



## ***Artifice***

**Written by: Matthew Purvis**

In the corner sits a heap of gears, motors and hair. It was here before you arrived. It will be here after you leave. It has a name: "Host." This is not its proper name and it is not its title. The title is "Artifice." Neither the title nor the name tell you what it is. Instead, they open a continually expanding index of which you are now a component. You are part of the indefinite proliferation of possibilities, but only part of them, a cog, a place holder, which could be left empty or assumed by another at any time for any period of time. Your presence does not animate this heap. In fact, the heap is quite indifferent to you.

You can conjure a set of instant assumptions about this heap. You can imagine it is an animal, or a metaphor for animals. You can imagine it is some monstrous figure lurking in the underground and hiding itself in the shadows. It is a short leap from there to speculating on its quality as a spectral part of the unconscious, as some manifestation of the repressed, the uncanny. Of course, you can also assume that it is a joke or merely garbage. And on and on... It doesn't matter because these are only meanings and meanings proliferate indefinitely. They have no end or beginning just as they have no real consequences: they are merely the special effects of meaningless processes, which serve to muffle the noise that underlies everything. A meaning is the qualification of a singularity for the purpose of transforming it into a digestible type, to give it an identity within the fauna of a babbling technocratic psychosis.

"Host" and "Artifice" are a couple and their relationship is consummated in a breath. Nothing breathes on its own. Everything that breathes is a parasite and all parasites are part of the libidinal programming of matter. Breathing is a mechanism for waste management, that is, for metamorphosis. The bodies of mammals function as filters for the circulation and transformation of gases. This metamorphic process is often culturally apprehended as a sign of life, a Turing test for sentience. Narcissistic humanity's exaggerated opinion of the significance of organic phenomena has caused it to sentimentalize this mechanical process. Consciousness is a gas, the chemical byproduct of machinery. In ancient religions it was commonly believed to be a sign of spirit, of the breath of God, and the animating force of creation. In our more scientific era it is taken for the signs of 'bare life', although machines can make it happen if the soul or consciousness are no longer available.

It may be that this consciousness, which possesses your body and through which the world is filtered, is a parasite upon this heap which serves as your host. It may also be that the image of this heap thrives through an indefinite proliferation in your consciousness which then operates as its host and attempts to domesticate it by according it significance. In either case, it is also the case that you are currently in a gallery, which hosts the heap. The heap parasitically lives off of the gallery, literally animated by the energy it provides. At the same time, the gallery functions as the organs of the heap, animating its breathing. But for all that, it is also true that the gallery is a parasite of the heap, since it thrives on the meaning it can animate from it and then extract for the marketing of ideas. And for all of that, it is also true that this heap serves as an organ for the gallery, as its mouthpiece, even if it is only the mouth of a ventriloquist's dummy. Such an indefinite proliferation is a product of the consummation of the relationship



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between the couple. The gallery and the viewer are both the child and the parent of this copulation. Both their orphan and their pimp. This general process of contagion and proliferation is the nature of artifice.

The production of this indefinite proliferation leads to the overproduction of meaning as a defense mechanism against the threat of neutrality. Indifference is experienced by the human agent as a form of violence. The embodiment of subjectivity - with the institutions, laws and the policing forces that underwrite its possibility - is the very instance of repressive violence. The stabilization of the subject through the infection of inchoate matter with significance is an act of domestication for the delusional stabilization of being. By means of the various cloaking and transmuting devices of artifice, the host likewise manages to parasitically thrive off of the subject's abreaction, constantly decomposing its solidity through its persistence as an absurd object, one with neither head nor tail, one which breathes but whose organs erase it within each instance.