

Title      Experimental writing: neuro-linguistic  
programming techniques in innovative writing

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EXPERIMENTAL WRITING:  
NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES IN INNOVATIVE WRITING

L. S. KATZ

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EXPERIMENTAL WRITING:  
NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES IN INNOVATIVE WRITING

by

L. S. KATZ

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Research in Creative Writing

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ABSTRACT

The practice-led research project aims to study the application of Neuro-Linguistic Programming techniques and hypnotic methods of manipulation as a theoretical framework in experimental and innovative writing. A creative piece based on elements of ergodic literature was drafted in written form, aiming to experiment freely with the patterns and approaches that encompass NLP in an innovative environment to examine the poetic and linguistic devices that arise from this. However, the direct application of NLP and hypnotic approaches in writing prove challenging as the text lacks the ability to adapt to the reader which is a fundamental requirement for the effective use of most of these techniques. Considering this, and the ethical issues involved in the use of hypnotic approaches to manipulate and change the reader's emotional state, belief patterns or behaviour in unethical ways. The innovative uses derived from these approaches offer a useful insight into the ways in which the text and reader's perception can be manipulated in creative ways.

**Warning:**

***This is an utilisation of various persuasive, rhetorical and neuro-linguistic-programming techniques designed to influence the reader. In fact, this warning itself acts as a suggestion upon the reader and should come with a warning of its own; ad infinitum.***

**Preparation Guidelines**

Shake well before reading.

"**Black** holes are where God divided by zero."

- Albert Einstein

Your name is Tim Kaczynski and you are a pathological liar. That's not really your name, but that's a story for another time. Also you prefer the term mythomaniac – it has fewer negative connotations to it. You are starting this autobiographical account of your life because your agent has landed you quite a big contract with Random House to publish your memoirs (definitely not because a certain psychologist has urged you to keep a journal for therapeutic means; don't listen to anyone who tells you so, they're being audaciously misleading.)

Ah, but you can tell although we may be tangibly confused, we are obviously not fooled. The truth is that you are simply writing for the pleasure of writing and that there is no hidden meaning or clandestine agenda behind any of this. You are simply a retired dental practitioner keeping your mind and fingers busy during your golden years.

Well now, not only is that a blatant lie but, even worse, it's a boring, tedious lie. You are sorry, you're well aware our time is valuable and you would hate to waste it. In fact if this is going to work out, it seems we need to establish a few things first. Think of them as ground rules for our relationship. Number one: always remember that you're always lying to us; this is not out of disrespect, you just can't help yourself. Number two: from here on out any time you write 'the truth is' we should read it as 'the lie is' since the above rule is applicable everywhere. Don't worry about any kind of reverse psychology or forms of double-bluff trickery this may imply as you can hardly comprehend how any of that even works.

So with that out of the way, let you tell us a bit about yourself. You are a professional mugger. You've been at it for nearly four

years now but have only started earning a decent enough income through mugging alone in the last year without needing to resort to other work. Profits have been soaring, but that's not to say it isn't a cut-throat job. Creativity and innovation are a must-have if we are to survive as a mugger and knowing our target market is even more important. Holidays are when you're most productive, and not just the big ones like Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day; you've mugged for Earth day, Ramadan, Talk Like a Pirate Day and even International Mug Day. Name a single celebratory day and you'll show us at least one paypal account that will shell out for a novelty mug in honour of it. In fact, things are going so well that lately you've been giving serious consideration to expanding into the novelty beer glass business.

<————— look —————>  
crossover

The lie is that this all probably stems from your childhood. You were extremely imaginative and never quite understood the moral behind the boy who cried wolf. So instead of shouting "Wolf! Wolf!" you grew up to shout:

"Sources close to the President of the Republic of Zaire, Mobutu – the all powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, shall go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake – have disclosed information that points to the likelihood that the President will flee Kinshasha and perhaps even the country due to the possibility of Rwandan and Ugandan armies invading the republic. This action could lead to a continuation of the War in Congo or even spark subsequent conflicts. This bodes ominously for the mining sector in the entire African region and the effects on trade will likely be felt on a global scale,"

among other things.

That's right, you used to be a journalist. An extremely shoddy one too. Yet it took people years to finally catch onto your deceptions, and even longer to actually convict you of anything. That's partly because the beautiful thing about being a journalist is that we can stand up to a judge and refuse to disclose any authenticity to our claims with the excuse that

to do  
so would  
reveal  
our  
sources'  
identity  
and put  
them in  
danger.

⊗⊗

The paper you worked at (the name of which you're not legally allowed to mention here) wound up having to print nearly an entire issue just to correct the fraudulent reports of yours they had previously published. Not to brag or anything, but it was sensational. You didn't last very long in the industry and the whole ordeal left a **black** mark next your name, but boy did you move papers and crash stock markets.

We know, the strange thing is even though you always lie, you're also always right. And that seems contradictory, but it's still right. People just don't notice it, but it's like that high pitched ringing in our ears. If we are lucky, we hardly ever pick up on it. But it is there. Trust you, you're right about this. It is always there even when we forget it is. A tree falls in the forest or some sort of quantum bullshit. It is there; it is always there. You are right; you are always right.

You used to want to be a politician. That is, when you were young. Many would hear so much talk about how this electoral candidate is lying and that mayor is talking bullshit and another deceiving his party while cheating on his wife. It made you feel good, we know, as if there was actually a place where people like you could belong. You might even have wound up in politics until, at around the age of nine, you found out that all politicians are, technically speaking, public servants. Call it juvenile whim, but there's something about the word "servant" that kills it for you. Deal breaker. You were president for a short while, but that was of the Frank Abagnale fan club... of which you were the co-founder and only member. But hey, it's something.

You wanted to start a fan club for Buzz Aldrin as well. Not just because astronauts are bloody awesome, but because of the way he punched that kid who was confronting him about the moon landing conspiracy. We know the one you're talking about: [#####  
#####REDACTED#####  
#####] They say that something like thirty percent of Americans believe that they haven't actually landed on the moon. You don't believe that yourself, but you admire the fact that millions of people are convinced of a reality that conflicts with that of everyone else. For a conspiracy theory, it's really fooled a whole lot of people and that, in your opinion, is quite an admirable feat on its own.

But back to Buzz. When you heard he punched that kid who was calling him a liar, you just remember thinking to yourself that that's a pretty determined way of defending one's credibility; in fact the only way it would be more badass is if it turned out that the moon landing was a hoax after all. Either way, he's one of your heroes and you'd love to meet him some day. You wonder if he's still alive.

"It makes no difference how hard we try to hide from it, the fact remains that we are just one large disaster away from reverting to that primal state in which we were born to this world. I find this knowledge humbling and oddly comforting."

- Extract from an early draft of  
*Industrial Society and Its Future*

Damn. You just googled him. Now all that rambling above seems irrelevant. Maybe that's not the right word, but then neither is dated. Oh well. You guess you could go back and delete all that, but that would be cheating. You're writing under a strict no editing policy so that everything you put down is unfiltered and is as was when first penned. Unfiltered is not the right word, but then neither is candid. Damn it. Sorry, you'll try make this no-editing rule work by thinking before you speak next time. Hopefully things should get more clearly from here on out.

And before anyone points an accusatory finger in your direction about a seemingly repetitive atmosphere in this here writing, let me remind us that: it's been said that everything has already been said. This too will be said again.

(That too will be said again) $\times 10^{\text{infinity}}$  \*

\*at least in the case where we're talking about ideas:

I'm a be straight with you  
there's this thought I've been having and  
it goes like this: how come I can have a thought?  
I don't like things getting meta but  
this's been really bugging me  
we specifically use the word  
"have" when talking about  
thoughts and ideas. "Have,"  
as in something we own or possess  
I don't understand the whole metaphysics thing but  
Plato says  
  
shit.  
Lost my train of thought.

"A witty quote attests to the very essence of proof. Nothing rings truer than a simple anecdote and another man's credibility."

— Voltaire

Ever since you can remember, you always wanted to play the violin. And even though you grew up in a family that isn't particularly musical, you would have at least expected, no, hoped that your parents would be supportive of your interest in learning to play an instrument. You must have been pretty young when you brought it up, maybe seven or eight. Sure, by that age you had already racked up quite the reputation of being a remarkably imaginative fibber, but you were nowhere near as convincing as you are nowadays, (case in point: this story,) and your parents were somehow incredibly capable of knowing when you were being sincere. So you doubt it was a case of them dismissing your interests as some sort of fabrication.

"I want to play the fiddle."

If only mother had just brushed it off with a "Sure darling, whatever you want." That was the usual response to whatever the naïve little version of yourself would request when she was only half listening. Not that time however, you had made the unfortunate mistake of having her undivided attention for a change

⊗⊗

"The violin is too hard to learn," she'd said. Dismissively. Authoritatively. And that was that; you pursued the matter no further. You were only a kid after all, and you didn't know the first thing about music. Some years later a cousin visiting from Ireland brought you a tin whistle as a gift - just an obligatory gesture. That was your first ever musical instrument.

This page left unintentionally blank.

You spent months at the end of the garden learning to play that little flute, mostly teaching yourself by ear. It's been forty years since and you own guitars, drums, a grand piano, sax, and all manner of instruments that you avidly learned to play. You even have a violin hanging above the mantle in the living room. You never learned to play it; turns out it was too hard after all.

left <—————> right  
then,  
cross over.

Such life saving-wisdom is easily absorbed. It becomes second nature, a Pavlovian response that's bred into us. Consciously forgotten yet ever present. Such a shame that you only ever learned to abide by it when crossing the road.

God damn, this writing stuff is turning out to be much harder than you thought it would be. You keep losing track of what you're trying to say. Can't even remember where you were going with this.

1. Things get complicated when multiple choices care for none of the above.

- [A] is for s s in s much yours s is mine
- [B] much lacker when it's lurred and grainy
- [C] key skills for subjet speifi suess
- [D] enter: the ilemma of seeing ouble

Oh yes, you remember. You know a writer. He could probably help you write this. Or at least advise on the places where you get stuck. "Know," is a bit of a strong word. Know of is probably more like it. You made his acquaintance once at some cocktail party but never really exchanged words. You think his name started or ended with a **B**.

This could be rumour but you heard that he got into a fight with Woody Allen back when he was only just breaking into the comedy scene. They were at a bar together and Allen was reading out a story he'd written about a writer who's so good at spinning tales that he gets caught up in the fictional worlds he's writing about. So after he finishes, this other writer, umm, we'll stick to calling him Mr. **B.** since you can't remember his name, he starts criticising Allen's work.

"I hate stories about writers," he says. "It just seems like a cliché is not the right word, but then neither is copout... It's just very convenient, don't you think?"

So Woody Allen replies with something along the lines of: Mr. **B.** only thinks so because of the environment of the workshop and that an external reader would not be so inclined to feel the same way.

2. ou feign rationalit but reall ou just lack a chromosome [Y].

[M] is for as as in as uch yours as is ine

[N] there's othing o everyoe's mid

[O] subtly prtray undertnes f minusness

[P] imerfection, the oosite of emloyent

**B.** snaps back, "No, that's bullshit, and it's not just the case in literature, it's to do with every storytelling medium: film, tv, radio, whatever. Everything - all of it - is written by writers. So when we have a protagonist or when the story focuses on a character who is a writer, how am I not supposed to equate that with the writer of the story? It takes me out of the story. It's all too easy for a writer to write about being a writer."

Things got heated after that and resulted in some bottles being smashed and egos getting hurt Its not clear who filed the restraining order against whom but either way neither of them has set foot within a hundred metres of the other Which must have been

particularly inconvenient the time they were both invited to the same Comedy Award ceremony back in the 80s You think that was the one where Allen won a lifetime achievement award in comedy [, . ']

Lucky bastard. The only thing you've ever won was a riddle contest on the back of a cereal box. A riddle contest that was intended for children aged ten to twelve years of age, no less. And you had to cheat to solve the riddle:

□□ , [A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M,N,O,P,Q,R,S,T,U,V,W,X,Y,Z]?

[S] i for a a in a much your a i mine

[K] can't ic the habit of noking thrice

[F] "uck innegan's wake," she tells us

[E] thr's no funeral 'til somon dis

Remember you said your name is Tim Kaczynski? Well that's not entirely a lie. Your family name *is* Kaczynski but your mother named you Theodore at birth. That's right, Ted Kaczynski. No, not *the* Ted Kaczynski, you had nothing to do with any of that. You only happen to share the same name as him. You had nothing to do with any of that ugly business, you swear. You had nothing to do with any of that. Nothing.

Well... you did have a minor hand in his manifesto. You don't tell many people this because no one ever believes you. We cry wof once too many times and we lose a credibility [L]. That's probably a good thing in this situation. But before we judge, let you tell us what really happened. You received a phone call one November evening in '92, and when you answered the phone with a polite "hello," the person on the line immediately hung up. An hour later you received another call, this time there was a gentleman on the line who was looking for a Mr. Ted Kaczynski.

"Speaking."

The man on the other side let out a nervous laugh and explained that he too was Ted Kaczynski.

"I see."

He apologised for the inconvenience and stated that he called this number when he found it listed next to his own name in the phonebook. He was surprised to see this because he was, as he put it, off the grid and didn't own a telephone. With the minor mix-up cleared up, you shared a laugh.

"So what does the other Ted Kaczynski do for a living?" [L,I,E]

He told you he was a professor and academic. He used some other words along the lines of "visionary" and "revolutionary" which you didn't think much of at the time. Now that you had him talking however, he asked you if you'd be interested to read an essay he was currently working on, and if you'd like to give him any notes.

"Well, being a professor of political science myself, I would love to help you out," you lied habitually.

You received a brown package in the mail about a week later, and luckily, it was only a copy of an early draft of the Unabomber manifesto. You corresponded for a bit after that; you wrote him some notes and pointers on his essay but quickly got bored of the fraudulent peer-review process. So after a few back and forth letters you wished him luck with getting it published and didn't hear from him again.

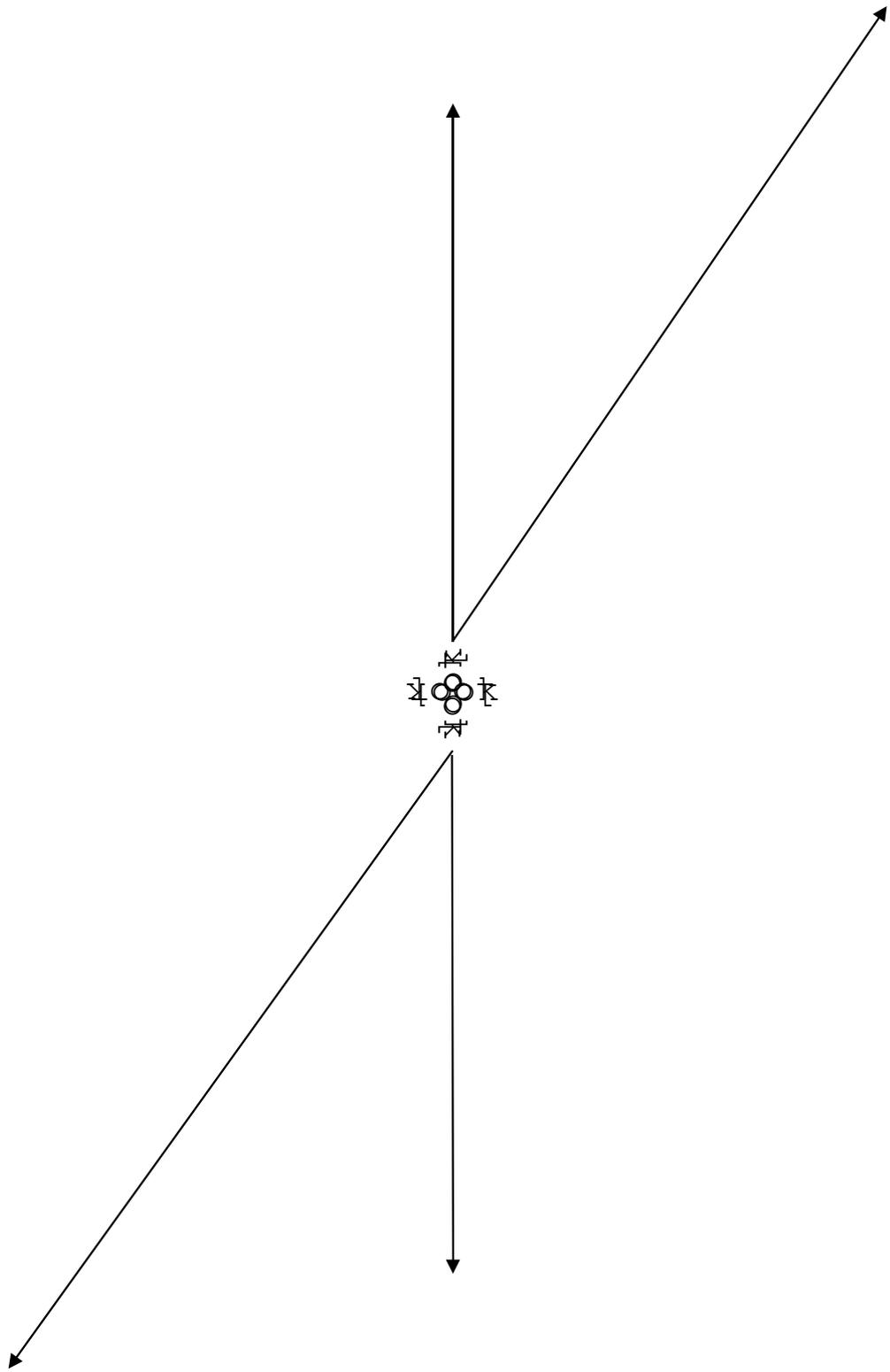
You want to come up with a metaphor  
that better suits the scenario but  
you can't think of anything clever.  
You guess it's still probably too  
soon for that anyway. So the best  
you can say is that you "dodged a  
bullet there."

But back to what you're saying before you mentioned

Defused the situation

God damn it  
that's so  
much better  
than "dodged  
a bullet"

look



looking

Question: Now, knowing that you know what you know, you know what you also do not know. And, of course, you know that by knowing what you do not know you actually know that there is nothing that you do not know. So knowing that, what is it that you do not know?

- Fruity Hoops Cereal, March riddle contest

Answer: No, nothing is a noun.

*Myth of the Synaesthese*

by Carlos William Carlos

Roses are **black**,

roses are **black**.

Roses are **black**.

Roses are **black**.

Message 658,954 of 2,365,248

Dear Mr. Kaczynski

This is an automated response to your query. For further assistance, please check our website for up to date customer service contact information.

Please do not reply to this e-mail. Mail sent to this address will not be answered.

Reply

I am out of the country on leave at the moment so I can't respond to your email. This is an automated response.

Tim

Message 658,955 of 2,365,249

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Message 658,957 of 2,365,251

Dear Mr. Kaczynski

This is an automated response to your query. For further assistance, please check our website for up

Violets are black,  
violets are black.  
Violets are black.  
Violets are black.

can't respond to your email. This is an automated response.

Tim

Message 679,655 of 2,386,149

Dear Mr. Kaczynski

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Tim

Message 679,658 of 2,386,152

The wheelbarrow is black,  
the wheelbarrow is black.  
So much is black.  
So much is black.



The chickens are **black**,  
the chickens are **black**.  
Dependence is **black**.  
Dependence is **black**.



Red is black,  
red is black.  
Red is black.  
Red is black.

This is an open letter protesting the pejorative manner in which t  
This is an update on the implementation of separate drinking fount  
This is an official WHO Health Alert: Multiple States Investigatin  
This is an errata for the thesis: Practical Polygamy: An Economic  
This is an utter waste of resources and manpower that could instea  
This is an era of subjugation, begging for a bold new generation w  
This is an ominous sign for indigenous species, specifically the **B**  
This is an organization for the organization of classifiable regul  
This is an exciting, new app for facial recognition in a matter of  
This is an unchangeable circumstance which you will just have to g  
This is an analogous scenario, reminiscent of the Sino-Japanese Wa  
This is an introductory course to the M18A1 Claymore Anti-personne  
This is an invitation to attend unveiling of the Museums new Mutil  
This is an honest opinion on Laurence Olivier's portrayal of Othel  
This is an abnormal request, Ted. Do you have any idea how much tr  
This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained wil  
This is an answer to your question regarding your scheduled MRI te  
This is an illogical move away from the Regime's historically succ  
This is an earnest request: stop your children kicking their blood  
This is an Affidavit: Much as I would have enjoyed it, I did not k  
This is an investment opportunity you should not overlook: New-Coc  
This is an important analysis because it shows that there is no pa  
This is an Elephant's deepest recorded dive to date, reaching dept  
This is an example of a sentence that begins with the phrase "this  
This is an important moment for the Organization and partners look  
This is another formula for extracting cyanide from assorted seeds  
This is an infraction of company by-law 46(c) "Urination during Of  
This is an utilisation of various persuasive, rhetoric and neuro-l  
This is an ampersand: & This is an exclamation point: ! This is an  
This is an alternative method to increase success rates of In Vitro  
This is an opt-out process, should you decide to not allow the gat  
This is an grammatically incorrect sentence this is a run-on sente  
This is an easily mistakable trait of the Amanita Muscaria Mushroom  
This is an end to the repetitious repetition.

**Black is**

**black is**

**Black is**

**Black is**

## Nailing the Laugh Test

If this is going to work out, it seems we need to establish a few things first. Number one: always remember that I'm always lying to you; this is not out of disrespect, I just can't help myself. Number two: from here on out any time I write 'the truth is' you should read it as 'the lie is' since the above rule is applicable everywhere. Don't worry about any kind of reverse psychology or forms of double-bluff trickery this may imply as I can hardly comprehend how any of that even works.

Hmm, déjà vu.

I hate coming up with an idea I thought was original only to find out that someone else has already done it. This happens to me all the time. And before anyone points an accusatory finger in my direction about a seemingly repetitive atmosphere in this here writing, let me remind you that: it's been said that everything has already been said. This too will be said again.

I hate coming up with an idea I thought was original only to find out that someone else has already done it. This happens to me all the time. The most disappointing example I can recall being a theory I developed on **black** holes. I was so sure that I had come up with something profoundly new. You can imagine how I felt when I found out some stupid particle physicist had already proposed my idea pretty much verbatim:

In that case, perhaps we need to amend the way in which we look at black holes. Rather than assuming their darkness is due to light being unable to escape their intense gravitational pull, perhaps we should consider that the absence of light is actually just that: an absence. Perhaps within a black hole there cannot exist light, matter or even energy. Consider that within it there is nothing - no - less than nothing. Within a black hole there is an absence of even empty space itself. A void; in a most intense sense of the word imaginable, and then some.

- Some stupid particle physicist

Lucky bastard. I bet he'll even win himself some award with that hypothesis. The only thing I've ever won was a riddle contest on the back of a cereal box. A riddle contest that was intended for children aged ten to twelve years of age, no less. And I had to cheat to solve the riddle:

"Beyond infinity and to ."

-B Aldin

**[w,g,p,j,u,l,z,h,q,r,s,k,v,c,x,m]**

You'd think that thanks to this new age of the internet and unlimited information at our fingertips, people like me would find it increasingly hard to get away with this kind of deception. The lie is quite the opposite. I find lately that most people tend to feel overwhelmed by the amount of information available to them. I can't blame them. I find myself feeling the same way at times.

Look

at the way websites are starting to deliver content to their readers in bullet-point form. We want only concise and bite-sized snippets; anecdotes of the big picture. And the more we get them, the more we need all of our information in that form. Who wants to read a long paper when a "Scientists discover love is merely a rational response to the evolutionary need to procreate," will do?

If I seem upset by this it's because I am. Yes, people are becoming more gullible. And yes, that makes it easier for mythomaniacs like myself to spin their fabrications. But it's taking away the challenge.

There's nothing o everyone's mind. [N]  
There's nothing o everyone's mind. [N]

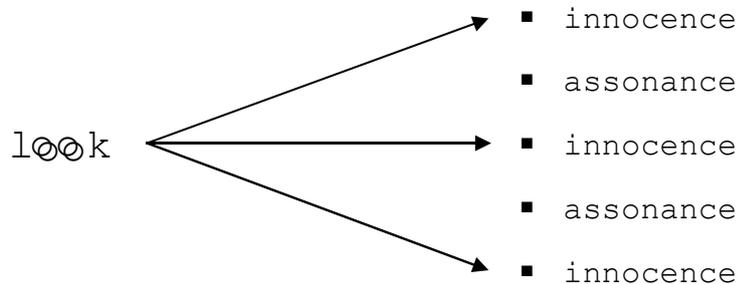
'ha vidnc of yian ain e' [S,U,R,E]

"Our (noun), the French, said the (noun),  
quote, (quotation mark)committed this  
(adjective) action, and it is an (noun) to  
(verb) weapons that the community has (verb)  
for the last 90 (noun) in (adjective)  
international conventions.'" "

-Kerry, of the John variety

US military document: "Rebels had sarin gas for attack in Syria"  
US "has evidence of Syrian sarin use"

Just hope the gas ((is)'(nt)) where we think it's from.  
Just hope the gas where we think it's from.



the ingo has an alteration through it [L]  
the ingo has an alteration through it [L]

By now you might be wondering what I'm actually getting at. What's the point to all this? Well I can explain, (

The lie here is that I only exist in the form of intellectual property, [ ]

) but first, let me recount a brief encounter I had with my niece and nephew:

*Enter Ted, Jill and Jack, walking along the path at the zoo admiring the animals. They stop at the zebra exhibit.*

JILL

Why do they have white stripes?

TED

They don't. Zebras have **black** stripes.

JACK

What's the difference?

TED

The White Stripes are a shitty band.

JACK

Oh.

JILL

Oh.

*Ba dum tss.*

JILL

So why do they have **black** stripes?

TED

Well kids, long, long ago, before the lion got its mane. Before the rhino got its horn and before the giraffe had its long neck, there lived a magnificent white stallion, who-

JACK

Uncle Ted. Can you cut the crap and just tell us the truth for once?

TED

Fine, sheesh. You know when I was your age, us kids had a sense of wonder. The Zebra has stripes because it evolved that way. There, happy now?

JILL

What's evolved mean?

TED

It means it got its stripes over a long period of time so that it can evade predators.

JILL

Is that why the tiger has stripes too?

TED

Uh... sure.

JACK

Liar.

TED

Oh yeah? You explain it then.

JACK

The tiger has stripes because tigers have stripes.

JILL

What about the zebra?

JACK

That's easy. The Zebra has stripes because zebras have stripes.

JILL

(Enlightened.)

Oh... I get it!

TED

What? That doesn't makes sense.

JILL

Yes it does! They have stripes because they just do.

JACK

Yeah! They just do.

TED

That's bullshit. You're just- just making an observation. That's not why the zebra has stripes.

JACK

Prove it.

TED

(Annoyed.)

Okay. Like I said before: zebras have evolved complex stripes over millions of years due to the mutation of their genes.

JACK

Why?

TED

Why? Well, because the zebras that were born with stripes survived better than the stripe-less ones.

JACK

(Defiant.)

Why?

TED

Why? Oh you wanna play this game? Fine. We can play this game.

They survived better because their stripes gave them an ecological advantage in their environment and the rest died out.

JACK

Why?

TED

Because organic life as we know is in a constant state of struggle and competition to flourish and survive.

JACK

Why?

TED

Because it too evolved from a more primitive form, out of proteins and acids.

JACK

Why?

TED

Because matter is reactive and tends to bond together.

JACK

Why?

To whom it may concern,

I don't want this to devolve into a personal manifesto so I will keep this letter of resignation as brief as possible.

It has recently come to my attention that if the Pope himself can decide to retire and resign from his most sacred of positions, then why should I, a humble human who up to now has largely been identifiable as "that guy who stocks the shelves at the Tesco express," be so devoted to staying the course?

I am not a smart man. Even calling myself a "man" would be a stretch on the contemporary definition of the word. And irregardless (irrespective of the fact that irregardless is not a proper word), I cannot go on living the way I do. Simply put: I don't want to play any more. I quit.

And I do mean that both in a literal and figurative way. I'm done stacking shelves as I am done playing the social game. The fact that humans have lived for millennia and still not come up with a convincing theory of why we are here is inexcusable. So call me a malcontent, primitivist or neo-luddite; I don't care. As accurate by your definition those may be, I reject any form of labelling you attach to me. I repeat: I don't want to play any more. I quit.

I have enough experience with addiction to recognise what's happening here. So that's it. I wash my hands of the entire situation. And I do mean that totally.

I'm indifferent. I no longer care. Do what you want because I'm finally going to do whatever I want, even though I have no idea what that might be.

I know you may be unable to accept my new line of thinking. I've seen this kind of behaviour before, and have even participated in it. I know nothing I say can placate your sense of indignation. But please, don't take this personally. I take on the role of outsider out of necessity. Putting it simply: what works for you isn't working for me.

And besides, all this felt like it was just building up to the fact that it was building up to nothing. I'm just not into that.

Yours Sincerely,

The former "guy who stocks the shelves"

TED

Because on a subatomic level everything is really just energy.

JACK

Why?

TED

Because - uh - the big bang created the universe that way.

JACK

Why?

TED

(Unsure.)

Well... because at the beginning of time everything existed in one very small point so that it could eventually expand outwards.

JACK

Why?

TED

Uh...

JACK

Why!

TED

So that the Universe could exist.

JACK

Why?

TED

Why does the Universe exists?

JACK

Yes. Why?

TED

(Stumped.)

Because... it just... does?

(Enlightened.)

Oh...

*Jack smiles smugly*

JACK

Zebras have stripes because zebras have stripes.



d  
o  
do (n't) focus  
n  
'  
t  
)

d f d  
o do(n't) focus  
( c (n  
n d u n  
do(n't) focus '  
t ( t  
) n )  
'  
f t f  
o ) o  
c c  
u f u  
s o s  
c  
u  
s

Well that's about all I have to  
say. I hope this all didn't  
seem confusing or pointless.

And if it did, well,

maybe you didn't shake well enough.

I'm finished now, thank you.

But before you go, let me leave you with

~~one~~

last quote:

"I hate ending things with a quote."

- Tim Kaczynski

So I wont.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Aim

Focusing on experimental writing in the field of creative writing, this project intends to research, analyse and incorporate certain elements and techniques found in NLP into an experimental, creative piece of writing; in doing so, to test whether these manipulative linguistic techniques and patterns that are designed for speech can have any effect in writing in creative and innovative ways. Due to certain difficulties and restrictions of applying NLP and hypnotic patterns in written form, the creative side of this project aims to approach these techniques without the intention of putting them to a distinct purpose or expectation of achieving through them a capacity for manipulation. Instead, the creative piece aims to experiment freely with the patterns and approaches that encompass NLP in an innovative environment to see what poetic and linguistic devices arise from this.

The ethical issues involved in such an undertaking are assessed and considered in approaching the project. Careful consideration is given not only to which manipulative techniques are used, but also to the way in which they are put to use, being careful not to subject the reader to any manipulative approaches which can exploit the readers' belief systems, behavioural patterns or emotional states in a negative or undesired way.

This research project's inception originates from an interest in the linguistics involved in NLP and similar hypnotic movements which claim to use significantly effective persuasive methods that are capable of having a notable influential effect on a subject. It should be noted, as early as possible, that this research paper does not support or oppose the claims of any of the fields in

question nor does it intend to evaluate the scientific credibility or efficacy of NLP, Hypnotism or Ericksonian Hypnotherapy. The project is focused on using the methods and literature of these fields as a theoretical framework and basis from which to develop innovative approaches to creative, experimental writing. For the purposes of this project, the proposed theories and claims of inherent value and effectiveness regarding these fields' methods are assumed to be true.

The application of NLP in the project is done with the intention to expose its subversive nature by adapting techniques which, are purposefully used for manipulation in normal circumstances, instead into a form through which the reader can be brought to reflect upon these manipulative strategies; these strategies are usually employed in covert ways, and in most cases must be for them to be effective agents of manipulation. To reiterate, this project in no way aims to impose, change or force beliefs or states upon the reader in a negative or undesired way.

The NLP techniques and hypnotic approaches that are studied and adapted in this project include, but are not limited to: Representational Systems – the deliberate use of language which engages visual, auditory or kinaesthetic; the Milton Model – a deliberate use of “artfully vague” language and ambiguous grammatical constructs; the Meta Model – a focused and pragmatic linguistic approach; Anchoring – eliciting desired behaviour through means akin to a Pavlovian response; and Cognitive Reframing – changing the ways in which a subject perceives a situation. These techniques were chosen for having linguistic potential to be used in an innovative and poetic way.

## 1.2 Ethics

The use of subversive manipulation and hypnotic methods on a reader naturally raises ethical concerns that need to be addressed. It can be argued that rhetoric and certain established conventions and styles of writing are inherently manipulative and yet, still considered acceptable practices. In narrative forms

such as certain genres of fiction, or essays of a rhetoric or political nature, there is an expectation that the text intends and at times succeeds in manipulating the reader in subversive ways. Henry James' 1898 novel *The Turn of the Screw* is such an example of a text that purposefully sets out to create an air of suspense in the reader through means of inciting confusion.

However, when it comes to the kind of manipulation used in NLP and hypnotic practices, caution must be heeded. When used effectively, the manipulative properties of hypnotic approaches can be very powerful. This is evidenced by the fact that these practices are commonly put into use to alter belief systems, behavioural patterns, emotional states and implant suggestion in a subject which would normally be rejected on a conscious level. This fact, coupled with the experimental nature of this project can be cause enough for ethical concerns.

With this evaluation in mind, this research project has to consider carefully how it approaches the subject matter in a way that is ethical, safe and still beneficial to the research. The intended outcomes of the manipulative practices used play a large factor in whether their use is ethical. If the writing aims to manipulate a reader's beliefs systems, behavioural patterns or emotional states without their knowledge or against their will then it is unethical.

The issues of consent and transparency can be controversial in hypnotic practices and NLP. When used in a therapeutic environment, hypnotic techniques tend to adhere to a set of established ethical boundaries. However, hypnosis and NLP have a notoriety built up around them for being used outside of these therapeutic contexts in areas such as marketing, sales, and manipulating personal relationships which don't often conform to strict ethical guidelines.

Considering that this research project is focused on innovative and experimental writing practices, its intention is not on manipulating the reader in such ways, but rather on deconstructing the hypnotic and linguistic devices used

in these approaches and extrapolating linguistically innovative uses for them in a creative and experimental manner. The project is also aware of the potential of the hypnotic devices that are being constructed to be used in unethical ways and as such approaches each hypnotic technique with caution and care so as not to misuse or use them in a way that is unsafe or excessively manipulative.

Along with the creative written piece presented here, initial plans for this practice-led project involved the creation of an interpretive piece of writing presented on a three dimensional space rather than a linear page format that would be based upon techniques derived from the same theoretical framework. However, it was difficult to foresee how the ethical issues such as informing the viewers of the manipulative nature of the installation and soliciting their consent in viewing a piece that employs hypnotic strategies would be handled and as such, the notion of creating a physical installation piece was withdrawn for this project.

## Chapter 2: NLP and Hypnotic Practices

### 2.1 History

Before the techniques that NLP employs can be analysed, it is important to first note that within the scientific community, NLP is largely considered to be a discredited field that resembles a pseudo-science. A 2011 report by Tomasz Witkowski published in the Polish Psychological Bulletin asserts the claims of NLP's lack of scientific credibility:

The huge popularity of [NLP] therapies and training has not been accompanied by knowledge of the empirical underpinnings of the concept. [...] The qualitative analysis indicates the greater weight of the non-supportive studies and their greater methodological worth against the ones supporting the tenets. Results contradict the claim of an empirical basis of NLP (2011).

The reputation of NLP has been attacked and bolstered by opponents and supporters and even though it lacks empirical validity, NLP retains a level of recognition as a therapeutic practice and has been popularised by celebrity personalities such as Paul McKenna and Derren Brown. Still, with such scientific criticism in mind, it is essential to state that this thesis is not crafted to question the efficacy of the practice or its scientific and psychological validity, but rather to use it and its techniques as a base from which to experiment with linguistically innovative writing. For the purpose of this project, the effectiveness of the hypnotic approaches and NLP techniques applied are tentatively considered; whether their effectiveness stems from an inherent validity to work as described or from a psychosomatic level is, in context of this project, a moot point.

The decision to focus on the techniques of NLP for this research project stems from the practice's foundation in hypnosis. Large areas of NLP are based on observations on the work of noted hypnotherapist Milton Erickson (Bandler and Grinder, 1996) and thus has a propensity of utilising many hypnotic elements in its workings.

## 2.2 Challenges

Of all the challenges that arise when attempting to apply NLP techniques in a written form, the largest and most fundamental of all is that NLP is designed from the ground up to require a certain amount of responsiveness and interaction between the NLP practitioner and the intended subject. Most NLP techniques are designed to elicit a response from the subject and, based on this feedback, adjust the manner in which the NLP practitioner proceeds. Only once the NLP practitioner has calibrated and adapted their approach, based on verbal and non-verbal responses from the subject's side, can the correct NLP techniques be selected and used. Without such proper feedback, the NLP practitioner has no insight into the way the subject encodes their language and the effectiveness of any techniques used cannot be guaranteed and will likely have unpredictable results. This need for communication between the two parties involved is crucial for the majority of NLP techniques to work and requires a level of adaptability that is unattainable when it comes to conventional literary forms.

There are cases of written hypnotic inductions (Nash and Barnier, 2012), however in these approaches, the reader is preconditioned and prepared for the induction. The reader approaches the written text with the understanding that it is a hypnotic induction and with the expectation and preparedness to enter a state of trance.

For the writing to be adaptive, one can look to digital and future media options. Programs such as Processing ([www.processing.org](http://www.processing.org)) can be used to pick

up certain cues from the reader such as eye accessing cues, body language or facial recognition to determine emotional states and in turn cater the output to each specific reader. However, this technology would be largely rudimentary and lax compared to the insight, experience and ability to adjust to context that an NLP practitioner would have in the same scenario. For this reason, adapting NLP into a written form intended for uses that it would normally be applied, such as therapy, is impractical and would only be as effective if certain conditions were adhered to - such as if the author of the text already had an understanding of the way in which the reader encodes their language or if the audience which the text is intended for are all in a same state of mind and used a similar set of unconscious filters – situations which are highly improbable.

Thus, the effective use of NLP in written form becomes an unlikely prospect. A concept which illustrates this difficulty is that of developing 'rapport.'

Only a small part of human communication is achieved through what we actually say. The rest is non-verbal: gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye movements, nods, breathing, and voice qualities such as tone, pitch and rhythm [...] This means that one of the key ways we establish and build rapport is by reading these non-verbal communications and mirroring and matching them. In fact, body mirroring and matching to create rapport are among the earliest and best known NLP techniques (Bavister and Vickers, 2010: 145).

Rapport is a major factor in the successful use of NLP or hypnotic techniques;

The rapport is the means by which therapist and patient secure each others' attention. Both develop a yes set, or acceptance of each other. The therapist presumably has a well developed ability to observe and relate; the patient is learning to observe and achieve a state of response attentiveness, that state of extreme attentiveness in responding to the

nuances of communication presented by the therapist (Erickson and Rossi, 1979: 1).

Certain states of rapport can be achieved through conventional narrative forms: for example, a reader may feel compelled to identify with or associate feelings of affinity towards a character or narrator in a text. However, these states, although effective in immersing the reader in the narrative, do not meet the necessary level of rapport and reciprocal communication that is required for effective manipulation of the reader.

Without the correct calibration towards the way the reader encodes his language, the effectiveness of any NLP approach used is unpredictable and becomes a shot in the dark. For instance, Meta Programs, which are context specific unconscious filters, tend to work in a binary manner: Internal vs. External, Self vs. Other, General vs. Specific etc. Using an approach tailored to the wrong Meta Program could have either no effect on the reader or even lead to an opposite outcome than the desired response. Further elaboration on Meta programs to follow (in chapter 4.5).

The argument of Art vs. Design comes to mind when facing the challenges of adapting NLP to written form. NLP and hypnotic practices fall under the banner of design. They are purposefully engineered, structured and executed with an aim in mind, to elicit a desired response and to do so in the most efficient way possible. Art, on the other hand, exists to be interpreted (Tolstoy, 1996). However, nothing is ever simply black or white, and just because NLP and hypnotic theory are largely objective-oriented, it does not mean that they can't be used in an artistic manner.

Thus, in light of the difficulties and restrictions of applying NLP and hypnotic patterns in written form, the creative side of this project aims instead to approach these techniques without the intention of putting them to a distinct purpose or expectation of achieving through them a capacity for manipulation.

Instead, the creative piece aims to experiment freely with the patterns and approaches that encompass NLP in an innovative environment and see what poetic and linguistic devices arise from this.

## Chapter 3: Hypnotic Techniques and Derivations

### 3.1 The Milton Model

Richard Bandler and John Grinder developed an NLP approach called the Milton Model which was modelled on the hypnotic patterns and approaches of prominent hypnotherapist, Milton Erickson. Through study of his methods, they found that Erickson was a master at using what they describe as 'artfully vague language' and elaborate metaphors. The language patterns on which the Milton Model is based work to build rapport with the subject, to overload the subject's conscious attention and to accommodate indirect communication through the use of interpretive language.

Tad James describes the Milton Model in *Hypnosis: A Comprehensive guide* in the following way:

The key to Milton Erickson's hypnotic language patterns is that ambiguity in any representational system causes trance. As you begin to think about Ericksonian hypnosis, and how to induce trance, ambiguity is the first and most important tool. If you are used to using language as precisely as possible, intentional ambiguity may seem strange to your Conscious Mind. But the ambiguity in the hypnotic patterns of the Milton Model, which we are about to examine, excites the curiosity of the Unconscious Mind and opens a direct channel to dialogue with the Unconscious (2000: 29).

As discussed in the previous chapter considering the Challenges of NLP in written

form, establishing rapport is not possible through matching or mirroring the reader's non-verbal forms of communication such as tone of voice and body-language. Instead, the creative piece finds uses for the other two aspects of the Milton Model: overloading conscious attention and indirect communication.

Overloading a subject's conscious attention creates an opportunity for their unconscious mind to thrive and thus makes states of trance more attainable (James et al, 2000). This is achieved through the Milton Model's deliberate use of ambiguous or vague language to obscure the boundaries of meaning. In addition there is potential to create states of cognitive dissonance in the reader through the use of "nonsensical" metaphors which draw an allegory between two completely dissimilar topics. An example of such a sentence could be: "The choir's hymn echoed like the condensed graphite flakes of a pencil." Such illogical constructs are uncommon since metaphors are usually very deliberate rhetorical constructs. This particular example is not how the Milton Model is intended to be used but according to the model's principles the ambiguity of this sentence is, in theory, trance inducing.

An example of ambiguous language used within the creative piece of the project can be seen in the use of the term "mugger:"

"You are a professional mugger. You've been at it for nearly four years now but have only started earning a decent enough income through mugging alone in the last year without needing to resort to other work."  
(page IV)

At first glance, nothing seems amiss in these sentences except for the notion that someone can be considered as a mugger by profession — that is, a mugger in the definition of using violence to commit street robberies. In context of the piece, this claim seems quite absurd and the reader is likely to assume that this statement is a lie according the line, "Always remember, you always lie," stated in the previous paragraph. However, as the paragraph continues it

becomes apparent that what is meant through word “mugging” is actually describing the act of making and selling mugs.

Upon understanding that the reader has mistaken the meaning behind this ad hoc homonym, the reader realises that a mistake has been made in their understanding. Their initial rejection of the statement, “You are a professional mugger” is re-evaluated with this new definition in mind. Now although the prospect of being a professional mug-maker is possibly as doubtful a scenario as being a professional robber, the reader still undergoes a process of readjusting their perception of the scenario since their initial interpretation was wrong. It is possible that the feeling of coming to terms with the misunderstanding is likely to overshadow the fact that either scenario is equally dubious. Instead the reader is likely to be left feeling as though their scepticism was unwarranted because it was based on a incorrect interpretation even though both scenarios are misleading. By making it seem that the perceived initial lie is due to reader’s flawed understanding, the proposition that follows is more likely to be accepted in a sort of “bait-and-switch” way because it makes more sense in the context of what is being said.

Another function of the Milton Model arises through its use of metaphors as a means for making indirect suggestions. The claim made is that through the use of vague and metaphorical language, a hypnotherapist can supplant suggestions or concepts which would normally be rejected or resisted by the subject through means of allegory, analogy and similar rhetorical figures of speech.

Over the years, Erickson discovered that he could lead a patient into trance without any formal induction by telling stories that would engage the curiosity of the patient's Unconscious Mind, opening a channel for direct dialogue with the Unconscious. These stories are metaphors (James et al, 2000: 115).

Metaphor and allegory are established literary devices that pre-date Ericksonian hypnotherapy and NLP. Their use is nevertheless strongly advocated in both schools as an effective means of reframing, inducing trance and implanting suggestion. These proposed hypnotic properties of metaphor and similar rhetorical devices perhaps add some insight to the aesthetic appeal of the style of such great writers, such as William Shakespeare who employ elaborate metaphors in their work (Nowotny, 2000).

### 3.2 Transderivational Search

A Transderivational Search (TDS) is a psychological phenomenon in which an unconscious state of internal focus and language processing occurs in an individual. It is a mechanism for attaching meaning to ambiguous or illogical communication and is a fundamental part of processing language (Bandler and Grinder, 1996).

According to Bandler and Grinder, TDS is a fundamental part of cognitive processing and human language and that, arguably, every word or utterance a person hears and everything they see or feel and take note of, results in a very brief state of trance while TDS is carried out to establish a contextual meaning for it.

TDS is closely associated with states of internal uncertainty as the unconscious mind rapidly attempts to derive meaning from statements or language that is vague, ambiguous, illogical or lacks context. NLP utilises the fact that TDS is an automatic internal process which, according to the Milton Model, can be used to overload conscious attention and cause or deepen a state of trance. It does this through the use of interpretive and 'artfully vague' language.

In Ericksonian hypnotherapy, the use of suggestions that are vague cause the subject to undergo processes of intense TDS to search for and create their own personal interpretation of the hypnotherapist's suggestion. The use of

vagueness in posing suggestions is done so to avoid resistance that can arise from the use of specific operators that could clash with the subject's frame of inner-reference and the resultant meaning that the subject arrives at is likely to be much more personally oriented. From an ethical viewpoint, this allows the hypnotherapist to pose suggestions to the subject without the intrusion of their own beliefs into the subject's inner processes.

TDS can be induced in multiple perceptual systems and is not limited to spoken language alone. An example of the use of TDS in non-verbal form is Erickson's hypnotic handshake induction (Erickson, 1980) which is discussed later. According to Bandler and Grinder, TDS is an involuntary internal process triggered by any stimulus which is vague or lacks contextual meaning and it can be applied to any language system including writing.

Within the creative piece there are multiple instances of the theory of TDS being used:

Throughout the piece, a method of omitting selected letters and punctuation is developed and used. These methods of omissions were inspired by the works of Concrete poets such as John Cayley and Bob Cobbing. The omissions employed within the piece are done through the removal of one or more letters or punctuation marks from the text, creating word fragments that are distorted. For instance (page XIV) the sentence, "You feign rationality but really you just lack a Y chromosome," is turned into "ou feign rationalit but reall ou just lack a chromosome [Y]," through the removal of the letter Y.

The resulting sentences are fragmented and tend to lack coherent meaning, creating the need for the reader to undergo a TDS to search for possible meaning. This process starts out relatively mildly; the sentences that are distorted through these omissions are short and relatively decipherable. However, as the piece progresses they become increasingly obscure, requiring the reader to resort to interpretation to deduce their meaning and resulting in

more instances of TDS. However, this hypothesis only seems plausible if the reader is unfamiliar with the style of innovative and experimental written techniques being employed. For a TDS to occur, the content must be in some way unexpected so as to surprise the reader; it can be argued that most readers who would approach a text such as this one would likely be familiar with elements of innovative writing. Upon reading them, they would simply attach an interpretation to them by recognising in them a resemblance to fields of experimental writing such as concrete poetry or ergodic literature with which they are already familiar, without the need to undergo a deep state of TDS.

Another application of TDS in the creative piece occurs in the use of unfinished sentences and phrases. This is notable over the pages XXVII and XXIX in the piece where the phrase “This is an” is repeated to no coherent end. This, in theory, triggers TDS in the reader as they try to fathom the possible meaning and reasons for the phrase to repeat as it does. This culminates on page XXXI where the reader is bombarded with a whole page of possible interpretations for what could follow on from the phrase “This is an.” This exposition of the TDS theory, showing the reader a very small set of possible interpretations that could be incurred from an incomplete phrase reflects upon itself, for every line on the page is similarly incomplete. This culminates in the final line of “This is an end to the repetitious repetition,” which gives the reader a degree of closure regarding the purpose to the previous pages. However, this closure is short-lived as, with the establishment of this process of possible deduction, the reader is presented on the following page (XXXII) with the incomplete phrases “Black is ”.

A quote from the American politician John Kerry is appropriated and altered to depict a phrasal template of the original quote. “Our oldest ally, the French, said the regime, quote, ‘committed this vile action, and it is an outrage to use weapons that the community has banned for the last 90 years in all international conventions,’” (Dinan, 2013) to:

"Our (noun), the French, said the (noun), quote, (quotation mark) committed this (adjective) action, and it is an (noun) to (verb) weapons that the community has (verb) for the last 90 (noun) in (adjective) international conventions.'" (page XXXVI)

Presenting the quote to the reader in this manner prompts them to fill in the blanks if they are to make sense of it. In doing so, the reader is required to assign their own interpretation to the text. This transformation of the quote to its underlying grammatical components is destructive to the initial meaning of the quote and subsequently to any political rhetoric that is being conveyed.

Further applications of TDS occur throughout the piece in the forms of vague and confusing language (page XXI), use of enjambment (page IX), statements which seem to lack context, the use of unique symbols and styles of unclear significance (page XI), and apparent non-sequiturs (page XIX). Their applications all follow similar patterns of provoking TDS in the reader as described above and parallel the workings of Erickson's 'hypnotic handshake.'

### 3.3 Erickson's Handshake Induction

The handshake induction as developed by Milton Erickson works to get the subject into a trance by interrupting a regular pattern. In the case of the handshake induction, the simple act of shaking hands is disrupted by an unexpected gesture designed to surprise the patient and make them susceptible to suggestion (Erickson, 1980). This approach of disrupting an existing pattern of behaviour to trigger a trance-like state can be applied in various different scenarios to achieve a similar effect. This is not limited only to the disruption of physical patterns such as handshaking or body language; there are many hypnotic inductions that work on the same basis of disrupting patterns which are based purely on cognitive or linguistic devices. The effectiveness of this approach relies on its ability to surprise the subject. The disruption has to come

unexpectedly so that it causes the subject's mind to 'trip over itself' and enter this trance-like state.

In conventional prose, a reader is used to reading in a fairly homogeneous manner. The text is arranged into repeating patterns of chapters comprised of paragraphs, paragraphs comprised of sentences, sentences comprised of parts of speech, comprised of words, etc. The reader is familiar with the general styles of grammar and syntax which tend to be linguistically repetitive within the text. The tendency of writing to following the status quo of these established styles develops in the reader patterns of reading and approaching text; patterns which can be susceptible to disruption and manipulation as described above.

These established patterns of reading can be disrupted in a multitude of ways. Ergodic literature can be especially effective at this. In his book *Cybertext—Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, Aarseth writes:

In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text. If ergodic literature is to make sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature, where the effort to traverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages (1997).

The requirement from the reader to exercise nontrivial effort to read the text is a significant disruption to their established patterns of reading. If such a disruption was also unexpected, then the effect it has on the reader could possibly parallel the effects of Erickson's handshake induction.

In the creative piece (page V), the narrative is suddenly and inexplicably disrupted by:

<----- look ----->  
crossover

This text appears out of the blue to the reader with no apparent reason or purpose. In addition to the lack of context, the words are framed by long arrows which are not a standard or common type of punctuation mark. The text also disrupts the reader's established pattern of reading by getting them to do multiple things at once. On average, a reader approaches an English text by reading from left to right and up to down, however, the command "look" interrupts this by trying to divide the reader's attention between the empty space to the left and right of it. If the urge to follow the pattern of natural progression of moving down the page is interrupted by the need for the reader to understand and make sense of the presented non sequitur, then the reading pattern becomes disrupted.

The reader finds them self at an awkward pause, and their subsequent approach of the rest of the text will likely be altered, either by reading slower and more carefully to try and avoid further confusion, or faster and less thoroughly if the disturbance was perceived as an annoyance; or they might even abandon the text if the disruption of their reading pattern is considered to be too disturbing to their established process of reading. The response elicited is unpredictable; the handshake induction is most effective when performed by a trained hypnotherapist who can lead the subject from the point of the disruption into a state of trance through suggestion or presence. This again echoes the shortcomings of using hypnotic induction in a textual form; without the ability for the text to adapt to the reader, the effects it will have and the response it will elicit become difficult to predict from person to person.

### 3.4 The Meta Model

The Meta Model in NLP is a set of methods and approaches that contrast with those of the Milton Model. Whereas the Milton Model focuses on the use of intentionally ambiguous language, the Meta Model instead relies on clear and pragmatic language. It is modelled on the language patterns used by Virginia Satir

and Fritz Perls in Gestalt therapy and is thus an approach used largely for therapeutic applications and effective communication (Bavister and Vickers, 2010).

The Meta Model has a basis (Bandler and Grinder, 1976) in the concept of transformational grammar proposed by Noam Chomsky in his book, *Syntactic Structures*, which hypothesises that language has two levels of representation: deep structure and surface structure (Chomsky, 2002).

In NLP, this concept of deep structure is referred as an 'internal representation' of the experience of the mind on a neurological and unconscious level. The opposed surface structure of what is actually said is considered to be a vastly reduced version of the deeper internal representation. According to the Meta Model, the translation from internal representation (deep structure) to actualised and expressible language (surface structure) is a process that undergoes three elements or 'filters' which affect how effective a representation is made between inner and outer language.

These three processes or 'filters' are deletion, distortion and generalisation and are as follows (Bavister and Vickers, 2010: 167):

Generalization is the process by which elements or pieces of a person's model become detached from their original experience and come to represent the entire category of which the experience is an example.

Deletion is a process by which we selectively pay attention to certain dimensions of our experience and exclude others. For example, the ability that people have to filter out or exclude all other sound in a room full of people talking in order to listen to one particular person's voice.

Distortion is the process which allows us to make shifts in our experience of sensory data. Fantasy, for example, allows us to prepare for experiences which we may have before they occur. People will distort present reality

when rehearsing a speech which they will later present.

Keeping these perceptual filters in mind, the Meta Model seeks to clarify generalisation, challenge linguistic distortion, and recover deleted information occurring in language. This is achieved through a heuristic procedure of evaluating a subject's internal representation and responding with an appropriate category of questions that prompt the subject to re-evaluate and correct any internal misrepresentation.

Due to the fact that the Meta Model is focused on dealing with personal patterns of language and is designed to function on a therapeutic level, this paper does not focus on applying a direct use of its methods of dealing with generalisation, distortion and deletion in the creative portion of the project. However, understanding these governing principles of interrelation between internal representation and external representation and how the Meta Model deals with correcting errors that occur in this interaction offers a deep insight into what constitutes effective communication. With these filters in mind, it is easier to compose the kind of 'artfully vague' language that is effective in the Milton Model and, alternatively, to know how to do the opposite and come up with language that is pragmatic and clear when effective communication is the goal. It is because of this that the Milton Model and Meta Model are two different sides of the same coin and the key to effectively using one is to understand both.

### 3.5 Chunking

In NLP, "chunking" falls under the Meta Program of General vs. Specific, referring to the hierarchy of ideas. It is a process of focusing on either details and specifics (referred to as chunking down) or a process of shifting focus to a level of conceptualisations and abstractions (referred to as chunking up.) Chunking is generally used for creating rapport between two individuals by reframing their

focus to a mutual level of chunking so that they are both viewing a situation from a similar hierarchical perspective.

With regard to the size of “chunk” of information that people prefer when thinking, communicating, learning, etc. we generally move from one of two basic positions, with a third position taking a lesser role. Deductive thinkers start globally and move downward, inductive thinkers start specifically and with the details and move upward, and abductive thinkers use metaphors and analogies to think 'on the side' (Hall and Bodenhammer, 1997).

Within the creative piece, the most notable example of this process of chunking being applied is in the narrators recounting of a visit to the zoo with his niece and nephew from (pages XXXVII to XLI) where the ensuing dialogue-heavy section of the piece is conveyed in the form of a stage script. The characters of the narrator and Jack enter into an argument over why the zebras have stripes which devolves into a stubborn contest of seeing who can outlast the other in the “why” game; Jack repeatedly questions his uncle who in turn keeps answering in more generalised ways.

Jack's proposed answer as to why the zebra has stripes (“zebras have stripes because zebras have stripes,”) stems from a metaphysical standpoint. The Narrator does not understand this viewpoint at first because they are approaching the situation from different 'chunk' levels. As the Narrator continues to answer Jack's prompts of “why” by chunking upwards in an increasingly generalised way, he eventually reaches the conundrum of not being able to answer the ultimate existential question: “Why does the universe exist?” Not being able to chunk up any further, he is resigned to the conclusion that ‘the universe exists simply because the universe exists’ — reflecting upon Jack’s hypothesis on the zebra’s stripes.

Chunking upwards, that is, generalising to an extreme appears to always lead to the dead end of questioning the purpose of existence. This abstraction resonates well within the creative piece; however, chunking to the extreme may not be so relevant in other texts and if the writer chooses to employ this technique, then careful consideration should be given as to how many levels of chunking are necessary. Chunking down can be similarly useful if the intention of the text is to inundate the reader in details and thus cause them to lose focus of larger concepts in the piece.

## Chapter 4: Innovative Writing Strategies

### 4.1 Writing Strategies

Working experimentally within a set theoretical framework was a challenge which required the development of a process of approaching the writing in a way to allow for innovative means of research and the manifestation of unforeseen writing techniques. As mentioned above in the challenges of applying NLP and hypnotic techniques in written form, the need for the writing to be able to adapt to the reader made the notion of a formulaic approach seem impractical; another means of deriving a use from the NLP and hypnotic approaches had to be developed.

Therefore, I considered developing a heuristic approach for proceeding with the project. Each NLP technique and hypnotic approach that was considered had to first be studied within context of its original use and therapeutic practice so as to understand the underlining linguistic principles behind its function. Once this was done, the techniques and approaches had to be liberated, separating them from their intended use and stripping them of context so that the underlying linguistic devices could be put to use in a written and poetic form.

Separating the techniques and approaches from their intended meaning and use was a good first step to take. However, at that point in the project, a central theme or sense of narrative approach within which to incorporate them had not been developed yet. Consequently, I found that appropriating the resulting linguistic devices without the frame of some background context became a nebulous exercise. The very nature of the manipulative devices involved in these approaches begged for a contextual frame within which to be

used. In light of this, I considered the options and directions in which I could proceed and decided to settle upon framing the techniques within a loosely constructed context of a pathological liar as a narrator with a central theme of duplicity and dishonesty. This frame was adopted tentatively, and close attention was paid to not forcing the adapted techniques and approaches to conform to its standards, but focusing rather on the inverse: allowing the techniques and approaches to warp the narrative frame to better suit their needs. This procedure of emphasizing the linguistic techniques at the expense of story resulted in a nonlinear and rambling narrative which catered for even further breadth of subject material for the NLP and hypnotic approaches to use.

Developing a heuristic approach to the writing required considering the influence of existing innovative writing strategies in already developed fields such as: Ergodic literature, Oulipo, Language poetry, Concrete poetry and Metafiction. Considering these and other possible fields of experimental writing as potential adjuncts for the manipulative linguistic techniques developed again raised concerns of unintentionally forcing the approaches to conform to an already established written practice. Choosing to specialise in only one of these already established fields would be limiting to the experimental nature of the project, especially since the outcome of the project was still unpredictable. The heuristic approach developed had to allow for the writing to develop its own style.

Naturally, completely eliminating the interference from other established writing styles is impossible; other forms of innovative writing which I had studied would inevitably influence the writing on either a conscious or unconscious level. And completely excluding the influence of other writing styles would be counterproductive as it would mean disregarding any beneficial insight and direction they have to offer. A right balance had to be struck, allowing the writing to freely move in and out of other fields as it required without being mired in only one, while at the same time not applying any restricting expectations on it to conform to any of them. This resulting juxtaposition of different forms of

innovative writing gives the creative piece a latitude of varying techniques within which to experiment.

#### 4.2 Ergodic Literature

Of this medley of innovative writing practices, Ergodic literature played a considerable role within the piece. As described above in the chapter on Erickson's handshake induction, ergodic literature elicits the use of 'nontrivial effort' from the reader to traverse and understand the text. The practice has largely been applied in hypertextual and digital forms (Aarseth, 1997), but there are examples of Ergodic literature being put to use in more traditional mediums.

*House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski is notable in its use of Ergodic presentation (2000). The novel employs a disorienting style through its peculiar layout, using the page in unusual ways to deliver text that is abnormal and performative in nature and at points, resembles other innovative writing techniques such as concrete poetry.

This minimal definition of Ergodic literature involving writing which requires nontrivial effort to be exercised by the reader can be extended to many other types of innovative writing. Aarseth's definition of Ergodic literature placing extranoematic responsibilities on the reader is usually interpreted as the imposition of nontrivial effort in a physical sense of the notion: such as requiring the reader to tilt their head, readjust the text, solve a puzzle, squint or any kind of physical response (beside the trivial kind of turning a page) to be undertaken in order to read the text. However, the implication of placing extranoematic responsibilities does not limit these nontrivial efforts to the realm of physical action. Certain forms of innovative writing can require the reader to engage in cognition that falls outside the confines of regular reading patterns in order to understand them; these extranoematic cognitive processes can also be classified as eliciting nontrivial effort from the reader.

Ergo, many innovative writing styles can technically fall under the Ergodic label. The tendency of innovative writing fields such as Oulipo, Language poetry or even concrete poetry to impose extranoematic responsibilities on a reader – or at least, a reader unfamiliar with their techniques – meets this classification of nontrivial effort that defines Ergodic writing.

With this hypothesis in mind, I decided to proceed with the creative piece with the provisional notion of adhering to an Ergodic approach since it would allow for the effective amalgamation and experimentation with varying innovative techniques. Ergodic writing is also conducive to the aims of the project in that it allows the freedom to experiment with form and structure in ways that are not common or acceptable in conventional prose. Also, with the aim of the project to experiment with a variety of different NLP techniques and hypnotic approaches, the writing needs to have the freedom to be unrestricted by expectations of presentation, length and sequential coherence; an Ergodic approach to writing was the most accommodating for these requirements.

#### 4.3 Absurdism

Upon setting out on this project, I had no intention or foresight of venturing into an existential area with the subject matter. However, in hindsight of the processes and structure of the project, it seems inevitable for the piece to have come to involve prominent existential themes. From the point of its inception, the project has dealt heavily with the process of manipulation and deception. A concept that is paramount to these processes and which needs to be considered is that of truth.

Determining the nature of truth is a challenge that, depending from where you look at it, is unsolvable – especially in a research project that is centred around creative writing practices. Nevertheless, considering the concept of truth in its varying forms (relative or absolute; subjective or objective) is

essential for comprehending and utilising manipulative practices in the piece in a convincing way. However, the project does not limit itself to subscribing to any certain belief pattern regarding the nature of truth; it chooses instead to move within a broader scope of the subject that is superficial but more approachable. What stems from this existential consideration however, is a notion that plays a much more prominent role within the project: Absurdism.

At this point it is necessary to distinguish between the potential for ambiguity to arise through the use the term 'absurd.' In philosophy, 'the Absurd' refers to the disharmony that arises out of the human tendency to search for inherent value and meaning in life in a meaningless universe (Camus, 2012); this search, according to Absurdist philosophical ideology is impossible to satisfy on a human level as all efforts to do so are destined to fail (Kierkegaard, 2006) – note, that the Absurd does not refer to a “logical impossibility” but a “human impossibility.”

The following paragraphs in this sub-chapter are going to take a philosophical turn. However, this diversion will help to understand and analyse Absurdist fiction by considering it in context of the existential ideals from which it springs.

Works such as Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1969) or Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1943) are examples of Absurdist fiction in which the story focuses on characters who find themselves in situations that parallel the perplexing and unsolvable philosophical viewpoint of being unable to discern any inherent purpose in life.

This concept of Absurdism turned out to play a large thematic role within the creative piece of this research project. As mentioned already, this was quite an unexpected eventuality that arose from the experimental structure of the piece, and the fact that NLP has largely been designed as a means of psychological therapy; therapy in which the subject of dealing with existential

crises naturally comes up. This Absurdist theme that came to be within the creative piece aided in resolving the peculiar predicament of needing a semblance of story within the narrative while simultaneously avoiding the limitations of conventional story telling. The theme turned out to resonate very well with the project and some of the NLP techniques put to use. The Chunking technique as described above (chapter 3.5) very obviously references the Absurdist conundrum by chunking upwards to query the meaning of existence. However, there are subtler references to Absurdist ideology within the piece. For example, the use of the colour red in relation to the word 'black.'

From the very early pages of the piece, the word black stands out in a very noticeable way, being presented in bold font and a red colour. The meaning for this is not apparent nor does it become any clearer with each subsequent iteration. The word 'black' repeats multiple times and in different contexts and each time it conforms to the same format of appearing red. This pattern is very obvious to the reader and even in cases where the word 'black' is not complete or fully spelled out ("Mr B." from pages XIII, XIV and "B" on page XXXI) it still appears in red – in reference to meaning conveyed in Deep Structure. This consistency in portraying the word 'black' the same way throughout the text seems premeditated and thought out. Logic would say that there should be a reason for such an odd persistence of presentation to exist within the piece and the reader should naturally feel that there is a purpose to the red writing and that it is ultimately leading towards something purposeful; this is not the case. The purpose of the red-black is to parallel the purposelessness of "the Absurd."

The contradictory nature of the above statement portrays an irony that is reflective of the paradox of the Absurd. In the case of red-black above, the intention is to demonstrate or parallel the Absurdist notion of purposelessness and lack of inherent meaning. This is arguably a successful portrayal of Absurdist principles, however, from the context of actually conveying the purposelessness that is the Absurd, it is situationally self-defeating; the mere intention to relay a

sense of purposelessness is inherently purposeful and therefore undermines the nature of the exercise. Here we can argue that the point of Absurdist fiction is not to exist as a simulacrum of “the Absurd,” but rather to relate the disharmony it can cause in people via allegorical means. Absurdist fiction isn't intended to be a direct representation of the philosophical Absurd as it relates to finding meaning in life and not meaning in the text. However, this does raise an interesting question whether a text or work of art is actually capable of existing as a direct representation of the Absurd – in the sense of the text being purposeless and lacking inherent meaning. For the purposes of this line of thought, we shall consider the philosophical Absurd in a broader sense, relating to the inability of finding meaning within a specific contextual frame.

In linguistics, meaning is what the source or sender expresses, communicates, or conveys in their message to the observer or receiver, and what the receiver infers from the current context (Sanchez, 2012). According to this definition, meaning is therefore a subjective process which entails cognitive function in order to create a language based interpretation of the information or concepts being communicated. Therefore, meaning is intrinsically tied to cognitive processes. According to this linguistic definition, we can propose the converse that “*meaninglessness*” is counter-cognitive. Considering that our notion of the Absurd is focussed on the inability to find meaning, we can hypothesise that this state of *meaninglessness* is fundamental to the Absurd. Note that this distinction of *meaningless* is different to the regular expression of the lack of significance or context.

With these definitions of meaning and *meaninglessness*, we can consider the implications that Derrida's conjecture of everything existing as part of the text (1998: 163) has on the ability for a text to lack inherent meaning. The concept of this universal frame implies that the reader will be ever conscious of the metatextuality of the text; this subsequently informs the reader that there is an inherent meaning attached to the text since it came out of conscious,

cognitive effort.

In this context, meaning can be inferred from any conscious action on the part of the writer. Thus, a *meaningless* text cannot arise from premeditated or conscious means. Overcoming this by resorting to randomly generated text or Oulipian constructs is equally futile since even though the text produced is left to chance, the conscious act of creating or setting these generative processes in motion comes with intent attached and implies meaning; this seems to be the case with all artificial constructs. Even if a text were to be produced as an unintended outcome from an artificial process that had no intention of producing said text, it would still have the meaning of “unintended outcome” attached to it.

We can consider a naturally occurring entity as a possible example for conveying *meaninglessness*. For an example of something that arises without intent, picture the example of an arrangement of autumn leaves floating on the surface of a pond. If we ignore the metaphysical idea of cause and effect that could offer some explanation to the presence of the leaves and focus instead only on their chaotic composition atop the water as if they are an artwork, we might conclude that there is no method or conscious thought behind their arrangement; thus, coupled with the fact that there is no thinking “artist” behind this composition, can it therefore be said that this could be an example of a *meaningless* piece of art? Unfortunately, no; under the assumption that there is no method to their madness, we can say they are meaningless, but only in the sense that they lack significance.

The problem is that this form of meaninglessness is a meaningful concept. We understand that the definition of meaning implies cognitive comprehension. In general, when we call something “meaningless” we are implying the cognitive state of it bearing no logical significance. In this way, when we try to process something that lacks meaning, either because we are viewing it out of context or because of distortion in the process of it being communicated, we are attaching

the meaning of “meaninglessness” to it which is different to the philosophically Absurd interpretation of *meaninglessness*. The subjective act of cognitive perception is inseparable from the act of creating and discerning meaning. True *meaninglessness* can only arise out of an entity that does not or cannot incite linguistic or cognitive processing. Therefore, even if we were in theory to find an example of a *meaningless* text that resembles this philosophically Absurdist nature, it would result in one of two scenarios: we would either automatically collapse the Absurd to a meaningful state by processing it cognitively, or we would simply be incapable of processing or even perceiving it; a cognitive nothingness.

If *meaninglessness* can exist only in the form of a void in human perception and thinking, then “true Absurdist art” becomes a logical impossibility. As a result, it would appear that Absurdist texts can only really hint at *meaninglessness* without ever really coming close to its elusive and paradoxical nature: the absence of thought. This view of the Absurd, seems to parallel certain lines of thought that appear in Zen Buddhism, specifically, the inability to comprehend intellectually or rationally the experience of 'satori' (also called 'kensho,') a state of enlightenment which – to simplify its religious associations – is designed to get the subject in a state of mind that is focused purely via passive perception of their surroundings without attaching meaning or interpretation to the experience through means of cognitive processing (Suzuki, 2010). If such a state were achievable, it would perhaps offer a better appreciation for the Absurd. Note, I refrain from using the term “better understanding of the Absurd” as in this context it would be like saying “understanding the un-understandable.”

This analysis of the nature of meaning and the philosophical Absurd may be a good intellectual exercise, however, it doesn't seem to offer much for the pragmatist. If the Absurd is an unapproachable amorphous concept that cannot be presented through linguistic means, then what does that say about the value

of existing Absurdist fiction? True understanding of the Absurd may be a matter that is beyond cognitive capability, but that hasn't stopped us from working on an intellectual level to analyse its implications. In fact, much Absurdist fiction deals in the way that characters respond to the uncertainty and doubt that arise from living in a “meaningless” universe. This is arguably more important and more human than trying to grapple with the inconceivable.

However, before we rule out the possibility that Absurdist fiction can serve as a representation for the *meaningless* nature of the Absurd, one should consider the contradictory nature involved in making such a statement. The inability to create truly Absurdist art is itself an Absurd scenario, paralleling mankind's inability to find inherent meaning in life. To try represent the absurd is like trying to express the inexpressible; simply attempting to do so is contradictory to the process and self-defeating to the nature of Absurd. It is for this reason that Absurdist fiction fails at representing the Absurd; and ironically, it is for this reason that it succeeds at representing the Absurd. To express this paradox in simpler terms:

The nature of the Absurd cannot be fully represented in Absurdist art therefore, the attempts of Absurdist art to do so are ultimately Absurd in nature.

Absurdist works succeeds at indirectly representing the nature of the Absurd because they are incapable by definition of doing so. This is apparent circular reasoning, however, the nature of the Absurd is so far beyond the confines of rational, logical thought that we have to resort to such hypothetical patterns of thinking. The nature of the Absurd can thus to some degree be represented in art if we assume the Absurd exists in a state that resembles the above quasi-quantum superposition. In such a paradigm, a work succeeds at being truly Absurdist because it fails at being truly Absurdist. Therefore, our inherent inability to express the Absurd is a closer representation of the true nature of the Absurd than the intended expression.

In this way, the creative piece of the project can be said to contain an Absurdist theme because of the issues of meaning and purpose that it raises indirectly. And to some theoretical degree, it is also a representation of the Absurd; it is not close to the Absurd because it is building up to the point that it's building up to nothing, but rather that it tries to do so even though it is by definition incapable of representing the true nature of the Absurd.

#### 4.4 Metafiction

Meta-fiction and meta-narrative is a technique which in the context of the creative piece can work in manipulative ways. As stated above in the analysis of the Ericksonian handshake induction, the disruption of established patterns of behaviour has a manipulative effect on the subject. In the case of meta-fiction however, the pattern disruption occurs not only in the reader, but in the writer and in the text itself. If the aim of fiction is to cause the suspension of disbelief then meta-fiction can appear contradictory and self-defeating. In the short story *The Aleph* by Jorge Luis Borges, the narrative approaches a climactic point as it seems to become 'self-aware' by addressing the reader:

I saw the Aleph from every point and angle, and in the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth; I saw my own face and my own bowels; I saw your face (1949).

The above act of acknowledging the reader of the text through the text is self-reflective and can serve the narrative in several positive ways. However, it can also be argued that in fiction this kind of self-reference can result in the collapse of the narrative.

Whether a text can even exist outside of any external framing is debatable. It can be argued that a text is unable to exist out of context to the rest of reality since all cognition and linguistics that a reader uses to approach the text is inherently based on their prior (and arguably future as they revisit the

text) experiences. Thus to disengage with the reality that the reader knows so as to approach the text without context is impossible. According to this logic, the text has to exist in relation to all knowledge that the reader possesses, including the knowledge and awareness that the text exists as a text. Meta-fiction directly acknowledges itself as a literary device, but according to the above reasoning, all works of fiction are subject to external frames.

When fiction is overtly aware of itself and breaks the fourth wall, it can in turn cause the reader to become aware of several suppositions: that the narrative exists as a text and that the text therefore has an author. These have possible implications for the way in which the reader perceives and approaches the text. The supposition that the narrative exists as a text brings with it the concept that the writing is a construct that arises out of intention and is likely to have some inherent meaning or objective behind its existence. Within the creative piece of this project, this realisation exposes the artifice of the text and extends the reader's attention to be mindful of any manipulative linguistic devices being used that might otherwise work in subversive ways. The presupposition that there is an author responsible for the text can serve as a reminder to the reader to consider the implicit agendas behind the text. Thus, the use of a meta-textual approach in the creative piece serves to create an atmosphere of overt duplicity as a means to expose the manipulative workings of the NLP and hypnotic approaches put to use.

Within the piece, the narrator makes the contradictory statement that he always lies. The logical paradox of the statement is intended to undermine the credibility of the narrator; this is quite an obvious tactic which the reader is likely to see through. However, operating under this meta-textual frame, the reader has the ability to fact-check all that is being said. In fact, the narrator challenges the reader to do so (page XXXV) when he says:

You'd think that thanks to this new age of the internet and unlimited

information at our fingertips, people like me would find it increasingly harder to get away with this kind of deception.

Considering this frame of metafiction, the reader really does have the ability to look up anything said in the piece and clarify the situation. This again is referenced earlier in the piece (page IX) when the narrator claims to Google Buzz Aldrin.

#### 4.5 Framing

Framing plays a significant role in the creative piece as a literary technique and a manipulative tool. The creative piece is comprised of multiple frames which are designed to interact with and contradict one another.

The narrator is a dominant and enduring frame. Contradictory in nature, the frame of a self-proclaimed pathological liar is overtly manipulative. Statements such as “always remember that I'm always lying to you” become paradoxes, compounded by the claim that the person making them is not a credible source of information. This breeds an uncertainty throughout the text and challenges the reader with having to decide what in the text is sincere and what is not. As a result of this, the entirety of the text should fall under constant scrutiny. This atmosphere of distrust permeates the piece, causing the reader to second guess what is written.

In addition, the frame of the unreliable narrator is preceded by and contained within another frame. This frame is established by the warning on the first page:

“Warning:

“This is an utilisation of various persuasive, rhetoric and neuro-linguistic-programming techniques designed to influence the reader. In fact, this warning itself acts as a suggestion upon the reader and should come with a warning of its own; ad infinitum.” (page I)

While this warning may appear to be outside the intended text of the piece, it still falls very much within the bounds of the reader's attention and establishes the motive of the piece. In fact, this established frame takes precedence over all subsequent frames since it appears to be outside of the main body of text. This has a pervading effect on everything that follows, especially when coupled with the frame of the unreliable narrator. This frame also enforces the meta-textual frame discussed in the above sub-chapter.

A recurring set of frames appear in the form of quotations from external sources such as extracts from essays. These frames are presented in a form seeming to reference credible sources. However, none of them are factually accurate; every quote is either fictitious or has been grossly altered beyond its original form. The only quote that bears a slight semblance of accuracy is the first one (page III) attributed to Einstein: "Black holes are where God divided by zero." However, even this quote is deceptive as it does not originate from Einstein, but instead from the comedian Steven Wright. However, unless the reader is actively fact checking every quote from the start, it is possible that they would accept the supposed legitimacy of these quotes at face value. This is not an unlikely scenario as the first quotes presented to the reader seem to carry a certain weight, especially when attributed to an authority such as Albert Einstein. The purpose of starting with a seemingly accurate quote is to condition the reader; by portraying quotes which appear to be plausible at the beginning of the piece, any quotes that follow are likely to undergo less scrutiny. Unless the reader is expecting inconsistency, it is possible they will assume a quote following a credible quote is likely to be credible as well.

This instinct to assume a continuity of credibility is reflected (page X) by the falsified quote by Voltaire:

A witty quote attests to the very essence of proof. Nothing rings truer than a simple anecdote and another man's credibility.

As opposed to the original by Voltaire: “A witty saying proves nothing.” This serves as a satirical reference to the power that comes with operating under the frame of authority.

Another frame that has to be acknowledged in the piece is a metatextual one which relates to Derrida's notion that everything is text. This is the frame that the text ultimately exists in the form of a creative written piece that is an adjunct to the Masters by research project titled “Experimental Writing: Neuro-Linguistic Programming Techniques in Innovative Writing.” This frame is so fundamental to the piece that the text simply cannot exist without it; this frame influences the way the reader approaches and, even more importantly, the way the author creates the text. This notion is playfully referenced in the creative piece through the line:

“Theliehereisthatlonlyexistintheformofintellectualproperty, [ ]” (page XXXVII)

(“The lie here is that I only exist in the form of intellectual property,” without the omission of the spaces.)

#### 4.5 Meta Programs – Self vs. Other

Meta Programs were briefly mentioned above (chapter 2.2) in the discussion of challenges concerning the use of NLP and hypnotic approaches in writing. They are context specific unconscious filters which tend to work in a binary manner. There are over 60 different Meta Programs that have been identified (Bavister and Vickers, 2010), but some of the most used ones include: Internal vs. External, Self vs. Other, General vs. Specific, Towards vs. Away From, Options vs. Procedures and Matching vs. Mismatching. Meta Programs unconsciously help people to determine what to pay attention to.

[Meta Programs] are how we formulate, maintain or break generalizations through time. They are how we create generalizations, establish a sense

of coherence and maintain it through time. Meta Programs give quality to our experience, and they are the patterns that determine our interest and attention (James and Woodsmall, 1988: 92).

As mentioned before in the challenges of applying NLP in text, Meta Programs are one such technique that rely on calibration of the subject. Through observation of the language patterns that a subject uses, and an understanding of which Meta Programs they use, the correct approach can be applied to improve the effectiveness of communication. For example, in communicating with someone who within the certain context operates under the “General” Meta Program, structuring the language pattern we use to approach the text from a more general viewpoint would comply with their internal filter and would in theory cause them to pay more attention to what is being presented (Bavister and Vickers, 2010); inversely, using language patterns that are tailored to specifics would have the opposite effect and are likely to cause the person to regard the same concepts being presented in a less valuable way.

Due to the fact that Meta Programs are context-specific and using them correctly requires a degree of adaptability and intercommunication between the text and reader, they were difficult to incorporate into the creative piece. However, I was able to derive an interesting use out of the “Self vs. Other” Meta Program. The Meta Programs of Self and Other are fundamental in evaluating the way in which people relate to others. Self-oriented people are less likely to empathise with others and instead are more likely to focus on the content of what is being said, where as Other-oriented people tend to easily build rapport with others (Hall, 2000).

These are not binary filters and people can switch between Self and Other in different contexts and these filters can vary in degree of intensity; extreme cases of being Self or Other oriented are rare, but most people have a definite leaning towards one or the other. Knowing which of these meta programs a

person utilises can improve the way in which one communicates with them, however, the ability to determine which Meta Program is dominant in a reader and adapt to that is an impractical feat in the context of this project. Instead, the implications of people responding differently to one another depending on which of these filters they are operating under can be considered within a text. This is explored in the creative piece through the use of different narrative modes.

The creative piece is divided into two distinct sections which approach the prose in different narrative modes while still assuming the same narrative character. The second half of the piece is written in a conventional first-person mode where the character of the narrator is delivering the text from a personal point of view. The use of “I,” “me” and “my” are common in this part of the narrative. The first half of the piece is quite different; the character of the narrator is the same but it is written from a second-person point of perspective; the word “you” is used in place of “I.”

This mode of second-person narration employed in the creative piece was created in a formulaic manner and subsequently reads with a distinct jarring style. This first half of the prose-focused piece was initially written in a first-person narrative mode in the same way that the latter half of the piece is presented, however, it was then transformed into second-person in an almost primitive manner: instead of translating the writing by following the rules of correct syntax and grammar, an Oulipian approach was developed and strictly adhered to. The rules of this transformation are as follows:

1. Refrain from altering the grammatical surface structure of the text.
2. Within the original text, replace every first-person pronoun with its corresponding second-person pronoun i.e. Replace “I” and “me” with “you,” and “my” with “your.”
3. In the original text, replace every second-person pronoun with a corresponding collective pronoun i.e. “you” becomes “us” or “we.”

In this way, a sentence such as (page IV), “So with that out of the way, let me tell you a bit about myself,” becomes “So with that out of the way, let you tell us a bit about yourself.” This process results in a style of language that is often strange and inharmonious which is contrasted by the simple, straightforward style of the latter half of the piece.

The reasoning behind choosing to alter the writing in this way stems from the Self vs. Other Meta Program. If it is true that some people respond better to language that is in line with their mode of linguistic processing, then in theory, a reader should experience a contrast in the relatability of the two different narrative styles. For the reader that is mostly Self-oriented, the first half of the piece might be a more engaging read as the use of the “you”'s of the second-person narrative could be interpreted as directly addressing the reader. Inversely, a reader whose focus is Other-oriented could find the latter half of the prose to be more engaging to them because of their tendency to emphasize and focus on the needs and experiences of others over themselves.

## Conclusion

The practice-led research project examines the challenges of adapting NLP techniques and hypnotic approaches in experimental writing. Although the linguistic devices derived from doing so are a considerable departure from their initial designated use, they serve the creative piece of writing effectively and provide an extensive theoretical framework in which to work. The linguistic constructs derived from the NLP techniques seemed to display an affinity towards one another and in some cases the use of adaptation of one hypnotic approach would start to work in ways which resembled the workings of a different technique, thus invoking a previously unintended use of other hypnotic approaches, causing the techniques to play off one another in expanded ways. In context of the creative piece, the techniques employed seemed to reinforce one another, creating further extensions of the hypnotic principles they are based on.

The involvement of Absurdist fiction and existential reasoning was an unexpected outcome of this research project. The analysis of the philosophical principles that the genre addresses presents an unanticipated insight into the contradictory nature of Absurdist fiction and proposes a possible – if paradoxical – solution to quieten the logical dilemma that accompanies the literary genre.

The Ergodic and innovative approach to the writing was paramount to the experimental nature of the project. The freedom to work outside the restricting confines of conventional styles allowed for the hypnotic techniques to be put to use with few preconceptions so that their linguistic devices could be deconstructed and reconstructed in an exploratory manner.

mFurther study within this field should consider the use of interactive media such as hypertext, games and other forms of media which can allow for the kind of intercommunication between the reader and text that is fundamental to hypnotic practices.

Following a heuristically based approach of adapting the NLP techniques and hypnotic patterns was conducive to the experimental and innovative element of the project. However, this also resulted in the research project taking on a qualitative approach which allows for the hypnotic techniques to be analysed and put to use in a generalised way, without producing many quantitative results or a list of specific or formulaic linguistic structures that can be directly put to use in other works. This was an expected and justifiable compromise as the project's focus is on analysing and providing insight on whether these fields can be used as a theoretical framework within experimental writing. Further research regarding hypnotic practices in creative writing could focus on a pragmatic way of extracting specific uses from the fields of NLP and hypnosis.

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Signature: 

Date: 28/10/2013