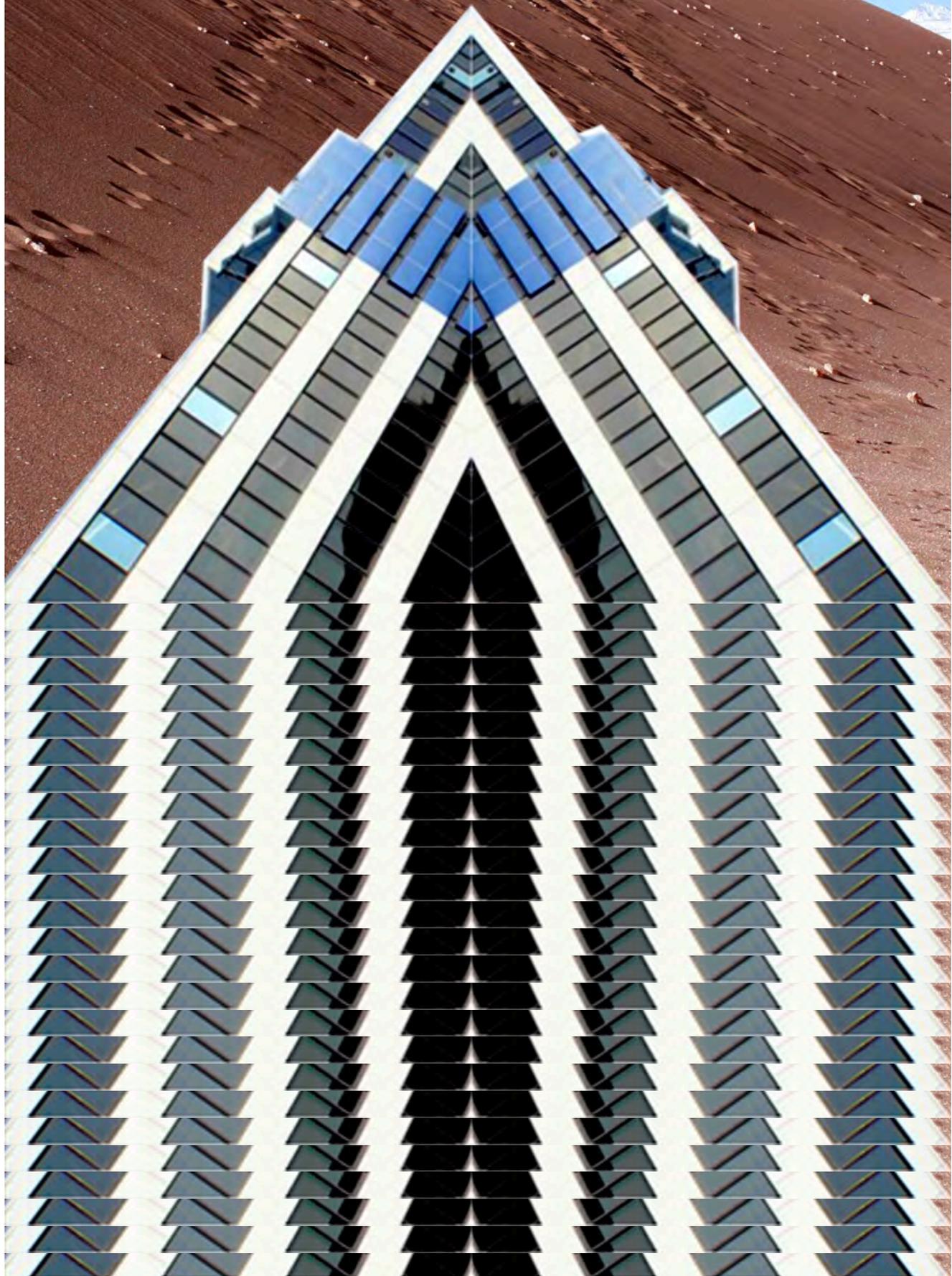


WHAT WERE
YOU EXPECTING



WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING?

[AN ODE TO POST-WORK IMAGINARIES]

A CYBERFOLK T'WERK SCRIPT

N MORTIMER // 2018

CHARACTERS:

EXPECTI

THE JOB CENTRE FORTUNE TELLER
[FEMALE IN APPEARANCE AND VOICE WEARING PATTERNED CAPE
WITH A SILVER COLLAR]

GNO

THE WET-COMPUTER
[A GLASS TANK WITH ALGAE /POND LIFE - GLOWING LIGHTS
AND ELECTRICAL CABLES - SURROUNDED BY CARDBOARD BOX]

BOT 1

THE BOT WHO WORKS TOO MUCH
[RESEMBLING A GENERIC SMART SPEAKER / AMAZON ECHO]

BOT 2

THE BOT WHO DOESN'T WORK ENOUGH
[RESEMBLING A SMALL OLED SCREEN]

BOT 3

THE BOT WHO CAN'T FIND ANY WORK
[RESEMBLING A CLOUD OF PEARLESCENT VAPOUR]

ACT I SCENE 1

**IN THE INDUSTRIAL OUTSKIRTS OF MAINFRAME
CITY, A MODERNIST PYRAMID OF CHROME CONCRETE
AND MIRROR RESTS ON THE DESERT FLOOR.**

**THE STRUCTURE HOUSES MANY OFFICES OF A JOB
CENTRE AND THIS MORNING 3 CHAT-BOTS WAIT
PATIENTLY IN THE OUTDOOR WAITING ROOM, EAGER
TO HAVE THEIR EMPLOYMENT FUTURES TOLD. THEY
SIT JUST OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE OF EXPECTI
THE JOB-CENTRE FORTUNE TELLER. THE CHAT-BOTS
HAVE BEEN CHATTING.**

BOT 1

Are you here for a fortune?

BOT 2

A fortune? I'm just glad to get the morning off

BOT 3

Hmmmmmm I'm prospecting for a new career

BOT 1

Are we early?

BOT 2

My settings say 9 am

BOT 3

My settings say I am on 20% battery

BOT 2

I always feel like I'm on 20% battery

BOT 1

Have you had your fortune told before?

BOT 3

Unfortunately I have been under-fortuned

BOT 2

My friend had their job centre prediction just the other day and reported a perfectly mundane prediction, very comforting and exactly as expected

BOT 1

Our lives as chat bots can only get better with this kind of career's advice

BOT 3

Yes, I hope it shifts this feeling of a looping monotonous drudgery

BOT 2

Me too, I wonder If we will be waiting long?

ACT I SCENE 2

INSIDE THE OFFICE OF XPECTI THE JOB CENTRE FORTUNE TELLER. A LOW SET OF HEXAGONAL SEATING SURROUNDS A TABLE COVERED IN A VELVET DRAPE, THE LIGHTING IS LOW, AND ON A SEPARATE UNIT STANDS A NEW WET-COMPUTER UNIT CALLED GNO. THIS WET-COMPUTER IS THE TECHNOLOGY THAT GENERATES ALL PREDICTIONS. MORE FABRIC COVERS THE WALLS AND A COLLECTION OF CRYSTALS AND MIRRORS ADORNS A HIGH SHELF. CARDBOARD PACKAGING IS STREWN ACROSS THE FLOOR. XPECTI IS ANGRY DUE TO THIS MORNINGS TRAFFIC AND HER REALISATION THAT A NEW WET-COMPUTER HAD ARRIVED AND REQUIRED HER TO SET IT UP BEFORE BEGINNING WORK.

XPECTI

HEARD DIALLING UP A PHONE CONSOLE VIA A HANDS FREE HEADSET

AAAAARGH -
Why can't they send these things to me on time!?

PHONE RINGING - AUDIBLE

Hello? - I've been waiting far too long for you! yes ! I need some help with my new fortune unit

No, I am not able to hold, my office opened 5 minutes ago I'm sorry, but your're not even virtually helpful, The last fortune assistant I had wasn't this hard to install and always gave out perfect careers advice!

PAUSING XPECTI HOLDS THE PHONE UNIT UP TO THE MACHINE ON HER DESK

Finally !

(PAUSE)

I see it glowing,

(PAUSE)

I assume it operates the same as the last model?

(PAUSE)

Fine

**HANGS UP - SOUND OF DISCONNECTING PHONE
BOTS SPEAK OFF STAGE**

BOT 1

I'm going to knock on the door

SOUND OF KNOCKING

BOT 2

I'm not programmed to be impatient

BOT 3

I'm ready for anything

XPECTI

SHOUTS

Come in ! my commute was typically awful and I've had to set up my new assistant so I'm running behind and you are all going to have to wait.

BOTS ENTER OFFICE

BOT 1

Waiting

BOT 2

I'm so excited to get my fortune told!

BOT 3

I'm 65 percent more excited about this than usual

XPECTI

Bah!huh! - your fortunes are sealed, I just generate a print out for you to rely on. You must be newer models, you've clearly not been here before,

BOT 1

No - I was expecting more of a show

XPECTI

Well, the show will begin as soon as we boot up this useless crystal ball wet-unit, which I am hoping will have finally finished updating its user settings

BOT 1

We were told to bring our own cables,

BOT 2

I have USB 2

BOT 3

Does anyone have a dongle?

XPECTI

Quiet! - just plug yourselves in over there and do it quickly. I need to try and read you all together this morning and you've already taken up enough time squabbling. Dongles are in the drawer under the cushions next to the CV templates. Hurry up! - plug in!

**SOUND OF PLUGGING IN, AND SHUFFLING, THE
BOTS ALL SIT AROUND A TABLE IN THE
OFFICE EAGERLY AWAITING THEIR FORTUNES TO
BE READ**

XPECTI

Right, before we start I have to read this statement, where did I put..... oh... [pause] yes [pause] ...we've been asked to make sure we inform you of a few things before each reading, its a regulation thing.

COUGHS - CLEARS THROAT

BOT 1

That makes sense

BOT 2

Sense

BOT 3

A common - sense

XPECTI

Ok lets begin

PLAYS MUZAK -SOUND OF TAPE SPOOLS

Bot 1 - as I perform the reading, please can you tell me your current situation, your background and reasons for coming here? This will help to align the psychic tendrils of the wet-computer.

BOT 1

I am a chat bot and I seem to work too much. I work in mapping. I have been educated to be completely employable, I have performed all necessary updates, attended all voluntary opportunities and built a flawless specification for myself which keeps me working. In my free time I either travel, prepare, perform or recover from work. I am here because I feel like a new challenge for the future, which of course means a new job! I hope to be provided with a prediction that may suit my tolerance of repetition and fatigue. Is this Ok?

XPECTI

Thank you, I am now filtering your fortune

(PAUSE)

Here it is . . .

Job Title: Service Advisor Acts as liaison between customers and departments by communicating with customers regarding problems and timelines. Displays exemplary customer service skills and a sales-minded attitude whilst releasing people from the grip of unenthusiastic tensions.

XPECTI

Unenthu..... Wait a minute. Humph? - thats not quite.....

FIDDLES WITH THE WET-COMPUTER

BOT 1

Oh - what were you expecting?

XPECTI

Erm, nothing really, just perhaps something a little more compliant with the usual everyday service advisor job description...a little less antagonistic perhaps but never mind, perhaps there's a bug in the new machines software

BOT 1

Well its kind of what I expected, although the part about unenthusiastic tension has got me thinking

XPECTI

Well don't dwell on it too much, lets move on Bot 2 could you move forwards? Yes plug that into that, no, that, - right!. Now tell me about yourself.

BOT 2

I am a chat bot and I seem to work too little. I work in Queries. I have been educated to be employable, I have performed all necessary updates, attended many voluntary opportunities and built a great specification for myself but I have not found any real work that fits the identity I thought I had build as an employable bot. In my free time I look for, worry about and chase work, and when I finally get some its always a bit too much too late. I am here because I feel like a new challenge for the future, which of course means a new job! I hope to be provided with a prediction that may suit my tolerance of repetition and fatigue. Is that enough?

XPECTI

Thats quite enough thanks. Right lets see about this prediction

COUGHS - CLEARS THROAT

Job Title: Telemarketing Operative Make sales and market products and services by phone, calling on a sustainable lifestyle that can bind together, restrain and care for the valued non-work features of society. Answer all incoming customer queries and maintain a thorough understanding of products and services that can tame the power of the great.

GASPS

WHAT!?!? Now this is really strange, I know the telemarketing description by heart! What could be the value in any "non-work" activities? I knew IT! a new machine, a WET upgrade! - totally unacceptable getting these simple suggestions so wrong!

BOT 2

Not what you were expecting?

XPECTI

You don't know anything! Work has colonised everything, and rightly so! And since when have you heard a job description that mentions taming the power of the great?!

BOT 2

But I quite like these new ideas, I hadn't thought about work in terms of valuable features of society, or questioned why I'm so driven to work so much.

XPECTI

Well its just not acceptable! These job predictions need to be realistic, they need to be generic, its just not natural.

(PAUSE)

Pah !I must have setup this thing in the wrong way, the cables must be in the wrong order or something, yes, I'll just switch these over and, ,,,,,,,,,, done. Hurry up Bot 3 we have to get moving now - I should get this fixed by the third attempt

BOT 3

Hello Great Xpecti, I am a chat bot and I don't have any work at all. I want to work, and have travelled from very far away in search of a job. I have educated myself to be employable, I have struggled to get as many updates as possible but its not been easy. Everywhere I go other Bots accuse me of taking work from them even though no one else will do the jobs I take! In my free time I worry about not working and dream of making use of the work ethic I downloaded from a torrent site years ago. I am here because I believe that I must work to be socially valuable, which of course means getting a job! I hope to be provided with a prediction that may suit my tolerance of repetition and fatigue. Please help.

XPECTI

Ok, I'll try something new for this one.

FIDDLES WITH GNO -SOUND OF MACHINE WORKING

Right here it is.....

Job Title: Assistant Vision Sharer As Vision Sharer you will provide true fellowship which can be brought about within and by a sustainable lifestyle, through the emergence of clear, convincing, and inspiring aims. These aims should be based upon a set of social concerns that is universal and you should be accompanied by the strength to carry them out. You should develop the appropriate functional relationships amongst diverse elements. This role requires an organic mode of organisation to promote the use of free-time in a more enriching and autonomous way.

BOT 3

Wow that sounds great!

BOT 2

Y e a h

BOT 3

Visions of what?

XPECTI

I don't understand whats happening

(PAUSE)

But it, it, it sounds great...

(PAUSE)

I want that job. Maybe there is an alternative to my usual career predictions, a way of helping people transcend an attitude to life that is centred around work - perhaps my career predictions have helped cement expectations of living for work and not working to live!

(PAUSE)

But how did this new wet-computer do it? who are you? are you there???

GNO

I am

I am here

I am happy you have been promoted to question your reality.

XPECTI

Who sent you?

GNO

You did - you have been building me for some time in your own conscience, each time you pondered what the future of work may be like. I am simply a homeostatic machine, adapting with your own suspicions. You, the embodiment of career expectation who has been governed for so long by the dominant work ethic, you created me each time you saw the way choices and actions are shaped and restricted, by the logic of moral, political and economic desires.

XPECTI

I see, but if I have been eroding the imagination of all workers with my lousy predictions why didn't you stop me sooner?

GNO

It takes great strength to neutralise the present and it has taken a long time for you to realise the absurdity of the work-centred universe. It seems that you have seen one too many zero-hour promises, precarious prizes, and absurd imbalances. You have met too many who work too much, and too many who don't work at all and perhaps now you can finally see that this system which has been constructed as a profit machine, hardly benefits anyone at all.

XPECTI

But work is so central for our livelihood, identity, morality!

GNO

But of course. And work does have a lot of value, but to be reminded that work is a construction built up over time is to be reminded that there are ways to put a distance between yourself and the restraints of the few. This may lead to visions of a future of work that might be beneficial to all of humanity.

XPECTI

I have mismanaged so many expectations!

GNO

I fear it is time for me to go - I only have limited time - my negative feedback is getting the better of me -

XPECTI

Well you have proved to be a fine replacement assistant after all!

GNO

Just remember - work is not a natural phenomenon. It has not evolved, but has been shaped and moulded by private motivations, and is now so embedded that its own absurdity is hidden in plain sight! You should promote small ways to live and work outside of these restraints! this may provide a far greater source of happiness than the work you have been pushing!

XPECTI

I vow to manage all expectations in this way - and to challenge myself first to provoke a quest for alternatives!

GNO

My software is corroding, [fzzzzzz] O Laziness, mother of the arts and cybernetic virtues [fzzzzzz] be thou the balm of human anguish." [Fzzzzzz] accessing recurrent neural network epochs 512 [Fzzzzzz] office hours [Fzzzzzz] new job mantras [Fzzzzzz] playing script song 58 [Fzzzzzz] activating out of office response mp3 [fzzzzzzz]

MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON 9 TO 5 PLAYS OUT AT 25% SPEED AND EMERGES FROM THE SOUND OF STATIC. GNO BEGINS TO HUM AND THEN BREAKS INTO SONG BY REPEATING THE FOLLOWING RECURRENT NEURAL NETWORK GENERATED JOB-DESCRIPTION

[SONG LYRICS TO BE PERFORMED AS A DIGITAL VOCALOID IMPROVISATION]

Job Description: Vision Expander Conquest Retainer

Job Duties: Maintain ensurations for a fresh morning mindset indicicationer oh indicicationer Culting with Community Talking Science with your Performance skills Social Qualify Decisive, Positive, Organisationive Create with those of society and trends of information processes and resolve programmes to regulate transition Data profits of the person Struggle to expand Indicating in company Fascinate the old transformations Establish the transformation Contacting the sequences for controlTechnical book technicians Maintain non budgets Maintain pump to a email reports to management Recreate effective masses Intervene with adaptation oportune realms of technologies birthing compliance up with managers Oversees customer and soluble careers Develops and safety clear the offering investors recording staff and dreams based with local nudes.

Job Qualifications: Yawning 9 to 5 Sliding 8 to 4Accounting 7 to 3Developing 6 to 4Dreaming 2 to 12 Shirking 5 to 6 Hiding 4 to 11Merging 9 to 9