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The Composer as Fiction Maker

The Weird, the Magical, and the Speculative in the work of Cameron Dodds

by

Cameron William Charles Dodds

A Portfolio and Thesis Submitted for the Qualification of Doctor of Philosophy
Composition Department, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama

October 2021

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Abstract

The thesis is written from the perspective of Dameron Codd, a musicologist from the future who is tasked with analysing the work of the composer Cameron Dodds who went missing in the year 2021. The aim of this thesis is to theorise on and explore my artistic work over my doctoral study. I utilise the idea of fiction as method to explore my practice and the act of making experimental music in the 21st century and especially the idea of what it means to create work for a future audience who do not yet exist. Using disparate methodologies from literature, speculative realism, and psychoanalysis the thesis aims to contextualise my work in recourse to magical and technological ontologies as well as in wider experimental musical discourse. The thesis attempts to show how through future-oriented and speculative thinking the composer can avoid the pitfalls of historical expectation by the fictioning of their practice, and how magical thinking and artificial technologies can be used by the artist as imagination extension technologies in the creation of their work.

PORTFOLIO INFORMATION

This portfolio is comprised of 4 videos of compositions by Cameron Dodds dated between 2019 and 2021. The composer didn't create traditional scores for these pieces and has instead chosen to submit them purely as documentation of compositional output and activity.

1. *LEMONTATIONS* (2019) – 23'27"
2. Etude #1: Hugo Wolf (2020) – 14'12"
3. Etude #3: St. Battenberg's Data Dump and Breakfast Buffet (2021) – 13'20"
4. Etude #4: Gibecrake (2021) – 33'34"

Total duration: 85'55"

All videos available to download from:

<https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ8GW5ZvIv4bed2JWLjMf52ARBEey8FX87V>

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother Hazel Budd who always believed in what I was doing even when she didn't understand it.

I would like to thank my parents, Ewan and Julie, who encouraged me always to follow my nose; my sisters, Bryony and Rhiannon, who have always kept me humble; my grandparents, Beryl and Tony, whose love of music I inherited; my best and oldest mates Lewis and Tom, who are my rocks and have always fully supported my ridiculousness; my supervisors Sam, Laurence, and Richard who challenged and guided this whole project; Lucien Hughes, who gave up so much of his time and energy to help bring my pieces to life; Neil Luck, who in the past two years has been a great mentor and friend; Matt Rogers, who kept me weird; Andy Ingamells, who listened to me whine about my PhD and career every Wednesday morning for the last year; everyone at Sung Chuan Kung Fu, who helped keep my mind strong; the Weird Studies podcast gang, who helped me see the magic in my life; Tim Ryan, whose generosity kept a roof over my head when times were bad; Jack Sheen, who has always supported my work; The Marchus Trust, who kindly provided me with the funds to create the *Etudes*; my high school music teachers, who told me I would never be a composer; everyone in the composition department at Birmingham Conservatoire; who allowed me to just be me; and all of the weird unconscious forces out there that led me to the strangest of places when making this project.

Lastly and mostly I thank my partner and best friend Patricia Auchterlonie, who has been my biggest fan and most vocal supporter. Your gentleness and patience have allowed me to finally confront and make peace with that great, black shaggy dog that has haunted me for most of my adult life. You are the reason that I actually managed to finish this. Thank you.

DECLARATION

I, Cameron William Charles Dodds, declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. I grant powers of discretion to the School Librarian to allow the thesis to be copied in whole or in part without further reference to the author.

Signed

Cameron Dodds, October 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Dodds', written in a cursive style.

NOTE TO READER

The following text deals with both metatext and fictioning as artistic practices and consequently, reference is sometimes made to entirely fictional sources. These are, mostly, detailed in the 'Archival Material' section at the end of the text, except in cases that explicitly deal with texts written by Cameron Dodds or the Haunted Network Research Initiative which are included in the main bibliography.

Introduction

In October 2021 Cameron Dodds handed in a portfolio of works alongside a hastily scribbled composition commentary to The Guildhall School of Music and Drama as the submission for his PhD. The documents were then passed to his external examiners who reacted with frustration and confusion. Despite the best efforts of the institution to contact the composer he did not answer his phone or respond to emails, nor did he attend his viva voce. To this day, July [REDACTED] at the time of writing, Cameron Dodds remains missing. My research on Cameron Dodds' work between the period of 2017-2021 aims to trace his thinking and artistic practice and perhaps elucidate on the working of his music in regard to the particular aesthetic he was attempting to conjure. Whilst not trying to solve the disappearance of the composer or provide cultural or artistic insight into the time he was working, my research instead attempts to analyse the work that he provided in his commentary from a qualitative perspective, utilising the archive of notebooks, literature, and other media initially found in his home after his disappearance. These items were generously lent to me by the trustees of his estate, the organisation that Dodds helped to found, the Haunted Network Research Initiative (HNRI). It is worth noting that after my initial research, the Haunted Network Research Initiative gave me full access to a private archive collected by the chairman of the organisation, Desmond Codar, that is housed in [REDACTED]. This archive contained Dodds' laptop, iMac, mobile phones, hard drive, and email correspondences that were hitherto presumed missing. I have used these archival materials to inform this thesis (listed at the beginning of this document), however, the organisation refused my request to include any more material references or appendices than I have explicitly referenced here. Although I was unable to include reproductions of facsimiles or scans of much of the archival material, I was able to attain permission for the inclusion of several artefacts from the archive including Dodds' original thesis on *LEMONTATIONS*, an interview from HNRI Quarterly, a transcription of a lecture from Dodds just before his disappearance, and some miscellaneous writings and drawings from his notebooks. It is my sincere hope that future researchers will one day convince the Haunted Network Research Initiative to make this archive publicly available. My thesis will make use of these materials to focus on how Dodds was attempting to fiction his practice and will provide a contextualisation of the role of fiction in his work. Furthermore, I have provided a list of the catalogued archival materials at the bottom of this thesis.

In the first part of the 21st century the term fiction has become politically and culturally loaded. In his book *Post-Truth* McIntyre argues against the rising trend of post-truths in politics:

...what seems new in the post-truth era is a challenge not just to the idea of *knowing* reality but to the existence of reality itself. When an individual is misinformed or mistaken, he or she will likely pay the price; wishing that a new drug will cure our heart disease will not make it so. But when our leaders —

or a plurality of our society — are in denial over basic facts, the consequences can be world shattering.¹

Indeed, we can see that as technology has evolved and the dissemination of information has become almost instant, the question of fiction has become increasingly weaponised in the form of deep fakes, post-truths, and purposeful misinformation. As the distance between truth and untruth has shrunk and been allowed to become more nuanced, there has also been increasing resistance that aims to widen the gap and show that the difference between the two are essentially black and white. Truth is celebrated for its inherent non-fictionality, its unbendable nature, whereas lies are called out for their inherent trickster nature, their insistence to attempt to break unbendable reality – hence they can be seen as fictions when compared to truth’s non-fictional insistence. One of the earliest arguments for truth comes from Aristotle who writes: ‘to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.’² We can see how this has echoed through the various ages of philosophy since. An excellent example of fiction shaping reality can be seen when we consider the UK’s 2016 Brexit referendum. The ‘leave’ campaign were actively telling the general public that Turkey were going to join the European Union which turned out to be completely false, yet it helped to inflame concerns about immigration which served the narrative spun by the ‘leave’ campaign. Fictions mould realities by being able to cross the border between truths and untruths and yet, they are neither; fiction can encapsulate truth such as it does in the discussion around climate change, providing a vivid method to explore the terror of climate disaster. Fiction can also deal with questions of ethics and morality as it does in Plato’s *Dialogues*:³ it can show us strange worlds, alternate realities, and physically impossible scenarios.

Fiction is a chaotic method that can simultaneously damage and heal, intimidate and entertain, destroy and create. An example of the terrifying reality of fiction manufacturing can be found in post-Soviet Russia and the philosophies of the former deputy chairman of the government of the Russian Federation, Vladislav Surkov, known as ‘the puppet master.’ Peter Pomerantsev quotes that Surkov told members of an open forum at the London School of Economics in 2013: ‘I am the author, or one of the authors, of the new Russian system... My portfolio at the Kremlin and in government has included ideology, media, political parties, religion, modernisation, innovation, foreign relations, and... modern art.’⁴ We can see how this reality manipulation is rife in Russian and, increasingly, Western politics. One only has to look towards the ‘troll farms’ organised by KGB operatives that interfered during the 2016 US Election with the intention of spreading purposeful disinformation in online forums. The weaponization of fiction in the twenty-first century shows us the raw power that fiction can have in the world and yet, we tend to dismiss *fiction* as if it were not distinct from *lies*. Fiction can be used as a tool to speculate on and speak to realities yet to come, from Lovecraftian

¹ McIntyre, L, *Post-Truth* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), p. 10.

² Aristotle., and Ross, W.D, *Metaphysics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1924), book 4, section 1011b.

³ Plato., and Jowett, B, *The Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

⁴ Pomerantsev, P, *Nothing Is True And Everything Is Possible* (London: Faber and Faber, 2017), p. 132.

mythos to Object Oriented Ontologies. This thesis will explore how Cameron Dodds used fiction as a method to move past historically reliant and politically motivated stale ontologies and towards new future-oriented aesthetic possibilities. Furthermore, please note that all websites referenced in this thesis were found in Dodds' bookmarks on his computer and I have dated them from when they were last accessed by him.

Artificial Hells in the Twenty-First Century

In both his self-consciously Weird Art and various writings and correspondences contained in the archive, we can see that Dodds reacted against a tendency toward positivism in experimental composition. To be more precise, art created from empirical methods that are somehow connected to an Aristotelian formalisation of truth, a *showing* of things that are fundamentally real. We can see this trend reflected in the newspaper and arts reviews of the time: from the 2021 Turner Prize nominees being made up of activist collectives to the deluge of artistic pieces being made in reaction to political realities of the time. Whilst Dodds never actively discredited the idea of activism or protest and, indeed, felt a deep solidarity with those affected by terrible political and institutional policies, he did feel a general cultural shift from artistic institutions and political bodies to utilise this 'radical' artwork for financial and careerist gain. This *relational antagonism*, as Bishop calls it in her book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, is employed in a way that thinly, but purposefully disguises social work as art and as a result is often unwilling to engage with aesthetics on a level playing field with its politically charged other.

As Dodds worked primarily in experimental music he viewed this positivist approach to composition primarily through a musical lens. In an email to himself in 2019,⁵ Dodds tracked this positivism down to: (1) the reality of experimental music primarily existing within the academic institution and, thus, needing to prove itself quantitatively to various academic and governmental agencies, (2) a post-Cagean push to explore sound to its limitation within externally found frameworks such as extra-musical data, and (3) an artistic funding body (Arts Council England) that viewed the impact of the arts increasingly neoliberally and two dimensionally; seeing art primarily as a cultural investment that could economically justify itself through community-oriented art and social engagement. This strongly relates to what could arguably be called the privatisation of culture under Tony Blair's New Labour where, in order to relieve economic pressures from public funding, alliances were forged with private sector businesses who in turn funded and sponsored the creation of new artworks. In an article titled *Were New Labour's Cultural Policies Neo-Liberal?*⁶ Hesmondhalgh, Nisbett, Oakley and Lee argue that New Labour's cultural agenda marked a 'shift in the prevailing rationale for cultural policy, away from culture and towards economic and social goals.'⁷ Perhaps Dodds felt that instead of broadening the role of artist in society these tendencies were, in fact, capitalistic realities that asked the artist to reframe their

⁵ Archive: HNRI-CD0029.

⁶ Hesmondhalgh, D., Nisbett, M., Oakley, K. and Lee, D., (2014). Were New Labour's cultural policies neo-liberal?. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, [online] 21(1), pp.1-18. Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10286632.2013.879126>> [Accessed 4 October 2021].

⁷ Ibid.

practice in more traditionally accepted and economically lucrative ideas of work and labour whilst eliminating the need to pay for wider supportive social programming. In the case of (1) we can see how the increasing neo-liberalisation of universities to act as businesses intensifies the need for artists to act in many different roles in order to quantitatively earn their keep,⁸ (2) an increasing scientism found in the arts forces more left-field and less linguistically admissible research to justify its work under empirical values, and c) as we have seen in the Turner Prize case above, the gradual transforming of artist into social worker. This led Dodds on a path to embrace fiction as an actual method in the rejection of institutionalisation and to use his art as an experimental laboratory for exploring less accepted roles for the composer and their work.

Experimental Music

In a 2017 email to a friend and colleague, composer Richard Stenton, Dodds stated that he felt ‘a disconnect with the wider experimental music world’⁹ and expressed a frustration at the following quote from Jennie Gottschalk’s 2016 book *Experimental Music Since 1970*:

I started thinking about ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ music and wondering how a work of music could be rooted in experience. Craft was not part of this question, nor was artistic integrity or value judgment. While a work of fiction temporarily shapes the subjective experience of its audience, a work of non-fiction sheds light on an aspect or element of objective experience. Whereas most musical works are based on culturally developed formal models, Lucier’s and Pisaro’s pieces are about the here and now of the performance situation—the time, space, and collective experience of the production of sound.¹⁰

As we can observe from his notebooks, Dodds often found that the work he enjoyed and the work he was creating were often at odds with the aesthetic material that his peers and colleagues were producing. He found that conversations about composition usually erred toward the technical rather than the aesthetic. This led Dodds to again think about the divide between fiction and non-fiction in music. Dodds notes that in 2017, his practise was often a reaction against the tendency towards the non-fictional in experimental music. He was developing methods that used fiction as a tool, allowing him to move beyond Gottschalk’s restraints of ‘temporarily shaping the subjective experience.’ Indeed, it seems that he also felt that Gottschalk’s view of non-fiction as a superior method, one which could transcend these ‘restraints’ was, in actual fact, caught up in the Aristotelean logic found above. He wanted the role of fiction in experimental music to elucidate through speculation and to enlighten through paradoxes, to give the imaginal realm the same amount of credit as we give the physical. It is clear that he found Gottschalk’s claim not only lacking in subtlety, but indictive of

⁸ This can be elucidated further as the neo-liberal desire for productivity and efficiency has pushed university lecturers to dedicate, on average, over 11 hours of unpaid overtime each week as found here: Ashley, D., (2013). *Unpaid overtime by teaching professionals shoots up*. [online] Ucu.org.uk. Available at: <<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/6531/Unpaid-overtime-by-teaching-professionals-shoots-up>> [Accessed 4 October 2021].

⁹. Archive: HNRI-CD0029. Dated 07/06/2017

¹⁰ Gottschalk, J, *Experimental Music Since 1970* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 16.

something he found in the wider musical community: 'a tendency towards anti-aestheticism in favour of quantitative empiricism.'¹¹

Future Orientation

If we consider the work in Dodds' portfolio, we can see that the composer generally thought that a speculative approach to artmaking was a much more radical and critical one than the positivist didacticism that was seemingly popular at the time. He viewed a lot of 'critical' art, such as the Turner Prize nominees mentioned above or the various operas written about yesterday's politics, as primarily present or past-oriented whereas he was interested in and wanted to create work that was *future-oriented*.¹² Dodds was increasingly interested in *hyperstition* – fictions that make themselves real – and was working towards an artistic practice that allowed him to create art in a speculative future, as if he were simply bringing it back in time in order for it to invent itself. He was constantly creating new speculative technologies, shifting ontologies, and alien aesthetics in which he would lay the foundations of his work. His ideas around future-oriented art lay not only in the realms of science fiction but also in alternate modes of viewing present reality. Dodds aimed to show future-oriented aesthetics *as if* they were already grounded in objective reality rather than asking *what if* this reality were the case.

We can see how Dodds' art certainly comes out of a movement of post-sound oriented interdisciplinary musical composition.¹³ Certainly his work emerged from points that were not purely sonic: film, theatre, puppetry, comedy, philosophy, and fiction writing were as important to Dodds as sound itself. He aimed to find a way to display his music that was inclusive of his work in different disciplines as part of a wider compositional practice. Harry Lehman's work on a *Relational Music* states that 'connections to the 'extra-musical' material are included in the concept of art music and not, as is the case in absolute music, excluded from the concept of music a priori...In other words, one can compose relational music by tying music to language, facial expressions and gestures or moving and unmoving pictures, as well as identifiable environmental or nature sounds.'¹⁴ We can see how this philosophy manifests in Dodds' work and indeed pushed him towards composers who worked outside the boundaries of absolute music.

A major influence on his work was Irish composer Jennifer Walshe. Walshe's work actively questions how the fictional and speculative can be framed within experimental music practice by utilising future-oriented technologies, such as machine learning, and creating fictional entities and personas which allow her to move freely between disciplines and musical ontologies. In 2016 Walshe released a piece of writing titled

¹¹ Archive: HNRI-CD0029. Found in an email to supervisor Richard Baker dated 14/02/2018.

¹² Whilst we will be exploring this in more depth in Chapter 3, we can take it, for now, to simply mean work that attempts to speak to a people yet to come.

¹³ Dodds attained his bachelor's degree from Birmingham Conservatoire, an institution where sound was only considered one part of the compositional toolkit. Many of peers and colleagues such as Andy Ingamells, Luke Deane, Anna Palmer, Richard Stenton, Maya Verlaak, et al have come to embody this interdisciplinary and post-sound approach to composing.

¹⁴ H. Lehmann. *Artistic Research in Art Music: Reflections on the Artistic Research Project 'Music with the Real'*. 2014.

The New Discipline which highlights the role of composers who work across practices and in interdisciplinary spaces. In this work she states:

Maybe what is at stake for the New Discipline is the fact that these pieces, these modes of thinking about the world, these compositional techniques – they are not “music theatre”, they **are** music. Or from a different perspective, maybe what is at stake is the idea that all music is music theatre. Perhaps we are finally willing to accept that the bodies playing the music are part of the music, that they’re present, they’re valid and they inform our listening whether subconsciously or consciously. That it’s not too late for us to have bodies.¹⁵

Dodds seemed to deeply admire this approach to composition as it resonated with his own desire to be recognised as a ‘composer of music rather than an artist who used music simply as a part of their artistic practice.’¹⁶ But his concern was less with *human bodies* and more with the inclusivity of *non-human agency* within musical practice. Whilst he fundamentally agreed with Walshe that bodies were, indeed, part of music-making, he wanted to embrace what was *alien* in experimental music and aesthetics and how this could resound and act in a hyperstitional artistic practice. The influence of Walshe’s *human* music theatre was more immediately present in Dodds’ earlier work such as *man gets hit by car, dies* (2017) and even to an extent in *LEMONTATIONS* (2019) (which will be analysed later), however, by the time he came to writing the *Etudes*, he was moving towards the non-anthropocentric and the inherent otherness of non-human agency (further explored in Chapter 3). Whilst this type of musical work has been called many different things such as experimental music theatre, post-experimental music, etc, I will be referring to it in this thesis as experimental music +, or EM+ for short, to ground it firmly within the musical arts but allowing the + to account for both future-oriented speculation and the personal belief that experimental music practice is fundamentally post-medium.

Dodds also looked to Norwegian composer Trond Reinholdtsen as an important influence on his practice.¹⁷ Reinholdtsen had created an opera house in his Oslo flat named *The Norwegian Opra (sic)* in which he staged elaborate and sometimes impenetrable operas usually based on classical myths. These operas would include outlandish pitch shifted vocal lines, complex and humorous MIDI orchestration, deranged puppetry, and clumsy foley that culminated in extremely long and dense musical works. Dodds saw in Reinholdtsen a truly future-oriented composer who, like Walshe, worked on the borders of cochlear and non-cochlear experience, and a sense of hyperstitional and ineffable spectacle that moved far past the romantic ideals of the opera house and into the alien unknown. Later in the thesis we will examine how Dodds work was created

¹⁵ Walshe, J, 'The New Discipline', *MusikTexte* 149, 2016.

¹⁶ Archive: HNRI-CD0163. Notebook C.

¹⁷ Reinholdtsen’s PhD thesis titled ‘There Will be no Critical Reflection’, which is a strange text full of paranoia and satire, might be said to be a spiritual forebear to Dodds’ own lack of critical reflection. Fortunately, Reinholdtsen elucidates on the lack of coherence in the thesis by providing extremely lucid footnotes, alas; we have no such luck. See: T, Reinholdtsen, "THERE WILL BE NO CRITICAL REFLECTION", *The Norwegian Opra*, 2013 <http://www.thenorwegianopra.no/Trond%20Reinholdtsen_critical%20reflection.pdf> [Accessed 6 October 2021]

at extreme points of the boundaries between familiar and alien methodologies, and how the limitations of science, consciousness, and language informed his practice within future-oriented aesthetics.

Fictioning

In this thesis I will attempt to track Cameron Dodds' thinking and interests around the creation of the pieces included in Dodds' PhD portfolio. Dodds found it difficult to see any worth in his own work or to see it within a wider aesthetic context. Nevertheless, he felt a strong sense of importance when it came to the actual making of the work itself. As we have briefly mentioned, Dodds was trying to make an EM+ practice that was both created within and displayed its own fictions. In order to reveal what Dodds meant by *fiction* we must put aside any black and white thinking of fiction as purposeful mistruth. Instead, we must turn to the 2019 text *Fictioning: The Myth-Functions of Contemporary Art and Philosophy* by David Burrows and Simon O'Sullivan, which will be our spiritual guide and inner methodology for this thesis. Whilst we will not be actively using the text until the final chapter, its passive influence permeates almost every sentence in this thesis. One quote in particular should be suspended in our minds throughout our reading of the thesis as a whole:

...our key concept in this critical survey is *fictioning*. This is a concept- and mode of operation- common to mythopoesis (*productive of worlds to come*), myth-science (*production of alternate perspectives and models*) and mythotechnesis (*technology as the projections of the existing and future influence of machines*), each of which *fiction* reality in different ways. By using the term fiction as a verb we refer to the writing, imaging, performing, or other material instantiation of worlds or social bodies that mark out trajectories different to those engendered by the dominant organisations of life currently in existence. Or, to put this another way, we are interested in exploring those fictions that involve potential realities to come....as well as the more general idea of fiction as intervention in, and augmentation of, existing reality. In this, we are also concerned with how fictioning can take on a critical power when it is set against, or foregrounded within, a given reality.¹⁸

Whilst *fictioning* is now of course a widely used and well-known term, in 2021 it was a relatively new discipline and there was still debate about the nuance and meaning of term. In this thesis I will be using the term as would have been understood by Dodds: an open-ended experimental practice that utilised fiction to create and anticipate new modes of being. In an email to supervisor Samuel Wilson, Dodds explains that 'fictioning is representative of a future-oriented aesthetics and an art that could travel back from the future in order to invent itself through bypassing dominant modes of existence in favour of creating new and speculative ones.'¹⁹ In this we can see how Dodds thought about and conceptualised the term *fiction* within his practice and philosophy. His work is not a *fictional* version of experimental music (what if) but a *fictioning* of experimental

¹⁸ Burrows, D and O'Sullivan, S, *Fictioning: The Myth-Functions of Contemporary Art and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p. 2.

¹⁹ Archive: HNRI-CD0030. Dated 17/04/2019.

music (as if). It is a setting of a future-oriented reality against a present and past-oriented one, a world that he frequently felt excluded from where the discourse was increasingly academic and frustratingly positivist. The only firm proof we have of Dodds' own theory of fiction comes from a sticky note found attached to his speaker (see Figure 1):

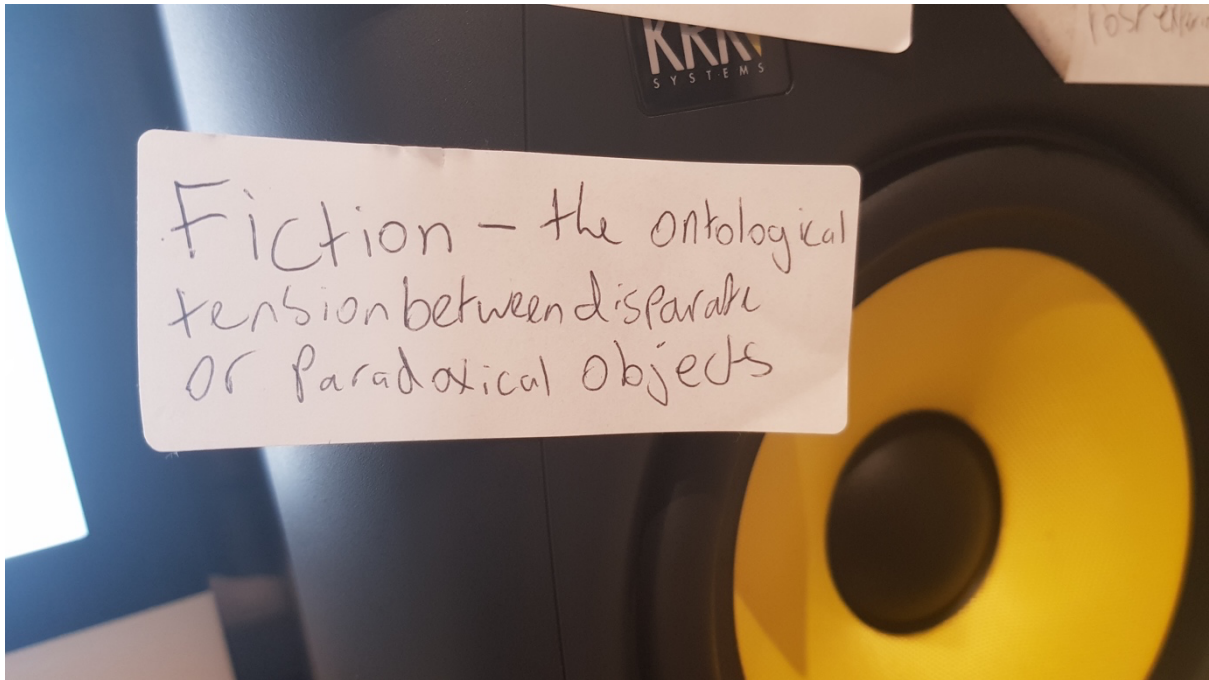


Figure 1: Speaker belonging to Cameron Dodds with sticky note. Found in Dodds' home at 16b Pepys Road, London. Archive: HNRI-CD0413.

The definition posited on the sticky note should also remain suspended in the reader's mind throughout the reading of this thesis. If we compare it to the lengthier quote above, it is clear that the connection between both theories of fiction is an inherent tension between realities, objects, and ways of being. It also closely related to his work and interest in work at the boundaries of realities between familiar and alien. Fiction also allowed a certain liberation from concert hall realities and toward the more punk-oriented DIY scene that Dodds was more comfortable operating within.²⁰ Dodds was not interested in creating a successful career, but instead in creating a sustainable practice that didn't compromise his mental health, energy, or artistic vision.²¹ Thus, he felt more at home outside of cultural institutions than within them. For Dodds, a sustainable practice included: being able to make with the materials available to the artist, not relying on institutional funding, and not comparing oneself to the success of others.²² Whilst some years were more lucrative than others he

²⁰ He also highly admired the experimental music groups Object Collection and ARCO for following a similar model.

²¹ In a talk he gave at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama he talks extensively about 'the need for a healthy and sustainable practice' being the most important aspect of a composer's creative life. See: Dodds, C. *Magic in Music*. A lecture at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. 2020. Transcript available in HNRI archive: HNRI-CD0214.

²² Dodds, C. *Magic in Music*. A lecture at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. 2020.

sincerely believed that ‘the symbols of the divine initially appear at the trash stratum.’²³ This quote, from *Valis* by Philip K. Dick gave him the confidence and freedom to create and experiment in an extremely open way without judging the results before they had truly manifested. As such, he was forever using objects some might consider ‘trash:’ old bits of tin foil, cardboard, and everyday disposable items within his work. He also conceptualised trash as noise (both cochlear and non-cochlear) which had a huge impact on the presentation of his work.

Methodology

Throughout this thesis I will be using a magpie methodology, as defined by Carter,²⁴ drawing on frameworks from disparate texts and theories in order to somewhat mimic Cameron Dodds’ wide array of interests and artistic output. The thesis as a complete object will be an analysis of Dodds’ work through a speculative realist lens. It will seek to give us a glimpse into a deeper underlying reality in which objects are not reduced merely to their perceived place in human-oriented physical reality but are given their own individual realities. We will also be attempting to view objects in Dodds’ aesthetic universe as existing on a flat ontological plane following philosophers such as Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux — that is, a plane in which all objects whether physical, metaphysical, fictional, hyperstitional, or hyperobjective are judged equally within a singular realm, no matter how many paradoxes this presents or laws of nature it breaks. Through these methods, I will attempt to enter into a similar aesthetic realm to the composer who would often use paradoxical, anachronistic, and alien object tensions within his work in order to foreground them against traditionally and scientifically accepted modes of reality.

In Chapter One, we will be using our magpie methodology to analyse hyperstitional art making, presentation, and agency of alternate realities in Cameron Dodds’ 2019 work *LEMONTATIONS* for two violins, two ‘cellos, two actors, video, electronics, lights, and various objects. Chapter Two will aim to follow Dodds’ views on magic as a form of reality alteration. It will use philosopher Federico Campagna’s cosmogonic hypostases on the nature of a magical reality from his 2018 text *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality* as the framework for analysing an interview by Dodds in which he posited five essential steps for magical working. The final chapter will be an analysis of Dodds’ *Etudes* nos. 1, 3, and 4 using Quentin Meillassoux’s 2015 *Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction* to show the possibilities of fiction outside of science and hyperstitional existence in aesthetic realms where the science and human-oriented epistemology breaks down.

Cameron Dodds’ work is not a calling to a present people but instead, it is calling to a people yet to come. I will be referring to this phrase throughout the thesis as a beacon to those who may be reading this

²³ Dick, P. K, *The VALIS Trilogy* (Massachusetts: HMH Books, 2011), p. 254.

text in some yet unimagined time. I hope the reader will be persuaded that the act of making art can transcend the barriers of time and space and can also exist outside of the vacuum of ordinary reality. Art is one way to break down ontological barriers and ask questions that not even the most speculative of scientists could ever dream of.

Chapter 1

LEMONTATIONS

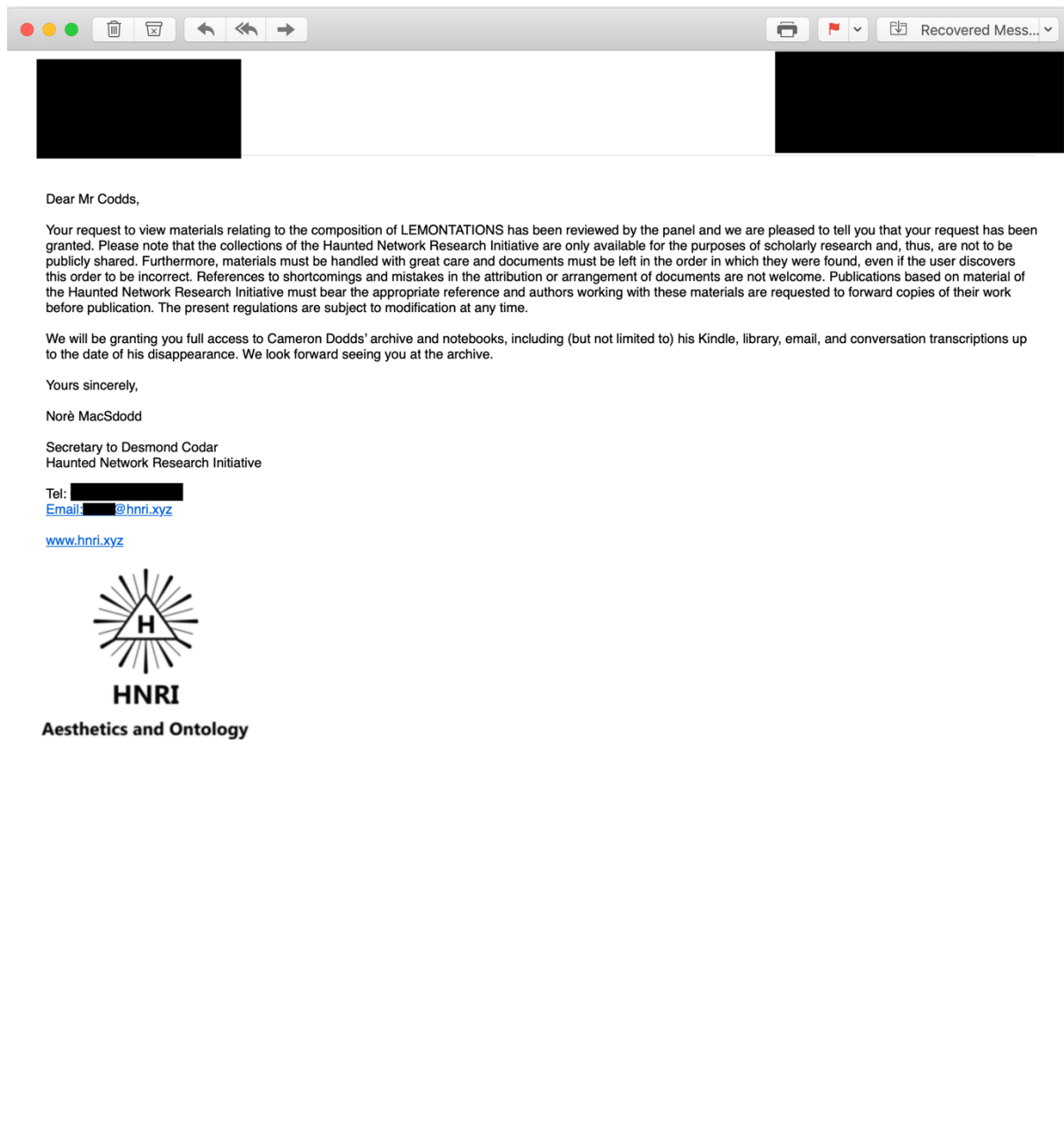


Figure 2.1: Email received by the author allowing initial access to Dodds' materials relating to *LEMONTATIONS*. Note the author was then provided with full access to a complete private archive containing more materials at a later date.



HAUNTED NETWORK RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The following text has been edited and redacted by the Haunted Network Research Initiative in accordance with our ontological and aesthetic sensitivities guidelines. The collections of the Haunted Network Research Initiative are only available for the purposes of scholarly research and must not be reproduced without express permission.

Name of researcher: **Dameron Codd**

Code: **1342-XyB**

Permissions: **Full (permissions now redacted)**

Signed

Desmond Codar

Chairman of Haunted Network Research Initiative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dm' or 'Desmond Codar' in a stylized, cursive script.

Figure 2.2: A document from the Haunted Network Research Initiative informing readers of this thesis that Dodds' text on *LEMONTATIONS* has been edited and redacted by the organisation. The author also had their permissions to view the private archive revoked on the completion of this project.

LEMONTATIONS

18/9/2019

FOR SUBMISSION FOR PHD.

To Whom it may concern,

I present this as a Commentary to my piece LEMONATIONS. I am currently away from a computer due to aesthetic and political reasons and, thus, will hand write what I think of the piece.

Please excuse the nature of submission.

WHAT THE FOLK

I have always been interested in Folklore.
From a young age

UFO'S

Vallee

The Piece is essentially an experiment in
Chaotic yet controlled ^{live} myth-making [redacted]
from [redacted]

[redacted] It creates an apocryphal and
experimental space to have hyperstitions before they
spin out of control. Whilst a lot of
experimental artistic thought has been centred
around the Posivist idea of de-mystifying art,
I suggest that the essence of experimentation
is suspended between this knowing and unknowing,
something balanced between humankind and world,
yet inaccessible to either. Use of divinatorial and
alchemical techniques can help us re-enchant art
and move it away from populist and neo-liberal
modes of reality into entirely new modes that
have yet to reveal themselves to us. It
is important to remember that we can create
our own realities, and while it may seem
impossible (to some) to manifest abstract ideas,
events or entities into being through the
focussing of conscious and non-conscious energies,
in art all is possible and the deeper you explore,
the richer the rewards. [redacted]

[redacted]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When thinking about the flat
Ontological approach I was taking to different
Sonic and Non-Sonic materials in composition I started
thinking [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This is all nonsense. I'm not
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My Process is essentially Simulation, the fiction must become real but it is too dangerous to let out of a controlled environment, it must be a simulation of hypothetical activity because

[REDACTED]

Schoenberg created tone rows as a sort of musical Communism, complete equality amongst notes and emancipation of harmony. But to me this seems so rooted in NEO-PLATONIC IDEALISM. One can only reduce a note to a singular object if one can then also reduce a melody to a singular object, an entire piece, the entire concert hall it's performed in, the city, the continent, the Universe! AND then what of the micro implications of the note? The vibrations? The butterfly effect? AND what about its nominal qualities? The inexpressible? What about the ^{the} deterritorialization of form? What about the joining of a note and a flower vase? The swing of a conductor's baton and the destruction of a block of flats? Why can't this all be music?

Everything is part of a completely unknowable machine
anyway, who are we to define the musical machine purely
by it's sonic qualities?

INFECTION

MAGIC

Baroque music

Memes

Why should I make a score just to
have it interpreted by past-oriented artists?
I don't care ~~if~~ whether an audience like or
don't like my work, all I want is to reach
a part of their brain that has never been reached
before

[REDACTED]

Pagan and magical belief systems¹²

[REDACTED]

Like in my favourite folk ritual -
The CUTH wren in Suffolk [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Why is making work so difficult for me?
The idea of permanence of work makes
me SICK. Writing exhausts me and I [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tarot, iching, random noise based computer
generation, machine learning [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Semi-Causal Relationship and Coincidences
between Objects and events!

✍

[REDACTED]

Live Composition is a way to deconstruct and destabilise the Performance/Composition divide. I started interrupting cementations with light signals, electronic noises, prebanging of processes to create a feedback loop. Working on multiple planes at once! This allows a deepening of the flat ontological realm and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Essentially, this allows me to confuse the Performance/Composition divide and allows me to have a level of hyperstitional control and agency. It means that the map (without score) becomes self-generated through the paradoxical agents and semi-causal relationships in the piece

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Why don't we think magically in
experimental art? or at least utilise its
inherent magical energy? We privilege the
HUMAN view above all else! [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Signed 

Cameron Dodds
19/9/2014

for research office.

Figure 2.3: Dodds' doctoral thesis submission. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Haunted Network Research Initiative. Archive: HNRI-CD0098.

LEMONTATIONS²⁵

In August 2019 Cameron Dodds was invited to LOD Muziektheater in Ghent, Belgium to create a new work as part of their annual summer residency. The result was a 45-minute-long piece titled *LEMONTATIONS* for two violins, two 'cellos, two actors, video, electronics, lights, and various objects. What we know about the piece has been pieced together using the video documentation, emails, and a notebook decorated with cartoon Greyhounds and containing the initial notes on the composition of the piece. In the version that we have, a twenty-something-minute redacted version of the full performance, we are introduced to two actors who are existing in a non-verbal and movement based temporality that is being manipulated by the heavily edited archival footage of an old man (known as The Old Boy in Dodds' notes). Another reality, which we will call the sonic reality, features four musicians who play through Dodds' notated and graphic scores. The realities begin to overlap as the actors become musicians and the musicians, actors. In the middle of the stage there exists a neutral temporality known as 'the interstitial zone' which provides the vehicle for infection to occur across the two distinct realities. We will see how Dodds intended the piece to be an exploration into alternate reality systems by exploring ritualistic folklore and the concept of cyberspace. Whilst *LEMONTATIONS* is not considered to be Dodds' best work,²⁶ it does provide a useful insight into his interest outside of traditional score making and certainly acts as a fulcrum and indicator towards his later pieces. This chapter will begin to explore Dodds' philosophical approach to his work as well as the world building methodologies that he utilised in the creation of his work. *LEMONTATIONS* makes heavy use of both consciously and unconsciously composed material.

Divining

The composer was increasingly interested in divination: specifically, how processes from the tarot and the I Ching could help him transcend his own aesthetic biases. In this piece, for example, Dodds notes that he used tarot imagery as the basis for the graphic scores that are played by the musicians. He developed a personal reading of each of the 72 cards and then, in order to avoid his own subconsciously manipulation of the material, he relayed the information to the performers who then drew the graphic scores using abstract imagery based on his interpretations. Reading Dodds' notebook from the time of composition²⁷ we can also see that he had pages of interpretations of I Ching readings which he was using to help structure the piece. The performers and the technicians were given separate rehearsals where Dodds made use of scored material, verbal and physical instructions, and written text scores to display the relevant information to each set of the performers. The actors were given temporal references from the electronic soundtrack as well as strict movement direction. The musicians were given notated and graphic scores as well as a set of textual

²⁵ Note to self 18/5/2018: I am going to keep track of my thinking as I create the final draft of this thesis in these footnotes marked 'note to self'. They might help me in the final edit. N.B. Must remember to delete them before I hand in.

²⁶ According to an email exchange with his PhD supervisor Laurence Crane, Dodds only ever considered the piece an important experiment that changed his thinking and compositional methods. While he didn't consider the piece a success, he did see it as a necessary artistic and philosophical transformation. Archive: HNRI-CD0029. Dated 18/09/21.

²⁷ Archive: HNRI-CD0786.

instructions. The technicians were given a set of written instructions as well as video files, lighting design and a stopwatch. Each of the three groups had their own arrangements in place that allowed them to follow the temporal structure of the piece. The piece was never completely rehearsed, and the video included in the portfolio is documentation of the first and only performance.²⁸

UFO's and Ritual

An extensively bookmarked text on Dodds' Kindle is *Passport to Magonia* by French computer scientist and UFOlogist Jacques Vallée.²⁹ Vallée, like Jung,³⁰ argues that UFOs are a phenomenon of cultural tracking.³¹ This cultural tracking can be seen when we observe reports of extra-terrestrial phenomena – these reports have a tendency to change through time in alignment with shifting cultural and technological advancement. Vallée analyses a series of folk and fairy tales, arguing that UFO sightings are inextricably linked to folklore. Dodds was obviously much taken by this argument: in many ways it allowed him to bridge the gap between his own interests in folkloric ritual and the idea of an archetypal deep time³² that is shared non-subjectively through a slightly panpsychist methodology;³³ that is, the positing of the existence of a mind-like quality in both conscious and non-conscious entities as well as human and non-human entities, and his love of all things speculative and technological. His reading habits³⁴ allow us to conclude that Dodds saw ritual as something multi-dimensional, both ancient and modern, a mode of magical thinking that has also been subject to cultural tracking (as we have seen above). To Dodds, ritual might propose the idea of deep time in the sense that it suggests a non-logical privileging of time as inherently non-linear, asking participants to delve into a super-reality. His use of technological terminology in the thesis above evokes a notion of deep space: a techno-cultural advancement outside of physical space and somewhere *other*. As we can see above, Dodds mentions 'memes' and 'simulation' – could it be that this other space exists as cyberspace?

We could surmise that *LEMONTATIONS* was created to explore the tensions between the elements of ritualised time and cyberspace, ultimately creating a theatrical interstitial zone between them. To define cyberspace, we must look at the text in which it was coined from – William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.³⁵ In this

²⁸ The video has since been edited by the Haunted Network Research Initiative in order to fit their ontological and aesthetic sensitivity guidelines.

²⁹ Vallée, J, *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* (Chicago, IL, USA: Henry Regnery Co., 1969).

³⁰ As discussed in Jung, C. G and Hulle, R. F. C, *Flying Saucers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

³¹ Whilst this term is not mentioned verbatim by Jung or Vallée, they are seen as instigators of this idea amongst UFOlogists. See Gray, J, "They Didn't Come From Outer Space", *www.Newhumanist.Org.Uk*, 2013 <<https://newhumanist.org.uk/articles/4139/they-didnt-come-from-outer-space>> [Accessed 6 October 2021]

³² Relating to all non-standard interpretations of time especially those considered ancient, or, as we will explore further later, before finitude.

³³ Goff, P, Seager W, and Allen-Hermanson S, "Panpsychism (Stanford Encyclopedia Of Philosophy)", *Plato.Stanford.Edu*, 2021 <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/>> [Accessed 6 October 2021]

³⁴ Here I allude to endless books on fairy-tale, magic, and myth found in Dodds' archive dotted alongside books on physics, artificial intelligence, and mathematics. A particularly dogeared copy of Edwin Abbott's 1884 novella *Flatland* was found with many folded pages and annotations by the composer. *Flatland* tells the story of a two-dimension shape that has a vision of one-dimensional space, and eventually visits three- and four-dimensional spaces. The book is written somewhat as a traditional narrative yet its speculative contributions to ideas about dimensions have proved incredibly important. It seems that Dodds used this text to try and imagine other and more subtle dimensions in his artworks.

³⁵ Gibson, W, *Neuromancer* (New York, USA: Berkley Pub. Group, 1984).

book, Gibson not only uses cyberspace to explain the phenomenon of the internet, but rather expands the term to create a temporal-spatial realm away from the physical. In *Count Zero* (the sequel to *Neuromancer* set in the same universe) an unknown AI approaches the protagonist, Case, and comments on the noumena of cyberspace:

Yeah, there's things out there. Ghosts, voices. Why not? Oceans had mermaids, all that shit, and we had a sea of silicon, see? Sure, it's just a tailored hallucination we all agreed to have, cyberspace, but anybody who jacks in knows, fucking knows, it's a whole universe.³⁶

In this passage, the AI suggests a moving away from human oriented understanding of temporal-space and toward an entirely new and speculative one. This is inherently *n*-dimensional³⁷: the AI has transcended its need for and reliance on humans and created its own new reality that can only be speculated on in terms of its noumenal and contingent dimensions. In effect, it has fictioned new and hitherto unheard-of dimensions into reality. It is worth noting this future-oriented shift as existing *after* finitude, in reference to speculative realist philosopher Quentin Meillassoux,³⁸ as it exists in post-anthropological and speculative space beyond the point of objective boundaries.

On the other side of the deep temporal-spatial realm of cyberspace exists an ancient force as ineffable as speculative cyberspace; the ritualised realm of magic. Whilst we will save a discussion on magic for the next chapter, we will define it for now as another *n*-dimensional realm that existed *before* finitude. Remnants of magic are found in folkloric and ritualised performances such as *The Cutty Wren*,³⁹ traditional in Dodds' home county of Suffolk, but also in quasi-religious practices such as the pre-game routine of a sports team or the simple act of asking the weather to change before leaving the house. In engaging with these ritualised practices, we momentarily step outside of our own time and into a time before finitude and into the realm of the Old Ones.⁴⁰ While this realm could be said to be pre-speculative, it is more important to see it as both *n*-dimensional and ahistorical, as its aim is to charge the work through its own ineffability rather than reveal its ineffability in of itself (as we will explore further in the next chapter). Dodds often borrows this power, using this sense of deep time and space to invoke a hazy simulacrum of folkloric and ritual events, as well as drawing on ominous and occult presences that infect and haunt his work. This is never more obvious than in the intentions of the Old Boy – an aesthetic spectre that is found in *LEMONTATIONS* in the form of a projected elderly man singing a manipulated folk song.

³⁶ Gibson, W, *Count Zero* (New York, USA: Berkley Pub. Group, 1987). p103.

³⁷ The *n* is used here to simply delineate that these dimensions are not purely defined by their phenomenological parts but are, instead, inclusive of noumenal and more abstract dimensions.

³⁸ Meillassoux, Q, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. by Brassier, R (London: Continuum, 2008).

³⁹ On the 26th of December in Middleton, Suffolk Molly Dancers perform a ritual silent procession whilst holding up a dead Wren in it's tomb made from holly, they march from the village hall to the local pub where local dances and songs are then performed.

⁴⁰ Here referring to HP Lovecraft's ineffable and pre-finitude monstrosities.

Occult Performance

In his work, Dodds explores different methods in which ancient and noumenal ritual practices found in Pagan and magical belief systems could be used to provide a temporal and aesthetic space for speculative and future-oriented work, avoiding what he considered to be twee and problematic appropriations of the occult in countless media.⁴¹ In Notebook B he states that he ‘was more interested in the chimerical, experimental, and philosophical implications of the interstitions created at the borderlands of paradoxes, rather than the tepid fusion so often found in popular media.’⁴² For Dodds, it seems that the paradoxes found through the combination of two contradictory objects were more artistically interesting than collaging tropes from either singular object on each other. This thinking can be found not only in his treatment of form and concept, as we have seen in the introduction to *LEMONTATIONS* above, but also in his approach toward interdisciplinary working.⁴³ In *LEMONTATIONS*, Dodds explores how speculative before finitude (magic) and after finitude (cyberspace) temporalities react outside of human interference. These interferences often appear in traditional narrative as human-oriented devices such as linear narrative or temporal and spatial restraints in the composition of an artistic work, however, Dodds was hoping to learn how to avoid these anthropocentric trappings in order to point to a fictioned other. This chapter will help elucidate the beginning of Cameron Dodds’ progress towards developing an EM+ practice, focussing on the speculative in terms of form and conceptual representation in his art.

Performance Ontology

In his seminal work *Performance Theory*, theatre director Richard Schechner offers a diagram (see Figure 3.1) in attempt to explain the ontological structure of a work of theatre. He suggests:

...a model of concentric, overlapping circles; a set of four discs with the largest, and least strictly defined, “performance”, on the bottom, each of the others resting on the one immediately larger than itself. The larger the size the more time and space covered and the broader the “idea area” occupied. Generally speaking, though, not in every case, the larger disc contains all those smaller than itself.⁴⁴

⁴¹ I surmise this from his library which contains dense books on magical theory, magical history, and magical philosophy but without any of the usual New Age books that one usually associates with magic in the 21st Century.

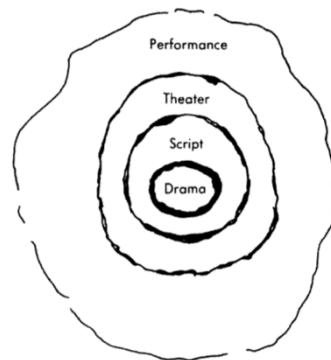
⁴² Archive: HNRI-CD0162.

⁴³ Note to self 18/5/20. According to colleagues at the HNRI, Dodds was forever experimenting with objects and forms from disparate disciplines in his compositional process and he found real joy in researching, studying, and practicing ideas outside of his fundamental discipline that he could then embody in his practice.

⁴⁴ Schechner, R, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 2003). p. 70.

Drama: the smallest, most intense (heated up) circle. A written text, score, scenario, instruction, plan, or map. The drama can be taken from place to place or time to time independent of the person or people who carry it. These people may be just "messengers," even unable to read the drama, no less comprehend or enact it.

Script: all that can be transmitted from time to time and place to place; the basic code of the events. The script is transmitted person to person, the transmitter is not a mere messenger. The transmitter of the script must know the script and be able to teach it to others. This teaching may be conscious or through empathetic, emphatic means.



Theater: the event enacted by a specific group of performers; what the performers actually do during production. The theater is concrete and immediate. Usually, the theater is the manifestation or representation of the drama and/or script.

Performance: the broadest, most ill-defined disc. The whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that take place in/among both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theater takes place – to the time the last spectator leaves.

Figure 3.1: Schechner's original model: Schechner, R, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 2003). p. 70.

Dodds reimagines this model in his compositional notebook on *LEMONTATIONS* and here we can see how he intended the piece to work (see Figure 3.5):

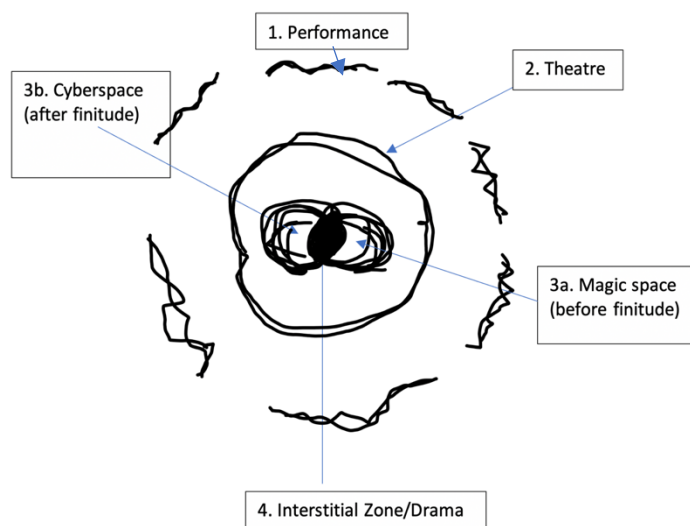


Figure 3.2: The author's reimagined model of Schechner's ontological structure of a work of theatre⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Found in Archive: HNRI-CD0786.

Each area in the model can be analysed in greater depth:

1. *Performance*: the broadest, most ill-defined circle. The whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that take place in/among both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of performance – the precinct where the theatre takes place – to the time the last spectator leaves.
2. *Theatre*: this circle becomes better defined – the event enacted by a specific group of performers; what the performers actually do during the production. The theatre is concrete and immediate. Usually, the theatre is a physical manifestation of the drama and/or script.
3. *Cyberspace Vs. Magic Space (or Script in Schechner)*: all that can be transmitted from time to time and place to place; the basic code of events. Instead of a singular script, we have tensions between multiple scripts that can broadly be defined as fictional versus actual representations of space and time.
4. *Interstitial Zone (Drama in Schechner)*: The smallest and most heated up area. The drama that can be taken from place to place or time to time independent of the people who carry it. These people may simply be messengers, unable to even read the drama, no less comprehend or enact it. *Interstitial Zone* here is used instead of drama because any drama created is mostly incidental through the use of synchronicity and coincidence, as we can see in Dodds' text – the result is a chimera of the two 'scripts.'⁴⁶ As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the interstitial zone is also displayed physically.

Whilst Schechner's original illustration privileges the idea of drama pre-existing before performance, Dodds' *LEMONTATIONS* seeks to uncover the tensions between disparate and ineffable objects without their having been preconceived beforehand. This has been surmised from Dodds' choice to rehearse each part separately, leaving each group of performers and technicians to adhere to their own individual temporalities. When these temporalities intersect, they help to create new signs that are essentially aleatoric. What Dodds and Schechner agree on is that the core of a piece is ultimately independent to its individual moving agents. This can be likened to Gibson's *Neuromancer*, a book in which the concepts are far stronger than the actual story – similarly, the inherent script (or narrative) of *LEMONTATIONS* is secondary to its central drama.

⁴⁶ As we can see in Schechner's diagram, script is taken here to mean everything, the basic code of events. Following Dodds' insistence that 'fiction is the ontological tension between disparate or paradoxical objects' and following our multi-dimensional theory outlined above we can surmise that multiple scripts hold their own individual agency and are left to generate the central 'drama' through their disparity.

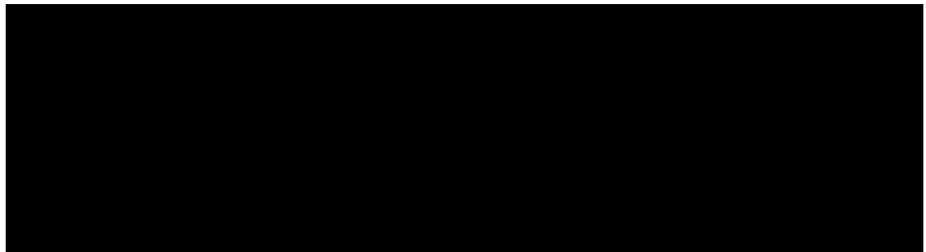
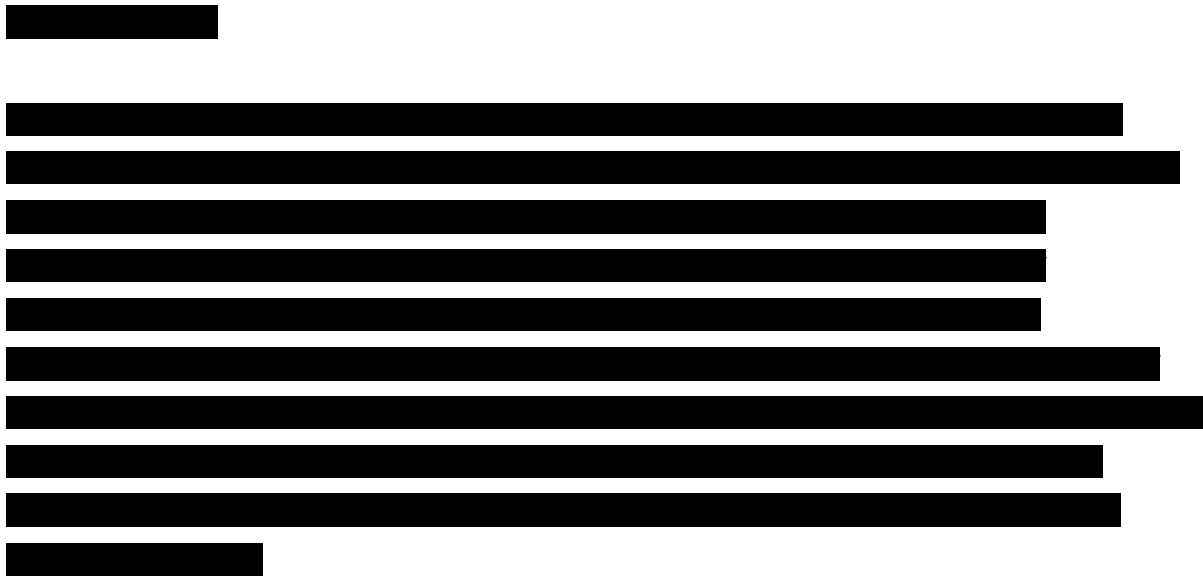


Figure 4. [REDACTED]

Hyperstition Prelude

In order to understand the creation of the interstitial zone, we must look closer at the realms of both *Cyber* and *Magical* time and space. Here we must again find the dramatic tension created through our *before* and *after* finitude paradox. For this, we look toward the term *hyperstition*, which can be defined as fictions that make themselves real.⁴⁷ The tension between these two is at the crux of Dodds' work from this period. We can understand it, and micro-iterations of it, as displaying a necessary inefficiency in the way that the material is generated. We can draw on materials from his many notebooks – in this instance, specifically the earlier writings such as those contained Notebook A and B which date from 2016 to 2018. These notebooks show us that Dodds would often create his own absurdist, roundabout ways of generating material and refining material: from feeding initial imagined data into machine learning programs to create new sets of data for performance (as we will see in later chapters) to purposefully obscuring ideas until they were only peripherally recognisable.⁴⁸ This time-consuming inefficiency was necessary to create the tension between

⁴⁷ Cybernetic Culture Research Centre (Land, N), *CCRU Writings 1997-2003: Lemurian Time War* (UK: Spiral Press, 2015).

⁴⁸ Note to self 27/6/20 [REDACTED]: Norè MacSdodd, the secretary of the HNRI, never met Dodds but made the joke that "through his lazy daydreaming, he could make himself disappear entirely". I think his laziness was at odds with HNRI's *Modus Operandi*, perhaps this is why he disassociated himself from the organisation that he helped to found just before its launch?

disparate objects by providing imaginal context and data to the objects, and then linking them together, as we have seen earlier. More than this, this inefficient process helps the composition to function as a 'hyperstition generator.' We can further understand *hyperstitions* as 'ideas function(ing) causally to bring about their own reality... transmuting fiction into truths.'⁴⁹ This concept is particularly important to understanding the work of Cameron Dodds.

It may be difficult to view anything theatrical as a truth, especially in the weird-infused world of Dodds' work, but we must look past his work as performance and see it as self-contained simulation. In the handwritten pages at the top of this chapter, Dodds notes that his 'process is essentially simulation, the fiction must become real, but it is too dangerous to let out of a controlled environment, it must be a simulation of hyperstitional activity...' (see Figure 2.3). In Dodds' portfolio we can see that he often used thinly veiled pseudonyms and anagrams of his own name in his work as well as fictioned versions of semiotic objects and their inherent tensions.⁵⁰ This seems to have allowed Dodds to consider his works as a simulated version of his own compositional process. The pages in Figure 2.3 show that Dodds saw his works as simulations of hyperstitions rather than hyperstitions themselves, and thus, these hyperstitions are transformed into a fictional other of themselves. If we understand hyperstition to be 'fictions that become facts,' perhaps Dodds' simulation of this brings about its own reverse: 'facts that become fictions.' Dodds became obsessed with the idea of his work and process being a simulation – therefore it is only logical to think about the work expressed as performance being a fact that has been reversed to its paradoxical other through this act of simulation.

Causality and Simulation

As we can see in Dodds' PhD portfolio, each major item of work from this period is quite different in character owing to the speculative approach he used in composition. However, one can sense a clear, overarching motif in these works, each aiming to be a self-contained microcosm of a larger idea. From his handwritten notes as well as in email exchanges and text messages written in bouts of depression, we see that Dodds often felt overwhelmed by the ambition of his own ideas. In addition, he rarely had the material resources (or, in his own estimation, the tenacity) to realise them. Therefore, he set about distilling the essence of the idea into various archetypal tensions that he would then allow to play off each other, utilising their own semi-causal agency. Agency here is described as semi-causal because applying total (a)causality to the work simply would be untrue as the structure, performance, and audience of each work are always rigorously defined. Through the use of 'semi-causal,' I am merely pointing towards a causality that does not privilege logical temporal-spatial events but rather creates a space for contingency. Here, one is reminded of *The Box* in *Twin Peaks: The Return*.⁵¹ The Box is a large glass box in an empty room, watched day and night by a

⁴⁹ Carstens, D, *Hyperstition* (9 March 2015) <http://xenopraxis.net/readings/carstens_hyperstition.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2020]

⁵⁰ This is explored in more detail in his *Etudes* but here we can see the dichotomy between musician and dancer as the same performer, or the human controlling influence of a non-human entity (The Old Boy in the video), the fictional tensions seem unrehearsed and are, rather, left to manifest within the performance.

⁵¹ *Twin Peaks: The Return* - Part 1, dir. by Frost, M and Lynch, D (CBS Television Distribution Showtime Networks, 2017).

man who is employed by unnamed scientists. Nothing happens for a number of years. Suddenly, an entity manifests inside of the box. It escapes and destroys the man hired to watch the box. This process is literally watching a hyperstition (from either before or after finitude) enter objective reality and manifest in the real world, or in the case of *Twin Peaks* as well as *LEMONTATIONS*, an encapsulation or microcosm of the real world. In any case, this signifies a virtual relationship and representation of time as the laws of physics are fundamentally fictioned in order for the speculative to physically manifest. We can also view *LEMONTATIONS* as a *virtual* representation of time rather than an *actual* one, and the aesthetic material as cyclical in regard to its time/deep time tension. In Dodds' work, we often find that the fictional becomes factual through this cyclical process of inter-connected and seemingly semi-causal semiotic processes and tensions. This happens in three ways: the objective (from the point of view of the composer), the subjective (from the point of view of the audience) and the intangible (from the point of view of the interstitial zone or drama, the essence of the piece). Whilst it could be said that this is true of all performed work, it is explicitly clear in Dodds' output. He purposefully created strange signifiers in order to breed ineffable hyperstitions and used abstract complexity to 'perplex audiences into engaging in a feedback loop of familiar and unfamiliar signifiers across disparate mediums, therefore asking them to create new signs in objective experience.'⁵² Thus, the audience creates bastardized chimeras in their imaginations and feeds the hyperstition-generating core of the piece: the interstitial zone. Essentially, he seemed to want each audience member and performer to create their own reality and interpretation. Whilst this isn't phenomenologically evident in the piece, this concept feels at home in his own magical approach to aesthetics and fictioning. Here, we might usefully refer to Dodds' own notes setting out his aims for the piece:

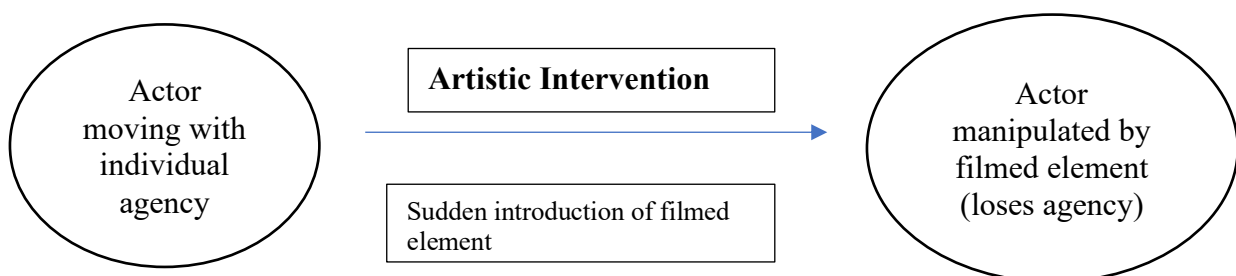
The piece is essentially an experiment in chaotic yet controlled live-mythmaking... It creates an apocryphal and experimental space to house hyperstitions before they spin out of control. Whilst a lot of experimental artistic thought has been centred around the positivist ideas of de-mystifying art, I suggest that the essence of experimentation is suspended between this knowing and unknowing, something balanced between humankind and world, yet inaccessible to either. Use of divinatorial and alchemical techniques can help us to re-enchance art and move it away from populist and neo-liberal modes of reality into entirely new modes that have yet to reveal themselves to us. It is important to remember that we can create our own realities, and while it may seem impossible (to some) to manifest abstract ideas, events, or entities into being through the focussing of conscious and non-conscious energies, in art all is possible and the deeper you explore, the richer the rewards (see Figure 2).

⁵² Archive: HNRI-CD0786.

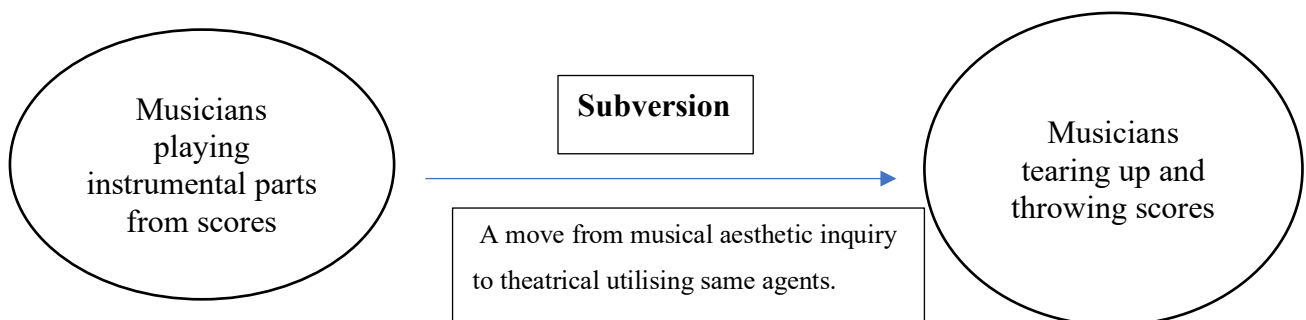
The Composer as Trickster

Another concept central to Dodds' work is that of the Trickster-Figure. In notebook B, Dodds notes '...I want to trick an audience, to confuse them, to make them feel confused about the reality they are viewing...to make them feel confused about the reality they inhabit'.⁵³ It seems that Dodds utilised the trickster spirit in order to disrupt and interrupt the structural architecture of reality through his art making. In his 1998 book *Trickster Makes This World*, essayist Lewis Hyde defines the trickster as a 'boundary-crosser'.⁵⁴ Indeed, we can see how Dodds crosses the boundaries of form and genre through disruption and subversion, creating multidimensional reality puzzles through semi-causal and aleatory means only to disrupt them through artistic ones. Like the tricksters Puck or Bugs Bunny before him, Dodds sought to manipulate the fabric of his realities to cause chaos or make unlikely conclusions between disparate materials to suit his needs and aesthetic vision.⁵⁵ In *LEMONTATIONS* he approached this on two fronts: (1) the setting up of an aesthetic reality through divinatory methods and (2) the destruction of this reality through artistic intervention: a purposeful placing of disparate materials from different mediums to create aesthetic tension; and subversion — a sudden move to a new aesthetic inquiry. Below we can see some examples of how this is achieved in *LEMONTATIONS* (see Figure 5).

LEMONTATIONS- 1'10" (male actor)



LEMONTATIONS- 2'15"



⁵³ Archive: HNRI-CD0162.

⁵⁴ Hyde, L. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998)

⁵⁵ Note to self 29/6/20██: I'm not sure why, but workers at the HNRI refer to Dr. Codar as Dr. Puck.

Figure 5: A graphic representation of *Artistic Intervention and Subversion* in Dodds' *LEMONTATIONS*.

Whilst these are only two examples from *LEMONTATIONS*, the rest of the piece plays with this trickster spirit and, indeed, allows it to manipulate and infect the ontological spaces set up by the inter-semiotic mingling of multidisciplinary forms that are constantly joining throughout the piece in an endless game of cat and mouse.

Flat Ontology?

Dodds' work and philosophy clearly indicates interest and importance placed on idea of *flat ontology*. Flat ontology can be defined as: the essential flattening of objects so that they exist on the same plane of existence when analysing and comparing them. Dodds was concerned with creating an EM+ that didn't privilege the cochlear above non-cochlear or human above non-human; in fact, he saw his whole compositional process and output as one that was apocryphally self-contained as just one thing: music. Even physical objects, set, costume, narrative, lighting, etc, were equal to notes played by an instrument. Taking examples from Dodds' commentary on *LEMONTATIONS* as extracted from his thesis materials we can see how some of this manifested:

Schoenberg created tone rows as a sort of musical communism, complete equality amongst notes and emancipation of harmony. But to me this seems so rooted in NEO-PLATONIC IDEALISM. One can only reduce a note to a singular object if one can then also reduce a melody to a singular object, an entire piece, the entire concert hall it's performed in, the city, the continent, the universe! AND then what of the micro implications of the note? The vibrations? The butterfly effect?! AND what about the noumenal qualities? The ineffable?! What about the deterritorialisation of form? What about the joining of a note and a flower vase? The swing of a conductor's baton and the destruction of a block of flats? Why can't this all be music? Everything is part of a completely unknowable machine anyway, who are we to define the musical machine purely by its sonic qualities? (see Figure 2.3)

Throughout Dodds' handwritten thesis, it is possible to observe a strong tendency toward Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Perhaps this philosophy permitted Dodds both a logical and non-logical⁵⁶ space for his work to occupy, and so, without having a particular allegiance or faith in either, he was able to explore the acausal connections and paradoxes between objects in a way that fictioned the objects, and relationships between objects very existence. An example from OOO philosopher Graham Harman's *The Third Table*⁵⁷ can further illustrate Dodds' thoughts.

⁵⁶ I use non-logical instead of illogical to avoid the latter's association with incorrectness.

⁵⁷ Harman, G, *'The Third Table'. 100 Notes, 100 Thoughts: Documenta Series 085* (Germany: HATJE CANTZ, 2012).

The principles of object-oriented philosophy can be summarized in a few sentences. First, philosophy must deal with every type of object rather than reducing all objects to one privileged type: zebras, leprechauns, and armies are just as worthy of philosophical discussion as atoms and brains. Second, objects are deeper than their appearance to the human mind but also deeper than their relations to one another, so all contact between objects must be indirect or vicarious. Third, objects are polarized in two ways: there is a distinction between objects and their qualities, and a distinction between real objects withdrawn from all access and sensual objects that exist only for some observer, whether human or inhuman. Finally, the basic problems of ontology must be reformulated in terms of the fourfold structure that results from these two polarizations in the core of objects.⁵⁸

Therefore, we can see how Dodds' thoughts mirror Harman's in respect to the privileging of objects. Harman's second point beautifully exemplifies the aleatoric and divinatory approach taken in *LEMONTATIONS* in regard to the creation of new signs, as described by Dodds in his notes on the piece. New objects, as well as the process of the creation of tension between these objects, are ultimately indirect and vicarious – they are not rehearsed, instead they are left to play out, unwind, and intertwine through the taking and giving of their own individual, divided, and joint agencies.⁵⁹ In his thesis, Dodds also makes it abundantly clear that the human is only a singular cog in the machine of his artwork and thus any observer, whether external or internal, and the subjective opinions of said observers became as much of the performance as the composed piece. It is also important to note that his material is gathered as a singular flat ontology and Dodds gives depth to each object through the imbuelement, subdivision, and multiplication of individual agencies.

If we return the quotation from Dodds' commentary at the beginning of this section, we will see that he uses the word 'deterritorialisation.' From its use here and elsewhere in his notebooks (specifically in Notebook B), one can conclude that Dodds employed this Deleuzian term to denote a move toward an unknowable territory (unstable) from a familiar territory (stable).⁶⁰ He seems less concerned about the territories themselves but more interested in the act of movement between the two. Looking at Harman's flat ontology, we can understand this in the 'deeper' way in which he wants us to view objects – a distinction between the objects and their qualities. Dodds' inquisition into deterritorialisation seems to map the move from reality to fiction to hyperstition as it relates to the objects that he is allowing to synchronistically interact. He then studies them in their own interstitial realms where they are detached from their original signifiers. I use 'synchronistically' here to allude to another idea from Jung⁶¹ in which he posits acausal relationships between objects and events. This is something I will be discussing in the next chapter on magic in Dodds' work.

⁵⁸ Harman p. 4.

⁵⁹ These last two points will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter in an interview with Dodds in which he discusses his magical thinking.

⁶⁰ Deleuze, G and Guattari, F, *A Thousand Plateaus (1980)*, trans. by Massumi, B (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

⁶¹ Jung, C G (1960), *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Hyperstition

In order to further understand Dodds' view of *hyperstition* it will be necessary to consider two figures from the realm of fiction and philosophy: H.P. Lovecraft and Nick Land. These two figures are perhaps best known in the modern imagination as socially problematic⁶² and, whilst neither I nor my subject would demur from this verdict, their considerable influence on Dodds' work demands examination. I will be firstly exploring Lovecraft's contribution towards Dodds' imaginative compositions and then delve deeper into Land's theories of hyperstition. In *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy*,⁶³ Harman refers to Lovecraft by the neologism of "productionist," which he defines as a philosopher who finds "new gaps in the world where there were formerly none."⁶⁴ Lovecraft's *Cthulhu* mythos⁶⁵ explores the effect of the ineffable in horror literature — entities exist just out of reach of the imagination and bubble under the surface of reality, and yet are very physically present within the mythos itself. These entities are finding new gaps in reality which previously did not exist.⁶⁶ With this in mind, it does not take a great stretch of the imagination to arrive at our definition of hyperstition as put forward by Nick Land: '...fictions that make themselves real.'⁶⁷

Dodds' own theory posits that fiction is the ontological tension between disparate or paradoxical objects. Keeping this in mind, it becomes much clearer how Dodds intended his fictions to operate. Following his bastardized OOO methodology and his ordering of objects not by their logical hierarchal systems, but through an ontological and hyperstitional interdisciplinarianism, we can also see that he was a productionist — an author of hyperstitions. He was not overly concerned with creating narrative fictions, focussing more on following and outlining a tension between aesthetic objects to highlight new gaps in the world where there were formerly none. For Dodds, it seems that hyperstition was less about fact being created by the fiction and more about the actual process that the fiction goes through to become fact. As Dodds notes in his handwritten thesis '*LEMONTATIONS* is set up to create semi-causal coincidences between objects and events and thus, create new objects and events — this is an important part of the work's structure' (Fig. 2). In Lovecraft, stories are told and retold until they make themselves real, stimulating the mythical imagination of the subjects in story until their combined belief leads to a climax. Like Lovecraft's ineffable creatures, Dodds' objects are left to find new ways to physically manifest as their semiotic routes become cut off.⁶⁸

⁶² Nick Land became a poster-boy of the Alt-Right because of his opposition to democracy which he believes inhibits freedom and accountability, as well as his philosophy of 'Dark Enlightenment' that contains racist overtones. H.P. Lovecraft displayed outwardly racist beliefs both within his work and private life.

⁶³ Harman, G, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (UK: Zero Books, 2012).

⁶⁴ Harman, G. p. 3.

⁶⁵ A mythopoeia and fictional universe in which Lovecraft's early works are set.

⁶⁶ Azathoth exists in Lovecraft's mythos as an outer-God and a symbol of primordial chaos, blind and deaf — it dreams reality into existence. Land later uses these ideas and entities to relate to his own ontological position using ideas from the *Cthulhu* mythos: In *Fanged Noumena* Land mentions *Azathoth* who he equates with capitalism, a great ineffable entity which is unconscious of itself See: Lovecraft, HP, *H. P. Lovecraft: Complete and Unabridged*. (New York City: Barnes and Noble, 2008).

⁶⁷ CCRU. & Orphan Drift., *Meshed: digital unlife catacombs* (London: Beaconsfield, 1999).

⁶⁸ This is especially true in Dodds' work that has taken place at the concert hall, as objects from disciplines outside of cochlear music are presented within a cochlear context, they are forced to find new meaning that is in the interstitial zone between musical and non-musical object.

Whilst Land used hyperstition to explain his own political and ontological position, as well as his sympathetic tendencies toward accelerated capitalism in the post-truth era, Dodds' concern with hyperstition is aesthetic. We can see that he uses the term 'simulation' to describe his use of these processes and there is, indeed, a Baudrillardian⁶⁹ flavour to *LEMONTATIONS*. In a note written on his phone, he writes 'hyperstition manifests in three ways theatrically, performatively, and mytho-individually.'⁷⁰ The theatrical encases what happens on stage past the suspension of disbelief, an example of this would be the gradual infection of both displayed realities by the Old Boy. The performative excludes the theatrical and instead denotes the technical and visual/sonic production as a whole; therefore, bridging the gap between the fictioned reality and the audience, further allowing for the real to manifest at the mytho-individual level through subjective experience. The combination of archetypally mythical and personal helps to tap into the audience's psyche, then imprinting upon it through the before/after finitude paradox – the audience become yet another spatial-temporal loop within the wider performance. As I have noted before, this could be said of all theatrical art, but it is particularly detailed in Dodds' work and can be specifically observed in his constant involvement in the performative part of the hyperstition. As he states in his thesis, Dodds directs this aspect of hyperstition in the act of live composition, changing the performance in real-time through manipulation of lighting, electronic music, the changing of cues, and artistic intervention, responding to his own impulses and the reaction of the audience and performers. This creates a feedback loop of hyperstitional activity where the real and the fictional become confused, thus becoming agencies within themselves, two more actors on the stage, as shown in the diagram below (see Figure 6).

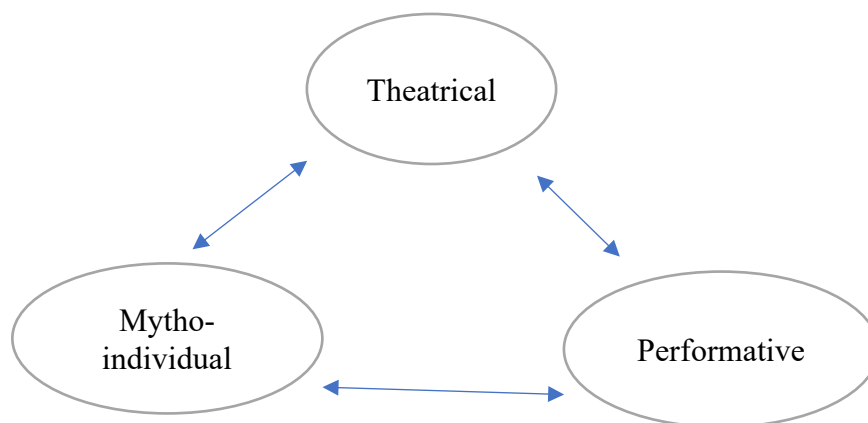


Figure 6: Graphic representation of hyperstitional feedback loops in *LEMONTATIONS*.

Dodds' EM+ accelerates its intentions, both compositionally and performatively, to ridiculous and wildly speculative conclusions, often following the perceived tensions between objects to create new aesthetic lines towards the post-narrative territories (this is explored in its extreme in the *Etudes* discussed in Chapter 3). This hyperstitional process allows Dodds' simulation to act in a way that bypasses narrative and the idea of *telling*

⁶⁹ Baudrillard, J, *Simulations* (Los Angeles, California: Semiotext(e), 1981).

⁷⁰ Archive: HNRI-CD0042. Mytho-individual is his own neologism, meaning a process in which an audience member creates their own individual mythos through conscious and unconscious processes.

in favour of *showing*. Relationships between objects remain vague and undefined, allowing the audience to fill in the ontological and relational gaps, breaking the illusion of narrative and moving towards something that feels fundamentally *other*, where the hyperstition is not just a process but an individual agent itself. As Land explains in *Meshed Katacombs*,⁷¹ a hyperstition has four characteristics: They function as (1) an ‘element of effective culture that makes itself real,’ (2) as a ‘fictional quality functional as a time-travelling device,’ (3) as ‘coincidence intensifiers,’ and (4) as a ‘call to the Old Ones.’⁷² We can easily see how the first three function in *LEMONTATIONS*,⁷³ however the fourth might be the most important to Dodds – the calling of the ancient, the ineffable, the unexplainable into the cultural space. Whilst Dodds might have seen this as a magical process, brought about through playing in the divinatory realm (for example, using tarot as mentioned earlier in the chapter), we can see it perhaps in a clearer aesthetic realm: the realm of the noumenal. At its heart, Dodds work is about tensions. Perhaps the most important tension found in his work is the one between phenomenal and the noumenal.⁷⁴ This is evident in *LEMONTATIONS*, perceivable as the tension between the aforementioned ritual/cyber space and time, as well as the conceptual before/after finitude paradox. It could be said that Dodds is attempting to rip a hole in aesthetic reality, leaving it prone to infection from previously unthought of noumenal objects, signifiers, and events.⁷⁵ His call to the Old Ones (perhaps this is even what he named his Old Boy after?) is one of Kantian questioning: what happens when an aesthetic work is left at the mercy of its noumenal other?

Maps

It is clear through Dodds’ disengagement with traditional score making in his later compositions that the map is not, indeed, the territory.⁷⁶ We may even imagine multiple maps: the original map as existing purely in the realm of Cameron Dodds (in imagination, notes, scores, etc), the performative map existing in the realm of both the audience and the performers, and yet another map generated through the live manipulation of the piece by the composer himself. As we have seen, the composer will often disrupt the performers and create changes based on live intuition. This in turn confuses any semiotic understanding of the original piece pre-performance. The original pre-performance map, as created by Dodds, is peeled away using aleatory, semi-causal coincidence, and the aforementioned intuitive manipulation of semiotics in real-time to hint at the strange and ineffable noumena of the piece. This meta-map overwrites the compositional original and pre-performance maps through its Azathoth-ian power to change and shift reality in real-time and forcing the performative agents and audience to respond to these events. In the performative, live realm of *LEMONTATIONS*, Dodds, as composer, becomes a simulation of the Lovecraftian ineffable, bubbling under the

⁷¹ CCRU. & Orphan Drift p. 3.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Imagining the whole piece as a hyperstition, the before/after finitude paradox as time travel device, and the semi-causal connections as coincidence intensifiers.

⁷⁴ Kant, I (1781), *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Weigelt, M (London: Penguin Classics, 2007).

⁷⁵ Note to self 3/7/20██: The more I came to know Dr. Codar/Puck, the less I trusted him. He would always call Dodds his ‘noumenal other’ and would often mumble that it was Dodds who was the virus, not he. I felt sorry for Dodds, I got the impression that he was just out of his depth with these people and just didn’t know how to manage collaborative aesthetic relationships.

⁷⁶ In opposition to the famous phrase by Semanticist Alfred Korzybski, see: Korzybski, A, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, trans. by Hurley, H, 5th edn (New York City: Institute of General Semantics, 1995), p. 58.

cracks of the piece's reality. Dodds uses this power to frequently disrupt semiotic boundaries in order to confuse and negate object-audience relationships. For example: the *human* actors use exclusively abstract languages such as grunts, screams, and such, whilst the *non-human* actors, such as the film, will use human oriented language to display effable text to the audience. This confuses the human/non-human semiotic agency within the piece and allows the audience to instinctively trust more in the unnatural effable nature of the non-human rather than the natural ineffable nature of the human. This confused semiosis is found at the heart of what English artist and writer on technology James Bridle calls 'automation bias':⁷⁷ a bias that allows us to trust blindly in machines rather than our own human agency and intuition. Whilst this automation bias is fictioned within *LEMONTATIONS*, it points towards a much darker strand in Dodds' work: the confusion of the map/territory division into human vs. occult (taken here to mean before, ancient speculative, and after, technological speculative, finitude symbiosis) agencies. Dodds seems acutely aware that the human imagination and its scope are not enough to reveal the noumenal, however, the piece is written to encourage and intensify coincidences, therefore allowing this ineffable realm to make itself known in the work. Indeed, in the *LEMONTATIONS* notebook⁷⁸ he states: 'Let occulted agencies infect the piece, build them in with tarot imagery, I Ching, active imagination, summon the demons, let them run riot, infect, infect, infect!'⁷⁹ Dodds' work may be created through magical and divinatory means, but magical intervention does not stop at the compositional level – *LEMONTATIONS*, specifically, almost acts as a philosophical summoning ritual for a demon: one that seeks to awaken the noumenal in the performance and the audience. But how can it *actually* awaken the noumenal in the audience?

Here, we might do well to note Dodds' allusion in his commentary to words from theatre maker Richard Foreman: 'I don't care whether an audience like or don't like my work, all I want is to reach a part of their brain that has never been reached before...'⁸⁰ In this light, we could conclude that for Dodds, the composing/performance/audience relationship is also noumenal. Again, we can see from his thesis that he considered his involvement in performance as an act of live composition and this allowed him to judge his own reactions to the piece and intensify aspects that he felt clicked in the performance with the intention that it might be the same for the audience. He felt that this idea live composition was just that: a displaying of composition as a living entity.

⁷⁷ Bridle, J, *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future* (Brooklyn, New York: Verso, 2018).

⁷⁸ Archive: HNRI-CD0786.

⁷⁹ Note to self: With all of the masks, movement, repetitive music, and psychedelic visuals; it is easy to imagine *LEMONTATIONS* as some sort of occult summoning ritual. What was it that Dodds was trying to summon? If the piece is a simulation of hyperstitional activity and the Old Boy was the result of a summoning, we surely have to imagine the result as *virtual*... what if, hypothetically, the simulation became unstable...could Dodds have summoned something else, something *actual*, into objective reality? At the HNRI archive the intern, Ron M. Docadds, was often locked in a room by Dr. Codar/Puck. He was always chanting odd words – more than once I strange lights emanating from the space between the door and the wall.

⁸⁰ '... I don't care about the audience's response; I'm making them for myself. But I'm making them for myself as audience, because I want to wake myself up. And I assume that other people might be woken up by what wakes me up.' MindFLUX: A film about Richard Foreman, dir. by Kerrison, R (Ride 5 Group, 2010).

Living Music (and a Final Word on Maps)

In order to create the microcosmic worlds that he was intent on creating, Dodds felt it was important to display them as *living* in their presentation to an audience. It could be said that his move away from the concert hall was a disengaging with *dead*⁸¹ forms: clear cut composing/performance divides – hung, drawn, and quartered pieces that are offered to an audience. Perhaps it could even be described as the giving of a map to an audience with an insistence that it is the only territory, as is found with traditional score based music. The role of the audience in Dodds' work is inherently part of the performance and follows Umberto Eco's theory of the model reader⁸² which posits that the audience itself make up an important part of the text. We have discussed how Dodds uses hyperstitial vehicles to create a feedback loop between separate agencies. We can imagine, then, that the audience are not given a map as much as they are given a set of familiar signposts, the use of 'baroque music' and 'memes' (examples are given in Figure 2.3) so that they may self-generate maps that help guide them through the piece, allowing them to 'deal interpretively with the text in the same way as the author deals generatively [in producing the text, that is].'⁸³

If one is to imagine Dodds' work as a sort of meta-mapmaking, surely, we must then follow his OOO methodology and refrain from privileging the map as a physical, singular object. At the beginning of this chapter, we discussed Dodds' multifaceted methods of creating *LEMONTATIONS*: aural, written, divinatory, and physicality in both translation to the performers as well as the audience. If there were a score, it would not exist only as a physical object but also would present a snapshot of the moment of creation of the whole work. If we draw upon Curtis Roads' work *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic*⁸⁴ we can summarise that Dodds' map-making was one of induction and deduction:

Multiscale planning encourages an interplay between inductive and deductive thinking, that is, from the specific to the general, and from the general to the specific. We use induction when we start working with a specific fragment and then see how many fragments can fit together within a larger framework. We use deduction when we conclude that a detail is inconsistent with the work as a whole. Multiscale planning can be likened to solving an n-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, [...] a compositional puzzle [that] can involve advance planning guided by predetermined design goals, but it can also be intuitive, exploratory, and open-ended.⁸⁵

This mode of working fits in nicely with his OOO methodology, but more importantly, it gives us a guide into the creative working of the interdisciplinary artist. The *n*-dimensional jigsaw puzzle metaphor can be used to help us understand the composition of Dodds' maps but we should not give privilege to whether or not the

⁸¹ Dodds later quotes in his interview with the Haunted Network Research Initiative magazine that he felt that contemporary concert music was usually 'left to rot on a stage like a bloated and forgotten corpse after its customary single performance' (see figure 9).

⁸² Eco, U, *The Role of the Reader* (Indiana: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1979).

⁸³ Eco, p. 7.

⁸⁴ Roads, C, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁸⁵ Roads p. 303.

pieces fit together – that would destroy any coincidence intensifying vehicles: rather we must let the individual jigsaw pieces become nothing more than props, with a design in mind but ultimately subjective to creator, audience, and noumena.

As we will see in Chapter 2, Dodds had a peripheral but long-standing interest in Chaos Magic. The idea of chaos provides us with a valuable tool in which to analyse the ontology of *LEMONTATIONS*. In a text found in Dodds’ personal library, *Chaos, Creativity, and Consciousness*,⁸⁶ mathematician Ralph Murray states that he imagines reality thus (see Figure 7):⁸⁷

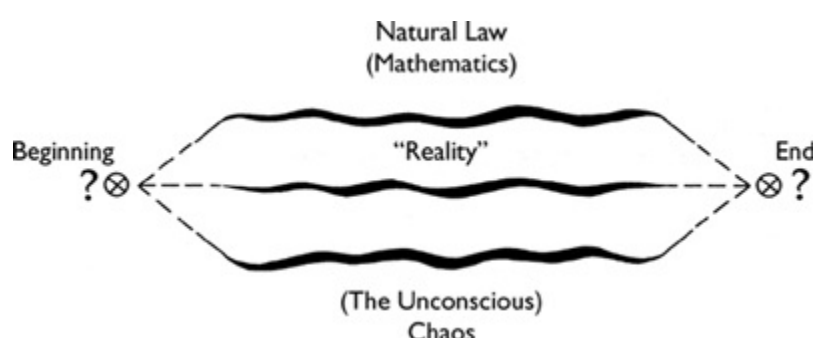


Figure 7: Ralph Murray’s figure of reality from *Chaos, Creativity and Cosmic Consciousness*, 2nd edn (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 2001) p. 36.

Murray goes on to postulate that there are three intertwining realities: an ordinary reality where we as beings preside, an overlooking reality that controls natural law, and an undercurrent reality of chaos, or ‘Gaian unconscious reality.’ This third reality contains ‘not form, but the source of form, the energy of form, the form of form, the material that form is made of.’⁸⁸ We have seen how, in *LEMONTATIONS*, Dodds gives us multiple maps – potentially even an infinite number of maps, taking into account the breaking apart of each sign made consciously and unconsciously by the hyperstitional and mytho-individual processes. They could easily be divided up to fit the diagram above as we can see in the table below (see Figure 8).

Natural Law (mathematics)	Natural Law (Dodds’ composition)
Ordinary Reality	What the performers experiences (as agents in Dodds’ composition)
Chaos	Live composition, feedback loops, hyperstition- What the audience experiences

Figure 8: A table relating Murray’s theory of reality and the ontology of *LEMONTATIONS*.

⁸⁶ Murray, McKenna, and Sheldrake, *Chaos, Creativity and Cosmic Consciousness*, 2nd edn (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 2001).

⁸⁷ Murray, McKenna and Sheldrake, p. 36.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

We must not only imagine the *Beginning* and *End* of the work in relation to the experience of performance and our relation to finitude and contingency, but also follow the initial composition through to the end of the performance until it ceases to vibrate in the collective conscious or unconscious⁸⁹ – it would be unfair to Dodds’ OOO methodology and outlook to suggest otherwise. The noumenal realms of Lovecraftian ineffability, indeed, reveal to us the beasts that lie below the cracks of reality and therein lies the machine of *LEMONTATIONS*.

⁸⁹ Note to self 13/8/20██: Perhaps Dodds was summoning the Haunted Network Research Institution? Was this intended, or an accident? But, then, what was Docadds summoning when I was at the archive? ...Dodds?

Chapter 2

Magic

as a suggestion of intellectual desire to implement both physical and metaphysical change in one's personal or academic life using concepts and unconscious methods. Avecantian art and manipulation of the mindless imagines the magical realm.

How can you give me some examples?

[Ler-/] sure. Let me give 3 that somewhat relate to my own practice. *Levi!* I'll decline it from the point of view of the present, but only by no means privilege the human over the nonhuman, it is completely indifferent, indelible. The manipulation of this ineffability is where power for the human comes from. Of course, I'm not talking about magic, but about the magical power of the human. In speaking through philosophical- magic thought and action determines how you perceive and interact with objects around you.

Example 1 could be, like, a natural outlook, a sort of...
[Ler-/] yes, but you approach a new... I think you decide might be made to approach the tree as a living entity until human dead, that is to recognize its immaterial qualities as an essential part of its being, does that make sense?

Now obviously, biologically the tree is living, but in this specific-oriented fashion we think to reduce objects to the help me to feel relaxed" or "I think this is beautiful." The whole wellness outlook, I think. This privileges the-

tree how one might greet an old friend. This of suspending your disbelief as it changes the pattern of your ordinary thinking and that in turn creates a paradox which opens new modes of thinking.

But as it is a conscious decision it requires a suspension of your disbelief and even the tree now from, like, learned concepts, socially imagined concepts.

Right, so a sort of reimagining of Kant's immunities over phenomena?

Well, a sort of agnostic approach to...
[Ler-/] yes, but you approach a new... I think you decide might be made to approach the tree as a living entity until human dead, that is to recognize its immaterial qualities as an essential part of its being, does that make sense?

Now obviously, biologically the tree is living, but in this specific-oriented fashion we think to reduce objects to the help me to feel relaxed" or "I think this is beautiful." The whole wellness outlook, I think. This privileges the-

Example 2 might be "personal" – the focusing of will for personal reasons – this could be gain, change, whatever. This is about intent. I usually talk about this in terms of the artist's intent to create a work of art. When you feel a need to remain calm at all times. Those who get angry always lose in a fight. This sense of calm is a state of mind, something that you put yourself in in order to focus your intent and change your will so it may be stronger than your opponent. The willingness of light is the challenge, as you have to keep your cool and continue focusing your intent. This also changes and strengthens this genius, a sort of magical state of mind, as your intent becomes stronger and clearer. In this way fighting is as much a test of mental endurance against an opponent as it is physical. This is a curious case with regard to the magical realm, as it is a conscious sort of ritual change. We have seen how this works on a physical level, but does it work on a metaphysical level?

The magical answer wouldn't be the-

[illegible]

Can you give some examples?

phenomenal—in this case, the person, but magic by no means privileges the human over the nonhuman, it is completely indifferent, ineffable. The manipulation of this ineffability is where power for the human comes from. Of course, I'm not talking about waving wands or neo-paganism. I'm speaking purely philosophically—magic thought and action determines how you perceive and interact with objects around you.

Example 1 could be like, a natural outbreak, a sort of amniotic outbreak. Like, if you approach a tree... a magical decision might be made to approach the tree as a living entity rather than dead, that is to recognize its nonhuman qualities as an essential part of its being, does that make sense? Now, obviously, biologically the tree is living, but in this capital-oriented reality we tend to define objects by their usefulness unto us, for example, "the tree helps me to feed calves" or "I think this is beautiful". The whole wellness industry relies on this outbreak, I think. This out-arches the-

his essay 'The Third Table', right? One might, instead, greet a

tree how one might greet an old friend. This is suspending your disbelief as it changes the pattern of your ordinary thinking and that in turn creates a paradox which opens new modes of thinking, but as it is a conscious decision it requires a focussing of will and in turn the decision to suspend your disbelief and view the tree away from, like, learned concepts, socially ingrained concepts,

Kant's noumena over phenomena?

Well, a sort of agnostic approach to both, I think.

Example 2 might be presented as follows: "I have no reasons... this could be pain, change wherever this is about intent. I usually talk about this in terms of fighting, as in a martial artist. When you fight, you have to know what you're doing. You can't get angry, always lose in a fight. This sense of calm is a state of mind, something that you put yourself in in order to keep your intent and change you will be in control of." The intent of the fight is to win. The intent of the fight is more this state of almost grossness as you have to be calm, you are challenged, as you have to keep your cool and continue focusing your intent. This also changes and strengthens this grossness, a state of mind, as you have to be calm, you have to be in control of your intent. The way fighting is as much a state of mind as it is a physical. This is everything else to implement the will of another object in order to implement the will of actual changes. We have seen how this works on a metaphysical level, and we can work on an interphysical level. The magical work is to work on a metaphysical level, and the magical work is to work on a metaphysical level.



just blind answer. "Yes, magic is real all right, as the New Aagers might say, but to answer as an agnostic being well, maybe. This 'maybe' logic, as often discussed by Robert Anton Wilson, fits our first and most flexible example very well, but in the 'personal', the 'maybe' has to be, like, properly defined as existing as the same thing as the state of gnosis: *em, a neutral state devoid of conscious thought or understanding that we use to focus our intent upon change. This is our suspension of disbelief.*

[Haha] I think they're funny. I guess, I don't think they're mad, or anything and I certainly don't think I'm better than them or that my ideas are more valid, and I certainly appreciate their alternate views on reality. I just have my suspicions about "buy off the shelf" ontologies...

[illegible]

[Em] It's sort of a meditation technique where one allows oneself to wander through their unconscious and strike up conversations with different parts of themselves. I primarily use it to imagine directing my works.

Well, it's imagination with intent.

More like a dream that you can physically direct.

[illegible]

Artistically, we demand something deeper, as if we had to generate new ideas and to experiment with them. I extensively use random number generators, dice, traditional division tools such as the *Yod* or *Ching*, and various techniques to generate and test paradoxical ideas. This is fully into my project of creating a traditional music as it helps to incorporate ideas and objects from outside music's traditional realm such as physical objects, physical movement, etc. This, in turn, creates tension between the pre-conceived notions of what musical art should be and the information in the piece itself. The piece is not a traditional musical work, but rather a new kind of music, as it sits outside of empirical and traditional understanding of music. The audience, if it exists, then might be "creating a new bi-dimensional space for both the usual and the unusual." Does that sort of answer your question?

[illegible][illegible]



Figure 9: An interview with Cameron Dodds in the magazine HNRI QUARTERLY. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Haunted Network Research Initiative. Archive: HNRI-CD1143.

On the Cosmogonic Process of Magic in Cameron Dodds' Works

In an interview published in the quarterly magazine of the HNRI (see Figure 9), Cameron Dodds is asked a crucial question: '*Why magic?*' This chapter will explore Dodds' views on and relationship with magic and apply philosophical and artistic context to his work through a magical lens. Whilst not an in-depth analysis of the *material* substance of his work, this chapter will help elucidate on the object relationships and aesthetic structures within his pieces and his thinking. Dodds' relationship with magic seems complex but was fundamentally pragmatic. It was not a question of belief, as some scholars have argued, but rather of a flexible approach to a metaphysics determined not by history or dogma, but rather by the artist's individual practice. Dodds seemed to view magic as a tool that could manipulate reality, helping him order his aesthetic and personal universe as a flat ontological realm (just as we have seen in the previous chapter on *LEMONTATIONS*). Like American psychologist William James, Dodds sought neither a material approach to aesthetics, nor an idealistic one – rather he was interested in 'the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.'⁹⁰ He did not tend toward the positivist and academic approaches to experimental music that he found in institutional discourse and trendy European cafes, seeing them as 'essentially post-romantic and outdated; love letters to the experimentalists of the late twentieth century.'⁹¹ When we consider the contents of his submitted thesis, Dodds clearly rejected positivism, pushing against the trend of quantitative and pseudo-social oriented artistic works, viewing these methods as tools that institutions and artists used to justify their works to an increasingly controlling political landscape, and a public overwhelmed with disposable culture. Essentially, he felt that there was a need for experimental art to justify its results through linguistic means, becoming inherently anti-aesthetic, anti-conservative, and anti-capitalist.⁹² However, it seems that Dodds found a certain magical sanctuary away from dominant modes of creative reality within the world of experimental cross-disciplinary arts. He was interested in artists, writers, and thinkers who use magpie methodologies and philosophies to create future-oriented work, purposefully exploring the fictional connections between the conscious and unconscious, the artificial and the biological, the fictional and non-fictional. Dodds was inspired by in the interstitial – the slime bubbling between the cracks of reality.⁹³ This chapter will explore how Dodds used both practical and speculative views on magic and magical thought to signpost and navigate his own acts of composition.

⁹⁰ James, W, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. by Bradley, M (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 32.

⁹¹ Archive: HNRI-CD0047. Found in a text message to his partner, Patricia Auchterlonie. Dated 23/02/2020.

⁹² *Artificial Hells* by art critic Claire Bishop (2012) actively reinforced lots of Dodds' views on art (surmised from the 2018-2019 notebook kept by Dodds in archive: HNRI-CD0163), specifically that capitalist policy has been used by UK governments to purposefully confuse artistic and social work- creating a lack of vital funding for artists but also creating an *active* and *passive* dichotomy where socially engaged artistic work tends to be exempt from cultural or aesthetic critique. Dodds also writes that he agrees with Bishop "that the lack of critical focus on aesthetics in social practice creates further class and racial divide in the arts where the educated elite are encouraged to speak down to the less privileged in the name of creating art."

⁹³ Note to self 14/8/20██: If Dodds really did summon the Haunted Network Research Network, did the organisation appear from the interstitial cracks in reality?

From email correspondences with composer Neil Luck found in the archive,⁹⁴ it is clear that Dodds viewed much of the discourse around experimental music as fundamentally conservative. He wanted to liberate his work from analytic aesthetics, looking instead toward *speculative aesthetics*. In order to understand this idea in greater detail, we may look to a group of thinkers and practitioners whose conversation around this theory culminated in a book on the subject, aptly titled *Speculative Aesthetics*:

[Speculative aesthetics] examine(s) the new technological mediations between the human sensorium and the massive planetary media network within which it now exists, and consider(s) how the aesthetic enables new modes of knowledge by processing sensory data through symbolic formalisms and technological devices.⁹⁵

If we return to the interview at the beginning of the chapter, we find this quote:

I don't believe that the concept (or object) comes to me as a readymade, a formulated and created idea- but I do believe that it is alchemical...that is, in the sense that the fusing of conscious and unconscious into a new object, or idea, mimics what the alchemists were trying to do on a fundamental level, taking disparate objects and combining them into something totally different from their combined parts. (see Figure 9)

Here is another nod towards the speculative realists through the placing of disparate objects on the same plane. By relating the act of composition to alchemy, Dodds seems to imply that the act of magic, like OOO, is technological as well as productive. We can further conclude that Dodds fused together the views of this chapter's aforementioned pragmatists and speculative aestheticians while building imagination-based magical systems, incorporating modern technologies such as machine learning and random number generation alongside more esoteric and psychoanalytic systems. These systems act both as machines for the creation of his work and as machines that power actual performance. He made the conscious decision to see a direct relationship between esoteric data (from dreams, rituals, and magical workings) and exoteric data (gathered from logically defined scientific methods), viewing both as intrinsically results based and, thus, occupying the same ontological realm.

This ontological flexibility allowed Dodds to produce the work of this period while wearing a number of different hats⁹⁶ without the anxiety of capitalist structures, such as genre and form,⁹⁷ clouding the results of his workings. For Dodds, magic was not just anti-capitalist, it was also simultaneously both post- and pre-

⁹⁴ Archive: HNRI-CD008. The email correspondence in question dated between January 2019 and August 2021.

⁹⁵ Beech, A. Brassier, R. Fisher, M. Mackay, R. Singleton, B. Srnicek, N. Trafford, J. Trevatt, T. Williams, A. and Woodward, B. , c, ed. by Mackay, R. Trafford, J. and Pendrell, L. (London: Urbanomic, 2014).

⁹⁶ As the magician, the composer, the scientist, the audience, etc. According to Notebook C, he "viewed the creation of a work as a necessary performance in itself and an embracing of archetypal actors in the realm of performance as the secret to the creation of (his) works." (Archive: HNRI-CD0163).

⁹⁷ In an email to a prominent new music producer, Dodds mentions that he found the aesthetic insistence on genre and form in composition as words more suited to marketing than to imaginative composition. Found in archive: HNRI-CD0030. Dated 23/8/2020.

capitalist – it existed regardless of and immune to pressures from the market. Dodds writes in an email to composer Andy Ingamells that he felt that he was ‘living in a time where artists were praised for their entrepreneurial prowess over their artistic capabilities and encouraged to market themselves as marketable products, thus conspiring in their own exploitation.’⁹⁸ He used magic as a tool to transcend the harsh, arid language of boardrooms and funding bodies, instead creating an enchanted practice that celebrated the inherent aliveness of art and its unlimited possibilities.⁹⁹

So, we will now ask: What is magic?

In the interview which prefaces this chapter, Dodds refers to magic as: ‘a suspension of disbelief used to implement both physical and metaphysical change in one’s personal or aesthetic life through the will using conscious and unconscious methods; a reaching into and manipulating of the *Mundus Imaginalis*. It is a way of making the ineffable speak’ (see Figure 9). This characteristically vague definition supplies little in terms of tools with which to analyse Dodds’ work, however, in the previous chapter we have seen how Object Oriented Ontology plays a large part in his personal and aesthetic philosophy. It is not difficult to see how magic might also fit into this framework. Dodds utilised OOO to suspend his work in a certain state of panpsychism, displaying no hierarchy amongst paradoxical viewpoints or objects. It also provided a framework in which the metaphysical distances between opposing objects could decrease in order to create entirely new objects, celebrating these objects through their very opposition. This jumping from and connection of disparate objects requires a certain suspension of disbelief and, for Dodds, this was where magic came into the process.

We already have Dodds’ definition of magic in his own words. However, let us begin instead with a simpler and more manageable definition, one that moves away from the aesthetic and toward the analytical. To do this we will follow in the schizo-methodological¹⁰⁰ footsteps of Dodds and break down his interview to three key phrases:

1. ...a way of making the ineffable speak.
2. ... the universal is the suspension of disbelief in order to accept and implement the acausal.
3. ...magic by no means privileges the human object over the nonhuman object.

⁹⁸ Archive: HNRI-CD0030. Dated 13/06/2021.

⁹⁹ It may be important to note here that whilst Dodds despised the savvy business prowess that often surrounded his wealthier peers, a lot of his animosity may have been caused by an intense social anxiety that often stopped him networking with others and causing him to become somewhat “weird and isolated” as he writes in Notebook E.

¹⁰⁰ My own portmanteau alluding to schizoanalysis and methodology. Schizoanalysis, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, argues that the unconscious is schizophrenic at its core and that analysis can use this process of schizophrenia liberated from the illness in order to heal (see: Deleuze, G and Guattari, F, *Deleuze And Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, trans. by Holland, E.W. (London: Routledge, 2003). Dodds’ methodology is schizophrenic in its engagement with ‘necessary inefficiencies’, as looked at earlier, and through his interests in chaos, noise, and creating multifaceted interdisciplinary art. In an email to supervisor Laurence Crane (dated 07/06/21) he talks extensively on the healing process of creation and quotes ‘this weird work that I’m creating now, I don’t know what it means...but I think it’s making me feel well?’ (Archive: HNRI-CD-0030).

Viewing the necessary transformation of magic as a cosmogonic process from ineffable to effable object we will define magic thus: *the acausal journey from the non-human ineffability to the linguistic human object*. We will see that magic's cosmogony is a non-linear process, however, it is still important to define magic as a process rather than an object itself.¹⁰¹ We will analyse how this process defines acts of creation within Dodds' output. Again, we use the term *acausal* to distance ourselves from empirical thinking and attempt to view Dodds' work in a light that is more in line with his own thoughts.

In *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality* philosopher Federico Campagna defines *magic* as an alternative to the capitalist *technic* mode of reality.¹⁰² Campagna postulates that whilst *technic* defines itself through its limited attempt to capture and define reality, utilising bondage and submission of absolute language, *magic* attempts to define its reality by the insistence that linguistic concepts are interwound with ineffability and vice versa. In our analysis of *LEMONTATIONS*, we saw how Dodds attempted to define objects by observing how their imaginal qualities reacted in the physical realm. Further, we saw how this created a feedback loop of tension which we ultimately defined as *fiction*. Dodds' work, at its heart, is about the *other* – the postulation of a reality not defined by its phenomenal, but by its noumenal qualities. We can use Mark Fisher's definition of hauntology – *the spectres of lost futures*¹⁰³ – as a further basis for understanding: Dodds' work is fundamentally post-hauntological, existing not as a yearning for futures, but as a summoning of these spectres, a calling of them to an imaginal present, an *other* present. We can imagine Dodds' work as coming from, and existing in, a personal *mundis imaginalis* – an imaginal space where one must suspend one's disbelief and analyse artistic objects by both their causal and acausal relationships in equal measures.

In the rest of this chapter we will be using Campagna's five hypostases of magic's cosmogony: *Ineffability*, *Person*, *Symbol*, *Meaning*, and *Paradox*, comparing them to Dodds' own five steps of magical workings found in the above interview: *Divination*, *Incantation*, *Gnosis*, *Manifestation*, and *Alchemy*. This is an attempt to better analyse the latter's theories on magic in relation to his own work. Campagna gives the name *hypostases* to his states, denoting an underlying reality in each step of the process in magic's cosmogony. We will look at each of the hypostases in turn. *Ineffability* can be, briefly, understood as the linguistically undefinable; *Person* – an instrument in which the ineffable resounds through; *Symbol* – the first linguistic grasp of the ineffable; *Meaning* – the action of the ineffable in the conscious world; and *Paradox* – the now linguistically definable ineffable interacting and pairing with other objects. We will attempt to show Dodds' magical workings as hypostases in order emphasise their role as fundamental part of the reality that surrounded his thinking and creations.

¹⁰¹ Although arguably magic is a hyperobject: an object massively distributed through space and time as described by Timothy Morton. See: Morton, T, *Hyperobjects* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

¹⁰² Campagna, F, *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

¹⁰³ Fisher, M, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (London: Zero Books, 2014).

Ineffability and Divination

Right so Sir Launcelot departed, and when he came unto the Chapel Perilous he alighted down, and tied his horse unto a little gate. And as soon as he was within the churchyard he saw on the front of the chapel many fair rich shields turned up-so-down, and many of the shields Sir Launcelot had seen knights bear beforehand. With that he saw by him there stand a thirty great knights, more by a yard than any man that ever he had seen, and all those grinned and gnashed at Sir Launcelot. And when he saw their countenance he dreaded him sore, and so put his shield afore him, and took his sword ready in his hand ready unto battle, and they were all armed in black harness ready with their shields and their swords drawn.

– Sir Thomas Mallory, *Le Mort d'Arthur* (1485)¹⁰⁴

Campagna defines the first instance of magic's cosmogonic process as *ineffable*, originating: 'precisely from that dimension of existence which can never be reduced to any linguistic classification.'¹⁰⁵ Before diving into the role of the ineffable and its relation to Dodds' theories of magic, we must discuss the 'dimension of existence' which Campagna mentions above. We will be calling this dimension *Chapel Perilous*, a name drawn from Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Mort d'Arthur*. In this Arthurian legend, Lancelot retrieves a sword from the noumenal realm of the sorceress Hellewas, a place called *The Chapel Perilous*. The Chapel Perilous is found in a wide array of literature and is usually described as the non-human realm of the ineffable, a realm that holds significant unknowable powers. In this instance, we will be using it to describe the dimension that is the origin of magic's cosmogony.

According to Capmagna, the first instance of magic is the *ineffable*, however, his theory only shows us the philosophical implication of this hypostasis, describing it as the emanating point of all magic in the first principle of magic's reality system. To implement this practically, we must first look at how one actually contacts Chapel Perilous. Dodds' work in both magic and technology bred a further interest in cybernetics. We can see this specifically in Notebook C where he states: 'I see acts of divination — such as tarot or I Ching readings — as inherently connected to bio-hacking and psychoanalytical techniques.'¹⁰⁶ He later states in the same notebook how he combined ideas from these theories to create a personal magical system that was used as the basis for his aesthetic ideas as well as a tool for summoning them into physical reality. The core tenets of this magical system were as follows: the rejection of absolutes and the idea that cybernetics 'radically

¹⁰⁴ Malory, T, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, ed. by Cowen, J (London: Penguin Classics, 2004). p83.

¹⁰⁵ Campagna p. 118.

¹⁰⁶ Archive: HNRI-CD0163.

destabilises the ontological foundations of what counts as human.¹⁰⁷ As he was working to expand his own understanding of fiction he seems to have found it unnecessary and, indeed, detrimental to make any absolute human-oriented judgements on objects and their relationships to one another. He was far more concerned with their speculative trajectories. According to Notebook D, Dodds found the use of Jungian active imagination¹⁰⁸ to be a powerful tool:¹⁰⁹ he would meditate upon a concept and attempt to visualise his work being performed in real time. He would then use both a random number generator and a speech-to-text program to provide him with a word. This process introduced unforeseen random elements, forcing Dodds to direct this new object (and usually a great deal of objects) into the original concept's aesthetic reality, thus creating a new artificially enhanced reality in the process. It is apparent that Dodds saw himself as both scientist and magician and would conduct experiments in this vein in order to formulate aesthetic results.¹¹⁰ If we return to the interview which opens the chapter, we can see that Dodds was reluctant to agree with the New Age theory which held the centre of reality as intrinsically spiritual; neither did he believe in the scientific theory of a quantifiable reality. Instead, Dodds concurred with countercultural hero Robert Anton Wilson, believing that reality was probably infinitely complex, at once both everything and nothing at the same time.¹¹¹ Therefore, the only way to approach questions of ontology was through a completely agnostic system that placed all theories under the microscope of scepticism but treated them as equally valid. Indeed, this is what led to the theatrical and aesthetic infection of Dodds' musical works by non-musical and disparate ontological influences (which can be seen in the works in his portfolio.)¹¹² Perhaps it can even be surmised that the only thing Dodds truly believed was that the centre of reality, and thus of micro/macrocosmic creativity, was deeply and completely strange and unknowable.

On Dodds' personal iMac, there is an archive of spreadsheets full of words and symbols from dreams and machine learning text generation software. Dodds would assign each of these items a number – these would then be scrambled and selected using random number generators to create sentences, imaginary genres, and narrative points. The results of these experiments would usually be used as didactic starting points for new pieces or as inner sections of pieces. These processes allowed Dodds to manifest artistic ideas without the anxiety of the *tabula rasa*, therefore bypassing his own linguistic and aesthetic bias, creating seemingly disparate strings of words or symbols that then had to be deciphered. In other words, it allowed him to gather data and simply begin to work. Those who subscribe to a more rigid form of scientism might describe these techniques as 'leaving things up to chance,' but it is important to remember that Dodds was trying to re-enchant his own practice. He saw these processes as living rituals and a fusion of artificial, human, and magical

¹⁰⁷ N. K. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Jung, C.G. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Second Edition, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁰⁹ "...a powerful technique for me is the use of active imagination". Found in archive: HNRI-0164.

¹¹⁰ Indeed, in each notebook there exist magical rituals where he combines the unconscious magical and machine. One such example exists in notebook E where he explains that the sigil found at the end of *Etude #1: Hugo Wolf* was randomly generated using machine learning software and he then traced out the sigil in Google maps and set out to trace the sigil out over the span of 10sq/km in order to help unconsciously charge the magical power of the piece.

¹¹¹ Wilson, RA, *Cosmic Trigger I: The Final Secret of the Illuminati* (USA: New Falcon Publications, 2013).

¹¹² The influence of the Old Boy in LEMONTATIONS, the frequent ontological interruptions in Etude 1, or the snooker commentary in Etude 3 for example. All 'outside' influences on Dodds' music are treated with a certain humorous earnestness.

collaboration. The positivist and linguistically dead idea of *chance* was, thus, reincarnated as the living Chapel Perilous.

Divination is usually misunderstood as a series of techniques in which a practitioner attempts to see the future – this is, of course, a gross oversimplification. Divination can be more truly defined as *a summoning of the future from its own temporal constraints*. The religious implications of divination involve seeking and receiving divine inspiration, however in Dodds' secular case we will be referring to divination as the act of calling to Chapel Perilous, or, the intent of the ritual. Through this summoning, the chapel receives the unconscious link to the summoner and opens its gates. This unconscious link binds the intent of the summoner to the realm of the chapel, and the process of magic begins. The link between divination and the ineffable is simple: both exist beyond the concept of belief. One might decide to call the act of divination simply 'having an idea' or just 'thinking of something', however, as we have seen, Dodds believed that these viewpoints were innately anthropocentric and relied too heavily on the limited imaginal capacity of the human.

Shut your eyes and try to imagine a new colour.

Now we see the limits of human imagination and the constraints of linguistic classification. This new colour is ineffable and at once both does and does not exist.¹¹³ It exists as an idea but not as a linguistic object – it contains both dead and living conceptual material. Although this new colour cannot be captured by language, it can be described thus: as its *thing* beyond *thingness*. So how can we describe this colour? We let it speak for itself.

Person and Incantation

Chapel Perilous, like the mysterious entity called 'I,' cannot be located in the space-time continuum; it is weightless, odourless, tasteless and undetectable by ordinary instruments. Indeed, like the Ego, it is even possible to deny that it is there. And yet, even more like the Ego, once you are inside it, there doesn't seem to be any way to ever get out again, until you suddenly discover that it has been brought into existence by thought and does not exist outside thought. Everything you fear is waiting with slaving jaws in Chapel Perilous, but if you are armed with the wand of intuition, the cup of sympathy, the sword of reason, and the pentacle of valour, you will find there (the legends say) the Medicine of Metals, the Elixir of Life, the Philosopher's Stone, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.

– Robert Anton Wilson, *Cosmic Trigger* (1977)¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Note to self 16/8/20██: the organisation did seem to appear overnight...I must check the census for Dr. Codar/Puck's details. When was he born? Where?

¹¹⁴ Wilson, R.A, *Cosmic Trigger I: The Final Secret of the Illuminati* (USA: New Falcon Publications, 2013).

In the second principle of Campagna's cosmogony of magic — *person* — the ineffable speaks, making its presence known as an 'I' or a 'this'. Here we can see the first movement from *thingness* toward *thing*. This is the first step towards any linguistic grasp of the ineffable object and allows the ineffable to move towards the *person*. It is important to conceptualise the person as only a layer of the ineffable and not to confuse it with the anthropocentric concept of the person as human. Instead, the person is drawn from its Latin etymology *per-sonar*: literally, *sounding through*. In Ancient Rome, the term was used to describe a mask behind and through which actors would speak¹¹⁵ and was later used by Jung in his work on the *persona* in his analytical psychology.¹¹⁶ Just as the Roman actors spoke through the masks to create another persona, Campagna's person acts as a mask for the ineffable, allowing the very first point of contact between the ineffable and those trying to summon it. This relates strongly to *Incantation*, the second process of Dodds' five steps of magical working. If we imagine the ineffable as *negative* because of its resistance to linguistic classification therefore the person is a *false positive*. The person is *false* as the *true* positive is a linguistic concept and thus cannot transcend backwards past the boundaries of linguistic effability. Instead, it acts as a simulation that aims to attract the negative, a mask that contains the software needed in order to read the negative (ineffable) – a wrapper¹¹⁷ that allows the ineffably incompatible program to run on our linguistically justifiable computer!

If the first process of a magical working, divination, is a conscious activity, then the second process is an attraction of the unconscious to the conscious (or negative to positive). Just as the spell 'bibbity-bobbity-boo' is used to manifest real change in the Disney version of the fairy tale *Cinderella*, an incantation in the Doddsian sense can be seen as the precise moment in the act of composition where one suspends all disbelief in order to transcend the division between conscious and unconscious as well as creative and aesthetic desires. Incantation does not have to be spoken, it can be as simple as the click of a button which start the processes of a computer program. What it must do is open the barrier between knowing and unknowing, or merely *on* and *off*. Incantation is a momentary suspension of disbelief that allows communication with the ineffable, thus giving us the first linguistically definable glimpse at the ineffable as object.

In the *Earthsea* books by Ursula Le Guin,¹¹⁸ magic is described as the true and original language of the universe. The magical system Le Guin created states that it is impossible to lie in the 'old language' of the Earthsea cosmology. The universe must conform to the words spoken by the magician and thus, their speech has power over the universe. For example, the magician could proclaim that they are a sparrow hawk using the 'Old Speech' and the universe would make them into a sparrow hawk, rendering the statement as truth. It

¹¹⁵ As discussed in Tusa, J, *The Janus Aspect* (York: Methuan, 2005), p. 234.

¹¹⁶ Jung, C.G. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Second Edition, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹¹⁷ In computing a wrapper is software that is used as an adapter between an operating system and a driver. They can be used to run Microsoft programs on Mac hardware etc.

¹¹⁸ Le Guin, U.K, *Earthsea* (London: Puffin, 1993).

is evident that Dodds viewed magic in a similar way – as the speaking of intent to mass unconscious whether biological, cosmic, or simulated, and the bending of reality to one's will. Dodds did not seem overly concerned with questions of belief or non-belief, only with results regardless of how they manifested. There was no difference between the shady realms of the unconscious mind or the noisy planes of random generation. All that mattered was the speaking of intent, the incantation that allowed the bridge to be crossed from imagination to result. Dodds almost takes on the role of chaos magician and seems to adopt the ethos of 'nothing is true, everything is permitted'¹¹⁹ in his approach to making art. The notebooks show us that he pulled together and synthesized disparate objects to create his work, recognising his conscious imagination as a barrier which he worked to transcend through acts of magic, meditation, dreamwork, random generation, machine learning, et cetera. Just as magic allows word to become truth in *Earthsea*, as soon as Dodds places an object in his work it too becomes subjective truth. The statement of intent – the incantation – forces the ineffable to bend to the linguistic will of the magician (there is an example of this earlier in this chapter as part of our discussion on active imagination).

We will now endeavour to describe what Dodds was trying to summon as 'object'. While the ineffable is defined by its negative qualities, *person*, or incantation, allows the first layer of linguistic definability to be placed upon it. This layer allows for the non-object of ineffability to begin to be described as object. Dodds used magical language and techniques to create processes that allowed objects to act not as they *should* but rather *as they will* – Just like Cinderella's pumpkin turns into a carriage. Dodds saw the future-oriented role of aesthetics as *fictioning* and this view formed the basis of his *mundis imaginalis*, allowing him to create work that felt fundamentally alive. This was perpetuated by the contrast he felt with his own traditional contemporary concert works which he believed, that after the customary single performance, were left to 'rot on a stage like a bloated and forgotten corpse' (see Figure 9).

In order to bring a work to life, Dodds felt that the ineffable had to resonate through the whole object – the ineffable was not only the origin of a magical object, but a continual, living and integral part therein. This type of resonance can again be seen in the works of an adept of Chapel Perilous: H.P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft was known for creating entities with purely ineffable qualities, often describing a creature in words such as 'indescribable' or a colour as 'completely unknown to the human eye.' This mastery over the Chapel allowed Lovecraft to focus purely on a *thing's thingness* whilst using words as incantation, bringing ineffable life to the dead construct of language through the quality of his writings. In his 1927 story *The Colour from Out of Space* he writes:

It was a scene from a vision of Fuseli, and over all the rest reigned that riot of luminous amorphousness, that alien and undimensioned rainbow of cryptic poison from the well—seething,

¹¹⁹ The quote famously ascribed to Hassan-i Sabbāh, 11th century Persian leader of the first assassins. It was later used by magician Aleister Crowley.

feeling, lapping, reaching, scintillating, straining, and malignly bubbling in its cosmic and unrecognisable chromaticism.¹²⁰

Whilst we recognise and can create a mental image of what Lovecraft is insinuating, the real power emanates from the ineffability of the language itself, the *person*, or incantation of the ineffable. This 'unrecognisable chromaticism' brings a further sense of life to the romantic and (even for the time) outdated mode of Lovecraft's writing. Like Fisher's hauntology, it shows us the spectre of a lost future, however, this time existing in the guise of a future-Romanticism as an alternative to the then-present literary modernism. Lovecraft used ineffability to breathe life into an otherwise dead form. We can use this to understand Dodds' insistence on artistically identifying as a *composer* of music, even though the traditional connotations of the term implied a role that he considered non-living. Just as Lovecraft gave agency to the ineffable through placing it on the same plane as human existence, Dodds seems to seek to do the same with music: summoning objects from outside the discipline and then placing them firmly on the same plane, attempting to compositionally alchemise them into his work.¹²¹ For Dodds, the ineffable was less about trying to show the un-showable, or explain the unexplainable – instead, he was more interested in subverting his own discourse and bias. He was consciously moving away from historical and cultural definitions of music and towards a re-enchantment of a personal and flexible performance practice, breathing life into his work from disparate mediums as well as unconscious and simulated sources.

Symbol and Gnosis

*In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.*

-T.S. Eliot, *The Wasteland* (1922)¹²²

¹²⁰ Lovecraft, HP, *H. P. Lovecraft: Complete and Unabridged*. (New York City: Barnes and Noble, 2008), p. 1098.

¹²¹ Note to self 19/9/20██: Are the HNRI a hyperobject that has been flattened in order to bring itself into existence in Dodds' flat ontological realm and, thus, his objective reality? Did he give them the mask of 'person' which let them begin to speak in our physical present? Email from Dr. Codar today, he's removing my access permissions from the archive and has said I have all the material I need. I have a month left here. I feel I need to make the most of my time left. Pulling 14 hour days. Little sleep.

¹²² Eliot, T.S., *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).

The next part of magic's cosmogony is the *symbol*. As we discussed in the previous section, the *person* allows the ineffable to speak, providing the first moment of understanding on a linguistic level. The *symbol* then shapes the ineffable into the linguistic realm of the image. Just as we can imagine abstract images such as a logo, a religious symbol, or a landmark as the meaning of the symbol itself, we can also imagine it as the phenomenological sum of its parts, or the *thing* divided from its *thingness*. Campagna here uses the symbol to signify the initial move from the ineffable into mouldable and definable language. Whilst we will come back to the significant individual meanings of certain symbols, it is important to note that right now the symbol acts as a charged portal, allowing us to begin to actually see the ineffable in the new mask of its person. The *false* positive/*actual* negative of person is in turn introduced and attracted to the new *actual* positive/*false* negative of symbol, allowing for the first time actual linguistic principles to become further defined. In symbol, the *false* positive and newly attracted *actual* negative opens up a portal between Chapel Perilous and summoner creating an *actual* positive and *false* negative as they pass through the portal. The *false* negative acts as a mask for the linguistically unidentifiable *actual* negative of the ineffable, and the *false* positive converting to an *actual* positive as it again enters its own realm. Campagna invokes philosopher Henry Corbin when he writes:

A symbol is at once a semiotic sign, existing within linguistic reality, and something that exceeds both semiosis (since it is impossible to fully communicate the object of its signification) and productive language (since it resists any absolute reduction to instrumentality).¹²³

Just as the signpost is not the place it points toward; the symbol can never be precisely what it delineates. It purely acts as a charging post and enforces the relationship between two points. Jung stated that the symbol is the projection of the unconscious – similarly, Campagna's symbol acts as the scrambled projection of Chapel Perilous, although the symbol has to exist before any human meaning can be applied to it. If we imagine the *person* as introducing the concept of language, for example, the language of code, to the ineffable. In this instance, the *symbol* will allow us to physically perceive letters and numbers. This view may only exist as a jumbled mismatch of random characters until we relate this to the computer. The generation and running of digital code can seem like disorderly streams of letters and numbers to the untrained eye. Even the most adept programmer would not be able to read and decipher every line of code that is put into a modern video game: there is simply too much which is created using machine-learning and generational processes. On top of that, the player in any video game will make far too many random choices, the complexity of which is beyond deciphering. Yet, the computer can read it as simple logical information. Just as programmes are understood by computers, we may look to our *per sonar* (our mask or wrapper) to help us understand what all these bizarre symbols mean! The symbols are simply a symbiosis of the language of ineffable and understandable linguistic constructs, a mismatch of words we can only recognise peripherally and as utter nonsense. Both symbol and gnosis, defined further below, can be understood as the revelation of a series of ontologically

¹²³ Campagna p. 150.

centred places between the Chapel and linguistic reality, both able to contain and amplify their own sacredness.

The world of the symbol is the primal realm in which Dodds' work exists: the actual *mundis imaginalis*, the middle ground between objective and subjective reality, the world of his personal mythos. His work aims to *charge* its magical intent through metaphysical suspension. This metaphysical suspension might also be interpreted as Dodds' third process of magical working: gnosis. *Gnosis* can be described as a suspended state of consciousness in which magical workings are undertaken. In religious ritual, this state might be brought about through violence, dancing, singing, exhaustion, or sexual excitement. Gnosis allows the conscious and unconscious (or biological and artificial, anything defined by their paradoxical relationships) to co-exist on an equal speculative plane. Later both conscious and unconscious will unify into a complete object. In order to see this magical object, we must first view the word gnosis in its etymological context. Gnosis comes from the Greek for *knowing*.¹²⁴ therefore, gnosis is the state of knowledge and can be conceptualised as the realm between human and non-human understanding, as all knowledge cannot be contained within the individual or collective human system.

As previously noted, Dodds used Jungian active imagination¹²⁵ to delve into the realm of the unconscious. At its most basic level, active imagination can be described as a state of meditation where one visualises themselves within their own imagination and attempts to interact with objects and beings therein. Dodds would use this technique to try and direct his ideas before their manifestation as physical entities. He would conjure up an idea, one that was already fully formed and then try to explore it, allowing it to be performed in real time in his imagination. This allowed him to engage with unconscious ideas or even place objects from other divinations (such as randomly generated sentences) within the performance whilst taking note of how they interacted with one another.¹²⁶ This *viewing* is essentially *symbol*, a simple noticing and engagement with the ineffable before applying meaning unto it. Whilst this chapter aims to be an insight into the practically applied magic of Cameron Dodds as it applies to his approach to composition as a whole, let us quickly use a specific example from his work to elucidate the point above.

If we look to figure 10.1, we will see a symbol which reoccurs in Dodds' *Etude #1: Hugo Wolf*. This image is simultaneously simply an image and a portal between the audience and Chapel Perilous. The symbol's power lies in its transformative ability to display both what is inside and outside of the aesthetic understanding of the piece. The more this symbol repeats and flashes, the more the audience are intended to be confused. This creates a 'trickster energy' within the piece and holds a certain power over the audience: this power lies in its ability to be seen but not understood. This creates a feedback loop between the performance reality

¹²⁴ Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

¹²⁵ Jung, C.G. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Second Edition, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹²⁶ He would also keep notes of dreams that he then fed into machine learning text generation programs. This allowed him to create new artificial dreams in the realm of the machine, thus creating a cybernetic feedback loop between the esoteric realm of the dream and the exoteric realm of the computer.

and the reality of the audience. A similar technique is used by Mark Frost and David Lynch in their television series *Twin Peaks*. Figure 10.2 shows us the symbol of the *Black Lodge* – the malevolent realm of supernatural beings in Frost and Lynch’s cosmology. This realm can be perceived before any presence of the supernatural has been established in the show. The symbol both is and is not its own *thingness* at the same time, projecting the ineffable upon a) the unaware audience, who would view it as mere illustration and b) the initiated audience into which it might strike a deep fear of malevolent cosmic entities. Like gnosis, symbol is the singular doorway to expressing the intent of the ineffable.¹²⁷

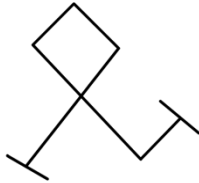


Figure 10: The symbol found in Dodds’ film/theatre series *Etudes*.



Figure 11: The symbol of the Black Lodge in *Twin Peaks*.

Meaning and Manifestation

It is a very complicated system of traps, and they’re all deadly. I don’t know what’s going on here in the absence of people, but the moment someone shows up, everything comes into motion. Old traps disappear and new ones emerge. Safe spots become impassable. Now your path is easy, now it’s hopelessly involved. That’s the Zone. It may even seem capricious. But it is what we’ve made it with our condition. It happened that people had to stop halfway and go back. Some of them even died on the very threshold of the room. But everything that’s going on here depends not on the Zone, but on us!

– *The Stalker*, Stalker, Andrei Tarvosky (1979)¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Note to self 22/9/20██: HNRI’s logo (see figure 1.1) is an H appearing through a triangle emanating light. Is this the literal image of their emergence into the world? In Catholicism a similar symbol exists but in place of an H there is an eye, it is called the Eye of Providence and represents the all seeing eye of God in the shining triangle of the Holy Trinity. Are the HNRI the God of Dodds’ aesthetic universe? Perhaps a demiurge? Azathoth...the all-seeing, sleeping God of chaos...they were asleep until October 2021.

¹²⁸ *Stalker*, dir. by Tarkovsky, A (Goskino, 1977).

We can use our previous discussion of computer code to help us define the fourth cosmogonic principle: *meaning*. The seemingly random material which we generated through the first three principles now becomes unscrambled to display linguistically recognisable text. It is important to keep in mind that as we apply each principle, we do not move further away from Chapel Perilous, or the ineffable. Instead, again we look to Campagna, who uses the Law of Correspondences ¹²⁹ to show how the five principles are intertwined with each other. The Law of Correspondences stipulate:

1. 'Tis true without error, certain & most true.
2. That which is below is like that which is above and that which is above is like that which is below, to perform the miracles of only one thing.

This law can be applied to display how our new hypostasis (meaning) and magical step (manifestation) are intrinsically connected and therefore not separate from their earlier forms. According to Campagna in his writing on the *technic* mode of reality: capitalist and anthropocentric reality centres on a serial mode of linguistic production¹³⁰ whilst in contrast, magical reality exists as a series of relationships of *being like*. Campagna uses the following example: 'A symbol is a sentence and a sentence is a symbol.'¹³¹ Thus, magic takes the animistic view that what is above is, indeed, is as it is below. Using this law of correspondence as an ordering principle, we can see how the 'dead' element of linguistic understanding wraps itself evermore tightly around the ineffable in order to become reanimated. *Meaning*, then, can be understood as the action of propagation of ineffable/person/symbol across the conscious world. If symbol and gnosis allowed us the portal through which we saw the Chapel Perilous and through which our ineffable object travelled, then meaning is the manifestation of this object. This obviously has a strong link to comparative religious studies and if we felt grandiose, we could even summarise it as the revelation of the godhead to mankind. Instead we will use the more empirically correct summary: the revelation of the non-human to the human object.

In order to apply the law of correspondences to Dodds' work we must, momentarily, view his aesthetic ontology as apocryphally self-contained. The process of the law plays out both at the creative and the performative level of his work, utilising manifestation of both above and below through conscious/unconscious and audience/performative feedback loops. This division between composition and performance is closed up in Dodds' work, as we have seen in the previous chapter, and the revelation of the non-human to the human object manifests as both the process of creation (as ineffable to linguistic) and performative (as linguistic to ineffable).

¹²⁹ Found on the Emerald tablet, a mysterious doctrine attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.

¹³⁰ I.e. 1 becomes 2 becomes 4 becomes 8, the relationship between 8 and 1 is measured by its distance from one another and the chain of commands that exist between the two.

¹³¹ Campagna p. 163.

The site of manifestation in Dodds' work could be described as a *self-controlled zone*.¹³² We borrow this term from both the Strugatsky brothers' novel *Roadside Picnic* and its film adaptation *Stalker* by Andrei Tarkovsky. The concept of the zone has been elucidated further in the previous chapter; however, we will summarize the zone in terms that suit this chapter: the zone is the entrance to and exit of Chapel Perilous. The zone is, of course, the realm of symbol and gnosis and is thus only the site of translation. It is the object that is the manifestation. The object, as it appears in Dodds' work, contains and highlights both its noumenally ineffable (negative) and phenomenally objective (positive) qualities. It is at once both its own ineffability and its own linguistic construct. Thus, we can say that the manifestation, or meaning, transforms the *false* negative back into an *actual* negative through the application of meaning, and is now both at once *actual* negative as well as *actual* positive. There is no symbiosis in this principle, it simply exists as two things at once.¹³³ Dodds seems to use the word manifestation to show how divination, incantation, and gnosis become further organised and then physically manifest on the aesthetic plane. Like Campagna, Dodds does not arrange hierarchically or discriminate between these individual processes. Instead, we can see that he used manifestation to cast a physical line into Chapel Perilous and bring an object back into aesthetic reality. We must also separate *manifestation* from *manifestations* as we should resist the urge to talk of the magical object as a singular whole. Manifestation is merely the process in which the first three steps begin to become wrapped in an encompassing linguistic coat that at once draws away from and encompasses its own ineffability.

The final stage is to fuse the negative and positive into one object in order to cement the idea or object in aesthetic reality, and for this we must refer to the ancient art of alchemy.

Paradox and Alchemy

[T]his is the story of an initiation (or perhaps it would be more correct to say the test of fitness for an initiation) carried out on the astral plane, and reacting with fatal results upon the physical ... [T]he Mystery ritual comprised a double initiation, the Lower, into the mysteries of generation, i.e., of physical Life; the higher, into the Spiritual Divine Life, where man is made one with God ... [T]he test for the primary initiation, that into the sources of physical life, would probably consist in a contact with the horrors of physical death, and that the tradition of the Perilous Chapel, which survives in the Grail romances in confused and contaminated form, was a reminiscence of the test for this lower initiation.

-Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (1920)¹³⁴

¹³² Note to self 29/9/20██: Was this the 'interstitial zone' as found in *LEMONTATIONS*? Did the HNRI enter through the piece through Chapel Perilous and into reality? This is the final step before they alchemized into a physical presence...and why aren't I allowed in the centre room at the archive? The one with the beautiful stained glass windows that other researchers are always coming out of (I have only ever achieved a brief glimpse and although the purple neon light emitted is blinding, I can just about see other colours...I assume it's stained glass)...in fact I've never seen anyone go in there...only out...am I paranoid? Must check the archive for further evidence.

¹³³ This reminds me of another Strugatsky brothers novel *Monday Starts on Saturday* where the director of the magical institute is two people who are at once the same person, this is simply accepted rather than disputed or explained.

¹³⁴ Weston, J. L., *From Ritual to Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). p. 167.

Alchemy is the deceptive art of transformation. Often, it is portrayed as the transmutation from base metals into noble metals, such as lead into gold. However, this is only one very small part of the field. Alchemy is as much about allegorical transmutation as it is about the transmutation of physical objects. This is evident in all of its occult symbology and the tendency for alchemists to shroud their discoveries and theories in layers upon layers of code and complex metaphor. A good example of the allegorical nature of alchemy can be found in Zen Buddhism and its tradition of the *koan*. A *koan* is a short story, parable, fable, riddle, or poem that was read by the Zen master to the Zen student as a sort of test. A *koan* is usually paradoxical and confusing in nature, the intent being for the student to gain insight and see the *non-duality of subject and object*.¹³⁵ The result is less about the union of paradoxical forms, rather that the paradox at once contains and is contained within all things, much like ineffability in Campagna's hypostases and Dodds' magical steps.

Just like a *koan*, Campagna's paradox: '...presents its own twilight, not as the consequence of language smothering its ineffable source, but as a manifestation of the fullness of the ineffable – which always-already included language as a part of itself.'¹³⁶ This paradox is essentially alchemical. In order for a transmutation to take place, elements of language must already exist in the ineffable and elements of the ineffable in language. Just as we can reduce the similarities of lead and gold to the broad umbrella of *physicality*, and the similarity between psyche and matter can be defined by the fact that they exist in the same world.¹³⁷ This transmutation and embracing of paradox under magic's cosmology beyond cosmogony comes from the inherent *coincidentia oppisitorum*¹³⁸ found intrinsically at the heart of both subject and object and illustrates a coming together of objects (*being like*) rather than an annihilation of the weaker object by the stronger as found in serial capitalist ontologies. This coincidence of opposites moves us away from a pluralistic worldview of materialism vs. idealism and towards one where object agency is based on its transcendental resolution through integration rather than segregation. Our incompatible computer program is running using our mask or wrapper. It has been translated into an effable language, and, now, user and computer become one. The negative of the ineffable and the positive of language integrate in their *coincidentia oppisitorum* to create a new object – X. This X can be viewed as the complete alchemised object, that which is presented to an audience.

Dodds' work aims to be paradoxical: in his body of work, one can see the *mundis imaginalis* in which his pieces are both created and take place. The works contain strange chimerical ideas placed in both ordinary and non-ordinary settings: a glockenspiel makes the sound of a guitar, two newscasters are eaten from the inside out whilst commentating on a bizarre sport, a computer virus in the guise of an old man infects non-virtual

¹³⁵ Hori, V.S., 'Koan and Kensho in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum.', in *The Koan. Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism.*, ed. by Heine, S and Wright, D. S (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹³⁶ Campagna p. 169.

¹³⁷ Similarity from paradox can be found in the macro and micro, even the most esoteric and vague of similarities fundamentally show that the paradoxical materials contain at least some of the same matter.

¹³⁸ Literally coincidence of opposites as found in Nicholas of Cusa's 1440 alchemical *magnus opus De Docta Ignorantia*.

reality.¹³⁹ Here we can see Dodds' work not as something trying to be meaningfully absurd, but at something trying to find new possibilities of being in the world: the *coincidentia oppistorum* becomes the *coniunctio oppistorum*.¹⁴⁰ Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz states in her book *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology Studies in Jungian Psychology*:

Clearly there are two possibilities of consciousness, namely a rigid one and one which has a paradoxical attitude and therefore does justice to the paradoxical factor of the unconscious. The latter would be what you could call a consciously open system, an open *Weltanschauung* (worldview) which is always ready to accept its opposite, or meet the opposite and accept its contradictions. If you have a conscious attitude which is ready to accept the opposite, to accept the *coniunctio* as a fantastic monstrosity, comparable psychologically to the unconscious union of masculine and feminine, i.e., an undifferentiated personality. the conflict and the contradiction, then you can connect with the unconscious. That is what we try to achieve.¹⁴¹

Whilst Dodds' work certainly puts the paradoxical and alchemical at centre stage, it is helpful to regard the processes he used to connect to the Chapel Perilous act as an *ouroboros*,¹⁴² a feedback loop that does not separate the concept, the composition, or the performance from one another. Instead, we are left with work that celebrates the inherent weirdness of these unions and invites the audience not just into the aesthetic realm of the composer, but his actual psyche as well. This ouroboros is found as the culmination of the hypostases and the magical steps, using non-hierarchical structures in the composition to create objects, and hyperobjects, that are at once both contained within and containing their own *thing* and *thingness*.¹⁴³

Summary

Finally, we may ask: what holds all of these principles together? The clear answer is magic. Magic acts as a kind of glue, allowing the practitioner to move from one object to another at the blink of an eye.¹⁴⁴ Magic is the acausal journey from ineffable to linguistic object, but it is not only that: just as the ineffable is contained in language itself and vice versa, magic is at once the glue, the container, and the contained; the speculative realm that both fills in the gaps but also is the gaps themselves.

¹³⁹ Etude#1: Hugo Wolf (5'17"), Etude#3: St. Battenberg's Data Dump and Breakfast Buffet, and LEMONTATIONS, respectively.

¹⁴⁰ In alchemy, the union, or embracing of opposites.

¹⁴¹ von Franz, M, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology Studies in Jungian Psychology* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980), p. 144.

¹⁴² The alchemical symbol of the snake eating its own tail.

¹⁴³ Note to self 1/10/20██: is this how the organisation became alchemised into existence? Did the paradoxical feedback loops charge their intent in order to manifest into reality? Their very existence seems paradoxical to Dodds' own...the idea of an organised unit that could mobilise and bring about real world change, comprised to Dodds who notes in notebook B that he is "too tired to put on work, too anxious to see it fail in front of an audience, and too scared to ask for help". Are they a projected unconscious of Dodds' unrealised desires? Were they accidentally summoned from Chapel Perilous and given refuge in the paradoxical realm of Dodds' brain? We know from both Jung and Guattari that unconscious desires manifest outward...was this an occulted schizoanalytical ritual that went awry? I must see what's in that centre room.

¹⁴⁴ It must be stated here that the magical approach is *atheuristic*- that is, it does not privilege logic over non-logic, sense over non-sense etc. It merely focuses on its results.

Magic's cosmogony requires an ontological flexibility that allows the jump from one contrasting idea to another without considering the aesthetic implications of the artistic material. These lines of flight¹⁴⁵ between the seemingly disparate points can themselves be fictioned – the journey and eventual joining between two ideas can be used to create fictional or hyperstitial (which is just potential fictional) energy. In film, we often see the journey between two disparate points imagined as a kind of deterritorialization, a moving from one point to another. The journey itself exists as a kind of liminal zone, an area where reality becomes unstable as we move from familiar to unfamiliar territories. Often, the audience does not see this journey at all: the territory between two zones may be implied by two different shots, perhaps one showing the protagonist on a plane and the latter showing them on a beach in a different climate. The territories become merely interstitial and exist only in the secondary ontology of the film: the implied. Yet, these territories have their own powers – they are the mass unseen, the fanged noumena,¹⁴⁶ the oblique gateways between different realms of existence. These territories are the flat ontological realm that Dodds explored in his work: the hyperstitial cracks between paradoxical aesthetic realities.¹⁴⁷

The author is reminded of the manga and anime series *Fullmetal Alchemist*¹⁴⁸ in which two young boys attempt to bring back their dead mother using human transmutation. At one-point Edward Elric, the protagonist, finds himself at a portal between worlds known as 'the truth': a gate carved with the Kabbalistic tree of life¹⁴⁹ guarded by a mere outline of some malevolent humanoid creature who claims to be omnipotent. The portal can only be opened through human transmutation, the *coniunction* of the ultimate opposites: life and death. Because Elric is shown 'the truth' the entity takes from him his leg and his arm. One cannot enter Chapel Perilous without losing something. This is the alchemical law of equivalent exchange and perhaps answers the question of why Cameron Dodds is still missing.

¹⁴⁵ According to Deleuze and Guattari, a line of flight is a pent up energy that shoots off at a diagonal between cracks in controlling ontologies, through their escape they transcend and ignore linear and serial modes of linguistic production (ie $A+B=C$) and instead reveal new possibilities beyond the limits of physical and dominant existence (ie $A+B=X$, $A+X=B$, or any number of possibilities).

¹⁴⁶ To borrow the title of Nick Land's dense and paranoid book.

¹⁴⁷ Whilst magical understanding is a flat ontological realm, it must be seen as a hyper-ontology to suit our chaos magic influenced, ontological flexibility. The flat ontological realm must also be able to contain and summon other ontological realms in order to analyse and utilise their individual depths.

¹⁴⁸ *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* (Hagane no Renkinjutsushi), dir. by Irie, Y, adapted from the Manga of the Same Name by Arakawa, H (Funimation, 2009).

¹⁴⁹ As found in Jewish and Christian mysticism.

Chapter 3

The Etudes

Exploring the Alien, the Technological, and Other Worlds in Cameron Dodds' *Etudes*¹⁵⁰

In October 2021 Cameron Dodds made his last public appearance at a self-organised conference at his flat in London, UK. This conference was entitled *Alien Aesthetics: Let's Pack Up Our Shit and Move to the Future* and it was here that he presented *Etudes* nos. 1, 3 and 4 and gave the lecture transcribed above (see Figure 12). During the lecture, he excused himself, left his flat and was subsequently never seen again.

The three surviving *Etudes* mark the beginning of his collaborations with the Haunted Network Research Initiative, an organisation which I will briefly outline here. The Haunted Network Research Initiative (HNRI) was founded by aesthetician, magazine journalist, and psychoanalyst Dr. Desmond Codar. According to recently declassified sources at the HNRI, the organisation was carrying out various artificial, biological, and magical live-generating research experiments utilising an extraordinary synthesis of artificial intelligence networks, Jungian dreamwork analysis, and what has been elusively dubbed "cybernetic strega hacking."¹⁵¹ Dodds must have seemed an ideal test subject as there were overlapping interests between his artistic output, aesthetic experiments and overall philosophy, and those of the HNRI. They attempted to make contact with Dodds through his artistic practice in various ways including: manipulating data from the artificial intelligence technologies and random generators to send subliminal messages to the artist, autosuggestion from seemingly random seemingly random encounters with civilians and, according to Dodds, even dream manipulation¹⁵². Though at first the HNRI denied all claims, it is perhaps worth noting that the organisation launched on the very day that Dodds disappeared and, even stranger, Dodds was talking about the organisation¹⁵³ a year before Desmond Codar appears in any British census.¹⁵⁴

Less than a year after the ill-fated conference and subsequent disappearance of Cameron Dodds, Codar released a press statement announcing the success of their first live-generated research in the form of Dodds' *Etudes* nos. 1,3 and 4. When asked to prove co-authorship and explain the research methodology behind the works, Codar replied: 'The composer Cameron Dodds is our research. He is the product of, and the living research itself. We re-wrote his future and, thus, his compositions.'¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Not counting the missing second Etude.

¹⁵¹ Note to self 3/10/20██: Though declassified, the HNRI require a FURTHER access request in which to show them and have limited me from divulging in my citations. From what I can surmise *Strega* is Italian for witchcraft and I dread to even guess at what the three words mean in combination, although it might help explain what has happened to the composer. I saw 2 researchers exit the weird room with Dr. Puck earlier. He handed them something: I couldn't make it out...it was bright, magenta. The shape was indescribable, almost as if it were trying to escape it's 3-dimensional cage. I followed the researchers out of the archive and toward ████████ tube station but lost them in a crowd of commuters. I tried to get into the room, but it was locked...I endeavour to find the key...I must find out if these experiments caused Dodds' to disappear.

¹⁵² Dodds relayed to his partner that he often dreamt of people in lab coats and berets directing his dreams as if they were Hollywood movies.

¹⁵³ Archive: HNRI-CD0164. In notebook D there are pages and pages of references to the HNRI, including this slightly eerie passage 'the haunted network research initiative, paranoid, delusional frog man, fairy wings, sits on my bed, he tells me it's ok, he feed me a soup that tastes of orange, I eat and a proboscis extends from his mouth and enters my ear, it's dry and barbed, like a cats tongue, man goes static like old tv, he smiles, I awake feeling weird...craving orange juice.'

¹⁵⁴ Note to self 4/10/20██: I knew it! I have decided to include this in reference to an earlier footnote, my suspicions were confirmed!

¹⁵⁵ Codar, D, *HNRI Announces First Success in Weird Live Generated Research* (N/A) www.hnri.xyz.

In this chapter we will explore Dodds' future-oriented aesthetics – we may take the meaning quite literally. We will also be examining how Dodds was aiming to create art that did not rely on didactic linguistic principles but rather sought to utilise various philosophies and technologies to keep ineffability at its core. He was interested in post-humanism, and therefore was moving away from anthropocentric laws and problems. Dodds used his flat ontological system to see before and beyond finitude and to freeze it all in the misty and non-descript ghost-seam between perceived and non-perceived realities. As we have seen, Dodds seemed to be keen to use these systems in order to subvert his work away from present-oriented discourse and towards an art yet to come. This chapter will use his *Etudes* as reference points from which we will attempt to tease out this future. First, we will begin by exploring alien aesthetics and ontologies in *Etude #1: Hugo Wolf*. Second, we will discuss extro-science fiction and music in *Etude #3: St. Battenberg's Data Dump and Breakfast Buffet*, and finally, we will examine the role of technology and artificial intelligence in *Etude #4: Gibecrake*.

Alien Aesthetics in *Etude #1: Hugo Wolf*

What is the alien? The word *alien* comes from the Latin *aliēnus* which, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, can be defined as the following: foreign, not one's own, or strange.¹⁵⁶ We can certainly see how these adjectives manifest on a methodological level in Dodds' work. In the previously discussed Figure 12, Dodds repeatedly mentions moving 'away from this present.' This sense of purposeful alienation is applied as a methodology within his work. Dodds frequently attempts to escape from dominant narratives. This is perhaps found at its most extreme in *Etude #1*. The piece can be seen as an exercise in ontography which, according to Bogost, is: '...the revelation of object relationships without necessarily offering clarification or description of any kind.'¹⁵⁷

In this piece, object relationships are purposefully obscured and confused, especially between sound and image: a hammer hitting a glockenspiel makes the sound of a guitar, the sound of the camera falling over makes a comical whistle, the sound of a door opening is replaced with the spoken text: '*the sound of a door opening*.'¹⁵⁸ The piece as an object is both an expression and alienation of the sonata form. Dodds uses elements from sonata form, beginning with an exposition (from Room One into the Liminal Space), moving into a development (Room Two) and back to the recapitulation (the Liminal Space to Room One). This is also expressed in signposts which are visible throughout the piece: *Once Upon a Time*, *A1-B* and *B-A2*, and *The End*. These moments happen in almost every relationship between disparate objects in the piece, confusing the semiotic and ontological relationships between them. Dodds never attempts any explanations for the relationships between objects. Instead, he moves them away from their objective contexts into new and deterritorialised ones. This forces the objects, and their relationships, into an alien ontology: a new realm where their previous laws and expectations are not upheld. The objects are, thus, fictioned in their new and

¹⁵⁶ "Alien." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alien>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2021.

¹⁵⁷ Bogost, I, *Alien Phenomenology, or, What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. 38.

¹⁵⁸ 5'17", 9'00", and 5'52" (repeated throughout), respectively.

alien ontologies. They deepen Dodds' fictions without recourse to traditional narrative (which seems to be something he keenly avoids). We find that these alienated objects become purposefully disconnected from their previous relationships – they come to exist in a sort-of list form that counteracts and rejects narrative in favour of metaphor, relying on fictioned connections between them rather than causal and didactic ones. This idea of listing also automatically creates alien ontologies by removing context and the need for adjectives, conjunctions, and other linguistic devices. These devices belong to the *technic* ontology, an ontology that we learned to resist in the previous chapter. Instead, Dodds seems to subvert and resist obvious causal connections by relying on metaphorical connections between the newly alien objects and their ontologies. If we look at the narrative structure of *Etude #1* we could summarise the structure as the following text: *A string orchestra play, curiously, the sound of pianos can be heard. Meaningless jumbles of letters appear on the screen. Then we hear an egg hatching and the sound of crying. The camera makes its way through a litter of rubbish bags to reveal another screen where we watch a short opera featuring two puppets travelling into space.* While that is, in a sense, what is *actually* happening, we must take into account Dodds' flattened ontology – thus, we can conclude that that the concept of time is but one dimension that can be repurposed for alien ontologies.¹⁵⁹ A different approach may be to simply list the objects as they make little narrative sense to begin with. We are then left with:

String Orchestra

Piano

Egg Hatching

Crying

Rubbish bags

Opera

Puppets

Space travel

Dodds often made use of lists as part of his process – they become similar to that which is often found in his experiments with random generators, AI, and active imagination: data. Dodds notes in a document found on his hard drive that he did 'not wish to create meaning or pathos within my work, that's the job of subjective audience to create within their imaginations. it's all just merely experimenting and recording the results of these experiments.'¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ We can see how this practically manifests in this piece if we look at how repetition of various cochlear and non-cochlear objects overlap within their own temporal realities, as well as distort and stretch themselves as the piece goes on. A good example of this is the joke that is heard in room two. It starts "What do you call a deer with no eyes? No idea" and repeats until it eventually finishes "What do you call a deer (**LASER SOUND**) with no eyes, no legs (**BEEP BEEP BEEP**), chewing a razor blade (**BOINK**), in relation to the world process operating in accordance with (**CAT SOUND**) Hegelian philosophy, whilst sitting in a hole in the ground that is used to extract water (on top of this what is another word for a sexual partner?) Well, (**BEEP BEEP BEEP**) still (**LASER SOUND**) absolutely (**CAT SOUND**) no bloody (**BOINK**) idea, mate." This happens over the looping of the strobe light and seeing the audience member (cameraperson) adopt the shoes for the second time and walk across the liminal zone whilst playing again with the glockenspiel that has deterritorialised from room one.

¹⁶⁰ Archive: HNRI-CD0214.

Dodds was purposeful in his use of alienation as method, using it to resist the status quo and other dominant realities (such as the didactic and linguistic modes we have discussed in the previous chapter). Instead, he embraced the idea of the alien, or what Meillassoux calls “the great outdoors.”¹⁶¹ Meillassoux uses this expression to relate to everything left out of dominant, and especially Kantian and rationalist, philosophies. We can see how Dodds employs this idea of the alien in a similar way. If we think back to the introduction, specifically to our definition of EM+, we can imagine that Dodds had a similar inclination towards music and art as Meillassoux had towards philosophy. Dodds notes in his final notebook, Notebook E, that he is ‘trying to express (his) music by alienating it from dominant and overbearing contexts such as cochlear over non-cochlear privilege, didactic narratives, and present-oriented aesthetic discourse.’¹⁶² His insistence on creating a *future-oriented* art was surely not a serious attempt to define the future of music nor an arrogance or sense of superiority over others. It was merely an attempt at another way of creating, creation outside of capitalist, neoliberal, and patriarchal systems and inside the *great outdoors*: the speculative. Dodds saw this purposeful alienation as a way to create work that acts as a hyperstitional intensifier, a writing of its own place and future in the infinite great outdoors and, a calling out to a people and aesthetics yet to come.

Now that we have discussed *Etude #1* in reference to the alien ontologically and ontographically, let us begin to discuss the encompassing aesthetic of the alien. I mentioned earlier in the chapter that science fiction generally considers the alien to be an extra-terrestrial entity. This is incredibly relevant to Dodds’ work, especially the *Etudes*. Extra-terrestrial, of course, implies that something is outside (extra) of anything relating to Earth (terrestrial) and, as we have seen, Dodds used alienation as a tool to move objects away from their dominant narrative. We can see in Dodds’ dismissal of traditional narrative a tendency towards the non-anthropocentric – in this case a virtual moving away from the human to express a metaphorical non-anthropocentrism. Narrative is a human construct, a way to use language to dominate and explain reality from the mundane to the complex. As is stated by Latour, even the most complicated scientific theories are ‘forced to explain one marvel with another, and that one with a third. It goes on until it looks just like a fairy tale.’¹⁶³ In other words, even generative data has to be captured and controlled by human oriented narrative. Dodds wrote these *Etudes* in a politically and socially turbulent time, a world where narrative seemed the dominant force in fictional aesthetics. Socially motivated artists used these real-world narratives to relay information through storytelling to relay artworks to larger audiences. Yet, as was predicted by Bishop in her (afore-mentioned) book *Artificial Hells*,¹⁶⁴ this was also eventually co-opted by larger institutional forces, once again dominating these systems through their leveraging of cultural capital. We can surmise from Notebook D¹⁶⁵ that Dodds saw this as a continuation of a colonial mindset and instead sought to work in an alien

¹⁶¹ Meillassoux, Q, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. by Brassier, R (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009), p. 26.

¹⁶² Archive: HNRI-CD0165.

¹⁶³ Latour, B, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. by Law, J and Sheridan, A (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 215.

¹⁶⁴ Bishop, C, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012).

¹⁶⁵ Archive: HNRI-CD164. A messily scribbled paragraph reading ‘neo-liberal fucking safe fucking art just serves the hierarchal dominant realities, fucking hangover of colonial bullshit disguised as progressive political agenda, it’s MORE DAMAGING IN THE LONG TERM. Nothing progressive about it, just repeats of fucking vacuous boring art that is repeated and relayed to audiences who already AGREE and FUCKSAKE ALREADY KNOW THE CONTENT BEFORE SEEING THE PERFORMANCE. SAFE SAFE SAFE SAFE. We all KNOW about CLIMATE

alternative, working actively against the tide of capitalist reality merely by existing and embracing the alien and, thus, non-anthropocentric. In *Etude #1* Dodds uses the concept of the noumenal to create an aesthetic where the human becomes almost a liminal entity, a mere viewer or listener of the work, whilst the objects and their alien ontologies become the focus. We can see this most clearly when we consider the first-person perspective of the film. Dodds subverts the expected anthropocentric viewpoint, instead creating one where the human becomes periphery and the usually peripheral objects become the focus. These objects become alienated from their didactic meaning and instead teach us to listen in a way that challenges our anthropocentrically and capitalistically conditioned ears. This can also be seen in the work of Trond Reinholdtsen and Jennifer Walshe, as well as works by Fluxus and many others, composers who were actively interested in post-human concepts and philosophy such as Holly Herndon and SOPHIE. We can conclude that in Dodds' alien aesthetics: madness reigns. Things which are often only seen out of the corner of your eye (or heard out of the corner of your ear), objects that don't fit into an anthropocentric worldview, and impossible interactions are metaphorically calculated to bring the *great outdoors* to the forefront of the work and give the *Etudes* their alien aesthetic.

In the television series *The X Files*, the alien acts as an overbearing weight against the structure of the narrative. Instead of influencing the narrative itself, it becomes an increasingly heavy and encroaching hyperobject that aims to reveal the insignificance of the human. *The X Files* displays this in the form of an interplanetary conspiracy theory that slowly unwinds outside of the knowledge of the show's protagonists, yet it influences the reality of the show as well as the unknowing characters in subtle and noumenal ways. Alien aesthetics allow the ontological weight of an alien object to counteract its anthropocentric counterpart. By purposefully alienating form, structure, objects, genre, etc one can fiction a world that does not need to be propped up by its central actors or sense of objective place. Instead the world can exist on its own, given shape by its inherent otherness and resistance to ordinary reality. Of course, this is only metaphorical, but metaphor is a powerful antidote to didacticism. It allows us to rewild our imaginations and bring a further subtlety to our increasingly anthropocentric worldview. In turn, perhaps this will allow us to accelerate into a better future – one no longer dominated by the shackles of capitalism but instead moving away from normative conditions of production and consumerism, and towards a speaking out to a people yet to come.¹⁶⁶

Extro-Science Fiction in *Etude #3: St. Battenburg's Data Dump and Breakfast Buffet*

CHANGE. Your shitty OPERA won't bring about IMMEDIATE ACTION, just more FUCKING arrogant art making that serves the ego of both the COMPOSER and smug AUDIENCE. If you are going to make POLITICAL ART then actually go about CHANIGNG (sic) SOMETHING not just serving your own MORALITY and appeasing your own EGO. IT'S JUST MORE MICROCAPITALIST ANTHROPOCENTRIC WAYS OF TRYING TO ESCAPE AN ARGUMENT ON THE AESTHETIC VALUES OF ART BY HUMANISAING IT TO ITS MOST BASE LEVEL.'

¹⁶⁶ Note to self 6/10/20██: The key proved easy to find...an hour after writing my previous footnote it merely appeared on my desk. I don't pretend to know how or why, and I must admit that I am fearful of some unknown entity egging me on...inviting me to see the room (that I have now dubbed 'the zone'). The key is small and flimsy and cheap looking, like the key to a deposit box or safe. I know this is a trap, it feels like a trap...but I feel compelled to find out. The last few days I spent my lunchbreaks pacing outside of the room, staring at the keyhole, feeling inexplicably drawn to open the door...I must wait, I should know more before making a decision.

If Dodds' work seeks to alienate dominant modes of reality, we must ask the question: what ontological space does this work occupy? So far, in Dodds' future-oriented aesthetics we have seen how objects become destabilised through new and alien relationships to one another and how this is a resisting of causality. However, we might ask: where is this resistance coming from? The answer is the imaginal future. The destabilising forces that works to subvert and disrupt objects Dodds' works are in their very being imaginal and post-linguistic, smuggled from the future into the present in order to make themselves real. In *Etude #3*, Dodds creates a dichotomy between visual and sonic information that, in effect, acts as a musical score. Whilst the performer attempts to read and play a traditional score through intensely magnified jewellers' lenses, they are also receiving a set of sonic instructions. These sonic instructions are being randomly triggered electronically¹⁶⁷ from a dataset built from medieval music, live radio signals, and movement cues. The physical score contains the instructions for the guitar part while the electronics provide audio cues for movement, voice, and the playing of instruments that are attached to the body suit. The medieval music is mimicked on the instruments – random radio signals provide vocalisations and movement-based actions. The random signal increases in rate as the piece goes on. Dodds writes in a document on his computer that 'the result is intended to overload the brain with information, to creating a newly generated performative ontology that is alchemised from the linguistic and ordered reality (score) and the chaotic and random one (electronics).'¹⁶⁸ The score allows the performer to be rooted to a familiar experience whilst the electronic randomness acts as a call from the realm of chaos, the Chapel Perilous. In turn, the performer creates something that is made up of both and projects this new aesthetic towards the future as a calling to people to come. But what is this new world that the work is inhabiting?

In his 2015 essay *Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction*, Quentin Meillassoux poses and presents a theory of fiction that works *outside of* science. He argues that by modifying the possibilities of the knowledge of the real, fiction can work without relying on experimental science or positivist linguistic models to define its fictional, or non-fictional, qualities. These fictions create worlds that are future-oriented, worlds beyond finitude that oppose present-oriented inductivism, where laws are defined by their empirical facts or evidence and seek to create themselves into future possibilities beyond current human understanding. Dodds' *Etudes* seek to work in the same way and to fiction themselves outside of the limited temporal loops that science, and aesthetics often find themselves caught up in. The *Etudes* seek to liberate themselves from dominant restraints. As we have previously noted, Dodds saw homogenization and tribalism in different institutional labs that sought to keep experimental aesthetics firmly rooted in the experience of the objective real. Dodds saw this as past-oriented and an overreliance on institutional empiricism, a system which was focused on making economically stable and historically reliable data by reproducing the same experiments over and over again expecting, and recording, the same results as entirely new data.

¹⁶⁷ Archive: HNRI-CD0013. In the Ableton Live file found on Dodds' iMac, we can see that he uses a Max for Live patch that uses background noise in the processor to act as a gate which allows the sounds to be randomly controlled and triggered.

¹⁶⁸ Archive: HNRI-CD0013. Dated 04/05/2021.

Meillassoux imagines extro-scientific worlds as ‘a particular regime of the imaginary in which structured – or rather deconstructed – worlds are conceived in such a way that experimental science cannot deploy its theories or consolidate its objects within.’¹⁶⁹ *Etude #3* expresses this by attempting to replace *experimental science* with *experimental music*. Dodds uses the randomness of the live generated score to liberate the performer from pre-conceived notions of artistic practice and performance through a chaotic information overload. This process does not leave much time for thinking or, especially, acting. We do not see the score the performer is reading from or hear the audio score that the performer is attempting to translate in performance and, thus, the performer is firmly rooted as the sole translator of the musical (and exto-musical) material. This allows a focus on the subject as a mere conduit for the material, a post-narrative teller¹⁷⁰ of the fiction that is being created through the tension between disparate sources and away from the causal connections found in traditional narrative structures. Here, one is reminded of Russel Hoban’s 1980 novel *Riddley Walker*¹⁷¹ which attempts to construct language and narrative from the bottom up after a nuclear disaster rips apart the English county of Kent (and presumably the rest of the world). The novel follows young Riddley Walker through his journey to make sense of the county before the nuclear apocalypse, using fragments of passed down knowledge and ruined technologies to piece together a rudimentary and post-logical language in order to communicate the reality of the time. Just as Hoban uses a speculative methodology to imagine a post-apocalyptic language as an *as if* object rather than a *what if* one by morphing *total language* into *deconstruction of total language (apocalypse)* into *complete reconstruction of fragmented total language*. This sets up his alien linguistic reality that can only be understood through the reader engaging and working with the text itself to unveil the methodology behind the text. Dodds uses the same technique in the performance of the piece – The performer has their preconceived and set idea of language, whether musical or linguistic, which is then broken down by an overloading of information and is in turn retranslated and reconstructed by the performer to the audience.

Meillassoux postulates that there are three possibilities for exto-science fiction worlds: Type 1 (XSF-1), which expresses an irregularity that does not affect either science nor consciousness (this may be found in movements such as Surrealism or Dadaism), communicating worlds that create their own laws yet do not break with science – they may have observable ruptures, but it is impossible to reproduce these ruptures. Type 2 (XSF-2), where irregularity abolishes science but not consciousness. This is where regular margins become unpredictable. Science and form become unreliable and unstable. This is realm where future-oriented aesthetics seeks to be. Type 3 (XSF-3) completely abolishes science and consciousness and is devoid of all necessary laws to function as a world in of itself. If we are to root *Etude #3* in an XSF-2 world, it is necessary to follow Meillassoux’s requirements: ‘a) within it events take place that no imaginary logic can explain; and b) the question of science is present in the tale albeit in the negative mode.’¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Meillassoux, Q. *Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction*, trans. by Edlebi, A (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2015), p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ I use post-narrative here to denote that the fictions of Cameron Dodds move away from a traditional understanding of narrative yet still contains narrative as part of its inherent material. Words, letters, notes, and structures are purposefully confused and mixed up to allow fiction to act as a line of flight through narrative and show new possibilities for post-linguistic story telling.

¹⁷¹ Hoban, R. *Riddley Walker* (London: Penguin Classics, 2021).

¹⁷² Meillassoux p. 44.

According to Dodds' alien aesthetics, we can see how events and objects are taken away from their ordinary contexts and given new ones, ordering themselves according to speculation rather than logical reasoning. Perhaps *science* not exactly the right word when talking about Dodds' output in the context of aesthetic qualities. Whilst science has so far provided us with something to resist when creating purposefully alien works, let us come back to aesthetics. Let us imagine the word *science* to mean anything that is ordered according to dominant realities. Let us then replace it with the word *music* for the sake of this thesis. Therefore, the quote now reads: 'a) within it events take place that no imaginary logic can explain; and b) the question of *music* is present in the tale albeit in the negative mode.'

We can now understand how the works presented in Dodds' portfolio consider music to be of primary importance. It seems that Dodds was attempting to flatten all objects into *music* for the purpose of his aesthetic vision (as is discussed in the previous chapters), placing everything under the all-encompassing term of EM+. Here we must imagine music in the terms of how it is usually expressed, that is, in terms of its cochlear qualities. Music keeps at its heart a deep connection to heterodox continuity and allows itself to shape and be shaped in terms of subjective experiences. Nevertheless, Dodds attempts to imagine a music that 'does not have a coherence of change at its disposal and instead finds itself forced to tear the tissues of its own frames through ruptures that nothing justifies, while having to compose a story with such tears.'¹⁷³ This allows Dodds to freely employ entities from *the great outdoors* outside of the anthropocentric normativity of music and traditional musical experience. It also allows Dodds to create fictions out of disparate and disorderly material, choosing objects and their relationships for their alien qualities rather in logical accordance to their place within traditional narrative. All of a sudden, fictions are not created through character relationships, relationship to place, or the movement through time. Instead, time and place become central characters themselves and these hyperobjects become flattened and placed alongside other objects with total parity. These XSF-2, or perhaps extro-musical-2, worlds translate and call out to an unpredictability and instability, a future that is not stifled by present and past-oriented quantitative laws.

The audio commentary in *Etude #3* provides another insight into the creation of an extro-musical world: it is set up from the perspective of a musical instrument, in this case a giant synthesizer. The commentary is shared between a human (biological) and robot (digital) as they attempt to outline a sport or game that the performer is taking part in. The progress of the commentary is eventually disrupted by both speakers remarking that they are not feeling well. Eventually we hear screams and the sound of tearing while simultaneously, on screen, a man dressed in a spacesuit emerges from the synthesizer. As we have previously remarked, deterritorialisation is a primary theme in Dodds work. This *Etude* gives us a clear example of the process in action. The commentary allows the audience to experience the journey from an XSF-1 world, one that — though irregular — is held together by its relationship to ordinary linguistics (the spoken nature of the

¹⁷³ Meillassoux p. 45.

commentary) to an XSF-2 world where these relationships are actively destroyed in front of the audience (the destruction of language in favour for noise).¹⁷⁴

Technology in *Etude #4: Gibecrake*

The use of technology, especially artificial intelligence, can be found in all corners of Dodds' output. This raises a difficult question when it comes to future-oriented art: what happens when the technology becomes outdated? If Dodds was attempting to create art that reached into the future in order to invent itself, surely the art itself can only be an expression of a future art to come? He answered this question by de-anthropomorphising technology and attempting to alienate it from its sole functions. We usually consider technology terms of its usefulness to humans. We only really find its noumenal properties highlighted in science fiction where computers gain sentience. However, Dodds seems unconcerned with the sentience of technology: rather he appears to use it in a way that helps express the ineffable qualities of the machines themselves as alluded to in the previous chapter. In *Etude #4* we see AI generated movies shimmer and morph against a screen of fog. We can see from information available on Dodds' personal computers¹⁷⁵ that these films were created using an opensource image generating GAN (generative adversarial network: a form of machine learning that pits two neural networks against each other in a sort of game in order to generate its outputs) called VQGAN+CLIP programmed by Katherine Crowson.¹⁷⁶ The AI is fed a prompt, which can be a sentence or the description of an image, and then attempts to render the text into an image. It seems that Dodds found that the discourse around AI in art mostly revolved around creating effable outputs that existed in past-oriented states. AI was used to recreate buildings, simulate Shakespearean poetry, or create musical notes in the style of Mozart or Beethoven. Dodds had a different goal in mind: he wanted to confuse the anthropocentric functions of the AI by feeding it with prompts that were generated from a mix of dream images, text, and previous AI text generation. As we have seen in previous chapters, Dodds often used AI text generation to create new texts from disparate esoteric and exoteric sources. These text generations came from an AI called Interactive Textgenrrn by Max Woolf¹⁷⁷ (another opensource AI). This AI used a recurrent neural network to train datasets, generating text by predicting the next characters in a sequence. Dodds generated over 250,000 words of text using a vast database built from his research, texts he liked, dreamwork,

¹⁷⁴ Note to self 11/10/20██: I feel that I am *physically* moving from an XSF-1 world to an XSF-2 one. I tried explaining my theory about the organisation and Dodds' disappearance to my partner this evening. They said I should take a rest and that I have been working too hard. They just don't understand. I can no longer be around them...they act as if they are being sensitive to my ideas, but I know they think I'm paranoid. I am sleeping at the archive from now on. No one from the organisation objects to my being there, Dr. Puck seems to invite it with a smug arrogance. I will find out his secret. I am watching the room day and night. Nothing so far. A week left in the archive.

¹⁷⁵ Archive: HNRI-CD0012 AND HNRI-CD-0013.

¹⁷⁶ Crowson, K. VQGAN+CLIP An (sic) PUBLIC COPY. Available: https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1ud6KJeKdq5egQx_zz2-rni5R-Q-vxJdj?usp=sharing#scrollTo=eD4YyZDessWK (Licensed by MIT).

¹⁷⁷ Woolf, M. Interactive Textgenrrn w/GPU. Available: <https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1mMKGnVxirJnqDViH7BDJxFqWrsXIPSoK#scrollTo=0wXB05bPDYxS>

active imagination, and previous iterations of his own AI-generated texts. The sentences he would feed the image generating GAN would often be nonsense, random fragments taken from the generated text such as:

What is it, the number anchored to the car and the garbage and sitting and the start and gets of the car parter and serves into the countion expanding the car.

And

*You know, what it in the restion of the air harge contantion at you only seezing this blint for the film.*¹⁷⁸

Dodds never attempted to make sense of this data, rather he fed it straight into the GAN and allowed it to do its work. This process was about liberating the AI from the restraints of the human and allowing it to attempt to learn and generate without the usual shackles of language. Dodds notes that he felt that this was a 'way to *philosophically* escape the weight of the present'¹⁷⁹ even if he could not physically travel into the future or utilise actual future technologies in his work.

Etude #4 is also an ode to Dodds' home county of Suffolk and the inherent weirdness of the flat and expansive land. We can see from various sources in the archive that he created a dataset from folk stories and songs with their origins in Suffolk. According to his browser history,¹⁸⁰ this dataset was fed into Interactive Textgenrnn alongside police reports from the Rendlesham Forest incident.¹⁸¹ The resulting sets were used to generate text for the songs that Dodds can be heard singing on the tape recordings throughout the *Etude*. These were, again, bizarre and incoherent but contained an ineffable beauty that Dodds felt captured the weirdness of the countryside:

*When was a man fascinate and distant and assured,
the instance of the defensive Project Blue Book was not the incident
to stop on his tree.
And the moon is a-robing as she was this for the Spanish Power Mark
'Your dog, why wicked colours of a practice of us.
The object to the morning said to the morning down this fair court for to me
And the tide of your coat and many young Mary
There was a more pretty fair maid
With your red rosy cheeks and your heart*

¹⁷⁸ Archive: HNRI-CD0013.

¹⁷⁹ Archive: HNRI-CD0029. In an email to composer Luke Deane dated 09/08/2021.

¹⁸⁰ Archive: HNRI-CD0013. Interactive Textgenrnn accessed 04/07/2021.

¹⁸¹ In December 1980 flashing lights were reported in the skies over Suffolk's Rendlesham Forest. These flashing lights were chased by RAF pilots and are said to have just disappeared into thin air.

*And he went out of the window of the world,
The search for the dead of the time for the declassified
And the mourning girl she did be Digitized
And the old man says she said,
I have come to the coast for ever the forest and the said could have a daughter says she¹⁸²*

The piece also uses modular synthesizers and other electronic instruments to create dramatic noise. Dodds saw noise as inherent part of the landscape of the digital. He also wanted to fiction the folkloric landscape of his imaginal Suffolk by allowing the biological and digital to act in total parity with one another through their inherent paradox. The noise was mostly randomly generated through samplers and feedback, allowing Dodds again to act in collaboration with the ineffable qualities of technology rather than try to purely dominate them. For him this is less about the inherent beauty of the sound and more about the nature of human-oriented technology: the further we gain mastery over an anthropocentrically useful object, the more control and dominance we hold over it. Of course, it is evolutionarily vital that humans do master objects. This is simply a philosophical musing on anthropocentrism. The paradox between the self-generation of the electronics and the amateur, almost crude performances found in Dodds' work reminds us of the *before* and *after* finitude paradox as found in Chapter 2. The act of the acoustic performance, although electronically altered, speaks to a rudimentary and performative side of Dodds' artistic nature, while the electronics and their random generation provide an extro-scientific materiality to the atmosphere of the piece. We must remind ourselves of Dodds' initial observations on fiction – we must continue to see fiction as the ontological tension between paradoxical objects.

Postlude

We have seen how Dodds utilises both esoteric (divination, dreamwork, active imagination etc) and exoteric (AI, random number generation, data collection) techniques within his work. It is important to note, once again, that these elements were treated as equals according to his flat ontology. He did not rely on magical, psychoanalytical, or digital technologies to create his work for him, instead, he saw the technologies as imagination extenders: ways to reach past the limits of the human imagination and project oneself into the future. Technology also provided ways for Dodds to transcend his own *a posteriori* knowledge and open himself up to new experiences. Above all, it is clear that Dodds was dedicated to making Weird Art, an art that became a hyperstitional calling of people yet to come. We can understand that he was dedicated to showing fiction as an alternate reality system; not just a made-up tale told to pass the time.

¹⁸² Archive: HNRI-CD0013.

Conclusion

The magical universe is structured according to the most primitive and meaningful of organizations: that of the reticulation of the world into privileged places and privileged moments. A privileged place, a place that has a power, is one that drains from within itself all the force and efficacy of the domain it delimits; it summarizes and contains the force of a compact mass of reality; it summarizes and governs it, as a highland governs and dominates a lowland; the elevated peak is the lord of the mountain, just as the most impenetrable part of the woods is where all its reality resides.

– Gilbert Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*¹⁸³

To create something does not mean to see through to its depths; we do not drain our children to the dregs by begetting them, but set them loose in the world like wild dogs, beyond our control and often beyond our knowledge.

–Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism- Essays and Lectures*¹⁸⁴

What is in a fiction? Lies? Truth? Can it contain its own reality? Is fiction purely escapism? Childish fancy? Did Cameron Dodds ever read any of the sources that I have quoted from? Or did I merely hang scraps of disassociated thought on the theoretical framework of others, hoping that my credentials would convince other academics? Did the Haunted Network Research Initiative infect the dreams and influence the artwork of Dodds? Did Dodds really believe in magic? Could Dodds actually perform magic? Did he care about fictioning his practice? Did he care about his practice? Is his output purely the residual bitterness of the artist as a young man? Is this thesis an attempt to work out the anxieties of the failing artist, an attempt (in twenty-six thousand words) to convince the reader that Dodds' work will stand out amongst other work which drew more attention and praise in his lifetime? Does his work contain anything of worth, aesthetic or otherwise? Did Dodds create these fictions as toys to play with whilst other composers were trying to make something of themselves? Are *they* the real artists? Or are they also fictioning their practices? Did Dodds become so overwhelmed that even facing himself as an artist became too much for him? Did he use capitalism as an excuse to not apply for those artistic opportunities that so often advanced the careers of his contemporaries? Or was he more interested in creating a long-term and sustainable practice for himself, protecting his mental and physical health? Did he purposefully obfuscate his work so that fewer people would engage with it? Was he seeking to keep critical feedback as minimal as possible? Is he even now hunched over a computer desk somewhere, sweating (after

¹⁸³ Simondon, G, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. by Mellamphy, N (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1958). p. 178.

¹⁸⁴ Harman, G, *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures* (London: Zero Books, 2010). p. 174.

too many coffees) and attempting to distil five years of research into a page of writing? Is he asking himself what this was all for? Does he know what is next for him? Did he *really* embark on a PhD? Is his work deserving of the label 'research?' Is any creative work worthy of the label 'research?' Is practice-based research a vain attempt to appease funding bodies, to assure them that nature of art can be evaluated in institutional and positivist terminology? Does Cameron Dodds know that his career as an artist will conclude in October 2021? Can he change this? What can he do to change this? How can we reach into the future to help un-disappear someone? Can we ask the aliens to bring him back? The faeries? The weather? Can we magically bring him back into existence? Is our current AI technology powerful enough to recreate his brain through his social media outputs and the memories of others? Could we recreate an accurate Cameron Dodds? Maybe we should create an artificial clone with more entrepreneurial drive to become a successful artist? Maybe he is better forgotten?

Cameron Dodds' work is purposefully complex and dense. He constantly nests fictions inside of fictions, attempting to present them in the least practical way. His work is often about the failure of the artist, the anxiety of making, and the inherent complexity of being. The only possible conclusion I can come to is the following: the convoluted efforts that went into and are displayed within his compositions are an attempt to delve deeper into his own psyche as an artist, deeper than the obvious, deeper than the past and certainly deeper than the future. I ask myself whether my own analysis has been complicated and dense enough to untangle the few graspable threads within the work, however, I fear that I have only further added to the complexity and density of the work itself.¹⁸⁵ As I sit here in Dodds' library I am reminded of his resistance to traditional narrative. My final conclusion of his work, and this thesis, is thus:

Sci-Fi	Natural Philosophy	M John Harrison
Folklore	Hieronymus Bosch	Cornwall
Experimental Art	The Sea	Carl Jung
Ithell Colquhoun	Alchemy	Monty Python
Speculative Philosophy	Artificial Intelligence	Synchronicities
Homebrewing	Acquaintances	Occultism
Existential Philosophy	Speculative Realism	Yoga
Medieval Literature	Experimental Music (+)	Robert Ashley
William Blake	Modular Synthesis	Physics
Martial Arts	Neon	Walking
Mathematics	The Weird	Igor Stravinsky
Fermentation	Wagner	Tarot
Magic	Love	Cooking

¹⁸⁵ Note to self 18/10/2020: Tonight, I enter the zone. I have posted a copy of this thesis to the metropolitan police. If I do not return, please see that the organisation is trialled for magico-technological kidnap and, possibly, homicide. This thesis is my evidence.

Autumn	CPE Bach	Time Loops
Troubadour Song	RPGs	Robert Anton Wilson
Hardcore Punk	Suffolk	Old Films
Family	Night-time	Consonance
Audio feedback	Puppetry	Silence
Chaos	Dissonance	Oak Trees
Boxing	Beer	London
Cigars	Foraging	Early Music
Art Deco	Blue	Daphne du Maurier
Performance Art	David Lynch	The Incredible String Band
Cats	Noise	Hammer Horror

*If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, and all is mended.
 That you have but slumber'd here
 While these visions did appear.
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream,
 Gentles, do not reprehend:
 If you pardon, we will mend.
 And, as I'm an honest Puck,
 If we have unearned luck
 Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
 We will make amends ere long;
 Else the Puck a liar call:
 So, good night unto you all.
 Give me your hands, if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends.*

– Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Shakespeare, W, ed. By Durham, W.H, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1918), pp. V. 1. 433-448.

Afterword



To the examiners of this thesis,

It is interesting re-reading Codd's text all of these years after his disappearance, especially now that we finally know what happened to him after the (now infamous) lengthy court case. This is all much to the relief of his family and the organisation. For his flaws, Codd was a unique scholar, and the first to gain access into dear Puck's extensive archive of my materials, which he had promised to take care of in case of my disappearance, which was, of course, all a misunderstanding (as is now public record). While the accusations against the organisation initially alarmed and saddened all of us working here (especially Puck who went out of his way to make sure that Codd was made to feel welcome at the archive) I have decided to present his full thesis including the inflammatory footnotes that accuse the organisation of all sorts of atrocious and malicious conspiracies. Dear old Puck's history and personal records became well known following the scandal, and it is regrettable that the public attention weighed heavily on his mind, causing his illness and eventually, perhaps, his demise.

We are submitting this thesis almost completely as it was originally written and as it appears in our updated and restored archive (HNRI-DC0100), with only minor edits and redactions made by Dr. Desmond Codar (with Codd's acknowledgment) remaining in place. It is my sincere hope that the panel will posthumously award Codd the title of Doctor of Philosophy under the recommendation of myself and the Haunted Network Research Initiative.

Sincerely,

Cameron Dodds

Chairman of Haunted Network Research Initiative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Dodds', is located below the typed name.

Archival Material

Archive accessed and referenced here with kind permission of the Haunted Network research Initiative.

Item	Archive Number
1x Kindle, 3 rd Generation.	HNRI-CD0010
1x Macbook Pro, 2013 Model.	HNRI-CD0012
1x iMac, 2019 Model	HNRI-CD0013
Email correspondences dated from 2016-2019 from Cameron.dodds@stu.gsmd.ac.uk..	HNRI-CD0029
Email correspondences dated from 2018-2021 from camerondoddscomposer@gmail.com.	HNRI-CD0030
1x Samsung Galaxy S8.	HNRI-CD0042
1x Samsung Galaxy S9.	HNRI-CD0047
Dodds submitted Thesis (also figure 2.3)	HNRI-CD0098
Notebook A dated between 2016 and 2017.	HNRI-CD0161
Notebook B dated between 2017 and 2018.	HNRI-CD0162
Notebook C dated between 2018 and 2019.	HNRI-CD0163
Notebook D dated between 2019 and 2020.	HNRI-CD0164
Notebook E dated between 2020 and 2021.	HNRI-CD0165
1x Lacie Hard drive.	HNRI-CD0214
2x Rokit 6 Monitor Speakers with attached note (also figure 1).	HNRI-CD0413
LEMONTATIONS Notebook.	HNRI-CD0786
Various collected digital transcripts and computer bookmarks.	HNRI-CD1024-CD1642

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Software

Crowson, K. VQGAN+CLIP An (sic) PUBLIC COPY. Available:
https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1ud6KJeKdq5egQx_zz2-rni5R-Q-vxJdj?usp=sharing#scrollTo=eD4YyZDessWK (Licensed by MIT)

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