

# Paradoxical Realities



+ TATIANA TAVARES +

# Paradoxical realities

**A creative consideration of realismo maravilhoso  
in an interactive digital narrative**

## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Marcia Filomena Tavares who, although half a world away in a different continent, has walked beside me on this doctoral journey, and to my deceased father Thadeu Antunes Tavares and my grandfather Orlando Rapaci who both passed away during the course of the study.

I would like to imagine that they are proud of my achievements and are watching over me.



This thesis is submitted to Auckland University of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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# Abstract

This artistic, practice-led thesis is concerned with the potentials of polyvocality and interactive digital narrative. The practical project, *Saints of Paradox*, is formatted as a printed picture book that can be expanded through the use of AR (Augmented Reality) technology.

The technical structure of the book allows for the reading of different versions of a story told by three distinctive narrators (saints). These saints are syncretic and they interpret a story through changes in illustrative content and monologue. In the development of the illustrations, I draw syncretism and photomontage into artistic relationality and explore ideological tensions and mysteries resulting from decontextualisation and recontextualisation.

Conceptually, the research project is concerned with storytelling and *realismo maravilhoso* (a distinctive form of Latin American magical realism), so the exegesis reflects on certain socio-cultural constructs that permeate divisions between belief and actuality. Methodologically, the project emanates from an artistic research paradigm (Klein, 2010) that supports a heuristic approach (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985) to the discovery and the refinement of ideas. Thus, the research draws upon both tacit and explicit knowledge in the development of a fictional narrative, its structure and stylistic treatments.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my primary supervisor Professor Welby Ings, who has inspired me for many years to exercise both creativity and academic rigour. I'm thankful for his passion and constant belief in the project. I have been fortunate to have worked with such a talented, caring, patient, generous and skilled scholar who has mentored me in the intricacies of the academy and what it is to educate others within it. I would also like to express my gratitude to my secondary supervisors Dr Miriam Harris, for her encouragement and knowledge in areas of digital design and contemporary AR technology, and Dr Frances Nelson for her insights in the construction of practical work and exegesis writing.

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# Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.



TATIANA TAVARES

31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

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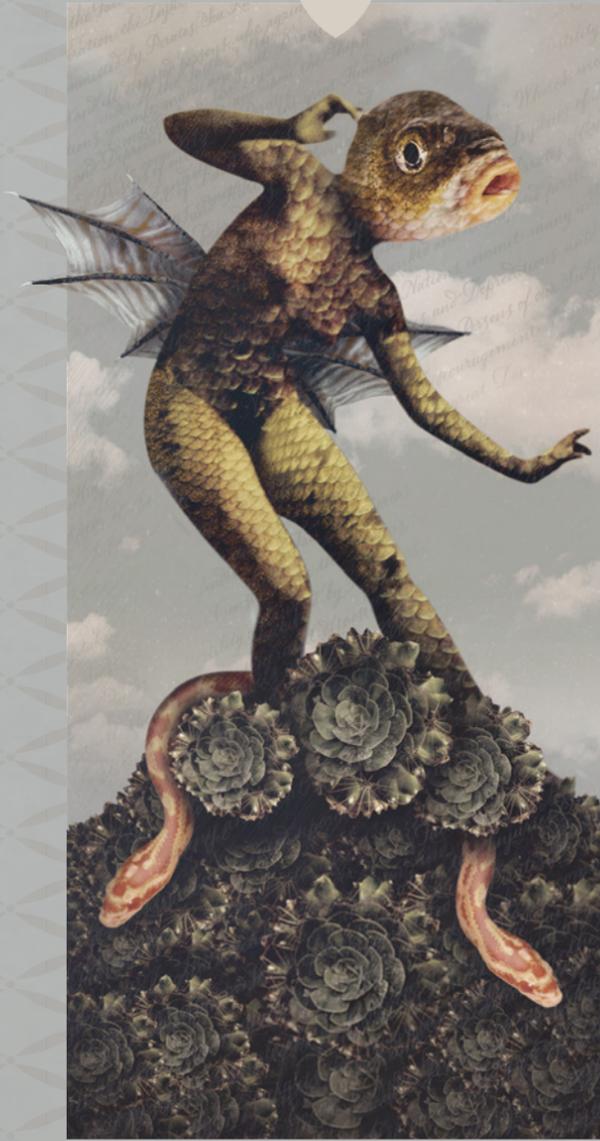


TATIANA TAVARES

31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

## Ethics approval and consents

Given that this project involved the creation of a fictional work and all actors were employed as professional contributors, it was unnecessary to gain ethical approval for the research.



+ introduction +

# Introduction

This exegesis contextualises an illustrated, fictional love story that draws on the potential of the syncretic and demonstrates how a plurality of world views might coexist and contest each other within a single given text.

Using Augmented Reality technology, the story navigates relationships between the real and the imagined. Here, the dynamics of the magically real are normalised and accepted, and meaning negotiates an unreliable, sometimes paradoxical pathway between rational and irrational accounting and polyvocal narration.

## + Research questions

The thesis asks four interconnected questions:

- 1 **What is the potential of AR, film, illustration, animation, sound and app design in the development of an interactive, digital narrative?**
- 2 **How might the interaction between story elements be used to explore relationships between what is real and what is imagined (within the construct of *realismo maravilhoso*)?**
- 3 **What is the potential of polyvocal narration in an AR picture book, such that a reader might encounter complementary but diverging interpretations of a baseline narrative?**
- 4 **... and how might the concept of photomontage be expanded within the realm of AR, such that a relationship might be drawn between syncretism and parallax<sup>1</sup> illustration?**

Driven by these questions, the research focuses on the design of a picture book called *Saints of Paradox*. In this work, the narrative structure and discourse<sup>2</sup> draw on considerations emanating from the fields of narratology, literary theory, *realismo maravilhoso* and applications of syncretism and photomontage.

The narrative structure of the work is designed as a polyvocal discourse that challenges the supremacy of the monologue (Bakhtin, 1981). By subverting the idea of a single, overruling truth, the design somewhat aligns with postcolonial questioning of the absolute and also with Bakhtin's polyphonic and dialogic theories. In the work, syncretism operates not only as a cultural reference to Brazilian culture and religion, but also as an artistic and narrative device used to communicate a negotiation of different voices and points of view. This discourse plays out inside a parallax that is both a technical and artistic device.

---

1 Parallax describes a sense of three-dimensionality suggested by the layering of levels or objects that are perceived from different lines of sight. The concept is expanded upon on page 35.

2 The story, [*histoire* by the French structuralists and *fabula* by the Russian formalists], consists of events, actions, time and location. *Narrative's discourse* relates to the manner in which the story is told. [The French structuralists call this the *discours* and the Russian formalists call it *syuzhet*]. Broadly, narrative discourse is concerned with arrangement, tone, emphasis / de-emphasis, and the magnification of elements in the story's content. For an expansion on these terms see the discussion on page 19.

As the author/designer of *Saints of Paradox*, I am positioned between worlds, operating as a Brazilian emigrant<sup>3</sup> who has experienced transitions and renegotiations of location, belief and identity.<sup>4</sup> Although the book is a fictional work, it alludes to the 1964 Brazilian coup d'état.<sup>5</sup> References to this period are manifest in the narrative, imagery and audio environments of the story.

---

<sup>3</sup> This has meant in the study that it has often been necessary for me to translate material from Portuguese so I can ensure clarity and veracity. I have indicated in the text instances where this occurs.

<sup>4</sup> The genesis of the story surfaced in Brazil but the production was constructed in New Zealand through collaborations with other designers and technical experts (see Chapter 3, Research Design).

<sup>5</sup> The Brazilian dictatorship began with the 1964 coup d'état and ended on March 15, 1985. Ongoing debates about the reliability of political systems and fractures in existing democracy (Löwy, 2016), the effects of military dictatorship as a mechanism of corruption (Dallari, 2013) and remembrance and the veracity of historic information about dictatorship in Brazil (Santos, 2013), all impact tangentially on the story and its design.

<sup>6</sup> Translated from Spanish term *lo real maravilloso* (Carpentier, 1975).

## + Definitions of key words used in the thesis

Within this exegesis I use certain words in specific ways. Because I accept that definitions are subject to challenge and meanings are not constant in differing contexts, I provide here definitions of the following terms:

### AUGMENTED REALITY [AR]

Augmented reality (referred to within the thesis as *AR*), is an interactive experience of an environment where digital elements are added to a live view. In this study, this occurs via an app on a mobile device. When using such a device, objects on a printed page are enhanced by computer-generated perceptual information, including visual and auditory material.

### DIEGESIS

Diegesis refers to the interior view of a narrated world and the relationships between the narrators and characters of a story. Although Plato introduced the concept in his discussion of the nature of speaking voices, Genette (1980) describes three diegetic levels in a narrated text: the extradiegetic level (external to the diegesis); intradiegetic level (internal to the diegesis) and metadiegetic (an intradiegetic embedded within an extradiegetic level – a story within a story). In this thesis I use these terms to discuss the positioning of narrators within or outside of the main story. I also use the word diegesis when discussing the design of elements that form part of the fictional world of the story.

### MAGICAL REALISM, MAGIC REALISM AND MARVELOUS REALISM

Magical realism, magic realism or marvelous realism<sup>6</sup> are subtly different denominations of a genre of narrative fiction in art, film and literature that portrays imaginary elements as an inherent and integrated part of an otherwise realistic environment. Strecher (1999, p. 267) uses the term to describe incongruent elements where a “highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe”. Spindler (1993) argues that the antinomy between the sense of real and imagined is presented in different ways, normally as a psychological state or supernatural phenomena. Zamora and Faris (1995, p. 3) define the *magical* as “an everyday occurrence — admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism.” In this thesis I use these terms to refer to elements or narrative episodes that may be inexplicable in a rational world but are accepted as a normal part of a story setting.

### PARADOX

The thesis is heavily influenced by considerations of paradox. In the study I use the term to refer to “a self-contradictory statement ... that is apparently absurd but is, or may be, really true” (Davidson, Seaton & Simpson, 1985, p. 704). As such the term may refer to something that is logically unacceptable (and therefore unreliable) either simultaneously in a moment or over an extended period of time.

## PARALLAX

Tonkovich defines a parallax as “the disjunction of two images of the same object seen from different angles” (2014, p. 70). The term is applied to a technique in computer graphics where different layers of two-dimensional images move at different speeds within a virtual environment, giving a sense of three-dimensionality. In this thesis, parallax is used as a technical and conceptual device in the construction of the narrative and illustrated spreads (Figure 0:1 - p. 4).

## PICTURE BOOK

In this thesis I use the term picture book to describe a sequential, image-led text that functions without written narration. Although the text is physically bound and printed, its illustrated narrative is supplemented by audio recorded, polyvocal narrations accessible via AR technology.

## POLYVOCALITY

The term polyvocality refers to the employment of multiple narrators or varied perspectives from different characters or narrators within a text. By employing polyvocalism a story may be told by multiple persons. The term is often associated with the writing of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1965, 1984*a*, 1984*b*) and the related concepts of polyphony and dialogism. Within the thesis, these concepts also relate to the transculturalism (Ortiz, 1940, 1995) present in *realismo maravilhoso* texts.

## REALISMO MARAVILHOSO

Demarcated from the terms above, *realismo maravilhoso* describes a form of transcultural magical realism derived from the term *lo real maravilloso* (Carpentier, 1972). It describes a narrative technique primarily associated with Latin American cultural beliefs. The term is often considered as a “marginal cultural production” because of its relationships with postcolonialism<sup>7</sup> (Bowers, 2004). Young (1995) suggests that the term *realismo maravilhoso*<sup>8</sup> in Brazil responds to unique geographic and cultural aspects of Brazilian experience within Latin America that require specific consideration. He argues that fantastic literature, definable by this term, has been evident for many years in the country’s literature.

## SYNCRETISM

Syncretism refers to the theological melding or “dual practice” of two religious systems (Stewart, 2011). In a Brazilian context, syncretism may be applied to the merging of indigenous and African gods with Catholic saints in Afro-Brazilian cults (Hedrick & Coll, 1967). Ramos (1941) argues that the Brazilian negroes were “Catholics, but behind the cult of the saints and the Catholic ceremonies, they continue worshiping their old African gods” (pp. 247-248). In this thesis, the term syncretism has been used as a theoretical concept that underpins both the story and illustrative approach.

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<sup>7</sup> Slemon (1995) suggests that magical realist narratives constitute counter-colonial writing. Faris (2004, p. 136) argues that this genre of “narrative inscription ... transfer[s] discursive power from the coloniser to the colonised, to provide a fictional ground in which to imagine alternative narrative visions of agency and history”.

<sup>8</sup> The Portuguese terms *realismo maravilhoso*, *realismo mágico*, and *realismo fantástico* are translations derived from English and Spanish that have been used interchangeably to describe types of magical realism in literature and painting. Figueiredo (2013) argues that only the term *realismo maravilhoso* (from Spanish *lo real maravilloso*) is appropriate because it relates most directly to theoretical Latin American constructs.



FIGURE 0:1

Diagram illustrating a parallax as an interactive device for an AR platform. A composite illustration like the one above is made up of multiple levels layered into the same image. These discrete levels can move against each other, revealing elements behind them that might normally be masked. The technique allows for a 3D sense of space (that is triggered by movement) to occur within the 2D layering of an illustration.

## + Components of the thesis

This thesis contains two interrelated elements, an AR activated picture book and a contextualising exegesis. These components are interrelated and are described briefly below.

### THE PICTURE BOOK

The main body of practice resides in an interactive, digital narrative that is both a printed picture book and an AR activated, polyvocal text. A sequence of illustrated, printed environments may be triggered using a mobile app. This device enables the reader to select from three differing and often conflicting versions of a story (Figure 0:2 - p. 5).

FIGURE 0:2 (NEXT PAGE)

Interactive page from *Saints of Paradox*. When pages are scanned, the user can select narrations from three different Saints: the Mother of Benevolence, the Father of Pragmatism or the Father of Orthodoxy. Each saint has a distinctive monologue, soundscape, video, and animated interpretation that plays out over the printed picture.





The printed book contains a selection of 10 illustrations each containing three separate interpretations; one for each narrator (Figure 0:3). The 30 variations are layered and composed as an interactive parallax that produces a sense of three-dimensional space within the illustrations' depth.



FIGURE 0:3

The top image constitutes an environment *in potentia*. It may be understood as a vacant set awaiting each saint's interpretation of an episode in the story. The adjacent plates are stills taken from each saint's narration of the story. They demonstrate how each populates the scene with divergent interpretations of both the environment and the events that play out within it.

## Synopsis of the story

*Saints of Paradox* tells the story of Elza, an elderly woman who mourns the death of her lover (Euclides)<sup>9</sup>, who disappeared during the 1964 Brazilian coup d'état. During the subsequent 50 years she has been immersed in grief, and her home has become an accumulation of magically real objects, odd religious items, and cobbled together memories that move in strange ways. Although she initially searches for her lover after his arrest, she gradually retreats into a deeply religious existence, bordering on obsession and madness. Elza spends her days watching an antiquated television that plays propaganda from the 1960s in a relentless loop. In this hypnotic setting, she becomes fixated on the day that her lover disappeared. One day, she accidentally breaks a photograph of Euclides. In a magically-real turn of events, she encounters the isolated place that her lover was imprisoned as a young man. She watches him as he dances ... but suddenly he is shot, and thus becomes a martyr. The event has a dramatic impact on Elza and the story ends in three different ways, depending on how each saint interprets the sequence of events.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The name is taken from Euclides of Megaria (c. 430–360 B.C.E.), a critical thinker and founder of the Megarian or Eristic sect. Euclides was a philosopher who was significantly influenced by the writings of Parmenides. He is primarily associated with the art of disputation and according to Cicero, with the concept of “supreme good.” In *Saints of Paradox*, Euclides disputes the power of the academy and its complicity in the coup d'état. This action may be tangentially likened to Euclides of Megaria's involvement in Socrates Athenian academy and Socrates expressed dissatisfaction with his fondness for controversy and disputation.

<sup>10</sup> The saints present three complementary but diverging interpretations of these events. These are shaped by their respective values of compassion, orthodoxy and pragmatic realism.

## THE EXEGESIS

In practice-led research Biggs (2006, p. 2) argues that the creative artefact alone “cannot place its content in a critical and historical context so that it can be demonstrated to be original and significant and therefore a contribution to knowledge or its interpretation.” Schwartz (1972, p. 22) observes that documentation of creative practice forces the validation of the work, so it can “translate artistic and creative efforts into the molds and models of doctoral requirements and objectives.” By extension, Scrivener (2000, p. 11) argues that doctoral exegeses should report “moments of reflection, including intended and unintended consequences and responses.” Bolt (2006, para. 7) suggests the importance of the act of making and the critical reflection behind it form a “double articulation between theory and practice, whereby theory emerges from a reflexive practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory.”<sup>11</sup>

In consideration of these arguments and Hamilton’s assertion that an exegesis must negotiate “the disinterested perspective and academic objectivity of an observer/ethnographer/analyst/theorist [and] the invested perspective of the practitioner/producer” (2011, para. 2), this document is structured into four chapters.

The first chapter prefigures the inquiry by positioning the researcher. It considers relationships between my personal, cultural and professional experience and the inquiry. This discussion is useful because the research draws significantly on cultural understandings and visual references emanating from my being a woman born in São Paulo, Brazil.

The second chapter offers a review of contextual knowledge.<sup>12</sup> It discusses specific concepts that have proven useful, including theory relating to narrative structure and discourse, parallax, *realismo maravilhoso*, syncretism and photomontage.

The third chapter considers the research design underpinning the project. Here, the thesis is paradigmatically framed as artistic and it employs a heuristic inquiry activated by a range of methods including: reflective journaling, iterative assembly, overviewing and testing, the strategic use of feedback, conference and presentations, and collaboration. At the conclusion of this chapter I offer a critique of the advantages and disadvantages of the methodology.

The fourth chapter offers a critical commentary on the practical work. In it I discuss concepts impacting on the design and construction of the final artefact including the structure of the sequential narrative and diegesis of the story. I then follow with a consideration of interactivity, AR, parallax, *realismo maravilhoso*, sound, colour, syncretism and photomontage. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of character design and theatricality.

The exegesis concludes with a summary of ideas, a consideration of the study’s contributions to knowledge, a discussion of potential future research and a personal reflection on my practice.

The exegesis contains three appendices that relate to discussions within the text. These are examples of story design development, evidence of critical feedback and a selection of production call sheets.

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<sup>11</sup> Bolt (2006, para. 7) creates this argument based in David Hockney’s (2001) “idiosyncratic methodology” where he investigated drawing methods from the 1400s to the 1900s. She argues that “Hockney’s insights demonstrate a very specific sort of knowing, a knowing that arises through handling materials in practice” (ibid., para. 8).

<sup>12</sup> I use the title ‘Contextual Review of Knowledge’ rather than the conventional term ‘Literature Review’, because a significant amount of knowledge contributing to and contextualising the inquiry, resides in repositories beyond written discourse. These include bodies of imagery, specific locations, music and sound archives.

## + The rationale & significance of the research

### SIGNIFICANCE

The study of this thesis builds on four significant contributions.

First, the project contributes to the practice of polyvocal and dialogic storytelling because it constructs a fictional, interactive narrative. It demonstrates how dynamics between events told by multiple narrators in an AR environment can occur while the author sustains overall narrative intelligibility. The polyvocal aspect of the work contributes to an expansion of the possibilities of interactivity and immersion (Laurel, 1991 [2014]; Ryan, 2001; Murray, 1997) inside a sequential, print-based narrative.

The second significant contribution is the manner in which the research utilises the potential of a *realismo maravilhoso* to contribute to a culturally distinctive narrative text. Thus, a transcultural and decolonial device from a non-Western epistemology is applied to the creation of a contemporary story.

Third, the thesis demonstrates how parallax may be moved beyond a technical mechanism and applied as a conceptual device for spatially connecting polyvocality and *realismo maravilhoso*.

Finally, the study applies the tenets of syncretism to an illustrative fusion of photomontage and parallax. Thus, it transforms the concept of syncretism into an artistic mode where disparate elements are brought together to form new wholes and create meaning through ‘impossible’ connections.

Having now introduced the thesis and offered an overview of its concerns, Chapter One will consider how, as a subjective practitioner, I am positioned within the study.

### RATIONALE

The rationale behind this research lies in challenges and opportunities inherent in emerging interactive technology (Barba, MacIntyre, & Mynatt, 2012; Bolter, 2014).

There have been ongoing discussions regarding the impact of new media on society and its influence on culture and aesthetic experience (Benjamin, 1963; Engberg & Bolter, 2014; McLuhan, 1994).<sup>13</sup> Currently, artists working with AR face challenges to expand the medium beyond medium specificity (Engberg & Bolter, 2014) and engage with its devices as “cultural and aesthetic practice rather than technology” (Manovich, 2006, p. 219).

This study surfaces as a response to these discussions. Within this, the process of remediation<sup>14</sup> is relevant because it places new media as an extension of old media platforms, in particular traditional conventions of literature and cinema (Luckhurst, 2016; Manovich, 2001).

However, the rationale for this research also relates to ongoing considerations of non-Western epistemologies as a form of decolonising thought (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010). By designing a new way of producing and reading a narrative, the study artistically considers *realismo maravilhoso* as an approach to storytelling that might function across and between Western European and Latin American frameworks. Thus, the project posits a political attitude by inserting the living nature of non-Western storytelling into a technologically enabled, contemporary media form.

<sup>13</sup> Bolter, Engberg and MacIntyre (2013, para. 39) argue that emergent technologies such as AR and VR have had a significant influence on our “culture’s aesthetics”. Engberg (2011) uses the term *polyaesthetic* to define the experience of AR in engaging a number of sensorial experiences that combine sound, sight, touch and proprioception (the position and movement of the body).

<sup>14</sup> Bolter and Grusin (2000, p. 9) argue that “the desire for immediacy leads to a process of appropriation and critique by which digital media reshape or ‘remediate’ one another and their analogue predecessors such as film, television, and photography.” They argue that new media will “always function in a constant dialectic with earlier media” (ibid., p. 50).

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I



† chapter I †

chapter 1

# Positioning of the research & the researcher

# 1

## BIRTH, UMBANDA & IDENTITY

**Here [in Latin America] the strange is commonplace and always was commonplace ... the extraordinary is neither beautiful nor ugly; rather it is amazing because it is strange.**

(Carpentier, 1975, p. 101)

I was born in a lower middle class suburb of São Paulo, in Brazil. In this world the fast pace of living, the smells of cooking and traffic fumes, the upbeat music, and the drugs and violence fused chaotically. In my childhood, I experienced sharp divisions between the fortunate, who had access to quality living and education, and those who survived in ghettos (Figure 1:1).

My mother was a third generation Italian whose family had emigrated to Brazil during the First World War, and my father was a mixture of French, Portuguese and indigenous ancestry. Growing up with miscegenation in my family (and my country in general), I learned to understand the intricacies of different cultures and to dream about marvelous distant worlds where people lived exotic lives comprised of the familiar and the inexplicable.

At a very early age, I was diagnosed with facial Bell's palsy in a country where advertising, soap operas and Carnival parades promoted a stereotypical woman who conformed to a specific way of looking and behaving. I didn't fit. For a while, my self-confidence and inner power was largely fulfilled by spirituality. In an effort to effect some form of healing, my mother engaged a variety of traditional medicine and witch doctors to treat my condition. Some of my nights were spent in Candomblé<sup>15</sup> and Umbanda<sup>16</sup> ceremonies. There were *mesa branca* in Kardec Spiritism<sup>17</sup> sessions, and conversations with spiritual entities and offerings in *cachoeiras*.<sup>18</sup> Moreira-

Almeida and Neto (2005, p. 571) suggest that these forms of spirituality have a larger number of devotees in Brazil than in any other part of the world, "despite the fact that the country presently has the world's largest Roman Catholic population".



FIGURE 1:1.

My cousins and me in *Bairro Alto*, São Paulo in 1988. The shack in the background belonged to my grandfather who was married to a black woman who practised Umbanda and introduced the practice to my mother. Many of my childhood memories and spiritual experiences were connected to this place.

- 15 Candomblé is a religion mainly practised in Brazil. It is derived from African beliefs specific to the Yoruba, Fon and Bantu tribes. These beliefs were brought from West Africa in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Candomblé also contains elements of Roman Catholicism.
- 16 Umbanda is an Afro-Brazilian religion that brings together Christianity, Kardecist Spiritism, and African-derived practices (Selka, 2012, p. 7).
- 17 Kardecist Spiritism is a doctrine that had its origins in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Its key principles include the immortality of the soul, the possibility of communication with the dead and reincarnation. The ceremonies are normally called *mesa branca*, which in Portuguese translates as 'white table' [trans. T. Tavares].
- 18 Offerings in *cachoeiras* (waterfalls) are an integral part of Umbanda and Candomblé ceremonies because they form a connection with *orixá's* (divine spirits) and the elemental forces of Nature (Shirey, 2012). Hayes (2007, p. 284) suggests that "for practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions, ritual offerings of food and drink constitute an important means of interchange with the spirit world."

Although I did not comprehend the complexities of these practices when I was growing up, I did come to understand that antithesis and illogic form distinct ways of knowing and being. Within the rituals and practices that my mother engaged in, the spiritual and tangible were blended in very strange ways. I perceived an apparent dualism between the *magic* and the *real* in the inanimate pieces of stone and plaster sculpted as the *saints* that populated the churches and the homes of my extended family. As I grew older, I saw the power of such ways of knowing, especially for people in my community who had little access to education. I realised that the world of belief is both multifaceted and enigmatic, and beneath the mystical facade of familiar religious practices there were undercurrents of carnality, corruption and poverty, that drew their origins from a history of colonialism and slavery.<sup>19</sup>

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- <sup>19</sup> Telles and Bailey (2013) suggest that the miscegenation between Africans, Europeans and indigenous backgrounds resulted in Brazil being a land of cultural diversity, but also social inequality and contradictions.
- <sup>20</sup> I secured official residency in 2007, and since 2012 I have been a New Zealand citizen.
- <sup>21</sup> The graphic novel won a medal at the New Zealand Best Awards (2011). It was highly commended at the *Australian Illustration Awards* (2011) and was a finalist at the *Chorus Network New Zealand Artist Showcase* in Times Square – NYC (2012).
- <sup>22</sup> Based on my thesis, in 2013 I was invited to conduct a workshop at the Conference *Upstream – Prospects of Design Education* at *HyperWerk Institute of Postindustrial Design in Basel, Switzerland*. *HyperWerk* then invited me to collaborate at *Cultural Spaces and Design*, a 3-year research project with workshops, conferences and presentations in India, Australia and New Zealand. The aim of the project was to create a platform for discussion around the role of design in the globalised world.

I was attracted to the strange and somehow congruous European, African and indigenous aesthetics that shaped the appearance of patchy shanty towns I lived and played in. Their beautiful inconsistencies were formative in shaping my artistic aesthetic.

#### TOWARDS DESIGN

When I was 15, in the pursuit of some form of creative direction, I enrolled in a four year graphic design course in a technical high school printing programme (Figure 1:2). Experience in printing and book binding were intended to prepare apprentices for the printing industry. This was a world where creativity was the poor cousin of the technical. Here I breathed the acrid smell of solvents, had my hands dirtied with ink and worked in a world loud with the noise of machinery. However, by the early 90s, with the arrival of Macintosh computers, movable type, dry transfer lettering (Letraset), Linotype, pasteup, phototypesetting and photolithography were all becoming redundant. This resulted in an exciting atmosphere of transition, that enabled me to navigate a space between traditional printmaking processes and the early digitalisation of desktop publishing. This experience shaped my understanding of design and image-making. I came to see them as productive fusions of digital technology and material thinking.

#### IMMIGRATION & CARNIVAL

At 24, in an attempt to escape the poverty and social complexities of my world, I left my home and emigrated to New Zealand.<sup>20</sup> Having worked professionally for 10 years, I had begun to question the construct of a designer as simply a commercial service provider.

Consequently, I enrolled in the Master of Art and Design programme at AUT University in Auckland,

New Zealand, in an attempt to find my creative voice. The focus of my thesis was on the experience of acculturation. During my study I returned to Brazil to research the phenomena of Carnival. The modernity of the city, the fast-evolving culture, the hybridism of races and the strange mixture of the religious and the profane, resonated with my recent experience as an immigrant living in and in-between cultures. The contradictions between poverty and the appearance of happiness in the parades formed the substrate for my illustrated autobiographical allegory, *Carnival Land* (2011) (Figure 1:3 - p. 14). The book that resulted from the study received considerable attention<sup>21</sup> and I was invited to participate in international research networks (Figure 1:4 - p. 15).<sup>22</sup> Here I discussed the nature of the liminal immigrant, bricolage identity, craft, and the role of artistic inquiry in interrogating complexities of self-experience.



FIGURE 1:2.

Photographs taken at *Senai Theobaldo de Nigris*, São Paulo in 1995. Here we studied the fundamentals of layout and desktop publishing, Linotype and movable type printing, in addition to Offset, Rotogravure, Flexo and finishing printing process such as die-stamping, embossing, laminating, folding and book binding. In the final semester of the programme I specialised in graphic design, completing the degree in 1999.



FIGURE 1:3.

Images from my 2011 graphic novel *Carnival Land*. Employing illustration and creative writing, *Carnival Land* told a tale of transformation and a young woman's quest for a place to belong. The work used metaphors of Carnival to communicate the sense of disconnection and ambivalence one can experience as an immigrant.

FIGURE 1:4.

In 2016 I was an invited lecturer and workshop facilitator in a cross-cultural research project involving Swiss design students and Indian lecturers at Banasthali University in Jaipur. The *Cultural Spaces and Design* research project involved contributions in India (January 2016) and at the *Points of View – Connotations in Material Cultures* conference in Canberra, Australia (July 2016).



## INTO THE THESIS

These engagements in design education and broader thinking about the role of non-Western cultures in shaping how we see and express the world, progressed me incrementally towards this thesis. I was drawn to the syncretic, the transcultural and the hybrid. Artistically these things translated into concerns with the visual and narrative potentials of dichotomies within emerging media forms. I had also become interested in the narrative potentials of augmented reality, sound, animation, photomontage, *realismo maravilhoso* and polyvocality. With these things, I have attempted to touch the cultural nuances and complexities of belief, and tensions between the tangible and intangible in storytelling and art-making. In considering the role and potential of my culture I was reminded of Hannah Arendt, who over 60 years ago argued that:

... the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised. For though the common world is the common meeting ground of all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life... Only where things can be seen by many, in a variety of aspects, without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear. (Arendt, 1958, p. 57)

So, in this thesis I have created a world that draws heavily on my past experiences. It has been resourced by the magical events of my childhood, by Brazilian storytelling, by my journeys between languages, and by my interest in the creative potentials of technology. It draws images and sound into a *marvelous* world; a world that may be real because it is a miracle of paradoxes. It is unbelievable ... and believable ... and it suggests a way forward.

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II



+ chapter 2 +

chapter 2

# Review of Contextual Knowledge

# 2

This chapter offers a review of knowledge contextualising or informing the thesis. Given the complexity of writing an exegetical account of an artistic artefact, it is arguably impossible to document every text impacting on its development. However, a consideration of 4 realms of theory is useful in understanding the manner in which my thinking has been resourced. The areas of consideration in the development of *Saints of Paradox* are:

- + Narrative structure and discourse
- + Parallax
- + Magical realism and *realismo maravilhoso*
- + Syncretism and photomontage.

## + Narrative structure and discourse

Considering the substantial body of theory emanating from narrative studies, my focus in this review is on narration, polyphony and dialogism. Most helpful in resourcing my thinking has been the writing of Mikhail Bakhtin (1965, 1981, 1984a, 1984b), Gérard Genette (1980) and emerging discourses surrounding interactive digital narratives.

### DEFINITIONS OF NARRATIVE

Before we begin, perhaps it is useful to consider conflicting interpretations surrounding the concept of narrative. Etymologically the word *narration* comes from Latin *narrare* ‘to tell, relate, explain’ and *gnariis* ‘knowing’. It describes the act of communication, specifically, the ways humans use to explain, relate and tell stories.

The Russian formalists suggest two aspects of narrative construction: fable (*fabula*), the basic elements of a story, and plot (*syuzhet*), the chronological order in which a story is organised (Tomaševskij, 1925).<sup>23</sup> Chatman (1980) divides a narrative into two levels of construction. The first is the *story*, which contains a series of events (actions, happenings) and elements (characters and settings). His second aspect of construction is the narrative’s *discourse*, that is, its expression, or “the means by which the content is communicated” (p. 19).

However, following Chatman’s work, Mieke Bal (1997) shifted the focus of narratology by considering narrative text in relation to an agent telling a story, in this case a “linguistic subject, a function and not a person, which expresses itself in the language that constitutes the text” (p. 16). She argued that trying to define the narrative nature of an object is “both

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23. Abbott (2008, para. 35) states that “the latter [*syuzhet*] is the defamiliarization of the former [fabula].” In Russian formalism, *defamiliarization* describes a strange or unfamiliar perception that enriches an awareness of the ordinary and familiar.

obvious and futile [and] initiates a circular argument that begs the question of specificity” (p. 221). Thus, Bal (1997) introduced into narratology the *science of narrative*. This was a way of studying narratives based on a general literary language, or a collective arrangement of codes that operate within the text and affect the reader’s perception. According to Bal (1997), narratological study includes a consideration of “narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artefacts that ‘tell a story’, [and a theoretical framework that] helps one to understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives” (p. 3).

As a recent alternative to language-based approaches to narrative,<sup>24</sup> transmedia, interactive and transdisciplinary writing has begun to consider media platforms where viewers may be perceived as *participants* in a story. In discussing such instances, Marie-Laure Ryan (2005, para. 12) reframes narrative as a “cognitive construct” where the:

... use of signs, or of a medium, evokes in the mind of the recipient the image of a concrete world that evolves in time, partly because of random happenings, and partly because of the intentional actions of individuated intelligent agents.

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24. Ryan (2005) calls this approach “transmedial narratology” (p. 1). She argues that language-based definitions are restrictive because narrative should be perceived as “a fuzzy set defined at the centre by a solid core of properties, but accepting various degrees of membership” (Ryan, 2006, p. 193).

25. Aristotle considered tragedy in terms of its ‘plot’ (*mythos*). This, he argued had a structured beginning, middle and end. His analysis of narrative was also concerned with character (*ethos*), thought (*dianoia*), diction (*lexis*), melody (*melos*) and spectacle (*opsis*).

## THE EVOLUTION OF NARRATOLOGY

The evolution of narratology may be traced back to Plato’s *Republic* and his differentiation between two modes of speech; *mimesis* (a direct simulation of life given by the characters in a story) and *diegesis* (a story told by a narrator). His division is often discussed as the difference between *showing* and *telling*. Conversely, Aristotle’s *Poetics* studied parts<sup>25</sup> and modes of imitation (*mimesis*) of *tragedy* and *epic poetry*. Despite these precursors, the word *narratology* wasn’t coined until 1969 when Tzvetan Todorov (1969), in his *Grammaire du Décaméron*, used the term in his analysis of Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*.

Meister (2011, para. 21) argues that from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards, principles of narratology should be considered in the context of other emerging fields, including “phenomenological, morphological and hermeneutic taxonomies and theories of literary and folk narratives”. Russian Formalism, a school of literary criticism that operated between 1910 and the 1930s, developed a number of theories formulated under Stalinist totalitarianism but much of this writing remained hidden until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Its considerations emanated from a number of thinkers including Viktor Shklovsky, Jan Mukarovsky, N. S. Troubetzkoy, Vladimir Propp and Mikhail Bakhtin. An early contribution of formalism was the differentiation between *fabula* and *syuzhet*. These ideas influenced subsequent structuralist approaches to narrative. In 1966, the formation of narratology as a discipline coincided with the French Structuralist essays from the Poétique group in their publication *Communications*. French Structuralism was heavily influenced by Saussure’s writing on linguistics and the thinking of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Algirdas Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Claude Bremond, Gérard Genette and Roland Barthes. By the mid-1970s, structuralist narratology, specifically Saussurean and Bakhtinian ideas, gained

considerable influence globally, particularly in the field of cultural studies. Between 1980 and 1990, poststructuralist narratology extended its concerns to visual narratives and cross-textual and polyvocal interpretations of intertextuality and intermediality, as well as feminist studies and considerations of sexuality. Writers who became influential in this period included Seymour Chatman, Mieke Bal, Jonathan Culler, Lubomír Doležel, Susan S. Lander and Hayden White. Prince (2008) has argued that the period from 1990 onwards may be described as post-classical narratology, because its concerns have been with the extension of classical ideas towards “poetics and interpretation, narrative theory and narratological criticism” (p. 117).

Broadly, my project is influenced by Bakhtin’s writing on polyphonic-dialogism. His work is particularly helpful in discussing how the three saints in the narrative function dialogically. Genette’s work relating to levels of narration has also been useful when unpacking the manner in which relationships between narrators, characters and events function within the diegesis of *Saints of Paradox*. In addition, I draw on more recent thinking that engages with the nature of narrative navigation in interactive digital narratives and non-linear forms of storytelling.

Having briefly outlined the evolution of narratological concerns, it is useful to discuss in more detail specific bodies of knowledge that contextualise my research.

## CARNIVALESQUE, POLYPHONY AND DIALOGISM

Given the nature of *Saints of Paradox*, Bakhtin's theories related to the carnivalesque, grotesque realism, polyphony and dialogism are helpful in understanding its tone, dynamics and content.

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26. Danow (1995) suggests that the carnivalesque “represents not so much a single literary form as a complex form of thought” (p. 22). Gesicka (2003) argues that magical realist novels share certain attributes of the carnivalesque in genre, structure and language (p. 394). In fact, she suggests that “the incongruous nature of world-views” and “the carnivalesque-grotesque liberating spirit ... permeate every magical realist text” (pp. 395-396). She adds “the logic of the carnivalesque (with its exaggeration, excessiveness, ‘billingsgate language’, and the aesthetic of the monstrous) provides the magical realist text with the capacity of undermining the validity of any given worldview, whether “real” or “magical” (ibid.).

27. In *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky, 1880) the narrator is almost invisible in the narrative, expressing regret for his superficial familiarity with the facts, giving the chance for the characters to bring their individual perspectives to the story.

## Bakhtin's carnivalesque and the grotesque

In *Rabelais and His World* (1965, 1984b), Bakhtin discusses the concepts of Carnival and the grotesque. He considers the carnivalesque as a *threshold* of social structures. He also discusses grotesque realism or the grotesque body (lower stratum), as a literary mode.<sup>26</sup>

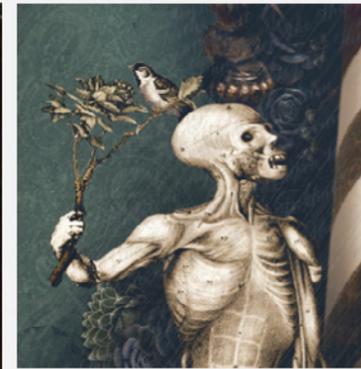
Bakhtin (1984b, p. 10) defines carnival as a “suspension of all hierarchical precedence”, where “all were considered equal.” He argues that Carnival offers “a special form of free and familiar contact among people who were usually divided by the barrier of caste, property, profession, and age” (ibid.). Bakhtin considers carnival in relation to depictions of the grotesque body which he describes as, “unifying, degrading, uncrowning, and simultaneously regenerating functions” (ibid., p. 23). Koepping (1985) argues that this “grotesqueness of the body imagery [was] used to indicate the inversion of order” (p. 194), and Irving and Young (2002, p. 21) propose it as a “feast of renewal, change, and becoming.” Aesthetically, Bakhtin sees the grotesque as “ambivalent and contradictory ... ugly, monstrous, and hidden from the point of view of classic aesthetics” (p. 25). He argues that these conditions are evidenced in Renaissance art and the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel the Elder. Bakhtin also argues that these forms of pictorial art contain grotesque-comic and carnivalesque elements that constituted a “considerable and substantial development in the popular, festive, and spectacle forms of the Middle Ages” (1984b, p. 27). Thus, in the *The Vision of Todal* (Figure 2:1 - p. 22), he claims that “it is easy to trace the specific logic of abuse, curses and oaths, and the logic of topographical bodily negation and debasement” (ibid., p. 389).

## Polyphony

In addition to his discussions of carnivalesque and grotesque realism, Bakhtin offers two other ideas that have been useful to this thesis. These are polyphony and dialogism. Irving and Young (2002) suggest that Bakhtin's work is concerned with “the oppressive character of monologue, the monopolization of meaning, and the ruling out and suppressing of all competing voices” (p. 22). Wasiolek (1987) argues that Bakhtin offered a “relational view of language” which was composed of a “universe of subjects confronting other subjects” (p. 188). His views contesting the power of monologue were developed through the concepts of *polyphony* and *dialogism*.

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984a), Bakhtin discusses Dostoevsky's writing as polyphonic. A polyphonic melody is considered a musical text consisting of two or more independent voices, pitting and adjusting against each other, to reach harmony in a completed whole. Bakhtin (1984a, p. 7) uses this concept to describe how many voices and consciousnesses are used in Dostoevsky's multi-voice style of narration. In such storytelling the narrators and characters may carry singular, individual truths and moral positions.<sup>27</sup> In much of his work characters and narrators contribute a “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness” (p. 6). Emerson (1997) suggests this approach produces “a world that knows neither absolute authority nor fixed plots” (p. 109).

Thus, in *Saints of Paradox* there are multiple narrators. Each has a different interpretation of the narrative, each has differing values, individual truths and moral positions, and each makes meaning of core events in different ways. They are independent narrators (polyphonic) and no narrator's ‘telling’ is privileged over that of another.



28. Bosch, H. (circa 1450-1516). *The Vision of Tondal* [Painting]. Madrid, Spain: Museum of Lázaro Galdiano. Retrieved May 2, 2018, from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Follower\\_of\\_Jheronimus\\_Bosch\\_037.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Follower_of_Jheronimus_Bosch_037.jpg).

FIGURE 2:1.

A comparison between Bosch's *The Vision of Tondal* (circa 1450-1516)<sup>28</sup> and early designs for the Mother of Benevolence (2017). Although at first glance the Mother of Benevolence appears sanctified, a closer analysis shows both ambivalence and contradiction. She exhibits Bakhtin's grotesque as "fragmented yet unified, degraded, uncrowned, yet regenerative" (Bakhtin, 1984*b*). The depiction is ornamented with material degradation in the form of skulls, dying flowers and damaged dolls.

## Dialogism

Bakhtin's dialogism describes an approach to storytelling in which diverse tones or viewpoints may interact with, or even contradict each other, yet they will remain integral to the text's interpretation.

The idea that there should be multiple voices in a dialogue resides at the core of Bakhtin's concept. Hirschkop and Shepherd (2001, para. 2) suggest that dialogism "denotes the quality of an instance of discourse that explicitly acknowledges that it is defined by its relationship to other instances, both past, to which it responds, and future, whose response it anticipates". Bakhtin sees dialogism as a dynamic, relational and limitless process. He describes it as, "the dialogic nature of consciousness. The dialogic nature of human life itself. The single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life is the open-ended dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 293). This consciousness is what Wasiolek (1987, p. 188) describes as "the very nature of the "dialogised" world [that] seems to guarantee that one's voice can never be absolute and final and that consciousness is always making itself out of other voices which in turn are never finished because they are made of other voices".

In *Saints of Paradox* the same story is told from three different theological/social viewpoints. The voice-over narrations often contradict each other and although the saints do not directly address each other's interpretations, their positions are clearly divergent. The narrative is constructed, not as a singular 'authoritative' account but rather, as an open-ended relational and arguably inconclusive dialogue.

## *Dialogism in relation to transcultural and the syncretic*

Because of the wide application of Bakhtin's writing in cultural studies (Cohen, 1998; Farmer, 1998; Hirschkop & Shepherd, 2001; Irving & Young, 2002), dialogism may be considered in relation to later theories that have also influenced my work. These include transculturation and syncretism.

In discussing the application of dialogism to language as open-ended and in constant transformation, Nielsen (1995) uses Bakhtin's concept of dialogism to explain an exchange in the "discursive process" of transculturation (p. 818). He suggests that dialogic dynamics in transculturation constitute a "process that leads to hybrids when different lifeworlds come into contact" (ibid., 1995, p. 826). Gatti (2016) also explores Bakhtin's dialogism, but in relation to cultural practices of syncretism (as a form of anti-essentialism) or a "melting pot that never melts" (p. 68). Drawing upon Benítez-Rojo's (1996) argument that "a syncretic artefact is not a synthesis, but rather a signifier made of differences" (p. 21), Gatti (2016) argues that syncretism cannot belong to dialectical operations, because it is a discourse belonging to and dependent on contingent relationships of power and history. The *elements* of this dialogue are partial or precarious, are mutually modified in the encounter, and reconstitute a strategic conflict of positions (p. 68).

## LEVELS OF NARRATION (DIEGESIS)

Serving to resource and explain parts of the inquiry is a body of work generated by the French literary theorist and narratologist Gérard Genette. His seminal work *Narrative Discourse: An essay in Method of Things Past*. Genette's (1980) concerns are largely with "relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and [...] between story and narrating" (p. 29). Genette breaks down the structure of narratives into five basic constituents:

### Order

The way that narratives may be presented in a non-linear, chronological and disarranged way and are "inaugurated by a characteristic effect of anachrony" (ibid., p. 36).

### Duration

The time within the narration and the time of the narration itself (the *discourse time* and *narrative time*).

### Frequency

Guerlac describes this as, "the temporal volume of a scene" (1980, p. 1415), which is defined as *singulative, iterative, repetitive, and multiple*.

### Mood (or narrative modes)

This regulates the narrative's facts and is divided by *distance* and *perspective*. Distance concerns the oppositions between *seeing* and *speaking* (Plato's terms of *mimesis* and *diegesis*). *Perspective* in this sense relates to the *focalisation* which he divides into three categories:

- + *nonfocalisation*, traditionally known as omniscient narrative, the all-knowing narrator;
- + *internal focalisation*, where information is given through the point of view of a character; and
- + *external focalisation*, where a narrator "appears to say less than a character knows" (ibid.).

## Voice

This aspect of Genette's writing is of particular use to this study. Genette uses 'voice' to refer to "the person [...] who reports [the action], and if need be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity" (1980, p. 213). He suggests that voice reflects *time* (past, present and future tense) and *levels of narration*. Genette positions these levels in relation to:

- + A narrator's position (layers) in the diegesis (world of the story). He proposes three narrator locations: the *extradiegetic level* (external to the diegesis – the narrator speaks to us from outside of the storyworld); *intradiegetic level* (internal to the diegesis – the narrator speaks to us from inside the storyworld) and *metadiegetic* (an intradiegetic embedded within an extradiegetic level – the narrator speaks to us from a story within a story);
- + *Metalepsis*, or the line of transgression between the world of narration and the world that is narrated. Genette describes this as "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse [...]" (ibid., p. 236). He relates this to any "... intrusions [that] disturb [...] the distinction between levels. It can be set down only to humor [...] or to the fantastic [...] or some mixture of the two [...], unless it functions as a figure of the creative imagination" (Genette, 1980, p. 88).
- + *The narrator as a person in the narrative*. He proposes the narrator can be positioned as *heterodiegetic* (the narrator is not the character of the story but describes the experiences), *homodiegetic* (present in the narrated world as a character of a story) or *autodiegetic* (the narrator is also the protagonist of the story).

Genette (1980) distinguishes *mood* and *voice* by the subject's (point of view) and the narrator's position. As Prince explains, "the one who 'speaks' is not necessarily the one who 'sees' (Prince, 1980, p. 414).

Genette's positioning of a narrator in relation to a story is helpful in explaining *how* stories are narrated in my work because I am able to differentiate between a saint (who is largely an extradiegetic narrator) and characters in the story (who are intradiegetic). Metalepsis is useful in discussing the way that the narrators (saints) perform actions that intervene with the world of the characters in the narrated world.

29. In the 1960s, AI technology applied Propp's *Morphology of Folktales* (1928) to automatic story generation software using algorithms capable of "randomly pairing characters and narrative functions and then concatenating them following the canonical order described by Propp in Russian folk tales" (Koenitz, Ferri, Haahr, Sezen, & Sezen, 2015, p. 71).
30. Koenitz et al. (2015, p. 13) say that hyperfiction is a genre of electronic literature that "relies on the principles of segmentation and linking [with] interactors travers[ing] the story by selecting links [...] or returning to the ones already visited." Ryan (2001, p. 7) suggests they comprise of "polyvocal structures [that] integrate different perspectives without forcing the reader to choose between them." She argues that, for the hypertext to maintain a basic level of narrativity "there must be reasonably long stretches of nodes with a linear connection so that they can be interpreted as a chronological and causal sequence" (ibid., p. 193). Thus, she maintains that hypertext must "occasionally intersect" (ibid.).
31. Ryan (2001, p. 7) says that "analogies between postmodern aesthetics and the idea of interactivity have been systematically developed by the early theorists of hypertext." She argues that the "feature of interactivity conferred upon [these texts ...] came to be regarded as the fulfilment of the postmodern conception of meaning" (ibid.).
32. These ideas demonstrate a shift in perspectives around the late 1980s when design and humanities showed increasing levels of interest in the topic (Koenitz et al., 2015).
33. She posits that the level of interactivity in "a non-linear story necessitates an attentive audience who can identify, follow and interpret each chronological shift" (Laurel, 1991, p. 128).
34. Ryan's (2001) thinking around VR technologies has parallels with other forms of media. Lichty (2014) argues that "much of AR-based art is a convergence between handheld device art and virtual reality, [but] with gestures that ... allow for its specificity as a genre" (p. 99). He suggests that the difference with VR is that in AR, while there is virtual content, this overlays a physical, visual representation (ibid., p. 100).

## INTERACTIVE DIGITAL NARRATIVES

Impacting on design decisions surrounding how *Saints of Paradox* is 'told' is a body of literature related to interactive narrative.

### A contemporary consideration

Interactive digital narratives are stories that offer a level of navigational engagement for the reader. In recent digital media this interactivity may navigate diverse platforms. Paracha and Yoshie (2010, p. 275) note that these media forms embrace "computer based narrative generation systems that dynamically respond to the user and adapt the narrative content to his or her actions in the virtual world." Brown, Barker and Favero (2011, p. 213) suggest that these narratives may be "understood as a formulation of old media practices—embodied by the narrative conventions of, for instance, the novel or the cinema—reapplied in the context of new media." Within the possibilities of new media, Green and Jenkins (2014, p. 481) see interactivity as "both a component of the story and the way in which the reader engages with the narrative." McErlean (2018, p. 132) suggests that in such narratives, a level of freedom is required, so the audience is "not simply being coerced into pathways dictated by the author." However, she argues that if the pathway is random and "without control it will probably fail to entertain" (ibid.).

### Evolution of the term

Murray (1997) suggests that early developments of interactivity in narrative may be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s and the rise of AI technology<sup>29</sup> and computer science. Bolter and Joyce note that in 1987, the first examples of *hyperfiction*<sup>30</sup> intended to challenge the limitations of the printed book began to "free both author and reader from restrictions

imposed by the printed medium and therefore allow[ed] new experiments in literary structure" (1987, p. 41).<sup>31</sup> Elaborating on this idea, Laurel (1991 [2014]) in *Computer as Theatre*, has used Aristotle's Poetics, theatre and performance studies as tools for better understanding the potentials of computers as interactive platforms.<sup>32</sup> She defined interactivity in these platforms as "thresholdly"; a phenomenon measured by the interplay of three forms:

- + Frequency (how often one can interact);
- + Range (how many choices are available); and
- + Significance (the extent to which choices made really affect matters) (Laurel, 2014, p. 29).<sup>33</sup>

Koenitz et al. (2015, p. 72) maintain that Propp and Aristotle's narrative theories have "helped legitimise the subject [of interactive narratives] and provided an accessible common ground with scholars from established fields of study." However, they argue that although these concepts are useful in contextualising sequential forms of narrative, they fail to recognise the non-linear systems of interaction and obscure the possibilities for a specific theoretic framework (ibid.).

### Virtuality, immersion & interactivity

Rieser (2015, p. 244) argues that specific "narratological theory of augmented reality is urgently required, because the technology offers enormous potential for unique narrative strategies." He says that in augmented reality, we encounter a blending of virtual and physical worlds that engages "continuous and implicit user control of the point of view, and interactivity" (ibid., p. 246). This paucity of theory accepted, Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) has considered narrative practices inherent to the traditional novel in relation to games and hypertext fiction.<sup>34</sup> She raises three main points of discussion: *virtuality*, *immersion*

35. Ryan (2001) uses Jean Braudillard's theories of *Simulacra* to describe the virtual in reference to illusion and inauthenticity. This framing sees the virtual as "the power to automatically capture and duplicate the world" (p. 10). She argues that contemporary culture's attraction to the virtual "precludes any dialectical relation and back-and-forth movement between the real and its image" (ibid., p. 21). Within this concept, when we experience the virtual, she argues that "we are caught in the gravitational pull of the fake, and the substance of the real is sucked out by the virtual" (ibid.).
36. Ryan (2001) uses Pierre Lévy's concepts to discuss the ontological dynamics and relationships between the real/fictional and actual/virtual. Lévy (1998) argues that "the virtual is by no means the opposite of the real. On the contrary, it is a fecund and powerful mode of being that expands the process of creation, opens up the future, injects a core of meaning beneath the platitude of immediate physical presence" (p. 35). Caracciolo (2014) argues that "through imagination and mental simulation, our real body can be used to bridge the ontological gap between reality and fiction" (p. 161).
37. Spatial immersion relates to the manner in which a "reader's private landscapes blend with the textual geography [and...] a sense of being present in the scene of represented events" (Ryan, 2001, p. 122).
38. Temporal immersion encompasses the suspense that "incites us to rush through the text towards the blissful state of retrospective omniscience" (Ryan, 2001, p. 140). Ryan suggests that this "temporal immersion is the reader's desire for the knowledge that awaits at the end of narrative time" (ibid.).
39. Emotional immersion relates to the "capacity of the human mind to be emotionally affected by the contemplation of purely imaginary states of affairs" (Ryan, 2001, p. 156).
40. McErlean (2018, p. 65) argues that using well developed soundscapes in interactive narratives "can ensure the audience stays immersed within the fictive reality while they contemplate their response to narrative options."
41. This work can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGrqp1LXKSg>

and *interactivity*. She posits virtuality as either "fake" (relating her argument to Jean Braudillard's theories of *Simulakra*)<sup>35</sup> or as containing "potential" (relating her arguments to Pierre Levy's ideas of actualization of the text).<sup>36</sup> Ryan argues a process of *immersion* as a narrative device used in literary texts to intensify body dynamics into the textual world. She suggests that this immersion may be spatial<sup>37</sup>, temporal<sup>38</sup> or emotional<sup>39</sup> (2001, p. 90-119). However, Ryan also suggests that interactivity may affect immersion, as the former can obstruct the coherence of the narrative. She argues that a full immersive narrative will generate a greater control over the user rather than in a "purely exploratory type of installation, in which the user can be simply turned loose in the simulated world" (ibid., p. 330). She suggests these worlds may comprise "little stories" rather than being structured within "an overarching Aristotelian plot" (ibid.). In reference to hypertext media, she also suggests that the interactivity of these platforms functions in a similar way to playing a game, because the reader makes meaning through a process of "free-play" (ibid., p. 183). However, she says the goal (and challenge) of such platforms is to maintain the emotional fulfillment of immersion, while providing the intellectual stimulus of interactivity.

## REVIEW OF RELATED PRACTICE

Within the relatively wide range of practice relating to interactive narrative design, the focus of this research is concerned with augmented reality books that use interactivity, visual elements and/or sound devices<sup>40</sup> to renegotiate traditional formats of the printed narrative. Three significant works contextualise *Saints of Paradox* and, in each, AR technology has been used as a fundamental element of the narrative's construction.

### Jekyll and Hyde (Kovacovsky & Hügli, 2010)<sup>41</sup>

*Jekyll and Hyde* by Martin Kovacovsky and Marius Hügli (2010) is an augmented reality [AR] book based on the Victorian novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886). Although Kovacovsky and Hügli's physical book may be read as a discrete artefact, their work incorporates a number of visual and interactive elements that allow the reader to physically engage in forms of interactivity with a screen. This process is used to create a 'conversation' between an analogue narrative and digital embellishment. Through AR technology, this physically printed artefact is embellished by shadows, light, illustrations, letters and short movies that operate in response to physical movement. These interactive elements constitute changes to the book's visual information, and they are activated by the manner in which the book is held or how it is touched in different places.

### Modern Polaxis (SUTU, 2014)

In *Modern Polaxis*, comic artist SUTU<sup>42</sup> used augmented reality to reveal additional layers and information about his narrative. In doing so, Davies (2015, p. 28) suggests he created a “hybrid reality experience” (Figure 2:2). Davies argues that the double reality of SUTU’s work took advantage of and played on a “new perceptive regime, [that opened] fissures through which different understandings of reality could be accessed and understood” (ibid.).

### Scorpion Dagger (Kerr, 2014)

In *Scorpion Dagger*, photomontage and AR are used to subvert religious Renaissance paintings and suggest sacrilegious meanings (Figure 2:3). Using satire and popular culture, the work critiques the reverence we place on art history. The work bridges the aesthetic of traditional and classical painting with AR technologies including gif animated collages.



FIGURE 2:2.  
*Modern Polaxis* by SUTU (2014).<sup>43</sup> This augmented reality comic book relates the journey of an obsessed time traveller who thinks that our world is a holographic projection from an alternative dimension. The protagonist shares events in a personal journal filled with conspiracy theories and secret information that the reader uncovers through AR technology.



FIGURE 2:3.  
*Scorpion Dagger* by James Kerr (2014).<sup>44</sup> In this AR illustrated book, the gif animated illustrations are collages with the comic stylings. Rhodes (2014) suggest that Kerr’s cut-out and gif animated style may be compared to the British animated comedy show *Monty Python’s Flying Circus* (1975).

42. SUTU is a member of a collective of AR practitioners called EyeJack. See <https://eyejackapp.com/>

43. Retrieved May 10, 2018, from <https://uploadvr.com/augmented-reality-comic-books-polaxis/>

44. Retrieved May 10, 2018, from <https://www.wired.com/2014/08/renaissance-gifs/>

## + Parallax

In addition to knowledge related to narrative structure and discourse, the thesis is also influenced by technical potentials and thinking surrounding the concept of parallax.

Parallax is often described as a sense of displacement caused by a change in the point of observation. It is also defined as a visual ability in humans to perceive depth created by the distance of binocular vision (*stereopsis*) that gives three-dimensionality to objects. In astronomy, the term is used to define the method of visual triangulation to measure larger distances of stars from Earth over time, based in the observer's point of view in relation to the position of the sun. These concepts have been expanded into artistic, technical and conceptual applications in the fields of photography (Benjamin, 197; Kavuri-Bauer, 2018), computer graphics, literature (Heusel, 1983; Wollaeger, 2001; Giles, 2016) and postcolonial and critical theory (Byrd, 2011; Fawaz, 2012).

In photography, parallax is understood as a condition where the photographer's eye sees the object differently from the way the image is recorded by the sensor. Walter Benjamin (1972, p. 7) described parallax as a "different nature that speaks to the camera from the one which addresses the eye." Kavuri-Bauer (2018, p. 46) notes that parallax has also been applied to a non-objective view of reality defined by "the gap between the eye and the lens [that] opens up a space for the contingent and the unconscious to seep into the photographic image." She suggests that "parallax views are not oppositional or obfuscatory, but further enhance our visual understanding of an object" (ibid.).

In computer graphics, parallax is a technical device used to simulate an illusion of depth when layers of two-dimensional objects are placed in a three-dimensional space and triggered by the movement of the camera or the scrolling of a page.<sup>45</sup>

In narrative studies, parallax is used to describe a strategy used by James Joyce in his novel *Ulysses* (1922 [1993]), in which a number of points of view are presented by the characters, offering contradictory narrative styles, thoughts and opinions (Heusel, 1983). Heusel argues that "when we close one eye, focusing on one character at a time, we lose perspective on all the rest of Joyce's world. [...] Joyce employs the parallax phenomenon to force us to put together the shifting views, to make us participate in the creation" (ibid., pp. 143-144). Giles (2016, para. 8) suggests that the parallax in *Ulysses* operates "as a formal principle, through which alternate spatiotemporal orbits are brought into focus, and that this realignment of space and time crucially affects the ways in which we understand the novel's universe".

In postcolonial and critical theory, the parallax is a metaphorical tool used to "describe [a] theoretical distortion that takes place between racialization and colonisation" (Fawaz, 2012, p. 266). Tonkovich (2014) uses the term "transmotion"<sup>46</sup> parallax" to describe a form of relational movement identified in the documentation of Native American Indian settlements by photographer Jane Gay. Using this concept, she discusses the spatiotemporal recordings and sense of colonialism that surfaces in the photographer's work, specifically the sense of three-dimensionality in the documentation of transition and domestication of Native American Indians over a period of 25 years.

45. See artistic and technical use of parallax in *Beauty* (dir. R. S. Tagliaferro, 2014) on <https://vimeo.com/83910533>. In this piece, subtle moving two-dimensional flat imagery is animated in a three-dimensional space to enhance the perception of depth and movement.

46. Transmotion is often related to the process of tribal sovereignty that allows "freedom to move across physical and conceptual boundaries" (Madsen, 2015, p. 23). Rostkowski (2012, p. xv) argues that "native transmotion" is a "practice of ontological transformation that overcomes the separations imposed by a colonial ontology or worldview."

Žižek (2009) uses the term parallax to describe a form of dialectics<sup>47</sup> from Kant and Hegel, where the synthesis of a discourse is only accomplished through a parallax movement. For Žižek, in a state of parallax “we do not have two perspectives, we have a perspective and what eludes it, and the other perspective fills in this void of what we could not see from the first perspective” (ibid., p. 29). He argues for a “parallaxical gap” as the space where no negotiation is possible and is linked by an “impossible short circuit of levels which, for structural reasons, can never meet” (ibid., p. 3).

In my work, parallax is used as a technical, artistic and conceptual device. As a technical approach, a parallax is an illustrative and interactive tool for the AR platform that exercises a three-dimensional notion of space using a two-dimensional layering technique that is triggered by movement. Parallax (as an effect) also relates to a conceptual understanding of the multilevel and polyvocal approach of the narrative that, while presenting different narrating voices and moral values to the narration, works in a dialectic ‘parallaxical’ manner. Thus, the voices never ‘meet’ (forming a parallaxical gap) because the construction of the narrative forces them to narrate discretely.

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47. The concept of dialectics was originally discussed by Plato as a debate between opposing sides between Socrates and his interlocutors. The dynamic of back-and-forth dialectics shows the development and growing of an idea and argumentation. Hegel discusses this dialect in the form of thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

## + Magical realism & realismo maravilloso

Having considered concepts of parallax, it is useful now to overview contextual knowledge related to magical realism in both Western European and Latin American contexts. My aim here is to position magical realism as a subversive genre with a postcolonial and decolonial basis.

### MAGICAL REALISM

*Magical realism* is commonly described as a fictional literary genre where binary modes of textual representation of *magic* and the *real* are naturalised and magical elements are presented as ordinary occurrences. In such works reality and magic merge and “the unreal happens as part of reality” (Flores, 1955, p. 112). Leal (1967, p. 121) argues that magical realism (unlike surrealism) is not a “dream motif” but “an attitude toward reality.” Slemon (1988) suggests that magical realism texts present “two worlds [that are] incompatible; neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the ‘other’; a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences” (pp. 10-11). Spindler (1993) states that in magically real fiction, the unreal “has an objective, ontological presence in the text” (p. 82) but magical realism differs from fantastic literature because “the narrator ... is not puzzled, disturbed or skeptical of the supernatural, ... he or she describes it as if it was a normal part of ordinary everyday life, where impossible situations are described in a very realistic way” (ibid.). Zamora and Faris suggest that in such narratives, there is an acceptance between the “plurality of worlds ... [that] often situate themselves on liminal territory ...” (1995, p. 6).

Faris (2004, p. 7) proposes five characteristics of magical realism:

First, the text contains an “irreducible element” of magic; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and, finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity.

### THE EVOLUTION OF MAGICAL REALISM

Roh (1925*a*, 1925*b*) first used the term magic realism in 1925 to describe a new method of post-expressionist painting influenced by Husserl’s phenomenology. In 1927, Roh’s ideas were translated into Spanish as *realismo mágico* and published in Madrid’s *Revista de Occidente* magazine. The term was diffused through, and propagated in, Latin American literature, and distant associations were made with German post-expressionism. In 1949, Alejo Carpentier, who rejected Roh’s model<sup>48</sup>, expanded the concepts to what he called *lo real maravilloso* (or *marvelous realism*). Here, he suggested specific historical and geographic conventions distinguished *lo real maravilloso* from other forms of magic realism. The term *magical realism* (as distinct from magic realism), began with Flores’ (1955) essay “*Magical realism in Spanish American fiction*”, and its consideration of a combination of characteristics from magic realism and marvelous realism. Flores claimed that magical realism was inspired by European literature and she proposed the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges was the first Latin American magical realist.<sup>49</sup> In the wake of Flores’ writing and the euphoria of the Cuban revolution in 1959, there was considerable interest in Carpentier’s

48. Carpentier (1967) sought to break away from the artificial creation of mystery and enchantment of the West because he considered it jaded by rationalism and scientific positivism.

49. Borges’ writing was heavily influenced by Franz Kafka.

50. This period was called the *Latin American Boom*, a period during the 1960s and 1970s where the works of Latin American novelists became increasingly accessible to European audiences.
51. Fredric Jameson (1986) suggested that Latin American writers had been influenced by left-wing or revolutionary writers, what Aldea (2011) called an “anti-colonial Marxist approach” (p. 104). Lopes (2012) maintains that as a consequence, in this period, magical realist texts became a tool for resistance (in some cases at the height of the dictatorship).
52. Arellano (2015) states that the *Wunderkammer* “follows a period of effervescence in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries followed by a sharp decline in the wake of the Enlightenment” (p. 19).
53. When discussing the *magic* in magical realism, Bowers (2004) suggests it is essential to note that *realism* is a narrative mode “most associated with the tradition of the novel as its expansive form, [that] allows the writer to present many details that contribute to a realistic impression” (p. 21). Realism was widely discussed in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century in relation to Aristotle’s concept of mimesis. Aristotle claimed that mimesis was “the act of imitating life [and it was] a natural instinct of humans” (ibid.). In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Belsey (1980, p. 47) argued that “realism is plausible not because reflects the world, but because it is constructed out of what is familiar.” Bowers (2004, p. 22) argues that realism in magical realist works is formed by “the way in which the narrative is constructed in order to provide a realistic context for the magical events of the fiction” (ibid.). However, she argues that magical realism is a distinctive narrative mode that depends on realism and expands “what is acceptable as real to its limits” (ibid.).

*marvelous realism* and new forms of modern Latin American fiction (Arellano, 2015; Pope, 1996; Sorensen, 2007).<sup>50</sup> These discussions arose with the emergence of works like *A Hundred Years of Solitude* (Márquez, 1967). Arellano (2015, p. 141) suggests that Márquez’ aesthetics evoked a “construction of utopian political discourse and the creation of startling fictional universes in the literature of this period.”<sup>51</sup>

In *Magical Realism and the History of Emotions in Latin America* (2015), Arellano argued that magical realism is deeply rooted in a colonial history of emotion and wonder and is evidenced in chronicles of expeditions to the New World. He considers *lo real maravilloso* through an assessment of the historical developments of the *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of wonders (Figure 2:4), and he argues that *Wunderkammer* worked as a “feel tank” (p. 19) for the collective imagination of the period.<sup>52</sup> Arellano also proposes a contemporary interpretation of magical realism that goes beyond textual discourse and includes the re-emergence of such *wonders* in contemporary art. These he suggests, recall the “lost order of things with hidden potential to re-enchant a disenchanted modern world” (p. xvi).

#### DEFINING TERMS

Flores (1955), Slemon (1988, 1995), Zamora and Faris (1995) and Bowers (2004), all differ in their definitions of magical realism and this arguably may be attributed to its variable employment and history. Fredric Jameson (1986) suggests “that in spite of these terminological complexities – which might be grounds for abandoning the concept altogether – it retains a strange seductiveness” (p. 302). Bowers (2004, p. 3) argues “that critics still debate whether the terms refer to modes, genres or forms of writing, or simply cultural concepts”. She says that it “is difficult to consider them in terms of one unifying genre, but rather, they constitute particular narrative modes” (ibid.).



FIGURE 2:4. Engraved illustration *Dell'Historia Naturale* cabinet of curiosities by Ferrante Imperato (1599). This is the first illustrative depiction of a natural history research collection released in a catalogue format. It is housed at the Palazzo Gravina in Naples.

The terms *magic realism* (Roh, 1925a, 1925b), *magic(al) realism* (Bowers, 2004; Roh, 1925a, 1925b), *magical realism* (Aldea, 2011; Faris, 2004; Flores, 1955; Zamora & Faris, 1995) and *marvelous realism* (Carpentier, 1967), are related and have been used to discuss types of magic and different applications in art and literature. Bowers (2004, p. 20) argues that in magic realism, magic “refers to the mystery of life”, whereas magic in *marvelous* and *magical realism* “refers to any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual and unaccountable by rational science.”<sup>53</sup>

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54. Other names for types of magic are used by different authors. These include: epistemological magic (Echevarría, 1977), scholarly magic, folkloric magic realism (Delbaere-Garant, 1992); psychic, mythic and grotesque realism (Delbaere-Garant, 1995); and phenomenological, postcolonial and reflexive magical realism (Aldea, 2011, p. 3).
55. Faris (2004, p. 170) posits *magical feminism* as an increasingly popular form of magical realism that embodies the *female spirit* in “structures of diffusion, polyvocality, and attention to issues of embodiment, to an earth-centred spirit world, and collectivity”.
56. Both Faris (2004) and Moreiras (2001) have discussed magical realism as a mode of transcultural narrative. Ascari (2011) has argued that transcultural narratives are distinctively recognised for their “ability to cross linguistic and cultural borders” (2011, p. 7). Ascari (2011) also notes that such novels employ “various linguistic and cultural declinations [that] are often rooted in the hybrid identities of their authors” (p. 11).
57. Bhabra (2014, p. 115) proposes that postcolonialism and decolonisation are “connected sociologies”, noting that the former originated in the Middle East and South Asia, while the latter emerged from the work of South American scholars.
58. Deleuze’s readings of magical realism may be applied to his ontology that posits ‘being’ as having two levels of reality (virtual and actual). When used to understand elements of “real and magical”, Aldea (2011) considers both as parts of the same ontological principle.

Spindler (1993) suggests three considerations of the word *magic*:

- + The *metaphysical*, which relates to Roh’s original ideas and is more common in painting. “‘Magic’ here may be understood in the sense of conjuring, producing surprising effects by the arrangement of natural objects by means of tricks, devices or optical illusion” (p. 79). In literature, this approach results in the “uncanny atmosphere and the creation within the text of a disturbing impersonal presence” (ibid.);
- + The *anthropological*, where the narrator has two voices, one “from a rational point of view (the ‘realist’ component) and [other] sometimes from that of a believer in magic (the ‘magical’ element)” (p. 81). The narrator resolves this contradiction by using a specific cultural background or myth. In Latin American literature this is considered a narrative trend that “reflect[s] a thematic and formal preoccupation with the strange, the uncanny and the grotesque, and with violence, deformity and exaggeration” (ibid.);
- + The *ontological*, in which magic is magic that “contradict[s] the laws of the natural world” (p. 82). It is a creative device in the text with no reference to any specific cultural background. In such instances, the uncanny is accessible in “a matter-of-fact way as if it did not contradict reason, and no explanations are offered for the unreal events in the text.”<sup>54</sup>

In Latin American contexts, Carpentier (1967) used the term *lo real maravilloso* (marvelous real) to posit an original Latin American voice for magical realism and he suggested that specific historical and geographic conventions distinguish it from other forms of magical realism. In Brazil, the term *realismo maravilhoso* is a direct translation from the Spanish term, and Young (1995) argues that the term may be applicable to many forms of fantastic literature produced by Brazilian authors, especially work that deals with the processes and nature of transculturation.

## SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE

Magical realism has also been discussed in a variety of other contexts including gender,<sup>55</sup> postcolonial and transcultural studies<sup>56</sup>, and subversive and marginal literature (Appadurai, 1996; Arellano, 2015; Faris, 2004; Slemon, 1988, 1995; Spindler, 1993; Zamora & Faris, 1995). Slemon has also posited magical realism as a “stamp of cultural authority” (1988, p. 407) and a form of transcultural narrative that both Faris (2004) and Weinberg (2008) have argued operates as a fundamental agent of decolonisation.<sup>57</sup>

### Magical realism & decolonisation

Slemon (1988) suggests that magical realism uses the language of narration as a “speaking mirror” with outward cultural relations and inward thematic content. He says this use “has its roots in the process of either transporting a language to a new land or imposing a foreign language on an indigenous population” (p. 13). Chanady (1995) later challenged these assertions by attributing this distinctive Latin American postcolonial voice to a “naïve existentialist argument” (p. 141). By 2011, Aldea was arguing that postcolonial magical real readings had become “a problematic, if not a failed, mode of writing; escapist and ineffectual at best, and neo-colonial and exoticizing at worst” (2011, p. 147). She sought an alternative ontology, in which she drew upon Deleuzian readings of *actual* and *virtual*,<sup>58</sup> that “allow the nature of the text to be considered separately from extra-textual reality, as well as giving the concept of difference a central place” (p. 18).

Parallel to this thread of critique, Weinberg (2008) has argued that magical realist texts bring an ethnographic imprint and invite the reader (and ethnographer) to enter into a visceral and hybridised socio-symbolic system that displaces “imagination from dominant modes of Western thought by

59. Mignolo (2007) calls “epistemic decolonisation” a form of delink “that leads to a decolonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding” (p. 453).
60. Indian scholar Spivak (2010), on *Can the subaltern speak?*, argues that Western discourses (including post-structuralist theory) fail to address the implications of Western representation of the “other” because (particularly in postcolonial and feminist studies) they tend to articulate knowledge using a hegemonic vocabulary.
61. Santiago (2000, p. 16) calls this sense of impurity “entre-lugar” (*in-betweenness*) and argues that the most valuable contribution of Latin America to Occidental culture comes from the systematic destruction of the concepts of unity and purity.
62. Economic exploitation of natural resources and the slavery of indigenous and African people were characteristics of Portuguese colonisation (Lockhard & Schwartz, 1983). Throughout its history, Brazil has been populated by a high number of immigrants from Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East.
63. *Manifesto Antropófago* (Anthropophagic Manifest) was an essay written by Oswald de Andrade (1928*b*). It was an avant-garde Brazilian manifesto of resistance against European postcolonial domination. It argued Modernist interest in anti-colonialism and primitivism as forms of “cultural emancipation, [that] demanded the invention of an authentic hybrid Brazilian tradition on the basis of which to construct an autonomous Brazilian art” (Philippou, 2005, p. 248). In the essay, Oswald de Andrade (1928*b*, p. 3) discussed the cultural “cannibalism” of European traditions as a process of “absorption of the sacred enemy [...] to transform him into a totem.” This metaphor drew on the 16<sup>th</sup> Century indigenous *Tupinambá* ritual of cannibalism, where tribes killed their enemies and ate their flesh, then the executor “change his name and have scars made in his body during a long and rigorous period of reclusion” (Rolnik, 2011, p. 1).
64. *Macunaíma* (Andrade, 1928*a*) is a comic folkloric novel that relates the adventures of an ugly black hero who lives in the Brazilian jungle and has magical abilities. Using regional, urban dialects and *Tupiguarani* language, *Macunaíma* depicts the national Brazilian as rural, multiracial and postcolonial, but who is also exposed to an increasingly modern urban life.

suspending the assumptions foundational to it, and then displacing its logics with an alternative approach to the interconnections that make up ‘reality’” (p. 347).

This form of imagination may occur in what Mignolo and Escobar (2010, p. 18) call *epistemic decolonisation*<sup>59</sup> (or an effort to “delink from the colonial matrix of power”). Escobar (2016, p. 77) says that coloniality “implies a profound and pervasive eurocentrism — a hegemonic representation and a mode of knowing that claims universality for itself”.<sup>60</sup> Quijano (2007, pp. 169-170) calls this a “colonisation of imaginary”. Faris (2004, p. 155) argues that throughout its historical development in Latin America, magical realism has acted as a form of decolonising strategy, a counter-hegemonic force that subverts and brings agency in a cultural conversation or exchange. She suggests this “transforms not only the discourse of the colonised but that of the coloniser [while...] contributing to the process of transculturation”. She argues that magical real texts are culturally decentred as the “coexistence of magical indigenous and European realist voices [have] operated between different cultural systems, creating a fertile narrative borderland” (p. 148). Consequently, Pan (2004) suggests transcultural narratives have the ability “to create an emotional response in more than one culture” (p. 16). Ascari (2011) suggests, these stories can “trigger imagination, opening us to alternative worldviews, [where] narratives exert an action on reality and translate in political acts” (p. 13).

## TRANSCULTURATION

A number of writers have also linked magical realism to the concept of transculturation. Transculturation broadly refers to the merging and converging of cultures. The term was first associated with Fernando Ortiz’s writing and appeared in 1940 in a study that considered stages of cultural exchange between

European Colonial and Caribbean societies (and the resulting complex relationships of a new cultural phenomena (*neoculturation*). Forty years later, Rama (1982), in *Writing across Cultures*, popularised the term as “narrative transculturation” when discussing the distinctive transcultural strategies used by Modernist Latin American writers who considered rural or primitive popular cultures while incorporating European avant-garde techniques. Moreiras (2001, p. 185) argued that although Rama’s views “promoted cultural survival undertaken as a reactive response to modernization” (p. 185), his arguments reinforced a homogeneous aesthetic, and a vision of a unified form for literature and culture, that was contrary to the socio-cultural heterogeneous processes that formed Latin American culture. While Rama’s transculturation was criticised, Legras (2008) argued that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the idea, “became a continental cultural machine for reading the relationship between centre and periphery” (p. 16). Transculturation, he suggested, “was a positive and democratic step that opened venues for the action of subaltern and oppressed peoples” (p. 18).

## Transculturation in Brazil

Dias and Nascimento (2014) tie transculturation in Brazil to narratives of national identity and racial democracy that contain themes of regional identity, cultural hybridism, mythic thinking of indigenous and afro-ancestral connection, and syncretism. They suggest that the term transculturation applies especially to Brazilian narratives that celebrate the “impurity” or “entre-lugar”<sup>61</sup> that has resulted from experiences of colonisation and immigration.<sup>62</sup> Transculturation in Brazil has often been associated with the seminal Modernist text *Manifesto Antropófago*<sup>63</sup> and novels like *Capitães de Areia* (Amado, 1937) and *Macunaíma* (Andrade, 1928*a*). Indeed, *Macunaíma*<sup>64</sup> has been described as the “mother” of the magical realist movement (James,

2005) and the novel has been associated with “the transition from primitivism to transculturation, in the sense [that it] debated the practices of European avant-gardes and their solidarity with colonial structures” (Rosenberg, 2006, p. 95). Rosenberg claims that this novel depicted transculturation as an “open wound.” It exposed the “idea of the virgin land becoming valuable only retrospectively.” He argued the novel stood as a “moral recommendation” for “a tropical civilisation” negotiating “a way out of Eurocentric values” (ibid., p. 95).

65. (Reiniger et al., 2013).

66. In the 1960s and 1970s *Cinema Novo* was a group of filmmakers who sought a distinctive Brazilian style of storytelling that used naturalistic film techniques to depict the rural and street life in a mix of “art, revolution, and utopia” (Rees, 2018, p. 56). This approach is often called “rural modernism”, a marginal and “anti-development mode ... that draws attention to spaces that lack modern development” (p. 56). Child (2014) draws parallels between *Cinema Novo* films and Roh’s magic realism through their common concern with an aesthetic of “sparse visual economies and sharp textures” (p. 59). He suggests that “the products of both Cinema Novo and magical realism are creolized texts that seek out rhizomatic, cross-cultural connections without being unseated by them” (p. 57).

67. (Stam, 2005).

68. (Child, 2014).

## MAGICAL REALISM IN THE CREATIVE ARTS

Although a significant body of writing considers magical realism as a literary genre, the term has also expanded across diverse media including film, animation, theatre, painting and illustration.

### Magical realism in film

While recognising the presence of magical realism in film, Bowers (2004, p. 109) states that “film is often not considered as magic(al) realist in criticism and neither magic realism nor magical realism are recognized categories of film.” Crawford (2009) suggests that in film “it is difficult to achieve the ‘seamless’ integration the mind can more easily attain with literary texts” (p. 58). However, Stam (2005) argues that cinema “as a technology of representation ... is equipped to magically multiply times and spaces ... and those who argue that film lacks the ‘flexibility’ of the novel forget these protean possibilities” (pp. 13-14). Bowers (2004) also argues that there are certain features of magical realism evident in literature that also occur in film narrative (pp. 109-110), especially in works that are adaptations of magical realist novels, including *Like Water for Chocolate* (dir. A. Arau, 1992). Stam (2005, p. 20) also discusses the “cinematic translation” of literary novels as a “complex energetic and synergistic shift involved in trans-media migration”. To his argument he applies film adaptations of Mário de Andrade’s *Macunaíma* (dir. P. Andrade, 1968), Gabriel García Márquez’s *An Old Man with Enormous Wings* (dir. F. Birri, 1988) and Alejo Carpentier’s *Barroco* (dir. P. Laduc, 1989). Still, Petersen (2013) observes that academic discourses on the topic are limited, so literary adaptations remain “a rather safe categorization” (p. 16).

Although there are complexities of genre classification, several films are popularly described as magically real. These include *Amelie* (dir. J. Jeunet, 2001); *Dancer in the Dark* (dir. L. von Trier, 2000); *Beautiful* (dir. A. Iñárritu, 2010); *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (dir. B. Zeitlin, 2012); *Birdman* (dir. A. Iñárritu, 2014); *Wings of Desire* (dir. W. Wenders, 1987) and *Being John Malkovich* (dir. S. Jonze, 1999).

In Brazil, a limited number of films and television series are also described as magically real. Among these are the telenovela *Saramanbaia* (dir. D. Gomes, 1976)<sup>65</sup> and the *Cinema Novo*<sup>66</sup> films, *Terra em Transe* (dir. G. Rocha, 1967),<sup>67</sup> *Vidas Secas* (dir. N. P. Santos, 1963) and *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (dir. G. Rocha, 1964).<sup>68</sup>

Unlike Bowers (2004, p. 109) and Crawford (2009), Fredrick Jameson (1986) argues that magical realism in film is clearly a recognised mode and it is supported by specific historical information within which there resides conceptual and structural disjunctions. In his essay, *On Magic Realism in Film*, he proposes three characteristics of magical realism in cinematic narrative. These are:

- + The works are historical;
- + The colour of each film constitutes a source of a peculiar pleasure;
- + The dynamic of the narrative is reduced, concentrated, and simplified, by the attention to violence (and, to a lesser degree, sexuality)(1986, p. 303).

Bowers (2004) suggests that magical realism in film “initiate[s] questions concerning philosophical issues such as the existence of God, the role of fate, and the idea of the self that extended beyond the film’s capacity to divert and entertain” (p. 115).

### Magical realism in animation

To date there has only been limited discussion of magical realism in animation. Crawford (2009, p. 58) suggests that “the thing that unites both literary and animated magical realism is that they both exploit entirely constructed realities”.

Mishra and Mishra (2014) argue that magical realism can operate effectively in animated narratives because “reality is drawn and not captured, and therefore reality itself is created and is ‘magical’” (p. 304). They cite the animations *Millennium Actress* (dir. S. Kon, 2001) and *Paprika* (dir. S. Kon, 2006) as indicative of magical realism because they are expressions of the postcolonial and “a break down [of] traditional narrative structures, embodying an Asian visual experience” (p. 313).

In their consideration of these animations, Mishra and Mishra (2014) and Crawford (2009) use Faris’ five characteristics of magical realism to frame their argument (Faris, 2004, p. 7). However, the authors add to these the additional features of “non-linearity of time and space, non-sequiturs, entangled identities, observers as actors, and integration of alternative realities” (ibid., pp. 300-301).

### Magical realism in painting

Beyond the media forms of film and animation, the term magical realism has also been applied to painting, and its theorisation has drawn on both Roh (1925*a*, 1925*b*) and Carpentier’s (1967, p. 112) discussions. Roh (1968) defines magic realism in painting as an approach that shows “the wonder of matter that could crystallize into objects [...] to be seen anew.” Building upon Roh’s thinking, Bowers (2004) has described magic realist painting as attentive “to accurate detail, a smooth photograph-like clarity of picture and the representation of the mystical non-material aspects of reality” (p. 9). Also following Roh’s models, Menton (1983, p. 26) suggests that such artworks have the following features:

- + Sobriety and sharp focus; an unsentimental and unemotional vision;
- + The artist’s vision is directed towards the everyday, banal, insignificant subjects; the absence of timidity with regard to painting the unpleasant;
- + A static, tightly unified structure, which often suggests a completely airless, glass-like space, which, in general, gives preference to the static rather than to the dynamic;
- + The eradication of the traces of the painting process, the liberation of the painting from all sights of the handicraft;
- + And a new spiritual relationship with the world of things.

Given this description, Bowers (2004) proposes a number of painters who may be considered magical realist, including Frida Kahlo. In comparing Kahlo's *The Broken Column* (1944) (Figure 2:5) and *The Two Fridas* (1939) (Figure 2:6) she notes, "the surfaces of her paintings are smooth and photographic and they reveal a strange juxtaposition of objects out of their context" (p. 118). Bowers also proposes the *Tree of Hope* (Figure 2:7) as an example of the magically real, noting that it portrays "aspects of indigenous and mixed Mexican culture", and she suggests that Kahlo's "pain and bodily mutilation is symbolic of the political damage caused by colonialism and the successive revolutions that tore the country apart" (ibid.).

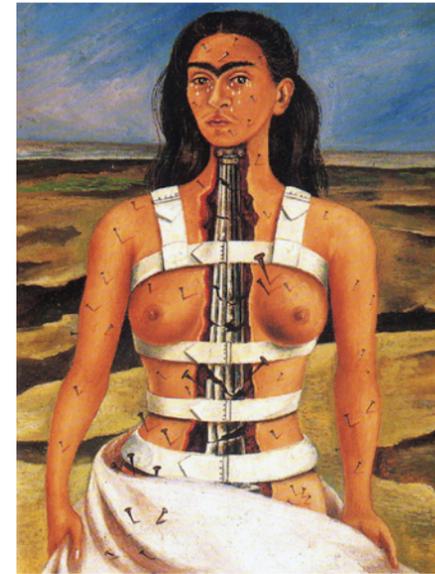


FIGURE 2:5.  
*Broken column* by Frida Kahlo (1944).<sup>69</sup>

FIGURE 2:6.  
*The Two Fridas* by Frida Kahlo (1939).<sup>70</sup>

FIGURE 2:7.  
*Tree of Hope* by Frida Kahlo (1946).<sup>71</sup>



69. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/the-broken-column/EgGmbMFBQrAe3Q?hl=en>

70. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://thesquirrelreview.com/2015/03/20/the-two-fridas-by-frida-kahlo-1939/>

71. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://useum.org/artwork/Tree-of-hope-Remain-Strong-Frida-Kahlo-1946>



FIGURE 2:8.  
*L'arbre généalogique* by Claude Verlinde (1927).<sup>72</sup>

Petersen (2013, p. 8) suggests that magical realist approaches to painting can propose a relatively “toy like world [where] the spectator’s eye is moved over the canvas, from one portion of the picture to another” in a manner congruent with a “mosaique-type composition [that] is also characteristic of some magic realist novels.” Indicative of this approach are paintings like *L’arbre généalogique* (Verlinde, 1927) (Figure 2:8) that concern themselves with an interplay between magical realism and carnivalesque-grotesque (Danow, 1995; Gesicka, 2003). In this work, the body is used in an incongruously transgressive and grotesque manner (Bakhtin, 1984*b*), proposing in its composition the “qualities of the trickster” (Koepping, 1985, p. 198). The sense of *wonder* in this work suggests aesthetic associations with Bakhtin’s depictions of Carnival rituals that contain “sensuous character and [...] strong elements of play, [that] resemble certain artistic forms, namely the spectacle” (ibid., p. 7).

## SUMMARY

Magical realism underpins both the content and narrative discourse of *Saints of Paradox*. In the work, polyphonic narrators and characters experience magical events as normal occurrences. They are not disconcerted by the *marvelous* or *uncanny*. Roh’s theories of magic realism are particularly useful in framing my approach to image construction, time and space. My imagery engages with a sense of *wonder* in a renegotiation of *Wunderkammer* space with the incongruities of both the carnivalesque and grotesque. The concepts of carnivalesque and grotesque are used in creating the conceptual diegesis of the world (Danow, 1995) which consciously reverses hierarchical orders (Bakhtin, 1984*a*) and creates an interplay between the magical and the real (Gesicka, 2003).

Theoretically, I recognise the interplay of ontological and anthropological magical realism (Spindler, 1993), including the decolonial subversive nature of the narrative. *Realismo maravilhoso* as a distinctively Brazilian construct underpinning the design of *Saints of Paradox* is discussed in Chapter 4.

72. In Brusen, C. (2008). *Imaginaire I: Magic realism 2008 – 2009* (Vol. 1). Denmark: Fantasmus - Art. This painting formed part of a 2008 curated *Michelle Boulet* gallery collection of Magic Realist paintings.

## + Syncretism & Photomontage

The third arena of knowledge impacting on this research relates to syncretism and photomontage and relationships between them. Syncretism may be described as the merging or attempted reconciliation of different beliefs or religious systems. Stewart (2011, p. 50) suggests that syncretism often involves “dual systems’ where people practice two religions side by side, in alternation or complementary.”

In this thesis I draw a creative correlation between syncretism and photomontage where photomontage is used as a visual interpretative device to communicate the fluid or uneasy reconciliation of diverse religious iconography or ideas. I use the term photomontage to describe a form of collage that produces a medium “composed primarily of photographs or fragments of photographs [used] to direct the viewer’s mind toward specific connections” (Gersh-Nesic, 2017, para. 1).

### SYNCRETISM

Syncretism is often associated with theology, anthropology and cultural studies where it is used to describe a process or blend of multiple beliefs and religious practices. Etymologically the word comes from Ancient Greek *syn*, ‘with’, and *krasis*, ‘mixture’. These components are combined to create the word *syngkrasis*, meaning “in a mixture or combination” or *indiosyngkrasia* — a mode or peculiar behaviour (Stewart & Shaw, 1994, p. 3). Although these authors note that syncretism can be “a contentious term, often taken to imply ‘inauthenticity’ or ‘contamination’, the infiltration of a supposedly ‘pure’ tradition by symbols and meaning seen as belonging to another, incompatible traditions” (p. 1),<sup>73</sup> Pakkanen (2011) argues that syncretism should be regarded as “a natural element inherent in all cultures and religions which have any sort of contact with other traditions” (p. 126). She suggests that syncretism is a “process of evolvment” (ibid.) that can result in new religions, where a “new unity [is] ‘more than the sum of its parts’ [and the religion] possesses distinctive qualities of its own” (p. 127).<sup>74</sup> She sees syncretism as a “dynamic, ever-changing hybrid in a continuum of historical process” (ibid.).

### Evolution of term

The word syncretism was first used by the Greek author Plutarch (AD 45-125) in his chapter *On Brotherly Love* in the *Moralia* essays. Here syncretism described an attitude of solidarity towards conciliating diversities by joining forces against the enemy. Syncretism did not surface significantly again as a term until the Renaissance, when Greek Philosophers began to exercise influence again in ecclesiastical readings of Christian texts (Screech, 1980, p. 21). In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, syncretism developed negative connotations<sup>75</sup> in theological debates about the Reformation churches.

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73. Stummer and Balme (1994, p. 27) suggest that in art history we can locate instances where this sense of impurity and marginalisation, connects syncretism with Bakhtinian carnival. This combination “mobilises all ‘abnormal’ and fantastic human instincts and desires in order to ridicule and subvert dominant cultures and discourses” (ibid.).

74. Gonzalez (2015) defines syncretism as a “linkage” that “binds [...] components together and reshapes them into a more or less coherent whole” (p. 99).

75. Pakkanen (2011) argues that the negative connotation and divergent concepts, has caused “various scholars to reject the term altogether as a tool in religious studies” (p. 126).

76. Stewart (1999, pp. 40-41) argues that many anthropologists frame syncretism as a “pejorative term, one that derides mixture, and/or [...] presupposes ‘purity’ in the traditions that combine”.
77. Gonzalez (2015) argues that syncretism now refers to “a distinct subcategory of the trope of hybridity, and not its equivalent” (p. 99). However, Gall (2014) believes that syncretism “does not problematize the political/nationalist claims of cultural purity” (p. 2).
78. Bricolage is a term developed by structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962). It describes patterns of mythological thought and the generation of *improvised* structures fashioned as responses of an environment. Stewart and Shaw (1994) see syncretism as a “provisional demarcation” (p. 9) and apply it to religions or ritual phenomena, while bricolage they see as “the formation of new cultural forms from bits and pieces of cultural practice of diverse origins” (p. 10). They argue that “where religious observance is inseparable from other social practices, we lose the ability to differentiate syncretism from other sorts of cultural bricolage and hybridization” (ibid.).
79. *Orixás* are spiritual entities of the Yoruban negroes and they are worshipped in Candomblé. Hedrick and Coll (1967, p. 13) note that the orixás are built around a “complex organisation of ritual and belief, [in which] each [deity] personifies some natural phenomenon.”
80. This polarisation results in two distinct approaches to prayer. “In the context of magic, prayer has a practical basis, [it] essentially represents a form of manipulation and coercion of the deity, via magical formulae.” In the context of religion ... “the individual resorts to prayer as a form of supplication, [that is prayer is] mainly geared to irrational, noneconomic or other-worldly, goals” (Camara, 1988, p. 301).

This shift in attitude was particularly distinctive in the writings of the Lutheran theologian George Calixtus. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, scholars often associated syncretism with Roman appropriation and dominance of foreign cults and considered it “an intermediate stage prior to Christian monotheism” (Stewart & Shaw, 1994, p. 4). Syncretism was also associated with missionary expansion and as part of a dynamic where churches had “begun to illegitimately indigenize Christianity instead of properly reproducing the European form of Christianity” (Stewart, 1999, p. 46). However, by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, anthropology and cultural studies considered syncretism a positive, cultural phenomena (ibid., pp. 3-4). Anthropologists like Melville Herskovit studied syncretism in the New World, considering it a valuable tool for ‘acculturation’ in the integration and survival of diverse cultures and meanings.<sup>76</sup> In postcolonial and postmodern studies, hybridism<sup>77</sup> and bricolage<sup>78</sup> have been positioned as similar ideas that have been theorised as key strategies against ethnocentrism (Gall, 2014, p. 2). In contrast to these ideas, syncretism is often seen as promoting processes of reconciliation of cultures and it is accused of being a technique for muting “political struggles involved in identity creation” (ibid.).

## Syncretism in Brazil

Bastide (1960, p. 260) suggests that syncretism in Brazil began during the time of slavery and colonisation, when in African ceremonies, “black Gods were forced to hide behind the statue of the Virgin or a Catholic saint.” He argues that syncretic practices were originally considered “merely a mask, a means of distracting the white man’s attention and evading his watchful eye” (ibid.). However, the phenomenon transformed into a structure of likenesses, where there were equivalences between saints and *orixás*.<sup>79</sup> Gradually, Africans and *Creoles* considered the juxtaposition of Christian saints and their own religious practices as “belong[ing] to the same category though completely separate”, and this produced a “dictionary of analogies, not synonyms” (ibid.). As a consequence, Bastide suggests, the devotees of African cults were quite aware of both the “differences and resemblances” between diverse religious iconography and practices (ibid., p. 277). Through these divergences and similarities, Camara (1988) argues that Catholic and African juxtapositions resulted in polarities between magic and religion<sup>80</sup> that became manifest in different forms of salvation and worship (p. 302). Leopold and Jensen (2014, p. 114) see another distinction. They note that “the orixás [...] descend into the bodies of their votaries, causing them to fall into an ecstatic trance—whereas the priests forbid the materialization of saints.”

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with the process of Brazilian independence from Portugal, the word syncretism was applied to a phase of political amalgamation where the “integration of ex-slaves into society” occurred. This period produced new ways of considering cultural and ethnic identity “fusion” (Mendieta, 2003, p. 134). In creating a new national identity, Brazil faced a situation where a different model was required to represent “neither the

Europeans (in this case, the Portuguese as colonisers) nor the Africans (as slaves)” (ibid.). Mendieta suggests that in prioritising the former there might be perceived a regression to colonialism and by elevating the latter the nation would be referencing a “primitive stage.” (ibid.). Since neither of the options suited, he suggests, “the only option left was the already destroyed indigenous Guarani culture” (ibid., p. 134).<sup>81</sup>

Mendieta also notes that, in the authoritarian regimes of the 1930s-1940s, the “integralist movement ... strongly emphasised categories such as patriotism and nationalism, and revived nineteenth-century romanticism and syncretism” (ibid., p. 140). Dunker (2008) argues that in fact, since the 1920s, syncretism has been considered a dominant narrative of Brazilian culture, and it is “abundant in art, [but] primarily in literature and music.”<sup>82</sup>

Conversant with a diverse range of Christian religions in Brazil, these are over a million and a half Spiritists, in addition to numerous followers of Candomblé<sup>83</sup> and Macumba (Turner, 2011, p. 3). In contemporary society, Turner (2011) argues that Brazilian Catholicism is discernibly syncretic. While its festivals and iconography are deeply rooted in centuries of Portuguese tradition, they are also heavily influenced by African and indigenous Brazilian traditions and practices.

## PHOTOMONTAGE

The word photomontage comes from the French verb ‘to mount’ and it describes artworks that collaged photographic elements repurposed from diverse sources.

The first documented use of photocollage may be attributed to the amateur handicraft of fantasy cards in the Victorian era (Schaffer, 2011, p. 284).<sup>84</sup> In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, combination printing (a technique that involved combining photographic negatives into a singular image), became popularised by artists like Henry Peach Robinson, of which *Fading Away* (1858) is a distinctive example.

However, the term photomontage was first applied formally to work emanating from the Dada Movement in 1916, specifically to the work of John Heartfield and George Grosz.<sup>85</sup> Jordan argues that for the Dada photomontage artist “the abrupt ‘cut’ present in a photomontage exemplified the ruptures and traumas in modernity” (Jordan, 2014, p. 99). For Dadaists, the photograph was considered a ‘ready-made’ image, that was bonded together “with cuttings from newspapers and magazines, lettering ... drawing to form a chaotic, explosive image, a provocative dismembering of reality” (Ades, 1976, p. 12-13). Significantly Otto (2010, p. 66) notes that:

By cutting up and repositioning ... pictures from everyday experience and political events, photomonteurs created often playful works that also functioned as a sophisticated mode of embedded cultural critique.

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81. *Indigenismo (or Indianismo)* became a significant theme in modern Brazilian literary fiction (Jobim, 1997). Later, the idea of the *caboclo* (a person of mixed indigenous Brazilian and European ancestry) or *mestiço* (a person with a mixture of two or more races, including African, indigenous and European) counted “as the genuine Brazilian synthesis between the native and European” (Mendieta, 2003, p. 134).
  82. Selka (2012, p. 224) argues that syncretism is evident in the modernist anthropophagic movement and it is made manifest in popular forms like carnival and Samba.
  83. Candomblé was a religion brought to Brazil by slaves from Nigeria. Today Roman Catholicism and Candomblé coexist in “pluralistic form” (Turner, 2011, p. 3).
  84. Schaffer (2011, p. 286) suggests that Victorian photocollages were “not so much a celebration of photography [but rather] a record of the anxieties of the photographic age.” These works she suggests were a reaction to the limits, failures and threats of the photograph as an emerging art form.
  85. Other significant Dada practitioners of the period include Hannah Höch, Kurt Schwitters, Raoul Hausmann and Johannes Baader.

Thus, the technique became closely associated with political narration and commentary. Heartfield was arguably the most recognised composer of photomontages and his combinations of imagery and text were employed as a political weapon against Nazi ideology (Kriebel, 2008) (Figure 2:9). Zervigón argues that for Heartfield, the seamless surface of photography retained “the greatest power of persuasion” (2012, p. 16). He suggests that Heartfield wanted his photomontages to be “partisan, biased, aggressive, and — most importantly — capable of making optical persuasion, a jolting and visceral experience” (ibid.).

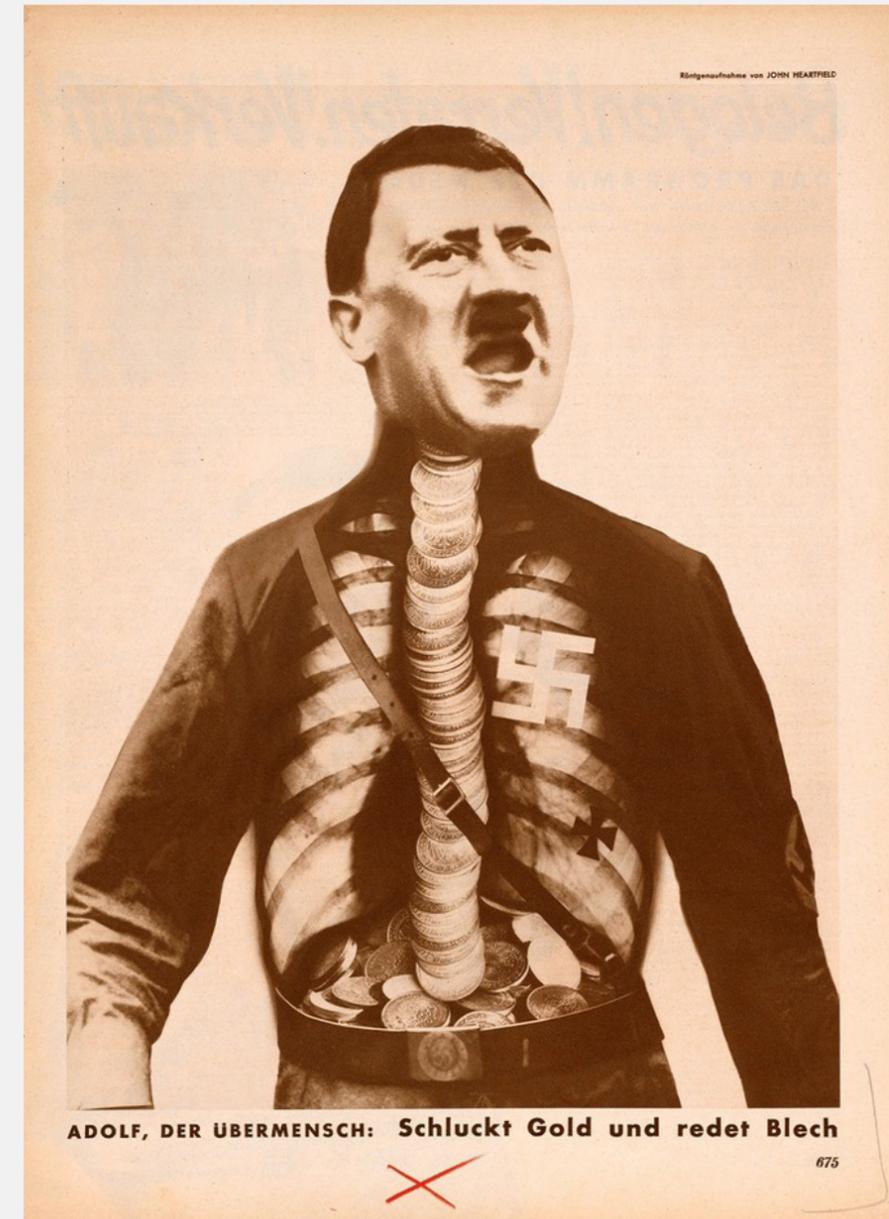


FIGURE 2:9.

*Adolf the Superman: Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk*, photomontage by John Heartfield (1932).<sup>86</sup> Ades (1976) notes that in this image Nazi rhetoric is shown as bombastic and reflecting the interests of money instead of the welfare of the people.

86. Retrieved May 5, 2018, from [http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/asset/AMHOUSTONIG\\_10313876289](http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/asset/AMHOUSTONIG_10313876289)

87. Retrieved May 6, 2018, from [http://library.artsstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/asset/SCALA\\_ARCHIVES\\_10313880113](http://library.artsstor.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_10313880113)

88. Although collage has a long history, its most popular use has been documented in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

89. Sutherland (1997, p. 10) offers useful comparison between collage, papier collé and photomontage. She notes that these:

...terms imply that elements of a picture are glued together. However, papier collé indicates a specific kind of pasted image whose elements are consistent, governed by the classical principle of design that insists on unity of material. Collage [...] mixes different materials, modes of representation, and styles: it welcomes the clash of the alien and unexpected [...] with contrasting combinations of elements, including rough and smooth textures and diverse mediums. Conversely, a photomontage is a collage made up of photographs, sections of photographs, or reproductions of photographs from magazines and newspapers and rarely exhibits areas of relief—it's primarily a two-dimensional medium.

Photomontage also continued as a politicised medium in the work of Russian constructivist artists like El Lissitzky, Gustav Klutis and Aleksandr Rodchenko. Their photomontages were considered as part of the “art of socialist construction” (Gough, 2009, p. 135) (Figure 2:10). Ades suggests that Soviet photomontage was “visionary and utopian in nature, [and] intended to persuade at first, the aims and later of the achievements, of the Soviet State” (Ades, 1976, p. 67).

Given its wide employment as a political medium, it is useful ideologically to separate photomontage of this period from *paper collé*.<sup>88</sup> Paper collé was developed in 1912 by George Braque and Pablo Picasso as a method for assembling materials from “everyday life, relatively untransformed by the artist, [to] intrude upon the traditionally privileged domain of painting” (Poggi, 1992, p. 1). Although cubist collage has often been likened to photomontage,<sup>89</sup> Jordan (2014) suggests Cubists used collage as a way to “signify ... the real by integrating new material into painting”; whereas the Dada photomontage artist “called forth a new world [and] broke up the possibility of a static historical moment captured in an image and replaced linear perspective with a ‘slashed up’ narrative” (Jordan, 2014, p. 99). However, Ulmer (1985) suggests that both collage and photomontage broke “the linearity of discourse and this led necessarily to a double reading: that of the fragment perceived in relation to its text of origin” (p. 88). He suggests that, “the trick of collage consists of never entirely suppressing the alterity of ... elements reunited in a temporary composition. Thus, the art of collage [draws] into question of the illusions of representation” (ibid.).

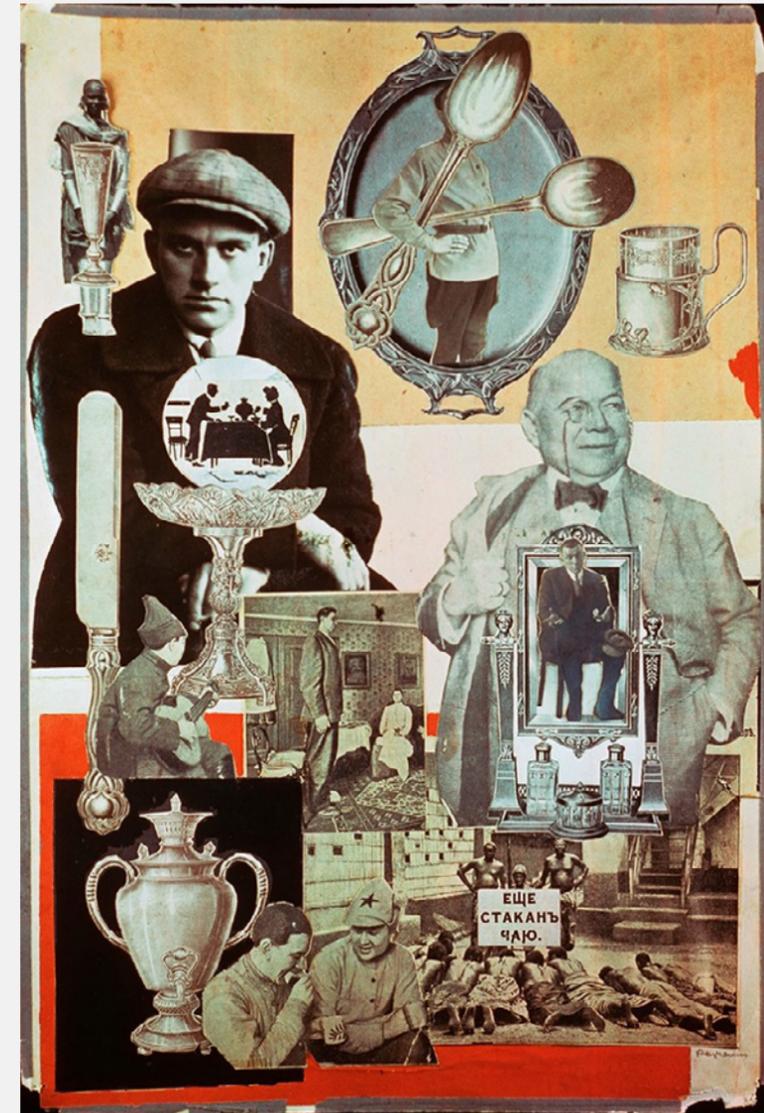


FIGURE 2:10.

*And This Takes Centuries* by Aleksandr Rodchenko (1923).<sup>87</sup> This image is part of a series of photomontages constructed to illustrate Maykovsky's poem *About This*. This poem was “a passionate demand for individual expression within revolutionary society” (Ades, 1976, p. 49).

In 1930, photomontage migrated to Latin America with German-Argentinian Grete Stern (Figure 2:11) whose work, displayed in *Idilio* magazine,<sup>90</sup> often portrayed the oppressive situation of Argentine women in relation to an “ironic commentary on the psychoanalytic validity of the staging of dreams” (Foster, 2003, para. 31). Foster (2003) posits that dreams in Stern’s photomontages “are allegorical representations of [women’s] diminished [...] presence in a world dominated by men, one in which they are menaced, persecuted, subject to mental and physical violence” (para. 33).<sup>91</sup>

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90. Grete Stern created a collection of photomontages for an article accompanying a series of essays from real-life women who described their experience of dreams.
91. Foster (2003) states that Stern’s interpretation may be aligned with contemporary feminism that has considered Freudian psychoanalysis “one of the very tools of the repression and oppression of women” (para. 34). He argues that Stern’s ironic approach in the article sees women not necessary renewing themselves through psychoanalysis, but “endorsing the very discourse that subjects them to a marginalizing scrutiny by an implacable masculine gaze” (para. 34).
92. Retrieved May 5, 2018, from <https://www.makma.net/caso-de-estudio-grete-stern/>



FIGURE 2:11.  
*Sueño 44* by Grete Stern (1950).<sup>92</sup> In this photomontage, Foster (2003, para. 17) suggests that this photomontage denotes a form of confinement of women that simultaneously protects and incarcerates.

After World War II, Kordic, Martinique and Herzog (2016) argue that the popularity of the medium declined, but it was revived again in the 1980s with the work of London artist Peter Kennard, particularly in the photomontages he produced in support of the anti-nuclear movement in Europe (Figure 2:12).

Today, Krohn (2013, p. 9) suggests that a number of contemporary artists share similar artistic and political intentions with their predecessors, but they continue to expand the use of photomontage techniques and themes. Cooper (2016) notes that what is new to the contemporary practitioner is an easy access and possibilities enabled through computer manipulating software, user-friendly computer programmes, tablets and phones. She suggests that this availability has produced new narrative spaces and has resulted in “the exponential growth of [a] visual expression and ‘language’ [that] is now redefining the boundaries of literature and visual communication” (2016, p. 35).



FIGURE 2:12.

*School Dinners?* by Peter Kennard (1986).<sup>93</sup> Douglas (2011, p. 99) sees Kennard’s photomontages as reflecting “the realities of imperial power, the madness of nuclear war and the inhumanity of the capitalist system.”

93. Retrieved May 5, 2018, from <http://www.peterkennard.com/nuclear-disarmament/>

## + Summary

In *Saints of Paradox* I draw syncretism and photomontage into artistic relationality and explore both their reconstitution of what pre-existed, and ideological tensions and mysteries resulting from decontextualisation and recontextualisation. The saints in my work are syncretic, and by combining religious and secular iconography with the grotesque, I create a form of *syncretic imagery*.

The setting of *Saints of Paradox* draws upon the iconography of nationalism, patriotism, and themes evident in Brazilian National identity that were rooted in authoritarian regimes and avant-garde Modernist movements. However the book responds to Garcia's (1997) assertion that women participating in activist protests in the 1960s-70s were not well perceived in Brazilian society and they suffered from "gender repression" (p. 326). He notes that such women had to make changes in their private lives, often living clandestinely, and submitting to forms of sexual abuse, pregnancy and specific tortures when captured (ibid.) [trans. T. Tavares]. In this regard I am inspired by the work of women artists like Grete Stern who applied photomontage to considerations of constraint, revolution, scrutiny and illogical connection.

Being cognisant of its historical context as a medium of political commentary, I have employed photomontage to disturb continuities, open the potentials for multiple readings (Ulmer, 1985) and create a disjointed sense of reality that is used to intensify the magical real nature of the narrative. Within this, the political and socio-cultural aspects of photomontage operate as referents for the postcolonial subversions of both syncretism and magical realism. It speaks both to a period of political revolution and to the discordance of an absolute narrative.

Having now contextualised *Saints of Paradox* with a consideration of contextual knowledge relating to narrative structure and discourse, parallax, magical realism, syncretism and photomontage, the next chapter will discuss the research design employed in the explication of the project.

†  
III



+ chapter 3 +

chapter 3

# Research Design

# 3

This chapter unpacks the research design underpinning the development of *Saints of Paradox*. Located within an artistic research paradigm, the project employed a heuristic inquiry actualised through a range of practice-led, reflective and collaborative methods.

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94. Sullivan (2010, p. 66) argues that “problem solving [is] a form of theorizing [that] asserts that the learner is a practitioner and a researcher and is therefore able to identify the problem and is capable of critical reflection and assessing the outcomes of the cyclical process of inquiry.”
95. Mäkelä (2011, p. 60) argues that the terms ‘practice-based’, ‘practice-led’ and ‘artistic research’ have been used interchangeably. Candy (2006, p. 3) uses the term ‘practice-based’ to describe a type of research where “original investigation [is] undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice.” Conversely, she defines ‘practice-led’ as research that is “concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice” (ibid.). In this thesis I understand practice-led research as an inquiry that is *led* by practice. In other words, discoveries and critique occur inside the practice and the researcher is *led* forward through a process of critical reflection towards insights that contribute to knowledge.

## + Research Paradigm

A *paradigm* is a belief system upon which research and development in a field of inquiry is based. Thus, Carroll defines a research paradigm as “a body of beliefs and values, laws, and practices which govern a community of practitioners” (1997, p. 171).

In this thesis, the research paradigm may be described as ‘artistic’. Within this, a robust yet flexible framework is employed wherein creative problem solving<sup>94</sup> is employed as an alternative to systematic investigation. Klein (2010) argues that artistic research is based on a subjective perspective of artistic experience, where modes of perception are the subject of knowledge. He argues that “if *art* is but a mode of perception is, also *artistic research* must be the mode of a process.” (Klein, 2010, p. 4). Artistic knowledge he argues, is “physical, embodied knowledge [and] the knowledge that artistic research strives for, is a *felt* knowledge” (ibid.).

## + Practice-led research

Within artistic research, ongoing debates concerning the nature of ‘practice-led’ and ‘practice-based research’<sup>95</sup> have been useful in articulating both research practices in the creative arts and the process of their institutionalisation (Frayling, 1993; Jones, 2002). These debates have partly arisen because of the distinctive processes and ways of understanding research employed by artists, designers, writers and performers “that have given rise to new concepts and methods in the generation of original knowledge” (Candy, 2006, p. 2).

Mäkelä (2007), Schön (1983), Scrivener (2000, 2002*a*, 2002*b*) and Gray (1996) all note that in practice-led research, the making and the

artefact may be considered a form of inquiry. Cross (1982, 2001) has argued for ‘designerly’ ways of knowing, where central importance is placed on the practitioner’s knowledge and skills, in the processes and design products themselves. In his discussion of doctoral research, Scrivener (2002*a*, p. 26) identifies a form of “creative-production” project, where “an object of experience, is more important than any knowledge embodied in it.” Such projects involve a “topic of interest and goal [that] may change as the work progresses” (ibid., p. 31).<sup>96</sup> He suggests such research may resist reduction to “a single problem and its solution” (ibid.). Haseman suggests that this kind of research is characterised by “experiential starting points from which practice follows.” Inquiry here is emergent and the result can be “individualistic and idiosyncratic” (2006, p. 100).

Borgdorff proposes that within the concept of practice lies a process of “material thinking” that is essential to “the articulation of non-propositional knowledge and experience, embodied in art works and creative processes” (2008, p. 91). His thinking may be related to Heidegger’s (1977) notion of “handlability” or “practical knowledge”, wherein the foundation of discovery and knowledge is understood as inherent in the act of ‘doing’ and sensorial experience. Inside this paradigm, Bolt argues that “research” commences in practice – in our dealings with the tools and materials of production, rather than a self-conscious attempt at theorisation” (2004, para. 2). In such an approach she suggests the researcher can draw “theorising out of practice” (ibid., para. 1).

Although Mäkelä argues that such inquiry requires a form of “plan with specific research question(s) and a context for carrying out the research” (2007, p. 160), I believe that practice-led artistic inquiry generally negotiates an unstable and emergent conversation between creative practice and theory

where the process of creating work is iterative and progressed through multiple points of reorientation. Within this instability, discoveries are made as the work progresses and questioning and planning must remain mutable and responsive.

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96. The work emanating from the inquiry “can be described as a response to a set of on-going issues, concerns and interests expressed through one or more artefacts” (Scrivener, 2002*a*, p. 34).

## + Methodology

Methodology describes the overarching approach used by the researcher within the research paradigm. Gray and Malins (2004) suggest “the aim of methodology is to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of inquiry, but the process itself” (p. 17).

Methodologically this project employs a framework that activates a heuristic approach to discovery and the refinement of ideas. This is because the thesis is less concerned with service-oriented research, and instead is more predicated on the productive use of nebulous and unstable processes of exploratory experimentation.

### HEURISTIC INQUIRY

In the study, research questions were initially imaginary, exploratory and reflective. They served to create an internal dialogue between the practitioner and what might be made. Accordingly, I employed a heuristic inquiry with generative and reflective methods utilised in its explication.

Heuristics derives from the Greek word *heuriskein* that means “to discover”. It may be defined as an informal process of problem solving that is concerned with discovery and knowledge gained by experience. It involves high levels of personal and intuitive engagement through experimentation and astute questioning. Moustakas defines heuristic inquiry as:

A process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. (1990, p. 9)

A number of writers note that within heuristic inquiries, the researcher is sometimes uncertain about the course of the research (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Ings, 2011; Kleining & Witt, 2000; Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002).<sup>97</sup>

Heuristic inquiry was employed because of its mutability and potential flexibility. Ings (2011) suggests that heuristic inquiry is useful in approaching certain design problems where no existing formulas for resolution exist. In such investigations Moustakas suggests that it is subjective critique that provides “a clear sense of the direction in which the theme or question is moving” (1990, p. 48). In this process the researcher utilises sophisticated levels of tacit knowing.<sup>98</sup> Moustakas describes such knowing as a:

... deep structure that contains the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgments housed in the internal frame of reference of a person. [Such knowledge] governs behaviour and determines how we interpret experience. (1990, p. 32)

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97. Sela-Smith (2002, p. 58) argues that heuristic inquiry involves a process of open experimentation, where “anything that makes sense can be tested”. She says that “this trial-and-error process, this discovery of what works, is the heuristic. What succeeds becomes the ‘right thing’” (ibid.).

98. Polanyi (1967) describes tacit knowing as spontaneous knowledge that one might possess but is unable to describe. He posits tacit knowing as precognitive and suggests that it cannot be adequately articulated verbally. He contrasts tacit knowing with explicit knowing, which is knowledge he suggests is able to be articulated.

## Indwelling

Indicative of heuristic inquiry is a process that Douglass & Moustakas describe as “indwelling” (1985, p. 47).<sup>99</sup> <sup>100</sup> Here, the researcher draws the question into herself and lives with its nature and potentials.

It was inside this largely gestational and imaginative process that the fictional world of *Saints of Paradox* took rudimentary form. Douglass & Moustakas (1985) suggest that this can be a resourceful state of gazing into oneself, where one is able to “touch with innumerable perceptions and awareness that are purely [one’s] own, without the interference of restrictions or judgments, with total disregard for conformity or congruence” (p. 47). They suggest that during this process, the researcher “might be captivated by a particular image, sensation, or realization and pause to explore its meaning or significance more fully” (ibid., p. 48). The authors see such indwelling as a vital part of a heuristic inquiry because it “carries the sense of total involvement in a research theme or question in such way that the whole world is centred in it for a while” (ibid., p. 47).

During this process, I engaged in generative questioning between the fictional world and the world of my lived experience. Moustakas (1990, p. 43) describes this merging of perceptions as a “song into which the researcher breathes life [...] because the question itself is infused in the researcher’s being. It creates a thirst to discover, to clarify, and to understand crucial dimensions of knowledge.”

In this research, indwelling has been used as a form of imagined experience of the characters and diegesis of the story. It gave birth to the core narrative and its imagined back story (Table 3:1 - p. 51). I found Elza in a historical place and I dwelt with her ... feeling her reactions and coming to understand why she behaved the way she did. Through this process of indwelling I *experienced* what shaped her.

## Explicitness

Inside a state of indwelling, I drew forward with incremental clarity, the story of Elza and Euclides, and details of their worlds. These surfaced out of a nebulous set of impressions from which I made iterative sense though forays into explicitness. This process of ‘making solid’ may be likened to Douglass & Moustakas observation that in heuristic inquiry “... vague and formless wanderings are characteristic in the beginning, but a growing sense of meaning and direction emerges as the perceptions and understandings of the researcher grow and the parameters of the problem are recognized” (1985, p. 47).

The process of ‘making explicit’ was multi-faceted. I explored diverse storylines (Figure 3:1 - p. 52), and media (Figure 3:2 - p. 52). I drew what was imagined into visualised scenes (Figure 3:3 – pp. 53-5) and spatial relationships (Figure 3:4 – p. 56). Through this visualisation, the story content took initial form as episodes that were imagined and fleshed out as an initial synopsis (see appendix 1: Treatment on page 157). As I arranged components of this imagined world, I engaged in intuitive exercises of aesthetic and operational judgment, that resulted in an iterative solidifying of both the narrative and the world that contained it.

Having discussed the broad concept of heuristic inquiry as a process that allowed me to move between indwelling and explicitness, it is useful to consider specific methods that were employed in testing and refining the research. These methods helped me to navigate a productive balance between interior thinking, planning and external productivity.

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99. Both Polanyi (1967) and Ings (2014b) discuss the process of indwelling. Ings (2014a, p. 24) argues that this process refers to an “induced interior state of self-hood where one dwells in the creative potential of what is not yet formed.”

100. By indwelling, I refer to a particular ‘iconic’ state where I am embodied inside images. This may be imaginative spaces, collage and digital environments, or physical spaces like props in a set or artefact I am making.

EUCLIDES	1942	1956	1958	1963	1965	1967	1968	1970	1984	2018		
	Euclides is born in Ribeirão Preto - São Paulo into a middle class family. They are traditional and very religious. Euclides goes to a Catholic school and wants to be a priest. He goes to church every Sunday. His mother was a ballerina and was fascinated with all kinds of music, including Ary Barroso. Euclides loves her.	Euclides decides he doesn't want to be a priest. He is interested in Theology, Philosophy and Social sciences. His mother teaches him how to dance, but he wants to learn Samba.	At 16 years old, he is engaged to marry a high school friend. He likes her but he is not in love. He doesn't want to disappoint his father. She is also from a traditional family.	Euclides becomes a professional Samba dancer. His mother knows but this is a secret from his father.	At 23 years old, he moves to the city (4 hours from his parent's home) and enrolls in the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo to study Theology. His marriage is to be arranged after his graduation.	He meets Elza and falls in love with her. Euclides is still engaged and his family disapproves of his relationship. He tries to end the relationship with his fiancée. His family threatens him by restricting financial support. Euclides and Elza start living together in her small apartment.	Some of Euclides' friends disappear after a protest. One day, he decides to stand against a lecturer who supports AI-5. He is sick of being the 'good boy'.  Euclides disappears.	Euclides family blames Elza for his disappearance. They suggest that she set him up and the communists killed him.	1984 <i>Possibilities:</i> Euclides is captured, put in a cell and was killed by a gun shot. Euclides is tortured to death. Euclides becomes a martyr. Euclides is a 'trapped' soul inside her apartment - held there by her grief. Euclides is waiting for her death so they can be reunited in a dance.	2018 Euclides' disappearance is not explained and his body was never found.		
ELZA	1944	1956	1961	1965-6	1967	1968	1970-2	1984	2018			
	Elza is born in Mooca - São Paulo. Her father's family is from the Northwest and her mother has Italian ancestry. She is the only child. Her father is an unorthodox Catholic and practices Umbanda. She is from a low middle class family.  Elza and her father are very close and he wants her to study. However, he also knows that this is rather unusual for a woman.	Her father dies in a car crash caused by a military official who was drunk while driving. She is 12. The killer escapes and is not arrested.  Her mother takes on work as a seamstress to pay for her education.	Her mother receives indemnity from the government for the killing of her father. Her mother can pay for her studies and also buys an old apartment for the two of them. Elza doesn't want to take her mother's money because she wants her to keep it for retirement.	Elza's mother dies unexpectedly of a heart attack. She then lives by herself in the apartment. She connects with her dad's ancestry and starts to practice Umbanda. She decides to study.  She enrolls in the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo to study Law. She wants to fight against injustice but still feels like a weak female voice.	Elza and Euclides meet and start living together. She joins the <i>União Nacional dos Estudantes (UNE)</i> .  Elza convinces Euclides to actively participate in meetings of the UNE. He initially resists.	Elza encourages Euclides to do something. She feels as a man, that he will have a stronger voice. Euclides disappears and she feels guilty.	1970-2 She receives an anonymous phone call saying Euclides is alive. Nobody believes her. She searches for him everywhere. She knows that she is vulnerable to arrest. She ceases her studies and makes an unsuccessful attempt at suicide.  1972 She receives anonymous threatening phone calls. She becomes deeply religious. First few signs of mental illness.	1984 She is 40 now. She keeps Euclides' memories alive. She receives anonymous phone calls saying Euclides is alive. She shows advanced signs of mental illness and obsession.  Is the phone call an illusion? She is obsessed with the only photograph of Euclides.	2018 She is 74. It has been 50 years since her lover died. Her room is an accumulation of objects and memories from the past. The photo breaks.  <i>Possibilities:</i> She dies. She meets up with him. She is forgiven and becomes a saint.			
TIMELINE	1948	1950	1961	1963	1964	1966	1967	1968	1969	1972-4	1984-8	2012-8
	"ANOS DOURADOS" (THE GOLDEN AGE)  END OF WORLD WAR 1 AND BEGINNING OF COLD WAR  THE CONSUMER CULTURE	CUBAN REVOLUTION  WOMEN FROM THE 1950S	JANGO GOVERNMENT  RITA LEE	JOHN KENNEDY IS MURDERED  WOMEN FROM THE 1960S	COUP D'ETAT IN BRAZIL  ATO INSTITUCIONAL (AI-1)  MARCHA DA FAMÍLIA COM DEUS PELA LIBERDADE "FAMILY WALK WITH GOD FOR FREEDOM"	ONGANÍA - COUP D'ETAT IN ARGENTINA  UNE STUDENTS ARRESTED IN BELO HORIZONTE  COSTA E SILVA ELECTED	TROPICÁLIA  JOURNAL DO BRASIL	(AI-5)  NUMBER OF STUDENTS' PROTESTS	(AI-6)  AMERICAN EMBASSADOR CHARLES ELBRICK'S KIDNAPPING	ARAGUAIA WAR  CHILEAN COUP D'ETAT  GENERAL AUGUSTO PINOCHET  ERNESTO GEISEL PRESIDENT	END OF DICTATORSHIP  MANIFESTATIONS "DIRETAS JÁ" - PUBLIC MOVEMENT DEMANDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS  1988 NEW BRAZILIAN CONSTITUTION	2012-8  WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL  2018 JAIR BOLSONARO IS ELECTED PRESIDENT

TABLE 3:1.

A fictional consideration of Elza's life journey (2016). In this timeline I created her back story from birth to death. I imagined, cross-referenced and built a historical narrative that operated as a context and catalyst for her development as a character. My understanding of her motivations and reactions was partly resourced by historical facts and changes in design styles indicative of specific periods.



FIGURE 3:1.

Screen shots of short animation film *Ibotirama*<sup>101</sup> (January, 2015). In this early foray, I developed a number of short experiments considering how I might create a character who operated in a world made up of real and unreal objects. Although at this stage I had not found the character of Elza, I was searching through a unique illustration style that combined an eclectic mix of painted photoshop drawings, simulated watercolour effects, photomontage and green screen footage, to explore relationships between a 'living' character and a collaged 'impossibly assembled' environment.

101. *Ibotirama* was an animated story about a lonely child's quest for a place to belong. Wandering through a lost city she finds a small house in the top of a tree. Its single room contains a damaged family photograph. The child goes to bed and dreams of a distant world that contains the answer to a special secret. This was my first attempt at an animation. It was an early consideration of the themes of reconnection and belonging realised in a magically real world.



FIGURE 3:2.

Early watercolour considerations of saintly iconography (July, 2015). At this point, I wasn't considering the use of animation and filming for the final work.



FIGURE 3:3. (PP.53-5)

Early visualisations of environments as photomontages (2016-2018). The process of externalising both imagery and the emotional texture of interior imaginings resulted in a rich variety of work. While much of this was rejected, some gathered resonance and coherence as the narrative and diegesis developed.





## Proscenium arches



FIGURE 3:4.

Mapping my imaginative dwelling within Elza's apartment as a 'real' world (2017). Using these floor plans I blocked in the artefacts I imagined and the characters' movements between them. Internally I 'saw' and felt her world both physically and emotionally. These visualisations of Elza's world were spaces in which I dwelt. I sensed light and detail and the constraints of her life. Eventually, such diagrams became influential in designing spatial relationships in the magically real space of the illustrations.

- A ELZA & EUCLIDES' LOUNGE
- B ELZA'S WORLD 2000s
- C ELZA'S SHRINE 2000s
- D BROKEN PHOTOGRAPH
- E ENDING
- F COUPLE'S ROOM

## + Methods

Research methods might be understood as “specific techniques and tools for exploring, gathering and analysing information” (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 17). For this research, the following methods (and sub-methods) were employed (Table 3:2):

- + Journaling
- + Iterative assembly, overviewing and testing
- + Strategic use of feedback
- + Collaboration, cooperation and testing.

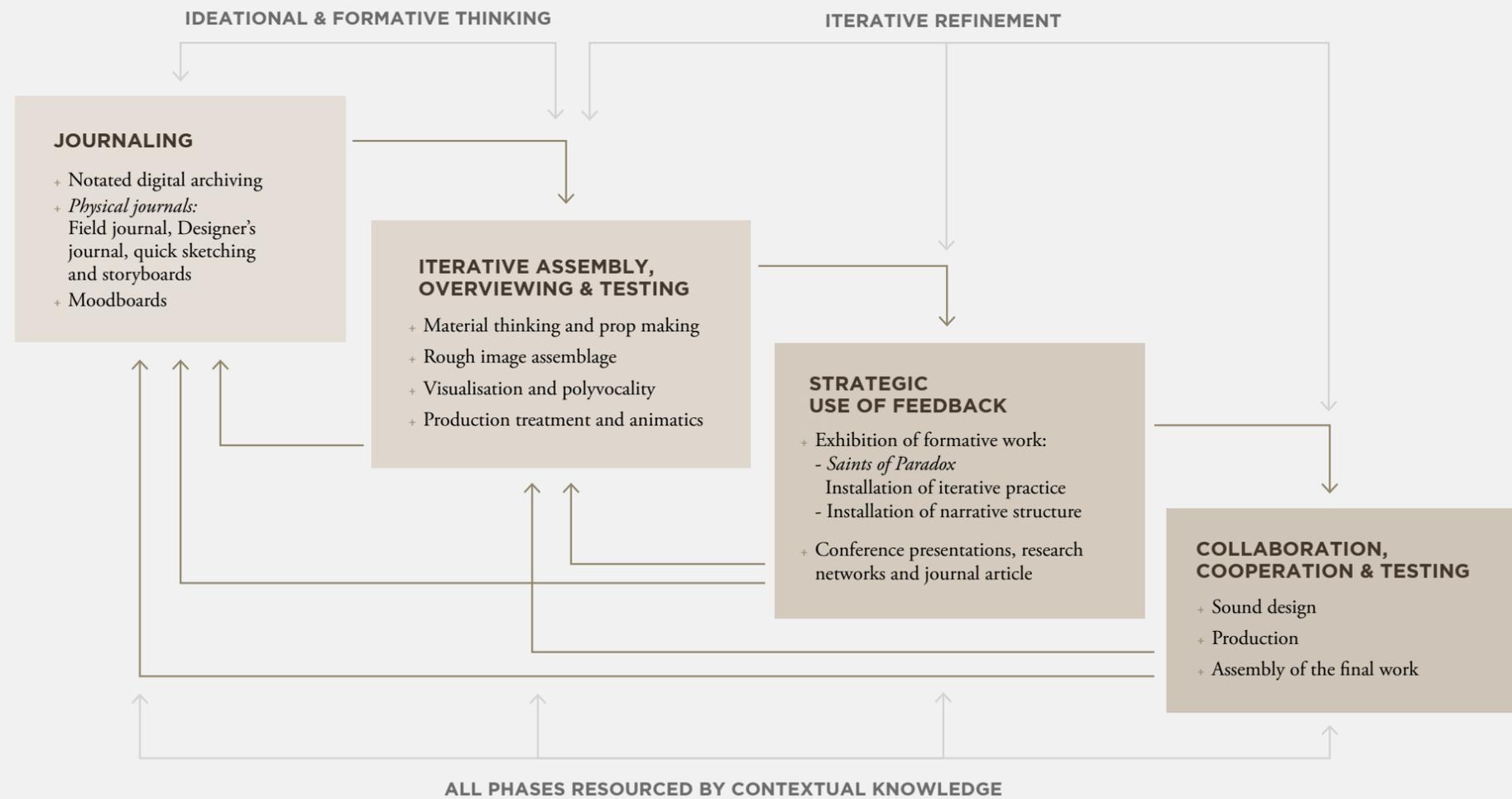


TABLE 3:2.  
A diagrammatic rendering of methods, sub-methods and phases of research. Methods are not discrete; they occur and resource cyclic processes that move incrementally forward in the refinement of the work.

## JOURNALING

As my thinking moved outwards from an immersive state, it took explicit form through a variety of digital and physical journals. These operated as information repositories and sites of experiment and reflection. Often they took the form of cursory ‘note-taking’,<sup>102</sup> reflection on theory or a dialogue with practice. Gray and Malins suggest such documents are not “precious, self-conscious object[s], but interactive device[s] ...” (2004, p. 59) that support a process of ongoing reflection-in-action (Rodgers, Green & McGown, 2000; Schön, 1983).

Newbury has argued that visual journals as research methods are not display artefacts that validate the research to others, but instead “facilitate the research process through recording observations, thoughts and questions as they happen, for later use by the researcher, and ... stimulate reflective thinking about the research” (2001, para. 8). In a more intimate way, such journals embrace “the real inner drama” of the research and reflect “its intuitive base, its halting timeline, and its extensive recycling of concepts and perspectives” (Bargar & Duncan, 1982, p. 2).

Hilsdon (2006) argues that reflection exists in interactions between learning and language, so written notes and internal reflection in visual journals can assist in learning new perspectives about a phenomena. Moon (2013, pp. 3-4) suggests that journals encourage documentation of “ongoing thought[s]” and, in an environment of “slipperiness”, they can be useful in capturing and documenting accurate thoughts and feelings during experiences (ibid.). This said, in my research, I was aware that writers like Platzer, Snelling and Blake (1997) also argue that research journaling can become an overly time consuming process that interrupts creative vitality. However, for me, the process of visual and contextual journaling helped

both in ideation and reflective processing and was useful for conceptually overviewing creative ideas and the information that provoked them.

Broadly, journals took three distinct forms: notated digital archiving, physical journaling (as quick sketching and storyboarding) and moodboards.

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102. ‘Note-taking’ here refers to both written thought and thumbnail sketches.

## Notated digital archiving

I used Microsoft OneNote software as a digital journal for archiving contextual material<sup>103</sup> and visual inspirations (Figure 3:5). This software afforded me convenient ways of notating my thinking and provided a networked, easily tracked archive. Cristy (2014, p. 2) suggests that such electronic environments can enable a “user to [accomplish] all of the operations typically performed with a hardcopy text, in addition to functions not possible with paper books.” Sedig and Parsons suggest that such “visualisation-based computational tools” can support a range of “complex cognitive activities” including “analytical reasoning, sense making, decision making, problem solving, learning, planning, and knowledge discovery” (2013, p. 84).

The digital journal enabled complex syntheses of information that were useful in both the design of *Saints of Paradox* and exegetical writing, because I was able to create indexes with hyperlinks, divide thinking into folders and tabs, and create a dynamic platform for interaction.

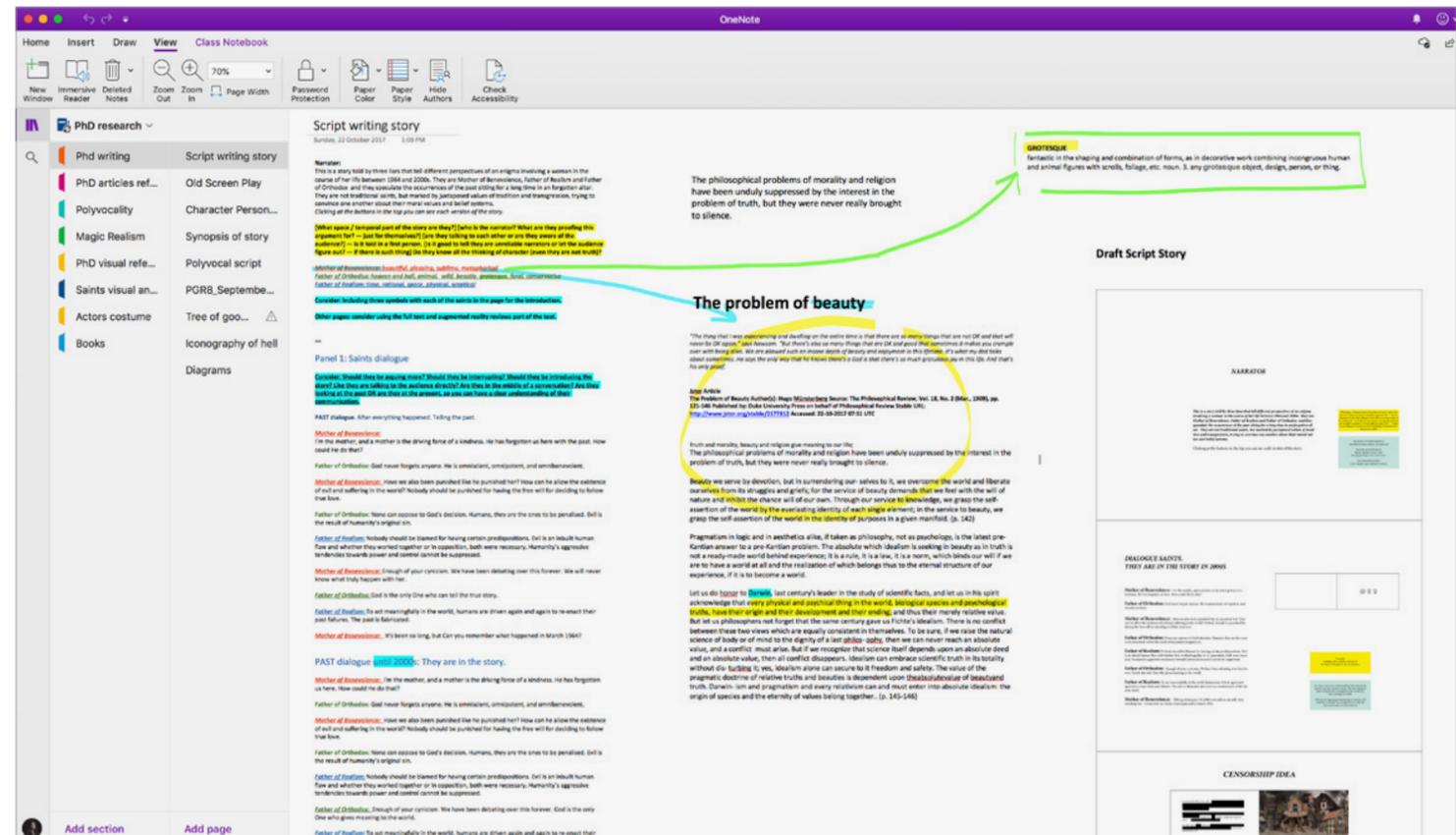


FIGURE 3:5. Digital journal showing relational tabs (2017).

103. This includes annotated articles, book chapters and online links of technical, cultural or artistic material (including image and sound data).

## Physical Journals

### *Field journals*

I used a field journal in the beginning of the research to gather images and impressions from field trips to a number of locations in Brazil (Figure 3:6 - p. 61). The journal became an annotated document concerned with data collection about historical sites, syncretism, architecture and ritual as it occurred in specific cultural contexts. In it I also documented conversations with local people,<sup>104</sup> historians and religious experts who responded to informal questions. As such, the journal may be considered as an ethnographic research method<sup>105</sup> that was organised in systematic chronological order and contained written observations, settings, summaries of situations and personal experiences. Burgess (1981, p. 76) discusses these aspects as ethnographic documentation, in which “autobiographical details [document] the researcher’s involvement in the social situation.” While some visual material from this journal appears in the final illustrations, most of the data operated as reference material for design considerations like the saints’ iconography and the storyworld’s architecture.

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**104.** From this field trip I returned to New Zealand with the substance of an idea that was influenced by observing and talking with a group of elderly women who lived in the neighbourhood surrounding my home in Brazil.

**105.** Burgess (1981, p. 78) defines ethnographical research as the “study of people *in situ*.” Some of the methods involved in ethnographic research include “data [that] is gathered from a range of sources, observation and/or relatively informal conversations” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 2).

**106.** Throughout the research, I completed six of these documents.

**107.** These initial storyboards dealt with a basic, sequential storyline. The polyvocalisation of events was not yet a consideration.

**108.** Such recording enabled me to keep track of specific changes.

## Designers’ journals, quick sketching and storyboards

Designers’ journals may be broadly understood as notebooks<sup>106</sup> that operated as reflection and ideation environments inside which I was able to create and reflect on ideas through a process of thumbnail sketching and rapid notation (Figures 3:7 and 3:8 - p. 62). Such journals provided a space for rendering cursory visualisations. Rosenberg suggests such thinking is normally rapidly rendered and operates as an:

... embodiment of knowing yet unknowing, where intentionality and technical and operational competencies ... osmosed with tacit knowledge, intuition and free association, form an engagement that enables performance in the face of high risk, radical instability and failure. (2008, p. 248)

As the diegesis of the work became increasingly tangible, the sequence and refinement of the story expanded into roughly sketched, sequential storyboards<sup>107</sup> (Figure 3:9 - p. 62). Using this method, scenes, compositions, narrative pace and detail were developed, tested and critiqued. It was at this point that I began discussing clarity and emphasis with other designers. As an outcome of this process, I listed possible changes and entered annotations next to my thumbnails.<sup>108</sup>



FIGURE 3:6.  
 Images from my field journal documenting my trip to Brazil (12<sup>nd</sup> June - 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2015). The inquiry was primarily concerned with recording existing depictions of saints specific to Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

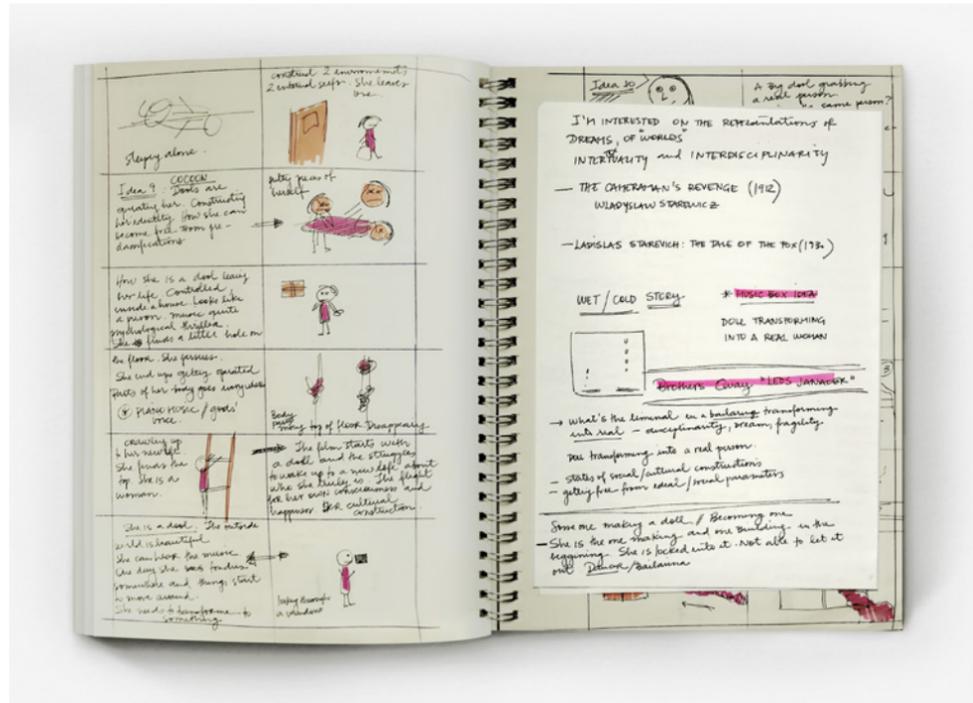


FIGURE 3:7. Cursory ideational drawings with notes (2015). This form of journaling became a kind of shorthand for thinking. It was designed to capture possibility by jotting down ideas (with little restriction) rather than developing or solidifying solutions. As such the method represented an early transition from indwelling to explicitness.

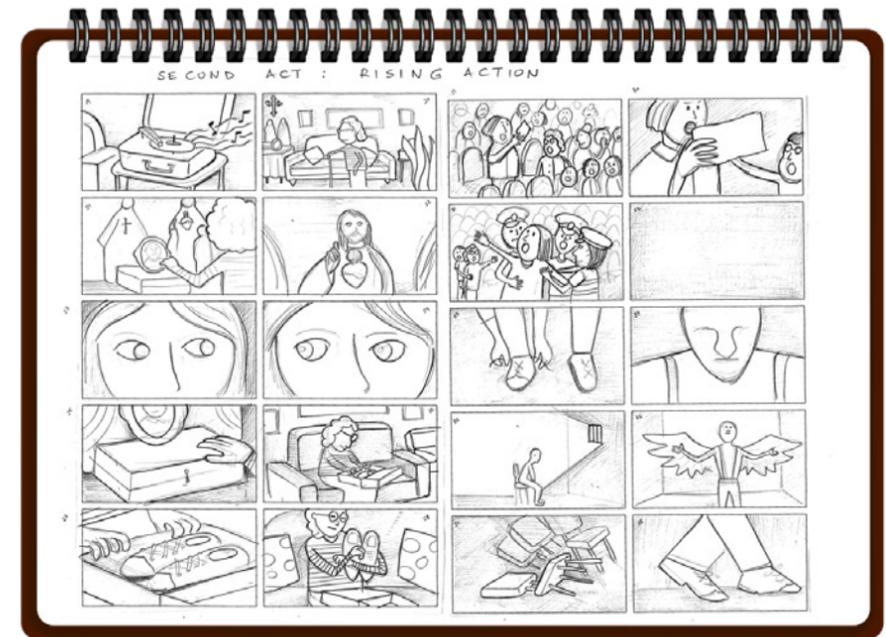


FIGURE 3:9. An example of an iterative storyboard developed for constructing a linear sequence of events (2016). Such storyboards were used to create an initial arrangement of the book's storyline.



FIGURE 3:8. Ideational drawing with notes (2015). As my thinking about a narrative developed I tended to draw ideas into loosely sequential thumbnails. However, at this stage my purpose was still to dialogue with potential.

This visual approach was supported by a diagrammatic process inside which I refined the story's synopsis. These structured diagrams were used to compare and align polyvocal interpretations of events (Table 3:3 - p. 64).<sup>109</sup> As an extension of this process I also developed a number of digitalised documents that highlighted intersections between the Saint's interpretations and events in the storyline.

Physical journals were also used to find connections between theories and technical information as the practice began to take a more tangible form (Figure 3:10).

## Moodboards

As my thinking progressed, journaling increasingly took the form of moodboards.<sup>110</sup> Lucero, Aliakseyeu and Martens (2007, p. 444) argues that moodboards can allow “designers to juxtapose both concrete and abstract imagery.” They suggest that rather than being restrictive they should provide the opportunity “on a general level to get a sense of the feeling that must be conveyed” (ibid.). In my work moodboards enabled a refinement in the understanding of the fictional world of the narrative, including considerations of colour, emotional texture, social behaviour, historical background, fashion references, sound, lighting and the potentials of archival photographs, that might enrich character, environment, narrative or artefact design (Figure 3:11 - p. 65).

McDonagh and Denton (2005, p. 3) suggest that moodboards can be viewed in a number of different ways, but their essential task relates to *inspiration* and *communication*. In my study they were particularly useful as “triggers for idea generation and providing anchors for structuring mental representations” (ibid.). Rather than being “static collections of images” (ibid.), they functioned as environments for indwelling and, explicitly, as communicative devices for discussions with costume designers and actors (Figure 3:12 - p. 65).

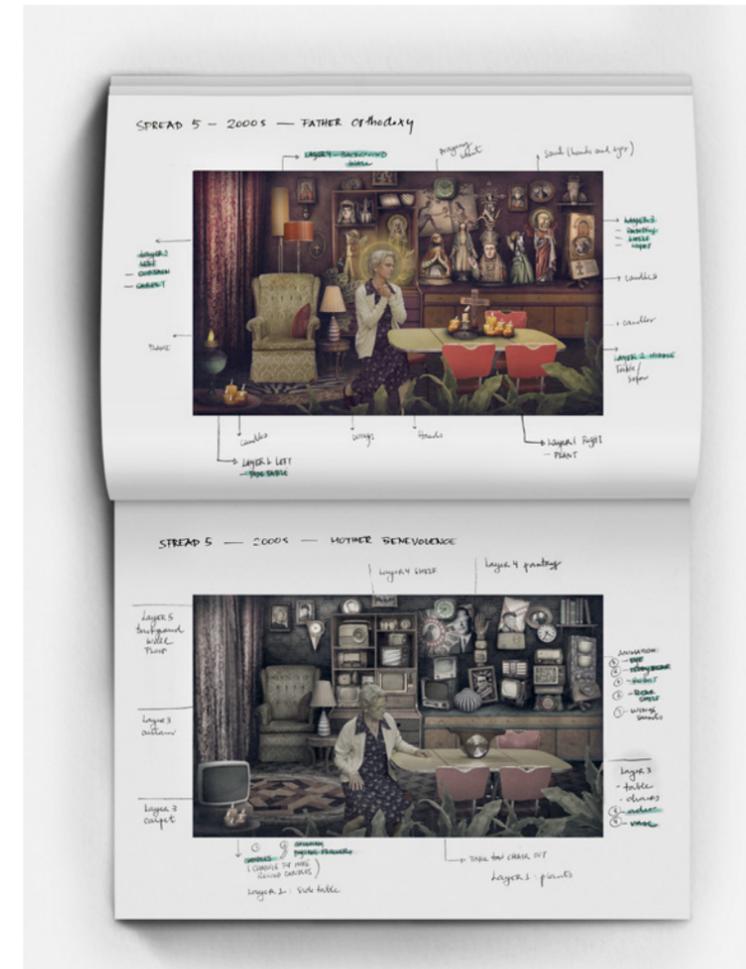


FIGURE 3:10. Technical and theoretical notes informing alternative conceptions of the parallax (2019).

109. See Table 4:1 on page 105 for the final synopsis and eventual voice-over narration of the three saints in the story.

110. In this research, a moodboard describes an orchestration of (normally pictorial) data. In general, images were accompanied by annotations suggesting potential connections to the work.

TABLE 3:3.

One of many attempts at designing the three saints' initial polyvocal relationships with the base storyline (2017). Such diagrammatic writing enabled me to contrast not only the narrator's tone but also the synchronicity of their parallel interpretations. This approach replaced the conventional method of sequential script writing because the story was now able to be developed as a network of relational parts that could be compared at a glance.

	ELZA'S BELIEF SYSTEMS	HER EMOTIONAL & PHYSICAL STATE	HER PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE & HISTORY
	They were very religious, but went against God's teachings. Her world is surrounded by beasts and animals, distorted human figures, trees, flowers and nature. These are positioned between good and evil.	They were a couple — love was worth more than anything. The world is surrounded by paradoxically dead and living organic and inorganic forms. It is a dark place.	They were revolutionaries, heroes of a generation. The room is surrounded with objects of the everyday mixed with radios, televisions and mechanical gadgets.
	<b>HISTORIC / FACTS / STORIES</b>	<b>HISTORIC / FACTS / STORIES</b>	<b>HISTORIC / FACTS / STORIES</b>
	<b>Father of Orthodoxy</b> <b>Personality:</b> rigid, conservative, complaining. <b>Rhetoric:</b> accusation, superficial truth-oriented.	<b>Mother of Benevolence</b> <b>Personality:</b> compassionate, caring, innocent. <b>Rhetoric:</b> poetic, metaphorical, figurative.	<b>Father of Realism</b> <b>Personality:</b> wise, intellectual, cynical, comedic. <b>Rhetoric:</b> factual, playful, skeptical.
INTRODUCTION	Sins of disobeying God then he banishes them from the Garden of Eden. God created human beings in the Garden of Eden, although they fell from grace into the present world containing death, wickedness, pain and suffering. Adam is told that he can walk in the ground and eat freely of all the trees in the garden, except for a tree that will give him knowledge of the difference between good and evil. Adam and Eve are innocent and unembarrassed about their nakedness. However, a serpent deceives Eve into eating fruit from the forbidden tree, and she gives some of this to Adam. Judeo-Christian religions reinforce feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Genesis 2:9	<b>1) HER ARRIVAL / HER RELIGION.</b> Irenne Medeiros followed Christian teachings since she was a child. She prayed everyday and attended to mass every Sunday. <b>2A) IRENNE MET JOÃO.</b> While at University, she met João. He was actively engaged with the Socialist party. OR <b>2B) HE WAS A SAINT.</b> When she moved to town she became devoted of a Saint and she prayed constantly for him. <b>3A) DISTANT FROM RELIGION.</b> Over his influence and her hectic city life, she became disengaged from her former religiosity. At the peak of the revolution, repression seemed to challenge the core of her Christian and family values. <b>3B) LOST ALTAR.</b> She read Marxist books and without noticing, her altar (a special place in the house), became a space for books. Her house was dark, more like a hidden place with people coming and going.	<b>1) UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.</b> During the 60s, João and Irenne Medeiros were University students. She was studying medicine and he was an architecture student. During their years in the university, João became the leader for the guerrilla group and adopted a socialist ideology against the dictatorship. <b>2) TEACHERS OPPRESSED.</b> Irenne wasn't sure in the beginning, but she gradually became more involved. During the dictatorial regime, teachers became increasingly oppressed and persecuted. They didn't know who they could trust. <b>3A) JOÃO IS ARRESTED.</b> One day, João was part of a reunion of other students in a lecture theatre where he was arrested and taken away by soldiers in front of Irenne. <b>3B) IRENNE NEEDED TO HIDE.</b> She knew she needed to hide. They could come back for her, but they didn't. The city was a risky place; she decided to retreat to the relative safety of her home. <b>4) IRENNE KNEW HE HAD DISAPPEARED.</b> She realised that João was probably tortured then killed ... and she assumed that he would now count among the disappeared persons who had argued against the authorities. She wanted answers.
TURNING POINT		<b>3A) FAMILY DISOWNED AND MARRIAGE.</b> Irenne's traditional family didn't accept João. They decided to take her out of University. She could return home and get married to somebody else. She refused. <b>3B) THEY DECIDE TO MARRY.</b> João and Irenne decided to marry secretly. Her parents found out and disowned her. She wasn't allowed to return home again. She felt betrayed and lonely. A few years later, both of her parents passed away. João now was all she had. <b>4) A PIECE OF HER DIED WITH HIM.</b> When they left home that morning, she didn't know the risks. But that day, she lost her love. She knew she could never love someone again. She waited for him to return. She was lonely at home. He was the love of her life. A piece of her had died with him. She was alienated.	<b>BRAZILIAN 60s</b> Dream of modernity, Brasília, more industry and wealth. Coup d'état 1964: directed by the rich, conservatives and the military/army government (including the elected president João Goulard). Support from the American government. 1969-1978 were years of terror. Students were organised against the private sector of education. Significant numbers were killed and riots were forbidden. Students were very important in the resistance and in the encouragement of culture. In 1964 all university organisations were banned and considered illegal. UNE Congress in Ibiúna (SP), with the imprisonment of around a thousand students.
2000S	Bosch's apocalyptic scenes portray man's struggle against temptation, and visions of heaven and hell. These views contain surreal imagery, including demons, unusual human figures and creatures. Purgatory is often described as a border state between physical death and heaven.	<b>GOOD AND EVIL // HEAVEN AND HELL FALL FROM GRACE</b> <b>5) IRENNE'S WORLD.</b> In the 2000s, she performed a ceremonial ritual of eating and drinking (wine and bread). Her world was possessed by demons, both grotesque and apocalyptic. She was trapped in a purgatory between the gates of hell and heaven. She lived her last years paying for her earthly sins, culminating in damnation. <b>6) SAINTS TRYING TO COMMUNICATE.</b> For years, saints tried to communicate with Irenne and give her salvation, but she would not listen to them. They were shoved in a room full of objects and demonic fetishes.	<b>LOVE AND HATRED // LIFE AND DEATH PHYSICAL AND IMMATERIAL</b> <b>5) IRENNE'S WORLD.</b> In the 2000s, she was very ill. She lived with the memory of him, his dancing shoes and a few of his objects. Her world was a fascination over the past and a lost love. She existed between the living and the dying. Her sense of love became corrupted over the years. <b>6) WAITING FOR HIM AGAIN.</b> Irenne adored him and surrounded her world with fragments of the time they spent together. She was trapped in the world of metaphors for life and death. She lived in a dark place, in the world of his death and she developed a hatred of the outside world. She was waiting to die, waiting to meet with him spiritually in a distant future.
TURNING POINT	"God uses a variety of methods to communicate with human beings, including visions, which are vivid apparitions that are distinct from dreams. They normally make themselves visible during conscious experiences. The Bible also explains that a person can experience a visualisation while dreaming" (Visions in the bible, n.d., para. 1). Visions in the Bible (n.d.). Retrieved April 2, 2019, from <a href="https://www.biblestudy.org/bible-study-by-topic/visions-in-the-bible.html">https://www.biblestudy.org/bible-study-by-topic/visions-in-the-bible.html</a>	<b>7) FOUND THE SAINTS.</b> But God is merciful. One day, Elza finds the Saints hidden in the corner of her room. She cleaned and put them in a special place. Every time she walked past, it felt like they moved in strange ways, but she still felt guilty and unable to surrender. <b>8) VISION.</b> One day she had a vision. God had something to tell her...	<b>7) HIS PHOTOGRAPH.</b> Irenne adored the last photograph that she took of him on the day of their wedding. They were poor at the time and they could only afford a few photos. He was beautiful and handsome. This is her only piece of his memory. <b>8) DROPS PHOTO / SLEEPS.</b> But one day, she drops his photograph on the floor. She collects the pieces and holds them close to her. She feels that she is losing him. She asks the saints to not forget his face. She cries and feels sleep come upon her. <b>9) AT THE GATES OF LIFE AND DEATH - DANCING WITH THE PHOTOGRAPH.</b> At the gates of life and death, Irenne sees him dancing with her photograph. He was healthy and beautiful. She feels his presence, it feels like she is there with him. He tells her that she needs to carry on with her life. <b>10) SHE WAKES UP AND DECIDES SHE NEEDS TO LIVE AGAIN.</b> She wakes up, she holds his shoes instead of the photograph. Had she met with him? She sits and realises that life needed to carry on. She couldn't living around death anymore. She found love inside herself again. She put his shoes on her feet and started dancing.
HIS WORLD	<b>POLITICAL MARTYRS</b> "A political martyr is someone who suffers persecution or death for advocating, renouncing, refusing to renounce, or refusing to advocate for a political belief or cause." From the Merriam-Webster Dictionary	<b>9) MARTYR OF SALVATION IN A CROSS?</b> She saw a Martyr of Salvation - an angel of eternity, who suffered persecution or death for advocating, renouncing a political cause. He was a hero devoted to an admirable ideal. He danced the nature of freedom. He payed for her sins and told her that she was forgiven.	<b>ILLUSION/DELUSION</b> An illusion is an image that deceives the mind by producing a false impression of reality. Magic is defined as the art of producing illusions as entertainment by the use of devices. Paranoid delusions (also called delusions of persecution) are rooted in fear and anxiety. In hallucinations, a person may hear voices that mock, insult or belittle. These voices might also tell a person to do harmful things or might cause them to see things that aren't really there. (What is paranoid schizophrenia?, n.d.). What is paranoid schizophrenia? (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2017, from <a href="https://www.webmd.com/schizophrenia/guide/schizophrenia-paranoia#1">https://www.webmd.com/schizophrenia/guide/schizophrenia-paranoia#1</a>
ENDING	"But God was merciful! We were dead because of our sins, but God loved us so much that he made us alive with Christ, and God's wonderful kindness is what saves you. 6 God raised us from death to life with Christ Jesus, and he has given us a place beside Christ in heaven" Ephesians 2.	<b>10) FORGIVENESS.</b> "God, forgive me", she said. Her room was blushed with light and she received salvation. She realises that God saved her from the evil and demonic obsession. She was free and she was forgiven. She prays to the saints and regains her connection to God.	<b>9) HE IS SHOT.</b> In the mechanical world of repression, he is tortured and eventually shot. Irenne knows that he is dead and understands intuitively that he has been killed. He was the hero of the revolution. <b>10) SHE ENDS THE HALLUCINATION.</b> Her fear is over, she decides to turn off the TV and end that world of illusion and irrationality. She knew he was the hero of the revolution. She knew now, he had been killed and the revolution had ended. Bretz, S. (2004). <i>Approaches to help Control Hallucinations in Schizophrenia</i> . Retrieved March 1, 2017, from <a href="http://www.schizophrenia.com/schizophrenia/hallucinations.html">http://www.schizophrenia.com/schizophrenia/hallucinations.html</a>
	Story of internal conflicts and paradoxical ideas with no clear answer. Saints in this work share the same moral values and the same internal conflicts of the Elza. She lives in guilt shaped by her past. Do they all connect with the Saints at some point?	Saints share conflicting points of view and they sit in the world of paradoxical ideas, but it's important that they also share some overriding attitudes (e.g a belief in goodness).	The story shows the Saints' own conflicts and abilities to distort the truth. It also shows how Elza was trapped in a magical real world where paradoxical ideas are in conflict. It's important that interpretations of events overlap and they can be perceived as a 360° understanding of the story? The saints reveal different perspectives.

FIGURE 3:11.

A moodboard showing design considerations and annotations (2016). It is through a creative consideration of these elements that the characters and narrative began to gather increasingly explicit form. In these moodboards I collected not only visual references, I also began to refine character personality, geographic location and behaviour within the historical timeframe of the story.

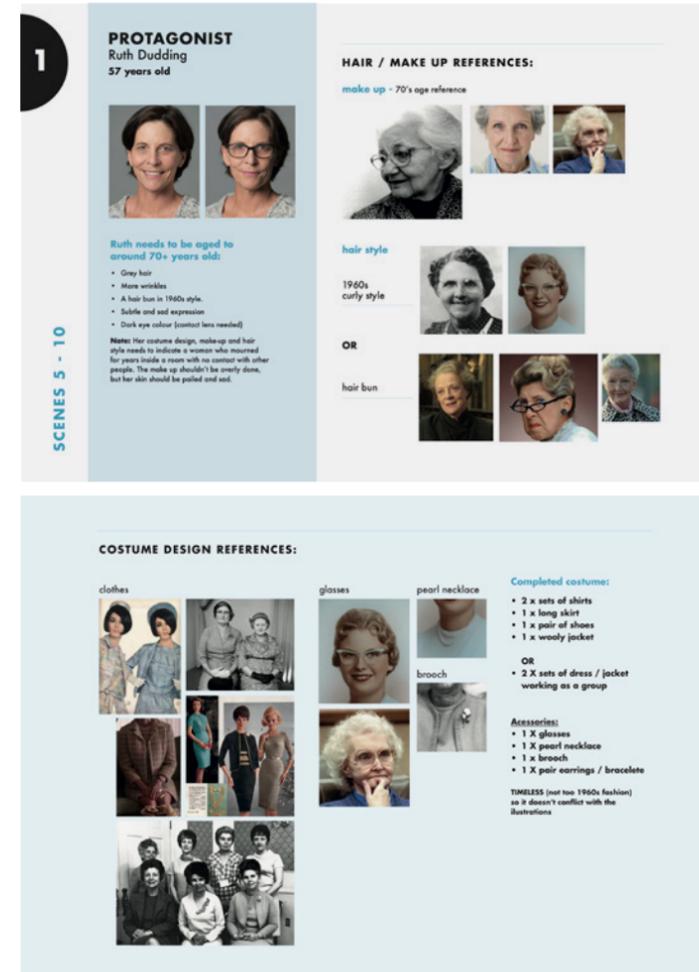


FIGURE 3:12.

Two moodboards showing considerations of hair, make-up and costume design for Elza as a mature woman (2018).

## ITERATIVE ASSEMBLY, OVERVIEWING & TESTING

The second phase of the inquiry involved a more complex process of iterative thinking, overviewing and testing. At this stage, I moved from journaling to methods that externalised the research through material thinking, 'wall storyboarding' and the construction of animatics.

### Material thinking and prop making

Increasingly I began to work physically with the emerging world's material nature.<sup>111</sup> This took the form of model making (Figure 3:13), prop creation (Figure 3:14 - p. 67), and producing time lapse recordings of physical objects in iterative states of decay (Figure 3:15 - p. 67).

At this stage I also began to think about the physical nature of the book (given that it would be both a tangible and digital artefact). Again, I explored a range of materials and processes, including the creation of symbolic artefacts (Figure 3:16 - p. 68), potentials for book housings (Figure 3:17 - p. 69), and construction (Figure 3:18 - p. 70).



FIGURE 3:13.

Two experiments with character design for a female saint (June 2015). My initial intention was to use these objects as a stop motion artefact, but they usefully 'spoke' of characteristics like ritual collecting, enigmatic metaphor and syncretism. Such ideas influenced subsequent iterations of the story.

111. This may be likened to the concept of *material thinking*. In artistic research the term is used to describe a practice where materials operate as active participants and interactors with the maker, her hand, eye and mind, as she engages in a creative process (Carter, 2004). Carter suggests that the act of making and the handling of materials may be seen as a kind of internal wisdom or tacit knowing that emerges from creative practice. Similar ideas have been discussed in Heidegger's (1977) concept of "handlability" or "praxical knowledge", and expanded upon by Bolt (2004) in relation to artistic inquiry.



FIGURE 3:14.  
 Prop design (2018). Examples included the exposed heart of the Mother of Benevolence, a broken photograph and newspapers of the period.



FIGURE 3:15.  
 Timelapse of dead flowers returning to life (14<sup>th</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015). This experiment, filmed over a two-week period, was set up inside a wardrobe using artificial lighting. Although the experiment wasn't used in the final book, it caused me to think about how time might loop or move paradoxically, and this idea was later applied to artefacts within the saints' environments.



FIGURE 3:16.  
Experiments with miniature  
ornamental shrines (2017).



FIGURE 3:17.  
 Prototypes of a catalogue for an  
 iterative exhibition (2016). The  
 design consisted of a boxed set of 14  
 loose leaf pages, based on the idea of  
 divination cards. The box was made  
 of laser cut mdf board, covered with  
 coffee stained calico.



FIGURE 3:18.  
Experiments with diverse, handmade book prototypes<sup>112</sup> (2017).  
These early prototypes experimented with approaches to  
binding, typography, iconography, image, flow and rhythm.  
Later experiments were more concerned with how book design  
might be combined with AR applications.

112. Preece, Rogers and Sharp (2015, p. 386) define a prototype as “one manifestation of a design that allows stakeholders to interact with it and to explore its suitability; it is limited in that a prototype will usually emphasise one set of product characteristics and de-emphasise others.”

## Rough image assemblage

Drawing on thinking emanating from processes of journaling and making, I began to construct mocked up iterations of episodes in the story. These were essentially assemblages of rough, clear-cut elements that were composed in Adobe Photoshop. They were used to produce an early sense of what each episode in the story might look like in terms of its baseline environment.<sup>113</sup>

Here I was working with what Donald Schön calls “discovery-in-action”. A process of “move testing” where the researcher does “... things in order to see what happens: [she] takes action in order to produce an intended change” (1983, p. 146).

In this iterative process I sourced imagery<sup>114</sup> and experimented with elements of the illustrations in an exploratory manner. Through this I drafted a hypothesis, where scale, proportion, setting and meaning were open and readily adjustable (Figure 3:19 - p. 72). While constructing these assemblages I was ‘thinking through’, and dwelling within, or making decisions *inside* the canvas of the world. Schön (ibid., p. 132) argues that it is during such engagements that “unintended changes [can] give the situation new meanings. The situation talks back, the practitioner listens, and as he appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again.” This process was useful for expanding potential ways of thinking about the book, but it was time-consuming, and it resulted in numerous unsuccessful experiments. This said, it did cause me to move incrementally forward, towards more cohesive and emotionally rich environments (Figure 3:20 - p. 73).

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113. A development of this technique was used as the illustrative approach in the final book.

114. Often, I browse a collection of copyright free images I have collected over the years. I also take photographs of objects in second hand shops. When I experience a creative block, I will also sometimes randomly search through copyright free images on the internet, using a kind of stream of consciousness; entering of key words to surface unpredictable ideas.



FIGURE 3:19.  
 Rough assemblages of the elderly Elza's lounge (2017).  
 While working through these experiments I was  
 influenced by the German concept of *Wunderkammer*.<sup>115</sup>  
 However, these early constructions were fragmented and  
 lacked the emotional tone I was seeking.

115. This concept is discussed more fully on pages 31 and 132.



FIGURE 3:20.

Advanced testing with assemblages (2017). In these compositions I became more concerned with relationality and context. I began to ask about the overall emotional ethos of the illustration. I was also considering a range of formats including shrines (top left), triptychs (top right) and narrative painting (bottom). Many of these compositions were comprised of up to 50 layers of information.

## Visualisation and polyvocality

As I progressed with assemblages, I laid out the story chronologically as key illustrated episodes or plot points on a wall. By displaying the narrative as a large, composite sequence I was able to rearrange incidents and compare variations in the saints' polyvocal narrations. At this point, drafts of the saints' monologues appeared as notes under the assemblages. While at first, the process of wall visualisation worked as an internal dialogue, I increasingly asked other designers, writers and illustrators to participate in critiques of the structure and to offer feedback on the clarity of the narrative (Figure 3:21). This method constituted an externalised approach to the project that helped me to address concerns I had with my over-familiarity with the story impeding objective judgments about its communicative clarity. The method also enabled me, at a glance, to check on consistency in the saints' voice-overs and differentiations in the illustrated tone of their interpretations of any event.



FIGURE 3:21.

The overview wall being critiqued by the designer Nick Konings (2018).

### Production treatment & animatics

At this point I also developed a narrative and production treatment<sup>116</sup> for the story. This enabled me to refine the three narrators' stories by comparing them in relation to each episode (Table 3:4 - p. 76). It also meant that I could consider production issues as they related to filming action-based sequences for each saint's version of the story.

Supporting this, I also developed sequential animatics to check on stylistic coherence and narrative clarity. The animatic was important because it helped to define the logistics of production. To do this, I filmed myself or colleagues against a green screen as a way of considering space and movement within the illustrations (Figure 3:22). However, I was aware that animatics can easily become overly prescriptive and impede the process of exploratory experimentation when shooting. To address this, I treated the method as a *refining instrument* that remained open to changes that might occur during production and postproduction phases of the inquiry.



FIGURE 3:22.  
Screenshots of animatics to block in movements and relationships prior to production (2018).

116. In film, a treatment generally describes a prose narrative used as a pre-production method and preliminary version of a screenplay. Treatments offer a description of set, camera work, style and events of narrative in present tense, in the form of a story. As such they connect “both synopsis and the short story form of a scenario” (Price, 2013, p. 15). My production treatments were structured as multilayered scripts that outlined in a precise manner, the narration, character movements, sound effects and location description.

TABLE 3:4

Narrative and production treatment (2018). On such documents, I indicated the actions of actors, listed props and indicated features of sound/narration (including the text for voice-overs). These documents were useful during the filming phase because, while directing, I was able to check the manner in which a character needed to navigate elements within the illustration.

	MOTHER OF BENEVOLENCE	FATHER OF REALISM	FATHER OF ORTHODOXY
	All of the scenes are constructed as wide angle shots.		
WE SEE	When we scan the image, we will see a man sitting on a desk. He is in prison. The colour treatment is relatively monochromatic. We see mechanical elements, pipes and clocks in the background. On the wall there are dictatorship clippings and photographs of missing people.	When we scan the image, we will see Euclides standing, looking at Elza's photograph on the wall. He is in a prison. The colour treatment is a little more saturated - leaning towards a sepia palette. The room is full of flowers.	When we view the image, we will see Euclides lying on the floor. He is in a prison. The colour treatment is even more saturated. We see in the room a devotional desk. There are a number of syncretic saints in the background.
PRINTED IMAGE			<p><b>PROPS</b></p> <p>Desk / chair Pencil Notebook</p> <p>Factor in buffer time in the opening and closing of each scene (to provide some flexibility in post production)</p> <p>20 SECONDS</p> <p><b>SCENE 8 - PRISON</b></p>
SOUND / NARRATION	<p>Power and fear are conspirators and Euclides had paid a price.</p> <p>We hear the sound of a prison cell opening ... He hears something ...</p> <p>Like hundreds before him, his disappearance became another statistic. Another name forgotten.</p> <p><i>Soundscape:</i> We hear mechanical sounds and ticking clocks.</p>	<p>But in his prison Euclides danced in memory of her.</p> <p>Bonding hearts and movement across time.</p> <p>He offered freedom and forgiveness.</p> <p><i>Soundscape:</i> We hear the sound of a slow Samba.</p>	<p>In pain, he paid penance for his sins. Now without her influence, he felt the wounds of the crucified Christ. ... and when sin was seared from his body, He was given grace. A man ... made into a Saint.</p> <p><i>Soundscape:</i> We hear the sound of prayer and perhaps ecclesiastical music.</p>
ACTION ACTORS	<p>Scene takes 40sec - 1min</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Opens:</i> He is sitting down, writing in a notebook. (He sits sideways so we can see his face. Maybe a slight distance from the table).</li> <li>2. He hears something (prison cell door opening). (He processes the action internally, not dramatically). He puts the pencil down and stands up - slowly.</li> <li>3. He sees something (Shows with his eyes - but he is accepting of what's happening). He is shot in the chest. (He holds both arms with his hands).</li> <li>4. He falls to the floor. It takes some time for him to die. (Dramatic scene).</li> <li>5. <i>Closes:</i> He lies inert on the floor. (Sideways facing the audience).</li> </ol>	<p>Scene takes 40sec - 1min</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Opens:</i> He stands in front of the Elza's photograph and touches it with his finger. The photograph is quite dominant on the prison wall. He is positioned sideways so we can see his face in profile. He moves to the front (middle stage) before he begins to dance.</li> <li>2. Thinking of her, he begins to dance (like he is dancing with her).</li> <li>3. He stops dancing and looks at her photograph.</li> <li>4. He touches her photograph again and kisses his fingers - he is positioned facing the camera.</li> <li>5. <i>Closes:</i> Eyes closed, holding his heart.</li> </ol>	<p>Scene takes 40sec - 1min</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Opens:</i> Lights gradually fade up. He is crawling on the ground.</li> <li>2. He stands up gradually. He is in pain ... shot in the chest, broken and bruised.</li> <li>3. He looks up to 'heaven'.</li> <li>4. <i>Closes:</i> He opens his arms to 'God' but also in an act of forgiving Elza. (There is a subtle halo around his head and dust will float down from the top of the page).</li> </ol>

## STRATEGIC USE OF FEEDBACK

Accompanying these processes and gaining increasing prominence as the project developed, were strategies employed to provide external critical feedback on the work.

Gray (1996) and Ings (2011) both note the importance of feedback during artistic research. However, both Sela-Smith (2002)<sup>117</sup> and Ings (2011) note that in heuristic inquiries, potential disjunctions can occur between the voice of the resourcing internal self and the advice of external critique. Ings (2011) notes:

... a designer employing external feedback in a heuristic inquiry needs to be vigilant. [...] Unless feedback is drawn back into the self (as opposed to simply being applied to the emerging design) the system of inquiry can become disconnected. The power of the subjective search can shift to an objective analysis of the created phenomena.

Although the research sourced external critique, I was aware of the value of the idiosyncratic artist's voice in my work. I protected this by framing specific questions around discrete challenges within the work (like narrative clarity or differentiations in tone between the saints' voices). In other words, I learned to avoid asking for a broad critique of the work in progress, because such feedback would often stray into areas that I was intent on holding open (in a state of irresolution) for a longer period.

External feedback occurred at exhibitions of formative work, after presentations at conferences, informally in research networks, or as peer reviews prior to the publication of journal articles.

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117. Sela-Smith (2002) argues that verbalised language may be considered as disconnected from thought-based self-experience. She sees tacit knowledge as "preverbal and disconnected from the verbal-thinking self" (p. 62).

## Exhibition of formative work

### *Saints of Paradox – Installation of iterative practice*

In January 2017, I exhibited a body of iterative work and sought critique on early designs for the three narrators in the story. The installation consisted of three screens projected onto gallery walls, each containing a saint's portrait (Figure 3:23-4). Each image was made up of synchronised sound, illustration and animation.

At this stage, I was not interested in the narration itself, but rather in the distinctiveness and character of each of the narrators. I was also testing technical applications of software, equipment, projection, time construction and audience response.<sup>118</sup>

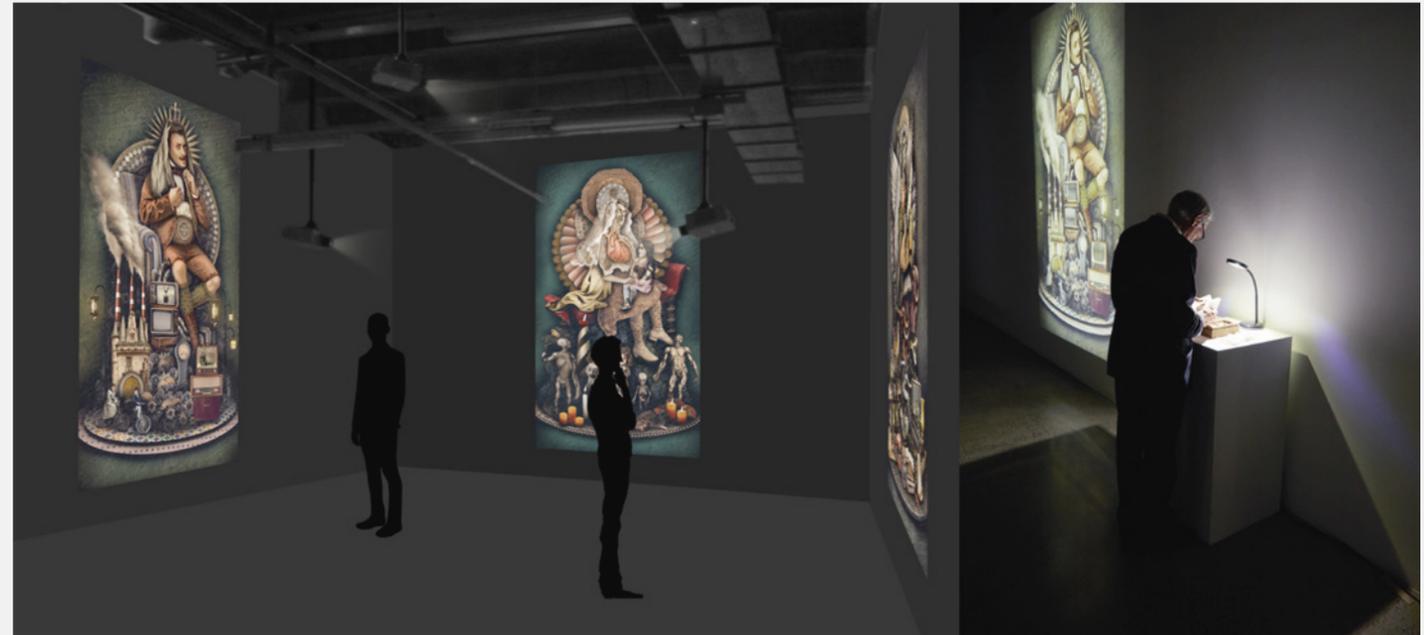


FIGURE 3:23. (top)

*Saints of Paradox* installation (26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January 2017). Three projections of saints were synchronised so they played as a loop. When one finished it would dissolve back into darkness and another would draw itself into the light. A catalogue and reading light were positioned adjacent to the projections, in semi-darkness.

FIGURE 3:24. (bottom)

The synchronised projections (2017), from left to right early designs for the Father of Orthodoxy, the Mother of Benevolence and the Father of Pragmatism.



118. At this stage I was envisaging the story potentially, as a projected narrative.

119. The three saints drew on the Christian concept of a trinity. In other words, they thought and operated discretely, having different perspectives, beliefs and emphases. A detailed explanation of this concept is provided on page 111.
120. The narrative voices of the saints were to come later in the study. At this point, I was concerned only with their unique characters, embellished by animated loops and soundscapes.
121. I worked collaboratively with Maree Sheehan (sound designer), Hossen Najafi (animator), Eddie Clemens and Suzie Gorodi (AV installation specialists).
122. These experts were Dr Marcos Steagall [photographer and Brazilian academic], Dr Ron Left [visual artist], Simon Clark [illustrator], Mairi Gunn [cinematographer], Don Chooi [designer and illustrator] and David Sinfield [motion graphic designer].
123. See Figure 3:17.
124. Some uncertainties about the final work were reinforced by observing people's behavioural patterns. For example, when two or more reviewers asked the same question or behaved in a certain way, I took careful consideration of the issue.
125. I suggested that their feedback might be in the form of a 300-500 word written reflection on the exhibition.
126. See appendix 2 on page 165 for the reviewers' critique.
127. Distinctive in establishing this effect was the use of diverse choral or religious audio subtexts permeating the three portraits.

The audio-visual portraits were installed in a space that might suggest a site for worship.<sup>119</sup> While structurally the saints were unified by their syncretic religiosity, each contained distinguishing imagery and soundscapes.<sup>120</sup> The installation necessitated collaborations with sound designers and technicians<sup>121</sup> and numerous tests with AV equipment as I explored the potentials of pace and projection.

In the feedback I was seeking a deeper level of critique than what one can normally access through comments at a conventional exhibition opening. Accordingly, I engaged six independent reviewers<sup>122</sup> and furnished them with a research abstract and a brief synopsis of the story (Figure 3:25 - p. 80). I asked them to consider the following:

- + a reflection on the use of space
- + sound design
- + iconography and symbolism
- + the gallery brochure as a prototype<sup>123</sup>
- + any other suggestions or critique.

Inside the gallery, I observed their reactions without intervention. This allowed me to reflect on patterns of engagement<sup>124</sup> and spontaneous reactions towards the work. At the end of the session, I put aside 10 minutes for conversation and questions, but I explained that I was primarily interested in their initial reflections as a piece of written critique.<sup>125</sup> I especially wanted to avoid long discussions where I might be tempted to start justifying or explaining decisions I had made during the design process.

The exhibition of formative work was useful because it enabled me to extend a body of practice into an installed space so I could alert myself to technical and presentation issues that might inform future directions in the design of the narrative. The feedback<sup>126</sup> raised four significant issues:

- + I needed to be careful about how much positioning information I provided before people encountered the work. Not only could it distract from the inherent impact of the text, it could also limit the diversity of 'readings' that the work might generate.
- + Sound design for the portraits was in general considered effective and the texture and interface between the ethos of each saint and movements within their portrait drew attention to pictorial elements because the audio design operated as a kind of punctuation to movement. This also allowed for a heightening of emotional impact and emphasised useful distinctions between each character.<sup>127</sup>
- + The use and selection of distinct iconography was successful, but composition and colour schemes required further development so they would emphasise clearer personalities for each of the saints.
- + There were some issues with regards to the projection, software and the scale of the projections, but these also raised concerns for me about the way that I might conceive the reading of a polyvocal text. I began thinking about the place of tactility and intimacy in the story, and ways in which projected elements might work within and through printed text.

My research shifted considerably after this installation and I began to progress the narrative with a greater sense of character distinctiveness. I also began thinking of the story as a book rather than an installation and I was encouraged to pursue the potential of 'voice-over' in creating polyvocality.



FIGURE 3:25.  
Installation briefing with Mairi Gunn (left),  
Dr Marcos Steagall (centre) and Dr Ron Left (right)  
at the installation briefing (26<sup>th</sup> January 2017).

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128. These were Dr Eileen Lavranos [documentary maker], Dr Lisa Williams [author], Zak Waipara [illustrator and animator], Maree Sheehan [sound designer], Jeff Gane [actor], Elwyn Sheehan [librarian], Nick Konings [designer] and Alejandro Davila [AR specialist]. These were all new reviewers because I didn't want critics coming to the work with perceptions formed through prior exposure.
129. Animation and movement were not considerations at this point.
130. The generic questions posed to the reviewers were:
- Were you able to understand the story? (Would you please describe it).
  - Was any part if it confusing or didn't make sense?
  - What stood out – positively and negatively?
  - Could you describe (in your own words) the personalities of each of the three saints?
  - Could you discuss your preferred order of reading of narrative and explain why?
  - Do you have any other questions or suggestions?
131. This approach was taken to preserve the neutrality of the responses.
132. A background soundscape was composed for each saint's narration.
133. Background soundscapes, illustration complexity, video inserts and animation were not considered at this point, so I was aware that the estimated time spent with each spread might change with iterative development.
134. Roar (<https://theroar.io/>) is an AR platform providing free accessibility. Although it may be considered user-friendly, the level of interaction and usage was quite limited and the possibility of different buttons to select the narration was restricted. I had to 'slice' the image in three areas so the reviewers could scan appropriate parts of the illustration to listen to the narration. After a number of scans, the free app stopped working. I proceeded with the installation by using playable sounds using itunes in the mobile.

### *Installation of narrative structure*

I installed another exhibition of thinking 14 months later (between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017). By this stage I had progressed both the storyline and polyvocality, and I needed to check that the complexity was not causing confusion or a deadening of emotional impact. For feedback I used eight new reviewers.<sup>128</sup> The process involved one-on-one sessions over three consecutive days. The reviewers were provided with a tablet containing an AR app that triggered the three different saints' audio narrations.<sup>129</sup> By scanning sequential illustrations on a wall (Figure 3:26 - p. 82), reviewers could choose to encounter the whole story listening to one saint at a time, or at each image they could press all three buttons and listen to the contrasting narrations of the episode.

In advance of the viewing, I formulated five generic questions about specific aspects of the work,<sup>130</sup> then these were followed by a discussion that drew on the particular expertise of the reviewer. By conducting the critiques separately, interpretations were not affected by the opinions of the other reviewers.<sup>131</sup> Feedback from these sessions was audio recorded for later reference.

The reviewers' feedback related primarily to narrative clarity, the technical properties of AR and sound design. The primary issues raised were:

- + Both the baseline narrative and polyvocal interpretations were easy to follow.
- + I needed to consider improvements in the flow and rhythm of the sound design, so it was less repetitive. The background music<sup>132</sup> was a little distracting from the saints' voiced over narrations.
- + Reviewers considered the Mother of Benevolence underdeveloped and suggested a stronger presence in the narrative, considering that at this point, she spoke less than the male saints.
- + It was generally thought that a printed book might create a more stable and intimate structure for the polyvocal narrative.
- + Reviewers generally preferred to read the three interpretations of each episode, before moving on to the next illustration. On average, this form of reading took approximately 20 minutes.<sup>133</sup>
- + Although testing a free AR platform (Roar) allowed me to consider an interactive format for reading of the narrative, it resulted in a number of complications because of the limitations of free AR technology.<sup>134</sup> I was aware that in the next phase of the research I would need to use something more tailor-made.

This installation of this first attempt at polyvocal voice-over was useful because I was able to pinpoint areas of character underdevelopment or episodes that required further refinement in terms of communicative clarity.



FIGURE 3:26.  
Panoramic photograph of the installation showing  
Dr Lisa Williams listening to a saint's narration  
while viewing illustrations and making notes for  
subsequent discussion (2018).

## Conference presentations, research networks and journal article

Feedback also occurred through externalising ideas in national and international fora.

In May 2015 I presented formative thinking and practical work at the *Discovering New Design Practices Symposium*.<sup>135</sup> Here I discussed multicultural and cross disciplinary aspects of my project. On 16<sup>th</sup> December of the same year, I presented a discussion of contextual knowledge and iterative story development at my Confirmation of Candidature review. On 16<sup>th</sup> February in 2016, I presented a paper, *Cultural Spaces: A Cross Cultural approach to narrative*, in Canberra. This considered applications of *realismo maravilhoso* and magical realism in story design.<sup>136</sup> This presentation was followed by another paper at the *Points of View Conference* on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. My submission, *Magical realism: the narrative and illustrative potentials of realismo maravilhoso*, applied *realismo maravilhoso* to applications of practice-led research.<sup>137</sup>

I had also been actively involved for a number of years with the *Institute Hyperwerk at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Northwestern Switzerland*, where I am an Associate Cultural Advisor in the research project, *Spaces and Design – Prospects of Design Education*. This project facilitates a network of academics and students from international universities (as well as representatives from design practice). This engagement assisted me in thinking through the role of globalisation in design education and refining my ideas concerning the decolonisation of thinking in non-Western design.

Feedback emanating from these presentations was important in clarifying my thinking. Conference presentations also opened networks with other scholars and provided an opportunity to contextualise the idea of practice as research. The journal article was especially useful because I was able to access feedback from Brazilian scholars who understood both contexts informing the research and the nature of practice-led inquiry.

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135. Tavares, T. (2015). *The cross disciplinary immigrant*. Discovering New Design Practices, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand, (2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015).

136. Tavares, T. (2016). *Cultural Spaces: a Cross Cultural approach to narrative*. Conference in collaboration with Hyperwerk and ANU Centre of European Studies. ANU School of Art, Canberra, Australia, (16<sup>th</sup> February 2016).

137. Tavares, T. (2016). *Connotations in Material Culture: Magical realism: the narrative and illustrative potentials of realismo maravilhoso*, Conference: Points of View. ANU School of Art, Canberra, Australia, (14<sup>th</sup> April 2016).

## COLLABORATION, COOPERATION & TESTING

This final cluster of methods concern processes of cooperation and collaboration as they relate to the final assembly of the interactive text.

Roschelle and Teasley (1995, p. 70) define cooperation as a process where a practitioner orchestrates a “division of labour among participants [...] where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving”. In the project, cooperative work tended to cluster around areas like make-up and costume design,<sup>138</sup> lighting facilitation<sup>139</sup> and studio sound recording. In these instances, a problem was defined and given to practitioners who fed solutions back into the research.

However, the concept of collaboration differs from cooperation in that the process is less discrete. Gray (1996) defines collaboration as a process of “practical support, criticism, encouragement [where] ideas are open to exchange and sharing” (p. 12). However, I also conceive it as a working practice of co-creation where participants are engaged in a dialogue of iterative testing, reflection and refinement that leads to a defined and common outcome.<sup>140</sup> In this project significant collaborative processes are identifiable in three arenas.

- + Sound design
- + Production design
- + Assemblage of final work.

## Sound design

In developing the sound design for *Saints of Paradox* I worked with two sets of collaborators. The first were actors who interpreted the monologues I developed. Although I operated as a director, I remained open to their treatment of the roles. I was pursuing an embodiment and synthesis of the actor and the character so we brought something into being that was more than a monologue. I see actors as contributing artists and my relationship with them is important. It helped that one of the actors, Dr Ross Brannigan (the Father of Orthodoxy), also taught acting professionally (Figure 3:27).

138. I worked closely with the costume designers (Christina Houghton, Jaime Aylish Scott and Lavinia Madugalle), and make-up artists (Rachel Johanson, Margaret Petchell, Rosanna Meikle, Shania Hales), but I also understood the discrete, professional nature of their contributions. At the outset we discussed the personality and style required for each actor and we investigated alternatives, including options for 1960s costumes and props selected from personal collections, opportunity shops and hiring departments.

139. Nicholas Monks.

140. Although I had informal conversations with other practitioners during ideational and early development phases of the project, these had limited influence on my creative process because I was still drawing the concept and narrative into form. Deep levels of collaboration occurred as the body of work developed because I needed to draw into the design, expert technical knowledge that resided outside of my abilities as a storyteller and visual communication designer.



FIGURE 3:27.

Dr Ross Brannigan performing an early (audio sketch) rendition of the Father of Orthodoxy (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017). The session was recorded at the Te Ara Poutama Recording Studios along with two other actors. A final recording was made one year later at the WG Recording studios at AUT University. For each saint we recorded a range of different intonations and pacing. This was so Maree Sheehan and I could select fragments and integrate them with the rhythm and tone of the contextualising soundscapes.

With actors I was able to co-create interpretations, using a process of co-construction where they worked outwards from an embodiment and I worked inwards from an overview of the wider narrative arcs and a knowledge of the diegetic world that their characters would inhabit. Before recording an actor's voice, we discussed the ethos, emotional resonance and personality of their character. I also showed them moodboards and tentative images of the story's world. I explained that I was seeking a mixture between understatement and dramatic presence. Collaboratively, we developed a process of recording, discussion and re-recording until an agreed resonance was captured.

The second realm of collaboration was with the sound designer Maree Sheehan. We discussed a form of directional brief that would allow a certain amount of freedom for her to respond to the work while providing a set of guidelines about the ethos, timing and flow of the animated spreads. Together, we developed for each saint a set of keywords, and discussed the emotional significance of each episode.<sup>141</sup> As a Māori woman, Maree Sheehan offered important creative insights into the composition of the polyvocal soundscapes because she understood the importance of a narrative's cultural context.

With each iteration of the project, we discussed potential refinements and possibilities so, not only were the monologues elegantly timed and embedded, but they also developed discrete atmospheres that aided in instant character recognition.

## Production

The process of filming occurred in a green screen studio (Figure 3:28 - p. 86), where I functioned as the producer,<sup>142</sup> director and production designer.<sup>143</sup> By working collaboratively with the actors<sup>144</sup> and the DOP,<sup>145</sup> we were able to co-create a flexible and informed environment. Our collaborative process was predicated on established guidelines that remained open to discovery and to the sharing of information and approaches. We adopted a process of pre-shoot 'run throughs' with sections of the film (to trial lighting, costumes and actor familiarity with the setup necessary for parallax filming).<sup>146</sup>

The collaborative process as a "coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem" (Roschelle and Teasley, 1995, p. 70), was resourced by ensuring clear communication, trust and a well-articulated, overriding vision for the project.

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141. While each spread might be seen as an individual visualisation, the soundscape needed to create a sense of consistency and flow across the whole book. Paradoxically, it also needed to establish an instant aural demarcation between each of the saints.

142. As the producer I developed schedules for the main shoots, synchronising times and availability. However, I used a First Assistant Director (Dr Chen Chen) to activate and monitor schedules so I could concentrate on directing the work. See appendix 3 on page 170 and 206 for the "production call sheet" indicating the roles, set descriptions, call times and schedules of scenes.

143. As the production designer I created the design style for the scenes and constructed sets and props.

144. Dr Ross Branningan (the Father of Orthodoxy), Maya Dalziel (the Mother of Benevolence), Jeff Gane (the Father of Pragmatism), Ruth Dudding (Elza), Chrystal Ashford (younger Elza) and Geoff Maynard (Euclides).

145. A DOP is a Director of Photography (camera person). Across the shoots I worked with Hossein Nazafi, Ali Taheri and Dr Marcos Steagall.

146. This was partly done to ensure strategic use of time and resources before we approached the tightly budgeted shoot.



FIGURE 3:28.

Filming *Saints of Paradox* with collaborators  
Chrystal Ashford, Geoff Maynard, Hossein Najafi  
and Nicholas Monks (August 2018).



FIGURE 3:29.

Iterative assembly and refinement of the Mother of Benevolence (January 2019). This sequence shows the process of developing an illustration from rough clear cuts to a more refined composition containing shadow and colour correction.

### Assembly of the final work

After completing filming and sound design, the final process involved designing the imagery as a parallax in Adobe Photoshop, then embedding animated videos and sound in Adobe After Effects.

#### *Parallax illustrations*

The final assembly of work began with the creation of photomontaged illustrations in Adobe Photoshop<sup>147</sup> (Figure 3:29). As each spread developed, I applied filters and created a track system to monitor colour and image palettes across the illustrations.

While finalising the illustrations, I had to consider the implications of a 3D parallax platform. The technical organisation of the images (as flattened layers) was time consuming because it required dividing the elements of the illustration and renegotiating features like shadowing and movement.

Filmed footage was edited, graded,<sup>148</sup> composited, and audio mixed in Adobe After Effects, but this process necessitated a close working relationship with the AR technicians so I was able to provide them with usable files.

I worked closely with Alejandro Davila and Marcos Melo from the Conical Interactive Studio in a collaborative interchange where we explored the requirements and potentials of the AR medium through a number of experiments. Initially, technical difficulties required numerous tests to clarify capabilities, such as working with green screen videos in tablets and the construction of effective file forms for embedding movement inside a parallax. While discussion in the studio was useful, we also developed a system of ‘mapping’ where I created information graphics as indicators of positioning and animation (Figure 3:30 - p. 88). Moving between discussion and graphic maps enabled us to talk through the possibilities of interactivity within the app design. The maps were also supplemented with rough animated videos that I constructed as thumbnails in Adobe After Effects in response to our discussions. These were essentially creative responses to new technical information. They were used as discussion references for potential changes and possibilities of the parallax.

147. This was a development of the ‘rough image assemblage’ employed near the beginning of the research. This photomontaging method preceded refinements of retouching, redrawing on top of images and the layering of space within the illustrations.

148. Colour corrected.

Page 2 | City Mother of benevolence (variation 1)

AR PARALLAX INSTRUCTIONS & ANIMATION/MOVING IMAGE INDICATIONS

● ANIMATION / MOVING



FIGURE 3:30.

A construction 'map' as an information graphic (2019). These spreads indicated parallax layers, showed the proposed positioning of animated and video elements and included information about file set ups.

## + Critique of Research Design

Having now outlined the paradigm, methodological framework and methods employed in the research design, it is useful to offer a critique of the overall approach.

A heuristic inquiry can pose distinct advantages and disadvantages to creative research projects. In terms of this thesis it offers two distinct advantages. First, because heuristic inquiry is a question-led methodology, it afforded a form of responsive flexibility where I was able to navigate rich trajectories into the unknown by asking creative questions of data as it arose. This flexibility heightened the chances of creative discovery in my work because I was not operating inside a template of systematic data gathering and analysis. Essentially, I was able to sense my way forward through a process of fertile questioning and creative response.

Second, heuristic inquiry embraces tacit knowing and this validated my drawing on subtle, non-explicit bodies of knowledge. By utilising significant levels of indwelling, I was able to supplement explicit knowing with subjective, culturally-resourced knowledge (from accrued lived experience) and thereby heighten a sense of originality in my designs.

These advantages considered, a heuristic inquiry also poses distinct challenges.

First, it can be unstable. Having employed this methodology before, I was familiar with the uncertainty that can occur during the research process. However, I understood that changes in the questions I was asking were signs of the research progressing, and I was reminded of Kleining and Witt who suggest, in heuristic inquiry, that the

research question “is only fully known after being successfully explored” (2000, para. 10). This said, because the questioning can be protean, the process can take you down a plethora of dead end roads. To address this, I constantly looked for patterns, homologies and resonances in my work, checking critically that new data “spoke coherently” with material already under development (ibid., para. 12).

Second my research design required me to navigate a productive balance between indwelling and external critique and advice, without negatively disrupting the intuitively sensed and resourced (Sela-Smith, 2002). To address this, I processed external material (be it written or oral feedback) through subjective pathways (processes of indwelling), so that advice was drawn back into the self and my ongoing, embodied experience of the narrative.

Finally, because the process of creating, thinking and questioning is experimental, the production of work was time and resource consuming. I was aware of resource limitations at the outset, so I was realistic about what could be pursued and what would require creative reconsideration. As a consequence, I notionally budgeted iterations of the research both financially and in relation to time and resources. Working in cooperation and in collaboration with other practitioners, I was able to engage with high levels of expertise that assisted me because they provided the research with a generous and informed platform of exchange and idea progression.

## + Summary

This chapter has considered in some detail the research design underpinning the development of *Saints of Paradox*. Paradigmatically positioned as artistic research, the project has employed a heuristic inquiry wherein I navigated a process of internalisation and externalisation that was actualised through a range of practice-led, reflective and collaborative methods. Having unpacked the research process and structure it is useful now to consider the outcome of the investigation and the manner in which theoretical and technological drivers served to shape its eventual form.

†  
IV



+ chapter 4 +

chapter 4

# Critical Commentary

# 4

This chapter discusses concepts and design decisions that have been significant in the construction of *Saints of Paradox*. In so doing, I consider the following arenas:

- + Sequential narrative, AR & interactivity
- + Parallax as a technical, artistic and conceptual device
- + Narrative voices
- + Realismo maravilhoso
- + Syncretism and photomontage
- + World building.

## + Sequential narrative, AR & interactivity

*Saints of Paradox* is an interactive narrative that artistically considers interchanges between a printed picture book (as a sequential narrative) and a hypertextual interactive narrative using AR technology. Because the work's narrative discourse is located between the physical and interactive, a consideration of media specificity is useful in understanding the nature of the text.

### DEFINING A LINEAR ILLUSTRATED PRINTED PICTURE BOOK

Printed, illustrated narratives are often considered in relation to how words and images convey meaning. Such relationships appear in a range of media forms including picture books, comics, graphic novels and graphic narratives<sup>149</sup> (Eisner, 1985; McCloud, 1993, 2006). Jakaitis and Wurtz (2012, p. 1) suggest that these texts may be generally considered as sequential art because they emphasise the image and “meaning is found primarily in the arranged order of the pictures.” This said, there can be significant differences between an illustrated children's picture book and the sophisticated structuring of some comics and graphic narratives.<sup>150</sup> In relation to the latter, a number of postclassical and transmedia narratologists have discussed complex relationships between image and text (Gardner & Herman, 2011; Stein & Thon, 2015).

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149. The terms comic, graphic novel, graphic narrative and picture book have often been used interchangeably (Gibson, Nabizadeh & Sambell, 2014; Stein & Thon, 2015). These media forms rely heavily on visual elements and they generally combine images and text in a manner that suggests a progression of time via a sequence. Gibson, Nabizadeh and Sambell (2014) observe that generally, comics and pictures books are associated with younger readers, while graphic novels are commonly marketed to a more mature audience, although such demarcations are not always a given.

150. Stein and Thon (2015, p. 3) suggest that a lack of scholarly interest may be due to the “low cultural esteem of comics”.

Such complexity is an evident feature in *Saints of Paradox* (Figure 4:1). A basic sequencing of events is initially established by the bound structure of the book and within this, the chronological numbering of environments on the facing page of each illustration. However, in the virtual realm, the linearity of the narrative is complicated by three variant voices, each of which the reader<sup>151</sup> may follow in a linear or non-linear manner. Given this variation in reading, considerable attention has been paid to the design of the book's visual and aural cohesion, so the reader experiences an overall sense of continuity within the narrative.<sup>152</sup>

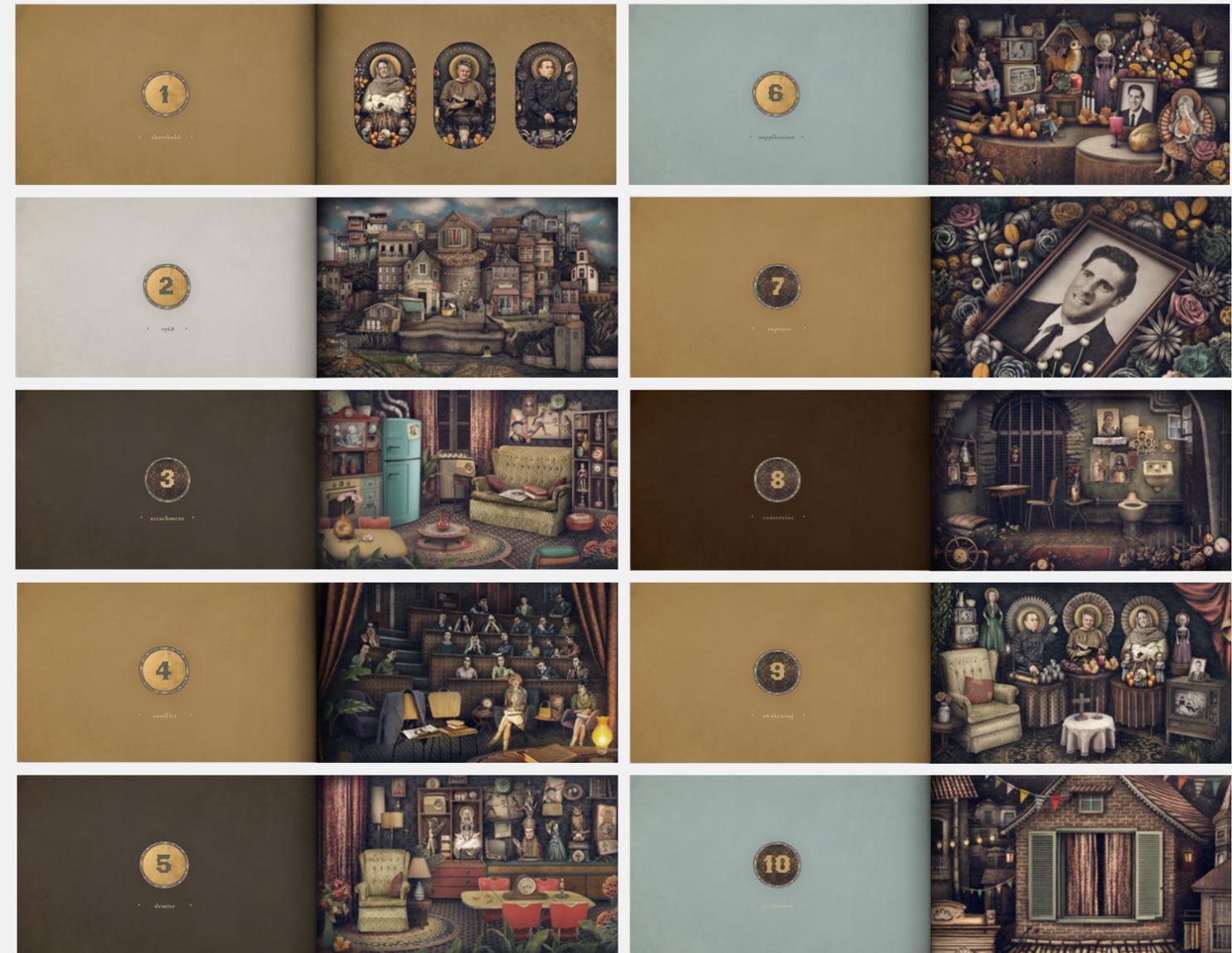


FIGURE 4:1.  
Printed spreads of the sequential illustrations in the picture book.

151. I use the term 'reader' to describe not only an audience who 'reads' written words and pictures of a book, but also the user who experiences spatio-temporal aspects of the story through the use of an app.

152. See Character Design considerations under *World building* (page 118) for details regarding illustrative approaches used to create this continuity.

## TIME AND CLOSURE

In *Saints of Paradox*, time may be understood as sequential. In its printed form, the book takes us through a series of uninhabited, enigmatic environments.<sup>153</sup> These are numbered worlds *in potentia*, inside which narrative events may unfold. When ‘reading’ the printed book, we assume that two of these environments will be revisited across time; the city in spreads 2 and 10 and a room in spreads 3, 5, 6 and 9.

However, time becomes a more detailed consideration when we engage with the book through AR technology. Each environment will become populated by a segment of time in which an action or series of actions unfolds. Although we may dwell in this environment and engage with one or more interpretations, what plays out draws meaning from the episodes before it and what we witness leads to subsequent developments.

In such a sequential narrative we are “transported across significant distances of time and space” (McCloud, 1993, p. 71). We follow a story that contains page to page transitions between changes in location and different periods of time. Long time stretches include encountering Elza’s room in 1968 and later in 2018, and short time transitions occur in instances like the breaking of a photograph or flowers dying in a vase.

Time is also presented as “living moments”<sup>154</sup> within each of the illustrated spreads. Such time is suggested by the use of animation and video accessed through AR technology (for instance, when Elza and Euclides talk while reading on a sofa (page 3). Between events that occur in each environment exists a phenomenon that McCloud (1993) defines as “closure”. Closure describes the reader’s action of filling in events between represented illustrations

of time.<sup>155</sup> In the process of reading, we become an active participant in the story because we must use our imagination to fill in gaps, so we can “translate sequential images into a continuous narrative” (Stein & Thon, 2015, p. 6). In *Saints of Paradox* we have a story constructed out of 10 narrated episodes. To connect these we must fill in decades of Elza growing old in her isolated world. We do not have these decades illustrated for us, instead we are asked to imaginatively fill in the gap between the events that have been presented (Figure 4:2 - p. 95).

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153. In support of this, enigmatic titles are presented on the facing page of each illustration.

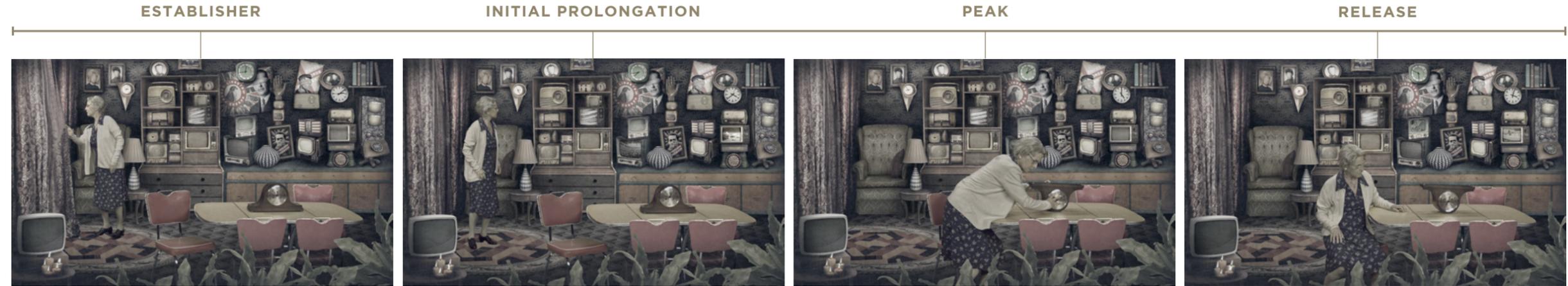
154. This may be contrasted to the *frozen moment* that is normally depicted in panels of printed comic strips and picture books. McCloud argues that the “closure of electronic media [and cinema] is continuous, largely involuntary and virtually imperceptible” (1993, p. 68).

155. McCloud (1993, p. 63) defines closure as “the phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole”. In comics, closure is the distinctive ability of human imagination that connects the space between the panels of the narrative (gutter) that “takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea” (ibid., p. 66).



FIGURE 4:2.

Comparison between Elza in her apartment in 1968 and 2018. While thematically her world contains a connecting sense of eclecticism and certain artefacts like the floor mat, clock and wallpaper remaining consistent, we also know that time has passed because in the later image, the emotional tone of the environment is subtly more troubled; decorative objects within it have changed, posters are awry, photographs of her lover obsessively populate frames and the intimate double couch has been replaced by a solitary single chair.



1 MINUTE

FIGURE 4:3.

Key frames from the Father of Orthodoxy's AR activated monologue. In the space of one minute, the moving image sequence moves from (E) establisher (the static position), through initiated moving tension and prolongation (I and L), to (P) where we reach a narrative peak, ... then encounter a release (R) (the resumption of a static position). In the AR sequences the release (R) is often disproportionately long. This is because with the action and monologue completed, we have time to dwell inside the illustration, noting small details that cumulatively tell us more about the nature of the saint relating the story.

- 156. Todorov (1981) argues that every story begins with a state of balance (equilibrium), followed by a disruption (disequilibrium), then recognition and an attempt to reconcile forces towards a new equilibrium. In this structure, he argues that transformation occurs through the continuous attempts characters undertake to restore equilibrium.
- 157. The same narrative arc may be aligned with Freytag's (1894) structure that conceives a linear narrative as one that moves from Set up – to – Rising Action – to – Climax – to – Falling Action – to – Denouement.
- 158. In the narrative, the initial disequilibrium occurs as the consequence of a "transgression of law, an act that deserves punishment" (Todorov, 1939, p. 218). Thus, Elza and Euclides' revolutionary defiance sets in motion a series of disequilibriums that shape Elza's life between 1968 and 2018.

#### NARRATIVE ARCS

Time in *Saints of Paradox* is structured into arcs. The most basic of these is drawn from the Aristotelian tradition of story-events that proposes a formal structure to narrative with a beginning, middle and end (*mythos*). This framework suggests a chronological and formally structured progression and includes actions, peaks and resolutions to events in a narrative. In *Saints of Paradox*, this arc operates broadly in a conventional progression from equilibrium, to disequilibrium, to equilibrium (Todorov, 1981).<sup>156 157</sup>

In the story line, we initially encounter the protagonist (Elza) in a state of harmony with her lover. She then moves through a series of disruptions including his arrest, the breaking of his photograph and the resulting dissolution of her world's order.<sup>158</sup> These events provide a process of transformation that results in three alternative equilibriums (endings) to the story. However, Todorov's simple chronological structure is not only evident in the overarching narrative arc of the book, it is also discernible inside the structure of each illustrated page.

In 2013, Cohn proposed a grammar for sequential, visual narratives inside which he identified five phases. His framework suggested an 'arc' that connected individual moments within a narrative that moved from an:

... Establisher (E) [that sets up an interaction without acting upon it]; to an Initial (I) [that initiates the tension of the narrative arc]; to a Prolongation (L) (that marks a medial state of extension, often the trajectory of a path); to a Peak (P) (that marks the height of narrative tension and point of maximal event structure); to an eventual Release (R) (that releases the tension of the interaction]" (2013, p. 421).

We can see this in a single environment where sequential cause and effect actions occur (Figure 4:3).

In his discussion of sequence in the classical narrative, Chatman (1980, p. 45) has argued that the sequence and events in a story are "not simply linear but causative." He describes events as "linked to each other as cause to effect, effects, in turn, causing other effects, until the final effect" (ibid., p. 46).

He suggests that it is effects that drive us towards resolutions behind a story. In *Saints of Paradox*, the narrative arc is formed by cause and effect relationships that are constructed differently by each narrator. What occurs in the story happens because of prior actions and the values that drive them. It is differences in cause and effect (in each saint's understanding) that propel us towards the three different story endings.<sup>159</sup>

## ENIGMA AND MEANING

*Saints of Paradox* is relatively enigmatic. Without access to an AR device we are presented with a slightly perplexing storyline that has trigger words on numbered, facing pages. We can trace a subtle narrative through vacated environments where something untoward is suggested. The illustrations may be understood as potentials that provide preliminary information and questions prior to the reader accessing the monologues. Thus, as a sequential series of environments, the book presents the reader with both meaning and the absence of meaning.

Although the narrative unfolds in chronological settings, because of the magically realist approach our linear understanding of time in the story also encounters space-time ambiguities, like the 'impossible' encounter between Elza and Euclides in prison.<sup>160</sup> Here, Elza is an elderly woman, but Euclides has somehow been preserved physically as the young man who was her lover over 50 years before. Such disjunctions serve not only to unsettle our sense of realism but also to underscore the pathos of the story.

Enigma is used in the work as both a destabilising device and a seduction into mystery. We do not completely understand this world or the things that happen in it. *Saints of Paradox* is a story of subtle contradictions and incongruencies.<sup>161</sup> It makes sense but it also leaves us wondering. It attracts us with suggestions, it alludes to things and then it suggests that our rational expectations must fail us.

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159. Although Chatman (1980, p. 46) argues that in a traditional plot, "probability and stability narrow down the end of the story to a limited number of choices", *Saints of Paradox*, because of its polyvocality, contradicts this provision. In this story the saints suggest three diverging trajectories of cause and effect. We travel on three different ideological routes, even though we are anchored to a sequence of printed environments. Each saint takes us to a different equilibrium through a sequence of different causes and effects.

160. Genette (1980) calls these time abnormalities "anachronies" that can often be presented as *flash-forward* (prolepsis) and *flashback* (analepsis). In *Saints of Paradox*, an interpretation of the scene as *flash-forward* gives a sense of spiritual connection with the dead (Euclides). A *flashback* questions her mental health and connection with the past.

161. See the concept of paradox on pages 2, 111 and 142.

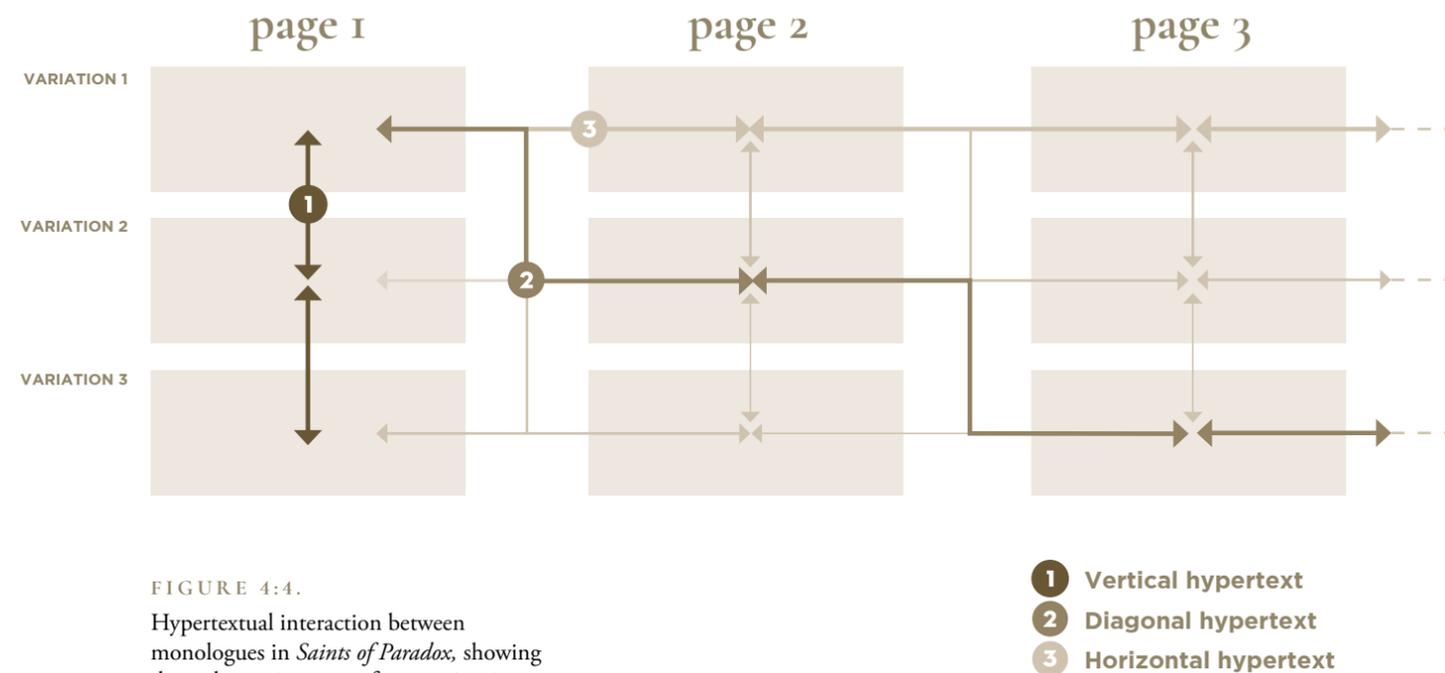


FIGURE 4:4.  
Hypertextual interaction between monologues in *Saints of Paradox*, showing three alternative routes for experiencing the polyvocal narrative.

## HYPERTEXT AND NARRATIVE

The technology available through a handheld digital device allows the virtual environment of *Saints of Paradox* to be participant driven. This enables access to interactivity with, and control over, something not only sensorial<sup>162</sup> but also diverse in its constructions of meaning. We encounter a form of multi-linear, interactive computer-based literature that allows a number of options and sequences when reading a story. Such media is defined as hypertext. Hypertext stories normally have fixed fragments of written text that are connected by hyperlinks<sup>163</sup> to additional written text, images, sounds or videos. Through the use of digital technologies, Bell (2010, p. 1) argues that a hypertext fiction system:

... allows documents to be linked according to concepts and ideas [such that they can be] structured according to context and purpose and horizontal or vertical hierarchies [...] which suggest complex configuration and multiple combinations.

In *Saints of Paradox* these multiple combinations take the form of three narrating voices that are available to the reader when they encounter a spread. Within the book, one can choose vertical, diagonal or horizontal hypertextual routes (Figure 4:4). Thus, the reader can decide to read the book accompanied by the narration of a single saint or they can compare the saints' contrasting narrations on each page, before moving on to the next environment. Although the reader can technically jump between illustrated spreads, the bound nature of the book provides a physically suggested chronology that is integral to maintain narrative coherence.

162. Through this interactivity we encounter three additional dimensions of information. The first contains the monologues of the narrating saints. The second is the story of Elza and Euclides, who populate the book's environments, initially as static images but then as active characters in space. Finally, atmospheric sound is used, not only as a diegetic accent (sound as an indication of movement) but also as an atmosphere (with a different palette accompanying each of the narrators). These dimensions are designed to embellish the hypertext narrative.

163. Although *Saints of Paradox* doesn't employ traditional hyperlinks, I use the term 'hypertextual' fiction as a way of describing a dynamic of selective reading enabled by the app.

## AR APPLICATIONS

*Saints of Paradox* enables a reader within the AR platform to make choices. Our decision to engage with this flexibility requires us to ‘learn’<sup>164</sup> aspects of navigation. Because the spreads contain complex layers of subtlety, as we engage with the book we are rewarded for dwelling in the surrounding environment after monologues and character movements have occurred.

The AR platform positions us a member of an audience who views a world through a proscenium arch. However, unlike an audience, we are less passive. By using mobile device screens, we can exercise a degree of control over the pace of the world and who tells us the story. Shilkrot, Montfort and Maes (2014) suggest that because of this, we become both a spectator and a partial director of the fictional world we encounter. They note, “AR naturally borrows elements from films, such as situated characters and props. However, the control of the camera and attention is not up to the director but the user-spectator” (Shilkrot, et al., *ibid.*, para. 32). Thus, as readers we hold another set of dimensions in our hands. The zoom-ins and interactions with the screen allow us to navigate around visual elements of the story. We can dwell in and contemplate aspects of the world, choosing the length of time that we might dwell on actions, monologues or illustration details.

This said, the reader is extradiegetic and unable to disrupt the narrative. We cannot interfere with cause and effect; we cannot change elements in an environment nor alter the nature of characters within the storyworld. We can only choose the amount of time that we dwell in an environment and select a saint to narrate what is happening. In this regard, we create a limited, mediated experience of the work. While the hypertextual nature of the book allows us

to compare narrations and experience more than one interpretation of the story, any sense of omniscience (all-knowingness) is limited. Even when we have experienced all of the narrations, we can never attain a fully resolved understanding of the work.<sup>165</sup>

Scanning the physical artefact provides an entry into a magical, fictional world. The dynamics between the book and the AR environments produce a sense of mixed reality (actual and virtual).<sup>166</sup> The narrative experience resides primarily in an unstable virtual world and the printed book functions as an enigmatic unoccupied vessel (Figure 4:5 - p. 100). Because of this, we encounter a sense of ontological reversal<sup>167</sup> where the ‘virtual’ answers the ambiguities that are presented by the real (the book). Martins (2018, p. 200), notes that in such instances, the relationship between the actual and virtual creates a situation where the “actual space welcomes the fictional one through the emergence of the storyworld, providing it a ‘case’ using its ‘real features’.”

The blur of levels in a narrative world in AR technology is often considered a form of metalepsis. Shilkrot, et al. describe metalepsis as “a blending of narrative levels, such as the narrated events and the narration itself” (2014, para. 9). They argue that in the AR medium, “fictional objects and characters are transported into the world where they are narrated, our reality” (*ibid.*). In other words, the virtual crosses into the real. In *Saints of Paradox*, the virtual world permeates the printed book because it populates the environments of the story. However, the saints who narrate in the virtual world also exist in the printed environment (figuratively on pages 1 and 7 and metaphorically on the other pages).

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164. Immersion is a “metaphorical term derived from the physical experience of being submerged in water. [However] in a participatory medium, immersion implies learning to swim, to doing the things that the new environment makes possible” (Murray, 1997, p. 99).
165. This is partly due to the use of enigma in the narrative and illustrated storyworld and partly because of the saints’ contradictory interpretations of what happens.
166. Lev Manovich (2006, p. 225) argues that the “typical AR system adds information that is directly related to the user’s immediate physical space.” In *Saints of Paradox*, the virtual is the AR platform, while the actual refers to the physicality of the book that exists in a corporeal environment.
167. By ontological reversal, I mean that although the virtual may be considered a ‘copy’ of the real, and so an illusion (Ryan, 2001), in *Saints of Paradox* the virtual acts as the ‘real’ because it answers the enigmas presented by the book. The printed book is not the ‘original’ but depends on the virtual for its own existence. The three virtual levels of narration are extended ‘clones’ of the original baseline environment but with their own characteristics.

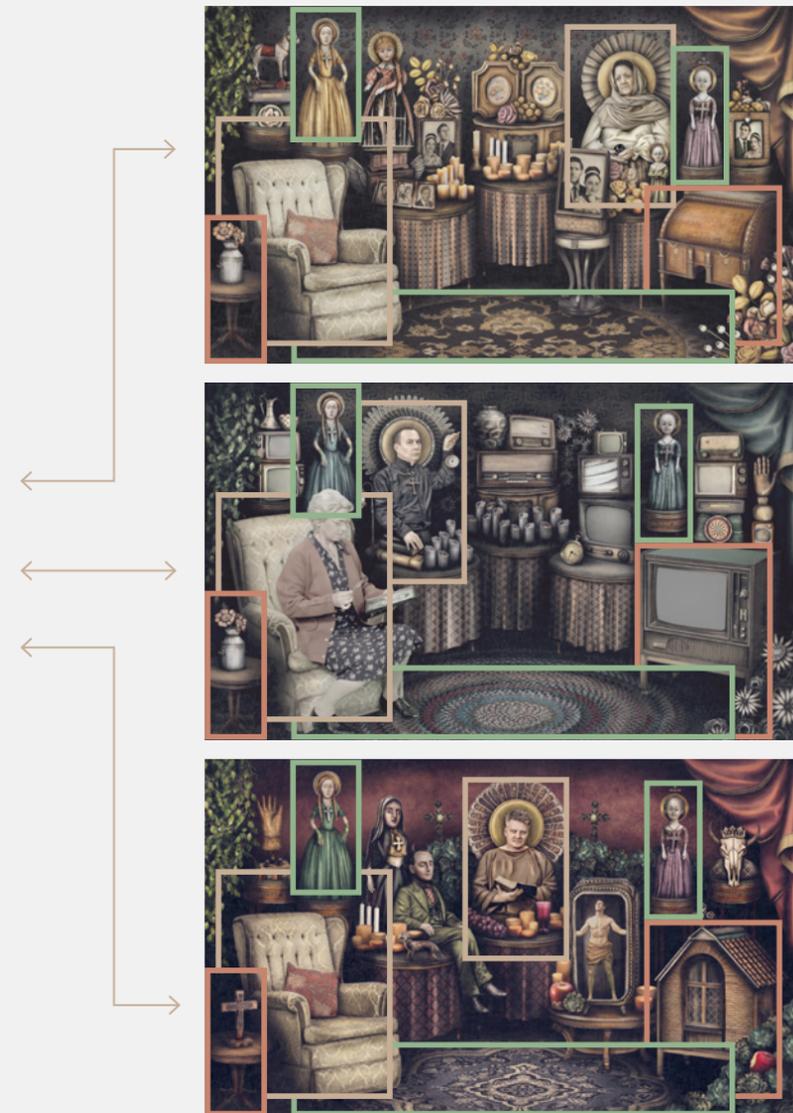
## Architecture of baseline environments



FIGURE 4:5.

Spreads indicating similarities and differences between the illustration in the printed book and variations in the virtual interpretations. While certain elements remain consistent, we perceive changes in colour, texture and structure. Although the original, baseline environment comprises an amalgamation of elements appearing in the three variations, it also contains certain elements that disappear once an AR interpretation is activated.

## VARIATIONS



- A** Elements that change colour or texture
- B** Elements that change structure
- C** Elements relatively similar
- D** Elements not used in the variations

- 
- 168.** The area around imagery had to be extended to encompass the movements of the parallax image. By organising the tracker images more systematically, I was able to reduce the time spent creating each spread and construct variations more strategically.
- 169.** A sprite sheet is a composed bitmap image file that contains a number of reduced graphics (sprites) or animations. Collecting few graphics into a separate file reduces memory usage and speeds up the startup time of moving sequences.
- 170.** Colour grading is a term borrowed from film. It describes postproduction alterations to contrast, colour, tone, saturation and light sources in whole or part of a moving image sequence.
- 171.** When creating the parallax, there was an option to have the layers ‘coming out’ from the book (like a pop-up book) or contained inside the book’s structure (in a manner similar to a tunnel book). The latter option was chosen because it allowed for a more cohesive framing of imagery inside the canvas of the baseline environments.

## Challenges and opportunities of technology

The use of emergent technology posed both challenges and opportunities because the technical construction of the work was closely tied to the possibilities and limitations of the tools we were using. This meant that design decisions evolved according to the technical understandings of the media. Often, when constructing the pages, I was forced to operate beyond established formulas. I faced three significant challenges:

- + First, the work required adaptations to the illustrations that were initially constructed as stable, flat baseline environments. When I needed to convert the Photoshop layers into parallax layers (before moving onto the AR construction), the shadows that were once fixed and clearly defined had to be reworked so they could function more amorphously in an environment where objects moved.<sup>168</sup>
- + Second, the size and volume of .png files had to be adapted for better optimisation of the mobile technology. This restricted the intricacy of animated elements and effects (such as dust and lighting) and thus impacted on the ambiance of work.
- + Third, the illustrations required many adaptations before I was able to integrate green screen video sequences into the photomontaged backgrounds. I discovered that it was virtually impossible to create realistic movement and proportion in the integration. My response was to step back and artistically reconsider disproportion and treat it as part of the aesthetic of the work. So, Elza and Euclides both belong and don’t belong in the environments they inhabit. Like the elements that surround them, they coexist in a paradox of proportion and disproportion, integration and estrangement, connection and disjunction.

## Technical description of AR construction

The individual pages in the book were initially constructed in Adobe Photoshop using layered files that contained smart objects (Figure 4:6 - p. 102). The pieces of parallax were exported as .png files from Adobe Photoshop, while animations required rendering as .png sequences (12 frames per second). These were constructed in Adobe After Effects. The limitations of mobile technology required files to be reduced with minimal frames and small proportions for optimal screen performance. Using the specialised software TexturePackerGUI for creating Sprite,<sup>169</sup> the .png sequences were combined to create one large graphic file per animation. This allowed for shorter looped sequences to be interpreted in Unity Engine. This approach was used for small, looped sequences like decorative elements. However, the approach for the green screen video sequences required a lengthy process of rotoscoping and colour grading.<sup>170</sup> For this material, I integrated flattened illustrative elements and moving image sequences, to produce credible relationships. The AR variations were created using the software Unity in conjunction with Vuforia.

The parallax effects were constructed as inserted layers ‘inside’ the book.<sup>171</sup> For these, skeletons with layers of .png images were created to establish both the structure of the spreads and movements. Animation, sound and video sequences were applied in the later stages of development. Features like fade-in and fade-outs and other transitional effects were created in the Unity Engine with personalised Shaders. The App itself was also constructed in Unity Engine.

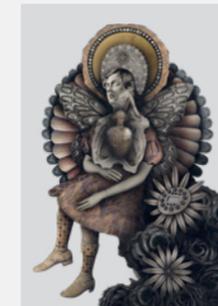
**A** tracker image



**B**  
smart object  
LINKED PHOTOSHOP  
SEPARATE FILE



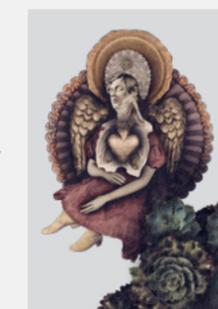
**C**  
variation 1



variation 2



variation 3



172. Smart objects are layered files that preserve the source and quality of the imagery and open separately in another Photoshop window (or in other software such as Illustrator or Indesign). They may contain individual or layered imagery that is updated when the file is saved. In *Saints of Paradox*, they were used as compact Photoshop layered files (B) inside the tracker image (A). Each tracker image was constructed with approximately five to seven groups of smart objects, each corresponding to a different parallax layer.

FIGURE 4:6.

Diagram showing the 'tracker image' (the original print illustration) and linked smart objects. The tracker image was created before the three saints' variations. In the tracker image (A), the parallax levels were constructed as linked 'smart objects' (B).<sup>172</sup> Smart objects allowed layers to be opened and individually constructed in a separate window following the same structural positioning of space for each variation (C). Once a smart layer was updated, this was saved back on to the original image (A), and this was then saved as a new document for each variation. This method enabled me to maintain the same positioning of elements in the tracker image and the variations.

## + Parallax as an artistic & conceptual device

In *Saints of Paradox*, parallax is a technical device employed to suggest three-dimensional space. In their original form, the printed illustrations of the book are two-dimensional,<sup>173</sup> and the collaged elements are composed within a stable plane with a single vanishing point.

### PARALLAX AS AN ILLUSTRATIVE DEVICE

However, the parallaxical illustrations are more complex because they respond to movements made in the three-dimensional space of the reader. When a mobile device is tilted, perspective is distorted in flattened panels that are positioned at different distances from the ground plane of the illustration. The world we thought we knew as a stable 'locked off' image is suddenly able to move and reveal more of itself in floating layers.

### PARALLAX AS A NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Although parallax is an illustrative device, it may also be understood as something conceptual. In narrative, parallax can describe an unsettled hierarchy, overlapping and disrupted stability that makes up how the story is told. Thus, in dialectics, Žižek (2009) argues that parallax is a practice of unraveling multiple opposing voices to assess beneath the surface of a conflict. He sees parallax as a form of distortion that gives the viewer analytical tools to see between the parallaxical gaps.

In *Saints of Paradox*, the three saints have interpretations that overlap with an environment. There is no hierarchy to their opinions; no saint's interpretation holds prominence over another's. Each monologue suggests itself as complete but when experienced in the context of other interpretations, we see that this might not be true.<sup>174</sup> These unstable versions of events become layers of the story. We tilt them in our memory and consider them in relation to one another and from the contradictions of interpretation, the overlapping and disrupted stability, we attempt to make meaning of something beneath the surface of the narrative.<sup>175</sup>

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173. However, their photomontaged quality creates a sense of disrupted three-dimensionality due to treatments of depth, shading, shadowing and perspective.

174. In *Saints of Paradox*, parallax may refer to a 'way of looking' at the gaps between the saints' judgmental and preconceived notions of the story. The parallaxical layering of their voices occurs over the existing geographic, religious, socio-cultural, political and historical backdrop of the narrative.

175. We consider the question, "What is real?"

## + Narrating voices

### POLYPHONIC-DIALOGIST NARRATION

*Saints of Paradox* is told through three monologues that narrate three different versions of a story. These monologues have distinct characteristics and points of convergence that may be described as a form of polyphonic-dialogic<sup>176</sup> narration. The subversive nature of this style of storytelling produces a world that is layered, carnivalesque, relational and open-ended.

Thus, in the story structure we can identify polyphonic planes containing monologues that are distinct but converge in a dialogic manner. Each saint comments on the same events in a similar amount of detail (Table 4:1 - p. 105).

Although the 'plot points' in the story are consistent, the narrators' divergent interpretations of what happens are often contradictory. However, the saints never openly argue with each other. Their narrations are discrete, and we may assume that the saints either do not know of each other's presence or choose to ignore any perspective but their own.<sup>177</sup>

In the story the narrators (saints) and protagonists (Elza and Euclides) are complex, unfinished and interconnected. The saints exist as individual entities, but also in relation to multiple facets of the story. Wall (1984, p. 45) argues that characters in a polyphonic-dialogic world are "in constant interaction with other characters, each of which posits the image of a current passing through the whole of the text, currents which have countless possibilities of confluence and branching apart."

The story is shaped by the saints' moral values and personalities, but their opinions and perceptions have equal value. This absence of hierarchy in the narration produces a form of carnivalesque order where narrators are unstable and ambivalent entities

who challenge the supremacy of a stable, reliable monologue. However, Elza and Euclides are still subordinated to the saints' interpretations.<sup>178</sup> Accordingly, the polyphonic layers of narration create complex perspectives in the story.

Can the saints' narrations be considered as the storyworld itself? Can these be definitive truths? Do Elza and Euclides actually exist or are they simply vehicles for the saints' personal proselytising?

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176. See the discussions of polyphony and dialogism on pages 21 and 23.

177. They may however, be aware that there are statues that exist amongst the objects in Elza's room.

178. In the polyphonic novel, Bakhtin (1984a) discusses the importance of self-aware characters that challenge the hierarchy and the dominance of narrators in the story. Although in *Saints of Paradox* the narrators are primary and secondary characters, they exercise certain power in what they choose to tell us. Elza and Euclides' opinions and perspectives are never presented in the narrative.

	<b>MOTHER OF BENEVOLENCE</b>	<b>FATHER OF REALISM</b>	<b>FATHER OF ORTHODOXY</b>
<b>1</b>	I don't understand why God should allow evil and suffering in this world. Lovers should not be punished for their free will. I would like to tell you a story of faith.	There is good and evil in this world. Both are necessary. We reap what we sow ... and thus, it is with this story.	There is original sin and God never forgets. God the omnipotent ... God the omnipresent ... God the avenging. This is the story of lovers who betrayed the sacrament of marriage... and fell from grace.
<b>2</b>	It was 1968 and the city was full of summer. Love blossomed with the richness of the season.	In 1968, people were executed. The city staggered under the weight of dictatorship.	Revolution had come to the city... a punishment for lust and disobedience. This was the new Gomorrah ... a world sodden with pleasure ... descending into destruction.
<b>3</b>	Euclides and Elza were young and full of ideas. Together they wrote poetry, played music and danced ... Lovers outside of marriage, dreaming of a better world.	Revolution, idealism, torture ... Euclides and Elza were young and fighters for freedom.	Euclides was destined to be a martyr, but Elza brought a shadow to his light. She seduced him with political ideas ... a woman exercising authority against the will of God. She turned his heart towards earthly things.
<b>4</b>	And Euclides dreamed to change a nation. Elza tried to protect him. This was a dangerous world. Fired with passion, he spoke out for a country he treasured ... for freedom and justice ... and the rights of humanity. When he disappeared ... she was left alone in a world of betrayal.	Shouting truth into the face of power, he was seized by an angry government. Euclides of a thousand faces. Another missing person. Another poster. Another life that revolution makes invisible.	She taught him to support communism — an evil incarnate. He spoke blasphemies and was ruthlessly judged.
<b>5</b>	Passion and warmth disappeared with Euclides. Elza searched for him relentlessly, but like others before him, he had disappeared without trace. Time fell limp like a wilted flower ... and her pain deepened. Grief and bewilderment ... beauty turned brittle with time. Elza clung to memories.	In her grief perhaps Elza went mad. It is not uncommon in such circumstances. She closed her room to the world. Another aging woman tormented by the disappearance of someone she loved ... In her fragile way, she sought to suspend time.	Escaping retribution, she hid in her room ... while Euclides paid for her sins. She comforted herself with small sacrileges. Wallowing in guilt, she built idols to his memory ... and fashioned herself a martyr.
<b>6</b>	In small rituals of devotion Elza preserved Euclides' spirit as a living altar. She prayed constantly for a return that never came.	She built an altar to his memory but the details faded ... because nothing holds substance forever.	In her small world, she tore bread apart and drank wine. Body and blood. But there was no purification for her sins.
<b>7</b>	Then one day the only picture she had of him, fell and broke apart. She begged for forgiveness ... a world lost in fragments.	... and one day this world fell apart. His photograph shattered on the floor.	Immoral and profane her false idols eventually fell ... and in the shatter of glass she beheld a true saint. The man she led into sin ...
<b>8</b>	But in his prison Euclides danced in memory of her. Bonding hearts and movement across time. He offered freedom and forgiveness.	Power and fear are conspirators and Euclides had paid a price. Like hundreds before him, his disappearance became another statistic. Another name forgotten.	In pain, he paid penance for his sins. Now without her influence, he felt the wounds of the crucified Christ ... and when sin was seared from his body, he was given grace. A man ... became a Saint.
<b>9</b>	... Euclides reached out, giving her comfort. A single picture of eternal love ... the grace of affection. Memory gathered her heart into a warm embrace. A moment became forever.	... and in her madness, Elza felt time lurch ... the dawn of truth. Insistent. He had died ... like many before him. Gone. An end to suffering. There is no accounting for such things. A broken photograph. That is all. She switched off the revolutions of her world. ... and time moved forward.	And across time, forgiveness touched her. The prodigal redeemed. Euclides had become a martyr and his first act of sainthood was to save the woman who caused his fall. The kindness of Adam ... the redemption of Eve.
<b>10</b>	And holding his love closely ... she danced.	All things must end ... including grief. The old must accept the nature of revolution. Elza stood still for a moment, and then quietly ... understanding the inevitability of loss, She opened a window to the day.	Such is the will of God. The price paid ... and Elza entered the world of heaven.

TABLE 4:1.  
Polyphonic-dialogic narration.  
Table comparing the diverging monologues of the three saints.

## LEVELS OF NARRATION

In discussing levels of narration in this section I am referring to the position of narrators, characters and events in the diegetic world. In other words I am considering who occupies what spaces, as providers of information in the story.

### Omniscience and the fourth wall

The saints in Elza's story may at first glance be understood as omniscient because we understand them as narrators who have knowledge about the narrated world. Genette (1980, pp. 188-189) describes omniscience (or non-focalisation) as a state "where the narrator knows more than the character – or more exactly – *says* more than any of the characters knows".

In the story, the saints use language that is laid over what we see happening. They assume omnipresence and therefore a kind of omniscience. As spiritual entities, they are perceived as being everywhere, all of the time, and they are able to describe Elza and Euclides' thoughts, feelings and opinions.<sup>179</sup> Their narrating suggests a form of spiritual wisdom that transcends what the characters feel or see.<sup>180</sup> However, although the saints assume omniscience, in fact they are flawed and therefore unreliable narrators,<sup>181</sup> because their prejudices cause them to ascribe meaning and motivations to complex situations that they may not fully comprehend. As unreliable narrators, they attempt to persuade and create empathy with the reader by breaking the fourth wall.<sup>182</sup>

Brown argues that such an approach "destroys the illusion of the storyworld and, ... distances us from the fiction" (2012, p. 10), while concurrently "encourag[ing] a sense of proximity" with the audience (ibid., p. 22).

### Narrative voice

Narrative voice refers to *who speaks*, acts or tells the story. In *Saints of Paradox* the narrators and characters operate on different narrative levels.

The saints are largely extradiegetic because they present the story's events on an external level. However, as spiritual entities, they are also divine and thus, in one instance, they intervene in the storyworld. At this point they may be seen as extradiegetic narrators whose presence bleeds intradiegetically (on pages 6 and 9). It is through this *realismo maravilhoso*-like behaviour that they are able to effect the connection between Euclides in his prison cell and Elza in her apartment.

This said, the *realismo maravilhoso* nature of the story means that although the saints narrate extradiegetically, Elza's obsession with divinity and loss may have unwittingly 'called' them into her physical world (Figure 4:7 - p. 107).<sup>183</sup>

Elza and Euclides, by contrast, may be positioned as intradiegetic because their actions occur entirely *inside* the storyworld. They are not aware of what is being said about them and they perform unwittingly what the narrator requires of them. In this regard they are like unsuspecting puppets. Their intradiegetic world is so sealed off, that they discretely play out three versions of each event with no awareness that other states of their experience co-exist.

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179. In the stories, the saints appear at two narrative levels; one figuratively, as spiritual entities (page 1), and other as statues in Elza's living room (page 9).
180. For example, the Father of Orthodoxy says, *In her small world, she tore bread apart and drank wine. Body and blood. But there was no purification for her sins.* In a statement like this, the saint purports to know the spiritual consequences of her actions.
181. Hansen (2007, p. 228) argues that "when the reader is presented with textual inconsistencies (e.g., self-contradictions or illogical circumstances), one strategy of solving these is to frame them as evidence of an unreliable narrator." When confronting an unreliable narration, he suggests, "our reading changes its focus from what is being told to the one who is telling" (ibid., p. 230).
182. The term 'fourth wall' is sometimes used in theatre to describe a performance where the characters are separated from the audience by an invisible wall. In other words, characters are not aware of the audience. Brown states that breaking the fourth wall means that "characters ... appear to acknowledge our presence as spectators; they seem to look at us" (Brown, 2012, p. 10).
183. Although in the clutter of her apartment she does not know this, because she does not demarcate them from other syncretic objects that surround her.



FIGURE 4:7.  
 Metalepsis of narrating and narrated worlds. On close inspection we see elements of each saint's extradiegetic world bleed into Elza and Euclides' environments. Above, we see the Father of Pragmatism's motifs (clocks, televisions and metallic objects), populating her environment each time he talks about it. It is by this process of thematic, metaphorical placement that I visually underscore the presence of each narrator.

## Retrospection and time

*Saints of Paradox* is a story we understand retrospectively. By this I mean, the story is only understood in its fullest sense once we are able to overview all of the narrations and the expanse of events that have given rise to them. Scheffel, Weixler and Werner call this process a “retrospective act of sense-making” (2013, para. 16).

Despite being chronological, the story contains complex inconsistencies of time. The saints narrate events in the past tense but speak directly to us in the present. However, at times they use divine ‘tricks of magic’ to appear as intradiegetic commentators on past events (Figure 4:8 - p. 109).

Berger (1994, p. 412) argues that “the world presented diegetically will consist of at least two distinct ontological levels, the immediately presented world of the narrator and the world mediated by the voice of the narrator.” He suggests that it is “the existence of the narrator’s voice that makes the existence of the narrated world possible, and not the reverse” (ibid.). In *Saints of Paradox*, the three narrators make Elza and Euclides’ story explicit to the reader. Berger suggests “the world to which the narrator belongs and the different, subordinated, world which he presents” are normally distinct (ibid., p. 414). However, in *Saints of Paradox*, because of the *realismo maravilhoso* ethos of the work, there is a merging of narrative levels that has resulted in occasional cohabitations of the saints in both intra and extradiegetic realms. Elza and Euclides are never aware of this seepage. Unlike the saints, they live out their experiences in a sealed, intradiegetic present. Here their love and alienation plays over and over again. We may understand their experiences as a kind of ritualised loop where prescribed actions and order can be systematically repeated,<sup>184</sup> (with assistance of an app).

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184. This repetition of their actions and (to a greater degree) looped animations in the objects that occupy their world, may be compared to forms of religious ritual that repeat phrases or actions and to the idea of eternal time, memory, and observance.



FIGURE 4:8.

The Father of Pragmatism inside Elza's shrine. In this AR version of the scene, the narrating saint shows us Elza's past but occupies it with his present self. In so doing, he moves from an extradiegetic present to inhabit an intradiegetic past in a metaleptic manner. This causes the scene to be presented as a ritualised state where time is paradoxically suspended and progressing.

## + Realismo maravilhoso

### THE REAL AND MAGICAL IN STORY DESIGN

In *Saints of Paradox*, *realismo maravilhoso* is presented as an interplay between the real and the magical. The magically real causes the impossible to become normalised. Elements in the saints' world permeate Elza and Euclides' environments; syncretic artefacts populate human settings; sound is both atmospherically normal and impregnated with impossibility; and through the breaking of a photograph, a man (preserved in time) is able to reach out to a woman almost 60 years after his incarceration. Within the nature of *realismo maravilhoso*, such things are acceptable.

Faris' (2004) five characteristics of magical realism are helpful in considering how the story functions. First, we encounter magic in its use of metalepsis, particularly in the way that the saints, through their spiritual intervention, both narrate and sometimes populate the intradiegetic world. Second, objects have a life of their own. Third, the reader is forced to conciliate conflicting accounts of events. Fourth, the narrative merges realms of the spiritual (mythical thinking) and real (historical accounts), and finally, the story orchestrates character and spatial transitions, and disruptions of time.

Chanady (1995) argues that in magical realist texts "a mystery which is left unexplained incites the reader to resolve it himself" (p. 121). In *Saints of Paradox*, magical events are not explained.<sup>185</sup> Magic is an integrated part of Elza's state of being. Individual saints may interpret this in different ways, but what is consistent is a woman living inside a correlation of impossibilities. The spiritual and the living meld and the narrators and characters (both extradiegetic and intradiegetic) are not surprised by incongruous elements.

In the story, *realismo maravilhoso* provides a platform for proposing semantic considerations of magical realism as a language of Latin America (Chiampi, 1980, p. 91) [trans. T. Tavares]. Spindler (1993, p. 80) suggests that "bringing into operation secret or occult controlling principles of Nature ... is strongly associated with Latin American fiction." Here cultures produce a double voice between the 'primitive' (magic) and the 'civilised' (realistic) that places an emphasis on "violence, deformity and exaggeration" (ibid., p. 81).

### The disturbed individual

Within Spindler's idea of "deformity", we also note in the book instances where events are "the product of the mind of a 'disturbed' individual" (Spindler, 1993, p. 82). In such cases, the irrational may permeate the thinking and behaviour of a character within the story; we may think of them as unstable, mentally unwell or discordant. Two examples from the book illustrate this phenomenon. The first is Elza, who in a state of grief withdraws into a neurotic and ritualised world where she surrounds herself with strange obsessions. This results in an anxious, cluttered space that is populated with strange figures and peculiar fragments of memory. A second example of the 'disturbed' individual is more subtle; it occurs with one of the saints. Beyond the cosmetic, the Father of Pragmatism does not exhibit signs of sainthood. He is skeptical, pragmatic, adamant, uncaring, world weary and dismissive of esoteric justifications. He does not offer respite or interpretation through religious observance or repentance. He disturbs the concept of saintliness; he is an agnostic, nonspiritual saint, and thus a disturbing entity.

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185. We can see this in the scene where the photograph drops on to the floor, providing access to Euclides in prison. There is no rational explanation for this transition. The photograph causes a turning point in the narrative, where magical action is elevated above the 'real'. At this point in the narrative we encounter a distinct divergence between the three saints' accounts of what happened to Euclides.

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186. In the Christian *trinus* there is one God in three divine individuals. These three beings are singular, while at the same time of one substance (homousios).
187. In this sense, they are designed to create a sense of universal affinity with the reader and connect with the subliminal realm of dreams, legends and myths.
188. Menton also makes this assertion, arguing that “the juxtaposition of magic and realism is clearly an artistic reflection of the psychological-philosophical ideas of Carl Jung” (1983, p. 13).
189. For example, dead and living animals, dolls, flowering and dying flora, whole and corrupted fruit and beating hearts.
190. Other Western theological dichotomies include the dualities of mind and body (Moreland & Craig, 2003), good and evil (Russell, 1987), human and spirit, and life and death (Lundell, 2016).
191. In the 1960s and 70s, students often operated clandestinely and when captured, they were jailed, interrogated, tortured and killed (AIRGRAM, 1973).
192. Changes in the city’s landscape over the period of 50 years can be identified when comparing pages 2 and 10 of the story.
193. References to television and radio of the 1960s and 1970s are particularly evident in the Father of Pragmatism’s version of the story. On page 5, from the radio, we hear speeches from the populist President *João Goulart* (specifically one delivered on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1964 and another where he spoke against the 1964 military regime). On page 3 there is also an excerpt from the announcement of the *AI-5 Institutional Act* in the *Voz do Brasil* on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1968.

## Paradox and the nature of saints

Another paradox in the book is theological. There are three saints (who constitute a trinity). However, they deviate from the Christian *trinus* (threefold) that entertains the idea that God is one, while concurrently being three infinite, complementary persons (or hypostases); the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>186</sup>

Conversely, although the three saints position themselves as a *trinus* of divine, omniscient beings, they have distinct and conflicting theological positions. In addition, rather than fusing into one consistent entity, they are constituted of conflicting fragments and bear a closer conceptual resemblance to Afro-Brazilian syncretic entities. The saints disturb theological continuity and align closely to a Jungian perspective of magical realist fictions<sup>187</sup> that present “a mysterious sense of collective relatedness” (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 183).<sup>188</sup>

Unlike the internally coherent *trinus*, the *Saints of Paradox* voice conflicting theological positions (benevolence, pragmatism and orthodoxy). In addition, each contains its own iconographic paradox. The Mother of Benevolence is surrounded by metaphors of life and death<sup>189</sup>; the Father of Pragmatism occupies a space adorned with the rational and irrational; and the Father of Orthodoxy surrounds himself with the iconography of heaven and hell. As such the saints are manifestations of ideological dichotomies.<sup>190</sup>

## Socio-cultural, geographic and historical constructs

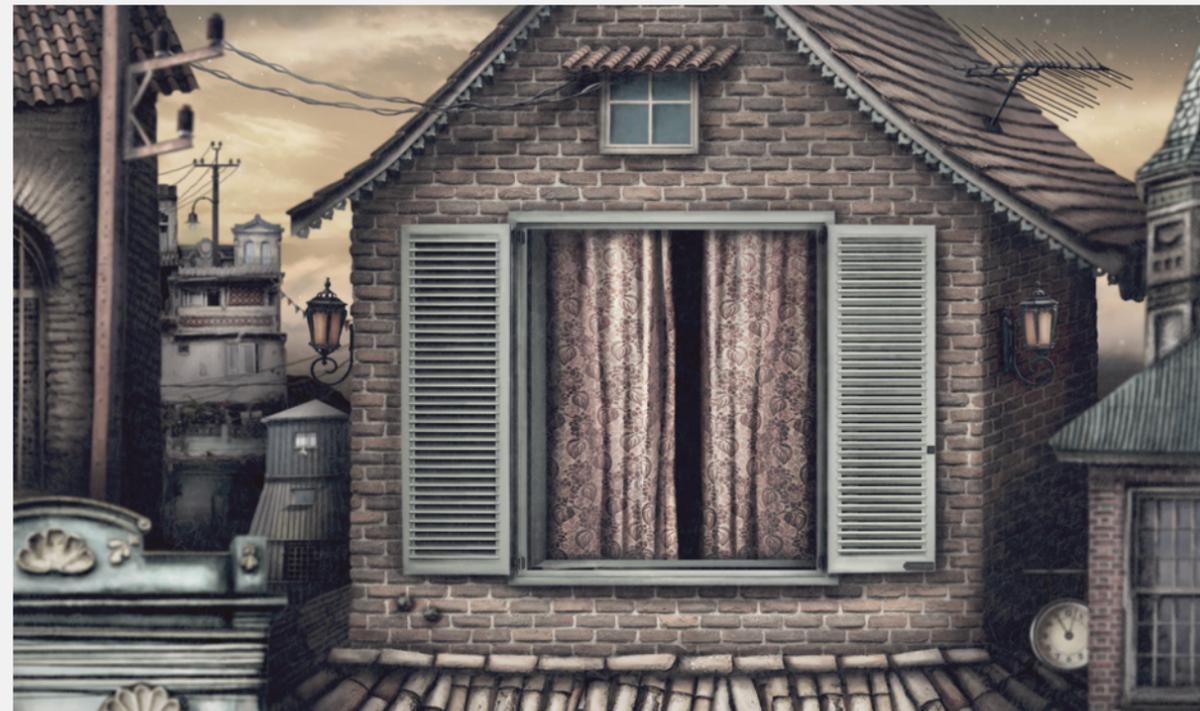
The storyworld of *Saints of Paradox* cannot be described as fantastic because it relies on geographical sites and historical events. In *realismo maravilhoso*, Zamora and Faris note that the narrative moves back and forth between “the historical and the imaginary,

and between political conflict and psychological and supernatural concerns” (1995, p. 1) . Here we encounter a recreation of historical events that offer “alternative versions of officially sanctioned accounts” (ibid., p. 170). The authors note that this device helps to demoralise politically sanctioned ‘facts’ and thus, regain control of the past by raising questions about social injustice. In *Saints of Paradox*, Euclides’ political disappearance is fictional but it relates to historical accounts of student uprisings and imprisonments during the Brazilian coup d’etat (Mansan, 2013).<sup>191</sup>

In the book’s storyworld, socio-cultural and geographical elements permeate both visual and aural dimensions. They appear in references to Brazilian music and dance (the Samba and Bossa Nova), in subtle references to changes in São Paulo’s urban landscape<sup>192</sup> (Figure 4:9 - p. 112) and in diverse syncretic creations that populate the character’s environments. In addition, the work includes allusions to the influence of television, radio and print media, with identifiable references to advertising and the *telenovelas* (soap operas) that were distinctive features of Brazilian culture in the 1960s and 1970s (Hamburger, 2011).<sup>193</sup>

FIGURE 4:9.

City in the 1960s (page 2) and 2018 (page 10) in *Saints of Paradox*. These illustrations contain distinct references to the suburban area of Penha, in São Paulo. The river references the *Tieté*, which has flowed in a state of abject pollution through the city for over 50 years. The socio-geographic location of the story is *Sudoeste do Brazil* (the Brazilian Southeast, where the author grew up). This area is distinguished by its cultural diversity, high population, multi-storied buildings, apartments and hilly streets.<sup>194</sup>



194. These references are used by the author as visual inspirations, but are fictitious in their depictions.

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195. For useful reading around this situation see Garcia, (1997), Leite (2016), and Ridenti (1990).
196. For useful reading around this situation see Mansan (2013).
197. We encounter this reference in the Father of Orthodoxy's statement: *She taught him to support Communism – an evil incarnate. He spoke blasphemies and was ruthlessly judged.* We see here, both his position against Communism and the involvement of Christianity in the military dictatorship. For useful reading around the church's conflicting positions during this time see Azevedo (2004), Lanza (2006), Rodrigues (2015).
198. We see story references to this in the Father of Pragmatism's city on page 2 and in Euclides' arrest on page 4.
199. See the relationships between magical realism and decolonisation on page 32.
200. The word subaltern is borrowed from postcolonial discourses, where it refers to people in a colony who reside socially, politically and geographically external to the hierarchy of power.
201. Although the Father of Orthodoxy may be considered as the most dominant and patriarchal narrator, all of the saints exercise dominance over Elza and Euclides.
202. Marco (2004, p. 47) argues that "*literatura de testemunho* creates tensions between the fictitious and the factual; between the literary and the literally; and between poetic language and referential prose" [trans. T. Tavares]. Similar tensions are evident in *Saints of Paradox* because, although it is fictional underneath the elevated style of the narration, the story is based on generalised accounts of historical facts. For instance, Elza observes and listens to fragmented pieces of dictatorship from different periods between 1964 and 1975 that are cobbled together to suggest an accumulation of memories.

In the narrative, the story refers to the political situation of women who spoke out against the military dictatorship surrounding the 1964 Brazilian coup d'état.<sup>195</sup> It also deals with the political involvement of students in opposition discourses of the period.<sup>196</sup> In addition, there are references to the threat of Communism in Brazil prior to and during the military dictatorship<sup>197</sup> and the influence of the Catholic Church in both supporting and opposing political leadership of the period.

In the work, we also encounter specific references to the AI-5 (Institutional Act Number 5). This was the legal mechanism that, promoted by State Officials, enabled "forms of control of the population, including the persecution, imprisonment, torture and assassination of Brazilian and foreign civilians" (Pimenta & Melgaço, 2014, para. 2). Calirman (2012, p. 5) claims that the AI-5 was:

... undoubtedly the most severe in a succession of increasingly repressive measures issued during the first years of the regime [and it] marked a drastic change in the country's political and cultural atmosphere [resulting in] widespread arrests of students, intellectuals, politicians, artists, and journalists, among other members of society, and censorship of the media and the arts.<sup>198</sup>

## THE SUBVERSIVE, DECOLONIAL APPROACH

*Saints of Paradox* is influenced by a decolonial approach manifest in *realismo maravilhoso*.<sup>199</sup> Thus, the story and its world reflect both forms of syncretism and a renegotiated hierarchy of knowing that may be described as subaltern.<sup>200</sup>

The 'outsiderness' of the subaltern describes the disempowered position of Elza and Euclides. Their lives are colonised and orchestrated by the three saints who, as authority figures,<sup>201</sup> adopt empowered positions and use Elza and Euclides as vessels for opinion and interpretation. However, once we have read the book and considered their narrations, we realise that they are all flawed and perhaps undeserving of the authority they assume.

Given that *realismo maravilhoso* is directly related to notions of postcolonial literature, it is not surprising that the basic storyline of the book deals thematically with "the conflict between a local community and an imperial authority" (Aldea, 2011, p. 6). In the story, the imperial authority is the absolute voice of a repressive dictatorship and the city has the "aesthetic of the Third World" (ibid., p. 107), where there is both decay and poverty (Figure 4:10 - p. 114).

Santos (2013, p. 139) discusses the importance of *literatura de resistência* (resistance literature) and *literatura de testemunho* (testimonial literature) that became more prevalent after the end of censorship in dictatorships in Chile, Argentina and Brazil. He suggests that both literary forms influenced autobiographical and fictional literature.<sup>202</sup> As narratives of resistance these works detailed the tortures and experiences of military dictatorship. Santos (ibid.) claims that both resistance and testimonial literature create a sense of reflection that works culturally towards the avoidance of new atrocities. Marco (2004) argues that this form of



FIGURE 4:10.

The city depicting poverty, prostitution and religiosity in the Father of Orthodoxy's interpretation of the story. Within his version we see the sacred and the profane juxtaposed and integrated.

literature gives voice to the subaltern and marginalised and brings a critical voice to the “official history” and to topics of specific social and political relevance.<sup>203</sup> In *Saints of Paradox*, the reference to dictatorship is factual (in that it uses existing imagery, video and sound), but these elements play out inside a heightened stylistic approach that is aimed at increasing emotional texture within the story.

### The issue of the aging female protagonist

In *Saints of Paradox*, Elza exhibits stereotypical features often associated with an aging woman, including illness, mental decline, loneliness and isolation (Thömen, 2007). She is also immersed in grief that has resulted in prolonged devotion to the past and a ritualised connection to a male partner. A number of writers discuss the underrepresentation of elderly women in the media (Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook & Harris, 1997; Robinson & Anderson, 2006; Robinson, Callister, Magoffin & Moore, 2007; Swinnen, 2015) and the negative and stereotypical aspects that often accompany their depiction (Chivers, 2003; Robinson et al., 2007; Vernon, Williams, Phillips & Wilson, 1991). Keady (1976, p. 124) argues that some of “the characteristics ascribed to

women are passivity, slyness, and the inability to grasp subtle principles of conduct, large aspirations, and grand designs.” Thömen (2007, p. 3) suggests that aging in literature is “not a biological process but rather a condemnation of women, determined by the way society reduces their freedom.”

In *Saints of Paradox*, male saints relate Elza’s story from judgmental positions. The Father of Orthodoxy describes Elza as corrupt and corrupting. She is the manifestation of a witch-figure, controlled by evil impulses as Eve was in the Old Testament (May, 1981, p. 18). This saint’s version of her story is one of theological subjugation. He sees that there is no position for a woman above a male partner. Her active role in encouraging Euclides to support communism causes her, in his eyes, to assume unwarranted power and therefore pay the price for a transgression.

The Father of Pragmatism, while less ruthless in his attitude, frames Elza’s imagination as a form of delirium or mental illness. She is depicted as a fragile, ineffectual character who progresses through madness to potential acceptance. She has no agency. He sees her as one of many women who has been caught up in the brutality of political oppression. She takes no action to change her circumstances; it is only fate (or his divine interference) that delivers her.

Radway (2009, p. 207) argues that female characters are often associated with the “social roles of lover, wife, and mother.” Thus, the female narrator, the Mother of Benevolence, although compassionate, continues the process of oppression because she depicts Elza as a woman dependent on a man’s love. Her symbolic world of dying beauty emphasises the woman’s “changing corporealities and the related topic of appearance” (Worsford, 2005). Thus, although the saint affords Elza initial agency by asserting that

she tried to protect Euclides and “searched for him relentlessly”, in the end, she has the woman defeated. On page 5 she paints this demise as:

*Time fell limp like a wilted flower ...  
and her pain deepened.  
Grief, bewilderment  
... beauty turned brittle with time.  
Elza clung to memories.*

Significantly, Elza is saved in the end not through her own agency, but by the saint’s need for romantic redemption.

In *Saints of Paradox*, Elza’s aging is used to emphasise her vulnerability. To each of the saints she becomes a helpless “symbol of late life” (Chivers, 2003, p. xi). She is redeemed only through their interventions. These take the form of divine forgiveness (the Father of Orthodoxy), enlightenment (the Father of Pragmatism) or romantic love (the Mother of Benevolence). Elza’s only claim to power comes through our questioning if the saints’ versions of her story are flawed.<sup>204</sup>

Elza’s dependency on others stops her from progressing. She is a colonised character, not a heroine. Both she and Euclides are prevented from *testimonium* (being able to tell their own stories). Elza’s position in the story may be considered as an analogy for the collective and social experience during authoritarian rule. Her story reflects the trauma, social restriction, diminished agency and questioning about what is real and imagined that may be experienced by others in such situations. She lives in an unstable political world and in the unreliability of a novel that purports to tell her story. She is the questing voice and also the living question in the end of the novel. We ask:

... If she could speak, what would she really tell us?

203. The narrative was designed so Elza is unable to come to terms with her past. Her damaged state reminds us of the consequences of any return to conservative, dictatorial rule.

204. We eventually question what is true, we note distortions and contradictions and we become aware of how prejudice infects both the characterisation of episodes and the environments in which they occur.

205. In religions such as Umbanda, Candomblé and Santo Daime, spiritual entities can manipulate the physical world, influencing *living* people and their choices (Lundell, 2016). The worlds of the living and the spiritual are activated through fetishism, body incorporations (ibid.), offerings (Hayes, 2007) and magic-ritual practices (Hayes, 2007). Lundell (2016, p. 44) argues that *exú spirit* (one of the Umbanda deities) “are incorporated into human bodies to do their work. The incorporation is enabled through a process called spiritual development (*desenvolvimento*), which happens through the materialisation and material mediations of the Exús’ vibration in humans, and in material and immaterial objects.” Lundell (ibid. p. 64) argues that exús “are material, they are persons and they are actors, even though not in the same biological sense as humans. In fact the ontological status of Exús is simultaneously human and non-human, material and immaterial.”
206. Here I am referring primarily to the conventions of Roman Catholicism, which has been Brazil’s dominant religion since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century after it was colonised by Jesuit missionaries. Currently, Brazil has the largest number of Roman Catholic devotees in the world. The convergence of beliefs during the Portuguese colonisation has resulted in a diverse range of syncretistic practices that are accommodated within the predominant construct of Brazilian Roman Catholicism. Such practices are evident in both iconography and traditional Portuguese religious festivals (Goebelbecker, 2013).
207. On page 6, the Mother of Benevolence says:  
*In small rituals of devotion,  
 Elza preserved Euclides’ spirit as a living altar.  
 She prayed constantly for a return that never came.*
208. In Kardecism Spiritualism and Umbanda, after death spirits can be placed in a state based on their actions in a past life. However, in this state they retain a certain attachment to the physical world (Elias, 2013; Moura, 2013; Serra, 2017).
209. We may understand Elza’s access to her lover as an unintended manifestation mediumship that is also indicative of Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion. Schmidt (2015) suggests that mediumship can occur in “uncontrolled experiences in the form of dreams, seizures, hallucinations and precognitions...” (p. 38). This phenomenon is common in many syncretic religions including Kardecist Spiritualism (Schmidt, 2015); Santo Daime (Nascimento, 2016), Umbanda and Candomblé (Graham, 1979; Negrão, 1993).

## + Syncretism

Having discussed how power operates within the story, let us now consider another distinctively Brazilian feature of the work; syncretism. In *Saints of Paradox*, syncretism operates as an artistic and ideological device that drove both the development of the illustrations and the design of polyvocality within the work.

In theology, syncretism occurs as a paradoxical or dual system (Stewart, 2011) where relationships are constructed between Christian religiosity and mythical thinking. In *Saints of Paradox*, the subversive nature of syncretism becomes evident in interactions between Bakhtinian carnival, postcolonial aspects of *realismo maravilhoso* and the politics and aesthetics of photomontage.

## AFRO-BRAZILIAN SYNCRETIC RELIGIONS

In Armstrong’s discussion of Afro-Brazilian syncretic religions and the devotion towards a spiritual deity, he describes “the materialization of [the] spirit in icons” (2007, p. 129). In the design of the book’s storyworld, this idea appears in the construction of eclectic objects that are imbued with a sense of movement or ‘livingness’. Their appearance suggests that the spiritual is not separated from the carnal,<sup>205</sup> and the traditional, European authority of church iconography is fundamentally challenged by a culturally resourced questioning. Within the syncretic, new order is constructed from disruptions to European colonisers conceptions of what constitutes worship.<sup>206</sup>

Syncretic relationships between the spiritual and the physical are also reflected in the way that Elza preserves Euclides’ spirit in an altar.<sup>207</sup> Here, her attachment to a spiritual ideal is realised through physical objects (that we suspect may have prevented Euclides’ ascent into heaven).<sup>208</sup> However, her altar also operates as a channel for a spiritual and emotional obsession that enables an ‘encounter’ with Euclides in the prison.<sup>209</sup>

## SYNCRETISM AND PHOTOMONTAGE

Syncretism operates as a conceptual and aesthetic approach to illustration. To achieve this I have adapted certain tenets of photomontage and applied it to treatments of both exterior and interior space.

We encounter the syncretic in Elza's altar<sup>210</sup> (pages 6 and 9 of the narrative), in the prison, the lecture theatre and in the two versions of her living room, where the religious and secular are conjoined by assembling pre-existing imagery and material I photographed for the project. The relationship between syncretism and photomontage reaches its highest level of tension in the Father of Orthodoxy's version of the story.<sup>211</sup> Here, crosses, statues, bread and wine, candles, flowers, serpents, fruit, wings, crowns, and other Judeo-Christian iconography are forced into an uncomfortable relationship with secular imagery, including references to prostitution, the carnivalesque-grotesque, the mythical, the profane and the animalesque.

Ascott suggests that syncretism creates a heterogeneous process of differences and alignments between elements in an "in-between condition of 'being both'" (2005, p. 1). Verger (2006) [trans. T. Tavares] likens this to water and wine coexisting inside the same chalice. In *Saints of Paradox*, the juxtaposition of imagery may be understood as a coexistence of elements that operate in correlation with each other to suggest a paradoxical harmony of union. Difference and divergences are accepted as normalised yet distinctive.<sup>212</sup> This approach may be differentiated from collage with its provision of "abrupt cut" (Jordan, 2014, p. 99). In my work elements are fused. They are magically connected into a 'new real' state of being. Thus, the objects and the ideas they suggest are ambiguous yet suggestive of a syncretic completeness.

In my work, syncretic illustration operates as a semiotic method for mutation and identity creation.<sup>213</sup> We encounter the photomontaged as mythical elements that are rearranged to produce novel meanings. Here, fragments of imagery may be considered as semiotic markers of cultural and ideological miscegenation. This said, my imagery does not refer directly to African *caboclo* or *mestiço*; it instead alludes to a wider consideration of Brazilian cultures.<sup>214</sup>

In *Saints of Paradox*, syncretic illustration draws upon both carnival and *favela* (shanty towns). These have inspired the discordant excesses and discontinuities evident in the book. In his discussion of the cultural aesthetics of Carnival style, Bristol (1983, p. 642) refers to a process of "parodic misappropriation, borrowing, and switching of significant symbols." We may observe a similar aesthetic in the *favelas* that formed part of the world where I grew up. These are constructed from diverse, appropriated elements that are then joined to produce distinctive dwellings. Jaguaribe (2004, p. 327) argues that these *favelas* have been "metaphorised as an emblem of Brazil's uneven modernization" to such an extent that they constitute the "terrain of proletarian revolution" (ibid., p. 333). Although, these dwellings are identifiable as physical forms in external environments of my book, conceptually, their eclecticism and 'temporary permanence' is a theme that permeates the whole story. Nothing in the world of Elza and Euclides is stable or permanent. Their environments are assembled and disassembled,<sup>215</sup> held together by tenuous connections, and their meaning is unfixed.

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210. The altar ('congá') in the Umbanda religion contains a mixture of diverse traditions and symbols from Christianity, Kardecism spirituality, Candomblé and oriental influences (Malandrino, 2008).

211. The Father of Orthodoxy's rhetoric is ecclesiastical, and his vision of the world suggests judgmental interpretations of syncretic religious practices (as evidenced in his comments about transgressive rituals and imagery). However, his position is paradoxical because his own world includes syncretic, profane and secular imagery.

212. The photomontaged elements are not only 'placed' together, but they are redrawn, shaded, layered and connected to create a sense of integration and connection. They are then ornamented to create a 'fused whole'.

213. Malandrino (2008, p. 38-9) [trans. T. Tavares] argues that the symbolic elements of Umbanda vary between *terreiros* (places of worship) and are not rigid. Instead they are in a constant process of construction and reconstruction. She argues that in Umbanda, we encounter a symbolic and ritualist mutability. This, she suggests, is because differing practices between *terreiros* respond to the religious needs of local individuals (ibid.).

214. In *Casa Grande e Senzala*, Gilberto Freyre (1933 [2003]) argued for the positive values of miscegenation between Portuguese, Indians and Africans in Brazilian culture (Barbalho, 2007). Although the iconography of these populations doesn't map directly on to the design of imagery in my book, I am aware that conceptually, their connection may be aligned with the concept of 'racial democracy' that formed a prevalent ideology during the Brazilian dictatorship of the 1960s (Guimarães, 1999, p. 153) [trans. T. Tavares].

215. By the narrating saints.

## + World building

Finally, I would like to consider aspects of World building<sup>216</sup> in the book. Specifically, I will discuss aspects of character design, structural environments, the influence of *Wunderkammer* and the theatricalisation of performance.

### Character design

In *Saints of Paradox*, AR pages contain judgments about Elza and Euclides and physical characteristics of each narrator's values (including the theological position from which their judgments emanate).

#### THE NARRATORS & SAINTHOOD

In the story the saints are initially presented as “servants of God”. However, as characters they are imperfect and deceptive. They exhibit human traits of punitive judgment, cynicism and arrogance. They have no evident life narrative before we meet them, so we only know them through their relationship with Elza. They are flawed emblems of the attributes of compassion, pragmatism and orthodoxy. Their attitudes are revealed through soundscapes that accompany their narrations, the objects that they carry or ornament their worlds, and the content of their monologues.

These saints may be compared to the Greek concept of an icon. In Greek, *eikon* means “image, picture, portrait representation.” Kenna (1985, p. 347) argues that the “modern use of the word denotes two-dimensional representations [that] refer particularly to pictures of holy persons and events.” She suggests an icon “is a *mysterion*, a sacred mystery, a sacrament” [that represents] “the relationship of the created world to its Creator [and...] is made of substances derived from all parts of the created world, from animal, vegetable, and mineral sources.” Aligning with Kenna's observations, the saints are presented with an “upright

posture” and imagery that emphasises a “special mode of holiness” (ibid.). Each has an *aureole* (sometimes called *aureola* or halo). This is a circular device above the head or “saint's crown of glory” (Hall & Uhr, 1985, p. 567) that indicates a “general goodness and chosen status” (Forgas & Laham, 2017, p. 276).

Each saint is clothed in garb that alludes to conventions of ecclesiastical attire. The Father of Pragmatism is dressed as a contemporary priest, the Father of Orthodoxy wears the attire of a Jesuit monk, and the Mother of Benevolence (in reference to Eastern iconography with its tradition of depicting Mary in red or brown to indicate her relationship to the physical world) wears a hood and clothing of a peasant (Hudson, 1997).

### Theological positions

The saints have different theological positions from which they endeavour to discuss the *problem of the evil*. Stump (1985, p. 392) suggests that the problem of the evil is:

... traditionally understood as an apparent inconsistency in theistic beliefs, [which] are committed to the truth of the following claims about God:

- (1) God is omnipotent
- (2) God is omniscient
- (3) God is perfectly good [and]
- (4) there is evil in the world.<sup>217</sup>

Each saint interprets Elza's story in accordance with how they understand good and evil and each adopts a particular moral lens; either orthodoxy, compassion or pragmatism.

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216. The term *World building* refers to the process of constructing an imaginary world. This includes characters, environments, sound and internal logic.

217. However, she notes that there is an inconsistency between these claims that raises the issue that “(5) There may be no morally sufficient reason for God to allow instances of evil” (ibid.).



*The Father of Orthodoxy*

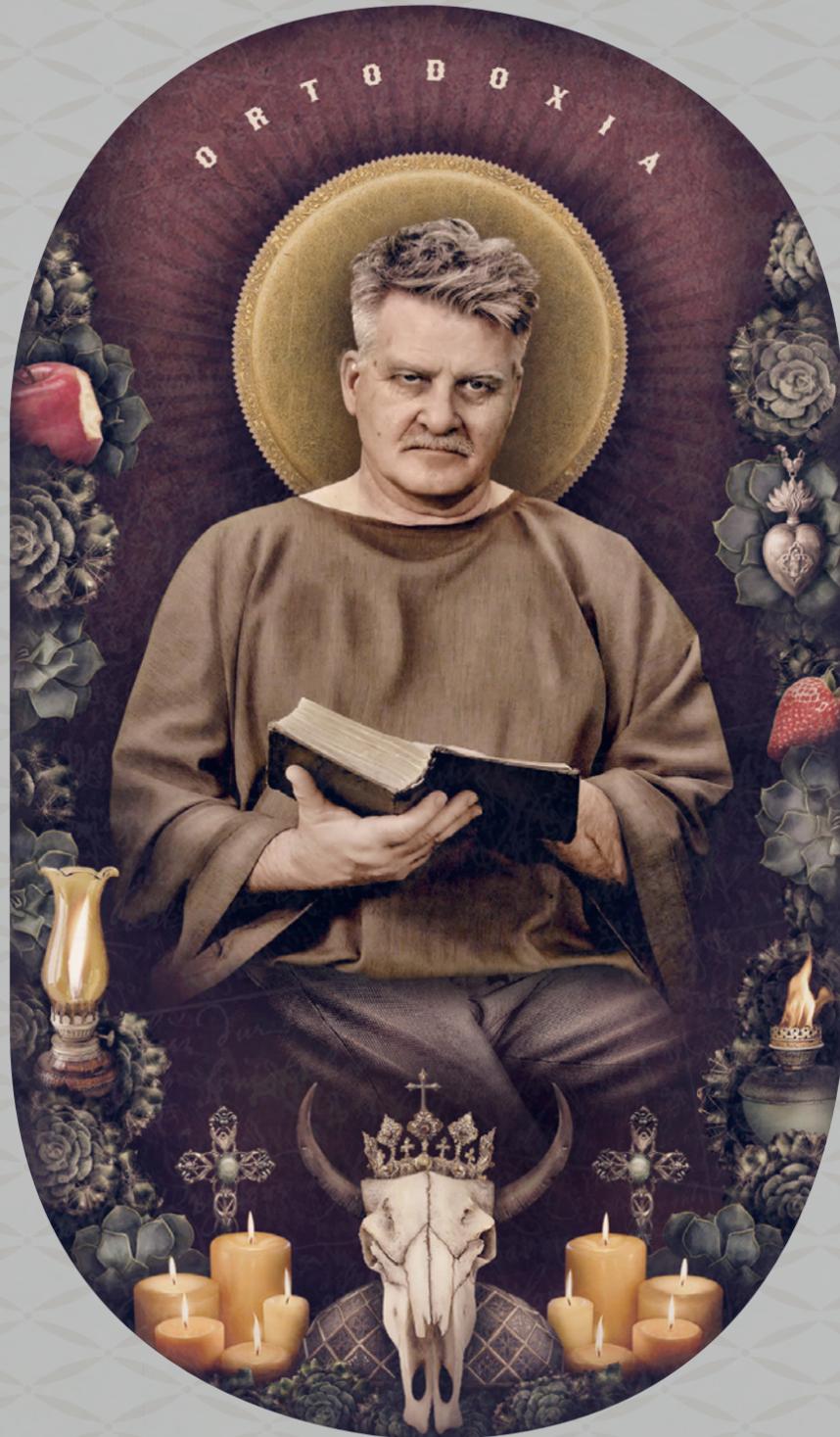


FIGURE 4:11. (previous page)

The Father of Orthodoxy.

The Father of Orthodoxy (Figure 4:11) believes that evil is the result of mankind's original sin and punishment for his fall from grace because man exercised free will. The saint is inspired by Augustinian Theodicy. Couenhoven says:

... Augustine finds himself wondering why human beings continually misuse the freedom God has given, and he ends up arguing that because of our negative inheritance from Adam, 'man cannot rise by his own free will because he fell by his own will spontaneously'. Augustine is left with the view that 'the capacity of choosing good or evil now attaches only to Adam and Even before the fall'. (2007, p. 280)

In other words, Augustine saw mankind as predestined to sin and receive punishment. He believed that we have no "original choice"; we come evil into the world and function as beings who have fallen from grace and require ongoing redemption. Under Augustine's influence, the Father of Orthodoxy presents God as omnipotent, perfect, ideally good and having created the world from nothing. Significantly his attitude to women is a reflection of Augustine's values, because he believes that women are inferior and carry primary blame for temptation and sin. In his consideration of Eve's role in the exclusion from the Garden of Eden, Augustine says:

... woman was given to man, woman who was of small intelligence and who perhaps still lives more in accordance with the promptings of the inferior flesh than by the superior reason ... that through her, the man became guilty of transgression. (Clark, 1983, p. 40)

Through the Augustinian lens, the Father of Orthodoxy perceives Elza as both inferior and living out the inheritance of Eve. She seduces Euclides into free thought through persuasively exercising her sexuality. The saint believes that both characters have "fallen from grace." This is partly because they

have "betrayed the sacrament of marriage" and thus become "evil incarnate," but they have also embraced communism and taken action to disrupt the order of established power.

### His iconography

The Father of Orthodoxy holds a book on his hands (probably a bible). This may suggest his reverence of, and obedience to, Christian doctrine and principles. His world is surrounded by fire as a "symbol associated with both the Holy Spirit and God" (Steffler, 2002, p. 41). On page 5, we see a serpent on the cross. The cross refers to the "death of Christ - with the cross being a symbol of suffering and self-denial" (ibid., p. 28). The paradoxical combination of the snake and the cross alludes to the presence or interference of evil. The bitten apple is a related symbol, representing the forbidden fruit from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* [Genesis 2:16–17] and the influence of Satan.

In the Father of Orthodoxy we see hands used in formal gestures of blessing, although on page 6 he paradoxically uses his left hand to point to the wine and bread sitting on the altar.<sup>218</sup> These symbols allude to the Host and Chalice which are representations of the body and blood of Christ (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1961; Steffler, 2002) , where the cup symbolises "God's salvation" (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1961, p. 31). Such symbols are important because the saint aligns (in Augustinian fashion) Euclides the male with Christ the sacrificing martyr.

With this saint we also see strange statues in Elza's room that bring to mind monstrosity, the animalesque, the demoniac and the profane.<sup>219</sup> His statues are unsettling. We can see among them pregnant, demonic, blindfolded and crying beings. Many of his creatures move in grotesque ways. Cumulatively, we may begin to question the purity of his fetishised fixation on punishment, the grotesque, erotic and corrupt.

218. The Latin word meaning left handedness is 'sinister'. We use the word today, to denote something evil and foreboding. By using his left hand to indicate something holy, the Saint suggests a paradox; something wrong, disrupted or misleading.

219. Adams, Yates and Warren (1997, p. 75) suggest that the grotesque is an "appropriately odd disclosure of ... mystery, whether forbidding or benign, with which theology is also and necessarily concerned."

## The theological framing of Elza & Euclides

The Father of Orthodoxy's version of Elza is largely misogynistic. Given that he speaks primarily from an Augustinian perspective, he sees Euclides as essentially spirit-oriented and Elza as purely flesh. Reuther, when discussing Augustine's view of relationships between women and men, suggests that his way of conceiving gender "is similar to that of body to spirit [where], only the man possesses the full image of God" (cited in Tucker & Liefeld, 1987, p. 124). This position she suggests is "the ultimate core of his misogyny" (ibid.).

While the Father of Orthodoxy describes both Elza and Euclides as martyrs, he sees a significant difference between them. Elza he frames as a self-fashioning martyr, whereas Euclides he compares to Christ, "the first martyr" of Christianity<sup>220</sup> (Lanzi & Lanzi, 2004, p. 12).

Conversely, Elza is denied martyr status. She is redeemed only through the actions of men. In the Father of Orthodoxy's story, she is associated with supplication, ritual and devotion. She prays and makes the sign of the cross.<sup>221</sup> She seeks forgiveness and Euclides' return. In this story, God's forgiveness may be likened to the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32). Thus, on page 9, the saint says:

*... and across time, forgiveness touched her.  
The prodigal redeemed.  
Euclides had become a martyr and his first act of  
sainthood was to save the woman who caused his fall.  
The kindness of Adam  
... the redemption of Eve.*

In Elza's constant praying we see an awareness of her fall, but her punishment is protracted. She exists as a confusing metaphor. She may be likened to Crowther's Eve who is often portrayed as "the pathetic dupe and other times the conniving co-conspirator" (Crowther, 2010, p. 7). Thus, the Father of Orthodoxy entertains diverse notions of Elza, but these are never respectful or understanding. At best, he constructs her as a redeemable sinner.

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220. Inside this framing, the saint fetishises Euclides' bodily suffering. On pages 8 and 9, we see a bullet wound in his chest. Lanzi and Lanzi (2004, p. 26) note that such displays of corporeal demise are common "signs of martyrdom." On page 8, the Father of Orthodoxy says: *In pain, he paid penance for his sins. Now without her influence, he felt the wounds of the crucified Christ ... and when sin was seared from his body, He was given grace. The man ... became a saint.*

221. Steffler (2002, p. 27) notes that "in many Christian traditions, the sign of the cross, [is] the holiest of signs. It is made with a hand gesture from forehead to breast, then from shoulder to shoulder. It is made before prayer in order to collect and compose oneself and to fix the mind upon God. It is made after prayer in order that one may hold fast the gift received from God".



*The Mother of Benevolence*



FIGURE 4:12. (previous page)  
The Mother of Benevolence.

By comparison, the Mother of Benevolence (Figure 4:12) is compassionate and believes that God must be merciful. She challenges the idea of an omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent God, because she observes the presence of evil and suffering in the world. Her character is influenced by writing in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians where God is referred to as the “Father of Compassion” and the “God of all comfort.” Here God is described as a divine being who:

... comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in your patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. (2 Corinthians 1:3–6)

In the story, the Mother of Benevolence understands Elza and Euclides’ suffering and is sympathetic to Elza’s mourning process. She does not believe in punishing free will and makes no judgment on the sacrament of marriage. She also questions God’s reasoning behind the atrocities of dictatorship.

### Her iconography

The Mother of Benevolence holds a subtly pulsating sphere that represents Elza and Euclides’ love and suffering. This sphere is cradled against her body. She strokes it as a mother might caress something fragile and through this action we see suggested traits of tenderness, maternalism, compassion and love.

Around her we see consistent themes. Flowers (from poppies to roses) may indicate femininity, beauty and fragility. The rose is an especially significant metaphor. Ferguson and Ferguson note that in Judeo-Christian legend, roses grew “without thorns” and “it was only after the fall of man did the rose take on thorns to

remind us of the sins man had committed and his fall from grace” (1961, p. 37). Paradoxically, the rose was also the “sign of Venus and earthly love” and referred to the purity of the Virgin Mary (Graziano & MacArthur, 2004, p. 69). In Christian tradition, the poppy sometimes alludes “to the Passion of Christ because of its blood-red color and its meaning of sleep and death” (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1961, p. 37). Thus, the flower is both narcotic (a reference to Elza’s addictive grief that affects her mood and behaviour) and a sign of suffering.<sup>222</sup>

However, the Mother of Benevolence ornaments Elza’s world with romantic symbols in an effort to mask the horror of what has happened. She uses compassion as a panacea; an opiate that softens the edges and proffers delusion and softness as substitutes for brutality.<sup>223</sup>

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222. We can see a sense of obsession in the way that she surrounds herself with photographs of Euclides. Her curtains are shut and she is locked inside this world.

223. In addition, the saint uses deformed dolls, with their paradoxical association with intimacy and uncanniness, that function as mysterious ‘actor-objects’ without a story.

## The theological framing of Elza & Euclides

In designing the Mother of Benevolence, I also drew on the work of the writer and theologian C.S. Lewis; specifically his book *A Grief Observed* (1961). In this work, he questioned the presence of God while he mourned the death of his wife. He posited an idea, “if God’s goodness is inconsistent with hurting us, then either God is not good or there is no God” (1961, p. 13). Here, he questioned God’s existence and his propensity to allow evil to become manifest. Like C. S. Lewis, the Mother of Benevolence is driven by unsettled belief. She cannot understand suffering and from this position she challenges the ‘wrongness’ of things. She observes from a distance the symptoms of mourning that Sigmund Freud identified in *Mourning and Melancholia* as “profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, [and] inhibition of all activity” (1917, p. 244). Her ‘compassionate’ observing, though, only ever results in the same level of intervention as the other saints. She does not enter Elza’s world to give her comfort. She simply sympathises with the *exteriority* of her situation ... and questions the fairness of what has happened.

Her relationship with Euclides is supported by a spiritual belief in a future encounter. Such spiritual assurance, Kernberg (2010, p. 605) suggests, exists inside a particular kind of mourning that produces an “intense emotional conviction that the person is still there, in some unreal world, which for deeply religious persons is consonant”. However, despite what has happened to Euclides, the saint displays no condemnation of the revolution, there is no political stance taken, no outrage at the horrors of violence, no calling to account injustice; she simply sympathises with his plight as a lover.

Of the three saints, the Mother of Benevolence is the most at ease with the implications with *realismo maravilhoso*, accepting permeations between the real and the magical as normal.<sup>224</sup> Thus, she constructs an easy connection between Elza, grief and the magical properties of a photograph.

Kernberg argues that photographs can be mourning objects that “symbolically represent the lost person [and] derive their consoling function from the assurance that the dead person is still out there, somewhere, in the external world” (2010, p. 614). For the Mother of Benevolence, the black and white photograph is both the past and a present of Euclides’ spiritual self. When it breaks, Elza’s rituals of mourning culminate in a turning point that draws Euclides into her world from another dimension.

For all of the surface compassion of this event, the Mother of Benevolence still frames Elza as a “begging” woman and she sees Euclides as providing her with “freedom and forgiveness.”<sup>225</sup> Euclides’ dancing becomes a romantic, symbolic, redemptive reaching across space and time. His actions resolve for her in a love story that offers a kind of closure when the brutality of Elza’s psychological state and the incarceration and torture of Euclides do not suit her mindset.

For this saint, mourning is seen as a process of redemption; the plight of a powerless woman. Her attitude draws upon Clewell’s observation that mourning can be a restorative process that “resuscitat[es] the other in memory [and] attempts to reclaim a part of the self that has been projected onto the other”, so the mourner can become “a complete and autonomous being” (2004, p. 47). However, although Elza’s final dance suggests that a state of grace may be attained, the Mother of Benevolence is clear that this may only occur through divine intervention.

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224. This may be contrasted with the Father of Realism who refuses to give it agency and the Father of Orthodoxy who frames it as divine intervention.

225. Her guilt and remorse become intrinsic aspects of her mourning, especially as they relate to her encouragement of Euclides to engage with the revolution.



## The Father of Pragmatism



FIGURE 4:13. (previous page)  
The Father of Pragmatism.

Finally, we might turn to the skeptical Father of Pragmatism (Figure 4:13). He is essentially agnostic, believing that “human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist” (Rowe, 1998, p. 267). The design of his character has been shaped by thinkers like Robert G. Ingersoll who, in an 1896 lecture, asked:

Is there a supernatural power—an arbitrary mind—an enthroned God—a supreme will that sways the tides and currents of the world—to which all causes bow? I do not deny. I do not know—but I do not believe. I believe that the natural is supreme—that there is no supernatural power that can answer prayer—no power that worship can persuade or change—no power that cares for man. (Published in Ingersoll, 1902, p. 223)

The Father of Pragmatism does not accept that evil can be defeated because he understands it as an “inbuilt human flaw” (Gray, 2014, para. 23). In his mind good and evil work “together or in opposition, but both are necessary” (ibid.). Accordingly, the Father of Pragmatism believes that humans are accountable for their actions. His ideas may be aligned with Einstein and Freud’s discussions about human nature and politics in *The Einstein-Freud Correspondence* (Einstein & Freud, 1931). Here Freud argues that “there is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity’s aggressive tendencies” (ibid., p. 77).

The Father of Pragmatism sees the destructive events of the 1960s Brazilian dictatorship as part of an inevitable reoccurrence. His attitude aligns with that of John Gray who argues that “no advance in human knowledge can stop humans attacking and persecuting others. [...] Ideas of similar kinds recur whenever societies are threatened by severe and continuing hardship” (2014, para. 24). The Father of Pragmatism’s world is a rational, eternal cycle of creation and destruction. He appears objectively interested in what occurs (and reoccurs) over a period of time, including the violence of repressive governments.

He presents himself rationally and reasonably, but underneath the surface his world lacks empathy and authenticity. He is able to narrate the atrocities of dictatorship without becoming emotionally involved and he is largely indifferent towards Elza and Euclides’ suffering.<sup>226</sup> He describes Elza as “another aging woman tormented by the disappearance of someone she loved”. In his world, Elza’s madness ends with a simple broken photograph that results in her coming to terms with the ‘truth’ of Euclides’ death. Her suffering ends abruptly in a kind of ‘wake up’ call, her grief and madness have a definite end and she is able to understand the “nature of revolution [and] the inevitability of loss”.

So, this saint acts as a dispassionate commentator who does not try to understand an individual human’s condition. He reports to an external audience, presenting the facts inside an overarching framework of inevitability. As a reporter his “story angles may go unaddressed and some plausible explanations may be overlooked” (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 359). His seemingly factual accounts show him to be an unaffected, cynical intellectual who is unable to show compassion for Elza’s situation or describe the emotional impact that Euclides’ disappearance has had on her life.

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226. Thus, on page 4 he says:  
*Shouting truth into the face of power, he was seized  
by an angry government; Euclides of a thousand faces.  
Another missing person. Another poster, another life that  
revolution makes invisible.*

## His iconography

The Father of Pragmatism is paradoxical because, while he is fixated on the pragmatic, his version of the story shows a high degree of inconsistency. He is surrounded by mechanical and damaged media, with clocks that tick backwards in incessant loops and televisions that screen static or flicker with anachronistic information. His world draws together the incessant rhetoric of oppressive regimes and the instability of Elza's mental state.

He holds a clock that symbolises time with neither a past nor a reliable present. His world is mechanistic, hard and as cold as metal. He idealises technology but this technology is actually a broken engine that suspends elastic time that is unpredictable, distorted, manipulated and trapped in loops between 1968 and 2018. In this world, televisions play illusions of a commanding past in the present. They present voices that sought to “mould public opinion [and] disseminate ruling class ideas” Brinton (1975, p. 6). But the presence of these images in Elza's world is also evidence of her inertia and delirium. Advertisements from the 1960s for candies and soap become part of a relentless narrative of magical, mass production<sup>227</sup> that provides a “cycle of continuous and conspicuous consumption” and an escape from the underlying violence of dictatorship and its impact (Dyer, 2008, p. 5).

In this saint's world, posters, pictures and statues display people who are blindfolded or have neither mouths nor eyes. This is a reference to lost identity, torture, disappearance, death, as well the censorship of media and ‘voice’ during the period of Brazilian dictatorship.

## The framing of Elza & Euclides

Although the Father of Pragmatism doesn't tell his story with any explicit religious inclination, he is both mystical and ritualistic. He presents himself as an icon and he has an altar for himself that reinforces his position as a saint. He insistently denies the magic in Elza and Euclides' world, even when it plays out in front of him. However, he is useful because he allows us to anchor elements in the story to actual historical events, even though he treats Elza and Euclides as inconsequential ‘players’ in an eternal, agnostic story.

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227. Williams (1980, p. 185) calls advertising “a magic system” in which “objects are not enough but must be validated, if only in fantasy, by association with social and personal meanings. These objects create a magic pattern [or a] highly organised and professional system of magical inducements and satisfactions, functionally very similar to magical systems in simpler societies, but rather strangely coexistent with a highly developed scientific technology.”

## + Colour palette, patterns & sound design

228. We see subtle differences in time in the story. For example, on pages 2 (the city) and 3 (Elza and Euclides' room), the Mother of Benevolence tells her story at dawn, the Father of Orthodoxy talks to us on a stormy evening and the Father of Pragmatism during a sunset.
229. The soundscapes were created and mixed in Logic X Pro digital audio workstation, utilising real audio recordings of ambient atmospheric sounds combined with sample libraries. Each spread/movie was imported into Logic X Pro. The soundscapes were created through multiple layering of audio on multiple tracks. The utilisation of MIDI with the plugin of the Alchemy software instrument primarily provided the choir vocals pad, synth and strings sounds. The audio narration was recorded at Auckland University of Technology sound studio WG136. This was then imported into Logic X Pro. The channel EQ plugin was applied to help equalise and adjust frequencies needed to support the vocalisation in the mix with the music and sound. Volume automation with fade outs on the ends of each track were also utilised. The final mix was semi-mastered using the Final Pop Master wide setting. All audio was exported and attached to each spread/movie with linear PCM audio format, 48khz sample rate and 24-bit depth.
230. In his discussion of film, Gorbman (1980, p. 196) notes that sound (including music) can operate intradiegetically and extradiegetically “and often freely cross the boundary line in between”. In film, such sound may be “temporal, spatial, dramatic, structural, denotative, or connotative [resourcing both the] diachronic flow of a film and various interpretive levels simultaneously” (ibid.).
231. On page 2 and its variations.
232. On page 2 of the Father of Pragmatism's variation.
233. On page 5 of the Father of Pragmatism's variation.
234. When sound is loud, we tend to watch the surface of an image and as it becomes more subtle, we enter further into the illustration.

Having considered the design of characters in the story, I would now like to turn to certain aesthetic features in the work. In *Saints of Paradox*, the worlds of the narrators are not only defined by their monologues and iconography, but also by time,<sup>228</sup> colour palettes, patterns and sound. Such design considerations are used to enrich our understanding of the narrators' personalities and increase the emotional resonance of events in the story.

### Colour palette and patterns

The saints' environments differ in terms of contrast, saturation, hue and temperature. The Father of Pragmatism has a relatively desaturated colour scheme and his world has patterns that emphasise straight and diagonal lines and metallic textures, with shades of grey, blue, burgundy and cream. The Mother of Benevolence has a softer atmosphere drawn from spring and summer with soft light and golden pastels. Her comfortable world has wooden floors, flowers and circular patterns that establish a sense of feminine comfort. Conversely, the Father of Orthodoxy has a saturated, contrasted colour palette of vivid colours that emphasise luxury and earthly desire. His overall scheme is built around a split complementary and triadic colours that is used to amplify discord and increase contrast between elements in his world.

### Sound design

Sound plays a significant role in the work, both as an establisher of atmosphere and as a device for drawing our attention to story events. Soundscapes also operate as instant identifiers of narration; in other words they quickly remind us with any interaction who is telling us the story.<sup>229</sup>

These demarcations of soundscape are established on the first page and then play out consistently,

with each saint recycling certain thematic sonic features. All three variations have a delineated sense of religiosity, but the Father of Orthodoxy's soundscapes are darker and more ominous with overtones of judgment and *ecclesiasticism*. Here we hear the toll of bells, dark choirs, mystical music, the flicker of burning candles and the threatening peal of thunder. The Father of Pragmatism is accompanied by the mechanical sounds of ticking clocks, banging metals, revolutionary speeches and gun shots. In contrast, the Mother of Benevolence carries with her memories of childhood, gentle angelic melodies, singing birds and romantic treatments of the Samba and other nostalgic music. At times we can also discern the gentle beating of her heart.

Elza and Euclides do not acknowledge the presence of the saints' soundscapes because normally sound is extradiegetic (outside of their world). However, there are exceptions to this.<sup>230</sup> Inside the storyworld we hear the background gurgle of a polluted river,<sup>231</sup> gun shots, the swish of a curtain at an open window,<sup>232</sup> and sound coming from radios and televisions.<sup>233</sup> Such intradiegetic sound is generally used to heighten a moment of action or create a sense of viscerality.

After selecting a saint to narrate a page, a thematically coherent soundscape will immediately be discernible. Sound will normally play for a few orienting moments before the saint begins speaking. Normally each segment plays in the background, but it lifts in intensity in relation to the dramatic plot point of the episode.<sup>234</sup> It then falls away to a more contemplative level that invites us to consider details in the image after the monologue has finished.

## + Structural development & architecture of spreads

235. Arellano (2015) argues that Augustine believed that curiosity was “tied to the concupiscence of the eyes, which attempt to take fleeting possession and imperfect knowledge of carnal and pecuniary objects”, and wonder was a “passionate response elicited by the reverential contemplation of the presence of the divine that is manifest in nature”. In *Saints of Paradox*, both visual curiosity and wonder are part of the way we experience the objects arranged in Elza’s and Euclides’ environments. While objects and environment create a sense of the magic of *realismo maravilhoso*, they also incite curiosity, that is rewarded with subtle revelations that become apparent the longer we spend considering each illustration.
236. During the period of colonisation, a number of Brazilian objects were displayed in *Wunderkammers* around Europe, including collections of the Governor of *Dutch Brazil* Johan Maurits (Spénlé, 2011). Objects included, “taxidermy specimens of rare fauna, paintings, weapons, and articles of indigenous apparel” (ibid., p. 8).
237. Interestingly, Laurel (1991 [2014], p. 30) compares interface design (which includes AR, game systems and social networks) to theatre and Dixon (1999, p. 135) compares a multimedia program to a “computer screen proscenium just as theatre performances do within their own stage frames.”
238. Wyeth’s paintings are arranged with a “flat backdrop and a wooden floor on which the figures stand, and a shallow space that condenses the action at the very front of the picture plane” (Nemerov, 1992, p. 37).

In the book, the architecture of the spreads was built around the concept of the *Wunderkammer* and our interactive engagement was styled on the idea of witnessing a theatrical performance.

### THE WUNDERKAMMER

A *Wunderkammer* space is sometimes known as a chamber of marvels or a cabinet of curiosities.<sup>235</sup> It was considered as a form of “theatre of the world” that contained collections of “liminal objects that lay on the margins of charted territory, brought back from worlds unknown, defying any accepted system of classification” (Mauriès, 2002, p. 12). Arellano (2015, p. xix) suggests that both the modern *Wunderkammer* and modes of magical realism “echo the wonder of the chronicles of the New World [because they] introduce significant distortions or modifications.” In *Saints of Paradox*, the *Wunderkammer* not only has historical associations with Brazilian colonisation,<sup>236</sup> but it is also used to display an assortment of anomalies that create a sense of wonder and magic at the margins of comprehensibility.

Traditionally, objects in a *Wunderkammer* were understood as having a “special aura, with magical and supernatural powers” (Mauriès, 2002, p. 23). In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, *Wunderkammer* contained the “marvelous and monstrous mixed [with] the animal and the vegetable, the animal and the human” (West, 2014, p. 76). As in Elza and Euclides’ worlds, the *Wunderkammer* objects did “not seek to explain the world, but rather [were intended] to illustrate its mysteries” (ibid.).

Mauriès (2002, p. 43) argues that in the *Wunderkammer* a “yearning for syncretism, [...] found its ultimate expression in the taste for the bizarre and the grotesque [of the] New World.” In *Saints of Paradox*, the *Wunderkammer* has a discernible resemblance to the work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder

(Figure 4:14 - p. 133), where the incongruous and unknown are displayed in an impossible taxonomy.

In *Saints of Paradox*, the *Wunderkammer* epitomises the incongruity inherent in colonial gathering of decontextualised fragments of culture. Elza and Euclides’ objects (as with a traditional *Wunderkammer*) are arranged in “display panels cabinets, cases and drawers [as] a response, not only to a desire to preserve, or to conceal from view, but also to a parallel impulse to slot each item into its place in a vast network of meaning and correspondences” (Mauriès, 2002, p. 25). In each saint’s version of their world, these objects suggest but do not establish meaning because they are made of decontextualised fragments. They are dismembered and disordered with limited logic and, as such, reside coherently alongside concepts like magical realism and syncretism.

### THE NATURE OF THEATRICALITY

Finally, it is useful to consider the nature of theatricality in the book. *Saints of Paradox* proposes a distinctive kind of performativity. Osipovich (2006, p. 461) explains that theatrical performance is a “particular kind of interaction between performers and observers (actors and audience members) in a shared physical space.” Frascana (1988, p. 21) suggests that graphic design may be considered a form of performance that through an attempt to communicate a message by the arrangement of visual elements can influence the opinion of an audience.<sup>237</sup> In *Saints of Paradox*, illustrations are constructed to evoke a sense of theatre through their similarity to vacant stage sets. When we first encounter them, these environments have no life; they are suspended in time, awaiting actors and a performance. I am reminded here of Nemerov who, when evaluating N. C. Wyeth’s illustrations, described “the space of the stage [as] a metaphor for the space of illustration” (1992, p. 49).<sup>238</sup>

FIGURE 4:14.

A comparison between the Father of Orthodoxy's page 5 and *The Sense of Sight* by John Brueghel the Elder (1617).<sup>239</sup> In both images, we can see an accumulation of incongruous objects and a frontal perspective on the composition. Mauriès suggests that Brueghel's painting is an "allegorical canvas ... a sort of pictorial equivalent of the cabinets, representing the same desire to bring all knowledge into a single space" (2002, p. 9). My illustrations similarly collect the unresolved into a single space, and as such, suggest inconclusive meaning as an overarching way of conceiving the world of the narrative.



239. Brueghel, J. (1617). *The Sense of Sight* [Painting]. Madrid, Museo del Prado. Retrieved June 2, 2019, from <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/sight/494fd4d5-16d2-4857-811b-e0b2a0eb7fc7>

240. Slade and Beckenham (2005, p. 338) note that:

... soap operas and telenovelas originally sandwiched soap-powder ads. The format was driven by advertising needs ... Originally, these ads were for household goods, and the stories employed domestic settings. Long-running family dramas proved most successful. What emerged as the characteristics of soap opera and telenovelas are a range of generic features: domestic settings, low production costs, and romantic themes are frequent though not universal.

The main difference between the two media forms relates to their respective lengths. Traditionally, soap operas have indefinite runs, while telenovelas require more concise storytelling because they normally have a prescribed ending within a year or two of their launch.

241. Naturalism refers to a form of acting that attempts to recreate the impression of reality in theatre.

242. The authors suggest that these daytime dramas constitute an “opiate of the masses [and they form] a complex relationship with the societies they depict” (ibid., pp. 337-8).

243. Leal (1990, p. 24) states that, in Brazilian society, the television is “the most important element among the set of objects in a home of the working-class.” Leal and Oliven suggest that the telenovelas that these devices broadcast “envelop in a mythical feeling” that blurs the lines between what is lived and what is fictional (1988, p. 83).

244. See the exterior of the city environment page 2. The importance of television throughout the story is particularly evident in the Father of Pragmatism’s world.

In *Saints of Paradox*, the ‘performance’ of Elza and Euclides is dependent on the narrated monologues of the saints. Their stories change subtly with each narrator (both in action and emphasis) and in line with this, so too do the embellishments on the stage that they occupy.

## The proscenium arch

*Saints of Paradox* may be seen as a series of environments constructed behind an invisible (and sometimes visible) proscenium arch (Figure 4:15 - p. 135). This approach establishes a situated perspective which, although it can be adjusted using parallax devices in an app, means we cannot move from a central, frontal view of each environment. It is as if we are locked into one place; we can stand or sit, tilt or skew, but we can never significantly alter our perspective on the scene. Because of this, we remain an external audience observing a set periodically populated by theatrical performances. Our physical self cannot invade the space of the illustration, we can only watch attentively in front of it. However, our remote position viewing the whole compositional space is slightly negotiable because by using an mobile device we can get closer to the action (in the manner of a camera in cinema) by moving the device screen around the space of the illustration.

## The theatricalisation of performance

In *Saints of Paradox*, the acting style is exaggerated because as a director I sought to reference certain conventions of Brazilian ‘soap opera’ and *telenovelas*.<sup>240</sup>

In these dramas, performers reach beyond naturalism<sup>241</sup> to embrace a stylised, slightly theatricised portrayal. Significantly, the actors’ performances simplify emotional states and can appear overly expressed.

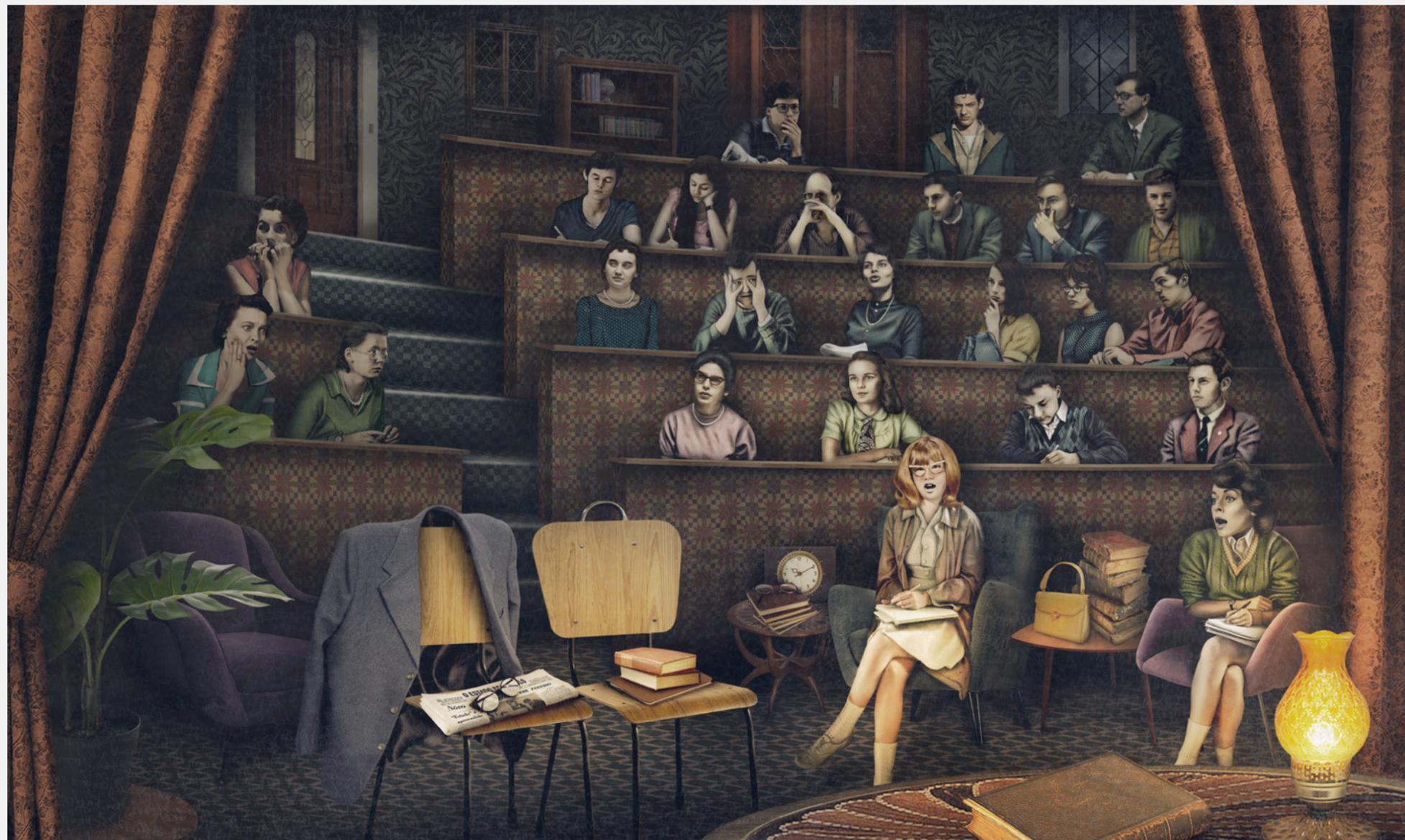
Slade and Beckenham (2005, p. 338) argue that soap operas and telenovelas “mimic” rather than portray real life.<sup>242</sup> Personifying “romantic, domestic and moral issues” (ibid., p. 340), they feature a distinctive acting style that elevates a kind of ritualising of emotion. As serial melodramas, these narratives are not concerned with subtle layering of feeling because they do not play out in the discrete attentive world of cinema; instead they focus on being immediately obvious because they are broadcast into domestic living rooms that Ellis (1982) describes as environments of constant distraction.

In *Saints of Paradox*, the television that screens these dramas has become an essential part of Elza’s world. It occupies a special place, next to Euclides’ photograph. In the dramas that reach Elza, Lean and Oliven (1988, p. 98-99) suggest, “fiction and reality overlap and separate in narratives [that become] incorporated as part of histories”,<sup>243</sup> and constitute, new “meaningful realities” (ibid.). Outside, we see the cables that carry these narratives into people’s living rooms, strung between buildings in the city.<sup>244</sup>

Given the significance of these dramas and their distinctive acting style, I made a directorial connection, because both the performances of life and the syncretic world the actors occupy are not natural; they are stylisations of meaning. The saints, when they move into life, use ritualised movements; they bless and caress and watch suspended time with gestures that are ‘un-natural’. Given that Elza and Euclides are ‘actors’ in the saints’ stories, I subtly aligned them with the narrators’ ‘ritualised woodenness’ and created a sense of them being cut and pasted into assembled worlds. Here, they are unable to express authentic emotions and, therefore, are reduced to a style of performance that alludes to tropes of artificiality prevalent in the broadcast narratives that surrounded me in my youth.

FIGURE 4:15.

Page 4's pre-AR activated environment showing a proscenium curtain, slanted floor and backdrop (*skênê*) in front of which the world operates. All of these features are indicative of set design for conventional theatre. The layered walls and patterned floors create a single point perspective. Within this, action is always constrained. We do not see one character walk off stage or become masked by another. Elza and Euclides, when they appear, are always visible and always proportionally the same.





+ chapter 5 +

chapter 5

# Conclusion

# 5

## + The nature of questions

At the centre of this thesis lies the design of a story.

In 1997, the Nigerian poet Ben Okri said “It is in the creation of a story, the lifting of a story into the realms of art – it is in this, that the higher realms of creativity reside” (1997, p. 119). Perhaps he was speaking here of something beautiful, something beyond entertainment, that might touch the human condition both through the intricacy of its structure and the uniqueness of its aesthetic. *Saints of Paradox* attempts to do this.

In designing this work an inquiry has been exercised across 50 months by four interconnected questions:

- 1 **What is the potential of AR, film, illustration, animation, sound and app design in the development of an interactive, digital narrative?**
- 2 **How might the interaction between story elements be used to explore relationships between what is real and what is imagined (within the construct of *realismo maravilhoso*)?**
- 3 **What is the potential of polyvocal narration in an AR picture book, such that a reader might encounter complementary but diverging interpretations of a baseline narrative?**
- 4 **... and how might the concept of photomontage be expanded within the realm of AR, such that a relationship might be drawn between syncretism and parallaxical illustration?**

These questions have challenged my thinking and led me into both conceptual and technological territories I had not imagined when I began the study. They forced critical and artistic correlations between ideas in a process of reflective critical practice. As such, the final book became the result of innumerable experiments.<sup>245</sup> Central to these has been the drawing of relationships between abstract ideas like *realismo maravilhoso*, syncretism and polyvocality - and the way such things might shape a story told largely in realms that reach beyond the borders of the written word.

### THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

The thesis is a distinctive form of research. The word ‘research’ comes from old French, *rechercher*, meaning “to seek” or “to search something closely” (Tavares & Ings, 2018, p. 11). Research is normally expected to be systematic and to include “a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research” (The Guide

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245. Thus, the thesis is not simply an exegesis and an interactive book, but a critical journey of discovery that gives voice to itself through practices and exegetical writing.

to the Research Grant Scheme for the UK Council, 2019, p. 9). However, artistic research is rarely systematic. Indeed Heard (2010, p. 81) has suggested that designers undertaking advanced research degrees engage with research practices that are often “experiential, intuitive, and open-ended.”

When writing this exegesis, I was aware that a linear reading can suggest a clean chronology of iterative experimentation and discovery. However, this is not entirely correct. In the thesis, experimentation served to create an internal dialogue between me the practitioner and emerging discoveries, so the research may be more correctly conceived of as a matrix of unstable, moving, intersecting levels. This meant that I needed to trust the heuristic process even though I was sometimes uncertain about the direction in which I was traveling (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Ings, 2011; Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Ventling, 2018).

## + Contribution to knowledge and understanding

It is traditional at the conclusion of a thesis for a researcher to discuss the study’s contribution to knowledge. However, I suggest that artistic research might do more than this; it might also contribute to understanding.

Understanding, Scrivener (2002*b*, p. 11) argues, provides “deep insights into emotion, human nature and relationships, and our place in the world”, but it also provides insights into practice. As far back as 1996 the UK Higher Education Funding Councils argued that, for artists, research might be conceived of “as an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge *and understanding* [my emphasis]” (HEFCE, 1999, p. 5). So, while knowledge as

explicit outcomes might be identifiable, there might also be understanding that for the researcher occurs through “the invention of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights” into one’s own practice (ibid.).

The study has built on my history of professional design practice, but it has extended my storytelling into the complex realm of polyvocality. This has resulted in my having to design finely tuned balances between voices so no narrator might gain precedence over another. I also had to navigate a base line narrative, so it remained delicately positioned between the readable and the mysterious.

The study has also led me to a deeper understanding of the world in which I grew up. I have come to appreciate complexity and nuance in Brazilian literature and to understand why many of the narratives that I consume contain a distinctive mixture of suffering and beauty. At the heart of this I have come to understand the power of paradoxical narrative. For a visual communication designer trained to communicate didactically in aesthetically consumable ways, this was a revelation. To work with paradox, I had to learn to trust. I had to draw richly on the unknowable and the indistinct. In this process I came to understand in an embodied way, Keats’ notion of negative capability, where “a man [sic] is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason” (1958, p. 193). It was from these uncertainties that I grew to understand another level of design that is more nuanced, more intricate and deliberately open to multiple readings.

These personal understandings aside, it is also useful to consider what contributions to knowledge the study might claim.

First, *Saints of Paradox*, as a designed artefact, contributes to the field of polyvocal storytelling

through its construction of a complex, AR activated, interactive narrative. Its form expands on the exercising of interactivity and immersion inside a sequential, print based-narrative. As such, it contributes a readable artefact that embodies and extends the thinking of researchers like Green and Jenkins, 2014; Laurel, 1991 [2014]; Ryan, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006; and Murray, 1997.

Second, the thesis offers a contribution in both its practice and exegetical writing, to considerations of *realismo maravilhoso* as a culturally distinctive narrative form. In doing so, it contributes a contemporary, transcultural and decolonial narrative that draws on distinctively non-Western epistemologies.

Third, the thesis demonstrates how a bridge might be made between an abstract theological concept like syncretism and an illustrative style that draws upon conventions of photomontage. The artistic work then demonstrates how a reconceptualising of parallax (as a technical mechanism) can be used to emphasise spatial disruption and embellish meaning and atmosphere in a *realismo maravilhoso* text.

## + Further Research

Arguably, it is not the purpose of artistic research to draw a definitive line around where research ends. Because practice grew out of accrued knowledge, the research may be seen as an iteration of complex thinking used to address a series of questions. Because I conceive my research as a living phenomenon, there is always a set of trajectories that will lead to further inquiry. On one level these may relate to the artefact itself and on the other, they may relate to expanding and disseminating knowledge surfacing from it. Accordingly, I will discuss two trajectories. The first concerns refinements to *Saints of Paradox* as a more developed and internationally marketable text and the second relates to publication of written thinking, conference papers and educational initiatives.

### THE ARTISTIC WORK

I intend to adapt editions of the work to suit the cultural potential of the project so, initially I will translate the story into Brazilian Portuguese. This will require finding Brazilian actors to perform the saints' voice-overs. Although I believe that the book is accessible to non-Brazilian readers, I suspect that some of the subtleties and references within it may have a different resonance with people whose cultural and social history has been the source of and inspiration for the work.

I also intend to create more interactivity within the illustrations themselves, so they can respond more sensitively to 'handling' that will trigger both sound and movement. This of course, requires some fine tuning because I need to hold at the core of the work, the power of a polyvocal story. Environmental effects will be introduced to enrich the nature of characters within the work, not to turn the storyworld into an interactive game.

After the alterations, I am also planning to publish the *Saints of Paradox* in a mass producible format, accompanied by the downloadable app. I also plan to extend the book into an installation of research work in a gallery. This is because I believe that the thinking behind work may be of interest as well as the final outcome (especially in an environment where artistic practice has been conceived as research in degree education). While such an exhibition can be facilitated by the University, outside of AUT, I intend to approach the Auckland Museum,<sup>246</sup> Auckland City Art Gallery and Art Space with a view to discussing an exhibition of large printed pages where 'readers' can use mobile devices and the downloadable app to interact with sequential environments. This is an exhibitable extension of the approach I took in the refinement of the project (illustrated in Figure 3:26).

I will also be entering the book in the New Zealand BEST Design Awards and the Australian Illustration Awards in 2020. My previous work, *Carnival Land*, gained awards in both competitions in 2012.<sup>247</sup> Both of these events are well-known Australasian platforms that feature a selection of commercial and conceptual practice, including student and professional work.

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246. The Auckland Museum is currently developing an exhibition interest in new forms of interactive culturally focused storytelling.

247. A selection of the Australia Illustration Awards 2012 winners is available at: <https://www.illustratorsaustralia.com/events/illustrators-australia-awards-2012-winners/>

## PUBLICATIONS

In November 2018, I published with my supervisor Professor Welby Ings an article, “*Navigating artistic inquiry in a creative-production thesis: the narrative and illustrative potentials of realismo maravilhoso*” in the bilingual, peer-reviewed *Brazilian Journal of Art, Design and Technology* [DAT]. This illustrated article considered the historical background of my inquiry, the role of the exegesis and artefact in a PhD project, and research methods employed in the study.<sup>248</sup>

As an extension of this, post-thesis, I have been invited to submit a ‘Graphic Essay’ to the DAT Journal where I will present the book as an original graphic production linked to the downloadable app. The book will be accompanied by a short contextualising essay written in both English and Portuguese. Because of the editorial and technical provisions of the journal, the article will be formatted so it is submitted in fewer than 15 pages.

I have also been liaising with *HyperWerk Institute* as they publish outcomes of their *Cultural Spaces and Design* project. The launching of their proposed book may indicate possibilities of working with the University in 2020. This will potentially involve a collaboration with the *Critical Media Lab at the Academy of Art and Design FHNW* in Basel.<sup>249</sup>

I also plan to submit an abstract to the BIRD – Board of International Research in Design for the 4<sup>th</sup> *NERD – New Experimental Research in Design Conference*. This has a deadline in April 2020. This conference is concerned with unique design practices and it has a focus on methodological, empirical or experimental research in social and cultural design.

I am also interested in developing parts of the exegesis into peer-reviewed articles. The first is a paper for the *Artech 2019 Digital Media Art Ecosystems* conference. My proposed research will

be integrated with the work of two other practice-led doctoral students<sup>250</sup> and we will discuss the concept and nature of practice-led research with an emphasis on relationships between the exegesis and practice, and the manner in which methodological approaches impact on the depth and nature of an inquiry. The conference, held in Braga-Portugal, promotes digital culture, interactive art and media, and extends to considerations of digital storytelling.

I am also planning to submit an article for the *Journal of Illustration*.<sup>251</sup> This is a double-blind peer-reviewed, international forum for research that considers contemporary issues and applications of illustration and visual communication. It embraces a range of topics including critical thinking relating to imagery and visual narratives, the potential of illustration in media platforms, and relationships between illustration and animation. The journal enables researchers to submit articles, research projects and visual essays about practice-led research, using one to six images.

Finally, I am interested in submitting a paper to the 2020 *Confia International Conference* on Illustration and Animation to be held in Viana do Castelo in Portugal. This conference has an associated double-blind, peer-reviewed journal that is concerned with multidisciplinary topics relating to digital illustration, animation, character development and narrative theory. As with the *Artech Digital Media Art Ecosystems conference*, the *Confia conference* will enable me to return to my first language [Portuguese] when I write up aspects of the research.

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248. I was first author of this article. It was published in a 2018 special issue: volume 3 (2), pp. 9-42. <https://datjournal.emnuvens.com.br/dat/article/view/85> The edition contained work by 13 doctoral candidates (second authored by their supervisors) in Brazil and New Zealand, who critically considered the concept of practice-led research in relation to a current research project.

249. This platform involves experimental media and projects by students and practitioners.

250. The other authors are Dr Marcos Steagall with his thesis *The process of immersive photography: Beyond the cognitive and the physical* [<https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/12251>] and Robert Pouwhare with his thesis in progress: *Pūrākau - mai i te mātākōrero ki te pūnaha hauropi matihiko*.

251. The *Journal of Illustration* is an international publication, with open online access. (<https://www.intellectbooks.com/journal-of-illustration>)

### ... and in concluding ...

Early in the development of this project I became creatively concerned with the idea of paradox. Faris (2004), contends that magically real fictions are paradoxical. Aldea suggests that this is because such narratives are “paradoxically dependent on realism for both the creation and the resolution of the antinomy between the real and the magic” (2011, p. 146). Thus, such fiction is dependent on external experiences of realism against which it can become distinct.

However, paradox reaches beyond this. Etymologically the word may be traced back to the Greek *paradoxon* (meaning *contrary opinion*). Inside this concept, lie rich possibilities for opposition and construction. My own world may be conceived of as a paradox<sup>252</sup> and the word may also be applied to describe this research journey. Inside the academy with its rituals of research, I have taken a critical inquiry through unstable ground. Some of this is factual and some of it fictional. Working heuristically I have pursued passion and possibility. This is not because I seek to disrupt systems for the sake of distinctiveness, but because I understand disruption as an approach to creative thinking.

Thus, my thesis is an artistic disruption. It is resourced by what can be accounted and what cannot. Through processes of thinking, I have searched for new territories and by encountering frustration, breakthroughs and failures, I have experienced that vivid sensation of excitement in the unexpected, that is the magic of discovery.

The thesis has explored the story of a fictional woman but it has also become the story of a designer critically exploring the marvelous through the nature of practice. Reassessing the potentials of design, new epistemologies and ways of thinking, I have brought together fragments of my past, my childhood, my culture, my language, my family ... and a nation I love

... and in so doing, I have lifted a story into the light.

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252. I am a woman from one culture who works inside another, a visual communication designer who creates narrative fictions, and a thinker who is attracted to structure yet seeks to disrupt it.



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+ appendices +

APPENDIX 1

*Saints of Paradox* Treatment

APPENDIX 2

*Saints of Paradox* Feedback on installation  
of iterative practice

APPENDIX 3

*Saints of Paradox* Production call sheets

# Appendix I

## 1964

Treatment February 2016.

Short synopsis

**After 50 years in mourning, an old woman who lost her lover in the 1964 Brazilian coup d'état, has the fragments of her life brought together by the statue of a Saint.**



EXT. 1964 BRAZIL DICTATORSHIP

DAY

We see transitions of manipulated black and white footage of the Brazilian dictatorship (circa 1964). A military colonel speaks from a podium. A page of a newspaper shows news clips. A wall displays photographs of disappeared militants. People march on the street in protest. We see a MAN walking past without noticing a pair of old shoes lying on the street. The shoes get kicked aside. People keep walking.

A Portuguese Revolutionary Motto plays in the background. The words paradoxically, are related to freedom of expression and nationalism.

SOUNDTRACK

Portuguese revolutionary motto with English subtitles.

## 1964

[Type flickers from 1964 forward]

*Fade in / fade out*

EXT. CITY 2000S

NIGHT

It's the 2000s. A camera travels around the city. Above a mixture of modern and derelict buildings the sky is littered with stars. This is South America. We can see silhouettes of people doing everyday things in each window that we pass. The camera approaches one of the houses. We see an OLD WOMAN looking sentimentally through her closed windows.



EXT. HOUSE

NIGHT

The OLD WOMAN closes the curtains.

EXT. LIVING ROOM

NIGHT

The surroundings show an accumulation of magically real objects hanging. We see odd religious items, old photographs and cobbled together memories.



In this reminiscently 1960s set things move in strange ways. We see a television playing propaganda from the decade in a relentless loop.



In one corner of the room an OLD WOMAN sits alone at a table. She breaks a piece of bread in half and fills her glass and then another with red wine. Across the table from her is an empty chair. She looks fondly at an old photograph of a man (on the wall). It hangs next to an altar of unfamiliar Saints.



INT.  
LECTURE THEATER 1964

DAY

We see a YOUNG RADICAL MAN sitting next to his YOUNG WIFE [the old woman at twenty] in a lecture theatre. This is the man we have just seen in the photograph. The theatre is full of other people listening to a propaganda lecture. Part of the speech is identical to the Portuguese rhetoric played at the beginning of the film. The YOUNG RADICAL MAN stands up and argues with the LECTURER. His YOUNG WIFE tries to hold him down. The YOUNG RADICAL MAN is forcibly removed by TWO MILITARY OFFICERS.

INT. HOUSE

DAY

We see the OLD WOMAN walking towards the altar containing three strangely constructed Saints. She lights candles and adjusts the flowers for each of them. We see that the saints move slightly without her awareness. One of the saints closes his eyes and the other moves his hands. But suddenly the last saint (with wings) catches her attention. As she approaches him she drops the photograph of her husband on the floor. It breaks. Distressed, she gathers up the fragments and carries them, crying, to the feet of the Saint. The Saint is poised for a moment, then he moves his wings. In his hands a shoe box materialises. The OLD WOMAN tentatively takes the box. She sits on the sofa and opens the container. From within it she takes a pair of distinctively designed male dancing shoes. The soundtrack from a 1964 propaganda campaign is still playing on the television in front of old woman. It increases in volume.

SOUNDTRACK

Propaganda soundtrack –  
merging to a 1960s Samba.



INT. CELL

DAY

SOUNDTRACK

Surfacing through the sound of dripping water in a cell, we hear the increasing volume of the propaganda soundtrack.

The YOUNG RADICAL MAN is wearing wings, sitting on a high, ladder-like stool in a cell. The cell is dark and there is a small-barred window above him. He is lacing up the dancing shoes. He stands and simulates a dance with another person. It unfolds with increasing confidence to the emerging Samba. There is grace and the joy of freedom in his dance. As he reaches the climax of the dance he suddenly flinches and we see that he has been shot in the back. He falls to the floor in slow motion, like an assassinated angel. The shoes dissolve and he becomes bare-footed once again.

INT. HOUSE

**NIGHT**

The OLD WOMAN is sitting on the sofa holding the shoes. She looks at them and begins to place them back into the box. However, the 1960s footage, interspersed with commercials of the period, plays incessantly. There is an escalation of tension. The soundtrack gets louder and more insistent. She glances over at the broken photograph of her lover and the cracks in the glass repair themselves. Above the photograph the Saint stands passively. Taking the shoes, the old woman stands and walks over to the television set. She bends down to turn it off. As she approaches, in objection, the reel plays louder and with more dominance. She flinches as if in a battle of wills, then she switches the set off. It expires in a burst of objection, the voice slowing to an indecipherable growl. There is stillness, then a single ray of light touches the woman and she bends down and places the shoes on her feet. The faint sound of a Samba fused with vaguely religious music drifts around her. The flowers in front of each Saint begin to open [time lapse]. The Saints turn to watch her. She stands up and begins to dance by herself. Slowly, and then with more assurance. The music builds ... rich and full of life. We sense she is dancing first with her lover and then by herself ... free. In the room the television dissolves.

The third Saint lifts his hand to his heart, closes his eyes and lowers his head as if in appreciative prayer.

She is free.

## Appendix 2

### *Saints of Paradox* Feedback on installation of iterative practice.

Gallery 2 St Paul Street Galleries,  
Auckland, New Zealand: 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

#### REVIEWER'S CRITIQUE

A collection of constructive points was noted in the written feedback given by reviewers after the installed practice on gallery 2.

There were questions relating to the idea of paradoxical Saints. Left asked:

Are these saints OF paradox, i.e. they oversee paradoxical process or generate paradox, or is what they do and espouse paradoxical?

My response was that the paradoxical Saints are embodiments of paradox in the diegesis of the story.

There was also a critique of sound design. Chooi said:

Although the initial impression I had when entering the space was akin to a spiritual experience (the atmosphere being dark and mysterious), it quickly faded as the background audio track was loud and intrusive. The audio track could be manipulated to sync to 'surround' the viewer for a more immersive experience.

Sinfield, who deals a lot with sound in his film poetry noted:

The soundtrack for the industrial type piece needs to be considered with possible more of a mechanical sound of machinery. I feel that the current sound is a misfit.

My response was that the ethos appeared to be working well as both a demarcation of individual difference and a connection between the saints as beings from the same storyworld. The volume can be easily adjusted and the location of speakers will be a significant decision in future work.

There was some useful discussion about the prototype catalogue.<sup>253</sup> Most people spent time with it, and

some took it from its stand and looked through it in physical proximity to the portraits. However, there was some concern with its necessity. Left said:

This is a seriously beautiful production, but I am not sure at this stage if it is necessary. The strength of the projected work stands strongly on its own and in some ways the booklet distracts the viewer into another quiet space that evades the story.

Upon reflection I think (based largely on observation), the cards as a catalogue may have compromised the interpretation of work. Few of the reviewers understood their purpose and their relationship with the projections. Although the cards posed an interesting conceptual approach, I will consider another way to use them more effectively. A bound book showing the process work and a brief introduction might more effectively contribute to the connection between the installation and wider thinking about it. This idea was prompted by Harris' suggestion that:

It would be great to use more pre-production methods – rough miniature models, sketches, animatics - to experiment with a range of approaches in a fairly quick, non-precious fashion.

Her suggestion was interesting and I will use miniature and animatics methods in the next phase of the inquiry.

There was useful feedback on the positioning of the screens and the use of space. In this regard, Chooi's observation was particularly interesting:

At first glance, there seemed to be an overload in visual stimuli. The panels depict intricate and detailed illustrations, which needed time to be viewed, digested and reflected upon. However, the transition of

the panels appearing and disappearing was too quick and this proved to be a disruption, rather than a support to the narrative. The experience was jarring as I had to wait for the panel I was viewing to reappear. Narratively, the three panels seemed too independent of each other as they did not form a cohesive bridge that lends to the overall storytelling experience. The only unifying element was the illustrative approach. The cycling of the transition between panels could be longer in duration to provide an opportunity for the viewer to properly assess the illustrations. It may be beneficial if the panels 'talk' to each other as a way to bridge the conceptual narrative and enhance the viewing experience.

Sinfield suggested:

Rather than the final works being projected on to a single wall these could be individually projected onto three separate panel type plinths. These could be positioned at differing angles and stepped within the exhibition space giving the viewer a more interactive approach to the work. The amount of time that each one plays for is too brief and could benefit from staying on one or two seconds longer. This would also help in the transition from one frame to the other. Perhaps there needs to be a point where for a brief period both illustrations are seen at the same time.

... and Clarke noted:

The three images were all the same height and hung with even spaces in between the individual pieces. Perhaps a less symmetrical approach to the installation may be more in sympathy with slightly rhizomic internal structure of the work.

Upon consideration I realise that considerable experimentation needed to be employed to come up with a design that suits the polyvocal nature of the narrative that will become the base of the work. Although the positioning of the screens was limited by the technical difficulties around space and equipment, I agree that the time spent on each saint could be improved. The pace will need to change considerably with the narration allowing for the independence of panels while creating a dialogic experience. A rigorous process of pre-production in form of miniature, treatment and moodboards will be put on place for the next iteration of the research.

At this stage in the research iconography was a significant concern and both Left and Clarke [visual artists] offered interesting critique. Left observed:

There are obvious references to aspects of the history of still-life – particularly symbolic, allegorical genres in Medieval, Netherlandish art etc – that also connect with other cultural practices. I found it very interesting to see your work present collage not solely from an aesthetic, technique position but maybe as reality itself being a collage and over-layering of actual and virtual, real and fantastic dimensions.

Clarke noted:

Currently all three personalities are seen with a similar palette, light source, tone, composition of the central figure, background foreground relationship etc. Perhaps small shifts in the form could potentially create more individuality in these subjects ... perhaps an exploration of alternative light sources, a stronger use of shadow or the use of chiaroscuro on individual works ... these small shifts while having the potential to create a radical difference between the

personalities could be made without losing your visual signature. The images are constructed using digitally manipulated collage. This approach takes collage full circle back to the aesthetic of realist oil painting with its seamless, velvet surfaces (which Picasso and Braque reacted against in their early collages), which revealed the process of making on the surface of the work. This digital approach to collage obviously has many implications in terms of representation which will need to be discussed.

Both of these reflections were rich and raised issues I had hitherto not considered. I will look in more detail into the 'atmosphere' of each saint, while maintaining the relatively successful cohesive reading of the work. This may pose challenges to the aesthetic of the film and exegetic writing around the project. I will also experiment with different colour schemes and lighting.

I think that this iteration of the work utilises disjoint perspectives, light sources and shadows that successfully create a distorted sense of reality, which is suitable in reinforcing ideas around the *realismo maravilhoso*. While my signature needs to be preserved, I will begin by increasing disparities in the work (form, perspective, lighting and representation). Also, a theoretical understanding of collage — a medium that often focuses on the flatness of imagery — needs to be reexamined. The term 'photomontage' might be a better term because it tends to convey a more concealed combination of elements.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES OF SPACE, PROJECTION AND SOFTWARE

In critically reflecting on the work and its installation I would make these additional observations:

### Projection

While setting up the test space some technical difficulties were encountered indicating problems with the selection of space and use of equipment. There are significant issues with projection when one wants high levels of image clarity. Without a full blackout space, light compromises the quality of colour and definition. This also draws attention to the space instead of allowing us to focus on the projections.

### Software

Working with three projectors linked using Softwares PVP and *Millumin* software posed some distinct problems. The version of PVP supplied by the University was outdated and the set-up of equipment was 'clunky' and often not responsive. Software *Millumin* seemed to be more effective in installations allowing more than six screens connected at the same time. However, the software required a better computer operating system and adapters. This was solved during the installation but the process of trial and error was time consuming. Software *Millumin* seemed to work well in this kind of installation.

### Scale of the projections

Scale considerations were complex. I can see that large projections are effective because the saints are comparatively the same proportion as the viewer and this gives them a powerful presence as narrators. Large scale projection also means that details within the work are clear. Some feedback from the audience noted similarities to stained glass windows and experiences when being in a church (Chooi, Clark, Left).

The stained glass association was not something I had anticipated but it may be useful. I am sure that I will continue to work with large projections, although I need to experiment with both portrait and landscape dimensions, especially regarding potential relationships between narrators and the story they narrate.

### Polyvocal Narration

Spatial considerations were complex and I am still not resolved on how I might move forward in structuring the narrative as a polyvocal installation. There will be logistical issues with installing projectors so they are invisible in the room. I have also been made aware that I must consider how much I want viewers to move when spatially immersed in the story. I also should consider how I balance polyvocal distinctiveness with narrative continuity.

This will require some more experimentation. I will try adjacent projections or projections positioned on other walls, but also possibly split the screens or position them above the audience, so they can get closer without interfering with the projection. Another possibility is to try all of the elements in one screen but with static and moving elements.



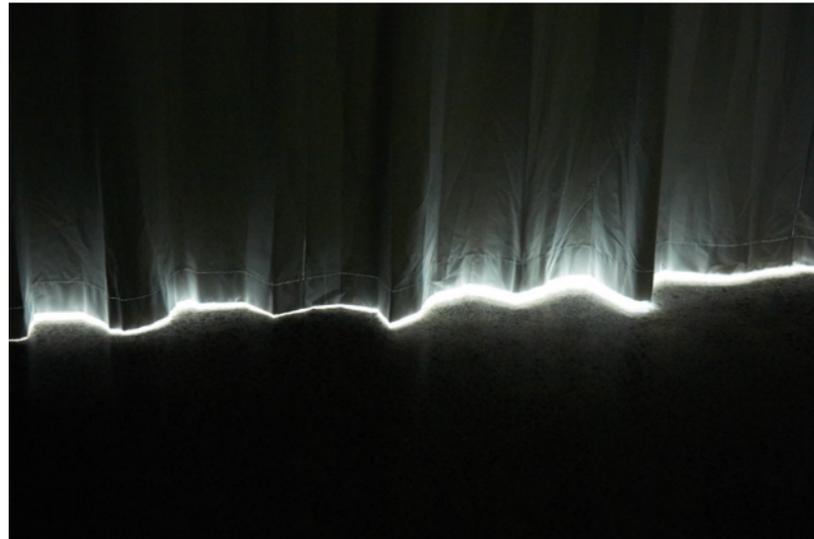
*Distribution of projectors, speakers  
and people walking in front of screens.*

The gallery didn't provide suitable equipment to display the projectors and speakers in an appropriate manner. Projectors had to be aligned on plinths and directed to the wall, instead of hanging from the roof. This caused problems in the movement of the audience, direction of sound and people walking in front of the screen during the installation.



*Tapes on projectors.*

The vertical layout of videos compromised the direction of projectors during the installation. Not only the projectors couldn't be rotated vertically, but also I required 'tapes' on the lens to mask the 'halo' around the work.



*Curtains.*

White walls and certain light coming from curtains affected the colour spectrum of imagery and darkness of room.



*Installation test with PVP software.*

The installation of screens using this software was unattractive and inefficient. Four computers were connected using a number of different cabling systems.

# Appendix 3

**SUNDAY**  
**12<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 2018**  
**6.30AM**  
**CREW CALL**

*Any inquires contact:*  
**First AD:**  
 Chen Chen 027 3202 565  
**Director / Producer:**  
 Tatiana Tavares 021 588 346

**ADDRESS:**  
**AUT WE Building**  
**Art and Design:**  
 Green Screen Room: Level 6 - WE  
 27 St Paul St, Auckland, 1010  
*off Symonds & Wakefield Street*

**Crew:** 6.30am

**Actors:**

**Chrystal and Geoff** at 7am (or 6.30am if they want breakfast).  
**Ruth Dudding** at 9am (tea break available upon arrival).

The front door will be locked, so you will need to contact **Nicholas Monks (021 269 7364)** so we will let you in.

**Parking instructions:**

Free street parking at AUT area on Sundays.

**Nearest parking:**  
 Civic Carpark: Greys Ave & Mayoral Drive, Auckland, 1010

SHOOTING DAY:  
 6.30am-7pm  
 Sunday 12<sup>nd</sup> August 2018  
**Meeting point:**  
 in front of WE Building  
 Art and Design Main  
 Entrance - by the stairs

**Breakfast:** 6.30-7am  
**Morning Tea break:** 9-9.15am  
**Lunch:** 11.45am-12.30am  
**Afternoon break:** 3.30pm

**Nearest Hospital:**  
 Auckland City Hospital  
 2 Park Road, Grafton  
 09 367 0000

**AUT Security:**  
 Ext 9997 or 09-921-9997

## Saints of Paradox

# CALL SHEET 1

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	
Director / Producer	Tatiana Tavares	021 588 346	taty.tavares@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
First AD	Chen Chen	027 3202 565	chenc3056@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
Continuity / lighting	Nicholas Monks	021 269 7364	nick.monks@gmail.com	AUT Masters Student
Cameraman	Hossein Najafi	022 6223800	hossein.najafi.nz@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
Costume Designer	Jaime Aylish Scott Christina Houghton	Jaime: 0273749180 Christina: 021 022 37414	Jaime: qws@0623@aut.ac.nz Christina: serpentlady@yahoo.com	AUT Bachelor Digital AUT PhD candidate
Catering	Rumen Rachev Carol Kodama	022 458 5659	rachev89@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
Documentation	Lisa Williams	021 676 798	lisa@lalisisa.org	Outside AUT
Make-up artist	Rachel Johanson Rosanna Meikle Shania Hales	021 280 0284	johanson_rachel@yahoo.co.nz	Outside AUT
Actress (Elza younger)	Chrystal Ashford	021667639	chrystal.ash@gmail.com	Outside AUT
Actor (Euclides)	Geoff Maynard	0212387150	gmaynardg@gmail.com	Outside AUT
Actress (Elza older)	Ruth Dudding	0275292121	duddingruth@gmail.com	Outside AUT

CAST	CHARACTER	CALL TIME (MAKE-UP / COSTUME)	CALL TIME (SCENES)
Chrystal Ashford (F)	Elza (younger)	6.30am-7am	9am (finished around 1pm)
Geoff Maynard (M)	Euclides (older)	6.30am-7am	8am (finished around 3.30pm)
Ruth Dudding (F)	Elza (older)	9am	12.30pm (finished around 7pm)

	Time	Scenes	Make-up	Dressing	Costume Details	Props				
1	6.30am	<b>6.30-7am: Prep and breakfast</b>								
2	7am-8am	<b>Crew prep</b>	7-7.30am: Geoff make-up (30 min)	Costume Chrystal sofa (1A): 30 min	Costume Chrystal: Mustard skirt, top	No props for this scene				
3	8-9am		7.30-9.15am: Chrystal make-up  (1.45 hour): (including retouch hand)	Costume Geoff dancing (1B): 15 min	Costume Geoff: Shirtless, suspenders, trousers, bare feet					
	9-9.15am			Costume Geoff sofa (2B): 15 min	Costume Ruth: Blue dress, brown cardigan, pearl necklace, earrings, shoes					
		9-9.15am: <b>Crew/actors Tea break: 15 min</b>		<b>9-9.15am: Costume Tea break: 15 min</b>						
4	9.15-10.15am	9.15am-10.15am Scene 3: Chrystal / Geoff Couple in the lounge	9.15- 9.30am: Make-up tea break: 15 min	Costume Ruth blue dress (1A): 15 min	Costume Geoff: Short sleeve shirt, trousers, shoes, socks Costume Chrystal: Stockings, shoes, skirt, top, earrings	<b>Scene 3:</b> Couch Old book Open newspaper Record player  I may need a long piece of green fabric.	<b>Scene 4:</b> 2 X Lecture theatre seats 1 X folded old newspaper Books Pencil Notebooks			
5	10.15-11.15am	Scene 4: 10.15am-11.15am Chrystal / Geoff Lecture Theatre  More time if needed for previous scenes.	9.30-11.45am: Ruth make-up (2.25 hours)	Costume Geoff lecture theatre (3B) / Chrystal lecture theatre (2B): 15 min	Costume Geoff: Long Shirt, trousers, neck tie, blouse Costume Chrystal: Long sleeve shirt, dress, shoes, tights.					
6	11.15-12pm	<b>11.45am - 12.30pm: ALL TEAM Lunch: 45 min</b>								
7	12-1pm	12.30pm-1.30pm: Scene 9: Ruth Turning off TV	12.30-1.30pm: Geoff make-up Wounded (45 min)		Costume Ruth: Light pink dress, pearl necklace, earrings stockings, black shoes	Broken / unbroken photograph of Euclides	Saintly prop Shrine table	Old 1960 TV Candle		
8	1-2pm	1.30pm-2.15pm: Scene 8: Geoff Prison getting shot	Removing make-up Chrystal (finished) Retouch make-up Ruth (if needed)	Costume Geoff shot (4B): 10 min		2 x Lecture theatre chairs Notebook x 2 Pencil x 2				
9	2-3pm	2.15-2.45pm: Scene 7: Ruth Picking photo	2-2.30pm: Geoff make-up Bullet Shot (30 min)	Costume Geoff martyr (1B): 10 min	Costume Geoff: Martyr: fabric Shot: Shirtless, suspenders, trousers, bare feet	Broken photo of him/ try with unbroken photo too.				
		2.45-3.30pm: Scene 8: Geoff Martyr	3-3.15pm: Make-up Tea break: 15 min							
10	3-4pm	3.30-3.45pm: Crew / actors Tea break: 15 min	Remove make-up Geoff (finished)	<b>3.30-3.45pm: Costume Tea break: 15 min</b>						
11	4-5pm	4pm-5pm: Scene 5: Ruth Her room	Retouch make-up Ruth (if needed)	Removing / Packing clothes Geoff and Chrystal	Costume Ruth as a saint: Fabric x 2 (head and body)	Curtain sideways Yellow Table Old clock	2 x red chairs 1 x couch	<b>Vase with old flowers 1 x fresh flower</b>		
	5-6pm	5pm-6pm: Scene 10: Ruth Final Dance	Retouch make-up Ruth (if needed)			Curtains Heart Prop Candle				
12	6-7pm	If needed more time for scenes	6pm-6.30pm: Remove Make-up Ruth			Packing Ruth Clothes				
13	7-8	<b>Packing</b>								

## Run Sheet

## Saints of Paradox

# CALL SHEET 2

**SUNDAY**  
6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2018  
**8AM**  
CREW CALL

*Any inquires contact:*  
**First AD:**  
Chen Chen 027 3202 565  
**Director / Producer:**  
Tatiana Tavares 021 588 346

ADDRESS:  
**AUT WE Building**  
**Art and Design:**  
Green Screen Room: Level 6 - WE  
  
27 St Paul St, Auckland, 1010  
*off Symonds & Wakefield Street*

**Crew:** 8am

**Actors:**

*Maya Dalziel* at 8am  
*Ruth Dudding* at 8.30am.  
*Jeff Gane* at 2pm  
*Ross Branningan* 2.30pm.

The front door will be locked,  
so you will need to contact  
**Lavinia Dassanayake**  
**022 033 55 91** so we will let you in.

**Parking instructions:**

Free street parking at  
AUT area on Sundays.

**Nearest parking:**  
Civic Carpark: Greys Ave &  
Mayoral Drive, Auckland, 1010

SHOOTING DAY:  
8am-4pm  
Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
**Meeting point:**  
in front of WE Building  
Art and Design Main  
Entrance - by the stairs

**Breakfast:** 8am  
**Morning Tea break:** 10am  
**Lunch:** 12-1pm  
**Afternoon break:** 3pm  
  
**Nearest Hospital:**  
Auckland City Hospital  
2 Park Road, Grafton  
09 367 0000

**AUT Security:**  
Ext 9997 or 09-921-9997

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	
Director / Producer	Tatiana Tavares	021 588 346	taty.tavares@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
Lighting	Marcos Steagall	021 566 230	mafoto@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
DOP	Hossein Najafi	022 622 3800	hossein.najafi.nz@gmail.com	AUT PhD candidate
Costume Designer Assistant / Documentation	Lavinia Madugalle	022 033 5591	creations.l@outlook.com	AUT Bachelor Visual Communication
Catering	Nicholas Monks	021 269 7364	nick.monks@gmail.com	AUT Masters VA
Make up artist	Margaret Petchell	021 481 215	margaretpetchell@xtra.co.nz	Outside AUT
Actress (MB)	Maya Dalziel	027 303 5229	mayadalziel@slingshot.co.nz	Outside AUT
Actor (FP)	Jeff Gane	027 204 5890	jefronz@gmail.com	Outside AUT
Actor (FO)	Ross Branningan	021 029 79844	ross.branningan@aut.ac.nz	AUT Lecturer
Actress (Elza older)	Ruth Dudding	0275292121	duddingruth@gmail.com	Outside AUT

CAST	CHARACTER	CALL TIME (MAKE-UP / COSTUME)	CALL TIME (SCENES)
Actress (MB)	Maya Dalziel	8am	9am (finished around 10am)
Actor (FP)	Jeff Gane	1.30pm	2pm (finished around 3.30pm)
Actor (FO)	Ross Branningan	10.30am	1pm (finished around 2.30-3pm)
Actress (Elza)	Ruth Dudding	8.30am	10.30am (finished around 1.30-2pm)

	Time	Scenes	Make-up	Dressing	Costume Details	Props
	<b>7.30am</b>	<b>7.30am: Prep and breakfast</b>				
1	<b>8am-9am</b>	<b>8am-9am:</b> Crew prep	<b>8-8.30am:</b> Maya make-up (30 min)	Documentation, Actor's assistance	Green screen fabric for saints	No props for this scene
2	<b>9-10am</b>	<b>9-10am</b> Scene 1: Saints Maya - Saint of Benevolence	<b>8.30-10.30am:</b> Ruth's aging make-up			
3	<b>10am-10.10am</b>	coffee break	<b>coffee break</b>			
	<b>10.30-12pm</b>	<b>10.30-12pm:</b> Scene 9 and Scene 10: Ruth scenes	<b>coffee break</b>	Costume Ruth: 15 min (dressing)	Costume Ruth: Blue dress, brown cardigan, pearl necklace, earrings, shoes	Sofa 1960 TV curtains curtain bars heart Veil x 2
4		<b>10.40am-12.40pm:</b> Ross' aging make-up	Documentation, Actor's assistance			
5	<b>12-1pm</b>	<b>12pm - 1pm: ALL TEAM Lunch: 30 min-40min</b>				
6	<b>1-2pm</b>	<b>1pm-2pm:</b> Scene 1: Ross - Father of Orthodoxy	<b>1.10pm-1.40pm:</b> Removing Ruth's make-up	Documentation, Actor's assistance	Green screen fabric for saints	Big vintage book
			<b>1.40pm - 2pm:</b> Jeff make-up	Costume Ruth: 15 min (packing)		
7	<b>2-3pm</b>	<b>2pm-3pm:</b> Scene 1: Jeff - Saint of Pragmatism	<b>2pm-2.30pm:</b> Removing Ross make-up	Packing costumes First Scene	Green screen fabric for saints	No props for this scene
8	<b>3-3.15pm</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>				
	<b>3.15-4pm</b>	<b>Packing</b>	<b>2.45pm-3pm:</b> Removing Jeff make-up	<b>Packing</b>	<b>Packing</b>	
	<b>Packing</b>					

**Run Sheet**



+ THANK YOU +