

ACÉPHALE

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SERGIO SEGURA

CHRIS GABRIEL

KRISTIN MIDDLETON

JUSTIN MICHELL

MISHA MAYFAIR

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ERIC ORTIZ

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THE GOD DISK

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ACÉPHALE



ECTOPIA

ectopia \ek-ˈtō-pē-ə\ - an abnormal position of a body part or organ, esp. at birth. Modern Latin from the Classical Greek *ektopos* (ἐκτοπος), away from a place from *ek-*, out of (see *ex-*) + *topos*, a place (see *topic*) + Modern Latin *-ia*, *-ia*.

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD COLLEGE DICTIONARY

“Do you think the rabbis, when they spoke of the Torah, were talking about a scroll? They were talking about us, about remaking our body through language. Now, listen, to manipulate the letters of the Book takes great piety, and we didn't have it. But every book is interwoven with the name of God. And we anagrammatized all the books of history, and we did it without praying. Listen to me, damn it!... For months, like devout rabbis, we uttered different combinations of the letters of the Book. GCC, CGC, GCG, CGG. What our lips said our cells learned. What did my cells do? They invented a different Plan, and now they are proceeding on their own, creating a history, a unique, private history. My cells have learned that you can blaspheme by anagrammatizing the Book, and all the books of the world. They have learned to do this now with my body. They invert,

transpose, alternate, transform themselves into cells unheard of, new cells without meaning, or with contrary to the right meaning... And as we sought secret meanings beyond the letter, we took all leave of our senses. And so did my cells, obediently, dutifully. That's why I'm dying, Jacopo, and you know it."

FOUCAULT'S PENDULUM, UMBERTO ECO

Acéphale is an ungrounding machine.

For eight decades now, the *opus diei* has not been dissimilar from other organisms: burrowing through the spongy earth like a mole, capturing dissipating energy. Lurking in the subterranean reaches of the Labyrinth.

Ground is swallowed and turned into unground along the digestive tract.

Jarry's Ubu and *Homo acephale* both have mazes for guts.

Cut off your own head so that $n+1$ heads can bloom- chakra flows uncapped to hemorrhage solar energy.

All the letters after 2000 are fakes.

The Drive was always headless. You can't get rid of it. Laughter-as-jouissance is always glorious expenditure.

Sincerely,
The Editor

Expenditure

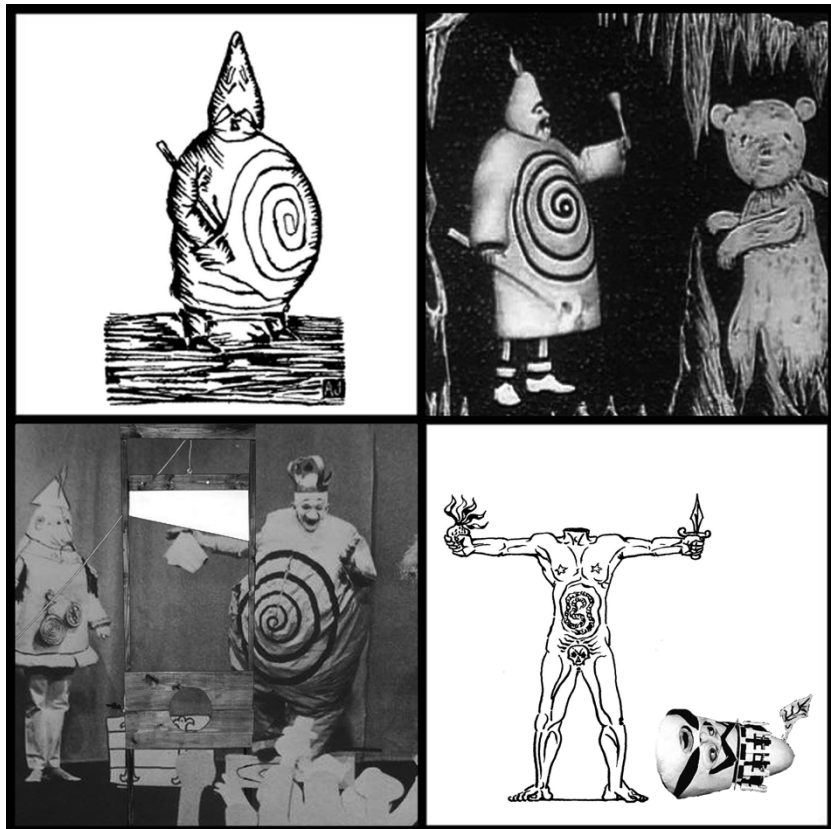


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Front: *Homo acephale* by Sergio Segura, Inside: *Tauroctony* by Sergio Segura, Back: *Femina acephale* (*Black and White*) by Misha Mayfair

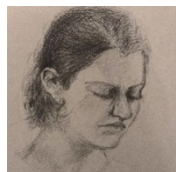
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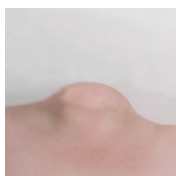
SERGIO SEGURA,
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CHRISTOPHER
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MISHA
MAYFAIR



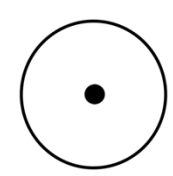
JUSTIN
MICHELL



ZZZZ



ERIC
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THE
GOD DISK

Black Sun

A TALE BY CHRISTIAN GABRIEL

ILLUSTRATED BY KRISTIN MIDDLETON

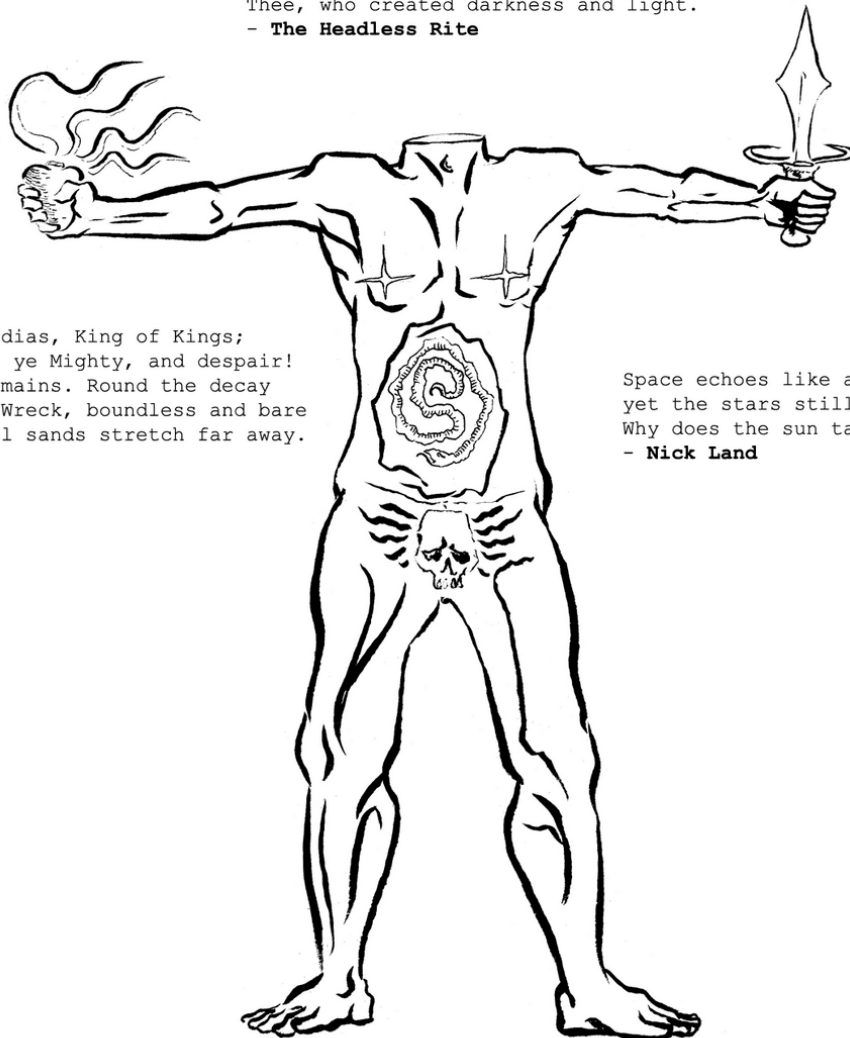
For Jack Kirby



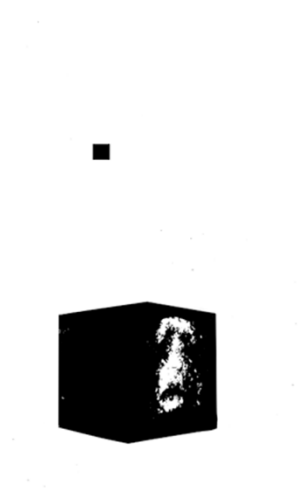
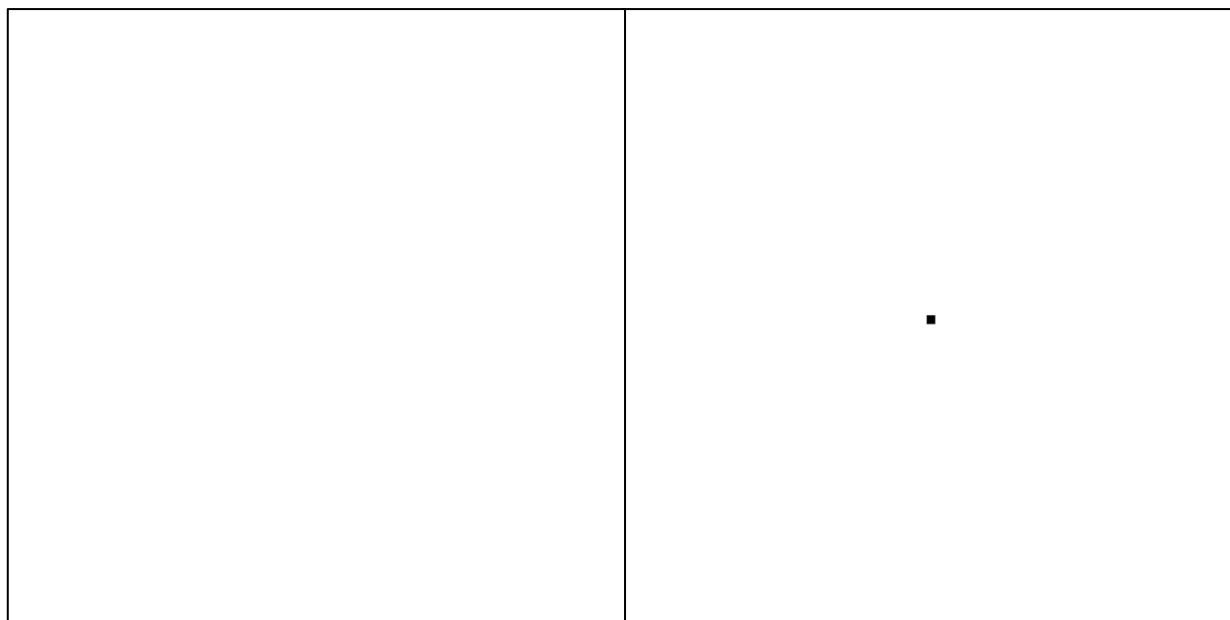
Thee I invoke, the Headless One.
Thee, who created earth and the heavens.
Thee, who created night and day.
Thee, who created darkness and light.
- **The Headless Rite**

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
- **Percy Shelley**

Space echoes like an immense tomb,
yet the stars still burn.
Why does the sun take so long to die?
- **Nick Land**

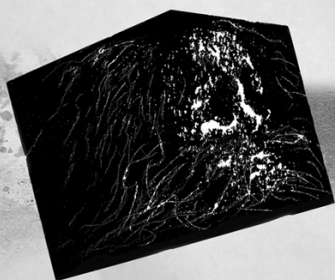


- Image of Bataille's Acéphale

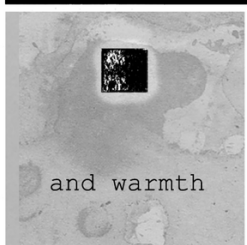




The pulsing of the star sounds my self

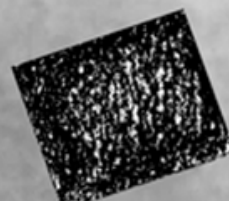


I recall my heart

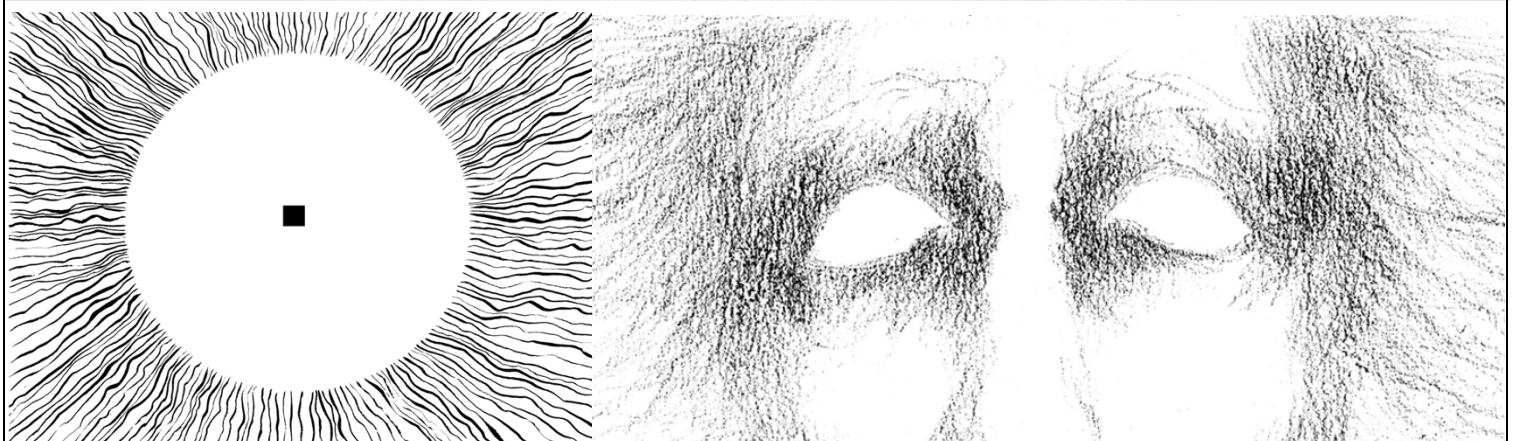


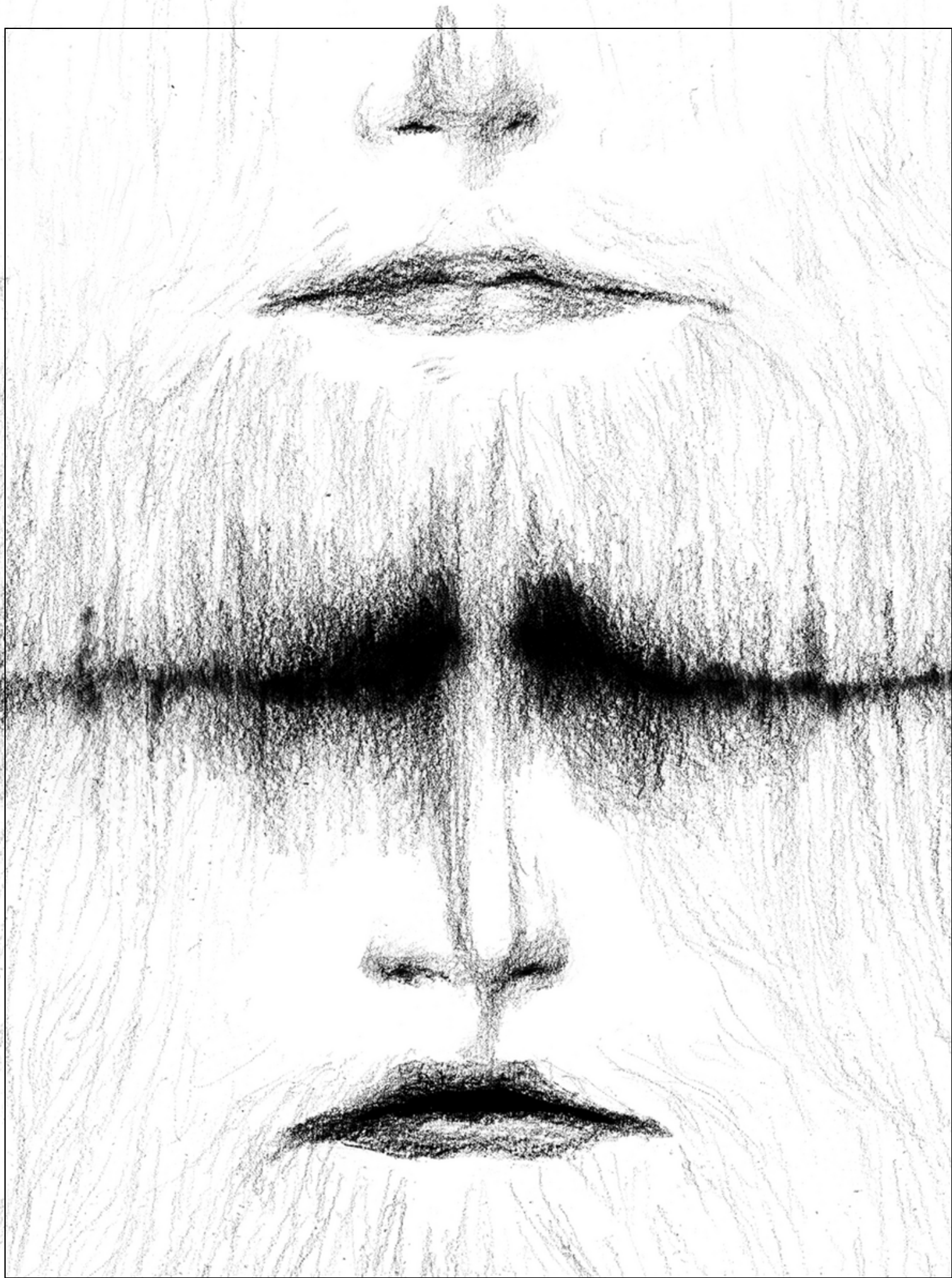
and warmth

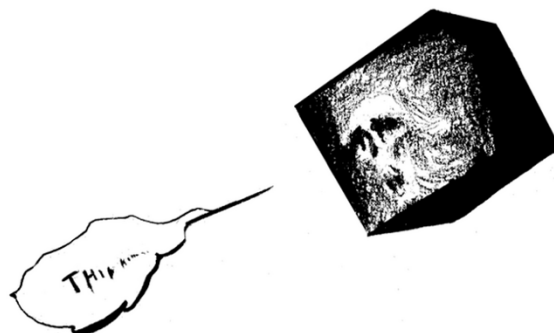


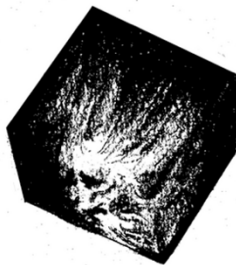










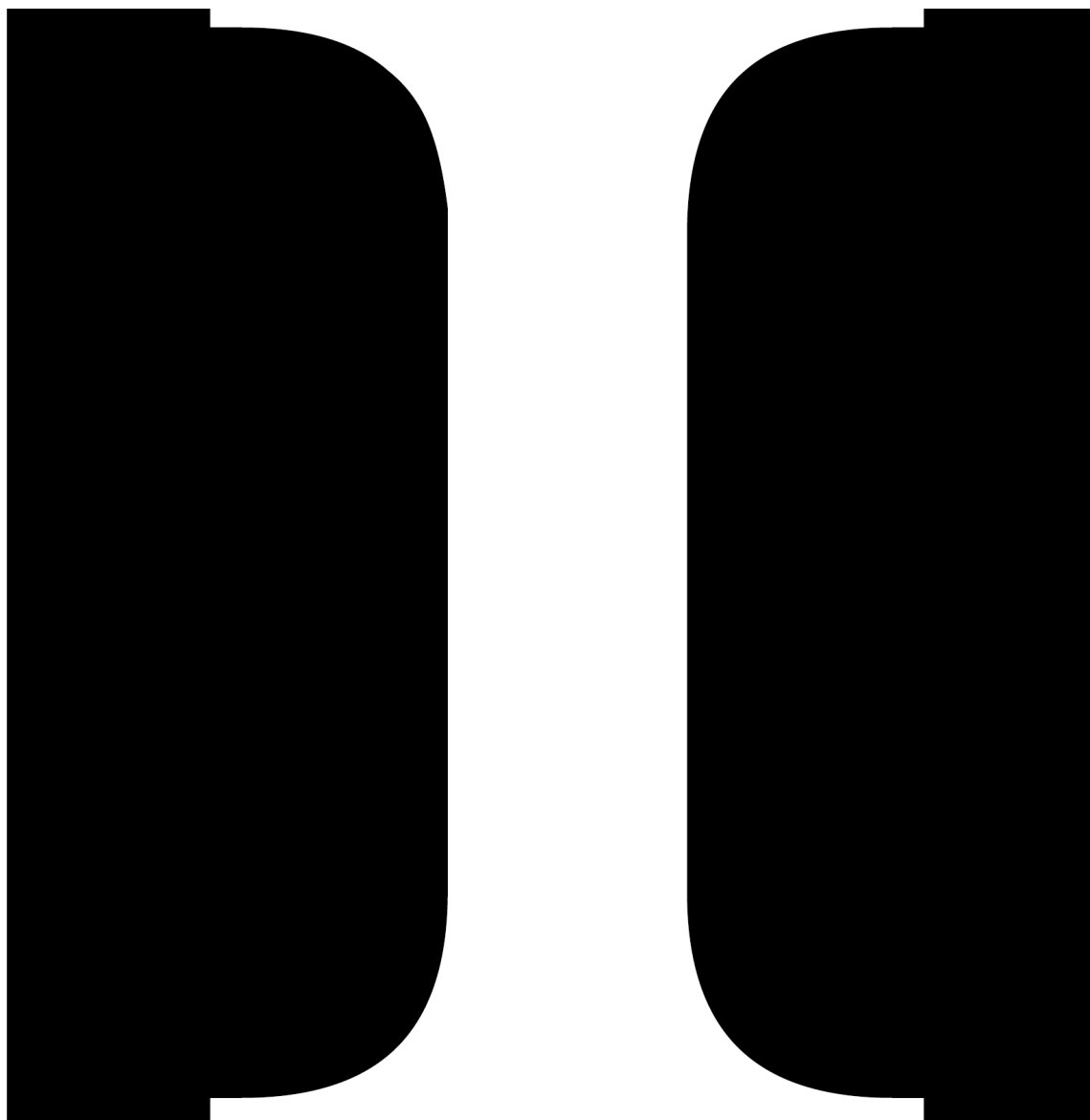


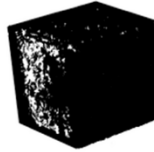



Throat

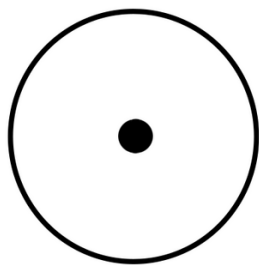
you must

Sing





	
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Shambles

JUSTIN MICHELL (ALL ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR)

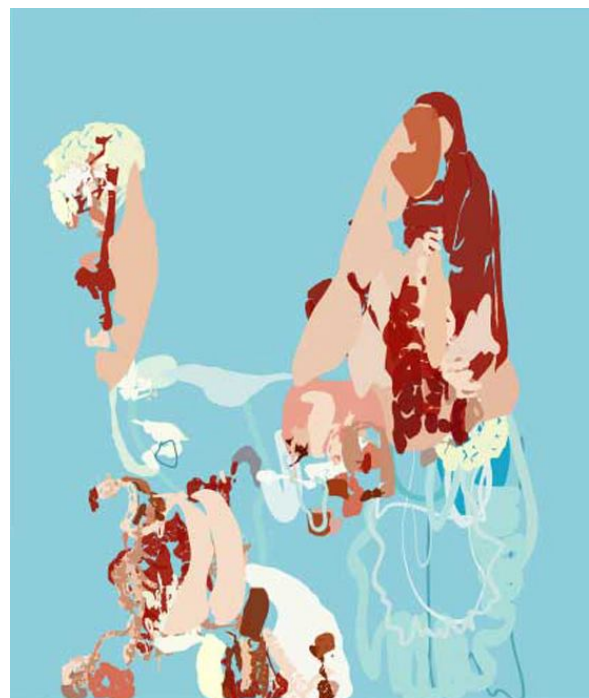
In *Journey to the End of the Night*, Louis-Ferdinand Celine vividly describes the body as a site of struggle against its own tendency toward disintegration. The doctor Baryton reflects, “You know, don't you, what families are; it is impossible to make a family see that a man, whether he's a relation of theirs or not, is nothing but an arrested putrescence.” (Celine, 425) In an earlier passage Baryton distractedly loses the thread of a priest's words as he examines his pyorrhea-encrusted mouth cavity, thinking to himself:

All our unhappiness is due to having to remain Tom, Dick and Harry, cost what it may, throughout a whole series of years. The bodies we possess, a fancy dress of twitching, trivial molecules, revolt unceasingly against the frightful farce of managing to last. They want to be cut off, these molecules of ours, and lose themselves as quick as they can, in the universe at large: little beauties! They hate just being us, mere cuckolds of the Infinite! We'd burst to smithereens if we'd had the guts, from one day to the next we only just fail to. Our darling agony is there, in atoms, enclosed within our hides, along with our pride. (Celine, 334-5)

Given this entropic tendency, medical discourse has a need to create stable visual sources in order to study the flux of the body's dying tissue, to annex it as a static image for a regime of knowledge reliant on visibility. One such archive is the set of anatomical photographs known as the Visible Human Project. This database is derived from the corpse donated to science by Joseph Paul Jernigan prior to his receiving lethal injections in 1993 by the state of Texas for a break-in robbery and murder. Immediately after his death, his corpse was deep frozen and shaved away in ultra thin cross sections and photographed at each step of the process.

Through its incremental destruction, Jernigan's entire body was systematically transformed into an image. Its hidden strata became a series of surfaces. One of the groundbreaking features of the Visible Human Project was that a fresh, intact corpse was used, as opposed to a cadaver, which would tend to deteriorate and undergo chemical changes as a result of its storage of in formaldehyde. This archive on the other hand is eternally fresh and bright, like living tissue, and also incidentally, like the victims in Sade's writings: eternally available as a docile instrument subject to limitlessly renewed manipulation.

The desire to preserve the body - and most of all the sovereign's - from the ravages of time was a prominent theme in ancient Egyptian art. This tradition represents bodies separated from the



disorder of their surroundings in order to constitute a structured environment. Time and space were seen as corrupting influences. Relative distance from the eye of objects and the play of light against shadow were thought to confuse and obstruct clarity of vision. Regular, stylized forms avoid the unpredictable, contingent aspects of organic shapes and phenomenological space. The figure is treated in Egyptian art as a 'being' removed from and as opposed to the flux of 'becoming'. (Bogue, 142-145)

This preservation of the pharaoh's body in a virtual space parallels that of Jernigan's body in the Visible Human Project. In the separations of time and place that divide these two examples, however, we can sense a regime change, a turn of events described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. The modern subject in the form of the patient, the prisoner, the "client" is scrutinized, preserved, and made virtual. In this case, a diffuse power is located behind the gaze, rather than displayed gloriously before it. For Foucault, modern science brought with it an intensified role of visual evidence in the production of knowledge. In order to create sciences of life, the body as object of knowledge passes through death. In halting its processes, clarity could emerge from the obscurities of the living body. (Jay, 392-395)

To serve the ideal of visible clarity and preservation of the body, both Egyptian art and the cross-sectional photographs of the medical specimen deploy a flat use of space. Though other views of Jernigan's corpse can be reconstructed digitally (rotation in three-dimensional space of organs, or travel through blood vessels in a flight simulator mode, etc), the Visible Human data in its raw form has been photographed as a series of planes as if recorded using a flatbed scanner.

Art historian Alois Riegl has termed the particular way flattened space is deployed in Egyptian art "haptic space," as opposed to "optic space," the latter applying to the deeper volumes beginning with depictions in late Roman art with its receding voids and use of foreshortening. Haptic space engages what Riegl calls *nahsichtig* ("near-seeing"). Every part of the image has been brought up to the picture plane, as one would sense the surface of a tactile object with the hand. All points in the image occupy the same slim range of focus. Consciousness is not located opposite a vanishing point relative to the image, like an eye receiving light rays from points in an outer world, so much as spread out over its surface. It is as if various touched points were assembled to produce an image. There are no shadows to create depth or ambiguity about the boundaries of forms. Haptic space is acquisitive, it converts "there" into "here." (Bogue, 136 -141)

Paralleling Foucault's description, Jacques-Alain Miller described the Panopticon's cells in the following terms: "The enclosed space lacks depth; it is spread out and open to a single solitary central eye. It is bathed in light. Nothing and no one can be hidden inside it - except the gaze itself, the invisible omni-voyeur. Surveillance confiscates the gaze for its own profit, appropriates it, and submits the inmate to it." (Jay, 382) Bentham's panopticon was thought of in its time as analogous to Rousseau's ideal of absolute transparency of social relations, visible and legible in their parts. (Jay, 411)

Like that of the medical gaze, the ideal for this penal system is a kind of nakedness, a complete exposure. The prisoner is potentially available for viewing at all times and is aware of this fact, but cannot see into the narrow window of the watchtower or know the exact time of surveillance, which therefore becomes all the more anxiety producing. The gaze embodied by the small window and the exposed backlit cell become parts of an internalized regulatory machine for producing a disciplined subjectivity along with asymmetrical relations of power where the soul becomes the "prison of the body," as Foucault put it.

The analysis of this scopic regime bears comparison with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "facialization." They construct a notion of the face as a flat surface perforated with holes. This flattened, reduced reality, lacks the multidimensional complexity and polyvalence of the body's heterogeneously interconnected workings. The "abstract machine" of faciality compresses heads

into images. (Bogue, 92) Facialization extends over the body and landscape beyond any resemblance to the human face itself and is coextensive with a system for codifying surfaces treated as homogenous. This provides an atmospheric coherence that reinforces a specific order of signs. Particular faces of different speakers and their changing expressions accompany speech and supplement another layer of meaning to spoken discourse, though not reducible to it. Facialized objects - ATM interfaces, clock faces, etc.- are caught up in these systematic realtions. The face-landscape provides a framework for acts that can be recognized as meaningful and coordinates arrangements of forces and bodies. (Bogue, 81-86)

Like the Panopticon's central tower, the abstract machine underlying the face-landscape consists at its most basic level of a white wall with black holes. The white wall is the integrated system of meanings and significations that make surfaces legible through a "despotic" imposition of meaning, an overcoding. The black holes in the white wall are passionate absorbing points of subjectification. They move across and interpret the white wall and become sites for the installation of the gaze in the landscape that halts and arrests the eye. (Bogue 86-99)

One possible way we might respond to this visual regime is through what Foucault calls heterotopias: incongruous arrangements of space that threaten imagined coherence. (Jay, 413) "Heterotopia" is also a medical term used to refer to "the displacement of an organ or other body part to an abnormal location", or "the displacement of gray matter, usually into the deep cerebral white matter." (*The American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary*)

The subjective dynamic of the Panopticon can be compared to the carnival freak show, for instance. Here the gaze is again fascinated by an object set aside as distinct from the rest of the world. In this case, however the gaze experiences an anomalous perception that it has trouble integrating into its systematic coding of visions. It is experienced as obscene and disturbing, and any pretense to scientific objectivity or the reform and betterment of humanity are absent. There is an ambiguity and a certain lack of access and frustration inherent in this space, which is often darkened and obscure and leaves the viewer suspicious of trickery and illusion, as it appears early in the narrative of David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*.

We can consider Lynch's film and H. P. Lovecraft's story, "The Call of Cthulhu" as two narratives which feature irregular, heterotopic bodies and center around themes of imprisonment and escape. Lynch's film describes the monstrous body in a process of becoming a domesticated human body, a subject. The figure gradually comes to be viewed as a subject with a name, John Merrick. In the pulp horror tale by Lovecraft on the other hand, the mollusk-headed Cthulhu remains frighteningly inhuman and radically Other, bearing a form of sentience inaccessible or even harmful to human subjectivity. It occupies some zone of indeterminacy between animal, human, and god.

Themes of containment, exile and imprisonment shape Lynch's narrative throughout the film. There is a tendency to eject Merrick's body from every place it occupies. Local police exile the carnival show he is featured in, forcing it to keep moving from city to city. Merrick's presence even in the hospital is controversial, and certain factions seek to have him transferred elsewhere, recognizing the potential for a perverse enjoyment his presence elicits that is perhaps too direct an evocation of the carnivalesque that must be disavowed and veiled for everyday clinical practice to function smoothly.

The Elephant Man's bodily form is treated as an obscenity, as an unassimilable excess beyond the state of 19th-century clinical medicine. In this sense, Treves, played by Anthony Hopkins, is the cutting edge of his own field, an experimental outlier. The scientist as acquisitive hunter presents itself as a dilemma that Treves struggles with. He engages in a power struggle with the carnival barker over custody of the monstrosity. Treve's medical gaze sees aberrant bodies as opportunities to gain medical recognition. His professional interest brings him uncomfortably close

to the position of the carny, revealing a hidden stratum of *jouissance*. He reproaches himself in the same way as his double - that he profits off of the misery of another.

Like Oedipus at Colonus, deformed both by self-inflicted blindness and a swollen club foot, Merrick seems condemned to a life apart from the human community while still exuding a contradictory pressure of attraction. The body of Merrick seems to carry a magnetic pull so intense that he must travel cloaked lest his presence provoke mass violence. Even this seems ineffective in a scene where his hood is pulled off in a harrowing trip through the labyrinthine bowels of London's subway system. Persecuted by a growing mob, his panicked and humiliating journey ends with Merrick cornered by the crowd in a bathroom stall. He is funneled by a kind of mass psychogeographic free-association to a place of excrement, a volatile zone composed of attraction and repulsion. At the moment of his safe return to custody at the hospital, he whispers finally "I'm free." His permanent confinement to the tower there is comforting. Being subject to symbolic law, having a circumscribed place and name is freedom for Merrick while the world at large is its terrifying lack.

One recurring image of the alien in science fiction and horror is of a creature dragging its entrails along outside of its center, an inside-out body one cannot make head or tail of. It not only shambles awkwardly along, but is itself a "shambles" in the sense of the detritus of a butcher's shop. Yet it is precisely in the opposite sense that Lacan locates the concept of "alienation" in his discussion of the mirror stage. This can be briefly summed up as follows:

Though still in a state of powerlessness and motor incoordination, the infant anticipates on an imaginary plane the apprehension and mastery of its bodily unity. This imaginary unification comes about by means of identification with the image of the counterpart as total *Gestalt*: it is exemplified concretely by the experience in which the child perceives its own reflection in a mirror. [...] it is obvious that from this point of view the subject cannot be equated with the ego, since the latter is an imaginary agency in which the subject tends to become alienated. [...] This approach might be compared with Freud's own views on the transition from auto-erotism - which precedes the formation of an ego - to narcissism proper: What Lacan calls the phantasy of the 'body-in-pieces' (*le corps morcelé*) would thus correspond to the former stage, while the mirror stage would correspond to the onset of primary narcissism. There is one important difference, however: Lacan sees the mirror phase as responsible, retroactively, for the emergence of the phantasy of the body-in-pieces. (Laplanche and Pontalis, 250-252)

Hence, the "alien" for Lacan refers to the "normal," ideal image of the human body. It is through identification with this image that the subject's identification with images - in this case it's own image presented in the mirror as other- first takes place. Yet something about the *corps morcelé* and the heterotopic body exert an uncanny fascination and fantasy power for the subject, despite its abjection from the ideal-ego.

Merrick's body-image is stuck at the level of the *corps morcelé* and lacks the capability for comparison to a specular double with which he could form a rivalrous aggressivity toward or be alienated in as a first step in a path of subjectification. His appearance is instead an abject formlessness. He can't bear his own reflection any more than others can, because it suggests nothing that can visually anticipate a coordinated organic whole. The intervention in the symbolic register by Treves, the "good doctor," creates a place for Merrick that offers a possibility of ending his torment. Treves concentrates on training Merrick in the capacity for legible speech to emerge from his ruined mouth. For pleasure, Merrick builds models of the ordered, angular, Gothic church he can see from

his window, which becomes an abstract supplement for his lack of a bodily ideal-ego. Like a neurotic symptom, the hospital for Merrick functions ambivalently as both an immobilizing fetter and as defensive against anxiety.

Merrick's comfort is only ever half-realized. He can only sleep in a cramped upright position. His nightmares are plagued by a primal scene of his mother being trampled by stampeding elephants, a fantasy that he was either conceived this way or damaged in the womb. Merrick's violent dreams find a symptomatic analog in the subway chase when he accidentally knocks over a young girl. She screams exactly like his mother during the elephant dream, head swinging from left to right, disturbed as much by his appearance as by the shock of the fall. Despite his monstrosity, Merrick strives toward a "normal" humanity. Through care and training, a human voice emerges from this formlessness for Treves and a few other sympathetic friends.

While this story follows a trajectory of assumption of humanizing subjectivity, there is no assimilation in "The Call of Cthulhu". Like Merrick's unveiled body, the mere sight of even a replica of the monster drives rational subjects to madness, unleashing dangerous forces. While Merrick ultimately desires death and sound sleep by the end of the film, Cthulhu begins the story dormant and dreaming. Its desire is to awaken and wreak havoc on the Earth. Unlike Merrick, whose "confinement" is recast as a welcome realization of the only home in the symbolic order he can find, Cthulhu restlessly dreams of the day when it will emerge into the surface world, unveiling itself.

Lovecraft's narrator, reflecting the author's own well-known anxieties regarding human 'otherness' and the mixing of races, describes the cultists who worship the monster as "half caste" or "mongrel." They are portrayed as having no fixed, clearly defined place in a particular, distinct culture or symbolic framework, confounding supposedly fixed differences. Their bodies are depicted as vessels for heretical forces occupying heterotopic spaces. Cthulhu's followers obsessively chant signifiers of a "meaningless" dead language, described as "howls and squawking ecstasies," (Lovecraft, 193) yet producing an uncanny effect in the listener.

For Freud, "uncanny" phenomena were precisely ones in which we do in fact recognize ourselves. Instances of the uncanny for the subject point to "the working of forces he's dimly aware of in a remote corner of his own being." (Freud, 49) The prefix "un" in *unheimlich* is the work of negation, an index of repression at work. (Freud, 51) So, reading into Lovecraft's own anxieties, one senses the contours of a fantasy - for the author both frightening and yet fascinating enough to sustain an entire lifelong body of fiction - a reactionary logic of slippery slope from the less radical alterity existing between human cultures toward a more threatening and extreme alterity of sublime inhuman chaos.

Linguistically anomalous, the name "Cthulhu" itself was conceived by Lovecraft "to represent a fumbling human attempt to catch the phonetics of an absolutely *non-human* word." (Lovecraft, 177, note 11, italics his) The otherworldly being makes a "nasty slopping sound," (Lovecraft, 213) not unlike Merrick's slurping lisp, and both conjure up an image immediately resonant with Freud's dream of "Irma's Injection" in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, as well as Celine's image of the mouth of the priest. The horrifying palpitating mass of the throat's internal anatomy can produce speech, but this same speech can conversely slide into formless delirium and guttural noises.

The monstrous body functions as an object of desire in both narratives we've been examining. On the one hand, cultists in Lovecraft's story attempt to free the monster from its underwater prison. They worship the tentacled being in hopes that someday "the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom." (Lovecraft, 198) What is unknown also becomes a fascinating lure to the scientific gaze. The irrational, the chaotic, the aberrant, become challenges to decipher. In "The Call of Cthulhu," a mysterious statuette found by anthropologists from an



unknown culture becomes the subject of intense scientific debate. What is this thing? Where did it come from? How can it be pinned to faciality's white wall of signification? The detective work of the curious investigator follows the elusive monstrous lure across the globe. The paths of police detectives investigating cult murders intersect with those of researchers. The monstrous body functions as gristle, the connective tissue between different disciplines and social zones.

In Lovecraft's work, artists and poets are particularly susceptible to the pull of the formless. The story begins with an anecdote of the narrator's uncle meeting a

young sculptor who has modeled a clay image of the squid-like god during his sleep, a sculpture uncannily close to the one found by anthropologists. The reference to surrealist automatic methods here is unmistakable.

In terms of aesthetics, the idea of the sublime plays a central role in "The Call of Cthulhu". Lovecraft opens his tale with the following:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (Lovecraft 173-4)

Elsewhere, he writes:

All my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the vast cosmos-at-large...To achieve the essence of real externality, whether of time or or space or dimension, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all. (Josh and Schultz, 51)

Here the line between horror and awe is almost indistinguishable. In a similar conception of the sublime, Bataille elaborates in the short essay “The Formless,” the swirling galaxies of the cosmos are compared to a “gob of spittle” or “the kind of vermin that is accorded no rights and crushed underfoot”. (Bataille, *Visions* 31) Both Bataille and Lovecraft use boneless invertebrates and liquid putrescence as images of sublime, inhuman nature, “the Sacred” as Bataille would name it. In both of these authors the sense of compatibility with ‘normal’ neurotic subjectivity that still adheres to characters like Lynch’s Elephant Man is notably absent. The formless maintains its opposition both to imaginary identification and to humanistic ideas of individual subjectivity, ambivalently both lowly and sacred, vermin and god.

For Lacan, “the sublime quality of an object is [...] not due to any intrinsic property of the object itself, but simply an effect of the object’s position in the symbolic structure of fantasy. To be more specific, sublimation relocates an object in the position of the Thing.” For Lacan, sublimation is linked to the death drive, because “the sublime object, being elevated to the dignity of the Thing, exerts a fascination which leads ultimately to death and destruction” (at least viewed in terms of a normalizing ego-ideal). (Evans, 199)

Related to Kant’s noumenon/Thing-in-itself, Lacan’s *‘la chose’* is outside of signification. It is impossible to sustain unmediated contact with the Thing. The subject always deals, even in the unconscious, with what Freud termed *Sachvorstellungen* (thing-presentations) and *Wortvorstellungen* (word-presentations). The pleasure principle keeps the subject at a certain distance from the real, maintaining a comfortable gap which a direct plunge toward jouissance would disturb. (Evans, 205)

Lacan locates the real not simply as existing independently of the symbolic and imaginary as a lost origin, but as a retroactive effect created by the impasses of the symbolic itself. He made frequent references to the lack Bertrand Russell spoke about regarding any contextual meaning or truth being able to be expressed by pure mathematics and logic. Of Kant, Lacan says, “some faint sense may have emerged by tangential illumination from the aforementioned “critiques” of pure reason, and of judgement (as regards practical reason, I have said how playful it is by putting it on the side of Sade, (who is not any funnier, but logical), – therefore once their sense dawns, Kant’s maxims no longer have any meaning.” (Lacan, *l’Étourdit*, 11-12))

For Lacan, the impasses of the symbolic lead not onto a reassuring understanding, but to a sublime real disruptive of any metaphoric quilting points that would temporarily halt the churning of the impossible which never stops being written. He uses Gödel’s incompleteness theorem, the set-theoretical work of Cantor, and topologies like those of the Klein bottle and cross-cap that fly in the face of the Platonic appreciation of the “good forms” of the sphere with its clearly bounded inside vs. outside, and single, central focal point. He warns that even images that help us visualize these topological structures are in danger of becoming imaginary lures away from pure algebraic writing that suggests the dead languages of Lovecraft’s Old Ones opening onto inhuman vistas in n-dimensional planes. It is only through writing that Lovecraft can point to the “Color out of Space” that does not occupy any discernible point on the spectrum visible to human eyes and is impossible to depict.

With this in mind, the imaginary register is still inextricably knotted up with the real and symbolic around an impossible, absent object. Returning to Egyptian art and the Visible Human Project, we can say that they share a similar libidinal economy with regard to their Thing. Their practices attempt to preserve selected visible features of metamorphic processes of life and death in an acquisitive, haptic space, guarding them against decay and change. Even Cthulhu, despite its mollusk head and bloated body topped with useless batlike wings still has a vaguely anthropomorphic form. It is merely a representative of mysterious “Old Ones” who are neither

living nor dead, and not in fact even composed of matter. Cthulhu is only a manifestation, an imprint of the passage of these forces through matter.

If the real is what disrupts speech and that pure writing opens onto, visual art can have a particular relation with this dimension in regard to the face-landscape. Discussed in relation to the painting of Francis Bacon, for Deleuze, artists can launch “probe heads” as creative personas or alter egos that plunge into slices of chaos as “what if ventures.” These are experimental assemblages that “pierce the walls of significance and gush forth from the holes of subjectivity.” Probe heads have a metamorphic (as opposed to metaphoric) potential to deterritorialize the face-landscape toward regions of the asignifying, the asubjective, the faceless. (Bogue, 108-9, 174)



At the same time as pursuing practical ends in a regime of scopic power, medical techniques inadvertently open up ludic, speculative spaces. Games such as the Surrealists' Exquisite Corpse, or the Dada practice of collage often rely on anatomy as a source to create shattered mirrors for subjectivities to revel in their own fragmentation. Dada collage treats the pictorial space as speculative - an altered state. These images are the product of an engagement with an already coded landscape rather than a fantasized return to a state before language. The results exist as traces of an “extimate” encounter between different source material and existing, historical visual codes, reworking them rather than simply expressing an intimate “inner vision.” The normative, orthopedic gaze is itself dissected in the service of creating extravagant heterotopias with no servile utilitarian end or function.

The Dadaist scalpel becomes an experimental tactile appendage, like those covering the bodies of Octavia Butler's Oankali, the alien species in her *Xenogenesis* series. In Butler's work, these tendrils are used to perceive others and exchange biochemical information and genetic material between species. They can induce pleasurable sensory experiences and facilitate communication, but can also fatally sting if provoked. Unlike Merrick, these creatures' efforts don't take the end goal of any recognizably human language. They draw interlocutors into unexpected and initially anxiety-provoking regions of unknown, inhuman experience. Oankali have males and females, but also “ooloi,” a third sex that performs the operations of genetic engineering and selection for its cross-species mates. Ooloi don't help to reproduce a static species, but are constantly performing a bricolage with genetic codes that incorporates any and all living creatures the Oankali encounter in their travels, and conspicuously lack any particular norm to guide the process.

Butler's Oankali are carried along by metamorphic flows, becomings-other. Oankali mix with humans in order to pull the earth with them out of the sun's orbit as a spacecraft toward new frontiers resisting the stasis toward passionless gravitational centers that threaten to become the passionless black holes of the face-landscape. They push mutation further and faster along, attracted by the mutagenic cancer cells found in abundance in humans and referred to as "talent" -utilizing them for shape-shifting properties to create new hybrid species while neutralizing their harmful effects. At first traumatically horrifying to most human sensibilities, they end up saving earthlings from a future in which they've destroyed their own habitat. They recast the kind of being that functioned as Lovecraft's nightmare as humanity's only hope for long-term survival/sublation. In Butler's work, the terror of the sublime is traversed by humanity through human-Oankali offspring who become the protagonists of further books in the series.

The sense of the body in both medical illustrations and collage is one of pieces that are perforated along fissures into discreet yet integrated functions. This mechanical conception is given coherence in the popular imagination through such things as replacement hips, artificial hearts and so on, that reinforce the idea of the body as open to tinkering. Mike Kelley writes, "The whole low-art pictorial tradition of the monster can be viewed as expressing the pleasure of shuffling the components of a form. (Psychologically, however there is a great difference between shuffling squares on a paper, or flowers in a vase, and reordering the human figure... The ambiguous humanity of these distorted images creates a tension between attraction and repulsion." (Kelley, 127)

Anatomical charts are part of a discourse meant to be applied to actual organs, bones, tissue etc. Surrealist collage shifts away from this, though still with one foot in the anatomist's gaze. This is still articulation in the sense that one part is attached to another in the sense that "the hip-bone's connected to the leg bone; the leg-bone's connected to the -knee bone," etc. To rearrange this ordering can hint at an aspect of contingency in even the normal arrangement of the body, not that just any arrangement would work, but that the current form has been arrived at by what evolutionists Varela and Maturana call "natural drift", rather than some kind of rational engineering.

Modernist architect Adolph Loos characterized ornament as a crime, a waste of health and resources, a parasitic excess attached to an object's functional dimension. (Loos, 32-3) This conceptual opposition between functional form and ornament breaks down when one considers the possibility of organic life as operating according to natural drift. For Varela and Maturana, while natural selection does prohibit non-viable organisms from surviving, it doesn't determine what new traits will be generated through mutation. There is no inherent optimization of form in all cases in biology. Instead, organisms that are sub-optimal or even wildly inefficient can and do often survive simply because they are possible. (Bogue, 62-68) Only under higher levels of external stress, of evolutionary 'bottlenecks' rather than in all cases do less optimal structures get whittled away in the process of natural selection.

Life may not after all exist for the exclusive goals of survival and reproduction, but may be more akin to aesthetic play. If life is not necessarily functional but ornamental- a gratuitous pageantry of form for its own sake, then the desire to generate new forms in art can be viewed as arising from this same ferment. Viewed this way, art harnesses the same metamorphic forces that create different bodies out of a latent, immanent state of chaos. (Bogue, 69-72) One can reply to Loos that if ornament is crime, then Nature, if she existed, would in that case herself be the supreme criminal.

Both Dada/Surrealist collage and Butler's Oankali take as a thematic subject the spilling over of possibility in excess of the situation of being limited to a single morphology. It is somehow not enough to live in this or that particular shape. Art runs ahead of its utilitarian recuperation, and in this respect, forms a continuum with nature. This is not to say that aesthetic response is somehow universal or that conventions are not learned. Conventions in various art forms, rather than limit

practice, are so many fields for it to multiplying and cross-pollinate. They create new games to play, new rules to bend or break, new versions to act as provisional standards to deviate from. Convention begets play, and so on, in an accelerating feedback loop.

Olivier Messiaen attempted to translate patterns heard in birdsong into music for human ears. Critic Paul Griffith wrote of his compositions, "It seems more reasonable to speak of the collection not as a group of attempts at fidelity to nature but rather as a sequence of piano pieces whose realization nature helped to facilitate." (Bogue, 31) In a similar way, Surrealist collage does not represent a plausible biological reality that would "work" in terms of survival so much as constituting an independent reality, an altered state. (Schumacher, *Mystery of Painting*, 32)

Mike Kelley has identified different kinds of monstrous bodies. On the one hand is Frankenstein's monster, re-assembled from cut up parts of the body-as-machine but functioning mechanistically as a whole. In *Re-animator* (1985), on the other hand, the body is not total but corporate- a linked compilation of separate entities. Both *Re-animator* and Jon Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982) feature pastiche creatures that when cut apart simply keep existing as part-beings. What could be more horrific to an essentialist such as Adolf Loos than this depiction of the world as "an accumulation of animated ornaments stripped from their primary forms?" (Kelley, 129) This situation is the epitome of grotesque for Bakhtin, who defines it as a body made up of parts. "It is not complete or separate; it is in process. Its surfaces are penetrable, its boundaries questionable. it does not stop at the surface, but merges interior and exterior," (Bakhtin, 153) again echoing the topologies utilized by Lacan in writing the impossible-real.

While illustrations of anatomy don't represent individual bodies, but strive toward a norm to which actual bodies can be compared in terms of health or deformity, monsters need not perform this function. They are all variations with no standard. They are nothing but anomalies, there is no degree zero, no unmarked term. There is no final form that these are evolving toward. (Bataille, *Visions*, 53-56) Artists run ahead of taxonomists into uncharted places, both destroying and extending what the abstract machine of faciality began by detaching the head from the rest of the body and making it a face. Probe heads detach pieces of the face-landscape from despotic overcoding and allow them to escape passional black holes and form new arrangements and recombine along new vectors. They accelerate the process by which "'anchors of familiarity,' knots of potential meaning identified/recognized as 'the same', independently of their actual meaning" become detached from their surroundings. (Žižek 143-144)

Lacan calls this dimension of the signifying process (never entirely absent from speech) *lalangue*, consisting of signifiers of *jouis-sense* rather than discursive sense-making. "Children enjoy talking to themselves," Žižek writes. "It is only through the enjoyment provided by the very act of speaking, through the speaker getting caught in the closed loop of pleasurable self-affection, that humans can detach themselves from their immersion in their environs and thus acquire a proper symbolic distance toward it." (Žižek, 143-4) So this babble is both potentially a proto-language and/or the eruption within language of the real of enjoyment, the subversion of metaphoric meaning by the metamorphic stuff of which language is composed like a fertile compost heap crawling with larval subjectivities. As with Deleuze's rethinking of a kind of philosophical formalism, the point is not the "what" of represented objects, but the "how" of style. (Bogue, 118)

Productions of the scopic drive detached from any utilitarian discourse can be viewed as desiring-machines, representing nothing, signifying nothing. They are produced in the same way that they function, in other words, in a kind of short circuit, their production is their function. At one end of this spectrum they are analogous to the machine in Beckett's Molloy for sucking stones. In order to suck on a different stone of a limited set, but have an element of chance and surprise in the choice, Molloy invents a machinic arrangement using stones, pockets, hands and mouth, a machine of maximal efficiency with no external purpose other than its own circular repetition. At another

pole we have Rube Goldberg's machines, which have clear pragmatic purposes (swatting a fly, opening a door), but the means of achieving this end are ludicrously convoluted and improbable. These are among the possibilities in an a-cosmos governed by aesthetic drift. (Bogue, 70-1)

Uncanny alien imagery, despite a lack of clear functional purpose, can seem to cohere and suggest some inscrutable logic at work. For example, the quasi-diagrammatic paintings of Jonathan Lasker produce an effect of beauty as a kind of coherence that "seems accidental, contingent, and not subsumable under a concept of the understanding; but it nevertheless appears as if it could somehow be brought under such a concept, as if it conforms spontaneously to some law, even though we are unable to say what that law might be." (Hobbs, et. al, 8) "Things that come together, work, hold, but there is no grand design, rather there is a gnawing, shifting precision of thought." (Hobbs, 29) Lasker considers his work as an investigation of how a painting works and how we assemble sense "at a clinical distance." (Hobbs, 18)

Perhaps this is a new and heretical way that we should read Kant's claim that aesthetic response is disinterested. It is not simply that we can experience form as beautiful, (or as the implied converse: as grotesque, etc.) apart from any pathological interest for us as beings with appetites, but conversely that even in the experience of phenomena which has no use-value for us, there is still a stain of subjective enjoyment that persists regardless.

This 'stain' of enjoyment is related in Lacan's late seminars to the *sinthome*, and persists after a symptom is no longer viewed as a message to the Other to be deciphered. The *sinthome* no longer solicits the Other in the form of the analyst as focus for the transference, but acts as pure *jouissance* addressed to no one. It's the product of analysis that constitutes its 'end.' This conception of the cure is diametrically opposed to a client modeling/rebuilding their neurotic ego on the normative model of the analyst's 'healthy' ego, and is the central, polemical thread throughout Lacan's teaching aimed at the Ego Psychology of IPA. (Evans, 4-5, 52-53, 188-189)

For Lacan, while desire is always the desire of/for the Other, the drive on the other hand is machinic, a-signifying, asocial. Any telos involved is a headless one. Following Roger Caillois, member of *Acéphale*, for Lacan the image of the mantis "designates for us a certain link between acephalia and the telos of the transmission of life, between acephalia and the handing of the torch from one individual to another in a signified eternity of the species - namely, that *Geliist* [sexual desire or craving] does not involve the head." (Lacan, Seminar VIII, 213). Elizabeth Roudinesco's biography of Lacan notes that his "presence at the secret activities of *Acéphale* is attested by all the contemporary witnesses." (Roudinesco, 136)

Unlike Bataille's transgressive vision however, the *sinthome* does not take the form of either a mere acting-out as coded message to the Other, or in a more extreme form of transgression as a *passage à l'acte* that can only end 'successfully' as suicide, an exiting of the subject from the Other scene entirely. Instead of hungering for a final entropic merging with base matter, the *sinthome* is what allows one to live, through a re-knotting of the symbolic, imaginary and real registers through a process of topological cutting and stitching. Acting as a fourth ring in a more elaborate Borromean knot, the *sinthome* is a *détournement* of all the registers into more complex, proliferating structures of utterly unique (contagious...), non-orthopedic forms of *jouissance*, varieties of enjoying the generalized lack of the Other in the a-cosmos we inhabit. Rather than Oedipal rage against a God-shaped hole or warmed-over, puppet shows of superegoic family feuds, we have "the singular *lalangue*, the comedic disregard for proper names and paternal or imperial authority" of a Joycean knotwork. (Greenshields, 258)

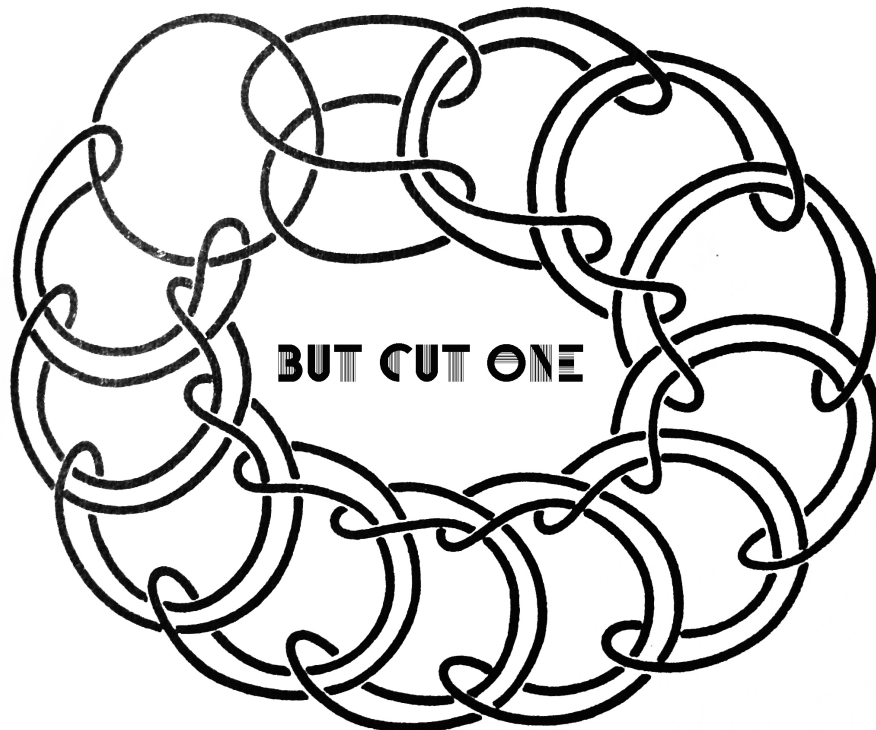
Improbable a-cosmic heterotopias can emerge unexpectedly from the fields opened up by the body subject to disciplinary regimes of knowledge/power. On a screen, in an anamorphic mirror, in topological figures like the Klein bottle or cross-cap that have no coherent difference between outside and inside, a self-recursive play can collapse the distinct roles of the prisoner in the

Panopticon cell and the guard in tower into new forms of display as *ars erotica*. Instead of being split by a disciplining superego and normalizing ideal-ego we have the possibility for a gaze in the process of becoming-other in the same breath that it fashions an uncanny faceless portrait as one of many possible versions. Anomalous imagery can be a trace of flows of metamorphic potential immanent to its coming-to-be. Artworks are monuments in the sense of being blocks of stored affects and sensations unhinged from the place in space and time from where they emerged. (Bogue, 168-9) As Deleuze puts it, in these works a diastolic fracturing is followed by a systolic contraction of these fragments into a contingent coherence. (Bogue, 119-121)

In images of this kind we can dress up, we can strip to our inverted and 'extimate' innards. This ludic activity can become a space of joyous absurdity, an open-ended tinkering with the machinery of cultural production, redirecting asignifying flows to press corrosively against signification, taking us on exploratory searches. Images can preserve sensations detached from any existing body as a referent, yet bearing traces of histories of where they temporarily stopped along a drift without definitive origin. They act as an index of processes of transformation of the scopic drive that have occurred vis-a-vis their biopolitical sources.



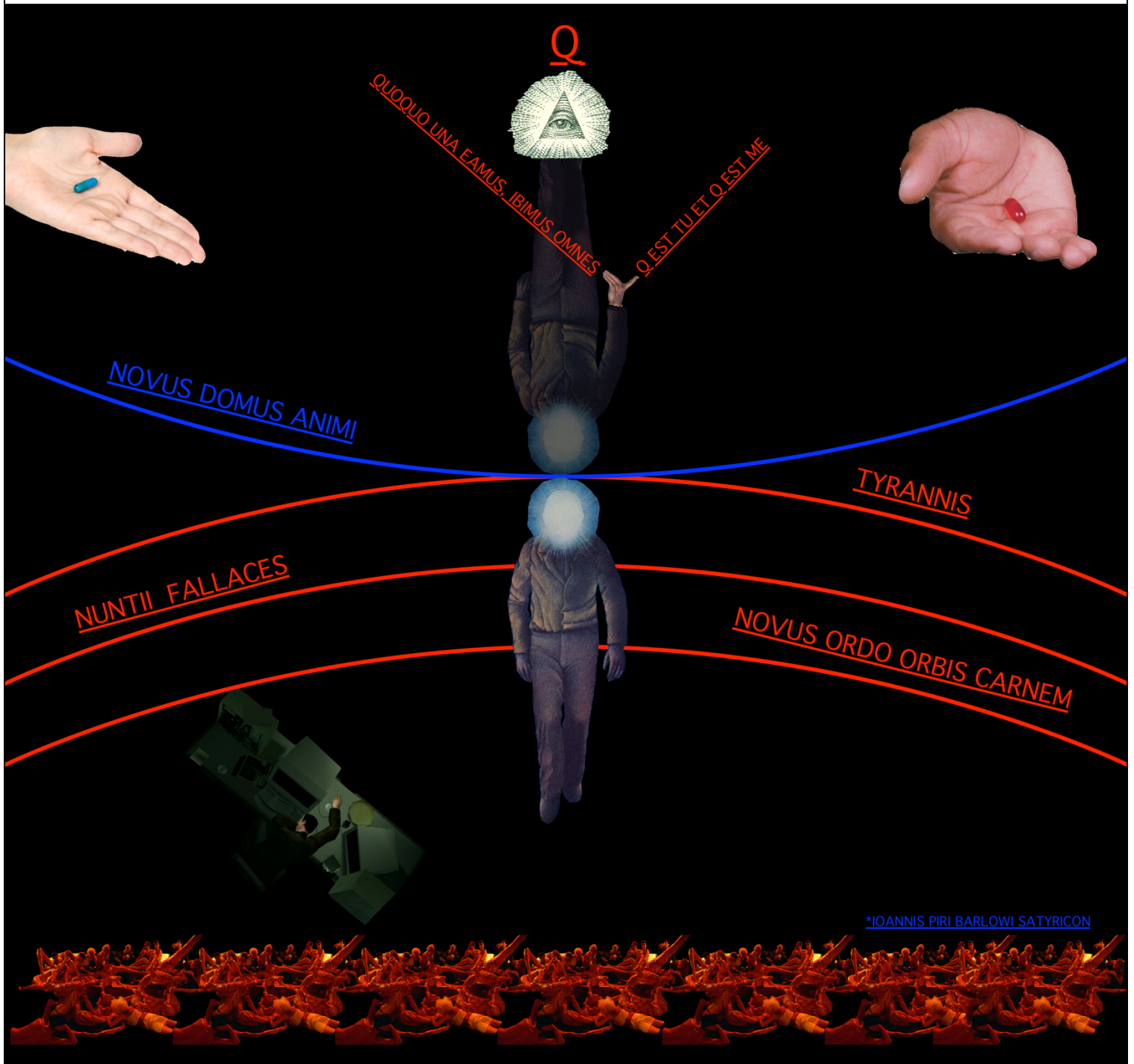
ADD AS MANY AS YOU LIKE



AND THEY ALL FALL APART

A Satire of John Perry Barlow

Zzzz



Defacing the Tree of Life: Dialectic and Perversion

ERIC ORTIZ

In October 1986, Acéphale published a set of 11 points to establish their program against the existing world in favor of a universal community, upholding acephalic play and perversion. Of particular interest are the following points:

- 6) *Take upon oneself perversion and crime, not as exclusive values, but as integrated within the human totality.*
- 7) *Fight for the decomposition and exclusion of all communities national, socialist, communist or churchly-- other than the universal community.*
- 9) *Take part in the destruction of the existing world, with eyes open to the world to come.*

These points are followed by Acéphale's *Sacred Conspiracy*, "it is necessary to become different or else cease to be," or, in other words, egosyntony and homophily or survival. While these may sound like admirably perverse aspirations, Žižek offered the critique that transgression always-already has surreptitious loyalty to the transgressed law, making perversion and difference little more than a boring fetish upholding a psychosocial (libidinal) status quo. In some lecture somewhere, Žižek went on somewhere to mention that Bataille's commitment to perversion-qua-status quo led him to oppose the sexual revolution on the grounds that it would remove the thrill of transgression from sexual perversion; a model of the world wherein transgression exits entirely outside the status quo and is not eventually folded into the status quo allows for the proper development of an Outside, while forbidding true incorporation of the transgressed elements requiring total revolution for them to enter the everyday world¹. Can a case be made for perversion which retains the thrill of perversion-as-such without permanently holding onto the psychosocial status quo? If not, then from where should Acéphale take its cues, and from where does the New (a revolution, newness, alien territory) emerge?

I.

If we consider the psychosocial (libidinal) status quo (or the Thing) as a set of objects/movements and that this set already contains the object/movement of transgression within it (i.e. their subversion/decay/decomposition- are these substantively different things?), then what is the set of things not contained within this quo-set? Is this new set entirely neutral to the status quo, i.e. not a threat to the existence of the status quo, not subversive, or does it contain hostile elements?: For the sake of argument, not all that is immediately perverse or subversive is necessarily included in the status quo, although it may be incorporated/reterritorialized at a later point. This "outside" set is then at least partially in flux with this "inside" set qua decay:

¹ What Bataille did not realize here is that the world he wished to live in where perversion's thrills would never leave would leave the world at risk for total consumption by the Outside of transgression, i.e. total revolution.

Decay is an artificializing process that is promulgated on the substratum of all modes of survival (beings). In other words, decay-- unlike death-- is not external to survival, for it perpetuates itself on the substratum of survival, in order to indefinitely postpone death and absolute disappearance.²

Whereas this hostile set has been described as being a set external to the quo-set, there is a different set of elements which survive, within which agents contained within both the status quo and hostile sets are included.

In decay, the being survives by blurring into other beings, without losing its ontological registers. In no way does decay wipe out or terminate, on the contrary it keeps alive.³

Decay in this blurring capacity maps with Žižek's and Lacan's observation of perversion being folded into and preserving the status quo. According to Negarestani, decay doesn't necessarily negate the nature of beings/the status quo, but rather the decaying being mutates with other beings to sustain both. In this way:

Decay undermines death and destruction by bringing them to a place where there is no formative power ... and hence where formation defies both wholesome integrity and death or erasure. By degenerating all aspects of formation, decay ungrounds the very ground upon which power is conducted, distributed, and established.⁴

An agent which sustains itself by decaying may therefore simultaneously be preserving elements of the quo-set while subverting the power upon which the quo-set is situated. The hostile set may therefore be described as embodying *undercover softness*. The new surviving set, made from the union of the quo-set and the hostile set, is a being of pure survival that is rotting at its core. In contradistinction to the idea that this rotting set-organism must be impure through this perverse blurring of the set elements and undermining of set integrity, being rotten allows the opportunity for this set-organism to further refine itself:

*...being qua being is that which continues to remain after all belongings are shed, removed and taken away. This is what makes *aphairesis* the fundamental procedure in revealing or exposing the One... despite being chained to the festering corpse or being subtracted, the soul is able to conserve some of itself and render the body intelligible. In the same vein, no matter what is taken away from the Divine, it will continue to remain as the One already there.⁵*

There is some fundamental core which is salvaged or even rendered pure only through decay. It is possible that this is what Bataille was referring to when he described the 'organic character of society' existing after all social institutions have been perverted. The superficial solidity of this core and especially of the quo-set is retained through moves of reduction (sucking in void) and covering-up, ()hole complex. But if the surviving set is to remain pure and decay is, as a process, undermining death and destruction, the decayed set elements must go somewhere external to the survival set. This outside set or sets is a collection of sloughed-off decayed and deformed elements

² Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Negarestani, *The Corpse Bride: Thinking with Nigredo*, Collapse, IV, 138.

of both the status quo and hostile exterior elements, which collects outside of and within the grooves of survival left behind by the aphairetic process (nigredo), dust. Per Negarestani:

Dust simultaneously emerges as the alpha and omega xero-data; there is no signal or message other than the compositional insurgency of dust, whose syncretism and obscure polytics of creation can effectively registered or rooted on a flux of dust...⁶

What lies outside of the survival-set, then, is not death, but an (un)intelligible stream of dust-data-sets. Perversion is decay, and decay creates dust. The status quo is seemingly preserved, but even as hostile and harmless agents outside the status quo are incorporated, reduced, and distorted with the status quo, there is a stream of altered outside-data-- xenoparticulate matter-- being created, slowly accumulating, covering everything, threatening to creep back in. As Matt Colquhoun and Žižek remarked recently⁷, the tendency (of capitalism) to let the Outside in does not diminish or remove the fact of the Outside. The dust persists.

II.

What is perversion? The clinical psychoanalytic interpretation (i.e. Freud and Lacan) describes perversion in terms of sadomasochism and/or voyeurism-exhibitionism. Whereas Freud defined perversion as sexually deviant behavior, Lacan postulated perversion as a clinical structure distinct from perverse acts; the perverse subject can act in socially-approved ways and still be a pervert, and a non-perverse subject can engage in perverse acts and not necessarily be a pervert. The pervert knows very well what the Other desires of them, and moves directly in response to this desire; the pervert embodies the desire of the Other, disavowing castration. In more concrete terms, the perverse clinical structure does not necessarily have to be embodied by unsustainable acts such as sadomasochism, but rather exists in a fundamentally alien (alien-without-alienation) manner to the world.

III.

Speaking broadly about dialectics⁸, the system of reason which Hegel describes is an ongoing process of folding, unfolding, and subtraction-refinement (aphairesis) of knowledge to reach the Absolute. This system can be seen as operating similarly to perversion within the status quo, engaging in a continuous process of burrowing-out, contradiction (negation), decaying, surviving. The Absolute which is brought forth from the dialectic is, again speaking broadly, meant to encompass all of pure reason and human history in a quasi-mystical sense (a holdover from Hegel's contemporaries)⁹, embodying some transcendental truth of the world. Bound up in the Absolute, naturally, is the status quo-set and the perverting agents of the outside. Because the Absolute emerges via aphairesis (decay, sublation), it must therefore be surviving. In a letter to Albert Goldman in 1940, Trotsky wrote, "Burham doesn't recognize dialectics but dialectics does not permit him to escape from its net¹⁰," often (helpfully) misquoted as, "you may not be interested in the dialectic, but the dialectic is interested in you." From its inception, the dialectic has always been characterized as being somehow sentient in its dynamics and seeming ability to anticipate movements in rhetoric and human intelligence as a whole. The dialectic is constantly intruding upon

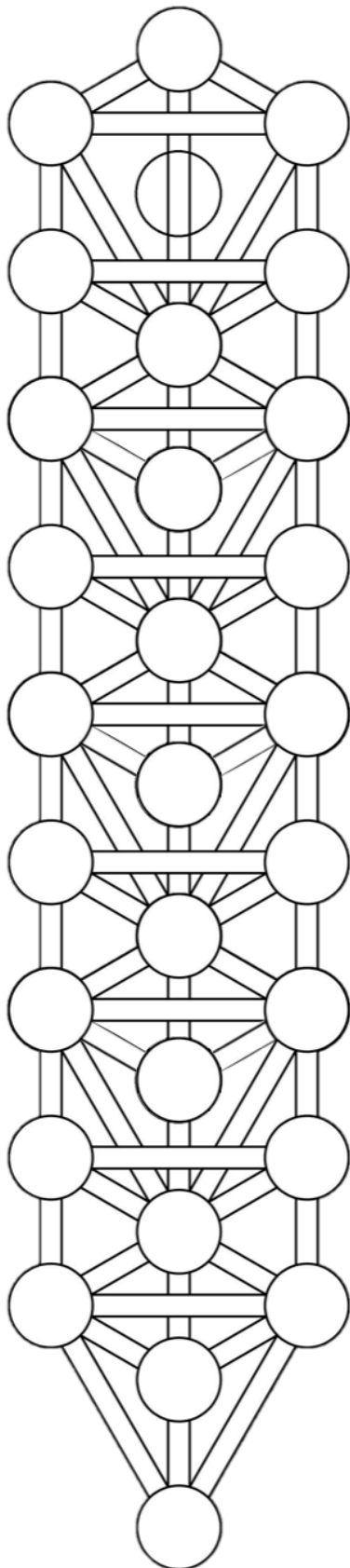
⁶ Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials*.

⁷ xenogothic.com/2019/04/08/zizek-on-accelerationism

⁸ So as to prevent this section from requiring too much knowledge of Hegel, and to disappoint Hegelians.

⁹ See also: the Akashic Records, Rosicrucianism, alchemy, Qabbalah.

¹⁰ Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism*, 1942



human history, infecting the spirit of man with the dust of decay (negation, sublation, apharesis), xenodata streams of junked Reason and Spirit as cosmogenic horror. Hegel himself, in turn, was inscribed upon the dialectic, never properly annihilating in the sense of organic matter, but rather dissolving into infectious xenoparticles, the spores of which latched onto the dialectic. Hegel is alive, and his corpse has infected all of history and reason!

IV.

There are four classical, principal elements: earth, wind, fire, and air; these elements are, to some, given a combination of two properties: wet, dry, hot, and cold. From combinations of these base elements, it was believed, all matter is composed. But perversion and decay alter these elements, such that they are replaced by alien agents with the properties (wet/cold/dry/hot) of the missing element. This has perverse effects upon the matter formed by this perverted elemental square, fundamentally changing the composition of the world. An example of this is oil (*naphi*) or LCL (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*), which is cold and wet like water, and forms perversely altered matter. While in *Evangelion*, we don't see this altered elemental cycle played out, it acts as a sort of lubricant for storytelling, filling the entry plugs and *Evangelion* unit pilots' lungs; in this way, the elemental square represents a narrative of reality and the altered element represents the counterfactuals upon which (fiction) storytelling subsists. But what if all the elements are replaced, such that there is no reference to the quo-set left? Surely such departures would be considered too alien to be proper stories and too subversive to be recognized as the four constituent elements of matter. But this is an inevitable consequence of the cosmogenic horror of perversion and decay and dust, creating distorted alien agents which slowly erode and replace the constituent parts of reality. Contra Land, wherein the dialectic is expected to suddenly stop working, it is more useful to think of the dialectic as necessarily having an ending which it itself creates through the endless purification-decay of reason, nigredo, the alchemical process of the Magnum Opus.

Besides famously believing that lead could be turned to gold, alchemists believe in a substance known as the Philosopher's Stone, created through the Magnum Opus, a process through which matter undergoes up to 12 phases, most well-recognized among them being nigredo (blackening, rotting, burning, fermenting), albedo (ablution, division of opposites, whitening), citrinitas (dawning of inner light, yellowing), and rubedo (unification of opposites, reddening). Each of these major phases can be assigned a base element: nigredo, earth (cold, dry);

albedo, water (cold, wet); citrinitas, air (hot, wet); and rubedo, fire (hot, dry). The most important steps for our purposes are nigredo and rubedo, as nigredo can describe the murky process of apairesis-decay itself, and rubedo can best describe the eternal flames of the Philosopher's Stone-quaa-Absolute. These alchemical processes can have their representative elements replaced by xenochemical agents to subvert or hijack the Magnum Opus and the dialectic and produce impure or totally alien substances and narratives¹¹.

V.

Despite being called “the tree of life,” the Sephiroth more closely resembles a rhizome of interconnected elements (or a Markov blanket broadly dividing self-organizing nested systems from one another via an “inside-outside” boundary¹²) describing the nature of creation, beginning ex nihilo (there are several “nothings” in Qabbala) and transitioning into 10 (or 11) phases or aspects of creation¹³, ending at the Kingdom of Heaven (Malkuth). Each aspect is given a circle or node in the Sephiroth, and each node is assigned a number. In the Sephiroth, God is represented as 1, Keter, the Crown, but emerges directly from the nothingnesses, and all of creation follows. There is a Sephiroth for each of the worlds: Assiah, the physical world; Yetzirah, the psychological world; Briah, the mental world; and Atziluth, the spiritual world. Finally, there is KADMON, the Philosopher's Stone, final destination, Adam, completion, kingdom. Each layer of the Sephiroth can correspond to an element, and each world tree itself overall represents an element: Assiah, earth; Yetzirah, air; Briah, water; and Atziluth, fire. Because these Sephiroths correspond to elements, they can, in turn, also correspond to the alchemical processes of the Magnum Opus; it is entirely possible that all of creation, including god, is engaged in the alchemical process of the dialectic. The worlds are layered over one another in a particular order, with realms 6-10 laying atop realms 1-6. Particular to the hermetic tradition of Qabbala (as opposed to the Jewish mystical Kabbalah), each world is assigned gematria, a word or phrase corresponding to the human body, Ya (head), He (limbs), Vau (torso), He, which combines to form YHVH, the hidden fifth word representing god as a complete body. Opposing the Sephiroth is the solitary tree of the Qliphoth, the satanic complex made of the husks blasted out during the process of creation, a void in existence, ungrounding, nemat-space, Qhole complex. It is united with the Sephiroth at the level of 10, the Kingdom, and flows in reverse, with a separate demon for every sphere. There is less concrete information about the Qliphoth as people who embrace the left-hand path are often quite slippery¹⁴, but one can infer so as above, so as below. Qliphoth may very well embody the perverted aspects of the Qholesome elements of the Qabbalah, a demon at every juncture. The entire Qabbalistic process is entropic, and Qliphoth represents the beginning and end of entropy. The dialectic is negentropic but nevertheless produces excess energy which is sloughed off to the Outside; the dialectic is complete but casts a shadow outside itself which threatens to one day consume it.

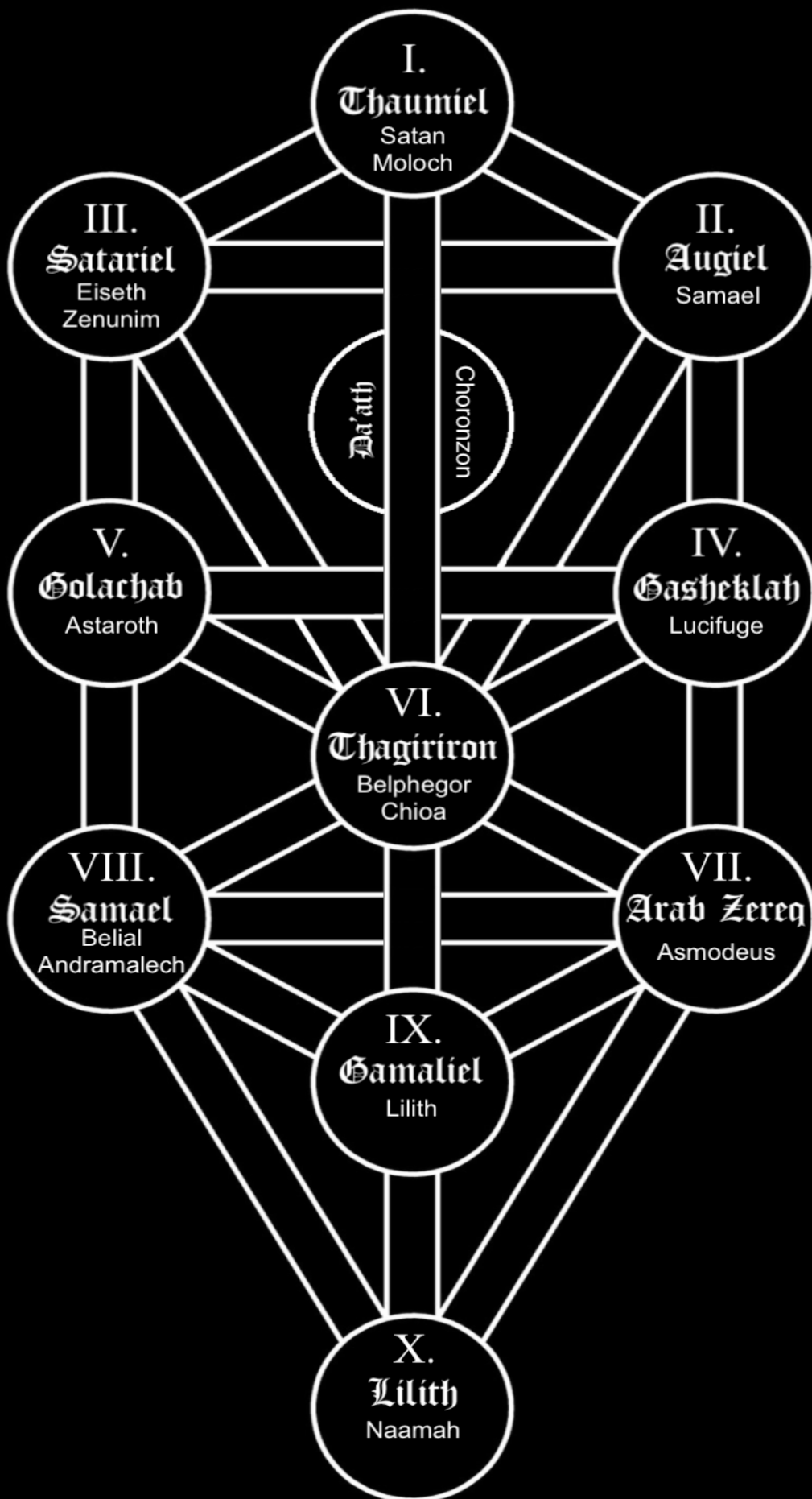
VI. CONCLUSION

¹¹ Loathe as I am to mention Jung, some of his work involves alchem/ so one might suggest that the entire Magnum Opus as it applies to the human psyche may be hijacked by xeno-agents.

¹² Kirchhoff, Parr, Palacios, Friston, & Kierstein, 2018, *The Markov blankets of life: autonomy, active inference, and the free energy principle*. [dx.doi.org/10.1090/rsif.2017.0792](https://doi.org/10.1090/rsif.2017.0792)

¹³ Between Kabbalists and Qabbalists, the abyss/death is inconsistently labeled a phase one passes through or given its own separate circle.

¹⁴ Slick with not-water (wet, cold)



Bulls and Bird Songs

CHRISTIAN GABRIEL



BULLS AND
BIRD SONGS,
KRISTIN MIDDLETON

*What sounds rise from the acephalic stump
Great heaving rushes
Hot air like a charging bull
A minotaur with Horns of headless
So too the whistling and twittering of the exotics*

*When men had heads they spoke from their throat
Entreating each other
With songs sung falsely*

*Without the head, men lost rest, nothing to sit on the
pillow by night*

*But the flesh was willed, and ran, the ease of a spiders
hydraulics propelled their heart
The tantric high, spluttering throated breathes*

But there's no face to plaster over the box of Wheaties

*The victor over time
Jeers dull, singing through their wound
Directionless dribbling laughter
Emitted from the contorted belly*

*But what strikes the men with eyes, is their dance
Primitive, dangerous to onlookers
A violent wave
Forced to shore itself on land like a dying leviathan*

*In these throes it rends the earth, striking clay
ferociously
Bitter fermenting fluids drain out
The drunken feelings of tasteful man, are shattered*

*Dance and dance and danced, did the plague ridden
man, sucking in air through that great hole*

Memorandum Concerning PNEUMA (09/21/2019)

SERCIO SEGURA

To my esteemed colleagues,

After thorough review, the incident of 30 April 2019 is now under official investigation. While significant amounts of correspondence have been collected over the last month, the existence of such successfully “deënsouled persons” has yet to be confirmed.

Concerning the purported deënsoulment project designated “PNEUMA”, our liaison at Gloriana House has confided that his knowledge concerning the existence and operations of PNEUMA is as limited as our own. That said, they have helpfully provided information confirming that paperwork was filed deeming Ms. Mina X of Southwark an unperson on the 31 July 2019, three months after her initial reported disappearance, two months following admittance to Charing Cross Hospital in Fulham, and one month following her second disappearance aboard an Aer Lingus flight from London to Dublin.

From: XXX

To: XXX

Subject: Mina Unwell

Good afternoon Professor,

I understand it’s been a while, but I’m feeling like I’ve had increasingly fewer people to talk to since visiting Trinity in May. Mina is unwell. She rarely speaks, and if she does, it’s little more than a few mumbled words at a time. She still eats, walks, works, and bathes on her own volition, but in a sort-of detached, mechanical kind of way.

I’ve already taken her down to the station twice to report men spying on us from across the street. I can’t say that they’ve done anything but I’ve for sure seen successive men just watching the flat’s entryway from the bench across the road- just sitting and staring. Sometimes standing, maybe. Sometimes, I think I can hear people walking around inside at 2, maybe 3 in the AM, stepping around softly, making the floorboards creak as they quietly pace the kitchen and the living room.

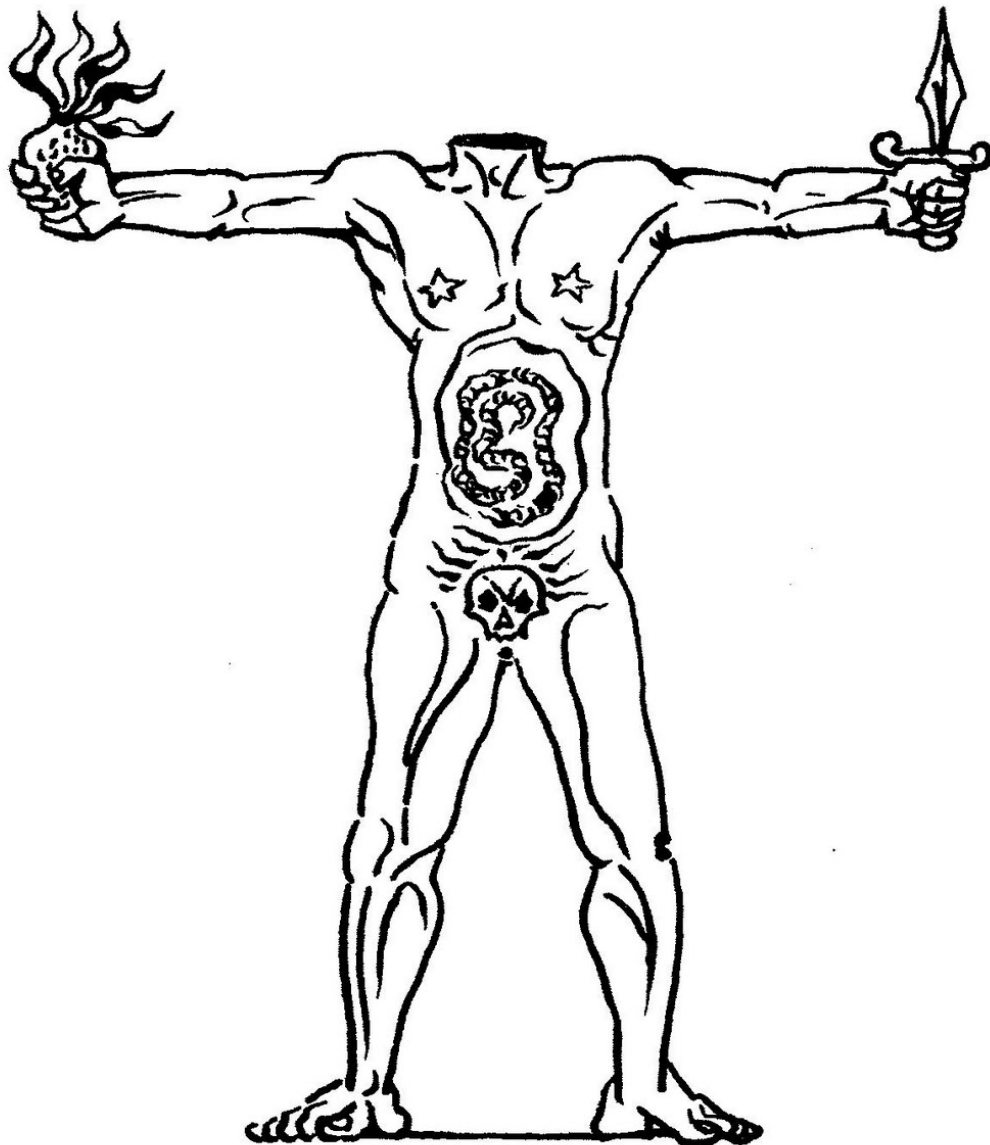
The police won’t do a thing. I think they think I’ve become paranoid. Mina simply doesn’t care, even when I point out the same man sitting on the bench every morning, watching our flat. They’re there all day, looking normal, I suppose. Not the kind of black-suited sunglass-wearing men you see in the movies. They’ve never talked to us. Never gotten too close. They just sit and watch and sit and watch and sit. Mina hasn’t been the same since she disappeared. You know that it was the night before the lecture when she vanished for three hours. Three hours that we spent combing the streets, shouting her name, even going to the

police to file a missing persons report. We found her back where we left her, at the bar, seeming fine. But she's not, professor, she hasn't been the same since.

Please call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX. I don't know who else to go to. My parents keep asking if I've been to the doctor. I can't get ahold of XXX either. His cell goes straight to "the number you have dialed is unavailable." As you read this, I'm likely making my way down to Trinity right now with Mina. If I vanish and you don't see me after Thursday, please file a missing persons report and contact my family immediately. I think I saw one of the men who watch our place board the Thameslink with us. Jesus Christ I'm scared.

Please call me. Please.

XXX





Two Ted Kaczynskis

THE GOD DISK

Theodore John Kaczynski is dead and has been for two decades, happening upon very clear identifiable differences in facial structures.

There are two Unabombers, that is the message. A false unity. “University Bomber” Uni meaning one, leaves the clear indication that the manifest was meant to unify otherwise divided groups into mass support of the technological revolution.

The same tired old nagging about MK Ultra always rears its head when Kaczynski is brought up. The crossdressing, the brainwashing, all of it. This is superficial junk. The aim of MK Ultra (Mind Kontrol Ultra) has always been the ability to fracture “normal” minds. The Unity Bomber is the punchline of an ongoing joke. The cabin is Dorothy’s house. Ted wasn’t in Oz until he started sending packages, and by God, you people don’t know what the Wizard is.

Theodore John Kaczynski was beheaded in the Acephalic Rite in United States Penitentiary, Administrative Maximum Facility in Florence, Colorado in 2000. The Wizard finally came out from behind the curtain, and he was carrying a bone saw.

The replacement of Theodore with a double is obvious, alluded to by the two (2=1) stories. David Kaczynski marks his older brother for death. Betrays his own blood, and spills the soup. Cain is the older brother and Abel is the younger brother, the inversion is important here, as two (2=1) games are being played here. One thinks Ted is Cain, out of his aptitude for causing death and love of nature, being cast out. While simultaneously David is killing his brother, marking him for death.

There we have the story of Two Kaczynskis. Adam and Eve didn’t stop with them, MK Ultra doesn’t leave loose ends. The bombing was a farce, a tool, like McVeigh, like all of them. Ted was a puppet, aware and unaware at times, and ultimately the Body. The ritual itself followed in the Greco-Egyptian magical tradition of Acephalic/Headless or Bornless Right. The Holy Guardian Angel, the Daemon of Ted came forth, the ultimate aim of MK Ultra is the fracturing of personality, and the inflation of various parts. The final step is the invocation of the supra-personality, the True Will. The Ego is stripped along with the head. And by god, the body moves, it breathes horribly, it is.

You hear little stories about blinking decapitated heads, but no one focuses on the true self, the body, like the Chicken you read about or the worm, they keep on living. But only for a time. In increments it sings, but not like you or me, that wound moves, and sounds are made. They’ve been doing this for years, and at some point, they understood them. MK Ultra is an experiment in communication with the Other. You establish a series of mind controlled victims, they endure a wicked and bizarre life completely unaware, and in the end, their Daemon has something to say about it all. What it means. It sings.

Appendix: Bibliography to “Shambles”

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