GHOSTINGS: THE HAUNTOLOGIES OF PRACTICE

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Abstract: By positioning hauntology as a possible critique of ontology, we hope through this article to offer a consideration of how practitioner researchers might find ways to secure what they don't know, by feeling around the edges of conspicuous knowledge. In this landscape of uncertainty, where the sclerotic nature of knowledge is challenged, we hope to remind ourselves of the value of the dialogic, the questioning and the unthought known (Martin Buber). By drawing upon the Derridean concept of *hauntology*, (c.f. *Spectres of Marx*), the knowingness of presence is replaced by 'discursive layers whose stratification allows long sequences to remain subjacent to ephemeral formations' (Derrida, 1994: 149). By shifting away from Alain Badiou's position that to exist there must be consistency, we seek to offer hauntologies of practice as valued opportunities where all the forgotten things, and all the mistakes made, can ghost the present moment. They serve as echoes of confusion and concern, and it is from these echoes that the elegiac and virtuosic might emerge.

Key Words: Hauntology; ontology; practice; ears; eyes.

[1]   Joanne (or 'Bob' as most people know her) and Lee completed the first joint practice-as-research PhD to be undertaken within a UK arts discipline in 2004. As part of that project they began to reflect upon the process of creative collaboration and knowledge production by drawing on the 'two-fold thinking' of Deleuze and Guattari. These processes remain central to their on-going work together. Alongside their creative practice, they both work in the UK university sector. Their current research includes an exploration of Buddhist, Vedantic and Taoist philosophies, with particular attention being paid to the concept of witnessing. Having spent too many years inside their heads, they have noticed they have bodies, and as a consequence Bob is now an acupuncturist, and Lee teaches yoga.
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Once, in a room full of people, we spoke the following words:

Ears cannot see, they are blind to the contingencies of spelling, and rely instead upon context to make sense of the narratives being offered to them.

It seems strange to be revisiting these words, once spoken at a symposium entitled *Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process*, offered here in the context of a journal article. These words are now subject to an ocular grasp, where ears are not the organ of reception, but the passive passenger on a head making literal sense through the refraction of light particles bouncing off a piece of paper, or perhaps from the illuminated screen of a laptop or tablet. Ears are not required here, not required to hear;

On the first of October 2016, I was riding my bicycle along the Exe Estuary Trail, a bicycle route that connects the city of Exeter, with the seafront town of Dawlish Warren on the South Coast of England. I was cycling to see the body of a young female sperm whale that had been washed ashore two days earlier. If that sounds gruesome, that's probably because it is. Gruesome, but magnetic. I felt like the four boys in *Stand by Me* (and also in *The Body*, the Stephen King novella upon which the film is based) who made a similar trip to find the corpse of a missing boy. It was a rite of passage, a moment where they stepped out of childhood, and towards a more uncertain future.
Those boys were being drawn to something, something dead but potent nonetheless.
On that bike ride, as I rode towards the decomposing corpse of a huge, and hugely intelligent mammal, I wondered what I was doing. I thought it was to encounter something

they can rest, or perhaps turn their attention to other inputs. Maybe you are listening to music as you read this. Certainly we are listening to music as we write.

And as we write this, revisiting words that were initially spoken, we cannot help but be aware of the act of translation that will soon occur. That the words chosen, measured, and weighed, will go through a process of transformation, slough off their old selves and take on the form of something new. Thus our writing, once intended for the ear, maintains that curious sense of doubling.

As we sit here, trying to move the words from the ear to the eye, we cannot help but wonder what further journeys they will have to take. Once, in that room full of people, we observed that practice is one of those words that hits the ear at just the right angle to afford a certain level of cognitive dissonance in its reception. We ventured that depending on the context, it can be either a noun or a verb, a having or a doing. But as we sit here anticipating how a story about the movement from mouth to ear might become a tale of the lexical slippage from page to eye, and eventually from language to language, our awareness shifts. Words are like elastic, they can be pulled in a variety of directions, moulded to the needs of the mouth that offers them, but like elastic there are limits. Holding words in one place for too long can remove their potential to bounce back, and too swift a movement can result in catastrophic failure. That word, practice, when held in the context of performance practice, is offered as a

immense, something that couldn't easily be fathomed; a creature, fifty feet in length, that only days before had been swimming in the Atlantic Ocean. I thought I wanted to hold myself up against this animal, perhaps to confirm just how small I truly am. At least, that was what I told myself. But on that bike ride, I started to get nervous. Maybe I just wanted to see some men with chainsaws cutting up a whale. Maybe there was more of the thirteen year old in me than I cared to confess to. Maybe I just wanted to be a little bit grossed out. As I cycled along, lost in these thoughts, I began to think that maybe I wouldn't really want to get too close. I pedaled on, lost in these thoughts.

It was then that a voice stage-whispered in my ear:

"I'm closer than you think"

"I'm coming to get you"

"Pedal faster little boy"

I was not alone on that bike ride. Bob and I had gone out together, but the difference in our heights and my tendency to pedal hard, means that more often than not I can be a few miles ahead, pausing every now and then for her to find me.

As I had ridden along the seafront, lost in the reverie of my thoughts, I had evidently slowed down enough for Bob to catch up with me. And as she saw me, she increased her speed, steadily drawing closer, until she was able to whisper-shout her threats.

The surprise, the unprecedented moment of being caught up with caught me off guard, and I squealed. The kind of squeal I used to make as my dad would chase me up the stairs, grabbing at my ankles as I ran ahead of him. And it was that same delicious dread that I felt, cycling towards a dead whale, and away from a girl pretending that she planned to do me harm.

noun when it should be a verb; people speak of 'their practice' when perhaps they would be better served to speak of the thing they are practicing; to offer a doing not a having. If the verb keeps being offered as a noun, then like elastic stretched beyond its capacity, it is likely to lose its ability to become a verb again. I supposed what we are talking about is the risk of ossification, of suffering from certainty, where knowing becomes having, not asking. In that room, that room full of people, we referenced Thomas A. Schwandt, talked about the contingencies of practice and then played some games with that word. We played with 's', we played with 'c', we recognised that this was a linguistic game that wouldn't work in North America, and we joked about the tectonic shifts of consonants. Words cooled and hardened as the molten core beneath them bubbled. But this doesn't make any sense when you can see the games being played. These are games for the ears not the eyes. And the gentle shift from English to Portuguese further obviates any limited value that our

playing might have had once upon a time in that

room full of ears.

All that we were trying to do, in that room long ago, was to balance the acquisition of skill against the numbing effects of being too practiced. To keep in play the potential value of failure when researching through the body. And on that day, long, long ago, we were surrounded by the voices of others, each asking questions that ran along similar tracks, before inevitably running off to their own destination. Now we find ourselves in a time when the playing with words and ears has past, and instead we are reminded what we were once in a room to do. We were there to offer some closing words – provocations drawn out of the myriad ideas floated over a long weekend. The words that follow here are offered in the same spirit; to reflect upon the things we heard, the things we did, and try to find something in amongst the sharing.

Where to begin? How about this.....

We are all ghosts.

The French word *hantise* is the etymological root for Derrida's *hauntology*. Surfacing in his book *Spectres of Marx* (1994), this neologism brings together haunting and ontology, to create a disembodied alternative to the branch of metaphysics that deals with the messy business of *being*. Ontology is the interrogation of thingness, a process undertaken in recognition that to be a thing, it is necessary to have been. Thus hauntology allows a way to step into a dialogue with those things that never were. Although not articulated explicitly, Bob has explored this idea in her writing about grief, miscarriage and the zombie (see Whalley, 2016). The grief of the miscarriage is a literal disembodiment, as the sorrow springs from the loss of biological material denied agency and autonomy. The grief speaks to that which wasn't, not that which was.

That Derrida uses an avowedly embodied proclamation from *Hamlet* as a means to begin his book, probably speaks to the complexity that the term asserts; when Hamlet bemoans that 'time is out of joint', he uses the viscerality of a dislocation to speak to the rupture in the body politic of Denmark. The interruption of his natural lineage,

with brother replacing brother on the throne, rather than the more expected line of succession moving to the surviving son and heir, is communicated not at the existential level, but at the bodily. Time is out of joint, a limb is swinging freely, no longer able to perform the tasks for which it was intended.

For Derrida, *Hamlet* is the pre-eminent hauntologic text. We are not asked to mourn Hamlet's death, we are asked to mourn those possibilities that his death removes. Through an extended discussion of Shakespeare's conflation of the existential (time) and the visceral (joint), Derrida considers how the optimism resulting from the fall of the Berlin wall, and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, allows for an interrogation of Marx's use of the term spectre in *The Communist Manifesto*, which Marx (with Engells) positioned linguistically as an always already disembodied political force. The fall of the wall affords Derrida the space to reflect that the Marxist project was built upon a ghost, thus causing him to question how one might mourn that which was never 'alive'.

Perhaps, there is a certain nihilism, or at the very least a pessimism, to the way in which hauntology is being positioned therein. But as with any neologism, for it to begin to gain a foothold in wider discourse, its signifiers must shift in order to accommodate a wider usage. In this way, Powell & Stephenson-Shaffer, theatre academics from whom we are developing the term, connect hauntological practices to 'haunting', by speaking also to the return. It is in these continuous, repetitive acts, that knowledge is created. Not in the identity of the thing itself, but through our interaction with the thing. As with Marx and Derrida before them, they open with a spectre. They inform the reader that a 'specter haunts performance studies' (Powell and Stephenson-Shaffer, 2009: 1), and it is from a recognition of this haunting that they borrow from Derrida. They open up the potential for multiplicity through the audience's agentic interaction with the 'thing' in question:

> truth is not found in the identity of the thing as the thing itself but through our interactions with that thing. For example, a box is not a box simply because others say it is, but it becomes a certain kind of box once we paint the walls black, hang

lights in it, and start moving around inside. Therefore, perspective is shaped by interaction and how each interaction differs (Powell and Stephenson- Shaffer, 2009: 2).

The subjective account is allowed space and value in the generation of knowledge, with a recognition that knowledge might function as both temporary and partial, liable to gentle hauntings of those other discoveries housed in those other bodies that occupied the spaces before us. To practice is not necessarily to stand on the shoulders of giants, but to occupy their boxes, make attendant discoveries, and feel things anew. Practitioners trained in the same techniques do not feel the same things, their experiences are based upon the contingencies of their own flesh, but they are nevertheless haunted by the discoveries of those bodies that come before them. Bodies that may have been explicitly or tacitly implicated in those trainings that have allowed the new knowledges to emerge. It is in these epistemological ghostings that, for us at any rate, the process of practice as research emerges.

This space for hauntings allows for the re-emergence of experiences that have *past*, experiences perhaps housed in other bodies, from other times. In practice as research, time can be usefully out of joint, offering a hauntologic understanding that affords the potential to absorb slippage and mistakes, or at least allow them to be valued as valid pedagogic and self-evaluative strategies. Our development of the term hauntology springs from a desire to better understand the critical insights into our own developmental processes, while resisting the sense that an arts practice cast in the light of research is deemed valid dependent only upon its use-value. In practice, those haunted moments are not necessarily experiences of erasure, but palimpsest-like tracings where the things that didn't work occupy the same space as the things that did. A hauntologogic approach allows for the practitioner to resist an understanding of failure as curative; the thing we do till we learn how to stop doing it. Instead, our mistakes function as an ever-present absence, which informs the partial and temporary nature of knowledges.

It is, of course, important that we resist simply casting the rest of the academy as somehow at fault. Nor are we suggesting practice as a panacea. Indeed, those areas of the academy that have long embraced practical learning still struggle to successfully 'frame teaching, learning and inquiry in the professional practice fields' (Schwandt, 2005: 313). The presence of 'doing' within graduate and postgraduate teaching serves to highlight the importance of a continued sensitivity to disciplinary distinctions in knowledge creation. Perhaps this is why we want to move away from an ontological understanding of practice, and towards a hauntological approach. As Powell & Stephenson-Shaffer suggest 'hauntology functions as a critique of ontology as we have understood it. Hauntology does not surpass ontology; it reimagines it' (2009: 1). Thus, our knowing can remain both fixed and contingent, allowing in all of the moments of unknowing, reminding us that not only was there a time when we didn't know, but there will likely be a time in the future where what seemed certain, shifts.

Powell & Stephenson-Shaffer's reimagining of ontology, when considered within the context of the practice as research, might be seen as a means to keep open a conversation about how best to resist the ossification of knowledge generation. Thus, we are seeing hauntology as a means to resist a knowledge paradigm which prioritises the hierarchical/arborescent model, and thus in keeping with the broader project of practice as research. John Law writes that:

> '[…] practice research needs to be messy and heterogeneous. It needs to be messy and heterogeneous because that is the way it – research – actually is. And also, and more importantly it needs to be messy because that is the way the largest part of the world is: messy, unknowable in a regular and routinized way. Unknowable, therefore, in ways that are definite or coherent (Law, 2007: 596–7).

It occurs to us that writing about an event that happened some time ago is equally messy, an exercise in both appearance and disappearance. The fingers of our memory grasp around some of the same moments that struck us at the time, yet other moments, seemingly less significant in the

room, now come forward. We 'possess' the event differently, hovering between our memory and our attempt at writing *through* the event, where our words functioned as an endnote, a provocation, a coda rather than a conclusion. Our intention then was for the words to embrace, rather than resist, the fade out: out of the studio and seminar space of the symposium; out of the thoughts and heads of those collected there.

Endings have always fascinated us when making performance, and function in much the same way that saying goodbye to my Auntie Sandra does. After visiting her and Uncle Patrick, having spent all day by a log fire and eating road kill, we head home. As soon as we get into the car, we wind down the windows, even before the engine has been engaged. Auntie Sandra waves to us as we depart, and continues long after we have turned the corners. And we wave back with arms stuck out of windows, long after she has disappeared from the rear view mirror. She is still waving now.

Endings are often not clean in contemporary performance, they are messy affairs, sticky with expectation or damp with disappointment. Endings are leaky things, and the potential for leakage within theatre boundaries reminds us of a small moment in a performance we have not seen. We pause to wonder if it is possible to be reminded of something that hasn't been experienced, and yet here we are. Thinking about endings, we are struck by the description of a particular moment from *Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never.* (2010–12) by Chicago-based performance company Every house has a door. The director Lin Hixson outlines the moment thus:

> At the end of *Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never.*, Stephen says to Selma in English and Mislav translates into Croatian the following:
>
> Selma, I'm going to go out of the theatre and shout your name. Then I'll come back, and you tell me whether you heard me or not. Then I'll do it again a little further away until you can't hear me anymore. That way, we'll establish where the theatre ends. Ok?
> Stephen and Mislav leave the room and shout from a short distance, 'Selma' . They return to ask

her if she heard her name. She does. They leave again, travel further, and shout her name. They return to ask Selma once again if she heard her name. She does. They leave the room and travel farther than they have travelled before. Ever so faintly, listening closely and vigilantly, her name is heard. Time passes now as it takes time for them to return. Selma nods. She heard her name, barely. They leave again never to return. Selma waits and finally leaves (Hixson, 2013: 92).

In these final moments of *Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never.* Hixson defines the ending as a thing that moves in two directions (Hixson, 2013: 92), and we imagine that in that moment, in the space between the audience and the performers, there is a kind of moving away in order to fill the vision. As Stephen Fiehn and Mislav Cavajda disperse, rather than retreat, they leave Selma Banich to hold the space before she too unravels the limits of where the performance ends. Hixson traces here a performance that you constantly strain your ears for, unfolding and unfolding, a field of theatre space in its final moments that is growing exponentially, rather than diminishing. *Let us think of these things always. Let us speak of them never.* by Every house has a door struggles to provide a terminal point: where Banich is still listening for her name, and Cavajda and Fiehn are still calling for her.

Perhaps Banich, Cavajda and Fiehn are performing a kind of 'visor effect' put forward by Derrida in his exploration of hauntology: '[t]he visor effect' in Hamlet, or what in any case I have called this, is that, up or down, the king's helmet, Hamlet's father's helmet, reminds us that his gaze can see without being seen' (Derrida, 1994: 41). This seen without being seen, this ghostly rebound is not that of the revenant, that body who has returned by pedaling back to life. Or at least this ghost is not one of a singular return, but rather a volley of comings and goings: an echoic stretching out, that extends way beyond the boundaries of the sound, that is still happening.

That weekend symposium, where we first tried out these ideas, began with a different three voices; Patrick Campbell, Jane Linden and Vida Midgelow. We were barely fifteen minutes into the weekend,

and Midgelow, Linden and Campbell had already invoked the body, reminding us of its potency in the conversation around knowledge generation. Campbell told us that the two days of conversations, papers, performances, and workshop would aspire "to unpack the complex ways in which these complex strategies play themselves out across the body". Soon after, Midgelow began with "Today I want to tell you some stories. Some stories with and of the flesh". Throughout her paper, we could hear the heel strikes of dancers working in an adjacent studio, their bodies reverberating as she spoke of weight. She connected her spine to the floor, stretched out her arms, palms touching those sat close, a tension fluctuating between something grounded by our feet, and the bodies caught in mid-air inside our heads. This evoked Alfredo Jaar's work *Lament of the Image* (2002). We don't know if you know it – maybe the editors have cleared the image rights and you are looking at it right now, maybe it sits, suspended in our verbiage, or maybe it is a ghost that haunts these words and you have to go and look for it. It is an image in a constant state of disappearance, a hauntology in the making, both referencing the ontological difficulties of an originary signifier in the moment that all meaning is informed and overshadowed by the ghosts of other meanings.

Further, practice as research process can be seen as something that answers back, they ricochet, moving through messy flesh and coherent unknowability. These concerns were explored through many of the presenting bodies of the *Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Processes*.

Dear Eliene Benicio, thank you for introducing us to the hybrid invitation of ethnoscenology. This forging of a concept, a notion, a method that brings together scattered experiences. An attempt at an intersectional response that has the potential to map the margins through performance. Where the ethnoscenologic body becomes layered with and through the experiences of others.

Watching the first of these case studies, analysing these layers, feeling the tilts, the shifts as she slides between bodies through her own, it had a feeling like an ice core sample. Now I'm sure you know of ice cores, that they include not just information about the snow, but wind-blown dust, ash, pollen, bubbles of atmospheric gas and radioactive substances. You can hold all those years and experiences in your hands. A kind of 'deep-mapping' to evoke Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks. Deep mapping is an extension of Clifford Geertz's anthropological theory of 'thick description' where you dig beyond the bare bones of a narrative (the thin description) to describe the action/event in front of you in microscopic detail. Deep mapping is a way of reaching a hand from the present back as far as can be thought/ felt/ seen, and holding all this where you stand. And in my hands my ice core slowly melts, like an unattended Cornetto, those experiences making my hands sticky and soggy, then puddling at my feet. And it leaches into my shoe leather and I am contaminated by what I have seen, what I have experienced.

We use our bodies to meet these ideas, and if we are lucky things will go to plan. But bodies are unruly and messy, bodies that are both with and out of flesh. The conceptual messy and the physical fleshy messy, are the ideas in tension with Derrida's looming spectre:

> The desire to touch, the tactile effect or affect, is violently summoned by its very frustration, summoned to come back [*appelé à revenir*], like a ghost [*un revenant*], in the places haunted by its absence' (Derrida, 1994: 38).

And what of these bodies, the ones who are writing the words you are reading? We are not entirely sure. Perhaps our move towards a hauntology of practice will allow the flesh to cling on, to abide rather than disappear. Perhaps it is enough to simply remind you that fingers were once implicated in the generation of these words, that eyes carried them to mouths that read them aloud, that ears caught the noises in the air and turned them back into thoughts, different this time. And writing that grows out of a two-day symposium will inevitably be ghosted by a practice that is no longer there, or at least not quite there - although maybe we still feel it a little bit in our joints and in our bones. As we think about those two days, as we search for the traces in our flesh, we remember a strange uncertainty that we can

steal from Marcel Duchamp. He used the term 'infrathin' to describe the interstices between two or more closely linked elements. It is a thing that speaks of cigarette smoke and the mouth that exhales it, warm seats in empty rooms, the thing that cannot be defined, only alluded to. So we reflect on what is left between our bodies and those we engaged: the warmth where a person has left their seat, the staring off, the immediate forgetting of our bodies as their gaze slides off us and onto their sandwich / their cigarette / their conversation.

Perhaps the infra thin offers something akin to the 'spectral turn', being both a turn towards and turn away, or perhaps even 'a revisiting', as identified by Blanco and Peeren (2013: 31). This might allow for an excavation into the ghost as metaphor: as invisible, as trauma, as possession, as death, as mourning, as return etc. For practice as research in performance it offers us a thinking through ghosts, where 'a specter does not only cause séance tables to turn, but sets heads spinning' (Derrida, 1994: 127). In practice as research in performance the concept of possession, with its concomitant outcomes of expertness and achievement results in proprietorship. We feel discomfort in this shift towards possession as it erases the messy and fluctuating body, one in which practice is always a doing and not a having.

Peter Buse and Andrew Stott comment that 'there may be no proper time for ghosts', and that 'haunting, by its very structure, implies a deformation of linear temporality' (Buse and Stott, 1999: 1), however the ghosts of performance practice are always seen in relation to specific geographies, specific temporalities. The implicit erasure of

In November 2014 I met a man on a train. The journey was long. We chatted. First about the weather, and then things moved on to his story of how he once transported an Atlantic blue fin tuna, over 2m in length, washed up on the shore of South East Cornwall, in the back of his truck. It turns out that fish were part of his job. He was a researcher at the Environment and Sustainability Institute, at the University of Exeter.

There were pictures of him on his Nokia phone, loading the dead fish onto the flatbed of his truck. He told me that his colleagues had needed to hire a walk-in cold room from a local butcher, because the fish was too large to store at the university. The fish waited in there for months.

A week later I saw the man on the train again. He invited me to meet the seven-foot Bluefin tuna for its official necropsy in a very cold room with a few interested parties. There was going to be a sort of lecture presentation …

The fish had been frozen to -28 and taken 6 days to defrost. The Thunnus Thymus, to give it its Latin name was a non-quota species, therefore illegal to sell. Over the whine of the bandsaw, there were snippets of information offered about the blue finned tuna; it has no swim bladder, so it has to constantly move, travelling about 100 km a day, at 12-15 body lengths a second, that is the equivalent of 80 mph. I was dizzy with factoids when suddenly the organs were being passed around. And then the gills. And then the eyes.

the body, of its time and placing, negates the 'doing' of practice, which also forgets the presence of the body in foreground. We would like to suggest that practice is a thing beginning from here, our own bodies in this place, the place where we currently sit / stand / lie. It remains intrinsically linked to bodies in space and place, so that we might move towards an understanding of there. We want to think about skill, and agency, about community, and culture, about how all the things spoken and done might take us closer to that messy idea of curation.

And as we circle towards some sort of temporary end, we go back to the idea of 'practice', and the move towards mastery. That troubling (conceptually at least) moment where we might cease to allow openings into our mistakes. To open a can of worms that we have no time, or appetite, to address is probably foolish, but open it we shall. What happens if, as some hope and others fear, we are running towards the democratic turn, to Culture 3.0, to Open Innovation 2.0. Writing in The Guardian, James McQuaid (the UK's National Trust, Visitor Experience Consultant), reflects upon the 2014 Arts Marketing Association conference. In his article he references the suggestion made by National Arts Strategies president, Russell Willis Taylor that 'we need to position audiences within our organisations as partners and consider very carefully the nature of our relationship with them' (McQuaid, 2014: unpaginated). At face value this may well seem like a move on the part of arts organisations to find clearer strategies for audience

engagement, and move towards Culture 3.0. However, the move to position audiences as agentic seems to be informed as much by the anxiety around arts organisations losing cultural relevance, as from any genuine urge to unsettle existing hierarchies. The possible interruption presented by a context of user-generated practice is the potential to undo distinctions between high, popular and amateur cultural product. What might have once been deemed amateur becomes visible and valued. The shift away from the two-step / multi-step flow model, removes the need for opinion leaders (in this instance curators, funders etc.) allowing audiences autonomy and the space to create the product they feel is missing.

Perhaps this moves us towards a landscape in which we all become curators, and the them / us of audience / performer, or even the integral aesthetic of Richard Schechner, is eroded. Social networks and platforms such as Vimeo and YouTube have proven how users can monetise their output, and crowd sourcing is fast becoming a way for artists to remove the need to engage with more formalised funding processes and the structures they impose. Whether this is a move towards a democratisation, or merely a different stage in the commodification of arts practice remains to be seen.

But there are ideologies of power and control in the shift to a digital economy; in 2012 we all knew that the iPhone, so ubiquitous in content generation and dissemination was made, in part at least, by 13 year olds

And then suddenly before me was a strange, small white object that looked like an extracted human tooth. Holding it in my palm, I remembered that I had recently had a wisdom tooth extracted. It was embedded in my jaw and although I was in my late thirties at the time, it had not yet broken the skin. The afternoon after the extraction I gave a lecture to a group of undergrads, taking them through the particulars of the Harvard Referencing System. And as we talked about brackets and commas and colons, I found my-self passing around the extracted tooth, still warm from my mouth. As I enumerated the intricacies of referencing, we all marvelled at my tooth's virgin veneer, never purposed for the task it had been hewn for.

At least I think we did, I was on a lot of pain-killers.

And in that cold room, I held the small, white tooth-like object, and listened as James the veterinary pathologist likened its removal to the extraction of a tooth, while reminding us that this object was more fragile; less like bone and more like glass, like crystal. The object that I held is called an otolith.

Otolith means 'ear stone', and there are three pairs that sit on either side of the fish's head, be-hind the eye and behind the brain. It is used for balance, orientation, and sound detection. The otolith can be used to determine the age of fish. Once removed a cross section can be taken, allowing the rings of calcium carbonate to be counted, like the rings of a felled tree. It can be used to perform a stable isotope analysis, allowing for a comparison with background layers of information to find out where the owner of the otolith has been. It is a map of places vis-ited, delicate as fine glass, floating underneath the brain.

working sixteen-hour shifts. Two years later the BBC reminded us that these practices were ongoing. What of these bodies, the bodies upon which Culture 3.0 is built, to say nothing of the bodies impacted by the use of PCB, lead, mercury, nickel, cadmium, phthalates. It's perhaps a blindingly obvious statement, but the territory of bodies and their ownership is complicated. There are doubtless implications here for the academic working through practice, hoping to use doing as means to unsettle the fixity of the academy, using the digital platforms to unsettle the easy hierarchy of the institution and the ideology of knowledge ownership. Jumping from the frying pan into the fire. And if we're honest, we don't know how to cope with this macro-practice, the implications of eschewing one form of hierarchy, trying to find a way to share ideas that unsettles, only to realise that this is done on the backs of workers we (un)wittingly conspire to exploit. The can opens, the worms spill and we don't know what to do, it's just too big.

But what of the whale and the tuna? What purpose do they serve in this writing, what meaning might they hold for us as authors? It is not our intention for these two marine beasts to enter into the scene of performing arts as a means to deconstruct it - rather they metonymically extend towards the hauntologic and offer us an interruption. In both cases their very literal materiality was laid bare to us - one in the cold storage room of a university campus, the other with chainsaws on a beach. These, the bodies of things that were, became the things which

had never been. Their sphere, one of depth, and distance, of long-held breaths and oxygen absorbed from water, once interrupted, ceased to be. They became impossible creatures, beyond the ken of the landlocked, and in the moment of being pulled apart, they become ever unknowable. Our encounters with them are hauntologic, as we look at the things that never were, or rather never could be.

So, we will do what we always do; return to this moment now, using these fingers on these keys as a route back into that room with those ears. And so we return to the otolith, that stone ear which becomes a fragile repository of all the things we have heard, all the things we have seen, all the things we have spoken. Etched on glass, held delicately in our hands. An object of ghosting. In these moments, we might forget that unlike the tuna, we are surface creatures, bound to solid terrains, while resisting their fixity. And the otolith is this thing between us, a one-way process through time, in a constant state of unfolding. It reminds us of David Byrne's *Möbius Structure of Relationships*, an illustration of the möbius that Midgelow touched upon at the start of the weekend we spent together. Byrne, a musician and visual philosopher began making what he calls 'mental maps of imaginary territory' in notebooks, which initially served as self-directed instructions. Little Venn diagrams about relationships, diagrams and maps of performance ecosystems. Perhaps you will tear the pages out of this journal, rip them into thin strips and fashion just such a loop of your own. The Möbius strip is a surface with only one side and only one boundary, and if you let your fingers walk across the length of this strip, it would return to its starting point having travelled the entire length of the strip, both sides of the paper, without having ever crossed an edge. A hauntologic journey of constant return without the chance of arrival. Not quite a stasis, because it is always a movement; towards something (a whale, an ending, an answer), away from something (fixity, certainty, an answer), endless.

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