

EVERYONE IN THE WORLD FEELS  
THE EXACT SAME WAY:  
ENZYME DISPENSING AND  
THE RECALIBRATION OF BELIEF  
IN RESPONSE TO POOR DIGESTION

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2017

BFA Thesis

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Typeset in Eldorado Text Light &amp; TeX Gyre Heros

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## Introduction

*The Story of our evolution is the story of what is left behind, discarded the appendix is useless.<sup>1</sup>*

A few days ago, an ex-lover died from a heroin overdose.

Though I would not go as far as to say my response is one of apathy, it has not necessarily thrown me into a state of mourning either. I have often tried to forget about our relationship because things didn't end well. There was an end, but it wasn't smooth enough to sip on and shit out. Knowing that he was still around kind of allowed that to be okay. The idea that maybe we would cross paths again and somehow gain a sense of resolution or closure allowed me to let all that had happened over the course of our time together remain unsummarized, unpackaged.

Since his death, people have been avidly posting photos and videos on his Facebook Timeline— little anecdotes of their memories of and with him. But similarly to watching the second episode of a TV show without the initial recap (Previously on "..."), I have found myself taken aback and slightly unnerved by the lot of these public posts—together forming a collective persona, or aura, of who he was and how he will be remembered. His Obituary is hosted by some website where I can press a button to send flowers or light a GIF candle. Preceding the sentimentally-charged graphic options for adding. Before I post, I can even get tips and suggestions for appropriate posts for those going through tough times. What's worse is that these "instructions" have clearly been programmatically followed, as each post either mentions or solely states those cookie-cutter remarks of condolence.

So even though memories tend to form idiosyncratically, based on a number of external factors, insurmountable contingencies, and happenstance associations, the algorithms which dictate social media feeds end up playing a large role in the process of remembering and forgetting by (pre)determining the content one will encounter.

~~You can communicate through both conversation and silence. While conversing may~~

~~exhaust and execute the information, silence may leave the data as an uncontainable entity; interest brings destruction (loving it too much). Could the conversation/ silence potentially come from what isn't there, and if everything is there then what is left? Can We/I/You either try to be alright with not or be afraid or mourn/celebrate together about what we cannot force into a container, or will speaking about it kill it, is this okay to kill or should I/We/You give up?~~

~~If you are presented with everything in a manner distant from seduction then you might want to find something in it that makes you feel satisfied in your ability to comprehend the world. (so you feel known and maybe less alone.) If you don't understand, what is the point?~~

Metabolism is the process by which one's body converts what has been consumed into energy. During this complex biochemical process, calories in food and beverages are combined with oxygen to release the energy a body needs to function. Metabolism allows things to break down and dissolve into one another. If one were to chew on something, but then spit it out instead of swallow, it would likely be difficult to decipher exactly what the material is or was before the said alteration. We might

1. "Life During Wartime." *Grey's Anatomy*. ABC, Oct. 30, 2008. Television

not be able to attach a particular word to it. In that stage, neither this nor that but a conglomeration of ingredients, its identity can begin to degrade, and with it any associative attachments—that third birthday party when you first tasted it. In order to print out a file, it must first go through a process of flattening as to become communicable across devices. Actions that are carried out digitally (and to an extent habitually), such as flattening, compressing, optimizing and/or storing, demonstrate in a parallel way this necessity for information of any kind and in any form to undergo metaphorically similar conversions so that it can be shared, transferred, and digested.

When parts in proximity to one another have a coherent connection, like the details of a story someone is telling, a listener should be able to follow and maybe even squeeze that content into a condensed version more suitable for memory. A larger comprehension of the described account, or “picture”, allows one to let go of certain details that may have merely taken up space, or perhaps failed to effectively contribute to a particular understanding of the relayed content.

If someone were to eat a lot of broccoli over time, they may eventually become sick of the flavor. Because it’s not new anymore, one is likely able to establish a pattern and anticipate the results of an action or activity (in the same way that sex may get boring between people in a long-term relationship). At first original, potent and enjoyable, one’s sensitivity dissolves and memory forms a series of connections to become accustomed to—possibly leading to feelings of boredom or dread when interacting or dealing with this material or subject matter. It is the elimination of chance in these scenarios that can threaten to take one off of their toes and allow an internal recession back into the mind. When surrounded by familiarity, time and space expand to think about options and anticipate movement, in turn reducing impulsivity. Despite its compromise, this habitual mechanism is necessary for digestion as well as communication.

For this reason, I have in a sense become fearful of pretending I hold real knowledge about things other than myself. I feel okay flattening myself, or communicating my own feelings, but uneasy when faced with applying this filter to other objects, or speaking on their behalf. It is this compromise that both stirs my fear and warrants its experimental embrace.

A refreshed consideration of ideas surrounding communication—its wide-ranging iterations and forms, immense potential and power, and perhaps most importantly, associated inevitable shortcomings—have become paramount within my thinking and practice as of late, and will likely continue to shape and steer the work I produce moving forward. In the meantime, other related topics which I have grappled with in the longer-term, cleansing as a form of nonsecular prayer, material and linguistic purging and making sense continually seep in, merge with, and color the more recent ones, ultimately allowing for a genuine, critical crossover to form between my identity and interests.

## 1. Filling

### CONTAINERS - CONTROL: LET’S MAKE SANDWICHES LATER?

On Kawara is an artist most famous for his series of date paintings, *Today* (1966–2013). Each painting is precise—all rendering the date they are respectively made on in the font Futura and centered on the canvas. He paints a different one of these each day, applying four coats of paint then packing them away in a box to be stored on a shelf. The containers are custom-made for each painting. There is something soothing about the level of discipline and performed routine in this work, cumulatively evident as one traces the steps Kawara takes to complete them. When looking at one or a group of these works together, the aforementioned potential for his process to be imagined provides viewers with a gateway for empathetic contact, or a fleeting understanding of one’s place in relation to a larger mass or population. The rigidity of a ritual, or designed system of repeated action, like Kawara’s, can be a functional, utilitarian method for getting outside of oneself.

This “loss,” or temporary leaving, can remain quite abstract and actually not entail specific interaction with other people in any sort of a prescribed way at all. The simple “performability” of this operation and its resemblance to other personal rituals, which all humans come up with and abide by in some iteration, may enable a larger empathetic connection with something bigger than ourselves and aid in our experience and internalization of the concept of time. To feel in control, we rely on our developed habits and actions as a form of comfort, and in a way may even objectify them. Thinking about actions as objects or screens can become a strategy for holding on to large concepts and also provide an imagined substrate on which to project ourselves.

A child may learn that expressing discomfort, for instance crying when they are hungry, is a way to solicit the reactions or obtain the things they want or need. Based on a series of observed and experienced actions and reactions to back this up, one can notice a pattern and with it develop a set of corresponding beliefs. Remembering an innate reliance on one’s mother during infancy therefore sets up the idea that there will always be an “other” that can be signaled or called upon to fix things.

The expectation for another to supply and continue to fill one with something desirable, or conversely something undesirable, remains part of the process of growing older and generates the possibility of a rigorous belief or promise in things.

Engineer David P. Wagner originally designed a certain kind of pill-packaging for his wife in order to help her manage the complex intake schedule and establish a routine for consumption. Inscribed dates and placebo pills were regulatory elements that would aid in reducing potential deviations within the prescribed system. According to Historian Patricia Peck Gossel, who studied packaging techniques for pharmaceuticals, including the DialPak in 1963, pill-packaging reversed the relationship between content and container—the package is the pill.

The dispenser was presented as prosthetic compensation for an accused forgetfulness, which was enforced by the Ortho Pharmaceutical advertising campaign. In this res-

pect, the DialPak was a technique for packaging “not only pills but also memory and time, responsibility and trust.”<sup>2</sup> The presence of each pill is indispensable, and when one is taken the subsequent empty slot reminds the user of their compliance to this ritual. Creating a routine around an object and corresponding affect on its consumer-base, especially an expected and perhaps necessary one on the body, creates parameters within which to heal, change, and hopefully thrive over time—though a dangerous counter-effect seems obvious here. A system which one initially empowers can quickly gain control over and render its subject powerless.

In 1893, English physiologist Ernest Starling described hormones as carriers of chemical messages transported by blood from the organ where they are produced to the organ where they most act.<sup>3</sup> Estrogen and progesterin are both female sex hormones. Combinations of the two work by preventing ovulation, or the release of eggs from the ovaries.

While masculinity is produced according to a model of sovereign patriarchal power, femininity is regulated according to a set of biopolitical techniques “intended to control the reproduction of the nation’s population in hygienic and eugenic terms, enforcing the reduction of deviancy understood in terms of class, race, sexuality, sickness and disability.”<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the pill as an external object with a prescribed routine for consumption is assigned a purpose (even when it does not contain one in the case of placebo.) The pill and its packaging create a dependency that is built by repeatedly following its program. One’s obedience within this system is accompanied by a promise—something definitive amongst the chaos of being a living, feeling human—that one will not reproduce, and simultaneously implicates one within a larger community holding the same container. This sacrifice for stability within the present looms a dreary future of chaotic hormones once you stop taking the pills, though awareness of a community makes this fact easier to swallow.

~~Everything is violent because we all have different dreams and the same motives? Not at all. Unless you’re silent which is boring, but safe when—I want what I don’t/can’t talk about which turns into what I don’t want you to know/assume (because i’m afraid). Maybe If I/You/We feel fear, I can try to pretend to be alright with it (but not too okay) with exposing and (objectifying our own fear [mine] because that’s all I know.) I can trick ourselves into letting it exist so it can disappear. FEAR OF LETTING FEAR BEING KNOWN But: I exist always in reliance on someone else: calm/dead.~~

This container is clear which allows me to see what is inside it—what it is holding together. These items are grouped because they have overlapping qualities and they make sense together in relation to one’s experience. If it were not clear, I would likely attach a label to it, with a word written that describes the general functions that these objects share, or a specific task they might help me with. Because they have something in common, they share a container so that one can easily find them when their presence and functions are required. I keep these objects because I am afraid that one day I will need them and if I dispose of them I would feel their absence. I’d then know that I was not equipped to carry out a particular set of actions that the object previously enabled me to do, but worse yet, if the objects were not sorted into containers,

2. Ibid, p. 162.

3. Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: Feminist Press), p. 160.

4. Ibid, p. 170

I would spend most of my time looking for them—sorting through piles of things with completely different intentions. Items that would accompany me at varying moments within my schedule, seeing them all on top of each other brings about this intense fear of collapse, disassociation or abjection.

I keep these containers as objects and holders of other objects and I stack them. The container, the sac, the satchel, the Ziploc®, the purse; all extensions of self, things we feel dependent upon, This dependency displays a need for an other, an object outside of oneself to hold onto. In *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, novelist Ursula K. Le Guin speculates on the likelihood that the first cultural gadget was actually a bag. “A leaf, a gourd, a shell, a net, a bag, a sling, a sack, a bottle, a box, a container, a holder, a recipient.”<sup>5</sup> Le Guin relates this to the construction of a novel as a medicinal vessel of sorts, a container or carrier of insights, and/ or a thing to lug one’s words around in. Putting something away or even just down for a moment insinuates a goal in one’s mind, a promise perhaps made to another or a future version of oneself. Putting words-as- containers into an enclosure (of what they already are) can be an act of reaching towards another—an analog gesture like a tap on the shoulder, or even internet slang and emojis—sacrifice or amplify the meaning you are attempting to pull from within yourself and spit back out as a transformed material; the translation is far from telepathic.



WHEN I IS REPLACED BY WE,  
ILLNESS BECOMES WELLNESS

~~Clogged: (Dispose of it all along with the container or seal the lid when there is too much perception). (Like Kleenex®) Blowing your nose generates an overproduction of snot, risking infection. Scientifically, it’s better to do nothing but it’s easier to empty your nose prolonging the condition. This between state was re-remedied by Kleenex® (rather than just remedied because handkerchiefs, and before that I probably just blew my nose all over things.)~~

The brand Kleenex® was created by the corporation Kimberly-Clark® in 1924, and today covers a variety of paper-based products such as facial tissue, bathroom tissue, paper towels, tampons, and diapers.

In the instance of a runny nose, it can be argued that leaving the issue unattended, or letting it drip, would be seen as socially unacceptable. Ordinary toilet paper, though a quite similar product, was developed and marketed for other purposes, exploiting a fictional gap to be filled by the supposedly required development of another product specifically designed to take care of the runny nose problem. The more tissues one uses, the more one will need them; Blowing a nose actually generates more snot and swells up sinuses. This quick- fix method and use of the designated product helps with maintaining appearances but actually prolongs clogged, uncomfortable conditions. Kimberly-Clark® simply observed and realized the exploitative potential of personal care products and, still today, monetarily takes advantage

5. Ursula K. Le Guin “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” 1986,

[https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit\\_crit/works/leguin/carrier-bag.html](https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/lit_crit/works/leguin/carrier-bag.html). (Accessed December 19, 2016).

of common dependencies on, or desires to believe in, external objects. It is more useful in a capitalist economy to be sick. Dependency is advertised because no one really wants to be alone. *immunity: the quality or state of being immune; especially: a condition of being able to resist a particular disease through preventing development of a pathogenic microorganism or by counteracting the effects of its products.*<sup>6</sup>

When a body becomes immune to something, it is not because this body has completely defeated and expelled the poisonous substance upon its initial entry into the organism, but has instead found a way to incorporate and remember it as to somehow make it part of the body. Potentially harmful material can actually prolong life, but only through a carefully balanced process of introduction and removal, through which a certain level of bodily resilience can be achieved by continuously giving it a taste of death. In 1790, the physician Samuel Hahnemann self-administered potent daily doses of cinchona bark, (the source of quinine), in order to observe effectiveness in fighting Malaria. His body reacted with symptoms resembling the fever characteristics of malaria. This experiment served as the basis for what would provoke the same symptoms of that illness in a healthy body. The controversy involved in our body's often-dismissed or downplayed "independence" can perhaps be phrased as an invention of the homeopathic movement, which based on The Law of Similars,<sup>7</sup> maintains that it is possible to treat illness using diluted doses of a substance that, in much larger amounts might kill you. This idea is a mode of "sympathetic magic" similar to the idea that eating the heart of a lion will generate bravery.<sup>8</sup>

Voluntary auto-intoxication, the process of controlled intentional poisoning, was developed by German philosopher and cultural theorist Peter Sloterdijk. He draws a connecting line from Foucault's ideas on the modern biopolitical body to these more contemporary expansions on that discourse, revealing that (in comparison) bodies are perhaps no longer a "one-dimensional surface where power, law and punishment come to be inscribed but rather a thick interiority where life, but also political control take place in the form of exchange traffic and communication."<sup>9</sup> The complexities involved in thinking through processes like digestion seem to widen Foucault's playing field, by penetrating and peering into procedures that, until now, have been concealed by the body's outermost layer of skin. By accepting a poison into the container of our bodies, we are protecting ourselves from their associated ailments. Duplication becomes a method of self-protection from such substances by way of neutralization—similar to how repeating anything numbs the potency of its effect. Antibiotics, for example, risk killing the good bacteria in our system, which is why supplementary probiotics are often taken as a way to reintroduce the beneficial bacteria. Over-cleaning actually increases the risk of infection, since the presence of some dirt effectively contributes to a body's self-sufficiency.

When one empties their body through any one of a variety of prayer-like cleansing processes (juice, bone broth, fasting, parasite-removing pool cleaner), it usually implies some sort of rigorous indoctrination to a systematic or rule-based diet, as means of achieving a suite of promised, though vague and variable, results which are realized in relation and reaction to an individual's own qualities and internal morphology. The impulse to pursue

an endeavor in this vein can have a slew of deeper psychological implications, one perhaps being an effort to adjust one's own physical state to correspond to an emotional state—a coping mechanism turned desire to make the body feel as lonely as the person who occupies it truly is; Because you are what you eat.

## 2. Breaking Down

### MANAGING OUR SEROTONIN SO WE WON'T FEEL SO ALONE

*"The body is so fraught with information it becomes impossible to process food."*<sup>10</sup>

When one repeats a sentence long enough, the ability to cognate its meaning gets lost. Registering that recurring sound becomes so predictable it begins to be processed more like something of a chant, its rhythm syncs up to inhaled and exhaled, a way to silence the mind or leave the body. Through this process of semi-hypnosis, the source becomes detached or unhinged from its meaning—eroded. In *Aliens and Anorexia*, Chris Kraus states that anorexia could be an attempt to transcend the body entirely. The trigger that once meant you were hungry undergoes a change and becomes linked to something different entirely. A past study has shown that anorexics have a high level of 5-Hydroxytryptamine (5-HT; serotonin) in their brain,<sup>11</sup> so starvation or other similar tactics of internal depletion—ruled as destructive to one's body—can actually be more of an attempt to self-regulate. Decreasing this abnormally high level of a chemical imbues a feeling of emptiness, which one may be able to renegotiate, or purposely interpret, as calmness. Similar to other effects of dissociation that may occur among certain connections within one's body, the feeling or trigger of hunger becomes addictive, and develops into a kind of craving to overcome and ignore, until enough control over it has been gained as to successfully diminish its power over the individual. Here, control and prescribed routine can lead to a trance-like state where your will becomes strong whilst your physical body—the thing that separates you from everything else—weakens. When the subject pushes their perceived limit beyond what the body can handle, it collapses into itself.

In *Aliens and Anorexia*, Kraus references the science-fiction writer known for his excessive use of amphetamine, Philip K. Dick, who posits that at death the spirit converts itself into a code that travels back into the world as information. "The universe is the information and we are static in it. [It is] fed to us and we hypostatize in the phenomenal world... The Gnostics live forever via techno-trans migration symbiotically absorbed among the living. Therefore each person is capable not just of perceiving everything at once, but of becoming other people."<sup>12</sup> The universe is made up of material elements and these materials are constantly in a state of flux—undergoing a series of actions and reactions. The part(s) of ourselves that we don't quite consider material (consciousness, mind, soul) are what Dick implies as static. We are subjected to these forces and their rules, but we don't and can't comprehend all of what is taking place physically at the vast variety of scales of time and space that things do. Individuals being the physical pieces of information that we are, we also experience and find ourselves stuck within this reactionary

6. *The American Heritage® Medical Dictionary*, "Immunity",

<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/immunity> (Accessed October 8 2016).

7. *Medical Dictionary for the Health Professions and Nursing*, S.v. «Law of similars», <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Law+of+similars> (Accessed December 12 2016).

8. Repositório das Tradições Antigas. "Sympathetic Magic". You Tube Video

9. Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p. 9.

10. Chris Kraus, *Aliens & Anorexia*. (Brooklyn, NY: Semiotext(e), 2000), p. 159.

11. Monteleone P, Bifulco M, Di Filippo C, Gazzero P, Canestrelli B, Monteleone F, Proto MC, Di Genio M, Grimaldi C, Maj M, "Association of CNR1 and FAAH endocannabinoid gene polymorphisms with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa: evidence for synergistic effects", *Genes Brain Behaviour*, June 26: 2009, p. 732.

12. Kraus, *Aliens & Anorexia*, p. 134.

chain—the goo of reality. This entanglement can be thought about as what first irked Mierle Laderman Ukeles to write “MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!” and then intrigued her enough to let it become the central theme of her artistic output from then on. As a way to mediate between the incomprehensible nature of the physical world and our position as subjects within that world, we have become creatures who think and work in the realm of representation. It almost sounds like he means the opposite, but what Dick argues is that we concretize abstraction, in essence represent or “re-make” the content we observe or with which we come into contact with in the physical world. Gnostics viewed the material world as inferior—as an obstacle impeding “spiritual perfection.” Since spirituality and human consciousness were seen by Gnostics as superior and in a sense distinct from the physical world, they felt enabled to believe that consciousness did not die when one’s body did, but remained alive and well-in-motion afterwards. Their hard insistence on a distinction between physicality and spirituality seems to have expanded their notion of what was possible in terms of a person’s non-material essence—wide enough to feel, or believe, that human will or some other form of mindful exertion could do things like: enter them or others into new physical bodies or vessels, conjoin with the spiritual essences of other humans, or perhaps somehow be collected and redistributed as to pervasively perceive the world on a collective, transcendental level.

Emotion might be produced as biologic memory; certain situations trigger memories of others.

Emotion and capital have become synonymous. “It’s like the world is flat and all around the edges of it there is a hyperspace of emotion with sadness at its core.”<sup>13</sup> If this resonates, we could believe it into being. As an option to communicate without flattening, one could believe that people are able to become other people, memory being transmitted through time, allowing emotions to become other people’s reactions to them, transforming a collective memory. In the same way one can teach their body to cease digestion by taking enzymes for an extended period of time in an attempt to return the body back into its natural state of absorption and expulsion—it’s all about the response trigger.

*Serotonin contributes to an individual’s feelings of well-being, happiness and affection. A side effect of overproduction is diarrhea.*

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13. Ibid, p.135.

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~~Here I am not using a strike though because it is already erased by being repeated. In some way it is striking through itself. Vocabulary of a bodily process.~~

So how can I satisfy a need by expelling plentitude? In a 1935 essay, “On Escape” the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas speaks of physical nourishment to address fundamental questions about ethics, investigating the counterintuitive example of nausea. He considered digestive processes crucial in making sense of the existential character of life. The root of our need to fill ourselves is not a lack of being but a plentitude of being. Nausea makes us hyperconscious of our innards—“We are revolted from the inside, our depths smother beneath ourselves.”<sup>14</sup> Recognizing our entrapment in subsistence and our disgust at that entrapment; nausea “amounts to an impossibility of being what one is.”<sup>15</sup> When I am nauseous, I am focused on what I am full of, and how I will bring it back outside of myself. “What constitutes the relationship between nausea and us is nausea itself... the nature of nausea is nothing other than its presence, and our powerlessness to take leave of that presence.”<sup>16</sup> The recognition of nausea is a fullness, an unbearable one that places me somewhere I don’t want to acknowledge. Time is collapsed because the input (consumption) and the output (expulsion) are smushed together into some sort of non-space where the need to vomit is a reminder of how full of life I really am.

#### WHEN WORDS ...

Language, like matter, erodes itself through excess. Immunity to the meaning of a certain conglomeration of words may develop over the course of this kind of unregulated repetition.

In a number of public primary schools in the United States, children are required to recite the country’s national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner”, on a daily basis. A loudspeaker might announce or initiate the lyrics, after which the pupils are expected to follow verbatim. In doing this everyday, the song’s original meaning is likely to begin to fade away. Iconic significance can easily be lost as a result of this kind of memorization and mindlessly repeated pronunciation. Instead, the excerpts or phrases within the song might become more associated with a variety of personal memories and sensations of the performers, like a smell reminding one of a particular time in the past. This effect would, of course, vary across individuals. The same phrase might bring a feeling of nausea to mind for another who may have had the flu the week before, barely able to prevent themselves from puking in response to the sound of a voice reciting...

14. Emmanuel Lévinas, *On escape = De l’évasion.*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.66-8.

15. Ibid, p.66-8

16. Ibid.p.66-8

“The bombs bursting in air!  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there”<sup>17</sup>

Linguistic repetition has the potential to offer disembodiment, which can in turn cease the usual kind of anticipation we experience. (One who knows what to expect may no longer have a reason to wonder what to expect.) This allows the “end goal” to disappear, converting free-movement into something more like an unfolding ritual. Repetition that generates a gradual expulsion (of content) can also be seen as an act of maintenance, a process of allowing communication to become born again and eventually regain its meaning. Muted content can perhaps come back amplified after a controlled hiatus. The continuation of a species (whether biological or spiritual) relies on the performance of a ritual alongside a certain level of obedience to a refusal. Its practice is dependent on one’s surrender to a foreign power that constructs both its state of being and a deliberate outcome. Religion mediates and quiets an individual’s relationship with particular versions of unnamable fear while also being the cause of it. How might one communicate with another without flattening the world?

### 3. Elimination

#### JUST ENOUGH CORTISOL TO CHECK SOMETHING OFF OF YOUR LIST

*Cortisol is released in response to stress and low blood glucose concentration. It suppresses the immune system and aids in the metabolism of fat, protein and carbohydrates and increases bone formation. It prevents the release of substances into the body that cause inflammation.*<sup>18</sup>

Things become the same through death—absence of life and differentiation. Living pushes you closer to dying, whether you’re catatonic or ‘productive’. What is abjected in the first separation is the biological body of the mother as a means of staying alive. The death-drive is predicated on the tendency for matter or life to return to a state in which everything is the same. “The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses.”<sup>19</sup> There becomes an emphasis on mechanics, actions, and the moves we make in space, established by our relationship to gravity. Activity ensues according to a formula, an opinion, idea, ideals or some neurotic or “rational” belief, according to a past pattern or future abstraction.<sup>20</sup>

The theorist Julia Kristeva, wrote in *Powers Of Horror, an essay on Abjection*, that abjection takes hold when the capacity to identify with something outside of oneself which would constitute the subject as a separate entity fails. When one bumps into the unnameable, meaning dissolves and threatens the emergence of self. The collapse of meaning is fundamental to formation of identity and the renewal of meaning. When substance becomes reduced, entropy is essential. Entropy is the tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to break

17. Francis Scott, “The Star-Spangled Banner”, *The Yale Book of American Verse*, Jan. 1999.

18. Marit Aline Christin Tanke, “Serotonin, cortisol, and stress-related psychopathology”, *Philosophy of Medicine*, 2009.

19. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press), 1982.

20. J. Krishnamurti, *The Krishnamurti Reader*, (Shambhala Publications), 2009.

down toward a state of inert uniformity, or the inevitable and steady deterioration of a system or society. “During that course in which “I” become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit.”<sup>21</sup> Kristeva’s abjection is located not only the margins of bodies but in the visceral and pulsating movement of a body.

“I” expel it. But since the food is not an “other” for “me,” who am only in their desire, I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which “I” claim to establish myself... I am in the process of becoming an other at the expense of my own death.”<sup>22</sup>



#### GETTING RID OF ABJECTION BY GETTING USED TO IT?

It is important to note that what may be abject to one body would not necessarily present that affect in another. When someone is accustomed to the position they are in, a nurse who puts IVs into a body all day long, or a patient in the hospital with a tube down their throat, they become familiar with the sensation. This familiarity, this repeated production of affect, makes one immune to the symbol, or in this case ambiguity, now, has a place for itself in the mind, gut, or heart of the numb body. I imagine that images that decades ago might have been called “abject” would not have that same effect nowadays, with the accessibility that the internet has provided us with. Therefore an overproduction of effect has a numbing affect. When something has a place, one is no longer frightened, confused or uncomfortable. Therefore spatial-ambivalence or “stickiness” is crucial for abjection to take hold. There is a necessity for tupperware that has failed to be provided. Abjection is the in-between, ambiguous, composite, which points to a dynamics of fear prior to the emergence of the object and upon which the very capacity to symbolize external reality is dependent. Side by side, fear and the object proceed together until the one subdues the other. One is not conditioned to find comfort in the liminal. We in the west might be designed to aspire towards a specific kind of progression, to find our way from point A to point B, and put things in their place, to check things off our list. Meaning that the things we set out to do in a day can be put to words, to phrases. Yet by claiming membership to anything in particular, to some relation we fulfill its finality, we formulate the words that will silence the world.

~~Can the broadcasting of the raw, procedural stages unmask the sleek, or does this divulgence create another [sic]? By sharing the liminal have I already/have you stuffed it into something else? Can We/I/You either try to be alright or mourn/celebrate together and pretend we can stop watching like no one’s dancing?~~

21. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 3.

22. *Ibid.* p.3

#### 4. Emptiness

##### USEFULNESS OF FICTION TO GET YOUR WAY

~~Why is delusion always deemed bad, or less positive than terror? Why does it matter if i got the placebo instead of the 'real' thing if it worked? What is BETTER? What is Health?~~

I read a book I don't feel like naming because you may have a different opinion about it. The main character and writer makes use of her own disillusion with a lover. She embraces it and fakes a romance to rekindle a connection with her partner. Using delusion to instigate disillusion, and then appropriating delusion-bred disillusion to create enchantment, is a powerful example of the mind's ability to make something out of nothing.

~~Personal isn't personal, because we all might sometimes want to be touched (nothing is something). What is the materiality of nothingness?~~

The poet Nathanaël Stephens posits nothingness as the place where we recognize ourselves. "It projects us into devastating unrest, offering no escape the way out is both free and obstructed, in other words: disappeared. We await despite ourselves, with stupor, in the emptiness of waiting, which is none other than the dizzying history of disappearance...So this touch, this sometimes conflicting contact that absorbs our senses, engaging desire, revolt or indifference, inflicts both the residual and nothingness, the residual that includes nothingness and that which emerges from it."<sup>23</sup> When one falls into contact with another, they may fall under excessive submission to the other's rules and regulations. They either break it (the pledge they made to themselves), turn it into themselves (withdraw), or both. By repeating

23. Nathanaël Stephens, *Absence Where As (Claude Cahun and The Unopened Book)*, (New York: Nightboat Books, 2009) p. 49.

anything, they kill it and fall into a state of absence where new meaning is born (like smoke, or ash, or the twin tower memorial crash t-shirts.) "The displacement, the reorientation, that result from these encounters, and are subsequent to encounter itself, to the correspondence begun by encounter, instigate the madness of disorientation."<sup>24</sup> Self-control is a muscle that is built by repeatedly obeying a promise in your mind. A routine gives you place regardless of where you are, but when you have failed to think about options or anticipate movement—movement which is defined by the walls that surround it—the space outside of your body gives you the possibility to move. When one becomes entranced by their own sense of motion through time, they may forget about planning, potentially trusting themselves as to allow their walls to expand without noticing. They slip. This unmask the fusion, the gravity of their zone—they have been disrupted. This encounter, this action, now means something entirely different—that space created through obedience or harsh tenderness enacted upon oneself has disappeared and it feels like part of that self has gone along with it.

~~How can I yield presence to get rid of myself?~~

~~Option 1: points undefined~~

~~(suspension without any points? Black holes or vacuums or brains.)~~

~~Hypothesis 1: When someone knows the end point but the other isn't sure: You have a desire (point of suspension) to know, so you imagine an exit because you are (annoyed/uncomfortable/confused). When it ends, you might feel less lonely because you wanted it to end (post-indulgence.)~~

~~Hypothesis 2: I know I'll die, I know I've been born—I'm able to choose (to a certain extent) how to frame my time. Perception is limiting so I can't really say anything because~~

24. *Ibid.*, p. 49



I am limited. (Important if you want to trick yourself for fun).  
Option 2: When desire is handed over. By speeding up something that should happen over a long amount of time and forcing it into a tighter form, (time/space/brain/heart), a regulative process (something between fiction and sincerity), can generate alimentionation to become self sufficient.

Hypothesis 1: Framed tight: with a clear beginning and end, like a 21 day habit formation that works. Hypothesis 2: Framed too tight: when I took too much vitamin B so much that my organs couldn't see it. In order for my body to recognise the nutrient again, I had to only eat white food for 5 days. Through this deprivation I learned to see it for what it was. Or when I get a sunburn cause the sun burnt me.

*"The voids malleability, its fluidity, are consistent with water's suppleness, its vigorous, even obliterative capacity. It is saturated with the absence of what was anticipated a movement that disappears immediately. To discover virtue is to penetrate down to life's biochemical reactions or time's basic rhythms. It is from here that courage leaps, a total and warm forgetting of self toward the world, others, neighbours and objects."*<sup>25</sup>

One can forget oneself by doing, saying or imagining something so often that they recede into the flow of it all. This repetition of something outside of oneself, in some way becomes part of them—they consume it. A person may let go of control, or perhaps relinquish what separates them, their biological material, from the other. In these moments, or this lapse of time they are in such control that they are able to loosen their grips by plunging within their own cadence.

Conclusion

## FLATNESS AND ASPIRATION

To overdose is to put an excess amount of anything into my body. This ill-fated version of one's repeated action can result in time and space falling into each other, flattening existence as I think I perceive it. I am polluted. There's a potential to consume too much of something outside my body until I cannot recognize it as something separate, it now consumes me. This may result in degradation or abrupt stoppage. Neutralization kicks in—killed because of the excess, it doesn't do what it is supposed to anymore but I'll fertilize.

Perhaps the only place any person can recognize themselves fully is in the non-space of postmortem, where mirrors don't exist and there's no self to help. All that is left can be called material remains. What do I do with them? I am a web of material, "reality" and faulty comprehension/receptivity using the fully-formed body, and finally melting back down into what the ground has become. Falling apart but remaining as/in a pile. How long is the ash kept around for? The broken-down further remains.

There is a disorientation and finality in the nature of death's ejection, an insisted removal out of the vehicle that had delivered one to one's own life in the first place. Everything is meant to be chaotic (so is the mind). Consistent, rhythmic reproduction is an option for me to merge with you without sacrificing my logic (or yours), to turn off my mind or leave my body (because the chaos is too much). In order to do this it might oppose an inherent human desire for definition and separation.

<sup>25</sup>. Ibid, p.49

I believe separation will put things in order, but everything is turbulent and we are inherently lonely. I either want to feel more or feel nothing at all. You might really want things to make sense—to understand. Sometimes I think that the words "control" and "understanding" are the same thing. As a human I have the desire to understand because then I'll feel less lonely. People who understand something or believe in something together form a group with some sort of narrative that is followed, or ritual that is repeated. But what happens when a community is formed based on difference? How can I replicate the process of understanding without turning it into something that is flat? The flatness is efficient because then it makes something disappear, becoming empty, ready for the excitement of filling once again. Everything is the same, probably, if you decide that, and it's not if you don't want it to be.



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