

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

Uma Officer

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

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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: lilwimi 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

Uma Officer





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## 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, 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

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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.

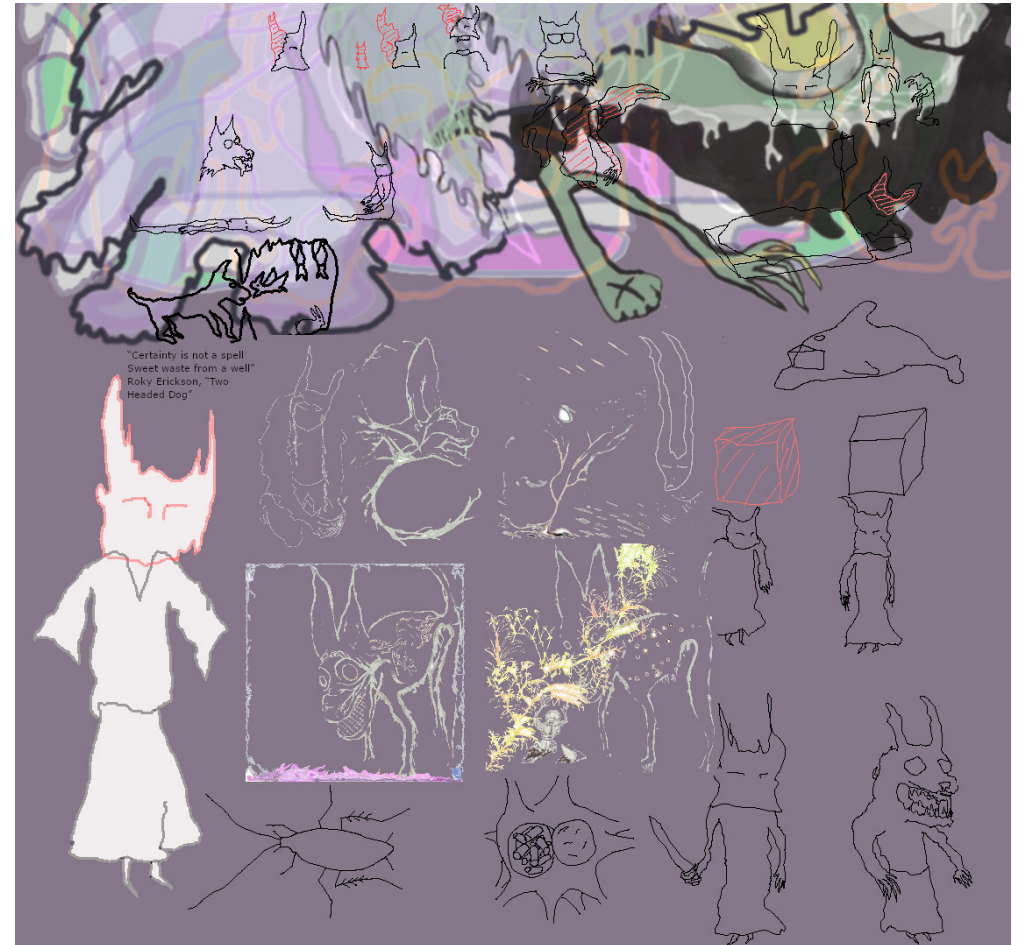
HOST  
(Dramatically)

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.



**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.

Sublime. Now turn to page 50 of Ahuman Use

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 it 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 its 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 mind 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 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 stumbling 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]

INT. CARGO BAY

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.

### 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?"

Better turn to page 55 of Unknown Lacuna

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.

Time to turn to page 91 of Ahuman Use

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 liver.

Your pineal gland.

Your thumbs.

Breath in and out.

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.

In.

And out.

In.

And out.

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.

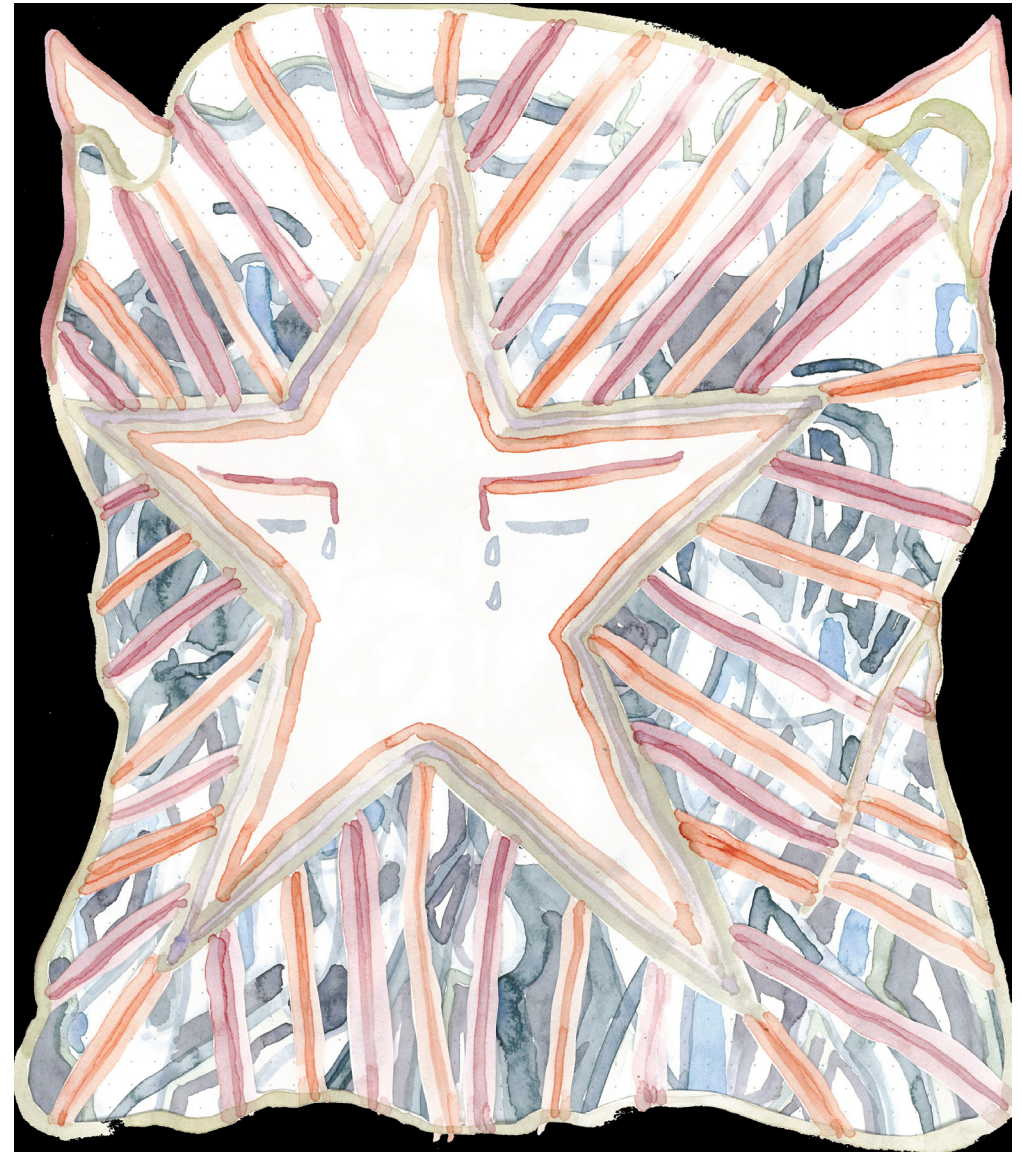
The point of contact tremors slightly then stops.

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.

You power down, turn to page 64 of Unknown Lacuna

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 it 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.

Ok, turn to page 68 of Unknown Lacuna



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 splay 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

You enter through the revolving door.

Time to turn to page 54 of Ahuman Desire



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.

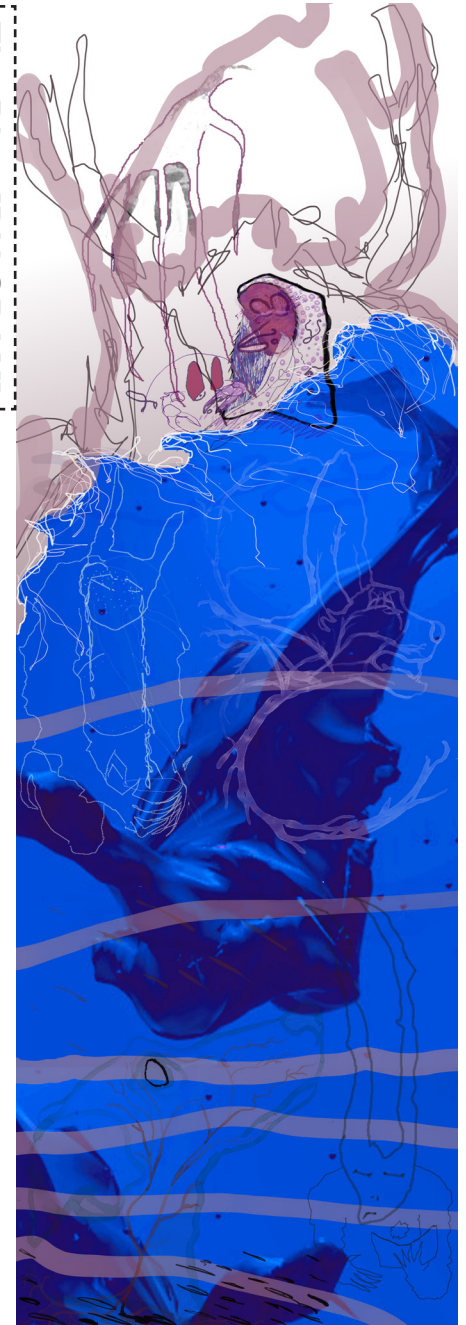
LAL  
(Man-voice)

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

The Ring [DIAGRAM]



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 at 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 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 lounge 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 very good representation and can function very well 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 13%.

It was thought that by removing the characteristic dead fish 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 killing 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<sup>1</sup>.

In the first half of this document I will put the artwork<sup>2</sup> 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)<sup>3</sup>. I will explore how, just as Shani remakes and fractures Pizan, the artwork can, when combined with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s writing the “reparative position”<sup>4</sup> (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-reinforcing 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<sup>5</sup> 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. Secondly, 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<sup>6</sup>.

This is not to say that because the *Artwork* does not solely operate from,

- King, S. (2011). *Cujo*. London: Hodder.
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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.

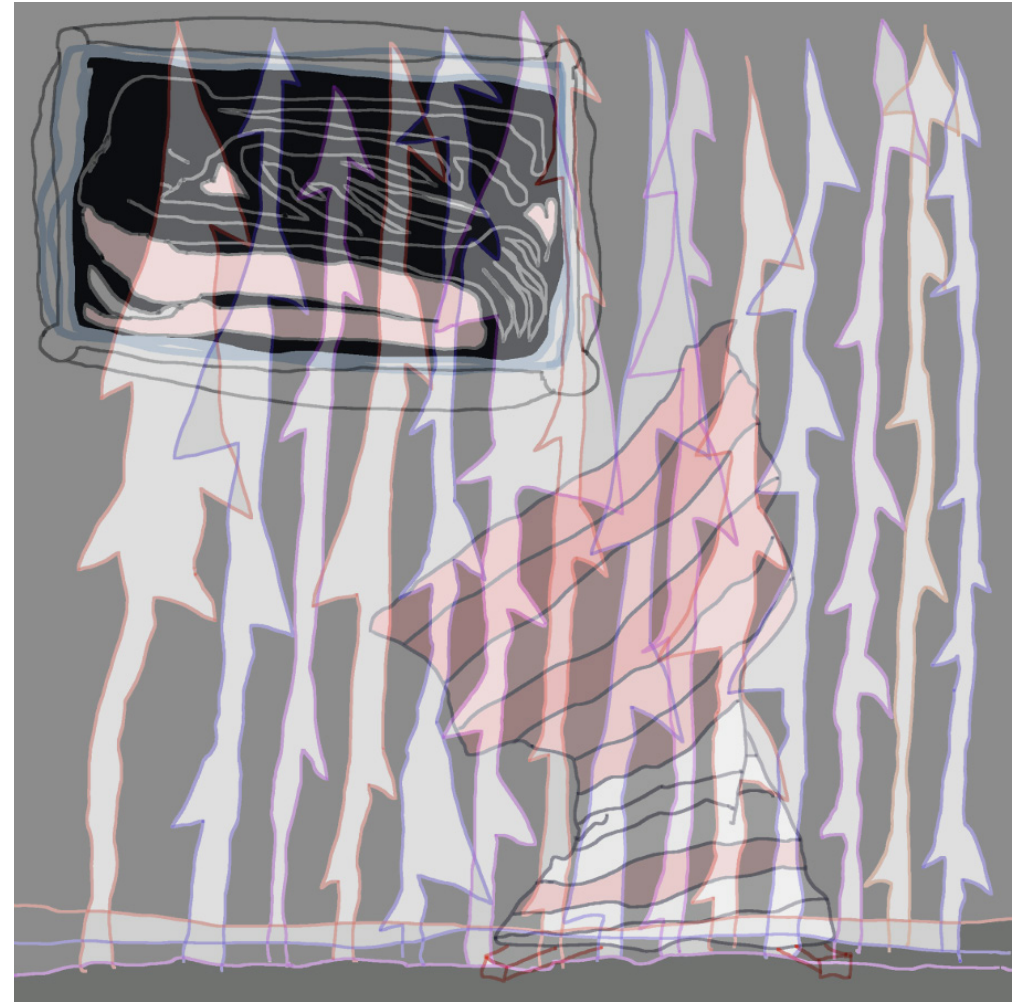
There is resonance with the space/subject/language that oscillates in front of the audience of the *Artwork*, and the "flexible to-and-fro movement implicit in Kleinian *positions*" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 128). Sedgwick sees the

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<sup>7</sup>. The first of these is *The Void*, which broadly refers to lacunae that affect things beyond them, while being themselves imperceivable beyond those effects<sup>8</sup>. *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"<sup>9</sup> (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;

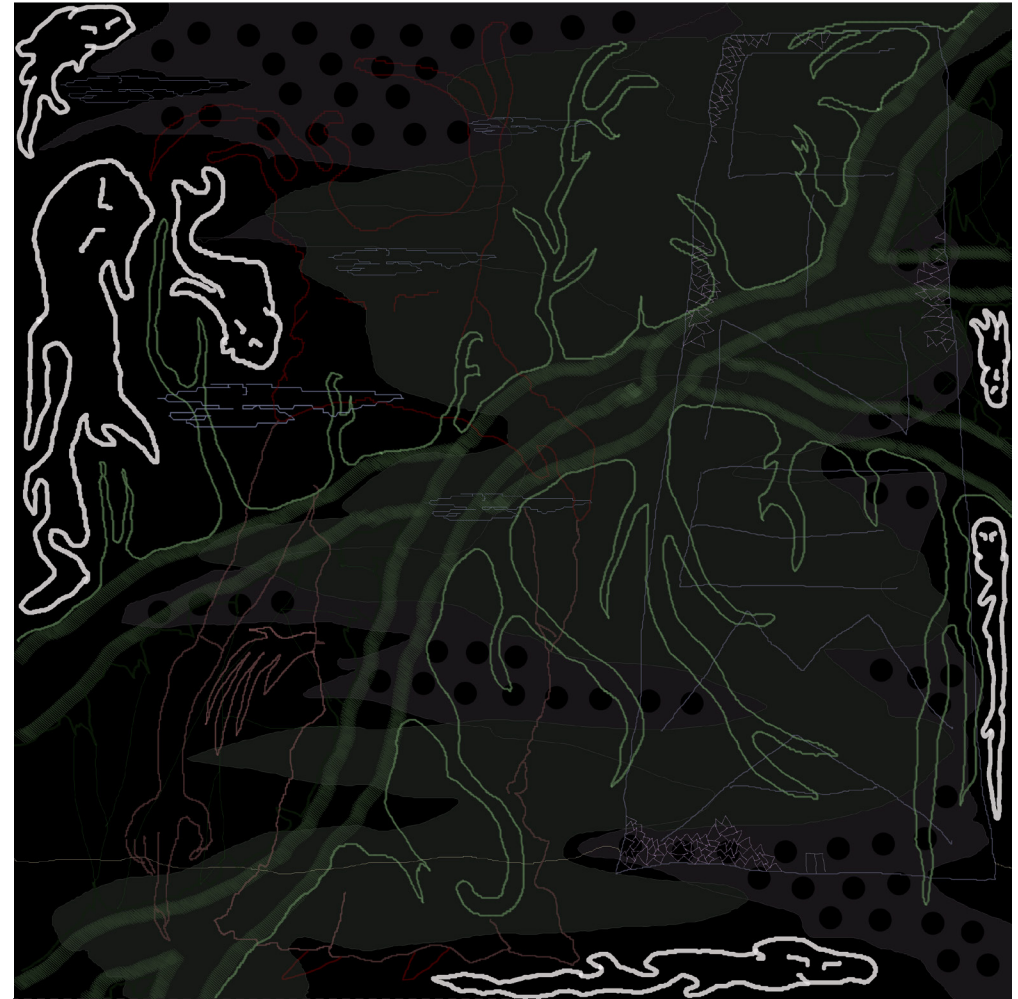
"Initially Irigaray seems to have shared the 1970s view that women's "madness" was potentially revolutionary. However she later became wary of women's exploration of their psychic pain or "madness" and came to see it as potentially dangerous rather than as a liberating iconoclasm" (Whitford, 1994a, p. 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<sup>10</sup> 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 sexualities” via “mucousal seminality” (MacCormack & McPhee, 2014, p. 160). Their reasons for this reconfiguration is that it removes the reliance on the feminine for Irigaray’s “divine”<sup>11</sup>, 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 film's 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 is less important than how it functions as a kinetic entity which we see through 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).

“So how were we chosen?”

Ok, turn to page 107 of Unknown Lacuna

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 seamlessly between movement, sound, affect, and



**Horse Explode**

gesture. It does not follow an unaltering 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<sup>12 13</sup>.

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

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

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 incestuously 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<sup>14</sup>" 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<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> 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 Wiegman 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 Mantinea, "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 where 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. [...]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



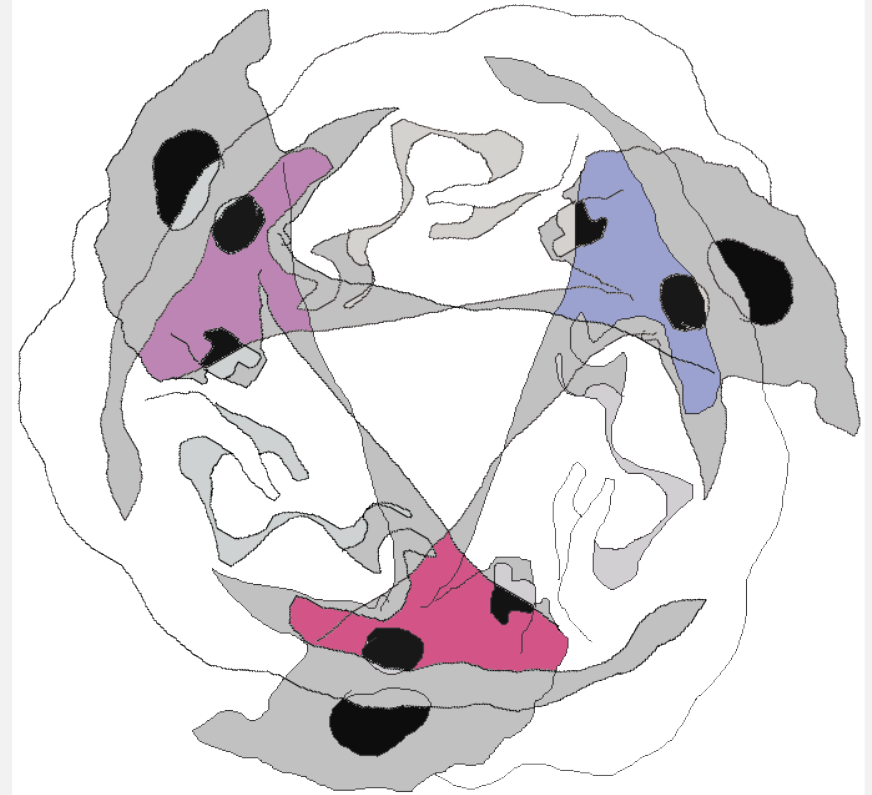
the body's interior fleshy pains and joys, whilst folding its interactions back across and through the flesh. The cut is thus a site of constant production. And thus for Shani, writing is also produced through the cut" (Crone, 2019, pp. xiii–xiv).

**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** pigs a phenomenon itself to its destination marking all molecules, selected by this line. Each molecule, in rapid succession, is imprinted with the potentiality (referred to by certain sets as “belief”) of the transported user. This combined potentiality, known as the **Ultimate Belief**, 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 genetic scribe, recording their life for the duration it is attached. A **Vita Remora** cannot be obtained other than by **falling 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 skin. It comes with a disposable ventilator complete with finer directed stimulant delivery system for relatively safe solo use.

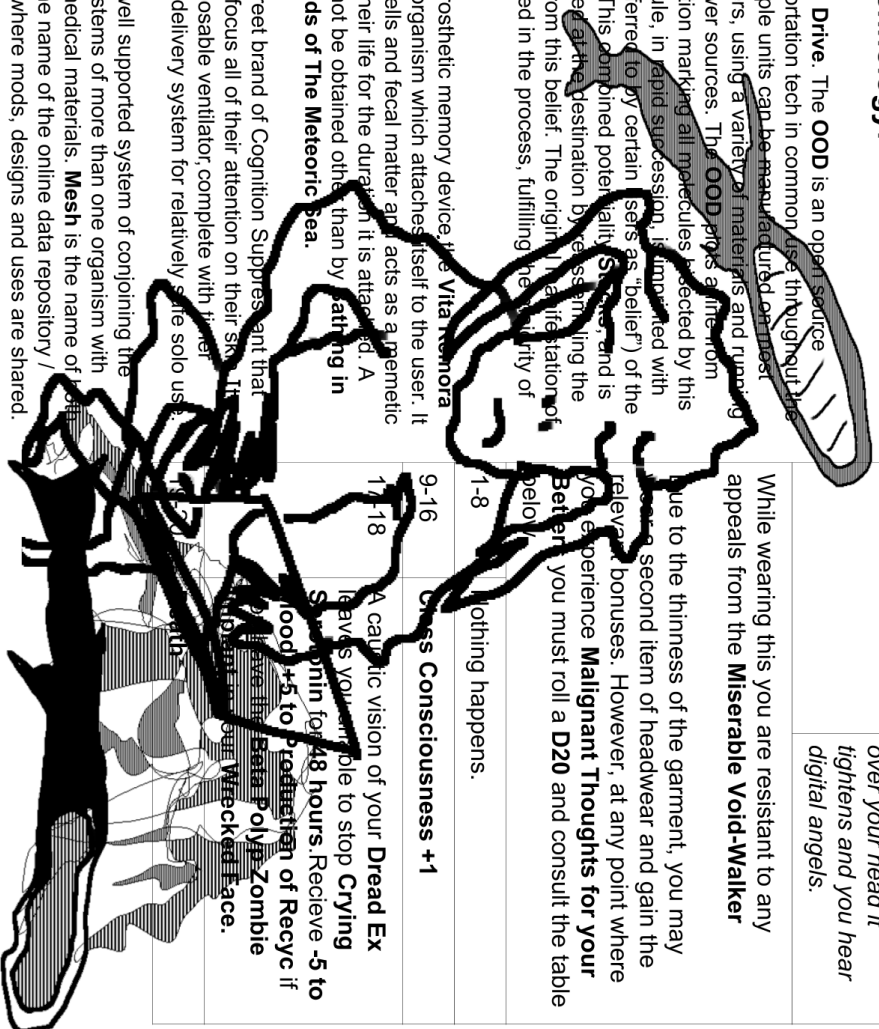
**Mesh.** A DIY but well supported system of conjoining the gastrointestinal systems of more than one organism with readily available medical materials. **Mesh** is the name of the process and the name of the online data repository / social community where mods, designs and uses are shared.

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 receive a second item of headwear and gain the relevant bonuses. However, at any point where you experience **Malignant Thoughts for your Belief**, you must roll a **D20** and consult the table below.

1-8	Nothing happens.
9-16	<b>Class Consciousness +1</b>
17-18	A caustic vision of your <b>Dread Ex</b> leaves you unable to stop <b>Crying</b> for 48 hours. Receive <b>-5 to Perception of Recyc</b> if you see the <b>Sata Polyp-Zombie</b> in the <b>Wrecked Face</b> .



## 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 **Epizoid Organisms**. You don't know

any more, 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:

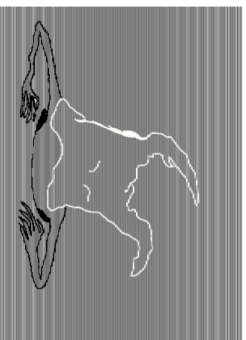
You who are the **ad-hoc-pac** extended through time and through each of its former present and future agents across space will primarily carry out the **Animal Mission** through tracking. Tracking is a broad and dynamic discipline however for the early levels of your character the primary technique will likely be **Scent Detection**. **Eccrine, Sebun** and **Apocrine** system 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. **Sebaceous** glands secrete a scent 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 **Sebun** 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 dens in moss hold small animals which thrive like coral and an atoll in the forest rising 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 **Desiring 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.

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 rising 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 **Despising 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 **Meshtes** which can also be called gut instinct.

## The Animal

[illegible]

\* You are now plural.



## 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.

AGENT  
(Stressed)

Good afternoon everyone, welcome to the lecture. Today we are going to explore the concept of the Incomplete Provocation<sup>1</sup>. The agency has deemed it unnecessary to provide software for displaying slide shows, so in the spirit of J-E-H, we will improvise.

The agent drinks from a bottle of water, pauses, scowls at the unseen audience, and smooths their hair.

AGENT



(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.

Time to turn to page 150 of Ahuman Use



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

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

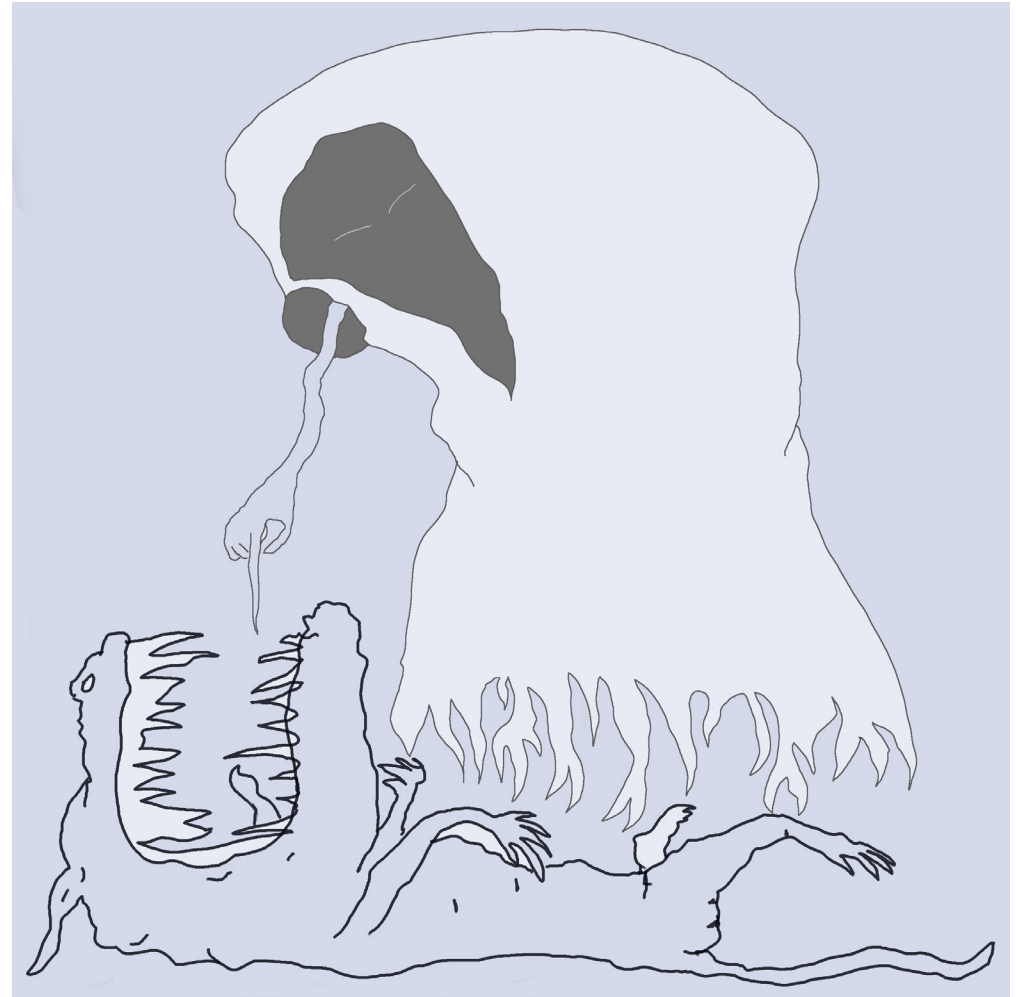
A music play-list which shuffles the soundtrack to the work. It is a mixture of euphoric pop music, and euphoric techno music. At points it helps me focus, at other points it distracts me. I might need to skip a track if I find myself dancing too much and unable to concentrate.

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<sup>2</sup>.

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 membranes [sic].

They kept working,

State funding demanded is.

understand the limit

Understand [sic] the limit

This material [sic] was pulled back from the folds of the waves.

miles and miles were pulled back like a lip

pop

like an tendon [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 from one layer, and splicing them with another

pumping fluid in different directions [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 revolutions [sic],  
the occasional [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 charismatic [*sic*] pull of more more magic.

All [*sic*] that wetness of the plague tripps

the seaborne 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 charismatic [*sic*] shining magic of Thulsa doom pulls the handshake off course

not a conscious [*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<sup>1</sup> and so the word is used for consistency to refer to the thing which is to be digested<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>. 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 explain 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 your 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 text 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<sup>4</sup>. 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<sup>5</sup>. 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<sup>6</sup>, 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.

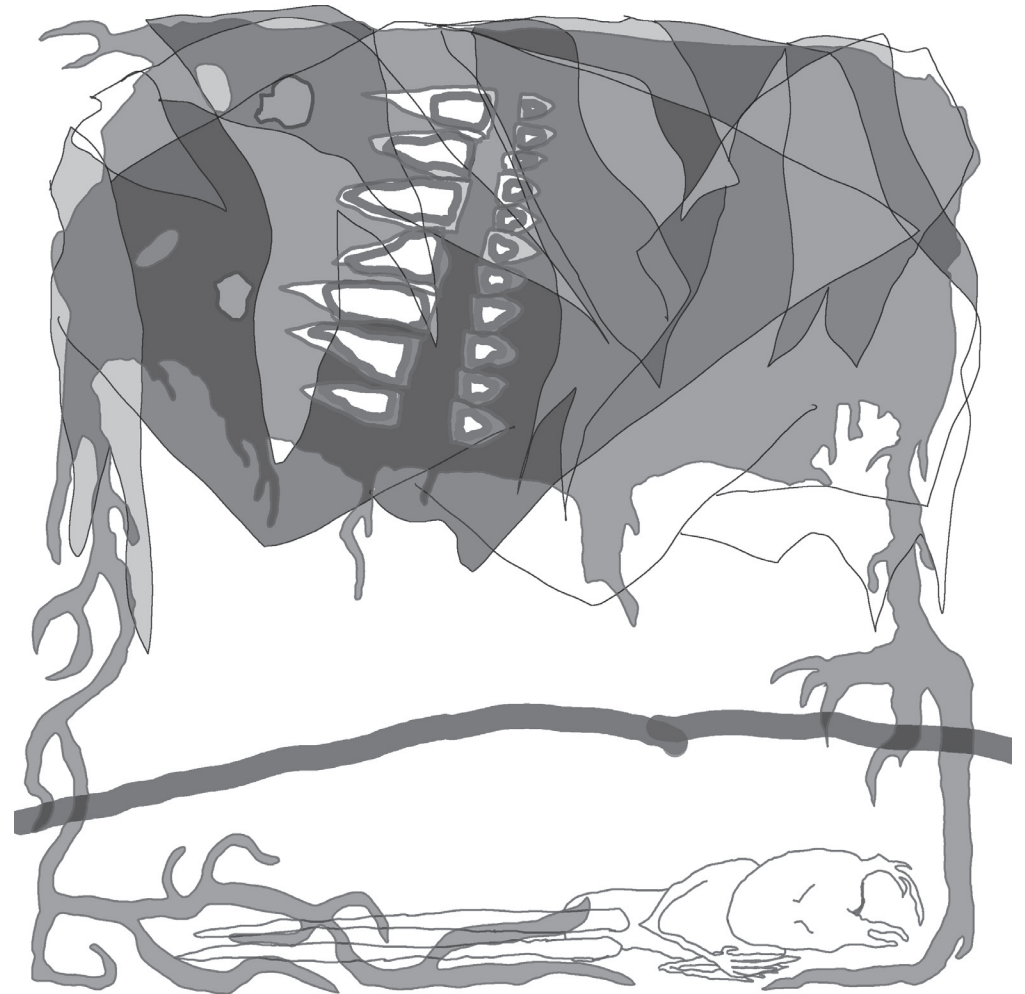
While you are turning quotes and ideas into your response, it might become apparent that the plan wasn’t quite right. Maybe you don’t need all your quotes that were in one row for example. In this case you can have an

“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 (though it might be). It can now be edited.



**Horse Teeth 4 [DIAGRAM]**

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## 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 which 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 them, 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 world" (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 vapourously 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 it 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).

## Conclusions and Exits; Bibliography

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