7 short observations on the Fetch – Jerome Fletcher

1. This work was conceived of as an exercise in repetition – repetition and difference.

The fetch is a wraith – the folkloric doppelganger that appears as a premonition of somebody’s death. As with all spectres, this double has a long memory. (Artaud)

The Fetch passage is pastiche – itself a form of repetition which is not a repetition.

The Fetch passage is performance. Over against Antoine Artaud, Rebecca Schneider suggests that performance can be approached not as that which disappears, but ‘as both the act of remaining and a means of reappearance’ (2001).

2. The fetch execute cycle is the basic process in any computational operation. It describes the mechanism by which the control unit fetches an instruction from the computer’s memory, which is then stored in the instruction register and there decoded for execution.

In this work, a double text is fetched from the Internet as a repetition but different. The web text repeats the fixed text but also differs from it. There is a constant repetition of a fragment of text, but it signifies differently because of the contextual shift. This is a haunting – the fixed text is haunted by the fetched text as both a repetition, a doppelganger and not-a-repetition – a wraith of the disappeared text.

Motif is born of repetition and the patterning that emerges from repetition. In this work, doubling itself becomes a motif as the process of doubling is repeated in a discernible and significant pattern. Thus the motif is a mode of performance not a packet of content.

4. The daughter who walks on her father’s feet. She is a doppelganger, literally a double-walker. She seeks to repeat her father’s steps –

‘ trembling and whining like a child, clicking his heels on the ground in rhythms that echo the automatism of liberated consciousness, this moment of concealment behind his own reality – what is being described here is an almost universal sense of fear.’

This from Antoine Artaud’s *Theatre and its Double*

Physical effort engendered and articulated through muscular gestures constitute an effigy of another effort, […] Making use of emotions in the same way that a wrestler makes use of his muscles: this requires seeing the human as a Double, a perpetual spectre radiating affective powers.

– there is a moment however, when the walk becomes a dance. This is the point at which the foot is raised beyond the point which is natural for walking – a wholly puritanical calculation.

‘All true effigies are doubled by a shadow’ In that moment the spectre of desire rises between the two figures. And desire is always implicated in, folded into, repetition. “Again, again!” says the child, until the parent calls a halt.

5. Double description

In chapter 3 of his 1979 book, *Mind and Nature*, Gregory Bateson draws “…the reader’s attention to a number of cases in which two or more information sources come together to give information of a sort different from what was in either source separately.” (Bateson, 1979: 21)

A classic example of this process is that of binocular vision. Humans, and indeed all primates, can perceive what is in front of us with both of our eyes due to our overlapping fields of view. However, the image that settles on the retina of each eye is two-dimensional on the left-right, up-down axis. This means that it is not possible to perceive depth, ie the distance ahead of us, with one eye only. Depth is created out of the combination in the brain of the images from the two eyes simultaneously. The information from our two retinas is fused such that we experience a single image the sensation of depth in a forward direction is created. However, the information that enters each of the eyes differs. It is not an exact repetition. And it is the difference between the information streams that generates the depth perception. According to Bateson, “the two-eyed way of seeing is itself an act of comparison.” (Bateson, 1979: 87) The act of comparison rests upon a perception of what is both the same and what is different. “From this new sort of information, the seer adds an extra *dimension* of seeing.” Thus this is more than just repetition and comparison. The process results in significant additionality. Moiré patterns and simultaneous beats are further examples of the additionality generated thus.

6. The Theatre and its double – Artaud, found text and the recontextualisation of repetition.

Artaud dreamed of an impossible theatre that never repeats itself, nor anything else: ‘Not a reflection of the written word, not a mere projection of physical doubles conjured up by a linguistic text, but rather an incandescent projection of all possible outcomes of gesture, word, sound, music and their hybrids.’

‘The stage will no longer operate as the repetition of a present, will no longer represent a present that would exist elsewhere and prior to it, a present whose plenitude would be older than it, absent from it, and rightfully capable of doing without it’ (Derrida 1967)

7. ‘Modern life is such that, confronted with the most mechanical, the most stereotypical repetitions, inside and outside ourselves, we endlessly extract from them little differences, variations and modifications. Conversely, secret, disguised and hidden repetitions, animated by the perpetual displacement of a difference, restore bare, mechanical and stereotypical repetitions, within and without us. In simulacra, repetition already plays upon repetitions, and difference already plays upon differences. Repetitions repeat themselves, while the differentiator differentiates itself. The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed.’

That wasn’t me, by the way. That was me repeating Gilles Deleuze, or rather performing Deleuze.

Fragments of a conclusion:

Doubling. - Somewhere between metaphor and a motif.

Motif and repetition –

The allure of the repetition which is part of a completely different context.

Pattern – we are set up to recognise patterns.

Is there such a thing as a single instance of a motif? This would make no sense. Is this a difference between metaphor and motif?

The repetition which is not a repetition – Gregory Bateson.

Pastiche as repetition – the text which is not a text.

3 sections of the text. 1 – 3 – 4

Repetition and difference – the essence of double description.

Pattern is repetition, therefore motif.   
Series and sequence.

Found text as repetition. Fetched text as repetition. Instructional repetition.