

# COMPLEXIONS WHICH FORMS THE SIGHTINGS OF A TRACE

A brief history of The Hollow Earth  
and some reflections on the project and exhibition called  
*Almost through the theory of a whole*

By

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### **Short introduction**

To give a short background of my project, I will give a brief summary of the history of different theories of Earth being hollow. I want to start by noting that this history is mostly contained in literature, where non-fiction and fiction blend together and build a sort of mythology. I also want to note that it is a Western history. Although it appropriates influences from non-western traditions, it is still a history mostly written in, by and for the ‘western’ world – and in many parts quite problematic. It is also a history mostly written by men. This can be seen through ideas that express colonialism, racism, misogyny, romanticism of ancient and lost civilizations, e.t.c.. Although a critical perspective towards this western centric perspective will be slightly present in this essay, it is not the main goal of my text . Instead it is something I will attempt to explore in future projects. Still, I want to bring this up as a way to activate this perspective you, the reader of this text.

As mentioned, the history of the hollow earth is mostly a written one, and instead of disentangling the history itself (which would need a proper essay on its own) I will try and give a short timeline of texts that are recurring in its literary canon with some short comments for each.

In the second section of this essay I write about some theories and concepts that has been important in the work with my exhibition and project (called *Almost through the theory of a whole*) and how I see them in relation to the research and resulting artworks.

## *A brief history of The Hollow Earth*

### **1692 – *An Account of the cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetic Needle; with an Hypothesis of the Structure of the Internal Parts of the Earth.*<sup>1</sup>**

A conjecture written by scientist and astronomer Edmond Halley, published through the Royal Society of London. Halley proposes that Earth is consisting of not one sphere, but several spheres inside the other. He also proposes that it would be plausible that these inner spheres would be inhabited by plants, animals and human-like creatures.

### **1818 – *Symmes' Circular No. 1, 1818*<sup>2</sup>**

In 1818, John Cleves Symmes Jr., a U.S. Army officer, published a circular that declared that Earth was hollow and inhabitable within with big holes in the polar regions, leading into the Earth. His theory is very similar to Halley, but with the main addition of polar openings. Symmes called for an expedition to the North Pole, but this expedition never came to. Symmes' made public lectures on the subject frequently, but never published any books on his theories. Two followers of his teachings (James McBride and Jeremiah N. Reynolds) published books and articles on the matter.

### **1819 – *Symzonia: A Voyage of Discovery*<sup>3</sup>**

Novel published under the pseudonym Captain Adam Seaborn. The novel portrays an expedition through a polar opening, into the inhabitable world inside. The book is often perceived as a satire of Symmes' theories.

### **1864 – *Journey to the Center of the Earth*<sup>4</sup>**

Science fiction and adventure novel by french writer Jules Verne. The story revolves around an expedition into the interior of the Earth, entering through a volcano on Iceland. Inside the expedition encounter subterranean rivers, crystal caves, pre-historic animals and gigantic mushrooms – and humanlike beings – among other things.

### **1871 – *The Coming Race*<sup>5</sup> (also known as *Vril, the Power of the Coming Race*)**

Novel by the English writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton, although the book was first published anonymously. The story is presented as a retelling of the experiences of the unnamed protagonist of the book, where he falls down a mine shaft and encounter an underground race of humanoids called the Vril-ya. In the book the Vril-ya is a highly advanced civilization that possibly survived the biblical flood and/or possibly evolved from frogs. The Vril-ya make use of a mystical power called Vril. The force of Vril is portrayed as (to the human civilization) a yet undiscovered natural force or resource, that can be used as a source of energy, a weapon, influencing minds and propel flying machines – among other things. The novel also goes into details of the Vril-ya's civilization and culture, portraying it as superior to the human. As the protagonist manages to return to the surface, he is also returning with a warning: that sooner or later the Vril-ya will travel to the surface and obliterate humanity, as it is seen as pitiful, barbaric and pathetic. The novel became a big success and was highly popular in England during the late 1800s.

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<sup>1</sup> Edmond Halley, "An Account of the cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetic Needle; with an Hypothesis of the Structure of the Internal Parts of the Earth" in *Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society of London*, No. 195, (London: Royal Society of London, 1692)

<sup>2</sup> General Catalog of American Antiquarian Society, n.d., *Catalog Record #307790*, <https://catalog.mwa.org/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=307790> [accessed 2021-11-16]

<sup>3</sup> Captain Adam Seaborn, *Symzonia: Voyage of Discovery* (New York: Arno Press, 1975)

<sup>4</sup> Jules Verne, *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905)

<sup>5</sup> Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871)

### **1877 – *Isis Unveiled*<sup>6</sup>**

Written by Helena Blavatsky, one of the founders of Theosophical Society, the book is a key text in the Theosophic movement. *Isis Unveiled* (and her 1888 book *The Secret Doctrine*) served as a huge influence on western esotericism.<sup>7</sup> The book also makes reference to Bulwer-Lytton's novels and specifically discusses the vril-force featured in *The Coming Race* – using the fictional force as an example of what she claims to be an actual occult force in existence.<sup>8</sup>

### **1906 – *The Phantom of the Poles*<sup>9</sup>**

The book, written by William Reed, proposes a similar theory as Symmes', but with a focus on the polar openings. While Reed is vague and speculative concerning what the inner earth actually contains, several of his arguments follow that there are at least plant and animal life inhabiting the inside.

### **1895 – *Etidorhpa*<sup>10</sup>**

Written by pharmacognocist John Uri Lloyd the novel (presented as an account of actual events) tells the story of a man on a journey through a cave in Kentucky, further down into the Earth, led by a strange humanoid being. Inside he encounters strange natural and otherworldly phenomena. The novel contains themes of spiritism, freemasonry and alchemy – and can be read as an allegory for an inner psychological or esoteric journey.

### **1913 – *A Journey to the Earth's Interior; or, Have the Poles Really Been Discovered*<sup>11</sup>**

In the book, author Marshall B. Gardner builds upon the theories of Symmes and Reed, but argues against a hollow earth that consists of concentric spheres. Instead he argues that our planet consists of only one hollow shell – but with the addition of there being a small internal sun resting at the center of the hollow.

### **1914 – *At the Earth's Core*<sup>12</sup>**

Written by Edgar Rice Burroughs (most famous as author of the series of books about Tarzan) the novel is the first of a series of novels that tells stories from the world Pellucidar, a world inhabiting the hollow of the earth. Pellucidar contains a perpetual central sun, pre-historic plants and animals (such as sabre tooth tigers and dinosaurs) – but also humanoid primates of different sorts. Some of these are humans, albeit described as 'primitive'; others are described as more ape-like and seem to have evolved from apes in a different path than humans. The humanoid/primate 'races' are enslaved and dominated by a species of highly intelligent winged dinosaurs called Mahars – similar in appearance to a pterosaurs. The Mahars also possess telepathic powers. The first book in the series tells the story of two men from the surface of the earth who accidentally, when trying out a newly invented drilling vehicle, burrow down through the outer shell of the Earth and resurface in Pellucidar.

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<sup>6</sup> Helena Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled, Vol. I: Science* (New York: The Theosophic Company, 1877)

<sup>7</sup> A.L. Bader, "Review of *Through a Glass Darkly: Spiritualism in the Browning Circle* by Katherine H. Porter; Bulwer-Lytton's Novels and 'Isis Unveiled' by S. B. Liljegren" in *Victorian Studies* vol. 2 no. 2 (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1958) p. 183-184

<sup>8</sup> Helena Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled, Vol. I: Science* (New York: The Theosophic Company, 1877), p. 125-126

<sup>9</sup> William Reed, *The Phantom of the Poles* (New York: Walter S. Rockey Company, 1906)

<sup>10</sup> John Uri Lloyd, *Etidorhpa* (Cincinnati: Self Published, 1895)

<sup>11</sup> Marshall B. Gardner, *A Journey to the Earth's Interior; or, Have the Poles Really Been Discovered* (Aurora, Illinois: Self published, 1913)

<sup>12</sup> Edgar Rice Burroughs, *At The Earth's Core* (New York: Nelson Doubleday Inc., 1914)

### **1943/1945 – *A Warning to Future Man & I Remember Lemuria***

In 1943 a letter by Richard S. Shaver was published in the science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*. The letter spoke of an ancient mother tongue, called *mantong*, that was the basis for all modern languages – and decoding our present language with *mantong* would also work as a proof that the myth of the legend of Atlantis was true.<sup>13</sup> The editor of the magazine, Raymond A. Palmer, showed interest in the letter and wrote back, asking for more information. Shaver compiled his information in a long letter with the title *A Warning to Future Man*. He stated that he, through telepathic transmissions, had received information about an ancient civilization of beings that once lived inside the earth, and that these beings were spacefaring aliens. The letter was rewritten into a science fiction adventure story, titled *I Remember Lemuria*, and published in *Amazing Stories* in 1945.<sup>14</sup> This was the starting point to what became known as *The Shaver Mystery*. It is hard to describe the complex mythos that it encompasses, but in short it tells of how the alien civilization abandoned Earth a long time ago, but that some of their descendants are still living in the ancient cave civilization inside Earth. Most of those left behind have become deprived and are a threat to humans. They are sadistic beings called *dero* who enjoy kidnapping and torture of human beings and influence the outside world with negative telepathy, which is the cause of war, violence and conflict on the surface. *The Shaver Mystery* was widely promoted by Palmer in his magazine, and also in the magazine he subsequently was editor of, such as *Flying Saucers Magazine*, *Fate Magazine* and *Search Magazine*. Palmer also merged earlier hollow earth-ideas with the Shaver Mystery such as openings in the polar regions and later also ideas like that of Walter Siegmeister.

### **1960 – *Flying Saucers from the Earth's Interior*<sup>15</sup>**

Written by Walter Siegmeister (under the pen name Raymond Bernard) the book proposes that the origin of flying saucers or is not from outer space, but rather coming from the inside of the hollow earth. According to Siegmeister flying saucers began appearing in the 1940s because of the development of the nuclear bomb – something that made the highly advanced inner earth civilization worried about the planets future. This inner earth civilization has the capacity of exterminating the human race with its deadly weapons: and will do so if the threat of nuclear destruction of the planet would become too big. It should be noted that this idea is very similar to the narrative in Bulwer-Lyttons *The Coming Race*. Siegmeisters writings became a link between older hollow earth theories, UFOs and the New Age movement. In 1964 he also published the book *The Hollow Earth*, further expanding on these ideas.

### **1974 – *Secret of the Ages: UFOs from Inside the Earth*<sup>16</sup>**

In the book, ufologist Brinsley Le Poer Trench promotes a Siegmeister-style of theory of a hollow earth – but also delving further into myths of ancient civilizations (such as Atlantis, Lemuria, Agharta, Mu) and ancient astronauts (the idea of alien beings visiting Earth throughout history).

### **1982 – *The Lost World of Agharti: The Mystery of Vril Power*<sup>17</sup>**

Alec Maclellan bears some similarities with his somewhat contemporary writers Siegmeister and Trench – especially in his focus on now lost and forgotten advanced civilizations. Still, he is not a

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<sup>13</sup> Richard S. Shaver “An Ancient Language?” in *Amazing Stories*, vol. 18, no.1, January 1944 (Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1944), p. 206-207

<sup>14</sup> Richard S. Shaver “I Remember Lemuria” in *Amazing Stories*, vol. 19, no. 1, March 1945 (Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1945), p. 12-71

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Bernard, *Flying Saucers from the Earth's Interior* (Mokelumne Hill, CA: Health Research, 1960)

<sup>16</sup> Brinsley Le Poer Trench, *Secret of the Ages: UFOs from inside the Earth* (London: Souvenir Press Ltd., 1974)

<sup>17</sup> Alec Maclellan, *The Lost World of Agharti: The Mystery of Vril Power* (London: Souvenir Press, 1982)

proponent of the complete hollow earth, but rather advocates for an enormous global cave system that has been the home for an advanced civilization with roots in Atlantis and Lemuria (and similar lost civilizations).

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This very brief literary history of how the hollow earth is, as I have hinted at earlier, much more complex. The connections and entanglements between the different texts throughout this history is not that apparent, but hopefully this timeline with its short summaries give some context of what sort of subjects and themes the history of the hollow earth contains.

If I would summarize an outline of the most common theories in my own words: the general idea is that Earth is hollow (either completely hollow or with enormous cave systems) and that there are another humanoid species living inside of it. They are usually portrayed as a non-violent, non-aggressive and highly advanced civilization. If threatened in some way of what is happening on the surface of the Earth they would not doubt to use their advanced technology against us humans.



Front cover of Amazing Stories vol. 18, no. 1 Jan, 1944  
featuring *I Remember Lemuria* by Richard S. Shaver

**Some reflections on the project and exhibition  
called *Almost through the theory of a whole.***

*A way of understanding things.*

What is something that is knowable? French philosopher and theorist Michel Serres proposes that the “only things that are known or knowable are what are called phenomena”.<sup>18</sup> But where does a phenomena come from, what is its origin? Serres means that the ground for every phenomena, the wellspring that they rise out of, is *noise*. Noise here is not only to be understood as a disturbance or disruption, but as a sort of ground or *fond* that works as a below, behind or background to everything – it is the ultimate ground, the before of every phenomena:

White noise never stops, it is limitless, continuous, perpetual, unchangeable. It has no grounding [fond] itself, no opposite. (...) Noise is not a phenomenon, all phenomena separate from it, figures on a ground [fond], as a light in the fog, as any message, cry, call, signal must each separate from the hubbub that fills the silence, just to be, to be perceived, sensed, known, exchanged. As soon as there is a phenomenon, it leaves noise, as soon as an appearance arises, it does so by masking the noise.<sup>19</sup>

This means that all we know, encountered through phenomena, is to be understood as separated from this background. We cannot perceive this ultimate ground, background or fond in itself, but only what has left it. The fond itself is too complex and overloaded with information for us to perceive. For us to perceive the phenomena it has to take some sort of shape, take *form*; “Form – information that is phenomenal – arises from chaos-white noise; what is knowable and what is known are born of that unknown.”<sup>20</sup>

Us making sense of the world – our perception of forms of phenomena – is the perception of these bits and pieces that arise out of that wellspring of endless possibilities. Even though we cannot perceive the totality, the (back)ground – this largest and most complex of multiplicities – the phenomena that take form does point us towards it. We must understand this enormous well, this sea, as holding the infinite possibilities of everything:

The noise, anarchic, clamoring, mottled, striped, streaked, variegated, mixed, crossed, piebald multiplicity is possibility itself. It is a set of possible things, it can be the set of possible things.

It is not strength, it is the very opposite of power, but it is capacity. This noise is the opening. The Ancients were right to think chaos a gaping abyss. The multiple is open and from it is born nature always being born. We cannot foresee what will be born of it. We cannot know what is in it, here or there. No one knows, no one has ever known, no one will ever know how possibilities co-exist and how they co-exist with a possible relation.<sup>21</sup>

In information theory, the hierarchy between message and information is quite different from Serres ‘metaphysical’ understanding of noise. Here noise can be understood as in opposition to information or a message:

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<sup>18</sup> Michel Serres “Noise”, in *SubStance*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Issue 40: Determinism, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) p. 54

<sup>19</sup> Serres, 1984, p. 50

<sup>20</sup> Serres, 1984, p. 54

<sup>21</sup> Serres, 1984, p. 56

From classical theories of information, (...) noise is perceived as the shadow of or resistance to a signal being passed between two points in a system, from a sender to a receiver. In a technical system of communication, therefore, the aim is to maximize the signal-to-noise ratio, to attain the most perfect possible transmission of the message. Nevertheless, no technical system is ever perfect, and there are no messages free of their accompanying characteristic forms of noise or interference.<sup>22</sup>

Michel Serres concept of noise is not in direct opposition with the knowable, rather it can be seen as knowledge in different stages – as possibility, before and after taking form, before and after becoming a phenomena. The knowable is therefore not in opposition to noise. In information theory the message is in opposition to noise, something that is to be fought and minimized. What unites the two theories is that noise is inevitable. It envelopes everything: whether it is the knowable, phenomena, messages or information. Another thing that unites these two perspectives is that it is the something that is *not* the knowable/phenomena/information:

(...) what any system necessarily excludes as noise are all the levels of organization above and below it that include its own conditions of possibility (...). Noise is indeed static or interference but not that of an unorganized chaos so much as patterns of organization alien to the norms of a specific system (...).<sup>23</sup>

#### *A way of connecting things.*

In his 1960 book *Synchronicity – An Acausal Connecting Principle*, the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung presented his proposed idea of synchronicity. He developed the concept in relation to the word ‘synchronism’, but it has a different meaning. Synchronism is something happening in unison, in ‘sync’; synchronicity, however, is “a coincidence in time of two or more casually unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning”.<sup>24</sup> He further explains that the term means “the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful in parallels to the momentary subjective state”.<sup>25</sup> As an example of synchronicity given by Jung was during a treatment session with a woman that had dreamt of being given a golden scarab:

While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, a scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*), which contrary to its usual habits had evidently felt an urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment.<sup>26</sup>

The relationship between the dream of the patient and the beetle appearing at the window do not seem to have a causal relationship, but *seems* both connected and important at that specific moment

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<sup>22</sup> Goddard, Michael, Halligan, Benjamin & Hegarty, Paul, “Introduction”, in *Reverberations: The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Noise*, (London: Continuum, 2012) p. 3

<sup>23</sup> Goddard, et al., 2012, s. 3

<sup>24</sup> C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) p. 25

<sup>25</sup> Jung, 2010, p. 25

<sup>26</sup> Jung, 2010, p. 22



(although *how* it would be important is not at all obvious). When you experience a synchronicity it is important to note that the meaningful connection is appearing *through you* since there is no apparent cause and effect-relationship between the different events that seem to be symbolically connected.. They are fully separate events. But the meaningfulness of the two events is still true, but only from out of yourself and your experience.

### *A way of thinking things*

Before delving further into the accounts of my project I also would like to shortly talk about a concept, or rather a collection of similar concepts. All of them are somewhat rooted in esoteric or occult philosophies and act as a sort of bridge between non-physical and physical phenomena.

First I would like to mention the concept of *thought-forms*. The book *Thought-Forms* (1905) by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater (both active theosophists and members of the Theosophic Society) is wholly devoted to the concept of thought-forms and tries to give an account of what they are and what they can look like. The basic thought of the book, which also mirrors basic understandings in Theosophy, is that reality as we normally see it is not reality as it is:

Each man travels through space enclosed within a cage of his own building, surrounded by a mass of the forms created by his habitual thoughts. Through this medium he looks out upon the world, and naturally he sees everything tinged with its predominant colours, and all rates of vibration which reach him from without are more or less modified by its rate. Thus until the man learns complete control of thought and feeling, he sees nothing as it really is, since all his observations must be made through this medium, which distorts and colours everything like badly-made glass.<sup>27</sup>

We are not going to delve too deep into this matter, but the importance here is that there are aspects of the world, aspects that are *more true*, that we ordinarily do not see or experience. These aspects are not readily available to each and every one of us, but rather the ones that have the ability of clairvoyance and a certain sensitivity to these matters. A clairvoyant person is also much more probable to actually see thought-forms.

Within the Theosophic tradition the world around us steeped in elemental essence, a “strange half-intelligent life which surrounds us in all directions”.<sup>28</sup> This matter responds and interacts with our thoughts and emotions, “every impulse sent out [...] immediately clothes itself in a temporary vehicle of this vitalised matter.”<sup>29</sup> This is the thought-forms. In short: thought forms are thoughts and emotions – visible for those who are psychically sensible enough to see them. It is important to emphasize that the thought-forms are not something imagined, but “representations of forms actually observed”.<sup>30</sup>

The thought-forms take different shape and acts in different ways depending on the thoughts and feelings of the person they are emanating from. Form, color and definition is dependent on these factors. There are three basic sort of thought-forms described in the book: (1) that which takes the image of the thinker, (2) that which take the image of some material object, and (3) that which takes a form entirely its own.

In short: thought-forms are the actual forms of thoughts – thoughts visible to the naked (clairvoyant) eye.

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<sup>27</sup> Besant, Annie & Leadbeater, C. W., *Thought-Forms* (London and Benares: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1905) p. 26f

<sup>28</sup> Besant, et al. 1905 , p. 25

<sup>29</sup> Besant, et al. 1905 , p. 25

<sup>30</sup> Besant, et al. 1905 , p. 40

### Understanding and connecting

For me as an artist, and in my artistic practice, there are certain elements of meaningfulness in Serres' concept of noise and phenomena and Jung's concept of synchronicity that are connected. Both describe concepts of how we perceive things as meaningful and how we understand the world that surrounds us. Both also describe a meeting of the self and the world, how the world isn't something that is totally separate from us, but instead is in a sort of feedback-relationship. The self's inner world and thoughts and the outer world's occurrences meet and they can be seen as influencing each other. I also find that both of these concepts share a similarity with two different kinds of processes: research process and my own artistic process for this project.

Generally speaking a research process is about looking for patterns and connections between different bits of information. Gathering and sorting bits of information and finding connections and correlations between these bits. For this sort of basic research to be science, these correlations and apparent connections need to be asserted and a causality proved between them. For example: a Slow worm might look like a snake since it has the same body like features of one, but it is a lizard. An apparent similarity is not the same as a causality. But in the research process this is not necessarily needed (yet).

In *Almost through the theory of a whole* I have been working with a large amount of research material. For the most part the material consist of literary works (both non-fiction and fiction) that deals with the idea of Earth being hollow. Many of these works also propose that there is an inhabitable world inside this hollow – often populated with different kinds of animals, plants or humanoid beings. I wanted to find ways of representing not only the material itself as it is but also its history and how it has evolved through centuries. Further on I also wanted to show how these kinds of conspiracy-like theories are constructed, creating a reflective surface that modern day conspiracy theories could be mirrored in.

One part of the project (with the title *Thought-forms*) is several short computer generated videos. These videos are generated through a neural network program that output images based on text input, called *Deep Daze*.<sup>31</sup> It does this by comparing the text input of previous training on combinations of images their textual descriptions (a large database of text and images). Starting with an image of visual noise it manipulates the pixels of the image, creating several versions, until this is filtered down through the neural process. This means that the system evaluates its results until one image is chosen as the one that is 'best' representing the text. It then takes this image as a starting point to redo the process. This is repeated several thousand times. In this way the program produces a series of images that for every iteration gets more defined. When working with the program I instructed it to save every 20th or 25th image of this process, which I then used as frames in the different videos.

By feeding the program with different words or phrases from the research material I get different video sequences that the neural network has 'painted' as an interpretation of the text input. This is something that I find encompasses both research, synchronicity and art process. Research and synchronicity in its evaluation and comparing of material, but at the same time not 'understanding' what sort of material it is actually studying. *Deep Daze* does not actually understand any language of the text input nor the material it has been previously been training on. Instead it looks for similarities in data in the images compared to the text (and/or vice versa). It is a sort of shallow connecting of data without causality but with a statistic similarity. When creating an image, from digital visual noise, trying to 'make sense' of its own production, it is finding and adding material

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<sup>31</sup> Github, *deep-daze*, n.d., <https://github.com/lucidrains/deep-daze> [visited 2022-01-24]

for each iteration. This is a similarity both to how conspiratorial and non-scientific research works (as most of my collected research material is not scientific), but also to a more deeper philosophical and psychological symbolism that can be seen as a portrayal of the individual subject or self interacting with the outer world engaged in a feedback relationship. A relationship where the outside is understood and shaped by what is happening inside, but also the other way around. It can also be viewed as a representation of a confirmation bias in action: that when our thoughts start to travel down a certain path we tend to find information that confirm it is the right path and ignore information that is contrary to this.

As for these generated videos and images, I also think that they have another aspect that is not a conceptual representation of ‘connections’ – and that is as a sort of artificially generated *thought-forms*. In this way, they also not only work as a representation of the ‘thinking’ about the phrases that *Deep Daze* is fed with, but also as a physical manifestation of these thoughts and connections. This can also be seen as functioning in a similar way as art: a way of thinking through material, objects e.t.c.. (See fig. 1-4 in the appendix for image examples of generated images).

In a similar way as with *Deep Daze*, I also worked with *textgenrnn* which is another neural network program but one that generates text instead of images.<sup>32</sup> In the first phase using the program it is given a large body of text which it trains on. The neural network goes through the text, trying to understand the order of characters in relation to each other – as characters, groups of characters and formatting (punctuation marks, spaces, e.t.c.). In the second phase the program is given a character, a word, or a sequence of words as a starting point. Building on this it writes a text (with a total length set by the program user) character by character, using the training and ‘memory’ from the first phase. The program has no linguistic knowledge, instead as with *Deep Daze*, only uses bits of data, trying to find patterns in the text given to it.

In the first phase I gave the program a text collection consisting of eight texts; seven of these were hollow earth text, all of them from the second half of the 20th century (all of them rich in references to different parts of the literary canon of Hollow Earth theories), and one novel, *The Coming Race*, since this is the singular work of fiction that is most recurring in the canon. The total word count of the collected texts came to approximately 277 000 words.

The resulting text is not a fully readable text and often has long, winding sentences, strange spelling mistakes and self created portmanteau words. But reading through the text I found several short sections that to me was very poetic, rich in imagery and ripe with reference within the canon. I generated and collected a large amount of these text sections which I later could go through and select the ones that had a poetic quality, but also pointed specifically to different aspects of the canon. In themselves, but also together as a collection, they work in a different way than the images generated by *Deep Daze*, since its directive is not based on singular phrases of words (such is the case with *Deep Daze*) but instead a large collection of literature with a large amount of references one poetic fragment can connect things that are not directly related in the common hollow earth canon. For example: ‘*Aph-Lin made flying saucers come*’. Aph-Lin is a character in Bulwer-Lyttons *The Coming Race*, but the novel makes no reference to flying saucers and the character is barely mentioned in the general Hollow Earth canon. Another example: ‘*the first Atlantis beyond the South Pole*’; the references of Atlantis and the South Pole makes sense within the canon of Hollow Earth lore, but the sentence in total connects these two things in a new way.

In my project I am presenting these short texts as fragments for mainly two reasons. The first reason is that they contain a poetic quality in themselves and are pointing both to something previous and something coming (both in the actual sense of being fragments, but also conceptually

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<sup>32</sup> Github, *textgenrnn*, n.d., <https://github.com/minimaxir/textgenrnn> [visited 2022-03-05]

as it points to the constructed history of the hollow earth but at the same time creates a parallel or future history that has not existed before). The second reason is that the idea of the fragment also is a big part of the actual history of the hollow earth: how this history is built upon different fragments from different sources that are connected and understood through the idea of The Hollow Earth.

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As an end note for this essay I also want to mention the title for the exhibition – *Almost through the theory of a whole*. The title is taken from one of the previous mentioned text fragments. For me there are aspects in the fragment that points to searching, trying and attempting to encompass and explain something as a totality. Also the homophone of ‘whole’ and ‘hole’ add a certain level of ambivalence to the title – ‘whole’ and ‘hole’ can be thought of as two descriptive words of the idea of something ‘hollow’.

The title of this essay also comes from one of these text fragments.

Fig. 1 - 4: frames from the video result of the text input “The Hollow Earth”  
The iterations for the images are numbered as follows: 1, 250, 550 and 870.



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4

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