

Thesis submitted to University College London  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE PHYSICAL AND POETIC  
PROCESSES OF RUNNING**  
**A Practice-Related Fine Art Discourse**  
**About A Playful Way To Transform Your World Today**

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2014

**PART 1.**  
**Written Thesis**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Kai Syng Tan, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## ABSTRACT

My practice-related Fine Art thesis performs a discourse of ‘trans-running’ – running physically and poetically, as subject and medium – as a playful way to transform our world today.

There are two components.

In my written thesis (Part I), I propose that trans-running enables us to claim ownership of the city and resist political control in the ‘real world’, as well as dodge online surveillance in the ‘digital world’. Running physically can cause the ‘runner’s high’, which I argue may create a euphoric, poetic mode of thinking applicable for the exploration of discourses. Since ‘discourse’ means ‘running from place to place’ in Latin, and as runners were historically ambassadors, I additionally propose the ‘trans-runner’ as the new ‘running-ambassador’ capable of activating new discourses and creating new knowledge.

A running-ambassador myself, I run back-and-forth between discourses. Apart from art and sport, I draw on the Chinese Daoist wanderers’ playful, poetic, techno-sceptic and transgressive ways to generate a playful, performative practice of writing and art-making.

Consisting of artworks online and offline, my studio practice (documented in Part II) is collectively entitled *Kaidie’s 1000-Day Trans-Run 12.12.2009-09.09.2012*. I play ‘Kaidie’, a ‘trans-runner’ who explores trans-running as a mode of art.

My entire thesis is an artwork that performs the discourses of the trans-runner. Mobilising ‘run’-related idioms, wordplay, alliteration, etymology, metaphor and analogy, my written thesis and artworks are performative. I invite you, the reader/audience, to perform trans-running yourselves, to better grasp it.

Trans-running aims to be trans-cultural, trans-disciplinary, transgressive and transformative. It introduces ‘running’ to the art world as a counter to the well-established tradition of walking, and as a mode of relating distinct discourses. Utilising non-Western and non-canonical discourses, my thesis contributes to debates about cultural difference. Integrating theory and practice, it seeks to contribute to the discourses of Fine Art research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have been ‘running’, in both its physical and poetic senses, all my life. Feeling un-free and un-happy since young has inspired the central leitmotif of restlessness in my 20-year career as an artist, and much of my 38 years as a person. Unable to ‘run away from it all’ in those pre-internet days, I made journeys of my mind by letting my imagination run wild. Dissatisfied with a growing body, I also turned to running as a means to run – govern – it. At 19, I left my island-state. This launched my life of being on the run, which has, in a paradoxical world, been largely supported by where/what I was running away from. In the face of such a ‘crazy logic’ of reality, the only logical retort seemed to be an absurdist view of the world. A sense of playfulness has since underlined my every move.

London was my first stopover. It transformed my worldview and artworks to such an extent that I have returned for more. The current leg of my odyssey – the undertaking of the PhD – has been demanding. Without the inspiration, guidance and friendship of my Supervisors, I would have lost sight of the finishing line. They have pushed me to test my own limits, and to explore new worlds. I cannot thank Professor Susan Collins, Mr Jon Thomson and, most of all, Dr Sharon Morris, enough. Sharon has been a most dedicated and generous coach.

Along the way of this PhD marathon, there were countless other people who guided and/or cheered me on, directly or indirectly. They include: Mr Grayson Perry, Mr. Teh-Ching Hsieh, Mr Jonathan Buckley, Professor Cheuk Yin Lee, Mr Ben Graham, Dr Joy Sleeman, Professor Su Jui Ling, Dr Jamie O’Brien, Mr Jamil Rzayev, Mr Keng Sen Ong, and Professor C.J. Wan-Ling Wee. There have also been numerous co-runners – collaborators and contributors – for my studio practice, online and off, such as Ms Claudia Tomaz and Mr James Odling-Smee. Then, friends like Dr Sarah Teasley and Dr Lucy Natarajan provided first-aid assistance to help me recover from my bruises and fatigue, while partner Mr Richard Wright has wiped off my tears, sweat and expletives when the going got tough.

This research was funded by scholarships from University College London and the National Arts Council of Singapore. Over the period of 2009-2013, I shared the message of trans-running in 63 exhibitions, conferences and publications, in the UK, Singapore, Brazil and Switzerland, supported by additional funding from the Slade, UCL Graduate School and Goodenough College. I completed 9 races, ran more than 7500 miles, made nearly 3000 Facebook ‘friends’, and welcomed more than 1.3 million unique visitors to my blog.

‘Homeless’ as I aspire to be, my blood-ties run deep. Brothers Mr Chin Hwee Tan and Mr Philip Tan have held my hands in all my races, while niece Ms Renee Joy Tan has been my Invincible Warrior of Happiness. My parents have supplied unconditional love and sustenance in the last 1000 days – and for nearly 4 decades before that. They have been the ones who opened up ‘10,000’ paths for me to explore, to make me happy, and to let me run off when I was unhappy – at the expense of their own happiness. They were also the ones who had brought me up with Daoist ways, and to live life with a sense of cheekiness.

I dedicate this thesis to Mr Tan Chio Lin and Mdm Ang Geok Aye.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **ABOUT THIS THESIS: RESEARCH AIM AND CONTEXT**

Walking has long intrigued artists and art researchers. Most people in what is commonly called the ‘art world’ are familiar with the practices of and writings about the Situationists, Richard Long and Francis Alys, just to name a few. Since the 1970’s, the world has experienced what British runner Sir Roger Bannister calls a ‘running boom’ (cited in Newsholme & Leech 1983, p.vi). The annual London Marathon welcomes nearly 40,000 runners, while 5 million viewers watch its ‘live’ broadcast (The London Marathon Limited 2013; London Town 2013). In the past decade, philosophers, novelists, urban geographers and neuroscientists have already begun to harness running in their research (Austin 2007; Murakami 2008; Latham and McCormack 2010; Mattson 2012). Yet, hitherto, a systematic study of the physical and poetic possibilities of running by artists and/or art researchers appears to be missing. The art world seems to be slow to capitalise on running as subject matter, and/or medium.

I have produced this practice-related Fine Art thesis with the objective of taking the first step to fill in this gap. My intention is to introduce running as a topic and creative approach to the art world, so that artists, curators, art writers and thinkers may explore it in their practice and/or research. The thesis itself can be understood as an example of how running may function as a rewarding field of study to a researcher who is also an artist. Synthesising rigorous research with dynamic art practice, my work examines some of the physical and poetic processes of running, and proposes that running may be mobilised as a playful medium to re-orientate the way we relate to the world today. I name my ‘new’ way of running ‘trans-running’.

## **ABOUT THIS INTRODUCTION**

This section is an overview of my thesis. I aim to introduce:

- how ‘trans-running’ refers to running both physically and poetically, how it functions as both a noun and a verb, how it is not just a concept but action and approach, and how both the subject and approach of this thesis concerns running;
- why I activate the prefix ‘trans-’ to describe this ‘new’ way of running, and how by ‘trans-’, I refer to its meaning as ‘across, to or on the farther side of, beyond, over’ (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.XVIII, p.385);
- how I use the term ‘transform’ to refer less to actual change, but a range of poetic approaches, including how we navigate, negotiate, manage, interpret, and impact our world. By proposing that trans-running may ‘transform’ our world, I argue that it can function as a stimulus to challenge us to re-think the way we do things, the same way a powerful piece of artwork may grant us a new insight about the way things are;
- how the term ‘world’ in my thesis includes the city, political state, the internet-mediated reality, the world-at-large as well as the realm of thinking;
- what some of the theoretical contexts of trans-running are, including the ancient Chinese tradition of Daoism, and why I have chosen to build my hypothesis through non-Western and non-canonical discourses. I will argue that these points-of-views are as important as dominant discourses in the art world, as well as emerging discourses

about running in the larger academic world, particularly because they seem to have been sidestepped thus far,

- and how and why trans-running can be a playful medium, and how and why the thesis has a playful approach. Instead of merely reading about or watching trans-running, you (my reader/audience) may join me (the writer, and a ‘trans-runner’ called ‘Kaidie’) to perform trans-running, and thus have a stronger grasp of trans-running.

Along the way, I aim to clarify the parameters of my thesis, such as:

- how it is a practice-*related* Fine Art thesis. This is explicit in the title of the degree, as well as the title of my thesis. It is not situated in the field of Art History, Art Criticism or Theory, nor is it a ‘practice-based’ research. My work constitutes more than a reading of secondary literature; its approach and outcomes encompasses practice and written research. I undertake primary research by creating artworks, including first-hand performances. In this introduction (pp. 24-33) and in chapter I (pp. 40-41; pp. 68-74), I analyse my research method. I aim to prove how my practice and research have a correlative, interdependency, and that its approach can contribute to debates about art research at doctorate level. In addition, I will argue, via my own practice-related research as well as via theories from the fields of pedagogy and philosophy, that practice can itself be a powerful source of new knowledge, and that it is limiting for traditionalists to insist on looking at the relationship between artwork and research as causal, or to privilege research over practice;
- how my focus is on running as an act faster than walking over a long, slow distance. I will proceed to argue that running may be a pleasurable and profitable process, too.

My intention is that these points will become clearer as the thesis unfolds. In the final chapter, I sum up my arguments. I aim for this work to function as a call for action as it alerts artists and art researchers to tap into the rich resource of running, by offering an introductory survey of the physical and poetic possibilities of running. I liken my role to that of a ‘running ambassador’ or a ‘forerunner’ of running in the art world. I explore a broad range of points through running; I explore running through diverse areas, too. My work aims to raise questions, and tease out or open up a new pathway in the art world.

## ***PHYSICAL AND POETIC***

The teachings of Lao Zi<sup>1</sup> (circa 600 BCE), the Chinese philosopher and founder of the way of life of Daoism, guide trans-running. Philosopher Martin Heidegger calls Lao Zi’s approach ‘poetic thinking’ (1982, p.92), which sinologists term ‘analogical’ or ‘correlative thinking’. One of Lao Zi’s tenets is the correlation of the human body with the world, which Daoism scholar Livia Kohn summarises as ‘world as body, body as world’ (1993, pp.102). Unlike Cartesian dualism, the Daoist ‘body’ embraces the mind and heart (1993, p.163).

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, Chinese words are romanised in the ‘*hanyu pinyin*’ system instead of the older Wade-Giles system (that is, ‘Daoism’, ‘Lao Zi and ‘*taiji*’ instead of ‘Taoism’, Lao Tzu and ‘*taichi*’) that ‘Western’ readers may be more familiar with. *Hanyu pinyin* is preferred by contemporary sinologists, being the system used in China today. It is also what I had been educated in, with Chinese as mother tongue. Yet, following philosopher J. J. Clarke, terms such as ‘Confucius’ will be employed instead of their *hanyu pinyin* equivalent, which may be too jarring for readers (2000).

However, instead of techniques like the martial art of *taiji*, I have chosen to translate this body-world ethos into practice via the mainstream exercise of running. Inspired by the running boom, I explore the physical and poetic possibilities of running. The phenomena of the ‘runner’s high’ is an example of how running encompasses the physical and the poetic. Running produces chemicals that can make us euphoric (Boecker et al. 2008). This ‘high’ can help the runner produce creative insights (Glover and Shepherd 1996, p.696). Code-breaker Alan Turing, for instance, conceptualised the computer in the middle of a run (Burfoot 2007). More generally, many of us have first-hand experience of running, and grasp how it can be pleasurable. After all, as soon as we could walk, did we not run about – until the adults scolded and stopped us?

## ***PLAYFUL AND PLEASURABLE***

Trans-running’s playful nature and approach is inspired by this running-induced ‘high’. I activate the word ‘playful’ in my thesis to denote various related modes, including a euphoric light-heartedness and light-footed-ness; a child-like, crude, ludic restlessness, and a paradoxical, absurdist worldview.

Lao Zi’s playfulness is another source of influence, as found in his notion of ‘*wuwei*’, which refers to ‘spontaneity’ and ‘playful freedom’ (Girardot 2009a, p.210). Throughout his 2600-year-old text called *Lao Zi*<sup>2</sup>, he enunciates the notions of being ‘restless’, ‘ignorant’ and ‘crude’ – like a playful toddler. Here, I quote a passage that I have translated from the scripture. It sums up Lao Zi’s advice of the attitude of a Daoist, and also captures the spirit of what trans-running aspires to be:

‘Like a child that has not yet learnt to smile, restless as if I have no home to return to. Everybody seems satisfied; I alone am insatiable. My mind is that of a fool – ignorant and stupid! Other people are clear; I alone am mixed-up. [...] Other people have their reasons for acting; I alone am foolish and crude’.  
(Translation from the Chinese by Kai Syng Tan, with reference to Lao Tzu & Lau 1963, ch.20)

## ***PERFORMATIVE: WRITTEN THESIS***

The playful rhetorical flourishes of the Lao Zi, also known as the ‘Old Master’ or ‘Old Child’, has inspired my own playful writing style, too. In fact, the ‘most ancient and most influential Daoist text’ (Miller 2003 p.132) is not a didactic manifesto, but a poem (Henricks 1990). In fact, so transgressive the *Lao Zi* is, that it is even described as ‘pungent’ (Wu 1997; Le Guin & Lao Tzu 2009).

Some of the playful writing approaches that I adopt in this thesis include:

- ... the mobilisation of wordplay, alliteration, correlation (metaphor and analogy), the etymology of words and run-related idioms. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) lists eighty-one definitions and conjugations for the word ‘run’ – which run across 14 pages (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.XVI, p. 250–264). Thus, I propose that ‘run’

<sup>2</sup> The *Lao Zi* is also known as the *Tao Te Ching* or *Daodejing*, meaning *The Scripture of The Way and Virtue*. The sayings of well-known Chinese figures are frequently simply referred to as their authors’ names.

seems predisposed for the generation and indeed proliferation of playful ideas. I consult a variety of dictionaries as well as books on the etymology of words, and use the meaning of words as a springboard to generate and develop my concepts;

- ... exploring a broad spectrum of themes through running: my aim is to reach out to as many artists and researchers as possible, particularly those who have not been interested in running. My intention is that they may feel inspired by the thesis, and even carry out further investigation in some of the areas that I raise in my work;
- ... putting forward my points in the form of a non-linear collage or ‘euphoric mapping’, instead of advancing the thesis by presenting a causal string of arguments: rather than ‘A therefore B hence C’, the sequence of arguments may be ‘A thus B, *and also* G and W (as they are correlated), and hence, C’. I scamper from one discourse to another, and write in an associative manner that aims to trespass the boundaries of disciplines, cultures and historicities;
- ... weaving in a layer of performativity in the text: my writing functions at a performative level in a number of ways. For instance, rather than a more formal tone, I have chosen to adopt a more intimate approach. I end my points with recommendations that I address to ‘you’, the reader/audience, or ‘us’, collectively. Like a ‘running ambassador’, I invite you to contemplate the possibilities of trans-running. Furthermore, throughout the thesis, I will be urging you to run poetically with me, that is, to perform the text by metaphorically ‘running about’ and generating your own collage of it;
- ... joining words with hyphens: I activate hyphens for several reasons. One is their literal – and visual – function to connect ideas, and to draw our attention to the component words. For instance, I refer to performance art as ‘body-art’, which relates it to the term ‘body art’. The hyphen also constructs a visual bridge between ‘body’ and ‘art’. It can also function as a metaphor of trans-running in how it playfully correlates disparate ideas. You may picture it as re-presenting the trans-runner metaphorically running back-and-forth-between the component concepts. There are other images that I would like the horizontal line of the hyphen to evoke, such as a road or course, or a cable that joins computers, as well as the meridian, which, according to the Daoist approach to medicine, run throughout the human body;
- ... being pungent: my pungency refers to Lao Zi’s sharp, caustic and unapologetic tone. Philologist Walter W. Skeat’s *Etymology Dictionary of the English Language* defines pungency as being ‘acrid to taste or smell’ as well as ‘sarcastic’. The word’s 17<sup>th</sup> century Latin origin ‘*pungere*’ means ‘to prick’ (1901, p.478). After all, the word ‘pungent’ itself seems to *perform* pungency, as it sounds pungent,
- and ending each chapter with something that I entitle ‘*Transition*’, which leads you to the following chapter. This helps to maintain the momentum of the text. At the ‘final’ chapter of the thesis that I sum up my ideas. Even then, I resist coming up with a definitive closure. Thus, I name chapter VI ‘Provisional Synthesis’.

You can read a text in Appendix IA of Part 2 of this thesis regarding how I have approached the *Lao Zi*. There, I examine such issues as its *transmission* and *translation*. The text functions as an assessment of my appropriation of the *Lao Zi* (and Daoism) as a reference for my thesis, too. Problems that I ran into as a ‘Western’-educated researcher in my own attempt to translate and re-habituate myself to Daoist ways – with

which I have been brought up in Singapore by my family – as well as why I have read Daoism largely through the interpretation of Western writers, are also explored.

My playful writing approach may contribute to the discussion of how a performative approach can function within the ‘world’ of a PhD thesis. Such an approach may also play a part in discussions regarding how a text may be playful yet maintain academic rigour and integrity, while staying accessible at the same time.

## ***PERFORMATIVE: ARTWORKS***

When it comes to my artwork, I invite you, the audience, to run with Kaidie.

*Kaidie’s 1000-Day Trans-Run 12.12.2009 – 09.09.2012* (hereafter shortened to *Kaidie’s Trans-Run*) features ‘Kaidie’, a ‘trans-runner’ who embodies the discourse of trans-running. As in the written thesis, multiple levels of ‘running’ occur within what I call ‘Kaidie’s world’. Apart from running physically, Kaidie runs figuratively across genres and media (performance, installation, cine-essay) and platforms (online, and offline, through the city of ‘Nondon’ which is inspired by London, where I was based while working on this thesis). To play Kaidie, I re-learned running. For 3 years, I ran everyday, and participated in several races. I took Global Positioning System (GPS) readings, photographs and videos of my runs, which became sources of my artworks.

You can see two types of examples of my artworks in the next pages. I refer to the first set of diagrams as ‘Correlations’. (Correlations 1-2) The first diagram shows the trajectory or course of our discourse of trans-running in the written thesis. The second diagram shows Kaidie running about and correlating the various discourses that I am referring to in this introductory text itself. You can consider these diagrams as non-linear, visual expressions, or poetic mappings via images and text, of what I am writing about. You can also regard them as thinking tools akin to concept maps that can orientate you as you read the written thesis. The next set of images are what I term ‘Figures from Kaidie’s world’. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 1) Here, Kaidie urges you to perform and experience trans-running with her. You will notice that Kaidie’s ‘voice’ is more irreverent and light-hearted than that adopted by the written thesis. These are merely two of the range of images that you will encounter in this thesis. As digital images, they are of variable dimensions. Many of them are screen-captures of my artworks published online, on my blog and other social media platforms. ‘Correlations’ and ‘Figures from Kaidie’s World’ are distinct from ‘Figures’ in the thesis, which are not my artworks but general images or artworks by other artists.

My artworks and written thesis are enmeshed in a dynamic interplay. Again, I invite you to ‘run’ back-and-forth between them.

Feel stuck, alienated and unhappy  
 but do not want to run away or hide;  
 subject of running not sufficiently researched in the art world

Problem



Running

Methodology



physically

poetically



Trans-running's messages of freedom  
 to generate creative correlations;  
 freedom in thought,  
 action and feeling, happiness

Correlations and Findings



Potential Impact and Further Research

YOU and your world;  
 different worlds including the  
 art world and PhD world

Correlations 1: 'The Course Of This Discourse'.



Correlations 1: 'The Big Picture'.

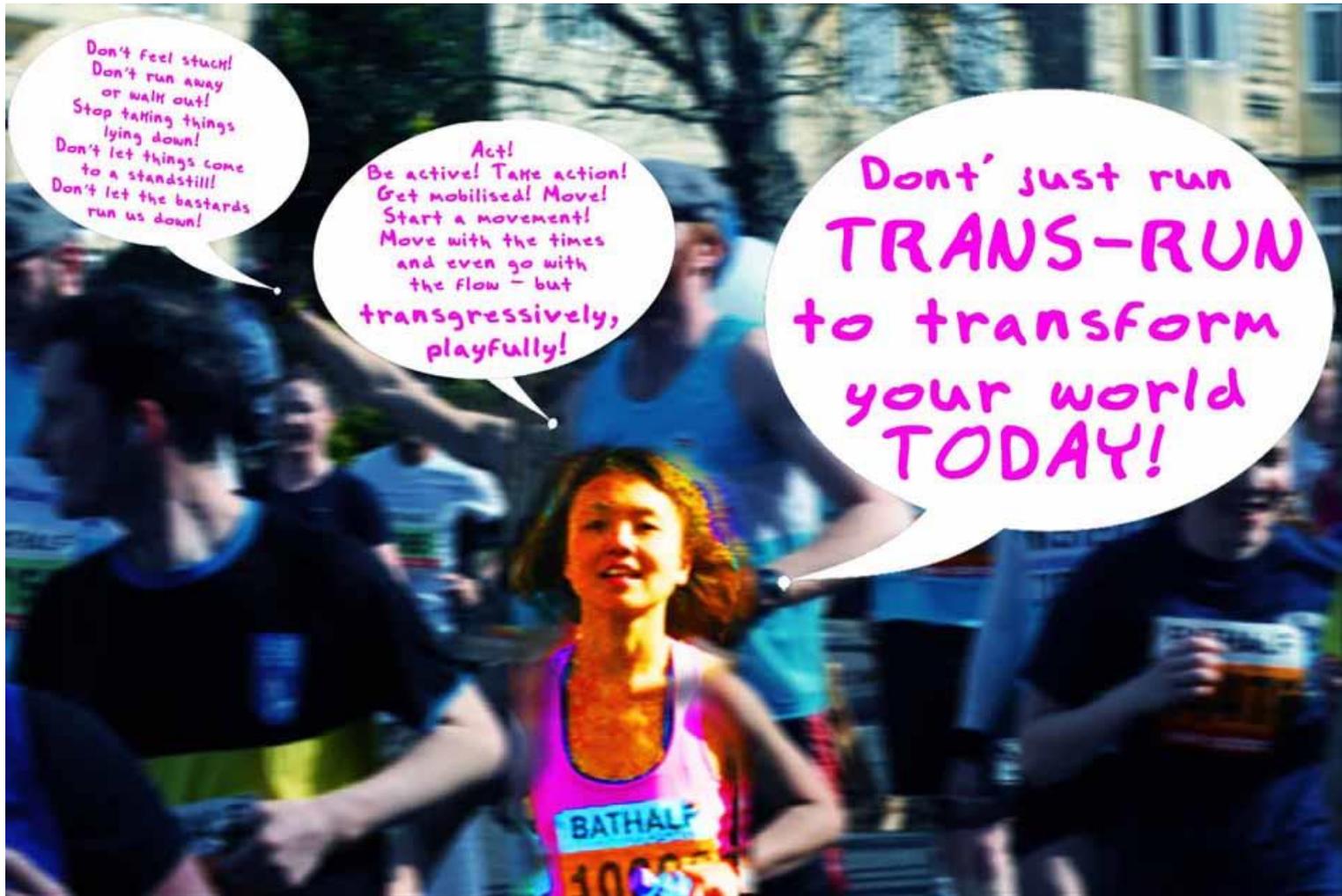


Figure from Kaidie's world 1: 'Trans-Run With Kaidie, Now!'

## ***PERTINENT: WHY NOW?***

Today, surveillance cameras relentlessly track our movements. This can make us feel disconnected from the city. Yet, the Situationist tactic of walking may no longer suffice as a tactic of resistance. Those governed by authoritarian regimes feel restricted, but cannot protest due to strict laws. Taking the body as a site of dissent, we may turn to hunger strike or even self-immolation, but such efforts can be literally short-lived. No longer nomadic, we may feel out-of-touch with nature, and become restless and unhappy. We may explore new territories in the worlds of dream, art, and even online, although the technophobic may feel ill-equipped. The internet's pervasiveness may make us blind to our gut instincts. Instead, we 'Ask Jeeves' or obey SatNav. Although yoga and meditation may re-align the body with the mind, they remain esoteric.

I propose trans-running as a playful act of transgression, that is, to 'break, violate, infringe, contravene, trespass against', or 'stepping across, go beyond the boundary or limits' of existing 'law, command, etc' (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.XVIII, p.402). Being high-impact, running may trump the Situationist's 'transient passage through varied ambiances (Guy Debord, 1958 cited in Ford 2005, p.54), and allow us to out-wit the intrusive gaze of CCTV cameras. Infusing running with spontaneity (*wuwei*), which Daoists conceived as an opposition to 'authority, government coercion and even to normal socialisation in values' (Hansen 2012), trans-running may be empowering. After all, runner-cardiologist George Sheehan conceives the runner as a rebel:

'There is a metaphysical lawlessness about running. [...] The runner follows no one's law but his own. [...] He despises authority and [agrees that] participation in government is fundamentally degrading. [...] He further alienates those who see the crowd as carnival where everyone joins in, becoming one happy, amorphous glob. [...] When he runs on the roads, he is making a comment about life. He is, in effect, criticising the life-style of everyone who sees him. [...] No wonder those who live by the rules, or live by community, feel threatened by him. [...]'. (1975, pp.44-45)

If the state is claustrophobic physically and ideologically, or even mocked as 'a regime that has excluded accident and randomness' (Koolhaas 2002, p.1011), then the playful spontaneity of trans-running may step in as a mode of dissent. Rhetorically, we may defiantly 'run' or 'run against' the system, 'let our imagination run riot', and go 'on the run', too. (Figures from Kaidie's world 2-3)

I aim to demonstrate that the performance of trans-running may act as a playful means to both celebrate and critique our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Referencing literature on running, the internet-mediated reality appears analogous to physical running in several ways. To begin with, this era of new media is marked by hybridity (Dewdney and Ride 2006, p.26). On a metaphorical level, the runner is as restless as they move about. Moreover, the internet and the runner alike are both location-independent. The runner can parody the intensity of the technology revolution, with their ability to advance with tremendous stamina, or speed and endurance (Dafter 2011). Not only that, they are armed with a unique '*sisu*' or 'strength of will' (Gotaas 2009, p.156). Walking, however, may not bring us metaphorically up to speed. As the OED says, 'running' is the movement of legs quickly at a pace faster than walking (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol.XVI p.250). Additionally, being 'slim' with 'a small trunk' (Sheehan 1978, p.241), the runner is, metaphorically-speaking, as compact as tiny handheld computers. Attuned to the body that philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu describes as equipped with 'a kind of intelligence' (1997), the runner may out-smart 'smart' devices. What makes running extra-ordinary is

how it is so accessible that ‘old and young can do it’ (Latham 2008a). Injecting Daoist wit and techno-scepticism into running may help us re-assess our relationship with technology. After all, Daoism has a love-hate relationship with technology. On the one hand, Daoism was inextricably linked to the sciences (especially in medicine), such that Daoism scholar James Miller (2003, p.12) correlates it with contemporary Western interest in ‘genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and cyborgism’. On the other hand, Daoist sages warned us – even in 400 BCE – against the ‘subtle doings’ of ‘ingenious contrivances’ (Legge 1962, p.320). If today’s world is ‘game-layered’ (Priebatsch 2010), and the authorities blame violent games for fuelling the 2011 London riots (International Business Times 2011), what better riposte than the ludic ways of trans-running?

In chapter I, I survey trans-running’s diverse theoretical contexts. It is beyond my interest as an artist and the scope of this Fine Art thesis to develop sophisticated analyses of each of topic I raise. For further reading, you may refer to the Bibliography. Furthermore, my Footnotes expound on areas that may be unfamiliar to your own culture or discipline. In chapter II, I apply trans-running to what I term the ‘real world’, which consists of the city and political state. I also argue that by living in a condition of ‘being on the run’ at the ‘world-at-large’, we may constantly revolutionise our lives. This chapter highlights the additional qualities of trans-running that, like its primary feature of playfulness, begin with ‘p’: *personal, political, poetic, philosophical and practical*. It also draws out how ‘trans-’ in trans-running not only refers to *transformation*, but how it aims to be *transgressive*, too. Chapter III applies trans-running to the ‘digital world’, that is, the world mediated by mobile internet. This makes trans-running *pertinent* for our contemporary conditions. I activate the word ‘digital’ to refer not only to the computing world, but the ‘digits’ of our feet (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.IV, p.653). Throughout the thesis, I italicise the words beginning with ‘p’ as well as words with the prefix ‘trans-’ that I associate with trans-running.

As a mapping-together of disparate discourses (such as Daoism, digital aesthetics and neuroscience), trans-running may arguably fill the lacunae that exist between them. With trans-running, I create a new way of running, and a new way of thinking about ‘running’, and as a new way to think about our world. These are the possible original contributions to knowledge of my thesis. In addition, trans-running may enrich discourses concerning the cultural tradition of walking, and be considered as its new extension. Besides, trans-running may add a light-hearted voice to certain discourses about technology that can be regarded as ‘overstatements’ (Heim 2000)<sup>3</sup>.

A note about the meaning of ‘world’: consisting of nature, heaven, earth, and a metaphorical ‘10,000’ objects, the Daoist world is a ‘dynamic creative harmony that is far more than the sum of its parts’ (Miller 2003, p.46). The term ‘world’ mobilised in my thesis is closer to its common usages, that is, the ‘sphere’ within which our ‘interests are bound up’, or where our ‘activities find scope’; our ‘sphere of action or thought’, or the ‘realm’ within which we move or live. (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.XX, p.556). My thesis explores only a few worlds, and analyse them as if they are distinct. Moreover, I have defined ‘today’ to the period circa 2009-2012.

Still, I hope that my thesis may offer you more than the sum of its parts.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of these may include the theories of Donna Haraway, Sadie Plant and Stelarc.

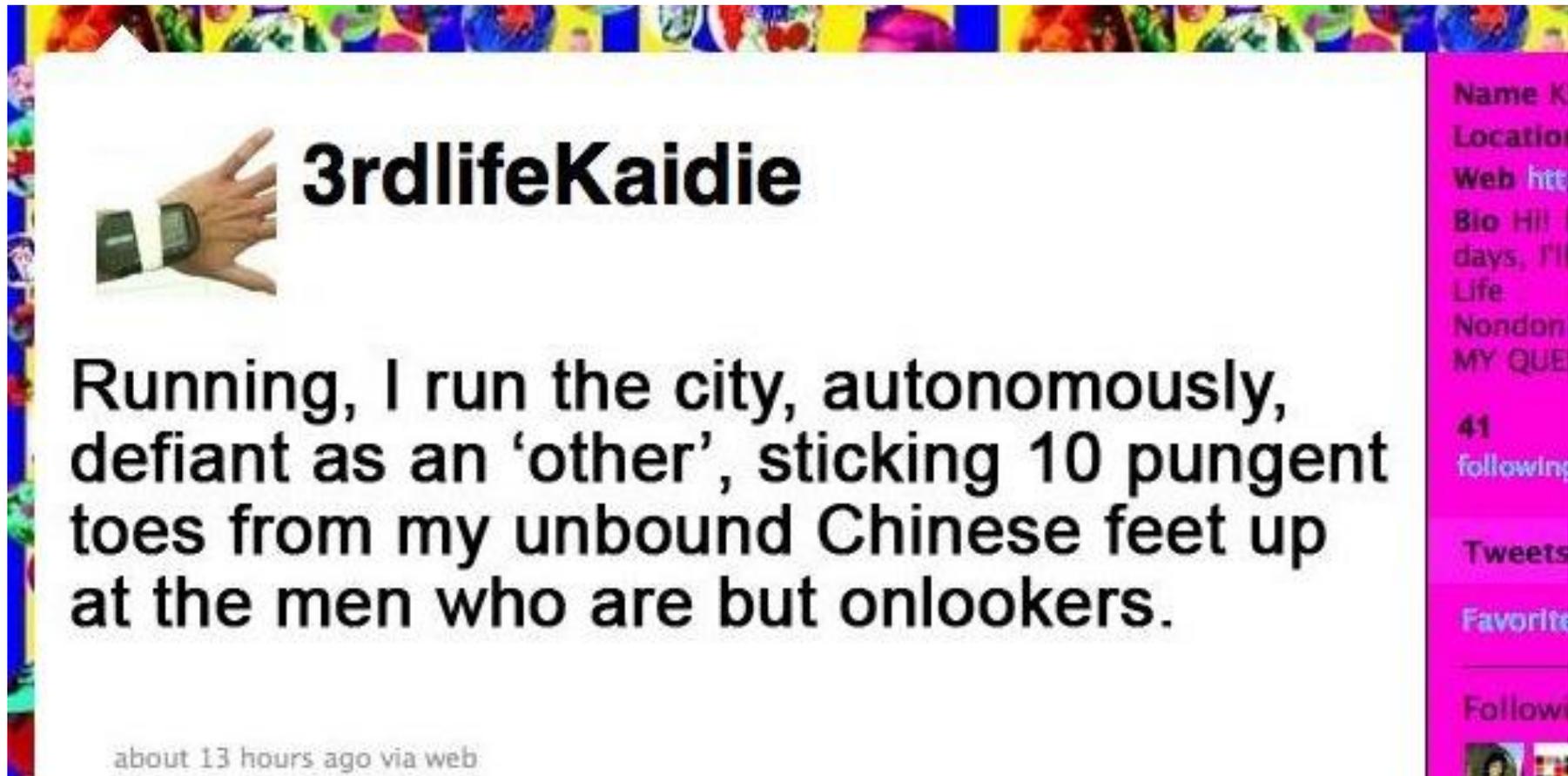


Figure from Kaidie's world 2: 'Autonomy'. Kaidie shares her playful solution to sexual harassment on the micro-blogging site, Twitter. (Tan 2011f)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> As of 2014, instead of <http://twitter.com/3rdlifekaidie>, please visit <http://twitter.com/kaisyngtan>. Also, instead of <http://3rdlifekaidie.com>, please now visit <http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie>, and instead of '3rdlifekaidie' on Facebook, the new name is 'kaisyngtan'.



Figure from Kaidie's world 3: 'Self-Governance'. Kaidie's 'wall update' on her Facebook. (Tan 2010i)

## RUNNING AS THINKING *PROCESS*

As you can see, I have constructed the concept of trans-running by correlating discourses from different disciplines. It was during my own performance of running as Kaidie one day, that I experienced an episode of the runner's high, and 'ran into' a creative insight. The epiphany was about how I could formalise the euphoric and creative modes of thinking that the runner feels during the runner's high, into a methodology that anyone may mobilise in their thinking in general.

As I returned to my drawing board and conducted theoretical research, I ran into several discourses that helped to reinforce my argument. They include the philosophy of poetic or correlative thinking and its characteristics of being spatial, processual, restless and open to possibilities (Hall and Ames 1995; Miller 2003; A.C. Graham 1986). Another was the word 'discourse' itself, which has a basic definition of a 'process of understanding, reasoning, thought' (Harper 2001b). What I found interesting was that, the word, which originates from around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, originally refers to 'running from place to place' (Blackburn 2008, p.102). Then, there is the historical fact that runners worked as ambassadors throughout Europe from the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century (Gotaas 2009, pp.9-22). Consulting the OED, I further learnt that the word 'run' is related to thinking, in that its 14<sup>th</sup> century definition refers to thoughts that 'come suddenly *into* (or in), to course or pass *through* the mind' (Simpson and Weiner 1989, vol. XVI, pp 252-259). The notion of running as associative is further supported by the definitions of run as 'to unite' or to 'combine', and the phrase 'run into' as to 'coalesce with' as well as 'to dash into or collide with, especially by accident'. Pulling these strands together, I speculated that the running-ambassador was not only transferring messages but activating discourses and even creating new knowledge as they ran from place to place. I developed my playful 'running' approach vis-à-vis what I call the 'world of thinking', as a feature of trans-running itself, and conceived the trans-runner as the new 'running-ambassador', or 'trans-running ambassador'. Since I cut across cultures and disciplines along the way, I add that trans-running aims to be *trans-cultural* and *trans-disciplinary*, which is potentially *profitable*, *transgressive* and *transformative*. Hence, trans-running, a hypothesis about running in the real and digital worlds, self-reflexively applies a 'running approach', which I argue can in turn be applicable for the world of thinking. The course I have undergone illustrates how trans-running adheres to the Daoist tenet of being a way that opens out '10,000' possibilities. I am like a child in its free-spirited running-about who makes new discoveries *en route* and undertakes yet new explorations, sidestepping annoyed adults who attempt to haul it 'back on track'. If you re-visit the diagrams labelled 'Correlations', you may think of them as visualisations of the spatial, poetic mode correlative thinking that takes place in this thesis, and Kaidie euphorically running about as an ambassador to pick-and-mix ideas. In fact, my role is akin to that of an ambassador myself, as I collaged different discourses together.

I explore the notion of running as a thinking process in chapter IV. In chapter V, I present arguments to refute criticism by thinkers and artists who misunderstand running as a process that is unthinking or uncreative.

My primary aim in these chapters is that they may demonstrate the potential that running can have as a creative medium within fine art discourse. This, alongside my arguments about the importance of the correlation between running and creative thinking, and how running may open up a platform for reflection and activity, may represent a substantial outcome of my creative and theoretical research. There are other ways in which my hypotheses in these chapters may make an original contribution to knowledge. John Rothfork, a Professor of English at Northern Arizona University, compares correlative thinking with postmodern discourses. For him, the latter's 'labored and over-wrought point' is plain in the correlative approach to thinking (1995). As an application of correlative

thinking, trans-running may open playful inroads to causality. If it cannot provide postmodernist approaches<sup>5</sup> with a run for their money, trans-running aims to offer some food for thought. Furthermore, with my activation of non-Western and non-canonical discourses, trans-running may contribute to the discussion of cultural difference. I hope that it can provoke us to, in philosopher J.J. Clarke's words about cross-cultural exchange, 'confront the assumptions, limitations and fractures in our own cultural traditions' (2000, p.11).<sup>6</sup> In a similar way, trans-running cheekily trespasses existing divisions between disciplines. Such a light-footed and light-hearted approach may irritate territorial traditionalists. By inviting the parties involved to question their own conventions, trans-running arguably generates new correlations, and hence, new knowledge. As a 'running-ambassador', I have collaged the discourses together with the same poetic spontaneity an artist may juxtapose images and texts in a film or art installation. My act of running-about may be considered as poetic, and may itself be regarded as an artwork. I argue that my discourse of trans-running resulting from the mixing-and-matching of discourses may also be considered as an artwork.

This is, after all, a *practice-related* Fine Art thesis.

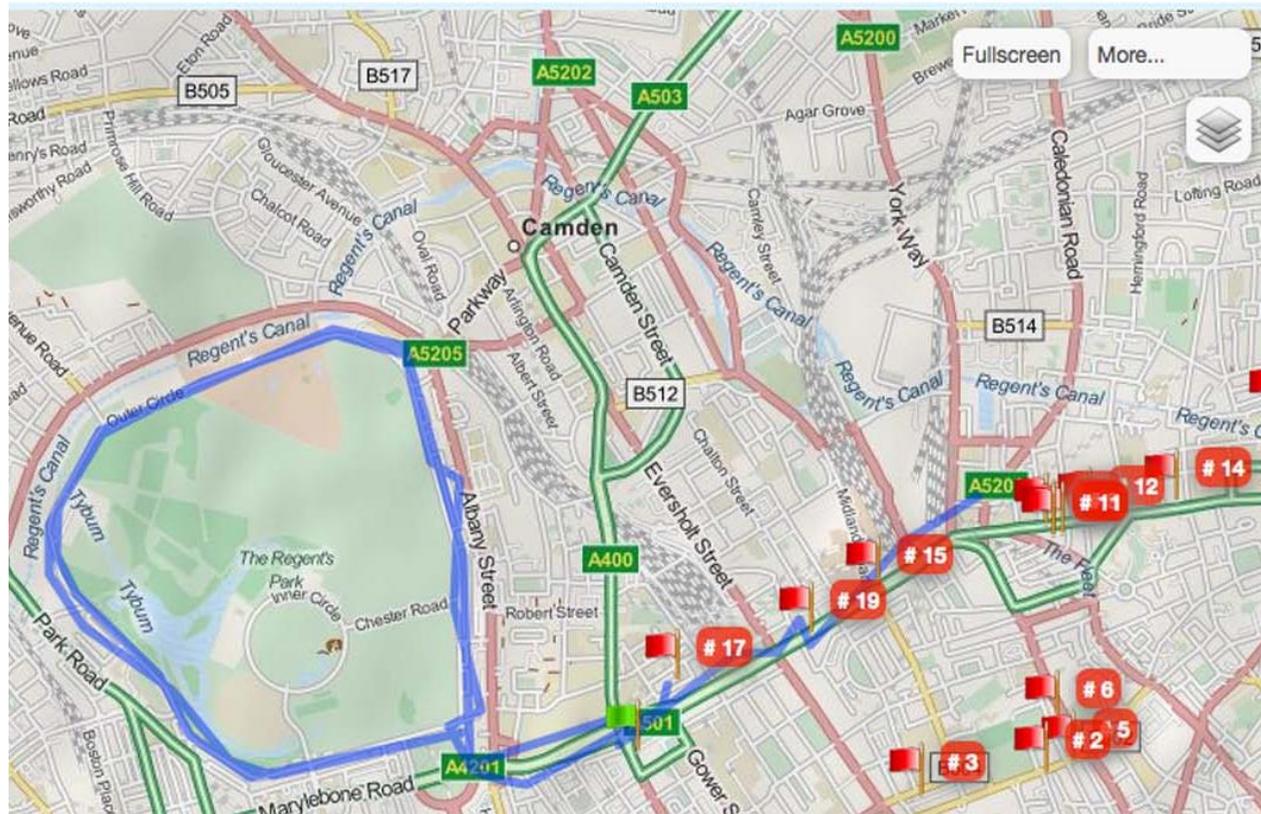
## **THIS PRACTICE-RELATED FINE ART THESIS**

The playful nature of trans-running is manifest in the absurdist premise and approach of my artwork. Together with my written thesis, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* constitutes my research method. They are interdependent and cannot exist without the other.

Within 'Kaidie's world', trans-running took place in many ways. While Kaidie lived in the semi-fictitious 'Nondon', she trans-ran everywhere for the duration of 1000 days from '12.12.2009 to 09.09.2012', in search of what was cryptically described as 'A/The Point of Life'. Kaidie ran physically in the real world. Being insatiable like Lao Zi, she ran figuratively too, by way of the artistic documentations and expressions of her runs, that run the gamut of genres and media (including photography, video, blog, maps, installation, cine-essays, and so on), both within as well as back-and-forth between the real and digital worlds. Audience members were invited to run with Kaidie in real life, or figuratively so, by 'following' her developments on her social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook. They could run back-and-forth between fiction and non-fiction, too. This is because 'Nondon' was based on the city of London. Moreover, 'Kaidie' was more than an imaginary character generated by words or computer effects. She was played by myself. For 3 years, I lived as Kaidie, and re-learned running as a sport, aged 34. Hence, art and 'real life' were enmeshed in a dynamic interplay. For instance, I entered the 2011 London Marathon as Kaidie, created a series of artworks, and raised money for a charity. In addition, during the 2012 London Olympics, I underwent interviews and training and was appointed by the Greater London Authority as a 'London Ambassador' – albeit 'in character', wearing a nametag that read 'Kaidie Nondon'. Yet, while the worlds of Kaidie and myself collided, parameters existed. Thus, the character had a name (Kaidie) that differed from mine (Kai). Moreover, her 'death' was already declared from the beginning. This is evidenced in the title of the artwork, in which her duration or running time was stated, as well as her name (a combination of 'Kai' and 'die'). (Figures from Kaidie's world 4-9)

<sup>5</sup> Some of these include deterritorialisation, rhizome and sampling. In their research on correlative thinking, Hall and Ames themselves align their work that developed by 'Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida, along with the new pragmatism of Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty' (1995, p.xviii).

<sup>6</sup> This is one of the reasons I have chosen not to refer to the works of dominant Western thinkers like Michel Foucault in my discussion of discourse and thinking.



## Tracks of 3rdlifekaidie



### About me

Hi world! I live in Nondon but run physically+poetically+offline+online for 1000days to seek A/The Point of Life. Where on googleearth is that? I die on 9.9.2012, and must get there THERE before that! Run with me, but run your own courses+discourses!

Website  <http://3rdlifekaidie.com>

Date of registration Feb 8, 2010

Total tracks 22

Country  United Kingdom

RSS Feed 

Figure from Kaidie's world 4: 'Follow Kaidie - but Run your Own Courses and Discourses'. A screen-capture of one of my artworks on GPS tracks-sharing site, GPSies, and consists of a GPS track of Kaidie's typical run at 'Regents Park'. (Tan 2010h)



Figure from Kaidie's world 5: 'Kaidie's Second And More Lives'. A cartoon composed of images of Kaidie's trips in the online world 'Second Life', in a collaboration with urban planner Chuthatip Achavasmit. (Tan 2010c)



Figure from Kaidie's world 6: 'From Non-Runner to Trans-Runner'. Kaidie runs her sixth race in Uxbridge, Nondon, November 2011. (Tan 2011b)



**Virgin money giving**

Start fundraising · Make a donation · About us · Raise more · Our community · Help guides

**Kaidie runs for SHELTER 2011 Nondon Marathon**

Fundraiser: Kaidie Nondon  
My page: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/3rdlifekaidie>

Hello world!

**\*\*2011 April17 Nondon Marathon: THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT! YOUR SPONSORSHIP SPURRED US TO THE FINISHING LINE: We came home at 4 hours 24 minutes 37 seconds. Please see preliminary report here. THANK YOU!!! \*\*\***

Thank you very much for visiting our fundraising page. We are running the 2011 Nondon Marathon for **Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity!** We will raise at least GBP£1500 - and we need YOUR HELP! This will be our 2nd full marathon, and the 3rd time we are raising money through our Life 1.0 running (The first was a 10km run for the Medecins Sans Frontieres in March 2010; the second was a 42km run along the historical Pilgrim's route in Surrey in September 2010, for the Farnham hospices).

Run with **Virgin money**

**Charity**

**Running total**  
**£1,520.00**

Target: £1,600.00  
Total raised incl. Gift Aid: £1,733.71  
Total donors: 47  
Biggest donor: tan chin hwee £200.00  
Last donor: Trespasser 20.04.11  
Offline fundraising: £0.00

**Donate now »**

Figure from Kaidie's world 7: 'Kaidie Runs for Shelter – and Raises £1520'. For the charitable organisation concerning, paradoxically, homelessness. (Tan 2011g)



Figure from Kaidie's world 8: 'Run for Your Lives!'. This is a still of a 'live' performance-lecture at *Off the Shelf*, Slade School of Fine Art. It illustrates how death is embedded in Kaidie's name. (Tan 2010a)

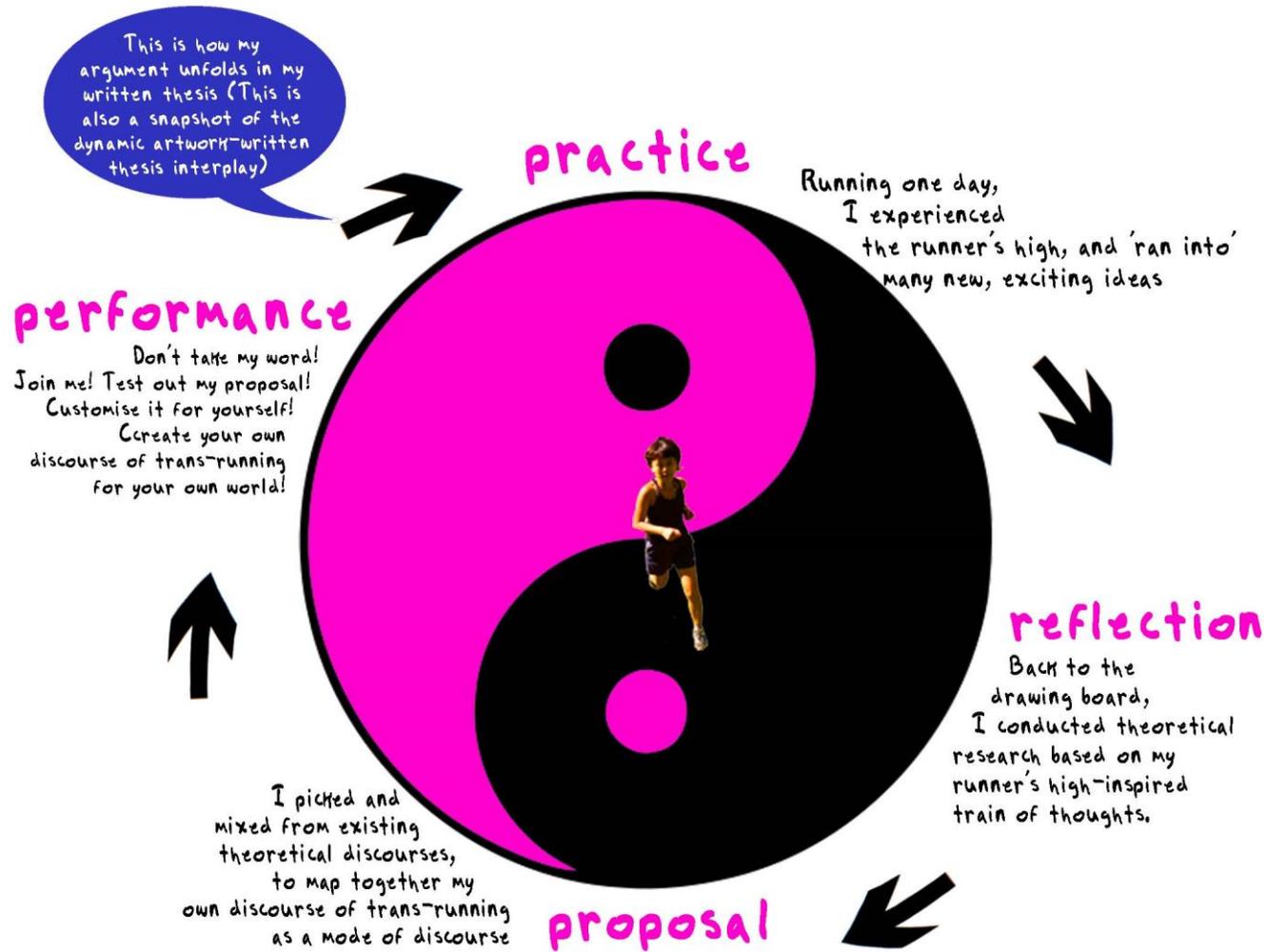


Figure from Kaidie's world 9: 'Team Nondon Ambassador'. (Tan 2012g)

My artworks and written thesis have a dynamic link. Again, I invite you to ‘run’ back-and-forth between them. In my thesis, I re-present the artworks in three ways:

- A DVD film submitted with the written thesis, enclosed in Part II. In this film, Kaidie provides a rundown of the ways trans-running may transform our world. I have talked about running as a way of thinking, writing and performance. The film highlights and applies another aim of trans-running, that is, running as a way of looking. One of the genres that the film may belong to is that of the ‘cine-essay’, which I argue may be a visual manifestation of poetic thinking. Chris Marker’s *Sans Soleil* (1982) seems to epitomise my argument. Instead of continuity editing, Marker collages disparate images and sounds, and with a free-associational gait (Tan 1996; Tan 2008). The result is *pungent, personal, political, philosophical* and *playful* – adjectives befitting Lao Zi’s ways, too. Kaidie the running ambassador’s recommendations are playfully addressed to ‘you’, the viewer. The film is playfully sub-titled *The Trans-Running Ambassador’s Motivational Video*.
- Two performances to be held during my *viva voce*, circa Fall 2013: I shall not give the punch-line away, except to say that the first is a performance-lecture. I am inspired by the performance-lectures of the enigmatic, New York-based Lebanese artist Walid Raad. The second is an interactive performance. I invite you to run with me – and I mean ‘run’ and ‘run with me’ in both the physical and poetic senses.
- As text and/or images within the body of the written thesis: In my written thesis, my arguments are supported by findings from my artworks. The way my arguments unfold generally follows this cycle:
  - Practice: description of Kaidie’s tests of trans-running;
  - Reflection: evaluation of my experience; mapping-together various discourses to build hypotheses;
  - Proposal: sharing of findings in the form of a provisional synthesis of the discourse of trans-running; suggestion for further research;
  - Performance: invitation for you to join me to trans-run and test out what I have proposed, so as to customise your own course of action and discourse applicable for your own world. (Correlations 3)

The ‘Figures from Kaidie’s world’ themselves undergo a dynamic process similar to the one described above. Being digital, they can be subject to endless manipulation, digitally and/or ‘back’ in real world, in the form of installation and so on. (Correlations 4) This ever-transformative and renewable nature of my artwork – as is the cycle described above – are symptomatic of the hypothesis of trans-running itself. It draws out another leitmotif of trans-running: the more we run, the more we can run, and the more we may generate new mappings and correlations, the larger our world can become, and more courses and discourses – all ‘10,000’ of them – may open up.



Corrections 3: 'An Example of the Dynamic Artwork-Written Thesis Interplay'.

I further transformed the photographs digitally, so that I created yet 'new' images and 'new' tracks with yet new digital versions of myself 'running' within it.



I tested out these new tracks by running them in real life!



I ran and recorded the GPS track of my run at 'Regent's Farm' in 'Nondon'.



This map is an example of the dynamic process that a 'figure from Kaidie's world' can undergo.

I uploaded the GPS track online, thereby translating the data into image. I further manipulated the image digitally.



During the exhibition, I took photographs of how the audiences interacted with the installation in the exhibition site.



I printed the image of the 'new' track. Hence, I 'returned' it to the real world. I exhibited it in an installation, within which I re-presented myself as a cartoon paper-cut-out, which was shown to 'run' within the exhibition site. ('Kaidie's Metamap' at the PhD exhibition, May 2010, Slade Research Centre, London)

Correlations 4: 'A Few of Kaidie's 10,000 Possible Courses'.

This is a good juncture to clarify what I mean when I activate the word ‘transformation’. When I propose trans-running as a playful medium for us to ‘transform’ our world, I am not referring to an actual change as such. Instead, the ‘transformation’ I aim to achieve is less tangible. It is a transformation not directly of actuality itself, but of the way we imagine and configure our relationship with the world. We may think of trans-running as a filter or interface through which we may correlate with our world. In other words, I propose that you mobilise trans-running to navigate, negotiate, experience, ‘run’ or manage, govern, think, understand, interpret, respond and impact the realms in which you exist and think in, so as to feel a greater sense of ownership and empowerment. In this sense, trans-running may transform your world the way a powerful work of art may function as a trigger to enable us to view the world with a new perspective. Yet other useful analogies are to think of trans-running as a toolkit, or ‘app’ that may enhance your life, a mapping, a worldview or an attitude that may help to re-orientate you, and which you may freely customise to suit your own needs.

In Appendix II of Part 2 of this thesis, you can find links of my artworks online and an analysis of the various levels of running that can occur in Kaidie’s world. There, I describe the artworks that inspire *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* as well as my own artworks of the last twenty years that inform the current work. Additionally, I provide a list of performances, exhibitions, and conferences at which I have been spreading the message of trans-running. You will notice that apart from the ‘art world’ (DOCUMENTA 13; Slade School Performance Day), I shared my message with different ‘worlds’, including that of sociology (The Centre for Mobilities Research at Lancaster University’s Department of Sociology), architecture (Bartlett School of Architecture), gender studies (Sexuate Subjects conference), digital humanities (Digital Resources in Humanities and Arts [DRHA] conference at Brunel University), and cinema (Delhi International Film Festival). Outside of the worlds of art and academia, I also talked about trans-running in the virtual world of ‘Second Life’, as well as what can be described as the ‘world-at-large’, when I communicated with people about trans-running while in character as Kaidie during the 2012 Olympics as ‘Ambassador’, and when I ran at the Farnham Pilgrim’s Marathon in Surrey and the 2011 London Marathon. Finally, I include a selection of press coverage about my efforts.

*Kaidie’s Trans-Run* aims to be a new synthesis of previously unrelated fields (such as performance, sports and Daoism). As a new, primary research, it aims to make an original contribution to knowledge. Combining practice with theory, my thesis may contribute to debates about the possibilities of the ‘Fine Art Thesis’, too.

## **A PLAYFUL DISCOURSE ABOUT A PLAYFUL WAY**

In spite of its wealth of possibilities as a subject matter or approach, running has been overlooked in the art world thus far. My practice-related Fine Art thesis is a demonstration of how running may inspire an artist and/or art researcher.

My work proposes a ‘new’ way of running that I term ‘trans-running’. A concept as well as an action, trans-running concerns both the *physical* and *poetic processes* of running, and running as both subject matter and approach. Trans-running aims to be a *playful* medium to re-orientate the way we approach our real and digital worlds,

as well as our world of thinking. Nourished by the wisdoms of Daoism, art, sports science and so on, trans-running aims to be a visceral counter-strike as well as a euphoric celebration of our complex conditions today. In order to demonstrate that running may indeed have the potential to function as a playful methodology, I self-reflexively activate running as an approach in this thesis, by ordering my arguments and presenting my artworks in a playful manner that is inspired by running. Trans-running aims to be *trans-cultural*, *trans-disciplinary*, *transgressive* and *transformative*. I encourage you to *perform* trans-running when approaching this thesis. You may regard this work as a template of how you can approach running as a concept and action, subject matter and approach. Run back-and-forth between the artworks and written thesis, and between the causal and correlative modes of writing in my written thesis. Edit my discourse, and formulate your own mapping of trans-running with which you may transform *your* world.

My thesis aims to open up a new pathway of exploration in the art world. My intention is that it can function as an invitation to artists and art researchers to reassess and capitalise on the potential of running, and hence join in the emerging discourse about running with practitioners and researchers in other disciplines who are already studying running. This engagement by artists and researchers with running is arguably timely, given how running is gaining momentum as an activity as well as an area of study. This ‘running movement’ may be contextualised with other emerging critical concerns such as that of the obesity crises, as well as trends such as the fitness craze and community gardening. As an additional observation, there is arguably a paucity of research from non-Western female researchers who offer interesting points-of-views on running. A related point is how I observe that thus far, existing discourses seem to privilege a Western, male perspective. Hence, another intention that I have with this thesis – a *playful* analysis of running via a unique blend of art practice and research that re-contextualises non-Western and non-canonical sources – is that it may contribute a refreshing voice to discourses on running and running-related issues.

In the long run, perhaps practitioners and researchers from different worlds may even consider running as an ‘*art* movement’, in both senses of the word ‘movement’. (Correlations 5)

**running time: 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012**

**approaches / outputs**

**worlds:**

**MY PRACTICE-RELATED FINE ART PhD RESEARCH  
RUNNING AS AN ART MOVEMENT**

**Kaidie + Kai Syng Tan**  
art (practice + research) +  
running

**Abdelkader Benali**  
**Haruki Murakami**  
**Joyce Carol Oates**  
writing + running

**Critical Run**  
**Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba**  
**Lone Twin**  
art + running

**Hayden Lorimer**  
**John Bale**  
geography  
+ running

**Goodgym**  
**Back On My Feet**  
social causes +  
running

**Michael Austin**  
**Mark Rowlands**  
**Ross C Reed**  
philosophy +  
running

**Alan Latham**  
**Ade Aboaba**  
**Michael Owens**  
urbanism +  
running

**Daniel Lieberman**  
**Arne Dietrich**  
**Mark Mattson**  
**Bernd Heinrich**  
neuroscience +  
anthropology +  
running

**Mike Stroud**  
gym trend  
(guerilla) gardening  
movement  
wellbeing + being  
active, includ-  
ing running

**Prezi**

**RUNNING: AN EMERGING MOVEMENT**

Correlations 5: 'Where This Thesis May Stand'. For a more complete picture, you may refer to the 'Prezi' presentation from which this screen capture is taken. (Tan 2014)

## **I. THEORETICAL CONTEXTS**

## INTRODUCTION

The discourse of trans-running is a playful collage of existing discourses. This chapter explores a few of them. (Correlations 6) As the thesis progresses, we will run into yet other discourses that have inspired trans-running.

I feel that structuring this chapter as a traditional literature review may be too abstract or dry. Instead, I have adhered to one of trans-running's aims, which is to create a dynamic interplay between written thesis and artwork and, by extension, theory and practice, knowledge and experience. Therefore, I begin with a section entitled 'Practice', which carries an example from my studio practice. This particular example, which is an interactive performance I carried out at the art event, dOCUMENTA 13, is chosen as it encapsulates several of the important concerns of my concept of trans-running. In the following section entitled 'Reflection', I evaluate Kaidie's findings and reinforce, compare and contrast them with existing theoretical discourses. As a further attempt to concretise my aim to correlate theory and practice, I have playfully written this section in short subsections, which carry headings with words or ideas that I correlate via a hyphen. You may 'run-about' them in any order when reading it, and, in so doing, also generate your own version of trans-running.

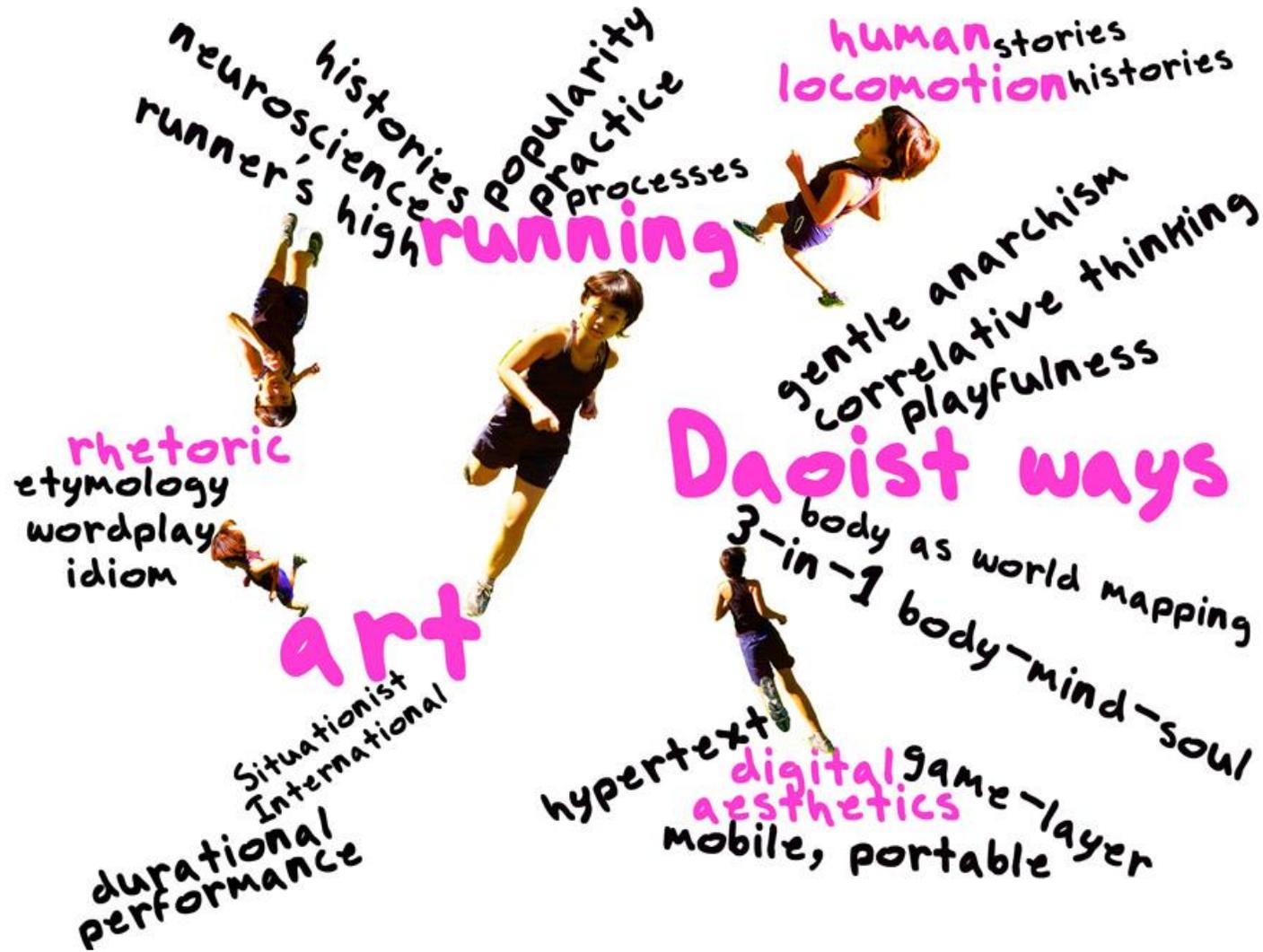
By the end of the chapter, you may be able to create your own provisional mapping of trans-running, with which you may apply and perform vis-à-vis the real world in the next chapter.

## PRACTICE

The following is a description of an interactive artwork I carried out in a conference at dOCUMENTA 13 in Germany, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

Instead of reading a paper, I played Kaidie and facilitated a discussion about the physical and poetic processes of running with my audience – while engaged in the process of a physical run with them. (Figure from Kaidie's world 10) By making them experience and embody what I was proposing, that is, my concept of trans-running, I aimed to give them to have a better grasp of the concept. In essence, Kaidie was embodying one of trans-running's hypotheses, which is that of the 'running-ambassador'. This ambassador transferred the discourse of trans-running to other parties who, instead of being passive audience members or recipients, became transformed into active participants who personalised and created their own discourses of trans-running. Should they then pass on the discourse of trans-running to yet others, they would effectively become running-ambassadors themselves.

The feedback I received from the participants confirmed that my experiment to correlate practice (running) with reflection (of my hypothesis of trans-running) was successful. Several enquired further about my research. Others expressed appreciation of the chance to be reminded of a childhood activity, and a few of these even mentioned how they have been inspired to want to pick up the exercise of running again. A sceptic who had initially announced that she would not run due to 'back problems' was seen enjoying the activity, and afterwards talked about how the interactivity of the format of my 'conference' brought the subject to life.



Correlations 6: 'The Discourse of Trans-Running: A Mapping of Disparate Discourses'.

**KAIDIE'S 1000-DAY TRANS-RUN: 12.12.2009 – 09.09.2012...**  
 IN SEARCH OF A/THE POINT OF LIFE a rundown ▾ run with kaidie ▾ [run a search](#)

**A HANDS-ON-FEET-ON COURSE-DISCOURSE-EXERCISE WITH KAIDIE THE TRANS-RUNNING-AMB-ASS-ADOR at dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel, on 6 September 2012**

3 days before my expiry on 09.09.2012. I make a d-Tour to dOCUMENTA 13 to transfer my final, world-changing messages. I run into problems right away: 1) My session follows one that was over-long – and still over-run (!!3 hours 20 minutes!!) 2) The running time assigned for lunch is hence cut down. So, only 12 people turn up at my 2pm run. The other 20 have walked-out – some of whom are no doubt the oh-so-precious-well-heeled-high-falutin-arm-chair-critics-cynics who must not be caught dead in such uncouth/mindless/embarrassing/juvenile act as running. I'm running out of time – but not breath. I get on with it.

'Hello world! Come join me in my "running discourse"! Let's warm up. Stretch your muscles and your imagination. Let's divide ourselves into 3 groups. Run for 3-minutes while discussing on one of these topics: DISCOURSE A: Walking versus running (biological and psychological similarities and differences). DISCOURSE B: The correlation between movement and thinking (thinking when moving versus sitting still? Lying in bed? Running? Cycling? Which is most conducive?). DISCOURSE C: The nature of discourse itself (one-way? dynamic? Versus other modes of communication such as a giving a paper at a conference?) Pay attention to how your body respond to or transform your thoughts! After the run, participants gather together to their findings. 'Fun!' 'Feel ache on muscles I didn't know I had!' 'Nice breeze on my face when running!' 'Tipsy after a night out, I tend to sprint home.' 'Too short! Want to run more! Want to discuss more!' 'Too distracted by the beautiful scenery of the beautiful park of Park Schonfeld to think properly!' 'I have to move to think, can't think when still!' 'Nice day to run about in the field!'

I share my own findings too. These findings have been gathered from my past 996 days of running. We've run for 3 minutes – but we human beings have run for 2 million years. Our "gluteus maximus"- or bum – are very maximus – to balance us while we run. When you run while you are high, you are following in the footsteps of the Raramuri people of Mexico who brew their own beer and run for hundreds of miles. And they've done that for hundreds of years. Without beer, running can make you high too. For scientists, this "high" is the production of neurotransmitters that make us happy, so linking our body and mind. For runners, this 'high' can be conducive to creativity – so linking running with thinking. For example mathematician Alan Turing conceptualised the computer while running.' 'On the other hand, or feet, Daoist sage Lao Zi linked the feet with the head, movement with life and thinking. You can see the latter in the Chinese word "dao", which refers to both course and discourse. I pinpoint this thinking to poetic thinking: non-linear, creative, associative. I also pinpoint this movement to running, because the 16<sup>th</sup> century Latin etymology of "discourse" ("discursus") refers to running from place to place, and runners were employed as messengers or ambassadors around the same time (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century).' 'So, I propose that as the running-ambassador transferred messages, neither ambassador nor recipient were passive, but were active agents themselves who, along the way, customise and transform the messages. In so doing, the messages are more than messages, but discourses. Such are to-and-fro exchanges that are alive, active and dynamic. New discourses and new knowledge are created. The process is creative and poetic, and can be an artwork. The running itself can be an artwork.' And finally: 'Thank you for allowing me to share my message of running. My name is Kaidie, and I have been your running-ambassador. Or *trans*-running-ambassador. Or, to be extra arsey, *trans*-running-amb-ASS-ador. I hope that you can personalise my messages, play with them, transform them, and further pass them on, keep the discourse alive, and open up 10,000 more discourses. Good bye.' With that, I run off, into the sunset, and live happily ever after (for 3 more days). Life, as they say, goes on.

*For an early video (circa January 2012) that provides a run-down of the correlation between running and discourse: [click, run the video, hear, watch](#). Some of these photographs have been taken by Dr. Hayley Newman With special thanks to: Dr. Sharon Morris, and Trespasser (for being a trail-runner of this performance), and the participants of the session.*

Share / Save

Figure from Kaidie's world 10: 'Trans-Running-Ambassadors at dOCUMENTA'. My blog entry. (Tan 2012e)

## REFLECTION

### Reflective-Practice

A turn to discourses from the ‘world’ of pedagogy may enable us to configure the dynamic interplay between practice and theory. While these discourses refer to learning, they may provide insights that we may learn from and apply to the world that this thesis originates and resides in, that is, that of Fine Art.

American philosopher Donald Schön (1930-1997) conceptualises the ‘reflective practitioner’ as one who bridges the gap between the ‘high ground’ of reflection (‘technical research’) and the ‘swampy lowland’ of practice (where ‘the problems of greatest human concern’ lie):

‘In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy, confusing problems defy technical solution’. (1987a, p.3)

The reflective practitioner undertakes ‘reflection in action’ – that is, thinking as we are performing an activity or, in Schön’s words, ‘thinking on our feet’. Not only that, ‘reflection on action’ – that is, evaluating our task upon completion – is critical, too. It is when we engage in *both* practice and reflection, thinking while carrying out a task as well as afterwards, and, additionally, by allowing ourselves to experiment and fail (1987b), that effective learning occurs. (Figure 1)

Schön’s research echoes that of fellow American, David Kolb (born 1939). The psychologist is best known for his theory of ‘experience-based learning’, which he has euphorically cultivated from a variety of discourses from John Dewey, to Tibetan Buddhism. For Kolb, knowledge is inseparable from experience (1984, pp.41–42). We must transform our experience, by creating a ‘figurative representation of experience and some transformation of that representation’. That is to say, ‘some state or experience’ must be ‘acted upon’ (instead of only imagined), contemplated about and further translated into something else. Only then is new knowledge generated. In short: having done something (‘concrete experience’), we evaluate it (‘reflective observation’), seek clarifications from existing discourses and make generalisations (‘abstract conceptualization’), innovate, develop and test out new ideas (‘active experimentation’), then return to the beginning of the cycle by practising something – albeit this time round, with renewed wisdom. (Figure 2) Kolb states that his work describes how we may ‘move through stages of learning cycles’ (1984, p.39). This notion of movement seems to correlate with Schön’s proposal for the necessity for the learner to be familiar with the terrains of both the swamp and dry ground. Simply put, if we stay put at one stage of the learning cycle or terrain, we cannot move on or progress.

The way Kolb and Schön conceptualise the knowledge-experience and theory-practice relationship may help us think – and work – through the relationship between the written thesis and artwork, as well as the genre of the practice-related thesis or thinking. Their call for movement echoes trans-running’s feature of being restless instead of staying still and stagnant. With myself embodying the protagonist ‘Kaidie’ in a 1000-day durational performance, *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* may also be understood as what Kolb frames as the ‘transformation of experience’ that generates new knowledge. That Kolb and Schön are not educators *per se*, and that their teachings have been appropriated by

another field (in this case pedagogy) may be understood as an application of their advocacy for a dynamic interplay between theory and practice. It is also proof of the versatility of their theories, as they themselves do not stay in one world but *move* to that of other disciplines. This may justify why their research is consulted in a thesis that posits itself in the ‘world’ of art. As a commentator notes, in providing a ‘missing link between theory and practice, between abstract generalization and the concrete instance, between affective and cognitive domains’, Kolb’s work is ‘the first’ to ‘shift the ecology of learning away from the exclusivity of the classroom’ to all aspects of life (Warren Bennis, in Kolb 1984, p.ix).

## Thinking-On-Our-Feet

‘Running’ to the world of Daoism, I find discourses that run along similar lines as those devised by Kolb and Schön.

For a start, Daoism’s root word, ‘*dao*’, as conceptualised – and lived by – Lao Zi powerfully encapsulates the reflection-practice, experience-knowledge interplay. Its Chinese character is composed of two radicals. One depicts a human head, and the other, the motion verb of the feet and footprints (Keelan 1967, p.22). (Figure 3) The noun translates as ‘road’, ‘way’, ‘path’ and ‘line’; figuratively, it indicates ‘methodology’, ‘doctrine’ and ‘principle’, and as a verb, *dao* is rendered as ‘speak’, ‘talk’, ‘think’ and ‘suppose’ (Oxford Dictionaries 1999, p.94).<sup>7</sup>

The meanings of *dao* may appear conflicting. Yet, Cheuk Yin Lee, a sinologist at the National University of Singapore, explains that *dao* refers to speaking precisely ‘due to its sense of movement and directionality’ (1994, p.88). Chad Hansen renders *dao* as ‘discourse’ (1996) thereby adeptly displaying how its literal and metaphorical meanings are interwoven. For the linguist and professor of philosophy at the University of Hong Kong, interpreting *dao* as discourse not only highlights *dao*’s application to both the oral and written language, but foregrounds ‘course’, reminding us of the ‘important normative feature shared by guiding discourse and roads or paths’. Thus, in a single stroke, *dao* maps together a range of seemingly opposing notions. It is as if there is a metaphorical pathway – *dao* – that runs between not only the feet and head, but course with discourse, the physical and the poetic, movement and thought, body and mind. So potent is Lao Zi’s *dao*, that philosopher Martin Heidegger refers to it as ‘poetic thinking’, and how it is ‘the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think’ (1982, p.92).

---

<sup>7</sup> *Dao*’s reference to doctrine is also what the word ‘*do*’ (which is ‘*dao*’ when pronounced in the Japanese language) in such words as *aikido* (a form of martial arts) and *chado* (tea ceremony) refer to.



Figure 1: 'Donald Schön's model of Reflective Practice'. (1987)

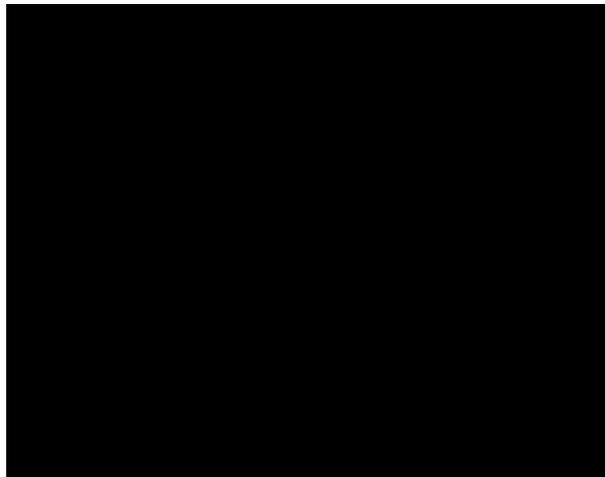


Figure 2: 'David Kolb's model of Experiential Learning'. (1984)

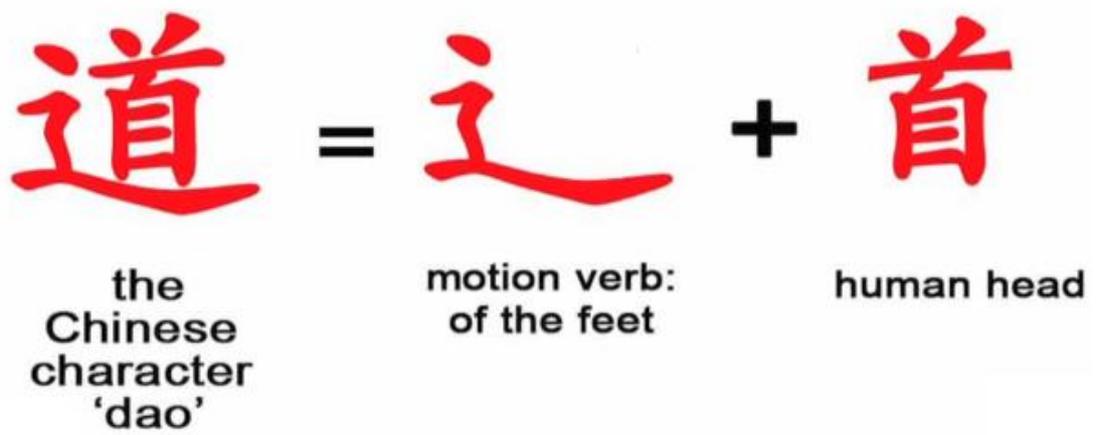


Figure 3: "Dao": The Head Run by its Feet'.

## Poetic-Thinking

Lao Zi's unique brand of *dao* was his way to transform his world, 600 BCE in China. It is the Old Child's poetic thinking that has shaped my own approach of trans-running.

Lao Zi's *dao* was his rejoinder to the political, social, economic and moral crisis brought upon by a corrupt government. Feeling 'disgusted' with the 'worsening conditions', Lao Zi quit his civil servant job in protest, and led a life on the run (Lee et al. 1994, p.89). His mode of restlessness was a tactic of fight, not flight, playful yet sophisticated. Instead of feeling disconnected, he poetically mapped the body with the world. Where abstract theories had failed, his methodologies were anti-intellectual. Because going against nature was unwise, his ways were ruled by *wuwei*, a 'playful freedom' and 'unique effortless freedom' (Girardot 2009b, p.210). Paradoxically, this 'naturalism' is achievable only through deliberate action, discipline, and training, such that we may become so accomplished at something that it appears spontaneous (Schipper 1994, p.138). Rather than a soteriological afterlife that other systems promised, these methods were practical and applicable to our present reality, indicating: 'My destiny is within me, not in Heaven!' (Schipper 1994). Since the state was untrustworthy, Lao Zi's approach was personal, charged with 'gentle anarchism' (Clarke 2000, p.x). The authorities mocked him and his followers, yet they defiantly retained their 'sense of otherness' and 'a refusal to conform' (Clarke 2000, p.xi). Since change was inevitable, Lao Zi's methods embraced the ever-transforming nature of things and interpreted the world as 'dynamic' and 'creative', and consisting of 'a metaphorical '10,000' things' (Miller 2003, p.46). Because reason and self-importance failed, his were child-like, 'crude', 'ignorant and stupid'. As reality was absurd, 'crazy logic' (Girardot 2009a, p.5) runs the Daoist cosmos. Conscious of the paradoxical nature of his own position as a sage, Lao Zi performed as the fool. In fact, the 'true Daoist must, in his perfect simplicity, give the appearance of a fool' (Max Kaltenmark, cited in Schipper 1994, p.210). Persuaded to transcribe his thoughts, Lao Zi self-reflexively composed his book in an open form, indicating to readers that his was but one synthesis. In the place of lofty names, Lao Zi simply called his way 'way' – *dao*. Followers came to call his teachings 'Daoism'. While Jesus Christ insisted that 'I am the gate' (John 10:9, New Living Translation), Daoists know that there are '10,000 gates,' that 'it is up to each of us to find our own' (Schipper 1994, p.158). That said, there is 'more than one way to the top of the mountain', and 'more than one mountaintop' (Pas 2006, p.48).

Lao Zi's double-edged *dao* sums up the aims of trans-running: a *playful* way that is complex, *paradoxical* and defiantly *pungent*; *personal* but *political*; *poetic* but *practical*. While intellectual, it is intuitive and *practice-related*; it 'goes with the flow' – which is another definition of *wuwei* (Berger 2012) – and moves with times, but is cultivated and deliberate; although sceptical, it is exuberant rather than aggressive or nihilistic. More than just a noun or abstract concept, it is also a verb, an action that a human agent may carry out. It runs with, yet runs against the authorities. While working from within, it is *transgressive* and *transformative*.

## World-Body-World

Lao Zi's ways have, over the past 2600 years, been argued about, mobilised and modified by people who identify as 'Daoists'. Here, I explore one of Lao Zi's central teachings that trans-running strongly identifies with, that is, the 'world as body, body as world'.

The body, explains Daoism scholar James Miller, is the 'pre-eminent space in which Daoism operates'. Crucial are the correlations between the body, political state and nature, which are mapped in an 'analogical, spatial way' (2003, pp.34-60).

In Daoist scriptures, the body is frequently depicted as a mountain or even entire landscapes (Pregadio 2008, p.79). We 'can and should' 'wander' among these landscapes, and 'make their acquaintance and feel at home' in oneself as the universe, advises Daoism scholar Livia Kohn (1993, pp.102-174). Kohn describes one such diagram as a 'spiritual and meditational journey through the body'. Here, the body features not only 'rivers and mountains, towers and palaces', but 'guards and gods' too. Traversing these courses, the Daoist recognises their symbolic and spiritual significance. (Figure 4) To rephrase: when we travel in our world, we may locate ourselves within it, and hence embody and personalise it, and potentially transform it.

At the same time, our body is a microcosm of the world and reproduces its plan, including its geographical, political and even celestial features (Se & St 1999). (Figure 5) According to Kohn, not only are there 'a sun and a moon', 'mountains and rivers', the body is a map of 'cities and fields, roads and passageways, palaces and towers', too. Miller adds that our cardiac system is analogous to the 'office of the monarch' issuing 'consciousness', while the pulmonary system the 'office of minister-mentors' issues 'oversight and supervision' (2003, p.61). (Table 1)

Agent	Direction	Colour	Season	Orb	Emotion	Sense	Psychology
Wood	East	Green	Spring	Liver	Anger	Eyes	Material Soul
Fire	South	Red	Summer	Heart	Joy	Tongue	Spirit
Earth	Centre	Yellow	September	Spleen	Worry	Lips	Will
Metal	West	White	Fall	Lungs	Sadness	Nose	Spirit Soul
Water	North	Black	Winter	Kidneys	Fear	Ears	Essence

Table 1: 'The Body as a Mapping of the World'. From the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* ('*Huangdi Neijing Suwen*', circa 475-221BCE). (Kohn 1993, p.163)

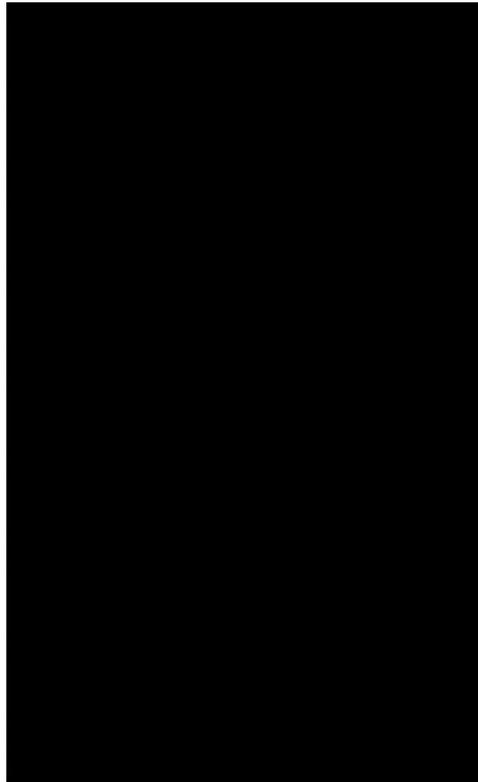


Figure 4: ‘The Diagram of Interior Lights (“*Neijing Tu*”)’. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this diagram depicts the body within nature. The section denoting the spine, for instance, is represented as the curvature on the right. (Cited in Kohn 1993, p.177)

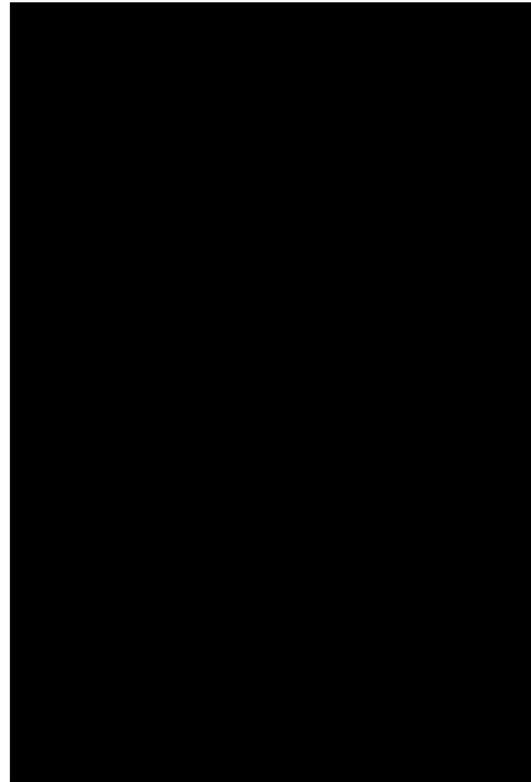


Figure 5: ‘The Chart for the Cultivation of Perfection (“*Xiuzhen Tu*”)’. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, this diagram depicts the body as a map of the world. (Cited in Pregadio 2008, p.767)

That is not all. The Daoist world is run by the ‘creative force’ of the *dao* (Pas 2006, pp.308–309). This is where I introduce yet another meaning of Lao Zi’s complex *dao*. *Dao* here refers to the ‘matrix of life’ that is ‘radically dynamic’ (Miller 2003, pp.42-46). That is to say, it is an immanent energy that underlies all aspects of the Daoist world. This *dao*’s governance of the cosmos is replicated in the body, via what Kohn terms ‘a network of energy channels, pulses, moving fluids’ and so on (1993, p.161). These pathways, known as meridians, run throughout the human body, rendering it a ‘full-fledged residence’ of the *dao*, with the entire ‘cosmos within’. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 11) Of these ‘energy fields’, the most important is the spleen which, as shown in the table, corresponds to the centre of the Earth. Daoism scholar Kristofer Schipper even correlates the belly with Lao Zi’s notion of ‘this here’, which he explains is ‘source of life’ and ‘foundation of all true knowledge’ (1994, pp.103-190). As Lao Zi says:

‘Through our body, we may contemplate the body. Through our family, we may contemplate the family. Through our hamlet, we may contemplate the hamlet. Through our state, we may contemplate the state. Through our world, we may contemplate the world. How do I know the world is so? By this here!’ (Translation from the Chinese by Kai Syng Tan with reference to Lao Tzu & Lau 1963, ch.54)

The sage’s words networks the micro-macro, and internal-external. Connected too is the *personal-political*, since ‘the image of the country’ is the body, states Schipper. Those who ‘know how to govern their bodies know how to govern their country’. Knowledge-intuition is linked too, as Schipper pinpoints Lao Zi’s ‘this here’ with our ‘belly, intuitive perception’. Schipper terms this ‘belly knowledge’ – which seems to have a bearing with what is commonly referred to as ‘gut instinct’. Not only that, *past-present* are connected, as the spleen ties us to our ancestors. It is from ‘this here’, that we may comprehend ‘not only the process of the creation and the evolution of the world, but also its involution.’

Rather than sinful, shameful or secondary to the mind or soul, the Daoist body – creative, dynamic, ever-transforming, of the here and now – is the basis of the Daoist world. How we govern our body is how we govern and transform our world. It is our own responsibility – and not that of a fearful, almighty being – to cultivate our body, in order to maintain what Schipper calls a ‘harmonious vision of the world’. So long as our ‘inner order is not established’, it is ‘pointless’ to try to act on the world outside. While we are ‘influenced and moulded’ by the environment, the ‘flow of influence’ can be ‘reversed’ for those who grasp both the ways of our body and ‘the laws of nature’. Only then are we no longer ‘simply the product’ of our environment, but are able to ‘dominate and transform’ it. Schipper’s words may be directly correlated with that of Daoist expert Professor Cheuk Yin Lee, about how Daoist intuition can ‘inform and transform everything we do’ and help us re-direct our approach to life (1994, p.100).

Schipper and Lee inspired me to design and think about trans-running as a worldview or attitude that may help to transform our lives. Trans-running aims to be a playful approach for us to re-imagine our world in a new way, to make us mindful of our actions, and practical in our thinking. (Correlations 7)



Figure from Kaidie's world 11: 'The Whole World In Her Hands (And Feet)'.



Correlations 7: 'Daoism as Jumping-Board for Trans-Running'.

## Living-Moving

Like a child, Lao Zi refuses to sit still, and is ‘restless as if I have no home to return to’. In fact, the Old Child equates motion with life, stillness with death:

‘We are soft and nimble when living, but firm and rigid when dead. [...] Thus the firm and rigid are the companions of death; the soft and nimble are the companions of life’. (Translation by Kai Syng Tan with reference to Lao Tzu & Lau, ch.76)

Lao Zi’s words may be aligned with Blaise Pascal’s, who asserts that ‘Our nature consists in motion; complete rest is death’ (1999, Thought 142). The 17<sup>th</sup> century French mathematician even blames stillness for our unhappiness:

‘I have often said that man’s unhappiness springs from one thing alone, his incapacity to stay quietly in one room’. (1999, Thought 132)

Human beings’ stories, actual or imagined, are bound by how we move about, explore, govern and transform the worlds, and indeed, *new* worlds. Our innate wanderlust underlines the restlessness of trans-running. The exploits of Marco Polo and Cheng Ho, or the walking rites of the Australian Aboriginals aside, our exploratory nature has been captured by such works as *Odyssey* and *Space Odyssey: 2001*. Agreeing with Pascal – who was probably describing his own plight, given that his long bouts of illness had confined him indoors – writer Bruce Chatwin muses that ‘without change’, our ‘brains and bodies rot’ (1996, pp.100–106).

In fact, Chatwin hypothesises that ‘evolution intended us to be travellers’. In his appropriately-titled *Anatomy of Restlessness*, the writer argues the importance of ‘journeys of the mind and body’. His argument stems from the research of biologists, who have long understood that how human beings – like homing pigeons and other migratory animals – have an internal magnetic compass for way-finding (Baker 1980). Indeed, many researchers today are concerned about how our relative inactivity has caused new problems for our bodies and societies. For Daoism scholar Kristofer Schipper, agriculture is ‘the main culprit of the imbalances of human civilisation’, bringing about ‘a radical break with the way of life that prevailed for almost the entire prehistory of humankind’ (1994, p.170). Mike Stroud, a medic and researcher at the UK’s Ministry of Defence, adds that we are biologically ‘set up to overcome the rigours of a mobile life’ (2004, p.203). That ‘we no longer live in harmony with our evolutionary design’ explains the prevalence of such lifestyle diseases as diabetes (2004, p.152). Stroud even argues that those favouring a sedentary lifestyle ‘inadvertently spend much of [their lives] in a slightly depressed mental state’, deprived as they are of the production of feel-good neurotransmitters that reward those engaged in sports (2004, p.55). The doctor’s argument seems to confirm Pascal’s rumination.

Yet, with many options of running away from Pascal’s proverbial room, why *run*?

Flying has always captured our imagination, laid bare by the trials and errors of Icarus, Leonardo, and the Wright Brothers. Closer to the ground, we could alternatively take the leap into the rabbit hole with *Alice in Wonderland*, or Richard Mayhew through the gap at the underground station into ‘London Below’ in Neil Gaiman’s 1996 urban fantasy *Neverwhere* (2005). Figures of speech like ‘flight of fancy’ and ‘leap of faith’ are further proofs of the evocative possibilities of flying and jumping. Nonetheless, these locomotions are arguably too far-fetched and lack a real-life applicability. For

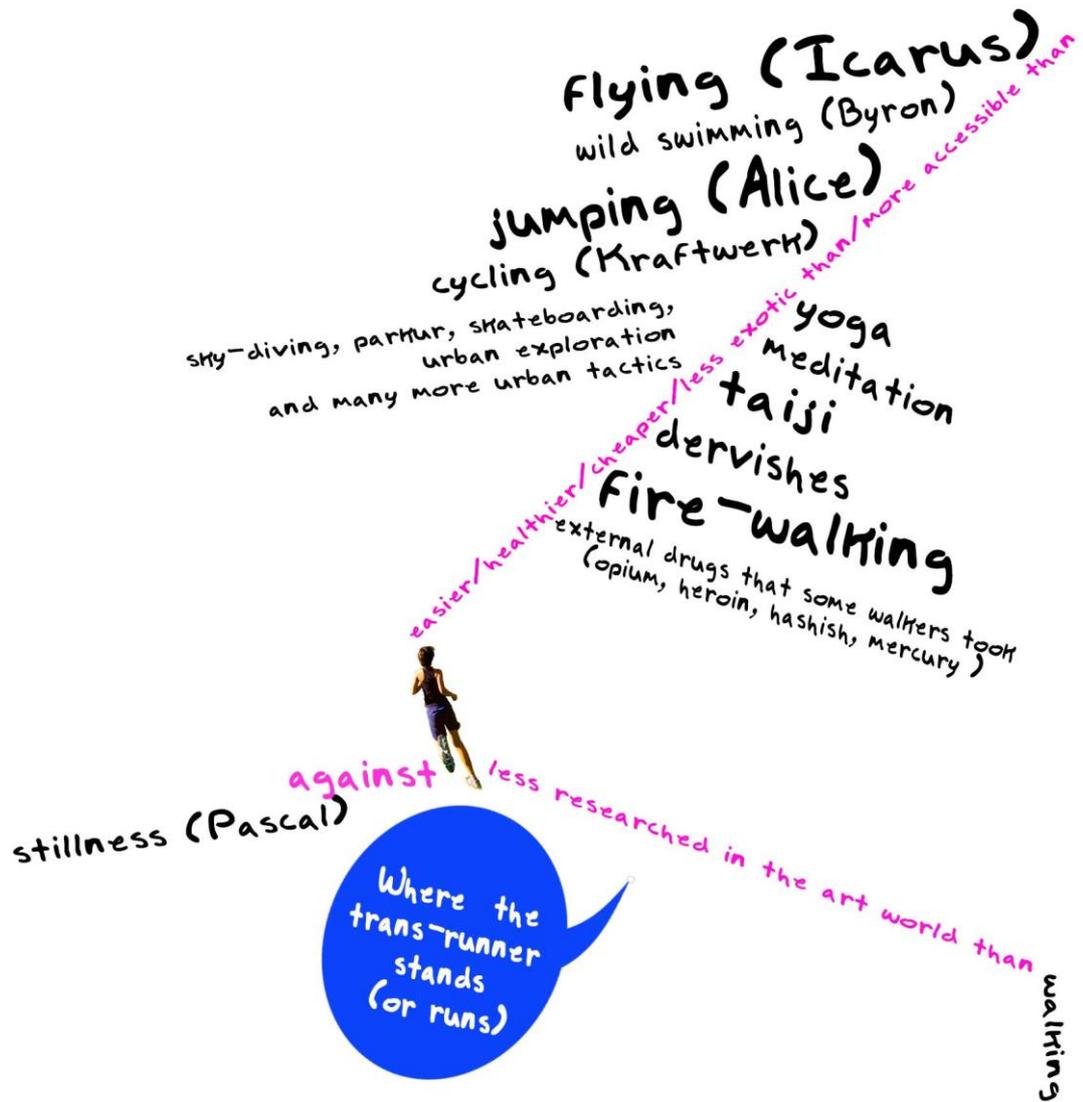
Kraftwerk, the ‘Fathers of Electronic Music’ (Le Funk 2010), cycling is the perfect expression of the philosophy of man and machine working in union to negotiate time and space (Brown 2009). In my conversation with Grayson Perry, the artist, too, reveals how long-distance cycling is an essential part of his life (2012). However, cycling may be expensive and technically difficult. Chatwin reminds us that we have ‘walked and swam long before we rode or flew.’ Indeed, water bears rich spiritual and poetic significance, correlated as it is with baptism, birth, and cleansing and so on. Advocates of wild swimming – swimming outdoors in freshwater – include writers George Gordon Byron and Thomas Hughes (Deakin 2011, p.177). Still, since it must take place away from the habitation – hence the descriptor ‘wild’ – it is impractical.

Chatwin recommends walking. After all, ‘as a species we are terrestrial’. Yet, I argue that walking has long dominated cultural and philosophical discourses. It is already well-researched how walking has been instrumental for many people and cultures throughout history; Walter Benjamin, Richard Long, William Wordsworth, Li Bai, Steve Jobs, the Long March are but a few examples. Libraries and museums of books and artefacts have been spawned by walkers and their fans, while many disciplines continue to produce studies about walking.

Since the 1970’s, running has become one of the world’s most popular sport. This is evidenced for instance by the fact that marathons are held daily, worldwide (Marathon Guide 2012). Beyond the sports world, disciplines with foresight, such as urban geography (Latham & McCormack 2010) and neuroscience (Dietrich & McDaniel 2004), are already studying running. Even the world of philosophy is beginning to harness running as a means to explore ideas. *Running and Philosophy: A Marathon for the Mind* (Austin 2007), is a collection of essays by American philosophers who run. Conjuring the philosophies of Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey and so on, the essays investigate the notions of will, existence, happiness, pain, aesthetics and even spirituality – via the lens of running.

It is time for us to move on, and introduce running the ‘new’ pathway into discourses in the world of Fine Art, to re-imagine it as a poetic medium.

After all, human beings have been running – since the beginning of time. (Correlations 8)



Correlations 8: 'The Trans-Runner's Position'.

## Running-Surviving

In 2004, biologist Dennis Bramble and paleoanthropologist Daniel Lieberman discovered the fossil evidence of the *nuchal ligament* on a skull of the *Homo erectus*. The finding of proof of the early existence of the ridge that supports our neck when moving at speed fortifies their hypothesis that the genus *Homo* – which originated two million years ago, and from which modern humans are derived – had run long, slow distances to hunt for food (2004). In the practice known as endurance hunting, we exploited our unique ability to sweat and lose heat, to gradually and eventually run our prey down under the hot sun. In fact, Bramble and Lieberman argue that we are ‘born to run’, being endowed with ‘running equipment’ (cited in Chen 2006) including long tendons and a large posterior that play no part in the locomotion of walking whatsoever. Clearly, running, unlike walking, is a strenuous exercise and no walk in the park. (Figure 6, Table 2)

Researchers from various fields collude with the hypothesis of Bramble and Lieberman (Liebenberg 2008; Lucas 2008; Stroud 2004). Studies are emerging about how our ancestors across various points in history had needed to run for food. While the Kalahari bushmen ran after the kudu antelope, the Australian Aborigines went for kangaroos, and the Omahas of the central plains in America chased buffalos (Heinrich 2002; McDougall 2009).

Endurance hunting proves that running enabled us to transform our place in the natural world. Our unique biological features – coupled with a distinctly human stubbornness – let us out-run and out-wit the four-legged animal sprinters, and defeat starvation and death.

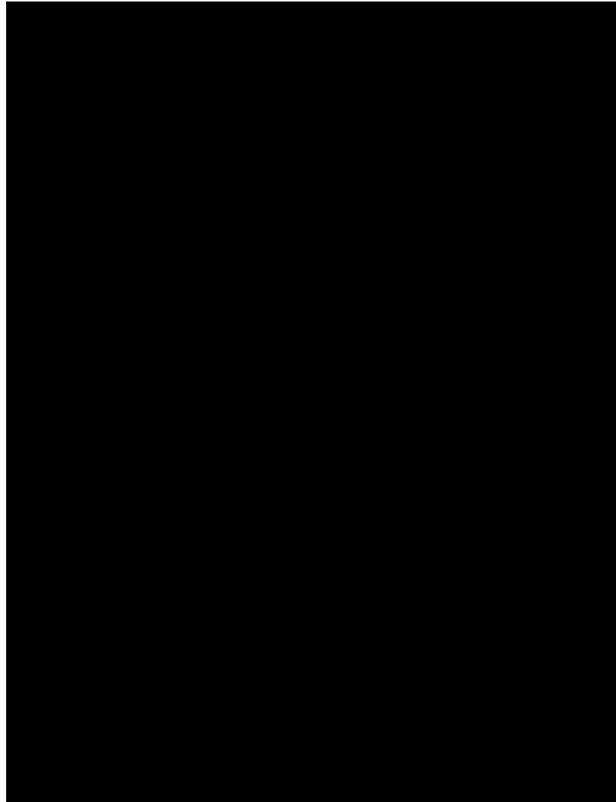


Figure 6: 'Comparison of the Anatomies of Our Runner-Ancestors with Non-Runners'. Here, you see the anatomy of the tree-dwelling chimpanzee (b, d) alongside that of the *Homo erectus* (a, c, e; active circa 1.3 – 1.8 million years ago) and the earlier, extinct *Australopithecus afarensis* (f, active circa 2.9-3.9 million years ago). The *Homo erectus* has larger tendons, a larger posterior, and a *nuchal ligament*. (Bramble and Lieberman 2004)

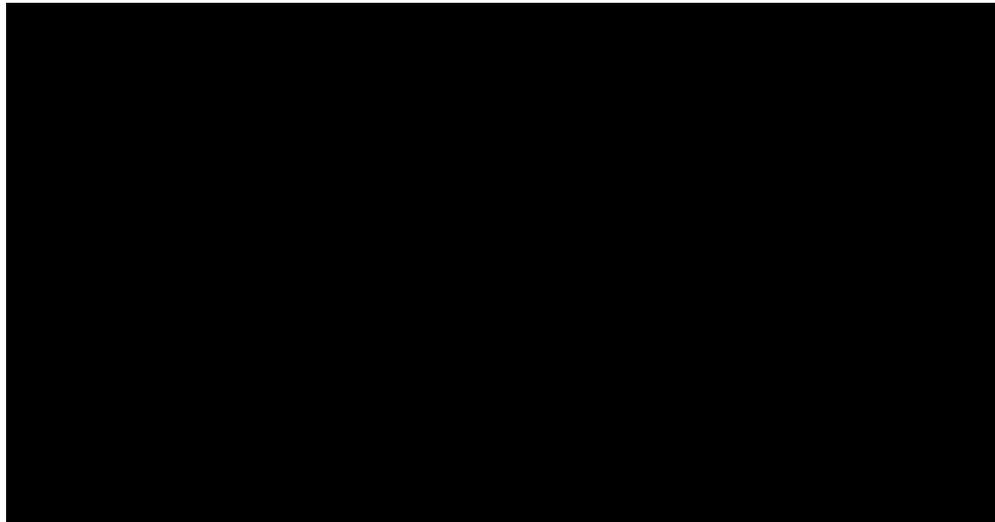


Table 2: 'Derived Features of the Human Skeleton with Cursorial Functions'. This charts the biological features of the human being that are cursorial, that is, particular to endurance running (indicated by 'R') and / or walking ('W'). R>W indicates traits that have greater effects on endurance running. The numbers in the parentheses correspond to those in the previous figure. (Bramble and Lieberman 2004)

Today, many are calling for a re-engagement in running. Mike Stroud's research focuses on how our bodies are built for endurance (2003, pp.55-203). It reverberates Bramble and Lieberman's rationalisation that we are 'beautifully tuned running machines' 'tailor-made for sustained running' (cited in Chen 2006). Himself a runner, Stroud argues that it is only after '5, 6 miles' of running that our muscles, breathing and heart become sufficiently warmed up to the optimal state of 'equilibrium and comfort'. 'Less fatigued', we settle into a 'truly relaxed running', and feel as if we may 'carry on for many miles'; even a 'heightened state of thought' can set in. These are further proofs that we had run long distances under hot climate. If our knees hurt, the culprit may paradoxically be the purportedly 'high-tech' running shoes that we wear today (Warburton 2010).<sup>8</sup> If running is addictive, 'the compulsion may serve some evolutionary need', argues Stroud.

Apart from overcoming the ill-effects of a passive lifestyle, running may even help us cope with societal crises today. Runner-geographer Alan Latham draws a link between the emergence of the running boom in the 1970's with that of counterculture movements that critique dominant systems (2008). Citing evidence from previous running booms during the Great Depression, the early 1970's after the Vietnam war as well as the 2001 September 11 attacks, runner-author Christopher McDougall even asserts that 'when things look worst, we run the most' (2009, p.11). In fact, Running USA recorded in 2009 the 'largest percent increase (nearly 10%) in more than 25 years' of participation rates in marathons (2012). Echoing McDougall's hypothesis, the organisation cites 'a response to the bad economy' as a factor influencing the current 'running "mania"'. (Figure from Kaidie's world 12)

One of the many contemporary high-profile amateur runners is Haruki Murakami. (Figure 7) The cult-novelist enjoys running for several reasons:

'First of all, you don't need anybody else to do it, and there is no need for special equipment. You don't have to go any special place to do it. As long as you have running shoes and a good road you can run to your hearts' content'. (2008, p.33)

Aged thirty-three, Murakami picked up running and transformed his life around from heavy drinking and late nights (2008, p. 47). He even correlated this turnaround with his 'real starting point as a novelist'. From Murakami's account, a secondary point may be drawn, about running as a means for many people to avert personal crises. George Sheehan, a researcher that this thesis will cite frequently, also re-engaged in running late, aged forty-five, again after years of feeling unfocused and unhealthy. (Correlations 9)

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<sup>8</sup> Stroud argues that the natural feedback systems of animals and human beings become upset when we become domesticated and settled (2004, p.174). By extrapolation, shoes that provide extra cushioning with so-called 'air' or 'gell' may cause our body to respond in unnatural ways and therefore cause – rather than prevent, as shoe-makers claim – injuries. This is one of the reasons for the rise of runners who advocate 'minimalist running' (Lovett 2010). After all, running barefoot was how the legendary Raramari Indians of Mexico ran (McDougall 2009) – as did our ancestors 2 million years ago.

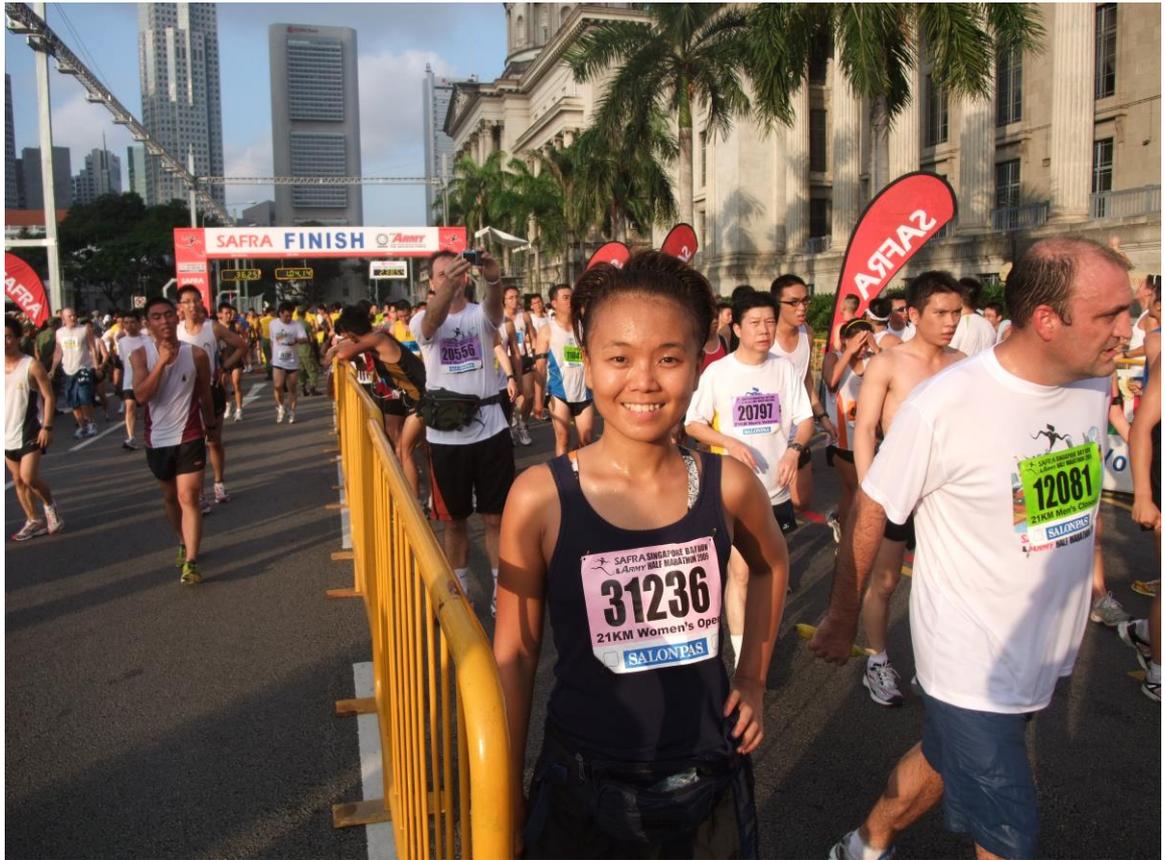


Figure from Kaidie's world 12: 'Kaidie's First Running Race'. At the SAFRA Bay Run and Army Half Marathon 2009, Singapore. Even in sweltering Singapore, this annual event has seen the number of participants 'swelled from 15,000 to 70,000' in the last 19 years (SAFRA 2011).



Figure 7: 'Runner-Novelist Haruki Murakami'. (Lee 2004)

stubbornness  
unique mental setup  
long range vision

# human being: born to run

massive posterior nuchal ligament  
unique physical traits  
ability to sweat  
endurance hunting  
large tendons

one foot in the past 2 million years ago  
homo erectus as runners

one foot in the present

exercise any time any one any where

running boom since the 1970's  
health benefits  
contemporary illnesses  
means to cope with societal crises  
recreation  
means to cope with personal crises

I'm running from discourse to discourse in the world of running

Correlations 9: 'The Running Roots of Trans-Running'.

## Daoism-Inspired-Running

Running back-and-forth between some of the discourses presented thus far, a conceptualisation of ‘Daoism-inspired-running’ can be reached, which forms the backbone of trans-running.

Daoism’s powerful body-world correlation is translated into all aspects of Daoist and indeed Chinese life, such as medicine (for instance acupuncture) and geomancy (*fengshui*). Of particular interest for this discussion are the set of physical exercises including the martial arts of *taiji*. (Figure 8; Figure from Kaidie’s world 13) These ‘cultivation techniques’ are for ‘life preservation and nourishment’ (*yangsheng*) (Girardot 2009, p.33). They can enable us to attain a ‘harmonisation and synchronisation of all aspects of life with the rhythms of nature’ (Pas 2006, p.364), and heal our illnesses. It is when the energies (*qi*) within our body run in synchronicity with the life force of the *dao*, that we can recognise the ‘cosmic dimension’ of our own existence, and hence, lead a long and healthy life (Kohn 1993, p.95).

Although not named as a cultivation technique, running seems a perfect fit. After all, the *dao* has ‘10,000 gates,’ and ‘it is up to each of us to find our own’ (Schipper 1994, p.158). I present two arguments to support the proposal.

The first originates from how the feet were understood as a key to good health in ancient Daoist medical theory (Nan 1990; Centre for Oriental Studies 2004). According to the oldest classic of Chinese Traditional Medicine, the *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* (*Huangdi Neijing*), of the fourteen important channels within the human body defined, six concern the foot. Additionally, with regards to the ‘points’ linking channels to the internal organs, about 10% are located in the feet. Hence, the earliest instances of reflexology, or foot massage, as a healing method for a wide range of illnesses was already evident around AD 581-682. Consistent with the formulation that ‘every part reproduces the whole’ (Se & St. 1999), each foot is a map of our entire body. (Figure 9) In fact, our health has a ‘direct relation with the condition of our feet’ (Nan 1990). As an exercise in which our feet are the primary medium, and which is more strenuous than walking, I thus propose that running may help to preserve and nourish life.



Figure 8: 'Taiji Practised in Singapore'.



Figure from Kaidie's world 13: 'Kaidie Tries To Taiji,'. Singapore, May 2011. Photograph by Geok Aye Ang.

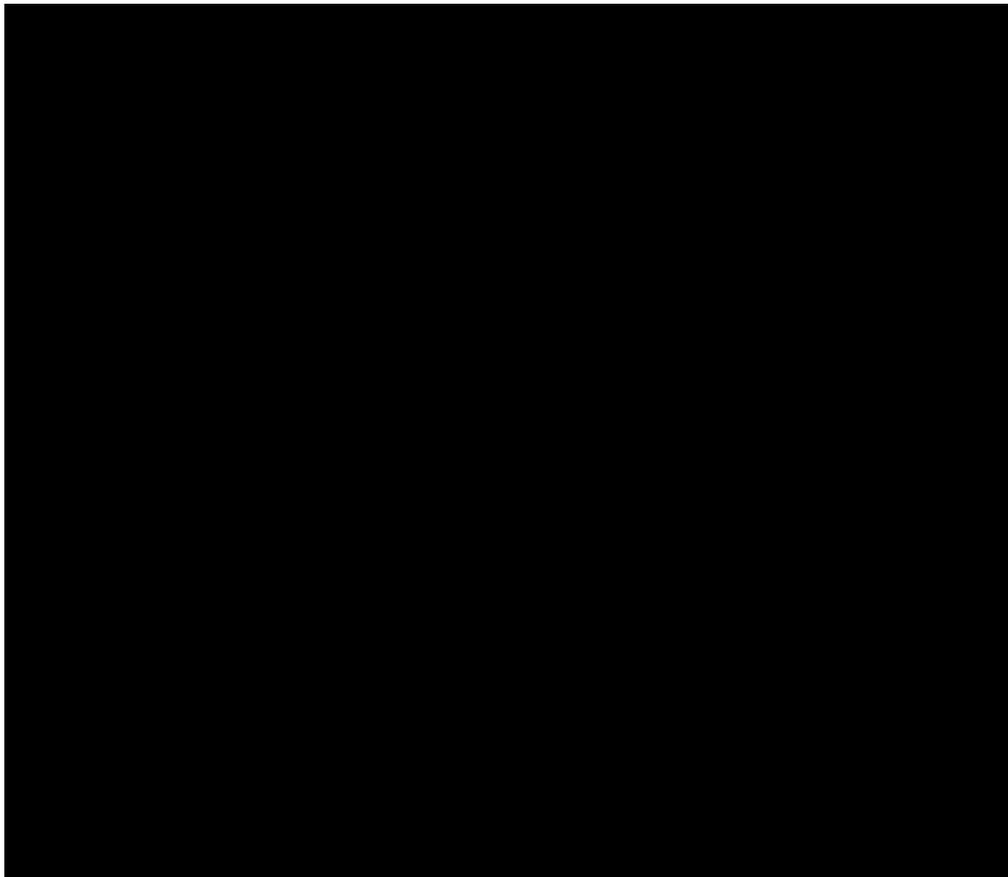


Figure 9: 'Gaining A Foothold In The World'. This contemporary foot reflexology map reflects the ancient Chinese understanding of the importance of the feet, for which every part correlates to the body. (Walpole 2012)

Secondly, running matches several of Schipper's descriptions of *taiji* (1994, p.138). Like the 'wonderful method of harmony and well-being', running needs 'no special equipment' and 'no prior training'. Through the 'daily practice' of *taiji*, we may condition in our body a healthy 'inner world'. The same may be said of running.

The paradoxical quality of being self-consciously 'natural' is held in high regard in Daoism. This stems from Lao Zi's notion of *wuwei*. While literally referring to 'non-action', Lao Zi is at his most exasperating – and inspiring – when he says that 'no action is undertaken, yet nothing is left undone' (*wuwei er wubuwei*) (Lao Tzu & Lau 1963, p.109). Even amongst sinologists, 'no common definition' is agreed upon (Liu 1991, pp.41–56). One defines *wuwei* as 'refraining from activity contrary to Nature' (Pas 2006, p.360).<sup>9</sup> Another sinologist states that *wuwei* governs 'all of the high disciplines' of Daoist martial arts, which advocate a 'yin-like approach, which is apparently non-involved' and non-aggressive (Schmiege 2004, p.36). Yet another correlates *wuwei* with the *dao*, which is 'actively to be sought and to be attained', although 'the flourishing of things is achieved by letting them be' (Miller 2003, p.46). Like the *dao*, *wuwei* is 'self-actualising, creative and spontaneous'. Far from a call for stoicism or passivity, *wuwei* arguably demands decision-making and action<sup>10</sup>. Discipline is vital, to make the Daoist so accomplished at something that the act appears spontaneous (Schipper 1994, p.138). *Wuwei* is the 'ideal state of effortless action' – which only comes after a period of 'effortful action' (Slingerland 2003, p.6). Ultimately, it is a 'playful freedom' and 'unique effortless freedom' (Girardot 2009 p.210). From these readings, I define *wuwei* as a playful spontaneity that encompasses the undertaking of the best action that yields the best results for a given situation.

The exercise of running fits *wuwei*. Since it demands 'no skill at all' (Stroud 2004, p.50), 'anyone can run' (Lloyd Cowan, cited in Salter 2012) – and nearly anytime and anywhere, as writer Murakami testifies. Requiring no equipment and almost no technology – even shoes are optional – it is as rudimentary and cost-free as it gets. (Figure from Kaidie's world 14). As if affirming the Daoist world-body correlation, runner-geographer Alan Latham argues that running can summon our 'wrecked body back to life', and allow us to re-discover what the body can do and to 'think and relate to the world in all sorts of new ways' (2008a). Unlike parkour, skateboarding or flying, running does not violate nature. Non-intrusive, non-ostentatious and legal, it is applicable on a day-to-day basis.

Yet, in order to reach the level of effortlessness, 'effortful action' is needed. Diligent training can strengthen the muscles of our legs and lungs, state Mike Stroud (2004, pp.60-203). As I have already mentioned, it is only after about thirty minutes of running that our body gets sufficiently warmed up. This is a 'crazy logic' that non-runners may not grasp and hence give up after struggling with the first miles. Running makes the heart literally stronger and larger, as the walls of the heart muscle thicken, and blood supply vessels expand. With the ability to 'alter an accepted part of ageing', running hence preserves and nourishes our health. The more we run, the more we can get closer to attain a 'rhythmical expression which guides [our] breathing', states Stroud. This level of adeptness may be likened to that which *taiji* practitioners work towards. We also then reach a state of 'equilibrium and comfort' – which parallels the 'ideal state of

<sup>9</sup> Note that the Daoist notion of 'nature' refers to 'the true reality of all things' and not just the phenomena of the natural world (Kohn 2005, p.xvii).

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Needham argues that many sinologists are 'wrong' to translate *wuwei* as 'nonaction' or 'inactivity' (cited in Pas 2006, p.360).

effortless action' that the Daoist aspires. Running hence qualifies as the action of the 'effortless action' of *wuwei*.

The correlation between running and Daoism does not end there. Referring to the word '*de*' in *Daodejing*, which is an alternative name of the *Lao Zi*, philologist Victor H. Mair correlates it to the word 'doughty', that is, the 'strength of the individual' (1990, p.134). This in turn may be mapped with endurance runners' 'strength of will' or '*sisu*' in the Finnish language (Gotaas 2009, p.156). Runner-biologist Bernd Heinrich refers to the runner's mental stamina as 'long range vision', and even proposes this as being more important than our physical advantages over the animal runners (2002, p.175).

In arguing how running qualifies as a Daoist cultivation technique, I have conceptualised a new kind of running, or a new kind of cultivation technique. This theorisation of 'Daoism-inspired running', a mapping of ancient Daoist wisdom with the popular sport of running, constitutes the first building blocks of my hypothesis. Taking liberties to appropriate the arguments of Daoism scholars, a provisional run-down of trans-running is as follows: Trans-running, we are 'this here', not 'that there', which Schipper refers to 'an exterior, fragmented view of things' (1994, p.189), nor the proverbial 'there there', which is but a fantasy<sup>11</sup>. Re-phrasing Kohn and other Daoist experts I have referred to thus far: mapping the external world onto the trans-runner's body, we can make acquaintance with the world and feel at home in ourselves, as the world. The trans-runner is within the world and embodies it simultaneously. Running affords us the intuitive inner perception to grasp our place in the larger scheme of things. Aligned with the 'cosmic rhythm', the trans-runner may participate in the 'spontaneous evolution of nature' (Schipper 1994, p.138). The trans-runner may, hence, be one step closer to redressing some of the imbalances we may feel today.

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<sup>11</sup> The phrase 'There is no there there' appears in writer Gertrud Stein's 1937 *Everybody's Autobiography*, which describes Stein's return to her childhood home in Oakland in the United States but was unable to locate the house.



Figure from Kaidie's world 14: 'Following in the Footsteps of Our Shoe-Less Forerunners'. (Tan 2012d)

## Aesthetic-Order

We have examined the theoretical sources that inform my hypothesis of trans-running as a playful way to transform our world. We shall now investigate the sources of trans-running's restless and collage-like approach to discourses itself.

An exploration of Lao Zi's 'poetic thinking' may help us formulate this playful mode of thinking. Sinologists call this correlative or analogical thinking (Graham 1986). This is a 'spatial way of thinking', a way of 'mapping the relationships between things that do not exist in a linear cause-and-effect sequence' (Miller 2003, p.60). In *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (1995), David Hall and Roger Ames present a nuanced investigation of correlative thinking. They also refer to it as 'aesthetic order', vis-à-vis the dominant order of what has been variously described as the rational, causal or logical thinking. According to the philosophers, instead of the analytical, abstract and formal, correlative thinking emphasises the aesthetic and imaginative, as well as the spontaneous, experiential and concrete. Additionally, elements governed by the rational order are 'replaceable and substitutable'; since the same form is repeatable, and the contents are 'ultimately irrelevant'. However, as form is inseparable from contents in a correlative order, each mapping is specific, unique, 'ad hoc' and 'irreplaceable'. In other words, rather than being absolute structures from which substances may simply be replaced, correlativity is *processual*, and is open to endless *possibilities*. This, according to Hall and Ames, underlies the Chinese pluralistic view of the world as '10,000 things'. A familiar example of correlation may be found in the 'yin-yang' symbol, which predates Daoism. What seem oppositional are in fact intertwined in a complex, dynamic correlation involving the 'art of contextualisation', state the philosophers. Without the other, there is no whole and no harmony. As represented in the smaller black circle within the white section, and vice versa, each side encapsulates within it its 'opposite'. (Figure 10)

For clarity, I have drawn up a table to differentiate correlativity and causality. (Table 3) However, such a setup of a dichotomous comparison opens up the set of issues surrounding how we *think about* correlative thinking and different modes of thinking. This is a point that Hall and Ames talk about throughout their book. Indeed, the debate about the relationship between correlativity and causality is as wrought as the debate about whether the mode of correlativity is 'Western' or 'Non-Western' (or, more specifically, 'Chinese'). In fact, it was such a tension that gave rise to the theorisation – rationalisation – of correlativity in the first place. Correlative thinking was first conceptualised by sociologist and sinologist Marcel Granet in his 1934 *La Pensée Chinoise* (Fung 2010). It was the Frenchman's means to, paradoxically, formalise the 'Chinese ways'. Philosophers have since argued that correlativity is not culture-specific, hence successfully shifting the discourse away from its somewhat colonialist roots. Prominent sinologist Derk Bodde declares that 'there is nothing uniquely Chinese' about correlative thinking and even associate it with our unconscious (1991, pp.97-98). That Heidegger refers to Lao Zi's *dao* 'the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think' supports the argument that correlative thinking transcends culture. Hall and Ames even assert that all causality is preceded by correlativity (1995, pp.134-141). Indeed, later in this chapter, I will distance myself from a dichotomous way of discussing correlativity and causality, but move towards a discussion of their *correlativity*.

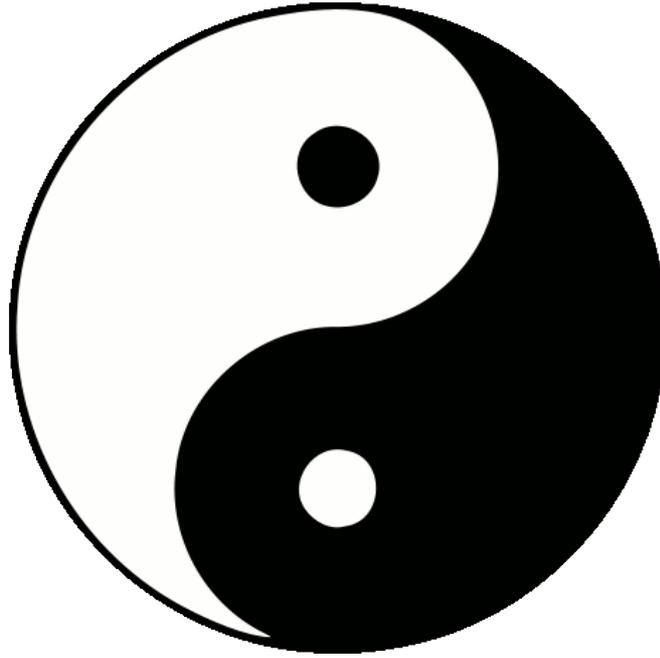


Figure 10: 'Correlativity', as exemplified by the *yin-yang* symbol.

Order	CAUSALITY	CORRELATIVITY
Features	Linear Temporal About cause-effect Static Dialectical Analytical Abstract Formal Form repeatable for different contents Rational Logical Singular	Non-linear Spatial Aesthetic Process-based Spontaneous Imaginative Experiential Unique (form and contents inseparable) Association by metaphor and analogy Ad hoc Of the unconscious Universal Plural

Table 3: 'A Causal Comparison of Causality and Correlativity'. (Hall & Ames 1995; Miller 2003; Bodde 1991; Graham 1986)

## Profitable-Exercise

Trans-running's correlative approach to discourses is playful. I argue that this playfulness may enliven the discourse. As it freely cuts across cultures and disciplines, it may even be *trans-cultural* and *trans-disciplinary*, *transgressive* and *transformative*.

My claims are inspired by the work of British philosopher J.J. Clarke. Speaking about Western interpretation – and transformation – of Daoist philosophies, Clarke argues that we should 'thrive on differences rather than seek to obliterate them' (2000, p.11). Such an 'agonistic encounter' can be 'a potentially subversive engagement, in which we are compelled to confront the assumptions, limitations and fractures in our own cultural traditions'.

Clarke's advice seems to bear a correlation to that of Michel de Montaigne in 1580 with regards to travelling. For the French essayist,

'Travel is in my opinion a very profitable exercise; the soul is there continually employed in observing new and unknown things, and I do not know [...] a better school wherein to model life than by incessantly exposing to it the diversity of so many other lives, fancies and usances, and by making it relish a perpetual variety of forms of human nature'. (2009, p.692)

To deliberately run into the new and unknown may be a radical transaction, for it challenges our own conditions and pre-conceptions. This self-interrogation is beneficial as it enriches us. Like Montaigne's traveller – as it is for the correlative thinker and Clarke's inter-cultural person – the trans-runner does not run away, stay still or hide indoors, but is curious about, and seeks new encounters, and runs to – and runs into – worlds different from our own. Hall and Ames explain that while certitude and plausibility characterise the rational order, correlativity is about possibilities (1995, pp.117-126). The trans-runner is hence arguably compelled to restlessly explore the world, since it is one offering endless and ever newer, unique encounters and mappings. It can be argued that the 'world' of a discourse – as well as its very boundary – may already accommodate or encourage difference. Nonetheless, with a deliberate mapping of disparate worlds, discourses that arise are arguably more profitable than those that take place within the same world, as their values get transformed. Instead of settling with a single discourse, we think on our feet and have our thoughts challenged along the way. The trans-runner's 'world' is hence not fixed but *pluralistic* and relative. It is a *process* and a *work-in-progress*. In this running-about from discourse to discourse, or worlds of discourses, tensions and clashes may arise. Ripped from our comfort zone and instead running into various zones of conflict – and contact – we must re-examine our own world. Crossing and re-drawing boundaries, the trans-runner is involved in an intertextual engagement that is potentially subversive – and even *transgressive*.

Daoism itself is such a transgressive discourse. Not only does it view reality as an ever-evolving pluralistic entity of '10,000 things', its own *dao*-doctrines are elastic and paradoxical. In fact, Daoist scholar Kristofer Schipper states that Daoist sage Zhuang Zi (or Chuang Zi, circa 400BCE) himself declared Daoism as 'a religion without doctrine, without dogma, or institutions' (1994, p.215). Unlike other '-isms', Daoism 'has never been pure' (Hardy 2002, p.307) and is inconsistent, even 'crude', as Lao Zi self-reflexively says in the opening quote. Professor of Chinese Studies Cheuk Yin Lee states that, being 'neither monolithic nor static', Daoism is notorious as a 'rich, complex, multifaceted tradition' and its structure 'invites diverse interpretations' (1994,

pp.87-89). This explains why Schipper regards Daoism as neither philosophy nor religion but a ‘way of life’ (1994, p.212), which is the term my thesis runs with. Daoism’s transgressiveness explains why it was mocked – not just by frustrated ‘Westerners’ but the Chinese, since Lao Zi’s times. Although, or because it was widely embraced as a way of life by the masses, Daoism has always maintained an antagonistic relationships with the ruling class. In contrast to Confucianism or, in later times, Christianity or Marxism, Daoism was often considered to be too anarchic or superstitious (Fung 2010, p.xi). As it ‘stands apart from, or even in opposition to, the cult of the state and its ideology’, Chinese official historiography had even preferred to ‘ignore Daoism’ (Fung 2010, p.5).

Trans-running runs with Daoism’s wayward ways. The same way Lao Zi is ‘homeless’, I propose that those of us with no theoretical alliance may be in a better position to transform ourselves as thinkers. As we trespass different cultures and disciplines, we may challenge our own limits and assumptions in our thinking, to broaden our horizons and that of others. This is how trans-running aims to be *trans-cultural*, *trans-disciplinary*, *transformative* and *transgressive*.

## Pungent-Words

A turn to the *Lao Zi* re-affirms Daoism’s anarchic ways. It also contextualises my own playful writing approach, and supports my recommendation that you perform ‘trans-running’ when reading this thesis.

The opening lines of the 2600-year-old scripture deftly display the Old Child’s pungency. Exploiting the multiple meanings of the noun and verb *dao*, Lao Zi draws out *dao*’s paradoxical nature of being simultaneously concrete as well as what many Daoism scholars term ‘ineffable’ (Girardot 2009, p.2):

‘The *dao* that can be *dao*-ed is not the real *dao*’. (Translation by Kai Syng Tan, with reference to Lao Tzu and Lau 1989, ch.1)

Lao Zi urges us to be governed by ‘intuition rather than logic’ (Girardot, cited in Schipper 1994, foreword). To ‘explain the meaning of things is pointless’. Hence, we should ‘use no words’ (Translation by Kai Syng Tan, with reference to Lao Tzu and Lau 1989, ch.3) Yet, Lao Zi was asked to *transcribe* his own teachings – anti-authority, anti-intellectual and even anti-words as they are – into the written word. The *Lao Zi* is the result of Lao Zi’s negotiation of the conundrum. Compared to the Bible, the *Upanishads* and other texts that define entire civilisations, the *Lao Zi* seems like a joke. Rather than epic sagas of villains, virgins, miracles, murders and monsters, the scripture consists only of ‘rhyming aphorisms’ (Pas 2006, p.312). Size-wise, it falls short, too, carrying only ‘5000 odd Chinese characters’, as Kuang-Ming Wu scathingly puts it (1997, p.58). Had the modernist author Samuel Beckett written in Chinese, it could have partly resembled the *Lao Zi*, with its ‘cryptic’ and ‘dense’ (Pas 2006, p.312) wordplay. The ‘laconical Classical Chinese in which it was written, the author’s punning and enigmatic style’ make it ‘difficult to understand at times’ (Henricks 1990). If the absence of any strong narrative themes is not already extreme, the work liberally mobilises wordplay, repetition and tautology, as evident in the quote. While chapters exist, their ordering is perplexing; digression and repetition abound, too. These characteristics could fit that of works by Laurence Sterne, James Joyce or Italo Calvino

– except that this was written two millennia earlier. No wonder scholars – Chinese or otherwise – have called it ‘historical riddle’ (Pas 2006, p.312). With neither name nor dates, it is anti-historicity as well as authorship (Schipper 1994, p.5) – in advance of Roland Barthes’ 1967 notion of the death of the author. So ahead of its time that opponents and admirers alike define it as poetry, a work of art.

Although the intention behind Lao Zi’s ‘classic manual on the art of living’ (Mitchell 1992) was serious, the Old Child *had* to be mischievous. Dictating neither theorem nor threat, *Lao Zi* offers personal recommendations – which are further undermined by the author’s self-deprecation (‘I alone am mixed up’). The resulting text may be understood as the author’s playful way to reconcile the need to theorise and transcribe into words a way of life that is against order and which distrusts language. In the final analysis, form and substance are inseparable, but intertwined in a complex correlation. *Lao Zi*’s style applies and *performs* the subject matter.<sup>12</sup> To write is contradictory – yet, to have spelt out his ideas in a causal, pedantic manner would have been even more at odds with the Old Master’s *dao*. It was by being self-reflexive in his approach that Lao Zi built in his self-critique. If Daoist ways runs on what has been described as ‘crazy logic’ (Girardot 2009, p.5), then Lao Zi’s playful writing approach may be the most rational, yet. Ergo, the best way for the reader to explore the *Lao Zi* must also be in the same ludic mode.

Whether it is the imperfect state of the text – as is common of many ancient documents – that is responsible for, or has compounded the ambiguity of the *Lao Zi*, is besides the point. Critics consistently describe the *Lao Zi* as radical. It is ‘not an esoteric book’ (Schipper 1994, p.184), but one of the world’s most translated (Mair 1990, p.xi). Oscar Wilde, a master of wit himself, calls it ‘the most caustic criticism of modern life I have met with for some time’ (cited in Clarke 2000, p.58). Those who grasped *Lao Zi*’s playful ways include the Chan (Zen) Buddhists, who, centuries later, flaunted their panache for wordplay with their riddles (also known as ‘*koan*’). Harvard-trained philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu even states – pungently – that ‘all other Chinese thinkers’ have followed in Lao Zi’s footsteps as they talk and write by ‘metaphoric implication, not by exhaustive explications’ (1997, p.58).

The playful spirit of *Lao Zi*’s has inspired me in my writing approach, and it is with this same exuberance that I recommend you read my thesis. Make your own correlations between words, phrases, paragraphs and pages. Weave your own logic or order for yourself. That my research begins from, and belongs not only to an abstract world, but in the lived and concrete, is an important leitmotif of my work. It is for the same reason that the worlds of Kaidie and that of myself as artist and writer overlap.

The manner in which Daoism scholar Livia Kohn thinks of her writing approach reinforces Lao Zi’s ways. In her introductory section to her anthology on Daoism, Kohn points out the limitation of the written word. While this can be said of any translation from one media to another, the issue seems particularly pronounced vis-à-vis the dynamic way of life of Daoism:

‘[...] any systematic description of Taoist path can never do justice to the actual experience of the religion. [...] Unravelling into sentences, transposed into the linear nature an logical structure of language, divided into chatters and sections, it can only be a mere shadow, a trace of itself, a pointer to its essence. Although

<sup>12</sup> Daoism scholar Julia M. Hardy compares the work of early Daoist texts to that of Jacques Derrida, in their focus on the ‘limitations of language to express human truths’, and given their activation of ‘paradox, word play and ironic humour’ (2002, p. 307).

presented as a logical succession, it must be understood that the concepts and practices described in actual reality are interwoven and mingled in a highly complex way'. (1993, p.3)

It is perhaps if, or when, trans-running is 'across, beyond' the theoretical, or the confines of the page, the artworks and the thesis, that it has the potential to be truly *trans-dimensional* – and even *transgressive*.

## Messy Swamp-High Ground

I invite you to approach my practice-related Fine Art thesis in a playful manner, too.

Here, we return to the research of Donald Schön and David Kolb. I have previously correlated their research with Daoist ways. In particular, the Chinese word *dao* seems to resonate with Schön's notion of 'thinking on our feet'. I now explore how several of the researchers quoted thus far seem to exemplify their ideas. This is followed by a re-visit of the discourse of correlativity. It is from running back-and-forth between these discourses that I theorise the dynamic interdependence between my artwork and written thesis. (Correlations 10) You have already seen an example of an application of this, in the form of my performance at DOCUMENTA.

Bernd Heinrich (born 1940), an award-winning Professor Emeritus of biology at the University of Vermont, became a world-record holder in a 62-mile (100km) race, aged 40. Years of studying how animals become fast runners was not enough for Heinrich, who made himself a guinea pig – by imitating the gait of antelopes. However academically-unsound an experiment with a sample size of one may be, Heinrich makes up with his almost child-like zeal, in subjecting himself to endless trial and error, as charted in his book *Why We Run: A Natural History* (2002). As an extension of his research on endurance hunting, Daniel Lieberman runs shoeless – even in winter, which explains his moniker, 'Barefoot Professor' (Nature Video 2010). Louis Liebenberg goes a step further, by carrying out what he calls 'direct observation' in the Savannah (1990). The anthropologist lived and hunted with the last surviving endurance hunters, running for up to 6.5 hours at a stretch (Liebenberg, cited in Chen 2006). Both Lieberman and Liebenberg are Professors of Anthropology at Harvard University. Daoism scholar Kristofer Schipper (born 1934) practises what he preaches, too. Abandoning his professorial job at the Sorbonne, the Dutchman underwent training in Taiwan for several years to become the first Westerner ordained as a Daoist priest. This is despite how the religious aspects of Daoism have constantly been 'written off wholesale as superstition' or 'interpreted as pure religious mysticism and poetry' by the ruling class, and academics from the East and West alike (Clarke 2000, p.2). Considered as 'one of the world's leading authorities' on Daoism (Xiong 1994), Schipper embodies Lao Zi's anti-intellectual stance<sup>13</sup>.

'10,000' gates are open to any researcher. These researchers walk – or run – the talk. Their approach matches the spirit of trans-running best.<sup>14</sup> Instead of proselytising from

<sup>13</sup> Even though he 'could have lived quite comfortably in Europe, since the research environment and living conditions are far better than in China' (Confucius Institute Online 2009), Schipper has even chosen to take residence in Fujian in South China today (The Chinese Government's Official Web Portal 2012). Fujian is also where my Daoist ancestors were from.

<sup>14</sup> A clarification: my argument is not one against the value and beauty of abstraction, formalism or fantasy; after all, the world would be impoverished if we are only 'allowed' to think, create or be what we have, what we are, what we know and so on. Neither is this a discussion about authenticity or realism, ethics and responsibility.

an armchair at a safe distance, or employing mercenary students to perform the legwork, these researchers *transpose, transplant, translate* – and *transform* – their hypotheses in the ‘messy swamp’ of real life. Collisions may occur as the researcher moves back-and-forth between the worlds of practice and discourse. Rather than creating neat formulae and perfect templates, such are *processes* of experimentation, fallibility and contingency. A lively transaction between textbook knowledge, theoretical know-how and preconceptions, with that which is occurring on the ground, in real-life contexts, may ensue. Things are subject to change – including the subject matter itself. New discoveries and new knowledge may be formed along the way. As processes of *transformation* and indeed *transgression*, these exercises may be profitable. Directly embedded within the material that they are studying, these researchers are embodying their own research. To the question: ‘What is at stake?’, these researchers can reply, ‘*Everything*, since I am also a subject and medium of my research’. As reflective practitioners, they, like Lao Zi and Daoism itself, seem ‘mixed up’ and impure.

The ways of these researchers inspired how I have devoted myself to embody Kaidie for 1000-days in *Kaidie’s Trans-Run*, which may be regarded as a playful type of field-work conducted with the sample size of one.

### **Thesis-As-Artwork. Artwork-As-Thesis**

David Hall and Roger Ames call for an application of correlative thinking when assessing the relationship between rationality and correlativity. Running with the philosophers’ proposal of such a different way of thinking (departing as it does from the dominant mode of rational thinking) may enable us to continue building up our own discourse about the theory-practice interplay, and, by extension, the artwork-written thesis correlation, as well as what a ‘Fine Art thesis’ may be.

Hall and Ames argue that if we were to examine the relationship between causality and correlativity from a correlative viewpoint, we may appreciate the dynamic interdependency of the two (1995, pp.134-141). The philosophers illustrate this point with atomic physicist Niels Bohr’s 1913 ‘Bohr Theory’. While taken to be rational, it is in fact ‘analogically grounded’, having ‘began as little more than a metaphorical emendation of a metaphor (“indivisible stuff”, “corpuscles”)’. That which is rational tend to have originated from ‘mythopoetic beginnings’, they argue. This illustrates the importance of an imaginative and poetic manner of thinking. Rather than mutually exclusive, correlativity and causality are interdependent.

reflective  
practitioner

Louise Liebenberg  
Kristofer Schipper  
Daniel Lieberman  
Bernd Heinrich

Donald Schon David Kolb

experiential  
learning



Hall & Ames

correlative thinking  
experiential  
metaphorical poetic analogical  
aesthetic concrete



I'm running  
back-and-forth between  
discourses that enable me  
to build my own discourse  
about the  
theory-practice  
written thesis-artwork  
interplay

Correlations 10: 'Theorising My Practice-Related Fine Art Thesis'.

Earlier, I introduced correlativity as an order that is diametrically opposite to causality. A re-construction of the familiar *yin-yang* symbol can now allow us to re-imagine the dynamic and creative *correlation* between correlativity and causality, as well as artworks and written thesis. We may think of one side as representing artworks, the other as written thesis, and that each 'section' encompasses within it an element of the 'other' (hence the smaller black sphere within the pink, and vice versa). With this setup, the artwork and written thesis are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other. Indeed, the very process of realisation – formalisation – of an artwork implies that a kind of logic is required, while the written thesis would have begun in mappings, metaphors and artworks, as this thesis has. Additionally, as I have already argued, the correlative order is associated with the aesthetic, analogical, metaphorical and poetic – all notions at home in the world of Fine Art. Correlativity seems correlated to what is commonly called 'lateral thinking' which many individuals, perhaps in particular artists, are drawn to. This can explain why an artist like myself identifies with correlativity and mobilises it in my thesis.

Running with the argument that correlativity consisting *includes within* it the order of causality, I propose that an artwork may encompass within it the written thesis. This supports arguments I have already made, that is, how this Fine Art thesis may be considered an artwork, and that it 'belongs' to the 'world' of art. I have argued that my 'running-about' as ambassador to collage together disparate schools of thought may itself be considered as a poetic move, too. (Correlations 11)

Thinking about the thesis as an artwork can be correlated to how the Situationist International frame their endeavours as art. True to their *avant garde* roots, they regard art as a 'powerful cultural weapon' (Ford 2005, p.36) capable of creating 'a new way of life' (Debord 1955). However, if overhauling the world at large in a total revolution – as the Situationists boasted – seems unrealistic within a lifetime, we may perhaps do so vis-à-vis our own world. For runner-writer George Sheehan, running is his art and the way he transforms his circumstances, one step at a time:

'I have found my specific pattern, heard the voice that calls me, found my art, any medium to experience and interpret life'. (1978, p.126)



Correlations 11: 'Nothing Is Black And White!'.

## Trial-and-Error

My artworks holds equal importance as the written thesis. After all, I have invented *Kaidie's Trans-Run* – as well as Kaidie – for the purpose of this PhD thesis. The audience may, along with Kaidie, correlate body, art, technology, theory and so on in a ‘live’, 1000-day process that is ever-transforming. More than a vehicle to test out theories, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* may serve as a counterpoint to check my hypotheses and assumptions. My artwork-written thesis are networked in a reciprocal system of interdependency. Without the other, one collapses. Like the *yin-yang*, each renews and transforms each other.

Another demonstration of the restless nature of *Kaidie's Trans-Run* may be seen in the way it has evolved over the duration of my research. You may have already come across terms like ‘3rdlife’, ‘Life 3.0’, ‘rough guide’ and so on in the ‘Figures from Kaidie’s world’. These were some of the concepts I had experimented with as I navigated my way through the ‘swampy lowland’ of ‘messy’ problems. In the process, these concepts were abandoned, absorbed or transformed. While another researcher may retroactively rectify the diagrams, I consider these ‘errors’ indispensable to my journey. Without these stepping stones, I would not have arrived at this thesis, which is ‘final’ insofar as it is submitted to be examined, but is, necessarily, *provisional*.

## 10,000-Possible-Mappings-And-Correlations

The so-called ‘imperfection’ reflects the *paradoxical* nature of trans-running itself. That it is dynamic – with a hypothesis about restlessness, approached in an a-historical, restless manner, and with Kaidie and *Kaidie's Trans-Run* literally all over the place – but, at the same time, fixed and historical (spanning the period of 12.12.2009 – 09.09.2012), is another contradictory feature of trans-running. Earlier, I have proposed for the thesis to be regarded as an artwork. If an artwork is a document of its time, then this thesis may be considered as a particular representation, reflection and re-action to some aspects of our dynamic world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, the restless ways of Kaidie seem typical of any technologically-attuned person today. Yet, as a sceptical critic and immersed *participant* alike, and with a highly self-reflexive approach, Kaidie is specific as an artwork, as if a heightened variation of the generic contemporary being. Even in the 1990’s, technology writer Sherry Turkle states that with the intensity of technological changes, ‘living with flux may no longer be temporary’ (1996).

The world as one that is in a state of flux is, of course, not a new concept. In the world of Daoism, things – including observations and theories themselves – are ever-changing. After all, the *dao* is ‘a living thing’ and always transforming, states Norman Girardot (2009, p.43). Hence, any attempt at a coherent narrative is, at best, *transitory*. The Daoism scholar states that only a ‘*provisional* conclusion’ may be offered, and texts are left ‘open to yet more multiple interpretations’ (2009, p.78). In his assessment of the work of another scholar, Girardot points out how it is necessarily an ‘ongoing enterprise’:

‘[There] needs to be a sharing, and a provisional synthesis, of the fruits of this work with a broader public.’ (1994, p.xvi)

Indeed, artist Jon Thomson argues that, given the fluidity of change in today's world, things may be regarded as 'disposable' instead of being appreciated (2012). Following this, my thesis may serve as a time capsule of a historical moment that is in flux. In fact, in my conversation with Thomson, he tells me that he thinks of *Kaidie* as a 'rumination of a condition of being', a 'metaphor', 'snapshot', 'cipher' and 'mapping of a moment today'. He adds that the strength of such a work is its role as a 'locator of a point' in history that has the foresight to articulate something clearly 'prior to something' such as augmented reality and wearable technology 'becoming normalised' (2013b). Indeed, Thomson is also the one who talks about thinking of trans-running as a 'toolkit', with which the user may personalise for themselves. Extrapolating from Thomson's argument, I propose that we think of trans-running as an app or mapping, too.

Just as *Kaidie's Trans-Run* is a *particular mapping* of its time, the hypothesis of trans-running itself must also be understood as syntheses or assemblages that are *provisional* and open. My research is an ongoing enterprise or *work-in-progress*. It is but one message, one euphoric mapping or collage, one course, one discourse or one set of correlations out of a proverbial '10,000'. While enquiries and responses are put forward, its real strength may be in *provoking* more questions and interest in what is raised. My thesis may point out *pathways for further research*. I invite you to run, or trans-run with me, to join me in an ongoing discourse, and to generate your own courses and discourses. After all, there are 10,000 gates and mountaintops.

## TRANSITION

In this chapter, I surveyed of some of the discourses that I have picked-and-mixed to string-together my own discourse of trans-running. Throughout, trans-running's proposed feature as a playful way to correlate between theory and practice, knowledge and experience, written thesis and artworks, is discussed and/or performed.

The robustness of trans-running as a collage of these discourses will be tested as I share my findings of my performance of trans-running within the real world (chapter II), digital world (III) and the world of thinking (IV).

## **II. TRANSFORM YOUR REAL WORLD**

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we shall apply trans-running to our real world.

Here, trans-running attempts to emulate some of the feats of the Situationist International, yet also departs from their efforts. Active in the 1950's, the group consisted of 'artists, anarchists, Marxists, cultural revolutionaries, modernists critical theorists' (Garrett 2010, p.60). They devised radical tactics to bring about 'a revolution of everyday life', so as to *transgress* the alienating spectacle of media-saturation, commercialism and mechanisation of the city (Debord 1995; Debord 2006; Sadler 1999; Ford 2005). One such method was the drift (*dérive*). In his book *The Situationist International: A User's Guide*, British art historian Simon Ford cites leader Guy Debord's definition of the drift as a 'mode of experimental behaviour' (2005, p.34). For Simon Sadler, an architectural academic, the drift enables us to cut 'freely across urban space' and 'gain a revolutionary perception of the city'. (1999, p.93). Games such as deliberately getting lost were a feature of the drift.

Instead of walking, which the Situationists's drift was based upon, trans-running harnesses the physical and poetic processes of running. As an interpretation of the Daoist aspiration of *wuwei* – a playful spontaneity and freedom that 'goes with the flow' – trans-running also turns away from the cultural insurgents' aggressive ways, which were factors that arguably contributed to the movement's downfall. In fact, *wuwei* is as revolutionary. Yet, the concept itself is an application of *wuwei*, and has an unassuming approach. As 'a new spirit of naturalness' which should 'inform and transform everything we do', *wuwei* 'helps us realise the need for a fundamental change in the way we live', and seeks to bring about a 'radical reorientation of the way we do things', explains sinologist Cheuk Yin Lee (1994, p.100).<sup>15</sup>

Mapping together the ways of the Situationists and Daoists, I will highlight 14 ways in which trans-running may enable us to correlate our body physically and poetically with the real world, instead of feeling alienated by it. I will show that, armed with trans-running, we may transform our real world by having a sense of ownership of our city (section 'A'). We may also resist control by the state, by which I refer to the political authorities of the nation state or country that the individual belongs to ('B'). Beyond the city and state, I will also explore how the actual and poetic condition of 'being on the run' at the 'world-at-large' may enable us to renew and even revolutionise the everyday world ('C'). My arguments may prove that trans-running is not only *playful*, but also *personal, political, pungent*.

My intention is that after reading this chapter, you may consider trans-running as a new building-upon of the efforts of the Situationists, and how it may contribute to existing discourses about ways to re-imagine our relationship with the city, state and beyond.

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<sup>15</sup> What Lee says about the alchemical practices of Daoism, illustrates this unassuming yet inclusive nature of *wuwei* and indeed, Daoism skilfully: that although they are 'not pursued in their classical form any more, their influence remain strong. But rather than tough overt missionary effort or deliberate indoctrination, [Daoist] practices simply merged with common Chinese conception of physical health and spiritual well-being, and in this way effectively rendered much of traditional Chinese culture an expression of Taoist insights' (1994, p.161).



Figure from Kaidie's world 15: 'Trans-Running as Trans-Port'.(Tan 2013f)

## A. RUN YOUR CITY

Here, I highlight 7 ways that trans-running may re-orientate the way you approach the city.

### **Sport and *Transport***

Over the course of 1000 days that I performed as Kaidie, I discovered that apart from places designated for running, such as the stadium or the treadmill in the gymnasium. I could run anywhere. As I ran in the streets, I found running an enjoyable way to move from one place to another in the city of ‘Nondon’. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 15)

With these findings from my fieldwork, I made the following reflective observations, and outlined a few recommendations. I propose trans-running as not just a sport, but a mode of *trans*-port for the urban dweller today. There are several arguments behind this proposal. Traffic congestions are a definitive feature of many large cities such as Delhi, New York or London. Going from ‘A’ to ‘B’ by foot at a speed faster than walking, we may avoid the frustration of wasting precious time while being trapped in a car or bus. Running as a form of commute can be pleasurable, too, as we weave past pedestrians and vehicles. Running is free-of-charge and allows us to avoid exorbitant subway fares or congestion charges, not to mention environmentally-friendly as well. These reasons may explain why running seems to be an increasingly popular mode of commute for Londoners. You may see office workers running in the streets to or from work during peak hours. This is further evidenced by documentation by runners themselves on social media platforms, as well as the emergence of campaigns that support such a transportation mode. (Figures 11-12) The frequency of train delays and strikes by transportation workers in London could be a factor, too. Furthermore, with the London Underground carrying ‘more than a billion people each year – and demand keeps growing’ (Transport for London 2012), running may be considered as a playful, alternative mode of transport. Until an elaborate network of specially-designated bicycle lanes are laid out in the city, and until drivers and cyclists alike are more respectful of how they may co-exist on public roads, cycling as a mode of transportation will arguably remain risky. As we can run on the pavement, running is relatively safer. If long distances between sites and the changeableness of the weather cause you concern, Alan Turing can inspire. Instead of riding the train or driving the company car, the mathematician preferred to ‘use his own steam’, by running 20 miles – 6 miles short of the distance of a full marathon – between workplaces, regardless of the time of the day or condition of the weather (Hodges 1983). Previously, I quoted scientists Dennis Bramble and Daniel Lieberman who describe the human body as a ‘beautifully-tuned running machine’ (cited in Chen 2006). Extending this metaphor, we may say that our body is our ‘vehicle’ itself, and, hence, we may have a more direct control over it. Performing the dual roles of passenger and driver, running can afford us with a greater sense of autonomy.

In these ways, navigating the city with trans-running may arguably lend us a greater sense of ownership of the city.



Figure 11: 'Twitter Page of A Running-Londoner'. 'Andrew' states that he runs for an hour each way to and from work between Fulham and the West End. (Andrew 2013)

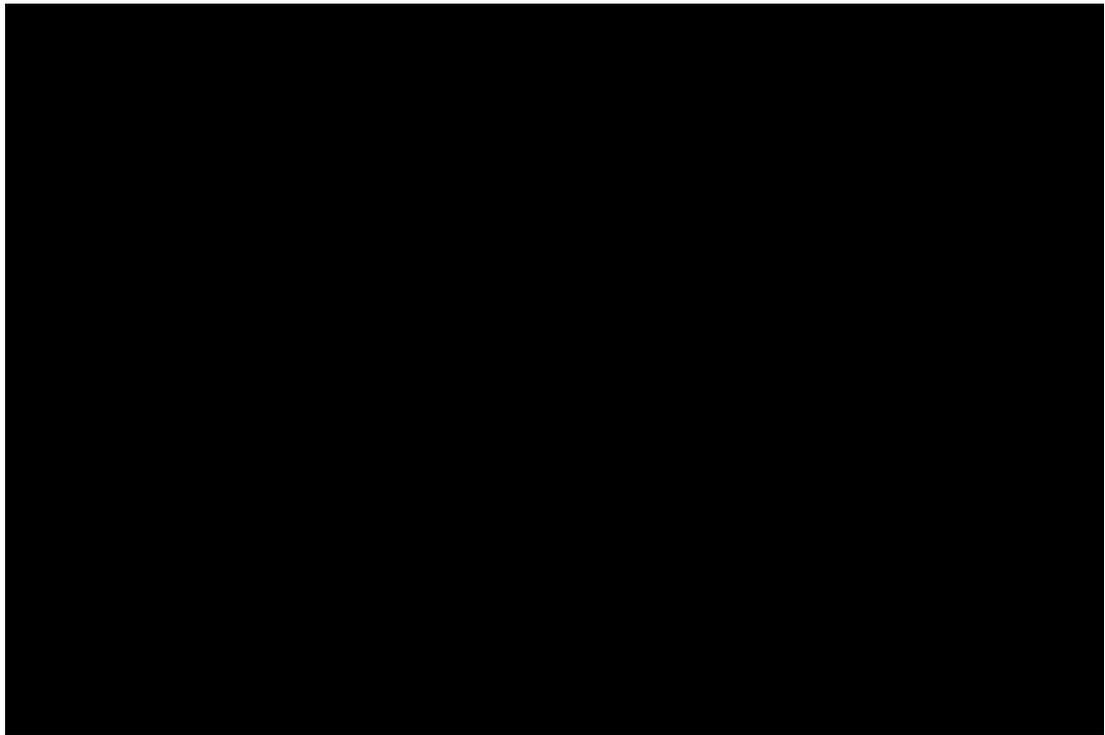


Figure 12: 'Running: An Emergent Movement in London?' (Home Run London 2012).

## Speed-Play-Drift

Trans-running may create new poetic possibilities for the urban-dweller, too.

My own experience proved that running can open up more room for contrast and play than walking. Cutting freely across the city with alternating intensities, I felt my senses sharpened, as if I was an endurance hunter, mid-hunt. Drifting about with speed-play, the urban landscape around me revealed itself in varying degrees of blurriness or sharpness. Had I stayed still in my room, or walked, I would not have experienced this transformation. Trans-running, I was the agent of this new perception of the city, thus making me feel a new affinity to it. (Figure from Kaidie's world 16)

In the 'running world', *fartlek*, literally Swedish for 'speed play', is a well-known concept. According to Richard Benyo and Joe Henderson, this is a form of training in which variation of speed is emphasised (2001, p.111). The authors of *The Running Encyclopedia* explain that the *fartlek* is more 'free-flowing' and playful than other forms of endurance training. Benyo and Henderson recommend, for instance, sprinting from one telephone post to another, and running the next at a slow speed, and so on. The running experts themselves betray a cheeky worldview when they quip:

'[...] the word [*fartlek*] is so much fun to say and write [...] we are sure that to the regular walking-around world it sounds gross'. (2011, p.111)

For Debord and fellow Situationists, drifts – 'transient passages through varied ambiances' (cited in Ford 2005, p.34) – were radical re-readings of the city, and their narratives were 'open, contingent, and shifting' (Sadler 1999, pp.98-99). The trans-runner may play this up with the superimposition of *fartlek* – with a technique that I shall term the '*fartlek-dérive*' or 'speed-play-drift' – and hence make it 'so much fun'. Navigating the city with *fartlek-dérive*, you may translate the *dérive* more dynamically, spotlighting its hallmarks of *transience* and variety. Given an era in which almost every physical frontier is already marked and mapped, the technique seems ever more *pertinent*. With a higher frequency of change, and a focus on the notions of being *in transit*, *transition* and the *transitory*, the *fartlek-dérive* may enable you to radically re-interpret your urban world, and your correlation with it. In order to alter their perception during their walks, many Situationists had resorted to drugs and alcohol. With the city unfolding itself in a rich repertoire of rhythms as you traverse through it by running, you may require no extraneous enhancement. Trans-running, the narratives of your speed-play-drift may remain ever open, contingent, and shifting. This is how you may have a revolution of your everyday life in the real world.

## FOUND: Album revealing how the late trans-runner viewed the world

30 September 2012

Kaidie's notes scribbled at the back of the photographs from left to right: 1. 'WALKING, this is what/how I see the world'. 2. 'TRANS-RUNNING, my world is transformed'. 3. 'TRANS-RUNNING RAPIDLY, the buildings appear to uncoil violently; I run out of breath trying to chase after the ever open, contingent and shifting landscape.' 4. 'TRANS-RUNNING IN SLOW MOTION, my surroundings seem locked in an ancient dance - and I, too, dance, and run, with them'. |

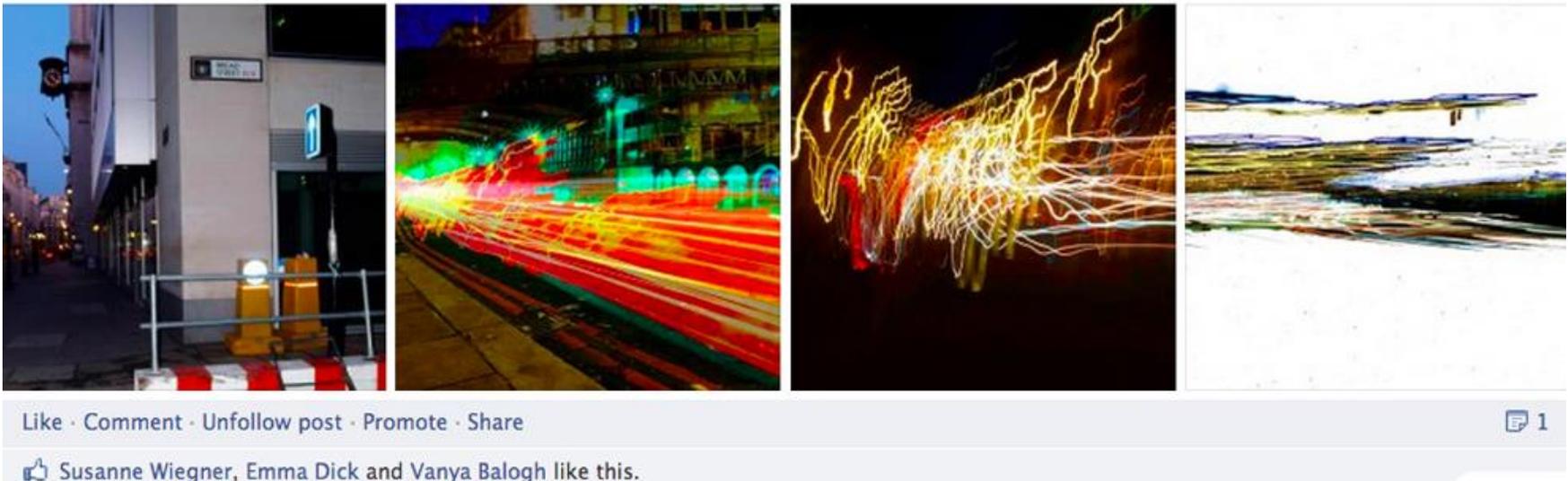


Figure from Kaidie's world 16: 'A Revolutionary Perception of Your City'. (Tan 2012a)



Even if all the  
CCTVs of the world  
were tracking me,  
so transient my passage is,  
that I will appear as if a character  
in a  
Futurist  
painting  
registering as  
nothing more than a blur.



Figure from Kaidie's world 17: 'Blasting Big Brother: Can You See Me Now?' (Tan 2013e)

## Subverting Big Brother's Gaze

With the *fartlek-dérive*, I varied my speed as I drifted about in the city. Given my small build sculpted from 1000-days of running, I was able to make it so much more fun, by slipping into unknown alleys. I even succeeded in dodging surveillance cameras, since I registered as a blur as I ran past them. In these ways, I personalised the way I negotiated the city, and no longer felt intimidated by it. (Figure from Kaidie's world 17)

Georges-Eugène Haussmann's 19th century renovation of Paris with broad boulevards helped facilitate Napoleon III's troops to run down delinquent Parisians. Fighting back in the 20th century, Debord's contemporaries Johan Huizinga and Henri Lefebvre prescribed 'play, spontaneity, and festivity' as everyday, 'oppositional forces to bureaucratic planning' (cited in Sadler 1999, p.99). Debord even proclaimed Haussmann an 'idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing' (cited in Sadler 1999, p. 16) – with much sound and fury himself. The fiery Frenchman recommended lively ways of subverting the authorities' schemes and scheming, by, for instance, 'slipping by night into houses undergoing demolition' and 'wandering in catacombs forbidden to public' (cited in Sadler, p.93).

While walking may have sufficed as a means to move about the boulevards of Paris two generations ago, the high-impact action of running may be a more forceful comeback metaphorically, vis-à-vis our more aggressive conditions now. Today, cities are populated by densely-packed skyscrapers, many of which have been rigged by bureaucrats with surveillance cameras. London alone is closely-watched by at least 10,000 Closed Circuit Televisions (Davenport 2007). Yet, following *wuwei*, trans-running does so with a spirit of naturalness, a quiet poetry and pungency without the sound and fury of either Haussmann or Debord. With the *fartlek-dérive*, you may subvert the gaze of the city's planners.

## Subverting the Tourist's Gaze

In 2010, I visited Sao Paulo in Brazil to share my findings of trans-running in a conference<sup>16</sup>. Instead of using public transportation or walking, I explored the city by running physically and poetically, as Kaidie. Following my belly-knowledge or gut instinct, I also went about *sans* map. As I ran, not only were my sweat pores opened, I felt as if my eyes, ears and heart were opened, too. Drifting about with varying speed, I discovered new sights and sounds otherwise sidestepped had I travelled in a tourist bus. I came face-to-face with *favelas* and other 'un-Photoshopped' sites, which 'official' narratives gloss over or omit altogether. Trans-running, my previously-received knowledge from tourism brochures about the wealthy capital was challenged. (Figure from Kaidie's world 18)

<sup>16</sup> This was the *Upgrade! Soft Borders* conference. You can find details about the conference, as well as a text I published for the conference, in Appendix II, we well as this link <<http://softborders.art.br/eng/>>.

Kaidie's Rough Guide to Non-Nondon Cities: Sao Paulo: DEMONS slash GODS slash  
TOP slash BOTTOM



Figure from Kaidie's world 18: 'Exploring the Underbelly of Sao Paulo with My Belly-Knowledge'. (Tan 2010f)

For Debord, cities are ‘lamentable spectacles, a supplement to the museums for tourists driven around in glassed-in buses’ (cited in Sadler 1999, p.99). To explore a foreign city with trans-running may radically re-order your experience of it. The intensity of the *fartlek-dérive* may equip us with a more refreshing filter to interpret the strange world. Trans-running can position you closer to the ground – literally and metaphorically-speaking. With trans-running, you may subvert the ‘tourist gaze’, or socially patterned and learnt ‘ways of seeing’ of the typical tourist (Urry & Larsen 2011, p.2).

### **Subverting the Gaze Cast On Tourists**

People may also gaze on the visitor who trans-runs differently from those who do not. When I ran, other tourists and even locals often asked me for directions. Running seems to function as a proof of my familiarity with where I was running. My action seems to afford me an authority that I would not be given had I walked. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 19)

Equipped with the luxury of time, or afflicted by hesitation due to unfamiliarity with the site, many visitors tend to assume what I term the ‘tourist’s traipse’, that is, a leisurely stroll punctuated by intermittent stops. Such a mode of movement irked one Londoner – and London mayor – Boris Johnson so much that he considered delineating a ‘slow lane’ for tourists and shoppers, and another for ‘hurried residents and workers’ (Rohwedder 2010).

Making transient passages through varied ambiances swiftly with trans-running, you may look more assertive than those traipsing on the slow lane. You may be thus re-read differently by the local inhabitants, to appear less strange, or less ‘other’, and even be perceived as ‘one of us’, as you appear to function on the same metaphorical wavelength. This, in turn, may make you feel more confident of your place in the foreign city. Trans-running may hence empower you to feel a greater sense of ownership of the city.

### **Re-Reading Your City, Out-Running Danger**

Having grasped how running physically could project an air of authority and familiarity, I became even more confident, and mobilised trans-running back on ‘homeground’ to explore parts of Nondon that I would not have normally dared to venture. On the few occasions when indeed danger seemed imminent, it was, again, the locomotion of running that equipped me to run away from any actual harm. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 20)

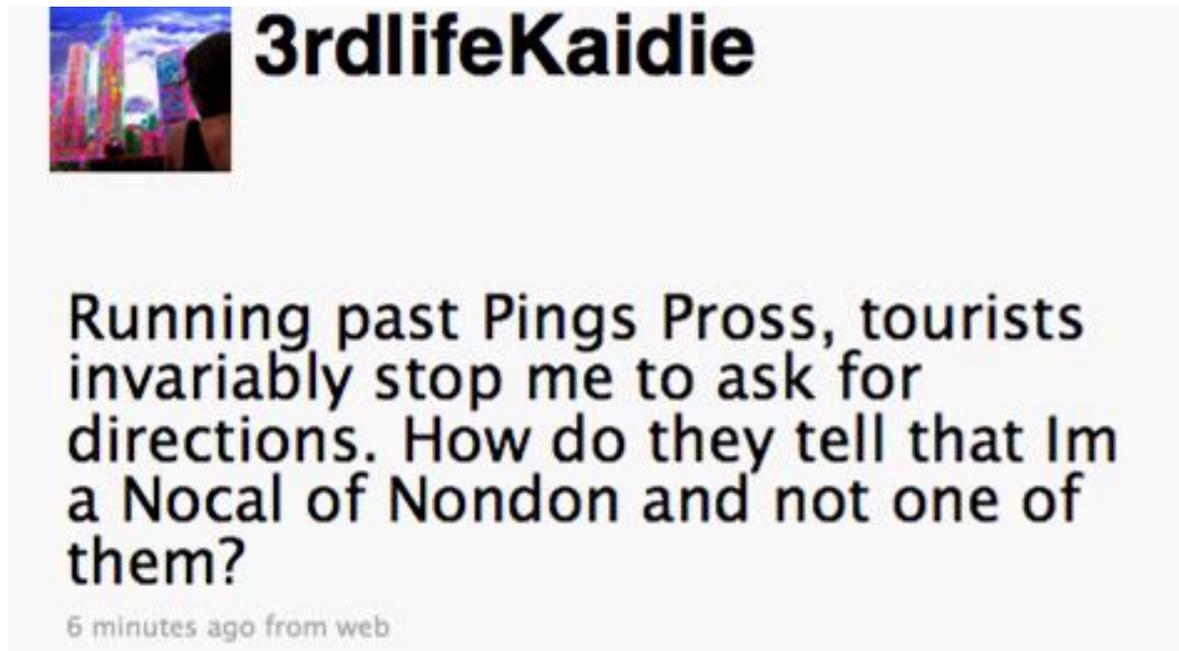


Figure from Kaidie's world 19: 'Nondon Native'. (Tan 2011f)



### Kaidie Nondon

KAIDIE on 21st century RACE RELATIONS:

Last week 5 June 2011: As I ran along the Regents Canal at Angel, Nondon, I spotted 2 young lads ahead of me.

As they saw me approaching, they shouted racist taunts at me (or what I reckoned to be racist, and to be taunting, although I could not make out what the X@£# they were on about, for they were mumbling - as teenage boys tend to).

The moment I ran past them, I saw them pick up some twig or fallen branch or suchlike which seemed to be aimed at me, but I had no way to check as I had run off by then. They didn't run after me. See you later alligators. Thank god and Sony Playstation for video games to render up-&-coming racist impotent+unscary. Impressed with my bunioned feet for my amazing feat of escape, I signed up to take part in a few races.

Figure from Kaidie's world 20: 'Running (for) My Life'. My Facebook wall update. (Tan 2011e)

Engaged in the high-impact movement of running, you may appear authoritative. Rather than feeling vulnerable, or being perceived as a victim, you may navigate and negotiate hostile areas of the city with an assertiveness that the gentler action of walking lacks. As you experience these places first hand, you may confront your insecurities or misconceptions, and subsequently gain a new understanding of these sites. If indeed danger is likely, you may run away from physical threat, by running. Someone with a less assured or slower gait may not be as fortunate. If you have no physical advantage over a potential attacker – especially if they are armed with a weapon, a fighter dog or ill intent – you may rely on your tenacity and run for prolonged periods of time, so as to outrun danger, the same way our ancestors of the endurance hunters had before us.

Hence, trans-running may function a playful way for us to re-read the city that we inhabit. It may enable us to outrun danger, too. It can therefore be said that the physical action of running may also enable us to suggest that we metaphorically ‘run’, that is, govern, the city.

### **Subverting the Male Gaze**

Trans-running in the city as Kaidie, I discovered another positive side effect of running, which is an extension of the previous point. It is how trans-running may function as a playful way to fend off unwanted attention from men, and, therefore, enable me to feel that I was in better control of my circumstances. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 21-22)

Debord advocates the importance of a ‘relentlessly critical state of mind’ to confront ‘all hegemonic cultural forms, whatever their origin, domestic or foreign, left or right, Eastern or Western’ (cited in Sadler 1999, p.43). Apart from subverting the tourist’s gaze and the gaze of CCTV cameras, as well as overturning the way local inhabitants may perceive tourists, the female trans-runner may apply a relentlessly critical state of mind to confront the male gaze when navigating the city. Running, you may demonstrate that you are authoritative, aggressive, active and in action, not passive, submissive or domesticated. After all, it is now a known fact in the running world that when it comes to endurance running, it is women – and not men – who are the stronger sex, equipped as we are with a higher percentage of body fat as well as a greater mental resilience (McDougall 2009, p.79). Running, you announce that you are in charge, not only of your own body, but of your own fate – even if that includes the wilful subjection of your body to battle wounds from running. Your physical running may act as your poetic announcement that you run the city; the male spectators can only watch from the sidelines, and remain as bystanders.

Trans-running may thus be a *playful* and *pungent* way for the female urban dweller to challenge the male gaze.



bound Chinese feet,  
distorted and creased  
to evoke the vagina,  
allegedly.



unbound Chinese feet,  
with battle scars to boot:  
pungent, potent.

Figure from Kaidie's world 21: 'My Chinese Unbound Feet'. (Tan 2013h)

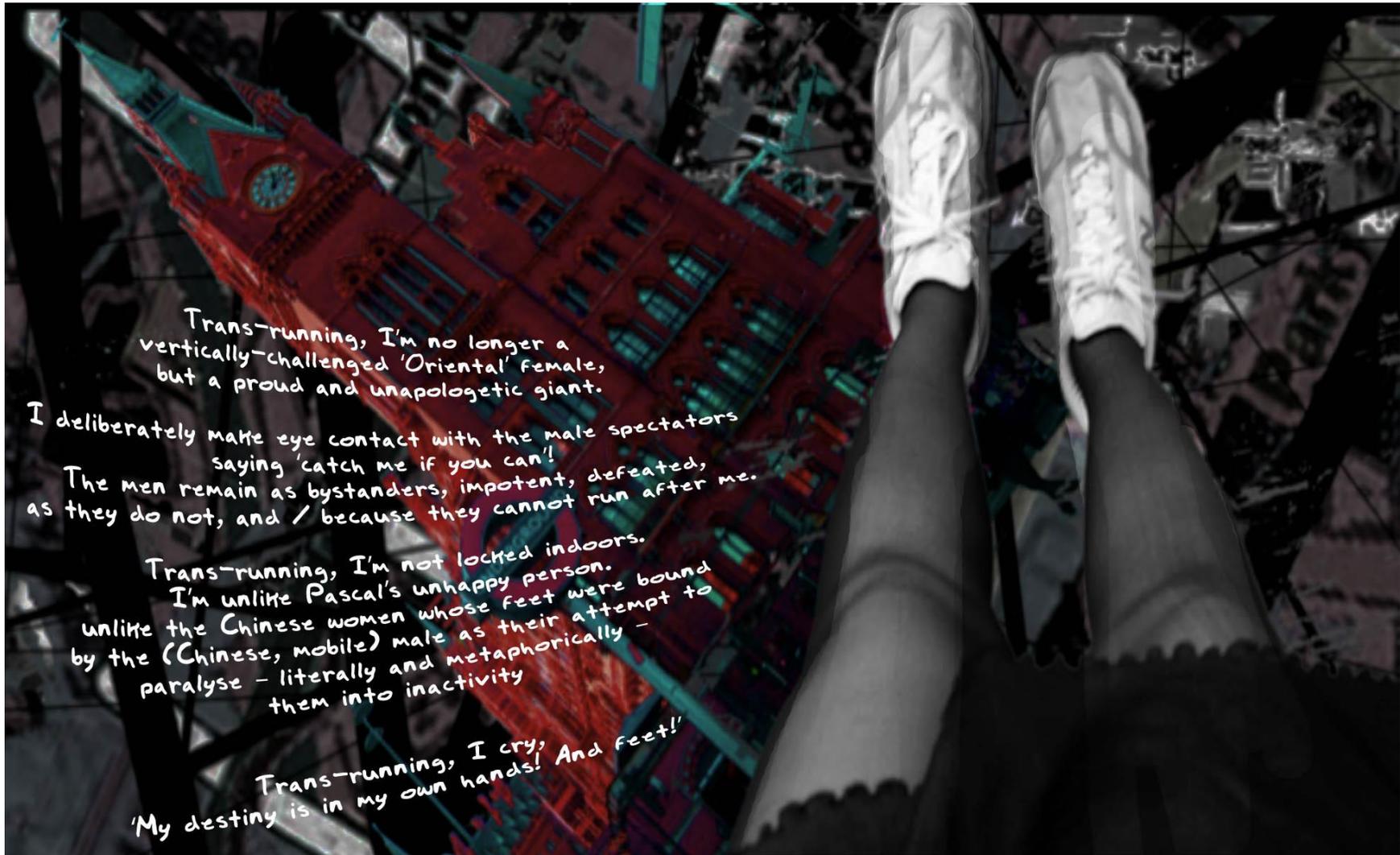


Figure from Kaidie's world 22: 'The Men Are Merely Bystanders'. (Tan 2013h)

## B. RUN AGAINST YOUR STATE

### Cutting Freely Across the Political Landscape

Building on the points I have laid out about running in the city, I shall now explore how trans-running may enable us to transform our state, by resisting political control.

Some of you may wonder: why is a playful approach to transgress and trespass boundaries drawn up by political authorities necessary at all?

I argue that such a tactic is important if you live in a state that is limited in size. Just as those trapped in Pascal's proverbial room may grow restless and unhappy, inhabitants of a small country may feel claustrophobic. The sense of cabin fever can be particularly accentuated if the country is remote, landlocked, or, alternatively, an island. It can feel stifling too, if it is so small that it is completely urbanised as a city-state, or has no varied terrain or climate. The state can be claustrophobic not just physically, but ideologically too. Some countries may be 'repressive', 'clearly not free' and 'lobotomised' (Koolhaas et al. 2002, pp.1015-1041), 'efficient' yet 'dull' (Sesser 1994, p.8), 'clean' yet a 'cultural desert' (Gibson 1993). If so, that the tactic of resistance is mischievous – and not direct or overt – can be a matter of life and death. When science-fiction writer William Gibson notes on his first visit to a tightly-controlled regime that the rebel must either have 'balls the size of durian fruit, or else be flat-out suicidal, or possibly both' (1993), he seems to imply that a degree of foolhardiness – and humour – is necessary vis-à-vis such authoritarian states. Needless to say, political conditions vary from place to place, and every country is multi-dimensional. A writer's description of one particular country as a 'fascinating nation of contradictions' echoes my point (Sesser 1994, p.7). Trans-running outlined in this chapter aims to be not just be useful with respect to dealing with difficult regimes. Regardless of the political system of your country, you may still apply Debord's advice, of bearing a 'relentlessly critical state of mind' to confront all hegemonic powers.

I shall outline trans-running as a general medium of political resistance and critique that you may customise to suit your own circumstances. Again, the ways of the Situationists and Daoists will inform my approach. We have already seen how Chad Hansen describes *wuwei* as an anarchic tactic in 'opposition to authority, government, coercion, and even to normal socialisation in values' (2012). The philosopher adds that Daoist ways were characterised by 'distinct ambivalence, indirect, non-argumentative style, use of poetry and parable'. Put another way, the Daoist notion of political resistance seems to be less an outright revolt that the Situationists fought for, and seems nearer instead to the mode of civil disobedience. I will demonstrate how the infusion of trans-running with *wuwei* may be the best action that yields the best results, particularly vis-à-vis restrictive regimes. Fulfilling my aim of being indirect and poetic, I will mobilise 'run'-related idioms, too.

Through my set of 5 recommendations, I aim to demonstrate that trans-running may potentially be not only *playful*, *personal* and *poetic*, but *pragmatic*, constructive and clever. Running with Gibson's quip, trans-running should be ballsy and, like the tropical fruit of durian, thorny and *pungent*.



Figure from Kaidie's world 23: 'Protesting Against the State-Run Business Spectacle'. (Tan 2013g)

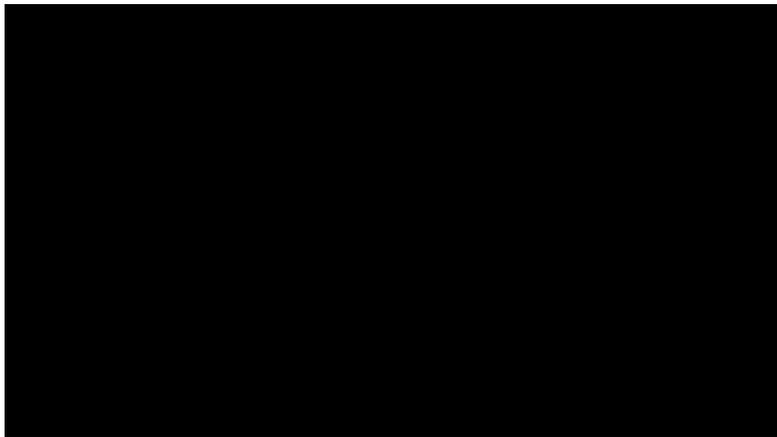


Figure from Kaidie's world 24: 'A Critical Mass of Revolting Trans-Runners'. (Tan 2013c)

## Transcending the State-Run Spectacle

Trans-running may be a playful human protest to enable us to correlate our body with the state, and transcend its spectacle. The cheeky ways of trans-running may be particularly useful when performed in countries that have undergone a rapid process of industrialisation, and/or are highly-urbanised, and/or even run like a business company. (Figure from Kaidie's world 23)

Debord states that the urban spectacle represents the 'collapse of reality into streams of images, products and activities sanctioned by business and bureaucracy' (cited in Sadler 1999, p.15). The drift, hence, functioned as 'a revolt against the spectacle', states philosopher Raoul Vaneigem (cited in Ford 2005, p.113). Calling 'everything into question', it was a 'human protest of *real individuals* against [our] separation from a community that would fulfil [our] *true human and social nature* and transcend the spectacle'.

Debord's description of the 'temple of frenetic consumption' and 'giant shopping centres created *ex nihilo*' and 'surrounded by acres of parking space' (1995, p.123) still seems relevant and applicable to many cities. In fact, such scenarios seem so widespread that they are not confined to towns, but suburbs and even entire states today. I extend the Situationists' argument, to think about not only the city but the state, and propose trans-running as a revolt against the commercialism and political control of our state. Trans-run, and you may poetically map your body with your surroundings, and hence not feel alienated from it. Moreover, it involves a more intense motion than walking. Against the backdrop of ever-shinier and larger temples of frenetic consumption, giant shopping centres and acres of parking space, the visceral action of running arguably makes it a stronger visual statement of human protest than that of walking. As you cut through the concrete jungle littered with malls, offices and casinos by running, you are metaphorically declaring a refusal to yield to the urban or even national way of life of shopping. Running, you demonstrate that you are neither consuming, literally or metaphorically, nor gambling, nor making money, and that you are rebelling against what Debord would label as a 'repulsive petit-bourgeois landscape' (cited in Sadler 1999, p.92). Like runner-cardiologist George Sheehan, your action may announce that you 'follow no one's law but our own'; weaving through the shopping crowd, you are 'criticising the life-style of everyone who sees us' (1975, pp.44-45). Running, you are calling everything into question, taunting the bureaucrats and bourgeoisie, symbolically making a scene and disrupting theirs.

## Transcending the State-Run Spectacle, *En Masse*

*En masse*, you may create a visual spectacle yourselves, to rival and even transcend the petit-bourgeois spectacle crafted by your government. (Figure from Kaidie's world 24)

Allying with a large number of other runners in the streets, you may present a striking visual counterpoint to the landscape otherwise inundated by ‘streams of images, products and activities sanctioned by business and bureaucracy’. Trans-runners can take inspiration from Critical Mass, which are celebratory street demonstrations by large groups of cyclists that highlight cyclist’s rights. Recruiting a ‘mass’ of runners will not be difficult. After all, the larger marathons, such as the London Marathon which Kaidie participated in 2011, are so popular that around 40,000 runners participate in them each time. You may even refer to the increasingly ubiquitous ‘flash mob’, that is, ‘a public gathering of complete strangers, organized via the Internet or mobile phone, who perform a ‘pointless act and then disperse again’ (Oxford Dictionaries 2012) That flash mobs are dismissed as ‘pointless’ – and hence deemed harmless – and that marathons are regarded as mainstream and socially-acceptable, can lend good cover to the critical mass of protesting trans-runners.

Trans-running may be an especially clever technique when it comes to countries in which any public gathering of five or more people – unless with a police permit – is rendered illegal (Attorney-General’s Chambers 2008), or where demonstrations are banned – because they are judged by a ruler as a ‘sad’ way to solve problems and things simply work differently in ‘this part of the world’ (cited in Sesser 1994, p.64), and where basic human rights are ignored – because they cannot be proven to be ‘universal’, says the country’s ex-leader (cited in Sesser 1994, p.48). Against the ‘crazy logic’ of such circumstances, trans-running can function as a cheeky way for us to transcend the spectacle of the state.

In short, as a ‘Critical-Mass-Flash-Mob’ of trans-runners, you can metaphorically run riot and make a scene – and, as runner-authors Benyo and Henderson would have added, have ‘so much fun’.

## **Running Against the Political Status Quo**

The physical and poetic processes of running may also be a playful demonstration of a refusal to accept the political status quo. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 25)

When you move, you may metaphorically demonstrate that you are capable of ‘getting on our feet’ to ‘get things done’, and that you refuse to ‘toe the line’, ‘let things come to a standstill’ or to ‘take things lying down’. Adhering the lessons of Lao Zi, Pascal and Bruce Chatwin, your performance may testify that you are alive, not unmoving and dead. Like the life-force of the *dao*, you are dynamic. Moving, you also bring to life Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuy’s emphasis on the importance of moving through the series of zones rather than occupying distinct places permanently (cited in Ford 2005, p.74). For the Dutch artist, the ability for inhabitants to ‘roam freely’ in a city that is ‘dynamic’ is critical, writes Ford. Following Constant’s advice, if the city cannot physically or symbolically move or change, *you* may.

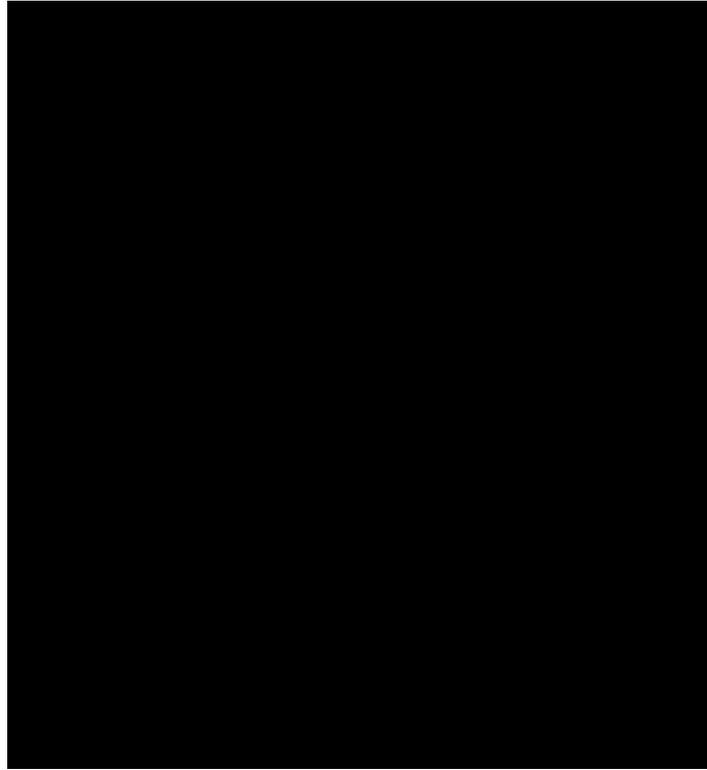


Figure from Kaidie's world 25: 'The Mover and (Salt-And-MSG-)Shaker'.

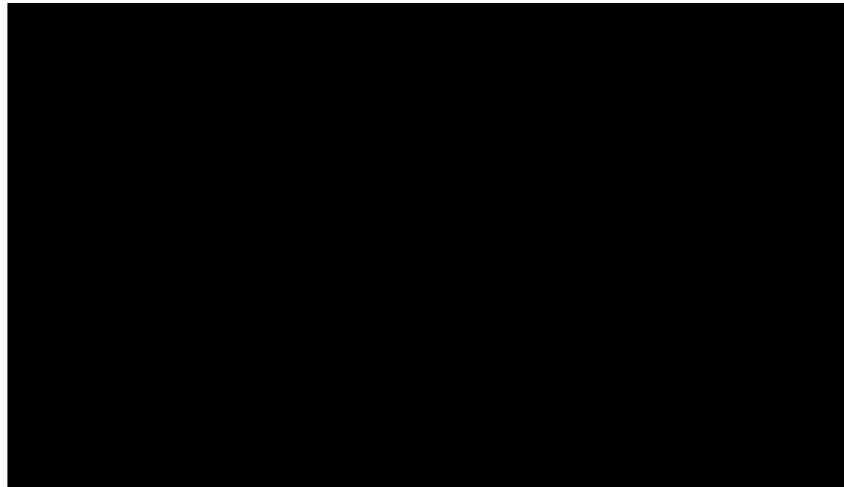


Figure from Kaidie's world 26: 'Running My Country'. (Tan 2011d)

Running can be a particularly evocative form of protest of the status quo, given its physically-demanding nature and how its vigour can create a potent visual impact. These factors make running a particularly sharp rejoinder to the words of a ruler who says that for ‘things to work properly’, any lurching has to be avoided.’ (cited in Sesser 1994, p.13) which may be interpreted as his excuse for the unchangeable nature of the political climate there. The Chambers English Dictionary defines the verb ‘lurch’ as ‘to pitch suddenly forward’; as a noun, lurch indicates ‘ambush’ (Schwarz 1992, p.850). I propose that as your body cuts through the political space with trans-running, you may stir the stale air and shake things up, both physically and poetically. Running, your abrupt, jerky action can signify the first step of a disruption. In the long run, and with the joint effort of other trans-runners, your stubborn action could even begin to redefine the old, well-trodden paths, and start new inroads that may make way for actual transformation.

### **Running Against Being Run by the State**

As I performed trans-running in the city, I learnt how running physically within it enabled me to feel a sense of ownership of the city, as if I was metaphorically running or governing it. With my increased level of confidence, I extended my stage of action to the state itself. I ran physically all over my country, so as to metaphorically run it, too. I wanted my physical performance to evoke poetic significance in more ways. Running was my metaphorical soapbox to broadcast that I was ‘running against’ the authorities, and that it cannot ‘run’ me, or ‘run me down’. Additionally, that the state was physically small made my task conceivable. That years of running had made myself smaller in build by losing weight further meant that I was a suitable match for my opponent, metaphorically. Furthermore, as I have argued throughout the thesis, the more we run, the more we are equipped to run. As I ran even more, my world seemed metaphorically enlarged too – to the extent that it seemed even bigger than the country itself. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 26)

Clearly, such an approach is playful and absurd. I was inspired by the Situationists’ friskiness. The drift, for instance, is described by Debord as a ‘playful-constructive behaviour’ (cited in Sadler 1994, p.77). Other farcical antics include wandering the streets with the wrong map, or reading a map the wrong way up. Lao Zi’s pungent ways are another source of influence. In *Lao Zi*, the Old Child urges us to be childlike and crude. The writing approach of his text – with the abundance of wordplay, repetition and so on – is self-reflexively tricky, too. His rhetorical flourishes inspired me to turn to language, to mobilise run-related idioms in my approach. In the previous chapter, we encountered Daoism Scholar Kristofer Schipper’s argument, that while we are ‘influenced and moulded’ by the environment, the ‘flow of influence’ can be ‘reversed’ for those who grasp both the ways of our body and ‘the laws of nature’; only then are we no longer ‘simply the product’ of our environment, but are able to ‘dominate and transform’ it (1993, p.103). By running physically as an attempt to ‘run’ my country, I was applying and testing out the reciprocal relationship between our body and country. To push things further on a rhetorical level, I propose that when we run, not only can we metaphorically run our *nation* state, we may run our own *existential* state, to keep our *state of mind* sane, and to empower our *state of being*.

The Daoist-inspired playful ways of trans-running can be particularly apt when it comes to states in which policies are rationalised as being ‘Confucianist’ or ‘Neo-Confucianist’. Founded by Chinese philosopher Confucius (circa 551-478BC), Confucianism was an ethical system concerned with the betterment of the larger society. This stands in contrast with the amoral and *laissez faire* approaches of Daoism. No wonder so-called Confucianist regimes tend to mock believers of Daoism as ‘ignorant and stupid’ (Lee et al 1994, p.127). Injecting the ‘ignorant and stupid’ ways of Daoism into trans-running may make it effective as an irritating riposte to regimes that place themselves on a moral high ground.

The foolish nature of trans-running may make it a powerful retaliation vis-à-vis states that are tightly-run, too. Rem Koolhaas describes one as so regimented that its chaos is ‘authored’, ugliness ‘designed’ and absurdity ‘willed’; and even its nature is ‘entirely remade’ (2002, p.1011). With its playful spontaneity or *wuwei*, trans-running may enable us to run against what the Dutch architect has described as ‘pure intention’ of the authorities. If it is difficult to actually overthrow a government that has been described as ‘authoritarian’ (Sesser 1994, p.5), ‘paternalistic’ (Kingsbury 2007), and that which is ruled with an ‘iron-fist’ (Nair 2012), and whose ruler who ‘doesn't like what he can't control’ (Sesser 1994, p.57), we may at least win the battle on a poetic level, by evoking our armour of run-related turns of phrase while running physically. Instead of feeling tormented by a government that ‘steps in in almost every other aspect’ of our lives (Sesser 1994, p.31), and which inscribes laws and runs national campaigns to dictate what and how we should run our lives, we engage in the equally absurdist approach of trans-running, and mock: ‘So you think you can run the country so thoroughly? So can we!’ Trans-running may function as our placard announcing, ‘Stop interfering! Stop running my life! Stop ruining my life!’

Hence, trans-run, and you may run your own state, and your own world. Via rhetorical means, trans-running may act as your playful constructive behaviour to revolt against your state. You may even imagine your poetic protest of trans-running as a ‘playful movement’ – in both the literal and metaphorical senses of the word ‘movement’.

### **The Trans-Running Body as Sight/Site of A Poetic Revolt**

I have demonstrated how by moving our body via the physical motion of running, we may create a strong visual impact, which can function as a playful form of political protest. Put another way, we may say that trans-running activates our body as what I shall call a ‘site of protest’, as well as a ‘sight of protest’. With trans-running, we are mobilising our body as the most rudimentary and yet ultimate medium of protest, to reclaim control of our world. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 27)



**Kaidie Nondon** The defiant Edison Pena, who had, while imprisoned underground, said: 'I could just lie down, but my fury has been channelled into a hatred towards this mountain. ... I wanted the mountain to get bored, seeing me run ... I am not defeated. I am fighting. I feel that by running, I am fighting to live'.



**Chilean miner's latest amazing feat ... the New York marathon | World news | The Guardian**  
[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

Edison Pena was greeted by cheers and a media whirlwind during first trip abroad to take part in 26-mile event

3 seconds ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Share](#)



**Kaidie Nondon** It was said that each time Edison Pena 'feels scared or in despair, he runs'. Pena runs because it 'sets him free' while imprisoned underground (as Colin did whilst jailed at the Borstal in Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner). 'Running was his psychological escape – for the moment'. [Remove](#)



**Edison Peña's marathon of endurance | Matt Seaton | Comment is free | guardian.co.uk**  
[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

Matt Seaton: For the trapped Chilean miner dubbed 'the runner' by his colleagues, exercise was not just a survival strategy but life itself

59 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Share](#)

**Artemis Yagou** likes this.



**Kaidie Nondon** 'I wanted the mountain to get bored, seeing me run,' he wrote. 'I am not defeated. I am fighting. I feel that by running, I am fighting to live'.

about a minute ago · [Like](#)

Figure from Kaidie's world 27: 'The Art of Running as "Political" In Various Senses of the Word'. My comments on my Facebook wall to the news of trapped Chilean miner for whom running was a gesture of defiance support my points in this section about running as an act of resistance. (Tan 2010i)

Unlike other urban tactics, running is neither illegal (as graffiti is), extreme (as base jumping is, in which people jump off skyscrapers), technically-complex (as parkour or free climbing is), nor does it require extraneous equipment (as skateboarding does). These factors can prevent us from having a 'run in' with the police. Even though acts like self-immolation, nudist demonstrations and hunger strikes may be more spectacular they can be literally short-lived. While it can be visually-striking if conducted *en masse*, the commonality and banality of running as a sport today also means that it has the versatility to look unassuming and hence escape the radar of the authorities. In regimes in which sit-ins, walk-outs or other forms of protests are illegal, trans-running may be a playful alternative. As a gently-anarchic act that can be directly operated by the protester (since it is our own body), and which can appear unassuming and 'go with the flow', the authorities have no grounds to censor or arrest us. At the same time, our lurching action may irritate the non-runners around us. Running, we are defiant and are following in the footsteps of the equally unapologetic Lao Zi in his rebellion against 'other people', and the uncooperative runner George Sheehan in his stinging critique against 'everyone' who sees him.

In short, the trans-runner's body as a sight/site of revolt is not only *playful* but *personal* and *political*, *pungent* and *transgressive*, yet *poetic* and *pragmatic*.

## C. BE ON THE RUN AT YOUR WORLD-AT-LARGE

### Fight, Not Flight

I have argued how trans-running may enable us to resist political control, yet without leaving the state or running afoul of the law. This is a position in which we may continue to be embedded within and work from within a given system, yet at the same time maintain our autonomy and mobilise trans-running as a playful mode of revolt to articulate our displeasure with the way things are. Nonetheless, if the regime is one in which control is so pervasive that political power is 'limited to the few on top of the political rung' (Gomez 2000), or in which 'any sign of dissent' is ruthlessly stamped out (Sesser 1994, p.xv), change from within may be difficult. Hence, I recommend another way of trans-running, that is, 'being on the run'. This refers to the literal and metaphorical states of being a traveller or exile, at the world-at-large. I argue that when we run away from the claustrophobic state to function from outside, we may continue our fight. In other words, 'being on the run' differs from 'running away'. Thus, we may retrospectively label the techniques outlined in the previous part as *internal* exile, and the following ones as exile.

I begin by sharing my findings as someone who lived on the run as Kaidie. This is followed by a reflection on how, on a more poetic level, living life in the permanent state of being on the run may be a playful way for us to revolutionise our world. Next, I will point out how the methodology of trans-running itself self-reflexively performs the concept of being on the run, as it does not tie itself to any theoretical 'home', but seeks to renew and transform itself constantly.

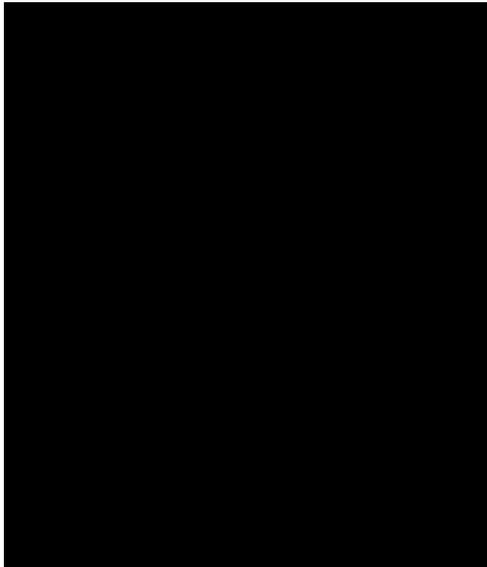


Figure from Kaidie's world 28: 'Anti-Journey with the Sin Girl'. Placards between the spaces of my toes, scorn between that of my teeth.



Figure from Kaidie's world 29: 'Kaidie Runs (Into) A Demonstration'. (Tan 2010j)

## MUMMY DIES DURING CHILDBIRTH

My birth day is also a death day. During the almighty push that is my coming-into-being from her tummy, **mummy** reaches her own limits and gives up, gives in, expires, kicks the bucket. At least it is a snappy death. Such is life.

At her funeral, a bomb explodes. According to the **twitter feed by the met**, it is a suspected terrorist attack in Nondon. All my family members are wiped out in a single splash of fireworks. They are shredded into pieces, so many that I cannot pick up.



P.S. 2: However, contrary to what this article claims, as far as I am aware of, issues of nationality and identity are irrelevant in Kaidie's cosmology. **Kaidie is born with no family/history/background/ethnicity/culture/gender/citizenship/place/country/allegiance**. She **begins afresh, ground zero**. That said, she is (al-most certainly) female, the last time I checked.

P.S. 3: Why is this categorised as 'alternative art'? What is this alternative to? What on google-earth is 'dominant art'? What on google-earth is 'dominant art'?

Figure from Kaidie's world 30: 'Non-Attachment: Kaidie the Orphan'. Extracts from my blog entry. (Tan 2009d)

## Transforming Your World, Being Transformed By The World

In my artwork, Kaidie is on the run, and lives in her adopted city of ‘Nondon’. As Kaidie goes about to seek ‘A/The Point of Life’, she engages in a plethora of activities which are documented online. These text, images and maps can be understood as proofs of how, instead of feeling claustrophobic, Kaidie felt free in her action, thought and emotion as an exile. In fact, it can even be speculated that Kaidie as a being, as well as the artwork *Kaidie’s Trans-Run*, and, indeed, the medium of trans-running itself cannot exist back home, and that they have been enabled only because they are created when I was living my life on the run, in London. It was in ‘Nondon’, an amplified version of London, that Kaidie also continued her quest for happiness, freedom and, indeed, her point in life. Perhaps to feel even more free, Kaidie did not stay put in Nondon, which was already a partly-imaginary realm. As a restless nomad, she trans-ran beyond Nondon, to ‘everywhere’ online and offline. As if yet another level of detachment, Kaidie was depicted as an orphan from day one. To be extra-subversive, Kaidie was not just a wayward child, but assumed the roles of her own father and mother as well. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 28-30)

Being on the run may be a statement of protest that you disagree with and refuse to play the game the way they are run back home. Functioning in your adopted home may be a declaration that you are insisting on a different set of rules. Being in exile may be a way for you to stay true to your causes, and register your criticism of unfair play at home. While in exile, you may even be able to generate impact that may be felt not only in your state of origin, but in your adopted countries, as well as internationally. Here, your message may reach a wider audience, and arguably generate waves that are even further-reaching than had you stayed at home, especially if ‘home’ is a small or remote country.

Dalai Lama and Milan Kundera are but two such well-known examples of activists and artists operating on the larger stage. The Singaporean multi-hyphenate Keng Sen Ong (born 1963) is another example. Ong is a critically-acclaimed theatre director-artist-curator-actor of Theatreworks International. While it has a physical office in Singapore, many of Theatreworks’ workshops and productions are funded, developed, produced and performed in all corners of the world, and are helmed by an ever-changing international creative team, often including practitioners who are themselves in exile and whose own work deal with the notion of being in exile. The subject and approach of Ong’s work, too, reflect a strong sense of restlessness, as if he is an editor mapping disparate aspects from different cultures and disciplines together. (Figure 13) His 2004 *Flying Circus Project: Seeing with Foreign Eyes* which I participated in, for instance, brought together artists, writers, dancers and filmmakers from Asia and the Arab world, including Walid Raad from USA and Lebanon, Popo from Myanmar, and Raeda Saadeh from Palestine and Israel. Ong himself is literally an exile. He tells me that he works away from home for 8 months each year (2013). Asked why he feels compelled to work beyond the shores of the small isle, Ong tells me that:

‘[S]ingapore is too myopic for my work. [I] am interested in world creating through my artistic work so this goes beyond the borders of nationalism [...]’.<sup>17</sup> (2013)

<sup>17</sup> For the full transcription of the conversation, please refer to Appendix IB.

Ong's own background, too, can be said to be a confluence of different discourses, which seems to typify people who live life on the run. While ethnically-Chinese, Ong works in the English-language. He has also been educated in Singapore and New York in not just theatre but law. His work has been described as 'embracing multiple realities and hybridity' (Tisch School of the Arts 1995), as they negotiate the tensions between the new and old, West and East, reality and fiction – the very issues that our dynamic and volatile world today – and arguably Asian countries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century like Singapore – are confronting. Indeed, Ong's approach seems 'Uniquely Singapore' – the tagline by which the Singapore Tourism Board promotes Singapore – since his restlessness can be understood as a response to the particular conditions and challenges of Singapore. As Ong himself puts it,

'Since the 90s I began to look at myself actively as an Asian and not just a Singaporean. However it is also exactly because I am Singaporean, that I embrace multiple cultures coexisting and engaging. The hybrid Asian character of Singapore permeates completely into me – speaking English as first language and being ethnically Chinese. I am the product of a new state with a lack of history and the schizophrenia of being at the crossroads of many different influences'. (Cited in Martin 2010)

Ong has been described as a 'visionary' (UCLA 2007). In 2009, his 'multimedia ode to migration' (Edinburgh Festival Guide 2009), *Diaspora*, opened the Edinburgh Arts Festival, and in 2010, he was awarded the prestigious Fukuoka Award in Japan. The bold works of the nomadic Ong has put his work – and Singapore – on the global contemporary cultural map.

It can hence be proposed that working 'outside-in', from the international stage, the exile may be able to inspire on a level that is more far-reaching than on a local platform.

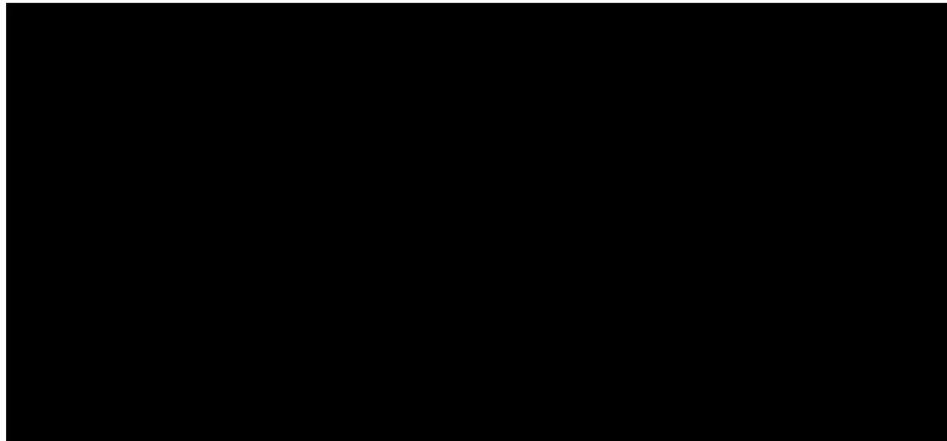


Figure 13: 'Insomnia, Curated by Keng Sen Ong'. This was a showcase of South East Asian arts at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, UK, which I also participated in (Institute of Contemporary Arts London 2005) This image – of a woman with a face and headdress in the style of Chinese traditional opera, but clad in Adidas jumper – is a classic Ong collage.

The transformation may not be one-way. A state of exile may be an opportunity for self-critique and assessment, too. As we move about in the world, away from home, our assumptions and prejudices can get challenged. At every unfamiliar terrain, we may acquire new knowledge that can offer us new insights into our own situations, and even transform our worldview. Many of us have an experience of such a readjustment when we travel to another town or abroad. Indeed, from *Divine Comedy* to *Don Quixote* and *Thelma and Louise*, how travelling to a new place, or even the process of travelling itself can be transformative, is one of the key features of the travel genre. A real-life illustration of this can be seen in the case of the revolutionary Che Guevara in 1950. Essayist Bruce Chatwin analyses how it was what the then 23-year-old learnt on his 8000-mile road trip with a friend throughout Latin America that he experienced a profound ‘political and social awakening’ that was to shape his revolutionary ideas (1996). Witnessing poverty at firsthand presented a reality check for the upper-middle class Guevara, and forced him to radically revise his worldview. The more they travelled, ‘the more their eyes were opened to the injustices around them’ (Lovgren 2004). Aboard a ship in the Pacific Ocean, the 23-year-old had an epiphany. As he writes in his *Motorcycle Diaries* in 1952:

‘There we understood that our vocation, our true vocation, was to move for eternity along the roads and seas of the world. Always curious, looking into everything that came before our eyes, sniffing out each corner but only very faintly – not setting down roots in any land or staying long enough to see the substratum of things; the outer limits would suffice’. (2004, p.21)

Che Guevara’s 9-month road-trip transformed his world – as well as that of many others, as the result of the Cuban Revolution that he orchestrated.

What if we were to extend this 9-month period, to a permanent state of being, as a way of life? What if we consider the notion of being in exile not with just in the geographical sense, but on a more poetic level? As we cut freely across the world-at-large, can we gain a revolutionary perception and transform it, and become happy and free?

## **Revolutionising Your World, Constantly**

I propose trans-running as a state of being on the run, permanently, and that such a mode may enable us to transform and even revolutionise our real world, constantly. Trans-running does not aim to be world-changing on the level achieved by the Guevara. Instead, the ‘revolution’ I am concerned with is one that is far more *personal* and *poetic* – yet no less *profound*. To appropriate the words of scholars that we have come across in this chapter: what I aim for is a worldview in which we stay curious, looking into everything that come before our eyes, and always subjecting ourselves to new encounters and new worlds. In other words, I envision my mode of being on the run as a new naturalism that informs and transforms everything we do and which radically re-orientate us. The trans-runner on the run is equipped with a relentlessly critical mind, as well as play, spontaneity and festivity, making it so much fun. In such a process of seeking difference, our

knowledge is constantly challenged, revised and renewed. As we make transient passages through varied ambiances in the world-at-large, our world may remain open, contingent, shifting. The more we trans-run, the larger it may grow. (Figure from Kaidie's world 31)

For Bruce Chatwin, Guevera's call for 'revolution' refers not only to political upheaval, but is related to the other sense of the word 'revolution', that is, the 'cyclical passage of celestial bodies' that human beings and migratory animals alike are attuned to (1996, pp.12–110). In the scientific world, birds and animals are understood to have biological mechanisms which correspond to the passage of celestial bodies (Carthy 1963). Correspondingly, in his essay entitled 'It's a Nomad, *Nomad* World', Chatwin argues that human beings, too, are 'seasonal animals'. Like geese that migrate by the stars using their internal chronometers and navigation aids, 'our brains have an information system giving us orders for the road', he argues. In other words, human beings are already equipped with internal 'satnavs' or the human equivalent of 'googlemaps' that many of us rely on today. Chatwin's argument seems to run with the Daoist worldview. You may recall from the previous chapter my explanation about how the energies in the human body as well as our movements produced from cultivation exercises move in tandem with the rhythms of the *dao*, which is a creative and dynamic life-force that runs the cosmos, and that every part of our body corresponds with a celestial feature. Chatwin argues that it is our need to be in touch with the 'passage of celestial bodies' that explains why human beings are 'travellers from birth' and have an innate 'migratory drive'.

Chatwin states that our problems began when we abandoned our nomadic ways. Citing Pascal, he argues that becoming settled caused our restlessness, turning us 'mad' and 'tortured'. Activating yet more emotive language that betrays his romanticism, the writer muses that 'monotonous surroundings and tedious regular activities wove patterns which produce fatigue, nervous disorders, apathy, self-disgust and violent reactions'. Mobile societies such as that of the gypsies were 'finer – morally and physically', as they were 'egalitarian' and 'thing-free'. It was when we became pastoral that such concepts as 'stock', 'capital' and 'sterling' were invented, and this was what made us increasingly insatiable. Hence, we began to seek outlets in 'violence, greed, status-seeking or a mania for the new'. Our 'fatal yearning for increase' led to raids and feuds. Chatwin's argument finds a correlation in that of Kristofer Schipper (1994, p.170). The ordinarily mild Daoism scholar blames agriculture as 'the main culprit of the imbalances of human civilisation over the last 10,000 years or so'. Having brought about 'a radical break with the way of life that prevailed for almost the entire prehistory of humankind' since Neolithic times, agriculture has caused a multitude of problems, including 'the systematic destruction of the environment, overpopulation, capitalisation, and other evils that result from sedentariness', argues Schipper. For Chatwin, it was as our nervous system became 'warped' that our migratory drive was affected. Herein Chatwin maps the two meanings of 'revolution' together. He correlates physical with political movement – and happiness and freedom, too:

'When the geographical movements of people are tampered with, they attach themselves to political movements. When a revolutionary hijacker says, "I'm married to the Revolution", he means it. For Revolution is a liberating god, the Dionysus of our age. It is a cure for melancholy. Revolution is the Way to Freedom [...]' (1996, pp. 100-106)



Figure from Kaidie's world 31: 'Baggage-free'.

For the rest of us not given to major political upheavals, Chatwin recommends travelling. Himself a compulsive traveller, Chatwin argues that travelling can enable our mind to be ‘constantly stimulated by observing new and unknown things’. Fresh sensations and new emotions can educate us in new values that force us to question those we held. Moving, our world ceases to have absolutes. These unknowns – which the writer calls ‘bumps’ – can disrupt our assumptions and received thinking. ‘Travel does not merely broaden the mind. It makes the mind’, argues Chatwin. Travelling, we fulfil our innate need ‘for journeys of mind and body’. Indeed, the Situationists seemed to have pursued the same freedom when they called for tactics to revolutionise everyday life, and to fight against the ‘imprisonment of routine’ (Sadler 1999, 93). Chatwin cites another traveller, Michel de Montaigne for his open-mindedness. According to the 16<sup>th</sup> century essayist, fixed attitudes and customs shield us from the true nature of things. Travelling was a ‘profitable exercise’ (2009, p.692). It could afford us a relativistic worldview such that ‘the savages do not so much offend me, in roasting and eating the bodies of the dead, as they do who torment and persecute the living’ (2009, p.306). Montaigne’s world is a moderate one. Anything that seems unusual will soon be modulated by another encounter.

Mike Stroud sings a similar tune as Chatwin, Schipper and Montaigne, but also lifts the argument to the next level, by specifically recommending running as a remedy (2004, pp.34-203). The runner-physician laments that human beings ‘no longer live in harmony with our evolutionary design’. Our ancestors had been conditioned to be ‘in a good frame of mind while performing physical activity’, but relatively soporific in between periods of exercise. Settlement, farming, industrialisation, the advent of automobiles and now, the conditions of what Stroud terms the ‘age of silicon’ means that human beings no longer obey the circadian rhythm. Echoing Chatwin’s argument that our brains have become ‘warped’ due to these man-made changes, Stroud argues that our mind and body have become so disoriented that we are ‘unable to cope with the changes’. The prevalence of illnesses today arises from the imbalance of our physiology, which had been ‘set up to overcome the rigours of a mobile life’. Echoing Pascal’s proclamation that all of our unhappiness stems from being immobilised indoors, Stroud argues that those who do not engage in physical activities ‘inadvertently spend much of [their lives] in a slightly depressed mental state’, given that they miss out on the effects of feel-good neurotransmitters that reward those who are active. To train, or re-train, and re-boot our body, Stroud specifically recommends the exercise of running, which he acknowledges was how our forerunners of the endurance hunters depended on, two million years ago.

The physical and poetic processes of running also seem emphatically linked to freedom that Chatwin associates with travelling. The word ‘run’ denotes going about ‘freely, without being restrained or checked in any way’ (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.XVI, pp. 250–252). Our wanderlust may be further correlated with how ‘run’ carries the definitions of a ‘(hurried) travelling or going about, especially to distant places’ as well as ‘to take a (hurried) journey for the purpose of making a short stay at or visit to a place’. I have already also argued how, with its *wuwei* qualities of simplicity and naturalness, running may possess a ‘playful freedom’ and ‘unique effortless freedom’ (Girardot 2009 p.210). Runner-cardiologist George Sheehan, too, writes expressively about how running emancipates him from the tyranny of his ordinary reality in more ways than one:

‘Running frees me from the monosyllabic inanities of my usual tongue-tied state, liberates me from polysyllabic jargon of my profession, removes me from the kind of talk which aims at concealing rather than revealing what is in my heart, and what I mean to do and be’. (1975, p.viii)

I propose trans-running as a playful way for you to transform and even revolutionise your everyday world. The physical and poetic process of running may take you to journeys of both the body and mind, and that links physical movement with political movement, as well as happiness and freedom. As a permanent nomad who lives life on the run, you seek, encounter and enjoy difference and bumps. You are constantly stimulated, by participating in new and unknown experiences. You have no place to call ‘home’, or rather, have many places to call home equally, being at once immersed and detached at each site. Constantly jolted out of any comfort zone, you enjoy life as what Chatwin calls ‘a journey through wilderness.’ Your world, hence, becomes a euphoric adventure. After all, the same way endorphins nourish the trans-runner, adrenaline fuel the traveller. As Chatwin says, ‘travel must be adventurous’, for such trips ‘keep adrenalin pumping around’.

## **Trans-Running As A Self-Renewing Medium**

Trans-running about revolution and renewal. The way I have configured the approach itself is also about revolution and renewal. I have designed trans-running with the aim that it functions as a moderate toolkit that is applicable to our ordinary reality.

Trans-running is inspired by the wisdom of our forerunners of nomadic societies, and the passionate critiques put forward by the writers, including the musings of Chatwin, himself a somewhat mythical figure. Yet, our turn, or re-turn to incorporate running is far from a nostalgic or romantic reversion to things past. The same way the *dao* is dynamic, creative and ever-transforming, and the earth is constantly revolving, and that to redress our imbalances human beings should always travel, trans-running as a medium is ever-transforming. It is a system open to re-vision. It self-consciously embodies the Situationists’ mantra to have a ‘relentlessly critical state of mind’, as well as Montaigne’s advice of the importance to bear a ‘cosmopolitan scepticism’, and Che Guevera’s recommendation for us to be ‘always curious’, ‘sniffing out each corner but only very faintly’. That is why I have picked-and-mixed from a variety of discourses from different disciplines, cultures and historicities. Just as the Daoist principle of life preservation and nourishment focuses on the enrichment of ourselves via conscientious training, trans-running itself may be understood as a process of such a training and nourishment, of self-critique. This explains why instead of Chatwin’s recommendation of walking, or Daoism’s technique of *taiji*, I have chosen to ‘go with the flow’ and embrace that which is unique today, to harness the currently-popular exercise of running, as well as to integrate technology (as you will see in the next chapter) as part of my approach. To rephrase, trans-running proposes to embody the spirit of a restless nomad engaged in a euphoric and wild adventure. Just as Montaigne’s world is open, relative and moderate, trans-running as a medium, too, constantly checks, interrogates and even undermine or contradict itself.

This system may appear paradoxical. Yet, such ‘self-contradictory’ orders are the norm in the Daoism. This is evident in *wuwei*, which we have already come across. According to sinologist Cheuk Yin Lee, the concept represents both non-intentionality and intentionality (2011). While *wuwei* encompasses *wu*, which refers to ‘nothingness’ or ‘non-being’, it also includes *wei*, which refers to intentionality, explains Lee (1994, pp. 92-104). Hence, I grasp *wuwei* in two ways: firstly, as a concept of moderation between intentionality and non-intentionality, as going with the flow of things and not against nature; secondly, as a concept which is a summation or mapping of the two (apparently-conflicting) concepts, with a sum greater than its parts. These readings are not mutually-exclusive. Indeed, this example of *wuwei* as both a message of moderation and a summative mapping-together of disparate concepts is replicated in several other Daoist concepts, and the Daoist world itself. This is a strength of Daoism.<sup>18</sup> ‘A healthy dose of Daoist philosophy’, states Lee, ‘can prevent us from losing sight of the true nature of our goals and aspirations’.

Kaidie, too, embodies both intentionality and non-intentionality. Her life-expectancy had been decided from the beginning; furthermore, as you will find out later in the thesis, she met with episodes of pre-mature death prior to her intended deadline. The methodology of trans-running aims, too, to be a mapping of the strengths of various discourses, as well as a medium of moderation. That is why I have conceptualised it as a technique that is not illegal, dangerous or extreme, but as a constructive and *pragmatic* tactic that we may perform anytime, anywhere, including our the city, state, as well as the world at large, to empower us to constantly revolutionise it. We learn from the past, and learn from Daoism and other –isms, but only insofar as they are relevant and compatible for our here and now. Mike Stroud similarly runs with the message of moderation (2004, p.205). The runner-doctor reminds us that while our evolutionary past has many lessons to teach us, to forcibly implement past practices today can be ‘impractical and unwelcome’. What we need is a ‘compromise’, such that changes can be ‘incorporated into our modern lifestyle without them being too time-consuming or unrealistic’. This position of moderation is a key aim of trans-running not only with regards to the real world, but the rest of the thesis as well.

## TRANSITION

In this chapter, I have come up with 14 playful recommendations of how trans-running may empower us to feel happy and free in the real world. For the still-restless amongst us, there are yet more worlds for us to explore. Chapter III may be particularly interesting for those of us who cannot run *physically*. Let us now venture into realms in which we may run *poetically*, and feel happy and free.

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<sup>18</sup> Daoism itself practices *wuwei*. According to Lee (1994, p.161), Daoism ‘permeates all facets of Chinese society: science, nature, ancient astronomy, medicine, maths, alchemy, other religious arts’. These disciplines were further developed into such fields as geomancy and astrology, and are ‘still active in everyday life of the Chinese’. In another words, so pervasive and embedded these Daoist doctrines are in the day-to-day practices and consciousness of the Chinese, that many of these practices and concepts have ceased to be taken as ‘Daoist’ per se, but a more generic ‘Chinese’. This is also why the words ‘Chinese’ and ‘Daoist’ in my thesis are used interchangeably. ‘Rather than thorough overt missionary effort or deliberate indoctrination’, Daoist practices ‘simply merged with common Chinese conception of physical health and spiritual well-being, and in this way effectively rendered much of traditional Chinese culture an expression of Taoist insights’, explains Lee. That Daoism has infiltrated to multiple aspects life, as a ‘way of life’ rather than a philosophy or religion, is a proof of the success of Daoism.

## **III. TRANSFORM YOUR DIGITAL WORLD**

## INTRODUCTION

Beyond the real world, we may respond to our migratory drive by undertaking metaphorical journeys into our dream world, and worlds conjured by works of art, where our imagination can run wild. Technology has opened up yet new realities. For Bruce Chatwin, our ‘mad obsession with technological progress’ is a ‘response to barriers in the way of our geographical progress’ (1996, pp.100-106). Where we cannot physically venture, technology can lend a hand. Stuck indoors in Blaise Pascal’s proverbial room, the radio or television can act as windows to other worlds. Of the range of technological media, the internet is the most ubiquitous and powerful today<sup>19</sup>. Born in the military world in the 1950’s, it has, since the 1990’s, exploded into the sphere of action and thought of 2.4 billion of us world-wide (Miniwatts Marketing Group 2013). Since around 2005, wireless internet has freed us from our desks indoors. Armed with our smart mobile gadgets, we may explore the online world while out-and-about in the offline world. The slogan of Blackberry’s computer tablet ‘Playbook’ seems to encapsulate the essence of the technology of our times:

‘Small enough to take anywhere, powerful enough to take you everywhere’. (2011)

It is the world opened-up by mobile internet via small and powerful devices that we are concerned with in this chapter. I term this the ‘digital world’, and argue that trans-running may be a playful way for us to *transform* our relationship with it.

I begin by surveying the appeals and challenges of such a world. Following that, I present five ways that trans-running may help us to navigate, negotiate and manage these exciting conditions (sections ‘A’ to ‘E’). Neither techno-phobic nor techno-philiac, they are cheeky and absurd. After all, Playbook urges us to not just ‘play’, but to play ‘harder’. (Figure 14)

A *translation* of playfulness is in my extensive use of word-play. I extrapolate from the definitions of words, and/or draw links with other words to generate new correlations. ‘Digital’ is one example. Consistent with the popular understanding of the word, the OED defines ‘digit’ as referring to parts of data in computers (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol.IV p.653). Yet, what excited me is its 17<sup>th</sup> century reference to ‘one of the five terminal division of the hand or foot; a finger or a toe’. This inspired me to reclaim the ‘digital’, to re-instate the importance of our feet – and body – for our technology-saturated 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then, there is my activation of the hyphen. I apply it to draw our attention to the component words. For instance, I use the term ‘body-art’, which refers to ‘body art’, as well as highlight ‘body’ and ‘art’. That is to say, I want to forge a correlation between the two words and *worlds* that they stand for. Furthermore, I want the hyphen to be a short-hand of the imagery of the trans-runner running back-and-forth-between the component concepts, as you have seen in the diagrams labelled ‘Correlations’. Other images that I want the punctuation mark to evoke include the thread, wire and meridian, for reasons that will gradually unfold.

Another performance of playfulness in my approach is in the way I pitch trans-running as a parody of the traits of the digital world. Hence, parody functions as an act of resistance in this chapter.

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<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, when I use the term ‘internet’, I am also referring to the ‘web’ and ‘cyberspace’.



Figure 14: 'Play Harder'. An extract of an advertisement for Playbook. (Blackberry 2011)

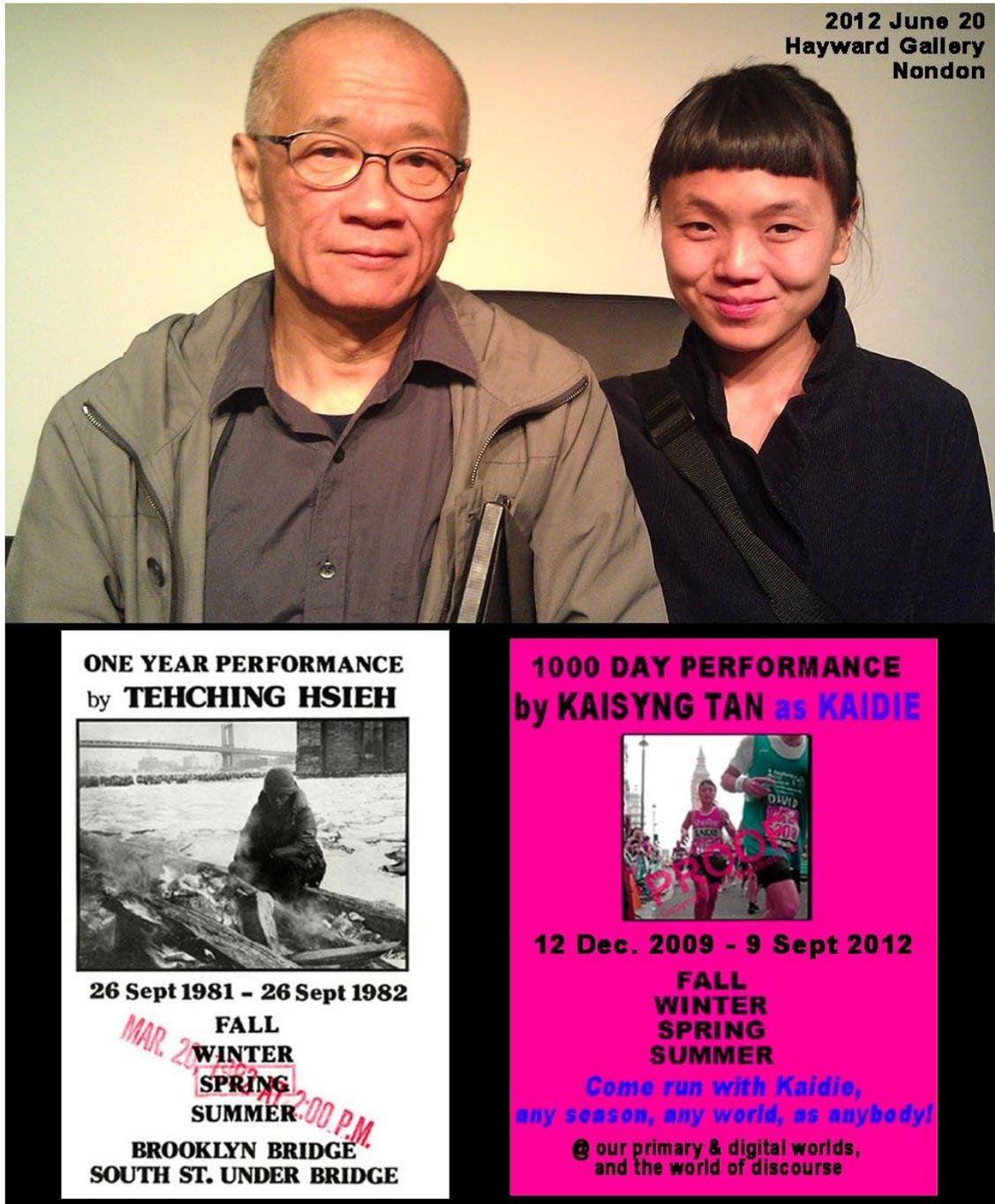


Figure from Kaidie's world 32: 'Running into Teh-Ching Hsieh'. Photograph of Kaidie and Hsieh taken by Kai Nien. Hsieh's poster is used with kind permission from Hsieh. (Tan 2012f)

In addition to my own artwork, I called on Teh-Ching Hsieh's *One Year Performance* (also known as *Outdoor Piece*, 1981-1982) to theorise trans-running for the digital

world. Here, the Taiwanese-American (born 1950) roamed Manhattan for a year. I identify with how he was on the run, in what he explains to me was a ‘freedom of exile by my own choice’ (2013). I also interpret his act as a response – if an over-enthusiastic one – to Pascal’s dictum about human beings’ unhappiness stemming from being locked indoors<sup>20</sup>. My return to incorporate art follows Californian humanities professor and author Michael R. Heim’s recommendation for us to refer to ‘recent artworks, cultural traditions, and [our] own experience’ for guidance for our technological age (2000b preface). Yet, instead of a ‘high-tech’ work, I have turned to one in which the artist’s body is his medium, which I argue may help us gain a renewed appreciation of the ingenuity of our body. Performance artist Marina Abramovic calls Hsieh a ‘master’ (cited in Menegoi 2007). Being guided by a master may help us re-gain our footing. I did not experience Hsieh’s work when it ran thirty years ago. Thus, I based my analysis on interviews, including one I conducted with him.<sup>21</sup> I also refer to my observations of him. I met Hsieh twice, in Singapore (September 2001) and London (June 2012). (Figure from Kaidie’s world 32)

By the end of this chapter, you will learn of 5 recommendations vis-à-vis the powerful agent of technology that may help you find your feet in the digital world. Less pragmatic than imaginative, they may encourage you to move with and celebrate the times in a manner that you are not run down or run over by the power, pervasiveness and pace of change of technology. Confined to the years 2009-2012, my account hardly covers a fraction of what happened, or could have happened. The climate of the digital had also dramatically altered over the period. For instance, when I first began my research in 2009, Twitter was the territory of geeks, as novelists and public figures shunned and mocked it. Today, the micro-blogging site is where news are not just transmitted but created, and where elections and revolutions are formed and fought. As I write, ever-newer innovations like augmented reality and wearable technology (Google Glass, for instance), and phenomena like the internet of things (in which objects are tagged and online) and life-logging (in which people document and broadcast large parts of their lives online) are re-defining the contexts in which our knowledge and awareness are rooted. Artist Jon Thomson tells me that my research is significant precisely because it is ‘marks a moment in flux and fixes something that is not fixed’ (2013a). For him, trans-running is a ‘rumination of a condition of being’ and a ‘locator of a point’ in history that articulates the way things are before they become normalised, and is best regarded as a ‘toolkit’ (2013b). Running with Thomson, I recommend that you view my proposals as ‘apps’ or mappings. Feel free to extrapolate and personalise them. Use them as jumping boards to envisage not just the impact of a world mediated by mobile internet, but technology in general, and of the technology to come. Finally, do not take my proposals at face value. Instead, see them as a pointer for you to not accept things at face value. Be questioning and cheeky – just like a child. Looking askance at the technology-mediated world with a dose of humour and imagination may be a way for us to gently subvert it.

<sup>20</sup> This argument is not far-fetched. Hsieh’s work prior to *Outdoor Piece* were all undertaken indoors – and in extreme conditions worse off than that of being imprisoned (*One Year Performance*, 1978 – 1979, and *One Year Performance*, 1979 – 1980).

<sup>21</sup> For a transcription of the conversation, please refer to Appendix IB.

## THE SMART, OR TYRANNICAL, STUPID AND INSANE DIGITAL WORLD

A technology journalist labels our era as ‘incredibly liberating’ (Prigg 2011). I welcome the window of opportunity to explore new territories. After all, trans-running is about resisting the status quo. Yet, behind each attraction of this new world and new world order are many more pitfalls. ‘Wide’ as the world wide web is, it can entrap us. There are too many discourses to cover, but you must have come across discussions about, and/or personally experienced, issues like privacy, censorship and over-dependency. Here, I map-together a few statistics and observations by critics of the past fifteen years. This whirlwind tour can give us a feel for how powerful the internet has become, and an opportunity to taste a few of its pros and cons.

A group of computer scientists sum up the internet’s all-in-one capability:

‘The invention of the telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer set the stage for this unprecedented integration of capabilities. The Internet is at once a world-wide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location’. (Leiner et al. 2003)

So powerful the internet is – and internet companies are – that if social-networking platform Facebook was a state, it would be three times ‘larger’ than USA, with more than one billion active users (Kiss 2012). No wonder founder Mark Zuckerberg uses words like ‘disruption’ and ‘revolution’ to describe his enterprise and even boasts that ‘this is really just the early stage’ (cited in Gelles 2010). As formidable is the internet’s growth-rate and how it permeates every facet of life. Back in 2000, geographers Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin already argued that the internet is such an ‘effective, transformative’ agent that it can ‘disrupt a number of processes and foundational assumptions’ (2000, pp.ix–13). How the internet is ‘radically altering social, cultural, political, institutional and economic life’ is manifest in the way we use the internet to communicate, consume information, express (by ‘tweeting’, for instance) and entertain (by watching Youtube clips for example) ourselves, trade, shop, learn, remember, and even have sex. Dodge and Kitchin termed the internet the ‘fastest growing communication medium in history’ capable of ‘seemingly constant flow of innovations’. Today, researchers predict 32% rise in the usage of smartphones annually (Thompson 2010). Then, ‘Father of Ubiquitous Computing’ (Parc 1999), scientist Mark Weiser, projected that the internet will be ‘invisible’ and ‘everywhere’ (1996). This has come true in our so-called age of the ‘portable personal web’ (Agarwal 2009). With cloud computing, the internet has turned 24/7. Even in 1997, an internet user was quoted in psychologist Sherry Turkle’s seminal *Life On The Screen* as proclaiming that ‘Real Life is just one more window’ (1997, p.13). Fifteen years on, the internet has run over from the computer window to Real Life, and threatens to run it – if not us – down. Then, Heim described the impact of computers as causing an ‘ontological shift’, meaning a ‘change in the world under our feet in the whole context in which our knowledge and awareness are rooted’ (1994). He mobilises another big word – ‘omnipresent’ – to describe our technology-saturated reality today (2005). Heim muses that previously, the telephone ‘trained us, like Pavlov’s dogs, to stop everything and respond to the ringing sound’. Now, we are programmed to be in the ‘always-on’ mode – and the crazy logic is that many of us consent to this. In his visionary 1984 science-fiction novel *Neuromancer*, William Gibson analogises the internet as a ‘mass

consensual hallucination’ (cited in Dodge 2004). Three decades on, we are even more spellbound. British technology author Heather Brooke describes the internet’s impact as ‘seismic’ (2000, preface). Simultaneously, she warns us of ‘digital totalitarianism’(2011). This alludes not only to the internet’s addictive nature but how our moves are closely-tracked by companies and authorities online, or what I call the Big Bosses and Big Brothers.

If author Nicholas G. Carr is right, the internet has dumbed us down, too. In an essay entitled ‘Is Google Making Us Stupid?’, the Pulitzer-prize finalist argues how the internet has cast such a ‘broad influence’ over our lives that it is transforming our thinking (2008). ‘Never has a communications system played so many roles in our lives’ that it is ‘subsuming most of our other intellectual technologies’ (cited in Murphy 2011). Citing emerging scientific evidence, he writes that the internet is ‘remapping the neural circuitry’ of our brain such that we have ceased to ‘think critically and creatively’, and struggle to stay focused. Paradoxically, our ‘stupidity’ is rising as technology becomes smarter. Carr quotes the founders of Google declaring the ‘ultimate search engine’ as being ‘as smart as people – or smarter’, and that humans are ‘better off’ if our brain was supplemented or even replaced (2008). In short, the brain is an ‘outdated computer’. In our over-zealousness to embrace technology, we are losing touch with how our body is itself an ingenious device that has been improved and upgraded over millions of years. You must have heard of reports of drivers ‘led’ – literally and figuratively so – by satellite navigators into lakes (Hanson 2012). Instead of listening to our gut instincts, we obey our technological masters. When Carr complains that ‘I get fidgety, lose the thread’, he means on both a physical and poetic level. The wireless internet is re-wiring us and making us lose our way. We worship the ‘electronic brain’ (*dian nao*), which is the transliteration of the Chinese word for computer, instead of using our own grey matter (*nao*).

Our world is also turning into a mad digital game. Colonising ‘everywhere’ are what a technology journalist labels ‘massively addictive small games’ on our gadgets, such as the ‘global phenomenon’ of *Angry Birds* (Prigg 2011). Previously, Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG) invaded our desktop computers and consciousness. So disruptive one such game ‘Second Life’ was, that a technology journalists says that it had ‘intruded’ in ‘first life’ (Terdiman 2003). Today, American technopreneur Seth Priebatsc speaks of a ‘game layer’ superimposed over our reality (2010). With the average player spending ‘six-and-a-half hours a day’ gaming, some regard it ‘like a full-time job’, he observes. Note that that is the same time-span hunters took to run after their prey (Liebenberg, cited in Chen 2006). In other words, over the duration our ancestors took to kill for food to feed the family, we spend it on killing pixellated pigs, and killing time. Dmitry Medvedev was such a fan of *Angry Birds* that he thanked its creators for having created ‘an occupation for a huge number of officials who now know what to do with their leisure time – *and during business hours*’ (cited in Prigg 2011). As if running a big state is not itself a full-time occupation, the then Russian President implied that gaming can rival Real Life. This can explain why critics continue to correlate violent video games with social ills. A government official even accused them for inspiring the London riots (International Business Times 2011). Indeed, the visual parallels can make Real Life look like ‘just another window’. (Figures 15-16) No wonder Priebatsc says of our game-mad world: ‘It’s insane’.

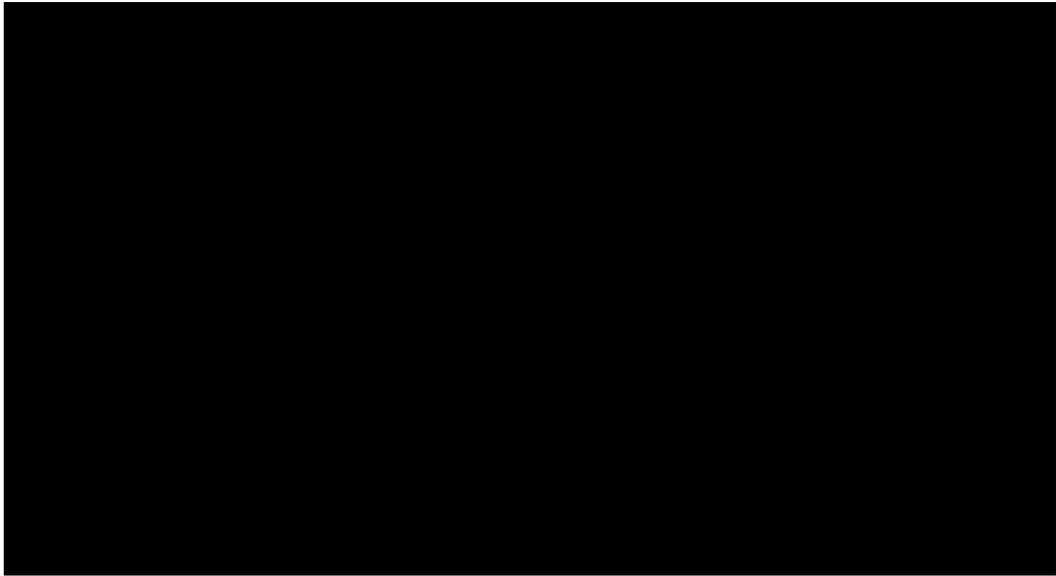


Figure 15: 'The 2011 London Riots'. (BBC News 2011a)

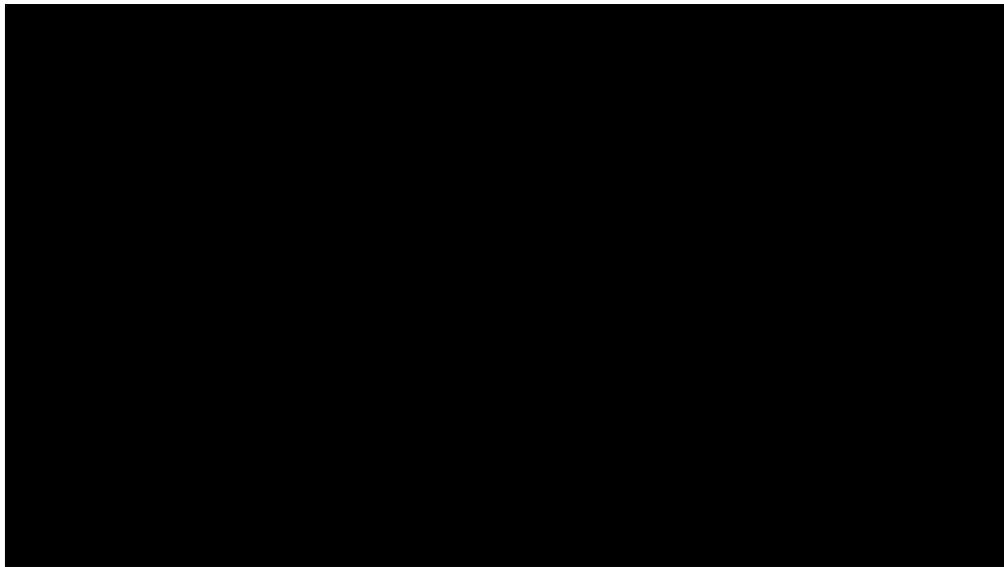


Figure 16: 'Real Life is Just Another Window; Video Game as Real Life'. A still from the popular digital game 'Grand Theft Auto'. (Microsoft 2008)

## TRANS-RUNNING AS AN ‘APP’ FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD

Notwithstanding how we may feel about the internet, what may be more ‘stupid’ and ‘insane’ would be to run or hide. ‘Regardless of whether we actively use them or ever want to use them’, the fact remains that internet technology is ‘employed by multinational corporations and the institutions which structure daily living’, state Dodge and Kitchin. The approaches I have come up with recall Guy Debord’s advice on the importance of having a relentlessly critical mind. I refer to the techno-sceptic Daoist sages, too. Adhering to the principle of naturalness (*wuwei*), Lao Zi urges:

‘Ensure that even if we have tools of war for a troop or a battalion, use them not. [...] Even if we have ships and carts, ride them not. Even if we have armour and weapons, show them not’. (Translation from the Chinese by Kai Syng Tan, with reference to Lao Tzu & Lau 1963, ch.80)

Lao Zi’s follower Zhuang Zi even considers machines as ‘too clever to be good’ (cited in Cooper 1995). For the philosopher, the ‘artificiality’ of machines destroys our ‘native ingenuity’. In my conversation with Professor Lee, the Daoism expert speculates that the Daoist sages would have found today’s technology-obsessed world ‘too aggressive’ (2011). Yet, it is wide off the mark to align the Daoists with the anti-technology Luddites. After all, the Daoists embraced change and read the world as one that is dynamic. Moreover, Daoism had a profound commitment to scientific research. In fact, alchemy and medicine are so deeply-embedded in the tradition that Daoism scholar James Miller likens it to contemporary Western engagement in genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and cyborgism (2003, p.120). What I grasp from Daoism with regards to our clever or smart machines is the importance of scepticism and moderation, again. Hence, the following recommendations aim to enhance our native ingenuity with the positive aspects of our digital machines.

### A. Play A ‘High-Tech-All-In-One-Smart-Digital-Compact-Body-Art-Trans-Runner-Fully-Equipped-With-Multiple-Apps’

Running and accessing ‘apps’ on my smartphone one day, I thought of likening myself to a human smartphone. Calling myself a ‘High-Tech-All-In-One-Smart-Digital-Compact-Body-Art-Trans-Runner-Fully-Equipped-With-Multiple-Apps’, such a re-imagination seeks to synthesise the cleverness of the internet with that of the body, enhancing its art and artistry with the internet’s capabilities. My mobilisation of the word ‘apps’ in my title hence refers not only to applications softwares of my smartphone, but the applied knowledge of my body. My conceptualisation may enable us to metaphorically ‘re-wire’ or ‘re-program’ ourselves to get in touch with our body, again. My long-winded title declares the silliness of my enterprise. Yet, my proposal aims to playfully shake us out of our technological-hallucination. Instead of being a lab-rat programmed to obey our digital masters, I propose that trans-running may make us as smart as, or even out-smart them – and be smarting, too. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 33)



Figure from Kaidie's world 33: 'Playing A Smartphone'. (Tan 2013d)

As you may deduce from its title, my approach maps together diverse sources of thoughts.

By labelling it ‘high-tech’, ‘smart’ and ‘fully-equipped with multiple-apps’, I am parodying words which are ubiquitous today, as well as re-claiming their meaning. My proposal aims to be ‘smart’ in terms of being clever, as well as causing a ‘sharp stinging’. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012d). By tagging it ‘high-tech’, I want to highlight how ‘technology’ refers not only to the feats of computer engineering, but the ‘application of knowledge to the practical aims of human life or to changing and manipulating the human environment’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012e). Additionally, the 17<sup>th</sup> century definition of technology points to ‘a discourse or treatise on an art or arts’ (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol.XVII p.705), while its etymology, ‘*technē*’, refers to ‘art and skill’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012e). As an application of the body’s knowledge, art and skill, my approach aims to encompass a clever and stinging discourse that may allow us to change and manipulate our digital environment. These correlations are not far-fetched, as technology can offer us new opportunities to re-embrace the intelligence of our body. We can be less sedentary now that the internet is mobile; technological interfaces are increasingly tactile (as seen in ‘wii’ consoles and touchscreen faculties of smartphones); digital gadgets (such as GPS devices) have enhanced our outdoor activities.

My conceptualisation of an ‘all-in-one’ body, on the other hand, has an ancient source. The Daoist body, as we know by now, is a microcosm of the world. It is also a three-in-one hub that thinks and feels, since the Daoist body is not separated from the mind and soul (Kohn 1993, p.160). My approach is infused with intuition, too. In fact, it was when I encountered Kristofer Schipper’s description of *wuwei* as a ‘technology’ that awoke me to the richness of the word. The Daoism scholar calls *wuwei*:

‘a spiritual technology by means of which humans cultivate their own nature and the nature around them’. (2003, p.140)

*Wuwei* is an art and skill, since it is about an attainment of a naturalness from rigorous training. Juxtaposing *wuwei* as a ‘technology’ of intuition in relation to internet ‘technology’ can enable us to re-assess our own nature and our relationship with the internet-layered environment around us. Indeed, several Daoism scholars allude to intuition as an important form of thinking. In his *On Chinese Body Thinking: A Cultural Hermeneutic*, philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu describes it ‘a kind of intelligence’ (1997). Our body is a powerful feedback system. ‘When hungry the body gets food and eats’; ‘when amused it laughs’, he writes. You may laugh at the rudimentary set-up, the same way many prefer to ‘google’ or ‘Ask Jeeves’ instead of listening to our gut instinct.

Regarding the ‘digital’ and ‘compact’ aspects of the approach, I refer to the running world. After all, the runner’s body already gives our smart gadgets a playful run for its money, as it poetically matches several features of our world today. Runners are ‘digital’, as we mobilise the digits of our toes, and mobile. Like small gadgets, runners tend to be compact, too. Runner-author George Sheehan describes the distance runner as ‘slim with good legs and a small trunk’ (1978, p.241). He even supplies a formula:

‘Double my height in inches and you have my weight. My bones are small, my legs short muscles stringy, with little body fat’. (1975, p.6)

In Alan Turing, we see a symbiotic relationship between running and technology. Although he was ‘the designer of the “electronic brain”’, as scientist Andrew Hodges describes him, Turing was such a consummate runner that he was nearly shortlisted for the British team at the 1948 Olympics (2012). Running and technology run hand-in-hand in more ways. As if a parody of the breathless rate of technological progress, runners can advance with tremendous stamina, that is, speed and endurance (Dafter 2011). The runner’s body is supplemented with an indefatigable mind too. ‘*Sisu*’ or ‘strength of will’ was made famous by Finnish runners who overcame long distances, poker-faced, in the 1950’s (Gotaas 2009, p.156). Runner-biologist Bernd Heinrich even argues that it was our mental stamina that motivated our ancestors to chase the swift antelopes in the first place, 2 million years ago:

‘It was not just sweat glands that made us premier endurance predators. It was also our minds fuelled by passion. [...] We can visualise far ahead’. (2002, p.177).

With our physical prowess and what Heinrich terms ‘long range vision’, runners may metaphorically out-run the powerful batteries that run our gadgets, as well as the ever-swifter speed of the internet. Being digital, compact, swift and ever-lasting, we may metaphorically out-run and out-smart our smart gadgets. Walking, in contrast, cannot metaphorically bring us up to speed, nor catch up with the times.

With the tag of ‘body-art’, my approach also foregrounds the art and skill of the body. Teh-Ching Hsieh’s *Outdoor Piece* seems to exemplify the *technē* of the body. Some critics use the term ‘body art’ interchangeably with ‘performance art’ (Carr 1993). For me, Hsieh’s work justifies this. It is his body – and not paint, bronze or film – that is his primary medium of expression. The artist walks around the Lower Manhattan, adhering to his rule ‘I shall stay OUTDOORS [...] never go inside’, for an entire year<sup>22</sup>. Although that winter was ‘one of the coldest of the century in New York’, Hsieh slept in his sleeping bag and bathed at the Hudson River (Menegoi 2007). No wonder a critic describes *Outdoor Piece* as a ‘test of his own endurance’ (Sontag 2009). Indeed, Hsieh’s body art resembles an extreme endurance sport. Needless to say, such a work demanded mental stamina, too. Hsieh himself calls *Outdoor Piece* his most ‘difficult’ work as it took ‘the most mental energy’ (cited in Bajo & Carey 2003). *Outdoor Piece* cannot be accomplished without the long range vision that characterises a distance runner. In fact, being slim and not much more than five foot three<sup>23</sup>, the artist physically resembles one, too.

A brand of ‘body art’ exists in the running world, too. After all, the runner’s body is the medium with which they run and interact with the world. In fact, runner George Sheehan correlates the runner with the artist and poet (1978, pp. 126-246). With running,

<sup>22</sup> The one time Hsieh broke his own rule was when he was kept in custody for 15 hours. Interestingly, Hsieh was arrested as he was involved in a fight using a *nunchaku* – the same weapon mythologised by another mythical American-Chinese, Bruce Lee.

<sup>23</sup> I deduced this from standing next to Hsieh. I am five foot two.

‘I have found my specific pattern, heard the voice that calls me, found my art, any medium to experience and interpret life. (1978, p.126)

Running is the runner’s art, which is created ‘through imagination and reason and intuition’. Sheehan equates his daily running session to ‘being a poet an hour a day’. He even maps running specifically with performance. ‘We were not created to be spectators’. Rather than mere ‘theatre-goers’, ‘onlookers or bystanders’, runners *perform*, in both the literal and figurative senses of the word:

‘You, as well as I, are producer, playwright, and actor making, creating and living the drama on stage. Life must be lived. Acted out. The play we are in is our own’. (1978, p.246)

I tag my approach ‘body-art’. I want the hyphen to allude to the network of meridians that run throughout the Daoist body. Such a mark can act as a visual bridge between, and stresses the importance of ‘body’, ‘art’, and the art of the body. I do not mean that we have to be artists as such. Instead, body-art serves to raise our consciousness about our body as a creative medium to interface with, express and interpret the digital world. In other words, my conception aims to be a playful way for us to re-instate the body and its art into our digital world, to run hand-in-hand with our clever machines.

Connecting these disparate notions together with a hyphen, you may re-imagine yourself as a ‘High-Tech-All-In-One-Smart-Digital-Compact-Body-Art-Trans-Runner-Fully-Equipped-With-Multiple-Apps’, which maps-together the digital of the computer and toes, the new (technology) and the old (Daoism), art (‘body-art’) and machine, the concrete (physical running) and the rhetorical. Given a world in which we can go online and move about outdoors simultaneously, an approach that emphasises the power and poetry of our body may be a first step towards helping us to re-gain our literal and metaphorical footing. As Sherry Turkle says,

‘We have to see ourselves as in a position to profoundly affect the outcome of how things are going to go. [...] We live in our bodies. We are terrestrial. We are physical as well as mental beings, we are cerebral, cognitive and we are emotional’. (Technology Review 1996)

## **B. Play A ‘Well-Connected-Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being’**

Traversing the digital worlds, I pictured myself as another multi-hyphenate. This time, I played a ‘Well-Connected-Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being’. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 34)



Figure from Kaidie's world 34: 'Well-Connected-Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being'. The background of this image is derived from GPS drawings of my runs in London. (Tan 2013d)

My hyphen seemed to function like a meridian, cable, line or thread. On one end was myself, a trans-runner of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On the other, a fact or figure from an other world, such as British motion-picture pioneer Eadweard Muybridge's *Girl Running* (1887). I was 'well-connected' not just because I had internet access, but because I was attuned to the different contexts of the internet. My hyphen was like a hyperlink, too. I resembled a hypertext that embodied multiple, new, poetic connections. I customise the term as 'hyper-link', to emphasise the component parts, 'hyper' and 'link'. I ran from window to window in a 'hyper' and excitable manner, insatiably learning about different viewpoints and freely making associations. The restless, exuberant and free-wheeling gait is replicated in the way I correlate ideas from different disciplines, collage disparate images in my diagrams, and juxtapose discordant sound and video in my cine-essays. *Kaidie's Trans-Run* itself is aligned with an extensive web of references, too.<sup>24</sup> Just as a text springs to life when enhanced with hyper-links, I felt enriched. With an awareness of my own lineages, or 'line-ages', I felt better-grounded instead of losing my thread. With access to new and old worlds, I gained a better sense of perspective about where I have come from, where I was, as well as where I was going, literally and metaphorically-speaking. This allowed me to reach further, and thus augment my digital world and my world-at-large.

My approach stems from the observation that many of us seem dis-connected from the historical, political and cultural contexts of the internet. Many of the 2.4 billion of us 'connected' or who have internet access today ignore how 4.6 billion other people do not. More than a decade ago, Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin already warned that 'despite impressive growth statistics', internet access is 'far from universal' (2000, p.6). 'Most of the world have yet to experience the web and many may never gain access, particularly those in the developing world'. Twelve years on, its signal remains weak or non-existent to two-thirds of the world's population. This is despite the United Nations' declaration of the non-access to the internet as a human rights violation (Kravets 2011). (Table 4-5) Sherry Turkle points out another blind spot. She feels 'troubled by people's sense that this is all basically magic' as we have 'no idea how computer technology works' (Technology Review 1996). The user-friendly nature of today's gadgets masks their technical complexity. Smartphones and tablets are literally child's-play, as reflected in one mother's account of the indispensable role of what she calls 'i-Nanny' in her household (Cook 2013). Turkle's criticism is echoed by UK experts today who stress the need to enforce the teaching of computer programming in information technology classes (Naughton 2012). The myth of the 'magic' of technology is perpetuated by the terms 'wireless' technology and 'cloud' computing. They cloud how the internet is run by complex networks of fibre optic cables running underwater in the real world. Since the internet is 'wireless' from server to gadget, and we can go online virtually anywhere, many of us have no idea about this. (Figures 17-18) Additionally, a technology author describes that users or 'Residents' of 'Second Life' are so immersed that they ignore how the make-believe world is run by '700 Debian Linux servers in a San Francisco data warehouse' (Guest 2008, p.7). Similarly, as we ditch our hard disks and store our photo albums on the digital cloud today, many of us buy into its magic and fail to correlate this to the large server farms in Iceland or Canada working 24/7 that enable this.

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<sup>24</sup> You can read about these references in Appendix II.

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Table 4: 'World Internet Usage'. (Miniwatts Marketing Group 2013)

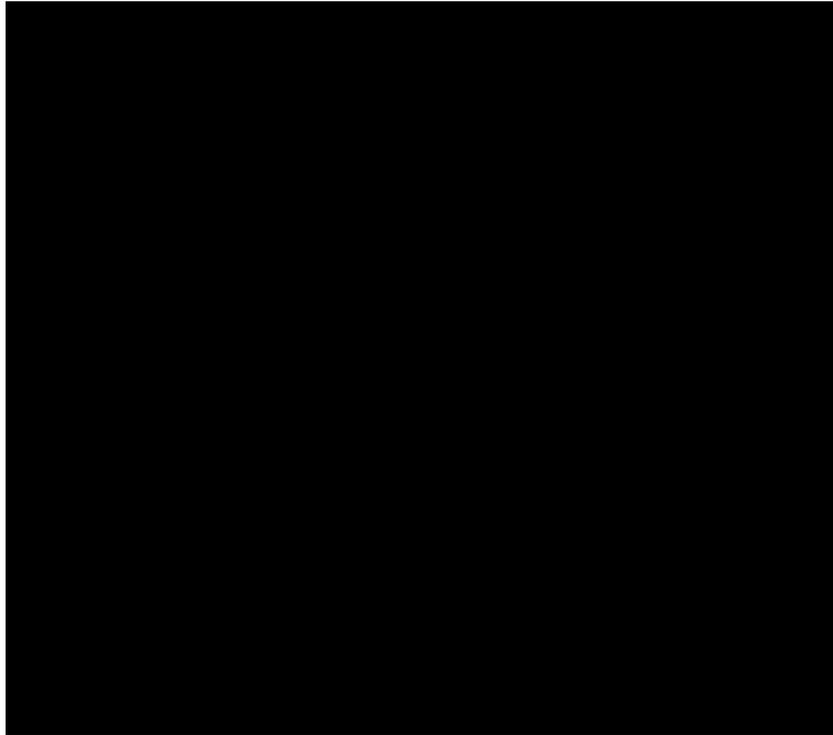
A large black rectangular redaction box covering the content of Table 5.

Table 5: 'World Internet Penetration Rates'. (Miniwatts Marketing Group 2013)

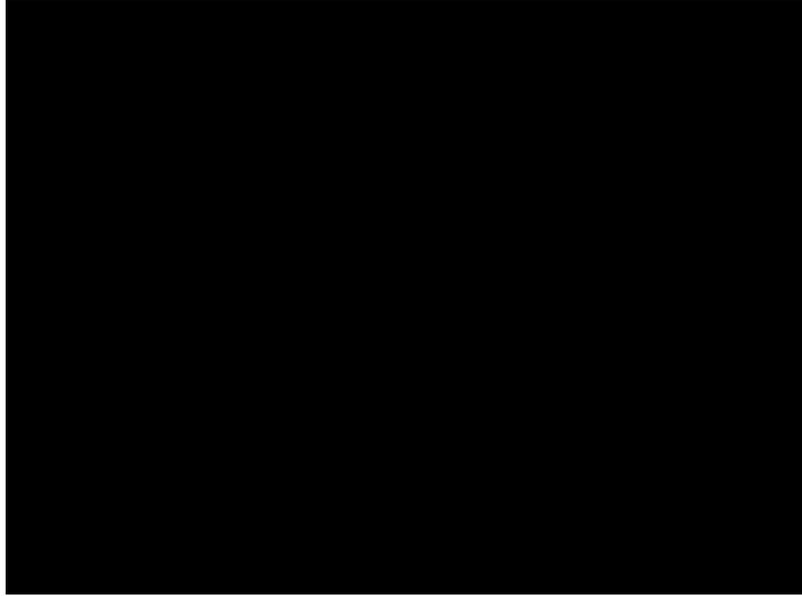


Figure 17: 'Workers Repairing Submarine Fibre-Optic Cables'. (IT news Africa 2010)

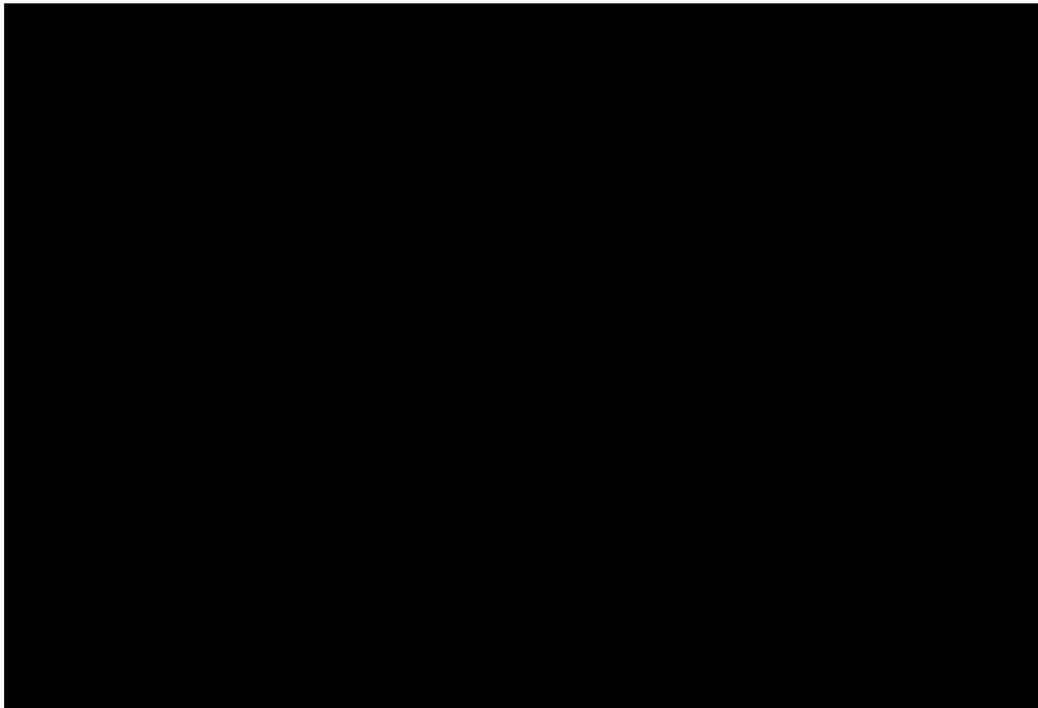


Figure 18: 'The Global Network of Submarine Cables'. An extract. (Telegeography: Authoritative Telecom data 2013)

Furthermore, we may tend to overrate the impact of the internet and forget that human beings have experienced other processes of radical restructuring. Again, it takes geographers Dodge and Kitchin to keep us grounded. While ‘one of the most significant evolutionary developments of the 21st century’, we should not take the internet’s development of ‘out of context’, treating it in an ‘ahistorical manner and uncritically accepting the revolutionary hype that surrounds them’. In fact, the geographers associate the internet’s origins with the moment the first transatlantic cables were laid to run the telegraph, in 1858. This is why science-fiction author Neal Stephenson asserts that ‘the world has actually been wired together by digital communication systems for a century and a half’. No wonder author Tom Standage calls the telegraph the ‘Victorian Internet’ and ‘highway of thought’ (2009). This in turn reminds us of the disruptiveness of the medium of cinema when it was introduced a century ago. So overwhelmed the earliest cinema-goers were by the projected image of a train in the Lumiere Brothers’ 1894 *Arrival of Train*, that they thought that the train was charging at them, and wanted to run away. Zooming out even further, we may correlate the internet as an ‘evolutionary development’ with another earlier milestone, which was that of our ancestors’ development of unique biological and psychological features to run for survival, two million years ago. With this sense of perspective, it will be hard to overstate the power of the internet.

Hence, get ‘well-connected’ and you may get re-aligned with what you may have overlooked or did not know. Picture the hyphen as a meridian, or a line, to get re-acquainted with your lineages – or ‘line-ages’, paying attention to the words ‘line’ (connection) and ‘ages’ (histories). Extrapolating from Carr’s point about how the internet has re-wired our brain and made us lose our ‘thread’, you may analogise the hyphen to other internet-specific terms, including the wire, cable, web, network and the internet itself. After all, the ‘internet’ refers to a ‘global network connecting millions of computers’, that is, a group of inter-connected computers (Webopedia Computer Dictionary 2009).

This metaphorical line-cable-wire-thread may in turn lead us to re-visit another radical innovation that we perhaps take for granted, which is that of the hyperlink. In fact, the artistic and political implications of the hyperlink run with the sensibilities of the trans-runner that I have proposed so far. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Computing*, the hyperlink is ‘a connection between an element (eg word, phrase, image etc) in a document on to a different destination on the web’ (Daintith & Wright 2010, p.241). Called ‘hypertext’, such a document can be ‘entered at many points and ‘may be browsed in any order’. Curator-academics Peter Ride and Andrew Dewdney state that these ideas were conceptualised in the 1960’s by American philosopher and sociologist Ted Nelson (2006, p.207). Summing up the values of the hypertext, they describe how it ‘frees the reader’ from ‘hierarchical and fixed thought inscribed in the linear text’. Similarly, geographers Dodge and Kitchin welcome hyperlinks’ ability to ‘transport’ users through the ‘vast amount of multimedia data’ online ‘without concern for their specific location in the network or in geographical space’, and conclude that hyperlinks are that which make the internet a ‘powerful medium’ (2000, p.3). Pioneer computer artist Myron W. Kreuger even declares the hypertext ‘a new form of expression’ (cited in Heim 1994, p.xviii). Its ‘non-linear, free-association’ nature enables us to disrupt the ‘linear sequence of ordered thought’ and make our own ‘decisions about the order of presentation’, he says. Contemporary

artists continue to be fascinated by the hyperlink.<sup>25</sup> By describing it as ‘anti-hierarchical’, media artist and theorist Joseph Nechvatal hints at its subversive nature (2009, p.29). He even imagines a ‘hyper-being model of existence’. Based on the ‘principles of networked connections and electronic links’ which offer ‘multiple choices of paths to follow and continually new branching possibilities’, he describes this being as ‘omni-perceptual’. With the ability to open new pages in any order, as well as to juxtapose multiple windows side by side, we may now acquire disparate views – and viewpoints – simultaneously.

The hyperlink gives Chatwin’s observation about how technology can help us overcome physical barriers a new dimension. Apart from opening up new realms for us to explore, the internet is enabling us to, in the figurative sense of the word, move in new ways. Chatwin aside, we have run into the light-footed and anarchic Daoist wanderers and the curious Che Guevera. They re-awakened our perception to the ever-changing rhythms of the city, and taught us to be anti-hierarchical and run against the country, as well as to be on the run and acquire fresh encounters. From Montaigne, we also learnt how travelling is a ‘profitable exercise’ that can afford us a relativistic worldview, since anything ‘offensive’ is soon modulated by another encounter. The figure of the all-seeing being that restlessly explores different windows of opportunity, worlds and worldviews seems to re-present a digital version of these free-spirited souls.

To customise the hyperlink, I add a hyphen, and imagine the 21<sup>st</sup> century traveller of the digital world as a ‘Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being’. The term ‘hyper-link’ foregrounds the importance of ‘hyper’ and ‘link’, and also acknowledges and embraces the *power* and *poetry* of the ‘hyperlink’. Since ‘hyper-’ refers to a state of being ‘high-strung’, ‘excitable’, ‘active’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012b), this ‘Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being’ as one that creates new, exhilarating connections in an exuberant manner. We are not ‘surfing’ the internet, as that conjures the image of the passive couch potato channel-surfing an a earlier screen, that of the dummy box of the television (Martin 1996). Instead, the Hyper-Linked Hyper Being metaphorically runs – and runs riot – in the digital world.

Hence, re-energise yourself as a ‘Well-Connected-Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being’, to be well-connected to your line-ages, as well as hyper-linked to ever-newer worlds. You may gasp and marvel at how ‘life-changing’ the internet is (Dodge and Kitchin 2000, p.ix). Simultaneously, you are grounded and grasp the bigger picture, and indeed many different pictures and points of views. With your deep roots, and all-seeing capability, you may have a better perspective of the digital world. This may transport you to have yet newer encounters and branch out to yet new windows and worlds. With the ability to constantly re-new your thinking, challenge and revolutionise yourself, you may hence become better-equipped to avoid blind-spots, and better-placed to re-assess your position in the digital world. You understand how the internet has changed the world under your feet, but also realise that, being ‘hyper’, you are active. You may become the transformative agent that effect change in your world yourself.

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<sup>25</sup> These are the reasons why I was drawn to the internet in the 1990’s, and why I my first internet work is a hypertext work. You can read about the work in Appendix II.

### C. Play A ‘Dis-Located-Digital-Nomad’

During March-May 2010, I ran an experiment that I tag ‘Kaidie’s Dis-Location’. It taught me that I could traverse freely back-and-forth between online and offline, with Real Life as just another window. I also learnt that the same way we may run to out-smart CCTV cameras and nosey governments in the real world, my metaphorical running may allow me to hide myself from online surveillance. This led me to conceptualise the figure of a ‘Dis-located-Digital-Nomad’ as a fun way to run – manage and govern – my digital world.

What happened was this: One day in March 2010, I announced to my ‘followers’ in my blog that Kaidie was ‘dis-located’. I claimed to be ‘Kaidie’s stand-in’ called ‘Kailives’. The word ‘dis-located’ refers to the claim that my arm was broken from a fall I suffered during a run. It also refers to Kaidie’s sudden disappearance thereafter. This was the start of a game-like artwork created in collaboration with my audience in the form of photographs, texts and performances online and offline for nearly two months. Upon reading my announcement, my audience swiftly stepped in to get involved. Their highly-imaginative responses pushed the plot in surprising directions. Several wrote in on my blog and Facebook ‘wall’ to express concern. One offered prayers. A few claimed to have spotted Kaidie, and even ‘tweeted’ textual or photographic ‘proofs’. I hence upped the ante and asserted that Kaidie was abducted. Promises of ‘hunting for’ and ‘rescuing’ Kaidie soon emerged. I then published a photograph of a glove left behind at a station, hinting that it was dropped by Kaidie while running, or running away. Thereupon, ‘Cloud 9’ wrote in to say that she spotted Kaidie at the Angel Station in London. This provocation by real-life filmmaker Claudia Tomaz motivated me to develop another narrative strand, about Kaidie jumping into the tracks of the underground station. Writing as ‘Kailives’, I speculated that Kaidie must have made the ‘poetic leap’ because of the evocative name of the station, or that it was her homage to *Alice in Wonderland* and Neil Gaiman’s urban fantasy *Neverwhere*, in which the protagonist entered ‘London Below’ via the gap between the track and platform. To complicate things, I was scheduled to perform in two events, and participate in a charity run in the real world during this time. Several of the members of my audience had donated money to support my run. By weaving the race into the story, the worlds of fiction and non-fiction collided. Finally, after yet more twists and turns, I revealed that Kaidie was kidnapped by ‘The Good Pirate’ into ‘Virtual Phuket’ in ‘Second Life’, and had re-invented herself as ‘Kaidie Absent’. In truth, ‘The Good Pirate’ is the avatar of Chuthatip Achavasmit, a real-life urban planner whose research focuses on online tourism. In fact, ‘Kaidie’s Dis-Location’ had been inspired by Achavasmit in the first place. A regular reader of my blog, Achavasmit had commented ‘I caught you running’ upon spotting me running in London. Her word ‘caught’ caught my attention, with which I let my imagination run wild and created the experiment. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 35-42)

**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0**  
**(DIS-) LOCATING KAIDIE IN NO** (dis-)orientations - come with kaidie - (dis-)locate

**LATEST**  
**KAIDIE, DISLOCATED.**

**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0**  
**(DIS-) LOCATING KAIDIE IN NONDON** (dis-)orientations - come with kaidie - (dis-)locate

DAY 80: KAIDIE FALLS (her 3rd in the last 80 days) HEAD OVER HEELS RUNNING ALONG THE PAVEMENT OF FUSTON ROAD. SHE IS TRANSFORMED.



Share / Save

This entry was posted on Wednesday, March 3rd, 2010 at 1:05 and is filed under **GETTING THERE THERE** and tagged with **give-take**, **in-between**, **meaning of life**, **metamorphosis**, **run**. You can follow any responses to this entry through the **RSS 2.0 feed**. You can leave a response, or **trackback** from your own site.

*Where on google-earth might Kaidie be? 2 days ago Kaidie reported that she 'fell head over heels at Fuston Road' and that it 'transformed' her. She shared some image of some dislocated part of her body with some injury of some sorts. We - by that I mean you and I - have not heard from her since. I have had to hack into her site and ask you: would you know where Kaidie might be? Have you seen Kaidie in Nondon?*

Share / Save

**Mar 05, 2010 | Categories: REALITY CHECK | Tags: in-between | Leave A Comment » | Edit**

Figure from Kaidie's world 35: 'Dis-Located'. This was one of the first posts I published to announce Kaidie's 'dis-location'. (Tan 2010e)

**Kaidie Nondon** As Kaidie's stand-in, I will have to use Kaidie's script for the lecture tomorrow at Nondon College of Communication. I will also have to fit into her small (running) shoes for the Charity run this Sunday. DO understand however that we are different and I am not Kaidie, but I am not a poor proxy and please give me som...  
See more  
A few seconds ago · Comment · Like

**Kaidie Nondon** Thank you for your tips so far, but given that Kaidie still can't be located, I will have to stand in for her tomorrow at her lecture!  
11 minutes ago via Twitter · Comment · Like

**Kaidie Nondon** Hello, Friends of Kaidie, Your best Facebook Friend Kaidie cannot be located. Has any of you spotted her, in Nondon or not, in Life 3.0 or 1.0 or 2.0? We have found one of her gloves at the St Pancreas station, and there have been some (conflicting) sightings. I am worried as she is scheduled for a few events next week...  
See more

**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0**  
3rdlifekaidie.com  
(Dis-) Locating Kaidie In Nondon  
Yesterday at 13:26 · Comment · Like · Share

not sure if it was Kaidie, but saw something yesterday Kaidie, but couldn't see her face. On a CCTV screen in Angel tube station I spotted a short but mysterious moment! a woman dressed in a black dress left a glove on the floor and walked away a few seconds later looking around. That in itself was a bit strange, but just before my train came, the same scene happened again in the exact same way. I went home thinking of it, a bit puzzled... the gesture, the glove, the deja-vu, the repetition... I wanted something new and it was cold. When I got home saw the picture of the glove online. Do you think there's a connection? is Kaidie leaving a trail? there's also the possibility that she can co-exist in many different time-spaces which might overlap sometimes??...

your not kaidie? so who r u?  
Mar 07, 2010 @ 21:33  
wmartens88

Hello everyone! Thanks so much for your support so far. However Kaidie still cannot be located, so I will have to change her status to 'maybe attending' for

She might just be misplaced.  
Sent via Facebook Mobile

sent a message in reply to a thread.  
Re: Kaidie, dislocated!  
"Sounds ominous . . ."

Clear Chat History

20:04  
i recive a strange message from you! everthing its ok?

Kaidie 20:05  
yes im missing or my friend Kaidie is if you have any clues let us know

20:07  
so you are use her profile to find her? well i never met her im afraid but good luck i will pray

Kaidie 20:10  
Thanks for your words!

Figure from Kaidie's world 36: 'I Will Pray For Kaidie'. (Tan 2010e)



Figure from Kaidie's world 37: 'Can You See Me Now?' (Tan 2010e)



Figure from Kaidie's world 38: 'Finding Kaidie'. (Tan 2010e)

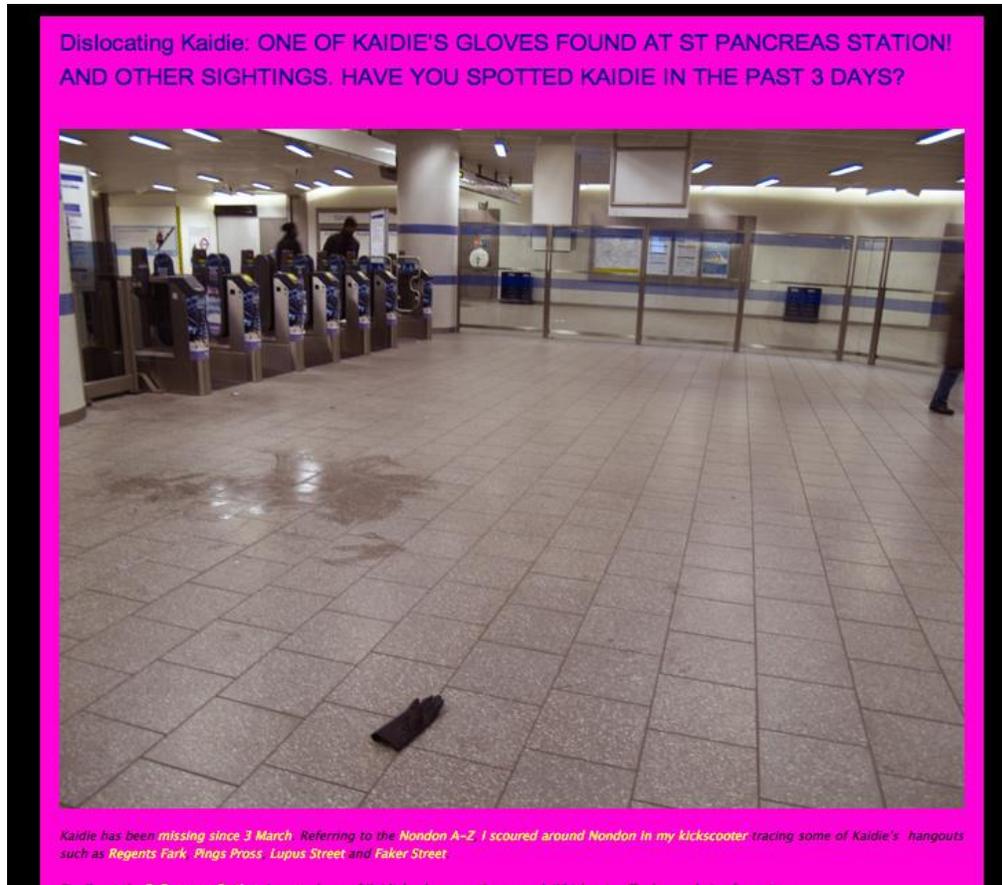


Figure from Kaidie's world 39: 'Did Kaidie Leave This/ Us Behind?'. (Tan 2010e)



Figure from Kaidie's world 40: 'Kaidie's Kidnapper Speaks!'. Chuthatip Achavasmit, who plays Kaidie's kidnapper, runs the avatars of 'The Good Pirate', 'Chutha' or 'Chutha Indigo'. Here, they drop cryptic hints about Kaidie's whereabouts across different social media platforms. (Tan 2010e)



Figure from Kaidie's world 41: 'Running the Gamut Of The Variations On The Theme Of "Kai"'. (Tan 2010e)

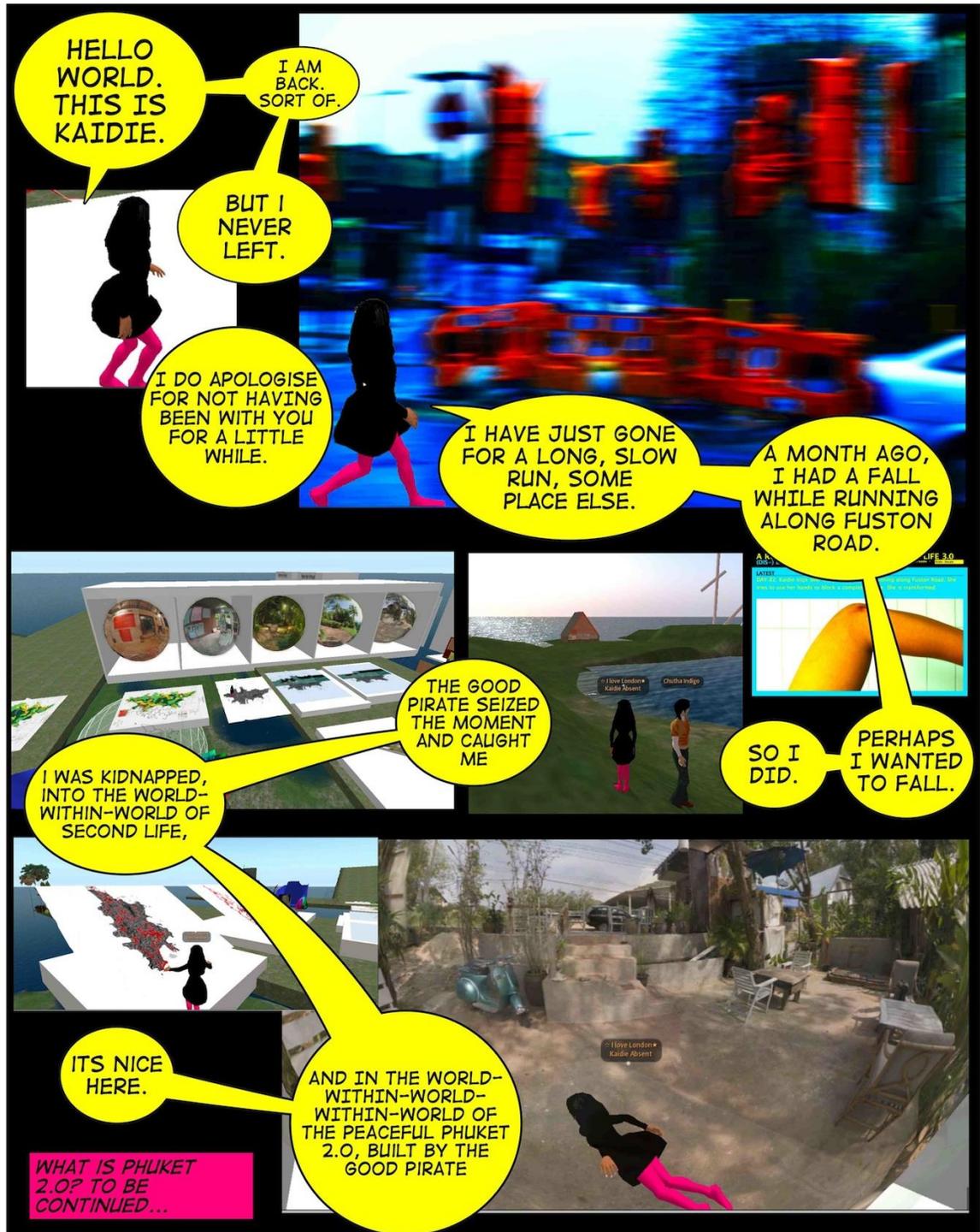


Figure from Kaidie's world 42: 'Kaidie's Second Lives'. (Tan 2010c)

My experience led me to imagine the figure of a baggage-free, location-independent nomad. The word ‘roam’, after all, characterises our portable smart devices, which can ‘move from one access point coverage area to another without interruption in service or loss in connectivity’ (Webopedia Computer Dictionary 2012). Like them, runners can be light and restless. Philosopher Michael Heim states of the smartphone or ‘cellphone’:

‘We are peripatetic creatures who not only hunger for information but who also walk as we talk and move as we think. Mobility expresses our deepest aversions and attractions. (The very terms of desire imply “moving towards” or “moving away from.”) We need more than thinking to survive; we also need to move. A device that feeds our hunger for information with an infinite supply, like the Web, gets better by becoming a device that also supports our ability to move about in the world. The cell phone is the movable Internet.’ (2005)

I will tease out the correlation between movement and thinking later (chapter IV). Here, what I am interested in is how this portable internet can re-configure us as not just nomads that author Bruce Chatwin muses about, but *digital* nomads. Armed with our digital gadgets and carried by the digits of our feet, such a figure roams the digital world freely. Online, members of this new tribe blog or ‘tweet’ about this way of life. One defines a digital nomad as someone who ‘goes where there is a wireless web connection’. (Rosenwald 2009). Others talk about the freedom of being ‘post-desktop’ (Borchers 2002), ‘location-independent’ (Woodward & Woodward 2011) and being a ‘digital minimalist’ (Prigg 2010a). These words make me think of the light-footed ways of Teh-Ching Hsieh. In *Outdoor Piece*, the artist carried a single backpack that contained basic necessities, including his camera and tripod with which he documented his performance. (Figure 19) Would he bring other gadgets today should he perform the work again? He tells me: ‘I will still stay with basic equipments (sic) doing the work, it is better for this piece to live raw’ (2012a). Hsieh seems to be following the ways of Daoist wayfarers, who were ‘light as a feather’, and could ‘travel great distances in a short time’ (Schipper 1994, p.169). In fact, Hsieh must have appeared no different from the 23,295 (other) homeless people in New York City at that time (Chung 2006). Nonetheless, his was an ‘extreme form of homelessness’ (Sontag 2009). Indeed, other than this self-enforced exile from indoors, Hsieh seems honed in the *technē* of being on the run all his life. Having run away from formal education and his authoritarian father, he pretended to be a sailor on board an oil tanker, to literally jump ship from his home state of Taiwan to America in 1974. It was just as well that by then, Hsieh had abandoned painting and turned to his body – which he could carry anytime, anywhere – as his tool of expression. Similarly, to roam the world baggage-free, I stopped making paintings and moved into film, and now, performance and digital media, as *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* primarily is. My laptop functions as my art studio, the city acts as my gallery, and my artworks, photographs and memories are ‘carried about’ by the digital cloud.

That said, our digital movement leaves an indelible mark behind. This is where the trick of being ‘dis-located’ comes in.

Physicist and writer Mark Buchanan analyses:

‘Every move you make, every twitter feed you update, somebody is watching you. You may not think twice about it, but if you use a social networking site, a cellphone or the internet regularly, you are leaving behind a clear digital trail that describes your behaviour, travel patterns, likes and dislikes, divulges who your friends are and reveals your mood and your opinions. In short, it tells the world an awful lot about you’. (2010)

We can refuse to ‘accept cookies’ on websites – but many of us do not. This allows companies like Yahoo and Google to track our online behaviour. In fact, they employ top ‘math whizzes’ to engineer sophisticated algorithms to teach computers to form ‘neural pathways’ – just like our brains’ – to memorise our ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’, and shadow our every move (Gelles 2011). They even persuade us that the advertisements we are spammed with are ‘useful’ and not ‘evil’ since they are ‘targeted’ to our ‘interests’ (Poole 2011).

This is where Lao Zi can step in to help us out-fox our digital stalkers:

‘Those who excel in travelling leaves no tracks’. (Translation from the Chinese by Kai Syng Tan, with reference to Lao Tzu & Lau 1963, ch.27)

The Old Child is teaching us to not only be light as a feather, but also so light in our footsteps that we are untraceable. This notion seems played up in Blast Theory’s *Can You See Me Now?*. In this work, which the artists describe as a game, real-life performers compete against audience members who play online (2001). I was first confused by, then enjoyed how I had to ‘hide’ myself from the performers running outside the museum, but whom I could only see as online figures or avatars. Coincidentally, I experienced the artwork at the Tate in April 2010, when ‘Kaidie’s Dis-Location’ was well under way. (Figure 20)

Hence, I conceptualise the relationship between the digital denizens and the businesses and bureaucrats that run them as a playful cat-and-mouse game. If it is tricky to destroy or hide your digital trail, you may ‘dis-locate’ yourself. Resist having a ‘home’ to return to. By being literally all over the place, and leaving a constellation of conflicting traces, you may prevent yourself from being located, placed, tied down, classified or entrapped. Like the hyper-link, be free-associational. Defy logic and linearity. In fact, artist Joseph Nechvatal describes his ‘hyper-being model of existence’ as ‘evasive’ specifically given how ‘multiple choices of paths’ and ‘continually new branching possibilities’ are available (2009, p.29). Similarly, while there is a ‘homepage’ on my blog, Kaidie ‘dwells’ on a myriad of social media platforms. Over and above ‘Kaidie’s Dis-Location’, Kaidie is hard to locate. So, be perpetually on the run. Take up temporary residence anywhere, anytime, and as anybody, like I have as ‘Kaidie Absent’ in ‘Second Life’. In this way, no coherent profile about you may be compiled, and no secret dossier filed. Be so erratic in your movement that you do not generate any pattern consistent enough that can be formulated mathematically. You may even imitate Korean teenagers would migrate from internet café to café as they play online games, hence preventing them from being identified with any one IP address (Hartvig 2010). William Gibson analogises the online world as a ‘big neon city’ (cited in Dodge 2004). Ergo, the same way we may dodge businesses and bureaucrats in the real world, your plethora of allegiances, homes and appearances in our digital ‘city’ may render you as nothing more than a digital blur. Your networks of crisscrossing digital tracks may signal your refusal to play to the rules of the online Big Bosses and Big Brothers. Playing ‘Dis-Located-Digital Nomads’ who leave confusing tracks, you follow no one’s law but your own. (Figure 21)



Figure 19: 'Digital Nomad Hsieh'. This photograph used with kind permission from Hsieh. (Hsieh 2012b)

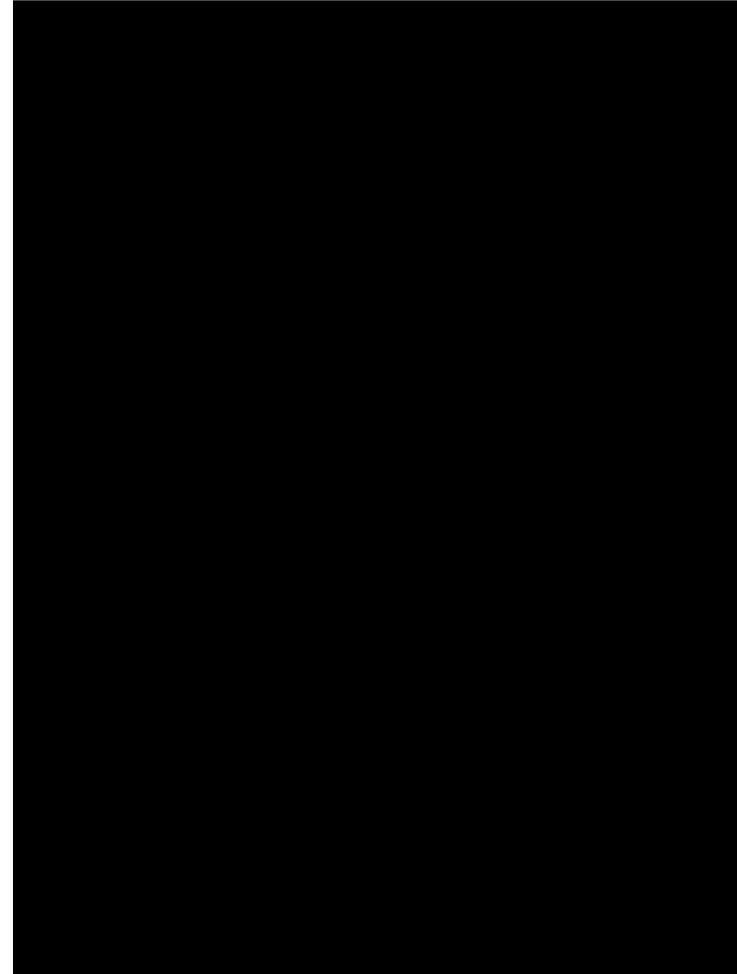


Figure 20: 'Can You See Me Now?' A still of the performance at the Banff Institute in Canada. (Blast Theory 2010)

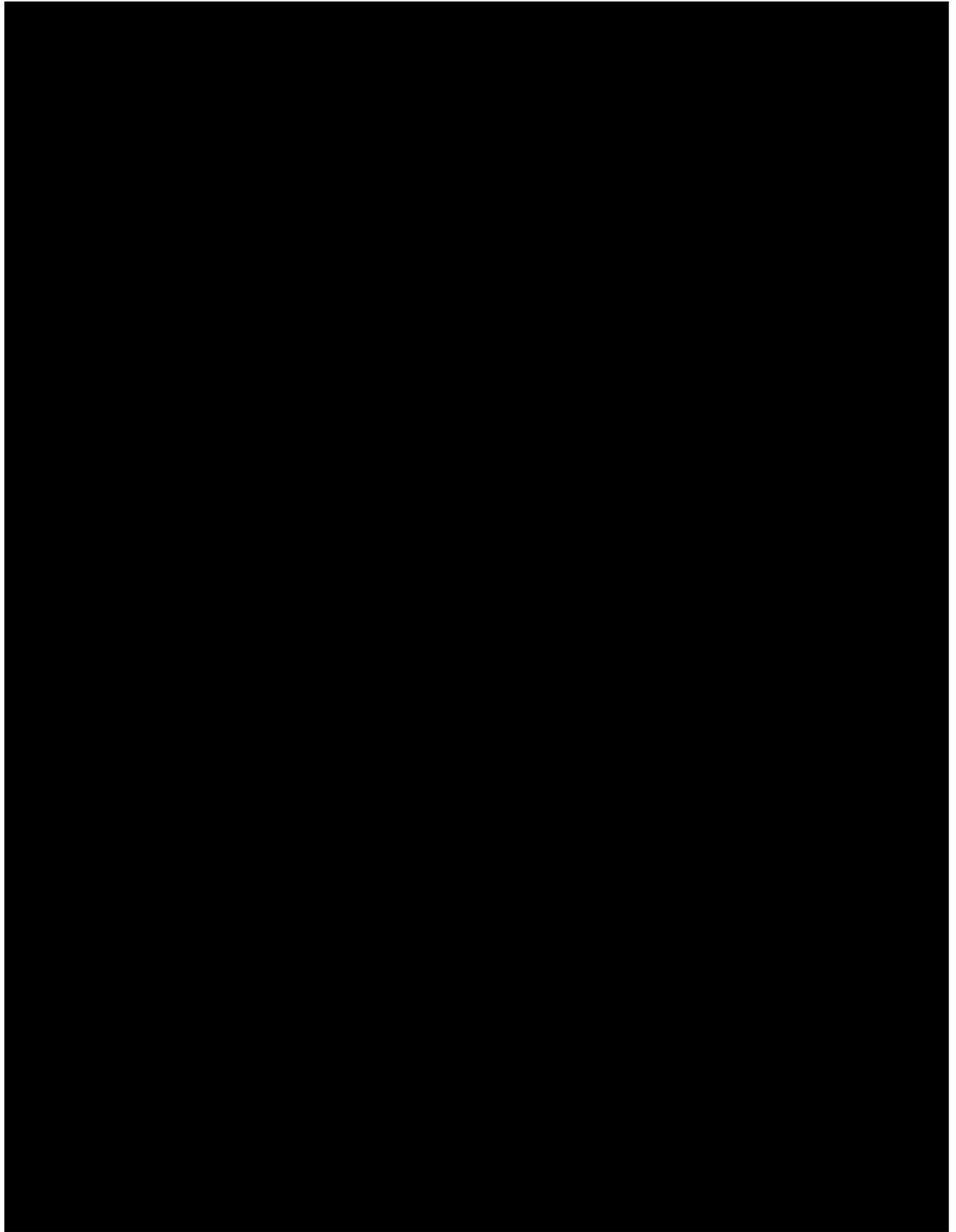


Figure 21: 'An online coverage about *Kaidie's Trans-Run*'. The writer grasps my artwork's essence of restlessness. Coincidentally, the article was published during 'Kaidie's Dis-Location'. (CNNgo 2010)

## D. Play An ‘Inane-And-Insane-Master’

In this thesis, I have associated *playfulness* with exuberance and absurdity and so on. For this fourth approach, ‘play’ additionally alludes to *performance* and *play-acting*. *Parodying* the ‘stupid’ and ‘insane’ ways of the digital world today, I propose *playing* – rather than actually being – stupid and insane may be a wise thing to do. While my feet were on the ground, my head was in the ‘cloud’, which refers to the cloud in the sky, cloud computing, and cloud cuckoo land. In spite of – or because of – snide remarks by bystanders around me, I frequently went running at six in the morning. Being hyper-active and defiant, I would do so even – or especially – during winter. Running without my spectacles, I often tripped and fell (as I did prior to my ‘dis-location’), and particularly in the darkness of dawn. Like a slapstick star of a pre-Technicolor comedy film, I lurched about in the technology-saturated world clumsily, while displaying my proud battery of blisters, broken toenails and bruises. My ridiculous actions brought laughter. I responded by laughing louder, for, onlookers do not grasp that my act was put on. Playing a ‘Stupid-And-Insane-Master’ was my display of pungency and resistance. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 43-44)

My folly is inspired by a long line-age of fools. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 45) Of these, those from the Daoist world fascinate me most because there, madness is not the exception, but the norm – and even ideal.

The inter-connected themes of playfulness, madness and folly dominate Daoist literature. Norman Girardot explains that early Daoist texts are proliferated with the antics of the ‘barbarian’, ‘buffoon’ or ‘clown’, and there are abundant references to the notions of ‘*yu*’ (stupid, fool), ‘*chi*’ (idiot), ‘*rusu*’ (unsophisticated), ‘*sanren*’ (loafer), ‘*yeren*’ (rustic, bumpkin, simpleton), ‘*kuang*’ (demented, mad) (2009, pp.211-212). Yet, this madness was cultivated. Lao Zi’s advice that we have been running with, for instance, talks about having the ‘mind of a fool’. In fact, playing a fool is a prerequisite to wisdom. This is consistent with the other Daoist values like the distrust of intellectualism, as well as being rebellious. The sages also play up their madness to generate a critical distance from the larger society. Contrasting himself with the ‘other people’, Lao Zi says that ‘I alone am foolish and crude’. According to Daoist scholar Max Kaltenmark,

‘The true Daoist must, in his perfect simplicity, give the appearance of a fool’.  
(cited in Schipper 1994, p.210)

David Kinsley, a scholar of world religions, further equates playing foolish with freedom:

‘Daoist images of madness are related to the mystical experience of the chaos condition and to the unique effortless freedom of *wuwei*, the sage’s playful freedom beyond human, or even humane, bounds. The Daoist as a “demented drifter” is aloof and indifferent to the normal order of the world. From the perspective of his belly knowledge, the Daoist is a wayfarer who knows that the way things appear to be – permanent, predictable, manageable – is not the way things really are in an ultimate vision of the real’ . (cited in Girardot 2009, p.210)

In the chaosmos of RUNNING AGAINST and RUNNING AWAY: Our deliriouslydelicious 6am loops in myopicdarkness at Regents Fark. Alternatively, hitting the hamster wheel.



Figure from Kaidie's world 43: 'Look, Some Idiot is Running in the Snow!' Photograph taken by Richard Wright. (Tan 2011c)

PARTLY IMAGINARY CHARACTERS THAT WE ARE, OUR BRUISES ARE FOR REAL: An ongoing catalogue of our Miss Haps (+insults to our injuries). Having come thus far, we will still do our best this Sunday. Fingers (and eyes, and toes) crossed. Watch this space. Don't move (for we will).



Figure from Kaidie's world 44: 'The Slapsticky Buffoonery of the Trans-Runner'. A catalogue of self-inflicted wounds circa December 2009 – June 2010. (Tan 2010g)

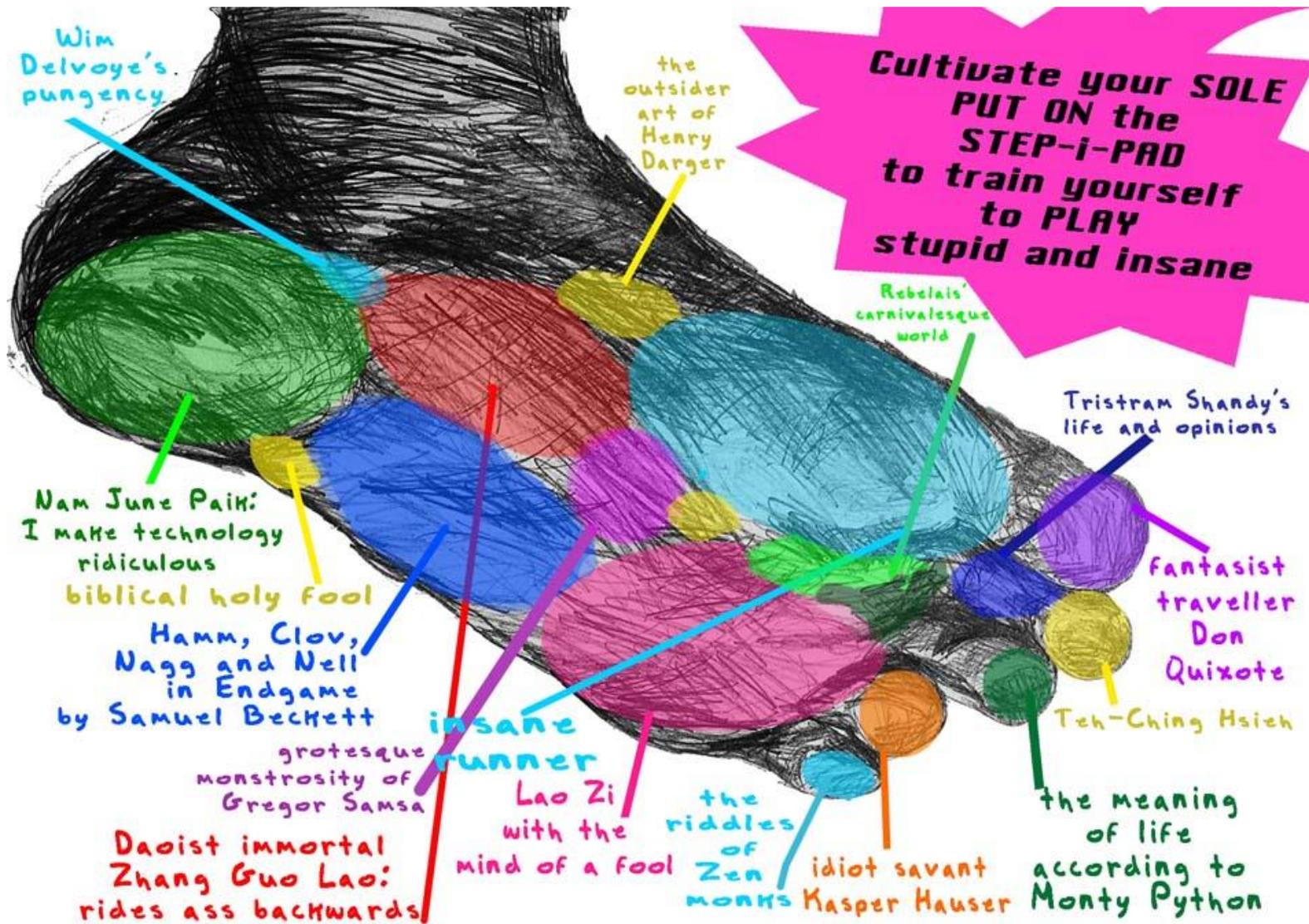


Figure from Kaidie's world 45: 'Can You Fill Into the Shoes of Our Line-Age of Fools?' (Tan 2013d)

Contrary to its appearance, reality is *transitory* and unpredictable. Although ‘other people’ try to order and control things, their acts are futile, given the world is ever-transforming. Yet, living – or stuck – here in this world as we are, we must distance ourselves from ‘other people’. By obeying our gut instincts, ignoring social and political laws, playing mad and staying restless, we are able to be free. It is by performing the fool that the Daoist represents ‘all that was opposed to the ordinary civilised order’ (Girardot 2009, p.212). In other words, it is only when ‘I alone’ put on a falsehood of stupidity (‘foolish’, ‘ignorant’, ‘crude’) and insanity (‘madness’, ‘demented’) that I may be free in a world that is also putting on a falsehood of permanence and order. That was why Lao Zi’s descendents wandered the world while inflicted with ‘sacred madness, stupidity, foolishness, or deformity’ (Schipper 1994, p.210). Alcohol was a method in this madness. The Daoist sages would wander the world ‘high’ from wine that these alchemy experts themselves brewed. These famous drunkards were frequently depicted in paintings wearing a smile on their faces. Appearing drunk – as well as stupid and insane – only aggravated the already-negative public image of the Daoists. So disdainful many were of the Daoists, that other people published a book called *Laughing at the Tao* (‘*Xiao Dao Lun*’) in the sixth century to mock their foolish ways. The anti-Daoists mocked, but the Daoists grasped that playing stupid and insane was the wisest – and most rational – response to the crazy logic of reality.

Runners, too, can appear un-wise. George Sheehan proclaims that he takes ‘play more seriously than anything else I do’ (1978, p.202). Like Lao Zi, the runner is anti-intellectual. For him, runners are:

‘[...] carnal creatures and incarnate God. The artist and the athlete, the saint and the poet know that. The educators alone remain ignorant’. (1978, p.97)

Sheehan says that ‘he may not want to do this’ but has no choice (1975, pp.44-45). His *pungent* action was his counter-argument to the world. Before the running revolution took off in the 1970’s, runners stood out even more. In his account of the history of running, historian Thor Gotaas describes how runners were not only ‘recipients of abuse, mockery and ridicule’, but had ‘the odd beer-can out of car windows’ hurled at them as they ran along roads (2009 p.242). Police patrol cars would even shadow runners and taunt: ‘So you’re just running, are you?’. Regardless of the fact that their pocket-less shorts would have been ‘hardly the standard dress for a criminal’, runners were even arrested ‘on the grounds that no one runs in the dark for the sake of his health’.

As for Teh-Ching Hsieh, he seems to be a Master *because of* his stupidity and insanity. A critic describes *Outdoor Piece* as ‘stupefying’ (Sontag 2009). Hsieh recalls receiving ‘a lot’ of ‘hurtful’ and ‘upsetting’ remarks from bystanders (cited in Sontag 2009). Some even say that ‘I should go to mental hospital’. Yet, like the Daoist masters, it seems that playing ‘mental’ was part of the *technē* of this master of body-art. We mock Hsieh perhaps because we have neither the physical or *mental* strength to leave our proverbial room and small worlds. Hsieh befits the label of a wise buffoon in more ways. Upon landing near Philadelphia, Hsieh paid \$150 for a long-distance taxi ride. Since there are cheaper modes of transportation, this looks like a crass move. Nonetheless, Hsieh was wiser than he would let on, as his destination of choice was not the city centre of Philadelphia, but Manhattan.

At where Hsieh himself calls the epicentre of contemporary art (2012a), the artist declared that he wanted to be a ‘serious artist’ (cited in Sontag 2009). In many ways, Hsieh resembles the demented Daoist, whom Kristofer Schipper typifies as a ‘carefree dropout, a gay character who prefers a life of wandering in the mountains to an official career’ (1994 pp.163-210). One such wanderer was Zhang Guo Lao. Like Lao Zi, Zhang<sup>26</sup> abandoned his career as an ‘eminent statesman’ and ‘advisor of emperors’, to roam. Zhang was a part-mythic figure, too. Frequently described as an ‘immortal’, Zhang’s magical repertoire included the making himself invisible, healing the sick and sustaining himself on alcohol instead of food. Yet, one enduring imagery of Zhang was how he wandered the world by riding his mule ‘facing the animal’s tail’. This seems a powerful shorthand of the figure of the contrarian worldview of the Daoist. Indeed, if even immortals held – or needed – such a quixotic position, mere mortals – living or being stuck here as we are – must all the more embrace a wry inanity as a playful way to relate to our world. Hsieh, too, opted to exist in the margin by dropping out of education and a profitable career in painting, to engage in the relatively less established practice of performance art. He went on to produce several stupefying feats. *Jump Piece* (1973) was literally self-destructive. In it, the 23-year-old jumped from a second-story window, and broke both his ankles. This, Hsieh’s first foray into body-art, displays his non-conformist worldview – similar to the way Zhang declares his by riding his mule the ‘wrong’ way around, and how Sheehan runs instead of walks like everyone else around him. Hsieh plays ‘dumb’ in more ways. His ‘status amongst the performance art world borders on the legendary’ (Caines 2009). Yet, Hsieh’s public persona purports a child-like naiveté. ‘I don’t know much about the outside and I am still the same’, he insists (cited in Bajo and Carey 2003). The artist is frequently described as ‘terse’ due to what has been deemed his ‘limited’ abilities in English (Sontag 2009). Nonetheless, this seems less a language issue than a tactical move. When we had dinner and drinks with other artists in Singapore, Hsieh was laconic – even as he spoke in his native language. At his lecture at the Hayward Gallery, Hsieh asserted, in fluent English, that ‘I’m primitive’ and that ‘my work is simple’ (2012a). Like Lao Zi, the artist is not just anti-word but anti-intellectual, too. When offered a political reading of his work, Hsieh declared, ‘People can say what they want’. When I emailed him in Chinese of my Daoism-influenced interpretation of his work, Hsieh replied – in English – ‘thanks for your comment, it’s better for me not saying anything’ (2013).

Learning from the buffoon-like Daoist drifters, Hsieh and runners, I recommend that you assume the sensibility of a wise fool to respond to the ‘stupid’ and ‘insane’ digital world. This act of resistance consists of putting on a falsehood of madness in a world that is putting on a semblance of order and logic. By playing the fool, you may ‘play harder’, and not reject the world, but achieve freedom. Instead of alcohol, your ‘high’ is fuelled by a runner’s high, as well as your own laughter. With a light-heartedness and light-footedness, we invite everyone to laugh at us, as we join in their laughter to laugh at the world, and to laugh the loudest at ourselves.

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<sup>26</sup> Written as it is in the Chinese order, the surname of Zhang Guo Lao is ‘Zhang’, instead of ‘Lao’.

## E. Play A ‘Game-Art-with-No-Point’

While running and simultaneously playing *Angry Birds* on my smartphone, I cooked up a game plan: what if we push the notion of the ‘game layer’ to the extreme, and render the world as a game? Instead of 6.5 hours, what if we play this game 24/7, as a full-time occupation and pre-occupation? Rather than an ordinary game, this is ‘game-art-with-no-point’. Exploring the game-like world as if playing a digital game may allow us to re-claim the notions of play and game, and feel a sense of ownership of the digital world. I proceeded to re-assemble *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* – which was already itself game-like in its structure and contents – into a proposal for a game called *Trans-Run, Kaidie, Trans-Run!*. I published the proposal on my blog and invited media companies to invest it. At the time of writing, they have not replied. If *you* are game, please get in touch. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 46)

My proposal is motivated by the interpretations of ‘game’. A ‘game’ is ‘a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition to each other’, or an ‘activity engaged in for diversion or amusement: play’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012a). Matching both definitions, running is a game. We can run against other people competitively, or for fun. ‘Fun’ is a keyword for runners. We have already encountered running experts Benyo and Henderson quipping how they find saying the word ‘*fartlek*’, which refers to a training technique, ‘so much fun’. Also, you must have enjoyed running as a kid. It was when our parents and teachers reprimanded ‘No running! Walk!’, that we left running behind. Grown-ups must have feared us running away from their reins. Running again as adults, we may re-capture that wayward freedom. Aged forty-five, George Sheehan re-learned how running was ‘fun’ and was about ‘play and enjoyment’:

‘Like most distance runners I’m still a child. And never more so than when I run’. (1978, p.211)

Running may be our ‘true journey’ ‘back to our childhood’. That is to say, the *process* of running may momentarily *transport* us back to re-live the joy of being a child. Sheehan further adds that like ‘most children, I think I control my life’. In other words, running may enable us to re-claim diversion, amusement, and a child-like freedom. It may also empower us to feel in control. (Figure 22)

Dear Apple or Google



Hey. I would like to sell you an idea for a game.

In this app which you access via your smart mobile device free-of-charge, you play 'Kaidie', a 'trans-runner', who is on a 'Quixotic Quest for a/the Meaning of Life'. You are given a time-frame of '1000 Days'. The way you go about doing this is via running, both physically 'Off-Line' or in 'Meatspace', as well as metaphorically, 'On-Line'. In other words, rather than distinct divisions of 'Real World' and 'Digital World', this is an augmented reality game.

Along the way, you have to run into as many new experiences as possible, including 'Hits and Misses'. You must also meet new runners both online and offline, who are in effect other players of the game. You can join forces and become their 'Co-Runner', 'Coach' or 'Pacer', or you can thwart their efforts by 'Running Them Down' or 'Running Against Them'. What I am saying is that you have to be an 'Active Agent'. 'Bystanders' or 'Spectators' are not allowed. When the going gets tough, you can press the 'Kill Zombies', 'Kill Time', 'Sisu', 'Long Range Vision', the 'Daoist Sage's Special Home-Brew Wine' or the 'Tarahumara's Special Home-Brew Beer' functions. However, there is no 'Home' to return to, and you are required to be 'On The Run'. After having completed more than 700 days of running, you may get lucky and be arbitrarily rewarded a bonus function, called 'Runner's High'. If you are unlucky, however, you may meet with 'Premature Death'. You may get 'Run Over by a Car'. That said, death, and life, are an elastic concept in the game. Of the 10,000 outcomes, apart from 'Death', there are 'Transition', 'Transmigration' and 'Transcendence', too.

You can even 'Go Back In Time' to see how the forerunner of the game, Kaidie's Trans-Run was born. That was in the year 2006 in Finland, the same country that gave birth to some of the main players of the Digital World, Nokia and Angry Birds itself. You can find out how it was while I was on an artist-in-residency programme on the island of Suomenlinna in my 'Proverbial Pascal's Room' that my imagination ran riot, and devised Kaidie's Trans-Run as a playful means for me to set foot in the internet world. That is to say, the creation of a playful, game-like artwork that eradicated my anxiety about the social media world online and to fully participate, explore and transform the new world, first hand, feet first.

For users of the Premium version of the game, you are able to 'mod', or modify, the game, and add your own variations to the game's basic narrative. After all, the game is already convoluted and ambiguous enough to start with. We can even collate all the variations of the game into a the wiki - which can itself be a game.

There is one last thing to point out. For both the free and premium versions, there is not one, but '10,000 Out-Comes'. Whichever way you go, the primary essence - or catch - of the game, is that there are No Points awarded, nor any prizes or rewards.

That's all. Do give us a call. Yours Truly, Kaidie

Figure from Kaidie's world 46: 'Trans-Run, Kaidie, Trans-Run!'. (Tan 2013a)

*Kaidie's Trans-Run* fits the description of a game, too. Running was the primary activity, and there were participants and rules. The audience gave Kaidie advice on where or how to find 'A/The Point of Life', contributed images and so on. Before 2009, I had shunned social media platforms. Using a fun, silly and game-like artwork as my interface made me feel better-equipped to face what I thought was a fun, silly and game-like world. My game bore a 'Do-It-With-Others' aspect, in which users 'connect, communicate and collaborate, creating controversies, structures and culture using both digital networks and shared physical environments' (Catlow & Garrett 2007). This is exemplified in 'Kaidie's Dis-Location', in which the audience became my co-producers and fellow-players. That the rules and parameters of my game were set by myself made me feel in control of my game, and, by extension, world. The artwork's duration alludes to that of the 2012 London Olympics official countdown, which was also 1000 days. *Kaidie's Trans-Run* ended on 9 September 2012, which coincided with the last day of the Games. Superimposing a 'game layer' into my world that additionally bore correlations with the real-life, large-scale Games made mine more entertaining. Furthermore, not satisfied with being only a spectator, I underwent interviews and training sessions to volunteer as a 'London Ambassador' at the Olympics. In my artwork, I hence re-configured myself as a 'Nondon Ambassador'. Instead of helping people, I gave out wrong directions. Living my world as a game made it so much fun for myself – and felt less insane. (Figures from Kaidie's world 47-49)

My proposal is inspired by artists' approach to games, too. Artist Corrado Morgana, also an 'incorrigible gamer' (Catlow 2010, p.86), talks about 'artgame', which he defines as:

'an independent or commercial game which expresses its "artness" through its play mechanics, narrative strategies or visual language'. (2010, p.9)

Based on a popular game *Unreal Tournament*, Morgana's *CarnageHug* (2007) features player pawns inexplicably 'killing' one other. Mathias Fuchs, a artgame pioneer, describes *CarnageHug* as 'ridiculous massacre without player-based gameplay objectives' (2010, pp.54-59). Morgana's artgame is an 'interactive experience that draws on game tropes', but *detourns* – 'uproot and subvert' – 'mainstream game expectations'. Strategies that these artistic games use include 'non-mainstream narratives' and 'experimental gameplay'.

Several of my approaches for this chapter, such as a parody of the aesthetics of advertisements of digital gadgets in my 'Figures from Kaidie's world', are forms of *detournement*. Morgana defines *detournement*, which originates from the Situationist International, as the 'overturning of established order' (2010, p.7). Indeed, artists have long flirted with game tropes. Curator Daphne Dragona traces the line-age to the 'playful spirit' of the Dadaist, Surrealist and Fluxus (2010, p.27). Unlike Scrabble or Catch, some of these artworks, such as Yoko Ono's 1966 *White Chess Set*, are 'impossible to play'. Such works are sometimes called 'game art' (or 'Game Art'). Morgana explains that unlike an 'artgame', this is not a game *per se*, but is:

'art that uses, abuses and misuses the materials and language of games, whether real world, electronic/digital or both. The imagery, the aesthetics, the systems, the software and the engines of games can be appropriated or the language of games approximated for creative commentary'. (2010, p.12)

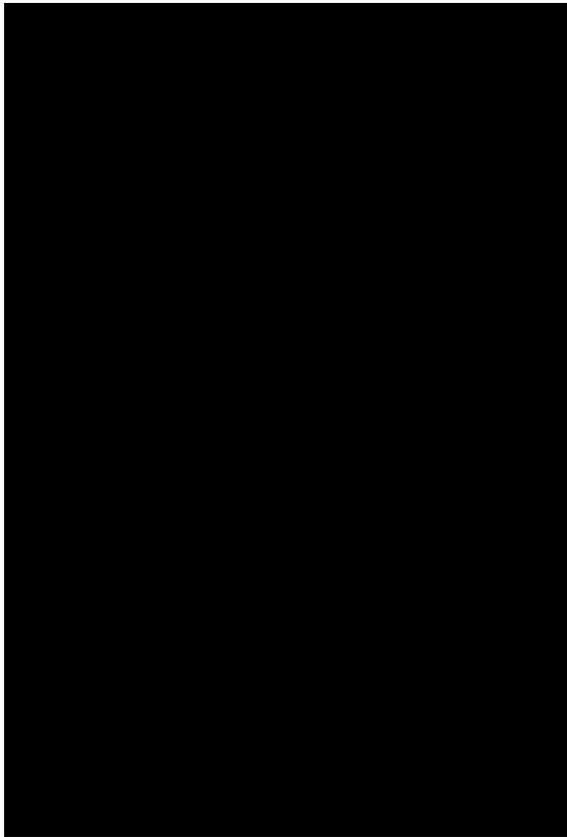


Figure 22: 'Running With A Child, and As A Child'. George Sheehan, aged 49. (2008)

**About Me:**  
 Hello world. We are Kaidie, trans-dimensional runners. We are looking for The/A Meaning of Life, by running for 1000 days within and to-and-fro the primary (including the city of Nondon), the virtual and digital dimensions of our cosmos. Would you give us a hand on our quixotic quest? Whether we succeed or not, we **MUST** die on the last day of the Nondon Olympics, so hurry! Be our running buddy, write in, share with our ideas/images/sounds/thoughts. Let us have the best run of our lives, every life.

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**Hometown:** Nondon

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**Country:** United Kingdom

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**Occupation:** Meaning of Life 3.0 (Re-)searcher

Figure from Kaidie's world 47: 'The Meaning Of Life (Re-)Searcher'. The rules of my 'game' are published on my social media profiles online, such as on this early Youtube profile. (Tan 2009c)



**Lucy Natarajan** 11 March at 11:20 Reply

Dear Kailives,

I spotted Kaidie in a different dimension a few weeks ago but have heard nothing since...any news? I see glimpses of her on posters at the Bartlett and I have also received a message about the creation of an Italian 3rd life community –

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8538761.stm> .... so can I ask:

- might she have moved to another sphere of 3rd life?
- might she have shrunk to a size where we can't see her due to lack of sustenance/consumption of a solution from the 'wrong bottle'?
- might she be hiding somewhere between life 2.0 and life 3.0 say in life 2.75 or making her way to a new dimensions 4.0?

Yours fascinatedly,  
Lucy



**BBC News – Naples' online 'ethical' city**

[news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

The people of Partenope City – named after Naples' historical name – only cross at pedestrian crossings, park their cars without blocking people in and never, ever, jump a red light.



Figure from Kaidie's world 49: 'Help the Nondon Ambassador'. (Tan 2012h)

Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* (1999) fits this description. In the film, 'Lola' runs and solves problems in three different ways<sup>27</sup>. How Lola transforms her own fate reminds me of the Daoist dictum, 'My destiny is within me, and not in Heaven!' (Schipper, 1994). With its energetic editing, non-linear plot, use of animation, vivid *mise-en-scene* and breathless techno-soundtrack, Lola's world resembles that of a video game. Even if the runner's high is not explicitly acknowledged, the vibrancy of the aesthetics, as well as the striking post-punk mien of the protagonist make the film exude an infectious euphoria. (Figures 23-24)

Kaidie aims to be less Lara Croft – the heroine of popular game *Tomb Raider* – than Lola. Like Lola, I wanted to have an insight about my crises – of looking for 'A/The Point Of Life', for instance – through running and to metaphorically run – govern – my world. Like Lola's world, I made mine colourful, as you can see from the 'Figures from Kaidie's world'. Yet, my game was virtually un-playable. 'A/The Point of Life' was never defined. Kaidie was also less heroine and more of an 'action figure'. By that I refer to how I mobilised my body to engage in 'actions', employed the 'figurative' in my approach and, most importantly, resembled an 'action figure' or cartoon, given the absurdity of my task and approach. Additionally, *Kaidie's Trans-Run*, like *CarnageHug*, features death. This fulfills the game expectation of violence. Yet, the audience were told that Kaidie 'MUST die' on a pre-determined date. By being upfront, I deprived them the pleasure of discovering this information by themselves. By *detourning* game tropes, my work acknowledges and critiques what Morgana describes as the 'cultural ubiquity' of digital games, and demonstrates that the game aesthetics can be 'approximated for creative commentary'. Thus, I playfully re-claimed amusement from the global phenomena of games like *Angry Birds* for my own world. Embodying Lola's 'ballsy-ness', I ran my own courses to seek my point of life, and determined my own fate – including my death.

As for a game art that is not just user-unfriendly but *pointless*, Bill Viola's 2007 *The Night Journey* fits the bill. The digital game is called 'one of the most bizarre' ever (cited in Viola 2007). According to curator Heather Corcoran, this is 'quite different from the fast-paced, shoot-'em-up world of a typical video game' (2010 p.20). Instead of jewels or a damsel-in-distress, Viola's protagonist seeks 'enlightenment'. The game features 'no winning and no scoring' either. Viola's game is thus 'pointless', with neither score nor 'end or object to be achieved' (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012c). That his game – like his video installations – is characterised by a meditative gait adds to its sense of meaninglessness for many players. The writer of *Is Google Making Us Stupid* Nicholas Carr talks about how the internet has moved us 'away from attentive, contemplative thought' (cited in Murphy 2011). This can be why some gamers mistake Viola's game as 'broken' (Corcoran 2010, p.20). They smash the buttons 'in hopes of eliciting some kind of quicker reaction before giving up entirely'. Even for those who 'understand the game's pace', they 'don't have the patience to see it through'. That is why Viola's game is tagged as 'experimental' (Sheets 2010), the same way his videos run parallel with the mainstream television and cinema.

<sup>27</sup> In the film, Lola's (weak) boyfriend, Manni, runs into trouble with the mafia and runs to her for help. They must come up with 100,000 German marks in 20 minutes. This, the premise of the film, is explained in the first twenty minutes. The subsequent 60 minutes of the film (with a crisp total running time of 80 minutes) is divided into 3 equal parts of 20 minutes each, as we breathlessly follow Lola running across the streets of Berlin, in almost real-time, as she works out three distinct solutions. In the first outcome, Lola dies; in the second, Manni dies. The third and final variation ends of a high as our heroine finds 100,000 marks and saves the day and her boyfriend.



Figure 23: 'Corrado Morgana's *CarnageHug*'. The artist's work is a pared-down version of an existing video game called *Unreal Tournament*. (Morgana 2008)

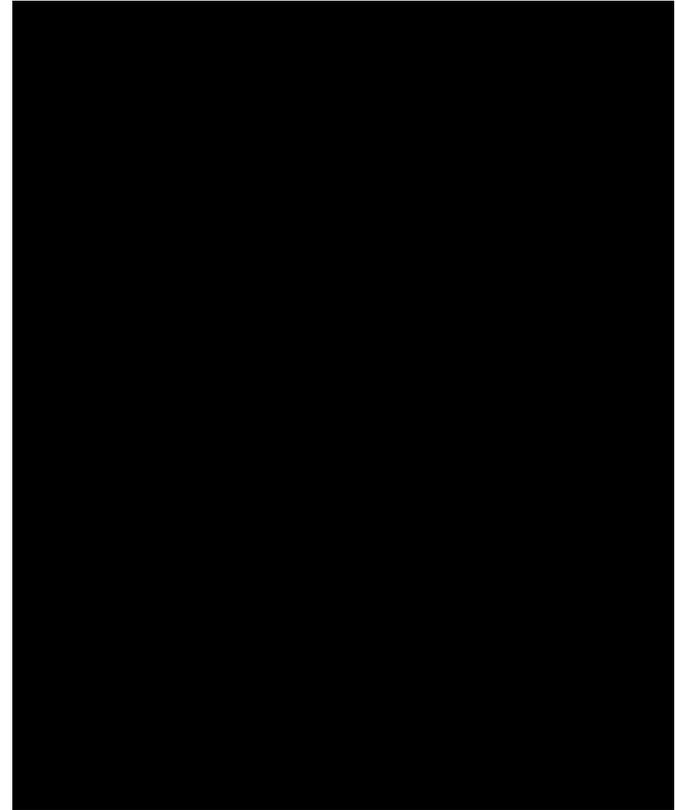


Figure 24: '*Run Lola Run*'. The DVD cover of the film. (Twyker 1999)

The long-distance running race, particularly the ultra-running race of more than 26 miles, resembles a point-less game. Top sprinters complete a 100-metre race in 10 seconds. Yet, ultra-runners take ‘24 even 48 hours’, if not weeks (McDougall 2009, p.85)<sup>28</sup>. The awards – if any – are rubbish. The winner gets the ‘same belt buckle as guy who comes in last’.

Nonetheless, maximum points go to Teh-Ching Hsieh. A critic analyses that the point of *Outdoor Piece* is ‘extreme deprivation’ (Smith 2009). So extra-ordinary this was – sleeping outdoors even as the East River froze, for instance – that another critic says that Hsieh demonstrated his ‘willingness to give his life to art’ (Sontag 2009). Yet, Hsieh would be too wise to sacrifice himself for art. Asked what his work is ‘about’, he declares that they concern ‘wasting time and freethinking’ (2012a).<sup>29</sup> Just as many make the killing of zombies and pigs their occupation and pre-occupation, killing time is Hsieh’s point. Indeed, do we all not kill time before our time runs out – except that we call it ‘living’? Hsieh’s example help us draw out another meaning of ‘game’, which is a ‘procedure or strategy for gaining an end’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012a).

My 1000-day *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* must have felt slow to people adapted to the rhythms of instantaneous internet alerts. Participants were also unclear about what they were ‘in direct opposition to’, or what they were in ‘competition’ against. An ultra-running race brings ‘no fame, no wealth, no medals’ (McDougall 2009, p.85). Likewise, my quest brought no end – except Kaidie’s death, which was guaranteed on ‘09.09.2012’. Perhaps, then, the ‘point’ of living life as a game is to reach our end-point, or end-game, of death.

Thus, living your digital world as if a ‘Game-Art-with-No-Point’ may be your procedure or strategy for gaining an ‘end’ in our game-like world. This ‘end’ or goal may be a re-claim of amusement, diversion and child-like, playful freedom, as well as to have a sense of control over our digital world, as we have learnt from Sheehan and Morgana. Lola and Hsieh in turn shows us that this ‘end’ may be how you can use your actions to metaphorically transform your fate, life and death.

## TRANSITION

I have outlined with 5 ways that you may adopt and/or adapt as you navigate your way around the digital world with your mobile devices.

We shall now move on into the world of thinking, and discover how trans-running may empower us to feel happy and free when we deal with discourses and thinking in general.

<sup>28</sup> Dr Mike Stroud, for instance, ran 7 marathons in 7 days (in 7 continents, with adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes).

<sup>29</sup> In an earlier *One Year Piece* (1980 – 1981), as if an over-eager proof that being a performance artist is a valid and proper occupation, Hsieh donned a uniform and punched a card every hour for one year, hence effectively depriving himself of any deep sleep. When asked by the audience in Singapore if he felt tired doing it, Hsieh simply deadpanned, ‘It is my job’.

## **IV. TRANSFORM YOUR WORLD OF THINKING**

## INTRODUCTION

I propose trans-running as a mode of thinking for us to explore what I shall term the ‘world of thinking’. Synthesising the physical and poetic processes of running, trans-running aims to be an exuberant and correlative approach, and which can have the potential to make us feel open and free in our thinking.

My argument is inspired by my first-hand experience of the runner’s high, which happened for four consecutive days, from 22 to 25 December 2011. The runner’s high refers to altered emotional and cognitive processes from running (Dietrich & McDaniel 2004). It is a rare occurrence for runners. Even if it occurs, it is subjective and varies from runner to runner. Hence, before I outline the structure of this chapter, I will transcribe my personal experience through text and images in the next few pages.

On each occasion, after I had run for about forty minutes, I felt an intense exhilaration and rush of thoughts. This was not a ‘light bulb moment’ or a ‘eureka’ instant, but a *process*. My thoughts did not queue up politely to greet me. Rather, they were like rounds of bullets fired everywhere in my brain, with each bullet representing a different thought. In other words, they were literally ‘bullet points’. What was interesting was that *I* was my own perpetrator – if I did not run, the bullets would not be ‘fired’; the more I ran, the more they were ‘shot’. My feet were the furious engines running and triggering the explosion of bullet points; every step I took activated a thought and made it burst into yet more thoughts. Hence, my thinking was *practice-related* as it had a direct correlation with my action; the *physical* was profoundly intertwined with my *processing* of thoughts. I felt as if I was carrying out the concepts of ‘reflection in action’ and ‘thinking on my feet’ as expounded by American philosopher Donald Schön (chapter I). My footsteps felt light and effortless. This was mirrored inside my mind. I pictured myself ‘running’ in a world of ideas in an effortless, exploratory and fearless manner. Along the way, I felt as if I was trespassing boundaries and crossing restricted zones, too. If I was breaking rules or laws, I felt that I had the authority to, like a child on an adventure of discovery. I could freely pick-and-mix and ‘collage’ together bullet points that did not normally ‘belong’ together – and these new bullet points turned out to reveal surprising solutions. It was as if by ‘running about’ in this world of ideas, I was able to shift my perspective; with my new perspective, I could ‘run into’ new insights and new pathways that I would not have had without running. Unusually, although my heart was racing, I felt calm; my ‘running engine’ seemed to have its own life, yet at the same time I felt in full control steering it; my thoughts seemed to be divergent, expansive and contradictory, yet unified by a strange logic; I felt my world expanding and multiplying, yet together and harmonious; I felt immersed. At the same time, I also felt external to the situation, as if I could ‘step out’ and watch myself. In the midst of this strange self-awareness about my own altered state, I succeeded in resolving a deadlock I was facing at that time, which concerned my thesis. I had been feeling trapped by the confines of the page. I felt burdened by having to sustain long arguments according to the rules of linearity, causality, logic and reason, and deplored the artifice of a happy-ever-after, grand conclusion that ties up loose ends. I felt oppressed having to ‘speak for’ a particular thinker, or a single school of thought, or from a certain discipline or culture. I wanted to break away from dominant or fashionable discourses of the art world, which I

found tired and distant. During my runner's high, I had an epiphany: *What if I order my discourses in my thesis in the same correlative, free-wheeling way that I 'run about' in this world of ideas? Wouldn't I be able to freely 'run into' and 'run with' and combine different ideas, and open out yet new possibilities? Will I hence be able to release myself from the shackles of linearity, continuity, fashion, convention, hegemony, logic, discipline and culture – and even from my own habit and assumptions?* This rush of creative insights continued long after I ended my run. The level of 'high' I felt on these four days lasted several more hours than usual. This is reflected in my documentations in the form of GPS readings and timings. The descriptors I used including 'superexuberant' and 'OVERDRIVE'. My mobilisation of capital letters further conveyed the intensity of my emotions and thoughts. (Figures from Kaidie's world 50-51) I was so inspired that I generated artistic outputs immediately after my runs. Still wearing my sweat-soaked running clothes, I produced a large number of mappings. (Figure from Kaidie's world 52) I did so with my hand and body still shaking, as I had not carried out my warming-down exercise. I was buzzing, as if in a manic episode. Although I had stopped running physically, my mind was still 'running', generating ideas and making exciting connections. The mappings look sketchy as they were generated speedily; I had to 'run after' my mental mappings and externalise them onto paper. Days after, I went on to create more mappings that look more 'finished', but which attempt to re-capture the sense of freedom and happiness I had experienced. (Figure from Kaidie's world 53; Correlations 12)

My own runner's high proved constructive and positive for my own thinking and art-making. Hence, my proposal of trans-running as a mode of thinking aims to re-enact the euphoric freedom of the runner's high. They are my attempts to formalise my extraordinary one-off, subjective episode into a loose set of approaches. I hope you may apply them to your own thinking, or when you read works by philosophers, or engage in a discourse. Even, or especially if you cannot physically run, you may vicariously experience the runner's high. When you deal with difficult ideas and theories and feel paralysed, imagine yourself running effortlessly in an altered state. Like a child, you do not care about rules. Instead, you are freely exploring ideas, and rearranging bullet points. Along the way, you may even run into creative insights and break out of your deadlock, and become an autonomous thinker – albeit without having to break a sweat.

I have come up with 6 imaginative recommendations, which I sum up at the end of the chapter. The recommendations come from disparate sources, including what scientists and runners say about the runner's high. That is to say, trans-running here is itself a mapping of a range of ideas from different disciplines and cultures. Furthermore, the way I argue my points is not causal, but by way of poetic association and clusters of concepts. In other words, my writing approach in this chapter is itself a self-reflexive performance of trans-running as a mode of thinking. In fact, I consider the entire thesis a 'product' of such an approach. I assemble trans-running by correlating a range of discourses, and order my arguments in an exuberant and poetic manner. In addition, you may regard the diagrams that you can see throughout my thesis as pictorial *translations* of my approach. (Correlations 13) As you read about the concept of the trans-running as a mode of thinking, and watch it 'live' in action in this chapter and thesis, you may be encouraged to run with me. My intention is that a sense of exuberant freedom can *transpire* through the pages, too.

	Activity Name	Activity Typ	Start ▾	Time	Distance	Avg Speed(Avg Pa
★	felt BAD but was FAST?	Running	Tue, 2012 Jan 3 6:53	55:28	9.65	5:45
★	with R	Uncateg...	Thu, 2011 Dec 29 7:03	4:36:45	32.32	7.0
★	canal	Running	Wed, 2011 Dec 28 8:25	43:42	7.37	5:56
★	RUBBISH run on square	Running	Tue, 2011 Dec 27 7:28	31:39	5.07	6:14
★	YUK blisitery nakedshoes Victoria Fark	Running	Mon, 2011 Dec 26 8:41	1:28:56	14.48	6:09
★	again INTENSE OVERDRIVE ideas TOO MUCH	Running	Sun, 2011 Dec 25 8:52	54:53	9.44	5:49
★	INTENSE OVERDRIVE supereuberant MADMAPPING	Running	Sat, 2011 Dec 24 6:10	55:59	9.60	5:50
★	INTENSE OVERDRIVE ideas	Running	Fri, 2011 Dec 23 6:15	56:04	9.38	5:59
★	nakedshoes SUPER EASY INTENSE BRAIN OVERDRIVE	Running	Thu, 2011 Dec 22 7:13	52:52	9.39	5:38
★	YUK felt slow heavy jacket RAIN	Running	Wed, 2011 Dec 21 6:20	31:37	5.05	6:16
★	felt fast but wasnt	Running	Tue, 2011 Dec 20 6:06	56:18	9.39	6:00
★	OK	Running	Mon, 2011 Dec 19 7:08	55:43	9.52	5:51
★	FAST nice break cycle	Running	Sun, 2011 Dec 18 7:26	53:50	9.47	5:41
★	canal OK	Running	Sat, 2011 Dec 17 7:37	37:06	6.23	5:57

Figure from Kaidie's world 50: 'The Trans-Runner's High'. The log is a screen-capture of a part of my record of my daily movements in the real world, including my runs, in December 2011. I experienced the runner's high on the days highlighted in the box. The distance is recorded in kilometres, and the log is stored in the Garmin website for users of Garmin, which was a GPS device I wore. (Tan 2012b)

The screenshot shows a detailed view of a running activity on the Garmin website. The title is "nakedshoes SUPER EASY INTENSE BRAIN OVERDRIVE". The activity was recorded on Thursday, December 22, 2011, at 7:13 AM in Western European Time by user "urbantick". The activity type is "Running" and the event type is "Training". The course is marked as "--". There are 0 likes and 0 comments.

Navigation options include "Previous" and "Next". Action buttons include "Share", "Export", "Compare", "Send to Device", "Save as Course", "Print", "Details", "Splits", and "Player".

The "Summary" section displays the following statistics:

- Distance: 9.39 km
- Time: 52:52
- Avg Pace: 5:38 min/km
- Elevation Gain: 68 m
- Calories: 507 C

The "Details" section includes a "Timing" sub-section with the following data:

- Time: 52:52
- Moving Time: 52:07
- Elapsed Time: 52:52
- Avg Pace: 5:38 min/km
- Avg Moving Pace: 5:33 min/km
- Best Pace: :06 min/km

The "Map" section shows a map of London with a red line indicating the running route. The route starts near Regent's Park and ends near Euston. Landmarks like Regent's Park, Inner Circle, and Outer Circle are visible. The map includes navigation controls like zoom in (+), zoom out (-), and map style selection (Bing, Map, etc.).

Figure from Kaidie's world 51: 'SUPER EASY INTENSE BRAIN OVERDRIVE'. This is a screen-capture of the details (including GPS tracks and timing) of one of the runs in which I experienced runner's high. (Tan 2012b)



Figure from Kaidie's world 52: 'Visualising My Mappings I Generated During My Trans-Runner's High'. These are a selection of the diagrams I created after my four days of runner's high.



Figure from Kaidie's world 53: 'Attacked By A Flood Of Ideas!'



Correlations 12: 'Trans-Running the World of Thinking'.



Correlations 13: 'A "Running Approach" to the Discourses'. The diagram above refers to my 'running approach' to discourses for this chapter. The diagram below, which we have already encountered in the beginning of the thesis, refers to my running approach to discourses for the thesis in general (Correlations 6, p.38).

## PICTURE YOURSELF AS:

### A. ... A Runner On A Runner's High

Based on reports by scientists and other runners, including conversations I held with artists about their runner's high, I recommend that when you are trying to work through ideas, imagine that you are a runner on a runner's high. This may make your experience more fun, and even free you from how you usually think, and how society thinks.

By now, we are familiar with the thesis of scientists Dennis Bramble and Daniel Lieberman about how our body is tailor-made for running (chapter I). Running with biologist Bernd Heinrich, we also know that it is our 'long range vision' or ability to dream that enables us to run after the antelopes in the first place. There is another unique feature that makes us natural-born runners. Mike Stroud, a runner and physician specialising in humans' response mechanism in extreme conditions, explains:

'If prolonged exercise was required for survival, and such exercise was painful, the body might well develop a pain reduction system triggered by exertion'. (2004, p.54)

This naturally-occurring painkiller enabled our ancestors to ignore injuries and run up to twenty miles or 6.5 hours after the prey. It also enables us to complete marathons and ultramarathons, and is that which keeps runners, in the words of runner-authors Joe Henderson and Rich Benyo, 'coming back for more' (2001, p.311). Nonetheless, in what is described as an 'emerging' field, and given the subjectivity of the runner's high, scientists admit that they still face technical difficulties in identifying and measuring its exact effects (Dietrich & McDaniel 2004). A survey of the findings by scientists and runners reveal overlaps as well as contradictions. In the 1970's, researchers identified this chemical as endorphin, meaning morphine which occurs endogenously, or from within. (Hughes et al. 1975). Biochemists – and runners – Eric Newsholme and Anthony Leech explain that, just like morphine, which they call 'one of the best painkilling drugs', endorphins are mini-proteins activated by running which may eliminate or dull pain (1983, p.143). However, since the 1990's, scientists have identified the chemical produced as endocannabinoid or endogenous cannabinoid anandamid. According to neuroscientist Arne Dietrich and psychologist William F. McDaniel, anandamide resembles the main ingredient of cannabis and produces sensations of euphoria, pain suppression, relaxation and reduced anxiety, as well as alters attention and enhances sensory perception and introspection (2004). In fact, runner-author Amby Burfoot points out that the word 'anandamide' comes from the Sanskrit for 'bliss' (2004). Rather than other endurance sports, Dietrich and McDaniel state that it is running that maximises endocannabinoid release. This is because it is weight-bearing, and our feet must absorb the 'pounding of the pavement'. That it requires 'low level skills' also lends itself to become automatic behaviour for the practitioner. Yet, as scientists quarrel over whether the pain reduction system from running is akin to morphine or cannabis, it is business as usual for many runners with their 'LSD'. Rather than the hallucinogenic lysergic acid diethylamide, 'LSD' refers to training in long slow distance. As Henderson and Benyo assure, although 'you can get high from it, it has nothing to do with illegal

drugs' (2011, p. 196). Studies conducted at the International Society of Sport and Psychology in America report that while twenty to thirty minutes of exercise may reduce stress, sixty minutes of continuous exercise may improve mental well-being, alertness, and clarity in thinking (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.693).

My inexperience in illegal substances makes it tricky for me to compare my episode of runner's high with the effects of exogenous drugs. It is also beyond the scope and interest of this Fine Art thesis to supply a close analysis of the chemical effects of running, or if the runner's high strikes at exactly the fortieth or sixtieth minute after running. Moreover, I am not equipped to compare the technical differences between endorphin and endocannabinoids, as well as other hormones and neurotransmitters like adrenaline and dopamine. In fact, there is no way for me to know if I did experience the runner's high on the four fateful days, or only one of the days – if at all. If its 'arrival' was unplanned, it also 'stopped' just as suddenly, on the 'fifth' day. Scientists may also question the integrity of my sample size (one) and approach. The elusiveness of the runner's high is also evidenced in how several runs I had prior to the four days were recorded as 'bad' – and not pleasurable – as you may see from my records. There are even scientists and runners who question the existence of the runner's high. Burfoot, the winner of the 1968 Boston Marathon, reports to have experienced it once – or exactly '0.00185%' – in his entire lifetime of running (2004). For others, the criteria differ. In an article entitled 'The Runner's "High" Is a Reality To Some', runner-cardiologist George Sheehan refutes the sceptics, but reports that his 'high' occurs when he is running 'at two minutes over my race pace', rather than slowly (1982). Then, the phenomena of 'hitting the wall' – the 'infamous stopping or slowing point' for the runner who has run out of stored fuel in the muscles – has been reported to affect runners (Benyo & Henderson 2001, p.367). As I have never encountered this after three years of running daily and two full marathons, I belong to the camp that considers the hitting of the wall – and not the runner's high – a myth.

Still, I argue that these inconsistencies prove exactly why the runner's high – as well as running in general – remain an exciting area of inquiry for runners, neuroscientists, and artists alike. To the question of whether running has a positive effect on our sense of well-being, Glover and Shepherd state that runners voice a resounding 'Yes!' and that scientific studies are merely confirming 'what runners were saying all along' (1996, pp.670–696). They cite one that shows that 69% of runners have experienced 'a feeling of euphoria with lifting of spirits, increased creativity and insight and a sense of well-being', while in another, 56% claim to have experienced a 'trance' or 'altered state of consciousness' during running. In another study, 92% of runners report 'improved creativity' and hence, better problem-solving abilities from running. The writers conclude:

'Your thoughts are thrown together randomly and new ideas can emerge. You actually begin to process information differently, and it frees you up. By the time you finish your run, the answers seem to fall right into place'. (1996, p.696)

William Morgan, an ex-president of the American Psychological Association's Division of Exercise and Sports Psychology even state:

‘I would like to suggest that running should be viewed as a wonder drug, analogous to penicillin, morphine and the tricyclics. [...] The inescapable conclusion is that physical activity is positively associated with good mental health, especially positive mood, general well-being, and less anxiety and depression’. (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.693)

In my thesis, I run with the popular term ‘runner’s high’, but slightly modify it. My ‘runner’s high’ refers to the heightened feeling of euphoria and mental activity from running, or what George Sheehan refers to as ‘the opening of the creative side of your brain’ (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.692). My term also includes the positive mind- and mood-altering processes as a result of running in general.

Real-life anecdotes by runners bring the theorisation about the runner’s high to life, and reveal that it is nourishing for the imagination. In fact, Burfoot points out that it was during an episode of runner’s high that neuroscientist Arne Dietrich disentangled his creative deadlock – with regards to the runner’s high itself (2004). Burfoot urges us to free ourselves from the desk and Pascal’s proverbial room to run:

‘Running provides a great time and space for thinking. Non-runners believe the activity is a strenuous physical one, a strain on the heart and legs. But we runners know different. Once we’re in shape, the heart and legs excuse themselves, and we become almost pure mind as we run. Away from our desks, monitors, keyboards, phones and meetings, we run on autopilot, and there’s nothing else to do but... think’. (2007, p.ix)

Daniel Shiffman, programmer and creator of the software Processing, sings the same tune:

‘You must find time to let your mind wander, think about logic, and brainstorm ideas away from the chair, the desk and the computer. Personally, I do all my best programming while jogging’. (2008, p.xii).

That running is not a technically-complex activity frees us from having to think about it. This allow us to run on ‘autopilot’, which liberates our mind to wander about anything else. That is why Michael Austin, a runner who is also a professor of philosophy, calls running a ‘reflective endeavour’, which is the premise of the book he edited, entitled *Running and Philosophy* (2007). The book consists of essays by philosophers who run, and several reflect about how running stimulates their thinking. Running with these philosophers is Sheehan, who states:

‘My mind becomes a cascade of thought. The sights and sounds, the touches and tastes, the pains and pleasures of my entire life become available to me’. (1982)

Similarly, British artist Jo Volley tells me how she finds running so stimulating that she correlates it with her creative productivity:

‘[...] I very often go into the studio after and I can breath and concentrate[.]  
Feel that anything is possible. I feel happy and free’. (2012)<sup>30</sup>

My informal research conducted on the social media platform Facebook with artists who run corroborate the positive correlation between running and creativity – and, related to that, the production of a sense of happiness and freedom. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 54-55) Indeed, Mike Stroud points out that the runner’s high can ‘grant pleasure and relaxation combined with a surprising clarity of thought’ (2004, p.52). That could be why Alan Turing would frequently ‘take off for a run’ to ‘work off his feelings’ whenever he faced problems at work (Hodges 1983, pp.282–345). Burfoot even points out that it was in the middle of such a run that Turing conceptualised the computer (2007). Some may find it paradoxical that the so-called ‘Father of the Computer’ (BBC News 1999) preferred to ‘use his own steam’ (Hodges 1983, p.395). Nonetheless, Turing’s example proves that running can help us navigate our way around intellectual problems and discourses. Given how running causes chemical transformations in the brain that can subsequently affect thinking, Turing’s case also epitomises how the mind and body can work in a powerful unison – via running.

Studies conducted at the Laboratory of Neuroscience at the National Institute on Aging in Baltimore confirm that changes in muscles prompted by running can improve the brain’s capacity to think, remember and learn (Hillman et al. 2008). Such research is, in health writer Gretchen Reynolds’ words, ‘upending the cliché of muscleheads’ (2012). In an article entitled ‘How Exercise can Strengthen the Brain’, Reynolds describes how scientists in California who scanned the brains of mice subject to ‘exercise’ discovered that metabolic activity in many parts of their brain surges during workouts (2011). In another article, Reynolds reports the findings of a Taiwanese physiology team which reveal that, rather than walking, weightlifting or stretching, it is, again, running that encourages ‘neuroplasticity changes in different brain regions’ (2009). In chapter III, we saw how the internet has made us ‘stupid’ (Carr 2008). These findings strengthen my argument that running can re-wire us – not just metaphorically but physically, too – to make us smart.

American novelist Joyce Carol Oates finds running so stimulating that she recommends it as the antidote to the writer’s block (1999). In an essay appropriately-entitled ‘Invigorate Literary Mind, Start Moving Literary Feet’, she says:

‘Running! If there’s any activity happier, more exhilarating, more nourishing to the imagination, I can’t think of what it might be’. (1999)

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<sup>30</sup> For a complete transcription of the conversation, please refer to the Appendix IB.



Figure from Kaidie's world 54: 'Running is Creative'. According to Singapore-based author Ben Slater. (Tan 2011e)

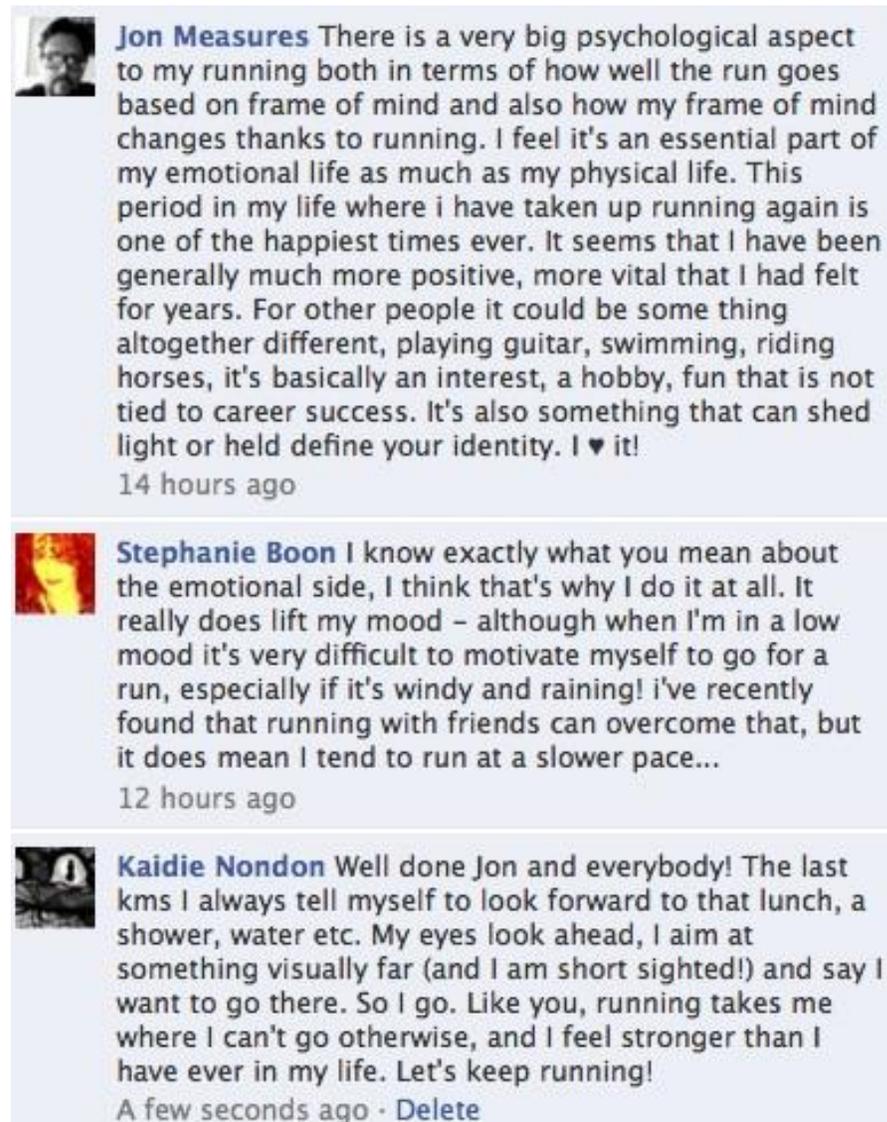


Figure from Kaidie's world 55: 'Running is Happiness'. According to British artist Stephanie Boon and Californian artist Jon Measures. (Tan 2011e)

Novelist Haruki Murakami similarly swears by running. In the process of writing *Kafka On The Shore*, he ran everyday (Lee 2004). In fact, Murakami participates in at least one marathon race annually, and stresses the importance of running as a regime for the writer (2008). Running along the same lines, Sheehan claims that writing and thinking cannot occur without running. He even urges us to ‘trust no thought arrived at sitting down’, as the ‘seated spectator is not a thinker; he is a knower’ (1978, p.60). Agreeing with Sheehan, runner-philosopher Ross C. Reed states:

‘[...] [R]unning and philosophising are inextricably intertwined. [...] running without philosophising would be *unthinkable*. [...] Knowledge [...] is static, frozen in time, but thinking is a process, a flux, an activity [...]’ (2007, pp.127-130)

These words chime with that of Lao Zi and Pascal that we encountered at the beginning of the thesis, which associate stillness with staleness, movement with life. In other words, it is when we run that thinking can *come to life*.

It even appears that the nature of the thinking-process that we experience during runner’s high departs from that when we are not moving, or not running. My own runner’s high-induced thinking-process felt ‘explosive’. I made connections and drew solutions that I had previously been blind to. I also felt as if my mind itself was ‘running’. Other runners mobilise a range of metaphors to describe this altered-state. Reed calls his an ‘endorphin-fuelled stream of consciousness’ (2007, p.128), and adds that:

‘As she oxygenates every cell in her body, the runner opens herself to a world of endless imaginative possibilities, possibilities of her own, possibilities imagined through the simple process of running’. (2007, p.134).

The notion of an ever-transforming and divergent thinking-process recur in Dutch novelist Abdelkader Benali’s testament<sup>31</sup>. The runner (born 1975), who frequently emerges in the top thirty position in marathon races, tells me that while running,

‘[...] you disentangle yourself from logical thinking, from efficiency thinking, from thinking for a purpose[;] in running ideas are wild, there is an ongoing guerrilla of ideas going on in the mind and this unleashes quite extraordinary associations [...] [It is] thinking while in motion, which for me is thinking in its most purest form’. (2012)

Abdelkader’s descriptors of a ‘guerrilla of ideas’ that are ‘wild’ with ‘extraordinary associations’ run shoulder-to-shoulder with George Sheehan’s account of his runner’s high:

‘At times these thoughts center around a common theme, the one I am then in the process of writing. Other times, there is a kaleidoscope of new and exciting arrangements of past experiences’. (1982)

And again:

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<sup>31</sup> For a complete transcription of the conversation, please refer to the Appendix IB.

‘My mind works through association rather than logic or reason. When I run those miles over the roads there is all the while a stream of consciousness, a torrent of ideas, coursing through my brain. One idea after another goes hurtling past like so much white water. Giving me here and there a new insight, a new intuition, a new understanding. Each in turn soon replaced by yet another thought, still another idea’. (1978, p.22)

Sheehan’s ever-expansive overdrive (‘a stream of consciousness’, ‘a torrent of ideas’, ‘a kaleidoscope’) resembles my thinking-process during my own experience of runner’s high (‘superexuberant madmapping’ which felt almost ‘too much’ to bear). Just as I rushed home to *transcribe*, *translate* and *transform* the ‘explosion’ of ‘bullet points’ into mappings, Sheehan, too, would ‘sometimes return from a run with an entire column which arose de novo’ (1982). The ideas can be, alas, all too *transient*. Once forgotten, they are irretrievable, because they are ad hoc and not ordered according to normal rules of logic:

‘[...] the thought, however clear, would soon be forgotten. And since there is no logical progression, no amount of reasoning would bring it back’. (1978, p.22)

The runner’s high-induced thinking-process not only shifts the runner to a way of thinking that differs from their usual way of thinking. It may also rip them from how society-at-large thinks. In the place of rationality, convention and the consensual hallucination of the world-at-large, is an other order of understanding, reasoning and thought. As a digression from society’s norm, this can be anarchic. As Abdelkader states, while running,

‘[...] the mind is stimulated to think against the thinking of society or time or group or ideology [...]. (2012)

The leitmotifs of running as *transformative* and *transgressive* are best illustrated in the efforts of Thaddeus Kostrubala. The psychiatrist went off the beaten track by removing his patients from the couch to run with them instead. In his 1976 book *The Joy Of Running*, the American states that the runner can experience ‘a part of his unconscious’ from ‘long, slow aerobic running’ (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.670). For Kostrubala, the notions of running as meditation – reflection, thinking, being creative – as well as *medication* – for healing and improvement – run strong. Running achieves

‘an altered state of consciousness that can be called a kind of Western meditation. It’s a distinct euphoria with feelings of excitement and enthusiasm... I call the period of 40 to 60 minutes the “altered state of consciousness” that must be similar to the catalytic experience of drug or religion that allows us to alter our lives from within. It’s an opening to the unconscious ... The thought process is altered. Problems become irrelevant or annoying, and are let go. And, like some inner consultation, a random jumble of ideas flashes through the field of consciousness’. (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.670)

For runner-geographer Alan Latham, Kostrubala's work implies an understanding of our genetic heritage as 'LSD' runners in endurance hunting (2008)<sup>32</sup>. Furthermore, Latham contextualises Kostrubala's efforts and the popularity of the 'LSD' with the rise of the counterculture movement in the 1970's, which sought new ways of thinking and, related to that, the turn to non-Western practices. That running can bring about drug-like effects, and is the 'least self-conscious and most natural of all movements' explain why running began to gain popularity then, argues Latham. With running, these non-mainstream wisdoms, as well as 'the wisdom of the body' can be made 'accessible to virtually everyone, regardless of age or athletic ability'. Latham's point is evidenced in the titles of books on running published in the 1970's, such as *Beyond Jogging: the Inner Spaces of Running* and *The Psychic Power of Running: How the Body can Illuminate the Mysteries of the Mind*.

Indeed, looking beyond the 'West', we can find inspiration in the running ritual of the Tarahumara Indians. These 'Super Athletes' are commonly recognised as the 'best long-distance runners in the world' (Noren 2010). They dwell in the remote Sierra Madre mountain range in Northern Mexico. Male and female members of the Tarahumara tribe, which is also known as 'Raramuri' or 'the running people', cover distances of up to 435 miles 'at a pop' (McDougall 2009, pp.11–16). As if to further transport them to an altered state, the runs are heavily-fuelled by home-brewed beer. If we look East, there are even the 'marathon monks' of Mount Hiei in Japan of the Tendai Buddhist sect. They meditate and run for one thousand days across the period of seven years to seek self-transcendence. The 'spiritual athletes' run the equivalent of two marathons daily for a large part of the task, covering a total distance of around 40,000 kilometres – wearing straw shoes (Davis 2001). They also carry a knife with which they have to take their own lives should they fail.

However, I argue that to go to such length as the monks runs against the aims of trans-running, which is about running as a constructive way to negotiate, govern and transform *this* world. What I wish to return to, are the moderate and pragmatic ways of Daoism.

Before that, I shall sum up this section: of the many positive ways we may learn from the runner's high-induced thinking-process, one key point you may run with as you explore the world of thinking is how you should feel free to think in a manner that departs from how you usually think, and how society wants you to think. Playfully run against convention and even transgress and strike a new path on your own, and you may open yourself to a world of endless imaginative possibilities.

## **B. ... A Daoist Adept In The Midst Of An Ecstatic Meditation-In-Motion**

In chapter I, I highlighted the correlations between running and *taiji*. For this second feature of trans-running as a mode of thinking, I correlate the runner's high with the poetic beauty of *taiji* and the adepts' religious ecstasy, and propose that when you engage with

<sup>32</sup> I have been inspired by Dr Alan Latham's lecture (2008b) on the runner's high for some of my arguments in this and the following chapter. I am also indebted to Mr Yow Siew Kah for our early conversations about several of these issues.

discourses, you may imagine yourself feeling light and ‘high’, as if in the midst of an ecstatic meditation-in-motion. Instead of running away or feeling ‘dragged down’, trans-running aims to be a playful antidote to discourses that are particularly ‘heavy’ and difficult-to-understand. I argue we should not neglect an element of poetic beauty and playfulness – *especially* when we confront intellectual discourses that seem difficult or abstract.

The runner’s high is arguably a form of meditation-in-motion, albeit a less exotic one than *taiji*. Daoism scholar Kristofer Schipper refers to *taiji* as a ‘slow supple dance’ (1994, p. 134). As a cultivation exercise, *taiji* can enable the Daoist to renew the flow of the *dao* within their body and hence, poetically map their body with the cosmos. Slowness characterises the movement *taiji*, which is why it is regarded as meditation-in-motion. This other-worldly tempo features in Zhuang Zi’s description of the Daoist paradise, too. There,

‘Man’s gait was slow and sauntering, their gaze relaxed and scattered’. (cited in Bodde 1991, p.130)

The philosopher’s portrayal seems to fit that of the ‘LSD’ runner. Similar to how *taiji*’s slow actions enable the Daoist to renew their *dao*, running slowly and for an extended period of time can bring about chemical transformation within the practitioner. Indeed, many runners analogise running with meditation. Joe Henderson, who popularised the LSD in the running world, calls it ‘meditation on the move’; others call it ‘attentive training’ which ‘keeps you focused on the present, just like meditation’, or a ‘wind’ that grants the runner a ‘meditative high’ (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.692). The repetitive action of the feet lifting and touching the ground, along with steady deep breathing, can indeed be meditative, analyses Alan Latham (2008a). George Sheehan adds that when he runs,

‘I am completely at peace with things when running. [...] My body is virtuoso. It requires no guidance, no commands, no spur. It is on automatic pilot. My mind is free to dissociate, to wander on its own’. (1982)

This ‘autopilot’ status can be acquired only when the runner reaches a certain level of adeptness. ‘Be assured it doesn’t occur to beginners’, advises Sheehan (1978, p.231). He recommends a minimum distance of 5 miles daily (cited in Glover & Shepherd 1996, p.692). Even then, it ‘doesn’t always happen’. Yet, when it does, ‘I seem to see the way things really are’, states Sheehan. These observations are supported by the work of the team led by runner-neuroscientist Henning Boecker, which suggests that runners accustomed to a regime of approximately a minimum of four hours of training weekly for a period of two years can yield a higher chance of acquiring the runner’s high (2008). When I ‘earned’ my runner’s high in December 2011, I had been running for two years, covering distances averaging 6 miles (approximately 9.6 kilometres) daily.

These notions of automatic action and training are echoed in *wuwei*. This state of spontaneity is acquired only after ‘long, honest, and dedicated efforts, of ritual and rhythmical repetition of the same gestures, the same procedures’ daily via cultivation techniques like *taiji*, states Schipper (1994, pp.213-214). When practitioners achieve ‘eventual mastery’, their actions appear to have ‘without any apparent effort’. Then,

‘Knots come undone, barriers fall, the stream of energies flows freely and nature is rediscovered’. (1994, p.213)

Adepts with the highest level of mastery are awarded the ‘ecstatic excursion’, a concept which seems to encompass the metaphorical and literal notions of the ‘autopilot’ and ‘high’ simultaneously, as it refers to a state of euphoria as well as being sky-bound.

According to Daoism scholar Livia Kohn, the most virtuoso Daoist – the ‘perfected’ – undertake ‘spirit trips into the otherworld’ (1993, pp.249–274):

‘The circuit, whether through earth or through heaven, is a way of knowing and possessing all there is. It is a method of reaching out to the more wondrous parts of the world, of going beyond the known and reaching into the unknown, of leaving the common world behind and attaining the position of the Tao’. (1993, p.249)

In other words, such a ‘state’ of perfection is not a state that is fixed, but a *process*. The Daoist keeps on moving – albeit this time in perfect synchronicity with the *dao*, Here,

‘From an ordinary human with the travel to the otherworld, a fully cosmicized being emerges. Practitioners increasingly make the heavens their true home, wander freely thoroughly the far ends of the universe, and gain control not only over their own life and death but over the transformations of the cosmos at large’. (1993, p.257)

Such a trip is ecstatic because the practitioner feels free in their action, thought and emotion. A poem by one such ‘perfected’ succinctly conveys such a state of ‘high’:

‘Oh, to follow the flow of energy, rising ever upward [...] All dazzling essence, flashing back and forth! [...] Oh, to leave it all for free and easy journey. Through years eternal that will never end! [...] Up to the crakes of Heaven, Down to the Great Abyss. Below just lofty openness, there is no more earth; Above just empty vastness, there is no more heaven’. (Translated by Kohn 1993, pp.251–257)

These are the words of Qu Yuan (339 BCE–278 BCE). In protest of the corrupt government, Qu Yuan – as did Lao Zi and immortal Zhang Guo Lao – quit his job as a court official. Instead, Qu Yuan turned to poetry, and composed this song, *The Far-Off Journey* (*Yuanyou*), which Kohn calls the ‘most classical of all ecstatic journeys in Chinese religion and literature’ (1993, p.251). In what Kohn calls his ‘visionary journey’, we may feel Qu Yuan’s sense of freedom and euphoria from his choice of words (‘flow’; ‘dazzling’; ‘flashing’; ‘free and easy’; ‘never end’; ‘lofty openness’).<sup>33</sup>

Worlds apart as they are, a correlation between the religious ecstasy expressed by Qu Yuan and the runner’s high achieved by George Sheehan (1918-1993), an American of Irish-Catholic origin, can be drawn. By describing himself to be ‘in the Kingdom’ when

<sup>33</sup> The song can also be interpreted as Qu Yuan’s suicide note. Mobilising his body as the ultimate medium of protest against the corrupt government, the poet threw himself into the river. The annual Chinese Festival of the Dragon Boat’s Festival is a commemoration of his death, in which Daoists throw rice dumplings into the river to feed the fish in the hope that they do not consume the poet’s body instead.

experiencing the runner's high, it is as if Sheehan conducts his spirit trip to the otherworld via running (1982). Sheehan has even become so euphoric that he sheds tears of joy:

‘Goodness and truth and beauty suddenly possess me. I’m surprised by joy, filled with delight. And there’s nothing to do but exult in tears. My runs – shameless hours with tears streaming down my cheeks’. (1978, p.249)

The expressions other runners use to describe their runner's high similarly carry quasi-religious tones. They include: ‘peaks’, ‘heightened state of consciousness’, ‘perfect moments’, ‘mindfulness’, ‘zone’, ‘flow’, ‘clear inner process’, ‘felt all together’, ‘a unity of mind and body’ and ‘a unity of self and environment’ (Young & Pain 1999).

My proposal is as follows: embody the spirit of the Daoists, and you may feel light and high. Imagine yourself wandering freely thoroughly the far ends of the world of thoughts, and you may feel in control. This is how you may transform your world of thinking. While the *taiji* and the ecstatic excursion have a religious dimension, what we may take from it is the sense of poetic beauty, which we should not forget even, or especially when we function in the realm of abstract ideas and theories.

At this point, I would like to explore the richness of the word ‘unity’. From the quotes above, we can see that many runners think of their runner's high as something that makes them feel at one. A form of unity exists in the Daoist world too, in terms of how Daoists map their body with the cosmos, and how they feel a sense of control of their fate. What is perhaps perplexing and hence worth exploring is how the Daoist ideal is equally about *not* being singular and unified. Instead, Daoist ‘unity’ is dynamic and ever-changing. ‘Perfection’, as you have seen, is not a final or stable state, but an *excursion*. This notion of an ever-transforming process, in turn, fits runners’ descriptions of their thought processes during the runner's high. Sheehan himself talks about his thinking as divergent and plural (‘cascade’; ‘kaleidoscope of new and exciting arrangements’). My own experience of the runner's high reveals how I had felt conflicting feelings: while my thoughts seemed to be associative and divergent, they also felt ordered and unified; even though I felt as if my world was expanding and multiplying, it also felt harmonious.

This is where we turn to David Hall and Roger Ames’ philosophy of correlative thinking, which is an order of thinking that may appear disorderly, and which exemplifies the *paradox* as something that is *pluralistic*, multiplying and contrasting, yet still having its own sense of unity and logic. This same tension underlines the essence of trans-running as a mode of thinking, and is part of what may make trans-running not run-of-the-mill.

### **C. ... A Correlative Thinker**

Picture yourself as a correlative thinker, and you may freely collage thoughts together in a manner not burdened by reason, linearity, causality or convention, but via analogy, metaphor, contrasts, association of images and concept clusters in a spontaneous and imaginative way that opens up ‘10,000’ possibilities.

I am inspired by David Hall and Roger Ames' theory of correlative thinking as expounded in their *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (1995). Hall and Ames' theory bears striking similarities with the runner's high-induced thinking-process.

My recommendation has four sub-components:

I) I propose that when you engage in the trans-running as a mode of thinking, you may leave the rules of cause-and-effect, logic and convention at the door. Instead, be creative and imaginative, and draw connections in a *poetic*, analogical or aesthetic manner.

According to Hall and Ames, correlativity is 'a species of spontaneous thinking grounded in informal and ad hoc analogical procedures presupposing both association and differentiation' (1998). It departs from what they call the 'dominant mode' of thinking in the West, that is rationality (1995, p.xvii). Rather than physical causation, formalism, abstraction, linearity and *logos*, correlative thinking is thinking ordered by analogy, metaphor, contrasts and 'the association of image – or concept-clusters' (1995, pp. 116-125). That is why it is also known as 'aesthetic order' (Hall and Ames), 'poetic thinking' (Heidegger 1986, p.92) and 'analogical thinking' (Graham 1986). Terms are clustered with opposing or complementary alter-terms', say Hall and Ames (p.230). Instead of teaming like with like, it 'unifies' what may otherwise be deemed contradictory. This is manifest in the *yin-yang* symbol, in which black and white are intertwined in a dynamic interplay. (Figure 10, p.63) Another example is the pictogram of the '*dao*', in which the radicals of the head and feet work hand-in-hand to give rise to a wide range of meanings that we will further unpack in the following section. (Figure 3, p.40) Hall and Ames' descriptors match that mobilised by runners to describe their runner's high-induced thinking-process ('unleashes quite extraordinary associations'; 'new and exciting arrangements'; 'no logical progression'; 'imaginative'; 'association rather than logic or reason'; 'process information differently'; 'my mind is free to dissociate, to wander on its own'). While ad hoc, informal and 'illogical', such a thinking-process has its own unique *logic* – just like the order of poetic thinking. Rather than messy, it is clarifying ('the answers seem to fall right into place'; 'I can concentrate'; 'surprising clarity of thought'; 'completely at peace'). Just as the 'sum' of the radicals of the head and feet can create something new (*dao*), and the *yin-yang* is a radical synthesis of dialectical elements, the runner's high-induced thinking-process may also generate new thoughts ('here and there a new insight, a new intuition, a new understanding'; 'thoughts are thrown together randomly and new ideas can emerge').

II) Imagine yourself moving about in a space, freely mapping ideas together. Trans-running aims to be a *process* that is subjective and open to a myriad of *possibilities*, rather than a one-off event that seeks neat conclusions.

Hall and Ames state that rather than being static or singular, correlativity 'characterises processes' (pp.134-141). This is echoed in the words of Daoism scholar James Miller who characterises correlativity as a spatial – not temporal – way of thinking (2003, p.60). Running with the metaphor of spatiality, Miller talks about correlation as 'mapping', as it is

a way of ‘mapping the relationships between things that do not exist in a linear cause-and-effect sequence’. Every mapping is unique. In rational thinking, elements are ‘replaceable and substitutable’; the same form is repeatable, and contents are ‘ultimately irrelevant’, state Hall and Ames (pp.116-126). In contrast, form is inseparable from contents in the world of correlativity. Instead, they are ‘ad hoc’ and ‘irreplaceable’. In other words, correlativity is about ever-newer possibilities (p.117). This worldview is, hence, subjective:

‘Chinese thinking does not presuppose the unity of Being behind things, a One behind the Many. All you have in the Chinese world view is ‘ten thousand things’ as an ad hoc summing up of beings and events’. (1995, p.140)

Indeed, right in chapter one of the *Lao Zi*, reality is referred to as ‘*wanwu*’, literally ‘ten thousand things’ or ‘myriad objects’ (Lao & Lau 1963, ch. 1). This sets the tone about how such a world celebrates pluralism, multiplicity and ambiguity. In fact, the ‘Classical Chinese may be uncongenial to the development of univocal propositions’, argue Hall and Ames (1995, p.230). Thus, they find truth with a capital ‘T’ ‘ultimately untenable’. This world consists of constellations of smaller ‘truths’. In the place of logocentrism, language ‘becomes an undulating sea of suggestiveness’, state the philosophers. No wonder Lao Zi deliberately describes himself as ‘mixed-up’, unlike ‘other people’. Clarity, state Hall and Ames, is ‘sterile’, whereas a muddle is ‘richer’ and more ‘satisfying’ (p.168). Rather than ‘objective truth which would presuppose a “God’s-eye view”’, the ‘myriad things of the world’ offers the correlative thinker a perspective ‘from which the “ten thousand things” might be constructed’ (1995, p.55). A world ordered by correlativity is ultimately ‘unknowable, since to know an order would mean that we were able to anticipate its pattern regularities, recognise its realised uniformities’. ‘No final unity is possible’ (1996, pp.116-119). The thinking-process induced by the runner’s high is similarly process-based, during which the runner is exposed to a myriad of possibilities and truths (‘endless possibilities’; ‘explosion of bullet points’; ‘kaleidoscope’; ‘overdrive’; ‘wild’; ‘ongoing guerrilla of ideas’; ‘cascade of thoughts’; ‘torrent of ideas coursing through my brain’; ‘one idea after another goes hurtling past like so much white water’; ‘let mind wander’; ‘brain storm ideas’; ‘soon replaced by yet another thought, still another idea’; ‘random jumble of ideas flashes through the field of consciousness’). Its subjective (‘too much’) and non-repeatable nature (‘no amount of reasoning would bring it back’) may explain why scientists find it difficult to measure and study.

III) When you explore discourses with trans-running, you may do so in a spontaneous manner. Each encounter you have with a discourse is like an adventure, as it is always different. Likewise, when you map different thoughts together, no two mappings are the same. Similarly, you are free to create your own unique mappings of trans-running, which is itself merely one mapping and not a set of iron-clad rules.

Hall and Ames explain that correlativity is ‘spontaneous, but not accidental’ (p.231). It is also ‘reflexive’, as it is ‘self-organising’ and ‘self-renewing’. Although it is about ‘imagination’, correlativity is not abstract but entrenched in ‘experience’ (p.55). Additionally, correlativity is a ‘dynamic sense of order’. Instead of ‘separating what orders

from what is ordered’, it ‘locates the energy of change within chaos itself by insisting that order is always richly vague’ (p.231). Since patterns cannot be repeated, every mapping is new and unique. Nothing is predictable, pre-determined or assumed. Nothing is simplistically or conveniently reductive, so disorder is allowed and celebrated, and novelty becomes the norm. Hence, you become free:

‘Naturalizing novelty problematises causal reductionism or simple determinism. Freedom is guaranteed’. (1995, p.231)

These characteristics link correlativity with the dynamic, ever-transforming and creative life-force of the *dao*. They also relate to the runner’s high, which the runner may achieve only via the experience of running – and not just thinking about it. The runner’s high brings about chemical changes from within us, so that we generate morphine-like or cannabis-like substances endogenously. While it can be hit-and-miss, the runner’s high is not accidental as it can only occur when the runner is sufficiently virtuoso; all the same, it is spontaneous and cannot be willed. The runner’s high-induced thinking-process is dynamic, too. The runner’s high cannot be planned, let alone the mode of thinking during such an episode. There is no way the runner can predetermine where they can ‘go’ or ‘land’, intellectually, during the runner’s high. Yet, this may be what makes the exercise a *profitable* one. Once we recognise that we are dealing with the unknown, but which is emerging from within us and which we have earned, we may *play*, and be *liberated* – not only from rationality, logic but causality, as we explore the wide world of thoughts ‘out there’. That may be why runners claim that with the runner’s high, they feel emancipated (‘I can breathe’; ‘feel that anything is possible’; ‘I feel happy and free’; ‘frees you up’). In a way, ‘Nondon’ in *Kaidie’s Trans-Run* is a concretised version of such a correlative world. Like the city of London itself, Nondon affords Kaidie the freedom to move about freely, and to freely associate herself with a myriad of new experiences. In Nondon, novelty is the norm. This is not to say that Nondon has no history and merely runs after the new and shiny. On the contrary, *past* and *present*, old and new clash together. With these exciting mixes and remixes, the inhabitants of Nondon like Kaidie are constantly stimulated; Kaidie, too, herself becomes constantly re-mixed as her values are challenged and subjected to change.

IV) Trans-running, you may think in an altered state that is *transgressive* as it departs from dominant thinking. Yet, it aims to be universal as thinking originates from *poetic* mappings.

While researchers have identified correlativity as the primary mode of thinking in the Chinese-Daoist world, many also argue that it is universal. Prominent sinologist Derk Bodde remarks that although correlative thinking has thrived most in China, it has ‘flourished in many societies’ and that ‘there is nothing uniquely Chinese’ about it (1991, pp.97–98). In fact, A.C. Graham, another highly-respected sinologist, correlates this mode of thinking with our unconscious. Paraphrasing Graham, Bodde explains that correlativity results from the human tendency to ‘draw upon sets of concepts that have been unconsciously stored within the mind’.<sup>34</sup> Hall and Ames add that rationality has

<sup>34</sup> The relationship between correlativity with the unconscious explains why Daoist ways were said to have influenced psychoanalyst Carl Jung, particularly in his synchronicity theory (Clarke 2000, p.195). This notion seems to have parallels with correlative thinking. For Jung, creativity is the formation of new links between formerly disparate entities, the union between opposites

‘mythopoetic beginnings’; all formal thinking emerges from poetic mappings (pp.136-137). This is why they also call correlativity ‘first problematic order’. Apart from the Bohr theory which we saw in chapter I, Hall and Ames highlight the example of the notion of ‘cosmos’. While understood as a ‘single-ordered world’ today, it is related to the verb ‘*kosmeo*’, which is linked to the Greek god Zeus Kosmetas. Hall and Ames’ argument reinforces how fundamental – and even universal – correlativity is. Once again this points to the quote we have already seen by Heidegger. Referring to Lao Zi’s *dao*, he says that poetic thinking is ‘the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think’ (1982, p.92)

Throughout my thesis, I have been arguing that, like correlativity, running is embedded in our unconscious and is even universal. I presented two inter-related running leitmotifs of this thesis. One was how human beings are born to run (via endurance hunting), and the other was that running is naturalistic (via *wuwei*). Recent research in neuroscience also reveals that dedicated practice in a given activity enables the brain to literally rewire itself, and such an autopilot mode is of the unconscious. (Lawrie 2012). In the same report, neuroscientists are quoted as saying that simple, repetitive tasks, including running, allow the mind to wander, engage in divergent thinking and even have creative insight. That running require little or no skills means that it can lend itself easily to be an automatic action, which is a pre-condition for the runner’s high. If correlativity is of the unconscious, a correlation between correlative thinking and the runner’s high-induced thinking-process may be drawn. After all, runners convey how the runner’s high transport them away from day-to-day consciousness (‘altered consciousness’; ‘endorphin-fuelled stream of consciousness’; ‘opening of the unconscious’). That said, the characterisation of this mode of thinking as unrestricted and untainted (‘pure mind’; ‘most purest form’ of thinking) also matches it to the notion that correlativity is the foundation of all thinking. Yet, undermining the dominant – logical – order of thinking, or doing things with a different kind of logic, may be considered *transgressive*. Runners themselves point to how their thinking achieved during running are not just unusual to what and how they normally think, but what and how other people think (‘think against the thinking of society or group’). Last but not least, trans-running, like correlativity, may be a medium for other thoughts and action (‘catalytic’; ‘alter our lives from within’). My own runner’s high had been the spark for my proposal of trans-running as a mode of thinking. If at the end of this chapter I am able to transform it by formalising and rationalising it into a mode of thinking, then I may prove that the runner’s high, like correlativity, does have mileage.

#### **D. ... A Personification Of The ‘*Dao*’**

Next, you may imagine yourself as a personification of the ‘*dao*’. As ‘*dao*’, both your head and feet are active. You are not sitting down to think or talk. Instead, you are metaphorically on the move, acting and interacting, exchanging your ideas with others, and hence allowing your discourse to grow, transform and come to life.

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My proposal is inspired by the Chinese character ‘*dao*’, as well as Lao Zi’s brand of *dao*. I have shown how ‘*dao*’ exemplifies Daoist *paradox* and *poetry* (chapter I). The term refers to not only path and course, but doctrine and speech. In a single stroke, the pictogram unites the literal and figurative, and movement and thought. This seems similar to how the runner’s high epitomises the union of the *physical* and the *poetic*. ‘*Dao*’ also advertises Daoism’s anti-intellectualism and distrust of language as well as the fact that it is itself an ‘ism’ or a doctrine – if a loose one at that. The word ‘*dao*’ sums up why Lao Zi and his followers wandered the world, ‘as if I have no home to return to’. It is by being on the move, and by constantly applying his theories into action, that the philosopher ensured that his doctrines stay agile and ever-transforming. Lao Zi’s words – and action – teach us that without our feet’s actions, any talk is meaningless.

Lao Zi is not the only person who walked the talk, or who walked while talking. Beyond Lao Zi, we may see the footprints of ‘*dao*’. Former U.S. president George W. Bush would run and hold meetings at the same time with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice (Hart 1999). At the G8 summit meeting, in what the press has labeled ‘treadmill diplomacy’, Barack Obama and David Cameron held the most important conversations while running alongside each other in a gym (Huffington Post UK 2012). Apple founder Steve Jobs often conducted ‘walking meetings’, a trait that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg has also acquired (Issacson 2011). I have also presented Bruce Chatwin’s argument of the importance of movement for our well-being and happiness (chapter II). According to the peripatetic writer, brain specialists who took scans of travellers found that ‘changes of scenery and awareness of the passage of seasons through the year stimulated the rhythms of the brain, contributing to a sense of wellbeing and an active purpose in life’ (1996, pp.100–108). Chatwin himself complains about how he cannot write in his room at home, but must instead move about to write at different places. ASICS, a popular brand of running shoes, derives its name from the Latin phrase ‘*mens sana in corpore sano*’ which refers to ‘sound mind in a sound body’. The phrase originated from the work of the ancient Roman poet Juvenal, although ASICS has modified ‘*mens*’ to ‘*anima*’ to convey ‘more of an active nuance of the mind’ (ASICS 2012). Thales had a similar theorem. The Greek philosopher declared: ‘who is healthy in body, resourceful in soul and of a readily teachable nature’ (Webster Dictionary 2006). Indeed, ancient Classical philosophers commonly advocated athletics and physical exercise as part of a good life. Contemporary philosophers say that this illustrates the importance of ‘a philosophical portrait of coordinated mind-body integration’ (Taliaferro & Traugher 2007, p.205). After all, the Academy and Lyceum, which were the main centres for philosophy then, were located by gymnasiums. Aristotle’s Peripatetic School, founded in 336BCE, was even named after the ‘*peripatos*’ or covered walk in the garden of the Lyceum (Blackburn 2008, p.272). This was where the thinker walked while transmitting his discourses (Reale & Catan 1990, p.420). Although Lao Zi and Aristotle were worlds apart geographically, historically and intellectually, their feet played a role in enabling their thinking.

Should we re-visit ‘*dao*’, and specify its meaning as ‘discourse’, as philosopher and linguist Chad Hansen does, the word can have even greater mileage (1996). By specifying the metaphorical meaning of *dao* as discourse, Hansen states that we may be reminded of ‘the important normative feature shared by guiding discourse and roads or paths’. After all,

‘course’, the root of ‘discourse’, is also embedded in the literal meaning of *dao*. Furthermore, as ‘discourse’, *dao*’s application to both the oral and written language, as well as its ‘social, reciprocal character’ can also be celebrated, argues Hansen. Indeed, different countries and historical periods ‘have different *dao*’, or doctrines. As I have explained, Confucianism was an example of a rival *dao* in China at the same time that Daoism thrived (chapter I). Hansen adds that as a word, the ‘[f]ootprints of the ‘linguistic component of the concept of *dao* are scattered through all kinds of modern Chinese compound words’. Conjugated with other characters, *dao* can form a constellation of words with an array of meanings including ‘morality’, ‘reason’, ‘philosophy’, ‘orthodoxy’, ‘thank’, ‘apologise’, ‘know’ and so on. Indeed, over the years, the *dao* as discourse has been ‘spoken, heard, forgotten, transmitted, learned, studied, understood and misunderstood, distorted, mastered, and performed with pleasure’. Hansen’s rendering adeptly fortifies *dao*’s mapping-together of thinking and movement as well as the literal and figurative. In evoking pleasure, Hansen’s *dao* allows us to draw a connection with running, and in particular, the runner’s high. His *dao* also captures the essence of *dao* as a life-force that is dynamic and with an ‘irreducibly reciprocal character of continuous action and re-action’ (Miller 2003, p.46). After all, a discourse is an exchange that demands the presence – and participation – of other parties.

### **E. ... An Active Participant In A Running-Discourse With Other People**

When you are working through ideas, imagine that you are moving, and that, specifically, your mode of locomotion is *running*. Furthermore, imagine that you are not just running alone, but amidst other runners, engaged in a lively, sweaty exchange of ideas.

I am inspired by the English definition, as well as the French and Latin etymologies of the word ‘discourse’ for this proposal. Of the many definitions of ‘discourse’, a recurrent feature is how it is a process that is active, interactive and reciprocal. According to the British grammarian C. T. Onions, ‘discourse’ originates from the word ‘intercourse’ (1966, p.272). These definitions map ‘discourse’ with correlativity, which Hall and Ames also describe as reciprocal. Divorced as it is from pure abstraction, correlativity is a ‘concretely interpersonal exercise’ that is ‘subjective’ and ‘human’, state the philosophers (1995, p.54). Highlighting the processual nature of discourse is Cambridge Professor of Philosophy Simon Blackburn, who defines it as ‘a continuous stretch of language containing more than one sentence: conversations, narratives, arguments, speeches’ (2008, p.102). This definition runs hand-in-hand with what we came across earlier, about how the runner’s high can come about only after a runner runs for a continuous stretch of running. Similarly, the OED defines discourse as an ‘onward course, process or succession of time, events, action’, as well as ‘act of understanding, by which it passes from premises to consequence’ (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol. IV, pp.750–751). These definitions emphasise the importance of movement in the process of understanding, reasoning and thought.

Turning to the etymologies of ‘discourse’, we may even pinpoint that it is *running* – not walking or crawling – that is the precise movement that takes place in a discourse.

'Discourse' comes from the medieval Latin *'discursus'*, which refers to 'a running from one place to another' (Blackburn 2008, p.102), a 'running to and fro' (Collins English Dictionary 2011, p.446), or 'a running-about' (Skeat 1901, p.144). The root words of *discursus*, too, point to running. *'Discurrere'* refers to 'run to and from' (Onions 1966, p.272) or 'run about' (Harper 2001b), and it originates from *'currere'*, which is 'to run' (Collins English Dictionary 2011, p.446). That the OED also defines discourse as something that takes place over considerable time and distance – 'a spoken or written treatment of a subject in which it is handled or discussed at length' – inches us closer yet to the long distance run. Even the word 'run' is related to thinking. Its 14<sup>th</sup> century definition refers to thoughts that 'come suddenly *into* (or in), to course or pass *through* the mind', or thoughts that 'revolve in the mind, to occur or return persistently to the memory' (Simpson and Weiner 1989 vol. XVI, p.252). In one definition, 'run' is even defined as 'to unite' or to 'combine'. This allows us to extrapolate an association between running and the notion of collage. Furthermore, the phrase 'run into' refer to 'to merge into; to blend or coalesce with' as well as, perhaps paradoxically, 'to dash into or collide with, especially by accident' (Simpson and Weiner 1989, vol. XVI, pp 252-259). The words mobilised in the latter descriptions seem to evoke the spontaneous and energetic nature of the runner's-high induced thinking-process. The idea of running as encompassing both the imageries of collating and clashing reinforces the point I raised earlier, about how trans-running aims to be an order about disorder. It also epitomises an exciting kind of unity within which conflicts and contrasts are celebrated.

A contemporary, real-life enactment of a 'running discourse' can even be found in *Critical Run*. Conceived by Danish-French artist Thierry Geoffroy, this is a series of artworks in which people debate about art – while running (2012). Over the course of the 20-minute runs, topics discussed have included immigration, colonialism and the role of the artist in society. Geoffroy calls it 'an art format for criticism' that is 'stimulating, debating and sweating'. The runs are 'critical' as the debates are 'burning' and have to be discussed 'before it's too late', argues Geoffroy. The runs have been held in New York, Istanbul, Hanoi, Siberia in major art events, or 'just happened on the spot because a debate was necessary here and now', and people from all walks of life participate in them. This reinforces my argument about how running can take place anytime, anywhere and be performed by nearly anybody. Although I have not taken part in *Critical Run*, the images I see on Geoffroy's websites show people wearing smiles on their faces as they talk, run – and sweat. (Figure 25) My own 'running-discourse' held at DOCUMENTA was inspired by *Critical Run* (Figure from Kaidie's world 10, p.37). That said, my version can be distinguished from Geoffroy's in that mine was a more self-reflexive un-packing of the *physical* and *poetic* processes of running itself, rather than only using running as a vehicle through which general topics are discussed. *Critical Run* can even be described as an art 'movement' – in both the literal and figurative senses of the word – about the running discourse. Only running – and not walking, and not even 'jogging' – can convey the sense of urgency of these discourses, as well as to energise them, states Geoffroy (Cultural Development Consulting 2013). In short: if thinking and movement are the pre-requisites of a discourse, then that movement is, specifically, running.

Hence, when you deploy trans-running as you explore discourses, you may picture yourself in a *Critical Run*-like situation. You are not still but moving; specifically, you are running. Instead of only being preached at, you are active, sweating and working-through thoughts for yourself, thinking on your own feet. Picture yourself not passively accepting ‘the Truth’, but questioning, disagreeing, debating, laughing and running with other thinkers or writers about a *plethora of possible truths*. This may be how your expedition in the world of thinking may become spontaneous, fun, energetic and alive.

## F. ... A Running-Ambassador and Forerunner

Last but not least, imagine yourself as an ambassador. This is no ordinary ambassador, but one who runs, and is a forerunner on a runner’s high, who transfers and exchanges messages or discourses. *Playful*, fearless and *transgressive* as you are, you cross boundaries and pave new paths, not just literally so but metaphorically-speaking, and even activate new messages and discourses.

My proposal is inspired by the historical phenomena of the running-ambassador or messenger. Historian Thor Gotaas states that professional runners were employed as ambassadors from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century (2009, pp.9–22). Those were the days before postal services, FEDEX or Twitter. Called ‘*chasquis*’, which refers to ‘exchange’ and to ‘give and take’, professional runners in South America *transported* and *transferred* news of all degrees of importance, from official government matters to local gossip, as well as food and heavy items. There were ‘messengers constantly on the move, covering nearly 200 miles (320km) in 24 hours in stages’, states Gotaas. Their job was so demanding that many chewed cocoa leaves for energy. Vital as their role was, that ‘to hinder or injure messengers was forbidden’. These running-ambassadors had ‘diplomatic immunity even in wartime, when they traversed battlefields carrying information about negotiations’. In fact, in Central Europe, these runners were not just respected for their physical and mental stamina, but admired for their knowledge and social mobility:

‘By comparison with those who were more static in terms of residence, the messengers were both well-travelled and knowledgeable. They belonged to a profession that crossed boundaries and had a great deal of contact with people of a higher social class, even though the runners themselves came from a humble background. They enjoyed considerable esteem and the career was a springboard to increased social status’. (2009, p.14)

Gotaas’ account presents many exciting points to think about vis-à-vis several points we have covered thus far.

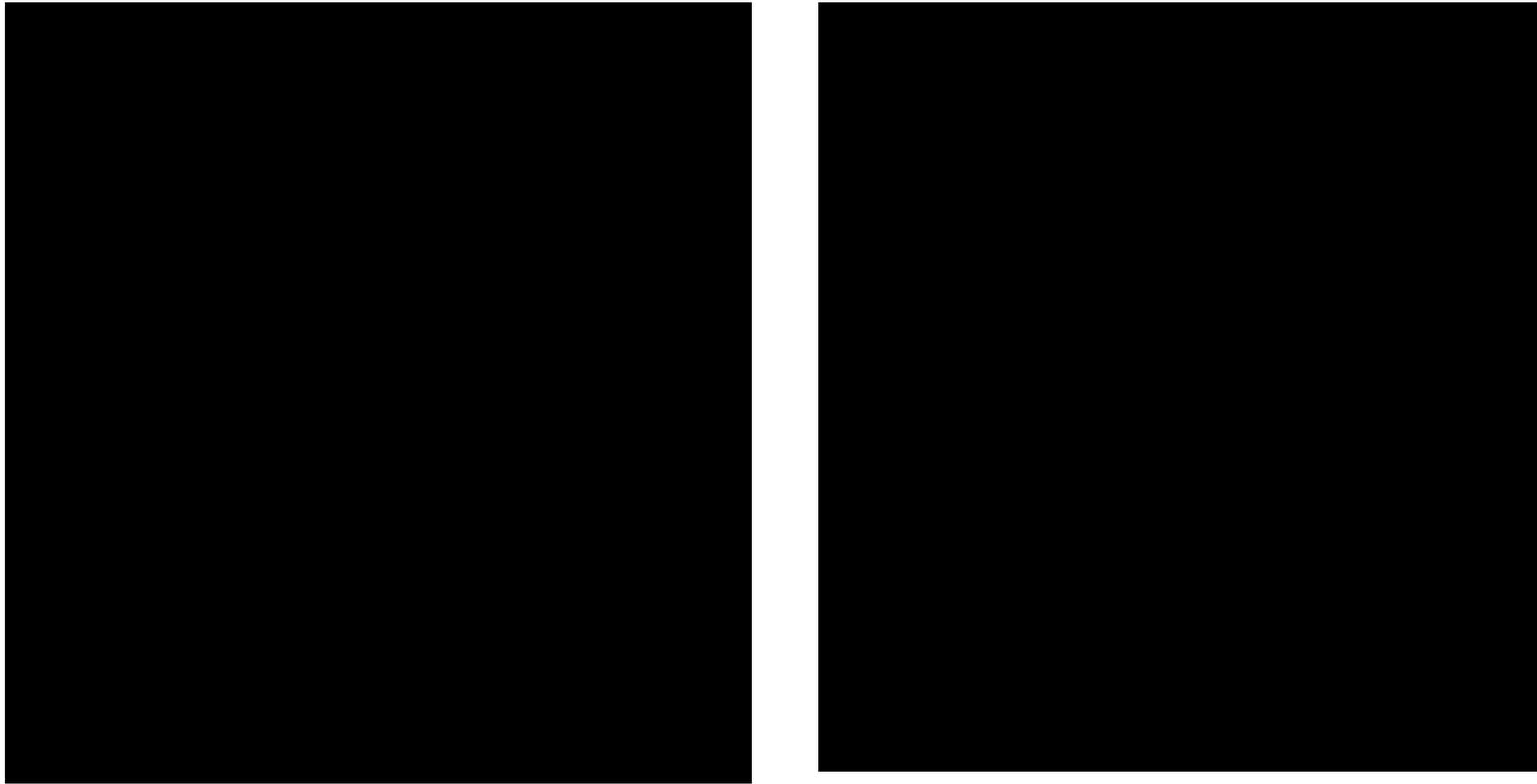


Figure 25: 'Critical Run'. These screen-captures show parts of an interview and photographs of the runs, lead by Geoffroy, the bespectacled man carrying a camera. (Cultural Development Consulting 2013)

First of all, the time period that the running-ambassador was active overlaps with that in which the word discourse originated (14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century) (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol. IV, pp.750–751). That long distances had to be traversed in the manual transportation of the message shows that running, with its speed as well as energising nature of the runner's high, was the required locomotion – 'before it is too late', to cite Geoffroy about *Critical Run*. That the running-ambassadors chewed cocoa leaves continues our narrative about drugs, altered consciousness, *transgression* and *transformation*. Cocoa leaves contain alkaloids, which function not only as a hunger-suppressant but a stimulant. This explains why they are the main ingredient of cocaine, which people enjoy for its euphoric effects (Palmer 2010). We may speculate that as the running-ambassador carried out their tasks, they were on a 'high' which was fuelled by cocoa leaves, endorphins or endocannabinoids.

Indeed, the very 'figure' – in the sense of person, as well as metaphor – of the running-ambassador opens out several poetic possibilities. On a fundamental level, the running-ambassador instates the human body into our discourse. This balances the abstract or intellectual aspect of a 'discourse', the same way our feet and movement are counterpoints to thinking and speaking in '*dao*'. Additionally, as they run from place to place, the ambassador's action seem to exemplify the discourse, which concerns the running from place to place. That the notions of 'exchange' and 'give and take' are embodied in their title of the '*chasquis*' also means that the running-ambassador is the very medium that activates the exchange. That is to say, the running-ambassador is a 'figure' of the discourse, literally and figuratively-speaking. Without the ambassador running, no discourse takes place. In other words, the running-ambassador is the agent of a discourse. As their role is to act, interact, reciprocate, exchange and give-and-take – which are words we have associated with discourse – we may even venture that the running-ambassador *personifies* the discourse. Yet another way to correlate the notions of the running-ambassador and discourse this is to think of 'message' as synonymous with 'discourse'. In other words, as the running-ambassador runs from place to place, or person to person, they are also exchanging ideas and thoughts, engaged in a lively back-and-forth discussion or discourse.

The figure of the running-ambassador has yet more mileage. Consistent with Gotaas' research, the OED defines the messenger as 'one who carries a message', 'envoy', 'ambassador' and 'bearer of (a specified message)' who are 'sent forward to prepare the way; a forerunner, precursor, harbinger' (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vol. IX, pp. 656–658). Indeed, they were the first – and perhaps only – people or medium to carry a piece of news from one place to another historically. That was why they were respected and protected. After all, we recall that the man who inspired the modern day marathon, Pheidippides (circa 500BCE) was a messenger who was running to convey the news of the victory of the battle of Marathon. We may think of the running-ambassador as a 'forerunner' in another sense of the word. Gotaas points out how their profession not only enabled the running-ambassador to improve their social standing, but their knowledge of things compared to 'those who were more static'. Gotaas also talks about them crossing boundaries in both the literal and metaphorical senses of the phrase. We may hence think about the running-ambassador as a leader on a symbolic level. They were in the forefront, paving new ways, literally and metaphorically-speaking. That is to say, running functioned as a springboard for them to transform their world. As an example, we may think of the running-ambassador as a precursor of the mobile, well-travelled, globalised and borderless person that many of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century describe ourselves as we become digital nomads, work as expatriates in an exotic country, or pop over to the continent for the weekend and so on. We

may even extrapolate the figure of the running-ambassador as someone who is fearless as they cross – and push – boundaries of class, hierarchy, thinking, disciplines and cultures. To take things yet a few steps further, we may imagine this forerunner on a ‘high’, not from cocoa leaves, but the runner’s high. As they engage in a lively discourse with others, they run about freely, and mix-and-match disparate messages. In so doing, they even create their own, new messages and discourses along the way.

My playful interpretation of the running-ambassador departs from Gotaas’. Historically, they were ‘sworn to a duty of silence’ and were tasked to transfer messages that were coded and indecipherable to them. In my re-imagination, the running-ambassador – or rather *trans*-running-ambassador – disobeys any masters, and is autonomous, free and happy.

I propose that as you traverse the world of thinking, you do not have to feel as if you are held hostage to the discourses of theorists. Instead, like the forerunner of the running-ambassador on a runner’s high, you may engage in lively discourses with their ideas and messages. Be fearless, playful, questioning and cheeky. Cross boundaries, run with, or run against these discourses, and in the process, you may pave new roads and inroads.

## **TRANS-RUNNING AS A MODE OF THINKING**

We can now gather the different points together to generate a more complete picture of the figure of the trans-runner as an autonomous thinker:

Imagine that you are an ambassador. You are no ordinary ambassador, but one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century who runs, and is a bold, *transgressive* and *playful* forerunner, on a runner’s high. Think of your exploration of the world of thinking as a *process* or excursion. Use your head and feet. Your entire body – including the mind – is active. Picture yourself moving, and specifically, running, and doing so in a manner that is meditative, yet with footsteps that are light and restless. You feel relaxed, invigorated, ‘high’, exuberant, exhilarated, euphoric, as if in an altered state of consciousness, or as if on morphine, cannabis, LSD, home-brewed beer, cocoa leaves or cocaine. In this altered state, you think against how you think when not running or not moving, as well as how others think. You reject consensual hallucination, and even break yourself free from your own habits and assumptions. You have no master but are your own free thinker. Ignoring the orders of linearity, continuity, fashion, convention, hegemony, logic, discipline and culture, you differentiate yourself from the ‘other people’ of the ‘regular walking-around world’, or those who do not move, or who are dead. Alive, active and activated, you run. You can breathe, and feel anything is possible. The more you run, the more discourses you may run into. Every step brings to life the different messages and discourses. They spring forth as if an explosion, a wild torrent, cascade or white-water stream. A myriad of 10,000 discourses seem to fire at you at the same time. They feel divergent yet at once unified, too. Excited, you play with the discourses. You run with, or run against them. You transfer, shuffle and re-arrange bullet points, messages or discourses from one place to another. You draw correlations between disparate discourses, in a manner that is poetic, analogical and aesthetical. The process is fun. Like children, you are armed only with a sense of adventure and curiosity on your intellectual expedition. You feel free, as if your mind is pure. You proceed, immune to fear, and treading without trepidation, expectant and excited about the unknown that

is to come. You trespass the boundaries marked by different cultures and disciplines. You are restless and homeless, as you pick-and-mix discourses rather than only following one train of thought, or one discourse. In the midst of this bliss and ‘superexuberance’, you form extraordinary associations amongst the guerrilla of ideas. You create exciting arrangements from the rich muddle or kaleidoscope of discourses. Each combination of ideas is ad hoc, informal and unique, as if brand new. In so doing, you even activate new messages and discourses and pave new paths. The answers seem to fall right into place; here and there a new insight, a new intuition, a new understanding pops up. Trans-running may be your means to enjoy an ecstatic excursion through different thoughts, so that you may reach out to the wondrous parts of the world of thinking. The same way the ‘perfected’ Daoist Qu Yuan flew through the heavens, you go beyond the known and reach into the unknown. In fact, novelty is the norm; your world is always new. With trans-running, you may be transformed into joyous explorers of the world of thinking. The more you run, the bigger your world may become, until it is pure vastness and openness. Hence, you may gain control of your own thoughts. You may even know and possess all there is, and feel happy and free.

Trans-running as a mode of thinking aims to be a beautiful union of the poetic and physical processes of running. Like the *dao*, it synthesises the head with feet, and the literal with the figurative. Like Lao Zi’s *dao*, it is a loose ‘-ism’. The same way trans-running in the real world is, like *wuwei*, both about intentionality and non-intentionality (chapter II), trans-running in the world of thinking is *paradoxical*. It aims to be a formalisation of a process that is informal, subjective and spontaneous. It is an order about dis-order, a deliberate procedure about an altered state of consciousness. It is a loose rationalisation of an ‘illogical’ train of thought. It is a practice-related discourse as well as a discourse-related practice. Beyond the world of thinking, you may apply this correlative approach to many other aspects of your world, such as in mapping, making films and writing. In fact, to walk, or rather run the talk, I have applied trans-running to my discourse in this chapter and thesis as a whole so that it has been assembled in an exuberant and correlative manner. That is to say, I have been playing the ambassador of trans-running. Throughout the thesis, you have been *participating* in my performance. I scampered to different worlds of discourses, and picked-and-mixed, mixed-and-matched disparate discourses and messages in an exuberant and correlative manner and mapped together my message of ‘trans-running’ which I have been delivering to you. By crossing the boundaries of disciplines and cultures, my discourse aims to be *trans-disciplinary* and *trans-cultural*.

## TRANSITION

I have come up with 6 playful ways in which you may activate trans-running as a mode of thinking, so that you feel happy and free as a thinker. In the following chapter, I shall continue with a few of the arguments and metaphors that I have developed here, and respond to people from the art world who criticise running as unthinking or uncreative.

**V. MY MESSAGES TO THE ART WORLD;  
CORRELATIONS AND FINDINGS**

## INTRODUCTION

I have explored how running may act as a playful medium to re-orientate the way we approach our real and digital worlds, as well as our world of thinking (chapters II-IV). In the following chapter (VI), I shall sum up my research. Here, I focus on the central findings of my research, that is, how trans-running has the potential to make us feel happy and free in our action, thought and emotion – including the ability to generate poetic correlations.

Recalling once again the playfulness of runner-writers Richard Benyo and Joe Henderson who talk about how running is about having ‘so much fun’ (p.80), I adopt a playful approach in this chapter. Here, I continue with the metaphor of the ambassador and messages that I have developed in the last chapter (IV). I structure my points in this chapter as ‘messages of happiness and freedom’. They are my tongue-in-cheek responses to thinkers and artists who make fun of running as an activity that is unthinking and uncreative. I argue that the critics’ views of running arise from an ignorance of its physical and poetic possibilities, which my particular brand of running – trans-running – addresses and dispels. By the end of this chapter, I aim to convince you that these people are but sad and un-fit critics, literally and figuratively-speaking. While I direct my messages primarily at the so-called ‘art world’, they can also be relevant to the larger ‘academic world’, or what Benyo and Henderson call the ‘walking-around world’ (2011, p.111). To make it even more ‘fun’, I frame my messages around words that begin with the prefix ‘trans-’, and/or the letter ‘p’ that I highlighted in the beginning of the thesis, to remind us of the aims of trans-running. I italicise these words to emphasise them. In addition, I apply a self-reflexive approach in this chapter. I mobilise trans-running as a mode of thinking to my discourse here. I scamper across chapters of this written thesis, to pick-and-mix, and then mix-and-match disparate discourses and messages in an exuberant and correlative manner, to map together my summary and evaluation of the results of trans-running. By seeing in practice what I am discussing, you may evaluate the results of trans-running, as well as grasp how it may function as an active application, instead of being something that is theoretical. Along the way, I assess how I have used trans-running as my personal ‘satnav’ and successfully moved away from feeling trapped and unhappy as a researcher, artist and individual. Additionally, we will run into yet new points. For instance, when I argue that trans-running synthesises the old and new, I perform what I say, by drawing connections between arguments I made in an earlier chapter with a new point. In so doing, I once again illustrate the exponential quality of trans-running; one point can open out ‘10,000’ more avenues. This is the reason behind why I have subtitled this chapter ‘*Correlations and Findings*’.

The following mapping sums up our trajectory thus far. (Correlations 14) If the smaller map-within-a-map at the top appears familiar, it is because we have repeatedly run into it. (Correlations 6, p.38; Correlations 13, p.160)



## MY MESSAGES OF HAPPINESS, FREEDOM AND CORRELATIVITY TO THE ART WORLD

Bruce Sterling analyses that artists ‘usually don’t like to run’. For the writer,

‘Artists and art people are typically negatively biased against running. And artists who do run, don’t do it as artists. But incognito. Running is somehow denigrating art. Running art does not appear [suitably] dignified’. (2009)

Indeed, so outraged Jean Baudrillard was by the spectacle of runners that he devoted two pages in his slim book, *America*, to attack it:

‘I would never have believed that the New York marathon could move you to tears. It really is the end-of-the-world show. ... They are all seeking death, the death by exhaustion that was the fate of the first Marathon man some two thousand years ago. ... [T]here are too many of them and their message has lost all meaning: ... [it is] a twilight message of a futile, superhuman effort. Collectively, they might rather seem to be bringing the message of a catastrophe for the human race’. (1989, p.19)

The thinker goes on to declare the marathon a form of ‘demonstrative suicide’, a ‘strange sign of weakness, harbinger of a new fanaticism’ (1989, p.20). Another French intellectual, Alain Finkielkraut, steps up the attack by proclaiming:

‘Western civilization [...] was born with the promenade. Walking is a sensitive, spiritual act. Jogging is management of the body. [...] It has nothing to do with meditation’. (cited in Bremner 2007)

Finkielkraut was reacting to news of the jogging hobby of the then newly-elected French president in 2007. The Professor of History of Ideas and Modernity found the public parade of ‘presidential knees’ ‘undignified’ (Johnson 2007). Instead, he urged Nicolas Sarkozy to follow in the footsteps of Socrates and Arthur Rimbaud, to walk (cited in Bremner 2007). Journalists lapped up the outcry with such headlines as ‘in France, Jogging Is a Running Joke’ (Garreau 2007) and ‘More Rimbaud and less Rambo, Critics Tell Sweaty Jogger Sarkozy’ (Bremner 2007). The Left-wing newspaper *Libération* even cried:

‘Is jogging right-wing?’ (cited in Bremner 2007)

‘No’ is my simple retort. In the following pages, I present 9 messages to the artists and thinkers in the ‘art world’, to urge them to free themselves from their blind spot, and to embrace running as a subject matter and/or medium.

### Message 1: Free Yourself From Your Biases About Running And Embrace Running As An App For Your Thinking And Art-Making

Before 2009, I was a critic of running myself. It was only after I lifted my own *maximus gluteus* from my armchair, and emerged from my ivory tower perched on high dry ground to run, that I discovered how running could augment my world. Aged 34-38, I re-invented myself from non-runner to *trans*-runner. The journey was challenging and humbling. I was amazed by how my body improved itself via dedicated training. In the space of 7 months, I shaved an hour from the time I took to complete a full marathon. I slept better, and had less bouts of colds. The intangible rewards of running were aplenty, too, thus affirming the adage that a healthy body makes a healthy mind. I successfully translated aspects of running into different aspects of my life. This include increased mental stamina, and the pacing and breaking down of a difficult task into manageable sections, the same way I would visualise and complete a long run. Furthermore, instead of feeling tyrannised by having to ventriloquise the thoughts of ‘branded’ Western thinkers, I felt free to obey no one’s law or school of thought but to invent my own. My own positive experience of running has contributed directly and indirectly to my creative world. My writing approach, as well as the mappings that you have seen throughout the thesis, and the DVD film that you may have watched, are outcomes of a correlative approach that I learnt from running.

I am not alone in thinking that running does not detract or denigrate, but contributes positively to art-making and thinking. Abdelkader Benali and Jo Volley are examples of artists and intellectuals who do run (chapter IV). Throughout the thesis, we also encountered artworks centred around running. They include *Can You See Me Now* and *Run Lola Run*. There are several more that I have not had the chance to explore. They include: Alan Sillitoe’s 1959 story of an angry young man who used running as a tool of resistance in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, Japanese-Vietnamese artist Jun Nguyen Hatsushiba’s 2009 performance *Breathing Is Free*, and British artist Martin Creed’s 2008 performance *No. 850*. That said, Bruce Sterling is right about how running sometimes faces animosity in the art world. I have personally encountered bemusement or polite silences from the art and academic worlds when I shared my research. It was as if I have ‘betrayed’ their kind and indulged in something which they seem to find undignified and mindless. This can be why some artists run incognito. Although Keith Tyson is better known for his slick artworks, the Turner-prize winner runs, everyday, to train for a triathlon. His eye-witness is his neighbour, Jonathan Buckley, himself a novelist – and runner (2012).

My message for critics is the same as the first one I offered to everyone in the beginning of my thesis. It is the invitation to give running, and indeed *trans*-running, a go. Stop admiring from sidelines. Join me in my movement, or rather, art movement. Liberate yourself from your pre- or mis-conceptions about running – the same way *trans*-running may enable you to evade state-control, digital totalitarianism, consensual hallucination, and even your own habits of thinking. Open your minds to the plethora of scientific, historical, artistic, philosophical and anthropological evidence of the possibilities of running, and become truly liberal.<sup>35</sup> Begin slowly. Be patient. See far ahead and do not give up, for, your body only warms up after the first miles. Keep going. In the long run, you may even pave new avenues for your thinking and art-making.

<sup>35</sup> A French academic at the Université Michel de Montaigne informs me that lately, Alain Finkielkraut is himself regarded not as a liberal but a narrow-minded thinker in France – a far cry from his heyday as a core figure of the 1968 movement (Gossot 2012).

## Message 2: Free Yourself To Network With Your *Past, Present And Future, And Shape Your Own Fate In Your Own Hands*

Baudrillard is incorrect to say that runners pursue ‘death by exhaustion’ by following the ‘fate of the first Marathon man’. I argue that running physically and poetically may liberate you from the shackles of chronology in your thinking and feeling. This may empower you to draw connections between your *past*, as well as to *pursue* something distant ahead, and hence, to even take fate in your own hands.

Throughout my thesis, you have seen several examples that support my point. For starters, my proposal of the 21<sup>st</sup> century trans-runner as ambassador is itself a derivation from the historical figure of the ‘first Marathon man’, the running-ambassador Pheidippides (chapter IV). My trans-runner follows the fate of this forerunner, although my pursuit is a life-affirming one, as I seek new pathways of thoughts in manner that are *trans-cultural* and *trans-disciplinary*. By way of a hyphen, I also correlated the worlds of old and new technologies (chapter III). Within my own world, running liberated me to freely map different timeframes, too. Every time I ran as an adult, I felt that I was re-enacting how I used to run about as a carefree child. For the duration of the run, the notion of time collapsed. In a similar vein, as I ‘shopped around’ for theories to support my hypothesis of trans-running, I felt permitted to re-visit and re-embrace Daoist ideas. Daoism was the cultural tradition I was brought up with in Singapore. Educating myself about its theories was challenging. Many notions felt exotic and esoteric. Sinologists and Daoist scholars may consider my interpretation clumsy. Yet, my ‘Daoist expedition’ felt fun, familiar and intuitive, unlike when I explored other schools of thoughts. Although – or, paradoxically, *because* – I have been an adult living in the West, I felt authorised to *play with* and *personalise* the Daoist texts for my own aims. Other runners sing a similar tune. Runner-novelist Joyce Carol Oates maps running with our dreams, our past as well as creativity. When we dream, we possess ‘peculiar powers of locomotion’, says Oates. These are:

‘[...] atavistic remnants, the hallucinatory memory of a distant ancestor for whom the physical being, charged with adrenaline in emergency situations, was indistinguishable from the spiritual or intellectual. In running, “spirit” seems to pervade the body; as musicians experience the uncanny phenomenon of tissue memory in their fingertips, so the runner seems to experience in feet, lungs, quickened heartbeat, an extension of the imagining self’. (1999)

Oates’ notion of the adrenaline-charged ‘distant ancestor’ seems to refer to the first endurance hunters chasing antelopes while fuelled by the runner’s high. Her vision supports my argument about the similarities between runner’s high and correlative thinking, both of which relate to the subconscious, and are spontaneous and imaginative. Oates’ argument also correlates with that of runner-physician Mike Stroud’s, about how running as our ancestors did is our cure for the ill-effects of our sedentary lifestyle today (chapter I). The thread is strongest when we look at the contemporary marathon. Non-professional runners take about 3.5 to 5.5 hours to complete 26 miles (Marathon Guide

2006).<sup>36</sup> This may be directly correlated with what our ancestors accomplished, which was around 20 miles in 6 hours per hunt (Liebenberg 2008). Running with this idea, marathon record holder Jim F. Fixx states that running is the key for us to reassert ‘our kinship with ancient man’ (cited in Heinrich 2002, p.10). A key instigator of the running boom in the 1970’s in America, Fixx argues that the runner reaches ‘directly back along the endless chain of history’. Another runner, Shawn Found, the US champion for the 25km race in 2000, even thinks that our act of running re-enacts the poetry of our forerunners’ hunt:

‘When you experience the run, you [...] relive the hunt. Running is about 30 miles of chasing prey that can outrun you in a sprint, and tracking it down and bringing life back to your village. It’s a beautiful thing’. (Cited in Heinrich 2002, p.163)

Runner-biologist Bernd Heinrich extends these views to say that our ‘long range vision’ empowers us to dream and create our own fates. This vision is that which propels us to run in the first place and to run after even the animal sprinters, and to finally run them down:

‘It was not just sweat glands that made us premier endurance predators. It was also our minds fuelled by passion. Our enthusiasm for the chase had to be like the migratory birds’ passion to fly off on their great journeys, as if propelled by dreams. A quick pounce and kill requires no dream. Dreams are the beacons that carry us far ahead into the hunt. Into the future, and into a marathon. We can visualise far ahead. We see our quarry even as it recedes over the hills and into the mists. It is still in our mind’s eye, still a target, and imagination becomes the main motivator’. (2002, p.177)

Heinrich’s notion of how we are ‘moulded by fierce dreams’ runs with an aim of trans-running that I appropriated from Bruce Chatwin’s argument, which is how running can drive or stimulate us to undertake *political* and *personal* revolutions (chapter II). Heinrich’s argument also points to how running empowers the individual, the same way Daoist expert Kristofer Schipper argues how Daoist ways allows us to cry, ‘my destiny is within me, not in Heaven!’ (chapter I).

Thus, I invite critics to run *physically* and *poetically*. Trans-run, and you may become free to re-connect with the *past*, forgotten or the subconscious, as well as with the present and the future. This is how you may become your own navigator of your own fate.

### **Message 3: Free Yourself To Be *Paradoxical***

For an example of something that correlates *past*, *present* and future, you may look at *Kaidie’s Trans-Run*. Each output is an ever-transforming work-in-progress and *product* of its internet-mediated times. So specific each film, Tweet or installation is to its time, that they are *transient*, *transitory* and *in transit*. That makes my artwork *pertinent*, and even

<sup>36</sup> My first marathon was the Farnham Pilgrims Marathon in September 2010. This took place at the hilly countryside and took me nearly 5.5 hours. My second, at the London Virgin Marathon in April 2011, took 4 hours 24 minutes 37 seconds. This placed me at the position of 3484 in the women’s open category, and an overall position of 14,914 out of a total participation of nearly 40,000 runners.

common, to the point of it destabilising its own status as an artwork. That said, as a Daoism-inspired enterprise, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* can also be said to be *paradoxical*. Rather than a passive reflection, the artwork can stand out from the crowd, and be regarded as a *pungent* sign or metaphor of its times. Rather than just being transformed, it can be *transformative*. It can even be *predictive* of the future, as a harbinger of things to come.

It is tricky to spot Kaidie in the world wide web, amongst the billions of digital denizens. Given the volume and speed of the traffic of the Information Superhighway, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* can easily be overlooked. Kaidie's restless 'running' about across different social media platforms, making 'friends', publishing clips and so on were commonplace (Figure from Kaidie's world 56). The figure of 'Kaidie' embodied the typical or even universal behaviour of most other online users circa 2009-2012. Yet *Kaidie's Trans-Run* is an artwork. It was carefully-designed and had specific parameters, such as a delineated time-frame and a storyline. I also assigned the character a name and identity – or identities – that depart from me. That said, it was a process of trial-and-error, discovery and renewal. I learnt to find my way around my new digital environs, at the same time that technological changes took place and transformed it in real time. Another paradoxical aspect was the fact that my blog posts and Tweets were based on my experience. Kaidie was not a computer-generated algorithm that mimicked the behaviour of everyone else. When 'Kaidie' blogged about running into racist children in Nondon, I was documenting my confrontation with racist children in London (Figure from Kaidie's world 20, p.86). That is to say, while generic, Kaidie was also specific. Had I invented an alternative platform outside of the social media world, or created my own self-contained online environment, my artwork may arguably have been more noticeable. Nonetheless, trans-running is not about running away, but experiencing with our body by working (from) within, yet in a way that is also *pungent*. Thus, it was critical that I immersed myself in the digital 'swamp'. Nestled within popular and powerful platforms such as Facebook, I felt that I was in a better position to critique them. My artwork was self-conscious in its approach, too. I declared its artifice by announcing the duration of Kaidie's life-span on my social media profiles, while my digital manipulations of images were crude and pointed to their own Photoshop processes. (Figures from Kaidie's world 57-58) These moves could help to make my audience and myself stay alert about the 'digital hallucination'. Indeed, an audience member of *Kaidie's Trans-Run* who 'got' the joke pointed out how Kaidie, in her ubiquity, re-presented a heightened or even idealised version of themselves. (Figure from Kaidie's world 59) For them, Kaidie was an 'externalised' embodiment of their sub-consciousness as they traversed the online world.

 Filters



**David Moss** if you haven't done it yet, check out the multiplying, vanishing, earth folding, quantum Jinn that is Kaidie...art with purpose, legs, and smiles, art that makes the bubbles where we all reside....truly on the case!!



**LIFE 3.0: TRAVELS IN BETWEEN LIFE 1.0 and LIFE 2.0**  
 A RESTART/REPLAY ON THE 132nd-DAY BIRTHDAY OF KAIDIE: SO WHAT/WHY/WHEN/FOR WHOM/HOW WAS LIFE 3.0 AGAIN? <http://3rdlifekaidie.com/turdlives/>  
 Kaidie's cyber-hyper-sur-sub-non-anti-pro-realities.  
 by: Kaidie Nondon

 45 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Share](#)

 **Paul Cha** likes this.



**Paul Cha** well said- david you & i are both big fans of hers.....go kaide!!  
 43 minutes ago



**David Moss** Go Kaidie!! :)  
 42 minutes ago



**Paul Cha** the omnipresent kaide- are you watching over us?  
 41 minutes ago



**David Moss** i think she is, even if she doesn't know it, either she is an earth angel or Jinn, they are maybe the same thing, a bodhisattva for sure!  
 39 minutes ago



**Paul Cha** amen!  
 38 minutes ago



**Kaidie Nondon** Yes am watching over all of you mortal sentient beings – now that I have just woken up from my mortal sentient sleep. Let me clean my glued eyes to watch more carefully. And put on my glasses.  
 about a minute ago · [Delete](#)

Figure from Kaidie's world 56: 'Socialising With My "Friends"'. From Kaide's Facebook pages. (Tan 2013b)

flickr® from YAHOO!

Home The Tour Sign Up Explore Upload

☆ Favorite Actions ✕ ✉ f t Share ✕ ← Newer



**Kaidie undercover as Queen Roach.**

Kaidie and her army of roaches just before her Metamorphosis into the Roach Queen. Now she can explore the underbelly of Nondon.

Figure from Kaidie's world 57: 'Kaidie As Roach'. (Tan 2009b)

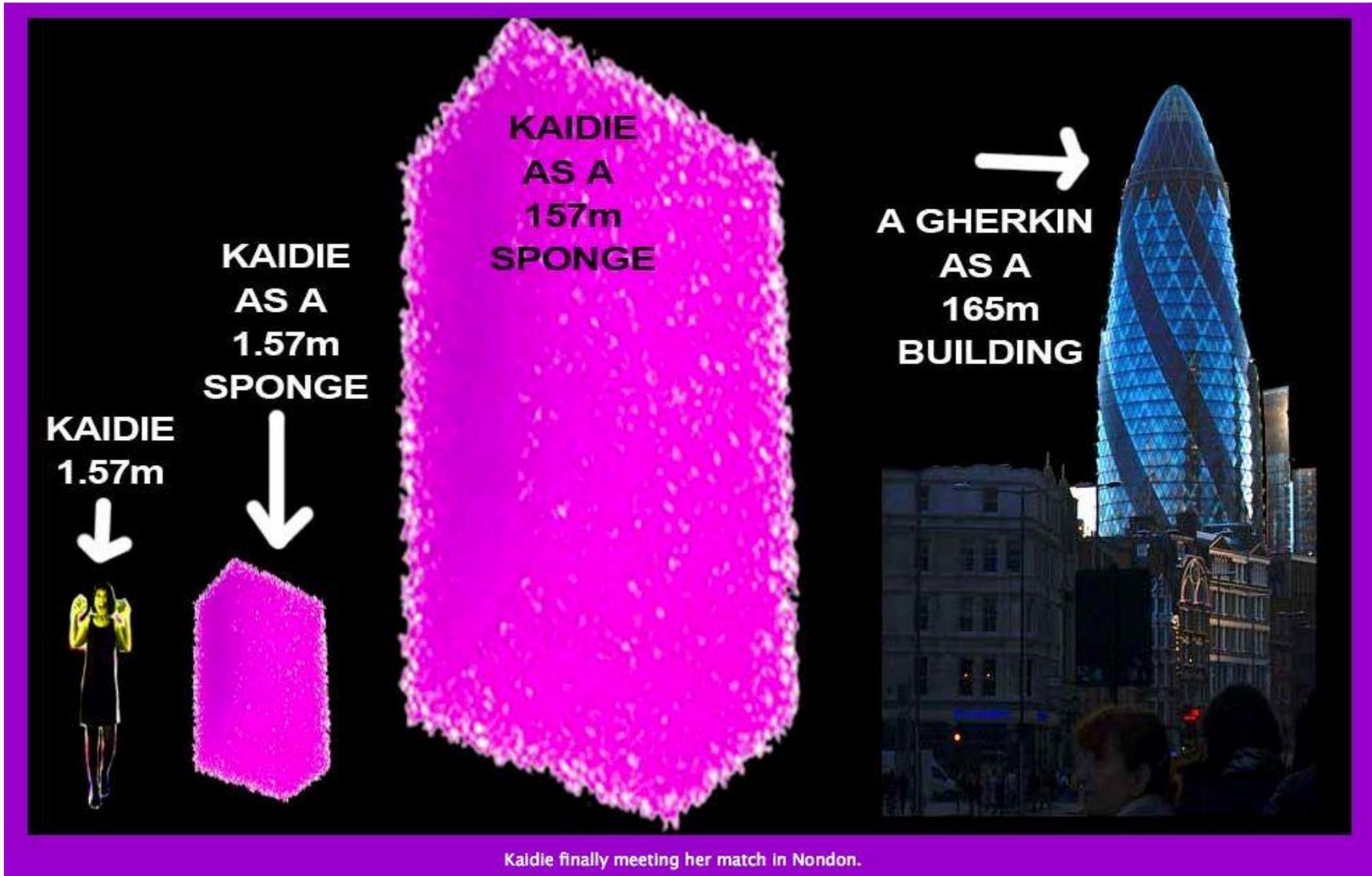


Figure from Kaidie's world 58: 'Kaidie Transforms into A Massive Sponge to Massively Soak Up The Festive Nondon Mood'. (Tan 2009a)

Perhaps you know. Perhaps you're just braver than I. After all you've told us what happens in the end. You've scratched your epitaph in the stone of your name. The pebble on a string around your neck. XXX days remain. Like a hit counter at the bottom of the page. Kaidie, you are a temporary self. A universe that exists among many possible worlds, for a limited time only. Unrepeatable. Before vanishing. This is the same as all selves. All worlds. All friends who disappear. The only difference is that you admit to it. You make it your project. You make your death your life.

Who did I meet last week? When did you peel off? If I had been watching more closely, would I have seen you depart?

Jul 12, 2010 @ 20:19



Kaidie

Hello CFTE, and other possible combinations, implications, extrapolations, incomplete, and complete meanings of CFTE,

Thank you for your words. For the record, I think it is the most detailed comment that we have ever received on this blog. Congratulations.

It was quite fascinating an interpretation, and, as importantly, a beautifully-written piece of text. It is an intricately layered piece about many things, including but not exclusively about this, which as you have

Figure from Kaidie's world 59: 'Comment by Reader "CFTE" about how Kaidie Is A Stand In for Everyone Else, Too'. (Tan 2010b)

Hence, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* embodies a *paradox* – and this paradox was liberating for me. This *practice-related* PhD thesis is at once an artwork, as well as more than that. More than an abstract musing, it was also a testament, witness, critic and *participant* of its time, as well as a life lived, played and played out, by myself. Media artist Jon Thomson tells me that we may think of Kaidie as a ‘metaphor’, and even a ‘cipher’ or a ‘code’ of its times (2013b). For him, a strength of *Kaidie's Trans-Run* is how it signifies a *particular* historical moment. It is:

‘a marking of a moment in flux. It fixes something that is not fixed and hence gives it good reason to exist’. (2013a).

Such a move is critical particularly if our times are rapidly transforming with the ever-newer technologies, and can be considered as ‘throwaway’, he adds. The work serves as a ‘locator of a point’ in history that has the foresight to articulate the way things were prior to something such as augmented reality becoming normalised, says Thomson. Indeed, my blog entries, Tweets and films can function as snapshots of how things were like over the duration of one thousand days in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kaidie is at once a result of (being enabled by internet technologies, and following the running trend for instance) and a response to (Kaidie as a parody of our smart technological gadgets today) its times. That trans-running is impermanent may be understood as symptomatic of today, which continues to undergo breathless transformations. That the rate of change is so ‘seismic’ arguably makes it urgent for such an undertaking to exist.

This message hence refutes Baudrillard’s claims of running being ‘a strange sign of weakness’ and ‘harbinger of new fanaticism’. Instead, I urge you to mobilise the new ‘fanaticism’ of running – and the new ‘fanaticism’ of the internet – to free yourself and embrace the *paradox* of being of the *present* as well as the future; to be both a *product* of your times and a *pungent* harbinger of things to come; to be not just a distant observer, but an immersive *participant* that goes with the flow; to theorise, generalise and surmise, as well as to live, test out, experiment, explore and make mistakes – and to be *paradoxical*.

#### **Message 4: Free Yourself To Embrace The *Physical And Poetic*, To Run After Ideas And Practices, and to *Transform* Them Into Something New**

Our ability to visualise far ahead as runners proves that running is not just a *physical* endeavour, nor is it that it is ‘only’ about the management of the body as Finkielkraut claims. When we run, we may manage, cultivate and train our long range vision. I argue that this is a *poetic process*. We run after ideas and practices, as well as play with, and run with them, and to extend, re-imagine and *transform* into something new. Hence, running may make us ‘Rambo’ *plus* ‘Rimbaud’, and *more*. Had our forefathers not run, there would not have been any civilisation – whether ‘born with the promenade’ or not – to speak of.

This message is itself an extrapolation from my own experience of running. In fact, without my own long range vision, this thesis, the artwork and the trans-runner ‘Kaidie’ would not

have existed. It was also by way of extending and playing with ideas that I built up my research. After surveying different discourses, I pursued avenues that I found meaningful, then drew my own extrapolations and transformed them. On a more general level, running opened for me a new pathway about a new kind of *practice-related* research. In the past 3.5 years, I streamlined a new way for myself to integrate research and practice. I also invented a new ‘voice’ for my work. In many ways, my thesis is a *work-in-progress*, cultivated from my last two decades’ work as an artist. What I learnt from running has pushed my work to a new level. It was my own episode of the runner’s high, and my subsequent formalisation of trans-running as a mode of thinking that gave me a clarity about this new voice, which inhabits my cine-essays and performance-lectures, too. Hence, running has shown me a new way to synthesise my practice and research. I am excited to see how it can continue to transform my work and identity as an artist and researcher.

This message is also an extrapolation from visions proposed by other runners and scientists about running, in particular Bernd Heinrich, who says that:

‘Sometimes I wonder if this ability to have long-range vision, if not also the drive to explore, might not also have been the boost that gave us our *unique* brain power to extrapolate’. (2002 p.177)

What Heinrich seems to be saying is that our ability to visualise far ahead was that which motivated the endurance hunter to chase the antelope. In the absence of a prey, this vision becomes transformed into the power of extrapolation, which teaches us to extend ideas, play with them, and transform them into something new. In linking this skill of extrapolation with dreams, we may correlate it with Hall and Ames’ notion of correlative thinking, which is also associated with the subconscious and the poetic, and frame the long range vision as a sub-category of correlative thinking. Heinrich himself seems to apply what he says, as his proposal is an extrapolation of his earlier argument. That I have applied and made new arguments from Heinrich’s proposal further proves that his idea has mileage.

Heinrich’s poetic vision seems to be proven correct a decade later by Mark Mattson, a renowned professor of neuroscience at the Johns Hopkins University. In a paper entitled ‘Evolutionary Aspects of Human Exercise – Born to Run Purposefully’, Mattson proposes several points that run with what we have seen previously (chapter IV). He states that apart from our physical features, it was the ‘increased size of the human brain relative to other primates’ that made us such natural runners. In fact, our heritage as endurance hunters was critical in equipping us with complex thinking skills:

‘[...] distance running in our human ancestors was purposeful and required complex cognitive processes. The retention and recall of the details (topography, potential food sources, water sources, etc.) of large areas of land was likely required to maximize the acquisition of resources that were “spread thin” in a timely manner. Individuals who possessed superior cognitive processing ability and endurance running capacity would be expected to have an advantage over those with lesser mental and endurance capabilities. [...] Not only does exercise strengthen muscle cells, it also strengthens brain cells’. (2012)

Mattson's radical argument upends the cliché that runners are merely 'muscleheads'. Previously, I proposed that running may make us smart or smarter, but Mattson is saying that running was instrumental in shaping human beings' cognitive skills – and, by extension, our ability to extrapolate, that is, to expand on and transform ideas and practices. Mattson ends his article by insisting on the superiority of running over other activities:

'Why sit when you can walk, why walk when you can run?' (2012)

Beyond the scientific world, there are yet other notions that support my message about how running may liberate us to draw poetic visions. According to the OED, the word 'run' refers to continuity and extension. It refers to 'continue, go on, last; to remain existent or operative' as well as 'to have course or continuance, to go on, to go, proceed' and 'to extend or stretch'. Additionally, run refers to thoughts that 'revolve in the mind, to occur or return persistently to the memory'. These definitions also align running with concepts that characterises the Daoist world, such as transformation and renewal. It can be proposed that it was running that also shapes Lola's long range vision in *Run Lola Run*, so that she resolves the crisis at hand, and ends up with the happy ending that she desired.

Hence, the historian Alain Finkielkraut can still benefit from taking history lessons. As runner-geographer Alan Latham notes,

'The French intellectuals are wrong: Running is good for the mind.' (2008a)

To Finkielkraut and others: I urge you to run. When you run, you may forge a kinship with our ancestors, who, moulded by their dreams, took their first steps. Running may fuel your ability to extrapolate, and to transform ideas and practices into something new. That is to say, when you run, you are also sharpening your long range vision. In so doing, you may weave the *physical* and *poetic processes* of running into a beautiful *interplay*. Running may be understood as a *product* – and extension – of your *passion* and dreams. It may quicken your heartbeat and enlarge your heart – both literally and metaphorically so.

### **Message 5: Free Yourself To Freely Correlate, And To Become A Mega-And Meta-Metaphor**

The trans-runner may not just be a *pungent* metaphor of their time. As we freely correlate, we map together disparate metaphors, and act as a *mega*-metaphor. The trans-runner may even become a metaphor of the metaphor, or a *meta*-metaphor, since the metaphor resembles the trans-runner in its restlessness. Hence, Baudrillard is wrong to regard running as a 'strange sign' of 'weakness'. The trans-runner's message has not 'lost all meaning'. Instead, as a mega- and meta-metaphor, the trans-runner is a *poetic* and *powerful* figure, in both the literal and metaphorical sense of the word 'figure'. The trans-runner is loaded with signification – including signifying the metaphor.

To begin with, trans-running has an inextricable kinship with the metaphor in many ways. My thesis already concerns running physically as well as metaphorically. Additionally, I

have presented my arguments by correlating points together in a metaphorical way. I have attempted to metaphorically traverse across cultures and disciplines, to link West with East (the Latin and Chinese words for ‘discourse’) and the esoteric with the mainstream (*taiji* with the current running boom). Also, throughout my thesis, I tagged trans-running and the trans-runner with different metaphors. They included ‘ambassador’ and ‘toolkit’. My touch was loose and light. The metaphors I threw about are multiple rather than precise. I made no distinction between ‘metaphor’, ‘correlation’, ‘sign’, and ‘mapping’.

Indeed, ‘mapping’ is another metaphor that artist Jon Thomson activates to describe trans-running. In fact, the trans-runner may be considered as a mapping of multiple metaphors, or a *mega*-metaphor. After all, it is arguably a product of its times, and a linear and fixed framework will not work for our fast-changing and densely-layered times. Curator-academics Peter Ride and Andrew Dewdney describe their theorisation of the digital age in *New Media Handbook* as a ‘mapping exercise’. They argue that a ‘mapping’ allows them to reveal ‘various levels of connections and disconnections within and across the technical and conceptual terminologies’ (2006, p.58). Mapping ideas in a manner that cuts across large cross-sections of a given landscape is necessary particularly because:

‘[...] our subject is not already unified, it is not already one thing, but rather has a number of different layers and surfaces that are not only simply visible or exposed. To extend the metaphor, we can’t spatialise all the dimensions of the subject on one plane. New media is a complex and layered subject that includes technical, historical, practical and theoretical knowledge. New media is characterised by its hybridity, or by the convergence or overlap of previously distinct media operations, skills and techniques. It follows, therefore, that it will contain different orders of knowledge and understanding’. (2006, p.26)

Like Dewdney and Ride, I used a ‘mapping approach’ to interpret the digital era (chapter III). Beyond the digital landscape, the leitmotif of mapping pervades my thesis. After all, the subject of my thesis is multi-layered, hybrid and diverse – just like the digital age itself. It is just as well that the metaphor of mapping matches the physical and poetic processes of running. Running and mapping are both spatial processes – and so is correlative thinking (Miller 2003, p.60). Hence, we may think of the concept of trans-running itself as a ‘mapping’ within which disparate discourses from diverse disciplines and cultures are enmeshed. The metaphor of mapping comes alive in the metaphor of the trans-running-ambassador, who can be read as a mapping or a ‘mapper’. After all, the ambassador was historically ‘well-travelled and knowledgeable’, and who ‘crossed boundaries and had a great deal of contact with people’ of disparate backgrounds (Gotaas 2009, p.14). As a mapping of multiple metaphors, the trans-runner is, thus, a *mega*-metaphor.

The trans-runner may embody yet more metaphors. In the process of running about, the ambassador may not just be *transferring* messages, ideas and thoughts, but metaphors, too. After all, the word ‘metaphor’ is itself a highly restless figure – just like the trans-runner. The OED defines the metaphor as ‘the figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to that which it is properly applicable’ (Simpson & Weiner 1989, vols.IX, p.676). This originates from Aristotle’s metaphor in *Poetics*, in which he calls it ‘the application of an alien name by transference

either from genus to species, or from species to species, or by analogy' (2008, p.21). Metaphor's root word '*metapherein*' also points to movement, as it is a 'transfer, carry over', while 'meta-' refers to 'over, across', and '*pherein*' 'to carry, bear' (Harper 2001a). Running with recent thinkers like Susan Sontag, John Urry, a Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Lancaster University, broadens Aristotle's 'metaphor' to include 'the wide variety of modes of substitution of one figure onto another' (2000, pp.21–22). Urry adds that 'such a process suffuses language and meaning' as well as thinking-processes in general. In saying so, Urry seems to concur with Hall and Ames' argument about the inseparable bond between metaphor with correlative thinking. If we turn to philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu's notion of the metaphor, we find out that the metaphor is in fact restless. For the Taiwanese-American, the metaphor 'ferries us out of our familiar realm to the other shore of meaning' – and 'has to move' and is 'always moving' (1997, p.60). Wu relates this to Lao Zi's advice for us to stay soft and nimble, to be what Wu transcribes as 'living imperfect against hard fixation of the dead perfect' (1997, p.87). To extrapolate from Wu's imagery, we may picture the metaphor transferring one figure to another, not via the ferry but our (metaphorical) feet. This transference is not fixed, but happens again and again. The metaphor is hence something that is alive, and remains imperfect and is always renewed – just like the trans-runner. Hence, we may metaphorise the trans-runner as a metaphor itself, or a metaphor about the metaphor, a '*meta-metaphor*'. Additionally, we may now associate the 'trans-' in trans-running with the notion of *transference*.

To Baudrillard and other critics, I invite you to trans-run and act as a *mega-metaphor* that maps together disparate metaphors, as well as a metaphor of the metaphor, or a *meta-metaphor*, and become a *poetic* figure.

## **Message 6: Free Yourself To Join In The Celebration Of Human Togetherness And Resilience**

Baudrillard complains that the spectacle of marathon runners signifies a 'futile, superhuman' effort and 'demonstrative suicide', and that they seem to be bringing the 'message of a catastrophe for the human race', so much so that he was nearly 'moved to tears'. I argued how the visual impact of the runner, either alone or *en masse*, may look rebellious, especially vis-à-vis the spectacle constructed by businesses and bureaucracy (chapter II). Had Baudrillard understood the *political* and *poetic potential* of such a scene, such histrionics could have been sidestepped. The philosopher fails to grasp how the 'new fanaticism' of running as a popular sport that is supported by critical mass makes it especially promising if transformed into a public demonstration of shared ideals. Had Baudrillard allowed himself to join in the fun, he could have enjoyed himself, and be moved to tears by the spectacular displays of *human* effort.

As Kaidie, I enjoyed nine running races, several of which involved entire towns. Running events are usually free of charge for supporters and spectators. This differs from, for instance, the annual Formula 1 car races held in Singapore, in which the entire civic district is cordoned off, and which are enjoyed only by the select few who can afford the exorbitant tickets. Running in the 2011 London Virgin Marathon and the 2012 Bath Half, I felt as if I

was participating in the Mardi Gras in Rio. The legendary ‘British reserve’ was absent. Several runners donned fancy dresses, a delight to other runners and spectators alike. As if the runner’s high was infectious, the spectators cheered hysterically, which in turn soothed our long-distance ordeal. They created impromptu parties, and barbecued – and offered – food to us as we ran by. Children asked for ‘high-fives’, or handed us jelly-babies. Pastors emerged from mass to sprinkle ‘holy water’, which I – under normal circumstances a strict atheist – also went for. Whether you are a first-timer aiming to ‘merely’ complete the race, or professional targeting to break records, the crowd’s support was bound to move you. (Figures 26-27) Undeniably, commercial hype and fanfare can surround such events. After all, these are perfect publicity vehicles for sport drinks and charity organisations alike. All the same, it does not mean that we cannot find ways to enjoy them on a human-to-human level, rather than to sit indoors and shut ourselves away on high, dry land. Despite being an introvert who normally avoids large events and who prefers running solitarily, I performed relatively well in these races. I enjoyed myself so much that that I took part in an average of three races annually. Perhaps such events are our urban proxies of the traditional village fete, street theatre or other rituals. The contemporary marathon may well signify a very ‘human’ effort for us to encounter and relate to other human beings.

That the 2013 Boston Marathon became the *mise-en-scene* of a terrorist attack is a further testament to the social and political standing of running today. The tragedy only made runners and non-runners alike more stubborn to keep running, and to make a stand against terrorism and violence. Even though the threat of another attack was imminent, organisers did not cancel the London Marathon which was scheduled to be held a week after the attack. The show went on, and even had a record turnout of 700,000 spectators. Sports Editor David Bond reports of a ‘quiet defiance’ and a sense of ‘solidarity’ (BBC News 2013). Although the ‘mass appeal of sports will always make it a target for terrorists’, London’s response shows that ‘it won’t be cowered’, says Bond. If a further proof of how the marathon symbolises human-togetherness is needed, we may find it in the occupied state of Palestine. On the same day of the London Marathon, Palestine held its first ever – and definitely not last – marathon. Its name? *Right To Movement*. (Figures 28-29)

After the terror of the Boston Marathon, USA President Barack Obama issued a public statement. Obama’s words send a strong message to Baudrillard, and also serve as a good conclusion to this section:

‘We will all be with you as you learn to stand and walk and, yes, run again. [...] Your resolve is the greatest rebuke to whoever committed this heinous act. [...] [We] may be momentarily knocked off our feet - but we’ll pick ourselves up. We’ll keep going. We will finish the race. [...] [We] can’t let something like this stop us. [...] [We will] push on, to persevere, to not grow weary, to not get faint even when it hurts. Even when our heart aches, we summon the strength that maybe we didn’t even know we had, and we carry on; we finish the race. [...] [We] know that somewhere around the bend, a stranger has a cup of water. Around the bend, somebody’s there to boost our spirits. On that toughest mile, just when we think that we’ve hit a wall, someone will be there to cheer us on and pick us up if we fall. [...] We carry on. We race. We strive. [...] [The] world will return to this great American city to run harder than ever and to cheer even louder for the 118th Boston Marathon. Bet on it’. (2013)



Figure 26: 'British Humour Without the British Reserve'. (Redington 2012)



Figure 27: 'The Marathon as a 21st Century Village Fete'. (BBC News 2011b)

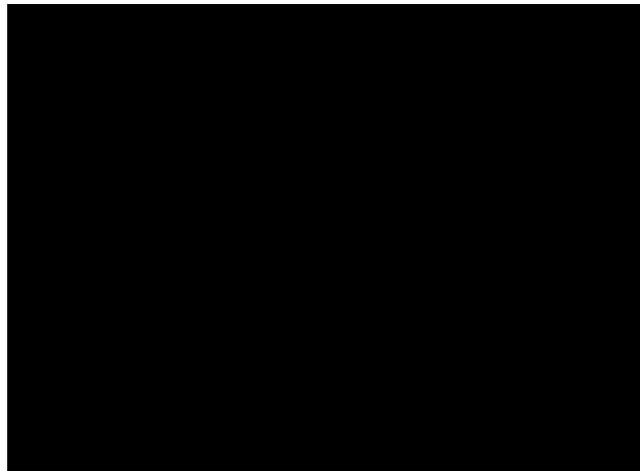


Figure 28: 'Terror at the Boston Marathon'. (CBS News 2013)



Figure 29: 'Right To Movement'. Screen-captures of the homepage of the Palestine's first marathon. (Palestine Marathon 2013)

## Message 7: Free Yourself To Be Happy

I argue that Finkielkraut is wrong to suggest that only the cultural tradition of walking is worthy, or worthy of study. Running can be a sensitive, spiritual and meditative act. It can make you happy, and this happiness may be conducive to creativity.

It was running – not psychotherapy, drugs (legal or illegal), religion or running away – that assisted me to manage my own crises in the past 3.5 years. Occasional bouts of the runner's high, and a general increased level of well-being granted me the permission to embrace happiness. My 'black dog' appeared less often. When it did, I felt better-equipped to fend it off, or to work with it. I learnt to channel my 'high' – and not just melancholy – to be creative. More generally, whenever I ran, I felt transported to a dimension in which I felt serene and free from anxiety, and which I felt I owned. Too restless to sit down to meditate, or to conduct the slow supple dance of *taiji*, I felt as if I was meditating-in-motion when I ran. Running made me feel stronger to face the world. Novelist Abdelkader Benali, too, says that running liberates him:

'I picked up running because I was fed up of standing still. Since my childhood I ran and it liberated something [in] me. Like ice is being melted by the sun. So running brought light in my life. [...] It empowered me like no other sport or thing could do'. (2012)

Likewise, artist Jo Volley considers running to be an avenue to happiness. In fact, she tells me that she first began running after her brother passed away:

'I'd gone to yoga about twice a week up until then but found I couldn't do it anymore, as it was so internal and just got upset. [...] I love the sense of freedom and when the breathing is right I feel I could run forever'. (2012)

These testaments about the positive correlation between running and happiness run with the one of the leitmotifs of the thesis, which is how running has been a means for human beings to deal with crises on both a personal and societal level (chapter I). It is, thus, time for the art and academic worlds to begin appreciating the poetic effects of running-induced endorphin or endocannabinoid. This can be a new extension to existing research about the role of man-made chemicals in the cultural tradition of walking. It goes without saying that many people enjoy walks without the accompaniment of drugs or alcohol. That said, amongst the wealth of literature that exists about walking, several of the more iconic ones involve descriptions of the impact of drugs and alcohol in their trips. They include Charles Baudelaire's *Wine and Hashish* (1851) and *Artificial Paradise* (1860), and Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of the Opium Eater* (1821). It can be ventured that without the crutches of exogenous drugs, their walks might not have been as uplifting. The contents and style of their works may have differed, and even the 'Western civilisation' that was 'born with the promenade' that Finkielkraut talks about may not have rolled out the way it had. In the context of the art world-at large, we are also familiar with the stories of how a few artists had a dependency on drugs and alcohol. Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Jackson Pollock are but a few famous examples. It is true that Lao Zi and the ancient Daoist wanderers indulged in wine – and even mercury and other radical alchemical substances –

in their bid to enhance their walks. I have also written about how the Tarahumaras would imbibe large quantities of beer before they run, while ambassadors chewed cocoa leaves (chapter IV). Still, what makes running stand out is that the process itself can generate mind- and mood-altering transformations. Running is a wonder drug that many runners run after. That is why runners are not be-suited, says Alan Latham (2008b). Although suits seem to be the sartorial choice of the many intellectuals, *flaneurs*, dandies, academics and artists alike, runners must perspire to earn their ‘high’. That it demands physical labour can explain why philosophers and artists alike find running ‘undignified’. While American musician Lou Reed celebrated his drug-addled trip in his 1972 song *Walk On The Wild Side*, active around the same time in the same country were trailblazers of the running revolution who sang a different tune. For George Sheehan, his daily one-hour running routine transports him to the wild side, affording him a ‘natural high’ and ‘altered states of consciousness that alcohol supplied so fleetingly’ (1978, p.49). He adds:

‘By that rushing stream I come alive.’ (1982)

While we are at it, we may also consider the creative effects of happiness. Such an enquiry can contribute to existing discourses about the correlation between creativity and depression. Vincent Van Gogh, Virginia Woolf, Michelangelo are a creative people well-known for their ‘black dogs’. Yet, it can be said that such a link can sometimes be romanticised, perhaps by artists who are prone to self-aggrandising or self-pathologising. After all, there seems to be a view that artists are meant to appear tortured and to suffer heroically for their art. As Bruce Sterling’s quote suggests, many would not be caught dead smiling or looking blissful – not least while putting one foot after the other, and sweating.

Physician Mike Stroud argues that deprived as they are of endorphins, those favouring a sedentary lifestyle ‘inadvertently spend much of [their lives] in a slightly depressed mental state’ (2004, p.55). Hence, to Finkelkraut and others of the walking-around world, I urge you to run, and you may free yourself from feeling bitter. Run, and you may free yourself to move on, and begin thinking about the role of endogenous chemicals in your creativity. Run, and you have no need for external drugs. Run, and embrace happiness.

## **Message 8: Free Yourself From The Notions Of Life and Death**

Speaking of happiness, we may use trans-running as a way for us to address a fear of death that many people may have. Baudrillard is wrong to say that runners are ‘all seeking death’. With its restlessness and playfulness, I will show that trans-running may be a life-affirming worldview that frees us to think about the notions of life and death as organic and open-ended. If death is rendered as no longer fearsome, we may become happy.

In *Kaidie’s Trans-Run*, death and life are elastic concepts that she toys with. Kaidie’s purpose of living was said to trans-run for 1000 days to find ‘A/The Point of Life’. Kaidie’s ‘mother’ died while giving birth to her, so Kaidie assumed the roles of mother, father and wayward child all at once. (Figure from Kaidie’s world 30, p.102) From the period of July to September 2012, Kaidie got involved in the ‘Nondon Olympics’. (Figures from Kaidie’s

world 60-61) When her time finally came on its last day, Kaidie took her own life by running into the Olympic flames. (Figure from Kaidie's world 62) Rather than sorrow, Kaidie ended on a ecstatic 'high', since she knew that it signified a new beginning. Her euphoria was enhanced by her 'trans-runner's high', which was achieved after running diligently for 1000 days. The celebratory mood was intensified by the Games-induced feel-good atmosphere that pervaded Nondon then. However, before this 'final' death, Kaidie had freely left us – and returned to us – throughout the 1000-day journey. (Figures from Kaidie's world 63-67) Kaidie also left behind several loose threads for us to pick up and work on. Until the end, many questions were left unanswered. *What is 'A/The Point Of Life'? Were there several points, or was it all pointless, like it was in Kaidie's augmented-reality game with 10,000 Outcomes? Was it all a laugh, like Monty Python's Meaning of Life (Gilliam & Jones 2004)? Was trans-running the means or end to the point of life? Was that it? Or, was Kaidie's life and death a continuum? Was trans-running itself the point of it all? Has Kaidie moved on so that you, the next generation of trans-runner, can run this world? Was the task of transferring the message of trans-running to you the point of it all?*

Kaidie aside, several people analogise running with life, growth, decay and death. Obama is one of them, as we have seen in his message. After all, we journey forwards to the finishing line in a running session or race the same way we journey towards the finishing line, of death, in life. In a run, and in particular a race, many runners compete against themselves to beat their 'personal best'. Of his record-breaking championship in his 100km race in 1981, Bernd Heinrich states that he was running it 'all by myself, against myself' (2002, p.266). Haruki Murakami similarly says:

'For me running is both exercise and a metaphor. Running day after day, piling up the races, bit by bit, I raise the bar, and by clearing each level I elevate myself. at least that's why I put in effort day after day: to raise my own level. [...] The point is whether or not I improved over yesterday. In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be'. (2008, p.10)

In fact, Murakami's *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* can be read as a poetic discourse of running as a means to negotiate his mortality (2002 pp.18-152). In a tone that recalls Antoine in Jean-Paul Sarte's existential classic, *Nausea*, Murakami writes that running allows him to think of his own progress (professional) and decline (physical) over the years ('now here I am living in this unimaginable world'; 'struck by how pitiful and pointless this little container called me is, what a lame, shabby being I am'; 'sad spreadsheet of my life that reveals how much my debts far outweigh my assets'). In one self-deprecatingly melodramatic passage, Murakami describes watching 'young blonde girls' swinging their ponytails 'proudly' as they run, and distils from it the metaphor of how 'one generation takes over from the next'. He allows them to overtake him, which is 'the way it should be', for, 'this is how the world is handed over in this world':

'[...] I doubt I'll ever be able to run the way I used to. I'm ready to accept that. [...] And time does its job much more faithfully, much more accurately, than I ever do. Ever since time began (when was that, I wonder?), it's been moving ever forward without a moment's rest'. (2002, p.121)

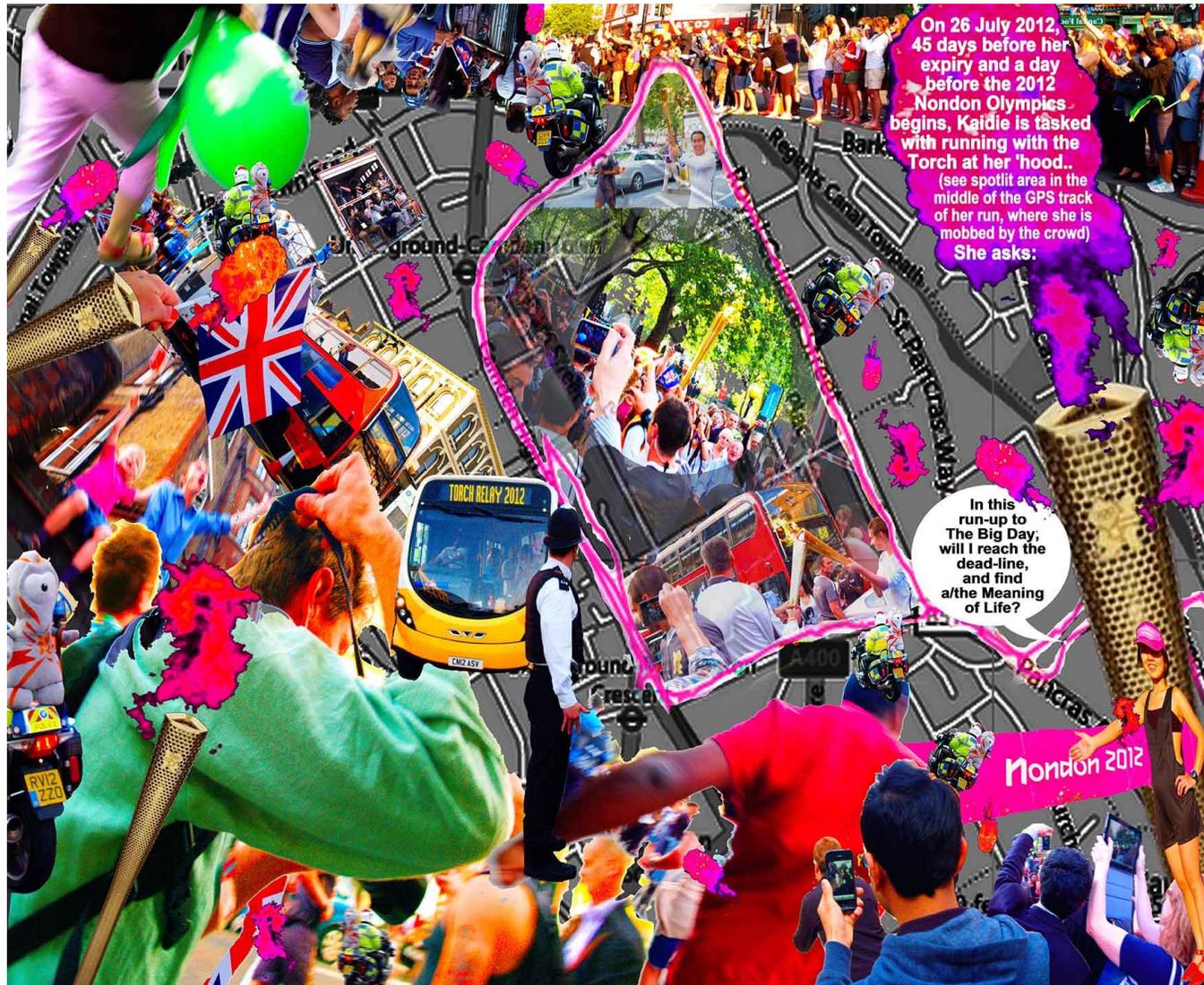


Figure from Kaidie's world 60: 'Kaidie Runs With The Olympic Torch'. This digital collage features Kaidie's GPS track running after the torch relay. (Tan 2012)



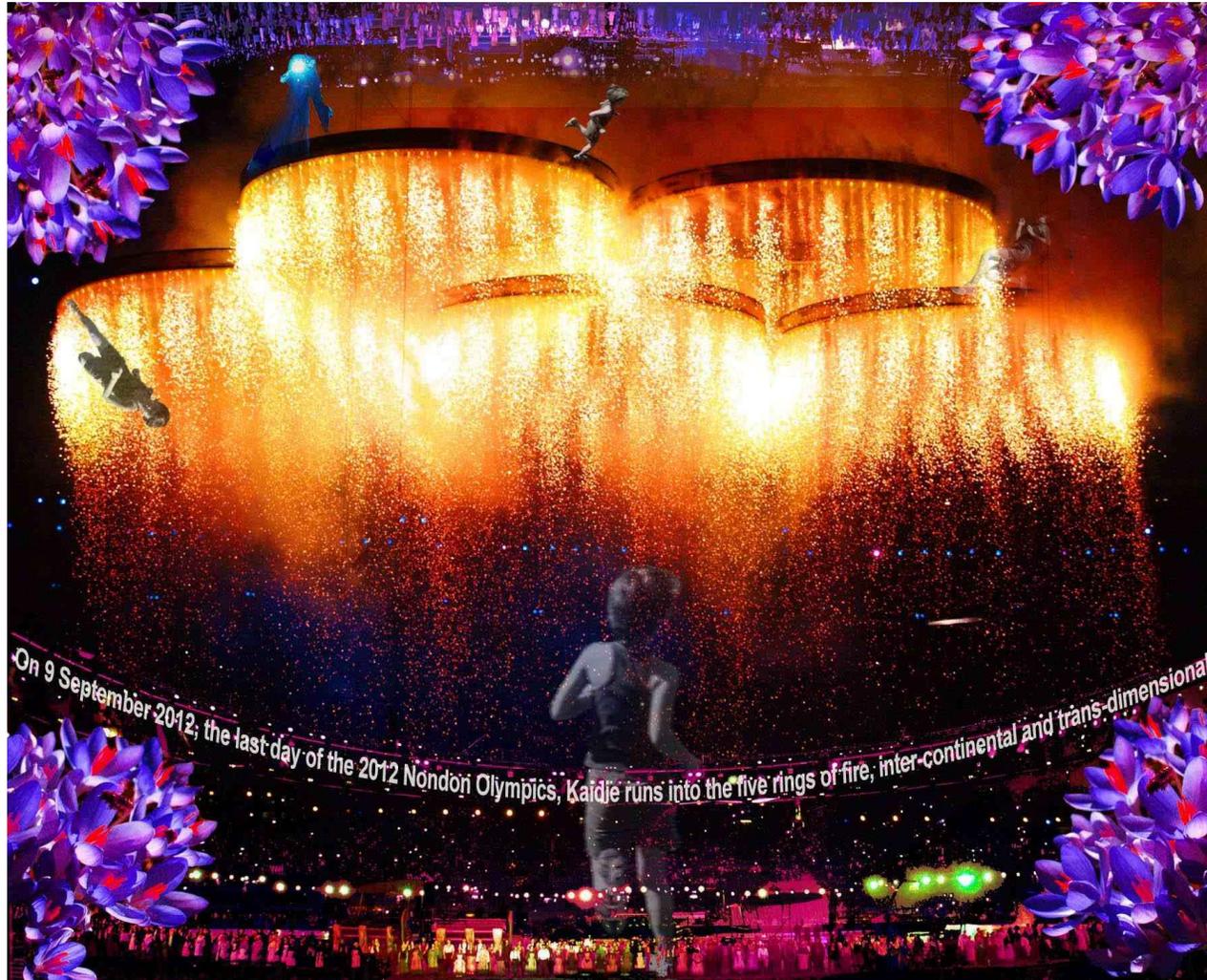


Figure from Kaidie's world 62: 'Kaidie Dies'. Based on images I took of the rehearsal of the London Olympics opening ceremony, having been invited as London Ambassador. (Tan 2012l)



Figure from Kaidie's world 63: 'Kaidie Dies: Variation 3'. (Tan 2011a)

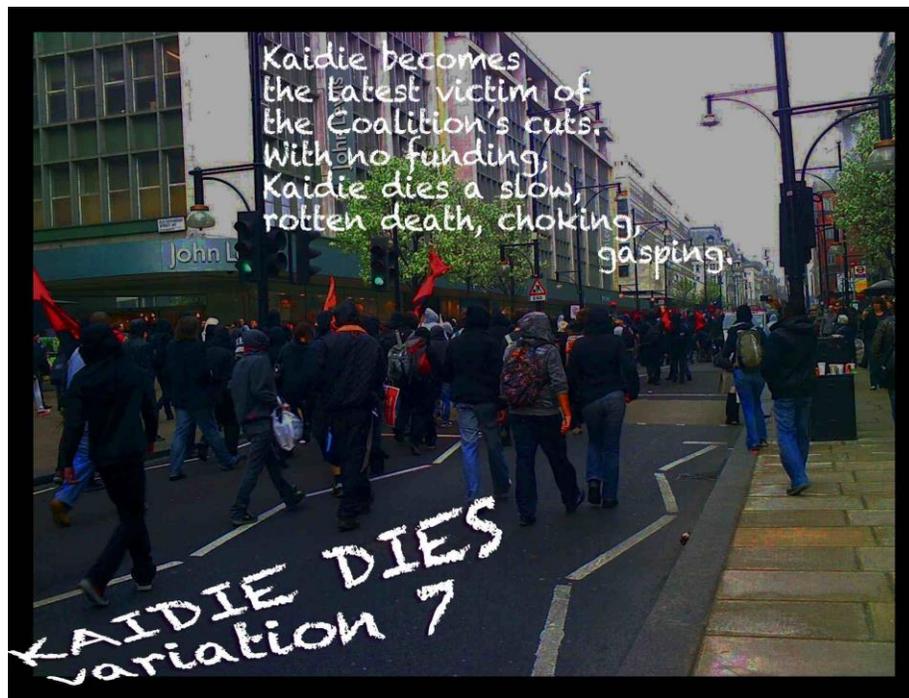


Figure from Kaidie's world 64: 'Kaidie Dies: Variation 7'. (Tan 2011a)

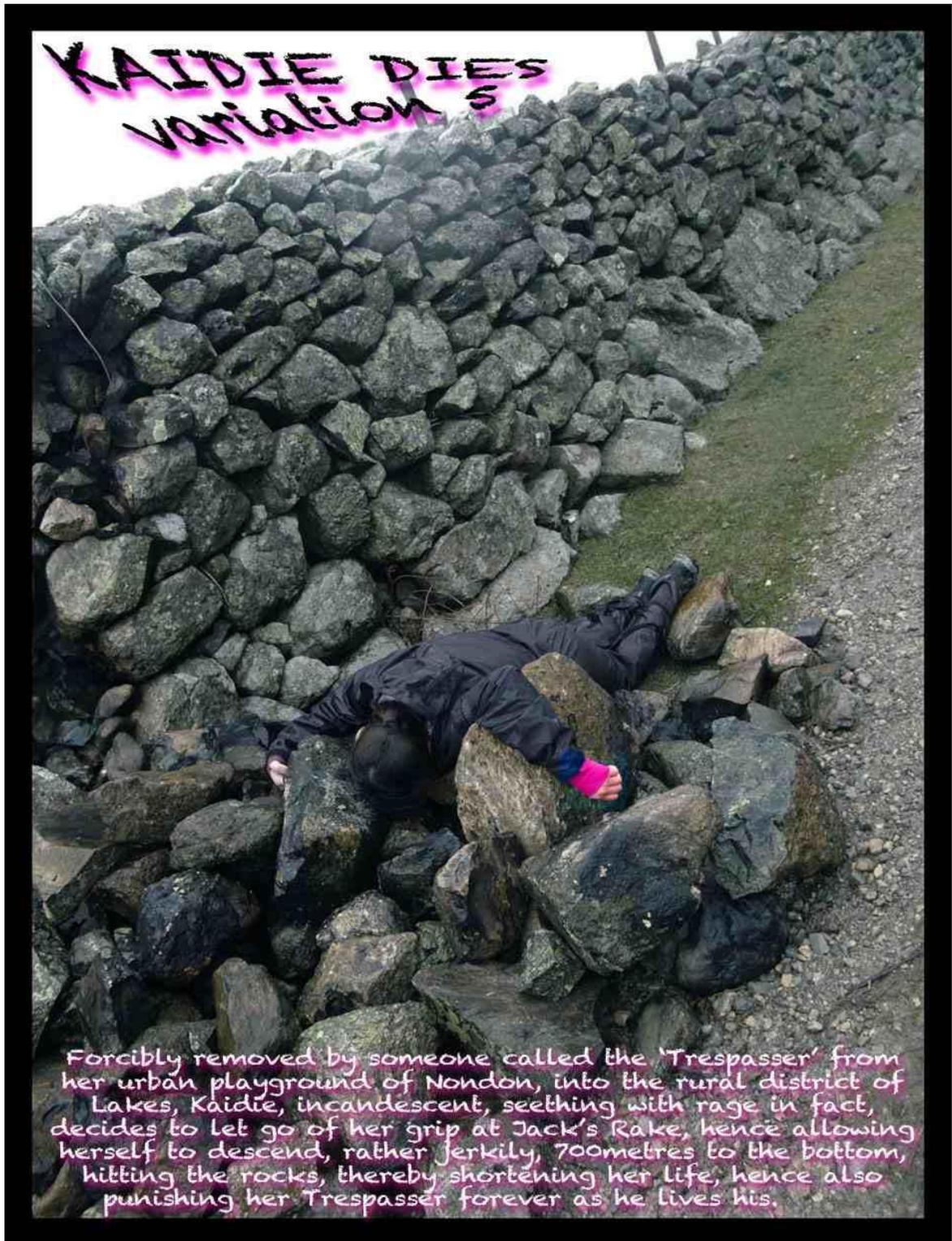


Figure from Kaidie's world 65: 'Kaidie Dies: Variation 5'. (Tan 2011a)

# KAIDIE DIES: Variation 8.



On 17 April 2011, kaidie joined nearly 40,000 people to run the Virgin Nondon Marathon. Along the 42km (very scenic) route, she was shot several times by the 'official' photographer. When it happened for the fourth time, Kaidie finally snapped, and shot the photographer, who died instantly. Kaidie, too, died, soon after the heroic tussle. Presented here are the last 4 frames found in the said (irritating) photographer's roll.  
(At least Kaidie died doing what she loved best.) (?)  
(She did love running? Didn't she?)

Figure from Kaidie's world 66: 'Kaidie Dies: Variation 8'. (Tan 2011a)



Figure from Kaidie's world 67: 'Coming Back (-and-Forth) To Life (Or Lives) (And Deaths)'. (Tan 2011a)

Will these real-world niggles disappear if we were to run away to the digital gaming world? After all, online, we can kill enemies, save the world[s], get killed but be endlessly reborn. Referring to the aptly-named ‘Second Life’, technology writer Tim Guest observes:

‘In virtual worlds, we have conquered death, and the question of reincarnation has been resolved. If you “die” from a virtual sword or bullet, you simply reappear, perfect and whole, somewhere nearby’. (2008, p.17)

So invincible we are, that we can virtually kill off the bad idea of death itself. Paradoxically, Guest himself expired from the real world from a drug overdose, aged 34.

Perhaps a Daoist perspective of life and death could have relieved Guest. The Daoist world addresses longevity, mortality – and immortality – in a myriad of complex ways. Daoism’s focus on cultivation exercises, and highly-sophisticated research on medicine and alchemy are but two examples that attest to this. Then, there are many stories surrounding Daoist figures that stretch our imagination, as well as the notions of life and death. According to Daoist scholar Kristofer Schipper, Lao Zi regards life and death as circular, and death as transformation and renewal (1994, pp.116-166). He quotes the sage:

‘I transform my body, passing through death to live again... I die and am reborn, and each time, I have a [new] body’. (1994, p.116)

In fact, Lao Zi underwent nine transformations before he was born. He emerged as an old man – ‘Lao Zi’, meaning ‘Old Child’. In another version of such ‘continuous mutations’ and ‘joyful changing’, Lao Zi was born an orphan, with ‘neither parents nor children, neither lineage, nor country’, and ‘no tomb nor holy relics’. In yet another variation, Lao Zi’s mother died ‘[at] the sight of her offspring.’ In the ‘brief moment between birth and apotheosis’, in which life comes face-to-face with death, Lao Zi’s mother ‘reveals to her child the secrets of the art of immortality, of that ‘Long Life’ which the Old Child has just experienced in his mother’s womb’. It is in this state of ‘neither birth nor death’ that ‘a complete cycle of the cosmos was accomplished’, states Schipper. Lao Zi then became ‘his own mother’. All these tales, explain Daoist scholar Norman Girardot, highlight the ‘organic round of life and death’ is but a ‘rite of passage’ that ‘constantly involves moments of growth and regression, security and danger’ (2009, p.5). Schipper points out how philosopher Zhuang Zi similarly considers death and life ‘two phases of a cycle’, with an ‘alternation analogous to that of *yin* and *yang*’ (Schipper 1994, p.37). After the death of his wife, Zhuang Zi broke not into tears, but into a song. The sage explains:

‘If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don’t understand anything about fate’. (1996).

Schipper explains that for Zhuang Zi, death is but another stage of life, a continuation from ‘the time before she was born’, which itself was a stage after ‘the time before she had a body’, which was in turn after ‘the time before she had a spirit’. Like the ‘progression of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, winter,’ death is merely ‘another change’. This celebratory view of mortality could have been why Qu Yuan wrote about suicide as a song.

So, do not fear death, for, it is but another stage of life, a new beginning of something else. Trans-run, and you may free yourself from the notions of life – and death.

### **Message 9: Free Yourself From Rules Set By The ‘Walking-Around’ World And Even By Yourself**

The French intellectuals are wrong to claim that running is ‘right-wing’. Throughout my thesis, I have argued that trans-running may liberate you from how society thinks, acts, and feels, and how it coerces you to think, act, feel and live. Trans-run, and you may playfully trespass and *transgress* the boundaries of law, order, causality, convention, continuity, linearity, reason, fashion, hegemony, logic, culture and discipline. Trans-run, and check reality, and check your own reality. Leave your own comfort zone. Challenge you own assumptions, think against how you think when not running, and shake your own world.

It may be true that a few totalitarian regimes have hijacked sports as an ideological expression. An example can be seen in Leni Riefenstahl’s Nazi-commissioned *Triumph of the Will* (1935). Via beautifully-composed images of well-sculpted men and women engaged in sports, the film unashamedly advertises Adolf Hitler’s sinister vision of an Aryan nation. Yet, it is laughable to hence discredit running *per se* as ‘right-wing’. Unsurprisingly, there are people on the so-called right who run. George Osborne, Tea-Party poster girl Sarah Palin, and Singapore’s legendary Lee Kuan Yew all run. Unsurprisingly, there are also people on the other side of the political spectrum who run. They include Bill Clinton and Alistair Campbell. Equally, there must be many more people in between the two political ends, or who are apolitical, or who switch political sides, who run. It may also be true that like several other 21<sup>st</sup> century fitness craze, running may carry darker aspects, such as an unhealthy obsession with the body. Running may be addictive, too. In fact, for the duration of my research, I felt compelled to run daily. If I did not, I felt unable to write. The running-writing thread is inseparable for runner-novelist Joyce Carol Oates, too:

‘On days when I can’t run, I don’t feel “myself”; and whoever the “self” is I feel, I don’t like nearly so much as the other. And the writing remains snarled in endless revisions’. (1999)

That said, and even if the feel-good effect of running was merely a placebo, *not* running and staying seated all day would have probably been healthier. Additionally, if running LSD – long slow distance – was indeed addictive, it must be a less negative one than, say, a dependency on LSD – the drug – itself. Moreover, it goes without saying that all sports – and indeed all facets of life – have unpleasant aspects. Doping continues to be a problem in the professional world of cycling, while in football, which is popularly regarded as democratic or ‘for the masses’, problems like racism, sexism, hooliganism and nationalism exist. Paradoxical for a sport that many may consider ‘working-class’, it is paradoxical, too, how large the income gap between the players and spectators can be.

In fact, I argue that running may be more ‘left-wing’ than other sports. Running is so simple and cheap – free, in fact – that it presents no entry barrier and can be carried out by

virtually anyone of any age, gender, ethnicity, anytime and anywhere. That is to say, running has a higher propensity for us to compete on more equal footing. Historian Thor Gotaas' account of how running-ambassadors climbed social ladders and crossed social boundaries also shows that running may function as a step forward and as a social-levelling tool. In a chapter entitled 'Striding Out of Poverty' in his book on the history of running, Gotaas traces the evolution of running from a class-free activity undertaken by tribes and communities as ritual, transportation or recreation, to its status as an elite sport in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (2009 pp.332 – 340). Even so, he argues that the sport has enabled many from underprivileged backgrounds to improve their lives socially and economically. This point is laid bare in the case of the legendary Ethiopian long-distance runner Haile Gebreselassie (born 1973). The 27-time world record-holder's 'career' began when he ran a total of 20 kilometres – nearly the distance of a half-marathon – daily to and from school as a child (International Olympics Committee 2012). So inspired by such rags-to-riches stories that many youngsters in East African villages increasingly consider running as a way forward. A recent film *Town of Runners* investigates this by tracking how young boys and girls train – many shoeless, and often on dirt tracks (Rothwell 2012). This demonstrates that running, far from being right-wing, may be transformative. After all, it is running – and not cycling, sailing or dressage – that has been, and continues to be, a form of play or mode of locomotion for children from impoverished backgrounds. Within the UK, fell running in Scotland was traditionally associated with the working class, asserts Alan Latham (2008b). Abdelkader Benali agrees that running may be transgressive, too. He says that historically,

'[...] running was considered left wing, or to be more [precise], anarchistic! [Running has been] vulgarized by the philosophizing elite [...] because of its [erroneously-]received image of muscularity as right wing, but this is, as any runner will tell you, wrong[;] running is more about mindfulness than any other sport [I] know'. (2012)

## TRANSITION

Indeed, to re-claim running from being 'vulgarized by the philosophising elite' is one of my aims of this chapter, and this is a good point to close this chapter. I have summarised the core ideas and findings of my thesis through 9 messages of happiness, freedom and correlativity that I directed at critics of running. Throughout, I applied what I was saying, by performing the discourse of trans-running. I have shown that my practice-related Fine Art thesis is a testament that running does not signify the twilight, morbid, catastrophic, weak, or death by exhaustion. I demonstrated how my brand of running may be a new, life-affirming harbinger of strength, creativity and hope. That I have come up with 9 messages dispel Baudrillard's assertion that runners' messages have 'lost all meaning'. In fact, historian Thor Gotaas argues that 'Baudrillard was critical of running precisely because he was fascinated by it' (2009, p.267). Runner-physician Mike Stroud adds that sceptics simply 'know not what they miss' (2004, p.55). When I showed artist Jo Volley the criticism, she shudders 'How could you be against running?' (2012). Abdelkader is more articulate: 'I think [it's] all bullshit' (2012). As we savour Abdelkader's message, let us proceed to the final chapter of this thesis.

## **VI. A PROVISIONAL SYNTHESIS**

## INTRODUCTION

My thesis proposes a ‘new’ way of running, ‘trans-running’. This child-like, creative and carefree way of running is my attempt to draw a connection or *re*-connection between our body with our city, state, technology and mind, and to establish a dynamic correlation between written text and artworks, theory and practice, knowledge and experience, so that we may feel free and happy in our action, feeling and thought. I argued how we can think of trans-running as a worldview, way of life, toolkit, mapping or app that we may activate to help re-orientate our world. I have demonstrated that the ‘trans-’ in trans-running refers to its aims of being *transformative, transgressive, trans-cultural* and *trans-disciplinary*. I have also outlined that apart from *playful*, there are other adjectives and expressions that begin with the letter ‘p’ that trans-running aligns itself with. They include: *philosophical, political, personal, pungent, poetic, pleasurable, practical, pragmatic, profitable, pertinent, paradoxical*, concerning our *past* and *present*, *popular*, a *product* of our times, as a *participatory, practice-related discourse and discourse-related practice* which mobilises *parody*, and which is a *process-based, pluralistic work-in-progress*. I discussed my aim of introducing artists and researchers to running as a subject matter and/or approach, and how this practice-related research itself may function as an example of how running may be a source of inspiration for an artwork and/or research. I have structured my thesis as an open-ended invitation to the reader/audience to pick up running as a concept and/or action. It offers neither a unified conclusion, nor clear answers that conveniently tie up loose ends.

It is for this reason that this ‘final’ chapter is called ‘*Provisional Synthesis*’. I begin by summarising my core arguments in each chapter. Next, I examine the potential impact of my thesis, by listing its possible contributions to knowledge. I highlight the ways in which trans-running may generate interest for artists and researchers, as well as other people from different fields. Following that, I outline areas of further research. After all, my thesis explores a wide-range of topics. Every correlation, mapping, thread or ‘answer’ opens up yet more pathways of questions and lines of inquiry. My intention is to encourage *you* to pick up and run with ideas that you find interesting – and hence, perform the role of the new trans-runner. This section is structured around the messages that Kaidie left behind before she moved on. They sketch out the areas that she had run out of time – given her short life of 1000 days – to work on, and suggest how *you*, as the new trans-runner, may carry the baton. A long message she left on her blog is entitled ‘The Next Steps of Trans-Running: Trans-Running’s *Leg-acy*’, while a series of ‘Tweets’ she left behind were called ‘Kaidie’s Final Messages to You: 10 Courses and Discourses You May Run With’. (Figures from Kaidie’s world 68-88) It can be argued that a truly worthwhile effort may come only from an entire lifetime, or lifetimes of effort. Kaidie could only have a short life. Yet, by the same token, I argue that it is important to begin somewhere, and, as artist Thierry Geoffroy of *Critical Run* may add, ‘before it is too late’ (p.178). Kristofer Schipper’s description of Daoist’s training reinforces these arguments, and also points to my argument about running as a way to deal with crises:

‘Our whole existence is nothing but a long apprenticeship to enable us to survive the disasters that come either from without or within us [...]’. (1994, p.214)

If mastering something takes a lifetime, to be adept in a few things must take several lifetimes. In his delightfully wide-ranging book *Lines: A Brief History*, the British professor of anthropology Tim Ingold says the following about inter-disciplinary approaches:

‘For every point raised, a hundred are left unexplored. To pursue them all, one would require many lives’. (2007, p.4)

Hence, this thesis should not be viewed as the end, but a temporary mapping. It is a first step, a beginning to 10,000 new possible pathways to come. This may be how trans-running may have mileage, and how the messages of trans-running can live on.

## CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL IMPACT

### 14 Playful Ways Trans-Running May Transform Your Real World

In chapter II, I came up with 14 playful recommendations for us to transform the way we interact with the city, authorities, as well as the world-at large. Here, trans-running is formulated from Daoist ways (including *wuwei*), which are modulated by discourses from Situationism (*derive*; playfulness), cultural history and poetry (via Bruce Chatwin, Blaise Pascal, Michel de Montaigne and Lao Zi), rhetoric (‘running’ against the government so as not to be ‘run down’ or ‘run over’; ‘being on the run’) as well as the physiology of running (via Mike Stroud) and running methods (*fartlek*).

I began by arguing how the trans-running may enable us to correlate our body physically and poetically with the city. In so doing, we may no longer feel alienated or separated from the urban spectacle, but feel as if we may (metaphorically) run it, by (physically) running in it. Next, I extended these techniques to the state, and demonstrated how trans-running may be a playful revolt against it. Here, I showed how trans-running may allow us to reclaim ownership of a place that is ruled by fear. I argued that with trans-running, we may demonstrate that we do not consent to the incessant violation and interference from the state, yet in a manner that may also be sufficiently innocent-looking to ensure that it does not backfire. I further proposed that, without the sound and fury of the Situationists, trans-running may enable us to perform as an internal exile, by remaining within a system, but slyly critiquing it at the same time. I also argued that with trans-running, we may declare that we have the right to be in public, outdoors, and that we are active and defiant. Mobilising as it does the most rudimentary and *personal* – and hence *powerful* – medium of the body, trans-running aims to be a *pragmatic yet playful* and ‘ballsly’ comeback. Finally, I opened up the discussion to beyond the city and state. I proposed the approach of being on the run, and argued that it may be a playful way for us to constantly renew and even revolutionise our world. Furthermore, I argued that trans-running as an approach seeks to constantly re-new itself, and is a medium of moderation.

My contribution to knowledge may include:

- ... drawing together two or more existing ideas, and demonstrating that the combination reveals something new and useful. For instance, I combined techniques from Daoism and Situationism and the contemporary running phenomena to devise new ways to gain a sense of ownership of the city;
- ... in the process of doing the above, re-contextualising existing knowledge for a new context. For instance, I applied Daoist ideas, largely from the *Lao Zi* circa 600BCE, to the political context today, tested them in my performance, and demonstrated that they may have the potential to work;
- ... elaborating on some of the aspects of the work of an existing model. With trans-running, I filled in a few areas that I felt were gaps of the work of the Situationists as outlined above. My work may be regarded as an extension of Situationism-related research;
- ... providing a new taxonomy of running. For example, I created playful neologisms like the '*fartlek-dérive*';
- ... contributing to existing discourses, such as those about the concepts of *wuwei* and 'world as body, body as world' in Daoism. My work also offers a playful rendering of the *Lao Zi* (via Lee, Livia Kohn, Norman Girardot, Kristofer Schipper, Chad Hansen and Kuang-Ming Wu);
- ... creating new, primary research through my conversation with Singaporean cultural doyen Keng Sen Ong;
- ... implementing the theoretical principles of trans-running into practice, in the form of *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. My artwork is an empirically-based characterisation of trans-running, and a detailed analysis and demonstration of it. It concretises the concept of trans-running, and hence shows how it works when applied to the real world, what its strength and weaknesses are,
- and generating new, original, primary research with *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. These works may be aligned with a variety of artistic genres. For instance, my mappings are located in the junctures of GPS drawing, artist's map, locative media, travelogue, mind maps, cine-essays and hypertext.

In particular, you may enjoy my message of trans-running if you are:

- ... a researcher and/or practitioner of art. My work may inspire you to make new artworks or writings based on the physical and poetic possibilities of running;
- ... a researcher in the fields of urban studies, human geography and mobility studies. You may want to consider trans-running as contributing to discourses in your world on the ways to re-imagine our everyday reality;
- ... an urban dweller. You may grasp trans-running as a playful way to celebrate and critique the city. If you live in a foreign city, you may mobilise trans-running to playfully subvert the way people may perceive you, or to enjoy the city in new ways.

From Kaidie's antics in 'Nondon' in *Kaidie's Trans-Run*, Londoners may gain a perspective on how the city may be re-imagined;

- ... stuck in restrictive circumstances. You may activate trans-running as a safe and practical but personal tactic of resistance and empowerment;
- ... a researcher and/or practitioner of Daoist ways. You may be inspired to think of new cultivation methodologies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as running;
- ... unable to physically run, or stuck in the proverbial room. You may enjoy the poetic processes of running;
- ... a non-runner. You may be inspired to re-think 'running' as a concept and/or action;
- ... a runner or someone who enjoys sports, or are a specialist in sport science. You may gain new poetic insights about running,
- or are someone who has overlooked the possibilities of running. You may enjoy a new way of running vis-à-vis the real world.

## 5 Playful Ways Trans-Running May Transform Your Digital World

In chapter III, I applied trans-running to the digital world, that is, a reality mediated by mobile internet. I welcomed how this world is mobile, smart, liberating and magical. Yet, I was sceptical of its 'too-clever' ways, and how it may bind us in a 'consensual hallucination', make us 'stupid' or 'lose our thread'.

As a response, I devised five 'apps' to accompany us on our digital expedition so that we may feel in better control. Echoing the exuberant and pungent ways of the Daoist drifters, runners and artists, including Teh-Ching Hsieh, my recommendations are critical, celebratory and silly. I argued that we may enhance our 'native ingenuity' with the 'good' aspects of our digital machines by picturing ourselves as a 'High-Tech-All-In-One-Smart-Digital-Compact-Body-Art-Trans-Runner-Fully-Equipped-With-Multiple-Apps'. Another approach I outlined was how we may perform a 'Well-Connected-Hyper-Linked-Hyper-Being' and become re-aligned with our line-ages. Like the hypertext and the internet itself, this imagination may allow us to assume multiple and even conflicting views and viewpoints at the same time, and defy the conventions of hierarchy and linearity. Thirdly, as a 'Dis-Located-Digital-Nomad', I argued that by leaving confusing tracks online, we may run away from surveillance. The fourth recommendation I came up with was how we may perform as an 'Inane-and-Insane-Master'. Mad as it sounds, I argued that this may be the smarter response to the crazy logic of our 'stupid' and 'insane' world. Finally, I encouraged us to imagine ourselves as living in a 'game-art-with-no-point'. I argued that by picturing ourselves as the protagonist or 'Action Figure' of such a game, we may reclaim play, and even *transform* our fate.

My contribution to knowledge may include:

- ... combining arguments and evidence from existing discourses, such as: threading performance art with Daoist ways and running; mobilising Daoist concepts to examine Teh-Ching Hsieh's *Outdoor Piece*; re-imagining Hsieh's work for the digital age; correlating digital gaming and game art with Daoist approaches, and combining digital aesthetics such as the hyperlink with running and Daoist ways;
- ... approaching 'play' and 'run' by drawing together perspectives from the fields of sports, digital gaming and Daoism;
- ... offering a playful inroad to existing and ever-growing discourses such as the cyborg theory, trans- and post-humanism, techno-utopianism;
- ... providing a new taxonomy for the digital world. For instance, I created playful neologisms such as 'game-art-with-no-point';
- ... creating new, primary research through my conversations with Teh-Ching Hsieh;
- ... implementing the principles of trans-running for the digital world, which combines theories from Daoism and running, into practice, in *Kaidie's Trans-Run*;
- ... generating *Kaidie's Trans-Run*, a new, original primary research that is embedded within the site of study, that is, the digital world. Some of the genres in which my artworks may fit include internet art and new media art, as well as 'older' media such as video art and literature;
- ... providing an articulation or reflection of the way things at a particular point in time. Future historians may refer to *Kaidie's Trans-Run* for a subjective interpretation by an artist-researcher about the era before wearable technology becomes normalised,
- and writing the thesis in a 'pungent' and performative manner, and hence possibly contributing to discourses about the possible approaches to academic writing.

My messages may have mileage particularly if you are:

- ... acquainted with the practice and/or philosophies of running, Daoism, and digital technology. My work may inspire you to re-imagine these areas in new ways;
- ... acquainted with the practices and/or philosophies of 'digital art', 'performance art', 'new media art', and 'game art'. As *Kaidie's Trans-Run* has elements of these genres, it may act as a trigger for you to re-imagine them in new ways;
- ... feeling addicted to or trapped by the digital world. With trans-running, you may be able to step away, or take a step back, and come un-stuck;
- ... running away from the technological world. You may, with trans-running, perhaps be encouraged to begin to play and even come un-stuck,
- or are someone who perceived running as non-creative, or as only physical. You may enjoy a new way of running vis-à-vis the digital world.

## 6 Playful Ways Trans-Running May Transform Your World of Thinking

In chapter IV, I came up with 6 recommendations of trans-running as a mode of thinking. These are different mind-sets that we may adopt when we explore discourses and philosophical ideas in the ‘world of thinking’.

Inspired by my own runner’s high, and based on reports by scientists and other runners, I proposed that we picture ourselves as runners on a runner’s high. I argued that this could make our experiences more pleasurable, and even release us from how we usually think, and how society thinks. Referring to the poetic beauty of *taiji* and the adepts’ religious ecstasy, I next recommended that we imagine ourselves as Daoist adepts in the midst of an ecstatic meditation-in-motion. I argued that such a playful and poetic mode might be useful and important particularly when we confront intellectual discourses that are difficult to understand. Another recommendation I presented was how we could picture ourselves as correlative thinkers. Inspired by the work of philosophers David Hall and Roger Ames, I argued that this approach may enable us to freely collage thoughts together in a manner not burdened by reason, linearity, causality or convention, but via analogy, metaphor, contrasts, association of images and concept clusters in a spontaneous and imaginative way that may open up ‘10,000’ creative possibilities. Inspired by the Chinese and Latin words for ‘discourse’, as well as artist Thierry Geoffroy’s *Critical Run*, I further proposed that when we explore ideas, we picture ourselves not stagnant or sitting down, but running and engaged in an exchange of ideas with other runners. I argued that it is through such a lively and sweaty ‘running-discourse’ that our thoughts may grow, transform and come to life. Last but not least, I proposed that we follow in the footsteps of the historical messengers, and imagine ourselves as running-ambassadors or forerunners. With this imagination, we may have the potential to feel ecstatic and fearless as we freely ‘traverse’ different schools of thoughts and cross boundaries of disciplines. In the process, we may even activate new messages and discourses, and pave new pathways of thoughts.

My proposal may contribute to knowledge by:

- ... drawing together a range of studies and experiences from a range of disciplines. I related old and new, such as the ancient Latin ‘*discursus*’ with the contemporary running boom. I threaded ‘West’ with ‘East’, such as the research from America and Europe about the runner’s high, with a study of Daoist cultivation techniques;
- ... in the process of doing the above, re-contextualising existing knowledge. They include: ‘transplanting’ correlative thinking from the specialist field of sinology, to the more mainstream realm of sport and, specifically, that of the popular sport of running;
- ... elaborating on of some of the aspects of the runner’s high from primary sources (personal experience), as well as a poetic approach via words and images;
- ... opening playful inroads to causality, with my euphoric approach to discourse;
- ... adding to existing discourses on non-causal modes of thinking, like the rhizome;

- ... contributing to existing discourses on methodologies that celebrate interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and intertextual collaboration;
- ... contributing to existing discourses about what a Fine Art PhD thesis can be with this correlative approach to writing and reading;
- ... creating new, primary research in *Kaidie's Trans-Run* that applies or performs my proposal of trans-running as a mode of thinking;
- ... creating new, primary research with conversations with creative people who run, like Jo Volley and Abdelkader Benali;
- ... creating a playful way to re-imagine how the mind and body can work together,
- and contributing a new narrative to the walking tradition which has been well-researched as a mode conducive for thinking and creativity.

My message may be inspiring especially if you:

- ... have experienced the runner's high. My intention is that you may relate to and even make use of my formulation of trans-running as a mode of thinking;
- ... have not experienced the runner's high, or cannot physically run. You may enjoy trans-running as a mode of thinking;
- ... enjoy causal approach to thinking. You may find aspects of my proposal of a non-causal approach interesting;
- ... enjoy non-causal approaches to thinking, art-making and writing. You may find aspects of approach interesting,
- or did not think that running may be 'mind-expanding'. You may enjoy 'running' vis-à-vis the world of thinking.

## 9 Playful Messages To the Art World

In chapter V, I rearranged my arguments in the form of 9 messages that I directed at the art world. In particular, I wanted to address the misunderstandings held by certain artists and researchers who criticise running as unthinking. I hope that these messages, alongside *Kaidie's Trans-Run* as documented in the Appendix, may collectively contribute to knowledge. I hope that my thesis may act as a trigger to make art practitioners and researchers appreciate how running can be an exciting area of exploration.

Through my messages, I highlighted how 'trans-' in trans-running refers to its aims of being *trans-cultural*, *trans-disciplinary*, *transformative* and *transgressive*. In fact, trans-running as a *transgressive*, sideways glance of the world is a running leitmotif of this research. Throughout my work, I have argued how running can indeed be a demonstration of resistance and an anarchic movement, in both the literal and figurative senses of the

words ‘demonstration’ and ‘movement’. As I explained, the word ‘*playful*’ in my thesis is my shorthand to denote a sense of rebelliousness. Other words I activated include: ‘defiant’, ‘unapologetic’, ‘*pungent*’, ‘wayward’, ‘restlessness’, ‘mischievous’ and child-like’. Indeed, from the beginning of the thesis, we have run into, and run with many non-conformists in different guises. My messages compiled in this chapter allow me to weave the following summary of my thesis:

Runner-novelist Abdelkader Benali runs to free himself from the way society bullies us into ways to think, act or feel, as well as to free himself from how he thinks, acts or feel when not running. In *Run Lola Run*, Lola mobilises her long range vision to re-define her own fate. She even *detourns* the audience’s expectations and the convention of the classical narrative structure by running and coming up with three diverse outcomes. When runner-cardiologist George Sheehan asserts that running has a metaphysical lawlessness, and urges us to follow no one’s law but our own, he seems to be behaving just like the restless metaphor, which moves from shore to shore to seek new correlations. Sheehan’s call for movement also draws us to the work of Americans Donald Schön and David Kolb that we studied in the beginning of the thesis, about the importance of movement for the learner, be it between high hard ground and messy swamp, or between reflection and practice, experience and conceptualisation. This sense of restlessness is encapsulated by the hypertext, too. It is itinerant and anti-hierarchical, even ‘promiscuous’, with its ability to form multiples associations. The hypertext’s function of opening many windows – and, by extension, to hold many viewpoints simultaneously – echoes the essence of correlative thinking, which is, by definition, a departure from the dominant mode of thinking of causality and linearity. Could there, then, be a correlation between correlative thinking’s universality and the hypertext’s popularity? After all, observers credit the hypertext as the element that makes the internet a powerful and popular medium. It may come as no surprise that philosopher Ted Nelson, who conceptualised the hypertext, based his ideas on theories of how the human mind works through the linking of ideas and thoughts by association (Dewdney & Ride 2006, p.207). Sheehan’s assertion of the autonomy of the runner is reverberated in the words of runner-philosopher Ross C. Reed, who says:

‘Just as the runner must do her own work of running, the thinker must do her own work of reflecting – the thinker, as such, cannot simply borrow concepts and consider the ‘thought’ her own’. (2007, p.130)

That is to say, thinking, like running, is an *activity*. The same way I felt that my feet were the ‘engine’ that fired off ‘bullet points’ during my runner’s high, the thinker is the agent that activates thinking. Underlying this point is the argument that thinkers and runners are independent beings. This runs with one of my leitmotifs of the thesis, that is, how when we run – and when we trans-run – we may assert: ‘I am in charge of my own actions, thoughts, feelings and fate! I am *running* my own world!’. This self-belief, as Sheehan points out, is found in children, and it is by running that we may feel empowered again. Likewise, runner-novelist Joyce Carol Oates retains her anarchistic streak. Writing at the age of 61, she correlates running with trespassing:

‘I never saw a “No Trespassing” sign that wasn’t a summons to my rebellious blood. Such signs, dutifully posted on trees and fence railings, might as well cry, “Come Right In!”’ (1999)

Oates’ disobedience recalls the ideologies and actions of the Situationists who devise playful constructive behaviours to conduct revolutions of their daily lives. For Che Guevara, the urge to revolutionise has larger footprints and legacies. For others such as Bruce Chatwin, disrupting our daily routines by being constantly on the move is as world-changing. By living life on the run instead of being settled down with capital and stock, or being stuck in a small room alone, we may optimise the way our bodies and mind have been built. Freed from our physical baggage, we may also divorce ourselves from our own prejudices. This was why Michel de Montaigne calls travelling a ‘profitable exercise’. See the world, and augment it – hence your world is always new. The French essayist’s words find an echo in philosopher J.J. Clarke’s argument about how we should ‘thrive on differences rather than seek to obliterate them’. Intercultural encounters are ‘potentially subversive’, as we are ‘compelled to confront the assumptions, limitations and fractures in our own cultural traditions’ (2000, p.11). By being on the run at the world-at-large, Singaporean theatre doyen Keng Sen Ong also extends his footprints to make a significant impact in the international art scene. When performance artist Teh-Ching Hsieh lived life on the run with his *Outdoor Piece*, he tells me that it was a ‘freedom of exile by my own choice’ (2013). In this way, he is shaking up the art world, as well as the world-at-large.

As critics point out, our wanderlust and insatiability could have been why some people were keen to abandon the real world and embrace the online world as a new promised land, particularly in the early days of the internet. A science writer observes that the more enthusiastic ones – known as the techno-utopianists – even perceived the online world as a technological equivalent of heaven (Wertheim 2000). This ‘mass exodus’ of people from reality to cyberspace was merely a continuation of our Hippie parents’ (partially failed) dream of constructing an alternative, ideal society in the 1970’s, suggests another science writer (Guest 2007, introduction). If so, this aligns the techno-utopianists with the pioneer runners of the 1970’s, whom runner-geographer Alan Latham argues were seeking alternative realities that depart from practices of the walking-around world. These lines of thought tie in with runner-author Christopher McDougall’s about how running has often been a means for individuals and society to deal with societal and personal crises.

In fact, our runner-ancestors are arguably the first radical forerunners, who took the first steps to run after animals, and to run away from starvation. The endurance hunter is no different from the fearless ambassador who crossed boundaries and entered new territories to transfer their messages. In the Daoist world, the poet Qu Yuan also used his actions to respond to crises physically and poetically. He registered his protest at the corrupt government by quitting his court position, and by writing about his imagination of an ecstatic excursion to the heavens. Then, there is immortal Zhang Guo Lao, who advertised his contrarian view of the world by wandering the world riding his mule backwards, and playing a wise fool. In so doing, he turned his back to social and political laws, and obeyed instead his gut instincts, belly knowledge or internal ‘satnav’.

The foremost forerunner of trans-running has to be Lao Zi. Just like the hypertext, metaphor, Chatwin, Lola, correlative thinking and the life-force of the *dao* itself, the philosopher lived life on the run, ever-transforming, trespassing frontiers and re-drawing boundaries. Lao Zi *transferred* his messages to us about ways in which we may *transform* the world. His *dao*, courses and discourses are gently anarchic. They are *philosophical* and *political* recommendations. Short of an actual change, transformation refers to how we could take on a new *personal* and *pragmatic* yet *poetic* worldview, attitude, way of life with which we may experience, interpret, manage, negotiate, correlate with and re-orientate the way we do things. Yet, rebel that the Old Child is, he encourages us to defy his words – which was why the *Lao Zi* is ambiguous, open, *playful* and *pungent*. Lao Zi seems to be saying: ‘Don't just follow me! Be active! Be brave! Find your own way!’

## FURTHER RESEARCH

Running with Lao Zi's message, I hope that you may feel free to not just follow my ways, but to freely *transfer* and *transform* my messages. That is to say, my message of running physically and poetically is only a beginning. It is just one particular mapping out of other possible mappings. That is to say, trans-running is itself something *transient*, *transitory* and *in transit*. As I *transfer* the messages of trans-running to you, I am passing you the baton, for you to run the next laps. I invite you to not just take my messages at face value, but to apply trans-running as a mode of thinking to my messages, as well as the entire thesis. Just as trans-running may free us from state-control, it has the potential to free you from thinking of trans-running itself as a form of set rules. Instead, freely pick-and-mix my arguments. Customise and personalise them. Abandon areas that you find irrelevant; research further with your own skills, discipline and culture into areas that stoke your interest. Transform the discourses, and transfer them to yet other people. Activate the other parties to be active, to participate in the process so that it becomes a lively interchange. Having received your messages, these people may further transform and transfer them. This is how they, too, may become trans-running-ambassadors, and run on, to pass the baton. Each of the ‘10,000’ discourses bring forth yet another ‘10,000’ discourses, as if an exponential expansion of yet more concept clusters, poetic mappings, messages and discourses. This is how trans-running may not ‘die’, but lives on, and have a second life and indeed more lives, to continue to generate correlations that clash happily and coexist, and to generate more answers – and yet more questions.

This is a core point of trans-running, which forms the basis of Kaidie's 10 Twitter messages addressed to us that you will see in the following pages.

## Hello world.

So you've read my written thesis, seen my DVD film, looked at (re-presentations of) Kaidie's 1000-Day Trans-Run 12.12.2009 – 09.09.2012. You are by now familiar with the messages of trans-running. But don't run out of breath. All that has been a warming-up session – now the fun begins, and you can fly, or rather run, or rather, trans-run.

By the time you read this, I've moved on, to make way for you to take over and run the show. I'm passing you the baton. This may be MY point of life, to pass you my messages. So, you are the NEW trans-runner. Run with the message of trans-running. Apply it to your world. Further transfer and transform your messages so that there are 10,000 more messages, courses and discourses...

Even though this vision is not necessarily the correct one (in Taoism, there probably is no such thing as absolute truth!), hopefully the discussion will provide all the necessary ingredients for a great banquet. How each reader will cook up a dinner is impossible to predict. "Streams" of wine, however, will not be missing, as the banquet must be enjoyable to be true. Otherwise, it would not be the Tao.' (Pas 2006, p.1)

Sinologist Julian F. Pas thinks of his own thesis of Daoism as setting the table for an exciting buffet. You, too, can picture my thesis as a smorgasbord of raw materials. With my enormous appetite, I freely gathered my own raw materials from different worlds. For every provisional synthesis, 'answer' or 'dish' I developed, there were 10,000 more competing or conflicting 'answers' and yet new possible dishes and pathways that we could have explored.

So, feel free to pick and mix that which piques your palate, appetite, expertise and interest, to assemble your own unique feast. Use my thesis as a springboard to trigger yet more courses and discourses. Treat it as a toolkit, technology or app. Regard it as a child that has not yet learnt to smile, a work-in-progress. Become a wayward child yourself, to freely detourn, trans-run and trespass chapters and other provisional frameworks I have drawn up in my thesis, to generate your own mappings.

Cut across the varied ambiances Run into other user-producers along the way who are equipped with yet different skill-sets and interests. Exchange notes, collaborate, debate, or compete. Abandon that which is irrelevant for you, probe deeper at that which resonates. At every juncture, review, renew, breathe, stretch your body and your imagination. Then you can run even further, to yet new worlds.

At each change of hands, yet new transformations of the 'original' message of trans-running can take place. After all, to mobilise Pas' other metaphor, there are many paths to the mountaintop, and many mountaintops (2006, p.48). That is how trans-running can continue living, even if I am dead. This is how my message can have a legacy beyond its research period of 2009-2012.

To get the ball rolling, I recommend 10 courses of actions that you may take as the next steps of trans-running. You have a big task ahead, so no pussy-footing! Be sure-footed. Get moving. Make trans-running smile. Don't forget the 'streams of wine' – get high, play, enjoy.

## Break a leg! Metaphorically-speaking. Goodbye world.



Figure from Kaidie's world 69: 'Course 1'. Screen-capture of Kaidie's last Tweets. (Tan 2012j)

As a trans-runner, I considered it important to venture beyond my comfort zone or immediate, professional world. Hence, I often took my messages to non-academic and non-art worlds. With my new-found artistic 'voice' that I cultivated, I spoke in a manner that people across different ages, disciplines, cultures and worlds could grasp. Working in character as 'Kaidie' as a 'Nondon Ambassador' during the 2012 Olympics, I used every opportunity to also talk to fellow Ambassadors and 'members of the public' about trans-running. This continued even when I was not performing as Kaidie *per se*. When interacting with the public, I would talk about my research, and in a playful manner reminiscent of the trans-runner. (Figures from Kaidie's world 70)

It is now your turn to play the trans-running-ambassador. Spread the messages of trans-running to different worlds. Like running itself, you may perform it anytime and anywhere.



Figure from Kaidie's world 70: 'The Trans-Running Ambassador Hard At Work'. Left to right: Infiltrating the public as Nondon Ambassador. Photograph by Javed Miah (2012). The Trans-Runner as a Guide at the 2011 Bloomsbury Festival. Photograph by Richard Wright (2011). Spreading the Message to Young Visitors at the Slade School of Fine Art' (2010).



Figure from Kaidie's world 71: 'Course 2'. (Tan 2012j)

A format of performance that you may play with as an ambassador is the running-discourse.

You have read about my Critical Run-inspired 'running-discourse' conducted at the dOCUMENTA 13. My audience and I held discourses about running while running.

On my behalf, you can carry out more of these interactive performances, and in different cities. These could be called 'running discourses-tours'. Participants can weave into their discussion the historical and cultural contexts of the sites. For instance, you may debate about the role of the running-ambassador in the city of Marathon, and, literally and metaphorically, follow in the footsteps of the first running-ambassador and marathon-runner, Pheidippides. Running-discourses can have a geopolitical dimension if conducted at contested political borders, such as the Turkish-Greek border of Cyprus, and the Israel-Gaza Strip division, and if participants come from different sides of the table. For added 'edginess', you may run along geographical fault lines. Liminal sites such as airports can be yet other exciting *mise-en-scenes*. There, you may debate upon the meanings of 'globalism' and 'home', as expounded by, for instance, Pico Iyer (2001). You can also conduct running-discourses at 'no-man's lands', such as shared or neutral aerial or marine spaces while on board a plane or ship, or at remote sites unkind for human habitation. This can make trans-running playfully '*trans-global*'. It is so much fun to run on the spot, anywhere, too. No distance is traversed. Participants can discuss Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* or Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the latter which artist Teh-Ching Hsieh has cited as a major influence.

Each of the above may be conducted with runners. Better still, you may bring these running-discourses to non-runners and their worlds. At dOCUMENTA, the running session was only 2-3 minutes-short. Hence, even the sceptics budged – literally and figuratively.



Figure from Kaidie's world 72: 'Course 3'. (Tan 2012j)

My interest in the performance-lecture began after I experienced Walid Raad's *My Head is Thinner Than A Hair* in 2004 in Singapore. Raad delivered a sermon-like lecture about the civil war in his native Lebanon. Yet, what he shared were not 'official' documentations of the event, but his own reconstructions. The austerity of his lecture contrasted sharply with the 'art-ness' of his enterprise. This powerfully drove home his points of the absurdity of war and the artifice of art, making us question the gaps between truth versus un-truth, autobiography versus performance, objectivity versus subjectivity.

My versions of the performance-lecture were often accompanied by a slideshow or densely-collaged film. This allowed me to showcase a curated archive of the diverse outputs and messages of trans-running, yet highlight its restlessness and mischief simultaneously. Although I looked authoritative, I would *detourn* my audience's expectations with puns and jokes, on top of the already-playful premise of my enterprise. Such a deliberately paradoxical design allowed me to capture the *transgressive* spirit of the trans-running, yet simultaneously highlight its own artifice as an artwork. I would also often play up the tensions between what was on-screen with that which was off-screen and 'live', and what I said with what my images expressed. I also mixed-and-matched 'actions' in the online world and 'meatspace'. With pre-recorded versions of myself 'popping up' on screen alongside my 'live' presence, I seemed to be performing trans-running 'live', 'running' restlessly about between different 'worlds' in front of the audience. It was as if I was a personification of the hypertext myself. (Figure from Kaidie's world 73)

You may take on the baton and explore the possibilities of the performance-lecture. Speaking about trans-running, en-acting as a trans-runner performing a 'live' mix in front of a 'live' audience, your performance-lecture can bring trans-running to life.





Figure from Kaidie's world 74: 'Course 4'. (Tan 2012j)

Collaborating with other people was another hallmark of trans-running. By deliberately 'running into' other people's worlds, I created works that would not have been realised had I not moved, not run, or not trans-run. Online, I made thousands of alliances, and fully exploited the 'social' capability of social media. As illustrated in 'Kaidie's Dis-Location', it was by 'Doing It With Others' that *Kaidie's Trans-Run* was taken to new territories. Offline, my world intersected with that of with other artists, filmmakers, musicians, urban planners, computer scientists, charity workers and so on. This enriched my world, and also allowed me to share my findings to worlds beyond my own. (Figures from Kaidie's world 75–76) (Figures 30-31)

An unrealised proposal you may take on is to re-structure my thesis into a Wikipedia-like smartphone 'app' that users can freely 'mod', 'mash up' or *detourn*. In so doing, we apply geographers Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin's thesis about how technology is 'restructuring' our lives (chapter III). To an extent, emerging self-publishing tools like 'Booktype' and 'Lulu' already exhibit some of these aspects. In my version, you may add hyperlinks. Hence, readers may freely 'trans-run' within and beyond the 'world' of the thesis. Users become producers, free to update, delete or extrapolate from existing pages. Such a format also plays with the notion of the 'death of the author', since I, Kaidie, am dead. Hyperlinks also facilitate the creative juxtapositions of topics (old with new, figurative with literal and so on). That reader-authors may access the materials via their mobile devices while out-and-about in their daily lives can demonstrate how trans-running may be relevant to our lives, instead of being an abstract hypothesis accessible only to the enclosed world of the academia. It may even function as a low-cost toolkit that anyone can apply to their world. If the app becomes sufficiently popular, trans-running's messages may even become 'viral', thereby possibly opening up another '10,000' more courses.

Such a new 'home' for my thesis may draw out trans-running's *transitional* nature. The malleability of its rules, contents and structure may ensure the longevity of my enterprise – even, or particularly if trans-running becomes transformed beyond recognition.

 **Kaidie Nondon**  
17 December 2010

TONIGHT: Second private view of PRINTNOMENON at the Oblong Gallery from 18:00hrs! Kaidie collaborates with Mathew Humphrey and exhibit FOUR prints: of Kaidie's running the high streets to the constellation patterns of SAGITTARIUS (Kaidie's star sign), ARIES (Mathew's), TAURUS (Kai Syng Tan) and CANCER (is this YOUR star sign??)

**PRINTNOMENON**

**private view**  
Fri 17th Dec 6-9pm  
rsvp mat@splitcream.com  
Exhibit runs until the 8th of January

**OBLONG**  
www.oblonggallery.com  
69a southgate road, London  
N1 3JS. T:02073548330

Some of East London's more experimental contemporary artists and printmakers exhibit in this fluctuating xmas art show. Artists taking part in the Private View will showcase further explorations using the screenprinting process working to the theme of natural phenomenon.

**All works/editions will be on sale at affordable and seasonal prices on the night.**

Printnomenon & Oblong welcomes editons by Anastasia a/c, Billy a/b, Iain Hector, Tom Eastland, Mathew Humphrey/Kaidie Nondon & Pete Fowler.

Start this final xmas shopping weekend in the company of some of the

Like · Comment · Promote · Share 1 3

Figure from Kaidie's world 75: 'Collaborating with FB Friends'. (Tan 2010d)

 **Kaidie Nondon** To smartassysnobs who say #running is unthinking: Daniel Shiffman, creator of #Processing: 'I do all my best #programming while #jogging.'

05 July at 08:20 via Twitter · Comment · Like · @3rdlifeKaidie on Twitter

[View all 9 comments](#)

 **Kaidie Nondon** Good question, Mytho. I am starting to read and learn about how one's physical – and mental – states change when one is running. To be sure, one's system is pumped up as well when one walks, but a high-impact activity like running pushes the body to a more heightened state of duress; hence, when one does stop running, I suppose the difference/drop ...  
[See more](#)  
07 July at 18:39 · Like · Delete

 **Mytho Geography** The concept of optic flow is brought to mind – humans are very good at seeing only what is necessary. The primitive optical information route triggers immediate flinches and ducking. The more sophisticated route can reduce extremely dense information into simple patterns of incline, reflection, slippage, obstacle, etc.. allowing us to negotiate ...  
[See more](#)  
07 July at 22:01 · Like · 1 person · Delete

Write a comment...

Figure from Kaidie's world 76: 'Discursing with FB Friends'. (Tan 2011e)



Figure 30: 'Map-making with Members of Headway East'. Headway East is a London charity that rehabilitates people with brain injury. (Graham 2010)



Figure 31: 'Doing It With Others'. Screen-capture of film about Kaidie published online by Claudia Tomaz. (Tomaz 2010)



Figure from Kaidie's world 77: 'Course 5'. (Tan 2012j)

In my thesis, I explored how the runner's high can be conducive to creativity (chapter IV). The next step is to ask: All things being equal, how does a person's creative work differ, stylistically and contents-wise whether they run or not? How does the *quality* of work differ if the person experiences the runner's high, or does not experience any 'high', or has a 'bad' run?

Increasingly, neuroscientists are making breakthroughs to grasp how creativity works (*BBC Horizon* 2013). Day by day, technology becomes ever-smarter, too. Perhaps there will come a time when you can invent an app that can not only track the extent of surge in creativity runners get from the 'high', but compare the *nature* of creative output that the runner produces as a result of the runner's high – and answer the questions above, and more.

If the app becomes cheaper to produce, sample sizes can increase and hence improve on the accuracy of the experiments. Additionally, the same way many runners express how wearing tracking devices improve their run, what I call the 'trans-runner's high app' may generate a placebo effect, to encourage users to run more or better, or to make them feel more creative or happier, which may, in turn, have further implications on the experiments.

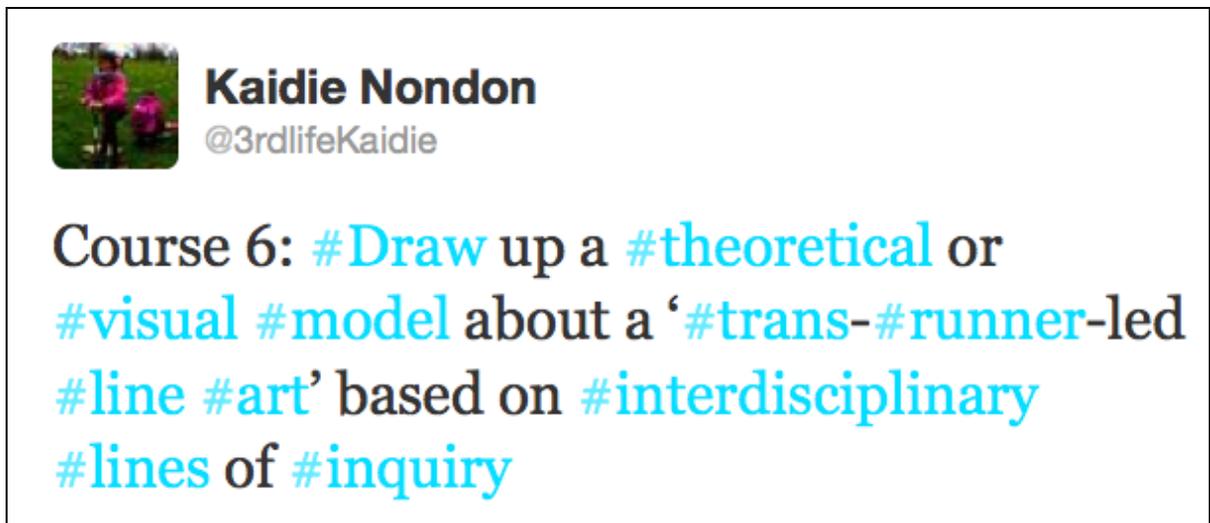


Figure from Kaidie's world 78: 'Course 6'. (Tan 2012j)

For every line of inquiry I pursued, there emerged many more paths that complemented or competed with what I 'settled' for. For instance, vis-à-vis the notions of correlativity and mapping that I raised, further research can be carried out on how they relate to the 'actor network theory' and 'convergence'.

One area that may have particular mileage is what I call 'trans-runner-led-line art'. Lines seem to be an important leitmotif in the Daoist world. 'Dao' refers to path or course, as well as discourse. Lines run throughout the Daoist body, too, in the form of meridians. This could perhaps, in turn, be correlated with the earth's meridians, which could have a bearing on human beings' innate migration drive and how we move in accordance to the earth's revolution. I also metaphorised the hyphen with the meridian, wire, cable and thread (chapter III). My investigation of lines continues in my studio practice. Throughout the thesis, you have come across my mappings and GPS documentations of my runs. Since the tracks were generated only when I ran, it was as if I was functioning as a human pencil. In the next pages, you can see more creative GPS drawings and mind-maps. (Figures from Kaidie's world 79-81) You can also see documentations of a large-scale installation I created, in which lines as a means to draw connections – including poetic and discordant ones – feature prominently. (Figures from Kaidie's world 82-84) Extrapolating from the installation, I further mixed the photographed lines with digital lines, to explore ways to extend the possibility of the line, both literally and metaphorically-speaking. The installation can be understood as a visual exploration of correlative thinking, which is an important thread in my research.

There are yet more related strands and threads that you may wish to pursue. Songlines as associated with the Australian Aboriginals' walking ritual, for instance as explored by Bruce Chatwin (1988), is one of them. You may also look into works by GPS artists, such as Jeremy Wood. An investigation into the role of lines in Daoist art could be revealing too. Social anthropologist Tim Ingold's exuberant exploration of line in his *Lines: A Brief History* (2007) can open out yet more lines of inquiry.

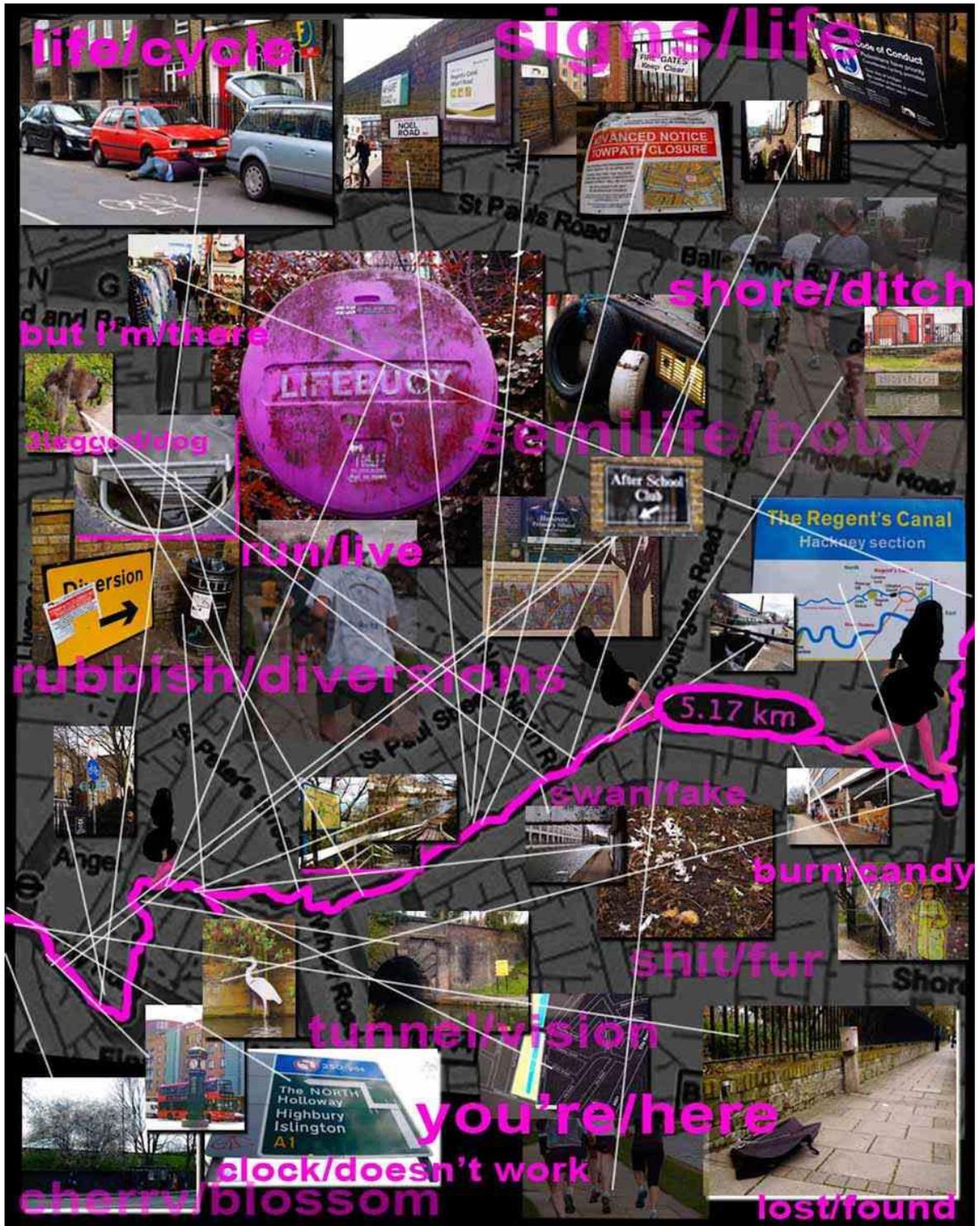


Figure from Kaidie's world 79: 'Journey to the Exotic East Nondon'. (2010)



Figure from Kaidie's world 80: 'Kaidie's World Wide Web'. (2010)

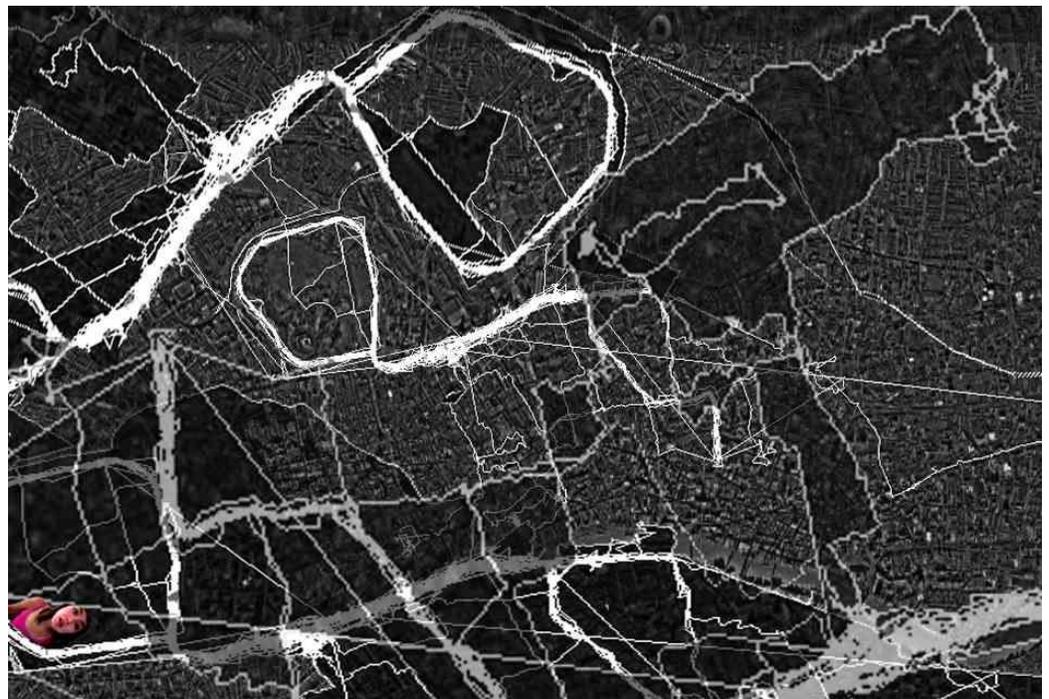


Figure from Kaidie's world 81: 'Kaidie A-Mazed'. (2011)

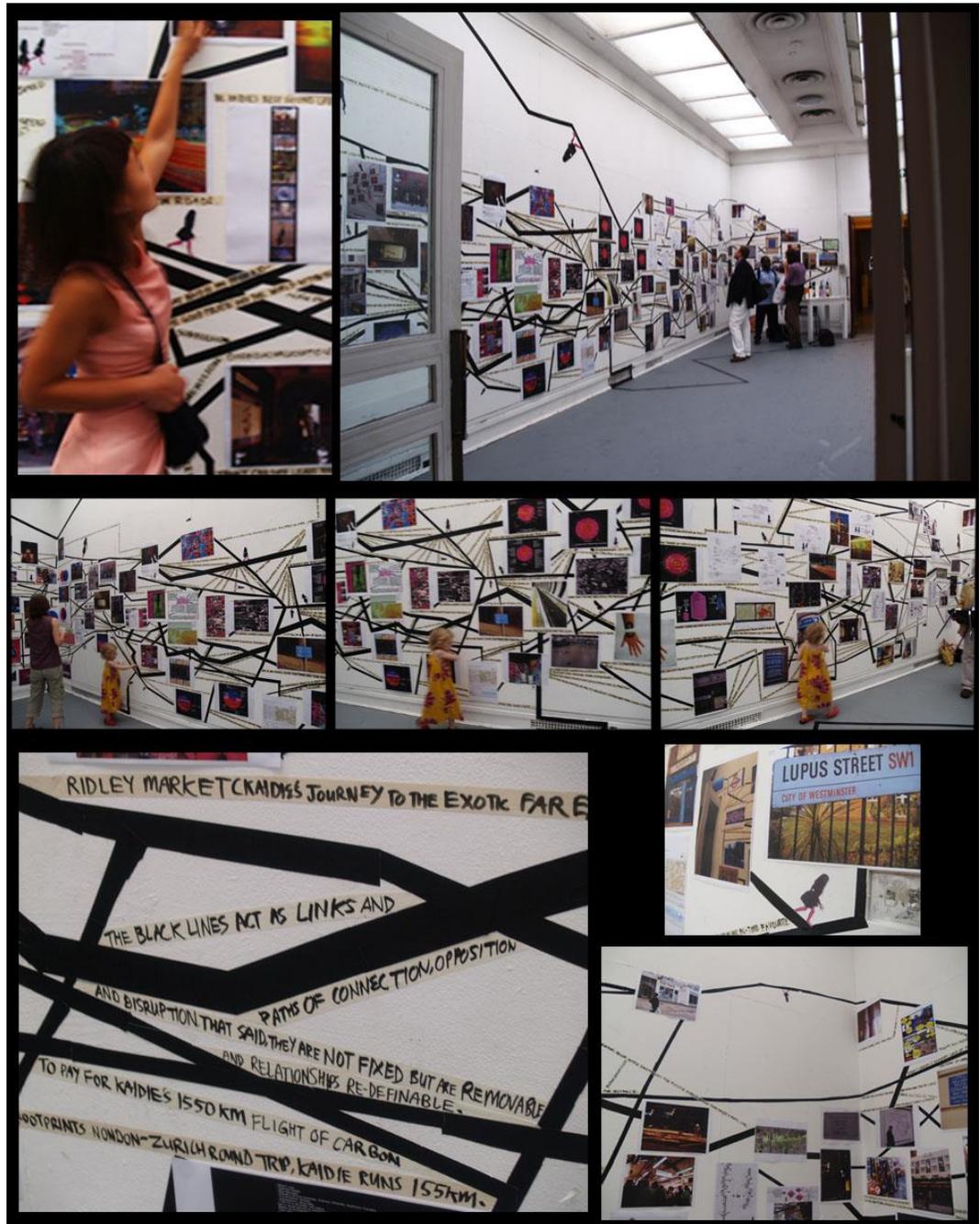


Figure from Kaidie's world 82: 'Documentations of "Meta-Mega-Map Installation"'. (2010)



Figure from Kaidie's world 83: 'Documentations of "Meta-Mega-Map Installation"'. (2010)



Figure from Kaidie's world 84: 'Documentations of "Meta-Mega-Map Installation"'. (2010). Filmmaker Claudia Tomaz is seen here filming the show.



Figure from Kaidie's world 85: 'Course 7'. (Tan 2012j)

The running-writing thread is inextricably bound in my thesis. After all, a core influence of trans-running is the *Lao Zi*, which is one of the most important poems in Chinese literature (Henricks 1990). Additionally, we have encountered several runner-writers. Abdelkader Benali claims that 'all writers are marathon runners' (2012). This is because running and writing both concern singularity and longevity, he explains. Extrapolating from Abdelkader's words, running does seem to be a particularly apt analogy if the writing concerned is a PhD thesis. Both activities are 'filled with repetition, patience and always looking at the horizon, the end', 'taking one little step at the time to arrive at the last line'. For Haruki Murakami, running constitutes his identity as a writer:

'Most of what I know about writing, I've learned through running every day'.  
(2009, p.81).

The running-writing thread is inseparable for Joyce Carol Oates. The novelist correlates the way we move with the way our mind travels:

'In running the mind flees with the body, the mysterious efflorescence of language seems to pulse in the brain, in rhythm with our feet and the swinging of our arms'. (1999)

Echoing research about how the runner's high is meditative and helps problem-solving, Oates states:

'Running is a meditation; more practicably it allows me to scroll through, in my mind's eye, the pages I've just written, proofreading for errors and improvements'. (1999)

Oates has even composed a novel about Detroit while running in London's Hyde Park. This recalls how William Wordsworth composed poems while walking. She further argues that both running are about exploration and *transgression*, both literally and metaphorically. Reminiscent of the running-ambassadors, and in words that recall that of the pungency of *Lao Zi*, George Sheehan and Teh-Ching Hsieh, Oates says:

‘[A]ny form of art is a species of exploration and transgression. [...] To write is to invade another's space, if only to memorialize it. To write is to invite angry censure from those who don't write, or who don't write in quite the way you do, for whom you may seem a threat. Art by its nature is a transgressive act [...]’ (1999)

Oates agrees that writers and poets are ‘famous for loving to be in motion. If not running, hiking; if not hiking, walking’. Nonetheless, she argues:

‘Walking, even fast, is a poor second to running, as all runners know, what we'll resort to when our knees go. But at least it's an option’. (1999)

As it stands, works that expound writing as a metaphor of walking or vice versa are run-of-the-mill. They include Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (2004), Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001) and Jane Rendell's *Site Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism* (2011). You may add a new leg to this well-trodden tradition, by exploring the running-writing correlation.

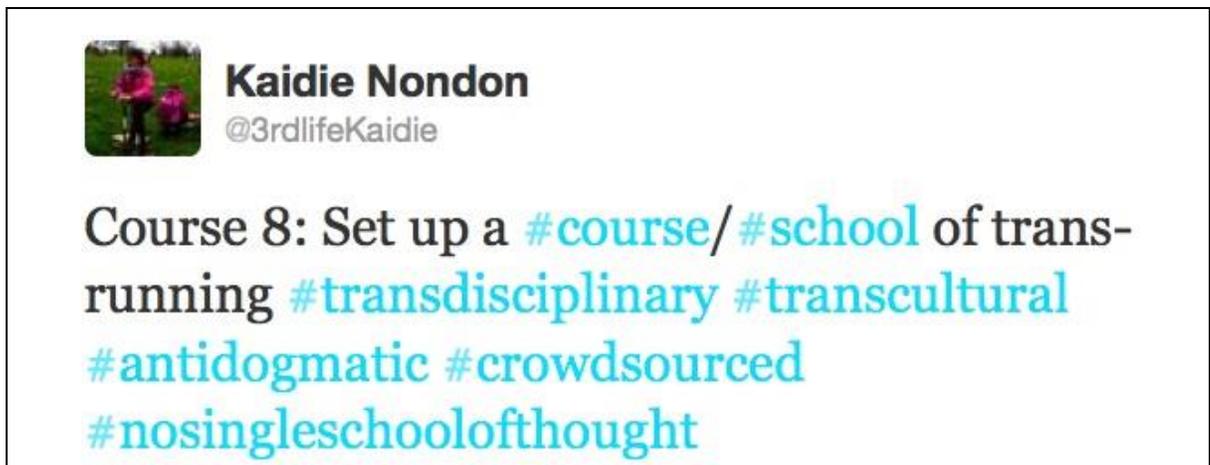


Figure from Kaidie's world 86: 'Course 8'. (Tan 2012j)

I am inspired by Lancaster University's dynamic Centre for Mobilities Research, which was set up in 2003. I am also intrigued by the so-called department of 'Digital Humanities' sprouting up in many Higher Educational institutions, such as University College London, of late. You can establish a postgraduate course or School, on trans-running. This is a site of convergence, conflict, discourse and synthesis for learners, researchers and teachers from diverse fields like Fine Art, urban geography, neuroscience, sport science, poetics, computer science, paleoanthropology, *taiji* and Daoism Studies. Your curriculum can be internationalised, *trans-cultural* and *trans-disciplinary*, crowd-sourced and constantly-reinvented by its students and tutors. While a school, it does not seek to cultivate a school of thought, nor does it follow a single school of thought. Like Daoism, the 'academic world' of trans-running is formalised yet porous. It celebrates and thrives on how individuals can play with, expand on and even *transgress* the basic theme.



Figure from Kaidie's world 87: 'Course 9'. (Tan 2012j)

Along with other Nondon Ambassadors, I planted some seeds, which will become a tree that will grow somewhere in Nondon. As you know, trees take years to grow, and I had expired before I could enjoy the fruits of my labour. Please take my place.



Figure from Kaidie's world 88.: 'Course 10'. (Tan 2012j)

## **PART 2.**

### **Appendices for Written Thesis and Studio Practice (with DVD film)**

**APPENDIX IA.**  
**About My Translation of the *Lao Zi***

## INTRODUCTION

One of my sources of influence for this research is the Chinese tradition of Daoism. In particular, trans-running is inspired by the teachings of Lao Zi in his scripture, *Lao Zi*. In this essay, I work through two related notions that begin with ‘trans-’: *transmission* and *translation*. I explore how the *Lao Zi* has, throughout the years, been variously transmitted, how these transmissions prove challenging to readers and scholars alike, and how this has in turn influenced the way I have translated the *Lao Zi* – and Daoism in general – for my hypothesis of trans-running. My approach addresses ‘translation’ in a more expanded and metaphorical sense. That is to say, this essay is not a technical analysis of my process of translation. After all, I am no scholar in sinology, Daoism or languages, but an artist creating an art thesis. My personal background, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Western-educated artist brought up with Daoist practices, comes into play in my translation of the *Lao Zi*, which can be considered as a creative rendering. In a way, you may regard my thesis about trans-running as a ‘resolution’ of several of these challenges I raise here.

I begin by describing some aspects of the complex background of the *Lao Zi*. Following that, I present three examples of my translation of the *Lao Zi* that you have already come across in my thesis. I juxtapose them with other translations for you to compare and contrast. Finally, I outline five aims in my translation. After reading this essay, you will grasp how my ‘translation’ of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism is idiosyncratic. Following my example, you may even extrapolate your own way to translate the *Lao Zi* and/or Daoism for yourself.

## THE COMPLEX BACKGROUND OF THE *LAO ZI*

Any task of translation is a challenge. The *Lao Zi* arguably presents particular problems – and, therefore, greater room for creativity.

Let us begin by examining its historical origins. Also known as the *Tao Te Ching*, *Daodejing* or the *Scripture of the Tao and the Virtue*, the *Lao Zi* is ‘the classic of all [Daoism], the oldest and the most important of its works’, explains Daoism scholar Livia Kohn (1993, pp.4-12). Consisting merely of 5000 Chinese characters, the terse text contains no dates, no proper names and ‘nothing that would tie it to history’, states Daoism scholar Kristofer Schipper (1994, p.5). No wonder sinologist Julien Pas describes the origins of the *Lao Zi* as a ‘historical riddle’ (2006, p.312). Scholars have been squabbling about a multitude of questions, including:

- There are no fewer than 250 translations of the *Lao Zi* into Western languages, 85 in English (Pas 2006, p.312). Given the plethora of versions out there, Ursula Le Guin, herself a translator of the *Lao Zi*, wonders if the *Lao Zi* has more translators than readers (1999, p.123). Additionally, we can ask: which of these captures the *spirit* – if there is such a thing – of the scripture most accurately? Does its *essence* – if such a thing exists – stay the same? What are the different agendas of the authors and publishers, and to what extent do these affect their translations?
- Was the *Lao Zi* written by the philosopher Lao Zi? Was ‘Lao Zi’ – ‘Old Child’ – merely a pseudonym or title of historical convenience? How reliable was this author? What do we know of him? Was he a court official, a contemporary of Confucius, or a mystical immortal capable of infinite transformations, and who is worshipped as a deity in many Chinese households up to this day? Or, was it written by a group of idealists later termed the ‘Laoist school’ (Pas 2006, p.313)?
- Was the *Lao Zi* written in 600 BCE as traditionally believed, or 250 BCE as recently reassessed? Ancient bamboo, silk, and paper manuscripts were discovered by archaeologists in the 1970’s, but would these be closer to the original than the transmitted versions and commentaries generated throughout the past millennia?

To these, I add two more questions:

- What could a 21<sup>st</sup> century reading or re-reading of the *Lao Zi* by an artist offer?
- What could such a reading say to us as individuals, here and now, this here, in our internet-mediated reality?

The contents of the *Lao Zi* are as confounding. Daoism scholar Robert G. Henricks describes it as ‘a statement of life’s most profound and elusive truths’ that ‘has been treasured for millennia’ (1990). This, however, is not in spite of, but *because* it is ‘poetic’ and ‘occasionally cryptic’:

‘the laconical Classical Chinese in which it was written, the author’s punning and enigmatic style, and the imperfect state of the Chinese originals make the brief poems that comprise it difficult to understand at times’. (1990)

For Daoism scholar James Miller, the *Lao Zi*’s ‘extremely terse and underdetermined’ style means its ‘range of interpretive possibility is particularly broad’, and that it can be applied to ‘an even wider variety of contexts’ (2003, pp.132-138). The fact that the *Lao Zi*, and indeed Daoism, has not only survived but permeated many aspects of the daily lives of many Daoists all over the world up to this day in spite of its critics’ attempts to deny its existence over the years can be understood as a testament to the versatility and indeed strength of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism. As Daoist expert Isabelle Robinet states:

‘Daoism has reabsorbed and digested, regathered and amalgamated, and preserved and organized various strands of Chinese culture ... all without ever abandoning its own identity and coherence. It has thus become a constantly operating force coordinating and synthesizing Chinese traditions ... [and] has impregnated all of Chinese civilization, penetrating ways of thinking in China in all kinds of ways’. (Cited in Clarke 2000, p.5)

These arguments support why Pas says that the *Lao Zi* has, for thousands of years, fired our imagination as a ‘a gold mine of inspiration’ (2006, p.11).

The structure of the *Lao Zi* is, tricky, too. Transmissions and translations of the *Lao Zi* typically consist of 81 chapters. They are divided into two parts, of the ‘*Dao*’ (Way) followed by the ‘*De*’ (Virtue). This explains the alternative title, *Daodejing*, in which ‘*jing*’ refers to ‘scripture’. Nonetheless, there is no logical narrative that runs through the pages. Some may link this to its muddled genealogy. Others may fault Lao Zi as an incompetent editor whose work is ‘poorly organized’ (Pas 2006, p.11). However, I like to think of the openness of the structure as an invitation to re-order the *Lao Zi* to our liking. In so doing, it is as if we are metaphorically running-about within the ‘world’ of the text, re-mixing and generating our own narrative thread, course and discourse, and *dao*. It is as if we are playing the role of editor or even writer of the *Lao Zi*. The openness of the structure of the *Lao Zi* may be the Old Child’s playful way to subvert the limitations of the written word. Generations of readers and translators of the *Lao Zi*, too, seem to have attempted to follow Lao Zi’s *dao* or methodology, by also transferring to the reader the role of the editor in generating their own *dao*. For her anthology of key Daoist texts, Livia Kohn encourages her reader to work out their own *dao* when reading her book:

‘Although presented as a logical succession, it must be understood that the concepts and practices described in actual reality are interwoven and mingled in a highly complex way. They are not to be followed in as simple and linear a manner as their presentation may suggest’. (1993, p.3)

In his introductory book to Daoism for the Western reader, Miller similarly states that instead of a linear scheme, he invites his reader to ‘leap backwards and forwards through the chapters to pursue whichever themes or lines of thought are interesting’ (2003, p.xii) That said, it is ‘also possible to start at the beginning and work your way forward, in which case readers will find themselves coming back to the same Daoist movements, but each time looking at them from a different perspective.’ In this way, Miller wants his text to ‘mirror something of a recursive quality’ that characterises the life-force of the *dao*. Trans-running runs with Miller’s analysis – as well as his choice of word, ‘movements’.

### THREE EXAMPLES OF MY TRANSLATION

My version referred to the work of sinologist D.C. Lau (1963), Daoism scholar Robert G. Henricks (1990), and poet-novelist Ursula Le Guin (1999). Where available, I also consulted the work of philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu (1997), who did not publish a translation of the *Lao Zi* as such, but quotes extensively from it.

Chapter 1:

Tan	Lau	Le Guin	Henricks	Wu
The <i>dao</i> that can be <i>dao</i> -ed is not the real <i>dao</i> .	The way that can be spoken of Is not the constant way.	The Way you can go isn't the real way	As for the Way, the Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way;	The Tao that can be tao-ed is not the constant Tao (p.231).  The Tao tao-able is not the constant Tao (p. 314).

Chapter 20:

Tan	Lau	Le Guin	Henricks
Like a child that has not yet learnt to smile, restless as if I have no home to return to. Everybody seems satisfied; I alone am insatiable. My mind is that of a fool – ignorant and stupid! Other people are clear; I alone am mixed-up. [...] Other people have their reasons for acting; I alone am foolish and crude.	Like a baby that has not yet learned to smile, Listless as though with no home to go back to. The multitude all have more than enough. I alone seem to be in want. My mind is that of a fool – how blank! Vulgar people are clear. I alone am drowsy. [...] The multitude all have a purpose. I alone am foolish and uncouth.	clueless, like a child, a baby too young to smile. Most people have plenty I'm the one that's poor, a fool right through.  Ignorant, ignorant. Most people are so bright. I'm the one that's dull. Most people are so keen, I don't have the answers [...]  Everybody has something to do. I'm the clumsy one, out of place.	Like a child who has not yet smiled. Tired and exhausted – as though I have no place to return. The multitudes all have a surplus. I alone seem to be lacking. Mine is the mind of a fool – ignorant and stupid! The common people see things clearly; I alone am in the dark. [...] The common people discriminate and make fine distinctions; I alone am muddled and confused.

Chapter 76:

Tan	Lau	Le Guin	Henricks	Wu
We are soft and nimble when living, but firm and rigid when dead. [...] Thus the firm and rigid are the companions of death; the soft and nimble are the companions of life.	A man is supple and weak when living, but hard and stiff when dead. [...] Thus the hard and the strong are the comrades of death; the supple and the weak are the comrades of life.	Living people are soft and tender. Corpses are hard and stiff. [...] So, hard and stiffness go with death; tenderness, softness, go with life.	When people are born, they're supple and soft; When they die, they end up stretched out firm and rigid; [...] Therefore we say that the firm and rigid are companions of death, While the supple, the soft, the weak, and the delicate are companions of life.	Lao Zi urged us to tend toward soft nimbleness of the living imperfect against hard fixation of the dead perfect (p.91).

## FIVE AIMS OF MY TRANSLATION

Given the complex conditions of the *Lao Zi*, I had five aims when translating it for my thesis.

### A. My translation aims to be a creative (re-)interpretation generated from a system of cross-referencing different existing translations

The unusual contents and structure of the *Lao Zi* as well as the way in which the it has been transmitted and translated throughout the centuries made me think of the game of Chinese Whispers, albeit one that is 2600 years old. To me, its convoluted genealogy seems to call for subjective interpretations. Because – and not despite – of the tricky circumstances of the *Lao Zi*, it is arguably important for us to continue to read, re-read, re-interpret and translate it. Pas points out the words of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Dutch sinologist J.J.L. Duyvendak, who states that ‘a critical study of a text, which is obviously corrupt, is indispensable’. Indeed, we cannot but read the *Lao Zi* – and Daoism – *critically*, for the Old Child would not have liked an unquestioning mind. Thus, Pas recommends that we think about the translation of the *Lao Zi* as an ‘exegesis’, which is *beyond translation*, but as an ‘exposition, critical analysis, or *interpretation* of [...] a text’ (2006, p.315). Although an exegesis ‘at best only presents a derived or applied meaning, that, per se, is not wrong, if the distinction is acknowledged.’ In other words, what Pas seems to be saying is that we should accept and even celebrate – rather than to fight or deny – the fact that what we encounter of the *Lao Zi* is inevitably already a variation of the so-called ‘original’. After all, making an ancient text ‘meaningful to new situations’ invariably calls for its ‘(re)interpretation’, argues Pas. That is to say, any translation of the *Lao Zi* is necessarily a re-contextualisation of the work into a different time and space, which demands a new re-vision. Additionally, Pas analyses that when it comes to the translation of literary and artistic works, not only are ‘good language skills and an understanding of the field’ required, ‘literary gifts and inspiration’ are vital. Given its ‘rhyming aphorisms’ (Pas 2006, p.132) many consider *Lao Zi* as a work of literature. Henricks, for instance, considers the *Lao Zi* as ‘among the most popular works of world literature’, and the text in each chapter as ‘poems, really’ (1990). Elsewhere, Pas mentions how, if ‘one would attempt to walk the Way alone, and find all one’s data in primary source, one lifetime would not be long enough’ (2006, p.ix).

Given how the *Lao Zi* seems to be engaged in a game of Chinese Whispers to this day, and following Pas’ advice, I felt encouraged to create my own translation of the *Lao Zi* as an enterprise that is less technical than creative, subjective and even idiosyncratic. Additionally, while I have explicitly aligned my translation with that of D. C. Lau’s in my thesis, my actual process consisted of a system of cross-referencing different existing translations of the *Lau Zi* simultaneously. I hope that the way I (re)interpreted the *Lao Zi* – and Daoism – for trans-running adequately reflects its rich background, but in a manner that is stimulating for the contemporary reader, too.

### B. My translation is a rendering that aims to embody *Lao Zi*’s poetic lyricism and playful irony

One of my references is Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Lao Tzu : Tao Te Ching: An English Version* (1999), which seems to exemplify Pas’ notion of a (re)interpretation that is not only ‘not wrong’ but ‘meaningful to new situations’. In fact, Jonathan Herman, an American professor in Religious Studies, praises Le Guin’s work as ‘surprisingly interesting and scholastically responsible’ (1998).

Yet, traditionalists may raise their eyebrows at Le Guin’s circumstances and approach.

To begin with, Le Guin, is not an academic, but a popular American writer better known for her novels and poems for children and adults in science fiction and fantasy. That said, Herman points out that Le Guin (born in 1929) has for years applied Daoist themes into her own novels. Another fact that may annoy purists is that

Le Guin does not know any Chinese. She declares this outright in her book. Instead, she constructs her work entirely from secondary – albeit highly authoritative – sources. One of these includes a 1898 translation of the *Lao Zi* that carries a transliteration and a translation by Paul Carus (p.107). Le Guin argues that this became her ‘Rosetta Stone’ through which she carried out a meticulous system of cross-referencing various transmissions from the last forty years. Herman lauds her methodological approach as reflecting ‘painstaking research and considerable methodological self-consciousness’. Le Guin is upfront about the subjectivity of her approach. She interjects a generous volume of footnotes and commentaries throughout her book, and definitely says that these are ‘idiosyncratic and unscholarly, and are to be ignored if not found helpful’ (p.x). Some of the areas she covers include: ‘Notes: Concerning this Version’ (p. 119), ‘Sources’ (p.121), ‘Notes on Some Choices of Wording’ (p. 124), ‘The Two Texts of the *Tao Te Ching*’ (p. 126) and ‘Notes on the Chapters’ (p.127). Creative decisions include the use of the word ‘wise soul’ or ‘the wise’ instead of ‘Sage’, ‘Wise Man’, ‘Saint’ and ‘Great Man’ that are common in many translations. For Le Guin, *Lao Zi* is ‘funny, keen, kind, modest, indestructibly outrageous, and inexhaustibly refreshing’ (p.x). Thus, she wants to ‘make a version that doesn’t limit wisdom to males, and doesn’t give the impression that a follower of the Tao has to be a professional, fulltime Holier-than-Thou who lives up above snowline’. In so doing, Le Guin wants her translation to reach ‘[u]nimportant, uneducated, untrained men and women’, who, too, ‘can be wise souls’ (p.124). Le Guin’s notes also elucidate her role as a ruthless editor. When it comes to passages that she cannot make ‘aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual sense’, Le Guin takes liberties to eradicate them (p.111). Herman describes Le Guin’s moves in ‘omitting, rearranging, reinterpreting, or interpolating passages’ as ‘unapologetic’. Le Guin herself describes the *Lao Zi* as unapologetic – ‘marvelously pungent’ – in its approach (p.123). In fact, Le Guin is so marvellously pungent herself, that the poet-novelist states that she reads the *Lao Zi* as poetry, and edits and (re)interprets it from the point of view of a poet as well. On her decision ‘eject’ parts of the *Lao Zi* in her rendering, she states:

‘My authority for doing so is nil – a poet’s judgement that “this doesn’t belong here”. [...] [M]y aim was to make aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual sense, and I felt that efforts to treat material extraneous to the text as integral to it weaken its integrity’. (p.125)

Elsewhere, Le Guin defiantly reasserts her position by describing her approach as ‘strictly personal and aesthetic’ (p.127). With regards to her audacity to translate a classic Chinese text with no knowledge of the language whatsoever, Le Guin says:

‘For all my ignorance of the language, I could gain an intuition of the style, the gait and cadence, of the original, necessary to my ear and conscience if I was to try to reproduce it in English’. (1999, p.119)

Le Guin labels her work as a ‘rendering’ or ‘rendition’ (p. 119). The term seems to encapsulate how her approach is less technical than creative, subjective and idiosyncratic. The term ‘rendering’ appears in Livia Kohn’s *The Taoist Experience, An Anthology*, too, in which the Daoist authority declares that ‘the manuscripts] are all given in the rendering of the author’ (1993, p.3). Le Guin’s efforts seems to have paid off, as Herman describes her rendering as an embodiment of the ‘poetic lyricism and playful irony’ of the *Lao Zi*.

I found Le Guin’s approach refreshing and inspiring. Like Le Guin, I am not a Daoist scholar or sinologist, but an artist. Thus, in my translation of the *Lao Zi*, I made editorial and aesthetic decisions. This includes aligning the translation as a single paragraph instead of line breaks, so as to conform with other quotations that appear in the thesis. Like Le Guin, I embraced the *pungency* and *playfulness* of the original text, too. My translation of Chapter I of the *Lao Zi* (as ‘the *dao* that can be *dao*-ed is not the real *dao*’) is an example. The ‘Whispers’ in the metaphor of the Chinese Whispers evokes a poetic and light touch that I aim for in my rendering. What I lack in rigour, knowledge, specialism, technique and sagacity, I hope I have made up with humility and sincerity, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century person who finds inspiration from the humour, generosity and wisdom of the Old Child.

## C. The unevenness of my translation reflects my own uneven grasp of the Chinese language and bumpy adventure with Daoism

All that said, I should distinguish two points that places some distance between my work and Le Guin.

The first is that I have been brought up as a practitioner of Daoist liturgy since I was born into a Daoist household in Singapore. The second is that, being ethnically Chinese, I am equipped with a knowledge of the written and spoken forms of the Chinese language.

The latter point is both a blessing and curse in my attempt to read, unpack and repackage the *Lao Zi*. The Daoist scripture was written in Classical Chinese. It is no secret that the study of a classical language is a field of specialisation. It requires years, if not an entire or several lifetimes to grasp and master any given task, as Pas, Wu, Tim Ingold, and Kristofer Schipper would testify, and as I have pointed out in my thesis (p.227). Classical languages often depart from the contemporary in terms of the grammar, syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation and so on. Hence, it is perhaps better for a person to approach Classical forms of a language as a distinct language from the contemporary. It can thus be said that my knowledge of Chinese can be a hindrance rather than an asset in the reading of ancient Chinese texts. To begin with, my grasp of the Chinese language is far from perfect. Although Mandarin Chinese is technically my ‘mother tongue’, I have been educated in English since the age of 4. English is also the language that I think and function in. Additionally, it is the so-called ‘Western’ – and not ‘Eastern’ – culture that I am more at home with, having been brought up in the highly-Westernised ex-British colony of Singapore, and having lived and worked in London and the US for several years.

I have mentioned that due to the *Lao Zi*'s complex lineage of transmission and translation of the past millennia, I have drawn upon several existing versions of the *Lao Zi* to help me generate my own translation. Another reason is that I was adhering to Pas' advice about how it is easier to be guided by others who are more experienced. I also wanted to follow in the footsteps of Le Guin, who had based her translation on an authoritative translation which she cross-referenced with other versions.

My lack of expertise in both Classical and professional Chinese explains why my choice of publications of the *Lao Zi* – as well as books about Daoism in general – have been those that are written by either Western scholars or Chinese scholars who have been educated in the West. Examples of such Western scholars include Livia Kohn, Norman Girardot, Chad Hansen, Kristofer Schipper and J.J. Clarke, who hail from or work in Netherlands, Germany, UK and USA. Examples of the non-Western scholars include the Harvard-trained Taiwanese-American Kuang-Ming Wu, and Professor Din Cheuk Lau (1921-2010). Associate Professor Su Jui Ling of the Department of Chinese studies of the National University of Singapore had recommended me to use Lau's translation (2011). Lau's version carries a Chinese transcription of the *Lao Zi*, as well as his parallel translation in English. Lau's translation is routinely credited as a definitive source of the *Lao Zi*. Philosopher Roger T. Ames describes the Hong King-born Glasgow-trained Lau as a ‘renowned scholar of Chinese philosophy and Culture’ (2010). Lau had not only translated the *Lao Zi*, but other canonical ancient Chinese texts including the *Mencius* and the *Analects of Confucius*, all of which had enjoyed immense popularity by the public and specialist reader alike. In fact, Ames states that Lau's Penguin publications have helped to ‘foster western literacy in the Chinese philosophical literature’. As a professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, Lau also taught ‘a whole generation’ of illustrious sinologists including A.C. Graham. That Lau had the best of both worlds of East and West could explain why I find his translation approachable. Indeed, Ames argues that it was Lau's grasp of ‘two disparate cultures’ that ‘speaks both of the quality and the depth of his understanding of these two different worlds’. It is the works of these scholars – and not those of Chinese scholars in the Chinese language – that feel ‘authentic’ to me. I felt that I could identify with their interpretations more closely. It is as if these scholars are not just translating the words from the poem, but sifting out bits and pieces of the very way of life and culture embodied and advocated by *Lao Zi*, and Daoism, for me. By ‘running with’ these scholars, it is as if they have held my hand to lead me back to where I have come from – and forgotten or neglected – to help me become re-acquainted with my mother tongue and culture. Yet, typical of a Daoist reversion, this has not just been a return, but a *renewal*. Their works have deepened my understanding of aspects of the culture, as well as led me to new

territories that I had not ventured to before, and equipped me with the tools to augment my ideas and run further. My proposal of the hypothesis of trans-running is a testimonial to this.

To sum up: my translation of the *Lao Zi* is not neutral, professional, perfect or learned, but uneven, flawed and idiosyncratic. It reflects my less-than-perfect grasp of the Chinese language, as well as my own bumpy journey with Daoism over the last 38 years. This, I feel, validates my translation.

#### **D. My translation aims to be *palatable yet pungent and playful*; it also aims to reflect a self-consciousness about the ‘Chineseness’ in this game of Chinese Whispers**

This point expands on my previous regarding my cultural identity and that of my writing.

I have aimed to put some distance between my research of trans-running from discourses that are trendy in the Western academic world. I have largely appropriated the *Lao Zi* and Daoist ways, arguing how they may give us new, imaginative insights into many aspects of our lives today.

At the same time, as I translated words, ideas and ideologies from an ancient ‘Eastern world’, I was self-conscious of possibly ‘othering’ my work. After all, the product – a PhD thesis – is to be validated by an institution of Higher Education in the Western world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I do not wish to alienate my readers in the ‘Western world’. You should not feel that my translation of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism into my hypothesis of trans-running sounds ‘Greek’, or, more fittingly, ‘Chinese’, and hence, dismiss it. Neither should you treat it with politeness or even political correctness. I do not want my thesis to be ‘ghetto-ised’ in the academic world to become the equivalent of ‘Esoteric’ ‘New Age’, ‘Alternative’, ‘Special Interest’, ‘World Music’, ‘International Foods’ or, worse still, simply ‘Exotic’ in the music store, supermarket or bookshop. These reasons explain why I have appropriated the popular activity of running, and not *taiji*, for my hypothesis. That said, I do not want to whitewash my work to the extent that it is bland. It would be as sad if you think that I have mined or plundered an other culture – even if it were ‘my own’ – and then go on to tame, manicure, tin or dilute in order to make it palatable for people outside of that world.

How then, can I find a balance when translating the *Lao Zi* and Daoism so that my work can be attractive to the Western reader, but, just like the *Lao Zi* itself, also playful and pungent enough to challenge and sting?

I consulted British sinologist J.J. Clarke’s *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought*. The book is a powerfully-argued treatise on West-East cultural negotiation (2000). In its preface, the Emeritus Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University states the importance of allowing Daoism to retain its ‘otherness’, and to ‘refuse the universalist demands of cultural uniformity’:

‘Daoism, I hope that I will be able to show, still manages to retain that sense of otherness, a refusal to conform, confronting our complacent orthodoxies with its own evident “right to exist”. In many ways both our academic and popular outlooks remain largely Eurocentric in spite of the seemingly inexorable march of globalization and multiculturalism, and I hope that this book will be a contribution to a truly ‘open sea’ of learning, mutual understanding, and respect across cultural boundaries, and an encouragement to productive intercultural dialogue’. (2000, pp.xi-xii).

I adopted several of Clarke’s approaches with the aim that they may facilitate a productive intercultural dialogue. The first was to utilise China’s preferred system of romanising Chinese words, that is, the *hanyu pinyin* system. Hence, my thesis refers to *Daoism* and *Lao Zi* instead of the older Wade-Giles system that western readers may be more familiar with such as *Taoism* and *Lao Tzu*. For Clarke, this is a sign of ‘respect for this Other world’ (2002, p.xi). The *hanyu-pinyin* system is also that which I had been taught through the 14 years of education with Chinese as my second language.

Another approach that I learnt from Clarke and applied was to adhere to ‘the spirit of Daoism’, in ‘avoiding in engaging in aggressive polemics’ (2000, p.5). I downplayed references that I found superstitious. At the same time, I drew out features that I found poetic and which I thought could contribute to trans-running in a positive way. An example of this is the notion of the Daoist adept’s ecstatic excursion that I discussed (chapter IV).

Indeed, the line between so-called ‘superstition’ and poetry may be difficult to draw in general. Daoist ways have routinely been ‘written off wholesale as superstition’ and ‘interpreted as pure religious mysticism and poetry’ states Clarke (2000, p.2). That is why Clarke calls Daoism ‘the least understood, the most commonly ignored and maligned, of all the major religions of the world’. The ruling Confucius elite mocked its ‘fanciful activities’ such as ‘flying though the air, living on dew, indefinitely prolonged orgasm, and the search for the elixir of immortality’. In fact, Clarke observes that even up to recently, Chinese intelligentsia considers Daoism as ‘an embarrassment and as a mark of China’s underdevelopment in relation to the West, a humiliating blemish on China’s record which must be erased in the drive towards modernisation.’ Particularly in Singapore, Daoism seems to be associated with superstition – and backwardness. The adjective Daoist seems often accompanied in the press with the words ‘uneducated’, ‘lower middle class’ and ‘lower class’. Although a popular cultural tradition and religion, it seems increasingly common for younger people brought up in Daoist households to distance themselves from the culture by converting to the ‘Western’ religion of Christianity. A few of my relatives, for instance, have done that. Although I found and still find certain aspects such as the praying to the ‘god of fortune’ excessive, I appreciate the riot of colours and noise that characterise the eclectic world.

A kind of prejudice also pervade the academic world vis-à-vis the Daoism’s ‘superstitious’ ways. This was one of the reasons why Daoist scholar Kristofer Schipper’s decision to become a Daoist priest (which I mentioned in chapter I of my thesis) was considered radical in the academic world. In a paradoxically anti-Daoist fashion, some Western academics even insist on ‘diachotomising’ Daoism by splitting it up into two categories: of ‘philosophical Daoism’, or, ‘Daoist philosophy’ (*‘daojia’*), which they set in opposition to religious Daoism or Daoist religion (*‘daojiao’*). This is in spite of the fact that Daoist practitioners do not make such a distinction. In his *A to Z of Taoism*, sinologist Julian F. Pas states that he exercises selection in his reading of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism (2006, p.ix). He states that he runs with the *Lao Zi*, which, as we already understand by now, academics commonly hold up as a highly-sophisticated work of philosophy and poetry. For Pas, ‘I find a rich treasure-house of wisdom that is meaningful in my own life’. In fact, he considers the *Lao Zi* a ‘perennial philosophy’ that appeals to the ‘universal human mind’, and that can ‘promote the human capacity for self-transcendence’. Nonetheless, in a move that appears ‘un-Daoistic’ and reminiscent of those who mock Daoism, Pas activates the adjectives ‘fascinating’, ‘colourful’, ‘mysterious’, ‘weird’, ‘illusive’ and ‘senseless’ to describe the Daoist religion, and categorically declares that he ‘would not incorporate’ the religion into his own life.

I warmed to Clarke’s recommendation, which is for us to take the middle path rather than choosing so-called ‘philosophical’ or ‘religious’ Daoism. Daoist scholar James Miller seems to run with Clarke’s recommendation of an intercultural dialogue when he urges us to on the one hand ‘pay attention to our own cultural milieu, the values and concepts that we take for granted in our day-to-day lives’ but at the same time be sensitive to how Daoist traditions differ from Western ones. After all, gods, priests, beliefs and rituals are but the ‘bread and butter’ of any religion, states Miller (2003, p.x). We do not have to deny or mock such aspects. Instead, by comparing and contrasting what we do not understand with what we do, by moving backwards-and-forwards between these two perspectives, we could weave ‘a picture of Daoism that is historically accurate and also culturally enlightening’. Indeed, Le Guin seems to apply such a principle when she translates words from the *Lao Zi* to be more inclusive, such as not just ‘males’ but non-males and the non-powerful are referred to, too.

My desire to come across as moderate was clearest perhaps in chapter II, where I talked about the importance of performing a playful revolt against the government, yet doing so within legitimate and not extreme means, and from within the system. Also, like the *Lao Zi* itself, I adopted a self-reflexive approach in my writing. This self-consciousness in its own ‘otherness’ explains why, for instance, I have mobilised the metaphor of the ‘Chinese Whispers’ to describe my translation efforts. While I could have used other names that the same

game goes by, such as ‘Broken Telephone’, the deliberate choice of ‘Chinese Whispers’ is my tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of my awareness of the cultural problems that my text carries. On a more general note, my thesis itself has been built up via an intercultural dialogue, or cacophony between contrasting schools of thoughts. In this way, I hope that my rendering of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism sufficiently embraces their unique poetic and imaginative richness, yet at the same time self-consciously refers back with what we are familiar with. We may still find it ‘senseless’ or ‘weird’ – but in a way that makes us curious about it and keen to learn more, rather than to dismiss it.

With these approaches, my translation of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism aims to be approachable yet uncompromisingly un-neutered and not sanitised – just like the *Lao Zi* itself.

## **E. My translation hand-picks the *Lao Zi* and Daoism for the purpose of the hypothesis of trans-running**

No enterprise comes without an agenda; so does every reading and re-writing of the *Lao Zi*. My translation, too, is but a variation of the classic work that I have hand-picked and custom-made to suit my hypothesis of trans-running.

In my written thesis (chapter IV), I discussed linguist Chad Hansen’s statement that the *dao* has, throughout the years, undergone processes of action and reaction, having been ‘spoken, heard, forgotten, transmitted, learned, studied, understood and misunderstood, distorted, mastered, and performed with pleasure’ (1996). Singing a similar tune, James Miller notes that Daoist texts including the *Lao Zi* ‘bear witness to a continuing process of redaction and commentary’ (2003, pp.132-138). Unsurprisingly, each of us reads, translates, adapts and performs the *Lao Zi* for different reasons, to suit different agendas, in different contexts. Julien F Pas argues that throughout the ages, people from different schools of thought have used the text as a vehicle to propagate a range of worldviews (2006, p.312). They include ‘idealist philosophy, Christian theology, theosophy, scientism, feminism, and romanticism’. Miller points out that, for instance, Daoist priests ‘derive their authority from the formal, ritual transmission’ of the *Lao Zi*, while intellectuals use it to ‘stake their claim to authority by framing their own agendas’. Then, Miller says that the Daoist literati ‘sought to reshape Daoist culture and values’ by reinterpreting the ideas of the *Lao Zi*. Then, there was British biochemist Joseph Needham. Renowned for his seminal *Science and Civilization in China*, Needham is commonly regarded as the most influential sinologist of the last century. Yet, it has also been said that ‘more than any other scholarly interpreter’, Needham had appropriated the *Lao Zi* ‘in service of his own agenda’ (Julia Hardy cited in Miller 2003, p.137). Needham’s version of the *dao*, explains Miller, is a kind of ‘utopian organic naturalism’ that can not only resolve feudal hierarchies of ancient China, but act as the ‘antidote to Western dualisms of spirit and body and what he saw as the unscientific view of nature and politics that they generate’ (2003, p.137).

My translation of the *Lao Zi* and Daoism is one particular reading that serves my motive, that is, to put forward the hypothesis of trans-running as a playful way for us to run our world. Hence, not all 81 chapters of the *Lao Zi* are relevant. To formulate a critical strategy catered for our 21<sup>st</sup> century internet-mediated world, I paid particular attention to chapters and lines within each ‘poem’ that explore the notions of the individual in society, the body, technology, the cyclical nature of life and death, and *wuwei* or spontaneity and so on. The way I have interpreted terms is selected, too. For instance, as I pointed out in my thesis (chapter I), scholars have no agreed definition of the term *wuwei*. Running with scholars like Miller and Edward Slingerland, I translated *wuwei* as ‘playful spontaneity’ and ‘playful freedom’. This runs with my idea, and idealisation, of trans-running. Running with one interpretation necessarily means that it runs against another. Several scholars also configure *wuwei* as passivity or inaction and non-action. Many other noted Daoist scholars, including Needham and Kristofer Schipper, dispute this. I have also run with interpretations of the *Lao Zi* which I feel are capable of portraying values that trans-running aims for. As you can see from my table that cross-references my translation with that by other translators, some render the ideal person in chapter 76 as akin to a ‘newborn babe’ that is ‘weak’. However, I preferred to conjure the nimbleness and freshness of the young child. This is the version that philosopher Kuang-Ming Wu advocates in his work (1997 p.91), which are qualities that I also consider as desirable in a trans-runner. Lastly, I do not see, and would not dream of seeing

myself as an expert or spokesperson of the *Lao Zi* or Daoism. It is not my aim or concern to persuade you to turn to the *Lao Zi* – or Daoism in general – after reading this thesis. That said, it is not an undesirable consequence if that were to happen, Pas says that ‘Daoism deserves to be better known in the West’ (2006, p.ix). I hope that you would agree.

## **A TRANSLATION THAT AIMS TO OPEN THE WAY FOR YOU TO CREATE YOUR OWN TRANSLATION OF THE *LAO ZI* AND DAOISM, AND CREATE MORE ROUNDS OF CHINESE WHISPERS**

Transmitted like a game of Chinese Whispers, the *Lao Zi* has always been read, always re-read, always written and edited (since every act of reading is a process of re-writing). Its meaning hence stays unstable, and any conclusion about it is provisional and a work-in-progress, ever-engaged in a whirlpool of intertextuality, and always capable of generating even more intercultural dialogues.

Mobilising the five approaches outlined above, I hope that my translation of the words of the Old Child have not only sufficiently reflected its rich background, but has laid out the ingredients to encourage you to create your own version of the *Lao Zi*, and to carry on with the game of Chinese Whispers. The *Lao Zi* – cryptic, elusive and contorted by different transmitters along the way – continues to inspire many people. I hope that my translation of the *Lao Zi* – as well as my translation of the *Lao Zi* and Daoist ways into trans-running – may also inspire us here and now. Lao Zi talks of the importance of being nimble and imperfect as a sign of life. You may think of my imperfect effort as an invitation for you to take hold of the baton, and to improve upon my effort, or to create your own re-interpretation of the *Lao Zi*. After all, there are 10,000 paths to the mountaintop, not to mention that there are many mountains. Just like the *dao* itself, the *Lao Zi* is fluid and ever-transforming. Your translation may ensure that the *Lao Zi* remains a lived and living document, and the we continue and create yet more rounds of the game of Chinese Whispers.

**APPENDIX IB.**  
**Transcripts of Conversations**

The following are transcripts of some of the conversations I conducted with people whose works have influenced trans-running. These conversations also constitute original primary research. Typos and other writing quirks are left uncorrected. My questions are in italics.

## **ABDELKADER BENALI, NOVELIST, EMAIL CONVERSATIONS 31 JANUARY – 2 FEBRUARY 2012**

*Why or how have you picked up running?*

I picked up running because I was fed up of standing still. Since my childhood I ran and it liberated something in me. Like ice is being melted by the sun. So running brought light in my life. While running I felt more able to resist certain temptations and also overcome difficulties in life. It empowered me like no other sport or thing could do. And when the running had ended I could look back to what I had run in a very nostalgic way. While running there is no place for something else, and I like that feeling.

*What do you like about running? (Do you engage in other sports? How is running different from them?)*

There is just you and you, to begin with, there is the road that sometimes is steep, than flat, than curbs and makes angles, I like conquering that road, I like it when I can run soft and slow and still feel progress building up in my body; I think there is a kind of intimacy to running that doesn't show in teamsports - the problem with teamsports is the shared responsibility and the shared failure, I shun away from this. I like to take my own responsibility and I like that there is not other to blame than myself when failing.

*Do you have a favorite route? How long do you run each time?*

I run between 8 and 10 miles a day, I run along the river De Amstel, from my house till a village called Ouderkerk aan de Amstel, there I turn by crossing a bridge, back to home. In the summer and spring there are rowers on the river, and I pass them. There is sweet melancholy in the sky. I also run in the Amsterdamse Bos, a big park just south of town, especially in winter and autumn when there aren't much people around. There I can be alone for a long time running.

*What goes on in your mind when you run?*

Sometimes a lot (people to meet, songs, memories, strange ideas about love, death and longing coming and going) but most of the time nothing, just me listening to the breath, and listening to my body adjusting to the new conditions; there is a lot to listen to.

*You say that 'all writers are marathon runners'. Could you explain that?*

Because of the singularity of longevity; there is no schedule for writing a novel, it just takes you a lot of time filled with repetition, patience and always looking at the horizon, the end, the finish, and never looking at the moment itself, the break down, the lack of energy when a chapter is not working, it's just about taking one little step at the time to arrive at the last line. A first advice marathon runners get from the pro is to always concentrate on the end and never linger too much in the present, especially when the running gets tough and energy is slowly slipping out.

*You say that 'a marathon is a self-portrait'. Could you explain that?*

No matter how much you train, no matter how much you rest, no matter how much you prepare, nothing can prepare you for the essence of the marathon, which is all about you and the way you cope with those 42 km. From the start there is a kind of seriousness that you cannot find in the training and also euphoria, and even though sometimes in a training you train much harder, it's in the marathon that you really experience what a race means, and I think this dynamic in the race tells you a lot about who you are, the way you react to it, the way you overcome difficulties and surprises. I think this is the big reason why people want to run a marathon.

*What can running teach you about life? About society? About yourself?*

See above. Tolstoj said that patience and time were the true soldiers who stood at his side, while planning to

write War and Peace. I think this is true for everything in life and truer still for people who run; training well is important but also allowing yourself to rest and wait and have the body recuperate. It all comes together in a fine balance.

*What is the relationship between running and creativity in general? In particular, what is the relationship between running and writing? How are they similar? How are they different?*

I think that while running you disentangle yourself from logical thinking, from efficiency thinking, from thinking for a purpose, in running ideas are wild, there is an ongoing guerrilla of ideas going on in the mind and this unleashes quite extraordinary associations, so yes, the mind is stimulated to think against the thinking of society or time or group or ideology; its thinking while in motion, which for me is thinking in its most purest form.

*I have collected comments critics of running like Baudrillard. What are your responses to them, please?*

I think its all bullshit.

*Do you have any interesting anecdote to share about running, or any other issues you wish to touch on? (for instance, runner's high; how other artists / writers view your running; running in the age of the internet, etc).*

SOMething to set straight: among philosophers, French, running was en vogue to consider right wing, but this was never the case among runners themselves, especially in the begin period, there running was considered left wing, or to be more precisely, anarchistic! Its the general view and also vulgarized by the philosophizing elite to consider running because of its erreounesly received image of muscularity as right wing, but this is, as any runner will tell you, wrong, running is more about mindfulness than any other sport i know

i love the analogy between politics and running. now its really getting interesting. more on that soon (look at the runners who come from poor countries, most of them rigidly run politically; I also write about this in Marathon runner, the tension between an individual sport which is always an act of opposition, a tragic act, to say it in the Camus-way, Sisyphus, and the collective, football, which is more nationalistic, more utopian

## **KENG SEN ONG, THEATRE DIRECTOR, EMAIL CONVERSATION 21 MARCH 2013**

*How often do you travel out of Singapore (roughly how many days in a year spent outside of Singapore)?*

only 4 months a year in singapore, other 8 months out.

*Many artists today freely move physically and metaphorically freely between cultures, countries, genres, worlds and disciplines - but you have been working in this manner for a long time, and for me I feel that this very mobility defines your work. Why do you do that (instead of staying still in or referring to one 'world')?*

singapore is too myopic for my work. i am interested in world creating through my artistic work so this goes beyond the borders of nationalism and also i question the neoliberal market which has become the substitute for nationalism.

*You have coined the genre of the docu-performance, which brings to the forefront the tension between make-believe and fiction and all the shades in between. How do you think this lens of the docu-performance can help us think about the world today?*

only when we can move past the artwork as commodity can we move towards a new understanding of the pressures on artmaking today and ultimately how neoliberalism works today. thats why i work with docuperformance as a way to challenge the notion that aesthetics is its own discreet box and to put market/art/life under an intense examination.

## TEH-CHING HSIEH, ARTIST, EMAIL CONVERSATION, 24-27 JANUARY 2013

My questions, initially posed in Chinese, are translated as below.

*I feel that the figure of the 'wise fool' (ala Lao Zi and Don Quixote) is powerful particularly in this work. thanks for your comment, it's better for me not saying anything.*

*You situated yourself outdoors. To me, this represents freedom (or a quest for freedom). Even if there were strict rules, they were set by yourself. May I ask what you feel about this comment?  
if there is freedom, it is the freedom of exile by my own choice.*

*If you had a mobile phone or laptop, would you have put them into your backpack and carried them with you as you wandered about, and used them as a means of documentation of your artwork?*

I carried a camera to record my work. I will still stay with basic equipments doing the work, it is better for this piece to live raw.

*If this was not made in 1981-1982, but the period 2013-2014, how do you think Outdoor Piece would differ? when time is changed, many variables are changed, motivation, age, the city, etc. I cannot make comparison.*

*If it were set in London, how different would the work have been?  
in the concept the work can be done in any metropolitan cities, I live in New York so I chose here to do it.*

## JO VOLLEY, ARTIST, EMAIL CONVERSATION 1 MARCH 2012

*When, and why or how have you picked up running?*

I began about 6 years ago after my brother Nick ,also an artist, died. I'd gone to yoga about twice a week up until then but found I couldn't do it anymore, as it was so internal and just got upset.

*What do you like about running? (Do you engage in other sports? How is running different from them?)*

I love the sense of freedom and when the breathing is right I feel I could run forever. No other sports but we are a sporty family. I love watching most sports

*Do you have a favourite route? How long do you run each time?*

Yes I live close to Hampstead Heath and run there several times a week. 2, 3 or 4 k depending on weather conditions and my condition!

*What goes in your mind when you run?*

Not a lot really that's why I like it, unless I'm talking with a friend or imagining in a race, which very occasionally I am.

*How does, or does running have any influence on your work at all?*

Yes, I very often go into the studio after and I can breath and concentrate. Feel that anything is possible. I feel happy and free

*Related question: What is the relationship between running and creativity in general?*

Tough one I will get back to you on this Its existential

*I have collected comments by critics and intellectuals who are against running. What are your responses to them, please?*

How could you be against running? Its heroic

**APPENDIX II.**  
**About My Studio Practice**



**Kaidie's 1000-Day Trans-Run**  
**12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012**

Kai Syng Tan 2013

**A RUN-THRU**

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**My Fine Art PhD research**, about the physical and poetic processes of running called trans-running, has two components: the written thesis, and studio practice or artwork. The latter, collectively entitled *Kaidie's 1000-Day Trans-Run 12.12.2009 – 09.09.2012* (hereby abbreviated to *Kaidie's Trans-Run*), constitutes original primary research. For 1000 days, I lived my life as 'Kaidie', a 'trans-runner', and created a large body of artworks that ran the gamut of media (including video, photography, blog, installation, body, GPS drawing) and genres (including cine-essay, locative media, internet art). Runner-author George Sheehan claims that through running, the 'universe' is also his medium (1978, p.241). Following Sheehan, as well as the Daoist dictum of 'world as body, body as world', my media have included: online in various social media or the so-called 'Web 2.0' platforms such as Facebook and Second Life, as well as offline outdoors, everyday life, cinema, gallery and so on.

This Appendix is a run-down of *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. Its **structure** is as follows:

**Timeline:** This provides an overview of what happened to Kaidie in her 1000-day life.

**Highlights:** In the written thesis, you saw how my practice works vis-à-vis the real, digital and discourse 'worlds'. Here is a gallery of images from or about the artwork, to highlight a few other hits and misses in Kaidie's quixotic quest. Many of the images are screen captures of the artworks published online.

**Contexts:** I argued about the importance of understanding our histories, particularly given our rapidly-transforming age (chapter III). While a good component of *Kaidie's Trans-Run* was facilitated by and took place in social media platforms, it is a confluence of diverse historical sources. Here, I present two lists that can enable us to have a better grasp of the rich artistic lineages of *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. The first is a list of a few of the sources which influenced *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. This is followed by a summary of my research created prior to *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. In a way, my research over the past 20 years has been a warm-up to *Kaidie's Trans-Run*.

**Achievement:** Here is a list of races that I participated in as Kaidie circa 2009-2012. Think of these as performances. This list is complemented by another, which concerns performance-lectures, exhibitions, conferences and publications that I participated in or produced.



## Introduction

**Two things to note:** 1) Figures in this Appendix are not labelled. You can find their textual descriptions near them. 2) A useful way to think of this Appendix is a curated, pictorial archive. Such an archive is helpful particularly given that my artworks are literally 'all over the place' and expansive. That said, you are also welcome to venture into Kaidie's world yourself. You will find the links to *Kaidie's Trans-Run* on page 273. Wherever appropriate, I provide additional links which allow you to experience the artworks yourself, or to find out more details about them.

**Along with this Appendix**, you will find a DVD film enclosed. Think of it as a 'Director's Cut' of my research. Form-wise, it is a cine-essay, with densely-montaged sequences. It is an example of how written thesis and artwork can come beautifully together – I hope. The film is accompanied by a new, original composition by Philip Tan <www.philbeat.com>. Tan is a well-known creative director, music director and sound artist in Singapore with whom I have collaborated with in many works. This Appendix also provides a hint of what you can expect at the exhibition I will present at the *viva voce*. I do not wish to give the punch-line away, but be prepared to engage in some form of running!





Winter



Spring / Autumn



Summer



Highlights

Kaidie Runs Physically

I ran for about 6 miles (9.6 kilometres) daily for 3.5 years. This took place anytime, anywhere. This meant day or night, rain, shine, snow, winter, spring, autumn or summer, be it in 'Nondon', the semi-fictitious city that I lived in (more on that later), or elsewhere.

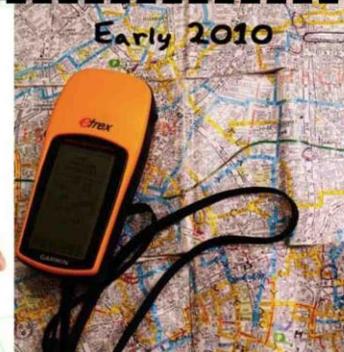


I ran wearing ordinary running shoes, no shoes (to feel closer to our running ancestors of the endurance hunters 2 million years ago), or with minimalist running shoes which I nicknamed 'naked shoes' (to get the best of both worlds of having my feet protected, but feeling as if I was barefoot). Still / thus, I often had blisters and blackened toes.

I often ran with Global Positioning System (GPS) devices to track my performances. The devices were loaned to me by a colleague Dr Fabian Neuhaus (aka 'Urbantick') at the Centre of Advanced Spatial Analysis of University College London, as part of his research. Reinforcing my point about how my research is a document of its time, the images here paint a picture of how technology advanced over the years. That said, the strap of the most advanced (and expensive) of them, the Garmin Forerunner 450, snapped more than once and had to be re-assembled with the help of (analogue) masking tape.



Late 2009



Early 2010



mid-2010-2012

**GPSies**  
Tracks for vagabonds

me Search Track creator Upload Convert Find coordinates

Tracks Partner Link to us Donate Tools Featured products Terms of use Login / Register No more ads?

**Kaidie's typical 14km Regents Fark Run of 3rdlifekaidie** RSS - 7.74 miles - one-way trip print

Share on Facebook

Track starts in United Kingdom NW1 Euston, Greater London

Track as Google Earth KML

16°C | 61F  
OpenWeatherMap

download show options

Export to Falk GPS Export to Garmin GPS

**Description**

This is Kaidie's typical Regents Fark run. Regents Fark is Kaidie's Favourite Fark. Come join her! Be her running buddy! See you at the Fark!

About this track		Ratings	
Quality of track	☆☆☆☆☆	Landscape	☆☆☆☆☆ (1)
Length	7.74 miles	Condition	☆☆☆☆☆ (1)
Coordinates	42	Technique	☆☆☆☆☆ (1)
Viewed	845 time(s)	Fun factor	☆☆☆☆☆ (1)
Downloaded	46 time(s)	Description of track	☆☆☆☆☆ (1)

I published photographs, films and GPS tracks of my runs on social media platforms. I also announced my runs beforehand. This is a snapshot of 'Kaidie's typical 14km run' at what I call 'Regents Fark' as it appears on a GPS-track-sharing site, 'GPSies'. Underneath the map is my invitation to my audience to join me. This track has been downloaded 46 times.



**Chew Tze Chuan** will think of your runs as i jog in the woodlands sports stadium near my flat. happy running Kai!  
14 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Report

**Kaidie Nondon** How brilliant Chew, that you jog!! Bring your little boy, I'm sure he'd love it too. Kids can run like there is no tomorrow. Perhaps because there isn't :) Jog in the stadium, jog in your imagination and across other realms as well. I will think of both of you when I run too! (Just don't think of my 'runs', Chew :)  
2 seconds ago · Like · Delete

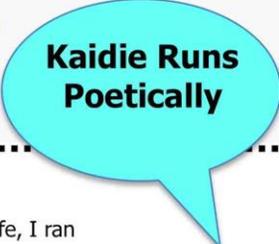
Several individuals told me that Kaidie inspired them to pick up or resume running as a form of exercise. The fact that Kaidie's GPS tracks have often been viewed and/or downloaded may be another proof of this. Here I reproduce two messages, one via my mobile phone, and the other via Facebook, that I received.



I also 'ran' in the figurative sense of the word, in different ways. For a start, *Kaidie's Trans-Run* 'ran' in that it ran the gamut of genres, disciplines and media. Additionally, I was 'on the run' away from 'home'. My adventures were not confined to London or Nondon, but other urban and rural sites, as well as sites online. The peripatetic nature of Kaidie is reflected in the name of one of my email addresses, which includes the word 'dislocation'. And here, as promised, are direct addresses for those of you who wish to explore the artworks by yourselves.

From: 3rdlifekaidie <dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com>  
 Date: Saturday, June 16, 2012 3:38 PM  
 To: dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com <dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com>  
 Subject: Kaidie literally all over the place

Run with Kaidie online!  
**BE KAIDIE'S RUNNING BUDDY!** <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com>>  
**RUN ALONGSIDE KAIDIE 'LIVE'!** <<http://twitter.com/3rdlifekaidie>>  
**TRACE KAIDIE'S ROUTES ACROSS THE VARIOUS WORLDS!** <<http://www.gpsies.com/mapUser.do?username=3rdlifekaidie>>  
**BE KAIDIE'S BEST FACEBOOK FRIEND!** Add 'Kaidie Nondon'  
**BE KAIDIE'S BEST SECOND LIFE FRIEND!** Add 'Kaidie Absent'  
**MOVING IMAGES** <<http://www.youtube.com/user/kaidie3rdlife>>  
**EMAIL KAIDIE NOW!** <[dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com](mailto:dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com)>  
**CHAT 'LIVE' WITH KAIDIE NOW!** <[3rdlifekaidie@gmail.com](mailto:3rdlifekaidie@gmail.com)>



Within the 'world-within-world' of Second Life, I ran about as 'Kaidie Absent'. In the images below, you can see me visiting an online version of London, as well as Palestine, which is depicted as a country there. While there are different choices of locomotion available there, including walking, teleportation, and flying, I was on the 'always run' mode. My campaign to mobilise people to run continued in the virtual world, as I would encourage characters I ran into to also run, virtually.



Kaidies run across Life 1.0 and Life 2.0 (e/motional studies after Muybridge).  
 In this photo: Kaidie Nondon (photos | remove tag), タン・カisin (remove tag), 2ndlifekaidie (remove tag), 1stlifekaidie (remove tag), 4thlifekaidie (remove tag)

From your album:  
 Profile Pictures



**Recent donors**

Showing results 1 - 10 of 10

<b>Y3</b>	<b>£20.00</b>
<b>12.12.10</b> Good Luck to my favourite (& most Adorable) mentori Run Kaidie Run!	
<b>diego</b>	<b>£5.00 (+ £1.41 giftaid)</b>
<b>12.12.10</b>	
<b>Anonymous</b>	<b>£10.00 (+ £2.82 giftaid)</b>
<b>10.12.10</b>	
<b>Patricia</b>	<b>£10.00 (+ £2.82 giftaid)</b>
<b>09.12.10</b> I hope you have a great run and raise lots of money	
<b>Sonia</b>	<b>£5.00</b>
<b>09.12.10</b> love that your doing this - it inspires admiration! best of luck	
<b>Your favourite Russian :)</b>	<b>£10.00</b>
<b>09.12.10</b> All the best, Kai. Thank you for everything you have done for me, without you I would not have been the person I am today.	

**Kaidie runs for SHELTER 2011 Nondon Marathon**

Running total **£105.00**

Target: £1,500.00  
Total raised incl. Gift Aid: £117.00  
Total donors: 10  
Biggest donor: wendee £30.00  
Last donor: Y3 12.12.10  
Offline fundraising: £5.00

**Donate now**

**Shelter**

**4thlifekaidie**  
Daughter

**About Kaidie**

Hello world! I am based in the city of Nondon, but trans-run for 1000 days within and across the real and digital worlds, find a/the 'Meaning of Life'. Do you know where/what that is? Give us a hand - or toe! Come follow our progress - or regress - here. We must die 09.09.2012 on the last day of the 2012 Nondon Olympics, so hurry!

\*\* We may re-publish any FB exchange that you have with Kaidie in <3rdlifekaidie DOT com>. You will of course be fully credited. If you wish to have a less public, 1-1 encounter with Kaidie, please send her a message or email us on <dislocation@3rdlifekaidie.com>. But if and only if you are extra nice. \*\*

**Kaidie Nondon**

THANK YOU so much Mirabelle Ang and Laura Cinti for your SPONSORSHIP FOR OUR RUN FOR SHELTER, 2011 NONDON MARATHON! We are feverish with excitement + in temperature but will finish our run, from 4hrs or 40hrs. <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/3rdlifekaidie> To raise the remaining £405 we'll sell our prints at a group show that opens 3rd March in Nondon - see you! <http://3rdlifekaidie/>.

**Virgin Money Giving | Fundraising | Kaidie runs for SHELTER 2011 Nondon Marathon**  
[uk.virginmoneygiving.com](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com)

Kaidie Nondon is raising money for Shelter by taking part in the 2011 Virgin London Marathon. Sponsor them with Virgin Money Giving.

18 hours ago · Like · Comment · Share

**Audience Runs Poetically**

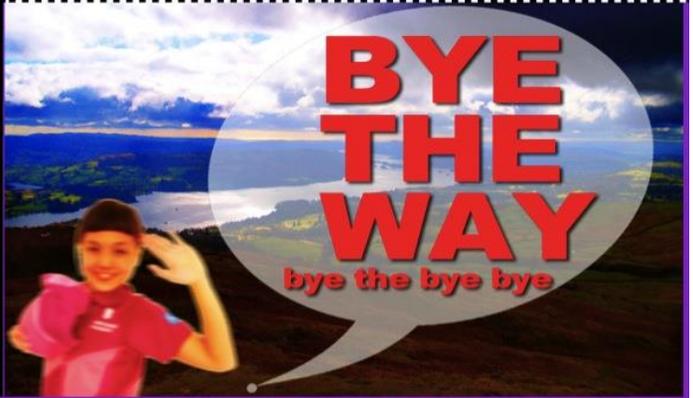
My audience also ran metaphorically with me as I ran. One way this was achieved is when they 'followed' my updates on my Facebook, Twitter or blog. Another example was when they 'sponsored' me in marathons. Helping me to raise funds for the charities I was running for brought them a step closer to my endeavour. On my profiles, I explicitly declared my online presence as artworks, and asked for permission to publish my exchanges. The way I 'packaged' myself online with my colourful imagery and language-use made it instantly clear that 'Kaidie Nondon' was more than your run-of-the-mill persona. By April 2013, I had nearly 3000 friends on Facebook.

**Timeline** **About**

**Friends**

All Friends 2,966 Recently added 3 Followers

- Sebastian Felten wow, just reading your website, is it really 1000 days from 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012??? ... that's spooky 14 hours ago · Like
- Kaidie Nondon Indeed - it's a palindrome of sorts! And we are nearly 500-day old now...but the f%^£ing meaning of life is nowhere in sight ...



**THE FINE PRINT FOR A FINE ART WORK AND WORK OF FINE ART AND A FINE WORK OF ART**

DO NOTE THAT THIS IS 'PURELY' A 'WORK OF ART'. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO 'REALITY' (IN WHATEVER DEFINITION) IS DELIBERATE, AND IS AN EXTENSION OF (YOUR) FIGMENT OF IMAGINATION. You are 'using' / reading about / commenting on / participating in / creating Kaidie's 1000-Day Trans-Run in full knowledge and understanding that you can not hold Kaidie (or any other versions of Kaidie) responsible/liable for any issues that may arise from here, there or elsewhere. When you 'friend' Kaidie and communicate with her, you do so in full knowledge that she may publish your exchanges with her, unless you explicitly indicate otherwise. If you do not agree with this clause, you will not be able to understand (a/the meaning of) life, so please leave immediately. Otherwise, if you are willing to play your part in helping Kaidie locate her obscure object of desire, do come in and play your roles as well in this open source web 2.0-enabled fantasy-urban-metaphysical-travelogue. Slip right in. Do not mind the gaps.

How my audience collaborated with me in my fundraising efforts was an example of the way I made use of social media to 'Do It With Others'. This pushed my work to new territories. Collaborations took place at different levels. They could be simple exchange of messages or photographs, retweets, recommendations to read or look at something, or in-depth debates, or advice to find 'A/The Point of Life'.



Dear Kaidie

the world is a big thing where we be live and move

and at the end found the answer to all our questions

to day is a good day

ciao from italia

Aug 30, 2010 @ 23:54

---

Dear Desnos,

It's great to hear from you again and thank you for you enlarges our worlds, internal and external. As you said monk of Mount Hiei in Japan who completed the rignon says: ' (Please live each day as if it is your entire life.



Exploiting the social component of social media

Some collaborations were more involved. You would recall 'Kaidie's Dis-Location', when I was 'kidnapped' and the audience helped in different ways. Another instance was when an artist collective that I encountered online wrote a song inspired by Kaidie, and which they dedicated to Kaidie to listen to while running. I also conducted exhibitions with artists and curators I met online.

Along the way, I had my own Co-Runner, Pacer, or 'Sancho Panza' to my Don Quixote. This was Chico, a many-toed cat from Montana. Chico's supportive owner was poet Anji Reyner, whom I met on Facebook. I created a story about Chico. Sadly, shortly after I published the tale, Chico died.



Kaidie Nondon via David Moss: A perfect musical mind trip for Kaidie to run to!

Meifumadô . M4SK 22  
www.youtube.com  
Keep Running, Keep Dreaming, Keep Believing... Music and video by M4SK 22...inspired by Virtual Tourist Kaidie http://3rdlifekaidie.com ..footage from Princess Iron Fan: the first Chinese animated feature film, made by Wan Guchan and Wan Laiming (the Wan brothers) and released on January 1, 1941. ...

6 hours ago · Comment · Unlike · Share

You, Paul Cha and Yinshi Lim like this.

Kaidie Nondon And run with, run for, run by, run through.  
20 minutes ago · Delete

Paul Cha sweet- its actually based on a chinese classic, journey to the west.....  
19 minutes ago · Delete

Kaidie Nondon 西游记 :)  
18 minutes ago · Delete

Paul Cha breakthrough...awakening!

Judy Vega Hendricks Hi Kaidie! I run for days as well! Good to meet you sister!  
Yesterday at 15:03 · Comment · Like · See Wall-to-Wall

Kaidie Nondon Lovely to meet you too Judy! I'm always so glad to find a fellow virtual running partner / sister!  
Happy running Judy :)  
18 hours ago · Delete

David Moss writing is a form of walking, we leave spaces like we stride with our feet, and make swerves and pauses, this way we write the environment as we move in it  
27 March at 21:47 · Delete

David Moss and yes you are right, the prime location of language is in the base electric moments of our first experience!  
27 March at 22:00 · Delete

Kaidie Nondon About language/walking/mapping/fformulating the world: For Kaidie's sake, I am reading Margaret Wertheim's rather good The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace: A History of Space from Dante to the Internet, which discusses what you both highlight. Wertheim says that how we think of space depends on the language that we use to speak about it. In another words, language creates the world around us. Different communities have different languages, and hence different (ways to see) worlds.

After finding CHICO, her sole mate-Sancho Panza, Kaidie Dies: Variation 9.

For all her life, lives and lifetimes, Kaidie has insisted on functioning alone. Then one day, she meets her sole mate, Chico. Like Kaidie, Chico has a funny gait (with 1 paw too many, funny pronation, blisters, broken/missing toe nails etc.) Like Kaidie, Chico too has neither family, history nor baggage. And, like Kaidie, Chico is incurably lustful - for wandering. They decide to travel together. And what a journey. They both think outside the box. run amok, day or night, cold or hot, summer or winter, till the cows come home (or not, for, they don't give an eff), as if there's no tomorrow. And there isn't. They traverse all over the cosmos - physically, virtually and beyond all dimensions. Then they disappear. When their bodies are discovered, the photographs above are found in Kaidie's camera.

DAY 15: KAIDIE HAS A NEW SUPERPOWER FOR 2010: LAUNCHING THE MIND over MATTER PLUGIN aka THE M&M PLUGIN (TM). Apologies, you can't download it – BUT I will share it at my first real-life appearance on 20:00hrs 26 January in Villa Straeuli, Winterthur, Switzerland. So, COME!



Above: Screen photo of Kaidie's highest brain (from my BlackBerry)

(Social) Media Art

Often, my own posts and the discussions I conducted with my online 'friends' were about the possibilities of social media as an art medium.



Jin Sup Yoon Facebook or Twitter as a social networking is a generation media for art. It is like a growing tree.

44 minutes ago · Comment · Like

Robert Longyear likes this.

R Henry Nigl Absolutely. The visual arts, artists, the critics, the reviewers, have not caught up yet. Still a big question mark for many. The internet is not a representation of a studio, or a gallery, or a museum, it IS, THE STUDIO, THE GALLERY, THE MUSEUM. 13 minutes ago

Kaidie Nondon It is not the next generation – it's happening now :) 9 minutes ago · Delete

R Henry Nigl Yes, now. 8 minutes ago

Jin Sup Yoon Just it is what i am saying. right. I agree with Henry and Kaidie. Thank you. 2 minutes ago

Kaidie Nondon and here! :) about a minute ago · Delete

Robert Longyear Joon – take a look at Willow Gray here on the Facebook. 4 seconds ago

Write a comment...



Jin Sup Yoon Artistic paradigm shift: Pictorial Paradigm:after Leonardo da Vinci Ojective Paradigm:after Marcel Duchamp Video Paradigm:after Nam June Paik Social Networking Paradigm:who?

54 minutes ago · Comment · Unlike

You like this.

Write a comment...

of social networking media will broaden the territory of aesthetic experience and it can give new opportunity to express creative desire to the public. 20 minutes ago



Kaidie Nondon Indeed, artists (can and do) make use of these portable media to create new chapters of some older dialogues ('new cinema', for example). Storytelling for instance can now be a collaborative, participatory process, 'true' to the Web 2.0 mantra of 'user as producer' or co-authors. Like the Wikipedia, the degrees of open-endedness and instability – some of the 'classic' features of postmodernism – are higher. That social media is so pervasive, with virtually no learning curve, are not only pluses, but are that which defines the new paradigm. (Compare, for instance the 'good old days' when the film camera was technically – and financially – inaccessible. I loved and still fully love cinema, and I was there! But today, I do not snide such platforms as Youtube and mobile-phone minidramas) To be sure, like ANY media, it would be naive to say that there are no problems. (See for instance how large businesses exploit the other Web 2.0 feature of crowdsourcing). But social networking is creating some new possibilities (production and distribution are some instances). Ever so opportunistic as artists are, they/we are exploring, experimenting and exploiting that! A few seconds ago · Delete



Kaidie Nondon As trans-dimensional runners of our technologically-layered multiverse, we have 1 foot in the techno-utopianist dream, the other in a deep-seated technophobia...

Eventbrite – The Luddites, without Condescension – A Conference on the 200th Anniversary of the Frame-breakers' Uprising Kaidie registered for The Luddites, without Condescension – A Conference on the 200th Anniversary of the Frame-breakers' Uprising at Eventbrite! Location: Room B34 – London, United Kingdom Time: Friday, May 06, 2011 Hosted By: Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities

17 March at 00:56 via Eventbrite · Like · Comment · Attend this event

Marc Carrett likes this.

Billie Childish (notice of course they low tech message distribution mechanism...) 17 March at 01:00 · Unlike · 1 person



Ivan Pope Privacy? What privacy?

The Evolution of Privacy on Facebook mattmckeeon.com

However, Facebook hasn't always managed its users' data well. In the beginning, it restricted the visibility of a user's personal information to just their friends and their "network" (college or school). ...

12 minutes ago · Comment · Unlike · Share

You and Ivan Pope like this.

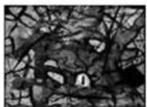
Kaidie Nondon 15MB of fame (Steve Dixon) and flame. 2 minutes ago · Delete

Claudia Tomaz

today re-read a comment by Kaidie Nondon in my blog. Inspired me and want to share it  
40 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Remove tag

 Claudia Tomaz 'I think it is really good what you are trying to do on Web 2.0 - to be truly independent!! It is meaningful when what the artist gives / takes and the audience gives / takes meet halfway - and Web 2.0 facilitates that. This might sound philosophical, but while you aren't able to cover your costs (yet at this point), I think filmmakers and artists like you are trailblazers in the area. It is a brave step forward - not all have the guts and would have security backup plans! So Claudia, please keep going. It is clear that you have a fan base, and are generating as well as educating an audience to new sights and sounds and ideas and emotions as well. So go, Claudia, go!' xx Kai(die)  
39 minutes ago · Like

Claudia Tomaz commented on her own link.



**WHERE IS THAT 'SPACE' IN CYBERSPACE? (HOW) DOES PHYSICS FUNCTION IN CYBERSPACE? Where did we come fr**  
3rdlifekaidie.com

(Dis-) Locating Kaidie In Nondon

Yesterday at 23:55 · Comment · Like

David Moss likes this.

 Mike Delta "Cyberspace is the homeland of the Information Age - the place where the citizens of the future are destined to dwell."  
John Perry Barlow  
Wednesday at 00:24

 Claudia Tomaz hi Mike, you will like kaidie's work :)  
Wednesday at 16:12

 Mike Delta (Tweetie accent) -- I did, I did! Bjs, Cláudia

Filmmaking 2.0



The Meaning of Life 3.0

Info Related posts

Related posts by friends

 Claudia Tomaz 'Kaidie and the Meaning of Life 3.0' and 'Transient Forms' are now the most voted films on my web tv both with 42 votes. Watch and Vote here <http://microfilmswebtv.com/>  
on Wednesday · Comment · Like

 Gen Johnson Currently #6 in the War of Films contest by Film Annex, check out Kaidie Nondon's video about the meaning of life 3.0 [http://www.waroffilms.com/films/s/KAIDIE\\_and\\_the\\_Meaning\\_of\\_Life\\_3.0/20522](http://www.waroffilms.com/films/s/KAIDIE_and_the_Meaning_of_Life_3.0/20522) And don't forget to vote for it!

 [http://www.waroffilms.com/films/s/KAIDIE\\_and\\_the\\_Meaning\\_of\\_Life\\_3.0/20522](http://www.waroffilms.com/films/s/KAIDIE_and_the_Meaning_of_Life_3.0/20522)  
www.waroffilms.com  
Kaidie runs in London and online! An immensely poetic, philosophical and fun quest for A Meaning of life 3.0! Meet the multi-talented artist and filmmaker at work, while she makes her wall map

Comments



Lillian Rodriguez on 13 August at 09:05

So interesting. I like to think of us as moving between points, and creating destinations and living in the travel between the benchmarks. Beautiful artistic concept. Thank you for sharing.



claudia tomaz on 02 August at 10:07

do you know how Kaidie and Claudia met and have been collaborating?? 'run Kaidie run' and 'Kaidie and the Meaning of Life 3.0' are part of an on going collaboration, both in real life and online. Check out our Travelogues here: <http://3rdlifekaidie.com/2010/08/claudia-kaidies-travelogues/>



Chew Tze Chuan on 17 July at 08:15

"... if a place doesn't change, i can change, i can move, i can run. it doesn't mean i'm running away from it. i'm just running to and fro, and when you do so there'll be many things happening at the same time, different values and ideas to keep you in check. so you'll not be stagnant or just one person. you're constantly pulled to and fro; constanly tested by things from different dimensions. this is what the idea of Kaidie's running is about."

wow, thanks to Claudia & Kai for sharing these thoughts. i'm gonna keep walking my talk too.



Hapless Stevedore on 17 July at 05:01

Thank you Claudia. Having not seen Kaidie, or Kai not die, in the flesh I have always imagined her as flat. Useful for posting herself abroad to reduce the costs of international travel and to save the planet but restrictive when it comes to lifting a tea cup. Now I see she has possibly more dimensions, trusting that you have not used any technical wizardry to 'pump her up'. And does she talk? She does! And she has put mind at rest as to exactly where the line between Kai not die and Kaidie falls, she is not sure herself so 'no matter'. I thought you caught the moment where she nervously refered to Monty Python's Meaning of Life in the hallowed walls of the Stade perfectly. Was she struck down? No she wasn't! More soon please so I can watch on my good friend's uber speedy gonnection rather than my own home ropey mobile broadband. Avanti Kaidie! Hup Claudia Hup! James

One of my most active collaborators was Claudia Tomaz, an award-winning London-based filmmaker (Venice and Locarno Film Festivals), artist, activist, published author and journalist. We clicked ever since we met at a Blast Theory event at the Tate. Thereafter, we went on to collaborate in making 2 films, and shared our texts and ideas about harnessing the crowd-sourcing capabilities of the internet for new forms of filmmaking.

Here, you see a few of our exchanges, plus comments by people who watched our films.

<[www.claudiatomaz.com](http://www.claudiatomaz.com)>

On 28th November, I received my Companion For The Evening (CFTE), who likes to pretend that he is not a psychologist, but who exclaims "I'm a big Grayson Perry fan". I can not understand this, as said companion is tall, but not big as in big big big. It is like someone claiming to be a mini cab driver, even though of normal-looking size. But being careful not to waste my newly-recovered energy, I let that one go.

8. As I'd mentioned in my previous post, I am in the audience of With Great Pleasure with Grayson Perry, for BBC Radio 4.

9. I had also memorised what you, My Dear Co-runners, have kindly advised what I could say to Perry.

10. It is full house. Before Perry enters, the producer of the show demands to check our level of enthusiasm as reflected by our applause. She is not satisfied with our first attempt. We try harder in the second practice session. CFTE adds "hurrah" as he claps, while I add "No matter where you go, nice pots" in mine.

11. The practice was rather unnecessary, as the moment Perry walks in as Claire, we are all excited. Claire looks splendid in a lovely frock, with impeccable hair and quite likeable wit.

12. For the next 45 minutes, Perry/Claire name some of their favourite books and tell us why they are important to them. There is even one which is a book that they read to the daughter when she was a baby. 2 actors read out short passages from the various books.

13. It is always nice to be reminded of the power of language and imagination, and the joy of reading, and listening.

14. Sadly, however, the audience is not afforded the chance for direct participation. So, when applauding at the end of the show, being the very modest and shy person that I am in Life 1.0, I whisper, ever so politely: "There you are! Howdeditodot?"

15. I think I quite like Perry/Claire. Perhaps I am on my way to becoming a Big Perry Fan myself.

16. The programme will go on air 22 July 2016.

17. Just when it is Ben Fogel's turn to speak, I begin dripping large beads of sweat profusely, making retching sounds and looking quite wretched. Anything associated with so-called (un-)Reality Shows must have triggered my already unwell body to react with such immediate repugnance.

18. "Clucking hell", I tell CFTE, nearly projectile puking into him. "Gotta go."

19. As I run off, my stomach does a few somersaults more violent than St Pancras.

20. In fact, the bile churned up blinds me so much that I fall to see The Chocolate Nemesis (TCM), screaming EAT ME, flying towards me!

21. And talk about big big big - you have not seen the size of my 70% Cocoa Arch Enemy!

22. Even in the amoral / immoral worlds of Kaidie, we recognise injustice and unfair play when it happens to us, that is!

23. - the cheek of Kaidie's Antagonist, launching an attack when we are at our weakest and most vulnerable!

24. I try to raise my legs for a few flyingkungfu-kicks of the WaterSnakePork School, but my thighs are softer than Jello. I raise my gym-trained arms to attempt some intimidating looking gestures while pulling my hoody down, but that only seems to thrill TCM as it continues lunging at me.

25. Too weak to defend myself, much less attack the offending article, I do what I know / do best, ie, run.

26. As the past 210 days of my short life flash before me, suddenly, 2 girls, aged 8 and 9, appear.

27. Without any effort, they pierce their forks into TCM.

28. and annihilate TCM in a matter of mere seconds.

29. Kaidie is alive, saved by these angels.

CAKE, ANGELS and INSPIRATION SUPPLIED BY JAMES ODLING-SMEE. Full recipe of TCM in the next post!

Another one of my most active collaborators is James Odling-Smee. We encountered within Kaidie's online world. I have never met him in person and have only communicated with him in-character. Throughout the years, he provided feedback about my work on social media platforms. He also visited many of my exhibitions in the real world, and helped me to promote my work by blogging or tweeting his comments about them (which was how I knew he had visited my shows). On top of that, he made several donations to sponsor my participation in races.

After I announced how Kaidie enjoyed re-fuelling for her ferocious pace of activities by scoffing chocolate cakes with a high percentage of cocoa, Odling-Smee published photographs of cakes that he had made, some of which were dedicated to Kaidie. When we found out that we shared a common friend, Odling-Smee even sent a (real) cake to me – which was soon polished off. Inspired by this and the other encounters I had with Odling-Smee, I developed a series of narratives on my blog. I share one of them here on the left, which is about how Kaidie annihilated a 70% cocoa-'Chocolate Nemesis' – by consuming it, with the assistance of two 'guardian angels'. This and other works are 'collaborations'; there would have been no artwork or story without the cake, nor the lively ideas of its creator. For instance, the name of the cake was given by Odling-Smee, and the angels are in fact his nieces, as you can see on the right.

**Kaidie's Nemesis And Co-Runners**



Can even the word famous KADIE hold breath, salivate, run, discover the Meaning of Life 3.0 and EAT at one and the same time. No? Yikes! Saved by two angels pixillating in a tree who vanquish and then devour her NEMESIS. But what of her DESIRE? For... this is NONDON. A city of ingredients in search of kaidie.

Photo added by James Odling-Smee

Added today · Comment · Unlike

Like this

Share

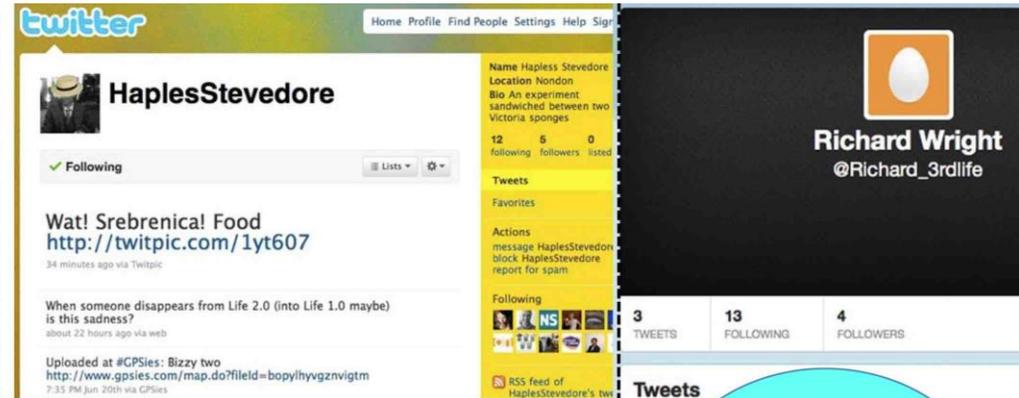
Tag this Photo



Just as people took up running in the real world as I shared with them about trans-running, a few of my online friends created social networking profiles that took on ideas from Kaidie's world.

One of them was Odling-Smee, who appears as 'HaplesStevodore' or 'HaplessPrince' on Twitter and GPSies, and who describes his location as 'Nondon'.

Another was Richard Wright, whose Twitter address is 'Richard\_3rdlife', '3rdlife' being an early idea I worked with. These may well be indications that the messages of trans-running worked!



what sort of music do you enjoy to listen to in nondon?  
15 hours ago · Comment · Like · See Wall-to-Wall

**Kaidie Nondon** You make music, do you not, Peter? Make something for Kaidie? In return, I can make a story post/picture/video in response your music. What do you say? Kaidie listens to not as much music as she should. She listens intently – when she listens, she only listens, and can not do anything else. It's so far been primarily Bach, Beethoven, and everything...  
See more  
2 hours ago · Delete

Seems like we both share common ground. I love Gould, he provides the best dentistry, but only on the right subjects. Apart from his interpretations, namely on Bach, and others more contemporaneously piqued, the rest of his interpretations void themselves from any categorisation from impartial taste; it is just sheer lust for his glory over music.

I would recommend: William Basinski 'The disintegration Loops' –

Do you have ichtat?

{p}

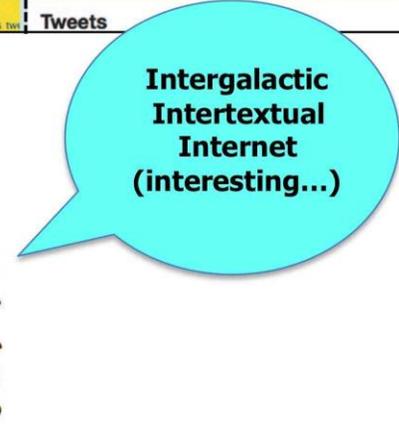
**Kaidie Nondon** YOU ARE HERE (BUT I AM THERE). KAIDIE'S ROUGH GUIDE TO THE EXOTIC FAR EAST #2: ALONG THE CANAL. <http://bit.ly/cdbzY8>

**Kaidie Nondon** YOU ARE HERE (BUT I AM THERE). KAIDIE'S ROUGH GUIDE TO THE EXOTIC FAR EAST #2: ALONG THE CANAL - A. [bit.ly/cdbzY8](http://bit.ly/cdbzY8)  
Kaidie's 1000-day run 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012

Yesterday at 09:56 · Comment · Like · Share  
likes this.  
I adore this and U have given me rise to allow something I am doing to grow too, You've inspired me today, Thank U.

**Kaidie Nondon** In a bid to stick 2 fingers/feet up at #winter, we'd been diligent in our 6am #runs & covered 70.53km this week, but at a much slower pace!  
21 hours ago via Twitter · Like · Comment · @3rdlifeKaidie on Twitter

im gonna get fit with you  
15 hours ago · Like  
**Kaidie Nondon** Fabulous – that will be 4 feet up!  
9 hours ago · Like  
i know – its a good idea  
7 minutes ago · Like



Communicating and collaborating with 'users' of my blog enabled me to feel a level of support and camaraderie with other artists 'out there'. Additionally, a few of my audiences also wanted to get to know Kaidie better. Perhaps they were intrigued by how Kaidie's private world seemed enmeshed with the public, and the fact that there was a real person behind the character or avatar rather than an algorithm or merely a make-believe figure. I have blurred out the names of these audiences as several of them communicated with me via private messaging.



HITS & MISSES, FITS & KISSES: Let's agree not to run into each other, but won't you let us take us for a ride? GAME FOR A COLLABORATION WITH US ON OUR EPIC QUIXOTIC QUEST?



As it is, we have not met 99.782 per cent of you, given that our interaction has been only in Life 2.0, ie, via the channels of this running blog Facebook Youtube GPSies Twitter and so on – and our imagination, of course. Also, given that we are partly an imaginary creation, meeting in real life is possibly an unimaginable task. (That said, we do not think that encounter in one dimension is of lesser or more significance than another) In this idea of a project, to make the point that we want to maintain or create a critical distance between us, let us go out of our way to deliberately not meet in Life 1.0. The way to go about doing this is that one person shares her routine over a prescribed period of time. The other person – let us call them the/an 'anti-stalker' – will journey on the same route, but intentionally missing the previous person, by a few minutes/moments/metres/centimetres.

I did not take up the invitations to meet these people. As a playful response, I posted a call for collaboration in a game of hide-and-see (above). I recommended my audience to consult my many GPS maps I published online of my real-world movements, and to deliberately create a new 'anti-map' so that we did *not* run into each other. This proposal was also a self-reflexive commentary on the increasing ubiquity of geographic information systems (GIS) in our daily lives, and how we willingly or unwittingly compromise our privacy.

There were also users who express how Kaidie was a heightened representation of them, and a mapping of its times. My media of interface were existing social media platforms, and my blog was housed on Wordpress. These were common sites accessible by anyone – rather than obscure, specialised, or protected zones. This was how Kaidie could run back-and-forth online and socialise with other online denizens, and hence get a better grasp of things in the (real) online world. Also, throughout the 1000-days, the audience could openly witness *Kaidie's Trans-Run* develop, experiment, make mistakes, change directions, transform as a work-in-progress, 'live'. The address of my blog, for instance, still says '3rdlife', even though I had abandoned the concept early on. This arguably lends the work a level of realism and make it more believable, compared to a work that is already resolved and slick.

Mapping of its times  
(and Anti-Mapping)



Birds Andbees

Hi Kaidie: I'm new to Facebook and a big admirer of your work. Best, Birdie.



Clear Chat History

its an attitude

a lot to do with imagination!

Peter beautiful 21:18

Me thanks! 21:19

Peter where are you from you beautiful psychonaut kaidie? 21:19

Me right now, London! 21:19



Clear Chat History

I had many lives!

Peter i see like a buddhist psychonaut from all over the world. born out of everyboy's phantasy 21:23

Me running is good for everyone – boys, girls etc! 21:24

Peter yes that is obviously true 21:25



Jim

I think this might have gone without saying but now you've said it! As soon as I know my course is diverted and get drawn to things I didn't think of or things I'd forgotten about already. Not intentionally, though sometimes yes, more in a drifty sort of way. A recipe, a road, both very similar things. Kaidie as strange attractor. And before Kaidie was born, Kai took a long time to get to Suomenlinna, knowing that I'd already been there and was waiting for her to catch up, and probably she was not as hung over as I was that morning, or plain beaten up as was, and you probably had an email account by then too. Eric Bloodaxe would have killed me if it hadn't been for my magnificent wee brother. I'd forgotten the place existed or even what I was doing there or what happened. And that was nothing to do with the drink just time lurching around dropping things. Oh sleep, sleep, sleep on memory foam of all things, next thing I'll be believing in ghosties!

Aug 22, 2010 @ 00:28



Lucy Natarajan

Er, dear Kailives, I feel I am already playing your game, bumping into your friends and stepping on ghosts of your past here in Singapore. This nearly-shared experience, long-distance togetherness, unparticipation or whatever you want to call it is kind of cruel but I'm starting to think that absence brings pseudo-celebrity status...my new Singaporean friends feel they "should" know you, the Bartlett's read my work on a UCL PhD grapevine portal, and my family has become strangely fascinated in mundane details of my daily life like what I can buy at the supermarket. Just goes to prove that the heart is a strange creature responding so positively to absence, craving the greener grass of exotic other places and impervious to such practical notions as distance, time and space. Lucy

**Kaidie Nondon Part of SPILLAGE: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN PHD STUDENTS OF THE SLADE SCHOOL OF FINE ART, UCL.** Across a 14m-wide wall, Kaidie works on site across 9 days to create a metamap consisting of 120 maps and images, that attempt to map her transdimensional run. This show departs from Kaidie's recent works in that it utilises no ...

See more



**METAMAP OF KAIDIE'S TRANSDIMENSIONAL RUN show 2010 June 25-30**

Yesterday at 14:47 · Comment · Like · Share

Cliff Lauson, Margarida Carvalho, Jon Measures and 10 others like this.

**A 1000-DAY QUEST**  
Time left to find Meaning Of Life 3.0: in 875 days, 14 hours, 48 minutes

**THEMES / VARIATIONS**  
altered state of consciousness  
**between life & death city cycles**  
dilemma existence  
give-take  
happiness health  
immortality in-between journey  
life life 3.0 lives  
london loop mapping  
meaning meaning of life  
mental training  
metamorphosis mind over matter mortality  
moving images  
multiplicity  
nondon ontology parallel lives  
physical training  
psycho geography  
renewal repetition rough guide  
run samsara  
subjectivity  
themes/ variations  
this life time touring

**KAIDIE'S PASTS, NOW**  
April (7)  
March 2010 (13)  
February 2010 (12)  
January 2010 (19)  
December 2009 (24)

**LATEST HITS/MISSES**  
19 APRIL MONDAY GMT 15:00 SLT 07:00: (REVISIT PROJECT WITH KAIDIE AND THE COODO PIRATE Kaidie's Virtual Tourist: Notes From Second Life #3)

A month ago, during Kaidie's dislocation, she was momentarily featured in a Singapore newspaper in Life 1.0 (printed edition) and Life 2.0 (online version), and Life 3.0 (somewhere in between).

KAIDIE'S HITS/MISSES: IF WE CAN'T/DOON'T WANT TO MEET IN THIS LIFE, PERHAPS WE COULD IN OUR NEXT/OTHER LIVES. ASSUMING THAT YOU'D LIKE TO, THAT IS. Same place, same time?

**TOURS/DETOURS**  
1000-DAY ITINERARY: GIGS & EVENTS (10)  
A ROUGH GUIDE (ONGOING) (8)  
COLLABORATIONS AND GUEST POSTS BY FELLOW TRAVELLERS/RUNNING BUDDIES (2)  
GETTING THERE THERE

**Kaidie Nondon GETTING THE HANG OF GETTING LOST** – how to navigate Kaidie's travel blog. Now get lost! (No, I'm not being rude!) <http://3rdlifekaidie.com>



**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0**  
3rdlifekaidie.com  
(Dis-) Locating Kaidie in Nondon

Yesterday at 09:55 · Comment · Like · Share

Chris Hughes, Reis Saho and 2 others like this.

**Kaidie Nondon Given the British Library's Magnificent Map show** – which opens today – and the informative and inspiring BBC series *The Beauty of Maps* <<http://bbc.co.uk/1/s3v0t/>> and Maps: *Power, Plunder and Possession*, today's post, as well as the next, are 2 of Kaidie's maps from Life 3.0. Use them to (circum)navigate your lives!  
Yesterday at 10:07 · Delete

**David Moss** we at m4sk 22 towers like the interwangled anarchy  
Yesterday at 10:13 · Delete

**Fabian Neuhaus** I think the first documentary of the BBC mapping series would be something for Kaidie!  
8 hours ago · Delete

Speaking of maps, you will gather by now how they are a prominent feature of Kaidie's world. As I metaphorically ran about, I was creating new mappings of disparate ideas. Generating visual maps enabled me to metaphorise or visualise my ideas. The maps also helped me to find my place or locate myself, both literally and metaphorically-speaking, in the world. In my early days, I also referred to ideas such as cosmology, *mandala*' and *axis mundi*. Paradoxically, my maps were often so densely-layered that they tended to confuse rather than enlighten, so that they seemed like 'anti-maps' themselves. Often, I also talk about mapping with my audiences. I published my maps online too, and have several archives of them (top right). My own blog and story were also deliberately hard to navigate. My blog had several different orders of organisation, such as by word cloud, or dates. When a user complained about its labyrinthine nature, I told them to 'get lost' – literally and metaphorically.

**Your Photos – MORE MAPPINGS OF LIFE 3.0**



**More Mappings**

View Photo Comments (1)  
Share this album  
Post this album to your Profile

In this album:  
Kaidie Nondon  
1 photo

Mappings of Kaidie's trans-dimensional run.

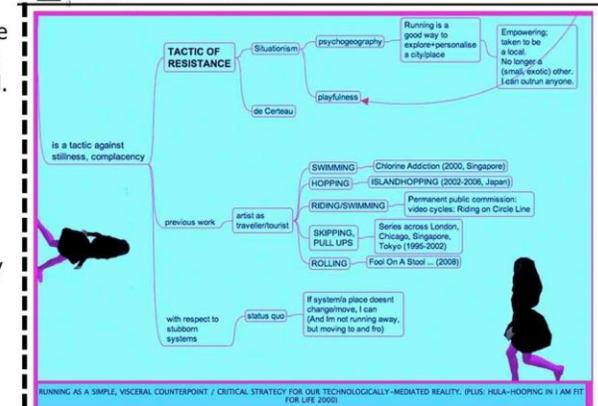
Added 21 hours ago · Comment · Like

Douglas MacKay, Teardrop Tim and 2 others like this.

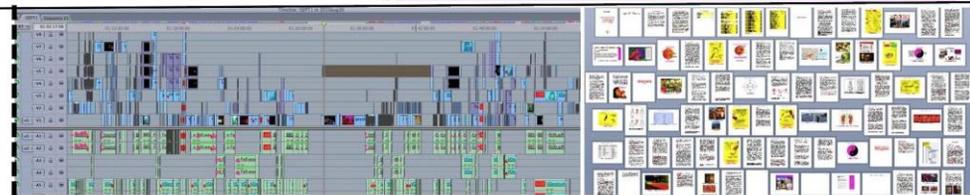
Marlene Sarroff I like these very much.  
Yesterday at 21:00 · Delete

Kaidie Nondon Thank you very much Marlene!  
Yesterday at 21:04 · Delete

Claudia Tomaz I love to get lost in yr maps Kaidie! will try to go to that exhibit too but yr maps are my favorite



The way I collaged my films and thesis together also resemble highly-layered maps (right). You can see evidence of this from the snapshot of the composition of my film clips as sequenced on the editing software Final Cut Pro, and an early draft of my written work. In fact, each page of this Appendix is a mapping, too!



1. A month ago, while I was away, 'Majei' wrote in He (She? It?) said that he is coming to Earth and asked me to check out the Dalston-Kingsland area which was his choice of landing.

2. Majei said that he wanted to know if he could survive there. "How does it look and feel? How does it sound and smell? Can you make sense of this place? How does your body react to the environment?" he asked.



3. Always eager to help a fellow traveller, I checked out the area yesterday. I will publish my findings across the next few days.

4. I walked from Pings Pross, along the very lovely Regent's Canal, then along the very straight Kingsland Road, to the Ridley Street market area, and back.

5. As you can see from the GPS track records, the outward-bound trip took 1:14:09, over the distance of 5.17km.



6. Inclusive of a 2-hour stop that I made at a Turkish Cafe, (to read, recite poetry, sigh about the absurdities of life, irritate my blister on my soul, power-nap) and several other mini-detours, the entire trip took me 6 hours.



7. The return trip took 1:16:23, over 5.72km.



8. When undertaking any urban expedition, one has to not mind making the satorial *faux pas* of teaming whatever (pretty elegant) togs one is wearing with a pair of sturdy (+ pretty grubby) trainers or walking boots.

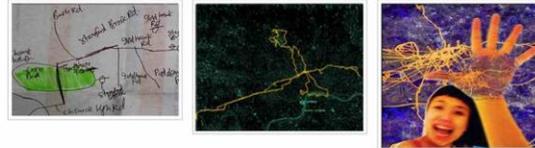
9. Not harbouring any gadget-fetish of any sorts (for I am an *au-naturel* artificial being), I carried only my watch, GPS and, of course, the trapper of memories, my camera. And a broly (raincoats are ugly!)

10. As any seasoned traveller will tell you, the best and most enjoyable way to travel, is to travel alone, and to travel light, and with no preconceptions whatsoever.

Just go.

More to come. I'll be back.

Kaidie Nondon Mappings by Kaidie of good old Nondon.  
 Tagged: Joerg Leib, Marc Flepp, Sebastian Felten



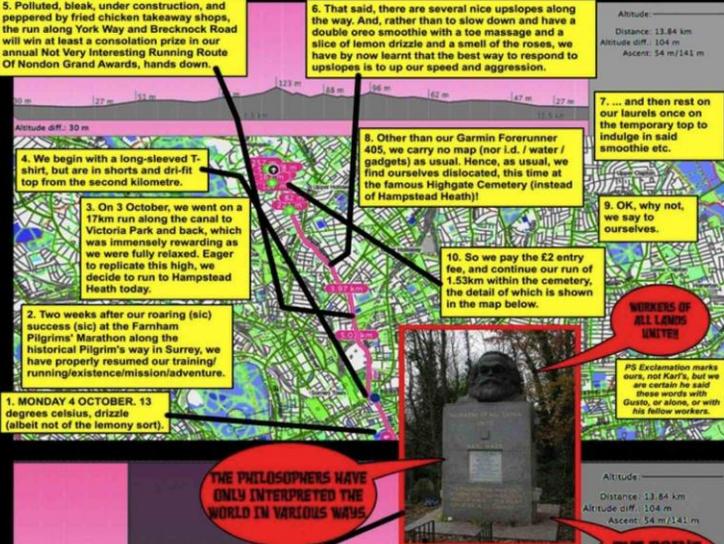
NONDON A-Z  
 5 new photos

20 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Share

Peter Politanoff, Suzanne Silk, Meena Mylvaganam and 6 others like this.

Nondon  
 A-Z

Of the different categories of mappings, there is one called 'Nondon-A-Z'. Named after the classic 'London A-Z', this consists of maps I created about my semi-fictitious city of Nondon. Places like 'Regents Fark', 'St Pancreas Station' and 'Slade School of Dine Art', for instance, were re-configurations of Regent's Park, St Pancras Station and Slade School of Fine Art respectively. Many of them were based on actual GPS tracks of my running in London. Nondon at once celebrated its source, 'London', yet, simultaneously, playful denied it, as if it was 'Non-London', the same way 'Kaidie' affirmed yet departed from 'Kai Syng'.



1. MONDAY 4 OCTOBER 13  
 degrees celsius, drizzle (albeit not of the limony sort).

2. Two weeks after our roaring (sic) success (sic) at the Farnham Pilgrims' Marathon along the historical Pilgrim's way in Surrey, we have properly resumed our training/running/existence/mission/adventure.

3. On 3 October, we went on a 17km run along the canal to Victoria Park and back, which was immensely rewarding as we were fully relaxed. Eager to replicate this high, we decide to run to Hampstead Heath today.

4. We begin with a long-sleeved T-shirt, but are in shorts and dri-fit top from the second kilometre.

5. Polluted, bleak, under construction, and peppered by fried chicken takeaway shops, the run along York Way and Brecknock Road will win at least a consolation prize in our annual Not Very Interesting Running Route Of Nondon Grand Awards, hands down.

6. That said, there are several nice upslopes along the way. And, rather than to slow down and have a double oreo smoothie with a toe massage and a slice of lemon drizzle and a smell of the roses, we have by now learnt that the best way to respond to upslopes is to up our speed and aggression.

7. ... and then rest on our laurels once on the temporary top to indulge in said smoothie etc.

8. Other than our Garmin Forerunner 405, we carry no map (nor I.d. / water / gadgets) as usual. Hence, as usual, we find ourselves dislocated, this time at the famous Highgate Cemetery (instead of Hampstead Heath!)

9. OK, why not, we say to ourselves.

10. So we pay the £2 entry fee, and continue our run of 1.53km within the cemetery, the detail of which is shown in the map below.

WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE

PS Exclamation marks ours, not Kai's, but we are certain he said these words with Gusto, or alone, or with his fellow workers.

THE PHILOSOPHERS HAVE ONLY INTERPRETED THE WORLD IN VARIOUS WAYS

TUC DUTY

Altitude: 13.64 km  
 Distance: 13.64 km  
 Altitude diff: 1.04 m  
 Ascent: 54 m / 141 m



Mitzi Sheinman It's true, I NEVER TIRE OF SALMON, and now I've done a song about it! Just click here to listen, I've done it in a very modern way, just like all the kids do nowadays, and if you click enough, I might get to be TOP OF THE POPS!

http://khu.sh/player.php?song=http://khu.music.s3.amazonaws.com/usersong\_4bf275d5

LaDiDa Player on khu.sh

58 minutes ago · Comment · Unlike · Share

You like this.

**Kaidie Nondon** Rather DELICIOUS indeed! I do hope that salmon and your song shoot to the TOP OF THE POPS in the UK!! (I never ever tire of salmon meself!) 8 minutes ago · Delete

**Mitzi Sheinman** Cross fingers, darling! 5 minutes ago

**Kaidie Nondon** Yes! I'm crossing my eyes while doing my fingers! 3 minutes ago · Delete

**Mitzi Sheinman** Be careful darling, that's how I did my hip.

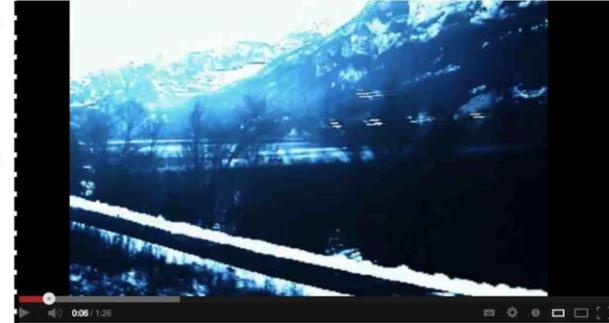
**Running Into Other Semi-Fictitious characters**



In Nondon, I ran into several other Nondoners who were, like Kaidie, larger-than-life.

In addition, I 'friended' other semi-fictitious characters that were invented by artists online.

Elsewhere, I also ran into, or attempted to encounter, other interesting characters in the bid to seek the point of life. For instance, when I was in Switzerland, I paid a visit to Heidiland in a bid to meet the legendary mountain-dwelling Heidi, whose name rhymes with Kaidie. Alas, my imaginary counterpart was absent on my visit – but that only strengthened my imagination of her.



OPENING OF SHORT FILM KAIIDIE IN HEIDILAND / HEIDI IN KAIIDIELAND.

kaidie3rdlife · 19 videos · 187 views

Like · About · Share · Add to

Uploaded on Jan 27, 2010

This is the opening of an 11 minute film that I made in 1 day, during my residency in Winterthur, Switzerland. Using my visit to Heidi in Maiefeld on 24 January 2010 as a starting point, this short essay is a discourse on travelling in the physical and imaginary worlds. Music by Philip Tan. To watch the entire film, come to my talks in March

facebook

My Photos – KAIIDIE MEETS SIGNIFICANT NONDONERS 27May2010 Museum Of Nondon



Grayson Perry, artist, with Kaidie. Image by Guy Gormley. "We quite like your maps in the British Library", Kaidie tells the artist. Kaidie feels quite underdressed and under-made-up next to the 2003 Turner-Prize winner.

From your album: KAIIDIE MEETS SIGNIFICANT NONDONERS 27May2010 Museum Of Nondon



Ken Livingstone, ex-London Mayor, with Kaidie. Image by Guy Gormley. "I really liked Singapore! I was there for the London Olympics bid". But Kaidie forgets to tell him that Kaidie will die on the last day of the Nondon Olympics 09.09.2012.

In this photo: Kaidie Nondon (Photos | remove tag)

Added 27 May · Comment · Like

Jon Thomson, Susanne Clausen, David Rhodes and 2 others like this.

From your album: KAIIDIE MEETS SIGNIFICANT NONDONERS 27May2010 Museum Of Nondon



Boris Johnson, current London mayor, with Kaidie. We asked him for a bicycle so that we could stop running. Photo by Guy Gormley.

In this photo:

Added 27 May · Comment · Like

Maco Studioscentcat and Maxi Kim like this.

Vassili Sibirius I am sure Mr Johnson was really honored to be in the frame with Kaidie :D Friday at 01:31 · Delete

Kaidie Nondon You think? But he doesnt look it, does he?? This was seconds before his speech. Kaidie was quite opportunistic and ran for her chance. Friday at 01:34 · Delete



Walking – or rather, Running – The Talk



**CONGRATULATIONS**

**KAIDIE NONDON**

YOU CAME. YOU RAN. YOU CONQUERED THE VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON

**04<sub>H</sub> : 24<sub>M</sub> : 37<sub>S</sub>**

THAT MOMENT WHEN EVERYTHING CLICKED. WHEN THE ENERGY FLOWED. WHEN YOU MADE PERSONAL HISTORY.

Overall  
 Time: 04:24:39  
 Distance: 42.99 km  
 Elevation Gain: 196 m  
 Calories: 3,186 C

Timing  
 Time: 04:24:39  
 Moving Time: 04:17:34  
 Elapsed Time: 04:24:40  
 Avg Pace: 06:09 min/km  
 Avg Moving Pace: 05:59 min/km  
 Best Pace: 00:04 min/km

Elevation  
 Elevation Gain: 196 m  
 Elevation Loss: 229 m  
 Min Elevation: 1 m  
 Max Elevation: 49 m

Laps  
 Split Time Distance Avg Pace  
 1 00:59:35 10.04 05:56  
 2 00:59:43 9.98 05:59  
 3 01:05:31 9.98 06:34  
 4 01:03:04 10.01 06:18  
 5 00:16:44 2.98 05:37

Virgin London Marathon 2011 results

results | Masses

place overall	place gender	place category	runner name	runner no	category	HALF	finish time
14914	3484	2132	Nondon, Kaidie (GBR)	47721	18-39	02:08:07	04:24:37

**Kaidie Nondon** SOMEONE IS BRIBING KAIDIE £2.50 FOR EVERY KM SHE RUNS (or CRAWLS) 3rdlifekaidie.com Chuthatip Fisherman Achavasmit Tan Chin Hwee James Odling-Smee

**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0** 3rdlifekaidie.com Kaidie's 1000-day transdimensional run 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012

19 hours ago · Comment · Like · Share

**Chuthatip Fisherman Achavasmit** You want a special arm strength training this weekend? Proven a wonderful experience to be on a different earth surface!! 19 hours ago · Like · Delete

My running had real-world implications in more ways. My participation in races were not just a means for me to generate storylines for my artworks. I often raised money for charities. Hence, it can be said that my research sometimes had a positive side-effect beyond the art world.

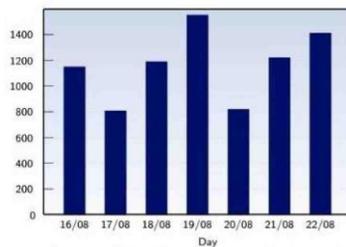
That said, my charitable efforts were often weaved into my artworks as storylines themselves.

Kaidie wondered aloud if doing charitable work was even a way to locate 'A/The Point of Life'.



I launched my blog on 12 December 2009. By early June 2013, even though I have not been updating the site for a while, its number of unique visitors was more than a million. Apparently. At its peak in 2010, the number of daily visitors to the blog was around 800-1000. I am not high-tech enough to generate my own 'bots' to raise the figures, but even if Kaidie was indeed this 'hot', I have, sadly, not been bankrolling from her popularity like many other bloggers or Twitterers have.

### Page Views



These statistics show all successful page views (also known as page impressions) and the time they were made. Only fully loaded pages are counted. Individual images and components are not included.

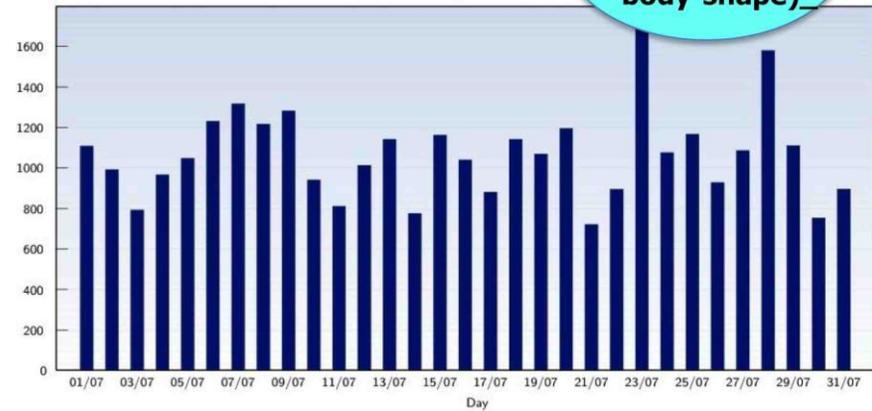
Date	Amount
Monday 16/08/10	1150
Tuesday 17/08/10	808
Wednesday 18/08/10	1190
Thursday 19/08/10	1552
Friday 20/08/10	821
Saturday 21/08/10	1222
Sunday 22/08/10	1413
<b>Total</b>	<b>8156</b>

## 1&1 Monthly Report 01/07/10 - 31/07/10

For 3rdlifekaidie.com

Visitors' Figures (numbers, not body-shape)

### Page Views



Date	Amount
Thursday 01/07/10	1109
Friday 02/07/10	993
Saturday 03/07/10	793
Sunday 04/07/10	967
Monday 05/07/10	1049
Tuesday 06/07/10	1232
Wednesday 07/07/10	1318
Thursday 08/07/10	1218
Friday 09/07/10	1283
Saturday 10/07/10	942
Sunday 11/07/10	812
Monday 12/07/10	1014
Tuesday 13/07/10	1142
Wednesday 14/07/10	776
Thursday 15/07/10	1163
Friday 16/07/10	1041

Date	Amount
Saturday 17/07/10	882
Sunday 18/07/10	1142
Monday 19/07/10	1070
Tuesday 20/07/10	1196
Wednesday 21/07/10	722
Thursday 22/07/10	896
Friday 23/07/10	1763
Saturday 24/07/10	1077
Sunday 25/07/10	1168
Monday 26/07/10	929
Tuesday 27/07/10	1087
Wednesday 28/07/10	1581
Thursday 29/07/10	1111
Friday 30/07/10	754
Saturday 31/07/10	897
<b>Total</b>	<b>33127</b>

These statistics show all successful page views (also known as page impressions) and the time they were made. Only fully loaded pages are counted. Individual images and components are not included.

# WHILE FLYING ACROSS NONDON, I DECIDE TO BE A CATFISH IN MY NEXT LIFE



Flying across Nondon with my friends from one of my previous lives.

Today is a fabulous day. At 24km, I experience a runner's high. I feel happy, calm, relaxed, smiling. Binfield House, babies visiting the zoo and having their other experience of animals apart from su plastic wings is stapled onto my shoulders and I begin to fly. It is quite a lovely, crisp day, given De who inform me that this has not been the case, as Nondon has been hazy lately. Hovering above Bee people certainly look different from a bird's eye view. Being so high make me delightfully queasy, w

Yet, I started off unpopular. I had difficulty making friends. Before I 'settled' into running, I also flirted with other modes of movement and being.

**Friends**  
100 friends [View All](#)

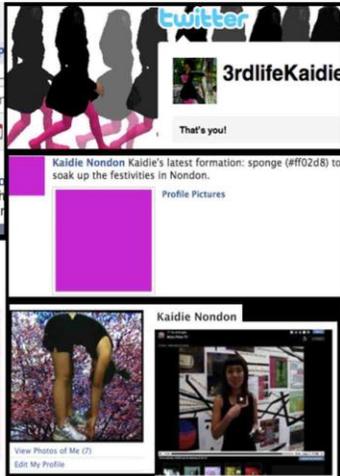
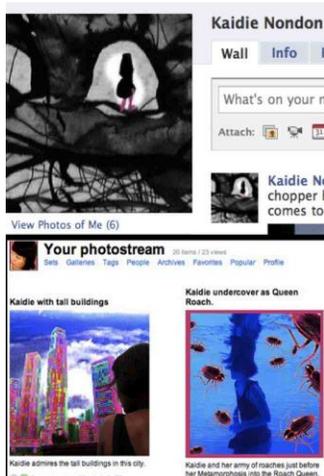
Photos

**Kaidie Nondon** Kaidie's latest hits/misses/fits/kisses : DAY 3: UNDERCOVER AS ROACH TO EXPLORE UNDERBELLY OF NONDON <http://bit.ly/6MvHAL>  
2 hours ago via Twitter · Comment · Like

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

- Kaidie joined the group ISEA (International Symposium on Electronic Art) · Comment · Like
- Kaidie and Destination London are now friends. · Comment · Like
- Kaidie and Christiane Paul are now friends. · Comment · Like
- Kaidie became a fan of Judith Butler. · Comment · Like

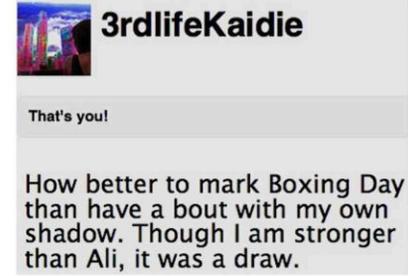
**Kaidie Nondon** Kaidie and her army of roaches just before her Metamorphosis into the Roach Queen. Now she can explore the underbelly of Nondon.



Yet, as soon as I warmed up and got into the 'zone', I treaded fearlessly, shamelessly making mistakes and new discoveries alike. I was on a runner's high, and had so much fun leaving confusing trials, experimenting with the medium and so on. The more I ran, the further I could run, the bigger my digital world.



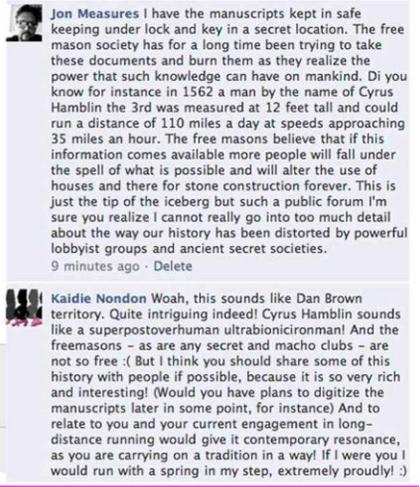
Identity thief strikes Kaidie, herself an identity thief: some twat shopped on Apple online using her £. (But less insulting than Windows?!)



How better to mark Boxing Day than have a bout with my own shadow. Though I am stronger than Ali, it was a draw.



Kaidie Nondon Who is this out-of-focus many-headed person? Is this Kaidie or Kailives? Or both of them in the same space-time? And which route did this person take? The official Friends of Medecins Sans Frontieres run route, or the one Kaidie has drawn out? <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com/2010/03/in-betweeners-run/>>

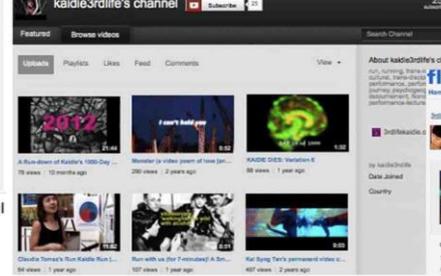


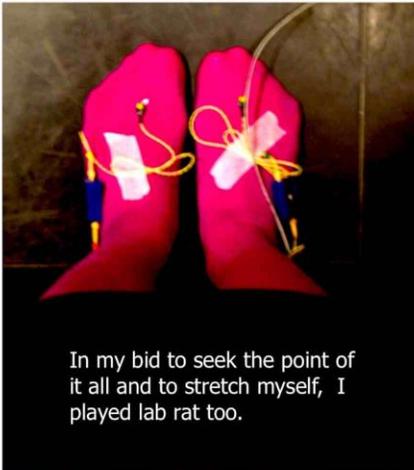
WE HAVE RUN AND COMPLETED OUR FIRST LIFE 1.0 MARATHON, FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PILGRIMS. Thank you all for your support and donations! BIG THANK YOU to the organisers too!

1. On 19 September Sunday, we completed our first Life 1.0 marathon. Our timing was rather rubbish (5 hours 29 minutes!) but all things given (hilly - 2200 feet total ascent - and sandy terrain, off road and cross-country - a stubborn shin splint and tendinitis on right leg: reduced training in the last 4 weeks), we are not displeased. We also handed £140 to the Rotary charities - THANK YOU Chin Hwee Tan, Chuthatip Achavasmit, Gregory Belichman and James Odling-Smee for your generous donations!

2. We arrived at Farnham. Sunny the day before for a recce. First impressions: Would we want to live there? NONONO - we need huge cities in which we can be anonymous/ignored/invisible (by now we are dead tired of being gazed in a manner we do not get in London, Tokyo or New York). But would we want to run there? YESYESYES! Any anxieties we have had went out of the window as we stroled part of the route - the freshness of the air, and not running into any body for miles on end calmed us tremendously. There, we decided that injury or not, we would complete the run.

3. That night, we stayed at a lovely B&B run by an elderly couple. loaded on our last pile of carbohydrates went to bed at 19:00hrs and slept a solid 9.5 hours. Mentally, physically and emotionally.





## ON TRIAL: PARTICIPANT 12(F) WITH ELECTRODES, SNAKES, 1k TONE, KY JELLY, 2 X (PLACEBO) PILLS.

Kadie undertook her first experiment as a lab rat last week. Now, Kadie is no longer Kaidie, but 12(F).

It would have been impossible to *not* be affected in any degree, with 4 hours of pills, existential ennui, electric shocks of varying degrees on the left hand, liberal applications of a nice lubrication, and staring at stills of snakes alternating with frames of blacks and crimson, oscillating between silence, very loud dead tones and its feedback, just like a copycat [Paul Sharits](#) or [Peter Kubelka](#) flicker film (I implore you my Dear Readers to kindly hook up your laptop to speakers, turn volume to the max, and WATCH FULLSCREEN, or, better still, projected large in a darkened space. Yes, we do know that a Web 2.0 representation does no justice whatsoever to these mindblowing films, but since the alternative is not watching them at all, sometimes a poor simulation is a lesser evil).

Hello World. My name is not Kaidie. My name is 12F. Like Smith in the final act after his elaborate reeducation process, my transformation is complete. **I feel real, for once. I smile incessantly now. Life is no longer dark and hypocritical, and I am living a lie no more. I am converted. Everything is all right. The struggle was finished. 2 gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of my nose.** I feel jolly wonderful. I have a perpetual smile on my face and black bars across my eyes (and so does the researcher, who must have undergone the experiment himself as well). The experiment succeeded.

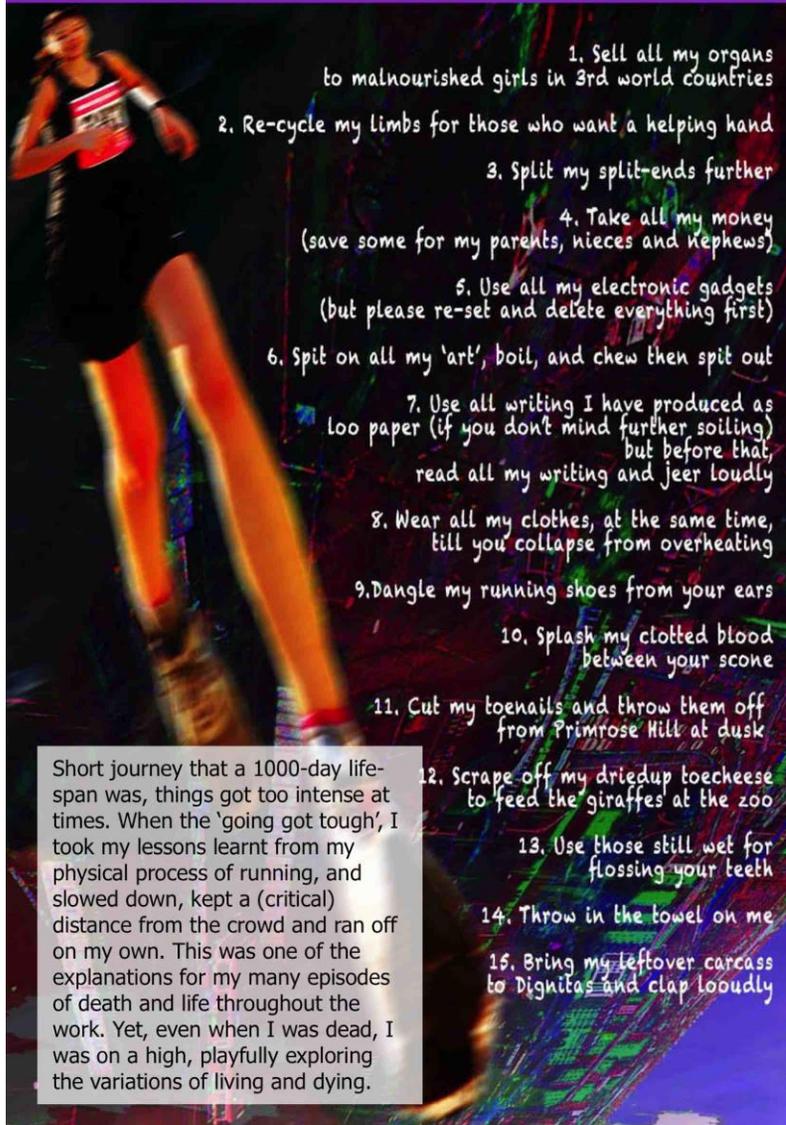
I will now see Nondon with a new set of eyes. A few shades darker, if at all, if I could peek through that black bar.



Trans-Humanism ?



**KAIDIE DIES: Variation 15. Kaidie's suicide note / LEGacy**



1. Sell all my organs to malnourished girls in 3rd world countries
2. Re-cycle my limbs for those who want a helping hand
3. Split my split-ends further
4. Take all my money (save some for my parents, nieces and nephews)
5. Use all my electronic gadgets (but please re-set and delete everything first)
6. Spit on all my 'art', boil, and chew then spit out
7. Use all writing I have produced as loo paper (if you don't mind further soiling) but before that, read all my writing and jeer loudly
8. Wear all my clothes, at the same time, till you collapse from overheating
9. Dangle my running shoes from your ears
10. Splash my clotted blood between your scone
11. Cut my toenails and throw them off from Primrose Hill at dusk
12. Scrape off my driedup toecheese to feed the giraffes at the zoo
13. Use those still wet for flossing your teeth
14. Throw in the towel on me
15. Bring my leftover carcass to Dignitas and clap loudly

Short journey that a 1000-day life-span was, things got too intense at times. When the 'going got tough', I took my lessons learnt from my physical process of running, and slowed down, kept a (critical) distance from the crowd and ran off on my own. This was one of the explanations for my many episodes of death and life throughout the work. Yet, even when I was dead, I was on a high, playfully exploring the variations of living and dying.

**Kaidie Nondon** 3rdlifeKaidie

**Report from Nondon, noon, 21 Dec: Eurostar cockup at St Pancras Station: missed carriages of justice. Labour pain (New, old New, etc).** 8 minutes ago

RT @admin: **Trans-Migrations & Transcendence**

Join the conversation

**Kaidie Nondon** When I ask for a 1-way ticket to Forch, to visit the pro-euthanasia group Dignitas, the man at the station gives me a sad smile. 7 hours ago via Twitter · Comment · Like

**Toby Rushbrook** Back up. Are you interviewing them? 6 hours ago · Delete

**Toby Rushbrook** Are you ok? 5 hours ago · Delete

**Kaidie Nondon**

**KADIE DIES: Variation 1.** On Sunday 4/24, a day of Easter bunnies & the resurrection of a popular figure, Kaidie's 500th-day birthday, Kai Syng Tan's 36th-year birthday in the external world, but 37th-year birthday including her time as an embryo, and 4/24/37 was the time Kaidie ended the 2011 Nondon Marathon, like a bunny caught in headlights, this being the year of the bunny, being Kaidie's rear, etc. <http://www.3rdlifeKaidie.com/>

**Kaidie Nondon** ALASI HAS OUR DIY JOB ALL GONE PETE TONG!? <http://j.mp/gK885A> Support our #run for Shelter! 2011 Nondon Marathon in 2 weeks' time. <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/3rdlifeKaidie>

**Kaidie dies**

**ALASI HAS IT ALL GONE PETE TONG!! - A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0** j.mp Kaidie's 1000-day transdimensional run 12.12.2009-09.09.2012

9 hours ago · Like · Comment · Share

James Odling-Smee likes this.

**3rdlifeKaidie**

That's you!

**Tobias Rushbrook** Are you older than me? You had me fooled. Sunday at 07:01 · Like

**Claudia Tomaz** Happy birthday dear Kai!!!! Sunday at 18:51 · Like

Paraphrasing Darwin: it's not the strongest/most intelligent of the species that survives, but the one that is the most adaptable to change.

**Hello there. I'm back. Well, sort of. Not for long anyway.**

**I'll die on 9 September 2012, the last day of the Nondon Olympics. Not before running amok a little including as Nondon Ambassador. How will I eventually go? stay tuned...**

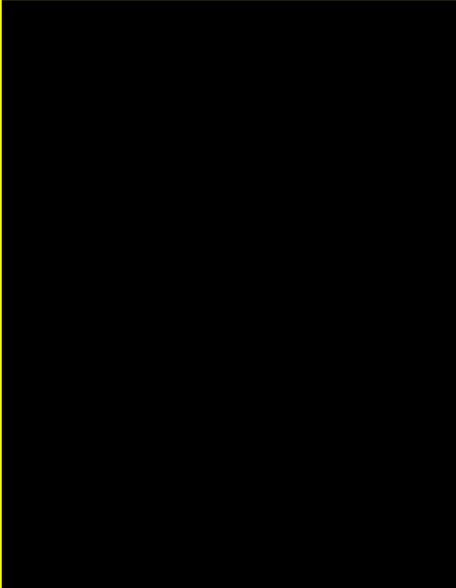


Before I formalised 'trans-running', many of my artworks of the past 20 years addressed restlessness as a subject, and had a restless approach. They were often densely-collaged, cutting across genre, discipline and media. Here is a summary of some of these, with related links. The works may enhance your understanding of the contexts of trans-running. I have arranged the list in chronological order to give you a sense of my development.



Year(s)	Title and medium	Location or commissioning institution	Notes	Representative Figure
1975 – 1988	Various	Singapore	<p>The real genesis of 'Kaidie' began when I was a young (day)dreamer who dreamt of 'running away' from the claustrophobic reality by letting my imagination run wild. This was translated to an array of paintings, cartoons, sculptures and installation. Several of my very early works have a science-fiction or fantasy theme, or feature some form of a mapping of the world or another.</p> <p>Aged 19, I ran away from home, and began living my life on the run.</p>	
1998	<p><i>All Change! !!, ---All Right???, F*** All.</i></p> <p>Film or film installation</p>	London	<p>I was fascinated by the new world (order/disorder) of the 'wild wild west' when I first arrived. In particular, I found street protests and public gatherings exotic, and filmed them. I edited this trilogy of cine-essays in 3 distinct styles, but used images and sounds from the same archive. The films could be watched independently as shorts, or together as an extended cine-essay totalling 45 minutes. I wanted to question the value between art and politics. I was influenced by the ideologies and approaches of French auteurs Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard, and Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. I employed a classical actor Declan Conlon to do the voiceover. One of the films won an award at the San Francisco International Documentary Film Festival 1999. &lt;<a href="http://www.imdb.com/event/ev0000584/1999">http://www.imdb.com/event/ev0000584/1999</a>&gt;</p>	

1997-1998	<i>mY unOFFICIAL dUMPING-GROUND (mud)</i>	Online	<p>Even when I was living in London, I was restless. Hence I ventured online with a large-scale hypertext work. Those were the early days of the internet, as you may tell from the aesthetics. The work was not just an archive of my text works, but a self-reflexive exploration of the medium. I generated a multitude of hyperlinks connecting subjects in ways sometimes logical, but mostly absurd. I wanted the audience to click endlessly and hence, travel, virtually, restlessly, and 'end up' in surprising sites that extrapolate from or digress away from where they started.</p> <p>The work was created with the assistance, guidance and support of artists Mr Jon Thomson and Professor Susan Collins.</p>	
2000	<i>Chlorine Addiction</i>  Film or film installation	Singapore	<p>Upon returning home after 4 years of absence, I felt adrift. This was also when I began to teach in a film school, where there was a swimming pool. I started swimming. The cine-essay <i>Chlorine Addiction</i> was structured as a swim, with a series of 10 videos with a runtime of 3 minutes each, which was the time I took to swim each of the 10X100 metre laps daily. Once again, the films encourage the audience to 're-map' or re-order and edit them. They may be viewed independently, in any order, as short films or an installation in space, or from the 'beginning' to 'end' as a linear film. Using images and sounds collected from Singapore, San Francisco, Bangkok, Taiwan and elsewhere, the work contemplates the everyday, rather strange, reality of Singapore and existence in general.</p> <p><i>Chlorine Addiction</i> was one of my most popular works. It has been shown, for instance, at Transmediale and the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival 2001. An early version of a clip was collected by the Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan. I also published a book which is distributed by Select Books, and produced an interactive DVD.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.yidff.jp/2001/cat043/01c068-e.html">http://www.yidff.jp/2001/cat043/01c068-e.html</a>&gt;</p>	

2001	<p><i>SPRING. BEAUTY. LOVE: Her story of trying to tell the stories of the three sisters.</i></p> <p>Installation</p>	Earl Lu Gallery, Singapore	<p>As a young person from a young country (with its own histories nearly wiped out), one of the first steps that I took to understand myself was by discovering, (re-)telling and (re-)constructing my own history, or rather histories. I did so by interviewing my mother and aunties, hence the title is an English translation of their names. Yet, instead of a 'straightforward' documentary with an all-telling, truth-seeing 'voice of god', this was one in which the narrators and filmmaker alike were unreliable, with their lapses in memory, miscommunication (English was my preferred <i>lingua franca</i>, while the women spoke in their mother tongue of the Chinese dialect of Hokkien). The stories of the sisters were also different. One was born before the war, one given away for adoption during the war, and the youngest – my mother – was born after the war. The way the work was presented questioned the grand notions of identity, subjectivity, documentary, truth and so on, with the three films played simultaneously as an installation. The audience had to physically and metaphorically navigate the cacophony of sounds and conflicting narratives. Additionally, as if a literal interpretation of 'oral history', only the women's mouths are filmed. In the screen in which 'Love' – my mother – appears, I appear, too. I was filmed by my mother, who interrogated me as to why I created such a project at all. The subtitle of my work itself highlights how the work is a self-reflexive exercise that problematises these notions. The show was curated by BingHui Huangfu. Other artists in the show include China's Song Dong and Lin Tian Miao.</p>	
2003	<p><i>Tokyo Tremour Triplet.</i></p> <p>Installation</p>	President's Young Talents, Singapore Art Museum	<p>This film trilogy was presented as an immersive installation. All films mobilise the same pool of images, of public events shot in Tokyo. However, one film has a voiceover in the Japanese language, the other English, and the last, in both English and Japanese. The audience meandering through the darkened space is assaulted by a cacophony of sounds and sights, and has to navigate and negotiate their own meaning out of the visual and audio noise – the same way I felt when I first lived in the metropolis of Tokyo.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/11444">http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/11444</a>&gt;</p>	

<p>2002-2005</p>	<p><i>ISLAND-HOPPING Japan 2002-2005</i></p> <p>Various</p>	<p>While a postgraduate student at the Musashino Art University in Japan, I travelled all over Japan, 'islandhopping' the many islands of the archipelago. As an islander (from Singapore) myself, I thought of this endeavour as a re-imagination of the idea of the 'island', by looking at a set of islands, from the point of view of an islander, and via the Japanese aesthetic concept of 'ma' or negative space (so-called). For 3 years with my video camera, I collected and collapsed together conflicting images, music and text. Of the disparate narratives, a major set relates to that of the Pacific war. I networked footage from my trip to an American military camp in Okinawa with a hidden camera, the peace ceremony at Hiroshima during which the message of Japan as victim was propagated; the controversial war shrine in Tokyo while impersonating as a Japanese, and an interview with my uncle of his ordeal during the Japanese occupation of Singapore. This is a large body of works spanning different genres and media. Different parts and combinations of ISLANDHOPPING have been widely exhibited, for instance at the Biennale of Sydney 2006 (as depicted), ICA London, House of World Cultures Berlin, and with 5 solo exhibitions in Japan. As the audience navigates through the densely-montaged films, or the packed installation, they were also 'islandhopping' and re-imagining new 'islands' and 'archipelagos' of meanings.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.culturebase.net/print_artist.php?3740">http://www.culturebase.net/print_artist.php?3740</a>&gt;          &lt;<a href="http://www.theatreworks.org.sg/international/insomnia_ica/">http://www.theatreworks.org.sg/international/insomnia_ica/</a>&gt;          &lt;<a href="http://www.catnet.ne.jp/surge/rec6/040913/10.html">http://www.catnet.ne.jp/surge/rec6/040913/10.html</a>&gt;</p>	
<p>2005-2009</p>	<p><i>Making a Living Of Sorts in (Y)Our Theme Park</i></p> <p>Performance</p>	<p>Upon returning home after 3 years in Japan, I began appearing in my own work. This was my response to a place that I felt was increasingly resembling a Theme Park. Yet, instead of merely criticising from a distance, I positioned myself as someone in cahoots with the authorities. Hence, I appear amidst the <i>mise-en-scene</i> and perform, as if a prop, mascot or performing monkey – as the city, too, performs.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.saatchionline.com/kaisyngtan">http://www.saatchionline.com/kaisyngtan</a>&gt;          &lt;<a href="http://app.lta.gov.sg/art/pdf/CEL.pdf">http://app.lta.gov.sg/art/pdf/CEL.pdf</a>&gt;</p>	

2007	<p><i>The Rather Terrible Slaughter Of the Tour Guide!</i></p> <p>Video tours</p>	Singapore Art Show.	<p>This consisted of 2 video tours filmed in the same location. The audience could select which tour to go on, both located in the main shopping district of Singapore. I changed the name of sites, for instance from City Hall to 'City Gall', and City Link to 'City Sink' in my artwork. Along the way, you ran into urban denizens such as the 'Flaneur' and 'Godzilla' (renamed 'Godsiliao', or 'god has died', in local dialect). The two tours were identical, save for name changes such as someone called 'Local' in one, who is called 'Global' in another. This was my way to question the validity of these terms which are thrown about easily in a city that likes identifying itself as 'globalised'. At the end of the tours, the tour guide/artist died. Curator: Joselina Cruz.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.philstar.com/young-star/414822/yet-another-rather-terrible-slaughter-tour-guide">http://www.philstar.com/young-star/414822/yet-another-rather-terrible-slaughter-tour-guide</a>&gt;</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://culturepush.com/2007/08/13/you-are-not-a-tourist/">http://culturepush.com/2007/08/13/you-are-not-a-tourist/</a>&gt;</p>	
2008	<p><i>A Fool on a Stool in a School ...</i></p> <p>Installation</p>	8Q Singapore, contemporary Art Museum	<p>In this 2-room, multi-screen installation, I ran about as if the star/victim of a theme park, albeit one of a disused school, to be converted to a white cube of a contemporary art museum, in which the same video was to be exhibited. This work dealt with the binary-feature of destruction/renewal, which characterises land-scarce Singapore. I shot and performed this work wearing a hard hat when the building was being renovated. The work was commissioned for the inaugural show of the museum. The audience experiencing the work also re-lived the history of the room and building where they stood. Curator: Kwok Kian Chow.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/bien/bienal_singapur/2008/parallel/8q_rate/tan_kai_syng">http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/bien/bienal_singapur/2008/parallel/8q_rate/tan_kai_syng</a>&gt;</p>	
2008	<p><i>Here, There, Where</i></p>	Guangzhou Triennale 2008, China	<p>I played a person suspended in a liminal space that resembled a fish tank. Was I sinking or floating? Was I immobilised, or free? The video was shot underwater with an underwater camera. Theme of Triennale: <i>Farewell to Post-Colonialism</i>. I was categorised under 'Free Radicals'. Research curator: Sopawan Boonnimitra. Curators: Gao Shiming, Sarat Maharaj, Chang Tsong-zung. Other artists and curators at the Triennale include Werner Herzog, Trinh T. Ming-ha, Feng Mengbo, Chen Chieh-jen, Roger Macdonald, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Ade Darmawan.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.gdmoa.org/zhanlan/threeyear/4/24/3/">http://www.gdmoa.org/zhanlan/threeyear/4/24/3/</a>&gt;</p>	

<p>2010 – 2059</p>	<p><i>The Never- ending Under- water Ad- ventures !</i></p> <p>Film install- ation</p>	<p>Land Transport Authority of Singapore (LTA)</p>	<p>I played 'Desyphus', which is a neologism of 'Sisyphus', 'Decipher' and 'Deceit', a perpetual rider of the Circle Line of Singapore, which has 29 stations, in a series of 29 video cycles that comes on each evening at 19:29hrs (when it is sufficiently dark), at a total run time of 29 minutes, with 29 riddles for commuters to solve as they descend 35 metres underwater into the station. The work is a permanent video installation, and it is the only new media work commissioned by the Land Transport Authority of Singapore. It is sited at Bras Basah Mass Rapid Transit station, which is a subway station located at the Civic and Arts and Heritage district of Singapore. The work was voted by arts journalist Mayo Martin as his favourite of the artworks that run on the Circle Line.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/bbs-art-1/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/bbs-art-1/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-2/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-2/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-3/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-3/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-5/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/bbs-art-5/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htb3yRpUEKQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htb3yRpUEKQ</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3xZOiCzjVA&amp;lr=1">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3xZOiCzjVA&amp;lr=1</a>&gt;</p>	
<p>2009- 2012</p>	<p><i>Kaidie's 1000- Day Trans- Run 12.12.2 009 - 09.09.2 012</i></p> <p>Various</p>	<p>London</p>	<p>My research was born in a small room in the island of Suommenlina in Helsinki, Finland, where I was based for nearly a month. I had won an artist-in-residency award, having been selected by Singapore theatre director Keng Sen Ong. It was while I was situated in the land that invented some of the more powerful brands in the contemporary technological landscape, namely Nokia and Angry Birds, that I pondered about how the internet allows us to travel in new ways.</p> <p>Blog: &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie</a>&gt;        Moving images: &lt;<a href="http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife">http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife</a>&gt;        Messages: &lt;<a href="https://twitter.com/kaisyngtan">twitter.com/kaisyngtan</a>&gt;        Tracks: &lt;<a href="http://www.gpsies.com/mapUser.do?username=3rdlifekaidie">http://www.gpsies.com/mapUser.do?username=3rdlifekaidie</a>&gt;        Images and interactions: &lt;<a href="https://www.facebook.com/kaisyngtan">www.facebook.com/kaisyngtan</a>&gt;</p>	

**A ROUGH GUIDE TO (THE MEANING OF) A LIFE 3.0**  
 KAIDIE'S 1000-DAY TRANSDIMENSIONAL RUN 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012 (dis-orientations - come with kaidie - (dis)life-locate)

**REVERIES OF A SOLITARY RUNNER I: Following the footsteps of Rousseau and his final work, Reveries of a Solitary Walker (1776-1778)**



One of the images we collected in our solitary runs - a picture of peace and a fecal-matter-smeard wall and the defecator in Nondon.

The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote Reveries of the Solitary Walker (Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire) between 1776-1778. When he died in 1778 at the age of 68, the work remained incomplete. The autobiographical series of essays is structured as 10 walks that Rousseau undertook in Paris alone. The work was written just after Rousseau 'emerged from the darkest passages of his life' (see Peter France in the introduction to this 2004 Penguin edition) which we read at the Waterstones at Cover Street in Nondon one difficult mid-morning, after many years of exile. During these final 2 years of his life, Rousseau felt misunderstood and unhappy. Rather than a work that is about walking, or his walking as a subject matter, Rousseau uses the act of walking as a medium, as a form, to express his final thoughts, before his death, although Rousseau was not a runner, we identify with his sentiments as a solitary wanderer, and especially in these unshiny days of ours. After all at peace with himself (or rather resigned to his fate, whatever Fate might mean).

## Contexts

## Kaidie's Forerunners

**Kaidie's Trans-Run** hails from a long lineage of artworks. They include so-called 'new' media, as well as the 'older' media such as video, photography and literature. Here, I highlight a few of these sources. Many of these artworks have, in fact, guided me for the past two decades. During Kaidie's lifetime, I was sometimes fortunate enough to encounter the works in Nondon again, or to be introduced to new sources of inspiration by my audience. Within 'Kaidie's world' itself, I frequently referred to my sources of influence explicitly or indirectly. Where available, I supply screen captures of these.

Kaidie's list of the possible Meaning(s) Of Life, on the cusp of an other new year, 2011:

1. The moment of realisation that our legs have been working in perfect synchronicity with our arms, minds, emotions, environment, weather, and that we had been un-self-conscious of this happening; that we have fully inhabited, embodied running.
2. Experiencing the transition/cut between from the black-and-white opening sequence of Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (of a man overcoming his stutter) and the first scene of the film proper a-washed in luscious green.
5. Experiencing the transition/cut between the closing sequence of Marlier's *Sans Soleil* and the final credits (of 3 children on a road in Iceland); the moment when the woman moves in *La Jetee* (1962).
6. Experiencing the first notes of Glenn Gould's rendition of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and, with assistance of good earphones, the melancholic-ecstasy in Glenn Gould humming/singing.
- 7.. Experiencing Werner Herzog's *Kasper Hauser's* dream sequence
8. When water from the very hot shower first hits our skin

**If works of art already transport the audience into other worlds**, works that are about travelling seem to have even more mileage, literally and metaphorically-speaking. I have always been moved by the travelogue. These physical journeys are often mirrored with transformative journeys of a personal, spiritual and/or intellectual nature. Kaidie's adventures follow in the footsteps of the actual and/or fictional exploits of *Don Quixote* (Miguel de Cervantes), *Voyage Around My Room* (Xavier de Maistre), *Orlando* (Virginia Woolf/ Sally Potter), Bruce Chatwin, Pico Iyer, as well as *A Journey To The West* by Wu Cheng'en, a popular 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese/ Daoist legend featuring a host of characters including a monkey with superpowers on a pilgrimage to India. I particularly enjoy works that are also structured like movement. One such work was Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (*Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*). The physical journeys of the protagonist are structured as ten walks that the philosopher undertook in Paris, alone, just before he died, in 1788.

**LIFE 2.0: (A)LIVE!**

Kaidie Nondon  
3rdlifeKaidie

Orlando Furioso & Woolf's Orlando traversed time, space, identities: psychonaut models for Kaidie's metaphysical travels in cyberreality.

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- Twitter Goodies

**For the same reason, highly-structured music inspired me.** As I ran as Kaidie, or worked on my thesis at the desk, I would often play and re-play certain tunes in my head. They include the variations on themes by J.S. Bach and Ludwig Van Beethoven as rendered by Glenn Gould, as well as the works of Steve Reich and Kraftwerk.

**On a related note, I was intrigued by the notion of life and death as a journey, cycle or variations of each other.** This explains Kaidie's elastic view on life and death.



### My durational performance has cinematic roots, too.

Specifically, I align it with the realist and documentary film traditions. Films that have broadened my understanding of the notions of time, reality, 'truth', fiction, performance, and the transformative power of the camera include the Lumiere brothers' 'actualities' such as the *Arrival of Train* (1886); Andy Warhol's looped film of the Empire State Building (1964) and Michael Apted's seminal *Up* series which follows the lives of a group of children every seven years, up to now as they turned middle-aged. To me, these works are true documents of their time. Their subject matters and approaches are reflective of (or ahead of) the sensibilities and technologies of their time. I feel that my understanding about these works puts me in a stronger position as we come face-to-face with our visual landscape today which is characterised by CCTV-cameras, 'reality'-TV and a culture of self-filming. To re-phrase Joseph Beuys, Youtube and the imminent Google-glasses seem to make everyone a video artist or documentarian. My durational performance is also aligned with the tradition of performance, such as the one-year performances of Taiwanese-American Teh-Ching Hsieh in 1970's. In fact, earlier in my project, I did not cut my hair for about 1.5 years, as my homage to Hsieh, who would leave his hair untrimmed for each performance to indicate the passage of time.

**Kaidie Nondon** One of Kaidie's favourite artists/filmmakers (in any life) has won this year's Palme D'Or. We have not seen this in Nondon, but it sounds like another sensitive, understated, magical work from the humble poet, APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL. (We met in a previous life, at the YIDFF 2000, during which his Mysterious Objects ...

See more



**Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives | Film review | Film | The Guardian**  
www.guardian.co.uk

Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Thai movie has a cumbersome title, but it's a gloriously worthy winner of the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes film festival. This is a visionary film in the director's characteristic style: mysterious, dreamlike, gentle, quiet, magical. ...

Yesterday at 08:35 · Comment · Like · Share

Maco Studioscentat, Emma Dick, Teardrop Tim and 4 others like this.



David Moss nice tale!  
Yesterday at 08:37 · Delete



Maco Studioscentat YOIWE ARE YIDFF MATE!  
4 hours ago · Delete



Hair 6 June 2010, split till Kaidie's end (uncut 12.12.2009 - 09.09.2012, after Tehching Hsieh)



### Kaidie Nondon

WERNER HERZOG on his new film, *Nondon* 23March2011: A steep £30 but a priceless opportunity with the great auteur. This will be the 2nd time we are in the same space as one of the giants whose works have deeply inspired us. (The 1st time we saw the German Romantic 'live' was at the Kabuki Theatre at the 42nd San Francisco International Film Festival 1999) <http://www.intelligencesquared.com/events/herzog-2011>



Werner Herzog: Filming the Abyss  
www.intelligencesquared.com

10 hours ago · Like · Comment · Share

Jay Murphy and Alfred Camp like this.

There are yet more artworks which walk the thin line between fiction and non-fiction which inspired *Kaidie's Trans-Run*. I am especially intrigued by the poetic-realism of Thai and German film auteurs Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Werner Herzog, as well as the elegant audio-visual tours of Canadian artist Janet Cardiff and witty performance-lectures of Lebanese Walid Raad.

### FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF WALID RAAD / THE ATLAS GROUP at the Whitechapel Gallery!

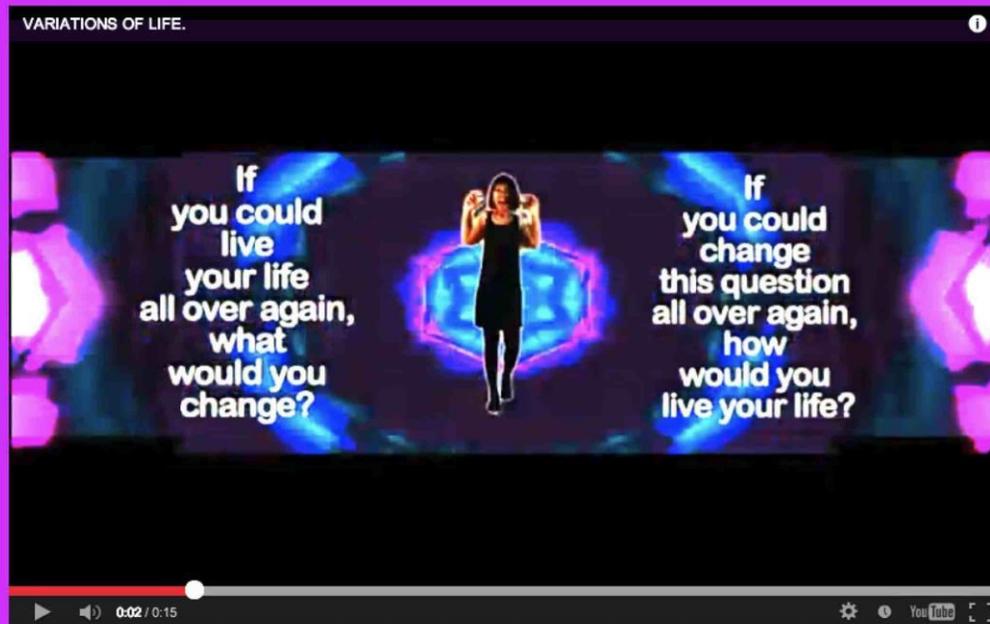


Place: Nondon. Date: 2 November 2010. Time: from 13:00hr GMT. Starting point/point of departure: Central Nondon. Loop point: Whitechapel Arts Gallery. What for: To see Walid Raad's show. Route: via the City. How was it, then: Crowded. Nice Cherkin you've got. Pet peeves: 1) Shovelling past people dangling cigarettes in their fingers. 2) Women/very large people who walk slowly but occupying entire pavements. 3) Women/girls (sic) who are in a large group but walking very slowly or giggling and chatting away in the middle of the pavement believing that they look cute and are drawing attention. - Indeed, from an angry runner. 4) Children/babies/prams with young parents with same level of entitlement as the chatty women and fat bastards who block entire pavements and roads, as if they are the first people on earth who have given birth and hence demand special treatment and that the rest of the world have been created from playdoh. We don't blame the kids but we blame their smugly parents. GET OUT! OF OUR SKINNY FACIII! Attire: Short-sleeved T-shirt and shorts. Temperature: 16 degrees celsius (sweaty run). Smell: Not So Terribly Good for an art gallery (or elsewhere). Quality of outward-bound run: Painful now with not one, but BOTH legs with thin spirits. Could not get a comfortable gait. At least our limo is balanced now. Run back was easier and even sweeter.



**Madness ruled Kaidie's world.** After all, the premise for Kaidie's existence was to search for the proverbial 'Point of Life' Kaidie's absurdist worldview runs with that of other fools before her. I have long been a fan of the British tradition of satire, irony and wordplay. In particular, I find the grotesque and playful approaches of Monty Python, Steve Bell, Laurence Sterne and Jonathan Swift compelling. The crazy logic of the worlds created by Samuel Beckett and Albert Camus drew me in, too. I also found humour, beauty and sadness in the works of painters Diego Velasquez, Juan Miro, Marc Chagall and Belgian contemporary artist Wim Delvoye.

## IF YOU COULD LIVE YOUR LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN, HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE IT?



Original composition by Philip Tan 2009

\* ERICH FROMM: Man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve.

\* MONTY PYTHON, *THE MEANING OF LIFE*. Lady Presenter: Well, that's the end of the film. Now, here's the meaning of life. ... Well, it's nothing very special. Uh, try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations.

twitter Home Profile Find People Settings

**3rdlifeKaidie**

That's you!

Mishap2 in 8days: land on my arse on icy ground. Inconsequential, since Life 3.0 bans pain (& pride), but surely it should ban clumsiness.

less than 10 seconds ago from web

At Jo & Rob's recommendation (THANKS!), I visit the Museum of Everything, which ends today. I quite like it. My favourite is Henry Darger!

Name Kaidie  
Location Non  
Web http://3  
Bio Hi! I'm Ka  
days: I'll look  
Life 3.0 in th  
Nondon. COH  
MY QUEST!

28 following  
10 following

Tweets  
Favorites  
Following

### The works of these artists also inform the way I construct Kaidie's world visually.

Clad in gaudy, day-glo colours, artist Jon Thomson has described *Kaidie's Trans-Run* 'retro' and 'nostalgic'. Another audience member points out how the work share the 'trashy' aesthetics of UK artist James Howard (born 1981). The other-worldly-yet-of-this-world worlds invented by Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Breugel and Grayson Perry influenced the way I composed and built my visual imagery. The disturbing yet enchanting paintings of 20<sup>th</sup> century outsider artist Henry Darger, which I encountered upon recommendation by my audience, also left a deep impression on me.

Kaidie Nondon

The Simply Brilliant Steve Bell comes to Russell Square's The Cartoon Museum in May - dead or alive, we will not miss it!

Steve Bell on David Cameron's immigration speech - cartoon | Comment is free | guardian.co.uk www.guardian.co.uk

The PM has warned in a speech that an unwillingness to integrate has created a disjointed Britain

56 seconds ago · Like · Comment · Share

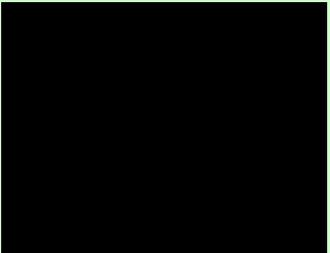
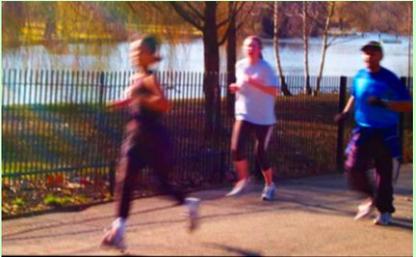
Kaidie Nondon

Laugh out loud at brilliant Hogarth, Gillray and Steve Bell at the very lovely The Cartoon Museum - tiny but power-packed, full of brilliant, brilliant things that make life wicked. Laugh out very loudly and incessantly, in our case. Little Russel Square Nondon.

The Cartoon Museum  
www.cartoonmuseum.org

I picked up running in 2009 as part of my field work. Apart from running daily, I took part in races. They included 2 full marathons (26.2 miles or 42 kilometres) and 5 half-marathons (13.1 miles or 21 kilometres). I ran in character as 'Kaidie'. I often constructed narrative events around the races which I would integrate into my artwork. 'Kaidie's Dis-Location' is an example. Often, I raised money from my audience for charitable organisations, too and invented creative means to solicit money from my audience. The list is in chronological order to convey my baby steps of progress over the years.



Date	Name of race	Timing	Notes	Photograph or GPS documentation of race
2009 August	Safra Bay Run Half-Marathon, Singapore	2 hours 21 minutes 23 seconds	The was the first ever race I participated in since re-learning running as an adult. Even though the race started off pre-dawn, it was hot and humid. Yet, for the entirety of the run, I was on a 'high'. I realised that I liked running, and running in a race. The image on the right is a screen-capture of a page from the SAFRA website.	
2010 March	Friends of MSF charity race, London, UK, 10km	52 minutes	I raised £110 for a short race for the Friends of <i>Medecins Sans Frontieres</i> . I appropriated the event as a climactic turn of my convoluted narrative of being kidnapped, 'Kaidie's Dis-Location', circa March-April 2010. Photograph by Adam Townsend.  < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/02/msf-run/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/02/msf-run/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/kaidie-absent/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/kaidie-absent/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/in-betweeners-run/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/in-betweeners-run/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/kaidies-shoes/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/kaidies-shoes/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/angel/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/angel/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/dislocated-sightings/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/dislocated-sightings/</a> > < <a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/release/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/03/release/</a> >	

2010 September	Farnham Pilgrim marathon, Farnham, Surrey, UK.	5 hours 27 minutes	<p>This was my first ever full marathon. It took place along the historical paths undertaken by the pilgrims in Surrey, as immortalised by Geoffrey Chaucer in <i>Canterbury Tales</i>. Not the easiest first marathon, as it involved a steep uphill section (which many, myself included, resorted to walking), several traffic stops and gates-crossings. I was also nursing a shin splint that had been troubling me for weeks. Nonetheless, the atmosphere in the village was electric. Runners, marshals and villagers were so warm and kind that I had no choice but to finish the race, and to do so on a high. I raised £140 for the Farnham hospices.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/marathon-1/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/marathon-1/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/marathon-2/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/08/marathon-2/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/marathon-4/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/09/marathon-4/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://www.gpsies.com/map.do;jsessionid=45E4A111976A798B2457175E4A36C5C2?fileId=yagmrcuyfrodfoea">http://www.gpsies.com/map.do;jsessionid=45E4A111976A798B2457175E4A36C5C2?fileId=yagmrcuyfrodfoea</a>&gt;</p>	 <p>The image shows a clipping from the Farnham Herald newspaper. The main headline reads 'FARNHAM PILGRIM 2010'. A large number '81' is prominently displayed. To the right of the number is a yellow note that says: 'NOTE OUR SMALL BATTLE SCAR OF A SCRATCH ON OUR RIGHT ARM, ACQUIRED AS WE BRUSHED PAST SHRUBS.' There is also a small circular logo on the left side of the clipping.</p>
2011 April	Virgin London Marathon	4 hours 24 minutes 37 seconds	<p>I raised £1520 for Shelter, a homelessness charity. This event became part of a series of narratives including my premature 'death'.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/12/kaidie-nondon-marathon-2011/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2010/12/kaidie-nondon-marathon-2011/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/02/running-for-shelter/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/02/running-for-shelter/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/02/london-marathon-3/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/02/london-marathon-3/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/03/london-marathon-4/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/03/london-marathon-4/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/04/marathon-result/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/04/marathon-result/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/04/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/04/</a>&gt;;        &lt;<a href="http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/11/kaidie-dies-variation-8/">http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2011/11/kaidie-dies-variation-8/</a>&gt;        &lt;<a href="http://www.gpsies.com/map.do;jsessionid=45E4A111976A798B2457175E4A36C5C2?fileId=bdaolspthyqihptp">http://www.gpsies.com/map.do;jsessionid=45E4A111976A798B2457175E4A36C5C2?fileId=bdaolspthyqihptp</a>&gt;</p>	 <p>The image shows a runner in a red athletic shirt with 'Shelter Kaidie' printed on it, running in a marathon. In the background, the Big Ben clock tower is visible. Another runner in a blue shirt is partially visible in the foreground.</p>
2011 May 21	Passion Run Singapore, 12km	1 hour 13 minutes	<p>Back in the tropical heat and humidity that I was no longer acclimatised to, I had a mediocre performance – not aided by the fact that my old Asics running shoes had a flapping sole that I had to rip off at the end of the race. I ran to accompany my eldest brother who has also picked up running again.</p>	 <p>The image shows a close-up of a hand peeling the sole off an Asics running shoe. The sole is being lifted away from the shoe, revealing the internal structure.</p>

2011 November 13	Uxbridge London UK	2 hours 01 minute 52 seconds	A small-scale race with stop-starts, as runners had to negotiate crowds and traffic. I was very disappointed with my timing, and blamed the absence of a GPS watch for being unable to have an accurate gauge of my pace.	
2012 March 11	Bath Half Marathon, Bath, UK	2 hours 14 minutes 11 seconds	Timing was not of concern in this race. I functioned as pacer for Kaidie's 'Trespasser', who is a character incorporated into <i>Kaidie's Trans-Run</i> . Trespasser is also my real-life partner and a new running convert who had been inspired to run by my research. The Bath Half felt like a mini-version of the London Marathon in terms of its level of hype, fanfare and community support.	
2012 April 1	KNI Waltham- stow Forest Half Marathon, London, UK.	1 hour 53 minutes 03 seconds (15 <sup>th</sup> position in the veteran women's category)	Conditions were not ideal: heat, barrage of abuse from the people of Walthamstow as we ran down the high street, having to negotiate grumpy pedestrians and cars, and to cross road after road, including a dangerous roundabout, as well as negotiating a steep slope. As a small-scale race, we were fed plain water in plastic cups, awarded cheap-looking 'medals' that resembled gambling tokens from trashy video arcades, and ugly T-shirts. Yet, I had an enjoyable race, fuelled by the 2 <sup>nd</sup> movement ( <i>Adagio</i> ) of Glenn Gould's rendition of Beethoven's <i>Emperor Concerto</i> that looped in my head. I attained my personal best for a half-marathon.	
2012 October 7	Blenheim Palace Half Marathon, Oxford, UK	2 hours 12 minutes 27 seconds	Timing was of no concern. I acted as a pacer for a friend, Dr. Lucy Natarajan on her first half-marathon, and my partner on his second.	



1. 2013 June 11-13: 'The Physical and Poetic Processes of Running' accepted for On the Move: ACSIS Cultural Studies Conference 2013. The Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS), Norrköping University, Sweden.
2. 2013 March 8: 'On Eating Gum and the Distasteful Art Of My Body'. *PolyPly 24*. Poetic Research Centre Royal Holloway University London, UK. Convened by Dr Kristen Krieder.
3. 2013 March 1: 'About Running, the Runner's High, Playing Nondon Ambassador and Feeling Good: Kaidie's Experience of the Nondon 2012 Olympics'. *TRAND 5: Whatever Next? London 2013 and Beyond*. Royal College of Art, London UK. Convened by Dr Sarah Teasley, Mr Joe Kerr. Other presenters include Will Self and Iain Sinclair.



4. 2013 February 15: 'The Whole World Under My Feet: An Exploration of the Daoist Conception of the body'. *Slade Performance Day*. Slade Research Centre, London UK. Convened by Carey Young and Dr Hayley Newman.
5. 2013 February 6: 'Trans-Running as A Playful Tactic of Resistance'. *PhD Forum*. Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. Convened by Dr Hayley Newman.
6. 2012 May 30: 'Kaidie's 1000-Day Trans-Dimensional Run'. *CeMoRe Annual Research Day*. Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, UK. Distinguished Professor of Sociology John Urry and Professors Colin Pooley and Monica Buscher also took part in this conference. See recorded version of performance here: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVj7cUTxAa4>>
7. 2012 January 25: 'The Creative Process of Running'. *PhD Forum*. Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. Convened by Drs Sharon Morris and Hayley Newman. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMnggCfAm70>>
8. 2011 May 11: 'A Rough Guide to Kaidie's and Kai Syng's Trans-Dimensional Travels'. *Artist's Talk*. School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.
9. 2010 November: Upgrade presentation. Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK.
10. 2010 August 5: 'About Kai's Restlessness'. Dr Nick Grindle's course on walking, travelling, and the city. Slade Summer School, London, UK.
11. 2010 December 4: 'A Rough Guide to Life 3.0: Running For (Y)Our Lives'. *Sexuate Subjects: Politics, Poetics and Ethics*. University College London, London, UK. Principal keynote by Dr Luce Irigaray. <<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/architecture/events/conferences/conferences.htm>>

12. 2010 November 1: Presentation with Dr Jamie O'Brien about our collaborative mapping research with Headway East. UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, University College London, UK. Other presenters include Professor Susan Collins, Simon Faithful, Jon Thomson and Tim Head. See C-Lab's documentation of event in images below and in this link: <<http://c-lab.co.uk/events/digital-matter-research-forum.html>>
13. 2010 October: 'Running for Our Lives! A Mini Rough Guide to the Rough Guide'. *Upgrade! Soft Borders New Media International Conference*. Sao Paulo, Brazil. Other presenters include Jo-Anne Green, Joshua Fishburn <<http://softborders.art.br/eng/>> <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ixDhS3j84c>>
14. 2010 September 5-8: *A Rough Guide to (The Meaning of A) Life 3.0: Author Slash Actor Slash Audience: A Performance-Lecture*. Kaidie is interviewed by a 'member of the audience', played by Kai Syng Tan, in a 1.5 hour show. *DRHA 2010 Conference*. Brunel University, London, UK. Infamous body artist Stelarc also performed. <<http://drha2010.org.uk>><<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdEa8aW6MVY>>
15. 2010 March 9: 'Kaidie's First Life 1.0 Performance In Nondon'. London College of Communication, UK. I appeared as 'Kailives', a 'reader of Kaidie's blog' standing in for Kaidie, as this happened during 'Kaidie's Dis-Location'. I made a public appeal to re-locate Kaidie.

**K A I D I E I N N O N D O N : P E R F O R M A N C E - L E C T U R E**

Type: Music/arts – Performance

Date: Tuesday, 09 March 2010  
Time: 11:30 – 13:00  
Location: Nondon College of Communication, Main lecture theatre, Elephant+Castle, Nondon.

**Description**

TITLE: Kaidie's First Life 1.0 performance in Nondon: 'A Rough Guide To A Rough Guide To The Meaning Of A Life 3.0:

PERFORMANCE: Catch Kaidie 'live' in Real Life, for real, in Nondon. Kaidie gives a lecture on Life 3.0, and on her Life 3.0. She will also share 'Kaidie In Heidiland / Heidi in Kaidieland', an 11 minute movie she premiered in Switzerland last month during her artist-in-residency at Villa Strauli. There will be a Q+A afterwards.

BACKGROUND: <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com>> For 1000 days 12.12.2009 – 09.09–2010, Kaidie looks for the Meaning of Life 3.0 in the city of Nondon. As she must die on the last day of the Nondon Olympics, she doesn't have much time, so PLEASE DO HELP HER! Write in, advise her, give her suggestions as to who to meet, where to go, what to do and really, how to be.

So far, 2.5-month old Kaidie has tried to conquer her mind using matter, and matter using mind, find love / find 'many loves', buy plugins for happiness, subjected herself to scientific experiments, visited several parts of Nondon, shapeshifted (sponge, hamster, cockroach, person) to get different points of views of Nondon, swam at Cally Pool N1, run at Regents Park, flown over East Nondon and come face to face with an other self. In the coming weeks, she will run 10km for charity.

Please JOIN K A I D I E in her looped loopy search for The Meaning of Life 3.0! She will take you for



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Attending  
 Maybe Attending  
 Not Attending

Chat

16. 2010 May: 'Artist's Talk'. Addressed 39 Nanyang Girls High School from Singapore on a visit to Slade School of Fine Art. Pearson Lecture theatre, University College London, UK
17. 2010 March 2: *PhD Research Projects*. Bartlett School of Architecture, London, UK.
18. 2010 March 22: '3.0, 2.0, 1.0: Run For Your Lives!'. *Off the Shelf*. Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. See filmmaker Jayne Parker's still below, and her documentation here: <[http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife#p/a/u/0/c\\_AcS6lrZ78](http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife#p/a/u/0/c_AcS6lrZ78)>



19. 2012 September 7: 'A Run-Discourse With Kaidie The Messenger'. *European Art Research Network (EARN) at dOCUMENTA 13*. Kassel, Germany. <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2012/09/kaidie-documenta-kaisyngtan/>> <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2012/08/documenta-kaidie-kaisyngtan/>> <<http://www.artresearch.eu/index.php/2012/08/28/schedule-doctoral-workshops-earndocumenta13/>>
20. 2013 August 26 - September 6: 'A Run-down of Kaidie's Trans-Run': Workshop, talk, exhibition, and interactive performance. Slade Summer Research Residency. Slade School of Fine Art, UK.
21. 2011 Spring: UK: 'Diptych'. PhD exhibition. Slade Research Centre, London, UK.

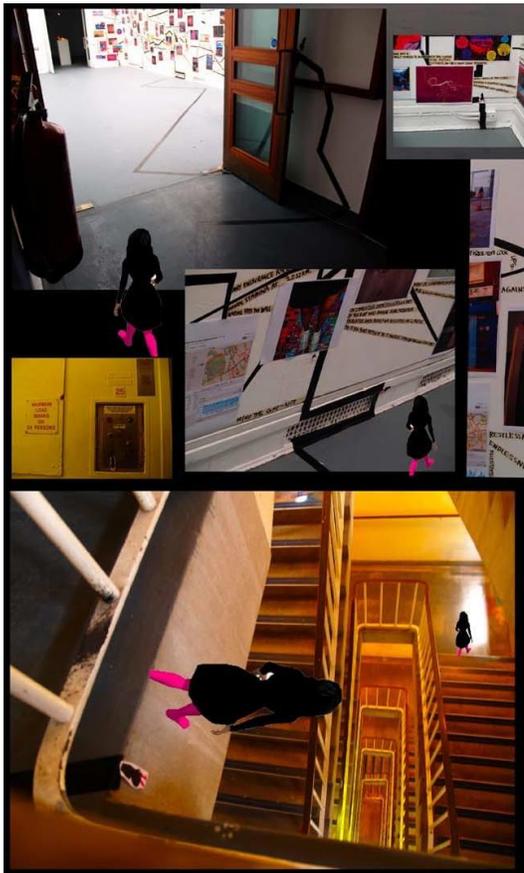
22. 2012 September-October: Invited artist at *Yonder* curated by Jasmin Stephens. I showcased a tableau of 5 images about Kaidie's death. Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Australia. Fellow participants include UK's Simon Faithful. Nearly 9000 people attended the show. <<http://www.pica.org.au/view/2012+Visual+Arts+Program/1407/>>
23. 2012: Invited curator and Advisory Board Member, of the first Delhi International Film Festival, India. I initiated a partnership or association between the DIFF and the Slade. A film about Kaidie was also screened. Films I curated include that by Slade lecturer Liz Rideal and researcher Patricia Townsend. <<http://www.delhiinternationalfilmfestival.com/component/content/article/48>>
24. 2012 Summer: Digital print. Representative of Singapore contingent. *Lens On Twelve* Photographic show at Connaught Brown gallery in Piccadilly Circus, London, with a new digital collage, UK. The image is sold to a private collector and now graces his 'world'. Artists exhibiting include Marie-Jo Lafontaine, Antonio Muntadas, Chen Chieh-Jen and Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba. <<http://lensontwelve.com/>>



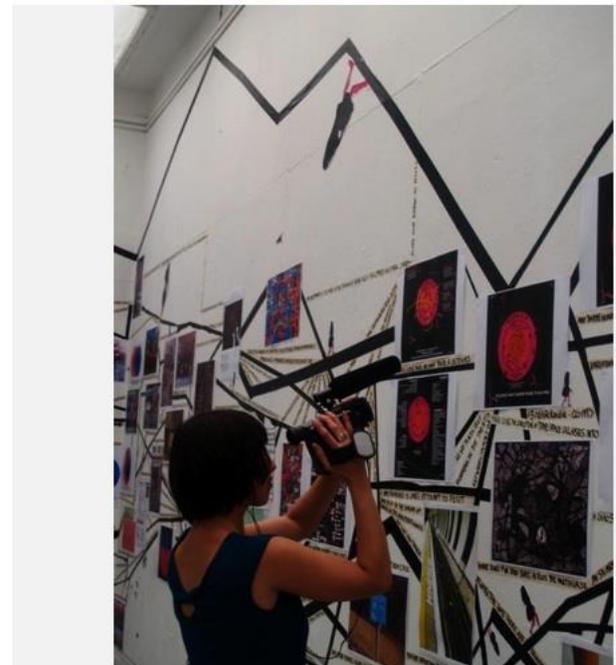
25. 2012 February: UK: 'The Creative Process of Running'. Video installation. *Making Space*, PhD exhibition and Conference. Slade Research Centre. The conference features Grayson Perry and Martin Creed. <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2012/02/slade-phd-event/>> <<http://vimeo.com/channels/makingspace>>
26. 2010 August 21-28: Video installation. Exhibited as invited artist. *Blacked Out*. London, UK. <<http://www.blackedoutexhibition.co.uk>> <<http://www.arch897.com/>> <<http://www.facebook.com/notes.php?drafts&id=100000400581501#!/event.php?eid=142351552457401&ref=ts>>
27. 2010 October 7-11: Invited as Featured Artist at *Art Singapore: The Contemporary Asian Art Fair*. I conducted a Skype performance, exhibited digital prints and screened a 50-minute film. This was the first time new media art was featured in this exhibition. Curated by Meena Mylvaganam. <<http://www.artabase.net/exhibition/2644-sony-new-media-space>> <<http://www.prnasia.com/pr/10/07/100142112-1.html>> <<http://www.artsingapore.net/index.php>>
28. 2010 June 25-30: '14-metre Meta-Map'. PhD exhibition. Slade Research Centre. This is a big map consisting of a plethora of maps from Kaidie's World – from which yet new digital maps were generated. <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/category/mandalasmaps-of-kaidies-cosmologies/>>
29. 2012 July 27-August 1: As official 'London Ambassador' and unofficial 'Nondon Ambassador'. *2012 London Olympics*. Kings Cross Station, London, UK. <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2012/07/london-ambassadors/>> <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2012/07/coming-soooooooooooooooooon-nondon-2012/>>
30. 2012 October, 2011 October: 'Cultural Bloomsbury Guide On Art & Society'. *Bloomsbury Festival*. London, UK. <[www.culturalbloomsbury.org/](http://www.culturalbloomsbury.org/)><[bloomsburyfestival.org.uk/](http://bloomsburyfestival.org.uk/)>



- 31. 2010 July: Film collaboration with award-winning filmmaker Claudia Tomaz (Venice and Locarno Film Festivals). 2 shorts were made: *Kaidie and the Meaning of Life 3.0* (12 minutes) and *Run Kaidie Run* (10 minutes) <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noVbq0-wZwg&feature=plcp>> <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjSQrcU5HMU&feature=context-chv>>



Claudia Tomaz's Photos - kaidie at work  
 Photo 8 of 8 Back to Album · Claudia's Photos · Claudia's Profile



Added 40 minutes ago · Comment · Like

Kaidie Nondon A picture of concentration - Ms Claudia Tomaz hard at work :)  
 26 minutes ago · Like · Delete

Claudia Tomaz love the lines touching the sky!  
 20 minutes ago · Like · Flag

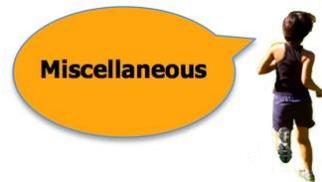
From the all kaidie at wo Tomaz

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32. 2010 January 26: Performance-Lecture and screening of new film based on Kaidie's pilgrimage to Heidiland to search for her friend, Heidi. Villa Straeuli, Winterthur, Switzerland. <<http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife#p/a/u/2/C9A6Y0f0xKk>>
33. 2010 April 19: Meeting with public in 'Phuket 2.0', built by Thai urban planner Chuthatip Achavasmith, in 'Second Life'. This was the 'conclusion' of 'Kaidie's Dis-Location', during which Kaidie was kidnapped by Chutha Achavasmith/Chutha Indigo/the Good Pirate. <[http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife#p/a/u/1/\\_kKhyI\\_I6hQ](http://www.youtube.com/kaidie3rdlife#p/a/u/1/_kKhyI_I6hQ)>
34. 2011 August. *Leonardo New Media Exhibition: Re-Drawing Boundaries*. Curator: Jeremy Hight. Senior curators: Lanfranco Aceti and Christiane Paul. Other artists in the series include Teri Reub, Jeremy Wood, Mez, Stanza. The following pages contain an extract of the curator's statement, and my interview with him. <<http://www.leoalmanac.org/lea-new-media-exhibition-interview-with-kai-syng-tan/>>



35. 2013 August 26 - September 6: 'A Run-down of Kaidie's Trans-Run': Workshop, talk, exhibition, and interactive performance. Slade Summer Research Residency. Slade School of Fine Art, UK.
36. January 2010: At Villa Straeuli. Winterthur, Switzerland. Hold first-ever real-world premiere of *Kaidie's Trans-Run* in the forms of performance-lecture and film screening. <[http://www.villastraeuli.ch/artistsArchive\\_en.shtml](http://www.villastraeuli.ch/artistsArchive_en.shtml)>



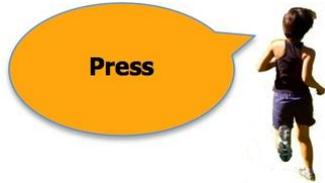
37. 2013 Spring: *MoL UnEarths 03.06.2012!* Film Commission by Museum of London on Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee.
38. 2012: Nominated for the Sovereign Art Foundation Prize with permanent installation *The Never-Ending Underwater Adventures!*
39. 2010 October: Performer in Michael Duffy's video installation, *Surround*, at the Schwartz Gallery. London UK. <<http://www.schwartzgallery.co.uk/site/>>
40. 2010 June: Assistant to new media art unit Thomson & Craighead in their large-scale commission by the Museum of London, *London Wall*. With Guy Gormley. London, UK. <<http://www.thomson-craighead.net/docs/londonwall.html>>
41. 2013: Video installation 'Islandhopping: Re-imagining 15 February 1942 – 15 August 1945' at travelling exhibition *Move on Asia*. At various sites including ZKM, Centre for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; Beijing Commune in China; City Gallery in Wellington, New Zealand; Alternative Space Loop. Curated by Jinsuk Suh (Loop) and Fabian Offert (ZKM). Exhibiting artists include Chen Chieh-Jen, Gao Shi Qiang and Song Dong. <[http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader\\$8253](http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader$8253)> <<http://www.moveonasia.net/>>



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conference on human and machines at the Oxford University, 2008, are distributed across pp.105-107; p.130; p.150; p.182; p.205. Watch the film at: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R81spXU2QAc>>

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# Kaidie's Trans-Run

## To Be Continued...



Kaidie is an urban denizen, by default.  
winning (out of breath) in a city!

THE PROCESS OF GETTING THERE, THERE.

LEFT

RIGHT.

MENT 'AS YOUR MATE

RENT IN EACH OF THESE

Kaidie runs across dimensions real, virtual.

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**(ARRANGED ACCORDING TO MEDIUM)**

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## Conversations Between Kai Syng Tan and Artists and Researchers Referred to in the Thesis

For complete transcriptions of the email conversations, please refer to Appendix IB.

Abdelkader, B., 2012. Email Conversations, 31 January – 2 February.

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Thomson, J., 2013a. Face-to-face Conversation, 7 February.

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Thomson, J., 2012. Face-to-face Conversation, 13 May.

Volley, J., 2012. Email Conversation, 1 March.

## My Studio Practice

My studio practice exists in various forms, including social media platforms. You may look up my artworks on my Wordpress blog <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com>>, Twitter <<http://twitter.com/3rdlifekaidie>>, GPSies <<http://www.gpsies.com/mapUser.do?username=3rdlifekaidie>>, Facebook ('Kaidie Nondon') and Youtube <<http://www.youtube.com/user/kaidie3rdlife>>. The following is a list of specific references I made in my thesis. For clarity, I have arranged them according to reverse chronological order.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> As of 2014, I have changed some of the details of my blog, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Blog: instead of <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com>>, please now visit <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie>>; for all references to <3rdlifekaidie.com> in the thesis, please now include the prefix <<http://kaisyngtan.com/>>. For instance, instead of <<http://3rdlifekaidie.com/2013/>>, please visit <<http://kaisyngtan.com/3rdlifekaidie/2013/>>. Facebook: instead of <<https://www.facebook.com/3rdlifekaidie>>, please visit <<https://www.facebook.com/kaisyngtan>>. Twitter: instead of <<http://twitter.com/3rdlifekaidie>>, please visit <<http://twitter.com/kaisyngtan>>.

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