FEVER DREAMS, volume one of possibly more, cheaply bound and even more cheaply produced, an outlet for graduate students & bored assistant or adjunct professors & wordplay enthusiasts & peripheral dilettantes, an exercise in type layout & readership & experimental publications immediately sent down the memory hole, catering to an audience of one or possibly fewer, academic (read: "serious") in tone but absolutely not peer-reviewed, unplayful and archive-minded, a total bruise on the C.V., is looking for contributions.

FEVER DREAMS is an experiment in publication tactics as well as the reach & pull of the online "Calls for Works" database. Not a zine, not an exhibition, and not quite a journal, FEVER DREAMS wants writings about, against, ignoring, embracing, or undoing the fever dream, hallucinogenic image, or psychic kaleidoscope in all its forms.

FEVER DREAMS is not a chickenshit "outsider comix" outfit. FEVER DREAMS is looking for serious writing talent and discipline, though it understands that it isn't going to be a high priority in anybody's life. FEVER DREAMS is edited and produced by a single graduate student in English Literature and Language somewhere in Canada, and is meant entirely as an exercise in alternative research methods.

In short:

YES: Personal essays, research essays, transcriptions of dreams past and present, in-depth explorations of personal trauma, sickness, illness, journeys, visions, shamanisms, etc., inclusive of loose definitions of these terms.

NO: Critical theory, seminar papers, poetry, fiction, artwork, "creative writing" as it is commonly known.

LENGTH: 500 to 2,000 words. Negotiable.

SEND TO: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

DEADLINE: Let's make it around April 2, 2015.

IF SELECTED, YOU WILL GET: contributor copy, typed memo of thanks, street cred.
Imagine if God accidentally made zombies. So his goal was to make amazing, beautiful people who look like him and live forever. What he got instead was a bunch of regular folks who, with access to great nutrition and health care, live for about 86 years. When these regular people die they are placed into caskets and buried; flowers are placed over their graves. Yet the body, the immortal creation, lives on.

The zombification process hits about three days after death, when the body is just beginning to really degrade. Buried safely in the ground, the immortal person begins the thrash about. They wake up fully aware and conscious, filled with a lifetime of memories of "loved ones" and "happiness" and "sorrow." At the same time, they have become a 28 Days Later zombie, overcome with rage and pain. With all their humanity still intact they writhe horribly in their coffins with no escape. The zombie body is immortal, and so their suffering only deepens as they are driven further into "rage" and "madness" into eternity.

But there's good news! A program has been started for select individuals. Guests of this exclusive program will be re-animated post-death and pre-zombification. Their intact and immortal bodies will be transported to Hell, where they will live in an all-inclusive 5-star resort forever. Depending on which metric you use, the odds are between 1 in 6, to 1 in 10,000. Your chances vary depending on which country you were born in, your exposure to a university education and your relationship with your father. Good luck.

Those not on the guest list will continue to face an eternity of zombie thrashing...
EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS & WE’RE ALL GONNA DIE

(SCOTT ALEXANDER JONES)

Radios are older than all of us already. Asleep at the Leaf & Bean, I’m barely aware I worry the baristas will think my eye drops are lysergic acid. But this, like everything, means nothing, like by the time y’all read this I’ll be rotting coffin meat. Some hymns are worth holding onto despite the thumb screws. For the most beautiful song, ask the oldest woman in the room, even if she voted for Bush II both times. Everyone who despised me must make an appearance at the funeral parlor, and the appearance I’ll make depends on how late the embalmer’s night. Hold hands, everyone, remove hats. Not for me but in memory of fireplaces before fire, in memory of memory, of shit before indoor plumbing. Stick me in a big sweaty microwave and send me downriver on a Huckleberry Finn raft and think of lasagna and know in this moment our minds are one.
DYNAMIC SECRET
(ZACHARY GIBSON)

WAVES

Human nesting, that gorgeous place inside your dreams that emerges daintily, fully equipped kitchen, hands Life knives, fingers cutting Your hair before breakfast, and Handling the tissue paper moon Like skin, but the dark coma Pours from syrup red mouths this early in the house.

But I have been with this Sickness for a very long time, I've been With you there, and weaving Whistles to your Irish wingspan Of angelica, the rosaries spinning In your home, there. My fingers Like ropes, and your fingers like Rosemary bundles lapped 65 in The waves, a dream comes Now, so galactic it Unravels our snakeskin Boots onto the wooden Floors and your window sill.
DREAMS OF A NIGHT FLYER

(VIKTORIA A. STRUNK)

(JAMES E. WILLIS, III)

The dream was always the same, I felt myself looking down at the world; sometimes I was miles in the air, and other times my nose was inches from the ground. Sometimes my body would soar to the earth as if I were going to crash, only to lift again at the last minute. Often I would feel myself perch on top of my swing set in the backyard. I would feel myself looking around, noticing that I could see the neighbor's dogs but they couldn't see me. I tried to yell out to them, but no sound would come out of my mouth. Those nights, my body would be in my bed, seemingly frozen to the spot. My heart would race, and perspiration would bead on my forehead. If I awakened from the dream, I tried to go back to sleep right away because I wanted to fly again.

Most children who have nightmares, scream, awaken their parents, and learn to sleep with the light on. I relished the dark because I knew the dream would come. My grandmother told me when I was very young that my ani-

mal spirit would come to me in a dream and meet me in the present. When I was awake, I looked for this animal everywhere I went. Finally, after many years of searching, I asked my grandmother how I would know this animal when it met me in the present. She said, "This animal will know you and make itself known to you. The pit of your stomach will feel the same as when you go over the top of a roller coaster."

After that conversation, I wanted more than ever to know my animal spirit. One day when I was eight, I was finally rewarded. I had been out hunting with my father when I heard a loud screech in the wind. Turning my head toward the sound, I saw the flash of brown wings as the bird dipped lower and lower to the ground. The gleam of a red tail tuck down as the mighty bird's talons picked up the rabbit and raised it from the earth. My eyes fixated on the beautiful creature as my stomach seemed to lift and droop in quick succession. The red-tailed hawk, my animal totem, had found me!

"Dreams and visions serve as messages or instructions that any of the faithful may expect to receive as gifts from an unseen power. Dreams exist for ordinary people to illuminate the path of an individual's life, as guidebooks for living, for making one's way through the day. In the world of the Indians, the dream is real" (Flaherty, 1992, p. 8). Most Indians are aware of the dream that Sitting Bull had before the defeat of General Custer. The chief spread this message to his braves to encourage them on the battle field. However, today, if a leader told his followers he had a "dream" that they would win a war, they would think he was on the brink of a psychotic break.

Sigmund Freud, the influential Viennese psychologist, emphasized the unconscious mind which expresses itself in dreams. Whereas in the West, thinkers often discount the power of the unconscious mind, Freud argued that dreams served as a medium to work out latent problems. Dividing them into direct prophesies, future foretelling, and symbolic dreams, Freud argued in his Interpretation of Dreams that even the most seemingly unimportant objects or occurrences in dreams often held the key to proper interpretation. Famous examples are a box signifying a womb or an elongated object signifying a phallicus.

The unconscious mind, according to Freud, serves to protect us from ourselves, so to speak. We must function in a society with others, so we cannot act however we want; our desires, though, must be released somehow. In our dreams, our minds do not suppress what we really want. This is why our fantasies and anxieties are masked in symbols which require interpretation. Freud (1920) said, "In truth, the dream work is only the first recognition of a group of physical processes to which must be referred the origin of hysterical symptoms, the ideas of morbid dread, obsession, and illusion" (p. 39). The interpretations of dreams may reveal much more about the processes of our thoughts.

The root of the unconscious mind in Freud's interpretation is sexually-driven. This means that at the most basic level, our minds are forever imposing imagery, words, and emotions to drive the instinct to reproduce. This may well be
since existence, as Richard Dawkins might put it, is statistically unlikely. The fact of our own being conscious or unconscious is a precious thing because at some level, we know we are an anomaly in the cosmos; our lives are immeasurably short, and death looms continuously. Yet we did not ask to be here; we simply find ourselves "here" one day when we become first aware of our own consciousness. This is traumatic to the unconscious mind, which must continuously cope with the fragility of life, the desire to propagate future life, and the necessity of living within structured society. The trauma of consciousness is why Hawes (2009) summarizes one of Freud’s dream theories by stating, "Dreams of flying through the air reveal subconscious thoughts of sexual desire" and dreams of falling "represent succumbing to sexual desire" (p. 1). In other words, the common features of dreams reveal commonalities in our consciousness.

Are dreams really just a manifestation of events that happen in a day and exhibit themselves with pseudo-sexual undertones? Or are they something more important? For me, the dream is always the same. I am flying. The canyon is vast and dry. I tilt my head down and look for a discernable movement. There in the scrub, in the deepest area of the canyon floor, the brown ears twitch slightly. I feel the gust in my feathers as I dip lower toward my prey. Its death scream resonates through the canyon as I ascend toward the heavens.

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Perfect Light

The impression of perfect light burns itself into the crystal fragments on the uncertain surface. The surface is then embossed and wrinkled, forming a topography of dry intelligence. Sparks short circuit and cascade through the uncertain surface creating an entropy of thoughts. This is a quantum world: a world smaller than the thoughts that made it in the first place. It is made of patterns, impressions, grazings, and light touches that fluctuate between the real and the ill conceived.

The orientation of looking and being watched is an important constant within the Ontocinematic apparatus of the Cinema of Sweat. This is a cinema of looking that moves only in one direction, from the looker to the looked upon.

Reverse Cinematography involves the self-conscious camera. This is where the camera is not merely the mechanical apparatus that grazes the shiny surface of reality with silver images but is a constitution of positions and circumstances that situates the camera in a quandary of strategic erasures. Imagine the camera as a wood plane scraping a thin veneer of substance off the uncertain surface of reality. Imagine the camera as method of removing the scum of images that coagulate on the surface after cinema boils all the reality away. Imagine the camera coiling and scratching as it slowly fails to reproduce the caustic accumulation of realities that clog up and burn into the camera’s view.

This camera vacuums away the reality of the world it is trained on. It leaves our minds discoloured by the mistakes of history. This cinema is nothing more than synesthesia – one could call it CINESTHESIA, that is: a correspondence of incomplete realities through arbitrarily correlated sensations. We can even say that, with Reverse Cinematography, time speaks to space through a kind of trickle-down ontology.

The proper description of a camera is that it is a reactor. It creates a juxtaposition of reality, memory, and ontology by controlling the radioactive possibility of meaning embedded within each image by restricting the explosion of interpretations. In this model, the deployment of ‘Style’ acts as the control rods by organizing meaning into recognizable form. This is sometime referred to colloquially as “all kinds of beautiful”.

What Kind of Beautiful?

All kinds of beautiful: Beautiful from A to H. Beautiful beyond the most beautiful number ever written. These are the beauties that are here to stay: the beauty of gentle decisions, the beauty in sudden becoming. There is the beauty of transitions between one shade and all the others. This is the classic beauty – an elusive MACGUFFIN that whispers slowly. There is a stumbling beauty, jilted with fear like tiny, flavoured burps. And, of course, there is the simple kindness of beauty that haunts the most notorious of parades. Here all the numbers float close to the ground held down by strings and string theory to prevent the numbers from floating away. These beauties are the big sticks - the heavy willow - that allow us to walk so softly.

But even the most beautiful and perfect flavours can be granulated. Sometimes these are shapes and at other times they are elusive except for the harmonies produced by the spook action. Where flavours period there is a knot of content.
tion within the fabric of space and time. These flavours imbue even the most perfect fabric with the human stain of memory and regret. From another perspective, all these stains can create a pleasing pattern of human history told through the confluence of knotted conceptions warping the perfect standing wave of a reversible universe.

Flavours require a palette on which the tastes can perform. A flat palette is best suited for test conditions although there are many reasons to want a variation to the flat palette. It is the groundkeeper who determines the warps and tensions of the palette. These deviations are culled from samples of the uncertain surface and used to create an exquisitely granulated flavour of play. This process is very similar to that used in developing a language.

The Cinema of Sweat

The cinema of sweat is a filmin reduction fusing inspiration with perspiration to create a cinematic concentrate. This is cinema that needs to be poured, not sprinkled. To truly appreciate this cinema you need to use a LIGHT TOUCH. You must move your fingers across the surface of the celluloid. The cinematic flavours come up from the heat created by the surface tension of finger on film. Do not lick the film (as some would advise). This is a wholly inappropriate appreciation of this subtle art.

The cinema of sweat is a proxy for the cycle of emotions that pool, condense, and flow through the body politic. The cinema glows that sweat the sweet stuff of cinematic history are 'pleasing units' of the circumstantial apparatus. Here is an art without disguise. Here is the brow sweat of weary warriors downstream from history turning tricks for professional degenerates. "Art for art's sake" was the battle cry of the weathermen. Human sympathy is the rising damp of cinema's dissolution. Critics blow gently across the surface of cinema to dry this dampness. This is what is known as THE BUZZZ. It dehumanizes the tensions allowing for a pharmaceutical derivative of cinema to be prepared from the particulate salts formed from cinema's failures.

Ontocinemography is the muscle memory of the body politic. It is a BAILLICK; a branch joint that causes a slip between the actual and the redacted aspects of reality. The camera is the enemy of disambiguation. It thrives on the promiscuity of signs and the ambiguity of time-shares. Its wonders are often abbreviated for shorter attention spans and sold as reminders. These are called BLIPS.

REMOVING THE THING FROM THE OBJECT

This is best done procedurally and on a controlled, flat palette. The object is reduced in dimension but not in size through thinning by the ontocinematic device. After the object is cooled and stored, its thinness can be discussed fluidly and technically. As the thing usually experiences colour shifts as well as pitch shifts, it must be filtered when it is brought back into discourse.

The reduced object is recycled across all parallel worlds as an UR form where it shudders and collapses through a Mysterious Cosmic Quiescing (MCQ). The reduced object is then un-cooled after the MCQ so that proper proportions can be established. At this point we can "call the question" and the reduced object can return from the background and once more attain dimension.

The Thing, in the meantime, vanishes altogether and reappears in perfect light. It can be constituted as an acquisition, a troubled form, or as a new flavor. The Thing is now scalable and has almost infinite resolution allowing it to cover more ground.

THE THING BECOMES THE IMAGE

This process occurs technically as The Thing itself is parsed and shuttered through the onotographic apparatus. The Image is "burned in" through steady passes of memory that scrape the image. At first the image is slippery and can easily become vanquished but, as continual passage is applied, a build up of nostalgia residues fortifies the image into an ontological resist. As the image stabilizes, it moves through the spectrum in a kind of purposeful wandering. Sparking occurs at cross-purposes that will start the process of rotation. The particular rotation can then be oriented to the spin as the image is put into play.

The systemic use of harmonics occurs with the interaction of different image sets. Images in play set up sympathetic harmonics and standing waves known as Tonic forms. Other harmonic relations reorient the image boundaries and produce the unique sparking of the image-type.

The corridor of uncertainty occurs between and across this passage from the object to the image. 'Gardening' can be introduced during play on the palette in an attempt to preserve the mystical flatness of the image. True mystical flatness can only be achieved through ironing (which is the opposite of irony). This is why image manipulation is often referred to as 'ironic gardening'.

IMAGE BECOMES MEANING

Content-aware weight-shaping is applied to the image as the reduced object attains dimension. This is not calibrated to the Play/Tonic harmonics but through an elaborate Legendre transformation, the image is attuned to the complex harmonic feedback of the whole field. This is a weave and is not considered a constitutional variation.

When the image is finally 'rapped out', it collapses as fracture points and punctums emerge into what is known as meaning. Meaning is a proto-hysterical confluence of harmonics at play that bears little resemblance to the reduced object. The Small Object (objet petit a) that arrives in parallel is a 'sticky object' since it sustains the standing wave longer than all the others.

Meaning is a human-readable network of reference points constrained to nodal positions within a linguistic array that makes them unstable and unreliable but also allows for flexible structures and adaptive architectures.

True meaning is a grid formation of linguistic nodes organized equidistant across the field forming the lowest anomaly possible throughout the system. This is also called THE REAL (not to be confused with the REALLY REAL (RR) or even the REALLY REALLY REAL (RRR)). THE REAL is, at it's flattest, a procure of Chimerat and Mirage effects across the pharmacological axis. These effects rise off the uncertain surface to be animated by perfect light causing these trans-dimensional GHOST EFFECTS that cannot be weight-shaped or tweaked. GHOST EFFECTS also indicate temporal folds and are used to identify anomalies. GHOST EFFECTS will occur during anomalies at level three and above.

The GHOST EFFECTS are sometimes called 'Blinkys'. They are known to have two states of spin known as 'up' and 'down'. Dramatically this is known as 'Spooky Action at a Distance' (SAD). Spooky Action at a Distance (SAD) is a fundamental dramatic force along with Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). These are the strong forces. There are two other weak forces: The MACGUFFIN and the GLOMAR.

THE APPEARANCE OF REAL OBJECTS

Only from the true mystical flatness of the real can object appear. This is a kind of hide-and-seek as ascensions produced by shadow energies consolidate into solid form (congruent stability) and become proto-objects. These become part-objects through condensation and displacement and then can become complete objects through secondary revision. Most objects are dreamed into reality this way although some special objects appear through the interaction of occluded objects and negative objects forming a complex object. These are sometime called 'Duds' or 'Strays'.
There is no such Thing as the Real Thing

In the minor chain of being there can be no
jump cuts or uncollaborated ontologies. The thing
is never real since it is constantly transitioning be-
tween the object and the image. The thing is only
a set of harmonic relations. The Thing, therefore is
never a real thing. It's thingness is just a mirror of
the real reflecting back projections of objects into
the void of language.

The Thingness of the Thing is only real with
in the confines of local realism and where counter-
factual definiteness does not persist. If nonlocality
is switched on then Spooky Action at a Distance
comes into play and should be massaged and up-
ended through the more notable forms of clandest-
tine realism that are available on the palette.

Countert factual Decoherence

The measure of entanglement (the TOIL-
LER) is a linguistic metric that correlates object
relations in parallel worlds. The application of
delusions of reference sustains the counterfac-
tual decoherence of a system in a superposition.
Through a methodology of circumstantial realign-
ment, the superposition can be sustained all the
way through to level three anomalies.

The technique of counterfactual decoher-
ance involves spin-polarized metaphors produced
through the collision of entangled linguistic ma-
terials. This is known as a 'joke'. A joke is the abil-
ity to suspend the counterfactual anomalies in a
superposition. 'Getting' the joke collapses the
waveform of the superposition.

The humor can be DARK or LIGHT de-
pending on the direction in time that the joke is
oriented. Dark Humor faces the past. Its residue
can build up on proper non-objects to create shad-
ow energy. Light humor moves towards the future
and dissipates like steam. Humor that moves side-
ways in time is known as a sacred joke and is unaf-
fected by linguistic gravity.

Countert factual decoherence is a future-di-
rected reverse entropy of shadow energy. Joke for-
mation is a condensation of entangled linguistic
material that is measured in bits. The bit follows
the law of three and if it has a TOLLER rating
of more than 100 it can start to exhibit traces of
blurring or ghosting which are a key feature of lev-
el three anomalies.

The Clown

The CLOWN is a special case of a GHOST
EFFECT (just as a joke is considered 'ghosting' or
'blurring'). Clowns can place jokes on non-con-
tinuous objects, into vapors, near to doors,
into small or medium-sized boxes, in proximity
to verbs, onto concepts not involving vampires,
through a keyhole, onto a watch list, and beside
themselves. Jokes employ SAD (Spooky Action
at a Distance).

One joke can replace another although this
is known as a 'stressed' joke. The rule of threes ap-
plies to jokes although there can also be a fourth
element known as a 'topper' that is used as a sup-
plement or a normalizer.

Legspin and tailspin can be applied to a
joke along with bounce. If portions of the joke
become stale, these should be carefully shaved off
and placed in an airtight container and labeled.
These jokes should be disposed of using proper
WSEG 50 regulations and protocols.

[1] In these cases, I like to act as a decimal, inserting myself into
the arrogance of numbers so they have to round up or round
down (according to local customs).
Dear Esther, developed by The Chinese Room, allows the player a unique experience of trauma narrative. Utilizing the game environment, personal narrative, playable memory, and visual metaphor, the game illustrates the many ways in which trauma can be expressed, how it is defined and refined, and its cyclical nature. The mystery of Dear Esther is three-fold: who is the character being played, does this character actually exist; what is this place, does it actually materially exist; and what happened/what parts of the story being told are true? Understanding this three-part mystery and the game as a whole necessitates an understanding of trauma narrative and the mechanisms within that allow an individual to understand and (hopefully) work through their traumatic experience.

First, I would like to propose that the player is not a real person, per se, but instead an embodiment of memory, trauma, and journey—both mental and, as we are made to experience via the island, physical. This being may be meant to hold the place of Esther, the main object of the game who may be dead (and thus the player is an embodiment of Esther in the mind of the narrator), comatose (she is being read to), or a ghost (experiencing the island as the narrator has constructed it for her). The player cannot be playing the narrator himself; only following his journey through his letters to Esther; there is no gameplay representation of his broken leg and distorted vision, assuming those things did in fact happen. However, the player’s character is portrayed as male, as suggested by the heavy breathing being heard after the fall into the cave. This small detail greatly disrupts the constructions of some possible identities of the walker, and may suggest that the player is a third, indirectly involved person who is reading the letters and constructing this world, in much the same way that one would read a book and construct a congruous world for the story. Because of the ambiguous identity of the controlled character, I will refer to it as “the walker.” This character has no visible extremities and the only semblances of humanity are the sound of footsteps and the clicking of the torch as it is automatically turned on and off. These, too, can be understood as embodiments of memory: they are the interactive projection of the narrative that we both hear and read, a necessary extension of understanding the main character’s journey.

Embodying the island itself, the narrator’s journey is the player’s main source of motivation for continuing the game. Throughout the game, the player sees the aerial in the distance and is made to remember it, as it is often referred to by the narrator. The player knows from the very beginning that the aerial is the “light at the end of the tunnel,” operating both as the locational goal of the game, and the main metaphor for the narrator’s apex of loss and grief. On the player’s journey to the aerial, exploration of the island uncovers pieces to the puzzle of where the player is and what they are doing; the record of the island (both historically true and dramatically real), remnants of the character whose footsteps the player follows, fantastic mutations of the island (the caves mostly, though even these could be believable), and chemical structures, circuit diagrams, and bible passages written on the cliff walls. The game has no other motivational rewards, only the discovery of new “information,” or, more specifically, poetics shrouded in the perceived reality of the main character—his trauma narrative.

After the first few monologues it is assumed that the narrator is a man who has some relation to Esther, which is only slightly better understood as the game is completed. His story is complicated by his poetic telling of history and the symbols embedded in his narration, both audible and visual/physical. The player hears his voice throughout the game; his memories and traumatic construction of the island are what the player experiences, through the prosthesis of the walker.

The walker is a humble cybernetic screen through which the player retraces the character’s footsteps, but only at a slow pace. The player is made delicate through the walker, imitating the sensitivity of the character’s traumatized sensibilities and perception of his surroundings. However, when the walker “dies,” the character’s voice asks the player to “come back...” The player is then revived, or simply “comes back” to the island, reinforcing the walker’s immortality. Esther’s non-mortality as a ghost, or, in contrast, Esther’s non-existence as the projection of the narrator, and thus the illusion of the physical realities of the journey. The slowness of the walker and the expansiveness of the island and its subenvironments force the player to reflect in the time between narrative clips and physical symbols that help explain the narrator’s trauma and experience. Acting as triggers, the narrative clips and symbols allow the player to experience the trauma, bit by bit, through the eyes of the traumatized individual; the time between lets the weight of guilt and grief settle in. Having only the controls of moving and looking, the player is restrained to ground movements and only very limited interactions. The story is only told as the player happens upon the pieces, through their own exploration and curiosity. The player is made to feel like a guest in the character’s landscape of trauma through these mechanisms. Indeed, the player is walking the topography of trauma, struggle, and healing. The island and its metamorphosed locales are both physically real and unreal, having had psychologically enhanced symbols placed upon them. To further extend this metaphor, one may look at the game itself as an extension of this layered form of trauma narrative. As the player must use the walker to experience a place that is imbued with psychological landscape (it cannot be understood by just any person walking the terrain, as it may not hold all the symbols—some must be real only to the narrator, or as explained in his account), so too must the player use the game. As the player sits
at their screen, the world of *Dear Esther* becomes their reality for the time of the game; otherwise the piece would produce little effect, reduced to a static image. To play is to be immersed, the player takes the game's reality as the walker takes the island's reality.

Though the player knows the game is not their material reality, it is experienced as such while being played, just as the island itself. Within this subreality, is understood as a physical neutral without the psychological reality projected upon it by the narrator, through the lens of the walker. In this way, the player is truly experiencing the trauma doubly: the narration is like a story being told, and the player can sympathize, but by submitting one’s self to the game, the player is then able to empathize, having experienced some of the results of the trauma firsthand, especially through the lens of the narrator, which is the only lens that matters (trauma is individual after all). As reality is warped through the lens of trauma, so too is the landscape of the island warped through the lens of the traumatized. Furthermore, the player’s reality is, in a way, traumatized by the acceptance of the game environment as real, and of the walker as an extension of their body.

This acceptance operates on many levels, some designed, others accidental. The Chinese Room has constructed a world that has both a tangible lineage of science and history, engorged with symbols and stories that make it believable, with a certain level of fantasy, existing without any evidence beyond direct narration and the player’s faith in this narration. If the player submits to the narrator’s conception of the island, the game is successful in trapping the player; the place is real, believable, and yet fantastical, though not without forgivable reason. The narrator has made it clear that the island is not only a physical reality, but also a psychological landscape rife with convoluted plays of personal and historical turmoil. The island is never seen solely as a physical environment, nor as a psychological imagining; it is always both, and these two islands are inseparable, as each necessitates the other for the possibility of the place. Without the understanding of either, the game would mean very little, being stripped of the multifaceted delusions experienced under the oppression of trauma.

The complications of these delusions are made apparent in the narrator’s epistles, his various pictorial and written works throughout the game’s environment, and the presence of certain game elements that would be otherwise absent on an uninhabited island. As the game progresses, the narrator’s letters become more and more confused, melding separate characters and actions, places and times. Similarly, certain iconic diagrammatic images are fused, as the structures of dopamine, alcohol, circuitry, and cells are mixed together and often infused with the Hebrew letters Aleph Kaph. The symbols both lose and gain meaning through this process: because the player acknowledges the early forms, the mutated versions are recognized as the narrator’s diminishing grasp on both objective reality and his own personal understanding of his environment and its symbols.

Additionally, ghosts are an element present throughout the game, though with increasing visibility and accessibility towards the end. Until the final chapter, the ghosts are only glimpsed or hinted at, only materializing as anthropomorphic beings as our journey nears its close. These ghosts may have been inserted only as prompts to move forward, as would make sense in the lighthouse and first caves, but later they are used more openly to symbolize the narrator’s increasing levels of delusion. Since the ordinary player would only see these beings from afar, I am here bypassing their identities, which have been noted by players using the debug console and utilizing noclip.[iii] So, to the players without this ability or knowledge, these are simply figures or lights in the distance — illusions, signifying the narrator’s ignorance or loss of certain aspects of reality. It is evident then, that this game is a visualization of a man’s final journey with trauma, as his subjective reality, taken for the objective, presented as the player’s only possible reality.

In this same vein, the narrator’s letters are presented only partially, both in each narration and in the game overall. The player never sees all of the letters; unless the game is played many times. This reinforces the double trauma of the piece, as pieces of the trauma narrative experienced by the player are left out, or lost, reifying the cycle of trauma represented throughout the piece. The player is never allowed the full story, and never in total clarity, strengthening the trauma both of the narrator and his experience and of the player and their experience of the game, allowing for a highly subjective and personal interpretation of the game.

The cyclic nature of trauma is duplicated in every corner of the game. It is made tangible through the narrator’s obsession with the number 21, reiterated more often as the game continues. It is also made apparent in his vehicle and driving metaphors, made physical on the island as the player stumbles upon tires, axes, and car doors. Additionally, Donnelly’s *History of the Hebrides*, often mentioned by the narrator as a symbol of the island’s history and a personal history of disease and delusion, is supposed to have only existed as a singular copy, but many copies can be found in the gully if one follows disembodied gulls from the beach. The *History* is misunderstood and internalized, and thus repeated over and over, just like the repetitions of the accident and the narrator’s actions, signifying his guilt and his helplessness at rectifying the past. This game is full of symbols, all of which can be written about on their own, and as such, they will here be left alone.

Also, the histories of the characters mentioned by the narrator are portrayed only partially, and in a cyclic manner. These stories are, like the rest of the piece, never disclosed fully or impartially, lending to the greater metaphor of trauma and delusion. It is doubtful whether there even is a clear answer to the “reality” of the different aspects of the game: everything is seen through the lens of trauma and its resulting psychological experiences and effects, perhaps complicated by other external factors, such as the morphine or the pain from the broken leg.

Overall, *Dear Esther* makes for a very well constructed third-person experience of trauma (in the first-person perspective), and thus the journey of an individual’s trauma narrative. The island is both physical and mentally construed, acting as a place to deal with trauma, as well as being the result of trauma. It is experienced alongside history and memory as the player is made to understand the events through the traumatic mind via narrations of broken letters and the prosthetics of the walker. Who is the walker? is the island real? what actually happened? These questions are posed, answered, and reanswered as the game progresses to the equally enigmatic ending, leaving the meaning up to the player and their interpretation of the signs, symbols, and narrative. The player’s trauma is similar to that of the walker’s and of the narrator himself; total disclosure is not allowed. Indeed, this exclusion of experience of an event is the epitome of trauma, and the player leaves with hands empty and graspering.

[i] A perhaps aptly chosen word, as its definition refers both to a letter written for a certain person (or people), often with the intention of teaching something, as well as the letters adopted as the writing making up the New Testament, from which much of the Christian excerpts are derived.

[ii] Except the caves chapter. Pages could be devoted to the reasons for this, but here I will only suggest that the caves are metaphor for the more introspective aspects of the trauma narrative process, in which the individual processes their feelings within themselves, apart from external factors. This may be reinforced by the cave paths that operate in a very different way than the open territory of the rest of the island, being very closed, underground, and largely self-illuminated.

[iii] [http://dearesthert.wikia.com/wiki/Ghosts](http://dearesthert.wikia.com/wiki/Ghosts)
CLINICAL FASCIST DREAMING: PERIPHERAL RESEARCH INTO CULTURAL SICKNESS (CAMERON BARROWS)

The mysterious appearance of fascism in the early twentieth century and its collective energy is unexplainable. Fascism is a resistance to the devaluation of the after World War I the disenchantment of collective political values and the rational secularization of all dimensions of life allowed for the populist rise of fascism. Fascism is inherently a confusion between the real and the rational. The construction of clinical nihilism in terms of both physical and psychical health are crucial in understanding the pervasive ideological tenets shared between the politics and science of the twentieth century.

The fever dream that central Europe entered in the 1930’s fertilized the mindset necessary for the rise of fascism through the upward valuation of the metaphysical and incommunicable.

We can trace this history of clinical fascist dreaming from the notion that ideals or ideology can replace actual human experience. The idealization of the human mind of the cogito is a great mishap in the development of western philosophy. The body of the twentieth and twenty-first century subject is not merely a corporeal structure but rather is a synthesis of bodily discourse and language. A synthesis of organic and inorganic, culture and history. This fusion is discovered in the pathos of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Leibniz’s monad contains the germ of the clinical notion of the body, a notion that one is separate from the body as viewed.

Clinical nihilism arises through the shock of the horror of the interior of the body of the Other. This is an essential aspect to the aesthetic regime (political aesthetic of death) of clinical nihilism. Odo of Cluny writes, “The beauty of the body is merely skin deep. For it, like the legendary lynx of Boethia, men were to see what lies beneath the skin, they would recoil in disgust at the sight of a woman... Just stop to consider what is hidden away in the nostrils, the throat, or the belly: everywhere filth.” It is this revulsion of the interior that encompasses the origin of clinical nihilism. The rise of Danse Macabre in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has given way to in the twentieth century the rise of health and life. This beget a culture that was separated from the experiences of decay, death, and putrefaction. The same could be said about the development of plumbing.

An extension of this ideology can be found in the psychoanalytic mysticism of Carl Jung. Jung develops during the inter-war years a philosophy of dreams and the mind based on the archaic image and the collective unconscious.
This philosophy calls on people to withdraw from the future and to learn and live with an objective psyche or as was later termed the collective unconscious. For Jung, the unconscious is no longer individual; it only exists in the renewal of the archaic unconscious within the masses in the present. Jung’s vitalism justifies the fascist ideology and Jung saw the rapid rise of fascist politics across Germany as a manifestation of the collective unconscious and a historical facet of his archetype theory. The politics of dreaming are always at stake. Delmore Schwartz writes, “In dreams begins responsibilities.” The mind of the author or of any subject is the genesis of the ethical arrangement between itself and and the others that surround it.

The construction of a new way to understand the body within a clinical structure, or to completely break down that structure, involves first an examination of the history and literature of clinical nihilism. In order to understand and deconstruct clinical nihilism, we must return to the history and literature that gave birth to the ideas.
BIOS

Jesse Ajayi says, "I am a Land-Use Planner and sometimes writer living and working in the Canadian Arctic."

Scott Alexander Jones—a PhD dropout who has lived in Portland, Austin, Seattle, and Lawrence, Kansas, as well as New Zealand and Prague—is the author of elsewhere (Black Lawrence Press, 2014), Carpe Demons (Unsolicited Press, 2014), and One Day There Will Be Nothing to Show That We Were Ever Here (Bedouin Books, 2009). His poems have appeared in over fifty journals. In 2009, he received his MFA from the University of Montana and was a writer-in-residence at the Montana Artists Refuge. In 2011, he received the Nancy Dew Taylor Poetry Award from Emrys Journal. He lives in Bozeman, Montana.

Zachary Gibson lives in New York City, out of a Bloomingdale’s bag he found in the trash. His work appears in journals Blazevox, sleeping fish and meta zen. He is currently researching for his third experiment, and can be followed doing so on, and so on www.infii.weebly.com and he loves you.

Vikoria Strunk, Ed.D., has published widely, including essays and chapters on Victorian literature, machine ethics, and religious education.

James E. Willis, III, Ph.D., has a background in comparative religion; his scholarship includes educational technology and ethics, philosophy and religion, and learning analytics.

David Clark is a Canadian media artist living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His website is: www.chemicalpictures.net.

//jsh wonders why he got a degree, but likes to think about trauma and control in relation to individuals and society.

Cameron Barrows is a graduate of Bard College at Simon’s Rock and a graduate student at St. John’s College Santa Fe. His interests are ontology, the relationship between Being, language, and the world, and the construction of radical ethics. He currently lives in Boulder, Colorado. For any inquiries he can contacted at: i_cam@mac.com
Carlos [Charlie] Sanchez is a graphic designer currently based in New York. He currently works freelance across media with clients in art, film, and publishing. They can be found at carlos-sanchez.info.

Matthew Schwager is a media artist based in Chicago, IL. His writing has appeared in Blunderbuss Magazine and First Person Scholar. Find him on Instagram as @studio.mss.