

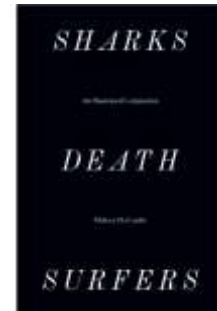
Melissa McCarthy talk at Santa Fe Institute, 12th May 2026.

The Whole Ocean was Full of Lines, Points, Fields, Waves, Folds: Sharks, Vision, and Transit

with pictures.

Section 1, Iphigenia in Tauris

IMAGE 1: SDS FRONT COVER



Hello. Plunge in with me to *Iphigenia in Tauris*, a play written by the Greek dramatist Euripides in round 413 BC. It's a follow-up to his earlier play, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and they're both set in sea-side towns. **First Aulis, then Tauris**. That first one is about sacrificing the Greek princess Iphigenia to bring good luck to the Greek fleet setting out to the Trojan War.

This second is set more than ten years later. The location, Tauris, is what is now the western end of the Crimean peninsula, sloping down to Sevastopol, where the Charge of the Light Brigade took place during the **Crimean War** of the 1850s (a great era for photography).

But back two thousand years, past several wars, to Euripides' play. This *Iphigenia in Tauris* catches my attention because it belongs, it seems to me, to a particular and underappreciated genre: it's a tragedy, and a sort of beach and/or surf movie – like, *Point Break* with Keanu, or *Jaws* (I'll be returning to this later), or *From Here to Eternity* (a 1953 world war two movie) – or, it's a new category mashing up the two that I think deserves more attention: **surf Greek tragedy**.

The location of the play (it has the Aristotelian unities of time, place, action) is, in Tauris, in front of the temple of Artemis, which is just by the beach, **“down by the breaking waves”**. Iphigenia is a priestess here. Her job is, when Greek seafarers land or are wrecked along these shores, she cleanses them before they get slaughtered. She is not up to date with the **events** of the past decade, which include that: after winning the Trojan war, her father, Agamemnon, returned home only to be killed in the bath by her mother, Clytemnestra. For this, Iphigenia's brother, Orestes, killed their mother, and has ever since been pursued by Furies, (though they are meant to have stopped). These Furies are avenging deities, **“winged maidens, with serpents twined in their hair, and with blood dripping from their eyes. They dwelt in the depths of Tartarus.”** says my *Smaller Classical Dictionary*. They're, maids, of Tartarus.

Iphigenia does not know all this, as she's been away here at Tauris. At the start of the play, as she recounts, she's just had a dream that she interprets as meaning that Orestes her brother has died, and she wants to perform rites for him. As is so often the way with dreams and signs, Iphigenia is actually wrong in her reading, in her **message-reception** and -interpretation; Orestes is not dead, he has just at this moment landed on the shore at Tauris. His ship has come in. And the reason he has sailed here – another form of disputed, unstable communication – is that the oracle told him to come, to steal a statue of Artemis out of the temple, and take it back to Athens. Then he will finally

be able to escape his torments. Both siblings have **received messages**, and are acting on them, or planning to; the information is going to make something happen.

That's the set-up for *Iphigenia in Tauris*: she's here on the shore, doing watery-sacrifice things (again, like when she was almost killed at Aulis), and her brother arrives to steal a statue. What happens in the course of the play is that: Orestes has a fit of madness and fights some cattle, "til the shore and the salt water flowered with bloody foam"; then, after they've stolen the statue, the whole drama rests on **the state of the waves**, on whether surf's up or not. They're trying to sail away; "the foam swirled at Iphigenia's feet"; there's "a choppy swell, and going was hard. A sudden wind Blew strongly, and forced the ship back"; "Unless the on-shore swell dies down They've no hope of escape." That's all in the text. This is all at the end, in a dramatic escape scene. Everything depends on the condition of the waves.

There's one more thing to point out about the start of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, apart from waves, death, dreams: Iphigenia and Orestes meet, but neither knows who the other is. They're mutually unaware of their true identity, here, on the beach.

section 2, Cook and Boren

At this point I'm going to **zoom out**, step back here, and discuss another incident of a person sailing to a new coast, taking the protective statue when they are not meant to. Ending up dead in the water.

This is, Captain James Cook, explorer, in Hawaii in 1779: In my first book, *Sharks, Death, Surfers*, of 2019, this is one of the motivating forces for the whole investigation. I met the surf correspondent for *The Times* newspaper, and he told me that the very final line of Captain Cook's journals,

IMAGE TWO: COOK'S JOURNAL, FINAL PAGE



is, 'Today I went surfing.' - that he **writes this then dies**. Turns out this isn't true, we misunderstood each other - Cook never mentions surfing in all his journal, which is itself suspicious - , but, it was a very **useful suggestion** or premise nevertheless, because it set me looking at Cook, at surfing, at death. Though I have to admit, it was already an interest.

I'll read you a bit from this book, about how Cook and his men went wrong in Hawaii. It's a passage answering the question, **what was it** that killed Captain Cook?

"during January and February of 1779, Cook was shown the religious buildings and hobnobbed with the powerful, while his crew had more practical tasks to get on with. One of these tasks was gathering firewood, and for this they asked the Hawaiians if they could uproot and use the palings

of the fence that surrounded one particular temple or *morai*. Tensions were mounting between the crew and the natives over issues including the theft of metal from the ships, the spread of venereal disease, and the very presence of the voyagers. Despite this, the sailors were granted permission to take the fence palings. But they overstepped the mark by removing not just the fence surrounding the temple, but the contents of the shrine as well: little wooden carvings of the gods themselves. Cultural exchange is often difficult and the crew experienced an escalation of misunderstandings and clashes with the Hawaiians. But it's clear that the sailors didn't understand that the fence set out a distinction between the two specific areas of inside/outside, sacred/everyday, ceremonial/practical. They didn't, as it were, read the fence properly. Instead they burned it and raided the sanctuary. It was his inability to negotiate the interface between two zones – or to protect the fence between two areas – that did for him. This is what led, shortly after the fence incident, to Cook's being stabbed by an iron knife of the sort his ships had been instrumental in bringing, dead in the shallow surf."

it wasn't a shark, or scurvy, or drowning that killed Cook, but a **failure to properly appreciate the boundary**.

That's the start of what I was looking at in this book, in a sort of armchair anthropology: Cook and surfing. Also, the **obituary** as a literary form. The broader genre of water-death-writing. Stumbling across people at the shoreline. And once I noticed this with Cook, I found several other examples of it elsewhere.

I found, from *Rolling Stone* magazine, an article about:

PIC THREE: LEW BOREN'S BOARD



Lew Boren, surfer, who in 1981 was killed by a great white shark off the California shore-line. He washes up

“on Christmas Eve with the left side of his torso ripped out from the hip to the armpit, dead in the water, on such a winter's day.”

Ostensibly, this is an article about marine biology and the accidental death of a machine toolist. But it's also about the death of the Pacific 60s, the onset of the rapacious, Reaganite 80s. Sharks are often used for social or cultural commentary, as an analogue or **metaphor**.

section 3, shark identity

But shark research, marine biology, is a lovely **cultural niche** in and of itself, and through this Lew Boren, I became an inadvertent shark scholar. I did a radio series based on Alistair Cooke's *Letter from America*, called, *Melissa McCarthy's View from a Shark*, which was a weekly audio dissection of the shark into parts: the skin, liver, womb, kidneys, eyes.

My favourite elasmobranchologist that I encountered was Dr Samuel Gruber, died 18 April 2019, who was an expert on shark vision, in particular, since the sixties. He talks about striving to understand the **merkwelt** of the lemon shark, its private perceptual world. I love this: *merken* is the German verb for noticing, remembering, the *welt*, world. But for an English speaker, merkwelt sounds mysterious, murky, submarine.

In fact through all my scientific reading, of textbooks and conference papers etc, they have all this unintended poetry.

For example, there's another shark expert, Stewart Springer, in 1963, talking about two types of shark: insiders vs outsiders. There's the main **breeding population**, he explains, and then:

“The other part of the total population, the ‘accessory population’, is that which is lost, and usually permanently lost, either through wandering from the usual geographical range of the species or through disorientation [...]”

He's raising philosophical questions very nicely here. How could something be **lost**, if it's not permanently lost? Otherwise you've just mislaid it somewhere for a minute. The whole point of loss is that, they're gone forever. Or that's how it feels, when one is lost, or losing.

And this Springer adds that, while apparently it's easy to learn about the accessory population,

“Unfortunately, however, we do not know anything about a principal population of white sharks.”

This is charming about great whites: we can recognize and describe the ostracized, dejected set of them, the “**lost and usually permanently lost**” among them. But the centre cannot hold, we do not know anything about the main, breeding, feeding group from which these are excluded. It's a society wholly made up of outcasts; the great white as the **Groucho** Marx of sharks, not wanting to belong to any club that would have him as a member.

So, the great white shark is the archetypal **loner**. And so too is this surfer, Lew Boren, in many aspects. Instead of proper stand-up surfing, for example, Lew knee-boards; he refuses the social conventions of marriage and family. He's compelled by some force to keep moving through the water, outside the usual geographical range. All of this gave me the germ of the idea that's the underpinning for the whole of *Sharks, Death, Surfers*: that, among a load of other pairings and oppositions, the surfer has an innate connection to the shark, they're irrevocably linked. As I propose,

“The shark isn't the opposing nemesis, the exceedingly violent other. Or, not just that; it's actually the mirror image and the counterpart to Boren. The surfer *is* the shark, the lone, deformed, ever-roaming, single-minded shark-surfer. When they meet, carving along the surface, breaking through the boundary, that's when death appears.

Followed by a special text, a particular form of writing.”

It's within this genre of Surf Greek Tragedy: there's a person in a moment with a fixed seam to their character, who suffers, through an off-stage act of sharp-toothed violence against the body, and this leads to catharsis and communal knowledge.

My argument throughout *Sharks, Death, Surfers* is that, though it is unfortunate for Lew Boren, all of this wider scenario is actually a good thing, a fundamental mode of existence even: that it's the potential presence of the matched other, above and below the surface, that gives meaning to all of this.

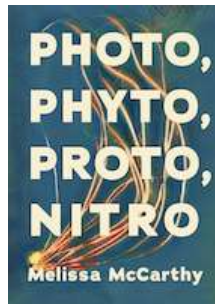
And that the way to deal with this is to get good at understanding, negotiating, enjoying surfaces of all types: watery, page-related, skin-based, cellular. Surfers are my role model because they

understand the surface (the boundary, edge) as **fundamentally an opportunity**. That's my first point.

section 4, women

As well as Captain Cook and Lew Boren, there's a lot of **women** that this happens to: they end up here, along the liminal stretch between land and sea. Who else, dead in the shallow surf? I'll outline five of them.

PIC FOUR: PPN FRONT COVER



In my second book, *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro* of 2013, I consider at greater length **Chrissie Watkins**, swimmer, in *Jaws* the book of 1974. Here she is on various front covers.

PIC FIVE: JAWS BOOK FRONT COVERS



The top three have her along the horizon, the fourth one doesn't. And this last, the UK first hardback edition, is a total outlier.

I note that *Jaws* the book is a very Greek Tragedy sort of book: it's about the security of the polis, what happens when there's an external threat to the community; it's about how actions have consequences.

Early on in the book this Chrissie has sex on the beach at night, then goes swimming, and is eaten by the shark, with the incident told just as much from the shark's perspective as from the human's. Peter Benchley writes:

“Below the surface, the fish shook its head from side to side, its serrated triangular teeth sawing through what little sinew still resisted. The corpse fell apart. The fish swallowed, then turned to continue feeding. Its brain still registered the signals of near-by prey. The water was laced with blood and shreds of flesh, and the fish could not sort signal from substance. [Yadda yadda... pieces

of the corpse] moved lazily in the current. A few drifted away just below the surface, floating in the surge that ended in the surf.”

Chrissie is found the next morning by Patrolman Len (the protagonist, Police Chief Brody, is still asleep, and dreaming about sex), and he notices something about her body that struck me as a very strange simile: he thought that “**her breast looked as flat as a flower pressed in a memory book.**” It’s an odd image for this patrolman to be making. Incongruous, anachronous even. It led me into consideration of flowers, time looping, layers of archaeological excavation, in *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro*.

As the next woman, we have **Laura** Palmer, in television’s very dream-heavy *Twin Peaks*, which I consider to be the most important artistic creation of the twenty first century. This is the seminal, inciting moment of the series:

PIC SIX: SHERIFF, DOC, ANDY; LAURA



Laura is washed up on the shore, another pale, blue girl, next to the lumber mill, where the Doc, the Sheriff, and a helper called Andy unwrap her dead body. While **failing** to take her photograph.

Something I noticed about this Laura Palmer unveiling, is that it is a re-run of an episode from Raymond Chandler’s 1943 crime novel *The Lady in the Lake*. Which contains an incident where the Doc, the sheriff, and a helper called Andy lead Marlow the dreaming detective along to extract the dead body of a woman, here at the edge of the water.

The Lady in the Lake also influences Hitchcock’s 1958 film *Vertigo*,

PIC SEVEN: KIM NOVAK TWO



which also features a superfluity of blonde women. There are necklaces and haunting portraits; bodies in the water, dreams. Obsessively driving along the wave-strewn coastline. Double identities, double vision, double deaths.

Or, in an example from political history rather than from fiction, there's the **Chappaquiddick Incident** of 1969,

PIC EIGHT: CHAPPAQUIDDICK CAR



in which senator Ted Kennedy (of the constantly-dying Kennedy family, a gift to obituary connoisseurs and action photographers) crashed his car into the water, and left his passenger Mary-Jo Kopechne to die. But art and non-fiction weave in and out of each other, fold together; I read *Jaws* of 1974 as a novel haunted by Chappaquiddick of five years earlier, by the woman pulled out of the shark I mean the vehicle at the edge of the shallow water. By the political considerations that follow. (*Jaws* the film is filmed at real-life Chappaquiddick.)

section 5, archive

And from all these women, over various times, places, cultures, my habit is to build up an archive, map the connections, see what sort of resonances start buzzing.

Samuel Gruber, my shark scientist, set up a thriving archive, the International Shark Attack File, which has the practical aim of learning about and thereby preventing attacks on humans. My aim is different; I'm interested in the cultural currents, the meanings that accrue around these bodies, like clumps of seaweed clot round the remains of Chrissie Watkins on the beach at Amity. So what I do is, gather the images and the instances, then mull around for a while. Like making compost, so you can grow something. Or like trees becoming pulp becoming paper becoming the blank page becoming the book.

section 6, photography, lurking

Then there's the next step, after the water, the death, the writing, that I think is essential, and that is, **photography**. It's the thing that happens next, after the crash or the catastrophe: people, police, coroners, press, artists make photos of the aftermath.

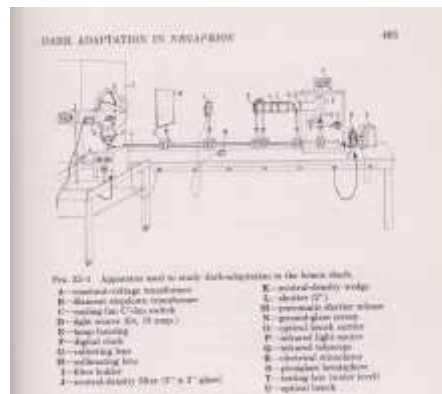
So I looked at an influential and disappearing surf photographer called Ron **Stoner**; here's his Skip Frye on the waves in California.

PIC NINE: STONER SKIP FRYE



And through Samuel Gruber (again) I grew interested in how **shark vision** works. Their rod cell/ cone cell balance, how they spill a black inky substance over their mirrored retinal cells when the ambient light is too bright; and particularly (this was Gruber's discover), their flicker fusion rate. This is, what's the relationship between the eyeball and the brain, at what rate can a shark comprehend that a visual stimulus has changed; how would they watch films, basically. Sometimes, like this:

PIC TEN: GRUBER SHARK ALPHABET



Then from sharks and optics, I went back to look at the entire history of photography, as a scientific process and an art form. Besides the biological and neurological, there's an **underlying existential reason** that I connect sharks to photographs. There's a clue in the moment in *Jaws* the book, when a daytripper named Daguerre (like the photographic pioneer) sees "a large silver-coloured object rise out of the water" (it's a shark). And Daguerre the photographer would do the same: lift his silvered metal sheet out of the liquid, hold it up, consider.

Photographs: sharks. The link between the two, the fundamental affinity, is, their reliance on the mode of **LURKING**.

PIC ELEVEN: BOOTH SHARK WATER 1930



This is the state that the shark is in (roaming about, waiting to snap), and this is what the photographer does (roaming about, waiting to snap), and it's the condition of the light-sensitive chemicals in the paper and the developing fluid. Sharks lurk, images lurk in the photographic paper. They point towards the underlying, organizing metaphor of *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro*, which is, that of the **latent image**, the idea that you've inscribed a picture onto the negative, but for now it is not to be seen. It's lurking.

As I describe it:

“Photography, beyond other arts, has this extra time lag, in the latency of the chemical reaction to the light falling on the paper. Light stimulates the chemicals of the receptive surface. And then, dramatically ... nothing happens. / It's a scientific matter, one based on previous experience. It's normal, explicable, observable. But it's still a bit magic.”

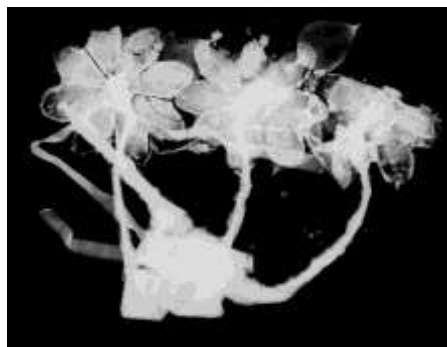
I go on to propose that this chemical model of the latent image applies also within literature and communication: there is a delay, before the message, the meaning, circles back round and bites us. **And this is where we live**, in this circling moment before the right image falls into focus and becomes comprehensible. Before something strikes, explosively. That's the underlying consideration, of *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro*. That's my second point.

section 7, persistence

I also look, in *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro*, at **how things persist** on surfaces: nuclear testing scars over a desert, the blue ink of a tattoo, the mark of shark bites on the skin, the blue image of a cyanotype (that's the blueprint, an early form of photography).

I was inspired in this by a British archaeologist from the 1920s, who is, Leonard **Woolley**, looking at graves at Ur in Mesopotamia. I'll read you this para from *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro* about his work.

PIC TWELVE: WOOLLEY XRAY OF HEADDRESS WITH FLOWERS



“There's one particular discovery of Woolley's that takes my attention, that reaches a finger through five thousand years to touch me on the cheek. In what's known as the great death-pit, at a certain depth, he found a sumptuously decorated queen, surrounded by treasures and by seventy willing-sacrifice attendants. This queen and her maids had been wearing lovely costumes, bright face powders, leaf-shaped jewellery (they're in the British Museum). And, as he discovers them, half the serving maids have a thin, gold hair ribbon, tied round each forehead, still there, preserved. The remaining maids don't have any ribbon, not now.

But Woolley suspects that they did have, that half of the entourage were buried wearing a contrasting silver ribbon tied round their hair. And he thinks this because, “there may be detected on the bone of the skull slight traces of a purplish colour which is silver chloride in a minutely powdered state” – Woolley’s certain that this is caused by silver ribbon, but he cannot prove it. Or, he cannot prove it until he makes one more discovery, of the remains that look like a small, round metal box, laid against a skeleton at waist-height, just where her belt would rest. Inside the box in 1920 is a silver hair ribbon, still tightly coiled, and thus protected from the air and the action of time. This maid, infers Woolley, had been late for the burial ceremony, and, dashing from her dressing table, hadn’t had time to extract her hair ribbon and tie it on. So it stayed in the case, wrapped up like typewriter ribbon or like camera film in its canister, a metallic reel and a proof, while on her prompter companions the silver decayed into almost nothing, only these faint blue marks of silver salts left on the bone.”

That’s what *Photo, Phyto, Proto, Nitro* is about: how to permanently mark, in silver or cyanotype blue; how to inscribe onto the photographic surface. And **almost everything**, to my mind, is a photographic surface.

So that’s **two books**, lines of argument.

From bodies in the water, to lurking and photography. The latent image, explosions.

section 8, the fold

And what next? To answer this, I’ll **loop** back to where I began.

We stepped out of the picture back there on the beach at Tauris.

If you **recall**, Iphigenia, unaware that this is Orestes, is meant to be preparing her brother for sacrifice; he wants to steal a statue; they both want to go home. Things don’t go according to plan.

When Iphigenia finds out that her two captives, Orestes and his friend, are from Argos, her home, she offers to help Pylades escape, if he’ll agree to carry a letter for her, back to Orestes in Argos. He agrees; she writes down the text of the communication, the substance. Then, for extra security, “**to make doubly sure**,” she tells him the message verbally, too, in case there’s any interference in the transmission process, in case he loses it. She does two does forms of encoding the idea, with a back-up channel.

And she says out loud, in front of Orestes and Pylades, the written message, which in essence is, Dear Orestes, I, Iphigenia, am alive, come and rescue me from Tauris.

It’s a crucial unveiling scene, where at last the characters become aware of identity, situation. In a scene about communication, finally the message is getting through.

There’s **one word**, in particular, during this scene, that grabbed me. It’s Iphigenia’s line 727, where she says,

“Here is my letter, friends, written on several folds.” or,
Here are the many folds of the tablet, strangers. Or,
Here, strangers, is the letter folded close.

(Depending on your translation.) The adjectives in the Greek are: poluthuroi PO LU THUR OI and diaptukai DI AP TU KAI; folded, with many leaves or doors. **Multi-folded**.

This is what she's asking them to take: a folded writing technology – tablet, paper, some transcribing medium.

But at the moment of asking this, Iphigenia does something crucial with communication, with how messages move, straightly or otherwise.

She thinks, the original plan is, for Pylades to deliver the text to Argos. The folded paper will travel over space, and through time, and will be conveyed to another person at its destination. There's going to be distance, over a line, and delay, through time.

But by doubling up the message verbally, Iphigenia short-circuits this plan, in a way that **collapses** both space and time.

She says, take this folded message, but it's not just the paper that's folded, at this point; it's time, space, understanding, family relations, – all these are suddenly here, touching. The restoration of genealogical descent. Civic and divine order. Suddenly everything occupies the same space – of coast, awareness, proximity – that seemed so distant before. Iphigenia's use of the fold, the folded paper, **puts things touching** that weren't before, and it has something to do with imparting information.

And I'm v interested in looking further into this, about how we expect information to travel, its signal vs noise (or, signal vs substance, as the *Jaws* shark describes it), how to achieve efficient transmission. And further, even, what counts as information, what's its **status**: is it energy, a mental state, something that motivates, how do we as observers know that information has been imparted: because we can see that it makes something happen, or someone tells us the message has got through, or how else could it be?

This got me thinking from Iphigenia's folded paper: what is the fold, and **what does it do**, enable, activate?

An obvious place to start is with the wave, as a fold in the water, a **topological** phenomenon.

PIC THIRTEEN: SKIP FRYE AGAIN

A wave is a lack of flatness that eventually over-topples. To begin with, it's just a bump and declivity over the ocean's surface; the profile of the water is not straight but curved.

But by the time the wave actually breaks (for Skip Frye), crashes in on itself, two parts of the face that were separate along a perceptible line, are now occupying the same place.

It seems to be a form of un-double-ness: these two points were separate and distinct, but now they are one.

A photograph achieves this, too: the visual set-up that was separate is now here, again, but in a different part of time and space.

section 9, Malfi

In my archive there's another figure in drama, in tragedy, with a notable use of the idea of the 'fold', and it's *The Duchess of Malfi* from Webster's play of written 1612.

Iphigenia's word, POL U THO ROI, translates as "many folded" or "with many doors", and I've heard this before, an echo.

The Duchess of Malfi (like Iphigenia) is a member of a ruling family which has internal tensions. Her brothers disrupt her marriage by poisoning her husband, killing her children, tormenting her with some crazy people, and, even worse, with waxwork figures, and lycanthropes. But so in the midst of this extravagant turmoil, the Duchess has a beautiful line, as she scorns her executioners. She says:

“I know death hath ten thousand several doors for men to take their exits
And tis found they go on such strange geometrical hinges, you may open them both ways.
Yet any way, so I were out your whispering.”

Again, this use of particular folding, in relation to how information travels: whispering, messages, channels of communications.

It brings me, yet again, to Laura Palmer in *Twin Peaks*, who, when asked if she knows Laura (herself), answers (and she speaks this in reverse; the actor pronounced the sounds backwards then they rewound the tape), she replies, “I feel like I know her but sometimes my arms bend back.” She’s telling us about: flexing the wrong way, **folding within the body**, unstable knowledge. *Twin Peaks* is all about telephones, strange channels of communication. There’s a brilliant moment in the opening episode when the switchboard operator wants to put through a call to the visiting FBI agent. She says, “Agent Cooper, I’ve got a call for you from a Mr Albert Rosenfeld, it sounds like long distance. It has that... open air sound, you know, where it sounds like wind blowing, like wind blowing through trees.”

Wind, or voices, or information, down the telephone wires, or through the trees. A dead woman at the waterline, again, and her arms fold the wrong way, they bend backwards. Strange geometrical hinges. Many folds or doors. Again, this conglomeration of literary figures make me think there’s something to hear, here, in relation to the **messaging channel and the fold**. That’s where I’m heading next, after the lurking double, the enjoyment of surface, the explosive potential of the shark and of the photo: information and folds.

section 10, next

So, before I wind up here, I have my eye on these as **potential** areas to investigate:

Sheep and wool. Because of how they shelter in the woolly fold of the land, with their curly wool;
Secondly, folds in **biology**, which might include: the structure of DNA, or how proteins fold up;
And thirdly, I’ll be looking at **geology**,

PIC FOURTEEN: GEOLOGY



the earth's crust, how it folds, faults, and sometimes explodes. As a subset of geology, I'm interested in the relationship between the earth and the water; in how water moves, is moved, over surfaces of the earth.

Within this last field, of water transportation, in particular, there are a couple of phenomena not too far from here, that seem relevant. One is **Nancy Holt's** *Sun Tunnels*, in Utah in the early seventies.

PIC FIFTEEN: HOLT SUN TUNNELS



She's looking at sunlight through the apertures, in a sort of slow photography.

The second item in my current archive is, this article from *The Surfer's Journal*, 2019,

PIC SIXTEEN: PIPES WITH CACTUS AND CLOUDS



about skateboarders in the **Central Arizona Project** in the Sonora desert, in the late 70s. How the skateboarders, who are out-of-season surfers, go on a gonzo road trip out to use the water pipes,

PIC SEVENTEEN: SKATERS IN PIPES



how they plug themselves into the **circuits** of flow, how they use the fold, in the land, on the land.

I'm also into the skaters because they tie in to someone who I suspect will be an important figure for my thinking: the Greek god **Hermes**. Here's a pic by Don McCullin of a statue of Hermes from Roman Anatolia, and one in Seville.

PIC EIGHTEEN: MCCULLIN HERMES; SEVILLE HERMES



Hermes is the god of boundaries and sailors, sheep and travellers, games and chance. Carrying messages.

And he flies about with his little winged feet, right up into the sunlight.

PIC NINETEEN: SKATER INTO SUNFLARE



This is what I want to look at next: how to use the fold for communication, and to swoop on up into the divine.

The sky is the limit. Or, possibly not. That's what I hope to find out. Thanks for listening.