomly generated spaceships (Hunt, 2013), to randomly generate prompts for a narrative built from a fictionalised version of my own past.

As a result of the cessation symptoms I was experiencing while coming off antidepressants I found memories returning that medication use had suppressed. In addition, there were physical cessation symptoms which mnemonically triggered some often confused memories of spaces in the town centre of Luton where I spent my teens, frequently from times in the early hours of the morning after leaving a club or a party. I reconstructed these fragmented memories, and the bodily feelings which connected them to the present, and any emergent feelings and noted them down as prompts on index cards. Some memories were so abstract as to not describe a place but just a sensation, or an action. These abstract memories, combined with some other images and thoughts were written up in a list and labelled 1-20.

The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability was produced as a single take spoken performance to microphone. It began with a short reflection on the different ways in which physical geography and brain chemistry are both modulated by chemicals. After this I shuffled and dealt an index

card, describing the derelict spaceship/ 4am Luton Town Centre space it represented in the manner of *Games Master* setting a scene for players of a *Role Playing Game*. I then rolled a 20 sided dice and used the corresponding entry from the list as a prompt for what the player (the audience to whom the work is addressed) did in traversing this space. A partial transcription of one room follows;

"You stagger out of the thickening fog into the area where escaping heat from the many times kicked in door makes a dim pocket at the edge of the street. Banging on the door that feels like it should have given in by now and it is finally opened by someone inside. You roll in, and so does the fog, and the door opener is already turning the corner ahead into the living room so you guess you will follow them, remembering to shut the door behind you.

The living room is thick with dust and hair and ash over the brown carpet and old sofas. No one has their feet on the floor, all bunched up to keep warm or to manage some symptoms of intake.

You just want to buy, but that isn't how this is going to work out. It never does.

Everything slips. Someone makes you take a music cassette and in lock-eyed intensity tells you why you will like it and when you will die.

A man takes you to one side and rapidly ages while sharing with you a one sided conversation about how he has lived his life. He has little ears like fins and catfish whiskers and it's clear from the way he holds and interacts with the portable stereo he cradles that he has a relationship with Fabio and Grooverider which is both more beastially physical and more vapourusly transcendental than you will ever understand.

You slip out and it's dawn and you have the cassette and you don't think you bought anything but now do not think you need anything so maybe you bought it and weren't paying attention during intake or maybe someone else was in charge of your body.

You roll out with the fog and luckily town is down hill but my god you would never be able to find this place again and my god you would probably never want to because all those people would want to check how closely you been following their advice on how to live.

Oh yeah the plot twist is you're a rabbit".

Going forward, I would like to explore the mechanics of procedural narrative based on sortation systems, both as an improvised *Rendition*, and as material which is subsequently cut up and deployed in other ways, possibly as a development of *Diagrammatics*. I'm looking into how I might produce these works for a platform like YouTube, possible using a split screen where half the image shows the face that speaks, and half shows the sortation system such as tarot-style cards.

Dog Mod

Running throughout all three books of this PhD Output are dogs. When I started this PhD in 2016, I soon afterward began living with Lea and Buster, two elderly Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The importance of this relationship to the research is something I have attempted, and failed, to articulate on many occasions in the last three years. As much as the majority of the documents in this PhD Output are underpinned by a desire to understand my own trans* non-binary gender identity, they are also a response to learning about what Deleuze and Guattari would call *Dog Affects*, as well as negotiating my emotions towards Lea and Buster particularly during the sadly increasing points where they have become unwell.

In mid 2019 I sketched an outline for what I called the "Dog Mod". In the language of games, a mod is something added to the game which alters part or all of its systems in some way. Mods are often produced by a third party, and can range from something which simply adds some different functionality (such as the campaign generator for Space Hulk referenced in the previous section) or completely reorientate the system, such as the mod "DayZ" that reconfigures military sim "ARMA" into a zombie survival game and spawned an entire genre of video games (Davison, 2014).

The aim of *Dog Mod* was to produce a document which could provide a means to reconfigure the rest of the PhD Output through its unspoken focus, dogs. *Dog Mod* is something I decided was both conceptually and emotionally too overwhelming for me to be able to complete in time for submission, but I remains as a point of departure for my future research. It connects the Becoming-Animal of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Stark & Roffe, 2015), philosopher Patricia MacCormack's expansion of this into animal rights discourse in the Ahuman (MacCormack, 2014), with other ideas around, animals, play and care (Chen, 2012; D. J. Haraway, 2016; Massumi, 2014; Vint, 2008).

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