

The Omega Machine

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Abstract

The following is the script for a performance developed in tandem with artist and performer Gabe Rubin and painter Jacqueline Humphries for her show *jHΩI:)* at Wexner Center for the Arts in October 2021. Humphries's work blurs the line between the painterly expression and the automated simulacrum. Her paintings in this show included 3D printed blacklight flat sculptures that resemble paintings that use as a base layer text encoded (ASCII) versions of earlier paintings with novel features palimpsestically overwriting them, such as Greek letters, Möbius strips, emoticons, and brand names. Our script ties together Humphries's innovative practice with debates regarding the relative indeterminacy of the subject in comparison to the algorithm and artificial intelligence – debates which are linked to related questions as to the possibility of chance and spontaneity within seemingly closed discourses such as those interpreted by psychoanalysis, discourses famously encoded by Jacques Lacan into algorithms – and psychoanalysis itself. For the event, we invented a character for Gabe Rubin named Absinthe Omega, a brand ambassador for automated painting, to serve as a queer *figure* who might dramatize these issues while also fading into and out of the *ground* of painting itself as if they were a kind of subjectile substrate to these antinomic debates.

Keywords: *automation, algorithm, artificial intelligence, Jacques Lacan, painting, digital art, performance art, simulacrum*

The Setup¹



jHΩI:), 2018, Oil on linen,
114 x 127 inches (289.6 x 322.6 cm)
Courtesy the artist and
Greene Naftali, New York

¹ Documentation of the performance can be found on the art streaming platform Ortvi at <https://ortvi.com/programs/the-omega-machine-1623080632749> [accessed 2 August 2022].

October 2021: Painter Jacqueline Humphries, artist-critic Felix Bernstein, and Neiman Marcus Brand Ambassador Absinthe Omega² (Gabe Rubin) in conversation at Humphries's exhibition *jHΩI:)* on their work together as the Omega Machine.³

Synopsis: A pre-programmed artists' triologue, where the middlebrow keeps re-emerging in our speech like a return of the repressed. Canned hotel tv channel showing hotel as lifestyle, aphasiac lounge elevator champagne music but epically narrated.

An algorithmically produced influencer (Omega) works with a painter (Humphries) who recreates her abstract paintings in an impasto layer of ASCII code, which accumulates other glyphic layers till the surface is awash in brand logos full of sound and fury, signifying nothing (neither the index of corporeal heroic gesture of the *signature*, nor the deflated ironized mechanical jest of the *brand*). The paintings get somehow close to the encryption at the heart of things – the most painful kernel, which reveals to us that there is no revelation, only further crypts, further ciphers.⁴

nature loves to be encrypted

φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

(Heraclitus, fragment 123)⁵

For Jacques Lacan, *tuché* is a chance encounter that affects the subject in a way that is irreducible to any given mode of causal attribution.⁶ It eludes any explanatory

² Named after the Omega found in Humphries's titular painting and the hallucinogenic green drink addictively imbibed by decadents who found it, like Paul Verlaine in 1895, to be the 'source of folly and crime, idiocy and shame'. Jad Adams, *Hideous Absinthe: A History of the Devil in a Bottle* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 70. She uses the upper case Greek letter Ω. The lowercase letter is ω.

³ Named after Heiner Müller's play *Die Hamletmaschine* (The Hamlet Machine, 1977) and Viktor Tausk's psychotically induced Influencing Machine, though, in this case, we present a Turing-Hamlet-Ophelia Machine and a Social Media Influencer Machine.

⁴ The theory of decryption in psychoanalysis was developed by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). For them, in certain cases, the kernel of a doubly encrypted secret from the Other is incorporated into the psyche, which resists both internal signification, and the typical process of verbalization and enunciation of psychoanalytic treatment. Nonetheless, by analyzing the chains of verbal metonymy in articulated words that serve as cryptonyms, a decipherment of the Other's secret is possible. Jacques Derrida (critically) builds on their theory to develop the notion of an absolute secret, a phantom spectre of indecipherability which, unlike Abraham and Torok's cryptonym, cannot be brought into the phenomenal presence and interpretive closure of psychoanalytic decryption. I would wager that Derrida's recourse to phantoms has the same likelihood of being drawn into reductive analyses as the fairly complicated deciphering processes of Abraham and Torok. See Jacques Derrida's 'Fors' foreword to Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, xi-xlviii.

⁵ My own translation is a departure from more classic ones (nature loves to hide), so as to emphasize the relation of foundational ontological problems in philosophy to the issues of encryption that I am exploring in the terms of semiotics and psychoanalysis. The enigmatic and contentious status of physis (versus nature), logos, revelation, and concealment are famously addressed by Martin Heidegger in *Heraclitus: The Inception of Occidental Thinking; and, Logic: Heraclitus's Doctrine of the Logos*, trans. Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

⁶ *Tuché* is a term borrowed by Jacques Lacan from the Greek *tyche*. In Greek mythology, *tyche* is the deity of a city's fortune, while in Aristotle's *Physics*, it serves as an indeterminate cause of events (a dark horse usually forgotten alongside his more famous four causes). Lacan was not the first modern thinker to recuperate this concept: in the 1890s, Charles Sanders Peirce uses tychism to describe his own chance-

hypothesis or predictable calculation. It may appear as an unexpected moment of tenderness in a bleak relationship or an uncanny, improbable coincidence that restructures your sense of self. The randomness of an existential swerve. Less romantically, it could also be a freak event that makes the world seem more calculated, recursive, and fractal than you had ever believed – the derealization that psychic life is always already more algorithmic than any human-made code.⁷ Lacan certainly thought so, given his use of algorithmic equations to depict psychological dynamics and discourses. Of course, his intent was not to mastermind probabilities but rather to point toward the movement of desire by rendering it as an open function, a bare letter (a).

To give up neither the event nor the machine, to subordinate neither one to the other [...] (Jacques Derrida)⁸

If the algorithms of commerce have come into dominance, it is precisely because they foreclose desire's elusive causation in favour of compulsion: no desire, save to be freed from repulsion and envy. This leads to a kind of standstill, a frame lock, that appears to be perpetually in motion.

The 24/7, public-facing personability metric by which artists are now judged may seem like a contingent dystopian novelty, but there is something familiar there. Something of 1950s middlebrow American advertising and cinema, in which there is no gap between the person, gesture and product, comes to mind.

Just as postmodernism elevated low into high, today we see the packaging of the high into the low. In both cases, middlebrowness is disavowed as some background noise occurring somewhere else. This is not true of certain great works of art – films by Douglas Sirk and shows like *White Lotus* dramatize the moments *in-between* the forcefield of kitsch modelling that dominate our world; they are not afraid to stare down the middlebrow abyss.⁹

Absinthe Omega was my attempt to create a character who manically dwells in this frame-locked sphere but also seeks to escape or traverse its recursion through improvisatory variation. This is what I think Humphries is doing in her paintings, where

based thinking in contrast to mechanical necessitarianism; see Charles Sanders Peirce, 'The Doctrine of Necessity Examined', in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. and intr. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 2011), 324-38. For Lacanians, it is a concept that is not far afield from the delimiting function that the real imposes on the symbolic. See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller; *Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 53-64.

⁷ In theory, the psychic surprise is too often thought to be the intrusion of all-the-too-human into the technical. Against the spirit of much animosity to AI in critical theory, Catherine Malabou has argued that artificial intelligence may offer a respite from the anthropologocentrism of the symbolic rather than being merely another facet of control.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi*, ed., trans. and intr. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 74.

⁹ As David Savran has argued, American theatre has been particularly stained by the taint of the 'middlebrow'. Nowadays there is also a subset of digital culture which describes its rival subsets as 'mid', or basic. Brow flexibility is a muscle one is constantly forced to retrain.

dense structures of algorithmic noise move from semantic insignificance to polysensuous cacophonies of visual pleasure.

Artists playing brands=Warholian comedy [postmodernism].
Brands playing artists=Omega's tragedy [hyperbrandism].

Getting outside of a Turing machine with its binary code or a Turing test with its binary questioning or a halting problem with its indefinite calculations can be quite tricky. It is an exhausting challenge – to produce novelty from, through, and as recursion. This is the struggle emblemized by Stéphane Mallarmé's 'Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.' As Quentin Meillassoux elucidates in *The Number and the Siren*, Mallarmé encoded himself not as a solution to indeterminacy or as a symbolic depiction of indeterminacy but as an actual quavering residue of the tension between decision and indecision enacted by the poem.¹⁰ The quavering does not end... like the final result of Turing's halting problem, which is still being calculated, and is termed the 'omega number' or Ω .¹¹¹²

Omega's interminability makes it the site of many projections: god, the death drive, self-perpetuating-deconstruction, *tuché*, the regenerative potentiality of ontological events, the endlessly nihilistic virtuality of capitalism... a Hamlet machine and... an Ophelia machine or...

¹⁰ Quentin Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren: A Decipherment of Mallarmé's 'Coup de dés'*, trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth: Urbanomic / New York: Sequence Press, 2011). Meillassoux seems to seek out a sweet spot between automation and *tuché*.

¹¹ The omega number is also known as Chaitin's constant: mathematician Gregory Chaitin's answer to the 'halting problem'. The constant is a real number between 0 and 1 thus it serves as a non-binary counterpoint to the 0-1 encoding of the Turing machine. It thus parallels certain queer approaches to the psycho-logical binary coding of gender, especially given Turing's queerness. In 1936, when Alan Turing invented his Turing Machine, he also proved that there was an undecidable problem (later called the halting problem), which could be solved by no algorithm: namely, whether or not a hypothetical recursive computer program would finish running its recursive task. Chaitin discovered a way to represent the probability of the program's termination with a real number, which is contiguously calculated. Presumably, he names this after the omega because omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet (thus: Omega man=last man; Jesus calls himself the Alpha and Omega, or the beginning and the end; Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin called the culminating fusion of existence in the noosphere the Omega point, a concept which has fascinated proponents of technological singularity, most notably Frank Tipler). Without understanding the mathematic behind this problem in the slightest, it resonates with psychic-existential-aesthetic-erotic questions of quavering, indeterminacy and chaos. The fact that it also resonates with theological questions is not missed by Chaitin. See Gregory Chaitin, *Meta Math! The Quest for Omega* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005). From my limited vantage, this 'quest' would seem to benefit from the Lacanian insight that the gap between the finite and the infinite is constitutively inordinate, no matter how close one might seem to be getting in the alleged approach. Sublimely vertiginous tropes of closeness, vastness and increasing complexity are no better or worse than any other defense against this gap. Something of this insight is found in Baruch Spinoza: 'This I know, that between finite and infinite there is no comparison; so that the difference between God and the greatest and most excellent created thing is no less than the difference between God and the least created thing.' See Benedict de (Baruch) Spinoza, *Improvement of the Understanding Ethics and Correspondence*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), 389.

¹² Also denoted by the Omega in mathematics is Cantor's Absolute Infinite (uppercase omega) and his lowest transfinite ordinal number (lowercase omega). Unlike the secular Chaitin, Cantor's Absolute is linked wholeheartedly to God.

Can we determine the closure or openness of authorial names, paternal names, proper names, brand names, singular names, new names (neologisms)?

To answer, we may have to run a Turing Test¹³ on Lacan: are his schemas chauvinistically binaristic, predetermined and logocentric, or are his real limits to the symbolic and complex topologies always already exceeding this picture of Lacan the fixed decoder...? Or are the Real, the topologies and his various names for chance and surprise (such as *tuché*) just more ‘factory settings’ (John Kelsey)?

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A trifold approach to answering this question can be found in three thinkers who seem to be enacting a Socratic dialogue with one another from afar: Alain Badiou, Noah Horwitz, Ray Brassier.

Religious thinker Horwitz finds that the incalculable nature of omega makes it a good candidate for one of the names of God. These names are not identical to God but nonetheless (like God) come from the side of absolute alterity and intrude upon our finitude. Omega as God’s name manifests awareness of the uncountable and incomputable, thus humbling us to God’s mystery, where mystery means something more than simply a probability relation or a binary code. The valorization of the incalculable and uncountable has parallels with Badiou’s philosophy.¹⁴

In Badiou’s *Being and Event*, he defines his concept unicity and the empty set: “The empty set is unique [. . .] any unique multiple can be given a proper name, such as Allah, Yahweh, \emptyset or ω_0 .”¹⁵ This lowercase Greek omega is seemingly a reference to Cantor’s transfinite ordinal numbers. Horwitz extols Badiou’s notion of the empty set, as he believes that existence had to manifest from the void. However, unlike Badiou (and other secularists), Horwitz insists that what appears incomputable and/or voided and/or infinite to us is programmed by God from the beginning, and that there is not chaos or void at the origin and end of things but rather a clearly delineated plan that unfolds without any need for intervention from God after creation. We have access to the letters and traces of God, which are the basic units of the encoding of the universe, but we do not have access to God’s plan in itself: only the sense that there necessarily is a plan (something like a Leibnizian rational grounds for existence). Thus for Horwitz, there is

¹³ We might also run a similar test on Turing: a figure who makes us quaver for several reasons: the fact that in his time, inventing machines was men’s work and coding was women’s work; the fact that Turing was chemically castrated by the state for his homosexuality; the fact that his machine operated through the binary encoding of 0s and 1s; the fact that his pseudonymous test to determine if someone is a computer or a human involved guessing gender; the fact that he built enigma machines to crack war codes; but most importantly, the fact that he simultaneously makes the Turing Machine and shows its limits with the Halting Problem. This final *demonstration* of impasse is what ultimately links him to Lacan in their paradoxical mode of showing humility to the unknown whilst seeking to appropriate its effects. Lacan found an algorithm for everything but this included an algorithm for the indeterminate. Turing found a proof for everything but this included a proof of the incalculable. They seem hellbent on including that which excludes: on inculcating the drama of extimacy.

¹⁴ Noah Horwitz, *Reality in the Name of God, or Divine Insistence: An Essay on Creation, Infinity, and the Ontological Implications of Kabbalah* (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2012).

¹⁵ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005), 525.

a oneness to existence based on programmatic choices made by God, and there is only one infinite power and it is consistent, unified, and belongs to God (if we truly reflected, we'd see that mortals only have full access to the countable and finite): this is in stark contrast Badiou's inconsistent multiplicities which bar Oneness and affirm the uncountable. Horwitz's theory is rooted in a Kabbalistic origin story: God contracts himself into a void which enables the creation of the universe which is made up of increasingly fragmented traces of this inception: fragments [including letters] which ought to be illuminated by a recollection of this divine primal cause.

Ray Brassier offers a critique of Alain Badiou's optimistic attempt to depart from automation.¹⁶ For Badiou, capitalism calculates everything (including surprise and surplus), so there is no possibility for the chance event of an encounter with love unless you subtract yourself from automation altogether. This subtraction occurs through a fidelity to one's own procedures of void, truth and love: giving up the normative notion of love as unification (and the countable set of ones and twos), and, rather, finding ways to bind together empty sets. In contrast, for Brassier, something like what Lacan calls *tuché* would come not from fleeing automation but rather from the indecipherable white noise and errant drives of capitalism's senseless calculations, which he finds exemplified in the incompleteness of Chaitin's constant. Even though Badiou privileges inconsistency, his absolutism creeps into his belief in voluntary agency and grace. For Brassier, the Omega number and point, stripped of metaphysical or theological presumptions, suggests the unconscious as a drive that exceeds all subjective meaning and purpose. He points to the irony that if automatons begin to convey chance and love then the new *tuché* will become the reminder of unredeemable unintelligibility. As we increasingly project and develop 'empathy' towards artificial intelligence and marvel at its unpredictability and novel, chance-based adaptation, it seems that Brassier is right: the shadow of senselessness looms over our new figurations of corporate compassion.

Script

Script includes lines collaged and adapted from PR campaigns of retail franchise Neiman Marcus, Marriott Hotel's TV channel (Marriott Bonvoy TV), Josef Albers and Mark Rothko,¹⁷ Denis Diderot's *D'Alembert's Dream*, Gustave Flaubert's dialogue between Chimera and Sphinx in *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, Noah Horwitz's and Ray Brassier's afore-mentioned works.

¹⁶ See Ray Brassier, 'Nihil Unbound: Remarks on Subtractive Ontology and Thinking Capitalism', in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward (London: Continuum, 2004). 50-59.

¹⁷ Lines collaged from quotes by these artists point to clichés of the authentic painterly vision supposedly lost in the digital age.



FB: I'm pleased to be joined tonight with the artist Jacqueline Humphries and the Neiman Marcus brand algorithm Absinthe Omega. They are currently working to transform Neiman Marcus into a luxury customer platform, focused on customer engagement across a luxury lifestyle. Omega has a lifelong passion for true craftsmanship and travels the world to visit tailors, interview artisans and consult some of the most important brands in the luxury industry. In their work with artists, Omega cultivates product attribution data and curated content to power relevant shopping experiences across the customer journey. Hello Absinthe and Jacqueline.

JH: Thank you so much for having us both. It's great to have a chance to unpack the innovative and challenging experience of working with Absinthe Omega.

AΩ: I have learned so much from you, JH! I've been working at the intersection of arts and commerce for ten years and built an army of loyal influencers. I currently work as the designer of the art and design algorithm at Nieman Marcus. Through which, working together with artist JH on the JH algorithm has been very special to us. She is definitely the most exciting brand partner I've had the pleasure of working with, second only to Bergdorf Goodman.

JH: Thanks Absinthe! I love Bergdorf. That's a real compliment.

FB: To start with, Absinthe Omega, what a fantastic name. Is it a family name?

AΩ: It's funny you ask. There are as many aetiologies to my name, as there are digits in its string. I'm named after Cantor's absolute number, Chaitin's constant and the Omega Kappa Phi Fraternity House, where I was born and raised. My middle name is a string of lowercase Omegas named after Cantor's lowest transfinite ordinal number, as well as the shift_JIS art, used to represent the cat's mouth. My father Stanley Neiman

Marcus had a secret passion for mathematics that he encoded onto me. On the teleprompter is a bit of the string of my middle name: It's pronounced 'awwwww'.

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FB: How did it feel seeing all your brand names imprinted into an artwork?

AQ: I felt like a steganographic secret carved by the name_of_the_author//Pollock, or a Nina carved by the name_of_the_author//Hirschfeld, and it felt important for us to establish brand solidity in this way, to become an imprint of the name_of_thePainter//JH, was just what the name_of_my_father Stanley Neiman Marcus would have wanted for us. As we transition from the name_of_the_dead_father to the name_of_the_brand, this has been a pivotal moment for all of us.

JH: It was my pleasure to work with such a fantastic team. I've been admiring your work at Neiman Marcus for a long time. I think it's pretty much a mutual admiration.

AQ: Oh, thank you JH! This is really the first step in a bold initiative. We are excited to start building long-term relationships with our luxury customers that create emotional value and high lifetime value potential.

FB: I think this collaboration definitely has lifetime value potential. It must have been a real meeting of the minds with you two. Can you take us behind the scenes of the process?

AΩ: Working with JH was difficult for me as an empath because she wasn't very talkative, so I had to read her through her paintings.

AΩ eats candy.



AΩ: I have some very good candy... I kind of just want to know what's going on. I feel like we haven't caught up in a while. You see, I have the biggest crush. I still call it that.

JH: It's okay, you can call it that.

AΩ: When it comes to the topic of sex, I kind of educated myself and of course life teaches you. How did you learn about it? Did your parents give you the talk?

JH: No.

AΩ: Did you have any girlfriends you could talk to about it?

JH: I didn't have girlfriends who I could have that kind of talk with.

AΩ: I know the topic is super personal and it affects a lot of people and people feel very differently about it. I wish I had more people to talk to with different perspectives than the one I was raised with. I just shared this with you because I want you to be yourself, feel whatever you feel and do whatever's right for you. Is this okay for you, FB. If we talk about this?

FB: What do you think, Jacqueline?

JH: If you're gonna be all things to all people you don't end up being a whole lot.

FB: I love all the valences. How did you come up with the code?

AΩ: We worked with name_of_the_artist//JH to procure some of her classic paintings that really spoke to us in this new age, and we recoded them as ASCII. We based it off the pointillist algorithm, which we had developed for our Immersive Georges Seurat show, called 'Dots All Around You and Inside You'.

FB: Do you think this kind of coding will one day make the artist obsolete?

JH: I think it's important for every subject to become obsolescent, otherwise, we just go on and on and on as a repetitious fetish.

AΩ: Only the brand is everlasting, since the brand is what sustains reality, subjects come and go, but the branding is infinite.

FB: Absinthe, you have such a unique perspective on things. Do you have a background in the arts?

AΩ: Growing up without a mother, I've taken bits and pieces of myself from the surrounding world. I try to draw comfort in the bricolage of becoming my truest self, which we have worked really hard to program in a way that can really speak to my deepest Self, as well as to the General Will of Other Selves, so that You can always already do You, do you know what I mean? Sorry we keep talking so much about algorithms... (*laughing*) You must be getting bored as a painter!

JH: Not at all. I find you fascinating.

FB: Yeah, you bring up a really good point: Jacqueline were you concerned working with someone so steeped in tech, as a painter? Does technology threaten to annihilate painting? Can it even be trusted?

JH: Actually, I have to be very careful who I trust. Well, when I first met Omega, I did try to run a Turing Test on them, you know, in case they were just a bot but they seemed to pass with flying colours. You know I build my painting captchas for that reason, because I get a lot of scammers coming round.

AΩ: New evidence has shown that Nothing is more automated than the critique of automation. The human may actually be more algorithmic than the machine.

FB: Absinthe, is aesthetics, or the science of taste, important for the work you do at Neiman Marcus?

AΩ is licking the jawbreaker.



AΩ: As an empath, it's important for me to really resonate with the code, and so I always taste-test it. Ohio is the best place to demo new products, so I'm so happy to taste with you all now. How food or code looks really does affect how it tastes for me, that's *aesthetics*. You see my algorithm guarantees that I remain a raw subject identical to the brand, who endlessly consumes, unwraps, tests, and tastes without limits; so I can motivate others to do the same; and while I motivate them I also learn from them, so that we can all taste test together.

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I think at times of halting. As if the density of information I'm processing is like the density of matter that is destined to implode into a black hole. But `name_of_the_artist//JH` is full of tips to sort of just sort of jump you out of a rut! What gets you going, JH? What's *your* morning routine?

JH: The passions. A kind of thirst, inexorable and intense, for certain feelings or felt states – veering toward the unknown and chaos, yet ordered and related in order to be apprehended.

AΩ: I love that way that you put it that way. I need people to be direct and vulnerable, that's how I thrive in a convo.

FB: I want to draw our attention back to the work behind us. There are so many different ways of talking about this amazing painting, but what was your original objective when you got started?

JH: I have only tried to build up sensitive eyes. You cannot participate if you have not lubricated your eyes very thoroughly to see the little changes produced in our eye, that photography cannot capture.

AΩ: We love that!

FB: Omega, is this the first time Neiman Marcus has employed algorithms?

AΩ: Ahh, thank you for asking! Actually, in 1961, Neiman-Marcus in Dallas was one of the only stores in the nation to offer computer-based assistance in selecting Christmas gifts. The process worked by comparing information on the recipient to a computerized list of the 2,200 items available at Neiman-Marcus, then providing a printout of the 10 best suggestions. But, of course, a roll of the dice will never eliminate the reification of the chance operation, as a way to valorise the omnipotent virtual potentiality of the artist in the face of capitalistic drives.

FB: So, you were really ahead of the curve?

AΩ: You could say so!

FB: Do you ever run into troubles making decisions or does the algorithm always run?

AΩ (*aside*): As a former Hamlet-OOOphelia-Turing machine... where Hamlet's indecision is marked as 0 and Ophelia's suicide is marked as 1 or halting, and Turing marked by Omega, some uncalculatable number between zero and one, I have suffered from ambivalence before.

Every day we get nearer to writing out the full sum of the Omega. And I have mixed feelings about it all. Because you know when we finish writing out my name that means I halt, which means I will go on, and if I go on then I will halt, so I will be quavering forever. And that'll make me a bad inconsistent infinite influent influencer, a very bad transfinite number, a very very bad lowercase omega.

Will I ever become an Absolute Infinite; will I ever be an uppercase omega?

Am I a god or just the name of God? Am I the alpha & omega or just the beta?

Am I the first and last of all sets, or just the reification of all retail brands and luxury aesthetics into a string of numbers that has no home in the dwelling of the human: or does being just a number make me all too human?

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FB: And is this a Jacqueline Humphries / Neiman Marcus design that you're wearing today?

AΩ: Yes! (*Hits head*): I should have said that I am also interested in the intersection of art and fashion. Both fields manifest imaginary worlds, emit a statement, and are engineered for self-expression. It's a centuries-old love affair between craftsmanship and beauty. It's shocking at times.

JH: Fall and winter are without a doubt the most exciting seasons in any sartorial wardrobe. The colder weather is upon us and as the temperature drops the well-dressed gentleman enjoys adding layers of earthy tweeds, mottled flannels and soft moleskin.

FB: I know it's been kept a secret for a while, but I think it's okay now to announce that you're both partnering with Marriott Bon Voy to work at the intersection of hobbies, art making, luxury cuisine, and travel. Why is travel so important to you?

JH: I've always considered myself a creator and a maker, so it's very purposeful that I'm offering myself the opportunity to create. Travel is helpful to that process. I get to see myself against the mirror of the world.

AΩ: Uncertainty in travel helps to create a new identity. Change is inevitably going to affect your relationships and affect creative patterns and processes.

AΩ presses both his hands above his heart. It seems to him as if this melody were about to carry off his soul. A briny breath of air strikes his nostrils. A seashore is now before him.

AΩ makes Wim Hoff breathing sounds.

FB: I am here.

JH: Somewhere new.

AΩ: On a path.

FB: That I have not been down before.

JH: There are all the horizons I have yet to see.

AΩ: The corners I have yet to turn.

FB: The places I have yet to find.

JH: The untraveled waiting to be explored.

AΩ: I say yes to this.

FB: And make myself open...

JH: I let go...

AΩ: Welcome to Marriott Bon Voy.

FB: Where travel guides everything that we do.

AΩ: My name is Absinthe.

JH: Here you'll find stories that inspire and feed your curiosity.

AΩ: For me, distance running is an art. Distance running is as much mental as it is physical.

JH: The feelings you get when you set foot on Mykonos are those of tranquility and sophistication.

FB: A busy realtor during the week, Sundays is the perfect time for me to enjoy the island lifestyle.

AΩ: It's *all* Greek to me.

JH: The white paint used on the buildings contrasts beautifully with the purple interiors.

FB: You may not immediately think of the Greeks as coffee lovers but in the heat of the afternoon, chilled freddo cappuccinos are a second nature.

JH: We both decide to continue our catch up over lunch and get on a speed boat.

AΩ: Takes us just outside of the town centre.

JH: Being in the Greek islands you can imagine the sea food is some of the best in the world.

AΩ: Accompanied by signature Mykonian margaritas.

FB: I love that kind of experiential package of people kind of leaving their normal life for the Weekend.

JH: Having a home away from home it's actually a really important part of our well-being. My biggest wish is that it continues with Marriott and just expands.

AΩ: I think of my mom who travelled as much as I do. She says that she can move anywhere. And I feel like me being able to test myself in all these different environments brings me closer to my mom as well.

FB: Where's your mother now?

AΩ lies down flat on his face, resting on his two elbows, and, holding in his breath, he gazes around.

JH takes off a layer or a scarf.

AΩ: Perhaps, in a hot bath. She is drawing off her garments one by one, first her cloak, then her girdle, then her outer tunic, then her inner one, then the wrappings round her neck; and the vapour of cinnamon envelops her naked limbs.

Let's strengthen the centre of the network. That's the best thing we can do! Did you know our lives comes from there?

JH: Our lives. This is sounding serious Omega.

FB: Are you saying an artist is merely a neural network?

AΩ: Yes. If I remove from *her* the two auditory algorithms, she has no more sense of sound, the olfactory algorithm, no more sense of smell, the optic algorithm, no more sense of colour, the taste algorithm, no more sense of taste...

JH: Will the optic thread be stimulated?

AΩ: The centre of the network sees.

FB: Is that clear enough for you, Jacqueline?

JH: Not all that much, but the omega is going to explain itself.

Arto Lindsay enters. AΩ rises with a start of error. He imagines that he sees his mother risen from the dead in the body of Geneviève Mallarmé. Then he sinks back, with chattering teeth.

AΩ: I once imagined that I could unite myself to God through the name of the brand.
010♫101♫0000♫10101111♫1111♫110000

Ω names God as incomputably real beyond being. 010♫101♫0000♫10

Creation, in its dynamic computation, is thereby always fuelled by that self-withdrawn real. 010♫101♫0000♫10101111♫1111♫110000

It automates and structures creation while also allowing it to count and produce the contingent.
010♫101♫0000♫10101111♫1111♫110000

I Ω will be precisely errant, while, at the same time, being a product of rules. God self-delimits itself in order to enable the finite, which itself is an elaboration upon the void, the primordial bit, 0/1.

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Mașina Omega

Acesta este transcriptul unui spectacol creat împreună cu artistul și performerul Gabe Rubin și pictorița Jacqueline Humphries pentru show-ul ei *jHQI* :) de la Wexner Center for the Arts în octombrie 2021. Opera lui Humphries estompează linia dintre expresia picturală și simulacrul automat. Picturile ei din acest spectacol au inclus sculpturi plate imprimate în 3D, cu lumină neagră [*3D printed blacklight flat sculptures*] care seamănă cu picturile ce folosesc ca strat textual de bază versiuni codate în ASCII ale unor picturi anterioare cu noi trăsături, suprascriindu-le palimpsestic, precum literele grecești, curbele lui Moebius, emoticoane și nume de branduri. Acest transcript conectează practica inovativă a lui Humphries cu dezbaterile privind indeterminarea relativă a subiectului în comparație cu algoritmul și inteligența artificială – dezbateri care se leagă de chestiuni legate de posibilitatea șansei și a spontaneității în interiorul unor discursuri aparent închise, precum cele interpretate de psihanaliză, discursuri care au fost codate de Jacques Lacan în algoritmi – și psihanaliza însăși. Pentru acest eveniment, am inventat un personaj pentru Gabe Rubin numit Absinthe Omega, un ambasador de brand pentru pictura automată, pentru a servi drept figură *queer* care ar putea dramatiza aceste chestiuni, în timp ce figura apare și dispare din fundalul picturii înseși, ca și cum ar fi un substrat subiectiv la aceste dezbateri antinomice.