

Thesis

Bachelor Fine Arts

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Title: I wanted to write about the Sublime

One long weekend in August I found myself in Italy where I got to know my uncle a little better. He is a pisces like myself and has discovered interesting techniques to tackle our inherent dualism. Perspiring under an awning overlooking a landscape with green hills and a glaring lake in the distance suddenly summoned a memory of a passage I read in Stefan Zweig's *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon* (The fight/struggle with the demon). Holding the rather conventional looking book with its 352 pages and sturdy cardboard cover in my hands again, I notice how it hesitates to reveal the section I so fondly remember. It appears as if the demon is cheerfully impersonating *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*<sup>1</sup> (a 1926 weighty tome by T.E. Lawrence ) in which I ought to find one line of text describing sunrise - an utterly challenging task considering my unfamiliarity with the piece.

Goethe and Nietzsche both travelled to Italy.<sup>2</sup> I wonder if I dare imagine them at the local trattoria ordering anti pasti and having their grappa to round of the evening.

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I notice how the first painting that entered my room was wiped by the evening sun, momentarily highlighting its dark oils in warm silky gold. The painting becomes something else, it becomes more. How is it that wondering light always seems to animate even the most forgotten angles of human construction. The apparition arises through the melting of both, so it appears. Attention becomes a metaphor for light.

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And again I wonder what will be next, noticing plans and goals all-round, resisting the defence of the ego's little games. Notes are these, pure notes. And how it will be within 4 weeks of darkness. Sensing the symbols and yes, here it comes.

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Walking through the crowd at the local market we finally end up at the coffee stand we visited two days ago, placing the same order with the black beauty. I stare over the high table top onto the Milka packaging of the stand across from us. It seems to contain the universal code, just like anything that exists in our awareness, recognising the thread that connects not only our consciousness but also our creation and imagination.

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A few days ago the first four hours of my day were spent speaking to a dear friend on the phone. Telling me about his overindulgent use of his dialectical capacities, I suggested the development of his intuitive side. By making marks, with a brush or pen in the form of drawings, writings etcetera on every single page of an eight centimetre stack of printing paper, all within 24 hours of course seemed like a good idea. It inevitably requires a certain acceptance of the unknown. I felt a bit bleak when this well reasoned exercise was not received with utter excitement and regarded as something of monumental profundity. Careful there.

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In front of me sits a neatly wrapped package of "papier wit 500 x l A4 l 75g/m2" with a red and white logo in the top left corner.

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I cannot believe the comfort I'm getting from the action of dipping a rusk into a cup of Rooibos tea with oat milk. Different shades of white is all I see when finding my way out of the window and sitting in 22 degree celsius on a couch sounds warmer than it is. Maybe it's the memory of dry air and

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<sup>1</sup>T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon. Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche*, Cologne: Anaconda Verlag GmbH, 2016.

cold mornings with crystal clear skies that summon a sense of peace within chaos, rather than chaos within peace.

"Peace within chaos, rather than chaos within peace" - let's work with this.

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'Chaos' is "the unconscious in its most primitive disorganised state and therefore in need of attention. [It] also depicts the dread of facing the dark, inner world of unconscious forces...[as it] surrounds both man and the cosmos at once"<sup>3</sup>.

What am I actually thinking about?

What multitude of monologues echo between the walls of the skull?

Is this happening in the subconscious drawers that I envision so vividly, trimmed with plastic coated red-yellow flower print? The inner world and the outer world, mirrors so they say - or rather what of the inner world I can successfully express and to what extent that is even possible considering the inner world does not belong to me, or rather does not belong to my ego, the conscious self, resulting in a mere babble. But am I then just the 'verbaliser' or expresser? Are my thoughts my thoughts? Is your perceiving of these words done by you?

To what part of the being does 'you' or 'me' refer to?

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I come across this idea quite often that if you can achieve ego death (dismantle the mask that grew from when you were young and had no influence over) and re-grow or rather receive your own consciously created mask (it's no longer a mask even though it is).... then you have 'won' (it's not about winning). It coincides with the ideas of Theodore Dalrymple<sup>4</sup> who states that rather than finding oneself one should loose oneself.

But back to chaos. Back to the point when I built a watchtower ready to identify my own projecting linked to the awareness of fluidity - that there is no Other.

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We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. This is something by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin from his book 'The Phenomenon of man'.<sup>5</sup>

Negative Capability<sup>6</sup>

Unthought known<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Chetwynd, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, London: Paladin Books, 1982, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Hermitix, host, "Existentialism and meaning with Theodore Dalrymple," Hermitix Podcast (Spotify), September 7, 2019, accessed November 1st, 2019, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1xgKp5f0dmx3HwkaxdAo8f?si=N-vP-FulSTK7q0ooEcdYAQ>.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of man*, New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

<sup>6</sup> John Keats

<sup>7</sup> Ian Hunt, "The Unthought Known", Frieze, June 7, 2002, accessed November 5th, 2019, <https://frieze.com/article/unthought-known>.

Thomas comes to tragically identify awareness as the "sovereignty of a being without being in the becoming without end of a death impossible to die"<sup>8</sup>.

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And I was reminded by someone who recalled something I pondered about some time ago - that a good work of art does not want anything from me as the viewer when I encounter it - "es will nichts" (it wants nothing) - it just is, it is complete in itself. I'm wondering whether this attitude is a form of limitation or if it's a healthy "Auseinandersetzung" (Confrontation) with the experience of art viewing.

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"The gift of reason and critical reflection is not one of man's outstanding peculiarities"<sup>9</sup>.

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"Without consciousness there would, practically speaking, be no world, for the world exists as such only in so far as it is consciously reflected and consciously expressed by a psyche. Consciousness is a precondition of being"<sup>10</sup>.

credulity - is it about knowledge or is it about understanding?

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Let's get back to Italy. So Goethe returns home after the trip feeling refreshed and having undergone a sense of growth. The experiences and memories of Italy add to his understanding of the world and he becomes a more whole human being. He arrives where he started, the cycle is complete. Nietzsche on the other hand, through embracing a full state of detachment from both a physical home and patriotic entrapment, arrives at himself. "Ubi pater sum, ibi patria"<sup>11</sup>, something Nietzsche would've probably pronounced wonderfully, stands for his transformation of thought, indeed a gift he received from the south. "Where I am a father, where I procreate, is where my home is [as my place of birth lies in the past and is thus history]".

So both arrive, although at different places. Goethe is a collector, seeking wholeness through experience and a sense of homeland ("Heimat") - returning from Italy like a proud fisherman with a full catch. Nietzsche on the other hand is reducing and discarding not only of his earthly possessions but also of his identity, to arrive at himself, his pure self, his being. What is interesting is that he specifically perceived german-ness ('das Deutsche') as "dusk, twilight, uncertainty - to much shadow of yesterday, to much history, to much burden with the own dragged along I"<sup>12</sup> (my own

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<sup>8</sup> Kevin Fitzgerald, "The Negative Eschatology of Maurice Blanchot", Studio Cleo, January 2, 2007, accessed November 5th, 2019, [http://www.studiocleo.com/librarie/blanchot/kf/orphic/the\\_Limits.htm](http://www.studiocleo.com/librarie/blanchot/kf/orphic/the_Limits.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *The undiscovered self*, Harmondsworth: Pinguin Books, 1957, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Car Gustav Jung, *The undiscovered self*, Harmondsworth: Pinguin Books, 1957, 58-59.

<sup>11</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon. Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche*, Cologne: Anaconda Verlag GmbH, 2016, 318.

<sup>12</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon. Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche*, Cologne: Anaconda Verlag GmbH, 2016, 320.

translation. It became too heavy, too indigestible for him as he was struggling with the "never-fishing of problems"<sup>13</sup>. The south, the warm south offered redemption.

Interest becomes a form of solidarity in the northern countries whereas physical location and time binds southern encounters. Those are the thoughts of a colleague, an artist like myself, when asked whether her perspective matches Nietzsche's. She recently returned from the south and she happened to be in the room where I sat writing. The opposed temperaments - temperaments that do mingle on occasion - seem to manifest chance versus determination as a potential world view. Of receiving versus controlling. But nothing is ever black and white, nor north and south.

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Talking of world views. Talking about the in-between states, of how some influence some, how energies can be transferred between beings. Do I really want to fall into the same trap of trying to explain the unexplained. How agency is something that we can take control of, at least our own for now. How noticing becomes a way to work through. And yes I do realise the incomplete and non-contextual tendencies of the last few words. But when it becomes quiet, really quiet and I laugh, with a sense of shame and embarrassment at the jokes of judgement that try and categorise chaos according to patterns of identity, my experience implodes. The young slowly moves away - away from high walls and arrows protecting a construction of grey and black broken brick, rattling. I have to remind myself that the inside mirrors the outside and vice versa. That the macrocosm is the microcosm and vice versa. That that to what you react - stays. And what you utter shall disappear.

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How difficult it is to research because all we get are symbols that we juggle and turn. We play with the weather patterns, creating more and more clouds that blind us with white. The symbolised is forgotten, we just speak about the form it holds.

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From the human perspective there are, according to Michael Haines, seven worlds. The third one underlines the impossibility to separate sensory patterns "from the capacity to sense them: colours-seen, sounds-heard, feelings-felt, flavours-tasted and odours-smelled"<sup>14</sup>. We are no longer dealing with symbols but directly with the symbolised. The same goes for all sensations as they themselves are actually meaningless occurrences, but together and in a vessel where they are able to manifest they seem to form internal knowledge that a meaningful experience is taking place. But enough of that. I was planning on making dinner tonight, lentils to be exact.

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And now I realise that there is this pocket of possibility, of clear mind, that still rings with uncertainty. I can see far down the corridor into a different universe, into different perspectives that cry for approval and hope, for inclusion and understanding. I wonder if I should create a dusty and old format for these words. I just folded painted transparent plastic sheets, creating layers of glaze - oh why do I have the desire to mention my actions while I'm fighting with the next step. I need to free these thoughts by putting them somewhere otherwise they cycle and cycle. An option is also to simply meditate on them I guess, forcing the subconscious mind to become somehow conscious.

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What does one hide? "Who am I is the central question... this is the only question there is"<sup>15</sup>. I resonate with what Houshiary states in this interview of how "identities [for example gender, nationality

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<sup>13</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Der Kampf mit dem Dämon. Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche*, Cologne: Anaconda Verlag GmbH, 2016, 320.

<sup>14</sup> Comment by Michael Haines on "What is a good way to describe the hard problem of consciousness to someone with little background in philosophy and/or science?", June 30th, 2018 accessed April 14th, 2019, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-a-good-way-to-describe-the-hard-problem-of-consciousness-to-someone-with-little-background-in-philosophy-and-or-science>.

<sup>15</sup> Shirazeh Houshiary, "Interview with Stella Santacatterena," in *The Sublime (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art)*, p. 93-94, edited by Simon Morley London: White Chapel Gallery, 2010, 94.

or cultural context] become a barrier blocking our access to the inner self"<sup>16</sup>. And how we dwell in the outer shells and layers of existence, seeking answers there. I wonder why I feel so bitter about this. I'm possibly projecting my own fear of not going deep enough, of lacking the courage to steer away from complete distraction. Or is it that I'm afraid of becoming a stranger, even to myself. Of losing myself. And how is the place where one no longer exists? Is it cold, dark and wet and full of jump-scares? Or is it so pure that what we perceive on the outer layers becomes unbearable. That you can never go back. This just reminded me of the good old red versus blue pill scenario. I might as well quote the whole script here<sup>17</sup>. Coming full circle once again. It is all known to us in so many forms.

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I look for keywords in texts that point to something deeper, some more profound insights to understand my existence - they almost call to me, draw me in.

I feel that the moment I understand what I am making I think that the direction I'm going in is not the right one.

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"I'm trying to understand my own existence in relation to the world around me. I'm trying to dig deep into primordial sources of myself"<sup>18</sup> Shirazeh Houshiary

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I want to include my prose a bit later, of just letting everything go and, as a friend so beautifully said, allow words to simply come. And yes, it felt like I was writing in circles, coming to some sort of intellectual conclusions, forgetting about being, thinking and doing as three oddities that all have different prospects. It's an easy mistake to intellectualise intuition and vice versa.

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And how you sound, your breath is hard like bottles that collapse inside of here, and now we walk and we walk and we walk more and more and we are dancing to sense it again, to go out there on the grey asphalt scorching our feet as we walk, and we walk, again, up and down, I take you along and you refuse and we walk and we walk, until the dark souls come from afar, nodding... and nodding, tapping and tapping, dancing...

... you are almost ready, once I write it here it loses its potency so I have to pick my words carefully of what I am willing to release and what has to remain unuttered in order to avoid both density or emptiness. It's similar to the practice of scuba divers who have to pack their weight belts carefully in order to avoid descent or buoyancy.

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So both *The Castle*<sup>19</sup> (Michael Haneke's film adaptation of Kafka's novel) and *La Bête Humaine*<sup>20</sup> by director Jean Renoir (inspired by Emile Zola's book *The Beast Within*<sup>21</sup>) end abruptly. Very very abruptly. The first concludes just before the major shocking event that gives the novel its edge, and

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<sup>16</sup> Shirazeh Houshiary, "Interview with Stella Santacatterena," in *The Sublime (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art)*, p. 93-94, edited by Simon Morley London: White Chapel Gallery, 2010, 94.

<sup>17</sup> *The Matrix*. Directed by The Wachowskis. Warner Bros. Entertainment inc, 1999. DVD. Warner Home Video, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Diana d'Arenberg, "Shirazeh Houshiary", Ocula, May 17, 2018, accessed November 10th, 2019, <https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/shirazeh-houshiary/>.

<sup>19</sup> *The Castle*, directed by Michael Haneke, Wega Film, 1998, DVD, Kino International, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> *La Bête Humaine*, directed by Jean Renoir, Paris Film, 1938, DVD, Kinowelt Home Entertainment, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Emile Zola, *The Beast Within*, London: Penguin Classics, 2016.

the second, as expected, ends when Kafka's original story cut off as it is an unfinished written work to begin with. Having watched these two films relatively quickly after each other, I was startled by their lack of conclusion. After my bewilderment I started feeling free in this liminal space of uncertainty which remains trembling even if I recall it now. I had to remember that I was breathing.

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Today I took a little walk in a book I recently purchased and there were some paragraphs that just invited a slight detour of the mind into memory and possible future scenarios, all while reading on of course. What I noticed is that these parallel worlds, the one in the book and the one in my mind co-existed in time, the one triggering the other. In my excitement I dare see this mental divergence from the meaning of the written words as a secret code (un)intentionally built in by the author to trigger a concurrent thought that opens the unconscious. And is there a relation between the written and the thought? What happens when the two are overlaid?

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Oh how I miss you, my former self. You were here just the other day so close. My aim to feel young and free made me feel old and weak. My serotonin is depleted for a one night low - a classic case of numbness with anger-icing. I want to return to the abrupt ending. It seems appropriate. Kafka knows - well, unknowingly. It feels like I can't hold my breath long enough to really dive deep enough into nothingness, into the unindexed, to keep my intellect focused (or rather unfocused) on the essence of it all.

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I wrote this at the end of June:

"I am still looking for the switch. How can I be honest again about the things that bite me and itch like sores. How can I play the blame game even though I want to kill fast. Burning away ideas and behaviours, violently and with crushing jaws, leaving behind sand of teeth. I wonder if I would save you if you would choke, maybe wait a little. I wonder why I always become sick in your presence – oh wait, you forgot to mention that the needles of your judgement hook themselves in flesh, burning themselves into openness and play. I feel captured and my stomach is full of bats that can't find their way out of the cave. Fuck you for what you have done, even though you don't even know or care as that is your nature, officially. Oh I wish I could just be loving and kind, but forgiveness is hard if the one forgiven is watching you still."

After months - now - I understand. I am the one watching. And grateful for that insight.

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What are doodles? What a simple question. Wide and flat and reduced. It is connected to boredom according to Jackie Andrade<sup>22</sup>, more specifically a situation where a person is prone to being bored seems to be the ideal situation for doodles to occur. I envision myself as some sort of zoologist searching for the perfect conditions required to spot a rare animal that lives in the flower of a tree that blossoms in 20 year cycles if the moon is right and the humidity level is below 33% during March. "Doodling simply helps to stabilise arousal at an optimal level, keeping people awake or reducing the high levels of autonomic arousal often associated with boredom"<sup>23</sup>.

Autonomic. What a simple word. Boredom. What a simple word.  
And it's the body. It has always been. And I am opened up. Raw. Honest. Aware of stiffness.

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<sup>22</sup> Jackie Andrade, "What Does Doodling do?", *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 24, issue 1 (January 2010): 100-106, accessed November 16th, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1561>.

<sup>23</sup> Jackie Andrade, "What Does Doodling do?", *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 24, issue 1 (January 2010): 100-106, accessed November 16th, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1561>, 104.

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Content in liminal spaces. Between here and there, of waiting in the middle. That space when one is alone, of just having left one human behind waiting to be received by another. That little space of freedom, of having a high point of creativity. Where anything is possible. Where courage thrives and fear has no place. Where intuition is strong and the self resonates in wholeness. Where bodily movement flows without edges, without stiffness. Others far enough away but still in reach. Yes, and music. Rhythm. It animates a puppet. It's self-trickery, like having a main project and a side 'doodle', where the doodle becomes the main work.

Let me continue with the no-plan approach. I recently discovered a magazine that deals exactly with that.

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I am afraid to go back to real life. I am afraid to start something new, to just create my ideas, of driving far and looking out of the window. Of being too literal in my work. What is it exactly that I don't like? Is it the lack of community, is it the small flat, is it the lack of nature, the people maybe? A place less safe where I work towards a goal that is no goal. Of being stuck in a system that I don't understand. I'm afraid of being a bad artist.

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Sharks and wolves around every corner wearing masks and acting unusually whimsical while crying. Are we the same? Am I just more ashamed to be me? That good old thought: what would happen if I let go.

I don't even know what real life is. I don't want to categorise anymore.

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Like a troll, trolling through space, like a small child, childing in the supermarket. Occasionally I am annoyed with these words - unsure where they take me.

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I would like to start this by quoting Josefine Rieks, a writer from Berlin. She states that "Ein Kunstwerk ist besser, je besser es geplant und je besser dieser Plan ausgeführt ist..."<sup>24</sup> which translates to "A work of art is better the better it is planned and the better this plan is executed".

This statement reminded me of a conversation or rather debate I had with one of my teachers in school. It must have been grade 7 or so and we were reading the beautiful play *The man outside* by Wolfgang Borchert<sup>25</sup>. This piece of writing is fully packed with all sorts of literary genius ranging from simple metaphors to eloquently hidden innuendos. I was told that every single interpretation offered by the literary tools was absolutely intended by Borchert. That every connection that could be made between concepts and story parts actually was meant to be made and all meaning derived from the play deliberate. Everything was planned. Borchert is dead - we cannot ask him anymore - but how can we be sure that he not perhaps accidentally, simply because he was a master of his craft unknowingly incorporated literary devices, quite naturally in fact, that we cherish today as part of his (conscious) plan.

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<sup>24</sup> Josefine Rieks, "Die Zukunft der Literatur", *Die Epilog*, May 2019, 143.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfgang Borchert, *Draußen vor der Tür und ausgewählte Erzählungen*, Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1975.

Today still I feel uncertain whether everything in this play was preconceived but it seems that this combination of both cases being true creates a strong enough paradox for any work of art to in fact work, if those two balance of course according to [ insert intuition and perception ].

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Steffen Greiner states that if it comes to "the subject of 'plan'... it is always about life and death, it seems. It lies heavy on the shoulders, and this text can finally address it: the melancholy of planning and the melancholy of aimlessness. For example, my co-editor always fights for her plan A, I live plan-wise beyond the alphabet, our editor-in-chief is somewhere in between. Now we often sit together depressed somewhere, so none of the models really makes one happiness"<sup>26</sup>.

The good old personality triad of the child - adult - parent modalities<sup>27</sup> seems fitting here. If I were to categorise it (which I would like to refrain from) a neat fit could be established. Limbo becomes the new mature human showcase model, the adult. But it doesn't. It's boring. That's why none of the three modes work alone, only together concurrently to create a whole. What is the word for a triad consisting of contradictions?

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The number 3 is an interesting one. I once watched a YouTube video where a man explained that the number 1 has one angle, the number 2 has two angles and number 3 three angles and so fourth.

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So I'm back to Kleist. Or rather I just started. Back and fourth, up and down and digging in. Digging into *On the gradual completion of thoughts during speech*. Here Erik Spiekermann states that this essay by Kleist addresses the "predicament many of us (writers and other creatives) suffer from: we cannot think unless we speak or - in the case of designers and artists - visualise our thoughts."<sup>28</sup>

Is it not interesting that we as adults have effectively learned to organise our thoughts in writing. I'm trying to resist the temptation of plainly quoting and then commenting on what comes my way. That pattern has been walking in unnoticed. Is it because I have not taken time to develop my own thoughts, have not really listened to what my mind has or is developing, or is it that I'm seeing this as some sort of chore. I would hate for it to be the latter but it's there. Yes, it's here.

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What is also here is resistance. It's what keeps us from bringing bones, flesh and soul into the arena of perceivable life, for everyone to see. It's what sickens our bones, flesh and soul. It's what needs releasing. If it becomes too full, too dense, too saturated it will find its own way to emancipate itself. It blinds the sight of the river that carries all for us to pick from, it's all here already.

"We're like fish who dislike water and are always trying to swim away from it."<sup>29</sup> David Cain

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<sup>26</sup> Steffen Greiner, "Nicht, weil ich das so geil finde, sondern", *Die Epilog*, May 2019, 87.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Berne

<sup>28</sup> Heinrich Von Kleist, *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden / On the gradual completion of thoughts during speech*, translated by John S. Taylor, 2006. Berlin: United Designers Network, 23.

<sup>29</sup> David Cain, "Life Gets Real When the TV Goes Off", [raptitude.com](http://raptitude.com), October 16th, 2016, accessed November 25th, 2019, <https://www.raptitude.com/2016/10/when-the-tv-goes-off/>.

"Two young fish are swimming along. An older fish, headed the other way, asks them, 'Morning boys, how's the water?' The two of them continue on in silence until one of them asks the other, 'What the hell is water?'" David Foster Wallace in *This is Water*<sup>30</sup>.

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Lately I've been looking into rituals. Not specifically into tried and tested methods and tools to achieve certain outcomes but rather ways to get me into the right headspace (non-headspace) that allows intuition and the universe to flow, that charges drive and awareness. As Alan Watts said "Don't try"<sup>31</sup>.

Sometimes being in a place where population density is extremely high seems to interfere with 'the weather' so to speak. What I mean to say is that it affects ones moods, thoughts and feelings, almost scrambles them. Thoughts are waves too.

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Repetition is an interesting one. Do something long enough and the stream will run and run after having passed multiple stages of resistance. I guess it only works though if it's pointless, without a goal. Like painting points on stones.

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It's about trusting and not controlling. About forcing versus accepting. About reminding oneself of one's spiritual awareness of the human condition rather than the rational human framework of what the spiritual ought to be. It's about breaking down barriers between different manifestations of consciousness - almost as is if the wooden threshold between two rooms did not exist and an electronic vacuum cleaner can just pass with ease.

It's about asking why the opposite always seems greener. Where resistance gains its power. And where everything becomes whole, possibly.

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Am I ready for another free flowing piece of text, where the words are appearing in front of me like birds of paradise in the wind of the sunny Brazilian landscape of doom, why doom. How do I explain that to Tanja. Broken bed, bad breath, sticky white bread that smells a tad too sour for the marmalade of hell. And again blue skies with white clouds shudder the previous image like nothing like a garden of gloom and not doom am now I laugh because I don't know what's coming here except for the racoon that just popped up here on my keyboard between my finger fingerroos.

And now I'm thirsty. Go drink water.

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<sup>30</sup> Jamie Sullivan, "This Is Water - Full version David Foster Wallace Commencement Speech" (video), May 19th, 2013, accessed November 25th, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CrOL-ydFMI>.

<sup>31</sup> HDvids 101, "Alan Watts - Don't Try" (video), June 24th, 2015, accessed November 15th, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-tRXsteuRA>.

Art is being. Let it happen. It's about not trying but being. Work can only be work when we don't force it. "We have a strange anxiety in us that if we don't interfere it won't happen" - Alan Watts<sup>32</sup>. Art is a paradox as the artificial is the real and the real is the artificial.

There is no end goal. There is only no more time left in this form.

Sitting around a fire.

There is this other side to us, our shadow side<sup>33</sup> as Jung put it.

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To change conscious perception and possibly even the flow of consciousness itself, certain elements for example time, space, objects and many others can be manipulated, organised or performed in certain ways to rattle and shake up 'standard' flows. What I mean to say is that we unintentionally affect life around us, not only on the surface (i.e. walking over a living insect or talking with a friend) but also on some deeper level which is able to be manipulated. Some might call this magic.

I just noticed that I called it 'deeper'. Maybe it's actually the lightest of them all, even the most accessible but we have just become perpetually more blinded and less open to it. We indeed live in a very safe society here in the West (at least from the context of which I am writing this out of). It is easy to notice the scrambling and confusion. I am even considering removing gluten from my diet to see if it affects my mood, the weather.

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Purity.

It's what is here, now. Is manipulation an intervention or is it the next step the human condition allows or is here to do? Or is it about preservation, protection.

I don't have to do anything. Everything is already. It is about receiving. Of being open to the river and what it brings.

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Lately I was thinking about paedophilia, in the sense of seeing it as a natural part of someone. A sense of pity was kindled in me for impacted individuals as our society condemns and criminalises their primordial crave. It opens up a sort of dance between group thinking and individual inclination, of what is allowed or accepted and of what is forbidden or rejected.

And I feel cold. It's raining outside. On us.

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A friend held a closed book in her hand, it was almost reminiscent of a magic 8-ball, it was a book of all answers. She closed her eyes, aiming to channel some sort of divine guidance that would tell her where to open the book. Her thumb ran through the pages and then it came to a halt, seemingly having found the right place. She held still but then in the last second hastily grabbed a few pages, moved them to the side and opened the book there.

How curious is that last move. It was her stamp, her signature.

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<sup>32</sup> HDvids 101, "Alan Watts - Don't Try" (video), June 24th, 2015, accessed November 15th, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-tRXsteuRA>.

<sup>33</sup> Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams, eds, *Meeting the Shadow. The hidden power of the dark side of human nature*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 1991.

Taking responsibility for ones actions or rather creating an active space for chance or the uncontrolled to add their part to the work.

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Work it out, work it out of yourself.

Connecting work through doing.

Experience in itself, the doing rather than observing, has a different frequency to it.

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Weeks. The sunshine hours in a day are still decreasing and every time I cook, my home steams up like a sauna, and yes I should open the windows to let the cold air in.

Resistance is such an interesting phenomenon<sup>34</sup>. It haunts me and when I face it, it smiles at me with this big fat grin, resembling the one of a proud soccer mom who's child just made the finals. We dance together all the time. I am afraid that this text won't do justice to experience itself. That it floats like single use plastic on the ocean surface. And next.

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It's hard to continue writing because the last few weeks I've been actively making work and spend long hours in the studio 'thinking' through doing. Returning to active reflection seems somehow a little arbitrary, especially with the use of symbols that become words that become sentences. Squeezing experience into these characters is something we learn from childhood and some are better at it than others. Is this becoming a philosophical side product?

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On becoming, and again it's going down like a rollercoaster that is certain of its path. I don't know where to start. It's all a big break of trash. The sun is shining and I cannot mirror it. What did I consume to not withstand this wind. I'm caged in my own body, forgetting that this is just a human experience all together, of being part of a group of not being. I remember the walks through the valley of endless hills of green, brown and rock. Oh how I yearn for these days where gravel under our feet meant freedom from life. It meant living itself. I dare say we were young but we were we. The early morning coffee or was it tea while it's still icy cold and our mouths steam like oxen losing the warmth of the bed as dawn becomes day. Oh how these times seem so distant now, how I remember myself when it got too much, not there but here and before but not there. I simply couldn't. It was sacred. Do I reminisce myself into a melancholy or low? Wake up. Serotonin is made in the gut. What did I consume. Is it the beef from a few days ago that has arrived in my intestine? Is it the oat milk and decaffeinated coffee? Is it simply becoming too much? Too much pressure. Again alone. Or so I feel and now? Is that so difficult. We all die alone. We all die alone. Look for that inner peace. Maybe it's the exposure that hid it deep down. Again, what you utter shall disappear. I should say out loud that I feel lonely. So do I. And I wonder how it can become soft. And softer. Soft.

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Trust.

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<sup>34</sup> Steven Pressfield, *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner Creative Battles*, New York: Black Irish Entertainment LLC, 2012.

“The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young.” Oscar Wilde <sup>35</sup>

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I know nothing. I know all.

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Rumbling.

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<sup>35</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Only Dull People Are Brilliant at Breakfast*, London: Penguin Random House UK, 2016, 27.

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