

THE RAPTURE OF CELLULAR ACCRETION

HERE, A DUAL, AS FANTASY AND REALITY ORBIT AROUND ONE ANOTHER, SOMETIMES TOUCHING AND SOMETIMES TRAINING ONE ANOTHER IN ACTS OF RITUAL EXCHANGE, REPERTOIRE AND COMBAT. [CHANT]

She replies to the email with a single link to a music video, "SHOW ME SOMETHING ELSE!" [CHANT], and he responds, with one video after another, after another, in cascades of audio. A principle of difference enters as atmosphere. In a rush to fill its chasm, she emails him back with her own YouTube link, thus inaugurating an era of sharing.

The audio is dislodged from several zones and repurposed within two unlisted playlists hosted within YouTube's nodal geography. Its landscape is one of cellular accretion, harvest and algorithmic misdirection, ITS LIFE BLOOD [CHANT]. Their videos are cultivated within this realm, as vascular, networked archives of customisable playlists affiliated with their gmail accounts, and functioning in the first instance as discrete containers for each to profile their tastes to the other... embellishing their digital landscapes from a resource of songs.

Periodically, the two would rearrange the constituent parts of their playlists according to an unspoken taxonomy, prioritising certain examples, by sliding another video to the foot of the playlist. In this way, the entire network grows, with digital ephemera blossoming in a rapture of cellular accretion. The video is its unit of life, with several surrounding features emerging from cytoplasmic puddles of coding to form supra-cellular life forms, themselves comprised of interactive organelles and other icons that resemble motile parts of the human body; submitting each cell to quantitative analysis of value, and other inventories that bring the cell's focus back to itself in extreme surveillance.

Digital ephemera flank the sidebar, congealing as vertiginous stacks, several feet long though neither tested its parameters or encountered the edge of its world. Their adherence to era is careless & additive; the usurping of genera - in its strictest sense, here - creates an attenuated audio stream where several centuries of cultural practices could be collapsed into their stack, together and touching in sequence, [1521-1994-1969-2007-1993], creating a degenerate history they would come to live inside... allowing one stack or series to slap against the difference of the other and shed clues.



Offered to each in spectacular close-up, the digitised voices of each music video becomes constitutive of an interlocutor, IT CHANTS ITS CHORUS AS ANIMAL AND AVATAR [CHANT], concretising the cell as a space for interactive harvest and confession. And with each video operating between them in the manner of both archive and intimate dialogue. These cells are more than mere artefacts of the playlist; they discipline his and her relationship to one another, and as a marker of life, they help to constitute the reality of each, to each other, in their interrelation.

A flatness begins to assume the proportions of spherical dimensionality!!!

Signs of life, as she slowly makes her way from one cell to another. And from one cell to the next, the recorded voice within his playlist begins to move further away from the body. The manipulable factors of its sound are edited, sampled, pitch shifted, distorted, decelerated and the body begins to shed the richness of its timbre, to assume a degree of synthetic anonymity, FLESH, AS SECOND THOUGHT [CHANT], liberating its sound from inherited models of musical voice, whilst imposing upon it new regimes heavily coded by the interactivity of the display or interface. The technologised voice in his playlist acts as a poetic indicator for re-imagining the world, occupying "the hyper-fantasy of a freedom from materiality"*... A fugitivity, as the voice is catapulted out of organic embodiment, OUT OF THE BODY [CHANT], towards the realm of corporeal abandonment, THE HEAVEN IN WHICH HE IS NOT HIMSELF [CHANT]... a hallucinatory second body, SOMEONE HE CAN TRULY BELIEVE IN [CHANT], simulated through a series of permutations to a virtualised vocal refrain, with its speaker now distributed across several pitches, objects, temporalities, and spaces... In this way, he breaks through several ceilings, though the entire edifice rested on more ceilings still both above and below, and every finger grasping desperately at an elsewhere.

The expediency of their exchange, a hyper-velocity in which she is able to quickly metabolise his response, so that, in the waiting room of a doctor's surgery, she customises her own playlist seconds after the inclusion of his video. She deposits within its frame, a new cell, A COUNTER OFFER [CHANT]. It sheds its light as aura... a pungent glow which concretises a new position with other signs of life incubated in the glow of their devices. Her customisations profile the political body of the NAKED VOICE [CHANT], with several of its voices emerging from the cell to enact unique claims for recognition, with attempts to salvage their testimony from liberalised notions of self hood... a slimy and discreet insistence both for and against the conditions which inform its utterances.

A LUCKY CHARM BEJEWELLED WITH NEITHER BOWELS OR MOVEMENT

Voyaging through gridded landscapes, moving from one video to the next, as if at the hinge of several portals, he picks up her offer; an immaterial rune or talisman*, and collects health, A LUCKY CHARM... [CHANT]. A barometer to the bottom left of the screen tilts its hand towards wellbeing and the lucky charm returns him again to the private sphere of their unlisted playlists, amongst cellular stacks of DDEX formatted audio. Here, he disassociates into a fantasy of an imagined solidarity, TRACING THEIR BODIES TOGETHER, IN PRIVATE - A PERFECT BALANCE OF BLISS AND SATURATED EMOTION [CHANT], thus gaining him several points... A strange heaven, this, as he retreats from the singularity of his own language to assert the primacy of the digital file, constantly invoked to speak images on his behalf, and in service to the romantic myth of an 'us' and 'we'.

AN EPIDERMIC INTERLUDE

On one evening, at the border territory of a single interface, he touches several objects on his desk; an orange cup, several pens, his iPhone. No one single object here confers health though the assembly of all three items keep him tethered to a domestic realm. He returns again to the computer, and his fingers linger on the keyboard, depress several keys, magicking a dozen letters inside the computer. This in turn funnels him towards her playlist. Sliding his fingers slowly over the trackpad, the screen pans vertically and scrolls down a central menu, locating one single cell, unlike the others. The chorus of this cell is surveilled and REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES [CHANT]. In a facility of movement that included both himself and the machine, he would slide his INDEX AND FOREFINGER [CHANT] back and forth over the trackpad. In twinned enchantment, the machine would track each of his gestures, precisely mapping and anchoring his index and forefinger to the arrow across the plane of the screen, culminating in the reactivation of the video's core line, OH MY LOVE [CHANT], slackening its sound in order to move through each of its words as if in the thickness of a dream... and in so doing, his gestures would ricochet through multiform portals and apparatuses; keypads, computers, internet providers, servers, data centres... He circles around the same repertoire of actions to repeat a chorus again, sensuously clinging to the hook, I'VE HUNGERED FOR YOUR TOUCH [CHANT].... An ambient restoration, as if by repeating the chorus he could bring about its propositional content, its unchained matter. Rather it disclosed an ever-thinning hold on language. The chorus nevertheless trains him in the affect of love and he learns to trust in it as a place to reconfigure his negativity, occasionally allowing some of its core elements to enter into his body in a mutant togetherness. SIGNS OF DEGENERATION AND RECOVERY ARE EVERYWHERE AND OFTEN CAN BE FOUND TOGETHER [CHANT].

*Burial: Unedited Transcript, The Wire Magazine, 2012

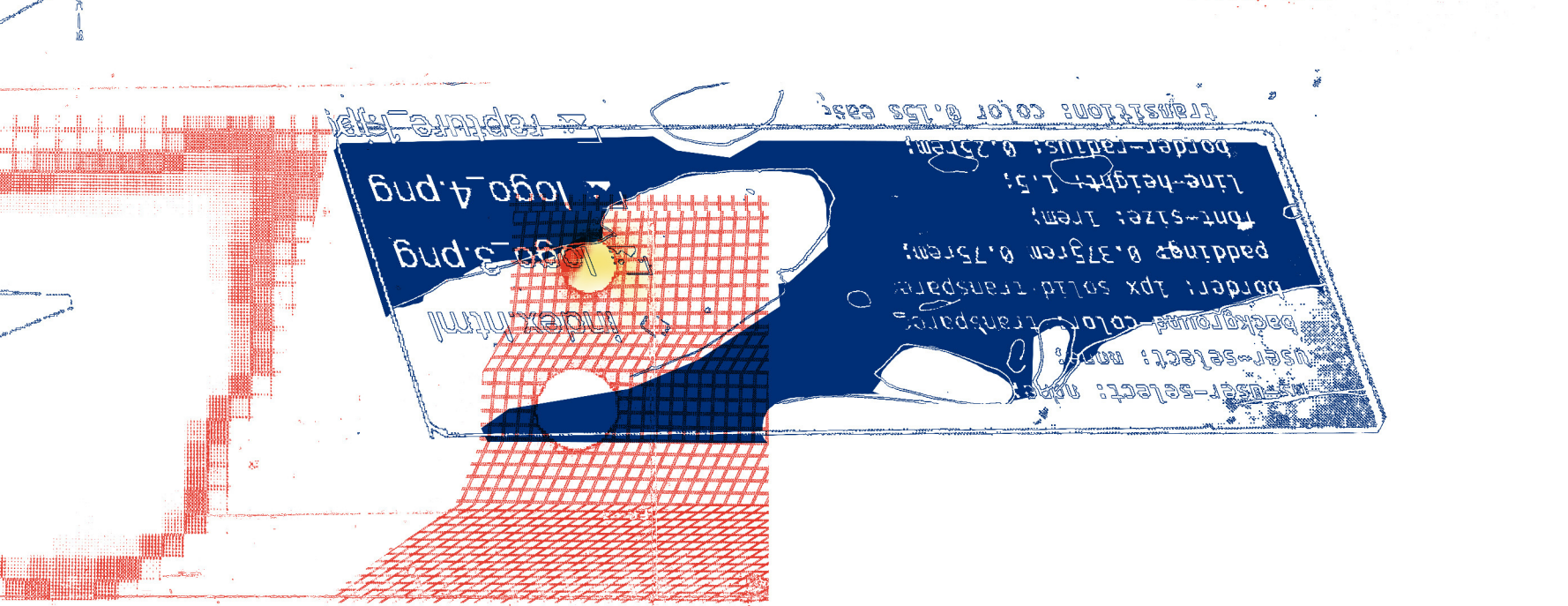
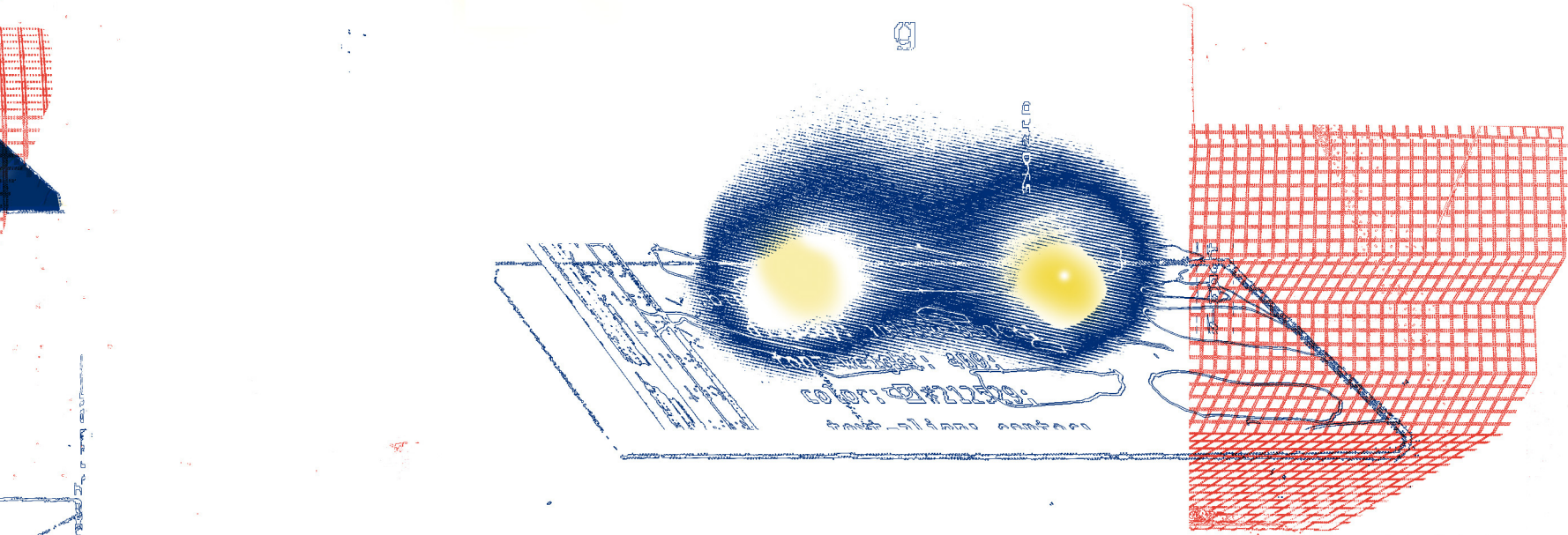
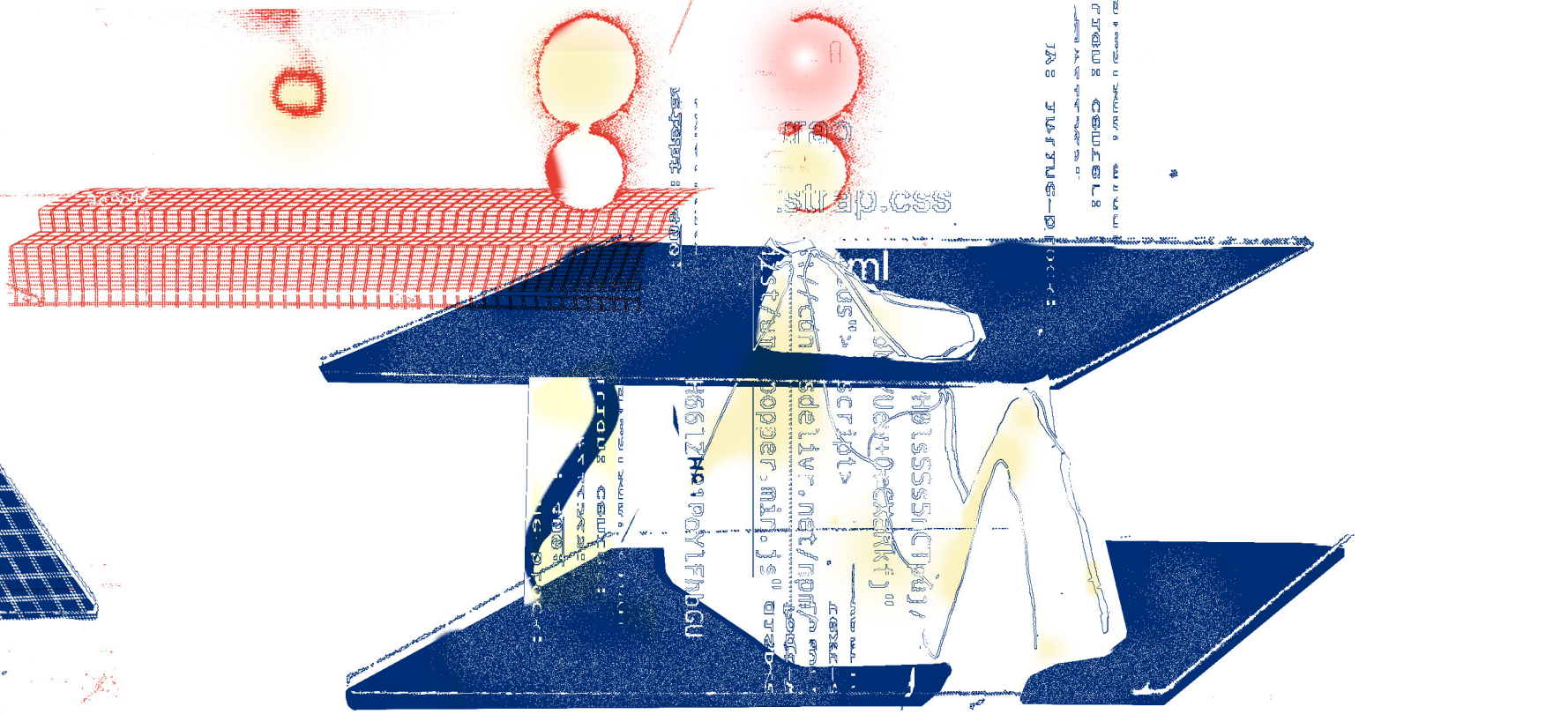
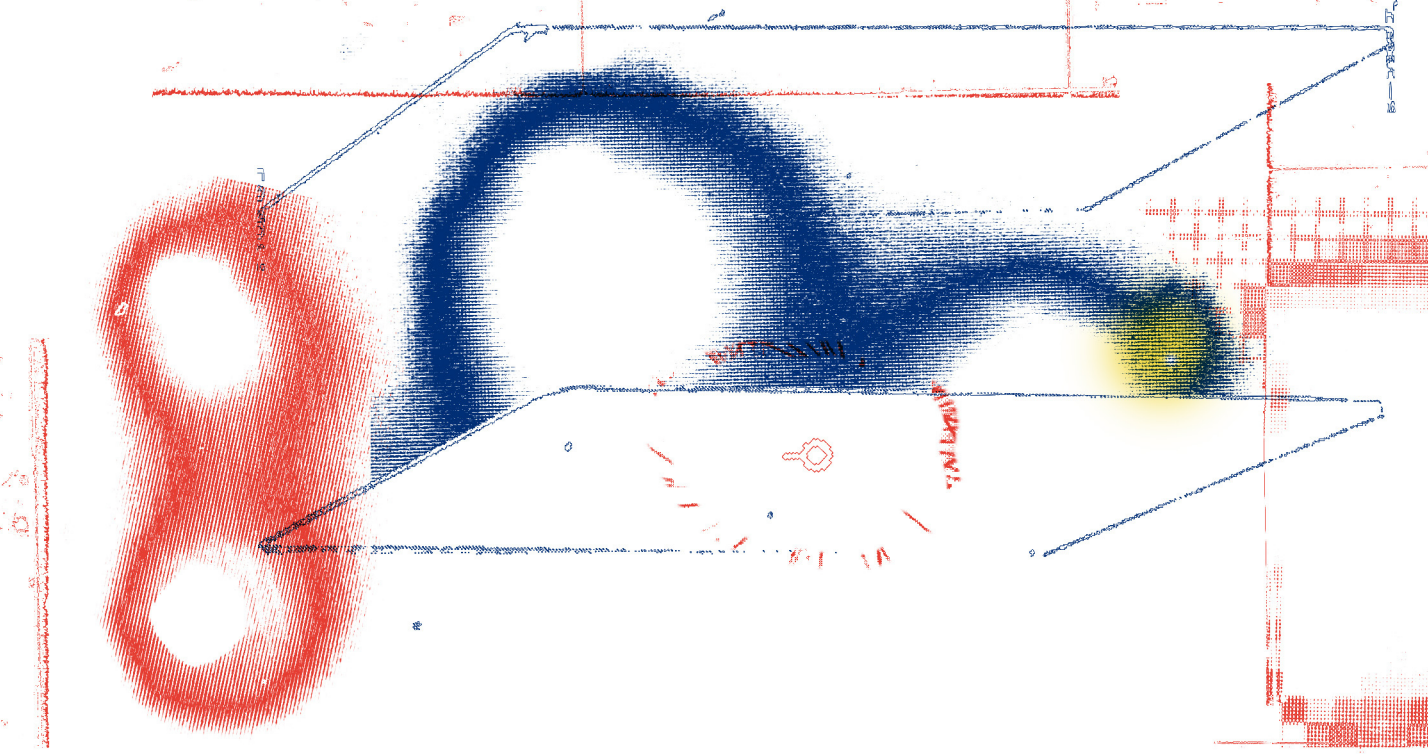
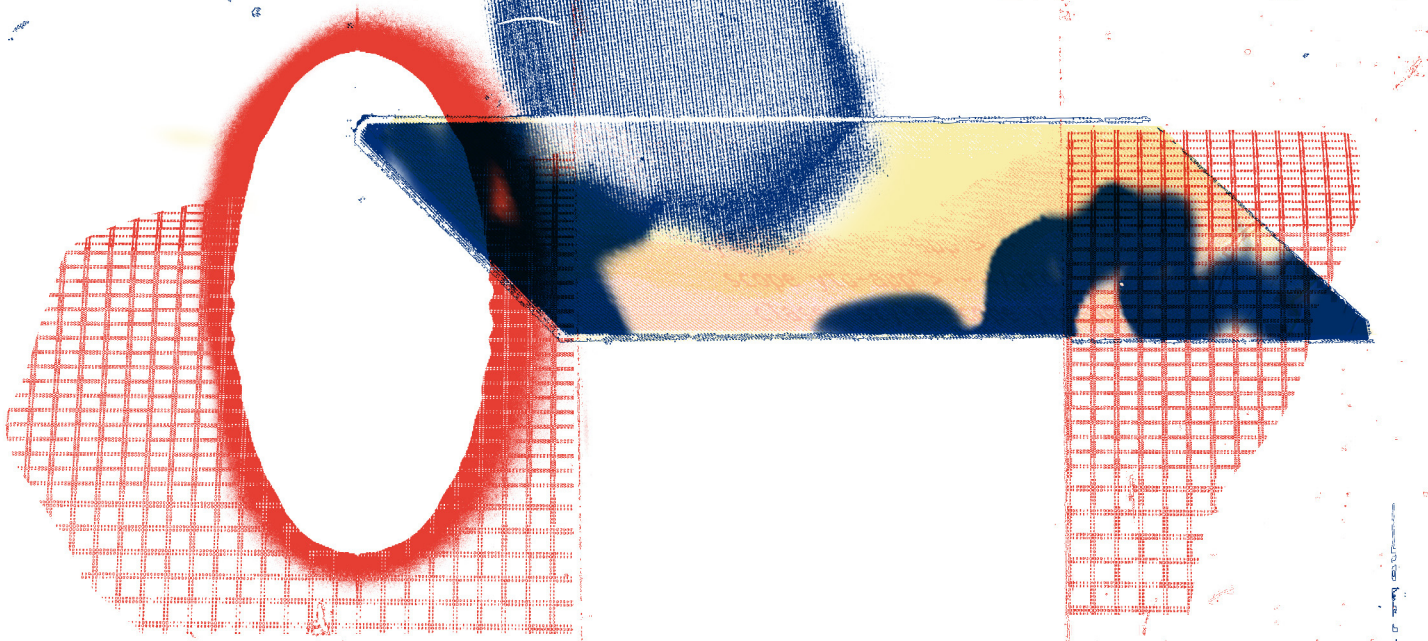
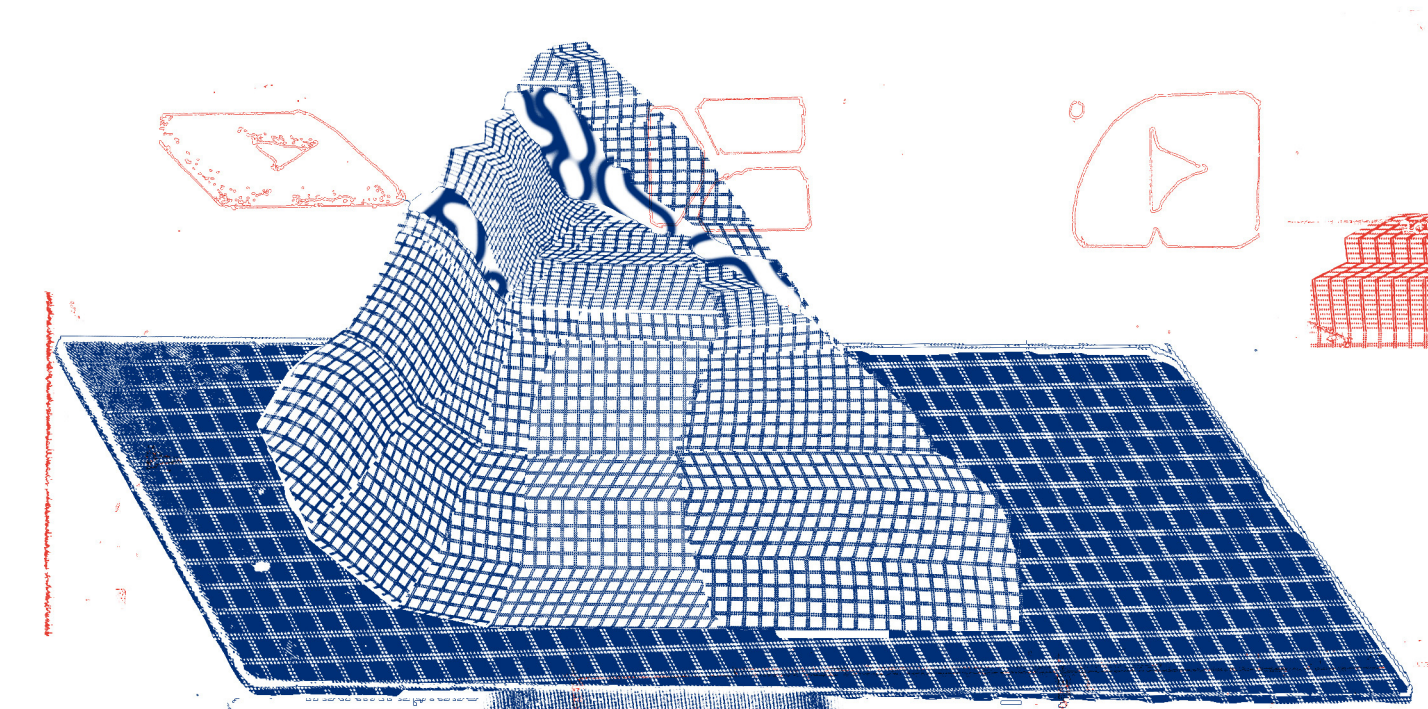
A NEWLY INCUBATED ENCHANTMENT

The 'we' of our watchfulness, across several other applications we entered every corner of our correspondence, creating an airless boundary. A SOGGY RECOMBINANT (HALF MACHINE, HALF FLESH) ...WE LOST COUNT OF THE NUMBER OF TIMES THAT WE VIEWED EACH OTHERS VIDEOS AND COMMENTS [CHANT], exhausting each cell as we fed off its pictures and sounds.... Nebulous days, watching each other between modes of 'typing...' and 'online'. The eternal time of those ellipses, which made mute its content as one dot learns to silence another, holding them both captive to the frame, THE TANTALISING PROMISE OF CONNECTION [CHANT], with a record of their inhabitation forever leaving a trace in circuitous scroll, 79 VIDEOS, 319 VIEWS, UPDATED 4 DAYS AGO, 120 VIDEOS, 335 VIEWS, LAST UPDATED ON DECEMBER THE 16TH... [CHANT] The "streaming and distress of so much language", occupying the most placeless of places, the zone of both an everywhere and particular nowhere, fractured through hundreds of thousands of manoeuvres that we would come to call "the endless erosion of the outside"*.

He moves through several of its frames, in order to salvage a 'we' that could be called upon to reconcile our differences. And in split frames, 'we' would become held together in a perpetual present... a soft and atomic dependency or inhabitation which might enable our renewal for several hours ahead. Our 'we' was always patiently awaiting proximity, depending always on the contingencies of promised encounters (Anna Tsing) ...and "when a proximity to one another, a shared condition leading to struggle, would make what was known a felt known, a suffered known, a known in process and not an imported known"**.

* The Thoughts from the Outside; I Lie, I Speak
Foucault on Maurice Blanchot

** Howard Slater, Anomie/Bonhomie & Other Writings



ANON ~ AN ENDING

During the peak of their playlist, many of their videos had once featured user generated commentary under YouTube's ANNOTATION EDITOR - A COMMONS BASED FEATURE [CHANT], that allowed the application to leverage the market potential of its users, through adaptations to the proprietary content uploaded, collapsing producer and consumer into a vibrating singularity. Launched in 2008, the function had enabled users to customise their content, coupling their videos to an integrated text box, hyperlink or other ancillary information.

"this perfect balance of bliss and saturated emotion" - anon

"getting body-highs from this and im 100% sober" - anon

"This is beyond beautiful" - anon

"I remember waking up in the middle of the night one time, and just hearing this loop over and over in my head with the 'Hankie' sample so prominent. One of the few tracks that genuinely made me feel uneasy. Credit to the boys for being able to create such an intense atmosphere... definitely not for the faint hearted!" - Sean R, 1 year ago

Though the visual content of each video was often little more than a static digital image of an album cover or centre label, THEY HANG THEMSELVES ON THE HTTP [CHANT], as the text box appeared, he would close it. In 2017, several years after the beginning of their YouTube playlist, the 'annotations editor' would be sunset. "SUNSET?", SHE EXCLAIMS [CHANT]. "Yes", because its use had fallen rapidly. The feature would be replaced by a series of standardised widgets and end screens, "AN ENDLESS HORIZON OF SUNSETS", SHE EXCLAIMS [CHANT]. "No", an optimal person-centred environment calibrated via a customisable array of thumbnails displayed at the closing of the video or the vertiginous list of scrollable thumbnails to the right of the video... "AN INTERPOLATIVE HABITAT OF TILES", SHE EXCLAIMS [CHANT]. "Yes", and with particular videos earmarked as RECOMMENDED FOR YOU [CHANT], as their magic was marshalled into nucleated slab-hells. Around damp geographies, its features are constantly renewed... videos expunged in cellular lysis to create new digital space, or re-orientated to now appear in the users field of vision, creating effervescent zones of transitional change.

When left to itself, it algorithmically moves them both between its parts, self-assembling recommendations; Hiroshi Yoshimura's 'Music for Nine Postcards', 'Very old Top Gear - very young Jeremy Clarkson and Tiff', and 'Three Tiers of Swedish Meatballs', three particular ways to prepare meatballs with each tier representing a new level of complexity and challenge to the culinary skills required of the previous tier. Each video functions as the commensal organism for the next, returning to generatively feed on each another, ONE FEEDS THE NEXT, WHO IN TURN, FEEDS ANOTHER AND INHERITS ITS CONSEQUENCES IN FLESH [CHANT], for as long as the computer could allow.

In the winter of 2018, the two owners of the unlisted playlists would suddenly abandon their collaborative project, ceasing to follow each other's shared playlists with the patient surveillance that had been lavished on those files previously. The edifice is abandoned and the playlist begins to shed its cells, casting off its exoskeleton as it's transfigured into its autumn. Something else will furtively grow around the files' decay... It will take each user's place, assuming a spectral form, to follow them both surreptitiously as they swim between other tiles... and will eventually conjure physical simulacra BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES [CHANT] in the form of YouTube's autoplay mode, like a mischievous spryte or hobgoblin, dwelling in the architecture of digital supply chains and source codes. They will one day concede that the spryte "had noticed us"* both... noticing us as we placed our fingers with unknowing carelessness inside it... WE SO DESPERATELY WISHED TO BE SEEN [CHANT]... Rather, we were partially assimilated into the machine, merged with so many others in forms of digital symbiogenesis, allowing novel digital species to take seed amongst the edifice of digital ruins... These mutant species come to train users, parenting them in the collapsed subjectivities of the algorithm.

A fissure in the algorithmic dispersion of the autoplay mode, and at the spryte's choosing, sees her bounced between two videos for all eternity THE DIATOMIC INFINITUDE OF RIHANNA, AND LINDA SHARROCK BECOMES HER FOLKLORE [CHANT]. And with the loss of a horizon, her desires find themselves set against a Sisyphean landscape, bounced between an endless plane of thumbnails and widgets.



