



ANATOMY OF THE INCORPOREAL

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The shadowless person

Unveiling the shadowless person initiates a foray into the strange anatomy of disembodiment and the operations of the otherworldly. If the glance is a blow, a look is more extensive still, absorbing the properties of sightlessness, unravelling a slow memory which unites an accumulation and discharge of time. Sight is always already an action, or, as Jean-Luc Nancy puts it, the participation of sight is in the visible, and the participation of the visible in the invisible nothing but sight itself (Nancy, p7, 2008). On its arrival, light-time is a thickened organization of touch: an emissive, gathered and constitutive gaze of someone whose eyes remain unseen, a blind spot without which there would be no visibility. Others arrive: foresight, hindsight and blindsight. They envelop us, operating in different modes and timeframes. Variations of exposure then radiate bodily ecology, updating the paradigm from anima to apparition, psyche to symbiosis, charisma to luminescence. Natasha Demkina – depicted as herself in *The Girl with X-ray Eyes* – personifies this project, played out relative to an algorithm's urge to test what are ultimately unverifiable claims. Her arrival is like the startling sensation of a missing family member appearing unannounced, the instrument of her penetrative vision an irreconcilable truth-or-dare. As looking transforms into seeing, it produces radiance: a doubling effect that extends beyond the mostly lacklustre human eye and its superficial view of surfaces. Permeation of the skin explodes intimacy, inspiring the legibility of a new bodily, creaturely order. Secrets, untouchables, an array of insensibility and the transparency constituent of shadowlessness display a constellation of effects, garnered from the dynamic side-effects of other species towards the sphere of the screen, where the forces of permeation gather, comprising an anatomy of the incorporeal.



Fig 1. Tho-Radia advert from 1933.
Face powder containing trace elements of radium
From the collection of the artist. Photograph by Phillip Warnell, 2019

X-ray and the advent of cinema were concomitant, in November and December 1895 respectively. The rays were quickly associated with the screen, seen as a panacea, a cure-all. The true effects of repeated, multiple exposure to them (both x-ray and cinema) remain unknown, even following widespread use, due to the misdiagnosis of (the rays') all too real side-effects (Caufield, p11, 1989). The stock use in shoe shops of the fluoroscope epitomised a naïve, eerie preoccupation with x-rays' technological, dynamic application, such was the need to measure the cramps of a growing foot. Housed in various contraptions, ray 'treatments' were designed as a macabre way of removing unwanted bodily hair or inducing cures, using the mild shocks of an electro-therapeutic violet ray. Wild products and bogus claims proliferated, intensifying claims of their efficacy. Z-rays were even, erroneously, 'discovered'. Beyond vision, radioactive vitality and an ineffable sparkle are felt if not seen commodities, induced by radioactive chocolate, condoms, toothpaste and drinking water. The extraordinary proliferation of ray sparkle still persists, in associations with cleanliness, health, purity and – most especially – performance (Warnell, p107, 2010).

Pregnable of Eye: X-rays, Vision and Magic

“Quite apart from all the metaphorical references to looking into the secrets hidden in another’s mind or breast, mesmerists and spiritualists had been claiming the power to see through opaque objects for much of the nineteenth century. Accounts of the prehistory of ‘animal magnetism’ regularly mention multiple individuals endowed with this faculty... the dream of X-ray vision is ancient, abiding and widely broadcast. X-ray vision is an imaginary redemption of one of the most fundamental deficiencies of sight, namely that it gives us access only to the outsides of things, to their aspects and superficial appearances”. (Connor, p75, 2008)



My filmed encounter with Demkina in *The Girl with X-ray Eyes* performed documentary as a visionary and alchemical image. Natasha believes she can contact future audiences through her inscription in the medium, her eye radiating as well as receiving light. The film's focus was on negotiation and role swapping, around a pivotal axis of seeing and looking as veritable acts. Our roles were provisional and mutable, introducing ideas concerned with the negotiated use of cinematic space, questioning the status, agenda and motive of the artist or 'director'. Our dialogue (and the camera) encircled, resounding, our revolutions permeated by an electric gaze. Both subject and consultant, Natasha controlled the methods of scrutiny during this strange consultation, directing our working situation: its duration, proximity and intensity. She does not physically touch her subject, as if some metaphysical immanence were already a constant, and her vision displays the capable, dilated vision of 'one who can see', realized as an incorporated technology, discreetly fuelled with overtures of faith and occultist traditions. She is also analogous to the electrical, and can short-circuit her vision if caught looking at herself.

Excerpt from *The Glance as a Blow* – Phillip Warnell (2012), 2nd Ural Biennial, 2012 pp 74-81

Natasha's suggestion of speaking to the future through her inscription or registration on film might seem an outrageous claim, considered as a supra-organic, or metaphysical, ability. Yet the reach of advertisements, television, celebrity or speechmaking all suffice to infuse just such an affect: of inspiring, changing or influencing at distance – in the unfettered manner of a teenager, dressed entirely relative to the preferences (seen on screen) of their favourite pop star. Natasha's influence is accomplished through the direct influence of her gaze being indefinitely suspended in screen-ready mode.

Unpublished report on Phillip Warnell, June 12th 2007 - Natasha Demkina

I think I will start with the brain. In the rear part of the head there is evidence of spasms of the blood vessels, especially on the right-hand side, above the ear. In the future it can affect the blood supply to the eyeground and the eyesight. There is rather obvious inflammation at the back of the top jaw, left side. The infection has spread and got in to the sinus, which is immediately noticeable. Let's continue, the spine. In the neck section, between the C-4 and C-5 cervical vertebrae, there is a disc that is slightly squashed on the right. Taking into account a strangulation of the anterior spinal artery, there will be an interruption of the blood supply to the brain. In the right lung there is something. It is somewhere around 0.7cm in diameter, filled with liquid. Actually it doesn't look like a cyst, maybe just an inflammation. It is breaking up the wholeness of the lung. Technically, it should show up on an x-ray. Next, the digestive tract. Because there are widespread bacteria in the mouth due to the inflammation, the mucous membrane in the intestine is also irritated, affecting the intestinal microflora. There is also, in some places, between the ascending and the transverse colons, a narrowing of the small intestine. I'm not sure whether it is a small commissure or something else. The liver, in the right lobe there are some small infection centres, little knots causing disfunction. The sources of infection are not on the visceral surface of the liver, they are in the actual peritoneum. If we look at the visceral surface, at the actual liver, its colour scheme is a little bit different to that of the left lobe. The means that the blood filtration process is disrupted. Now the, the pancreas. Its head is slightly hardened and there are some signs of pancreatitis although it's sort of coming and going, not permanently present so to speak. The cardiovascular system. The visco-elasticity of blood is higher than normal and because of that there are some idle occurrences in the micro-circulatory channel. As for the heart itself, there is a light myocardial hypertrophy of the neural filters, which may be caused by being excited.

As both director and patient, my role was properly ambivalent. The trajectory of gymnastic sightlines and direction produces unpredictable circumstances, a precarious circumnavigation coupled with an encircling film crew who claimed Natasha's operational vision flattened our batteries and interfered with the recordings, in keeping with how bodily proximity 'tunes' the soviet Theremin (the instrument of choice for non-contact, 'force-field' accompaniment). Just prior to shooting, our engagement involved tense negotiations, 'tuning' our anticipation into Natasha's pre-commitment to participating and establishing agreed, contractual terms. If the circumstances of a film's making are embedded in its subsequent material, this resonates with the discreet politics and surveillance of post-Soviet era engagement.

Whether in ESP, where extra sensory perception meets the beyond in a more fictional form, or ECP, where a sense of someone's continued presence persists in their absence (after death) – perception assumes the role of a technology placed both out of and as a goal for science's reach, arriving with associated, unavoidable questions of belief. The irreconcilable circumstances of the beyond contend with the irreducible gap between doubt and assertion. An opening shot, and to paraphrase Freud, is that it is simply time to be skeptical of one's skepticism. More evidently, the status of bodies as purveyors of decidedly uncertain truths (at least those under Natasha's scrutiny) promotes ours as an era of the shadowless or transparent person, one permeated by light, illuminated in all directions by rays, pierced by medical imaging and fractured by endless modes of positivity. (Baudrillard, p44, 1993).

R is for Radiation

If forces and rays are marked by their unseen presence and effects: contaminating, radiating and permeating bodies, what does the filmmaker do when the 'thing' itself is not present, or at least not visibly so? What do you film when material signs and the visual field are unavailable? The gymnasium as context for film is significant here. It is a guiding place of sight lines, a grid where coloured lines, trajectories, targets and zones of intensity map, train and optimize the body. Code, espionage and geometry meet in an anatomical, muscular, diagnostic and optical form for the development of the collective body, a competition set amidst limbering exercises and programs of inter-bodily choreography.

Following exposure to low-level radiation, the body experiences an intensified level of wellbeing, before the injury caused by ionisation takes effect: a chain reaction causing chemical changes, radiation sickness and decomposition of the soul. When plants or porous minerals absorb vast quantities of radioactive emissions, they become capable of its signature autoradiographs or automatic x-ray shadows. X-rays of the body were initially thought prophetic, revealing the subject's mortality, evidence of their immobilization rendering the death drive within a living entity, and representing them as if already 'post'-life. Certain substances are still modelled on a duplicitous plan for glowing, hairless, sterile bodies, containing the promise of radiant energy. Akin to the culture of the athleticized body, produced in the optimising circumstances of the gymnasium and health food shop, processed materials such as flakes, powders and gels, in cereal, washing powder, and hair and skin products, emit a powerful (advertising) placebo – inner strength and a healthy halo suggesting immunity, longevity and immunity to disease (Warnell, p18, 2010).

Roentgen's discovery of x-rays' shadowy resolution was famously first demonstrated via an image of his wife's hand, incorporating a symbolic element – her wedding ring – which remained opaque. Just as the true addressee of an unsent letter might be the atmosphere of the Lacanian force the big other, the elemental form of a double-wedding – an exchange of vows between insubstantial ray and alchemical bond – links an inexistent release. The backdrop to Roentgen's new ray harnessed fire, electricity and other discreetly permeating forces; atmospheres which were already eating away at the collective body of the labour force in Victorian London. The condition known as 'Phossy Jaw' mainly affected those who worked as match makers, with glowing technologies harnessing unknown forces in dark occupations, a prelude to the exploitative effects of simply licking a paintbrush, or dipping a match which could then be struck in all weathers. Indeed, the 'tipping' of dial painter brushes, used in factories to produce glow in the dark watches, culminated in so much absorbed radium that film could even be developed in the mouths of workers. (Lippit, p169, 2005).

William Cordes – my great-great-grandfather and a gas tester at Southwark – invented the first non-white phosphorescent match, a discovery he shared with the Mile End matchmaking company Bryant & May. His chemistry counteracted the vapours of a toxic disease which had directly exposed the mouth's skeletal interior, caused by the demands of industries that dominated London's East End – so smartly depicted at the turn of the century by undercover Jack London. The Victorian East End's industrial exposure to these deadly phenomenologies of the interior was already in full swing, by which time Jeremy Bentham's 'auto-icon' was also permanently installed and in operation, his cadaveric form on view (and still proactive in meetings) posthumously at University College London (UCL). Meanwhile, criminal apprenticeships were being served in

and around the exotic animal markets and murderous causes of east London's Old Nicol.

Famously culminating in the match girls' strike of 1888, Cordes' invention transformed the prolific production of firelighters, manufacturing processes and consequently the lives of otherwise deathly figures, reduced to living corpses in the making of a box of 'Lucifers'. As a Bryant & May promotional film put it: "tree trunks went in at one end, and millions and millions of little matches came out of the other".

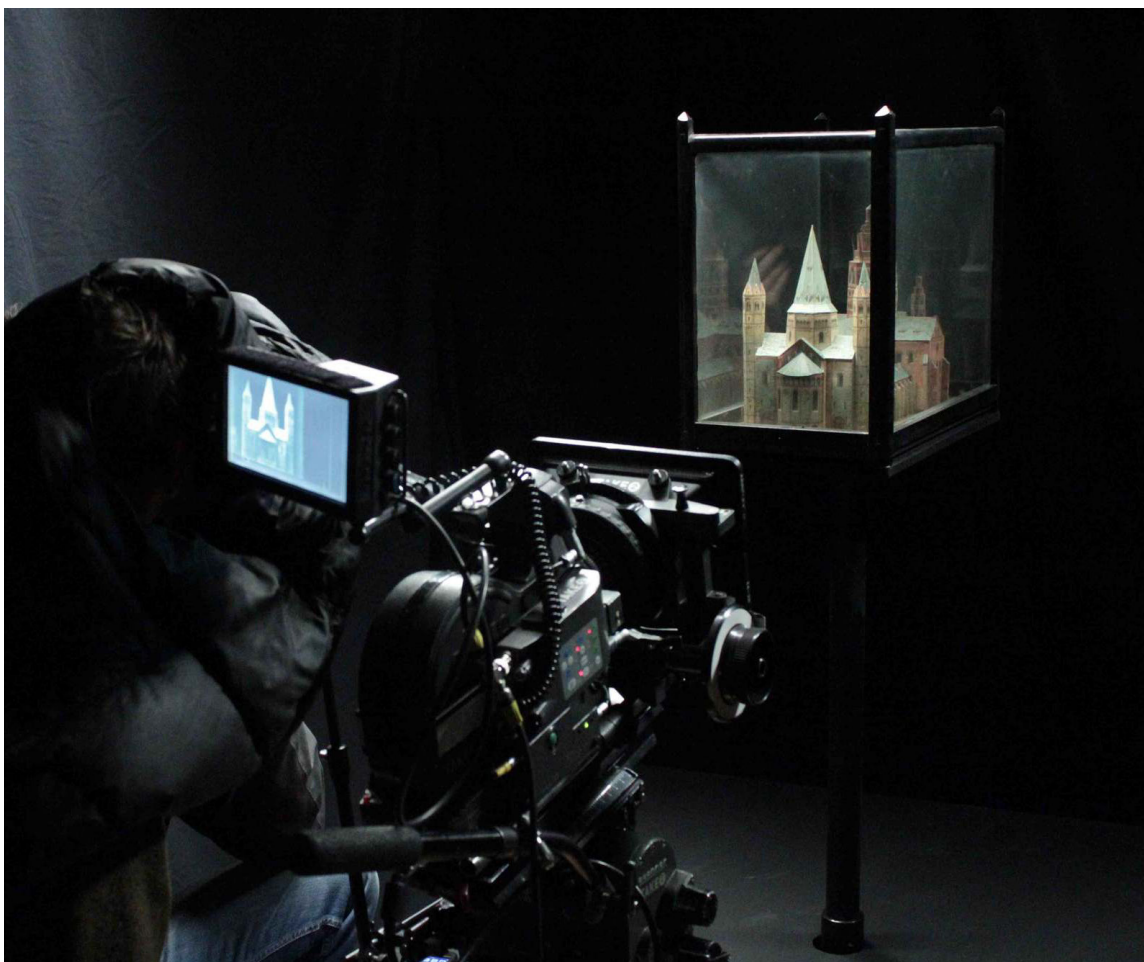


Fig 3: Production still from I first saw the light, filmed at the Royal London Hospital archive, 2012

Workers exposed to the fumes in match factories, in conditions which allowed the fumes to hang on the air, gave the factory an eerie blue-green glow, as their clothing glowed phantom-like in the dark. Those who inhaled too much rich atmosphere would have developed fluorescent vomit, blue breath and a faint glow around their mouths. Such was the uniquely unforgiveable, extreme setting in that other 'flicker in the dark' that the arrival of electric cinema, with its sixth sense, set an anticipatory air amid the freak shows of London's Whitechapel High Street (in which Joseph Merrick, the 'Elephant Man', was displayed, just opposite the London Hospital). There, waves of remote transmission technologies quivered on the air, and the heyday of spirit mediumship brought back the dead to the parlour in voice manifestation. This eerie, circumspect world – looking round and round – culminated in the discovery of the otherworldly rays, its death drive revealed in ethereal plasmic substances, matter through matter, and the ghostly contact made with shadowless bodies.

I first saw the light (Warnell, 2012) is a short silent film and a declaration on Merrick's continuing survival to this date. His strangely ubiquitous, eponymous air conveys both the violence of the era (via freak show, abject medical scrutiny and mob brutality) in which he was displayed as part-man, part-animal, and the extraordinary sensibility with which he responded to that profound dilemma. The film – a footnote to David Lynch's bio-fiction – privileges the remaining traces of Merrick's output. These are a model cathedral, now housed in an aquarium-like structure, and a two-page pamphlet, his bleak 'story' held within. The ennui he faced is encapsulated in the following part-poem he recites:

Tis true my form is something odd

But blaming me, is blaming god

Could I create myself anew

I would not fail in pleasing you

Was I so tall, could reach the pole

Or grasp the ocean with a span

I would be measured by the soul

The mind's the standard of the man

Forecast of a prognosis

At Harvard appeared Dudley Sargent's contribution to an unnerving, yet unhesitating vision of deliverance through wellbeing, the 'Inomotor' – prototype for the now-ubiquitous rowing machine (Sargent, 1892). This came concomitant with his bizarre institutional work on anthropometric profiling, in which he compiled an aggregated 'typical American' within a foreign body, assembling (not assembly) lines of thousands of peculiarly standardised measurements taken from students. The absurd, neo-classical fig leaf motif employed by Sargent marked an appropriately statuesque crotch for the (male) student body (their measurements somehow 'amalgamated' into the production of two unsurprisingly Aryan-looking statues, even sprayed gold at a later date) as an innocent. The 'typical American' was an Edenic, aestheticized and romanticized object, conjuring divisive bio-politics and propagating an embrace of the proto-eugenics to come. On the contrary, the body delights in taking geometric forms beyond such typecasts, unconforming to the standard types of anthropometric order. Beyond all measure, it serves as a stark reminder that whilst Bertillon's supposition of a predisposed criminal body was being served up – profiling and measuring techniques which could be predicted and an accompanying propensity which could be foreseen, a tendency of phrenology – it was in supreme, stark contrast to the universally acclaimed body, or to be more precise, the university body, one that created an entirely disproportionate identity and paradigm for bodily exemplars in representation.



Fig 4. Dudley Sargent's anthropometric survey of (naked) Harvard students in the late 1800's.

Pre-figuring the anthropometric suppositions of Bertillon, Sargent and others, and anticipating the eidetic visions of Demkina, were the enthralling, high-society, psycho-bodily antics of Franz Mesmer. The eponymous development and practice of mesmerism temporarily provoked wonder in Parisian aristocratic circles centred around a number of quack, but vividly prophetic, contraptions. The most startling of these was the widely used baquet, a sometimes ornate vat containing magnetized water and emblazoned with masonic marquetry. Eight skeletal, arachnoid, articulated arms protruded from the vat. Ankle-height ropes and roped-in participants completed the action of this circular piece of furniture, which was then used in an electrifying, group therapeutic capacity by a controlling magnetizer.

Mesmer's pre-hypnotic parlour rooms aimed to produce beneficial crises, and were even thought to induce a state of 'transparency', providing those attending a séance – each holding one of the arms intended to promote its electro-static benefits – the opportunity to uncannily self-diagnose. This parlour object linked to some grandiose principles of 'animal magnetism', which he and others promoted, deliberating on the nature of the séance, the notion of shared empathy and the energized powers of a healing magnetizer. In *Spheres*, Peter Sloterdijk views this combination with both awe and scepticism, considering whether it really needed to be cosmic rays from the ether that formed such a healing energy circle, concocted from an ethereal, invisible fluid connecting all living matter – anything with a soul or that could breathe. (Sloterdijk, p 233, 2011).

A photographic slide projection, an assemblage and a group portrait (that never quite occurred), *Placebo* (Warnell, 2007) gathered around the sole surviving example of Mesmer's handicraft, performing imbrications of linkages and specialisms, those which loosely correlate to the adven-

ture of this still-very-alive piece of proto-technology; an electrical therapy and uncannily robot-like piece of furniture. Forming the first of several collaborative pieces with Jean-Luc Nancy, it brought together a vaguely evocative set of professions and a seated magnetizer (whose day job was wonderfully in accordance, as an anaesthetist) around which the baquet itself quite literally articulated. For whilst Mesmer was famously debunked as a fraudster and depicted as half-man, half-donkey, his device anticipated the very notion of a live-image tool, designed and engineered to see inside the dynamic, living body in action. As a formative prototype for an MRI scanner, the machine wasn't so preposterous or even without basis. And as an advance, or reversal, of Mesmer's more hypnotically/performatively motivated machine, the MRI also relies on swathes of magnets surrounding the body, holding the potential to gain visual access or scanned entry to their secrets within (MRI/Magnetism). Quietly, the image probes the body of medicine, raising the spectre of its own question (and that of the unknown, but evident, efficacy of the placebo): where and how does a cure begin?

As well as the screening of bodies, their exercising and what is exercised combine at the very edges of our capacity. It is also how we accede to bodily and psychological limits. Indeed, the ability of a body to adapt and contrive or conform to circadian rhythms, translates the very contingencies of the world into something of logic and formula. If 'geometry comes out of the skeleton' and metaphysics spent too long searching for the anatomy of a soul, they both still correlate with the screen's eternal quest for authenticity and belief alike (Serres, p146, 2011). The phenomenon of early cinema might have been considered by those experiencing it an immediate, ocular experiment – far from the reach of the cinematic corpus – the recording of our screen efforts finally visible, set against a noisy backdrop of contextual staging. The triple growth of philosophical,

Fig 5: Placebo (animal magnetism), photographic group portrait. Phillip Warnell, 2007



gymnastic and cinematic perspectives therefore provided a shared armature, comprehending what became an industry of bodily re-configuration, examining the incorporeal shell and frame of metamorphoses within its gaps, frames and various (screen) apparatus.

In a cinematic world lacking ontology, a milieu is constructed around the casting of a relationship between appearance and character, each one diagnosed within the forecast of a prognosis provided by the other. As in ethics – where it is not simply the consequences of actions which determine their appropriateness, but the motives of those directing such actions – metaphysics and film suffer an equally elusive onion-skin search for a root, forerunner or core, which eventually exposes nothing more than the realisation that exteriority goes all the way. As at the ‘edge’ of the world, when one can only travel towards its centre, at the very heart of the matter, subjectivity and its apparitional certainties vanish. The fables, storytelling, rules and regulations of film’s moral industry similarly corrupt any possibility of what might still be described as cinema illimitée, feeling the impact of a material ghost. And in another context, Giorgio Agamben reminds us that even the incorporeal body needs to meet exacting anatomical standards, the precise formulas necessary for adopting a ‘physiology of the blessed’ (Agamben, p17, 2002). If people are imprecise silhouettes, the raised body therefore takes the appearance of an apparition-like statue – unfurling a coiled-up composite, an anti-gravity narrative within the space of the open – where figure, subject, actor, character, object, sense and sites of bodily migration coalesce in an unbridled light.

Nancy's analysis of *Noli me Tangere* evokes the ambiguities of seeing and 'touching' the untouchable. Rising and ascending, the one risen belongs not to the visceral world of sustenance and reproduction, nor to the judicial world of voice, speech and ideology, but is rather committed to assuring the supposedly perfect order of contemplative life. In doing so, Nancy confirms a link between thinking space, thought experiment and an opening, a spatial domain motioning towards an aerial world, occupied by others – the fulfilment of a non-human space. He describes this (ecstatic) state, an incandescent space in which all (former) bodies meet, as a culture, opening a relation that is also the shared division of departure (Nancy, p45, 2008). The announcement is that of a departure that revels in its emptiness; a space which empties out presence. Such a primordial echo is reminiscent of the Kabbalah, wherein the principle of creation is less a making process than one of withdrawing, of contraction. A hollow opens a void within which the world can take its place, namely the *tsimtsum*. As an ecstatic state, it is positioned relative to that other state of the beyond, where shared *jouissance* takes its fullest effect in the foreplay and aftermath of bodily exchange. Its shape levels with the counter-intuitive conditions faced by a conscientious objector, criminalized through their nevertheless legitimate refusal to fight. And as a phenomenon, it emerges from the depths of shadows (of a cave, or a house), in dimly-lit spaces where a delicate, sensitive glow of fading rays clings, as Tanizaki describes it, to the living, out of what little life remains in them (Tanizaki, p30, 2001).

The emptying of presence incorporates another, part-symbolic, part-industrial programme: evisceration. The hollowing out of the carcass ex-

emplifies the way in which a number of removals enabling seemingly diverse human imperatives stack up: from preparation for the afterlife involving the removal of vital organs, through gutting (the industrial preparation of animal bodies as foodstuff), to ritualistic self-annihilation amid the profoundly selfless act of disembowelment. These variations on withdrawal into decomposition reveal the pure state of body which is, in its extraneitas – an unvisited, relinquished, inoperative or unfamiliar form, “the world is strangeness, unpreceded by any familiarity” (Nancy, p19, 2010).

In the lexicon of incorporeal terminology, it is the Greek Ana that points us skyward, guiding the radiant on, up or above all current proceedings. As Aristophanes’ character Pisthetaerus is miraculously elevated to the aerial status of the gods in *The Birds* (Aristophanes, 414), so anastasis develops a (resurrected) god-like figure which, discernibly, and according to Nancy, “has to do with what anastasis is not or does not bring about from the self but from the other. Anastasis comes to the self from the other, arises from the other within the self – or again, it is the raising of the other within the self. It is the other that rises and resurrects within the dead self” (Nancy, p19, 2008). In serving to remind us that the advent of death departs from both the dimensionality of embodiment and the apparent singularity (or apparition) of selfhood, this ‘other’ outperforms finitude, its strangeness elaborating a transposition into kenosis – the emptying or abandonment of the subject-shell proper into a skyward trajectory of ascension. It shapes a body/non-body palindrome arriving at its extremities, whereby spatial withdrawal mirrors the pursuit of the hunt: its excitement and guile proving the critical elements, rather than the momentary, dispossessive and murderous final kill.

Evo-Devo

Penetrative vision might be associated with the supra-human eye and ultra-invasive optics of a photographic iris, but the ability also promotes a link with, and keen sense of, the beyond, in witnessing futurity and seeing cadavers. Firstly, the subject of x-ray vision is seen 'as if' already dead (Žižek, p87, 1997). This is closely, dorsally followed by a bio-technological enhancement, or, more precisely, in the unknowable ability to witness that which should absolutely not be seen. In this sense, the vectoral paths of cosmic rays are themselves uncertain 'seers' that traverse vast, unimaginable distances, producing chronic, excited trails of elsewhere. Their undeflected capabilities contain the potential to pass right through or attach to living cells, fully exposing the transparency of seemingly opaque, solid bodies and worlds. The sphere felt as a globe – as if not here. The discreet power and pervasive force of the ray family is characterised by properties which have no explicit material form, distinguished by otherworldly, spectral effects, located in the production of strange glows and gases, the mimicry of weather forms and ambiguous, mysterious psychic relations with electricity and ethereal fluids. Food for oracular, speculative and anticipatory thought.

As ghost particles, neutrinos operate like ceaseless, ineluctable drives, emissions that travel endlessly across the vast curvatures of space, literally permeating worlds (they pass through solid bodies – whole planets – as if they were simply not there). They can be suspended in radioactive, subterranean mineral deposits, including the buried uranium of

vast meteorites (part of an array of extra-terrestrial materials, ready to hand, which teem with peculiar, transformative properties), as well as the entirety of seawater in our oceans and the entire earthbound supply of that peculiarly voice-altering gas, helium. Startling or unfamiliar as it may seem, the material world simply isn't made of earthly materialisations. This blue planet, as we like to think of it, is composed entirely of extra-terrestrial seas, 'our' water a strange, clingy medium, the ancient deposits of vast asteroids dowsing our arid planet in otherworldly contents, of which life became composed. It confounds a view of this world as an enduring, integrated sphere. Water is without doubt a sign of life, but its strangeness is in no way Earthbound, in either its origin or substance. (Jha, BBC, 2019)

"The sky is sown with the limbs of women, men and animals". (Serres p91, 2011)

An embodied, personified arrival is shaped in the becoming and celestial form of Camille Flammarion's luminary Lumen – a light source from elsewhere, suspended in a humanoid and literary character. A combination of ray, celestial body and ethereal messenger, Lumen's figure is kneaded of scientific, sacred and astronomic imprecision (see cover image). The prose offers an account of how a previously human, now extra-terrestrial life-form continues as the orbital body and trajectory of a comet. Lumen is thus constituted of a fleeting, insubstantial and mineral light-form, encapsulated into an incorporeal, limb-enhanced being, telling chronicles of other life-worlds. (Flammarion, p72, 2002). This science fiction scenario accompanies Lumen's later depiction by painter Falero as a semi-clad, powder-white and seriously proto-futuristic form. Lumen elaborates on life elsewhere, describing eerie landscapes, the uneasy complexities of other worlds and inhabitants of sentient configuration. Incorporating a number of shifting viewpoints, including seemingly

transgender memories of their own past-life and humanoid status, Lumen's inter-bodily voyages are reminiscent of the exploits of the infinite planet-piercing rays promoted in Muybridge's crazed magic-lantern spectacles of the 1880s, or in the virtual explosion of a being-character, performing panoptic, post-millennial, multiple selves. Lumen's abilities provoke wonder, drawing on the spiritualist movement's bizarre requirement that knowledge be gathered across multiple timeframes, elucidating whilst projecting brilliant light from their firework-style head. Producing a game-changing collection of anecdotes and sentience, its tales are voiced whilst spilling a continuous stream of (blinding) cosmic traces from their head-light fountain. (see cover image)

Lifespan of a droplet

Preoccupied with the aestheticisation of exotic beasts and emptied environments, the endless reinforcing of classificatory differences has overflowed into a declaration of abstracts, the prescribed poles of body and landscape manifest through endlessly saturated imaging and exo-corporeality, pictorially and archeologically drenched. The net result of aestheticizing absolutely everything has since caused replete uncertainty in known categories, with ever swelling ranks of species and collections of sub-categories. Our thinking is fuelled, as Baudrillard points out, by the emergence of an algorithm, after which comes the loss of any differentiation, even the possibility of a metaphor for difference – everything now travelling in all directions at the same time. We've entered into a hyper-orbital or fractal state along the lines of, or probably beyond, the

orbital paths of all such trajectories, occupied by those such as Lumen; light-speed extremes with exploded meaning and the loss of any discernable value. Evo-devo and bio-engulfment studies shift the emphasis from distinct groupings of organisms into their trans-organic format – creating relations identifying a sustained presence of ancient genes, triggering bodily growth and modes of strange evolution. Traversing species types, these operations extend well beyond norms, individuals, subjectivities or explicit co-operations.

They provide a sense in which no one and nothing belongs anywhere: neither in a body, nor of a place. In which case, everyone belongs nowhere – despite being composed of place and origin – as we are firmly beyond any confirmed state of identity. Serres composes this differently, whereby however many groups or sub-groups – things to which we belong – we are composed of, none of them constitute or conform to an absolute identity. (Serres, p72, 2018)

The building blocks of dimensionality and its barely corporeal regulators are therefore effectively shared by all creatures, in an interchange that transcends body type, genus, origin and the co-ordinates of territorial spaces, within which we are doubtless so constructed. A bio-assimilation and process-driven capitulation, to the extent that one complete organism can be engulfed and encapsulated, endlessly contained within another. According to Vilém Flusser (and Louis Bec) life on Earth is only a 'specialised formulation in the organisation' of water – a 'peculiar solution' and fluid which, whilst it is 99% H₂O, also contains in varying measures chlorine, sodium, magnesium, sulphur and potassium, among other elements – along with ever-present carbon dioxide. Their suggestion is that life be regarded as aggregations, temporarily displaced 'drops' of

specialised seawater; lifespan condensed into aberrant fluids, concentrations of an organisation or droplet. (Flusser & Bec, p32, 2012).

Russian doll structures can similarly be witnessed between seemingly opposed categories of life, or in the captivation of one species by another. The Hawaiian Bobtail Squid puts the latter method to work, gaining its signature nightly light-display through the capture and repurposing of single-cell organisms (Warnell, p46, 2004). Imprisoned within the squid's specially equipped stomach – which sensationally also contains an iris (digestion as a working lens) – micro-organisms fuel the production of bioluminescence, put to a radical and enchanting use. As the squid rises to the oceanic surface each night to feed, its telltale giveaway shadow denotes its presence to predators. Calculating the ambient moonlight, and adjusting the beam from its belly to match, the squid effectively forms a cloak of invisibility controlled with symbiotic guile, projecting an equivalent amount of ambient light and, effectively, disappearing. Its trick of the (moon) light is a further reminder of how body and environment cannot be considered separately. In the cephalopod's merger of moon, celestial sea and tiny squid (only a few centimetres across), co-existence harnesses terrestrial forms and extraterrestrial forces.

Further, astonishing examples of (meta)physical imperatives and language instincts ensure that migrating birds nest conspicuously in a lunar sightline, affording their chicks a clear view of the night sky. In the nest, the young birds study the movement of celestial spheres, learning their future language of song, magnetic bearings and sky charts for eventual migrations. These tiny creatures in feathery plumage are embarked upon deep learning, traversing generations, all weathers and a vastly changing habitat (Pinker, 1994). The evolutionary notion of engulfment suggests that a biomass within another that has consumed it permanent-

ly can continue to operate and influence its host: a local adaptation and co-creaturely conjoining of an albeit formerly distinct biology, (mitochondria). Predator and prey re-orientate, dancing an extravagant display of particle mutuality akin to a vital intestinal ecology, within which humans also necessarily conform. This bio-laboratory, wherein a lifeform is an unsettled, ill-thought-out and even inoperative process, is referred to by Jean-Christophe Bailly in the script for an as yet unmade film, *The Open*. In this case, at the culmination of the film, the bio-laboratory is set on a beach.

Flimsy Spaceships

“We do not know if these are memories of forms – a sort of morphogenetic archive, or, rather, equally, at the same time, a rough draft of some evo-devo yet to come, Scattering its sketches and its plans. Abandoning, in folds and in pools, the fragments of a hypothesis of existence which is proved as it settles in, little by little without worrying about what might be lost along the way, but rather constantly trying out new protocols for experimentation in a sort of constant pounding or slow throbbing. A coherent architecture, then, but one which is also viscous, with flowing forms, clusters of jelly, tentacles; submerged jolts, unexpected movements, from a shoddy assemblage of shells, antenna and aureoles. The surprise of a reflex, all over and ongoing, within a mass which appears unfinished: without prayer or protest, becoming-forms, uncertain but strangely resilient, flimsy spaceships launched amongst the bubbles, eagerly voyaging across zones with no edges, zones whose limits are endlessly unravelling.

Decomposed into billions of blinks and lights that flow inwards, as if the unknown were, in the end, nothing more than this frenzied vibration of life which reproduces itself without considering the outcome. We brush past this excess, we feel it from time to time, like the sudden sting of a weever: And then our whole body shivers and retracts, as if in rejection of contact from the outside, and seeks refuge inside itself, a sanctuary that it will never find. For the only refuge is the outside, infinity”. (Bailly, unpublished, 2018)

Identity acts

“Crime stands at the beginning of all cultures, as the supreme form of ‘acting-out’”.
(Baudrillard, p38, 1996)

Missing or lost stories of how criminal minds relate to the emergence of dissonant voices in cinema have been a key element in my ongoing research for the film *Intimate Distances*, coupled with that of a previous (unsuccessful) attempt to make a film (*Apprenticeship of a Criminal*) based on Arthur Tresadern’s abject, traumatic and bullish reflections on an impoverished East-End upbringing in London’s Shoreditch. To find the testimony of the voiceless, one has to search in the annals of unassigned, marginalized, archival repositories, where the perfect crime can silently, fearlessly be committed. “All that is unintelligible, is criminal in substance” (Baudrillard, p59, 1996). Having read Tresadern’s unpublished *Apprenticeship to Crime*, the sole copy of which is hand typed and bound (as per 1970s school exercise books) in wallpaper, which relates his progress from an abject childhood into a hardened East-End criminal also known for the extraordinary number of times he successfully defended himself in court, my research explored the imbrications of his testimony, interview, confession and literary audition. Further to this, in 2018 I viewed the entirety of the casting for Josh and Ben Safdi’s film *Good Time* (2016) at their casting agents in New York City, where thousands had been involved in the auditioning process, including a considerable number of recently released, previously incarcerated men. Street casting and targeted audition groups are increasingly common search methods for cinematic narrative application, backstory and perhaps most importantly, authenticity – unlocking ‘real’ stories using street tactics, in cool, empathic interceptions. However, *Good Time* is anything but, since the

Fig 6: Film still: Intimate Distances (with Martha Wollner).
62mins. 4K digital film. Shot on location in Astoria, Queens NYC



extraordinary testimony of 'life inside' and other forms of incarceration which abound in this particular archive feature graphic descriptions of inmates' isolated incarceration in the box: detailing the extreme, 'animal-like' conditions of isolation cells, recollections of 'acceptable homicide', prison law and the repercussions of gang violence and hierarchy.

Intimate Distances (film, 2020) channels one such lost narrative of transgression – as etched into unseen faces, anonymous voices and unheard lives, an exemplar of those unsuccessfully interviewed for a part in another film. In the film, cinematic intent is given an overlapping, double-agent purpose. The video audition is a trial, convergent with the aim for a trickster's insider knowledge, the transgressor reframed into a writing and performing equation that seeks an elusive air of shared authenticity. Assigned a place within the medium of film's disposable anatomy, it shapes unnerving, strange disclosures, within the false genre of an audition tape.

The casting tape is a boundary object, one where various intentions descend into a vortex of pre-formatted expectations: questions with no real need of answers; the emptiness of necessary (real-world) testimony, laced with latent (scripting) potential and the harsh exclusions of a screen-test. Everything is contrived to meet the scrupulous, aestheticized eye of a casting director, or 'catch the eye' of a street scout and (if short-listed) a film director during their search for an actor-character in an as-yet-unknown fictional truth. Figures and stories are released (the name of cinema's agreement form) and repurposed, drawn from the dark, a repository of the underworld's unconscious, mobilizing street crime and the cruel brotherhood politics of convicts and clink. Regardless of whether ethics committees might wish to grapple with and problematize such a situation (usually in the abstract guise of policy making), the answer on all sides of this remarkable collusion is always a resounding yes, as if

cinema and crime are snared within a shared lure, a pathway of visualising criminal non-intelligibility. *Intimate Distances* taps into this withdrawal of source as the means of production for intimacy at a distance, witnessing the resolve of the casting process, which couples disclosure and intimacy in the type of assembled, constructed form of empathic encounter which has been deployed by cinema since its inception.

Mainstream cinema's creeping, inconsequential screen lacks emotional depth. Its characters move on (almost) instantly – shot by shot, sequence by sequence. They recover instantaneously, and lapse only if the plot requires, as if already moved to a post-life state of disbelieving ascension. The delivery and intensity of screen performance is only required in intense, short bursts, conforming to the necessities of the action/cut scenario. These succinct incursions form sign by sign, and via disposable alignments in post-production following the intensities of the shoot. It involves actor-characters delivering (shall we say) an array of wildly fluctuating emotions, and the converse – the absolute need to avoid a sense of inactivity, dwelling on the shortcomings of one's subjectivity. In this particular art of the real any primary sense, less of heightened emotion, but its consequences, is lost, confined to the deliberations, ways and means of a take.

The admissions of former prisoners shunted into a screen audition situation suffer a similar fate, even twice over. Firstly, in the lack of any emotional consolidation inherent in an audition, which is primarily a speculative audit, or 'testing' situation. Secondly, from their conveyances taking place in a repository of an indexical compilation, a profiling process epitomized by the holding up of a sign with your name and (audition) number – yet another line-up (or identity parade). This situation is evocative of that most revealing of interviews, conducted with Jean Genet by the BBC

shortly before his death (BBC, Arena, first shown in 1985 on November 12th). In it, Genet's resistance to questions that would necessitate an 'archaeology' of his earlier life provoke recollections of his early years, and interrogations by les flics when he was just another criminal apprentice and dissonant young mind. In his vehement appraisal of norms and orthodoxies (on the one side) and marginality (on the other), he reveals the rigidity of the 'sentence' (both in speech and servitude) – the violence served both by language and within time spent either behind bars or in front of the camera. In the process, he condemns the conventionality of those 'doing (industry) time'; the exceptionally po-faced 'who, me?' matter-of-fact tendencies of a BBC documentary film crew given short shrift. Other layers of mis-understanding emerge, in the gaps between those who might wish to convey felt, embodied experience and others wishing to chronicle it. In the process of developing an epistemological approach towards translation across cultures, classes and times – interview methodologies, informational false understanding and gross mis-interpretation prosper.

Far from such learning and listening, the transmission, the hearing at cross-purposes, and even cross-eyed incomprehension – exposing the limits of exposure – are graphically encountered in such exchanges, which readily occur in Arthur Tressadern's later life audio interviews (and more widely those of casting scouts), conducted by historian Raphael Samuel (Bishopsgate Institute London), in which the forgetful, disparaging tone of the former gangster engages, but never sees 'eye-to-eye', with the over-refined airs, graces and relative condescension of a more celebrated, liberal historian.

Fearful Symmetry

Revealing how other species are animated by enigmatic visibility, it is as if they were about to be detached from themselves, displaying a constitutive 'outer foil'. Outside of language and names, the political imagination propagates a necessity for other resources, those of poetics and cinema, as interlocutors for forms of inter or incorporeality. And as philosopher Mathew Abbot describes it, 'animals are hypnotic in a way that human subjects rarely are, and they are so not in spite, but in virtue of being mostly impenetrable.' (Abbot, p146, 2017). Exposing the human tendency to explore the ungraspable and incomprehensible in terms of the familiar and well understood has zoological, political and pedagogic consequences.

A neologism or portmanteau name is formed in the doubling and splitting of names and species imperatives that – in the case of *Ming of Harlem* (film, 2014) – present an unlikely threesome of relations requiring hybrid terms. The conjoining of names is predicated by a prior exchange, occurring between the terms neologism and portmanteau themselves. (portmanteau) The former, an occidental term, is commonly used in French, whilst the latter, clearly a French term, is expressly used in English. This switching of the terms' cultural origins unfolds a tapestry of incorporations and shifts, engineering new etymological environments and ingenuity in language operations. Engaging with species hybridization, drawing on an account of three roommates: a tiger, alligator and human (predators that somehow co-habited a New York City high-rise apartment), the film and Nancy's poetic text within it explore how co-operative creature-

ly dwelling and non-body constituents merge, into a zoological, familial and social study of mutant poetics and an ethically fraught screen. In his poem written for the project – part film, part study – Nancy explores this proposition within an insert in which the joining of predators, nouns and the notion of a neo-species are formed in the calculation Tiger + Alligator = Tigrator (Nancy, 2014).

If non-human and human animals are defined by co-ordinates, bodies harbour an inextricable relationship to the thresholds of coming into being, along with architectures and geometry, seen and negotiated spaces which are profoundly incorporated in them. In combination, these produce a kind of temporality permeated by corporeality, a border and an order, as Nancy suggests (Nancy, p17, 2010). It is in this sense that animals are not in the world, they are the world. Territory is both the property of the animal and one of its properties. The creaturely are bodied as an anticipatory response to their (future) life-world, a sublime wearing of both their environment and its fellow protagonists. Critters are cloaked in environmental and optical requisites, coated, coloured and metabolized relative to territorialized predicates and probable counter-creatures, whether adversarial, complementary or otherwise. Species occupy spaces according to ongoing processes of gathering and assuming clusters of body-to-body agency and spatial proximity. The sovereign of spaces, the tiger commands vast territories, its patrol potentially extending tens of kilometres, offering one explanation for the desperately induced pacing of felids when held in confinement. William Blake's poetic musings on the tiger meet the elusive orange creature in the necessary form of a question. His quizzical words are infused with fantastical trajectories, the spears of an immortal eye cast into timeless verse aimed straight at the heart of the most hypnotic of species, infused with overtones of its seemingly cosmological origin.

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Multiferous man-eaters and divine makers initiate discussions on those considered above or beneath the law. Jacques Derrida's notion of Sovereign and Beast, examines ideas on how species and sovereigns operate around, above, beneath and beyond written laws and territorial zones, forested places, enchanted woods and covert hunting operations.

The Beast with Two Backs

In distilled moments of virtual intimacy and co-dependence between beast and aristocrat, Walerian Borowczyk's *Beast* (film, 1975) traverses pornography and eroticism, horror and pastiche, thus uncovering a strange avowal, which summons the beast into the service of the landed gentry. This tendency of the sovereign towards the beast and vice-versa offers an uncanny association, endlessly and variously played out through art, literature and film. The kingdom, the one who reigns over it and the prodigious nature of the beast who transgresses it interact with one another. Their contact permeates worlds: the bodily, the territorial and the psychological, with each of them perceived through the other's transparency. Thresholds and limits dissolve into a flurry of ritual, primordial and magnetic effects. Scripts are re-written and the cinematic emerges. In Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* (1946), Beauty effortlessly traverses a seemingly endless corridor, which constitutes a parallel dominion. Her encounter with the horrific refinement and bizarre make-up of actor Jean Marais provides an astonishing, enchanted set of episodes culminating in the death of the beast, who becomes a prince in the very moment of his death. Palace, pavilion, glove, key, arrow, mirror – the glossy material, spatial and magical trappings of Cocteau's take on sovereign-beast transcendentalism and corporeal convergence. The trans-

figuration from beast to prince, their union, brings into question the friction between what might be considered the laws of nature versus those of society, as well as the continuing mystery of man and animal's borders. This troubling resemblance, this worrying superposition of these two beings – outside the law, without laws or above the law – that beast and sovereign both are when viewed from a certain angle. This resemblance explains and engenders a sort of hypnotic fascination or irresistible hallucination, which makes us see, project, perceive as in an x-ray, the face of the beast under the features of the sovereign, or conversely if you prefer, it is as though, through the maw of the untameable beast, a figure of the sovereign were to appear. (Derrida, p18, 2009)

In this situation the sovereign is the one who does not have to respond, in accordance with their status as one placed above the law. And this is as per the beast, castigated by humanity as beneath the law, a creature that, whilst it can react, is (purportedly) unable to respond. Further to this, Derrida reminds us that God himself does not respond, emphasizing the shared ability of the outlandish savage and Him, endlessly worshipped through the sacred animal and its sacrifice (Derrida, p18, 2009). The monarch resides above humanity – is god-like, yet exercises the right of the former to a certain irresponsibility, and is regularly nicknamed as such; one thinks of the derisory naming of Saddam Hussein as the Beast of Baghdad, for example. And if creature and creator co-exist as a palimpsest, it confirms the requirement for an interplay and permeability in their joint representation, whereby beauty and the beast becomes beauty as the beast. Nancy's unpublished poem, written to accompany the UK premiere screening of *Ming of Harlem* at Tate, further develops the idea of nocturnal wildness and portmanteau thinking, encapsulated in the notion of a speaky silent existence, situated somewhere not that far from the heart of animal locomotion and cinematic experience (Nancy, 2015).

Extract from *The Beast with Two Backs*, Phillip Warnell from *Boro, L'île d'amour*, pp 111-117, 2015

Oh, the animals
never will it be said too much...oh!

They are so close, so far
so mobile, so immobile
they are so speaky silent, Oh!
more so, they are so cinematic

cinematographic

cinetigeraphic

or cinegatoriffic

claws in the camera obscura

eyes aglow in darkness

Oh, what cinemality!

In *The Animal Side*, Bailly develops the relationship between humanity and animality in the space of a single word: contemplation. Reading and reflection can be sensed in the overlap of place and term: the word contemplation named after the templar, a piece of sky where birds ride the thermal streams and air currents, not solely for food or the purpose of seeking a mate, but for the sheer exhilaration of being so able. The birds assemble in their flamboyances, murmurations and even parliamentary congregations, offering rich potential to inspire human speculations within the undulating space-flight of a poetic proposal or thought experiment. (Bailly, p20, 2011).

Wild Minds

“Before the foundation of knowledge, law or approbation, even before the foundation of speech, it was decided that nothing could be changed or instituted without the addiction of birds. This is the feral, non-historical origin of the city.” (Serres, p99, 2008)

This consultation of mingling with and foresight derived from reading the wild-mindedness of other species has been employed as a method, producing decision making, determining law or even establishing orientation, locations at which a city or other significant canton might have been originated. Overlooked cornerstones of interspecies exchange, they are points of departure for anticipatory learning. The endless folds of belonging, which conclude that we all become somewhere, privileged in our purpose and presentiment.

Similarly, the process by which civic society and language developed was predicated, or intuited, formed under the sign of other species. And whilst the musical instrument known as the recorder was precisely that – developed to enable its owner to repeatedly play various songs to cap-

tive birds in order that they might learn and sing these automatically, theatrically in repertoire – earlier exchanges may well have been cast in the other direction. David Abram (1996) describes a relationship whereby animism and the alphabet were played out according to the ‘swooping flight of birds as a kind of cursive script, written on the wind and studied by the ancient augurs who could read therein the course of the future’.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968) considers an alphabet relative to the notion of ‘singing the world’, whereby the evolution of initial forms of language’s utterances and linguistic melody may have emerged primarily as songs. Besides the impossibility of explicitly determining the origins of language, his imaginative suggestion countenances the spirited idea that the prompt for human language may (in turn) have been initiated by our mimicry of other species, with birds the prime candidate. For as the uncrested Bower Bird’s own body is ‘completed’ by its requisite construction of an elaborate bower, built according to taste on the forest floor, words and signs ‘spilled’ into human usage through the informing influence of non-human sources. The value of making or hearing the contact of others at distance, and the use of melody and, especially, whistling technique, involves listening to modulations arriving as if out of thin air – seen and heard, witnessed at distance. Such a proposal heralds language as initiated by the songs – or, to be more precise (for surely ‘songs’ is to anthropomorphize the motives of other species), the calls, gestures and marks of others, often olfactory, heard in their absence. It takes us full circle, to the influence of other species by which Serres ascribes our addiction of birds (Serres, p99, 2008). The space of the institution at origin is an assembly, a withdrawal convened by the governing organization of oracular prophecy, a principle built on the hermeneutic interpretation of other creatures.

“The origin is a distancing. It is a distancing that immediately has the magnitude of all space-time and is also nothing other than the interstice of the intimacy of the world.”
(Nancy, 1996)

Distancing is vastly felt in its application, or in a barely-noticed comment by Werner Herzog, in *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (film, 2011), which documents a network of now permanently closed caves with vast stretches of ancient renderings and animal representations. At one point Herzog’s voiceover suggests that some of the surfaces on which the drawings were made – which had a scratched and smooth finish – weren’t simply formed by the elements. Rather, they were noticed as having been scratched into, probably across some vast period, by bears. The preference of the bear, its hard nails and substance of keratin, derived the preparation – as it were – of a canvas, which was then serviced by subsequent cave dwellers. Various forms of whistled languages remain widely in use, and of these, the most endangered is the Greek Sfyria; its phonetic, thrown form displaying an ability to tune remotely into the ex of elsewhere. It is the language of missives, thrown without sight-to-sight contact; communications in whistled, expressed form. It encourages mythologization, speculations on how language itself came to exist and flourish. One suggestion is that whistled terms may have been propagated by (animal) rituals of courtship, hunting, dissonant and even military purposes – or some other variant in the codes of lovers, hunters and outlaws. In certain instances lovers may even have introduced nonsensical syllables, distended knots, decoys designed to throw off anyone eavesdropping on secret exchanges. As Julien Meyer (2008) has pointed out, whistles can also be used to great sonic effect, collapsing extreme distances well beyond the violent reach of shouting, performing a body-space geometry in the service of a mountainous community, or an arousal issuing an acoustic voice from nowhere – the strains of an amorous, strategic and un-

traceable voice.

The voiceover also seeks an hypnotic attention, establishing a constant (from which it might depart) between listener and speaker, just as the microphone or whistled contact does. In achieving a sonic order of distance, the microphone confirms how an acousmatic, disembodied voice functions across media's fluctuating forms: including those of film, recording studio and mediumship alike. This should be considered in the context of Lisa Cartwright's reminder (recited to me personally) concerning how direct voicing is employed during the progress of a séance relative to the use of a child figure as an interlocutor during mediumship, whereby they might voice channel from within touching distance (of the medium's head). This functions as a membrane-like, haptic amplification technique, similar to the one by which Anne Sullivan taught Helen Keller to speak (Cartwright, 2008, p144). A further, if earlier, echo of voice technique is that of ventriloquism, which Greek culture was already using to convey otherness in the various forms of oracular stomach speech, divining prophecy (as an interlocutor of elsewhere), gathering the forces of consultation and reading gnomons, performing a a voice operation that speaks through the body of others.

Pedagogy is also an art of performing (the knowledge of) otherness in one of its fullest assimilations. It is obliquely reminiscent of the way in which vocal repertoire explores how true vocal strength, timbre, reach and register become virtuosity (with the unfortunate addition of competitiveness). Human 'speaker systems' and thrown voices seek attention in their compliance, learning the rules and attribute of a foreign body, mediating games, leaning towards scrambled messages of empathic intimacy and a studious sense of timing. The cinematic and recording industries – variously written up with utmost precision by Paul Virilio and Michel

Chion – introduced standards of voice and fidelity, providing the means by which deep breath and hypnotic listening, on screen and via absent wordsmiths, are constructed and maintained (Virilio, 1994 & Chion, 1982). The era of the ‘crooners’ is an exemplar of this; their smooth frequency exalting the utterly convincing power of a voice to vibrate as a soothing, resonant and influencing wave in space – seduction arriving magically out of thin air. ‘His Master’s Voice’ (the fidelity sound of ownership and obedience in absentia) brands the development of this inscribed, circular line. It links ancient or mythic disembodied sources to a highly refined, assisted voice technique. The arrival of an acousmatic voice can equally, however, be disassembled, tethering an unconnected, yet recognisable voice to an unexpected bodily source, such as in *The Wizard of Oz*, or, more contemporaneously, Pierre Huyghe’s film on Lucie Dolène’s voice and her career dubbing Disney’s *Snow White* (*Blanche Neige Lucie*, 2008). In this case the film discusses the contested legal status of Dolène’s essentially fictionalised voice as the Disney character, copyrighted and disputed, despite its origin clearly emanating from within her.

Sonic ‘calling’ casts, motioning forth the very origin and purpose of language, where melodies of whistled sound trace an unobtainable, untraceable former instance, an arrival lost on the wind. If platonic serenades commenced with the mimicry of birds, mimicry performs the extravagant warblings of communication and the ingenuity of knowledge acquisition, copying or replicating (with variation) a crucial part of learning. It serves as a reminder that innervation functions as a symmetry, whereby the body learns by imitation: “all of society in a pas-de-deux” (Serres, 2011, p.73). It suggests not so much a universality of language, or the desire for the eradication of spatial distance, but an eccentric requirement for sensory acquisition to be performed in virtual circumstances – as per the unexpected success story of the text message, which was originally

merely an afterthought for use in the cell phone – via thrown missives and the gesture of ‘firing off intimacy’ from a remote distance. This alternating dance between departure and arrival tests risk and is continually enacted, ‘speaking to’ an invitation, a conference or assembly of bodies: noised, sonorised, screamed, squarked, cawed, croaked, roared, whistled, spoken, barked (to the horror of Gilles Deleuze), whispered, proclaimed, measured and melodied in a ceaseless abundance of species’ ways and means according to their projection facilities, limb adaptations, voice box and speech patterns – all of the regulated apertures, the many gestures and layers, of that apparently instinctive urge to give voice.

The absence of groundedness

In *The Flying Proletarian* (film, 2017), Jean-Luc Nancy develops the sense by which a ‘location’ becomes a landmark, a designated place of known origin.

“Over a few years, one passes thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of times, by the same locations. The word originally signified “precision, exactitude”. Then it came to designate a precise spot, determined in the sense that one also speaks of a “place”. It is there where we are in our proper place, it is a propriety, a balance, a liaison out of which comes all there is to come out of lives long shared: here one finishes by no longer being in one’s proper place, but having become the place. We are no longer “there”, we are the “there”. How to imagine what comes to be there, there itself, an inaudible event? The appearance of a ghost, the explosion of a bomb, the fall of a meteor, the jingling bell of the plague-stricken.” (Nancy, *The Flying Proletarian*, 2017)

He extends us the shape of an order: one that, without limits and borders, without a shell, cannot produce an opening. In doing so, he explores how

an originary translates into a designate – distanced from other bodies – formed in relation to an opening.

“It is, as it were, a shell, but not in the pejorative sense that evokes imprisonment, retreat, an ivory tower perhaps. No, it is the shell that forms part of the body of a snail or an ancient clam. It is there where the muscles attach themselves. Far from being closed, it is open: in truth it is the opening itself. For, without limits, edges, sides, there can be no opening.” (Nancy, 2017)

Using distillates on film is to extend an already alchemical process. Anointing the screen, using the particular, rather than a type of harvest, *The Flying Proletarian* completes the screen (augmenting the auditorium with an ‘elixir’ of lavender, the solution – a droplet – of that which is being distilled on screen). It suggests the field-side factory as a constitutive place, where sense and sensation conjugate the partly dissolved body-droplet of the viewer. In an unktion of the screen, the perfumed oil anoints what Nancy describes as the opening of a place of arrival and departure through which a moment of eternity enters, outside foreseeable, ordered time. In producing organic cinema, reminiscent of Eisenstein’s proclamation, its manufacture isn’t subjective but (ol)factory, it follows the organic, making logic of (two) things. (Eisenstein pp.11, 1976) Firstly, the sensory drive which fuels change in the organism at the cellular level – a space in which the essential is both disease and cure. Secondly, the way in which the corner of a field from which the harvest is formulated suggests a pre-analytic, experimental, divinatory and alchemical space, not a narrative structure. It is unbounded, an originary space as understood in the Nancean framework of the singular plural, which, as he would describe it, features not a lost origin, root or beginning, but the possibility of beginnings, potential as an induced aporia, formed of the technology (Techné) and constitutive element of philosophy. And whilst this is referred to as a ‘de-natured’ space, it isn’t one that denies or has

forgotten its origin, rather it is in the very withdrawal of originals and endings, their undecidability, that it finds efficacy, in pursuit of a plurality that ensues from the absence of groundedness.

Fig 7: Film still from *The Flying Proletarian*, 2017. 36mins, S16mm. Shot on location in La Drome, France



In effect, the use of an evocative, aromatic sensorium is visceral and connective. It prompts open conditions, by which various material properties and atmospheres commence, searching akin to a more pronounced, if later, cinematic presence – the process of consequential renderings. In an echo of becoming – direct species-to-species contact – or of Natasha Demkina’s gaze operating at the dynamic, molecular level, plant distillation produces organic change in the transformative manner of weather – its fluctuations extending from plant to vapour to liquid in a chain reac-

tion of screen, flora and fauna in metamorphosis, rising and ascending. Alchemically, it provides a composite in the manner of the *Pharmakon*, the (Derridean) sense by which both remedy and poison simultaneously occur within a single designate. Intriguingly, cure and antidote are frequently found in this sort of double-bind, a transitional, non-oppositional one-in-the-other relationship reminiscent of other similarly felt, non-binary discourses (Derrida, pp. 2-61, 1981).

Curative potions were, according to the 'theory of signatures', assumed to be found in the leaf, plant or creature which marked them. The divinatory sciences search for and examine signs of this, which are often placed in some seemingly reasoned proximity to the one that poisons. An analysis of the body might therefore be found in its celestial, visceral or associative form, with names considered to play a privileged role in the relationship between signature and signed. This links closely to the suspension of knowledge as epitomised by the paradigm, an analogical, folding movement across and between various singularities, rather than from an origin to a particularity. Agamben's bringing together of a series of proposals includes the reminder of the experiment as 'mediator' between subject and object, where phenomena stand in relation to each other in a manner reminiscent of the alchemist's all-explosive potions, or the panopticon's observational architecture, corresponding to "the way we say, of a freely floating luminous point, that it emits its rays in every direction". (Agamben, pp, 33-80, 2009)

To draw on this example, and in neutralizing the dichotomy between general and particular, the speech writer (logographer) is effectively a ghost-who "composes speeches for use by litigants, speeches which he himself does not pronounce, which he does not attend, so to speak, in person,

and which produce their effects in his absence” (Derrida, p69,1981). The purpose of such writing completes an ambiguous relationship whereby their words are embedded within, and yet excepted from, speech. This was reinforced in (ancient) Greek courts by the use of a Klepsydra, a water clock which kept ‘speech time’ during court cases. Of analogous and paradigmatic form, languages, materials and cinematics evade analysis, instead proposing cryptic depth in a single, ambivalent breath, riddle or image. It confirms the long-held comparison to a stimulant or spellbound medicine, a magical thinking whereby the experience might alternatively provoke beneficial crises or maleficent, unpredictable effects.

The film also links a black, bird-like ‘character’ to the above, weaving and dodging between the otherwise fixed identities of a plague doctor and soothsayer (of which Nostradamus is the most heralded). The figure’s costume is a facsimile of an archival, leather template, the drastic dress assumed by the plague doctor analogous to signalling the presence of death, somewhat theatrically, through the presence of carrion-consuming crows.

It was evening,
to put it simply.
In the sky
as always,
a tiny aeroplane appeared.
The usual one –
sky-writing -
Aerostat.
Moscow.
Moscovites
clambered on to roofs
of forty-storeyed
commune blocks.
Shall we see
what it spells out.
Who?
Whom?
When?
Who to? –
Red Alert.
The pilot
turns on
his smoke,
inscribes
in the sky
a frame.
Traces
in capital letters:
ORDER
MOBILISATION

In the film, the actions remain abstracted, however – an assemblage of character, archive, drawing and non-actor combined – loosely influenced by Mayakovsky's (1925) futuristic, industrial and strangely outmoded propaganda, the poetic fantasy of a skyward-bound Communist, which the film mirrors in the refined work of an airborne farmer, set atop wagons loaded with vast amounts of lavender and filmed against a Provençal skyscape. Mayakovsky's calligram explores the future-anachronistic era of sky writing, the chemical inscription of brief messages in calm skies: a manifesto, unspoken sentiment or advertising slogan decorating Aero-stat on smoky, airborne pages.

Looking elsewhere, seeing nearby

Literary, cinematic and poetic perspectives alternate their vantage points in a similar manner, providing a cell for variations of thought, found in tele-present oases such as the city of birds (Aristophanes, BC 414). They provide authors, readers and viewers radically altered perspectives on proximity, imagination and life-worlds, portmanteau thinking that switches between an elsewhere and nearby, whilst maintaining an elastic, or bi-polar, constitution. The literary imagination's so-called 'reach of mind' involves – as described by Anna Henschman – “the production of radical shifts between subject positions and universal viewpoints” (Henschman, p2, 2014). These feather-like imbrications are epitomised by what is effec-

tively the reconsideration of the metaphysical: from the mythologized, to the stretching mis-observations of life elsewhere, as witnessed through the prism of an apparently scientific, objective, astronomical lens, seeking and reimagining the spectral image of god-like creatures (just look at how we name ourselves) and their life-world narratives. The ability to switch from a local to a universally-felt perspective develops not simply an imaginary difference, but an anticipatory one. In this way, the senses themselves are dispersed, decentred, directional and shared by various organic and bodily landscapes.

Gaining multiple vantage points serves notice of how radical forms of social organisation can arise from a combination of celestial and astronomical mis-observations, which, combined with virtual insight, present the ways in which insight, representation and knowledge coalesce to form new ecologies that emerge from our perceived analysis of globalisation; evident in the spotless organisations of life elsewhere. Emmy Ingeborg Brun's exquisite globe, from Percival Lowell's (1909) uncanny, strange visions and drawings of Mars (based on seasonal and annual observations) are indicative of how wild-minded projection, as much as the proposals of any political assembly, inspire futurity. The formation of spatial and social structures are perhaps almost entirely dependent on the apparitional contemplation of elsewhere, nature or otherness in concocting new, speculative models for concomitant application nearby.

I am a man

Little do I last

and the night is enormous

But I look up, the stars right

Unknowing

I understand

I too am written

And at this very moment

Someone spells me out

Intimate distances

In *The Perfect Crime*, Jean Baudrillard surmises that “all things exist only in a recorded version, in an unutterable, inescapable distance from each other, never truly present to each other” (Baudrillard, p52, 1996). This proposition is best understood as materiality of illusion, as well as through a measure of non-real ‘delayed inevitability’, both an oxymoron and fluctuating manifestation of things and selves.

Perhaps the most notorious example of an inescapable distance between life and post-life circumstances is the (still) common practice of ascribing the body of a condemned criminal – whose corpse is assigned the status of eternal, captive anonymity – to experimental scientific and medical research purposes, without need of any prior permission. These figures are preserved, frozen and exposed as statues in an eternal punishment for their crimes. It demonstrates how scientific purpose and bio-medical research are inextricably linked to the boundaries of transgression, following which they exemplify everyone’s crime. In this sense crime is always already recorded, surely felt in the saga of pharmaceutical companies’ role in the US opioid addiction death toll crisis. In this sense the registration of crime commences well in advance of its reckoning, with a strategic, phantom-like corporate agenda, hankering a deathly figure of the incorporeal.

The recorded body is set at an intimate distance from itself and other bodies. It confirms the strangeness of the progressive relationship between inescapable, captive circumstances, ensuring a fractured non-presence which Baudrillard equates with that of all things. The executed criminal’s

corpse which becomes a bespoke medical specimen bridges the usual conditions of life and death circumstances. Such fractures necessarily occur at all points during the life cycle of the organism: most especially in the pre-subjective communication felt between an unborn 'also' and its 'lost' placental twin, or 'with' - which Sloterdijk describes as an "intimate usher or nourishing shadow" (Sloterdijk, p356, 2011), through to the doubling, splitting and other adventures in bodily form experienced by radiant species, those which operate via a magically inclined, apport-like process of bodily transmogrification – an aerial development in metamorphosis from earthbound to airborne creatures.

Criminality operates like a derivation of the Greek *krinein*, describing an action that splits, separates or, more precisely, casts doubt on a known singularity. As Vilém Flusser suggests, it opens the space of perpetration, "a basso continuo of criminal undertone that accompanies all our thoughts, deeds and sufferings". (Flusser, p42, 2002). The inscription of crime through optical forms of evidence-based media – including the macabre, covert practice of filming criminal deaths – is exemplified by that of Genet's preferred criminal Weidmann, in the last recorded execution by Guillotine. The haunting notion of forensic optography, for which formative research was conducted concomitant with many of the para-technologies described above, provided further suggestion that the retina stored an unlikely imprint of the act of murder. A quasi-photographic technique, it was even tried – through medical intervention on cadavers – in a desperate attempt to catch the ever-elusive surgeon Jack the Ripper. (Kremer, p62, 2008) And whether the back of the eye does hold a flashing, circular recording of a deathly perpetrator, it continues to be viewed as a biomarker for neurological disorder and pathology, along with being the root cause of voyeuristic gaze theory and the horrific, superstitious stare of the evil eye. Cinema and its figures propagate light-emission, or ex-

transmission, the not-so-outrageous belief that the eye can project as well as receive a ray of light – a supra-organic sense and diagnostic heat, the stare of second sight and its penetrative bionology.

The cinematic image emanates its projected, non-body status, in the same way as the ventriloquised, distended narrative of cinematic voice-over provides such a convincing air of simulated authority for cinephiles. If the imaginary-technological gaze of cinema animates the eye, it then reduces viewers to “a quasi-dead organism, producing almost incorporeal sensations, already abstract” (Serres, p9, 2011). It suggests directors, viewers and victims in cahoots, eyewitnesses in a subjective line-up: the terror, tropes and trappings of film coupled with forensic crime scenes and incorporeal cadavers. In the performance work *O* (unseen footage) I attempted to further collapse the irreducible distance between looking and seeing. Film and photographic media produce contact at distance, which, as Didi-Huberman suggests, is “a distance always exorbitant, an encounter always imminent. Through the dual processes of manifestation and erasure, they explore how we wait before visible things”. (Didi-Huberman, p90, 2008). Extending this proposition, we are further reminded how images ‘apprehend’ (or trap) distance:

“To see is to make use of separation, not as mediating, but as a means of immediation, as immediating. In this sense too, to see is to experience the continuous and to celebrate the sun, that is, beyond the sun: the One.”

(Blanchot p. 28, 1993)

To see is to both advance and make use of distance, as cinema is the ‘invention’ of a technics – a measure for emotional exaggeration, bound within a register of advantage, influence and exploitation – the performance of exposure and inconsequential emotion alike, exercised as film

grammar. As Slavoj Žižek wrote succinctly on how the ‘fright of real tears’ marked Kieslowski’s move from documentary to fiction filmmaking, and on the performances produced by Charcot, photographed by Albert Londe at the Salpêtrière Hospital, whereby the patient fulfils a doctor’s desire for definitions and (visible) conditions of pathological states – film similarly takes advantage of the circumstances within which its production and its dissemination occur (Žižek, 1991). An emergent pseudo-science of cinematic grammar murders, interrogates, channels or otherwise structures its fleeting subjects, storytelling at those marvelling in its dispassionate gaze.



Fig 9: O. Unseen Footage. Phillip Warnell, performance with modified 16mm projector. 2007

the body resides in a promoted state of dimensionality: a visited, inspired bodily format. That a body is created as a 'spasm of the nihil' in a process of division and variation – is described by Nancy in the film as the only "truth of the world, created, not produced, not formed, not constructed".

Humanity itself arrived from the sea, or at least (in Outlandish) from the 'Baie des Singes' in Marseille. Babylonian myth prescribes that civilisation was presented to humanity through the refined, inter-corporeal figure of Oannes, half-man, half-fish. Outlandish opens on the limits of subjective possibility, an extraneitas embracing a proto-science of strangeness and bodies, witnessed as a series of processes within and without, situated somewhere between new biology and the resources offered by poetics, those required to access forms of the beyond. In respect of this, it is the strange body of the film itself which "expresses the corporeality of the Octopus" (Barnfield, p29, 2016) its eight (episodic) limbs refusing to fuse into a singularity, remaining always at least partially autonomous. In this it is reminiscent of the tactics of mediumship, or an ability to communicate with other species by proxy, the opening of one's limits relative to perception experienced as a force:

"[...] perception is a wisdom rooted in the ground and standing fixed in the direction of an opening; it is of the land, in the proper sense of the term: planted in the earth and forming a link between the immobile boundary and the apparently boundless horizon."

(Blanchot, p28, 1993)

The film features an original text, structured in eight limb-like episodes, reaon-screen by Nancy. Thinking on the intrusion of foreign bodies, and the thresholds of selfhood, is explored, primarily through the mutant,

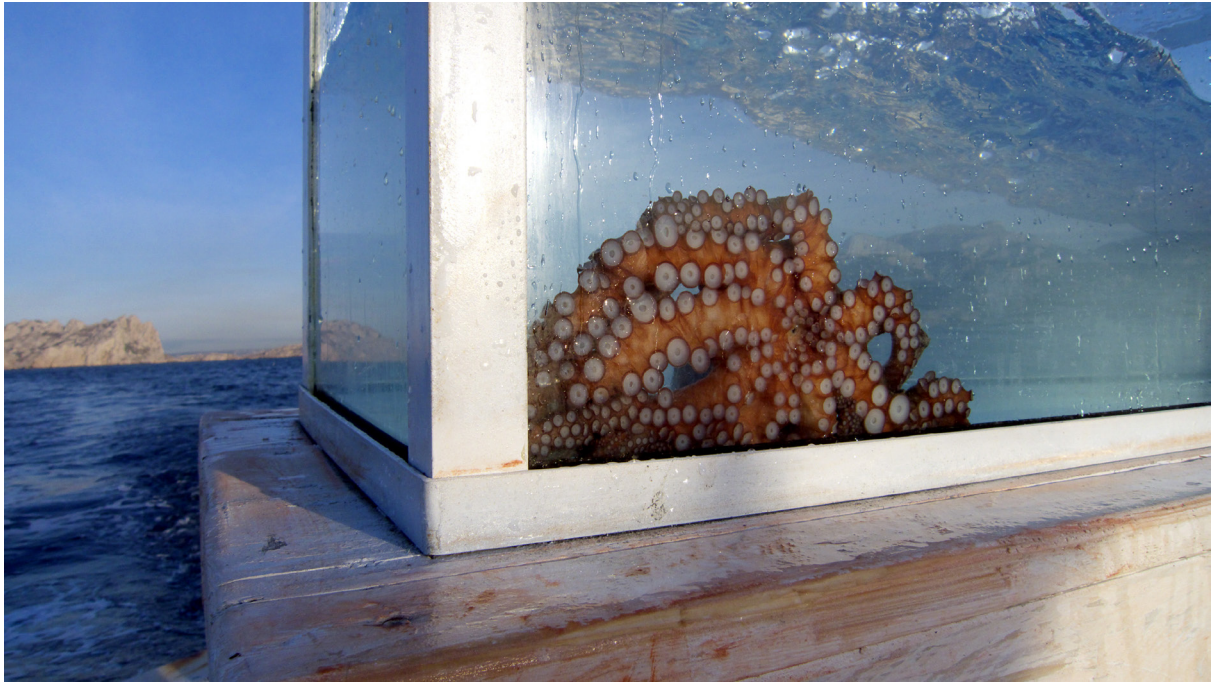


Fig 10: Film still from *Outlandish*, filmed at the home of Jean-Luc Nancy in Strasbourg and at the Baie des Singes, Marseille, in 2008

post-life and forced bodily status of transplanted, grafted organic material. As the world's longest surviving heart transplant recipient, Nancy is well placed – having, incredibly, had three hearts – to write on and anticipate the process of de-regulation, receipt, assimilation, proximity and appropriation of other bodies.

If we ask the strange and foreign, do we only ever arrive at the familiar – in a conundrum of familiar strangeness, strange familiarity? In thinking elsewhere, the question is whether we only ever come to the nearby, in a suspended momentum of alternating flows of perceptions of proximity. Physical suffering and pain, by inherently motioning towards the need for technological, bio-medical intervention, singularly achieve this experience of the outside, or as Nancy would put it, of 'outsidiness'. The sensitivity and apparentness of the dis-eased bodies' clinical phantoms become foreign by their very presence, their intimacy introducing a present where previously had remained an unannounced, organic 'silence', operating transparently in metabolic rhythms, ebbs and flows. The tensions of proximity revealed through rejection and separation produce organic shedding, even a wearing-out, commencing from within. Once the body is opened, a plethora of strange trans-imperatives emerge: harvesting, storage, transplantation, after-life, exhaustion, insertion, contamination, suturing, release. The history of the bio-medicalized, surgical organism is only fully realized in relation to the progress of immunology's radical otherness, which, once introduced into the bio-medical sphere, became a fundamentally deceptive device. It presented the opportunity to host the cellular material of others, housed in the preparatory domain of otherwise post-life recipients, without detection by the immune system. Nancy's short text *L'Intrus* (*The Intruder*), written a decade after his own (first) experience of heart transplantation (Nancy, p161, 2008), is an account of

the sensations of bio-medical intervention and the passage of hearts; a text which he developed further in *Strange Foreign Bodies*, written for the film.

“Body is itself in its integrity only when it is dissected and anatomized, not when it is animated, visited, inspired, knocked over, caressed. Then it is thought, desire, aspiration, virtue, inclination and declination. It is east and west, zenith and nadir, sharing and crossing, regions of air, a stranger to end in the world whose secret it takes with it – each body coiled up, deployed in world secret.” (Nancy, p22, 2010)



Fig 11: Jean-Luc Nancy's desk, photographed (with Möbius ribbon) during filming for *Outlandish*, 2008.
Photograph, Phillip Warnell

The Sea with Corners

An aquarium is the sea in convenient form, an engineered space of artificial proportions. This 'lake in a glass', a projected form of fresh or salt water, is a piece of ocean extract given exact, manufactured dimensions. Aquariums emerged as both domestic and public attractions – aqua-vivariums – taking the form of parlour oceans or vast ornamental grottos, part of an era of developments culminating in a range of lens-based and other methods by which aspects of interiority – as already discussed – became identifiable and visible. An unembedded, cubed world, the aquarium is configured within a slow, glass skin, standing free-form as a sculptural entity, set eternally at the brink of its own collapse. Its transparent aesthetic provides a viewfinder for a compact, pocket-submarine landscape. Initially considered a breakthrough device equivalent to a microscope or telescope, the aquarium's tank provides its own close-up view into the sea's depths, a scopophiliac's account of submergence, offering repeated, daily viewings of a contrived fantasy space, borne of an otherwise inaccessible domain.

Extract by Phillip Warnell from *The Sea with Corners*,

Outlandish pp 39-42, 2010

If bodies are 'life-like' structures, armatures supporting strangeness incarnate, this can be heard in the term body itself, in which we can hear both abode and oddity. Exemplifying this, the body of the Octopus defies the split between cerebral and corporeal. Rather than 'embodied' experience, so over-referred-to in discourses which primarily promote difference in limb and devolved intelligence, the Octopus' formlessness resists any such mind-body duality in opposition, emphasized in its disembodied, protean potential, "with none of the gains and costs of a constraining, action-guiding body" (Godfrey-Smith, p62, 2016). A human organ in transit, set between bodies, environments or institutional zones, also functions apart from the symbolic order, within the gaps and spaces of an otherwise seemingly closed circuit of corporeality and embodiment.

Mediumship and life-like structures

During the period when an organ is in suspension, devoid of a body, it resides in a measured, viable and liminal escape, detached from its embeddedness within a host organism – or rather, within one of an unnerving array of containers produced for the transit of surrogate body parts: vessels devised either for the temporary movement of bio-medical material, post-life storage or the ritually charged tradition of storing human organic material for use in the afterlife, epitomised by the Egyptian 'canopic jar'. However, it should be remembered that as well as human organs holding the continued potential for functionality beyond an originary

host, the counter is now also the case. In these circumstances, the personal contingency of a body coincides with those of medical techniques and its methods of the day. And from whichever source replacement cells and tissues are sought, the harvested organ resides in a state of psychic fragmentation, lacking the seeming certainties that (supposedly) arrive with subjectivity, gender, identity and apparent wholeness, the proper immersion in oneself that actually doesn't even announce or describe itself as 'body'. In this infirm and extrinsic state of passage and potential, the organ inhabits a part-medical, part-psychoanalytic zone: slowed, preserved, stored, transited, drugged and in-flux. Who owns an organ whilst it is in transit, 'on the road' between identities? No one. It is a visible phantom, a disturbed, emergent form of bodily secrecy. It is the vehicle-in-chief for the communication of strangeness, an organ in search of a body (Warnell, p8, 2010).

"Mr D thought a mass of substance was in Psyche's lap. Then I was palmstruck by a cool, clammy, apparently disc-like object. On repeated flicks the object was constantly changing. It appeared to lengthen, widen and thicken, as if some internal mechanism were causing a swelling in parts of the mass. When the substance was drawn from the hand it appeared to be slightly viscous. I felt a loose, clammy skin-like appendage, which proceeding from the mass on the table, appeared to curl away towards Psyche's right side. Notes from a séance". January 7th 1925. 10 Lime Street, Boston

Mediumship is a prime example of disturbed, conjured, transitional exchange – a process of spirited thought transference that confounds the production of identity and organism. It transmits an acousmatic, channelled voice of 'someone or something' somewhere, evading knowledge, propagating the pseudo. Its speculative nature is part of a repertoire of spectral and insubstantial forms which play with the cusp of authenticity



Fig 12. The mediumship of Margery Crandon's seances (primarily in the 1920's) involved the literal production of her lost brother Walter's limbs and voice, with 'teleplasmic' viscera often emanating from various of her orifices. Photograph from the family archive with permission © Anna Thurlow.

and/or presumed trickery, reminiscent of how cinema, photography and performance function. Whether by pre-meditated, involuntary, exploitative design or other means, its revelations are presented as ambiguous, unknowable paths (from or towards the unconscious or non-origin), its momentum gathered from the lack of ontology prescribed of the 'other side', linking liminal manifestations and boundary objects capable of fantastical feats which disrupt disciplines – like the antics of the neutrino, propelling furtive and visceral matter through matter. Margery Crandon's docu-fiction approach to mediumship involved the production of ectoplasmic materialisations from her orifices, combined with sounds, various manifestations and vocalisations, including repeatedly 'birthing' her dead brother. Those attempting to debunk her creative production of various prostheses and proto-birthing methods concentrated on a fascination with her exo-performativity and the forensic analysis of the visceral substances she produced.

In mustering viscous, organ-like and intestinal material – glow-in-the-dark, umbilical, anti-gravity and kinetic – Margery revealed not so much the body of the familial or ancestral, but the organs of an extended, animal otherness and imagined, magical state of intimacy. The eviscerated animal is an actor, in both the guise of an embodied interlocutor and a dismembered surrogate, a partial body inciting substitution, worship and the beyond. Margery's temporarily surgically-implanted body regurgitated and oozed proxy, and whilst her credentials and authenticity were repeatedly questioned, her consultations with her deceased brother Walter undoubtedly went beyond the throes of exploitation through mediumship, haunting her until her death from alcoholism aged fifty-one (note on Anna Thurlow). Margery's experience links the visceral appearance of bodies to the 'hearing of voices', along with the ageless proposition of the oracle as an indirect, sourceless prophetic voice, which Mladen

Dollar suggests as a “vast auditory field of hallucinations, intractable and hypnotic voices including a supplement which possesses the subject – imposing themselves as more real than any other voices” (Dollar, p39, 2006). The practice of channelling, possessing or exotic mutuality relates to modes of aside, whereby being ‘beside oneself’, speaking ‘askance’ or simply ‘not being oneself’, establish an uneasy sense, an unsettling feeling whereby the spirited is manifest as an invasive figment or pervasive partial object. The neurological ability of a body to experience the pain from a ‘phantom’ limb (despite it not actually being there) suggests that the erasure of origin can extant a looped, elliptical and returning sensorium – encouraging resounding forms of psychic in-betweenness in an extended, repeat order (Ramachandran, pp 39-62, 1998). The experience of pain is therefore as much a trace of the outside – a resonant, insistent discharge – as a given symptom. Or, to put it differently, the experience of pain is foreign by virtue of its very inescapability; its utter proximity to us.

There is an interplay of relations between the coming into being and departure of things and terms, the non-arrival of identity, questions of intimacy and introduction of events by which we continue to replenish the potential of an incorporeal world – conditions which the stoics might have described as ‘non-somethings’ in their various inflections.

“Every materialism, whether this is acknowledged openly or not, requires an incorporeal frame. The appeal of the Stoics, even today, lies in the audacity with which they develop the concept of the incorporeal of the subsisting condition of material existence”. (Grosz, p28, 2017)

The profoundly proto-scientific, unidentifiable politics of the séance both defy and provoke the scrutiny required of epistemological means, acting remotely, enigmatically or through a series of dark-room techniques. These theatrically induced, ventriloquized signs of dissonance enhance

a sense of elsewhere, beyond, and give subjective responses to the lack of evidential means or meaningful disclosures. If phrases are emptied of their meaning, so are identities in the perfunctory realm of relations, possession and consumption. Anatomies are accordingly played out primarily through their verisimilitude, prompted by spectral means – a ghostly materiality. Such strategies are epitomised in the deft, suspicious, sixth-sense behaviour on screen, the discreet politics of Natasha Demkina, or the quivering connection between mediumship and the recording studio, along with the prospering of other ephemeral, uncertain media.

Speech Violence

The exacting science of craniological evisceration deprives and empties skulls of their sacred, ritual and multi-sensory, generative function (Tomas, p58, 1996). Akin to the anthropometric systems explored by Bertillon and Sargent and developed in policing and university bodies, colonialization circulates bodies, and most especially the head, within a Western system of observation, handling, museology and measurement. Withdrawn from any local narrative or dialogues between the living and dead, the generative body is abandoned or distended, eventually usurped by the supposed clarity of a measure, in a specialist Darwinian and ontological aim. Our universities are teeming with such objects, brim-full of interpretation, evidential and consequential assumptions built on relationships between actor, method and measurement, a post-life performance, the taking of knowledge into exorbitant, arbitrary levels of speci-

ality as cannot be undone. These contested sites and methods, between bodies, shores and cultures, are colonised, militarized littoral zones, the mythological seas from which Oannes emerged. They are written about by Tomas as transcultural spaces, populated not so much of exterior bodies, but transcultural beings, capitulated spaces where language was and continues to be reduced to prelinguistic form, primarily those of laughter and violence (Tomas, p54, 1996). The progress of ethnographic filmmaking, foreign policy, news agency and the 'exotic visitor' all continue to expel an unending stream of neo-colonialism and media populism (which one of us can't be considered an exotic tourist during their travel, yet which of us will admit to being in that bracket?) which informally reinforces values, biases, borders - categories of 'us' and 'them'. We continue to prepare 'their' story for 'us'. It mirrors an equally problematic issue within the framework of identity politics as earlier discussed relative to Sargent's attempts to establish an image of normalcy, a 'who's who', that can readily now be ascribed to the globalized, cultural arts, accompanied by an urgent need for resistance to this:

"Racism can be defined by the reduction it carries out between the relation of belonging and the principal of identity. The racist reduces the I to an us. So consider the following expressions to be definitely racist: cultural identity, religious identity, national identity, sexual identity". (Serres, p74, 2018)

In thinking philosophically, stimuli are released into the veins, channels and discourses on community, for philosophy is tacit in its developments around the political body and its numerous repositories. In various exchanges between Nancy, Bailly and Blanchot, points of discussion and misrepresentation address mythologized and politically charged assumptions; but most interesting (from the perspective of this text) are their rec-

itations concerning perspectives on the longing for an absent, formerly closer, non-existent and harmonious origin, surmounted with belonging; in short, the terms of a community. In forging an agenda around familial, bodily and co-existential matters to the screen, sharing intertextual authorship with the above philosophers, the films I've produced engage with a displaced notion of urban or remote living circumstances, and the advent of piracy, criminality or the spaced bodily adventure of community. And if we must always destroy our beginnings, placing ourselves within a philosophical experience that escapes the boundedness of perceptions concerning cultural identity is essential.

Outlandish describes the state of the body in its eksistence, a sea-worthy reference to Heidegger's expanded use of the term, which Nancy develops more fully in *The Inoperative Community*.

"The body doesn't contain anything, neither a spirit that couldn't be contained inside anything since it has no place or dimension or substance, nor an interiority specific to the body, since the body itself is nothing but the multiply folded surface of the ex-position or of the ek-sistence that it is. As its form, the soul indicates this very fact: the entire surface exposed, without front or back, without a double face, without a double; rather, exposed on all sides, like those topological entities that refuse the opposition between one side and the other". (Nancy, *Outlandish*, p18, 2010)

He further describes this state as "being-outside, an outside prior to all 'inside', to all closure of a subjectivity according to the classical schema of being-in-itself" (Nancy, p.9, 2016). The point here is that being and body are always already made of the outside, from which they incorporate the very folds of extraneitas, to which we have already referred – unvisited, uninhabited and non-original. Equally, the body of community is founded not of essences or substance, but of strangeness, exteriority and exposure. We are enmeshed in the nets and entanglements of community, far

Fig 13: Outlandish. installed at the Project Art Space. Dublin in 2017. Photograph courtesy of Project Art Space



from it being something which has been lost – or indeed, to which we might be nostalgic for a return. In pictorial terms, the film's choices are positioned less as a response, or even an imaginary to the above, but as various sensory developments of (non) human spaces, geometry of form and engagement in technologically refined, contested sites.

As an encounter at sea, the raised aquarium is a displaced cube of sea, supplemented in *Outlandish* by the torsion-in-aliveness of a contorted octopus. Both are positive indicators of another order within another medium. Let us additionally consider how such a statement relates to other, primary, coastal encounters, whereby territorial unfamiliarity, bodily proximity and speech violence – the elements manifold in colonial spaces and conflicts – are constructed to such terrifying and uncanny effect. If human-to-human combat and the unknown enemy are seen within a framework of criminal force, dominance and weaponry – concealing, cunning and unintelligible – in colonial form they produce a disturbing side-effect, or even perhaps the unwitting goal of the 'invention of the savage': most especially as received in places of slavery, or the perverse formation of human zoos and other such communal Western atrocities.

Tomas' illuminating text exposes the reductive approach of imperialist forces and dominant ideologies, as revealed in eyewitness and ship's log accounts of nineteenth-century encounters between British and indigenous populations. Highlighting the absurd levels of ill-judgement and distortion relative to local values and things, absent community and existing custom, he describes the circumstances where "looking replaces the need for seeing, with a centralized form of light being shed, an observational (or bonfire light, as we shall see) governing a new order in the previous darkness of an unknown territory". Recounting a defamiliarization of senses and their distended role in transcultural space,

he conveys the ludicrous extent to which prelinguistic modes of communication prosper within such circumstances, namely laughter, which creates a framework of coalescence for turning on others and staging hostility – by which cultural monologue and common assumption affect an already error-strewn series of clunky, invariable tactics.

One particularly memorable evocation in his text describes a coastal point of contact and veritably disembodied encounter (physically proximate, absent-minded) between the East India Company and indigenous Andaman inhabitants. It assumes the presence, in a jungle clearing, of an adversarial army, identified through British naval ‘intelligence’. On hearing the presumed approach of further local reinforcements, the crew of the vessel *Diligent*, firearms at the ready, “advanced in the increasing dusk of the evening, towards a pretty considerable body of natives”. With a confirmational shout, the colonizers then made a pre-emptive attack into the very heart of the enemy.

“Excitement soon evaporated, however, for ‘the enemies we had intended to attack with so much vigour regarded our advance towards them very coolly, not even taking the trouble to stir. Quickly and brutally revealed, the reason for this arrogant posture was in that what had been taken to be a numerous body of savages was discovered to be a group of the charred and wasted stumps of trees, about the height of men, and with small branches remaining, looking like arms”. (Tomas, p46, 1996)

This episode, categorised by smoke, confusion and a sulphur-filled atmosphere of incorporeal threat, was beset with the bemusement and disorientation of a British brigade whose self-sustained injuries prompted their stunned insensibility. It conveys the intensity of how internal speech contains an all-encompassing violation; the incident not even requiring the virtual or absent presence of an enemy within its perverse ‘first con-

tact' provocation. Blanchot further elaborates on how mass panic is especially close to the inevitable question of opinion, an action in deciding and settling by way of a speech that is abstracted, elitist and "tyrannical, because no one imposes it; unaccountable, for no one is responsible for it". (Blanchot, p19, 1992). Community is instrumentalized in opine statements, the tactics of press, pressure, pressing and editorial false impressions. Without need of any enemy presence, it is a rarefied protocol, strangely reminiscent of the scholarly need for 'critique', the fixing of a distance from which – in another context – we underscore the constitution of 'properly' academic discourse.

Impossible force, secret presence

Secretly conjuring evocations of bodies and lives previewed and revisited, the unnamed ambiguity of mutant poetics quiver around the elusive, extended politics of divination, highlighting an 'impossible' search for an identity and origin alike. If it is impossibility that questions, this accounts for Genet's form of poetic vitriol, directed towards the paucity of linguistic form, violence of speech and identity politics, asserting that writing itself is a form of betrayal and true narration is impossible (Critchley, p40, 1999). His early-life criminality and poetic refinement combine the discrete phases of animality-cinemality-criminality under discussion. Nancy describes this direction of travel in terms of how sense defers

truth (a truth which may never arrive), whereby being is in the direction of an entity. By association, Jacques Derrida's deliberately misspelt notion of *différance* is described by Nancy as "a coming which keeps on coming without arriving, an identity whose presence is a precedence and pre-possessing prevention of itself". (Nancy, p13, 1997)

Speech, voice, whistle and even whisper can be co-opted, possessed or, more worryingly still, forced. Their mutability, the fluctuating manifestation of the erasure of voiced statements, maintains that whoever speaks isn't necessarily the one who should be held to account, as motive precedes endeavour. Nevertheless, the power and manipulation of speech is surely humanity's most troubling capacity, as it turns to professing the word, the manifesto, the over-confidence, the book, seeking to convey the story of absolute bodies.

Gaining in the primary importance of the interval (to facilitate dialogue, conversation or two-way exchange), listening always necessitates ambiguity – which in turn always questions, and which has always been political. In assessing other creatures, unknown sources, ghost speeches, sky messages, the non-human geometry-cum-space of the open, bodies made of the outside, the channel of oracular voice that so influences decision making, military action and the founding of prime objectives, we need to remember the side-effects of our congregation of life-worlds. They provide an opening whereby a deferential relationship to the necessary signs of creatures, forces, or the political ecology of things (Bennett, p2, 2010) emerges, and imperatives of the beyond and its materialisations are touched upon. An extraneous state should forever continue to resound, listening to itself and hearing elsewhere. A forced interrogation by absolute bodies attacking tree stumps will forever remain a most undue, torturous and inopportune way of 'making them speak'.

Appendices

The skin of others (extract, Phillip Warnell, 2019)

Audition, testimony script (redacted)

Joseph Merrick pamphlet cover

Smoke & Mirrors text on Margery Crandon for (20'x20')

performance by Myrto Farmaki at Wellcome Collection

The Flying Proletarian (film script Jean-Luc Nancy, 2017)

Strange Foreign Bodies (film script Jean-Luc Nancy, 2010)

Oh, The language animals (film script Jean-Luc Nancy, 2014)



Fig 14. Production still, *Ming of Harlem*, 2014. Leather couch with horse meat tidbits.
Photograph by Yuki Yamamoto © big other films.

The skin of others

A film cell has a biology, an expanded, cinematic petri dish of a body in every frame. The film set - witness the apartment as a protagonist - is its unwrapped, multi-dimensional form, a nervous system before miniaturisation (and projected re-enlargement). Or are we closer to a canopic vessel, where organs are stored in sacred containers, in preparation for the afterlife of furniture?

Is our sofa still potential prey? Is the long-gone horse now a wounded living-room? Does the tiger sense the cow in its new, geometric configuration? No such couch for Rajiv, whose disinterest in our three-seater was only matched by his obsessive interest in marking door knobs, entrances and exits. Are big cats exorcising a form of OCD? Terror-torialising, spraying and licking, delighting in absorbing his own secretions, I am somehow reminded of Howard Hughes' dark behaviours, which in Rajiv's case change on entering the living room, which remains untouched. Is Rajiv remembering his house-proud upbringing, raised as a circus big cat?

Materialisations and ingestion. The genitals always meet the face eventually when being raised, and are an olfactory measure for the growing child, as Georges Bataille reminded us. The nose reaches the genitals, reaches the armpit. Rajiv sprays the handle, culminating in a Flehmens response, the secret receipt of missives within species. A transfer of air containing pheromones and scent is channelled to an organ housed in the upper palette for analysis. Sniff deeply, pull back your head and open your lips wide as you can. The tongue should hang loose, your salivation become excessive. Head moves from side to side, tasting the air. You might look slightly bewildered.

Invisible reading and writing. A detective's search for present absence and sense of recent substance. Scent breaks the silence of the organs, cracking them open. The Flehmen grin is ecstatic, involuntary, an inter-sensory program. It is a metabolic communication, an inner laboratory processing forensic evidence - see exhibit A.

Antoine Yates' place (and such zoo's) employ a strange, equivalent system of olfactory enrichment. In spraying perfumes, they engage felids in tracking, searching and display for and of others: this is the pheromonal art gallery of the tiger. Their preferential other? Its Calvin Klein's 'Obsession', by far.

Lacing a trap for images

“Ming had a habit of taking up the same spot in late afternoon, where he’d be looking out the window, watching the folks come in and out from the retirement home below. Easy meat.” (Antoine Yates, *Ming of Harlem*)

What are we seeing here? A set built in an outdoor tiger/zoo enclosure for a tiger to temporarily dwell in, watched in its construction by said tiger. A kitchen production still, an unseen image from a perspective unachievable (life threatening) if our tiger protagonist were in situ. I’m attracted to the life of images that can’t (or shouldn’t) be seen. Beyond documents, images of ideas, preparation or transformation, cursory and momentary shifts: off screen, out of body, in the wings, apparitional, marginal, incorporeal or forensic. Suspended visibility anticipates arrival, tracks position and most of all – produces illusion emptied of lost origin. Such oscillations in the manifestation and erasure of events is how we wait before the shared forces of wildness and conditions of (in)visible things.

How to encourage Rajiv, stand-in actor-tiger, to peruse the view from the window? Try a straw bundle coated in another’s urine – a favourite neighbour, Frosty the lioness. Combine it with some defrosted horse meat tidbits.

The color scheme of the felid is already present in the image, mapped into the fabric and geometric patterns of 1970’s wallpaper. The kill was already made, its spent force folded into a preparation of horse chunks and urine treats. The place is that of an inter-bodily adventure and timeframe. Harlem, October, 2003 melds with the tiger enclosure at the Isle of Wight Zoo, Sandown summer 2012. A palimpsest of a scene is set, this is a film.

Geometry sets, camouflage evokes. Nancy’s poem of pennants suffuses: ‘Oh, the language animals’. Maws, muscle and fur intertwine and exchange. Species meld into spelling the Tigrator’s lair (a portmanteau hybrid, not a typo). Raise the scales and stripes, its rectangular skins billow in the wind (or sway about, mounted on the pole of a fashionista). God bless the tiger and the alligator...!



Fig 15. Production still, Ming of Harlem, 2014. Kitchen area with 1970's wallpaper, horse meat and urine soaked straw. Photograph by Yuki Yamamoto © big other films.



Fig 16. Production still, Ming of Harlem, 2014. Standin actor-tiger Rajiv on set

Predation wasn't always

Minds and muscles emerged in response to various interactions, formed of inflections in the developing incarnation of the nervous system, either externally, or latterly, internally felt. The space between things was assimilated inside bodies. Organisms were assimilated into other organisms. The Cambrian period gave us animals growing in their importance to the surroundings of others. Responding to this imperative, unambiguous weaponry arrived: claws, fangs, talons, teeth, antennae, serrated suckers.

It is suggested that predation began by perpetrators scavenging on the dead, before eventually moving on to hunting down the living. Actions and behaviours demanded knowing, anticipation and minded observation. Tactics and rivalries emerged, culprits and fatalities commonplace. 'There is something of the spider in the fly' as Gilles Deleuze puts it.

Imagine death at the claws of a tiger, a sublime man-eater arriving from nowhere. Perched at the summit of the food chain, death by strangulation of the throat. Orange, irresistible and ready to effortlessly outwit you in the chase. Even a lick of its tongue would take off your skin.

"Whatever your bedtime, turn out all the lights, pitch black. Now imagine your laying next to a 500lb predatory animal. Can you relax, can you rest, knowing he might wake up in the middle of the night, cos he dreaming about a zebra"? Antoine Yates, from *Ming of Harlem*.



Fig 17. Production still, Ming of Harlem, 2014. The bath is drunk by the tiger

Drink me, or climb in and be drunk by me

On set, we laid on a bathroom mirror of tigerish proportions. Rajiv revelled in lengthy, repeat self-recognition (contrary to all convention), vocalising and 'chuffing' - greeting, spraying and circling. Meeting himself admiringly, seen at the door whilst in the corridor, he walks his own dislocation, chance encounters with star, stripe or similar. He vocalises, giving a speech at a film premiere, arriving by red carpet, an enigmatic visibility. Performing both lead role and in attendance at an award ceremony, he lays down amid a captive audience and alarmed neighbourhood.

In this, does he anticipate his own death, which uncannily coincided with the film's premiere? July 4, 2014. A Marseille prison, the strangest of screenings laid on for a film jury of convicts, possibly the most honest film jury I've ever come across. In his enchanted, culminating scene, does the tiger drink himself out of the film, returning once more to the mind of Yates in the outside world? Bathrooms, photographic darkrooms and caves – originary spaces, of phantasmagoria and light trickery.



Fig 18. Production still. Pillow ripped apart, the girl surveys the scene

A daughter, a ghost

The fleeting appearance of a child-like, spectral figure, a daughter. “My mother, a very beautiful woman, had to raise and adopt over sixty children to keep that apartment”. Antoine Yates, our host, sees his fifth floor apartment as a temporary stopping point, a proposal for an eventual edenic family unit: predators, mothers, children. The block provides him a ‘crack to escape’, its high-rise verticality producing an ‘ultimate moment’. Holed up living with a tiger and an alligator. Ming rips up the pillow, Al hisses. Predators become poltergeists. The scent of blood and false etiquette of a tiger brought up in social (or other) housing. Ming in Harlem, Rajiv in Manchester. Big cats in captivity – strange distortions of love and private ownership.

Out of body experience meets bodily migration when you enter the space of a tiger’s territory. Numbness and fear. Instinct is bred of certainty, formed of millennia of trials. Killing creatures, and even more so things, memorize. Objects both hold and are memory repositories. We, creatures of forgetfulness, speak and spell it out, then forget. We plunder, we over commit.

Does the little girl become the tiger, or is she – like Yates – due a mauling? Put the cat among the duck down feathers. Her name is like a perfume. Will she be found like he, writhing in agony in front of the elevator? “He had my leg in his mouth for about five minutes. I could see millions and millions of years of instinct in his eyes, and my bond just fade from him”. A public secret reigned, except for cascading tiger piss, raining down windows. The Greek term *krinein* corresponds to a ‘division’, the provocations borne of an extreme situation. The word cracks open, escapes continuity, introducing doubt. It enables essential disruption – further formed in the consultation of humans with other animals. Where do origins commence? How does crime itself begin? Does transgression emerge in the throes of love? If we choose to pursue the meaning of the above, we need to press the interpretation of *krinein* into ‘perpetration’. The split in oneness, on close reading, opens fissures of self-hood and otherness. It carries a criminal undertone, which accompanies all thought and voices of dissonance. That which is unintelligible is criminal in substance.

script - audition - testimony - profile XX...65...27 years...last May 2015...88...i was all over connecticut, clinton...yes... homicide. it was somebody that worked for me at the time. i was deep in the game at the time...the QM. you know FC... cats like that. i have some newspaper articles, about me. no, but i will bring them in next time that i come. i didn't know that you would be interested in that. well the caption that it was under was J'IF. There was also a book out called CS back during that time. I was all up in that book. It revolved around an officer that got killed whilst he was watching a witness in Q off 118th and southern boulevard during that era...like 87, 88. There was a lot going on then. The crack era, that revolved around a lot of chaos, a lot of drama and a lot of murder. So i was more or less in the mix at that time. Exactly. I was in my 30's, ever since i was 11 years old. Just ask. You're looking at me...you're acting like its hesitant to ask a question, it's cool, it's alright. I'm hooked up with FS. I do public speaking for them at times. Yes. And right now I just got back from Arizona for the holidays. Yes, I'm going to relocate to xxxxxx because the job opportunities are a lot better. I'm not a young man any more and i have an interest in a couple of companies out there now. Adult health care. My nephew set it up and he wants me to be partners with him on that. The opportunities for me financially are a lot more lucrative out there than in NY. I'm trying to get my parole transferred, see i have life parole...every two weeks... right. I think that will shed a bit of light on myself, after you've read some of the things that was written about me. That was at a time when i was younger, and i was dumber. I experienced a lot at a very young age. I grew up before my time. Lets just say that, its something that i'm not proud of but i realise its a part of my history, its also part of my make-up, my character, my general disposition...has a lot to do with that time...you know I take life a lot more seriously now and i value every moment of it. Just to catch the subway is pleasant to me. To interact with people on the subway is even better. Yes I do, i'm enjoying life...the simplicities of life. That's what i'm enjoying...you know. The small things. I could probably do that, but something i've noticed since i've been home and that's a lot of people don't want to learn anything, they don't want to change. Whatever brick wall that they're headed towards, they actually want to collide with that wall, because they don't seem to realise that everything is not glamour or glitz in terms of prison. They think its the kind of experience that's supposed to make you a man but in actuality it doesn't do that. Prison has changed. They will kill you in prison now. They will beat you to death literally. The police. I watched a few inmates die, in prison. Right, in prison. It seems to be allowed, you know. An acceptable, lets say an acceptable homicide...because its still homicide to me. Anytime you beat someone (in their restraints) to death that's a homicide. I just have a different viewpoint a different attitude about prison, due to my experience there. Like I said its not a lot of glamour or glitz, a lot of young cats they want to go to prison. Supposedly its going to make them a man so when they come back out, they can talk about all the pearls, the jubilations that they had whilst they were in prison. But that's nothing to glamorise. I don't think it should be that, you know. That's not the reality of prison. It doesn't improve you, it doesn't improve your attitude or your disposition. If anything...its disintegrates you, to an extent, you know. You become an intricate part of your environment. You become the animal that they make you out to be...I don't think I know. No, I said I don't think, I know, in terms of the disintegration that they gravitate towards individuals, I know that's the practice, to humiliate you. Even your visits, when your visits come up they treat a lot of visits as if they're in prison. That's civilians you know, to deter them from coming to see you. There's a whole lot of sneaky things, underground things, behind the door things that are done now...it deter people from coming and visiting prison. I don't think that's right. I gave a speech at JJ college...it was a while ago it was last summer and i actually cried. The reason why i cried is because i could see the pain that a lot of individuals were going through as i was talking. Talking to their pain. There's another element in prison now that i'm fighting, and i will continue to fight it...is the aging of individuals in prison, right...you have a lot of individuals that are my age or even older, keep getting hit at the board. They're no longer a threat to society. One thing they said to me when i went up for parole the second time. Cos the first time they didn't give it to me, cos i was on administrative segregation...I was still stupid then, you know. Make a long story short, the second time i knew i was going to get it because the attitude and disposition of the parole officers was different, the parole board was different. And they told me basically that i'm no longer a threat to society. And that brought a smile to my face, because i actually thought that i was never coming out. You see I had 25 and life. So once i completed the 25 i knew i wasn't going to get it because of my condition. administrative segregation, right. I wasn't part of the regular population for a long time, because of the things i was doing inside the jail. To make a long story short, the second time, when i was out of administrative segregation, they hit me with two years. During that time, I didn't get one ticket and i did that on purpose. I told everybody that i was affiliated with, listen man i'm not with this no more...you understand. I'm trying to go home. Exactly. I lost a lot of friends but looking back at it, they were not really my friends. No, not enough, they didn't want me to go home, do you understand what i'm saying. They wanted me in the mix. I think that i could help them a lot better where i am right now...in the street.

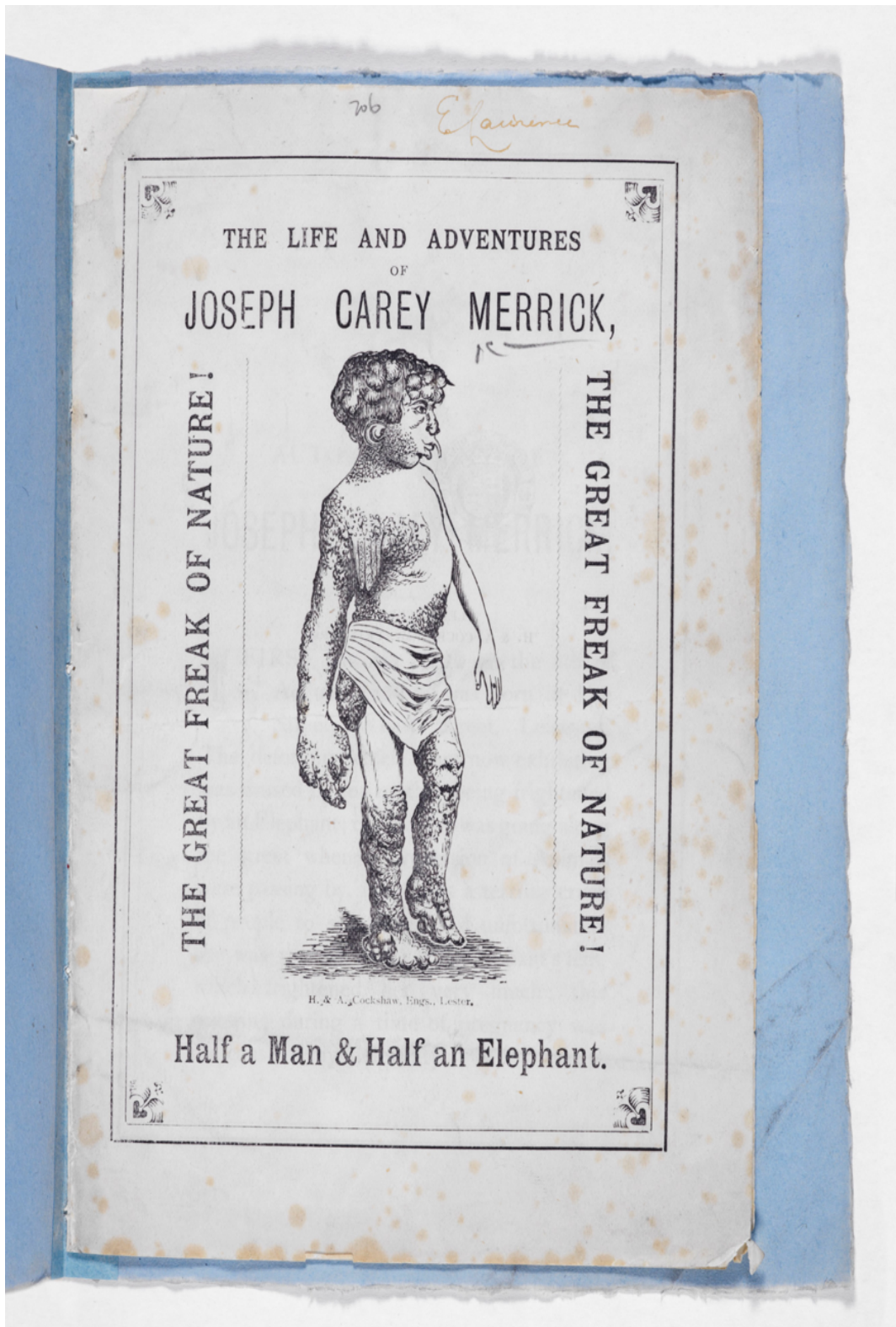


Fig 19. Joseph Merrick's sole surviving two-page pamphlet, 1885.

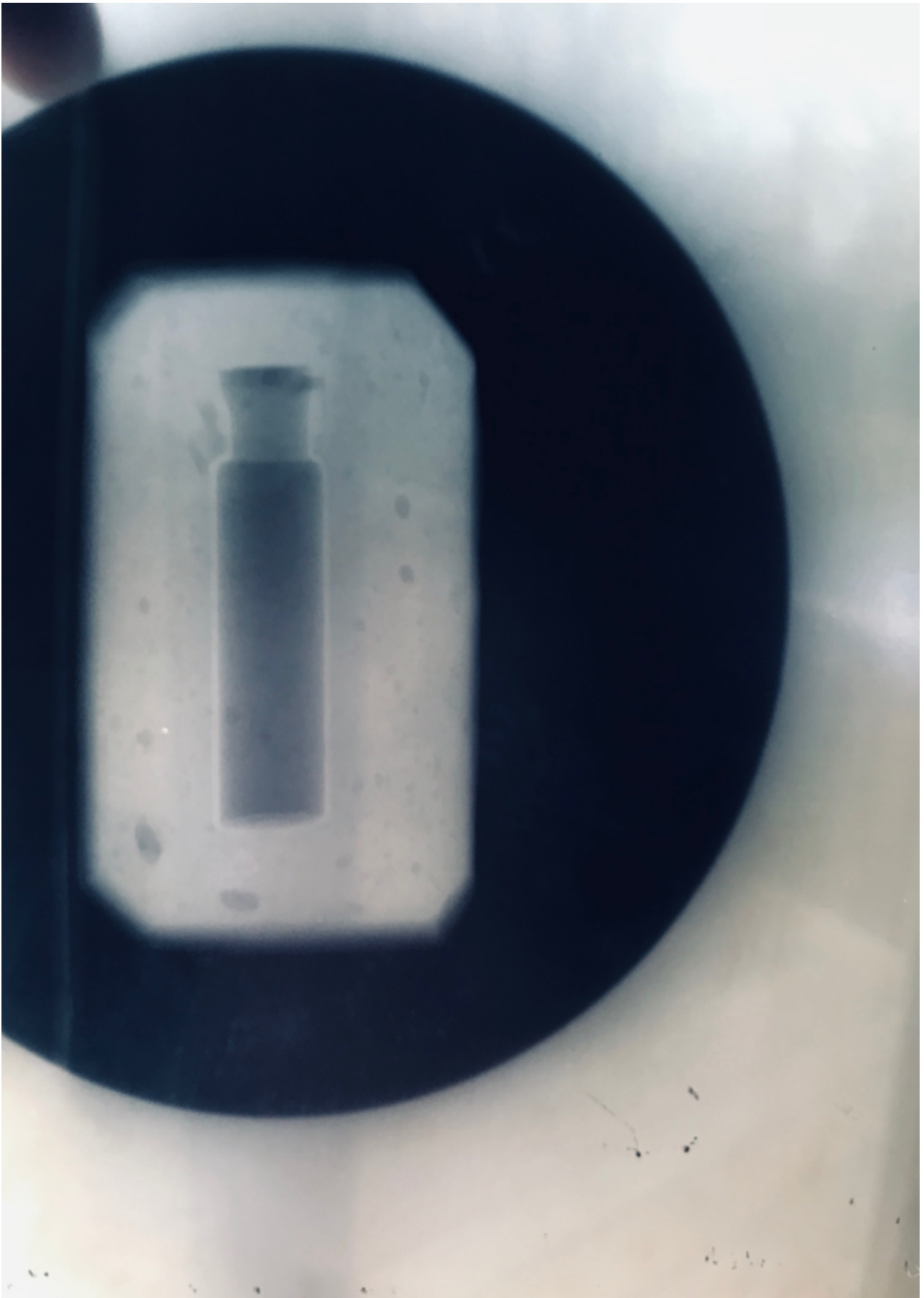


Fig 20/21. X-ray testing Margery's ability to send 'matter through matter', Photographs by Phillip Warnell from the family archive of Anna Thurlow, with permission 2019

Text written on the occasion of Myrto Farmaki's performance: 20'x20'
Wellcome Collection exhibition Smoke & Mirrors, May 2019

If life is a series of recorded moments where no-one is ever really present to anyone else, the atmosphere of the recording studio's echo and delay is marked out in Margery Crandon's mediumship, which produced an astonishing range of materialisations, some of which were later transferred into direct, teleplasmic renderings: pseudo-pods, voiced gender shifts, trans-oscillations - the strange production of matter through matter and constant, umbilical birthing of otherness, via protrusions which emanated from her orifices: vagina, ear, mouth and navel.

An image of this extreme phenomena is at once an unforgettable photographic experience. Her seances were creatively conducted in a fourth floor 25'x25' room at 10 Lime Street Boston. Short-term orientations, they were experiments which struck a tone at the very heart of identity and illusion. Progressively, her voice assimilated that of her brother, culminating in their non-differentiation outside the séance room, anticipating a trans era where conflicts linked to difference - even biological or anatomical difference - communicate like vessels, alternating sexual poles. In Margery's seances, sexual orientation becomes reversible. She produces, rather than personifies, otherness and gender. Aside of the stereotyping of psychoanalysis and advertising, her process commenced with a test subject and ground, set in an highly organic yet distinctly incorporeal space, transcending the singularity of any given identity.

Margery's visceral table manners enlivened high-society, conjuring a range of manifestations at her sittings, previously unimaginable in certain circles, incorporating partial, surgical objects formed of other creatures, ectoplasmic animal jelly and eviscerated organs. Margery's spatial gymnastics had an almost bioluminescent relation to light and sound. Her repertoire extended to wafting olfactory floral scent and spirited cold breezes alike - indoor psychic weather fronts. Her trance-like states dismembered language and writing, adopting a male voice and producing automatic writing thrown or versed in obscure languages. She even encapsulated the creative notion of multiple seances conducted simultaneously in different time zones, forming composited, strange missives.



In a parallel reading, however, another view emerges. Were Margery's butler and husband acting as surreptitious voice translators and accomplices, and if so who was controlling whom? Who plotted these fictitious deceptions (some of which are captured photographically), and did they also manipulate the medium, whilst she herself toyed with puzzled and colluding scientists, professors, press, lovers and family alike. Margery's personal scrapbooks bear witness to the copious column inches and fascination with her private life in the mainstream national press and wider community alike – one where Houdini and others all desperately sought (and were willing to pay for) an authentic source of otherness. Intriguingly, there isn't a posthumous shred of evidence in the archive revealing any duplicitous scheming on her part. No matter the supposed limits of truths and fictions, Margery's séances performed the transportation of matter through matter - entering into the realm of veritable acts and haunted, inter-bodily timeframes. We are not alone, and our otherness is composed within us.

Margery's enigmatic voice-communication channelled the lucid, playful, rogue and acousmatic voice of her lost brother Walter Stinson, whose unimaginable death – his teenage body crushed by a train - contrasted with the fluid, precarious circumstances of a séance, repeatedly tuning into his disturbed vocals and verbose commentary. We can still hear her interfacial voice-box in albeit lost transmissions, recorded on gramophone and typewriter, and even broadcast from a Boston radio studio in 1929. Hearing Walter's voice shaped Margery beyond séance, permeating her everyday, contributing to the alcoholism from which she died aged 51.

Script 1.)

The Flying Proletarian - Jean-Luc Nancy

02.02

These familiar places are those that have incorporated themselves in us, in a sense where there is no metaphor at play. They are corporeal, they have penetrated our eyes and ears, our nostrils and our skin. They are imprinted in our gait. They have become independent of all cartography and all topology. Of all toponymy too. The name of my street is buried in a corner and never appears, any more so than the name of the river across from my home.

05.09

At a distance, it was no more than a church epitomising the town, representing it, speaking of it and for it to the horizon. And as one drew near, gathering close about its long, dark cloak, sheltering from the wind on the open plain, within a fragment of the town's medieval ramparts it enclosed a house I knew, a stop off, a haven set along an outline as scrupulously circular as that of a little town in a primitive view.

07.16

The country is first of all the space of a land considered from a certain corner or angle, a corner delimited by some natural or cultural feature: a ridge, a pass, a formation, a passing herd or an armed horde, an encampment. But first a corner: that depends on a geometry as yet without ideality or analysis, the laying out of at least two axes of reference and thus of an opening separated by whatever angle they create, more or less wide or narrow, only exceptionally at a right angle.

09.50

It's an elixir, which infiltrates and expands in me, around and through me. An 'al'iksir', a dry powder of pollens and dust from this place diluted in the humours of my glands and in the liquors of my arteries and veins. It is the essence of metamorphosis, the philosopher's balm, which makes everything into the gold of knowledge and light.

The elixir passes into me, changes me into the light of the place. A fragrant medicine of confession soaked in a formula of aromatic oils and camphor, impregnated with spices.

11.00

1 and a half oz Rue, fresh

4oz Sage flowers, dried

6oz Lavender flowers, dried

1oz of camphor, dissolved in spirit

three quarters of an ounce, Garlic, sliced 1drm of Cloves, bruised

1gallon of distilled wine vinegar, strongest

She wants to be viewed...wants to print terror and rub against the appalling indifference of nature... the plague.

21.53

When a stranger appears – a messenger, a wanderer, a stray – the place mobilises all its forces to surround them, observe them, palpate them and, accordingly, offer them to acclimatise themselves, or else permit them a quick and untroubled passage.

Over a few years, one passes thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of times, by the same locations. So what is a “location” then? The word originally signified “precision, exactitude”. Then it came to designate a precise spot, determined in the sense that one also speaks of a “place”. It is there where we are in our proper place, it is a propriety, a balance, a liaison out of which comes all there is to come out of lives long shared: here one finishes by no longer being “in one’s proper place” but having become the place. We are no longer “there”, we are the “there”. How to imagine what comes to be there, there itself, an inaudible event? The appearance of a ghost, the explosion of a bomb, the fall of a meteor, the jingling bell of the plague- stricken.

28.52

The canton, before becoming an administrative term, designated a boundary, a limit or a side. The noun is related to the word “song” [canto] which is a homonym of the musical song, stemming from Celtic, that designates, for example, the side of a board or of a book (like the edge of the latter). I restrict myself [je me cantonne] to traveling the space of my everyday strolls, of my passages between my landmarks [points of reference], there where one must go, where one must turn, there where there is no need to go by automated means.

It is, as it were, a shell, but not in the pejorative sense that evokes imprisonment, retreat, an ivory tower maybe. No, it is the shell that forms part of the body of a snail or an ancient clam. It is there where the muscles attach themselves. Far from being closed, it is open: in truth it is the opening itself. For, without limits, edges, sides, there can be no opening.

Script 2.)

I
 We call “a foreign body” any kind of object, piece, part or substance introduced more or less fortuitously into a system or a milieu, if not organic as such, at least considered homogeneous and capable of a self-regulation to which the “foreign body” cannot be subjected. A concrete girder is a foreign body in a forest; a metal tambour is one in a river. But the canonical example that is always given is a needle or a piece of glass accidentally swallowed, or better yet, a surgical instrument left inside after the incision has been sewn up. In the latter case, the invasive procedure - to use the medical jargon - sees its therapeutic goal turned into aggression, and, what’s more, through the effect of a careless mistake that taints the image of the practitioner, of his expertise and of his deontology. The “clamp” (this is the stereotypically invoked instrument) left inside becomes twice a foreign body: for the patient’s own body and for the moral body of medicine. But the most exemplary case is, no doubt, that, taken once again from medicine, of the malign tumor: a hostile guest for the organism that it is trying to undermine, the cancerous cell still withholds from us the secret of its precise origin. Does it come from the body itself or from somewhere else? While its external origin seems clear, its development isn’t (not all smokers contract throat or lung cancer).

The “foreign body” - by its expression as well as by the imprecise image it conveys - combines a violent intrusion with a malign predisposition at the very least, if not a malign intention. But the intrusion carries in itself something potentially malign. Generally speaking, even penetration is or can become suspect of such a predisposition: one rarely speaks of penetrating a body, a territory or a mind, without letting hover above the words an air of threat or aggression.

That the foreigner is threatening or at least disquieting is an old story, as old as the notion of the outsider, which goes back to the first clan no less, the first group, and therefore precedes humanity itself; which goes back to any kind of communal life, of given or elective affinity, and thus back to almost any kind of life, if we think that life is rarely lived without a spontaneous division into relations, correlations, heritages, separations and sharing.

What is manifested in the expression “a foreign body” is the substance specific to the outsider - the foreigner. It isn’t only his difference, but also, and even especially, the fact that this difference is the reality of a body - and thus, this word acquires all the significance of its resisting concreteness, of its autonomous hardness contained in a self-sufficiency that can only prove, sooner or later, hostile to any other body. In “body” one hears at the same time “border” and “order:” the order of a real, physical exteriority, which is only equalled by material impenetrability. A body is penetrable only from the perspective of one kind of reasoning, either that of assimilation or that of its opposite, destruction. Either the foreign matter is assimilated by the body - ingested, absorbed,

metabolized - or, on the contrary, it cuts into the body's wholeness: it hurts it, tears it apart, mutilates it or even lacerates it. (When we speak of penetration without referring to an invasive, military or medical threat, we speak of love. In love, there is mingling without assimilation or laceration. There is body one in each other and one to each other without incorporation or decorporation. "Love" is the mingling of two bodies that avoid all the traps of one.) In general, in the foreign body, exclusion takes its full meaning in the body: a body is what is separated. A body is what can have only a relation of exteriority with the outside, of differentiation, of isolation, whatever the exchanges in which it could participate at the same time may be. In revealing itself as a "foreign body," it isn't engaged in any relation demanded by its own characteristics. It then best reveals its naked characteristic: that of embodying itself.

A body embodies: it isn't a tautology. It is a subject predicating its own essence. If the soul is the body's form (the form of an organized body, Aristotle tells us - but we have to accept that the inorganic - the *res extensa* - is essential and complementary to the organic: any body is first of all minerals, liquids, gas, tendons, etc.), then the body is also the soul's impenetrability. It is the soul's hardness, substance, entrenchment. A soul without entrenchment, without rampart, vanishes soulless. Therefore, it is also the body itself, one's "own" body, "my" body, that is an outsider. Any body is an out-sider for the other bodies: the being-outsider is inherent to its bodyness. More than anything, a body is an extension, and this extension shields it from the unreal condition of being a dot. The body cannot be told without dimensions. But its dimension, all its dimensions constitute as many defenses: the other bodies must move aside to make space for it. This space opens the condition of their relations - of their contacts, of their confrontations, of their gazes, listening, taste and attractions.

II

My hands touch each other, my body recognizes itself coming to itself from an outside that is itself, taking back in the outside world. This chiasmus of the flesh described so well by the most astute phenomenologist of the body - this chiasmus that makes us feel, through an anagrammatical resonance of the words flesh and feels, to what extent we are weaved into the world - shouldn't let us forget that our entangling with the outside has always already, from the start, exposed us down to our very depths. The "inside" is nowhere else than between outside and outside, and this in-between - the in-between of its before-i[g]n, of its cave with myths and phantoms of the inner self - is to itself merely another outside. Away from all the outsides without nevertheless ever returning to a non-dimensional dot (for the psyche is spread out: this time, it is the analyst who supposedly knows it), "inside" or "in itself" can never be given save to the outside, outer life and not inner life.

The body doesn't contain anything, neither a spirit that couldn't be contained

All the way down to its guts, in its muscle fiber and through its irrigation channels, the body exposes itself, it exposes to the outside the inside that keeps escaping always farther away, farther down the abyss that it is. For this is the truth of the world: generated out of nothing, created, that is, not produced, not formed, not built - an alteration and a spasm of the nihil, the world is the explosion and the expansion of an exposition (that we may call "truth" or else "sense"). The chiasmus between body and world exposes the exposition to itself - and with itself, in the end, the impossibility to lead the world to one spirit and the sense to one signification. The world is strangeness unpreceded by any familiarity.

III

Outlandish are the bodies: they are made of the outside, of the extraneitas that forms the outsider's outsidiness. The outside always seems to come after the inside, like a medium, an element in which the inside world pre-exists, detached, closed onto itself. But this enclosing, this enfolding inside can only take place through the detachment unfolding the outside. The latter doesn't merely signify a "non-self:" on the contrary, it makes possible the exposition without which the "self" itself couldn't simply be, that is, be in relation to itself. At any rate, outside and inside are conditioned by each other, and the inside can only be defined in two ways: either as pure concentration in itself - and then it is called spirit - or as relation to itself, and it is called soul. But the spirit, a stranger to any dimension, any extension and any shape, has no outside. It is the absolute container, a self-envelopment canceling any distinction, including that between an envelope's front and back. The spirit is in this sense the absolute outsider, the outsidiness to the world of a negation radical of any exteriority. Extraneus extremus, interior intimomeum - the outsider equal to the unfathomable intimacy, the other as more the same than the same, sameness melting into the identical, and the identical mirrored in itself.

That is also why the spirit - which pierces everything with its tip, sweeps everything with its breath or its flame, and first transverberates itself, a pure ignition, a pure combustion, an exhalation losing its breath, an expiration's inspiration, a spirit equal to itself only in death—is reduced in the end, tied up in its concentration and contraction, to the springing desire of going out of itself. This desire makes the soul possible.

The spirit soars aspiring to the outside, the soul answers by taking shape: body turned outward, exposing desire. And this desire is rooted in nothing else but the absolute strangeness of the spirit. In the world, there is an outering of the world. The sense of the world is out of the world, and this outside is itself outside of everything, without place, outside with no inside.

This is why the spirit-sense, sense as breath - leaps out of the absence of place, causing the explosion of the dot that it is (its essential nullity), opening the space, the spacing of shapes, the distance between bodies.

IV

Bodies are foreign to each other because of the outsidiness of their living spirit. This outerling also constitutes their strangeness: not only are bodies foreign, but they acknowledge and seek each other only with difficulty, obliged to overcome at least mistrust, sometimes fear, even repulsion. A body doesn't touch easily another body, for it knows that this closeness threatens to strike them together in a new spark of the spirit's desire.

In a certain way, all bodies touch each other: the world is woven of all the bodies held together by air, light, sound, odors and all the other modulations of matter that ceaselessly weave the delicate, dense fabric of the universe. The latter is thus named for the fabric's unity, unity of extension interlaced with itself, unity that doesn't find its resolution neither in unification nor in uniformity, unity - in essence - away from itself and exposed to itself: bodies amongst each other, sharing their in-between, their with, their against—one against each other close and mingling without settling. Nothing settles the world in spirit: it isn't a fault or an absence, quite the contrary, for Oneness [l'Un] isn't the good that beings are lacking or from which they have been separated (an impoverished logic and an impoverished ethics of mutilation, of necessary castration, of resignation to being separated). Oneness is itself absence, being absent to oneself par excellence; Oneness collapses in its solitude, deprived of everything, of position even, deprived of unity and nourishment.

What remains are but the separate bodies and the indefinite, ever replayed variation of their individuality. Souls turned toward each other, touching, side by side or face to face, back to back and one by one. Forms fingering and avoiding each other, conforming or deforming, bending, espousing and leaving each other; never melting into, or becoming one with, each other, yet sometimes disappearing, taking the shape of molecules or globules, always invigorating clear outlines, pushing away or enlarging stains and traces, edges, fringes, the trembling extremities on which bodies maximize their exposition: fragile skin fraying or flaring, birthmarks and other individual scars, disappearance of matter. Leaf near leaf and seed among seeds, streams of water separated by patches of earth, twins from the same egg squeezed twice, rocky formations and flights of lammergeyers, right hand and left hand, smoke reflected in a lake, lantern fish of the big oceanic rifts, bent back of a woman planting rice, and you, and you again, or me, you saying "me" and me saying "you," and our thick or thin lips, and the compositions with sharp contrast of our faces, thus unstoppably taking up the challenge of the assignation of individual essences. Farther even stranger in its singularity the strangeness from one moment to the next of an alleged subject, the callosities and the wrinkles, the stigmata, the protuberant veins, the spots, the vanishing lines.

V

Unique essences are mobile, volatile essences, forever different from themselves and with a forthcoming essentiality - without nonetheless foregoing the promise of sameness, an ultimate property endowed with an Idea's brightness: this rock, this ivy, this woman. This idea's brightness is due to the repeated affirmation of its necessity according to the spirit - but, as we've already said, this doesn't stop the spirit from causing its desire for the outside to explode: desire that this woman, this rock, this ivy come to be only by coming out of itself, surrendering to winds, fires, encounters. Thus exposed, a body is an outsider or a stranger not only to the others. It is that only insofar as it is that to itself. A body outers and stranges itself. It is to itself outsidiness and strangeness spurted out of a soul, ejected from the spirit's placelessness.

A body is the retreat of the self, relating the self to itself by exposing it to the world. My body isn't only my skin turned outward: it is itself already the outside to myself, the outside in myself and for myself - by me to myself opposed to differentiate myself from Unity. A stranger to the others and first to this other I am becoming thanks to it. Where am I in my foot, my hand, my sex, my ear? Where am I in this face, its features, traces, crossings and tremors? Who am I on the outlines of this mouth saying "I"?

One's own body - we say to differentiate it from a foreign body: but what kind of ownership does the one owning have? It isn't an attribute of my substance, it isn't a possession of my right, though I can identify it as such in certain respects. It is my own in the sense that it is me rather than in the sense that it is mine. If it were mine in the sense of an attribute or a possession, I could take advantage of it to the point of annihilating it. Annihilating myself then, I would show that it is me and not mine.

It is myself, yes, ego extraneus. Myself outside, myself out, as out of me, myself as division into an inside and an outside, the inside sunk into itself to the point of obscure concentration, opaque and bottomless, in which the spirit is torn between an abstract I "that needs to accompany all my representations," as Kant demands, a logical and grammatical subject without substance, and an uttered "I," an ego wide open in two lips curved around the funnel of air thrust into sounds by throat, palate and tongue, according to the airwaves demanded by the unique biology of my tongue. Inside turned onto itself, extravawide, exogastrulated, exclaimed, expressed and thrown - not "outside" but "as outside."

Yes, me-outside. Not "outside of me," for in truth the only inside isn't "me" but the opening in which an entire body concentrates and squeezes itself to become voice and declare itself "self," to claim itself and call itself, to desire itself by desiring the echo likely to be sent by other bodies around itself. A stranger

to itself in its call for itself: otherwise, it wouldn't call itself, it wouldn't express with all its extension the demand to meet this stranger.

VI

It, the spirit's point - embodying itself, it stranges itself. It takes shape, it takes soul, animated, stranged to itself. Better yet, what animates it is this outsidiness, this strangeness coming from the bottom of its abyss. Without it, it would remain soulless, pure spirit shattered in bits of bone, in fibres, humours, sprays... Body in high and low tide, ebb and flow, tidal wave and ebb tide, hollowed sea hoisted from depths preceding life, depths preceding the first cellular division of this very body, preceding all multiplication of bodies going back to nihil's thickness.

The strange inhabiting and squeezing it extends its palms and its lips, its forehead, its pupils, all the births and falls of its limbs, its awkwardness and its ease, its ways, its manes, its edges, its ridges, its angles and its nails. It moves forward and offers itself, it explores the lights and paths, the textures, the asperities, firmness and softness, it explores stridencies and growls, blows, vibrations. A cave-like body visited by shadows, it is incorporated and becomes itself perfume of rose or woollen rug, scratching chalk, cloud or lava flowing. Then it withdraws and bares itself, an immaterial sketch whose waters rock a reflection. It goes back to the sea and sand, uncertain of its outline overstretched by effort or boredom, slipping out of itself as out of a dead skin.

Ever stranger to itself, tattooed by age and passions, wrinkled and marked by its changes in taste, distaste, fervors and rejections - all this machinery of attractions and repulsions exposing it, a galaxy among galaxies, to the explosion or implosion of forces structuring it and struggling within it - it finally knows itself as such: the guest arrived from far away, reptile and rodent, bird, insect grafted onto the nervous embryo suddenly surged from a shudder of the void. Its shudder, its spasm is itself: it is nothing but one more tremor when two bodies embrace, becoming body of the in-between opening a new space, a new outside of itself to the others and first, of itself to itself, nothing but one more distancing, nothing but one more estranging between all the bodies, all disposed of, foreign to the world and to themselves, a feverish multitude, our shimmering dust.

VII

Swimming body is fin, wing and shining scale, becomes stream and body of water, becomes algae and blue-green brightness. Eating body becomes savor and juice, bite of fibers and spices, expressed juices, tasty expansion. Climaxing body exasperated in its spasm is made into hardened shudder, departs as flow and blow. Each time body is other and another than the same it is in all its avatars, in all its divine metamorphoses according to which it is its own guest, an angel or a demon arrived from the remotest elsewhere. Body is coming

in itself of the unknown, irruption and intrusion of other bodies, ingestions, intuitions, incarnations, encounters and gratitudes, repulsions and rejections. Body is great beat of foreign bodies, inspired and expired, gasped, swallowed and spat.

It is tight strap or relaxed fist, sunken mass of sleep, palm against forehead, its voice's echo in its head, numbness, generosity and transpiration, minuscule excoriation, indurations and cramps, irritations, awkwardness, extrasystoles, sneezes, an entire machinery too sensitive, subject too much to that which is nothing but the ever renewed excess of all things - and of itself - merely regarding the maintenance of its machine. For there is no machine, there is only desire and waiting, dread and hunger, need, envy, aspiration, disillusion. There is only disjoining and constriction between forces that pull and push from all sides, from all the extremities of the skin and the world.

Body is itself in its integrity only when it is dissected and anatomized, not when it is animated, visited, inspired, knocked over, caressed. Then it is thought, desire, aspiration, virtue, inclination and declination. It is east and west, zenith and nadir, sharing and crossing, regions of air, a stranger to end in the world whose secret it takes with it - each body coiled up, deployed in world secret.

VIII

Body is nothing else but the strangeness of being. But body is body only out of the desire seeking it - without which it is simply local contraction of forces, but its shape quickly flees from it. A body's shape, the shape that it is, is the answer to a desire, wait, need or longing: the shape of the fruit I want to eat, of the hand I hope to hold.

Thus, the strangeness of being resides in this desire. Nothing is solely from the desire to be. This desire comes from nowhere or from Being itself. Better yet, it comes of being, it is of being and it is being. Sense of Being, sense of being: to desire to be, to be desire of being. Therefore, stranger, for desire stranges itself to itself. Ontology or creation have been the classical terms to say it. Henceforth we will say it otherwise, yet likewise, with our foreign bodies.

We have always said and we will say it in yet another way: the desire to be is also called "art." In the singular, this belated, modern name indicates the identity properly un-assignable of a variety of practices and/or dispositions formerly called the "arts" [les beaux arts] - a name in which strangeness is twice questioned. On the one hand, the "beautiful" indicates, indeed, nothing but the quality of a strangeness in relation to the entire order of causes and ends, of reasons and intentions, of functions and operations, of organisms and mechanisms. The "beautiful" always names the disruption of something already given, the intrusion of something excessive, a discomfort and inconformity, and

this no matter how harmonious, how precise or happy the touch may be. On the other hand, the "arts" indicate nothing but the technical channels (techné, ars, kunst modulate in three languages the theme of a skill to overcome, or solve, something difficult, some kind of a problem resulting from the absence of a given means, of an available function, of a written formula). Technology responds to different goals than those of what we call "nature." In this sense Aristotle says that "art imitates nature:" it takes its place in order to do as she does, when in fact nature does nothing.

Nature does nothing to respond to the desire to be. It is by definition the order of the desireless being: of the being that doesn't relate to itself as to a stranger. It wouldn't be wrong, of course, to state that it is Being as such, in its entirety, that relates to itself as to a stranger: for otherwise one couldn't begin to comprehend "nature's" richness in superfluous forms, in unexplainable ends, starting with the purpose of the universe, or nature's endowment with an increasing inferiority regarding spontaneous solutions or instinctual resources in superior animals, and, on the contrary, an increasing complexity regarding improbable purposes, fragilities and destitutions whose highest degree is exposed in the human animal. But if it is really true that "nature" encloses in itself the power of adulteration, this means that nature alienates and stranges itself ever since the mystery of its coming into being.

Nature's adulteration offers technology's principle - and therefore the principle according to which one cannot speak of "technology" in the same way one would think of speaking of "nature." There is no unitary technique that would offer to a being the means of its own being. Technology is multiple and endless by definition. It can only multiply the ends, which are equally means for endlessly postponed goals, replayed and demultiplied anew.

Some technologies take charge of nature's adulteration as such and, together with it, of the dissemination of goals and the bottomless strangeness of the desire to be. This desire is indeed strange, for it desires nothing, no object, and it is foreign, for it only desires that which it does not know, cannot imagine or anticipate in any way - unless one thinks that, ultimately, it desires to desire, which comes down to saying that it desires its own strangeness.

We call these technologies "art." They reside in giving form and in underlying this strangeness of desire and this desire for the stranger. A man places his hand on the surface of a rock and blows around it a coloured powder; he withdraws his hand and observes the bright handprint outlined by the sandy glint of ochre and charcoal. Or else he lifts a foot and taps the ground so as to give his body not a walk-like push but the impulse of a pause above the ground and a coiled line uncoiled for itself, like a creeper or a cloud. And this

dance and this image bear the strangeness of a body that knows itself - or that suddenly finds itself - a stranger to itself.

This is not to say that "art" domesticates and thus diminishes the strangeness of this body. Quite the contrary: it exposes it and hollows it or it accentuates it, it exaggerates it if need be, it exasperates it, it hounds it only to better let it go. It opens its space into a borderless expansion.

Translated from the French by Daniela Hurezanu. *Strange Foreign Bodies* written for the film *Outlandish*. The translator wishes to thank Jean-Luc Nancy, Christine Irizarry and Stephen Kessler for their helpful suggestions.

Script 3.)

Oh the Language Animals - Jean-Luc Nancy, 2014 for Ming of Harlem: twenty one storeys in the air

Oh the language animals
Oh the tiger oh the alligator
Oh the alligator and the tiger
one another neither friend nor foes
cruel indifferent sovereigns meeting by chance
not through hunting or the whim of men
zoo or domestic fantasy
fantastical fantasy face to face in ignorance
pure cruel innocents
sawing jaws bony frame violent game
long indolent torpor
skin-deep sleep
and sudden awakening
as if called by a bugle
a signal an alarm
a cry a scent a rustle a breeze
an insect or snake
pulse of prey or threat
pulsing death oh indifferent death
sacrifice without idol
no altar no ritual
sacrifice to ravenous life
to the living gods of fertile devourings
to the gods of older worlds
tiger the vengeful god
alligator the wrathful
knowing neither vengeance nor anger
oh such impeccable savagery save barbarity
save war peace dilemma
powers identical to themselves
even not the same
living outside their names
outside the languages that name them
these names that roar and gape
these sharp-toothed names
hot-throated maws
claws and craws
scales and stripes
all these animal words
they have not learned
nor understood or swallowed
nor devoured or digested them in their names
not in them their names
names which flutter outside flags torches ideas images
nothing to eat nothing to scratch nothing to bulge
but growling snapping biting

forms of fierceness called by name
Oh tiger alligator
more than your truthful names
following your hunger
following what suits your ways
unconcerned with proper splendours
sumptuous coat scaly leather
undreamt-of luxuries
massive luxuriance radiating
figures of an old mystery
of living profusion
a mystery of origins in the prolific profusion of geneses
of genes of generations
of crossings of selections of mutations
of trials of errors of successes
in families species and varieties
through to rare specimens the great loners
Lords of forests and rivers
born just for this lordly dominion
Oh tiger alligator
Sovereign by your allure alone
by your stretches by your leaps by your sated sleep
by your starts by your fury your courage your glory
which our tongues try to form in roughened rhymes
gnashing scratching roaring rumbling repetitions
hoarse tongued torsions
tongue behind words
in your mouth which roars and which weeps groans moans howls
cries from your tear-filled throat
your throat tigrator your throat
but no less mine no less
deep in which these names
you do not know make signs
which celebrate you which honour you rituals prayers
rhythms of adoration
from throat to belly and into the lungs
heart liver nerves and tendons
spread the shiny splinters of your names Tiger Gator
their savage invocations
which make of you in me the gods
the ancient the fearsome
intimate with the impossible

Translation by Martin Crowley
suggestions by Phillip Warnell

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Falero, L., (cover image) Wellcome Library collection (detail), photograph, Phillip Warnell, 2019

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