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Analysis and Interpretation of the Visualisation of Traumatic Experience in J.G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* through Illustration Processes

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ABSTRACT.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the proposal that *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1969) by J.G. Ballard is a visual response to traumatic experience. This investigation identifies key motifs, concepts and techniques of the narrative and examines relevant literary readings in conjunction with creative practice.

The main readings include 'peritraumatic dissociation'; narrative as the traumatic experience rather than a retelling of traumatic experience, 'negotiated truth'; the manipulation of details to better suit a perceived truth, 'moral pornography'; the use of parody as critique which creates awareness around mediation and trauma, and lastly war trauma; the concept that the events that are conveyed by the narrative indicate experiences of war.

Additionally, the thesis establishes the concepts 'transformative aesthetic' portrayed through the numerous alternate realities of the narrative and 'conceptual death' which is presented through multiple layers of consciousness. This links to the surrealist movement which fuses the subjective with the objective and is recognised as a prominent influence of the narrative. Altogether these aspects play an important role in the investigation of the narrative as a visual response to trauma.

The findings of the research are reinforced by creative practice which attempts to interpret the motifs and concepts and their meaning rather than illustrate the events of the narrative. The objective of the

investigation is to analyse why the narrative might be read as a response to trauma and how this is conveyed visually through the examination of meaning and motive behind the narrative's motifs and concepts.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

The subject of this study is J.G. Ballard's experimental novel *The Atrocity Exhibition* written in 1969 and expanded upon in 1990 in the form of annotations. The narrative focuses predominantly on social and political culture during the 1960s but also incorporates other themes and motifs, some of which are characteristic of Ballard's novels. The novel can also be characterised by its non-linear narrative structure which has been separated into short paragraphs, forms no coherent plot-line and includes random lists of things that seemingly share no connection to each other.

The aim of this project is to explore the possibility that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a response to trauma focusing on pre-existing readings to analyse the motifs and imagery used and to what effect this visually conveys trauma. Ballard's trauma was supposedly caused by his childhood experiences as a civilian held in the Lunghua internment camp in China during the second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945). It is also suggested that his trauma extended to his emigration to England and later his wife's death. However, Ballard makes little to no reference to these events in *The Atrocity Exhibition*, although these events are portrayed on several occasions throughout Ballard's oeuvre. In particular *Empire of the Sun* (1984), *The Kindness of Women* (1991) and *Miracles of Life* (2008).

This thesis focuses on different interpretations of *The Atrocity Exhibition* to gain an understanding of the literary methods used and how these can be read as a visual response to traumatic experience. Firstly, the research looks at the concept of peritraumatic dissociation which is defined as a way of experiencing trauma through present events that on the surface do not appear to have any connection to Ballard's trauma and are usually characterised as an impersonal atrocity. Secondly the theory of 'negotiated truth' as a means of coping is investigated by discussing the characteristics of this process including the manipulation and omission of specific details within an event. The use of this process as a method of communicating traumatic experiences whilst also avoiding the trauma attached to them is also discussed.

The next chapter investigates the proposal that Ballard's narrative can be read as 'moral pornography' through his use of parody. The chapter discusses how parody is used to illuminate issues that arise from pornographic culture and identifies motifs which demonstrate this method. The findings of this research topic aim to answer the question of why this is significant to the ways in which Ballard communicates trauma. The final chapter follows on from this investigation by examining how war

trauma is conveyed by the narrative. It is proposed that the extreme repetition of atrocities and violence are used as techniques for parodying the mediation of war to present the trauma that it causes. 5

The processes and development of my creative practice were conducted to work alongside the theory by using concepts put forward by key contextual and theoretical readings. This informed the decisions made with regard to the application of imagery, media and processes. The exploration of motifs and concepts informed by the research for example, the repetitive use of imagery, the mediated gaze and the multiple alternative realities portrayed through distortion and obscurity. Additionally, the practice considers Ballard's influences, in particular surrealist concepts and aesthetics and their association with trauma.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The thesis adopts both theoretical and practice based research to allow for a wider scope of critical frameworks and offer a variety of views rooted in different disciplines such as literature and psychology, in addition to the dynamics of visual arts with a particular focus on illustration. Psychology based theoretical frameworks are discussed to analyse aspects of trauma found within J. G. Ballard's work, alongside the theories set by literature based contextual analysis of his use of imagery within his narratives. This creates a link between visual interpretation and analysis through illustrative processes.

For each chapter of *The Atrocity Exhibition* the reader is placed into a different scenario in which they follow the main protagonist who is used as an avatar that changes identity with each new scenario. They take on several different roles and play out a multitude of situations. The other characters present within the narrative are not necessarily real people either. Instead, they are portrayed as recurring motifs or concepts similar to the themes that are repetitively used throughout the narrative. This demonstrates the extent to which the narrative operates visually.

A selection of other narratives by Ballard are considered throughout this research. These include *Crash* (1973): which shares the same motifs, themes and characters and *Empire of the Sun* (1984), *The Kindness of Women* (1991) and *Miracles of Life* (2008) which are (semi) auto-biographical novels that resemble the auto-biographical extracts found within *The Atrocity Exhibition*. This extended reading allows for comparison and places *The Atrocity Exhibition* in context with Ballard's oeuvre. In addition, published interviews with Ballard shed light on the philosophy behind his narratives. What follows is a review of the existing literature on Ballard and trauma which helps to situate some of the core visual motifs in *The Atrocity Exhibition* and their influence on the illustrative practice.

Ballard utilises *The Atrocity Exhibition* as a method of coping with and working through trauma. In *Being Dead?: Trauma and the Liminal narrative in J.G. Ballard's 'Crash' and Tom McCarthy's 'Remainder'* (2012) Jim Byatt explains that Ballard's narratives are characteristic of peritraumatic dissociation, whereby the author is attempting to make sense of traumatic experience through the

events of the narrative. This is illustrated by the removal of the reality/fantasy boundary through the moment of transition between the "existential states" that *The Atrocity Exhibition* conveys. Mark Seltzer's *Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere* (1997) counters Byatt's theory explaining that the narrative is a reversal of roles between reality and fantasy. The dialogue between these two theoretical lenses and the practice, is a reciprocal relationship in which they inform and extend each other to gain new and different insights.

In *J.G. Ballard* (2005) Andrzej Gasiorek explains that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is heavily influenced by surrealism and is evident in the narrative's interweaving of the inner psyche (subjective) with external influences (objective). It is stated that the narrative uses techniques similar to what surrealists used in their work. This is exemplified by Salvador Dalí's *Young Virgin Auto-Sodomized by the Horns of her own Chastity* (1954) which depicts a woman made up of free floating shapes that fragment her body. The artwork also suggests that the identity of the woman is being fragmented which is demonstrated by the narrative's depiction of characters. Gasiorek explains that this portrays an alternate reality where individuals are seen as symbolic constructs. This observation reinforces the idea that the narrative is a response to trauma because it evidences a redefinition of reality as a means to avoid trauma.

Meg Jensen suggests that Ballard's portrayal of his traumatic experience is a 'negotiated truth' which demonstrates Ballard's inability to provide the reader with the absolute truth. In other words, Ballard is only able to present a truth that has been edited, by combining the omission and manipulation of certain details such as key events, people and places which allowed Ballard to "negotiate" truth. Meg Jensen's *Getting to Know Me in Theory and Practice: Negotiated Truth and Mourning in Autobiographically Based Fiction* (2011) establishes the theory of 'negotiated truth', explaining that Ballard forms a partial truth that removes certain details that do not apply to his version of events. For example, the removal of his parents' presence represents the lack of power that they had over him because of their life within the internment camp.

The analysis of Meg Jensen's *Surviving the Wreck: Post-traumatic Writers, Bodies in Transition and the Point of Autobiographical Fiction* (2016) further supports the 'negotiated truth' theory by adding that it is the formation of an alternate version of the world where Ballard can find solace and empowerment. Jensen supports this by incorporating Anne Whitehead's concept that trauma fiction is a valuable and inevitable response to the failure of being able to communicate trauma through language. The chapter continues by placing Jensen's theory in context with Roger Luckhurst's essay *Future Shock: science fiction and the trauma paradigm* in *The Future of Trauma Theory:*

contemporary literary and cultural criticism (2014). Luckhurst discusses how Ballard's trauma is negotiated through a retranslation created by *The Atrocity Exhibition*, where the protagonist is traumatised by mediated and technological aspects of the future allowing Ballard to communicate his trauma.

This is further supported by Paul Crosthwaite's, "*A Secret Code of Pain and Memory": War Trauma and Narrative Organisation in the Fiction of J.G. Ballard* (2005) in which Crosthwaite explains that *The Atrocity Exhibition* in addition to his semi-autobiographical novels are a way for Ballard to organise the events surrounding his trauma. Crosthwaite refers to the work of psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk who explains that psychological health is bound to the individual's ability to narrate temporal experience. This theory is based upon the work of psychiatrist Pierre Janet who elaborates that the individual needs to properly order events in their memory to be able to tell a story. Moreover, the chapter refers to Gasiorek's work *J. G. Ballard* (2005) in which he explains that the autobiographical aspects of *The Atrocity Exhibition* are obscured. This is because the narrative reinterprets reality, alters meaning and demonstrates a 'transformative aesthetic' caused by the narrative's non-linear, rhizomatic structure. This point poses the question of whether the disordering of events is intentional or not.

In the article, *J.G. Ballard's empire of the senses: perversion and the failure of authority* Dennis Foster (1993) explains that Ballard demonstrates an Americanised vision which incorporates American actors, politics and applies America's national and international image. This reinforces the point that Ballard reinterprets reality through his narratives in addition to his repetitive use of motifs. This is further established by the article *Petition, repetition, and "autobiography": J.G. Ballard's 'Empire of the Sun' and 'The 'Kindness of Women'* (1994) in which Roger Luckhurst discusses how *The Atrocity Exhibition* combines the protagonist Travers with autobiographical events, indicating a lack of differentiation between fictional and autobiographical events.

The next chapter explores *The Atrocity Exhibition* read as 'moral pornography'. This topic refers to the essay *Pornographic Imagination* (1967) in which Susan Sontag explains how pornography is generally understood as a fantasy formed from the failure or deformation within an individual's imagination, demonstrating the negative associations we have with pornography. Sontag continues by arguing the point that this view of the pornographic imagination goes against the complex nature of literature and that pornographic literature should not be tied to these negative associations. This

requires the reader to be able to consider more nuanced interpretations, demonstrating a contrast between pornography and literature.

In the article *'Moral Pornography' and 'Total Imagination': The Pornographic in J.G. Ballard's Crash* (2008) Sam Francis investigates the concept of "moral pornography" put forward by Angela Carter with regard to Ballard's *Crash*. Although Francis places focus on *Crash*, the point that he makes is relevant to *The Atrocity Exhibition* because it gave basis to some of the motifs that are presented within *Crash*. Francis explains that the way in which pornographic characteristics are used within the narrative differ from their functionality in pornography. The narrative uses pornography as parody to be able to critique pornographic and voyeuristic sensibilities.

Francis continues to reinforce this point by referring to the annotations that Ballard added to *The Atrocity Exhibition* demonstrative of a need to distance himself from the criminalisation of pornography. Ballard also expresses that the pornographic is an effective method to make societal changes and links back to Sontag who explains that the process of making art is a form of consciousness, that leads to an acknowledgement of a moral obligation to inhibit these states of consciousness in ourselves.

The chapter also refers the essay *J.G. Ballard's Atrocity Exhibitions* (1998) in which Linda Kauffman states that Ballard "maps" sex and death demonstrating an investigative and scientific approach. In addition, there is a clear sense of morals demonstrated by Ballard as observed by Gasiorek, who explains that concepts such as sexual violence and the sexualisation of the mediated gaze are portrayed in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. This is illustrated through an extreme fragmentation of the female body which is itemised in the form of a list. This itemisation while stripping a female character of her identity also removes any opportunity for the eroticised gaze. This extreme way in which the female body is portrayed is indicative of parody.

The next topic is an examination of how *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as war trauma in context with Ballard's childhood experiences of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The chapter begins with Gasiorek's concept that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is used as a process of retranslation which allows Ballard to understand events in his own terms and that the narrative's collage style structure is orientated towards an epiphany. This is expanded upon in the essay *"A New Algebra": The Poetics and Ethics of Trauma in J.G. Ballard's 'The Atrocity Exhibition'* in *Ethics and trauma in contemporary British fiction* (2011) in which Jakob Winnberg explains that the fragmented structure of this collage style narrative is a visualisation of the effects of trauma.

Winnberg terms this as the "doubling of trauma" and compares the narrative to Andy Warhol's *Ambulance Disaster* (1963). This print depicts two of the same image of a road traffic accident involving an ambulance but the images differ in that the bottom image is worse in quality. This is suggestive of the idea that each time a traumatic event is revisited it becomes worse because the severity of this event becomes increasingly unbearable.

Moreover, the chapter discusses how the narrative can be read as war trauma through its use of photography as a means to create awareness. This is reinforced by the essay *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2004) in which Susan Sontag explains that the distant observation of the photographer objectives those who are subjected to violence. The individual is objectified to such an extent that their pain becomes alien to the observer which suggests that Ballard used photography as a means to distance himself from traumatic events. The focus created by photography could also be a way to shock people into being aware of the horrors of war. Sontag points out that Ernst Friedrich's book *War Against War!* includes a series of photographs of wounded soldiers which is significant to Ballard's repetitive use of motifs as a method of parody.

Hal Foster's article *Trauma Culture* (1996) supports the idea that Ballard is a critique of war by explaining that a special truth emerges from traumatic states and that trauma is an important basis for the witnessing of truth. Jean Baudrillard's essay *War Porn* (2005) also proves relevant to this discussion with regard to Ballard's use of parody as a means to create awareness because Baudrillard claims that mediated images of war become a parody of violence and war itself. This is because the images are no longer just about killing and are so graphically and repetitively extreme that they become an infantile reality-show. The repetitive and extreme illustration of atrocities within *The Atrocity Exhibition* shares a resemblance to Baudrillard's point.

THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION READ AS PERITRAUMATIC DISSOCIATION.

Byatt views *The Atrocity Exhibition* as an "ambiguously post account" of traumatic experience and that it is "the narrative of the event itself" (Byatt, 2012) where life-threatening trauma is the catalyst. This causes the objective view to be removed leaving just a subjective narrative that Byatt (2012) explains is "nothing more than a psychological fantasy" that is "unfolding within the temporal framework of the accident itself". Gasiorek (2005) explains that Ballard was heavily influenced by surrealist ideology such as "the fusion of the outer world of reality and the inner world of the psyche".

Gasiorek also discusses the relevance of Decalcomania to the narrative, a technique used by surrealist Óscar Domínguez (Fig. 1) which involves "pressing paint between sheets of paper" (Dictionary.com LLC, 1995) to produce a "mineral-like world that distances human beings from the world they inhabit" (Gasiorek, 2005). This results in an "entirely different reality [being] disclosed" (Gasiorek, 2005) and suggests that the human is of a construction unfamiliar to reality.

In *Crash* the character Vaughan is portrayed as a collection of loosely coupled planes and can be compared to Salvador Dalí's *Young Virgin Auto-Sodomized by the Horns of her own Chastity* (1954) (Fig. 2). This is because the woman in this image is constructed with individual, free-floating horns that fragment and distort her which distances her being from reality. Gasiorek claims that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a literary collage, a surrealist potpourri assembled out of found objects, such as popular culture, elusive artworks, political and everyday events. The narrative similarly conveys a different reality where subjects have become nothing more than a fragmented, symbolic construct exemplified

in the following way: "...her limbs and musculature merely established the residential context of her body" (Ballard, 1969).

(Fig. 1)

(Fig. 2)
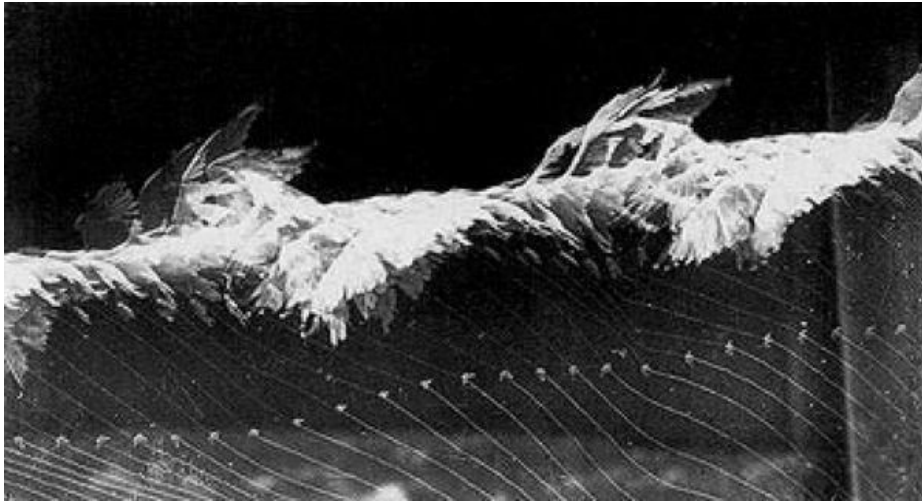
(Fig. 3)

Another aspect of *The Atrocity Exhibition* that illustrates a fictionalised reality is the distortion of time. The narrative refers to Étienne-Jules Marey's chronographs (Fig. 3) and one of the most prominent examples of Marey's influence is when the character Dr. Nathan states that the protagonist's husband uses "a series of photographs of the most commonplace objects" and treats them "as if they already were chronograms" in which "a very different world was revealed" (Ballard, 1969). This reinforces the notion that the narrative can be read as 'peritraumatic dissociation' because it presents a distortion of reality that removes the distinction between reality and fiction.

I created an image which combines gesso paint with graphite powder (Fig. 4) which suggests movement and resembles a figure that appears to be climbing or crawling. This is characteristic of Eadweard Muybridge's photographic studies *Woman climbing stairs and a ladder* (1887) (Fig. 5) which is a crucial observation because Muybridge's work is similar in nature to E. J. Marey's work such as *Chronophotograph of a man clearing a hurdle* (1892) (Fig. 6). Ballard refers to this work within *The Atrocity Exhibition* describing them as "multiple-exposure photographs in which the element of time is visible - the walking human figure, for example, is represented as a series of dune-like lumps" (Ballard, 1969). The image that I created demonstrates this point in that the marks depict a human figure through the suggestion of movement. The way in which the human form is simplified in this image relates to the narrative's redefinition of the human form as a series of abstract shapes to be able to gain understanding.
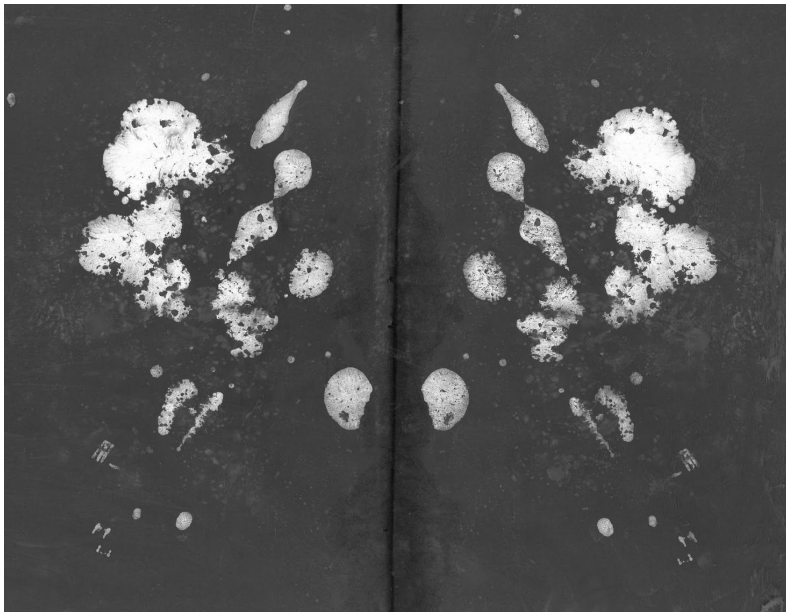
(Fig. 4)

(Fig. 5)

(Fig. 6)

To test the validity of Byatt's idea of 'peritraumatic dissociation' the theory is placed in context with Mark Seltzer's article *Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Sphere* (1997). Seltzer explains that in *Crash* Ballard reverses the roles of reality and fantasy as a result of trauma caused by car accidents. *The Atrocity Exhibition* is similar in this regard but trauma is caused by the media of the 1960s. For example, the narrative considers John F. Kennedy's assassination as an extremely traumatic event as is suggested in the following excerpt: "They show (1) the left orbit and zygomatic arch of President Kennedy magnified from Zapruder frame 230" (Ballard, 1969). In this example the assassination is approached from an unusual perspective that causes a distortion of reality through the fragmentation of this event. This demonstrates Seltzer's theory that the roles of reality and fantasy have been reversed. This altered and fragmented reality is presented through a disinterested, technical tone and is relevant to Byatt's (2012) statement that *Crash* proposes that "life starts with death".

Byatt's and Seltzer's theories are similar as both demonstrate the blurring of the boundary between reality and fantasy. In Byatt's theory of 'peritraumatic dissociation' the boundary is removed completely while Seltzer's theory suggests that the boundary still exists but the roles of reality and fantasy have reversed. Gasiorek (2005) also explains that *The Atrocity Exhibition is a* rhizomatic structure that does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself, instead it constructs the unconscious. This suggests that reality and fantasy can no longer be structured into two separate groups but rather several smaller groups that have the possibility to overlap each other.

In *Disquieting Features: Tour of 'The Atrocity Exhibition'* (2009) Jake Huntley quotes Bill Ashcroft, explaining that the rhizome "is a botanical term for a root system which spreads across the ground rather than downwards and grows from several points rather than a single tap root" (Ashcroft, 1999). It is established that "emergence from several points is precisely how [the main character] Travis is manifested throughout *The Atrocity Exhibitio*n and the lateral spread of the character continuously produces these clusters of disparate matter" (Huntley, 2009). This explanation illustrates a surrealist aesthetic that proves difficult to categorise with regard to the binary formed by reality and fiction. The phrase "disparate matter" is key as it suggests that aspects of the narrative such as the main

character cannot be compared and thus cannot be placed into groups. This is indicative of Byatt's proposal that there are no boundaries between reality and fiction.

The Atrocity Exhibition features "the merging of the organic and the inorganic" exemplified by "the bodily samples listed alongside the sundry items […] or the fusing of biological and mechanical attributes" (Huntley, 2009). Additionally, the narrative "reduces identities to mere formulae [and] simple shapes [...] where one definitional equivalent can be substituted for another" (Huntley, 2009). This is indicative of 'peritraumatic dissociation' because a correlation is made between the idea that there are no boundaries and that identities do not exist as demonstrated by "mere formulae" and "simple shapes". An interesting point to consider is Huntley's use of the words "mere" and "simple" which suggests that identities have been downgraded to a less significant form. However, it could be argued that Ballard did not intend identities to be downgraded but rather translated into a simpler form that is understandable to him.

The protagonist Travis views Karen Novotny as "a modulus" believing that "by multiplying her into the space and time of the apartment he would obtain a valid unit of existence" (Ballard, 1969). This illustrates the importance that Ballard places on formulae and shapes which he portrays throughout the narrative as if these motifs are required by the protagonist in order to validate existence thus presenting them as a necessity for life itself. The way in which Ballard presents formulae and shapes suggests that roles have not been reversed, because in this instance mathematical and logical processes are conveyed as a basis for reality.

THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION READ AS NEGOTIATED TRUTH.

Jensen (2011) begins by explaining that, Ballard does not include his parents in *Empire of the Sun* because "Jim - the boy in the novel who clearly represents young Ballard - is all alone - boy versus war" and yet Ballard (2006) states that "'Empire of the Sun' [is] a novel about [his] life as a boy in Shanghai during the second world war and in the civilian camp at Lunghua, where [he] was interned with [his] parents". Jensen (2011) poses the question "Why did Ballard so alter the facts in the telling

of his childhood?" and establishes the 'negotiated truth' concept in which Ballard forms a division between the nominal and the essential. In other words, "...his parents' presence did not alter [the] truth" and the removal of his parents more accurately portrayed the truth, because "they had no control over [him]" (Ballard, 2006). This suggests that the absence of parental influence made their presence irrelevant and that negotiation of their removal is more accurate to the truth as Ballard perceives it.

On reading *Empire of the Sun* as 'negotiated truth' we might consider how this method would apply to *The Atrocity Exhibition.* Luckhurst (1994) observes that a scene detailing "an attempt to travel to Japan on the invitation of a Captain Tulloch" is also "repeated in *[The] Kindness [of Women]"* but from a different viewpoint. In addition, the scene is absent in *Empire of the Sun* but "the character Tulloch appears as a bandit" (Luckhurst, 1994). This demonstrates what Luckhurst (1994) describes as a "constant permutation of details, weaving between fiction and supposed autobiography". Put differently it is a process of negotiation indicative of a deliberate decision to communicate a truth that Ballard perceives as being more accurate to his experiences as opposed to any confusion in his perception of events.

Gasiorek (2005) claims that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a "reinterpretation of reality" with "totally altered meanings". This illustrates a "transformative aesthetic, [...] fascinated by the passage from one mode of existence to another" hinting at "a powerful desire to disengage from this shattered reality altogether" (Gasiorek, 2005). This is evident in the protagonist's countless attempts to alter reality which is conveyed through the constant change of the character's role and of scenarios all of which seem to share no connection and are completely random. The process of 'negotiated truth' "allows the victim/writer a chance to inhabit (and indeed narrate) that other version of the world" and that this "alternative narrative offers solace [and] empowerment" (Jensen, 2016) This reinforces the idea that 'negotiated truth' is a method of protection from reality allowing for Ballard to effectively communicate his trauma.

The narrative's passage from one mode of existence to another which demonstrates its 'transformative aesthetic' is echoed by the random forms that the ink creates in these images (Figs. 7 - 9). The forms in these images resemble the random ordering and structuring of events because they lack determinacy in their meaning and there is no linearity between them. However, the narrative consistently and repeatedly portrays the same motifs which provides some uniformity and order. This

is also demonstrated by these images in that they share similar characteristics (e.g. ink, black and white, symmetrical, etc.), suggesting that they are all part of the same series. Further, the ink medium is similar to the narrative in that as it bleeds it follows the flow of water and gravity when the sketchbook is tilted. The ink appears less random in this way although the end result is not easy to predict. This is evident when the ink on the wet page is imprinted onto the dry page because the mirrored image differs from its original despite their similarities. This visualises the process that Ballard adopts to create the lists of unrelated aspects that can be found throughout *The Atrocity Exhibition*. He explains that "[They] were produced by free association which accounts for the repetition" (Ballard, 1990) and is reflected in my practice in the loose control that I had on the placement of the ink.
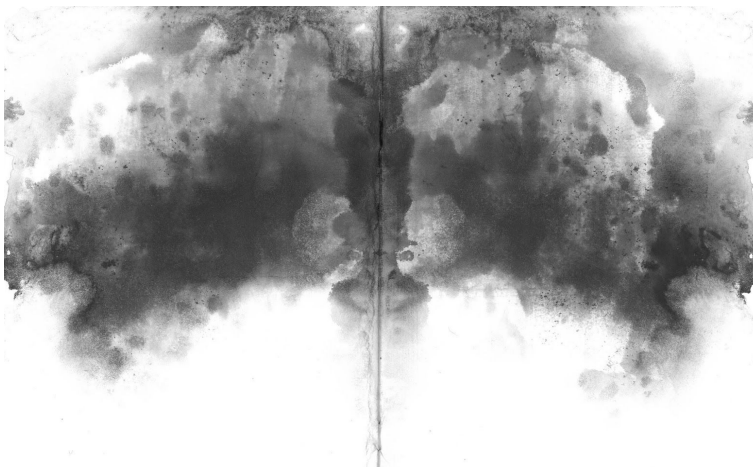
(Fig. 7)

(Fig. 8)
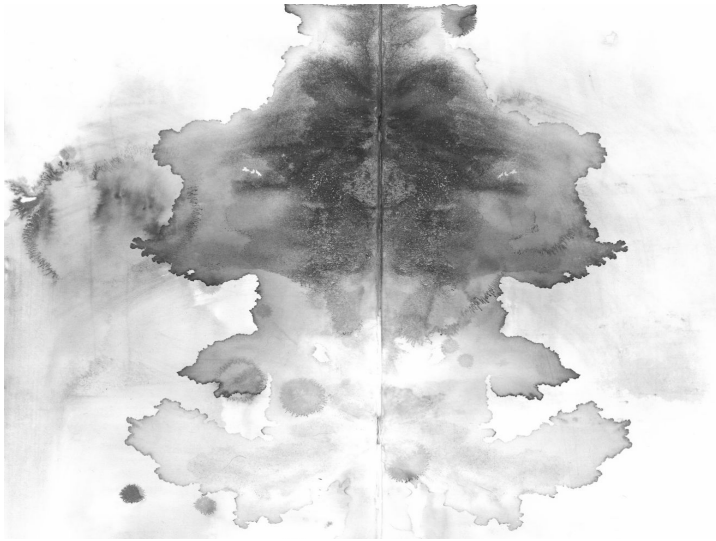
(Fig. 9)

Anne Whitehead (2004) discusses the concept of trauma fiction stating that it is "a valuable and inevitable response to the failure of language to communicate the terrible knowledge gained through traumatic experience". This observation is elaborated on by Jensen (2016) who states that "navigating the complex waters of post-trauma identity narratives is no easy task" and that "negotiating the truth becomes the work of a lifetime". This proposes that although *The Atrocity Exhibition* is not an autobiographical narrative it still portrays autobiographical elements that are obscured by the "reinterpretation of reality", "altered meanings" and the "transformative aesthetic" (Gasiorek, 2005). These are all conveyed in the narrative through the protagonist's numerous attempts to redefine reality which is a reflection of Ballard's process of negotiation.

I experimented digitally by using layers and blending modes with acetone prints of Ronald Reagan. The layering of two acetone prints of Reagan over each other (Figs. 10 - 11) accidentally created an image that formed a new face (Fig. 12). This was then emphasised (Fig. 13) by using the overlay blending mode which removed sections of the faces that did not overlap. This development is relevant because the combination of two different faces of the same figure is illustrative of the narrative's ambiguity. In particular, it is representative of 'negotiated truth' because the two image of Reagan and the newly formed image of Reagan is indicative of the narrative's 'transformative aesthetic' which is formed by the alteration of details and meanings.

(Fig. 10)   (Fig. 11)

(Fig. 12)   (Fig. 13)

The Atrocity Exhibition can be viewed as a microcosm of Ballard's oeuvre in which he tests ideas. This is supported by Jensen (2016) who states that "negotiating the truth becomes the work of a lifetime" which proposes that each of Ballard's narratives is a process of "negotiating the truth" because each narrative is an alternate reality. This point becomes more plausible when considering Luckhurst's (1994) observation that Ballard's narratives are "mired in the complex repetitions that fold the texts back into the oeuvre". Put differently there are "obsessive elements that are repeatedly combined and recombined". These statements not only suggest that Ballard's narratives are greatly characterised by the repetition of motifs but also share the same motifs as they are recycled into subsequent narratives.

I attempted to accurately depict the human musculature (Figs. 14 - 15) to illustrate Ballard's repetitive use of medical motifs throughout *The Atrocity Exhibition*. To create these images, I used a fineliner pen with a 0.2 mm nib. The thinness of the nib is crucial because it is this thinness that creates a simplistic, coherent and precise image which represents the clinical and technical language used in the narrative. Further it is representative of the simplified abstract forms conveyed by the narrative as a means of redefinition and gaining understanding. Additionally, I added shadow to the images by forming clusters of tiny dots to reflect the repetitive and obsessive use of motifs.
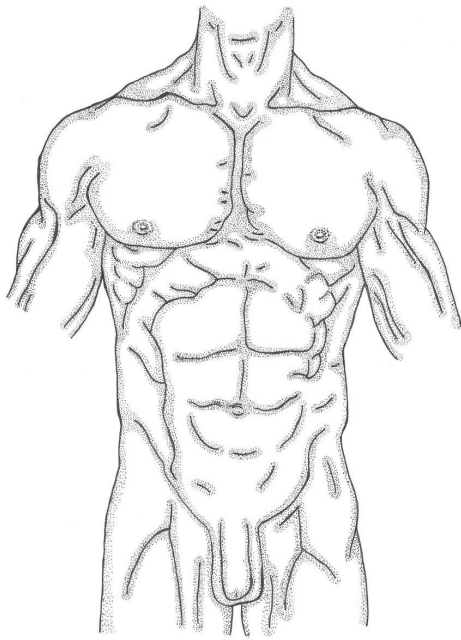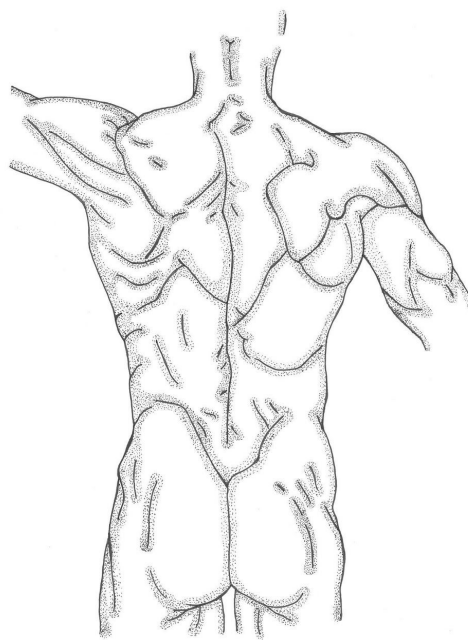
(Fig. 14)   (Fig. 15)

As a variation of these images I produced an image in which I only used dots to illustrate the image of a torso (Fig. 16). This removal of the line detail within the image is representative of Ballard's use of 'negotiated truth'. This is defined by the removal or alteration of one detail which can greatly affect the way an aspect is viewed. The image with no lines further reinforces the motif of abstract forms, symbolic constructs and the fragmentation of figures which demonstrate the redefinition of reality.
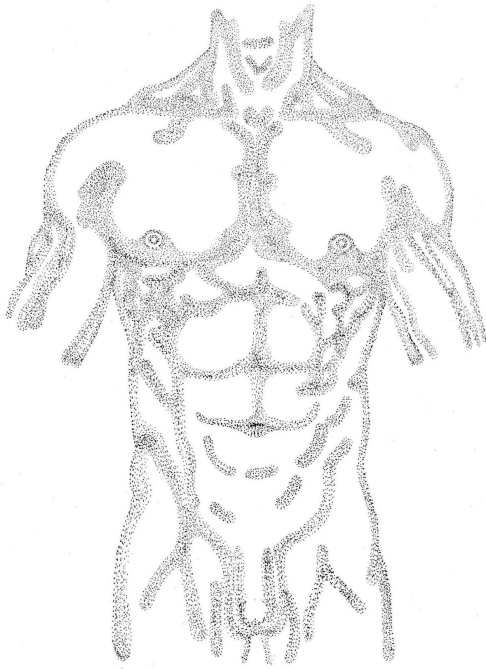
(Fig. 16)

An example of the narrative's repetition is illustrated by Foster (1993) who states that "Ballard's vision of the world has a distinctly American cast, ruled by icons of Hollywood film (Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor), of political power (John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan), and of car crashes (James Dean) that have defined much of America's national and international image". Foster (1993) identifies one of Ballard's motifs, the American pop culture icon stating that "this image [is] displayed especially starkly in *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Crash*". Foster (1993) also notes that Ballard's novel *Running Wild* (1989) "frequently invokes [Charles] Manson, an American type (like Mark Chapman, Lee Harvey Oswald, [and other murderers]), to inform [this novel]. This further establishes the repetition and recycling of motifs, demonstrated by the interval of two decades between *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Running Wild*.

This constant recycling and repetition of motifs and the testing of ideas used so prominently in *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as Ballard's continuous reinterpretation of reality which is symptomatic of an attempt to comprehend traumatic events. This is reflected in the diagnosis of the protagonist by the character Dr. Nathan who observes a "reluctance to accept the fact of his own consciousness" (Ballard, 1969). This is exhibited by a "sensitivity to the volumes and geometry of the world around him, and their immediate translation into psychological terms" which Dr. Nathan concludes "may reflect a belated attempt to return to a symmetrical world" (Ballard, 1969). This excerpt suggests that Travis struggles to come to terms with a reality that he believes he was forced into and to be able to make sense of reality, creates an alternate version of reality that is "symmetrical".

Symmetry represents an evenness that provides consistency and order which is conveyed through the utilisation of mathematical formulae and shapes. This contrasts with a reality of meaningless chaos created by the excessive stream of imagery distributed by the media which Travis is trying to escape. Luckhurst (2014) reinforces this point by explaining that "the protagonist is so effectively future shocked by intensifications of technological mediation that he is simply dispersed into global telecom networks" and that "Ballard's uncomfortable technological fantasies [illustrated through the character Travis] have been further retranslated as symptoms of a far more explicable traumatic experience" (Luckhurst, 2014). This explanation suggests that there is a connection between Ballard and Travis in that the "shock" caused by "technological mediation" is a translation of Ballard's attempt to explain the violence that he saw during the 1960s that was intensified by the media coverage of these events and the trauma that was caused as a result (Kunzru, 2014).

I used *Adobe Photoshop Sketch* to digitally edit an acetone print of Princess Margaret (Fig. 17) by using layering techniques and different blending modes to create different effects. This made the image appear blurred and grainy aesthetically similar to a television image (Fig. 18) which is one method of distributing the mediated image. This is relevant to Ballard's portrayal of the celebrity figure through the parodying of the mediated image. This is indicative of trauma caused by the consumerist society of the 1960s and also links to today's technological amplification of this excessive and obsessive mediated image culture.

(Fig. 17)   (Fig. 18)

As mentioned previously Ballard's desire to create a rhizomatic structure of possible realities as a method of communicating his traumatic experience is reflected by the non-linear narrative structure. In the article *"A Secret Code of Pain and Memory": War Trauma and Narrative Organisation in the Fiction of J.G Ballard* Paul Crosthwaite (2005) states that Ballard "approaches [both the] autobiographical and literary narratives as organisational practices" illustrating the point that Ballard's oeuvre can be read as a process of negotiating truth. Further Crosthwaite (2005) demonstrates the relevance of Bessel van der Kolk's work stating that it "is the assumption that psychological health is bound up with an individual's ability to narrativise temporal experience" and that van der Kolk's theoretical position is based upon what Pierre Janet (1919) elaborates on in his statement that "memory, is an action; essentially it *is the action of telling a story*. [...] The teller must not only know how to [narrate the event], but must also know how to associate the happening with the other events of his life".

This is an important point because it explains that Ballard's narratives show a constant resistance to placing events into a correct timeline which is evident in that the same event is told differently each time it is included in a narrative. This statement also suggests that Ballard used 'negotiated truth' as an attempt to retain his "psychological health" demonstrated by the reordering and reinterpretation of events within his narratives. This is reinforced by the observation that "this mode of understanding and organising the past, termed "narrative memory", is profoundly disrupted by traumatic experience" because "traumatic memories refuse to be consigned to the survivor's sense of the past, and hence resist assimilation into "narrative memory"" (Crosthwaite, 2005).

Crosthwaite (2005) notes that Ballard's trauma is most likely to have been caused by childhood exposure to military conflict as opposed to other events in Ballard's life. This is evident not just because of Ballard's war related narratives and motifs but also because of the way in which he presents these narratives. Scarry (1985) in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* observes that within any kind of written or spoken record of war there is the usage of "omission". Although the motivation for this may vary, there is always an act of disowning the injury (or trauma) thus creating an alteration that allows for the "neutralisation" of injury (or trauma). This is consistently evident throughout Ballard's entire oeuvre in the different realities that they convey throughout each narrative, which further reinforces the plausibility that 'negotiated truth' is a method that Ballard used in response to trauma.

THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION **READ AS MORAL PORNOGRAPHY.**

Sontag (1967) states that there is "a near-unanimous consensus as to what pornography is" and that "pornography is rarely seen as anything more interesting [than the illustration of] a deplorable arrest in normal adult sexual development". This suggests that the most popular view that is adopted about pornography is one formed by reputation. Additionally, Sontag (1967) explains that "pornographic works are tokens of a radical failure or deformation of the imagination" further suggesting that pornography only carries negative connotations and that the "pornographic imagination" can only be formed by a deformed or deviant mind. This demonstrates that pornography polarises literature in that its aim is to "inspire a set of nonverbal fantasies in which language plays a debased, merely instrumental role". This is a stark contrast to the complexities of literature which poses the question: How can The *Atrocity Exhibition* as a piece of literature be understood as pornography?

To investigate this question, the focus turns to Sam Francis's essay *Moral Pornography' and 'Total Imagination': The Pornographic in J.G. Ballard's Crash* in which Francis discusses the concept of "moral pornography" proposed by Angela Carter and applies it to the narrative of Ballard's *Crash*. Francis (2008) observes that *Crash* "displays many of the characteristics of pornographic representation (most notably explicit sexual depiction)" and "also functions both to parody such representation and to critique the pornographic or voyeuristic sensibility created by [...] technological representations and scientific modes of thinking" (Francis, 2008). Although Francis is talking about *Crash* the points made are relevant to *The Atrocity Exhibition* as it is the origin of a number of themes and motifs that *Crash* uses.

In *The Atrocity Exhibition* Ballard distances himself from "the criminal excesses of kiddy porn and snuff movies" and expresses his sense of the pornographic as "a powerful catalyst for social change" (Francis, 2008). These statements suggest that he is attempting to remove himself from the criminalisation of pornography. Ballard then establishes that he can utilise pornographic techniques as a method of parody to be able to critique pornographic culture. The ideology behind Ballard's use of pornography is reminiscent of Sontag's (1967) point that "art (and art-making) is a form of consciousness, the materials of art are a variety of forms of consciousness" and that "we may acknowledge a moral obligation to inhibit such states of consciousness in ourselves". This points towards the notion that Ballard feels that he is morally bound to illustrate the consciousness of society, "express[ing] a concern to "itemise and to analyse the various atrocities (as events) that for [him] dominated social and political life in the 1960s" (Gasiorek, 2005).

It is important to emphasise Sontag's phrase "moral obligation" which implies that art and literature have a sense of morality that motivates the writer to bring light to a certain aspect that in Ballard's case is pornographic culture. This is a plausible motive for Ballard's work when considering that "In his 1974 introduction to the French edition of *Crash* [he] states that "Pornography is the most political form of fiction, dealing with how we use and exploit each other, in the most urgent and ruthless ways"" (Francis, 2008). This is significant to Ballard's interview with Robert Louit for *Magazine Littéraire* in which Ballard claims that he believes this because "there is a tradition of intellectual pornography in France, while in America pornography is still disreputable" (O'Hara & Sellars, 2012). This indicates that Ballard believes that by parodying pornography he can create awareness for issues that arise from pornographic culture.

Francis (2008) explains that "[Angela] Carter's idea of moral pornography act[s] as "a critique of current relations between the sexes" [and a] "revelation [...] of the real relations of man and his kind"". In addition, the "moral pornographer" is defined as "an artist who uses pornographic material as part of the acceptance of the logic of a world of absolute sexual licence for all the genders" (Francis, 2008). The focal point here is the relationship between the sexes as they are conveyed within pornography. This furthers the investigation into how *The Atrocity Exhibition* portrays the relationship between the two genders with regard to the characteristics of 'moral pornography'.

Sontag's (1967) discussion of the "deadpan tone" or "emotional flatness" of pornography claiming that "the basic tone of pornography is affectless, emotionless" and that this absence of directly stated emotions is necessary to leave the reader space for his own sexual response which indicates a distancing from events to allow for the pornographic gaze. However, Francis (2008) adds that the distancing is characteristic of a scientific approach because it is "detached, calculating and quantifying" and that this is reflected by *Crash*'s protagonist James who "itemises and catalogues Helen Remington even as he caresses her". This is presented in the following way: "Elements of her body, her square kneecaps below my elbows, her right breast jacked out of its brassière cup, the small ulcer that marked the lower arc of her nipple..." (Ballard, 1973).

Additionally, characters are often objectified, and a prominent example of this is demonstrated through the character Vaughan who is "by far the most powerful character, collecting and manipulating people, just as he collects and manipulates their pornographic images" (Francis, 2008). This is made explicit when Vaughan shows James his "photographic workshop" where there were "hundreds of [...] crude pictures of motor-cars and heavy vehicles involved in highway collisions" and

of "hospitalization and post-recuperat[ion]" (Ballard, 1973) which demonstrates that Vaughan's main method of recording and itemising is through the distancing effect of photography.

Ballard's distanced approach to the narrative of *Crash* is also evident in *The Atrocity Exhibition* in that it too objectifies its characters. This is exemplified in the passage in which the characters Dr. Nathan and Koester talk about the character Karen Novotny: "it might be feasible to market it commercially [...] [i]t contains the following items: (1) Pad of pubic hair, (2) a latex face mask, (3) six detachable mouths, (4) a set of smiles, (5) a pair of breasts, left nipple marked by a smaller ulcer, (6) a set of non-chafe orifices..." (Ballard, 1969). This excerpt bears a resemblance to *Crash* when James is describing Helen Remington. However, *The Atrocity Exhibition* is an extreme version of this because Karen Novotny is referred to as an "it" demonstrating the objectification of a woman. The extreme way in which Karen Novotny is portrayed illustrates a relationship between sexes in that male characters distance themselves from the female character which removes significance from the interactions between them.

This distancing effect of the narrative appears to expand to the reader and resembles the "emotionless" and "affectlessness" characteristics of pornography. However, it can be argued that Ballard's "clinical" approach to eroticism is an investigative tone that he employs to be able to critique pornography which distinguishes the "moral pornographer". Francis (2008) states that "*Crash* self-consciously uses its own pornographic form implicitly to critique aspects of contemporary consciousness and culture" and "to explore or speculate about certain potential extreme forms of human consciousness". This is suggestive of 'moral pornography' because it demonstrates a self-consciousness which is backed by "Ballard's confession that the process of writing *Crash* was a "continuing moral challenge"" (Francis, 2008).

The Atrocity Exhibition also demonstrates a self-consciousness in that Ballard refers to Sontag's *The Pornographic Imagination* suggesting that one of his motivations for writing *The Atrocity Exhibition* is in Sontag's explanation "[to] acknowledge a moral obligation to inhibit such states of consciousness in ourselves". For Ballard it is a sense of responsibility to illuminate pornographic culture and the wider consumerist society as a method of critique on mediation. This illumination is indicated by Francis (2008) who observes that the way in which "*Crash* condones violence towards women is not straightforward" explaining that "the book contains a catalogue of instances of violence to women both represented, imagined and real". The different layers of representation described here is an important point to consider as it implies that the events presented in the narrative are on another level of consciousness, demonstrative of a self-awareness around the way in which we consume and process the mediated image.

The emphasis that *Crash* places on the "association of violence and sexuality" is relevant to Sontag's (1967) statement "that what pornography is really about, ultimately, is not sex but death" and "only works dealing with that specific and sharpest inflection of the themes of lust do". This point is exemplified by Francis's (2008) statement that "Vaughan's violence towards Catherine [is portrayed by him] "holding [Catherine's] breasts with his palms as if trying to force them into a single globe" and Catherine's gasps are 'drowned' by the mechanical noise of the car wash, as if she is in danger of being not only sexually overwhelmed but even killed by Vaughan's attentions".

The way in which *The Atrocity Exhibition* demonstrates this association between violence and sex is not as explicit as *Crash*. However, Kauffman (1998) in her essay *J.G. Ballard's Atrocity Exhibitions* states that "Ballard has been mapping the coordinates of sex and violence in the most unlikely places: in the fusion of pornography and science, memory and history". This proposes that the narrative presents the relationship between sex and death through a scientific and experimental view "mapping the coordinates" of these two elements as if this association is a scientific diagram that charts the results of a test. This indicates that the investigative and clinical tone that is applied to *The Atrocity Exhibition* is significant to the scientific, disinterested way in which the association of sex and violence is presented.

The Atrocity Exhibition presents the link between sex and death conceptually like a scientific theory: "simulated newsreels of auto-crashes and Vietnam atrocities [...] an apt commentary on [Catherine's] own destructive sexuality". This forms a clear connection between sex and violence and the accompanying annotation reinforces this point. Ballard refers to "the work of Masters and Johnson [collected in] Human Sexual Response" explaining that "the most interesting aspect [of this work] was its effect on [the experimenters]". Ballard claims that the experimenters "seemed almost neutered by the experiments" and that "the copulating volunteers were really training the doctors to lose all interest in sex" (Ballard, 1969). This is characteristic of the "moral pornographer" who shows a sense of self-consciousness in their work.

Francis (2008) notes that in *Crash* "Vaughan fragments the body-image of Elizabeth Taylor through blown-up photographs [and] collects photographs of "the breasts of teenage girls deformed by instrument binnacles. This presents no physical manifestation of violence but rather it is representative of violence towards women through the fragmentation of the female identity and is

similar to the way in which people are fragmented within *The Atrocity Exhibition*. Gasiorek (2005) observes that "the text's own objectifications through its inventories, disarticulations and blow-ups are inevitably at some level complicit with the phenomena they anatomise". This point proposes that the techniques used within *The Atrocity Exhibition* present and condone the objectification of women. This is exemplified by "the huge figure of [...] the screen actress, Elizabeth Taylor" in which "[t]he magnification was enormous. A wall, the size of a tennis court, contained little more than the right eye and cheekbone" (Ballard, 1969).

I used photographs of prominent figures from the 1960s era to create collage style imagery that combined anatomical diagrams with the Dadaist technique known as 'photomontage'. An example of this is Hannah Höch's *Und Schatten (And Shadows)* (1925) (Fig. 19) which depicts a section of the face in isolation. To reproduce this effect, I ripped some images into pieces which fragmented the faces that they depict. This illustrates the fragmentation of identity and is particularly relevant to the representation of violence against women with regard to the fragmentation of female celebrities.

For example, Marilyn Monroe (Fig. 20) is presented as several scattered fragments which are labelled with different parts of the face. These labels bring context to the image indicating that the image has lost meaning and is significant to the narrative's objectification of women. Moreover, this alternate presentation of Marilyn Monroe (Fig. 21) through the anatomical diagrams further portrays the loss of identity and the objectification of women because Monroe is depicted with her head missing and with labelling on her body reducing a portrait of a celebrity to an anatomical diagram of a depersonalised body.

(Fig. 19)
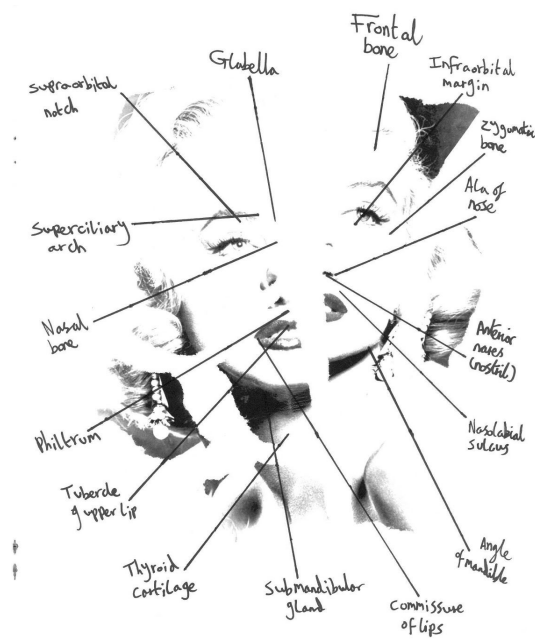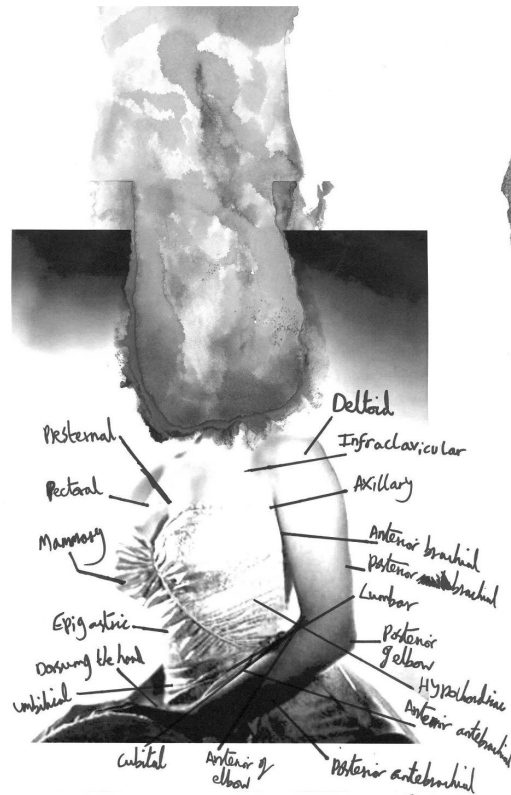
(Fig. 20)   (Fig. 21)

Francis states that the condoning of violence towards women in *Crash* is "not straightforward" and Gasiorek also claims that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is only "at some level complicit with the phenomena they anatomise" this is an important matter because it points towards the notion that both narratives are "moral pornography" as they demonstrate that Ballard is critiquing rather than affiliating with pornographic culture.

Moreover, Francis (2008) explains that "the eroticisation of the female body seen as a victim of violence is persistent enough to remain unsettling and ethically problematic" and that this is conveyed through "elements of genuine heterosexual masculine sadism". This is identified in the graphic illustrations of wounded female body parts in *Crash* and in the extreme objectification and itemisation of the female identity in *The Atrocity Exhibition*. This extreme parody of pornography creates awareness around violence towards women specifically within media. This point is reinforced by Gasiorek (2008) who explains that in *The Atrocity Exhibition* "there are no visual cues for the potentially predatory eye, and its textual representation of the objectified female body needs to be seen in relation to its wider concern with commodity culture".

This is exemplified in the following extract "...(3) Contour: the unique parameters of Karen's body - beckoning vents of mouth and vulva, the soft hypogeum of the anus. (4) Astral: segments of his posture mimetized in the processions of space. These transits contained an image of the geometry assembling itself in the musculature of the young woman" (Ballard, 1969). This illustrates a pornographic scene that has been "reduced to an affectless geometric experimentation with bodily forms and sexual postures [...] stripped of libidinal pleasure" (Gasiorek, 2005). This removes any real opportunity for a fetishistic or predatory gaze on this scene and instead creates an effect of alienation for the reader.

***THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION* READ AS WAR TRAUMA.**

The aim of this chapter is to examine the possibility that *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as war trauma as suggested by the 'peritraumatic dissociation' and negotiated trauma readings. It is proposed that the narrative is itself the traumatic events rather than a process of recalling these events and that this is evident in the "transformative aesthetic" that the narrative employs. The narrative relies on the visualisation of its motifs to convey this correctly. This observation poses the question of how *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as a visual response to trauma encountered through war. Ballard's autobiographical narratives *Empire of the Sun* (1984), *The Kindness of Women* (1994) and a variety of essays discussing the subject of war trauma are considered with regard to this query.

Gasiorek (2005) observes that *The Atrocity Exhibition* "tries to 'decode' some of the 'transformational grammars' through which alternative structures of meaning are discovered in human existence in an attempt to ascertain what sort of 'language could provide a key'" to a reality that has been "fragmented". This indicates that the aim of the narrative is to find an alternate reality that provides an understanding to a reality that has become meaningless as a result of the overabundant distribution of the mediated image. This is further reinforced by Gasiorek's (2005) explanation that "Ballard's deployment of the latent-manifest distinction which demands an act of translation: one order of discourse needs to be transposed into the terms of another" and that "the text's collage structure would be orientated less to indeterminacy and more towards epiphany". This proposes that the narrative is a method of dealing with complexities caused by trauma of the past (war) and of the present (media and technology). This is exemplified in Travis's refusal to come to terms with reality.

This image of a surreal form (Fig. 22) requires an act of translation similar to how the narrative can be used as a method of dealing with trauma. The translation of this image allows for realisation much like how the collage structure of the narrative does through 'transformational grammars'. For example, the image can be suggestive of a figure in motion, not dissimilar to the way that *The Atrocity Exhibition* creates ambiguity through the use of the fluid human figure to convey the 'transformative aesthetic', which is exemplified in the following: "...he saw the figure of the dancer. Her muscular body, clad in white tights and sweater that made her almost invisible against the sloping sand, moved like a wraith up and down the crests. [...] He watched her dance, a random cipher drawing its signature across the time-slopes [...] a symbol in a transcendental geometry" (Ballard, 1969).
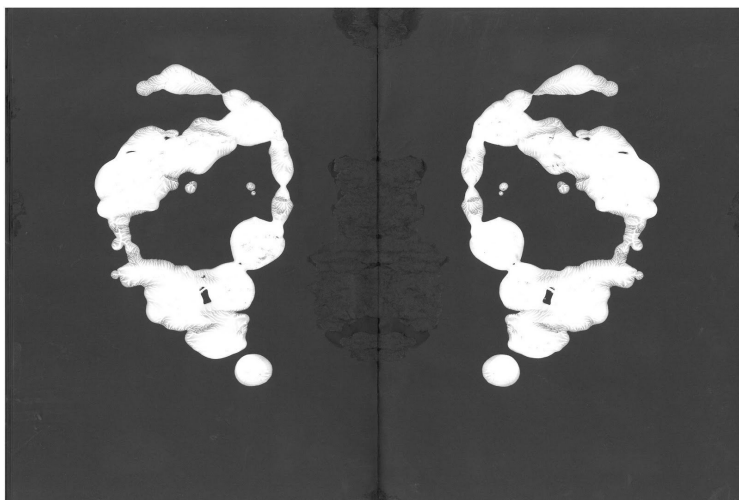
(Fig. 22)
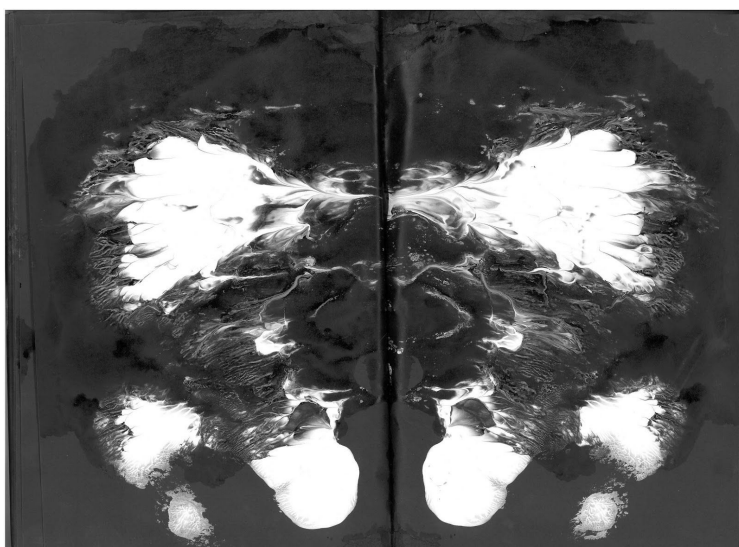
(Fig. 23)
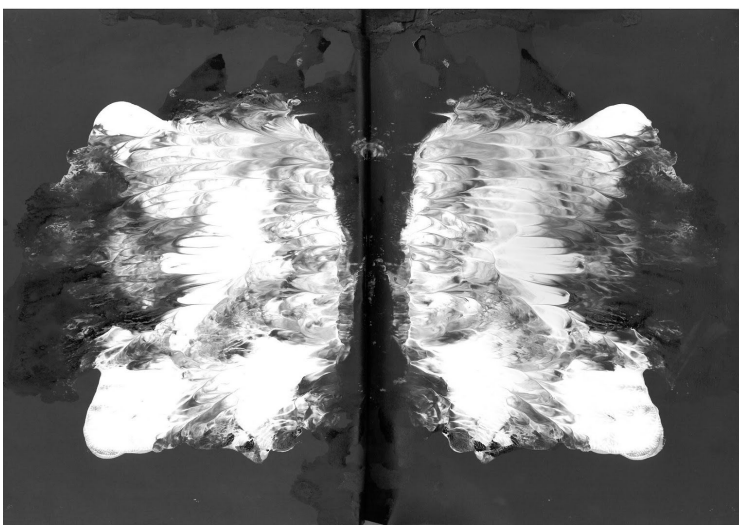
(Fig. 24)

This points towards the notion that the image of the surreal form could depict a dancer's movements which has been redefined to form an alternate method of understanding the movements of the human figure. The 'transformative aesthetic' is further illustrated in these two images (Figs. 23 – 24) which are suggestive of a rough, mountainous terrain. The textures that appear in this imagery resemble the erosion of rock and the flow of water because the textures generated in these images are wave-like and representative of movement. Both the geographical and figurative aspects of movement that are illustrated here effectively communicate ambiguity and fluidity, specifically of the (in)distinguishability between the human figure and the landscape.

The narrative's collage-like structure is relevant because it reflects the fragmented effect that trauma has on the individual which can be understood as the "doubling of trauma". This is proposed by Winnberg who compares Andy Warhol's work *Ambulance Disaster* (1963) (Fig. 25) to Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*. He explains that "The work consists of the doubling of a photograph depicting a crashed ambulance with [a seemingly] dead woman slumped out of one of the windows [and] this doubling of the image reflects a doubling of trauma - not only are we confronted with a [...] traumatic event, what was supposed to be the vehicle of relief has, in a cruel instance of irony, exacerbated the trauma". This is notion is reinforced because "the bottom image repeats the top image with a clear difference: bleaches, lines and tears" (Winnberg, 2011). This is representative of the worsening of an event as a result of the constant reliving of its trauma.

(Fig. 25)

I was inspired by Rorschach test images (Fig. 26) to reproduce a similar aesthetic by using *Adobe Photoshop* to change the orientation and the placement of images on the canvas which created a mirroring effect (Fig. 27). I also applied the 'threshold' effect to make the images appear monotone to better resemble the shapes found within Rorschach test images (Fig. 28). The duality of the celebrity figure created as a mirrored image demonstrates an inversion/ reversal of the original which is representative of the alternative realities and meanings that *The Atrocity Exhibition* conveys throughout.
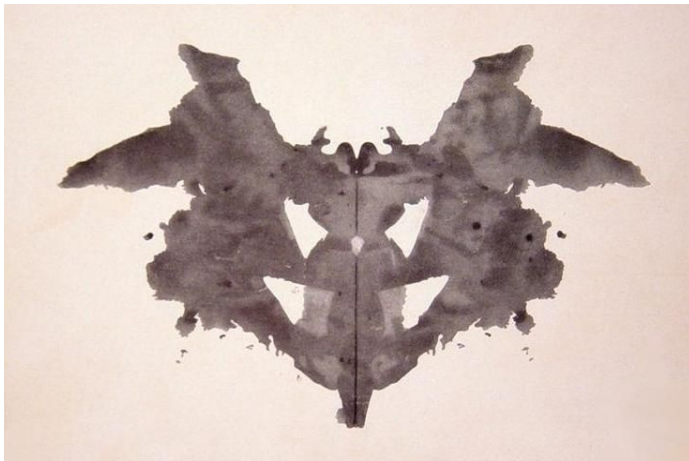
(Fig. 26)

(Fig. 27)

(Fig. 28)

The duality also links to the doubling of trauma caused by the worsening effect of trauma each time it is revisited. The mirroring of the image is indicative of the copying of the same image and the repetitive distribution of media. Some of the images were quadrupled (Fig. 29) which supports both of these points and forms a correlation between the two. Moreover, the different orientations of the same image illustrate the overabundance of alternate ways in which these images are distributed. Finally, this collision of the media and psychological worlds, communicates the idea that the trauma caused by the overwhelming mediated imagery is difficult to escape as it seeps into places that supposedly protect against further trauma. This suggests that there is a constant struggle to avoid trauma and find meaning in reality.

(Fig. 29)

Furthermore, Winnberg (2011) states that "*Ambulance Disaster* may serve as a perfect visual equivalent and forerunner of Ballard's novel one of the main motifs of which notably is car crashes and their victims, as well as other forms of disasters staged in *Serial Deaths*". This reinforces the idea that the narrative is a method of coping with trauma through a series of alternate events that distances Ballard from traumatic experience. This is reflected in the way *Serial Deaths* represents the "napalm bombings in Vietnam" and "the serial deaths of Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe" as "replicas" and "fragmentary" images on "advertising billboards" (Ballard, 1969). This implies that Ballard is attempting to obscure his trauma by using motifs and techniques that parody the distortion of mediation.

I used a photograph of Greta Garbo (Fig. 30), whose image is utilised within *The Atrocity Exhibition* in the following extract: "...there are a series of plaster casts of film stars and politicians in bizarre poses - how they were made we cannot find out, they seem to have been cast from the living models, [...] there's even one of Garbo dying" (Ballard, 1969). The images that I produced illustrate this quote in that the blending modes that I used create the effect that Garbo was made from inorganic materials such as stone (Fig. 31) and metal (Fig. 32). In addition, this image (Fig.33) makes Garbo appear to glow which gives her an otherworldly appearance like a spirit. While in this image (Fig. 34) Garbo appears to be decaying on a part of her face, like a corpse.

(Fig. 30)

(Fig. 31)

(Fig. 32)

(Fig. 33)

(Fig. 34)

These multiple alternate ways of viewing Greta Garbo suggests that the narrative portrays several alternate realities as demonstrated by the several possible scenarios. Moreover, the third and fourth edits illustrate the 'conceptual death' motif which is the idea that events (such as death) are portrayed on multiple levels of consciousness, rather than on multiple planes of existence. The combination of these two concepts is suggestive of the proposal that the narrative is influenced by the surrealist movement which intertwines the objective and the subjective. Alternate realities represent the objective and multiple layers of consciousness represent the subjective.

Caruth (1991) notes that war trauma causes "the emergence of a pathological condition - the repetitive experience of nightmares and relivings of battlefield events - that is experienced like a neurotic pathology and yet whose symptoms reflect, in startling directness and simplicity, nothing but the unmediated occurrence of violent events". This is relevant to the following extract: "the end of World War II" when Travis and his parents "left Lunghua internment camp and returned to [their] house in Shanghai" (Ballard, 1969). This is a clear re-telling of Ballard's childhood but one that has been negotiated to tell a different truth.

The accompanying annotation for this extract is a quote from Sigmund Freud's *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1930): "The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction". This illustrates "a barrier of knowledge that protects by placing stimulation within an ordered experience of time" (Caruth, 1991). This shows that Ballard has returned to this recorded part of his experience and as a form of protection quotes Freud as a distant observation of war to remove himself from trauma, while simultaneously ordering it within a timeline.

The Atrocity Exhibition's use of photographic techniques and the mediated image suggests that the narrative is a response to war trauma. This is exemplified by the following passage: "[a] woman's photographs, in profile and full face, jerked one by one across the screen [...] the planes of her face seemed to lead towards some invisible focus". Here, the photograph is employed as a means to raise awareness to something that is otherwise unseen. Similarly, the extract "[a] montage photograph [...] of a man with itemized wound areas [has] wholly uncharacteristic emphasis on palm, ankle, and abdominal injuries [which exhibit] injuries [that] seem to have been sustained in an optimized auto-fatality" (Ballard, 1969), raises awareness through the unusual placement of emphasis which redefines the focal point of a photograph.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others* Sontag refers to Simone Weil's essay *The Iliad, or The Poem of Force*, in which Weil (1940) states that "violence turns anybody subjected to it into a thing". Sontag (2004) explains this statement by claiming that "modern life supplies "innumerable opportunities" to regard at a distance through the medium of photography - other people's pain". This points towards the notion that the subject of the photograph loses their identity particularly when subject to violence because it distances and alienates the viewer from the emotions that the event evokes. Ballard's attempt to distance himself from his trauma through 'negotiated truth', conveying alternate events and adopting an unbiased tone is reminiscent of the photographic gaze, because the real traumatic events have been distorted and obscured causing them to become meaningless.

Sontag (2004) notes that "people believed that if the horror could be made vivid enough, most people would finally take in the outrageousness [and] the insanity [of] war" and uses Ernst Friedrich's book *War Against War!* as an example of this point. Sontag explains that it is "photography as shock therapy". Sontag (2004) focuses on a chapter of the book "*The Face of War* [which contains] twenty-four close-ups of soldiers with huge facial wounds [that] each [have] an impassioned caption (Fig. 35) and the wickedness of militarist ideology is excoriated and mocked on every page". This is similar to the extreme way in which Ballard uses parody as a method of critique. Ballard refers to a number of different atrocities in technical detail with great abundance and the fragmented portrayal of these aspects reflects the surreal and horrific images of the extremely wounded faces of Friedrich's book.
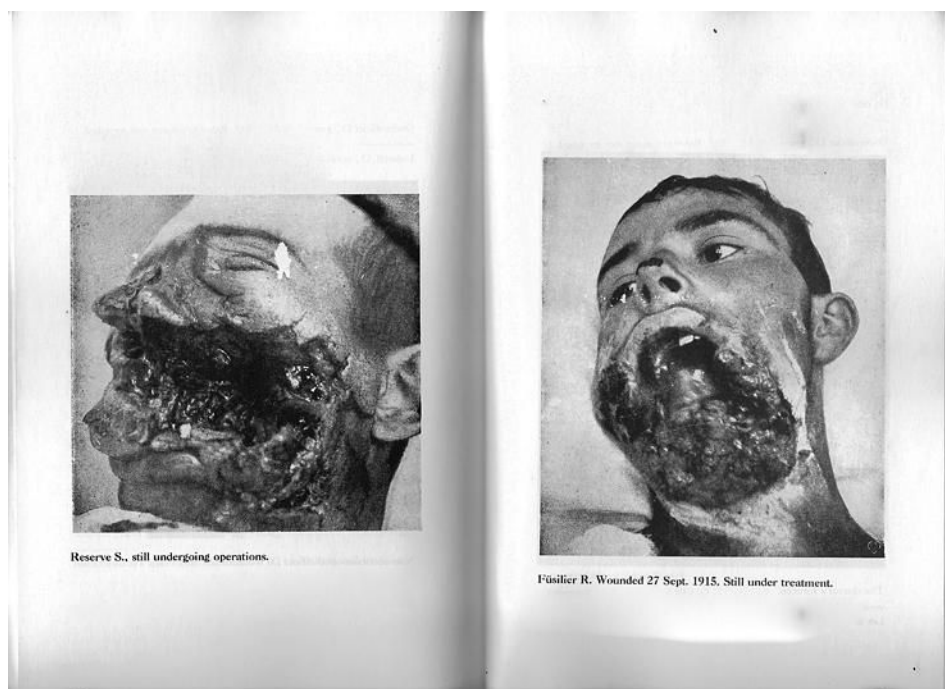
(Fig. 35)

It is interesting to note that Salvador Dalí created a piece of work, *The Face of War* (1940) (Fig. 36) which is significant to the link between war and trauma. The image depicts a large corpse-like face with an expression of anguish. In the eye sockets and the mouth of the face are more faces similar to the large face. This is indicative of an infinite loop of death which could represent the endlessness of war but also the revisiting of horrible events, symptomatic of trauma. Similarly, in my practice I was influenced by another piece of work by Dalí, *Paranoiac Face* (1937) (Fig. 37) which is the image of a human face that when looked at horizontally (landscape) becomes an image of "a group of Africans sitting in front of a straw hut" (Hopkins, 2004). What Dalí was trying to illustrate with images such as this was his own invention, "so-called 'paranoiac-critical method'" which theorizes that "clinical

paranoia involves the obsessional reinterpretation of external phenomena" (trauma). This demonstrates the importance of the role of trauma when bringing light to an aspect such as war.
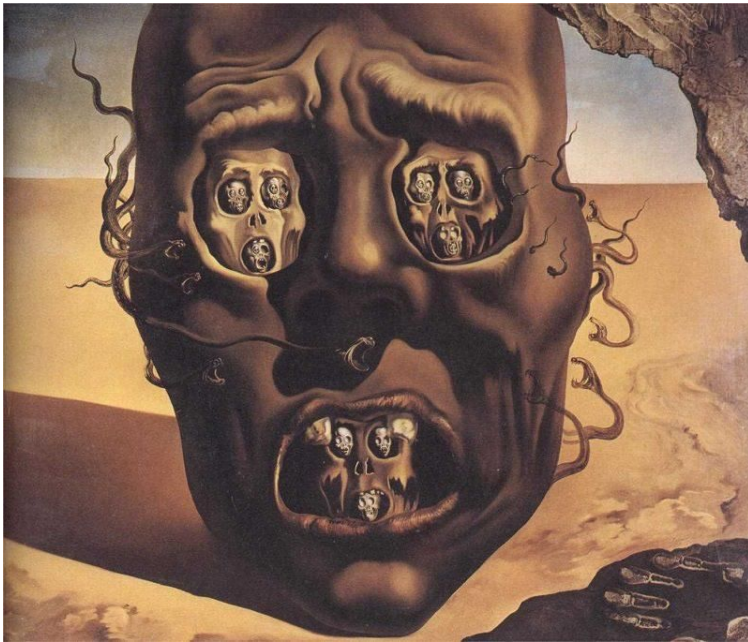
(Fig. 36)

(Fig. 37)

To portray this concept, I collected images of 1960s era celebrities and prominent figures and digitally edited them in *Adobe Photoshop* to appear monotone. Then I printed physical copies of these images and altered them by layering black drawing ink over them, which gave the illusion that they were landscapes similar to the Dalí paintings (Fig. 38 & 39). I produced a combination of different landscapes because the surrealist images that Ballard refers to are not specific environments and are often made up of a variety of elements such as *Europe After the Rain II* (1940-1942) (Fig. 40). This

image depicts imagined structures relating to the narrative's multiple layers of consciousness and its "discrediting [of] reality" which was Dalí's aim when reinterpreting "external phenomena" through his work (Hopkins, 2004).

(Fig. 38)   (Fig. 39)

(Fig. 40)

Caruth's (1991) observes that "trauma is always "a double wound" in the sense that it is "experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known [...] until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor". Winnberg (2011) considers this point stating that "reading Warhol in accordance with Caruth's understanding of the doubling of the wound [...] is precisely the obscene tear of the repetition that brings out the full force of the disaster, of the trauma, which in the first instance may remain hidden". This reinforces the point that *The Atrocity Exhibition* uses techniques to emphasise key aspects specifically when critiquing the consumerist gaze. This is in line with Winnberg's (2011) statement that "Ballard's novel may be read similarly, as concerned

with a repetition-compulsion geared towards the restitution of lost significances" which is illustrated by the protagonist's aim to find new meaning in a supposedly meaningless reality.

Repetition of violence and death is exemplified in the following way: "These are the generations of America. Sirhan Sirhan shot Robert F. Kennedy. And Ethel M. Kennedy shot Judith Birnbaum. And Judith Birnbaum shot Elizabeth Bochnak. And Elizabeth Bochnak shot Andrew Witwer..." (Ballard, 1969). This overly extensive list of assassinations conveys the idea of extreme violence and demonstrates the degree to which parody is used to emphasise the obsessive nature of the mediation of war. In the article *Trauma Culture* (1996) Hal Foster asserts that "a special truth seems to reside in traumatic or abject states, in diseased or damaged bodies" and that "the violated body is often the evidentiary basis of important witnessings to truth, of necessary testimonials against power". This supports the idea that Ballard uses *The Atrocity Exhibition* as a means of creating awareness to war and other violent atrocities and the trauma that they cause.

This is indicative of the narrative's mimesis of the symptoms of trauma and also parodying of mediation. In the essay *War Porn* (2005) Jean Baudrillard explains that "[degrading images of war] become a parody of violence, a parody of war itself, pornography becoming the ultimate form of the abjection of war which is unable to be simply war, to be simply about killing, and instead turns itself into a grotesque infantile reality-show". This resembles the discomforting and alienating effect that Ballard's use of extreme repetition and emphasis creates, which proposes that this is the main aim of the narrative.

Through experimenting with gesso paint, I found that I could use it to transfer images onto paper, although the results are varied and unpredictable, they gave the images a textured and worn aesthetic that distorts the face in a way that obscures identity (Fig. 41). The gesso paint transfers are relevant to *The Atrocity Exhibition* in that they effectively illustrate loss of meaning as a result of mediation. Moreover, the gesso paint transfers aesthetically resemble advertisements found on billboards, which also relates to mediation. For example, "The Cinemascope billboards of Jackie, Oswald and Malcolm X were beginning to break up in the wind. One morning he woke to find that they had gone" (Ballard, 1969). This excerpt suggests that the identity of these figures are in a process of slowly fading away, eventually disappearing because it has lost meaning. Further, the worn aesthetic of the images could represent violence (of war), the loss of identity of those subject to violence and the loss of emotion within an image as a result of the distant mediated gaze of war.

(Fig. 41)

METHODOLOGY.

The research draws from the idea that Ballard's narratives are exceptionally visual and this is because of the effective techniques that he applies to his writing. Ballard's oeuvre is closer to an artist's than a writer's in that it demonstrates an abundance of imagery. However, it is not always clear what these images are trying to convey and that is what the investigation is trying to find out.

When considering topics for investigation there was much literary reading into identifying trauma within Ballard's work. This pointed towards the fascinating idea that there is a correlation between the visuals that the narrative conveys and the aspects of trauma found in Ballard's work, which could provide insight into the thinking behind Ballard's work.

Having already investigated Ballard's novel *Crash*, I chose to look into *The Atrocity Exhibition* which provided the basis for many of the concepts and motifs found within *Crash*. Also *The Atrocity Exhibition* was an interesting focal point for the topic of discussion because of its non-linear narrative and experimental nature which creates ambiguity around the meaning of the narrative. The visual language used within the novel provides a key to understanding motifs and concepts that are presented.

Initially, motifs and themes with the narrative and key points that Ballard made in interviews were considered in relation to *The Atrocity Exhibition*. I focused on aspects that were recurring and that were significant to the narrative and tried to establish connections between readings that discussed trauma and that discussed imagery in relation to Ballard's work. I selected a few readings which I thought were relevant to the investigation and also identified other readings which shared similarities to these but had a different perspective or lead off on a different branch of investigation.

I began by solely focusing on literary research but realised that it would be more effective to also use creative practice as a means of investigation and interpretation because of the visual nature of the research topic. I began to consider artists that Ballard referred to in *The Atrocity Exhibition* and in interviews. The surrealist movement was particularly important to the narrative which is apparent in that the narrative illustrates numerous alternate objective and subjective realities.

I tried to repeatedly illustrate this concept by using a variety of different processes and media to reflect the repetitive nature of the narrative and its 'transformative aesthetic' conveyed through its creation of alternate realities. I also utilised imagery of celebrities from the 1960s because these two elements were a constant throughout as they were important to the narrative's setting and its motivation in creating awareness around mediation.

The process included an emergent practice that had no final outcome to begin with and constantly developed as new information was gathered and images were produced. Initially I thought about making a series of images that would be displayed in an exhibition but felt that this would be too literal and also lose the meaning of the research. I thought about making a link between the book format and the research and decided to create a book design that would accompany the narrative.

I wanted to illustrate the narrative but realised that this would not be relevant to the research investigation and would be too literal with regard to the concepts and motifs of the narrative. Instead I decided to create something that would be subtle in telling a story to reflect the way in which the narrative hides its true meaning and motives.

The art book design aims to demonstrate a connection to *The Atrocity Exhibition* without directly illustrating the events or being over literal with the content of the narrative such as in the RE/Search illustrated publication of *The Atrocity Exhibition* (Fig. 42) which places imagery alongside the narrative and attempts to illustrate literal imagery rather than the meaning behind them. The art book is intended for an audience who are familiar with *The Atrocity Exhibition* and J.G. Ballard's other work and is designed with pages from the book to illustrate this connection.
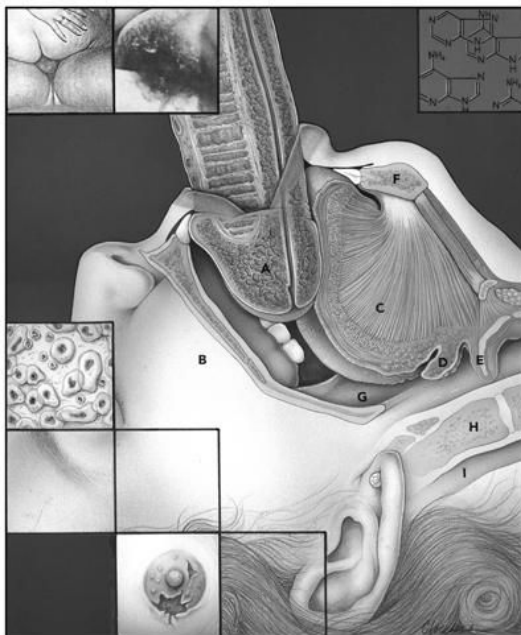
(Fig. 42)

I thought that the content of the art book would be ideal to be featured on websites relating to Ballard's work such as www.ballardian.com (Fig. 43) and https://jgballard.ca (Fig. 44) as an e-book. This requirement meant that the book design had to be in a digital format rather than a physical printed copy. I began the design process by trying to put all the images from the practice into *Adobe InDesign*.

(Fig. 43)
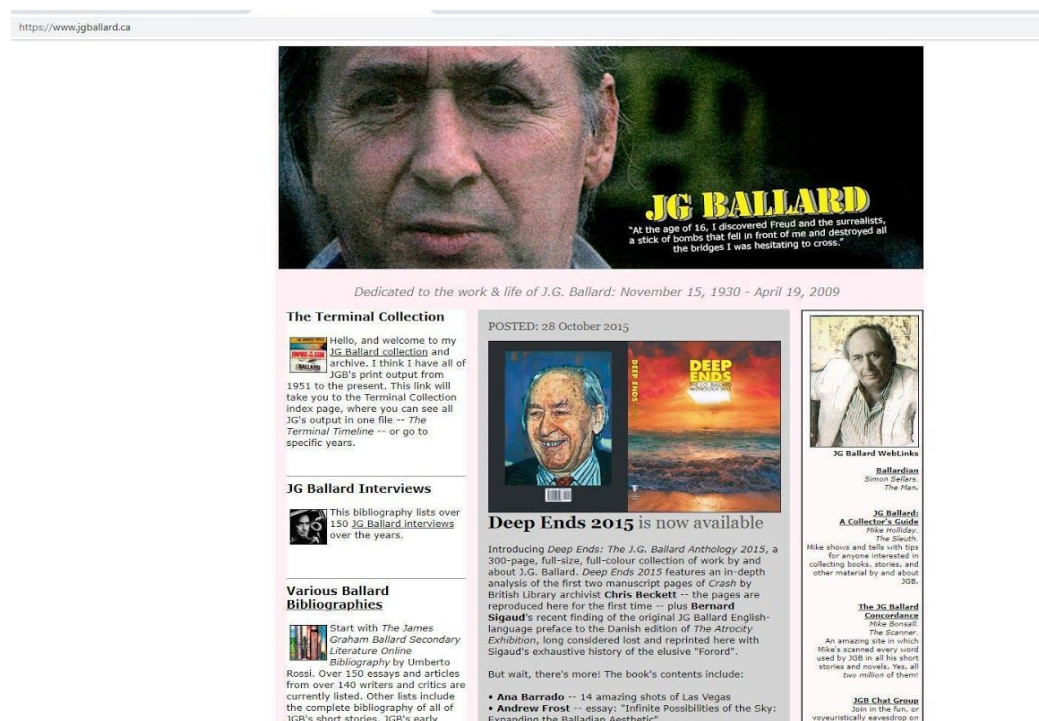
(Fig. 44)

However, I found that implementing all of these images would cause the book to be too bulky and lack meaning so I condensed the book down to approximately seventy pages. I decided on using a monochromatic and greyscale colour scheme because the majority of the images were one or the other as a result of using black and white photographs from the 1960s.

I decided to remove other images that I did not feel were as visually strong as the others which further condensed the book to under 60 pages. While deciding which images to remove I also began to reorder the images because I felt that the order of the images was too regimented. To be able to reorder these images I had them printed out as physical copies and then laid them out how they were laid out in *Adobe InDesign* (Figs. 45 - 46). In this way I could play around with the order of the images easier and also visualise the order of the images better.

(Fig. 45)   (Fig. 46)

During this process I decided that the design would benefit from mixing images together that were predominantly black and predominantly white. I also tried to break up images of celebrities especially

of the same celebrity. However, so that the order of the images did not appear entirely random I tried to place subtle similarities together whether it was the formations within the images or the concept behind the images (Fig. 47).
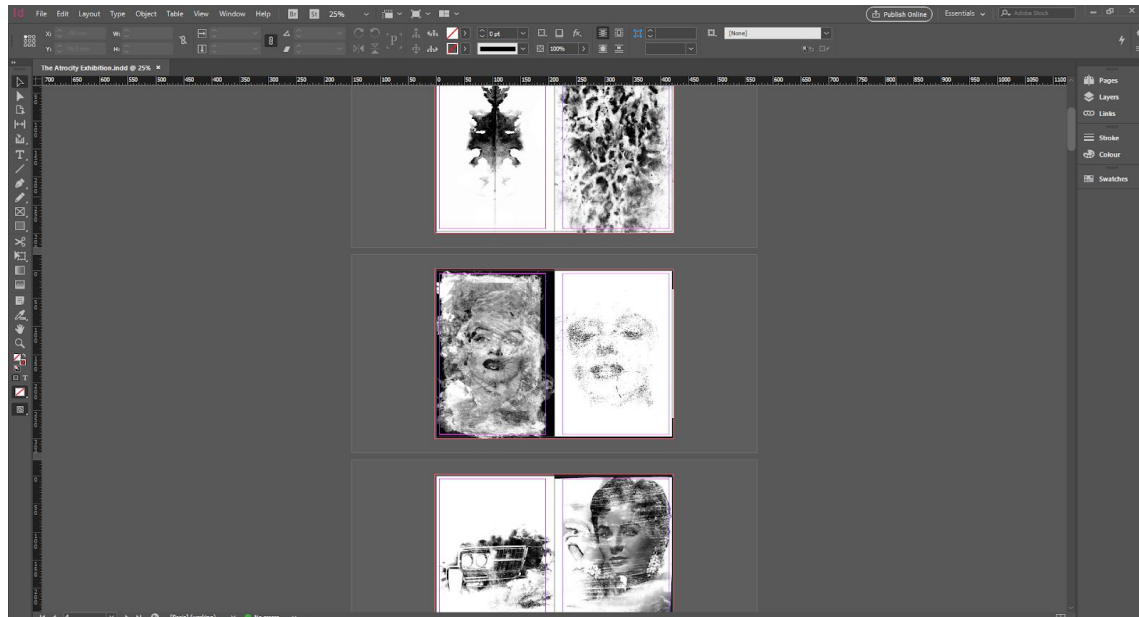
(Fig. 47)

I also decided to remove the front and back pages of the book which depicted edited photographs of Ballard (Figs. 48 – 49). This is because I thought that this contradicted the ambiguity of the narrative. I replaced these edited photographs with photocopies of pages from *The Atrocity Exhibition* which I had previously annotated with notes for my research (Figs. 50 - 51). I thought that this would provide the design with some context to the initial research methodology without hindering the effect of the imagery and design.

(Fig. 48)

(Fig. 49)

(Fig. 50)

(4) 'Chronograms,' by E. J. Marey; (5) Photograph taken at noon, August 7th, 1945, of the sand-sea, Qattara Depression, Egypt; (6) Reproduction of Max Ernst's 'Garden Airplane Traps'; (7) Fusing sequences for 'Little Boy' and 'Fat Boy', Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-Bombs. When he had finished Travis turned to the window. As usual, the white Pontiac had found a place in the crowded parking lot directly below him. The two occupants watched him through the tinted windshield.

Internal Landscapes. Controlling the tremor in his left hand, Travis studied the thin-shouldered man sitting opposite him. Through the transom the light from the empty corridor shone into the darkened office. His face was partly hidden by the peak of his flying cap, but Travis recognized the bruised features of the bomber pilot whose photographs, torn from the pages of *Newsweek* and *Paris-Match*, had been strewn around the bedroom of the shabby hotel in Earls Court. His eyes stared at Travis, their focus sustained only by a continuous effort. For some reason the planes of his face failed to intersect, as if their true resolution took place in some as yet invisible dimension, or required elements other than those provided by his own character and musculature. Why had he come to the hospital, seeking out Travis among the thirty physicians? Travis had tried to speak to him, but the tall man made no reply, standing by the instrument cabinet like a tattered mannequin. His immature but at the same time aged face seemed as rigid as a plaster mask. For months Travis had seen his solitary figure, shoulders hunched inside the flying jacket, in more and more newsreels, as an extra in war films, and then as a patient in an elegant ophthalmic film on nystagmus – the series of giant geometric models,

2

like sections of abstract landscapes, had made him uneasily aware that their long-delayed confrontation would soon take place.

The Weapons Range. Travis stopped the car at the end of the lane. In the sunlight he could see the remains of the outer perimeter fence, and beyond this a rusting quonset and the iron-stained roofs of the bunkers. He crossed the ditch and walked towards the fence, within five minutes found an opening. A disused runway moved through the grass. Partly concealed by the sunlight, the camouflage patterns across the complex of towers and bunkers four hundred yards away revealed half-familiar contours – the model of a face, a posture, a neural interval. A unique event would take place here. Without thinking, Travis murmured, 'Elizabeth Taylor.' Abruptly there was a blare of sound above the trees.

Dissociation: Who Laughed at Nagasaki? Travis ran across the broken concrete to the perimeter fence. The helicopter plunged towards him, engine roaring through the trees, its fans churning up a storm of leaves and paper. Twenty yards from the fence Travis stumbled among the coils of barbed wire. The helicopter was banking sharply, the pilot crouched over the controls. As Travis ran forward the shadows of the diving machine flickered around him like cryptic ideograms. Then the craft pulled away and flew off across the mannequin. When Travis reached the car, holding the torn knee of his trousers, he saw the young woman in the white dress walking down the lane. Her disfigured face looked back at him with indulgent eyes. Travis started to call to her, but stopped himself. Exhausted, he vomited across the roof of the car.
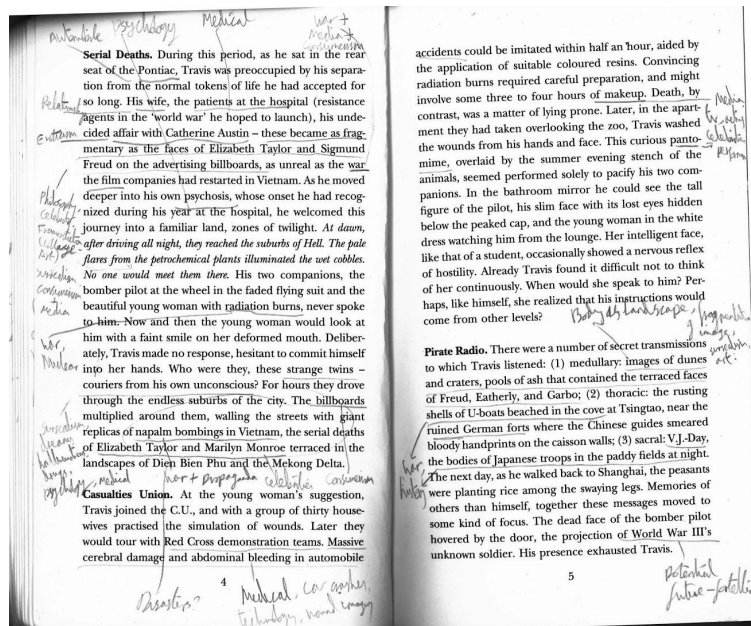
3

(Fig. 51)

Appropriation.

It needs to be addressed that the images that have been obtained and used within the practice based research are sourced from various websites and were edited as a method of creating new content. In other words, the images used are secondary sources that have been appropriated for my research. So what does it mean to appropriate an image? Hito Steyerl (2012) explains that secondary sources are "a copy in motion. Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, [...] distributed for free [...], compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution". This explains how an image that is sourced for free is a bad copy of the original, because it becomes further and further removed from its original context and each time an image is downloaded and uploaded the quality of it becomes worse, making it impossible to obtain an original image through digital distribution.

This form of appropriation is a modern phenomenon caused by the invention of the World Wide Web in 1990. However, this process is relevant with regard to Ballard's critique of mediated imagery in the

1960s because of his excessive repetition of the same imagery and is similar to how imagery is repetitively distributed on the internet. Moreover, the distorted imagery that is portrayed in the narrative and interpreted through my practice is characteristic of Steyerl's (2012) point that appropriation "mocks the promises of digital technology. Not only is it often degraded to the point of being just a hurried blur, one even doubts whether it could be called an image at all". This is because the distorted imagery that is conveyed within the narrative is parodying the media's poor handling of subject matter, which is reflected by the loss or replacement of context and the poor quality of the appropriated image. This questions the ethics of appropriation specifically when there is no credit to the creator of the work and when the image is used for profit.

Masahiro Ito's Work and *The Atrocity Exhibition.*

Masahiro Ito is best known for his work on the *Silent Hill* video game series. In particular, *Silent Hill 2* which features a monster known as "Pyramid Head" (Fig. 52), a design that greatly exemplifies the psychological nature of Ito's work. *Silent Hill 2* is a psychological survival horror game (Twin Perfect, 2010) and includes texts regarding the psychological state of patients that have been admitted to a mental institution. An excerpt relevant to *The Atrocity Exhibition* states that "to us [the patient's] imaginings are nothing but the inventions of a busy mind" regarding the possibility that "to him there simply is no other reality" and that "he is happy there". The text then asks "why in the name of healing him must we drag him painfully into the world of our own reality?" (Konami, 2001). This resembles the following passage in which the character Dr. Nathan proposes that "Travis's extreme sensitivity to the volumes and geometry of the world around him, and their immediate translation into psychological terms [could be a symptom of] a[n] attempt to return to a symmetrical world" (Ballard, 1969).

(Fig. 52)

This connection between *The Atrocity Exhibition* and *Silent Hill 2* illustrates the concept that creating a new reality is not necessarily a negative thing and is used as a method of redefining and gaining an understanding of reality. This need to redefine reality could be the result of a desire to escape a mediated reality and the inability to return to this reality is caused by the individual's refusal to do so. These observations point towards the notion that the narrative is still relevant today because it demonstrates that key narrative motifs are also portrayed within video games an aspect that is undoubtedly contemporary. Moreover, the idea that there is a need to escape a reality that is completely mediated is a significant point, because this is exactly what we face in a modern era overwhelmed by rapid technological advancements.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion this thesis has considered four main readings that are significant to the proposal that *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as a visual response to trauma. The investigation into these readings has established some important points which support the proposal. These points have been reinforced through creative practice as a method of interpretation that provides further insight into the research.

Peritraumatic Dissociation.

The first topic of discussion is the reading of *The Atrocity Exhibition* as 'peritraumatic dissociation'. It is explained that 'peritraumatic dissociation' is "the narrative of the event itself" which means that the traumatic experience is the narrative, rather than the narrative being a retelling of traumatic experience. This is characterised by the narrative's removal of the boundary between the objective and the subjective view.

A technique known as 'Decalcomania' used by Óscar Domínguez illustrates this removal of boundaries by depicting an alternate reality where humans have become unfamiliar forms. This is further illustrated by Dalí's image of a woman made up of free-floating fragments which is characteristic of the novel's fragmentation of characters. This conveys a reality that is made up of symbolic constructs which visualises the effect of trauma.

This is reinforced by the narrative's reference to E.J. Marey's work which is understood by the narrative as an alteration of the passage of time as a means to redefine reality. My own practice interprets the narrative's understanding of Marey's work and suggests that the photographs simplify our understanding of the human figure by placing focus on the abstract forms that movement creates.

This is evidenced by the narrative's abstract depictions of significant events such as John F. Kennedy's assassination as way of redefining reality to be able to find new meaning and escape trauma. This observation suggests that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a visual response to trauma because it is a means to escape the objective through the subjective redefinition of reality.

Negotiated Truth.

The second chapter discusses the concept of 'negotiated truth' with regard to *The Atrocity Exhibition*. 'Negotiated Truth' is defined as a process of altering or omitting details of an event so that they are more accurate to the way in which the individual perceives them. This is demonstrated in that Ballard decides to remove his parents' presence from his childhood because they had no influence over him while living in an internment camp and therefore becomes more accurate to Ballard's perception of events.

In addition, it is suggested that the narrative portrays 'negotiated truth' through a "transformative aesthetic" which is the "passage of one mode of existence to another". It is also explained that this is indicative of a desire to "disengage" from a "shattered" reality. This is conveyed through the protagonist's constant change of role and the scenario that they are in. It is proposed that this helps Ballard to inhabit another world where he can find "empowerment" and "solace" and is a form of protection from trauma.

My practice tries to demonstrate and gain an understanding with regard to the concept of 'negotiated truth' by experimenting digitally with different effects to create new imagery. This process represents 'negotiated truth' because it utilises alternate images of an aspect to redefine how it is viewed to create a new perception. This is indicative of the narrative's 'transformative aesthetic' which provides alternate ways of understanding an aspect to create new ways of understanding.

To convey this repetition, I produced images that were able to accurately illustrate the human musculature. These images are reminiscent of the abstract forms that are depicted by the narrative. Furthermore, I created a simplified variation of these images to reinforce the idea that the narrative's symbolic constructs demonstrate the redefinition of reality. It is suggested that the narrative is a record of events which exhibits symptoms of trauma through the need to alter, omit and reorder details. This is further supported by the narrative's repetition and recycling of motifs and concepts as a means to redefine reality, indicative of a means to respond to trauma.

Moral Pornography.
The concept of 'moral pornography' is introduced and is linked to the author's self-consciousness and moral obligation to create awareness. It is explained that Ballard uses 'moral pornography' to critique pornographic culture and more generally consumerist society. It is suggested that Ballard feels morally bound to illustrate the consciousness of society during in the 1960s in which he stated was a cause of his trauma. To be able to come to terms with his trauma, Ballard expresses a concern to itemise and analyse various events that dominated the social and political life of the 1960s.

It is demonstrated that Ballard parodies pornography by using pornographic techniques through an emotionless and deadpan tone which is emphasised by its use of technical language. It is argued that this is a scientific and disinterested tone associated with an investigative approach to the eroticised scenes. This is reflected in the itemising and listing of aspects of the female body which objectifies and fragments the female identity. This is a method of illumination, because Ballard portrays this objectification in an extreme way that denies the pornographic gaze and instead alienates and discomforts the reader.

Furthermore, the excessiveness and obsessiveness of the repetition of physical and presented violence is suggestive of death rather than sex. Ballard's intentions can be misunderstood as it is assumed that he condones violence towards women due to the amount of violence incorporated into the narrative. However, this excessiveness of violence is "ethically problematic" and is demonstrative of a critique on violence. In my practice I combined anatomical diagrams and photomontage to illustrate the destruction of the female identity which is representative of violence against women. I ripped up photographs into small pieces that fragmented and removed the identity of the celebrities and labelled these fragments so that they resembled anatomical diagrams.

This is indicative of the redefinition of reality because the identity of a celebrity has been placed into new context and is labelled with parts of the body which depersonalises them. This visualises the process that Ballard is using to parody and create awareness around pornographic culture and the consumerist society. It is proposed that this is a response to trauma because it uses pornographic techniques to illustrate graphic violence towards the body and destruction of the identity. This places emphasis on trauma that is caused by these images and makes the reader form a negative response to the pornographic and mediation as Ballard perceives them.

War Trauma.

This chapter was an investigation into the notion that *The Atrocity Exhibition* can be read as war trauma. It is observed that the narrative uses certain techniques as a method of "decoding" a "reality that has been fragmented" which indicates that the aim of the narrative is to find a reality that provides meaning. It is explained that the narrative uses the process of translation and collage-structure to orientate towards an epiphany and that this is a method of dealing with trauma. It is demonstrated through my practice that the process of redefining reality involves the formation of a new focal point.

This new focal point provides simplicity and is exemplified in my image of an abstract form. It is suggested that this image demonstrates the 'transformative aesthetic' of the narrative as human figures appear to change and shift as well as intertwine with the landscapes. This is plausible because the simplified form depicts the movement of the figure rather than the figure itself. It is observed that provides understanding which also communicates the idea of ambiguity and fluidity. This is indicative of the narrative's aim to redefine reality by constantly shifting between different realities and states of being, evident in the protagonist's constant role change.

This is further demonstrated by the narrative's doubling of trauma which is compared to Andy Warhol's work in which he depicts the same image of traffic accident twice. The bottom image

appears damaged which suggests a worsening of trauma each time it is revisited. It is explained that the narrative is similar in this regard in that its collage-like structure reflects the fragmented effect that trauma has on the individual. Ballard uses a "barrier of knowledge" to be able to communicate his experiences of war through the distant observation of war. This is reinforced by the narrative's use of photographic techniques which parodies the mediated image.

The photograph is used to create new meaning through the unusual placement of focus which creates awareness to something that would otherwise be unseen. Additionally, viewing war through the photograph distances the viewer from war by removing emotional connection from the photograph which creates an unbiased view. Moreover, it is suggested that Ballard uses photography to critique the horrors of war and the way in which the media poorly handles the images of war. The emphasis created by the degrading imagery that Ballard conveys simultaneously critiques the mediated image and mimics the effects of trauma which supports the proposal that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a visual response to trauma.

End.

The thesis has provided four significant readings which have all established the idea that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a visual response to trauma. Several associations can be made between the readings in that they reinforce the narrative's redefinition of reality which is conveyed through the narrative's 'transformative aesthetic'. A number of points have been made which identify recurring concepts and motifs that link to the narrative's aim to find meaning and gain understanding. Simultaneously the narrative attempts to create awareness around the dangers of mediation and the trauma it causes, which for Ballard was at its worst during the 1960s.

This explains why Ballard dedicated this novel to the societal and political culture of this era. However, it is further established that the narrative is still relevant to the present day. This is because the narrative consistently critiques the overabundance of the mediated image which is significant to the rapid increase in this distribution of mediation through the technological. This attempt to find new meaning by escaping into alternate realities while also creating awareness around aspects that supposedly cause trauma is evidence to suggest that *The Atrocity Exhibition* is a response to trauma.

This is reinforced by the identification of Ballard's abundant and diverse use of visual techniques. The identified techniques include: pornography, media photography, Surrealism and Dadaism, Pop art, Chronography and Collage, all of which have played a prominent role in the illustration of the 'transformative aesthetic' and the redefinition of reality. It is these key elements of the narrative that are demonstrative of a visual response to traumatic experience.

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