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Dear BioDaddy,

an open letter

ABSTRACT

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<p>This written thesis is the companion of the live performance series 'Dear BioDaddy,' the fourth and 'final' iteration of which was presented at the New Performance Turku Biennale in September 2023. The work pivots in an autofictional & autoethnographical reflex around 'BioDaddy', the sperm donor who is my biological parent, confronting the complexities of assisted reproductive technologies, their violent histories and unexpected consequences, particularly within Scandinavia. The written component presented here provides the reader with the performance script whilst embedding within it expanded theoretical threads, poetic meanders and diaristic extracts. The task at hand became an act of allowing the text to perform itself, and point to itself as to employ a structural critique of kinship and nationhood through an unravelling of the thesis structure itself. As a performance lecture and a performative piece of writing, knowledge production is a topic of contention that is formally encountered in the text by utilising an alternative organising structure. Knowledge is therefore produced as a consequence of the interrelational and intertextual qualities of the texts and a play on their proximities. The texts carefully curate an encounter and an embrace of the paradoxes that manifest in ideas of the familial, and entangle the reader in a meta-structure of meanings whilst tracing my literary lineages in parallel with the techno-familial lineages I fiction along the way. This work is preoccupied with questions of multiplicity, belonging and uncertainty, and the reading of this thesis has perhaps been best described by my kindred as the experience of 'passing through a feeling.'</p> <p>As the work decomposes into a fictioning of ecosexual utopias, following a pilgrimage to inseminate the islands of the Earth, it searches not only for BioDaddy, but expanded kinships and alternative forms of community building, based on technological commonality and home-making in a beyond-human world.</p>	
KEYWORDS Ancestry; Assisted Reproductive Technologies; Biopolitics; Community; Ecosexuality; Family; Feminism; Fictioning; Fluids; Intertextuality; Kirkkovene; Kinship; Kindred; Nationality; Posthumanism; Proximity; Queer; Sexuality; Water.	

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Last but not least, thank you BioDaddy for deciding to donate a piece of yourself to the unknown.

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For kin, kith and the kind.

*

Dear BioDaddy,

This body of work has presented itself within me and before me in parallels and paradoxes, in layers and multitudes; I am interested in resting inside of those, in holding all of the threads at the same time, sometimes at the cost of coherency, but always circling back. Confronting questions of kinship and ancestry in light of my own birth being assisted by reproductive technologies, *'Dear BioDaddy,'* has manifested as many things beyond the boundaries of an eighty minute performance in a single evening. It is countless conversations with my parents; a trip to Denmark to meet the founder of the world's largest sperm bank; a birthday spent alone rowing a boat and my blood around the Helsinki archipelago; the arrival of a DNA test; an accidental almost-meeting with the woman who inseminated my mother; endless hours reading paperbacks and digital periodicals; and now this written thesis. As the work labours to introduce itself, to reveal itself and perpetually point to itself, I will keep this preamble brief.

'Dear BioDaddy,' is a verbally preoccupied performance and the fourth iteration in a series of the same title that was developed throughout my master's studies. As a performance lecture in which I monologue for the majority of the time, I discover myself to be most indebted to works of literature and realise that the script always occupied more of me than the stage. So as I sat before the task of crafting this thesis, I decided to continue unfolding this work into new literary dimensions, so that it manifests both as a reflection and a continuation of the live performance. Therefore, this written component does not discuss in significant detail the particularities of the live performance, but develops in parallel with the script, extending it as a performative text in itself. It is written with and from my body to give breadth to the thoughts that emerge both from books as well as the trees they have been pressed from, and to acknowledge knowledges that arise from practices in proximity. So I will tell you which texts linger in my thoughts and about the images which occupy my mind, as well as the places in which I find my body.

I will provide you with my performance script in the right margin, and resting in its construction are new windows that have been carved out to shed some light on the supporting structure: the academic margin on the left. In **red asterisks** are our stage directions and in *blue* are the instructions for the changing slides of the powerpoint which accompanied the performance. Footnotes might turn out a surprising lot like feet, trying to keep the ground steady but occasionally meandering down a new diversion.

A single * indicates a pause.

Tracing the threads of my artistic, literary, and philosophical lineages, which braid together to form the rope that guides my fingers, they reveal themselves not as linear or discrete, but rather connecting one polyphonic archive to another. My writing is an act of pulling on threads which have thus far been submerged, some deeper than others, the tension of my pulling causing them rise out of the water to reveal their inescapably interrelational qualities: a tangled web. Produced in the companionship of reference material, the texts are intertextual, preoccupied with their own relational attributes, and a self-reflexiveness becomes the tool by which they reveal themselves through their relationships with each other; a metamodern pursuit of plurality. On the structure and stylistic changes in this work: the texts presented meander to make up the body of this braided river and as it grows more threads are weaved into its tapestry. The margins multiply as membranes break down and you may see what you come to count as consistent become otherwise, as to confront the mechanisms of your own meaning making. The channels proliferate with time and boundaries begin bleeding into one another, so that when you come to the coda, the footnotes have been swept up in the current until they hit the sea.

I am playing with time and acknowledge this text's tendency to ahistorical insertions of information. Although I do not always trace the lineage of all those to whom I am indebted as they appear, allowing them to remain somewhat abstract at the expense of my own specificity, I know I do not emerge out of a void. Far from it, I am faced with the impossibility of neatly organising the cacophony of inspiration and experiences which encircle any creative and literary labour. This work speaks to the impossibility of ownership rather than an impossibility of authorship that parallels the challenge to propertarian and hetero-nuclear notions of kinship that the following words work to unfold into uncertainly.

This work stands supported by literary pillars, and I offer not an exhaustive list of them but one beginning of many for this incomplete introduction, so that I might continue to begin as this text continues to unfold, because I am invested in the ongoingness of the gap. Of the few I wish to mention, Sophie Lewis' work on *'Feminism Against Family'* informs this work from a political standpoint. Confronting in its radical Marxist nature, she employs the reality and policy of international surrogacy commerce to level an 'assault on wage labour' and kinship practices. The self-generating philosophy of Paul B. Preciado, which exists in light of his liberty to write

into reality new language that can point to previously impossible places, was one of the first autotheoretical texts I encountered. I have remained enticed by this relationship between the self and theory, which encircles oneself and exudes from one's own life, being that which the work feeds and feeds on. From autotheory to autoethnography, genres I am keenly inclined to place myself within for their aptness in reflecting on one's own existence as an example and result of historical and social processes, I fell head first into the anarchist ass-fucking of McKenzie Wark, who, like Preciado, writes from her own body (or the gaping hole she finds in the place of her self). I admire her form, for the tangible ordinariness of what she describes, a description of a life that points to the concepts, rather than concepts attempting to point to life. Always a subterranean stream underlying my thoughts is Astrida Neimanis' hydrofeminist work developed in her book *'Bodies of Water'*, which she positions as a Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology. The work aspires to make palpable the embodied phenomena of one's human body as a literal body of water in order to attentively orient the reader in the world to transspecies and transcorporeal realities. This experience of the world hopes to make impossible any violence against a species or land in light of the interconnectedness with which water binds bodies. And perhaps most fantastically the mid-twentieth century novelist Clarice Lispector, whose writing touches me in the fullness of the gaps it creates, an intoxicating kind of vertigo. Her words do not touch me in a place of understanding or clarity, but a familiar place that feels like a never-ending déjà vu.

The position of the written word as the most prized producer of knowledge has led it to become my primary tool to level a critique against knowledge production, and perhaps dismantling the masters house is not the task at hand, but rather the building of a new structure to examine its relationship to those that tower around it. As an act of knowledge production employing a precise literary choreographic effort, I quote selectively, partially and tactically. Sense-making is recognised as a construction and I am building this house of knowledge with words, approaching this task with the permission to be an unreliable narrator, a poor excuse for a carpenter. For it is the gaps, growing more pivotal the smaller they become, out of which the value of this work grows; I aim to privilege exercises in relationality to prevent preconceived knowledge from occupying the centre, so that the centre itself may instead become a place where the invitation lies to read between the lines.

An experiment in form is what this work demands.

And who am I to refuse?

It is 8pm on Thursday, September 7th, 2023,
the third day of the New Performance Turku Biennale,
and ninety people have passed through the foyer where tea and coffee have
been served before being invited onto the glass floor and mezzanine of
Manilla's Vanha Viinatehdas main space in Turku, Finland.¹

¹ Previous performance iterations in the '*Dear BioDaddy*,' series have been witnessed as:

'Kirkkovene & BioDaddy', 17th June 2022, ARS Week, Asbestos Art Space, Helsinki, Finland.

'Who's Your (Techno)Mummy?', 18th November 2022, PAB Local- The Queer Edition, Fincken Bar, Bergen, Norway.

'TechnoDaddy's Dreams', 30th March 2023, Vapaan Taiteen Tila, Helsinki, Finland.

I grab my own cup of coffee from the foyer and hug my mother

*Once people have settled, the song *Mother Nature's Bitch* starts playing*

*I lip sync to the song, testing several different spots in the room to dance:

hands on my thighs, my back slowly arches up and down,

flexing my pelvis and bending my knees alternately whilst

making eye contact with audience members*

“Everybody
Please give a warm welcome to
To this current mood

Here I am
Easy to please
Here I am
Okay with it
Here I am
Being mother nature’s bitch

Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh
Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh

Here I am
The whole world is my daddy
Here I am
Wabi sabi papi
Here I am
Desperate for attention
Here I am
Being mother nature’s bitch”²

² Lyrics Dope, “Okay Kaya - Mother Nature’s Bitch (Lyrics)”, August 12, 2020, song and lyrics, 1:51, <https://youtu.be/DwYJiF5yAfl?si=9bOZhdOU0fTSRNiz>.

“Performance art and post-structural theory ought to be understood here as dildos, cultural apparatuses of affect and imagination production that the text uses to displace the centrality of anatomical realism.”³

I walk to pick up the transparent hose that has been running water into the wooden boat in the centre ‘stage’ and stand holding it at the height of my crotch as the water continues to run
A helping hand turns off the water tap and I stand there holding the hose until the stream slowly decreases and eventually stops.

Ancient Origins

I read once in a children’s book illustrated with ancient green amphibians that when the first of our ancestors crawled out of the ocean, they needed to replicate the optimal conditions for the incubated growth of their offspring, which up until that point had been the sea itself.

““Quails are known to cluster together, into multifamily ‘communal broods’ which include at least two females, multiple males, and many offspring. Fathers associated with quail families are not always their biological father...It seems as if Nature enjoys contradicting natural morality””⁴

³ Paul B. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, trans. Kevin Gerry Dunn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 17.

⁴ Carol Mavor, *Like a Lake: A Story of Uneasy Love and Photography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), 86.

To do this they folded a little piece of the sea inside themselves.
*Holding the edges of my T-shirt, scoop some water into the shirt;
hold the puddle of water as it seeps through the fabric*
Like a lake, the womb became a body of water inside bodies of water.⁵

*Fold hands inside the T-shirt and push against the fabric
like from inside one's skin*

My body of water,
its liquid memory is imprinted with the muffled murmurs of ancestral mouths

Writing of the aqueous state of the world, from sea and tree sap to my fingertips, Carol tells me “we are water in water.”⁶ I read this passage of her novel before this work of mine had been conceived. I let it drop, sink, dissipate into my unconscious where it seems to have stayed humming and echoes today in my work like ripples on the surface of a lake.

Her words on the page perform the porous quality of watery membranes, of hydrofeminist concern, for she is a self proclaimed performer of Roland Barthes’ ‘novelesque’, making “indivisible

⁵ ‘*Like a Lake*’ is the title of a novel authored by my old professor and friend Carol Mavor. I recently finished reading her novel whilst the early afternoon sun scattered hurriedly on my walls at the hands of the trees, which swayed seemingly directionless in the autumn breeze. It has been two years since she sent me a copy of the book to Portugal by post. That was also the last time we spoke on the phone. She had just published the book and called to tell me her husband had died unexpectedly in a bicycle accident. I can hear the sounds of the piano being played in the next room. Only a thin wall separates us.

⁶ Mavor, *Like a Lake*, 14.

fiction and nonfiction”⁷ and I stand looking through the translucent membrane between the two.

She is the one who permitted the poetic in my early academic career; she saw and showed me the value of metaphor in places I had been taught it did not belong. She is the one who gestured towards blurry boundaries, guided my pen in hand to touch the wet palimpsest membranes that divide genres. And sometimes the sharp tip of the pen, or its heavy bleeding ink, tears it open. Piercing it.

She is the reason I write as I do today.

;

On gestating foetuses still in the womb Carol writes: “Not yet born, they can breathe underwater”⁸ and I feel how the images she sculpted, now birthed anew in my own work, had resided all the while in their foetal form within my mind. Breathing underwater.

gagging and gargling some incoherent histories in my ear on the shores of
Iceland where I grew up,
the Atlantic Ocean across the street,

⁷ Mavor, *Like a Lake*, 135.

Carol traces the lineage of the novelesque to Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, in which the question is proposed: “Is there really ever a need to know a fact?” (136), and I catch it lingering in my mind, colouring my work as I continue to write.

⁸ Mavor, *Like a Lake*, 14.

It is the porosity of membranes which not only permits the passage between literary genres, but exists in the embodied parallel of the literal permeability of bodies as they perform their orchestra of gaseous and liquid exchanges as a condition of their existence. Bodies are bound to be permeated without permission. I pause to lift a glass of water to my lips and in my watery dependence I am dependent upon the plastic which laces it. It is the islands of plastic which live on the Atlantic and the black bodies that litter the seabed of its trade routes, which attest to the necessity of acknowledging that “some skins are more porous than others.”⁹ The same songs are not sung on all shores and history’s tentacled body is dismembered in the selective amnesia of nations as they build their own narratives and re-member its bloody cadaver.

pregnant with the whole of history undulating inside its cells.

And when we were children my parents sat my brother and I down on the old red sofa which my father inherited from his father’s father.

To write this text feels like walking inside my house and leaving the door open behind me. Performing it feels like hosting an open house. All are invited or encouraged to come inside: invited to let their eyes rest on the furniture and catch glimpses of cracks in the paint; to let their fingers trace the outlines of ornaments and draw lines on dust covered surfaces. I never really

⁹ Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). 8.

I acknowledge that my Atlantic is not ahistorical, that it contains violent legacies of forced and hindered migrations of colonised nations, and although it is not within the scope of this work to extensively unfold this topic, it is an ongoing violence with ongoing legacies. It will be touched upon again in this text, but for further reading of the intersection of oceans and race, Christina Sharpe’s *In The Wake: On Blackness and Being*(2016) is a powerful and poignant source.

left his place, I never really built anything new. I just started circling it, peering at it from different angles and distances, discovering new or forgotten windows with which to look inside. The form shifts and changes with time but I am still circling the same centre.

*Whilst picking up a stool and seating myself on it in
the middle of the space:*

They sat down opposite us and told us two important things:
First, was that we were both conceived using donated sperm, from
separate donors, making us half siblings;

“Several stories unfold, in a quincunx, alternatively, or in a spiral, as
Barthes would say – always around the same points, but not at the same level.”¹⁰

all they know is that the donors, according to a written description,
looked like my father and were Danish university students at the time.

*Casually pick up the stool to move it directly in front of an audience member
and look into their eyes when I say:*

Secondly they said: We love you very much and we will always love you
no matter who you love.

¹⁰ Virginie Despentes, foreword to *An Apartment on Uranus: Chronicles of the Crossing*, by Paul B. Preciado, trans. Charlotte Mandell (South Pasadena, Ca.: Semiotext(e), 2020), 23.

Someone told me that I should consider leaving that last part out, whatever it was; to let it go as if it weighed nothing.

In an abrupt manner, pick up the stool and walk away with it as I say:

Neither of them remember this particular conversation at all, they tell me we had it many times, and they still sit on that same red couch every day.

In hindsight I am thinking about the performance group 'Every house has a door' as I write my way back inside this text. I saw the group perform their work 'The Fossil Record' with Essi Kausalainen at the opening ceremony of New Performance Turku 2023 (from now on referred to as NPT), but I had misread the information and understood 'Every house has a door' to be the title of the work, and so that is the doorframe through which I watched the whole piece. I thought of entrances, of entry points, of accessibility, of transparency, of privacy, and of welcomings. I thought of the apartment I grew up in, of family dinners, of candlelight and conflicts. I thought about all the houses and all the doors, of all the things I cannot think about because every house has a door, and most of them are shut.

Many months have passed since I began writing and thinking this text as an open house and I return to the beginning. Although it is constructed in a way that proposes it be read linearly, I write back and forth, sideways and in circles. As I am sure all who have written any length of text know from experience.

This text grows in spirals, and so the house unfolds.¹¹

BioDaddy Goes to University

So I began making this piece as a way of searching, for you.

Looking to the audience with a searching gaze

A sort of open letter one might say
to the donor who is my biological parent,
my *BioDaddy* if you will.

Because I am looking for something.

I am desperately looking for something
and when I type this statement in between the lines of this script,

sitting in an empty studio at my university,
alone in my underpants on a hot summer day,

I spontaneously burst out crying.

Because my body knows best.

¹¹ Rodney Graham's *The System of Landor's Cottage: A Pendant to Poe's Last Story* (1987) is a text I came across briefly in the final year of my bachelor studies in Art History, and it has remained a permanent structure in the landscape of my mind. As he takes on Edgar Allan Poe's unfinished text *Landor's Cottage*, Graham builds architectural marvels down to the most abstracting detail and inside of which unfold evermore intricate and complex, systematic stories. One journeys in a downward spiral and is sprung back up again, disorientated and straggling the boundary of boredom and fascination. This is a seminal text in my own literary lineage which has led me to consider my own writing as three dimensional sculptures that I can trace with the fingertip-like tendrils of my mind: A space for me to inhabit.

;

Sculpture without the formal and physical act of sculpting met me in other ways too that year. On a research trip for the purpose of my dissertation, I visited the Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam, where I began to interpret Van Gogh's stylistic changes in 1886-1887 as 'his brushwork [acknowledging] the three-dimensionality of his subject', the shape of each individual brush stroke becoming 'important as an expression of the corporeality of his being. His strokes now curve and sway as the hand of a sculptor would when caressing his clay'.

And it seems I too find myself grappling with sculpture, the black letters my rigid clay.

In an old notebook I had scribbled the words “perception is always participatory”¹², and as I re-read it I shift my body in agreement. The places I write from within myself are inescapably shaped by my placement outside myself: my context. This truth rings loudly in my ears on the quiet shores of the archipelago. Should I just pick one place from which to write? It is hard to care much for – ¹³ – under the stars by the silver fabric of the moonlit sea. Yet the existence of that seaside is inseparably entangled in – ¹⁴ –. Thus I must write from everywhere and hold it all because what I need is for these pages to hold all of me.

To hold all of the paradoxes.

And I wonder if you exist in my water body,
if the things which tug at my soul are alive in a lineage,
as if you are part of an ancestral line that exists for me
like the full moon exists for the sea.

Tugging.

Begin climbing up the ladder to the balcony

¹² David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, 1997).

This passage is written in reference to Merleau Ponty's work on phenomenology.

¹³ Politics.

I went to an exhibition opening last week and got a bit too drunk for my own good, perhaps perfectly drunk, and spoke for a long while with a friend and colleague, telling him about the process of writing this text and my struggle to organise my academia and politics among my poetics and my metaphors, my long footnotes.

'Ah', he said, 'let the politics be in the footnotes.'

¹⁴ Hydropolitics: the politics (local and global) of conflict and co-operation regarding the use, abuse and distribution of water as a resource necessary to sustain life.

It is only since I have re-entered this university institution
that I have began feeling closer to this mythological BioDaddy of mine,
because we have something in common!

I never seem to be able to imagine them as anything but young,
still at university, frozen in time at the moment of my own conception.

My imagination has been colonised by neoliberal temporality where time
equals the passage to actualisation, and after my own realisation
my BioDaddy has been taxidermied in time,
stuck in 1996.

BioDaddy's passage has been stunted by a latency that left them lying behind the glass of this auto-ethnographic cabinet of curiosities, and whose limbs I choose to animate in the spinning of this speculative fiction. But now I am gazing at the bifurcation of this watery trajectory, one arm of the river reaching into an endless ignorance of my own choice, and the other extending this exploration in hopes of letting the skin on BioDaddy's face finally sag with the weight of time that has passed since my inception. If I am to sincerely search for that aging face of theirs, I am acting to try to close one aspect of the latency of their actions, tying together two ends of unknowing that were set into motion as soon as they left their beaker of liquid in the lab.

But even if I go looking, the river will continue to split with the ever-present possibility of drying off to a dead end and the past might never arrive in the present.¹⁵

¹⁵ I am thinking within watery parameters of latency and with Michelle Murphy's toxic transits, which she animates in terms of their latency and which temporarily 'names the wait for the effects of the past to arrive in the present...[it] names how the past becomes reactivated'. As explored in Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 36.

Fade in short sample of Alanis Morissette's 'Ironic' in the background

"A traffic jam when you're already late
A 'No Smoking' sign on your cigarette break

It's like ten thousand spoons when all you need is a knife

It's meeting the man of my dreams
And then meeting his beautiful wife

And isn't it ironic?"¹⁶

Arrive on the balcony to stand leaning on the railing

I spend the majority of my preparatory time for this performance series sculpting the script. Totalling at 6,421 words, I memorise every single one. I guess I do not belong to the lineage of performance artists who like to play with chance. I construct certainty where I can and I rest in a sense of relief when I get to reside there. Here. Perhaps that is why I insist on precision when I perform: so that I can craft my idea of an abode to hold all of me.

(Don't you think?)

¹⁶ "Alanis Morissette - Ironic," Genius, accessed August 15, 2023, <https://genius.com/Alanis-morissette-ironic-lyrics>.

Because during our bachelor studies my friends and I used to joke about donating eggs and sperm since we all needed extra cash.

And there is something appealing in the tragically romantic image of BioDaddy performing the drama of being so broke on the back of capitalist exploitation that selling themselves was the only salvation to their economic despair.

“I knew exactly what I was doing, for once. I knew he would take me in. I knew I could live there. I knew he would want to fuck me. That he would think that was part of the deal...it was a way to make rent.”¹⁷

But when I remember that *we* needed the money to fund the drug dependencies we inevitably acquired being at university I have concluded that I am the result of some university student’s need for extra cash on a weekend bender.

But my father tells me not to disrespect the noble work that these wankers are doing.

¹⁷ McKenzie Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl* (South Padadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2020), 46.

A couple of days after I performed ‘*Dear BioDaddy*,’ at NPT I was standing in Manilla’s courtyard, now a smoking area in the context of a party, when I was eagerly encouraged by a fellow student, and witness to my work, to read McKenzie Wark’s *Reverse Cowgirl*. So I sat through this autumn alternating between reading her ass-fucking affirmations and listening to *Against Me!*, an emblem of early 21st Century punk rock, and all their anarchistic words of death and dysphoria become conflated in my mind so that Laura Jane Grace and McKenzie Wark have become inseparable actors in the theatre of my mind.

slam hand against the railing of the balcony to make an audible sound

He likes to believe it was an act of altruism.

CLICK to slide on the definition of altruism

“altruism

/'altrʊɪz(ə)m/

noun

Disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others."some may choose to work with vulnerable elderly people out of altruism"

Similar: Unselfishness, selflessness, self-sacrifice, self-denial, consideration

ZOOLOGY:

behaviour of an animal that benefits another at its own expense.

"reciprocal altruism"¹⁸

*Take a sip of water from the cup placed on the balcony,

keep the water in my mouth;

roll onto my back so my head hangs upside-down off the edge of the balcony;

drool the watery saliva into my own eyes & let it drip to the floor*

¹⁸ "Altruism Definition," Google search, accessed March 20, 2023, https://www.google.com/search?q=altruism%2Bdefinition&oq=altruism%2Bdef&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGAQyBwgAEAAyGAQyBggBEEUYOTIHCAIQABiABDIHCAMQABiABDIHCAQQABiABDIHCAUQABiABDIHCAYQABiABDIHCACQABiABDIHCAgQABiABDIHCAkQABiABNIBCDI0OTdQMw03qAIAAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

https://www.google.com/search?q=altruism%2Bdefinition&oq=altruism%2Bdef&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgAEAAyGAQyBwgAEAAyGAQyBggBEEUYOTIHCAIQABiABDIHCAMQABiABDIHCAQQABiABDIHCAUQABiABDIHCAYQABiABDIHCACQABiABDIHCAgQABiABDIHCAkQABiABNIBCDI0OTdQMw03qAIAAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Wet Dreams & Crowded Boats

Stand up and lean casually on the railing

When I continue to trace back the line of possibility pertaining my existence,
I find myself indebted to a Danish man's wet dream in 1981.

In Iceland they sing songs for the sailors lost at sea, for their lamenting
lovers who are left on the crusted lava of the coast, turning cold and hard from
decades of waiting. The other day I died submerged in a body of water. I
resolved to pass through my death as consciously as I could, but I did not die,
I woke up. "Sleep is Death's younger brother" Hiwa K tells me in his Pre-Image
(Blind as the Mother Tongue).¹⁹

Ole Schou was an economics student by day who found himself
one night diving in a subaquatic dream, in the midsts of a glacial lake,
when he notices that all around him are sperm cells.
Fixed in the frozen waters.
Nothing but unmistakable sperm cells.
Suspended in time.

¹⁹ I saw the artist's video work in a course I called 'Water, Body, Gender' with Anastasia (A) Khodyreva at the University of Turku. Hiwa K. walks balancing a long pole donned by dangling mirrors on his face, looking up to the sky, and through the mirrors down to the earth, as he retraces his steps from Kurdish territories to Rome, where he migrated by foot as a child.

The first ever experimental iteration of this series, 'Kirkkovene & BioDaddy', was performed to a room of twelve people: peers and professionals present to provide feedback in the Theatre Academy in April 2022.²⁰ Just me, a large television screen hooked up to my laptop, several bio-bags of soil, a white baby-bathtub and two buckets of water. Before I let the audience into the room I found myself pacing in circles, one after the other, around the room, and I was reminded of how I used to pace in such circles around the kitchen island in our home as a child. My mother, provoked to frustration, would ask me to stop several times, growing more tense with each one. A coping mechanism I unknowingly developed to deal with my anxiety, I continued pacing. This time nobody told me to stop.

Upon waking he headed straight to the library and sank himself waist deep in literature on cryo-technology, artificial reproduction and sperm freezing.

Soon he had filled his freezer as well as his mothers
with his own sperm samples,
which he spent his nights studying through the microscope
she gave him as a confirmation present,
and after which, he borrowed 20 000 euros from her,
wrote a 200 page business plan and started a sperm bank
in a 9m2 office in Aarhus, Denmark.

Where I believe I am from.

²⁰ June 17th, the day this first iteration was publicly performed at Asbestos Art Space in the same year, is also the annual 'National Day of Iceland', commemorating their emancipation from Danish rule in 1944 and the establishment of the Republic of Iceland.

“is this my struggle against that disintegration: trying now to give it a form?... the vision of an infinite piece of meat is the vision of the mad, but if I cut that meat into pieces and parcel them out over days and over hungers— then it would no longer be perdition and madness: it would once again be humanized life.”²¹

This is Ole.

CLICK to slide with cropped photo of Ole smiling next to the ‘Dreams Do Come True’ poster

Following this discovery, I decided I should start keeping a dream journal, because the subsequently founded Cryos International sperm bank became a multi-million dollar company.

“It looks more like meat than true meat looks like. That word “truth” doesn’t make much sense anymore.”²²

²¹ Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, ed. Benjamin Moser, trans. Idra Novey (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 6.

In my first year studying Live Art & Performance Studies (from now on referred to as LAPS) our professor Tero Nauha laid out among a literary buffet, the work of Clarice Lispector, and her writing was indeed a *Breath of Life* which peeled open the possibilities of words, leaving them naked. She has become a staple in my literary diet, for there is something invisible tying me to her words, licking at my heart with an immaterial tongue.

²² *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages (Tornar-se um homem na Idade Média)*, directed by Pedro Neves Marques (Foi Bonita a Festa, 2022), 22 minutes, 0:01:01-0:01:08, <https://mubi.com/en/films/becoming-male-in-the-middle-ages/player>.

I watched the film at the recommendation of my friend and colleague Onur.

CLICK to slide with video of me rowing the boat with a jar of blood as my passenger, to play in the background

So far, I haven't dreamt up any million dollar ideas,
but all my dreams seem to be wet dreams.

When I began to present the early experiments of this work I unquestioningly chose to present myself with a chatty tone in casual clothes.²³ I perform casualness and I construct it in order to stage myself and speak myself into a familiar place. It might be that a place only becomes familiar once you have spent enough time there, that familiarity is what permits casualness. Of course this is a familiar place to me and my body because it resides within my bones, but for you I intend to invert the cause and effect so that casualness may precede familiarity.²⁴ This casual quality allows the words to perform a gentle sort of carpentry that eases you in, that quietly raises monuments around you until you find yourself in another place altogether.

I carefully craft this casual demeanour in order to induce the familiar inside of this exploration of the familial. I am interested in the every-day, in the

²³ The casual and conversational quality of this performance work has often been described as straddling the border of stand up comedy, and I must admit, although somewhat reluctantly, that Bo Burnham is a pivotal performance figure in my presentation. Reluctant because not all things age well with regard to his material, yet with age he has made great efforts to acknowledge that he has been 'Problematic', as he titled one of his more recent songs, and acts to be held accountable. My now dear friend Julian showed me Burnham's work when we were 20 years old, sharing a 9m2 room in an insect infested flat in the middle of Sydney during an exchange semester on the other side of the world. As I watch Burnham's work for the first time in years I re-live the thrill of being caught in the meta-web of meanings which he spins with his words, and realise that it planted a seed of desire in my mind a long time ago, an aspiration to spin.

²⁴ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 7:
"The familiar is an effect of inhabitation; we are not simply in the familiar, but rather the familiar is shaped by actions that reach out toward objects that are already within reach."

; perhaps if this text feels familiar to you, it may mirror some of the architecture in your own house: an invitation to look inside.

monumentality of the mundane, every moment of which is like a tightly woven ball of historical affect, and I am fascinated by one's capacity to relax into its contradictory and incomprehensible vastness which everyone necessarily stands upon, differentiated.²⁵

;

When I asked my mother about her experience of the insemination she says she does not remember much, my parents tell me they did not make a big deal out of it, that they tried to normalise it the best they could. Keeping it casual, they make the whole genesis of my existence sound like just another trip to the supermarket.

In the first dream I write down
I too find myself in the Antarctic,
overshadowed by icebergs;
But I was floating aboard a boat,
my eyelashes keep freezing together,
I don't feel cold,
and the boat is crowded with people.

This place is crowded with paradoxes. They are the colours of the wallpaper. If I exist then so do they. But I was taught that paradoxes should not exist. Their definition negates their existence, a logical impossibility. I am a logical impossibility. But perhaps it is the words which are redundant and not

²⁵ 'Differentiated' as a nod towards Adrienne Rich's challenge to the collective 'we', and a recognition that as "bodies of water, 'we' are all in this together (Braidotti 2002), but 'we' are not all the same, nor are we all 'in this' in the same way." - Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 15.

the being itself. My being. Because logically impossible things are happening all of the time. Perhaps the problem is with logic itself, with paradox as a concept. Does it serve any purpose other than alienation?

;

Following the work of Elizabeth Grosz, it is Astrida Neimanis' conviction that "negotiating paradox is one of feminist theory's best plays".²⁶
So I will continue to play.

Climb down the ladder in silence whilst rowing video continues to play

Get out the bio-bags full of soil and pour them in several places on the floor as the video finishes playing

In a prelude I prepared for a class on autotheory earlier in the spring of 2022, and one I have a tendency to forget about, I presented a spoken text titled 'Fuck Being Coherent'. It collages old and new thoughts, quotes from academic essays and diary entries I had written long, and not so long, ago. A gathering of my conceptual trajectory. It was early in my performative explorations, for I arrived to the LAPS programme in Helsinki with a very recent enthusiasm for performing and a complete lack of clarity on what I really wanted within that frame. Before getting up on front my class I wondered how to make myself feel most comfortable, how I could ease my nervousness. So I went into my backyard and dug myself a few bagfuls of soil. I figured I would feel most at home, most grounded, barefoot on a pile of soil, because I come from a place where

²⁶ Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 18.

the smell of home is wet soil and burnt matches.²⁷

A Visit to Denmark

Unsurprisingly, ever since I read about Ole online I've been eager to meet the man whom I have now come to regard as my TechnoDaddy.

Although I was disappointed to discover that he had now retired to Switzerland, I none the less decided to organise a visit to the headquarters of Cryos International in Denmark.

Despite my anxious composure moments before I began to recite this script for two glass floors full of people in Manilla, including my parents, I settled into what felt like a sedated kind of a calm once the first couple of sections had been sounded. My heart was beating evenly and I was left a little disappointed at the lack of adrenaline running through my veins. I felt at home in my piles of soil and wet skin, inside of my thoroughly sculpted words which flowed out of my mouth with ease.

Too at home?

When I landed in Copenhagen it started to really sink in that half of me belongs to that land.

²⁷ I am thinking of running half naked to my great grandmothers' greenhouses and making mudpies with my cousin, surrounded by the scent of tomato plants, humid and hanging heavy in the glass houses; the way my mother would turn off the radio every evening before lighting a candle as we sat down to dinner.

Although it doesn't say so in my birth certificate.

The second iteration I perform, 'Who's Your (Techno)Mummy?', took place in Norway, at an all-queer performance evening at the only queer bar in Bergen.²⁸ A colleague was co-curating the event and at an organisational meeting of the university's queer collective, QUNT, encouraged us all to apply.

Only after I was invited to perform did my colleague disclose to me that they too are a TechnoChild.²⁹ Having only found out the previous summer, they too are in the midsts of processing this information, this identity. Caught in an excitement that I can only liken to discovering a long-lost relative, we immediately began referring to each other as the other's 'TechnoSibling'. And so I became a (proper) noun. Was my invitation the result of nepotism?

In fact, it doesn't say that anywhere.

Apparently contracts were signed, but my parents claim they never got a copy.

No receipts or bank statements exist anymore.

Nothing out of place according to the early agenda of the techno-fertilisers

²⁸ The evening was titled '*Leather Stilettos Kicking Skeivt Kulturår Off the Bar*', curated by Nayara Leite & Tanja Silvestrini for a Performance Art Bergen (PAB) Local event: The Queer Edition.

It was before the strangers in this queer bar in Bergen that I have felt the most ecstatic and joyful to perform this work. There was something deeply touching about performing to a community which I felt at home in: seen and welcomed. And perhaps its place in the bosom of Bergen's seven peaks and the sight of the Atlantic Ocean played their part as well.

²⁹ 'TechnoChild' is the term I have adapted to refer to myself and others who have been conceived with technological assistance or intervention. Primarily in reference to those conceived using donated sperm or eggs, the insemination of which occurred using additional tools as technological prostheses, such as plastic syringes, metal needles and glass dishes. Yet the boundaries of this term have been challenged by the vast array of assistance which is technologically available today, from IVF using the sperm of a present partner, life saving incubators for infants who would not survive without them, and even home inseminations of the queer kind, those with the help of friends, vials full of semen being replaced by a teacup. All kinds of kith have come knocking on this newfound cult of TechnoChildren.

There is a convenient forgetfulness that leaves gaps in the tapestry of knowledge, in the archives, and that “forgotten space is blackness.”³⁰ Hetero-nuclear forms of family were coerced upon colonised peoples in exchange for the recognition of their ‘full citizenship’, and slavery remains “the ghost in the machine of kinship.”³¹ ‘Non-normative’ modes of kinship predate “violent settlement, dispossession, forced adoption, anti-fatalism, and enslavement”³², and are being recovered and reclaimed in their wake, more so than they exist as modernity's “projects to “abolish” or “queer” anything at all”.³³ They were and are strategic tools for survival inside of structural impossibilities.

Everything in its place to uphold the ideal of the family,
who were advised in those days to not tell their children how they came to be.

It was in part within colonial projects of expansion and viking raids for resources, property and land, that the unintelligibility of lineages have been sculpted through transatlantic rape, kidnappings and enslavement. Yet the heirs of the historical victors continue to uphold their illusions of national purity to protect everything they gained in parallel with this unintelligibility through transatlantic exploitation, including sexual, gestational and parental labour.

³⁰ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 29.

³¹ Sophie Lewis, quoting Saidiya Hartman in *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family* (New York: Verso, 2021), 148.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

So that
I have no right to inherit *that* place.

“If we work hard at something, then it seems "effortless." This paradox- with effort it becomes effortless- is precisely what makes history disappear in the moment of its enactment.”³⁴

When I arrive in Aarhus, a city in the west of Denmark,
I pass my morning by taking a stroll around the local botanical gardens
before meeting the very excited marketing employee of Cryos waiting for me in
their lobby to tell me that to everyone’s surprise
Ole is in the office this morning.
They were trying to arrange a meeting with him for me.
They tell me he is very keen to meet me too.

And soon I am sitting across a table sharing a cup of coffee with TechnoDaddy
who tells me I’m only the 4th or 5th TechnoChild to come looking for him.

Loaded with fetishism, ‘Mummy’ & ‘Daddy’ resound in my ears. I like the taste in my mouth. I think of the pornographic, of performative sexuality. ‘D-A-D-D-Y’ spell out the silver letters hanging from the chain around her neck. I impose erogenous zones upon the intimately estranged bodies of TechnoDaddy &

³⁴ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 56.

TechnoMummy, origins of sexual arousal. Pleasure? Already implicated as technical prostheses in my conception, they become participants in my sexual-somatic fiction in which I act on the urgency “to invent new grammar”: my tool for re-producing their roles in an inverted techno-sexuality “that allows us to imagine another social organisation of forms of life.”³⁵

CLICK to slide with un-cropped photo of Ole smiling next to the ‘Dreams Do Come True’ poster where I can be seen standing next to him

*

Institutional Penetration

There are some disagreements about where in Iceland my mother’s inseminations took place using this Danish sperm.

Apparently one of us (of my brother and I) was conceived in the dingy and eerie basement of the university hospital, but the other in a normal doctor’s office surrounded by photos of other happy babies that are living proof of the procedure’s medical success.

³⁵ Paul B. Preciado, introduction to *An Apartment on Uranus: Chronicles of the Crossing*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (South Pasadena, Ca.: Semiotext(e), 2020), 50.

“Happiness, we might say, is the ultimate performance indicator.”³⁶

CLICK to slide of animated turquoise ink marbling for ambience

But I like to imagine I am from that drab basement.
I imagine it dim and the air humid so that sweat trickles down your arms.

Climb into one end of the boat and spread my own legs on its edges

The wooden boat which ended up on stage with me is called Dooris. At first I wanted to cover up Dooris’ name. For the sake of precision, for aesthetic clarity.

Of course her name was not relevant. It was not relevant to my work and so it could only be a distraction. It would confuse people. I was the artist and she a prop. It was her role to support me.

But the longer we shared the space together, the more I photographed, supported and lined her with plastic, the more I repeated her name: Dooris. The more I spent time inside of her. The more she really became Dooris to me.

She was not just an object, she was Dooris. Personified. As time passed and we grew closer I began feeling guilty at the idea of covering up her name, which she bore so proudly upon her stern, twice for good measure, one on each side. We had become partners and in building that relationship I had forfeited my ‘right’ to impose anonymity upon her, to erase her place in history, and replaced it with reverence. For she was not just the idea of a boat, a representation, like my words are ideas of objects, she was the real deal.

³⁶ Sara Ahmed, *Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.

I'm dreaming of my mother, lying there with her legs spread,
Jóhanna, the doctor, is holding a plastic syringe firm in her hand.

*If possible, gradually pick up the pace of your reading as you descend towards
the climax of this section*

Without any titillating foreplay she inserts it into my mothers vagina
and pushes the plunger of the syringe.

"...He had complained of my being a mere object for him to cum in. And so I warmed
to the role, not just of the object to be penetrated, but the subject. I became
the one who wants to be breached at the boundaries, who wants to be touched
inside, that makes the other want that want."³⁷

I can feel the resistance of all that cum as it gets squeezed through the plastic
tube, that steady pressure of her thumb like my lovers thumb on my clitoris
whilst their fingers penetrate my pussy.

"This is structural exploitation, and the sexual and political profits that
heterosexual men and women thereby gain necessarily reduce the erotic surface of
the world to the sexual reproductive organs and privilege the biopenis as the
one and only mechanical center of sex-drive production."³⁸

³⁷ Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl*, 54.

³⁸ Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, 25.

I imagine Jóhanna in the biodrag of my BioDaddy,
becoming my TechnoMummy,

“...the technical imitation of the very materiality of the living being, the pharmacopornographic production of somatic fictions of femininity and masculinity. I will call this process biodrag”.³⁹

taking the homosexual and dildonic role of my mother’s reproductive lover.

““human nature” is an effect of the constant border negotiation not only between human and animal, body and machine, but also between organ and prosthesis, organic and plastic, alive and dead.”⁴⁰

*Retrieve condom from my pocket and rip the wrapper open with my mouth;
roll condom over my hand and arm; touch my own body with that hand*

All at once her whole arm becomes the prosthetic extension of the
Icelandic medical corporation.

³⁹ Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York, NY: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2017), 191.

⁴⁰ Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, 22.

“The power of women to produce pleasure does not belong to them: it belongs to the State.”⁴¹

Her hands slickly covered in plastic gloves growing a pseudo phallus with
five fingers protruding from her torso,
Start climbing out of the boat to crawl onto the floor
Providing me with the primordial push out of the cosmic nest of nothingness.

I believe my parents are happy people.

My father says it took all of 3 seconds.

Kneeling on all fours on the floor: bite the condom open

A miraculous conception.

*

⁴¹ Preciado, “Women’s Right to (Sex) Work,” in *An Apartment on Uranus*, 72.

Deep breath

Children Choose Their Parents

Take a moment to rest with the pile of soil I have arrived by on the floor

I dug this particular pile of soil from my garden on the outskirts of Helsinki,
and put it in my backpack.

And got on my bike, and the bus and the metro,
until I arrived at the university and poured it out on my studio floor.
There, my mother and I sat together when she came to visit me this spring.

Settle into the pile of soil and speak with an increasingly gentle tone

And sitting here naked in this pile of soil she told me
how she believes that children choose their parents.
That at birth one's soul travels and chooses its destination.
It comforts her I think.
To think we chose them.

I guess it's one way in which we are alike:
believing that we all come to this Earth, to these incarnations,
with lessons to learn; a higher purpose of sorts.
There has always been a certain sense of comradeship between us
from that perspective.
This idea that in some way we both chose to be here.
Together.
My father doesn't see the world in those shades.
Between the four of us he is the only one who has touched death
and he's the only one who believes in the
black emptiness of the end.

The body of Princess Diana being driven away in a Black Mercedes; I watched the entirety of her televised funeral on the big screen behind Niko Hallikainen, who stood talking for five hours straight in his solo performance of the same name. My father used to drive a black Mercedes. I stayed the whole time, watching 'Finlands only performance poet' envisioning "the fall of the monarchy of rationality"⁴²

Just him and his water cooler.

'Performance poet', that is how Niko refers to himself in his most recent work *Petrolio*, which I watched last week in MadHouse. It has been two years since the first time I saw him perform at the Baltic Circle international theatre festival, and I realise how much the taste of him has lingered in my mouth.

⁴² "Black Mercedes," Baltic Circle, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.balticcircle.fi/en/ohjelmisto/black-mercedes-4/>.

Stuffed full of words. Shameless. I have come full circle and only now do I see what is behind me, what is in front of me: perhaps I too aspire to be a performance poet.

Be playing tenderly with the soil with my hands

That there is a quiet finality to our lives.

That we will simply cease to exist.

He doesn't believe he was saved by God.

He was saved by medical science.

*

Mr. Hard

I found a copy of the 1909 April edition of a journal called The Medical World, which contains the first ever report of artificial insemination to be carried out in a medical institution using donated sperm,

Get up out of the soil gradually and pick up the pace of my speech as I continue

occurring in 1884 in Philadelphia by doctor William Pancoast.

After being approached by a wealthy couple who had difficulties conceiving a child and realising the husband had no sperm in his semen the doctor requested from the medical students present on the case,

a sperm sample from “the best-looking member of the group”.⁴³
Then without informing the couple of his plans he calls the wife into his office,
chloroformed her and using a hard rubber syringe, inseminated her with the
student’s fresh sperm sample.

My mind meanders down a diversion in which I see myself as the manifestation of one of modernities many A.R.T.⁴⁴ projects that appears to be following a Greenbergian trajectory of art historical progress in the deconstruction of form through a reductionist kind of reproduction with insemination at the centre.⁴⁵

I think of Aldous Huxley’s dystopian Hatcheries in his ‘Brave New World’ as well as the utopian brooders discovered by Marge Piercy’s ‘Woman on the Edge of Time’. In either direction unessential elements of evolution are eliminated. A mid-20th century demand for reproductive capacity made a market for A.R.T. that bypasses that which is ‘besides the point’ if the point is the proliferation of patrons of familiar familial forms.⁴⁶

Nine months later she gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

⁴³ A D Hard, “Artificial Impregnation,” *The Medical World* 27 (April 1909): 163–64,163.

⁴⁴ Assisted Reproductive Technologies

⁴⁵ In reference to the American essayist and art critic Clement Greenberg.

⁴⁶ Agence France-Presse, “French Parliament Votes to Extend IVF Rights to Lesbians and Single Women,” *The Guardian*, accessed November 25, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/29/french-parliament-votes-to-extend-ivf-rights-to-lesbians-and-single-women>:

A.R.T. has historically been made unavailable to people outside of heterosexual coupling: it was for example only in 2021 that France extended the right to access such technologies to single women and lesbian couples.

Eventually, the doctor told the husband who turned out to be “delighted with the idea” and both agreed to never tell the wife.⁴⁷

It appears I have deemed everything essential in this literary endeavour of mine.

dip the top of my head in the water as a gesture of baptising myself in that history

All of these threads do not reveal their paradoxical natures when they are positioned distantly enough from each other. From where I am standing they sit on my horizon as I gaze in different directions, but when I start to pull them in line, closer, they begin “slipping away”, seeming “out of place in their place alongside other things.”⁴⁸ Adding to my disorientation, they compose my paradoxical disposition by the nature of their (dis)location.

It is the positions of all these threads in relation to each other that produces knowledge. It is out of the gap between them, seemingly irreconcilable at times, and which makes itself more apparent the smaller it becomes, that new knowledges sprout, seep & drip. It is my curatorial practice of sorts to gather them together on these pages, with my words, as if I am the choreographer and these paragraphs my dancers; I the painter and every line a different shade I place carefully in my composition. Some things seem impossible to speak precisely because speaking them would limit them, tie them down in form when it is their nature to be relational, so instead I point to the relationality itself: to the gap.

⁴⁷ Hard, “Artificial Impregnation,” 163.

⁴⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 166.

A miraculous conception indeed.

*

I was intrigued to find in the original article a flavour of a utopian kinship
set apart from biological destinies.

The author believed that it was a scientific fact that the origin of the sperm is of
“no more importance than the personality of the finger
which pulls the trigger of a gun”.⁴⁹
A utilitarian dissection.

In addition to the discursive quality of this work, it is this preoccupation with relationality as the site of knowledge production that led me to identify the form of this work as a performance lecture. Because “the particular setup of Lecture Performances is always grounded in a spatial situation in which the artistic experience consists in the estrangement from our common conception of knowledge; it (more or less explicitly) rejects the fashionable notion of knowledge production or acquisition as some kind of possibly objective and self-sufficient truth within science’s own formats, to use knowledge (and the format of the lecture) as material that doesn’t yet contain value but needs to be subjectively applied to gain significance.”⁵⁰

The ‘value’ is birthed between the lines, in the gaps, which I carefully curate

⁴⁹ Hard, “Artificial Impregnation,” 163.

⁵⁰ Ellen Blumenstein, “What Is Lecture Performance? An Introduction to an Extended Investigation,” Ellen Blumenstein on Artmap.com, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://artmap.com/ellenblumenstein/text/what-is-lecture-performance-an-introduction-to-an-extended-investigation->.

in the literary and linguistic 'spatial situation'; There is no inherent value in what I am telling you when dissected, it is precisely the discursive character which provides the permission for connections to be made by meandering, for kinship to be created.

This is however followed by compliments to Luther Burbank, the famous botanist experimenting in the selective cross breeding of plants to cultivate new species and an active member of the American Eugenics Movement at the turn of the 20th Century.

Eventually, the author himself concludes that in due time "artificial impregnation[will] become recognised as a race-uplifting procedure."⁵¹

*

The article was written by Mr. A.D. Hard, one of the medical students present at the insemination, after he met with the then 25 year old New York business man this baby boy had become and shook his hand over a cup of coffee in 1909.

⁵¹ Hard, "Artificial Impregnation," 163.

About this baby boy Hard wrote that the son “had characteristic features, not of the senior student, but of the willing but impossible father.”⁵² I read this willingness and impossibility not as the practical conditions of the conception, but as parental characteristics in themselves; an archetypal parental personality; a willing father, but an impossible father. Immediately I imagine him stubborn and strict, but with a hidden softness from which he concedes to his child’s wishes. Thus a father was born, emancipating Hard from any further responsibilities.

Altruistic Happiness

Like my father, TechnoDaddy believes these donations are acts of altruism.

Stand on top of the seat in the boat to make the following announcement:

He said “in Denmark we share everything”; “we’re just one big family”.

When I asked him why he has moved to Switzerland now he said
he had long dreamed of living there,
because he actually has a lot of family there,
and particularly enjoys the excellent outdoor sporting opportunities
and tax advantages it offers.

Taking my now wet trousers off, casually stepping out of them

⁵² Ibid.

The rhetoric around gamete donation is all about making ‘dreams come true’
and giving this ‘gift’ of life to people.

On an overcast metro ride into the city I write in the margin of page 159 in
Sophie Lewis’ *Full Surrogacy Now* “the reality that I only exist because of
A.R.T. is sinking in deeply. I feel intensely.”

[*CLICK to slide of screenshot of the Cryos all-white-male board members*](#)

And because it is a gift that grants dreams if you just rub hard enough,
donating must indeed be an act of altruism.

There is some debate about whether altruistic people are happier people
or whether happier people are more altruistic people.

Just like much art had to be discounted in order to trim the trajectory of art
history towards an abstract purity, so too, many familial anomalies must be
disregarded in order to reproduce and refine its form. “The point of the family
is to keep family the point” and so that which is ‘besides the point’ must be
dismissed in order to maintain the family as the “happy object” it becomes
“through the work that must be done to keep it together.”⁵³

With Cryos International being the largest sperm bank in the world,

⁵³ Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 46.

and Danish men continuing to be some of the world's most prolific donors, it seems that they have become stuck in what the science of happiness would call a self-perpetuating virtuosity spiral.⁵⁴

The Nordic countries “are arguably caught up in a virtuous cycle, where well-functioning and democratic institutions are able to provide citizens extensive benefits and security, so that citizens trust institutions and each other, which leads them to vote for parties that promise to preserve the welfare model.”⁵⁵

CLICK to start the ‘cup of coffee’ sound clip

I move to the side for a ‘break’ and pick up my cup of coffee to drink as the following sound clip plays:

“I just think I gave a helping hand
Not like that I expect them to give me anything back later
err
If they want, I will be here,
Ready to drink a good cup of coffee
But if not, then it’s perfectly fine

⁵⁴ John Helliwell et al., “Executive Summary,” ed. Sharon Paculor, The World Happiness Report, March 20, 2023, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/executive-summary/>.

⁵⁵ Frank Martela et al., “The Nordic Exceptionalism: What Explains Why the Nordic Countries Are Constantly Among the Happiest in the World,” The World Happiness Report, March 20, 2020, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2020/the-nordic-exceptionalism-what-explains-why-the-nordic-countries-are-constantly-among-the-happiest-in-the-world/#fnref57>.

If they turn up and they want a cup of coffee I am definitely gonna,
gonna take that
cup of coffee and,
And pay for it as well

Cup of coffee
Ready to drink a good cup of coffee
good cup of coffee
good cup of coffee
And pay for it as well
good cup of coffee
cup of coffee
cup of coffee
like that I expect them to give me a
cup of coffee
good cup of coffee
And pay for it as well
drink a good cup of coffee
And pay for it as well
And pay for it as well
cup of coffee
cup of coffee
cup of coffee
like that I expect them to give me a

cup of coffee
good cup of coffee
And pay for it as well
drink a good cup of coffee
And pay for it as well
And pay for it as well
cup of coffee
cup of coffee
cup of coffee
in slow motion
like that I expect them to give me a
cup of coffee
in even slower motion
And pay for it as well

back to standard tempo
if not, then it's perfectly fine"⁵⁶

Still sipping my own cup of coffee & making eye contact with the audience

The keen marketing employee tells me that the most successful advertising campaign at Cryos relies on the comparison of sperm donors to

⁵⁶ The transcript of a sound clip played in the performance which consisted of edited interviews with sperm donors regarding their relationship to the TechnoChildren (or the idea of the TechnoChildren) they have fathered as a consequence.

fire fighters and doctors.

CLICK to slide with the advertisement with the following text on it:

“Some save lives, Others give life.”

“Just your everyday hero.” He says.

An apparent reduction in one place often means a complication elsewhere as labour can simply be shifted, in this institutional case from two bodies to too many bodies to count. Modern purity is built on the back of unpaid, exploited and unacknowledged labour that leaves me living in thick time.⁵⁷

Really the entire business depends on the prerequisite of life being good,
that it is a morally agreeable thing to grant life.

The preconception seems to be that everyone will come out of the womb
(fucking) bursting with gratitude.

⁵⁷ ‘Thick Time’ definition: “a transcorporeal stretching between present, future, and past that foregrounds a nonchronological durationality.” In Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, “Weathering’: Climate Change and the ‘Thick Time’ of Transcorporeality,” *Hypatia* 29, no. 3 (2014): 558-75, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12064>, 561.

When I wrote this section to be performed in the third iteration of the work, 'TechnoDaddy's Dreams', in the middle of March, I was on the last legs of my winter depression. Barely any legs left to stand on, my reservoirs of gratitude were exhausted in the everlasting evening of winter.

Danishness

To give you some historical context, Iceland was a colony of Denmark from the 14th century until the 20th, gaining full Independence in 1944.

My supervisor told me that conferences are held in the name of nordic exceptionalism.⁵⁸ When I got researching I found an article from the World Happiness Report that asks: "What exactly makes Nordic citizens so exceptionally satisfied with their lives?"⁵⁹

And when the donation of gametes began, because Iceland is a small population of people, 250.000 when I was born,

⁵⁸ Suvi Keskinen, "Intra-Nordic Differences, Colonial/Racial Histories, and National Narratives: Rewriting Finnish History," *Scandinavian Studies* 91, no. 1-2 (Spring 2019): 163-81, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/scanstud.91.1-2.0163>, 163: Nordic exceptionalism can be understood by how "in the public sphere, discussions of nordic histories have been characterized by what Gloria Wekker (2016) calls "white innocence"—ignorance and denial of participation in global colonial histories and the continued colonialism in the region."

⁵⁹ Martela et al., "The Nordic Exceptionalism".

it needed to ensure genetic diversity,
meaning that they had to get their donations from elsewhere.
Namely, and exclusively, from Denmark.
For diversity.

A colonial exhibition was held in Copenhagen's Tivoli in 1905, which aimed to display subjects and artefacts from the Danish colonies, consisting at the time of Greenland, Iceland, and the Danish West Indies (which included the islands of Saint John, Saint Thomas & Saint Croix). Only handcrafts were on display from Iceland, but people were also included in the case of a boy and girl presented as part of the West Indies display, one of whom ended up in a cage within the exhibition because they kept wandering from their designated West Indies area to the one dedicated to Greenland.⁶⁰

;

Sometimes we would spend Christmas in Copenhagen. My father's mother's mother is Danish, her great-socio-grandmotherly limbs leading me back to Denmark. We would always enjoy the Christmas festivities at Tivoli, especially eating Æbleskiver, round pastries dipped in powdered sugar and jam.

Even now, the first ever sperm bank to open in Iceland in 2020
only exports to other Scandinavian countries.

⁶⁰ Kristín Loftsdóttir, "Belonging and the Icelandic Others: Situating Icelandic Identity in a Postcolonial Context," essay, in *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 57-71.

The World Happiness Report article draws connections between the sense of equality experienced in the nordics and "the historical fact that the Nordic countries have not had an underclass of slaves or cheap labor imported from colonies",⁶¹ safely distancing the nordics from their imperial slave trading pasts. But it is simply so that, Denmark at least, was more inclined to keep their slaves in their colonies to be exploited for labour there rather than in Denmark itself.

**Climbing into the boat and lowering myself to lie leisurely
with my feet resting on its edge as I say:**

And so it seems that we've constructed ourselves quite the
exclusive Scandinavian gene pool
in which we can lie back and admire the view from our privilege whilst patting
ourselves on the back for preserving our racial hygiene.

At the time of the 1905 exhibition, Copenhagen was "the intellectual centre of Iceland",⁶² and the Icelandic student association was appalled enough to protest the exhibition. They did not protest on the grounds of its appalling nature as a colonial project, but because they found it unacceptable for Iceland to be "exhibited along with uncultured savage ethnicities".⁶³ In their struggle for independence, Iceland was preoccupied with accentuating their exceptionalism, unavoidably bound to their whiteness, by distancing themselves from other colonised peoples, for they saw themselves to be in 'danger' of 'disgrace' "in

⁶¹ Martela et al., "The Nordic Exceptionalism".

⁶² Loftsdóttir, "Belonging and the Icelandic Others", 62.

⁶³ Ibid.

the eyes of the cultivated world”.⁶⁴

In fact, I discovered that this phenomenon has its own website, it's called

“Scandinavian Seed Siblings . org”

That's, “Scandinavian Seed Siblings . org”

I am under the impression that it is a national obligation in Iceland to vote for Denmark every year in the Eurovision.

“Because we are such good friends” my grandma explained to me.

CLICK to slide with a screenshot of Scandinavian Seed Siblings website

Genetic Dysphoria

Attentively tracing the inside edges of the boat with my hands

Bursting is one word I could use to describe how I felt
when my mother came to visit me this spring.

But it was a bursting at the seams of my subjectivity.

Climb out of the boat

⁶⁴ Ibid.

“political subjectivity emerges precisely when the subject does not recognize itself in its representation.”⁶⁵

Her home body began to disintegrate my body
and I had to vacate some space to accommodate the
accumulating crowd she brought with her.

Act out the gestures of touch as they are described

One morning when I raised my hand to rub my face I see the hand of another
move above me and push against the skin of my face.
I recognise my cousin’s fingers touch my face as I know they touch her own.
I feel at once incomprehensibly alien to my own body,
far removed from its reality,
and full of things
that aren’t mine.

“For if it is my hands that are strange, then it is my hands as they express themselves in a gesture. Such gestures are the “point” where my hands meet with objects: where they cease to be apart, where they pick things up.” So is it my hand or is it my face that is different? Is there something new about my hands or is it my face that has a certain way of being touched?⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 397.

⁶⁶ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 163.

In reference to Sartre’s *Nausea*, which Ahmed understands as a “phenomenological description of disorientation” (162), in relationship to objects.

Another one of my cousins surprised me by
embodying my arms for a brief moment.
I was so caught off guard that my heart leapt with fear
and panic rose in my chest.
Just as quickly she was gone and I was left with just my self again,
until I glimpse a photo of myself I had just taken
and see the mouth of yet another cousin frown back at me on the screen.
I had never felt his presence in my mouth
like I did when I looked at that photograph.
Crouching on the floor, sitting on my knees
Before long,
Looking down at my hands on my thighs
I look down at my fingers sticking out of my fingerless gloves.
Not *my* fingers.

It is as if my mother's presence altered the orientation of my own body to itself. Our physical proximity seemed to have passed the point of preserving my independence and the whole of her(my) history threatened to "get inside of me, or spill what is inside out."⁶⁷ A disorientation that had my hands failing to plug the holes, as they simply absorbed the excesses of me, embodying all of my almost otherness in a circle, out of my body into my hands and back to my head and into my body and out of my hands.

⁶⁷ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 165.

They look dry,
Rubbing fingers against my palms, checking them
the kind of dry that skin gets when it has been working the land,
Sink hands into the soil I am sitting in
deep in the soil.
Lift them up, palms up and soil seeping through fingers
It gives them the impression of being old,
like the earth cut lines in their skin, marking their growth rings.
They look like my mother's fingers.
younger, yet older than I.
I stare a long time.

I cannot locate my nausea anywhere outside my self, in the 'handled', when it is my hands that are nauseated at the touch of my own body, my body nauseated at the touch of my hands. A circular self-made nausea passing from my hands to the handled and around again.⁶⁸

We are traversing time as well as matter
and I am alien in this time space.
Bodies inhabit & haunt space,⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 53: "Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space...What makes bodies different is how they inhabit space: space is not a container for the body; it does not contain the body as if the body were "in it." Rather bodies are submerged, such that they become the space they inhabit"

but my body is a space too
and bodies take up space
in this space,
and perhaps that's why it is so hard to breathe in here sometimes.
Because it's getting crowded
in this body of mine.

I read out loud: "So fuck being coherent. And fuck being relatable.", then I tore the words out of my paper printout of the script, put them in my mouth, chewed a while, and swallowed them with some water.⁷⁰

In such disorientating episodes
of what I've begun calling
genetic dysphoria,
I am left alone in a body that has become a stranger to me

For Preciado it is "fundamental not to recognize oneself", to make oneself at home as a stranger in a strange world, because it is from the pressure of derecognition and disidentification that the "emergence of the political as the

⁷⁰ A description of how I concluded my aforementioned performance essay for Autotheory: 'Fuck Being Coherent'.

possibility of transforming reality” can emerge.⁷¹ And I write as a way to collect all the incoherencies in one place, destabilising the gaze of my I as to reach towards transformation.

Yet
it is full of bodies,
of people,
people I know.

Perhaps the question isn't so much why all these people are here,
but why it is I feel alienated at their appearance rather than grateful for the
company in the face of this vast and impersonal world.

In the ‘Promise of Happiness’, Ahmed follows the psychological narrative that unhappy subjects “feel alienated from the world as they experience the world as alien”, but she begs the question whether it is the world which ““houses” some bodies more than others, such that some bodies do not experience that world as resistant?”⁷²

Perhaps the problem is in the crooked construction of the house itself, of the world, but straight lines are not the answer and the form itself might not be faulty as much as one's orientation towards it might be changed. One's

⁷¹ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 397.

From a shared appreciation of science fiction, I read at a friend's recommendation Robert A. Heinlein's 1961 award winning novel *Stranger in a Strange World*, and although I was intrigued by its Martian free love sex cult, I was most in awe of the apparent impossibility for the author to imagine a world in the future to be beyond an overbearing misogyny, aptly summarised in the oft quoted line by its female lead: “Nine times out of ten, if a girl gets raped, it's partly her fault.”

⁷² Ahmed, *Promise of Happiness*, 11-12.

orientation to alienation can be adjusted in a Xenofeminist fashion, for they seize “alienation as an impetus to generate new worlds.”⁷³ They demand more alienation, not less, for the construction of freedom because it is not given by the grace of anything ‘natural’, and if one does away with the naturalisation of the ‘norm’, then what is there left to be alienated from?⁷⁴

*Maybe we are the multiplicity of the cosmos shouting back at itself.*⁷⁵

*

Inheritance

If I can inherit limbs full of latent bodies then what else is there to inherit?

Transgenerational trauma is not news anymore,
but can one inherit happiness too?
People seem to think one can inherit all kinds of things.

⁷³ Laboria Cuboniks, “Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation,” A Politics for Alienation | Laboria Cuboniks, accessed April 25, 2022, <https://laboriacuboniks.net/manifesto/xenofeminism-a-politics-for-alienation/>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Preciado, *An Apartment on Uranus*, 37:

“I am a dissident of the sex-gender system. I am the multiplicity of the cosmos trapped in a binary political and epistemological system, shouting in front of you. I am a Uranian confined inside the limits of techno-scientific capitalism.”

*Pull wet rope out of the boat and grab the stool to stand on and hang the rope
from the ceiling so it drips onto the pile of soil I have been in*

Many of the single women who are using donated sperm to start their own
families choose their donors based on how unlike them they are.

There is a kindness implied in this act,
which is perceived to be giving prospective children the best head-start in life,
by picking the sperm of men who are everything they are not.

In her work on family abolition, Sophie Lewis posits that what is happening
through surrogacy (and I would expand this notion to include all technologically
assisted modes of reproduction,) is not the production of children, but the
production of parents: of parenthood. It is not the being that is made, it is
identities that are being re-made.⁷⁶

*Lie down in the soil with my mouth positioned under the rope to catch
the dripping water in it*

You don't need a partner anymore who completes you
because we are beyond that now,

⁷⁶ Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now*, 98.

On the same page she comments on the scene of a birth by a woman employed as a surrogate: "What we saw was not a mother; it was surrogacy. Motherhood was born, but the new mother was not the woman on her back."

we can puzzle ourselves together and become a super-race of reproducers
who can commercially complete themselves.
This isn't a dating game anymore, we are designers
and I complete me.

“Maybe it’s a problem with the couple as form. It becomes transactional, but not rational. We were not comrades but traders of goods and services. I felt kept for the purposes of his access to my body, a catamite. Yet he felt like I got the better end of the deal, that there was an asymmetry of sexual joy between the fucked and the fucker. Like I was embezzling, skimming off orgone energy or something. And maybe I was.”⁷⁷

People are ceasing to be mere ‘adults’
and are instead becoming legally recognised,
re-identified,
as ‘parents’,
the *real* product on this assembly line.

When I asked my father once in my mid twenties why he did not hold me accountable for my behaviour he simply laughed lovingly and said ‘You’ll always be my little girl.’

⁷⁷ Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl*, 69-70.

And the diminutiveness I was being crammed into is the shape of the prison of childhood that I imagine parents like to keep ‘their children’ in until their days are up. I think about authorship, ownership and artistry. I think about genetic engineering and wonder whether increased intentionality through technological intervention will increase people’s sense of ownership of their offspring.

Will it be a free market full of patents and copyright laws?

What will it mean to copy-left?⁷⁸

We’re not in the business making babies.

We’re making families.

“Coda could not bear the idea of being a stepfather, so he adopted me, and my mother just agreed. I wish that she would not have done that. But I could not break her heart anymore.”⁷⁹

Say the following as I am scrambling back to my feet

I’ve heard a lot in my life that the best thing to do is to give your child as many options as possible, all the opportunities in this life

⁷⁸ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 55.

A play on the word ‘copyright’: “We’re *copyleft* users who consider sex hormones free and open biocodes, whose use shouldn’t be regulated by the state or commandeered by pharmaceutical companies.”

⁷⁹ Mavor, *Like a Lake*, 116.

that you can possibly muster.

But I am not sure anyone is accounting for all of us who suffer from
debilitating decision anxiety.

Through deliberate craft this performance is a place where the choices have
already been made and I provide myself little room for error, although the
audience might permit me plenty on the grounds of their unknowing, and I can
simply flow, for there are no more decisions left to be made.
Unless I err of course.

Finland, Denmark and Iceland are actually the three happiest countries in the
world according to statistics.

And based on that, I should probably be

Start fading in Asexual Wellbeing song and lyric video

the happiest person in the world.

“I still thought of myself, as Edward did, as someone’s property: mine, his.”⁸⁰

Dance with kitsch sexuality whilst lip syncing to Asexual Wellbeing

⁸⁰ Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl*, 75.

“Sometimes I rub my ghost dick until I can almost see it
but right now all I need is your cerebral per diem.
That midnight Van Leeuwen,
Netflix and yeast infection.

*Rapidly point with vigour at an audience member and make eye contact
every time I lip sync the chorus:*

I know sex with me is mediocre
but I can give you asexual wellbeing.
Sex with me is mediocre
but I can probably feel what you're feeling.

If they can put a pulse into a spinach leaf
can they turn the two of us into a tree?
You still have the spare key,
I've got vegan peanut butter chocolate ice cream.

*Cross the 'stage' by climbing over and through the boat to dance at the front
near the audience as the song comes to an abrupt end*

Sex with me is mediocre
but I can give you asexual wellbeing.
Sex with me is mediocre

but I can probably feel what you're feeling."⁸¹

An Identity Crisis

My mother doesn't get why I am doing all of this.

She has always told me that I think too much too deeply about everything.

She says she doesn't see the point.

I laugh and tell her, of course there is no point in it for you.

"not for you either" she replied.

"You think you'll feel better?"

She and TechnoDaddy seem to be on the same page about this one.

Pause for emphasis and a drink of water

During our discussion, TechnoDaddy seemed adamantly married to the narrative that I'm having an identity crisis.

⁸¹ Lyrics Dope, "Okay Kaya - Asexual Wellbeing (Lyrics)", August 13, 2020, song and lyrics, 2:56, <https://youtu.be/0S9ZVwhsN4M?si=q8WhVtHC6gE09Xq->.

Whilst on my spring visit to Denmark I listened to Okay Kaya's 2020 album 'Watch This Liquid Pour Itself' on repeat (which included the songs in this performance: *Mother Nature's Bitch & Asexual Wellbeing*). I walked down the streets of Aarhus with the words of Okay Kaya sounding in my headphones and muttering them to myself as I pictured BioDaddy in their youthful vigour walking besides me.

“The norm patrols tender bodies”, tender meaty flesh.⁸²

Why else would I be looking for you.

‘The problem you are facing.’

He kept saying

‘This question of identity.’

‘Your problem.’

‘Your identity confusion.’

‘This problem.’

There lives a ‘naturalist’ within me, a ‘nature essentialist’. The one who proposes a paradox by idealising and romanticising the past, but what I have had to confront is the reality that if I were to hold as right and true some ‘natural’ and destined way of time ‘as it is’, then I would never have been born. I wonder if perhaps there is something within me that regrets my own being or wishes my own demise; do I not have conviction in the ‘rightness’ of my own being (, or in the destiny of my own birth as an active choice, as my mother would have it)?

Stuff my underpants with soil as I continue

He tells me to think hard,

⁸² Preciado, “Who Defends the Queer Child?,” in *An Apartment on Uranus*, 56.

to think carefully about this.
What if these new kin turn out to be criminals?
I might discover all kinds of undesirable things.

“You acknowledge that such discoveries may have a strong emotional impact on you and others with whom you share these discoveries. You expressly agree to assume all risks associated with your use of the Services, and that Ancestry shall not be liable for any social, emotional, or legal consequences of such discoveries.”⁸³

- The Ancestry DNA services’ terms and conditions.

The News

One of the few things I did discover with the help of my father,
was this Icelandic newspaper article from 1992
CLICK to slide with a screenshot of the Newspaper article being discussed
on Artificial Reproductive Technologies,
framed by these wonderful anti-wrinkle ads.

When I write these words I see the pages of Preciado’s ‘Testo Junkie’ spread open
before my mind’s eye, the manufactured and manicured fingers of the 1960s domestic

⁸³ “Terms and Conditions,” Terms and Conditions - Ancestry.com, accessed April 12, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/c/legal/termsandconditions>.

housewife of North America holding early Pill dispensers.⁸⁴

Targeted advertising.

I remember the anti-wrinkle moisturisers my mother used to apply to her skin. The slight smell of chemicals that lingered behind the overbearing floral aroma. The orienting of wombed bodies to reproduce cultural femininity; biofemininity?

The headline reads: 'The Progress of Techno-fertilisation in Iceland is Good, but Needs Rules and Regulations.'⁸⁵

"Heterosexuality must be understood as a politically assisted procreation technology."⁸⁶

Pause to look at the screen

This is Jóhanna Jónsdóttir

CLICK to slide zoomed in on her photo in the article

my aforementioned Techno-Mummy.

In the article she explains that whilst the process is only just being born itself and they await the rules to be set by not just the ministry of justice, but the

⁸⁴ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 196.

⁸⁵ Brynja Tomer and Guðbjörg R. Guðmundsdóttir, "Árangurinn Af Glasafjrjógvun Hérlandis Góður En Lög Og Reglur Vantar," *Morgunblaðið: Daglegt Líf*, June 12, 1992, <https://timarit.is/page/1766296#page/n1/mode/2up>, 2-3.

⁸⁶ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 47.

ministry of ecclesiastical affairs, they operate in a sort of lawlessness.

When I turned the page to examine the rest of the paper

I find on the following page a most serendipitous article

about the Happy Moomins of Finland.

CLICK to slide of Moomin article

CLICK to slide with cropped Moomin illustration and caption

This caption reads ‘the Moomins are naturally happy.

It is so in their nature that they don’t even realise they are happy.’⁸⁷

CLICK for zoom-cropped eyes of Moomin

The World Happiness Report has decreed that the “prevalence of positive emotions” is not what determines happiness, otherwise “we would see that Latin American countries...occupy top positions” instead of the Nordics. Rather, their parameters are concerned with “high life satisfaction”, which they clarify, “on an individual or national level, is not a guarantee that one has high frequency of positive emotions or low frequency of negative emotions.”⁸⁸

It would seem that many citizens of the Nordic countries do not recognise their own ‘happiness’ as many were “taken by surprise”⁸⁹ because they too acknowledge the lack of ‘indicators of positive affect’ in their respective countries of residence.

CLICK for more zoom-cropped eyes of Moomin

⁸⁷ Brynja Tomer, “Múmínálfarnir hamingjusömu í Finnlandi,” *Morgunblaðið: Daglegt Líf*, June 12, 1992, <https://timarit.is/page/1766298#page/n3/mode/2up>, 4.

⁸⁸ Martela et al., “The Nordic Exceptionalism”.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Drink some water and let the Moomins watch the audience a while

TechnoMummy

Last autumn I found myself standing in the lobby of
TechnoMummy's apartment block.
A big white building by the sea.
I was only planning to speculate.
But I was standing in the entrance hall staring at her mailbox when
a small older woman came in the door.
She said hello as I awkwardly shuffled as to not come across like the creep that
I am who has no business loitering in this hallway.

She punched in the code to get to the staircase,
and without a second thought I catch the door at the last second as it closes
and slip in behind her.

I followed the dinging of the elevator and the soft shuffle of her steps until I am
watching her walk into an apartment marked with the name
Jóhanna Jónsdóttir.

I see her put her bags down and start taking off her coat as her front door
slowly eases shut and I am standing all alone in the hallway.
On the edge of an anxiety attack I'm all of a sudden lying on the floor of this

staircase in a house full of strangers until eventually
the automatic lights left me in the dark.

I embody my impression of TechnoMummy's motherly absence in my life and discover it to manifest as a performance that plays out "the most conspicuously class- and race-contingent piece of modern dogma in existence": that of the "inestimable ravages [which] are wrought by maternal "absence" or "selfishness"". My perceived emotional anguish, the colour of a colonial consciousness, levered against this white mother to an abundance of TechnoChildren, as punishment for her perceived neglect. I paint her as the pinnacle of the 'bad mother' in the matrix of the bourgeois family. I, abandoned, and her 'maternal love' disastrously distant from "the (nonblack) image of the eternally present, cis-heterosexual, solicitous housewife."⁹⁰

I realised that *I want* to knock on her door and tell her
'I'm your long lost techno-child'.
I wanted her to invite me in for a cup of coffee and smile at me.
At the time, I wanted her to reach her hand across the table
to hold mine and say 'I love you'.

Sara Ahmed posits that "the science of happiness could be described as performative" because it is "by finding happiness in certain places, [that] it generates those places as being good, as being what should be promoted as

⁹⁰ Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now*, 114.

goods.”⁹¹ Thus happiness performs the idea of itself, a feedback loop, the output becoming the input, which becomes the output; a self-perpetuating monster that births itself and eats itself in order to rebirth itself.

But happiness is not looked for everywhere, it is “looked for where it is expected to be found”, such as in the institution of marriage, and when happiness is not discovered in those places “the crisis of happiness” is not considered a failure of the ideals themselves, but “our failure to follow them.”⁹²

I question the coincidence that she walks in at the moment I am standing in
the entrance, and think that it must be the universe urging me on,
giving me signs.
Maybe she does love me.

“although I had a father and a mother, the ideology of sexual difference and normative heterosexuality confiscated them from me.”⁹³

*Take water from a glass into my mouth, pull the elastic of my underwear out
and spittle the water into them and onto the soil at my crotch*

⁹¹ Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 6.

⁹² Ibid, 7.

⁹³ Preciado, “Who Defends the Queer Child?,” in *An Apartment on Uranus*, 57.

A Bloody Birthday

On my last birthday I decided to try a new approach to this exploration of mine
and enlist some ritual magic as a means to get closer to you BioDaddy.
If your fluids had to embark on a sea voyage, to freeze and float,
to cross the Atlantic so that I could come to be,
perhaps I could embark on my own reproductive adventure.

There is a storm tonight and the house creaks in the wind and rain, the roof panels sounding as they become bent out of shape. I got home late and we ran out of hot water for the day already. “I first have to bathe to waste time”⁹⁴, so I boil the kettle and fetch a bucket. I top up the bucket with cool water and make my way to the bathroom, where I stand in candlelight scooping the mild water from the bucket with a glass jar, pouring it over my skin; bathing “as a refusal to remain exhausted by draining cis-heteronormativity knotted with neoliberal capitalism.”⁹⁵

You see, like TechnoDaddy, I’d also been experimenting with some
biomaterial freezing.

Initially, and for reasons unclear to me at the time,
I had started collecting my menstrual blood in a peanut butter jar and

⁹⁴ Syksy Walden, “Bath(e),” essay, in *Aquatic Encounters. A Glossary of Hydrofeminisms*, ed. Anastasia (A) Khodyreva and Elina Suoyrjö (Helsinki: Rooftop Press, 2024), ?.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

keeping it in the freezer of my communal home.
By the time my birthday came around, nine months had passed
and my jar was full to the brim.

It is early April and I just performed 'TechnoDaddy's Dreams'.
Old, light purple slime, clots of dark red, and even splotches of cherry red,
colour my discharge in the days following the performance. I am not supposed to
bleed for another week. My body is signalling an end, but it does not feel like
an end. It feels like confusion. It feels like leftovers. Like debris.

This performance refuses to stand separated from my bodily being.

When I told my mother about this she just contorted her face and said
"eww"
"What's wrong with you?"

**Trace the edge of the boat with my hand as I walk next to it and
continue to encircle it lovingly as I explain:**

I had become particularly enamoured with the yonic image of the Kirkkovene.

CLICK to slide with the definition of 'Kirkkovene' & 'Vulgar'

kirkkovene

/'kirk:ɔ,ʋeneː/

noun

1. (historical) "church boat" (long rowing boat seating up to 60 people, in which people travelled to church in old times)
2. A modern boat resembling above, but of much lighter structure and 14 oars, used in rowing competitions.
3. (colloquial) A vulgar drawing of vulva, said to resemble a "church boat" seen straight from above.

X piirsi protestiksi vaalilippuun kirkkoveneen.

As a protest, X drew a picture of a vulva in the voting ticket.⁹⁶

;

"vulgar

/'vʌlgə/

adjective

1. lacking sophistication or good taste.
"a vulgar check suit"

Similar: tasteless, gross, crass, unrefined, tawdry, ostentatious

2. making explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions; coarse and rude
"a vulgar joke"

⁹⁶ "Kirkkovene," Wiktionary, the free dictionary, accessed March 18, 2022, <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/kirkkovene>.

3. Similar: rude, indecent, indelicate, offensive, distasteful, obnoxious"⁹⁷

It is the Finnish church boat with which people were rowed to
mass every Sunday across rural lakes.

Now popular graffiti, the Kirkkovene is represented by the
“vulgar” drawing of a pussy, as the boat is seen from above,

Look up to the people on the mezzanine

oars in every direction.

“In 1492, Christopher Columbus, blundering about the Caribbean in search of India, wrote home to say that the ancient mariners had erred thinking the earth was round. Rather, he said, it was shaped like a woman’s breast, with a protuberance upon its summit in the unmistakable shape of a nipple—toward which he was slowly sailing.”⁹⁸

This fleet would keep faith afloat and ritualistically
deliver its devotees to their place of worship.

⁹⁷ “Vulgar Definition,” Google search, accessed March 23, 2023, https://www.google.com/search?q=vulgar%2Bdefiniiton&oq=vulgar%2Bdefiniiton&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIMCAEQABgUGIcCGIAEMgclAhAAGIAEMgclAxAAGIAEMgclBBAA GIAEMgclBRAAGIAEMgclBhAAGIAEMgclBxAAGIAEMgclCBAAGIAEMgclCRAAGIAE0gEIMzAyM2owajSoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.

⁹⁸ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 21.

I caught a glimpse of the curve of my breast as I passed the mirror.
It struck me as beautiful.
Geometrically sound.

I thought about Columbus.

And I decided that I would spend my birthday rowing a boat of my own
between the islands on the Helsinki coastline.

Iceland is itself an island

**Settling into a pile of soil and be kneeling, pussy on the soil,
whilst delivering this part:**

born through the ruptured orifice of the Earth,
hot liquids spilling out in an oceanic ejaculation,

I-land, consolidated cum stains on the sea.

“Little islands in an archipelago of dreams”⁹⁹,

I must travel backwards into the future
and I dwell in this place where we don’t only make love to the land
but “the land [makes] love[s] [to] us back”.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Preciado, introduction to *An Apartment on Uranus*, 29.

¹⁰⁰ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2018), 130: “I knew it with a certainty as warm and clear as the September sunshine. The land loves us back.”

It is early July and I stand under a big rock wall near my home in heavy rain on the border of a nearby national park. My hands against its abundant body, wet at the touch. I look up along its surface and marvel at the raindrops trickling down from the garb of moss adorning its edges. The trees surrounding us sound louder, a gust, and the rain falls heavier. From high in the air the raindrops descend to my face: I open my mouth to devour the world. I begin to laugh ecstatically and it feels as though I could stand here forever, loving this never-ending erotic surface. For I am in love, for “being in love today is inevitably communicating with the entire planet. Feeling the consciousness of the planet.”¹⁰¹

I desert the barren island of Iceland and
I walk into the arms of the Finnish forests,
my surrogate mother;
reaching out an infinite number of arms to hold me.
A titanic incestry of Water and Time, I pour out the Memory of me in you,¹⁰²
and inseminate the soil with my blood.

I speak these stories and the sounds of their syllables vibrate in my body.
Their contours reverberate in the liquids of my being, marking their passage,

¹⁰¹ Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 401.

¹⁰² Preciado, introduction to *An Apartment on Uranus*, 32:

“From the incestuous and ultimately not very heterosexual relationships between heaven and earth, the first generation of Titans were born, including Oceanus (Water), Chronos (Time), and Mnemosyne (Memory)... Uranus was both the son of the Earth and the father of all the others.”

their presence, and leaving a wake in my waters.¹⁰³ My body takes note, it shifts, it shape-shifts. Performing re-shapes my cycle and we become strangers again.

Even though it's useless to the capital of society, menstrual blood is rich in the
eyes of the Earth and I wanted to be in counter-action,
to re-inscribe the bleeding of my body with anti-functional functionality.
So I rowed from sunrise to sunset because I wanted to know whether my blood
could become my own dildonic prosthetic, my own countersexual technology,
with which I could penetrate the history of ecclesiastical tradition,
like they penetrated my own origins,
by crossing the wet womb of the Earth
in a wooden vulva.

“The true aim of countersexual practices is neither physical pleasure (which can always be transformed into profit) nor identity production but rather exuberant expenditure, affect experimentation, and freedom.”¹⁰⁴ Is that what is happening here?

¹⁰³ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 3.

Defining the wake:

"Wake: the track left on the water's surface by a ship; the disturbance caused by a body swimming or moved, in water; it is the air currents behind a body in flight; a region of disturbed flow."

¹⁰⁴ Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, 9-10.

What I discovered
was that rowing a boat is really fucking hard work
and no matter how metaphorically and beautifully I conceptualise
my reproductive speculations,
a lot of people had to work really hard so that I could come to be.
From the Wankers to the sailors and the cleaners to the nurses,
I exist in thick time,
and there isn't anything frozen about it.

It is September now and the mornings are crisp again, a nostalgic time of year
when the smell of the air is sharp with the presence of the past.
My birthday is coming around again and still I am discharging clotted and bloody
debris.

Slowly making my way back to standing whilst delivering the following lines:

How is one to perform the idea of family, biology, identity, individuality,
when one exists in such multiplicity?

Scan audience, making eye contact with them (implicate them)

Can the familial narrative be dismantled from inside its own perpetuation?

An expansive abolition.

Perhaps the problem isn't so much the bloody rowing,
but to be rowing alone.

Perhaps the boat is crowded with kin.

Ancestry (DNA)

Walk around the space as I deliver this section

After all of these speculative adventures I decided,
rather apprehensively I might add,
that I would put myself out there, into the now commercial world of
DNA testing.

CLICK for the screenshot of Ancestry DNA's advert

'The average British person's DNA is only 36% British'
reads the advertisement as the smile of a young woman encourages its audience
to discover their 'unique ethnic mix'.

I have never read so thoroughly, or at all, the terms and conditions of anything
like I have the Ancestry DNA website.

I even scoured all the public legal documents they have
because I've always been a big fan of dystopian fiction and definitely have some
reservations regarding the possible data-and-bio-wars yet to come.

I couldn't find any waivers to sign in which I opt out of futuristic experiments on growing people back to life from their DNA and putting their consciousness in computer simulations.

The Ancestry DNA terms and conditions continue:

"1.4.2 Your Use of DNA Services. In addition to the requirements in Section 1.3 above, you also agree:...

By providing a saliva sample to us, you acquire no rights in any research or commercial products developed by us or our collaborators/partners and will receive no compensation related to any such research or product development; and

Store your saliva and any extracted DNA in the United States or destroy any remaining saliva or DNA sample after your sample has been processed; once submitted to us, your saliva and DNA sample cannot be returned to you (note, however, that you may request that we destroy your sample, and, in certain cases we may destroy biological samples to maintain biobank quality levels"¹⁰⁵

I really don't want to wake up in a vat in a few hundred years and be like

Stop walking when I say:

'Ah, fuck.'

'This again'.

¹⁰⁵ "Terms and Conditions," Terms and Conditions - Ancestry.com.

Start walking again

So it's a good idea to start getting grateful because soon it will become impossible to die.¹⁰⁶

*

I saw a film many years ago whose dystopian narrative has been particularly stuck in my mind and in which the protagonist suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose. And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose.

All the while pacing around in circles with increasing speed

And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose. And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose. And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose. And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose. And she suffers such existential dread in this void of meaninglessness that she decides to have a child in order to give her life purpose.

¹⁰⁶ I remember a scene from the television series *Altered Carbon*, where the corpse of a girl falls through the skies from the satellite foxhole of the ultra-rich where death-defying-sexual-sensationalism is embraced in the search of feeling something, anything, new in the face of living forever.

TechnoDaddy told me “To help people have the child of their dreams,
that, to me, is a good purpose.”

“1.4.5 Note to Users who have received a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. If you have received a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, your AncestryDNA test may provide unexpected results because your saliva may contain cells with your DNA as well as cells with your donor’s DNA. DNA for the test is extracted from the cells, and the combination of DNA sources can result in a failed test or a test that provides results based on your donor’s DNA. Therefore, we recommend that those who have received a bone marrow or stem cell transplant do not take the AncestryDNA test.”¹⁰⁷

Come to stillness

In the end I ordered a DNA test which arrived by post
on a plane from America,
and the possibility of you has been sitting in my closet all summer
staring at me.

I feel like a closeted Dane. As if this performance is what I do with the space left in my closet, for “closets still “make room”...in which there are things left

¹⁰⁷ “Terms and Conditions,” Terms and Conditions - Ancestry.com.

for bodies to do”¹⁰⁸, and I have simply invited you in for a moment rather than stepping out.

;

‘Wow, what a beautiful jumper you are wearing’, a friend said to me, ‘is it Icelandic?’

I do not know how to respond. I do not know what that means.

I do not know how one is to locate nationality.

My hands knitted it together, but I do not know if they are Icelandic enough to inherit their offspring that national notion.

We could continue to come closer, if I so chose,
if I would step into the parallel footsteps of you BioDaddy and sell myself to
the ancestry institutions and let them harvest my genetic information.
But this is bigger than just you and I,

I have been encountering the idea of you within the ‘ontologic’ of anmiotics (our watery embodied connections) and its gestationality (that we owe ourselves to others)¹⁰⁹, in a ‘lateral’ and multidirectional character recently recognised

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 175.

¹⁰⁹ Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 111.

in evolutionary biology.¹¹⁰ Thinking evolution alongside Joan Roughgarden and Stefan Helmreich, not as a linear ‘progress’ oriented process, whose trajectory is set, and at the forefront of which are humans, but rather in this lateral orientation, one may perceive the tree of life in an increasingly ‘brambled state’.¹¹¹ Indeed, some sea-residing-creatures are believed to have begun their evolutionary trajectory on land before slowly making their way into the water.¹¹² What I infer from these lateral limbs is a twisting of time, for “evolution can also be a part anticipated, a future remembered.”¹¹³

Teasing a further implication out of Elizabeth Grosz’s reading of Darwin, to play with time, Neimanis writes: “if sexual dimorphism burst onto the evolutionary scene as an ingenious way of proliferating life, there is nothing to prevent further mechanisms for expressing sexual difference from likewise emerging.”¹¹⁴ Thus the past and present actualisation of dimorphism as an expression of sexual difference “doesn’t mean it will stay the same;” for human beings are not the pinnacle of creation at the turret of time: “it will likely be complexified, elaborated, and developed further.”¹¹⁵ It is this formulation of sexual difference and evolution as “still-unfolding and yet-to-come” that permits me to think of kinship structures in its parallel as ever-still-unfolding.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 121:

“In following...extremophiles, Helmreich discovers how ‘lateral gene transfer in microbes places in jeopardy the vertical inheritance needed to root the tree of life’ (87). Helmreich’s focus is on how new paradigms of science – biogenetics, in this case – are finding new ways to break down life and build it up again, and what this might mean for how we understand kinship and ourselves”.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 115.

¹¹² Ibid, 133.

Whales, dolphins & porpoises are believed to have *become* cetaceans with time.

¹¹³ Ibid, 131.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 127.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 130.

Point to my body (I) and the audience body (you)

because sperm donations are used in abundance and a single donor might
father dozens of children to dozens of families.

“There is a simple but infrequently noted kind of beauty to the fact that the gestating body does not necessarily distinguish between an embryo containing some of its own DNA and an embryo containing none.”¹¹⁷

Unless prospective parents pay to patent their ownership
over your genetic material.

If one has the money, it’s possible to ensure your child never has any estranged
siblings showing up on your doorstep.

And for me, more likely than a paternal (re)union is that I might just buy myself
into the genetic inheritance of an abundance of TechnoSiblings.
Just one *big (happy)* family.

Out of the Xenofeminist manifesto arises the equation “‘xenofam ≥ biofam’
– the idea that families hospitable to otherness and synthesised across
differences match or exceed those built on genetic coincidence alone”¹¹⁸,
but I find myself caught in the middle of partitions prepared by these

¹¹⁷ Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now*, 156.

¹¹⁸ Helen Hester, *Xenofeminism* (Cambridge, Uk: Polity Press, 2019), 65.

prefixes. I am not upheld by genetic coincidence, but by a densely grown family tree gashed with 'techno', 'socio' and 'xeno' grafts.

Some of my technofam could become my xenofam, because "'blood relations' can themselves become xenofamilial through an ongoing orientation towards practical solidarity"¹¹⁹, but if my 'sociofam' is not my 'biofam', and we have not become xenofamilial, then what are we? Just people co-existing in the same space and time in tacit agreement to internalise some degree of responsibility towards each other?

How much difference must be bridged in order to redefine relations?

Welcome Home

Back up to stand near the boat edge and bring arms in towards my own body

My parents flew over from Iceland to witness this work in Turku, and with tender recognition I see the intimacy this work has introduced to our relationship. I have never been so at peace with the idea of becoming my mother.

But my own boundaries are beginning to get blurry
and my definition distorted,

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Endings are always

shifting and changing,

if they exist at all.

And this is how I concluded

'Who's Your (Techno)Mummy?'
& 'TechnoDaddy's Dreams'

:

...I will buy my way into the genetic inheritance of an anti-institutional utopia in which my techno-siblings and I can come together to give ourselves to the Earth in an intentional incestuous ecosexual orgy.

I am gathering my TechnoSiblings and I'm inviting them to step inside the kirkkovene with me to row as a collective body floating in the alternative time of water.

I collapse into the collective and I struggle to decide where to draw lines.

I am not sure who 'you' is anymore
or where I land in this archipelago of I-lands.

“An I for an I for an I for an I.”¹²⁰

please read this again out loud if you can

Through these eye-lines from ‘Like a Lake’ I can touch the lineage of my investment in the blurry boundaries between the spoken word and the written. I am in awe of the orality of words, which performs differently the writing on the page. There is something about the way alliterations are embodied in one’s tongue and dance in a way that only the mind cannot master. Homophones in my mouth multiply meanings and breed uncertainty in their multiplicity when my tongue need not be bound by ink and paper.

And I’m interested in intention,
to be intentionally in relation.

Consciously kindred.

*I’m not interested in responsibilities into which I am only born and those which come
to feel like burdensome obligations, I’m not interested in kin dread.
I’m interested in joy and I want pleasure, and in choosing to birth myself into them,
the kind and the red.*

Make my way around the other (back) side of the boat as I continue

But I am not sure how to receive this tension between multiplicity and scarcity
when I am so full I start to feel empty.

¹²⁰ Mavor, *Like a Lake*, 130.

Xenofeminism “is not a call for gender austerity, but for gender post-scarcity!”¹²¹ And it is precisely that multiplicity which breeds a power scarcity. They desire an abolition of gender which manifests through the proliferation of genders, an overdoing as a means of undoing. In embracing and inventing an abundance of genders, a multiplicity of meanings, the binary will cease to be capable of commanding such power as to bend the structures of the world to its will. They will simply be two of too many.

;

“We have been divided by the norm. Cut in half and forced to remain on one side or the other of the rift. What we call ‘subjectivity’ is only the scar that, over the multiplicity of all that we could have been, covers the wound of this fracture. It is over this scar that property, family and inheritance were founded. Over this scar, names are written and sexual identities asserted.”¹²²

Maybe I am looking for you because I think life will
unveil one of her mysteries if we meet.
That she will drop just one more piece of garb in her
infinite strip tease.¹²³

¹²¹ Hester, *Xenofeminism*, 30.

¹²² Preciado, introduction to *An Apartment on Uranus*, 35.

¹²³ I am at Sompasauna with a friend, naked and sweaty on a cold winter night. We start to hum and sound in a chorus. A polyphonic ode to the earth, our sweat dripping to the ground and our voices vibrating through the wood and water. From her mouth was how I heard of mystery’s infinite strip tease.

Whilst I was out walking I realised that after fifteen months of living here I still do not have a complete mental picture of the forest surrounding the house. Still I discover new places and paths. Still I get lost. But “It’s hard to get lost. It’s so hard that I’ll probably quickly figure out some way to find myself, even if finding myself is once again my vital lie.”¹²⁴

If I just understand myself through you I might finally understand all the things that feel so incomprehensibly big to me, so overwhelmingly unknowable to me.

If “to be oriented is also to extend the reach of the body”¹²⁵, and “disorientation occurs when that extension fails”¹²⁶, I must indeed be in a state of disorientation, for I only extend myself into empty space. BioDaddy’s body is out of reach to my body so that I can never fully give them shape (never fully give myself shape?). Like water vapour. A shapeless shapeshifter; I find myself at a loss. Lost? But this ‘getting lost’ that I have been doing “means finding things without any idea of what to do with what you’re finding.”¹²⁷

But you probably don’t have all the answers

¹²⁴ Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, 4.

¹²⁵ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 8.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 11.

¹²⁷ Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, 5.

Scanning audience's eyes

and I might not find all my missing pieces in your body.

As I began to think how I could come to know the forest I realised I do not want to know it. I fear that if I know it too well, if I really understand it, I will cease to enjoy it. A methodological dissection has a tendency to drain out the magic of the mystery.¹²⁸ For all of my anxious need to understand, I am enticed by the mystery more than by knowing. And I wonder if being lost, is actually an orientation towards mystery.

Look into the boat, as if looking at my own reflection

My I-land is like an independent nation state
A normative fiction I cling to in a state of dissolution
as I look for your body in my body.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 16-17: "To say that lines are performative is to say that we find our way and we know which direction we face only as an effect of work, which is often hidden from view. So in following the directions, I arrive, as if by magic./Directions are about the magic of arrival. In a way, the work of arrival is forgotten in the very feeling that the arrival is magic."

¹²⁹ Preciado, introduction to *An Apartment on Uranus*, 48: "A process that, like a sex change, always risks crystallising around the construction of a normative identity of exclusion. 'Subject' and 'nation' are nothing but normative fictions that seek to put an end to the process of subjectivation and to social creation as constant transformation."

It is water which “extends embodiment in time - body, to body, to body.”¹³⁰, I embody bodies beyond my body, but only because my body does not really exist when its definitions depends upon defined borders. It is the embodiment of the paradox of possession, I can only be a body and claim this body as mine under the condition of it being persistently permeable. Like my oral I for an I for an I, my body in your body in my body exists infinitely indefinitely.

And my over-populated internal state
is a crowded ship that makes me question the possibility of
claiming any citizenship.

And I don't know what it means to want a relationship with you
because you are the shape of all the intangible ties I can feel tugging at me

Crouching in my piles of dirt for the first time in front of an audience made up
of my colleagues I explain that

“my identity feels relative.

Who I am depends on where I am, who I'm with, what structure I am playing inside
of, even the season of the year.

And I wonder how I can commit to, and fight for, anything in such a relative
world.

So often I apathetically rest in ignorance.

But I ponder whether perhaps I can exist wholeheartedly committed to something
as capital T Truth, all the while knowing that the time will come where I might
need or want to reside in a different T/truth.

¹³⁰ Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 3.

The question is how to stand for something fallible.
How to dedicate myself to ephemeral things.
This is what relativity demands of me: to co-exist with my own fallibility and
the impossibility of knowing.
Perhaps it is one's ability to commit to a lower-case t truth which defines
one's apathy."¹³¹

*Walk to turn on the spotlight directed at the boat and which casts the
reflection of the water onto the ceiling*

Who am I to say where I end and you begin?
Why trap you in a single body *Look at my body*
when you can be every body. *Look at audience*

I want to be in deliberate Kinship, except it's not a ship it's a boat
and I want you all in it.

Remaining like a flutter behind my ear are images I constructed whilst listening
to Octavia Butler's 'Parable of the Talents'. Her protagonist, after building
her own community on the basis of her spiritual convictions, asked her fellow
community members to commit themselves to familial roles in each others' lives.
Scattered and alone is how most of the people found themselves there, so when a
new child was born she asked that people step into the roles of being siblings
and aunts and uncles and cousins to these children. She asked that these roles
be treated with honour and severity, they were not about pretty titles or empty

¹³¹ Previously referenced performance essay for Autotheory: *'Fuck Being Coherent'*.

gestures; they were real commitments. Now I read it again and it seems an almost passive detail: four sentences in a book of several hundred pages. Yet here I am somehow aspiring to let this seed blossom and fruit as if it was the whole message of the work. I guess that is how reading and writing work, much like planting seeds: some will sprout and grow whilst others stay in the dark of the soil. It depends on the soil.

Making my way into the boat and moving the water to animate the reflection

So perhaps we can step inside this wooden vulva of ours and not only fiction ourselves to a collective truth, but stage the event of our own rebirth into an era of expanded kinship where pleasure is a component of evolution.

Spitting, gargling, spewing, swallowing, sliding evolutionary pleasures; “Slide it in, out, in, out...”¹³² I take notes from the post-performance discussion of ‘Deep Time Trans’ performed at the 2021 Baltic Circle theatre festival. Teo Ala-Ruona, one of the performers and creators, says he was “building a maze” out of his “most helpless thoughts”, he says it “isn’t who I am, it’s where I am.” And the definitive nature of identities loosens its grip just a bit. My relativity rests easy for a moment and I feel as though I have been given the permission by these aqua-queer creatures to commit myself to inconsistency, to fluidity, to my

¹³² Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl*, 61.

non-binary nature. I read my notes almost exactly two years later, and notice that I have come a full circle, that I have been building a maze of my own.¹³³

Although it was the image of Teo that came to my mind as I folded over my own body to spit a fountain of water into my own arsehole when I performed 'Who's Your (Techno)Mummy?' in Bergen, it was the verbally permissive quality of his later work 'Lacuna' which affected my own performance format most directly.

Just him and his water bottle.

It was an autofictional embodiment that spoke through bodily orifices, some more visceral than others, and increased my commitment to spoken words to conjure what is in order to touch what is not, for "I can only reach the depersonality of muteness if I have first constructed an entire voice."¹³⁴

But this evolutionary lineage isn't linear, it's elliptical
and I often find myself writing in the present tense about the past.

¹³³ I attended the performance with my then-lover, and now dear friend, and exited the building in a state of elation: feeling seen; feeling performed for; performed through. They turned to me as we walked out and wondered out loud whether this is what cis-hetero people feel like at most events? Represented? ;

Teo became my mentor in the following semester and was present with me as 'Dear BioDaddy,' was birthed. In truth, what I remember most from our mentorship time together was their emotional support as I faced a transphobic confrontation at home. I remain grateful for his expanded embrace of the role of a mentor, for his willingness to let the lines between all the different rooms of life stay translucent, for I got the feeling he knew as well as I that there is no separating of one's academia and art from one's home and one's heart. A few months later I moved out.

¹³⁴ Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, 185.

The same friend accompanied me to see Lacuna in April 2022 at the Takomo theatre, and this time I left the theatre and laid down in the street square outside of it. It felt necessary to just lie there for a moment, to feel whatever feelings arose from seeing that work; it necessitated an act of making my body more solid on the cold concrete of that late winter. An older man walked past us and said "get a container", I think he meant a room.

“He, the future man, would pet us, remotely undertaking us, as I remotely understand myself later, beneath the memory of the memory of the memory”¹³⁵

The hands of fate crack our shell on the edge of knowing
Gently caressing the edge of the boat as I sit inside of it
the yolk slipping out and running down like rain on the fingertips of trees.
I open my mouth and drink from its hands

There is a certain place I write from, out of which emerge poetics that I dare not edit. It does not feel that they are mine to change, they belong to themselves, to the moment they were born out of and I am of the impression that intervening in any other temporality would cause them to unravel and disintegrate. The texts that emerge from that place capture the rooms of this house in a particular light, at a precise moment in time, coming in through the windows and cracks in the walls, through the open doorway. I am tempted to compare them to the photographer’s golden hour, but sometimes it is the dim and obscure light of a rainy day or the pitch-black of a moonless night.

It might be that I care more for poetry than performance, but that is not to say they are mutually exclusive; “There is no freedom in politics without poetry.”¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, 112.

¹³⁶ Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*, 16.

*Dipping hands in water and lifting them so water runs from palms down my
arms & drips from fingers*

because there is no steady ground beneath these feet
and the I-land against which I push to unmoor this boat of mine
is it's own state of home-land-less-ness.

*...I'm all wet and covered with slimy placenta, and I'm crying and screaming and
I'm waiting for your warm hands to receive me. I can be your midwife, your earth
mother, I can hold your hand and tell you to push, but I'm interested in orgasmic
birth and I'd rather stroke your clitoris the whole time to make this the most
rapturous moment of your life, the one where you birth yourself from your own
arsehole.*

*Dying at the moment of our rebirth, your corpse arms hold our newborn body and
finally the frost is thawing from our lashes so we can look into our own eyes and
sincerely say 'I love you'.*

I heard that to belong in a place
you need to long to be where you are.

Standing in front of a crowd full of friends in Vapaan Taiteen Tila as I
performed 'TechnoDaddy's Dreams', I could not force myself to deliver these last
lines sincerely. Just as the darkness had depleted me of gratitude, I simply had
no love left in me.

Continue animating the water in the boat to create sounds and reflections

And after spending many years being anywhere
I finally decided to stay somewhere

“...until somebody cums.”¹³⁷

And I realised after spending a while in this somewhere
that it matters where I moor this boat of mine

Looking sincerely at the audience, everyone in the eyes

And so Dear BioDaddy,
I don't need you
to tell me I am loved.
But what I want
is to hear you say

“...to these children: life is wonderful, we are waiting for you, there are many
of us here, we have all been hit by the bullet, we are lovers with chests wide
open. You are not alone.”¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Wark, *Reverse Cowgirl*, 61.

¹³⁸ Preciado, “The Bullet,” in *An Apartment on Uranus*, 79.

I cried a while once I read this line, a kind of homecoming, the water emerging from an underground river that never ceases to run, but only on occasion breaks through the surface in the form of a spring to relieve the state of a never-ending homesickness.

Welcome home.

*Start to hum Mother Nature's Bitch as I ease my body deeper into the water of
the boat and all that's left on the surface is my face as I continue to hum a
while*¹³⁹

Hmmm-mmm-mmmm
M-m-m-m-mmm-m-mmmmm

Hmmm-mmm-mmmm
M-m-m-m-mmm-m-mmmmm

Hmmm-mmm-mmmm
M-m-m-m-mmm-m-mmmmm

Hmmm-mmm-mmmm
M-m-m-m-mmm-m-mmmmm

FIN.

¹³⁹ As I work in the last weeks coming up to the performance in Turku I listen to a thirty second sound clip from Documenta 15 that I recorded last summer. It is Eva Kořátková's work Daydreaming. The melody evokes a haunting kind of comfort and one line in particular moves my insides, one intonation that stirs me so I cannot stop listening. It loops for hours as I write my script. I continue to hum it as I walk around the house:

'I am — there used to be water in the ocean/ I am a pipeline in which rebellion is happening/ I am a bound being that is saying something anyway./ I am a fan that spins against time./ I am the — that connects bodies/ I am a head that dreams of another world./ I am headed into battle do you want to join me?/ Dream, dream during the day/ Dream with eyes open.'

Coda

As I complete my revolution
around your axis, BioDaddy(.you
as the centre of this creative
endeavour), I realise you have
become a concept, a figurehead
for my own agenda, one of many
tools in my repertoire. Many
months have passed since I began
this journey, the earth is white
with snow again and I cannot say
you cross my mind much these
days. It feels as though I
walked out of the closet but you
stayed in, that I have left you
there to be devoured by the
academic domain.

In the face of the possible impossibility of finding you, it seems I have chosen to find you in fiction. But that is perhaps where the power of you comes into play, for it may be more accurate to adapt you not as a figurehead, but a 'figuration': an embodied concept.¹³⁷ For you continue to live in my body and in this work as the central axis around which I pivot in the possibility to 'imagine otherwise'. It is precisely your immateriality I need right now, your present absence that permits all the possibilities to co-exist in their ever-becoming condition.

¹³⁷ Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 5:

A posthuman feminist understanding of concepts.

So I am choosing to leave this process open, and in some way incomplete, in an inclination to co-exist with Clarice: "I no longer want to delight in the easiness of liking a thing only because, being apparently completed, it no longer scare[s] me, and therefore is falsely mine".¹³⁸ If completion indicates possession then I want no part in it. I support neither an attitude of ownership over children nor

knowledge, and although I have prefaced this process as a kind of search, I cannot say I have found what I was looking for; but that is not to say that nothing was found. As this process has unravelled I see wrapped up in it the parameters of my praxis. I realised that I write; that I am a writer? One of my many I's, unstable in an ever-shifting spatiotemporality. In fact, I have discovered within this work such paradoxical multiplicities that any kind of destination became redundant, impossible precisely because it is concerned with maintaining the prospect of possibilities present. But perhaps a convenient coda is what this paradoxical literary procession provokes.

¹³⁸ Lispector, *The Passion*, 167.

I am inclined to frame this work as an act of “amniotechnics”: “the art of holding and caring even while being ripped into, at the same time as being held.”¹³⁹ An unconditional holding.

This has not been a painless co-creation, and I think of Deleuze and the embryo which “holds all the potentiality that would rip an adult apart.”¹⁴⁰ But I guess I never strived for either of us to be adults here, rather I long to pursue Lewis’ wish for an abolition of adulthood, where we can remain together in this wet Deleuzian virtuality of all that “could-have-been and might-become.”¹⁴¹

“Unknowability” is “another one of water’s lessons”¹⁴² and I experience your body as the contours of this text.

¹³⁹ Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now*, 163.

¹⁴⁰ Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 120.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 47.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 118.

I feel tender gratitude
in my body as I think
of you.

Perhaps once we drained the
water out of Dooris and into
the streets of Turku it seeped
into the sea and reached
another shore somewhere.
Perhaps the vibrations of my
words live on somewhere in
the sea, and just maybe,
although minuscule a chance
as it might be, they will touch
your skin as you go for a dip
in the sea on some distant
shore.

Because water remembers.

And so do I.



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