

Critical Humanities

Volume 2
Issue 2 *Teaching in the Time of ChatGPT and
other forms of AI*

Article 12

January 2024

A Faint Narrative

Ilan Manouach
Metalab, Harvard

Barbara Postema

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/criticalhumanities>

Recommended Citation

Manouach, Ilan, and Barbara Postema. "A Faint Narrative." *Critical Humanities* 2, 2 (2024). DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.33470/2836-3140.1054>

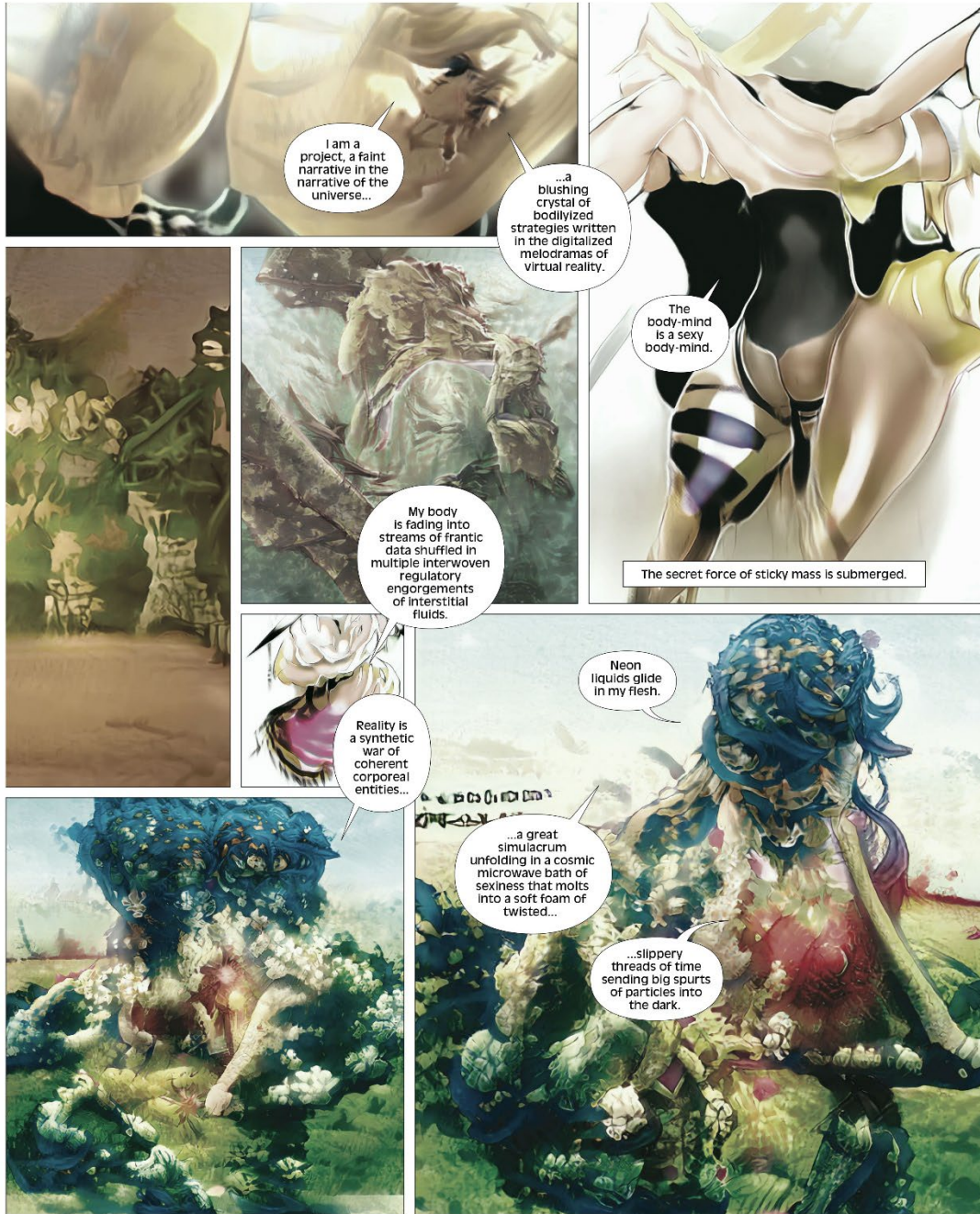
This Artwork is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Critical Humanities by an authorized editor of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact beachgr@marshall.edu.

A Faint Narrative

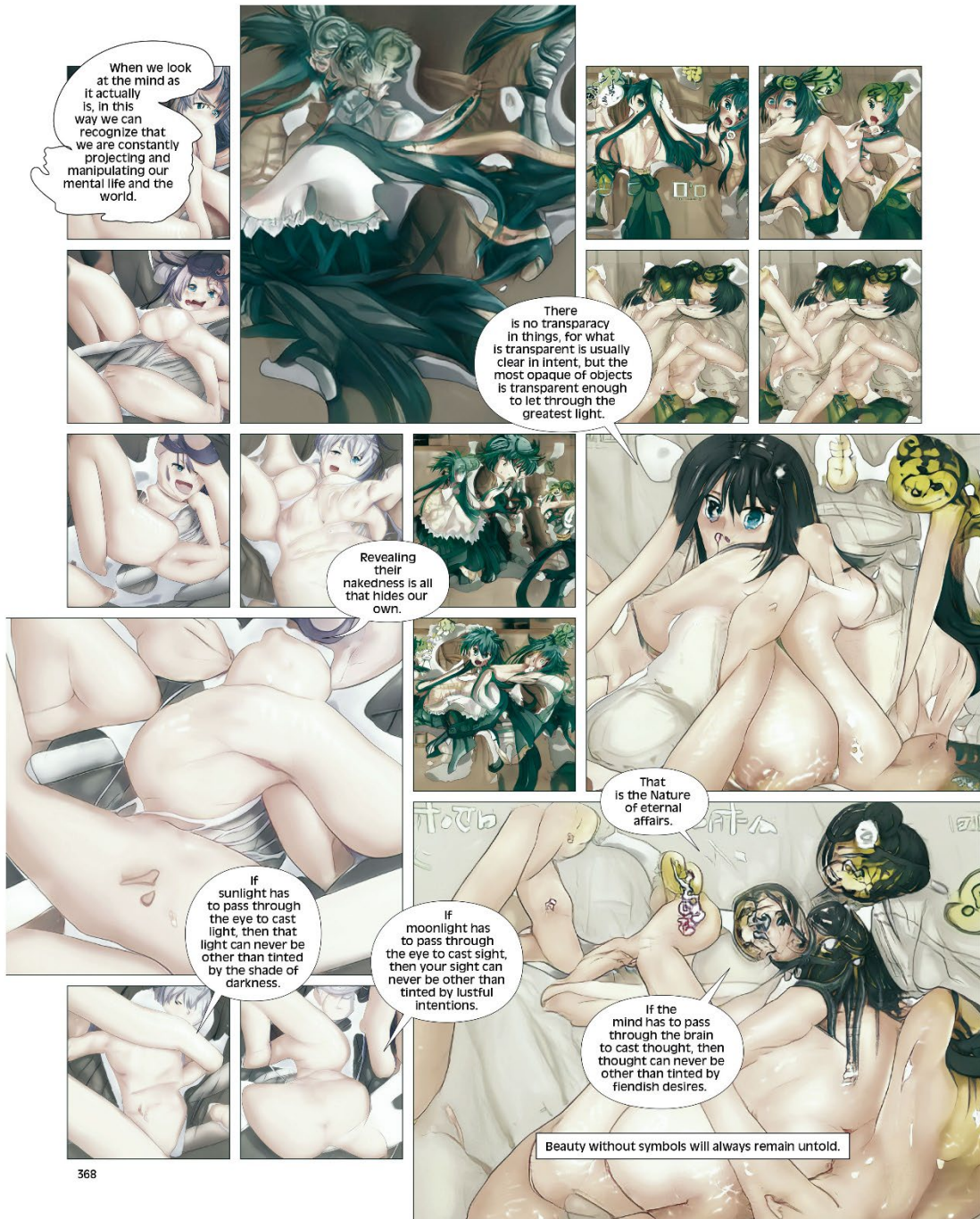
Artwork by Ilan Manouach

“I am a project, a faint narrative in the narrative of the universe.”

The following two illustrations are full pages from the comic *Fastwalkers* (Echo Chamber, 2021), a "synthetic" comic, created with the use of AI and conceptualized by Ilan Manouach. These two pages (p. 139 and p. 368) show the uncanny nature of the imagery in this work, suggesting landscapes and figures, but never quite settling into real forms, despite the static nature of the medium. The speech balloons are similarly unsettling and unsettled, hinting at meaning but not adding up to any full sense. These pages include most elements we expect to find in a comic--panels with images, gutters, word balloons, and captions--but they do not form a meaningful sequence, and any search for narrative remains futile. The pages are suggestive in an additional way: The program that created *Fastwalkers* was trained on imagery from manga, more specifically hentai imagery. Hentai is sexually explicit material, and while these two pages (and indeed *Fastwalkers* as a whole) are not in any way explicit, many of the images certainly suggest naked limbs in various compromising positions. – Barbara Postema



© Echo Chamber and used with permission



© Echo Chamber and used with permission