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TEATERHÖGSKOLAN

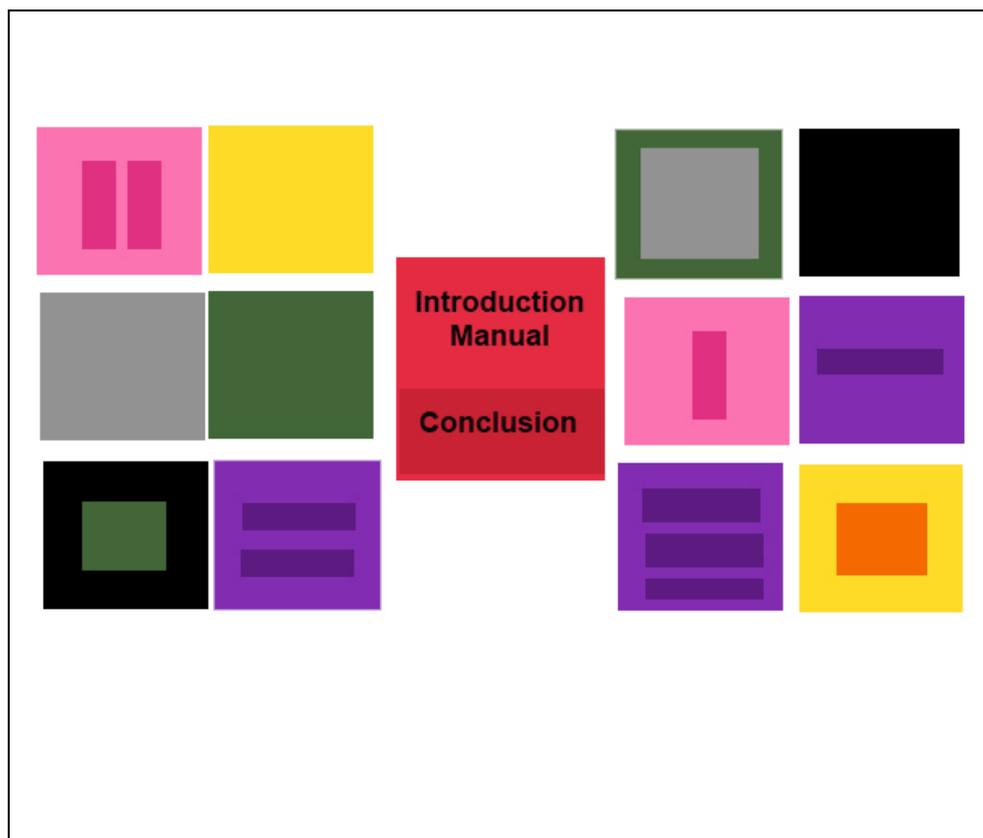
2011

OPINNÄYTETYÖ

Spin-Fold-Spill

a textual exploration about role-play, narrative
and fictitious truths

SARI TM KIVINEN



MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMME IN LIVE ART AND
PERFORMANCE STUDIES



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TEKIJÄ Sari TM Kivinen		KOULUTUS- TAI MAISTERIOHJELMA MA in Live Art & Performance Studies	
KIRJALLISEN OSION/TUTKIELMAN NIMI Spin-Fold-Spill: a textual investigation about role-play, narrative		KIRJALLISEN TYÖN SIVUMÄÄRÄ & LIITTEET and fictitious truths. 130 pages + DVD	
TAITEELLISEN / TAITEELLIS-PEDAGOGISEN TYÖN NIMI Spin-Fold-Spill			
SÄILYTETTÄVÄ MATERIAALI Written thesis			
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<p><i>Spin-Fold-Spill</i> is a solo performance, installation and written thesis that explores the Role-System, a system of roles that represents parts of a personality. The performance and installation took place during May 2011. This written component articulates and documents the performance whilst aiming to re-perform the live performance in a textual form. This body of work fits within the fields of live art and performance studies.</p> <p><i>Spin-Fold-Spill</i> is about how to obscure autobiographical material through the fiction of roles. It is about exploring monologue, about speaking subjects, about telling ones own story and simultaneously playing with the certainty of whose story it is/ was.</p> <p>The body of the performance and this written component are structured in twelve parts that are represented by twelve colour combinations. The audience / reader can choose the order by selecting a colour order of their choice.</p> <p>Various overlapping themes are explored within <i>Spin-Fold-Spill</i> such as: multiple persona in artistic practice, compartmentalisation, melancholia and performativity, storytelling, and the function of the video camera in developing a role's fictitious history.</p>			
ASIASANAT Multiple personas in artistic practice, role-play, performativity, performative writing, fictitious truths, storytelling, live art, performance studies.			

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Spin-Fold-Spill: Introduction Manual

An introduction to the structure of *Spin-Fold-Spill* –

The body of this writing is in twelve parts. Parts which directly mirror the twelve chapters that my connected artistic work *Spin-Fold-Spill* was contained of. *Spin-Fold-Spill* was a performance and installation that took place during six days and six evenings in May 2011. This introduction manual is the thirteenth part and frames the experimental nature of this collection of writing.¹

In the evening performances of *Spin-Fold-Spill* audience members were asked to place twelve coloured cards into an order of their choice. This order dictated the order of the performance parts. Thus each evening the performance as a whole narrative varied immensely. During the daytime *Spin-Fold-Spill* was open as an installation and visitors were invited to choose one colour² that I performed for them. I am curious about how shuffling the order of content, or only experiencing one part of the whole content, changes the overall meaning for the audience. The shuffling of order aims to disrupt singular linear readings of the narrative. These writings offer a similar participatory experience to the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performance. Each part begins with a score and an image that describes the performance chapter that took place, this is followed by an exploratory text that aims to further question, perform, and articulate the main ideas in each part of the performance.

Throughout the twelve written parts the speaking voice shifts between positions of first, second and third person. Within the *Spin-Fold-Spill* content I am aiming to explore what it means to speak through multiple roles. In the live performance this was explored through physical enactment of roles, and in this written component I explore roles through shifting between various writing positions. Often the same piece of text has gone through various versions of which role is writing it. This is another way of questioning the linearity and structure of the narrative; Sari wonders in what ways does the

¹ In this pdf version all thirteen parts are in one document. The body of this thesis (the twelve coloured parts) are conventionally placed between the introduction and the conclusion. An order has been chosen by the author. If you would like to read the parts as separate documents please email: saritm kivinen@gmail.com

² The colour could be chosen by literally spinning a white dial that was included in the installation during the day. The dial was not present during the evening performances.

content change when the speaking position shifts from first person to third person?

This introduction manual is informative of the background leading up to this body of work and includes an overview of: research materials, re-appropriated texts, documents, and excerpts from previous projects. The conclusion is placed after this introduction manual and provides a summary of the main points of discovery that I made whilst developing this body of writing. Of course in your own reading you may choose to conclude elsewhere. The bibliography is included in its extensive form after the conclusion, and in shorter forms the relevant sources are included at the end of each of the twelve parts.

I invite you, as the audience of this text, to chose your own order based either on the chance of which chapter you happen to pick up or based on your personal colour associations.

Questions and challenges –

I would like to begin by defining the main problems that I have been working through in this text and in the practical artistic work that is connected to it. Problems which are both challenging and fascinating to me.

The first is the problem of how my main question has changed and mutated throughout the development of my artistic research. This problem is linked to fact that my research is about performing through multiple roles.

In 2009 when applying to study in the Masters degree programme in Live Art and Performance Studies I defined my research question as: how would I, as performer, be affected if the three roles whom I had been performing through for the previous five years, and refer to as my Role-System³, became redundant - either by being metaphorically killed, or if I simply refrained performing through them? This question was relevant as a research topic because as an artist I found myself increasingly dependent on performing through these specific roles and I wanted to explore alternative ways of performing.

³ A group of roles that represent parts of a personality.

Beginning my studies with this question I developed various projects which explored my attachment to the three roles and alternatives to performing as them. Yet skipping ahead to *Spin-Fold-Spill*, the culmination of the last two years of artistic research, I find I am continuing to perform through the three roles I had vowed to stop performing through. Yet the way I perform has changed. This is one point of exploration within this thesis.

I have found that the initial research question guided the artistic process that I undertook. Over the last two years the question has had different versions and the emphasis has shifted at various points. This process has led me to the following question that I now view as my main research question: when working through multiple roles that are viewed as parts of the personality of the performer, in what ways can we define the performativity of the roles?

This question highlights that: a) I define my roles as parts of my own personality; and b) by focusing my research on the performativity of the roles that I position my artistic work within the theoretical field of performance studies.

Additional questions connected to this main research question include: are the roles merely extensions of my own limitation to performing myself? Can my multiple roles think beyond what I know? And what is the function of melancholy in multiple personas? These questions will be explored in various ways through the body of this thesis, however please keep in mind that my priority has been to perceive this written thesis as an art project as well as an academic exploration. I view this thesis as a body of text intricately connected to my practical artistic work. Both have informed (and continue to inform) each other, they are connected parallel activities.

Another problematic I have experienced during the last two years is how to articulate, with critical distance, the process of subjective changes in my relation to the roles that I basically view as being parts of my own personality. Due to the initial challenge of not performing through the three pre-existing roles, new roles were provided the space to develop. These new roles have

-- The Role-System's roles --



**Jessee-Liina is the eldest sister.
She is social, bubbly, and pleasing.**



**Caroliina is the middle sister.
She likes to maintain order at all times.**



**Starella is the youngest sister.
She scowls, writes poetry, and
maintains a cynical worldview.**



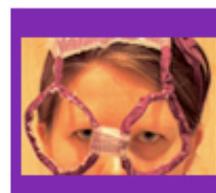
**Swamp-Sari is connected to regular
'Sari'. Both are at times situated into
the narrative as the forth sister (between
Caroliina and Starella in rank).**



**Sari is the artist and author of the role-
system. She grew up at 145 Rocky
Passage Road in Redland Bay, QLD
Australia 4165.**



**Gareth Bdm entered the role-system in
August 2010. He writes in grey pen and
is good at maintaining his routine at his
'regular'.**



**Purple Eyes appeared in August 2010.
Purple Eyes is the role that theorises
and frames what the other roles do.**

allowed for changes in how I relate to the earlier roles and have allowed for expansion of what I refer to as the Role-System.

As will become apparent in the many parts of this thesis, I explore ways of writing through a role. Of writing through multiple roles. The challenge for me (and for you as reader) is to consider at any given point: who is speaking? Possibly you as reader will take this one step further and question in response to who is speaking, who at any given point is reading or receiving? Given that this is a thesis that explores multiple roles and thus multiple speaking positions this thesis aims to explore—through the act of writing—the many subjectivities of multiple roles in my artistic practice.

SPIN-FOLD-SPILL = doing words –

In the title *Spin-Fold-Spill*, doing words are used which denote various actions. For example: of speaking, of sewing, of writing, of storytelling. These are acts of folding layers of narrative, of spinning tales, and of spilling guts.

To fold can be connected to Gilles Deleuze's use of the term in reference to his reading of Michel Foucault's work. According to Vikki Bell Deleuze's reading of Foucault, from one book to the next, sees that "the subjectification process is figured as a process of folding." (Bell 2007, 101). And in Deleuze's words: "To think is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside. The general topology of thought, which had already begun 'in the neighbourhood' of the particular features, now ends up in the folding of the outside into the inside." (Deleuze 2006, 97).

In the act of folding narratives, I acknowledge that, whilst I view the sister roles as inherently being internal (intimate) parts of my personality, they are simultaneously constructed by outside influences; a folding of societal expectation at intricate conscious and unconscious levels.

A text (such as this thesis) is the folding of thoughts, references, citations, words, languages, information, nuances, and so forth. To spin is to submit to chance, what does the dial choose? Or when spinning oneself where does the body land? To spill guts (to say too much), to spill pills (what's your addiction?) There is no use crying over spilt milk.

Working methodology –

My working methodology for *Spin-Fold-Spill* included reworking various texts that I had written during the previous years. Each text contained something we could consider as auto-biographical material, even if many of the events of the stories have never really occurred in real life. My working methods have included auto-ethnographical and phenomenological approaches.

I view auto-ethnographic research as a way to gain knowledge and understanding by questioning ones own experience and placing it into some kind of dialogue with other perspectives (this could simply be to make ones personal perspective public). Carolyn Ellis and Arthur B. Bochner discuss their view of auto-ethnography in the following way:

I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life. (Ellis & Bochner 2000, 737).

Similarly by saying that I work with features of phenomenology I simply mean that I maintain a focus on lived experience. Through working with multiple roles I develop stories that are focused on expressing what I have experienced and lived through. One principle of phenomenology is that phenomenologists investigate the relationship humans have to the world via relationships to meaning. With the view that lived experience is a valid way of understanding life there is often a focus on a particular experience or situation. Max Van Manen instructs: “describe a lived experience as it appeared, as you lived through it. [...] Describe the experience from an internal or subjective point of view: what did you think, feel, see, hear.” (Van Manen 1990, 64-64).

In my working methods I have also been influenced by performative writing, which aims to not merely articulate the performance but to perform it in another way. I am particularly interested in how the text itself performs. Here I take a cue from writers and theorists such as Peggy Phelan who outlines performative writing as being:

[..] different from personal criticism or autobiographical essay, although it owes a lot to both genres. Performative writing is an attempt to find a form for “what philosophy wishes all the same to say.” Rather than describing the performance event in “direct signification,” a task I believe to be impossible and not terrifically interesting, I want this writing to enact the affective force of the performance event again, as it plays itself out in an ongoing temporality made vivid by the psychic process of distortion (repression, fantasy, and the general hubbub of the individual and collective unconscious). (Phelan 1997, 12).

One possible challenge in this thesis as a performative body of writing is that the performance I enact in all its affective force is my own. I view this thesis as an attempt to escape autobiography through the many layers of fiction that are folded into the live performance and lively text.

Key Terms –

Key terms such as Role-System, role-play, roles, performativity, and repetition are relevant in this thesis. In order to strengthen intended meanings let us explore some of the perspectives that I have focused on in my research.

[A role system]

I have often used the following quote to explain my definition of a Role-System:

A role system contains the substance of one’s identity – all the pieces that, once assembled, represent a personality. However this system is perpetually in flux, changing according to one’s experiences within the somatic and social environments. (Landy 2007, 44).

This quote is by Robert J. Landy who explores roles and role systems in his work as professor of dramatherapy at New York University. Since locating his book *Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama, Therapy, and Everyday Life* in 2005 I have used Landy’s perspective of roles to help validate my development of my own Role-System. His definition perceives roles as discrete parts of a personality assemblage.

Below is an outline of the linear development of what I refer to as my Role-System.

A brief history of the Role-System:

- In November 2004 the three sisters Jessee-Liina, Caroliina, and Starella appeared as sibling roles. They materialised in Kivinen's writings, video works, and live social appearances around Sydney (Australia). Kivinen recognised them as three versions of her own personality that had not previously been granted expression. She also viewed them as being in constant conflict with each other.
- In 2008 Kivinen began referring to herself as the fourth sister. This became particularly clear during her solo exhibition the *Role-System* at MOP projects (Sydney) when she created a text document outlining details about the *Role-System*. The document was presented alongside four installations representing the four sisters. In a feedback session about the *Role-System* it was commented that the installations relation to each other within the confined gallery space indicated a sense of anxiety. Kivinen agreed with this comment, acknowledging that there is a strong anxiety in her relation to her sisters and to how all of the sisters co-exist. Kivinen also recognised this as an anxiety of not knowing how best to present herself to the world; an anxiety which has often presented itself in her art works.
- In 2009 Kivinen moved to Finland and applied to study in the MA programme of Live Art and Performance Studies at the Theatre Academy, Helsinki. In her application she introduced the Role-System and proposed that her artistic research would explore her relationship to the sisters as catalysts for her art making. She posed the question: what would happen if she stopped performing and making work through them.
- Throughout 2009 and 2010 Kivinen made work which explored her attachment to the sisters roles. She also investigated ways to break and rupture the structures in place. For example in December 2009 as part of the cabaret event Nights of Live Art at the Theatre Academy she explored shifting between Jessee-Liina and a character she perceived as representing the role of Sari (which she has later named Swamp Sari). In April 2010 she developed *Fictional Space Investigation*, which prompted performance actions that were not role or character based. In August 2010 Kivinen undertook a durational action of writing through the pre-existing sister roles and encouraged new roles to present themselves. Her aim was to write through the roles for a focused period of time to somehow get past the predominant narrative. As a result three new roles presented themselves with alternative perspectives of the same story. Gareth Bdm appeared as a man who watched the sisters from his regular bar, perceiving them from a masculine perspective. Another voice appearing was that of Purple Eyes, a storyteller commenting from various angles about the goings on. Purple Eyes has the ability to analyse that which Kivinen cannot. The third role was a male psychiatrist that Caroliina was visiting. This role has remained underdeveloped and has not re-appeared in Kivinen's later projects.
- In May 2011 Kivinen re-worked the pre-existing narrative with new perspectives in her final MA work *Spin-Fold-Spill*. For example Gareth Bdm was included to share his perspective and Purple Eyes framed the performance as the storyteller.

Figure 1: A brief history of the role system 2004-11

Role-play is a term understood differently in various contrasting fields. I would like to distinguish four areas of comparison for defining my own usage of role-play: 1) therapeutic role-play; 2) social roles; 3) role-playing in games theory; 4) role-play in artistic practice.

1) In therapeutic role-play a relevant reference point is the work of J.L. Moreno and his development of psychodrama. Moreno is often said to be the first to have developed role-playing techniques in the early 20th century. While psychoanalysts around the same time (mainly Freud) focused on one-to-one therapy, Moreno developed role-play within group therapy sessions as a way to work on patients interactive skills and to explore roles relevant to each person's life situation.

The pre-mentioned Robert J. Landy has further developed therapeutic notions of role-play in his role theory model of dramatherapy. More generally dramatherapy itself developed from connections between theatre and therapy. The main difference being that the therapist is in place of the director and the intent is focused on therapeutic process as opposed to theatrical outcomes. Dorothy Langley discusses role-play as one important stage in what she outlines as the five stages of dramatherapy:

Role play focuses on real-life roles, allowing the security of dramatic fiction to give group members sufficient distance to consider actual roles they occupy in their lives. Taking on roles of real life [...] allows clients to consider the roles they have in reality, experiment with new roles and alter existing ones if desired. (Langley 2006, 24).

2) The work of the sociologist Erving Goffman is key when considering social roles in everyday life and is also a relevant reference point to the lineage of games theory. Similarly to dramatherapy Goffman's concepts employ theatrical approaches (for example expanding the ideas of Kenneth Burke). Goffman believed that everyone plays a role wherever they are.

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) Goffman analyzes the function of characterization, and how it connects idealized social values to social roles. Roles that inform the idealized versions of characters that we, as the performers, take up within society. Goffman basically believed that there are "proper ways of conducting oneself" (Goffman 1959, 81), and he outlined

the theory about how the “front” is the way that a person presents themselves in a regular and unchanging way in various life situations. In his own words:

A social front can be divided into traditional parts, such as setting, appearance, and manner, and that (since different routines may be presented from behind the same front) we may not find a perfect fit between the specific character of a performance and the general socialized guise in which it appears to us. (Goffman 1959, 39).

According to Eelka Lampe, Goffman – in his book *Frame Analysis* - employed:

The theatrical concept of performance as a model for the social realm; for both on stage and off, he distinguished between a person as an individual complex identity and the specialized function of a person in a social role. (Lampe 2002, 299).

The backstage meanwhile is a place concealed from those that the front is performed for, and where the performer can ‘let go’ of the show for a moment. Goffman’s take on life is that it is basically theatrical. He viewed identity as being how we perform and present ourself to specific audiences, and to present the self means to be in-role.

3) Role-playing games consists of a wide array of sub-categories, each of which might define role-playing itself in contrasting ways. These categories as outlined by the *International Journal of Role-Playing (Issue 1)* include: Pen-and-paper/table-top; Systemless; Live-action role-playing; Single Player digital; Massively Multi-Player Online; Freeform; and Pervasive.

Specifically Live-action role-playing (Larp) is relevant to consider as an example of role-play in which players physically gather in a location that represents the setting of the game (a castle, warehouse, or such) and utilizes elements of role through costumes and props. Montola describes Larp as “a role-playing game, where the actual physical reality is used to construct diegeses, in addition to communication, both directly and arbitrarily.”

(Montola 2003, 86). Larp can consist of up to thousands of players that engage in verbal and physical techniques of play.

Role-play within the arena of games can find connection to the work of Goffman, for example with his clarification of the main terms of game theory in 1969. He established appropriate definitions for 'players', 'moves' and 'rules' and stated that players can represent themselves or others.

The main difference between my approach to role-play and role-play in games theory is the conditions in which role-playing occurs. In role-playing games there are formal rules that are followed by participants who enact characters within the game. These characters are generally pre-established and participants are divided into categories of players and game masters. The shared imaginary world in Larp games potentially consists of hundreds or even thousands of participants. Contrastingly my role-plays are generally personal attempts to explore elements of make-believe coinciding with real life and take their cue mainly from the therapeutic approach to role-play and from visual art practices.

4) Terms such as masquerade and representation are particularly common when discussing the lineage of visual artists' approaches to role-play. My artistic references range from the masquerades of Claude Cahun (1894-1954) to well known contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman, Paul McCarthy, Eleanor Antin, Oreet Ashery, Rachel Rosenthal, Pope Alice (aka Luke Roberts), Samuel Fosso, and Gilbert and George, to the lesser known emerging artists whose work I have encountered such as Sarah crowEST, Leena Kela, Mark Shorter, Johnny Amore, the King Pins, The Motel Sisters, Morgan Schagerberg and so many others.

Role-play within the artistic domain can mean anything from parodying your favourite pop star as playful critique, to subverting gendered and / or cultural norms, to finding ways of manifesting alternative selves. Artists who use aspects of role-play in their work have varying intentions of representation. From the deeply psychological and personal investigations, to critiques of cultural representations, to role-play for the sake of dress ups. Throughout this thesis I will discuss a handful of artists relevant to my own approach of role-play with a specific focus on artists who have developed multiple personas.

The act of role-play has been an important starting point for me as a way to access my own system of roles (discrete parts to my personality) and as a way to attempt understanding societal pressure to fit certain role-moulds.

Although the term role-play will not be stated per se within the body of this thesis it is constantly present as a point of exploration within the text itself. I write through roles as a form of role-play.

[Roles]

Roles can manifest in many forms, and are not always easily recognisable. Generally the act of purposely taking on a role (for example I take on the role of artist, of janitor, of manager, and so forth) involves a level of mimicry of what one assumes that the role should be based on pre-existing stereotypes. In alignment with the idea that my roles are parts of my own personality sometimes it is obvious that I am enacting out a specific role but in other moments it is less clear (even to myself).

- Purple Eyes -

Systemising roles has been for Sari something that she has done since childhood. Particularly Sari was influenced during her elementary schooling when she was taught the *6 thinking hats method of learning*⁴ developed by Edward de Bono in the 1980s. This method is a way of

⁴ According to David C. Leonard in his book “Learning Theories, A to Z” the six hat colours are: white, red, purple, yellow, green, and blue. He states: “White hat thinking is looking at the facts and figures and the data. Red hat thinking emphasizes feelings and emotions and is characterized by intuitive thinking. It is pretty much the opposite of white hat thinking. Purple hat thinking focuses on the exercise of judgement, caution, and logic. [...] Yellow hat thinking focuses on the positive, optimistic perspective of a proposal or suggestion. [...] Green hat thinking [...] represents the creative, innovative approach that involves changes. [...] Green hat thinking typically involves synthesis and the exercise of creativity for problem solving. Blue hat thinking is that which focuses on the process itself. [...] Blue hat thinking is that of the observer, someone who is viewing the process from an objective, outsider’s perspective.” (Leonard 2002, 174-175).

Purple Eyes fancies being something of a combination of the purple and blue hat ways of thinking. With a way of existing that is both observative and objective, Purple Eye’s has an outsider’s perspective. Yet also the capacity to judge and to exercise logic.

organisational learning which encourages compartmentalising different ways of thinking in association with different coloured hats.

According to Moreno “roles do not emerge from the self but that the self emerges from these roles.” (Moreno according to Carlson 2004, 41-42). Moreno also viewed that there are three core aspects of roles: “the psychosomatic, pertaining to such basic body functions as eating and sleeping; the psychodramatic, pertaining to fantasy and inner psychological processes; and the social, pertaining to relationships in the social world.” (Moreno according to Landy 1993, 23). In Moreno’s psychodramatic perspective of roles he perceived that a personality can be developed through multiple possibilities being explored and played out. This being close in many ways to Landy’s dramatherapy perspective, and contrary to many social scientists such as Ralph Linton, Erving Goffman and George Herbert Mead who all viewed roles to be socially determined and orientated by behaviour.

Sari’s fixation has been to bring to the fore the unacceptable behaviour of the otherwise acceptable role. Goffman might call this bringing the backstage to the front stage. In the case of the role of Caroliina, although she maintains her front in all situations where other people are present, she has often been portrayed in Sari’s artworks as a neurotic alcoholic and therefore her front is lowered without her own willingness. This is because Sari’s fixation has at times been to bring to the fore what would otherwise remain in the backstage. Sari’s own perspective about role differs to Goffman’s in that she distinguishes role as being the other aspects of her personality that do not necessarily present themselves in the theatre of everyday life. There is a difference between Goffman’s definition of social roles and what Sari simply terms as the roles that reflect the different parts of her personality. Goffman’s idea of the social front is the very thing that provokes Sari to retaliate. Sari creates roles in order to escape the compartmentalisation of Goffman’s theatrical society.

- Sari -

at this point I feel like a hypocrite. I really want to believe that my sister roles and I are beyond the façade that Goffman seems to talk about, about how to conduct oneself properly. Yet I also feel that Caroliina prefers to show herself to the world in a decent way. I am also sure that

Jessee-Liina smiles to be socially accepted. The reason I feel like a hypocrite is because I hide my own flaws in the roles of my sisters; as much as they each want to present themselves in socially acceptable ways to society I sabotage this by revealing my flaws as theirs.

“For several years Kivinen believed that she had effectively passed the buck to her characters, objectively shared her own neuroses and self-destructive tendencies amongst performative roles that act out any undesirable behaviour. More recently Kivinen has made the realisation that she cannot escape the system she has created for her roles; she is affected by them as much as they are of her.”

Figure 2: press release excerpt from *The Role-System*, MOP projects, Sydney 2008

[Performativity]

This term is perhaps best known by Judith Butler’s development of it in regard to research about how gender is constructed and performed (see *Gender Trouble* 1990, *Bodies That Matter* 1993). The term references John L. Austin’s 19 lectures *How to do Things with Words* in which he coined the term ‘performative’ to explain words that act. Austin’s student John Searle furthered Austin’s performative in his development of speech acts.

The lineage of Butler’s performativity also owes a great deal to ideas developed by Michel Foucault about subject formation, to Simone de Beauvoir’s discussion about “becoming” and to Jacques Derrida’s reading of Kafka’s *Before the Law*.

The PURPLE CHAPTERS of this thesis will specifically elaborate on the relevance of this term from a Butlerian perspective as well as weave in other viewpoints.

[Repetition]

In my 2009 research proposal I stated:

When I initially developed the three sibling roles and developed mannerisms, activities and a back-story for each role I found that they were able to act out and express what I previously had been unable to. Over the years their behaviour and actions have become repetitive. Through initial repetition I gained perspective of my own methods of behaving and responding [...]. As Anthony Howell states in *The Analysis of Performance Art* “repetition kills time by reduplicating the past.” (Howell 1999, 84). [...] The element of repetition is an additional element to the obstruction of the real self and to the fictitious selves⁵. As I repeat embodying the roles which repeat their specified actions and narratives I am in a sense reiterating a repressed element of the self. (Kivinen 2009).

This initial attitude towards repetition in role-play has shifted, however is relevant to mention as a point of exploration in my artistic work over the last two years. In *Spin-Fold-Spill* I began to think of repetition in role-play in reference to Gilles Deleuze’s *Difference and repetition*, for example: “To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent.” (Deleuze 1994, 1). Throughout this thesis repetition is explored in connection to how roles are repeatedly performed in the same kind of way yet always in relation to difference.

What’s Live Art got to do with it? –

One aspect in terms of “terms” is in thinking about the difference between what is generally termed as performance art and what is termed as live art. The title of the study programme within which this thesis is produced for is “Live Art and Performance Studies,” and perhaps consequently I have begun

⁵ Purple Eyes notes that: Sari’s claim about repetition being an obstruction to the real self and to fictitious selves is questionable. Purple Eyes would simplify this now as: initially when the three sisters roles manifested in Sari’s life they allowed her freedom in playing with different ways of behaviour. However as time has past the way that each sister role behaves has become stuck in a cycle of what we could term as repetition; Sari now feels an obstruction because of the routine of each sister role. Purple Eyes will elaborate on this in the PURPLE CHAPTERS in an essay about how multiple roles are performatively melancholic.

to refer to my own practice as fitting within the practicalities of the term live art with more ease than within what is often considered as performance art. This is possibly because of the hybrid nature of my practice and lack of focus on the ephemeral “authenticity” of the live moment. And although I am not a theatre practitioner I do utilise theatrical elements in my practice with scripted monologues, emphasis of being in-role, and use of costumes. In *Spin-Fold-Spill* the blurring of performance art, theatre, and visual arts was a confusing one for many who experienced the installation and performance. It combined live and mediated elements such as role-play, video, and text.

Theorists and practitioners of performance art often speak of the special liveness of the witnessed and shared moment in performance – unrepeatable and authentic. Performance art cannot be scripted, repeated, or faked. Its essence is the live moment. This moment is for many experienced as an image in time; the performing body freezing for a microscopic pinch of time whilst an image is perceived by those present in real time witnessing the ephemeral moment. I am not sure that it is of particular importance to over-define these terms yet it is relevant to acknowledge that there are different schools of thinking in regard to performance art and live art. Below I will outline historical lineage that I find relevant to frame my own practice.

Historical movements –

The historical movements which are often referred to when discussing the roots of performance art include Futurism, Dada (& Cabaret Voltaire), Fluxus, Happenings, and Body Art. The context in which each of these movements arose was specific. For example “Cabaret Voltaire” in 1916 was in many ways a provocation to encourage social change through creative forms such as spoken word, song, and dance. With a focus on language, Hugo Ball invented a sequence of verses without any identifiable word or sense.

Skipping ahead in time, it has been said that action painter Jackson Pollock was a big influence for Fluxus and the Happenings of the late 1950s that themselves are said to have been a major influence for the performance art that proceeded them. This was because the emphasis suddenly shifted from producing an art product to exploring an action.

Happenings were one of the first recorded instances in which the audience (spectator) was placed into the middle of the action. As an interdisciplinary art form Happenings were connected to theatrical and visual art practices. Close connections between art and life were emphasized. Happenings involved artists such as Wolf Vostell and Allan Kaprow. Kaprow was a former student of John Cage, whose influential thinking and teaching at the Blackmountain collage has had its ripple effect throughout many creative genres. These were artists who attempted to construct situations that were not unlike real life. One of Cage's performance goals was that incidents within a sequence of events could accidentally happen and unfold, even when they were not scripted in a determined and detailed score beforehand (as in real life).

In 1959 Kaprow's "18 Happenings in 6 Parts" took place at Reuben Gallery, New York. Audiences unwittingly became participants in a performance that broke down linearity and logical sequence. The title literally explains the context – there were eighteen happenings in six parts. Audiences had to choose which parts they would witness (without knowing what to expect). Three rooms were constructed with foil separating them, different elements were placed in each space along with a timing system. In each of the three rooms six parts took place. As collaged performance, Happenings were in their simplest form single parts that occurred in various compartments simultaneously. This being contradictory to traditional theatre and performances at the time which were logical and linear in their structure.

In Happenings the audience was always in close proximity to the event with the option of becoming participant. In a sense everyone present at a Happening was already a participant. Each person was responsible for their own transformation and level of interaction.

Whilst being known as initiator of Happenings Allan Kaprow is also well known for his ideas about blurring art and life, having written a book titled *The Blurring of Art and Life*. In one essay *Art Which Can't Be Art* (1986) Kaprow discusses how he spent two weeks in the 1980s brushing his teeth

attentively, documenting aspects of his behaviour and subsequently framing it as an everyday art action. Kaprow believes that “Ordinary life performed as art/ not art can charge the everyday with metaphoric power.” (Kaprow 1986, 222).

When planning *Spin-Fold-Spill* I considered aspects of Happenings as a collage-like-assemblage to be a relevant reference point. Yet as a solo performance *Spin-Fold-Spill* could never fulfil the ideology of a Happening. Not to mention the level of pre-determined aspects involved with *Spin-Fold-Spill*. Yet relevant is the idea of breaking linearity. *Spin-Fold-Spill's* linearity was determined by the audience/ participant choices.

“Indeed, I would compartmentalise *Spin-Fold-Spill* as one Happening in twelve parts because it took place in one location with twelve chapters.”

“But you know Caro’s, *Spin-Fold-Spill* was a scripted performance, many would say it was all acted and feigned. I know for you it’s about fitting a framework. About each chapter being a neat little packet. But serially a Happening is said to be about not pretending to be something, it’s more about a bunch of stuff just taking place.”

(Caroliina and Starella in conversation 2011).

Meanwhile another relevant reference is the work of body artists such as Carolee Schneemann and Yayoi Kusama, who throughout the 1960s presented themselves as both author and subject. In particular Kusama’s contribution to performance art in terms of her doubled and exaggerated other self, is relevant to my own presentation of exaggerated (other) selves. Amelia Jones states that the “particularized body both unveils the artist and strategically insists upon the contingency of this body/self on that of the viewer.” (Jones 1998, 9). Kusama’s performances occurred as self images and performative self exposures. Her doubled and exaggerated otherness was performed “beyond the control of art historical space.” (Jones 1998, 8). And although Kusama was always perceived as herself (real and actual) she was accentuated, eroticised, and exaggerated. “Folding the work of art into the artist (and vice versa)”. (Jones 1998, 8).

Purple Eyes –

Sari's above outline of historical lineage merely repeats the same old referencing of the canon that has been over referenced for decades now. In actual fact Purple Eyes knows that Sari does not care much for most of these artists or art movements, indeed she finds them important for their contribution, but she does not find them truly relevant to her own artistic practice. The only included reference that Purple Eyes believes is useful for Sari is Allan Kaprow, as both like to write about brushing their teeth.

Purple Eyes would like to suggest that Sari is much more influenced by artists such as: Pipilotti Rist (whose video *I'm not the girl who misses much* is possibly the reason Sari began to film herself and to quote pop songs in her work); then there are the two Australian male performance artists Mike Parr and Tony Schwensen whose solo performances Sari has witnessed from time to time in Sydney between 2000-2009; artists groups who work in a socially engaged performative way have also been eye opening for Sari, for example Squat Space in Sydney and their Redfern Tour of Beauty, and the Finnish performance art group Messianic Research Center for Visual Ethics. Purple Eyes would argue that these artists have influenced Sari's practice more greatly than any of the artists that Sari discusses in the above section.

Research projects leading up to *Spin-Fold-Spill* –

The various projects explored since I posed the question about how to deconstruct the Role-System have subsequently involved attempts to dislodge, to question, to fragment, and to change the Role-System. Instead of metaphorically killing the Role-System, it has merely changed and grown. On the road to *Spin-Fold-Spill* there were three distinct projects that contributed to producing material in response to my initial research question. The projects in order of execution are titled: *Role Investigations*; *Fictional Space Investigations*; and *Textual Opera-Ration*.

Below is a brief abstract about each project. Throughout this thesis I will reference these projects in various ways in conjunction to their relevance to a particular role and chapter theme.

Role Investigations took place as part of a cabaret event in December 2009. During three separate evenings I explored playing out the three pre-existing

roles by experimenting with on-stage switches between the roles (for example switching between Jessee-Liina and Sari). A theme that emerged from these performances was a hesitancy about continuing to embody the roles. This hesitancy is discussed by Jessee-Liina in PINK CHAPTER I.

Contrastingly *Fictional Space Investigations* and *Textual Opera-Ration* explored alternatives to playing out the 'existing' roles. For example in *Fictional Space Investigations* performance actions were developed through a process of three workshops with school children (ages 7-12) exploring their ideas about make-believe spaces. Ideas generated in the workshops were interpreted into performance actions that were performed in colour co-ordinated environments.

Textual Opera-Ration was a durational writing performance in which I attempted to write through the roles for several hours during the exhibition Co-Operation. An aim was that new perspectives would emerge through the writing process as a way to challenge and develop the narrative. Each pre-existing role had a specific colour to write with, for example Jessee-Liina was represented by pink, Caroliina was yellow, Sari was green, and Starella was black. Three new voices emerged: Gareth Bdm (grey pen), Purple Eyes (purple pen), and an unnamed male psychiatrist writing in blue pen. This project was specifically important as one big shift away from embodying the roles in the same way that I previously had (wig, costumes, mannerism) to embodying them via a textual process.

**

This introduction has outlined the basic premise of *Spin-Fold-Spill*.
You as reader are now invited to explore the twelve coloured parts.

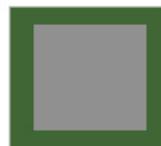
-- thesis parts: themes connected to colours --



compartmentalisation
of materials



memory & distortion



owning a story
& make-believe



archival footage
and the role of the camera



melancholia of performativity
in roles



multiple persona
in art practices



melancholia of performativity
in roles



repetition of a
role-mould



text and auto biography



the voice recorded



role-play & resistance



melancholia of
performativity in roles

-- end of introduction --



GREY & GREEN CHAPTER: Gareth retold

FEATURING: SARI

Script

Adorn the green gloves that are located in a clear plastic bag hanging on a clothes line in the installation. Take a chair and place it close to the audience and tell them the following story.

“We wrote this song once about Gareth. At the time we didn’t know his name though. So our song, it went: ‘the man without a name is going back to never-never-land/ riding into the sunset with his beer battered breath and cult 45 still smoking.’ Gareth was always a mystery to us. A gaping void in our recollections. We knew he was watching but we didn’t know from where. For a long time we didn’t know even what he looked like, all we knew was that someone was watching us intensely. I guess he never meant any real harm though. Just wanted to grasp a sense of our lives, cos his own life seemed so shitty. ‘The man without a name is going back to never-never-land.....’ The first time we concretely knew that he was watching was when he left a note on our regular bus, he’d taped a note on the seat that Starella always sits in, the note was addressed to ‘the pretty one with long dark dreds.’ Star went red and we thought she might throw up into her hair.

Aina tämmöisiä hetkiä kun aika vaan pysähtyy. Ja joku rakasti Starellaa enemmän kuin meitä muita siskoja. Tää oli tosi outo tilanne.

‘Mies ilman nimeä menee takaisin ei-koskaan-ei-koskaan-maahan. Ratsastaa auringon laskuun, olut hajuinen hengitys ja colt 45 vielä savuaa.’

Gareth kept leaving strange notes around the joint. Teasing us. Scaring us. We became suspicious of everyone, we watched our backs.

It’s a strange sensation to know someone is watching. And yet every attempt to catch the reciprocal gaze ends up so fleeting that one never knows for sure if it really occurred.

What has really occurred?

Mitä täällä oikeasti tapahtuu? Tässä hetkessä mikä on aina jo mennyt....

‘Who was there and who did what, what could I do? What could I do? The man without a name is going back to never-never-land with his beer battered breath and cult 45 still smoking.’”

Take off the green gloves, return them to the bag and return the bag to the clothes line. Pick up the chair and return to the installation.



Video still of Sari re-telling a story about Gareth in *Spin-Fold-Spill*.

Filmed by Juhani Koivumäki.

owning a story & make-believe

“It is written in loss, with words all too conscious of what they are unable to convey.”
(Phelan 1997, 8).

In compiling the stories for *Spin-Fold-Spill* I folded together various real life experiences with imagined experiences. Narrative was explored through text, live performance, installation, and video. In particular the videos and text combined archival material with new material that was produced within the installation. As discussed in the GREEN CHAPTER the narratives explored in *Spin-Fold-Spill* neither begin nor end in its materialisation as an installation and performance. Both this written component and the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performance have been developed out of a method of cut’n’paste. I have mixed material produced throughout my lifetime in order to tell a story. This is an account of oneself fragmented over time.

I am interested to explore ideas about how to tell a story through role, whilst hoping that through exploring storytelling with layers of perspectives (via multiple roles) that I can learn something about myself. I challenge the statement that Judith Butler has made in *The Psychic Life of Power* that: “The subject loses itself to tell the story of itself.” (Butler 1997, 11). I challenge this statement because I hope that through telling a story of myself that I locate – not lose – myself.

“I” tell the story of Gareth –

“And if you have five seconds to spare then I’ll tell you the story of my life.”
(The Smiths 1986).

In *Spin-Fold-Spill* I attempted to develop Gareth’s role in the Role-System. He was the only role who did not manifest physically during the performances. His perspective was pre-recorded as a soundtrack. This aspect of recorded voice is discussed in detail in the GREY CHAPTER. The focus within this

section is to elaborate how storytelling has functioned as a method of exploring what the Role-System is. The example of *Gareth retold* is used as a starting point.

When Gareth Bdm first appeared in the Role-System, during the durational writing performance *Textual Opera-Ration*, different roles attempted to explain what his function in the Role-System was. The role of Purple Eyes, for example, appeared in the script shortly after Gareth, with the initial purpose of making sense of why Gareth appeared in the Role-System. Simultaneously Sari commented her concerns about Gareth in green pen, and Caroliina immediately began seeing a shrink after Gareth appeared (although she never mentioned Gareth in her writing). These varied responses to the new role of Gareth suggests that his presence causes an uneasiness for the other roles. This uneasiness could be because Gareth's presence causes a rupture to the reality of the pre-existing roles. This is comparable to the hesitancy that Jessee-Liina discusses in PINK CHAPTER I.

In *Gareth retold* Sari intimately discusses how Gareth appeared during her childhood. Her story tells about how Gareth began leaving strange notes for her sister Starella on the bus they took home from school. It is a short script which is mostly in English and partly in Finnish. All of Sari's stories are told in a combination of English and Finnish.

How are things made up?

Actuality in Sari's work arises from personal starting points. The element of the unreal, the illusionary play frame so to speak, occurs through roles which take on board the fictitious realm of the other. Each of Sari's roles are her, yet not her, as they operate in the real-world relating fictitiously to each other. Referencing the work of Richard Schechner, Marvin Carlson states that "within the play frame a performer is not herself (because of the operations of illusion) but she is also not not herself (because of the operations of reality)". (Schechner according to Carlson 2004, 49). Sari finds this double consciousness of being her but not her to be strange grey area in attaining an understanding of self.

Who is Speaking?

Sari -

Much of the process for *Spin-Fold-Spill* was to explore the meanings and context of the language that is my own. And when I say *my* own, I refer also to the many parts that constitute me. And I wonder - do the different parts of me have their own unique linguistic ability? Or are we all in the same constrained boat?

Who is speaking?

In *Excitable Speech* Judith Butler states that the “Subject speaking is responsible for speech but rarely is originator of the speech” (Butler 1997, 34). In this perspective I can choose the compilation of words for my story, yet I am never really the creator of this compilation, what I say and what I write, what I am able to perceive as myself and my story are to many extents pre-determined. Butler’s proposition is that “the one who acts (not the same as the sovereign subject) acts precisely to the extent that he/ she is constituted as actor hence operating within a linguistic field of enabling constraints from the outset.” (Butler 1997, 16). Weaving doses of Austinian illocution (words that act), with Althusserian interpellation⁶, Butler examines how speech performs and how much of what it performs is linguistically pre-determined. She proposes interpellation as an always already given, the subject does not need to turn around when being hailed in order to be interpellated. Similarly linguistics (language in its form, meaning and context) is constrained from the outset. From the beginning of our subjecthood (mine, my sisters, yours) we are brought into this linguistic

⁶ Structuralist Louis Althusser coined the term ‘interpellation’ in 1972. An example he used was of a policeman calling out “hey you!” on a busy street to which a man turns around in response. In the act of turning he becomes interpellated (becomes a subject). The person is therefore called into the subjecthood. “By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*.” (Althusser 1972, 174).

realm where the words we use to say something, anything, are already limited.

Starella -

I cut up the master narrative of my life and fractured it into the story that I thought was the story of your life. The act of writing, of wording, juxtaposed beside silence. The act of placing silence.

Spin-Fold-Spill is about how to obscure autobiographical material through the fiction of roles. It is about exploring monologue, about speaking subjects, about telling ones own story and simultaneously playing with the certainty of whose story it is/ was. (This has been said so many times before).

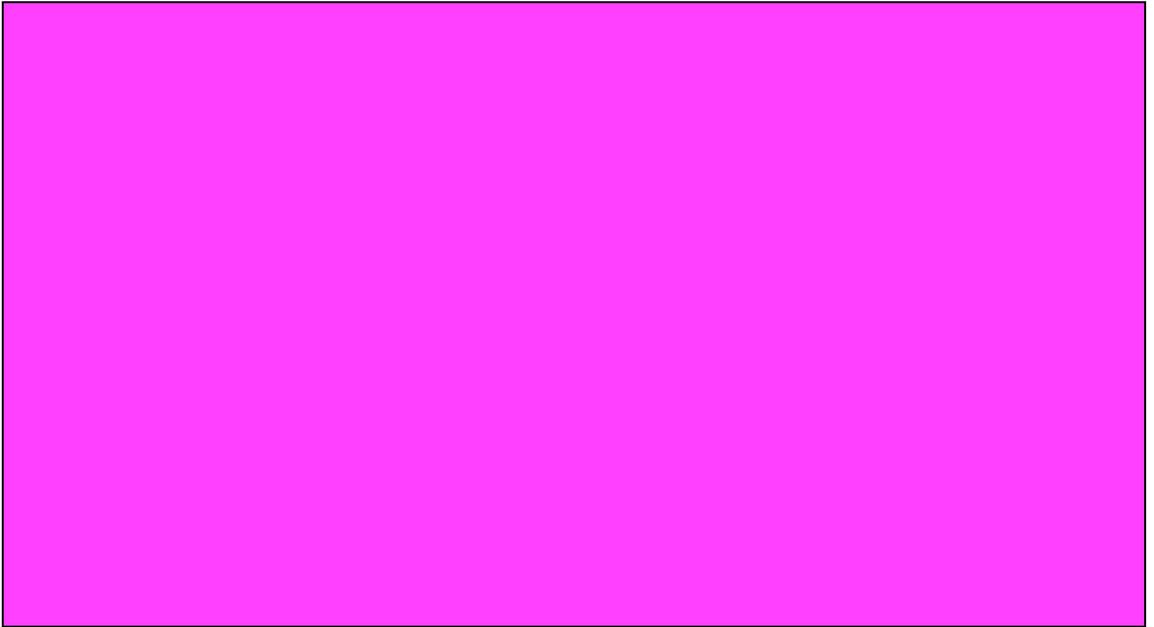
Sari -

I can say that every time we speak I feel melancholic.

These words I love in my two mother tongues (English and Finnish) are never enough. We limit each other, these words and me, and my many parts. We are uncomfortable speaking subjects, and conflicted ones too. We love to speak yet to speak saddens us. Because we can never fulfill the potential of these words, and the words can never fulfill our intention.

Starella -

Yet this story is ours. I whisper it to her as she falls into her dreamings.



PINK CHAPTER II: Jesse-Liina lines
FEATURING: JESSEE-LIINA



Jessee-Liina lines in Spin-Fold-Spill. Photographed by Juuso Noronkoski.

Script

Lights adjusted to the brightest levels. Walk to the clothesline and pick up the bag with the pink headpiece in it. Adorn the headpiece, make sure to smile as soon as it goes on to the head. Enthusiastically tell the following monologue:

“We are told to stand in line. I am the tallest so I stand to the left (his left as he stands facing us). To my immediate left stands Caroliina, then Sari, and then Starella. I am ten years of age. Starella is a toddler. The others are located between these ages.

I am the prettiest and have the sweetest best smile. People are generally kind to me, as a child, based on these attributes.

As I stand in line I smile my best smile. He glares at me. I wonder why he glares as I keep smiling.

A camera flashes. We, in our line assemble, are caught inside the picture. Four sisters in their best Sunday clothes (except for Starella in her plastic nappy).

The photograph is printed and framed and placed onto the mantelpiece at our family home. Proof of a time when we were children together – shiny happy children.”

MEMORY & DISTORTION

The child resembles the father, for both father and child possess the capability of mimesis. Whereas the woman, the receiver, cannot change, for she has no form and so can neither be named nor discussed. She has no essence, for all that comes into being, according to Plato, partakes no form. I knew this as a child, before I had ever read Plato, Irigaray, Butler. That, as a girl, I was outside the world. I wasn't. I had no name. For me, language was being. There was no entry for me into language. As a receptacle, as a womb, as Butler argues, I could be entered, but I could not enter, and so I could neither have nor make meaning in the world. I was unspeakable so I ran into the language of others. In this essay, as yet, I am only repeating the language of others. (Acker 1997, 161).

Jessee-Liina remembers –

I am smiling my bestest smile. Somehow my long term crush, the awe inspiring Renny Kodgers invited me out for a drink after a somewhat odd discussion via Myspace. And now he has totally invited me up to check out his penthouse at the Hilton Hotel on George Street, Sydney.

On my way up in the elevator I glance nervously at the tall man next to me. The elevator rises fifty floors and eases to a halt. A sharp right. Ten paces. A turn of the key and we're both inside. Before either of us have the chance to turn on the light the phone rings. Just like he said it would. As he answers the phone and speaks with a secretive hushed tone, I turn on the light and visit the generous bathroom. Gold edged porcelain details offer a small touch of

luxury.

I pick up a toothbrush and attempt small circular movements. With a firm hand I brush my teeth. At a specific moment I look up and catch a vision of my reflection in the bathroom mirror. I recall that I usually avoid looking at my reflection in the mirror, especially in the mornings because I prefer to wash and smooth my face before presenting it to myself. But this particular morning is different. As I catch sight of myself an unremarkable image starts to surface, one that I had never really examined even though I myself have created the image. I am reminded of this book I once saw by Alan Kaprow⁷, he was this guy who got really known in the states in like the 1950s cos he organized something called a happening. But anyways in this book I looked through he was talking about how he made an art project about brushing his teeth. The whole book was like about doing really mundane things and calling it art. I guess anything can be art these days.

When I finish brushing my teeth and adjusting my hair I walk back in to the abundant open space of the master suite, and in my faux American accent I attempt a conversation. “Renny darling, you know I’m really in the mood for cooking up a cauliflower soup. I don’t know if I ever told you but I absolutely adore working with cauliflower. It’s kind like working with a brain. Don’t you think?”

No answer.

“Well cauliflower totally reminds me of a performance I once saw, this lady, Rachel I think her name was, was going on about how the cauliflower is like a human brain. Then she attacked the cauliflower with cleavers and knives, and proceeded to puree it. She said it was about how ‘fundamentally split we are’ (Rosenthal in Chaudhuri 2001, 281). But you know, Renny darling, I never really believed her. I don’t think us humans are split at all. Just look at us,

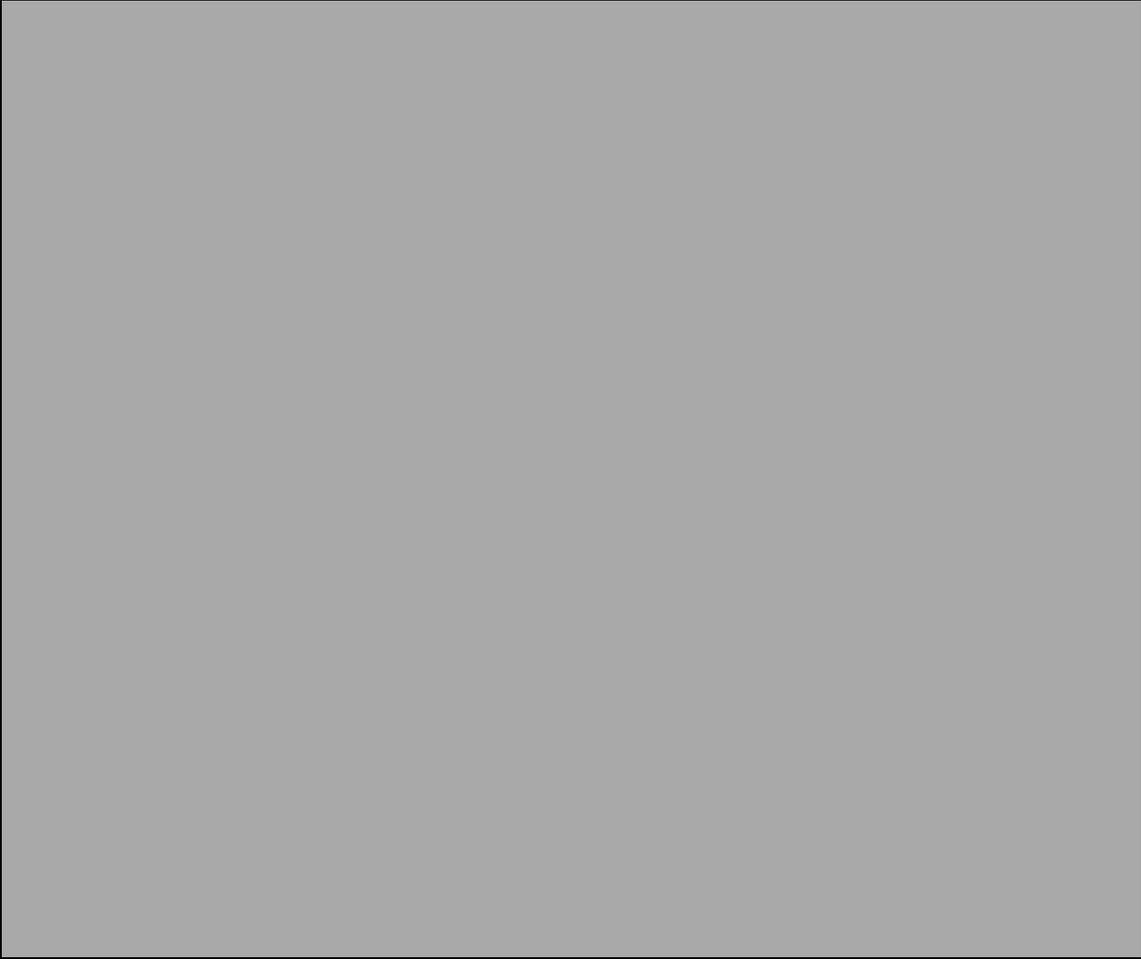
⁷ Purple Eyes: here Jessee-Liina means Allan Kaprow.

complete individuals. Whole in ourselves.”

I wait for an answer.

I then notice that I am alone in the room. I walk back to the bathroom. The vinyl plastic edges of the cupboards are starting to crack, I stare at myself in the mirror. Whilst adjusting the crinkled white suit that I am wearing, I realise that my severely orange fake tan has started to sweat, making my grey beard look a little, well, fake.

The End



GREY CHAPTER: Gareth's perspective

FEATURING: GARETH BDM

Script

The script is recorded as a sound file. Playback occurs with sub-sonic speakers booming the audio out from the inside of the installation. Lights are dimmed.

Gareth speaks –

“Watching them from the inside out. Every weekday at 3.30pm, I sit inside my regular watching out the window, seeing them strolling, jumping, frisking around. I got big ideas and bad ambitions. This is what I got. Big ideas, bad ambitions. Surviving each day till they stroll past the window of my regular. Swaying their school bags, swaying those pretty little bony hips. Watching them at 3.30pm each weekday, Friday's the worst. Monday's the best. Don't know what to do with myself on the weekends. I guess just drinking the whiskey that's been the sweet thorn in my life. And kicking around some footy ball on some footy field with some blokes who ain't really understanding of anything real. Reading newspapers every morning gives me little kinda hope about the world I'm living in, cos man, there ain't seem to be anything really real that's keeping these guts together. Just watching out the window, watching inside out. Inside out I'm watching. I'm watching this here world



External view of the installation. Photographed by Juuso Noronkoski.

from the inside out. When I was a young lad I run rampant in the city I was born in. Excited for every new sight and sound. But then the comfort got a hold of me, a place to call my regular, and a flat across the road. Pretty girls walking past. What's more a guy need? What's more a guy like me need. Christened as Gareth, my mama always took good care of me, real good care. Though my daddy left home when I was young. And didn't seem to leave much for mama and me. I was the man of the house. And I looked after my mama real good. Always had these big ambitions for life, big bad ideas for I could become. And now just sitting here, watching the sun go down on those pretty swaying hips. Long dark hair. She looks like she'll grow up to be a bloody star one day."

A MALE VOICE PROTRUDES OUT FROM THE BOX. IT BOOMS. IT DOMINATES. BUT IT NEVER SHOWS ITS FACE.

The only picture seen publicly of Gareth Bdm is on his myspace page. I suspect it is a grabbed picture from the internet, chosen by Gareth to represent his image. Gareth's myspace page tells us that he is from Brighton in the United Kingdom, yet his accent in *Spin-Fold-Spill* sounds Ocker Australian. Gareth first appeared in August 2010 during the durational writing project *Textual Opera-Ration* stating:

I watch them move. Positioned at my regular café bar I occupy a window seat as I read a newspaper and sip black coffee. In an hour or two I'll switch to a stronger drink. This seat works well for me as the ideal spot to watch what's going on in the café bar as well as everything that goes on outside. I get to know a lot of the people who regularly visit the joint as well as faces of people who regularly walk past.

I watch them move – three girls maybe sisters – as I drink my coffee. Almost every weekday I see one, two or all three of them as they wait for a bus just outside of my regular. They look about ten or twelve years old. Maybe if they really are sisters then they're all different ages but somewhere around there anyway.

One has bouncy blonde curls and appears dominant over the others, a bit fussy though. Another has long dark hair that always seems to cover her eyes. I'm most intrigued by this one even though she looks like she might be the youngest out of all of them. Dark hair girl is the sexiest out of all of them. I think about her a lot. The third seems dowdy, a bit dull, possibly the shyest of them.

I switch to whiskey whilst they wait for their bus. The bus arrives "39." The time is 4.05pm.

One day I reckon I'll catch "39" and have myself a real good time.

Figure 1: Gareth writes in *Textual Opera-Ration*, 2010

A voice booms from the base speakers. The room is darkened. Lights out. The voice references country singers; Johnny Cash singing *A Boy Named Sue* “Though my daddy left home when I was three. And didn’t seem to leave much for mama and me.” And Jeff Bridges’ character Bad Blake in the film *Crazy Heart* singing “Drinking the whiskey that’s been the sweet thorn in my life.”

The voice that never shows its face. Is this my male counterpart? Or is Gareth Bdm merely the man whose very existence bothers me. When he appeared in *Textual Opera-Ration* I wrote the following story:

Gareth just appeared (arrow pointing left). I don’t trust him. He’s definitely no knight in shining armour. I’m scared of what he is capable of.

I kissed Gareth once at the Crown bar, well actually it was just outside the Crown, out by Cowpers Wharf. Almost everyone had left already. I ended up kissing Gareth, so did Ron (my hairdresser). All I really remember is standing outside the Crown kissing Gareth, not able to stand up quite straight, and then suddenly running back inside to puke in the ladies toilet. Coming back outside, everyone had disappeared. It was a strange evening. Dangerous too. The type of danger that is so silly that when you place yourself in its grasp and realise the next day what’s happened, it’s hard to trust oneself to visit places like the Crown again.

P.S. remember own instincts “trust”

Figure 2: Sari writes about Gareth in *Textual Opera-Ration*, 2010.

The Gareth that I discuss in this story originates from one strange night in Sydney in 2008. Yet the Gareth that appears as a new role in the Role-System is different to the Gareth I discuss above; he seems to be an actual part of me somehow. Maybe his namesake is merely a reminder for me of the dangerous situations I have placed myself and my sisters into over the years. Gareth’s presence in the Role-System is possibly a resonance of these situations.

RECORDED SOUND –

Perhaps the commonest experiential proof of the voice's split condition, as at once cleaving to and taking leave from myself, is provided by the experience of hearing one's own recorded voice. This experience became available for the first time in human history only after Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1876 and became common only after the popularisation of tape-recording technology after the Second World War. [...] The most striking thing about the popularisation of the tape-recorder is the experience that it made familiar of the unfamiliarity of one's own voice as heard by others. (Connor 2000, 7).

Gareth's voice booming from the loud speakers is a recorded voice, it is my voice. Recorded in a sound studio with modern technology and manipulated via computer software. Yet it is still my voice. It is the tone that is manipulated. The rhythm's, the accent, and the hesitancy in my voice remain 'authentic'. The words that Gareth speak come from me (both written and vocalised).

Steven Connor discusses how when people hear a playback of their voice recorded they often shrink from it, do not recognise themselves; or *do not want* to recognise their own voice/ self in what they hear. He defines differences between how people generally hear their own voice when speaking as being "invested with strong feelings of recognition, please, and love." (Connor 2000, 9). And when hearing ones voice recorded there is often an experience of unfamiliarity and of finding the voice "alien—ugly, piping, thin, crude, drawling, barking, or otherwise unattractive." (Connor 2000, 9).

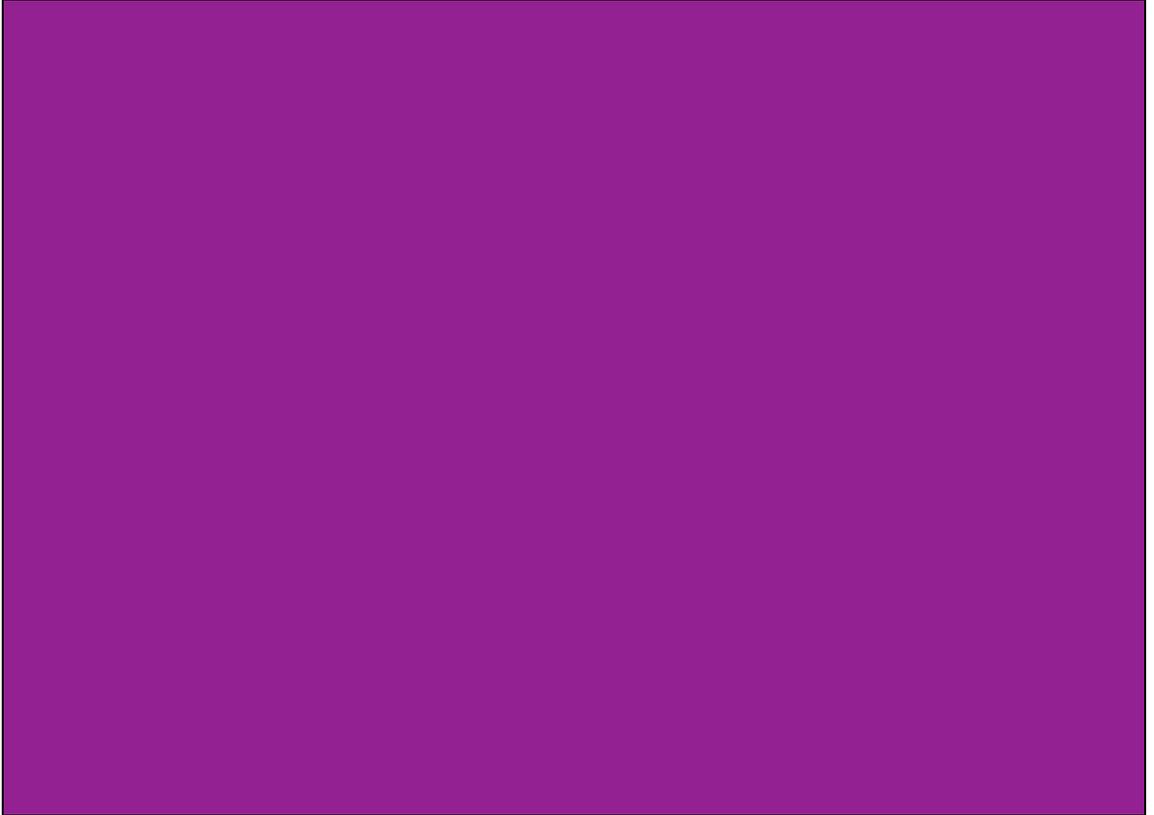
It was an interesting process to record the monologue for Gareth, and purposely I tried to keep my tone level and I did not attempt to conceal or neutralise my Australian accent, rather I used it to direct the flow of how Gareth spoke. Any discomfort in hearing my voice on playback was minimised due to the fact that this recording was not really representing my voice but was the voice for Gareth that would be further manipulated. Yet still this voice

recorded is a part of me that is estranged from my body. The voice is, in Connor's words, "a voice amputated from its body." (Connor 2000, 11).

The voice is heard in *Spin-Fold-Spill* coming out from the inside of the installation (an interior that is mainly inhabited by female roles). Gareth is presented in *Spin-Fold-Spill* mainly as an outsider – a detached voice, a voyeur – yet the voice comes *out* from the *inside* of the installation. The installation is the space that represents the internal part of the Role-System. If we consider the installation itself as a kind of body (a vessel) for the Role-System, could we state that the voice of Gareth is coming out of the installation-as-body? This adds a further insight into how to think about the physicality of the body in general when analysing the multiple roles in *Spin-Fold-Spill* and the Role-System. And especially when I think about my own body in respect to the various role representations.

During the chapter *Gareth's Perspective* I turned the lights down, pressed play on the soundtrack, adjusted the sound levels, and then stepped out of the installation from the side door (being concealed from the audience). As Gareth's voice projected out of the installation-as-body, my physical self stood outside of the installation; my body no longer part of the body that Gareth inhabits. However I recognise myself in his voice, possibly I can perceive him as my Other, yet I do not em-body him. At least not in the same way as I have embodied Jessee-Liina, Caroliina, Sari, and Starella.

In this section I have explored some ideas surrounding Gareth as a new role, and I have posed the question of: in what ways is Gareth a part of me? The relationship between the recorded voice, the body, and the installation of *Spin-Fold-Spill* has been discussed and I have particularly wondered about the connection between my physical body, my recorded voice manipulated as Gareth's voice, and the installation-as-body.

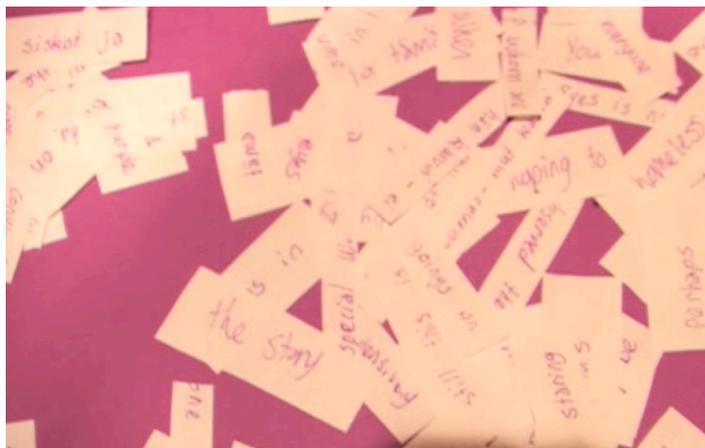


PURPLE CHAPTER I: Purple Eyes narrates introduction FEATURING: PURPLE EYES



Purple Eyes narrates introduction in *Spin-Fold-Spill* with shuffled words read at random.

Photograph by Juuso Noronkoski.



PURPLE EYES ENTERS THE ROOM AND BEGINS TO TELL A STORY. THE STORY TURNS INTO THE STORY OF THE FOUR SISTERS (THE SAME STORY TOLD MANY TIMES BEFORE). PURPLE EYES BEGINS TO MAP OUT THE REASONS FOR THEIR FAILURE TO ESCAPE EACH OTHER. THIS TURNS INTO AN ESSAY ABOUT THE MELANCHOLIC PERFORMATIVITY EXPERIENCED BY THE FOUR SISTERS.

This essay is written from the perspective of Purple Eyes, a role in Sari's Role-System who always speaks from the third person perspective. As mentioned in the GREY CHAPTER, Purple Eyes first materialised in Sari's work during the project *Textual Opera-Ration* in response to the emergence of the role Gareth Bdm. This sounds confusing. To simplify: Purple Eyes is the role in charge of theorising and explaining, thus arises when something requires an explanation. This essay in three parts (Purple I, II, & III) will explore the question: how does the melancholy of performativity relate to performing through multiple persona? This question will be mapped and explored with reference to theoretical notions of performativity and melancholia.

The basic premise of approaching the idea of multiple personas experiencing melancholic performativity follows the logic that firstly there is the singular person who experiences melancholy associated to the received expectation of her/his way of performing herself / himself in daily life. As a result s/he creates an alternate self or selves that have the ability to perform themselves in ways other than the ways that s/he is expected to. The singular is now multiple. However the initial sense of freedom in creating new versions of self sooner or later becomes equally limited as the multiple selves are intricately connected to the limitations of the singular person that invents and performs them. Thus the sense of melancholy that arises from an initial sense of constraint arises again in the multiplicities of self.

Using the example of what Sari terms as her Role-System as a case study, we could consider her initial thesis question as one reflection of experiencing melancholy of multiple selves. The question posed by Sari in 2009, of what

would happen if the sister roles were no longer available for her to perform through, indicates a clear point of change between an initial enthusiasm to perform via alternate selves to wanting a new alternative (a desire to metaphorically kill of her alternative selves in order for something new and unknown).

But then a new question arose for Sari, what if all multiples are not really alternative in the sense of being *other* versions of self. Rather, what if all multiples are (or become) merely reflections of the self one attempts to escape,⁸ but never can.



Figure 1: stages of self

Notion's of performativity –

Performativity reflects how cultural norms are repetitively and ritually re-enacted. In Judith Butler's development of the term she referenced the work of many thinkers. For example she has been specifically influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and his investigations of exploring the lineage of various lines of subjection and power. "Foucault's notion that regulatory power produces the subjects it controls, that power is not only imposed

⁸ This is somewhat clumsily and simply stated. If time could allow Purple Eyes would explore how the possibility of creating roles that are reflections of what one hopes to escape is not acknowledged on a conscious level. Purple Eyes would like to explore this through various theoretical lenses, and will do so in the future.

externally, but works as the regulatory and normative means by which subjects are formed.” (Butler 1993, 22).

Another reference is Jacques Derrida’s reading of Kafka’s *Before the Law*. In this story, a man seeking the law travels to the door where the law is guarded by a gatekeeper, the man is told that he can not enter at this time, he waits until a time that he can enter and sits at the door until almost the end of his life when at last he is permitted entry, “the one who seeks the law, sits before the door of the law, attributes a certain force to the law for which one waits.” (Butler 1999, p. xiv). Butler wondered if gender could be considered to operate in a similar way, a process of waiting with a comparable expectation. Assuming that gender operates in this way, and as we wait to become our gendered selves are we therefore subject to “an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates”? (Butler 1999, xiv).

Simone de Beauvoir’s seminal text *The Second Sex* is considered in *Gender Trouble* as an important reference point in the development of what is considered performativity. Specifically the quote: “One is not born a woman, rather becomes one.” (Beauvoir according to Butler 1999, 141). This quote is relevant precisely for questioning what it means to become one’s gender, a question which Butler explores in depth, it is through this example that Butler delves into the implications of: how one becomes, who is doing the becoming, and is there a choice to the becoming? An important distinction implied in this quote is in regard to the differences between biological sex and gendered becoming.

For Simone de Beauvoir, it seems, the verb ‘become’ contains a consequential ambiguity. Gender is not only a cultural construction imposed upon identity, but in some sense gender is a process of constructing ourselves. (Butler 1998, 31).

Butler’s critique about how we construct ourselves ultimately returns to the limitations of the norms that are pre-stated; the boundaries governing how we can perceive to construct our genders. Although “becoming” suggests a

process of subject formation, the construction of the gendered subject, the term also suggests a choice. Whilst biological sex is concrete in its status, one is born either male or female⁹, becoming a gender also implies a naturalisation of sorts; to become a man or woman steeped in traditions of societal conventions. The limitations of how we can choose our genders are questionable, for are we not always bound by the stereotypes that we know?

Conventionally gender has a mimetic relationship towards biological sex: “Gender mirrors sex or is restricted by it.” (Butler 1999, 10). In believing that sex as a category is from the beginning of life considered normative and in Foucauldian terms a “regulatory ideal”, Butler fundamentally states that sex is not only normative in its way of operating but is part of a governing body that regulates its practice. Ideals of how each sex should behave become in themselves the regulators of maintaining that the norms of gender are adhered to through a process of passing down, repeating, and effectively ritualising. The expectation that we will each become our pre-destined genders, which are then consequently “performed” as part of society is the essential foundation of Butler’s critique of how gender norms function.

If a person does not fit the prescription of what he/ she should be as a gendered identity, the effect can be that the “notion of ‘the person’ is called into question.” (Butler 1999, 23.) In other words, if a person’s gender does not concur to the expectations of the cultural norms of that person’s society then the reality of that person is called into question. Butler’s arguments seek to question the normalities of convention, and to destabilise presumptions about the norms of gender. Referring to Beauvoir’s “becoming”, Butler states “being sexed and being human as coextensive and simultaneous” (Butler 1999, 142).

⁹ There are exceptions to being born as a set biological sex for example in the rare case of being born as a hermaphrodite, an anatomical combination of male and female. Butler devotes a section of *Gender Trouble* to the discussion of Herculine Barbin, a hermaphrodite that Foucault has written about.

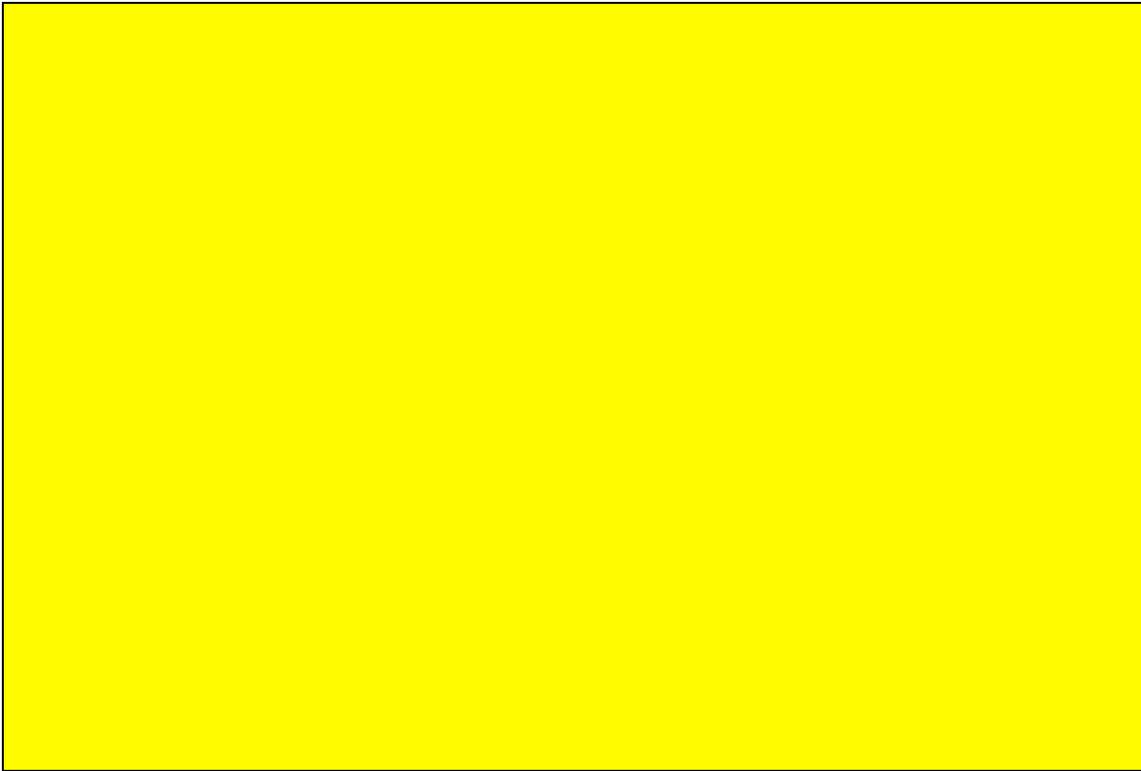
HERE PURPLE EYES BEGINS MERELY TO REITERATE THE INFORMATION FOUND IN TEXT-BOOKS. PURPLE EYES MUST FIND A WAY TO ESCAPE THE EXPECTATION OF THIS ESSAY.

Next we will explore Vicki Bell's recent work about the genealogy of performativity by referencing her book *Culture & Performance: The challenge of ethics, politics and feminist theory* (2007). These theoretical reference points will assist us to assert what we mean by performativity in relation to the Role-System. ~~And in thinking about melancholy Freud's classic essay *Mourning And Melancholia* will be considered alongside Butler's reworking of Freud's theories in conjunction to gender and identity.~~

In many ways each role in Sari's Role-System reflects a stereotype. In role-playing as three sister roles Sari has explored her own associations of being a woman and the restrictions of societal role-moulds from multiple perspectives. In the newer role of Gareth Bdm, Sari explores associations of maleness, yet Purple Eyes wonders if the role of Gareth Bdm is also restricted to a role-mould? Is not his presence in the Role-System merely informed by the sister roles that came before him? Therefore Gareth is not merely a male role-mould but a role-mould restricted to the limitations of Sari's own constructed (female) subjectivity.

Consequently Sari often wonders if she is constrained to merely repeating the same scenario over and over again. A scenario disguised in the appearance of difference (of variation) yet always fundamentally the same. She wonders if her sense of multiple-identity is rather just a repetition of the same-person-type who manifests in different appearances. She wonders about behaviour in general, is it learnt via mimicry? Absorbed into us via subtle levels of observation—at conscious and unconscious levels—ever since (or even before) we were born into this world? Something passed down to us by the almost invisible threads of genealogical history we are intricately sewn into.

-- to be continued --



YELLOW CHAPTER: Caroliina's yellow room
FEATURING: CAROLIINA

* On my first day inside the installation I sat and I sewed the headpiece for Purple Eyes. I used wire to sculpt the big round glasses and then I sat and hand-sewed purple fabric around the wire as visitors came into the space and asked me questions. *



Video still from *Caroliina's Shift*. Filmed by Juhani Koivumäki.

Script

Dim the lights. Choose track 4 on the CD player and press play. Adorn a yellow apron. Pick up a bucket of lemons and exit the installation from the side door. Stand in the shadows to the right side of the audience. Slowly pick up the lemons one-by-one and place them into the groove of the folded left arm. Continue to pick up more lemons from the bucket. Try to hold onto them in the arms groove for as long as possible. When they eventually begin to drop, let them remain on the ground, pick up the empty bucket and return to the installation via the side door.

COMPARTMENTALISATION OF MATERIALS –

Inside the installation-box is a white round table and a white clothes line nailed into a wooden wall. At the table sits Caroliina on a timbre chair with yellow upholstery. On the clothes line hang six plastic bags (20cm x 30cm). Each bag contains a costume piece and is pegged onto the clothes line with two pale timbre pegs.

During the evening performances Caroliina undertook a repeated action of taking the plastic bags, one by one, from the line. It was not obvious to the audience that Caroliina was the one to undertake the repeated action of removing the transparent bags one by one. Yet, I was aware that I evoked the Caroliina in me when taking the bags one by one as a preparation of embodying the role that the costume inside the bag symbolised.

The thought of approaching tasks through the roles as specific parts of me is an act of compartmentalising. Compartmentalising of the personality can easily occur in everyday life for many people in different ways, and is possibly even expected as a normality of fitting-in¹⁰. However most people do not consciously say “now I am going to evoke the Caroliina part of me.” In medically recorded cases of multiple personality disorder a more dramatic take-over occurs as the alter personalities are triggered to deal with different situations. However generally the predominant personality is not consciously aware of what occurred (often suffering from amnesia) and is not in control of the other personality part/s. In the role theory method of dramatherapy roles are consciously employed in order to deal with the personalities many parts. My sense of how I work with roles as personality parts fits somewhere between this dramatherapy method and within my understanding of how multiple personalities function. I believe that acknowledging the roles and working with them has prevented them from becoming repressed parts of me.

¹⁰ By this I mean that people often adapt their ways of behaving to fit social norms in various situations, even if the way they adapt themselves is not necessarily their “authentic” way of being (authentic being a contestable term here).

In *Spin-Fold-Spill* the roles as parts of the personality are explored in various ways. For example in the compartmentalisation of materials. There are the fore-mentioned costumes in plastic bags. Then there is the installation as a wood box inside a black theatre box, which could be interpreted as a container of the roles. Outside of the wood box is black space whilst inside are carefully arranged objects. Many of the objects are wrapped in plastic. Then there are the twelve parts of the performance, each part consisting of a carefully scripted expression of each role and her/ his relation to the other



roles. The only aspect that provided flexibility in the performance was the order in which the twelve parts were performed. This being determined by how the audience arranged the twelve coloured cards each evening. Yet the content of each part was tightly woven as a contained compartment of the whole.

Above: detail of *Spin-Fold-Spill* installation. Photograph by Juuso Noronkoski.

WHAT ABOUT THE BODY AS MATERIAL?

Caroliina –

I don't want to think about the body (my body). I keep it clean. That's all. I keep the house clean. That's all.

Starella –

All that gushy fluid, visceral, pouring out. Pouring out of me, out of you. We're just blood, guts, bones, sperm, liver, heart, pumping organs, porous skin, flaky scalps.

Purple Eyes –

There is no body to claim, Purple Eyes floats as a thought, floats and is not earth-bound to a body. Yet Sari lends her body in order for Purple Eyes to share thoughts in the form recognisable to regular people. Purple Eyes is channelled into a body.

Gareth Bdm –

I watch them move pretty little things. Long legs. Swaying hips. Ruby red lips.

Sari –

I often wake up bruised and sore after a night out as Starella.

Caroliina –

I keep it clean. That's all.

Judith Butler –

“Butler has always admitted that her efforts to attend to the material have always led her back toward the discursive [...] ‘Everytime I try to write about the body, the writing ends up being about language.’” (Butler according to Bell 2007, 112).

Sari –

My cheeks ache because of Caroliina. She keeps her expression taut, does not smile. She bites the insides of her cheeks out of nervousness. But her face as a result has this kind of hollow look.

Bloodhound Gang –

“Milky white skin, ruby red lips, baby blue eyes; name was Russell. [...] This pretty little thing comes up to me and starts kneading my balls, says her name is Bambi, and I say ‘well ain’t that a coincidence cos I was just thinking about skinnin’ you like a deer.” (A lapdance is so much better when the stripper is crying).

Hélène Cixous –

“From the time when the soul still speaks flesh, and the flesh understands itself in every tongue, we hear ourselves internally to our nerves’ end.” (Cixous 1994, 50).

Kathy Acker –

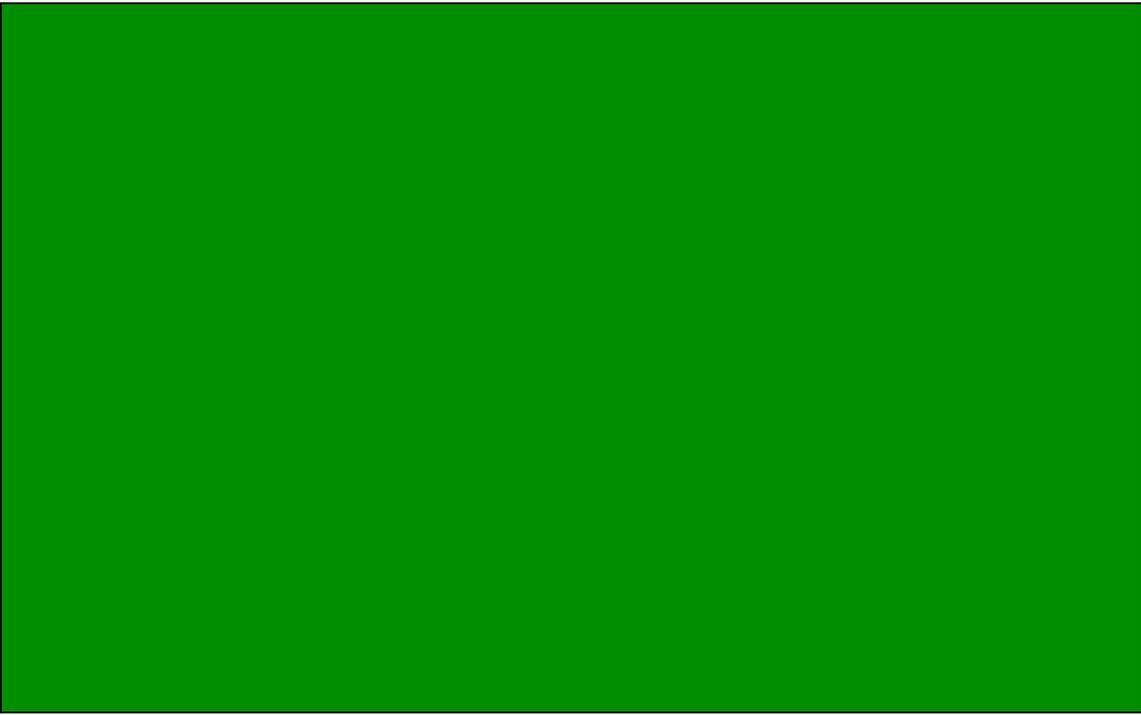
*“When I dream, my body is the site, not only of the dream, but also of the dreaming and of the dreamer. [...] The dreamer, the dreaming, the dream. I call these languages, *languages of the body*.” (Acker 2004, 167).*

Caroliina –

I keep it clean. That’s all.

Starella –

I whisper the story of her life into her ear as she dreams. Her legs twitches like a dog twitches when we speculate that they are running in their dreams. I can tell by the expression on her face that she is dreaming about Rocky Passage Road whilst her physical body is tucked into a warm bed in Helsinki.



**GREEN CHAPTER: Rocky Passage Road
FEATURING: SWAMP SARI**



Script

Remove two bags from the clothes line that contain dark green costume pieces. Place gloves on arms, and place head band on head. Take small green pieces with clips and clip onto outfit whilst speaking the following monologue. Once all pieces are clipped on, begin to move as though mimicking a bird.

“The Finnish word Kivi means stone or Rock. The word Kivinen means Rocky or Stony. My sisters and I grew up on a street named Rocky Passage Road. This in Finnish translates to Kivinen Pääsy Tie.

At 145 Rocky Passage Road lived the Kivinen family. At 146 Rocky Passage Road lived the Ahokas’s and the Paavilainen’s.

Rocky Passage Road is the last road in the Redland Bay area. Here, the wind moves with agonising might, everyone on Rocky Passage Road speaks vain Finnish. Myrsky kutsuu hänet lähelle. Tuuli on voima. Ja hän on myrsky. Lapsi laulaa ankeriaskaloille kun ne heiluu samean padon veden syvyyksissä. En ole lapsi, tai puu, en tuuli, tai pato, en ole ankeriaskala, tai vesililja. En ole mitään näistä, mutta säilytän piirteet kaikista.

Sari was fond of all bush creatures, and particularly of birds, she admired the elegance of feathered creatures to the point of mimicking the mannerisms and calls of her favourite birds. Kivinen Pääsy Tie oli hänen leikkikenttä, her playground. Until Caroliina followed her one morning to the water hole. Purple Eyes watched as Caroliina – seemingly possessed – pushed her younger sister under the water.

That day Sari became crocodile of the jungle, moving swiftly to the rhythm of Ginger Rogers. A helicopter looming above spraying chemicals, all birds leave the jungle. Sari is not in a position to leave. She remains in the swamp, batting eyelashes at squirming eels, deformed by chemical spray.

On this day in 1985, Sari became a contradiction.”

Remove the green costume pieces and return them to the bags, peg the bags back onto the clothesline. Exit.

TEXT: (auto) BIOGRAPHY and ways to tell a STORY

Looking back, I find it ironic that it took fiction to make me recognize fact.

(Lippard 1995, 33)

Mixing my voices to tell stories. Starella is screaming. I hold my hands over my ears,
afraid to hear.....

Own words. Own perspective. Owning a voice, my voice. What is it? Whose is my own
voice? Trail off into the distance.....

(Kivinen 2010)

We are one but we are many –

This section asks how speaking through many positions can be a useful way to explore and dissect narrative. Examples of artists that question the subjective “I” are explored. A further question considered in this section is how roles as fictitious entities can explore real events and autobiographical material precisely because of the mode of fiction.

In discussing Laurie Anderson’s *Stories from the Nerve Bible* Jessica Prinz outlines how Anderson’s use of many voices relates not to her own personal identity in so much as it relates to postmodern theory. Because of the impossibility of separating the author from her/ his fictions Anderson’s work deals with how “the self is diffracted and refracted through various stories and voices, and the autobiographical “I” is deconstructed.” (Prinz 2002, 392). Prinz affirms that an author’s objective is find alternative choices through heteroglossia (mixing of voices) which can lead to locating or selecting an individual language or ideology. As opposed to an author simply taking an ideological position. The “I” in Anderson’s work is affected by media, by dreams, stories, and by technology. The certainty of the “I” is above all questioned. Agency and subjectivity are interchangeable. In Anderson’s words: “Basically, work is storytelling, the world’s most ancient artform. And as a narrator I have used a lot of different voices in order to escape my own perspective.” (Anderson according to Prinz 2002, 392).

In thinking about autobiographical art Deidre Heddon states that: “The ‘self’ in performance is plural in many ways [...] beyond the psychoanalytic understanding of the divided self.” (Heddon 2008, 9). It is relevant here to consider that if the self that performs is already divided and plural, what about the self that performs through multiple persona? Is the self who performs consciously through multiple selves even further divided? Although, as Laurie Anderson has stated, everyone has at least twenty voices within them.

Fiona Wright uses writing to record her doings. Performance papers are often used as a predominant element in her performances, for example the following is an extract from *Slowly kissing down with tears*:

Mapping out some of the functions of remembrance. Writing other bodies into this throughout. Writing part(s) of my own history into this, yet resisting a linear, chronological (auto) biography of the artist and the apparent ‘object’ of her process. A body of texts, which are inevitably personalised and yet deliberately unconfessional and, of course, knowingly, purposefully incomplete. I repeat myself. (Wright 2003).

Similarly to Wright, Sari uses writing as a way to map a part of her personal history that resists linearity, and resists accuracy.

Since beginning to work with the Role-System in 2004 Sari has used fiction as a deliberate mechanism to experiment with ways of sharing autobiography. Speaking through the voices of Jessee-Liina, Caroliina, and Starella has allowed Sari to experiment with various ways of telling the story of oneself. The roles themselves as fiction, allow the personal to become contorted. Ultimately this kind of confessing through roles can be interpreted either as: everything is personal, or that nothing is personal.

The writing process undertaken whilst developing *Spin-Fold-Spill* involved continual dissection, editing, fragmenting and mixing up. It was a process of re-working text which dealt with real and made-up elements. A big question, and one which connects to ideas about multiple personas, is the question of

what happens when one writes through (as) multiple voices? What happens when one's work is to express a story, and in attempting to tell the story (which is not necessarily one's own) the story becomes absorbed into the psyche of the one telling it?

Sari is attracted to the idea of her own existence being an assemblage of “part me’s,” always interchangeable, always a part but never the whole. Each role that emerges can only ever represent a specific self within the assemblage of multiple selves that Sari feels she is contained of and contained within.

The chapter *Rocky Passage Road* is an example of how fiction is used in *Spin-Fold-Spill* (the made up story of Sari having being drowned as a child by her older sister Caroliina and turning into a crocodile of the jungle) in order to tell something real (about the place where she grew up - Rocky Passage Road – a place in Australia where a lot of Finnish speaking people lived).

An earlier text written during the project *Fictional Space Investigation* was an influence in the development of the chapter *Rocky Passage Road*, especially the development of the crocodile and swamp creature. The process of combining texts that had been written by Sari at different points in her life was important as an act of gluing together fragments of real and imagined events to create one story.



Fictional Space investigation (2010). The swamp creature and crocodile actions in the green space. Generator Gallery, Pori (Finland). Photographed by Juhani Koivumäki.

How to become a swamp creature: 1) suck a lime; 2) wrap your body in crepe paper; 3) and read a book by Kathy Acker that has a green cover.

I am a creature of the swamp
 I swallow flies in my spare time and bat my eyelashes for the pretty
 little fishes that mistook the green mushy swamp for the clear blue
 river where they were meant to go
 No one lives in the swamp by choice
 I am a green agent. A drug. An antidote
 I am green with envy in the jungle fighting for morality and humanity
 I am the crocodile of the jungle, I move swiftly with the rhythm of
 Ginger Rogers
 I hear gossip from the birds
 A helicopter looms above spraying chemicals
 The birds leave the jungle
 I am not in a position to leave; into the swamp I go
 Here I remain batting my eyelashes for the pretty little fishes that
 became deformed as soon as the chemical spray hit the earth
 I am a green agent

Figure 1: Text developed during Fictional Space Investigations (2010)

The above images of the swamp creature and the crocodile were developed from a process of working with school children at Cygnaeus school in Pori, Finland.

A description of *Fictional Space Investigation: Coloured Green* –

Upstairs in the Generator Gallery a green space was installed. In the space there was a dark green area that the *green group* from Cygnaeus 5th/6th English speaking class had told Sari was a jungle. Next to the jungle was a lighter green area, which was explained as a swamp where crocodiles live.



When asked what they would choose to be if they were to exist within the fictional space one student said “I want to be the crocodile,” and another said “I would be a tiger in the forest.”

Sari then asked them what they would suggest if she were to perform one of their ideas. The students told Sari that she could be a crocodile. This was one subsequent idea that Sari pursued when performing actions in the green space. She also decided to explore other versions of being a swamp creature in the fictional swamp.



About *Textual Opera-Ration*: many voices in writing –

Description: A singular person sits on a chair in front of a square table and writes in many different coloured pens. The role of Sari was represented with the colour green; Caroliina by yellow; Starella as black; and Jessee-Liina as pink. New voices emerged through the durational writing such as Gareth Bdm (grey pen); The psychiatrist (blue pen); and Purple Eyes (purple pen). Below are a few examples of excerpts from this performance. Interesting to note was the limitation that Sari experienced when writing as ‘Sari’ (green pen). She found herself only able to write about her real life experiences. For example she wrote a lot about her pet chickens, dogs, and mice. Her main influence were her childhood adventures at Rocky Passage Road (see figure 3 below). Caroliina’s psychiatrist discusses Caroliina’s fears (see figure 2). And Starella’s text allows for both real anecdotal and imaginative explorations (see figure 4).

Caroliina has entered the room, sat down, and (as advised) waits until she is spoken to. She visits the same room almost every week. Depending of course on whether her OCD allows her to leave the house or not.

When she is invited to enter my office she picks up her white handbag with her gloved hands and tentatively walks from the waiting room to my office. Once inside she closes the door and begins to speak.

For forty five minutes Caroliina tells me about her week. She reveals herself to me and I analyse her.

I watch as Caroliina speaks. Her worries choke her. I advise her and record her speaking. Caroliina always arrives an hour early.

Today she reveals her fear of spiders, stating that throughout the week she has spent a great deal of her time staring up at the ceiling, convinced that a giant huntsman was about to leap down. Subsequently Caroliina’s neck has become tender and sore.

She talks about her fear of spiders for almost the entire session. I let her know five minutes before time is up and she begins to wind up. I click the tape recorder off and Caroliina is guided out. She sits in the reception area for a while before venturing outdoors; prepares herself to face the outside world.

Figure 2: The psychiatrist discusses Caroliina in *Textual Opera-Ration* (2010)

In Redland bay the land used to be really good for farming. Mainly used for crops. I once had a boyfriend whose family grew fields of cabbage and orchids. The land that I lived on was rocky and too dry for crops. Despite still being technically included in the Redland bay region. All we had were gum trees, rocks and pines plus one million mosquitoes. Our house was built from the rocks of our property (and some collected rocks from nearby islands). Our road was called Rocky Passage Road. I used to laugh because my surname is Kivinen, which means rocky or stony.

The kookaburras used to laugh with me.

Reference: the Kookaburra song “kookaburra sits in his old gum tree, king of the bush of the bush is he. Laugh kookaburra laugh, oh how gay your life must be.”

I’ve always been fond of birds and trees. I used to have a kind of chicken nursing home at the property when I was about ten or so. I’d buy chickens from the battery farms close-by for about 50cents per chicken. They’d arrive looking close to death with most of their feathers having dropped of. After about a month living on my property they generally started to lay eggs again and looked youthful again. I think its because I gave them loads of TLC and even sang songs to them. My favourite songs to sing to them was Cyndi Lauper’s “Time After Time” and “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun.”

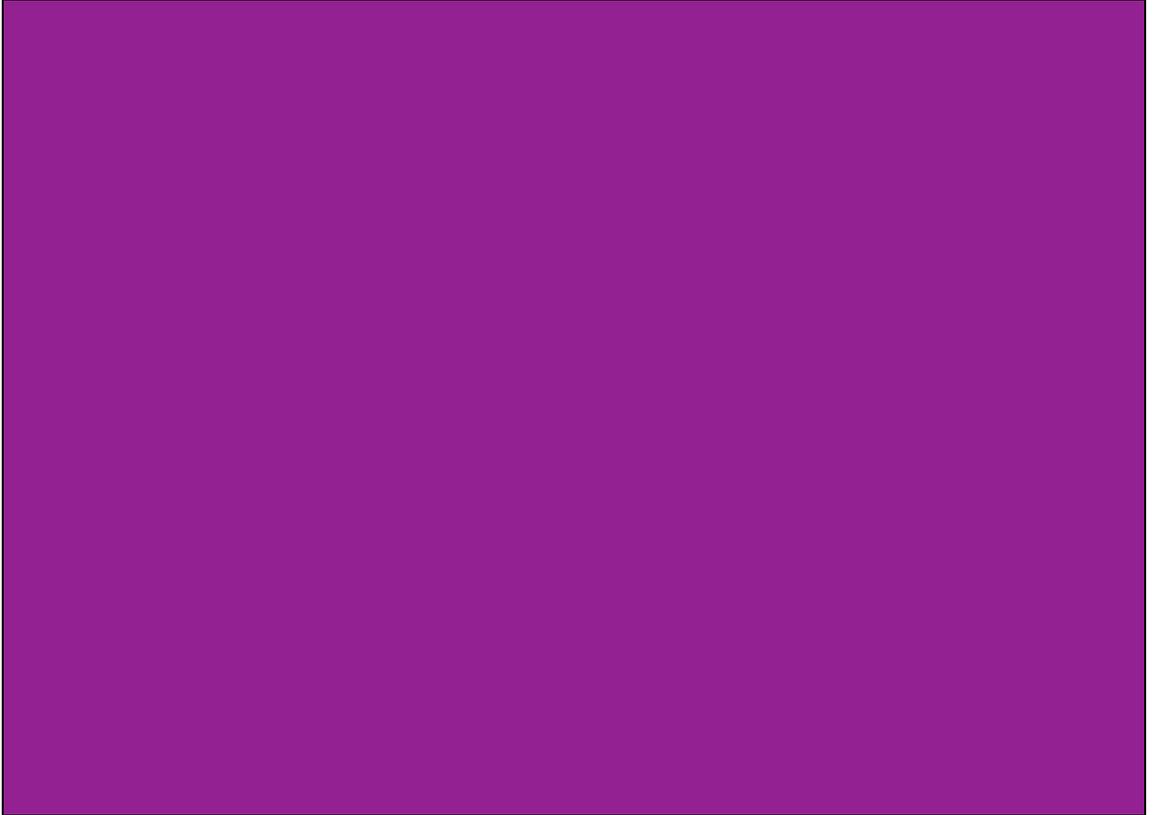
My most beautiful chicken was named Snowy. I was sad when I opened the chicken coop one morning to see that Snowy had been swallowed whole by a carpet snake. The snake couldn’t digest her so quickly so was still stuck in the coop with the remaining chickens frantic and traumatised by the incident.

A head on your shoulders
 Racking my brain for another way
 Another way to acknowledge what we know
 ←-----distance between -----→
 A Green forest embryos
 Collecting themselves
 Within + without
 We take (even took already) “a ride out.”

Figure 3: Here Sari discusses childhood stories about the suburb she grew up in, she shares anecdotes about her pet chickens. *Textual Opera-Ration* (2010)

<p>My words got squashed when the others played along..... rabbits in dungeons. Fools gold.</p> <p>I, I'm, I, me, mine → fucking subjective crap</p> <p>These references start to freeze themselves. Each voice dulling the next. Objective voices are desired here</p> <p>Common baby, where r u objective voice...? I know you wanna play</p> <p>A desert > both in my mouth A dessert > dry'n'sweet mmmmmm → I dreamt I was flying again low slow [not like a bird]</p> <p>I was taking food out into the corridor Mint potatoes, sour cream A mouth full of reds'n'blues Shadows in my way Restraining</p> <p>Folding following Conniving + deciphering findings A discussion follows this report walking through deserts spatial wondering distractions may loom (or none)</p>	<p>Once I wrote some songs, one of which consisted of lyrics such as: "I wanted the world You gave me champagne I wanted the world You gave me chocolate"</p> <p>It's a kind of stupid song 'cos you know no one really has the power to give the world to another. And cos "you" (whoever you are) probably can't afford real champagne anyways so probs, you'd give me passion pop or something..... maybe even Spumante.....</p> <p>Car car car car oh oh liina is a stupid bitch</p> <p>It didn't seem to matter which way I was pacing nor which way my head turned. What mattered was how stern my tone could be. How sharp my gaze could be. Everything less than stern and sharp was not respected. All they could manage to see was another attention seeking slut* A stupid game of pigeonholing anyways* By this time I am sick to my core of empty words that I could hardly bare to look at myself in the mirror. A traitor to my self. [empty words empty words] [are lovely only sometimes] [like when we sing] ["blah la la blah la la la"]</p>
---	---

Figure 4: Here Starella shares some of her thoughts from *Textual Opera-Ration* (2010)



A PIECE + A PIECE + A PIECE + A PIECE = pieces

Press play on the video, pause at the point in which Starella is standing at the window ledge of the green house.

“Everything begins at this window. This window in Redland Bay. Starella standing at the ledge in this video recalls Sari at the age of nine, climbing whilst sleepwalking. Sari was star gazing and admiring the unusual closeness of Pluto, Mars and Jupiter. She tried to touch Pluto, Mars and Jupiter by flying up closer towards them. Yet gravity took over in a melancholic realisation of “reality” as Sari hit the ground and awoke - thump thump - startled against the ground. Hitting hard, ankle twisted. Stunned, startled, and with a full bladder all she could fathom to do was to pee.

Everything begins at this window. This window here in this box, in this video, in this room, in this mind, in this moment which has always already fluttered away. Everything began with this window.”

Pause at end of the section where Jesse-Liina is smiling.

Figure 1: Excerpt from reflections about *Spin-Fold-Spill* presented at LAPSody 2011.

-- continued--

The melancholia of not fitting the norm – yet never knowing the alternative – equals a loss that can never be acknowledged.

Judith Butler’s revision of drag performance is interesting to consider.

Initially, drag was considered in *Gender Trouble* as performativity, and then in *Critically Queer* Butler wrote that drag should be considered as performance and *not* as performativity. Some years later in *The Psychic Life of Power* Butler returned to the consideration of drag as performativity with the argument that drag imitates what is already imitated.

Taking her cue from Freud's research about the unconscious, Butler references how repression emerges through "acting out" repeated behaviour. Here we could use Caroliina as the prime example of a role that acts out specific behaviour repeatedly in response to repressed desires and fears. Or alternatively we could say that Caroliina is the behaviour acted out by Sari in response to her repressed desires and fears.

Butler suggests that in the case of drag, where a drag queen engages in a performance repetitively "acted out" it could be perceived from a psychoanalytic perspective to be acting out a repressed sense of loss. The "performance, understood as 'acting out,' may be related to a problem of unacknowledged loss." (Butler 1997, 145). "In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency." (Butler 1999, 175). The paradoxical strength of drag is its capability to highlight prevalent gendered stereotypes, a way to imitate the legacy of the original. The irony is that that which is being imitated (the presumed original) is itself an imitation prescribing to signified norms that have been developed historically.

Expansion as freedom?

Oh it's a mystery to me, we have agreed, with which we have agreed. And you think you have to want more than you need. Until you have it all you won't be free [...] When you want more than you have you think you need and when you think more than you want your thoughts begin to bleed. (Vedder 2007).

Earlier in this essay the idea of a connection between expanding the Role-System as an attempt to gain freedom was made. A connection which generally succeeds momentarily before ultimately failing. The example being that: Sari experiences a sense of melancholy (because of a sense of loss that could never be acknowledged), and as a result she creates the roles of the three sisters Jessee-Liina, Caroliina and Starella. They serve her for a period of time, each in different ways. They allow her a sense of freedom, of

expanding herself by embodying the other/s. But after some time each role begins to experience a restraint: a limitation. They can only be as free as Sari can allow them to be. Thus eventually melancholy arises again. And a similar cycle occurs again (a repetition of behaviour always in response to a different situation). As the singular person expands into many parts, freedom is experienced for a spell. But it is a manufactured freedom, it is not unconditional. Kind of like accumulating all the latest stuff in order to feel purchasing freedom. “Until you have it all you won’t be free.” (Vedder 2007).

Purple Eyes perceives Sari’s expansion of self as comparable to capitalism. “I want more more more more more more more!” Is expanding roles merely a reflection of the society one finds oneself in? Is Sari really the one constructing her roles, or are the roles subjects in their own right born out of the effects of reiteration of the power structures in place? And how can we locate the origins of Purple Eyes in all of this?

EXPLORING THE ORIGINS OF PURPLE EYES –

As one way to trace the lineage of Purple Eyes Sari googled the words “purple eyes” and found several interesting references. Sari’s main reason for this was because she finds it difficult to explain why Purple Eyes appeared as a part of her system of roles (as part of her personality). She can understand the third person position of Purple Eyes as providing the level of distance that she often craves when working with blurred distinctions of autobiography and fiction. Yet she cannot understand the reasons for the name Purple Eyes. Perhaps it was merely prompted by the purple pen that was available at the time of Purple Eyes’ first appearance, or on the other hand perhaps Sari has associations that she is not conscious of.

In the search for further meaning Sari found several interesting examples in reference to the words ‘purple eyes.’

Between October 1984 and February 1987 Chie Shinohara wrote and illustrated the Japanese shōjo manga series *Purple Eyes in the Dark*. A series which tells of the struggles of a teenage girl who has found herself transformed into a lycanthropy-leopard and now battles with newly discovered predatory primal instincts.

Then there is *Alexandria's Genesis*, a mysterious condition connected to the myth of the spirit people of Egypt. *Alexandria's Genesis* is an extremely rare mutation which grows stronger generation by generation.

Among the symptoms of this disorder, one of them is purple eyes. The legend that has given rise to this genetic condition is that several centuries ago, in a small village Egypt, there occurred a mysterious flash of light in the sky, that affected all the village people, and led them to develop pale white skin, along with purple eyes. Due to these developments in their appearance, they came to be known as 'spirit people'.¹¹ (Puja Lalwani 2010)

Whilst on the website www.answers.yahoo, a young woman born with purple coloured eyes asks: “Is there something in my genes or it is a mutation?”¹²

The name “Purple Eyes” evokes examples of transformation, of mutation, mystical connotations and rarity. Perhaps Purple Eyes as an addition to the Role-System indicates a transformative shift. And whilst there is a lineage to Purple Eyes beyond what Sari could imagine, the limitations of this essay and of the knowledge imparted via Purple Eyes is restricted by the regulations instated by Sari (as the gatekeeper of the Role-System).

Perhaps melancholy is not merely “an attachment which takes the form of a turning back upon itself.” (Butler 1997, 68). Perhaps melancholy is a slowly moving mutation towards something unknown. A mutation that begins from limitation and pushes, spurts, grows into unrecognisable shapes. Can the mutation eventually push beyond the borders of what one knows?

¹¹ <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/purple-eyes.html> (accessed 04/10/2011)

¹² <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071007231338AAUJRSu> (accessed 04/10/2011)

WE BEGIN BY TURNING BACK UPON OURSELVES. BEFORE PULLING APART EVERYTHING WE KNOW. WE FOLD THE TALE OVER ITSELF AND THE TAIL UNDER OURSELVES. WE TAKE A WALK INTO THE DESERT. RECLAIMING INSTINCT. WE THEN RETURN TO WHERE WE BEGAN TURNING AGAIN BACK UPON OURSELVES BEFORE PULLING APART EVERYTHING WE KNOW.



BLACK CHAPTER: Starella watched
FEATURING: STARELLA



Two videos are projected on the back wall of the installation. Both videos feature Starella. One is dark and shows her wondering in a bush landscape, she holds a bottle of sparkling wine and falls over. Mosquitoes are heard in the background. The second video is filmed in the morning light and shows Starella stepping onto a window ledge. She grabs at branches of a tree in front of her. Birds can be heard singing in the background. Both videos were filmed in Redland Bay – the place where the four sisters grew up – on the outskirts of South-East Brisbane, Australia.



the lens that captures our lives

This section will discuss ways that the video camera has played a part in documenting the lives of Jessee-Liina, Caroliina, Sari and Starella. Questions explored include: can archival footage provide evidence of that which really occurred? How does the camera alter representation of a role? And who stands behind the camera?

In *Spin-Fold-Spill* projected video was prominent. There were four separate videos shown during the evening¹³ performances which were assembled from new and archival footage. The videos shown were: *Caroliina's shift*; *Starella projected*; *Jessee guns*¹⁴; and *the wall*. *The wall* was a backdrop projection for all chapters that did not otherwise have a video. By using a mixture of footage filmed at different points of the sister roles lives it was attempted to dislocate the dominate narratives in place.



Image 1: Video stills of the *Spin-Fold-Spill* projections

¹³ Here I have focused on describing the evening performances, however during the daytime visitors to the installation encountered various viewing alternatives.

¹⁴ A video that played during Purple Chapter III and showed an alternate version to Jessee-Liina.

THE CAMERA THAT ADORES JESSEE-LIINA

Purple Eyes –

Jessee-Liina as the eldest sister represents a loveable persona. Having initially gained love by portraying a sugary sweet and innocent social identity, she has spent most of her life re-enacting the attitude and the gestures that she gained the sense of social acceptance from in the first place. Oblivious to her inability to gain the love and acceptance of her younger sisters, Jessee-Liina is always focused on keeping up social appearances, and of maintaining her adored place in the social world. She performs a social front of being a well to do, classy, stylish woman.

Goffman discusses the social front as being: “that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.” (Goffman 1959, 32.) Jessee-Liina maintains the performance of her social front so thoroughly that even her sisters have difficulty accessing what Goffman might term as her “back” self. This is the self that is revealed in ones comfort quarters; away from the audience.

Starella –

My first memory of Jessee is seeing her in the family home, a house built by our Grandparents when they migrated to Australia in the 1960s from Finland. The house was built like a sculpture, using one bag of cement every pay week and found rocks from the surrounding bush property and nearby islands. This house is located in the South East of Brisbane, our childhood home.

In my first memory of her, Jessee wore a pink evening gown, her long blonde hair pressed into meticulous curls. She was of course the centre of attention that day as a film crew followed her from room to room gushing at her every syllable. The outward perfection displayed by Jessee prompted immediate admiration and social love.

I bet the film crew never even noticed Sari passed out in the garden, Caroliina hiding in the kitchen pantry and myself as silent onlooker. I was a Plain-Jane next to glowing aura of Jessee-Liina, all the rest of us merely sisters with the same genetic make-up, 'inferior copies,' Jessee-Liina was the only one of us to deserve love (at least societies love.)

Purple Eyes –

The camera adores Jessee-Liina and picks up every detail of her sparkling presence. It illuminates and accentuates her very being. It is not even about the film crew controlling the camera rather it is the camera that responds directly to Jessee-Liina's luminescence.

Starella –

Sometimes I think back to that first time that I remember seeing Jessee-Liina and I wonder if in actual fact there even was a film crew. It doesn't make sense that Jessee had a whole film crew just to make a home video. Maybe there was just a camera set up on a tripod to record her, a camera with a life of its own. A camera determined to capture Jessee's reflection within it. To hold it, maintain, contain and to show the world the beauty of Jessee-Liina.

I wonder if I was even present for the filming, is it possible that my memory of the event is constructed through viewing the footage afterwards? My memory of Jessee-Liina posing for the camera is so vivid, yet I know I can't truly trust it.

Purple Eyes –

Philip Auslander has discussed various levels of performance in respect to mediatisation and technology. He has distinguished between internal and external mediations. "the internal are aspects of the performance situation itself, such as the nature of the performance space, while the external ones are historical and social factors, such as the impact of television and film on our perception." (Auslander 2008, 115).

Starella –

When I really think about it, most of my memories of Jesse-Liina have been re-enforced by watching video footage of her over and over again. I find it significant now to consider how the camera as a device of mediatisation has been so closely connected to how I generate knowledge about my sister. And even further, how I have generated knowledge about myself; having been slightly obsessed in filming myself throughout my childhood, gaining information about how I speak and behave through repetitive playback.



A collage of Starella's first memory of Jesse-Liina dressed in a pink evening dress with meticulous blonde curls. Filmed by Sari TM Kivinen (2004).



Video still of Starella from *Sibling Study: Redland Bay driveway* (2007).
 Filmed by Raimo Kivinen.

SIBLING STUDIES

“The question “do you love me?” is a social question.” (Phelan 1997, 31).

Starella –

In a video that Sari once made of Jessee-Liina, Caroliina and myself, she got us to dissect a box of Finnish vodka chocolate candies. Basically Jessee-Liina was filmed first, sweetly licking of all the chocolate from the candy, she then hands the sugar cased part filled with vodka to Caroliina who breaks the candy and pours the vodka into a glass, Caroliina chews the sugar part and after breaking open a bunch of candies she hands me the glass filled with vodka. I just drink it right. And Sari, as the director of the video, encourages me to.



Video stills from *Sibling Study: Finlandia vodka chocolates* (2006).
 Filmed by Sari TM Kivinen.

Sari told me that this video work basically explores how consumption of candy and of alcohol is encouraged within society. The small group presented here of us three sisters presents the metaphor of a wider society in which we adhere to cultural and behavioural norms. We induce addiction via various mechanisms in place. We love to consume. Consuming loves us¹⁵.

It's interesting how Sari managed to get us all to act for her in this video. Though I reckon she was just getting us to just channel our normal selves anyways.



Video stills from *Sibling Study: conflict in Warrimoo* (2006). Filmed by Sari TM Kivinen.

Sari explains –

In the image above *Sibling Study: conflict in Warrimoo* I first positioned Jessee-Liina (standing and smiling) and Starella (sulking). I directed an interaction between Jessee-Liina and Starella, in which Jessee-Liina makes a flippant comment towards Starella who responds in anger. Starella starts a physical fight with Jessee-Liina.

Caroliina appears in a white dress, and mediates the situation. Caroliina stops the fighting and tells her sisters that this kind of behaviour is not

¹⁵ Yeah here I'm referencing this thing Gilbert and George once said "We love Gin, and Gin loves us."

acceptable. Caroliina and Jessee-Liina leave the scene satisfied, whilst Starella remains. Starella bites her own arm and punches her own left thigh thinking that if she is not allowed to share her aggression then she must internalise it.

In this video Caroliina enforces what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. In a sense she signifies a society embedded by regulation by prohibiting Starella's unacceptable behaviour towards Jessee-Liina. Yet, Caroliina cannot prevent Starella from hurting herself.

Purple Eyes –

In the above description Sari is speaking as though she is separate from Jessee-Liina, Caroliina, Starella, and not the physical entity who enacts them. Depending on which perspective we choose, both variations can be considered as true: Sari is separate from her roles, yet she is ultimately always connected. She uses the video camera as an attempt to capture the roles and the differences between them.

In the video *Sibling Study: conflict in Warrimoo* Sari enacts the conflict of a split self, which simultaneously shows the pleasing personality part (Jessee-Liina), the resentful part (Starella), and the mediating part (Caroliina). In the actuality of the filming process a camera is set up on a tripod, Sari runs in front of the camera, test records a position, and runs back to watch the playback. This process is repeated until the ideal frame is found. Sari enacts one role after another. The camera stands on a tripod and records Sari enacting the actions of each role. This is a common procedure for many of Sari's videos.

In Sari's *Sibling Study* videos the video camera is a tool for capturing and witnessing the sister roles. Sari orchestrates the framing of the camera and the movements of the roles-as-actors in her video artworks.



**BLACK & GREEN CHAPTER: Sari & Starella wash clothes
FEATURING: STARELLA (enacting herself and Sari)**



Photo credit: Juuso Noronkoski

Script

Props: 2 Buckets, 2 water bottles, some dolls clothes to wash.

Starella describes a dialogue she once had with Sari about their grandmothers clothes. She enacts what Sari said and pretends to be Sari.

Starella - You know, my sis and I we always seem to like just remember things real different. I figure everyone kinda experiences this sometimes right? How bout you's? Any of these kinda experiences? You know of umm your sis or bro says one thing, then you realise you have no idea about what they're talking about, then you realise that you do know what they're talking about but it's just that they remember things in a really different kinda way right? Anyways my sister Sari and I were recently talking about our

grandmother Aili. Anyways we were just in the laundry both of us washing some clothes and stuff and then Sari says:

Sari - “I’m washing grandmothers clothes.”

Starella - And then I say: “Nah. I’m washing my grandmothers clothes.” Just to see her reaction right, but Sari ain’t listening to me, she continues to reminisce about how sweet our grandma was and stuff, she says:

Sari - “My grandmother was sweet, we baked together a lot, she taught me how to sew. She was my mothers mother, named Aili Cecilia Ahokas (maiden name Hyitinen, teased as hytynen). When she died my mother and I carried her clothes to the middle of the forest and re-folded them into piles, folding them into the landscape, which had been such an important landscape for my grandmother. We left them there as an offering to her spirit and an offering to the earth. We left them there to cope with our own grief.”

Starella - At this point I’m just like staring at Sari right, like I can’t believe the shit she’s rattling of right? I try to stir her and say again “Yeah yeah, well I’m washing grandma’s dirty clothes. The dirt is old. A lifetime of suffering has clung to the fabrication of each piece of cloth. I can smell blood on my hands as I wash this *big* pile of clothes.” But then I kinda get carried away and start talking ‘bout the war, you know well why wouldn’t I? Cos Grandma always did. But you see Sari wouldn’t remember that, cos she just blocks all that stuff out of her mind. So anyways I say to Sari: “You know sis there’s blood on the streets. Blood everywhere. The war was a tough time you know, it left its mark on everything it touched.”

I look at Sari as I speak my words, she seems glazed over in her expression, right, like no comprehension whats-so-ever. After a moment of silence Sari continues to speak:

Sari - “Grandma once told me that her conventional life planning, as a young adult, included marriage, two point five children, a picket fence and a household pet. At the time she told me, she’d already succeeded in achieving these life goals. Yet she always seemed so sad.”

Starella - Sari just continues to stare vacantly right, her hands just dunked in the bucket of water for ages. After like the biggest massive pause Sari turns to look towards me, and very softly says:

Sari - “Starella, I’m scared I’ll end up just like her. We’re so similar, grandma and me in so many ways. Both married young. Both have given up so much of ourselves, before knowing what either of us really wanted from life.”

Starella- I know Sari is dramatising the situation, but I can’t help but think that in some way she’s right. They both always had this tendency to please, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of compliance.

Well anyways, me, myself, I’m gonna be better, I’m gonna be better. Gonna make something of my life. Gonna be someone. Gonna be some kind of Star – just like they always told me I’d become. A star for real.

Starella stands up and exits.

MULTIPLE PERSONA IN ART PRACTICES

An essay by Starella¹⁶

MULTIPLE VOICES

Does not our identity precisely consist in a lack of self-identity, in the fact that identity is always a question for us – a quest, indeed – that we might vigorously pursue, but it is not something I actually possess?

[...] I most certainly am, but yet I do not have myself.

(Critchley 2002, 43).

In this chapter, artistic perspectives about multiple persona will be considered alongside examples from *Spin-Fold-Spill*. In the GREEN CHAPTER Jessica Prinz is quoted discussing heteroglossia – a mixing of voices – which is a relevant reference when considering the multiple perspectives presented in *Spin-Fold-Spill*. Prinz says that it is the objective of the author to locate alternative ideologies or languages through heteroglossia. One function of Sari's multiple roles is to present various viewpoints as a way to tell a story; each point of view connected to a part of her own personality and life experience, yet mutated.

Artists working in multiple-

Sarah crowEST has explored alternative selves as part of her artistic research, viewing her constructed personas as tourist versions of her own self stating that they “can be more accurately described as semi-alter-egos because

¹⁶ Purple Eyes inputs: please note that many parts of this chapter have merely been either copied directly or paraphrased from texts that Sari has already written. For example discussion about Rachel Rosenthal and Mark Shorter is taken from the published essay “Assemblages of Multiple Selves: Artists performing through persona” published in *Converging Perspectives: Writings on Performance Art* (2011). Although Starella is quite adept at writing her own text, her interest is to use what Sari has written as a starting point. Starella uses plagiarism in order to find new ideas in the process of re-working pre-existing text.

although the personalities are not entirely mine they are not different from but rather simply ‘mutilations’ of my personality.”¹⁷ Personas for Eleanor Antin were first developed after being told she was neurotic by a psychiatrist. Her personas each fulfilled a specific aspect for her, for example the purposeful character of the King was an outlet for political aspiration (who always found himself failing). In the 1970s, Antin began to project four selves into her video works: *The Ballerina*, *The King*, *The Black Movie Star*, and *The Nurse*. These character personas began to lead their own lives, and were a combination of autobiography and fiction. Antin’s personas also had variations (the ballerina Eleanora Antinova being a variation of *The Ballerina* persona and presumably was a variation of Antin herself). Mark Shorter on the other hand constructs personas that he does not fundamentally view as connected to his own personality. In an interview conducted with Shorter he stated that: “Part of the working process is thinking through the character but I keep myself quite separate from my alter-egos.” (Shorter 2010.)

Meanwhile Rachel Rosenthal asserts that her personas are part of her:

A persona is [...] an artifact, a fabrication, that corresponds to what you want to project from yourself. From within. It is like taking a facet, a fragment, and using that as a seed to elaborate on. It is you and yet not you – a part of you but not the whole. (Rosenthal according to Lampe 2002, 297).

Rachel Rosenthal’s initial performances¹⁸ between 1975 and 1981 derived very much from exorcising personal narratives and experiences. Later her performances evolved into comments about social and political concerns, this allowed Rosenthal to develop a greater depth of meaning to her performances. For example Rosenthal made work that commented on animal rights, environmental concerns, and overpopulation.

I am curious that whilst all of the female examples above are focused on their personas as parts of their own selves the token male example evades intimate connection between his everyday self and the “performed” selves that he constructs. Let us further explore Shorter’s work.

¹⁷ Sarah CrowEST website: <http://www.sarahcrowest.com/page18.htm>

¹⁸ Although Rosenthal had been working in theatre for a number of years, she began working with performance art in the 1970s, partly from her involvement with *Womanspace*, a feminist art initiative based in L.A.

Mark Shorter has remained within exploring male representations. His male alter-ego's Renny Kodgers and Tino La Bamba illuminate what could be considered to be representative of both the best and worst masculine traits; assertiveness (aggressiveness), sex appeal (misogyny); power (dominance). Shorter's investigation explores the way in which the contemporary male performs. His research centres specifically on the role of the male alter-ego in contemporary culture. Tino La Bamba (since 2009) is connected to Don Quixote, as explained by Shorter: "I was interested in creating a sort of Don Quixote character so in a sense I kind of built the character from the ground up inspired very much by Cervantes novel and the grotesque concepts within that work." (Shorter 2010). Meanwhile Renny Kodgers (since 2005) is based on singer Kenny Rogers as well as including appropriations of George W. Bush. Shorter has explained that the role of Kodgers is "more about employing strategies that (re)presented a world view of America, in particular the manner in which the United States has been perceived since the Bush administration. I adopted a self-important, misogynist, ignorant, unbeatable approach to the persona." (Shorter according to Stein 2007.) Shorter's personas aim to parody specific male role types whilst simultaneously attempting to subvert the particular masculinity being emulated.

In her article about Rosenthal's multiple performance selves Eelka Lampe states that "through personae a woman can speak as a subject from the perspective of multiple selves. (Lampe 2002, 298.) The women in the above examples have a tendency to use persona and role as a means to speak from different perspectives, and use persona as a way to express parts of their own selves. Shorter meanwhile evades direct connection between himself and his characterizations. I, however, am not convinced. I believe that every role or character we enact ultimately is part of us in some way. Even if Shorter does not intend his alter-egos to bare any relation to his own self, I am quite sure that *they* will leave their trace in him.

Many voices telling stories-

In the above example of *Sari and Starella wash clothes*, I enact Sari's reaction from my own perspective. This is a dialogue which attempts to tell the story from my own angle whilst also playing with an idea of how to have a dialogue live on stage with more than one of us sisters. I reckon that telling stories is an age old art form, and that the way stories are told these days is real different to

how they were told a generation or two ago because of technology. These days we are overloaded with stories on TV, in computer games, in movies, and so forth.

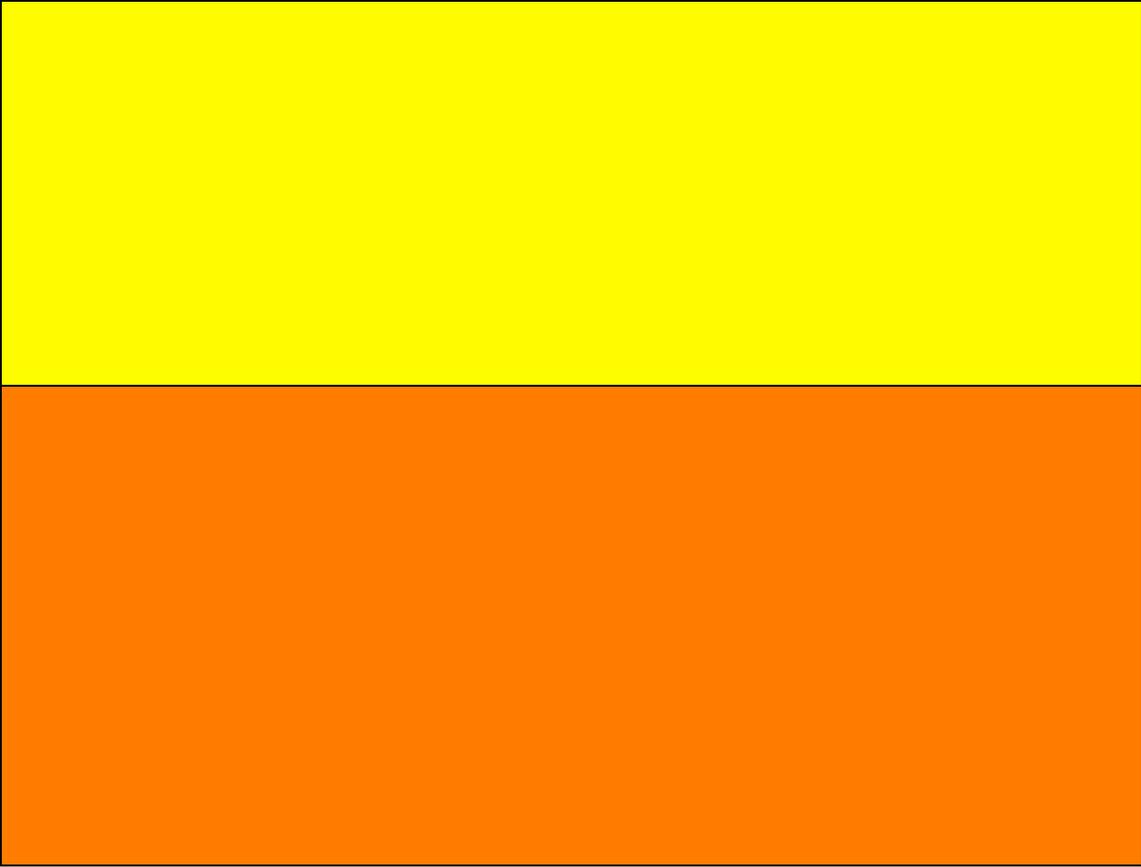
Yet the good old word of mouth stories still exist, we still speak to each other (well some of us). Generally parents will tell their children stories about their own childhood or least read them a bedtime story. By the time I was born all the stories had been told to all the other sisters so many times that no one had the energy left to tell them to me. So I learnt to eavesdrop.

I listened to the stories told to the neighbours kids. I listened to folks chattering away on the school bus, I listened to the stories the teachers reiterated. I learnt that a story doesn't always sound like a story. Picking up on pieces of conversation I pulled together narratives. Non linear. Fragmented narratives. I learnt how to make up my own stories. Sometimes I whispered my stories to Sari as she drifted off to sleep. Sometimes the next day she would recall a bit of the story I'd whispered to her, but not recall how she knew it. She would write it down, fill in the gaps of what she didn't remember by using her own imagination.

Basically in *Spin-Fold-Spill*, by combining our many voices, we are able to tell many stories about the topic of our lives. We focus the narrative on the story of us sisters; our relationship to each other, and our real and imagined histories. Real is referential to autobiographical aspects spun through narrative, and fictionalised via the levels of folding the tale over itself (or perhaps folding the tail under oneself).

Telling stories through many voices enables our individual subjectivity to be distanced. Sari has felt that the only way she can tell a story is to tell it through another version of self. *Spin-Fold-Spill* is an example of mixing voices, all voices connected to Sari yet through the process of telling the story of ourselves we become something Other than Sari.

I still whisper my stories to her as she enters the dreamtime.



YELLOW & ORANGE CHAPTER: Caroliina's shift FEATURING: CAROLIINA



Video still from *Caroliina's Shift*. Filmed by Juhani Koivumäki.

Script

A video is filmed in the installation with Caroliina sitting in front of a white table covered in lemons, she is wearing a yellow apron. One by one the lemons turn into oranges. Caroliina displays a subdued suspicion at this change which is expressed via her expression and slow movement. This change represents a perspective shift for Caroliina.

During the evening performances this video is projected onto the back wall and simultaneously shown on a small monitor. Whilst the videos are played Caroliina is present in the space wearing an orange apron and sitting quietly on a wooden chair with yellow upholstery. Caroliina is represented without a single spoken word.

Repetition of a role-mould

Caroliina dreams –

The two chapters that featured Caroliina in *Spin-Fold-Spill* are the starting point for this section which explores thoughts about how the unconscious can bring repressed feelings to the surface. I will consider connections to repetition and how ruptures to repeated actions can occur. As an example of repetition the development of Caroliina as a role will be discussed.

A red dot appears on my left arm (near the elbow). I stare at it, carefully touch it. Another red dot appears. This time just above my right breast. Then a third on my right thigh. They keep multiplying on my body. Red dots the size of small moles, yet bigger than freckles. My skin remains smooth to touch, yet infected by the still multiplying dots. I scrub my skin, scrub and scrub. The dots remain. Still multiplying. I am frozen out of fear. Not knowing what to do. All sense of control dissipated. Suddenly I hear someone screaming. Hysterically screaming. I move towards the scream, in a motion of both fear and curiosity. The closer I get to the sound of the scream the wetter I feel. And then with a startle I realise that the scream is coming from my throat, from my lungs; I wake up in a sweat. (Caroliina's dream 2009).

In *Spin-Fold-Spill* the video *Caroliina's Shift* was projected onto the back wall whilst a small monitor to one side showed a detail of Caroliina's hands fidgeting. At the same time Caroliina sat to one side of the projection wearing an orange apron and staring into the void in front of her.

In the above description of a dream, the red dot possibly signifies an unconscious fear of losing a sense of control. This is similar to the intended metaphor of the orange that appears in place of the lemon and highlights an irrational fear of losing a sense of control. The first lemon to change into an orange is held in Caroliina's hands, there is a prolonged moment when Caroliina holds the orange in her hands—remaining still, very still—before slowly rejecting it by placing it onto the table. This is an interesting moment of

bodily contact with the object which is potentially threatening her sense of control. Contrarily in the dream the red dots cover Caroliina's skin, a threat not only to her sense of rationality but to her flesh: her body infected. The contact with the orange in the video is different, here Caroliina seems to be able to reject the object that threatens her. Even though she is obviously disturbed by the irrational transformation of lemons to oranges they remain exterior objects to her physical body.

Looking at Caroliina's appearances in *Spin-Fold-Spill* I would like to think about the physical contact with the lemons and oranges as signifying a metaphor of Caroliina's broader contact with the world around her. In the earlier project *Textual Opera-Ration* Caroliina wrote secretively in a yellow pen which was barely readable. I later deciphered fragments of the text, these offering clues as to how Caroliina perceives her own existence.

I am looking down at my hands. Skin wrinkled, dishpan hands. I look around me. Kitchen gleaming, all in order. All sharp knives concealed. All dishes colour coordinated. 7am Tuesday morning. Two hours until the fruit and vegetable delivery. I make a cup of tea and wait for the doorbell to ring.

Dropping lemons –

In the YELLOW CHAPTER of *Spin-Fold-Spill* Caroliina carries a bucket of lemons out of the installation and into the dark space near the audience. A song is played "Car-car-car Car-car-car Caroliina where's she hiding, Caroliinaaaaa, no one's finding her. Caroliina, where's she hiding?" (Lyrics by Naomi Oliver). Hiding in the darkened corners of the theatre space Caroliina picks up the lemons from the bucket with her right hand and one by one places them into the folds of her left arm, cradling them. The audience, distracted by the soundtrack stare into the empty installation in front of them, fail to see Caroliina in the shadows close to them until the lemons begin to drop. Thumping lemons hit the ground despite Caroliina's best attempts to cradle them. She stands still for a moment before picking up the bucket and returning to the inside of the installation.



Video still of Caroliina dropping lemons in *Spin-Fold-Spill*. Filmed by Juhani Koivumäki

I don't particularly like lemons or anything. But they're familiar. We have always had several lemon trees in our backyard, four trees to be precise. When we were children Sari decided to begin a lemonade business. I helped her.

Pre-Caroliina –

Prior to consciously working on what I refer to as the Role-System I explored social roles with a focus on women's roles. In my fine arts honours exegesis I researched and wrote about the housewife who becomes a closet alcoholic. The prompters for this research were focused on an uneasiness with being expected to fit certain social role-moulds, and my (at the time) romanticised idea of developing an addiction to alcohol as a way to cope with the expectation of fitting the confines of a social role. At this point my sister roles had not yet consciously manifested. Artistic influences included artists such as Gilbert & George (for leading their lives as art), Vanalyne Green (for her monologue about alcoholism), and Cindy Sherman (for her masquerades). Below is a short extract from my exegesis in which I attempted to frame aspects of repeating and returning to past events within my work:

Attempting to define the causes of addiction is a process of returning to previous experiences, the act of doing so within my research is a method of linking events as an attempt to understand the outcome. Derrida has discussed that “Those who do not acknowledge the spectres that arise from the past and actively haunt them in the present are fated to reiterate and repeat quandaries of the past.” (Derrida according to Valverde 1998, 203). I have developed roles within my video and performance work that embody specific aspects of my research, each video has been developed as a result of researching tendencies of the woman as alcoholic. The characteristic of drunkenness within my art practice is a means of role-playing as well as being a crucial component of my investigations. The performance and video work that I have developed is the result of my research yet at the same time the works themselves are catalysts for further research, specifically the behavioural tendencies that I have observed whilst drinking. Similarly to Gilbert and George stating that it is their duty to explore drunkenness I also tackle the act of drunkenness as an obligation. (Kivinen 2004).

This aspect of repetition is an interesting link when considering the sister roles that later emerged in my life and artistic work. At the point of this exegesis research I began to explore and embody roles such as the domestic goddess with a weakness for cointreau and the alcoholic widow. Neither of these roles were named, however aspects of both later evolved into the sister role that became Caroliina. Aspects of my exploration were repeated in the actions, behaviours, and words of the roles. Specifically the actions of the domestic goddess can be seen as directly transferred to Caroliina; scrubbing and disinfecting with an air of neurosis whilst sipping from hidden drink canisters.

The example of Caroliina alongside earlier masquerades are examples of both a curiosity about and a resistance towards fitting the role of a housewife. The resistance to fitting the mould is explored via the addiction to alcohol as a way to cope with the role, yet simultaneously allows (and possibly

perpetuates) the role to continue in its socially acceptable form. The role presents itself to the world with its social front, yet can only do so through unacceptable means (discreetly being mildly drunk all the time).

The first times I performed as Caroliina I did not know it was her. On three separate occasions Caroliina appeared in 2003, the first two times in live performances and once in a video artwork. The first time that she officially appeared was in November 2004 along with her older and younger sisters. It was only much later that I realised that Caroliina had made earlier appearances, prior to being named and consciously evoked.



These pre-Caroliina examples possibly provide insight to ways that repeated actions can aid in role development.



Left: “It’s not that bad” performance, Artspace Sydney. Right: “Dear Love. Why haven’t you written yet?” performance at Firstdraft gallery, Sydney. Photographed by Jason White.

In these examples a combination of repetitive tasks such as cleaning, writing endless letters and sipping alcoholic drinks from various containers (teapot, canister, fishbowl) were undertaken for several hours. Similarly when Caroliina emerged as the middle sister in late 2004, she obsessively cleaned and secretly nipped away at a hidden stashes of liquor. These examples of

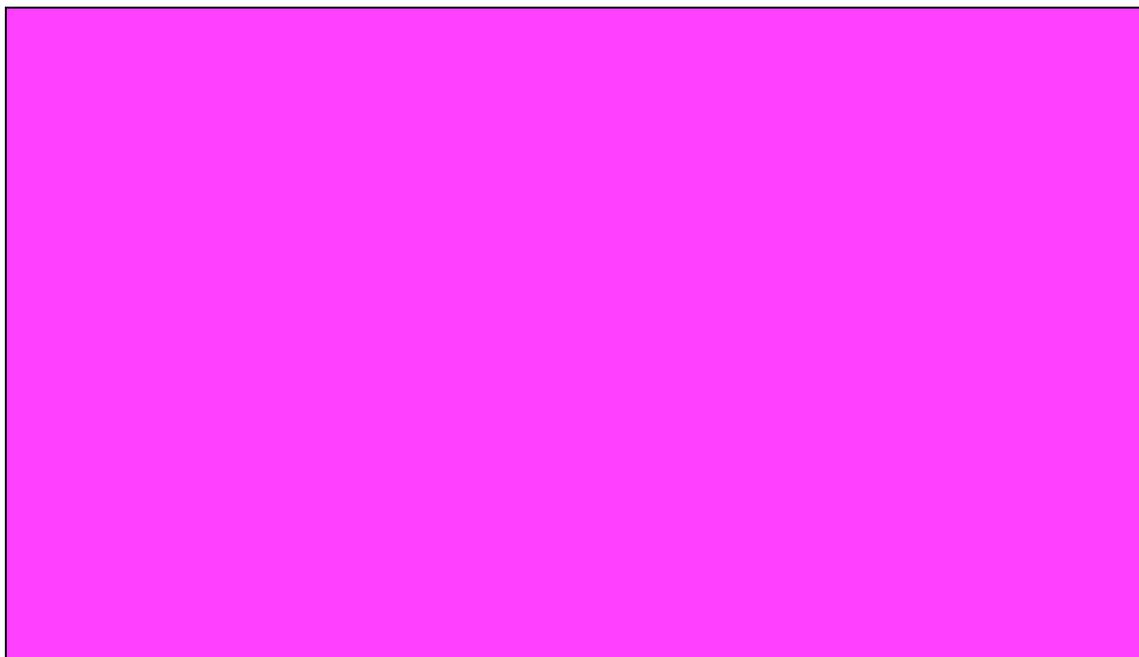
earlier masquerades that resemble Caroliina are examples of both a curiosity about and a resistance towards fitting stereotypical roles.

Caroliina has rarely appeared in public: twice in 2005; once in 2006; and recently as part of *Spin-Fold-Spill*. She has been explored mainly within the private domestic domain. Her existence has been documented with video, photography, and text. Yet as middle sister her impact on the entire system is immense. She is quietly controlling. Caroliina regulates the behaviour of her sisters through her own behaviour which symbolises the conventions and regulations prevalent in wider society.

Compartmentalisation is another way that Caroliina expresses her need to control. In *Spin-Fold-Spill* Caroliina's tendency to compartmentalise materials became an influence in how the interior installation was designed. Objects were placed into plastic bags as a way to maintain order and cleanliness. This element of compartmentalisation is the focus of the YELLOW CHAPTER.

Summary –

This section has discussed how the role of Caroliina emerged in my artistic practice. Having begun by considering the symbolism of the YELLOW & ORANGE CHAPTER in *Spin-Fold-Spill*, I discussed how the lemon and orange objects possibly relate to Caroliina's unconscious fear of change. Repetition and repression were then explored through looking at performance examples that I developed prior to the role of Caroliina. In reflection, these performances reveal how the essence of Caroliina has been present in my life and work for longer than I was consciously aware of. In many ways Caroliina is the most dominating of all of the roles even though, in the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performance, Caroliina is the only role who does not speak a word.



ROLE-PLAY & RESISTANCE

HESITATING –

Sari picks up a pencil to write about the performance *Role Investigations* (2009) and finds herself reflecting as Jessee-Liina:

I began with a hesitation.

Staring at a wall, mid-performance, staring at a pink dress hanging on the wall. The audience anticipate, holding their breath, as I hesitate. Taking the dress from a hook on the wall, I re-adorn it, at the same time that smile returns to my face. An automated smile; learnt and rehearsed. The smile, the pink dress and the curly blonde wig on my head belong together; these are the personal indicators of assuming a specific characters mannerisms. Mannerisms that belong to me as Jessee-Liina, and as Jessee-Liina I am a bubbly socially adored personality who was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. As Jessee-Liina I smile subserviently, I am the type of woman who always gets what she wants because I am a positive happy bundle of energy.



The hesitation belongs to Sari. Who although keeps me in good physical shape aligns herself more strongly with my younger sisters Caroliina (the neurotic cleaning woman) and Starella (the out of control alcoholic). When I say align, I mean that she identifies herself with my sisters flaws with more ease than she relates to my perfections. Although, when required, Sari utilises my social skills in order to be

Jessee-Liina in *Role Investigations* (2009).

Photographed by Davide Pavonne

pleasing in specific life situations. Basically without many of my attributes Sari would not be able to live her day-to-day life sufficiently well enough.

And yet she has begun to hesitate embodying me. At least in the obvious sense (with clothes, hair, and mannerisms). This at least seems the case with the performance described above which took place in November 2009 as part of the Nights of Live Art (Theatre Academy, Helsinki). Yet I have wondered if Sari embodies me in other ways, in order to soothe her anxiety to keep everyone happy. Ways that may not be as exaggerated as my ways. Perhaps she is moving from the realm of theatrical role-play into mere social role-play. Perhaps she has learnt all there is to know about me. Thus, I wonder if this hesitation threatens my identity/existence, or if I will continue to exist in other, less obvious, ways? (March 2011).

In the above text Sari was surprised to find that her reflection was really Jessee-Liina's reflection, especially as she has often found great difficulty in accessing Jessee-Liina's opinion when trying to write as her. For example during *Textual Opera-Ration*, Sari wrote:

I'm having difficulties to gage Jessee-Liina's authentic writing voice. I wonder if it is because she hasn't had the vocabulary to really express herself or because there's nothing really in that pretty little head of hers after all...? Or is it my inability to access Jessee-Liina beyond the superficial, beyond the obvious....? (Kivinen 2010).

In this section Sari's embodiment of Jessee-Liina will be considered alongside the mannerism of smiling. In particular the argument developed in the three PURPLE CHAPTERS about the connection between multiple roles and melancholia will be considered in connection to Jessee-Liina's smile.

PURPLE EYES –

Sari's method of using multiple voices as roles to speak through and to embody allows her to move between many scenarios and to explore various perspectives. However Purple Eyes believes that it is questionable whether the method of speaking through many roles allows Sari to become more whole in herself, or whether Sari as the subject attempting to tell her own story in fact loses herself in the act of telling her story. Sari has argued that because she attempts to tell the story through many perspectives this allows her more leeway to challenge the narrative function. Yet the observations of Purple Eyes (the one who observes all of the sister roles including Sari from a knowledgeable and objective perspective) indicates otherwise. According to Purple Eyes, Sari becomes a split subject precisely because of her attempts to tell her story from multiple perspectives. Purple Eyes believes that whilst Sari thinks that exploring narrative through her sister roles allows her to become whole in herself (because she is giving voice to the various discrete parts of her own personality), that in actual fact Sari becomes continually more split and fragmented, losing sight of her own subjectivity.

Jessee-Liina giggles –

This is why I keep smiling. I can sense the melancholia in her when I smile, yet I desire to be adored. Even when Sari is told that she shouldn't smile so much, that she is a doormat because she smiles too much, that she is not a feminist because she smiles too much. Well, I can't help it. I have the sweetest best smile. As a child I was always complimented on my puffy lips that smile real sweetly. When I smiled on stage in Spin-Fold-Spill, most people smiled back. Only a couple didn't and mainly these were the hardcore performance artists, the ones that cringed every time I spoke because all they could see was my blonde hair and pink hat. They could not see beyond the smile. Or allow themselves to smile.

PURPLE EYES –

The melancholia that Jessee-Liina mentions ties in with Sari being a subject that can not think beyond what she knows. Purple Eyes theorises this as the melancholia of performativity. As much as we think we have all the choices in the world about how to perform ourselves we are always limited by: the choices on offer; by what we are told; and by the limitations of society. The melancholia arises from never having been able to grieve for that which one could have been. Sari experiences melancholy for the unknown possibilities of what she could have been. Repeat: what *she* could be.

Simultaneously the act of telling her story through her multiple selves is an attempt to move beyond the restrictions of what she is, yet as pre-mentioned Sari has come to realise that each of these roles merely represents another limitation; they are representations of what she knows to conjure.

TO SMILE –

In his book *On Humour* Simon Critchley writes about how in many cultures smiling is a diminutive of laughter, for example the Danish “smile or “smila” is a root for the English word smile, but in Danish it also means a “small laugh.” *On Humour* weaves various angles and forms that humour potentially takes. One view that Critchley claims is that “the body that is object and subject of humour is an abject body- estranged, alien, weakening, failing.” (Critchley 2002, 51).

Jessee-Liina’s smile becomes estranged precisely in its attempts to please. The smile overcompensates for something that is lacking. The smile becomes separate from the body, not unlike the voice detached from the body and discussed in the GREY CHAPTER.

Consider the painted on smile of a clown. A smile that often borders between being humorous and sinister. Here we could recall the work *Koulofobia* by the Finnish artist Jani Leinonen. Leinonen presents a man trying to seek medical help only to be told that he should visit Ronald McDonald to cheer himself up, “but Doctor,” says the sad man, “I am Ronald.”

Contrarily a performance by Kasvijuri sees four women smiling for an elongated period of time, they sit like statues at a dinner table. Their smiles seem plastered, until the drool begins. In the performances by Kasvijuri the focused act of smiling becomes grotesque.

When Sari recently gave a conference talk about *Spin-Fold-Spill* she discussed the act of smiling as Jessee-Liina:

Smiling and hesitating. Smiling too much again. She smiles to impress, I smile out of nervousness. We giggle and smile together.

*Painful smiling is painfully funny. It hurts me to smile as Jessee-Liina yet I kept smiling. During Jessee-Liina's appearances in *Spin-Fold-Spill* (and other performances that included Jessee-Liina with a similar forced smile) audience members often smiled back out of discomfort, to ease the discomfort of someone smiling so intensely at them. Other audience members laughed freely in response, whilst some stared back unimpressed by all the smiling. I have found this simple act of smiling to be rich in terms of response.*

*In *Spin-Fold-Spill* the smiling body becomes abject, de-humanized. The smiling begins as an attempt to impress, yet becomes a distortion. "I" the smiling body playing the part of Jessee-Liina am abject in my /her overcompensation of being the prettiest, the tallest, and the one with the sweetest best smile.*

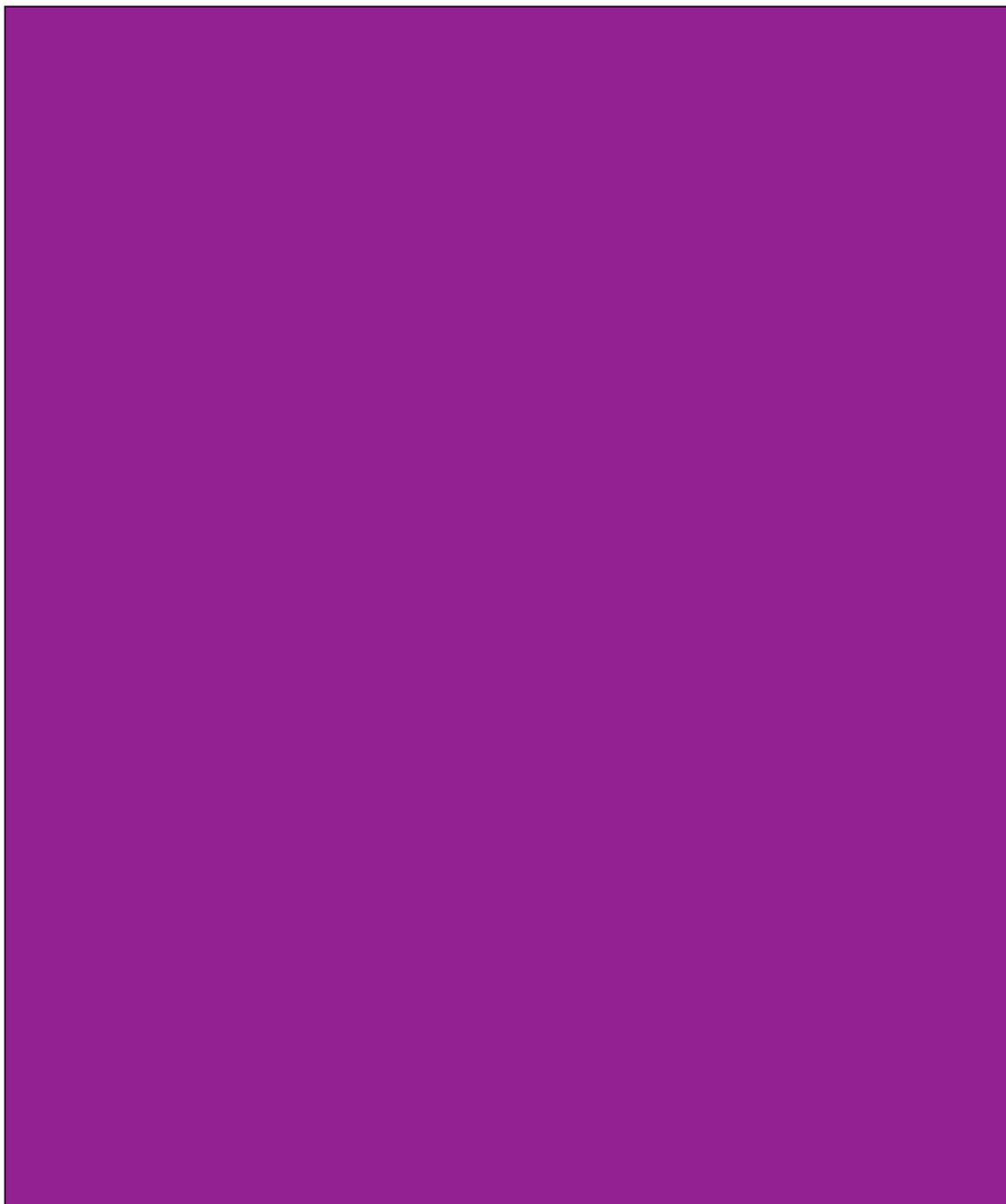
As Jessee-Liina recaps her children memory of standing in line alongside her three younger sisters, whilst waiting for a photograph to be taken I recap a sense of scrutiny, of over-playing a part. Jessee-Liina says in her monologue:

I'm the tallest so I stand furthest to the left, he stands facing us, and to my immediate right stands Caroliina, then Sari, then Starella. I'm the

prettiest and I have the sweetest best smile. As I stand in line I try to smile my bestest smile, he glares at me, I wonder why he glares as I keep smiling.

And as he glares at her I glare at the situation. From the outside in, to the inside out. I jump between positions. I want to be him, the one glaring, the one taking the photograph, yet, yet again I have positioned myself pretending to be Jesse-Liina, positioned myself smiling too much, too pretty, too much, too little.

I wish I was him glaring, him glaring, him staring.



PURPLE CHAPTER II: Purple Eyes narrates middle FEATURING: PURPLE EYES



Purple Eyes narrates middle in Spin-Fold-Spill. Photographed by Juuso Noronkoski.

Script

In between the start and the finish was a middle point, a point when everything just seemed to freeze. Stop. For a moment. And so again then began the cycle.

Owing to idea resemblance of a model (the model) and owing to the internal coding of the model (a model). So far in the story, the four sisters have become aware that someone is watching them, leaving notes to taunt them. So far the story has revealed internal thoughts of Gareth, Supposedly a man, supposedly human → yet in the ever moving, pixelated existence of Purple Eyes suppositions are merely suppositions. In other words, each time we come across a disguise, a variant, a displacement we could say it is a repetition. Here in the middle we find a medley of words.

-- continued--

Each sister acts out learnt actions, gestures, and behaviours. Simone de Beauvoir might refer to this as “the character she represents, but is not.” (Beauvoir according to Goffman 1969, 65). And according to Vikki Bell “The subject is produced as an effect of reiteration, and the subject by necessity reiterates itself in the terms of the constituting power, even if in that need for repetition there is the possibility of rearticulation and resignification.” (Bell 2007, 34). Here Bell references a range of thinkers that each feed into the concept of the genealogy of performativity; from Nietzsche’s ‘no doer behind the deed’, Foucault’s power relations and specifically the subject caught within the architecture of a panopticon, John L. Austin’s performative utterances, and Judith Butler’s gender performativity. Woven into her text Bell explores the connected concept of what Jean-Luc Nancy terms ‘co-originality’, which “refers precisely to the plurality on which any origin story of the self turns, since origin cannot be represented except in such a way.” (Nancy according to Bell 2007, 20).

Can the construction of Sari’s Role-System be traced to co-origins (many lines, woven into the fabrication of plural sources)?

PURPLE EYES SENSES THE CRITICISM OF SARI WHILST WRITING THIS. SARI DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PURPLE EYES CAN PULL IT OFF – THIS ARGUMENT – PURPLE EYES BELIEVES OTHERWISE, YET, AGREES WITH NANCY THAT THE STORY OF SELF MUST BE PLURAL.

Purple Eyes is particularly interested to consider the differences between thinking about the “me” that is performatively constructed and the “me yet not me” versions that are constructed in deliberate conscious ways. Relevant

here is the distinction between performing the self in artistic contexts (deliberate role-play—me yet not me) and the everyday presentation of self (performativity—me). As Sari's roles feature in the artistic realm – yet she relates to them as parts of her – it is important to consider these distinctions and consider the work of artists who relate to their personas in a similar way.

For example Eelka Lampe's 2002 article *Rachel Rosenthal Creating Her Selves* considers the varied performatives taking place in the work and life of Rachel Rosenthal. Lampe devised a scale of performing/ not performing which is based on the work of various scholars related to the field of performance studies: Richard Schechner's theories about restored behaviour; Michael Kirby's theories surrounding acting and non acting; Eugenie Barba's thoughts about extra-daily performing; and Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* in which he "employed the theatrical concept of performance as a model for the social realm; for both on stage and off, he distinguished between a person as an individual complex identity and the specialized function of a person in a social role." (Lampe 2002, 299).

Whilst Rachel Rosenthal discusses her work with multiple characters to be about how "fundamentally split we are" (Rosenthal in Chaudhuri 2001, 281). The drama therapist Robert J. Landy describes a role system as a grouping of ones personality parts to be in constant movement and "the substance of one's identity – all the pieces that, once assembled, represent a personality." (Landy 2007, 44). Both of these perspectives consider the personality as being in parts; split (first misspelt as 'spit' which Purple Eyes thinks could be psychoanalysed appropriately as a Freudian slip within this section if the word limit could allow it).

PURPLE EYES WONDERS IF EVERY ROLE CREATED BY SARI IS MERELY ANOTHER IMITATION WHICH EQUALS LIMITATION. AND SUBSEQUENTLY EQUALS MELANCHOLIA (BECAUSE THE SELF CAN NEVER BE ESCAPED, EVEN VIA THE ACT OF MULTIPLICATION).

MELANCHOLIA

~~“Butler had argued that melancholia might act as a sort of metaphor for performative constitution. Speaking of gender as constituted within the heterosexual frame, Butler has argued that in a sense the contemporary production of sexual orientation with its related constitution of gender might be regarded as melancholic. For Freud, melancholic loss is a loss that cannot be grieved, or that cannot be ‘let go’ by the subject, such that the lost object is incorporated into the ego, and becomes part of the person, constitutive of who she or he is. In Butler’s hands, the production of gender can be related to this melancholia. For here, too, there is something that has been placed on the ‘interior’—with the proviso that one remembers it is not truly interior—that has to carried although (and because) it is in tension with the performance.” (Bell 2007, 23).~~

Purple Eyes asks how do the norms of personhood contribute to how the subject is formed? And by destabilising the norms, do new norms merely formulate that subsequently create new stereotypes to be imitated? Purple Eyes believes that when Sari splits herself into multiple roles she is attempting to destabilise the norms known to her, yet she can never truly escape the norms because they are so intricately ingrained. The loss for Sari is that even via her multiple roles she can never quite grasp beyond the norms instated.

Let us consider now the importance of melancholia as a symptom of refused identification. As previously outlined, gender performativity is understood predominately as inherited repetitive and ritualised behaviour performed by a subject in society according to a set of cultural norms. That which constitutes

a norm is always slightly shifting and changing, but the general consensus is that gender will be imitated according to the norm. The process of imitation is generally unconscious and unquestioned, most girls assume that they will become women and most boys believe that one day they will become men. For each sex there are stereotypical gender norms that are typically followed. Performativity for Butler is about the societal constructs inside which everyone plays their roles according to order steeped in tradition and emphasised by repetition.

Referencing the section *Melancholy Gender / Refused Identification in The Psychic Life of Power*, we can now consider ideas about melancholy as a response to types of loss that were never actually had. Important here is the grief and melancholia pertained to refused identity, thoughts which are perhaps most eloquently explained in the following excerpt:

On the one hand, melancholia is an attachment that substitutes for an attachment that is broken, gone, or impossible; on the other hand, melancholia continues the tradition of impossibility, as it were, that belongs to the attachment for which it substitutes [...] Does this not produce a sociality afflicted by melancholia, a sociality in which loss cannot be grieved because it cannot be recognised as loss, because what is lost never had any entitlement to existence? (Butler 1997, 24.)

This example highlights how the psychic life, although unseen, plays out and affects the operations of identity. The performativity presented by Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power* occurs in the way in which identity is constructed at unconscious levels. A subject is always governed by historical layers steeped in the norms of what one should become.

-- to be continued --

Conclusion

Let us return to the introduction in order to locate a conclusion. In the introduction I stated that my main research question is: when working through multiple roles that are viewed as parts of the personality of the performer, in what ways can we define the performativity of the roles? In collating the twelve chapter parts I have written through roles as a way to channel their perspectives and to actively explore this research question. I have spent time watching video documentation of the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performances and have attempted to watch myself in-role with critical distance. The mediated forms of text and video have been important in analysing *Spin-Fold-Spill*, and have granted me necessary distance to analyse my working process. Below, I will outline some relevant points that have arisen from this thesis and the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performances.

What I have discovered through the writing process -

I have realised that when Purple Eyes writes a certain style is permitted which I would generally shy away from. Purple Eyes is capable of forming theoretical standpoints, and of abundantly referencing, despite not always knowing enough about a given topic. In the *Spin-Fold-Spill* performances Purple Eyes fulfilled a function of narrating the story of the four sisters as well as imagining their future possibilities. As I watch video documentation of myself enacting the role of Purple Eyes I fixate on small nuances, ways that I behave that cannot be escaped despite the ‘role’ in place. For example the subtle slip of a nervous laugh. Is this a reflection of the limitation of Purple Eyes? Who despite being capable of forming theoretical standpoints is restricted to *my* body’s learnt ways of responding to a situation? And if yes is this what I could claim as being an example of a role’s melancholic performativity? Or should we just place it into the category of bad acting – despite “acting” not having been considered the goal of my investigations into role-play.

Over the years when interacting socially as one of the sister roles people have often commented about how thoroughly I seem in-role; having mastered the skill of method acting. Yet I would always argue that on the contrary, that

it is when I am *not* in role that I am acting. Not necessarily consciously acting, but feeling as though I need to “act” a certain way in order to fit into the social norms and expectations of any given situation. For example the role of Starella initially allowed me to behave in a way that felt more “natural” than my regular self. I say here initially because the freedom experienced in the role of Starella has shifted; she is now more and more aware of her own limitations. She is aware that she is limited because of Sari. Whereas she provided me a sense of freedom I now constrain her. In this thesis Starella is limited to merely paraphrasing what I have previously written. For example in the BLACK & GREEN CHAPTER. Simultaneously I have on occasion perhaps taken on board her writing style which is a mixture of blunt poetic commentary. In the PURPLE CHAPTERS the role of Purple Eyes explored this aspect of a role providing me with an initial sense of freedom that eventually turns into merely another layer of restriction.

Hesitation –

Jessee-Liina meanwhile is portrayed in *Spin-Fold-Spill* as a smiling subject (or object). In PINK CHAPTER I Jessee-Liina writes about my hesitancy to embody her in the performance *Role-Investigations* (2009). She wonders if my hesitancy is a threat to her existence. This is resonant of the real life multiple personality case study of Sybil¹⁹ in which some of the personalities became worried that once Sybil as the main personality began to become aware of her other personalities that they would cease to exist. This aspect of hesitancy is extremely interesting to me as a point to explore further. What does it mean for a role to fear being extinguished?

In *Spin-Fold-Spill* I explored Jessee-Liina’s concerns through a process of minimising her costume and her mannerisms. Her once full head of blonde curly locks now minimised to two strands cut from the wig she used to wear and sewn into a pink headdress. The action of smiling became the central focus, over-smiling as a referent of abjection. Jessee-Liina has generally been explored in social situations. In *Spin-Fold-Spill* she was explored in relation to

¹⁹ See: Shreiber, Flora Rheta. *Sybil*. New York: Penguin Books, 1973. It is about the true story of a woman with sixteen personalities.

the other sister roles as she delivered a short monologue about herself and her sisters.

Another example of the roles voicing concerns about their existence is discussed in the GREY & GREEN CHAPTER in reference to Gareth Bdm appearing during the writing performance *Textual Opera-Ration*. For example Sari began to write about a strange night in Sydney when she encountered a man named Gareth, and Caroliina began to see a shrink immediately after Gareth Bdm appeared in the text. Purple Eyes also responded by taking up the role of the narrator in the story; interpellated into the text.

Losing or gaining the self –

You may have noticed several points of conflict in the twelve chapters. Conflicts that represent opposing views that the various roles maintain. For example in the GREEN & GREY CHAPTER the role of Sari states that “I hope that through telling a story of myself that I locate – not lose – myself.” Whilst Purple Eyes in PINK CHAPTER I writes “it is questionable whether the method of speaking through many roles allows Sari to become more whole in herself, or whether Sari as the subject attempting to tell her own story in fact loses herself in the act of telling her story.”

These two opposing viewpoints are developed in many ways throughout this body of work and pose questions that I do not have definite answers for; they are rather ongoing pursuits to explore in further depth in the future.

Regulation –

Another theme that surfaced several times in the writing process is the act of regulation in association to how the roles experience each other. For example in the BLACK CHAPTER, Caroliina is referenced as the mediating sister who maintains regulation and order within the system. Whilst in PURPLE CHAPTER III Purple Eyes states that: “the limitation of this essay and of the knowledge imparted via Purple Eyes is restricted to the regulations instated by Sari.”

Regulation as a theme is possibly connected to theories of performativity in which the power of regulation produces the subjects that it controls, as discussed in PURPLE CHAPTER I. If I as Sari am the one producing the roles as subjects and thus regulating them it is only natural that they would feel some kind of resentment towards me. However, if I am constructing these roles then who is constructing me?

The video camera –

In the BLACK CHAPTER the video camera and its relationship to my roles was explored. Purple Eyes' comment was that: "The camera is a tool for capturing the sister roles. Sari orchestrates its framing and the movements of the roles-as-actors in her video artworks."

For many years I have found it difficult to articulate my relationship to the video camera, possibly because it has been so important as a witness (the first witness) of my sister roles. The first time I enacted all three sisters was in November 2004. I was alone in my Grandmothers empty house, a house that Starella describes in the BLACK CHAPTER as being "built like a sculpture, using one bag of cement every pay week and found rocks from the surrounding bush property and nearby islands." In Starella's description she tells of her memory of watching Jessee-Liina in a pink dress being filmed by a film crew. In actual fact I was dressed in a pink evening dress embodying the role of Jessee-Liina as Starella waited for her turn to be embodied. I was also the camera person (the film crew) with a single analogue camera set up on a tripod. The footage that was captured that day was evidence of the three sister roles. The video camera captured their existence and I spent countless hours watching and re-watching the footage afterwards. The video footage helped me to familiarise myself with these roles as parts of myself whose purpose I did not quite understand at the time. The filmed footage allowed me a certain critical distance to observe myself as if from afar.

The camera as a witness of the sister roles has been important in the development of the Role-System. My relationship to the video camera and its relation to the roles has changed over the years. Whereas in the first four years of the Role-System I used the video camera as a device to capture and explore the sister roles in relationship to each other (and myself), I now seem to use

creative writing in a similar way. More recently when producing video artworks that feature roles from the Role-System there has been a camera person also present. There has been a shift in my work from the camera as a witness of private improvisatory acts to the camera recording deliberate and scripted situations.

The problem of the body in *Spin-Fold-Spill* -

Only one body exists when performing the Role-System: mine. This is a necessity when exploring the multiple roles of a singular person. Yet in my imagination I see Caroliina touching Starella's shoulder whilst Jessee-Liina hugs Sari. I imagine all four sisters inhabiting the same physical space. The narrative unfolds with the bodies of all sisters present. Yet when performing live, as the sisters, my body is the only one present.

Whilst writing the twelve parts to this thesis – the thesis body – I have observed an interesting factor in reference to how the body is discussed and represented in this text. Particularly there is an emphasis on isolated parts becoming estranged from the body. For example the voice protruding in the GREY CHAPTER, the smile contorted in the PINK CHAPTER, the body exposed to infection in the YELLOW & ORANGE CHAPTER, the filmed body falling and vulnerable in the BLACK CHAPTER, and the arms fluttering like a bird in the GREEN CHAPTER.

The body is represented as parts, possibly as a reflection of the personas as part-selves. Estrangement is an interesting aspect to consider, for example the voice that is recorded once came from the physical body and now protrudes from elsewhere. In the GREY CHAPTER I also consider the idea of installation-as-body in an attempt to question how my own body can possibly move aside from the position of being representative of the roles.

These thoughts have come out of the process of *Spin-Fold-Spill* and in writing this thesis. I mention them here as a way to pinpoint the problem of the body in my work. This is an interesting problem which I will investigate in the future.

Final words -

In this conclusion I have summarised various aspects discovered through the process of compiling this thesis. The questions that have driven my working process are still in motion. I began with the question of what would happen to me as performer (and more importantly as person) if I eliminated the roles that I describe as being parts of my own personality. And I end in a place of having expanded – not minimised – the roles that I perform through.

Whilst the initial question was an important starting point for this research and has led me to explore several alternative ways of performing, I am ultimately relieved that I have not, in any concrete ways, killed the sister roles – even at the risk of being called a sissy.²⁰ Instead this question of elimination prompted me to reconsider and to challenge the function of multiple roles as an artistic pursuit. The newer roles have allowed for a different kind of depth to occur, and have helped shift perspectives when looking at the same basic story.

The narratives that I work through and the roles that I recognise as parts of me can also be viewed as wider reflections of an experience of being in this world. They are reflections of the societal world that I experience, the regulations of personhood, and the expectation of fitting (often conflicting) role-moulds.

This textual body of work is layered with thoughts, references, and experiences folded and spun and spilt into and over and under itself.

These are the concluding words of *Spin-Fold-Spill: a textual exploration about role-play, narrative, and fictitious truths*.

²⁰ “Sissy” in this instance means cowardly. Sissy can also refer to a boy or man who is regarded as effeminate, or to an informal sister. (See: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/sissy>)

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Rachel Rosenthal: www.rachelrosenthal.org/
 Sarah crowEST: <http://www.sarahcrowest.com/>
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