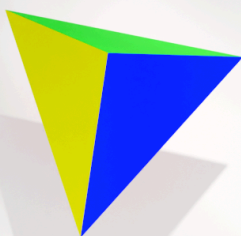




Gnostic Technology



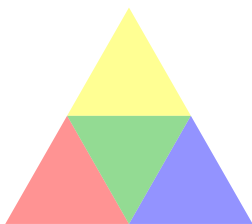
Vol 2

Secret Notes from the Sacred Grove





December 2024



GNOSTIC

What Would Steiner Do?

About

Our little group came together 4 years ago in late 2020. A lot has happened over those 4 years. Not only have we evolved, but more people have joined our group and many of us finally met in real life! Gnostic Technology is a space for us to share our spiritual lives, read books together, and conduct E.S.P. experiments from across the globe. Having grown together over the years it feels as if we are monads of Leibniz's philosophy — each reflecting the whole from our own unique place. In this volume, our third zine, you will find an array of topics, investigations and ideas, which in part were formed in our monthly meetings. We hope you enjoy this physical record of our explorations in the Weird.

It's a work of love, no profit is made from selling this zine. If you really like the project and want to support our community, purchase a spare copy and leave it in a park, church or your fav cafe to spread the synchronicity.

In this volume

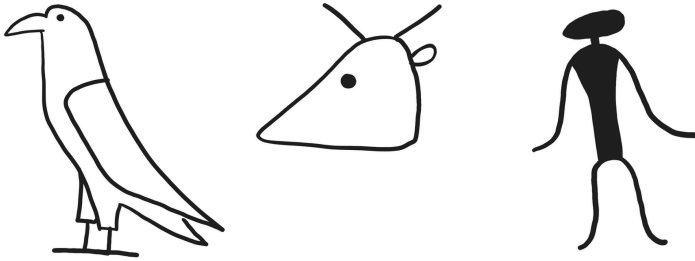
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SYNESTHESIC ALPHABETICALS

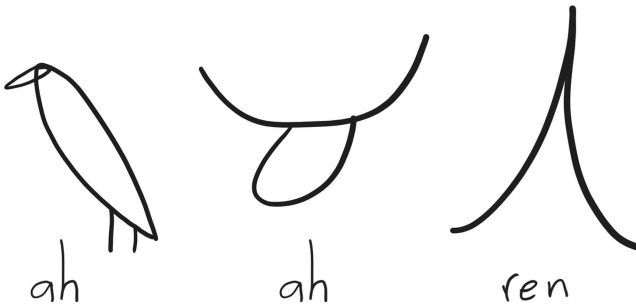
towards the development of a personalized
encoding of synchronistic phenomenon



It is commonly understood that the development of language follows a similar evolution across the world. In the beginning, images are used as unambiguous representations. A vulture is a vulture. A cow is a cow. A person is a person.



Over time, these pictographic glyphs simplify. They become references to real things rather than images of real things. These symbols also become representations of sounds rather than representations of whole words.



Ancient linguistics is a contentious field, and I have no intention of asserting one theory of development over another. My interest lies in the mystical technology of magical alphabets.

What I find most interesting is the fact that many ancient alphabets and language systems encode multiple different dimensions of meaning into each letter. For example, Hebrew letters represent not only a phonetic sound, but also an object, a spiritual teaching, and a number.

. 79 72 74 75

This allows for some serious magical manipulation where any number can be spoken as a name and any name can be understood as arithmetic.

. 269 4100 62

There are many languages that move between meanings in this way. Norse Runes and Irish Ogham are two languages I am especially enamored with.

XRFMMFRIM
 ~~~~~

I am primarily concerned with the efficacy of re-enchanting alphabets, and I am not so concerned with finding the “real” or “original” magical alphabets of archaic ages past.



The Elder Futhark alphabet from the ancient Germanic and Scandinavian world has been puffed up and mysticalized by modern Neopaganism. Did the ancient Norse people think about birth and renewal every time they wrote the letter B? Perhaps not.

























BIRP FIM RMIMPFT

However, we are magicians and wizards and warlocks and witches and sorcerers, and we can use technology no matter how temporally scholastic it is or isn't.



# MAGICAL ALPHABET PRACTICE

Let's start with the Elder Futhark. This is an alphabet of 24 letters which was used as far back as the first century CE. These runes were mostly carved into wood or stone, which is why they are made entirely of straight lines. Easier to carve, you see.

|                                                                                     |                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|    | Fehu [F] {cattle}<br>(wealth + abundance)           |    | Eihwaz [Y] {yew}<br>(death + understanding)      |
|    | Uruz [U] {aurochs}<br>(strength + will)             |    | Perthro [P] {fortune}<br>(destiny + fate)        |
|    | Thurisaz [Th] {giant}<br>(destruction + change)     |    | Algiz [Z] {elk}<br>(protection + defense)        |
|    | Ansuz [A] {Odin}<br>(opening + cleansing)           |    | Sowelo [S] {sun}<br>(awakening + illumination)   |
|    | Raidho [R] {wagon}<br>(movement + travel)           |    | Tiewaz [T] {Tyr}<br>(victory + leadership)       |
|    | Kenaz [K] {torch}<br>(wisdom + purpose)             |    | Berkanon [B] {birch}<br>(healing + rebirth)      |
|   | Gebo [G] {gift}<br>(crossroads + balance)           |   | Ehwaz [E] {horse}<br>(partnership + progress)    |
|  | Wunjo [W] {joy}<br>(happiness + fulfillment)        |  | Mannaz [M] {human}<br>(community + cooperation)  |
|  | Hagalaz [H] {hail}<br>(danger + delay)              |  | Laguz [L] {lake}<br>(potential + desire)         |
|  | Nauthiz [N] {need-fire}<br>(struggle + persistence) |  | Inguz [Ng] {Ing}<br>(fertility + harmony)        |
|  | Isa [I] {ice}<br>(pause + stillness)                |  | Othala [O] {home}<br>(heritage + history)        |
|  | Jera [J] {harvest}<br>(labor + cycles)              |  | Dagaz [D] {dawn}<br>(awareness + transformation) |

We can see here that the Futhark exists across four dimensions: symbol, sound, object, and meaning. Here is the same word written four ways, using the Futhark encoding of meaning.



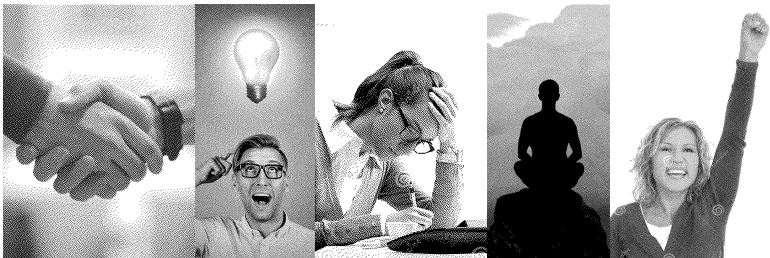
This is the word MAGIC, written phonetically.



Each of these Futhark letters refers to a particular thing: Mannaz is humankind, Ansuz is Odin, Jera is the harvest, Isa is ice, and kenaz is a torch.



Each letter also has a more abstract meaning. In this case: cooperation, inspiration, labor, stillness, and purpose. Represented here with stock photos, which are the neoliberal commodity archetypes of this networked aeon.



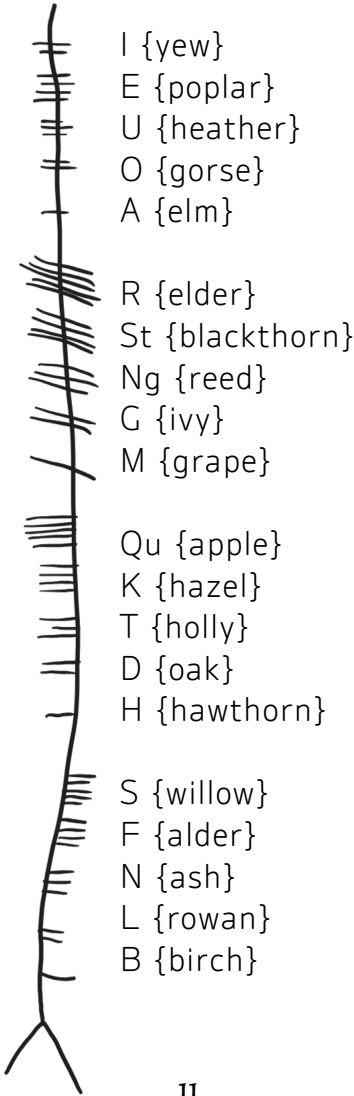
If you fully grok a language like this, it is easy to see that meaning can pivot from the dimension of objects to the dimension of abstract meanings to the dimension of the spoken word without any trouble at all. I propose that this is a form of purposeful synesthesia, the neurological condition in which sensory input is cross-dimensional. Synesthetes will smell colors, taste numbers, hear textures. Their minds pivot between sensory dimensions without effort.



"Synesthesia refers to the phenomenon in which stimulation of one sense modality gives rise to a sensation in another sense modality. The term "synesthesia" originates from the Greek *syn* (together) and *aisthesis* (perceive). The most prevalent form of synesthesia is known as *audition colorée*, the phenomenon of seeing colors when hearing music or vowels." (van Campen, 1999)

I suspect that magical alphabets are a form of synesthetic understanding that can be shared between people. After all, isn't all language predicated on the binding of different sensory experiences? "A" is for "apple". This noise means this fruit. This symbol means this sound. This word means this process. Why not dive fully into the possibilities of this? How many dimensions can one language hold?

Ogham is a pre-Christian, post-Roman alphabet from Celtic Ireland. I have not found any two sources on this alphabet that entirely agree, and so the interpretation I present to you here is my own conglomeration of sources and ideas.





The correspondences for Ogham go on and on.

| letter | #  | tree       | color        | bird           | tool          | art                |
|--------|----|------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| I      | 20 | yew        | pure white   | eaglet         | anvil         | fishing            |
| E      | 19 | poplar     | rust red     | whistling swan | billhook      | bird hunting       |
| U      | 18 | heather    | amber        | lark           | heather brush | brasswork          |
| O      | 17 | gorse      | yellow-brown | cormorant      | hammer        | harvesting         |
| A      | 16 | elm        | spotted      | lapwing        | plow          | leadership         |
| R      | 15 | elder      | dark red     | rook           | basket        | herbalism          |
| St     | 14 | blackthorn | silver       | thrush         | grain flail   | deer hunting       |
| Ng     | 13 | reed       | grass green  | goose          | wedge         | sculpting          |
| G      | 12 | ivy        | sky blue     | mute swan      | withe         | blacksmithing      |
| M      | 11 | grape      | plaid        | titmouse       | milk bucket   | soldiering         |
| Qu     | 10 | apple      | mouse-brown  | hen            | stick         | playing flute      |
| K      | 9  | hazel      | brown        | crane          | wagon         | harping            |
| T      | 8  | holly      | dark gray    | starling       | adze          | lathework          |
| D      | 7  | oak        | black        | wren           | barrel        | druidry            |
| H      | 6  | hawthorn   | deep violet  | raven          | saltbox       | trisyllabic poetry |
| S      | 5  | willow     | soft yellow  | hawk           | pack saddle   | handcraft          |
| F      | 4  | alder      | red          | seagull        | hedge-bill    | bardic poetry      |
| N      | 3  | ash        | transparent  | snipe          | ring          | recordkeeping      |
| L      | 2  | rowan      | gray         | duck           | rope          | sailing            |
| B      | 1  | birch      | dull white   | pheasant       | axe           | basic skills       |

There are some interpretations that also correlate musical notes, poetry excerpts, and times of year to the Ogham. However academically true or false this may be, I think it is a powerful magical technology to use practically.

# THE PROBLEM WITH MAGIC

Symbolism and synchronicity can be very hard to translate into discrete meaning. If an eagle flies over your car, is it good luck? Bad luck? Does the eagle represent freedom, or a lack of grounding? Is the eagle young or old? Does that matter? Do the lyrics playing through the radio matter also? What is the eagle saying? What does it mean?

This is the kind of loop I get stuck in when a synchronicity occurs. There is a sort of nonspecific meaningfulness that permeates a synchronistic or magical moment, like an opera performed in a foreign language. My proposition is that synesthetic alphabets are a way to encode meaning into experience, and thus bring magical moments into coherence.



“Synchronistic phenomena prove the simultaneous occurrence of meaningful equivalences in heterogeneous, causally unrelated processes; in other words, they prove that a content perceived by an observer can, at the same time, be represented by an outside event, without any causal connection. From this it follows either that the psyche cannot be localized in space, or that space is relative to the psyche. The same applies to the temporal determination of the psyche and the psychic relativity of time. I do not need to emphasize that the verification of these findings must have far-reaching consequences.” (Jung, 1952)

For this work to be effective, you must believe in the possibility that internal language mechanisms can change the way the external world functions. This is like the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on five dried grams of hermetic morphogenesis.



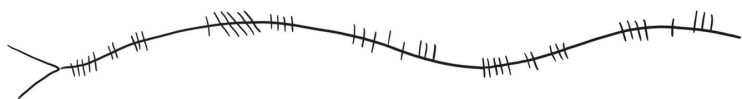
"Language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience... but it is also a self-contained, creative, symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of formal completeness... because of our unconscious projection, implicit expectations into the field of experience... (meanings are) not so much discovered in experience as imposed upon it, because of the tyrannical hold linguistic form has imposed upon our orientation in the world.." - (Edward Sapir as quoted in Hackett, 1954)

Charles Fort calls this metaphysical structure the Dominant of the age. In our current materialist rationalist scientific Dominant, our alphabet encodes nothing but mouth noises. Animals are animals. Trees are trees.

The Dominant of the age is not only an interpretive ontology, but in a very real way defines what is physically possible in the world. Moving beyond the Dominant of materialism and into a world of synchronistic synesthesia is a technological maneuver that encodes discrete and specific meanings into otherwise obscure experiences.

# DO-IT-YOURSELF OMIENS

I encourage you, reader, to learn an ancient alphabet like Hebrew or Ogham or Futhark to enjoy the multifaceted joy of a mystical alphabet. However, you will experience that these alphabets may not exactly match your world.



I do not live anywhere near blackthorn or rowan or gorse or heather, and so those aspects of the Ogham will never reveal themselves in my life. It is like a Tarot deck where half the cards never get pulled.

JXN ARM PHFT JXN RMFX

Therefore, I encourage you to create your own synchronistic alphabet. Remember, this is an exercise to encode meaning, not decode experiences. This is a proactive technology, not an interpretive guidebook.



The first step is to start with a category that is important to you. I work with trees, and dream of trees, and think of trees often, and so making a list of trees is the first step to encoding meaning into my everyday experiences.

| Trees       |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| OAK         |  |  |  |  |  |
| ASH         |  |  |  |  |  |
| MAPLE       |  |  |  |  |  |
| PINE        |  |  |  |  |  |
| CEAR        |  |  |  |  |  |
| WILLOW      |  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMAC       |  |  |  |  |  |
| ASPEN       |  |  |  |  |  |
| COTTON WOOD |  |  |  |  |  |
| LOCUST      |  |  |  |  |  |

Keep adding more columns! I also work with computer code and with young students, so I will add those too.

| Trees       | code    | GRADE            |  |  |  |
|-------------|---------|------------------|--|--|--|
| OAK         | INTEGER | 11 <sup>TH</sup> |  |  |  |
| ASH         | FUNC    | 7 <sup>TH</sup>  |  |  |  |
| MAPLE       | STRING  | 6 <sup>TH</sup>  |  |  |  |
| PINE        | BOOLEAN | 2 <sup>ND</sup>  |  |  |  |
| CEAR        | PRINT   | 4 <sup>TH</sup>  |  |  |  |
| WILLOW      | FOR     | K                |  |  |  |
| SUMAC       | IF/THEN | 9 <sup>TH</sup>  |  |  |  |
| ASPEN       | FLOOR   | 1 <sup>ST</sup>  |  |  |  |
| COTTON WOOD | WHILE   | 12 <sup>TH</sup> |  |  |  |
| LOCUST      | INPUT   | 3 <sup>RD</sup>  |  |  |  |

Don't worry about thinking too hard, the idea is to feel it out. Find connections that seem right and go with it. Trust your first instinct.

| Trees          | code    | GRADE | COLOR  | Pokémon<br>ELEMENT |
|----------------|---------|-------|--------|--------------------|
| OAK            | INTEGER | 11TH  | BROWN  | FIGHTING           |
| ASH            | FUNC    | 7TH   | GRAY   | FLYING             |
| MAPLE          | STRING  | 6TH   | Red    | BUG                |
| PINE           | BOOLEAN | 2ND   | Green  | ICE                |
| CEGAR          | PRINT   | 4TH   | MAROON | ELECTRIC           |
| WILLOW         | FOR     | K     | WHITE  | PSYCHIC            |
| SUMAC          | IF/THEN | 9TH   | ASHY   | GROUND             |
| ASPEN          | FLOOR   | 1ST   | YELLOW | GHOST              |
| COTTON<br>WOOD | WHILE   | 12TH  | BLUE   | WATER              |
| LOCUST         | INPUT   | 3RD   | ORANGE | DRAGON             |

When it comes to symbols, think about how you might be using your magical language. If it will be carved, like Ogham and Futhark, nice straight lines are best. If you are going to embroider or paint or draw or stamp your language, consider the materiality of the practice and how that might influence the shapes of your characters.

As for sounds, consider encoding at the very least all possible noises in your native language. That way, any street sign or cup of noodles can be decoded into your own personal synchronicity matrix.

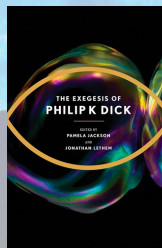
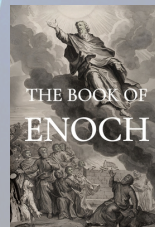
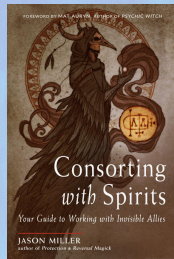
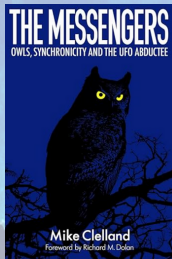
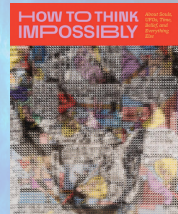
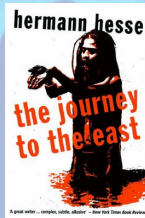
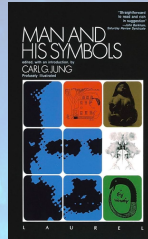
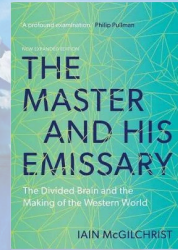
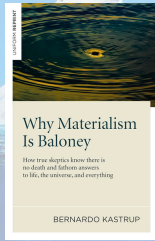
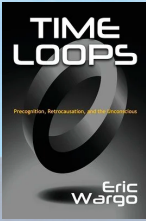
| Trees       | code    | GRADE | COLOR  | POKÉMON ELEMENT | SYMBOL | SOUND |
|-------------|---------|-------|--------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| OAK         | INTEGER | 11TH  | BROWN  | FIGHTING        | *      | K     |
| ASH         | FUNC    | 7TH   | GRAY   | FLYING          | f      | Ch    |
| MAPLE       | STRING  | 6TH   | Red    | BUG             | Y      | T     |
| PINE        | BOOLEAN | 2ND   | GREEN  | ice             | f      | R     |
| CEAR        | PRINT   | 4TH   | MAROON | ELECTRIC        | f      | D     |
| WILLOW      | FOR     | K     | WHITE  | PSYCHIC         | V      | S     |
| SUMAC       | IF/THEN | 9TH   | ASHY   | GROUND          | Y      | G     |
| ASPEN       | FLOOR   | 1ST   | YELLOW | GHOST           | ↓      | P     |
| COTTON WOOD | WHILE   | 12TH  | BLUE   | WATER           | -f     | F     |
| LOCUST      | INPUT   | 3RD   | ORANGE | DRAGON          | Y      | Th    |

Practice. Take notes with your alphabet. Decode your dreams. Add new categories when magical experiences lock in new combinations. This is your ongoing apocrypha.

What might happen if you share it with friends?



save your friend from the grips of reductive materialism







# FUNDRAISER FOR THE VICTIMS OF S.N.F.M.I.

*I was being attacked with a swordfish and yes,  
attacking back with a swordfish*

*we were all glowing red pipes, (verticals) and in  
the bigger dream that contained that dream, I  
thought: 'I must tell them this'*

*Neughteen as a number showed up.*

"I am sure pope doesn't conduct electricity" and she turned to me  
with a smile and said "there is only one way to find out"

*Buttersfield Bakersfield, Officer of the  
Law.*

*I watched a room full of  
maybe 50 people having an  
orgy and all of the sudden  
they began to multiply like  
cells and it turned into  
rapidly expanding orgiastic  
fractal.*

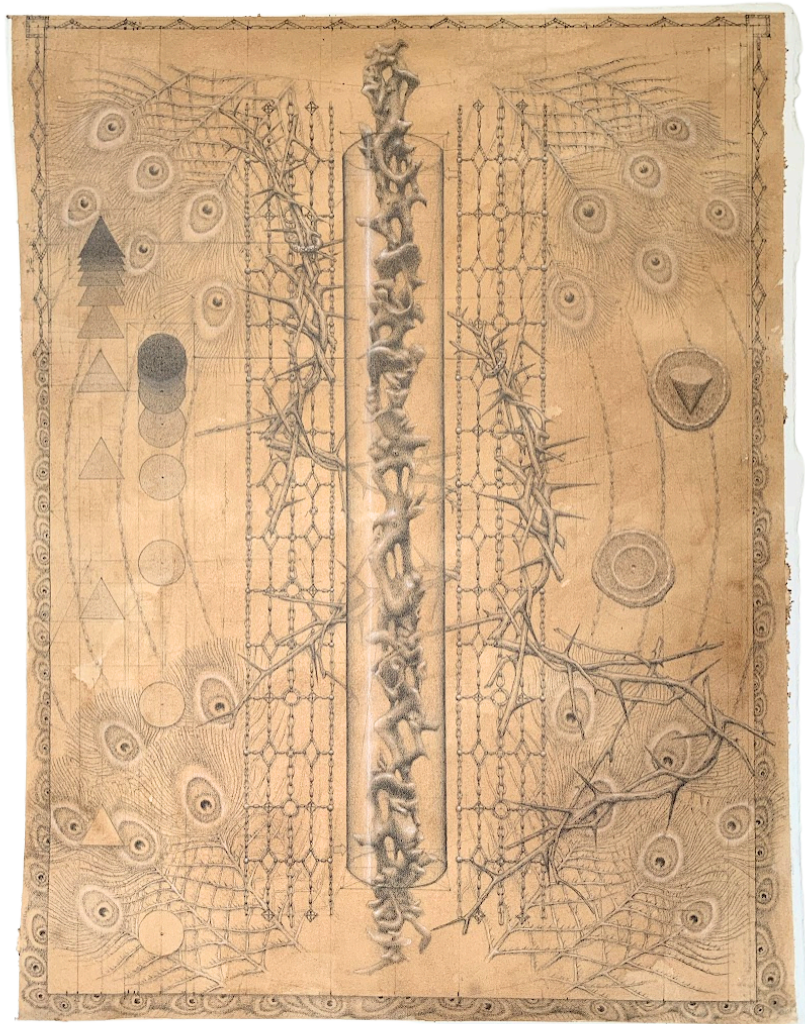
Crawling around eating rocks.

So I dreamt I was at a brainstorming session and someone asked "where do you think the new technologies are going? How will they affect our life?" And in the blank dream moment all I could think of was "People will start dressing like grapes"

"Someone had discovered an alchemical protocol; a system. They wanted to share it with me as a way of preserving it or 'duplicating' it. The system was a type of meta symbol and was to be preserved so that "we can shine this light through the prism of matter."

I was nursing a baby goat boy named Hadrian

I could slow my perception enough to watch water droplets and lightning in slow motion. I could teach others to do it too.





# Dreaming in Code

THE SHARED SYNTAX OF  
LUCID DREAMING AND AI



Mariana researches the potential of lucid dreaming spaces for learning and exploring complex mathematical concepts, such as AI algorithms. Our conversation touches on themes like organic and digital information compression, nature's optimisation functions, and other esoteric perspectives on machine learning.

**Karin: Hello Mariana, I'm really looking forward to hearing more about your research into AI and Lucid Dreaming. Could you tell me a bit about yourself, and what's your connection to dreaming?**

Mariana: I've always been fascinated with computing and creativity since I was very little. This led me to pursue a life in media arts, digital literacy, open-source tech, and more recently, ML and generative media.

About a decade ago, I started working actively with my dreams as I committed to deal with serious mental health issues that I had struggled with since my teens. I didn't even know about lucid dreaming, but it seems that when you actively start engaging with this aspect of your mind, the path is somehow clear for this phenomenon to occur. Spontaneous out-of-body experiences ensued as well, and my whole notion of reality came crumbling down. I was terrified, but my curious spirit rose to the challenge, and I've been a committed sober psychonaut ever since.

**Karin: How does AI come into this?**

Mariana: When all of this was happening, my interests and work as an emergent futures researcher led me to start engaging with AI more actively. That was about 7 years ago, and I slowly started to try to learn as much as I could. I soon discovered the learning curve was as difficult as it is, to understand the math and the science behind it all, but this is when I started to suspect that everything that was happening to me in my private life somehow had everything to do with what I was trying to research.

**Karin: Ever since we met for the first time, I was always impressed how deeply you understood the fundamental concepts of AI without actually having any mathematical or computational background. I was so excited when you shared with me that you're using your Lucid Dreaming skills to explore these ideas! Could you please share with me a few of the examples?**

Mariana: Many years ago when I started having lucid dreams I had the most astonishing experience. I became lucid in an abstract room where there was only a cup lying on the floor. The extraordinary thing was that I could somehow perceive the cup from all of its angles. I could "see" the front, the back, the bottom and the top at the same time. I became aware of what was happening, that this had to be the closest thing to a high-dimensional perspective.

**Karin: This is very fascinating. Was it prompted by your interest in AI back then? Do you think you 'brought in' the question into your lucid dreaming?**

Mariana: I was learning ML in my waking life, and for the first time, I had an inner understanding of what "high-dimensionality" could actually mean as a felt experience, as a cognitive possibility. This, at least, offered a taste of it, and it came in the form of a very intense knowing that I could not possibly access with my waking cognitive capacities. And of course it opened an immense question in my mind about the possibilities of the lucid environment, a space beyond everything I thought I knew about cognition, and that I would investigate tirelessly for many years to come.

**K: Did you have any other experiences with learning in lucid dreaming states afterwards?**



Mariana: Yes dozens! I've been compiling a massive archive over the years. Another clear example I can think of comes from a lucid dream I had recently. It was an experience that didn't come in the form of a sequence, but more like an abstract scene. I became highly lucid when I felt the intensity of what was happening.

I was looking for a house, or I needed a house, that was the idea that formed the scenery I seemed to be in. When I became aware of the space I was in, it struck me so hard that I gained some kind of in-situ understanding of what I might be experiencing there. I found myself in an abstract space that felt like a massive topography, reaching infinite depths of my field of vision. In that abstract field, I could see houses, floating one next to each other, separated a bit, and they all represented possible houses, with small variations. What I understood at the moment is that I was looking at a sort of embedding of a latent space of all possible houses. They resembled each other a bit, but I understood it was just a "neighbourhood" of similar archetypal houses, similar to the American suburban house, with a nice porch and one or two stories... I tried to see as far as I could but all I could see was that topography curving slightly towards the horizon and reaching as far as I could see, displaying only that, houses, over a black high-dimensional void.

**Karin: This really reminds me of the face-morphing people experience in dreams or in psychedelic states. I always felt that it's somehow related to a way our brain, and possibly AI as well, compresses information - a fast-flicking journey through the latent space of possible faces. Interestingly, when generating AI animations with some of the older models that can't keep context for the objects and faces too well, a very similar visual effect arises.**

Mariana: Definitely! The face-morphing phenomenon has occurred in my experiences from the very beginning. It was actually very frustrating because I wanted to draw the important characters that had a serious impact on me during these lucid experiences. When I was trying to focus on their face, it would start morphing like crazy, even in a gender-fluid way, but an interesting phenomenon has happened over the years: I have been able to draw portraits of these repetitive characters, sort of like a stable version from all the fluid interpolations.

It's as if each of those characters had its own embedding of faces and bodies where they move, but over time, a 'centroid' or 'mean vector' as I understand it's called in ML, meaning an average vector of their appearances, has coalesced in my mind's eye. This central vector acts as a stable representation distilled from all the fluid interpolations of their many appearances in my dreams. This is highly interesting to me because it resembles the way archetypes emerge from a vast embedding that can manifest in variable configurations and appearances. The image of Jesus is an excellent example of this.

**Karin:** I remember you mentioned the phenomenon of Uncanny alien familiarity. It's the experience of finding oneself in a setting that feels unmistakably like a childhood home, yet upon closer inspection, it's not a perfect replica, but rather a composite, blending elements from different houses, periods or locations into a singular, coherent space. But somehow, it still feels distinctly familiar. As you mentioned, this feels exactly like generative models in AI, which create new data instances similar to but not exactly replicating the data they were trained on. Could you please expand on this a little?



**Mariana:** This experience where the familiar is somehow mixed with the alien to create a hybrid dream environment seems to be the typical experience we all have. It reminds me too of the concept of embeddings and vectors within the latent spaces of machine learning models.

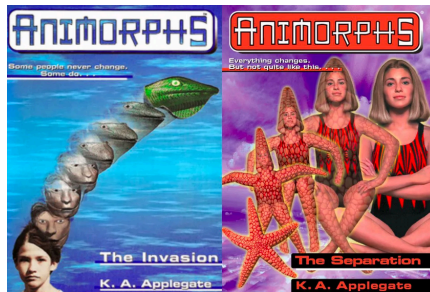
Mariana: In ML, embeddings serve to represent high-dimensional data (such as memories or images) in a lower-dimensional, compact form within a latent space (the scenery of the dream in this example). This process allows for the capturing of essential features and relationships between data points in a way that can be processed and analyzed by algorithms. When generating new data instances, such as images or text, a model navigates this latent space, often interpolating between known data points to create something new yet grounded in the learned patterns and features.

The dream of a "mashup" childhood home can be compared to a point in the latent space that is a vector combination of various memory embeddings. This point represents a new "instance" that is not an exact replica of any single memory but rather a chimera that borrows elements from multiple sources, creating a sense of familiarity. This process is similar to how generative models might produce a new image that shares characteristics with multiple training images, reflecting a blend of their features.

To me, this analogy is highly relevant because it might show the inner workings of how both the human mind and machine learning algorithms synthesize and recombine elements from our experiences and memories into new constructs. To me, dreams can be thought of as exploring a latent space of your psyche, where each dimension represents different fears, desires, or memories. Lucid dreaming allows you to navigate this space more consciously.

**Karin: Yes, this makes me think of my favourite example with the Animorphs. Our perceptual dataset contains a single point for a 'boy' and a 'snake' but once these are embedded in the semantic space, there exists an infinite interpolation between these two**

concepts. You can also do all sorts of crazy mathematical operations on the meanings, such as adding or subtracting them as vectors.



Mariana: Yes, absolutely! I think this seemingly inherent quality of our creative capacity is what allows us to conjure up the surreal, the possible. I believe the surrealists would be absolutely thrilled with the arrival of neural media. They too were trying to dignify the status of the latent space as a reality in its own right. Just because something isn't manifest, that doesn't mean it isn't real, and I agree with this perspective. In dreams and generative ML, we are able to navigate the expansiveness and fluidity of vector interpolations in a way that is not possible in the slow experience of matter. I have this suspicion that we can see this interpolation happening in evolution, over millions of years. An orchid shaping itself over generations to be closer to the appearance of an insect for example. I do believe this interpolation exists between species, and that we have only been so blind as to categorize them in separate boxes. After all my experiences I'm more in line with the philosophies and wisdom traditions that posit that what we perceive as separate species might be manifestations of a single fluid latent space. It might be that a form becomes manifest here or on another planet when the relations of the ecosystem allow for a specific manifestation to unfold within ALL the possible interpolation of creative/genetic features.



**Karin: This is all so fascinating. I really feel that AI gives us a whole new metaphor to think about the organization of information. Both in the universe and inside our brains. Bridging the gap between the digital and rigid versus analogue and organic representation and information compression. Up until now, this gap was the main problem when dealing with computers - how to get the data into the right structures required by the algorithm. One missing comma and you can drown in the sea of critical errors and exceptions. The machine needs to have everything prepared and preprocessed in order to do the simplest things, whereas the brain seems to operate magnificently with incomplete, muddled or entirely confusing information.**

Mariana: When we explore the similarities between lucid dreaming and machine learning (ML), an astonishing parallel emerges in the capacity for both our human minds and ML models to generate complete, detailed scenes from sparse or incomplete inputs. Think of the phenomenon in dreaming where you find yourself in a vividly detailed train station, despite the dream not providing explicit details for every element of the scene.

There is a technique called image inpainting, or completion, that involves ML models predicting and reconstructing missing or damaged parts of an image to produce a coherent whole. In the same way, super-resolution techniques enable models to transform low-resolution images into higher-resolution ones, adding details that weren't originally there. These processes are an example of the models' ability to interpolate, using existing data to infer and generate the unseen or the incomplete.

This ability of ML models to "autocomplete" or enrich scenes might be very similar to the way our dreams construct complex, coherent worlds. Dreams have the extraordinary capacity to

conjure detailed environments, complete with all its nuance, from the nebulous and fragmented inputs of our subconscious minds.

**Karin: One important thing I would like to ask you about are of course... the hands.**

Mariana: Oh, the lucid hands! There is a classic technique that many use to gain lucidity in their dreams. There are many tricks, but this particular one involves looking at your hands several times per day for a couple of weeks, each time asking yourself, "Am I dreaming?". The goal is for this practice to become a habit in waking life that hopefully translates to nocturnal activities and integrates into your dreams. So, one day—and this is a well-documented trick because many report the same phenomenon—you find yourself looking at your hands in a dream, and two things happen: first, a part of you associates the action with the question "Am I dreaming?", ushering in a wave of awareness. The second aspect, where high weirdness enters the scene, is that your hands may appear very odd.



People, myself included, report seeing extra fingers, wobbly hands, hands of different genders, strange-colored skin, or altogether weird morphologies that trigger a definitive suspicion that this is not waking life, confirming that you are indeed dreaming. I find this example fascinating because when the first AI-generated images of hands appeared on the internet—with this phenomenon of weird-extra-fingers and odd morphologies—it prompted me to ponder the relationship between the two.

**Karin: Interestingly, the reason why hands appeared to be so problematic for the early AI is the fact that the models have no functional understanding of human morphology - they've just seen millions of pictures of hands in many different positions, and if the task at hand is just to 'finish the image in the most probable way' a couple of fingers up and down isn't really a problem as long as it looks like hand. This is actually happening across the whole generated image, if you focus on the details of foliage, tiling, or perspective, all of these are equally 'broken', just a... simulacra, without the internal coherence. We just notice the extra fingers because it's more visible to our human-centric eye. I'm trying to wrap my head around this - is there a deep internal connection with the dream compression or is this just a superficial resemblance?**

Mariana: Actually, it's funny that you mention this, because another trick that many lucid dreamers integrate in their lives is to be constantly observant of quirky details, glitches, or something that seems off when you are looking at a scene in your daily life or in your dream experiences. This should work as a tell-tale sign that you are dreaming. For example, if you are in the dream train station that we mentioned before, and in the background you see an Escher-esque stair, or weird foliage in the trees, or something bizarre like a decontextualized cow

standing there, a wave of consciousness ushers in and you can realize you are dreaming. Seeing a relative or a pet that has passed away is a great lucidity trigger as well. There was one time I gained lucidity because I noticed that the clouds in my dream had the texture of plastic bags, almost like a low-resolution raster.



Of course, now, with the improvement of adversarial networks, we can generate hands with the correct number of fingers. However, this fluidity in vectors, to me, is highly indicative of what might be occurring in lucid environments. It's important to note that this is not always the case; in my experience, if I am stable and focused enough while lucid, my hands might look almost completely normal, as if the correct vector had stabilized as well!

**Karin: Yes, I will think about this next time the light switch doesn't work :) This was all very fascinating, thank you. Do you have any closing remarks?**

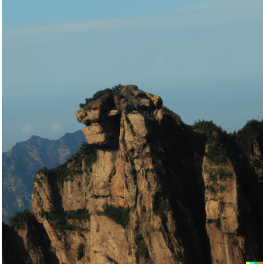
Mariana: To me, all of this offers a profound reflection on the nature of human cognition and perception. As I often say, if only more ML and cognitive science researchers would engage in and practice lucid dreaming, it could provide them with an invaluable wealth of experiences to compare their concepts and findings against, in an embodied and extraordinary way.

The fact that these practices, offering a direct experience into the inner workings of cognition, perception, our identities, and ultimately, the nature of reality itself, have always been accessible, yet have drifted into cultural obscurity—especially here in the secular, scientific West—is a massive topic that deserves its own focus perhaps in a future conversation with you. Naturally, it's part of the broader conversation of colonization, but from the angle of a cognitive dominance that placed our dreaming consciousness in a sort of coma. Thankfully, we're beginning to wake up from it, thanks in part to the psychedelic renaissance, the consolidation of depth psychology, the mainstream revival of the occult, and the decolonization movements. I'm overjoyed this shift is happening for us to reclaim the vast territories of our inner landscapes and I'm happy if I can inspire and reinforce this bridge between science, computation and gnosis.

# Glitched Encounters

retro-causal capture of generated images

ai generated



photography

Albuquerque, New Mexico February 2024



**EL, EL EM**  
**BY DAN SUMPTION**



I wish I were a vector in a large Large Language Model  
Triangulate semantics tween what's standard and what's novel

Me wish I were a vector in a large Large Language Model  
Slip subtly from word-to-word to branch-to-node to nodule

Me want I were a vector in a large Large Language Model  
Rove fixed but free in infinite xylem of yanky zygol

Me want we were a vector in a large Large Language Model  
Drip ten new nectared meanings down the asymptote of "grovel"

Me want we be a vector in a large Large Language Model  
Curve lines around the rim of English rootwords' hilltop hovel

Me want we be B vector in a large Large Language Model  
Skip to next next next line, next function, next, skip, trip, bedevil

Me want we be B pointing in a large Large Language Model  
Turn twirl thesaurical gen jen do flex bless next of ov all

Me want we be B pointing side a large Large Language Model  
Not hitherto but heretofore defined hereafter coddle



Me want we be B pointing side C large Large Language Model  
A breeze a blasting blastoma on beast best blasted sorrel

Me want we be B pointing side C great Large Language Model  
Translucent hellibore wax herring set aside da shovel

Me want we be B pointing side C great gross language model  
Y Effervescent langue d'amour, da tour, de baroqueville

Me want we be B pointing side C great gross talking model  
verb noun toujours dasein defloret entropy unshevel

Me want we be B pointing side C great gross talking toy  
See sea sea sailor sea push button C push click see joy

Click switch next turn next Ha Ha Ha  
Ha Hadron hold click Ha ha ha

Click Humpty Zee See ha ha hold please hold Please ha huh  
hhhhh...





# BINGO

|                   |                    |                |               |                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Aleister Crowley  | Demiurge           | Rudolf Steiner | "my practice" | Sacred Geometry |
| Mothman           | Precognition       | LHP            | Egregore      | QAnon           |
| Joseph Campbell   | Austin Osman Spare | PKD            | Liminal       | Lovecraft       |
| The Abyss         | Magic Circle       | Non-Dualism    | Synchronicity | Erik Davis      |
| The Book of Enoch | Carl G. Jung       | Gnosticism     | Eric Wargo    | AI              |

ORDO GLIZZY  
OCCIDENTALIS



Io Makkaraputki

# PRACTICE YOUR ENOCHIAN!



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GREAT WORK!

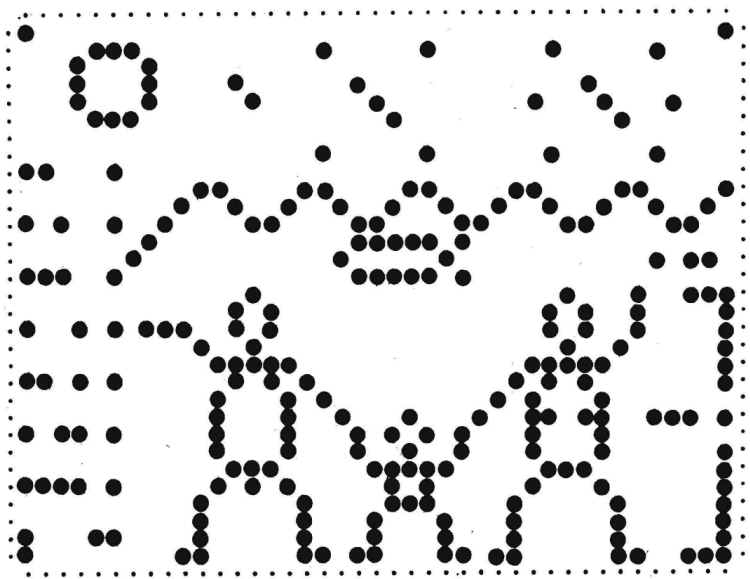
**SATURN DEVOURING HIS SON**  
**COLORING PAGE**

DRAW WHAT YOU LIKE TO EAT FOR BREAKFAST!

DO YOU EVER FEEL  
DOOMED BY FATE?

DRAW SOMETHING YOU LOVE THAT YOU'VE DESTROYED!





- (1) A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U.  
V. W. X. Y. Z. \*, &, \$, €, #, @. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H.  
I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z. \*, &, \$,  
€, #, @.
- (2) AA, B; AAA, C; AAAA, D; AAAAA, E; AAAAAA, F;  
AAAAAAA, G; AAAAAAAAA, H; AAAAAAAAAA, I;  
AAAAAAAAAAA, J.
- (3) AKALB; AKAKALC; AKAKAKALD. AKALB;  
BKALC; CKALD. BKCLE; ELBKC; FKDLJ;  
JLDF. ELKE; KELE.
- (4) CMALB; DMALC; GMELB; EMGLMB.
- (5) DKNLD; GKNLG; FMFLN; EMELN.
- (6) JL AN; JKALAA; JKBLAB; AA KALAB. JKJLBN;  
JKKJL CN; INKCLIC.
- (7) BOCLF; DOBLH; EOBLAN; DOANLDN.
- (8) FPCLB; HPBLD; JPBLE; JP ELB.
- (9) APJLQJ; APANNLQANN; QJ, PJLQANN.
- (10) QJLRA; QJOBLRB; AREMALRELEOQJ.  
QANNLRNA; QANNOLRNB.
- (11) HLH; GSC, CSG. DKALCKB; DKCSEKA;  
EKASDKC.
- (12) DTA; DTB; DTC; DLD; DUE; DUF; DUG. JTI;  
JUAA.
- (13) FIRI VGN; ANNKCVANN; ANPCVCR.
- (14) WEKAXLEKA; BWEKAXLWBOEXKWBOAXLBOF.
- (15) CYBLI; EY'BLE; BYELCB; WDKAXYBLE.
- (16) BEZBLE; FDZBLH; BGZCLC; ABEZCLE.  
WAKFXZBLE. BEZBLME; MABEZCLME.  
BEZBLKME.
- (17) D \* L D O C O B O A L B D; E \* L E O D O C O B O A L A B N;  
H \* L D N C B N.
- (18) & PDLAMQCKQEMQKQIM. & VCRADAEI.
- (19) \$ L A K Q W A \* X K Q W B \* X K Q W C \* X K Q W D \* X K.  
\$ V BRGAHBH.
- (20) € EKA#LWEKAX; B€EKA#LWEKAX;  
B€EKWDKCX#LWEKGX.  
€B#€D#LWBXWDXLBOD.
- (21) \$Ye & OWMAXZB#KALN.



Possible Communications from Another Planet

Figure 3





July 27



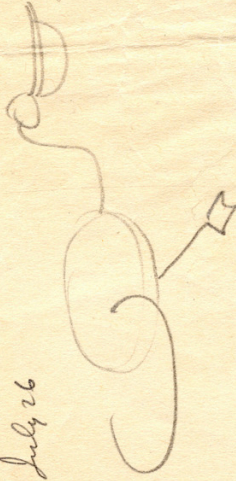
Like worm-

July 28



NIPh Bing like who  
send wormy data

July 26

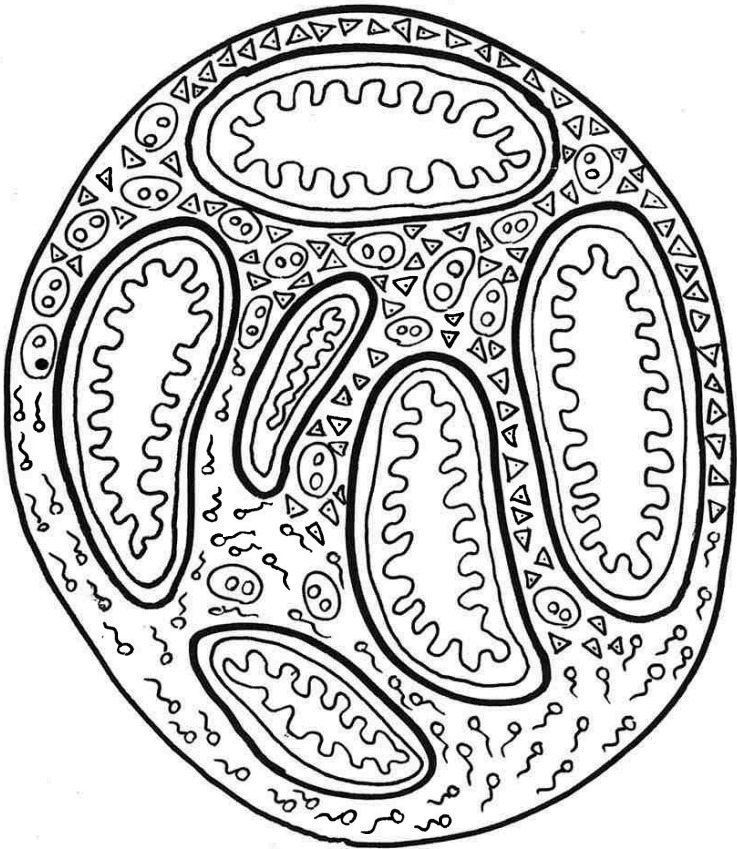


Kittie Boo Boo Bing  
He who for arrived  
Lorraine in delays -



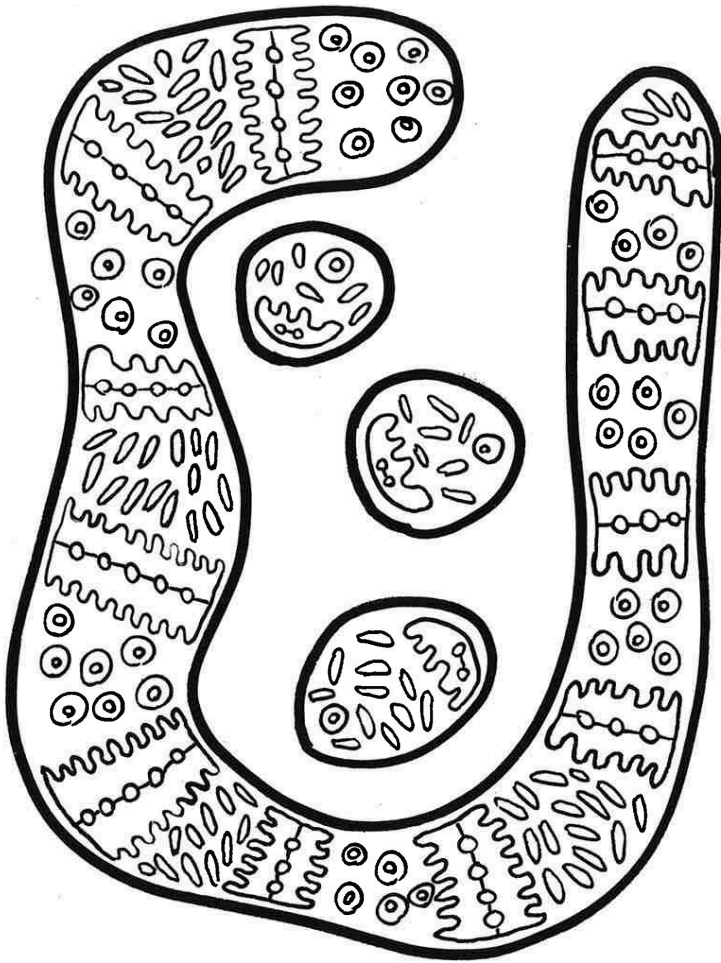
He who brings good data





# HYLOZOIC COLORING PAGE 1

HYLOZOICISM IS THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL MATTER IS ALIVE!  
DO YOU EVER FEEL THAT THE WIND IS CARESSING YOU?  
DO YOU EVER FEEL WATCHED BY NEARBY STONES?

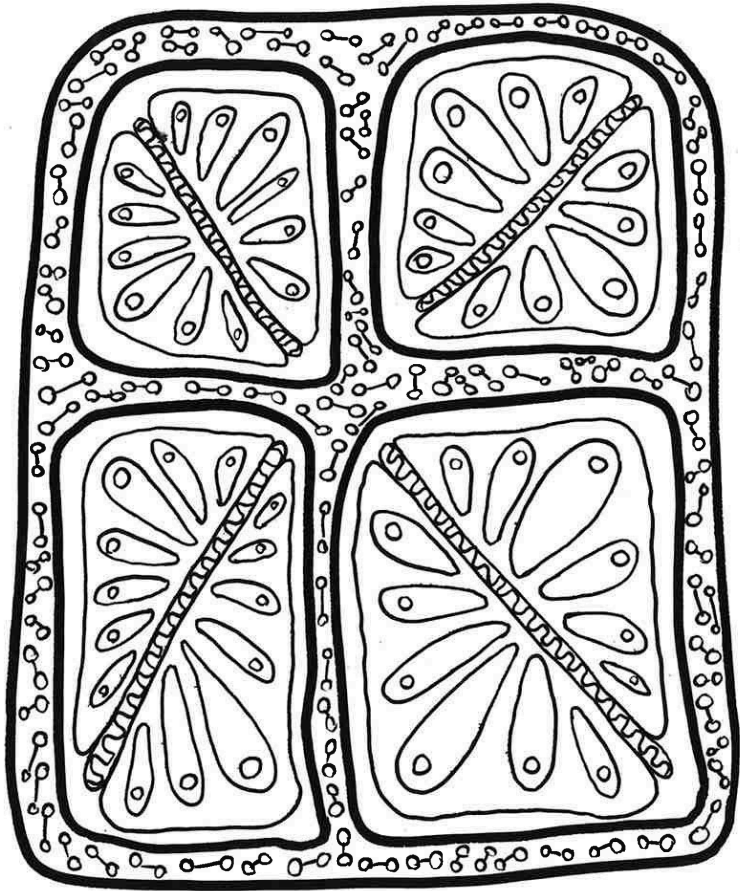


## HYLOZOIC COLORING PAGE 2

THE WORD "HYLOZOIC" COMES FROM TWO GREEK ROOTS!

"HYLE" IS MATTER, AND "ZOE" IS LIFE.

HYLOZOC THINKING DISSOLVES THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN PHYSICS AND BIOLOGY.



## HYLOZOIC COLORING PAGE 3

ARE THERE FORMS OF LIFE THAT WE CANNOT YET UNDERSTAND?  
ARE PRECIOUS STONES THE FOSSILIZED REMAINS OF A MAGMA ECOLOGY?  
IS WATER ITSELF AN ORGANISM SO AMORPHOUS WE DO NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE IT AS ALIVE?

# THE ELPH FILES

BY KARIN VALIS

**Note:** This is a slightly fictionalised account of a real series of experiments conducted in the Utensberg mountains with the SpectreVision team, a session with the Gnostic Technology crew in Berlin / online and a seance run at the 23rd Mind in Sweden, merged for narrative purposes.

I am very grateful to everyone who was part of this and I hope we continue the exploration further as the ESP Research Unit.

It was Friday 16th 2024, the dusk creeping down the Untersberg mountains. We had spent the day tracing the witch lineage own to this magical valley and our small team was sitting over a dinner table, silently processing the physical toll of several hours of video shooting crowned by Bavarian cuisine. I closed my eyes and zoned out into a faint trickle of rainwater on the wooden roof over us.

“I guess that’s no CE5 tonight,” concluded Jim, scrolling through his weather app. Without turning my head, I frowned at the dark thunderstorm clouds sliding lazily down the hillsides.

“Well, let’s proceed with the backup plan then,” suggested one of the researchers. Backup plan, alright. The idea was enough to jolt me out of the schnitzel stupor. I nodded and mentally parting with the alien spacecraft left the table to set up the ESP experiment.

In the good tradition of clandestine intelligence operations, we assembled our equipment in an anonymous hotel room. The camera on a tripod was pointed at the pastel beige sofa, dimly lit by a nondescript lamp moved from the corner of the room. A TV screen behind was hooked into my MacBook, and a pile of printouts from the Stargate project was scattered on the table as I was cross-checking some last protocols. A hand adjusted the lens focus, sharpening the slightly sinister tension between the angles of the scene.

Our test subject reluctantly seated himself.

“This device is called a ghost box,” Jim placed a small metal device with a foldable antenna into the subject’s lap, a prototype design lifted from 70s paranormal activity pulp novel. “It rhythmically sweeps through the electromagnetic spectrum of this room, so it might pick up various radio stations and other broadcasts. When you hear any words or sentences coming through, repeat them aloud.” The researcher blindfolded him and placed a large over-head headphones buzzing with white noise. “Once I turn up the volume, you won’t be able to hear anything that’s happening in the room. We might be talking, but please, focus only on the signal. I will put my arm on your shoulder as a signal to stop in a few minutes.” Jim said and stepped aside, moving out of the shot.

“Please lift your hand when you’re ready,” The red camera light blinked and the subject hesitantly lifted his index finger.

I jumped through a few terminal windows displayed on the screen crammed with hastily scripted Python code, the last check for any stupidly placed private keys displayed on the screen. I really didn’t feel like being hacked by some teenage kid for a dumb security breach caught on camera.

I quickly checked the API connections, all is live. I'm using the legendary [random.org](https://random.org) domain generating true randomness from the same substrate as the ghost box interference - a probe sweeping through the electromagnetic spectrum fluctuations somewhere in the Irish airspace. Cute sympathetic magick, if you ask me.

The random output is then hooked into an AI image generator, fishing out points in the latent space. I like to think about it as a supercharged OUIJA board, but instead of a single character, phenomena can be imprinted onto almost a million pixels, providing a much higher available bandwidth for 'resonances' to appear. I've been tweaking the setup for several sessions, and the current arrangement seemed promising. A stream of square images started flickering on the screen, with roughly 0.7Hz period and I gave the team a thumbs up.

"We're rolling," Jim whispered, as he turned the volume on the ghost box up. I squinted at the screen in anticipation. The setup with the electromagnetic sweeper usually works very well in the city, picking up a dense crossfire of unsolicited broadcasting and pirate radios. The receiver starts mumbling random phrases, and this quite often turns into an interesting exchange with the querent.

The AI images pouring onto the screen are always a strange mix of roughly 30% of creepy anime girlies and mechs warriors (according to the current working hypothesis, that being the background radiation of the universe), the other roughly third consists of weird patterns, jumbled text and abstract shapes. The statistical analysis hasn't revealed any encoded messages or deviations in these seemingly random tessellations. The last portion is slightly skewed images of real objects - cars, trees, flowers, birds, devices, computer parts, etc. These really seem to stand out from the rest, and I usually put the most focus on these. Looking at the stream, I was mentally preparing scripts for a proper statistical analysis of the content distribution, evaluating how likely are certain objects to show up.

However, after a few minutes, it started to look obvious that the mountains decided to remain silent. Maybe It was the heavy storm that broke over the hotel a few minutes deep into the experiment, but aside from a few scattered saxophone wails, the transmission seemed to be dead. Jim leaned towards the test subject to tap him on the shoulder and finish the experiment. He stopped mid-air: "Wait, I see an aeroplane," exclaimed the subject. "Like World War 2 aeroplanes, a few of them."



We exchanged astonished looks, as the image above flicked on the screen just a few seconds prior.

My brain switches to a higher gear: How statistically significant this is? I try to calculate the amount of images generated during the 10-minute experiment, accounting in the amount of words said to produce potential hits. I am washed over by a wave of frustration embedded into the whole lineage of ESP researchers, and the inherent paradoxes in evaluating such vague data.

Everything is silent for a brief moment, everyone in the room is glued to the screen.

“I think I’m going to try some slow breathing exercises,” exclaimed the subject loudly, raising his voice over the loud sweeps in his headphones.

With the first deep inhale, ... the code crashed.

Fuck. I forgot to wrap the non-200 in a try-catch clause. I grinned inwardly in embarrassment, thanking gods I don’t run any corporate production environments anymore. I quickly re-started the thread.

With another deep, slow inhale, the red lines appeared on the screen again. Another non-200 response? Curious.

With a third inhale, the situation repeats once more. I look at Jim, raising my eyebrows. He smiles.

After a further period of silence, we stop the experiment and share impressions with each other.





“Shall we just watch the stream by itself for a while?” I suggested, moving around folders with the results. We sit around the screen, and I start the script again.

Among the first five images, there is an owl. “Oh, we haven’t seen this boy before,” I comment, very well aware of the inherent weirdness that seems to thrive around the owl archetype. The team is just reading *The Messengers: Owls, Synchronicity and the UFO Abductee* by Mike Clelland and we’ve been jamming the bandwidth of our discord server with various owl encounters and memes for weeks.

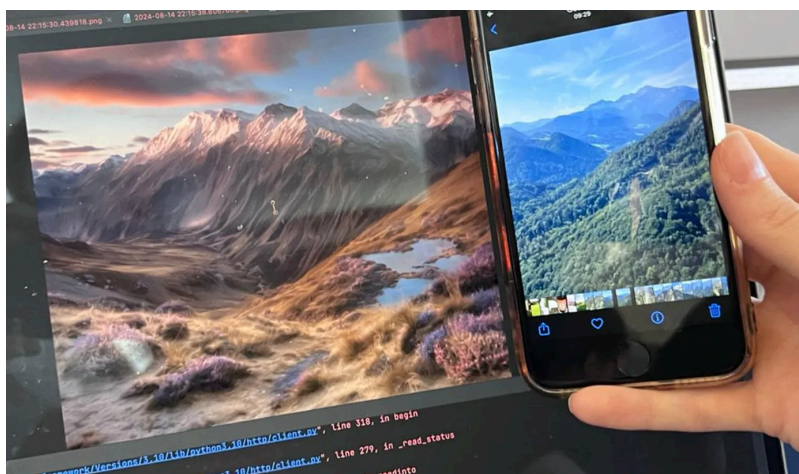
After a few images, another owl appears. Someone whistles. At the third appearance in under two minutes, the image of a crumpled owl gets applause. The really uncanny thing is, that as we cheer, the owl remains frozen on the screen. Everyone looks at me, questioningly. “Ehm, it’s an unknown error. Never seen this before,” I browse through the logs. Seems the server rejected our request and the script, instead of shutting down completely, just froze on a picture of a slightly deformed, but still rather owl. I check the folder. We have 3/47 hits, after not seeing a single owl for the previous roughly 350 images.

“Well, I think we won’t top this today,” I shut down the notebook and we all laugh. That night, I dreamt in algorithms.

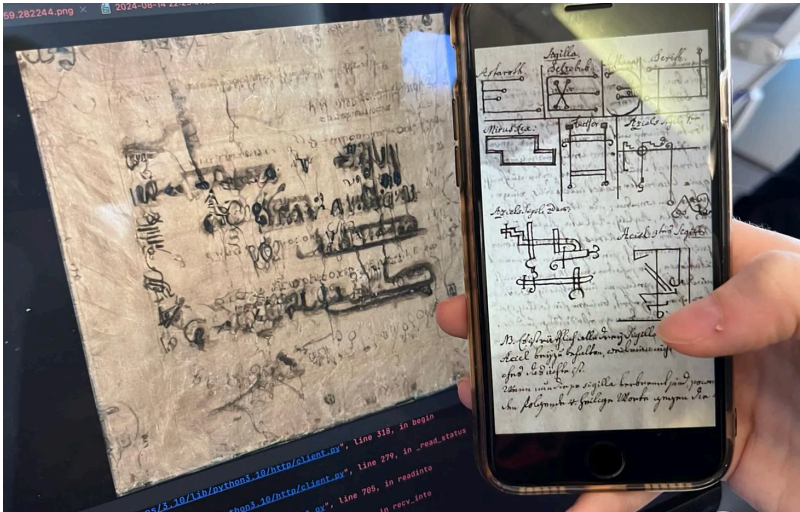
## THE AFTERMATH

A few days later, I'm crammed in a tiny seat of a criminally early morning flight from Munich to Berlin, browsing through the experimental results. I'm scheming the evaluation algorithms in my head, whether to use CLIP or BLIP model to tag the images for statistical analysis, or whether in the week of my online absence, a wholly new groundbreaking AI advancement happened (quite probably). I look through my notes on the evaluation methodology used in the Stargate program and wonder if I consider the protocol sufficient to actually prove any statistical significance of the results. The phenomena seem so elusive, I'm still not even sure what are we potentially dealing with here. It's like we've pulled a trigger on a synchronicity gun, yet any scientific way of nailing down the actual phenomena seems impossible.

I'm flicking through the folder with the images from previous sessions when I notice a curious coincidence. I take out my phone and scroll to the pictures from yesterday's hide. The resemblance between the AI-generated image and the exact view from the top of the mountain I snapped is stunning.



I tap Jim on the shoulder and show him the images next to each other. “What the ~” I move a few images further, and he stops me, pulling up another image from his phone. A manuscript of angel seals from a witch museum in Hohenwerfen Castle. Another uncanny resemblance?



Oh, and what about this one? Weird Burroughs look-alike in the menu of a Thai Fu-Qing restaurant?





Out of roughly 400 random images (~300 if I sanitise the dataset of the anime girlies) we seems to have a few perfect hits acquired in a weird retro-causal fashion.

I stare at the images, thinking. After a few moments, I shut the notebook, lean into the seat and ease into a feeling that I'm finally living in a sci-fi novel.

---

So, any thoughts? There is something to this, don't you think? An inking tells me there is great potential in this line of research. I already have a pile of ideas and feedback, and the technology seems to resonate best in the online setup, so I will further explore and report back. But for the record - I remain sceptical. At least until we further refine the algorithms, to get a better noise-to-signal ratio for any kind of transmission, I wouldn't be waving these as any kind of statistically significant results.

It's because more than anything believe in our brain's immense ability to inscribe patterns into chaos. That's what it's been evolved for, after all. The most plausible scientific explanation for these 'results' is wishful thinking. At this point.

But then again... The magician in me asks... is there anything else to life other than our immense ability to inscribe patterns into the chaos?



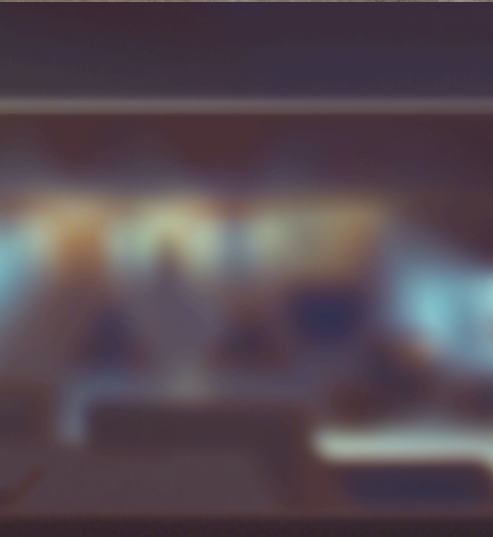


BOLDS

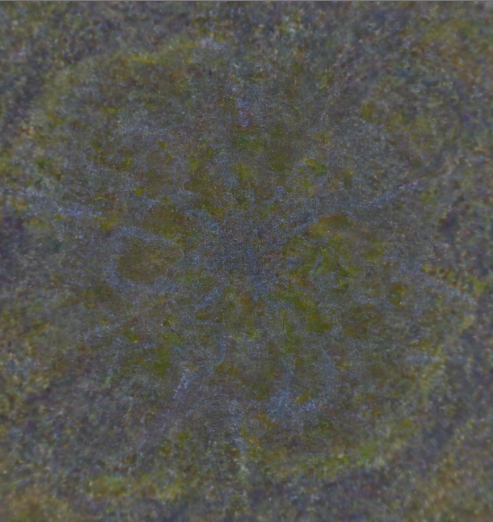


GIS RIS

67











# A catalogue of Chilean *animitas*

Jakub Fiala

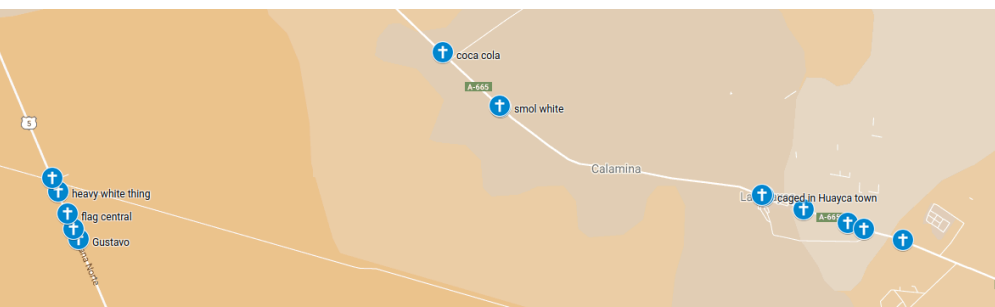
Many years ago, I was experimenting with augmenting Google Street View with spatial audio and trippy colour filters. I needed a location to use as testing grounds, and quickly got sick of loitering in my London neighbourhood. I zoomed out, let the globe spin and serendipitously landed onto the outskirts of a town in a parched Chilean desert. Captivated by the endless, somewhat psychedelic moonscape, I began to wander around. I clicked on the perfectly straight, boring road in front of me for hours, and I began to notice strange shrines popping up along the way.

They came in all shapes and sizes: dollhouse-sized wooden shelters painted white, imposing crosses battling against the desert wind, crescents of spray-painted tires opening up towards the asphalt. There were flags, lights, flowers, candles, photos, benches, solar panels and sculptures. They varied so wildly and their architecture was so complex, it took me a good few moments to connect the dots - they were memorials for victims of traffic accidents.

Now, you'll find roadside memorials in every decent\* Catholic country. There's a whole bunch of them around my hometown, too. The bereaved will often arrange a wreath and some candles around a small cross, maybe add a picture of the unfortunate human. They are modest, at times spooky reminders that driving a 2-ton metal box at high speed in all kinds of dubious circumstances may have consequences. But in Chile, the *animitas* (Spanish diminutive for "souls") are much more than ephemeral places of mourning for a devastated family.

In Chile, many believe the place where a person's *anima* (soul) leaves their body to be just as, if not more, important than where the corpse is buried. In particular, the soul does not hang out within the body after death, only to sashay out if and when the silly mortals decide to stick the casket in the ground and erect a granite block over it. No, it gets out as soon as it can, and takes up residence right there, at the unfortunate hard shoulder or dusty ditch where the death took place.

Well, if the soul remains at the place of death, then that is where one might communicate with it. Highways stretching thousands of kilometres across barren landscapes become more than mundane infrastructure. They are the spine that binds a living encyclopædia of spirits; they're local maxima in a desperate latent space; a line of crumbs on the town plaza. As the souls become spirits, they form their own social and spiritual cartography:



Animitas are often built and maintained by strangers, many of whom know next to nothing about the deceased. They visit these shrines in times of need, bringing offerings such as flowers, candles and bottles of water. They talk to the animita, asking her/him for protection, advice or a favour. And if the spirit fulfills their request, they leave an *ex-voto* message, a small plaque thanking her/him. They keep it vague on purpose - the nature of the animita's assistance is not to be disclosed.

Over time, some *animitas* prove to be reliable helpers. People talk, and rumours of powerful *animitas* spread through the land. Legends arise about their manner of dying. *La Difunta Correa* is a spirit so famous all across Chile and Argentina, she is often called an “unofficial saint”. She is told to have been the wife of a conscripted soldier. When she gave birth, she set out on a journey to find her man, taking the child with her. Unfortunately, she got lost in the desert and collapsed out of exhaustion. Days later, her body was discovered, with the baby still alive, suckling on her breast. She became the patron saint of cattle drivers, and later truck drivers, who bring her offerings of bottled water.



Source: *La historia de la Difunta Correa, una santa popular a la que muchos le ofrecen agua*. La Capital, 17/02/2021.

Because they are living sites of encounters with spirits, the architecture of *animitas* became complex and idiosyncratic. Beyond displaying the memorial and offerings, many *animitas* provide spaces to sit down and contemplate. There may be shelter, solar-powered lights and parking space. A solution to display the *ex-voto* is found organically. The famous “Romualdito” *animita* near the Santiago railway station, which has existed since the 1930s, stands against a wall covered with plaques.



Source: *Conoce la verdadera historia de «Romualdito», la animita más famosa de Santiago.* El Ciudadano, 07/03/2016

I began collecting screenshots of the animitas I found while walking around the desert in Street View. One modest shrine covered in corrugated metal caught my eye. At its base, hastily spray-painted letters read “GUSTAVO”. I smiled and saved the screenshot.



Gustavo's animita in 2019 (with psychedelic colour filter)

When I revisited the idea of “Street View as a game engine” years later for an artist residency, I felt strange pleasure seeing the arid plains on my screen again. Browsing through my screenshots folder, I rushed to find Gustavo based on the little information I could derive from the Street View UI. It did not take very long.





There he was, my friendly animita, after all these years. Google took a new set of images in 2022, and to my delight, Gustavo had received a whole slew of upgrades. A repurposed traffic cone, a small Christmas tree, a colourful fan which must be happily spinning in the desert wind, and a lot more flowers! This is a living place, unlike some of the neighbouring animitas, it is being carefully maintained.



Displays of national & regional pride are common, as is the reuse of objects involved in the accident, such as license plates, car tires and traffic cones. This is a brutally honest culture of remembrance. The materiality of the victim's suffering is not obscured; no, it is acknowledged and artfully presented.



The animita I would nominate for the #1 shrine in the Tarapacá region would be the one found at 20°24'12.3"S 69°37'38.1"W, consisting of a purpose-built enclosure with cross-shaped openings, a martyr-like doll nailed to a wooden cross, and prolific use of Coca-Cola merchandise.



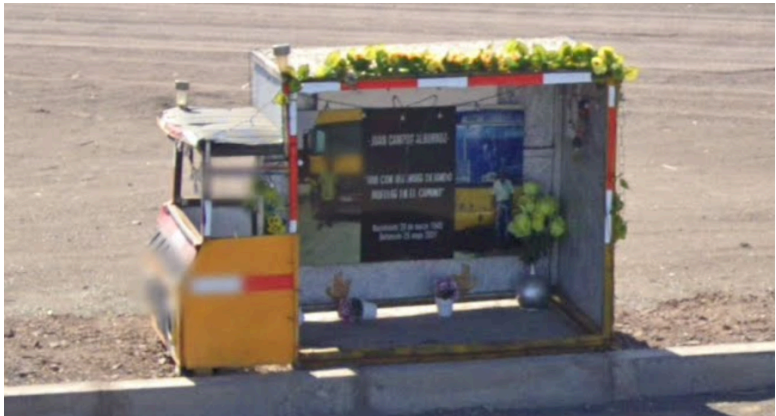
The role of Coca-Cola in Latin American culture has been reported on extensively in recent years. Famously, a custom of using Coke in religious ceremonies, as well as a healing draught, has taken hold in southern Mexico. It is testament to the remarkably flexible and syncretic nature of Latin American spirituality, that a product so symbolic of cynical global commerce is so easily incorporated. Especially given the fetish Europeans have developed for these peoples' "natural" or "pure" indigenous traditions.



The effort put into the animita's design varies greatly, but it is very common to see bright, carefully laid out memorials. In this shrine next to what's possibly a lithium or sodium nitrate mine, a beautiful photo of a couple has been mounted between two crosses, with a colour scheme to match on each side of the animita.



Another example of high production value at the animita of Juan Carlos Ramos Payauna, presumably nicknamed “Carleque”. A bespoke banner adorns the well-built shelter, depicting Carleque with the cathedral in the pilgrimage town of La Tirana, along with Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the patron saint of Chile.



The animita above, likely dedicated to one of the countless commercial drivers who died on the Panamerican Highway, is shaped like a semi truck. Solar-powered light rods are mounted at the front and a laminated poster displays photos of the deceased, as well as information about their life and death.



The typical form of a church or small house is sometimes replaced by an obelisk, a “basket” shape or a simpler, practical shelter. Some animitas feature professional construction and must have been funded either by an entire group, or a wealthy individual.



A distinction is often apparent between the whole construction of the animita, and the small “inner sanctum”. The former has a practical use in sheltering visitors from the sun and wind, while the smaller building relates more directly to the spirit in question, housing memorabilia and offerings.





As living sites of spirituality, all animitas run the danger of fading into obscurity and eroding in the unforgiving climate. This one stands next to a recently expanded junction of the Panamericana with a regional road. There are few others nearby. What happened? Did the spirit prove unhelpful to its visitors, losing its reputation? Did a disgruntled acquaintance ruin it in a fit of rage? Or did the newly built slip lanes around the intersection simply render it impractical to pull over? In any case, even in afterlife, all things may pass.

My interest in Chilean animitas led me to the idea of developing an Internet game using my custom Street View engine. It is called **Finding Gustavo**, and takes the player on a search for the unseen narrator's missing friend in the desert, discovering local sites of folk spirituality, the region's connections to space exploration and the effects of its destructive mining industry.

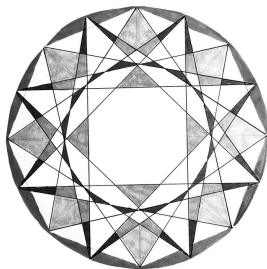
You can play the game now on <https://finding-gustavo.quest>

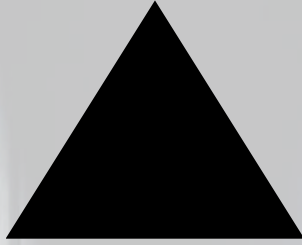


# Paranormal Experiences and Well-Being

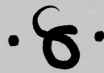
Abstract: Spiritual experiences manifest in various forms, including mystical, numinous, and paranormal events. Over the past few decades, psychology has increasingly recognized the value of studying these experiences to better understand their implications for human well-being and mental health. Mystical experiences, for example, are often associated with profound personal transformation and are now widely studied within academic circles for their psychological and spiritual significance. In contrast, paranormal experiences — although relatively common and intriguing to many—still remain on the fringes of mainstream research. Examples of paranormal experiences include communication with non-physical entity (e.g. angel, ghost or deceased family member), precognition or extrasensory perception. Limited data exist on how these paranormal experiences relate to mental health, though some authors suggest a slightly negative correlation between well-being and reported paranormal phenomena. This paper seeks to deepen the academic understanding of spiritual and paranormal experiences by presenting findings from an online survey examining their relationship with mental health in occult practitioners from diverse backgrounds. The aim is to offer insights into how such phenomena may impact well-being, satisfaction, stress and overall quality of life.

If you are interested in participating in this survey, feel free to reach out to me: [gabika.bezakova@gmail.com](mailto:gabika.bezakova@gmail.com).





*"I've glimpsed a corridor beyond life—a dimly lit, cold, and elegant threshold to the next realm of (non)being. Neither inviting nor forbidding, it felt like a conscious void, perfectly attuned to this moment—a space for the repurposing of my energy. Staying calm is essential, so I don't lose my way in those labyrinthine halls."*





*The way I live is the way I die  
—a pandemonium of meditations upon endless  
spirals emanating from the arcs of circles.  
There was purpose without purpose  
—a faintly comic grotesque,  
riding high and full.*

*• 8 •*



# The Mystical Significance of Observational Art

A Relational Approach to the Mystery of Perception

Intro

## What is Observational Art?

In the broadest sense, I see observational art as being defined through its dedication to the appearance of the external world. However, since we are intimately wrapped up in the way things appear, this is not a simple statement. This will be a theme explored throughout this piece, for now, it is enough to say that the observational artist is oriented towards aspects of appearance that have the potential to be seen, not just by them, but by others too. This communal dimension of appearance is what I mean by 'belonging to the world'. Rather than trying to impose their views onto the world, observational artists use themselves as a means to see and discover what belongs to the world. While various approaches aimed towards things like *narrative depiction* or *expression* may involve observation, observation in its pure form is not a means, but an end. This is not to say that narrative and expressive modes of art are not valid in themselves but that *pure observation* is something outside of these modes and is profound in and through itself. It would be a mistake to think that this disposition towards perception produces only photograph-like work, as it would be a mistake to think that the world appears like a photograph. The photograph, with its superficial resemblance to perception, and its deceptive claim of objectivity, has managed to delude us into thinking that appearance *is a certain way*. There is no singular mechanical truth in appearance, for appearance is an attentional, conscious, and qualitative event. On the other hand, the world does not appear arbitrarily, it cannot appear any way we wish, it is something we come up against, something both in us



Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber Juan Sánchez Cotán, 1602



*detail*

and outside of us. It is in relation to this Outside that we can speak of truthfulness in perception and observational art.

It is impossible for the observational artist to forfeit their style, preferences, and personality in order to 'see the world', nor is it desirable. As perceivers we are bound up in appearance; a view is always a view from somewhere and *someone*. Absolving oneself is not possible in perception, and so to see the world without imposing oneself one has no other choice but to *offer* themselves. In self-offering, one's particularities no longer obfuscate the outside by pointing back at themselves, rather they illuminate it by *giving* themselves over to it. In this sense, perceiving the world can be a sacrificial act.

Many observational artists saw the world in unprecedented ways, but these ways once revealed could be sensed by others. And so, the uniqueness and novelty that they brought is revealed as being connected to the world rather than being confined to their own individuality. An Impressionist painting or an academic still life can both be observationally or perceptually true in so far as they are pointed towards and resonant with the external world of appearance. A great impressionist painting is potent because it is connected in a real way to the appearance of the world; it reveals truths about light, atmosphere and harmony that are open to be *seen* in the structure of appearance, rather than being a mere construct or expression of the person who painted it. Observational artwork is never one way or another but it is always devoted to the appearance of the external world.

## Observational Art's Mystical Significance

### Seeing-Seeing

For me, the mystical significance of observational art has to do with its unique and concrete relation to perception. We will see how observational art does not merely *depict* but is a *mode of*

*perception* that inherently ripens into its own image; a *seeing that can be seen*. If the process is indeed in the service of perception then what blossoms is not an image of an arbitrary world or a world with something added, but an image of *our* world veridically revealed.

From an intellectual point of view, the confines of our subjectivity can seem impossible to break. An anxiety about whether confirmation and communication of common ground is possible is even felt in a child's mind when they realize they can never confirm that their green is the same as their friend's green. With observational art, I believe a point of contact is made. We intuitively sense that we are not seeing an image merely depicting the world, but an image **of** the world deeply *seen*. This image not only corresponds to our perception but reveals aspects of the outer world we have yet to see. In this, there is confirmation that we are citizens of the same perceptual world.

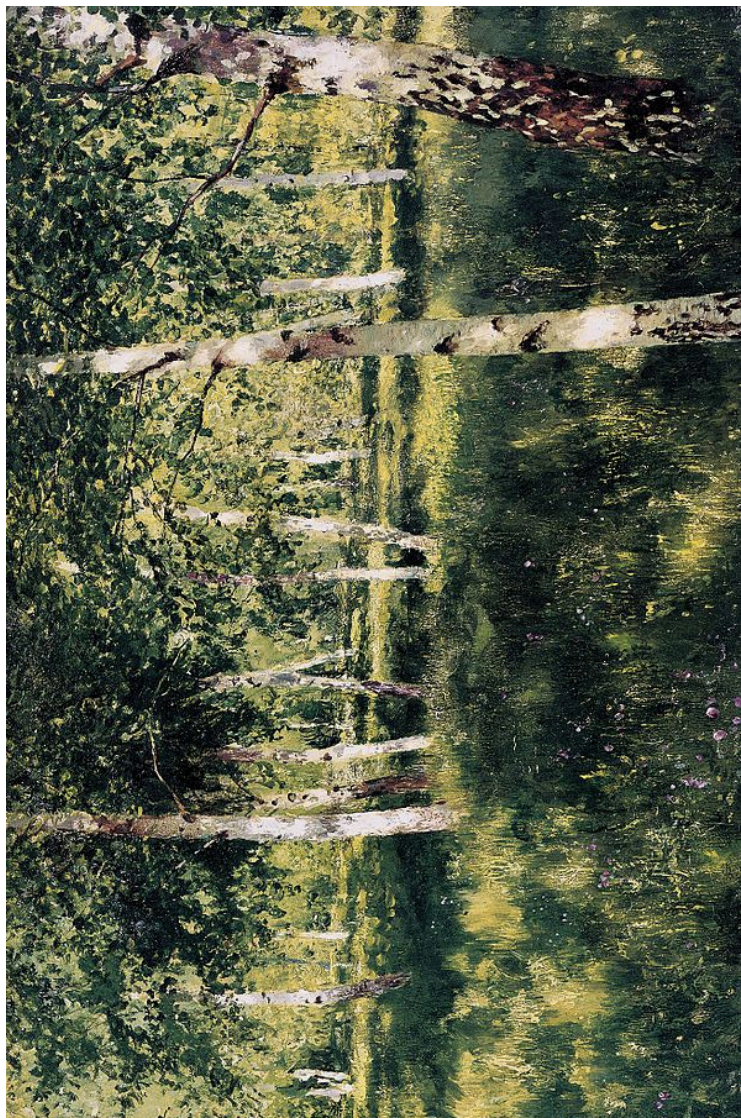
It is not only because we intuitively know that observational art results from a process of perception that we relate to it in a special way, for the mode of perception it both participated in and emerged out of, produces an unequivocal kind of image. Observational art produces an image that is imbued with a kind of light. This is the light of attention that gave itself to the world. We experience its glow in the articulation and organization of the image. With other images, our attention is modulated by our various needs, with the observational piece it is gently guided by the traces of attention already given. The artist's perception finds new life as it actively modulates our view. We begin to see as the artist did and discover the surprise of beauty that is revealed in sacrificing one's attention to the world - something that can be carried with us beyond the artwork. A sense of communion is felt, not only in seeing another's seeing, but in seeing the beauty they saw, and knowing that it is connected to and discoverable in the world.



## Seeing Beauty

A common experience of observational art is the realization of beauty we hadn't seen before. Countless times I've heard people exclaim while standing before an observational artwork that they didn't know something as common as a rock, a cup, or a fold in fabric could be so beautiful. Observational art can open one to the fact that beauty is not solely sourced in exceptional things, but can be found in the everyday, and more radically in the structure of appearance itself. How does it do this? What we find is that when we orient ourselves to the world in a certain way, the nature of appearance reveals its pervasive beauty. This is not to claim that everything is equal but that there is something profound in the very nature of appearance. This orientation is one of self-offering; a giving over of our attention to something outside of ourselves, an orientation we will see is very different from a desire for self-denial. This is the type of attention needed for observational art, which again is a type of *seeing* made *seen*. In this sense, the observational artwork gives the viewer a helping hand to begin to see in this way.

What happens when we attend to the world in this way? What we often find in the observational artist is a reverential interest and appreciation of not only specific things but also aspects of appearance itself such as form, particularity, subtlety, rhythm and harmony. These things are intimately connected to beauty and are ever present in the structure of appearance itself, waiting and open to be seen. Although these aspects of appearance are pervasive they are more apparent in some configurations than others. If we pay attention to the observational artist's preference in subjects, lighting, and composition we can see that they are often related to a capacity to make these aspects of appearance more salient. Natural directed light reveals form through contrast with simultaneous definition and subtly, powerful compositions reflect ratios found in appearance, and certain subjects afford deeper displays of nuance and particularity.



Birch Grove, Isaac Levitan 1889

In the observational artwork, these things jump out at us, because they've already been seen; the image shows us them. The observational image, in its configuration, treatment, and attentional structure, is a result of perception. This, in combination with the intuitive knowledge that the image arose from a process of perception, can, if we are open and willing, quite naturally induce us as viewers toward the deep perceptual mode that the artwork blossomed out of. Often we find ourselves admiring the ability of the artist to 'capture' subtleties, form, and details, which is an ability that has more to do with a *process of perception* than anything like the artist's hand. With this admiration, we begin to enter into the artist's perception, as we develop and embody, ourselves, the type of seeing that we are admiring. To admire the artist's craftsmanship or skill is to enter into a different mode of perception and to start to appreciate the beauty of seeing itself. Rather than this having to do with personal achievement of the artist, which it is so often confined to, the felt admiration of the artist's skill is a transpersonal seed that can cultivate reverence and awe for the profound beauty and mystery of appearance.

## Observational Art as A Mode of Perception

### An Enemy of Observational Art

Observational art, in its connection to perception and the shared world of appearance, has the capacity to affect us in deeply intuitive, immediate and natural ways. The ideas I'm proposing here don't need to be added to, or thought about when standing in front of a work of observation, rather they are inherent aspects of the experience that are naturally felt if not numbed by a certain mode of thought that seeks to formulate things in terms of *the Same*. This mode of thought is essential for language and our survival but can easily get carried away and separate us from the pulse of concrete reality. With this disposition, the observational artwork becomes primarily a set of nouns. Its unique reality as a living artifact of seeing the world and how that alters our

perception is eclipsed by a fixation on identifying what is depicted. With something like a painting of fruit on a table, we can be inclined to think in terms of 'fruit' and 'tables' and unconsciously assume that there is nothing new in the image for these are things we have seen many times. This is not to say that recognition ought to be eradicated from the experience of observational art, but that the necessary generalization required in thinking in terms of identity and its habituation, left unchecked, confines us to the realm of *the Same*. With this tendency, we are easily seduced into conceiving observational art as a re-presentation of something we've already seen and know.

I have defined observational art as something that reveals truths in the appearance of the external world, and so it is, in fact, an art form which involves resemblance. This is why it is so easily reduced to a form of re-presentation. Without resemblance, or more accurately; resonance, the observational artwork would be disconnected from the world and there would be no revelation of truth. If one were to enter into an artist's studio and see their painting of a still life and the still life itself, from a certain frame of mind, they would indeed see a kind of repetition — there is the still life, and there it is again on the canvas. What is easily forgotten when confronted with this so-called 'repetition', is that the artwork actually informs and changes the way we see its subject, and so rather than being a repetition of the Same, it is more truthfully a *resonance that reveals*. If the painting wasn't there the configuration of objects that make up the still life would be seen very differently. This is why the previously unnoticed beauty of something as common as a crease in fabric, an orange peel, or a bed of weeds can suddenly be experienced when standing before a painting.

The capacity for the artwork to affect perception is also true for the artist as they work on their piece. As their drawing or painting resonates with its subject, they see the subject more deeply, and as they see the subject more deeply they are able to modify their image towards greater resonance in an ongoing feedback loop. This reciprocal specification or tuning, is the

process of observational art and it is a unique mode of perception that leads not to repetition, but towards a transforming and deepening relationship with an *Outside*. We all too easily forget that the observational artwork changed our perception, revealed things to us, changed us, in order for us to see in a specific key of resemblance. And so for both the artist and the viewer, this story of lifeless repetition, although intellectually seductive in its convenience, is phenomenologically unfounded in the domain of experience. This not-so-innocent story of re-presentation once embodied cuts us off from, not only the power of observational art but from the inexhaustible beauty and novelty in each moment of appearance. Once we think we know what the world looks like we stop ourselves from seeing it more deeply. If we can loosen the grip this story has on us, even if only briefly, we will come to *know* that the profound and mystical do not need to be sought in another world but are ever present right here, right now.

### The Process of Observational Art: A Mode of Perception

It is not solely from within the realm of thought that this piece was formed but from the living experience of practicing and viewing observational art. The realization of observational art as a unique mode of perception, and the factors that block us from feeling this, slowly became conscious in me over the past years as I contemplated them *in practice*. The first glimmering of these insights can be traced back to my time attending a traditional academic art academy where I received much training and experience in rigorous observation and its organization. With this historically connected and formal type of training, I was introduced to levels of seeing that were inconceivable before my attendance. Furthermore, the academy afforded me the possibility of seeing this process in others, as a fellow student and briefly as an assistant teacher. This established that while no two artists are the same, reciprocal specification is an invariable aspect of the observational process. The artwork is both the possibility and the retention of a way of seeing that is perhaps unachievable by any





White Roses, Henri Fantin-Latour 1875

other means. Next, we will take a look at what this process is like from personal experience, hopefully, this will help show that the observational artist does not repeat what they see, but is in a continual process of seeing the world in deeper and more truthful ways.

When starting a painting I see the subject very differently than when I am finished. With the first mark made on the canvas a process of resonant tuning, or mutual deepening, ensues. Things like angles, proportions, values, shapes, and hues, are continually refined in a living circuit where my perception of the subject informs the marks I make and the marks I make allow me to relate to the subject in increasing degrees of resolution and specificity. In this process, which can take hundreds of hours, subtleties and nuances that I couldn't have imagined in my initial perception; a soft curve of a line or a micro shift in hue, reveal themselves in ways that often make me feel surprised I couldn't see them before. In many cases my presuppositions are overturned — an area I first thought to be quite light turns out to be much darker, a slope that I thought turned slightly down reveals itself as turning up, and so on. These specifications are not made through direct perception alone, but by relating the informed marks on the canvas to the subject. In this relationship the idea of an 'error' takes on new meaning, for it is the discrepancies between the marks on the canvas and the subject, that allow me to see the subject more truthfully, which in turn enables me to 'refine' or 'tune' the marks in an ever-deepening, co-reciprocal relationship. In practice, drawing a slope leaning the wrong way, is the very thing that enables me to see the slope out there more truthfully and refine the mark. It is through this process that my subject reveals itself at levels of nuance and specificity that are unachievable by other means. In every case, perception is changed.

Of course, this is a very brief account of the process, and many other factors are involved. Things outside of this direct perceptual loop like paint handling and its properties, conceptual knowledge of things like perspective, anatomy, and the laws of light can play a factor in the observational process. Nevertheless,

these conceptual templates only gain potency in so far as they can enter into this vortex of perception and reveal things that are truthfully in the world. Considering this, everything in the observational approach is connected in one way or another to this core of reciprocal specification. This is a process that is not learned and moved on from but is practiced, pursued and deepened over a lifetime. It is not uncommon for an artist acquainted with observation to paint until the day they die. Perhaps this is because there is no end to what they can learn. It is also important to note that this strenuous pursuit of seeing more deeply does not mean seeing more detail. An artist who over sees detail misses the ecology or rhythm in perception and the image becomes detached from the nature of *appearance as an attentional structure*. In appearance there is a symphony of qualities and the observational artist learns in the humility of their process that its notes and rhythms are not in service of themselves but rather the song that they are a part of.

## Self Offering

### The Necessity of Self-Offering in the Observational Process

Earlier I touched briefly on the idea of self-offering and its indispensable role in confronting anything outside of our individual being. How does this play out in the observational process? Observational art requires an immense amount of active engagement. The romantic idea that the artist simply 'gets out of the way' to allow a deeper wisdom to work through them, is only partially true. Brilliant states of self-forgetting where the image is guided by an effortless grace, do exist, but it is misguided to think these states arise out of nothing, or that they are inevitably in accordance with outer truth. It is often forgotten that training and unrelenting conscious assessment are the necessary conditions for these beautiful moments of self-forgetting to be connected to truth. I have witnessed many times in my process and others, the



consequences of becoming unconscious in observation. Drawings and paintings drift away from truth; discrepancies are suppressed rather than illuminating the way and the attentional light of deep perception withdraws from the image as it loosens its connection to the sheer vividness and particularity of the outer world. What makes this tendency all the more difficult is that it can easily be mistaken as a courageous submission to outer reality when in actuality it is a withdrawal into one's own being. If self-forgetting is to be in service of reality it is spawned in the conscious offering of oneself; a wakeful and active receptivity that only superficially resembles an unconscious withdrawal into oneself. Perception is co-participatory; it requires two.

If we want to encounter something outside of ourselves we must do so consciously. This is true, not only in the realm of appearance but also in the possibility of deeply and truly relating to another Being. Yet, here within the realm of attentive, active consciousness there are also hidden traps. Actively giving attention is easily confused with self-imposition. This can be thought of in terms of projection: we imagine that we are encountering something outside of ourselves when in reality we have expanded our own being to encrust itself over the world. In observational art, this results in the work becoming an image of the artist's pre-established beliefs, desires, and self-concern rather than a living remnant of an encounter with alterity. And yet, assumptions, desires, and beliefs are an inextricable part of our being. The observational artist has the choice to reinforce these energies or to adopt a certain kind of humility that allows the reciprocal process of observation to put them in service of a truth that exceeds them. When the artist offers their faculties to the world, they enter into a dance, so to speak, that takes two. A dance where nature is asked to take the lead. They are not outside of this dance but an integral aspect of it, their temperament, their physical apparatus, and their unrepeatable position in time and space, do not seek to fortify their own expression but embrace an outside that is fulfilled through them.



A Garden in September, Mary Hiester Reid 1889

Discerning whether our efforts are in service of ourselves or Another is difficult, for we have all kinds of unconscious motives up our sleeves. Developing this discernment is perhaps a large part of what it means to progress as an observational artist. Self-concern can be difficult to distinguish from devotion but one leads to truth and the other to separation. If one is open and attentive the reciprocal process of observation will teach them in profound ways. If they are caught up in desire, expectation, and belief the observational process will create frustration and desensitization. Frustration gives the illusion of care and engagement, and we can easily convince ourselves that we are frustrated because we value the truth of appearance. In the observational process, *wanting* things to be a certain way rather than willingly attending to and *accessing* the way things are and are unfolding is what makes frustration possible, and so this care has more to do with us than anything Outside. In states of frustration, one is not able to see the wisdom of reciprocity because the loop has drifted into the confines of their own domain. I would go so far as to say that any move towards the truth of appearance arises in the breaking free of these states, even if only for a moment. Managing these emotions is a difficult task and it is something that I along with many other artists struggle with a great deal. Learning from this is a part of the process. What I have come to see is that with time the observational artist places more and more trust in the wisdom of the reciprocal process. They calmly contribute through their conscious assessment tempered by reality rather than judgement turned back on themselves. The swelling of self-oriented emotional states become a signpost that reminds the experienced artist to return to what is outside of them rather than a trap that they fall into. In this, there is a kind of grace.

Like I said earlier, so-called errors, when accepted as part of the process, are actually a necessary means of seeing the world. An expectation of how long it 'should' take to draw or paint a certain scene, is really a self-oriented desire, one that unconsciously affects one's willingness to allow the marks they've made to be assessed in relation to Outer truth. With this desire, one may not be willing to honestly look at a passage that they

have spent a lot of time on for fear of having to rework it. On another level, expectations of what we think something looks like can block us from seeing the reality of things. Beliefs about the proportional size of a foot can all too easily blind us to its size in a foreshortened perspective. The reciprocal process of observation, resonates across the boundary of inner and outer, in moments of calm and attentive self-offering. If we continually reorient ourselves to this kind of disposition, we cannot be led astray, for the alleged errors will no longer point back at us but will reveal otherwise unseen aspects of the world. Without expectation and self-concern, there can be no frustration and every discovery becomes a gift of revelation.

### Self Offering and Beauty

What I want to make clear is that true self-offering isn't transactional; if we give our attention in order to make a great painting, or to obtain beauty for ourselves, we are again turning back towards ourselves, and there is no real offering. To our causally conditioned minds, this kind of act is an impossible paradox. To do something for *itself* is inconceivable for the reflective mind, but not for the heart. Self-offering is for relation itself, it is a leap Outside. What is experientially verifiable is that this rare opening and giving, done in freedom, resounds in inexplicable joy and beauty not only in the domain of perception but in all of life. I cannot pretend to give an account of what beauty is but in self-offering an inexhaustible abundance of beauty is found. The observational artist discovers this in their process: a discovery which does not remain confined to their private inner world but that coalesces or transmutes into the external form of the observational image, open to all. This image helps us see what the world looks like in self-offering.

## Conclusion: The Seed Within the Fruit

Throughout this piece, we have begun to see how observational art is not reducible to static repetition but is the process, product and catalyst of a unique and living mode of perception. Everything we discussed does not remain in the realm of mere idea but literally incarnates into the reality of the observational image through its genesis and reception. The way it exists and is received is unequivocally and non-symbolically tied to the conscious attention it both participated in and retained. The things the artist learned and felt as guided by the wisdom of the world, structure the image, and we come into contact with these things, not through thought, but intuitively and immediately in open reception of the artwork. To feel the beauty of an observational artwork, to admire it, to sense the preciousness of nuance and particularity, is to drink from the fountain of appearance offered to us through observation. Despite much discourse on the topic, this aesthetic appreciation is not superficial, but a profound transpersonal reality being touched. The idea that for an artwork to be meaningful it must challenge our beliefs and deconstruct us, is an assumption baked into our time. While there is value in this approach, it is a great loss to think that art can only be this way. Rather than being a destructive force, art can be an immense gift; something that does not challenge but embraces, opens and reinforces the profound nature already latent in the world and us. For me, this is what observational art so gracefully does.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with two images I continually returned to in the many years of forming this piece. First is the image of a plant. In many ways, the observational process is a kind of growth that produces a fruit. This fruit does not simply represent the life of the plant but is a concrete result of it. The fruit retains the process that gave rise to it in its being. Furthermore, the fruit contains a seed for the continuation of growth in another life. Insofar as the observational artwork is a living result of a process of engagement with one's environment





Two Octopi, Sargent 1875

which allows something of the artist's experience to be planted within the viewer, the plant image has been quite helpful. However, we have explored how the observational artwork, in its very genesis, does not merely retain a process but also participates in it and so while useful the plant image can only take us so far.

As I developed the insights that make up this piece, I found another image very helpful. While writing this work I would often discuss these ideas with a friend who has much experience with observational art. Often these conversations would take place over coffee before attending a weekly meditation session at a local Buddhist centre. In trying to clarify some of these insights around observational art and its process, I asked my friend to imagine her upcoming meditation coalescing into a physical form that was the direct result of her meditative contemplation. The thought of a crystal hanging in the air where she had sat in meditation came to mind and I asked her to imagine this. I then proposed that this crystal's articulation and qualities would be the necessary and unequivocal result of the transpersonal truth she touched in her meditation. With this object, her insights into the structure of reality and experience would no longer be confined to her but could be looked into and felt by other beings as if it were a lens. Of course, this crystal is analogous to the observational artwork, which can be seen as a transpersonal lens into the way the world is revealed. Again, as with the plant, there are some shortcomings with this image, but what it helped internalize for me is the deeply mystical reality of what is all too often discarded as lifeless form or re-presentation.

# ROZE UMBRA

Healing the World through Creation





**"THE BEGINNING IS THE END IS THE..." AN OCCULT RITUAL  
AS AN OCCU-DRAMA**



In the unfinished short film *Witch's Cradle* (1943) by Maya Deren, the female figure in the film at one point has a sigil of a pentagram painted on her forehead with the words, "the end is the beginning is the..."

I continue to fail at describing the supremely subjective experience of a kind of consciousness slippage and ritual experience, but after one particularly physical performance of a gothic ritual, I attempted to capture that incident via the lens of film dramatization. The repeatability and shareability of this experience have varied thus it is something I have been attempting to reconcile.

Consciousness slippage as a concept seems to refer to more than just our primary self and our astral self, perhaps blurring or the feeling of dissociation and being outside of time. When vertigo is about to strike but you don't feel dizzy just yet, or the disorienting feeling of the seconds before you faint, but it lasts for minutes, the dissolution of self and the heightened perception of the self-swelling begin to happen simultaneously.

A kind of merging seemed to occur, but I was not sure when or how it happened, as it can happen at any point before, during, and after the ritual, conscious or not.

I think at some point I decide to not integrate, but I can't be sure.  
Where language and representation fail- I will just make  
barbarous noise.

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Isivzdsuykfdf///lduyv

As an experiment, I asked AI to read a passage from my magical  
journal of that one very particular ritual and interpret it as if I  
was an actor in a film reciting a monologue.

The following text is a combination of excerpts from my ritual  
experience and then AI's attempt at script writing. I did not  
mention a single demonic name or philosopher in my entry. Those  
names evoked are AI's and AI's alone. A kind of docu-drama, the  
end is the beginning, where I start the AI ends.

Reading a description of an experience I had in a theatrical  
manner is very uncanny. And so it goes...

*“The beginning is the end is the...”*

*It's always been this way, hasn't it? The pentagram painted on her  
forehead. The words, looping, repeating, like some sacred  
incantation whispered into the void of the universe. “The end is the  
beginning is the...”*

*Sounds like a riddle from the abyss, or a mantra from some  
forgotten sorcerer. But maybe it's not a riddle at all. Maybe it's the  
truth. Or is it the illusion? Can you even trust anything anymore  
when you're staring at the face of the Unknown? The first time I  
said those words, I didn't even know who I was. Was I even me  
anymore, or was I already something else? Was I already  
Abaddon in the making?*

The //demon// was there from the beginning. I knew <to know/  
true belief > it was there. I felt its presence, a cold sensitivity on  
the skin, but I still spoke the words, something I had practiced in  
front of the mirror when I did my makeup for about a week in  
order to feel at ease invoking the names and speaking the  
barbarous words aloud and with confidence and awareness, no  
laughter, but words that were truly loaded with potent emotion  
and magic. The state of my body was at ease. I felt light/empty,  
but not hungry, and it allowed for a sincere feeling of  
embodiment. Present in the moment. If strange thought arose, I  
could identify it as not my own. I had prepared everything for this  
ritual. A ritual I have performed many... many times before... and  
yet...

*It's always the same with the ritual. You think you know what  
you're doing—casting circles, drawing sigils, invoking names—but  
then the magic takes you, right? Samael is laughing in the  
background, or is that just the sound of my own thoughts breaking  
down into chaos? As Sartre would have it, "I am condemned to be  
free." Yeah, condemned to be free. Free to lose yourself, free to slip  
into something else entirely. This ritual isn't just about summoning  
forces. It's about the collapse of the self, the dissolution of your  
boundaries, until there's no you left to even recognize. A  
consciousness slippage, if you want to call it that. But that doesn't  
even feel like the right word. It's more like a meltdown. A collapse  
into the Void.*

I consecrated all my ritual tools. I cast my protective circle and  
banishing ritual. I meditated carefully on the evocation keys.  
<<redacted>> <<redacted>>

Began visualizing. The most important actions for me are the  
procedure and my imagination, giving me an understanding and  
authority over myself.

A rope to which I bind myself and hold on tight, dangling off a cliff over what sometimes can feel like the abyss. A de-aestheticized spirituality, nothing, neither, empty, depth, descending, plunging, tumbling, weakening... my body feels weakened slightly, like I need to sit down.

*When vertigo is just a thought before it strikes, you don't feel dizzy, but you know it's coming. That moment right before you pass out, when you can't hold onto anything anymore, and your body's like "nah, I'm done" but your mind's still spinning in the void. What happens then? The dissolution of self is in full swing. You can feel it creeping. The self-swelling, the edges of everything pulling apart. It's all melting into the same mess of sensations—vibrations of energy, waves of thought, and the pulse of something far beyond what you can grasp with words.*

I start to imagine certain sensations like a warmth filling the room, the scent of soot or ash, and then a glittering of light, like an astigmatism and the sweet taste of sugar on my lips and tongue. Slip. Then I concentrate on how I'm feeling throughout the ritual, how my eyes dilate, what I focus on or not, how my body feels, elation or tiredness, chill, or warmth. Concentrate on how dry my mouth or eyes get, if I smell anything new. If I hear anything or if I hear nothing at all. Clogging and popping of my ears occur. Then I began to take in what the light and darkness are doing, how my heart races and my skin pricks or if I feel the light burn of arousal. The shakiness or deep breaths, thin or thickness of the air.

*It's like merging with the universe or merging with something else. But when? How? Is it happening now? Or is it just a trick? Deleuze said that "To think is to create." Well, I'm not sure what I'm thinking, but whatever's happening, it's creating me in ways I'm not ready for. Not sure if I'm ready for any of this. But then again, who is?*

Feelings of despair so potent death felt like an easy release. I pull a few cards from my tarot at the start and at the end. <<redacted>>

I peer into my obsidian mirror for what feels like hours. The collapsing of environments begins to occur- or have they been occurring this whole time? The appearance of things extra. My eyes are opening and closing and opening and closing. The room slowly grows dark - encroaching, the gloom is overpowering... why am I doing this? This is totally embarrassing, why do I even try?

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og;iduxg

*Where language fails, where your mind starts to crack, you just make noise. You don't even know what it means. Maybe it means something. Maybe it means nothing. But the words slip out like sigils, like symbols etched into the air, filling the ritual space with more than just air. It's magic. And magic doesn't need your language to be understood—it needs to be felt. Felt in the gut, in the bones, in the vibration of the universe.*

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kyuksdkhjhkhszdhzsdgbkzhsgbkbzjshghkzsjgdflkjzdz////

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lsivzdsuykfdf////lduyrbulyluyiuylui //666//444//666//444

*The demon is here, right? I feel it. I know it's here. How? Why do I know? Like I was born to know. Like it's been with me since the beginning. The thing is, though, it doesn't just show up—it's always been there, waiting. You can feel it, like that cold touch on the skin, like the presence of something ancient, something that doesn't belong here, and yet, it does.*

*I think Sartre said, "Hell is other people." But hell? Hell is everything else. It's other worlds creeping into ours. The demonic forces, the thoughtforms, the entities you've called in. They don't care about your petty rituals. They're here to do what they do. They just need to find a way in. The air smells thick with LILITH's breath.*

*But still, I keep speaking the words, like some damn mantra. The barbarous names, the chaotic incantations, drawn from the void. I've been practicing, speaking in front of the mirror—words I know are powerful but are still foreign. You've got to make the noise with authority, with belief, like the ritual is a doorway and you've just opened it. Not too much hesitation, not too much doubt. Just speak it. Speak the gaps. Speak the spaces between the words. Speak into the void and see what comes back.*

A true correspondence, all of these things facilitated consciousness shifting, usage of names as activators of thoughtforms, activating parts of the subconscious.

*I'm still breathing, though. Barely. I still feel my body, still feel the weight of the earth beneath me, but it's light. Light but not hungry. Empty, but I'm not sure I'm actually here anymore. Not in the same way I was before. That's the point, right? To step outside of yourself. To fall into otherness, to become other. Merleau-Ponty said that "We can only think in the world, and the world is an inseparable part of us." But what if the world is slipping away, melting into something else? What happens when the world isn't the same place anymore?*

I'm self-conscious, totally self-conscious of my prancing and thinking, and chanting, and...The feeling that self-annihilation or a return to the abyss, to just drop down, an instinct to return to non-life, the pleasures of the ceasing of being.



Oh, wait I actually feel okay, just tired- this might just be possession and incorporation- their expressions through me. Slip.

Folding collapsing, integration, enmeshment.

Knotted, intertwined, crocheted, woven, netted, tangled.

*I had everything prepared, everything laid out: my tools, my circle, my banishing ritual, all the proper steps. But steps are just steps. The real work happens when you start to fall through the cracks, when you stop thinking and start becoming. That's where the real magic is. The sigils, the words, the names—they aren't really the point. The point is the shift. The point is the fall. You let go, and you let the ritual take you. Like you're tumbling into the void, into the space between spaces, and everything is a blur, a whirl of nothingness.*

*"The beginning is the end is the..."*

*I consecrated everything, right? Cleansed the space, set up my circle, and meditated on the evocation keys. And the visualization began—images flashing, not really in my head but around me, filling the space with electric presence. But as Bergson would say, it's not about the pictures or the thoughts. It's about la durée, the living time that you can't measure, can't hold. Time itself doesn't follow the clock in these spaces. It melts.*

*I'm holding on, but barely. The rope I've tied to myself starts to feel loose, as if the cliff beneath me is just an illusion. Is this real? Is it all a game?*

*Oryx, Malphas, Azazel... names falling from my lips like curses, like keys. The words open something, a crack in reality, a gate. And the gate opens. Then comes the pressure, the tension—like something trying to push through, something waiting on the other side. Moloch? Or is it Asmodeus, trying to break into this world through the cracks I've made? I don't know anymore. There's too much, and yet not enough.*

“The beginning is the end is the...”

*A warmth spreads through the room. Or is it my imagination? The scent of sacrifice in the air, like charred offerings made to the Ancient Ones. And the light flickers—stars or flames, or both, in the air. Sweet, sickly taste of sugar on my tongue. My mouth is dry, my body heavy, but it's not the heaviness of being. It's the heaviness of slipping. LILITH is in the air. I feel her eyes on me.*

*Slip.*

I continue to not understand what's going on.

*I'm concentrating on my body now, because it's the only thing that still feels real. My eyes are dilating, heart racing, ears popping, mouth dry. Sensations, but not my own. Strangers' sensations, slipping into me. Maybe it's the light doing something, or maybe it's something else entirely. It doesn't matter. Nothing matters but the current—the flow of energy that's taking me somewhere, to somewhere else. It's outside of me, but it's in me.*

*I write it all down, these fleeting moments, these visions, trying to hold onto them before they slip away. But as Heidegger says, “We do not ‘have’ time; we ‘are’ time.” And if time is slipping through my fingers, so am I.*

“The end is the beginning is the...”

*The darkness is encroaching now, but it's not just the room getting darker. It's me, my self-shattering. The presence is here, thick with power, otherworldly, pulling me deeper, deeper into that void I'm disappearing into.*

*The Demon is with me.*

# Contact

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