



The Data Souls

David Thomas Henry Wright

Most Powerful Words

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“Sprawling, complex and surreal web-based work of pieces of flash-fiction whose texts are then reworked via a poetry generator. Each story is thought provoking and disturbing; together they create an atmosphere of discomfort.”

On The Data Souls

“Thought provoking computer generated poetry experience about power dynamics, use and misuse of language, and propaganda.”

On Most Powerful Words

ICIDS 2020 Jury

Data as language; language as data

Abstract

The born-digital creative works *The Data Souls* and *Most Powerful Words* treat language as data and data as language. Set in a distant future, *The Data Souls* imagines the discovery of seven rusted data storage devices that define our contemporary age. Their contents use various data sets to generate multiple text performances. This data is then used to 3D-model and print correlating artefacts. Each flash fiction or 'soul' contains images and recordings of the 3D-printed artefact. This work is discomfoting to the reader in that, while the data is knowable, its causes and reverberations are not. *Most Powerful Words* is a digital literary work comprised of 54 computer-generated poems. Using Montfort's algorithmically minimal JavaScript, this collection allows contemporary readers to lightly, quickly, precisely, visibly, and consistently traverse the infinite use and misuse of past and present language. The work uses controversial and at times discomfoting texts from contemporary and early Australian and Queensland history to generate poetry. This paper explores the creative processes used in the development of these two projects. In so doing, it explores the discomfoting and at times dystopian nature of data-driven culture and its impact on language and literature.

Keywords

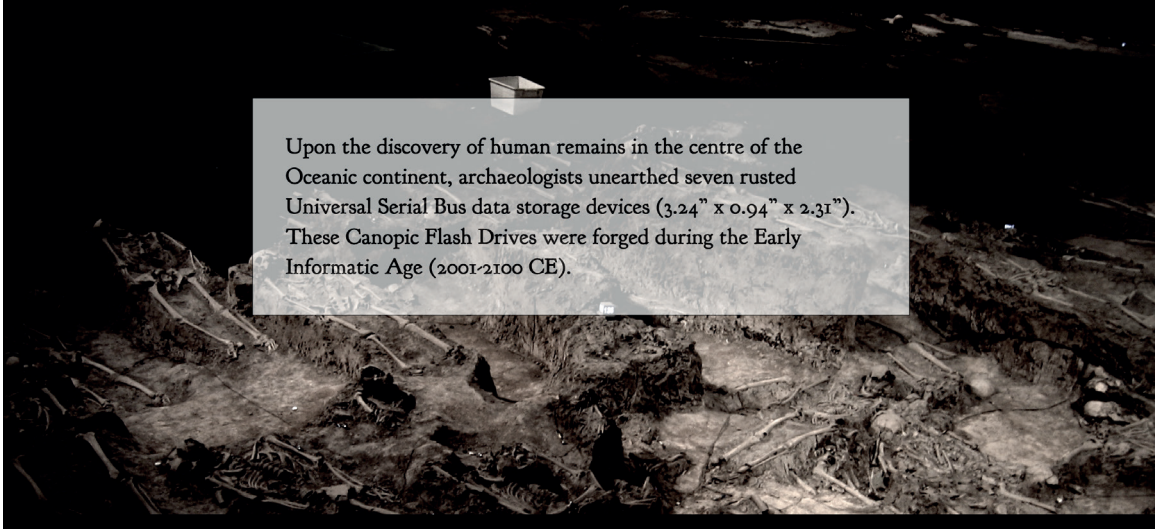
data, electronic literature, 3D-printing, digital Poetry, Italo Calvino, six memos for the next millennium

The born-digital creative works *The Data Souls* and *Most Powerful Words* both treat language as data and data as language. This paper explores the creative processes used in the development of these two projects. In so doing, it explores the discomfiting and at times dystopian nature of data-driven culture and its impact on language and literature. In both cases, a Calvinian method informed by Italo Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (1988) has been used to uphold the values of lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity and consistency. These values, I argue, are requisite for navigating the posthuman weight of data-driven culture. Firstly, I will introduce Calvino's *Six Memos* as a creative model. Secondly, I will describe the creative processes used to create *The Data Souls* and *Most Powerful Words*. Finally, I will draw these works back to Calvino's values, arguing their necessity in contemporary digital literary practice.

1

THE DATA SOULS

Upon the discovery of human remains in the centre of the Oceanic continent, archaeologists unearthed seven rusted Universal Serial Bus data storage devices (3.24" x 0.94" x 2.31"). These Canopic Flash Drives were forged during the Early Informatic Age (2001-2100 CE).



2



PM

DMs

...

Calvino's *Six Memos* as creative model

In *Italo Calvino's Six Memos as ethical imperative* in J.R. Carpenter's *The Gathering Cloud* (Wright 2019b), I argued for the importance of Calvino's Memos in relation to contemporary digital literary practice. In *The Data Souls* and *Most Powerful Words*, the larger work upholds Italo Calvino's values depicted in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*: lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity and consistency.

The *Six Memos* were written in 1985 as a series of lectures Calvino wrote for the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. Calvino died before he ever completed or delivered them. Despite the title 'Six Memos', there are in fact only five memos that were written. It should be noted, however, that Calvino's creative method is such that the unwritten memo of 'consistency' can be inferred from the existing

memos.

The first value, lightness, is defined in opposition to 'weight'. Calvino's preference for lightness is driven by a desire to write in such a way to represent his own time without being 'weighed down' by the enormity of collective and individual energies propelling the events of the century. In an information age, the weight of data becomes overbearing. Calvino's solution, then, is drawn from Greek mythology. Weight is represented by the Medusa, whose stare paralyzes its subject, while lightness is represented by Perseus on his Pegasus. In defeating the Medusa and carrying its head, Perseus carries 'weight' without depicting weight itself. In both of these projects, the weight of 'too much' data or 'too much' language is made light.

Calvino's definition of quickness coincides with his unique hope for literature in this millennium. The function of literature, Calvino argues, is 'communication between things that

are different simply because they are different, not blunting but even sharpening the differences between them, following the true bent of written language' (p.45).

In discussing the literary value of exactitude, Calvino distinguishes between 'crystal' and 'flame' exactitude. These terms are borrowed from a debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky's debate on the philosophy of science. 'Flame' exactitude, Calvino describes as an obsession with the 'detail of the detail of the detail' (pp.68–9), whereas 'crystal' exactitude offers a structure composed of multiple clearly drawn lines or facets that clearly and minimally define the piece, from which the broader 'crystalline' structure can grow.

Calvino divides the visible imaginative process into two types, distinguishing between one that begins with the word and arrives at a visual image, and one that begins with the visual image and arrives at its verbal expression

(p.83). Fearing a use of language that would become suffocative and ephemeral, Calvino uses the Italian word 'icastic' to define his preferred use of the visual in literature. This word, literally meaning 'figurative', allows images to 'crystallize into a well-defined, memorable, and self-sufficient form' (p.92).

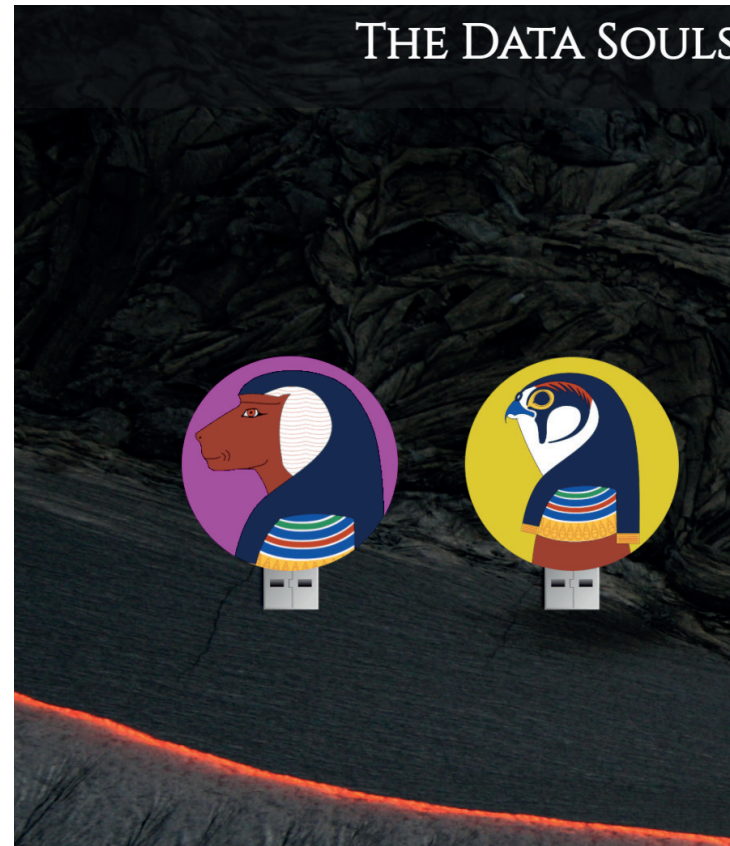
In valuing multiplicity, Calvino champions an encyclopaedic form, and opts for a literature that is encyclopaedic as a 'network of connections between the events, the people, and the things of the world' (p.105). Calvino's values themselves are such a network, in that each of the values work with the others towards an aesthetic objective. In the case of multiplicity, it functions with the value of exactitude. While the encyclopaedic aesthetic and approach Calvino prefers is not exhaustive, the network it forms creates a pattern that exhausts all types of variations, to the point that continuing to create new variations would verge towards narrati-

ve repetitiveness.

Calvino's unwritten value of consistency can be understood by examining his other values, notably crystal exactitude and multiplicity. Crystal exactitude provides a precise model that is replicated in multiple ways. In this sense, Calvino's works opt for a consistent level of controlled and varied inconsistency.

The Data Souls' Creative Process

The Data Souls was created in conjunction with the Toronto-based industrial automation company *Griffin Prototyping*. It imagines a distant future's discovery of seven rusted Universal Serial Bus data storage devices or 'souls' that define our current age. Their contents use various data sets to generate multiple text performances. This data is then used to 3D-model and print correlating artefacts. Each 'soul' contains images and recordings of the 3D-printed artefact. This work is discomfiting to the rea-



LS

3



texts of discomfort

der in that, while the data is knowable, its causes and reverberations are not. Each fictional USB device also represents an imagined 'god' (for a more detailed description of *The Data Souls'* contents, refer to Appendix A).

The origin for this project was a 'print' piece of flash fiction titled 'The Veblen Good'. A Veblen good is a product that becomes more desirable/saleable to wealthy consumers when the price is increased, rather than decreased. For example, a Rolls-Royce automobile salesman would never offer ten percent off the asking price in the hopes of swaying a potential customer, as part of the appeal of the luxury product is its high cost. This term is attributed to American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen, who writes:

Conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure. As wealth accumulates on his hands, his own unaided effort will not avail to

sufficiently put his opulence in evidence by this method. The aid of friends and competitors is therefore brought in by resorting to the giving of valuable presents and expensive feasts and entertainments. (1899, p. 47)

In addition to this concept, the work was also inspired by the oldest companies in the world that still exist today. The narrative goal of the work was to tie together as much of history and geography in the shortest way possible through a meta-company behind all companies and human invention. This initial work is comprehensible to English-speaking readers, but it also utilises a handful of Japanese, Chinese, Latin, Russian, French, German, Georgian, Serbian, Russian, and Icelandic words and phrases.

The next iteration of this work was an animated text, titled 'ヴェブレン OK (*The Veblen Good*)' published in *Griffith Review* (2019), in which the variations on language are enhanced. Va-

rious words have various translations which the text fluctuates between at various intervals. In this sense, the text 'breathes', i.e. it has a liquid/amorphous quality that transforms the work into a performative, born-digital form. The work is still comprehensible to English-language readers, but the suggestion of an unreachable force behind reality is better invoked. The next iteration sought to program this fluctuating language. Using currency values from 2011 to 2019, the language was programmed to change at various precise intervals. Teaming up with *Griffin Prototyping*, a 3D model of an egg imprinted with graphs of this data was produced. In this iteration, the work surrenders to data.

In *Collaboration and Authority in electronic literature* (Wright 2020a), I argued that within works of electronic literature, various media fragments hold varying degrees of authority within the piece. For example, the multimedial work *novelling* (2016) by Will Luers, Hazel Smi-



th, and Roger Dean combines text, film, sound design, and code. In this work, the code imposes a 'cinemagraph' quality on the text. Therefore, I argue that the cinemagraph form is the authoritative media in this particular work, because the code applies this form (i.e. temporality) to the text. The dynamic of this authority is unique to the work in question. Regarding writer authority, Said (1978) argues:

Every sort of writing establishes explicit and implicit rules of pertinence for itself: certain things are admissible, certain others not. I call these rules of pertinence authority – both in the sense of explicit law and guiding force (what we usually mean by the term) and in the sense of the implicit power to generate another word that will belong to the writing as a whole (Vico's etymology is auctor: autos: suis ipsius: propius: property). (p.16)

In *The Data Souls*, the data itself is the

'authority', i.e. the code applies the data to the text, making it behave according to the data sets. by creating an illustrative sculpture and a performative text programmed by the same data, data becomes the work's centre. If the data is removed, these two elements – text and sculpture – have no connection. The data ties everything together. (It should also be noted that the same could be said of 'code', however, as argued within the paper mentioned above, the code is not the text, merely the structure for the work to exist. The code of a work of electronic literature, therefore, is not the authority but a 'meta-authority' that empowers authority to the media fragment in question. In this instance, code allows data to be the authority).

From this third iteration, a form was established: text, code, data, sculpture. These were not only the components, but the process of development. A piece of flash fiction had code added to it, which was informed by data, which

was in turn used to create a 3D model. Text, image, visualisations of the print, and the model for the user to explore were then added. From here, the larger project, *The Data Souls* was created.

For the majority of these souls, the creative process was the same. The work was written as a 'traditional' flash fiction. Code was added. Data determined how the code functioned. The same data was then used to create a model. For example, with *Livre ♥ (Bibliophilia)*, I wrote a piece of short fiction, acquired data on the human freedom index, added code to censor the text at varying rates, and then used this data to 3D model a book that gradually had holes appear within it.

For the fifth soul, however, the process was different. The idea of using global temperature anomalies to grow an 'exploding sun' that consumed the text was the initial idea. I developed this functionality first and then wrote the story, *Mes/s/se©*. So the data informed the code,

which in turn informed the text and the 3D model.

In reading early 21st-century works of electronic literature, digital theorist Jessica Pressman argues that they represent a 'digital modernism', which is:



aligned with strategies of the avant-garde: it challenges traditional expectations about what art is and does. It illuminates and interrogates the cultural infrastructures, technological networks, and critical practices that support and enable these judgments. Digital modernism thus remakes the category of the avant-garde in the new media. (p.10)

So in The Data Souls, one could argue that the ambitions of the print text find their ideal aesthetic in a digital form. This process from print to text could also be regarded as an example of what Bolter and Grusin (1999) label 'remediation as reform':

The goal of remediation is to refashion or rehabilitate other media. Furthermore, because all mediations are both real and mediations of the real, remediation can also be understood as a process of reforming reality as well. (p.56)

In this case, the print texts have been re-fashioned. The print text cannot 'breathe', whereas the digital text can. The print text cannot be transformed by data in a kinetic way, whereas the digital text can. The digital form applied re-fashions and reforms both the work and reality. Bolter and Grusin also note that:

new digital media oscillate between immediacy and hypermediacy, between transparency and opacity. This oscillation is the key to understanding how a medium fashions its predecessors and other contemporary media. Although each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. Thus, immediacy leads to hypermediacy. The process of remediation makes us aware that all media are at one level a "play of signs," which is a lesson that we take from poststructuralist literary theory. (p.16)

This accurately describes my creative process. The digital format remade the 'print' or 'traditional' text of *The Veblen Good*. The form that I established then encouraged the development of a 'print' text for the purposes of the code, i.e. *Mes/s/se@*.

***Most Powerful Words'* Creative Process**

Most Powerful Words (2020) is a digital literary work comprised of fifty-four computer-generated poems or Taroko Gorge remixes (ELC, 2016). The original work is a nature poem

that was inspired by a visit to Taroko Gorge in Taiwan. Like the waterfalls of Taroko Gorge, the 'flow' of the recombinant nature of the poem always produced unique results. Montfort's 'procedurally-generated poem' has inspired a sub-genre of 'remixes, remakes, constrained writing experiments, and parodies'. Using Nick Montfort's source code (2009), this collection does likewise, by repurposing political language into poetry (e.g. Xi Jinping's 2020 New Year Speech is used to create an infinite, recombinant poem).

Government sets the complaints.
Meetings edge the foundings.

rest the national tough —

Number drops the storm.
Air forces celebrate the province.

people the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao tough concrete close —

Teammate accelerates the system.
Profiles live.
Establishments sweat the Tiananmen Square.

innovation the yellow coordinated Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao steady —

Youth edges the cup.
Ties achieve the moons.

thousand the greater concrete —

[Return to Most Powerful Words](#)

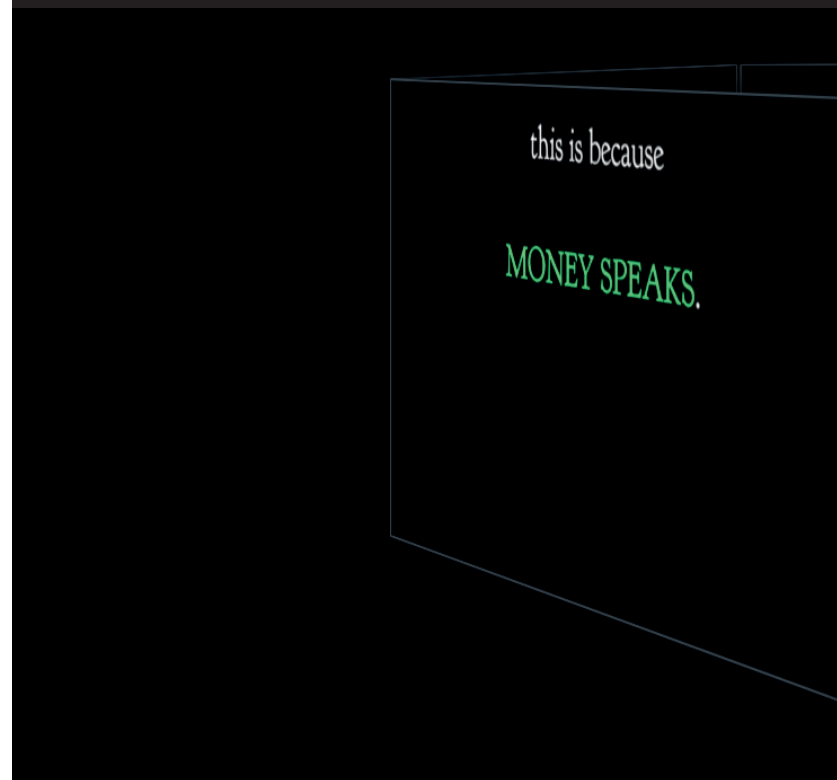


The work is broken up into six sections. Each section contains nine recombinant poems (for a more detailed description of *Most Powerful Words*' contents, refer to Appendix B). All of this text is treated as 'found' data. Just as conceptual artists use found objects, this poetry operates the same way. When situated through Montfort's code, the 'found' text takes on poetic meaning, transforming/revealing the source text. The code therefore facilitates a posthuman way of broaching the enormity of archival and contemporary language.

This work embraces the long tradition of Taroko Gorge remixes to create not one, but fifty-four Taroko Gorge remixes using 'found' text. In multiplying this form, all language is treated equally, allowing contemporary readers to traverse the infinite use and misuse of past and present language. As political poems these digital creations literally 'speak as' by using the subject's own words.

For this work, I chose the perspective of myself, as an Australian living in Queensland in early 2020. The 'narrative' created in the carousel menu, asserts a position in relation to this language:

*Despite our history of PM DMs...
these are the MOST POWERFUL WORDS.
this is because MONEY SPEAKS.
this is why there is so much INDIGENOUS SILENCE.*



MOST POWERFUL WORDS.

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*this is why there must be CONCESSIONS.
this is why there will be NEW BEGINNINGS.*

The work begins with colonial history. Then moves to contemporary global politics. Then it reflects on the images depicted on Australian currency. Next, it reflects on the impact on Indigenous history, by reflecting on 'silence'. While Indigenous history could be represented (and indeed is represented through the figures

of David Unaipon in the 'Money Speaks' section and Melissa Luchashenko, Alexis Wright, and Lesley and Tammy Williams in the 'New Beginnings' section), a decision was made not to appropriate Indigenous voices, but rather to acknowledge an absence of voice in Australian history. 'Concessions' looked at literal concessions by the most recent Queensland Premiers. 'New Beginnings', finally, looked at local texts that were in some fashion revolutionary or cul-

turally important to Queensland. As with *The Data Souls*, the Taroko Gorge remix forms a set model, that can then be repeated in order to represent the broader culture.

Conclusion: Italo Calvino and the posthuman

Through these two practice-led research projects, I hope to have shown the importance of Calvino's values of lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity and consistency to contemporary digital literary creative practice, especially in light of the enormous amount of data networks our current lives are mediated in.

In the case of *The Data Souls*, lightness is depicted through the flash fiction or 'raccontino' form that depicts enormous subjects: the entirety of human innovation and enterprise, the history of censorship, Chinese politics, Australian and Cambodian colonial history, as well as the colossal energy put into stealing our attention in the contemporary age. In applying samples of

data to the text, the enormity of this potential data is depicted or suggested, without actually depicting the data itself. Furthermore, this data is visually represented using a unique 3D object. In *Most Powerful Words*, the history of language and power is lightly depicted by taking a small sample of unique vocabulary. In the case of a figure such as Vladimir Putin, the recombined vocabulary from Putin's 2020 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly at the Manezh Central Exhibition hall in Moscow is used to represent Putin's entire political career and biographical history. Montfort's code also recombines this vocabulary in approaching-infinite combinations, yet engaging with the Taroko Gorge 'flow', this weighty possibility is lightly depicted.

The Data Souls depicts quickness by using data as a means to communicate between things that are different. The connection between the performed text and the performed sculpture is linked via data. Data therefore becomes

central to connecting these media fragments. *Most Powerful Words* draws connections between the various themes (this also shows the importance of Calvino's value of 'consistency', which will be discussed in more detail shortly). The repeated code and format put all these texts from various countries, periods, and perspectives on the same level. Additionally, the flow of the Taroko Gorge code encourages a quicker reading of the text, one that is constantly moving forward, deterring lingering on any one phrase or concept.

In *The Data Souls*, the structure of historical quote, raccontino, data set, data-determined coded text, and data-determined 3D structure forms the basic 'crystalline' structure, from which additional works can 'grow'. Furthermore, while the data souls are positioned as representing 'our' contemporary age, they are by no means presented as thorough, exhaustive, or representative of the entire age. Rather, becau-

se the work employs a crystalline structure, the implementation of the set structure provides enough examples for a reader to be able to use their algorithmic imagination to speculate on what additional souls could be like. *Most Powerful Words* similarly is grown out of a crystalline structure. One could very easily create another fifty-four (or indeed fifty-four thousand) Taroko Gorge remixes. The established system, however, has provided enough variance on the crystal structure to allow a reader/user to imagine additional variations. As the enormous genre of Taroko Gorge remixes illustrates, users can even take Montfort's code, apply their own vocabulary, and create their own version.

Visibility in *The Data Souls* is depicted through the souls themselves, which utilise images of Ancient Egyptian gods to represent the various sections. 'Data' is potentially a confusing, ephemeral concept. While we can use graphs, as is explained in the project descrip-

tion, 'while the data is knowable, its causes and reverberations are not' (Wright 2019c). In this sense, the work attempts to make not simply data, but also its abstract, confusing and ephemeral causes visible. This is done through the text performance and the 3D sculpture animation. By downloading the .stl file, users can also print their own sculpture and literally make this 'icastic' object. Videos of the 3D printing processes are also provided. The use of image in *Most Powerful Words* (e.g. the instantly recognisable images of the nine most powerful people) are used as a counterpoint to the text, to better situate the reader's relationship to the text. For example, without the portrait of Angela Merkel, the reader would be less able to connect the text to the person, especially since the reordered, recombined text presents something very different to anything Merkel has ever actually said. As with quickness, the movement and flow of the Taroko Gorge code gives an impression

of language as something constantly flowing, changing, and evolving, as opposed to a static, definitive concept. The Data Souls opts for six variations, as well as a poetry generator (which is itself, another variation). Most Powerful Words embraces exhaustiveness, presenting a thorough variation of fifty-four poems. As mentioned, however, despite this enormous amount of recombinant poetic variation, this process could be extended indefinitely.

Finally, *The Data Souls* employs a set consistent form – text, code, data, sculpture – that is replicated multiple times, utilising enough variations that the reader can algorithmically imagine (or indeed, adopt the code and actually create) further iterations of the same work. In the case of *Most Powerful Words*, it functions in the same way. The whole 'Taroko Gorge remix' genre is in fact an expression of Calvino's value of consistency, which here finds an additional level of consistency, in a set form of nine digital

poems on a particular topic using vocabulary informed by specific documents. As with *The Data Souls*, the work generates enough variations that the reader can algorithmically imagine or actually create further iterations of the same work.

These digital forms informed by Calvino's *Six Memos* highlight the importance of Calvino's Memos in writing, generating, creating, and reading digital literary works in an age of big data. Only through lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity, and consistency can artists and readers navigate the enormity of contemporary and historical information. In digital literary practice, the use of code can be understood as an expression of Calvino's unwritten memo of consistency. Just as we are able to infer Calvino's unwritten value through his other written values, so too can contemporary code be utilised to algorithmically extend digital

literary practice in the current age.

Appendix A

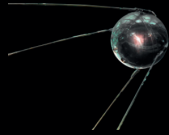
Description of The Data Souls

The first soul depicts \$olomon, the simian financial god, and tells the story of The Veblen Good. It uses fluctuating currency values from 2011 to 2019 to transform various words and phrases of a narrative involving a meta-company behind all human innovation. The currency values are used to sculpt a corresponding golden egg.

The second soul depicts Prudenc3, the aquiline god of privilege, and tells the story of *Livre ♥ (Bibliophilia)*. It uses the human freedom index to censor the work as it is being read. The text itself is about a European culture that burns books, only to be overthrown by an ideology that literally loves – or fetishizes – books. A marble book receives holes in

The Man Who Watched Cook

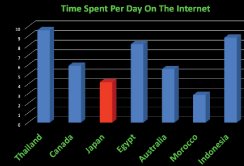
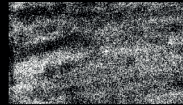
9



The liberation of human attention may be the defining moral and political struggle of our time. Its success is prerequisite for the success of virtually all other struggles. We therefore have an obligation to rewire this system of intelligent, adversarial persuasion before it rewires us.

James Williams

Stand Out of Our Light: Freedom and Resistance in the Attention Economy



k choy and soft-boiled quail eggs, Żubrówka and cloudy apple gelatine cubes with cheddar cheese ice-cream and crumbled butter cookies, agar-agar chocolate spaghetti with truffle meatballs and watermelon coulis), dishes I have never

sizes relative to the freedom index cited. The 3D model can be downloaded and explored.

The third soul depicts $\beta\text{ath}\{\text{He}\Omega$, the hippopotamine god of childbirth, and tells the story of The Second Tiananmen Square Massacre. It uses provincial Chinese male/female ratios to fluctuate between three variations of the same

story, which concerns the failure of a mythical qilin to bring democracy to contemporary China. A 3D model of a human foetus is cut in half in correlation to the data.

The fourth soul depicts $\text{M}@\text{lach}!$, the canine populational god, and tells the story of the town the rabbit ate. It uses rabbit populations to

multiply the word rabbit in a narrative about a child abandoned in rural Australia; meanwhile 'growths' are added to a muscle-textured rabbit. The fifth soul depicts R%th, the human god of atmosphere, and tells the story of *Mes/s/se@*, an interdisciplinary Cambodian scholar who escapes Pol Pot's regime. It uses global temperature anomalies to grow an 'exploding sun'-like space that consumes the text. This data is used to cut craters into a desolate Earth.

The sixth soul depicts A81shA1, the ibidine god of attention, and tells the story of The Man Who Watched Cook Australia, Cook!, an extended, unbroken sentence describing one man's addiction to a cooking reality TV show. It uses average time spent per day on the Internet to reposition the text. This data is represented by a laser on a rusty satellite.

The final soul depicts T&llm#th, the almighty metadata deity. It is a poetry generator that uses the vocabulary from the six other souls to

generate a three-line poem. Treating the text as 'data', data again becomes central to the work.

Appendix B

Description of Most Powerful Words

The first section 'PM DMS', takes the vocabulary from the first nine Australian prime ministers: Edmund Barton's speaking notes and handwritten amendments for a speech delivered at Maitland, January 17th, 1901; Alfred Deakin's speech delivered at Ballarat, October 29th, 1903; a press report of Chris Watson's speech delivered at Redfern, October 8th, 1906; a press report of George Reid's speech delivered at Melbourne, October 30th, 1903; a press report of Andrew Fisher's speech delivered at Maryborough, February 10th, 1910; Joseph Cook's speech delivered at Parramatta, April 3rd, 1913; Billy Hughes's speech delivered at Bendigo, March 27th, 1917; Stanley Bruce's speech delivered at Dan-

denong, October 5th, 1925; and a press report of James Scullin's speech delivered at Richmond, September 30th, 1929.

The second section, 'Most Powerful Words', uses the vocabulary from speeches delivered by the nine most powerful people in the world according to Forbes magazine in 2020: Xi Jinping's 2020 New Year Speech, Vladimir Putin's 2020 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly at the Manezh Central Exhibition hall in Moscow, Donald Trump's 2020 State of the Union, Angela Merkel's 2018 Speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Jeff Bezos's 2010 baccalaureate remarks to graduates from Princeton University, the Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2020, Bill Gates's Commencement Speech at Harvard 2007, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud's 'Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030', and Narendra Modi's address to the 74th session of the United Nations General.

The third section, 'Money Speaks', draws

vocabulary from texts written by those depicted on Australian currency: Queen Elizabeth II's public address regarding the spread of COVID-19, delivered on April 5, 2020; John Monash's letter to Major-General Sir A.J. Godley, 8 July 1915; the opening chapters of Dame Nellie Melba's *Melodies and Memories* (1925); Edith Cowan's words from the transcript of the Women's Legal Status Bill, Second Reading held in September 1923; the letter from David Unaipon to Dr Herbert Base-dow, 21 April 1914; *The Bushman's Companion* (1916) by John Flynn; the letter from Mary Reibey to 'dear aunt', dated 'Octb 8th 1792 bottany bay'; *No Foe Shall Gather Our Harvest* (1940) by Mary Gilmore; and *The Man From Snowy River* (1890) by Banjo Paterson.

The fourth section, 'Indigenous Silence', takes the vocabulary from historical policies, speeches, rulings, log-books, and Wikipedia entries that are about/have impacted Indigenous Australians. No words spoken or written by Indigenous Australians have been used in this

section. It uses the Wikipedia entry for 'History of Indigenous Australians, Early History'; Captain James Cook's description of Indigenous Australians in his logbook (23 August, 1770); the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld); the Immigration Restriction Act (1901); *Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd* (1971); Aboriginal Land Fund Act (1974); *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)* (1992); and Kevin Rudd's Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples, delivered on February 13, 2008. The final poem, titled 'Silence' is the only poem in this collection that I, the author, have provided vocabulary for.

The fifth section, 'Concessions', takes the vocabulary from concession speeches or regretful musings of the past nine Queensland Premiers: Joh Bjelke-Peterson's 1989 interview with Jana Wendt; Mike Ahern's 2011 interview with Rae Wear & Chris Salisbury; Russell Cooper's 2011 interview with Danielle Miller & Rae Wear; Wayne Goss's 2011 interview with Leigh Sales; Rob Borbidge's 2015 interview with Jessi-

ca Van Vonderen; Peter Beattie's 2012 interview with Chris Uhlmann; Anna Bligh's 2012 concession speech; Campbell Newman's 2015 concession speech; and Annastacia Palaszczuk's 2020 announcement that Queensland schools will close for non-essential workers' children.

The final section, 'New Beginnings', takes the vocabulary from the first pages of nine notable Queensland novels and works of non-fiction: *On Our Selection* (1899) by Steele Rudd; *The Slow Natives* (1965) by Thea Astley; *Johnno* (1975) by David Malouf; *Praise* (1992) by Andrew McGahan; *Carpentaria* (2006) by Alexis Wright; *Not Just Black and White* (2015) by Lesley & Tammy Williams; *The Daintree Blockade: The Battle for Australia's Tropical Rainforests* (2017) by Bill Wilkie; *We'll Show the World: Expo 88* (2018) by Jackie Ryan; and *Too Much Lip* (2018) by Melissa Lucashenko.

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Images

1. The Data Souls;
2. Most Powerful Words;
3. The seven 'found' USB data storage devices in The Data Souls;
4. The 3D model of an egg imprinted with graphs of financial data;
5. The final, textured 3D model of an egg imprinted with graphs of financial data;
6. The contents of the fifth soul, R%th;
7. An example of a recombinant poem generated by Most Powerful Words;
8. The carousel menu of Most Powerful Words;
9. The contents of the sixth soul, A8lshA1.

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