

Morte Pointe Walk

Text for a walk/performance for Morte Point (National Trust),
near Morteheo, North Devon, UK 2009

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A/ 'crossroads'

Audience arrive at a spot some way into the point, where a small path leaves the main path to climb up to the ridge of the Point.

I am wearing a cream suit, black tie, and on one hand a large black crab claw. I have a black eye patch over one eye.

I cut up the oranges into segments. Cut oranges into fours.

I apologise for my odd appearance. I talk about the wrecking of boats on Morte Point in the 18th and 19th centuries – it's the obvious thing to deal with – it's what gets mentioned in all the most superficial



material about Morte Point – it's in all the tourist advertising, for example.

Wreckers, today, tend to get lumped together with smugglers and pirates – about all of whom there's a certain – well rather a lot of – romanticising.

So, in a way, immediately I began to research about Morte Point, the first thing I realised was that I didn't want to make the wrecking important to the walk. But, like a ship caught in the Race, or those American landing craft swept by the black east wind, I've been more and more driven back to deal with this subject.

Not so much to puncture the romanticism... that would be easy... and I may do a little of that, though I'm sure it's hardly necessary – No, I think more what I hope we'll come to is some kind of understanding of a landscape of mind that made it possible, justifiable, even virtuous to wreck...

So, that's why I've given you the oranges, because oranges were just one of many cargoes – many often unfamiliar cargoes – that were taken from the rocks by Morte Point people during the wrecking times... the oranges probably would not have been a familiar taste and so perhaps the first aspect of wrecking is that way that, perversely, it connected the people of – what was then a pretty isolated spot – to a wider world...

I'm going to give out a rope to carry – I suppose, in a way, the rope connects you... but it's a different quality I'm after, not connection yet, I want to bring out connection later, but first let's climb up a little and I'll talk about the rope and what it signifies.

Take a deep breath please.

B/ First sighting of Morte Stone

Well, part of the reason I've brought the rope with us, is to give us a line, a straight line, also a kind of axis. Something that has struck me when I looked at the maps of Morte Point is that there is a kind of symmetry here. You can draw a line through the middle of the Point and it's roughly the same shape either side.

(Show Map with line through the centre of the Point)

And there is also a kind of historical aspect to this line. For if we line the rope up with the Morte Stone (*a large rock out to sea*), and then orientate it so that it's pointing inland, cutting the Point in half, and if we could elongate this rope for say a hundred miles... well, according to some historians, including Margaret Read, who has written the most comprehensive history of Morte Point, that rope would follow a very ancient route...

From Morte Point via Mullacott Cross - Blackmoor Gate - Wood Barrow - Chapmans Burrow then as the Great Somerset Ridgeway thru' Moles Chamber and Sandyway Cross ...

It's a route which, at least partly is there today... and David Kennard who farms here, and who is shepherd to these sheep, still takes his lambs to market at Blackmoor Gate...

Margaret Read thought that this might have been a flint trading route – what archaeological evidence there is here relates to people who were living here in a kind of nomadic lifestyle – possibly in animal skin tents – they were here somewhere between 6 or 8 thousand years ago... but the evidence of their

presence seems to contradict the flint trading story... I'll come to that evidence in a while... but something drew people here a long time ago... when this coast was already pretty much where it is now...

But's that for later...

There was something else about this line...

I thought the symmetry of the Point signalled a kind of doubleness that is characteristic of this place... it's a place where things have their other, their shadow, a place where one is aware of how the same things, even the same animals or people, contain differences...

Doubleness seems to be something fundamental to life... you can split a human being longways and make two mostly equal parts, the same with a lobster... but it goes deeper than such big, living physical structures... tiny particles have double qualities.

All the particles - up and down quarks that make up protons and neutrons; the electron; and the electron neutrino involved in beta decay - the particles that make up what we would recognise as everyday material things - from the lightest, the electron, to the heaviest, the top quark - they all exist in left- or right-handed versions... in the case of neutrinos, the left- and right-handedness is a kind of helicity, almost like a spin...

In human culture we try to understand things by dividing them into opposites or binaries: and some of them are very clearly present here: North and South, Land and Sea, dark and light, good and evil, self and other, us and them, public and private, life and death, old and new, war and peace...

I want to read a passage now from the Reverend Charles C. Crump's didactic poem 'The Morte Stone', (*gesture to the Morte Stone*) published in 1850, a call to end the practice of wrecking:

*“... in broken ground,
They hamlet village, Morte-hoe! May be found,
Meet dwelling for thy sons, a rugged race
Who tread their fathers' footsteps, and disgrace
Their better frame (if men say sooth) to join
With waves and rocks, from sea-wrecks to purloin;
Plunder the dead, nor timely help afford,
Unholy deeds, by God and man abhorred;
Nor heed they warning; nor the chastening voice
Of Christian pastor, but as fiends, rejoice
Amid the tempest's gloom, some sail t'esp'y,
Nearing their rocks of death, nor heed the cry
Of drowning men, eager to seize their prey,
As rabid wolves, the vampires of Morte Bay.*

*...And can it be? That foremost in the fray
Are ever found the women of Morte Bay?
Surely the softer mould of woman's heart
Would lead them to withdrawn from taking part
In such unhallow'd scenes, such coward guilt,
Such lawless rapine, though no blood be spilt.
But, who shall hold the midnight wrecker's hand
From that poor struggler, gasping to reach land?*

*...Have ye ne'er heard men tell, the fiendish deed,
Of that feel woman, who, from cursed greed
Of plunder, merged beneath the whelming tide
A shipwrecked mariner, who struggling died
Under her iron prongs? And know ye not
Of that fierce murd'ress, the fearful lot?”*

(HOLD THE TWO KNIVES TO MY MOUTH)

The double teeth of the Vampires.

(STRIKE DOWN WITH THE KNIVES)

The two prongs of the pitchfork.

I'll come to the lot of Elizabeth Berry towards the end of this walk, but we need to go on now -

And in the spirit of doubleness – we will go forward in space and back in time.

C/ Stegosaurus

I love the appearance of the rock here.

It reminds me of the thick defensive plates on a Stegosaurus dinosaur.

I'm sure many of you know how the rock was formed like this.

It began as far back in time from Stegosaurus, as we are from Stegosaurus.

400 million years ago.

At that time this area of the Earth's crust was very different from now – much warmer, much wetter, much of it underwater – it was a semi-tropical climate and there were many rivers that

swept a rich, thick silt into lakes and seas. As this silt was buried deeper and deeper it became subject to enormous pressures and formed the consistency of a hard rock – a slate.

100 million years later... still only halfway to the Stegosaurus, this area was subject to a tremendous geological upheaval – during which what had been the hardened floor of a sea or ocean, was lifted up and stood on its end.

Over the millions of years since then the wind and weather has got into the layers of the slate and you get this effect of vertical plates of vertical rock.

The terrible irony of this rock is that of all the extraordinary animals buried in that silt at the bottom of that ocean bottom there is virtually no record, because the pressures and heat that resulted from the massive upheaval of rock destroyed all the fossils. The story of a great aeon, a vast tract of time, was simply wiped away.

So - this stone may look like a dinosaur fossil, but it has no fossils of its own.

But there are stories we can deduce from stone here.

Not from the slate, but from worked flints – increasingly found right on the edges of the Point where the earth is eroding and flints tools are being revealed –

These were tools made by a Mesolithic people – essentially living a nomadic existence, they would move around within a fairly familiar territory, anticipating the movements of animals... hunting, fishing... this was in the later Mesolithic period, maybe around 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.

The coast wasn't very different to what it is now, so they may well have fished here as well as hunted on land.

In some of the documents that I was given by the National Trust's archaeologist there's a record of a single flint found here on the Point – and the document looks almost absurd, with all the details that had been logged for just one, isolated flint. And yet the detail of this documentation is very important because it can be put together with other documents that begin to show up patterns.

I've already talked about the doubleness here, but it's not the only pattern. However, the flints actually take me away from here... although perhaps it's really to travel deeper within ... They remind me of the work of the archaeologist Steven Mithen and his theory of the modern mind...



By “modern” here I mean the human mind that came into being 30,000 to 50,000 years ago, during what is sometimes called the Cultural Explosion, a new kind of mind...

Mithen's theory is based on findings like the flints here – although the tools were more primitive and simpler ones... but what was key was their distribution, their pattern... from the records, Mithen believes that he has been able to detect a change of mind in the change of pattern...

From behaviour based on a mind in which specialist knowledges – about the weather, about animal behaviour, about dangers and perils, about the attractiveness of others – in which these were

dealt with in separate parts of the mind, as if the mind had a series of boxes in which it could separately store stuff and the person could go to whichever box they needed...

From this Mithen believes he saw a change reflected in the change in the pattern of flints... to a behaviour based on a human mind which rather than having separate chapels of thought, was one big cathedral mind, in which all sorts of knowledge was mixed up, mixed together - for the first time metaphor appears, art appears, religion appears... rather than simply boxing and storing knowledge, bits of knowledge could be fitted together... human beings began to think their race might have come from polar bears, they began to see themselves as possessing the characteristics of certain animals, certain weather conditions were not simply meteorological events, but might be messages from some unseen force or being...

And one of the key changes that Mithen believes happens at this point is the way human beings regarded themselves... and each other. Suddenly they became capable of unselfishness, of ideas of the sanctity of all humans – of seeing all people as gifts from a god – and at the same time they became capable of seeing human beings as things, as objects, as trash to be kicked around and disposed of...

An ambiguity entered humanity – giving us the possibilities both of idealism and utter brutality... and the inevitability of neither...

END: deep breath – hold as long as you can...

D/ shell craters

I don't know whether you can see these dips in the ground here, but these are probably shell craters left by the practice shelling of the Point by American floating artillery – as preparation for the Normandy landings during the Second World War.

The Americans mounted field artillery on boats and were sailing the boats – sometimes parallel with the end of the Point...

So I'll take the rope here from our linear walk. And then the lateral movement of the boats.

(TAKE OUT AND USE TORCH)

This lateral movement is echoed in the movement of the wreckers' lights... – sometimes mounting their lanterns on donkeys... which they would move parallel to the shore in the hope of imitating the lights of a busy port and draw the sailors in to their doom on the sharp rocks.

(PLACE ONE ROPE ACROSS THE OTHER TO FORM A STRAIGHT CROSS)

The target area for the US shelling measured 200 square yards, divided into four portions of 100 square yards – so two lines... squared...

IN FACT - THE POINT WAS QUARTERED...

According to the target scores the worst battery missed the whole target on 28% of its attempts... remember these were

missiles that were to be fired over the heads of advancing troops... !!!

(THEN PICK UP THE LATERAL ROPE)

There's a particular resonance, a memory for me, sparked by the lateral quality of the shelling, and of the wrecker's lights... it's a memory that I forgotten until I began to do the research for this walk... as part of that research, for reasons I have to leave out for the moment... I watched a James Bond film called From Russia With Love... and very early on a man is garrotted... not with a rope, but a thin steel wire is held to his neck and then twisted around it...

(DEMONSTRATE BY PLACING AGAINST MY THROAT, THEN PLACE THE LATERAL ROPE OVER THE VERTICAL ONE)

The first ever recorded victim to be hung, drawn and then quartered was a pirate...

E/ just on from the shell craters' view down to the 'lunar landscape'



I want you take in the bleakness of this view – and try to imagine how isolated this place might have been 250 years ago – before there was any South West Coastal Path... or modern transport...

And I want to make a special case for the isolation of this Point of the village of Mortehoe...

I think there are certain special characteristics of the history of Morteheo around the eighteenth and early 19th centuries... And absence and isolation plays a very large part in them.



First of all, the church went absent – this was at a time when being an Anglican priest was something for the youngest son of a well-to-do family to do, simply a salary to be collected... and many priests simply didn't turn up to do their job... this

seems to have been the case at Morteheo for large stretches of the 18th century... in 1764 the vicarage is described as being dilapidated and the vicar living in Pilton – I have kept coming across references to absent clerics of this time...

And the legal authorities went missing. There were no police constables in Morteheo until late in the 19th century.

An aristocratic traveller in the very late 17th century – Sophia Fiennes – in her book *England by Side-Saddle* noted the complete absence of wheels in this area ... everything was transported by foot or by pack animals. As late as 1821 a tourist described the village as “barbarous”.



The dates are interesting here – for the time of Morthoe's intense isolation – and it WASN'T ALWAYS SO! – the dates of its isolation are those of the Industrial Revolution – at a time when other areas were becoming connected to the world -

Morthoe had little to offer that revolution ... it didn't have the minerals, it didn't have the industry or the population – it wasn't part of the economies of scale. It was – for a time – one of the

forgotten fringes that had once been as connected as anywhere but became ignored...

We may think that the speed of change in a society is a common one, shared by all... but it isn't... speeds vary like power in society, and some places actually go backwards... so Morthoe's lack of connectedness reflected a wider brutality of disconnection!

In the late nineteenth century tourism began to gather momentum as an industry and as part of the income of local people. At that time three different gates separated tourist Woollacombe from "barbarian" Morthoe.



But there was another massive dislocation – in the 17th century many of the leading local families of wealth in this area were recusants, non-attenders at church... they were essentially Catholic in belief. So it was for the Chichesters. They were recusants.

And from 1608 they were prohibited from departing more than 5 miles from their home – which meant they couldn't visit Morteheo – for 200 years!!

Where was the religious authority? Where was the legal authority? Abdicated. And the authority that could have provided a moral model of some kind, the Chichester family, were absent throughout the 18th century... confined to their home, essentially... the Chichesters were 'rebel' aristocrats... both rebels and authorities... authorities that broke the law... powerful and criminal... these were dangerous combinations in a social model...

And missing from Morteheo, unlike much of the rest of North Devon was the influence of non-conformity...

(The following section (in italics) was omitted from the performances.)

F/ View down to the quarry

There are many ambiguities on the Point:

In 1943 this whole area was used as a replica of part of Normandy...

Today, many people will know this geography NOT by coming here and being here, but by seeing it in one of the films based on the work of David Kennard and his sheep dogs... as part of my research I obtained some videos of these films from my local library – but I was very distracted. Because I looked at the credits after the first episode and it turned out that three of the actors who were speaking the supposed voices of sheep and dogs and whatever were from this socialist-feminist left-wing theatre

company that I once used to go and see in the 1970s – called Monstrous Regiment... the name was taken from the title of a Protestant reformation pamphlet written by John Knox called The Monstrous Regiment of Women...

.... A reformation which was very late coming here... – I can feel an argument coming on that its absence left the field free for a monster like Elizabeth Berry... the woman who pitchforked her victims under the water...

We'll be down on the very point in a moment...

When I first came on the Point I didn't come up here at all – I walked around the lowers paths... coming round this way... and then along the South side ... and I passed this area just below here... and I was really confused... because there were marks on the rocks that looked very ... they looked there was human thought and organisation in those marks... and yet I now how many times people have been fooled by organic or geological nature... into thinking that they see human work in what is simply geological pattern... or even animate, living things in what are simply inanimate chemical events...

You may have seen the coverage a few years ago of a rock sample recovered from the planet Mars... there seemed to be shape in the rock that looked very like an organic form.. here at last was proof of life on Mars...

It now seems that there was a mistake, a very understandable mistake...

The seemingly organic shape was the product of rock under the influence of very high temperatures... liquefied matter can look like the structure of a living thing... the patterns that appear in

the universe sometimes cross the usual boundaries... they defy that doubleness... that binary... so living and dead, old and new, big and small... there are patterns which can appear that defy these boundaries....

On this Point there is a plant called Birdsfoot Trefoil... it generally has a yellow flower.. if you can find it you'll see why... beneath the flower there is a three pronged pointed offshoot from the stem....

(MAKE THE SHAPE WITH MY HAND... FLEMING'S RIGHT HAND RULE)

It look's just like a bird's foot.

I'm going to ask you to take another deep breath and hold it for as long as you can.



The reason I'm doing this – and I'm going to do this four times in all... is that this walk lasts approximately an hour... and we're taking four deep breaths.... so each breath – if we were able to hold it for that long – would be held for approximately 15 minutes... and that's how long the seals who live along the Point can hold their breaths... so we can think now of the way they have a kind of doubleness – part above the surface, part under the surface...

G/ In indent in the rocks not far from the end of the Point.

The reason I associate that garrotting in *From Russia With Love* with here is that I first saw the film very near here...

I was brought to Woollacombe when I was about 9 years old... we stayed at the Narracott Grand, as it was then, and they showed From Russia With Love...

I remember a shiny parquet floor.... With spill from the screen reflecting in the polish...

I was allowed to watch it as a special treat.... I couldn't really remember anything of the film and so I rented it out on dvd a couple of weeks ago and I saw the garrotting scene and I realised I'd kept the memory of what I felt, even though I had no idea what the context was.

I have to say I felt empathy for the victim... too much empathy... I remember now that I physically FELT the effect of that garrotte... there was nothing glamorous or thrilling or adventurous ... I simply felt the awfulness, the pain, the horror of hard, sharp wire on flesh....

A couple of days ago I allowed my son – who is 9 years old and is a great James Bond fan - to watch a film I'd recorded – the film was AI – Artificial Intelligence – the director is Steven Spielberg – it's about a robot child who begins to believe that he is a real child and desperately longs – impossibly – to have a mother...

I'm going to have to take my claw off now, to deal with this coconut.

(TAKE COCONUT AND HAMMER IN HOLES AND EXTRACT MILK – OFFER TO OTHERS TO DRINK)

About an hour after I put my son to bed he came downstairs and cried. He'd been thinking about the film. He cried about the tragedy of the robot boy. And I didn't think that that was bad – it was empathy for someone who was suffering. That seemed a good thing to feel.

And then he said: “I'm not upset when I go to the War Museum... they won't let me go in the Jewish bit, but I'd be alright...”

My son is Jewish... and as a result of the endless teaching of the 2nd World War in English schools, he has had to learn about the murder by the Nazis of approximately 6 million Jews perhaps a little earlier than we might have preferred...

But I know why the Second World War is taught so much – because it offers us a doubleness that we can feel comfortable with: Nazis bad, Us and our Allies good And despite Dresden and Nagasaki and Katyn.... Yes, YES, that is still right... and the practice on here, the shelling, the training, the drilling, in the end, yes, it was the best good we could do against one of the worst of evils...

For the Nazis treated people like things, like objects, like cargo... my son cried about an object, a thing, a robot that wanted to be a boy... far better that, than treat people like robots, like things...

(INSIDE A TOWEL SMASH THE COCONUT WITH HAMMER)

But there is a more complicated truth... and for that we need to go to another rock...

But first I want to read you something from the *Colloquies* of Erasmus... after a period of little use, the church at Morteheo here received a diocesan visit which took an inventory of what was in the church and among the things they found in the church was a black sheet for covering corpses... and a book by the great reformation writer Erasmus... so this is part of a story of his, called *The Shipwreck* ...

(OFFER PIECES OF COCONUT)

O, coconut was another of the exotic cargos that washed up here....

(READ EXTRACT FROM 'THE SHIPWRECK' COLLOQUY BY ERASMUS: of sailors and travellers on a boat rescued by people living by the coast, putting their own lives in danger, using poles to move out into the surf to effect the rescue.)

H/ At Commandment Gut

1. You shall not worship any other god but YHWH.
2. You shall not make any graven image.
3. You shall not take the name of YHWH in vain.
4. You shall not break the Sabbath.
5. You shall not dishonour your parents.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not commit perjury.

10. You shall not covet.

I think that second commandment is very interesting – you shall make no likeness of any thing.... That's why orthodox Jewish art... and, indeed, Islamic art – for strict Islam has the same prohibition... that art is all abstract!!!! Abstract art is not a modern art, it is as old as monotheism: the belief in a single god. Because with one god you must not have doubleness...

Now, the reason I've brought you here and read the 10 commandments is because this is Commandment Gut... I've heard two stories – always doubleness here!!... as to why it's called that.... One is that the Ten Commandments were actually carved into the rock here, but have now worn away... that's what Ray Easterbrook told me... and the other is that the erosion here has created shapes that look like tablets of stone, and also smaller marks in those tablets that might be taken for Hebrew text...

BUT I want to take you somewhere where we can look in maybe more ways than two...

I/ Rock next to coastal path, looking down on Commandment Gut.

You may remember me asking you to look down on this area from up there, on the ridge. To see it as an area of desolation... of bleakness...

And I asked you to see this place as one of isolation – to see the landscape as representative of the cutting off and cutting up of this area...

But this time I want you to see it in a different way.

By the way, did you know that a lobster cannot look up... it can look down and it can look around, but it cannot look up.... That's why lobsters never climb out of the hole in the top of lobster pots... they don't know they're there....

And do you know why pirates wore eye-patches?

It wasn't to cover wounds... they used the eyepatch in battle to keep one eye accustomed to dark so that if they had to go below decks – either fighting hand to hand or in order to man the guns - they could switch their eye patch across and would be able to see in the dimness immediately.... Of course, like most doubleness, it only works one way....

When I saw this view for the first time... it immediately reminded of somewhere I haven't been for more than forty years – quite near here... The Valley of the Rocks, near Lynton.... I must have been taken there when we were staying at the Narracott Grand – I was only 9, but it's always stayed with me... that feeling of the awfulness of its ruin... and yet the deep, beautiful feeling... that even in ruin nature can be so elegant and full of grace.

But I'm not sure I would have felt that 300 years ago.

300 years ago, such places as these were seen as wild, chaotic and evil... their naturalness, the absence of the work of a human hand, was seen as a mark of original sin, of the lustful and violent excess of a nature left to its own devices.

And then the romantic poets came along – among others – such as theorists of the sublime like Burke and Kant - and the great landscape gardeners like Capability Brown – and they persuaded us to see a sublime beauty rather than evil in natural or natural-like landscapes.

But it isn't quite as simple as that... once naturally bad, now good natured...

Coleridge wrote an unfinished work that is set in the Valley of the Rocks, it's called *The Wanderings of Cain* – and it re-tells the story of the man who famously killed his brother Abel...

This is part of Canto II of *The Wanderings of Cain* – a failed project:

“Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophesy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of soul, a Shape fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, "Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery." Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said: "The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?" Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock... Cain said, "Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?" The Shape answered, "The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God."

Here Cain is shown opposing both the god of the living and the god of the dead... – here is another ‘double’ but this time Coleridge goes beyond the double...

In this prose poem we see that the double, the binary of opposites – Abel and Cain – are parts of the same human being – that people are mostly neither wholly innocent nor wholly guilty.

One last deep breath with the seals.... And hold for as long as you can.

J/ Up the path, to the bench with the view over to Lundy.

TAKE OUT THE PIRATE FLAG

I describe the history of the Mariscos on Lundy island, 12th century rebel aristocrats, like the Chichesters – who turned to piracy and preyed on the ship in the Bristol Channel, followed by the Barbary pirates, 300 years later, who eventually turned piracy into a form of industrialised slavery, with 20,000 prisoners freed from a prison on Lundy in the 1650s when Oliver Cromwell send a fleet to clear out the pirates.

In the 18th century – only 100 years later - did there remain a folk memory of what had happened on Lundy? Of the model of industrialised slavery, of treating people as objects?

There is a tremendous romance about pirates – why?

Because they help us to face death – one of the great inevitabilities of life.

See *Pirates of the Caribbean*: the whole crew of the Black Pearl are dead

See *Treasure Island*.... It's the story of its author, Robert Louis Stevenson, coming to terms with the absence of immortality after losing his faith.

In the isolation of Morteheo... and in its abandonment by leaders, priests, constables and rulers, in the absence of authorities and models – did that model of industrial piracy out there, on Lundy – turning people into objects – did that fill the gap for a dark century? Did that answer questions that had once been answered by faith or duty or fear?

(I TAKE OUT THE ROPE)

But a transformation happened here... this linear thing... like the path of a missile or a shell.... This became a machine for connecting people....

Men who would once have been down here collecting cargo and disposing of survivors, were formed in a group to be ready to save survivors... their key piece of kit being a rocket with a rope attached for firing onto a stricken vessel so survivors could be winched ashore...

The rope is transformed from a divider – a doubler – and becomes a connector....

For just as a binary can split things, so it can also link things...

Life with death

Self with other

North with South

Us with them