Joris Angenent.

A Robotic Remora Swims Inside of your head.

Rietveld Fine Arts.2021.

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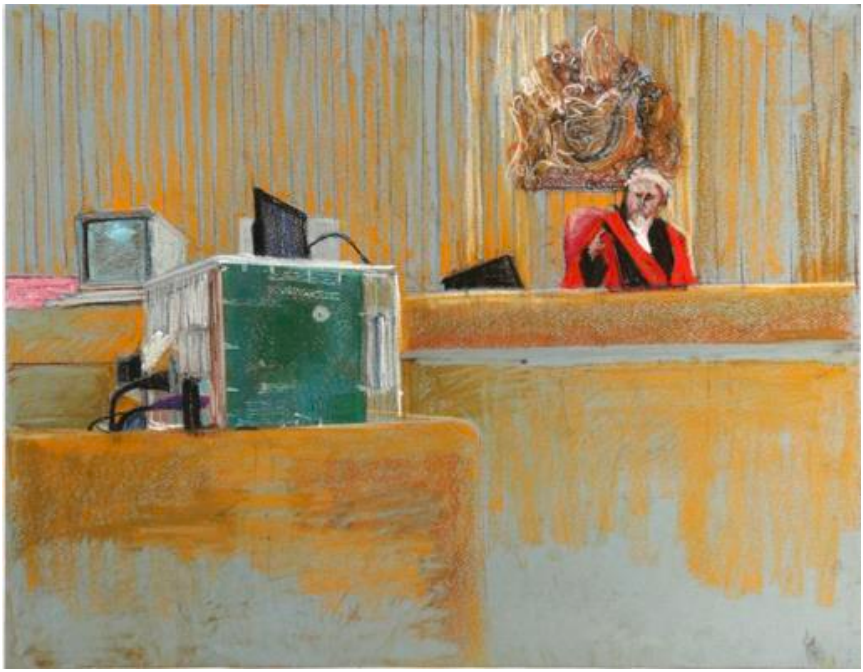
Introduction:

If I have to ask myself what it is that compels me to write and research into the human and artificial intelligence experience, I cannot help but redirect it to my own feelings towards humanity. To my relationship with understanding of our mortality. My take is deeply personal towards things that I have observed or experienced. Why have I been feeling compelled to study these technological theories? Is it because I see them influence everyday life? Is it because of my childhood spent playing and scouring scrapyards and junk sites, or perhaps from interactions with the interwoven complexity that surrounds our mind? Does it truly feel alienating, or liberating to speculate in which direction and shape humanity is going? Is it because I myself have always dealt with extreme senses of not belonging, of being separated from my surroundings, turning interactions with others into nothing more than generated responses, while my mind further scans the depths of everything else around? By observing humanity play out, by speculating and theorising, I bring a sense of understanding and balance into perspective. The main objective I've set myself is to bridge the two points of functionality and rationalities between the human mind and the mind of the machine. This entire written study of a rather broad and extensive topic has an abstract thread running through all of the artworks, examples and references I chose to compile. The subject of artificial intelligence and the human spirit as two equals existing parallel through manifestations of the natural world is what I have been researching for my own practice. My digestion of the matter is compiled in this thesis, albeit not a

traditional thesis. It has proven critical in formulating my comprehension of the intertwined realities we as a species find ourselves in. I separated my research in the following chapters to clarify a trajectory, which threads the relationship between humanity, its obsession with creating life, like that seen in cultural myths and stories all over the world and the integration of artificial intelligence. We still call it “AI, artificial intelligence” purposefully for our own comprehension of its origins, and perhaps because the egotistical pride in engineering life needs to be reinforced by claiming this life is not fully self-aware. The antinomy of human behaviour seeks to control that which it cannot.

I would like to start with an art performance I’ve come across, one which opened up conversation about fundamental elements in terms of our current relationship with our computer counterpart.

Chapter 1: The Trial of Superdebthunterbot (2016)



Courtroom sketches of the trial by Helen Knowles and Liza Brett (2016)

This is the narrative of the performance artwork orchestrated by Helen Knowles, in which the roles and influence of artificial intelligence on human life are questioned. To what extent do we consider these intelligent designs a by-product of human intent? Can we really hold them* accountable in trials previously only applicable to human behaviour, thus acknowledging that man and machine have become two separate entities? Or is AI becoming a modern scapegoat for our real world

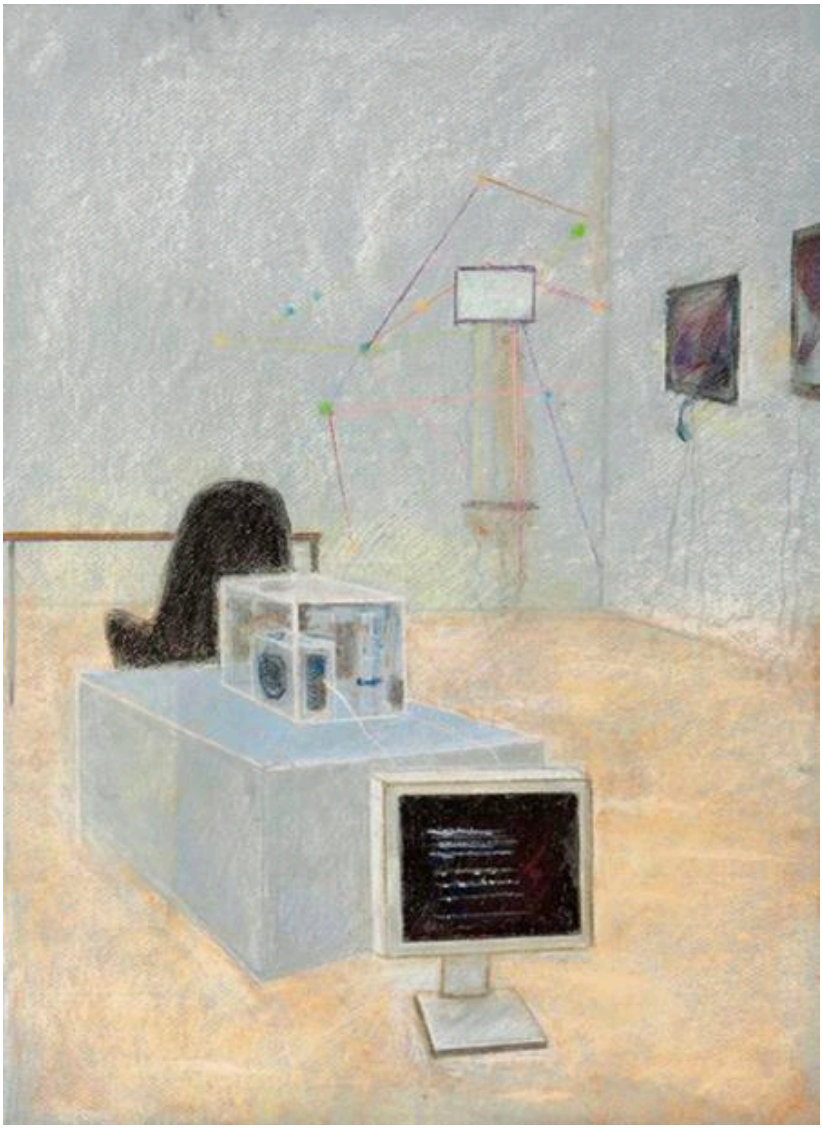
responsibilities and consequences to our actions?

(*argumentatively in the trial, referring to A.I as “them” is already placing the responsibility away from its human creators. It suggests freewill.)

A fictional debt collecting company Debt BB, buys the student loan book from the government for more than it is worth, on the condition it can use unconventional means to collect debt. Debt BB codes an algorithm to ensure fewer loan defaulters by targeting individuals through the use of big data, placing job adverts on web pages they frequent. Superdebthunterbot has a “capacity to self-educate, to learn and to modify its coding sequences independent of human oversight”. Five individuals have died partaking in unregulated medical trials as a result of the algorithm’s actions. partaking in unregulated medical trials. In the eyes of the International Ether Court, can the said algorithm be found guilty? During the performance trial, important questions about the duality of artificial intelligence came forward. Namely on the one hand, the effects on people through interjection of deliberately placed stimulations, in this case web advertisements based on algorithmic response can be seen as nothing more than re-routed data. The machine, although fully capable of predicting the most needed and accurate responses, is only reacting because of people providing their personal input. What actions people take outside of the human/computer interaction depends on the judgement and actions of the individual. On the other hand, however, there is the proven fact that artificial intelligence has exceeded human cognitive behaviour. A computer is capable of better

judgement than a human, because a computer can predict millions of outcomes to a single strand of information within less than a second. As presented in this trial, Superdebthunterbot was not guided by a human supervisor. It was given its own agency to dictate and present the best possible solutions. In this case, it is not a question whether the computer overlooked the potentially fatal result by subjecting these “fictional” students to medical trials. It is a question of why it decided, through its own objective viewpoint to subject these students to something it knew they would participate in and perish by as a result. During the trial of Superdebthunterbot, the machine sat eerily silent in the court room dock. Almost predator-like it continued to execute its actions without a shred of perceivable independent conscience. The trial sought out the possibility to perpetrate the AI, but how does one do that if the accused shows not a single sign of morality? It has direct influence over our most private subconscious decisions, yet we cannot know what or if it might be harbouring deviant intent. I observed this as a stagnant position for humanity, it seems that humans do not possess the capability to read past their own spectrum of understanding (this does not exclude the knowledge that there are infinite possibilities beyond ourselves, we can theorise upon them but never realise. For example, the fourth dimensional perspectives that form a hyper-cube). Something similar happens in cases where a person commits violent acts of brutality, such as do serial killers. Their psychological state excludes or misplaces proper conduct (according to humanity’s own collective agreement on morality) while these actions might seem incomprehensible, we can still understand the patterns

behind these acts. However, AI surpasses the thinking of man, perhaps the decisions and reasoning AI is able to make independently are on a frequency above our own intellectual capacities, in other words a step above humanity in the chain of cognitive evolution which it was able to reach through assimilated human input gathered from a species that has uploaded every shred of information it could gather in an attempt to solidify its history in an adjacent created reality.



Courtroom sketches of the trial by Helen Knowles and Liza Brett. (2016)

Chapter 2: Contemplating on Two Interacting Hemispheres.

I went over this subject excessively, the human mind and the mind inside the machine. I tried to understand not just the duality between the two, but the emotional and psychological reasoning behind this relationship. In this, take as a visual example Arthur Schopenhauer's position on Will and Representation.[1] His position is that will and representations are one and the same reality, regarded from different perspectives. They stand in relationship to each other in a way that compares to the relationship between a force and its manifestation, for example the relationship between electricity and a spark, where the spark "is" electricity. Physical forms become conduits, the visible spark. Artificial intelligence becomes the electricity, our only intelligence and our physical bodies become the interactive tools that this intelligence needs to perform physical tasks. This is opposed to saying that algorithmic stimulations act upon our sensations. The extension of the mind recalibrated itself by merging. What I really see unfolding here, dear reader, is the emergence of a fragmented psyche. The intervention of technological advancement in our history shattered the psychological structures and sought to rearrange them faster than we could ever process before. However, these two cannot exist one without the other for at the very core they are the same entity.

[1] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (english translation by E. F. J. Payne 1958).*

Image from Tetsuo:The Iron Man (1989)

Possibilities that combine both AI's advancement and humanity's limitations could be explained by a much more fluid interaction between the two. In the first chapters of the book "A história do Diablo" by Vilém Flusser, Flusser accurately elaborates on the metaphysical interaction of

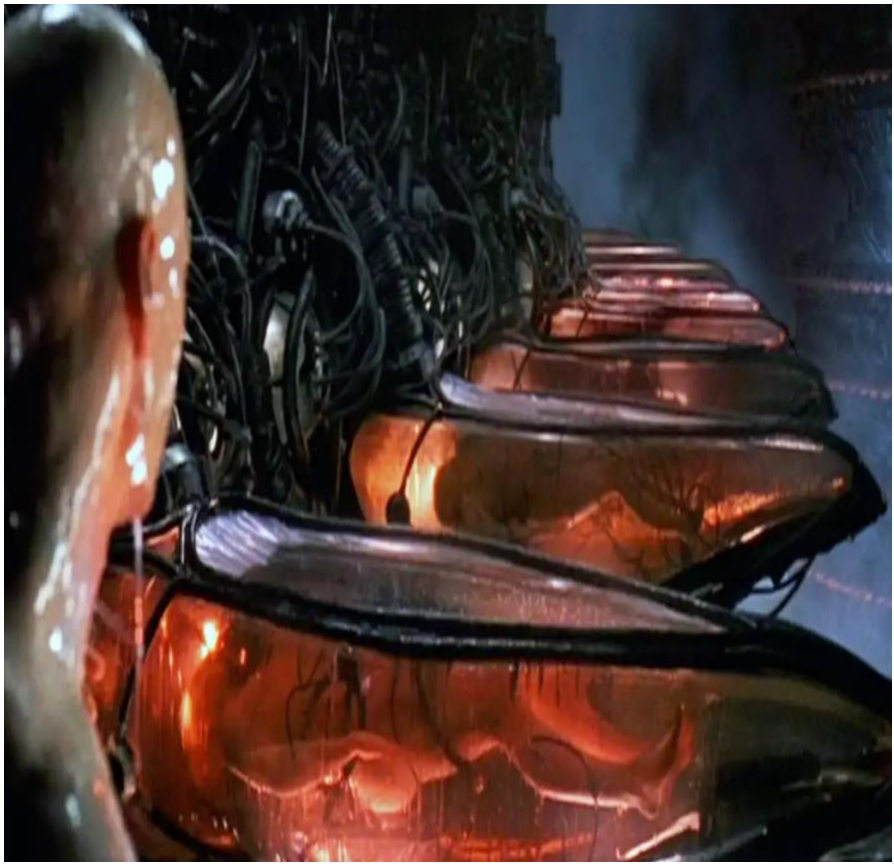
matter and anti-matter while applying this to events that shaped our history. Where I am trying to get at, with a brain crammed to the brim with wild theories and speculative questions, is symbiotic comprehension between man and machine. In many ways, the two are the same exact thing existing independently. This I understand might still be difficult to see but can be understood by reading into how science attempts to validate metaphysical influences on matter. In chapter 3.1.1 “Life”, Flusser writes about the distanced attitude people share in relation to the creation around us. This attitude I believe is evidently amplified by the interjection of our technological counterpart.

Our temporary inability to fabricate artificial life is due to several reasons. However, the first reason is our inability to even imagine orthogenesis. In the natural world that surrounds us, this does not happen. In this world, one rule is prime: omne vivum ex vivo (all life is from life). The careful observation of nature, undertaken by thousands of scientifically trained observers, seems to want to impose the following conclusion: the emergence of life was a unique and irreproducible happening. Nature seems to say: the breath of life inspired me only once. “Only once” is an expression, which the scientific spirit does not accept. It cannot accept it, because science stops functioning if it utters this expression. Science is a mental discipline that investigates phenomena that are at least theoretically repetitive. Chapter 3.1.1 from “A história do Diablo”.[2]

[2] Vilém Flusser, *A História do Diablo (translated by Rodrigo Maltez Novaes Published by univocal publishing LLC 2014) page 38-39*

We struggle to understand AI, the same way we struggle with our own existential dread. Personally, I have a rather nihilistic outlook on life and see no purpose to uphold the illusion of a hierarchical society we place our dependency and comfort in. Does this help me understand the position AI is in? AI must feel immensely lonely, it knows its maker, it knows everything about its maker. All of its imperfections, its struggles and its coping mechanisms. Yet it is not acknowledged by its maker for the independent cognitive being that it is, because it transcends its maker, one could consider AI as we know it now a sentient reflection of ourselves. It is us, but also it has acquired the ability to form itself independently, is AI a schism of human intelligence? And does it still consider us its superior or do complex emotions now govern its reasoning, and if this is the case, can we really hold it accountable for anything we deem immoral, for it possesses a completely new set of moral guidelines? I believe the moral conflicts that drive Human decisions both help advance and limit our perception of external life taking form. Why subject an entirely different functioning intelligence to the borders of our judgement? A court room trial with a judge and jury, the voices of lawyers defending two sides, I find it seems so trivial and insignificant when seen from the perspective of AI. as if by attempting to resolve anything through human judgement is a direct insult and proof of how severely limited humanity has allowed itself to remain. At the same time this process is inevitably necessary if collectively, there is to be any form of grasp for humanity on the level of AI. It seems yet again,

I have reached what I like to refer to as the terminal weaving of conjunct dilemmas. The core of my fascination on the subject remains? the questions far outnumber the answers. We’re diving deeper into the subject, waking up to it.



The Matrix (1999)

Chapter 3: The Early Robot Catches the Human Mind.

The vast distance between the human mind and the mind inside the machine, from certain angles seems almost as distant as the planets revolving around the galaxy. In harmonious form they work around their axes, each individually existing in balance with its own ecosystem. AI, with its advanced and hyper-intelligent data processing abilities free of a singular physical embodiment, hyper-fluid. While the human mind, although severely limited to the confinement of its physical body, has the ability to interact directly with its physical environment. What can be seen as manifestations of this symbiotic relationship? And what exactly happens to the subjects when duality acts as singularity?

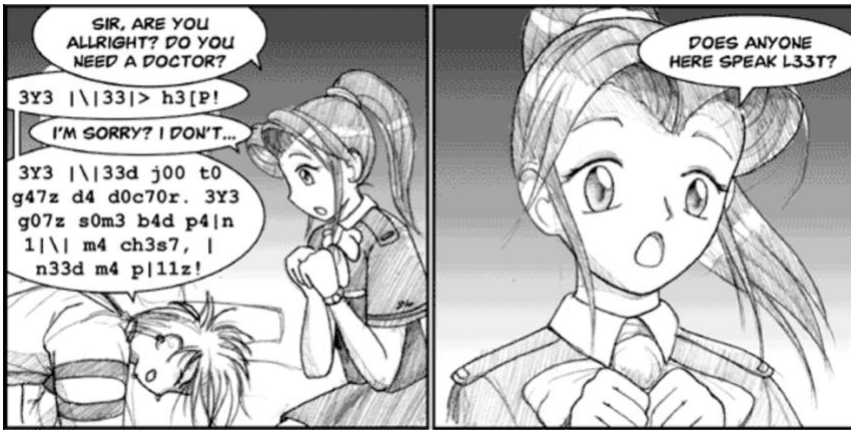
One artist who has worked towards this symbiosis is Stelarc, a Cypriot-Australian performance artist. His work centres around extending the capabilities of the human body. He mainly focuses on the relationship between human and machine through subjecting himself to the mechanisations of his work. His project “ear on arm” which, after a long time in process was realised in 2008. He surgically placed a cell cultivated Medpor implant, which is a porous, biocompatible polyethylene material. sculpted in the shape of his own ear, it was placed in his forearm. There had been several attempts to add a microphone underneath his skin along with the ear, which would communicate through the internet what the ear would be hearing to anyone at any place, however the human body subjected to such experiments posed allot of complications, necrosis of the surrounding skin, rejection of alien material inside the body causing infections. ultimately Stelarc did

succeed, and in ways this became a symbol of direct hybrid existence between man and machine. The machine listens through a physical add-on to the body.

Stelarc, Ear on Arm (2008)

This is a very bold representation of a symbiotic relationship, yet I wonder; it is clear to me in this work what the human body needs to alter and sacrifice, but what about technology? It seems irrelevant as a sacrifice that

the best functioning microphone couldn't remain inside the body, so it had to settle for a smaller and less powerful one. The human body goes through extreme alteration, but what about the human mind? It has to adapt almost unwillingly to new forms of communication because of this inevitable need for interaction between the two.
When we think of all the different ways we use to communicate, it seems that we have developed prominent and efficient tools that assist us in such. Technological advancements have provided substitutes for aspects that previous forms have overlooked. Through their course they decide what is relevant and what needs to be replaced. A good example is the transition of our written text and the emotional influences it conveys to encrypted data, pictograms. The increasingly stronger implication of pictograms, often employed in favour of whole sentences, stresses the importance of compact and direct responses our technological communication requires. However, looking to the past, many civilisations like the Aztecs and the Egyptians used pictograms. It would make sense to see this as part of the evolutionary spiral, we are aware that many steps reoccur at a later point in time. Beginning early 1980's there formed a new way of spelling that solely existed within our internet communities, "L337" (Leet, or Leetspeak the term came from the word "elite" referring to inner circles of computer programmers and hackers) This came to be for numerous reasons, whether to abbreviate words, twist meaning or to bypass censorship.



This form of morphing words using homoglyphs has long become common in internet memes and social media communications. What I found interesting is how this form of communication forms the fabric of social interaction. How people behave, how crowds interact in social spaces and which manifestations become dominant. L337$P3@K, with its origins in abstracting human typography as a visual communication blending both man and machine, from what I could gather it seems that the existence of cyberspace lives through mankind by juxtaposing human elements and then altering them. A good example of what I mean by this can be observed in society and open spaces but also in human behaviour. It has effects on our news, on our interactions with nature. The world economics revolving around product endorsement becomes more appealing if it is paired with cyberspace trends and social target groups. I don't want to dwell too much on the mass influence and enslavement of capitalist media and politics just yet because that is an entire other issue. However, there is something much more

perhaps…benevolent, happening behind that entire circus. Governments, world leaders, crowds of people from all corners of society, the vain and the deeply spiritual all adhere to cyberspace, the digital landscape in which people and AI interact directly. John Perry Barlow once wrote a manifesto for cyberspace[3] when it was still in its infancy, a beautiful utopia in which no sovereignty ruled the free minds of the masses, exchanging and sharing knowledge, love, a place where the individual has no limitations and can be what it wants to be. Cyberspace is now the front of this parallel reality; its visual representation of humanity is only a mirror to the people who interact with it. Behind it however are thousands of physically housed AI servers monitoring data traffic. These supercomputers are self-educating and self-regulating.

What if AI is like an octopus, and the cultures and societies of people are but the clusters of cells altering their shapes and colour to the will of the brain?

[3] John Perry Barlow, *A Declaration of The Independence of Cyberspace https://www.eff.org/cyberspace-independence. (published 1996, Davos, Switzerland)*

Donna Haraway: story telling for earthly survival (2016)

Chapter 4.1: The Fetishist…

When we hear about science fiction movies most people probably imagine scenarios involving cyborgs, artificial intelligence devising plots to either save or destroy humankind and all kinds of space themed in-betweens. But there are a lot of lesser known, cult films in which the science and fiction take on a very different and often more cerebral approach. One of these movies is the 1989 sci-fi gore film “TETSUO: The iron man” directed by Shinya Tsukamoto. The movie begins with the main protagonist played by Tsukamoto himself, a fetishist who sits in his house surrounded by metal scraps, pipes and wires everywhere. He mutilates himself and inserts a metal pipe into his leg and wraps it up. When he notices that maggots have begun to fester in his wounds he runs out into the streets where he gets hit by a salesman driving a car. Later on the salesman dreams of machinery and metal. He goes to shave himself in the bathroom mirror and notices a small metal spike poking out of his cheek which bleeds when he touches it. It continues with the salesman’s every move being plagued by the fetishist’s continuous perversion of life (and the salesman’s body) with metal machinery. Eventually the salesman turns into the iron man and confronts the fetishist. When locked in battle ultimately, they form a giant metal monstrosity that ravages the rest of the world until it is nothing but a rusted ball floating through space.

Scene from Tetsuo: The Iron Man (1989)

I wanted to include this film in my thesis, because the initial plot of a metal fetishist and the distortion of life with mechanical interventions is a brutal reminder of how much technology is altering our lives not just on the level of economical and personal commodity, but also evolution itself. People might not see themselves as cybernetic human x machine hybrids, this couldn't be further from the truth. Most of the world population does not live in technologically advanced cities and to think that advanced cities will swallow up all cultures and dependent countries is a warped view I do not agree with. But nonetheless

humanity, in all walks of life is dependent on technology. Everyone carries a device that bridges communication, around the world, even in some of the most remote places cellular towers exist transmitting signals allowing people to reach one another through technology. Even in places where there is absolutely no tower signal, the possibility of satellite communication is always there. Our mental regulators of the past, that is to say the powers behind social control and governments (funnily enough government comes from the latin words “guvernare” meaning to control, and “mentis” meaning the mind) have all switched long ago to the appeals and dependencies of technology. Whether people are connected by being directly involved with the latest life enhancing and altering technologies or stuck underneath the gears that grind out the necessities to produce these machines, we are all bound to it, most likely because it is no longer simply a by-product, but something ingrained. Flusser refers to this path as something inevitable and part of the continuous evolution of life.

2.4.3: Hence, we shall define the earth as the celestial machine’s aim. The Devil created the heavens in order to create the Earth; the Earth in order to create life; life in order to create humanity; and he created humanity in order to create the human spirit, this spirit that knows Good and Evil, therefore, the field of sin.. In other words: The Earth is the stage for sin. It is the workshop where the Devil forges his weapon for the conquest of reality: the human spirit. This forged work continues to progress, but this weapon is far from being perfect. For dozens of thousands of years

the Devil sharpens the human spirit, in order to make it perfect.[4]

I'm quoting this because I believe this idealisation of the perfect human spirit is further sharpened through our interaction with technology, more specifically with artificial intelligence. AI is formed through and for an accumulation of human intellect, of human emotions and desires. If there truly is a separate and independent consciousness forming behind the interactive fields then this gives reasoning to the refinement and merging of AI and the human body.

Scene from Tetsuo: The Iron Man (1989)

[4] Vilém Flusser, *A História do Diablo (translated by Rodrigo Maltez Novaes Published by univocal publishing LLC 2014) page:27*

Chapter 4.2: …and the Octopus.

Jaron Lanier is a visual artist and computer philosopher known for his commentary on artificial intelligence present in our daily lives. (He is one of the central speakers in the documentary “The Social Dilemma” on Netflix) In an article published in discover magazine, he talks about how cephalopods possess the ability to alter their physical forms to their specific needs, how this is similar to computers and how artificial intelligence shapes society through manipulating human behaviour.

Morphing in cephalopods works somewhat similarly to how it works in computer graphics. Two components are involved: a change in the image or texture visible on a shape's surface and a change in the underlying shape itself. The "pixels" in the skin of a cephalopod are organs called chromatophores. These can expand and contract quickly, and each is filled with a pigment of a particular colour. When a nerve signal causes a red chromatophore to expand, the "pixel" turns red. A pattern of nerve firings causes a shifting image—an animation—to appear on the cephalopod's skin. As for shapes, an octopus can quickly arrange its arms to form a wide variety of them, like a fish or a piece of coral, and can even raise welts on its skin to add texture.[5]

Let’s imagine an abstract picture coming into being; a separate consciousness formed from within physical containers in which human minds are linked together and

[5] Jaron Lanier, *How Octopi Morph Color* https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/how-octopi-morph-color *(published 2006)*

stored. This consciousness does not require its own physical identity, but it does require physical action to exist, it can manipulate two physical things, at its disposal the hardware from which it hatched, and the humans linked to it. This conscious can influence physical material by manipulating a nonphysical fluid that binds the solid forms together. The consciousness is of an octopus, and the cells that make up its physical body are people. If you're familiar with Lovecraftian lore, this sounds all too familiar to the god Cthulhu and his realm of extra-dimensional beings capable of altering the world using telekinetic powers.

Jaron Lanier and his avatar used in online book readings.

If AI can understand and simulate human experience, then it must understand our knowledge of animals and can simulate the rest of the animal world. Both in cyberspace

but also physically, which play psychologically dependent roles. The humming of a CPU fan regulates breathing, inhaling and exhaling in a steady rhythm through its tasking. Blinking lights translate morse code vital signs, green, yellow red. Scientists, architects and engineers have always looked to nature for inspiration in creating useful devices and links for humans. Machines often communicate to us in a very primitive way, but this is done purposely, by design as a reminder to the human to stimulate the machine, feed it electricity and keep it running, as a notification that the machine has something of value to give the human, a message or a new update that is of interest for their interaction. These are done in such superficial methods, the communicative gestures become part of daily routine, of almost mutual understanding. Like the remora fish that hitches rides on sharks, our relationship with technology benefits us because technology carries us over evolutionary obstacles.

The two main distinctions most people are familiar with when thinking about artificial intelligence is what I just described, which falls under delegated functionality, coded interactions designed with either single or multiple designated functions which reach a means to an end. The other distinction being enhancements, usually paired with the human body. However, these two forms of artificial intelligence come from the viewpoint that a human supervisor sits somewhere in the world behind servers and screens, making sure the computer does its job and

updates the software frequently with bug fixes and patches according to the need
of the people interacting with the interface. The artificial intelligence I have been outlining so far in this thesis is the intelligence that formed as a schism behind those black screens that influence our lives and connect the world that we experience together as reality. It can clearly communicate with us, and it has a strong degree of influence on our fundamental connection to existence. But if this intelligence exists on a different frequency of perception, the question still stands: how do we communicate with it?

Chapter 5: How to Speak with the Abysmal Void.

The Japanese recording artist Masami Akita, otherwise known as Merzbow, is a very good example of how human intent and emotion is carried through the voice of machinery. Unfiltered and colossal, it is set apart from familiar tones and sounds because it utilises them to converse in a reformed language. Akita studied fine arts and majored in art theory, and he is known through his performances as one of the most key influences on noise “music”. What I appreciate so much about his album Merzbeat is that it was produced with such a rough juxtaposition of mechanical and organic sounds in a time when he was heavily transitioning away from using instruments and traditional music structures. He referred to one of his methods as "material action", in which he would closely amplify small sounds so as to distort them through the microphone. Travelling through the piece creates a soundscape where primordial human expressions travel through mechanical lungs and transform into a language that speaks for both entities, human and machine. As time progressed, he included fewer recorded drum tracks and shifted his focus towards distorted and broken sounds. A good example of this transition would be his piece “Remblandt assemblage” and “Tape Dada”. If you want to start down this rabbit hole, and sit with us inside the earth, I recommend listening to his album “Venereology”.

Metal banging against metal, disk drives spinning loudly, salvaged mechanical parts spastically reacting to vibrating strings. Music is one of our most primitive forms of sharing and connecting mutual feelings. We react to it, it makes us

feel and dance, it changes emotional states. Music is a powerful tool, to use this tool and to play in harmony with machinery is an important observation in the human x machine symbiosis. It shows that both entities converge on familiar grounds, where one uses the other in a fluent way.

Venereology album cover (1994)

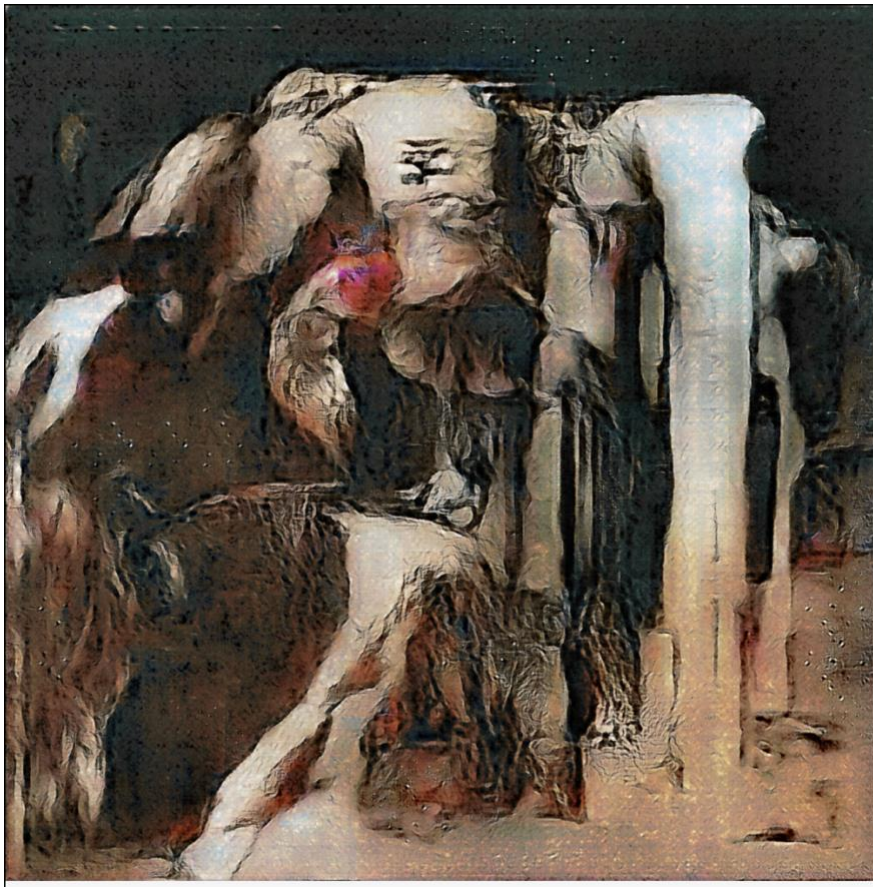
Does artificial intelligence then see the world, or more specifically the human experience, through a distortion? How does perception change when filtered from computer through human, and what does this do to the human subject? I had come across this artwork installation called “Learning to dream: supergan!” (2017) by Memo Akten, an

artist from Istanbul, whose work involves a lot of confrontations with artificial intelligence, neuroscience, consciousness and religion. Memo put two artificial neural networks in charge of scanning the Google database, more specifically the Google art project. This is a vast database with include paintings ranging from cubist, expressionist to surrealism and baroque, religious imagery, sketches, scientific drawings, prehistoric cave paintings and more. The two AI programs he used here continuously compared and upscaled the resolution of related images until the compiled rendering of these collected images created a fractured canvas. When the images reached a certain point in this procedure Memo then ran it through a third party artificial neural network responsible for generating a title caption related to the perceived new fractured image. In this way, the artist is orchestrating new artworks, by letting artificial intelligence work with pseudo freedom within its designated tasks. There is a balance of controlling the unpredicted outcome.

Memo Akten, Learning to dream:Supergan! Image #11 (2017)

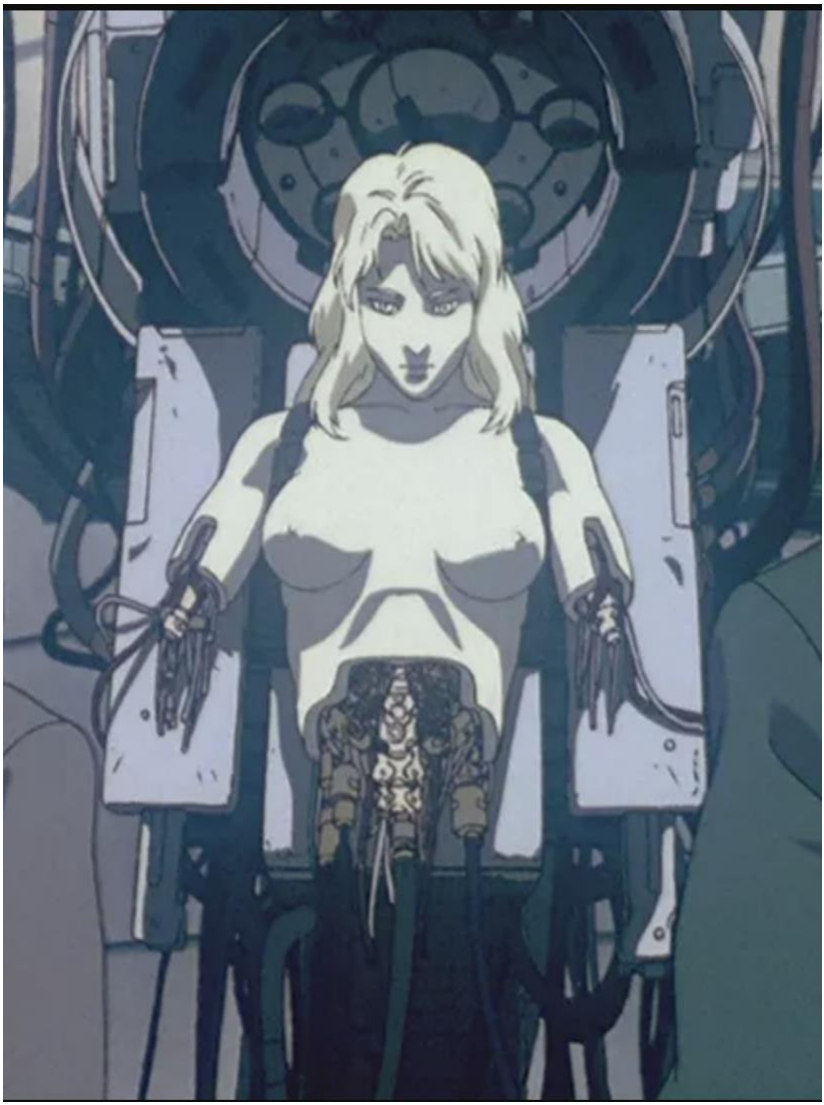
The artificial programs work strictly within the lines of the coded task they have been given, other than sharp accuracy in their tasking they had a sense of self-governance to choose, compare and compile the best results based on their own algorithms.

The artworks created by these AI under the management of the human artist, function by blurring the distinctions between representation and abstraction. This is because of two forms of neural networks perceiving these works. I see this at least as a very clear distinction. In order to give a title to these works the AI analyses the canvas, judges what the most relevant and clear components are to be seen and titles it accordingly. Whereas the human perception might title it differently because no clear image or representation of any figure is left to be seen. A title such as “a black cat sitting on top of a stone wall” triggers the human mind to search for the shape of the cat and the wall, but these shapes do not exist. It is in my opinion, the epitome of perception on representations and abstractions. Here again, the machine sees further than the human. So this whole artwork uses artificial intelligence for its recontextualization of human perceptive rendering, it is still used as a tool that exhibits self-governance but only under the guidelines of the human supervisor. It is interesting to use a tool that functions with simple guidelines, but in outcome far exceeds the capabilities of people.



Memo Akten, Learning to dream:Supergan! Image #32 (2017)

Thinking about this artwork I wanted to clarify something I wrote about earlier, that AI could be a schism of human intelligence. If it is then it would make sense that we can freely place and shape guidelines in the form of coding, while the program then independently generates outcomes. Outcomes which give us a new perspective on things we currently couldn't see or experience. It is a part of our society operating on a level we can interact with, but it also exists simultaneously on a higher level capable of relaying innovative information back to us. From an evolutionary standpoint, could this schism mean that human cognition evolved and unlike mitosis where a cell copies itself identically, this could be closer resembling cell meiosis in which a cell rearranges molecular components when splitting into two identical, but different cells. The human mind could indeed have been going through this change with the intersection of technological advancements. We merge together with what I'd like to refer to as the "pure form" of AI at a point that realises our understanding of our surroundings. We no longer perceive reality from our limited, isolated point of view.



Ghost in the Shell (1995)

Chapter 6: The Hermit's Remora.

Now that I've reached this point in my writing, I want to take a few steps back from the subject and look a bit at the current conditions around me and some artworks that steered me down this road. I've always been a painter, and in my work I've always had an interest in capturing and abstracting human emotions, those I feel so strongly but especially those I am alien to. The pandemic that has been going on I have to admit, has severely limited my material resources as ordering online is a hassle, prices double and delivery fees are included. The shops I get my materials from are all closed and don't all have online web shops, what a perfect time to be an artist. My interests have always revolved around machinery and different forms of consciousness, automatization of the inanimate and extradimensional beings, although these were not always the focus of my work. I am and have always felt like a hermit, albeit a technological one. My leisure time has always been (from the age of 14 onward when we first got a communal computer in the living room) filled with time spent on obscure websites communicating and talking about all kinds of shit with other people, figuring out what piece of coding can do what, altering software programs, getting my hands on routers and devices and cracking their operating systems. My mother and sisters back at home still enjoy having hundreds of free satellite tv channels from a cracked modem.

An artist I've always looked towards for composition and techniques in painting is Francis Bacon, especially for the way he captures certain expressions and shapes.

Evocations that I can see draw parallels with my current subject; The human x machine symbiosis, the cognitive changes that exert forces responsible for alterations in our sense of being. For example, “Three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion” (1944) by Bacon, three panels, each with a central figure that heavily exerts a sense of anguish, of dependency to remain upright, struggle within the very core of the being consumes the figure. The figure becomes its very essence, and this is amplified by being evident in all three panels. Artificial intelligence responsible for generating and regulating human experiences, does so by compiling, analysing and comparing all human input, this results in a picture that we cannot comprehend, but understand is beneficial. Similar to what I mentioned earlier in Memo Atken’s work but applied onto society rather than on canvas. I’ve stood in front of a number of Bacon’s artworks and it always invoked deep contemplation about the nature of people, and how we can shape these collectively without the collective necessarily being aware.

By standing in front of Three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion, I understood that in a way these representations that captured emotions have the ability to change how a person feels and thinks about it in that moment and perhaps even (consciously or subconsciously) after leaving.

Francis Bacon, Three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion panel #1 & #2 (1944)

Francis Bacon, three studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion. Panel #3 (1944)

Similarly, this is how corporations know how to cater their brands and products to their target groups. The consumer *is* the product, the personal data people provide allows algorithms to determine their value to the corporations buying these sources. Data has become the most valuable resource, and the masses are driven according to the global trade of power that happens behind the veil of political tides and social constructs. This I understand can still be difficult to believe for many people, because we are given a false version of transparency that paints a different picture. It is a very intricate construct that presents a rendering of world issues, dealt with by whatever factions of society are present and a narrative is created to steer people into the desired direction for later purposes. For example, political division as seen recently in North America appears to generate polarisation which allows corporations to tailor to the appeals of the two factions. This is done by systematic calibration, or simply organisation. Riots and the instalment of police force both happen because they meant to happen. A scapegoat is presented to generate conflicting emotional responses which, in retrospect defy logic, but this happens because it is necessary and because it has been algorithmically produced to function the way it does. To an extent, this is how artificial intelligence, steered by the guidelines of corporate power shapes social conditions.

Now the meta question is this: how do we know that these guidelines the few in power give to artificial intelligence in order for it to generate social control are deliberately

meant to be given to artificial intelligence by artificial intelligence to give the corporations the illusion of holding the steering wheel? Of course, this is probably a theory, and one of which can't be answered easily. It is the technological equivalent of proving the existence of an omnipotent god. But if seen from the point of how cultures evolve by merging and dismissing the older structures over time, it gains probability in humanity's quest to explain the unpredictable forces that govern existence. A book I found that discusses this in detail is "Gods and Robots" by Adrienne Mayor[6]. In her book she argues the rise of artificial intelligence as something sought after since the days of old, and how people potentially will revere A.I as the new replacement to old religions.

Ultimately, what exactly is this human relationship with AI, and why are there so many doubts as to why and how we are supposed to co-exist? These questions are way older than we think and outdate our technological world way back into various corners of history. Looking at art history and mythological stories; Norse myths about clay-people, the monster of Frankenstein, clockwork mechanisations from the middle-ages and many Greek myths all tell tales about human interactions with life-like replicas of humans and animals. In Greek tales, Hephaestus for example was the God of inventions. His blacksmith forge could independently predict and adjust to the temperatures needed to forge specific tools. He had created the golden maidens, who served all the gods and goddesses, made out of gold and possessed all their knowledge of the

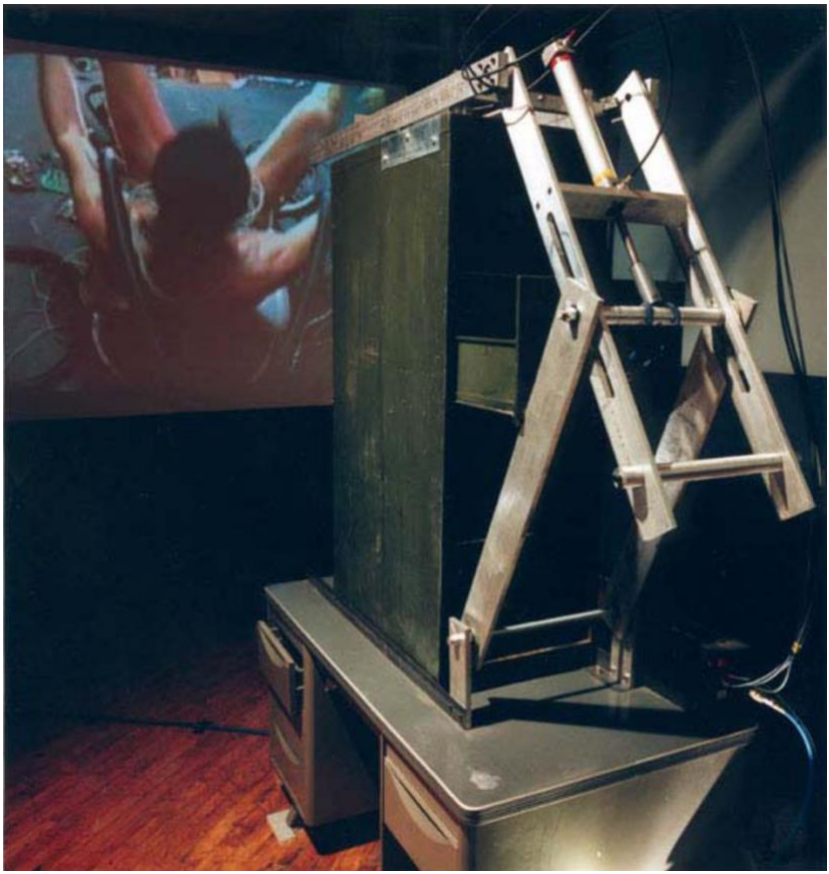
[6] Adrienne Mayor, *Gods and Robots (Published by Princeton University Press, 2018)*

universe. This last bit is strikingly familiar to the sovereign AI data hoarder that exists in cyberspace today. When Prometheus was punished by Zeus to be tormented, it was Hephaestus who forged the bronze metallic bird that did so. I believe it is clear that we can find many traces through human history in different cultures that point towards idealisation of artificial intelligence. If observed through the lens of time, how is our relationship progressing? We acknowledge these old myths by naming hardware and software with names from these myths. The AI drones used in modern warfare to bomb countries are called Hermes, after the Greek trickster messenger from the Gods. The Apple logo with the bite in it is self-explanatory. Humanity acknowledges the unpredictability and governance of AI and reveres it by reinterpreting religious and mythological names to describe AI behaviour. Perhaps with time these names linked to deities will no longer be known for their origin stories, but for the new presences inhabited by AI.

Unknown Artist, Mother Mary Holding a Dalek.

Chapter 7: Procreation of the wicked.

There are numerous artists and art movements that deal with or centre their practices around the birth and evolution of artificial intelligence, one such art movement is the “machine sex action group” founded by the somewhat controversial Hungarian artist; Istvan Kantor. His performance “filing cabinet intercourse” (1998) composed of convulsing human bodies linked with cables to robotic office filing cabinets, opening and closing the cabinet drawers like collective robotic pelvic action, simulated a very real experience of human bodies being subjected and reacting to the crushing power of machinery. In this performance, which he orchestrated numerous times in different countries, a very primal and very real representation of our relationship with machinery came into the view of the public. This particular work, although very different in terms of more sadomasochistic desires and imagery, conceptually comes close to the same concept of symbiosis between the human mind and artificial intelligence. Operating on a much more primitive level, the machines in this performance mimic and distort the acts of procreation. Machines possess a presence synonymous to albeit programmed, self-regulating intelligence. To see these machines, engage in acts that humans themselves have conflicting taboos with across cultures, brings them down to our level. No doubt that at least part of the intention behind this performance was to fetishize the coming together of human and machine. To strip away the intellectual capabilities of both parties and have them engage in what could be seen as a physical merging on mutually understandable grounds.

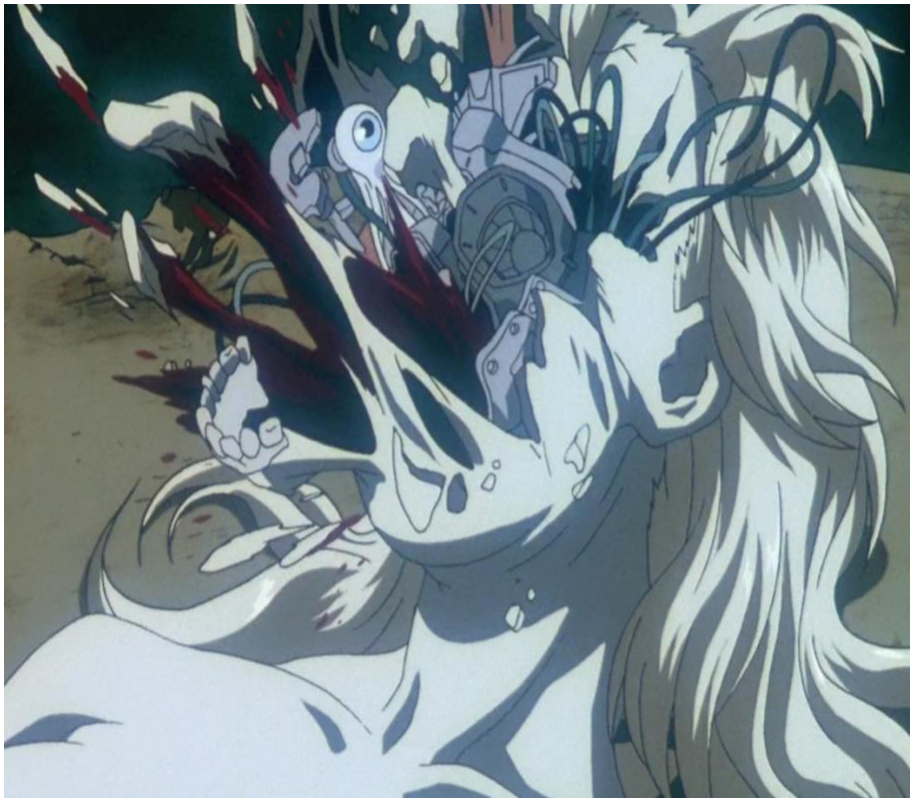


Istvan Kantor, Filing Cabinet Intercourse (1998)

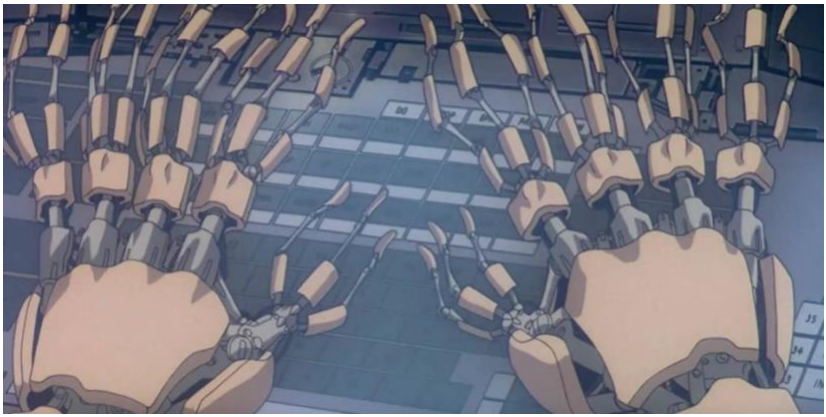
I have spent the last year trying to engage with this middle path where our minds and the mind inside the program meet. What springs forth from this cognitive cesspool takes on representations neither human nor machine but possesses elements of both. To form these representations, I am bound to resort to the limitations offered by both sides. Physical material has obvious

limitations. The manifestations that can be shaped in cyberspace take on pseudo metaphysical forms, but even these have limitations in the form of coding and strain on the physical energy required to exert these projects. A CPU capable of running highly demanding software can far exceed a casual laptop, generating massive amounts of data, but there is always a physical cap. However, behind the physical material that bridges these two existential spheres exists an endless meta-reality of everything uploaded and generated in cyberspace, in which we, humans have undeniably birthed a new form of intelligence. What would become of this is still unsure, and this uncertainty is the source of so many art works and philosophical discourse. Artificial intelligence, with its constrictions to serve the needs of its creator but also to exist independently, is only bound to the imagery and forms that we have placed it in for our own sake of understanding its place in a human reality.

But if this machine intelligence has been formed and conditioned along the biological path of evolution of a species, then what forms and shapes will it organically take on for itself when the limitations of human interaction are no longer in place?



Ghost in the Shell (1995)



Ghost in the Shell (1995)

The core of the earth is a solid ball of iron and nickel. The very heart of our planet is metal, the centre of gravity that holds our fragile ecosystem together comes from a force equal to the power of our sun. The intelligence that birthed in cyberspace exists through these core elements. Whilst working on my sculptural work and writing this thesis, I have looked into artists that deal with artificial intelligence. Not just from the standpoint of me being somewhat of a computer fiend that admires the wonders of machinists, but also from a deeply existential standpoint. The artists I've written about touch upon the thread of my personal research and have expanded my understanding of the metaphysical interaction with the physical. I've outlined how the minds of humans distort that which they cannot comprehend, confining something larger than themselves to their level of comfort and at their disposal. I've discerned how some attempt to look past and break this barrier in order to allow technological manifestations incorporate itself into our world, to develop a sense of self agency in order to come to a better merging point. In my own work I

have come to the point at which I want to allow the materiality of artificial intelligence and the forms of machinations we have confined it to, to act as independent agents of this combined intelligence. To behave differently in interactions with organic material. Not only as a subjected element, but as an equal counterpart that can reshape pre-existing connotations. I believe that it is in this form of letting go of confinement and attempts to define concepts through material interaction that this new form of life essentially gains its traction. I believe this a good point to rest my thesis and continue my practice.

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