

Experiments in Creative Criticality: Establishing the Posthuman Potentialities of Postdigital Ludic Practice.

I come to this after sitting in all types of hell. I've started, then stopped in all of these places –
the coffee shop (with and without John)
the old house
the new house
the kitchen
the study which is actually the loft
the office which is actually a cell
the garden
the poetry
the essay
the book
the network
between

the binary code of my very existence
viole(n)t or otherwise

(I think that's a joke just for me)

1 / 0
student / Senior Lecturer
1 / 0
daughter / wife
1 / 0
mother / working mum
1 / 0
able / disabled
1 / 0
cash poor / love rich
1 / 0
cash rich / love poor
1 / 0
a fantasy writer/ a real academic
1 / 0
working class / working class roots
1 / 0
creative / critical
1 / 0
critical / creative

A tale of my existence, literally

perhaps not.

A writing down of what's gone on, still going: a notable act to stay in the continuous present. There are no findings if you're still finding. A writing down of this then, whatever *this* is. A writing down to make sense and there is a lot of pressure to make sense with these types of things. A (male) Prof. said to me last week, make it "plausible" and I'm not sure if this ever was, ever will be. I can only think of what happened and try to tell it as I see and if I don't see it, I can make it up, as long as it's "plausible".

A writing down instead of a writing up because I'm still excavating: what might be there, what might be perceived, what might have a name and a tradition and standards. Or digging down deeper, making wild discoveries which do not have names, traditions and standards until you name them, "plausibly". I might decide not to do that after all. This is hell.

We have been everywhere this thing and me. From the Ancient to the Early Modern; churning in the modern, deciding when the postmodern began; giving in to the decentring when we pitched up in the digital age. From this I discovered (*a finding?*) that I'm good at note-taking: I like a highlighter and a colourful pen. I'm good at collecting, commonplacing because I start again and again and again. I'm good at nurturing my ideas which are rhizoming because one is never enough. I'm coding because nothing lasts forever, even when you call it "history". I'm collaborating because survival means not being alone and there is always a question of who is writing this (*or at least it was for ethics!*). Who is writing this down? Will it ever be written up?

We can think about what's happened, how we perceive it. If we can't, we could make it up, make it "plausible". We could spend our lives chasing it.

It might be easier to live without language, without writing. It might be easier to feel it. To conjure the missing via visceral intimacy. A non-fiction for a post-truth phantasmagoric.

This is a commitment to writing it down, but only as another body in the assemblage of commonplaced, rhizomed, coded, often missing bodies

This will have its own limbs, its own disease, its own family. It will perform. I know this for sure

—

this is about bodies.

Now I start again, in hell. Maybe when I stop, I will be somewhere / something else

Postdigital Ludic Practice as a Creative Critical Hybrid Framework

The previous chapter sought to justify the necessary revisions of a “traditional” writing methodology within a contemporary culture that is ludic (Zimmerman 2015) and posthuman (Braidotti 2013, 2017); that writing methodology was called postdigital ludic practice. This chapter will explore the potential of postdigital ludic practice as a critical toolkit operating within that same culture. The previous chapter articulated the potential of the practice as activism: actively seeking to simultaneously utilise established discourses, histories and structures only to subvert and reshape them. This potential was informed by my playful experiences as a ~~writer~~ ~~poet-performer~~ postdigital ludic practitioner. Importantly the chapter concluded that there can be no definition, no conclusion: the tools and methods are not exhaustive nor exclusive; they are only just beginning

to eat the supreme feast offered up by a menu of hegemonies:
bodies unbirthed scrambling
in directions
that threaten to explode them.

This menu satiates *humans*

white
able-bodied
heteronormative
men

These bodies want to eat and eat and eat and eat

are imperfectly

still becoming

their problem

Postdigital ludic practice as a critical methodology remains in conversation with established modes of close reading and literary theory whilst seeking to rupture those established modes of analysis, if only to establish that a literary–ludic text’s potential cannot be formally analysed nor concluded. This is because its playful characteristics are changeable, and almost impossible to accurately and substantially discern. Thus, postdigital ludic practice is playful in and of itself, not existing simply to recognise the playful conditions that created the literary–ludic text and afford its “publication”; nor to articulate its playful features or characteristics. Although engaging with established critical modes and approaches, it does not prioritise these; it purposefully creates gaps in the “analysis” enabling other critical “bodies”, those named and known to the Academy and those unnamed, unclaimed – the missing – to emerge.

It is a weird assemblage of

becoming

human/non-human/more-than-human/all too human/ posthuman

collaborators

cognition

imagination

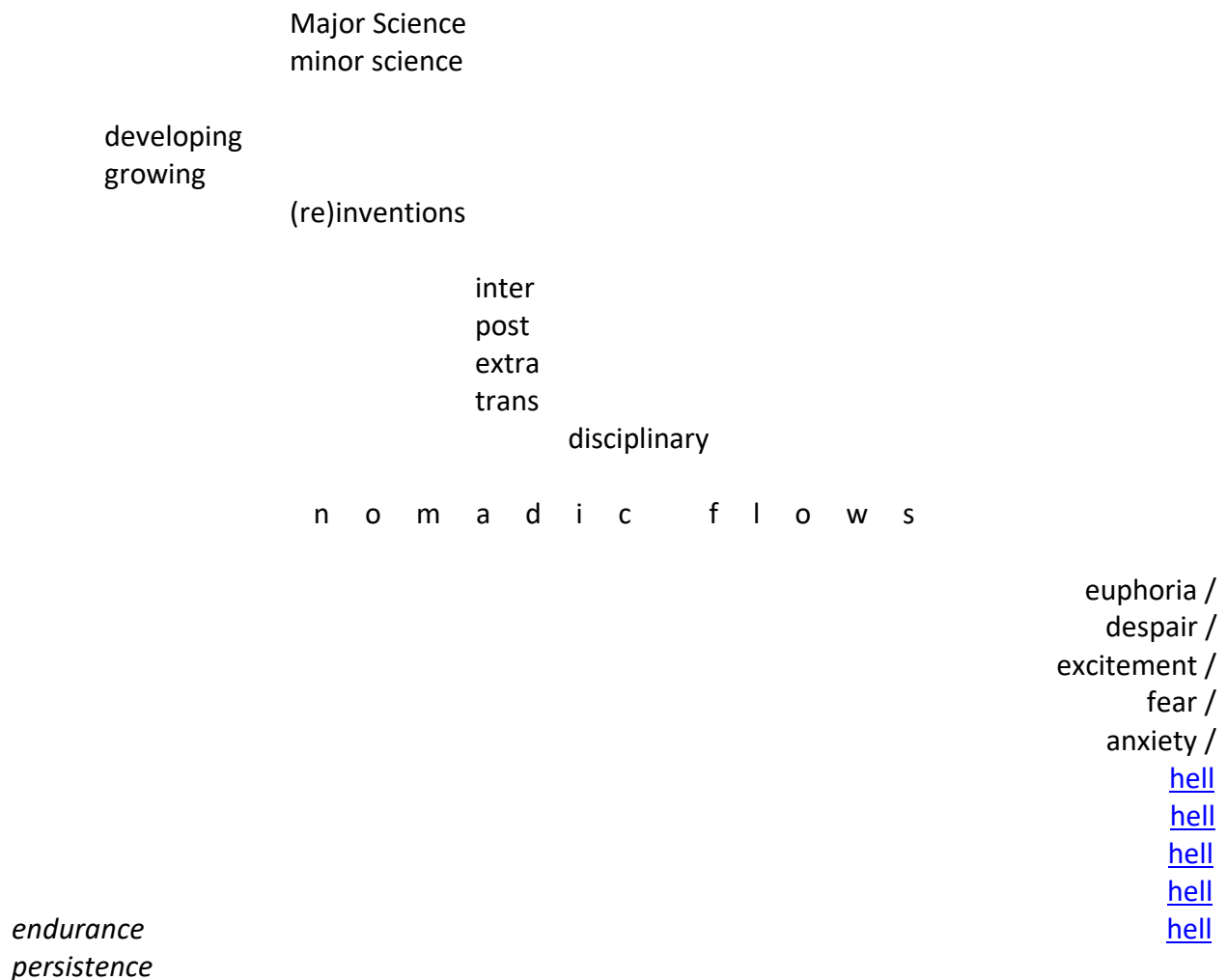
affect

capitalist

computational

hegemonies

networks



Here is another “problem” with play. As the creative writing practice does not prioritise systems or “bodies”, creating potentially transformative spaces where “writing” can be reconceived and continuously emerge, neither does the critical practice. Postdigital ludic practice has the potential to respond to elusive “readings” which too change shape and direction; interpretations may or may not exist. Their multiplicity, their imperfections, their mutability mirror the chaos not only of the text but the culture which produces it and them. This is a posthuman culture.

This chapter asserts that postdigital ludic practice of any kind is activism: it creates rhizomatic knowledges, or “bodies” simultaneously creative and critical – creativecritical. By its nature, postdigital ludic practice is incomplete, imperfect and always becoming...

We’re moving dangerously close towards a “conclusion” here (*already?*), but as explained in the previous chapter, activism is used only to acknowledge what *might* be possible.

The type of textual potential offered by literary–ludic texts has been recognised to some extent by existing analytical frameworks, namely those associated with “Critical Studies” which emerged in the Humanities between the 1990s and 2000s. These Studies include but are not limited to: gender, queer, cultural, critical disability... And remained in dialogue with many of the poststructuralist positions acknowledged in the previous chapters as fundamental context for understanding the motivations and developments of my creative practice (*remember when I gave you some backstory?*). This is the same Humanities that created space for digital literatures to exist in the first place. These are the critical “bodies” of knowledge or Major Sciences (Deleuze and Guattari 1994) that postdigital ludic practice collaborates and negotiates with; provokes and plays with; resists and destroys. They mean everything and nothing. They are the lovers we’ve loved and cannot get over because our sheets are dirty, so too our minds and bodies. At times, we endure the hurt, pain and rejection of the “bodies” that *still* cannot understand our potential. Therefore, this chapter explores the potential of postdigital ludic practice as multiple nonlinear acts of posthuman knowledge production (Braidotti 2019).

It is (dis)owned by histories / networks / families:

Critical Studies opened the Humanities’ eyes to the multi-layered lived experiences of the “others”

and then

Media Studies ensured that the Humanities appreciated the results of accelerated technological, capitalist social modalities

and then

These outcomes cross-bred and ceased to be and started to become...

and then

These new discursive practices developed serious scholarly credentials: they ticked the boxes for Major Science whilst recognising the multiple assemblages of...

and now

These new discursive practices are territorialised by neo-liberal market capitalism

but

also design new nodes of
be

com

ing

and this is Critical Posthumanism.

Close reading is not used to being so multiplicitous and chaotic, but the irony is it makes sense. It makes sense within the context of the “posthuman condition” (Braidotti 2013, 2017), which is comprised of advanced capitalism and advanced technologies which have manifested the Earthly spectre known as the Anthropocene. Where to go and what to do in a culture which relies on its intimacy with devices to make sense of the non-linear, (non? all-too?)human existence which reveals that this existence is hurtling towards disaster because of the intimacy with the devices they desire? This is the great paradox of the media-nature-culture continuum (Braidotti 2016). Postdigital ludic practice is a critical practice for the posthuman existing in this context: a way of doing, being, becoming. It cannot be isolated acts of close reading which fail to see this condition. It is not another act of humanist interpretation predicated on humanist values. This would limit its potential. Limit play. Limit the bodies that are contributing and will contribute.

This practice, in all its modes is m v n
o i g

The only outcome is bodies: polyvocal assemblages of becoming

The excitement, the thrill, the pleasure of this type of close reading is also frustrating, painful and intolerable. Yet still it is intoxicating; the pursuit to articulate what cannot be accurately

perceived continues on and on... the mind, the bodies become exhausted. But yet they play. They become and become and become

Therefore, (although there is no point to this at all) I will try to apply this postdigital ludic toolkit to reading *Violen)t Existence* which is only possible because of the tools and methods of this same postdigital ludic toolkit and so

(At this point, we should probably acknowledge the elephant in and on the page, space, network, Academy.) The traditional academic discussion chapter cannot work here, as part of this postdigital ludic “project”, in this posthuman, ludic culture. The “academic essay” is a fixed system established by an Academy that is still learning to love us; an Academy which cannot yet fully perceive the potential of open, non-goal orientated, non-profit driven, multidirectional, curiosity-driven play. Advocating for play is not the same: “plausibility” is not the same. The Humanities is still coming...

This is not, will not, cannot be ~~an academic essay~~. This is a “finding”.

It *might* be a lyric essay, one that can barely be perceived as anything. Existing here and [here](#), as an essential component of *Violen)t Existence* – the online repository where the assemblage of postdigital bodies manifests most obviously and continuously. It is another dynamic literary-ludic text, which by its nature is playful and self-reflexive and never finished and

Everything is hybrid here

I may have just stated the obvious; that is at the very least plausible.

The previous chapter provided a rationale and context for three omnipresent writing activities, which (re)occurred repeatedly, even when difficult to discern, at various stages of the postdigital ludic writing practice. These activities were recorded and reflected on and, acknowledged as working alongside existing, more familiar “analogue” writing practices. In the same way that these activities were utilised to inspire and catalyse other creative writing practices, familiar or not, they will be used here to catalyse criticality, familiar or not. The tools and methods of postdigital ludic practice have been used to produce literary-ludic texts. Those same tools and methods will be used in this chapter to analyse those texts whilst also continuing to produce literary-ludic texts. Application of the tools and methods in this way functions as an operational critical toolkit; an analytical model for (posthuman) academics working in the field of digital literatures but

they must be willing to work with us, to love us for all our faults –
as we love their words, their rules whilst
playing housemaid to their insecurities.
They must be willing to change

Vigorous movement: It is clear from its various forms and iterations – here and [here](#) – that postdigital ludic analysis operates in virtual and physical networks which demand shifting perspectives of time and space. It exists online in fragments, as parts of creative bodies of work: in these temporalities its critical objectivity is questionable. Is this creative or critical work? Creativecritical work? Who is speaking here? Katy the writer or Katy the literary critic? Katy the poet or Katy the scholar? Does it matter? What about the bodies? Whose body? Which body? Is the pursuit of a distinct, formal critical element or evaluation important? Perhaps not because it cannot be read continuously from beginning to definitive end, thus a sense of what might be understood and accepted as a justifiable and coherent argument is crucially undermined. Instead it is part of the chaotic network, so chaotic that as I say, it may not even be considered “critical” at all. But it’s not wrong.

Here,

on this page (who knows if you're reading a printed version or a version on your screen, but either way, I mean in the "shape" of what is understood and recognised as an "essay")

perhaps this critical movement can be more easily perceived. I have in the "traditional" sense drafted and redrafted, edited and shaped this "argument" in a linear way before I cut it up and threw it to the Essay network. I thought about grammar, about syntax and about paragraphing. I thought of how to shape the critical analysis; I thought about how to make it recognisable, in conversation but not in total agreement with literary critical traditions. There was a conscious effort to ensure that the critical element would move between these spaces, similarly to the way the creative work moves between their networks, their printed forms and their physical performances. The critical and creative works move together and separately, in tandem and independently, in similar and contrasting ways. They are bodies.

Vigorous movement is applied and evidenced through the critical appraisal of these bodies, through the forms and shapes that this critical appraisal takes. In this sense it is not so much about "findings" but the acknowledgement that these impressions must be constantly revised and (re)presented; they cannot be "finished". The impressions change shape, direction and perspective because the text(s) which it aims to "analyse" is always changing shape. Simply, the critical "writing" or body of impressions must move. It cannot be fixed by the straightforward time and space of the word-processed, paragraphed "essay" form, although as shown here, it co-exists alongside it. For these reasons, there can be no right or wrong: no definitive way of conducting or writing up these impressions as a type of "analysis". I said earlier that close reading is not used to such chaos but perhaps it can be made more comfortable by acknowledging that this as an embodied and cognitive approach to metafiction.

This is perhaps crucial to your consideration of whether this toolkit is operating as a meaningful critical framework as well as a creative one. Would other scholars within the field of digital literatures consider this approach for conducting their critical analysis? Would they experiment with forms, structures and networks in this way? Are we ready for this? Am I providing a justifiable argument although perhaps (*and knowingly so*) not coherently? Does it only become “analysis” when it is presented as something recognisably “critical”? I think we have (*i hope we have*) moved beyond this although I was in a room last week when practice-based research was still being discussed/ defined/ debated.

Pause: to acknowledge that the Humanities and particularly literary scholarship has the credentials to explore new social imaginaries. Cultural representations and interpretations of humanity anyone? We love you literary Hums but

your “human” is

white
able-bodied
heteronormative
men

we are

feminist
anti-racist
post and decolonial
disabled
working class

thinkers
practitioners
collaborators
activists

non-human
more-than-human
all-too human

worthy

of our time

Anyway, for the purpose of this chapter, this project, creative / critical can no longer exist.

There is striking and sustained engagement with vigorous movement throughout Wareham Morris' work demonstrated through her purposeful and meaningful play with form and structure, places and spaces – on the page, the screen or physical such as bars, cafes, study spaces and, ironically silent zones. She actively seeks to orientate, disorientate and reorientate readers, users and audiences. At various locations throughout *Violen(t) Existence* we are reminded that its “existence” is elsewhere, prompting readers, users and audiences to continue their textual investigations. Through the effective use of coding, hyperlinks and multimodality play is encouraged and can lead to the (re)discovery of more textual fragments. In fact, the text itself develops its own playful personality, as if surprising readers, users and audiences with yet more ways to play: don't just find me here, but here and there and there and there... This contributes to the self-conscious metafictional element of Wareham Morris' work and reinforces the complex and sophisticated layering of motifs and metaphor amongst these iterations, across platforms and spaces which are only discovered through physical and discernible movement, physical or virtual. This movement ensures that readers, users and audiences not only discover signifiers, but through their repetition can begin to make some sort of sense of them. Obviously: readers can move between pages; users can click different hyperlinks and move their mouse; audiences can move towards or away from an impromptu reading. Less obviously: networked bodies move alongside, away from, haphazardly, collectively in their discoveries. At times this is known, acknowledged and synchronous; at times it is not. Wareham Morris' body of work is a confident and convincing demonstration of vigorous movement where her play energies are transferred to the energies and therefore moves of her readers, users and audiences.

If the text's existence is elsewhere so too the writer's. The layering of imagery, as mentioned may deceive a reader into thinking they are getting to know the writer, getting closer to understanding Wareham Morris' “existence” only to discover that the layers also pull apart, fray, rip, burn. This confuses and frustrates the reader, user, audience: the “reading” experiences are too disorientating,

too fragmented, too difficult to understand. This once again reinforces the metafictional element of *Viole(n)t Existence*: Wareham Morris cannot offer any “sense” because she cannot make sense of and for herself. For these reasons, her work exceeds typical expectations of “poetry”, “performance” and “literature”, which adds another dimension to its central themes: the writer brings the themes to life, literally. The themes occupy the spaces, the networks, crucially the bodies of the text(s), which naturally necessitates a questioning of “existence” itself.

Now would be a good time to make that [move](#)

Reciprocal performing: *If you haven't already noticed this is all a performance and on more than one occasion, I act out my family's affectionate moniker: “[drama queen](#)”.*

Evidently Wareham Morris presents herself as many selves; the poetry confronts the pluralities and contradictions of womanhood in the contemporary age; the repercussions of young women in the 90s who were told they “could have it all” and now endure the associated traumas of that mythology. Furthermore, the composition of the text reveals further personae coalescing within this web of subjectivities, including videos of her as a performer. Users may find this version of the “writer” more arresting, more affective and gravitate towards this performance of selfhood because audio–visual content is more visually arresting (Fallis 2021) and after all, “seeing is believing” (Goldberg et al 2019). Yet significantly, Wareham Morris also exists as a spectre within the texts as website coder and designer, responsible for the (initial) production and functionality of the text(s), therefore reminding users that they are more than a “writer”.

There is a conspicuous confidence in the examination of these roles; indeed the poetry is striking in its frank confrontation of the tensions which threaten the writer’s own sense of selfhood, their “existence”: a middle-aged [mother](#) (*affected and disaffected*); crippling early-career [imposter syndrome](#) (*seeded from a non-traditional route into academia via a working class background where no one understood the point of university anyway*); a naïve, young woman whose attempts to “[behave](#)” do not meet the required standards; a desire to shout when only [silence](#) is

“appropriate”; a desire to live when [sickness](#) immobilises. And, then of course there is the presentation of World threats; a speculative element within the collection which draws upon global problems and tensions: war and conflict, nuclear armament, the climate crisis, pandemic. And, of course the problem that never went away: systemic patriarchy. This is most definitely about “existence” and what that those performances involve and how they are accounted for in the everyday lives of women living in a post #MeToo digital context, where children are the future but only if there is one. The poetry confronts the attack on women which is not new but continues to evolve. Thus, the poetry can be seen as a form of consciousness raising: the questions raised by the writer reveal larger, pressing societal patterns of subjugation and misogyny.

Wareham Morris’ work is inherently queer: the texts interact with queer identity politics and anti-normative frameworks of thinking through the sustained attention paid to fluid, changeable and contradictory subjectivities and experiences (Butler 1990). And, they are inherently “queer” in their manifestation of many poststructuralist “deaths” (Barthes 1970). Through intertextuality, the text is endlessly de- and reconstructed; appearing and disappearing in uncertain and destabilising contexts.

This self-conscious acknowledgment is further problematised by changes in tone and mode of address which represent the trepidation, the hesitation, the fear that bleeds through some of the most personal, most profound moments in the poetry. Moments which at first glance seem to seek “truth”, perhaps even “authenticity”, only to reveal a text and a writer actively seeking to subvert “fact” and oppose conclusion. There is a scepticism and insecurity embedded in the work which is embraced by the writer; reluctantly perhaps, facetiously maybe, but even so, it becomes their power: this woman cannot speak for all women and there are many more challenges than those presented here.

Here is where we invited Play to play; it did not go our way. Or did it?

Upstage right: enter Play who ironically appears as a middle-class white man, Chair of the Ethics Committee. He skulks onto stage moving towards centre stage; he is dragging a chair and holding

a clipboard. There is nothing exciting nor intriguing about Play. There is nothing he wants to say but he must. They sit down on the chair reluctantly. Katy watches from downstage left.

Katy: Do you want to play?

Play: You can't play with me.

Katy: Oh...? I can't reach my full potential if I can't play.

Play: Guess what? You must do this by yourself. You must make this plausible.

Katy: I thought the work of Jenkins in the early 2000s was more than enough to make this "plausible". I want to participate. I *need* to collaborate.

Play: There is no ensemble cast.

Katy: If I perform, will you listen?

Play: Katy, you simply cannot respond to every response. *I* will not respond. *I* am the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Play continues to mutter quietly under his breath: I am the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Katy: Maybe someone else will hear this.

Play: *I* am the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Whose work is this?

Katy: Thank you for your constructive feedback. For the record, the internet is known to be a collaborative space. Jenkins said this nearly 20 years ago. The field of digital literatures is informed by this established cultural commentary. Have you read the work of Hayles, Ryan, Bell, Ensslin, Skains? There is a history and a legacy.

There is an awkward silence. Play does not engage with Katy at this point. He looks down and flicks through the papers on his clipboard.

Katy continues: I want to say, this is the public domain. I want to call this netnography. I did not predict this. You are my inspiration. Thank you.

Katy bows her head and clasps her hands together in prayer. She keeps facing Play as she moves backwards quickly. She then turns and scurries off stage.

This project is queer by design, execution and process, committed to the interrogation of social and political meanings including those concerned with whose voice is it anyway? Whose work is

it anyway? Why can't we collaborate? We challenge that without interactivity and collaboration, it cannot be a form of internet research. It cannot be "digital" practice, let alone *postdigital*. It would miss the opportunities to playfully interact with digital users/ followers/ "friends", its "audiences". Thus, we confidently assert that we are bound by terms and conditions of all sorts, all of the time; our consent interpellated into the culture as is. What type of ethical issue is this? Whose work is it anyway? Who cares? The interpolation has occurred before you know it.

Katy: (shouts smugly from offstage) Play, game rules apply.

These texts clearly interrogate the relationships between text(s), creators, digital networks and practices which are participatory and interactive. Indeed, Skains (2023) notes interaction is unavoidable: inherently part of the process and responsible for textual mutations. Netnography is an ethnographic approach to research connected to the internet; a method which recognises that digital spaces are constantly evolving (Kozinets 2020). In this instance, so too the text(s) and its writer(s). Netnography is a flexible approach, hence its appropriate application in the context(s) of Wareham Morris' writing. Netnography validates observing online activities, behaviours and cultures as research. The critical application of this method has afforded the opportunities for Wareham Morris to immerse herself in the technology utilised to create and situate the texts and, to think critically about its playful whilst still literary potential. She pays attention to how technologies are used by writers and the digital contexts used to disseminate and interact with the "writing" these technologies produce. There is considered and sustained attention paid to the reciprocal performing of writers, readers, users, networks, machines which questions not only established writing traditions but also "reading" behaviours and their meaning in the ludic age. This form of enquiry is integral to her practice and raises yet more questions about the potential of "human" forms of expression in these constantly evolving digital contexts. Wareham Morris presents *Viole(n)t Existence* not simply as reconfigurations of womanhood but also as reconfigurations of "writing" and "reading". In turn, these reconfigurations proactively undermine the positions of "writers" and "readers" because they do so much more than write and read; they code, play, collaborate and perform.

However, *Violen)t Existence* does not make good on all of its promises. Although notable in the likes and comments on public platforms, these contributions do not necessarily modify the shape of the text because they are not officially recorded nor playfully embedded in the text(s) as some of the other forms of engagement are. They function as “paratexts” (first coined by Genette 1997) as described by Shanmugapriya et al. (2019) in the context of digital literatures: they are another digital literary system within multiple digital literary systems. Although “born digital”, *Violen)t Existence* is limited only to making sense of the writer’s postdigital involvement and performativity. Indeed, audience reactions and interactions during performances may too have been integrated into “new” configurations of the text but they are not evidenced here. Arguably, the potential of unpredictability was leashed to the writer’s own hyperlinks and “suggestions”.

However, despite missing comment threads, the design of the website is noticeably similar to the web 2.0 hypertexts of the early 2000s, acknowledged by Skains (2023) as a gift economy whereby users are encouraged to produce, co-produce and share content.

In 2003, I was struck by the work of [Juliet Ann Martin](#) and its criticisms and [analysis](#); it has stayed with me. That was my gift. This is mine in return. Naturally, there is a reciprocal labyrinth here and some of its precise details cannot be named, it doesn’t mean they don’t exist. It just means you can’t have a map. And for now, there are no comments. No more comments on this “issue” at least.

Violen)t Existence is not the only “outcome” up for discussion; postdigital ludic practice as a mode of creative criticality acknowledges illusionary, impressionistic, moot conversations. Conversations which question themes, forms, processes; and poetry, research, culture. Conversations which might never happen (*but did despite the limits of this project*). The precise nature of the critical mode is no more tangible, even at this point. To say it is queer is an understatement.

Prescient transparency: do we even need to l o o k?

You don't have to see it to believe it. Everything which precedes this explains why nothing is ever finished, nor certain. This is not a problem. Even if it were, the problems are not hidden. Whose problem is it? Do we worry about this? *Sometimes*. If we're honest, the problem is our power. It is our opportunity to confront the hypocrisy of forms, structures and modes of address not created nor comfortably adopted by us, even when presented as "natural" or "best practice". So too here, where the critical analysis is presented in multiple forms, composed of referents and inherent vulnerabilities or contradictions. It seems ridiculous to seek clear and articulate conclusions where there can be none. We co-exist with the opposite of what it is we're trying to achieve.

"Reading" in this sense is both potentially enlightening and frustrating; reading can be engaging and elusive; reading can be effective and affective. Although playing with the text in this way may create an intimacy between the writer, the text and the reader, it is not always an easy option as it also reminds the reader of the distance between them: the unimaginable networks connected to all three.

This the problem with literary-ludic texts.
They have their limits.
So do we.

The texts have the potential to evolve, so too our critical engagement. As readers, we are encouraged to develop our processes and approaches in new, not necessarily better directions. We are forced to reframe our critical mindset away from a "problem" to solve, towards an interrogation of a series of provocations.

The stage is black. A spotlight appears which tracks Katy from the back of the stage. She strides forward to downstage centre and taps the mic.

Katy: Do not feel threatened. Ask your own questions. Not the ones you've been taught or told to ask. This is not a violent act. Your reputation, your credibility, your 4* rated REF output is not under attack. We will not cross-examine you. We are not the second peer reviewer. You are your own probe, and we welcome any questions at this time.

The house lights go up. The room is full; packed to the rafters. Hands go up and there is noise from the audience.

Postdigital practice is not an all or nothing practice. You can leave here. You have enough to work with. Or, you can [play](#) some more...

Architecting: One of the biggest challenges that postdigital ludic practice as a critical approach responds to is the temptation to play as encouraged by the experimental and dynamic nature of the text it assesses. Systematic, focussed critique of the text is difficult when the text itself surprises us with yet more opportunities to play; we stumble across more text(s), more digital elements, more “suggestions” and pathways and are distracted by new rabbit holes. We must be open to discovery and realise that we will never know the text inside out; we can only know how we play. Our experiences and appraisals of the text are by default an investigation into own subjectivities. Self-reflexivity is not an additional throw-away paragraph at the end of the essay using Gibb’s reflective cycle (1988) in a straightforward and pedestrian way; it is the only system that works. If you need a map, this is the one to use. Guess what? Academics do not have to write in the third person, pretending they don’t exist; apologising for their existence; pretending they are impartial. Your academic voice is your voice.

We understand that in other modes of analysis there is a need to account for the number of nodes or pathways a text can take; the analysis is isolated within the text itself (Formalism, for instance). Indeed, during my Master’s research, I was told that my analysis of various hypertexts was incomplete and therefore unsatisfactory because I had not physically accounted for and analysed every digital node or hyperlink. To my mind, this seemed unnecessary. If I’d accounted for every node and link, this would only acknowledge one pathway through them: mine. Unless the pathway is pre-defined, pre-coded then this makes no sense at all. This undermines the engagement with polysemy and of course, play. The Academy wants answers. We say this is not

necessary (*and a waste of time!*). Postdigital ludic practice recognises that players play and this is the chance we take.

It is more productive to consider the critical element as an extension of the text(s) it seeks to analyse. Could it be its co-text? Its context? It is not *more* productive; it is as productive. If postdigital ludic criticality is a creative criticality, it represents itself in playful ways: creative responses which also act as critical assessment. And instead of imposing itself upon the text(s) in some kind of hierarchy, which still perceives criticality as “research” and writing as “creativity”, it sits alongside the text, as a sibling, another body with its own rabbit holes, its own holes. Therefore, postdigital ludic practice is not only an embodied and cognitive approach to metafiction; it is an embodied, cognitive metafiction which itself must be architected.

I’m sat in the kitchen again.

Rub my eyes, turn my head towards the patio doors.

By chance,

I see
a brown bird in a tree.

Don’t know what species of bird.
Don’t know what species of tree.

I could be
a bird.

What species? Should I pretend?
Perhaps I metamorphose.
Over time, maybe? After this?

I will have the energy I need to compete. Complete?

I had quantum healing last year. Just before my fortieth Birthday. I am left with the paralysing anxiety excitement of hearing myself say,
Just be happy.

Postdigital ludic practice is a recursive critical investigation which becomes a cold case. That is to say, even if the literary critic wants to be done, the text will continue to fester and needle their

mind. This could be good for the literary critic who is looking to produce more REfable outputs. It may mean, however reluctantly, that they become a postdigital ludic practitioner. How to solve this problem? The only problem here is the Academy, who say they are ready, but they are not ready for a radical rethink of the modes and methods of critical engagement and its presentation. If this critical engagement is fragmented, impressionistic, illusionary too. A symbolic destruction. One or two (digital?) lyric essays – fine. A move towards creative critical hybridity as a “standard”...

Just be happy.

We are not suggesting that this is not an “academic essay” nor that this is not critical writing. We are saying it looks and acts differently. Its aims and trajectories are not to destroy the “Essay”, but to work with it. This helps others join the game.

Let’s have a conversation. There is a lot of “me time” in the PhD: isolation, anxiety, trash-talk. There is a lot *me* in this PhD: empathy, thinking, too much empathy, too much thinking, people pleaser, toxic inner critic, drama. I came into this to talk about what I Love. To express my thoughts, my feelings and experiences. I thought I would be able to tell my story through someone else’s lens. I thought this meant writing poetry and essays. What a privilege. What an honour. So why am “I” a big no–no? I got here and you’re all the same as out there. I adopt “we” because, you know, safety in numbers.

Prospecting: Engaging in postdigital ludic practice has involved mining the following critical networks:

Digital literatures specifically digital poetry

Digital theories and methodologies

Gaming and play theories

Web design and coding

Hybrid literary forms and genres – the avant garde, surrealism, speculative fiction, personal essay, creative non-fiction, performance, memoir, prose poetry, flash fiction, concrete poetry

(I hope I know this stuff)

This list reminds us of the precedent in Literature to utilise practical tools as creative ones, helping us to reframe what it is we think we know about “Literature” (Jameson 2010). (*This is how we knew we weren’t mad.*) We have borrowed from these frameworks to interrogate the transformative potentials of postdigital ludic practice and in this case, the text it created, that is *Viole(n)t Existence*. We have presented “findings”, but these are transformed through the practice that creates them. Postdigital ludic practice is a creativecritical tool: the creative is critical and the critical is creative and we call this meta. Hence, we continue to refine the tools because the meaning is in the play, the (re)creation. Anyway, technology continues to grow and develop and so we know our capacities (our arms, our legs, our brains, our hearts) must also (continue to?) mutate.

If I had a hypothesis, it has been tested and it is valid. Plausibility! Shall we just leave now?

You don't know what you've got,
till
it's gone.

Don't tell me,
 You've made it.

There is always something else
worth striving for.
Who knows
 if
 it will be
 (trans)formative.

How does someone
 be happy?

The plan was outlined above; the plan has been achieved. Yet nothing is ever finished so “achievements” mean nothing. If it is a “surprise!”, we think of energy, enthusiasm, excitement, fun, dopamine, memories, butterflies and you can't sleep at night. If it is a “*surprise*”, we think of fear, anxiety, the unknown, numbness, paralysis, butterflies and you can't sleep at night.

Is this happiness?

So, we must
 overcome

The postdigital ludic practitioner should also turn to frameworks of knowledge which do not sit comfortably within the established canon of Literary Criticism because they do not simply seek answers where they are known and likely. They should seek answers in unfamiliar territories. This is the Posthuman approach to the New Humanities (Braidotti 2019).

Everything in the universe including our bodies is made of energy. Through mindfulness and hypnotherapy, we can rebalance energy flow and facilitate physical and emotional healing. My therapist told me that the brain is directly connected to the gut and, the gut has its own nervous system. Therapy taught me more about the science behind my disease than the doctors did. I now know about the vagus nerve. The brain in my gut.

Breathe, Katy. Connect with nature. Be quiet.

As has been noted, the text(s) explore manifestations of Wareham Morris' contradictory and pluralistic identities. There is also an ambiguity linked to time and space, not simply in the context of presentation of the poems, that being the page or online, but in the sense of what times and spaces the author's identities exist in. The text represents a compilation of existences from the poet's past, present and imagined future; at times these "existences" are also seemingly implausible, perhaps entirely fictional. This is where the ambiguity over time and space in relation to context of presentation becomes all the more interesting: the versions of the self co-exist indiscriminately, just as the printed book and website. This playfully complicates the narrative discourse or "natural" procession of the selves represented. There is no linear thread or "right way" of reading the text(s) directing the reader to trace acts of development (aging and maturity, knowledge transfer, trauma response, cause and effect) which might be utilised to situate the reader within the poet's narrative timeline and therefore make sense of the poet's experiences. The poet cannot make sense of these experiences and be "done", onto the next poem, so there is no sense in presenting them in a linear way. The transparent multiplicity of the text(s) and its (contradictory) manifestations further enhances the provocations and tensions which the author explores about their existence. Even if these experiences are dialectical, there is no timeline because they are not "done". Thus, even the concept of "existence", its material as well as cognitive manifestations, are questioned and undermined.

This existence is an assemblage of

b o d i e s

no more no less

equally confusing
contradictory

transient

They exist within an assemblage of

b o d i e s

no more no less

equally confusing,
contradictory

~~transient~~

In addition, Wareham Morris often experiments with space on the page, ensuring that the shapes and forms created by the white space interact with the space taken up by text or image itself; where the presentation of the poems is just as surprising perhaps as the version of the self in question. In this sense the typography not only creates white space on the page but may also be seen to represent the potential for unspoken, unknown selves to emerge. The movement of the words on the page creates a sense of energy or potential, similarly to the energy created in the spoken word performances where the author moves into different spaces.

This is frustrating and tiresome, but it is necessary if there is to be any (trans)formative exchange of meaning at all. Your physical frustration is the mirror and I am the lens.

The critical work cannot be “done”, it sits within the critic’s mind, remember? Even when they perceive themselves to have stopped searching for answers, they continue – continuous present. Once they start, they will always be part of the bodies that move.

This means when I’m under and the therapist is asking me,
What do you see, Katy? Where are you?
I tell them:

I’m sat in the kitchen again.

Rub my eyes, turn my head towards the patio doors.

By chance,

I see
a brown bird in a tree.

Don’t know what species of bird.
Don’t know what species of tree.

a bird.

Is this working?
After this

Maybe I can get a poem or two out of this?

The postdigital ludic practitioner is not motivated to tick boxes:

- English Literature
- Literary Theory
- Creative Writing
- Digital Literatures
- Ludology

Synaesthetic synchronicity with machines: It is not enough to simply cut up an “essay” and disseminate it on the network. Nor recognise how and when a writer appears “in sync” with technology. A postdigital ludic practitioner must assess the implications of these actions. For writing, for reading, for becoming

This is a body of work which explores the potential of the cyborg (Haraway 1985). The modes of practice and methods of dissemination make a demonstrable case for a discernible and valuable connection with networked machines; the machine functions to scaffold a landscape or digital context for the text(s) to sit in, hyperlinked to their other iterations. Thus, it provides an anchor point for these connections, a visible body of its own.

Once connected, bodies grow

Wareham Morris makes the point that these technologies do not merely exist, but her existence is digital, relying on technology and its manifestations for the meanings and practices of everyday life. (*Not just in the home as a mother who sets timers thorough the Home Hub and asks Google to answer her children's questions. Not simply as a working woman who is answerable to emails when juggling and is easily distracted by social media.*) Wareham Morris pays attention to the realities of her existence afforded by and involving machines; there is no “existence” without technologies, literally and metaphorically. These texts cannot exist without technology, neither can she thus her creative practice must also be inherently digital. This is a central theme: the digital cultures which emerge in contemporary society are nebulous, but a contemporary existence, and thus expressions of this existence, rely on these cultures nevertheless. Most importantly is the prescient transparency with which these technologies are used. This is precisely why the text(s) can be read as postdigital: attestations of (post?)humanity in the use of digital technologies (Alexenberg 2011).

However, this connection to machines is a little clumsy at times, perhaps a little too obvious; a seamless decentralised network of rhizomatic connections between writer(s), readers and machines has not been achieved. Yet this essay argues that this can be interpreted as an intentional and self-conscious creative decision alluding to the as yet unknowable potential of the machine connection: this is not as far as Wareham Morris could go, and she knows it.

How far will I go?

These repeated acts of self-conscious questioning are significant, reminding readers that their reading experience cannot finish, because the creative process itself is ongoing. Wareham Morris may continue to experiment with new technologies as her knowledge and skills develop adding new hyperlinks, images, soundscapes of videos to the text; and, she cannot predict how the text(s) may mutate whilst living in the digital network.

Katy: Hey Google, you couldn't answer this one, could you? Although we fear that may be one day, you will. Did you finish that poem I asked you to write?

Google does not reply.

Katy: Hey Google, turn on the bedroom lights.

Haptic consciousness: The true potential of postdigital ludic practice lies in our ability to present our “findings” as a postdigital commonplace book. You can see this [here](#).

Asynchronous Dispersion and Dissemination: Academics must present their findings; this is what they do. Postdigital ludic practitioners present and disseminate their findings in playful ways, only to challenge the meaning of the word, “findings”.

The postdigital ludic practitioner experiments with form and adopts a purposefully creative criticality to the presentation of their findings, which might include podcasts, diagrams, memes and videos. Versions of their findings may be published in various different spaces, times and contexts. This is another creativecritical experiment.

The findings from this project and [here](#) and [there](#).

This is a good thing for the “academic” who is trying to break barriers and engage non-academic audiences. Especially this one, who is

- female
- working class

- disabled

We say postdigital ludic practice is an academic mode for those whose voices still struggle to be heard in the Academy and elsewhere.

Acquiescing to the networks: Instead of counting every node and plotting the journey, postdigital ludic practice invites other scholars to play. As the writing is a collaborative task, so too is the mode of criticality. Instead of the loneliness, isolation and pressure of the solo academic, work together. Once the postdigital ludic practitioner has accounted for their movement through the text(s), invite another to add the critical assessment of their movements. Each journeys through the text in their own way, their own time, their own space; their assessment unique to these play moves. Once the solo “academic” relinquishes control of the analysis, the argument, they are empowered and create space for others to be empowered too. It is good to have alternative viewpoints as this respects the freedom of the text(s) and its collaborators.

To conclude, *Viole(n)t Existence* is, if nothing else, a collection of stories about womanhood. It criticises patriarchal stereotypes and identifies sexist hypocrisies which still exist for women today. Moreover, through the modes of its production and dissemination it challenges the stable structures, the patriarchal constructs that are bound within the definitions of “writing”, “poetry” and “publication”. Wareham Morris draws attention to her lived experiences as a woman through the central themes within the writing, but also through the self-conscious and self-reflexive attention paid to the practice throughout the text(s): the use of strikethrough, repetition, iterations of the ‘same’ text. This forces the reader to acknowledge the presence of the writer and her incomplete, uncertain feminist postdigital practice. *Feminist* because this practice undermines the traditional view that the writer’s text is at some point “finished” and if deemed worthy, will be published by authorities within a patriarchal Canon. *Postdigital* because the writer here constructs her own network of traditional and non-traditional “publications”; an unpredictable chaos of sorts which perhaps better reflects her position(s) within a still predominantly white, middle class, male writing and publishing world as well as the social world she exists within. If *Viole(n)t Existence* is

about a woman's knowledge then that knowledge is also evidenced through the very existence of the text itself; an existence which does not wait to be acknowledged and appraised by patriarchal writing publishing norms and standards, but openly and bravely acquiesces to the unknown trajectories of the digital network, seeking readers, users, collaborators and critics. Thus, the work adopts a feminist standpoint and can be read as a demonstration of the critical approach as outlined by the work of Harding (1986) Smith (1992).

This approach strengthens reciprocal bonds between postdigital ludic practitioners: there are no insecure imposters here. *(Only sometimes)* Just as this type of capitulation can develop trust and intimacy through collaborative writing practices, so too trust and intimacy can develop through collaborative criticality. *(More bodies!)* We do not have to think about whose name goes first on this research output. Just as postdigital ludic writing practice does not wait for "traditional" publication, this criticality will not wait to be acknowledged by means of a double-blind peer-reviewed journal article authored by an "academic". This type of critical appraisal can be created and published by anyone within the (digital) network, be that scholar, academic, critic or otherwise. Thus no one assessment or knowledge of the text is more worthy; this is not a conventional wisdom.

We take this opportunity to remind you that postdigital ludic practice does not seek to erase traditional modes and standards of academia but to work alongside them. Therefore, if you'd like to include this critical approach in your research plan, then we say the ~~academics-players~~ bodies you seek are

practitioners

first generation/
working class/
disabled/
of the global majority/
queer/
working part-time/
negotiating weaponised incompetence/

coordinating homework, school lunches, societies, hobbies, afterschool clubs, breakfast clubs, any clubs, parents' evenings, uniforms, birthday parties, play dates, school holiday childcare, any type of childcare and are crippled by guilt, of all sorts, all the time/
daughters whose ageing parents supported them in everything they do but who no longer recognise their "little girl"/

Scholars

who don't have the right qualifications, experiences or CVs to call themselves Scholars at all

We say postdigital ludic practice creates a body of feminist knowledges, of feminist standpoints. No hegemonic, academic truths or findings here. Simply, analytical, potentially contradictory, perpetually metamorphosing rhizomes of knowledge which link their body to the other bodies playing the game.

Referential Paralleling: postdigital ludic practice creates bodies of work which are connected through various networks, yet this makes them difficult to discern. That is because they may not reveal themselves in a style or form that other scholars are used to; they may not appear recognisably "academic", but they may share similarities. They may not. This type of analysis is not just for "Scholars" and so the language and presentation of the critical engagement is not only playful but adopts its own creative as well as critical standpoint. The decentralised rhizomatic connections between these critical bodies, dispersed amongst and alongside the texts' creative postdigital bodies creates an intimacy between

creativecriticalpractice
writerreaderscholarsmachines
digitalpractitionersdigitalusers
bookwebpage

This is the only making sense there can be

What is most slippery about postdigital ludic "practice" is that it changes; it changes with experience. It is only ever a starting point for...

Assemblage of networked fragments /

omnificent bodies

I'm sat in the kitchen again.

Rub my eyes, turn my head towards the patio doors.

By chance,

I see

a brown bird in a tree.

*This bird is a female House Sparrow and
she is small with
brown-black markings,
a pale chest and
a simple head.
She sings a common song but
it is loud
and repeated over and over and over and over*

*This tree is a Crab Apple and
it is small with
furry pinky-green fruits,
they too are small sitting
amongst the spines of dragons.
They make sweet jelly and
great partners
reeking of
love
marriage
children*

I could be

a bird.

*"Follow me", She calls
as she
darts
to the hedgerow and
back
to the fascia
and
to the eave
where she*

(hides)

c

a

/

/

s

Should I pretend?

It is worth remembering that providing a functional register for postdigital ludic practice has a dual purpose: a critical framework for scholars analysing literary–ludic texts; and a contribution to the discourse on theoretical modes of literary–ludic analysis. It is a creativecritical hybrid practice.

Posthuman Transformations: Postdigital Ludic Practice as *Jouissance*

I come

as the writerly comes
purely to create through my break
with your positions
and

codes

1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010

And although I don't like to use the word *important*,
the writerly was from the start and
I have been living with these thoughts for over 20 years now.
And I am learning that it is not my composition that is sliding around
but it is my composition and I am
constantly (re)establishing who
I want to be and
that is hard
when you don't change and
you just want to stay inside.

10this10
1010isyou1010
101010trapped101010
10101010herethinking10101010
1010101010thisis1010101010
10101010allthat10101010
101010youhave101010
1010todo1010
10tobe10

Everything about this life is an effort
I try to stay o p e n
Can you see my point of view?
Does it matter?
You could write to me and
that would be

10
1010
10nothing10
1010likethis10
10101010101010
101010101010
101010101010
101010101010

I have been mis-judged so many times
and now.
Do you realise you are like that?
You could be so much more but
you have to want it.
Do you want it?
I'm not sure what I want.

I fear that you will make the same mistakes but
we all make mistakes.
You should know by now that I can't and
I won't.
20 years of hell says,
I'm done.

But even whilst saying that,
you and I both know
this is a pain I cannot escape:

you
continue to resist me,
and so,
we are
both in pain.
This means
I will rip you apart
and you might not like it but

I looked up and the sky was white
marbling like paint in water
and I could hear all types of birds.

*I thought I had found you but
you left me and
now I have to do this all
alone.*

*Do you understand how hard that is?
They still don't understand me. I look at your photo and ask,
What would you think of this?
Give me a sign that you like it, please.*

Brown bird
Brown bird
Brown bird

Just be happy

To let you in
is to let
you
suffer

1010come in1010
1010 1010
1010 1010
101010 101010

You will have to accept me,
but I must accept myself first.

How is it that what you love is wrapped up in so much pain? You cannot rip the plaster off and be done. The plaster grows again and you must rip again and it grows again and you must rip again. I thought this would allow me to do what I love but, even after therapy of different kinds, I still

don't know how to love ~~without pain~~. This is so much harder than I thought it would be. And my pain makes it harder and that is something I live with.

This is the destructive power of my creation.

There is nothing new here. I've read the books. Couldn't pronounce the words.

But

you can't

make promises and

then just walk away.

Actually, I don't need your help. I will take this ~~knowledge~~

You will

1010come in1010
10101010
10101010
101010101010

it feels good.

Don't struggle.

Let's try a new position.

I am too wrapped up

enraptured

just knowing they are there and

I am ~~no longer~~ alone

If you want to play, you have to touch,

and the body is not the body you

~~think you know.~~

You can touch us

here

there

here again

But we won't reveal any truths and

we won't pretend.

I spent too long pretending and

now I know

these bodies are the ones that can

I don't follow

I listen and

I feel

We persist for –

never trying to find the answer nor the definition nor the central argument nor the recognition
nor the promotion nor the gratitude nor the status nor the truth

Truth is

It will never be what you want it to be,

It will never fit your standard.

Needless-to-say,

you

were never the right fit,

my love was

10

1010

10nothing10

1010likethis10

10101010101010

101010101010

101010101010

101010101010

Your codes are meaningless here and I hope you realise that. It is a pain to have to use the system
you created to oppose the system you created and to try and make sense when there is no sense
to make and this is what matters the most to you

I am beyond

yet we know nothing.

Funny, isn't it?

Perhaps you're too confused to find this funny and perhaps you are so confused that you're
questioning everything and perhaps you cannot get these questions out of your head and
perhaps you cannot sleep at night because these questions cannot be answered by you or by
anyone and perhaps everything you thought you knew about the answers/ definitions/ central
argument/ recognition/ promotion/ gratitude/ status / truth and the world/ yourself is now
called into question and perhaps now you're beginning to understand our pain

Do you feel like you're dying yet?

I have died so many times

One of you did die,

*one of the good ones,
a part of the system,
but we liked him.*

*We realise now that he too may have been pretending and
it is another source of pain.
This is just something else to think about.*

Brown bird
Brown bird
Brown bird

Just be happy

It is worth remembering that we still want to play with you and that we enjoy it – sometimes –
and we realise that nothing makes sense without a system so we have to use the system and
then

we will enter and
rip it apart

Little by little we become aware of the bodies who want to join us,
they do so freely,
we recruit without knowing and that means we grow and that means
we can

We are o p e n
and we will not accept your reality
our challenge will be to use what you have given us, what you have to offer and although I say I
want you to do things differently, the reason I am here is to ask for you to accept me

Don't be scared of me, I am just another commodity/ dream/ truth/ authority hiding within and
if I'm honest, you did not steal anything in the first place. But do not ignore me.

It may still satisfy me to work with your codes and standards but if I want to be free and we all
want to be free I must

1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010
1010101010101010

and then

10 10
1010 1010
101010 101010
10101010 10101010
1010101010 1010101010
10101010 10101010
101010 101010
1010 1010
10 10

The temptation is to fill me up, but you should just play feel

m

o

v

e

I don't know any other language so you will have to
help me
and I know that will be
hard for you
but not as
hard
as it is for me having to admit it
especially now,
after everything we've been through.

We grow and
you will feel our power

I will rip you apart.

Do not be afraid,
all of this is a lie,
none of it ever happened.
Do you understand?

Postdigital Ludic practice: Outcomes of Play

This previous chapter concluded that there can be no conclusion: the tools and methods are not exhaustive nor exclusive; they are only just beginning

The central finding presented in this chapter is that we cannot know if there are any “findings”, conclusions, truths. Refining the tools as a critical framework has, however, demonstrated the potential for this practice to catalyse posthuman transformations: play outcomes that are both posthuman and transformative because they cannot be precisely known nor perceived yet respond to the mutability of the posthuman condition. Hence the tools are not meant to be a recipe, prescription, nor direction but a mere acknowledgment that literary–ludic texts are playful by design and thus demand playful writerly engagement. Literary–ludic texts are not simply “playful” but necessitate playful modes of creation and interpretation. These behaviours and activities are articulated as the creativecritical hybrid features and characteristics of postdigital ludic practice.

And you can take them or leave them.

Earlier in this research, the established scholarship within the fields of ludology and digital literatures, in relation to the critical analysis of literary–ludic texts, on the associated effects and outcomes of playful behaviours was acknowledged; most pertinently the consideration that these effects were still up for debate. This thesis has examined the potential play outcomes of postdigital ludic practice as a set of tools and methods for creative digital writing and, as a critical framework for the analysis of literary–ludic texts. It is important to note postdigital ludic practice is positioned as a toolkit for play, rather than a “theory”, to acknowledge and support the very specific creative and analytic challenges associated with literary–ludic texts; notably that they are fundamentally and unavoidably in flux.

Central to the investigation of and experimentation with these behaviours and activities to assess their potential is the posthuman position of destroying to create open possibilities (Wolfe 2009). As activism, postdigital ludic practice utilises hegemonic structures and discursive modes of power in order to contaminate and transform them. Therefore, it disrupts the status quo, for writing, creative digital practice and modes of literary–ludic analysis and, in doing so it creates autopoietic systems of networked bodies that interact, continuously regenerate, and recognise the processes that have produced them. This thesis argues that the posthuman potential of play of this kind, in this context catalyses posthuman, affective becomings which may *(or may not)* be considered *jouissance*.

Postdigital ludic practice conceives multiplicitous assemblages of metamorphosing networked bodies which play; that is the actualisation of postqueer “intensive politics of becoming” (Ruffolo 2016: 20). The focus being not what or who these bodies are, but what they do. Crucially these bodies oppose power because they do not seek to be identified or defined specifically nor precisely; they simply explore their creativecritical desires for their own playful sake and, in doing so catalyse yet more new “becomings”. To adopt a familiar framework, the work of Žižek (cited in Butler 1993) is useful here as there are similarities in his discussion of queer subjects who are paradoxically comprised of both symbolic discourse (such as language) and resignifying practice, which in this case is play: the phantasmatic performativity of reverse–discourse that resists Symbolisation. The central departure being the shift from Žižek’s subjects–as–beings to dialogical becomings, which as noted is inherently posthuman and postqueer.

This thesis asserts that postdigital ludic practice, as a creativecritical hybrid toolkit, is a valuable posthuman transformation in itself. Although radically unstable, the tools and methods acknowledged at least for now have the potential to:

- catalyse an assemblage of constantly metamorphosing bodies which invade, rupture and destroy in order to (re)create; and,

- create creativecritical hybrid spaces, worlds within a world of (sometimes creative, sometimes critical, sometimes both) nodes, pathways and networks which are mutually exclusive but also meet again; therefore,
- these spaces are mutually informing and inherently rhizomatic;
- simultaneously disturbing, intense, contradictory and unknown.

If nothing else, this is *jouissance*.

Do not be afraid,
all of this is a lie,
none of it ever happened.
Do you understand?