

**Brooklyn Brown**

**November 7<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting Assessment**

***Committee Members:***

Ben Hooker, Elise Co, Anne Burdick, and Shannon Herbert (not present)  
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My committee suggested other raw material I can use to continue experimenting as well as new ways I might think about framing my work. They suggested I look at the logic of the code structures for machine recognition and decisions, including algorithms, value sets, thresholds, parameters and rules in order to make the project richer and go beyond the surface level visual assessments. I could manipulate a decision tree or systematically abuse an algorithm so that it is used for something other than its intended purpose, like misrecognizing faces as objects for example. I did attempt to train iPhoto incorrectly already, but it doesn't seem to learn from my input of objects as faces and only learns to recognize people's faces that are actually faces according to the algorithm. I interpret this suggestion to mean that I should explore the logic and use it to propose alternate uses or ways to interfere with it, rather than actually manipulating lines of code or attempting to train existing software. Perhaps I will be able to find an existing decision tree to manipulate as a starting point, or I could propose a new one with strange parameters and show examples of the output.

In regards to my drawings from a machine's perspective, it was suggested that I could expand the visual vocabulary for them and consider the context. The captions, like "I want you to be me," could be lines of dialog that are either commonplace or strange in the world the drawings represent. The drawings read as frames from a film or comic strip and could be continued to reveal what the next frame may be. I think that once I expand the visual language for creating these a story might begin to reveal itself to me, even it is still meant to be ambiguous. It was also mentioned that I should try to hold onto the surprising weirdness in what I have done so far as I take these things further, since becoming too analytical or explanatory could take away some of the magic. This could be difficult to balance, but so far I feel like keeping things unclear, even to myself, is helping to maintain the ambiguous qualities I want to keep. My

next step is to develop the drawings further, either into a storyboard for a film trailer or pages for a graphic novel since the beginning, end, and overall plot could remain ambiguous but the world will become more defined.

Thinking about what can be seen by machines that cannot be seen with a camera or human eye, e.g. machines being able to read our heart rates by looking into our eyes, was also suggested. I find it interesting to think about how human perception could be increased using low-tech methods. For example, what if you had a physical overlay that could be a window to help you see things technically rather than intuitively, like a diagram of the scientific definitions for facial beauty or artistic compositions? I'm not sure if those are the right examples, but I like the idea of carrying around an object that helps you act or see more like a machine and isn't a high-tech augmented reality type of device. It was also pointed out that logos and human faces are among the first things humans learn to recognize, and I think it could be interesting to explore what the easiest things for computers to see are, like QR codes and numbers, for example. I intend to think about these ideas on the periphery to my other explorations for now, but might want to explore creating actual devices or scenarios to allow people to experience being more like a machine than they are normally.

The questions I have been asking in my writing and the subjects I have been writing about and researching have felt disparate from the concepts my work is intuitively exploring so far. It was suggested that my questions are too big and somewhat moralistic and could be scaled down so that they are more qualitative and specific. Part of my statement in which I suggest that maybe we want technology to overwhelm us since we so willingly allow it to enter our lives on a regular basis seems like a more useful argument, and perhaps I could shift the framing of the project around that idea. Breaking down the opposition between the human and the machine and considering machines to be extensions of humans or mediators between people might be more productive, and I definitely agree that there is a false duality in place. A coder of an algorithm and a person who uses the machine is not much different from an author of story and the person who reads it. Humans already codify behavior, as I identified in my quick sketch of a code for arriving at a party, so it was

advised that thinking of ways humans might be indistinguishable from machines or seem less human could be a more fruitful line of inquiry. I intend to reframe the argument I am making in my writing to better reflect my opinions about the most interesting, smaller points in what I have researched so far. Blurring the distinctions like I have been starting to do in my work is more useful and provocative than talking about machines and humans as opposites. It was suggested that I could probably keep playing for a while without knowing exactly what it is all about yet, which fits the process that has worked for me in the past. The committee agreed that the play I have been doing has been productive and perhaps I could just continue it more ambitiously.

Thinking about how I could synthesize all of the work into a branded proposal for an experience next term is exciting to me. It was suggested that this might give an otherwise potentially purely speculative and somewhat arty project an interesting edge. This is something I definitely intend to work towards though I will keep it in the back of my mind for the next few weeks since I need to arrive at a more clear set of projects before I can synthesize them. Moving forward, I think that creating scripts for machine-like behaviors and experiences, making storyboards about strange relationships, investigating algorithms for recognition software, and adjusting the concepts in my writing will all help me to gain more clarity and reach a solid set of small projects by the end of the term. What I feel like I am missing is a clearly developed point of view, though I believe it will begin to come across as I make more work.