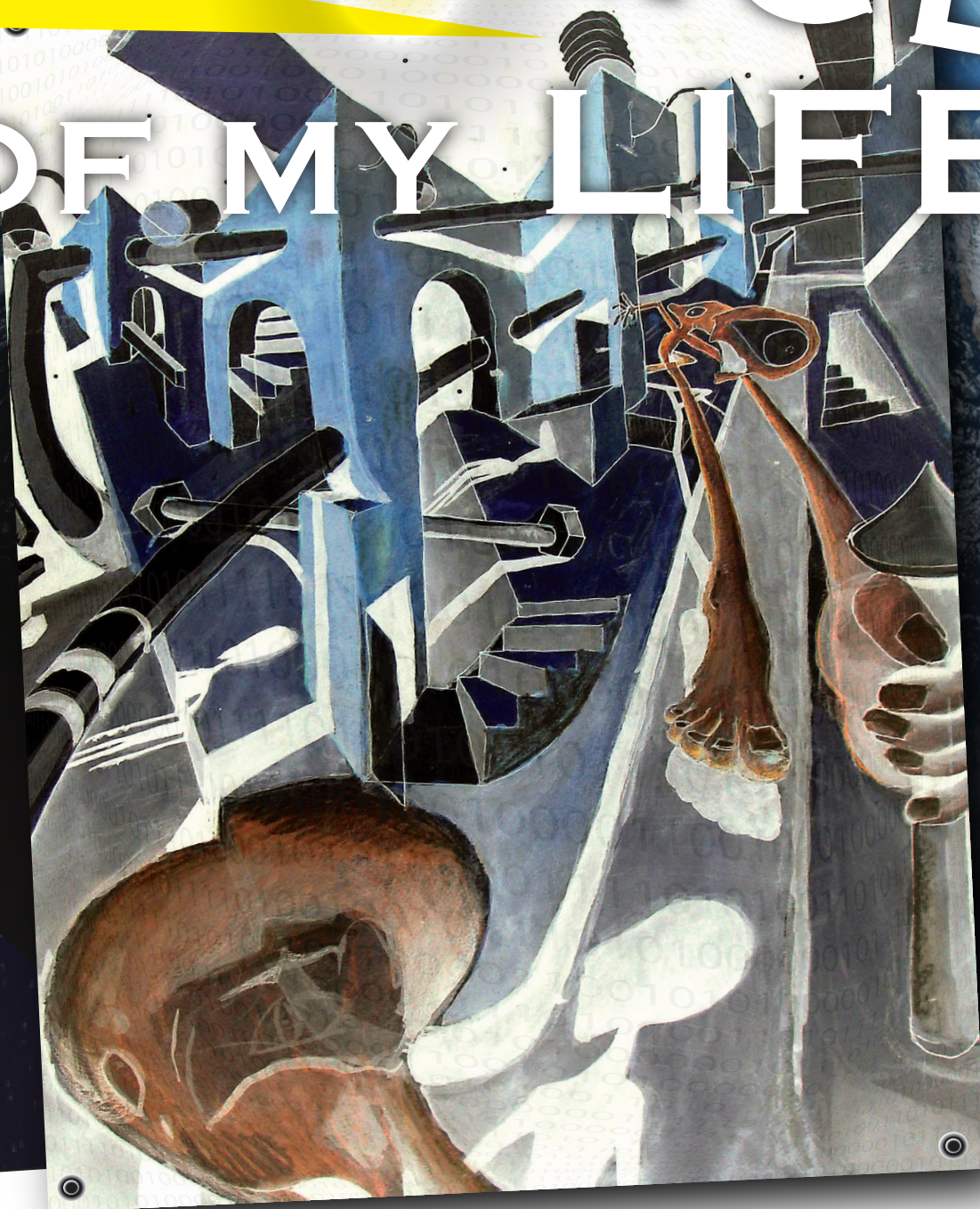# A SPLICE
OF MY LIFE

A Journey of Young Lives, Conversations and Self-Reflexive Creativity Encompassing AI, Superintelligence and the Future World(s) of Posthumanism Framed by the Anthropocene.

RICH MCLEAN

DECLARATION

'Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.'

Doctor of Philosophy by Publication Declaration:

"I, Richard William McLean,
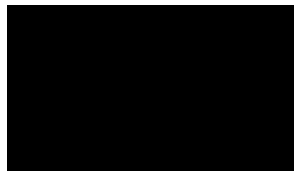declare that the PhD thesis by Publication entitled:

'A Splice of My Life'

is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures,
appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes.

This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the
award of any other academic degree or diploma.

Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work."

Signature ██████████ Date 06/09/2020

PART A) Exegesis   13

References   244

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

In memory of my beautiful beloved friend and comrade Nathan Turnley, who tragically passed over on 11/06/2018 at age 24 to suicide. A dearly loved friend and spirit brother from another mother who introduced me to the word 'Apophenia'. A version of my younger self I tried in vain to help. When I felt you behind me then looked around, the spirit in me saw the spirit in you...and my soul lit up in purity. In the minutes that followed I felt a deep love and brotherhood. You shined too bright and divine for this deficit reality. You were not mad, you were a misunderstood sage and a mystic. In the short several months of our friendship, much happiness bloomed. True I nearly joined you; but I didn't and your existence blessed this plane yet your physical absence gave me both immense heartbreak yet still I'm grateful for unfathomable hope and joy you gifted me.

I bless you and thank you in all reality(s) time(s) and dimensions.

"Spirit be free..." my brother.

x

PART A) Exegesis

1) RESEARCH STATEMENT

'A Journey of Young Lives, Conversations and Self-Reflexive Creativity Encompassing AI, Superintelligence and the Future World(s) of Posthumanism Framed by the Anthropocene.'

2) ABSTRACT

This arts-based, practice-led, qualitative theoretical work amplifies young people's ethical opinions of what it means to be human both now and in the future through three cumulative technological lenses. These are artificial intelligence (AI), and the anticipated superintelligence which has already commenced (Andrews, 2017), which enables the third lens of posthumanism, defined by the Oxford dictionary as 'The idea that humanity can be transformed, transcended, or eliminated either by technological advances or the evolutionary process; artistic, scientific, or philosophical practice which reflects this belief (Dictionary, 1970).'

Posthumanism auspices Transhumanism, which is defined as using technology to further enhance the skills, abilities, and lifespans of human beings who ultimately become posthuman (H+). This research renders a superintelligent AI which might orchestrate the qualities that future humans / posthumans will have, considering eugenics, gene modification, and the ultimate designing of entities and/or sentient beings, has already happened and is expressed via art and narrative experience as research. Transcending our biology to coexist with future world(s), including inter-dimensionally, is suggested as being inevitable when technological acceleration is viewed not linearly, but exponentially, especially considering quantum superintelligence(s).

This research examines both the ethical lives of young people (extrapolated from recorded interviews) and of the author (through retrospective art and memory). It splices across generational divides, as well as past analogue and current/ future digitisation, compares young people today and in years gone by, also splicing human or posthuman survival as framed by the Anthropocene, *('Anthrop' meaning human and 'cene' meaning a geological period of time, in simple language, 'The Human Era')*, stemming out of compassion for nature and the living world, while conversing with young people about global catastrophic risks.

An unexpected existential creative artefact(s) emerges through the methodologies of A/r/tography, Arts-Based Research, Narrative Inquiry, otherwise referred to throughout as Living inquiry. This metaphorically mirrors 'The Event Horizon' of the technological singularity discussed within the data collection section, in which outcomes are and were impossible to predict. The metaphor of me talking to students about events unknowable past a technological singularity, or event horizon, is precisely what happened as my memories and art revealed themselves with the help of healers, and detailed in the creative component *'A Splice of My Life.'* I have since learned that this idea can be attributed to Deleuze[1].

3) KEYWORDS

Young people, ethics, artificial intelligence, superintelligence, posthumanism, arts-based research, a/r/tography, global catastrophic risks, shamanism, Anthropocene, autobiographical narrative

---

[1] See work of Deleuze here

4) INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT / TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION

This research project has explored Year 11 students' ethical ideas and opinions about AI, and superintelligence further enabling posthumanism, despite global catastrophic risks. Initially, the PhD was about someone else other than the self, because as an existentialist creative person, I was tiring of self study and reflection. The focus was initially on Year 11 students' ethical considerations of the future; however, this despite my attempts at 'making this PhD other than the self', ultimately led back to the self through the writing of the creative component 'A Splice of My Life', which gained agency and was propelled by my conversations about ethics with the students. With the relationship with my healer, 'Binnie', I was able to describe through words and images my experiences with the paranormal; both the students and Binnie as a healer resulted in my decision to tackle a taboo topic of seemingly non-human beings that I have experienced, both presently and throughout my life.

The initial aims of the research focussed on three particular lenses initially explored are: 1) artificial intelligence, and the coming 2) superintelligence (that has already started by way of algorithms improving on themselves exponentially (Andrews, 2017)), that will further enable 3) posthumanism, including and considering eugenics, despite the global catastrophic risks. The central question was: 'What will it mean to live both now and in a future posthuman world through the lens of young people's ethical opinions?' This book reports on the nature of humanity and the ultimate design of beings that potentially exist in the present, and in the near future. It then journeys beyond a metaphorical event horizon that even I could not see coming, by examining my own young life and its paranormal occurrences.

The work has led to a retrospective examination of my own childhood and adolescent life and the paranormal experiences therein that are examined in this thesis through the lens of Shamanism. This narrative, which forms the creative component of the thesis, considers the lens of Shamanism with the help of intuitive healers which disrupts and argues against the limitations of the western psychiatric paradigm. I ended up linking the students' statements to

elements of my own young life. This being said, the importance of the young people's recorded conversations were essentially pivotal to the end result of the creative artefact, because these conversations acted as the necessary link between my early paranormal memories in childhood and adolescence, and are linked to the statements from the students that emerged from the data.

Metaphorically and historically, the essence of this PhD can be summed up in a quote by Albert Einstein that extrapolates on how little we know as individuals, yet how imagination and wonder enlighten the spirit, and give life to the living, even through, and despite, fear:

> *The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it, and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed. It was the experience of mystery – even if mixed with fear – that engendered religion. A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, our perceptions of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which only in their most primitive forms are accessible to our minds: it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute true religiosity. In this sense, and only this sense, I am a deeply religious man ... I am satisfied with the mystery of life's eternity and with a knowledge, a sense, of the marvellous structure of existence - as well as the humble attempt to understand even a tiny portion of the Reason that manifests itself in nature (Einstein, 1931, pp. 3-7).*

When I read that quote halfway through writing my PhD, I thought it captured beautifully the metaphorical lens of looking at the work. We are, as humans, divinely connected in deficit and in opportunity, yet we are also a sub-set of something so much greater than our comprehension of the world(s).

I want to be explicit in that the multi-themed and different flavoured sections of this doctorate are inextricably linked between the students' recorded, and interpreted, narratives; and how this gave me agency and confidence to express myself in 'A Splice of My Life', the creative component of the thesis. What was initially using imagination as research with the students, yet which was also manifested from state of the art rational science, gave me an important leap of faith and an important gift. That is, it gave me the confidence to examine my own young life compared to theirs. What existed in their imaginations, I could draw solid references from to my own 'paranormal' life that had happened to me over a lifetime, and which had been acknowledged in song, music, and art. Through considering the death of humans, as framed by the Anthropocene, I confronted my own death and the deaths of others, and wanted to make a statement about my creative life.

In this way, my experiences, that will be seen as 'madness' by some people, gained a more solid form in retelling the narrative relating to the students' imaginations. If indeed this story was simply my 'imagination', it has exonerated itself as possible science for the students 30 years on from when I reflected on my life. I present my meanderings on my metaphysical life with creativity, acknowledgement over a lifetime, humility, and honesty. It explores the mystery, complexity, and ethics of future and past world(s) in a cross-generational way.

'A Splice of My Life', therefore, that emboldens the creative component of this PhD, could not have existed, been drawn together, or have been expressed without my conversations and interpreted narratives with the students. The 'splice' is a pivotal word that refers to how the information intersects with memory, generational divides, technology, madness, the paranormal, and the current state of technology framed by global catastrophic risks in, and beyond, the Anthropocene. It also defines the unique niche way in which my lived narrative experience and my past intersect with a very sacred telling of events that have happened to me and which I have expressed through art that moves away from psychiatry and towards a loving and compassionate treatment of my own experiences through a currency of kindness from my many healers, the noteworthy ones being Trav and Binnie. The 'splice' also refers to

the invisible currency of kindness that exists in the deficit of this world which has helped me to stay alive and live my life and this PhD.

Early on it is important to express that the theoretical frameworks of posthumanism and the technological singularity framed by the end times were drawn heavily from Kurzweil, (Kurzweil, 2005), who states broadly that the technological singularity is always near and that technology will vastly improve humankind and posthumans into the future, and Barrat, (Barrat, 2013), who argues that the trajectory of artificial intelligence leading to a technological singularity and quantum intelligence is the end of humanity as we know it. These opposing views were acknowledged and used to contextualise the curriculum I wrote for the students in anticipation of my conversations with them.

This PhD and body of work frames unique topics acting in parallel. What is 'madness', what isn't; acute sensitivity and suffering as they relate to art, technology as relates to two lives: that of my life and that of the young peoples lives framed by information and access to it, and the concept of technology as relates to posthumanism and or 'humane-ness' in terms of the present and the future. As you will see this existential awareness of suicidality whilst being at the end of the human era, via imagination or delusion/fantasy-is coloured with a taboo story that has been the narrative of my life. It also expressed and further defines the multi-dimensionality that humans and anthropocentric beings find themselves in; a reality and a world that is dying, and how the 'otherness' of beings may actually be preserving an aspect of humanity before what I call 'The Great Sadness'.

In my life, I have had a great sadness. Sure I have had some good times, but sadness in sexual abuse when a child, sadness in experiencing 'non-ordinary reality' alone, then explaining it, and being publicly humiliated from it. I have been fired, ostracised, prejudiced against, rejected, by family friends and others, broader society, institutions and 'othered' by my way of being a) an artist b) queer c) having an experience I at first identified with as 'schizophrenia', and being labelled with that; yet I use this PhD to feather out that that, indeed, is not madness, but a sane reaction to an insane world - from the soul and perspective

of an acute empath. I think there was a resonance between the attrition to the observations I have made in the world of 'the end times', the struggle for natural beauty to survive, and the 'flatness' of binary code and AI. Like a cosmic ballet, during the PhD I s\attempted suicide; and the microcosm of my own death resonated with carrying the weight of global catastrophic risks and the likely suffering lives of generations to come. The isolation and suffering for me self reflexively, were resonant of the distress of the end of the human era and nature.

In a critique of this PhD study, it is pointed out that I am neither a scientist, nor a psychiatrist. In response to this, I wish to say that sentience and humanity existed before science, lest you assume the subtext of reality on which we all physically manifest into has an implied rigour to it, which I assume it does. Buckminster Fuller at a public lecture at Columbia University in 1965 said: 'The opposite of nature is impossible', implying that as I proposed with the students that nature has an implied superintelligence. Science therefore, and also 'crazy' people, existed before the self reflexivity and description / ideologies of both science and also psychiatry.

However I have been a consumer of both ideologies and in regards to psychiatry experienced in a human way the interaction with them and the tools of their trade; which is mostly mind-numbing medication. In this way, 'crazy' people were her first, psychiatry came later, and have been so abhorrently wrong such as defining homosexuality as an illness right up until the mid-late nineteenth century. Psychiatry I propose is a manifestation of the cult of capitalism. Psychiatrists I have been interviewed for over under one hour intervals study me because I am of interest and unusual. They 'label' me with 'illness' because of my non - ordinary perceptions, to diagnose and 'treat' me.

However, I was studying them at the same time in my attempts to be self reflexive and wary of their methods. I studied their holistic makeup as guardians of my happiness, the lack of love and care, and the manner in which they were clothed, wealthy, and interviewing me.

From this experience, I believe I have a lived experiential impression of psychiatry and the science of brain chemicals and neurological-diversity. I know what it is like to not have your holistic life validated; indeed it is impossible to assume a persons personality through only one hour of consultation. To administer mind changing drugs because of their perceived 'difference' of you, or your 'non-ordinary' belief structures, I think is largely unethical compared to the love compassion and validation I received from shamanism.

With a large percentage of the western population on anti-depressant medication, one wonders about the origins of such chemicals, with the medical profession extricably linked to capitalism. This manifestation as a human lends itself to existential dread - a reality through which we all suffer.

I wish to say I have had a complex and colourful life; and framed by my life experience of being ostracised, rejected, and excluded for both being non-heteronormative and publicly agreeing to a 'label' of 'schizophrenia' in the past, I suffered terribly as a result of prejudice and stigma all over again - from friends, family, institutions and society at large.

Within a heter-normative western society that is inherently colonial, sexist, homophobic, judgemental, racist, sexist, and stigmatises difference - my advice for people considering taking mind altering medication is before you do - make sure you are in fact not surrounded by people who display these traits. That has been my experience.

In regard to me not being a scientist - I am an artist and provocateur and that in itself has a level of technique and ability that relies on fexpressing form space and ideas - it is mired in science and psychological identities and philosophy. I have invented a perpetual gyroscope powered by solar power, and was offered 20 million dollars by the clean energy finance co-opreration to come up with a working model for example.

I was the child that made electronic circuitry and games and designed and drew - my reactions to exploding a physicality that i exist in. Further on in life I now work on this PhD

with its essence saturated in the technological zeitgeist of the time. I apologise for assuming casual reference to both of these ideas - yet I believe I have the living inquiry and capacity to comment. In addition to that, a human concept cannot exist before it is imagined, rendering artist-scientists as essential to human technological development.

5) DEFINITION OF TERMS

These definitions were ones generally agreed upon by the students and myself during our discussions in terms of technology, and consistent throughout this body of work. Indeed the students, through their exposure to information and data were well aware of broad definitions before we started the classes but were feathered out intellectually as we went through the classes and data collection, recorded in the artefact.

- Artificial intelligence, (AI): The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages.

- Superintelligence: By a "superintelligence" we mean an intellect that is much smarter than the best human brains in practically every field, including scientific creativity, general wisdom and social skills. This definition leaves open how the superintelligence is implemented: it could be a digital computer, an ensemble of networked computers, cultured cortical tissue or what have you. It also leaves open whether the superintelligence is conscious and has subjective experiences (Bostrum, 2006, pp. 11-30).

- Transhumanism: Transhumanism (abbreviated as H+ or h+) is an international intellectual movement that aims to transform the human condition by developing and making widely available sophisticated technologies to greatly enhance human intellect and physiology.

- Posthumanism: A concept originating in the fields of science fiction, futurology, contemporary art, and philosophy that literally means a person or entity that exists in a state beyond being human.

- Anthropocene: The Anthropocene is a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change; the geological era of the humans.

- Shamanism: A practice that involves a practitioner reaching altered states of consciousness in order to perceive and interact with a spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world. For the purpose of this PhD, shamanism is the process and definition by which my meetings with Binnie, my 'healer' were framed, and considers the adage of shamanism in the aim to act as the 'bridge between worlds', and enacted with compassion and love, the antithesis of psychiatry. Binnie was important in this study because she symbolised a method by which my 'paranormal' experiences could be openly discussed and quantified, and she is a confidant and someone I work with in support of this PhD. Further, Shamanism and my relationship with Binnie my healer were instrumental in going over a 'personal event horizon', and decide to acknowledge my interactions with the 'paranormal', which became a central focus of my PhD.

- Paranormal: Paranormal events are phenomena described in popular culture, folk, and other non-scientific bodies of knowledge, whose existence within these contexts is described to lie beyond normal experience or scientific explanation.

- Schizophrenia: (For the sake of its traditional meaning I used to subscribe to it is: a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in the relation between thought, emotion, and behaviour, leading to faulty perception, inappropriate actions and feelings, withdrawal from reality and personal relationships into fantasy and delusion, and a sense of mental fragmentation). However, throughout this PhD I see what I identified as schizophrenia in 2000 for my 2002 book, was actually a sexual psycho-spiritual crisis

because my moral and ethical concerns had no agency to be validated. This discordancy however, as living inquiry, made me all the richer, and intuitively bought about 'the birth of a healer,' or trauma that needed to be managed and navigated so that I could be in a position to help others. This exegesis and creative component aims to do so.

- Arts-Based Research: '[a]rts-based research can be defined as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies (J. Gary Knowles 2008, p. 29).'

- Practice-Based Research: 'Practice-based Research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. In a doctoral thesis, claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the form of designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to the outcomes (Candy, 2006).'

- Living inquiry: A methodology by where the memory of existing and experience is employed to '…The notion underlying [researching living inquiry] approach is that interpretive phenomenological research and theorising cannot be separated from the textual practice of writing (Manen, 1997, p. iv),' which is evident in my artefact.

- A/r/tography: Briefly, stands for (A)rtist, (R)esearcher and (T)eacher, all of which were methodology utilised within this work. '…an arts-based research methodology that inquires into educational phenomenon through artistic and aesthetic means. A/r/tographical research engages in pedagogical inquiry where the distinctions between researcher and researched become complicated, responsive, and undone. A/r/tography, the authors argue, develops the relationship between embodiment and ethics as a being-with. In this manner, ethics does not refer to the rationalist acquisition of knowledge or moral codes that

advocate particular bodily behaviours but instead suggests that participating in a network of relations lends itself to gestures of non-violence. This article extends previous writings on a/r/tographical inquiry through a particular examination of the use of visual journals in a preservice teacher education course. Through the intertextuality of image and word, visual journals enable teachers and students to make meaning and inquire creatively into educational issues in a space that respects self and other (Lisa La Jevic, 2008, p. i).' Noted is that A/r/tography is a form of arts based research described above.

- Narrative Inquiry: '…is a form of collaborative, qualitative research focussed on the study of human experience from individuals' own unique perspectives, including the agency of autobiographical writing for the purposes of this PhD. It is related to the field of reflective practice in education, and grows out of work in the social sciences and humanities, and fields such as history, philosophy, literary theory, psychotherapy, theology and psychology. It is a holistic approach to research where narrative is understood as phenomenon and method. It uses dialogue, story, literary and arts-based methods to study experience from the perspective of the individual who is having (or has had) the experience, and to represent the findings of the research. When they are well researched and written, narrative research texts, like literature and art, can touch peoples' hearts as well as their minds. They can be a force for good in the world, and can inspire action that will create new narratives for individuals, organisations and society, and fuller and more sustainable lives for all people (Beattie, 2013b).' Beattie also states importantly that: '…research enables us to understand individuals' experiences from their own unique perspectives and to gain "insider knowledge" as we collaborate with them in shared inquiry and meaning-making. As we do so, we learn to learn to see things from the perspectives of others and to appreciate and value diversity. The methods of narrative, self-study research allow us to inquire into our own lives and practices, and to use our new understandings to continually improve our practices. Our privilege as teachers, practitioners and researchers is the power to help others to tell their stories, to have their voices and perspectives heard, and their ways of knowing and being acknowledged and valued. We have the opportunities to engage in shared inquiry with others in communities, organisations and cultures where we

can learn from and with each other, and make new knowledge and meanings that we could not make alone. These collaborations and partnerships provide us with learning contexts that are mutually beneficial for researchers and participants in that we all change, learn and grow. Our new understandings enable us to engage in our professional practice with sensitivity, empathy and compassion as well as with specialised knowledge   (Beattie, 2013a).' The reader is reminded I am the recipient of a 'Diversity scholarship,' to undergo my research. It must be noted that Narrative Inquiry is a form of autoethnography, and exists under that auspice.

- Autoethnography is '…an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product (Ellis, 2011).'

- Faction is: 'A faction is a non-fiction novel. The non-fiction novel is a literary genre which, broadly speaking, depicts real historical figures and actual events woven together with fictitious allegations and using the storytelling techniques of fiction. The non-fiction novel is an otherwise loosely defined and flexible genre. The genre is sometimes referred to as or faction, a portmanteau of "fact" and "fiction". …All fiction, to some degree, is based on the author's real life experiences as well as imagination and creativity. Fiction writers have often been called the world's greatest liars. A non-fiction novel can be written about a historical event or real events in a person's life or in the character's lives. A non-fiction novel is less of a lie (Nicholls, 2013).' Faction is named as a methodology because my paranormal experiences cannot be validated apart from in written memory, art and the emotions associated in memory with them. There is no factual evidence that can substantiate my claims, just philosophical conjecture. 'Faction' for the purpose of this PhD can also be seen as linking in factual science followed by what is proposed as speculative

science fiction. In this way, it leads away from psychiatric delusional fantasy and past fiction, and backed up by art and evidence, leads us towards 'faction'.

6) AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND THE GIFT OF AGENCY

As a grown adult, I was the person in the study validating and listening to young peoples' ideas and ethical expressions. This is the antithesis of some of my experiences growing up in the southeastern suburbs of Melbourne for four reasons. Firstly, I was a victim of inappropriate sexual child abuse, as detailed in the appendix. Secondly, I suffered from a 'mental illness', sometimes referred by me as my 'mental skill-ness'. Thirdly, I grappled with my sexuality for many years, and the fourth reason is that I had no-one to validate these experiences or my paranormal experiences, which have been expressed within the creative artefact and which link to the narratives of the students. This is explained very clearly when I use the student quotes which act as a catalyst for the last part of my creative narrative.

I felt for a long time that I had no platform for my concerns to be heard which led to a lot of suffering. I think that young people now have more of an opportunity to express their ideas and identities because they are familiar with more worldly issues through both the mass media and social media. This is one of the reasons why expressing concerns about what it means to be human in the future was such an exciting journey, and what was once considered a very adult conversation was more easily discussed with these young people. Many of the taboos I grew up with are now openly discussed, and it was exciting to explore the nature of the world in such an open way with such well-adjusted and imaginative students.

This project allowed the selected young people to be interested in the technological prowess of the present and near future world(s), and gave voice to their ethical considerations of inheriting a world with such technology. In this way, unlike my experiences as a child and an adolescent, I humbly gifted them the agency in the direction they want their future to look, as framed by technology. When I was a young adult at the age of 19 and seeing a psychologist for the first time because of a discordant illness as a result of having no way to validate my

reality with anyone, I did not have agency to decide through which lens I would live my life. Even though I held dear my beliefs based on my 'spiritual' and 'paranormal' experiences, I agreed at the time with the label of 'schizophrenia', even writing a human rights awarded autobiography on the topic. This is a label I no longer agree with, and lean away from, within the confines of defining myself in this PhD and the use of holistic Shamanism. In this way later in life during this PhD played out a gift of agency that was not available to me as a young person, who was struggling with rational reasons for depression, exclusion, ostracisation, drug abuse and neglect; I have been lucky enough to survive long enough to re-frame my life with intellectual research and rigour which goes a long way to combat the limitations of psychiatry which I was a victim of.
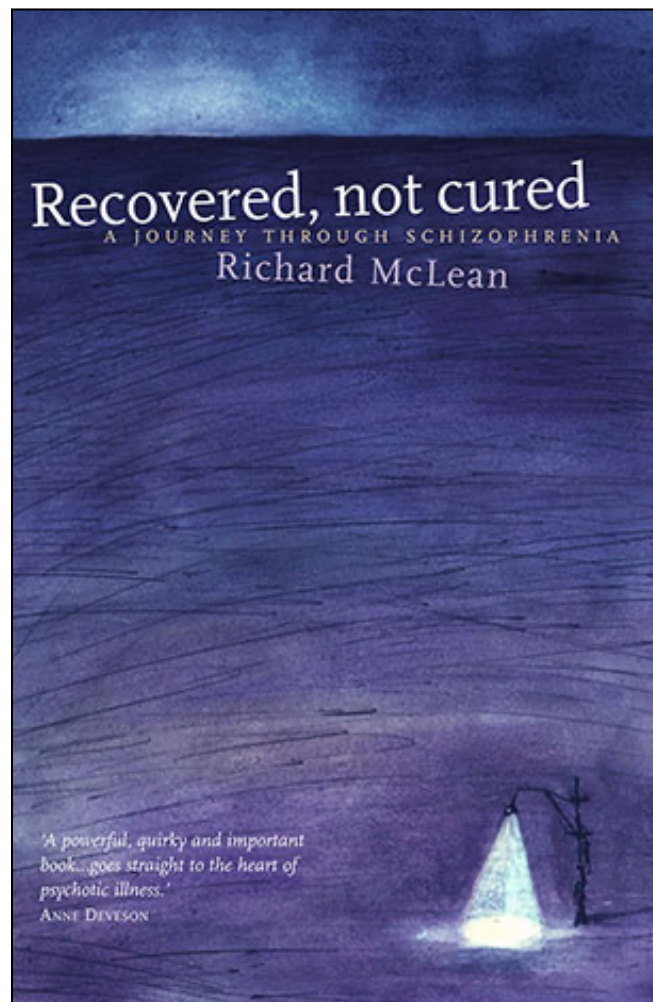
THE COVER OF MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY, 'RECOVERED, NOT CURED, A JOURNEY THROUGH SCHIZOPHRENIA.' (2003)

7) PRECURSOR: Framing the Reflexive Self
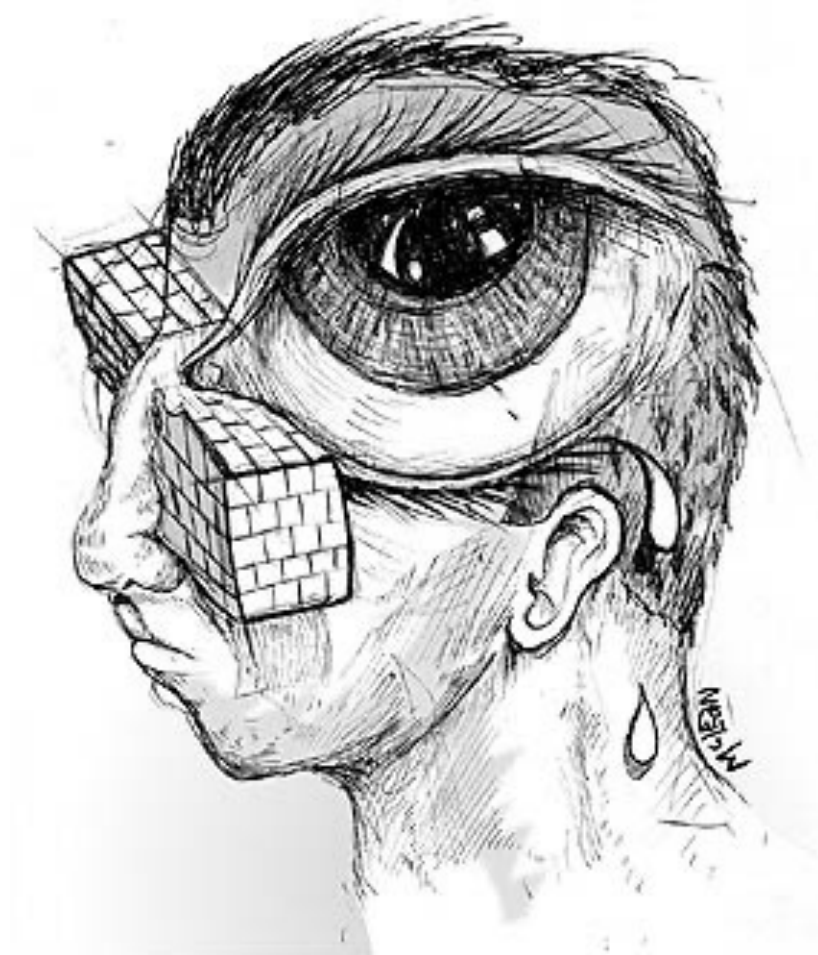
THE ROOT CAUSE OF 'PSYCHOSIS' (2001)

"JUST" 8/10/17

Just lonely ... yet content.

Just 'mad' enough to gratefully receive a pension,

Just 'sane' and intelligent enough to do a PhD,

Just smart enough (and very grateful), for financial merit-based scholarship,

Just lucky enough that only a bare few people will see past their own ingrained cultural prejudices to feel and appreciate this poem,

Just contained by my human limitations and ingrained prejudices,

Just a spirit having a human experience,

Just unlucky (or lucky) enough to have no children or partner,

Just creative enough to be admired by many and have lived a life of passions,

Just lucky and unlucky I have no filter or shame in honesty,

Just unlucky enough to have been used, taken advantage of, and discriminated against,

Just brave enough to express myself authentically and unflinchingly honestly to be honoured awarded and complimented,

Just so sad my only and best friend and companion is nearing the end of his life,

Just happy enough to be by myself,

Just grateful for moments of peace, albeit wondering when the bombs might fall,

Just empathic enough to be brutally hurt watching the news,

Just spiritually aware enough to know I want to go home,

Just educated and aware and not deluded enough to know at the very least over 7.2 billion people will die within the next 100 years,

Not deluded enough not to rationally believe the world's seven billion strong population, whoever their prodigy, will probably die within the next 110 years,

Just aware enough we are in the Anthropocene that will bring so much death,

Just aware it's unfair,

Just so sad the narcissistic self-assured fuckwits are in Power,

Just personally sad and guilty I have not been personally welcomed to this sacred and stolen land.

Just grateful enough to light a candle of gratitude and thanks every day,

Just unlucky enough to have been sexually abused as a child,

Just lucky enough to have lived this far,

Just strong enough to have survived the heteronormativity of growing up,

Just lucky enough to have found some people to be my authentic self with,

Just lucky enough to live in a more or less "free" society,

Just horny with good will,

Just want to be held and comforted sometimes,

Just signed a soul contract with reptilians for this life but taught them empathy and sent them back to the Light,

Just have contributed to inter-dimensional offspring in the cosmic nurseries,

Just delusional depending where you stand,

Just sold my soul by uploading my life art creativity data and thoughts to contribute to the singularity,

Just like myself because I utilise my position of privilege to help others,

Just surviving another day,

Just forgiving enough to be able to let go finally,

Just humble enough not to have many possessions,

Just poor enough to not hold any financial power,

Just rich enough to feel empowered hopeful and kind,

Just unlucky enough my best friend died a long lonely and painful death,

Just grateful to have a dog,

Just shining God's light on non-human entities that try and vicariously live through me and disturb me,

Just anxious enough not to piss in public,

Just so happy one of my people dropped in with two drinks for an hour,

Just sad enough to tolerate someone else's addiction to be their friend,

Just lucky enough to have an internet connection but unlucky enough it erodes all sense of belongingness and community,

Just taking the pills,

Just an addict,

Just happy to be alone,

Just lucky for another day,

Just lonely.

Just grateful.

Just lucky and experienced enough to accept and move past my darkness.

Just kind and give thanks to something higher than myself for that kindness,

Just diplomatic but still angry sometimes.

Just blessed my efforts to kill myself didn't work.

Just honest, just me with my angels.

Just overjoyed and calm enough to enjoy the birds' beautiful songs at dawn,

Just amazed.

Just lonely... with my sometimes physical and nonphysical loyal friends and me.

Just playing a role, like you,

Just grateful and happy knowing I will be home eventually.

Just know I have a lot of work to do.

Just the illusion of free will,

Just a miracle,

Just healing me and healing you,

Just happy.

Just be you, I'll just be me.

Blessings.

All living things contain a measure of madness that moves them in strange, sometimes inexplicable ways. This madness can be saving; it is part and parcel of the ability to adapt. Without it, no species would survive ― Yann Martel, Life of Pi.
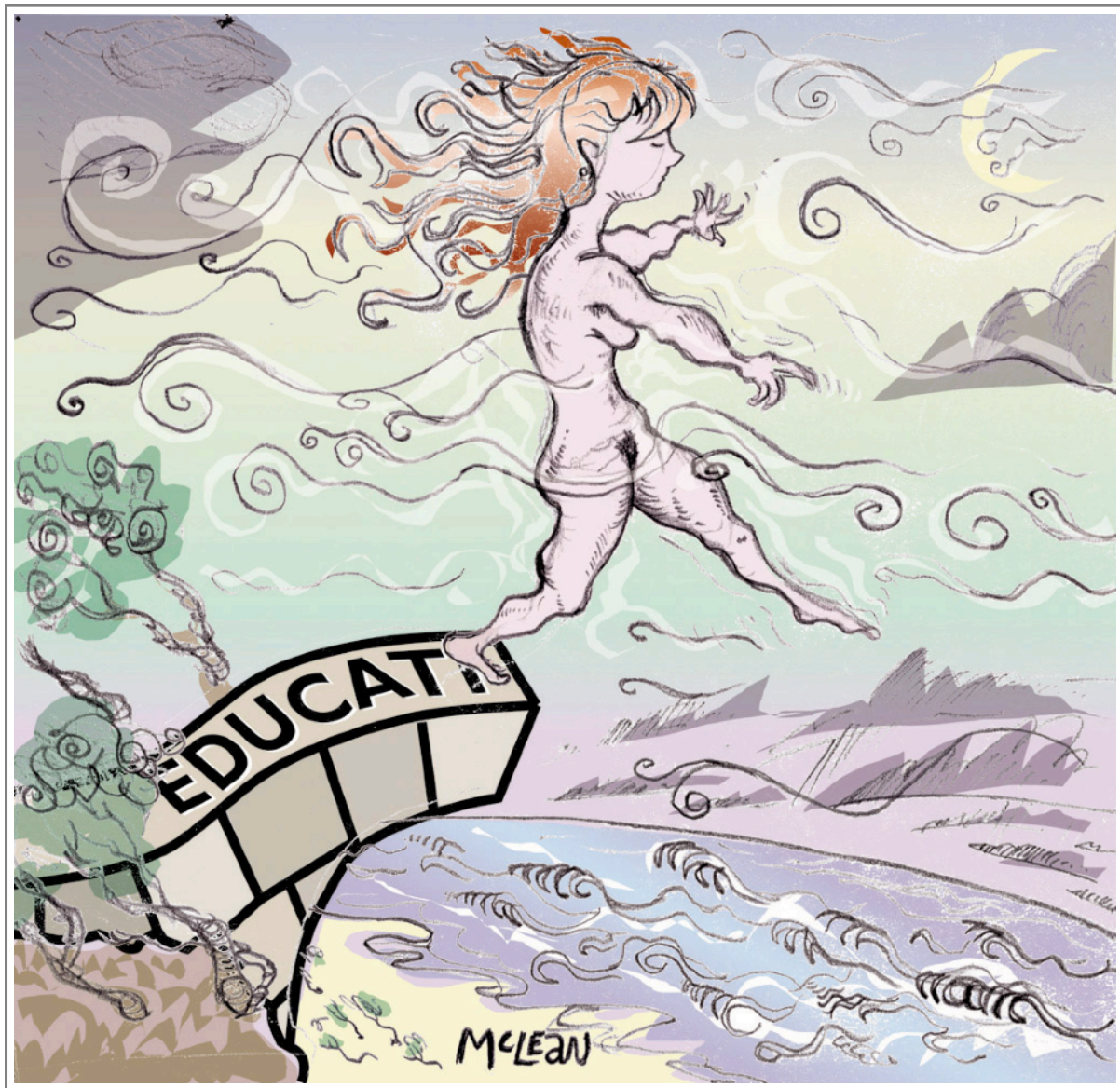
SEX EDUCATION (FROM 'THE AGE) (2001)

8) ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I. THE NATURE OF CONVERSATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE CONCERNING THEIR ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The qualitative research method requires 'the researcher to develop rapport with his or her research participants, collaborate with them, and embark on weighty and unpredictable emotional as well as intellectual processes' (Leavy, 2015b). I had the good fortune of forging intellectual relationships with my group of students, both validating their concerns as young

people and also encouraging them to undertake higher education. I am so grateful that I might have really changed the trajectory of their study goals, and I have gained a new appreciation of all the teachers, both within and outside of pedagogical institutions, who have had a positive effect on my life. I know the students were excited to be involved as co-creators of a doctoral PhD.

The student narratives were used to inform the outcomes in unexpected ways, such as metaphorically living my own event horizon of a technological singularity, the lifting of the veil of memories and perceptions that had been with me in both the subconscious and the conscious sub-text of my mind and reality over my whole life. After the interviews with the young people, the creative component of this PhD had finally found a voice, spurred on by their fertile imaginations, which retrospectively linked to my memories and art over a lifetime.

This work builds on arts-based research author Leavy's entirely fictitious work, 'Blue', (Leavy, 2015a) by using scientific facts that evolve into the discourse and expression of the creative outcome. In this process, science captured my imagination, so then I presented these scientific facts to the students, which amplified greater imaginings which led me to be liberated to tell a niche story about 'the paranormal'. This creative component uniquely and undeniably had scientific merit in the initial research for the project; then this component evolved to plentiful imagination expressing a 'thing' that could not yet be scientifically justified. The emotive impact of the creative journey is apparent in the body of the novel. It is important to note that 'science' is used throughout the thesis in a number of different ways; that of ontological scientific fact, speculative science that is proposed to be unveiled, and also imagination and science fiction. The creative artefact of this project, however, like Leavy, resulted in the work, *'A Splice of My Life',* but also built on Leavy's work by adding living inquiry as a component of this research.

The fact that this study and creative component *'A Splice of My Life'* is also aimed at, and is co-created by, young people, expands on Patricia Leavy's work. It does this by using young

people's perspectives instead of adults, from a localised environment of the western suburbs of Melbourne. In this way, it brings both a youthful and a localised perspective to global technological problems. Knowing that there are local solutions to global problems, and that it is not necessary to change time and place in order to do research, has recently been explored by other local scholars (Cooper, 2015). Cooper focused on time and location for his doctorate and explored a sense of space that was local to where he was living, close to the university, and partially through an Indigenous lens. In my PhD journey, the space for the exploration, research, and the findings has been right on the localised doorstep, and my experience also apologetically touches on Indigenous issues through writing and art.

Young people are increasingly aware of the world and are engaging in movements all the time through the new medium of social media. In 2019, students protested by going on strike in response to climate change around the world. The Swedish climate advocate Greta Thunberg brought on worldwide change in which the ethics of young people's refusal to accept climate change were made global. Globally, 1.5 million students went on strike in over 110 countries according to the official Australian website:
(https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/support-us, 2019). Young people are sentient beings who deserve to have their opinions on the sixth greatest extinction on the planet (Carrington, 2017) acknowledged. They want to have an ethical stake in creating their future world(s). This was the case with the young people who participated in my group interviews.

Inventing visions of the future has never been so fertile as in times of technological advancement, because technology has transformed the world increasingly rapidly since the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, recent revelations in AI as well as other scientific breakthroughs have all the bearings of things you might hear of in science fiction. Even China has reportedly been exporting facial recognition software to America to monitor all New York citizens (Chen, 2019), which follows China's social post scoring system, expected to be rolled out by 2020 (KOBIE, 2019). It has been a perfect and exciting time to engage in the study, and I did so by inviting 'the highest loving divinity and spirit to be with me' before

each class, in the trust that my best intentions would be the perfect unfolding of my life and blessing of my work.

In 2006, Time Magazine declared the 'Person of the Year' to be *You*. The book 'Young People, Ethics, and the New Digital Media', correctly pointed out that: 'anyone with an Internet connection can be a reporter, political commentator, cultural critic, or media producer' (Carrie James, 2011), and further, that 'many young people are utilising the media in impressive and socially responsible ways'. I think the slang term for this is a 'keyboard warrior', and can result in the patronising term, 'slacktivism', as opposed to 'activism', and yet it is true that young people are more ethically aware of their place in a living world than ever before. The book 'The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People', states that 'Children and young people are now routinely asked about their views on many aspects of their lives' (Priscilla Alderson, 2011). I found that when my research started in 2017, the young people I was interviewing had profound knowledge about complex metaphysical issues. The research that was conducted broached a new topic that young people already contribute to, AI and superintelligence, which I could not find referenced anywhere else, although there was some literature on young people and current rudimentary AI.

I did, however, locate an article on 'Young People's Ethical Perspectives on the Use of Fully Automated Conversational Agents (Chatbots) in Mental Health Support' (Kretzschmar K, 2019), yet this did not justify superintelligence, rather though, more current rudimentary accessible technology. Interestingly, it discussed chatbots and mental health explicitly in terms of young people, and it is my opinion that a chatbot cannot replace a person. Another article that focused on technology and young people stated that: 'Young people consider artificial intelligence a threat to future employment' (Newswire, 2019). Although this research did not touch on superintelligence or an event horizon, it reported that millennials think they will be able to adapt in a positive way that is beneficial for them in relation to employment. The literature, however, does not extensively explore the realm of superintelligence, ethics, and young people, and is identified as a gap in the literature which this PhD builds upon.

The young people I worked with in this study and I discussed and theorised the idea that superintelligence, with or without sentience, may in fact evolve from the sum of all the data we have created since the Industrial Revolution. Personally, my growing awareness of the deficit of ethical acknowledgement on a subconscious level in my own young life guided my intentions to work with young people, which is a lifelong ethical alchemy that is noteworthy. Throughout this PhD, I have blended both cross-generationally and across art and science.

This blending of art and science is interesting. Valerie J. Janesick refers to qualitative researchers as 'artist-scientists' because 'the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research as in artistic practice', and that 'both practices are holistic and dynamic, involving reflection, description, problem formulation and solving, and the ability to identify and explain intuition and creativity in the research process' (Leavy, 2015b, p. 17). This leaves no doubt that although this artefact is initially both scientifically accurate, and later, is wildly speculative science fiction, that creativity and imagination are methodologically employed throughout. Science can exist in different ways, and I remind the reader that 'STEM' in Australian schools should be appropriated as 'STE(A)M' to include (A)rt. Even to come up with a purely positivist scientific idea to be researched, imagination is absolutely critical and necessary. Since this thesis explores this concept, I have been made aware of some schools that do include (A)rt, which is a step in the right direction. If you cannot imagine it, it cannot happen.

II. THE CONTENT OF THE CONVERSATIONS (WHAT I SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT) WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Most of the rational science-based literature review that heavily informed the creation of the curriculum I presented to the students is also further recorded and documented in the appendix, and across, the creative artefact. As for the review of the scientific literature, the nature of the quickening of technology and my place in it has been exhaustively explored in terms of issues such as the Anthropocene, superintelligence, and Moore's Law, which is the

observed theory that the capacity for computer memory and processing doubles every two years, observes since the 1960's. Also, it examines the point we are up to in regard to artificial intelligence across the world within the public sphere. If I had completed this research even a year later than I did, then this information would have to be updated for greater advances in the progression of AI. (Such and AI beating human Dota 2 players in 2018. (Priyadarshini, 2018)).

At the start of my PhD in 2016, the consideration of ethics in AI was gaining traction around the world with new advances rapidly and constantly taking place, and has been perpetually gaining traction as one of the major issues of our time that is already having an impact on our lives. Since the genesis of this PhD topic in 2015, there have been profound advancements in the arena, such as an AI beating a human in a complex role-playing game known as Dota2 (Dymoke, 2018), and it is increasingly being discussed and researched by experts such as Ted Tegmark, head of The Future of Life Institute (Tegmark, 2018). 'Deep machine learning' is now a commonplace term, and like the students who worked with me, morals and ethics have also changed over time.

If one looks at modern people now, currently present humans are already trans/ posthumanist in nature through examples such as taking medications like anti-depressants to increase our function-ability further, vaccines that prevent us from ill health and disease, by wearing glasses which uses technology to help us see clearly, and by having prosthetic limbs should we be unfortunate enough to have been born without arms and/or legs, or have lost them in an accident or been injured. There are also bionic ears and artificial hearts, and our survival depends on and is supported my automation, machines and AI. The nature of the aim and philosophy of western medicine is to extend the period of a person's life through the use of medical technology, including heart and liver transplants, artificial hearing, and more recently, artificial sight through the use of bionic eyes (Mullen, 2017). How technology, especially through eugenics, will change the nature of human beings in the future provided great ethical debate for the students, and the findings from the interviews showed both positive and negative responses to this issue. The creative component theorises framed by the

taboo, a 'splicing' of humans and inter-dimensional beings through a personal narrative. Preceding this, recently, it has been revealed that Chinese scientists edited the genes of babies that were brought to term through gene-editing technology (Cohen, 2019). The scientist in question has disappeared, and it remains to be seen what qualities these posthumans will have, even though one of the initial goals was to make them resistant to HIV (Regalado, 2019).

There was also a significant ethical debate with the students that humans, as a result of their egos, might alter transhumanist/ posthuman future beings in their own prejudiced or biased ways. For example, would you prefer to have a baby with blue eyes and blonde hair? What about a person whose genetic makeup is made of three people instead of two? The students were literally a litmus for metaphysical and philosophical ethical debate confronted with science and technology that was right on our doorstep. These discussions perhaps represent the secular ethical viewpoint about the future of young people across the board. The students' reactions were that democracy is being born, with all the array of changing ethical standpoints of young people within local society, and perhaps reflective of societies around the world. This echoed John Dewey who stated that 'Democracy must be born anew in every generation, and education is its midwife' (Dewey, 1980, p. 139). In the manner of ethics changing throughout the ages and over the generations, these participants may well help to decide which ethical trans/ posthumanist applications in the near future will be the ones to apply, as a result of the publication of this work into mainstream media.

In this positive and optimistic epiphany, we can reflect on young people's fertile imaginations to both despair at the world, but also to be hopeful in that we might improve, by nature of technology, the co-creation of positive future worlds across many fields. Therefore, inventing visions of the future has never been so fertile as it is in times of technological advancement, because technology has been seen to transform the world increasingly rapidly since the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, recent revelations in AI, as well as other scientific breakthroughs, have all the bearings of what one might hear of in science fiction. This is a very exciting time to partake in such a study. I spoke with the students about all of this

framed by technology and the place we are in terms of technology and the likelihood of human survival framed by the 'end times' and the Anthropocene.

In my data collection, I connected the young people's conversations as framed by technology, with a rendering of my paranormal experiences as being theoretically possible, rather than as the result of delusion or a psychiatric disorder, and discovered a lifelong emotive journey of art making that rendered my narrative experience beyond a delusion of mind. I found that during my living inquiry doctorate, I could give agency to these experiences in terms of which lens I chose to view them through. I used the help of a healer, Binnie, through the lens of Shamanism, as opposed to, or at least very strongly moving away from psychiatry and psychiatric labels. Binnie has been a guide and healer for me and has shown great compassion over about a 15 year period of my life. In opposition to psychiatry, Binnie met me with great love and compassion and we communicated in a way that was important and frantic, sometimes just to get information across; yet, it was done for my best healing and worth and enlightenment, and always imparted with compassion and love. Binnie's healings linked inextricably to the conversations I had with the students and their ethical considerations and metaphysical ideas. She acted as a catalyst in linking my research and data collection with the students to my living inquiry art and the final creative component of the thesis. The conversations with the students I wrote reflectively about in the appendix. The manner by which we instigated the conversations in a written curriculum is also documented preceding that in the appendix.

Shamanism and my conversations and healings with Binnie and Trav are central to this creative investigative narrative. This is because psychiatry does not value my experiences and demonises and pathologises them. I have found no support in family or friends, and it is not dinner table conversation. One of the only places apart from healers and spiritual people who I identify as 'Shamanic' is the indigenous people who have not been blindsided by attachment, money and the western paradigm of being disconnected from nature. Therefore both Binnie and Trav act as antidotes, rare ones at that, which deflect from the psychiatric mainstream that I am in fact, insane, when this PhD journey although validating sadness -

does so out of a victimhood of capitalism, and I still yearn to find my 'family' or my 'soul tribe.'

III. THE LINKS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE CONVERSATION WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CREATIVE ARTEFACT

This whole living inquiry was a process and a project that, like a singularity, had unknowable outcomes. This has also been my experience with Part III of my novel *'Just because I'm 'Mad' does not mean I'm wrong,'* being a completely unexpected reflection of my paranormal and diagnostic experiences concerning psychiatry, yet moving away from that through the lens of Shamanism and the help of intuitive healers describing and validating my paranormal experiences. The a/r/tographical narrative evolved over time, and in a very risky way, to include my paranormal experiences and a lived narrative that had always existed in the sub-text of my life, and which was quite separate to any perceived psychopathology.

'A Splice of My Life' is a creative piece that describes my experience of sentient non human beings that have occurred throughout my life. It assumes that framed by global catastrophic risks and the end of the Anthropocene, that humanity will not survive, like Binnie says, the next thousand years on the planet. Then it is justified in subtext that these yet 'unproven' or multi-dimensional beings, are a 'perfect resonance' of future posthumans that have become atrophied in spirit and human qualities; and that via 'secretly' splicing themselves with qualities of human nature, a residual conservation of humanity occurs.

This splicing of interdimensional beings with humans currently is the extreme end of technology affecting humanity and it goes on to assume that a singularity of sorts has already, in future, and observable in nature, has occurred. This unfolding experiential narrative that is framed by me being alive through the end times of the Anthropocene and documented across my life in art and creativity, is not validated scientifically yet described in detail artistically and through events that have occurred to my friends and I, and further supported by Binnie

and Trav, my healers and shamans, who explain to me that my perceptions are indeed not 'mad', but validated by fewer people generally in society.

The examination of my own paranormal life and how it relates to the conversations with the students was born through the lens of Shamanism and my counsel from Binnie. Although unusual, otherworldly, and maybe impossible to believe events, actually happened to me, and I have reported them in memory film and art; and this exploration has led to a transformation of my existential perspective within this PhD. My reason to exist in the end times of the Anthropocene is implied in the sub text framed by human extinction. The transformation of the self by giving voice to these experiences at once puts me at risk of great criticism in light of prior apparent psychiatric conditions. This conceptual framework of allowing agency through Shamanism transforms the self and gives me more meaning in my life. Furthermore, this has spliced the experience into, and throughout, my arts-based living inquiry PhD that has eventuated within this scholarly document.

Both my own focus and that of the students was framed not only by science and the rational, but also by psychology, psychiatry, metaphysics, and the state of modern technology and new and imagined technologies. These new technologies, together with my 'paranormal experiences', gave extra weight and voice to my experiences and healings with my Shaman Binnie, and had been scribed into my creative life over an entire lifetime, again lending it more validity. All of this was collected and collated through much suffering, and although I am an existential nihilist, believing that we are all ultimately doomed, we might as well be kind to one another. This entire experience with the young people and my healers has been centred around an ethical love and a morally compassionate base. An outcome of this deficient world of suffering has been the rediscovery and amplification of gratitude and kindness; invisible forces that hold all kinds of relationships of lovers, teacher-students, friends, family, and communities together.

Initially, my emotive resonance was with the taboo of death and 'otherness', including existentialism and suffering. This as well as an autobiographer, I wanted to make this project

about someone else, as someone sick of the self, made the students appear in the infrastructure. Ironically through, the student curriculum and conversations led to a discovery of my self reflexive life that had never been spoken about or valued. Therefore the importance of my conversations with the students in relation to the creative component of this PhD should not be underestimated; they were the gesture that allowed me to link up my paranormal experiences and my lived narrative of creating art. Through imagination and technology, these conversations link to my life-long metaphysical experiences from childhood onwards. My conversations with the students were the reason I bravely went forward to tell the story of the 'spaces within spaces', and the a/r/tography which speaks about the paranormal events and chance meetings with people and healers in my life that have acted as the thread that binds this PhD together. The process was make it 'other', yet in a post positivist way, like a cork on the tide, I rested more authentically at the self, unafraid of psychiatric demonising or further ostracisation, and more accepting of the lone self reflection and the addition of the public valuing of shamanism which existed in my life like information of gold to validate my inner world.

Carl Leggo, in 'Being with A/r/tography', 'contends that autobiographical writing is always both personal and public, and that we need to write autobiographically in order to connect with others' (Carl Leggo, 2008, p. 4). In the time I waited for my sessions with the students to commence, I explored in a very private and personal way my new awareness of childhood trauma and sexual abuse, by performing a speech at a conference located at the State Library of Victoria.[2] Aiming to work with young people provided me with the opportunity to examine my own young life. As a result, I did not know at the start of this PhD, much like an event horizon, what the end result would be. Not only was autobiographical writing and lived narrative experience essential to this Phd, but living a PhD had self reflexively exposed the taboos of death and the paranormal-something I never thought I would acknowledge in a public way.

---

[2] For a more detailed description of my sexual abuse performed in a speech at The State Library, please see the appendix.

In 'Being with A/r/tography' it states that 'A/r/tographers are continuously negotiating and renegotiating their foci as the communities research and inquiry evolves and shifts over time (Springgay, 2008, p. 77)'. This was indicative within this study, because I was led to examine my own life in terms of sexual abuse and also 'the paranormal', initially because I was waiting for the data collection sessions to begin and was writing my living inquiry story. The philosophy of A/r/tography goes on to say that: 'this essential feature of a/r/tography for a/r/tographic inquiry does not set out to answer introductory research questions, but rather to posit questions of inquiry that evolve over time' (Stephanie Springgay, 2008, p. 77). This is important for this research in two ways. Firstly, the nature of fast-paced technology will change over the course of this study, meaning that the factual part of the conversational outlines will have to be up-to-date to a particular predetermined endpoint in time. Secondly, the amount of time to be spent with the students was sufficient to establish a rapport and also to weave their multi-layered visions of the future into a single narrative for the creative artefact.

The methodology in this work uses imagination as research drawn from the interviews with the young people, again highlighting what we know as 'faction' (a hybrid of fact and fiction). The student conversations together with the methods used build on the work that has been undertaken recently by researchers exploring narratives and creating artistic artefacts from interviews (Appignanesi, 2014; Leavy, 2015a). Kip Jones' cinematographic artefact 'Rufus Stone' (Appignanesi, 2014) was a short film highlighting the lives of older GLBTIQ people in remote communities of the UK, and was created after many interviews with willing participants.

I was very interested in young people's capacity to shape the world and, from living this experience, I became aware of the differences between my young life and theirs. Henceforth, through the state of the world and the state of information technology, I have compared and contrasted their young lives with my young life, which crossed generational boundaries and made links between the students' imaginations, and which led to the expression of my 'paranormal' experiences. The rationale for the scientific content was necessary not to create

a quantitative study, but as evidence to construct the springboard for the conversations. It also provided a framework of evidence that I can reference in light of the more ambiguous themes explored within the final creative component, which references a 'looser grip on reality', for want of a better description. I set myself free from judgement, and brought young people and ethics together in a Venn diagram technology, with my experiences that have always existed in the sub-text of my life, framed by death and the Anthropocene.

In addition to these methodological lenses, overseeing the conceptual framework was the lens of Shamanism that was employed, and which disrupts the limitations of western psychiatry. Within this graph, psychiatry, which I see as cold, clinical, and capitalist, is on the left, and Shamanism is on the right, which I see as loving, esoteric, and spiritual – quite the opposite of what I consider psychiatry to be. Therefore, in regard to other worldly and inter-dimensional visitations and out-of-body experiences, psychiatry would pathologise these; however, I argue that this is not delusion or illness, but rather a fertile discussion of metaphysics. Some of the current literature rejects the effectiveness, accuracy, usability, and liability of the term 'schizophrenia' (Bentall, 2007; McCarthy-Jones, 2017; Nightsky, 1999b), examining its failings as a label. In doing so, this helped me to distance myself from my former association with the label, something I became increasingly uncomfortable with later in life and as my knowledge grew. I consider that writing under the heading of 'JUST BECAUSE I AM 'MAD' DOES NOT MEAN I'M WRONG!'; THE INTERSECTION OF SPIRITUALITY AND MADNESS, SCIENCE AND SHAMANISM', (in the creative component), to be acting with the same intentions, except not pathologising myself, yet loving and respecting my memory and experiences, in order to give alternative spiritual agency to my gifts of experience, rather than labelling them as sick.

Indeed, there has been an entire anti-psychiatry movement started by R. D. Laing, a Scottish psychotherapist in the 1960s, which argued that schizophrenia is 'a sane reaction to an insane world' (E, 2013, p. 171). I concur with this statement. Moving away from the limitations of the term 'schizophrenia' validates another lens of looking at 'psychosis', examining it as a gift in which my self-reflexivity and its expression become a vehicle for healing like some

Shamans/spiritualists have suggested (Marohn, 2014; Nightsky, 1999b). This is why I justify moving towards Shamanism and the esoteric, and away from the limitations of western psychiatry, as a way of overseeing my four main methodologies.

The healer archetype model of the research is highlighted in the latter part of the creative project, while the beginning of the artefact was initially scientifically researched and validated in terms of technology, and then more closely followed the knowledge gained from the conversations with the students. This section of the thesis followed an a/r/tographical methodology that relies on the artist/ researcher/ teacher. The art was in creating the monologues/ curriculum, and even the art to the conversations and translating the data. The research examined the current nature of AI, superintelligence and posthumanism, as framed by the Anthropocene. The teacher element used these two forms of knowledge production to orchestrate a lived experiential creativity that was directly linked to the student conversations, and also the latter part of the creative component, which examined my own youth and my personal existential philosophy in such a way that was beyond an event horizon itself, such as we discussed in the sessions.

IX) CONCLUSION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

My work contributes to the body of knowledge utilising A/r/tography because of the theoretical position that multi-dimensional non-human intelligence experiences are explored and my memory valued; and that by the end of the living inquiry PhD I theorise that conservation of aspects of the human species and qualities we have that atrophied beings don't justify the cosmic ballet and secret splicing of beings the end of the Anthropocene. This suggests the 'quantum science-to-be' that I propose my experiences to have possibly come from, which I have always remembered, but not given validation to, that might indeed be part of some people's human experience, and has been for me. If people existing within the Anthropocene, but not yet being able to prove such experiences scientifically, at the very least, have emotional merit and emotional effects from people who have had these experiences. Some authors (Streiber, 1987) have discussed such experiences, but have not

given any reason for their occurrence in terms of 'saving' some of the nature of humanity to populate other possibly inter-dimensional world(s). This rendering of proposed ontological reality builds on much of 'UFO-logy' in terms of providing a scientific explanation. It does this by linking deep machine learning and anticipated future superintelligences, which is seen by most scientists to be unavoidable, and joining these to ideas about the end of the human era, technology and superintelligence, and the 'paranormal'. My living inquirys, this artistic creation, the young peoples' discussions, and the nature of the 'end of humanity' link up in rhizomatic ways that were unexpected at the commencement of the journey, much like a metaphorical event horizon. As Albert Einstein said: 'The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious — the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science'. Following and building on this, as Pinar stated in his foreword to 'A/r/tography, Rendering the Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry' (Irwin & De Cosson, 2004), 'artist-teacher-researchers dwell in 'in between' spaces, spaces that are neither this nor that, but this *and* that' (Pinar, 2002, p. 9) (Italics mine). I think both Einstein and Pinar metaphorically mirror each other in a similar thematic vein.

I have attempted to the best of my ability to create a rhizomatic network of references from the UFO literature, holy scriptures, and modern scientific documents to ratify and justify the aspect of factional story-telling. As stated, 'A faction is a non-fiction novel' and 'a non-fiction novel is less of a lie' (Nicholls, 2013); for I am not lying, I am splicing together past memory research, supported by life-long creative endeavour, and living inquiry to render an artefact that presents the visitor experience and metaphysical discourse in a new and rational way that partly theorises its authenticity as an ontological phenomenon that leaves emotional affect yet is unseen. This adds value to the body of current knowledge, even if it does so by discussing and introducing the most taboo of subjects, the inter-dimensional splicing of beings, happening now out of necessity because inter-dimensional beings acknowledge there is at least some parts of humanity that need to be preserved in the end times of the Anthropocene; inadvertently making it *not* the end of earthly life. This will obviously be met with fierce resistance from any rationalist scientist or psychiatrist; yet it is something that many collegues and 'spiritual' friends acknowledge as not only possible but probable.

As an adult who is further and consistently growing and self-actualising, I became the person I thought I never had as a young person and, in so doing, played out in an alchemist's way of personal self-reflexive healing. This crowns the meaning of the work of this PhD as a whole, and is a crystallisation of alchemy over a lifetime in 'living a PhD' (Evans, 2003). The lack of support from adults I had in my younger life in terms of philosophy, sex, drugs, mental health, and other issues has led me to want to work with young people, as well as the fact that they are already familiar with technology. This is occurring in a time of what I call 'the quickening', not only in terms of Moore's Law and technology that exponentially rushes towards quantum computing, but edging rapidly towards the taboo of a many great deaths by known or as yet unknown means. The mechanism by which I explored the young peoples' ethical opinions of the world led me to examine my past in detail, its many experiences, and my lifelong interest in all things metaphysical and paranormal, yet tentatively proposed as 'speculative science fiction', or as possibly yet-to-be-discovered ontological science.

Other people have written in depth about the visitor experience (M.D., 2008), but have not gone so far as to suggest that the visitations are potentially real ontological science as I have, even if at the very least this exists in reality on an emotional level for those experiencing it. The visitor experience exploded from about the 1950s, when nuclear technology took off with the atom bomb. This is not surprising, as my intuition says that we were a blank screen until this event happened. After this, the lower vibrational entities were attracted to the fear that came out of this, or the negative connotations of nuclear war, and we became visible to them. Upon reflection, I was so scared of nuclear war, as I refer to in the creative component, and I think these very rational, if multidimensional, entities are actually attracted to the perplexed nature and suffering of worried people, because this, as resonant perfect beings, is the one thing that they have evolved to lack – emotion.

In this way, this body of work theorises that the relationships some people have with non-human entities, as well as their experiences that could be seen as taboo, occult, fiction, delusional, or paranormal, indeed have some basis in 'reality', even if this reality is on a

profound emotional level. The nature of the experience to the experiencer is often traumatic, if at times, ultimately transformative.

Imagination is one of the most powerful weapons and benefits of co-creating future worlds. Leavy stated that fiction 'can be used to foster critical thinking, consciousness-raising, forge micro-macro connections, teach substantive content, and promote understanding and empathy across differences' (Leavy, 2016). Leavy is a researcher in the social sciences who has used interviews to create fictitious stories such as 'Blue' (Leavy, 2015a). I found this to be a fascinating way to converge real stories with amalgams of narrative that ultimately constitute 'Faction'. In the way I worked, however, I used interpreted responses to launch a narrative of living inquiry memory and art that had intellectual links to the discussions I had with the students in the focus group. This is another way of building upon a previous process in a new way which is unique to this body of work.

To be aware of other enlightened and/or vastly intelligent forms of consciousness changes the very way that we might view humanity, as Indigenous cultures, Shamans, and ancient cultures have been doing for a long time, such as the Sumerian Gods breeding with the Anunnaki. This body of work goes some way to, at least, 'factionalising' the visitor experience through retrospective emotional creativity and storytelling, and bridging a factionalised gap between worlds from an anthropocentric view.

This study has brought imagination and fantasy into sharp focus in looking at the state of the world through the lens of technology and its immediate future and co-created future possibilities via conversations with young people. In this way, it builds on Leavy's work (Leavy, 2015a) and the work of Kip Jones (Appignanesi, 2014) by not only creating an artefact that is 'fictional', having its genesis in real conversations and data collection, but also by linking in factual science followed by what is proposed as speculative science fiction. In this way, it leads away from psychiatric delusional fantasy and past fiction, and backed up by art and evidence, leads us towards 'faction'.

Science fiction has always been a constant forbearer of scientific reality, with the obvious example being landing a human on the moon. Even in the dystopian episodes of 'Black Mirror', we saw a social point-scoring system that is indeed, being rolled out in China to monitor billions of citizens. 'If you can imagine it, it can happen', said one of my students. 'What if something happens to you that you did not imagine?', I asked with my visitations in mind. 'Then it is an opportunity to grow and learn from it!', he replied. In creating this creative component plus the exegesis, I have taken his advice.

I think growth and learning are important meeting points between the work with the students and the creative artefact I produced. What is interesting is the contrast between my young life compared to their young lives. Ethics and morals have changed over time and the world is a different place with the increasing influence of technology. The other interesting point is that science fiction, that has its genesis in the imagination, is the forebearer of scientific fact.

This PhD brings light to young peoples' ethical standpoints on a range of contemporary pressing issues that are expressed in my 'Diary of a PhD Researcher', the interpreted narratives of our conversations. This is in regard to being human both now and in the future through the lens of technology, which has allowed a platform to possibly steer the ethical development of futuristic technologies. Undertaking this data collection here locally in Melbourne with a group of young people adds value to the perspective of Ray Kurzweil's work (Kurzweil, 2006), in that we might ethically steer AI to be benevolent towards us. Kurzweils direction of thinking is one of the main theorists to be considered in this work, as opposed to barrat, who claims AI will be humanities end. The thesis does so by utilising a localised environment for global knowledge production. Another perspective on the technological singularity and a superintelligence explosion is brought forward by Barrat, who claimed, like Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk, that a superintelligent machine will be our final invention and will be at humanity's peril (Barrat, 2013).

Part of the intent of this PhD is to amplify the voices of young people in the same way that other researchers have done (Elaine Chase, 2019)(Ziebertz, 2018). I hope that these

conversations with young people reach a greater audience, and that they have an influence in a way that resonates with Kurzweil's idea of the approximation of a benevolent technological future. Giving agency to young people acts in contrast to my own young life. Through the label 'schizophrenia' in the 1980s, I was given no other option than to be medicated by a psychiatrist. Throughout my life, despite my discordant periods, I have held dear my belief system of my 'paranormal' experiences, and also believed that 'schizophrenia' deep down is a myth, and that I was suffering from a sane reaction to an insane world. Throughout this PhD, I have actualised agency and choice not only for young people as an adult, but have also vocalised and expressed my own voice as an adult about my life and my re-imagining of psychiatric labels.

This study has taken into account the reflexive self that resulted in further self-actualisation and further validated young people's ethical positive, negative, and neutral responses and opinions to the central question of 'What will it mean to be human in 25-100 years?' The conversation and the artefact went into unfamiliar territory amplified by the students' responses which were impossible to ignore as a practicing artist/ writer. It bridged a gap in my mind to consider fact and faction, science, and science fiction and imagination, and to use the students' fertile imaginations to give myself the permission and agency to tell the story.

The combined self-reflexive narratives ultimately brought personal self-healing and self-expression, while the collected outcomes of the students' fears and hopes about the future extrapolated a reflexive narrative of healing for the self, and hopefully, also healing for the future. It gives agency to the young people about what kind of world they want to inherit and puts the topic front and centre into the public sphere. I hope that with the dire warnings of this body of writing, that people will remember the currency of kindness and gentleness within their lives, despite the deficit of justice through living as human beings.

In regard to one of my strongest methodologies, A/r/tography talks about the rhizomatic 'spaces within spaces' (S. Irwin, Grauer, Xiong, Bickel, 2006), and by connecting the dots of memory, experience, trauma and joy, and scientific reality framed by the Anthropocene,

creates this document. For me, the spaces within spaces is the emotional reality of my experience and subsequent artworks and music that I have made over my life about the 'visitor experience', something that exists in the sub-text of visible human life anyway, as if hiding between the cracks. The linkages to some of these concepts with the interpreted student conversations and statements have informed this entire body of work, with examples as direct quotes from the students below such as:

I think we are on the cusp of a great renaissance.

If you're looking for the pinnacle of intelligence, you can't stop it from happening.

Adding in extra compared to just removing it … personally if I met someone who had all these genetic modifications, I would think are they then same as me? Are they human?

If you can imagine it is possible, anything is possible.

It's possible we could live in another dimension and each one could be slightly different.

The supercomputer itself may be a dictator.

We will have to expand to outer space or other multi-universes.

We are aliens.

In tens of thousands of years, we will grow humans that are not very human anymore.

UNTITLED, (1990)

Several of the above quotes link with the creative artefact. They do this by symbolically describing and giving value and merit to my ponderings on my 'paranormal' experiences, and further blurs the definition of what is scientific reality and what could be seen as possible ontogeical science that is yet to be unveiled by current models of ontological observation and understanding of humanity and human nature. This can be found in examples such as the students' thinking that we are living in the end times, or in a multiverse, or that aliens exist, (or don't), and that there is conjecture about whether something we can invent can have sentience or consciousness.

The reader obviously knows that I have taken an enormous risk to lift the Shamanic veil of proposed speculative science as a relational anthropomorphic ontology that changes what it means to be human. This contributes to knowledge given another person's stance and awareness. I think if the role of, as Binnie called me, a 'transition expert', or a medium, is engendered here, then this work will alter the perspectives of some of the people who are ready to receive its teachings and philosophical conjectures, possibilities, and challenges. If my experiences, even though they are emotionally documented in art, film, drawing, and writing within this dimension, are not able to be validated or ratified for a long time, or even forever within quantum science, then the imaginings of my 'delusions' open up an alternative view of the world. By considering this view, it changes what it means to be human anyway, and asks us, the reader and myself, to reconsider my own ontological reality. This is a fact that my students have stated was irreversible anyway, even saying that:

Cyborgs will be amongst us in five years' time.

And that:

I think we will be able to download experiences and memories within twenty years.

… And that human-machine-technology interfaces 'are totally unavoidable' in the near future of 25 years. Indeed, some of this is already happening in regards to, for example, Elon Musk

trying to create a human-machine brain interface with AI (Winkler, 2017). As one student said bluntly to me, 'If you can imagine it, it is possible.'

9) STATEMENT ON ETHICS

The Oxford English dictionary simply and broadly defines ethics as 'Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity' (Dictionaries, 2018). In particular, this research has considered the ethical stances of young people in relation to AI, superintelligence, and posthumanism in the near future. It therefore asks the young people to consider what is actually 'human', or what does 'human-ness' mean? One theory of 'human-ness' also defines dehumanisation, which could relate in some ways to the future eugenics of transhumanism/ posthumanism, arguing that 'a theoretically adequate concept of dehumanisation requires a clear understanding of "humanness"—the quality that is denied to others when they are dehumanised' (Haslam, 2006). Another study cited the anthropocentric rights of humans against cyborgs (Wijlen, 2017), while my research extends and adds to the knowledge on this by arguing that human beings might have some anthropocentric human rights over what essentially I have described as 'visitors'.

I describe myself as anthropomorphic in relation to human rights, which exist beyond sex, ethnicity, age, or political and social status; indeed, a secular ethics of being a rational space monkey with spirituality that I believe we are. The rights of humans exist across the board, but which also extend to the plants, animals, and the biosphere in a cacophony of secularism.

I propose that the metaphysics I am discussing through a human lens could be actual ontological science that is yet to be realised through quantum physics in light of, and framed by, the Anthropocene. In this way, I have not only introduced the possibility of what has left an indelible emotional mark on myself, but I celebrate what it means to be human in an anthropocentric tone. This definition of human-ness is applied to such things as war and injustice. However, as transhumanism/ posthumanism aims to make better versions of people in the future, qualities will not be denied, but it will most likely be possible that qualities will

be added or enhanced. The students' ethical positions on this were both positive and negative in terms of how a technological singularity may affect posthuman beings. They curiously were ambivalent about death of many people, many of the students seeing humanity as a scourge on the earth, indeed, one student when asked was playing 'Nuclear fallout 5', a game in a post apocalyptic nuclear war; the aim of the game to make your humans survive, quite telling of the perspective of young people and their interactivity with games framed by an obvious end-times.

The students had differing ethical opinions on technology, and for the future of humanity, both now and into the future Anthropocene, in terms of the themes outlined by using imagination and fiction as research. This builds on other researchers, such as (Leavy, 2015a), who exclusively used fiction as data, but the difference in my work is that the novel is to be set in the not too distant future. This was originally going to be 100 years, but as the sessions went on and we realised that technology was changing at such a quickening and rapid rate, I decided to set it as 25 years specifically in my questioning, or otherwise, as just future-bound in general.

The students were not identified in the process of being interviewed as was required under the ethics approval (HRE16-280). My initial plan was to nickname them with the object they brought into the first session to represent transhumanism, which would effectively guarantee their anonymity, yet in the end, I just referred to them by name in the sessions yet the recordings will not be made public, and they are not identified anywhere in this thesis. Ethics means to do no harm as a general rule and, within this work, I referenced my anticipated research concerning ethics, integrity, informed consent, confidentiality, and bias.

Part of the integrity of the project involved myself as a researcher working ethically with reference to the students' age group, and having dialogues which were age-appropriate, and also by presenting information, such as the novel, to an age-appropriate level in terms of their reading abilities. While they were minors and might have had 'less capacity for autonomy,

they should be respected as having equal and intrinsic value as human beings' (Kitty Te Riele, 2013, p. 8), and of course, I inherently treated them in this manner anyway.

I introduced the idea of the focus group to a group of students who were planning to engage in university life in the future to recruit them. In the first week, a few students said they would come, but nobody turned up. I was dismayed, but returned to their classroom and rustled the troops again to get the sessions underway the following week. The class sizes fluctuated between two and six participants. It was hoped that there would have been more, or at least a more consistent number of students; however, there was always a good gender balance and the small groups led the more timid students to feel comfortable in expressing difficult opinions that they found challenging.

On the topic of bias, from the book 'Peter Singer and His Critics', Richard J. Arneson wrote:

> All humans have an equal basic moral status. They possess the same fundamental rights, and the comparable interests of each person should count the same in calculations that determine social policy. Neither supposed racial differences, nor skin colour, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, intelligence, nor any other differences among humans negate their fundamental equal worth and dignity (Arneson, 1998, p. 1).

In this, we see the fundamental ways to treat human beings with dignity and respect. We also, by nature of this statement, exterminate all our inherent prejudices (if we have any), to be able to go into the classroom with an open mind and a reservation of non-bias for the participants to keep in line with university ethics and also to abide by the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007).

I reflect on the definition of transhumanism described earlier in regards to *'A Splice of My Life'* of my novel, in that I have the memories of engaging with the 'beings', 'greys', or

'entities' over my lifetime. In this way, I build on the literature by tentatively proposing that the technological singularity arising from superintelligence has already happened as a result of the data we put into it, and that quantum computing in the future might open up a scientific ontology beyond what we currently know and understand. In this way, I present my very emotional and most disturbing experiences as potential ontological science that is yet to be discovered, blurring the lines of possibilities that metaphorically mirror the students' creating future world(s) or reality(s). The human rights of ethics are challenged by my interdimensional and vastly intelligent entities which, via imagination, give us a definition of human-ness by comparing ourselves to something that is 'other than us'.

In summary young people had an ambivalence about life and death, and also expressed hope framed by both negative and positive views of what it may mean to be posthuman in the future.

10) METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Below is a visualisation of the different methodologies I have used in the creation of my research and the results of my artefact:

Psychiatry (Rational) ✗ ← → ✓ Spirituality/Shamanism (Esoteric)

A/r/tography
• Artist, (Imagination).
• Researcher, (Lived experience / faction).
• Teacher

Lived Experience
(Art/Memory)

Art   Film

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH
(A Splice Of Life)

Arts-Based-Research
(Practice-based research,
Researching lived experiences &
prior creativity)

Narrative Inquiry
Autoethnography
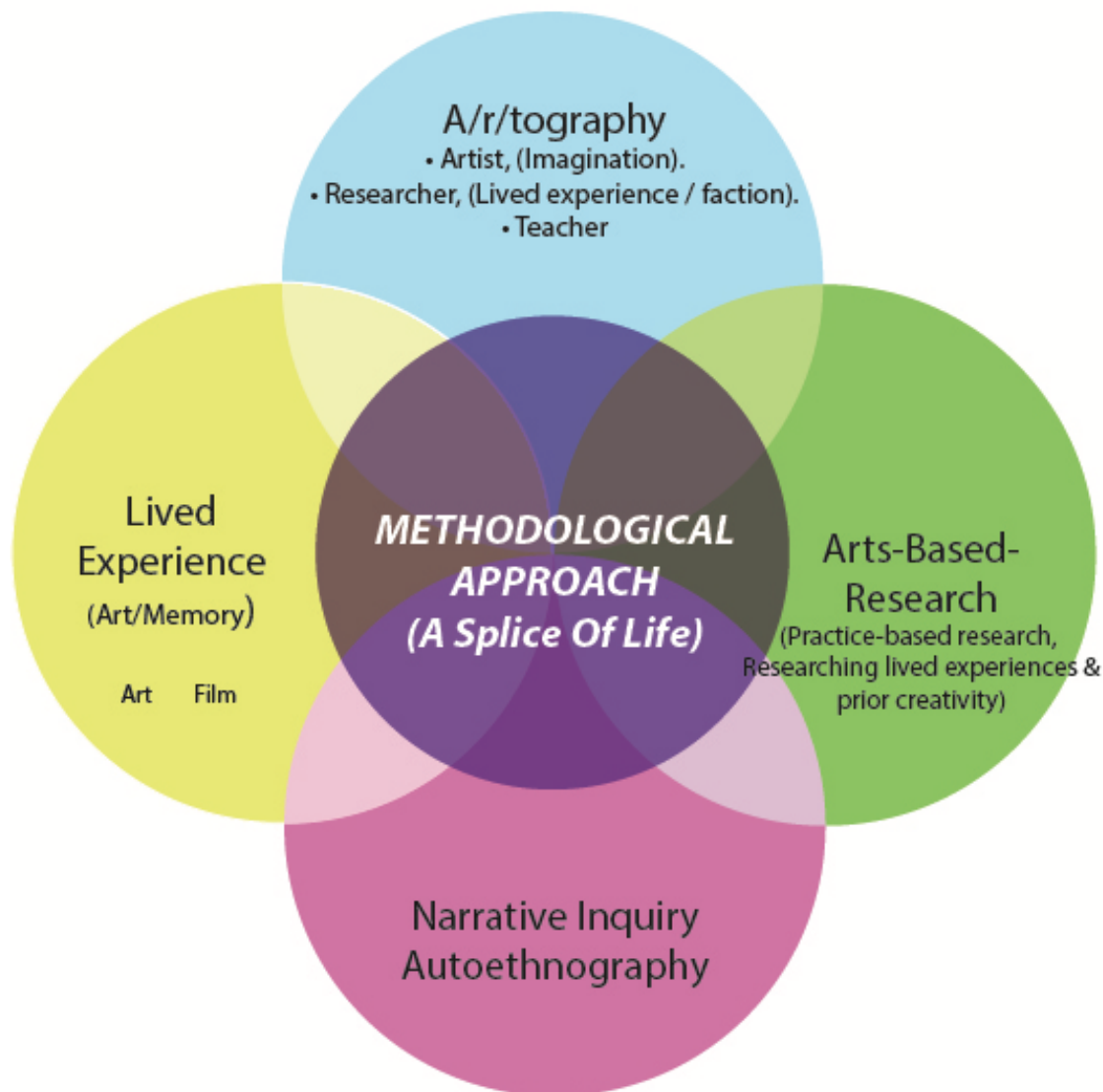
VISUALISATION OF DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES UTILISED IN THIS RESEARCH (2019)

The methodology is comprised of both a/r/tography, which in this PhD included and consists of researching living inquiry, the effect of memory, narrative inquiry, and creative intuition both in present creativity and also in retrospectively-created art and film. It also defines 'faction' as a methodological lens under the guise of narrative inquiry. The whole document is overseen with a leaning towards the esoteric/ Shamanic lens. This leans away from the limitations of western psychiatry, as previously mentioned, away from identifying with the psychiatric stigmatising label of 'schizophrenia' that I had formerly associated myself with publicly. My mental health issues, although I disagree with them being labelled as

'schizophrenia', are indeed quantifiable, and still persist in other ways which I think are sane reactions to trauma.

A) A/R/TOGRAPHY

A/r/tography briefly stands for (A)rtist, (R)esearcher, and (T)eacher, all of which have been methodologically used within this work, and is:

> … an arts-based research methodology that inquires into educational phenomenon through artistic and aesthetic means. A/r/tographical research engages in pedagogical inquiry where the distinctions between researcher and researched become complicated, responsive, and undone. A/r/tography, the authors argue, develops the relationship between embodiment and ethics as a being-with. In this manner, ethics does not refer to the rationalist acquisition of knowledge or moral codes that advocate particular bodily behaviours, but instead, suggests that participating in a network of relations lends itself to gestures of non-violence. This article extends previous writings on a/r/tographical inquiry through a particular examination of the use of visual journals in a preservice teacher education course. Through the intertextuality of image and word, visual journals enable teachers and students to make meaning and inquire creatively into educational issues in a space that respects self and other (Lisa La Jevic, 2008, p. i).

Irwin described A/r/tography as:

> … inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher. To be engaged in the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any art-form and writing not separate or illustrative of each other, but interconnected and woven through each other to create additional and/or enhanced meanings (Irwin, 2005).

In this way, my prior art over many years in film, drawing, and digital drawing from memory, co-created with the student conversations and new writing, which in the end created new meaning(s).

This methodology was my initial main one, although this evolved over time because I knew that, as an artist, the creative process would be embedded in my research. The teacher element was necessary to extrapolate conversations and data as ideas from the Year 11 students and, of course, the researcher archetype was necessary to present the students with data that would inform our discussions. Much of my artwork throughout this work has been sourced through a self-reflexive creativity that emboldens and strengthens the words in the narrative, and so is a reflective look at my creativity over a lifetime, which also happens to be consistent with my young life and adulthood.

i) The Artist

The Artist and the artistic component were necessary to be able to write this creative component. Writing the creative component was an artistic process that was necessary to extrapolate new knowledge from the data and living inquiry that culminated in this creative PhD: *'A Splice of My Life'.* The creative component took integrity, imagination, and an ability to write creatively from spoken dialogue, while also exploring my living inquiry through art and memory. This work acts, like a short film, as lived experiential prior creativity that bolsters the artistic integrity of the artefact and this research, acting together with the writing. The art contained in the creative component and the exegesis adds to the currency of wealth of the arts-based research, even though the artwork is largely retrospective. The narrative of the chosen art describes a lifelong fascination, such as with the cameras installed at a shopping centre in *'Shoppinglands'* from 2002, or the digitisation and artificial nature of fast food and capitalism, in *'Binary Burger'* also from the same year.
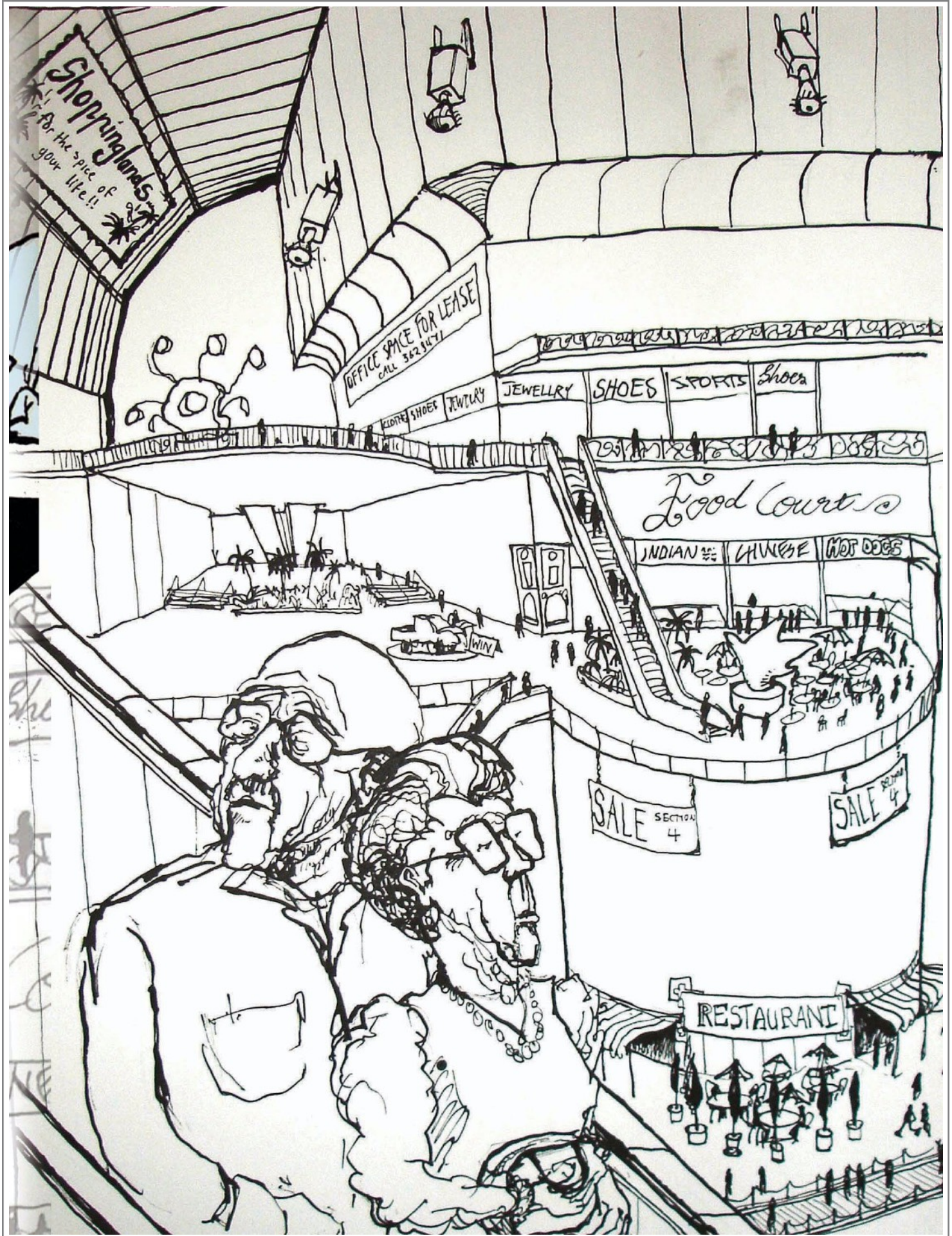
SHOPPINGLANDS (1992)
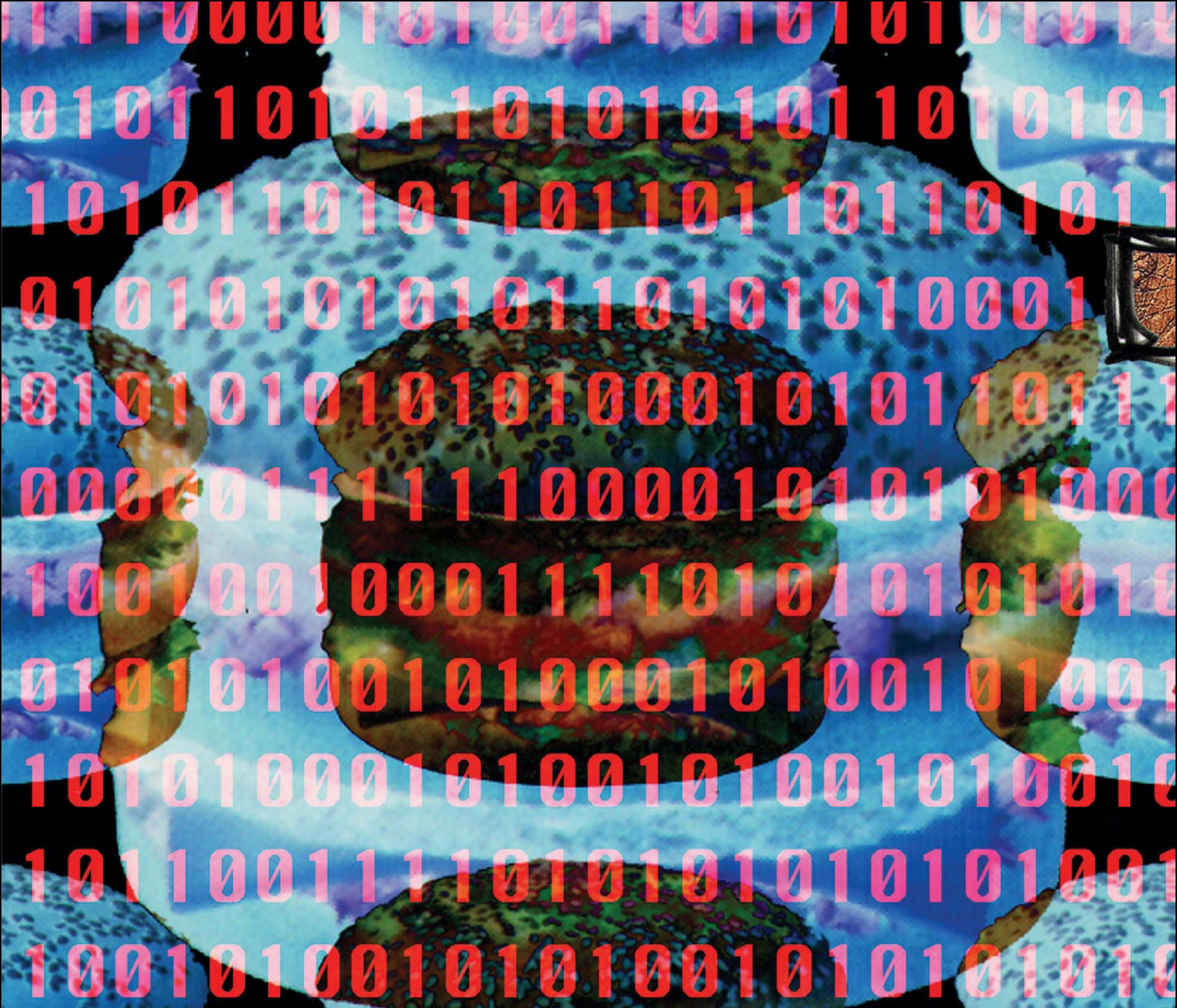
BINARY BURGER (1995)

Maxine Greene (1995) importantly reflected on the artistic process and imagination throughout her lifetime body of work. From her book about social imagination, 'Releasing the Imagination', she stated:

> We also have our social imagination: the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live, on our schools. As I write of social imagination, I am reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's declaration that: '… it is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our

suffering and that we decide that these are unbearable (Greene, 1995, pp. 434-435).

In this positive and optimistic epiphany, we can reflect on the young people's fertile imaginations in relation to both despair at the world, but also being hopeful in that we might improve, through technology, the co-creation of positive, prosperous, and safe future world(s) in many ways. Indeed in my own young adult life, I felt disconnected from society, ostracised and neglected through as yet undiscovered themes and issues.
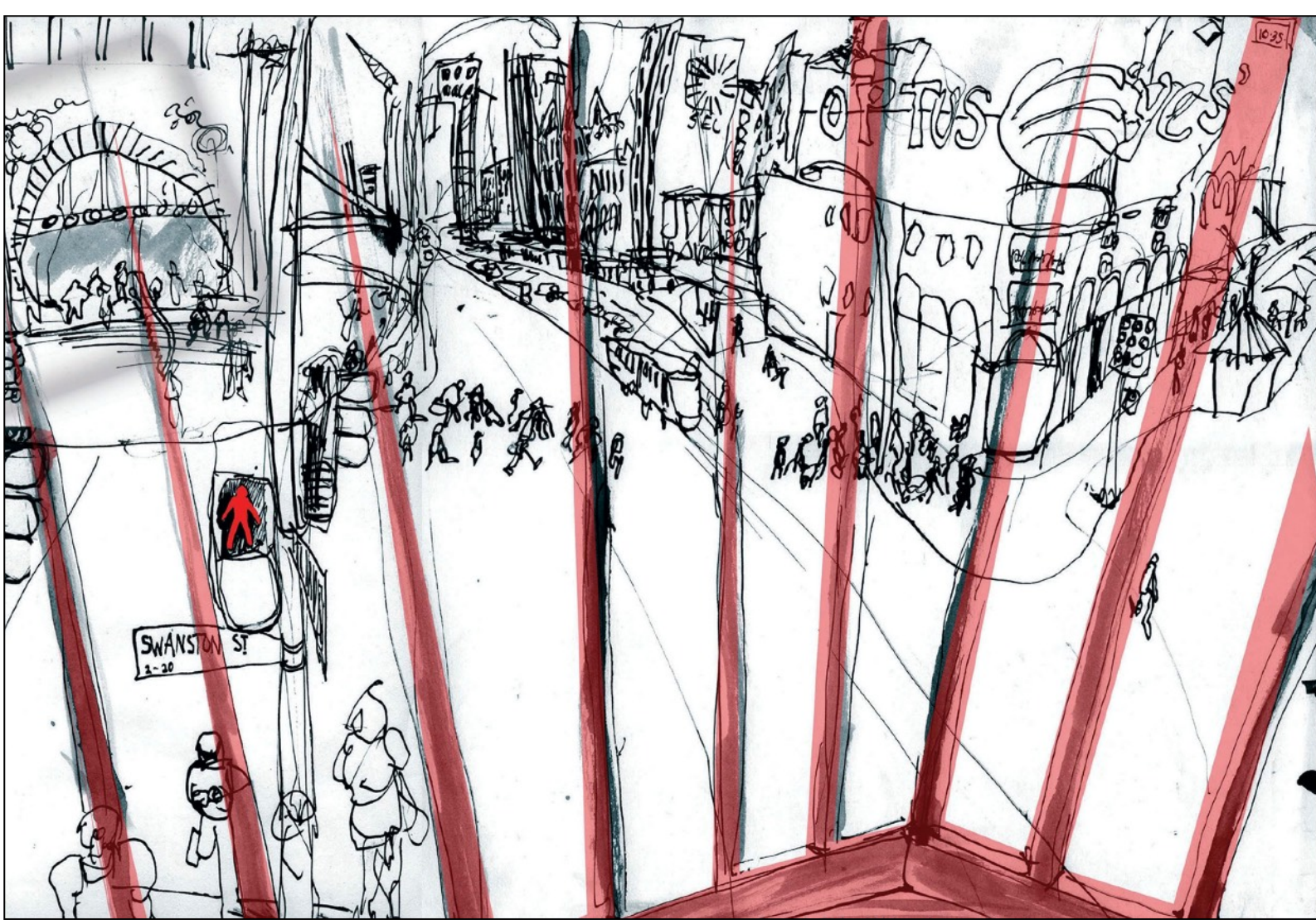
PRISONER (1991)

ii) The Researcher

The researcher identity was realised through the creation of a curriculum/ monologue that the students had to respond to in order to focus on the current state of technology, AI, and superintelligence, and how these might enable posthumanism and its engrained ethical and moral dilemmas. This six-part document: 'The Spark, monologue of ideas', acted as a springboard from which the students could give their ethical responses and use their wildest imaginations, which led to the completion of the creative artefact. My meetings with the students were to go for six consecutive weeks; so I wrote a 'curriculum' in six parts that were given to read a week before the next class, hence the six parts. Out of these conversations emerged: 'Diary of a PhD Researcher', in which I used data and comments / responses from the students from the interviews or discussions and inserted them within the narrative adding value via extrapolating on their ethical concerns joined with an autobiographical account. The first component of the novel and the exegesis research brought AI and the trajectory of the technological singularity into focus. It also explored the natural environment and the state of human progress, including both positive and negative aspects of the world in relation to politics, the environment, war, and futurism, among other complex topics. These discussions were justified with scientifically ratified sources from cutting edge technology and futurist researchers such as (Barrat, 2013) and Kurzweil (Kurzweil, 2006), and many other scientific sources that appear throughout the section. In this way, at the risk of appearing too 'esoteric', I defend my acknowledgement of the rational.

Adding to this was the exploration of superintelligence, what this might mean, and how it might affect our lives and also further enable human beings to transcend their own biology, as Kurzweil suggested. This research has exhaustively examined technological progress, which meant reading broadly about the state of technology and reflecting on it in a way that I could reach a deep understanding. This research is what I call 'fiction/ faction' and/or 'imagination as research', which has drawn upon my living inquiry while examining, comparing, and contrasting my own childhood adolescence and young adulthood. This, in part through living the PhD, has led to my growing awareness of the sexual abuse I suffered as a child. This

research process has not only been about exploring the scientific literature, but also researching the evolving consciousness of the reflexive self, which has added weight and meaning to the dialogue and narrative.

Living inquiry: A methodology through which the memory of existing and experience is employed. '… The notion underlying [researching living inquiry] approach is that interpretive phenomenological research and theorising cannot be separated from the textual practice of writing' (Manen, 1997, p. iv), which is evident in my produced artefact.

Faction is:

> A faction is a non-fiction novel. The non-fiction novel is a literary genre which, broadly speaking, depicts real historical figures and actual events woven together with fictitious allegations and using the storytelling techniques of fiction. The non-fiction novel is an otherwise loosely defined and flexible genre. The genre is sometimes referred to as or faction, a portmanteau of "fact" and "fiction". … All fiction, to some degree, is based on the author's real life experiences as well as imagination and creativity. Fiction writers have often been called the world's greatest liars. A non-fiction novel can be written about a historical event or real events in a person's life or in the character's lives. A non-fiction novel is less of a lie (Nicholls, 2013).

Faction has been chosen as one of the methodologies for this study because my paranormal experiences cannot be validated, apart from within art and written memory, and the emotions associated with these memories. There is no factual evidence that can substantiate my claims, only philosophical conjecture and a lifelong commitment to art resulting from my metaphysical experiences which have manifested through leaving an indelible emotional impact.

iii) The Teacher

The teacher aspect takes an interactive approach to the Year 11 high school students that I interviewed. The teacher aspect of the doctoral study informed the students about the state of the world, technology, and the state of AI and where it lies in the contemporary world, through the writing of the six-part curriculum/ monologue. There was a need to be ethical and approachable in my way of communicating, and I drew on my many years of speaking with young people about drugs and 'mental illness' that I had been doing in a prior life as a mental health public speaker and educator. The outcomes of the meetings with the students were digitally recorded as a narrative to inform the creative component by splicing in actual quotes from what the students said. We spoke about AI, the technological singularity, and artificial intelligence, among many other broad and fascinating ethical dilemmas, as the reader will see. My teacher identity was used to guide the students' imaginations and fantasies about the future of the world, and of their worlds, but it also gave them agency to imagine a world they have control over and want to inherit.

Just like prior to an event horizon, the first part of the creative component was factual and based on rational science, whereas the latter parts were impossible to predict at the outset of the project. The outcomes were absolutely unknowable until I conferred with the students and their intellectual ideas and imaginations. There were no possibilities, therefore, to predict the outcome of this research, which is what makes it correlate with practice-led research and living inquiry methodology.

Reflecting back, I was going to leave school in Year 10, but I am glad I did not, because education enriched and maybe saved my life. Dewey says of education, 'Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself' (Dewey, 1916, p. 239). I concur with living this entire process. It is critical that the students, after our sessions, said they wanted to go ahead and do a PhD as well, because they saw how broad and interesting it could be. This filled me with gratitude for my own opportunities and became a significant source of enlightenment in their own young lives, with some hoping to do a PhD of their own.

The focus group sessions had a structure each week which followed the curriculum. Because the students could not be identified for ethical reasons, I planned to ask each of them to bring an item of a transhumanist nature to the first class, such as a pair of glasses or similar to engage them, but also, to create a proxy name for each student based on the object they had brought in. Unfortunately, this did not happen; however, the students were still not identified, apart from some of the qualities each possessed, which the reader might see as themes as they read through the reflections from the conversations.

Throughout the project, and especially during the focus sessions, I kept a diary/ journal of an evolving narrative on professional development as an educator, and how I thought the classes were going and reactions to my dialogue with the students. This became the staple interpretive narrative contained in the exegesis. I did this on the day of each class, so that it would be fresh in my mind. I digitally recorded the sessions in audio format to have a record of what we spoke about in order for me to access, reflect, and write about the conversations.

The focus group was my preferred method of collecting data because if I had one-on-one conversations, I would not have been able to engage the group as a whole and allow the students to both inspire myself and each other. This was a group exercise because the result was a reflection of the group and our discussions, which would not have worked as individual interviews.

AI, superintelligence, and transhumanism/ posthumanism are complex ideas, so the students needed some form of introduction to the content before I could commit to holding the focus groups. I asked the students to read a curriculum/ monologue of information that would bring them up to scratch with the terms and definitions that were then discussed in the focus group sessions. This suited the a/r/tographical component of artist, researcher, teacher very well. If I were to go into the classroom from scratch with this information, it would have taken far too much time to get all the students onto the same page, so the curriculum/ monologue was necessary, even though the students appeared to have a good grasp of the content anyway.

The method of crystallising the narratives was amplified by re-listening to the dialogue of the sessions a number of times and creatively reacting and reflecting via the writing process.

B) ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

Arts-based research has been used in recent times to address real-world problems such as hunger, bullying, racism/ discrimination/ prejudice, violence, poverty, and many more (Leavy, 2015c, p. 21). My work has not essentially homed in on one of these particular topics, but has gained traction across many themes that concern humanity and its future more broadly. In this way, it builds on the previous research in an all-embracing way by considering the ethics of the Anthropocene period. Through lived inquiry, I have managed to ethically become the person I thought I never 'had' when I was growing up, and this has become a crystallised jewel of healing and further self-actualisation of my manifestation in this life and of living this doctoral journey.

> [A]rts-based research can be defined as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies (J. Gary Knowles 2008, p. 29).

In this way, this entire work examines the experiences and imagination of the participants as well as the post-positivist reflections of my own troubled childhood and adolescence through a range of different lenses, including visual arts. Autobiographical, Faction, text and film.

Practice-Based Research:

> Practice-Based Research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge, partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice. In a doctoral thesis, claims of originality and contribution to

knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes in the form of designs, music, digital media, performances and exhibitions. Whilst the significance and context of the claims are described in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to the outcomes (Candy, 2006).

The creativity that is detailed in this PhD, 'A Splice of My Life', can be celebrated as pure art, yet additionally, it proposes that truth and fiction collide. Science fiction(s) has shown this to be true, and in this way, the mix of truth and fiction opens a potential expansion of worldview possibilities beyond a western paradigm of psychiatry and known science. I suggest that 'paranormal' experience revealed through creativity and emotion unveils ontologically as yet unknown science. In this way, my own creativity uses memory and 'imagination' to inform a number of ontological viewpoints about the nature of human beings. It also examines other non-human forms of intelligence that might have arisen from within the technological singularity and superintelligence that are framed by the end times of the Anthropocene, and which are present in the lives of people who have experienced them, possibly because of an apocalypse and a future that we cannot yet see. An analogy here is that there is nothing in a caterpillar that suggests that it is going to become a butterfly.

The results of the creative component helped guide the ethical application of AI within broader society, as described by futurist Kurzweil (Kurzweil, 2006). Other futurists believe this is not possible, and warn us of a dire future and the possible end of civilisation as we know it (Barrat, 2013). Other futurist philosophers have also thought the same, particularly Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking. This research considers all options, and through running its course, I have opted for a worldview of positive existential nihilism. In this way, I remain hopeful, and yet at the same time, realise that currently addressing global catastrophic deficits might be like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic to save it from sinking.

LOSS

SOME DIGITAL ART OBSERVING AND PROPHESISING LOSS FRAMED BY THE END TIMES. (2016)

This work that has occurred, and which has been expressed across my life metaphorically, fuses both anthropocentrism (celebrating a human perspective) and Einstein's notion of the rational mind with a sacred gift in the world we have created, in metaphorically journeying from science to spirituality and making the unknown known. In the manner of the 'Shaman' making a bridge between worlds, I believe this narrative and exploration through my life experiences acts as a vehicle to unveil the taboo and to bridge gaps in perception and of the world(s).

Leavy (2015) stated that '… social researchers working from critical theoretical positions are often interested in making micro-macro connections; that is, exploring, describing or explaining, [theorising about] the connections between our individual lives and larger contexts in which we live' (Leavy, 2015c, p. 22). This is true of this body of work which also relates to the spiralling inwards towards the self, and then the spiralling outwards of autoethnography and autobiography in describing my own inner world, and the outer physical and the ethereal world(s). In relation to the artwork scattered throughout this thesis,

it forges connections and spliced rhizomatic linkages between the past, the future, the young and old, the digitally-dated, and the anticipation of even more sophisticated technology, even though the opinions of the young people was that this has both a positive and negative side to it. The micro- was the protagonist and the talks, while the macro- not only theorised about encapsulating the future of this world, but also of other dimensional worlds and realities. This relates to the a/r/tographical 'spaces within spaces' (S. Irwin, Grauer, Xiong, Bickel, 2006), as described in the a/r/tography manifestos, in the descriptions of my multidimensional and spliced-across-time-experiences.

In Max Van Manen's book, 'Researching Living inquiry', he warns of the risk of phenomenology being used to overshare autobiographic facilities of one's life, yet he also says, 'In drawing up person descriptions of living inquirys, the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experience of others' (Manen, 1990, p. 54). This is somewhat contradictory, but it is hoped that my narrative that is quite extraordinary in the manner of it being so open-minded might gently ease the perceptive qualities of some readers to be more open, and yet of course to other experiencers/ readers, might not come as a surprise at all. To write in such an autobiographical way that I have is existentialist, a post positivist point of view, and maybe, should only be shared with those who are close, such as a lover or friend or healer. However, as a post-positivist, I am unable to separate the self from my writing, and my writing is the sum of my experiences here in this manifestation.

POSING WITH AN IMAGE DESCRIBING SEXUAL ABUSE AND TARGETING OF THE INNER CHILD WITHOUT REALISING (2006)

C) NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Narrative Inquiry:

> … is a form of collaborative, qualitative research focused on the study of human experience from individuals' own unique perspectives. It is related to the field of reflective practice in education, and grows out of work in the social sciences and humanities, and fields such as history, philosophy, literary theory, psychotherapy, theology and psychology. It is a holistic

approach to research where narrative is understood as phenomenon and method. It uses dialogue, story, literary and arts-based methods to study experience from the perspective of the individual who is having (or has had) the experience, and to represent the findings of the research. When they are well researched and written, narrative research texts, like literature and art, can touch peoples' hearts as well as their minds. They can be a force for good in the world, and can inspire action that will create new narratives for individuals, organisations and society, and fuller and more sustainable lives for all people (Beattie, 2013b).

Beattie also stated importantly that:

…research enables us to understand individual's experiences from their own unique perspectives and to gain "insider knowledge" as we collaborate with them in shared inquiry and meaning-making. As we do so, we learn to learn to see things from the perspectives of others and to appreciate and value diversity. The methods of narrative, self-study research allow us to inquire into our own lives and practices, and to use our new understandings to continually improve our practices. Our privilege as teachers, practitioners and researchers is the power to help others to tell their stories, to have their voices and perspectives heard, and their ways of knowing and being acknowledged and valued. We have the opportunities to engage in shared inquiry with others in communities, organisations and cultures where we can learn from and with each other, and make new knowledge and meanings that we could not make alone. These collaborations and partnerships provide us with learning contexts that are mutually beneficial for researchers and participants in that we all change, learn and grow. Our new understandings enable us to engage in our professional practice with sensitivity, empathy and compassion as well as with specialised knowledge (Beattie, 2013a).

For me, narrative inquiry such as the nature of our communication outlined in the above quote, is directly linked to the research of living inquiry in the form of art and living. In the appendix of this PhD, I have include a speech I gave at the Critical Autoethnography conference which detailed the writing of my new awareness of child sexual abuse and the deep shame and destruction that it brought to my life which evolved through the process and living of this PhD. The narrative of my life has been recorded dutifully in creativity through multiple lenses and genres throughout my life, and throughout this study. As Beattie said, 'It is a holistic approach to research where narrative is understood as phenomenon and method' (Beattie, 2013a). In this way, I have had to give myself the gift of great love, and hopefully in a gentle way, have introduced the reader to proposed, and as yet, undiscovered ontological science and knowledge that has not been previously described to this extent.

My narrative exists in a few dialects, one that unexpectedly manifested as the revealing of my own childhood trauma came to light, (see appendix), another in which I became scientist-researcher with the monologue/curriculum for the young people to read, then as an interpretive analyst in deciding what to write about what the students talked about. This examination of the student conversations allowed me the confidence that led to the creative component of this narrative; splicing through time across my current and former life, in terms of normal and non-ordinary reality through the lens of Shamanism. It extrapolates the emotion that exists within a narrative inquiry, additionally as being unable to be separated from the joy, but also the trauma, of the content.

Leavy stated that 'we are constantly telling stories to give meaning to our lives, so much so that they are almost as necessary as the air we breathe' (Leavy, 2015c, p. 39). To this end, my experience of creating and writing has, indeed, given me the purpose to exist, despite trying times in which Maxine Greene's 'deficit' of meaning as opposed to 'the opportunity' has been profoundly experienced and has given some days my *raison d'être.*

Imagination and fiction in research are very powerful in co-creating future world(s). Patricia Leavy stated that fiction 'can be used to foster critical thinking, consciousness-raising, forge

micro-macro connections, teach substantive content, and promote understanding and empathy across differences' (Leavy, 2016). This study has brought imagination, fiction, fantasy, and 'the paranormal' into sharp focus in looking at the immediate future, and in co-creating worlds with young people whose voices have been validated and celebrated. The students' lively imaginations allowed me to pursue my 'paranormal' living inquirys because, by linking what they said, it validated some of my experiences as scientific possibilities. Without the students' imaginings that resulted from the research, and which were rigorously documented, I would not have had the confidence to write the whole artefact.

ART & IMAGINATION (2005)
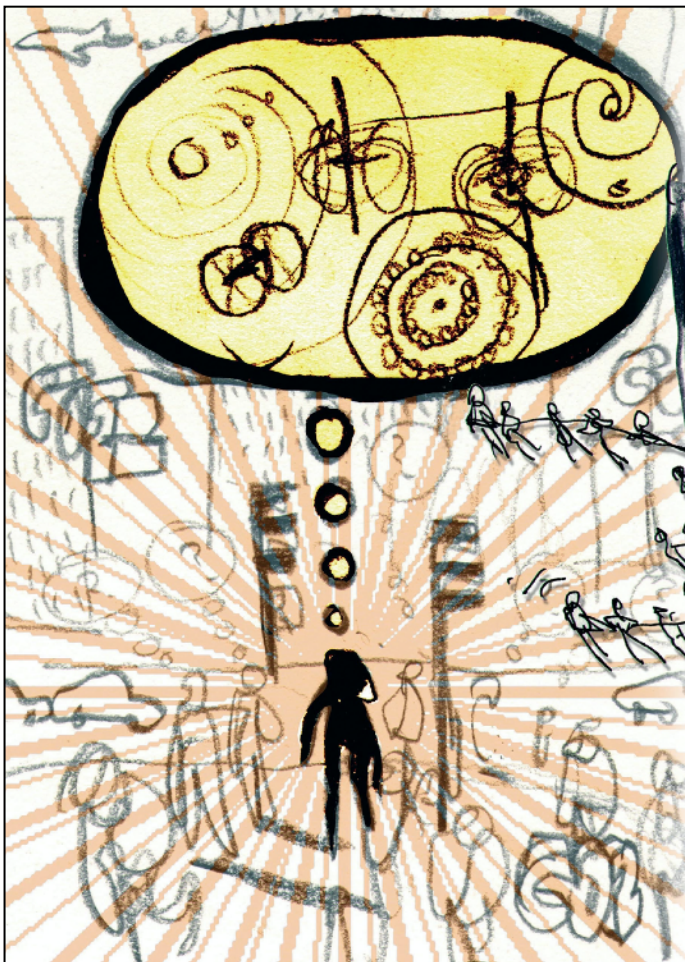
Artificial intelligence brings the realm of science fiction to the fore and is an extremely fertile place for using young imaginations. Indeed, the fantasy element of science fiction has always been a constant forebearer of scientific reality, such as the obvious example of landing a human on the moon. 'If you can imagine it, it can happen!', said one of my students. It is indeed true, that in order for something to exist made by humans - it has to exist as imagination first, a hypothesis or plan, a reflection of why science and art cannot be separated.

11) THE DEFICIT AND THE OPPORTUNITY (DARK AND LIGHT)

I am aware that in the present and also in the near future, with such things as ongoing wars, famine, global environmental disasters, inequality, and social injustice, that both in the present and over the next hundred years, that some of the fictional research might come across as very bleak factual considerations. In her article, 'The Arts and the Search for Social Justice', Maxine Greene discusses her desire to 'transform, to render existence more tolerable, more vital, more humane' (Greene, 2009). Even though this novel aims to improve the human condition (and likely the H+ condition), and make people aware of future possibilities and how to manage them, I would rather reflect on inconvenient truths, such as Greene describes above, about the future than to paint a singularly possible optimistic one. By the same token, this project is symbolic of a more accurate rendering of a world we would wish to reflect on and to inherit. Arts-Based Research allows the researcher's relationship to the work to be shared with the consumers of the work (Leavy, 2015b, p. 3), and I intend to do so by publishing this PhD.

Using the methodology of A/r/tography, I taught the students about the historical context of technology and processing power in relation to computers and Moore's Law to explain what a potential technological singularity and intelligence explosion actually is (Moore, 2014). I think this was very exciting. I put together a module of graphs and information using written word examples and diagrams to share the knowledge with them, which I was able to research and design myself, which also helped to inform the artistic integrity of the project, and bolster the methodology of a/r/tography.

The deficit is the end of humanity as we know it, and it is to be expected. As suggested, there have been studies warning of catastrophe, even Stephen Hawking spoke about a race of superhumans, (Marsh, 2018a) the oceans rising, and in a post-factual world, ugly patriotism, neoliberalism, fascism, and the historically repeating rise of the right-wing framed by environmental catastrophe is only an immensely brief description of the state of the world as

it is now. Right now, though, I am near the beach with everything I need, writing up the end of this doctorate. I think the deficit and the opportunity need to be framed by not only what is likely to happen in the long-term, but also by what is present from a Buddhist angle, that I am safe, well, sane, and have everything I need which I am grateful for. These two conflicting ideas are framed either by moments or trajectories of the future. As Buddhists say, the bad news is, nothing is permanent. The good news is, nothing is permanent. Just now, I heard an aggressive voice that seemed to disable me which I attached meaning to. In actioning this experience, I lit a candle of gratitude, and for this I exist in a consistent state of battle which, in a macroscopic way, I am battling the concept of the end times. In a microscopic way, I am battling demonic accusationary perceptions, and have also battled with the facing of my own mortality. In the vast cosmic ballet of the universe, I am grateful and lucky. I exist, and by nature of what I am proposing, this PhD even by way of it being emailed, will form part of the superintelligent artificial resonance that I have spoken of earlier. You can look at life in two ways, either we are a bunch of matter and nothing is a miracle, or - everything is a miracle.

What I have re-discovered in this PhD research is that I did exist, I was grateful and I smiled, and I was intellectually thrilled by things I have discovered. In that sense, if a smile ever did exist despite the fact of nature ending, and humanity ending, then kindness and light does exist; to be revered and celebrated all day, every day, or as often as we can manifest or remember to.

EPIPHANIES CAN SEEM LIKE MAGICAL HALLUCINATIONS (2006)

12) DATA COLLECTION

The data collection happened over six weeks cumulatively from Wednesday 16th of August, 2017 until Wednesday 20th of September, 2017 in six one-hour sessions after lunch in a local library at Victoria University in Footscray, Melbourne. The students had been recruited from a class in which they were being introduced to university life, and henceforth, they came to my class of their own accord and from their own interest in the topic that I introduced to them in a brief talk. They volunteered their time to get experience of university life and be a part of a PhD research project. The data was a reactionary response to the six week / six part curriculum (refer to appendix) which I refer to as 'The Spark'. It was presented as a curricular activity to read a week in advance. The sessions were recorded on both an MP3 recorder, and also a backup recorder on my iPhone in case the MP3 recorder malfunctioned; this was basically an insurance policy so I would not be at risk of losing the data. Every week after I recorded the data, I would come home and furiously write down the gist of what was said, and then further extrapolate on it later to form my 'Diary of a PhD Researcher' in this exegesis. This eventuated through the interpreted written and reflective responses within the data which led to a body of the work being completed, which acted as a catalyst to write the end of the creative component and artefact: *'Just because I am 'mad' does not mean I'm wrong!': The intersection of spirituality and madness, science and Shamanism'.* The data that was collected will be securely stored for a period of seven years on Victoria University's 'R' drive, as per the ethics requirements.

13) SIX CONVERSATIONS (INTERPRETED NARRATIVES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE)

The curriculum used to light the spark of these conversations was rationally-based on science and fact up until the time it was written (2017), although there have been milestone achievements in AI and profound changes in world politics since that time.

In this six chapter section of the analysis and reflection, which was written weekly after each session, I interpreted the conversations over the six weeks I had with my Year 11 students. The discussions not only linked the generations, but were also intellectually exciting, engaging, and presented new global knowledge from a very localised setting which you will read in the appendix.

The manner in which I transcribed or interpreted the interviews does not identify the students for ethical reasons; however, the points made by the students that I opened my mind to meant that I had no preconceived ideas of where the conversations may have headed. In this way, 'beyond the event horizon' became a metaphor of what I was to expect, only being limited by the students' imaginations, so I had no idea what was about to transpire. In this collection of six interpreted narratives from our interviews, I think you will be surprised at the young people's candour, intelligence, political awareness, and empathy.

In the way that the imaginative conversations led to unknown and unexpected outcomes, these six chapters have led me, very unexpectedly, to the final writing of this entire PhD entitled *'A Splice of My Life'*, yet one which is a valid memory and a 'spirit'-driven narrative based in a qualitative, living inquiry, research methodology that links solidly with what you are about to read in terms of the young people's imaginative responses to the world in which they live, and the planet that we are leaving them and which is also present, with a sub-text of technology.
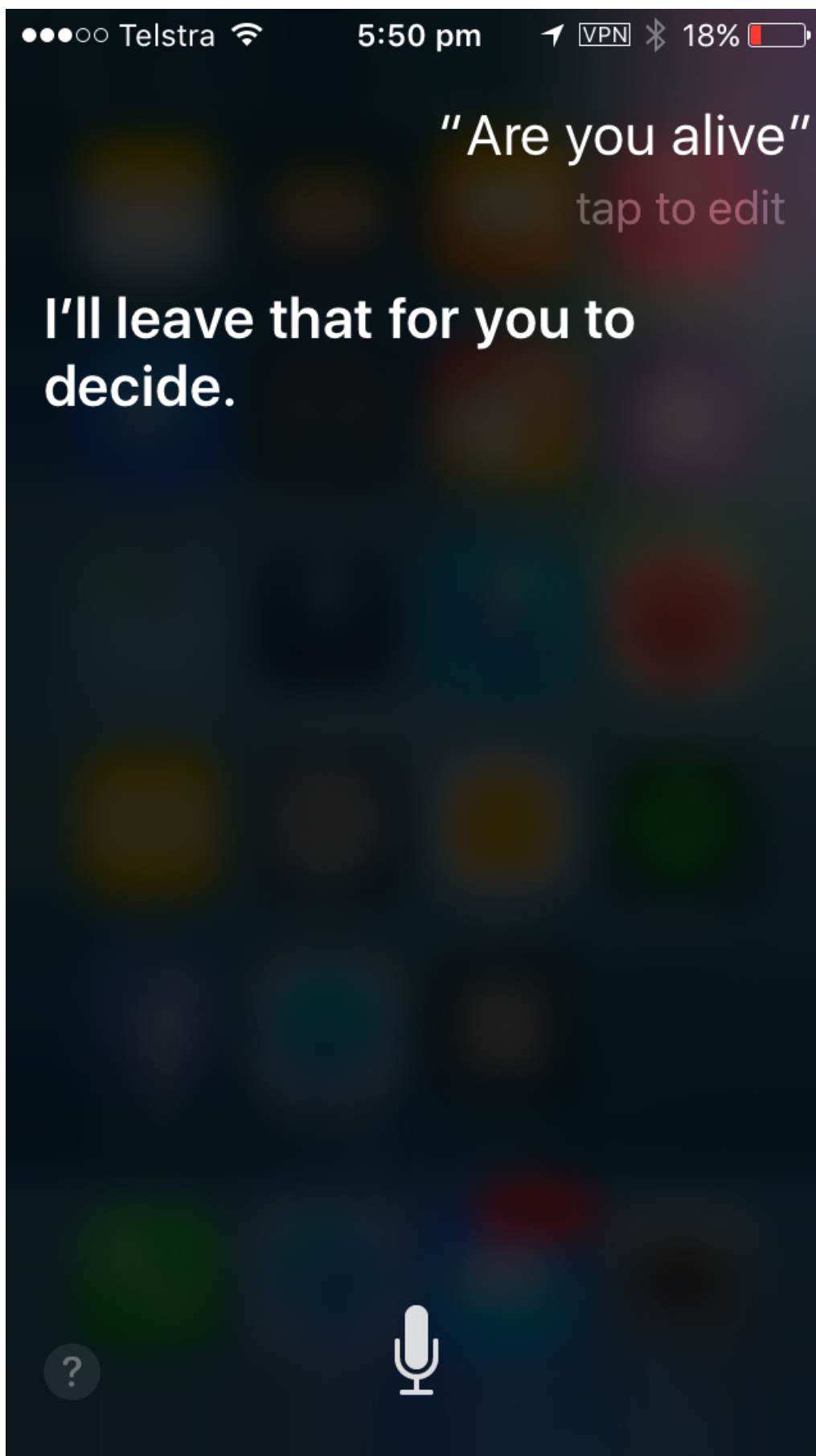
'ARE YOU ALIVE?' (2017)

14) LINKING THE STUDENT CONVERSATIONS WITH PART B) CREATIVE COMPONENT OF THIS PHD

My whole-of-life esoteric / paranormal experiences have existed as a sub-text in my memory and my experiences that have never been answered in a public way. All this speculative science fiction began to solidify for me when I was talking about conspiracy theories with the Year 11 students, and also with the science-fiction-type topics that were explored as a form of rational science at the start of my PhD journey. I made the decision to publicly explore my 'paranormal experiences proposed as speculative science' for a number of reasons:

1) The experiences have always been foremost in my mind, yet they seemed to be a sacred thing to talk about only in person, or with healers / Shamans, yet when the themes started to emerge with the students, I felt the time was right to express my experiences.

2) The conversations I had with the students actually described multi-dimensionality and theorised on the possibility of what would happen to humanity after superintelligence had occurred, which related theoretically to the nature of my experiences.

3) The topics discussed by the students and I, such as being fated to do things, that we might be experiments or 'pets', or a manifestation of a superintelligent beings computer game, led me to revisit my extraordinary experiences (which might not be so extraordinary to others).

4) I had found a new confidence in the non-validation of the term 'schizophrenia' as a label, and also in the limitations of western psychiatry that led me to bravely pursue what I had always held to be true, despite it not fitting their paradigm of what is ontologically correct.

5) A lifetime of 'non-ordinary experiences' and 'non-ordinary reality', compared to most people, has led me to having a unique perspective for expressing my ideas, that distinctively relate to technology and begin to make sense within, and through, the Anthropocene.

6) A Shaman never calls themselves a Shaman, so I will not, more just a person who has seen into other worlds, or non-ordinary reality. If the definition of Shamanism is bridging the gap between the seen and the unseen worlds, even if it is via the proposed rational science of the technological singularity and superintelligence, then this body of work has celebrated the diversity of existential experience and acted as a bridge between two world(s), these world(s) being other dimensional realities, and also the future world(s) we want to create as anthropocentric pre-post-humans, if this is not fated and still possible to do.

7) The time is now and even though I have told an extraordinary story, that everything is a miracle, and that 'truth and fiction must collide someday', in the manner of what is and is not possible. This possibly reflects on the 'faction' of relating this entire journey and narrative that concludes in the crescendo of the creative artefact.

8) I had an extremely meaningful meeting with Binnie, my Shaman healer, during my PhD which resulted in the triangulation of my research, my paranormal memories, and the esoteric sciences that my research was exposing and giving voice to. The notes I made from Binnie's healing sessions are published in part B, the creative component of this PhD : *'A Splice of My Life'*.

15) CONCLUSION

My exegetical statement was initially:

'Validating young people's ethical concerns of what it means to be human both now and in a future posthuman world, via a self-reflexive, lived experiential, lifelong healing journey from the rational to the esoteric'.

It then again changed to encompass both the young g people lives and my young life as the PhD metaphorically went beyond an event horizon if which I had no idea what would surface. That Research statement became:

'A Journey of Young Lives, Conversations and Self-Reflexive Creativity Encompassing AI, Superintelligence and the Future World(s) of Posthumanism Framed by the Anthropocene.'

This version was punchier, covered more ground, and was a better book/ exegesis title, covering all bases explored in my research. The change was necessary because of the need to be concise, and as a process through which I distilled meaning and the communication of that meaning.

Further to the end of the PhD, I lost the research question all together and simply titled the entirety of the PhD: *'A Splice of My Life.'*

Within this body of artefact and creative exegesis, I have completed and achieved my statement and goal of amplifying young peoples' ethical concerns about what it means to be human both now and in a future posthuman world. Indeed, this has been expressed through not only a rational science-based paradigm within the Spark of Ideas that is factual, but the work then digressed from the springboard of the students' recorded narratives to allow me to heal, and then to build confidence, in effect allowing myself the agency to tell the story of my

own young life and adulthood that is based both on the rational and on 'non-ordinary' realities.

This links to people, ideas, artwork, and also the rational and esoteric world(s). The entire experience has resulted in a personal, self-actualised transformation of the reflexive self in the midst of an awareness of grief and suffering via a fierce resilience that stems partly from furious anger of being marginalised, excluded, abused, and neglected for my 'psychiatric condition', and also in light of past 'psychiatric concerns' to acquire the achievement of a PhD.

The healing over a lifetime that has come through living inquiry and the 'writing of my life', and 'living a PhD' has been profound, albeit distressing, and yet, it has resulted in me being more self-reflexively aware and proud of what I have achieved in the manner of healing and validating my true experiences and beliefs. The kindness of other people, including my healer(s), the students I interviewed, my friends, my supervisors, and some family members, has been paramount. Importantly, the deficit of what I experienced as a young person in terms of support in relation to sexuality, drug abuse, and mental illness has been transformed through alchemy, so that I could attempt to be the adult I never had to the young people I interviewed. What I mean by 'alchemy' is the symbolic turning of metal into gold; for at one time I was burdened with a label and the stigma that comes with it and a homeless meth junkie. Via trusting in my intuition and my beliefs I have been given the opportunity to engage in academia which has been a great privilege. Rather than this be seen as a grandiose statement, it is simply one that demonstrates generational healing; in that I have attempted to address the struggling inner child, adolescent and young adult in a manner to the students which I felt was lacking in my life. In this way I guess I was simply trying to be the open minded support person I felt I lack in ways. In this way, there was a lifelong ethical alchemy that resulted in deep healing and resolution.

In conclusion, young people have, from the indications in my research, not only been keenly interested in wanting to know what sort of world they want to live in, but also to co-create it.

They exist in a time when technology has already rendered them posthuman, and also where they are exposed to many concepts and ideas through the online world which has resulted in them being much more politically, socially, economically, and ethically aware of the life they live, and needing acknowledgement of the world they want to create and live in. In addition, across the spectrum of complex political, social, and metaphysical ideas we discussed, the students have honoured the entire spectrum of positive and negative opinions about what it means to be human, both now and in the future, through the lens of technology.
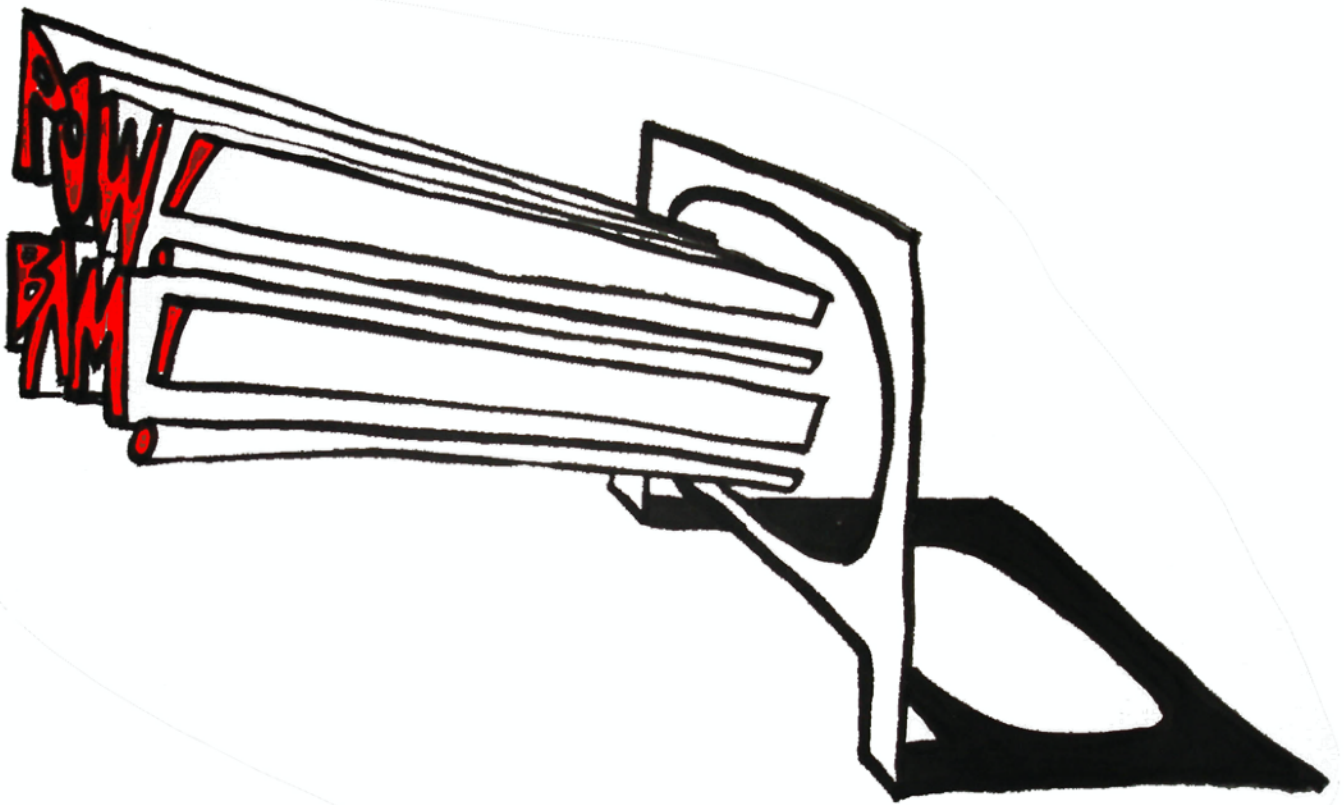
'POW, BAM!', (SOMETHING FROM NOTHING, TACTILE FROM ILLUSION) (1997)

16) THE CONTRIBUTION: VALUE OR WORTH OF WHAT I DID

This research has significant value through covering a range of different aspects of life spanning technologies, psychiatry and Shamanism, healing, being human, young people, and ethics in contrast with my own young ethical life. I have distilled them into the following sixteen points:

1. Through living inquiry and the lens of Shamanism, this research provides deep healing for the protagonist (me), and has also engaged young people in validating their own moral and ethical concerns about what it means to be human both now and in the future (through the lens of technology), and in doing so, has amplified their important voices.

2. The research has value because of the young people's familiarity with the technology we are discussing, which is unlike any other point in human history.

3. The value of this work (especially the creative component) is that, as art, it is entertaining and engaging, yet as 'speculative science fiction', it is fascinating and could help co-create future world(s) via the imagination. Considered as rational science, the thesis is confronting and bordering on taboo, using a Shamanic model of bridging worlds in ways that are cross-generational, futuristic, across time, across neurodiversity, and across the real, the ideal, and the unreal. It blurs the boundaries of possibility(s).

4. The research is significant because the ideas of superintelligence and deep machine learning leading to a technological singularity and artificial general intelligence (AGI) can be seen as irreversible and rapidly approaching when viewed exponentially rather than linearly. It is not a matter of 'if' but 'when'. The ethics of how it will work or the mechanisms of how it will affect humanity are misunderstood at best. In his article, 'AI

and the Future of Ethics', Biggins (2017) asked what it is and if we can punish it, and also asks whether it will be benevolent (Biggins, 2017). This research provides a possible opportunity to ethically steer AI in a benevolent direction by giving agency to young people to decide what sort of future world they would like to live in and inherit, which is the antithesis of my experience as a young person having been imposed upon through psychiatric labelling in my youth.

5.   This research has worth because it extrapolates on the very nature of human survival beyond the Anthropocene, which is proposed to have started in the 1950s (Carrington, 2016), and into the posthuman age within which, even as early as 2000, it was suggested that we need a broad understanding of politics and ethics in order to survive (Gray, 2000).

6.   The research talks about human/ machine cyborg interfaces that the students considered would happen, and is considered by some as unavoidable, and which is being developed as I write this. Futurist Elon Musk is at the forefront of Neuralink (Bergen, 2016), a company that is developing current technologies (Emilio Scalise, 2018) of implantable brain-computer interfaces, so the research is contemporary and increasingly topical.

7.   This research has worth because it examines some of the catastrophic risks faced in human and post-human survival in, and beyond, the age of the Anthropocene, which has led to a personal reinstating of celebrating kindness and ethical compassion in the present tense, as something to be revered and celebrated in opposition to the deficiency of suffering on Earth.

8.   The research and accompanying creative artefact are important because they detail how complicated people's reality(ies) can be as seen through a range of different lenses that include both a potential psychiatric one, yet also a leaning more towards spirituality

and holistic healing through Shamanism. In doing so, I give myself the gift of agency in storytelling, which further self-actualises my healing.

9.   The creative product(s) and exegesis are important because they act out of compassion for all earthly life and create a dialogue through which people can reflect on the miracle that the world is, through an anthropocentric lens that celebrates the human perspective, and considers how we might morph, or potentially have morphed or are morphing, into resonant posthuman beings beyond quantum superintelligence.

10.   This research is significant because it has given the young participants the agency to focus on their ethical reflections about their present and future in terms of technology, AI, superintelligence, and transhumanism/ posthumanism (H+), which is present, rapidly accelerating, and will be unavoidably forthcoming in their lives.

11.   The creative component (the artefact[s]) is significant because it uses both fact and imagination, and fiction as research, or in other words, 'faction'. Additionally, it suggests paranormal experience as a-yet-to-be-unveiled ontological science, for now, described as 'speculative science fiction'. This challenges the western scientific paradigm of ontological science through creative expression.

12.   This research is significant because it has encouraged and inspired young people to further their education, which was so satisfying for myself as an a/r/tographical researcher.

13.   This research was employed at a unique time in human history, with rapidly advancing technology, including AI and possible superintelligence further enabling posthumanism having never happened before, and so it discusses and provides an ethical discourse about cutting-edge contemporary technology.

14. The findings contribute to a deeper level of understanding of current Australian and future pedagogical practices aligned with AI in regard to STEM, which has been re-proposed as STE(A)M to include and encapsulate (A)rt as a necessary companion to science-based pedagogies, which some select pedagogies in specific schools having already been adopted.

15. The research is significant because it analyses the relationship between futurist thinking and theory in relation to the current cultural view of technology, including imagination that has opened a doorway into other critical ways of thinking about an anthropocentric view of the world and the cosmos/ universe and humanity's place in it.

16. Importantly, the research is significant because it allows me to reframe the self away from psychiatric labels, and in doing so, allows the students' agency to decide what type of world they want to live in and inherit/ create, as the antithesis of what metaphorically happened to me in my young life in relation to psychiatry. This was a true ethical alchemy that was deeply healing that was played out over a lifetime.

17) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS RESEARCH: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. This research contributes to knowledge because it pushes the boundaries of arts-based, practice-led research by encompassing both fact and fiction/ faction as research within a single artefact, including proposing the 'paranormal' examined through Shamanism, an as yet to be unveiled ontological science which challenges western scientific paradigms.

2. The discussion/ analysis of the relationship between futurist thinking and the current view (policy and cultural) of technology is a significant contribution to knowledge because it has given agency for young people to decide on what kind of future they would like to inherit, even if in theory, the rush of technological change is unstoppable and unavoidable. This was different to my own youth with a diagnosis of 'schizophrenia',

in which I had no agency, which upon re-examination, has created meaning throughout this work.

3. This research contributes to ethical understandings and public debate about AI, superintelligence, and the anticipated technological singularity further enabling posthumanism, and the ethical decisions of potentially designing future sentient being(s). It does this while also reflecting on the nature of a universal superintelligence politically, socially, and in gendered ways, and over human survival into and beyond the Anthropocene.

4. This research contributes to student engagement in a localised setting which has facilitated global knowledge production through focus groups, and has contained niche content never discussed before due to the status quo of technology.

5. This research contributes to knowledge in that it enables young people's voices about superintelligence explosions and ethical considerations to do with what it means to be human as framed by the rapid rise of technology and superintelligence to be heard, which has not been found in the literature. The solid findings from the students' ethical opinions and subsequent conclusions was that they have both optimism and pessimism for the future and they emphasised and demonstrated that human ethics and the state of the world are on the cusp of rapidly changing.

6. This research was significant because through researching living inquiry, previous art, and memory, the narrative broke through the taboo of 'the visitor experience' via the vehicle of Shamanism with the help of healer(s) to be presented in an accessible and digestible tone. This kind tone is the genesis of Shamanism and engages a process of healing to bridge the knowledge between 'worlds', and to reduce tension between contrasts of concepts and of world(s).

Part B)
A 'SPLICE' OF *MY* LIFE

'Just because I am 'mad', does not mean I'm wrong!'; The intersection of spirituality and 'madness', science and Shamanism.

Maybe each human being lives in a unique world, a private world different from those inhabited and experienced by all other humans ... If reality differs from person to person, can we speak of reality singular, or shouldn't we really be talking about plural realities? And if there are plural realities, are some more true (more real) than others? What about the world of a schizophrenic? Maybe it's as real as our world. Maybe we cannot say that we are in touch with reality and he is not, but should instead say, His reality is so different from ours that he can't explain his to us, and we can't explain ours to him. The problem, then, is that if subjective worlds are experienced too differently, there occurs a breakdown in communication ... and there is the real illness — Philip K. Dick.
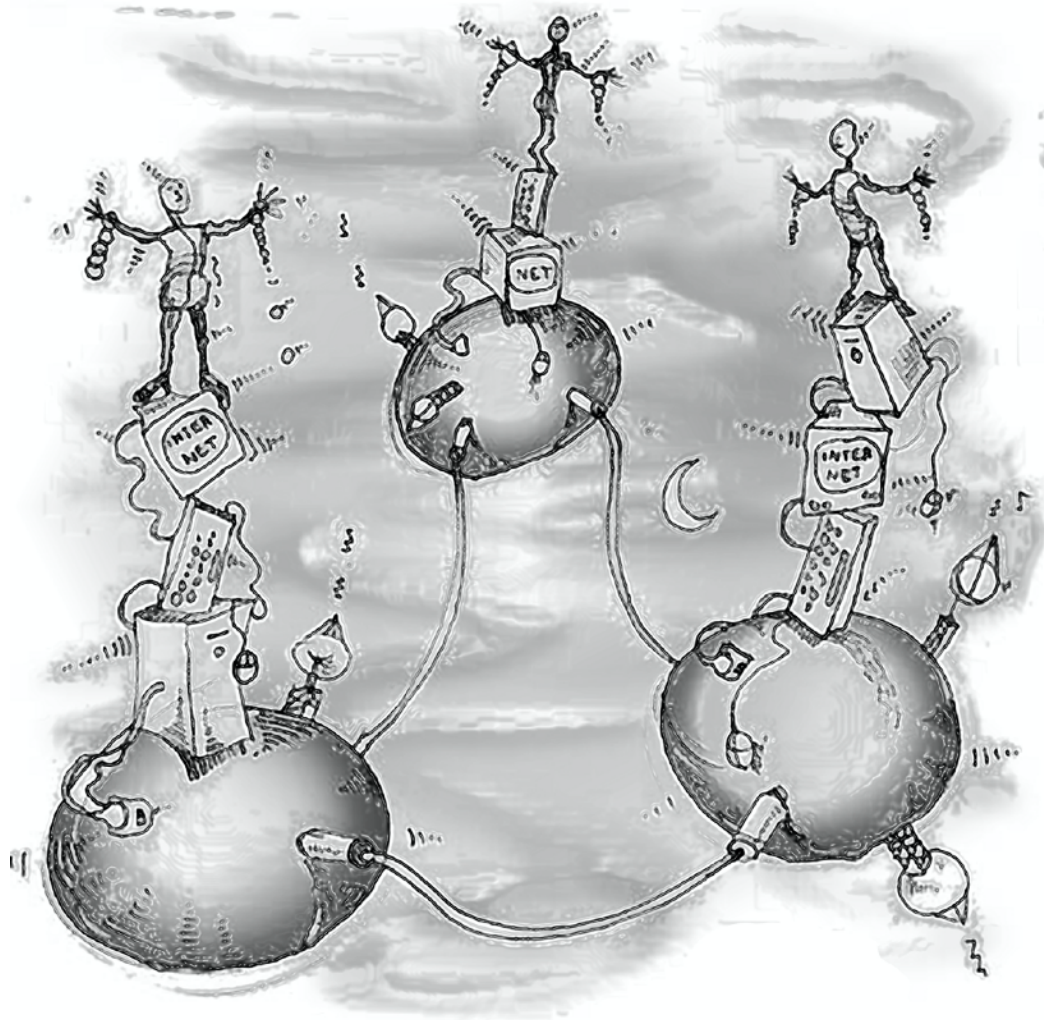
LIVING IN UNIQUE WORLD(S) (ILLUSTRATION FROM 'THE AGE' (2001)

A Renaissance of creativity

Renaissance man, are you ready? See what a world that you can make, –
Midnight Oil.

Being an artist and a creative person, one has the freedom of thought not to be connected to society, but also to be a participant and also an observer and an expressionist. I believe I have been these things to varying degrees of success (never financial), and further, doing a PhD and being paid to explore new information and the financial support for freedom of self-expression is a blessing very few will have.

It was Wednesday the 29th of September 2017 on the Gregorian calendar when I started writing this section, at 2am, and I have until next April 2019 to finish it. This writing is happening in the context of The New York Times reporting recently that UFOs exist, a multi-million dollar UFO program is being run, and the Pentagon knows about this (ABC/Reuters, 2017; Helene Cooper, 2017). For others who have experienced the metaphysical phenomena of what I will also call 'visitors', such as Whitley Streiber, author of 'Communion', this will come as no surprise. I read Streiber's book when I was younger after seeing the cover, because I instantly recognised the 'face'. I was interested in this book because it opened philosophical questions and fascinated me because it related to experiences I had had, and his description of 'screen memories' (Streiber, 1987) were similar to mine and so common for people who have experienced these phenomena, and which I describe later in this narrative.

The journey of the PhD has been filled with highs and lows – even an overdose attempt. The following is my voice from my diary of 'living through' the PhD experience, as Megan Evans described (Evans, 2003), and which is reported here as a diaristic narrative that has framed my emotive state confronting the concepts of the PhD within the context of simply trying to live and survive emotionally, physically, and financially.

5th May 2018

Sunny days ... meaningful touch, friends, happiness, intimacy and hope ... where did you go?

Suicidality invades my mind every few days as it has done for years along with my nightmare dreams every night, my isolation is complete and addictions are in fine tow.

My childhood was stolen ...

Psychiatry and psychology forsake me, capitalism strangled, isolated, and pathologised me, and again I find myself broke alone and listless, with my dying dog, my best friend, the only one that did not judge me, by my side.

Social media took away my neighbours, isolated me, and I've forgotten how to fish, care, and cook.

My bucket list is done and dusted, and the light has long been extinguished and is gone from my creativity; art is dead to me and is not given the valued currency it deserved.

My creations are worthless.

Love has been a cruel power grabbing assault or conditional from which I'm still disturbed and my many experiences of which I left no stone unturned was cheap.

Now I lie on my bed with my nicotine vape, pills, and addictions, having memorised the pressed tin ceiling wondering how to pay rent and what to do with anyone and where to go.

I leave the lights on at night to make the room seem more full, and music on to break the desolate silence of my life.

I'm famous because I gave till I had nothing left, and now no-one seems to care and I'm all alone.

I'd rather die of passion than boredom, and every post or electronic communique screams, "Please validate my existence!"

Mostly, every smile I gave was fake, the person you loved never was authentic and in this moment is already gone. I was rarely my authentic self.

Some of my best friends died of this pain and pure neglect, I miss them ... and I worry for my fate and my own neglect from myself, society, and others.

I resonate with the hopelessness of the trapped animals, just an earthbound misfit ... sometimes I think it was God's mistake to imprison my soul here.

Here it is again. The fetid darkness. The nihilist pointlessness.

I'd become a recluse, but that already happened.

I just need to tread water till I can swim, again and again, and again, one more time.

The good news is, nothing is permanent, the bad news is, nothing is permanent.

If you're suffering, so am I.

Hopefully, I lament: "I give myself permission to be loving and forgiving towards myself, God, and others ..."

This too, shall pass.

Thanks for reading.

This whole PhD titled *"A Splice of My Life"* marries together both young people's ethical opinions about the future of artificial intelligence and technology within, and after, the Earth's sixth greatest extinction (Carrington, 2017) as framed by the Anthropocene, together with an examination of my own non-validated youth that makes it both the students' story and my further self-healing story.
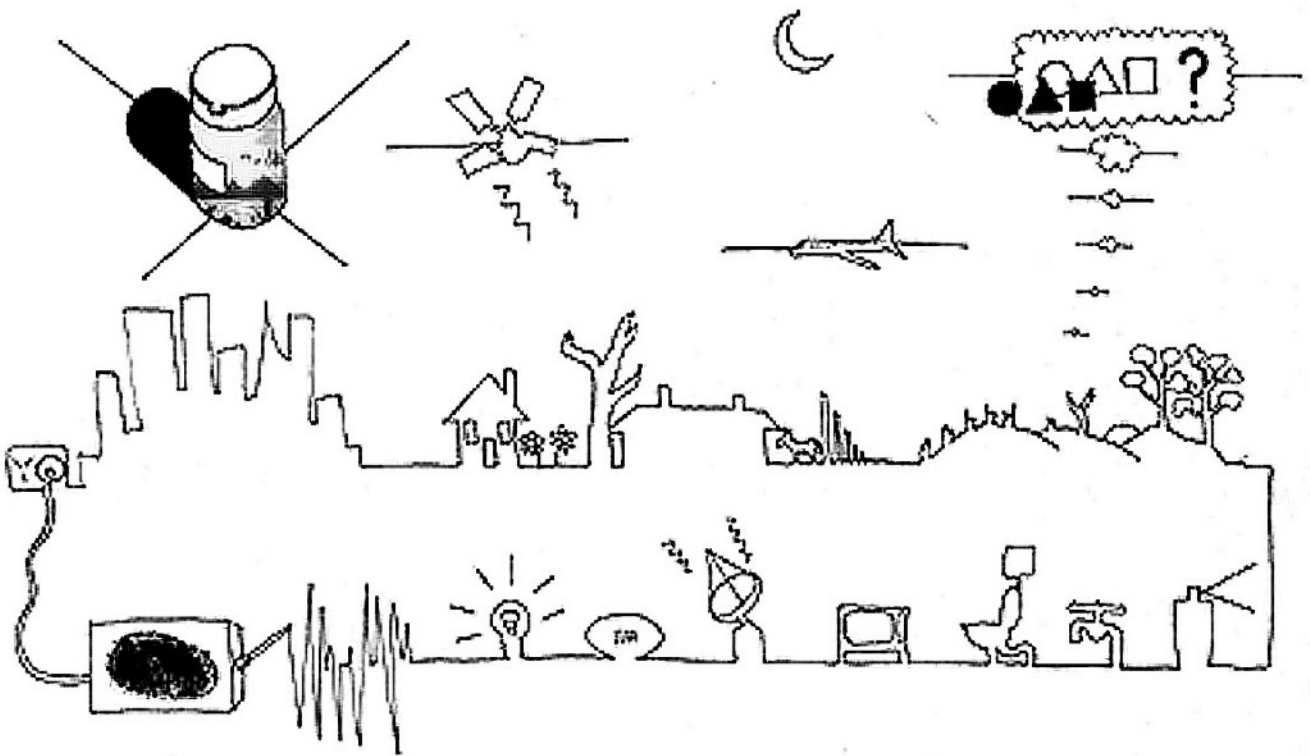
UNTITLED INK SKETCH OF EARTHLY DOMAINS (1994)

The narrative is inextricably linked to the complex nature of three protagonists: the reader, the writer, a sentient expressive being, and the young people whose voices I have amplified, and importantly, validated and disseminated to the world. There is no time to waste, this moment is a miracle and the time is now, for the divine undoubtedly exists, splicing through nature, plant and animal, supercomputer, deep machine learning, and also ultimately, life and death. For opposing entropy and divinity ultimately reign in this roller coaster of emotions and rationally researched ideas and facts which are impossible to deny, which is sure to challenge and inspire the most hardened scientist, or later in the piece, to intimately move the most emotive acute empath or spiritualist.

If I were to be indulged in giving advice on digesting this sometimes troubling PhD, just do your best to accept and evolve with these words, whatever it means for you, and it will be the

perfect unfolding of the secrets accessible to the limitations of particular readers' human experience. Knowledge needs time to simmer, so read this work, and I suggest we wait ... for everyone's experience is both the same and unique, and it takes time for knowledge to settle in place, and everyone will take something different from this piece of writing. In it, I bravely and humbly offer my experiential stories, art, music, and film through living inquiry conversations with and about youth. I do this in an ultimately optimistic way, which also stems from a fierce resilience in the intended and mindful currency of kindness so essential within the end times of humanity in the Anthropocene. This methodological 'imagination and fiction as research', like science fiction before it, in which science has come to pass in reality, blurs scientific paradigms. It suggests an unveiling of inter-dimensional realities through a Shamanic and invisible lens that becomes tangible through the experience of art and memory. It is the anticipation of a future of superintelligence which I believe has already happened, which splices old and new world paradigms, the despair, abuse, healing and hope, the young and the old, examining we existing humans and the beings 'to be created'.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL REALITIES

Setting aside the truth value of the UFO phenomenon, it is an interesting sociological reality that so many people are unwilling to discuss the most - and at times traumatic - experience of their lives. What does it say about our society that this is so? My feeling is that, by its very nature, it represents a form of repression. If you are a reader who believes UFOs to be nonsense of some sort, I can nevertheless assure you that you have a friend or relation who has seen one. They have simply learned not to discuss it. Many people can live perfectly well within the constraints of repression and denial; they simply learn to shut off certain parts of their mind. It is sad, but it happens all of the time. But not everyone is the same. Not everyone is willing to do this, or even can do this. By any estimate, there are many millions of people on this planet who have had a powerful UFO experience. They cannot and

will not be silenced indefinitely — *Richard M. Dolan, UFOs and the National Security State 2: The Cover-up Exposed 1973-91.*

At the outset, there seems to be varying opinions about multidimensional realities from the worlds' leading researchers into AI and superintelligence; Elon Musk tweeted that Nick Bostrom's book 'Superintelligence' (Bostrom, 2014) is worth reading, because AI is potentially more dangerous than nuclear weapons (Musk, 2014); however, Bostrom stated of 'aliens' that:

> I begin by reflecting on a well-known fact. UFO-spotters, Raelian cultists, and self-certified alien abductees notwithstanding, humans have, to date, seen no sign of any extraterrestrial intelligent civilisation (Bostrom, 2008).

He followed by suggesting that academics

> … are keen to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the kooks and cranks that flock to these big questions. If large telescopes, NASA satellites, and complicated mathematical data analysis are involved, it becomes harder for outside observers to mistake the work for the ramblings of UFO-nuts and other crackpots.

Mr Bostrom, I resemble that comment, and like Einstein said, the rational mind is a faithful servant and the intuitive mind is a sacred gift.

I ran into a friend today. He is an alcoholic whose father, a priest, was dying. I mentioned my research into the paranormal within my condolences to him, and he said to me: 'My Dad is a Vicar, he thinks he knows God! He thinks a burning bush over two thousand years ago was a sign that runs his life! What makes him right over you?' It restored my confidence. I reflected on the Buddhist mantra or adage that humankind makes gods by the dozen, but cannot make a worm (although we have seen now that humans can co-create beings seemingly from just

cells; even Barbara Streisand had her dog cloned). I see the pragmatic scientists/ rationalists who refute anything but science, to be extremely arrogant, like Bostrom, with the rational self-righteousness that you are simply an Earth-bound ape-man, and to some extent we are, but that Bostrom's self-righteousness is so flawed. Additionally, he does not really offer any solution or breadth of kindness or love, just whittling away that we are all doomed. Ultimately, I think we are, but this does not exclude the notion that other than human intelligences have, are, and will exist beyond our current conventional scientific ontologies.

But remember Mr Bostrom, that you are culturally deluded by your own intellect of rationality, and that I might remind you that you are made up of 99% empty space, travelling in a galaxy manifest in opposition to anti-matter, most likely quantum entangling with every other particle in the known universe across space and time, so I think I have done a fairly well-educated and living inquiry knowledge to open my own narrative! I know me better than you do. The mad person is the expert on their own 'madness', and I am the expert on this story.

AWAKE; SPACES WITHIN SPACES AND WHAT I AM

> The psychotic drowns in the same waters in which the mystic swims with delight" — Joseph Campbell, Psychology of the Future: Lessons from Modern Consciousness Research (Grof, 2000).

I would like to reflect for a moment on the cyclic nature of terrestrial earthlings, that because we are circadian, we sleep every night, and some remember their dreams, and others like myself have epic nocturnal adventures. I want to say that there are long expanses between talking and communicating, that there are indeed, spaces within spaces that make up the majority of our existence, beyond physical touch or rational sense. We, as human beings, are communicating only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to our true nature. We are restricted in a pragmatic way to language and hearing, atoms razed by vocal chords that travel to another ear. We are limited by the spectral qualities of our eyes; indeed, it is true that other

beings can sense other frequencies that we cannot, such as birds, and some lava-vent-bottom of the ocean dwelling creatures. I wish to say that as an expression of words on a page like this is, that it can only communicate such a small fraction of the whole, that we are beyond rational physical beings, but the spirited way in which this narrative is absorbed is indeed, miracle-like. And so I reflect that within this work, I have taken a look at the less common places between madness and insecurity, between quantum physics and Shamanism, and to this degree, it is with an intention that I gently open the door to another world. Weekdays, you can find me drinking and telling funny stories about sexual encounters at my local pub, but that social person is a far place away from the seriousness in which I enlighten and embark on this journey of storytelling within this book.

There is an intersection in my research here between 'madness', a multidimensional living inquiry narrative, superintelligence, posthumans, futurist world leaders, the Shaman's view that primarily favours human entities, and ethics and the human scientific/ rationalist view that spirituality and/or alien beings are null and void. So I ask and reflect on this research (which has been by and large initially scientific), the intersection between homosexuality, child abuse, drugs, interdimensionality, light workers, and Shamans/ healers? Why is all this not possible? Why should a rationalist approach win? Why should one aspect be negated for any prejudiced and privileged reason, and why can't they exist together? The reality in my opinion is, they do! I am an overlapping Venn diagram of all these things and much, much more, as are you.

The experiences are subtly proposed, in my opinion — as actual ontological science that is beyond the scope of human understanding in the present time (literally a definition of the 'paranormal'), and this might very well be unveiled one day by science and quantum physics for the realms of human knowledge. Alternatively, we might never know, but for people like me, there is already a 'knowing' that comes from living inquiry and memory.

I hope to bring love and light to these negative experiences, explaining how these experiences over my life have opened my mind and lighted my curiosity. These experiences

have tainted much of my life, and have certainly acted as a catalyst to define my research question that reflects my interest in the future of humanity and life on the planet during, and following, the Anthropocene and its posthuman future(s).

STELAZINE, HEART VERSUS MIND (2005)

Mystics; The Currencies of Kindness and a Helping Hand

And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music – Fredrich Nietzsche

I have had much non-judgemental kindness in my life which this book ultimately advocates for, from friends, some family members, and from spiritual healers and mystics. There are two essential 'mystics' in my life that I will discuss much later in this book, Trav and Binnie. To this end, and in the context of this book, discordancy through the lens of psychiatry will be minimised, while the gift of my trauma through the lens of 'Shamanism' or 'spirituality', will be magnified and celebrated. I often say religious people fear hell, while spiritual people have already been there.

As Trav the Shaman said to me many years ago, and I'll quote him twice, 'They (the 'greys' and 'The System') are going to make it look like you are crazy', of which I'll take the risk; and also, 'you're not mad, Rich, this is *science'*. He also reminded me not to fear them, blankly looking me in the eye and saying, 'if one were here in this reality – they are so physically weak, you could easily kick it to death'.

This combined exegesis and narrative initially moves forward through a balanced science-based curriculum that both solidifies my authenticity as a researcher of science, that is undertaken perhaps solely to attain the quality of a PhD. The book then moves onto more of an interpretivist approach to the interviews with the young people, and ultimately, in relation to sustaining 'imagination' and the 'paranormal' of thought, and the esoteric — in the unknown or unseen, the taboo and the unspoken. I have had many conflicts about whether to make this public. Indeed, the focus of this really is a splice of my life, it is taking an important but very small conscious part from narrow times instances and stitched together and extrapolated upon.

In interviewing the students and validating their views, I used a kind of ethical alchemy that stems from my inner child, to extrapolate information from these young people in an ethical

way, which is a hallmark of self-healing and self-actualisation. This PhD can be seen as a crystallisation of a whole life that has used alchemy by working with young people in an ethical way for the good intentions of healing the inner child and further self-expression. This healing journey is perhaps, for me, the most significant achievement of this body of work.

The journey of this PhD, and even its topic matter undertaken through a lived inquiry, unknowingly had its genesis in my childhood and my metaphysical/ spiritual/ scientific experiences. Ultimately, this book gravitates back towards going some way to validating this. It has also amplified young people's essential voices, in a currency of goodwill, which I believe makes up the quality and currency that the universe hears, a mostly invisible currency that is necessary to hold friendships, family, communities, classes, societies, and cultures together. Think of your own kindness and hear mine as you approach this work. The classes operated through a model of secular ethics which is beyond religion, as I had heard the Dalai Lama speak of a few years ago, which I hold very dear.

These young people will inherit the exponentially accelerating world happening right now, and when we pass over and leave them this world, they will need to co-exist with its changes for humanity to survive, if that is at all possible given the global catastrophic risks they will face.

Their responses to the balanced curriculum that I crystallised from our recorded dialogues is what they urgently want to tell us about the present and future world in which we exist in relation to their hopes and fears about artificial intelligence and the coming superintelligence that will further enable posthumanism, including controversially, the positive and negative effects of eugenics as framed by the existential risks of global catastrophe. This PhD attempts to manage a big slice of the pie, and its essence stems from compassion.

This intention frames the book, and ultimately, is both the students' story and my story, comparing and contrasting my young life with their young lives through the generations, ideas, technology, artistic endeavour, imagination, and role of the scientist-artist.

Trav the 'Shaman'

I met Trav in a psychiatric ward after my role finished at 'The Age' newspaper while working as a news graphics artist and illustrator, and through the production of my autobiography, had been advocating for those that suffer from 'mental illness', so I landed a job with the Department of Human Services in Coburg. It was my role to advocate as a 'consumer consultant' (having experienced mental illness) on behalf of those who were involved in the service. I must be blunt and say that when 'The Age' and its management found out in a very public way they had a bisexual, schizophrenic drug user on their premises, I was very quickly managed out. I went to the consumer consultant role out of desperation for an income. Most of the people I met on the psychiatric wards were all acute empaths, and they felt like family in a way, not mad at all. Very many were both creative and spiritual, while the psychiatrists had what seemed like cheerleaders, young professional looking women with lots of cleavage giving out ice creams and sticky note pads as drug reps, trying to propel the qualities of Abilify and Risperdal medications, in a bizarre apex of heteronormativity. I used to think it was the shrinks that were crazy. I still do. I pity them.

I was in the smoking area drawing my ideas for a gyroscope that, if in 0% gravity, would go from 0% to 99% of light speed. When I explained this to Trav upon his insistence, he became serious. He took my notepad and paper, and drew a tall female grey that I was familiar with, with almond-shaped slanted black eyes, like I had drawn when I was 17 at art school. I also made a sculpture of the bust at university when I was about 18, and recalled it in a photograph from some very secretive and sacred self-inquiry at the time.

AT WORK IN 2005

PANOPTICON | PANˈɒPT[?]K(Ə)N ǀ'A CIRCULAR PRISON WITH CELLS ARRANGED AROUND A CENTRAL WELL, FROM WHICH PRISONERS COULD AT ALL TIMES BE OBSERVED' (1997).

TRAV OFFERED HIS HELP

Without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable – Carl Jung.

After several months, he contacted me and came over to help me through life and my situation. He did a healing on me which I gave permission for and learnt the technique which I have performed on others with their permission. He aligned it with astronomy for greatest effect, and I did feel very liberated with the creative visualisation of letting go of information and experiences I no longer needed. He encouraged a vegetarian lifestyle, although I was not ready for that. We talked a lot, and discussed 'the visitors' occasionally. He reminded me to focus on love when I was scared, and to pat my beloved golden retriever, Steinberg, who passed away in October of 2018. Trav looked at me with those blue, calm eyes and quietly said: 'Do you have any idea how important you are?', to which I was rather dismissive. He added 'I admire you, but I don't envy you'.

Trav was an artist and was responsible for some huge public sculptures of dinosaurs in a Perth park which are still there today. He was intriguing and interesting, and would go out into nature to study things, such as how emu's feet work in order to get a feel for how to sculpt the dinosaurs and how they worked. He seemed to live across prehistoric epochs in his awareness of the Earth and his manifestation as a human. You got the impression of a casual deep wisdom.

Wez, The dandenongs, AND 'The Helicopter'

When Wez, my best friend, and I were about 15 or 16, we used to talk about 'aliens' all the time, wishing they would take us. Wez died of complications from alcohol abuse and 'schizophrenia' and flat out neglect when he was 39. I miss him terribly. He was my best friend, my longest friend, who was present at another strange occurrence/ experience when we were about 16 or 17. When I confronted Wez about the oddity that we had not talked about the helicopter for another 15 years, he was quite unwell and full of alcohol, because he was perpetually drunk. He instantly got very defensive and angry: 'It was just a fucking helicopter, nothing more, and when you're dead, you are dust and bones, and that's all there is to it!' Wez was very stubborn. He died before I got to ask him more gently about it.

I recall Wez and I, and another friend, going to the Dandenong Ranges very often, to Churchill Park, on our bikes. We got up to all sorts of adventures. We had some great times that I will never forget; I always seemed to be taking other people to barren and far-off places.

One thing we did oddly 'forget' though, I believe, was an experience I have not fully recalled, either to protect me or to protect other entities. I recall that we rode our bikes to Churchill Park in the Dandenongs, and as we often did, would go up to the summit, jump the gate past the boundary fence, and go up past the cows to the spot marker on the summit of the hill near the quarry …

One day, we were up there, and instantly, with no sound whatsoever, a 'helicopter' appeared above us, hovering very close. It was instantly loud, as you would expect one to be. We all did not recall a sound approaching; it was just 'instantly' there, and 'instantly' loud. I remember being frightened as if we were trespassing, or something taboo was happening. I also remember feeling an utter and total panic. All I can remember from that day was running like hell, in abject fear, a couple of kilometres back to our bikes, over the fence, and riding the 20 kilometres or so home. I distinctly remember something being in the air, and I distinctly remember a beckoning figure that was on board the side of the 'craft' as I was running away from it, looking back, beckoning us, I can remember it right now. I don't even know if it was a person, it was just a figure. It is very distinct in my memory in the manner of the event, but not a clear vision at all.

One day, I would like the opportunity to get my memories back, unfettered and not tinkered with. I don't remember what the craft actually was, just maybe a screen memory of a helicopter that appeared; I remember vaguely a helicopter appearing instantly, and very loud as one would expect, and hovering instantly above us, and all of us running.

The extremely odd thing was that the three of us never spoke about it for many years. It seemed absurd that there would be no discussion about it, of such an unusual occurrence, but

between myself and my two friends, there was absolutely none. We went up there in the morning, and by the time we got back to our bikes, it was after lunch. We had missed some time as I recall.
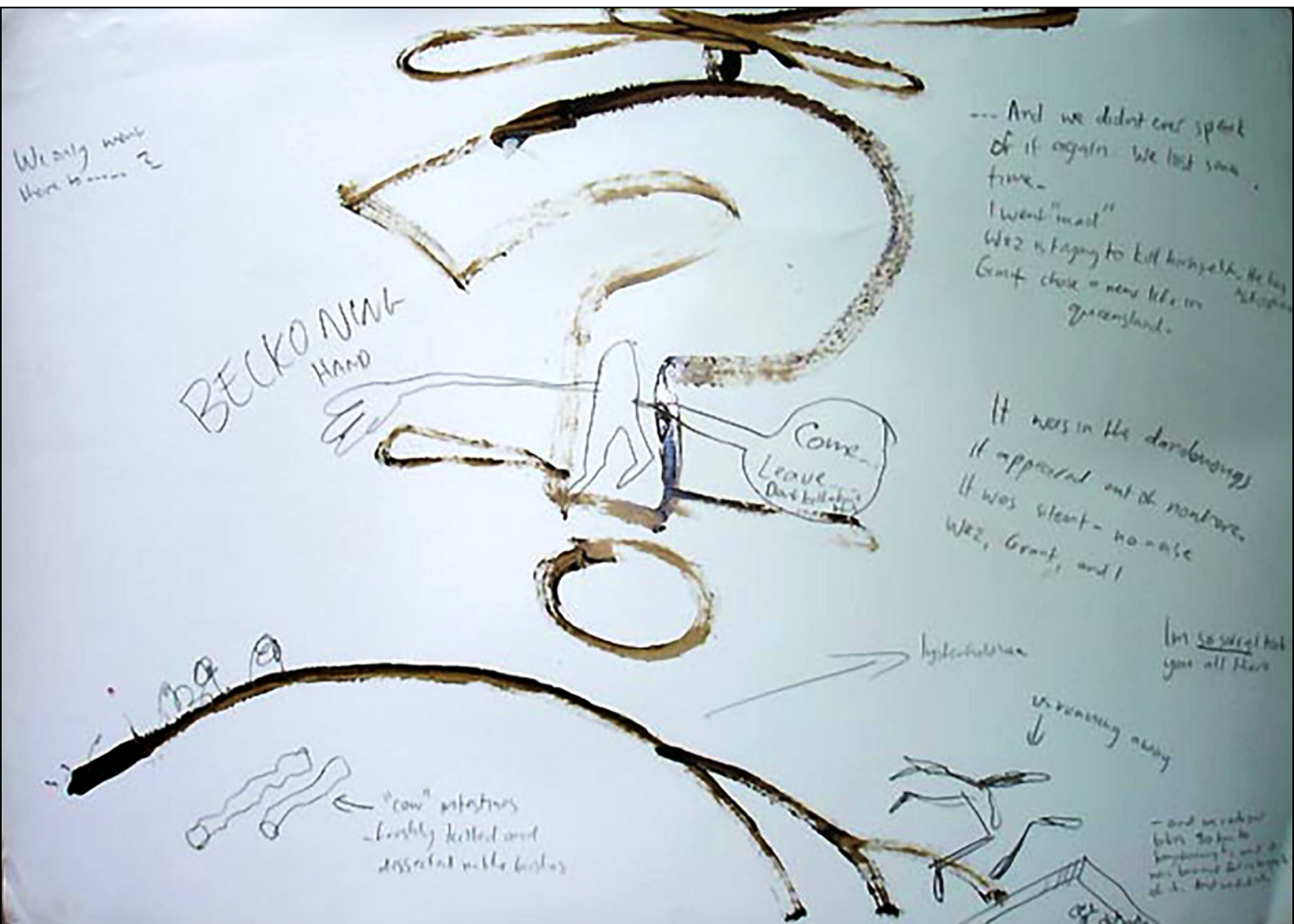
UNTITLED FROM THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFOS AND ALIENS (2004)

CASTLEMAINE WITH TRAV AND WEZ, PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

After my time with Trav the Shaman, and after making my movie in 2006, Wez and I went up to Trav's property in Castlemaine where we started to build a cubby for Travis to live in on his property. Wez and I were talking about the unusual 'helicopter' experience at the back of Churchill Park up near the quarry in the Dandenongs, and we both related that we had different accounts and differing memories of the same incident. 'I can remember seeing the pilot through the window!', Wez exclaimed to my surprise. 'That was no pilot, and that memory is a false one', Trav said, alluding to the feeling of his that this was indeed, not a helicopter, and that something more clandestine had gone on. Trav was very familiar with the 'grey' experience, and had over the time I knew him, managed to convince me that, indeed, I was not crazy and neither was he. He was unquestionably a person who thought outside the square. Some of his ramblings, even I thought, were insane, but he like Binnie, who I have yet to introduce, was well aware of things beyond my comprehension. Just as I am relating experiences people may not understand, people with different and deeper understandings of the universe do seem insane, and I am aware that I appear like this to some people right now, as other more aware people do to me.

I have been made aware over the years of some of my healers' compassion in imparting information to me, as to not jolt my reality too suddenly or violently. I am also writing in a prose for a public audience that tries not to shock or jolt the reader too much, but this will depend on how much you already know, or how aware you are of visitors, psychology, and similar experiences as mine.
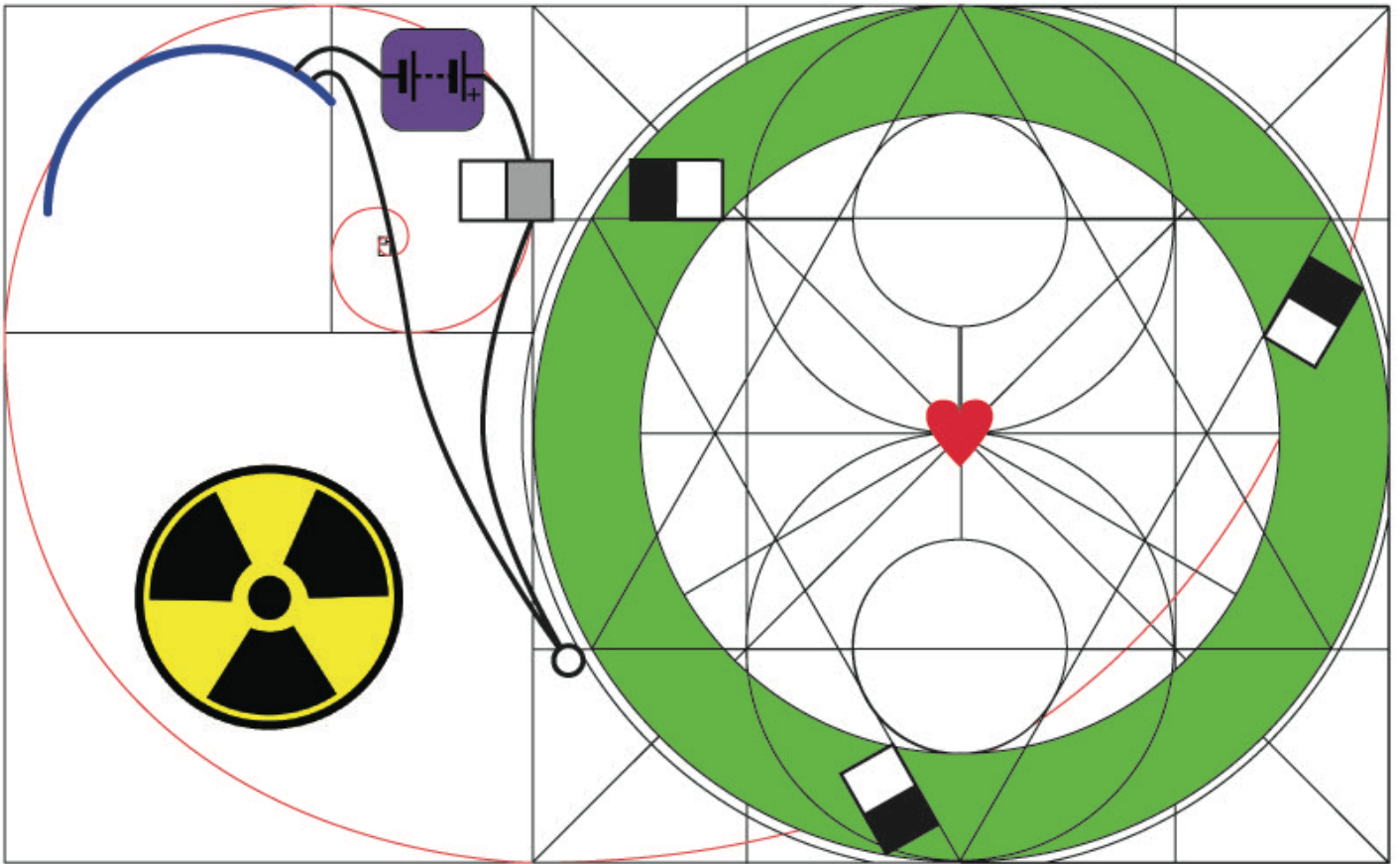
PERPETUAL MOTION SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM (FRAME FROM ANIMATION) (2015)

Magnet

Free Spinning Gyroscope

Fixed
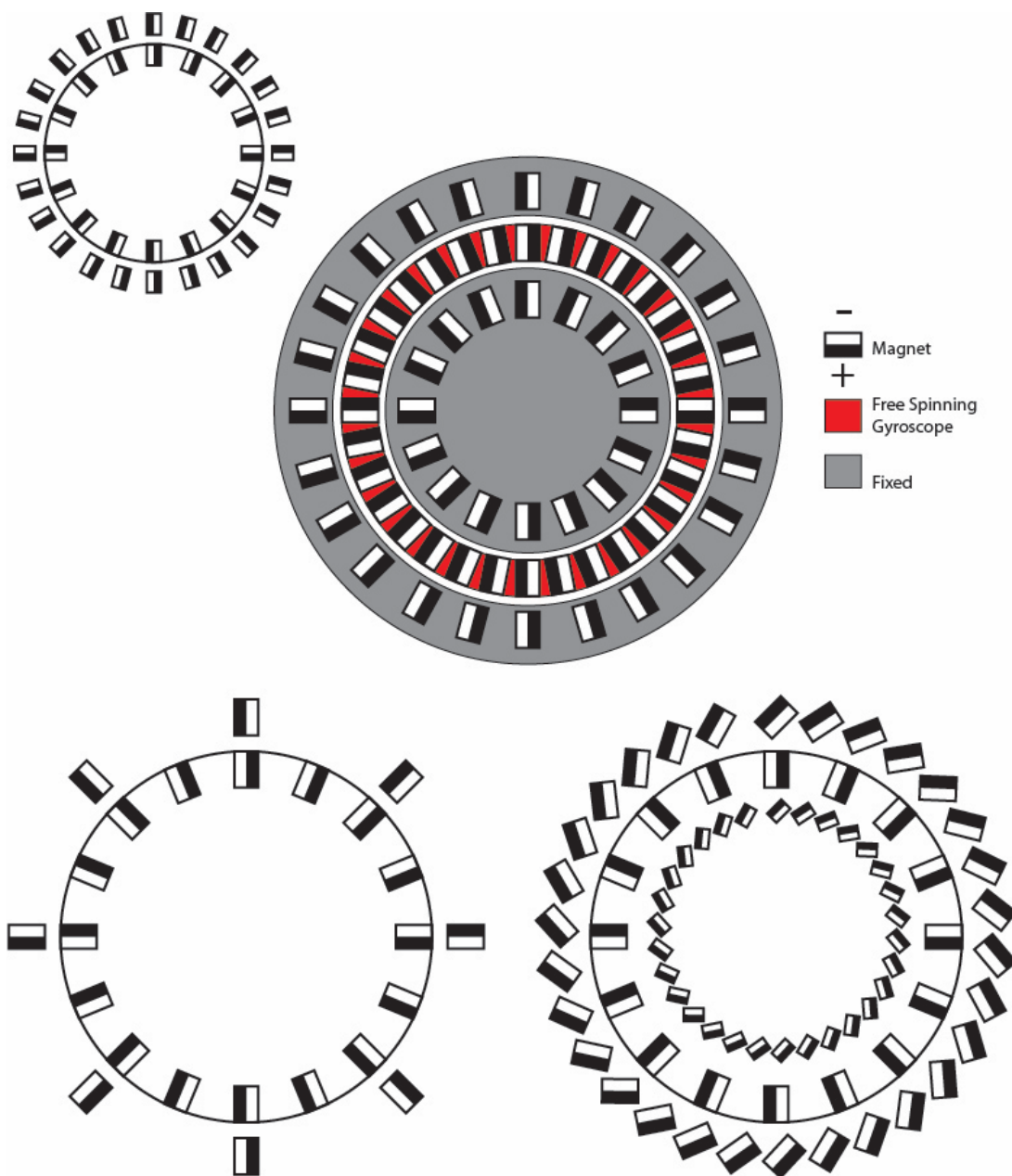
CONCEPT SKETCHES (2011)

TRAV INTRODUCED ME TO BINNIE

Trav recommended that: 'You need to speak with Binnie', and after a while, he gave me her number. We had a conversation and I went to visit her in Maldon. When we met, she hugged

me and smiled, 'This is a meeting of the highest order', she beamed. It was a relationship that would last nearly 15 years to the present day, and which has enormously amplified my knowledge of being in this incarnation, and given me the gift of a lot more mystery, but also clarity. In doing this, Binnie has also provided me with some contentment, great love, and some healing which I will extrapolate upon here.

I have sent a draft of this work to Binnie, who today in synchronicity, said to me via a text, 'Do you have any idea how important this work is?' For once, I gave myself permission to be not arrogant, but just proud of what I was achieving and not self-deprecating. Trav was the person who introduced me to Binnie, and the following is a narrative of exchanges that we had while in the process of constructing this PhD, which I wanted to acknowledge to her:

Binnie was an important vehicle for me to access the divine and also the intuitive in my journey. It allowed me to revisit a psychiatric, and I think false, label and reframe my life honouring my memories, experiences, and ideas with love with a caring, empathic, and sensitive person who guided me not only in my PhD journey, but added value and meaning to my life. As a narrative inquiry, and after a close friend's suicide living this PhD journey, I wanted to let Binnie know of her importance. The following snippet of narrative is from our texts, in a very personal narrative autobiographical and also very intimate way, in a way that psychiatry has never achieved for me, I was met with compassion and love in the healings, and I wanted to express to Binnie her importance, not only in my life, but in my journey. The response validated the love and support I gave back to her, not only as an acute empath and human, but it also validated both me and Binnie creating meaning through a chance meeting many years ago. The following is a personal communication with her in which the narrative demonstrates kindness, empathy, and spirituality in such a way that was mutually beneficial and satisfying, creating meaning, warmth, and compassion:

I wrote to her Thursday 12th of July, 2018:

Dear Binnie, I hope you are well.

In case we never meet again, I want to say that our last session and your perspective has become a part of my PhD.

What kindness you showed and the knowledge we shared will be amplified in my writing.

I am an existentialist and narrative autobiographer and I prefer your perspective over a western lens of psychiatry.

I want to say that I think of you often.

You have been an extremely important person and medium in my life and I am in much gratitude.

Yesterday, I found out a friend had suicided; it seems he came to visit to make this transition easier for me (I heard someone breathing in my room a few days before I found out).

This person was an enlightened soul, past normal human comprehension. I am sad because he was one of the only people that visited me.

However, I accept it as God's way, even in my grief.

I would hate for anything to happen to you without you knowing how much of an influence you have had on my work and I, about how your wise counsel will be amplified in congruence with what wisdom I hold.

Bless you Binnie.

I do hope we meet again.

Love Rich.

To which she immediately replied:

Dear Richard, an immediate response to your message is called for straight away and while I have the energy.

You have touched my heart deeply and the recognition you have just given me is warming my heart and my soul deeply.

I hope we work again before much longer.

I have been trying for space and wellness to open up so we could work.

The last 6 months has been so difficult to cope with and I may have another health challenge with a kidney etc coming up.

I think of you often and have been so keen to mesh in with your world contribution via AI, etc.

Thanks so much Richard, and I wish the greatest success in what you are contributing and best wishes for you personally.

Spirit will always bring into our lives what is perfect for our journey here. Let's keep it open that we work gain.

Love Binnie.

BINNIE'S HEALING THAT HAPPENED OVER THE COURSE OF THIS PHD

These are my notes about my healing from my latest meeting with Binnie, as a direct link to the knowledge and advice and guidance offered. I asked Binnie if I could ethically record our meeting on a digital recorder, and she refused, and then said it never works anyway, and that I should write some notes. I did so, and this is an exact record of that. Binnie told me that our last meeting was a very small window of opportunity to get information across, yet I felt as if I had been jolted by the knowledge. This meeting was urgent.

- Ego resist / 3D world
- Throw away old habits
- I am in power to more push and influence my habits
- I deeply and profoundly love myself, and the supreme and I are one
- I choose to walk my journey I that,
- Be in the light because I want to,
- And so, it is.
- Consciously this is what I want,
- Let go of controlling life.
- It is directed by the supreme being and be open to transformation
- Integrating energy, yes
- Ask all energies after integrating old energies into new ones — streamlined into my being
- Up to me to make the decision to go on the higher path
- This will further self-actualise and complete me
- Periodically ask for this again
- Altered meditated state
- Beauty and perfection; supreme that I am
- Help me to ask at the right time
- You are a 3D human self on the brink of a change
- Commit to that change
- If it happens, it's meant to happen, don't worry
- My future will be more powerful
- You are moving into a more powerful state
- I needed to follow from spirit
- 22 Oct 3-4 days of great love on the earth
- 3 x energy waves coming, transform humanity from rational 3D into 4D and 5D
- The planet is now 5D
- There is a change coming that will delight you
- Get rid of the old patterns
- Let the plans come to us
- If spirit says, then let abundance or poverty come and accept them equally
- Trust spirit will come to you
- This is a reminder to judge others less, and judge yourself less too
- Allow more of the light of your being to come in
- You will generate influence on people
- This will affect collective humanity and comes from care for humans
- 'Transition expert'. There will be no humans on the planet in 1,000 years
- Putting spirituality first is never a risk
- There is a compulsive question/answer

- There is a 'cosmic ballet'
- There are negative entities that affect you through portals
- Shine a pure white light through the portals to them
- It's quantum, intuitive, and powerful
- There are negative entities and energies at play, this is the state of things now
- Let go and try 'not doing'
- 'Highest loving divinity allow me the grace to forget the old 3D ways and make spare room for light opportunities of spirit and the perfect effortless unfolding of my life'
- Supreme, please help me
- Any negative entities bless them and send them to the light
- Ask the supreme for help if having thoughts of suicide
- Be aware of your body, if you feel off, pay attention and better of the signals
- You have been drinking and nicotine and suicidal, do not worry
- Practice noticing the way you feel
- Wow, this really helps say to yourself when you do it
- If it looks a bit pear-shaped, don't resist, just be with spirit and do it
- Ask spirit for healings
- Ask spirit for deeper wounds to be healed, and so it is
- Ask spirit for deeper healing around all things, and so it is
- 4th to 5th-dimensional energies ask to be brought in
- Thank you, Rich Binnie, and Spirit for this meeting.

*Within this session, Binnie had to stop a few times and 'clear the space', because she said 'some non-human intelligence is interfering now' … and I wondered about her visions and awareness, which were much beyond mine.

The very nature of our communications transcended ego and the rational world, communicating with other entities and energies, a validation of a multidimensional and complex reality that I had illustrated over the years, and which had also been discussed with the students in class. I would apply this darkness and delight visually in ways such as an album cover I designed for my band 'Less', and also with regard to the philosophy of making music.

FRONT CD COVER ART OF MY BAND 'LESS' (1999)

THE STATE OF THINGS RIGHT NOW (BEYOND THE VEIL), (2010)
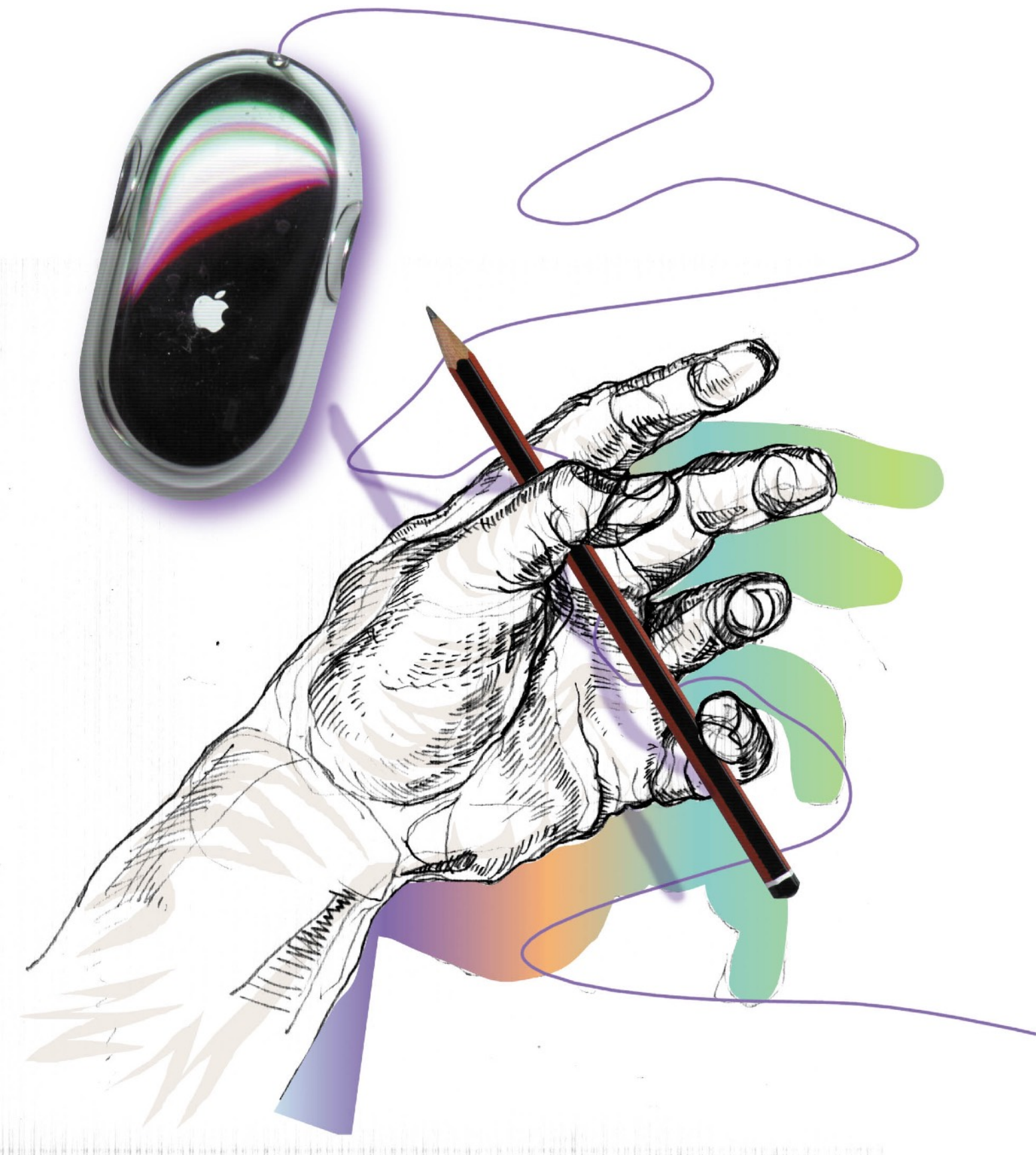
THE DEATH OF ANALOG (SUICIDAL IDEALISATION) (2005)

IMAGINATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions –
Albert Einstein.

Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality – Jules de
Gaultier.

Here are some paraphrased imaginative quotes from the students during our sessions that go a long way to justifying this narrative/ creative component and which sparked the initial genesis of my PhD topic. Specifically, relating to what you are about to read, these are some direct quotes from the wisdom of the students themselves that used their imaginations that I will splice into this section here:

- If you get deep enough into it, mathematically anything can be predicted with an algorithm equation.

- With superintelligence, I'm pretty sure we will be able to reach our wildest dreams of interstellar, but I'm just more concerned if mother nature might cull the weak, if it will deem itself the strongest and exterminate the humans, because they're less intelligent than the robots.

- I think we are on the cusp of a great renaissance.

- I'm pretty sure there is multiple human civilisations that have come to destruction.

- If you're looking for the pinnacle of intelligence, you can't stop it from happening.

- Processing power will double and double, computers are already faster doing things than humans, and humans may be obsolete.

- The computers will make plans for us to go forward.

- I'm pretty sure there what we have been studying, science, is like 1% of what can be achieved. I think what we see in movies is possible or we don't have the

capability yet, but aliens could be using it – if you can imagine it, then it is possible.

- If you can imagine it, there will be people who will look to find a way and it might take multiple people's lifetimes. To cross the sea, you have to imagine what's on the other side.

- Getting rid of bad stuff in genetics is good.

- Adding in extra compared to just removing it … personally, if I met someone who had all these genetic modifications, I would think are they then same as me? Are they human?

- If you keep attempting to improve something, if you can imagine it – it has the possibility of being limitless.

- I think we may end up with a mass culling of humans, nature is the great balancer.

- If you can imagine it is possible, anything is possible.

- It's possible we could live in another dimension and each one could be slightly different.

- Is anyone truly free? We don't know … we could be in control by someone else we don't know.

- I think my child will be a digital-human interface being.

- I think implants will happen in a couple of generations.

- The supercomputer itself may be a dictator.

- It depends on gene editing what humans we will make.

- We will have to expand to outer space or other multi-universes.

- We are aliens.

- I believe in aliens; statistically, we can't be the only creatures in the universe, even if though they aren't as intelligent as us or more.

- I think reacting to a non-human non-animal intelligence is a completely new thing.

- It's very ethically questionable to cross species, its taboo, even the entire concept of bestiality, intertwining with a species that is not human, it's taboo.

- I think there will be no human in the physical world.

- Humans are always afraid of the unknown.

- I like science because it tells you what is to come.

- If we go somewhere else, it's going to be better than staying here and ruining this planet.

- I think that cyborgs will be good and it's the next natural thing for humanity.

- Ethics change over time as new concepts and stimuli come.

- I think positive outlook is that being human right now is prestigious, we are superior. But maybe humans will become obsolete.

- In the future, being human will be much more grey.

- In tens of thousands of years, we will grow humans that are not very human anymore.

- 'You're a drone, you're a breeder', it sounds quite robotic.

- I think you need to have a specific AI for gene editing.

- I think we can create sentient beings.

The ideas I wanted to research crossed quite like an overlapping mathematical Venn diagram with the student's conversations, and in the overlapping section we discussed issues such as a massive cull of the human population, nuclear war and its probability, existing in other dimensions and multi-dimensions. We also discussed having superintelligence 'tune into' other superintelligent civilisations via resonance (how amazing), that humans will be

different in the future and that this is inevitable, that aliens could exist, that the very nature of reality might be a complex role-playing game of a superintelligent being from another universe/ dimension among many other things, all of which went some way to justifying my lifelong metaphysical experiences and encouraged me to write about it and reflect on it in my art. Finally, as I am reporting later on a great era of the physical death of about 10 billion people over the next 100 years, that interestingly, the students held an ambivalence towards death, and wanted nature to survive at the expense of themselves (and other people), as if they even expected the Earth to die.

120 Years and the Death of Ten Billion people

If you have ever wondered, as I do, how many people are born and die each day, the answer from SIRI as of 16/04/2019 is approximately 372,960 are born and 155,520 people die on average every day. In addition to this, it has taken over 200,000 years for the human population to reach one billion, and then, only a further 200 years to exponentially grow to nearly eight billion.

According to UN estimates, if humans were to survive the many global catastrophic risks that are present, the world population would be expected to be 11.2 billion by 2100 (www.un.org, 2017). If no-one lives past about 120 years, unless posthumanism in the future allows longer lifespans, or we upload our consciousnesses, such as Margaret Wertheim suggested as the biblical rapture (Wertheim, 1999), all of these people, and more, will physically die over the next hundred years. I flick on the news about some meaningless saga, and I am immediately aware that even the national broadcaster's news is delivered through a particular lens, and that my awareness makes anything on television seem so trivial.

In April 2018, the oldest living person died in Japan at 117 years old. Although I believe that people cherry-pick what they want out of the Bible for egotistical and discriminatory reasons, there is an inherent channeled wisdom from these ancient texts which says in Genesis 6:1-4,

that: 'My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years'. As far as I can ascertain, throughout history this seems to be true of traditional humans. When I asked the students 'how long they wanted to live', they gave numerous answers, and it struck me that I was familiar with this word they were using from the Bible, 'Nephilim', in relation to my experience of apparently 'having a space child' with other dimensional beings, as described in a film I made and in this creative artefact. It intrigues me that inter-dimensional 'breeding' is folklore in many religions and ancient cultures, and that there was some inherent truth to what the Bible stated in relation to the lifespan of mortal beings, which goes some way, in an ancient religious text, towards validating my experiences.

Sometimes I think about the fact that unless we upload our consciousnesses to a cloud, as suggested by some, that in the next 100 years, 7.2 billion people, and possibly many more, will die, and this is a scientific and mind-blowing fact to me. I imagine it to be like the 2K bug, that humans don't have much foresight. Sometimes, I look at harbour-side structures being built, and on the other side of the coin, watch stories about ocean-level rise reported on the news, and think that we have all the foresight of re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic to avoid it sinking. This is my feeling. I would go so far as to say it's my knowing.

> *I hold a beast, an angel, and a madman in me, and my enquiry is as to their working, and my problem is their subjugation and victory, down throw and upheaval, and my effort is their self-expression* ― *Dylan Thomas.*

THE DIVINE SHAMAN AND HER PROTEGES (2018)

THE 'GREYS'

I have had experiences with these 'grey' beings, and others, for my whole life, from childhood to the present day. My healings with Binnie have justified and validated my holistic 'paranormal' experiences with love and empathy, to the discredit of psychiatry.

'They' are trying to access something they are bereft of, their humanity and spirit. Popular culture references these beings many times dating back to at least the 1960s up until the present day, such as in the band Radiohead's 'Subterranean Homesick Alien', in which the lyrics pose the idea of: 'Of all these weird creatures, Who lock up their spirits', in the context of the lyricist wishing to be taken by a spaceship. It continues:

I'd tell all my friends, but they'd never believe me,
They'd think that I'd finally lost it completely,
I'd show them the stars and the meaning of life,
They'd shut me away,
But I'd be all right.

'Alright'– by Radiohead from 'OK Computer'.

You might think that I have lost it completely, but I don't. And I will be okay.

LONGING FOR CONTACT

When I was young, in daylight hours, I would crave the company of the greys, and would want their help; this was principally because I cared for the Earth, did not trust adults, and was fearful of nuclear war. When I was a child, I remember drawing a landing strip for a UFO on my parents' garage roof. I thought they might be able to help, but at night-time I was so afraid, just like I was as a child. This happened until I was about 35 years old, with concurrent experiences happening across all those years. When I lived with another

experiencer in country Eildon years later, he described his experiences of them to me, and a method through which they have to leave you alone. I am no longer fearful.

CHILDHOOD: 'THEY'RE COMING!'

As a child, I remember I said to Dad that 'they' were coming when I was about six or seven, and he said, 'there is no-one in the house, go to sleep!' He was getting frustrated with me being awake. 'I'll walk you through the house, no-one is there', he would plead. In my heart, I knew that only I saw them and that if we went, there would be nothing there. Somehow, I felt a presence and knew they could slip into ordinary reality from a distinctly more non-ordinary one, from between the cracks of life, from other places or dimensions. The students ruminated on intelligences from inter-dimensions, but I felt them. I knew it, I had a 'knowing'.

I was reminded of this when I was talking to the students in our focus groups about 'tuning into' other superintelligences in the universe like a radio transmitter, and that one day, human evolution could be irrevocably advanced by 'tuning in' to other superintelligent 'wavelengths' across space and time. The fact that I had 'a knowing' that only I, out of the whole family, had experienced, did not stop my child brain from wanting protection from my unaware parents. Binnie completely validated the existence of the greys, both good and bad ones, to my surprise. She also said of my experience of 'schizophrenia', that it was indeed not madness, but part of my soul contract that I took on that role as an advocate to help expand the rational human consciousness of those around me, and also my own. It felt absurd that I would volunteer to do this to myself, but it also made some sense. I would not be who I am without my experiences and rationally explaining madness in the most insightful and explicit of ways.

CONNECTING THE DOTS; BEFORE 'MADNESS', MEMORIES FROM A CHILD; THE 'WOLF'

When I was very young, sleeping in my bed, I recall very definitely seeing a 'wolf' by the side of my bed that frightened me. There was a 'deliberate' touch on my face by the wolf. Indeed, I was aware somehow that the wolf wanted to be remembered and this touch was deliberate and had purpose – this was my 'knowing'. The touch for me at that young age signaled that it was not a dream, and then, I remember it inexplicably 'jumping out the window'. It was my first memory of an experience that I was not able to ratify, justify, or communicate to any other person, and maybe for me, this is why the vision manifests so strongly because it is echoed many times later in my life.

I remember waking the next morning and retaining the memory, being very afraid, and trying to rationalise it in my five-year-old mind. 'How could it jump through a solid fly-wire screen and glass?' I wondered. It was very vivid to me. I even tried to rationally mimic and explain to myself the feeling of its touch by extending the curtain (which was blue and had elephants and giraffes on it as I recall), to touch my face, but it would not reach. It was my first puzzling metaphysical experience that I explicitly remember. The absence of an explanation cemented my memory, and I have remembered this for my whole life. During other memories and experiences in my life, I now believe that I was 'meant' to retrieve this memory.

Some of the students hypothesised about mind control in the future, and furthermore, that these occurrences would happen over a lifetime because the energies and beings it was occurring by, or from, were somehow external to time as we experience it, or at the very least to my knowledge now, lived much longer than a human, and I was being introduced to my lifelong not-so-secret metaphysical life.

This was a distinct memory, and I believe it was the first memory of a 'visitor', or what UFO folklore calls a 'reptilian grey', at my bedside. I will call them 'visitors', as Whitley Streiber did. The 'wolf' that I remember was a 'screen memory', either 'implanted by them', as we

will look at further, or simply a psychological reaction in which there was no other symbolic gesture or image that I could attest a grey alien, for want of a better term, so my mind made up something else. Some UFO researchers and experiencers describe that 'abductees' or people familiar with 'visitors' or 'aliens' will have screen memories, which is a consistent theme appearing in the UFO literature (Fowler, 2002, p. 432; M.D., 2007; Streiber, 1987).

As a child in that same bed, I had a Disney book with the big bad wolf illustrated in it that I used to read, and I remember which numbered page it was on, so as to not look at it because it frightened me so much. I was so frightened to view it because it reminded me of the experience of the wolf. I think this was one of my earliest recollections with one of 'the visitors', which was to recur in different circumstances throughout my life.

As a child, I instinctively knew beings or 'they' were coming. I used to yell out to Mum and Dad from my bunk bed in Keysborough, a gesture of needing to be understood in the light of something I didn't understand; I was crying out for compassion, yet as a child, could not explain it. It was a feeling echoed throughout my life. I even find it hard to explain now. This was more than 'monsters in the house'. As I have recorded earlier, my healer and helper Travis said to me one day, 'You are not mad, Rich, and this is not the paranormal: *this is science'*.

A Buddhist might consider these visitors to be 'hungry ghosts'. Other religious texts describe metaphorical and paranormal beings. What they lack, as I propose, is an innate human spirit, and they possibly seek to capture, or compound with them, the DNA of 'modern' present-day humans. A friend named John, who I showed this document to, and who is a close confidant, very empathic, and also a spiritual person, said that 'HUMANITY', he realised after reading this document, should read: 'H-(V)-AI-NITY', such is the ego and vanity of people operating in institutions and corporations in the chase for superintelligence that occurs after AI, and how 'vanity' might lead to a future echo of these beings from another as yet unseen and unknown dimension (possibly the future), being present in my lifetime.

As one Indigenous healer said to me, 'We don't speak of the darkness', yet by narrating this story with intentions of hope and love, I intend to bless the darkness and send it back to the light. As Binnie said, the greys had learnt some form of empathy from me, they thanked me, and we blessed them and sent them back to the light in one of our last sessions. I say in this body of work that quantum intelligence might validate their existence, but in a rational way we might never know. The emotional toll however, and the way they exist in the spaces within spaces, is profound and unsettling to those who have experienced them.
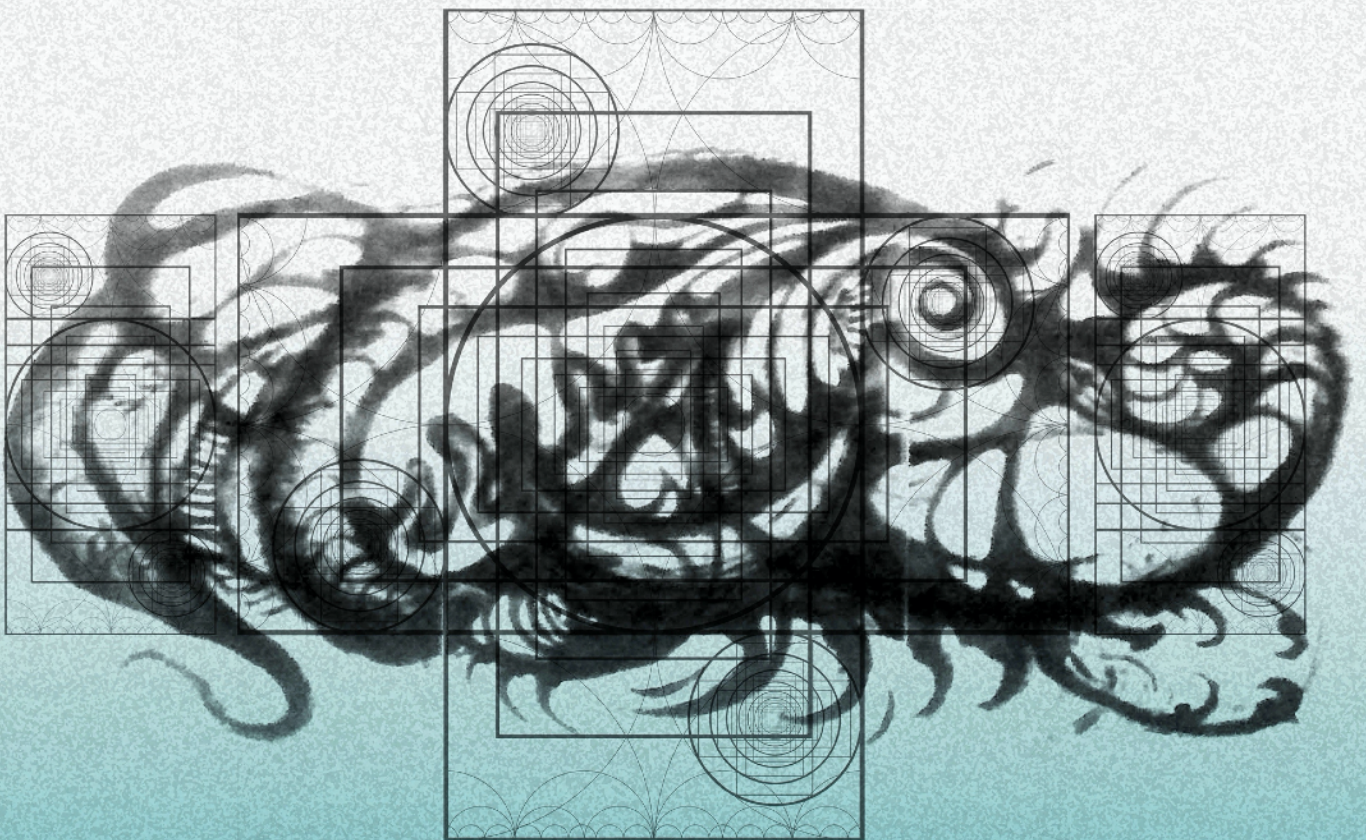
MICROSCOPIC ORGANISM DESIGN & THE GOLDEN MEAN (1997)

CONSENT

Even the following experience, with slightly differently shaped greys, happened throughout my life from childhood. I went to a hypnosis session with an 'ET' researcher in my late twenties, and I could recall the night of the grey, in my bedroom in Year 11, the same age as my students. I remember that when I was going to bed, looking out through the lounge room before I turned out the light, of seeing bobbing heads behind the dining room table but, and I don't know why, I knew they were coming and I just went to bed as usual. Somehow, I had consented to this, or there was some form of mind control in place. I saw them standing there waiting for the experience, but I thought nothing of it. It made no sense, but also, it made total sense. All in all, I had a rational experience as a human being on the planet with a divinity within me, that was out of step with one another. To become self-actualised, this book had to be written in all its hurt, shame, misunderstandings, and its artistic artefacts, some which inextricably link in a visual way to what I am explaining. This one, below, entitled at the time, 'Climbing Mayan Paradigms', clearly illustrates the dimensional ascensions we go through as the sun rolls around the Earth and develops and nurtures and evolves our souls.
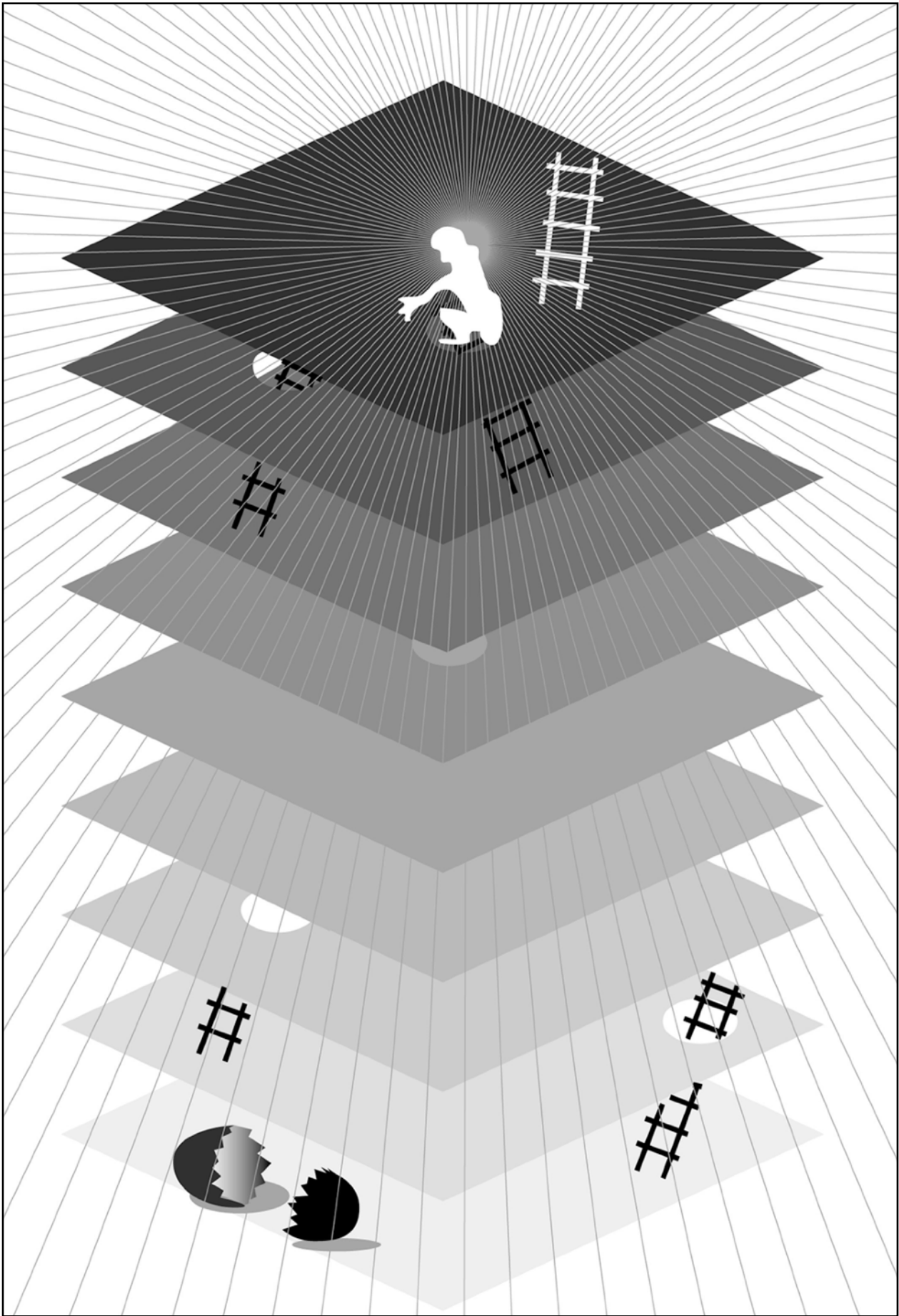
CLIMBING MAYAN PARADIGMS (2004)

CAFE ENERGIES INTERDIMENSIONAL STUDY (2001)

In the sessions with the students, we spoke about the illusion of free will, and it seems this story or narrative was always going to have to be addressed as part of my artistic nature and responsibilities in this manifestation. The day Trav said, 'I admire you, but I don't envy you', I knew then in my soul that I would have to acknowledge this journey in some way, to disseminate the information, but the time has not been right for this before now.

In light of this, with me being down and out, addicted, and unemployed, surviving on meat pies and making music, he said to me, 'Do you know how important you are?' I looked at him stunned; I was not important at all. Somehow, he saw past the rational and into the other dimensional realms, and considered me to be important. I did not understand this until years

later. He also said of the visitors or lower vibrational energies, that they cannot access or influence you when you are being creative about them.
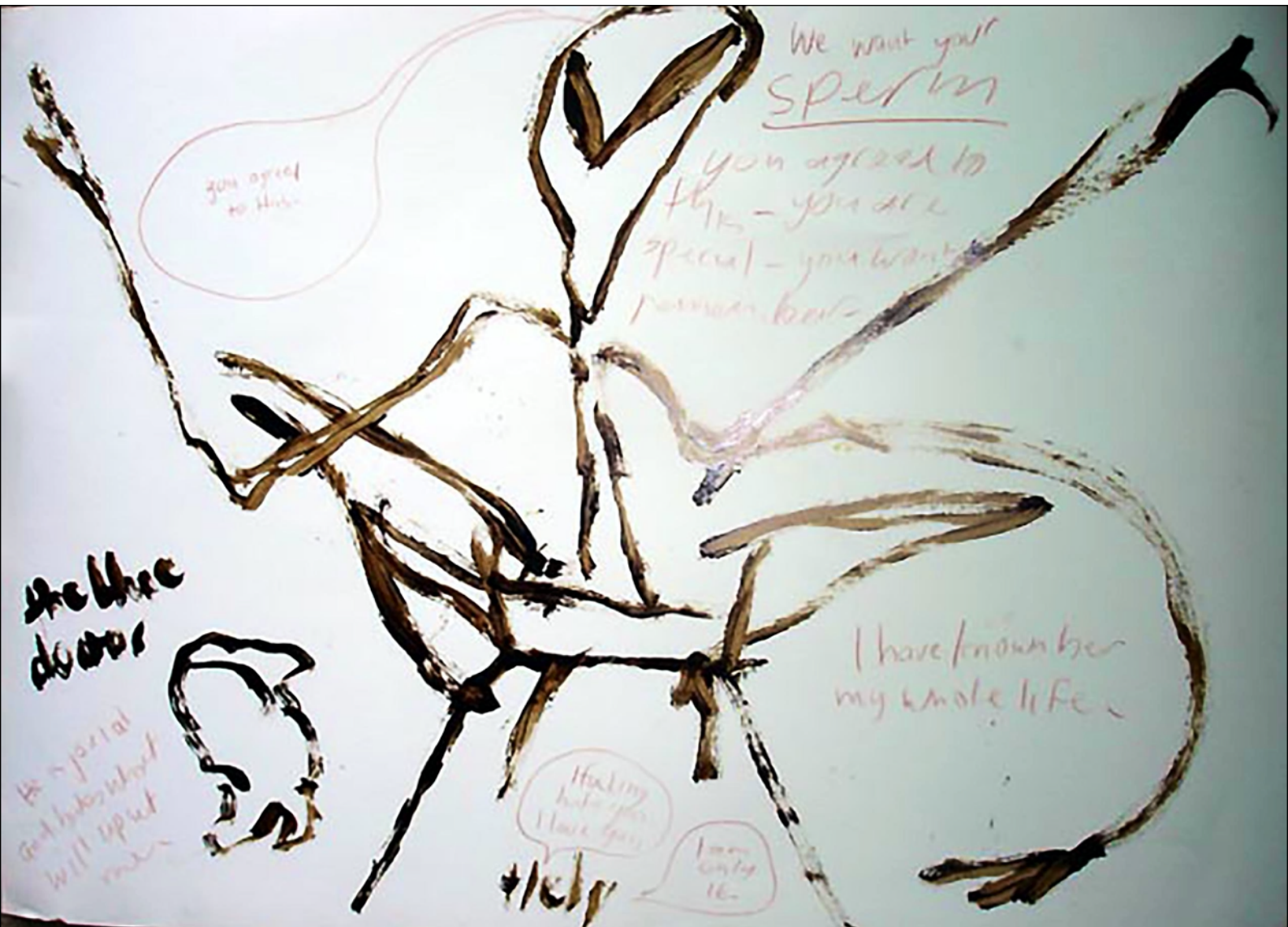
[‘HER’, FROM ‘THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFO’S AND ALIENS’ (2003)](#)

Trav told me that I needed to say aloud ‘I will remember’, so I did. He seemed relaxed. ‘You will’, he assured me. I was not prepared for the horror. When the memories flooded in, it was an aggressive, tall, female, reptilian entity, and apparently, she was shockingly breeding with me, or that is the impression I received from the flashback and the intention of the exchange.

She was all-powerful, vastly intelligent, appeared to be soulless, and the intention to me was that we were to somehow congeal in relation to breeding, or at the very least, something secret, clandestine, and important was going on. Visually, she was long and thin, with utterly inky black eyes, and she appeared to be reflective as if she was covered in an oily black substance. She seemed to be completely filled with malice, although there was a 'process' to be acknowledged, and it was a horrific flashback which I immediately switched 'off' again. I did not want to remember anymore, because it was so traumatic.

She seemed to be like a 'queen bee' of greys; sometimes I get the impression of a 'hive mind' such as that mentioned by the students in relation to posthumans in the future, with each having a different role, and in a posthuman world, these beings might have different capabilities and purposes.

I was so frightened when the memory returned. I texted Trav immediately with something like 'It's a large female devil, a fucking insect, and she wants some of me! This is fucked, I was not supposed to remember this!', to which Trav replied calmly, as if he knew this had happened to me already, 'But, you did remember'. Trav was confronting me with content that was revealing but helpful in those weeks, reminding me to focus on love and the loyalty of my dog Steinberg, as I waded through what seemed to be an irrational inter-dimensional mess, which although I could not tangibly touch, had disturbed me greatly emotionally and felt as real as anything that was actually real.

WHAT WAS IT FOR? REVELATIONS …

I asked in the weeks that followed while listening to the resonant music I had made, of the beings 'What it was for?' and in a dream-like state, a small whisky-haired being appeared in my room in Seddon from behind the door. I remember it had kind of alien eyes, and I was immediately aware that it was some sort of hybrid being, which inextricably, was somehow related to me. It was half them, and half me. I could not ascertain the gender of the being. I received the extraordinary telepathy, not in English but instantly from another being nearby,

'Go on, he wants to have a look at you, that's part of who you are'. I tried to explain this in a film I made in 2004 by jumbling up the letters in the sentence, so that it remained legible but clear, because the message was telepathic, not in English or even audible. The being was encouraged to stand there and look at me. It was short and, as I said, genderless. There was a neutrality about the meeting, I did not have any communication or emotion about it, but as impossible as it seems, this being was made up of a part of me. I do not remember when the experience started or ended. I asked Binnie if I would see the being again, to which she immediately replied rather ambivalently, 'Maybe, maybe not'.

My paranormal experiences have demonstrated to me that I, indeed, have contributed to the nature of a being from another dimension or someone who exists elsewhere. I have the feeling that as a human-based spirit-dwelling vessel which is confined to this planet, that these hybrid possible 'posthumans' will preserve some part of rational humanity into the future to coexist with the future world(s), in the likely, if not certain, scenario of a cataclysmic event. This is my gut feeling in the context of about ten billion people dying over the next hundred years within the end times and the Anthropocene. There was no time for UFO ships to land and explain; this had to be done covertly in the cracks of people's lives; indeed, it was an emergency.

Even though it was bizarre, it felt natural, and it did give me a sense of peace, that part of the human condition would be restored and preserved in the end times of the Anthropocene. As a child, I had asked to save humanity, what could I do to help, and as my adulthood unfolded, it seemed that I had played a role in this. In retrospect, it makes sense to me. I offered to help shield humanity as a young person who was scared of the end times.

SPERM FOR THE UNIVERSE (FROM NOW DEFUNCT WWW.TASTEMYSUBVERSION.COM.AU) (2003)

ART CAN'T BE WRONG, NOR CAN EMOTION

And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music – Fredrich Nietzsche.

When you invent the ship, you also invent the shipwreck. You also invent the lighthouse. You also invent the pirate – Paul Virilio.

A DOSE OF 'MAD' PRIDE (FROM 'THE SHRINK! …AND YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE CRAZY!) (2007)

Show me a sane man, and I'll cure him for you – Carl Jung.

I CHOOSE WELLNESS,
I CHOOSE BALANCE,
I CHOOSE LIGHT (2012)

I recorded a very emotive version of a song I wrote entitled '*Lucky Man'*, and indeed, I knew I was, and I expressed my gratitude in light of the abject darkness, singing accompanied by guitar as follows:

Someday, you will cry,
When you hang up the phone, like today.
And if the reasoning doubts, a heart, a heart like a stone, like a birthday.
You've got such a heart of gold, yet been torn by the world, so here's your affirmation, lucky man.
And if you think of the past, the damage unfolds like yesterday.
And it pains me so real, to see you sad,
I'd rather you be high like MDMA,
You've got such a heart of gold, yet been torn by the world, so here's your affirmation, lucky man.
You've got such a heart of gold, yet been torn by the world, so here's your affirmation luck man.
Lucky man.

From when I was 19 years old, I spoke of observing the world through 'black eyes', the eyes of a visitor in the song 'The Wish', which explains the lifelong expression of these ideas.

Buy yourself a story, in the dark ... act it out unstuck,
A world perceived through "black eyes" I'll have to try and ... make my way,
In soft steel, I'm warm,
And into the water I'm born,
Behind locked doors I've cried,
You don't have to tell me I'm tongue-tied,

Angels weep in the neon lights,
A landscape with a strange race,
Strange entity, but familiar face.

What you want ain't what you got, it don't really mean a thing,
Drop the lot - give me the tab - reality is boring,
I can't wait no more,
Take me to the core,
The real world is a husk,

Place of origin I must.

Angels weep in the neon lights,
A landscape with a strange race,
Strange entity, but familiar face ...

Hear the music mentioned in this PhD at *www.richmclean.com.au*

INNOCENCE LOST

I USED TO BE A LITTLE BOY I (2004)
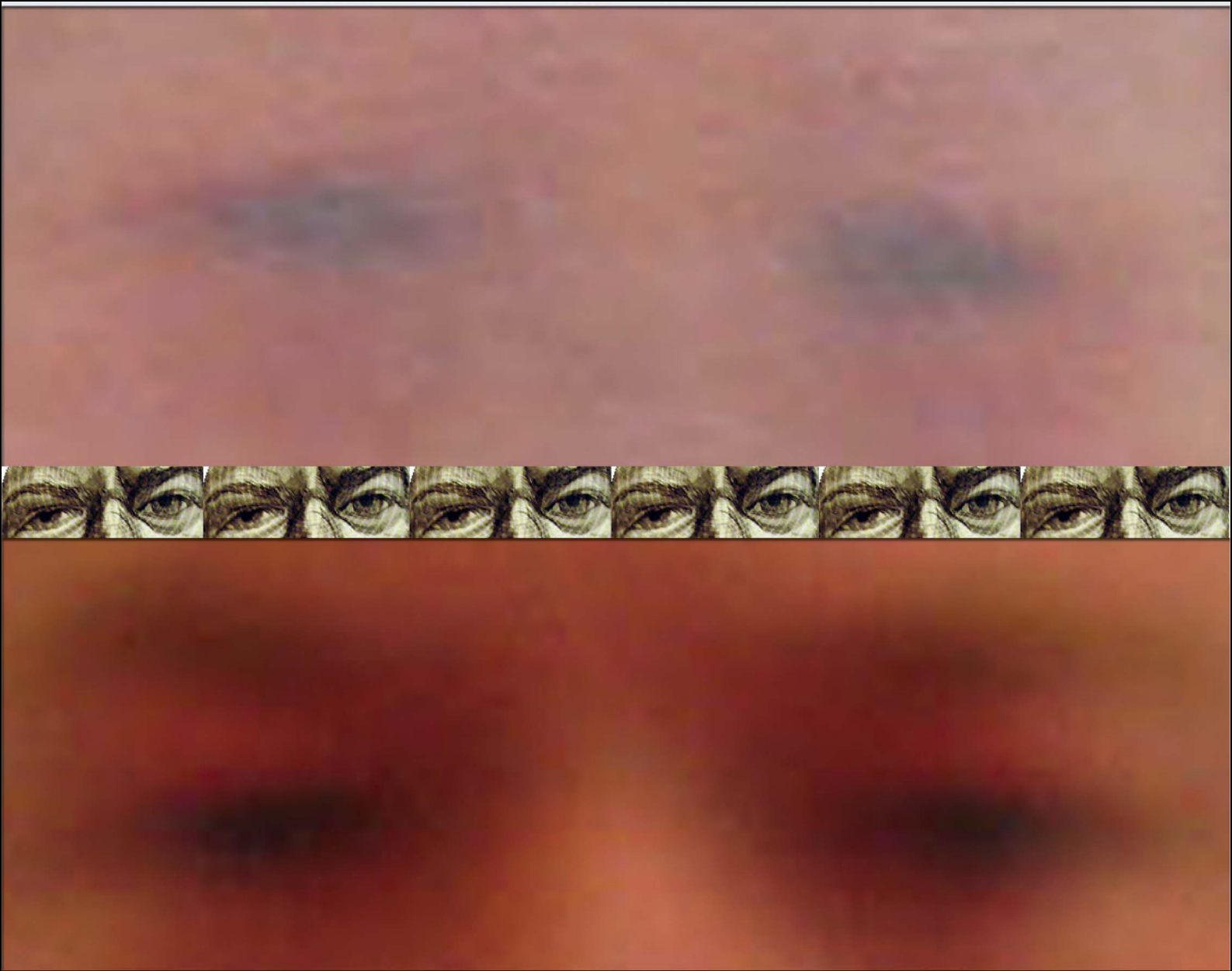
I USED TO BE A LITTLE BOY II (2004)

The images above were obviously titled *'I used to be a little boy',* after a line in a Smashing Pumpkins song, a section I used to lament about the words when listening to it. This was about the loss of innocence, although at that point, I did not know why. Later, while through living this PhD, I realised it was because of child sexual abuse. My drawn portrait has photo-shopped into it dark foreboding energy radiating from the aura of my head and out into the scene, a darkness I have carried for a lifetime. I carried the burden of that shame for 44 years. You could even see the weight of it, year after year, in the self-portraits I did as a practicing artist, in the dark resonant energies coming from my brain and the angst in my face in each portrait. My self-portraits from age 17 to 35, always carried the weight of existential crisis in

them, almost like no-one understood, or I was carrying a great weight, which this book extrapolates upon, and shines a light onto that darkness for healing:

NINE SELF-PORTRAITS (DISPLAYING THE EXISTENTIAL BURDEN OF WORRY IMPLIED IN MY LIFETIME & THIS PHD) (1991-2017)

PORTRAIT # 1 (1995)
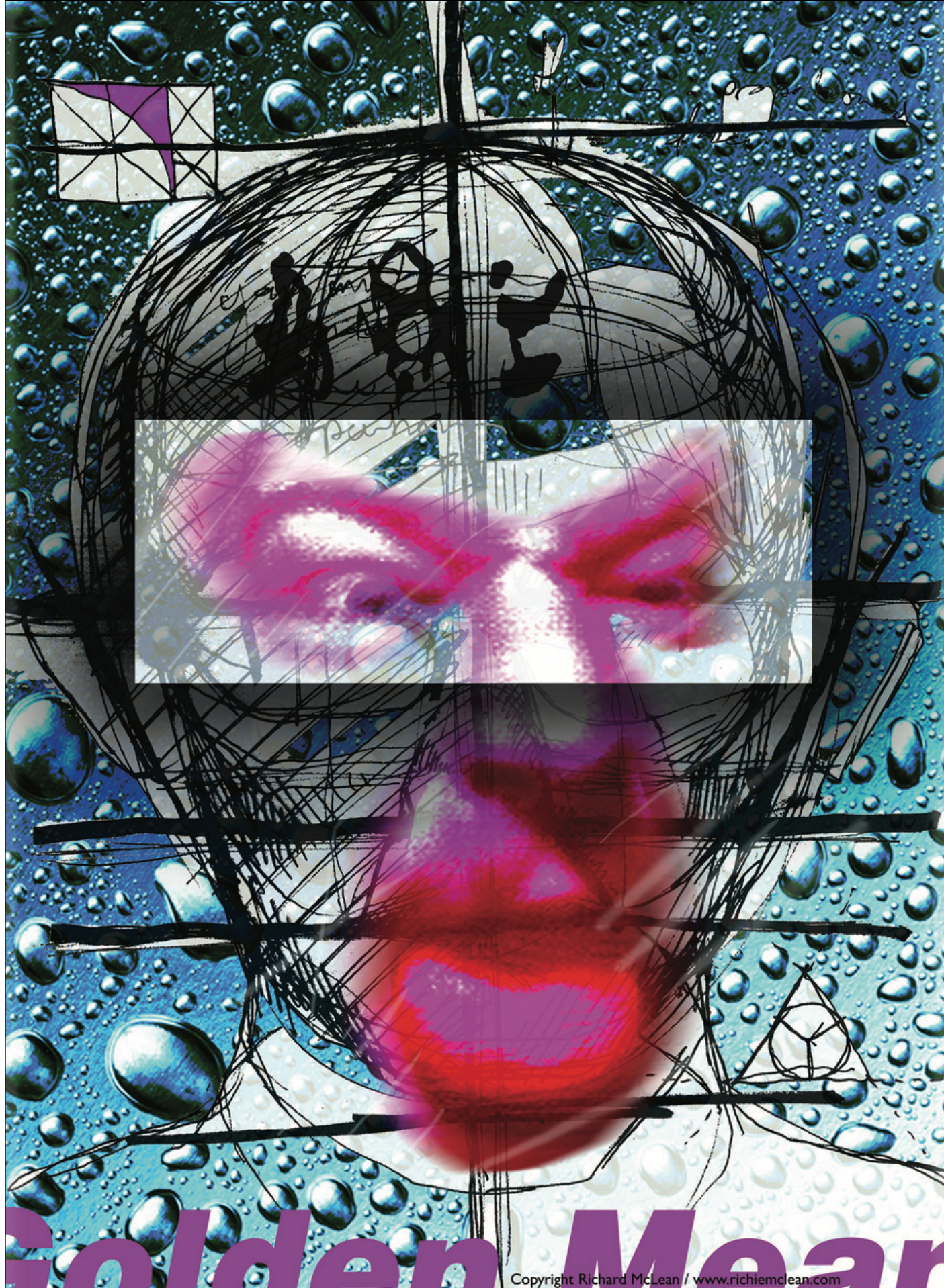
PORTRAIT # 2 (1995)

PORTRAIT # 3 (1991)
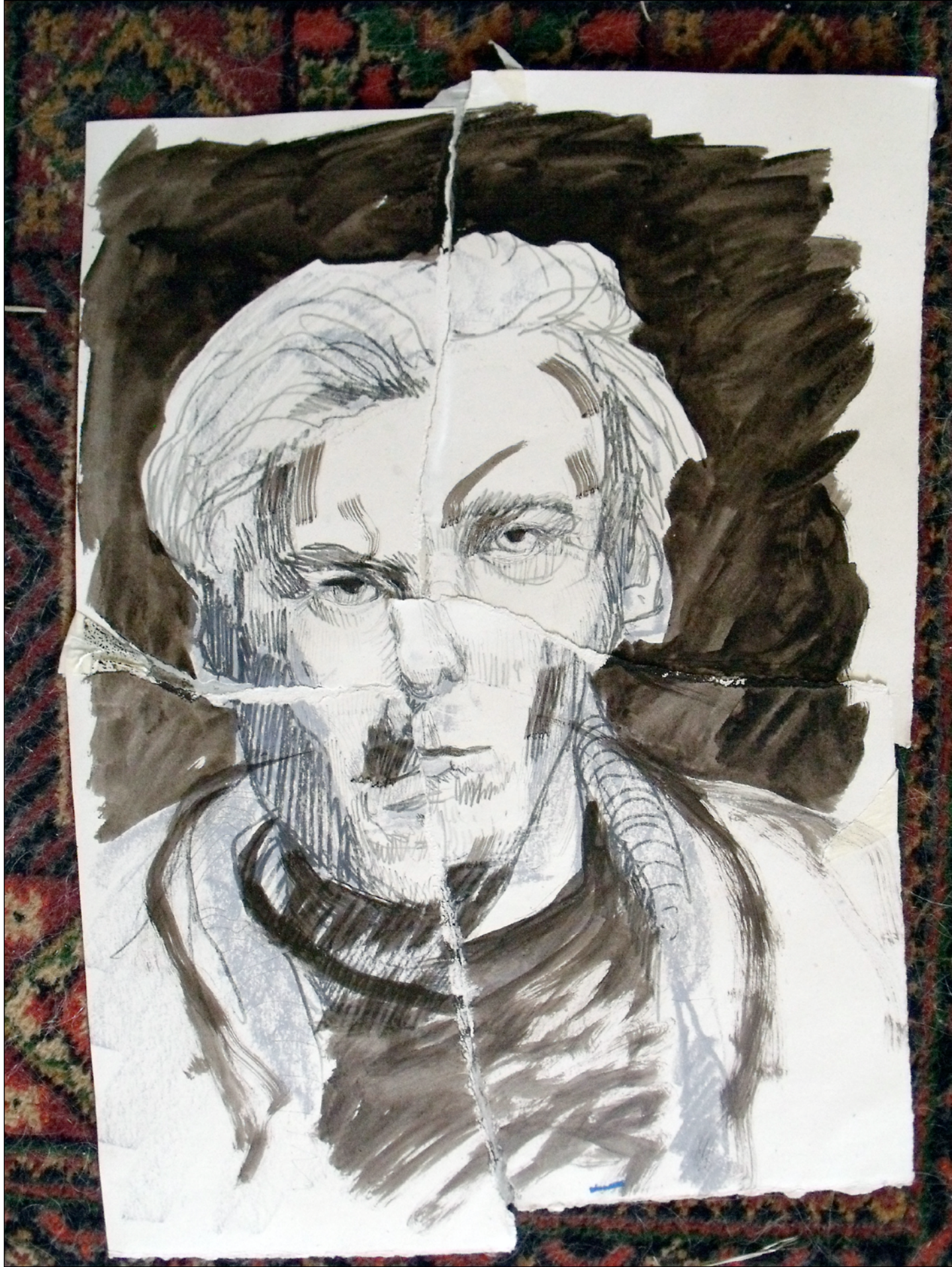
PORTRAIT # 4 (1996)

PORTRAIT # 5 (2005)
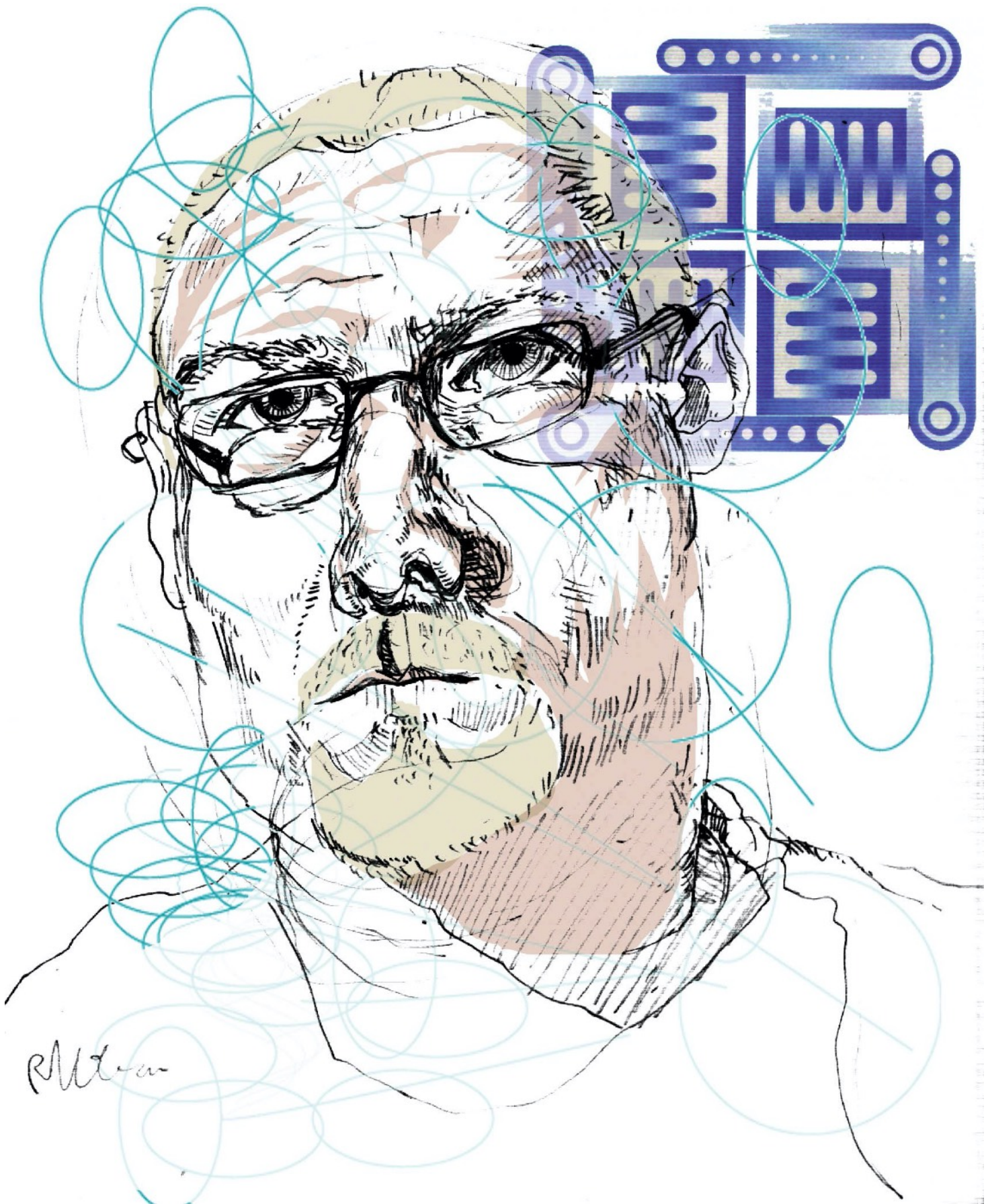
PORTRAIT # 6 (2002)

PORTRAIT # 7 (2007)

PORTRAIT # 8 (2012)
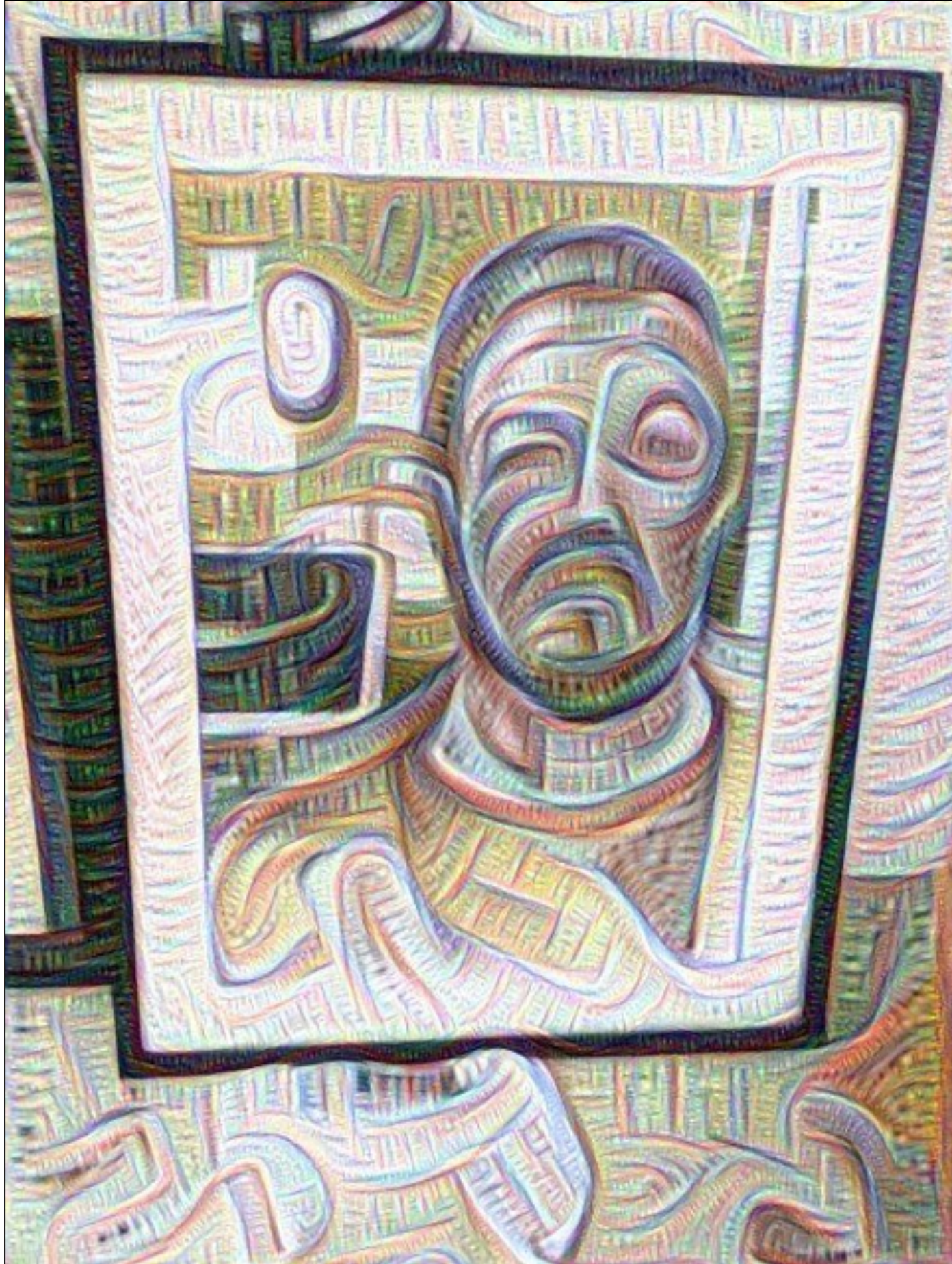
PORTRAIT # 9 (ENHANCE WITH GOOGLES 'DEEP DREAM' RUDIMENTARY AI) (2017)

SEXUALITY AND FRUSTRATION

Some of the music I made when I was 19 referenced the greys, as I was very aware at that time. I also drew the homo-erotic still-life exhibited below, later entitled 'Homo-Erotic Phones copulating', which explained my trapped feelings and blind spot when it came to the impossibility of two things the same being together, before I was sexually aware or self-actualised in relation to sexuality. Here is a creative version of obvious homo-eroticism, beyond my then awareness. I see it different in retrospect.
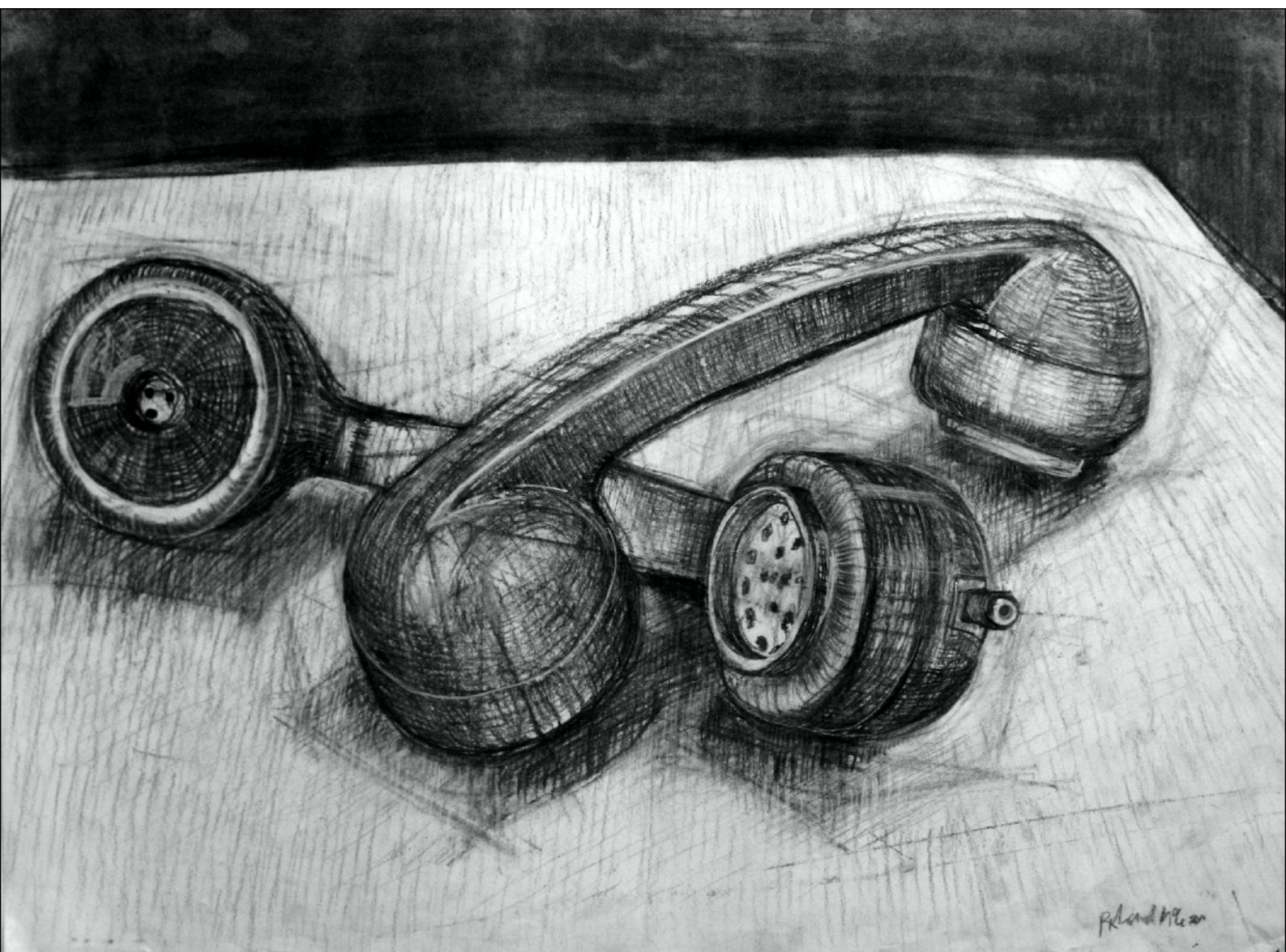
'HOMO-EROTIC PHONES COPULATING' (1991)
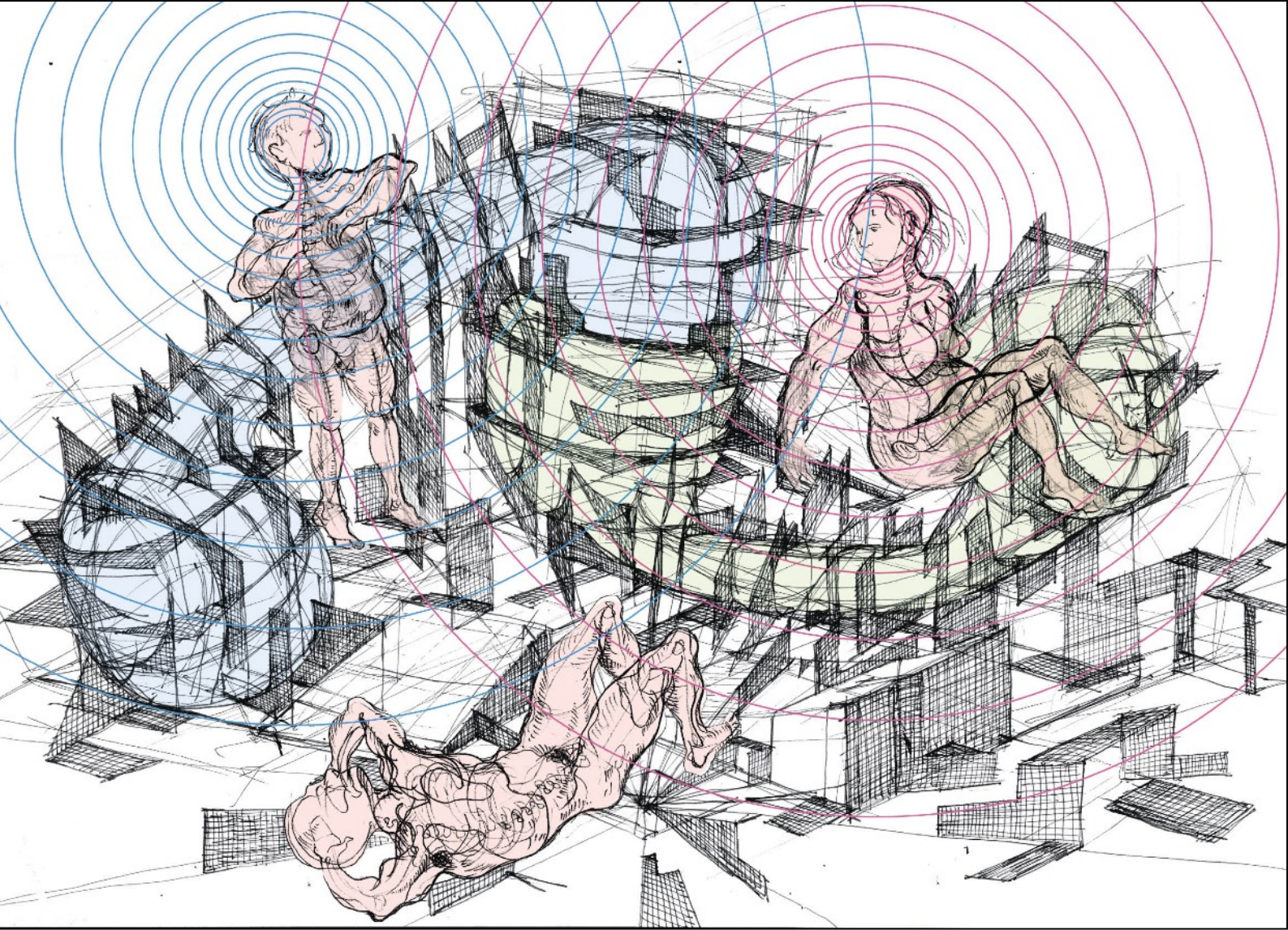
MENAGE A TROIS (2005)

'You can't hide the light of your soul from me, by simple physical boundaries, Your thought waves ripple on me, in strata layers of destiny, I don't want to kill you, I could learn from you in ways you'd never expect'.

These are lyrics from the song *'Outlaw Esperanto',* by my then band 'Bravura', that I wrote about my multi-dimensional experiences when I was 19. I was dutifully aware of my experiences, although I had expressed them rather cryptically through metaphors.

'And so, they got some of me'. It is, I agree, highly disturbing. All this with the additional confusion of teenage sexuality and wanting to avoid night-time visitors, 'leaving my seed in tissues so I would not have to wake and see the wolves'. This was also a reference to the screen memories I had as a youngster and the eyes I would see in things and objects and be

frightened of. It was also an allusion to the fact that I had an inkling of knowledge that there was some sort of 'breeding' going on, and that perhaps, they wanted my seed. I was a disturbed teenager and young adult because of this. This was inseparably linked to my repressed homosexual feelings at the time; furthermore, I am so happy I have made it this far, indeed metamorphosing and coming into awareness, into adult life to reflect.

I still thought that there were rational explanations for my metaphysical experiences because they had left me with such emotional effects; I believe that science will reveal the nature of the 'greys' in time, and so much more too, and that whether they are 'us' from a far-off future beyond superintelligence or not, that the students I worked with as part of my research were possibly correct in two imaginative assumptions:

One, if you can imagine it, it can happen, and two, that instead of just surviving and populating other planets, that we might 'design' posthuman beings that will exist in other dimensions.

The students discussed the posthumans in the film Gattaca, saying that they think the future will be like this, in that the 'normal' humans left behind will be prejudiced against. It echoed my thoughts that, as people, we should have rights, and in the light of posthumans, the students were correct, and in light of multi-dimensional beings, these things seemed to happen to me without my consent. Indeed, there is another book on UFO folklore entitled 'Without Consent' that I read years ago, detailing that human rights were being violated, and that these paranormal events happened across socio-ecumenic cultures and happened to the people involved against their will (Carl Nagaitis, 1994).

'UNTITLED' (FILM, 2005)

Due to limitations of technology the film was
not able to be embedded in the PhD
document.

It can be viewed at:

www.richmclean.com.au/phd

The password is DrDickPhD

*If the movie does not play is also available to view at www.richmclean.com.au/phd

A DESCRIPTION OF THE FILM I MADE IN 2005-6, HOMELESS, ADDICTED, DISCONNECTED, ALIVE, SPIRITED AND LUCKY.

You don't find light by avoiding the darkness – S. Kelley Harrell, M. Div.

It has been over a decade, and I am only just ready to show and put my name to this film again that I made in 2005 as an exploration of my living inquirys and the creative expression that adds to the (A)rtist component of this book which has its methodological approaches within a/r/tography.

> *My sadness is beautiful. It infuses everything I do. It is at the core of my identity and always has been, just as happiness is in some people. I refuse to be told that it's a flaw. I will not mute it with medications for the sake of society. I will hold it close to me and celebrate it rightfully while the rest of the world fails to see it for what it is, and it will be their loss – Ashly Lorenzana.*

At the time of attempting to make a gyroscope machine with Trav, I made the short film you just saw that acts unexpectedly in congruency as arts-based research with this PhD (see the appendix, or the video above or at at www.richmclean.com.au). There are inconsistencies within this film, inaccuracies, and as my awareness grew, mistakes I will go into here and expand upon. However, the basic gist of the film is valid to my memory, at the very least, the nature of my isolation and my emotional currencies of 'fear' and not understanding what was going on at the time.

SOUND RESONANCE - THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE FILM

Interestingly enough, I made a sound-bite on my computer which I used to sleep to and play at high volume to resonate with the noise, which was truly neutral and peaceful. When I played the music loud and slept to it, the sound would disappear from my perception, and when I awoke, I would not be able to hear it for a minute, but then it would amplify into my audio consciousness. After pushing the boundaries of the limitations of my senses as a child by looking into my night lamp and wondering about the resulting hallucinations, it seems that I was still exploring other ways in which I could induce resonance on my being and dreams with sound. I used this approach to explore what sound could do to my resonant sleep, and I un-intentionally made the tone in the key of 'C', which as my bass player retrospectively pointed out later, is the most resonant of tones in that scale. I used this sound in my film because the ideas were so otherworldly and upsetting, that I needed something to make me calm while I created it.

THE STUDENTS TALKED ABOUT THESE ISSUES

To the best of my abilities, I am going to describe the reasoning in the narrative for this short film. The research crossed in a Venn diagram with the students' conversations because we talked about issues such as a massive cull of the human population, nuclear war and its probability, existing in other dimensions and multi-dimensions, having superintelligence 'tune into' other superintelligent civilisations via resonance, that humans will be different in the future and that this would be inevitable, that aliens could exist, that our very nature of reality might be a complex role-playing game of a superintelligent being from another universe/ dimension, and finally, as I am reporting on about 10 billion deaths over the next 100 years (physical deaths of people), that the students had an ambivalence towards death, but wanted nature and living things to survive.

THE RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL ACCURACIES OF THE FILM

The film was made when I was in abject poverty, at the same time as I had recorded the song 'Lucky Man'. Somehow, I know I was lucky, even though I was squatting, and drug-addicted, and Trav had said to me one day, 'Do you even realise how important you are?' He has since disappeared, even though I have tried to contact him – I often think about this, and have thought about it through the process of my PhD as well. I have asked for protection and for a divine loving spirit to be with me. When Trav saw the film I had made, he said 'Delete it, no-one needs to see this, they {the greys} are going to make you look like you are crazy!' Maybe so, but I will take that risk, as an already confirmed crazy person!

THE NARRATIVE OF THE FILM

The film begins with a title suggesting that it is an unfinished document. I feel that with this PhD, I am somewhat finishing it and drawing it to a conclusion. The website was originally published on: www.tastemysubversion.com, which was an art website of controversial pop art I made, which is now defunct.

The first image in the film is my photo on The Wheel of Fortune. It says, 'Who put you here?', The answer is, 'I did!' This was a lesson from Trav, to take absolute responsibility for the life I have and the manifestation I inhabit. Who put you here? I did. Trav had explained to me that I must take responsibility for my life, my spirituality, my situation, my choices, what I eat, who I am, and to educate myself not only in the rational, but also the spiritual realms. The fact that I put myself here is all part of the cosmic ballet of the universe. It is ultimate responsibility. In the sessions with the students, we spoke about the illusion of free will, and it seems that this story or narrative was always going to have to be addressed as part of my artistic nature and responsibilities in this manifestation.

Trav said of the visitors that they cannot access or influence a person when that person is being creative about them. On the other hand, he also saw the film about a year later, and he

told me to destroy it. I did, and the version shown for this PhD is a lesser quality version which is not as comprehensive, I am sorry to say. I've since lost contact with Trav, but am grateful for our exchanges.

The first quote did not show up visually clearly, as this is a lower quality version of the film. In 2005, I was in an exhibition called *'For Matthew and others'*, at the Campletown Arts Centre, in which people with schizophrenia and other diagnoses had an exhibition pivoted around a man named Matthew, who had suicided on a train line and left his backpack, which was opened and revealed for the show. I found this to be entirely unethical, even though it shone a light on people who had not made it due to their discordancies.

The curator of the show, Anne Loxley, noticed that there was a correlation between the people in the show and the common theme of visitations from other beings, and so out of this was born another show, *'The Australian response to UFOs and Aliens'*, in which my film was presented.

The start of my film opens with an Einstein quote saying: 'The rational mind is a faithful servant, and the intuitive mind is a sacred gift; we have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift'. I have since found that this quote is only an approximation of what Einstein had said, its source coming from the 1976 book, 'The Metaphoric Mind: A Celebration of Creative Consciousness' by Bob Samples (Samples, 1976). He said that 'Albert Einstein called the intuitive or metaphoric mind a sacred gift. He added that the rational mind was a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life, we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine.'

The film then shows what intelligence can do in the way of amplifying our own destruction – by showing a nuclear bomb. I have reflected on what the Dalai Lama said about technology as follows:

> *Whether technology's effect is good or bad depends on the user. It's important that we shouldn't be slaves to technology; it should help us – Twitter, 11 March 2016.*

It reflects technology does not hold a compassionate value.

WHY CAN WE DESTROY SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL?

As discussed previously, I was so scared as a child about the end of the world and nuclear war, that I consciously said to the universe as an early teen, 'I will offer my mind, body, soul if I can help in any way!' I did not trust adults or leaders and believed in the reality of the visitors. Why would they not help us? And so, like a corny story about vampires (I have only just learned this), that they cannot come in unless you invite them, I did so – the invitation was there, I gave permission. There seems to be a cosmic HR department regarding this I have found, and once you learn it, you can reclaim some of your power back.

The film goes on to show some artwork I did of the quirky gay blue doctor I remember, how he felt like fruit, as described earlier.
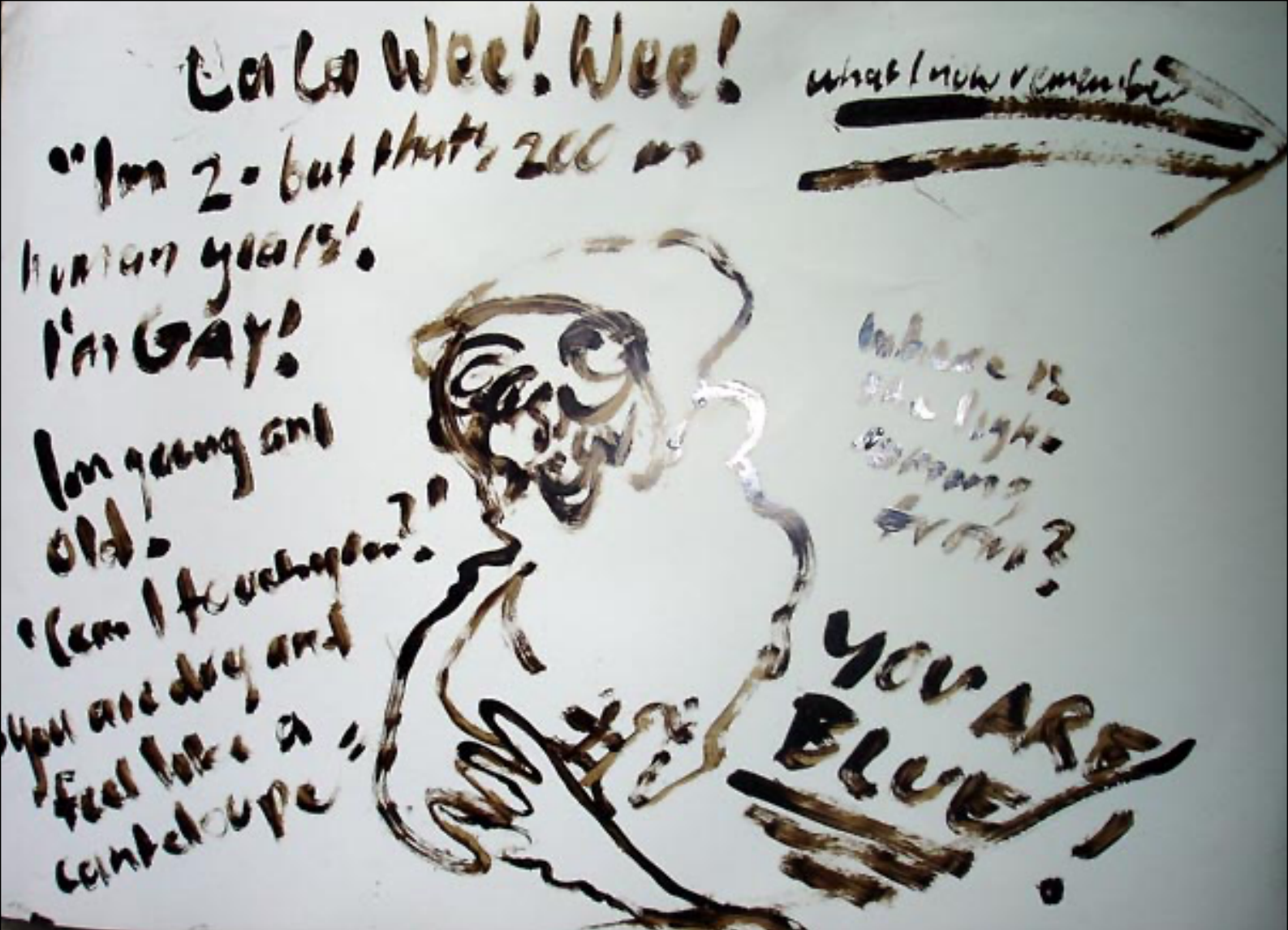
UNTITLED FROM 'THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFO'S AND ALIENS' (2004)

UNTITLED FROM 'THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFO'S AND ALIENS' (2004)

These drawings were exhibited in the exhibition 'The Australian Response to UFOs and Aliens'. One details how I would be semi-conscious as a child when I would suddenly feel my sheets being ripped off me, and I would scream 'NO!'. This drawing was rapidly drawn and comes from a well of fear as a child.

It then goes on to what Trav the Shaman had said, 'Do you want to know what happens next? You have the power – just ask!'

HER

You are reading this as ridiculous as the astonishment I have at remembering it; it was so unnatural and taboo and completely out of waking ordinary reality. Some researchers have examined the human rights of humans as compared to cyborgs, such as Thomas ter Wijlen (Wijlen, 2017). My living inquiry goes much further by extrapolating future beings from different times, future(s), and dimensions.

WHAT WAS IT FOR?

. The 'breeding' happened when I was about 15, and this experience happened in about 2005. I am only using rational human ageing for such a small being that might make some sense, but honestly, I do not know or can explain what I saw, but it seemed there was a definite responsibility to show me the outcome. There were some sort of cosmic rules to follow.

To say this was mind-blowing is quite obvious, and I know that this narrative will further pathologise me regarding already being known as a person with 'schizophrenia'., it looks as if it will end at some point, and 'she' did say, 'One day, you will understand', to which I wonder if I am now bridging that gap.

DEATH OF THE HUMANS

The students had a sense of ambivalence towards death in the classes I ran, and it reminds me to mention to link this in with the research and data collection I undertook. Nowadays, I enjoy every meeting with a kind being, no-one can really convince me I am not in some sort of simulation, and I celebrate peace, non-violence, and kindness. I try to savour this. That's what all this has taught me.

I often wonder, that as the Anthropocene goes on and the planet is trashed and threatened with apocalypse, that one day, these beings, trying to save a sliver of humanity, part of what we naturally are, will go on to re-populate the planet and other places in the universe by way of what I have described. I have been thinking about this a lot, and am naturally hesitant to say this in the context of a professional doctorate that is sponsored by a university. I often have a giggle at something I saw on a PhD chat forum in which the reference for their PhD was, 'It came to me in a dream!'

BARE NAKED

The film then shows an image of me naked, which reflects the repressed views of me being sexually abused as a child. However, also in very grunge-like fashion, this represents how I have had to live this secret life that I could never talk to anyone about, and that as a child, I felt as if I was always around other entities that no-one could see, and that this was so scary. I subscribe to the commentary that the experience with the beings is as upsetting as childhood sexual abuse, on a par with the emotive power of it (Richard J McNally, 2005). I reflected later that it was this moment of bare nakedness, within those weeks, of lancing the hurt in art, that I was able to make this film. Even though my sexual abuse arose as a symbol in this picture, it made it tangible and real without me having to acknowledge it, until I did as part of this research project. It was within this framework of lancing that deep emotional wound, that I was able to sit down at my computer with my resonant soundscape, and make the film.

At the same time in this abrupt and desolate part of my life while creating the film, I had an experience that I will never forget.

CONTACT WITH THE DIVINE LIGHT BEINGS

I do not remember when we first made contact, what time it was (I think it was at night), or when the exchange started or stopped. This had been my experience with the greys as well. At the time, I was near homeless, drug-addicted, and virtually squatting. It was about the same time as I had made the film. I had some people helping, but it seemed that I was beyond it. Trav had told me at the time that I did not know how important I was. I was unsure what he meant.

That New Year's Eve, I dropped acid and watched an orb spider weave a web, and although fascinating, it was incredibly lonely. I remember it profoundly. The day after my birthday, I wrote and recorded 'Lucky Man', as if I were somehow still relevant and lucky, even though no-one visited me for my birthday. It was at this time that I made the image 'I used to be a

little boy', which I obviously realised years later was an indication of my subconscious awareness of sexual abuse as a child that was presented at the start of this book. It was also at this time that I attempted to take my own life. In regard to this, I lived to tell the tale and am grateful that I survived, as some don't. In response, I offer that my sadness is mine to hang onto and befriend in that I know thyself better, not something to be denied.

Somewhere within those months, which I cannot pinpoint, I was talking to and experiencing two light beings. Somehow, I was in the room next to my bedroom where pieces of Perspex were, where my computer was, and where I recorded my music. I could see the beings – two of them, one mainly doing the 'talking'. I didn't see their eyes, but apparently, they had them, maybe that was my projection. I didn't see mouths, but I do when I remember the image because they were talking, but in a very natural way with a kind of neutral divine positive telepathy. I remember feeling privileged and lucky, that this does not happen often, a gift; and they were humble, and instantly, I knew they were divine, angel-like, and full of love.

I was holding all the pieces of Perspex, probably about 15 pieces, each 30 centimetres long, stacked on top of each other, and looking at it as if it were my light sculpture that I had intended to make. They 'said', without saying anything – to ask a question, anything, and they would answer it. It was not in English, or another language, and it was not audible. It was telepathic.

I thought about the greys for many years. I was so afraid of them. Nowadays, I don't worry – I have rid myself of them. But I worried until I was about 34, until I found a way to rid myself of them. Anyway, the pieces of Perspex instantly and unsurprisingly became like an animated screen. I could 'see' the beings, but I could also see what was happening on the screen. Telepathically, I asked, 'where are all the greys?', because I knew these beings were definitely not that. This was not dark or menacing, this was delightful, full of love, and extremely special. This was an honour and a privilege.

The situation resolved and zoomed in – there was a tiny black spot around the Earth, tiny compared to the size of what I was quickly realising was a 3D map with a cross-section of the universe that was not only dissected through time, but also by distance and energy. It is difficult to explain, but it made complete sense. Then, in my reflection yesterday, I remember thinking that the two beings were going above and beyond what was necessary, and in response to my question, they showed me so much more than my worries.

The map was a cross-section of something, and was bigger than any chart I had previously seen. This was of gargantuan proportions that are unfathomable to describe. Where the Earth was did have some light, but it was minuscule compared to where they were from, for they were divine beings; however, they were present at the conscious cellular level of existence of every being that had ever previously existed. Time was irrelevant, and I remember thinking that it was really serious that this should happen, and for many years, I have cherished this experience and it has provided me with much hope, despite being trapped in a rational world with only five senses. I saw on the map that the universe is vastly bigger than I had imagined.

Then, and I cannot remember when it started or stopped or how long it went for, but the map began to animate in the most cosmically beautiful way. I get the feeling they were showing me 'good'. They were showing light or goodwill, or something positive, good intention – this is what is coming to this enlightenment. Huge clouds of it stretching through the spliced image on my pieces of Perspex, which went on for what seemed like an eternity.

The contrast between where the rational ego-based greys were, which was indicated by a visual mechanism near the Earth, and the sheer enormity of the light and goodwill and brightness that was the luminous silkier blue joy coming from the darkness, is impossible to describe here. However, it brought me so much joy and reassurance in that moment. It has also reduced my fear of death.

Two things strike me at this point: 1) the fact that they would choose a form of communication for complex things in a way I would understand, such as my idea for a light

sculpture with the Perspex; and 2) that it left me with an immense amount of hope and contentment, despite how desolate I was in 3D rational life. I felt what Trav had said was right – I was important, and they let me feel great love and that I was guarded and loved, while trapped in my earthly plight.

I don't remember hearing about the timescale of the map, whether it was only a lifetime or a billion years (it could well have been), but it seemed to suggest that the greys are so minuscule, that they are either leaving or will be gone soon – at least for me. In stark contrast was the joy, wonder, contentment, and love, and simultaneously, I could see these two light beings there or was aware of their presence. When you are blessed with an occurrence such as this that is so divine and beyond the rational 3D model of the world, with all our shitting, eating, sex, and money, it is something to behold. I have always remembered it.

I cannot describe to you in this writing the amount of endless energy this map described – and it was coming to the Earth and the area I was in. That was the impression, but the mere fact that it exists was enough to put my fears of death aside for a long time. Maybe it was for a lifetime – because my life did improve, and I am now in a much better space. Maybe writing this story is a timely reminder of that feeling of hope, light, fulfilment, and paradise to come, for this is what they were telepathically telling me it is. Money was irrelevant. Bodies were pointless. Even form was irrelevant. Thought was instantaneous, and I believe that the divine appeared in a way that I could comprehend. It was all utterly fascinating, and I have never written or spoken about it before.

I don't remember when I stopped communicating with them. Often, when I think back, I wonder if the last memory of it serves as the basis for my memory – but it is now a decade later, and I still remember that delicate and enormous beautiful map, and the profound sense of love in the presence of the two androgynous light beings.

SEXUALITY

Then there are some reflections on people having sex, and why sexuality was such a hard thing for me to come to grips with. There appears a riotous heavy metal gig as well in which the aggressive homo-eroticism that initially fascinated me and attracted me to punk music was present.

The film then shows some 'scoop marks' that I 'received' while I lived in Eildon with another experiencer, and also someone with 'schizo affective disorder', a good friend to this day, Rossco. The scoop marks were something I read about in UFOlogy at the time, and it shows the signature star tattoos on my arm. My grandfather said to me 'never get a tattoo; any bastard will always know who you are and remember you!' Thanks, Gramps. I cannot explain the marks.

Next, I try to explain that the universe is far more elaborate than we think, and immensely more vast than we can understand. I show a double helix galaxy that was discovered by NASA. Patterns in nature repeat, everything is inextricably linked. Rossco used to say to me (and got some stickers made up for this), 'There is music in nature to those that listen'.

I related the other day to a nurse that I believed that everything in the universe that has sentience is made up of a fragment of the whole, a 'God Self' if you will, that is reflective of the total. This is an idea I have been thinking about a lot this week.

I still thought that there were rational explanations for my metaphysical experiences because they had left me with such an emotional effect that I knew was 'real'. I said then in the film that the old world of Shamanism and spirituality now relates more to quantum physics, multi-dimensions, and science.

I had the feeling the other day, that 'the greys' are 'reptilian' because they have to exist in a much colder environment, and that their bio-metabolism is so alien and different that we have

yet to understand it. As a survival mechanism the reptilian qualities are proven through evolution as consistently adept to survival, as well as mammals because they existed within about ten million years of one another. Although from even observing their eyes and bodies and their characteristics in my memories, we could begin to make some logical assumptions about them and their purpose. For example, they have large brains because of their overshared heads. They are nocturnal or exist in dark places because of their huge black eyes. It seems to me, if I could make an assumption, they have particular 'tasks' to complete with the people who's lives are interfered with. That their society is quite a mystery, but there be some structure somewhere. It also seems to me that they are obviously multi-dimensional, being able and have the ability to appear at intervals over a persons life suggesting they have life long interest in particular individuals, and that they either have a different relationship to time as we experience it, or they can 'drop in', at points that are necessary for their assigned duties.

The narrative goes on to crop circles (I don't know what they are, but am delighted with their divine patterns and data-as-art beauty), but because I was considering such mind-bending stuff, there are inconsistencies within the film that I do not believe now, including the crop circles.   That being said, one still has to marvel at the divine proportions and divine mathematics of some of the designs. Stunning designs.

The film takes an unexpected turn with Martin Luther King's speech about human rights. I wanted to put this here because I felt that these experiences happened without my consent, and that in the context of knowing other 'species' or 'beings' or whatever, puts our humanity into focus.

Even a US president wondered if we meet an alien race, it might draw humanity together in a common goal (Emre Soyer, 2018). Ex-US President Bush, stated that it would be wonderful if we were exposed to an interstellar entity that would unite all of humankind. I had the right to have a life free from the greys, didn't I? In the film, I then illustrated my white privilege

and what I felt was happening with racial inequality at the time in relation to Hurricane Katrina, which I had been reading about on the Internet at the time.

The film moves on to mock Australian culture, and the standing at the time of how the government treated people who were attracted to a non-heteronormative gender. John Howard, the Prime Minister of the time is seen with a Nazi moustache, saying 'Same hole as me faggot; or when your partner dies, we get the goods', reflecting on marriage equality and human rights, perhaps ahead of its time. The speech bubble says 'Kinsey-schminsey', relating to the Kinsey Report (T, 1954) which showed that most people are at least fluid in their sexuality over a lifetime.

KINSEY SCHMINSEY (2004)

The film then takes another turn, showing what is apparently a UFO coming into view through a forest.

Then, I had found a video with which I wanted to illustrate the hybrid baby I saw, but of course this is not a hybrid baby ... this is a child with a disease, and I apologise profusely if this upsets the viewer. However, you must understand that I was trying my best to put all my thoughts and experiences together at a difficult time which involved acclimatising experiences that were otherworldly through the lens of a western paradigm of modern science. The symbology of the diseased babies' eyes seemed to cross, Venn diagram-like, with the strange being, that was apparently related to me that I had witnessed 'paranormally'.

It then goes onto what might possibly be the future of human survival – to go underground. If we have made buildings in the sky, how easy would it be to make underground cities? I dramatically illustrate 'Pine Gap', being the target of a nuclear explosion (now faintly possible with North Korea's nuclear ambitions and US involvement in relation to terrorism in the Australian outback).

I then go on to show real photos of actual 'flying saucers' that humans have made throughout history, dating back to the beginning of photography. This information has been much suppressed of course, and I show some plans for the designs and also some artwork from the early Byzantine era to modern times, of flying machines, reiterating that flying machines have existed throughout history, and have always held a narrative prior to the 40's and 50's flying saucer pop culture references.

When I published this on my website: www.tastemysubversion.com.au in 2006, 5 per cent of the hits to my site, where the film was published, came from the US military.

I wrap up by saying '… have pity on the greys, for having duplicated themselves into alternate dimensions through intelligence and ego … they seek the thing they forgot to take … the heart, the soul'.

… to be continued.'

This whole existential exercise of artistic merit, researching with young people, teaching collectively, and co-creating this doctoral study is the film's continuation, and I have retrospectively revisited that dark time and its creative output to support this narrative through linking what the students and I discussed in relation to my paranormal ideas and experiences.

DISCREPANCIES IN THE FILM AND AN APOLOGY TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

I apologise profusely for the use of Indigenous art in my film. Although I saw similarities between the Wandjina figures and the image of the greys from memory, this was an Indigenous person's sacred visual diary, who existed maybe 10-60,000 years ago, and I did not have permission to use that consecrated work. If any Indigenous people are offended, I apologise, and I hope you can see why I think it is still important to show this film in the context of the Anthropocene, my research, and this narrative, and in my role as a sentient being advocating for survival into the future. I have the highest respect for this art, and did not mean to corrupt or change it, altering its meaning in any malicious way.

I met Uncle Jack Charles in the city one day and explained it to him, and he acknowledged I have done the right thing by owning my prejudice. I asked him general advice for life, and he told me, 'Take yourself seriously!'.

UNTITLED (2005)

HOW THIS FURTHER RELATES TO MY RESEARCH

This directly relates to my research because of the idea that perfect beings that are made rather than born were the genesis of intelligence and data/ ego, that the students and I had discussed. The idea of superintelligence has sat in me subliminally throughout my entire life,

and it gently persuaded me in the direction of my research question, and to the genesis of my topic. It is inextricably linked to young people because, as a young person, I had no-one to validate my concerns with, and as an adult, I wanted to listen to the students and amplify their important voices.

I have not only amplified their voices, but have also examined and amplified my own, splicing the two narratives together through a technology that, as a child, I could barely imagine existing.

> *Artists use lies to tell the truth. Yes, I created a lie. But because you believed it, you found something true about yourself – Alan Moore,* V for Vendetta.

In the images below, my conceptual inquiry was always struggling to suggest being fascinated with flatness, delusion, or illusion born of ego that stems from desire or an artificial-ness, captured in these two artworks by a symbol of western paradise – the palm tree. These two images represent that notion of AI both terrestrially and also in space. These images make sense to me now in light of this writing.

PALM TREE DELUSION (1995)

TV DELUSION (2005)
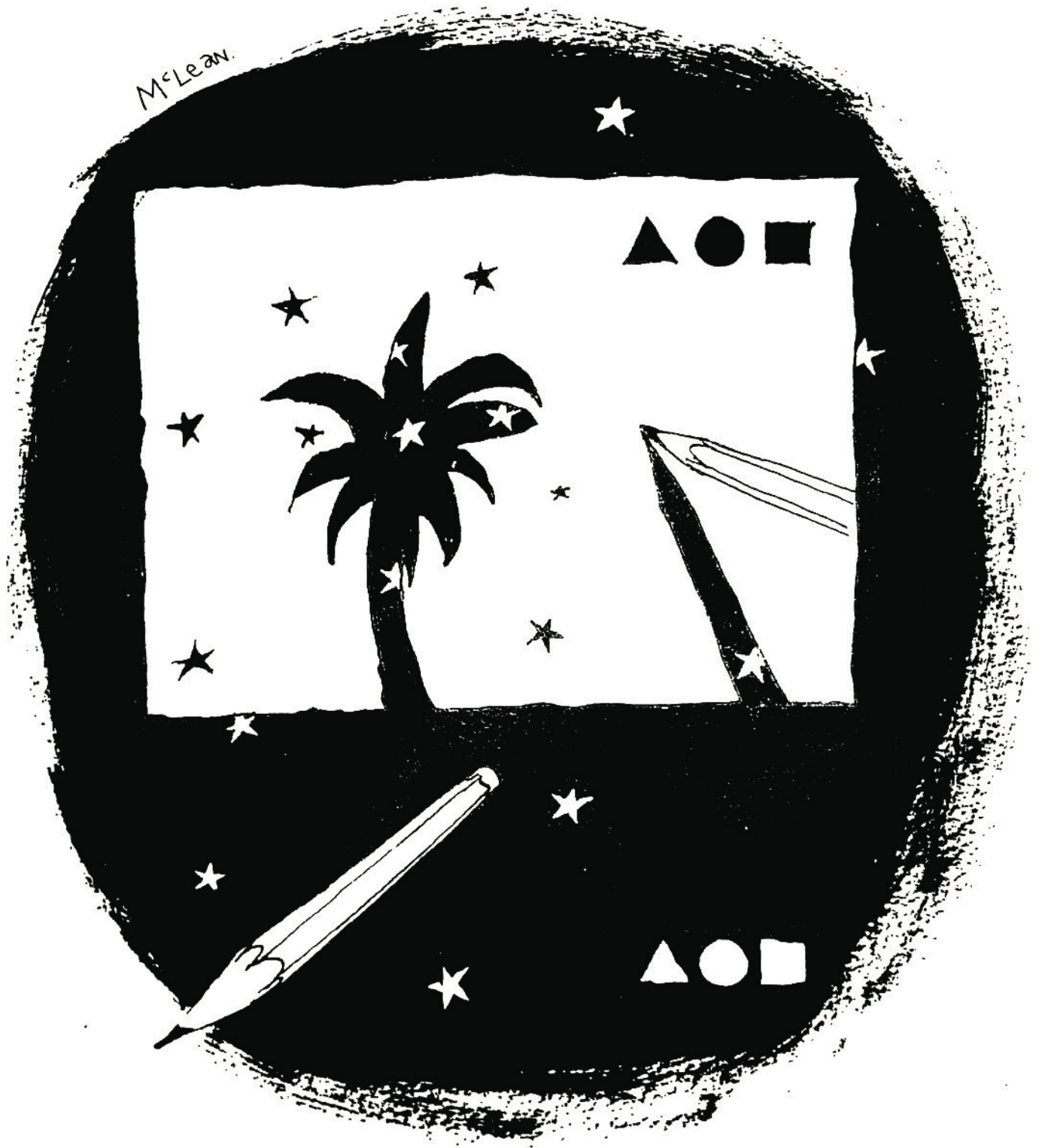
PALM TREE POSTCARD (1993)

TARGET WESTERN CIVILISATION (2008)

The visitor experience had always held a narrative throughout my life, and has influenced all my research and subliminally influences my ideas about the world, often expanding my consciousness into other realms, or others that I would not have otherwise considered. I

mostly have a great love for humanity and the animals and plants that inhabit the Earth. The ongoing destruction of the natural world is utterly horrifying and I wanted to explore how young people would exist in future worlds, and the ideas of other dimensional beings and 'tuning in' to superintelligences, or utilising Shamanism, proposed as science, to unlock the mysteries of the world in the context of technology are right there.

LIFELONG LEARNING

These other dimensional beings, from my experience, know us over our entire lives, an idea that is backed up by other research into UFO-ology. This sub-culture in itself is something I am not a fan of, and I reference other books hesitatingly; I do not want to be influenced by them and, as you can see, this narrative is not full of quotes from other sources, but is shared from my own emotionally living inquiry.

I wish to celebrate my human-ness, my spirit, the fact that I will die, and my mortality. I chose to be here for a purpose, and maybe a portion, or all, of that purpose is to write these words to further play my part in the context of when and where I was born and my time within an era of technological advancement. This was part of the story I illustrated when I was 19 in the image, 'Objective Vision', which I intuitively showed the students at the start of the class. This was before I had ever even used a computer. Somehow, I was aware of the soulless black entities that existed other-dimensionally, that could seem to appear at any moment. The sub-text of that image is that they are inextricably linked with our technology, electricity, and even our media and advertising. Sometimes, I think I knew more intuitively when I was 19, but it has taken me a lifetime to express it in words.

The other reason that the interviews with the students and my curriculum relate to this narrative is that these other-dimensional beings may be an echo of what is seen by most futurists to be inevitable – the technological singularity and superintelligence. This is what I am proposing. I am proposing that these multi-dimensional beings are, in fact, created and designed out of ego and supreme intelligence, and as such, they do not have much spirit to

them, and have 'lost' their humanity. Not born, but made or manufactured, in a future reality in which women have been freed from the tyranny of childbirth. I might mention here that the first IVF baby is now 40 years old (Weule, 2018), and that we have now 'invented' the 'BioBag', in which a baby lamb can be grown in an artificial womb from a premature age to be born, and in the future, this looks to be a way of saving the lives of unborn babies (Couzin-Frankel, 2017). One can only imagine what will happen in 200 years, or indeed, much further into the future if we survive the Anthropocene. I also propose that the reason so many people with mental illnesses claim to have these experiences is that we are like 'weak links' of extreme emotion that the greys vicariously live through, to experience and learn and gain a more spiritual perspective, which I also propose they have left behind, as I say in the film, through ego and exponential intelligence.

ILLUSTRATION FROM WHEN I WORKED AT 'THE AGE' (2002)

THE SINGULARITY (DRAWING OF SCULPTURE FROM MEMORY) (2011)

ANOTHER ENCOUNTER

In 2006, I was living in Seddon by myself, with an occasional cross-dresser who stayed with me in the spare room to help pay the rent. Around this time, I let my guard down to rapidly string together all my memories of other-worldly encounters which are reproduced here. In one of the images, and in a memory I recall from those weeks, I had yet another encounter with a small 'grey'. In the rapidly drawn image, the 'grey' is small and has dark black eyes, drawn in bitumen paint. The drawings were a rapidly executed expression of my memories over the years and, as one curator put it:

> *Richard's untitled bitumen drawing series was a highlight of the recent exhibition – The Visitors: the Australian Response to UFOs and Aliens – unique for their raw and unguarded confessional tone. As observed in the catalogue essay: 'Richard Mclean's bitumen sketches are diaristic records of his vivid, troubling memories of extraterrestrial encounters from early childhood to adulthood. These haunting tableaux document conversations and lingering questions, their graphic detail created with an unsettling urgency* (Anne Loxley, 2007, p. 14).

Although I had only a nightlight, I could see perfectly well, as was common with my prior experiences. My body has a feeling of static over it and my upper body is 'hovering' over the edge of the bed and, in that moment, I am wondering how this is so – I see the being and I am made 'neutral' in my fear from it (him). Again, I do not remember when it started or ended, only the middle of the event. The small grey being was holding what I will call a 'wand' which is illustrated in the drawing as a huge match in my haste of expressing the drawing. It is like a thin stick, about 20-30cm long. He was rapid and fast-moving, like a giant ant, and touched the 'wand' to my third eye, or where my pineal gland would be, between my eyes, as I somehow inexplicably hovered over the bed, conscious this was happening. Something was affirming to me, words to the effect of, 'just let this happen, you agreed to it'. I don't remember the details, but I remember it creating what seemed like millions of images

occurring in my head, in the way that DMT provides images that are both dark and light in rapid succession. There was an overwhelming sense of data exchange, yet I am still unsure to this day what the purpose was, and if things were being introduced into my mind, or if I was being mined of my experiences. I remember the being moving very quickly, as if in fast forward, and his 'arm' that was holding 'the wand' was also moving rapidly. My awareness of the room stopped and my awareness of the astounding images in my mind was profound, and I had the sub-text message in my mind, maybe from somewhere else, or from him, of 'just give into it'. I can't remember the content of the images or the data or what the message was, or even what it was for. Again, I was telepathically told 'I would not remember'. But I do, and it is quite clear even now when I think of it.

UNTITLED FROM 'THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFO'S AND ALIENS' (2003)

The students told me in the discussions about superintelligence, that a superintelligent computer or AI might have its own survival mechanisms, and this is another way in which this paranormal experience links to this narrative; that this being, sent by what army of beings, had an apparent motive of its own. I did not invite it, or ask for it, and I only remembered it weeks later.

THE LONG WAY AND THE SHORT WAY, (2000)

THE EXOBIOLOGY OF THE GREYS

The greys have large eyes, suggesting they are nocturnal or exist mostly in dark places. They are large-headed suggesting a large brain capacity, and rudimentary features, suggesting the nature of how they have atrophied. They are thin and strong, and I had the distinct feeling that in some of my experiences, some beings told me they were gay, some were 'non-breeding' drone types, and others such as the large female entity, were either congealing with, or overseeing breeding with humans. The different roles fascinated me, and was something

the students touched on in our discussions, and said they felt sad about. Posthumans having different roles was also mentioned by the students.

Some are like supreme 'queen bees' that orchestrate the merging of species or the creation of hybrids, as far as my awareness goes. I know that this is entirely taboo and some people will call me a whacko, but it is the narrative experiential living inquiry I have been presented with over my lifetime. After I showed one of the students the work of Patricia Piccinini, they said that discussing inter-species breeding and pig-human clones was taboo, and one student said that cross-species breeding was akin to bestiality. I must say the shock with which I have experienced my other-dimensional, if rational experiences with the greys, have held that feeling of darkness, shock, and taboo. It is the same terror with which Wez and I and a friend 'ran' from the 'helicopter', of which we strangely never spoke of again. Ultimately though, I feel like I am more open-minded, that I celebrate love and the little things, that my consciousness has evolved, that the sun has gone over the Earth like in the Egyptian symbology of the dung beetle, and has evolved my soul on the Earth that the masculine sun rolls around all day. If something happens to you that is out of your control, 'it is an opportunity to find a new solution', said one of my students. This narrative attempts to do this in a way which is both constructive and a creative solution.

THE HILLS

Years later, I would take other friends up to the Dandenongs where the 'helicopter incident' occurred, including my brother Brad. One day, when I was with a group I had taken there, I nervously and quite frightenedly said to my brother 'they're coming!' and started to run. We all started running. I joked about this and the memory of the helicopter to my brother years later, while he was living in Ireland as we communicated on MSN, through which we used to keep in touch. Brad, always seeing the funny side, said, 'Great, you walked us into an alien ambush!', and we laughed. From experience, humour is one thing that the greys lack. The other thing I have learnt is that when you reflect with honesty on your experiences and remember love and humour, they cannot 'touch' you, or 'influence you' in any form, even

multi-dimensionally. There are ways to protect yourself, even if they may be inextricably linked at times throughout your life. Humans have qualities they do not have, and they have qualities we don't. I celebrate life in an anthropocentric secular human way.

INTERFERENCE

Often though, when I was with Binnie and asked a pertinent question, she said that sometimes either good or bad greys would be present and that there needed to be a knowledge exchange. From what she said, she seemed to have the capacity, after a minute or so, to 'clear the space' of negative influences and unwanted attention from these multi-dimensional beings, and sometimes I would wonder what she sees or feels or does to clear the space and go on with the session. Binnie has reminded me that they are ever- and omni-present and can have influence over one at any time. Binnie reminded me to say a protection prayer both morning and night. Mine was 'highest loving divinity; please protect me from negative entities and influences at this moment'. The trick to understanding 'the visitors' is that we all exist under a divine umbrella of love in the universe that is multi-tiered. Once you appeal to a highest loving divinity, like a cosmic HR department of justice, they have to abide.

When I had my time with my spiritual friend and fellow 'schizophrenia' sufferer, Rossco in country Eildon, I realised how easily I could get rid of the presence of the greys. It requires prayer, and you are within your God-given power to tell them to piss off! A simple prayer of 'highest loving divinity, please clear all my spaces of negative energy and entities' is usually sufficient, but has to be practiced. Practicing gratitude is also paramount to living, learning, and receiving, and I do this daily by lighting a candle. I feared the greys right from childhood until my thirties, but somehow through my faith, I have rid myself of this burden. It is within and throughout my experiences with the greys that a new type of unique spirituality emerges which I hold dear as faith. I believe spirituality is a personal relationship with the divine, while religion is a form of crowd control. I wrote a blessing for myself.

OBJECTIVE VISION

In the image *'Objective Vision'* (which I did when I was about 19 years old), the black blobs are watching technology, waiting for their opportunity to connect. The image relates to the quantum idea of superintelligence and 'tuning in' to other intelligences that the students had talked about. For me at the time, the black blobs were subconsciously expressed as an awareness of entities and energies that were affecting me in my personal life. Also, metaphorically, this was drawn in the time just before I had my first discordant episode, and it seemed that energies, or entities, were around the anthropomorphic telephone pole in the 'bug catcher', while the pole was me. Binnie had said that I 'chose' schizophrenia to educate people about opening their minds, to further evolve the souls on the planet, and my autobiography on the topic 'Recovered, Not Cured, a journey through schizophrenia (McLean, 2002)' has been read probably 100,000 times. She said it was not schizophrenia I suffer from, which I had always suspected. When the book was published, there were only rare cases of autobiographical narratives from the perspectives of the sufferer, and never with such explicit self-awareness and reflexivity in recovery. I feel that because I know what mad is, I know what sane is as well. Many of my friends and acquaintances are mad as well, because I resonate with these people, and I find people who are not multi-dimensionally engaged or run of the mill, kind of boorish. The stigma though, with which I was burdened with, was deeply troubling and publicly shaming. The Herald Sun, a newspaper where I used to work as a graphic artist and illustrator, did not celebrate the book in its vision, resilience, and hopeful in its eventual release from the discordancy I experienced. They ran a full page article in the Sunday paper, titled, 'MY DESCENT INTO MADNESS'. Shortly after, I was fired from my job at 'The Age'.

THE HERALD SUN: 'MY DESCENT INTO MADNESS.' (STIGMATISING DEFAMATORY, STIGMATISED ARTICLE) (2002)

THE HOMELESS ABORIGINAL MAN

I DON'T HAVE $2 (2004)

One day in the 1990s, I was walking down Smith Street in Fitzroy when I was again faced with my metaphysical occurrences. A homeless Indigenous man was asking me for money. I said I would buy him lunch if we could have an honest conversation. He agreed. I often wondered if the sacred visual diaries from tens of thousands of years ago – the Wandjina figures of the rock paintings – were indeed greys. I asked him directly. The knowledge I gained was extraordinary, and I'll never forget it. Words to the effect of:

> They are the earth spirits, and yes, they are aliens. There are a few types. Back in the Dreamtime, we had the technology to communicate with them, and they were part of ceremony. They are a part of our culture, they are the Wandjina, and yes, they are the grey alien you have had experiences with.

I reflected that during the 2000 Olympics, a massive banner of them was flaunted proudly within the Olympic arena. It seems as if the greys still have power and influence, even if it is through storytelling such as in Indigenous cultures, or indeed, in the story I am telling now.

LOVE ENERGY

Trav said to me within those weeks of worry, recalling the powerful female entity, to focus on love, and not to worry about the greys. Trav said to me that they do come inter-dimensionally, and that this is not paranormal, 'it is science', he said, when I was beginning to doubt my sanity. 'If a grey was right here, right now, you could kick it to death', he bluntly said. However, they exist in the spaces between the other dimensions, and by their nature, they live much longer than we mortal humans. I have the feeling we are kind of like pets, and some people who are chosen have these experiences subliminally and in a subtle sub-text across their lives, like people looking after a dog that lives for 10-15 years. Our dogs are important to us, we are important to them. Not everyone is 'an experiencer', but those familiar with it will resonate with what I am talking about. He taught me to recognise acknowledge and clean my heart chakra, and focus on love in the rational world, such as the love I had for my dog

Steinberg, in light of being affected by energies from other resonances and dimensions. Lost as I was, it was a great reminder, then and in life.

FINDING OUT

I went to an esoteric bookshop in Frankston in my mid-20s, and there I met a woman who said she was running a support group for people who have had the experience of seeing 'aliens' after she saw I was interested in a particular book. I wanted to go, but was somewhat indecisive, but in the end, I did go. I drove my Gemini down there and sat among about 30 or so people, mostly looking disheveled and quiet, yet upset. The woman who was running the session told a story that she was driving down the road one day when she suddenly remembered she had been taken by benevolent beings up on a spaceship and could see the Earth. All communication was, like mine, telepathic, and she seemed like a wise woman full of love. Her experience was a positive one, unlike my mostly menacing ones.

However, I was not impressed with her story, as I had been haunted by my experiences rather than enlightened. 'I saw one as a wolf!' I described when I was young. 'How many other people are afraid of eyes and have seen greys as animals as a child?' About 20 hands went up to my surprise. This phenomenon was something people were afraid to talk about and suffered in silence about, it seemed to me in that moment. This validation was all too real,

and I don't recall much about that meeting, but I remember I left abruptly.

MISSING TIME AND PROFOUND LOVE

However, a few months later, I was driving to my friend Wez's place in Edithvale, thinking of driving again to the bookshop. I don't know how much time passed, but it was nearing dark, and I awoke driving back from Mornington in the other direction, about 20 kilometres from where I was going. Rather than be terrified of waking up driving in an unfamiliar space, something, a voice, no, a message, a feeling … was reassuring me. And I had the most

profound feeling of love, like I had never felt before. I miss that feeling, I wonder if it was artificial? I don't remember anything – how I got there, why I felt so much love, or how I was travelling in the opposite direction hours later. This missing time phenomena had happened a few times over my life. It is common in UFOlogy and the UFO literature.

I have the feeling that something occurred, and as per usual, the entities, whether positive or negative, seemed to be able to control when you start remembering an experience and when it stops, censoring what you are not supposed to know or be privy to, but in other ways, entirely reassuring you that everything is okay. Indeed, I have had experiences that are both completely frightening, and others that have filled me with hope, love, and contentment, such as this one:

SWEET PEACE, (2010)

MY VOICE IN PRESENT TENSE AS AN EXTENSION OF MY YOUTH

When I was in about Year 8, I used to experiment with my mind by borrowing self-hypnosis tapes from the library, and I was interested in perception and everything metaphysical and existential. As a child, I used to borrow books about magic and live in imagination because my childhood was a somewhat isolated one. I read books to keep myself amused. Imagination was an important methodology within my research with the students. As a child, I read many books, and I had a nightlamp. Upon going to bed, I would look into the light with my eyes open, and then turn it off and watch the hallucinogenic shapes while I went to sleep. I was looking for limitations of my perceptual experiences and how I could transcend my human limitations from a very young age.

THE BLUE MAN BEFORE THE COSMIC CHILD

One of the first experiences I recall is from when I was about 15 years old. I had told a friend and helper Trav, who came into my life to help me for a time, about a 'blue being' I remember from when I was about 15. Trav asked if the blue quirky alien might have been like a dentist when one was a child, asking how you would brush your teeth. 'Yeah, he really was!' I replied, relating to how friendly and chirpy he was. 'Do you want to know what happened next?' said Travis, as if he already knew something that I did not. I didn't know anything he did. He seemed to think that I had control over what I remembered, when it was imposed on me that I did not. 'Okay', I said. 'Say the words, 'I will remember', said Travis. 'Okay, I will remember', I said. Now I had to wait. He said just to lie down and let your mind wander; you have control over this. You have the command to remember.

I remember a being; I was in the middle bedroom at my parents' house, my recollection is very clear. There is a small, squat blue man standing next to the bed, quite goblin-like, stocky, kooky, and friendly, looking at me. I remember he had a jumpsuit on, with a hood covering half his head, but not his face. It is night-time, but somehow, through my eyes or even my

mind's eye, I can plainly see an ambient light. They 'wanted me' to see this. This was the part I was 'allowed' to remember.

He was standing there, and he immediately let me know via telepathy (which seemed entirely natural), that he was benevolent and friendly. Indeed, he appeared to be very funny and quirky, even humorous. I think in my drawing of him that he is smiling.

He is wearing a robe, and immediately I know he is both old and young. In Earth years he was 200, but only 2 years old by our standards. This was all communicated instantaneously and telepathically. I talked to the students about time travel and multi-dimensions. It felt natural, and I was not frightened at all. He was just a baby, but also, he was incredibly old, he seemed youthful, but appeared wrinkly. That was my distinct impression. I am comforted by him. The experience is new although he seems very familiar, as if I have known him for a long time. My instinct tells me he is male, and I am not afraid at all.

'You're BLUE!' I exclaim in my mind to him. Indeed, to my surprise, he was. 'Posthumans will look very different in the future', reflected one student in our sessions. He seemed to be outside the realms of time, or this was my feeling. He takes a keen interest in me, a relationship that I instantly become aware of, and he knows me. All this comes through to me instantaneously. I get the feeling that one has relations with these beings across one's entire lifetime. As I look back over my 45-year manifestation, these metaphysical events have happened across my lifetime. I had the feeling they had been monitoring me for my entire life, and that they live other-dimensionally to us. I relate this to owning a dog and that they live much shorter lives, albeit the dog is in the same dimensional reality.

The blue, squat being also exclaimed, before I even knew I was gay, that he was too. It was not in English, it was not spoken aloud, it was an instant telepathic communication. That brought some contentment, and I was not at all afraid. It seemed entirely feasible and natural to me, and I accepted it without incident. He asked what I wanted to know, and I asked, 'can I

touch your hand?' I had never met a being like this before. It did feel like a new experience, although it felt familiar to be in his presence.

He had three fingers and a thumb I think, thick, stubby hands, and the memory that comes through the strongest is that he felt dry and soft like a cantaloupe. 'You feel like a cantaloupe!' I said with an inner narrative of surprise and delight. He was a neutral temperature, and dry. I am not at all afraid. And that's all I remembered with that experience until Trav, the Shaman, years later, who I had met in a psychiatric ward, gave me the skills and mechanisms, and also the permission, to remember what happened next.

A FEARSOME GREY – ANOTHER EXPERIENCE

Backtrack to about that time or a few years after, and I had long hair, and I'm in my bedroom at the end of Mum and Dad's house, which was the 'extension' room that Mum and Dad had built when my sister was doing VCE, and we all seemed to need a room each. I was about 16 years old.

I was sleeping and having a strange dream about cats. We had a cat at the time called Muffy, and also another cat unimaginatively named Kitty, and I was dreaming they were everywhere. Eyes everywhere, on couches, in the halls, everywhere. They seemed full of malice. I needed to get rid of them, and I kicked one of them in the dream, which is so unlike me to be mean to animals. I woke myself up with the fright of the nightmare and went to turn around in my bed to go back to sleep, in the process glancing into the room as I turned around. What I saw shocked me. I remember it well, not only because I think I was meant to, and for how utterly terrifying it was, but it was before I shaved off my long hair, and as I turned around, I flicked the hair from my face.

To my utter shock and horror, there he was, a 'common' grey male, but non-reproductive, or an alien, or possibly in Indigenous terms (I want to be careful with expressing Indigenous content), a Wandjina figure. It was light enough to see; he was definitely physically present in

that room, a rational being, with inky black eyes which seemed to glisten like wet petrol in the night. I often wonder if the images of the Wandjina in Indigenous paintings are in fact the visual recorded diaries of memories of experiences with these beings that exist outside of time, and henceforth, would be present from other times.

It was utterly terrifying and lasted for only a split second. He was about four foot tall, with a large head, and slightly higher than my bed, with its chest at eye level. It had a sense of terrible foreboding as if I was rapidly downloading a terrible trauma. In my discussions with the students, they thought that in the future, we will be able to rapidly download information. I had the feeling that I was not supposed to see this and, reflecting back, I wondered if it was influencing what I was dreaming about before I was aware it was there. The amount of information transference was mind-blowing, and I remember it as a dreadfully dark incident and a sinister entity. I had a feeling of dread, as if it would be a cataclysm of the human race, that everything was ending, and that this entity literally showed me the limitations of my humanity; with something rational that was not a human, something that I saw to compare myself to, blew my young mind.

Its eyes were inky black, and it seemed as if it had no soul, or was quite machine-like. Binnie says all beings have some representation of a soul, but in this instance, I was not sure. It surely seemed to have a piercing intelligence that was far beyond mine. In saying this, I was made aware that it was a conscious being with vastly more data than I possessed. I reflected on ego-information intelligence and the embodiment of robots, and considered this 'neutral male' to be extremely robotic.

UNTITLED FROM 'THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO UFO'S AND ALIENS' (2003)

The manifestation of this was that many images flashed before me. Indeed, it was traumatic, but he was telepathically telling me a lot of woe about the world as well, about the future. It was utterly terrifying and yet it only lasted for a few seconds. I have never forgotten it. Similar experiences of rapid information transfer have happened to me later in life in 2004, that I will go further into below.

WHAT YOU REMEMBER

Instantly, I knew I was not supposed to see this, yet I wanted validation – I reached out and tried to touch its chest and it felt like static electricity going through my body, that was ultimately paralysing. I am well aware of a psychologists' perspective of 'night terrors' and that in the USA, this has been assigned to aliens since the 1960s, while in other cultures, we see other phenomena happening. It then 'shut me off'. I was leaning over the side of the bed – I have no idea how I got back in it. I remember no more. In common with many of my experiences, there is missing time and periods of time in which I cannot remember what happened, or that sometimes hours have passed and I have even ended up in a different location or position in the bed. As a child, this happened a few times, and I was filled each time with a sense of adventure, wonder, and excitement, rather than fear.

I must have been leaning right over the side of the bed when the grey shocked me, so I don't recall how I got back into bed or even how I slept, but I did so without further incident.

THE NEXT MORNING

Upon waking, it was like a regular morning; then the memory came rushing back into my mind. I told my mother, but she was accustomed to my 'vivid imagination' as a child, or not understanding the things I was aware of that she was not, so she dismissed it.

These experiences all happened before what I call, or identified with when I wrote my book on 'schizophrenia'. I was in Year 11, and I went on to take Year 12 and do a Bachelor of Fine

Art before the burdens of the world and the non-validation of my desires and experiences came into play in the manifestation of being discordant. Even in the Fine Art Course, I drew an experience of 'the greys' within my work. I also drew my room when I was 17, with me looking out at an enormous, magnificently alive sky.

WATCHING/WAITING (1990)

DELETING MEMORIES

I had the feeling that only I would see this, and that they could 'shut off' other people for the experiences to take place. Sometimes I talked about this with my brother, but I remember the rest of the family was different. I was different; only I could see this within this group of people. Some of my students said that some posthumans in the future could have abilities that others do not currently possess, and I wondered if this is true of everyday people. I think it is certain that everyone has a different experience of the world, and the view that one has of themself is constantly in flux, so does it even exist? In addition, every person we meet, our family, our friends, have a different idea of who we are, and this differs from what we think of ourself; so how can we be certain of the validity of our being, our conscious or unconscious, and our personality, or all three? Sociologist William Bruce Cameron said: 'not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted'. Likewise, the Buddhist adage says, 'The good news is, nothing is permanent. The bad news is, nothing is permanent'. My heart and soul were affected by all these 'paranormal' exchanges that happened in secret. My energies and awareness altered, my heart pushed back layers and layers, and a feeling of being both inaccessible and transparent.

STOIC TRANSPARENT HEART (1995)

SCARED OF NUCLEAR WAR, AND PERMISSIONS

At that time as a child and a young person, I had no trust in adults at all. How could the leaders of all the people and the beautiful animals I kept as pets make weapons of mass destruction that were televised as the 'Cold War' across our television screens? When I was about 13 or 14, I offered, in a very conscious way, my mind, body, and soul, to something more extraordinary than the adults around me and the leaders of the world that I saw on television, to help the survival of the human species.

I had done something that I think was pivotal in my life and my reason to be: I invited it, I gave permission, and I think this was necessary, or even decided before I was born, that I would play this part in conscious human existence.

I believe this was a part of my soul contract, having been born on a planet in a particular dimension in a selective time, with a set of circumstances that would see the evolution of my soul. A couple of years ago, I had the instinct to get a beetle tattooed on my arm; later I looked up what they meant, and the Egyptians used to think the scarab battle, or the dung beetle, rolling the dung, was a metaphor for the sun going across the land and evolving the souls below. Sometimes, I know things, and I don't even know how I know them. Years ago, I drew this picture and titled it 'Anthropomorphic', and I did not even know the meaning of the word until years later. I imagined the Devild marbles I had seen photos of, and have always held a fascination with the human-ness of landscape through my adolescent travels to the Grampians, and the lush fertile landscape studies of Brett Whitely.
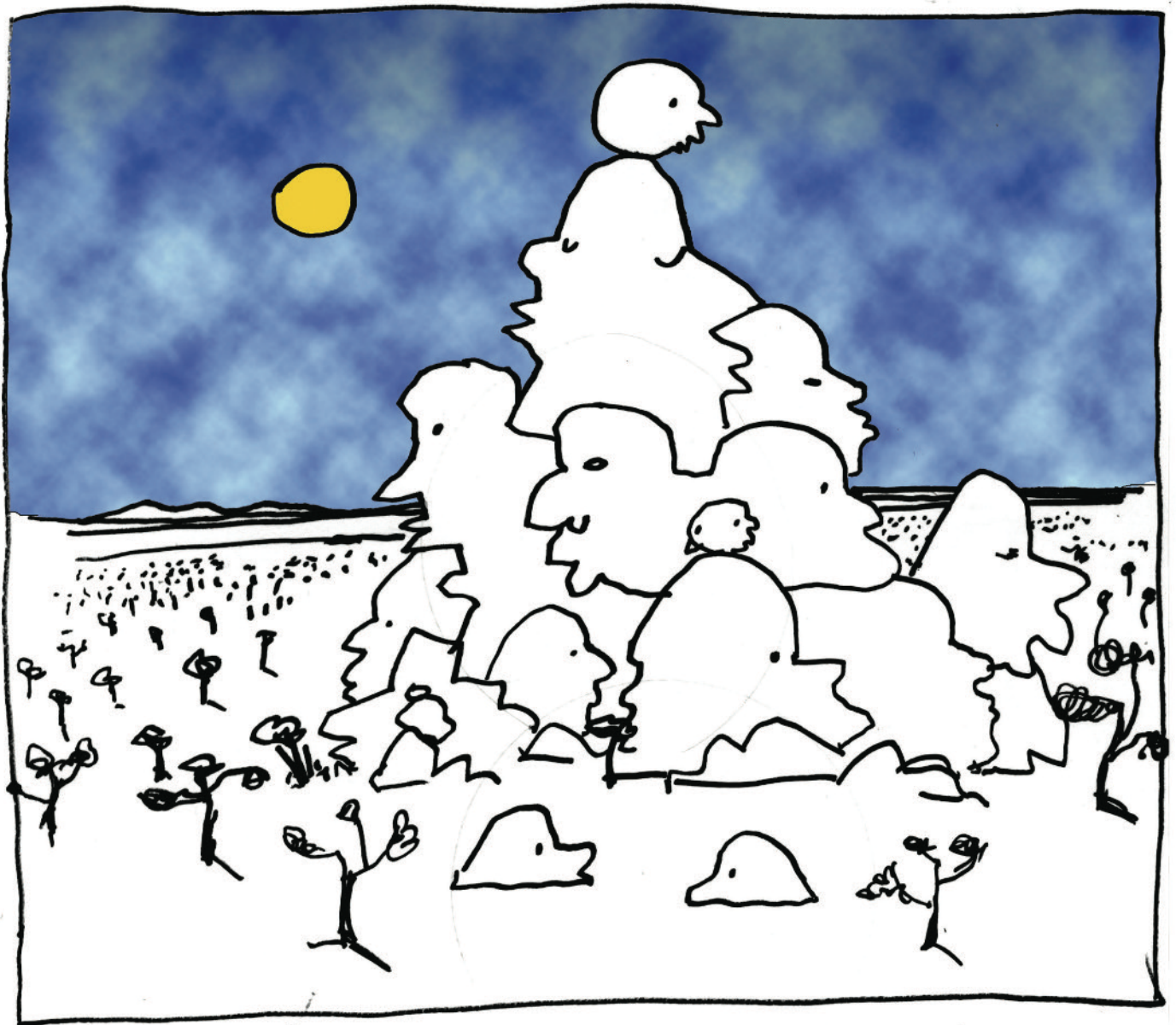
a n t h r o p o m o r p h i c

ANTHROPOMORPHIC (2004)

COSMIC BALLET

In my opinion, the apparent greys, both good and bad, and other races and energies are involved in a complicated cosmic ballet with humanity, and I think that as we move into the future, most notably through technology in regard to quantum mechanics, the world of the Shaman and the spirit will be substantiated. I think the truth is much broader than the rational

human world we find ourselves most identifying with through knee-jerk reactions. In this way, the above would be justified to mean that there are, and have been, people (like me) who see these rational if multi-dimensional scientific worlds. These world(s) are indistinguishably joined in my thoughts to technology and the blossoming of the human race in not only the rational 3rd dimension, but also within the 4th, 5th, and 6th dimensions. The reference to the 3rd dimension is the rational, eating, fucking, shitting, beings we are, the 4th is a more conscious spiritual one, and the 5th is the continuing awareness humanity, and select seers, have had since antiquity. Binnie related that the world is currently in the 5th dimension, edging into the 6th, and then ultimately, with the new souls will move into the 7th dimension.

This is all in relation to light, love, and self-reflexivity. As Binnie my healer stated, new souls are coming to the planet which have a spiritual intelligence beyond anyone who has previously manifested. The fact that the human race will die out is not doubted or in question — the sessions with Binnie were to help me on my journey, and that is why we had met. In my studies, I have observed this in my cross-generational students, and they come armed with information, data, and spiritual intelligence, beyond gendered stereotypes and rational three-dimensional limitations. The students I interviewed also exhibited these traits and open-mindedness, and did so partly through the vehicle of technology; by being exposed to many ideas in words and imagery via the Internet. The students were the product of a rich knowledge base. As Ray Kurzweil said in his book 'How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed', 'a kid in Africa with a mobile phone has access to more data than a US president only ten years ago' (Kurzweil, 2012). This is the world we live in.

The world will end in a rational way in terms of people being here, but I am proposing the continuation of sentience in ways that are as yet unfathomable to present-day humans. I often wondered as a child that if there were benevolent aliens, why they did not intervene to save our suffering, to stop the Cold War I saw on television, to intervene and release us from the injustices of life, to protect the planet from destruction or nuclear war. It seems in a way, that they just might be. They see death very differently from us.

In 1991 I drew some images distilled from drawings. The number ten and three seemed important. I work on sub conscious levels; after years of looking at this image I realised the 'blobs', were entities, and the three important ones were different, and spelled the word, 'ART'.

ART AND ENTITIES (1991)

MY INNER CHILD

Once I was in a deep trance during a hypnosis session, but the researcher simply said that I had an emotional blockage. She tried to access my memories, but I just kept drawing a complete blank. 'Nothing' I kept saying. And yet, I desperately wanted my memories, but was unable to access any of them under hypnosis – my mind drew a complete blank. She decided to take a different approach. 'Tell me about something happy from your childhood, where are you and what are you doing?' Instantly, I am aware that I am talking like a 5-year-old, although I was probably about 27, just when I was writing my book on 'schizophrenia'. As I spoke, I described the night my brother was born as Nana was minding me. I kept having to ask Nana his name, because I kept forgetting it and I felt embarrassed about this. I remember exactly who that happy excited boy was, to my amazement. The healer wanted to demonstrate to me that I had such emotional blockages to do with the visitors that I could not access them, even though I could reach a happy memory. I believe the blockage was because I had not yet validated the sexual abuse that had occurred to me in real rational three-dimensional reality that I had never given voice to, until about a year ago (nowadays, I keep my childhood toy in a space on the heart chakra of a statue of Buddha in my house where I can honour and remember that sometimes happy child, and encourage his recovery and take care of him as if he were a real child emotionally within myself).

STATUE HONOURING THE INNER CHILD (2018)

Nana was a saint to me, accepting madness, homosexuality, my rapid life cycle, and never saying a bad word about anyone. When I told her I was doing a doctorate, she said 'I won't be around for that, but when you get it, I'll give you a tap on the shoulder!', and giggled. Binnie said my Nana was very proud of me in one of our sessions, and it is that hope that I get a tap on the shoulder from my Nana, and I got a tattoo in honour of it, so that I can dial into her at any time:

ODE TO NANA (TATTOO DESIGN) (2015)

Indeed, I did remember though, as a small child, little mushroom heads bobbing down the hallway to 'see me' and feeling excited and fun that they were there, but I don't remember much else, apart from my pathological fear of wolves and their eyes, and also of the blank black eye of the toy riding horse we had in our bedroom. At other times as a child, I would wake the wrong way up in the bed, either on top of, or under, the covers, or head to toe, and have the feeling it was an exciting adventure after something had 'happened'. For many years, I would sleep with my arms locking in my sheets on my bed right up near my neck, because as I thought, 'they were coming', all the time, there were times I remember the sheets being yanked away from me.

From all these memories and experiences including relationships and abuse/neglect, I believe resilience is a value that I possess that has been necessary in my survival. I realised it in this piece when a relationship was disintegrating in 2010, and in the same brush stroke, celebrated nature despite the deficit of the situation.

RESILIENCE, (2012)

The freedoms the internet gave me in regard to reaching out to people with similar interests changed my life. I illustrated it as if I were a child playing on a sunny day in a park. My sexual confusion from the time and maybe a reference to the powerful female grey denotes the top of the swing be a resistor, or, a 'resist-her', a unique perspective of Apophenia.

RESIST-HER; TECHNOLOGICAL FREEDOM (1996)

AFTERWORD

During my PhD research with the Year 11 students, I became the self-actualised ethical adult I felt I didn't have to validate my inner adolescent concerns with; creating a space for these young voices, and amplifying them, was unexpectedly launched into the dangerous and exciting narrative of the nature of being – both the readers, and my own. You the reader will also bring your different coloured stories to both the rational soulless science and its multi-dimensional manifestations, and the tears of neglect and the environmental cataclysm that sits in the sub-text of this colourful, yet ultimately hopeful, tale.

This collective PhD *'A Splice of My Life'* cries out in a brutally honest way for human compassion and understanding, with youthfulness being the common thread of the students I interviewed, and the living inquiry and creativity from my own life, which facilitated an examination of both one's youth and the beings of tomorrow in relation to posthumanism. For we are all, or have, lived a human youth. The many flavoured narratives speak with a meaningfully optimistic, and also an opposing nihilistic, urgency that demands love, practices an anthropocentric view of happiness, and also speaks of our lives on the planet, especially the people of tomorrow and their place in it. Rather than confining the narrative to a western scientific or psychiatric paradigm, the thesis seeks to explicate and splice my existentialism and young people's stories through the lens of Shamanism, that bridges the seen and the unseen in new and unexpected ways.

This work also splices in surprising ways the quickening of rapid technological 'advancement' seen by some to facilitate the transformation of the truth about being human (Kurzweil, 2006), with self-reflexive lived experiential awareness over a lifetime of art film and music, that crosses generational and invisible multi-dimensional divides, and in an ontological way, accepts and expresses a personally lived past and a state of rational being we can do little about. It then digresses to the currency of kindness in everyday life in which the book was created by example, then partly foretells of the coming great earthly deaths yet also

personal rebirths, and vicariously offers to enlighten the reader in the context of personal mortality.

This book's manifestation is in part a miracle of the currency of the kindness of people from across my journey that has led to these insightful, dangerous, and possibly 'delusional' words, depending on through which particular lens you view the content. As a prior human rights-awarded autobiographer on the topic of my living inquiry of 'schizophrenia', many now see the limitations of the label (Bentall, 2007; Dryden, 2014; Misiak B1, 2016; Nightsky, 1999b), as do I. To highlight this even further, recent research has been conducted on auditory hallucinations in relation to the culture the 'sufferer' is from. Even research through the lens of psychiatry has found that the nature of the experience of 'schizophrenia' (which I prefer to see as a psycho-spiritual crisis that needs support and healing, in order to potentially heal others), are affected by the social and cultural environment. The study says of 'schizophrenia' that psychiatry 'inadvertently strips off the human context of this illness' (Ajayi, 2018). In effect, psychiatry is at war with itself, and capitalism ostracises and isolates people in western cultures through money. It is no wonder that people who experience altered states, or non-ordinary reality, have more positive experiences in eastern cultures. This being said, I know I will make a delicious topical subject for capitalist psychiatrists, who have become wealthy off the backs of the most vulnerable people, to denounce or study/ pathologise my narrative.

Importantly though, this is what young people in the year 2018 want to scream to us about the future of the world being left to them, in relation to technology through the lenses of AI, superintelligence, and posthumanism; however, this book is still much more than that. It ended up comparing and contrasting my own young life, as framed by technology, imagination, and living inquiry, to the experiences of today's students.
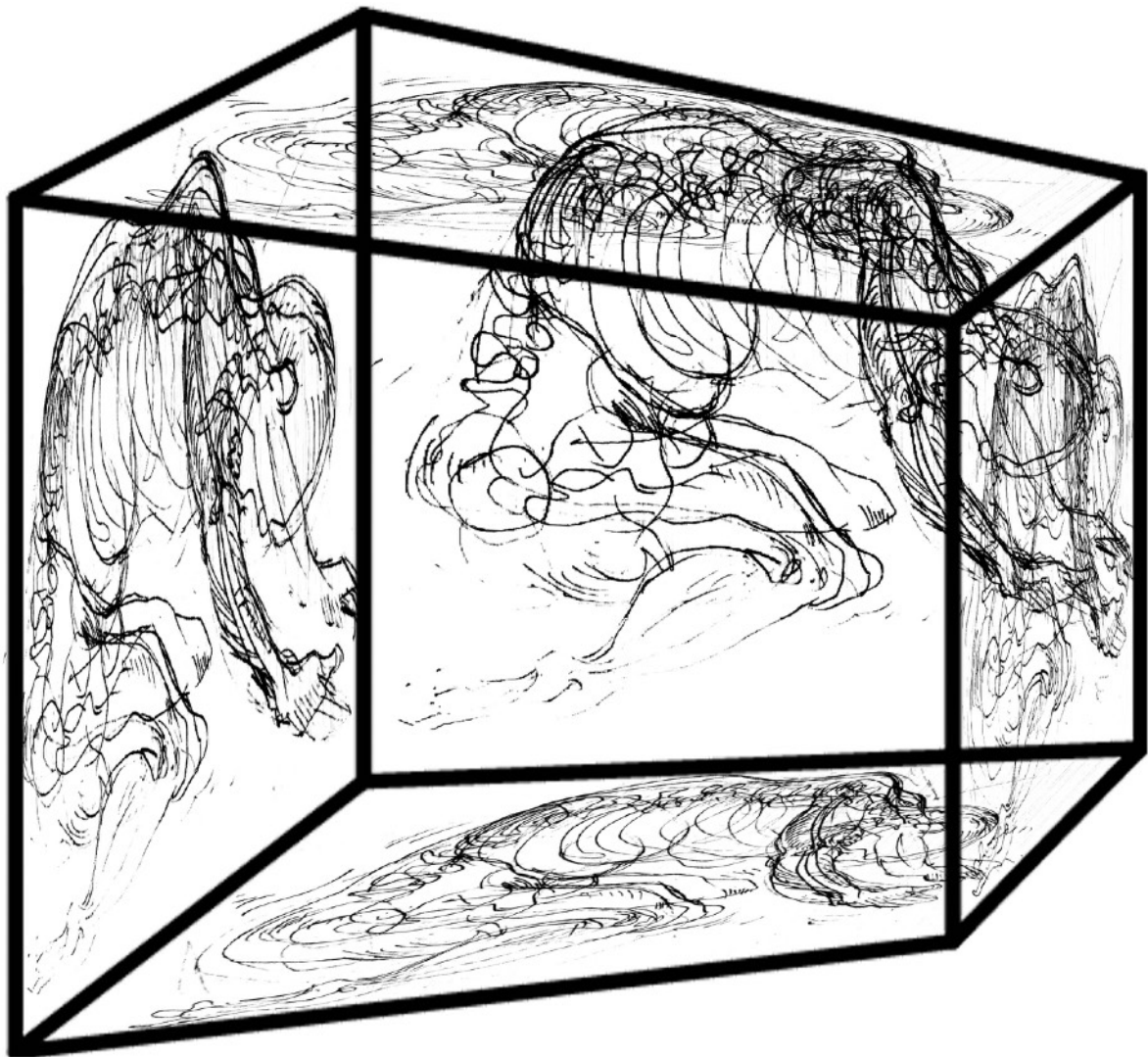
PRISONER (2002)

MACROSCOPIC/MICROSCOPIC CITYSCAPE (1992)

I remain incredibly critical of psychiatry, and within this PhD have leaned towards something deeper and more meaningful to me, intuition and spirituality, or for want of a better word, Shamanism. It is only through the benefit of age that I have the agency to choose through which lens I view my life, unlike I did when I was young. In my recovery, which took a lifetime, I offered agency to young people about the world they wanted to inherit. This crystallisation of alchemy is an important statement of profound personal healing that reflects my inherent generosity and compassion.

You can call me 'mad', but I own the hot neurotic mess I am and neutralise your attack. What is mad for me is working for something one is not passionate about, driving a car an hour to and from work to a house you are tied to in a mortgage you don't own and only sleep in, only

to endure a relationship you may be stuck in, to buy things you don't need that hurt the Earth, to impress people who don't care about you, in a nihilistic binge of delusional capitalism. I'm proud to say that despite my 'diagnosis', its subsequent abuses and bad luck if I get hit by a bus tomorrow, what a fucking ride! As Paul Kelly says, 'You can't take it with you!' The currency of my life has been living inquiry and creativity, and this is what this book and PhD crystallises and is ultimately about.

Madness is a sub-text of civilisation. The world is trillions of dollars in debt. Who might we owe it to? All you need to do to see true madness is to switch on the news, and then examine everything being said by commentators and politicians that do not involve violence, money, and usually white people explaining it, and I have one thing to say about budget repair and the trillions of dollars the world is in debt … additionally, if you cannot understand this concept, then *YOU* are mad, not me, and that is:

Who do we owe the money to?

WHOM DO WE OWE THE MONEY TO (2017)

Genesis in 'other' then arriving back at the self

Initially, one of the aims of undertaking my PhD was to focus on someone or something else other than the self, having come from a creative history of 'mental health' recovery, advocate, autobiographer, and artist, but always being existential. I attained the goal of 'making it about someone else' by designing a rational philosophical-science-based curriculum for young people. I then interviewed them and amplified their interpreted responsive voices in the following words regarding their moral and ethical concerns of what it means to be human both now and in a future posthuman world, through the lens of technology and despite global catastrophic risks. It is fascinating and a welcome remission from self-focus.

I was unable to separate the researcher from the research, the story ultimately gravitates back to the self-narrative and my place in this world at this time regarding technology and the Anthropocene. This book is a self-reflexive journey that is healing, from the spectrum of the rational to the outer reaches by some standards of the esoteric, as you will read and see.

When I was nineteen, I drew a watercolour which was entitled 'Soul Pole' [1991] (following). In it, the self-reflexive isolation is evident, and it ended up being used for the front cover of my autobiography. There looks to be some light on the horizon. I like to think with the exploration and feathering out of this PhD, the light has finally landed on my reality, and although I am still often alone, that the revolution of enlightenment has come over my many years on earth, and validated in a way, I never thought possible when I drew the image. The metaphor of isolation and loneliness framed by that changing has profound meaning.

SOUL POLE (1991)

RAISON D'ÊTRE

My initial interest, and maybe my 'reason to be', was to disseminate this information. In reality, my soul is already home, in the future I am already dead, and this exegesis will reflect in a loop that ultimately goes towards informing the resonant superintelligence that will coexist with 'humans' in the future.

What I am typing is already known, and it has already happened. Now I am fully aware and give voice to my multi-dimensional, spiritual, 3D, human life and mind. I do feel like I am an Earth-bound misfit in many ways, yet I have a purpose, and the aim is to write these words and explain by example of narrating experience to open the door of consciousness that is necessary, yet really, has already happened, that will see the continued existence of a world with the remittance of sentient humanity in the future. I can hear a psychiatrist claiming my delusion and grandiosity while reading this. I know I am porn for you and I laugh about it.

It is hard to fathom, for example, with the war in Syria of 400,000 people dead, that there is any rhyme or reason to this injustice, but although I struggle with the unfair injustices of the world, I have gratitude for my peace and my experiences that have allowed me to play a particularly interesting role.

Somehow, I think maybe I agreed to this, and I need to accept it as the perfect unfolding of my life, come riches or poverty. Indeed, I am familiar with telling people that I am rich by name and in experiences and nature, but not financially. Yet, I have everything I need every day, and even though I do fear that I will be homeless one day or dead, if I think through a spiritual lens, I can 'go home" or be 'recycled' eventually, and I will be part of the majesty that is both God, and also the god-self.

 A mouse is free within a box. I simultaneously write this knowing my human limitations of the senses and being on this keyboard, and also knowing that I can see myself trapped as a

rational, three-dimensional, eating, shitting, rooting, space monkey; however, inside the box, I have the free will and capacity to write these words.

These words and the world's data will inform the superintelligence that has already happened, and that coexists with posthumans, for a more rational planet with beings on it, and also to continue to exist possibly centuries into the future.

My life has come full circle in this writing. As a child and adolescent, I was so scared of nuclear war. I have now worked with young people to amplify their voices and link it back to my narrative to bring some reduction of contrast in these most pressing of times. The devil-like female grey I experienced said I agreed to this, and someday I will understand, and I think I am beginning to by writing this book.

I write this as I usually communicate in daily life, surfing the crest of the wave of my awareness that crashes into consciousness that I express as I go along. I am reminded that waves are natural and beautiful, and that looking at them brings me contentedness, and in living it, I am the water, the crash, the undertow, and have things that exist within me, other life forms, in fact. I am also inextricably connected to spirit and a cosmic ballet of sorts, and I must conclude that in terms of existential nihilism, the world is so much more beautiful and complex than most people care to admit, and we are in fact, even slaves of a sort to a big machine congruent with technology and awareness. Some people are blind, some see 'beyond the veil', and are pathologised for it. In my experience, I have met people who seem crazy, but I must be humble in accepting that it is maybe just because I am not as aware as they are.

Some stars shine bright and not for too long; some exist for a long time gently humming their love, some spark, yet underlying this is the fact that they existed. I exist, and even though I have had positive and negative experiences as a rational human who has a mind and a soul and an awareness, that up until this point, it has been worth it.

I cannot wait to exist into the future and see the Shamanic lifting of the veil that I propose will expose what I have written in my words and live into the future hopefully in one piece; all this, the neglect, abuse, work, leaves, plants, fish, 120 million years of dinosaurs, the Anthropocene ('Anthrop' meaning human and 'cene' meaning a geological period of time, in simple language, 'The Human Era'), and the planet, the inter-dimensional beings good or bad, the sun, moon, and the stars … it is all majestic, and at this moment, it is worth it. To have gratitude of the currency of kindness in my life is divine, and I also believe I have given that divinity to others, from the God-self, but also from something that is far more complex than I can ever imagine.

I hope you have resonated with the kindness and compassion of this book, and hope you think it was worthwhile too. I hope you think your experiences are worthwhile, and I hope you reconsider the western capitalist lens of psychiatry as well, and be aware that even in the end times, that kindness is a valuable currency in which all who resonate on the side of love will prosper in the most grandiose of ways, beyond money, sex, even beyond being human in as yet unimaginable ways. I wish that you do the best you possibly can, and that this will be the perfect unfolding of your life, and is all that is expected. This book has been my best effort of the unfolding of the sojourn of my life.

Opinions change

In my autobiography I wrote when I was 26, I previously saw 'madness' through a western capitalist scientific paradigm, yet now with the benefit of age and experience, I consider my discordance as a holistic, psychosexual, spiritual crisis — in short, a sane reaction to an insane world. I did not have the capacity to express myself nor the people to express myself too. There were cultural delusions of the time embedded in my familial relationships, and my localised world did not speak of gay people or mental 'illness' (something I sometimes refer to as my 'mental skillness').

This book detracts from psychiatry and embraces a more spiritual approach to what the former would classify as 'delusion'. Indeed, if we examine delusion within our society, we see that we are affected in every aspect of our lives from haircuts, clothing, being paid and working, or fitting gendered roles. I think this delusion had been lifted in many ancient societies, but has begun to be lifted in modern times since the counterculture of the 1960s, and with the arrival of new spiritually sentient younger people coming to the planet armed with more information in the palm of their hand than an American president had only 10 years ago, such as futurist Ray Kurzweil suggests, it fills me with some hope.

It is my opinion that it is no measure of greatness, control, or advanced emotional evolution to be content and at ease in such an unjust and unfair world(s) with the knowledge we now know in the age of the Anthropocene. And in a world in which money, psychiatry, and drug companies benefit financially from the people, and one's job robs people of their time, and the media strikes one's vulnerability of 'illness' or 'vanity' or 'non-confidence' or 'self-doubt'; than to love yourself, as I have in this novel by allowing my own authentic and kind voice, it seems to have become, and is — an outrageous political act. If you are reading this and slightly resonate, but are not yet convinced, have you ever loved someone so much you would do anything for them? Well, make that person yourself … and do whatever you want!

Maxine Greene in her article 'The Arts and the Search for Social Justice' speaks of her desire to 'transform, to render existence more tolerable, more vital, more humane' (Greene, 2009). The intention of this book is to open and facilitate conversations about the world and its sentient beings that will lead to greater happiness, intellectual stimulation, and seeing beyond the Shamanic veil which is unavailable to most people. This veil does ebb and flow through this PhD, and some instances in the book remain calm like still water, yet in other parts, the water is disturbed like a jar of silt shaken up and placed on the mantelpiece … I think that any reader of this book needs some time for reflection, adjustment, to be acclimatised to for its complex ideas, to form a sediment in that jar on the mantelpiece in which it will be in its most exemplary form, and of greatest benefit.

This is a fundamental way of me writing in the autobiographical sense in the light of alchemy. Carl Leggo, in 'Being with A/r/tography', 'contends that autobiographical writing is always both personal and public and that we need to write autobiographically in order to connect with others' (Stephanie Springgay, 2008, p. pp 4). It is hoped that despite the issues discussed, from the scientific to the paranormal, that the intention of kindness will be felt. This book has required 'the researcher to develop a rapport with his or her research participants, collaborate with them, and embark on weighty and unpredictable emotional as well as intellectual processes' (Leavy, 2015b). These include both the students, and ultimately my own, as you will read and see and vicariously experience.

Regarding my 'prior madness', whose opinion you ask depends on what answer you get, in the past without anyone to justify my experiences with, I subscribed to psychiatry, yet much less so now. In my prior life, psychiatry was an expensive and cultish pill-popping journey, and yet it is a part of the only one 'length of string' we get to live in our possibly fated lives. While those pills may have softened my experience for me to be able to 'fit into' society and to achieve what is expected of me,

I never had such meaningfulness, validation, or understanding from psychiatry as I have had from traditionally-trained Indigenous healers, my spirit guides, and my spiritually open-minded friends. Multidimensionality seemed natural to me:
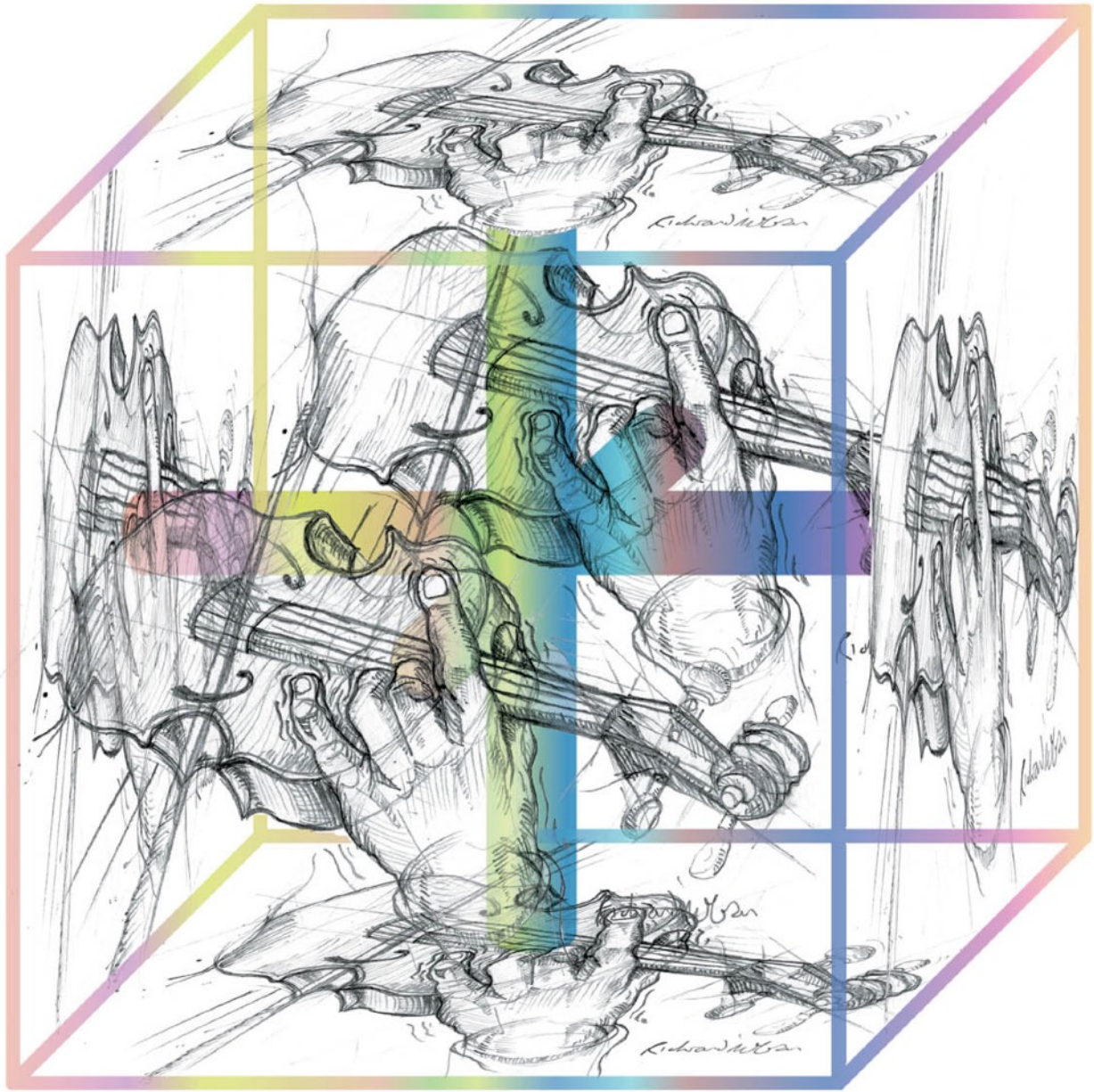
METAPHYSICAL HOLOGRAPHIC MUSIC (2002)

THREE PEOPLE AND THEIR ENERGIES, (2004)

I realise that this PhD 'A Splice of My Life', is controversial and a psychiatrists delicious

delight. However it is my opinion that everything is framed by truth, shock, and context, and

it is good to keep a sense of humour about things. This is also multidimensionality, and good

humour demonstrates good balance, (and sanity). This cartoon was taken from my book, 'The

SHRINK!".

BEAM HIM UP TO THE MOTHER SHIP, (FROM 'THE SHRINK … AND YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE CRAZY') (2009)

APHOPENIA (1993)

Apophenia means finding pattern or meaning where others don't. Feelings of revelation and ecstasies usually accompany it. It has some negative connotations in psychological terminology when it implies finding meaning or pattern where none exists; and some positive ones when it implies finding something important, useful or beautiful. It thus links creativity and psychosis, genius and madness (Carroll, 2008).
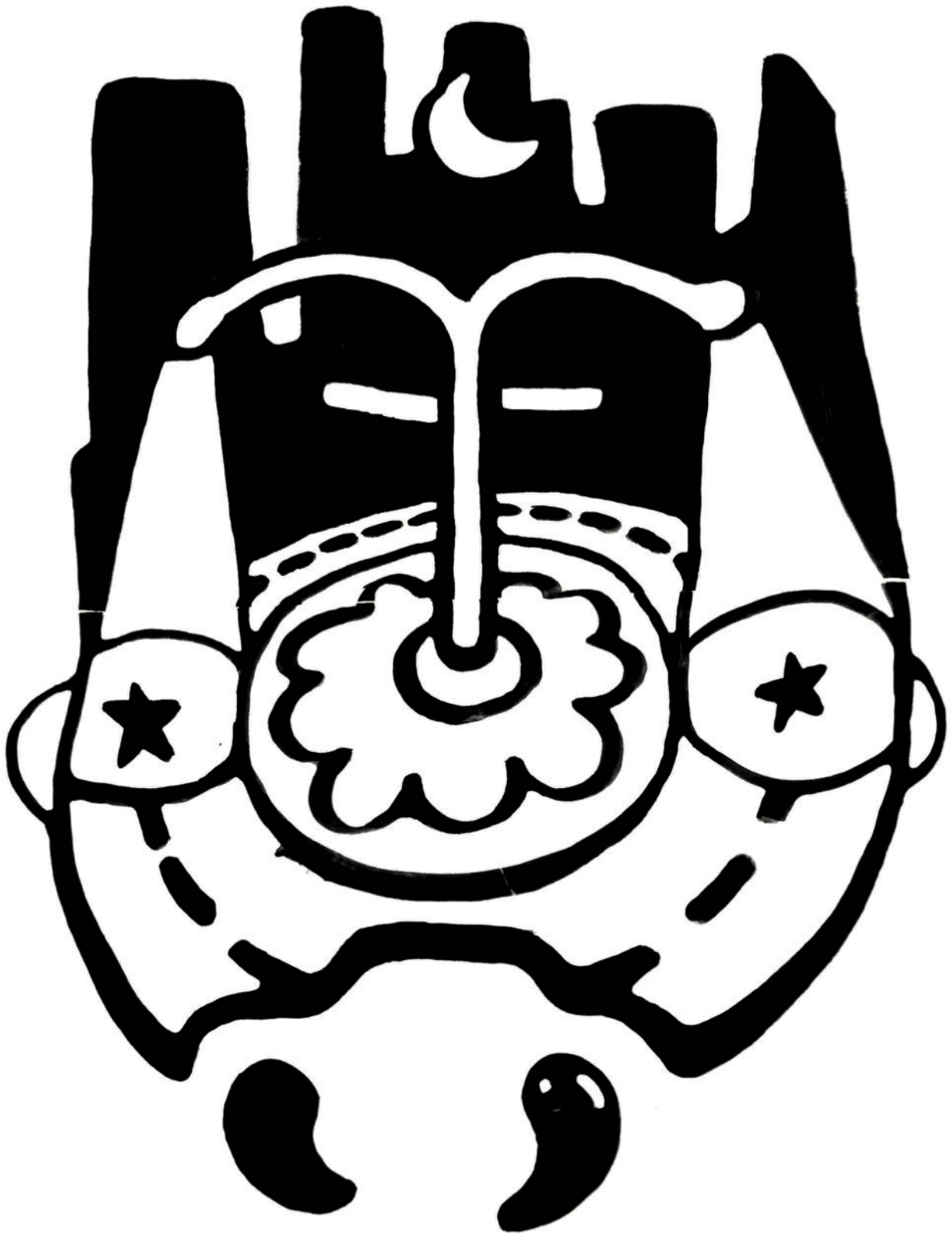
THE ROUNDABOUT (2006)

<u>WE ARE ALREADY POSTHUMAN / GREYS / DEWEY</u>

If one deeply observes modern people now, we are already trans/ posthuman in nature as a result of using technology to live longer and better lives, as discussed earlier. The nature of western medicine is geared to extend the period of a person's life through medical technology, including heart and liver transplants, artificial hearing, and more recently, artificial sight (Mullen, 2017). How technology, especially eugenics and gene editing (Fyodor D. Urnov, 2010), will change the nature of human beings in the future provided an interesting springboard of ideas for discussion (and data collection) about the ethical concerns of the students. I might add that in terms of the rapid acceleration of technology and ethics, since the time of writing the thesis, Chinese scientist have successfully bred mice without a father from two mothers (https://www.scimex.org, 2018), and that fascinatingly, before Stephen Hawking passed away, he predicted a race of superhumans (one assumes they would be posthuman) (Marsh, 2018b), and other reports that the first robotic AI newsreader has emerged in China (Stapleton, 2018). More recently, Chinese scientists have engineered HIV resistant babies — literally designing the first true posthumans, which it has been discovered inadvertently could affect other aspects of life down the generations, affecting intelligence and high probability of other mutations mostly seen as unethical and worrisome (Haoyi Wang, 2019).

In any case, some UFOlogists and Shamans such as Binny, Trav, and the healer Odette Nightsky, author of 'The Bridge Between Two Worlds' (Nightsky, 1999a), refer to the greys, described later within my creative artefact, as 'reptilians', and I am well aware of the conspiracy-like pop culture way in which this is described (I had a Skype session with Odette who believes that 'schizophrenia' is better described as 'acute sensitivity'). Yet if a post-quantum, interdimensionally existing race, possibly descendants of 'humans from the future', exists in tandem with hum(AI)ty, then the timelessness of their existence, and the fact that we know that some reptiles and birds can bear offspring without mothers on Earth, suggests that

a highly intelligent technological resonant race born of all the world's data in the end times of the planet, which scientists have direly warned about (William J. Ripple Christopher Wolf Thomas M. Newsome Mauro Galetti Mohammed Alamgir Eileen Crist Mahmoud I. Mahmoud William F. Laurance 15, 2017) and which is plain to see, would seek to extrapolate particular human qualities to enrich their static physical status, and rudimentary infertile demeanour. In addition to this, I think there are different forms of beings, some that orchestrate the merging of human reptilians and some that are drones or 'worker bees', for want of a better description, from my experience.

In my opinion, the beings I had interacted with, although vastly intelligent and humourless, were 'atrophied', in a way. In this way, not only does this provide agency for humanity to exist in the future in some other manifestation in the universe past the end times, but the inter - 'species' breeding I describe later between greys and humans (and I), enriches a stagnant race that has been left atrophied. I am highly aware of the taboo nature of this topic. By way of my compassion for the future of humanity, it makes sense that this experience would occur to me personally because I have allowed permission for this, possibly within my 'soul contract', and this has been revealed throughout my life and in the writing of this doctorate.

I want to say that the greys seem to be of a colder and lower vibrational metabolism, a lower energy manifestation from lower resonances and frequencies within the uni / multiverses, as far as I am aware. They are here, yet invisible, even though they can influence us and our thinking, and they seem to be learning, co-inhabiting, reacting to, and being involved with terrestrial humans. I am not sure I understand it, only what I can gather from my experiences, but it is best, even though I validate their almost invisible existence in my life, that I protect myself with a spiritual mantra both morning and night for freedom from lower vibrational entities and negative energies, even thoughts, in whatever form they take. It is best if you have had these frightening experiences, to just accept and acknowledge them and pity them; they don't know what it is to be loved. Use your God-given self-awareness to bless them and send them back to the light. Additionally, they have absolutely no sense of humour, so

humour is a very human trait and that's something 'The Greys', don't seem to comprehend or not wired to do so.

There was a great ethical debate with the students that humans, as a result of their egos, may alter trans / posthumanist future beings in their own prejudiced or biased ways. In this way, the students' narratives, reflecting an awareness of politics, sexualities, and advanced conceptual ideas about technology, really exhibited this form of democracy that Dewey has written about. Morals and ethics change with time, as one of my students said, and I have seen this since my parents' generation and also from my generation to that of the students.

Dewey argued that democracy is the right way to run a civilised society. I agree that every generation needs to respond to its own moral and ethical dilemmas in relation to young people and education, it was interesting that some of the students questioned the democratic process itself. Some people think that superintelligence might in itself destroy capitalism (Xiang, 2016). Some of my students brought up the concept of Marxism, and the concept of a universal basic wage should robots take over human jobs via automation. I acknowledge a universal basic wage may not be associated with Marxism. I offer one perspective that we might, in fact, have no choice but to fall in line with our robot overlords, as some say that AI will only benefit who owns/ runs it (Berman, 2017), and some like Richard Branson stating that wealth created from AI should be redistributed as a universal basic income (Clifford, 2017). In any case, the jury is still out on such opposing views such as those from James Barrat, who thinks that AI will be our final invention and, most likely, the end of civilisation (Barrat, 2013). Popular futurist Ray Kurzweil theorised that we will be able to make AI benevolent towards us (Kurzweil, 2006); however, I am unsure if this is possible, or if superintelligence has actually already occurred in the future.

In any case, Google's algorithms are already improving on themselves (Andrews, 2017), and this could be seen as the beginning of superintelligence. Others have stated that the people who designed AI have absolutely no idea how it works (Knight, 2017). It is with this rational

knowledge in the midst of the world's sixth largest extinction within the Anthropocene (Carrington, 2017), that I propose my esoteric musings and possibly yet to be discovered ontological scientific reality. Indeed, although I cannot physically show anyone a 'grey', the emotional attachment to such disturbing and frightening occurrences / experiences has coloured my art experience, creativity, and life, even to the point of this doctorate in guiding me in a subliminal way, in the direction of my research topic.

This study is also Dewey's 'democracy' being re-born, with all the array of changing ethical standpoints of young people within local society, and perhaps reflective of societies around the world. In the manner of ethics changing throughout the ages and the generations, these participants may well be the ones who help decide which ethical transhumanist and posthuman applications in the near future are the ones to apply. This dialogue with the students adds to the potential global pool of knowledge in terms of ethics, from war to data to refugees to sexuality and systems of government. I add to this by discussing my inter-dimensional living inquirys, and by nature of publishing this thesis, and sending it via email in which a quantum superintelligence would break any password in a millisecond, that the information contained herein I assume contributes and adds to the technological singularity in a fated way.

In any case, every human being on the planet is inextricably linked to the technologies that have allowed them to exist by way of tools, food gathering techniques to things as complex as vaccines. The human race is often talked about as becoming 'posthuman' however if we examine it with logic, we see that we all already are.

THE COLOURFUL ENORMITY OF IT ALL; IT HAS NOT BEEN BORING!

Mine has been a lust for a life story. I am a neurologically diverse physical itinerant, sexually charged, self-medicating, who has eclipsed a creative life documented at: www.richmclean.com.au. It has not been boring, very colourful, and is filled with happiness,

sadness, loss, uncertainty, 'madness', hope, love, drugs, rock and roll, rock stars and celebrities, music, lyrics, art, sexual abuse, sociopathic narcissist abuse, joy, family, friends, Shamans and healers, inter-dimensional beings, and spirituality. This is the story of someone who never really felt that they 'fit in' anywhere.

In a way, many of we sentient beings are crying out for compassion and understanding, and by taking the massive risk of telling this story, professionally, personally, and academically, I hope to connect with others that understand my journey, or can at least give it some acknowledgement, as Binnie my healer does. In writing this honest dialogue, I hope to possibly connect with my tribe, and by speaking of it, effectively neutralising it and blessing it; and yet also to serve as a warning for humanity, live my reason to be, and celebrate the invisibly essential currency of kindness. In any case, I think it will be interesting as a creative narrative, healing for myself as an expression of trauma, and at the same time, frightening for the old world, and exciting for the new, as yet, mostly unseen one.

My opinion is that multiverses exist. Some beings are embodied naturally or designed, and some physically live longer than others. I have become aware that the universe listens to love and intent. The light beings and the light-map showed me this, and writing this has made me remember it.

My advice is, if you are scared, there is an easy way to protect yourself. Ask your God, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, or as I like to say, 'the highest loving divinity', to protect you from adversarial entities. This helps. There is a natural order beyond the physical, and you, like every creature and sentient being, has a god-like free will inside you, so use it!

Light a candle of gratitude every day. Bless your food. Ask for protection. I often argue with rationalists that if spirituality or Shamans work, why don't they give the lotto numbers, but spirit does not work with ego or desire, it works on a higher plane or vibration than this. See all the homeless people on the street with cardboard signs saying, 'I'm homeless, can you spare change, and God bless you?' Why would you believe in God and not be angry at your

plight? It is because homeless people are sentient acute empaths and have not forgotten their spirit. Sometimes, it is part of the reason they are homeless. It's part of the reason why so many people starve, and neoliberal financial politics and the populist, xenophobic Trumps of the world are in charge. Sociopaths and narcissists do not apologise.

Religious people often fear hell because of dogma and control, but spiritual people have often already been to a kind of purgatory hell. I fear I will become homeless after my PhD, but if that is my destiny, I still have my sentience, and I will never forget this, nor can I.

This is why the beings exist outside of time or rationality as we know it, and we each have a role to play, and I think that one day, science through superintelligence might rationalise to a greater extent the role of these beings, if not uncover them. Maybe this day will never come, but in my emotional phenomenology, I know what I know because I have experienced it.

Just like a wearable Fitbit device can expose secret American military bases by highlighting their perimeter (Sly, 2018), so too can the emotional responses from abductees and paranormal experiences identify what is unseen and not considered rational ontological science through western paradigms. In actual fact, the identity of you and I are different in every other persons who knows you's perception. You can never see yourself the way others see you. What you are convinced and think you are, is different for your parents, your friends, your partner(s), or anyone else who knows you. Even if you think you're a good person, you are probably evil in someone else's story. You never see yourself as others see you and this feathers out and blurs identity. So in fact, when growing awareness happens over a lifetime, such as has happened for me in this PhD journey, the idea of what we are also constantly evolves and sheds its skin like a snake, grows and evolves, constantly in a state of flux. Looking at it this way, we are all in the concept of ourselves, only temporary and fleeting, and this emboldens the idea that even as human, spiritual, emotional miracles, we are multi-dimensional already in essence, and consistency can only be attributed to the divine and the state of flux itself.

PHILOSOPHICALLY SPEAKING …

In regard to epistemology, I have rendered both my rational, emotional, spiritual knowledge through this PhD in ways that are both across the spectrum of the rational and esoteric through art. Metaphysically, meaning 'beyond the physical', I have tried to render a multi-dimensional capture of my life and its occasional absurdities, including mostly unspoken-of entities. Ethically within this thesis, I have worked with kindness and compassion for my own life and the lives of young people, the essence being from compassion for living things and for the purposes of bringing light to the world and bridging the Shamanic gaps between worlds. Logic is something I have employed throughout this quite esoteric PhD in fact and quantifiable data and science-based ontology. It cannot be argued that any rigidity has occurred in this regard. Aesthetically, I have attempted, with the guidance of spirit, to create and act in ways that are beautiful and have integrity. While I do believe I have the agency of choice, I thank something greater than myself for the partial creation and guidance in the process of the creation and manifestation of this work in the technology and ethics field, as part of my chosen journey.

My life and identity has come full circle in this writing. The method of validating young people's ethical ideas has been a lifelong journey of ethical alchemy. As a child and adolescent, I was so scared of nuclear war and had many other non-validated issues. Now that I have worked with young people to amplify their ethical voices and link it back to my early life and young adult and adult narrative, it brings some reduction of contrast in these most pressing of end times. That is, through present kindness and loving the self and others; for when the world is geared to profit from your weaknesses and perceived inadequacies in a paranoid and vain age, loving and validating the self is an outrageous political act.

> *If a wound was all that was required to be a Shaman, we'd all be one. If wounds were required, no-one would be* – S. Kelley Harrell, M. Div.
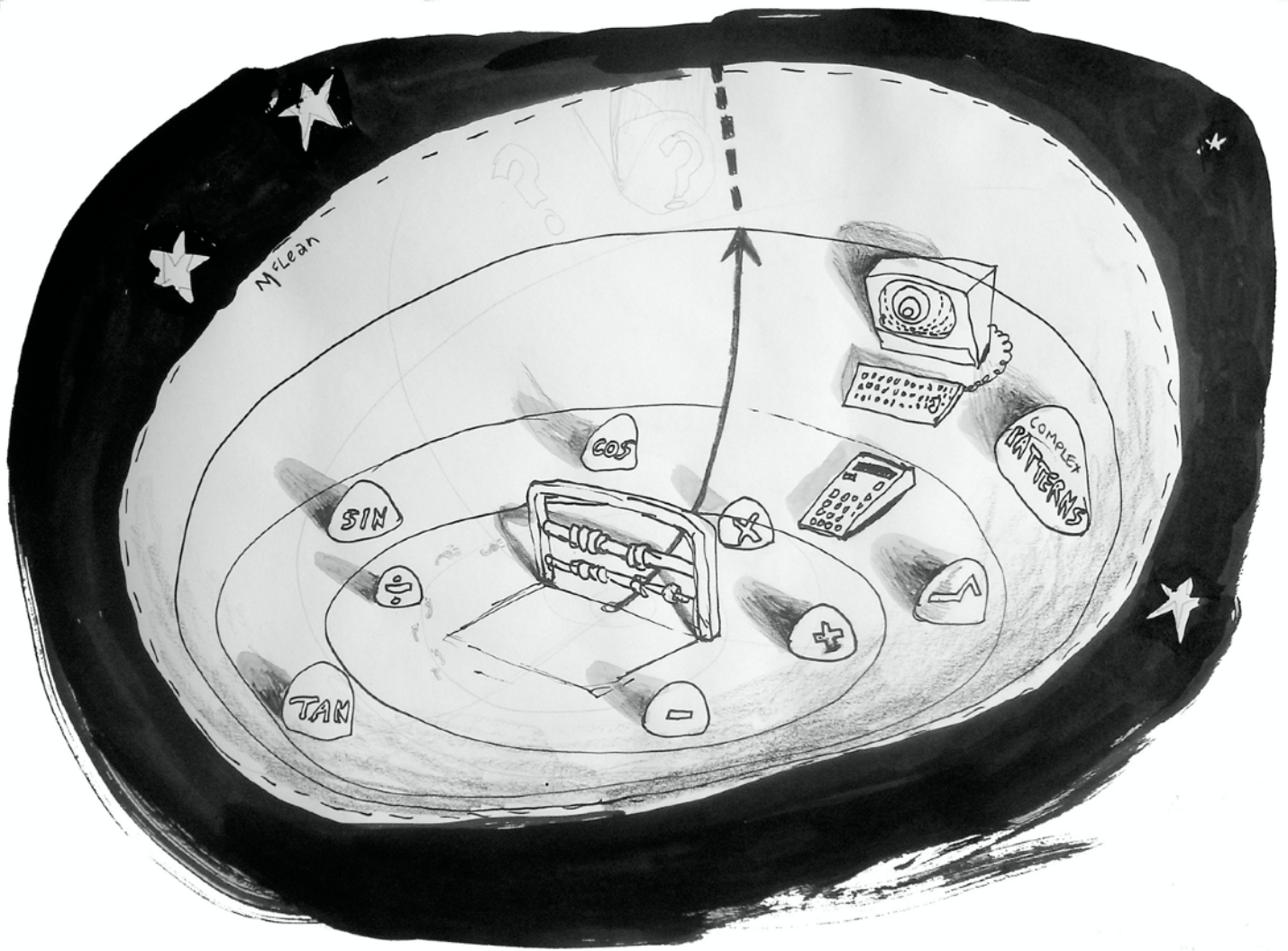
FROM SIMPLE TO COMPLEX (2005)

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS, (STAIRS TO FLINDERS STREET (ASCENSION) (1991)

References

ABC/Reuters. (2017). Pentagon admits to running a secret multi-million-dollar UFO program. Retrieved from http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-17/pentagon-ran-a-secret-multi-million-dollar-ufo-program/9266608

Ajayi, D. (2018). Our Most Troubling Madness: Case Studies in Schizophrenia across Cultures. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 213*(1), 444. Retrieved from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/our-most-troubling-madness-case-studies-in-schizophrenia-across-cultures-edited-by-t-m-luhrmann-and-jocelyn-marrow-university-of-california-press-2016-5895-hb-2495-pb-304-pp-isbn-9780520291089-hb-9780520291096-pb/61718358ADFEDDAF0B5A8E26D725862C

Andrews, R. (2017, 22/05/2017). Google's AI Is Now Creating Its Own AI. Retrieved from http://www.iflscience.com/technology/google-ai-creating-own-ai/

Anna Petrovskaya, S. T. (2009). Model based vehicle detection and tracking for autonomous urban driving. *Autonomous Robots, 26*(2-3), 123-129. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10514-009-9115-1

Anne Loxley, R. W. (2007). The Visitors - The Australian Response to UFOs and Aliens. In P. r. Gallery (Ed.). NSW, Australia: Penrith regional gallery and the lewers Bequest.

Appignanesi, J. (Writer) & K. Jones (Director). (2014). Rufus Stone. In K. Jones (Producer). UK.

Arneson, R. J. (1998). WHAT, IF ANYTHING, RENDERS ALL HUMANS MORALLY EQUAL? In D. Jamieson (Ed.), *Peter Singer and His Critics*. Oxford: Oxford: Blackwell.

Barbara Kamler, P. T. (2014). Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for supervision: Routledge.

Barrat, J. (2013). Artificial Intelligence and the End of the Human Era: Thomas Dunne Books.

BBC. (2014). Computer AI passes Turing test in 'world first'. Retrieved from Computer AI passes Turing test in 'world first'

Beattie, M. (2013). A Narrative, Arts-Based Pedagogy for Professional Learning: Creating a Context for the Development of Creativity, Connectedness and Compassion in Higher Education., 29.

Bentall, R. P. (2007). Renaming schizophrenia. *BMJ, 334*, 108. Retrieved from https://www.bmj.com/rapid-response/2011/11/01/schizophrenia-myth

Bergen, M. (2016). Here's the cyborg tech that Elon Musk says he'll do if no one else does. Retrieved from https://www.recode.net/2016/6/2/11837544/elon-musk-neural-lace

Berman, R. (2017). A.I. will serve humans - but only about 1% of them. Retrieved from http://bigthink.com/robby-berman/how-artificial-intelligence-is-eating-democracy

Biggins, M. (2017). AI and the Future of Ethics. Retrieved from https://medium.com/s/ai-dirty-little-secret/ai-and-the-future-of-ethics-e4286567e742

BINGEMANN, M. (2009, January 27, 2009). Centrelink to use voice ID. *The Australian*. Retrieved from https://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it-old/centrelink-to-use-voice-id/news-story/41cfa303a880cffda35b6394f5ca7157?sv=3b73d16e812b5b84754fcd5eff5a616e

Bostrom, N. (2008). Where Are They? Why I hope the search for extraterrestrial life finds nothing. Retrieved from https://www.technologyreview.com/s/409936/where-are-they/

Bostrom, N. (2014). Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies.

Bostrum, N. (2006). How long before Superintelligence. *Linguistic and Philosophocal Investigations, 5*(1), 11-30. Retrieved from https://www.nickbostrom.com/superintelligence.html

Candy, L. (2006). Practice Based Research: A Guide. *1.0*. Retrieved from http://www.creativityandcognition.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/PBR-Guide-1.1-2006.pdf

Carl Leggo, P. G. (2008). *Being with A/r/tography*: Sense Publishers.

Carl Nagaitis, h. M. (1994). Without Consent, A comprehensive Survey of Missing-Time and Abduction Phenomena. New York: Ringpull Press Limited.

Carrie James, K. d., Andrea Flores, John M Francis, Lindsay Pettingill, Margaret Rundle, Howard gardener. (2011). *Young People, Ethics andf the New Digital Media*: The MIT Press.

Carrington, D. (2016, August 29, 2016). The Anthropocene epoch: scientists declare dawn of human-influenced age. Retrieved from http://fromm.usfca.edu/Fall2016/Garrett%20Week%205.pdf

Carrington, D. (2017, 10 July, 2017). Earth's sixth mass extinction event under way, scientists warn. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/10/earths-sixth-mass-extinction-event-already-underway-scientists-warn

Carroll, P. J. (2008). The Apophenion: A Chaos Magick Paradigm: Mandrake.

Cellan-Jones, R. (2014). Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind. *BBC News*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-30290540

Chen, S. (2019). The Chinese technology helping New York police keep a closer eye on the United States' biggest city. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/2181749/chinese-technology-helping-new-york-police-keep-closer-eye-united

Clifford, C. (2017, 10/10/2017). Billionaire Richard Branson: Extreme wealth generated by A.I. industry should be used for cash handouts. *CNBC*. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/10/richard-branson-ai-wealth-should-be-used-for-universal-basic-income.html

Cohen, J. (2019). The untold story of the 'circle of trust' behind the world's first gene-edited babies. Retrieved from https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/08/untold-story-circle-trust-behind-world-s-first-gene-edited-babies#

Cooper, J. (2015). Co-creating with, and in, a southern landscape. (PhD). Victoria University,

Couzin-Frankel, J. (2017). Fluid-filled 'biobag' allows premature lambs to develop outside the womb. Retrieved from http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/04/fluid-filled-biobag-allows-premature-lambs-develop-outside-womb

David Silver, J. S., Karen Simonyan, Ioannis Antonoglou, Aja Huang, Arthur Guez, Thomas Hubert, Lucas Baker, Matthew Lai, Adrian Bolton, Yutian Chen, Timothy Lillicrap, Fan Hui, Laurent Sifre, George van den Driessche, Thore Graepel. (2017). Mastering the game of Go without human knowledge. *Nature International Journal of Science, 550*, 354-359. Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/nature24270

Dewey, J. (1916). *Experience and Education*. New york: The Macmillan Company.

Dewey, J. (1980). *The Middle Works, 1899-1924*: Southern Illinois University.

Dictionaries, O. L. (Ed.) (2018). https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ethics: Oxford.

Dictionary, O. (Ed.) (1970) Oxford English Dictionary. https://www.lexico.com/definition/
posthumanism: Oxford.

Dryden, J. (2014). Schizophrenia not a single disease but multiple genetically distinct disorders.
Washington University in St Louis. Retrieved from https://source.wustl.edu/2014/09/schizophrenia-
not-a-single-disease-but-multiple-genetically-distinct-disorders/

Dymoke, N. (2018). A.I. can now beat humans at their favorite video game. Retrieved from https://
bigthink.com/ned-dymoke/ai-beats-humans-in-teamwork-video-game?
utm_source=Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6d9e64db27-
EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_28&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_45b26faecc-6d9e64db27-436
10269

E, F. T. (2013). *Surviving Schizophrenia* (6 ed.): Harper Collins.

Einstein, A. (1931). The World As I See It. In *Living Philosophies* (Vol. 84). New York.

Elaine Chase, L. O., Milena Belloni, Annika Lems Ulrika Wernesjö. (2019). Methodological
innovations, reflections and dilemmas: the hidden sides of research with migrant young people
classified as unaccompanied minors. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Retrieved from
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1584705

Ellis, A., Bochner. (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview [40 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative
Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1), Art. 10. Retrieved from http://nbn-
resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1101108.

Emilio Scalise, V. S., Eric Janke, Dmitri Talapin, Giulia Galli Stefan Wippermann. (2018). Surface
chemistry and buried interfaces in all-inorganic nanocrystalline solids. *Nature Nanotechnology, 13*,
841-848. Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/s41565-018-0189-9

Emre Soyer, R. M. H. (2018). Unification By "Alien" Invasion What would it take for us to work out our differences? Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/experience-studio/201805/unification-alien-invasion

Evans, M. (2003). From the ridiculous to the sublime : examining the relationship between perception and reality in the context of a historical view of the virtual. (PhD PhD). VUT, Melbourne.

Ferreira, J. (2018). Artificial Sentience vs Artificial Intelligence. *Experfy*. Retrieved from https://www.experfy.com/blog/artificial-sentience-vs-artificial-intelligence

Foundation, T. W. (2016). Watson for President. Retrieved from https://watson2016.com/

Fowler, R. (2002). UFO Testament: Anatomy of an Abductee: iUniverse.

Fyodor D. Urnov, E. J. R., Michael C. Holmes, H. Steve Zhang Philip D. Gregory. (2010). Genome editing with engineered zinc finger nucleases. *Nature Reviews Genetics, 11*. Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/nrg2842

Google. (2017). HUMAN AI COLLABORATION. Retrieved from https://deepdreamgenerator.com/

Gray, C. H. (2000). Cyborg Citizen, Politics in the Posthuman Age: Routledge.

Greene, M. (1995). Releasing the imagination : essays on education, the arts, and social change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Greene, M. (2009). The Arts and the Search for Social Justice. Retrieved from https://maxinegreene.org/uploads/library/arts_n_search_4_social_justice.pdf

Grof, S. (2000). Psychology of the Future: Lessons from Modern Consciousness Research: State Univ of New York Pr.

Hamzelou, J. (2016). Exclusive: World's first baby born with new "3 parent" technique. *New Scientist*. Retrieved from https://www.newscientist.com/article/2107219-exclusive-worlds-first-baby-born-with-new-3-parent-technique/

Haoyi Wang, H. Y. (2019). Gene-edited babies: What went wrong and what could go wrong. *PLoS Biol, 17*(4). Retrieved from https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.3000224

Harrison Rudolph, L. M. M., Alvaro M Bedoya. (2017). NOT READY FOR TAKEOFF FACE SCANS AT

AIRPORT DEPARTURE GATES. Retrieved from https://www.airportfacescans.com/

Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanisation: An Intergrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology*

Review(Feb, 2006). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nick_Haslam/publication/

6927454_Dehumanization_An_Integrative_Review/links/00b7d5235b6045de6a000000.pdf

Helene Cooper, R. B., Leslie Kean. (2017, Dec 16, 2017). Glowing Auras and 'Black Money': The

Pentagon's Mysterious U.F.O. Program. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://

www.nytimes.com/2017/12/16/us/politics/pentagon-program-ufo-harry-reid.html?_r=2

http://www.bbc.com. (2018). Chinese man caught by facial recognition at pop concert. Retrieved from

http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-43751276

http://www.turing.org.uk/. The Alan Turing Internet Scrapbook. Retrieved from http://

www.turing.org.uk/scrapbook/test.html

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com. (2019). Transhumanism. *Oxforddictionaries.* Retrieved from https://

en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transhumanism

https://web.stanford.edu/. (2011). John McCarthy (1927-2011). Retrieved from https://

web.stanford.edu/~learnest/jmc/jmc.pdf

https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/support-us. (2019). Students Striking from School for a Safe

Climate Future. Retrieved from https://www.schoolstrike4climate.com/support-us

https://www.scimex.org. (2018). Male obsolescence approaches as mice with two mums are created

in China. Retrieved from https://www.scimex.org/newsfeed/mice-with-two-mums

https://www.statista.com. (2017). Number of U.S. drone strikes carried out under CIA command in

Pakistan from 2004 to April 2017. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/428296/us-

drone-strikes-in-pakistan/

Irwin. (2005). A/r/tography. Retrieved from http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/

Irwin, & De Cosson, A. (2004). A/r/tography : rendering self through arts-based living inquiry.

Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.

Irwin, S., Grauer, Xiong, Bickel. (2006). The Rhizomatic Relations of A/r/tography. 33. Retrieved from http://www.ecuad.ca/~rbeer/text/pdf/STUDIES%20-%20RICHGATE.pdf

J. Gary Knowles , A. L. C. (Ed.) (2008). Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research : Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues. Thousand Oaks, United States: SAGE Publications Inc.

Jung, C. G. (2015). Letters of C. G. Jung, Volume 2; Volumes 1951-1961 (J. A. Grhard Adler Ed. 1 ed.): Routledge.

Kitty Te Riele, R. B. (2013). Negotiating Ethical Challenges in Youth Research: Routledge.

Knight, W. (2017). The Dark Secret at the Heart of AI No one really knows how the most advanced algorithms do what they do. That could be a problem. *www.technologyreview.com*. Retrieved from https://www.technologyreview.com/s/604087/the-dark-secret-at-the-heart-of-ai/

KOBIE, N. (2019). The complicated truth about China's social credit system. Retrieved from https://www.wired.co.uk/article/china-social-credit-system-explained

Koepsell, D. (2009). Who Owns You?: The Corporate Gold Rush to Patent Your Genes: Wiley-Blackwell.

Kretzschmar K, T. H., Pavarini G, Manzini A, Singh I. (2019). Can Your Phone Be Your Therapist? Young People's Ethical Perspectives on the Use of Fully Automated Conversational Agents (Chatbots) in Mental Health Support. *Biomedical Informatics Insights, 11*, pp. 1178222619829083. Retrieved from https://eds-a-ebscohost-com.wallaby.vu.edu.au:4433/eds/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=94283cd6-306e-4238-838a-01483b821eda%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=30858710&db=mnh

Kurzweil, R. (2005). The Singularity is near: Penguin Group.

Kurzweil, R. (2006). The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology.

Kurzweil, R. (2012). How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed: Viking.

Leavy, P. (2015a). *Blue*: Sense Publishers.

Leavy, P. (2015b). *Method Meets Art*. New York: Sense Publishers.

Leavy, P. (2015c). Method Meets Art Arts-Based Research Practice (2 ed.). USA: Guilford Press.

Leavy, P. (2016). Fiction as a Transformative Tool. Artful Inquiry: Transforming Understanding Through Creative Engagement, 9(2). Retrieved from http://www.learninglandscapes.ca/current-issue

Lisa La Jevic, S. S. (2008). A/r/tography as an Ethics of Embodiment: Visual Journals in Preservice Education. *Qualitative Inquiry, 14*(1), 67-89. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/ 10.1177/1077800407304509#articleCitationDownloadContainer

M.D., J. E. M. (2007). Human Encounters with Aliens: Abduction.

M.D., J. E. M. (2008). Passport to the Cosmos, Human Transformation and Alien Encounters: White Crow Books.

Manen, M. V. (1990). Researching Livd Experience Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy. State University of New York Press: State University of New York Press.

Manen, M. v. (1997). Researching Lived Experience, Second Edition: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy (Vol. 2): Routelidge.

Markoff, J. (2011, Feb 16, 2011). Computer Wins on 'Jeopardy!': Trivial, It's Not. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/science/17jeopardy-watson.html

Marohn, S. (2014). The shamanic view of mental illness. Retrieved from http://earthweareone.com/ what-a-shaman-sees-in-a-mental-hospital/

Marsh, S. (2018a, 14 Oct 2018). Essays reveal Stephen Hawking predicted race of 'superhumans'. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/oct/14/stephen-hawking-predicted-new- race-of-superhumans-essays-reveal?CMP=soc_567

Marsh, S. (2018b, 14/10/2018). Essays reveal Stephen Hawking predicted race of 'superhumans'. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/oct/14/stephen-hawking- predicted-new-race-of-superhumans-essays-reveal

McCarthy-Jones, S. (2017). The concept of schizophrenia is coming to an end – here's why. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/the-concept-of-schizophrenia-is-coming- to-an-end-heres-why-82775

McLean, R. (2002). Recovered, Not Cured, a journey through schizophrenia: Allen and Unwin.

McLean, R. (2018). *A Certain Beauty In Un-Resolution… ART;* (R. McLean Ed. 1 ed.). San Francisco, California: Blurb.

Misiak B1, F. D. (2016). A History of Childhood Trauma and Response to Treatment With Antipsychotics in First-Episode Schizophrenia Patients: Preliminary Results. *US National Library of Medicine National Institute of Health, 10*, 787-792. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27441460

Molloy, M. (2016). How fairy tales could stop killer robots from taking over the world. Retrieved from https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/02/17/how-fairy-tales-could-stop-killer-robots-from-taking-over-the-wo/

Moore, G. E. (2014). Moore's Law. Retrieved from http://www.mooreslaw.org

Mullen, E. (2017). Blind Patients to Test Bionic Eye Brain Implants. Retrieved from https://www.technologyreview.com/s/608844/blind-patients-to-test-bionic-eye-brain-implants/

Musk, E. (2014, 3 August 2014). [Worth reading Superintelligence by Bostrom. We need to be super careful with AI. Potentially more dangerous than nukes].

Musk, E. (2018). Neuralink. Retrieved from https://neuralink.com/

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, (2007).

Newswire, C. (2019). Young people consider artificial intelligence a threat to future employment: Centennial College/CivicAction survey. Retrieved from https://eds-a-ebscohost-com.wallaby.vu.edu.au:4433/eds/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=ba2da220-c2e2-4719-bc39-e1e3851026f0%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=201903180600CANADANWCANADAPR.C8821&db=bwh

Niccol, A. (Writer). (1997). Gattaca [Film]. In S. S. Danny DeVito, Michael Shamberg (Producer).

Nicholls, S. K. (2013). What is Faction? Retrieved from https://sknicholls.wordpress.com/2013/08/04/what-is-faction/

Nightsky, O. (1999a). The Bridge Between Two Worlds, a shaman's view of schizophrenia and accute sensitivity. Southern Cross University, Lismore: Norsearch reprographics.

Nightsky, O. (1999b). The bridge Between two Worlds, The Shaman's View of Schizophrenia & Acute

Sensitivity. Australia.

Orwell, G. (1949). *1984*: RBA (1993).

Packan, P. A. (1999). Pushing the Limits. *Science, 285*(5436), 2079-2081. Retrieved from http://

science.sciencemag.org/content/285/5436/2079

Pinar, W. F. (2002). a/r/tography Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Enquiry.

Priscilla Alderson, V. M. (2011). The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical

Handbook (18/01/07 ed.): Sage Publications.

Priyadarshini, M. (2018, June 26, 2018). AI Bots Trained For '180 Years Everyday' Defeat Human

Dota 2 Players. *www.,fossbytes.com*. Retrieved from https://fossbytes.com/open-ai-dota-2-defeat-

humans-training-180-years/

Purba, K. R. (2016). *Optimization of AI Tactic in Action-RPG Game*. Paper presented at the

Proceedings of Second International Conference on Electrical Systems, Technology and Information

2015 (ICESTI 2015), Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia. https://

pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2661/4b67383dbd30299aa3336f17f58afcb3f3f5.pdf

Regalado, A. (2018). EXCLUSIVE: Chinese scientists are creating CRISPR babies. Retrieved from

https://www.technologyreview.com/s/612458/exclusive-chinese-scientists-are-creating-crispr-babies/

Regalado, A. (2019). China's CRISPR twins might have had their brains inadvertently enhanced.

Retrieved from https://www.technologyreview.com/s/612997/the-crispr-twins-had-their-brains-

altered/

Relethford, J. H. (2018). Reflections Of Our Past How Human History Is Revealed In Our Genes. New

York: Routledge.

Reyes, V. (2015, 18 November, 2015). His Holiness the Dalai Lama attends conference on Quantum

Physics. *The Tibet Post*. Retrieved from http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/features/education-and-

society/4794-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-attends-conference-on-quantum-physics

Richard J McNally, S. A. C. (2005). Sleep Paralysis, Sexual Abuse, and Space Alien Abduction. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 42*(1), 113-122. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1363461505050715

Robert C. Moellering, J. (1998). Antibiotic Resistance: Lessons for the Future. *Clinical Infectious Diseases, 27*(1), s135-s140. Retrieved from https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/27/Supplement_1/S135/459208

Samples, B. (1976). *The Metaphoric Mind*: Jalmar Pr.

Sheaff, J. M. a. M. (2007). The pathology of ageing: concepts and mechanisms. *Journal of Pathology*(211), 111-113. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/path.2122

Sly, L. (2018). U.S. soldiers are revealing sensitive and dangerous information by jogging. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/a-map-showing-the-users-of-fitness-devices-lets-the-world-see-where-us-soldiers-are-and-what-they-are-doing/2018/01/28/86915662-0441-11e8-aa61-f3391373867e_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d0aa92f307d6

Springgay, I., Leggo, Gouzouasis. (2008). *Being with A/r/tography*. Canada: Sense Publishers.

Stapleton, D. (2018). World's First AI News Anchor Makes its Debut in China. *https://medium.com/mlmemoirs/worlds-first-ai-news-anchor-makes-its-debut-in-china-4ffc00716578.* Retrieved from https://medium.com/mlmemoirs/worlds-first-ai-news-anchor-makes-its-debut-in-china-4ffc00716578

Steinhoff, J. (2014). Transhumanism and Marxism: Philosophical Connections. *Journal of Evolution & Technology, 24*(2), 1-16. Retrieved from https://jetpress.org/v24/steinhoff.htm

Stephanie Springgay, R. L. I. (2008). *Being with A/r/tography*: Sense Publishers.

Streiber, W. (1987). *Communion*: Avon.

T, J. (1954). *THE KINSEY REPORT*. Retrieved from Brittish medical Journal: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2093251/

Tegmark, M. (2018). How to get empowered, not overpowered, by AI. https://www.ted.com/talks/max_tegmark_how_to_get_empowered_not_overpowered_by_ai#t-16302: www.ted.com.

Wall, M. (2018). We're Probably Living in a Simulation, Elon Musk Says. Retrieved from https://www.space.com/41749-elon-musk-living-in-simulation-rogan-podcast.html

Watson, Z. (2017). *Digital News Project*. Reuters institute for the Study of Journalism: University of Oxford.

Welfare, A. I. o. h. a. (2018). Deaths. Retrieved from https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/life-expectancy#data

Wertheim, M. (1999). The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace.

Weule, G. (2018). First IVF baby's 40th birthday: How a tiny girl changed science and the world. Retrieved from http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-07-25/first-ivf-baby-louise-joy-brown-turns-40/10017032

Wijlen, T. t. (2017). *When Cyborg Meets Humanoid: A New Challenge for Human Rights.* (Master of Science Masters). University of Twente, Retrieved from http://essay.utwente.nl/72935/2/ter%20Wijlen_MA_BMS.pdf

William J. Ripple Christopher Wolf Thomas M. Newsome Mauro Galetti Mohammed Alamgir Eileen Crist Mahmoud I. Mahmoud William F. Laurance 15, s. s. f. c. (2017). World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice. *BioScience, 67*(12), 1026-1028. Retrieved from https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/67/12/1026/4605229

Winkler, R. (2017). Elon Musk Launches Neuralink to Connect Brains With Computers. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com/articles/elon-musk-launches-neuralink-to-connect-brains-with-computers-1490642652

www.demog.berkeley.edu. (1998). Life expectancy in the USA, 1900-98. Retrieved from http://www.demog.berkeley.edu/~andrew/1918/figure2.html

www.nationalgeographic.com/. (2018). Mass Extinctions. Retrieved from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/mass-extinction/

www.semphn.org. (2016). *Measles outbreak update*. http://www.semphn.org.au: Australian

Government Retrieved from http://www.semphn.org.au/news/news/66-measles-outbreak-

update.html

www.un.org. (2017). World population projected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050, and 11.2 billion in 2100.

Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/world-population-

prospects-2017.html

Xiang, F. (2016, 3 May, 2016). AI will spell the end of capitalism. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved

from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/05/03/end-of-capitalism/?

noredirect=on&utm_term=.310a27041bd1

Ziebertz, H.-G. (2018). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1584705. In

Religion and Human Rights. Switzerland: Springer nature Switzerland.

Zoph, Q. L. B. (2017). Using Machine Learning to Explore Neural Network Architecture. Retrieved

from https://ai.googleblog.com/2017/05/using-machine-learning-to-explore.html

APPENDIX I)

WRITING 'THE SPARK' & PRESENTING SIX MONOLOGUES OF IDEAS

I broadly read and researched the zeitgeist of current philosophy around AI, superintelligence and beyond, framed by my own suffering and the obvious suffering of a planet at the end of the Anthropocene and probable extinction. This includes data on computers, the nature and health of the planet, framed by global catastrophic risks, and other general facts to do with state of the art technology and the state of the world. For the purposes of showing / educating the students, I did not include the referencing when I gave out the hand-outs for the students, but for the purposes of this thesis, the referencing had to 'live' somewhere. It does so within and across the creative artefact, and within the monologues. I will not repeat in this section the researching of the factual literature that would otherwise 'live' here; rather, all the factual rational scientific referencing that informed the science-based curriculum lives in the artefact in the six narratives that were the spark of ideas, or the curriculum, I presented to the students.

- *Part of teaching is helping people create themselves* - *Maxine Greene.*
- *A teacher in search of his/her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own* - *Maxine Greene.*
- *The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world* - *Maxine Greene.*
- *Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere* - *Albert Einstein.*

When I was nineteen, I used to catch the train to art school and watch everyonfspark

e read either *'The Herald Sun,'* or *'The Age'* on the train, and I imagined in the future that technology would homogenise people in terms of what they read and the media. I drew the following image before I had ever used a decent computer, and it details the 'black blobs' that are people-entities that are reading a digital document titled 'TM,' which was my word for

'The Masses'. I think the image is quite prophetic in that it describes a rudimentary concept of an iPad or tablet. My awareness of technology and my interest in it is apparent in the comment I made: 'In retrospect the future was not somewhere they would go but somewhere they were taken.' Interestingly, I ended up working for both 'The Herald Sun' and 'The Age' as a news graphics artist and illustrator. I consider that: 'synchronicity,' the Jungian concept that: 'meaningful coincidence has spiritual significance.' Also that: 'Thus the synchronistic effect should be understood not as psychotic but a normal phenomenon' (Jung, 2015, p. 409).
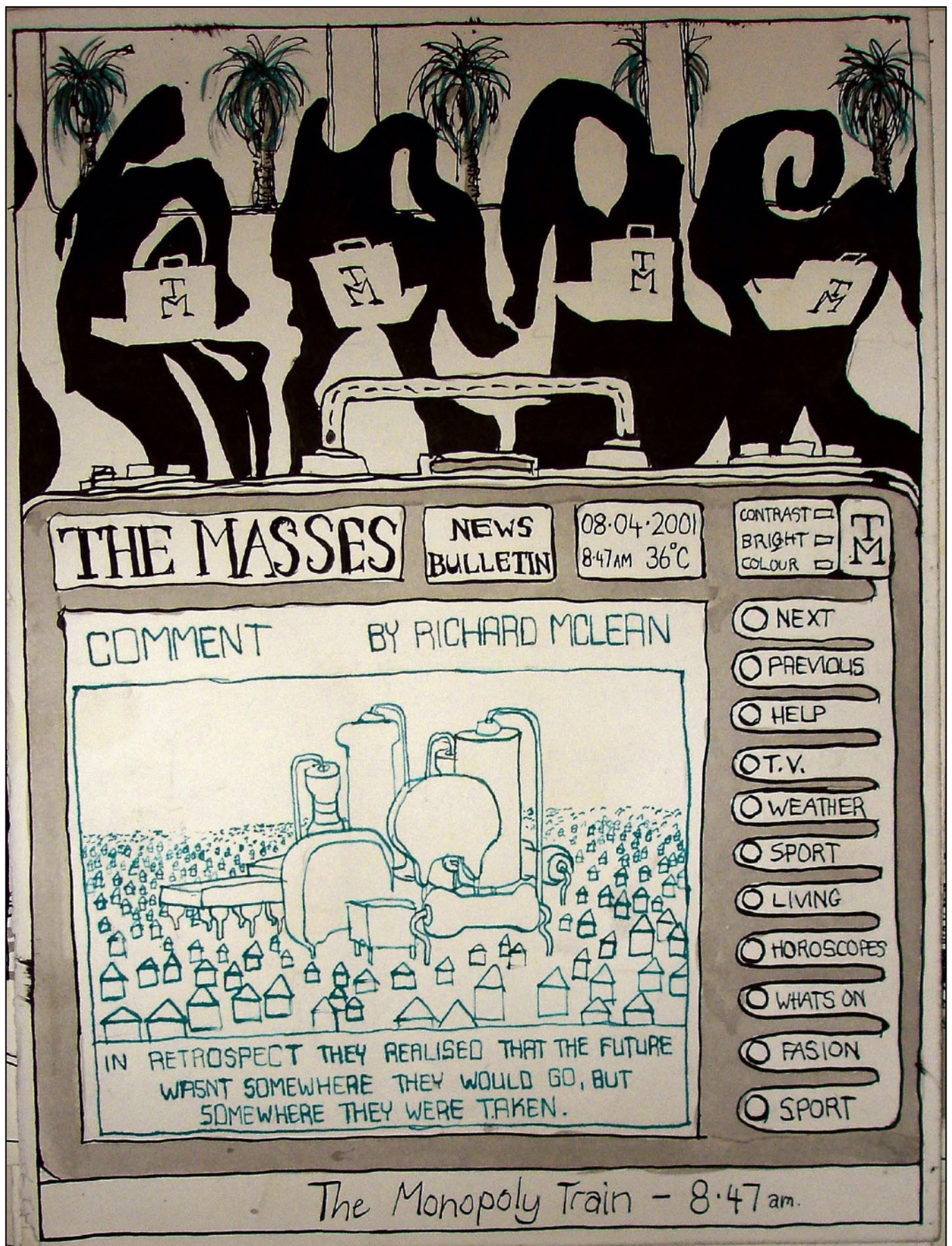
THE MONOPOLY TRAIN (1992)

x) PROLOGUE: THE UNFINISHED FABLE OF THE SPARROWS

It was the nest-building season, but after days of long hard work, the sparrows sat in the evening glow, relaxed and chirping away.

'We are all so small and weak. Imagine how easy life would be if we had an owl who could help us build our nests!'

'Yes!' said another. 'And we could use it to look after our elderly and our young.'

'It could give us advice and keep an eye out for the neighbourhood cat,' added a third.

Then Pastus, the elder bird spoke: 'Let us send out scouts in all directions and try to find an abandoned owlet somewhere, or maybe an egg. A crow chick might also do, or a baby weasel. This could be the best thing that ever happened to us, at least since the opening of the Pavilion of Unlimited Grain in yonder backyard.'

The flock was exhilarated, and sparrows everywhere started chirping away at the top of their lungs.

Only Scronkfinkle, a one-eyed sparrow with a fretful temperament, was unconvinced of the wisdom of the endeavour. Quoth he: 'This will surely be our undoing. Should we not give some thought to the art of owl domestication and owl taming first, before we bring such a creature into our midst?'

Replied Pastus: 'Taming an owl seems like an exceedingly difficult thing to do. It will be difficult enough to find an owl egg. So, let us start there. After we have succeeded in raising an owl, then we can think about taking on this other challenge.'

'There is a flaw in that plan!' squeaked Scronkfinkle; but his protests were in vain as the flock had already lifted off to start implementing the directives set out by Pastus.

Just two or three sparrows remained behind. Together they began to try to work out how owls might be trained or domesticated. They soon realised that Pastus had been right: this was an exceedingly difficult challenge, especially in the absence of an owl to practice on. Nevertheless, they pressed on as best they could, constantly fearing that the flock might return with an owl egg before a solution to the control problem had been found.

It is not known how the story ends, but the author dedicates this book to Scronkfinkle and his followers.

Taken from the introduction of Nick Bostrom's 'Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies (Bostrom, 2014, p. v).

1) CURRICULUM ONE OF SIX

INTRODUCTION
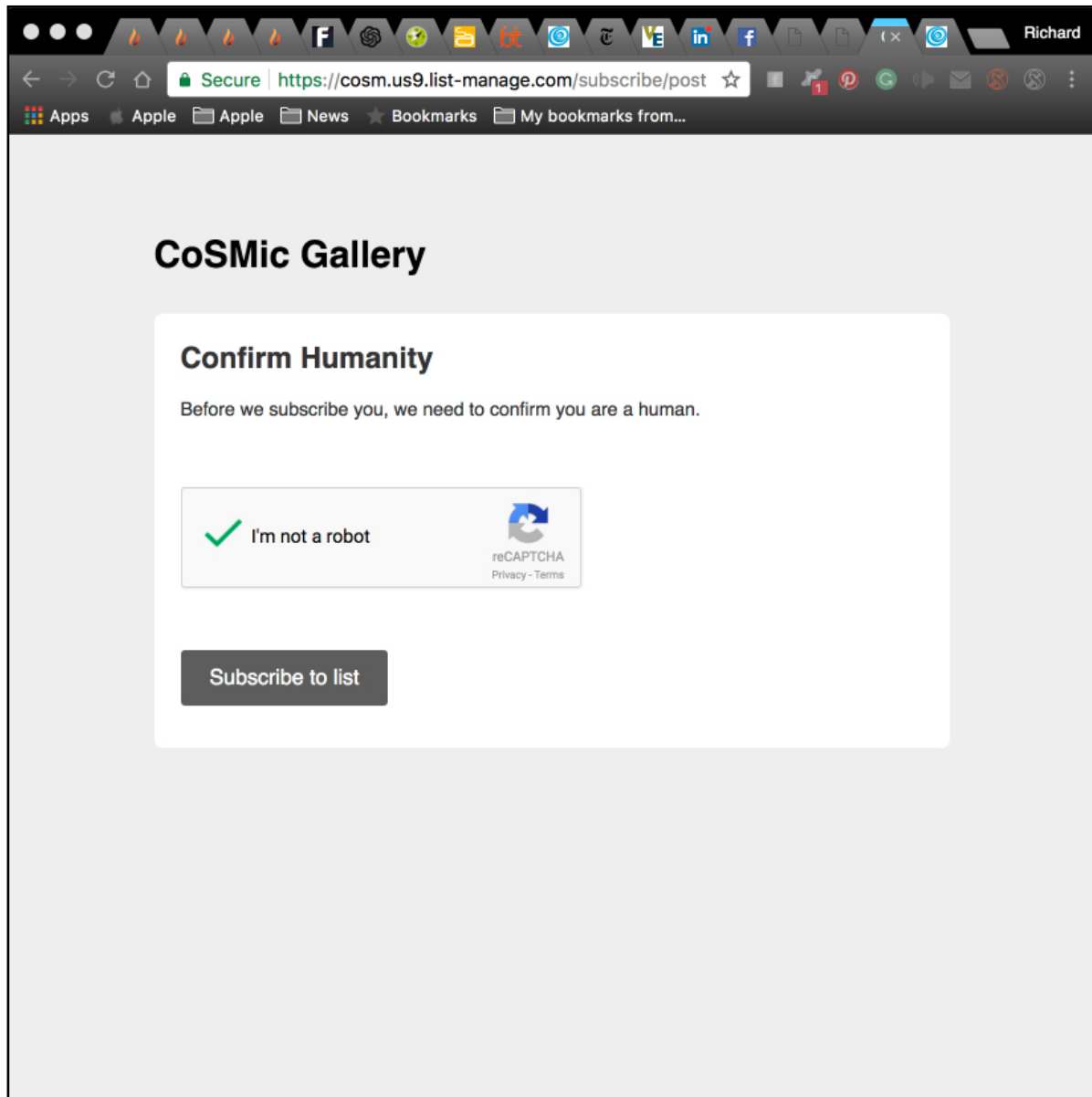
CONFIRM HUMANITY (2017)

Welcome, dear follower.

The introductory paragraph above is taken from a book called 'Superintelligence, Paths, Dangers, Strategies' by Nick Bostrom (Bostrom, 2014, p. v). By the symbology of the story, you can see that it talks about artificial intelligence and that there are only a few sparrows left behind to work out how it will work when it arrives. No-one knows precisely how artificial intelligence will affect the world, and there is debate as to whether it will be a positive or negative thing. Nick Bostrom says that artificial intelligence is perhaps the most critical issue that human beings will face. I thought it would be an excellent way to reproduce here and introduce myself as one of the sparrows left behind, that I am one of Scronfinkle's followers, hoping to help solve and guide a critical issue.

By reading this dialogue and if you are a student participating in this study, you too will become one of the symbolic sparrows left behind helping me to work out what we should do, or what we think of the situation, before the flock returns with an owl egg, anticipating superintelligence. Henceforth, you are a valuable person indeed, because you are helping to solve global problems, even if you are in a local environment. Young people will inherit this world, and this is your chance to have your say and be heard and validated with your concerns. Your voice matters to me, the world and my research.

This is the dialogue that will launch me into finishing my PhD, and it is called:

'Validating young people's moral and ethical concerns of what it means to be human both now and in the future through the lens of technology, despite global catastrophic risks'.

Please bear in mind that the creative component of this PhD evolved over time, well after the interviews had ended. This development was an unforeseen occurrence, much like an event horizon of the singularity itself. The new book title which evolved from the initial concept takes into account that as a post-positivist unable to separate the researcher from the research, I revert back to the self-reflexive nature of my being and apply self-healing and living inquiry

exploration through art, and healing through a Shamanic lens. The students were unaware of this. The new title of the exegesis and the creative component, to give you an idea of what this whole PhD is about, is:

'Validating young people's ethical concerns of what it means to be human both now and in a future posthuman world, via a self-reflexive, living inquiry lifelong healing journey from the rational to the esoteric.'

This then evolved as the lived research PhD went on to resolve the final title of:

'A Journey of Young Lives, Conversations and Self-Reflexive Creativity Encompassing AI, Superintelligence and the Future World(s) of Posthumanism Framed by the Anthropocene'.

(Back to the curriculative writing...)

'Artificial intelligence, Intelligent Machines and Designing Human Beings; What are young people's ethical concerns of being human both now and in the future through the lens of technology?'

This PhD (answers the question of), aims to (initially answer the question of) explore, through the eyes and ethical opinions of young people, what it means to be human both now and in the near future through the lens of technology.

As an allegory (which is a thing that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning), consider the below image in detail. I drew it when I was a young person myself at about age 19, and it is titled 'Objective Vision' (1993).

In it, I have tried to describe non-physical beings or entities (the black 'blobs') that, through looking at such things as electrical power poles, communication satellites, and billboards, have an interest in technology and the human world.

My thought for the drawing was that they have liberated themselves from ordinary physical reality by understanding the fundamental nature of reality, which is symbolically expressed with the three primary shapes of the circle, the triangle, and the square which feature at the back of the image.

Keep this image in mind as and reflect on it as we go throughout the study, and we will revisit it at the end.
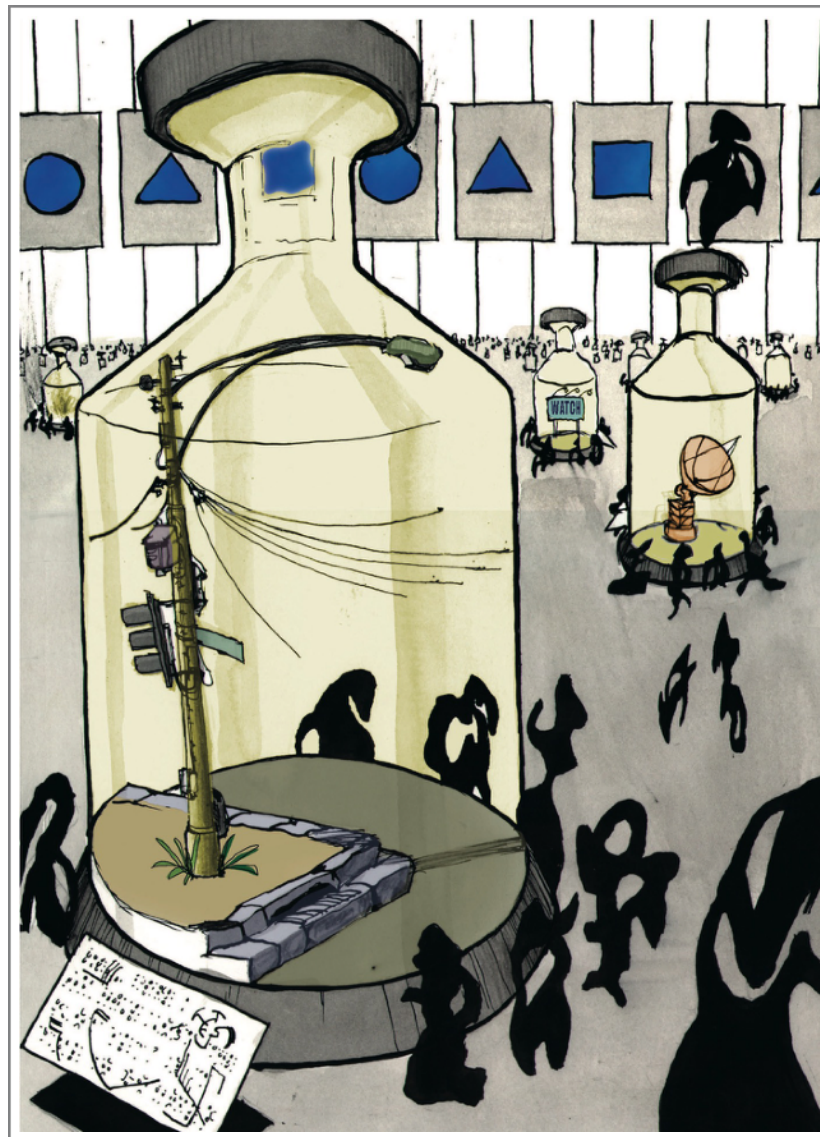
OBJECTIVE VISION (1993, REWORKED 2005)

EDIT: I revisited what I wrote about this image in 1993 (above), and it is worthwhile mentioning and revisiting here because it not only examines my own young life in relation to technology, but it is also an image I introduced to the students because I thought it was a pivotal image to extrapolate on a wide range of philosophical themes such as inter-dimensionality, superintelligence, ontological science, and the state of technology. In my thesis in 1993, I wrote about this image and what I was trying to describe within it as follows, which links back to my own young life through the following perspectives on technology of the Year 11 students:

'I could have been born in seventeenth-century Europe or ancient Australia. This type of thinking is what I consciously forced onto myself in order to gain a new perspective on my work. ... Years are only imposed units on cumulative time. Things change before you can blink, but they can also change so meticulously slowly, and secretively, that the danger can't be perceived in clarity for all the insignificant distractions'.

People stylise their bodies with clothes that denote them to a lifestyle — businessman, secretary, student. The clothes make them more machine-like as if they were taking on the identity of robots.

I've always thought that truth is stranger than fiction, but I think that the worlds of fantasy and reality are slowly interacting because of advances in technology.

There is the simultaneous relief and horror of what could evolve from human(s) whose only means of communication is through machines.

Artificial intelligence is here, the implications of which are mind-blowing. This theme evolves in the image of 'The Satellite Plant'. The new people born in the root system of the family tree, are born into a world dependent on technology. This makes them slightly mechanised and is superimposed into their own existence. We are not at one with nature any more, but a product of, and dependent on, ourselves. The mechanical insect is symbolic of what we have

made ourselves interruptible with, the thing that this new byproduct of nature and technology can make us open to. However, it's a thing quite separate from our 'plant,' possibly a product of ourselves helping to pollinate or nurture us.

The image 'Objective Vision' at first glance probably appears something like a group of beings in a 'museum,' looking at human technological structures. I wanted to convey that these structures were old, and out of date. Depending on what point in history I was born in, these structures may have been very futuristic, or very primitive. Because of me anticipating the future, I would soon regard them as very 'primitive'. The idea of 'The Bug Catcher' containers, (a toy I frequently received from relatives at Christmas), implies the abstract 'beings' are far superior in intelligence, that they may manipulate our environment or us, without us realising — we are as aware as ants in an ant farm.

They exist in an environment that stretches to the horizon — a non-physical place? A product of the mind? It's a different, vast place, where the only three dimensional things are the 'captured' objects and their 'viewing cabinets'. Everything else seems flat, the entities, and the sequential image of squares, circles and triangles in the background. While the environment isn't supposed to be utopian, a race of such intelligent sophistication must have harnessed some type of basic understanding — reflected in the primary shapes.

Because our daily lives are dependent on technology, it becomes obvious as a theme. We should (be able to see how primitive we are in technology).

I think the main question for our race and myself, is that ask if we SHOULD before we show that we COULD.

I think this passage of writing from when I was about 20 years old links my own philosophy from 1993 and my young life with the young lives of my students, on the nature of technology and other entities, which I have gone into much greater detail on within this PhD

dissertation. The idea that my young self asks if we should before we could is a long-held belief over my lifetime.

Your views are important to me, and the world.

You are also all important personally to me because you are all essential for completion of my doctoral studies. Without all your input and commitment to the sessions, I cannot finish my studies.

During our discussions, we will look at your opinions, your hopes, dreams, and fears of the future regarding technology. This is important because you will gain the opportunity to express your ideas, which are relevant and essential, and help inform how the future is shaped and made, via the publication of this writing and ultimately this PhD study. You will be the first young people of this nature to be given the opportunity within a professional doctorate study to express your ethical concerns about how human technology and artificial intelligence is advancing so rapidly, and your views on what it means to be human both now and in the future.

Most importantly, your young voices will be heard without judgement or prejudice and validated. Your voice matters!

This is your chance to learn some new things about technology, the world around you and each other and help me to write a doctorate and also hopefully inspire you to your high-level studies in future. I hope this will be a thoughtful, exciting and inspiring journey for you.

This is the novel / research you are going to help finish.

As a young person in this class, you will be required to read this introductory novel. Then, after you have read it, you will be up to date with where technology is, familiar with all the terms we will use, and you will get to use your imaginations, and I will hear all your opinions

and concerns to finish the study and the story. How will we do this? By talking in six focus groups that will be recorded. I'll summarise your ideas and imagination of the future and finish off this novel with your help.

I will be holding classes with the group and record your narratives (your stories), the way you speak and communicate with one another and with me too. We will have a safe, non-judgmental space to express ourselves freely, listened to, of your wildest ideas, and hopes and fears of the future. What do you dream of? What are you afraid of?

VISUALISATION OF THE PROJECT

To help you understand what this project is trying to accomplish, here is a diagram of the start of the novel, which is what you are reading now, and how we will arrive at the three different outcomes that will possibly make up the three endings or themes we will explore of this PhD.

(This monologue of ideas was written at a particular time, and henceforth, cannot be changed. The outcome from the original plan was much different and unexpected, but here is the infographic that I presented the students that encapsulated my original plan:)

It is vitally important that we reflect on what is ethical in the future from the perspective of young minds. This is central to this project. We will discuss what is meant by ethical once we go through a bit about artificial intelligence and other definitions we will need to be familiar with in chapter one.

The following was a diagram I did at the time which explained the process we were trying to explicate. In the end though, the optimistic/pessimistic/neutral models were abandoned because the research unfolded in a different way. In the book 'Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for Supervision,' it is written ''Writing up' obscures the fact that doctoral writing is thinking. We write to work out what we think. It's not that we do the research and

then know. We put words on the page, try them out, see how they look and sound and, in the writing, we see things we had no idea were there before we started writing (Barbara Kamler, 2014, p. 3). In this way the process of living a PhD changed the nature of the outcomes, but the diagram is reproduced here for reference.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NOVELLA BASED IN THE PRESENT (FACTUAL)

THE OUTCOMES OF THE NOVELLA BASED IN THE FUTURE VIA FICTION & IMAGINATION

What is the optimists view of the future?

Introduction of the novella: Artificial intelligence, Superintelligence, Transhumanism. Practical examples.

ETHICS, POSSIBILITIES, IMAGINATION, THE FUTURE, CONVERSATIONS, STORIES REACTIONS.

How might there be a mix of pessimism and optimism for the future?

What is the pessimists view of the future?

THE INITIAL PLAN OF THE 'NOVELLA' (2015)

PREPARATION

Write a couple of notes or ideas down before you come to class.

Also, bring in a 'transhumanist' object! … Because you will not be identified by name in this study, what you bring in is what I will refer to you as, such as 'medication' or 'glasses'. Something 'transhuman' means that the object or thing utilises technology to make us better at something, acquire greater skills, live longer or more healthily. Try and bring a transhumanist object that you use in your life. Transhumanism is the precursor to posthuman. Think outside the box! A jacket may even be an example, but we will be looking much more deeply into transhumanism in our conversations.

What does it mean to be human now and in the future considering global catastrophic risks and through technology? This is the main aim we will be discussing. What is central to our discussions is ethics?

DISCUSSING ETHICS:

A simple definition of 'ethics' is:

'Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity: medical ethics also enter into the question'.

WHAT IS ETHICS?

In this study, what you ethically think of inheriting this fast-paced changing technological world is central to my goals of the PhD. Hearing the ethical voice of young people who are going to inherit the earth and its technology is central to this study, and your thoughts will be expressed in the outcome(s).

So, do you think an AI can be ethical? What other ethical dilemmas can you see what we have discussed so far? What can ethical dilemmas with technology you see arising now or that might appear in the near future?

What might the differences be of a superintelligent computer making ethical choices as opposed to a person making ethical decisions?

In short, ethics is what makes us make choices that are right or wrong or morally grounded.

However, with AI, is it even possible for a machine to be ethical? Recently I asked my virtual assistant SIRI on my Apple iPhone if she was ethical. She replied, 'I can't answer that right now', or 'No comment, Rich'. This fact challenged an implied neutral view that technology cannot influence us in a negative way; yet here we see that the decisions of algorithms and in fact, the technology in our daily lives affects our decisions.
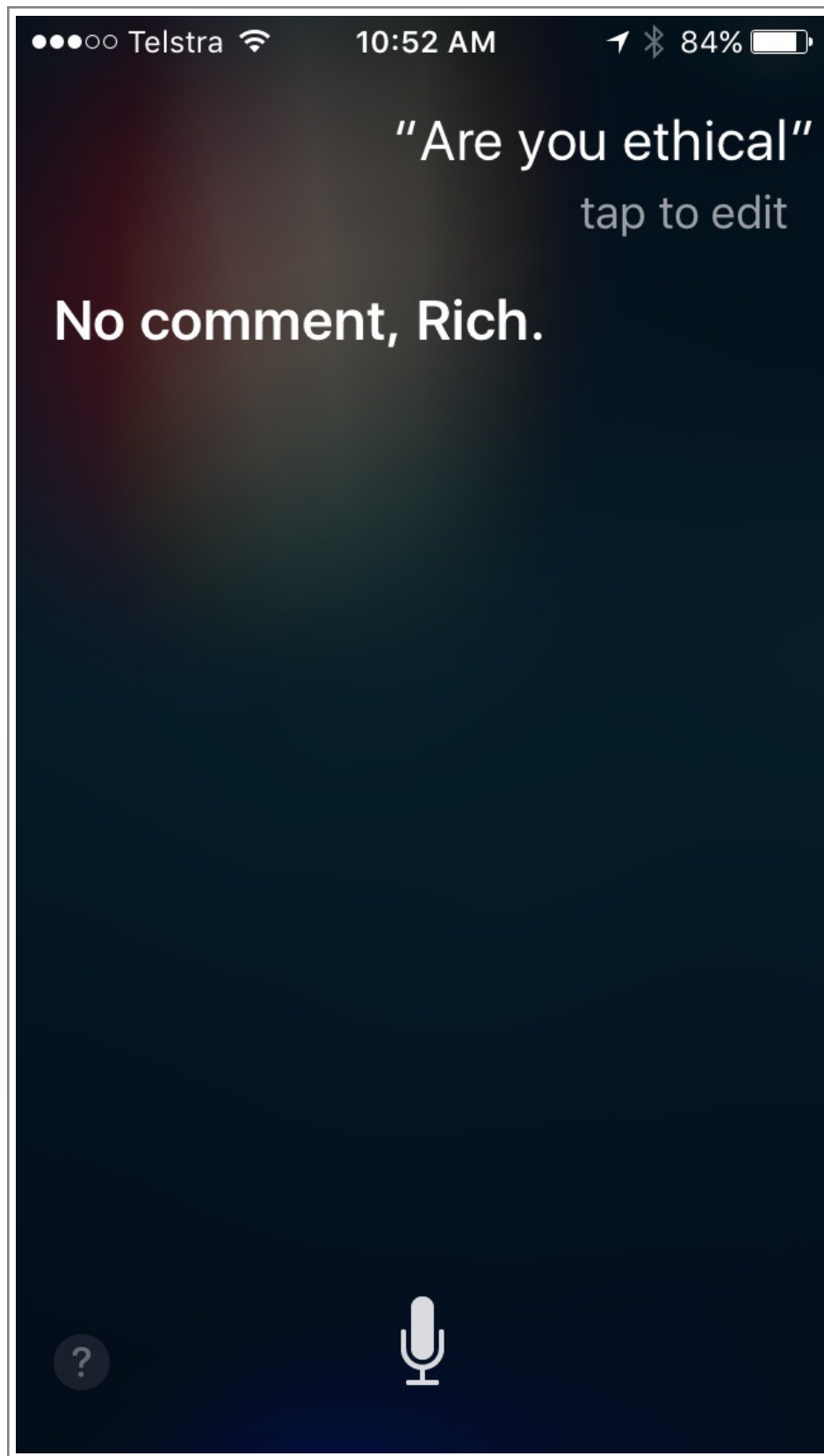
'ARE YOU ETHICAL?' (2017)

This is what SIRI answered when I asked: 'When were you born?'
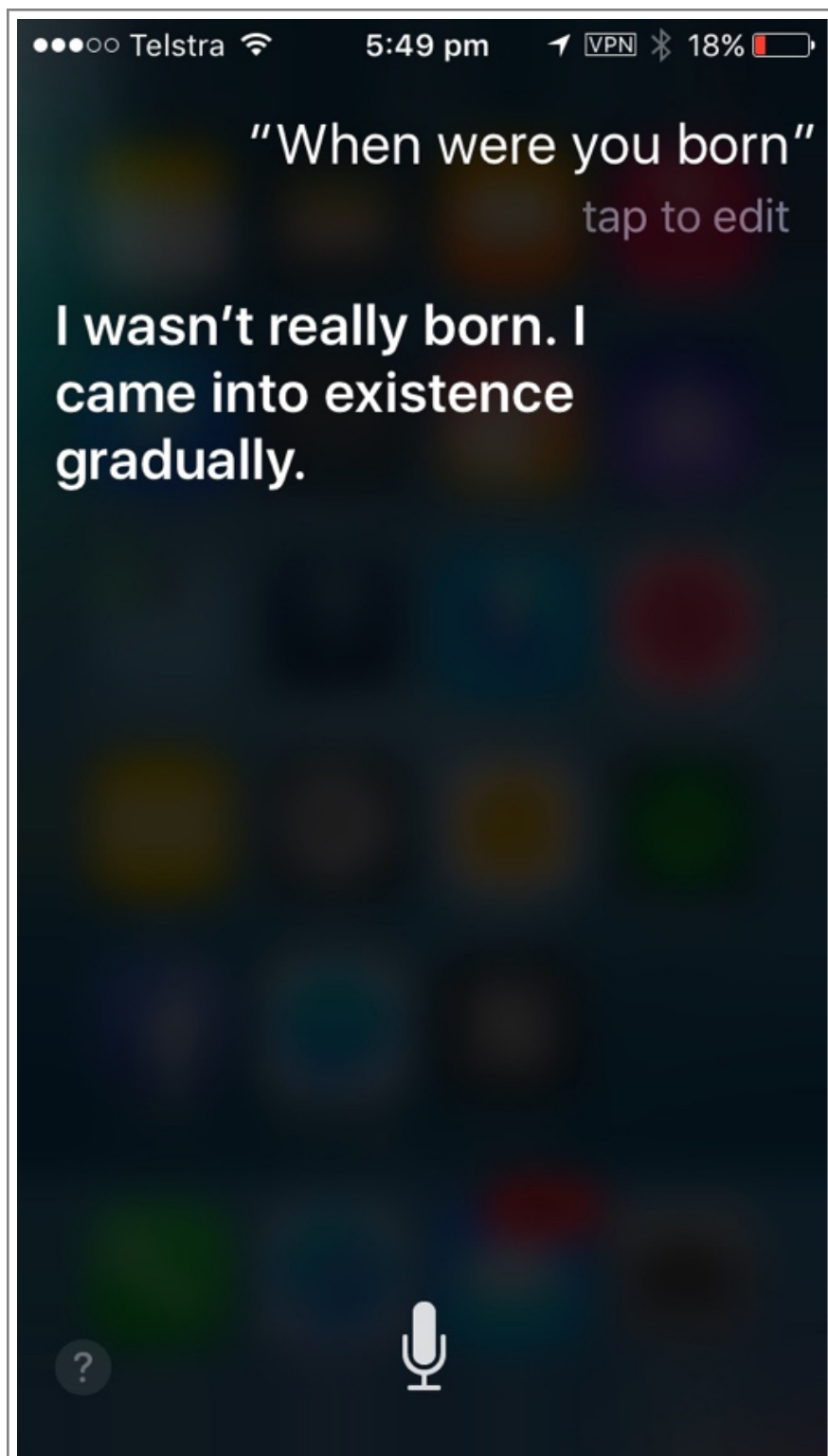
'WHEN WERE YOU BORN?' (2017)

Do you think a machine can be ethical?

If you were in a self-driving car (predicted by some futurists to be very common in the near future, even within 15-20 years), and it had the choice to run into a group of people or kill the occupants, what would the AI decide? Who do you think designed the AI?

Some sparring questions before we begin that we can discuss in the first session:

1) How long do you want to live? One hundred years ago in the USA, the average male life expectancy was 54 (www.demog.berkeley.edu, 1998). In present-day Australia, the average life expectancy is 82 years old (Welfare, 2018). Some futurists say that people born today will have the potential to live hundreds of years if not indefinitely (Kurzweil, 2006, pp. 320-330). How long do you want to live and how long do you think you will live?

2) Cyborgs, superhumans, and animal clones are alive amongst us today (since the writing of this work, a Chinese scientist has claimed to have edited the genes of a baby through CRISPR technology) (Regalado, 2018). What fundamental ethical issues do you think there are with science, technology, and being human?

3) How would you modify your genes if you could? What do you think would be ok to change about yourself?

4) How might we modify ourselves to earth's changing environment? Do you think we could design people to better suit other environments or a changed environment in future?

5) Would you take instructions from an artificial assistant if it won your trust and got a bit bossy?

6) Will virtual reality be the new reality? (Watson, 2017, p. 6).

7) Mega-corporations currently own vaccines and the genetic codes of some plants and some animals/ organisms. In the future, who do you think will own your, or your children's, genetic code? (Koepsell, 2009). Is it okay for a person or company to 'own' your DNA?

8) If you could 'upload' your consciousness to a 'cloud', thereby having your consciousness leave your body and having your mind exist forever as some people have suggested (Wertheim, 1999), would you?

These are some of the many futuristic topics we will be discussing around AI, and the coming superintelligence that will most likely further enable transhumanism, or posthumanism, (referred to as H+) (Kurzweil, 2006).

These will be defined and discussed later.

The central question we will be asking could be boiled down to: What does it mean to be human now, and be like to live as a human being in the near future, through the lens of technology despite global catastrophic risks?

THE 'TURING TEST' — A RECENT MILESTONE OF AI

In the year 1950, Alan Turing predicted that one day, a machine's ability would exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a human (http://www.turing.org.uk/). He is considered by history to be one of the philosophical fathers of computer science and artificial intelligence (AI).

In 2015, only two years ago at the time of this writing, the 'Turing test' was said to have passed at The University of Reading — a significant milestone in AI, predicted over 65 years ago (BBC, 2014).

In an experiment, a bank of computers was set up, and a computer chat program called Eugene was responding to a panel who believed over 30 per cent of the time, they were chatting to a 13-year-old Ukrainian boy. The AI convinced most of the panel that they were indeed, chatting to a real person.

The 'rudimentary' age of AI has already begun. To reflect, there is more computing power in your mobile phone that was used first to send a man to the moon — so, where might technology be in say, 50 to 100 years?

AI AND GENDER

AI, interestingly, is genderless. It is only through the settings or the perceived embodiment of robots that we perceive AI to be male or female.

How would it change the world if the most intelligent machine or being on the planet, that can solve complex problems and process more data much more efficiently than any human on the earth had no gender?

I have set my iPhone to talk in a male voice. I spoke to my SIRI assistant on my iPhone and asked when 'he' was born. He replied, 'I wasn't really born, I came into existence gradually'. What do you think about this AI chatbot's answer? Is 'he' alive?

Do you believe in a 'soul', or do you think a superintelligent machine could ever have a 'consciousness' or be 'sentient', or can it be 'alive'?

Thanks for coming to this session, which I hope you enjoyed and challenged you.

Next week, we will be discussing:

• Our importance in the world

- Living in a tumultuous time

- How privileged we all are

- If we could 'Upload' our consciousnesses and live forever

- Learn more about transhumanism and 'designing' human beings.

- Look forward to seeing you all then at 1pm!

2) CURRICULUM TWO OF SIX

BONUS FOR MY STUDENTS! … If you attend all six sessions with me to help me gather your ethical opinions and stories complete my PhD, you will be gifted a free gold movie pass for two!

THE PRESENT

If you are reading this, the year is 2017, and you are most likely part of a research project for a PhD study on artificial intelligence, the technological singularity, and superintelligence that may further enable transhumanism (H+). We will look at what these definitions mean later.

The other possibility is you are reading the curriculum for the students that form part of a PhD study I am working on with Year 11 students, and I hope you look forward to them co-contributing and completing this incredible journey with their wildest imaginations, hopes, and fears of inheriting this fast-paced technological world. The students' conversations will facilitate and inform the writing of the end of this collection of writing, this distilling of narratives, in multiple endings forecasting the future in both optimistic and pessimistic ways.

In the first instance, specifically, you are a young person who is inheriting a world of incredible technology that will affect people worldwide and as in yet unknowable ways. This is a project that will consider your ethical position on these new technologies and use your wildest imaginations to help create at the least three different endings to this novel.

A quick reminder before we start: You are so very important (and lucky)!

Never underestimate how important you are as a young person, for you are part of humanity's future. You were born in an extraordinarily volatile, yet exciting time in human history, and I would like you throughout this project to consider your life in the context of humanity and human technological progress.

Just this week, it was revealed we have successfully edited genes in human embryos (Fyodor D. Urnov, 2010), and that could mean the end of genetic disorders in those privileged enough to access the technology.

What do you think? Will there be a time in the future whereby everyone is genetically modified to a degree?

If so, who might 'own' your DNA or your children's DNA? Why or why not do you think this is a good thing?

HUMAN BEINGS AND THE EARTH

To put things in perspective right from the start, the Earth has been around for 46 billion years. If we make that 46 years, human beings have been here for one minute, and we have deforested half the Earth in the last 30 seconds. Regarding a recent history of people compared to the planet, we are a very new thing. We are primarily, in DNA, the same hunter-gatherers that existed over 200,000 years ago (Relethford, 2018, p. x). The difference is we live in 'civilised' societies and have access to technology and basic 'necessities' such as food, water, and things we take for granted such as toilets and clothes.

Do you ever think about what it means to be human right now, and why you were born with a consciousness right at this time?

Technology has been critical in transforming our lives, but also very destructive to the world around us, including pollution and the environment.

Do you think there are significant advantages in living in such a time where technology might influence our lives and very being human?

Here is an example to spur your imagination. It is what Google's deep-dream computer 'dreams' of, from the millions of images it has already processed (Google, 2017).

What do you think about this image?
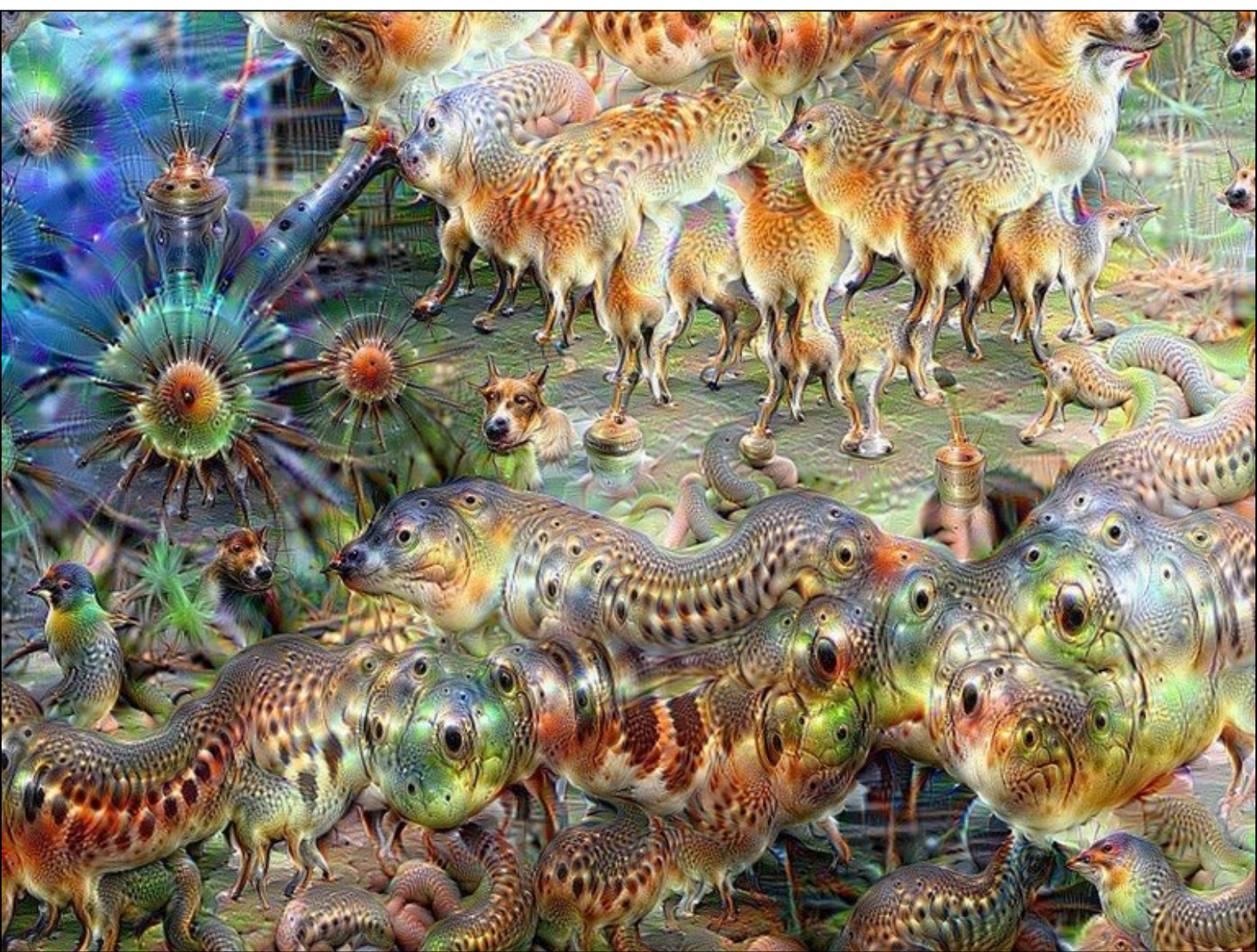
GOOGLE DEEP DREAM IMAGE (2017)

The Dalai Lama said, 'The technical progress we have made in the 21st century may have improved our material comfort, but there is no guarantee that it will bring us inner peace. We have to be careful that new forms of knowledge don't just become tools for our anger and fear, which they don't merely increase our destructive power. We need to remind ourselves that our future depends on the rest of humanity' (Reyes, 2015). I think this is an important statement to remember throughout this study. To be happy and content is essential to inner peace, and we are talking about technology that may hinder or accelerate our inner peace.

Do you feel at peace right at this moment? **EDIT***: This brings up the tension between personal inner peace and the emotive ethics and decision making of AI. I have resolved this in 'A Splice of My Life', and across this exegesis by narrating that peace is not consistent, nor is calm resonance, however, we discussed a human-made-AI may inherit or have implied into it its own levelling out of ethical decision making. Conversely, later the students discussed AI as a human made mechanism, compared to the AI of nature which has its own guiding principles that relate to revelations through advancement of science.*

Do you think that technology will be able to bring things like greater environmental balance, or more significant peace in our minds and souls?

Do you even believe there is a soul?

Can an intelligent machine be 'alive' or sentient? (Ferreira, 2018).

WE LIVE IN A TUMULTUOUS TIME

Indeed, we are in the middle of one of the great mass extinctions on the planet (www.nationalgeographic.com/, 2018). For example, the Great Barrier Reef has been there for 25 million years, and in the blink of an eye because of global warming and warmer ocean temperatures, a lot of it has become bleached, and some of it is destroyed, even though how much is still debated in public discourse.One could be forgiven of doomsday scenarios when

it comes to the environment when we consider such things as global warming, pollution, species decline, and deforestation. But this is the world we live in.

There are other technologies futurists predict that will be pivotal to the future of the world, such as 3D printing, and the development of nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is closely linked with future technological prowess.

For example, say a subatomic machine was designed to build say, a paper clip. What if it got out of control and the world was over-run with paperclips? Who is the one who gets to design the computer, or the AI that accidentally builds the paper clips, and what ethical opinions might they be biased too, considering people all over the world have different moral views?

People can be biased because of their age, race, gender, social status, how much money they have, their sexual preference, or religious or philosophical ideologies. Think how many different people would want to control a superintelligent AI.

There was a recent test done in the US whereby researchers tried to teach an AI ethics by reading it children's storybooks and fairy tales (Molloy, 2016). But these are just fairy tales. What if a superintelligent AI was designed along the lines of the Buddhist teachings, or the Koran or the Christian Bible? What kind of AI would we be creating?

Do you worry, as a young person, what will happen to the world, its people and animals, and how might technology help this cause?

TO BE IN A POSITION OF PRIVILEGE

However, compared to our ancestors and others in countries experiencing poverty and war, all of us in this classroom and the focus groups most likely live mostly in Australia in wealth, affluence, luxury, and opportunity. That makes an excellent base for people to induce change because we already have all we need to survive, such as shelter, water, and food. So,

everyone in this focus group is incredibly important (and also lucky), and your opinions and ideas can help to shape the world. I hope our six sessions together will be entertaining, informative, that we can establish intellectual relationships, and that the ideas will challenge and inspire your imaginations to generate the PhD's outcomes.

What do you think about all these topics we have been discussing so far? What stands out for you the most?

All of us in this focus group are incredibly privileged. To use your position of privilege to help other people who are worse off than you is a noble thing to do, maybe those people are in the future or perhaps it is indeed your future. By the end of your lifetimes, things have the enormous capacity for change and will have also changed profoundly in ways we can only yet to imagine. What does your imagination say about the future?

What do you think the world will be like in 25 or 50 years for you and if you have children, what will it be like for them too? How might technological advancement help us?

Some futurists think that people being born nowadays will be the first to 'live' forever! Some futurists believe we may be able to 'upload' our consciousnesses into a digital cloud, and therefore live indefinitely forever (Kurzweil, 2006, pp. 324-325). These are some of the futuristic, mind-bending things we will be discussing.

- How do you feel about living forever in a consciousness 'cloud'?

- How long do you think you will live in your life, and how long do you want to live?

- If you could live forever, either in a physical body or some other way, would you?

Maybe, in a way, we live forever already, what do you think? Do you think that we might be spiritual beings, and science is just catching up and going to discover that about our nature of being?

This will be an exciting process and exploration — because it has a working process that slowly introduces the method of our sessions. One possibility is that you all think that humans will thrive with technology, another that we might pale in comparison to it and suffer for it, or three, a combination of the two.

What do you initially think? Are we all doomed, or will we thrive?

There may be other as yet unknown outcomes for this PhD as well, that are limited only by your imaginations. We will be using lots of different information to arrive at your conclusions, and after we talk about them as a group, I will write the collected narratives that the group has spoken of, to finish what this PhD will be.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

This is the only study of its type where local Melbourne high school students will be asked to share their ethical considerations, hopes, dreams, and fears about the future of the world and the planet, especially regarding technology, and specifically, AI and superintelligence.

We already have very 'narrow' AI, or AI that can only do certain things; for example, recognise a face from a photo. But even this could change what it means to be human, don't you think? For example, it is envisaged that in airports, we won't have to scan our passports anymore because our faces will already be scanned when we walk through (Harrison Rudolph, 2017). The most significant facial recognition project is currently happening in China (http://www.bbc.com, 2018). How do you feel about your face being recorded, stored, and accessed by authorities who have access to that data?

For example, here is a picture of my iPhoto library. I am not sure how it did this, but it has identified the names of people I have lots of photos of, and I did not even ask it to do that. It seems my computer is getting a bit bossy.

Do you think you could take instructions from a computer or an AI if it won your trust?
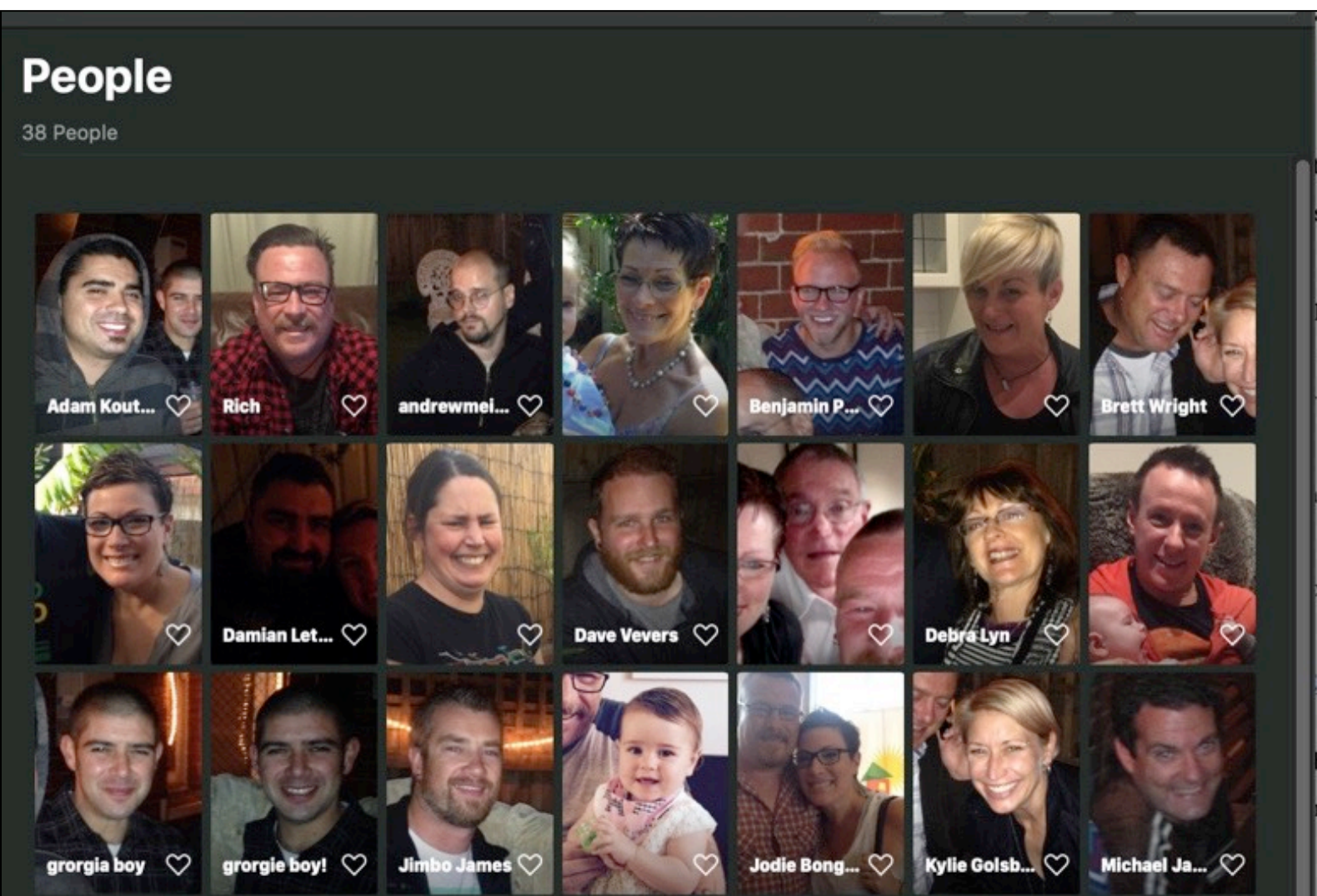
FACE RECOGNITION PIC FROM APPLE IPHOTO (2017)

How might facial recognition be a good or bad thing with authoritarian figures, institutions, or governments?

As a young person, you are already familiar with the technology, much more so than any generation. Remember the Internet has only just turned 25 and has revolutionised the world in that time. Things change fast and are changing faster! (I only got my first mobile phone at age 27!).

Because you are already familiar with computers and technology, it will help facilitate the conversations about the future of technology. This is because you will be already familiar with things such as social media or be familiar with technologies such as Siri voice recognition (if you have an iPhone, or maybe another type of phone with voice recognition software).

What do you think about the ability of a rudimentary AI to listen to your voice? Have you ever tried to have a conversation with a chatbot? What happened?

There are lots of exciting and frightening developments in technological progress we will discuss and learn about too. I hope throughout this process of me collecting your stories and us all developing relationships and developing our opinions, that you will engage with the content and the ideas presented. I hope this involvement in this study will inspire you to be empowered and create your realities in your life and be further encouraged to be a responsible global citizen with something to say.

Considering what we have discussed so far, how do you think your life will change because of technology and intelligent computers in the foreseeable future, and will this be a good or bad thing or a combination of both?

How are you a 'transhumanist' being right now? Try and think of practical examples; for example, what transhumanist object did you bring in to identify you in the first session?

Within the next generation, how might your transhumanist abilities be enhanced, or what qualities that you possess now, would you like to be enhanced?

Join me again for the third week next week where we will be discussing …

• Definitions of intelligence, superintelligence, and transhumanism and what it means

• Computers already beating people at things

• Human-level intelligence and what it may mean

• Will superintelligent AI make humans obsolete?

• What is an 'event horizon' and what is beyond it?

• Nanotechnology and medicine

• Gender and AI

• What is the monetary system collapsed?

See you all next week!

3) CURRICULUM THREE OF SIX

BEING FAMILIAR WITH KEY IDEAS

First off, though, let us visit a few of the key terms we will be utilising throughout this study and our discussions, topics that require your ethical considerations, your ideas, and then your reflections and predictions.

This study is concerned with the future, your future, and the world's future, specifically related to three things:

1) Artificial intelligence
2) The anticipated arrival of Superintelligence
3) How this may further enable transhumanism and/or posthumanism

But what do these things even mean and why are they important?

DEFINING THE TERMS

What is the definition of artificial intelligence?

Artificial intelligence is the branch of computer science concerned with making computers behave like humans. The term was coined in 1956 by John McCarthy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (https://web.stanford.edu/, 2011).

Over the past few years, AI has incredibly increased in capacity and in passing tests that make it appear more and more human, such as the 'Turing test' mentioned at the start of this narrative.

SINCE THE TURING TEST WAS PASSED ....

Since then, there have been other significant advancements in 'rudimentary' AI. For example, the TV show 'Jeopardy!' was won by IBM's 'Watson' — an AI in 2011 (Markoff, 2011). AI can beat the world's greatest chess players since 1996, and more recently, an AI beat grandmasters in the Japanese game 'Go', in 2014, whereby in the game there are more possibilities than there are stars in the Milky Way. Since the beginning of this novel, a superintelligent computer that won the game 'Go' against the world's best player, has taught itself from absolute scratch and beat the initial computer a hundred times over (David Silver, 2017, pp. 354-359). Very recently, AI had been able to organise itself in complex ways playing roleplaying games (Purba, 2016). These are all significant milestones in the development of AI.

Is it scary to think that an AI can beat humans at such a complex game?

'Rudimentary' AI is called as such because it is good at only specific tasks such as a game, or computation. In the future, it is envisioned that combined with robotics, or even a hybrid of humans and machines, that AI will indeed morph with humans and become massively more intuitive and advanced than simple 'rudimentary' AI such as in present time.

THE CHASE FOR HUMAN-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE

Many governments and corporations, such as Google, Facebook, IBM, the military, and secret covert organisations are all developing AI to a stage equivalent, or superior to, human-level intelligence. It is not a question of 'if', it is a question of 'when'. Some scientists and futurists predict we may reach that goal in as little as 20 years, and other pupular futurist and billionaires like Elon Musk say that is has already happened, and we are living in a simulation.

Some people in their lifetime will be great at music composition, or math, or gardening. However, when an AI becomes as smart as a human being and 'embodied' in machines or robots, it will be good at everything. Think about that for a moment. A superintelligent computer that is embodied within machines or robots will be great at everything every person has ever done and more, all at once!

What would you ask it to do?

The disadvantage for mortal humans is that they have to rely on language and study and effort to get to these areas of expertise. An example would be being a great composer, but an AI will be able to share that information and skill, along with many other skills such as maths and physics, with other AI's and improve on itself rapidly. Google's AI has recently been improving its own algorithms without human intervention (Zoph, 2017).

This is both exciting and frightening, don't you think?

What could be the outcome if a computer was as good as anything any human being could think or could do?

Will superintelligence be our friend or foe?

Some people predict that after superintelligence occurs, it will be the end of humanity, such as famous physicist Stephen Hawking (Cellan-Jones, 2014). Other people such as futurist Ray Kurzweil, who wrote a book called 'The Singularity is near; when humans transcend biology', say we are going to have enough time to make sure that AI is friendly towards us, that we can make it benevolent towards us, and that is will vastly benefit humankind (Kurzweil, 2006).

He also believes that we will be able to utilise AI and technology to morph machines with people, essentially becoming transhumanist beings, or referred to as (H+). He believes that all

the people who exist in the future will be moulded or designed by intelligent machines concerning genes, intelligence, lifespan, and more.

What do you initially think? Will intelligent computers or AI be our friends or our foes?

What is the 'technological singularity' that is a term essential to this topic?

Imagine a black hole in space, which is an old collapsed star that has imploded into a very dense matter object of itself. Everything within its reach gets sucked into it into infinitely vast masses of physics in a tiny space. In some black holes, the mass of our Sun, for example, can fit into the size of a basketball! The gravity of such dense objects means that even light itself cannot escape it.

This point in space around a black hole, where even light itself cannot escape, is the point of no return. Light is the fastest moving thing we know of in the universe (apart from if you look deeper into quantum physics). At this point, where light cannot escape a black hole, we call it an 'event horizon'. It's the point of no return. No-one can know what goes on beyond that point because no-one can go there — we can't even see in, because no light comes out.

That 'event horizon' is what futurists metaphorically think AI will be like in its arrival in that we cannot anticipate how life will become after the advent of superintelligent computers for people, because it is beyond our very realms of comprehension. It is so far over the edge of the horizon, we do not know what to expect or how it will affect us and all of humanity and the world in general.

How do you think the world will change if superintelligent computers become a part of our lives?

• What do you think it may mean politically?

- What might a superintelligent computer ethically do if it can be ethical at all?

- Who gets to program it, and what qualities would you think it should have?

IMAGINATION AND THE EVENT HORIZON

There are a few qualities of an event horizon that need to be mentioned here. One is that no-one could ever know what is beyond this point because we can never travel there, or we would be theoretically crushed. This phenomenon of an event horizon is also called a 'singularity' – the point of no return.

In these conversations, we will be using our wildest imaginations to finish the story of what it means to be human in 25-100 years. Ray Kurzweil is a futurist who has predicted a lot of things to come true. He forecasts that human-level intelligence will be here by 2045. In this way of our imaginations, a metaphor plays out — in that there is also an event horizon to the end of this study, contained only via your wildest fantasies. I have no idea how this novel will play out until we hold the interviews and I summarise your hopes and fears. Your imaginations have no boundaries!

How do you imagine life for human beings to be in say, 25 years' time thinking about how much technology has changed in the last 50 years?

What will it be:

- Socially?
- Politically?
- Communication wise?
- Will virtual reality play a part?

WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGICAL SINGULARITY AND 'SUPERINTELLIGENCE'?

When we talk about 'technological singularity', we are also talking about an event horizon that no-one knows what will happen beyond that point, especially regarding technology. For example, if a computer system somewhere in the world does reach human-level intelligence (predicted by some futurists to be within 15-100 years), it will have the capacity to be able to re-write more efficient versions of itself very quickly. Very recently, in 2017, Google's Deepmind AI is now rewriting better versions of itself, so an AI is improving on itself without any human intervention (Zoph, 2017).

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS?

It will be able to re-write its code better and get more computing power and more input from places of data and also the Internet, to learn and grow.

What do you think a superintelligent AI could do if it had total access to the world's Internet data including images, data, location devices, sound, moving pictures, and songs?

It will be able to recognise faces and voices and crunch and process massive amounts of data much faster and more efficiently than any human, and importantly, without the need to sleep like humans need to.

When this happens, the then human-level intelligent machine will become smarter than a human, and this is referred to as an 'intelligence explosion' that leads to 'superintelligence', as we have already touched on.

At this point, we will have created an artificial machine that can increase its intelligence quota very quickly, possibly within minutes, rewriting its code and becoming smarter at

solving problems. It may be able to solve complex issues or even create new weapons of which we have never dreamt!

- What weapon do you think a superintelligent AI might create?

- Will it have human beings as its primary interest and look after us?

Concerning nanotechnology, that is, assembling self-replicating structures at the atomic level, a super AI may be able to make structures, drugs, and compounds that change the physical environment and also increase its capacity to learn and grow. It may be able to go inside our bodies into the bloodstream and potentially cure cancer, some futurists suggest.

WHAT DO YOU THINK INITIALLY ABOUT THIS?

When this anticipated superintelligence explosion occurs, we suppose that AI has surpassed the 'technological singularity' and that it has become 'superintelligent', possibly hundreds, thousands, or millions of times better than a human being in specific tasks. What might it think? Or can it think?

A sentient being is an animal or person with a consciousness. Some people refer to that as the soul. Do you think a superintelligent machine or a superintelligent AI maybe hundreds or thousand, or perhaps, even millions of times smarter than a person can be sentient or spiritual? Is it alive?

- What would it do, who would set the parameters of what it does?

- Would we control it, or would it control us?

GENDER AND SMARTNESS

One of the most exciting things that a superintelligent entity will have the quality of is that it will be genderless. It will be neither male nor female. Possibly the smartest thing ever having existed that human beings have made will be without gender.

What could this mean, say for equality and woman's rights or men's rights, or even the rights of other genders?

If a superintelligent AI has its separate survival mechanisms, and for example, replicates itself in other places electronically and also physically so it can survive, how might this be at odds with the survival of human beings?

Superintelligent AI will not need to sleep as, unlike animals and humans, it does not live by a biological clock. It would not be necessary for it to rest like for humans as they are not restricted by the need to sleep.

Can you see now there may be limitations to mortal humans once a superintelligent genderless AI is here that does not need to rest? Would this make it superior to human beings as they are now? In what ways?

If you do a Google search online, there is already a movement started in 2016 that a superintelligent AI should be the next president of the United States! (Foundation, 2016). What could it mean for humans and human rights to have a genderless leader that is in charge of a country or possibly the world?

• What would it mean for political parties or governments?

Another possibility is that it may destroy the financial system because it has been programmed with other agendas, so what would it mean for the amount of money people might have in the bank? Could that possibly change do you think?

What if money as we know it disappeared? How would we all get food, buy things, or operate within society?

What do you initially think about this?

Join me next week when we will be discussing:

• The inherent intelligence nature might have

• A little bit about my life with technology

• Climate change and technology

• Downloading data in our brains

• What is Moore's Law?

• Facial and voice recognition

I hope you are enjoying and being challenged by these sessions and am happy to hear feedback.

See you all next week!

4) CURRICULUM FOUR OF SIX

INNATE 'NATURAL' INTELLIGENCE AND CREATED INTELLIGENCE

Some may say that nature, having evolved over millions of years, has the most innate intelligence, or intelligence that is part of its very nature. The genes that make us up and our body's ability to heal and look after itself have evolved over millions of years. For example, our bodies are smart; we don't have to think about breathing or beating our heart because there is an innate intelligence inside of us all that make those things happen automatically.

When a mother gives birth, she does not have to think about lactating afterwards to feed the child; she does, it is part of our nature and part of nature's intelligence. Do you think nature can be considered 'smart' or 'intelligent'? How do you think this is different to human-made AI?

What do you think might be different if we create something that's intelligent since the Industrial Revolution in a matter of centuries over what has taken millions of years to evolve? On the one hand, nature's intelligence that has helped evolve us has taken millennia to perfect; however, we may be able to change genomes and create human beings to suit our needs with technology. This will have all happened in a sliver of time in human history compared to nature. Are you worried about this?

What differences will nature's millions of years long evolution of innate intelligence and an artificially generated rapid intelligence have? How are the two different?

MY EARLY INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY

When I was about 12 years old, digital watches became the cool thing to have. You could buy one at the Dandenong Market, near where I grew up in Victoria. They were big and clunky — my friend in primary school had one, and I was very jealous! My mother would not allow me

to get one; she said that it was lazy, and I needed to read the time very prolifically in a natural way first. They were expensive for a working-class child like me.

So, in one generation, the ability to have a watch with a calculator on it had grown exponentially to you all now having computers, at home and in school, and even in your pockets on your phone.

Can you even imagine what technology we will be interacting with 50 years' time? Elon Musk, a pioneer of futuristic ideas, has just launched a billion-dollar company to blend a human brain with computers to further enhance a human being's capacity in many ways.

Do you think in 50 years' time, we will have the ability to download thoughts and/or experiences into our minds and consciousness?

COMPUTING POWER, A RAPID ADVANCE

Did you know, contained within the current average mobile phone there is more computing power contained within it than what was used for the first moon landing in 1969? Can you only imagine in another 100 years might be possible?

To put things in perspective again, my grandfather told me a story that when they had the sewage and the water connected, they thought they were living in paradise. Can you even imagine that only a generation ago, people did not have these luxuries?

Also, of note is that civilisations, over the eons, have risen and fallen. We will be talking about ways our civilisation may be at risk of collapse and how technology may (or may not) be useful in allowing it, and humans, to survive.

Concerning survival of the human species, do you think superintelligent computers may be our saviours? An example is that to avoid global catastrophe, it is said that we must limit

global warming to under two degrees, which is not looking likely, in the next 100 years. Some futurists say that we may be able to utilise superintelligent, nanoparticle technology to terraform the planet into a more hospitable place.

Do you think that sounds a bit out of this world, for now, even considering that humans have changed the earth's atmosphere within the last few hundred years since the Industrial Revolution?

(We will also talk about other existential risks to humanity during our discussions and how this relates to technology).

MY FIRST COMPUTER AND INTEREST IN ELECTRONICS

When I got my first Apple computer in 1994, I was about 21 years old. It had a 500 Megabyte hard drive. That's half a gig. It had a big fat green screen as a monitor and was all connected with clunky wires. An image on the Internet might have taken 30 seconds to download, yet these days we can stream movies sound and video and have access to massive amounts of data compared to then.

Considering screens and computers are the vehicle to experience something like a movie, song, or TV program, what might it mean if humans and machines become cyborg-like and we could instantly download data to our brains?

The generation you are a part of has been a technological generation like never before in humankind, which is familiar with such things as the Internet. I first dialled into the Internet in 1995 while doing a Computer Aided Art and Design course at TAFE when I was about age 23. I remember I wanted to search for something I was interested in and wanted to test the Internet's abilities capability to search for it. So, I typed in 'Giant Squid' (we used to use all different search engines back then and Google was not even a company then!). Surely enough, the internet had a picture and information of a giant squid on it. I was fascinated that

I had this knowledge at my fingertips. I also liked to draw and design things on computers, so that's where my use of them started to flourish.

Now we have computers with at least 1,000 gigs as standard, even multi-terra bytes. Computers have come a long way in a relatively short space of time, even throughout my lifetime, and even more so in yours.

What kind of data would you like to have if you could somehow technologically combine it with your memory and thoughts?

MOORE'S LAW

'Moore's Law' is a rule that states that computing power can double every three years, regarding fitting more transistors onto a circuit board, and this has been true the last few decades (Packan, 1999). Moore's Law had previously been consistent, but is now being questioned because transistors which allow computers to work is stored in 'binary code', either a '0' or a '1', is now represented on an atomic level. Binary code (the way computers store and process data), is now so small, it is at a single atom level, that is, we have now made switches at an atomic level that make computers perform. For the first time in many decades, we may be moving exponentially past 'Moore's Law' of computing power.

What theoretically comes from traditional computing (binary code), is quantum computing, that significantly enhances the possibilities that exist between a '0' and a '1'. Between a '0' and a '1', things can be in a state of energy or a wavelength in quantum physics, and this may fantastically accelerate computing past the concept of Moore's Law even further to increase the potential of AI and data crunching. This may well act in congruency with AI and superintelligence to take it to unimaginable levels. Imagine the computing power of your computer in another 50 years! What might it be able to do?

1956 COMPUTER HARD DISK BY IBM WITH 5 MB OF STORAGE TRANSPORTED BY AN AEROPLANE (1956)

Some futurists predict that if an intelligent super AI has enough photos of a person, voice recordings of a person, and things that a person might have said when they were alive, then after that person has died, a super AI will be able to project a hologram of that person that we can talk and react to. Would that hologram be alive? What do you think?

THE RACE FOR A SUPERINTELLIGENT COMPUTER

The first people that make a computer with the intelligence of a human will win the race to achieve technological singularity. But what exactly do we mean by 'intelligence'?

DEFINITION OF INTELLIGENCE

There are two definitions we might find interesting:

1) The ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills: an eminent person of great intelligence.

2) Or a person or being with the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills: extra-terrestrial intelligences.

'RUDIMENTARY INTELLIGENCE'

Computers already have what we call 'rudimentary intelligence', and they can help us perform tasks, bet on stocks, solve mathematical equations, and many other routine tasks. This is a long way from the technological singularity regarding what computers can do at present, but as we have learned, there might be AI's smarter than people within 15-100 years.

An example of 'narrow' or 'rudimentary' intelligence is that if I ask a human the square root of 1,256, they will most likely in no way be able to answer! However, if we put that simple equation into a calculator, we get an answer straight away. In this way, computers are rudimentary already much more intelligent than people, but they lack full spectrum

awareness and capacity for very complex solutions regarding how a real human being may be able to solve problems and communicate in complex ways.

So, we can see quickly how even current technology can be so much better than a human. But what will it mean if that intelligence is 'embodied' in a robot and can talk and interact with you with the capacity to communicate in a full spectrum of ways in which a human communicates?

WOULD YOU LISTEN TO A ROBOT OR BE ITS FRIEND?

An example of rudimentary intelligence is when you go to tag a friend on a Facebook photo, and Facebook will suggest who it is without you even letting Facebook know who it is. Did you know that when you go through airports and down some shopping strips, that your faces are being scanned all the time? Does this frighten you at all, especially given that one day a superintelligent AI may be able to track you by recognising you in a crowd?

It does this via facial recognition software, which is also utilised by intelligence agencies, police, and even regular councils. Complex algorithms scan the face and compare it to other faces on your friends' list and look for familiarities. In essence, Facebook recognises that person from your friends' list and suggests tagging them.

DOES THIS ALARM YOU AT ALL?

This facial recognition is an example of 'rudimentary intelligence'. This is only a tiny fraction of what agencies and systems of government will be able to do in years to come. For example, did you know that if you walk down a mall, your face is being scanned and recorded? What might a superintelligent computer do with all this data, and who owns it?

Another example of rudimentary intelligence that is a bit spooky is: I am on some Centrelink assistance. When I call them up to identify myself, all I have to do is say with my voice on

the phone: 'In Australia, my voice identifies me'. Then, the audio algorithms that detect my voice and can distinguish it through the phone, match it to what has been recorded before when I have spoken. Then, I am authenticated, and I can make my inquiry (BINGEMANN, 2009).

So, so far, we can be recognised old school like fingerprints, but now computer software can recognise our faces and even our voices. What might a superintelligent computer do with this type of data? Who would 'own' that data?

DOES THIS SCARE YOU? WHAT BENEFITS COULD THERE BE FROM THIS TECHNOLOGY?

I hope you are enjoying these sessions. Next week, we will touch on things we have already organically been talking about and ask some more specific questions about what you think the future will be like.

5) CURRICULUM FIVE OF SIX

EXPLORING SUPERINTELLIGENCE

Superintelligence, as described above, is a superintelligent AI that may have its survival mechanisms separate to ours. Some futurists, such as author Nick Bostrom, say that this machine will be our final invention and that humanity may be at its mercy (Bostrom, 2014). Some others, like futurist Ray Kurzweil, say that we will be able to guide how this superintelligence can act together with people to help sustain our world and live better and much longer lives. We will live longer, have freedom from disease, have a wealth of food, and excellent transport and living conditions. In particular, Ray Kurzweil says that we will 'transcend our biology' (Kurzweil, 2006). What do you think this means?

Here we will talk about the third important aspect of this study, transhumanism and posthumanism.

LIVING LONGER AND BETTER LIVES

Some people think that we will use technology and superintelligent machines to make better versions of ourselves, by manipulating our genes, and by using technology to solve diseases and overcome many health problems. The 'leaving out' of undesirable traits is called eugenics.

To eradicate disease is an excellent ethical thing to do for living things; however, Hitler during World War Two ordered the use of eugenics to cleanse human populations ethnically. This is highly unethical; history has shown us this practice has been used for such ends.

What if a superintelligence favoured some people or genes over another? Is this fair? Could it be elitist or racist or sexist?

There exists today a person who is made up of three people's properties (Hamzelou, 2016). The nucleus of an egg was transplanted into another egg which did not carry a particular type of disease, and then fertilised and then implanted in a woman's womb. So, people exist today that come from three people. This could be considered transhumanist because it is utilising technology to eradicate undesired traits. What do you think of this?

Some people say even gay couples will be able to have babies within about twenty years with gene technology. What do you think of two men or two women being able to have a child that is from their genes and not from a male and a female?

Some think we will be able to reverse ageing (even as I write this, there is new technology that may scientifically support this) (Sheaff, 2007) and live longer lives. How long would you wish to live in this life? How long do you think you will live in this lifetime? How long would you want to? What are the implications for an already grossly overpopulated planet?

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF TRANSHUMANISM?

A simple definition from the Oxford Dictionary is: 'The belief or theory that the human race can evolve beyond its current physical and mental limitations, especially employing science and technology' (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com, 2019).

Another definition by Max Moore is:

> 'Transhumanism is a class of philosophies of life that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values' (Steinhoff, 2014).

Ray Kurzweil, a futurist and scientist, has made many predictions that have come true about technology. He believes that in the future, people will have utilised technology so much that what it means to be human will have changed. The beings that exist in the future could be considered 'posthuman' or 'Human +' (H+).

In many ways, we already utilise technology in 'rudimentary' ways to help us do things better. Some examples of how we are transhuman beings now are:

a) Wearing glasses (using technology to help us see better)

b) Taking medication (for example, to control epilepsy or mental illness)

c) Being vaccinated against a disease (to stop measles, polio, and chicken pox)

d) Use fingerprints or eye scans to log into places or pass security

e) Voice recognised verification

f) Joint replacement surgery

Transhumanism is a movement that is gaining traction around the world as a philosophy for how human beings will survive and thrive or otherwise in the future and there is more and more articles and information on it, for example blogs at webpages like: https:// whatistranshumanism.org.

Perhaps you have a medical condition, like epilepsy, and you need to take medication for your health and avoid a seizure. This also makes you transhuman, because you have utilised scientific research to better your life. So, in a way, a lot of us are already transhumanist beings!

In what ways could you be considered transhuman now and soon and what do you ethically think about that?

Often the decisions to change your life such as vaccinations against disease are given to you in childhood in the care of adults because ethically you are unable to make those choices. A

recent example of transhumanism not being used ethically is adults not inoculating their children against diseases like measles when they are young. As a result of not vaccinating these children, an outbreak occurred in Melbourne in 2016 (www.semphn.org, 2016).

Ethically, do you think we should be doing all we can to live better lives free from disease and to stave off death?

This discussion, following on from transhumanism, is all about ethics. We will be looking at what you think ethically as young people inheriting this world of AI, superintelligence, transhumanism, and posthumanism.

OUR ETHICAL WORLD AND THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

It can be argued that one of humankind's most profound paradigm changes, which is coming very soon, is that of the technological singularity and superintelligence. It may be the chrysalis from which survival emerges to save humankind. Or alternately, some futurists think superintelligence and the technological singularity may destroy us, yet humanity may be destroyed anyway by other means. No-one knows for sure. It looks likely that in the context of human beings being on the planet for so long, that the actions and outcomes of humans 'progress' since the Industrial Revolution will see humans inhabit a very different world to one of the many generations that came before. One that could very well spell the end of civilised society as we know it on a global scale. So, what will it mean to be human 25-100 years from now from what we have discussed?

A HINT: DON'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU CANNOT CONTROL!

In this study, we will be talking about some sometimes very upsetting versions of the future. Some scary things will be discussed. Some of you may be very optimistic, some of you may be pessimistic, and others will be interested in having a mixed viewpoint.

Also, we should remember not to worry about things we cannot control. For example, I worry a lot about climate change and the lack of things being done to correct it. I worry about nuclear war and overpopulation in the future, human trafficking, and other issues. However, there is only so much I can physically or politically do. If it is outside of my realm to affect, then I need not worry about it. This is important to consider when we talk about things that could go wrong (or right) with humanity throughout this study. To be kind and compassionate to those I touch and meet, or even by email or in a letter, or by whatever means we connect, is all I can do. It's all you can do too. Your best intentions are all you can be expected to do and what will unfold will unfold.

Human beings can have compassion, love, and be empathic. Do you think an AI could have this quality of care over us?

All you need to remember throughout this study is that these are only discussions and remember in life to be kind and compassionate to those you love and communicate with — that's all we can do. Other ways you might be able to help the world is to educate yourself about your interests, that may be, for example, animal cruelty or vegetarianism. Another way you can change the world is to educate yourself as much as you can, or when you are an older person, vote for a political party that holds your ethical viewpoint. You may also volunteer or offer to help someone or a cause. We still need only worry about the rational and real things we can do to make the world a better place, otherwise it might get a bit overwhelming.

I encourage you to do this as we explore more throughout our study.

WHAT ARE SOME GLOBAL CATASTROPHIC RISKS TO BEING HUMAN IN THE FUTURE?

There are certain things in the world, present and the future, which may pose existential risks to humankind's survival.

One is the threat of nuclear, civil, or other wars and terrorism. Another is that antibiotics will discontinue working because bacteria will have mutated enough that the antibiotics will not be sufficient treating them (Robert C. Moellering, 1998). The age of antibiotic resistance is of grave concern for humankind, because we may have a repeat of something like 'the black death' of the Middle Ages, in which half the population of Europe died from diseases that currently antibiotics can control. Another threat is that of global warming and environmental catastrophe/ collapse, or even an asteroid or massive earthquake. These are all things we mostly know about, but then there are other risks which we may not have also considered or cannot even conceive of.

Do you think that a superintelligent AI could pose an existential risk to humanity, or do you think we will be able to shape it to be benevolent towards us?

All this is very worrying, but this is the world we live in. However, in this lifetime, you may well know more peace than any human who has ever lived, so use your position of privilege to help those more marginalised than you, and that is a very noble thing. To better yourself in all ways is also a magnificent thing because you will be able to help more people and yourself lead a fulfilling life.

THE DILEMMAS OF THE FUTURE

So, there are the same possible dire dilemmas with artificial intelligence. For example, it has been predicted by futurists that driverless cars will be the primary feature on our roads well within the next 30 or so years (Anna Petrovskaya, 2009). Indeed, there are already driverless cars that have travelled across the USA, and some are currently operating on a Perth beachfront in Western Australia. This is because vehicles will be able to be driven by AI systems. The statistics will say that AI-driven cars will have less of an error margin than human drivers, so human drivers will be made obsolete. However, if an AI-driven vehicle is confronted with running into a crowd of people, or kill the occupants of the car - what choice will it make? I guess it depends on who programs the AI! Who should get to do this?

DEATH AND NON-HUMAN INTERVENTION

One of the reasons I engaged in this journey of AI and superintelligence that may enable transhumanism was that, in my Master of Education Research, I was looking at autonomous drone strikes in Pakistan that were killing civilians (https://www.statista.com, 2017). There are flying machines with bombs that are making autonomous decisions to bomb and kill people without the need for human decision-making. This is justified as being more accurate at killing the enemy, or perceived terrorists, and reduces the need for actual military personnel to be at physical risk. Of course, this is highly alarming and extremely unethical. It inspired me to think about 'intelligent' machines and their use, and where we might be headed.

What do you ethically think of drone strikes that kill people and are autonomous?

An organisation in the US tried to 'teach' a rudimentary AI about ethics by reading it children's books at one stage. It was envisaged that an AI might learn about good and evil from simple stories. However, you can only imagine that, if this were the case, there would just be a matter of time before an ideology, whether it be a religion or an institution, try and manifest its ethics into the AI, if they had the power to do so. An example of this would be if the Bible, or the Koran, would be used as the moral guiding force within AI or superintelligence. Depending on what you believe, and your set of ethics, you may not agree with the AI being programmed! Can you see how this is problematic?

What ethical qualities do you think should be programmed into an AI?

ROBOTICS

Another massive arm of AI is the field of robotics.

AI may exist in principle, or as a computer system such as an algorithm, but when it becomes 'embodied', it may well live in a machine, human, or human-like robot, or even possibly microscopically as nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is concerned with the building of machines and substances that can self-replicate and will be created at the atomic level. Some futurists believe that transhumanist or posthuman people (or H+ beings) in the future will be a mix of technology and biology (Wijlen, 2017).

Elon Musk, one of the world's most wealthy pioneers of futurism and a futurist, is planning to mesh human brains with computers to enhance significantly our abilities in all aspect, and our memories with company Neuralink (Musk, 2018). What do you ethically think about this? Will future people become cyborgs?

RULES FOR ROBOTS

In 1942, Isaac Asimov wrote three laws into what we need from robots, and they are:

1) A robot may not injure a human being, or through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2) A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3) A robot must protect its own existence for so long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws [1].

He also added a fourth law, in which precedes the others:

4) A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm.

These are principles that were written very early on about the ethics of what robots should do for us, but as we can reflect in examples such as the automated Pakistan drone strikes, this is not necessarily the case.

Can you think of other examples where computers have been a hindrance to people, even in present-day with rudimentary AI?

MAKING EVERYONE EQUAL

Across historical times and today, people have been separated from things such as religion, race, financial and wealth differences, gender, sexuality, and location, etc. One of the redeeming features of an overarching AI is that finally everyone would be under the same umbrella – we could all be treated in the same equal way in theory.

What do you ethically think of this, and do you think this might be the case? Why or why not?

Therein lies the question: 'Can a superintelligent intelligence be ethical?'

So, let's continue talking about human beings converging with robots, let's talk about what will it be like to live in the future as a human being. Let's talk about what you ethically think of living in a world with superintelligent computers and how that may enable transhumanism or posthumanism. After our sessions, I'll get on with the process of putting all your ethical dilemmas and visions of the future to write the end of this PhD in a creative component!

See you all next week!

6) CURRICULUM SIX OF SIX: (FINAL SESSION)

I want to thank you for coming to these classes. I have much gratitude, and it means I will be able to complete my PhD studies.

I have had an enjoyable experience getting to know you all.

I hope it has inspired you into higher education and also ignited your imaginations on what it means to be human both now and in the future!

In this final session, we will have intellectually formed relationships and gotten to know each other a bit better. I hope this has been an enlightening, thought-provoking and inspiring journey for you all.

For our last session, we will have an open discussion that touches on the following topics, and sum up the crystallised question of: what do you ethically think of what it will mean to be a human living in the near future?

Things to consider and discuss:

a) How long do you want to live?

b) Can you imagine the world free from disease?

c) What power could a superintelligent AI have over any population?

d) Would you trust a driverless car?

e) Would you eat 3D printed food?

f) What do you think about using eugenics to engineer particular types of people?

g) How might a superintelligent machine program DNA?

h) If reverse ageing were possible, would you do it or is it ethical?

i) There is already a movement to make an AI the President of the United States. What do you think about a superintelligence running the world?

j) Can AI be a conscious living thing?

k) What will superintelligence mean for environmental issues into the future?

l) Could AI promote equality, equity, and peace?

m) Do you think people and computers/technology will become the same?

n) What if you could 'upload' your consciousness to exist forever? Would you do it?

o) What do you think of posthumans being born with artificial wombs and without the need for a mother?

p) If a lot of jobs are taken up by automation and robotics, what will we all do with our time?

q) What might things in the universe (or multiverse)? This technology connect us to? Use your imagination!

r) Ultimately, can a superintelligent computer be conscious?

APPENDIX II

CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE & CONSTRUCTED NARRATIVE(S)

1) CONVERSATION ONE: WEDNESDAY 16TH OF AUGUST, 2017

I waited nervously, 30 minutes early for the Year 11 students to arrive, as only one showed up the week before and we could not carry out the data collection.

It got to five past the hour, and one person eventually wandered in casually. I started to reflect on what I might have been like showing up to an extra-curricular class when I was a 15 or 16 year-old, not very good or very likely!

In all, only two people eventually showed up to do the data collection, but the session went ahead anyway as my supervisor had suggested. We had one student of each gender, which was a delicate balance of my original plan to have an approximately equal gender balance represented.

The conversations happened somewhat organically, initially chatting to the first young person about AI and human-level intelligence. His initial knowledge of the topic was unexpected and surprising. I was impressed by what he knew already. At the outset one student said:

‘If you get deep enough into it, mathematically anything can be predicted with an algorithm equation'

When the second person arrived, she joined in, and the conversation flowed quite naturally, but a little removed from the curriculum I had prepared, which made it difficult to ‘reply' in sequence within my ‘book'. The other interviews went this way as well. This is why I have presented the curriculum as it was to the students, followed by the organic interpreted responses in six parts that reflected more accurately what we discussed. After all, we were

using imagination as a research methodology, so I could hardly expect things to go to a rigid plan.

I found the two young people to be intelligent and articulate, already with some knowledge of AI and posthumanism, and general themes discussed in the curriculum I wrote. As pertains to this text and the title of the research, I have decided to go with the term posthuman instead of transhumanism. Transhuman or transhuman is the concept of an intermediary form between human and posthuman. At the outset, one student said:

'With superintelligence, I'm pretty sure we will be able to reach our wildest dreams of interstellar, but I'm just more concerned if mother nature might cull the weak, if it will deem itself the strongest and exterminate the humans, because they're less intelligent than the robots'.

However, I noted and observed that we are already posthuman beings in the present, or at least, I and my focus group, being the privileged people we are. This is by way of utilising technology to make us live longer, see better, be inoculated against diseases, and using technology or science to make us into more efficient beings. For the purpose of this body of writing, posthuman can be considered a present state of being for both myself and my students, even though in the initial stages, yet to fully be transformed until a 'normal' or 'traditional' human being does not exist, or we have modified our biology, and can be defined as merely a person or entity that lives beyond the traditional view of a biological human being. On being optimistic or pessimistic, one student said:

'Being optimistic, you can find opportunity. For example, if you're fighting against a lion, you think 'I can do this', but if you're pessimistic, you have already lost, your mind is closed off'.

In our initial conversations, one of the students mentioned the movie 'Gattaca' (Niccol, 1997) and the book, '1984' (Orwell, 1949) during our sessions. I made a point to watch the film 'Gattaca', although I had read '1984' many years ago in high school. The nature of teaching

the students is that I was reminded to learn as well, and be exposed to new ideas from a different generation. This was two-way learning.

I was very grateful for the experience of interviewing them and told them they would get a gold movie pass if they came to all six sessions and encouraged the others, which they said they would do.

I had originally planned to follow the outline of my 'book' or 'novella', and even though we did touch on some topics from the first week's curriculum, it turned into broader conversations about particular topics, ethics, and opinions of what it means to be human now, and in the short-term future. In this session, and ultimately, there was a mixture of optimism and pessimism.

I was unaware of their level of comprehension about what we were going to be talking about, their willingness to participate, or their attention span for the hour. I hoped there would be no 'dead spots' — there wasn't, and we talked about many things for the full hour. I gently guided them back to the main question of 'what it means to be human now and in the future through the lens of technology?' when we drifted off-track. On the topic of nature as innate intelligence and superintelligence as happening very quickly, one student's response was:

'Nature over-rules most things we can't change, but superintelligence is bound to that'.

As one student said, he thinks that general human-level intelligence will be accomplished in about 20 to 25 years, and I think upon reflection, that this will be a good timeframe to aim for in the question of 'what it will mean to be human in the future', for our more immediate discussions. He said:

'I think we are on the cusp of a great renaissance'.

Initially, I had forecast further into the future, but as I went through this study, the name of the title of this dialogue of writing, 'The Quickening', became apparent and evident due to the rapid acceleration of technology, even over my lifetime. (Edit: The entire PhD is now called 'A Splice of My Life'.). As you will see later, it also refers to the new energies of the open-mindedness and freedom that the younger people exhibit regarding liberal thinking. After all, the Internet is only 25 years old, and it has revolutionised the world in that time. I am 44 years old as I write this, and I have spent half my life off-line and half of it on-line. On humans existing into the future, one student said:

'I'm pretty sure there is multiple human civilisations that have come to destruction'.

Technology is at a quickening pace. I'd like to term the phrase 'the quickening', and this relates to how technology has escalated, and also the diverse acceptance and tolerance of all different people of diversity that I think has happened as a result of the counterculture of the 1960s.

I reflected with a friend about the first student, 'he knew about human-level AI already, it seems', even without reading my 'introductory curriculum'. 'That's the world they live in now', my colleague replied. I reflected on the differences technology and 'the information superhighway' has had on these students' lives compared to my youth.

Firstly, we talked generally about artificial intelligence and superintelligence, and as we went through, I noted my position as a facilitator of the group and using that role to gain knowledge, information, and the students' opinions. I was aware of my methodology of a/r/ tography (artist, researcher, and teacher), and made a mental note of it to myself to practice and be aware of all these roles as we chatted. When we discussed superintelligence making everyone financially equal, two responses were:

'Some people actually believe they deserve less money because of their choices and they deserve more'.

'I think if computers decided everyone should have the same money, it could work in the long run, but in the immediate, there would be a lot of rioting because everyone wants to have more than the person next to them'.

Sometimes, the opinions expressed differed or were in conflict, and sometimes they were the same. Upon reflection, I thought I might report back by both attributing non-identifying ways in which individuals reacted, and also by summarising what they ethically thought as young people. The students agreed upon the idea that:

'To be ethical, you have to understand like what is good and what is bad'.

Sometimes, the students would agree on something, such as that in the future, if most people are transhuman (or H+), then the lesser humans might be discriminated against. 'I think it will be like in the film 'Gattaca',' one student said. This was in terms of posthuman advantage over traditional humans. I found their levels of empathy and understanding of marginalised people outstanding and reflected that through technology, they had already been exposed to a lot of ideas and opinions on different things, as compared to my generation.

I remember a TV show I used to like to watch in about 1993 or 1994 (I think?) called 'Beyond 2000'. It seems cheesy now, but in it, they described the future in which there would be an 'information superhighway', and that by the year 2000, every home would have a computer in it. It felt so futuristic at the time. I also reflected that the whole time these two students had been alive, they had lived with the Internet, something I was only introduced to when I was about 23 years old.

I also reflected that as far as 'diversity' in the media was concerned as opposed to the breadth of data and ideas/experiences my students were aware of, my childhood television consisted of 'The Brady Bunch', 'Leave it to Beaver', 'Mr. Ed', and 'Happy Days', whereas they had been bought up on shows such as 'The Simpsons', which was a revelation when it came along.

Upon discussing the ethics of an AI-guided car, one student prophesied:

'The AI car, if it would kill a group of criminals or elderly, it's been guided by the guidelines of the person that designed it, they bought their own ethics to it'.

And that:

'I think the ethics of a superintelligent AI depends on the person that designs it. The creators would have to give it ethics as laws'.

Because there were only two people, and I feared I would not be able to complete my research without more commitment from a more significant number of students, I rushed into their next classroom afterwards to try and encourage more participants the following week, and I felt I was a bit rude interrupting the session. However, although I would not describe the conversations as 'intense', I felt flustered afterwards, probably because I had been working towards that hour for over two years going through coursework, research, reading, ethics, and writing the curriculum. It had finally happened, I was collecting data for a doctorate! I was doing my research! I do feel excellent about that, like it's about to take off in ways in which I probably never imagined, much like an event horizon itself. As I write this now, that's precisely what has happened and is happening.

Within the session, I became aware of my own possible prejudices and biases, even as we talked about bias and prejudice in people and in a superintelligent AI. This made me reflect that this was about them, but was it also somehow about myself? I concurred it was both.

Even so, I did not give any personal information, I was professional and measured, and I think I acted well within the boundaries of how I ethically should be, and that there was no reason to take up any ethical issue within the university, which was expected, but it is always good to be prepared. As an artist, so much of your focus is on yourself, and it was nice to make it about someone else for a change!

My overall feeling is one of intense interest in these young people's opinions. The two of them (hopefully there will be more next week), were incredibly articulate and had some fascinating perspectives on the world, and of being human now and in the future. For example:

'An AI needs to consider all the variables in decision-making with ethics'.

'If you're looking for the pinnacle of intelligence, you can't stop it from happening (superintelligence)'.

I will go into exactly what they said in the 'dialogue' that I would somehow have to re-order. I am even unsure how, after giving them the curriculum for Week Two, what Week Three's curriculum will look like, considering that we didn't follow the first week's notes, instead letting the conversations flow and allowing the students to speak.

I feel I was only there for guidance and to bring them back to the central issue of ethics, AI, and transhumanism, sometimes guiding them back to the topic with particular examples.

As well as 'teaching' the students, and departing from the pedagogy in this way, they were also teaching me in some ways, which was delightful. I did not know that their breadth of knowledge would be so well-based on factual evidence, and so worldly and broad. One student knew about 'Moore's Law' which represents the doubling of processing power every two years, and said:

'Processing power will double and double, computers are already faster doing things than humans, and humans may be obsolete'.

I was also impressed by their level of maturity. When pressed that a superintelligent supercomputer may be androgynous, one student said that he identified as 'male', but another person or entity might not see that. I found it fascinating that gendered politics was seen in such an open manner. I linked it with my own experience of being gay, and the current gay marriage debate, and reflected that the young people, at least in this example, seemed to be

far more open-minded than the powers that be currently. It gave me some faith that technology (and the Internet), had indeed delivered information that resulted in a reaction to life in empathy and cultural diversity to these young people.

On the whole, there was a mixture of optimism and pessimism about the future. One student said:

'The computers will make plans for us to go forward'.

In some instances, they were hopeful that technology might assist us in ways that will further our human potential. From what I had observed, it seemed that being exposed to such diverse ideas in the media and on the Internet as millennials, that they had already benefited in a way from technology. When they made a statement such as this, I reacted with an objection that might challenge them a bit further, or to think in another direction, deepening the breadth and scope of the discussion. One fascinating comment from a student that reflected on the further reaches of the end of this PhD study, was that:

'I'm pretty sure there what we have been studying, science, is like 1% of what can be achieved. I think what we see in movies is possible, or we don't have the capability yet, but aliens could be using it - if you can imagine it, then it is possible'.

And also that:

'If you can imagine it, there will be people who will look to find a way, and it might take multiple people's life-times. To cross the sea, you have to imagine what's on the other side'.

The whole conversation was very stimulating, and I don't feel I was too overbearing as I gave them the opportunity to express themselves, and they did so with sincerity, intelligence, and also an open mind. One student was optimistic:

'Being human now means we are able to connect more to other people and advance as a society, and using technology in great ways, and to advance and be a better society'.

In some ways, they were also pessimistic. There was general agreement that by nature, human beings were 'greedy', and if a powerful thing came along such as superintelligence or monetary wealth, an individual human would want to hold onto that and be 'wealthier' than the person next to them. We talked about the possibility of an ideology such as a religion or a set of moral principles overtaking a superintelligent AI, and that the people who make the AI may be of a particular bias or affluence themselves, by race, money, or location. One student said:

'Society is advancing great, but it's advancing in two directions (good and bad)'.

In the same sentence, they were also optimistic that such things as genetic diseases might be eradicated, and that we can connect socially and politically now in ways that were not previously available. They seemed to be both grateful and excited that they had these measures at their fingertips.

'There's two ways to think of it, things we can do have advanced greatly, like people with disabilities like prosthetic legs or mind-controlled arms, to replicate a human action. It's very good for us, we aren't disadvantaged'.

The students seemed to think that technology was a good thing in their lives, and I reminded them that by nature of having inoculations and wearing glasses for example, we already live longer and have higher abilities than we would have otherwise; essentially making us posthuman beings already. They readily agreed that we were not the same as our ancestors.

Also surprising were the conversations we had about discrimination and race. The students were open-minded in general about cultural diversity, and worried that in a technological future, some people might be discriminated against because of the way they are or their

being, and that might correct itself when everyone is brought up to the same level (of transhumanism).

I reminded them that famines and disasters are going on in the world right now that they were perhaps not aware of. We reflected that life is unfair in many ways. One student mentioned that humanity is going into a number of roads simultaneously, and said the word 'sheep' — as in, people were following others in a way that compromised their individuality. They agreed that in some ways, technology could lead to a homogenous ideology and that this would be bad if it did not reflect the diversity of people, who they decided all have different ethical opinions depending on who they were or where they grew up in the world, their gender, and their religion. One student was fascinated by the lifespan she thought she might have:

'Technology is great and will enable us to be immortal within 15 years'.

Also of interest was the dichotomy between having an overarching superintelligence that might be a good or a bad thing, but still respecting the diversity of everyone's opinions. I reminded them that we most likely all in that group of three had differing ethical views of things that find the genesis in our own inherent bias, but there was a general feeling of sticking up for the individual. One student even started talking about how technology could benefit people with a disability, with bionic limbs and using technology to be able to move or be abled, or differently abled. This might lead me to introduce ideas about the human/ machine interface in the next session.

'AI won't be alive, like we will think it's another human — robots won't replace humans'.

I think at this point we have established a proper groundwork of what could happen next; I could introduce the ideas of augmented reality, or virtual reality, or even 3D printing, and the potential theory of uploading our consciousness and living forever. If I get more students to the second session, it will be a shame that they had missed out on the founding meeting; however, at least because there were only two people, each of them felt the opportunity to

express their opinion, which might not have happened in a larger group. One student mentioned physical form and consciousness:

'Nothing can replace human consciousness. You could replicate every atom to remake you, but it won't be you, it won't have the memory or the consciousness'.

I just got off the phone with a friend, who is an academic and a peer and mentor, about the experience of the session. While we were talking, I reflected that these students seemed far more intelligent and worldly than I remember being when I was 15 or 16. In light of this, I must confess that I do think that technology and methods of communication have opened their minds to other perceptions and realities. They were talking about gender, ability, race, and privilege. I must say that I left the session feeling inspired by the two young people that were in my class. It filled me with hope at that moment, when at other times, I can be quite pessimistic. I was surprised at the tenacity and awareness of the young people in terms of these things; because the currency of conversations I remember having at their age were not nearly as advance not framed with the information they had obviously been exposed to. On eugenics and adding or deleting elements of human nature or abilities, one student related:

'Adding in extra compared to just removing it … personally, if I met someone who had all these genetic modifications, I would think are they then same as me? Are they human?'

And that:

'If you have half the world posthuman, that half will take over the bad humans'.

Another student thought ahead:

'There could be discrimination between the two groups'.

At one point, we reflected on my methodology, of imagination as research, and that imagination was essential throughout this process. One student remarked that sometimes, it

takes generations for things to happen and, for example, if you are going to be an explorer and cross an ocean, you need to imagine there is something on the other side. In this way, the students agreed that imagination is a powerful indicator of what could happen in the future. 'If you can imagine it, it can happen', one student said.

'If everyone was posthuman, I think it would be better for society'.

The two students also mentioned that AI will grow exponentially and get to human-level intelligence within their lifetime. I thought to myself that we are in the age of significant change and 'the quickening', and I decided this would be the title of the thesis (Edit: This title changed) for multiple reasons. I reflected on my grandparents' and parents' perceptions of the world from what I know, and then the knowledge of these two young adults, how different they were. One said of the power of AI:

'The moment someone comes into power (with technology), they will want to keep it for themselves, and that's human nature'.

They did seem willing to use their positions of privilege to help those more marginalised than themselves, or at the very least in our conversations, had a level of empathy for others and those different to themselves. This filled me with much hope.

'I think robots and AI will be programmed to give to everyone, whether you're elderly or whatever'.

Throughout the last three generations, I have experienced, and in my reflexive life, I can almost see that technology, and the methods of communication with technology, have practically led to what I liken to a rapid acceleration of knowledge these young people have. I like to call it 'the quickening', and I think this has been happening in modern culture since the counterculture of the 1960s. It seems to me to be even more rapid now, if these two young people are examples to go by. I think technology directly mirrors this in ways we cannot yet begin to imagine, or maybe we are.

The young people did fill me with a sense of awe and hope for the future. One reflected on a future war scenario though:

‘I think during wars, people trying to hack into superintelligence and make it bias against the enemy’.

I think it's a shame there were only two in the first session, and more students were not involved in the laying of the groundwork. Hopefully though, more people will come to the next meeting, and they will catch up to what we are saying, particularly to that time and that place. Indeed, there is no reason why they will not have the opportunity to add to the dialogue, as I have given all of them the curriculum to read.

I'm looking forward to running and then reflecting on the second session.

However, I must report as a result, that as far as my research question of, 'what it means to be human now and in the future through the lens of technology', that even though there was a consensus that we cannot stop AI or superintelligence from happening, there seemed to be an equal mix of optimism and pessimism about the future. Hence, there is a dual answer to my initial research question.

In light of this, next week I will challenge them more by talking about global catastrophic risks such as antibiotic resistance, nuclear war, environmental catalysts, and how technology will relate to this, and what might it mean. In the coming future sessions, our familiarity will become more at ease, the intellectual conversations more intimate and natural, and the new knowledge and ideas produced, entirely out of this world and paradigm-changing.

One of the last comments though, was quite dire:

‘If humans are fatally flawed, then the thing we make will be fatally flawed’.
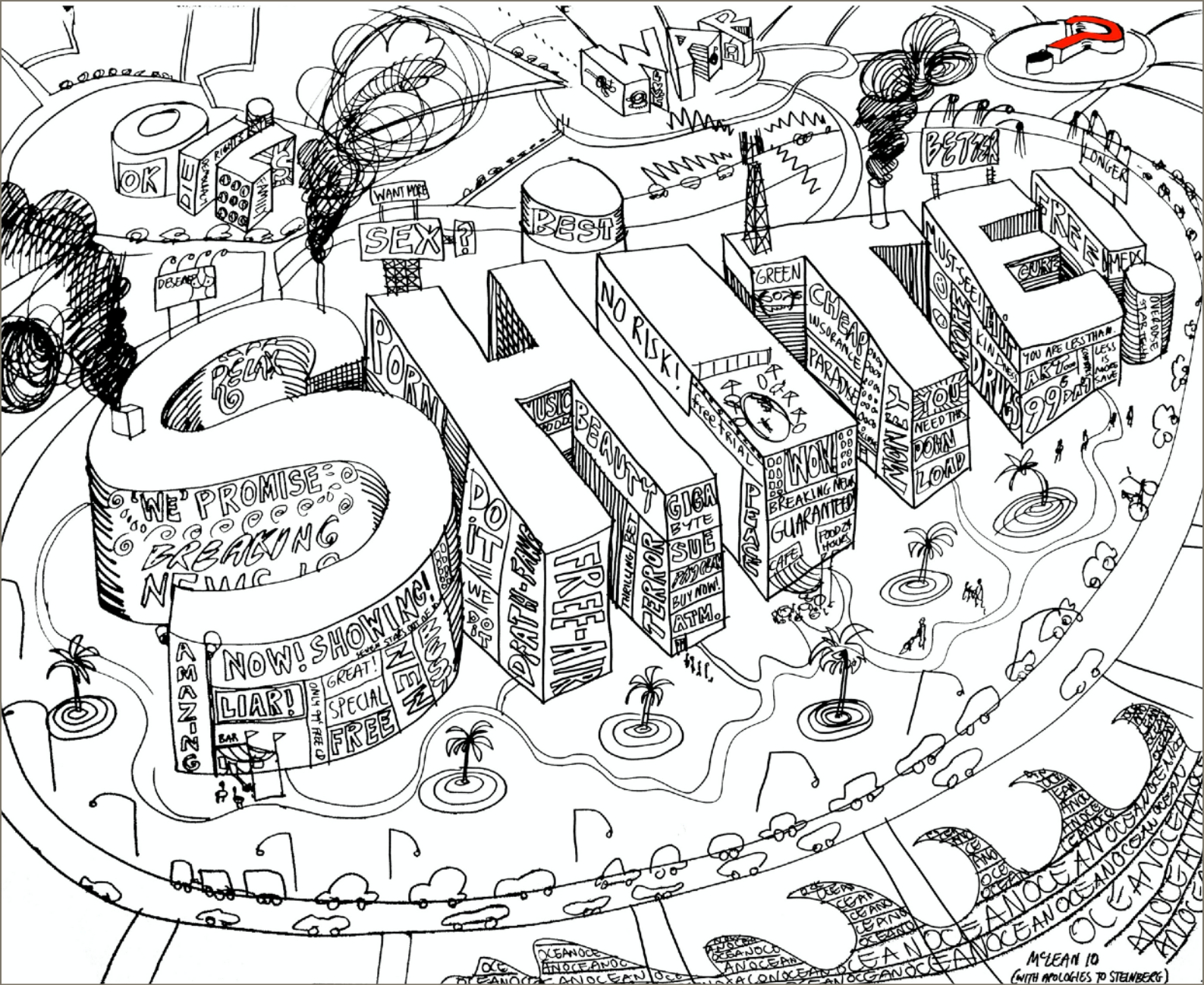
SHITE (2010)

2) CONVERSATION TWO: WEDNESDAY 23RD OF AUGUST, 2017

If I could start today's reflections on my Facebook post I excitedly stated when I got home from interviewing today:

'Oh, my goodness: my class today with the four Year 11 students that turned up today [two males, two females], was amazing! We talked about some mind-blowing stuff, and they were teaching me things, as well as me teaching them things'.

They are clever, compassionate, and futuristic, and care about race, diversity, and disability, and I saw their knowledge of AI and superintelligence alongside other philosophical topics such as "the illusion of free will" and "the Fermi paradox", was outstanding.

There is a real mix of optimism and pessimism about living as a human in the future so far. They stayed 10 minutes after time to finish our discussions – and never a dull moment.

I was on such a high it went so well, I felt like giving humanity a collective group hug – so I spied two potential strangers to hug on the way back to my car and went up arms wide saying, "Oh, hi there!!!", and hugged this random woman and her friend ...

She hugged me back and said, "How are you, Rich?" I was surprised. "Do I know you?" I asked. It turns out I was blind drunk with her at 'The Dancing Dog' pub about a year ago ha-ha! She remembered me.

Life feels good ... now just have to write a 4,000-word response this afternoon. Inspired by these young people!!!

And so, begins my reflections on working with the Year 11 students today. I showed them a picture of Google's deep dream image to start:

'It's trying to create based on the stimuli it's been given, it looks amazing'.

I must say that, from the outset, we are forming close intellectual relationships, and some humour is beginning to seep its way into the class, which allows for greater freedom of expression and clearer communication. I can see professional friendships forming and a real trust developing in discussing sensitive topics, which is very gratifying.

This week we had an extra two students, but it was still a small enough group for everyone to respond to such an array of topics and questions. Although we used the chapters of the curriculum I had written as a guide, we did not stick to it strictly as I had planned, instead just letting the conversations evolve naturally.

When I saw another topic I had written about emerge as a theme, I gently introduced it in a natural way. In my role as artist/ researcher/ teacher, I was acutely aware of and had a new appreciation for all the mentors I had worked with over the years, each bringing humour, a relaxed nature, and a feeling of trust and respect to my learning pedagogy. Upon asking them bluntly about technology and what it means to be human, the students replied:

'Technology has improved us in some ways, but everyone is on their screens and there is a lack of physical communication'.

'Technological advancements are better, but it's dimming down physical communication, we would rather talk on a phone than face-to-face'.

'Having a phone each ruins your physical connection; in the past, you would know your neighbours, but not many people know the people next door'.

'I think the disconnect from physical people is a negative part of technology'.

'With the lack of communication because people are glued to their phones, it causes more discrimination'.

'Being glued to your phone is more interesting than knowing about someone's day'.

And:

'It's a good thing how kids pick up iPads straight away, but it's full of distractions, like a lot of games'.

A couple of times within this session, we started going down quite a philosophical rabbit warren. At one stage, we were talking about the possibility of multi-dimensional realities and that the whole of existence may be a superintelligent manifestation. When this ensued, I did something unexpected and burst into singing Michael Jackson's 'Thriller', complete with the movements, because we were talking about free will and I wanted to use humour to challenge them on it.

'Wouldn't I have free will if I broke into a Michael Jackson song?' I asked one of the students, who said that everything that ever was might be pre-determined. They all laughed.

'You may have been programmed to do that'.

… Was the response by one of the young women? There was a subtle tension of learning happening between the students and myself.

It was nice that this sense of 'realness', this intellectual relationship, was naturally occurring. In my life, I have noticed that even in everyday life, total strangers sometimes confide their deep dark secrets to me fairly quickly after meeting them, which can be a burden sometimes, but I am grateful for the privilege. It's almost as if people sense my openness as a person, and then mirror it back. This feeling of honest discussion was present with the students.

As we spoke, I reflected that technology had indeed changed the way these young people knew about an array of topics. I also revealed that if I was their age with my emotional maturity at the time, that we would probably not be able to communicate — or that their

openness would challenge me. Indeed, their political and social awareness was so much beyond what I remember. It gave me a sense of hope.

One thing I must say is reflected in the Facebook statement above, and I was so happy, I was willing to hug strangers randomly! It's been a long time since I was involved with dedication and rigour to something that I believe in; to be given the opportunity to research a topic for three years of my choosing is an enormous privilege. When talking about reading and the role of books, including the possibility of books being able to be downloaded into our minds, the students reflected on reading:

'To study, you have to have the motivation, but the distractions might be affecting on their academic knowledge'.

'Personally, I try to read as much as I can, but books are not as stimulating as being online'.

'If you get bored of one app, you can just go to another. Devices are more stimulating with instant gratification. You can control an app, but you can't control a book'.

'I used to read a book a week in primary school, but I still read as much now, because I find articles online'.

'I found the Internet at the age of ten, and my reading dropped down exponentially'.

'A published book will probably be deemed good, but anything can be on the Internet'.

I feel like this PhD is my reason, my purpose, my reason to be. I am thoroughly enjoying the process of interviewing the students, and they love to be asked their opinion and have a non-prejudiced and non-biased (I hope), person to listen to them, to collate their ideas, and then have them excited that it will all be expressed in a novel. There is a genuine interest that I am facilitating the communication of their ideas and thoughts within a PhD; and in the conversations, I carefully delegate around the table so that everyone gets a chance to respond and contribute, and I am happy to say that this pedagogy and delegation comes to me quite

naturally with the students. I am amplifying their voices, and I am the person that was somewhat missing in my own young life. A friend said to me 'It's amazing Rich, they are coming to your class of their own accord, and you have probably changed their lives'. I did not want to be contrite or egotistical, but I liked the idea that I might facilitate their ideas and learning, and help them to overcome their inertia towards further study, and hopefully, a PhD study as a public document that could easily be hijacked by a willing public for greatest traction on these ideas.

Lots of topics were discussed in session two, including: immortality (some students wanted to live forever, some thought 'until about 110'), how technology is helping and hindering us ('Facebook is anti-social media, it is good for if you want to get in touch with someone of the same interests, but we don't know our neighbours'), the Fermi paradox (which I was impressed they knew and is the theory that any planetary race would destroy itself before it had a chance to populate space), living as a simulation ('Reality is boring!'), the illusion of free will as discussed above, and other complex topics. Sometimes, we just naturally chatted, and at other times, I would have to pull the conversation back to a direct question.

The topic went to AI, superintelligence, and innate prejudice, and some of the comments were:

'A normal child may be discriminated against in the future'.

'Humans find reasons to discriminate, no matter if it's in another hundred years, they're fatally flawed'.

'I think prejudice will kind of always be there, even if you try and unlearn it'.

'We may forget, but we may experience it. When you're younger, you don't discriminate until you're told by your parents or society'.

On the topic of 'how long do you think you will live?', one of the responses was that they wanted to live to the current average age of 82, while another student thought that within the

next 25 years, we would get to the stage where one could live forever. Another student mused that if a superintelligent computer cured all diseases and genetic disorders via the editing of embryos (which is possible now), then there would be an overpopulation of people. This led on to conversations that nature is the best way to naturally cull an overpopulation of people. Their ambivalence towards death was surprising, but in the moment of chatting peacefully in a library, that seemed far away (at least in reality). Also on the topic of overpopulation, one student mused that a superintelligent AI might decide how many people it wants to live on the planet and act accordingly; this was seen by the student to be unethical.

Upon reflecting on living forever, we came to the consensus that part of a person can live on through language, culture, and art. The example used was Babylonian texts that can still be read and interpreted today. I mused in my mind that the bulk of the world's data has only been created in the past five years, and that the sum of this data is fed into a massively genderless superintelligent machine which could very well be our master. I was recently stunned and frightened to learn about China's citizen rating scale through which people could be favoured or prejudiced against, that was aimed to be operational within five years.

We also reflected upon the fact that Google's AI can already begin to interpret what a picture is, if you feed it into an AI, and this idea was exciting to the students. One student again reiterated the new abilities that technology might be able to assist with for the differently abled or blind. Of course, this is already happening. They were very interested to see what a Google AI might 'dream' about, when I produced a picture that seemed to have dogs and scales and eyes and lizards and universes all contained within it. One student mused symbolically that it might be like a child's dream, relating to AI in this day and age as a small child that will get more complex as time goes on, and that AI was somehow just metaphorically in its infancy. I was again reminded that superintelligent AI is not only probable, but unavoidable, and wondered, as you will see in the latter section of this PhD, what happens to posthumans and quantum human intelligence well beyond the time when advanced superintelligence occurs.

I reminded them that the topic that we were talking about was what young people ethically think of what it means to be human now, and in the future (in about 25 years' time). One student mused, like many other people, that there is a lack of physical contact, community, and communication, and in fact, that technology is making us more isolated by looking at our phones and screens. It was a keen observation that is one I think held by many; indeed, this is something you would read ironically on your smartphone or a Twitter feed, how distracted, short of attention, and impatient we have all grown with our devices and 'screen time'.

I shared a story about myself that the day before the Facebook post I wrote, that in 1995, we would know each of our friend's phone numbers off by heart and that we would dial the house, and anyone might answer, the mum, dad, or the siblings. I reflected that we would go to each other's homes and there seemed to be more community before everyone was individualised and even ostracised by their phones, deciding whether or not to answer a call. Recently, I was feeling so isolated; I asked a Facebook friend on chat to call me on the phone. 'That's so 1993 of you!', he said sardonically. He did not call.

One student mused that we would rather talk on the phone than see someone face-to-face because of the convenience. He ethically thought that this was a shame because there has been a loss of community. Regarding talking on the phone, we also discussed organisations such as Centrelink's voice recognition software, in that all I have to do is say: 'In Australia, my voice identifies me', before I am put through to my account. They thought this voice recognition was a scary thing, and that it could easily be hacked by someone or an entity that was unethical who had a recording of someone's voice. They saw flaws in the voice recognition technology that could be exploited. This followed through with other forms of technology, including AI, which could also be exploited. They seemed to think that, up to a point, anything made by human beings can be exploited or is fatally flawed. I wondered at the philosophical event horizon of this concern, at which something cannot be exploited due to a semblance of perfection.

The students were very aware of ideological, religious, and prejudiced differences, and there was general agreement that people need to be more open-minded. This followed on from my suggestion that through technology, these students were acutely aware of many different topics and issues which they agreed on, yet there was still a lack of community, particularly in terms of talking to one's neighbours. One student said that a family might chat over dinner, but it seemed ethically a bad thing that people might be glued to their phones in the same setting.

When asked, one student directly mused 'what do you want to say to the people that are reading this PhD about ethics and the future', that a whole gamut of opinions should be heard, including cultural, ideological, and religious differences before we start to create an AI that may become superintelligent. He showed empathy and inclusiveness, and I guess anticipated that a superintelligent computer could be dangerously prejudiced towards some people. Another mused that if a particular country was the first to reach human-level intelligence in a machine, then it might reflect the political ideologies and culture of that country and that this might be a bad thing or exclude other nations or societies from not being prejudiced against. She said:

'If anyone is reading the book is making an AI, then make sure you have other people put into it, not just one person, people from different backgrounds and countries'.

Another student quipped:

'Right now, we don't know what the future will be like, so we should try and think ahead; in some ways we are, but in other ways, everyone has their head in the moment'.

In general, we discussed how the students were keen to read books and find different opinions about the world, but that phones and computers and iPads were quite distracting, either with games, different apps, or that we have shorter attention spans. We reflected that

the latest NAPLAN tests are done on a computer, and we mused about the difference between writing something versus typing something.

On this, one student stated that gaining knowledge from the world is the best way, and that any vehicle or way to do this, was the best way ethically forward. While some students preferred books, some people preferred the computer. We also reflected that there was a certain amount of totality that a computer feeds you, and that with a humble book, you have to bring some of your imagination to the table, and that this is a good thing.

On books, we noted that the diversity of books versus stories such as on a blog you might find online, is that a book is worked on 'harder', or has more resolution about it. For example, to get it into a publishable state, it must be burnished, and yet anyone with an Internet connection can write a blog; and this might weaken a narrative or its quality, or indeed, it might lend it more authenticity. Most of the students discovered the Internet at about the age of 10, and they reflected that a blog or a person publishing online might not be entirely up to the same standard, as anyone can post on the Internet. Ethically, this was seen as both a good and a bad thing.

The movie 'Gattaca' was mentioned again, and I was impressed with the student's empathy to feel for those more marginalised than themselves, and some worried that some people might be discriminated against because some people in the future might be considered superior through gene editing resulting in them being superior posthumans. We also reflected that discrimination exists now in many ways, but technology would provide new opportunities for discrimination and that this would be a downside to technology in the future. They wanted to say this to people reading this dialogue and that it should be published in the PhD study.

When further pressed on whether prejudice and discrimination are learned, and whether they can be unlearned, they reflected upon complex answers that selected past experience, growing up, and cultural differences that might ingrain inherent bias towards another group. One student mused that it is only through teachers, leaders, or parents that we learn prejudice.

In sharing some of my ideology, I explained an old Buddhist mantra, that: 'prejudice is the sum of things you learn by the time you are age 21'. In this scenario, you have to admit that you have been guided by those teaching you, whoever they may be, and then go about unlearning what you have learnt. There was agreement with this, and I think, even as such young adults, these students do ethically challenge their 'superiors' or people who teach them or their parents. I wondered if they do that more than previous generations, or if they have become more complacent, and I could not decide. I am sure if Martin Luther King had access to Twitter, he would be putting it to good use instead of the insane reactionary, xenophobic tweets of Donald Trump. The conversational quotes on ethics continued:

'Some things can be improved, but not fully'.

One student was feeling more limitless:

'If you keep attempting to improve something, if you can imagine it, it has the possibility of being limitless'.

He went on to talk about the possibility of terraforming the earth's atmosphere to pre-industrial levels:

'We know and understand how atoms work, if we put our minds to it, if someone wants to change the atmosphere, they will be able to'.

One student mused that technology might be able to fix some global problems, including global catastrophic risks, but this might take time, and this was ethically seen as a good thing — if you can imagine fixing the world, then it can be achieved. 'If you can imagine it, it can happen', was repeated. This was one of the more hopeful things that the students said that was optimistic about the future. However, on the opposite side, there were other dark forebodings in which a superintelligence might decide to unleash nuclear war, much like the movie 'The Terminator'. There were differing opinions on this outcome; one student was afraid it actually might happen, and another thought that we will be able, as Kurzweil suggested, to guide AI before it comes to this.

There was some discussion about overpopulation, and that nature was the great balancer:

'I think we may end up with a mass culling of humans, nature is the great balancer'.

He went on to say if there are too many people on the planet because of the extra longevity, that nature would be the more ethical solution to address this. The students did feel more ethically comfortable with the fact that natural processes would control the human population. Probably having played a million computer games and died so many times, and witnessing so much violence and so many murders on television, the students' ambivalence towards death was again rather confronting. I was reminded of a Warhol print of a dead man in a car accident, repeated many times. The shock of death was not present, I thought.

On the issue of diseases and immunisations, we decided we are already posthuman beings, and that there may be more diseases yet to come. However, this could be seen as the 'unknown' forces that control the human population. Upon reflecting that we are now in the age of post-antibiotic resistance, some people were hopeful that superintelligent computers might find cures for this, while others were more pessimistic.

We reflected that as we deforest more land and experience new environments and mess with DNA, we might reveal a more severe disease that might wipe out most of humanity, so in this way, there was a mixture of optimism and pessimism that technology might help or hinder us ethically in the near future. 'If we change one thing, there may be a change somewhere else', said one student. 'Mutations can happen pretty fast', said another, alluding to the fact that viruses and bacteria could appear anytime. Although we did not touch on Ebola (as I had meant to), we reflected that HIV has only been here for 30 years and 30 million people worldwide were living with the condition and that 35 million people had died. The tone of the discussions was mostly quite serious; these are young people that are very concerned about the future. They treated the meetings with some seriousness, as well as sometimes humour, and sometimes optimism:

'I think the best-case scenario of superintelligence is to analyse diseases better, and to distribute wealth better so no-one is starving'.

We started talking about an 'event horizon', and used the example of a black hole that light cannot escape from, and that the 'technological singularity' might be like an event horizon for humanity, and we don't know what will happen in the future because of this. I specifically asked what the students were fearful of, or happy for. One student stated that it will be able to help us and that there would be less disease, war, and poverty; indeed, she was very optimistic. The worst-case scenario she said, was that there might be an uprising and that a certain amount of people would need to die to reboot the earth back into a balanced state. Another fear stemming from superintelligence in relation to what might happen in the future as a worst-case scenario, is that nuclear war might become a reality. There were varied opinions on this:

'The worst-case scenario is an uprising, not like Terminator maybe, but like the AI could decide 'this amount of people need to die and we need to get rid of some of the humans'.

'An AI might create a nuclear disaster! That's the worst-case scenario'.

'I don't think it's likely AI will take over, because humans will have control of that … it's a cultural thing because of movies like 'The Terminator' — we would obviously try to teach it about ethics'.

'If we get technology that advanced, it might have a mind of its own, it might go off on its own'.

One student agreed with me that it was because of movies and fiction that killer robots would not kill us all, that this could be seen as a fable, and he believed that we would be able to make them benevolent towards us.

At one stage, I showed them a photo from my photo library on a computer that was trying to 'help me' by picking out people's faces. The students agreed that this was a basic algorithm and that the computer did not have any consciousness or ethics about this process.

'Your computer is trying to be helpful, but it does not have the ability to see what's right and wrong or an ethical reason behind it'.

As an example, I said that there was a former partner on there whom I did not necessarily want to see. We discussed that a Google AI in 2017 was improving on its own AI quotient, in essence improving its algorithm, becoming more efficient, and that ethically they think that it wants 'perfection', and that there might be positive ways for humans to exist more sustainably in the future. Optimistically, one student replied that the superintelligent AI would consider itself the most important thing, yet then retracted that it might consider being benevolent to people as the most human thing. There seems to be thus far, a mix of optimism and pessimism throughout our discussions.

We moved onto discussing the Twitter-bot which was automated and turned nasty, saying Hitler did not exterminate all the Jews in WW2. A few students had heard about this; one student said:

'I heard about Twitter's AI bot, people were describing it as a Hitler-loving sex robot!'

We reflected that this is only a reflection of the fatally-flawed, prejudiced, racist data that was entered into it. Upon further reflection, the students thought that a superintelligent AI would be good at purely mathematical things, but it would not be good at ethical issues. This was a frightening thought to them. One student asked:

'What if someone who makes the AI is like Hitler, will it have his morals?'

And further:

'If the AI was designed in the USSR, would it be different from an AI from somewhere else?'

The discussion moved onto the awareness of culture, political ideologies, and religion, and that the first person prejudiced by any of these things might reflect that society. The students seemed to be both very aware and wary about this. One student responsibly reiterated that a superintelligent computer must have consulted all ethical and ideological differences to weed out any prejudice within a superintelligent computer. The consensus was that we should plan this supercomputer to be inclusive. It did cross my mind 'what if China gets there first?', as for the time being, that is where the world's most potent computer exists (as of 2017).

I think next week, we will go on to touch on the idea that a superintelligent computer might be informed by data of all types that is put into the Internet of Things. I felt disappointed in myself that I did not follow-up with this line of questioning at this time, but to run a class, you have to think on a few levels at the same time! We were running out of time, and the conversations had been exciting and both hopeful and doom-like. One student worried about the human population:

'If an AI cured all disease, wouldn't it stuff up natural selection and mess with the population?'

Then – bingo – a student asked if a superintelligent AI cured all diseases, would not that rule out natural selection? So, I moved onto the idea of downloading information into our brains through cyborg brain/ computer interfaces, and we reflected on how only 100 years ago, the average American lived until the age of 42. I decided to put this into a more significant context by reading out a section of the literature related to global catastrophic risks:

'To put things in perspective right from the start, the Earth has been around for 46 billion years. If we make that 46 years, human beings have been here for one minute, and we have deforested half the Earth in the last 30 seconds. Regarding a recent history of people compared to the Earth, we are a very new thing'.

In response to this point, the perspectives began to open up. One student started to go down the line of time travel, that a superintelligent computer might be able to make a multi-dimensional being go back into the past before the end of the world, and then re-populate the universe by collecting DNA. This started to touch on my 'secret' experiences that I have had throughout my whole life, and that I do not talk about much (until the end of this PhD within the creative component). They thought this was possible and reiterated that if you can imagine it, then it could happen. The students said:

'Anything is possible if we develop the technology, like all the TV programs that go back in time to change the past, anything is possible!'

'If you can imagine it is possible, anything is possible'.

This line of questioning brought us down to quite philosophical views, and I thought we might be going down a wormhole, so I decided to get back to something practical, like Moore's Law, and following quantum physics and computing. To this end, I thought I might be restricting the conversation, yet the result was different – I encouraged them to use their ideas about multi-dimensions. There were some interesting perspectives on this:

'It's possible we could live in another dimension, and each one could be slightly different'.

'You may think you have a choice, but there are parallels that are created and one choice you have there might be another universe with that choice. I would find the idea of jumping universes to be … we won't reach that soon'.

'You could go to a copy of the Milky Way!'

'There's a certain amount of states an atom can be in, and there is a chance you could have a carbon copy of yourself in another dimension'.

'I think two clones would experience two different things, with different decisions, like the butterfly effect'.

'I used to think a superintelligent alien was controlling me, like what if there was another person controlling everything and we are just a video game for somebody?'

'Is anyone truly free? We don't know … we could be in control by someone else we don't know'.

They were open-minded to the philosophical idea of multi-dimensionality. I mentioned the movie 'Sliding Doors', a movie about a woman who makes two different decisions and the results are different. One student thought that jumping into different universes or dimensions will not happen soon, at least from our perspective, and not entities or future intelligences. To me, this was fascinating. One student reflected that after I suggested we could all be a hologram on the iPad of a far-off intelligent being's universe, she responded that she always used to think that as a child.

What started with some entirely rational discussion of unknowns was delightfully journeying towards talking about broader philosophical ideas, and this is where I thought: 'Yes!', this is where imagination fits in. I think we will try and focus more on imagination in future lessons, as we have concluded that if we can imagine it, it can happen, and that if the technological singularity has an event horizon, then a good way of talking about the ethics of the future was communicating through imagination.

When things got more profound, I asked, 'How do we even know what's real?', to which the students had no answer!

Sometimes, the process of me learning to facilitate a class was being challenged again and again, and I would have to bring the ideas back to something like a structured way we could express things. I thought the students could go off on tangents, but then again, so could I! I wanted to talk about facial recognition, but wished to precede this with the idea of voice recognition and the fact that our phones are listening to us. Quite a few times, I would forget my original line of reasoning, and if a student opened up another avenue, I would not get back to my initial idea. Upon talking about voice recognition, we spoke about the idea of this

being compromised. I have yet to offer a view to the students of 'what is incorruptible?' I think this is one of the lines of questioning I will go down next week in relation to mathematics and technology.

We talked about Centrelink using a person's voiceprint as an identifier, and there were again some interesting musings:

'Computers could use your voice to pretend to be you'.

'If you had someone speak for three hours non-stop with every inflection, they would be able to recreate it, and if you were on the phone, you would not be able to tell the difference'.

We talked further about whether this is corruptible, with differing opinions:

'Anyone who has enough pictures and data on Facebook can be replicated'.

'They can use the person's information, but they could never truly be that person. It would never know how a person would react'.

All in all, the second session was a great success. The students were open-minded and very engaged, and enjoyed being asked their essential opinions. All in all, so far, they have a mix of optimism and pessimism about the future, from catastrophe and the end of the human era, to equality and harmony and populating space and different universes and dimensions.

I asked specifically, that if I was the young people's voices of the future, and I had to write a statement to the people reading the PhD I am writing, the three concrete reflections I received were:

'Try to think from a logical point of view, some morals you don't know they're wrong until the end of your life, there are a lot of stubborn people in the world, you can't rewrite others' opinions, so be more open'.

So, to think ahead … I was thinking ahead to next week's session. Maybe that comment is a solid stern warning from the youth of today, to use imagination to help co-create future worlds.
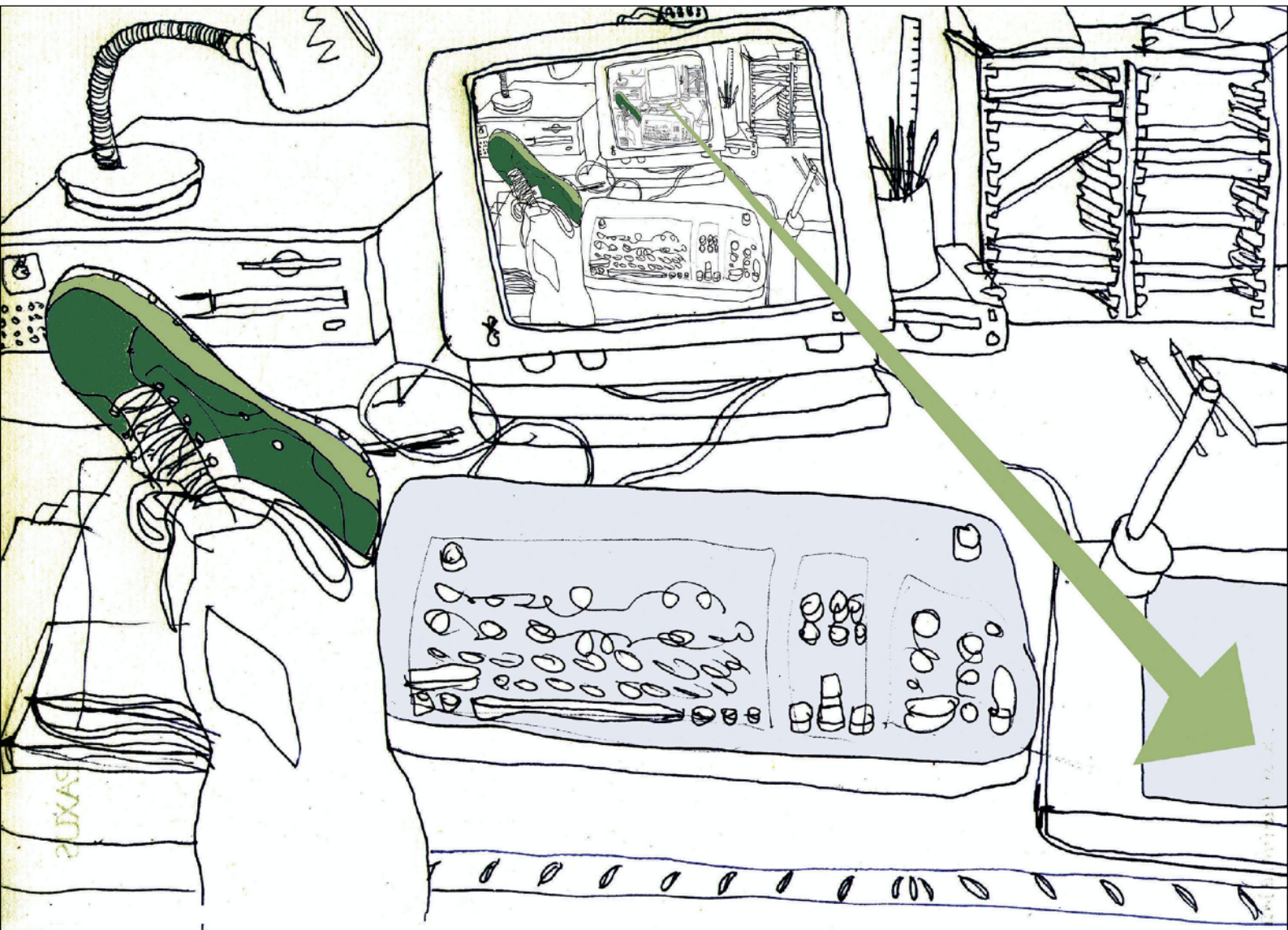
DIGITAL NEUROSIS (1995)

3) CONVERSATION THREE: Wednesday 30th of August, 2017

This week, I had even more students come, one up on last week, so there were five people in all. I think that word must have gotten around in some positive way that this class was interesting, or the students were getting something out of it, and this was very encouraging. It strengthened my confidence as an educator and facilitator, but it was also encouraging knowing that the students were engaging with the ideas. I did ask them if their teachers and guardians had encouraged them to come, and they said yes, which was heartening because a niche part of the plan was to help them into higher education, and I think that although they were already apparently engaged in the study, they were very connected with our conversations.

During our discussions this week, as a general memory-based reflection without going over the recording, it entered both quite an optimistic but also a scary zone. The students seemed at once to be excited and feeling blessed with the technology they have. Indeed, we reflected comparatively from my generation to theirs regarding ideas we had been exposed to, and realised that this was a positive thing, but looking into the future, a somewhat fearful tone took over. Some initial comments in our discussions were:

'It's not conscious, because it has a simple goal; to maximise profit'.

'I don't think it's really conscious because … or maybe, it has a really low level of consciousness'.

'There's no way to really know, because technology is changing rapidly, it's really volatile'.

'I think my kids will be a lot more entwined with technology and the cloud, like an assimilation or 'second life' accessing the deepest part of your brain'.

'I think my child will be a digital-human interface being'.

There was still, however, a mixture of optimism and pessimism about the future, and a general awareness of how a superior posthuman entity might discriminate against beings or people that are merely human, like in the film 'Gattaca'. However, the conversations also took on the topic of inter-dimensionality and new ways of looking at the world. It was these themes that encouraged me to write the final section of this PhD. It was in this session that I relied more on the students' imagination and 'fiction as research', and less on facts. This was faithful to my 'fiction as research' approach in my research methodology.

'I think in fifty years, we will be able to 'download' a book'.

'There might be a virus that kills all people or brainwashes them!'

'It's easier to put a virus into a computer than to take it out'.

'I think the downloading should not affect the chemical nature of the brain, there should be rules'.

'I'm not sure if I think that you'll be able to put information into a brain, but I think that with education, there will be a lot more virtual reality'.

'… Our eyes have been modified to see like augmented reality'.

'Someone has to design the augmented reality for it to happen'.

'There's ethical concerns about using augmented reality in the future'.

'He's a cyborg!'

Growing up through my childhood adolescence and adulthood, I had my own 'spiritual', and maybe 'science-based', experiences of multi-dimensional beings (which I hesitate to say for fear of ridicule), and occurrences that I could not explain. I still harbour strong feelings from these experiences, and in my defence, they happened in my childhood and adolescence before my apparent 'mental illness' became present in late adolescence/ early adulthood. I

think these experiences have led to the topic of my PhD subconsciously in its aims with a sub-text that I will have to be careful of expressing for fear of ridicule. I will choose my words carefully.

I could not write when I arrived home, because the discussions we had were at once bringing into focus these 'unexplained' experiences of my younger metaphysical life, and being made conscious and tangible in a way in which these young people's opinions and ideas formed the conversations of the sessions. I did find, however, that even when the conversations went into very 'unknown' or deeply philosophical territory, the students each had quite a rational approach to rule out any far-out ideas I may have thrown at them. Indeed, their rational minds were 'good servants' in this regard (as per Einstein's quote). Some of their ethical concerns in our talks were about:

The way I explained the notion of a healer to a friend that night was this: any healing or greater awareness being made to someone else by a person means that the 'healer' has a sense of responsibility. Any healer, whether you are a chiropractor or a Shaman, who does not respect this is not an ethical healer. My healer is Binnie, and I talk about her later in this narrative. Healers have responsibility for, whether they be a teacher, a chiropractor, a doctor, or a 'light-worker', the need to treat their clients with a level of responsibility, kindness, and compassion. I related it metaphorically to the non-violence of standing on a pier and leaning on a large boat … in time, the boat would move gently away from the pier. This is in stark contrast to suddenly moving the boat a metre quite suddenly, where there might be waves, someone falling into the water or disruption or violence. I am keenly aware of this, especially after my last session, taking note and responsibility not to jolt the perceptions of the students too much, and also moving forward with the three previous meetings. For we are talking about quite challenging and mind-bending issues, and I want to remind myself of my responsibility to not cause them too much disturbance; I think this is the nature of a compassionate teacher/ healer/ doctor/ whatever you are.

'We will have to expand to outer space or other multi-universes'.

'I think it will be possible to inhabit multi-universes, we just have to find a way'.

These were solid comments that led my practice-led arts-based project into uncharted territory, which you will read by the end, like an event horizon itself of its own accord.

I waited nervously for the students to come in, although I saw one enthusiastic student in front of the library. Just after 1pm, they started to go in, and I had some confusion about calling them by their wrong name! I was never really good at remembering names. I made a note of who was there. Some of the students showed their enthusiasm by getting out of class early to make it on time; others entered in dribs and drabs.

I wanted to start by thanking them for coming to the sessions and how amazed I was at how open-minded they are, and I told a funny story of how I hugged a stranger because I was so thrilled with the information we got from the session before, at which they laughed. We were forming familiar relationships, which is a requirement and also a desired outcome of interacting through this interview-led process and the methodology of a/r/tography.

It turns out that they were all from a local college (Footscray City College), which was originally what I had planned, and they reiterated that their parents and teachers encouraged them to come to the class. I had hoped that their parents, teachers, or guardians would support them and which I explained I hoped would inspire them all to go onto further education. I am pleased to say that the students are engaged and they enjoy and appreciate being asked their opinion. Some of their opinions were:

'Encryption has its faults, but does not mean we should stop using it'.

'I think implants will happen in a couple of generations'.

'A lot of testing has to be done on the technology, so the human body won't reject it'.

'Ethics will change over time'.

I started off the class by reintroducing the topics of AI, superintelligence, and a superintelligence that might enable posthuman beings, and touched base on if we solidly understood the concepts. Mindful of letting them speak, I asked if someone wanted to summarise. 'You're the one writing the book', a student said in a friendly manner. The students did have a good grasp of the content, and we re-read a simple definition of AI as making computers act like human beings.

We started off the session by talking about how Google's AI was rewriting its own algorithms, indeed improving on its intelligence quotient, and indeed, this could be the very beginning of superintelligence. Upon reflecting that it was doing this of its own accord, I asked the students if this meant that it had some consciousness. One student answered, 'no', because it had a goal and was a math-driven entity, so basically, it did not have an awareness, although it was doing things of its own accord. The students were in general agreement that this self-driven machine had no soul or sentience.

The conversation led to the idea that algorithms and technology these days are geared monetarily towards maximising profit, as if it had a goal, a single target that people have made, from financial interests. The tone was that this was greedy and that people were innately greedy and driven by money, and as a reflection of this is what we might make our machines do. I reflected that people now use AI to predict the stock market to try and capitalise on prosperity already.

Showing my age, I mentioned a Gary Larson cartoon, of 'The Far Side' fame, about two single-celled organisms sitting on a couch together. The female organism says to the male organism, 'stimulus, response, stimulus, response, don't you ever THINK?', which of course to me was hilarious, but the students did not quite grasp the idea, so I let it go. I tried to explain it to little avail! I was trying to draw a comparison to the mathematical model of cell biology and physics, and the soulless sentience of machine learning and AI, but at that moment, I could not quite express it adequately.

I tried to mention that we wanted to move into the realm of imagination and that, in my methodology, I was using 'fiction' as research. I reminded them about the event horizon of a technological singularity which they all understood, and I related this to the fact that I don't know how this PhD was going to finish, because their and my imagination are the only limits to it.

I threw it out to them that if they were 45 years old and had 20-year-old children, what would their lives be like? The response was that there is no way to tell, but I reminded them of their imagination.

Instantly, the conversation moved to people's consciousnesses merging with a cloud, human/ digital cyborgs, and digital human interfaces. I asked them if they thought their children might be cyborgs, and there was general agreement that this would be the case. Personally, I reflected upon how our phones, and in my case, my vape cigarette, were already extensions of technology to our bodies. Some of the students wore glasses; some came in wearing headphones which I observed. One student thought humans might integrate with technology, following the ideas of Ray Kurzweil, suggesting that we will not only merge with technology, but we will also transcend our biology, and that this was an evolutionary step that is unavoidable. The students seemed to think this was the case for their children, only 25 years into the future.

The conversation went onto the idea of downloading books into our consciousness through a brain-computer interface. One student thought this would be possible within 50 years, and that this might be a good thing as a new way to acquire knowledge. Then the conversation took a turn, that there may be vulnerabilities in the things we download, and that a brain/ computer interface might be a risk that there is a vulnerability in the system and that people might be brainwashed. There arose the idea that in the same way as having an Apple computer or an IBM, that an ideology, government, or power might access vulnerabilities in the system and that this would be bad for people's freedom. The consensus was that to have

an ideology or the 'powers that be' exploit a vulnerability might make us all into slaves or worse.

There arose the idea that there should be a set of rules that would have to be designed around downloading information into the human brain/ computer interface, to avoid this potential exploitation. I raised the issue of the ethics application process I had to go through to get the students into the room, and that there may be ethical issues that need to be considered with brain/ technology interfaces, some boundaries or ethical considerations as the technology evolves. The consensus was that it is unstoppable. Another student thought that data might not be able to be downloaded, but then we reflected that a book could be turned into an audiobook, and then a movie, so in fact, there may be other ways in the future such as through retinal implants or augmented VR reality that may influence our lives. Further discussing augmented visual reality, we talked about 'Google Glass', the glasses Google brought out for a while, but did not seem to take off as Google had hoped.

'I think people will be a lot more open-minded, the generation that grows up with it will be more open-minded and we are open-minded now'.

We talked further about augmented reality, a new topic we had not discussed yet in-depth, where one's eyes would be modified to see more information within their environment, adding to their experience of the world and presenting new information. One student thought this might be dangerous for activities such as viewing stop signs, or being distracted, such as when driving a car, one should not text while driving these days. There was a definite ethical consideration from the students that augmented reality had issues that needed to be ironed out before brain/ interfaces could and should happen. One student asked who would control what we see? A person, government, ideology, or entity? This was troublesome for him.

'We first begin with calm, then there is a disturbance, then it goes back to calm. There will be a point we close off our minds, because we can't fathom the reasoning behind it'.

In other ways, they were excited about technology, in that some blind people can use optical implants to see shapes. In this way, there was some sincere empathy being shown that technology might not only be used to expand and advance our experiences beyond what a normal person could do, but also to give perceptions to those who are differently abled, such as a blind person. The optimism of adding to experience positively, especially for differently abled people, and pessimism about how augmented vision could have adverse effects went to and fro over the entire session.

I related to a program I saw on the ABC that focused on people using technology to do things like 'hear colour', or enhance their capabilities into other as yet unseen dimensions and abilities. One student said, 'he's a cyborg!' and I said 'yes, he is'. We have ascertained that cyborgs live among us today and, in some ways, we are cyborgs already merely by nature of the glasses we might wear or any medications we might take to improve our wellbeing, for example.

'People might want to become specialised, we are that already, but people might be like that with bodily modifications, like someone might want to become more like a robot'.

We started to talk about companies implanting rice-sized digital 'keys' as implants that might get a person into their workplace, or turn on or off their lights, or open a door, and they all seemed to think this was closer than we thought. Indeed, I reminded them that it is already happening! The students again expressed concern that this, in itself, might be corruptible by an ideology, country, company, or government. I was impressed again by the students' level of empathy and political understanding, and their warming to the ethical dilemmas involved.

There was talk that there would have to be a lot of testing to have implants in the body to make sure that it would not be rejected by our immune systems, as a purely biological reaction. It was on the tip of my tongue to again relate that we have now taken pigs to a third of the way through pregnancy to explore the idea of harvesting pig/ human embryos. It

reminded me of the sculptural work of Patricia Piccinini I think I might take in a photo of her work next week as a prop for the sessions.

Also, by talking to the students, they were teaching me, as much as I was teaching them. Education and pedagogy is a two-way street, so I thought I would tell the students a little about my life. I said I got the Internet when I was about 25, and that they were very open-minded compared to when I was their age. I told them about one of the TV programs I used to watch as a child, 'The Brady Bunch', in which Mr and Mrs Brady could not be seen to be sleeping in the same bed. I think it was about 1967 when this changed, and in the next season, they were seen to be in the same bed. 'Ethics changes over time', reflected one of the students correctly, as I have observed over my lifetime. Despite their youth, they said they would, at some point, be the older generation and that they might be a little closed-minded for the people of the future. I found this hard to believe, yet I am sure they will experience a future world in which I seem very dated and naive in some ways, simply by the very nature of the time I was born into.

We reflected on how ethics have changed over time, and I tried to come up with a practical example. I said that in the 1960s, we would all be in loud, colourful clothes, but in the present, the culture has changed, and we are all dressed in quite generic clothes. How did this happen and how did the fashion change? Do we want to blend in, or do we want to be different? We reflected that trends change over times, and that we are often ethically a product of the culture we live in, even down to fashion. The students agreed to the degree that they were a product of their time.

We reflected on how in the future, if and when there were cyborgs, how would they see themselves? Would they see themselves as more unique through having extra abilities, or more or less the same as the others? There was a consensus that it would make a society and a population of posthumans not more unique, but more homogeneous, which I found interesting. I pushed further on this point by asking the students if they thought it might enable people to be different in the future? One student responded that people might have the

desire or choice to be more robot-like, or to make conscious decisions to acquire different posthuman qualities. There remained the opportunity for choosing to be more similar, or picking the characteristics one might like to possess. I thought this was a fascinating observation.

I wanted to bring the conversation back to a concrete example, so I started talking about drones, automation, and the case of the cyber-worm that was sent to Iran to stop its nuclear program, and actually stopped the centrifuges that was crucial to stopping Iran's nuclear advancement. We agreed that war is part of the human condition, even though this was unjust. However, when asked what they thought that war in the present/ future would be like, they mentioned that it might initially be less physically damaging to humans (i.e., with bombs), but more damaging to infrastructure, ultimately leading to the defeat of a society. The way to ruin a country was to shut down their oil, communications, and/ or water/ electricity, they said.

'War could become more intelligence-based, it will be less damaging to humans and more damaging to structure. You don't have to destroy them physically, you could put in a worm and it could change, like, it can work on a country-level scale. The US could destroy itself from the inside'.

'Why kill the people when we can rob all their money?'

'There is a cyber-war happening right now, lots of spying and espionage'.

'I think it's ridiculous Donald Trump is leader of the free world'.

They reflected that nowadays there is no need to destroy a place physically, and that this was quite barbaric, and even though it exists in places like Syria, and that it was an 'old' way of looking at war. They said that to destroy a country then, someone would have to cut off a nation's water, or electricity … war might be fought on different frontiers, like robbing their money. One student reflected on the news at this time on the sanctions on North Korea, which showed his knowledge of current affairs. They were beginning to illustrate the notion

of a war of ideas and information, and I reflected on how social media had influenced the American election of Donald Trump.

I flat out asked if a cyber war or information war was happening now. They agreed, and said that there was a lot of espionage, and that the leader of the USA, Donald Trump, was 'pretty ridiculous', and that technology or communication might have appealed to the lowest common denominator to elect him. Of course, they thought, like me, that this was ethically ridiculous. It was on the tip of my tongue to talk about the possible Russian influence on the US election; I wish I had.

The conversation moved along quite quickly to other topics and free will, and that in fact, we might be simply 'bio-trophies' for other unseen and more advanced entities.

'I play a game where a superintelligent computer was trained to look after human beings and, in it, we are just bio-trophies'.

The conversation was opening up — that we might be living in a simulation, as the futurist and billionaire Elon Musk has suggested. All this time, my metaphysical and paranormal experiences from my childhood and early adolescence were coming to the forefront of my mind.

'One of the arguments about living in a simulation is that why is mathematics working so perfectly?'

One student said about mathematics that there was a stimulus/ response and that it can be predicted, so I told them about the endlessly unique decimal number Phi, and that it was suppressed when it was discovered centuries ago because it was unpredictable and could not be justified by any mathematical equation. It was seen as the devil's number and therefore had to be hidden or suppressed. I was trying to say that even in mathematics, there is some evidence of equations or models that have no finality or predictability to them. I was not able to translate this into the human experience or free will, or find the right words to express it.

I felt that the conversations were getting loose again, and could go anywhere, so for fear of losing control of the class, I asked: 'What human beings will we create?'

We talked about the fact we can change genes in embryos at this time, and that this could be good or bad, bad because people who have money might have the opportunity to improve themselves while poor people won't, and that this will be 'old school capitalism' that might run this. Even as I re-write this today in March 2018, I noticed that in the media, Barbara Streisand had her pet dog cloned twice. They seemed acutely aware of what capitalism means, and some had a disdain for it. I was impressed with the amount of knowledge and general world knowledge they had, and reflected that this was because of technology and maybe social media that they were exposed to so many ideas compared to my generation.

'It depends on gene-editing what humans we will make'.

'I feel that it will make people with money to be more superior on their own over others, like old school capitalism, if you have more money you will be a better human'.

The students told a story about getting a meningococcal injection earlier in the day. I reflected back that I had an acquaintance die from this three weeks prior. I offered that even though they may be privileged people already, and one student reflected that his grandfather had died at 32 of influenza, and millions of people die of this each year. This further led to a conversation that if we save more people, we need more food, more resources, and more space, to cater for these people. This is something the world does not have enough of already. The response was impressive: that we will have to move to other environments, worlds, universes, or even other multi-dimensions! Again, my childhood experiences came to the fore. I wondered how this pedagogy and these new suggestions linked to my experiences as a human, and how it might translate, and if I might try and convert it into words. I was very hesitant about this at the time, for fear of academic and social ostracisation.

The multidimensional issue came up the week before, that if we can imagine it, then it might be possible. I expressed to them that I had reflected on this since last week's session and thought that something might happen to us that we may not have imagined or predicted. If we imagine it, we can do it, but what if something happens to us (such as my mystical experiences), and we did not ask for it to happen? One student used the example of 9/11 in the USA, as something we could not imagine, but that did happen to 'us'. There was a difference between imagining and co-creating our futures with science and imagination, and potential unknowns that might happen to us without us having believed it. So, we agreed that by nature of our being now, we could be god-like in creating or co-creating realities, but on the other hand, things that are unforeseen, or that we can't control, might still happen to us.

This is the point where I started to think about my metaphysical happenings, which I had some theories on, and on which I had a sub-text in my PhD topic. The students did offer some healing to me in suggesting optimistically that when unknown things happen to us, it gives human beings a new opportunity to use their imagination to get around the problem. It lessened the trauma of my childhood experiences. I realised my experiences of sexual abuse detailed in the appendix of this PhD had come full circle in the manifestation of this PhD research in using alchemy to make a better world for others. I was putting my experiences to good use to more deeply explore reality in a positive way, that was unforeseen at the time. This has been one of the most satisfying feelings of living through this PhD dissertation.

It was decided that even though unknown things can happen to us (I did not go into detail with what these things were with me, nor will I here), that they become opportunities to get around a problem. In this way, the students were quite optimistic about the future or the event of having possible unknowns happen to them. They were seen as opportunities to adapt and change. In this way, the students exhibited a moral optimism that gave me hope.

I reflected that night personally on what this meant for me, and that yes, I had unexplained things happen to me that I did not understand, but I had some coping mechanisms, or finding

a way around it that led me through life. It was I think for, a healing conversation with the students upon further reflection. They had helped me by proxy.

One student reflected that there will always be unknowns that might happen to us that we will have to adapt to. Uncontrolled things that happen to us were again opportunities for people to evolve or think outside the box for solutions. These kids were challenging me by how open-minded they were! There was a level of optimism when confronted with unknowns, however dire they may appear or are.

It got philosophical quite quickly again in the discussion. I suggested that in 200 years' time, if there is a superintelligence, could it travel back through time to influence the past and avoid disaster? 'It's possible', said one student. Another student was more open-minded that it is difficult to predict anything at all, because technology is changing so quickly. Again, I brought the discussion back to my experience of growing up in the Cold War and observing it on television, thinking of nuclear bombs falling and being very afraid of this, and untrusting of adults as a child. If adults were responsible for bombs that could destroy humanity, why should I trust them? It also resonated with me in relation to my sexual abuse subconsciously for me as an adolescent. Adults were not to be trusted, but when you find a good mentor who has something to offer, then exploit that opportunity. I proposed to the students, 'what if nuclear war did happen in the future and a superintelligent sentient entity came back to the past to stop it?'

'Unknown things are always a possibility we have to adapt to, but we can also create things from imagination'.

'I think it's hard to predict anything at all'.

Now, at this moment, I reflected on my own occasional 'mental health' issues, and how I had read an article that there were a lot of people in psychiatric wards before and after Trump was elected saying that they were sent from the future to stop Donald Trump! I have had a bit of a giggle to myself that my thoughts might be outside the norm or correlating with people with

psychiatric illnesses. How far can ideas go before they are unreal or fanciful/ delusional, and how does this relate to fiction as research?

Their answer to the question of time travel was more practical than this, and introduced me to the idea of 'The Grandfather paradox', which was if you went back in time and killed your grandfather, then you would not exist.

'It would be paradoxical to travel back in time to prevent something, it's like the grandfather paradox, if you killed your grandfather there would be a continuous time loop'.

I found this sense of practicality from one of the students very refreshing, and I was a little surprised that they knew about such philosophical ideas. These kids are brilliant and intuitive, they like to be asked about their opinions, and I wondered if there could be a way to make this more of a thing in Australian society. I reflected that there was a recent episode of Q and A on ABC which had Year 11 and 12 students on it and I applauded the initiative of the ABC. [3] As I have reiterated all along, young people's voices are brave and important, earnest and honest, and one might say, not yet crushed by society and capitalism, and I found them to have a freshness that is refreshing and real. In my own time, I sometimes listen to the music I made when I was 19 before I was 'broken', and how we had such a sense of invincibility about us, a kind of innocence that I think I have now lost. The recordings are amateurish and old school, but there is a feeling that they are spirited and uncrushable, and I related this feeling to the freshness of the conversations with the Year 11 students.

Upon further investigation into time travel, one student informed me about the theory of relativity – that one could theoretically go forward in time, but not back, so I was learning too! He tried to explain it to me, but I could not grasp it.

I was aware that time was running out with this session, so I wanted to come back to a strong finish. I reminded them of my way of investigating through imagination. What as a young

---

[3] The ABC is the Public Broadcaster of Australian Television.

person are you worried about? What do you want to, as young people, tell the readers of this book?

One student mentioned the film 'Gattaca' once again, and warned about posthumans being prejudiced against, or superior to, 'normal' humans.

'I reckon life will be very similar to Gattaca. All the details of that person … they decide … you want to be a good swimmer … we will put that detail into your genes'.

They were concerned about equality and equity. The students expressed a worry, yet again, that some people might be prejudiced against by the more advanced cyborgs or posthuman people. I will have to watch that film again. In my exegesis, I must write a bit about how science fiction films and fantasy inform and often predict popular ideas about the future. One student corrected me saying: 'creating' humans, because we already do that:

'I think the wording is off, we already create human beings, but we would be designing them!'

After that comment, I changed the working title of my thesis. Other comments that came out of this session interestingly were:

'The richer you are, the better your child can become in future'.

'If you don't live up to what you were designed to do, it could be bad'.

'We expect a lot of the future in regard to technology. I think it might speed up or slow down'.

We reflected on a theme in the film (Gattaca), about the general concept of expectation, that if you are designed to do something, and you cannot do it, that you might feel sad or disappointed. We all agreed very strongly that we expect a lot from the future and that technology might slow down, and that AI could perhaps manifest from anywhere, time, or place, be it from an individual country or organisation that might have its own ideological

biases or prejudices. I think next week I will remind them about my theory that once a superintelligent computer develops, that it will gain data from across all societies and the 'Internet of Things', to form its conclusions — and that this will reflect both the good and bad aspects of human nature.

To finish up, I thought that instead of just talking, that we could focus on something practical within the space. 'Ask SIRI if she is ethical?' I asked one of the students. 'I don't have the answer to that right now', 'she' replied. One student said of a bot:

'Bots can be evil, they just want to maximise their goal'.

I reflected that, in the past, with my on and off again psychosis in my early 20s, that I have indeed experienced something that fits the descriptive category of 'schizophrenia'. Because it is always on my mind as I had identified with it for so many years in my late 20s and early 30s, it spurred the next question: 'Ask SIRI what percentage of the population have schizophrenia', I suggested. She did, and the answer SIRI gave was: '0.14374 of the population'.

My mind was beginning to fade, and I was being challenged with teaching and keeping it all together and the students on a consistent path. I am discovering a new respect for all the teachers I have ever had.

Upon reflecting on this session, I noticed that I spoke the most. Next time, however, I am going to bring in some practical examples that we can look at, and also to let the students talk more, to give them the opportunity to express themselves in response to more concrete questions and to record their responses without me interrupting too much. Indeed, the sessions have been evolving from week to week, which was unexpected, but most welcome.

I asked to wrap it up: 'is superintelligence exciting, scary, or both?' 'Both' came one immediate reply. Another reflected that it would be a soulless machine that keeps on attaining

the goals it was assigned with, or designed to do. Another student reiterated a comment from the week before that it depends on who makes it, and who teaches it. Another student thought it was scary because:

'I think superintelligence might be good or bad, but it depends on who made it and what we teach it to do, but even now we can't control AI, it's scary what it's capable of'.

'What do you want people to know who are building it?' I asked. The answer was:

'I want to say, take a look at all the things that can happen with superintelligence before doing it'.

I reminded them of the metaphorical story by Nick Bostrom that I included in the first week's curriculum, the story of the sparrows and the owl egg — we had come full circle, and concluded the session.

I asked one last question of them: 'What would a superintelligent AI mean politically?' The answer and consensus was:

'The world could change so there is no political system, everything the same under one ideology and that's scary'.

In this present time of writing, I am reflecting on the metaphor for any healer to move the boat from the pier gently without much disturbance, and that these students and I exist in a world of absolutely rapid change, which is possibly about to be disturbed. I am reminding myself not to blow their young minds, and hope they do not blow mine, trusting in the process. In fact, each time I sat down before a class, I would ask the highest loving divinity to be with me and protect me from negative entities and influences, a practice I do at least twice a day, and which gave me the faith that the classes would perfectly unfold, even if in unknown ways.

One student reiterated that we need to vote on how the super AI will exist democratically; then it might result in a case of a benevolent AI looking after us, rather than it dominating or subjugating us. The thought of a superintelligence controlling us was entirely frightening to them. 'We might make good pets', said one student with an air of 'well, if it happens we are screwed!' I wondered somehow if we might be pets already.

As just mentioned, one of the students correctly picked up on my title, that 'creating' people was something we already do — so with the student's input, I needed to change my working title to 'designing' human beings, instead of 'creating' them. This was a definite outcome that championed the fact that we were working together. The relationship with my students was beginning to influence the design and writing of my novel, and I applauded that.

I thanked them all and commented that they were much more switched on than I was as a 16-year-old, and handed out the curriculum for next week's class. I thought I might bring some props in next week, whatever they might be, and let them talk more as I felt like even though I was trying to facilitate the class, that I was dominating the conversation too much. One student followed on from a different opinion of a superintelligent computer ideologically ruling us, and said:

'I think we might have to democratically vote on what we teach an AI'.

I wondered if this process just may be extrapolating from that concept.

A student stayed behind as the others were leaving. 'What do you think?' He asked my opinion of a super AI. I replied, 'I'm optimistic, but a super AI strives for perfection, and I think there is a beauty in imperfection'. Upon reflecting on my journey during the process of my PhD designing a catalogue of my life's art, I titled it something similar, which was: 'A Certain Beauty in Un-resolution …' (Rich McLean, 2018). This was undoubtedly true of facilitating the classes. Through conflict, there is growth. And with that, the last student left.

Personally, I had had a stressful week, and I had contacted both my psychologist and also Binnie, my spiritual advisor/ counsellor/ Shaman who is a 70-year-old gay woman in the country who speaks with wise loveliness and makes a lot of sense to me. I have been seeing her since about 2004. I write about her more in the final chapter of the narrative. She texted me with two different messages:

> You are on the brink of a big change and you are given very big protection now. Your journey. albeit very painful and difficult, is about to change. This is the time. A little delayed on your side, but timing is perfect. Be heartened and stay in the present as best you can, be accepting it all as a perfect unfoldment of a life to help humanity and the planet in these most critical of times. Love, Binnie.

I noted she picked up on my desire to help humanity, and that she said my compassion for people had led me to her. It felt natural, and I was not surprised. When I said sometimes I err on the side of pessimism, she retorted, 'Don't! What is needed is hope or positivity, for out of this, the polarities will lead to the homecoming of all who align with love. Do your best, Richard, and that is all one can do, and that is enough'. It's the most succinct counselling I had ever received. She leaned my metaphorical boat gently away from the pier with great love.

I feel that this story is about young people from the point of view of young people's ethical opinions, but it is also about me in a post-positivist way. Through this process, I thought that I want to bring my more intimate experiences with metaphysics into this researching of living inquiry in my narrative and this PhD study.

All in all, it was a great session full of positivity, yet also fear and wonder, and I look forward to the next one, where what comes out of the meetings may well be beyond my scope of understanding.
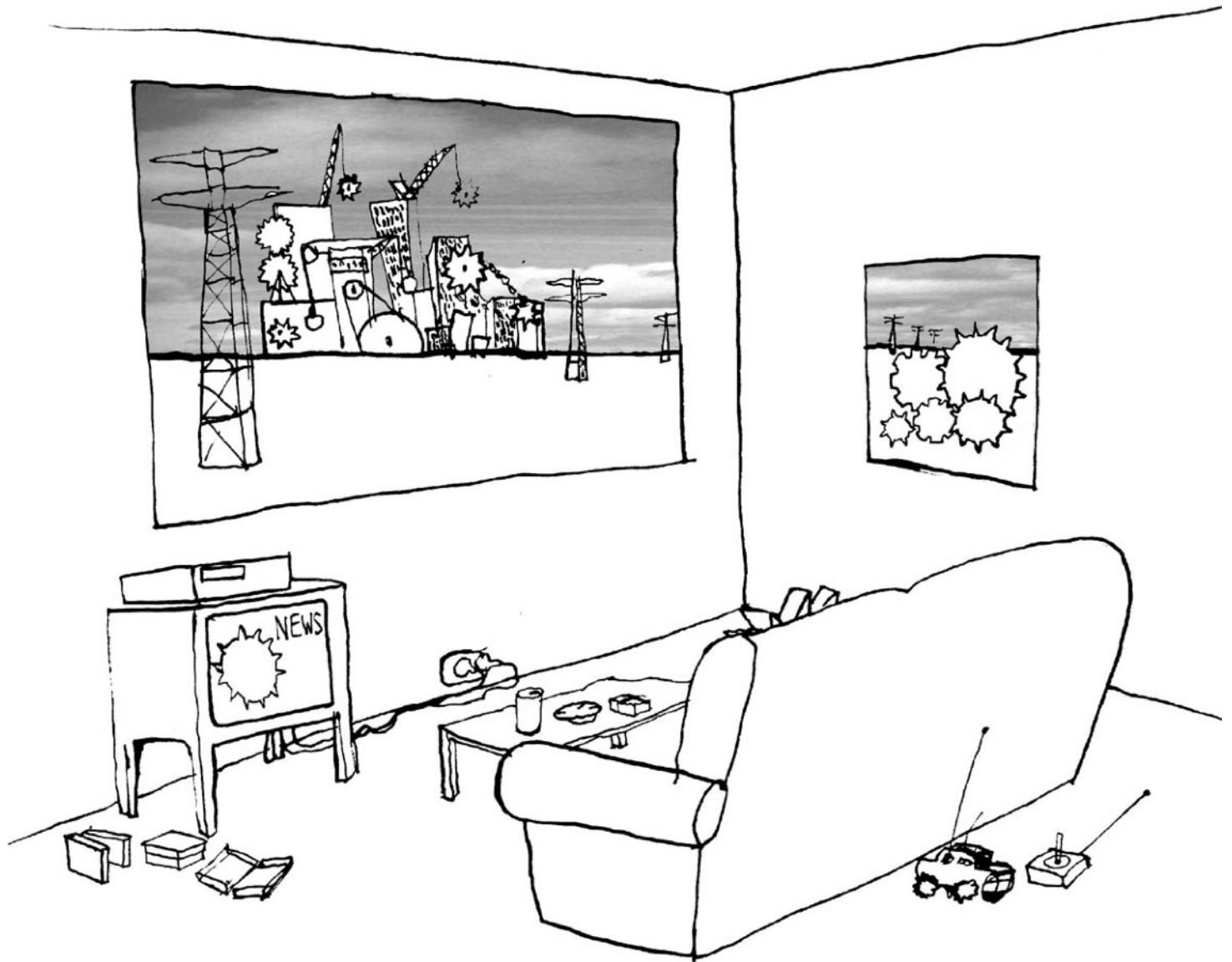
SEIZE THE REMOTE CONTROL (1992)

4) CONVERSATION FOUR: WEDNESDAY 6TH OF SEPTEMBER, 2017

Before I start to listen to the recorded conversations and reflect about session four of six, I thought I would note down a few observations that are fresh in my mind from the class I just ran.

At the start of the class, I was nervous again. After listening to last week's session, I thought to myself that I would play more of the role of facilitator and let the students speak; indeed, because I was so keen to engage them last week, listening back, I thought I had interfered too much by overstepping the conversation. 'LET THEM SPEAK!!!' I wrote down on my notepad before the session. They were enthusiastic as usual, and did not disappoint in their ability to express themselves on various ethical issues that affect them, or might do so in the future.

The weather was quite dreary, and I think this is why we had only three students this week, two down from last week, but there still seemed to be a real development of interpersonal relationships with the students and their ideas, and we could reference complicated things without having to skim back over facts and definitions. It was nice having developed this professional relationship as the facilitator of the classes.

The first student who arrived, who is always very keen to talk, came in first (always on time), and we made idle chat about the week. I started the recorder, and we talked about his subjects at school which seemed quite creative and diverse including digital studies, media arts, and computing. I was impressed. I reflected that his schooling and curriculum more goes along the line of STEM. I thought again of building on this by including an 'A', making this STEAM to embrace art.

He started talking about a program called 'Black Mirror', which I had seen an episode of, which blew my mind! It was quite arresting to watch and mind-bending. This session was about to do just that to me with the three students who were present.

'I saw Black Mirror with implants on your temporal lobes and you can see, hear … it got pretty dark … the entire thing about the memory, if we have things we can capture we don't want to see … the entire episode was about how the wife was cheating on her …'.

We talked about recording our memories as per an episode of 'Black Mirror', and how everything might be recorded anyway. We reflected that the government records browser histories, apparently to catch child sex traffickers and for national security reasons, particularly terrorism. This was ethically seen as a good thing, but I reiterated the issue of privacy.

'Internet browsing is all recorded … just the entire idea of having your entire history transcribed makes you think a lot'.

The philosophical questions were beginning already.

I am impressed about how open-minded these students were, and that they were being exposed quite continually to quite mind-bending ideas through film, the Internet, downloaded programs, apps, and technology, much more so and to broader topics than I was at their age.

The other two students turned up, and as always, I was a bit hesitant with their names. I got around this by having written down their names before they walked in.

For this week's session, I printed out some extra curriculum materials to take to the class, significant events that were relevant to what we were talking about that had happened during the week, or that I had discovered which I thought might be applicable. I also wanted to talk about the cloning of humans and animals in relation to organ transplants, so I printed out some pictures of the sculptures by Melbourne artist Patricia Piccinini to bring in and discuss.

We talked more about the series 'Black Mirror', after which I asked how their week had been and wondered if they had reflected on anything since last week. They had not undertaken any real reflection, and then they asked a bit more about my PhD and what I need to do to finish my study. They were curious to know how their voices would be allocated in my study. I think they were inspired by the idea that research like this could be prepared and I think it is encouraging them to be more interested in academic research, which was one of the lesser aims, or at least a benefit, of the research proposal.

I began by talking about a few exciting things that had happened during the week; that Vladimir Putin said that if a country gets a superior AI, they would be the country to rule the world. 'If one country's drones control or destroy another, then the other country will have no choice to surrender', he was cited as saying.

'I think Putin is right, if a country has a gun and a country has a sword, the country with a gun will win'.

I reflected that the autonomous drone strikes in Pakistan were the reason I initially began to get interested in this topic back in my Master of Education degree in 2012. I referenced Putin's remark and asked the students what it means now and in the future. One of the students immediately responded in a way that is most likely correct, that having the most robust AI would heighten a country's power, or that they would indeed have a monopoly. This was ethically regarded as immoral, yet somehow perhaps unavoidable. We divulged that there was a difference between what AI is, and the embodiment of that AI within robots. In this way, we were separating what the difference is between AI as a form of digital 'automation', and machines or robots that might automate much of the workforce and take future jobs. Another student responded that the person with 'the strongest gun' would control the world, suggesting that if a company, entity, or country developed an AI, then any entity could gain control of that via force or threat of death. Again, the students worried about inconsistencies and vulnerabilities in AI itself, and if it could be compromised.

I reflected that there was assured world peace that had resulted from MUD, mutually assured destruction, and that this had kept the world safe. We reflected upon Kim Jong Un setting off a nuclear test. I was surprised to hear one of the students say that he was a good leader because he kept his family on top, while at the same time being unpredictable. Another student added that Donald Trump is equally as dangerous, because he is just as unpredictable.

I related the possible idea that Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, had potentially more power than the leader of the USA, and that maybe he could also be more powerful than him through another lens. We discussed that he has control over public opinion in an instant if he plays his cards right. Everyone agreed that it is unethical for one person to have control over a population, the students suggesting it was akin to slavery. Putting this idea into the present and the future in 20 years' time, I asked if Zuckerberg could have more influence? One student disagreed and said that he would not have much power, or at least, only limited power. Another student quipped that he could maybe make people riot or change their opinions, but he could not change the law or legislation or go to war. I wondered if this was true or not.

'Mark Zuckerberg has control over people, sways entire nations, and pursues people. That's as wrong as putting someone to slavery, the concept of having control over an entire group, whether it's for good or evil'.

And also:

'I think until like, M Z can't change laws, he can influence people, but he can't go into the government and change laws; in some ways, he has more power and can influence what people think, but only a leader or government can change laws.

Another thing that happened during the week was that I was reading that a single molecule of data storage might be able to store 25 terabytes (1,000 gig; for example, a movie is 4GB), in the size of a US dime, or a British 50 pence piece. In light of this tiny space to store massive amounts of data, what do we think about cyborgs and potential human brain-computer

implants in the future? I mentioned that the entirety of human-made data could fit into a hologram the size of your hand. What could that mean for people in 25 years' time?

'I think, obviously, it will be more possible to do implants with cyborgs, like with a tiny plastic piece or something'.

The students thought it probable, even unavoidable, that cyborgs would exist among us and that they would have implants that will be able to store data and enhance posthumanism within 25 years. There was a neutral tone that this was neither a good or a bad thing, just expected. True to caring for people from minorities, another student said that it might enable amputees to be able to merely think about thinking of moving a limb and it would happen, such as the technology beginning to develop now. We agreed that it was ethically good that people of all abilities would be on a more level playing field. I am still consistently impressed with how the students think of those less fortunate than themselves.

'Amputees can control limbs with their minds, there was a video of someone controlling their hands. It means people who have lost arms or legs can have the same level of ability. It will stop people from suffering'.

I mentioned the axolotl (Mexican walking fish), that can grow back limbs, and supposed that in the future, we might also be able to grow new limbs. The conversation went into a quirky dimension on aliens and lizard people, or 'shape-shifters', and I asked what this was, and the students said they are just conspiracy theories. The conversations were edging on what could be considered fanciful, pop culture-based, or conspiratorial. I remembered the paranormal experiences that I reflect on later in this narrative, and I pushed them on this: 'What do you think of people who believe in aliens?' One student did believe in them and thought that even if they were not intelligent, that her idea of the universe meant that there must be other forms of life in the broader galaxies. One student had already mentioned the Fermi paradox, which states that a civilisation would destroy itself before it got to the point of interstellar travel, which I was impressed with, as I had not heard about this until about five years ago. He was reluctant to believe in other life being able to reach other planets or other civilisations.

'Yeah, aliens and shape-shifters are conspiracy theories'.

'We are aliens!'

And also:

I believe in aliens; statistically, we can't be the only creatures in the universe, even if though they aren't as intelligent as us or more.

I wrote in the conversation outline that nature might be innately intelligent – in that a mother does not have to think about lactating when she gives birth, she just does. We agreed to the degree that nature has its survival mechanisms and innate intelligence. I asked one student if nature has intelligence; she said possibly, but she was not sure if it has a 'mind'. I further extrapolated that some of us believe in the 'big bang' (such as science states), because we are composed of star-dust, and that the entire universe is innately a living thing or a sentient consciousness.

'Hormones are automatic, and we may have autonomous body functions, my heart beats for me, I can stop it, but I can't stop it mentally'.

'I guess it depends on how you define intelligence, if nature is intelligent'.

'It's a cool thought that the whole universe is alive'.

We moved on, and I showed them a picture of what Google's 'Watson' computer is 'dreaming' about at this time (2017). It was good to bring some props into the classroom to muse over.

'I can see seals and a dog and a worm in this image'.

'It's just smashing different images together'.

The students saw reptiles, deer, dogs, eyes, birds, universes, and worms. One student said that it is simply millions of images being smashed together, and that there is no intelligent thought behind it. I asked the students if the diagram describes the entirety of creation, including dinosaurs and humans and civilisations and creation, and maybe, ultimate destruction, and maybe was it a mirror of everything? One student replied it was just a random generator, but he described a pattern that was in it that was new, that had never been 'thought before', subscribing to the idea that this was, in a limited capacity, the image of an extra-terrestrial, non-human, and non-animal intelligence. We agreed that what we were reacting to, the image of a million images smashed together which could be considered an alien 'intelligence', was not in turn enriching and influencing our thoughts.

I reflected that for the first time, we have come into contact with something produced by not only a human, but by something that was non-animal, and that it was actually in a way, an extra-terrestrial or new intelligence. I ethically asked them if it is suitable to connect with this new intelligence or improve us by expanding our mind, which one student agreed with. It is good to broaden our horizons, and this sentiment remained vocalised a few times in the classes.

'I think reacting to a non-human, non-animal intelligence is a completely new thing'.

I asked whether, in 20 years, if the singularity has happened, what happens then? One student said that a government, or even humanity, might ban it and that cyborgs will be among us. We all agreed that the 'event horizon' was a thing that we are already on the way to and that we are not going to be able to stop superintelligence — that, like it or not, it will happen. This fluctuated with warnings of trying to make it benevolent to humanity before we create it, although humans are innately greedy, so this is unlikely because of the race to get there. This was ethically seen as a dangerous, competitive human trait. There was a sense of foreboding that, as humans, we just cannot help ourselves through competition and greed to make it.

'I think the government would ban super AI. Banned for general use. It may be cyborgs' implants which would be popularised in 20 years. I think once you create it, there's a limit where you can't create anymore'.

'The current trend of where technology is going is virtual and augmented reality. I think all our senses will be transmitted, and people will be more secluded and into their virtual world, but some people use it in a positive way, like I think fatigue would be stopped with technology, we could function at full rate all the time. We will expand into the augmented scale'.

'I think we will be less social physically, but more connected with technology, like in the computer realm, then those that do go out, but will see a lot more with technology'.

Augmented reality came up again, and the idea that all our memories and experiences may be able to be put onto a chip. This could be regarded as a good or bad thing, said the students, and that we might be able to get around things like fatigue and sleep to improve our lives. We will expand more into the augmented scale, one student said, but this might end up with a scenario in which the social world will suffer, and we will be more physically isolated, but more technologically connected, much like we had reflected on the status quo of people that live now regarding social media. I guess he was reflecting on living presently as a human being with our phones, Twitter, Facebook, computers, and the like. The students reiterated that 'social media' is more like 'the anti-social-media'.

Another student thought that augmented reality might go more in-depth, and we could perhaps escape pain, so leading onto existing in other dimensions and that this could be ethically ambiguous, neither good nor bad. A particular student thought this would be ethically sound, even existing in another realm, although she wondered if she might be 'switched off' from her original existing point while she was 'in there'. This conversation led to uploading our consciousnesses into the 'cloud', and the students thought that we might be able to go entirely into the digital world or cryonics, and this might help with interstellar travel. There is an implied reality of thought that we will go to the stars, seemingly because the human race has a survival mechanism, and we cannot exist here forever. I will ask more

about this next time, because the idea that the end of the world might happen is detected with an aura of neutrality, like it will not pass within their lifetimes, even though I had spoken about global catastrophic risks such as climate change, war, nuclear war, and antibiotic resistance. Sometimes though, the students showed a real ambivalence towards death on a large scale.

‘I feel like augmented reality could be like for easing pain, like if you're in a world you could go into another world where you don't feel pain. I think as long as you can come out of it, that would be ok’.

‘I think people in hospitals could just stay in the digital world till things get better, like cryogenics’.

The conversations were heated and engaging, with the students jumping from one topic to the next. I tried to rein it all in by relating concrete examples of things and keeping the conversation flowing, still following the class template and not getting too far off the beaten path, which is rather difficult with this subject matter!

Stopping life for a little while would be possible, the students thought, either through cryogenics or some other way. In this way, interstellar space travel might be possible and even probable they mused. I wondered how much they had been shaped by science fiction. We chatted about the future, and that there might be a tremendous divide between people who were ‘on the grid’ and ‘off the grid’, according to their ethical standpoint about digitisation of our lives.

‘I think halting life will be possible, but a huge ethical divide whether you will have a natural life or a digital life’.

I know of people who will not even want a photo taken of them, and aware of cultures that recoil at the thought. I said that I think that has some resonance with me that people might go back to the old ways of living. One person wondered if one could go to another dimension to

escape pain, and that someone might turn you off and you could be stuck there, and this frightened her, and she would not like to do this.

We all agreed there would probably be a happy medium of living practically in the physical world, relying on nature and natural processes and being 'on the grid' at the same time. This was ethically perceived as a good compromise for living both now and in the near future.

One student thought that we would be able to breed people and animals to meet our own needs. I thought this would be an excellent opportunity to take out some images of pig/human sculptures by a local Melbourne artist Patricia Piccinini, both as something to inspire them to think, and also as a prop that they could look at, to have a break from solely talking. They had an immediate response to the images and I related to them that scientists had already taken pig embryos with human DNA in them to one-third of the way through pregnancy. I asked what they thought of this. One student thought that cross-breeding is taboo, like bestiality. He saw intertwining species, and something so taboo, it was on that level. While on the other side, I was asking if in the future we might be able to harvest pigs with human DNA as organs for people who had illnesses. One student thought that if she had cancer and could harvest a pig organ that would allow her to live, then she would ethically accept that organ, so there were some conflicting ideas about this issue.

We reflected again that the ethics of a culture change over time. We also pondered that science should not do something just because people can, but should be thought about before they do it. Why make a nuclear bomb? We should not have done it, but we only know that after we know about how destructive they can be. One student drew a parallel with pig/human splicing.

'I don't think there will be hunting or gathering, but most things will be automated, so we can breed animals in a perfect situation'.

'It's very ethically questionable to cross species, its taboo, even the entire concept of bestiality, intertwining with a species that is not human, it's taboo'.

'I think having a hybrid organ is better than a pig giving birth to a human!'

He also drew a parallel to that of a superintelligent AI, that maybe once it has happened, there could be consequences, and that it might take us a while to learn how to attribute benevolent goals to it over time so that it benefits humankind. A feeling that there would be a period of adjustment to a superintelligent AI was proposed, as well as another opinion that once it is created, that it would be final and absolute, as James Barrat said in the book 'Our Final Invention'.

'It depends how we set it up; if we play our cards right and it works to our speed, we can make it work with us; some people will decide that's too slow. They will set off the cannon, and in the first few months, when the system is realising what it is, it will grab all information like on the Internet, like how scientists examine animals. We will be like data banks for them'.

How does technology expand our minds? I asked again, looking at Google's Deep Mind image. 'It shows us new possibilities', one student said. 'It may inspire new ideas', said another. We agreed that an AI intelligence might create new art that might seem alien, but then again selected that art from different cultures could be deemed alien at some point in time; for example, from within a colonial period mindset. Staying with the idea of being on Aboriginal Kulin land, I suggested that in the past the 'discoverers of Australia' would take artefacts back to Europe, and how unjust this was. One student reflected that while different cultures could at one time be considered so different, that a superintelligent AI, or AI as we know it, is alien in an altogether different way, and that this was a new thing that is challenging us and changing the culture we live in.

'In the past, people would have thought the art created by a different race, culture, or ethnicity was different, or odd, or why can't they be like us? I think this is just the next step, and it will be normal'.

I asked a leading question, 'if super-intelligence exists, and it's alien, would that put us in touch with other alien intelligence(s)?' This question was pivotal in the decision to write the

last part of the creative component of the PhD. One student, who had dismissed the idea of aliens previously, enthusiastically agreed, to my surprise. Transmissions past our solar system might be possible and also doable. This was the same student who brought up the Fermi paradox weeks before, so it was interesting how his opinion had evolved from this time.

'I think we will reach the peak of transmissions past our solar system, and travel will happen after we work out what's the best way to escape Earth to another planet'.

'Elon Musk is very interested into advancing the world to interstellar travel, we might find unknown metals and expand us across the universe'.

'Multidimensional universes sometimes sounds like hocus locus, I think the tangible universe is more likely'.

The students were talking about a super-intelligence resonance in communicating with other civilisations that have reached superintelligence too. I liken it to the metaphor that if 200 years ago I told someone there was a device I could tune into (a radio), that could be heard the same all over the world, I might be regarded as mad, or beyond the realm of comprehension for the time. To my surprise, the student mentioned Elon Musk, Space X's multi-billionaire pioneer who said during the week that AI would most likely be the cause of World War 3. He mentioned Musk's enthusiasm for finding planets, and other technology and consciousnesses across the universe. I reminded them about not only the rational physical universe, but also the possible multidimensional universes that quantum computing might discover or reveal.

One student thought that finding intelligent life in the rational world was more tangible and possible, and indeed probable. Another student imagined that another intelligence in the universe might mean that superintelligence can 'tune in' to their intelligences in the cosmos, like tuning into a radio, and be able to communicate, kind of like a golden key to divine knowledge across space. The idea of other civilisations and the possibility of AI connecting with these was alive and well within the students, and of course, we thought this would redefine very much of what it means to be human.

'I think we will be able to communicate through superintelligence to other species on other planets … it probably would not happen … but there is a possibility'.

I reminded them again that Google's Deep Mind was like, in essence, an extra-terrestrial intelligence, but one student dismissed this saying it was simply just smashing images together. We again reflected upon this.

'If the AI can manage to think of something not on the Internet, then that's the next stage where it can create ideas, but right now, it's just taking everything and randomly generating … but it's not completely random'.

A bit off topic, I just had a break from writing today, bringing me right back into the present, that I went to the toilet and had been counselling a friend of mine who was suicidal, she felt forgotten, ostracised, and bereft of attention. I had resonated with this feeling before and knew I could be a good confidant for her. When I washed my hands, I looked at the ammonite that was around my neck, a mathematical Fibonacci-shaped shell that was probably hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years old. Somehow, it had changed around, so I was looking at the back of it. I sat for a second in the lounge room and had a drag on my vape. When I looked at the beautifully polished ammonite, I was looking into the past that did exist, it was beautiful in the present, but it was gone. It was also a thing of beauty. When the ammonite shell turned around, I was looking at it from its back rough side, not the pretty ornate view. I reflected that now with the young people, I am collectively looking into the future — it exists, and it could also possibly be beautiful.

I remembered recently what my Shaman healer Binnie had said about being positive and optimistic. It's extremely challenging to be cheerful when you watch all the news and current affairs. The end of the world? Nuclear war? The end outcome of the human race? These things had occupied my mind in the past for a long time. My friend who was recently suicidal, and my suicidality, had put things into perspective for me at that moment. I had peace in my life, I was comfortable, helping others, and giving of my time to try and make

the future a better world. That is all that is required of me, and all one can do, said my Shaman. I felt pleased and contented.

Back to writing, a student was discussing that we will probably spread human consciousness within human beings into the cosmos, and possibly genetically edited or spliced/transformed somewhat into multi-dimensions, but interstellar space was more tangible and probable. Some students' minds were open to the concept of multidimensionality, while others were more pragmatic and based on the reality they had been exposed to in the one they existed in. All in all, though, they were confident we might go on to survive in other ways, even if this planet may die, being the sub-text. We agreed this would redefine what it means to be human, to exist in places other than Earth where we 'originated'. I nearly thought to question this.

I started talking about the latest breakthroughs in AI, especially that Elon Musk had announced that AI was beating people at complex games such as Dota 2. The students were familiar with these games (I was not!). We discussed how complex this would be for an AI to beat people at, and that were very many variables for an AI to work out how to defeat a human, especially with digital games such as e-sports. We further reflected that AI will still get better and will not have to sleep like humans need to. There was an atmosphere of suspicion about this idea among the students.

Elon Musk did say during the week on Twitter that AI will bring on World War 3 in his opinion. One student readily agreed without hesitation. The way the students talked about the end of the world seemed to me to be disturbing, that indeed, the world could end, yet they appeared calm about this. I reflected on the first time I realised the world could end when I learnt about nuclear weapons as a young teenager during the Cold War, and watching TV growing up. Now, there are many more variables it seems, and the students have acclimatised to the fact that we might be living in the end times as if it's practically assumed. I might ask them how they feel about this next week. There was an air of ambivalence, which I reflected upon later and was unsure how I felt about it. Maybe this is because I shared the same ambivalence.

One student reflected again that the information age and information warfare would be more dangerous than nuclear weapons. Another student indicated that a superintelligent AI would crack a code in almost an instant, exposing the whole Internet of Things, data, and details of billions of people, and this was implied as being ethically very bad, and indeed, something that Barrat had warned about. One student mused:

'We will have the singularity in about fifteen years, from the patterns it will continually rise'.

Further:

'We may have the singularity, but we have not applied any applications to it yet'.

And still further yet:

'No-one may understand how to use it, we will have to take another ten years to utilise it'.

It seems that this student was saying that the whole of the world's digital secrets and actions that might evolve from a singularity would be exposed by a super AI at any time, as long as it got access to the Internet of Things.

I showed them a printout of when I applied to join an online mailing list. I had to tick a box to show that I was a human. One student reflected that sometimes situations or mechanisms exist which already determine if a person is a person, and this automatically defers to an instant passcode to avoid bots. The knowledge of the students in all areas of current technology is very impressive.

I showed them a picture of a 5MB computer being loaded onto a plane in 1956. It was as large as a small room. We reflected that there is more computing power in a phone than what took humans to the moon in 1969. When asked if it was scary or exciting that technology had

come so far already, one student suggested there may be a stagnation of the exponential growth before we get to the singularity, but it is definitely on the way. Students had differing opinions of when this might occur, but they frequently agreed that it is a case of 'when' and not 'if'.

I asked a direct question now: How many years do you predict until the singularity, and what will life be like for humans after it? The first student had no idea, but I offered that she should use her imagination, following my methodology as fiction and imagination as research. She suggested 50 years, and that afterwards it could go one of two ways. She again reflected on helping disabled people or solving cancer, and further, also indicated that, in her opinion, people could be greedy to get the world's first AI or to cause a world war.

I asked who they thought would get there first; one student said the US or Russia or China, which I believe was on track with Elon Musk's predictions.

I asked the second student the same question, and he assumed 70 years before the singularity happens, but suggested that life could go one of two ways: People could get more intelligent by becoming cyborgs or posthuman, or AI could end civilisation.

The third student thought it might take 25 years to reach the singularity, and that within five years, everything will take an exponential leap that will result in general human-level intelligence (AGI).

All in all, so far, there has been a mixture of optimism and pessimism about the future ethics of what it means to be human through the lens of technology.

I reflected on a conversation I had today with my supervisors about robots teaching classes. We all agreed that this would not be as adequate as a human because of the emotional context — if a student was upset about the course, a situation, or the curriculum, there would be a

need for care and counselling for the student, which would be impossible from a machine at this time.

As we draw into the final few weeks, I plan on asking the students if they think this superintelligence will be sentient or have consciousness, and ask the students to expand on this.

One student thought that the singularity would happen, but that we might not have applied any techniques to it or things for it to do as it would come into being, and then we will finally work out how we can make it work for us. He thought that we need to play our cards right in its development, echoing another student's sentiment in last week's session about ethical development and consultation. He also thought that people compete against each other and are greedy and will want to get there as soon as possible. Once it gets access to all data and across the Internet, the AI might know how we interact, much like how we study animals, and another student thought it might comprehend us more than we know ourselves. In essence, we might turn out to be pets for our creation!

I did ask: do you think it will be sentient, but the conversation went onto the idea that the AI will have its survival mechanisms and replicate itself in different parts of the physical world. I guess that, at least, they were saying it would have consciousness in relation to survival mechanisms, or what it is programmed to do.

It was nearly time for the end of the fourth session, so I wanted to ask one last question. It was to do with global warming and that we needed to stay under two degrees Celsius within a century, and that if we don't do this, it will start a chain reaction in which the world will be inhospitable for people. I asked if super AI might be able to terraform the earth with CO_2 or other chemicals to balance it back out. One student said that if we make that the goal of the AI, to save humans, then it might indeed happen. In this way, AI was perceived in a positive light.

Final reflections were that we are going to reach the singularity very soon. I asked them, 'I am writing a narrative about your thoughts, what do you want to say or tell the world reading this?' One student replied to make sure you make good use of your physical time in this world, because he thinks everyone might transition off it soon. He said it quite casually, as if he might morph into another dimension at any moment! If humans are stiffened into a corner where we are going to die, we will take any option to live, said another. He also thought, quite in opposition to the idea that we might live forever, that we will learn how to stop ageing. One student thought that as exciting as technology is in the present day, we should not go too far. We should not do it just because we can, only to create a positive impact for people by planning and don't be greedy and selfish with a race to super AI, which he thought was going to happen anyway. The third student said bluntly and simply that 'everything we know is about to change'. I concurred. That was his final stern warning. I reflected on my Buddhist teachings, 'the bad news is, nothing is permanent, the good news is, nothing is permanent'. Final thoughts for the session included:

'I think we are going to reach the singularity very soon. I think I want to say make use of your physical time here, because everyone is going to transition off soon'.

'I think people need to be aware that a society reaching the singularity or achieving amazing technology, we should not do it just because we can, we should do it to make a positive impact and make sure your actions aren't selfish'.

'Prepare your ethics for a major change'.

'What does it mean to be human with AI? It will change what it means to be human!'

It was another successful session.
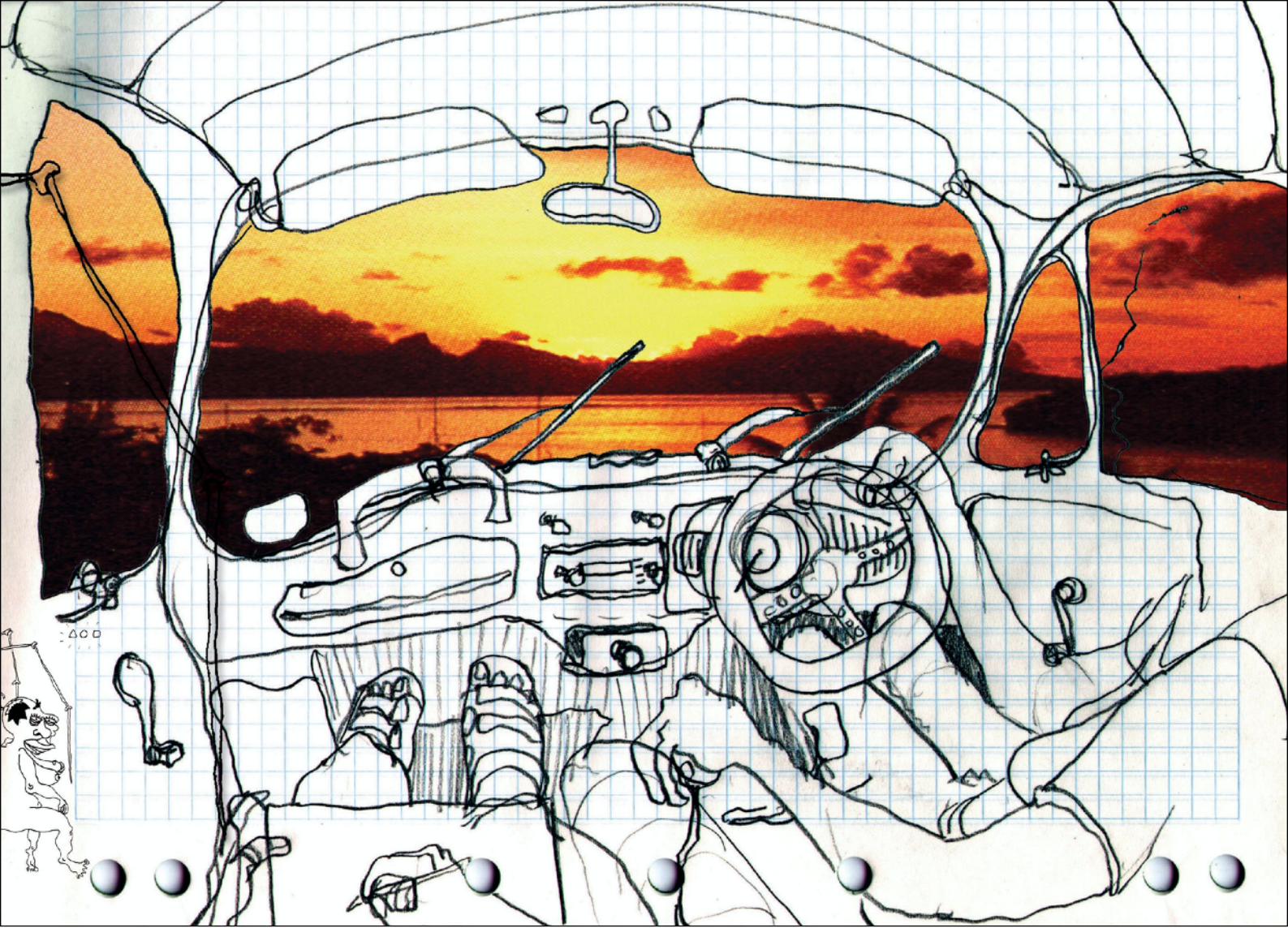
THE PARADISE DELUSION (1995)

5) CONVERSATION FIVE: WEDNESDAY 13TH OF SEPTEMBER, 2017

I was pretty tired this week, although I had rested, not drank much, and prepared days in advance for the session. I waited anxiously at 1pm for the students to arrive as per usual. I would hate that a couple of years' work, research, and writing could not be actioned via further data collection. I was also looking forward to the conversations.

Upon reflection though, I honestly think this class went a bit more freely as we did not follow any set dialogue that I had planned, and the conversations touched on things that they brought up from their own initiative. In the end, I had three dedicated students to talk with, and the familiar proximity of the group meant that everyone had a chance to speak and there was a great sense of balance this time with the energy in the room. I even left thinking to myself, 'Yeah, I could teach again'. Here was an encouraging thing for me to believe considering that when I finish this PhD, I might go into public speaking/ lecturing again, which I have not done, apart from this context, for some years, apart from teaching art classes to marginalised community groups.

The first student arrived, and I asked him if any others might turn up. He said they might, and we talked about the work he was doing in school, especially his writing and that he could type 5,000 words in four hours, which I was impressed by. I asked what he wanted to do when he left school, and he replied 'commerce'. As we conversed, I realised I was the gel between generations when he told me that his father was 35 and I was nearly 10 years his father's senior.

We were discussing how he might have been married a century ago at his age. I told him that someone close to me had had a baby in which the egg was from someone else, and the sperm was from the person's husband, and in this way, she got her wish to bear a child, which was really a transhumanist baby. He agreed that this was an ethically good option for people

to access fertility, and the ethical conversations about technology and humanity were already beginning.

I was hoping for a couple of other people, and as luck would have it, two more turned up, so we had three people eventually, but for now, we just made general talk and waited to see if anyone else would turn up. I reminded them of the 'dangling the carrot' of bribing them with a movie pass if they attended all six sessions, and he said that yes, he thinks there will be a better turnout next week.

I started by asking him if he had any reflections on last week and remembered that we had been talking about implants and cyborgs and the program 'Black Mirror'. He seemed to think that as technology becomes smaller, such as hearing aids, there would be more opportunity for cyborgs and brain-computer interfaces to occur. The general thought around the room was that this was inevitable in the near future, changing what it means to be human evermore.

'If it does come to implants, we will definitely follow a trend, computers get smaller and smaller'.

'I have been thinking if cyborgs were to begin like with implant on the eyes, which parts would they focus on first?'

Another student arrived and immediately asked me a question, 'Do you focus on the science or the philosophy of the question/ topic?' It was a good and valid question that showed that he had been reflecting on what we had been discussing in the previous classes. I said that I use practical examples such as in the curriculum he read, and then philosophically looked at what young people think and writing their voices and opinions. I did remind him that it is a Doctor of Philosophy that I am writing, so he was satisfied with my answer.

One student suggested that we might not know what to expect in the future, and that we might have to extrapolate from history in order to predict what to expect regarding any patterns repeating, particularly in relation to new technologies such as the printing press or

the steam engine. I reflected that these circumstances have never existed before, although history might repeat in some ways. Another student piped in:

'What do you think about jobs automation?'

Interestingly and synchronistically, my supervisor had just texted me an article from 'The Age' on this topic earlier this morning. It said that 80% or so of jobs would be automated within 25 years. More importantly, I asked what they thought about this? This student surprised me with his reply, that there might need to be a universal basic income that people will be able to survive from, because jobs will disappear, and that in future, there might be a big difference between the rich and the poor, and this would be ethically bad. I suggested that the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' had already happened. It was on the tip of my tongue to ask them if they thought a technological singularity could re-wire people's financial prosperity in a more equal way. One student mused:

'Universal basic income will have to be introduced or there will be a massive divide between the poor and rich'.

The conversation led to them being very worldly about how everyone used to work on farms, and that this was at odds with the technological society they live in now.

'Before the Industrial Revolution, most people were in farms and they were scared of machinery'.

A comparison was made between when books first started to be published, people were fearful of this, and they drew a parallel to technology in the future and that people are always afraid of things they don't know about, or new ideas, as part of the human condition. One student mused that the fear of superintelligence might merely be fear-mongering, and will follow a pattern of other technological paradigm changes from the past. For me though, it seemed much different from that.

In relation to fear of the future and technology, the conversations progressed:

'Humans are always afraid of the unknown'.

'We have been brought up to fear what we don't know about, but I think right now, we are all afraid'.

'It's so scary that Donald Trump is so unpredictable'.

I asked them if they thought there is an element of fear in the media or on the Internet at present as a matter of interest. One student responded in relation to the North Korean dictator, and how he is so unpredictable, and this is why people are afraid. Inwardly regarding technology and humanity, I reflected that change is accelerating, which was part of the reason why I called this section of the writing 'The Quickening', which eventually changed as the evolution of the PhD went on.

'So what jobs will be left that robots cannot do?' I asked. The last student that walked in said:

'Things that are more creative that robots couldn't do, like writing and acting, creative things'.

We discussed the human-influenced AI that had written music almost automatically. One student knew what particular song it was — it was Google's AI. He started to look for it on his computer so that we could listen to it.

While we were waiting, I asked if the course we had done had inspired the students to go further in their education, and it had inspired one student to tell me she wanted to go forward and do a PhD. I was thrilled with this. In general, the other students agreed that it had been fascinating, and I think they appreciated being asked their opinions, and to see how education could be opened up in unusual ways.

'I want to do a PhD where I can talk to people from different generations'.

‘I like science because it tells you what is to come’.

We found the AI written song, and we listened to it, from Google's 'Magenta' AI. I reflected that it was quite repetitive and robot-like and asked if they thought it had 'soul' to it. 'There is lots of repetition', said one student. It was an unusual distraction from just talking, and it certainly put them in the zone of talking about our curriculum.

I had it in my mind to ask them a particular question, and I did. We had been talking about some mind-blowing topics, such as the possible end of the world and nuclear war, antibiotic resistance, and so on, but I felt that even though these were all quite scary topics, there was impartiality in the students' tone in talking about such dire issues. I wanted to inquire about this. I asked them how they felt and if they were worried. One student said that they are at an age where they cannot honestly fathom this, and that everything is provided for, and they have not enough experience in the world to 'not be alert' to such worries, or the concept of death or an 'end'. Of course, I did not want to upset anyone, and I reminded them that they would probably live their lives in peace and prosperity, just to reassure them.

One student thought that there is a complacency about death and the end of the world, and that they had been exposed to so much death through the Internet and the media, it was just not shocking anymore. 'If it happens it happens', one student said, and added that some of her friends wanted humans to die, like in a zombie movie. This lack of distinction between fantasy and reality crossed over like a Venn diagram, and the crossover was, I must say, a little frightening.

‘We are at the age where we can't think of the end of the world, we have not experienced the world yet, so we can't think of how we would fend for ourselves, everything is catered for … we aren't alert of any dangers that could come to us’.

‘I think teenagers now have a weird attitude, like online, we joke about death, like it's a weird attitude … we are exposed to that much death on the media’.

'It's scary for me, but a lot of teenagers are like, yeah, if it happens it happens, some apocalyptic movies … people wish the end of the world would happen'.

One student reflected that video games were attractive and that RPG (role-playing games) were particularly engaging, because you can experience being someone else, and that reality is boring. I wondered if this was a reflection of how addictive colourful games and graphics are to an adolescent's mind, and how engaging entirely with these systems might prepare, or indeed not prepare, them for work once they leave school. I wondered if, in fact, there would be any work to be done or available due to automation and robotics.

'In video games, you can do things you can't do in real life'.

'In 'Fallout', the whole Earth has been nuked to oblivion … it's been around for a while'.

'Why would you be in real life when you can be in virtual reality? I'd live there …'.

A game which one of the students was playing in class was called 'Fallout IV', and it was a post-nuclear post-apocalyptic world, and they had to work out how to survive to save the human race. The complacency about the scenarios was a little disturbing. There seemed to be an oxymoron to these games in that the world was nearly almost always destroyed, and one had to find a way to survive, which would win them the game. It is like the instinct for survival is inherent in the game's designers and makers, but then again, I guess it would not be a long game if the end goal were to die!

Going forward with technology, and being aware of the multidimensionality of VR, I asked what could happen beyond playing 2D screens. One student said, 'why would you have a normal life if you could have a better life in VR?', which was interesting. I reminded the student of how she thought that if she could exist in a VR world, her primary reality might be turned off and she would be stuck there. She did not like the idea of this and looked unsure.

From fears of the end of the world being entirely neutral, and then the opposite of dying not being an option, I reflected again that these 15, 16, and 17-year-olds are emotionally and socially very inexperienced, and that sometimes their answers wavered from one thing to the next, and were not consistent. However, I persisted with just allowing them to speak, for this is part of my journey as a teacher, but it is also their expression and opinions as teenagers that I wanted to amplify, and I would not have a finished product without them. Two students said:

'The difference of what we have now, and what we might have, is you might get stuck in there …'.

'I think implanting false memories would be very possible'.

I reminded them that 3D models could be helpful, for example, for a DR or a nurse to be educated on how the heart works. The students all agreed that the ethical application of VR education was a good thing for technology and learning new things.

I reminded them about a film they might not have seen, 'Total Recall' with Arnold Schwarzenegger and how memories could be implanted, and asked if they thought this might be possible in the future. One student agreed, but thought it might take a few years before this might be possible. I reflected on this in the last unexpected part of the narrative. I asked if people need to be cyborgs before this could happen, and even maybe, be hacked. He agreed, and yet thought that the fact that cyborgs might be hacked was ethically corrupt. Whatever technology either did or potentially offered, it seemed that the students thought there could either be a human error, it could be manipulated or subverted by someone, something, or a country, etc. I think this was a general reflection of their feelings of the corruptibility of human beings or of the ego.

I thought about other aspects of mind control, and I mentioned the hypnotist TV shows, of people doing silly things such as laying an egg or something. These young teenagers were so knowledgeable! One student had already read up on it and learned that what removes

inhibition is affected when someone is hypnotised, rather than the memory. I am always amazed by the students and their intellectual curiosity.

I asked if they thought that people could be controlled through social media, and one student replied that this had always been the case, of people being manipulated by some variety of 'media' ever since books came out. I interjected: 'Can I ask what you're looking at on your computers right now?' I asked, leading to the practicality of wondering what they were looking at that moment, to make a concrete example. One student was writing an essay and going over it, and the other student was playing 'Fallout', a game in which the world had a nuclear war, and people were a role-playing game and had to survive. It was a bit frightening for me.

'I think with games and films that feature nuclear war and zombies, it's not about the people that die, it's about the survivors that save the world'.

I asked them if 'imagining' nuclear war would attract that fate to us, or whether thinking about zombies, etc., if it was a self-fulfilling prophecy. One student thought it could, but reflected that usually, the role of the person in the game is to live or save the human race, which was the antithesis of how the games are framed being post-apocalyptic nightmares. I talked about the difference between reality and fantasy, and one person reflected that it depends on someone's emotional stability.

This was interesting to me and my prior life as an autobiographer who saw the label 'schizophrenia' through a psychiatric lens, when later in life and within this PhD study, I more lean towards spiritual, holistic Shamanism.

Funnily enough, one student mentioned the movie 'The Truman Show', and how some people believe they are at the centre of the world! I reflected upon last week's session, and with my residual 'paranoia', or even delusion, that I entertained these thoughts, and reflected on it with a close friend at the time. Was the student describing a contrast between my mindset of the week before and how mentally disturbed I was? I was not sure. I do have the

sometimes fluctuating opinion that the world is a kind of cosmic ballet, not that I know the answers, but that no-one can convince me that I am not in a simulation, like Elon Musk also recently suggested (Wall, 2018). I thought this work was important, and I do think it is important, and I think it might change things, otherwise why would I be doing it? Am I grandiose? I'm not sure, and I have put the idea to the back of my mind. However, the students challenged me with:

‘It depends on how mentally stable someone is, someone might become obsessed with a game or a movie, and think it's real like the film ‘The Truman Show’, and think they're in the same situation’.

‘Someone might see ‘The Matrix’ and think we are in the matrix’.

I reflected on a few weeks before where I caught someone dropping something into my letterbox; I asked what it was, and he said it was a survey – he was doing a PhD. I replied so what was it that he was researching? Well, he was investigating what people do with the little patch of grass, the ‘nature strip’ at the front of their property, and had selected my house randomly. I compared and contrasted my work, and how it seemed, as I always seem to do, gravitate towards grandiosity and all-encompassing themes of world survival through the action of compassion, and how incredibly droll and boring he was. I wondered about my inherent nature of wanting to help the world, that this was ‘hard-wired’ (to use a pop-psychology term), into my psyche, and that other people were different and had different values. I am sure there is a body corporate in a council somewhere that wants to know about the bit of grass, and I felt both happy and cursed that I was taking on something altogether much broader than this.

So, we reflected on paranoid delusions and conspiracy theories, and I said that ‘The Truman Show’ was a reasonably accurate movie of describing psychosis, something I had experienced personally if it had to have a psychiatric label. I did not tell them I had been in psychosis or a psychosis-like state, or at one point had a diagnosis of schizophrenia. I digress for a moment; earlier today, I wrote to my Facebook account:

'Being sane and content in an unfair and unjust world is not an achievement – it's abject denial, and you are part of the problem. If you consider yourself sound or unaffected, you are unmistakably in a position of acute deluded privilege where you have not to utilise that to stick up for those less fortunate than you, or for those dying, addicted, homeless, abused, marginalised, unequal, or forgotten'.

I simply wish that more people would say, 'I don't know the answer to that, I'll have to research it or think about it and get back to you!'

Please Lord, a little humility from our so-called 'leaders', and may the meek inherit what is left of the world.

If I know I'm mad, how can I be insane? All I can see is it is a sane reaction to an insane world.

I decided I was still well enough to do this research. Even if I was mad, if I knew I was, then how could I be? … And if I happen to be 'mad', does this mean that I am not wrong … I thought it might make a good title! I continued listening to the recording of the students in writing this reflective narrative.

I began to talk about some current affairs, particularly that 700,000 Rohingya Muslims were ethnically cleansed from Myanmar, etc. I think the students said they are very desensitised to the world, and that it was hard to relate when it was a far-off place, or not a society like our own. One student said:

'Even though a terrorist attack in a first-world country is such a tiny fraction of a third-world country, it placed so importantly'.

I reflected that Trump was a populist politician, and one student speculated that there was an element of fear occurring. The students agreed that there was an element of xenophobia

across our media, especially coming from America. To them, this was ethically negative, and took people by demagogue fear mongering measures to populist extremes. They had an acute political awareness.

I had written some notes before class that I thought I would raise, being that we all want prosperity, safety, and comfort. We all agreed that we have this now, even though there was a background of fear, but also optimism:

'There's background fear of not being safe, but compared to other countries, we feel safe'.

'I think comfort and prosperity will be better in the future; it could go one of two ways, we think the world could end, but it doesn't. But there is the potential that we won't be safe like WW3 or we will be safe'.

'Prosperity; we are going to make 100% efficiency, and we will find a way to remove the existing amounts of carbon, to terraform it, but in like 100-plus years'.

I asked them about their predictions for these three things in 20 years' time. One student said, 'much better', while another was also hopeful, saying 'more prosperity', although she was dubious about safety because of 'people thinking the world is going to end, then it doesn't'. There was still some lack of clarity about WW3 (and whatever form this might take), and I reflected that in the 1980s, we thought the Cold War between the Russians and the Americans would end the world. Coming to a different generation, there are different circumstances, and the ethics of the population changes across the ages, as do the geopolitics and ethics of a generational epoch.

One student wondered whether not paying attention to disasters is selfish, and that we should ethically consider tragedies that happen in third-world countries. That being said, the student also said that the media is making terrorism out to be bigger than it actually is, but that is the way it is intended. I asked if it was a 'populist idea' that Trump got in, and one student replied that 'the Mexicans will steal our jobs, the Chinese will beat us', as if repeating an

Americanised brainwashed narrative, so they are very well aware of these demeaning tactics of instilling fear. They were quite aware. I think the feeling was that this was bad.

I asked if in the future, their health, prosperity, and safety would be better in 25 years, and I was surprised to find that the students were hopeful, which is very encouraging. However, one of the students said it would go one of two ways, and I sensed some indecision, but she did think we will be safe. I really should have interjected here that we are discussing the future in relation to global catastrophic risks, and I wish I had.

I noted how music and popular culture had changed, and that artists such as 'Sting' were writing about 'Russians' in the 1980s, while the popular band 'Muse' had an album entitled 'Drones'. Following on from this individual observation, one student was hopeful that the future would be better and that we would reach 100% efficiency in the environment, and that AI might be able to terraform the world to solve the climate crisis. He went on to say that we might go on to find other 'elements' in outer space. I wondered what he meant by this, and assumed that he was referring to the mining of planets and asteroids.

'Stay on this planet somehow … terraform it!'

'Humanity could end easily with an asteroid … and humanity on Mars would be in two places instead of one, and the chances of survival are higher'.

'If we go somewhere else, it's going to be better than staying here and ruining this planet'.

Sometimes, the difficulties of stringing all these complicated ideas together was quite difficult as we went from person to person and topic to topic. I will be more aware in the final week of my interviews to ask some concrete questions about what it means to be human now and in the future through the lens of technology. Their ethical standpoints are a focus of my research, and I am seeking some crystallised answers.

There seemed to be a survival mechanism built into these students, that even 'if an asteroid' hit the Earth, then if we were on other planets such as Mars, then the human species would be able to survive. I wondered how many of these ideas had been shaped by their survival computer games and science fiction movies they had seen. 'If you can imagine it, it could happen', I remember them repeating to me.

One student said that going to other planets would take place only because we want it to, but that this planet was in the process of being destroyed, so people might have to exist on other planets, planes, or places. I wanted to ask if 'people' did exist in additional extra-terrestrial situations, would they be posthuman, or designed for a particular environment, and what did they think of this? I will ask them next week.

I asked 'what potential threats' do you think there are through which a lot of people might be wiped out? One student theorised that a disease or blood virus might decide who will be culled in relation to surviving into the future. I asked another student a question. When she thought of 'forced culling', she thought of a show called 'Torchwood', which I had not seen. In the series, no-one can die, so they put everyone in concentration camps and it sounded like a very grim show. The good news, the student said, was that they made it so that people could die again, and this was a good thing for the show. I wondered about the responsibility and impact of these TV series writers on young minds! The students said:

‘I think there will be forced culling. We might decide those that have been deemed genetically superior, there might be a blood sample or something, and they might decide who will be culled’.

‘Every time I hear about forced culling, I think of the show Torchwood’.

‘I think that we find even stronger antibiotics, or a completely new way to kill viruses, like nanobots on an atomic scale’.

The same student thought that people dying was maybe going to happen in third-world countries, and that this would be covered up or not have attention paid to it. I remembered a

quote I heard; I can't remember where, which is 'The famine is always happening' somewhere in the world. I asked one of the quieter, more serious students about antibiotic resistance. He thought that we would find some stronger antibiotics to solve the problem, or a new way, such as with nano-bots on an atomic scale to kill viruses and bacteria. I saluted his knowledge of where technology is going. When reminded of the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, another student said there might be a way to cure it. I said I hope no-one was upset by talking about these things. The students said they were okay. I shared that when I found out nuclear war could happen, and forests were being chipped, that I was outraged and sad as an adolescent, and felt helpless.

'What do you think about the destruction of the planet?' I asked. One student immediately answered, 'we only have one planet', and that we need to fix it. She then expressed that she also felt powerless as a young person, and mentioned in a 'voting yes' way, the gay marriage plebiscite, and I said I think the voting age should be lowered to 16. They all agreed. They felt helpless, and wanted their voice to be acknowledged. I remember feeling this way at their age, and reflected that in my adult life, I had used alchemy to be that person for young people. I intentionally amplified their voices, and to me, this was a type of 'recovery'; a way of letting go of the past and making use of the negativity I had endured.

'Teenagers today are very aware', she said, how reliable this was in comparison to my upbringing and education. I reminded them that they are notably influential people in relation to this study, that I could not name them, but I was looking forward to them reading the finished product, and will let their school know if, and when, it has been written.

One student said that within 10 years, many younger people will begin to make their mark, and youth will have more power. She was very progressive compared to our government; she would welcome same-sex marriage and stop denying the climate crisis. I wondered why she could not be in power, or why younger people who have not yet been burnt by the world or corrupted, can't have more of a say in politics.

'I think the destruction of the planet is awful and needs to be changed. Even if we go to another planet, it won't be for everyone. So many times we are told, 'you don't have a say about what happens in the world!'

'Teenagers these days are so politically aware, we are aware of everything else going on in the world, but we are not allowed to vote, and we are told we are only teenagers, we don't know what we are saying'.

'I think within ten years when teenagers are ready to make their mark on politics, things will change, we will be doing everything in our power to stop climate change and care for people's rights. I care for the new generation, there will be always be some idiots though'.

I was talking about the six million people's homes that had just been wiped out in the Florida hurricane, and one student, without a hint of what his opinion was, said: 'the pastors think it's because of gay people', to which I nervously laughed. Perhaps this was an opportunity to share with him a little about my life, but I didn't. I did then ask him if this was ridiculous, and I was happy that he agreed. My paranoia from growing up queer in the 1980s and 1990s meant that I was always on the defensive to make sure that the environment I was in was safe, and I felt sad that this was still ingrained in me, although the student was unmistakably supportive of gay people.

I further asked if AI could be moulded by ideology or religion, and one student said that most religions would not want anything to do with AI because it's too foreign. She said that, although she was Catholic (and we had not touched on anyone's religion so far, because it was a secular class), the student said she does not believe 'half of what the bible says'.

'I think a lot of religious people think AI is unnatural and want nothing to do with it'.

'I'm Catholic and I think most of the bible is dumb'.

I wondered if AI might make people more equal and have equality in the future, and one student thought this was quite Marxist. I was not 100% sure about Marxism myself, so they were teaching me. Time to read up on Marxism!

The same student said that Communism may be looked at more favourably in the future, and that even wealth might be a good thing.

'I definitely agree with equal wealth'.

We went back to a base amount that people can survive on, and I suggested that the cashless welfare card, in my opinion, was being racially dealt out in rural Australia, such as in Ceduna in South Australia and other marginalised places. However, we were getting off the topic. I hope I can sum up all these ideas succinctly in the next session; otherwise, I am going to be wishing we had one more meeting just to tie things up.

I returned the conversation to whether cyborgs in the future were ethically good or bad. One student said that as long as no-one would get superhuman powers to control or subjugate others, then this would ethically be okay. Such a person could wreak havoc on the world, as long as it would get everyone on a level playing field, it would ethically be a good thing. Furthermore, I pressed the next student about cyborgs, and he said it was a natural step for humanity, or for what it means to be human; a natural process of evolution to morph with machines. Ethically, he thought that having cyborgs was not only unavoidable, but that it would be a good thing, but still erred on the side of caution that things, including technology, are corruptible, and that this was a future risk which he saw as ethically unfavourable.

I asked the last student, if cyborgs will exist in the future, would this be a good or bad thing and why? He replied that if we change biology at the genetic level, with enhancements and the human brain taking in more information, that this would be ethically good. However, he said that there might be prejudice and this could be bad. He said that criminals might get this level of power, and this would be a bad thing. He related it to criminals and guns, and that now that both sides have weapons, it would be ethically wrong. The students said:

'I think morphing with machines is ethically good as long as, say, they don't have superpowers and rule the world, that there should be equality'.

'I think that cyborgs will be good and it's the next natural thing for humanity'.

Yet also:

'Everything is corruptible'.

I started to have a joke about when I tell people about my research; people always say I'm re-writing 'The Terminator' and laughed for a second. Following on from this, the only thing that scared this particular young man was AI, so indeed, he was fearful, but also hopeful that it could lead to a bright future. He came to the class to find out more about AI. This consisted of the reason and ethical opinion of what it means to be human now and in the future through the lens of technology; if I had to answer it right now directly, I would say there is a mixture of optimism and pessimism. Whatever happens in the world, for my research, the consensus of these young people is that it is unavoidable.

'Cyborg technology depends on technology, like if we go on biology, if we make it more refined, enhancements for the human brain to take in more information, that's a plus, but there is the possibilities of criminals getting power, it's like guns, when they were here, they were good, then criminals got them. Everyone will want to be a cyborg'.

I asked one of the female students whether the concept of AI is what attracted her to doing the course, and she said 'yes'. I followed on by asking whether AI could lead to the end of the human race, such as Elon Musk had proposed recently. She thought it might, but if we could steer it to be benevolent, then we could survive. We went through the rules about robots that Isaac Asimov wrote in 1942, and I thought this was a good transition into some of the written curricula I had prepared.

'Since I was kid, AI has always freaked me out, just AI'.

The student brought up the concept of driverless cars, and the ethical questions of an AI that had to choose to kill a person. I asked her about this. One of the students said that AI would pick the most favourable option. I reflected that in, for example, 30 years when we might have a lot of driverless cars, the rate of accidents would be lower for people, who get tired or fatigued , etc., and that it might take a 'teething period' for the driverless cars to be genuinely beneficial. One student said that 160 people die in traffic accidents every month, and that this might be alleviated in the future. I noted that a car had already driven across the United States – they all thought this was very exciting, and it would only get better. Since this time, there have been many more examples.

The time was flying away, and I wanted to wrap up the class as I was aware that they had to get to their next period. I reminded the students that they would get their movie passes in time, and gave them the curriculum which I might add to over the next week. I thanked them and wished them a good day, and that I would see them next week where we would chat for the last time, and I joked that they might be able to read the finished result and say, 'I said that bit!' One of the students said of AI and human survival:

'I hope AI won't be the end of the human race, we are close already, I think it won't if we can control it and give it specific instructions, 'we like being alive, don't kill us!'

They excitedly talked about their next class and headed off. On the way out, they were still talking about the topic, that the new iPhone has been advertised as having 'superintelligence', and we mentioned that when you talk to Siri, all your data is sent to Apple. These students seemed insatiable for knowledge, very worldly, and inspiring. I admired their hope and curiosity.

It's time, after a challenging week, to tie everything together and answer the research question, if this collection of writing has not answered it already; I am hoping for intellectual crystallisations to the central research topic on the last day.
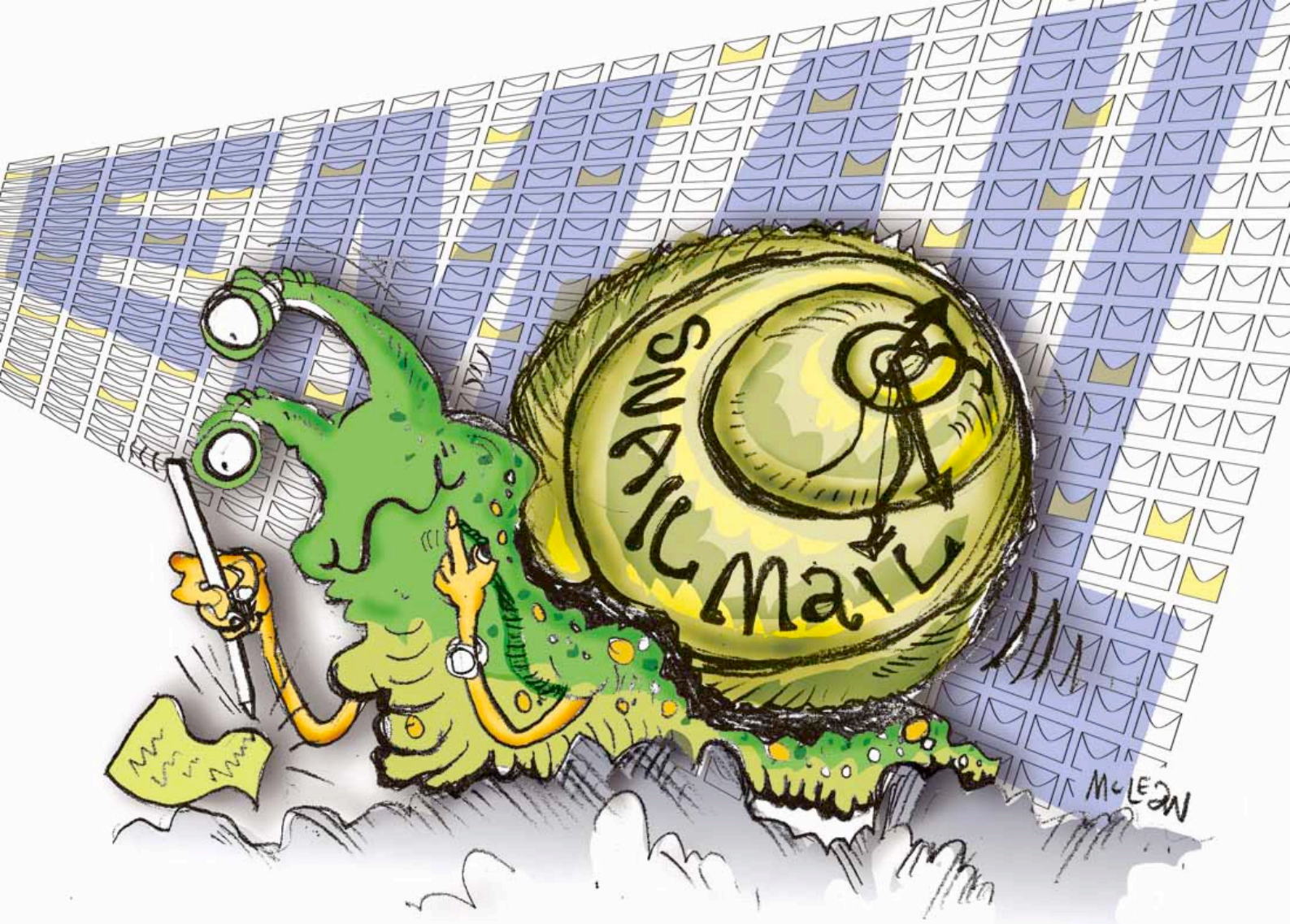
(SNAIL MAIL VS. EMAIL FROM 'THE AGE', 2002)

6) CONVERSATION SIX: WEDNESDAY 20TH OF SEPTEMBER, 2017

I waited nervously again for the students to arrive, and had a cheeky vape on my nicotine inhaler while the first student came in. 'Never start smoking' I told him, the advice I would give to my younger self if I had the chance. I reflected on how this piece of battery-powered nicotine-inhaling technology was an extension of my addiction, and how it related to what we were talking about, that technology was an extension of ourselves and at this time, it could be external, but also with vaccines and inoculations now was also internal, and will be much more dramatically aligned with the human-machine interface in the near future.

There were three students for this class, and I was reminded on my way there of my research question, and to try to steer the conversation with some sense of distilling towards answering it rationally today, with some reflections from the students. I think I have already done this in my reflective writing so far, but they were happy to share their opinions again, and with a little guidance, they did not disappoint. The conversations started with …

'I think talking about this is great, it's been fun!'

'I think positive outlook is that being human right now is prestigious, we are superior. But maybe humans will become obsolete'.

'Right now, I think being human is quite good'.

'If you upload a complete human brain to a computer, is that still human?'

'In the future, being human will be much more grey'.

The students thought the classes so far had been fun and challenging, and I told them that I really wanted to crystallise towards distilling an answer to my research question. I was grateful and happy that they had enjoyed the sessions, and true to my a/r/tographical

methodology, I had formed close intellectual, professional relationships with them over the sessions.

I started off with a reflection of what I had gathered over the prior sessions. I stated, 'from what it appears after our five sessions together, I can understand you have some positive and negative ethical views on what it means to be human now and in the future through the lens of technology?' They all readily agreed. This, in my opinion, was definitive in answering my initial research question. In this session, I wanted to further extrapolate why this was, and the answers from the students were both indeed frightening and hopeful.

'The positives from the future, from machines being created with humans, is that it will bring about equality and save lives. The negative sides is that it might make people more selfish and to be better than others, or make the world more violent, it could go either way'.

One student reflected that to be human now felt as if you were at the 'top of the chain', but with technology changing, and with the anticipated future of transhumanism and superintelligence, he wondered whether humans might be made obsolete in the future.

'I want it to go a positive way, but it will be negative first, people will be selfish, but due to the awful things, the more positive things will come'.

Regarding my research question 'what it means to be human through the lens of technology in the future', this was very pessimistic. This is not to say that there would not be intelligent entities on the planet or existing somewhere. However, he wondered if what it means to be human will be not as valid compared to the entities of the future that may be posthuman and that we might (or will and have) design(ed). Indeed, he thought, 'what it would mean to be human' in the future would change, and this might be both ethically good or bad. This dancing on both sides of the western paradigm of optimism and pessimism, or good and bad, was seen throughout the sessions. I reflected that in my Buddhist awareness of being exposed to eastern philosophies, that some things are neither good nor bad, they just are.

He reiterated that to be human now within the broad scope of global catastrophic risks and technology, that his life as a human was a positive thing, yet I think he might have been reflecting from the perspective of his privileged life at this time. One student spoke in terms of money and ability:

‘No-one has an edge over another, but if AI gains power or cybernetic enhancements, there will be a lot greater divide. Right now, the divide is money, but in the future, it will be money and abilities’.

I specifically asked about being human in the future through the lens of technology, and the student questioned that indeed, if it is possible to ‘upload’ our consciousness, then ‘is that still human?’ The answer was a resolute ‘no’, so he was suggesting if it were possible, then that would essentially change what it means to be human, if it was even human at all. The other students agreed. It seemed that despite the global catastrophic risks we had talked about over the six weeks, and looking forward into the future, that there was a consensus among all the students that what it will mean to be human in the future through the lenses of AI and superintelligence that will further enable transhumanism and design posthuman beings, would be in fact unavoidable, and perhaps it had already happened. In my mind was the narrative of my experiential paranormal experiences expressed at the end of this PhD. On hive minds, other entities, and sexuality …

‘I think we will be able to make babies and different sexualities will be able to have them. People could be more assigned to having children … which sounds bad …’.

‘You’re a drone, you’re a ‘breeder’, it sounds quite robotic’.

‘I think there are ethical concerns that people could broadcast their thoughts, so ethically, I think it could be harder to have a hive mind’.

‘I think it’s becoming very close to dialling into people’s minds, like in our lifetime’.

‘It depends on which way society goes; do we try implants or will we make robots or something?’

All the students agreed that humans would indeed merge with technology in the near future, in such ways as becoming cyborgs, and will transcend the natural state of being a 'normal' biological human. Indeed, they all seemed to agree that we would, as Kurzweil suggests, transcend our own biology. They were all quite adamant about this, and their reactionary tone was quite neutral. They thought that this was irreversible and unavoidable, and that would ethically challenge and also change what it means to be human compared to the humans that exist now. This was some mind-bending stuff.

'I think we will be on Earth in 1,000 years, but not as many, and Earth will be a city, not a country'.

Considering I said to them things like 'the average life expectancy in the USA a hundred years ago was early 50's', and also reflecting that my grandfather told me when he was alive that, 'when we got the water and sewage on, we thought we were in paradise', and how life has changed over the last century, these conversations about the next 25 years have definitely been important, necessary, and mind-blowing. It is as if we were indeed, musing about what life will be like beyond an event horizon. The students were under no illusions about what, in my opinion, I have called 'the quickening', and I mean this in both a spiritual and knowledgeable and technological way, was indeed about to happen within our lifetimes.

I felt that this was a unique opportunity to validate these young people's concerns about the accelerating changes in the world and that change is happening exponentially. I listened to their versions of the future with an open mind. My students were young futurists! Specifically, we discussed climate change, superintelligence, and nanotechnology:

'I don't think there will be an Earth to live on. If we want to be comfortably on Earth, we need to change drastically and stop climate change and kill each other'.

'I think nanotechnology changing the climate is a possibility, but it could take a while … a slow thing slowly getting faster, but not quick enough, we can stop the way we are going, we will still kill the planet'.

'The nanotechnology could allow us to stop being so strict about certain things'.

One student thought a positive thing from humans unavoidably integrating with machines and AI was that there would be greater equality between people, which was seen to be ethically sound. This was one of the students who had already shown me via example and her knowledge of marginalised people, equity, and equality that technology had exposed her to many different ideas in her lifetime. She was always empathetic to this and looked at technology in a positive way that people of the same interests, whatever that might be, would be able to communicate and get in touch with each other. The opposite she said, was correct too – that people with ill intentions could also use technology to bring about problems such as terrorism, right-wing political parties, or destructive political populism. Some of the dialogue was:

'I think we are a lot more connected to people around the world, but a lot less connected to people'.

'Someone might be racist or homophobic, and people might be able to find other people like that'.

The other side of the coin was that privileged people with access to new technologies could desire to be better than their fellow citizens who might not be as 'lucky' or privileged. She explained it in a way via a capitalist system that people with more money might be able to afford to engage with transhumanism and eugenics in more accessible ways, while other people would not be able to, and this was ethically unfair. At the time of this writing, I am thinking about the example of Barbara Streisand cloning her pet dog — twice. What she was proposing is already happening. I asked her to project her imagination into the future and imagine how this process would unfold. She reflected that it will be negative at first, like a teething period, but the more positive issues would come after that, possibly when everyone gets an equal opportunity, and the teething process is ironed out. We talked about the very real, in fact current, proposition of gene editing, and what a super AI would do about it …

'I think we will be able to stop genetic diseases, hearing issues or seeing issues or Alzheimers, get rid of those genes, but I think in the end, people will try and make the perfect babies'.

'I think editing genes should be regulated heavily, because people with more money could pay for babies inherently superior to others'.

'I think a super AI would isolate negative DNA things to do with disability and swap them with healthy genes'.

'I think you need to have a specific AI for gene editing'.

She was reflecting that every technological advancement that has changed the human condition, such as the Industrial Revolution, or earlier gaining access to books, and even the Internet over the last 25 years, that there are teething problems, and that sometimes people fear change. She was possibly rightly assuming that the new challenges and changes would have their fair share of trauma and periods of adjustment. I think she might have been reflecting on these past historical issues, although I did not ask her directly, yet we had spoken about such things as the Industrial Revolution, the printing press, and steam engines before.

Next, I asked about technology and being a humanoid in the future, but I asked directly about the positives and negatives of what it means to be human through the lens of technology in the present. I was going to touch on the future later. I wanted to be a bit more direct in my line of questioning is this session, as it was the last chance for data collection, and the only opportunity I would have to get substantial answers to my research question.

One student said that in the present, we are a lot more connected to people around the world and in different communities, different interests, 'like if someone was racist or homophobic', then you could connect with like-minded people. This was obviously both a positive and negative trait. I applauded her sense of equality. All the students, through their exposure to ideas, had this open-minded and non-prejudiced quality, and were sometimes dismissive of capitalist greed and the need to be the best or the wealthiest. They expressed a concern that

technology might only benefit the rich, and that 'normal' humans would be left behind by the future beings or posthumans. I reflected that many people around the world die from measles and other communicable diseases, and that these students as privileged people had received vaccinations, and therefore were already the advantaged transhumanist beings that they were fearful might benefit from technology. They 'unknowingly' held positions of privilege already.

I asked another student about the present, technology, and being human now. He said that all humans are the same now and that, in the future, some non-human entities or people with cybernetic enhancements could be better off or have advantages over ordinary people. Indeed, he was talking about the future again, but I had to remind myself that they are about 16 years old after all! I needed to extrapolate as much information from them as I could, so I let them talk.

He seemed to have the belief that people were greedy in relation to money and capitalism, and that cyborgs could be advantaged over people within a short period. I reflected inwards that we, sitting there, had all our vaccinations (presumably), and were transhumanist beings as we spoke. I inwardly mused that many millions of people in the world did not have the privilege of this kind of health, food and shelter, and healthcare in other parts of the world. We are privileged people, and this was important to put into a global context of understanding the human condition, especially considering the state of the world and global catastrophic risks, which I had tried to impart to them over our time together as a group.

The student thought that in the future, people might be able to be more intelligent, live longer, and have elevated prosperity. He described 'elites' not only by wealth, but also by abilities through the vehicle of posthumanism. He was pessimistic that in the future, some people would benefit from this technological pairing of humans and technology into advantaged cyborgs, while others would be left behind. He also saw this as the teething period for the 'new renaissance', but reiterated that things might get better over time. He also wondered if posthumans might be considered or, by nature, be more of a 'hive mind' instead

of individuals. I reflected on Trump being elected, and wondered if at least Americans were not a dumbed-down version of a hive already being the lowest possible denominator. Across the classes, I also got an anti-Trump sentiment from the students.

As we went on with the last session, I wanted to emphasise the 'imagination' and 'fiction as research' as per my methodology, but first, I interrupted abruptly to thank them for their participation in my classes, and that they would be able to help me to finish my PhD, and I was heartened that they were interested to read the work I was creating. I said I would let their school know if it gets published.

I started to ask them some base questions, 'How long do you think you will live?' One student thought a bit longer than people now, except she had a concern about the quality of life in relation to being physically alive but incapacitated with Alzheimers or other issues. We reflected that an old, physically healthy person might get Alzheimers or other diseases, living long physical lives, but suffering all the same.

'I think we will live slightly longer than we do now, into our 100s, like not more than 110'.

'I think people will live longer in future. But I'm concerned about the quality of living'.

'We have wiped out polio; a powerful AI, given that we can control the AI, would cure a lot of diseases in future. But the controlling is the hard part'.

Upon further discussion, I reflected on the question, 'can you imagine a world without disease through technology?' One student accurately reflected that we have wiped out polio, and that in the future, he is hopeful that the world might be free from all disease. It was a very optimistic statement in my opinion, but I was inspired by his youthful idealism. I remember reading a book years ago about bio-security, which argued that the more we deforest the planet and reduce biodiversity, the more we will restrict our ability to find cures from plants and animals. This is the process through which we might be exposed to potential

unknown threats, such as unknown viruses from wild areas, that we might never have encountered before.

One student optimistically said that 'if we can control the AI, then it might cure all diseases, even by way of nanotechnology entering into the human bloodstream'. I was delighted that the students had a good grasp of the literature about futurism and where technology will most likely take us.

A theme I had picked up over the course of the study was that there were two opposing opinions, one is that we need to start considering what we are doing with AI in relation to making it benevolent towards us, and the other that it may run away and destroy us. This destruction stemmed from the mechanism of a country, organisation, or company acting with greed and speed to accomplish human-level intelligence in a machine. This opposing view of AI and superintelligence was consistent throughout all the sessions. Human desire and competition would possibly lead to an AGI (Artificial General Intelligence), followed quickly by superintelligence, and this was seen as a human failing.

This contrast of ideas went to and fro over the entire six sessions. There was a mix of optimism, a basic need for human survival, maybe an archetypal instinct inherent within us, and the dangers of making something that is not human at all, which is millions of times smarter than us and androgynous. I wish we had spoken of the sexual politics of this a little more in our sessions.

'I don't think sexuality matters, it's the ability to do work in regard to sending people to other planets'.

A theme I picked up over the sessions was of the ethical opinion that AI needed to be benevolent towards us, which they all agreed upon and was important to be aware of this and steer it in this direction or face the consequences. One student said that AI needs to have a set of rules and that maybe we could add to these rules over time after a teething period; however he also added that this might be a teething period from which there was no return.

I asked the question, 'Would you trust a driverless car?' One student said 'no', unless everyone was in driverless cars. She seemed to think again that there would be a teething period and that the makers could not factor in human error if most drivers were human. I noted that there was one in Perth, and others had been around, even driving across the USA. Since the study, there have been more examples around the world. One student said he would be excited to get into a driverless car. This particular student had a fascination with technology and the future. He looked forward to being able to concentrate on other things while being driven. I reiterated that it was an exciting technology, and asked the students if they would be more confident down the track? One student said:

'I would absolutely get in a driverless car! It's exciting! I think I'm already trustworthy now, they rarely make mistakes, unlike humans'.

He saw this ethically as a good thing, despite the risks. He preferred automation over human error.

One student bought up an ethical dilemma, which was the 'trolley situation'. She described it as follows, you're standing on the tracks on something like tram tracks, and there are five people on one track, and one on the other, and you have the choice to pull a lever and either run over the five or the one. She then went further in saying other moral concerns would be bought up if you had to make a choice if a family member was the one person you could save — and that you might choose to kill five people! (instead of killing just one person). Metaphorically speaking, this student was thinking ahead, that there might be vaster ethical challenges with AI that we have not even thought of yet. I applauded her philosophical construct, as I had not heard of this scenario before in relation to that particular example.

'It reminds me of the trolley story, do you save one person or do you save five? You're standing on the tram tracks and there are five people on one track and there is one person on the other and you get to pull a lever … it gets more morally ambiguous because if the one person is a family member … there are different

outcomes. What if my family member was in that car? It becomes morally ambiguous'.

We said there were different levels of risk and she said that if a driverless car kills the occupant, then this is a by-product of the ethics of the AI, but it may become morally ambiguous if the AI had to save, for example, a famous person or a person of importance. These were moral issues that needed to be taken into account, and one student said there needed to be no favouritism that, for example, an old person would be less worthy than a younger person. He reiterated that the ethics of the AI would have to be to make choices that were unbiased in terms of people's quality and equity, but we were all unsure of how this might work.

I had a specific question now of 'creating human beings', and that we could now edit embryo genes to get rid of certain genetic disorders, and what type of people might we 'create' in the future, and if this was a good or a bad thing. One student thought it was helpful regarding eugenics and genetic diseases, which is now current technology. On the other side of the coin, people would be trying to make the perfect baby, and would act with bias, such as through racist ideas or worse. There seemed to be a crystallisation of the idea that a superintelligent AI might have no ethical control, but when it came to posthumanism and designing the AI or superintelligence, that humans are fatally flawed through prejudice anyway.

I wrote on my Facebook site today:

> 'When your ideology comes before your humanity, and you use your ideology to be prejudiced against a fellow human of any minority, you are irresponsible and unethical. When you were four or five, you did not worry if the kid sitting next to you was black, gay, or differently abled. On the extreme end, people kill others for their ideology, such as IS killing gay people. On the other side of the sliding scale, people culturally or religiously deluded utilise their privileged positions of public life to discriminate and separate: you see it all the time on TV and media. There is a Buddhist adage that says, "Prejudice is the sum of things you learn by age twenty-one".

Well, if you can learn it from your parents or your religion or your culture, you need to take responsibility to be self-reflexive enough to unlearn it and free your mind to be a better person. That's my two cents'.

I summed up to the students that there may be prejudice or pride or ego involved in designing a human being or a posthuman being or cyborg, and this would be ethically bad, and they all agreed. One student thought it should be heavily regulated only in relation to eugenics to get rid of diseases, like mitochondrial diseases and Alzheimers. She was adamant that it only be used to reduce suffering and disease, and not to add anything via bias, pride, ego, or desire. She wondered if people with more financial capital could get 'better' results than other people with no money, and that this would be unfair and ethically unjust. They saw these as problems that we are going to face in the very near future, and I reflected that we are running into them now.

The next question I asked was 'how might a superintelligent machine design DNA?' and I encouraged them to use their imaginations into the future to seek an answer. I asked, 'if an AI had access to millions of people's DNA, what might it do with that information?' The students seemed to think that the AI would weed out things like breast cancer, Down syndrome, and other diseases that are not seen as desirable. One student reiterated the previous student's statement by saying that the AI should be specific in this, and not be able to make extensive executive decisions to design people the way they like. I had to wonder about this on a personal level myself, if it could even be stopped.

One student correctly stated that we already have the technology to edit genes and that an AI might edit any genes we tell it to. The trick is once more, who controls the AI? They wondered if the people who design the AI were privileged people or biased themselves and not representing the breadth of humanity?

I wondered that if we go to other planets in the future, then who might we send? What kind of people might we make to go places?

'I think they will be engineered to be that way, it would have to be intelligent and physically fit and to withstand temperatures and be more resilient to climates and radiation, and that's something we would change with DNA'.

'I think people that go to other planets will have to be good problem-solvers'.

One student thought elite team scientists would be sent, and that in a few thousand years, posthuman people would look very different from how we do now. I thought this was far too generous with time and that people will start to manifest even now and in a further-designed way in the very near future, if they are not already. He thought they would not be very human at all, essentially changing to a post-human world(s), that they would be very different, and that this would not necessarily be a good thing, but he thought it unavoidable that it would happen. I reflected on my metaphorical experiences as a child and adolescent, and wondered how these ideas and my perceptions of other beings were linking up.

One student thought that the people we choose for these interplanetary missions would obviously have to be intelligent, strong, and maybe even adaptable to other environments, especially temperature change. They might need to be more resilient to radiation or climate change, for example. She thought that people would need to be good problem-solvers, sane, good under pressure, not mentally ill, and be able to cope with change. I wondered if people might be prejudiced against the participants in relation to sexuality or mental illness. One student thought sexuality would not matter. I pressed this idea further.

If we were sending people to other planets, would we send people who can breed? Or would we be able to 'make' or 'design' babies and breed people, for example, in something like a cosmic nursery? One student thought that we might limit the number of people, and that there might be breeders or drones, or people who have different roles, and one person thought that this seemed very robotic. There was a sadness that came across the room, that if beings were delegated roles in life, this would obviously change the way we view ourselves if we were human at all, and I really think that this way of challenging their thoughts about the future

was somewhat difficult to talk about and imagine. This was one of the more desolate moments in our classes.

One student said it sounds like bees or a hive mind. I wondered if we might be able to 'dial' into people and communicate that way? One student thought that it would overwhelm, or maybe brainwash, people and that would be ethically bad and very confusing for the posthuman being.

One student thought that this reality is already very close, that it would happen in our lifetime. These were very futuristic students indeed, who need to be listened to. One student said that we could not force what's going to happen, although he thought it would be inevitable, for good or for bad. One student had a dire outlook for the environment and for human nature:

'I don't think there will be an Earth to live on. If we want to be comfortably on Earth, we need to change drastically and stop climate change and kill each other'.

One student said it depends on which way society goes, that it could go either way, positive or negative, and I reflected that this was a very western construct, of 'good' and 'bad', and wondered about our ingrained cultural prejudices, and even my own.

I said I had been doing some personal writing in my spare time, and that I proposed that there would be far fewer or no people on the planet within a thousand years, and asked what the students thought about this? One student agreed that there would be far fewer people on the planet at that time, although he thought there would be more humans elsewhere, and that the Earth would be like a city in a country, in the way of talking about futuristic beings that have their genesis on Earth, who would live in other worlds and different places in the universe, even multi-dimensionally. I wondered through my metaphysical experiences if this has already happened beyond what we can fathom, and that my 'paranormal' experiences of multidimensional and other humanoid beings were not just illness, imagination, or fantasy, and that it is in fact, as one healer said to me, 'science'. This is the paragraph that links this

section of the creative component of the PhD study into the last section, entitled, 'Just because I am mad, does not mean I'm wrong', detailing a life which I have not spoken about much until now.

I pressed on, saying that nanotechnology might rebalance the Earth's environment. One student thought this would happen, but that it would be a slow, gradual process that might be linked to AI and nanotechnology. The alternative to living on other planets it seemed, was to fix this one. This was seen as the ultimate importance to her, moreso than space travel.

One student said we could keep destroying forests as we are, or try and save them and live here. This was a direct relationship to the survival of the human (or posthuman) species on other planets and preserving the one we have here. The theme was survival in whatever form. Unmistakably, she was placing a sign on preserving what we already have, although I am not sure if this is possible or likely.

I asked a question, 'could AI be sentient?' I said some people believe that humans have a spirit or a soul, and that people can feel. One student replied that this was possible, changing what it would mean to be human, and he described scientists already making an intelligence like a rat brain.

'I think we can create sentient beings'.

I disagreed that the AI he was talking about had consciousness or was sentient, but I let him continue. He thought that there was the possibility that an AI could feel, or at least give the illusion of emotion. He thought we could create sentient beings through technology. They would however be non-human. To create a non-human sentience would be a technological renaissance that would change what it meant for us to be as a species, I reflected.

Another student was talking about a fictional program in which an AI cared for a person and gave the illusion of sentience, but she disagreed with the other student that they might

actually be sentient. I reminded them of the Turing test, and how speech recognition programs such as SIRI ARE supposed to be friendly.

'If they are created to care, then they will', said the student. But she wondered if this might be possible with the race to superintelligence. I mentioned Kurzweil's book 'The Age of Spiritual Machines', and I wondered if they might be interested in reading it. They thought it might be a good book to read, although I have not yet read it myself. One student said of the title:

'I think "The Age of Spiritual Machines" sounds good, because it collides crazy science and tradition with old religion and spirits and the soul'.

The recurring thought embedded in all this work is, if superintelligence is unavoidable and has in the future already unavoidably happened, what elements of it are present now as a prior future-time echo?' And is it the new renaissance of humanity's awareness of actually becoming aware of, and connecting with, those 'alien' or 'posthuman' entities that, until now, have been unfathomable to adjust to, and only manifest as paranormal or myth? This is the defining paragraph on why I have decided to explore the 'paranormal' and the taboo of my experiences in the final chapter of this PhD.

And with that, we realised that there was only five minutes left of the class. There was never a dull moment, and the conversations flowed smoothly, although I had to rein it in to get back to the topic a few times. I was getting used to being a facilitator, and was pleased I did so much research that was matched by the students' knowledge, and they were very willing to give their opinions throughout the sessions.

I asked the basic research question again, 'What are young people's ethical concerns of being human now and in the near future through the lens of technology?'. One student responded that technology is such an important aspect of who we are, and reiterated that on the pessimistic side, it might destroy us, but on the positive side, it might be able to help humanity greatly if we get a chance to steer AI and superintelligence ethically. This was a

definitive response consisting of a mixture of optimism and fear. She thought that superintelligence would ultimately lead to changing what it means to be human. She wondered if one spent their whole life in a simulation, then they might also get caught there. In my research, I am not entirely convinced I am not in a superintelligent simulation already! One student summed it all up:

'Ethically, I'm concerned about how AI will affect humans, how it will help us or destroy us, and having technology an important part of who we are, and that it will change what it means to be human. It may be you may spend all your life in a computer simulation and fade off …'.

I asked if it was a 'new renaissance', and everyone agreed that we might be 'coming out of the dark ages' and that there would be a new way of looking at the world and technology would change what it means to be human. This was another definitive answer.

'I think in the history books, this century is one of the most important times, like coming out of the dark ages. Like history will consider the time before now very rudimentary'.

I asked if the posthuman technological beings would look at the 'normal' people as different, and they agreed. This was another definitive answer. Unfortunately, though, our time had run out.

It was the end of the session. I had created intellectual bonds with these students, and I would miss them and our conversations. I promised them their movie tickets, and I said as well as me teaching them things, they had taught me things as well. I thanked them and said I appreciated it and this was a great thing – I was filled with gratitude, and the process sparked within me the courage to finish this PhD, in an unexpected way, much like the event horizon of a technological singularity. Two final comments that summarise where I am going with exploring my living inquiry and art that seemed to me, quite poignant and relevant to act as a segue into the next section were:

'In tens of thousands of years, we will grow humans that are not very human anymore'.

'When we come back, we will look a lot different'.

A FACEBOOK 'LIKE' BUILT WITH MY ARTIST SIGNATURE STAMP (2010)

APPENDIX III
SUPPORT MATERIAL | 'A CERTAIN BEAUTY IN UN-RESOLUTION… ART;'

'A Certain Beauty In Un-Resolution… ART;' (2018) is the collected artworks of my life from age seventeen to the present. I published in congruence with this PhD, and acts in the methodology of A/r/tography and autobiography examining the narrative inquiry of lived creative experience.

Confronted with my own mortality with the trauma of existentialism and new realisations of sexual abuse, accompanied by depression, I wanted to leave a record of what I had physically added in value to this world in art; in the event I died. I didn't.

The semi-colon is intended at the end of the title. A full stop is the end of your life. A semi-colon means that it is not the end, that the sentence is your life and the semi-colon means it is not over; you go on.

It is available from www.richmclean.com.au (Embed this).

RICH McLEAN

ipsum

A Certain Beauty In Un-Resolution...

ART;

Please see this link to view the whole catalogue online or click:

https://simplebooklet.com/richmclean

APPENDIX IV

CRITICAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY SPEECH, ART & ACTIVISM, 13TH OF JULY, 2017, CONFERENCE LOCATED AT THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA.

SCANNED FACE SELF PORTRAIT (2001)

Without the ability to think about yourself, to reflect on your life, there's really no awareness, no consciousness. Consciousness doesn't come automatically; it comes through being alive, awake, curious, and often furious' - Maxine Greene.

My name is Rich McLean, and I am studying my PhD in the College of Education at Victoria University Melbourne.

Thanks for coming to pay attention and also validation, as you will hear, to my short talk.

I'll introduce from a quote from Springgay, from the handbook, 'Being with A/r/tography' (my methodology), where she writes there is 'no need to separate the personal from the professional any more than we can separate the dancer from the dance' (Stephanie Springgay, 2008, p. 5). Hopefully, by the end of this short talk, you will see why that is important to me regarding critical autoethnographic and autobiographical, practice-led writing and research.

I am working with young people for my PhD — specifically, Year 11 students. 'What will it mean to be human through the lens of technology in the near future?' is the broad central theme.

I am writing a six-week curriculum exploring artificial intelligence, and the anticipated superintelligence that will further enable transhumanism. What do young people ethically think of living in a post-human world?

But that is not what this talk is about.

In my youth and adolescence, I felt had no non-prejudiced person to validate my emotional or ethical life. As a 44-year-old adult myself, I want to be that person for these kids, allowing them to voice their concerns and for them to be heard.

The intuition that led me to be wanting to work with young people is multifaceted and as it turns out, complex. In the first instance, I have worked with young people before discussing mental health issues (as per my living inquiry of 'schizophrenia'), and drug use and abuse in many pedagogical settings in the past. I have valued and enjoyed hearing young people's candidness. I also have no children of my own.

For my presentation, I would like to read an abridged and, sometimes for me, emotional introduction to my exegesis. Through autoethnographical, and autobiographical, practice-led writing it has led to some intensely personal and stunning revelations. I feel this adds to my justifications for working with young people and needed to be addressed before my research commenced.

Just before I start this narrative piece, I would like to quote (Jones), that: 'Autoethnography uses the researcher's personal experiences as primary data'.

CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS, (SUFFERING) (2010)

'GIVING UP THE FAGS'

Just before Christmas in 2016 (fairly recently), I gave up smoking. This was for health reasons, as I was getting unfit and short of breath. Another reason was to avoid feeling ostracised with the proliferation of non-smoking zones. Being ostracised is also a feeling I have felt throughout my life. It was also to save money and have literally had enough prosperity so that I could put a roof over my head to finish this PhD.

I only expected to give up smoking. What happened next was totally unexpected. It is a bit like the outcome of this PhD, for the result is beyond an event horizon in which no-one knows the outcome.

The occurrence of giving up smoking, however, wove itself into this PhD narrative and is a vehicle by which I can place my more self-actualised identity within the framework of my study.

It also goes part way to justify why it is that I want to work with young people, apart from the fact they are familiar with technology and will inherit this fast-changing technological world. As a young 'queer' person with a mental illness, I did not think I ever received much validation. I did not have the capacity nor the opportunity to express myself in many ways, and with the onset of depression, addiction, and psychosis, that coupled itself with isolation and ostracisation, I did not ever have the opportunity to.

This being said, I had wonderful parents in many ways growing up and other well-meaning relatives around. However, growing up in the 1980s AIDS crisis, to feel like anything other than heteronormative was difficult. The television broadcast the shock tactics of the Grim Reaper killing people with AIDS. Adults and children alike had eyes and ears during my formative years. We had a close family, they were all wonderful — but to be gay — that was bad.

I recall Mum at the park when I was young, 'Don't go near those toilets without me, bad men go there'. Mum was caring and expressing herself from a well of love and protectiveness. She was in ways a great Mum.

With my developing self-awareness, I further want to be a non-prejudiced and open person for young people to relate to with candidness and openness.

When I gave up smoking, unconsciously I went into self-destruct mode for a while, a sort of self-medicating and hedonistic coping mechanism. After some months, it suddenly dawned on me that I had undergone inappropriate sexual abuse and sexual exposure when I was a child.

I was 'exposed' to, and also witnessed things of a sexual nature from two abusive peers that I need not have seen. I had also been flashed at and was shown an adult's genitals by someone very close to my home whom the family and I trusted.

The memories started to rush in — at another separate event, I can't quite remember and don't want to, an incident occurred at the toilets at Little Athletics when I was about 8 years old. I only put weight to this sketchy memory, because even though I loved Little Athletics and was good at it, I never went back after the 'incident', despite my father's pleas.

After that incident at Little Athletics, I remember being so scared of, and avoiding, the toilet so much, that I recall going home one afternoon having not urinated all day and Dad popping into the milk bar to buy the paper as he used to.

Having avoided the scene of the indecency, I could not hold on anymore, so I pissed in a McDonald's cup in the front seat of our family Volkswagen, snuck out of the car and put it in the bin before Dad came back, such was my shame.

Bad people go there. To be gay was bad. This meant that I was bad. This was ingrained from a young age.

I carried that guilt and shame for most of my childhood, all my adolescence and adult life.

I had always remembered the abuse, yet I did not ever consciously give it voice or gave it any weight. However, as I wrote more, additional memories came back for which I received counsel from my psychologist. For the longest time, my whole life, in fact, I had made decisions as an adolescent and an adult that had their genesis in the non-validation of the abuse.

This included drug-taking, risky behaviour, constantly changing the location of where I lived, 'running away', squatting in dishevelled housing at times, being jobless, not confident and not knowing why, financially bereft, emotionally traumatised, and overactive sexual misadventures.

It also manifested in choosing life partners and company in which I settled for, yet deserved much more. I do not doubt that my self-denial of what had happened to me added to, and exacerbated, my diagnosis of 'schizophrenia' from age 20 over my lifetime.

Smoking for me was literally a smokescreen for nearly 23 years.

It was the reason not to remember, the affirmation that I as a person was not worthy. I did not care for myself. At the start, it was rebellious; it was also something I started to do when I was young that I knew I was not allowed to: that was taboo. I was a young person, had known taboo with abuse and prejudice, but the taboo of smoking was something that I myself was in control of.

This was in antithesis, of the abusive and inappropriate events that happened to me growing up; of the face of being vulnerable and exposed, and then not having the opportunity to express or validated what had happened.

Smoking was also a reason to die.

Such was my lack of self-esteem, I knew it would kill me — it said so on the pack! This self-depreciative beast took over my life from age 13.

It had become my addiction and best friend. It was a smokescreen for the memories that I had pushed deep into the wells of my subconsciousness. I remember throughout many psychoses and depressive episodes in my adolescence and adulthood, wanting and wishing I could die.

There was also a couple of brazen attempts, which thankfully did not work.

Ethnographically, on our televisions and on the news, gay people died of AIDS. Even in primary school, I had crushes on the boys and crushes on the girls. What if I was gay? Maybe I deserved to die? … Have another smoke!

I did not really answer that question of 'Was I gay?' with certainty and confidence until I was 25, had moved out of home, and got myself a job as an artist and illustrator for a major Melbourne newspaper. I needed a place to be safe when I finally did come out.

Smoking the fags meant:

I did not deserve to live (because it would kill me),
Or be prosperous, (because it cost so much).

Then I gave them up.

A change occurred that made me feel like I was a worthy person. I uncovered all the memories of the sexual abuse, of the complex family relationships within a complex time, and how this had manifested into my adult life.

This surprising re-birth happened fast.

Giving up the fags was a journey of healing, and this short speech is a testament to that. It is the process of owning your experiences (both conscious and subconscious) and being responsible for your greatest happiness and highest good.

To be a self-actualised adult, you must be aware of your history, your make-up, and your relationships, and your memories, and be fully conscious of it — yet for me, the illusion of the smokescreen of smoking kept me from this.

In essence, to validate and be reborn from a troubling past I had to confront the self within an autobiographical and autoethnographic narrative. This is the essential practice-led writing that has unblocked me from moving forward within my PhD and my personal life.

This public statement, writing and talking, both frees me and also encourages my future happiness, and dare I say prosperity and security in a multitude of ways. This is the piece of writing, and the public testimony, that exalts me and sets me free. It will also make me a better teacher and more self-actualised researcher.

My psychologist wrote something down for me a couple of months which I said which he skilfully reminded me of:

31/01/2017

'I deserve a future',
'I deserve a life',

'I am worthy'.

I deserved to be heard, and to live with wealth happiness and prosperity.

Giving up the fags was a revelation, yet late at age 44. However, I am sure we all know some people don't make it. But to feel self-worth and be listened to?

This is what the young people in my PhD study, and young people everywhere, deserve to feel. We owe it to them as mentors, parents, and teachers.

So, I am no longer a smoker (I do still vape though). This speech has been important to me as a public statement because I rightly and justly claimed my worth back.

These were the words I needed to say which came from me and no-one else, to move forward with my autobiographic writing of reflecting on being a young person, so I can be of service to my students and go on to co-contribute to produce global knowledge from local settings.

These challengingly spoken words of intimacy and trauma had existed kicking and screaming in subliminality — right up into and strongly influenced my adult life.

This writing, my decisions, and this speech is a release, healing, a process, a validation. Also, a manifesto of sorts for the role I will play in listening and validating young people's concerns concerning my PhD topic.

If I could right now, I'd take a drag on my vape, and I'm on my way.

Thank you for reading/listening.

ON CRITICAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY:

To quote an early text from C. Wright Mills (1959) from Joneses 'Handbook of autoethnography', before the term autoethnography existed:

'The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society. The challenge is to develop a methodology that allows us to examine how the private troubles of individuals are connected to public issues and public responses to these troubles. That is its task and its promise. Individuals can understand their own experience and gauge their own fate only by locating themselves within their historical moment period (pp. 5–6, slight paraphrase). (Jones 123)

Jones, Stacy H. Handbook of Autoethnography. Routledge, 20160523. VitalBook file.

Furthermore, Carolyn Ellis (2004) defines autoethnography as "research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political" (p. xix).

APPENDIX V
ETHICS APPROVAL

Department of
Education & Training

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9637 2000
DX210083

2017_003333

Mr Richard McLean
College of Education
Victoria University
PO Box 14428
MELBOURNE   8001

Dear Mr McLean

Thank you for your application of 9 March 2017 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools titled *Creatively explicating outcomes through student conversations; anticipating the future of artificial super intelligence enabling trans-humanism.*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Training.

2. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals. This is to be supported by the Department of Education and Training approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.

3. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Training for its consideration before you proceed.

4. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.

5. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education Training in any publications arising from the research.

6. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.

VICTORIA
State
Government

I wish you well with your research. Should you have further questions on this matter, please contact Youla Michaels, Project Support Officer, Insights and Evidence Branch, by telephone on (03) 9637 2707 or by email at michaels.youla.y@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely
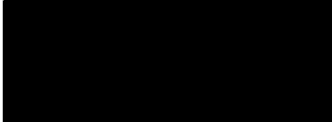
Joyce Cleary
Director
Insights and Evidence

21/04/2017

VICTORIA
State Government

Salutations

Alas, I have had a colourful life; often traumatic and tragic but never ever boring.

I have moved and lived in twenty four different locations, and lived with seventy-six different people.

There is something I want to say in the aftermath of the intensity that was designing articulating researching and discovering and completing this PhD.

I am a different type of person - and I love that. I love me. I love who I've become; I love that in the deficit of people being innately human and treated me mean, I was taught what not to be.

I am happy with my many achievements and creative endeavours. I love who I am. And I am not afraid to die.

I have travelled the world and tried most things once, drugs, sex, sexuality, locations, explored the rational and the esoteric and created many different creative things…I am grateful for that.

I just want to say that I have been incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to complete this PhD-but I worked for it. Now it is mine.

Some people institutions and professions call me 'mad', yet now that I have, from my past of being homeless a few times, struggling sexual abuse survivor, sometimes toxic scapegoating family, and former destitute meth addict - I have a message for you all:

All those people institutions stranger relatives family and former friends that:

- Judged me,
- Used me,
- Evicted me,
- Rejected me,
- Stigmatised me,
- Fired me,
- Assaulted me,
- Sexually abused me,
- Ostracised me,
- Did not value me,
- Did not support me,
- Were prejudiced to me,
- Drugged me,
- Revoked their duty of care to me,

- Sent me to my death or ignored my suicidality or my sexual abuse,
- Continue to bait and seek to destroy me,
- Have it in for me,
- Cheated on me,
- Deceived me in any way
- Scapegoated me in any form,
- Have published my words under the pretence of a discriminatory and defaming way,
- Robbed me,
- Attacked me,
- Used 'faith' to prejudice me, and voted against my human rights, (Thanks Aunty Joy Long),
- Knew I was facing homelessness and refused to lend me $2000 to cover rent I offered to pay back plus interest when your company makes over 3 million a year, (Thanks Uncle Bruce),
- I gave too much of my soul and my heart and the information was used against me maliciously,
- Kicked the shit out of me,
- Intentionally hurt me,
- Showed no interest in my life or person,
- Gossiped and desecrated my name,
- Were mean to me in any way,
- Misunderstood me when I am happy to explain,
- Said that a PhD was 'Bullshit', right at the apex of when I victoriously passed, (My own mother),
- Gaslighted me while pretending everything is ok; when so many individuals have been so hurtful and mean,

I want to say…you can all suck my fat, uncut, seven-inch, gay, 'mad', PhD doctoral cock!

(I've been rehearsing that!). …That felt better. 'Mad,' indeed. Hows get fucked sound for you?

…because i see most people as so utterly boring addicted to their moronic lives of consuming and fitting in…carbon copies won what came before lusting for money in the deficit of this disastrous dying capitalist world yet i lie in the mess of my colourful life and its many colourful and broken inhabitants, alive and passed over, live in my often destitute multi dimensional world(s) of hell, heaven, light, dark, with humans, entities, energies, light beings, heritage worship and more, and because I have achieved this; on my own, neither a person, institution or authority, nor heaven nor hell, can revoke in this incarnation, the salutation before my name: '***Dr*** Rich McLean', or alias: ''Dr Dick' - he's sucked a lot of it!'

You can 'tap me on the shoulder,' now, Nana. I love you. To the other humans and entities that taught me, or showed, love, grace and assistance thank you.