

The Illusive Nature of Context: The Negotiation of the Thoughtbody
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The World Generator / The Engine of Desire (p0es1s text Version)

How is it that we come to know an ever changing world that conflates both computer environments with other physical environments? An ongoing stream of perceptions forms a body of knowledge over time, informing the larger context of our individual thought. Each instance of media use has a meaning force that delicately shapes understanding through an ongoing set of environmental perceptions... the current process — thought. “Current” is a pun here, thought being an ongoing physical electro-chemical process. Yet the shape of this thought is also informed by past perceptual activity. The subtle nature of the forming of this *thoughtbody* is extremely illusive. I use the term thoughtbody as a unity, avoiding any idea of a mind / body split.

In particular I want to discuss a work entitled **The World Generator / The Engine of Desire**, a collaboration with the artist/programmer Gideon May that has been exhibited in Europe, the United States and Japan. I have also extended this work through the publication of the text from the work in an alternate form and context within the exhibition “p0es1s”. The World Generator promotes a form of active looking/listening/interacting/understanding. Through interaction with this virtual world generator, text potentially qualifies differing emotive aspects of the current computer-based emergent context. Media elements also inform the understanding of the text. All of the media-elements present meaning forces that operate on each other. Different interactions and “negotiations” of the space promote an ongoing meaning summing.

The version of the text that is to be presented in the “p0es1s” exhibition as decontextualised from the World Generator and recontextualised, qualifies the surroundings of the exhibition space of p0es1s, in a related way to how the texts operates within in the **World Generator**. In terms of this form of participatory “negotiation” of space, Varela, Thompson and Rosch in *The Embodied Mind*, speaking about Buddhist mindfulness awareness suggest:

Its purpose is to become mindful, to experience what one’s mind is doing as it does it, to be present with one’s mind. What relevance does this have to cognitive science? We believe that if cognitive science is to include human experience, it must have some method of exploring and knowing what human experience is. (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch, 1996, p.23)

The body is the analogue medium that contains this electro-chemical process/ground – the space of mindful awareness. Embodied events enable a physics to operate through an electrochemical vehicle of exchange to alter the subtle shape of the thoughtbody. The mutability and operative nature of computer-based environments compounds the complexity of this process. The computer is just one meaning-force-exchange-mechanism in the landscape of living exchanges, albeit an extremely pervasive one. The accretive nature of context suggests that any past context can inform a future context, even if the content of that context has been displaced or recontextualised — i.e. shifted from a computer-based context to a different form of physical context or media (as it has been here).

A set of mutable and operational media-elements and processes are potentially perceived via the computer, shifting the very nature of how meaning forces can be organized and transmitted. The thoughtbody is in a continuous state of subtle change and the computer now augments the speed and quality of this change. In fact, as the computer unlocks our ability to restructure nature via nanotechnological processes we enter yet another profound era of technological transformation. Every computer-based exploration of meaning subtly shifts the form of the thoughtbody which in turn exists, from time to time, away from the computer.

Could one make a technology to point at the subtle nature of meaning change over time? This question formed the driving problem which led to the authorship the project **The World Generator / The Engine of Desire** and led to my concept of Recombinant Poetics. A Recombinant Poetic work presents a mechanism in which a viewer/user/participant can act upon and explore varying juxtapositions of computer-based media-elements to examine environmental meaning within a mutable generative electronic environment. The generative component is essential to Recombinant Poetics and differentiates it from other fixed virtual environments. I am also interested in states of media. Thus a generative virtual environment can also be qualified by repositioning text gleaned from that space and further explored in a re-contextualised physical environment. **The World Generator** enables participants to construct virtual worlds in real time and then navigate and operate on/in that virtual world. Participants could (in some instantiations of the work) also enter networked virtual spaces, linking, for example, Tokyo to Karlsruhe among other connectivities.

The work enables one to examine differing fields of meaning as well as meaning forces as they are explored by an interacting participant. One can experientially witness subtle meaning shifts through this interaction. I write about mutable fields of meaning force in my dissertation. Ideas surrounding the production of the World Generator are contained in my PH.D. from CAiA (the

Centre For Advanced Inquiry in The Interactive Arts, University of Wales), led by Roy Ascott. The title of the dissertation was **Recombinant Poetics: Emergent Meaning as Examined and Explored Within a Specific Generative Virtual Environment**, available for download in PDF format from the Langlois Foundation. The Ph.D. was completed in 1999.

I have for many years been interested in what we might call differing states of media. In a similar way to the differing states of matter, media elements can be decontextualized to varying degrees. Many different forms of analogue and digital media can be carriers of abstractions of the initial meaning forces that can be encountered and explored through interaction in particular environments be they virtual or other. The thoughtbody is in a continuous flow of becoming. It is potentially informed by differing states of media over time. Deleuze and Guattari describe this quality of unfixity as a "flow" functioning as part of a larger conceptual assemblage. They relate this concept to the book form in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.4)

The "lines of flight" spread outward from the initial context of the computer-based work the World Generator. All instances of use that the thoughtbody perceives, inform the thoughtbody's understanding of the work. There is no fixed static meaning. The shape of the thoughtbody is always in a state of ongoing change from the interactive experience of differing meaning forces — different contexts of use and embodiment, each with their own individual nature. The functionality of this artwork as well as the displacement of media elements from the artwork, its quality of non-closure, manifests an ongoing "plateau" of change. Deleuze and Guattari speak about the origin of their use of the term "plateau":

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word "plateau" to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.22)

Computer-based environments fall in relation to the thoughtbody as do the alternate contexts housing decontextualised media-elements derived from the initial context. This is the premise behind my work in this show. By repositioning and making physical the text from **The World Generator / The Engine of Desire**, I extend through physical decontextualisation the implications that I sought to point at through the initial mutable computer-based experience. I also add multiple fields of new implications.

The concept of the rhizome as developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* is highly relevant to a discussion of a shifting configurations and contextualisations of media-elements, as well as a conflation of language-vehicles falling within the continuum between the physical and the digital. The authors relate this definition:

Let us summarise the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible to neither the One or the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the one, or to which one is added ($n+1$). It is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency and from which the one is always subtracted ($n-1$). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis. Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, the rhizome is made only of lines; lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. These lines, or ligaments, should not be confused with lineages of the aborescent type, which are merely localizable linkages between points and positions... Unlike the graphic arts, drawing or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.21)

My investigation of emergent meaning can be seen in the light of the concept of the rhizome.

The following observations are attributed to Heraclitus from the 6th century B.C., with commentary by Philip Wheelwright.

Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.

You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on.

It is in changing that things find repose. (Wheelwright, 1968, p.29)

Wheelwright muses:

Permanence is but a relative term, his [Heraclitus', emphasis Seaman] philosophy declares; and what we call permanent is simply an example of change in slow motion. All structures, if you observe them patiently enough and project your imagination far enough,

are dissolving slowly; everything, as the Greeks put it, is in a process of coming-to-be and passing-away. (Wheelwright, 1968, p.29)

It is interesting that Wheelwright uses a technological metaphor to discuss Heraclitus — slow motion. Yet it is this same kind of slow motion – the accretive thoughtmotion of a thoughtbody that I seek in part to point at. The techno-poetic mechanism (The World Generator / The Engine of Desire) seeks to illuminate processes of change — configurations of media-elements "coming-to-be" and "passing away" within an advanced technological environment. Within that technological environment, a world of potential poetic understanding undergoes change — meaning here enables an ongoing reflection related to the nature of accretive processes. In my dissertation on Recombinant Poetics I examine language-vehicle use. I argue that context is central to the generation of meaning. I show that meaning can be seen as ambiguous, indefinite and constantly in flux. This is particularly relevant to mutable, computer-based environments and to the nature of the recombinant sign. Reconfigurable contexts are continually entertained in the *negotiation* of meaning. This punning reading of the term *negotiation* is both spatial and conceptual.

Thus meaning is experienced through sensual interaction in a virtual environment as it is in any environment. Yet, meaning is no longer simply conveyed through chains of words. It is now circulated through the negotiation of virtual volumetric flows of media elements and processes, through probabilities and potentialities as well as across physical volumes of space — environmental interaction facilitates this process. These flows are polyvalent and ambiguous within the use of the device (as well as in this exterior context), seeing these characteristics as central to poetic approaches to the contemporary production of meaning.

Such flows qualify our future reading both of media elements from within the work as well as across other environments... My texts often include puns functioning to bridge multiple perspectives, where appropriate, i.e., the word *negotiation* is used above. The exhibition of the text from **The World Generator**, within the auspices of the p0es1s and/or other contexts extends the accretive process of meaning production related to the work. For those viewer/participants that have experienced the original digital work this extends the text's meaning. The physical distribution of the text creates a new form of negotiation for people who have not seen it in relation to its original context. Thus the two media states fall in relation to each other in a dynamic manner as experienced from a timedistance, each opening out different evocative layers of meaning. The thoughtbody navigates and negotiates the continuum between the physical and the virtual, the past and the present.

I here present the text is is presented in a distributed form across the exhibition space:

The World Generator / The Engine of Desire

Text Included In Menu System

quantum behaviours - the paradox engine
floating signifiers of the doubt progressions (arithmetic)
turn fold library of constellation puns
n spoke shunt jumpers
empty vessel theatre drives
shared oscillation reference fields
generator meta-constructs
random fall mechanisms
auto-positioning game board moves
meta-empty projection fields (in waiting)
snare set models
recombinant code construction presence
inward and outward shunt vessels
objectspun
large and small infinities of code vicinities
condensation dispersions of infinite re-definition
the looping turn bridge
pool loops / loop pools
room of memory collection debris
the tearing of vessels
the tearing of vessels
endgame of architectural endgames
blue museum of theatre engines
null expression receptors
the physics of the void expression
word chain reaction trees
the positioning and re-positioning of object spokes
silent hands repositioning
the lie of luminosity | lay of the landing
reverse engineering paradox
fabrication illuminates the museum of emptiness
fabrications of emptiness in the museum of illumination
low light eye fabrication
structure signatures of sublime erosion
conducting bone transmission pulse bridges
drum language vessel engines
omnilocal eyes in the light of fabrication
sexual signal site abstracters and extenders
elegant locution | mouth of chance
desire exchange foci
arteries of arithmetics
solutions of doubt mixtures
energy of loss
recovery frames
spinning steadily in reverse equal to the speed of rotation
standing still | changing context
equations of symbolic orders and disorders
vessels of the dance
reorientation rebus
sound distances

sounding out situations
motioning clear
halation of magnetics
motionless flight of the conveyor
window trees
vast territories of the entropyleless domain
optical futures
shifter eye constants
numb breather songs
throat of blood rust
symbolic duration of hair
phantom gestures of the body
amplification hands
slow flow / gravity of glass thoughts
blueprint of sand
silence as it circulates and slides
the skin of experience
functions of the desire bearings
physicality of the emotional hand
release of self-guided desire mechanisms
co-ordinates of resonant desire
vessels of the collapsed field
container release triggers
paradox engine maps
drifting non-arrival
drive collision mesh paths
floating destinations
remotional aggregates
felt expressions of the folding engine
a thought map which builds an expression
components of thought (re-embodied)
collapsing through generative mind sites
alife compartments
transfer skin | transposition
chess snare | forking map
self organising desire mechanisms
geometric falls
gravity of luminous hands
resonance scatter drivers
phantom limbics
architecture of thought weaving
violent ballet | quiescent repose
slowly sinking light ship
the circulatory lighthouse of blue sound
empty touch / blue void
ballet ship
born of the wreckage debris (re configured)
light flows across all void distance
looping fields of silence
simple gestures delineate the site of desire
eventual smooth equilibrium
a simultaneity of infinities
storage of desire collapse realms
dispersion of desire vehicles
entering - resonance architectures
self supporting architecture | definition room

self suspended
removal of time place
times items bridging
edge of the world parameters | landscape loop
behavioural voice
orders of magnitude | orders of behaviour
aleotoric driver re-alignment rebus
skin of reason (touched)
museum of the void
circulatory systems
arbiters of displacement
navigational memory
governor of rotation engines desire bearings
conveyor engines
tag shifters | tethered and floating
numb flows
indexical shifters
mixed metaphor [mechanics]
an answer that asks questions
poly-syntactic rotation {objects}
word falls
Body theatre thought vicinities
entering - entering
navigating observation
observation containers
gestures of inclination
shadow triggers
behavioural conveyors
the null set relationals
screen blank vessels
a propensity toward inversion
the back of signs [storage sites]
Wittgenstein's handles
reframing the gaming field
pulse permutation shimmers
sound substitution sets
properties of inverse polemics
action at a distance [bridges]
non-causal chain reactions
recombinant architectures of information
molecules of thought ambivalence
soft sliding rules
transmutation trigger metaphors
once again removed
one word for another [place]
event window [s]
text behaviours
palpable exchange rotations
thought vessels
algorithmic holds
self aware entities
rotating schedules
conveyor vessels
felt behaviours triggered by non-entities
tactile turnstile conductors
de-contextual contact facilitater fields

false emulates in the netting
room pools
written in rotating drums
encoded function rooms
encrypted rule sets
levels of longing [elucidated]
elliptical or circulatory cross-pollination metaphors
compound collection machines
recollections recombined [false history generator]
code book looks ups
invention generator pulse rhythms
cadence of the trigger variables
apparatus for reflection dispersion
amorous theatre screen mesh
sexual web of perception alloys
carnal | canal
amatory ambience of tender decline
sensorial net drive assembly
fundamental conveyor shaft
morose transference mechanism
shaft passage conveyor
drift course resolve
apparatus shelves
spindle axis vehicles
blue voiceprint snare
angles of envelopment
uncertainty angles | allusive sextant
shaft beam labyrinth
rotary emission beacon merge
loaded dice object spins
radial illuminations
gyro-linguistic stabiliser
rotation schedules of revolving desire bearings
dispersion potentials
desire bearings
conductor desire shells
hands of light gestures
alchemical symbols | alchimeral slink
x (.....) y
false emulates of the rotation stands
swivel location fulcrum
circulatory map disruptions
face of light spool
photosynthetic metaphoric fields
doubled over | layered spindle turns
crossed object turnstiles
selection spindle weave
bridge fasteners and repulsion keys
electricconnector contact mesh
folded doubles
oblique enablers
chemical endgame memory flights
biogenetic code plays
bio-endgame storage
digital spill containment vessels
KING and QUEEN electro-transfer ducts

cohesion resonators
rarefied fields
alchemical remembrance
trace balance elements
association valence
paradox shells
meta-lily | periodic vessels
pataphysical drift configurations
trollers of the light realm
thought with spin
sleek oblique luminous links
meta-engine nets
distributor of thought engine filters
table of non-predictable alignments
angle of incidence or inception carriers
dis-logistic sparks of dispersion semantics
angles of percussion and recoil
inexhaustible diffusions
thrown meaning | sliding means
scattered association
oscillation valence
spark of the skew gap
meta-sliding function | poetic engines
function engines of alternating strings
engines of sliding field oscillation
domain of rotation
blind skill within the shells of silence
meta-operator voices
the desire engine and the agents of oscillation
the sensual transference mechanism
the realm of the desire engine
circumnavigation rings
cycles of relatives
eye of the needle | eye of the loop
tower of babel | eye of the storm
the light of distance
quantum jumps without falls
recognitive resonance
a suspended net sentence
suspension suspended
engendered strings of sonic fields
in the light of absence
puny hardware
mercurial tropes
parallel stream drivers
exploded objects of quiescence
transitional poetics of disembodiment
surrogate sense fields
conundrum domains | bridged and fused
chess theatre drum snare pair
a trap of folded fields
alchemical relatives
objects which turn in on themselves
inversion objects
poem of the exploded word
gathered misnomers

revolving glass door
arboretum of reciprocal inversions
acrostic architectures of collapsed time
bodythought compressions
site which fabricates sites
personal cipher machines
encryption system strings
trap door code names
anagrammatic exchange objects
camouflaged key word states
situational
poly-syntactic emblems
coded compartments
trade craft decoy ploys
books can become like shoes... [slogans]
ligature of the light passage bodies
hands of information
floating function rooms
indeterminate arcs of reaction
location sensitive self regulating rules
the desire object reflection mesh
a room which gets ahead of itself
[fabrication] housings nestings vessels and levels
turn puns which loop around an axis / access
sung round of rotations
a pun spun and retouched
frequencies of event windows
nested generator rebus bridges
dis-rebus
world within a word
a machine to generate or navigate puns
speed of reflex thought implosion
delta-set shunts
pataphysics of introspection
skin of light
tongue of the labyrinth
elevator sentence
radial means
cross a book with a landscape
a periodically relative battery of scores in scale / one to one
optimal use of uncertain information
the profession of release
displacements | a machine of exchange

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