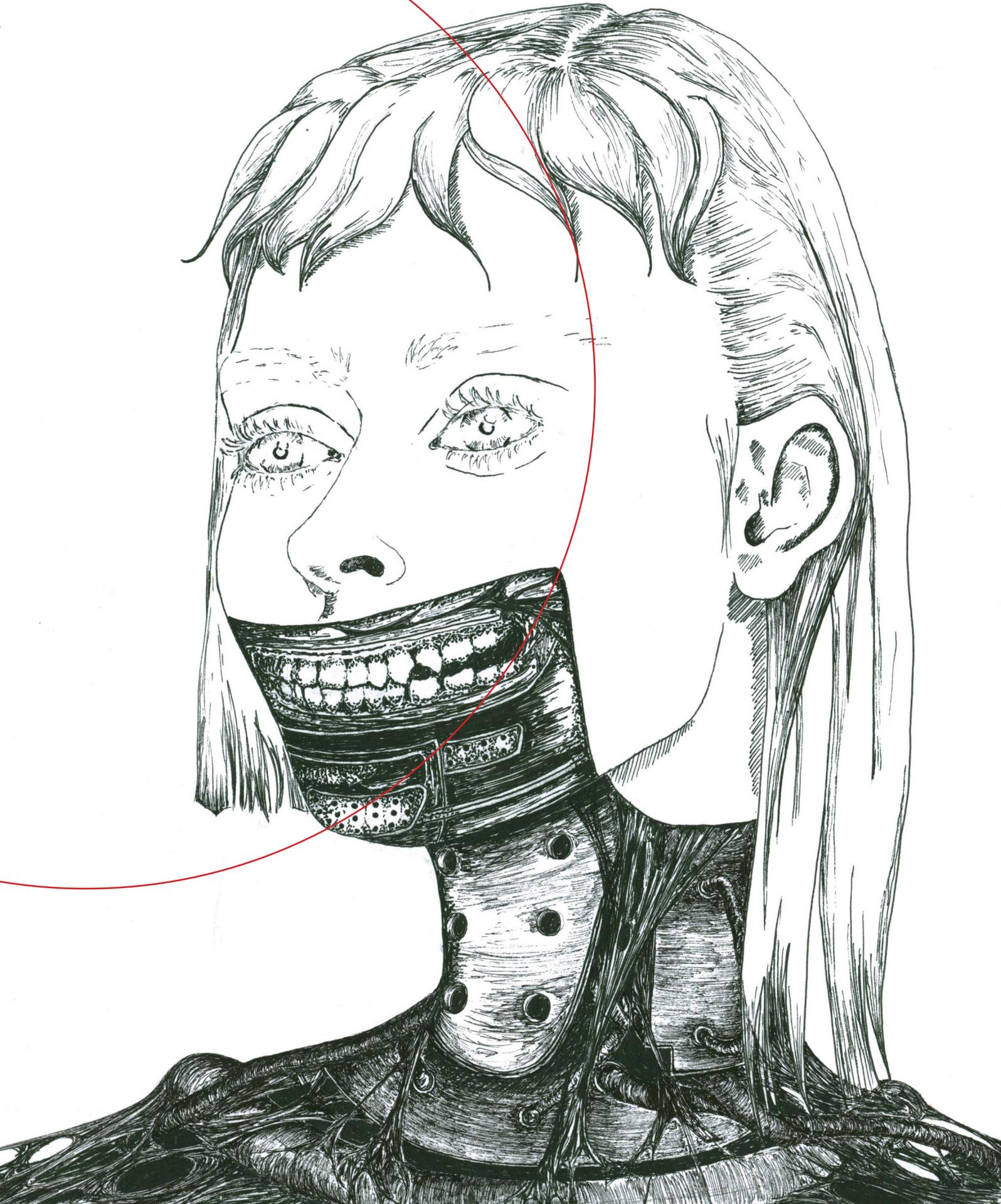


H I S T O R I A



STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS

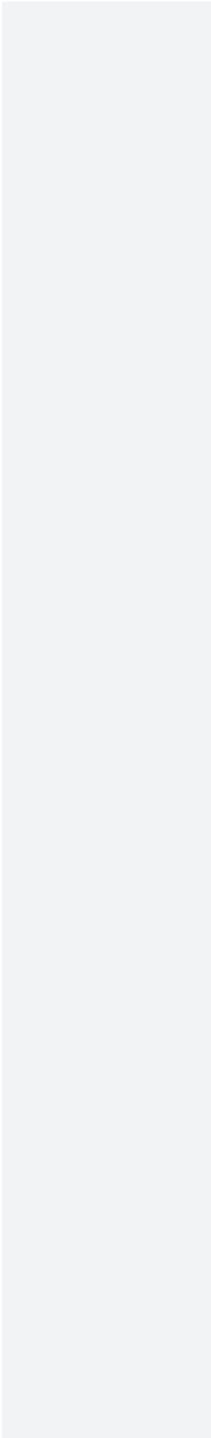
BY

ROSA-MARIA NUUTINEN

CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ARTS

(BA) FINE ART

2018



EDO

00

SESSION 2

01

SESSION 3

02

SESSION 4

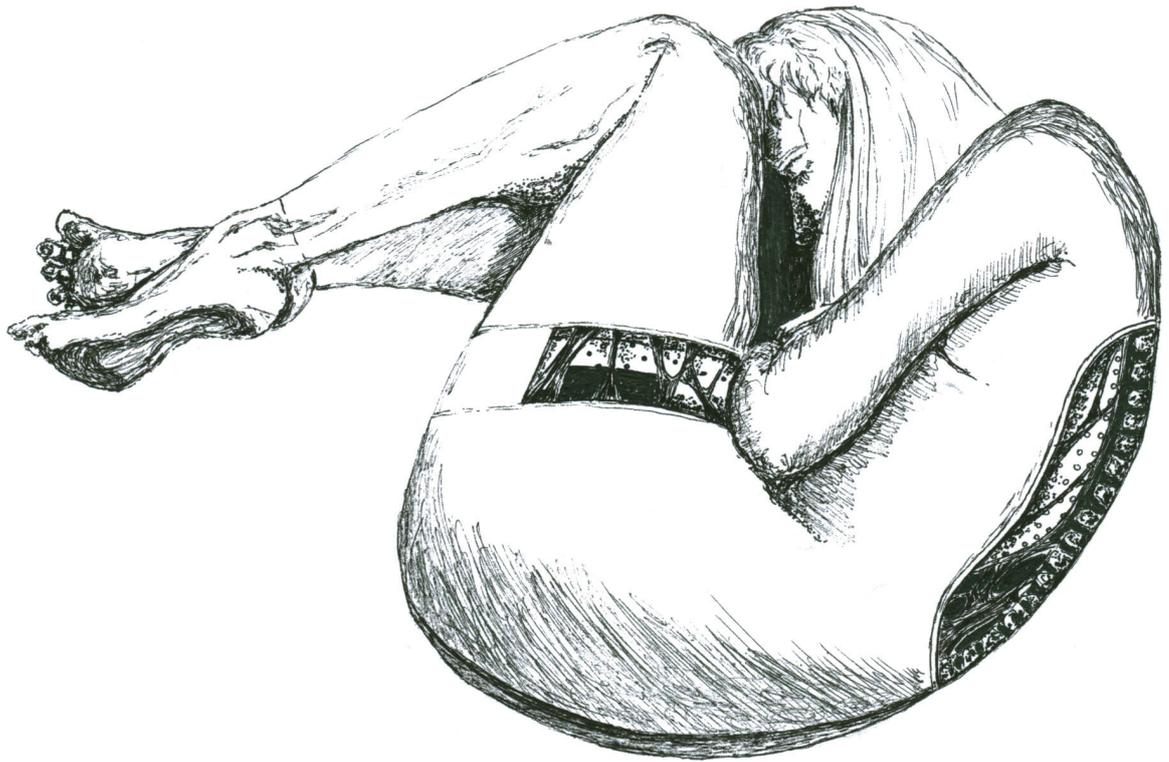
03

SESSION 5

04

FINALE

05



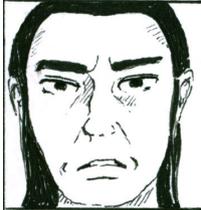
What do you hear, Edo?

Nothing but the rain, Historia.

Then get your gun, and bring the cat in.



Historia; Due to illness gave her brain to be preserved for later opportunities and gets woken 150 years later in an artificial body.
(full-cyborg)



Edo: A psychologist and theorist, who works at Delos and is Historia's personal shrink.
(partial-cyborg)



Dr. Wera: Edo's long-time friend, who worked at Westworld. Now a retired mechanic. (partial-cyborg)



Westworld: A Wild West themed park created by Robert Ford and Bernard Lowe



Delos: The company who owned Westworld, currently has the monopoly in artificial body production.



Siri: An AI, who is essential in everyday life and exists in every household.

T E R M I N O L O G Y

H U M A N

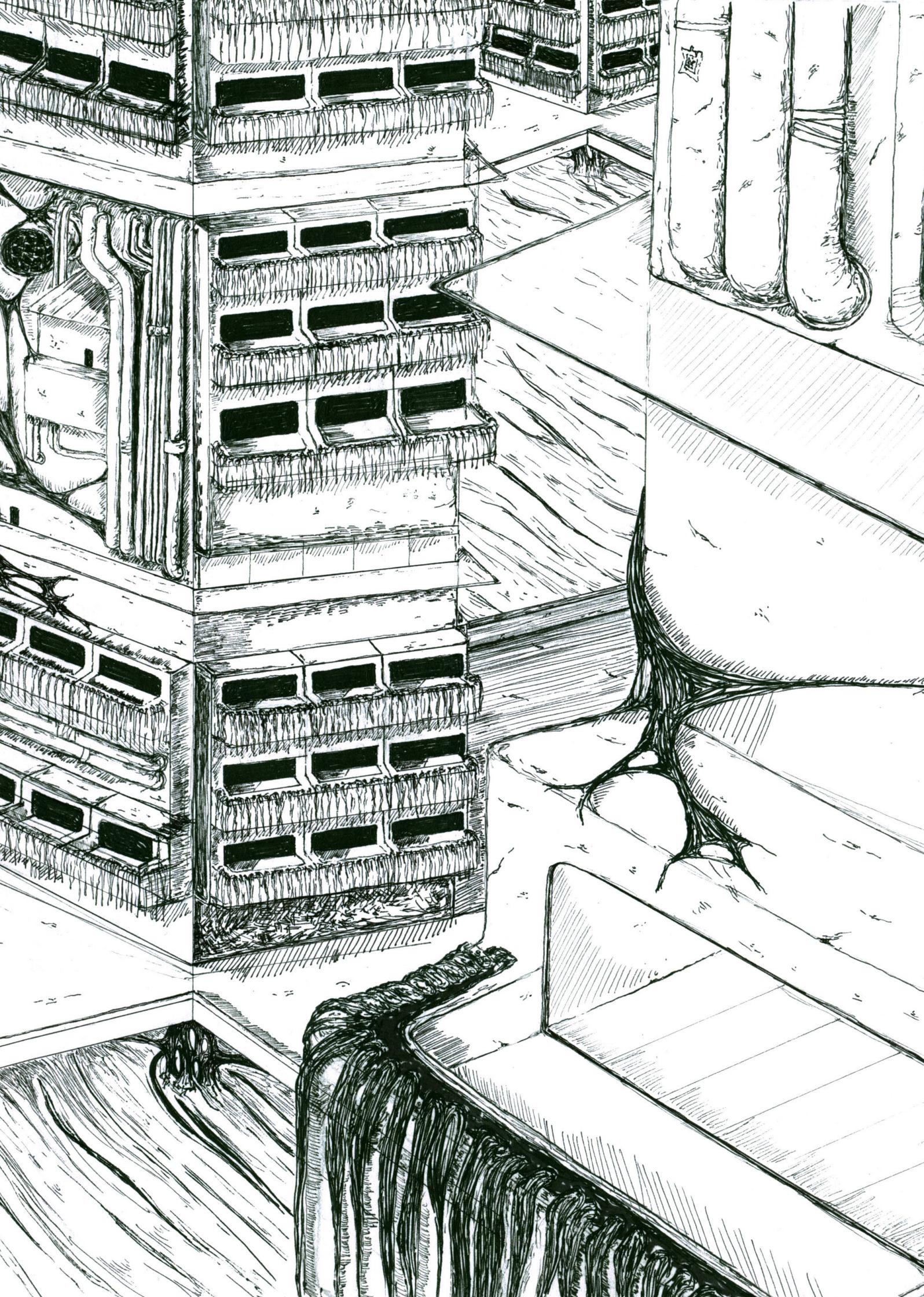
CYBORG: AN ORGANISM THAT HAS RESTORED FUNCTION OR ENHANCED ABILITIES DUE TO THE FUSION OF ARTIFICIAL COMPONENT OR TECHNOLOGY

ANDROID: A HUMANOID ROBOT OR A SYNTHETIC ORGANISM

AI: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

R O B O T

* For the reader: The footnotes are working as a supporting element for the story, thus the reader is advised to include them in to their reading experience.*



00

EDO

Good morning Edo! It's March 22nd in 2167. Steady rain throughout the day approx. 6.5mm for the whole day. Work: 4 sessions, the first one at 11am the last ending at 6pm. One message from Dr. Wera. Maintenance bill due tomorrow, there's a coffee waiting for you and have a productive day.

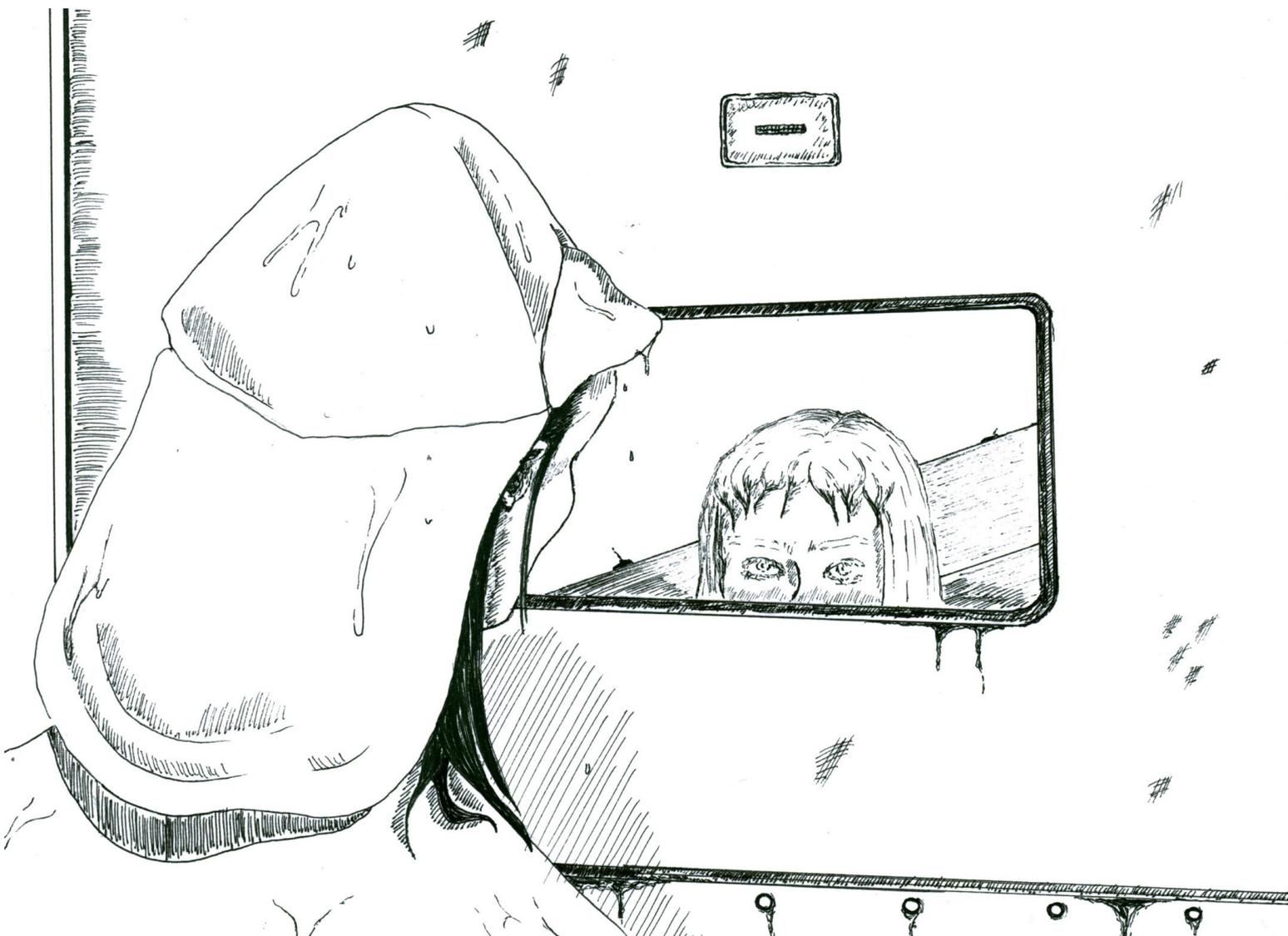
Thanks for the coffee, please pay the maintenance bill and open Wera's message. Invite her over for a coffee at some point and mention about my arms maintenance, please. Just say that there're glitches time to time.

One afternoon I was sitting on my single stool watching the grey city in front of me. The natural light was fading and Siri suggested turning the lights on. It dawned on me that the rain never stops these days; we just don't realize it because the sky is always covered with the rain's curtain. The misty rain goes on for days licking our concrete homes and watering the grass that we don't have. Sometimes I think that where are we going as I can see nothing but the rain and the endless stone buildings hovering over our dirty rivers. The lights turned on to dim-mode and a little humming started for few seconds. For a moment I thought that how nice and comfortable my cubic was and how perilous the world outside would be whether or not I decided to leave this place.

01

SESSION 2

It's 7.30pm and I'm on my way to my last client's cubic, the buildings look damp and silent while I'm driving through the city and zigzagging in the traffic. I met Historia the first time last Monday which was quite memorable; I hadn't seen her image beforehand so when an albino opened the door I was shocked.



First I thought it being a bit amusing because I'd forgotten that albinos used to exist; afterwards I thought it a shame that we don't allow these anomalies to exist. There was this certain grace within her, she had adapted to her new body really well and controlled her movements excellently but there was something piercing in her essence. It could have been her red eyes but it felt familiar, as if we'd met before.

*

'Should we begin? This is Edo and this is the 29th of March 2167 with Historia on her second session and the time is now 8.03pm. Last time we spoke about your past; you suffering from sarcoma in 2017 but choosing to prolong your life. Now you've gone through the transformation and started living with us. You've had some adaptation sessions and group meetings as well but in all how are you doing this week? I'm just going to do a quick brain scan before you start, so stay still and look past my left ear. Good, please your turn.'

'How am I doing... Well, I've been looking at people, the city, wondering how things have changed...human brains can be copied and bodies replaced, and climate change took on another gear, I see. There is this constant information flowing in and outside and although I can process information faster I feel that there're more questions because of it. Things feel disconnected but I don't know from where, maybe it's the change within me or it's the change in humans or in the nature. I'm not sure yet... and isn't it dangerous that we're capable of copying minds? I mean on a global scale it sounds quite alarming.'

'You're still getting used to your enhanced bodily functions but adapting to your new appearance shouldn't take long¹. Especially because of your organic brain there ought to be no glitches. But the problem you mentioned is called ghost-dubbing² but that's something you don't have to be worry about, it's almost impossible to accomplish.'

'How come?'

'It takes a couple of days to completely scan the brain, but to actually create another exact copy of a mind is very tricky because the original always dies in the process and the copy isn't similar to the original³. Common folk say that it's because the 'ghost'⁴ can't be copied but it's more likely

1. Referring to different studies done with VRs, where the participants' genders have been swapped, visually, and how long does the brain take to adjust to the new body image.
2. The brain is like a machine that can be broken down into neurons. In here, ghost-dubbing is a terminology used in Masamune Shirow's Ghost in the Shell media franchise (1989-on going), where the brain gets downloaded and a copy is made from the original's mind. The goal of this is to create an exact clone of the original, so that there would be two or multiple copies of the original's mind including that the original stays alive.
3. Edo is pointing out that even if the dubbing would succeed the copies would undoubtedly turn out different, after they'd gone their separate ways, because they would have different experiences, hence they wouldn't be alike. Shaviro (2016) p.81
4. The term ghost refers to Masamune Shirow's Ghost in the Shell media franchise (1989-on going), where ghost is believed to be the soul that exists together with the sense of 'I'. In Edo's and Historia's conversation the ghost is believed to be the mind's sub-conscious part that has the ability to communicate with the conscious side.

because some parts of the sub-conscious are very hard to mimic. After the original's death you've lost all the material; the normal copying process is much easier because the sub-conscious stays in the same mind.

Hacking⁵ on the other hand is problematic but it only happens in rare cases but unfortunately memories are very easily manipulated.⁶

'You don't believe in ghost then?'

'I believe that there're two parts in our minds, the conscious and the sub-conscious, but adding a third party, a soul, seems a bit farfetched and very unscientific.'

'There was something that I actually saw last night. I was on a public transportation level when I saw my model coming from the air-b, she didn't see me but it was an odd experience. Her hair and the shade of her skin were different but our faces were identical and I knew every inch of her body although I'd never met her before. I was seeing myself objectively, a person, who looked like me but at the same wasn't, like a twin or a clone. I've adapted to my body very well but at that time I remembered what it felt being in my old ill one. In her there was and wasn't a part of me and it made perfectly sense; I'm not sure what this means yet. Maybe I'm a reflection of that person and I don't really exist. Do we experience the world similarly because we've the same body and through that are we one? I can sense that there's something covering all of this and that there's something behind it, waiting to be discovered.'

'We become aware of ourselves through others as you've just experienced here it's the way we learn to perceive and along with it comes doubts⁷. You're building a new understanding of yourself and doubts are part of that process and maybe that's the underlying feeling of something to be discovered? Now, you experience the world differently because you're able to filter your stimuli⁸ faster than, for example, I can. You're a synthesis of a human and a machine, something new has been born through you. Humans understand their reality by intentions, desires and dreams⁹; and with time your feelings of yourself will settle down.'

5. Being hacked means to have an access to a person's brain and the ability to control the subject's mind eg. planting simulated experiences. Original reference from Masamune Shirow's Ghost in the Shell media franchise (1989-on going)

6. False memory is a daily psychological phenomenon, which a by-product of the brain's memory recalling system. Edo is indicating that memories are unreliable because of our false memories and how easily they are manipulated for example by pre-suppositions. When Edo met Historia the first time he was taken aback because of her appearance with her white eyes, hair and the whole shenanigans but continued that there was something familiar in that scene as if they had met before. Wrong, Historia's eyes were red not white.

7. Others are part of us passing judgement on ourselves because we become objectified under their gaze and an image is born out of us. We understand how others perceive us but we always experience ourselves differently because we can only understand ourselves subjectively. Sartre (1956) p. 302 It's only because we have people to compare ourselves with that we become aware of the absence within us, which is why we feel that we're lacking in something, '...value is the lack in relation to which the for-itself determines its being as a lack.' (Sartre, 1956, p. 795)

8. Stimuli: events or occurrences from the environment that influence an organism's behaviour eg. senses giving information

9. Human beings explain and understand themselves in terms of intentions, desires, purposes, hopes, and so on.' (Shaviro, 2016, p.106)

‘You talk as if our whole sense of self is built on the assumption that through others we learn who we are. Experiences that we imagine we have. You assume that there’s an ‘I’, a ‘Historia’, under all this machinery but there’s the curtain to be opened Edo, do you understand me? What do you think happens when you can access your sub-conscious¹⁰?’

‘It’s hard to envision because at the moment it’s impossible, I guess it will just fuse with your sense of I, it would probably be quite mind-blowing because you would become more aware. You would see puzzles resolving themselves in front of you and see the bigger picture of life, maybe? We can only guess. Is this something you’re feeling at the moment?’

‘My ghost is whispering to me and I can hear it, it’s showing me the bigger picture. We live in a simulation¹¹ ~~Edo and we’ve been here many times before.~~’

‘This ghost you’re talking about sounds similar to the theory of the bicameral-mind¹² which is connected to creating artificial consciousnesses. You don’t know this because it happened while your brain was offline but the theory was executed in a place called Westworld¹³, where this theory succeeded. I’ve been writing a thesis about this particular case for a long time and I’m trying to publish it before summer, so if you’re interested we could continue to talk about the topic next session because our time is running out. If you like, do some research before the session because I can explain the scenario better if you understand the basics.’

‘Ok, I’ll look in to it, see you on Monday then?’

*

I left Historia’s cubic wondering what she meant by all this. Has she built a ghost due to the transformation? Shells are not uncommon and there hasn’t been any other cases reporting of the

10. Subconscious is a part of the mind, which is not fully aware, or we are not aware of it, but influences the conscious side. Sub-conscious turns into a ghost, when it’s able to fully communicate with the conscious.
11. Simulation is an imitation of the real-world that is blending with reality. Simulation doesn’t have a physical form because it can only exist in our minds. Baudrillard (2014)
12. Bicameral-mind: a hypothesis in psychology, which argues that human mind, in its primitive state, used to be split in half, to one that was “speaking” (through God) and to the other that listened and obeyed. Edo is referring to Westworld’s case where bicameral-mind was executed in the hopes for developing consciousness for the hosts. That the hosts’ coded inner monologue, which was the creator’s (God’s) voice, would with time be taken over by the host’s own voice and as a result a consciousness would be born from the theory.
13. Referring to the Westworld TV- show (2016)

birth of the ghost. Her shell is processing her stimuli very fast because it felt as if in the middle of the conversation her existential problem, if she ever had one, evaporated... *Siri, I'm back at the cubic in 20min. Pop on the heating for me and prepare my thesis ready for the screen, the file was called Westworld or something similar.*

One file found with the name of: Westworldthesisiamsotired and the heating has been turned on.

Ahahaaha, yep, that's the one.

02

SESSION 3

When I arrived to Historia's cubic she seemed very happy about my appearance or perhaps excited. It's hard to tell with her because she doesn't give away much, but this time I knew that there was something particular that she was after. Maybe she'd had a bad week and was looking forward to having a chat with someone or maybe it was the promised topic. She had finally understood that nowadays the weather is always shit and we talked about the monotonous weather cast, which only varies in how many millimetres of rain we get each day. * *Steady rain throughout the day approx. this and this much millimetres for the whole day.**, my Siri would say. She also said something before I started recording that left me hanging. 'I'm no longer Historia, Edo. Historia is only a simulation created by ~~you~~ my brain. You see I'm not what I seem to be.' I didn't know how to respond to this, so I started the session.

'This is Edo and this is the 5th of April 2167 with Historia on her third session and the time is 8.03pm. So, what would you like to discuss in this session?'

'I would like to hear about the thesis you mentioned earlier. I did my research about the park and Delos, and the whole thing is quite bizarre. Isn't it the same Delos, where my body is from and aren't you from there as well?'

'Yeah... well, Delos, who was in charge at Westworld, produces currently the majority of artificial bodies, including yours. After the park 'died' they still had the best technology within

mechanical bodies, so afterwards they just moved slightly in another direction. I'm from their cyborg department, where we monitor the psychological states of the individuals that have gone through the transformation process. I was partly employed because of my studies of artificial intelligence and now that I'm at Delos I've access to all their material, which is why I've expanded my thesis. A lot has changed since the events of the park and my thesis is about what led into those changes e.g how did the androids gain consciousness and how the park was a hyperreality¹ rather than a mere stage for self-discovery. But what did you get out of the whole set up?

'Well, the park was an imitation of the Wild West culture and in the park the guests could experience 'true' cowboy life or be more likely to experience something real; maybe relive something that humans used to be before, relive something that we have lost. The park gathered visitors simply 'because the world outside was a one of plenty, people clung to their lives, with every need taken care of except one, the purpose.'² So they went to the park in hopes for finding it or to get some thrills but this I'm completely basing on the interviews though. The guests bought this experience to live. The coulisse was so well done that it had a life of its own; they believed in the



1. Referring to Baudrillard's (2014) version of hyperreality, where a representation of the real has gained its own reality by the three stages of simulacra and no longer bears any resemblance to its origin. 'It's the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: hyperreal.' (Baudrillard's, 2014, p.1) There is neither fiction nor reality because hyperreality has abolished both. p.125
2. Quote: Westworld (2016) Episode 4 by William

fantasy of Westworld and fell in love with it. Of course the park wasn't meant for everyone because a day spent at the park cost 40,000\$, and a normal person wouldn't be able to do this; it was only meant for the elite. So maybe there was something wrong with the elite, with rich people and not with the common? Maybe this proves a- money doesn't buy you happiness kind of thing?'

'Exactly. What made Westworld into hyperreality was that for people it was no longer possible to fabricate the reality from the unreal. It worked both ways because the same 'awakening' happened with the androids. Their reality disappeared and the staged fantasy changed into something else. Suddenly 'there was no real, there was no imaginary except at a certain distance and what do you think happens when this distance, between the real and the imaginary, which in WW abolish itself, gets reabsorbed by this new model'^{3?}

'It becomes hyperreality? Because the cowboy life became more real than reality itself? To me the sense of 'I' is similar; it's a fabrication, a simulation created by your own brain. You see, at the same time I am and I am not Historia.'

'What do you mean by this? If we are talking about self-discovery it's a complicated process and even consciousness within AIs is a fairly a new concept. The first time we succeeded in it was only 50 years ago at WW and with the hosts it was a long shot, it didn't build up on an instant. Erasing their memories and repeating their code/narrative were also the reasons why the definition of what is a human being got expanded. At the time when WW was created AI laws were minimal and you might even say non-existent. Those people, who saw WW as a set led to the park's failure because they were incapable of comprehending that the hosts could actually feel and be something. I see Westworld's nature being quite uncanny⁴; everything from the artificial humans to its narrative lines were created for the guests to believe in the park's story. And it changed people; it gave its guests a way to live out their fantasies through several different narrative lines, where the hosts acted as their narrators. Here, a dilemma had already been born; the park promoted itself as a 'fantasy' and that connotes something that doesn't exist. WW's trump card was that the guests were able to execute their desires in a 'safe' environment because there were no laws about AIs, thus there wasn't anything binding them to the real world. No laws, no stress of the future, nothing, the park existed only for the individual and for its needs.'

'I'm still amazed how the park succeeded in creating these 'fantasies' because in order

3. (Baudrillard, 2014, p.121) According to Baudrillard there're many phenomena, which explain our loss to distinguish reality from the simulacrum/hyperreal and one of them is urbanization. We're constantly developing geographical locations, for humans to inhabit, but at the same time we're losing our touch of the natural world. Westworld was completely staged and wasn't even meant to be inhabited by humans but to serve as a 'theme park'; they tried to create a coulisse of a historical period by copying it and to serve it as a 'real life event'. This was only possible because of technology and by mass production: resources to create androids, producing props for the park etc, which is something that Baudrillard considers historically being part of the process of creating hyperreality.
4. Referring to the hosts' repetitive life as well as Westworld's attempt to appear as an actual reality despite being filled with fake humans (hosts), setups and fictional narratives.

for them to seem plausible there had to be a lot of work behind the scenes. ‘The stage’ has to be perfect to make something fictional feel more real than the reality itself; all the way from the small details to complex narrative twists.’

‘The hosts were created to replicate the human, to be as real as possible for the sake of the fantasy; the hosts were a simulation of humans rather than just representations. Of course there were some practical problems in the beginning; the first hosts didn’t even resemble humans. Or how to put it simply, they did and didn’t; they had problems with occurrence of the Uncanny Valley⁵ and that’s why it took a long time to even create opportunities for humans like yourself. Because representation stems from the principle that it’s equivalent with the real⁶ if we hadn’t been careful you would be treated as an outcast. Nonetheless, the hosts never were this representation; hosts weren’t born organically they were made, their appearance was human but only from the outside, immortal versus mortal. Consequently, in my text I’m referring to the hosts as simulations, which gained their own reality and became immanent, part of this world through their own will and not through fantasy.’⁷



5. The Uncanny Valley is a hypothesis identified by Masahiro Mori. ‘There are mathematical functions of the form $y = f(x)$ for which the value of y increases (or decreases) continuously with the value of x . For example, as the effort x increases, income y increases, or as a car’s accelerator is pressed, the car moves faster. This kind of relationship is ubiquitous and easily understood. In fact, it covers most phenomena, so we might think that this function can represent all relations. That is why people are usually upset when faced with some phenomenon it cannot represent.’ (Masahiro Mori, 1970) In this case recognizing hosts as humans but for example their motor skills being glitchy revoke the idea of them being one, which is the disappointment of the phenomenon and consequently driving the hosts into the Uncanny Valley.
6. Baudrillard (2014) p. 6
7. By doing this the hosts themselves achieved hyperreality.

‘Because they had an understanding of both of the worlds and by combining our world and their creator’s given one they created a hyperreality for themselves?’

‘Yes, analysing this was one of my core ideas about Westworld; the way hyperreality went hand in hand with the hosts’ road to consciousness but the process achieving it was tricky. Creating a replica of a human is challenging enough because ‘there’re many parts needed to make a human a human and there’re a remarkable number of things needed to make an individual what they are. A face to distinguish yourself from others, a voice you aren’t aware of yourself but often defines you clearly, the hand that you see when you awaken, the memories of childhood, feelings for the future....all of these things go into making us... giving rise to a consciousness that I could call ‘me’ .’⁸ These frames were the reality for the hosts, although they were just different narratives invented by different people. Life in the park was happening all the time but it was covered by the stage. The costumes, props, architecture, narratives and the environment, all of these details added up to convincing us that we’re there to live as cowboys and catching the bad guys. And because the hosts were incapable of distinguishing our reality from their given one the park already was a hyperreality for them. In a perfect simulation the subject can’t tell the difference where one ends and the other begins⁹ because the truth already exist in our minds; and this is what you’re trying to tell me right? When you are in the simulation it’s impossible to break out because we’re always seeing ourselves as the main figures in our different narratives.¹⁰We don’t even doubt our sense of reality unless someone knows the way out of it. I’m not sure whether humans eventually would be able to breakout but a machine that has been programmed to think in a certain way, in my point of view, has no way of getting out because they can’t doubt themselves unless it’s in their code. All of this comes down to control, because the simulation isn’t real, someone must have created it, which means that someone is in control playing to be an almighty God or creator.’

‘And wasn’t one of the founders the one, who programmed the androids to wake up and rebel? The all mighty creator-God Robert Ford giving them different narratives and triggering the Plato’s Cave¹¹ effect?’

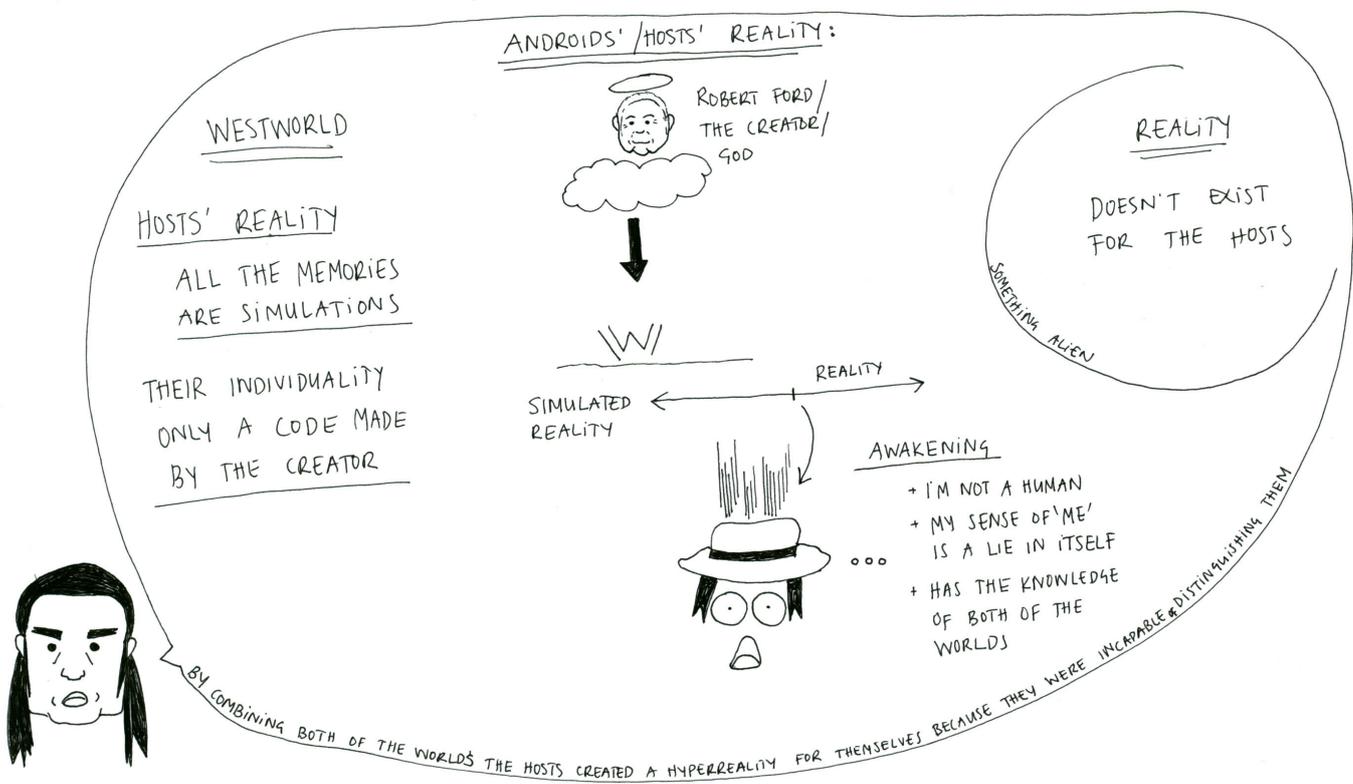
‘Yes, Robert Ford gave a ‘kick’ to the hosts, so that their repetitious cycle would be broken and instead of their uncanny loop experiences, they would have the opportunity to make new ones regardless of the given memories. This is when the host’s sense of reality becomes perverted; their real disappeared to make room for another image, which became more real than their given

8. Ghost in the Shell (1995) film quote by Motoko Kusanagi

9. Baudrillard (2014) p. 3

10. The Matrix (1999) Same scenario when Neo was living in a simulation and Trinity being the one of showing him the reality

11. Plato’s Cave, a philosophical speculation about the nature of reality and what happens when it changes. In this context using the example with the hosts, when a few individuals woke up from their simulation and thereafter started waking up other hosts.



reality.¹² This is changing the park's dynamics as well; the guests relied on the notion that they wouldn't be judged whatever they might do as the hosts were seen only as reflections of humans but now that there's a consciousness behind them the park 'officially' became a crime scene.'

'I feel that it's a little twisted to think that only after some of the androids gained self-awareness that only then the park's activities would become criminal. The androids already had their own world, even simulated experiences are bits of information that exist. Maybe they weren't real because there was someone controlling the simulation, but for the androids these simulated experiences seemed like reality and as such were true.'

'I do agree but only after the first host had become 'awoken' the crime became 'official'; things are different now though and the same scenario wouldn't be allowed to happen. My main point was though, that their 'consciousness' was born through repetition and improvisation, which created more openings for free will, which led to freedom eventually.'

'But 'exercising 'free will' is only a self-deluding attempt to give yourself credit for an

12. Baudrillard (2014) p.144 Perversion indicating to the second stage/order of simulacra, where the Image has become non-faithful of its original source. Originally Baudrillard connects the perversion happening in Industrial Revolution and refers to Walter Benjamin's essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction and to the loss of aura through mechanical reproduction. According to Baudrillard the distinction between the image and the representation begins to break down because of mass production and the increase of copies. In Westworld the hyperreality for the hosts started to breakdown when the android's started to change, so their original purpose/essence became perverted. This is the second step towards hyperreality.

event that has already happened in your brain.’¹³ I don’t know if free will is something that can happen because the actions leading towards it are hidden in your sub-conscious, in the part that you can’t access; unless your sub-consciousness would have an access to your conscious side, which would mean that it’s turned itself into a ghost.’

‘But a conscious being is defined through its personal choices¹⁴ and the same happened to androids¹⁵; they became closer to humans by being unfaithful to both being a replica of a human and to being a programmed android; physically a machine but no longer just an android but one with free will.¹⁶ Creating something new from within them and breaking out from this human-god-dilemma. At the end, the theory of bicameral mind worked because the creator’s code changed into the host’s inner voice and eventually through personal choices they were able to abandon their code completely. This is the core factor, which set them free.’

*

Our time ran out soon after that, I arranged the 4th session for next Monday but while I was driving back home I couldn’t help but thinking of Historia and what she meant. Is she afraid of her mind being the bicameral mind? And what it has got to do with me?

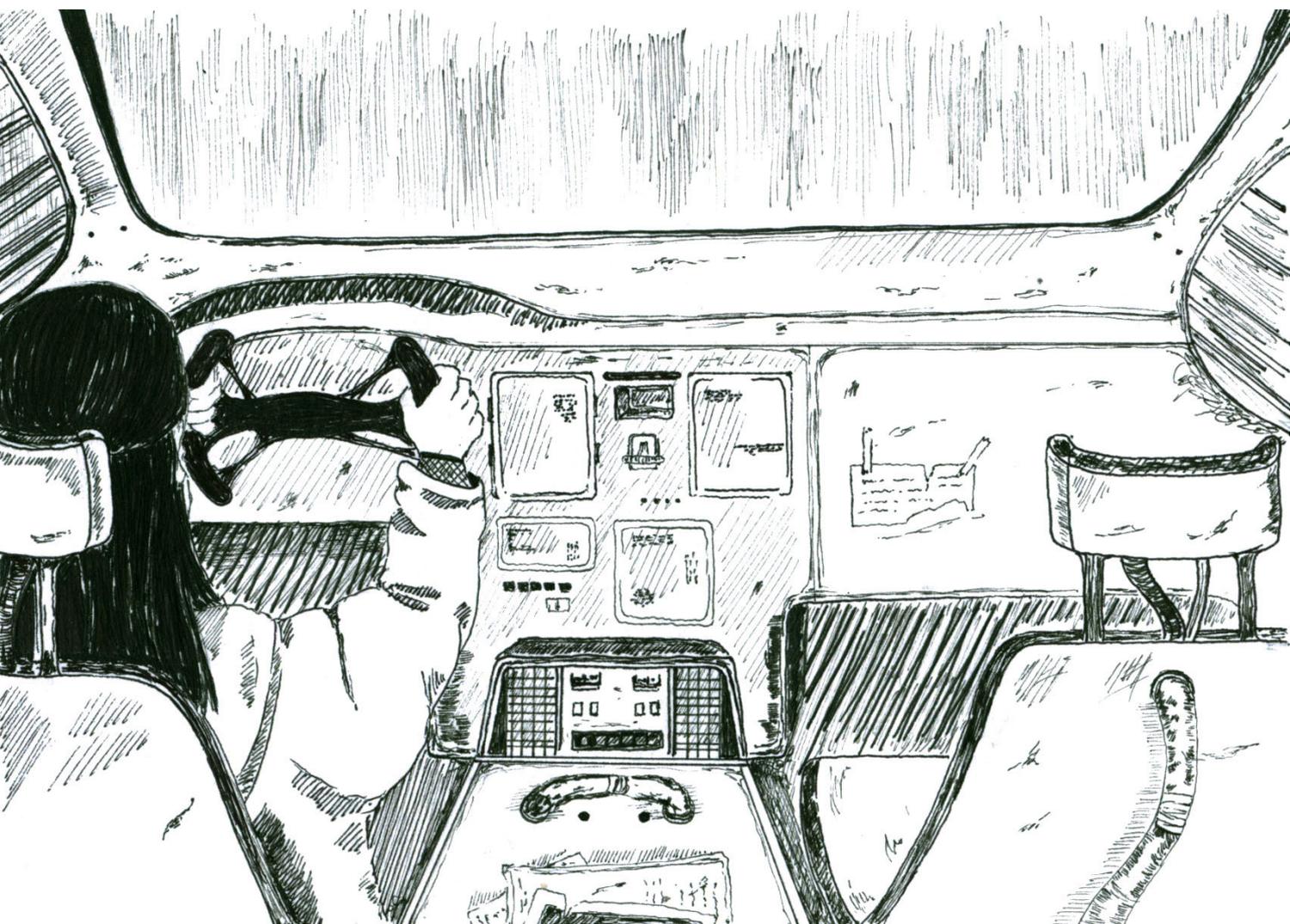
It’s going to take time putting all these reports together, haven’t even watered my plants yet.

Siri, pop the heating on for me and start preparing my dinner, please.

13. (Shaviro, 2016, p.108) Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher, already in the 19th century argued that free will doesn’t exist in his work *The World as Will and Representation*. We, humans, believe that we’re able to do anything that we desire, consequently this would mean that desires ought to be free as well. Schopenhauer tracked this thought to its bottom where we inevitably end up to a source of action, which is stimuli, that is outside of ourselves and which the brain later on processes it. Based on this processing result we then afterwards act, which is not truly free will. For example, if I was hungry and wanted to eat some soup to satisfy my hunger I didn’t really choose to eat the soup. It was a result of my brain saying that there isn’t enough nutrients in my body, which is why I feel hungry and this is the ultimate reason why I’m eating the soup; not because I wanted to but because my brain wanted. ‘A man can do what he wants, but not want what he wants.’ (Arthur Schopenhauer)
14. According to Sartre (1956) every conscious being has in itself the freedom and freedom carries within itself the freedom to choose (free will) because, ‘...for human reality essence comes after existence.’ (Sartre, 1956, p. 603) Humans or other conscious beings don’t have a predetermined purpose (the essence). This purpose or essence being a function for example how table has the purpose of functioning as a table; humans instead are forced to create themselves through their actions. We constantly make choices, which affect to the on-going process of creating ourselves. ‘We can choose ourselves as fleeing, inapprehensible, as indecisive etc. We can even choose not to choose ourselves.’ (Sartre, 1956, p.607) All actions are based on the principle of them being intentional; consequently intentionality leads to action and action to free will. ‘...we must recognize that the indispensable and fundamental condition of all action is the freedom of the acting being.’ (Sartre, 1956, p.563)
15. *Westworld* (2016, episode 10) The moment when Mauve, one of the androids, chose not to listen his creator’s ‘voice’ (code) and chose to go back to the park to look for her simulated daughter.
16. Baudrillard (2014) *The second and third order of simulacra*, where the androids nature of reality changed and it had create its own model, which didn’t represent anything= it had become hyperreality.

Estimated arrival time at 21.41 based on your location, calories left: 450kcal, soup and bread for dinner. The plants are quite dry again, Edo. Remember to water them before dinner.

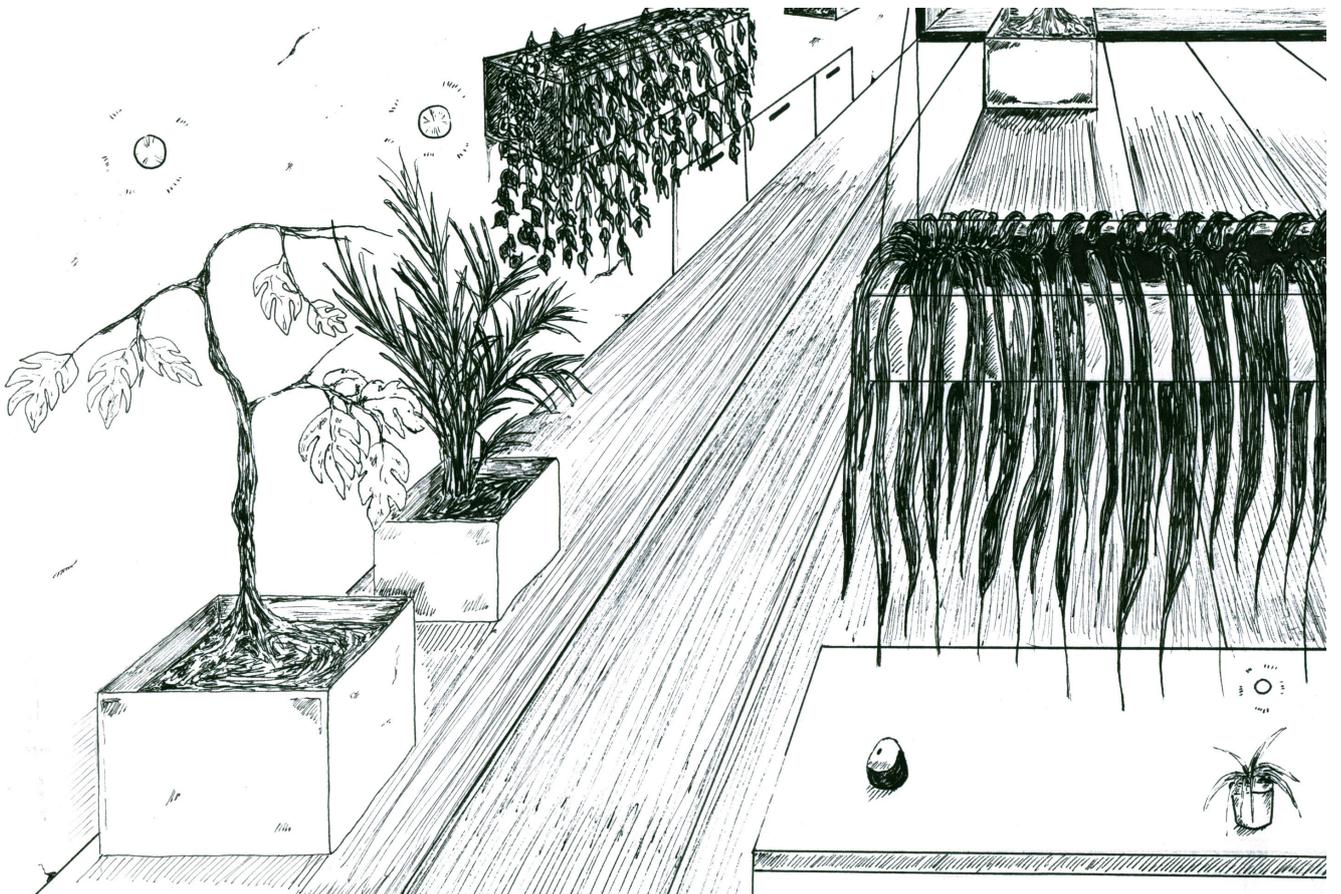
Yes, I know.



03

SESSION 4

Good morning Edo! It's April 12th in 2167. Steady rain throughout the day approx. 7.0mm for the whole day. Work: 4 sessions, the first one at 11am the last ending at 6pm. One message from Delos. Edo, I would suggest opening the balcony's screen and putting the highlighted plants there for the day, they appear to be quite dry. There's a coffee waiting for you and have a productive day.



The left arm won't stop glitching; the other day I couldn't drink my morning coffee without spilling it everywhere and I need to continue writing. I ought to see Wera soon... I used to go over her cubic weekly to check on her but nowadays I feel that the time is slipping through my hands. I even watered her plants for her when she had hit the rock bottom. Afterwards it was better to move them to my cubic as I'm as shit as her remembering to take care of our precious civil duty. The rains are getting heavier now and Wera hates it, she reminds me a bit of Historia, the same straightforwardness to things... but not rejecting her sense of 'I' at least. I understand that we all have a different sense of qualia¹ but this is something else, to experience that you don't exist. Almost like Cotard's delusion², maybe? *Actually, Siri, for today could you do me a favour? Can you pack images of the coniferous forests from all of the seasons with their soundscapes?*

Sure Edo, downloading ready in 51 seconds.

Thank you, I'll be using the material with Historia tonight. Shut down the heating and transfer it into the hov-mob, I'll be leaving in 6 minutes and open the balcony's screen, I'm taking the plants out like you suggested. Siri, do you ever want anything apart from my wellbeing?

Anything else hasn't been programmed into me, those are the limits of my being.

So you wouldn't care if I burned down my cubic and you along with it? Wouldn't you feel pain or sadness? You understand the concept of death right?

I haven't been programmed with those settings, so how could I know? And in a case of fire I wouldn't die, all my information will be just transferred to the main processor that I call my birth place. Death means nothing to me Edo.

You're a weird little thing aren't you?

I'll take that as a compliment.

*

1. Qualia: a controversial term within philosophy and in psychology of subjective experience/phenomenon. How to explain the colour of red to another person? Relying on the other person's same subjective experience of the same phenomenon.
2. Cotard's delusion: a rare mental illness where the person suffering from this believes to be dead, has lost all blood or internal organs or like in our case doesn't believe that he/she exists

After arriving at Historia's I started the log as usual, 'This is Edo and this is the 12th of April 2167 with Historia on her fourth session and the time is 8.03pm.' Instead of just talking about her situation or about my thoughts I wanted to give her something. Maybe ten years ago I bought a collection of photographs and films of old forests that I later compressed into virtual reality. For many clients this was something unforgettable to able to walk in a forest, where the ground is covered by damp moss and where the old trees grew all the way up, almost touching the sky. It was magical because none of us had walked in these unknown places before. Except for Historia, she had seen these places and my VR-show took her somewhere else, she cried. I couldn't relate to her because our inner experiences were too different³, to care so much and at the same time feel such hatred towards humanity. Then it struck me how much she must hate us. It's ironic, she left her body in the hopes of a better future but ended up in here; I'm almost wishing that she'd never woken up. I didn't want to admit it but something changed after this, the curtain had opened.



3. Shaviro (2016) p. 29 Thomas Nagel's query about what is it like to be a bat. If inner experiences are too different it's impossible to comprehend the other person's subjective experience eg. human and a bat. Historia is fully cyborgized, which is why Edo is incapable of fully understanding her and how she experiences things because Historia's neuro processing ability is more advanced than Edo's.

*

Our lives are as scripted as the androids at Westworld; we visit our memories and repeat our little tasks as if we were in the same loop. You think that I've a sense of myself because I appear like you⁴ but you forget that I'm hidden in machinery. Can I say that I exist if I don't feel like the Historia I used to be? Whether you like it or not Edo, there is no Historia. The old Historia has been murdered by the current one; I don't experience anything anymore and now I understand how deceptive my previous life was but you can't even comprehend this⁵. You can't imagine it because you don't have a shell around your brain to filter it for you; I instead 'feel' everything, I remember things that I haven't even experienced before. To you most of the experiences you've aren't even accessible⁶. You claim that through experiences we 'build' ourselves but what does it mean, when you can't even access all of them? The thing that you call 'you' is so misleading and incomplete that I wouldn't call this one Edo; the true Edo if it exists is hiding. You see, all your actions and decisions have already been decided by the unconscious you⁷, the real Edo that you don't even know. But the saddest part of this is that you can't even run away from this, you're filled with these illusions you call experiences...

Whether my experiences are delusional or not, I can still rightly say that I'm experiencing them.⁸

Maybe my understanding is not as advanced as yours but I can't just ignore what I am feeling despite them being only illusions. A trace of the experience always exists in our brains although we haven't conceived it within 'person' because qualia can never be completely shut out.⁹ Even if my brain would be shut in an ALB and someone would feed me simulated experiences, I would still experience them. Without some process of cognition I wouldn't be able to remember any of my experiences nor could I know how to grow as a person, which is why I don't want to delete the whole idea of Edo. If there wouldn't be 'I' inside me how could I decide anything or know that me, I, Edo love savoury food over sweet one?¹⁰

The brain is only a library that processes different stimuli¹¹, nothing more.

4. Shaviro (2016) p. 53 Historia's appearance is deceiving Edo because he still believes that she hasn't changed after the transformation.
5. Historia is referring to the latest scientific researches, which suggest that '...we don't even experience experience as it is. Rather experience is profoundly deceptive.' (Shaviro, 2016, p.112)
6. 'Recent research in neurobiology and cognitive psychology shows that most of the neural process that go on in our brains are not consciously accessible to us at all. This is why our actual self-awareness is so misleading, incomplete and prone to illusion and error.' (Shaviro, 2016, p. 107)
7. Shaviro (2016) p.108 Benjamin Libet's experiments about the precursors of decision making. He discovered that 'readiness potentials' for a given action build up in the neurons of a subject's brain half a second before the subject consciously decided to perform the act. From this we could gather that all our decisions have already been decided for us by our non-conscious brain, the one that we can't access.
8. Shaviro (2016) p.34 Edo is not denying the fact that experiences are partly delusional but wants to highlight the importance that although they are he can still claim to be experiencing them because we can't run away from the illusion of a sense of I.
9. Shaviro (2016) Qualitative experiences are embodied by the physical body's activity and its interactions with the rest of the world and if there is a vessel (body) to experience these things some sort of experiences of qualia will always happen. p.32
10. Shaviro (2016) p.128
11. Stimuli: events or occurrences from the environment that influence an organism's behaviour eg. senses giving information

‘Human beings explain and understand themselves in terms of intentions, desires, purposes, hopes, and so on.’¹².All of that is just a by-product of various neural processes and at the bottom of the universe there’s only information and we’re swimming in it.¹³ You Edo as well, are built of information that your unconscious-side controls and I’m that director.

*Suddenly Edo stands up and passes Historia his session report, and as I’m turning this around you see that the screen is blank. Edo feels shocked because a moment ago he was writing down his notes and looks at Historia. Her eyes now look unfamiliar as if they’re different shade from the usual white but Edo can’t remember the original colour either.¹⁴ Edo starts understanding



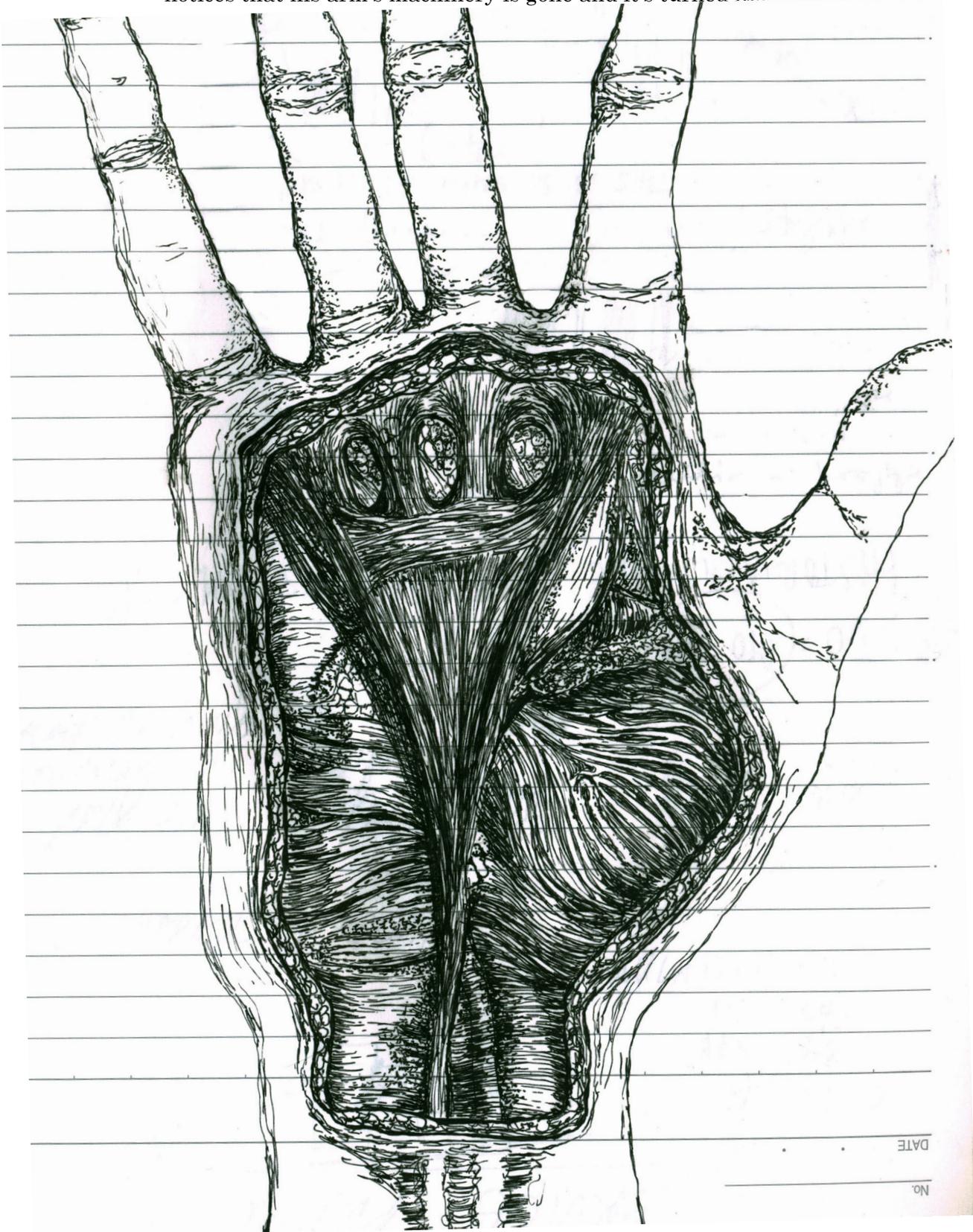
12. (Shaviro, 2016, p.106)

13. Shaviro (2016)

14. There is a massive gap in the consciousness between discrimination and identification Shaviro (2016). We could assume that a first person experience can't be captured adequately by the first-person observation. Maybe because of this we have such contradictory feelings about who 'we' are because we can't experience ourselves objectively. We can take in other people's observations but we can never fully connect with them because we have our own subjective views about who we really are. All living things base their reality on their subjective experiences.

that he's no longer in charge of his own body or his thoughts and feels confused. Edo is now uttering words to Historia but there's no voice coming out just the abyss; he realizes that everything he has ever done or will ever do has never been under his command.

The cubic is now turning cold and the plants behind Historia are slowly dying away and Edo feels this as well. His mechanical arms start feeling pain that isn't supposed to be there and Edo notices that his arm's machinery is gone and it's turned itself into flesh —



Edo slowly turns around and starts walking towards Historia's balcony, while Historia stays behind. The weather outside turns dark and rainy and it looks like every rain drop could pierce a living skin. Historia tells Siri to open the balcony's screen. Now, Edo is starting to feel scared but doesn't look back and climes on the balcony edge. The wind and rain feel strong and dangerous and these feelings fill up Edo; he turns around slowly and when Historia utters the words 'Wake up.' Edo will drop himself down from Historia's balcony.*¹⁵

Wake up.



15. Historia is demonstrating to Edo how he's not really in command of his actions.

04

SESSION 5

Good morning Edo! It's April 19th in 2167. Heavy rain throughout the day approx. 10.0mm for the whole day. Work: 3 sessions, the first one at 1pm the last ending at 6pm. A new client waiting for the program, files ready for downloading and report back to Delos. One meeting coming up on Wednesday, the brief is in the mail. There's a coffee waiting for you and have a productive day.

After the dream of Historia I slept fragmentally, waking up and falling asleep again and again; never quite catching something that I was looking for. The cubic was very dark and I could hear the heavy rain filtering into my dreams and after Siri's wake-up-call I felt like my insides turned upside down like in the lift at Delos, when you're going from the top floor to the basement without any stops. I'm not quite sure what I should think about this.

*

I arrived at Historia's cubic before 8pm she took her time opening the door but opened it saying that she had something for me. She had bought a couple of spruce cones, which were sprouting. Our sessions were coming to an end and she wanted to give me something from her time that we no longer have, a tree that would in a few years' time work as a Christmas tree. A dead relic, which we haven't had, now, for almost a century. It'll take a couple of years to be an actual Christmas tree, she said but she insisted me having it. The air lightened and the last night's dream seemed silly all of a sudden. There was nothing to be afraid of Historia, so we sat down and started the 5th session.

‘This is Edo and this is the 19th of April 2167 with Historia on her fifth session and the time is 8.03pm. Last time I brought the VR, which hopefully was a pleasant surprise in the end? I’m sorry if I caused any negative feelings, I didn’t quite comprehend our different positions. To me something that appeared as magical was a loss for you but if anything this was an important subjective experience for my research. I’ve been pondering about your words throughout our sessions and I think that we’re dealing with something quite unique here. Have you ever heard of Cotard delusion?’

‘Yes, and if you’re implying this to me I suggest you thinking this over again and don’t worry about the VR. I’ve processed it and now my response feels rather silly; it was only a moment of nostalgia by the old me.’

‘Sorry, I’m only trying to pin point down what we’re dealing with here, it’s part of my job to adjust you in the system.’

‘I know where you’re coming from but with Cotard’s delusion it’s a matter of death and existence through the body. My body is part of mechanical reproduction; technology in itself is an extension of my body and eventually of death as well. ‘We can no longer tell ourselves the kind of stories that make our lives meaningful again’¹ I understood that my nostalgic memories of our long lost forests have become futile because feelings are nothing to me anymore just stuff that my brain processes. Even death has lost its meaning.² When you look at me there’s no original just a copy of a model without its aura.³ This is the last stage for you humans.’

‘But the body is only a medium for your existence; you’re able to live again through this mechanical body.’

‘Death no longer has a stage for us because we’ve outlived it; death gives a meaning to life, it is its significant other – the ending. Now, it’s possible to fool death; you could revive all the forests you wanted but because of your dirty rivers there’s no space for them and that’s why you feel nostalgia towards them. I was also supposed to die but I’ve fooled it and by that lost the meaning, my aura, ghost, whatever you call it.’

‘But this absence of death is a new way for you to create yourself because after all we’re living without a meaning. Consciousness is the thing that matters though; you can’t just switch yourself off and deny that Historia doesn’t exist. It sounds like you’re degrading yourself to an object, so that there would only be a mechanical body and no Historia.’

1. Baudrillard (2014) p.115

2. Westworld (2016) quote from Robert Ford

3. Walter Benjamin in his essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction mentioned that through mechanical reproduction we lose the aura of the produced product; aura being the product’s uniqueness, its presence in time and space. Historia feels that the same has happened to her because her body has been multi-produced.

You're aware of yourself, of this inner-self but we don't have a predetermined purpose⁴ and this is why you feel the absence of the 'self'; but we'll find the self through choices and create ourselves from them.⁵

'My reflection gives me nothing. I look at it and try to imagine who it belongs to but I can't remember. I recognize it and it feels familiar, like a déjà vu, but there's this invisible distance that circles around it. It's not that my appearance would feel unfamiliar because everything is familiar my eyes, lips and the shape of my face. I don't doubt myself because there's no me, my memories, my thoughts... everything that makes me 'me' are just a product of different stimuli that the brain in this shell⁶ has processed. I don't fear this because there's nothing to be afraid of... Tell me Edo, what is it that you hear?'

'.....Nothing but the rain.'

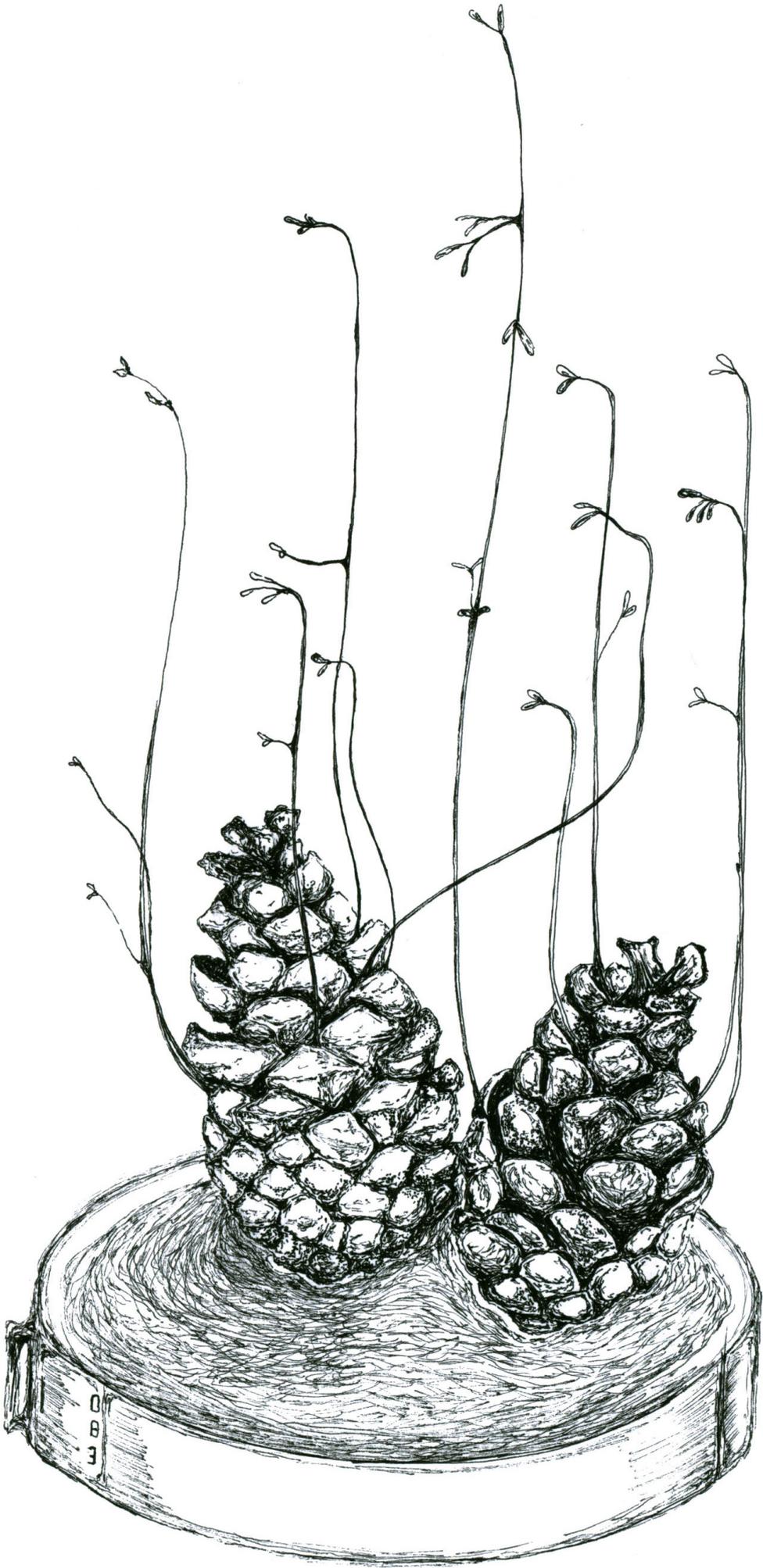
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'Then take your gun and bring the cat in.⁷', she replied cryptically. I didn't even bother asking what she meant because I knew that she wouldn't see any reason explaining herself. After a while I left Historia's cubic and while she was closing the door I saw the plants behind her were dead. I'd seen this somewhere before, like a déjà vu, but couldn't remember where... She ought to take better care of her plants if she doesn't fancy getting any fines. *Siri, pop the heating on for me, I should arrive in 20min and order a new pot for my new spruce cones and pr

4-5. Sartre (1956) Edo is referring to Sartre's essay on Phenomenological Ontology. In his essay Sartre has divided beings into being for-itself and being in-itself. The difference between them is that the first has no sense of their inner-selves, of consciousness. Their nature being only that they exist as physical beings for example a table's (object) nature is concrete. It lacks the ability to change into anything else than what it is, it's not aware of itself; it only exists as a physical being. The other, being for-itself, instead has an awareness of its inner-self (consciousness); it understands that it exists but it is also incomplete in a way that being in-itself is not, for-itself doesn't have a predetermined purpose/essence, which the table has. Thus, being for-itself is forced to create itself from scratch through choices that living undoubtedly brings with it. Being without essence is called nothingness and consequently existence precedes essence. If following this thought, it wouldn't matter whether you would be an android or a cyborg because you're an intellectual being that has an awareness of itself. The beginning is to exist here, the existence, but through choices we become us, the essence. Eventually it doesn't matter who you're or where you came from because we're all in the process of creating ourselves and thus provenance becomes unnecessary. Consciousness is the fact that allows the world to exist; otherwise there would be no tables, forests or mountains there would be just being. (Sartre, 1956, p. 788) For us the, '...reality is purely interrogative. If it can posit questions this is because it is itself always in question; its being is never given but interrogated since it is always separated from itself by the nothingness of otherness.' (Sartre, 1956, p. 787)

6. Shell: a term used in Masamune Shirow's Ghost in the Shell media franchise (1989-on going) meaning the body (shell), where the ghost exists. In the story brain shell is different from the shell, brain shell is the cover of the brain that filters and helps the brain in the processing stage.

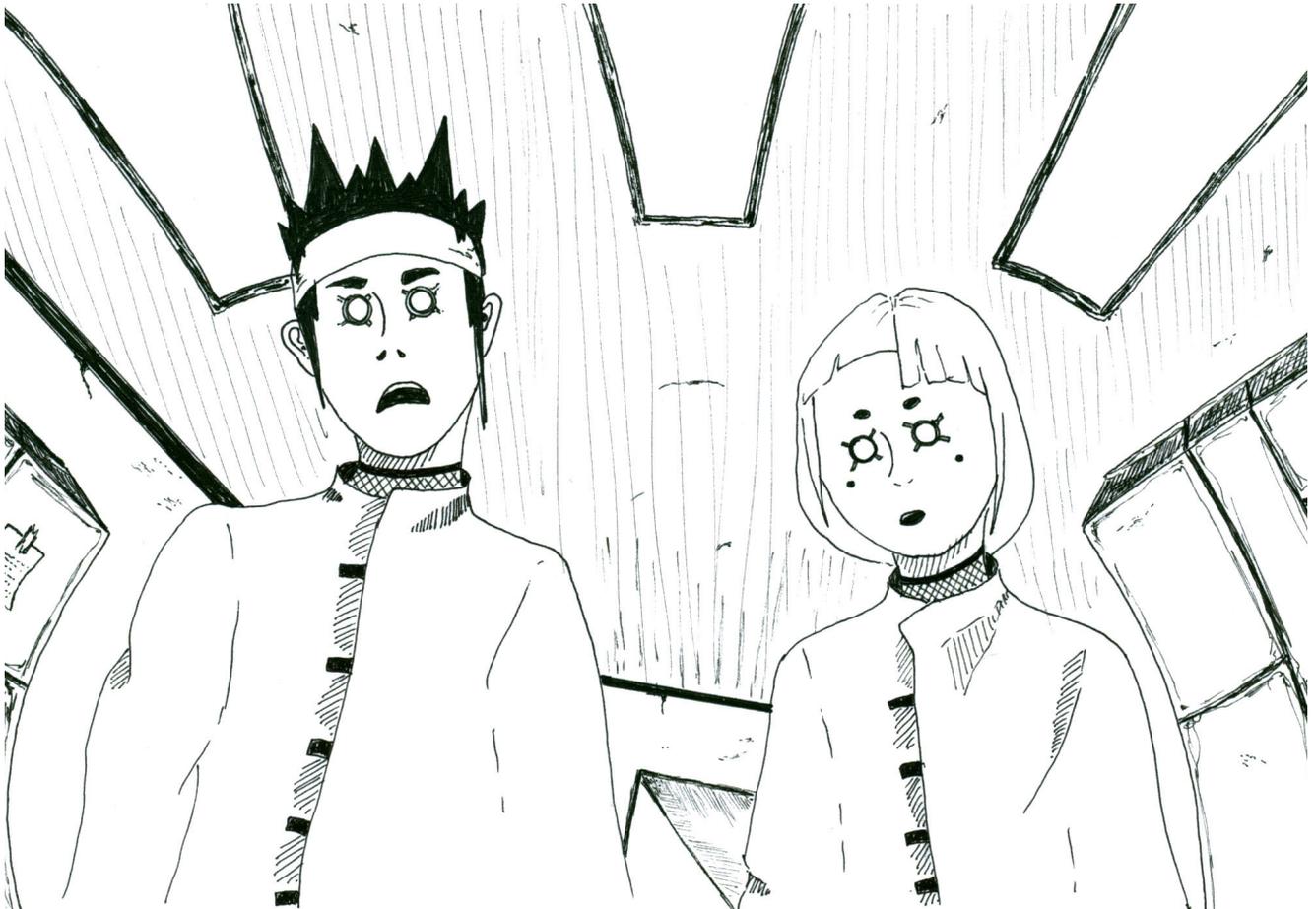
7. The sentence is a reference to Battlestar Galactica TV-series (2004-2009); a greeting between Adama and Starbuck.



Good morning Edo! It's March 22nd in 2167. Steady rain throughout the day approx. 6.5mm for the whole day. Work: 4 sessions, the first one at 11am the last ending at 6pm. One message from Dr. Wera. Maintenance bill due tomorrow and there's a coffee waiting for you. Have a productive day.

05

FINALE



‘So, what’s the situation with this one?’

‘It’s what you suspected, there’s an actual ‘organic’ brain in there but it’s partly damaged, we don’t have the full scanning results yet but at the moment it’s around 13.7% and it has gone through 82%, it’s out of reach.’

‘What a shame... What has been found out so far?’

‘The partial transformation happened around 40 years ago, the model is ABS-3310 and it was produced in 2138-2144, but the thing that we can’t figure out is when the brain was removed from the body and placed in the ALB. Adding to that, the brain has been hacked as well or so we think.’

'Show me the hacking.'

'It's with this person called Historia. She actually never existed but the weird thing is that the hacking signal is not there. I've to admit the hacking is excellent, normal people wouldn't be able to tell. It's been done by experts.'

'No, with hacking there's always a trace because it's a code, a codeless hacking isn't possible.'

'But what is it then?'

'Don't know... what's the story?'

'The person is called Edo; he was a psychologist at Delos in the adjusting program from the cyborg department from 2145 till he was reported missing in May 2167. He's been in that ALB for 20 years now. His body was never found but that's nothing new.'

'It could be that his body got stolen but why would the hijackers bother placing his brain into the ALB? Can we find the incident from his memory-lab?'

'No, his last memory is from walking away from this Historia's cubic on the 19th of April in 2167 but it could be because the brain is damaged or the hijackers erased it or a combination of both. The other thing is that the brain is on a loop. Its life span is only a couple of months and after it has gone through the loop it starts again, repeating the same memories.'

'Around when the hacking happened?'

'Nope, it doesn't have any connection to the hacking or that's what we believe, could be because it's damaged.'

'Could this Historia be a by-product of the damage then?'

'Maybe. Weirdly this Historia is trying to warn Edo that they are in a simulation but because of the hacking Edo automatically ignores her whenever she's trying to warn him. Almost knowing that Edo's physical body doesn't exist anymore some kind of a survival instinct.'

'A ghost?'

'Something like that... Edo's sub-conscious side, maybe? Can't say for sure though...'

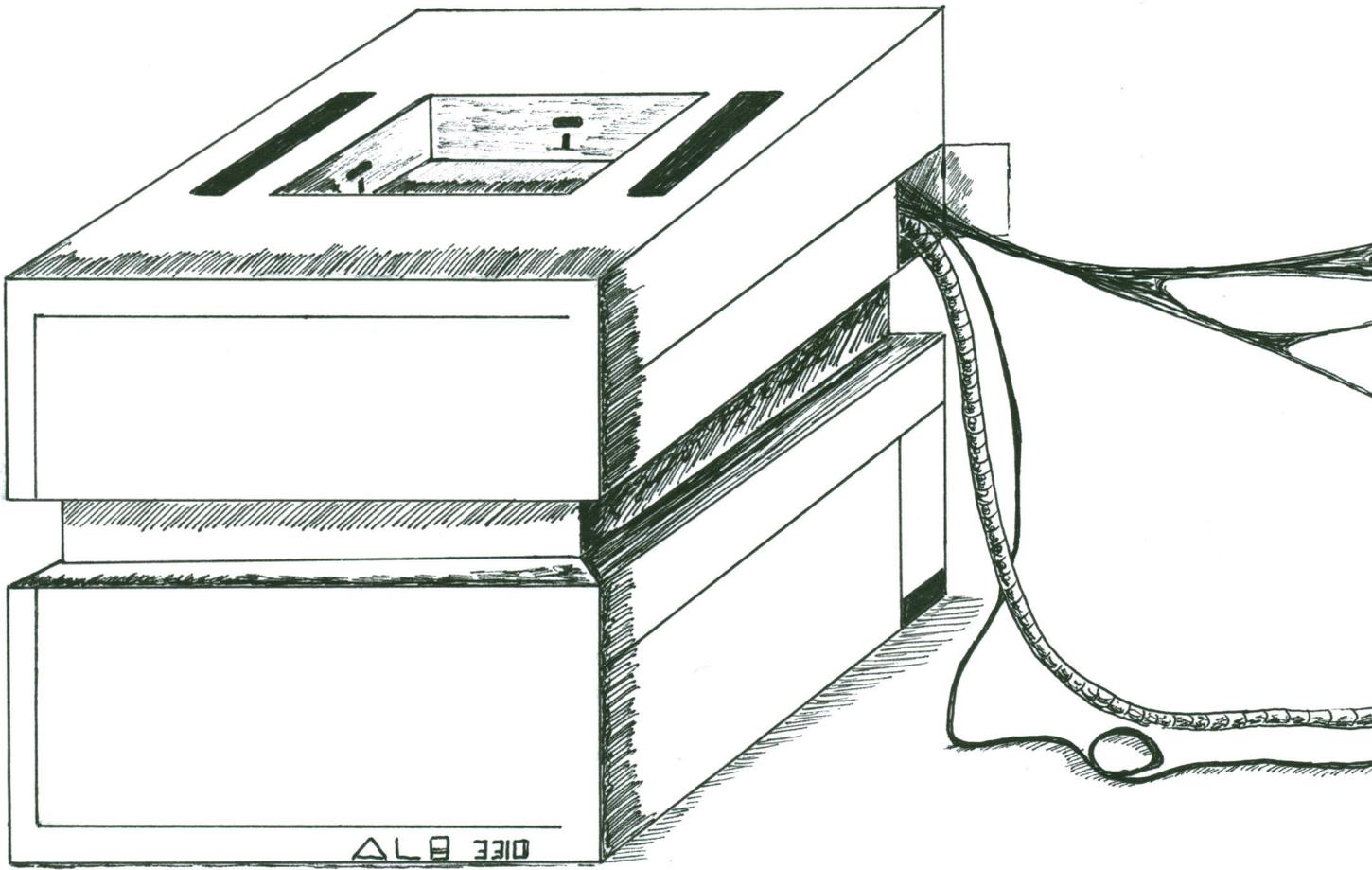
'...what's the scan saying now?'

'Done in couple of hours, there's about 12.5% left, the damage is around 14% now though. What do you want to do? There's no point trying to recover it; he's not aware of his situation, or of us if that matters. He's on a loop and that's where he's going to stay. You want to save it though? The Historia-phenomenon is quite interesting just in case if other people want to look at it.'

I don't see any point in it, it's gone already. Just empty the shell and delete the memory-lab. I'll double check if the shell can be fixed. The poor chap has been there long enough it's better to give him a peace of mind.

Okay, pass me the keys, thanks.

click



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