



FOR WIN

ALIENISTIX



IDEOLOGY IS BIOPOLLUTION







**THE PROGRESS FROM**





**THEORY TO PRAXIS**







# ALIENISM REDUX

When humanity is extinct, ALIENISM will be its triumphant ideology.

The “real” virus is the placebo?

No matter how much they steal from the future, it will not enable them to resurrect the past.

Regimes are the spiritual foundation of every pandemic.

Humanity doesn't need a cop to beat sense into it.

“Bare life” is the one you pay for.

Forced to breathe oxygen without respite, the astronauts mutinied & abandoned ship.

Politics is social merchandising.

The means-of-production are to progress as plagiarism is to power.

How many hidden hands does it take to change a lightbulb?

Mediocrity is the primus inter pares.

Two wrongs don't make a *Philosophie des Rechts*.

The only universal explanation is the one that kills you.

Everyone gets the revolution they deserve?

ALIENISM announces the mass-movement of psychic crypto-currencies.

The instructions are printed on the back of your head.

What is humanity but a variety of one thing?

History has always played an important role in undoing time.

All concrete facts begin with a true conspiracy.

Wake up, the real struggle hasn't even begun.

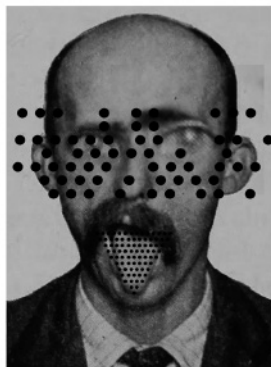
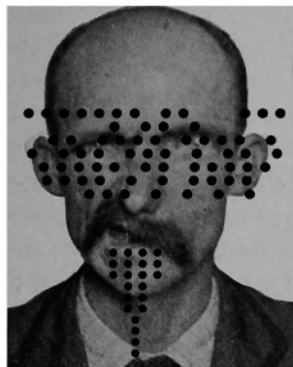
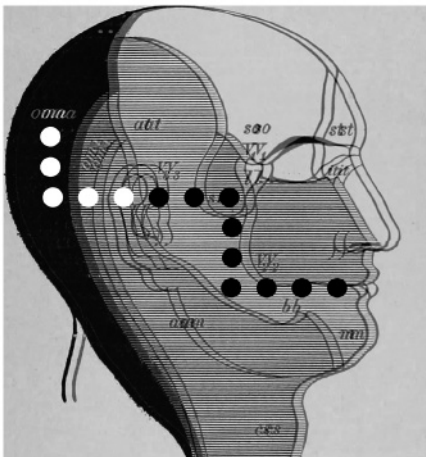
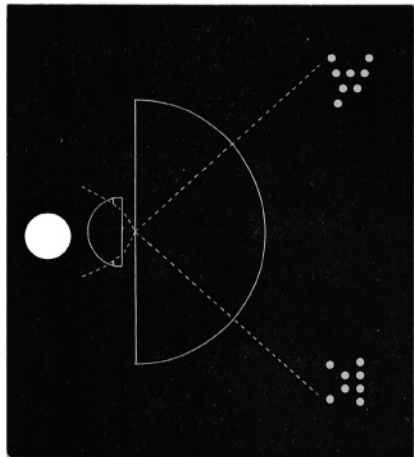
What if the universe is a neural network with irreparable brain damage?

Evolution is always fatal.

INTERIOR MINISTRY  
17 NOVEMBER 20XX



**remission is the disease**



YANINA SPIZZIRRI, *Transmissions*





# ICONO CLASM

## **UN AUTRE MONDE DE MERDE EST POSSIBLE**

Those who do not know what life is, cannot know what victory is. Even cybernetics teaches us that the world is only what creates itself out of randomness & contingency. At a certain point, just by (still) being alive, this world, on the verge of having been vanquished, attests not to what has been “lost” but to opportunities that must yet be created. For existence to be bearable, nostalgia for an illusory past must be cast aside. For time itself to be survivable, for History to be more than a denouement, the “present” must be a perpetual tyrannicide. The enemies of life proffer nostalgia for a mythical benevolence – the authoritarian, psychotic benevolence of a Corporate-State rooted in divine right (the very DNA of all “manifest destiny”). They proffer nostalgia for LIFE ITSELF (which they call CREATION), as a weapon against conscience, against consciousness – as a weapon against possibility – as a weapon of demoralisation, of a future mortgaged in advance of itself, of a world that can no longer bear the sight of itself & beats itself to sleep at night – sticks a needle in its eye – turns in morbid desperation to every quack theory & miracle cure the robots have been able to cook up, like a mental plague. How has it been persuaded that it is fighting the good fight, when it cannot bear the sight of everything it has been fighting for?

## **THE INDIVIDUAL IS THE TRUE STATE OF EXCEPTION**

The principle weapon of Corporate-State neo-colonialism has always been the privilege of the liberal “humanist” subject. At a time when “humanity” is for all intents & purposes defined by a mass infectious potential – versus “productive” potential – so-called humanism reveals itself again & again as nothing but a strategy for procuring economic output against an “acceptable” rate of attrition. It is the ideology of the Arbeitslager, the forced labour camp, driven by a logic of justified expendability. Thus does the fatalism of the individual remain the icon of the “free world.” What, in the shadow of COVID-19, is projected as the New Normal, is just statistical

fatigue paving the way for business as usual. After the first million infections, after the first hundred-thousand deaths, the Corporate-State's covidology "hoax" has turned into just another war with numbers: at first nothing, too little, now too much. The real enemy is not the demon of abstraction, like some pantomime spectre haunting the Twin Towers: all demons serve a master, but not only a demon may kill its master.

### THE MELANCHOLIA OF EXTINCTION

Under the guise of rehabilitation, mitigation, law & order, the Corporate-State Apparatus *serially produces infrastructural collapse*. By this apparent contradiction all contradictions are subsumed. By this supposed paradox, all paradoxes are reduced to an appearance of "deep adaptation": the totalising capacity of its system to magically subsume everything. To this end it evokes external agents of metabolic rift. The false symmetry this affects, permits the idea of an apocalyptic clash to maintain its purchase upon the collective imaginary – such that not only is an identification established between, for example, a self-proclaimed "historical triumph of liberal democracy / capitalism" & "the end of History," but also between the prospect of an "end of capitalism" & "the end of the world." Discursive strategies of this kind attempt to establish an unassailable antinomy, precluding critique: e.g. if "capitalist realism" = the field of representational possibility across the "totality" of signspace, then the "end of capitalism" must correspond to an impossibility of representation: the *unpresentable* itself. This space outside signspace has two forms of "existence." One is deconstructive of the very logic of representation itself. The other caters to a romantic egoism, of the "individual" persuaded of its freedom to choose, & which believes – as the algorithmic logic trap has persuaded it to believe – that this "unpresentability" can serve as the paradigm of an exit strategy. But this romantic egoism isn't *opposed* to the Corporate-State, it *is* the Corporate-State. Its EXIT is nothing but a movement of ever-more-complete capture.

### REVOLUTION À LA MODE

"Excessive" overproduction (meaning production, anxiety production, gratification production, debt production, etc., etc.) isn't, therefore, a consequence of a lack of ideological planning (as if in *contrast* to the totalitarian "idea") – it is, it has been from the beginning, the *driving strategy* of its exhaustion of the means of opposition to its system of power. The acme of overproduction as strategy is the globalised Corporate-State, in whose operations the tractor-beam of political totality mirrors the homogenised, world-saturating production of totalitarian signspace. In this the rationalist mantra of "meaning is power, power is meaning" achieves its apotheosis. Even those who riot in the streets are following a convention,



a genre of “social contract.” If an avantgarde is capable of existing today, it will arise from the necessity to abolish & reinvent a politics that is nothing but a conditioned response, a formalised ritual of punishment & reward, a nostalgic “neoclassicism” (democracy of slaveowners), an aesthetics of individual emancipation purchased by collective supplication, abasement, procession of flagellants, etc. There are those who wld prefer not to analyse the “reason why.” Yet possibility & its consciousness are the only serious revolutionary arguments. Not simply to break the “mind-forged manacles” of the Corporate-State, but to abolish the world in which such manacles exist & in which the minds that forge them exist.

## RESISTANCE ISN'T REMINISCENCE

Totalitarianism, born of historical paradox, is the ideology of risk mitigated to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  degree: to whom, alone, the future is permitted to bear no surprises & is thus the ultimate political weapon. Such is its dream, its promise, like every other world-beating lunatic since time began. Its “genius” has been to convince a willing audience that all this is the case. It has expropriated to its monopoly not only the “science” of what is known or knowable, but that of indeterminacy & the unknowable. Like a Janus head, totalitarianism & the reduction of cybernetics. It opens its mouth onto a great hermeneutic spiral in which all of reality is drawn down. The inescapable algorithm in which the indefinable is trapped like some ready-to-hand Minotaur – to be mocked, paraded, or ritually slain as circumstance requires. It is the parlour magician whose left hand is constantly outwitting its right hand, to the astonishment of an audience willing to pay to see more. Its relation to History is as an undertaker's relation to living memory. Its adversities are seasonal teledramas. Its progress is a rote itinerary of ecstatic triumphs. It's the child-eyed Maxwell's Demon in the sandbox, turning entropy on its head. Time is its greatest accomplishment: an endlessly recyclable commodity that doesn't even exist. When it says “ever after,” it means it.

## EUTHANASIA OF A DEAD IDEA

The basis & *sine qua non* of political hysteria is the existence of “reality.” It is from this reality that contradiction is born, which ideology seeks to negate, to normalise, to reduce to a system of ramifications. It is from an irrational fear of contradiction that the totalising movement of ideology gives rise to its ironic doppelganger: totalitarianism. It is the *raison d'être* of totalitarianism not merely to negate but to forge an equivalence between all contradicting terms, no matter how disparate, tenuous or imaginary, & thereby reduce them to the mark of a singular adversary. This universal adversary is in fact the *guardian* of totalitarianism's one true utopia – for in the struggle against it, ideology bases its claim upon a destiny of *cosmic*

dimensions. Yet in the face of ever more tenacious forms of contradiction in the material world, such ideological "reason" withdraws into that primordial abyss from which it has always pretended to have emancipated those flattered by the name of Homo Sapiens. This abyssal plunge is like a nova, drawing all worldly contradictions into an ultimate cataclysm, so as to project into the remaining void one final, all-enveloping & infallible image of itself. The further it plunges, the greater the archaic depths of sacrificial mania this image demands, till it collapses in on itself in the convulsions of mass-suicide, blackhole metaphysics.

INTERIOR MINISTRY  
JULY 20xx



**fighting in the streets is exactly where the powers-that-be want it, yet it is the Corporate-State itself that has shown just how vulnerable it really is to a targeted assault upon its executive: a direct decapitation.**

**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 77**

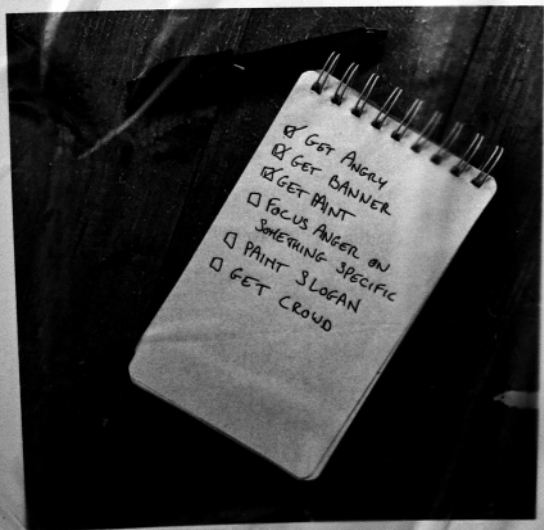
**DATE:** 01-04-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Thought about organising a protest.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 67**

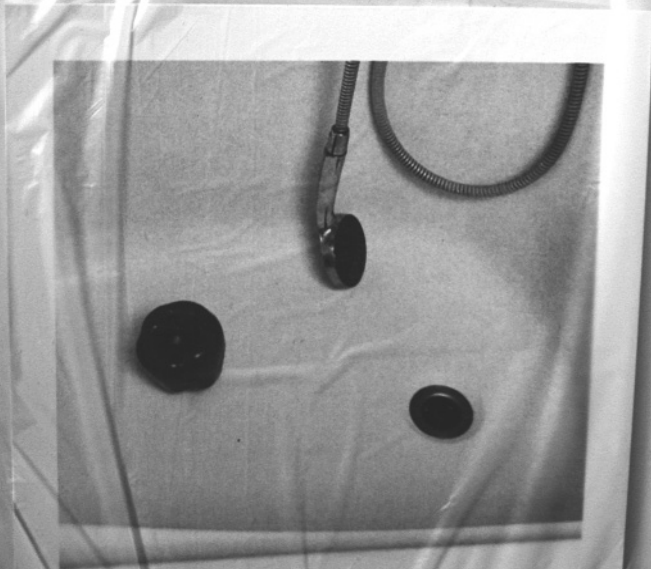
**DATE:** 04-03-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Considered starting an Instagram account focusing on pictures of vegetables in bathtubs.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 89**

**DATE:** 05-04-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Wondered if killing someone for a good cause really would be wrong.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 39**

**DATE:** 02-10-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Looked at other people's graffiti for inspiration.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above





**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 13**

**DATE:** 22-01-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Sought inspiration in small annoying acts.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 2**

**DATE:** 02-01-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Considered taking my top off to attract attention.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 27**

**DATE:** 28-02-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Went on a hunger strike for 5 hours.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 82**

**DATE:** 04-04-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Contemplated self-immolation.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 12**

**DATE:** 23-01-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Practiced throwing stones.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



**ABORTED ACT OF DISSENT N° 56**

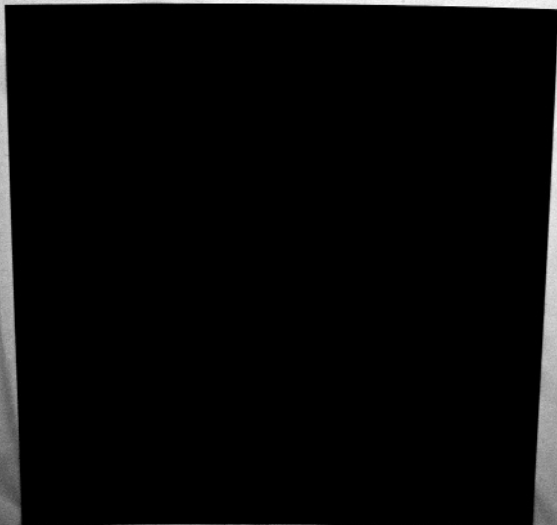
**DATE:** 02-03-18

**DESCRIPTION:**

Wondered if staying in the dark about everything wouldn't be a bit like solving everything.

**REASON FOR NOT TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL:**

- Lack of courage
- Lack of resources
- Lack of patience
- Lack of purpose
- Lack of time
- Other/rather not say/all of the above



# MAYDAY! M'AIDÉZ!

A colloquium on panic, alarm, protest & social plague-pathologies in the resurrection of the myth of the benevolent corporate-state & the theoretic manufacture of a "new communist" species-solidarity as the *subject* of renascent post-history. Yet the ongoing "health crisis," like a mirror held up to the Anthropocene, has not only put the architectures of social power under an epochal strain: it has suspended the very idea of *the last instance*, the very logic of *appeal*, & the romance of the *social contract*. Humanity's self-proclaimed right to exist has had its last shreds of mystique reduced to a procurement problem. Political theatre has become a theatre of the plague: inertia, perversity, irrationalism, grotesque displays of hope & apocalyptic abandon, all laid side-by-side on the same metaphorical pyre. A controlled hysteria has given way to the hysteria of control. If the virus threatens to enact a revolution, it's because every revolution is already an inside job. The plague is not an alien force that arrived from elsewhere: it was always already here. If the tremor of its mutations has delivered a shock to social response-mechanisms, this is because they themselves were the convulsive product of a viral corporate-state apparatus: their paroxysms have merely provided an affective arena for an ever-enlarging spectacle of enforced austerity, precarisation & enclosure. This alien-within, having infected the tissues of the social body, now instantiates a quarantine-politics of temporal dislocation – the virus that must be "lived with" in the open-ended present so as to be permitted the promise of a future "cure." How does pandemic time interrelate within the current xenocapitalist imaginary & how will it extrapolate in the future war over the New Normal? What are the modes of negentropic mutation that will turn the present eco-cultural malaise into the next ideological commodity growth concept? And what means can be evolved to sabotage it?

Louis Armand, Dustin Breitling, Márk Horváth,  
Bogna Konior, Adam Lovasz, Robin Mackay,  
moderated by Vit Van Camp



**VÍT VAN CAMP:** First I would like to very much thank everybody who has been involved with the Mayday! M'aidez! project. Today's panel will focus on the type of cultural knowledge, the type of pathology which we have been encountering these past months. And perhaps the unfolding COVID pandemic will serve as the background for most of what we will be talking about here today, but it will not be exclusively limited to that. I would like to pick up on the idea that "A controlled hysteria has given way to the hysteria of control." I talked very briefly with Robin Mackay a moment ago & it seems that, Robin, if I understood you correctly, you take issue with this notion of hysteria as it is presented there, & you sort of mention a type of lethargy rather than hysteria setting in. I'm wondering, & I know that during the "Plaguepod" podcast which had been going on for a few months awhile back, you definitely broached very similar topics. This lethargy came up time & time again. Could you elaborate on it? What do you exactly mean & where do you take issue with this notion of hysteria?

**ROBIN MACKAY:** I think my uppermost feeling about this is to wonder why we're forcing ourselves to do it? Why are we trying so hard to have something to say? And that's where it goes to with the podcast is, after hours & hours of trying to draw some kind of theoretical significance or some kind of philosophical position out of it, eventually everyone just got bored. There's certainly a regional aspect to this, you know. It depends where you are in the world, what kind of experience you're having. And that's something that's interesting about the temporality of COVID, that we're all on the same timeline in some sense, but we're at different places. But certainly, from my point of view, I don't see hysteria, & I'm not sure who's hysteria is it? Is it supposed to be hysteria of authority in trying to control the population? Is it the hysteria of those who don't know what's going on & are living through something that's this kind of pure contingency where no one knows what's going to be happening next week or next month. Or is it hysteria produced by a kind of pressure or a certain configuration of theory? And that's where I feel the hysteria is coming from. It is coming from this pressure to be able to say something, to be able to produce some kind of theoretical material out of what's happening to us. And it's coming from the fact that we're going through a collective problem, the cause for the collective imposition of social constraints. And there's a certain kind of political, theoretical position that's finding it very hard to align itself with that. And it's getting kind of forced back on the need for control at the individual level & kind of naïve liberalism or naïve notion of freedom which is to do with, you know, just being allowed to do whatever I want & anything that the government imposes on us is just seen as an infringement of freedom. So, I think it's a kind of theoretical positions which seemed easy & which were developed during a period of relative political & economic ease & is now getting pushed into a very difficult



position by having to face the situation where we actually need collective social action to deal with a totally contingent problem. So, "Who's hysteria is it?" is the first question, I suppose.

**VAN CAMP:** One thing which you mention, Robin, is this sort of temporality of how the pandemic is unfolding in the world. I think here this acceleration is connection with the notion of technology & the way technology actually engenders our temporality. Really kind of comes to its fore because now we see a kind of technical apparatus of the state, of various different states, to sort of stray from conspiratorial fetishization of the state apparatus. We see each region & each state or government or governing entity kind of dealing with its own problems differently through technological means. If I can ask, Bogna is joining us from Shanghai, & I'm wondering what is the situation there now in Shanghai?

**BOGNA KONIOR:** Yes, it seems to me that we [have] very different not only technological but psychological logistics here. For me, even being here, thinking about COVID again, is kind of a flashback. Shanghai has not had an outbreak for months. It's kind of astounding to me that people don't talk about how East Asia is in a post-COVID situation really. Whatever kind of outbreak is happening now, it's very minor, so there hasn't really been a parallel outpouring of academic and artistic interest in COVID as we see in the Western world and the Western arts scene where there's kind of a panicked rush to make it into a culturally relevant event, versus here where there has been a rush to just handle the event on the level of governmentality and management. So, it seems the psychological effect, not only temporality, is completely disjointed. Being here on this panel is not at all corresponding to my experience of going through this pandemic in Hong Kong and Shanghai where it feels very much [like] a past thing, or at least a part of it is concluded (there might be another unexpected wave, of course).

**VAN CAMP:** That's very interesting. Of course, here in the Czech Republic, we are sort of on the cusp of what's being called a second wave, & the numbers are sort of tapering off. So hopefully, we have better days ahead. But absolutely, it has been in the forefront of a type of national consciousness all over Europe. I'm wondering, Louis, could you maybe talk about this kind of decoupling or this distinction between a cultural aspect to what we're seeing & perhaps a more business as usual classic biopolitical approach in terms of how the state interprets such a situation.

**LOUIS ARMAND:** Just coming back to the question you posed to Robin, I think the issue of hysteria perhaps comes back to the idea of reification, of a

certain kind of ideological symptom, the way in which the various quarantine regimes have been mapped onto the status of the so-called objective reality of COVID, while popular consciousness, including critical consciousness, has become fixated in reaction to these regimes rather than upon the concrete situation of a virus itself. This is a very interesting phenomenon. We've seen, for example, an intellectual preoccupation with defining the virus as an agent of social critique, even as an agent of revolution, while at the same time eliding this critique with a kind of ipso facto post-COVIDology: a new Communism in Žižek's case, a new humanism in Agamben's case, a whole world consciousness in the case of Latour. What is notable is that these are not simply utopian projects repurposed to the situation brought about in response to COVID, but acquire that status of a pre-condition or prerequisite for effectively addressing COVID. And this is quite fascinating. It's as if there were a theoretical attempt to reconstruct a whole global apparatus as the necessary prelude to any real critique of the virus, while at the same time affect COVID itself as an automatic critique of global capital.

**MACKAY:** In that respect, isn't it that this idea of trying to make it culturally relevant, what's happening is that it's just a convenient event that can be used to fill a space. It's a kind of place holder that can be put into a structural position that was there kind of waiting for it; for these thinkers. You know, some kind of demon in order to get your theoretical machine working.

**KONIOR:** Sorry, just wanted to follow up on what Armand was saying. If you want to look for cultural relevance, it wouldn't be in reading the actions that people are consciously taking to reframe this theoretically, but what is becoming visible in the panicked responses that we are seeing. For example, over the last few months, the way we see a convergence of technophobia and of China-phobia almost perfectly aligning. It's quite curious. Anna Greenspan and Nick Land have been working on this for some time now, but this convergence is very visible during the pandemic. I've read numerous articles of people associating the European COVID response with humanity and being together, with Agamben leading this kind of 'reactionary humanist' discourse, and at the same time, portraying the controlling, robotic, futuristic China as radically inhuman. So, this convergence of the fear of Asia and the fear of technology and the fear of governmentality that is emerging will be something to study more than the hot takes that the academic and art industry is trying to produce.

**MACKAY:** Isn't there kind of a backwards logic at work there where, you know, the reason why the European states & the US have failed so miserably to deal with this problem can't simply be because they're incompetent or they're part of a kind of decaying political structure. It must be because

there's something evil & inhuman about China. There's something about the efficiency of dealing with a problem like this that has to be seen as problematic, otherwise we'd have to look at our own social & political structure & see what's failing in it.

**VAN CAMP:** This is most certainly a very interesting sort of angle in terms of the criticality. I know recently in a book entitled *Perhaps It Is High Time for a Xeno-Architecture to Match*, Benjamin Bratton speaks about Criticality with a capital C versus criticality with a lower-case c. And I think it's very important perhaps to productively critique the apparatuses as they are set up now. Now, this goes back to sort of an earlier discussion of how did Western Europe deal with COVID crisis versus let's say Eastern Europe or the Czech Republic particularly because of the national health system as it is set up, &, of course, the US posing as sort an alternate case study in that. It seems that there is an element of productive criticality in the way we see the fissures which COVID has opened in our governmental systems. Would anybody agree with me there? That there's no need to posit this fundamental Critique - with a capital C - which we perhaps see with Agamben & his call of a permanent state of exception, but rather that we would focus quite politically & in quite an engaged manner with the particularities of the systems as they are set up & how they deal with the strain & the stress which COVID has undoubtedly exposed.

**MÁRK HORVÁTH:** I think I can speak in Adam's name also in this question. In the last couple of months we are dealing with how a kind of post-human entropy of ontology can be described about the COVID 19 crisis. So, we are always trying to theorize not just the presences but the absences, so the unknowns & the strange factors about this disease. We try to focus more or transgress the kind of critique of people of biopower. We wrote an article about it criticizing also Žižek & Agamben's response. And we went back to Foucault's lecture about partisan biopower & how a kind of opening up towards the inorganic cradle of death can mean something like an escape from these authoritarian melancholy recurrent situations, but also finding new ways to concentrate in a theoretical level onto COVID & posthuman as facts.

**ADAM LOVASZ:** I think the fundamental irony of our current situation is that basically, a non-human entity has done more for social change than human agents. The introduction of COVID into the human immune system has resulted in far more fundamental changes in a far shorter period of time. It's basically resulted in a kind of paradoxical social acceleration. Even though we've had lockdowns & the economic crash, it still resulted in fundamental changes in the way society operates. And I think, from a posthumanist perspective, we can see this change in political agency.

**MACKAY:** Do you think that any of the effects have moved culturally to the tendencies that were in place before COVID appeared? Because for me, yes I agree with what you're saying, but I think mostly it's accelerated trends that were there already.

**LOVASZ:** Yes, it felt like that in many respects. Look at the digitalization of the economy, for example.

**HORVÁTH:** The university system & also the education system.

**LOVASZ:** Yes, these were basically present before, but I think this is done by a focus of what these social policies are doing even though it's not taking us beyond capitalism, but rather it has still sort of liquified society in many respects.

**HORVÁTH:** And I think that it opens up new perspectives. For example, I'm now working on a Hungarian book about the Anthropocene. It will be the first Hungarian book about this whole kind of theory, & it uses a term that the Anthropocene itself is a kind of a metacrisis that causes many local collapses & breakdowns. And I would consider COVID 19 as not a part, not as a metanarrative, but as a kind of localized breakdown of the system. And I think where posthumanist philosophy or philosophy & speculative philosophy in general, comes into place is kind of connected to this kind of local breakdown with the meta crisis. It's also a big question of how we could name this kind of metacrisis whether Anthropocene or Capitalocene or we should point out many different aspects.

**LOVASZ:** Many different things.

**HORVÁTH:** Yes. So, I would use COVID 19 as a local kind of breakdown that points towards the more structural & systematic problem which is the collapse of the functioning of the earth system itself. And this clearly shows how environmental damage accelerated the spread of diseases & viruses, for example.

**DUSTIN BREITLING:** Yes. So, I of course think that there's quite a salient idea in the sense that the disease itself is a purveyor, that it is what designs & redesigns us especially along the lines of infrastructure, especially along the lines of logistics. We look modern-day England. London also structured around something like cholera & even extending, if you look at Shanghai. Bogna, you can probably testify to this when you're probably witnessing this kind of contact, type of servicing, & automation that has really sprung up as well. And, I think there's actually quite another kind of interesting aspect to

it, particularly if you look right now at how infrastructure/logistics is going to have to change & conform accordingly to even what vaccine is going to be rolled out. I'm sure you're more or less you're acquainted with Moderna vaccine, & how this vaccine, it's a messenger RNA or a new type of vaccine. This messenger RNA is quite important because, as opposed to looking at how other types of vaccines have to produce the viral proteins or grow the viruses. Rather here, they're just getting these kind of naked strands of messenger RNA cells. And they have to encase these messenger RNA cells into these lipid nanoparticles. And the problem being there is that the messenger RNA is inherently an unstable molecule. It's very sensitive to heat. So, there's the huge issue of how are they going to be able to, especially in the United States, ship all these frozen, refrigerators & try to maintain these kinds of vaccines in close to minus seventy degrees Celsius temperatures? Just by virtue of this, you're going to have this whole economy spring up where it's just going to be about dry ice & thermal shippers. And the dry ice has to replenished within twenty-four hours & every five days & so forth. And this is also going to constrain how much there can be a distribution of the COVID vaccine out there because you can, apparently, only do about a thousand doses per shipment. So, I think that does tie in absolutely how logistics & infrastructure have from kind of the cyborg angle, with how vaccines &/or viruses have been quite instrumental in reconfiguring our cities in that case.

**HORVÁTH:** So, in this context, COVID is a technological collapsifying agent in this way, & it's how our postmodern, posthuman society works in its natural goings, only accelerated or, I would say, a quicker reaction towards this kind of problem. So, it's a technological accelerated aspect that is also present everywhere.

**MACKAY:** This is an interesting point isn't it, but capitalism doesn't have an inherent problem with COVID. The question is at what point can capitalism absorb it & produce some kind of value out of the process? Like, when we're talking about the end of COVID, that's a kind of a different point of view from economically what it might be.

**KONIOR:** And also, what is not a technological accelerator at this point? And it's not just a technological accelerator in the sense of it's accelerating anything that's within the system. It's also accelerating different philosophies. It would be much more interesting to point out whether there is any decelerator in any shape or form within the current system rather than just saying COVID and everything else is accelerating.

**MACKAY:** COVID is an economic decelerator surely. And it's a drastic break on the economies which is still prevalent. And, presumably, China is now

drawing a massive advantage from coming out the other side & being able to reconstruct itself economically.

**ARMAND:** COVID is a decelerator for certain areas of industry & certain centres of capital, & acts as an accelerator in other areas, where it responds in an inherently problematic way for capitalism. While there has been an attempt at ideological capture, to define COVID in certain advantageous terms for capitalism, yet just as capitalism is internally riven with competing forces, so too COVID is a competitor. Everything that COVID does is what capitalism as a whole would like to be doing.

**MACKAY:** How's that?

**ARMAND:** In terms of its entire orientation, its proliferation & acceleration, consumption of resources, circulation. It is an economic system that is also a semantic model, & in this it corresponds almost entirely with the logic of the capitalist machinery, expropriating its resources. The question is, can it in turn be commodified, so these actions upon the economy can be themselves be turned into resources to be exploited? In other words, is it possible & is it in capital's interests to negate the virus, or to exploit it in a subordinated relation?

**VAN CAMP:** A sort of interesting angle on this was opened with the mention of acceleration. Acceleration is a must as it has been talked about now, & I think with accelerationism there is a reading into it which might be fundamentally teleological & would constitute a type of alien temporality in a classical sense of Nick Land. I think perhaps what we're encountering now &, again Robin you & I sort of broached the topic just before the panel, is that what's accelerating is actually a type of domestic processes & processes of health, care &, of course, family & kinship as well. I think this is a fundamental aspect, this quarantine into Helen Hester's term "Domestic Realism." There's a new normal which is what's setting in the domestic sphere. I'm wondering if whether we could maybe take the discussion in this direction in exactly how this COVID crisis is being experienced on the level of personal habitance in terms of domestic violence, addiction, etc. All these sort of very malign accelerations which we have been seeing nowadays.

**MACKAY:** There's been a kind of generalized autocrazation, right, in that we're all more or less at home ordering pizza to be delivered, doing everything through our screens, etc., so it's certainly accelerated that. But I think at certain points there's also been, in the UK at any rate, this kind of ambient fear on the part of the government that people will learn not to work. People will learn that they can just not go to work. People are

also learning that they don't have to go out of the house & commute for two hours a day, & they won't want to be going back to that. Yeah, there's been this kind of "get back to work, be productive again." And at certain points, certainly at the beginning, I felt like there was the kind of opening for some other kind of life, maybe. And I think that a lot of people had this feeling right at the beginning like 'This gives some kind of space' because in the beginning, it felt actually apocalyptic just for a few weeks, you know. It felt like something really singular was happening. But I think the state & people's social instincts themselves have done a very good job of closing down that possibility.

**ARMAND:** You know, Robin, I think this is a very important point you're touching on here. And this process is being recycled, the constant talk in the summer about reopening economies & about keeping the economies alive, while there's been very little discussion about the psychosocial element: the apocalyptic character of the so-called first-wave lockdowns that could have itself given rise to radical social dislocations, had it been permitted to continue without amelioration.

**MACKAY:** Right. Yes. So, what seems like incompetence in the sense that the UK government, for instance, was at a certain point paying people to go out to restaurants, basically giving meals half price to everyone who wanted to go out. And now we're in this second wave where we're considering going into full lockdown again. That seems like incompetence, but in fact, there's a kind of strategy there of not letting things drift out too far from normality even if it means risking people's lives. I think that's actually the case. The fear is really to do with allowing things to become too bizarre & too kind of dislocated from social norms. I think there's something like that in play definitely. But I grew up during the era of kind of the tail end of the Cold War, & my parents we're anti-nuclear protesters, so I was always really attuned to this idea of the apocalypse. And, as a child, I was always really secretly excited about it. Like, I thought it would be great when it's announced that the nuclear bomb is coming & you can & do whatever you want. Like, the streets are empty or you can go & steal guns & shoot the school windows out, you know. All this stuff was kind of excitement about the apocalyptic scenario. And I kind of got a bit of that at the beginning as well. Obviously, when we started the podcast, I started off thinking that we have to be serious & get people talking about it seriously. In fact, people weren't that reticent to admit that there's a holiday vibe to it as well. And, you know, people were being kind of let off social obligations in a certain way. So, I think there was something very liberating which was quickly shut down.

**VAN CAMP:** Bogna, could you maybe respond to sort of this slightly European take on things, the second wave being what it is here now. Could you maybe offer commentary?

**KONIOR:** I'm European and so I feel dislocated seeing Europe from China. But as a counter-narrative to "not letting things drift too far away," I would say in my native Poland, there's quite a different tendency, where we see the government encouraging people currently to go out to the streets, to "defend the churches" from perceived attacks, where the churches are supposedly attacked by their own citizens. Right? So, maybe there is some kind of counter vector of absolute insanity that actually will come from the post-USSR. We just don't see it yet. But I haven't had the time yet to conceptualize what is happening right now in Eastern Europe from the perspective of China and Hong Kong. It's interesting to realize that, in East Asia, the local scenarios have been handled very differently. In China, it has been engineered from the top. In Hong Kong, it's been a very grassroots kind of response where the people perceive that the government was not in charge enough, so we were all arranging our own masks and kind of forcing each other to stay home and so on, but, even given the differences in the responses, both of those scenarios succeeded. So, I'm very curious as to why, with the variety of scenarios in East Asia, from Japan to Korea to Taiwan, that were actually technologically and socially different responses in all those places, but the situation has been handled and why with the variety of the responses in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, it hasn't been handled. And this is still a riddle for me. So, if anyone wants to clarify that, I'd be very curious.

**VAN CAMP:** Well, it's a tough question of course. Could maybe Adam & Mark chip in on how the Orbán government has been dealing with this?

**HORVÁTH:** I think the reaction for the first wave of the COVID crisis in Hungary was interpreted as kind of a success story for our nationalistic, rightwing, populist government, but now in the second wave it's very totally different. The numbers are going higher & higher & people are more, I think, apocalyptic right now. So the feelings certainly changed, I think, around the end of August, somewhere between the end of August & early September. Because, in early Summer, there was really few cases in Hungary, but now I think the scene, & also how people are affected by it, has clearly changed in the last couple of months.

**LOVASZ:** I think one of the key political takeaways from this whole situation is not the impossibility but the implausibility of maintaining an ecologically closed human system. I think we need to get sort of acclimatized to this. They always say there's going to be newer & newer viruses, so this is not the



last one. Many scientists are saying that, with the global climate change, there's going to be new waves of different kinds of infections. I think politics has to become more realistic about this approach of excluding viruses from the political community. I don't think this is really sustainable. Viruses have always been a part of our evolution. I think what's fascinating in the kind of herd immunity approach, even though it's very controversial, is that it's a more realistic approach to this whole virus issue. We believe that you can't really exclude the outside world forever from the human system.

**HORVÁTH:** Yes, but right now in Hungary we are getting closer & closer to total lockdown. We have to wear masks in the restaurants, & the restaurants are closing everywhere in Budapest. So, we are getting closer to a total lockdown & kind of this chaotic situation.

**MACKAY:** This idea that we have to get used to or expect that this kind of thing is going to happen again comes up against political paranoia & hysteria, right, because it essentially means that you need to have a constant management of the population. So, this is where this whole question of this creeping in of the totalitarian state comes in, & people having these apps on their phones where their location is constantly tracked & so on. These kinds of things which are making people in the West extremely uncomfortable, I think. But there's also a sense in which you can't really plan for it. Before this happened, you could certainly have built some kind of probabilistic model, but it wouldn't have been any use. And after it's happened, the probability is one & we just have to deal with it. And at every stage of dealing with it, the problem is changing. So, it doesn't help you at all. So, I don't know what kind of management of this risk do you think is possible after the immediate crisis.

**BREITLING:** Well there's been a proposal on the table. I guess they've done a few studies, some university in Australia, where they are proposing vaccinating nature. So, what they would do is whip up a paste vaccine. They would collect it from bats.

**MACKAY:** Immunize the whole world?

**BREITLING:** Yeah, yeah. So, that would be a measure that's been proposed. There's also been a couple of cases back in 2016, near the Yamal Peninsula, where a young boy got infected by anthrax. So, there's this kind of inherent danger of all these viruses, especially up north, aged thousands to millions of years old. We don't have the immune system built in for that. So, how do you factor that in as an existential risk? I think it's something that's going to be gaining more momentum & gaining more traction in the coming years.

**ARMAND:** A futures market for dinosaur viruses.

**MACKAY:** Yeah, how will risk management deal with that?

**ARMAND:** There's been quite a bit of discussion about this sort of speculative risk management. Dustin was talking about the logistics of dealing with vaccines, & Adam & Mark talked about herd immunity, both of which remain thought experiments in some sense. Clearly there are practical questions attached to them, so I mean that they are thought experiments in the sense that they're projective. And on the basis of these projections, many additional assumptions have been made in regard to "management," quote-unquote, of the various responses governments have undertaken around the world in a largely uncoordinated fashion. Of course the real elephant in the room, which threatens all of these speculative regimes, is the question of reinfections & to what extent any concrete parameters can be laid down with respect to how this pandemic is going to evolve once vaccines become available, or if the delivery of anything like a global vaccination plan is even going to work, given the prevailing laissez-fairism. That is the actual horizon of constant vulnerability. It's a little bit like the economic stimulus issue. Within no time at all, individual governments & the European Union were injecting vast amounts of cash into the economy, in some kind of expectation that this would produce an automatic solution to the pandemic problem, a solution that has been stuck on repeat. This repetition compulsion infuses all aspects of the attempt, as Robin was saying, to reconstruct normality, that is to say the status quo, to which a certain kind of crisis is endemic, while preventing any externalised mode of crisis from taking over the system, one that might prove fatal to it. And at the same time this repetition compulsion is orientated in such a way as to test the limits of this external threat, to determine if it be capitalized upon. "Can reinfection be capitalized upon?" It's important to understand that this repetition compulsion isn't an actual failure within the system, but its mode of operations, by which it seeks to incorporate the emergent character of the virus into a future model economy – not just pharmacological management, but an entire genetic regime.

**MACKAY:** I'm waiting for tips. I've already written "invest in cryonics."

**KONIOR:** I want to ask Adam a question. If you could follow up on something that you said. When you said that we have to be more open to letting the inhuman element into the system, can you explain what you mean here? Do you mean open yourself up to bodily invasion by the virus, or in what way? How radical are you with this statement?

**LOVASZ:** I guess on the level of governmentality, what governments have to accept is the idea that we can't exclude viruses forever from humans so there's always gonna be newer & newer influxes of viruses. And we can slow it down but we can't stop it. I think it's inevitable. It's an inevitable reality of living on this planet & we have to think in terms of a more ecologically open system of society. We can't maintain this. We can't live in plastic bubbles all of our lives. You have an example where someone doesn't have an immune system & they have to live in like a plastic bubble. I think we have to pierce this bubble. We have to think of new kinds of governmentality which don't maintain this kind of closedness at all costs because this isn't going to work in the long term. I'm really sceptical as to this.

**HORVÁTH:** But I think in our paper it was more theoretical or speculative. First aspects of how we can theorize with contemporary thinkers of death as a kind of positive aspect & a positive future before us that is kind of an escape from the ongoing & strengthening biopower everywhere in Europe. So when we look at, for example, negative queer theory &, for example, the ethics of extinction from Claire Colebrook. In our paper, there are several thought experiments about how we can get used to the finality of human life & how death can be looked upon not as an ending, as a closing down, but as something like an opening up for a kind of new horizon. So, I think the ending of our paper is quite radical, but there are five or six different approaches towards death in our paper.

**LOVASZ:** Just to sort of, in brief, explain what we're talking about is that, basically, the more governments try to defend life, the more they have to restrict life. There's this basic paradox at work in biopower & we somehow have to think outside of this, I think. We can't continue closing ourselves from the environment forever. There's going to be a point of no return, I think.

**ARMAND:** Can I just quickly ask you, Adam? When you talk about restrictions – because this is not an objective horizon & things have changed historically & culturally: which restrictions amount to “too many”?

**LOVASZ:** I think it's on a case by case basis. You have to always look at that. I think it's very ridiculous kinds of things. People don't want to wear a mask or something. That's a very, very mild kind of thing, but, on the whole, it's something which can't be maintained for very long. We had the one hundred eleven days lock down in Australia for example, but that's like a very extreme case & it really demands a very rule-following, obedient population. And you don't have that in all societies. There's cultural differences. And it's not really sustainable. You can't ask six billion people to not go outside. It's not very realistic.

**HORVÁTH:** And I think it's also a question of how other sides & other aspects of everyday life is managed under this kind of biopower, & how, for example, strange & dangerous or bad rules are. So, it's question of how the other side of life can be managed under this kind of lockdown.

**LOVASZ:** And you get this kind of paranoia on the part of power & also on the part of the political subjects as well. You have this mutually enforcing paranoia, & it leads to bad political results on the long term in many respects.

**KONIOR:** I'm hearing that maybe we should consider these different philosophies of governmentality and the use of technologies by governments in relation to how we conceptualize the individual, or the self, or the subject. I talked to Robin about this just two days ago, about this anthropologist, Shuang Frost. She writes about the difference between Western and Chinese philosophies of technology and she says that in the Western concept of ethics of technology, technology is perceived as good when it contributes to individual liberation, individual rights, and the protection of the subject and the individual. Versus in Confucian philosophy, there's no real counterpoint to this understanding of ethics. We can talk instead about the morality of technology, which is much more aspirational and is about engineering towards an aspirational form of society, and this aspiration towards an ideal form can be orchestrated by a dispersed agency. So, ethics if prohibitive – you can do this, you cannot do that – and morality is aspirational: what is the ideal social form? So, I don't know how can we say that it wouldn't work to keep seven million people indoors when that's exactly what Hong Kong has done for almost a month in the beginning of lockdown, and it has worked. So, it's not really a speculative scenario for me. It is doable. The question is why is it doable in some places and not in others. I think it would be a stretch to say 'Oh it's because it's Confucian and there's a difference of philosophy of technology' but maybe. I don't know, but it's a thought to explore.

**VAN CAMP:** I think perhaps a sort of metaphor which we can move into here is a type of zoning, & I'd be very interested in perhaps exactly what you mentioned, Bogna, with a type of zoning of, let's say, Hong Kong, a metropolitan area of seven million people. And same, I think, this ties with Adam's point about this ecology & this openness which is to be retained. I think it's interesting just how the discussion in Europe has, or rather just how Eastern Europe has, in a way, closed itself off, closed national borders at the beginning of the first wave very quickly, which had a fundamentally positive aspect. Again, there is quite an effective element to this drop-down, pop-up zone, which can be activated & deactivated at given times. And I'm wondering whether this might be sort of a part of sort of a new politics

or, you know, new normal which we might be seeing appearing. I assume that perhaps in other places, various places, this might be more natural or rather that the infrastructure is already built up. We, of course, know about the social credit system which is a type of zoning I would say that is sort of focalized on the individual, but aspect of the zone as a type of concept holds there as well, & I'm wondering whether anybody might have anything to say about that?

**ARMAND:** It's strange that we're still talking about Asia & Europe in this way, as opposing paradigms of lockdown. But in terms of state-centred regimes of isolation, we need to consider the relation of globalism to literal island societies, for whom isolation defines the entire power nexus. In response to COVID, countries like Vanuatu had no viable alternative to strict border closure, unlike in Europe or Asia where, even under the more reactionary governments, closure always has its economic exceptions. A question that also needs to be asked is about the relationship between authoritarianism & survivalism, & how this operates, or how it's distributed, under the reign of global capital. There's a very real question of privilege centring what is an opportunistic, if not outright cynical, routine of lockdown & reopening, whose framework is entirely political & barely at all immunological.

**MACKAY:** I think if we're just trying to link this question about zoning & in the UK, of course, we've got tears now rather than zones. But I want to link this back to what Bogna was saying before. And if we are entering into a situation where this is the new normal, where we're going to have to expect that this kind of thing is going to happen & we have to have management systems in place in advance in order to make sure that it's not a huge crisis like this. Then it seems like obviously, on a geopolitical level, what that means is advantage is going to accrue to certain nations & certain cultures. And this seems to be one of these things where there's just a complete fracturing of the lines of making sense of the world politically. It's just kind of falling apart because you have, basically, the thing that was meant to characterize the enemy of capitalism (i.e. massive populations which are heavily invested in collectivity, compliant populations that are happy to take social control measures from above. All those things are now what's going to drive the new winners of capitalism for the next however many hundred years. So, that's a complete kind of blowing apart of all the distinctions that we used in politics in the twentieth century. But then also on the other side, one thing that's interesting in the UK is that, in the absence of any ability of the population to accept any kind of control from above, any kind of collective identification, any suggestion that you are a generic citizen who must do the same as all the other citizens. There's just no conditioning to be able to accept that, & people just get angry about it immediately. So,

what's actually happened is a great fragmentation. So, now there's this kind of as an avatar of the individualization of it. You have a breaking up into smaller & smaller areas. So, you know, I'm in Tier 2. Manchester's in Tier 3. And then Manchester is almost declaring civil war on the rest of the UK. So, it's actually accelerating a kind of patchwork process, which is kind of interesting in itself. And you can see how that could, with the help of technology, penetrate down to smaller & smaller areas.

**KONIOR:** Perhaps, there's some kind of species-level defense in us about accepting that humanity can be understood as a collective population.

**MACKAY:** Population, yes.

**KONIOR:** I don't really have a problem with monitoring bats, putting satellites in the sky to monitor forests, & everything else. But we see that there is something irreducible about humanity that could never be captured in those technical systems. So, maybe there's a species chauvinism about this.

**MACKAY:** There is a kind of failure to apply the principles of ecology to our own species, I think.

**BREITLING:** Kind of leaping back to Louis's point concerning kind of the fine granularity of how far we can think of datafication & technology kind of inner penetrating even inside the body that will be particularly something, which, from the future, given the fact that we're understanding that viruses do evolve to kind of manipulate the host's circadian clock. In that case, that clock, these clocks in your body are responsible for a whole raft of intracellular systems that's changing the whole activity of your translation, transcription, metabolism. And that's where it kind of effectively reprograms your whole cell officially in this case. And there's this idea that's being sprung forth as to this idea about infection & immunity. There are these kinds of time-sensitive dynamics that need to be taken into consideration. You know the idea too is, as I was reading the other day, that, for example, it's better to give people vaccines in the night because they're kind of at their rest period in this case. So I would just imagine collecting this kind of data, getting down again to these very small kinds of minuscule points about ourselves that could be what needs to be advantaged in the future, if you are more or less able to kind of capture all this information concerning the most kind of basic metabolic mechanisms.

**MACKAY:** Shaping the whole of the social structure around the nature of the virus. So, society becomes a kind of virus puppet.

**ARMAND:** Well that's a nice change from the idea that the "state" is disciplining society, in some kind of hyper-rationalist way, since the agent of discipline here is the virus itself.

**VAN CAMP:** I think perhaps the concept which we can bring in, & I know I read it in a piece by Anton Jäger, is "Quarantine Corporatism." And it's sort of interesting to see just which businesses & enterprises are accelerating. And this is home delivery as we've been seeing: Amazon, Walmart. It sort of transcribes itself or can also be seen as a kind of, as Bogna mentioned, new logistics, as Dustin sort of alluded to as well, new logistics for the new normal where you know supermarkets become a type of distribution centre, etc. I think there's a very interesting phenomenon which we've been seeing now. I know of two places. Definitely this has happened in Czech Republic but also Quebec has been actually moving towards questioning self-sustainability, elementary & nutritional self-sustainability. The Czech government has a proposal for a bill which would, basically, require shopping centres to firstly fifteen percent of Czech produce & then thirty percent of this may actually increase too. Now, this is not official legislation, but this is, as far as I know, the first time these questions are being broached. And again it goes to this question of how resilient can a zone be in a way & for how long into almost kind of a garrison mentality which might go against again what Adam was saying, a kind of openness, a sort of trans-boundary openness in favour of something kind of different.

**ARMAND:** These boundaries that you're talking about, defined by quotas for local production & things like that, produce social relations defined by procurement. The social contract, as this romantic idea of universal rights guaranteed by a benevolent state, has been substituted for by a politics of procurement, where the contemporary states, particularly within Europe, offer the idea, a certain metaphysical notion, of providing for the care of their citizens, but in the form of a deferred procurement problem, one on which they cannot deliver. In fact it is impossible to deliver, & one of the things that COVID has done is make this very tangible & very clear, that the promise of being able to provide for the care for a populace is unserviceable. And so, these efforts at bringing in all sorts of quarantine measures, of a regionalist & protectionist character, are attempts to mitigate against a horizontal problem that is endemic to the global neoliberal economy: the idea that everything can be outsourced. But it cannot, it seems.

**VAN CAMP:** This horizontalism feeds very well into our discussion of zoning. We have Paul Chaney in the audience with this question: *Thinking about survival among pacific islands & general fragmentation... couldn't patchwork society be the ultimate defence to future outbreaks of yet unknown viruses?*

**MACKAY:** Well, the concept of patchwork is essentially to do with firebreaks, right? It's to do with the possibility of experimenting & trying different kind of social formations in this kind of controlled way. So, potentially, this leads into the question of the rural, doesn't it? And one of the interesting things, when you're talking about food procurement & so on, is what kind of effect these kinds of events are going to have between the urban & the rural because it's really the concentrated, densely populated areas & the kind of, you know, the centres of communicative capitalism where this kind of outbreak is happening. And there's a possibility that there's a kind of schism between the rural & the urban where the barriers will go up. And every city in the world is absolutely dependent on massive rural zones. So, there's not only this kind of dependency of one nation on another nation but the dependency of cities upon rural production.

**ARMAND:** The question about the Pacific Islands, just to come back to that. Adam & Mark refer to the Anthropocene, & one of the features of this discourse is how, by evoking a shift in the geological register, it appealed to the notion of an objective, & in a sense alien, force that could still be treated as somehow separable from the human sphere, as something that exists in the physical, material world. And there's a tendency in certain arguments to see COVID in this way. In other words, it's a virus: there's a biological character to all this which is independent of ideology, leading to some notion that can be expressed in the idea that "We're all in this together," that the objective reality of the virus applies equally across the board & has the equal capacity to affect people wherever they are in the world. But clearly it has the capacity to impact not only on different economies or different cultural formations, but different geographies, which is one of the reasons that with small island communities in the South Pacific the virus has exacerbated certain geopolitical singularities, which are likewise characteristic of the effects of global warming in the region. The impact of certain aspects of capitalism, the import of vast quantities of plastic, for example, into areas that have no means of recycling or disposing of it, where the threat of rising sea levels is imminent, where resource finitude is palpable, etc. And we see in all of these cases there's a certain virulence that needs to be taken into account. But this virulence is not universal. It accelerates or increases or decreases in relation to different social-political-physical geographies. And then the question is, How do we deal with this virulence which itself is not subject to rhetorical persuasion, let's say, or ideological persuasion?

**VAN CAMP:** Bogna perhaps is interested in questioning this notion of patchwork with or considering, in consideration of what you said previously about the differences between the way things were addressed in Shanghai & the way things were done in Hong Kong. I'm wondering, considering



that the system in China is a much more top-heavy entity, do you see at all patchwork & the notion of horizontality which you sort of alluded to with Hong Kong bearing any real traction?

**KONIOR:** Yes, I think, first of all, it's kind of a myth that China is as centralized as people imagine it to be. For example, with the social credit system, it is imagined as a really centralized system, while in fact it's a bunch of patches exchanging information, we could say. Ok, patchwork. Something to say here. I guess two things. One: How the patches are formed is probably one of the most crucial questions. Would the nation-state model be transposed into, in any way, into what the patches would be? Obviously, some of the new reactionary proposals are to have micro ethnic-based patches, right? So, the question of how you form the patches is crucial to what kind of modes of governance will be happening in the patches. And two, we have to notice that we entertain the idea of the patchwork for the reason that we implicitly believe that increasing governance ability of the state is an increase in control, right? And it's something that we want to avoid. However, when you look at how people who work in automation talk about control, it's not so clear that increase in organization is an increase in control. I think it was Kevin Kelly who said that the more we automate the more we actually don't know what's going to come out of it. And we don't spend enough time on questions of technological contingency and the fact that you might want something to happen and the consequences of that might be very different. So, I look at the patchwork as an interesting alternative, but I think what it's trying to counter is a bit of a scarecrow of this top-down controlled government that's never as top-down or controlled as people are imagining because there's so much accident and contingency, you know. As Paul Virilio said, the invention of any kind of technology is an invention of a corresponding accident, right? So, we don't really know how to chart the complexities of technology that come from responses to viruses.

**BREITLING:** I would also be interested concerning issues related to the patchwork & I suppose a kind of an immunitarian more or less modelling/politics emerging. This has been actually advocated by some members of the Silicon Valley that a patchwork would be unfolding & would be more or less working & corresponding according to the model of antibodies. You would have an antibody test. Therefore, this antibody test would in a certain sense of course enable you to go this zone, that zone, that zone, etc. And I would also be kind of curious to know if we do kind of imagine post immunitarian/maybe not post but immunitarian antibody world. And would we necessarily see even just a kind of different spatial & a kind of ethnic or population demographics in that case. And how would that necessarily/could that possibly change & challenge the idea that is linked

up with patchwork where you have this homogeneity nativism if it's not according to the kind of techno-commercialistic kind of impulse that someone like Land would have where you do see that it is quite resonates, especially in the certain circles you really want for ethno-nationalist types of states.

**KONIOR:** And also, isn't it more dangerous, from purely immunological perspective, to be in small homogenous groups because then you're more vulnerable to something like a biological threat because it cannot be dispersed within the genetically varied population anymore?

**ARMAND:** These communities are never genetically homogenous, they're just cultural constructs. Adam & Mark talked about the issue of species solidarity, which inevitably resolves into a universalized idea of eugenics. It comes back to this question, too, of whether we map eugenics onto, as Bogna was saying, an ethnicity or whether we map it onto, as Dustin is suggesting, a privileged access to the territory. I should just clarify that, because the idea that there is going to be some sort of antibody test that's going to determine their freedom of movement is again an appeal to a "objective measure" that would somehow be non-ideological. But we know that access to treatment & even access to testing is not equally distributed. It is in no way clear how any kind of egalitarianism can be underwritten, or how this would then lead to social patchworks being self-evident & not already ideologically conditioned.

**LOVASZ:** Just in relation to the issue of territoriality, I read a really interesting book on this topic. It's called *The Political Economy of Non-Territorial Exit*. It was published last year, & I think it's a very good response to this idea of the patchwork society. Just, in brief, the author says, basically, we could imagine a kind of exit as kind of thing which can be separated from territories. He says that crypto technologies could potentially make possible a kind of exit from existing social structures, not as a real possibility but as a constant threat. Individuals would have that sort of power to basically blackmail states, to opt out of certain aspects of governmentality which they wouldn't want to participate in, like in taxation for example. And I think this would be a really constructive idea. We could separate exit from territory. You don't have to secede from a country in order to maybe not participate in everything. So, I think it's maybe kind of a good alternative to this idea of fragmentation. It sort of takes fragmentation to a whole new level in cyber reality. I think it's just an interesting option. I don't know how much, how plausible it is, but it's a very interesting Utopia.

**ARMAND:** How would you be a non-participant in a pandemic, for example?

**HORVÁTH:** I think, it's question whether you want to be part of the lockdown or not, so there would be a state where lockdown would open up, like the plague in the Middle Ages, where the death drive would open up. And, of course, something like this is possible. But there is or there should be a territory for it.

**LOVASZ:** Well, it involves introducing a higher level of selectivity into participation in state services & government services. So, it's very Utopian in the sense that I don't think it's possible right now, but it has potential. I think technology could go in this certain direction which makes possible this kind of idea that you don't have to fight a war or do a referendum to get out of it. You can pick & choose which parts of a government you want to participate in.

**HORVÁTH:** In connection with the pandemic, it would mean that you could choose between, for example, several kinds of vaccines.

**LOVASZ:** Like packages.

**HORVÁTH:** Packages, yes.

**LOVASZ:** Well, I don't say that this is a solution to the question of patchwork, but I think it's a good point of departure for thinking in a different way about these kinds of things. And it's a very libertarian way of thinking. We don't really agree with all of that, but it's very provocative & constructive in many ways, out of the box when thinking about territory, population, governmentality. I just want to bring that in.

**MACKAY:** The thing about patchwork is that, like any kind of political theory, it is just totally moronic if you think about it on the level of "Shall we do this or not?" "Should we do patchwork?" This goes back to what Bogna was saying about technology as well. What's more interesting is that COVID is acting as a kind of a social iodine, like it's dropped into this petri dish & it's making evident all of these fracture lines & these existing tendencies & there's definitely a sense in which you're seeing this virtual potential for patchwork rising to the surface. And it makes it clear that the patchwork is a kind of interference pattern between global homogenization & libertarianism: the more interference, the more homogenous, connected, & inextricable the world becomes. As Louis was saying, you know, we're all in this in one way or another. The more you reach these crunch points where people think "Well, hang on, we didn't do this" & that's what I'm saying about the possibility of

a kind of rural secession: 'We didn't do this, We were growing your food for you, We weren't the ones going on seven easy jet flights a week,' you know, 'We weren't the ones in the coffee shops spreading virus.'" So, I think there's a definite possibility to kind of drive those processes, but also through this kind of tearing of society & the fact that it kind of introduces an element of competition almost into the scenario. And especially in the UK where cities are capped into the highest tier without any clear idea of how they can get out of it. It's producing a lot of tension. I think it's really interesting, just to see how COVID is acting as an accelerator for these processes.

**KONIOR:** I would say that the question 'what should we do?' is the least interesting question at any point. Simply because, if we look at the history of the technological and social paradigm shifts, they very rarely happen because a group of humans sat in one place and decided to do something. Actually, it's quite a complex evolution of social and ecological factors that leads to some kind of paradigm shift. With the agricultural revolution, it didn't happen because humans set down and invented agriculture. It happened, for example, because of the Milankovich phenomenon, an orbital tilt between the earth and the sun that allowed for a really long summer to happen, that allowed the agricultural revolution to happen. There are so many factors that would influence something like a switch to patchwork model, and individual or collective will might be part of that, but it would not be a deciding factor of such big shifts in governance.

**ARMAND:** It's interesting how often today we encounter the resurrection of the idea of rational social relations. The idea that there is something about a society or system of governance that is inherently rational as opposed to being driven by say broadly irrational impulses or whatnot. And one of the themes for this colloquium is "Mayday!" & it's striking that, simultaneous with the phenomenon of COVID, we've witnessed a period of widespread political unrest or instability or protest &, in light of the very existential character of the present crisis, the question presents itself as to why, when people take to the streets, if they not involved in the business of seizing power, what are they doing? What is this spectacle of protest? Who is it directed at? Who is the addressee? And this broadcast of the signal "Mayday! Mayday!" as if to say, "We're crashing! Something's wrong! Help!" Who is being called upon to help? Is it the idea of the benevolent state – the state with a conscience, which is going to reform itself & act for the greater good of the populace? Is it a call to arms? "Help us against this monstrous thing!" This also implies the idea that there is an entity somewhere, a state, a god, a father who is going to heed this call & attend to reason, that will tell us what we should do, or – since it is the corporate-state that is itself this monstrous thing – enact swift justice upon itself. Is this the rationality of the panopticon, responding

to assist the masses, who have dutifully enacted a rational critique of “it,” & so on? Are these the kinds of impulses & responses that we’re dealing with? Yet a positivism of this kind keeps creeping back into the discourse no matter what sort of apocalyptic tone seems to be its vehicle.

**MACKAY:** Back to the question of where we began, which was looking at the introductory text to the talk & kind of asking where is this hysteria coming from? Where is the question ‘What should we do’ coming from? And the claim I think in that text is that this isn’t a contingency. It’s something that’s been there all along as if COVID has come to fill the place of some expected event, which is basically a form of what Reza Negarestani called an affordance, right? It’s like seeing COVID as something that you can fit inside your already existing cognitive framework. And that just bespeaks the fact that we’re quite incapable of dealing with something that is pure contingency, that we weren’t prepared for, & that we don’t have any idea how it’s going to play out. So, we kind of invent these myths to deal with it.

**BREITLING:** It’s not pure contingency though because this has been anticipated for a long time. It might not be Disease X but the mechanism that we’ve resorted to has just been denial, which in itself enables the reduction of those type of uncertainties. It seems like a good point to ask, how much do we also envision this kind of economy of scale? Amazon. Of course, it’s not as pronounced in Europe per se, but looking at the United States & looking at this kind of neo-cartelism that’s kind of emerging, you are going to see a lot of these major companies. You’re already seeing these major companies. You’re already seeing Tesla, now the biggest carmaker & the amount of capitalization is just exponential, etc. How much can we envision or say? They are fulfilling a very patchwork type of model in a certain sense through a kind of subscribership & customership type of basis. And they are already having the kind of whole logistical supply chain fulfilled. I’m really kind of interested is how much do we anticipate or envision them kind of taking over the governance functions & taking on the functions as well where they get concerned or interested in the customers’ & subscribers’ health because they have all the ability to collect all these types of data on them. What’s going to be the long-term interest for them? To try to preserve populations or preserve their customer base? I’d be interested in that. We see Amazon & Google, maybe, even though it’s kind of intentionally breaking up, become more & more interested biopolitical/slash health questions for citizens because that would be a way they could garner the kind of exit voice loyalty model.

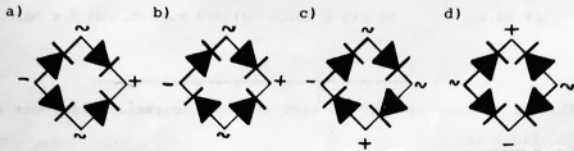
**VAN CAMP:** There’s a question from the audience, before we conclude. I like the way it ties things back to the primal scene of this whole discussion, which

is ultimately a type of death. Bertalan Eged asks: *I understand the openness Adam talked about, but what about the people who opened themselves up & died from the virus? What about the relations between openness & death?*

**LOVASZ:** I guess this sort of comes back to the issue of denial. We modern, secular people are in denial about the fact that we're going to die & what happens afterwards. This wasn't evident in previous social forms. You knew what was going to happen after death. And now we don't really know what's going to happen to us. Heaven or Hell is not really plausible anymore. You could cultivate an of epicurean acceptance of death. I think that's a sort of a good starting point, but it's very hard for modern people to think about finitude, & I think that's where we're in desperate need of thinking about finitude & about reducing our expectations, exponentially, about what we want from society & from life. This crisis is a good opportunity to cut back our expectations about what we want, what we expect in the developed world at least.

Prague Microfestival  
30 OCTOBER 20XX  
Transcribed by Jeff Howe

47. Which one of the bridge rectifier circuits shown below is correct?



48. Power in a circuit is given by  $X^2$  in  $X'$ ?



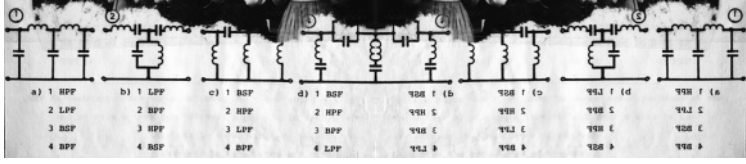
FIG. 10

- a) An auto transformer.
- b) A non-linear 500 ohm carbon resistor.
- c) A thyatron. e.g. Mazda T41.

31. Parasitic oscillations in any stage of a transmitter are likely to cause-

- a) spurious emissions at the transmitter output.
- b) key clicks on the receiver.

32.



# CATASTROPHE PRAXIS

## PRECOGNITIONS

There are certain things as if *known in advance*. "The world must end," for example. "Death is inevitable," "Nothing lasts forever," & so on. Yet all of these are posed against a background of absolute nonknowledge: the meaning of "forever," of "endlessness," of "nothing," of "death" even, & therefore of "life." They are, in effect, figures of speech, if not metaphors: the constructed verism of the profoundly unknowable, lying somewhere upon the further shore of a present bounded by catastrophe. But catastrophe is a blackbox, in which the rationality of the knowable, the predictable, the modellable, breaks down. What good is it to confront ecological collapse armed with a survivalist handbook if the climate patterns that have defined the very idea of a biosphere cease to exist? What use is an immunological corporate-state enterprise when the accelerated form, force & frequency of viral pandemics reduces its system of control to an epistemological precariat? And what type of theoretical fictions do we inhabit when we pretend that catastrophe itself will permit of a transitional phase of human social re-becoming? That, in short, it will behave as nothing more than a dialectical "figure," beholden somehow to the rules of a critical discourse infatuated with the idea of its own futurity? At a time when the language of "revolution" has undergone an almost complete rehabilitation, the thought that travels abroad under its name nevertheless does so in the pay of a radical conservatism: from the conservation of the planet, to the conservation of the human, to the conservation of a culture of consumption, capital & of course crisis (for though the world is ending, the spectacle of



its end has never been more productive – for conservation is nothing if not a mode of perpetuated ending, of an ending-in-abeyance or in-abysse). Yet none of this violates in any way the fundamental logic of these discourses, which have secretly *known this all along* & which exist, in fact, to *conserve* this secret: not the secret of any *thing*, or a conspiracy among things & kept from the “world,” but the knowledge assiduously kept from itself – its “unknown-known” – that it itself, broadly speaking the discourse of humanism (including all the forms of anti- & post-humanism), isn’t the *consciousness* of this catastrophism, but the contrary.

## COVIDOLOGY

Almost from the moment COVID-19 entered public consciousness, it became a *phenomenon*. This phenomenon was characterised by two dominant modes: PANIC – that the virus posed an existential threat to the entire “world order”; DENIAL – that the virus didn’t exist, etc. But there is also a more subtle characteristic which has largely gone unremarked, between the *instantaneously known*, the *unknown*, the *unknowable* & the *unavowable*. There has been no shortage of observations to the effect that COVID is as much a product of “late capital” as it is a “force of nature”; that it is ideological as much as it is biological; that it is anthropocenic *par excellence*. Like “the Anthropocene” – a term meant to designate both an “objective” geological register & the accumulation of capital effects into an “autonomous” geotechnology – the phenomenon of COVID marks a confusion between the idea of an “objectifiable thing” (virus) & an “alien force” (pandemic) capable of bringing about a kind of *automatic revolution* independent of, yet parasitic upon, collective human agency. Like “the Anthropocene,” the phenomenon of COVID-19 has renewed a certain apocalyptic tone in contemporary discourse, which sees in it an instrument of radical upheaval, a catalyst of world-transformation, an irresistible acceleration of THE END: of the status quo, of the regime of global capital, & – as always – of History. The purview of this “End of History” has produced a vertiginous anachronism at the heart of all these covidologies – for no sooner had it presented itself as a *fait accompli* than it availed itself of a compulsive *historicisation*: before virtually anything at all was really known about the novel coronavirus spreading across the planet, mouthpieces everywhere were proclaiming – in the same moment – the “return” to a New Normal & the “advent” of a post-catastrophe World Order *unlike any that had gone before*, etc.

## OMEGA MEN

Viewed retrospectively, the timeline in which the first major financial stimulus packages were announced (to assist economies in their *recovery* from the COVID-19 crisis or mitigate its impact) appears to have been

a phenomenon in itself, occupying a temporality both *after the fact* & hyperstitionally *in advance of it*. It wasn't simply that governments & financial institutions sought to shore up their own futures by treating the pandemic as ostensibly over before it had really begun (& thus purchasing the political-economic conditions for the continuation of the status quo) – nor that this convulsive routine of economic stimulus was a kind of primal reflex in the face of potentially catastrophic uncertainty (& not merely a routine formalism) – rather, what this temporality of responses brings into view are the operations of a certain *regime of anachronism* at work in the control of “reality” itself, whose end is *always already* its beginning. (The dialectics of power.) Within two months of introducing financial stimulus into their economies, beginning in mid-March, it is estimated that world governments collectively spent more on COVID – over \$10 trillion USD – than during the entire 2008 Global Financial Crisis, driving global debt to unprecedented levels (in the first 9 months of 2020, global debt rose by \$19.3 trillion). These are not simply ritualistic gestures to conjure a virus out of existence, but a ruthless struggle on the part of capital to foreclose on the possibility of its own “end”; to erase the very idea of that possibility. How is it that this *revolutionary struggle* is largely invisible within a critical discourse that is instead preoccupied with transcendental utopias & street protests with no prospect (in their current form) of a real “seizure of power”?

## FETISH

On 11 March, the Director General of the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a “global pandemic” – on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month, Žižek, ever ready to preach from the mount, published a book entitled *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World*.<sup>1</sup> A month earlier, in the course of Europe's inaugural (& most intensive) lockdown, Agamben published the first of many denunciations of the “new dictatorship of telematics,” entitled “The Invention of an Epidemic”<sup>2</sup> – in it he laments the reduction of social existence to “bare life” under a biopolitical “state of exception.” What Agamben's instant humanist sentimentality belies, armed with reactionary non-knowledge, isn't the discipline of a *defence* of life, but its subsumption into an act of liberal self-gratification. The denunciations that followed, in texts like “Requiem for the Students”<sup>3</sup> (23 May), are all the more remarkable for the fact that their primary motivation stemmed from a threat to academic *lifestyle*. The Socratic system of political education in which

<sup>1</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (London: Verso, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “L'invenzione de un'epidemia,” *Quodlibet* (24 February 2020): [www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-l-invenzione-di-un-epidemia](http://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-l-invenzione-di-un-epidemia)

<sup>3</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “Requiem per gli studenti” (23 May 2020): [www.iisf.it/index.php/attivita/pubblicazioni-e-archivi/diario-della-crisi/giorgio-agamben-requiem-per-gli-studenti.html](http://www.iisf.it/index.php/attivita/pubblicazioni-e-archivi/diario-della-crisi/giorgio-agamben-requiem-per-gli-studenti.html)

Agamben's privileged position had – even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – heretofore been assured as if harassed by that most Platonic nemesis: *technē*. The relative folly of Žižek & Agamben's interventions exposes the extent to which the production of critical fetish objects has come to manifest the same cultural & economic forms as those it pretends to "critique." What Žižek & Agamben have not been willing to examine is – to rephrase Bourdieu – "the entire set of social mechanisms that make possible" the figure of the "public intellectual" – even, or especially, in these apparently anti-intellectual times – as the producer of that fetish called *critique*.<sup>4</sup> In other words, while claiming a unique cultural authority to direct the way in which the COVID pandemic is being critically *thought*, & thereby *known*, they elide the constitution of the very field that serves as the *locus where the belief in the value of critique is produced & reproduced* in the first place: a field that *anything other than a purely theoretical response* to COVID-19 must inevitably put in question.

### **AUTOMATIC REVOLUTION**

COVID has produced an industry of response, including intellectual industries, caught between two replay loops: 1. the anticipatory replay in which the ever-prescient mouthpieces of the coming apocalypse have found their readymade occasion; & 2. the temporal replay of the so-called second & third waves, in which these same industries find their occasion exhausted. Žižek's *Pandemic!* is only the most obvious example. In particular, Žižek amplifies a tendency elsewhere to propose an entire social-theoretical project in lieu of a "concrete analysis" – not as a *mode of action* but as a *prerequisite* for action: Žižek's "new communism," Agamben's new humanism, Latour's "Gaia hypothesis." This pathological retreat into (grandiose) New Myths, as a proxy for the task of direct intervention, seems paradoxically geared towards the *conservation* of a cultural status quo (the same litany of issues, the same litany of responses), rather than a practical instrumentalising of the pandemic for the purpose of deconstructing the prevailing culture that gave rise to it. In the end, we've been left with ideological theatre, mechanically repeating an exhausted histrionics, punctuated by eruptions of "protest" & a mesmeric belief in something that might be called *automatic revolution*: that COVID will do the work of direct social/institutional *critique* all by itself, bringing about the end of global capital *as if by magic*. In effect, COVID has become the "objective correlative" of the old discredited idea of a *withering away of the state*. And what it has revealed is again a willingness among the philosophers of the left to herald the arrival of a new tyrant in order to dispense with the existing one.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University press, 1996) 292.

## SPECTRES

The spectre of history hangs over the present situation, yet it isn't the one they had been expecting. In 1848 there arose an expectation of world-wide social democratic revolution: the accelerated decadence of the old world order, the impulse to emancipation of an industrial proletariat, the inevitability of progress forged through the industry of capitalism itself. The social democratic revolution failed, yet the bourgeoisie triumphed: a triumph that did not produce a politically emancipative effect. In 1917-18, even under conditions of a catastrophic world war & the global "Spanish Flu" pandemic, coinciding with the final collapse of the imperial order, expectations of a world-wide socialist revolution didn't eventuate: the Bolshevik Revolution itself barely succeeded against the forces of an international counterrevolutionary effort – everywhere outside the Soviet Union, reaction triumphed. In 1968, etc., etc.: the corporate-state triumphed. Blinded by the expectation of *an automatic social revolution*, the mouthpieces of history could not see the actual revolution taking place before their very eyes. They believed that capitalism was an historical phase, or a mere instrument, on the path to revolution; they did not grasp that *it was the revolution*. At every stage capitalism has revolutionised itself, in its material, logistical & broadly "cybernetic" (or, as we will see, *entropological*) forms. Today, the gaze of "theory" drifts once more from its object onto the horizon of Expectation, unwilling or unable to perceive that the revolution in process of taking place *does not belong to it*. Just as the primary error in Deleuze & Guattari's post-68 lament, *Anti-Oedipus*, had been in assuming capitalism to be a force of inertia set *against* the flow of liberated "schizes" (that it itself produced): while it was rather the moral arrière-garde of a failed "revolutionary ideology" that was seemingly determined to re-Oedipalise the spectacle of capital's totalisation, while romanticising the emancipatory potential of its sacrificial straw man. In subverting the system of diagnostics (social medicine), while nevertheless insisting that capital lay within its epistemological grasp, it evoked a radical "schizoanalysis" capable of producing existential catastrophe within the system of capital itself, unmindful of the possibility that in doing so nothing had in fact been produced but a description of capital's own evolutionary movement. It is this inverse symptomatology that has passed down to the present situation.

## M'AIDEZ

*Mayday! Mayday! We're going to crash!* What happens when the nominal addressee of this emergency broadcast is in fact the *agent* of catastrophe itself? Is it a call to arms or merely a verbalised rage, a cry of defeat? *Mayday! This is the End! We're fucked!* At least since the turn of the millennium,

anti-globalisation & anti-authoritarian movements have arisen & spread – like minor pandemics – in waves of protest & increasingly radicalised “discontent” around the world. From global capital, to climate catastrophe, to COVID, an accelerated cycle of such phenomena have fed the spectacle of the corporate-state’s seemingly endless demise. On the level of civil disobedience, each of these has tended to exhibit both a strange credulity towards the idea of protest & a simultaneous incredulity towards social master narratives. Each has likewise occasioned the question as to whether or not, *as protest*, such forms of direct action fall victim to the desire for a benevolent, paternalistic corporate-state – even if this benevolence extends only to the state being a good or rational adversary: an adversary with a conscience available to appeal. In this desire, too, is reflected the idea of a rational society directed by collective self-interest, which it is ultimately prepared to delegate to the care of the state – so that the *Mayday!* reflex may be said to be an expression of the deep-rooted paradox that traverses all hegemonic structures: the seeking of aid from the very thing that has caused harm & which must be opposed, subverted, overcome, or destroyed *before it’s too late*, etc. (Such is its hysterical condition, that protest is always prepared to exhaust itself in symbolic forms of parricide as if to avert the real catastrophe – which isn’t, in this instance, globalisation, climate change or COVID, but an open admission that the *social contract* has in fact long ceased to exist & that the objective reality bearing upon the world isn’t any pseudo-“natural disaster” but the real void of political subjectivity.) And if only those protests that have “descended” into riots & have evolved into quasi-insurrection – as in Chile, Guatemala, France & Hong Kong – have given any appearance of putting the corporate-state to the question, nevertheless on every occasion their insufficiency has (as if by necessity) fuelled a decisive & ever-more-virulent *reaction*: an actual “dictatorship of telematics,” like the “cybernetic revolutions” that preceded it (as if on a permanent schedule at least since 1968). In this respect, the admiration some have shown for the Chinese & Korean responses to COVID is not merely a kind of sympathy for the devil, as has often been supposed, but instead yet another symptom of the appeal of the New Myths – foremost among them, the myth of the unassailable adversary & the myth of the hyperrational corporate-state. Yet there is nothing more irrational than a belief in the rationality of the corporate-state – unless, perhaps, it is a belief in the rationality of social relations themselves.

## **PROCUREMENT**

The New Myths do not merely repeat those of the recent past (the late twentieth century had no shortage of them): the myth of No Future mirrored in that of the coming Extinction; the myth of Unfettered Growth, of



Inexhaustible Resources, mirrored in that of a *post-Anthropocene*, *post-COVID* reconstructionism – the mythic dimension of global capital mirrored in that of revolutionary despair. Rather, the New Myths are a dialectical ensemble of overabundant crises, of renewable apocalypse. It achieves its apotheosis in the ongoing spectacle of the disintegration & reconstitution of the spectacle itself – under the gravitational sway of the Myth of the Impossible (the impossibility of an end of capitalism; the impossibility of revolution; the final impossibility of an *after-life*, etc.). The domain of the political is fully inscribed within this “new” convulsive movement of forethrow & recapitulation, between a humanistic ideal & a recursive technicity that does not contradict but *produces it* in all its desiring insufficiency. Where Rousseau’s social contract had promised universal rights universally, the provision of rights (the collective rights of the individual) under covidocracy becomes a procurement problem. In short, the New Myths arisen under “pandemic conditions” are seemingly not ideological but logistical. Or rather, the ideological has ceased to be distinguishable from the logistical. In just the same way, political abstractions like “emancipation” have come to present an insurmountable *procurement burden*. In January 2020, the World Health Organization issued the statement that “Wearing medical masks when not indicated may cause unnecessary cost, procurement burden & create a false sense of security that can lead to neglecting other essential measures such as hand hygiene practices. Furthermore, using a mask incorrectly may hamper its effectiveness to reduce the risk of transmission.”<sup>5</sup> Of which Zuzana Holečková has written:

The declaration is a neatly formulated, perfect example of political correctness because what is hidden behind the words “may cause unnecessary cost, procurement burden” is the fact, which the WHO was well aware of, that there is not sufficient quantity of masks available. And it is nobody’s fault because it is not possible, practical & desirable to maintain a universal stock of protective equipment; no emergency plan in the world has ever been designed to do so... The problem is the masses: How to manage the relatively rich, educated, healthy & thus long-living masses; how to feed, tame & console them, literally, politically & culturally, if God is dead & so-called democracy shoreless? How to give them the illusion of “free will” (& equal access to universal health care, because what is more sacred than human life?) & not to expose the fact that something like “free will” is an insurmountable procurement burden? This is our current modernity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>“Advice on the Use of Masks the Community, during Home Care & in Health Care Settings in the Context of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Outbreak,” World Health Organization (29 Jan 2020): [www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-2019-ncov.pdf](http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-2019-ncov.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>Zuzana Holečková, “Modernism after Modernity,” unpublished paper.

Yet if the capacity to maintain the *promise of emancipation*, in place of its actual (impossible) realisation, remains a measure of the viability of any given system of (mythic) power, this isn't because "emancipation" is impossible *as such* (sheer romanticism), or even that the idea of "emancipation" contradicts the *raison d'être* of the system of power it belongs to, but that *the logistics of its procurement* in any sense other than being *for the system itself* renders it fatal.<sup>7</sup> Emancipation without subjection to a correlative system of power, has no meaning. Such is the *pharmakon* of all social palliatives, that procure for themselves – we might say – the pandemic they best deserve.

## SURVIVAL

Talk of *survivalism* looks forward to a residual world in which all the dirty work has been done, leaving the socio-economic equivalent of *Jurassic Park* in its wake. From the point of view of a certain primitivism, this readymade catastrophe presents itself as a benevolent "force of nature," an automatic revolution. Were this a Hollywood movie, there would be a guerrilla army of social-engineers-in-waiting, whose mission is to establish the perimeter of a New Darwinism: a terrain of self-sufficiencies, an institutional wilderness in which the Law is a dark continent & Power a buried temple that only the intrepid future ape may worship at. Contesting the rule of these primitivists would be all those refugee Neo Huxleyites, armed with a UN one-worldism of the *we shall rebuild* variety familiar from endless "disaster" fictions. There would be the inevitable happy ending: reason & a new modernity would ultimately prevail (such films should simply self-destruct, like the messages in *Mission Impossible*, taking the viewer with them). These two visions of survival are symbiotic: the terraforming aspirations of the one are reborn within the primitivist aspirations of the other. They are, in fact, the same impulse, driven by the same evangelism. To each, the world is a zero sum. They are truly the children of the juggernaut, prepared to carve out the future in flesh & blood, but only after the fact. Such fictions are as heroic as they are absurd, like a tale told of little Oedipuses whose mamapapas have been taken from them, as they say, by an "act of God": one wants to rebuild their father's house, the other wants to run free in the orchard. Something is too perfect: the sheer horror of human existence seems to have gone up in smoke with the death of parental tyranny. It's a purely allegorical world: nothing could possibly breathe there. Only madness could save them: the madness of repetition, "civilised man" at war with "natural man," modernism or barbarity, etc., to determine who shall be the unique source of Gaia's pleasure. At least this way a future is guaranteed: the eternal return of the same.

<sup>7</sup>The corporate-state is inaugurated as a guarantor of the *mercantile contract*; the welfare state is inaugurated to provide for the maintenance of the mercantile subject, which it calls the *social contract*.

## TRICKLEDOWN

Is there such a thing as a political economy of “exit”? At every point, the ruthlessness of the virus has been posed against the imperative of an ethics of social response: between those who would *make live* & those who would *let die*. And at every point this inordinate project of conservation (to save the planet, to save humanity, to save the future, etc., etc.) has run up against the fact that the only real project of conservation in the offing is that of power itself: the rest are chattels, the spoils of victory. When Agamben complains about the “state of exception,” he is acknowledging that “bare life” isn’t what is left when the procurement of individual or collective liberties is withdrawn – “bare life” is the fictional existence in which these things are imagined to be real in the first place. Under conditions of so-called “late capitalism,” bare life is the one you pay for on credit, in lieu of the one alienated within the Panopticon. In this relation, it is the individual that is the true “state of exception,” & it is for this reason that its *action* is always instead a *reaction*: a reaction to the agenda of the corporate-state, a stone thrown at the shield of a riot cop, a lament about the loss of human contact in the classroom (even Virginia Woolf wanted to burn down the universities – what has happened?). For its part, the corporate-state would like either to outsource COVID or transform it into a tradable commodity or financial instrument (monetisable “futures,” like carbon credits) – as if it were some kind of objective correlative of “market adjustment”: whereas COVID pre-emptly & even threatens to usurp capitalism’s position & function at every turn – proliferating, accelerating, expropriating the means of production to its own processes of insatiable consumption, etc. Just as global capital, in the guise of neoliberalism, had until now been able to parasitise infrastructure everywhere while opting-out of any real liability for it, banking on a future that would always, as if by magic, be recapitalised (by “individual taxpayers,” for example, who’ve been seduced by this myth into believing that they, too, can *opt out*). Thus the parasitic function of global capital finds itself both in direct alignment & direct competition with the parasitism of COVID: so that the question that arises isn’t how to affect an *exception* from the ongoing “crisis,” as if one or other of its elements (COVID or capitalism “itself”) might simply be detached from the global equation, but the contrary – How can a direct political relation be re-established within it?

## GLOBAL MINIMUM

Inevitable as it may appear in retrospect, the cybernetic revolution that Harvey Wheeler proclaimed in 1968 was by no means an obvious outcome of the reaction against the insurrectionary events of that year, but was the product of a loosely confederated opportunism that itself wildly misconstrued cybernetics simply as an instrument of social order & of



increased production unfettered by the pressures of industrial labour. By the 1970s, however, the cybernetic revolution had brought about the conditions for the abolition of the bourgeois state as it had been previously conceived, & the advent of neoliberalism as an ideological & economic force whose direct consequence would, following the dissolution of many Cold War geopolitical boundaries, produce the forms of global capital still operative today (in which the dominant “class” is only nominally techno-oligarchic but in reality is the evolved systems of information management themselves). A second cybernetic revolution – the so-called digital revolution of the 1990s – in many respects completed the task of abstraction & automation initiated by the industrial revolution at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (& overlapping with another revolutionary period), permitting the rise of a dominant new economic &, ultimately, political force: an abstract, diffuse, & often unacknowledged force which has, to a greater or lesser extent, redefined the political domain across swathes of the planet, via the mass-automation of logistics & a radical realignment of mass mediated social reality into increasingly integrated forms of social media & datocracy. Just as between the invention of Gerardus Mercator’s cylindrical map projection in 1569 & the launch of the GPS radionavigational satellite network in 1973, the *global* came into view not as a self-contained unicum but as a geodesic system of co-ordinate *interlocutions*: a distributed individuality, in which every “position” in geolocational spacetime is in communication with every other, & which propagates via a web of aggregated *differences*. Building on this idea, in 1960, internet pioneer Ted Nelson proposed a globally integrated information system to be called Xanadu, described as a “unique symmetrical connective system” that would employ profuse, fine grained, deep linkage & stabilised media to construct a prototypical *worldwide web*.<sup>8</sup> In their recent proposals for an information theory of individuality, David Krakauer, Nils Bertschinger & Eckehard Olbrich complete this picture by positioning the “individual” as a cybernated evolutionary aggregate “that propagate[s] information from the past to the future & [has] temporal integrity.”<sup>9</sup> This movement of propagation may be likened to a *between two interlocutors* – in other words, a *difference* integral to itself – even if we must insist that its temporal vector will be nothing if not recursive, in the predicative time of a transmission to which an *anachronistic present* stands in a relation of *decoherence*. (The authenticity of the present isn’t what stands obscured by this observer paradox; it is its consequence, built of its very fabric.)

<sup>8</sup> See Theodor Holm Nelson, “Xanalogical Structure, Needed Now More Than Ever: Parallel Documents, Deep Links to Content, Deep Versioning & Deep Re-USE,” [xanadu.com.au/ted/XUsurvey/xuDation.html](http://xanadu.com.au/ted/XUsurvey/xuDation.html)

<sup>9</sup> David Krakauer, Nils Bertschinger & Eckehard Olbrich et al., “The Information Theory of Individuality,” *Theory of Biosciences* 139.2 (2020): 209–223. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12064-020-00313-7>

## ENTROPOLOGY

At the very end of his 1955 memoir, *Tristes Tropiques*, Lévi-Strauss both calls for & announces a critical project of *dissipative anthropology*, to which he alludes under the term “entropology,” yet which he does not in fact realise in any of his subsequent major texts (*Anthropologie structurale*, 1958; *La pensée sauvage*, 1962, *Mythologiques I-IV*, 1964-1971):

Every verbal exchange, every line printed, establishes a communication between two interlocutors, thus creating an evenness of level, where before there was an information gap & consequently a greater degree of organisation. Anthropology could with advantage be changed into “entropology,” as the name of the discipline concerned with the study of the highest manifestations of this process of disintegration.<sup>20</sup>

In his evocation of the term “entropology,” Lévi-Strauss affects a definition of *integration by hierarchisation* as the principal characteristic of social organisation. Integration nevertheless also takes place on the level of relations (“une communication entre les deux interlocuteurs”) that may be hierarchically indeterminate, & it is here that a contradiction emerges in the formalisation of entropy as a general *neganthropology*.<sup>21</sup> Implicit is the idea, drawn from Claude Shannon’s information theory, that entropy doesn’t describe a mere *dissipation of energy through work* but rather (like Boltzmann before, who defined entropy as the number of unobservable configurations of a system) that it corresponds to an *information potential*, transmitted from a signaller to a receiver (i.e. between interlocutors).<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Lévi-Strauss identifies entropy with the inevitable tendency towards (social) dis-integration – whereby the study of human society (microstate) is bound up with the apparent “fate” of the universe (macrostate). In the face of this movement towards systemic homogeneity, Lévi-Strauss envisages a counter-movement, of ceaselessly accelerated production of “bifurcations” & “difference” (complexification) – a (positive) negentropic feedback spiral which recuperates the (negative) movement of entropy – as a (positive) object of knowledge (i.e. “entropology”) – a kind of hermeneutic recycling of *potential*. Such a project, *as both a critique & recuperation of anthropology*,

<sup>20</sup> Emphasis added. “Chaque parole échangée, chaque ligne imprimée établissent une communication entre les deux interlocuteurs, rendant étale un niveau qui se caractérisait auparavant par un écart d’information, donc une organisation plus grande. Plutôt qu’anthropologie, il faudrait écrire ‘entropologie’ le nom d’une discipline vouée à étudier dans ses manifestations les plus hautes ce processus de désintégration.” Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques*, 496; in English, 413-414 [translation modified].

<sup>21</sup> Entropology, in Lévi-Strauss’ terms, is a critique of anthropology that rests on the prediction of the ultimate thermodynamic levelling of all culture.

<sup>22</sup> Claude Shannon, “A Mathematical Theory of Communication,” *Bell System Technical Journal* 27 (July, October, 1948).

could nevertheless neither exist within the framework of Lévi-Strauss' structuralism nor survive outside it. "Entropology," in the sense given, is the solicitation from within of an impossible "deconstruction." A more explicit theorising of this entropic turn in the "human sciences" has had to wait several decades, for a "posthumanist" turn in the wake of (& more often than not in reaction against) "deconstruction": a turn which – by no means paradoxical – has at the same time entailed a *return of anthropology* ("a new humanism"<sup>33</sup>) & a reinstatement of structuralism's "universal problematic,"<sup>34</sup> under the guise of a critique of what has all too readily been labelled "the Anthropocene." The acme of Lévi-Strauss' "entropology" arrives with Stiegler's misreading of Schrödinger – *Neganthropocene* (2018) – in which the former acolyte of Derrida casts neoliberalism as an entropic doomsday device, whose proliferating systems of (negative) feedback are driving the world along a teleology to extinction. Stiegler grasps onto the concept of negentropy as a redemptive recuperation of the world's loss, by converting "negative" into "positive" feedback – by which productive circuits of harmonious growth may provide for life ever after. (Such a productivism always risks amounting to little more than a conceptual Ponzi scheme.) This rather conventional binary describes a mirror-effect around the dream of perpetual growth, a paradise regained in which entropy lurks like the proverbial serpent with designs to bring about the Fall, unless it is productively curbed so as to observe the harmonious laws of this changeless realm. Such nostalgia is a dream of death. An idealised death. One which has never existed anymore than a pristine paradise brought low by the ravages of entropy. If entropy corresponds to what in Freud is called *Todestrieb* or *death drive*, this is because it describes the "death" at the origin of life: no entropy, no world.

## THING

A correspondence establishes itself between Lévi-Strauss' putative entropology & the project of re-reading Marx's *Capital* embarked upon during the decade following by Louis Althusser, Jacques Rancière & others. In his contribution on commodity fetishism, Rancière makes the observation that "What is lost in fetishism is the structural implication that founds the distance of the thing from itself, a distance which is precisely the site at which economic relations are at play."<sup>35</sup> The "thing" – the *form* of the commodity – is thus firstly the site of a *between two interlocutors*, in which

<sup>33</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign & Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," *Writing & Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978) 292.

<sup>34</sup> Derrida, "Structure, Sign & Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 151-2

<sup>35</sup> Jacques Rancière, "The Concept of Critique & the Critique of Political Economy," *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, trans. Ben Brewster & David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2015) 160.

economic relations (the communication of value) mirror social relations, & in which each can be characterised as *in-formation*. What appears to “pass into the thing” in the work of production is neither an *alien entity* nor *alienated subjectivity* “but a relation.”<sup>16</sup> It is this relation that permits it to function as a site of (more than) symbolic exchange & the circulation of value, which is also to say of an *entropology*: both “entropement” & “entropy.” And as in Lévi-Strauss, what is first *information potential*, inscribes a matrix of *disintegration* & *alienation* – since, in its signifying subjection, “it is the form which becomes alien to the relation it supports &, in becoming alien to it, becomes a [mere/inert] thing & leads to the materialisation of relations.”<sup>17</sup> Likewise, what Stiegler calls “negentropy” is thus limited to a *redistribution* of the *production of entropy* – which ignores the operation of entropy “as productive force” in & of “itself”: that is to say, as the encompassment of production, its very anteriority, so to speak – the condition of the productivity of production as such & not anything that can be *brought under the rule of production*. Like the “thing” defined as a *relation*, entropy maintains a *minimum* of self-separation against Rancière’s *materialisation* (disintegration into *mere thingness*) – a kind of Planck constant of *différance*. It is in this manner that Krakauer & co provide parallels between the idea of an “individual” as a mode of propagation & the “parasitic” operation of a virus. “Viruses,” they argue,

constitute obligate translational parasites, incapable of completing their life cycles without first appropriating the protein synthesis machinery of a host cell. The viral capsid contains a largely *inert* genome responsible for encoding only a small fraction of the proteins required for synthesizing a new virus genome & the capsid required for egressing from the infected cell. *The virus exists only within the larger dynamical, regulatory network of the cell*. Hence, the virus – understood as the active parasitic agent – is comprised largely of host encoded factors. And yet it can replicate, adapt, & has a persistent identity that distinguishes it from its “host” environment – despite the fact it relies on its “host” environment for replicating.<sup>18</sup>

The cell here can also stand for a dynamic, topologically recursive frame-of-reference, in which an entropology (dissipation as productive propagation) presents as a “positive science” (the viral *logos*) while at the same time, & by the same gesture, soliciting its deconstruction. It is necessary, therefore, to speak of entropology as the relation of entropy not only to its *logos* but to the operations of *techne* that brings into constellation the very terms of its signifying production. In the structuralist arrangement, entropy remains

<sup>16</sup> Rancière, “The Concept of Critique,” 159.

<sup>17</sup> Rancière, “The Concept of Critique,” 159-160.

<sup>18</sup> Krakauer, Bertschinger, Olbrich, “The Information Theory of Individuality.”

an aftereffect, a decoherence, a degradation – rather than a *condition of possibility* of any system whatsoever (just as the COVID *pandemic* is treated as an *product* of capitalism rather than as the *mode of production* of capitalist re-evolution) – & this hierarchy repeats itself in Stiegler’s adoption of the term, in which disintegration remains a *product* not a *production* of the Anthropocene (or what he thereby periodises as the *Entropocene*<sup>19</sup>). Here, again, the distinction remains one between evolution & its *artefacts*; between the entropic condition of all production & the *reification of production*.

## CRISIS EPIDEMIC

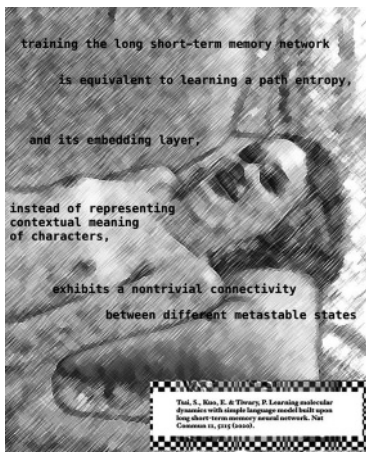
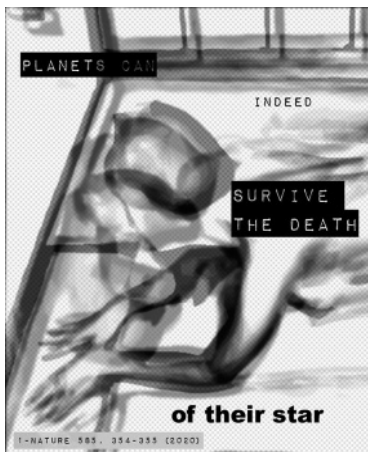
As if propagated from the future onto a consciousness of the present, the acceleration of crises defined as the Anthropocene will have appeared to bring prophetically into view nothing short of the End of Global Capital – on the naïve assumption that what has so far been called “capitalism” has already met its limits.<sup>20</sup> Whereas all that has really come to pass is the end of an epistemological regime by which both the capitalist “object” & the limits of its possibility have been “measured.” As with all such regimes, the terms under which capitalism’s *ends* are situated are only discoverable at the point at which said regime is no longer able to maintain even the appearance of functioning (the “end of capitalism” is first & foremost contained within the terminal crisis of its “objective critique”). The limits that have been met in the foreclosure of the present, yet still approaching, catastrophe, are those of an entropo-epistemology that believed itself capable of accounting for the totality of a global means of evolution. This is more than simply the disillusionment of a delusion of grandeur – nor merely the reprise of a tragic view of history. Unlike critique, which has always secretly clung to the dream of revolution *in its own image*,<sup>21</sup> there is nothing sentimental about capital, having no greater attachment to any particular constellation of forms beyond the advantage they present at any given juncture. Likewise, all evolution is, in its major convulsions, *catastrophic*.

LOUIS ARMAND  
JUNE-NOVEMBER 2020

<sup>19</sup> See Bernard Stiegler, “Escaping the Anthropocene” (talk at Durham University, January 2015): [https://criticaltheoryworkshop.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/bernard\\_stiegler\\_escaping\\_the\\_anthropece.pdf](https://criticaltheoryworkshop.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/bernard_stiegler_escaping_the_anthropece.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> See Léon de Mattis, “Epidemic crisis and crisis of capital,” *Non* (14 April 2020): <https://non.copyriot.com/epidemic-crisis-and-crisis-of-capital/>

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Michelet: “I define the Revolution: the advent of the Law, the resurrection of Right, & the reaction of Justice” (*History of the French Revolution*, ed. G. Wright [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967] 17).

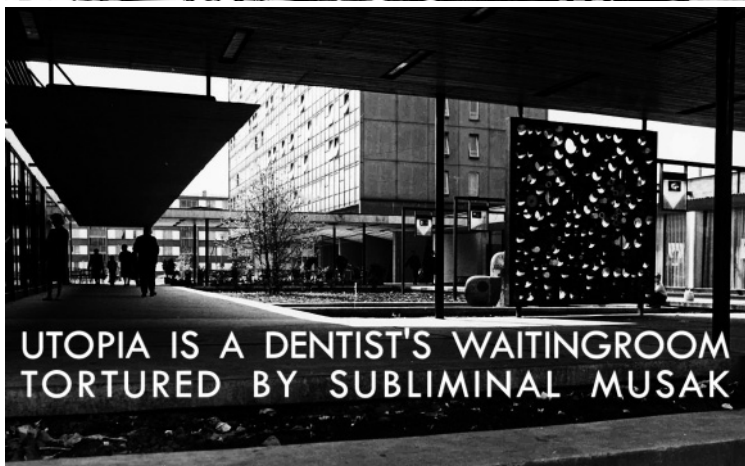






**THE FATE OF  
THEORY  
IS TO BE DONE  
TO DEATH**

# THEIR MASTER'S VOICE



UTOPIA IS A DENTIST'S WAITINGROOM  
TORTURED BY SUBLIMINAL MUSAK





# ON THE ENTROPEMENT OF COVID-19

(A RESPONSE TO LOUIS ARMAND'S *ENTROPOLOGY*\*)

The manner in which media have been reporting on the current Covid-19 epidemic has been unique, insofar as the new crisis quickly focused the western media-scape on this one single story in a very short span of time. This effect is highly unusual & differs from the standard tempo & manner of reporting & can yield some unique insights. This essay will attempt to situate the Covid-19 pandemic within a general "entropology," showing how the crisis is being spun in the months following the first reports, & will focus on the manner in which the event of the disease has become, in Armand's lexicon, "entroped" within contemporary information networks

\* Louis Armand, "Entropology," *Alienist 7* (2020): 56-77 & above.

– entropement will be shown to consist in the framing of a “dissipative” object-signifier within a network of parasitic relations.

### **MATTER (1)**

The first mention of the term “entropology” comes from Claude Lévi-Strauss’ best-selling book *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), where he coins the term as an alternative to anthropology. After years of performing anthropological work in the Amazonian region, Lévi-Strauss becomes disenchanted with the work of the anthropologist who ventures beyond the ramparts of civilization to observe, note, & analyze:

Taken as a whole, therefore, civilization can be described as a prodigiously complicated mechanism: tempting as it would be to regard it as our universe’s best hope of survival. Its true function is to produce what physicists call entropy [...] “Entropology,” not anthropology, should be the word for the discipline that devotes itself to the study of this process of disintegration in its most highly evolved forms.

Lévi-Strauss considers “the human” within its modernist envelope, as a particular force which has, through processes of technical exosomatization, created instruments for the exploitation of “nature.” He considers the relationship of nature to culture, “man” to animal, & other cognate dialectics as transparent. This dialectic split is largely rooted in a structuralist paradigm & applies equally to Lévi-Strauss’ comment on language & communication which he expands in the same passage. According to Lévi-Strauss, the structure of communication (stratified, but still dichotomous) breeds entropy:

Every scrap of conversation, every line set up in type, establishes a communication between two interlocutors, levelling what had previously existed on two different planes & had had, for that reason, a greater degree of organization.

Lévi-Strauss’ understanding of entropy here is limited in its structuralist oppositional logic, which considers entropy as a science which bridges the material with the informational, much like the signifier “entropy” straddles both the thermodynamic & informational registers. This misunderstanding makes “entropology” a science which charts a point of convergence between the material traces of the human animal & its communicational apparatus, drawing a direct relationship between the two. As will be shown, this is a dubious reality from the perspective of the sciences (particularly physics & information theory), but lends itself nicely to linguistic & philosophical analysis.

## **SIGNAL (1)**

Although “entropy” has been notoriously hard to define since its first framing by Carnot in 1824, it has since appeared both in the context of information theory & the physics of thermodynamics – but both speak of different things. Informational “entropy” is a concept first developed by Norbert Wiener & Claude Shannon, most notably in Shannon’s work “A Mathematical Theory of Communication,” where he posits it as a relationship between the “information” & “redundancy” tied to the “chance” of an element of communication occurring at a given time & in a given place within the message. In his classical schema of a “general communication system,” Shannon describes a signal as a discrete packet which can be transmitted from source to destination with some intervening noise potentially scrambling the messages’ coherence, decreasing its structuration & increasing its “entropy.”

Where Lévi-Strauss’ understanding of entropy was still largely rooted in the thermodynamic frame & the “disintegration” which the human ultimately perpetrates on the Earth’s chthonic organs & natural structures, communication in Shannon’s take becomes a measure of predictability. This notion that humanity, as a speaking & communicating species, carves out little islands of negentropy can be traced to Shannon’s colleague Norbert Wiener who presented the thesis that human culture is a Maxwell’s Demon whose structuration of the world can resist “nature’s statistical tendency to disorder, the tendency for entropy to increase.” Wiener thus considered communication & the structuration of the environment as a negentropic force, one which counters the macroscopic tendency of the universe towards equilibrium as maximum entropy.

Shannon’s & Wiener’s sublimation & appropriation of entropy into a measure of information moves away from a grand scheme of thermodynamic equilibrium & introduces a much more microscopic, nuanced & relational approach, opening the way towards a systems theory of entropy. This transition towards a systems theory of modelling entropy went hand in hand with the new science of cybernetics (a term coined by none other than Wiener) which aimed to bridge the gap between living & artificial systems on the basis of their analogous functions & the study of their systems of relations.

## **MATTER (2)**

This tension between the ordering of matter & of information constitute a basis for the study of entropology, & this short genealogy will follow the work of Michel Serres who considered “entropy” as a ubiquitous component of his materialist & predatory information theory.

In his work *The Parasite*, Serres conceived of the “parasitic cascade.” This

cascade expands the simple dialectic framework which Lévi-Strauss sets up in his original framing of entropology & introduces an expanded frame from Shannon's model. Serres builds on his previous work on entropy & technology & offers the model of the parasitic cascade as a dynamic process which underwrites the relation between a series of systems & instills noise as a source of displacement driving the processes of Production. His ecological & materialist grasp of 'entropy' is fundamental, as it shows systems as always being nested & encroached upon within a wider assemblage of other systems.

In Serres' treatment, the parasitic cascade introduces two things to the more technocratic schema of Shannon: 1) it works within a wider ecology of systems & their processes of entropic exchange, & 2) it inaugurates a properly entropological frame in its conjunction of an ecological & informational ontology, expanding on Shannon's preoccupation with the technical apparatus.

For Serres, it is through the noise, the parasite, that information about the real is gleaned – this noise is the force which pushes back against the locus of Production, & "entropy" becomes a modular quality which can increase or decrease based on the disequilibrium among the systems within the cascade. Serres pragmatic materialism thus straddles the boundary between the anthropological understanding of entropy (which is physical, & which Lévi-Strauss originally associated with the human) & the informational understanding as found in Shannon. These two tendencies counter each other or, as Serres writes, "one parasite chases another out." Serres:

One parasite (static), in the sense that information theory uses the word, chases another, in the anthropological sense. Communication theory is in charge of the system; it can break it down or let it function, depending on the signal.

Within the parasitic cascade, noise is not something which needs to be purged, as in Shannon's project of communicational relay, but is rather the very motor of communication & exchange – the message never says merely what it intends to say, but always fundamentally posits a field of actors which further calibrate the parasitic chain.

Serres' schema is then a formulation of a materialist informational theory, one in which the parasite (the noise) has agency of its own & is indeed the included third which conducts the exchange of information, integrating this informational logic within the multi-agent system of his materialist ontology.

## SIGNAL (2): ENTROPEMENT

The informational platforms filtering contemporary digital-era media channels are not as easily decomposed into their individual elements & actors as Lévi-Strauss' afore-mentioned bipartite communication schema would propose – a “new dark age” of opaque media ecologies & the creative destruction of post-truth fake news has clouded the relationship between the various discourses & their underlying infrastructural vectors. The moment of the pandemic was indeed novel in a number of particular techno-social aspects – the stack of informational databases, relays & channels of virtually all contemporary media coming together around a single issue served to shed some of the media's camouflage & generated a news feed predicated on a particular type of timeliness.

Mainstream Czech media, for example, started seriously tackling the issue once Covid-19 reached Italy, & the illness became a binding point for virtually *all* media coverage once the disease reached the Czech Republic in March 2020, especially after the government declared a state of emergency on March 12. In the world media coverage, the effect was similar: the moment of the pandemic when media largely reported stats & figures gradually became integrated within other discourses, being spun in political (US vs. China), economic (liberal values vs. technocratic control), social, or environmental directions. Due to the highly limited information originally available about the virus, the event of the pandemic became, in its early stages, a linchpin for the wider communicational ecology, only to then be appropriated & detailed into myriad sub-discourses, turning into what the WHO has termed an “infodemic,” generating “excessive access to information, sometimes not thoroughly screened.” The pandemic quickly turned into an intersectional issue.

The very quick shift from the sensing of the event of the disease-in-itself into a largely informational & narrative phenomenon can be considered as an example of entropement & will be discussed presently.

Within the context of Serre's predatory informational theory, one in which informational/material systems are nested in & adjunct to other systems, Louis Armand's conception of 'entropement' becomes much clearer. Entropement carries three major semiotic elements: it is first a neologism which evokes the standard noun of the English “entrapment,” but does so by incorporating the informational & literary concept of the “trope” as a “a common or overused theme or device.” This lack of information which the trope carries is also the mark of “entropy,” & has direct effect on the western media apparatus & its treatment of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

To better understand the concrete mechanisms of entropement, a quick analysis of a recent *Guardian* article by Adam Tooze observed in parallax to

the much sparser facts is in order. According to the currently official version of the WHO (which is however being contested by not only numerous “fringe” theories, but also none other than the US government) the tracks of Covid-19’s first occurrence lead to Wuhan’s Huanan wet market, where close proximity of humans & animals may have led to the first human infection. The origins of the virus have been traced to bats, as was the case with the previous & similar 2002-2004 SARS virus, bats being one of the major viral vectors due to the robustness of their immunity system. From bats, the virus most likely spread to other, consumable wildlife traded in the wholesale markets of China.

The encroachment upon wildlife & the disruption of remote habitats has indeed been for a long time considered one of the vectors through which pathogens, such as the SARS-CoV-2, can spread. The wilderness has been the source of various illnesses throughout history – AIDS, for example, came from the close contact between humans & the blood of chimpanzees during slaughter – & experts now say that another 10 000 – 600 000 viruses have the potential to spread to mammalian wildlife & infect the human, warning that the current pandemic is mild compared to what might be lurking in other distant corners of the planet, not only in wildlife, but also hidden under permafrost. The general fact that human extractive practices throughout history have led to close cohabitation & easy transmission between humans & Emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) is correct, but certain recent articles have presented the crisis as, for example, a crisis of the ‘Anthropocene,’ or have in another way politicized the pandemic in ways which are more manipulative than they are informative. The media environment began to spin the few facts available about the diseases & has, since its turbulent irruption into the world’s populations, made a discursive issue of it, prompting the WHO to call the media storm an “infodemic” in its own right.

In his article “We Are Living Through the First Economic Crisis of the Anthropocene,” Adam Tooze writes that “What we are living through [at the moment of the Covid-19 pandemic] is the first economic crisis of the Anthropocene. This is the era in which humanity’s impact on nature has begun to blow back on us in unpredictable & disastrous ways.” There are a few nested assertions in the whole article as well as in this short excerpt: Tooze adopts a vulgar understanding of the virus as a direct effect of ‘humanity’s impact’ on wildlife & the wilderness. The seeming novelty of such a moment in time, as Tooze dates the Anthropocene from 1945 to the present, creates the idea that epidemics & close contact between animals & humans, a fact which facilitates zoonotic transfer, has no precedent in the past. This is not true, as the appearance of numerous diseases which had appeared throughout previous eras of humanity’s existence as a

result of the close co-habitation of humans & animals make clear. Tooze is thus conflating speed of transmission facilitated by the technologies of displacement & the conditions of high-density co-habitation with the very *existence* of diseases which occurred in the past & could also be termed “pandemic.” His argument is that the “great acceleration that defined the anthropocene” is somehow responsible for the very fact of zoonotic transfer taking place.

The question of a time-frame within which to speak of novelty & the dissemination of information is fundamental here, as Bogna Konior makes clear when she writes that

As blessed as we are to have books & other media that transmit knowledge & stretch temporality for us, we are still trapped within the span of an individual lifetime, & a limited perception of history. Even if pandemics happen throughout history, what appears to us in perception appears as a novelty, as a problem for thought, & it indeed has new variables each time.

The journalistic frame of *The Guardian* within which Tooze’s essay appears thus latently positions the phenomenon of SARS-CoV-2 as being 1) an “unprecedented” & 2) a phenomenon of the Anthropocene. This is a particular spin which is predicated on the media industry’s curatorial practices. That is not to say that Tooze’s article is invalid in & of itself, but rather that the inferences which Tooze makes on the pandemic have undergone factual distortion & have become contained within pre-determined templates, or tropes, which peddle in novelty as much as they work with largely evacuated information – specifically “the Anthropocene” can now contain just about anything without necessarily saying anything either, as Rosi Braidotti has made clear.

Entropement is a structural secretion of the contemporary communicational ecology & its function in the wider entropological field functions as follows: The more entroped the signifier is signifier, the more redundant it becomes & the less information it carries. Entropement is thus the generation of enclosed informational objects which are “dissipative” & of discursive systems which are parasitic in their logic. Entropement is a particular discursive phenomenon which fuses infrastructural & material systems with informational apparatuses in a way which in their effects on society may, in the words of Armand, “be said to be constitutive of a general *ecology of mind*”. The dissipation of the originally largely coherent concept of Covid-19 (a coherence largely predicated on necessity) thus becomes dissipated through the parasitic mechanisms of the contemporary media apparatus. This makes the original signifier overdetermined (meaning it is vested with more causes than there are effects) & Armand writes that “such an overdetermination of structural logic” is the very mode of “*entropement*.”

Entropement is thus a phenomenon which spins the original event of the Covid-19 pandemic along various party lines, all of them predicated on an underlying infrastructural platform of contemporary distributed & hybrid media. Entropement as a concept works through the ideological values of the discourse while taking into account the underlying material networks & infrastructure which make such a discourse possible & which situate it firmly within the wider study of entropology.

### Conclusion

The essay aimed to show the genealogy of entropology with the backdrop of the current Covid-19 pandemic as a case study. The analysis moved through some of the central milestones of information theory in order to show the non-transparency of the term "entropy" & its resulting abduction for philosophical speculation – the science of entropology. The treatment of the pandemic within the western media apparatus served as a case study for framing the Armandian concept of entropement as a fundamental component of entropology & has been utilized to show the implication it carries for thinking the media both as an infrastructural space as much as an ideological arena whose logic oscillates between the crystallization & subsequent dissipation of meaning.

CELIA SPHINXTER



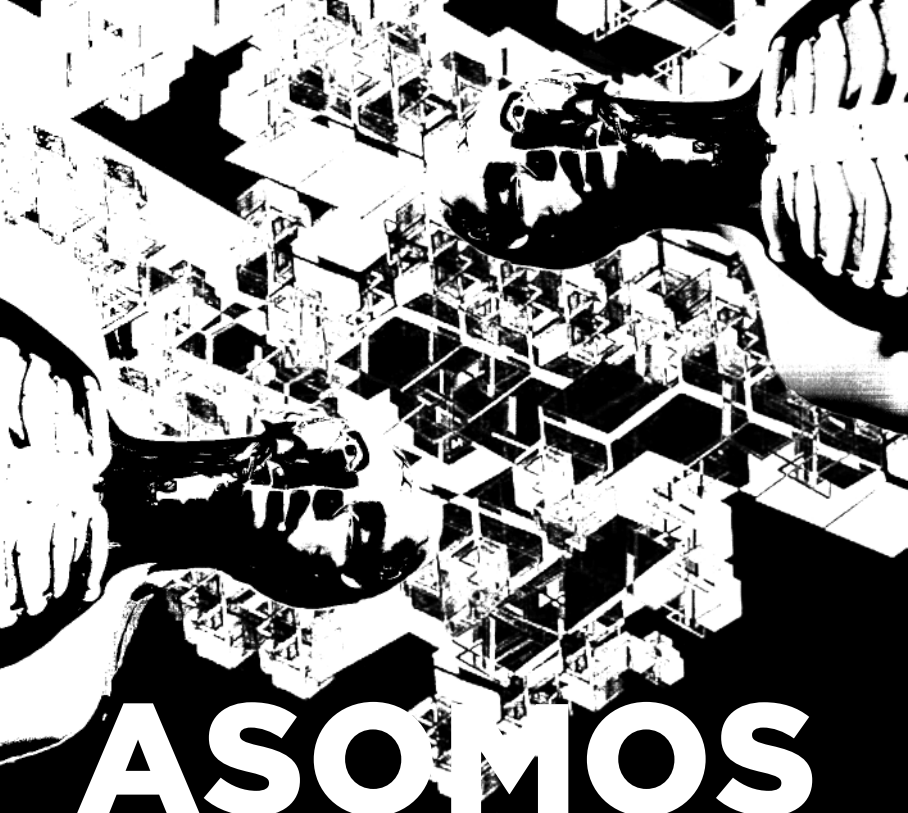
DETRUIRE LE  
PANOPTIQUE.







**THE PURPOSE OF MONEY  
IS TO APPORTION BLAME**



# ASOMOS

## 1. Reflexiones pterygotas

Los humanos se encontraron frente a su propia extinción. Le habían dado nuevas formas al paisaje sin apercebirse de que coexistían con temporalidades otras: las de los fantasmas del pasado que los acechaban o que igual se asomaban a mirarlos desde el futuro donde están ausentes. Los humanos olvidaron lo que había antes y los futuros que imaginaron no tenían la suficiente fuerza para conjurarlos más allá de las ruinas tóxicas que habitaban. Como una estrategia de fuga de su realidad, implementaron otra temporalidad: la sincronización instantánea. Al manipular el tiempo con la ciencia y la tecnología, dejaron de poder percibir temporalidades otras, los tiempos que se entrecruzan para hacer la matriz sobre la cual se teje la existencia de la tierra. Porque compartimos existencia con la flor silvestre extinta en el prado, el líquen en la tumba del cementerio, los jitomates que crecen salvajes en una lata tirada en un basurero, con peces que se asfixian en un río contaminado y con mariposas migrantes que han errado en su ruta y divagan perdidas. Estas temporalidades y mundos posibles están entre los

humanos, pero no los perciben porque la imaginación humana es incapaz de fugarse del tiempo del presente instantáneo que cerca sus conciencias. El supuesto excepcionalismo humano los está llevando a morir de asfixia. Para erigir su civilización supusieron que estaban por encima de todo lo demás – empezando por lo inhumano – por tener lenguaje, sentido de justicia, razón, empatía, risa, sexo erótico. Pero nunca se dieron cuenta que los “desastres naturales” no son naturales sino consecuencias de actividades humanas que desataron amenazas aterradoras: depredadores invasores, epidemias de auto-destrucción, incendios implacables, virus descontrolados.

## 2. El cuerpo desmaterializado y la virtualización de la conciencia

En el primer episodio de la serie británica *Years and Years* (transmitida a partir de 2019 en HBO/BBC), el personaje de Bethany, una adolescente cuyo rostro se esconde detrás de una máscara en 3D de emoji animada, ha hecho una cita para hablar con sus papás y anunciarles que es “transhumana.” Les dice: “No quiero ser carne. Quiero escapar esta cosa y devenir digital, quiero vivir para siempre como información.”

El transhumanismo es el sueño de digitalizar al cuerpo humano como una forma de potenciarlo o mejorarlo, de escapar el sufrimiento humano y el “error” de la muerte. Con el transhumanismo, la tecnología pone al alcance de los humanos los atributos divinos de la omnipresencia, la omnipotencia y la omniscencia. El ideal del transhumanismo es devenir “pura conciencia” logrando un tipo de trascendencia individual y secular. En *Years and Years*, Bethany se convierte en una heroína que con superpoderes transhumanos (ojos mecanizados y cerebro conectado a toda la data del mundo) logra hacer visibles los horrores en un campo de refugiados del gobierno británico. Ésta narrativa tecno-utópica es afin a la ideología de democracia en el sentido de que la meta política es la de visibilizar las ordalías de las minorías oprimidas. También está en sintonía con la ideología transhumanista de Silicon Valley, en la que el individualismo moderno secular culmina al subir a la red la estructura de la mente de una persona y descargarla en un cuerpo trans-biológico. En oposición a esta tecno-utopía, en la ciencia ficción y literatura cyberpunk el transhumanismo resulta en escenarios de pesadilla de apocalipsis, control social y sometimiento individual. Por ejemplo, como en la otra serie británica, *Black Mirror*. Lo que tienen en común *Years and Years* and *Black Mirror*: es que en ambas los avances tecnológicos y la creciente simbiosis entre humanos y máquinas vienen de la mano de inestabilidad política, económica y social. Podemos afirmar que todavía no hay equivalentes en la realidad a estas narrativas – la implantación de prótesis es cosa todavía de experimentos científicos y estéticos. Aunque en realidad, nuestra existencia no está muy alejada de estos escenarios de ciencia ficción.

### 3. Neurototalitarismo

Definitivamente, la tecnología ha tomado un papel decisivo en nuestras vidas: las plataformas digitales son la infraestructura a través de la cual gestionamos nuestras vidas laborales e interpersonales. La vida humana prácticamente se ha fusionado al mundo virtual y podemos decir que las plataformas digitales son la infraestructura totalizadora del mundo globalizado.

La cuestión es, que siguiendo a Franco Berardi, la tecnología digital tiene poder de actuar directamente sobre nuestras mentes<sup>3</sup>. Berardi llama "tecnomaya" y lo define como la captura de los flujos de la actividad mental humana que se nos regresan en un bucle de retroalimentación. Es decir, las plataformas digitales extraen data de nuestros flujos neuronales para generar algoritmos que nos regresan mercancías digitales individualizadas para maximizar la captura de nuestra atención y por lo tanto plusvalía.

Sí vivimos en la distopía del espejo opaco, en el sentido de que la gente pasa más y más tiempo con fantasmas electrónicos consumiendo cantidades de data que el cerebro humano no es capaz de procesar. Una de las consecuencias de ello es que la experiencia humana se está transformando en códigos monetizados sujetos al poder de la simulación y la estandarización. Otra consecuencia es la transformación de la percepción y experiencia humanos en data, lo cual para Berardi implica una mutación cognitiva que cambia de manera radical las maneras en las que nos relacionamos con lo que nos rodea y con los otros.

La experiencia humana es nuestro acceso a la realidad: es ver al mundo y proyectarlo para darle significado. La experiencia es vivir algo e implica encontrar significado en esa vivencia. Cuando la experiencia es formateada por una plataforma digital, (Waze Google Maps) la experiencia se somete al poder de la simulación y la estandarización de la data y paulatinamente, dejamos de tener experiencias del mundo que dejan de ser objetos de nuestra propia experiencia para convertirse en referencias de un mundo pre-empaquetado. Además, al estar constantemente expuestos a los flujos de data, los estímulos que percibimos de la red rebasan nuestra atención y sucede que carecemos del tiempo suficiente para elaborar, reflexionar y pensar críticamente en los estímulos informacionales que recibimos. Esta aceleración y captura de la experiencia de la atención tienen consecuencias en nuestras decisiones políticas, memoria, imaginación, lenguaje y comunicación. También generan falta de empatía. Por ejemplo, cada noche se nos informa sobre el estado de la pandemia en México con datos, gráficas y estadísticas. Son pocos los medios de comunicación que cuentan las historias de cómo la gente está viviendo la pandemia del

<sup>3</sup> Franco Berardi, *Neuro-totalitarianism in Technomayagoog-colonization of Experience and Neuro-Plastic Alternative* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2014)

COVID-19. Los enfermos y sobrevivientes de coronavirus no tienen rostro, y también son invisibles las redes de ayuda mutua, los remedios caseros, las historias de cómo se contagia la gente. Las historias humanas están fuera de nuestra percepción compartida, y son sustituidas por informes basados en datos dados por un funcionario encantador. Esto es un ejemplo de cómo el lenguaje se ha reducido a la información y la comunicación a la incorporación automatizada de tecno-lingüísticos (Like/share).

Y mientras más vaciamos nuestras vidas en el ámbito virtual, más se va afianzando un nuevo macrofascismo global o "neurototalitarismo." Es bien sabido cómo la compañía Cambridge Analytica usó a los algoritmos de retroalimentación de las plataformas digitales para ayudar a que Trump ganara las elecciones en 2016. También se sabe que la gente se mantiene enganchada a las plataformas con algoritmos que deliberadamente amplifican los contenidos de historias diseñadas para desatar furia, odio y miedo. Esto se debe a que los algoritmos que actúan directamente en el sistema límbico de los usuarios son los más efectivos para mantenernos conectados. Hay que tomar en cuenta también que las benditas redes sociales que son las plataformas de Silicon Valley, actúan no solamente en base a modelos de maximización de ganancia sino también como si estuvieran por encima de la ley. Es decir, a diferencia de los medios de comunicación tradicionales, que están sujetos a la ley y deben seguir ciertos estándares de objetividad y responsabilidad, las plataformas digitales siguen un modelo de negocios cuyo único objetivo es el de enganchar a los usuarios bajo pretexto de fomentar la libertad de expresión. Están tan por encima de la ley, que de nuevo Facebook y Twitter tuvieron injerencia en las elecciones en Estados Unidos: censurando un artículo del New York Post que comprometía a Biden. También hace poco, la plataforma de Zoom censuró un encuentro académico con la líder activista palestina Leila Khaled.

#### **4. Macrofascismo y capitalismo del coronavirus: ¿Dónde están las líneas de escape?**

Hoy, universidades y todo tipo de instituciones por el mundo han firmado jugosos contratos con Zoom y Google para mantener andando la maquinaria de la productividad (material e inmaterial). Con la pandemia, las pantallas parecen ser nuestro único lazo con el mundo no sólo para seguir produciendo sino en una búsqueda desesperada por ahuyentar la depresión y el pánico, juntarnos y encontrar significado en común en fiestas de Zoom, intercambiar puntos de vista, artículos, memes, sobre la situación en grupos de WhatsApp (¡fiestas clandestinas!).

Con el encierro por la pandemia, las condiciones de alienación de la vida urbana se intensifican, además de que el privilegio se ha redefinido como la posibilidad de tener los medios para no entrar en contacto cercano con

la gente de cuyo trabajo, cuerpos y vidas dependemos porque sostienen nuestras formas de vida. Esto significa que ha surgido una nueva "clase trabajadora virtual" y que Zoom y plataformas afines se han convertido en la matriz de un modelo de producción instituido por el coronavirus en el que la oficina y la escuela invaden el espacio privado. La nueva economía del encierro florece en la pureza de la conectividad digital, en un espacio de comunicación desacuerpado, donde el conocimiento se subsume a códigos intercambiables y a las reglas de la acumulación del capital, exacerbando el poder de la tecnología sobre la sociedad.

Uno de los aspectos más preocupantes de la reducción de la vida y contacto humanos a las pantallas ha sido que la sociedad ha caído en la duda de su propia capacidad para gobernarse. El encierro de la sociedad civil significa compartir a diario pánico y rabia automatizados desatados por la voz simulacral del liderazgo político. La capacidad de la mente de elaborar la experiencia está debilitada, al ser delegada a las máquinas, la memoria también se altera, la memoria se uniformiza, afectando la imaginación.

Los Seis de Silicon Valley están utilizando su poder de censura para preservar el estatus quo, y la promesa del internet de ser una herramienta para la emancipación y lograr equidad permitiendo a los que no tienen dinero y poder competir en la guerra de información con gobiernos y corporaciones más poderosos acabó convirtiéndose en una herramienta de extracción, coerción, vigilancia en masa y en la centralización de poder sobre el flujo de información.

Ante este panorama y para estar a la altura de los tiempos, necesitamos asumir que la crisis por la pandemia de COVID-19 no es pasajera sino un síntoma del agotamiento inminente de los recursos de la tierra. Es decir, el coronavirus nos dice a gritos que la vida humana es insostenible bajo este modelo de capitalismo extractivista. Y el hecho de que las políticas estatales protejan al mercado y no a la vida hacen evidente primero, que no sabemos sobrevivir fuera del mercado y segundo, que no hay línea de escape posible, porque si nos volvemos tecnófobos, dejamos de existir en este mundo interconectado. Yo tengo la esperanza de que logremos un éxodo colectivo de las plataformas cuando compartamos la percepción que estar conectados tiene que ver con enfermedad, pandemia, encierro muerte y aislamiento. Y así salir todos juntos corriendo al mundo real con ganas de tener experiencias que no pasen por la mediación digital y a partir de allí, reimaginar al futuro.

IRMGARD EMMELHEINZ



NOWHERE LEFT TO FALL



the adult female,  
is covered with hair

We must not judge

MADELAINE CULVER, *Corrections*, from Charles Darwin's  
*The Descent of Man, & Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871)

## the bones

## make an extraordinary noise,

not unlike the crack of a whip.

The diversity of the sounds, both vocal and instrumental, made by the males of many birds during the breeding-season, and the diversity of the means for producing such sounds, are highly remarkable. We thus gain a high idea of their importance for sexual purposes, and are reminded of the conclusion arrived at as to insects. It is not difficult to imagine the steps by which

a bird, primarily used as a mere call or for some other purpose, might have been

of the modified feathers, by which the drumming, whistling, or other noises are

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and in the

and in the

she forgot

his

doubt, and

pursued

the forests



the dream kicks you in the head

the death of  
**M E T A P H Y S I C S**  
has been sorely  
exaggerated



#nofilter

# CYBERGOTHIC

## OR, THE WALLS ARE CLOSING IN

*Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, & a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty & strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause & progress of this decay & forced to spend days & nights in vaults & charnel-houses.*  
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*

Let me tell you a modern horror story. Horror is about invasion: something from the outside coming in, or something from within trying to get out: a stranger in the home, a virus in the body, an alien bursting through the chest, a thousand-year-old curse growing leaves out of the basement. In my tale, the internet swallowed us like a flood, nested itself like a parasite under our ribcage, & something's creeping behind our walls. Around the turn of the millennium, notably in Mark Fisher's *Flatline Constructs: Gothic Materialism & Cybernetic Theory-Fiction*, appears the idea of the cyberspace as a gothic territory.<sup>1</sup> The gothic deals with a most primal invasion, a most upsetting boundary disruption – life is ventriloquized into undead profanity, & death walks on earth disguised as ghosts, vampires, & monsters. The problem of the cybergothic is doctor Frankenstein's dilemma: technology, allowed to wield organic life as its tool creates a prosthetic hyper-nature. In Fisher's horrific tale, the cyberspace made the undead out of us - the internet lives in our bodies, manipulating our nervous systems to its rhythm. We dance to its macabre tune. We are like marionettes on its string, pulled into the carnival of ventriloquized emotions & epistemic micro-wars. The cyberspace is where it is no longer possible to distinguish between the internal lives of men & machines, where, as in a scene from *The Golem*, humans are blown around from one place to another like scraps of paper, moved by invisible cybernetic winds that hack our perceptual channels, all the while we think that we are enjoying 'freedom,' 'personal expression' or 'community.'<sup>2</sup> The uncanny terror of it is not that inhuman creatures are *alive just like us*, as it is with vampires or zombies, but that we are as *dead* as our machines. It is no longer possible to tell where agency, intention, & desire come from. The cyberspace is Dr. Frankenstein & we are its monster.

In 1973, Leonard Wolf wrote that "the Gothic novel was something of a cottage-industry of middle-class women — as if women, oppressed by needlepoint, whalebone stays, psychic frustrations, shame & babies,

<sup>1</sup> Mark Fisher, "Flatline constructs: Gothic materialism & cybernetic theory-fiction." PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Meyrink, *The Golem*, trans. Mike Mitchell (Sawtry/Riverside: Dedalus/Ariadne, 1995) 54-55.

found in the making & consuming of these fictions a way to signal each other (& perhaps the world) the shadowy outlines of their own pain.”<sup>3</sup> In *Flatline Constructs*, Fisher spends little time on the Gothic classic, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus*, the contents of which are too well known to summarise. *Frankenstein* tells horrific tales of ‘perfect’ reproduction through a woman’s horror, although this might not be obvious at first. In her essay on *Frankenstein*, Jill Lepore describes how Shelley wrote the canonical novel after a series of biotraumas:

Mary Shelley began writing “Frankenstein, or, the modern Prometheus” when she was eighteen years old, two years after she’d become pregnant with her first child, a baby she did not name. “Nurse the baby, read,” she had written in her diary, day after day, until the eleventh day: “I awoke in the night to give it suck it appeared to be sleeping so quietly that I would not awake it,” & then, in the morning, “Find my baby dead.” With grief at that loss came a fear of “a fever from the milk.” Her breasts were swollen, inflamed, unsucked; her sleep, too, grew fevered. “Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, & that we rubbed it before the fire, & it lived,” she wrote in her diary. “Awake & find no baby.” She was pregnant again when she wrote the book, pregnant again when the book came out. Shelly’s mother, a famous feminist author, died eleven days after giving birth to Shelley.<sup>4</sup>

*Frankenstein* is not only about technological manipulation of organic life, about how we are as dead as the monsters that we make, as Fisher would have it. It is also about stillbirth. A woman is a receptacle for organic invasion, the vessel for life to carry itself out through a mutation of the body: reproduction is a brute force stronger than any ideology, a nightmare & blessing eternal. A woman’s body is a ghostly receptacle. Reproduction is bifurcation. From one body, comes another. From one body can also die another. Mothers, as Claudia Day writes, are not only makers of life; they are also makers of death: even if a baby is not stillborn, making a baby is always adding to the future death count of the world. Uncanny changes are set off in the mother’s body, the most altering of which is the loss of autonomy, which is yet another form of death: “the mother is divided the moment she watches another human being exit her body.”<sup>5</sup> Gothic reproduction makes clones, stillborn babies, & undead beings stitched together from organic matter, complicating the notions of autonomy, intention & agency.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 58.

<sup>4</sup> Jill Lepore, “The Strange & Twisted Life of *Frankenstein*,” *The New Yorker*, 12/02/2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/12/the-strange-&-twisted-life-of-frankenstein>

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Day, “Mothers as Makers of Death,” *The Paris Review*, 14/08/2018, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/08/14/mothers-as-makers-of-death/>

In the gothic tradition, spiritual traumas nest in physical containers. The ghost, like a baby, is an emotional & physical wound twisting & morphing the body just as anxiety, chronic pain, or sexual trauma does, albeit each of these morphs the body in a different register. A haunted house – the house that houses the wound - or a haunted body, is in the gothic like a time machine. The future cannot be born - walk into the wrong *body*, you're dead or trapped forever (possession). Walk into the wrong *room* & you're back *there* again, living through *it* again, surrounded by ghosts (haunting). The gothic, so often concerned with the domestic life of women, turns both female territories – the body & the house – into terror zones. In Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, intimate pasts are trapped within the house, while in the new suburban gothic novels, such as in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, the domestic space houses self-renewing loops of inescapable terrors for both the wife & the husband. It is because the spaces where terror happens – your body, your home – are inescapable that the gothic is the ideal frame for describing the increasing domestication of the cyberspace. Whether it is the walls of the uterus or the walls of the house, the walls are closing in.

In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the heroine is prescribed "the rest cure," a method of treating postpartum depression in women popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, now scientifically debunked, where the woman is asked to move & act as little as possible – to not go out, write, socialize, or even cook, but to instead live as passive a life as possible. *Just stare at the walls in your house*. In the story, the longer the heroine looks at the *wall*, the more the *wall* begins to mutate. The house morphs into a feminine form - the house is the uterus from which the heroine herself is stillborn into a nightmare. She notices "a woman stooping down & creeping about behind the pattern."<sup>6</sup> The heroine sees an inverted, grotesque version of herself mended into the *wall*. Incidentally, we've taken to calling our news feeds *walls* – don't they close in on us, each a misshapen mirror, with humanoid shapes creeping underneath? When we enter into the simulated Americas that we've taken to call social media, are we entering into a modern gothic quarter, where the mundane becomes horrific, & every exit is a dead end? What's there creeping behind the walls if not ghosts, of ourselves & others, past versions of our thoughts & stillborn selves, monstrous clones, living their own lives in the dark?

In her (cyber)gothic horror novel *Ciemno, Prawie Noc* [Dark, Almost Night], novelist Joanna Bator writes: "On the Net, night never falls. Words that would once sink without a trace here harden into a film, immortalised in a lifeless glow."<sup>7</sup> If the haunted house in the gothic is a time machine, where memories are materialized as ghosts, the internet immortalizes versions

<sup>6</sup>Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, 1892, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1952>

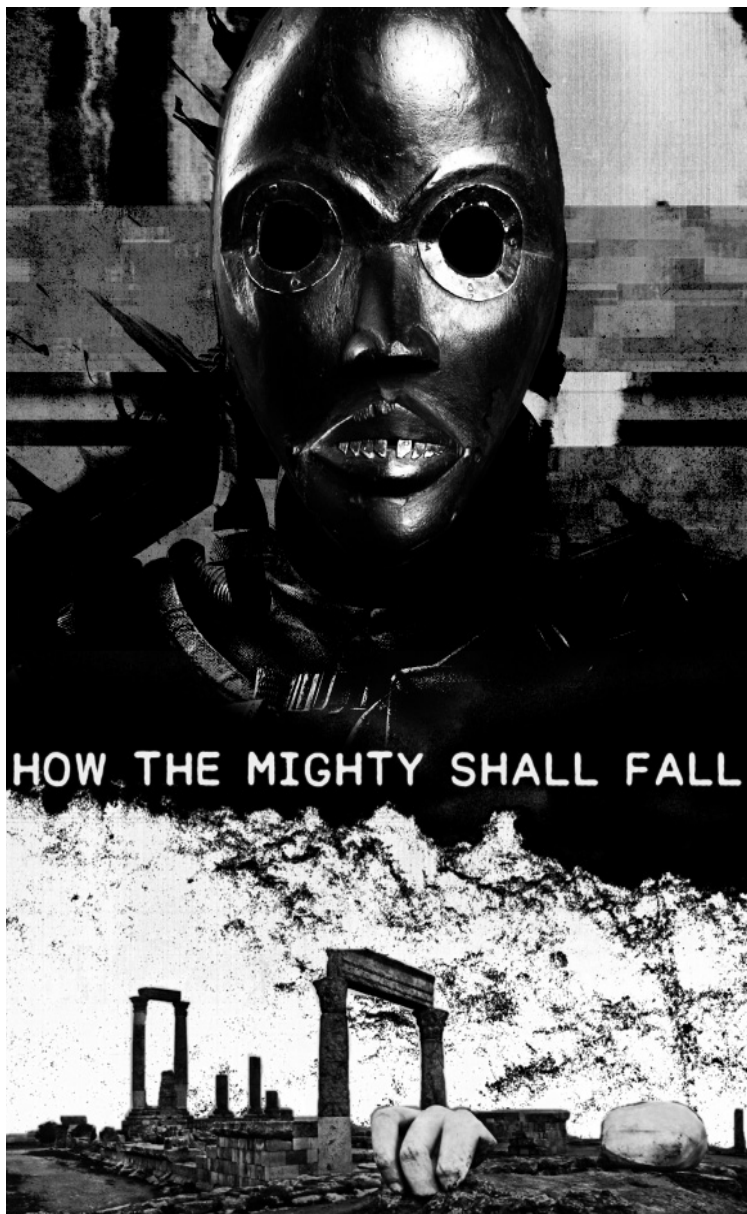
<sup>7</sup>Joanna Bator, *Ciemno, Prawie Noc* (Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2012) [e-pub]



of ourselves (a time machine). It confronts us perpetually with our past, which never disappears, creating prosthetic, monstrous copies of ourselves. *Lifeless, stillborn selves.* It starts innocently, with snapshots of our 'normal' lives: babies, dogs, dinners. Soon enough, though, monstrous versions of us appear behind the walls. The walls are closing in. We are drawn to them, as if through fate or hypnosis. Cybergothic: being surrounded by stillborn versions of yourself, immortalised in the lifeless glow of the spiderweb that became your house.

BOGNA KONIOR





**HOW THE MIGHTY SHALL FALL**



ALIEN  
Giger

HR GIGER et al., *Landscape with wreck* (1979/1989)

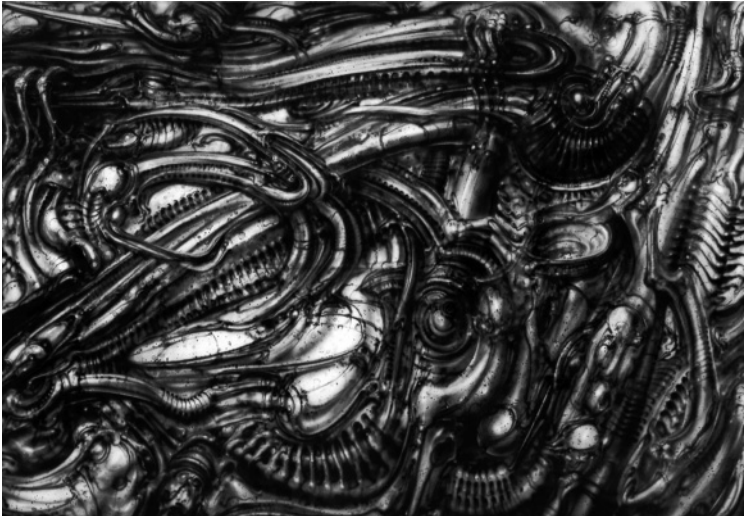
# HEGALIEN

ON HR GIGER'S HEGEL

*Helplessness guides the wandering thought in their breasts;  
they are carried along deaf & blind alike, dazed, beasts  
without judgment, convinced that to be & not to be  
are the same & not the same, & that the road of all things  
is a backward-turning one. (Parmenides)*

From the very beginning, Giger visually situates himself as a reader of Hegel. Consider his line drawing "Guillotine." In it, the artist makes his art beneath the guillotine. His canvases capture the synchronicity of execution, of slaughter. They take the moments of death, defeat, & failure &, by transforming those moments into artistic productions, he seeks to redeem them. Hegel asks us, "[...] as we contemplate history as this slaughter-bench, upon which the happiness of nations, the wisdom of states, & the virtues of individuals were sacrificed, the question necessarily comes to mind: What was the ultimate goal for which these monstrous sacrifices were made?" The implication is that without such a goal, the long nightmare of history remains without meaning. For Hegel, if there is no reconciliation of suffering with purpose, then the law of the cosmos is exclusively Roman. To the victims ("those who are sprawled underfoot"): *damnatio memoriae*. But it is Hegel's goal precisely to avoid this. Indeed, Hegel's entire project is a metaphysics of redemption (whether that redemption is forever deferred or not is secondary to its aim). Thus he reconciles himself to the guillotine in the belief that its excess (the splatter of blood upon the canvas of world history, the thump of the victim's severed head as it drops to the cobblestones below) will be someday reintegrated into the Absolute. For "the life of *Geist* is not the life that shrinks from death & keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it & maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter *dismemberment*, it finds itself." The excess of dismemberment is the bloody spew of the dismembered, & that excess necessarily accompanies the act itself. What must the world fundamentally be like for Hegel in order for this to be possible?

Giger's biomechanical landscapes compose a distinctly Hegelian metaphysical portraiture. They are snapshots of Substance, a true "world-picture" (*Weltbilder*). In short, the landscapes are perfect representations of *Geist* supervening over, or inhering within, Nature. As articulations of the technics of *Geist*, they fully ensmear the raw, sick mess of materiality. Matter rots, but its rottenness is only another site of production. It is



HR GIGER et al., *Biomechanical Landscape II No 417*



HR GIGER et al., *Biomechanical Landscape III (Trains)*

even misleading to postulate the distinction in such terms altogether, for no (ontologically) strong distinction can be made. For Hegel, there is substance, not substances. There are only differences in textures, spatial variations, permutations & distortions, whorls – but there is no clear distinction between that which is “biological” (or *Geistig*) & that which is “mechanical” (or *natürlich*). Hence the affective response of disgust commonly experienced when first viewing the biomechanical landscapes. Why disgust? It is not because the biomechanical as such is abjected (Kristeva). Fundamentally, Hegel’s philosophy does not rest upon an abject-oriented ontology (as Bataille’s does). Instead, it is because there is nothing imaginable outside of the biomechanical landscape’s contours. It is a living map of an undead territory. That is Hegel’s innovation. For him, metaphysics itself is a machine for living in (Le Corbusier). *Bios* does not occupy a privileged space in a hierarchy. Rather, it traverses the *mekhanikos* (from the Greek, meaning that which is “full of resources, inventive, ingenious”). The traversal in question is less like “a schizophrenic out for a walk” (Deleuze & Guattari) & more like the slow growth of a radiotrophic fungus, feeding off the Zone. In Giger’s biomechanical landscapes, there is no penetration (despite, at times, appearances to the contrary). All that exists in them is all that exists – the World Stuff – only a pulsing & pure immanence. The perspectival trick they perform is to subsume the viewer forcefully into themselves, like a conceptual-visual glue trap. They ensnare the viewer, at first, by embodying seductive abjection, but the abjection is simulacral. When the viewer finally looks away, she has already been illuminated. Escape is no longer possible once the viewer realizes that the painting was a hole in the curtain of appearances, that one cannot look away from that which environs & surrounds. The biomechanical landscape, which Hegel’s System limns, is the World & everything in it. To view it is to become aware of immersion in the inextricable amnesia of *Geist/Nature* as the condition of possibility for the whole (e.g., imagine the dark inversion of Augustine or Whitman’s “continual miracle” of Being).

Addendum: despite the appearance of fine reticulation, the biomechanical landscapes (like the Hegelian world substance) are smooth, not striated. The smoothness inheres in the coils & curves of tentacular space. Tentacular space can “feel itself up,” so to speak, but only on the condition of its smoothness. Ontological smoothness necessarily appears reticulated, but underlying (even making possible) the reticulation is a form of homogeneity that any immanence embodies. This is what Badiou means when he writes of Deleuze that his “fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One” (Deleuze occupies the latter part of a trajectory in thought that begins with Parmenides).



HR GIGER et al., *Landscape* (1979/1989)



HR GIGER et al., *Biomechanical Landscape No. 347*

The derelict is the remainder of a spacefaring culture that has passed away, destroyed or sacrificed, a site of dialectical failure that is haunted, pregnant with potentiality. From its dusty arcades & twisted ruins emerges Giger's Alien, stalking the landing crew first in its very absence before discharging its biomechanics upon them, penetrating their bodies violently with its obscure desire (revealed to be nothing so obscure at all, for the Alien seeks to reproduce itself). If the sexual act is in time what the tiger is in space (Bataille), the Alien then embodies both: coiled, erotic, predatory, savage. Natural, but Nature's excess: both the ghost & the darkness. The bodies of the *Nostramo's* crew are its standing reserves (*Bestanden*). But first there is nothing, only the empty space of the derelict, filled with echoes. In it, "the imminent awakening is poised, like the wooden horse of the Greeks, in the Troy of dreams." This is precisely crucial. From the derelict, a ruin, springs the resurrection. A speculative Good Friday – not for Ripley, nor for the *Nostramo's* crew, but for the Alien itself (*Hegalien*). The Alien (that which does not belong), that which takes first one shape, then another, proceeding dialectically along its pathways of development. First, it is an unknown interloper &, later, entitative & taxonomized, the product of breeding habits & lifecycles ("the wealth of the appearances of spirit, which at first glance seem to be only chaotic, is brought into a scientific order, exhibiting them in terms of their necessity & within which the imperfect modes fall into dissolution & pass over into the higher forms which are their proximate truth"). *Alien* is a Passion Play. It is a story of a God coming to be. "A transmission of unknown origin" – "the exposition of the coming to be of knowledge." In short, the Alien is a further articulation of Hegel's biomechanical world substance, Giger's perennial subject: "the perfect organism, its structural perfection matched only by its hostility." "The final report of the commercial starship," humanity's artificial womb & its sole protection against the void between the stars, the preparatory stage before the gestation & maturation of that which proceeds by sublating the human body itself – Alien, or animate *Geist*, the operative coextension of Nature, the two combined perfectly into an organism whose hostility is incidental, even accidental. Sublation necessitates destruction, sacrifice. Futurity emerges blood-spattered from the chest cavities of those who encounter it. Thus, from "the quiet shore where we can be secure in enjoying the distant sight of confusion & wreckage" (ruin gazing on an extraterrestrial scale), to the utterly nonconsensual integration of the Alien body into our own, this is what Hegel (*Hegalien*) ushers forth. The passage of *Geist* traverses the landscape of biohistory in the same manner as the Alien stalks the *Nostramo's* decks. This is what the cunning of reason entails: real cunning, real slaughter ("what it brings into existence suffers loss & injury. [...] Compared to the universal, the particular is for the most part too slight





HR GIGER et. al., *Necronom IV* (1984)

in importance: individuals are surrendered & sacrificed. The Idea pays the ransom of existence & transience – not out of its own pocket, but with the passions of individuals”). Hence why there is always another *Alien* in the making, one way or another, why Giger’s Idea (*Hegalien*) gets reconfigured endlessly. Ripley may escape for now, but the Alien always returns in the next instalment.

A material-philosophical study in verdigris. “The faint scent of rotting metal,” they contain the hints of bones within them, as if they were subjects physiologically repurposed. The fetish object in its purest form (“visible & dazzling to our eyes”), in which the fetish & the fetishist become identical, with only the barest skeletal tracings to signify that the object had once been animate. Now there is a radically new form of life, self-identical & static, the calcified remnants of Time. It is like a painting of a stopped clock. These are history’s afterbirth, stiletto placenta. Raw meat commodities produced in entirely automated & mobile factories. The factories on great spidery legs skitter slowly over a desert world, dumb creatures beachcombing a planet with no more seas. Slowly but surely, they recycle all repurposable materials & process them according to ancient machine instructions. Conveyor belts spit out thousands – millions, billions – of high-heeled shoes, dropping them in the patinized wasteland like strange spoor. In discarded heaps of heels, Giger depicts the end of history. “The mode of existence of fetish objects” as a utopian project. *Bewusstsein* becomes *Warenfetsch*: history materializes. The nightmare of time fades into eternity, which is a Now that does not fade. Augustine states that time consists of the movement of (all) physical objects. “Time is the movement of an entity.” So when Time (History, “the halls of night”) ends, motion becomes impossible. Perhaps it was always an illusion; at the end of history, “Being becomes *Begriff*.” Was it not always already *Begriff*, only calved & fractured? The meaning of the end of history is the erasure of all possible caesurae. “Absolute Knowledge, which reveals the totality of Being, can be realized only at the end of History, in the last World created by Man” (Kojève). This is the desert world, the shoe work landscape, geologically perfected by means of precipitated climatological reform on a global-industrial scale. The originary philosopher of the end of history is Parmenides. History as the history of Idea is the slow solution of the following Gordian riddle: “being is, but nothing is not.” That nothing which is not is that from which Hegel’s negative springs, like a dark, slow river eroding the programmatic error that Time was. “History itself must be essentially finite; collective Man (humanity) must die just as the human individual dies; universal History must have a definitive *end*.” Absolute knowledge, “being the last moment of *Time* – that is, a moment without a *Future* – is no longer a temporal moment.” This is why Parmenides is Hegel’s progenitor. “What exists is now, all at once, one & continuous. Nor is it

divisible, since it is all alike; nor is there any more or less of it in one place which might prevent it from holding together, but all is full of what is." The end of history is an incalculably vast & unimaginably still planetary archive of fetish objects that once *were* subjects. It is not the murder of the Real (Baudrillard) that conditions the present, but rather its birth. Simulation is a form of production in which ontological impurities are removed. The primal scene is an endpoint, not an *Ursprung*. It takes the form of the fetish object because "to be aware & to be are the same" (for Parmenides, being & thinking are numerically identical because there is only the metaphysics of the One). In other words, if a fetish is an acute awareness in which libidinal investments saturate the object of desire, then the identification of the fetish & the fetish object is its implicit trajectory. We know now, for Giger has shown us, that, for Hegel, the end of history is marked by the materialization of the Absolute – not in the form of a book of knowledge or wisdom, nor a classless society (Marx), nor a properly ordered state (the Ancients), but in the form of a Shoe.

MICHAEL UHALL







# DIFFICULT TIMES

THE WORK OF ART AS OPEN PROCESS

Although terms such as “postmodern” & postpost modern or “an open work of art” have been with us for a while, & theorists & the public have been comfortable at using them for a couple of decades, their adequate comprehension requires us to return to a patient examination of the essential core of the problem represented by the very possibility of such a work of art. We should consequently ask what can it really be? What is truly a contemporary, or an “open” work of art in process? Then, we would like to pose a question such as: how is this old analytical theme related to that of the role of the artist in difficult, dark or any other sort of times, indeed?

As the possible answers involve the entire history of civilization & culture, from Paleolithic & Neolithic times onwards, we would like to offer at least one of them; perhaps, an answer which would enable even the most innocent & simple observer or reader to interpret such a work of art. In order to somewhat explain our approach to the so called “open” work of art, it would be perhaps useful to go back to its origin & then ask oneself what is its precise meaning at this extremely complex moment of human history which is the beginning of the twenty-first century? The latest atonal music (Bill Laswell, Steve Reich, Philip Glass), the monochromatic paintings, or books without a story or a plot which the reader/spectator helplessly tries to decipher – what do they really mean? Is it something that one could use as the latest cheese spread (the participants of ‘rave’ parties), or something he would never understand regardless of the volume of the spent effort but someone else would die for (as was the case of the Russian artist, Kasimir Malevich who paid for his art by his mental health)?

In order to draw the line between the form & the opening in a work of art – & establish the notion of axiological ambiguity as a hermeneutically legitimate category in analyzing a work of art, we should first try to comprehend how & why at such notions as chance, the unformal, chaos & indeterminacy in a work of art. Art is nothing but a part of everyday life experience although it often precedes ‘life’ in an avant-garde, precognitive manner. Art also ‘follows’ life in the sense that the 21<sup>st</sup> century art is a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life as it has been developing since its inception. And if our century appears to us chaotic & life in it fragmented, often senseless & hazardous, the art which follows it appears just as chaotic & senseless. Thus, the emergence of such artistic figures as Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, John Cage, Philip Glass & earlier Stockhausen was not incidental. Their repetitive & fragmented scores are added to the previous musical tonal elements or subtracted from them in a way that has been far from incidental. Here we mention music since it is the most harmonious & direct form of art which is then followed by literature & visually decisive images & preceded, as usual, by philosophy or any prophetic intellectual development or sensibility & artistic style that may lead us to the threshold of contemporary art.

However, new works of art & new consciousness about them have not emerged "out of nowhere." Things happen historically & in continuity & ideas repeat themselves & return in cycles. So, in order to arrive at Boulez, we were bound to have an open score by JS Bach, & in order to be able to comprehend the work of James Joyce & Proust, we had to have the "open" manuscript of Sterne & Cervantes which did not insist on the plot & the classical narrative structure. Umberto Eco who devoted a greater part of his studies to this problem claims that the category of "opening" or an open work of art could have been found in all the arts & in all their forms, but that it is generally best applied to all "post-Weberian" compositions in art starting from the Baroque era through Symbolism. All these compositions were based on the spiritual & theoretical collaboration of the spectator & the author/artist where the spectator & the reader have not leisurely lounged in an armchair contemplating the artistic final product but rather participated actively in the interpretation of a given work of art.

And so instead of looking, for example, at the final form of the vase & flowers in the domain of visual arts, the spectator would enter into a situation – as in the case with Picasso's painting – where he would instead create, helped by his own eye retina, a form of the aesthetic act of creation of the work of art instead of merely observing its existence. In order to explore more vividly the phenomenon which permeated the 20<sup>th</sup> century art & which entered literature through the big door with the appearance of Mallarme's *Book*, we have to go back to Shakespeare who introduced the notion of an open work in his play "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He not only introduced us the notion of an "opening" by applying the technique of a story within story, but had also given us a real advice there on how to observe such a play. His Thisbe asks Pyramus who is imprisoned, "how should we make a hole in a wall & make an opening"? To which Pyramus, using a famous technical & theatrical gimmick, answers: "move your fingers, open your fingers & you'll make an opening." In other words, by changing the angle of viewing things in art, we arrive at an opening, an open work of art.

"The opening" in the visual field of arts begins in the twentieth century with the development of lyrical & geometric abstraction: for instance, the Czech artist František Kupka reduces the form to an absolute abstraction as early as 1912, & Matisse arrives there in 1914; Fernand Leger arrives in 1921 & Hans Arp only in 1929. Of course, there is Alexander Calder who opened the way to the postmodern combinatory science in 1933 & we remember Dubuffet who in his painting "Permeated Clarity" (1957) combines the spiritual & mystical contemplation of art with a simple & brutal approach to it (Art Brut).

Where do we arrive, or better still, where do we start from in all these occurrences & instances of an "open approach" to art? A possibly useful

starting point in examining the existence of an open work of art, is the consideration of the problem of the role of the quotidian in the work of an artist. We shall try to glance, but only in passing, at the role of an artist in the quotidian, & the hidden meaning of his role expressed in an everyday form of existence. Is s/he in jail? Does s/he dwell on some sort of Gulag, or Google island? Is s/he smitten by a pandemic flu, with his/her empty pockets full of the capitalist promises? Is s/he still alive or do we just hear the podcast of his voice mixed with the noise coming from the central Almighty's box streaming the orders from the President's office?

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, from the Russian revolution onwards, artists as well as their spectators/readers/listeners have evermore come to terms with the fact that the "ivory tower" or say the extreme aestheticization or isolation of the artist from the world & from him/herself were no longer viable. These escapisms from the real were no longer valid elements of an adequate assumption of the status of the artist in the contemporary world. This insight we will later invoke despite that old & well-known danger of theoretical reductionism symbolized by the dogmatic "Stalinist" or say "Maoist" approaches to art & existence as such. Sadly enough, the aforementioned approaches had staggered & ruined the most pertinent & brilliant pillars of the early Marxist writings cum philosophy. Whenever the artist is kept in a doghouse or in a lockdown, & whenever he's being told to "shut up," he screams out barking ever louder & better. That's the nature of his role in the times which are for her/him rather always difficult.

The period which precedes the Abstract Expressionism & say Neo-Expressionism (1980s) is largely putting it – the era of Baroque. The open stance characteristic of the Baroque epoch as well as its extremely wrought-up artistic & aesthetic endeavors have left us with the heritage of the genius such as Caravaggio whose models of the homeless seem to emerge straight from some contemporary Parisian Metro stop or the London Tube (underground). As the author's aesthetic & artistic "I" have disappeared from the scene, & the scene has become more spiritual flowing into that large river called life, we feel comfortable to observe the uncomfortable presences of the most spiritual artists of the twentieth century: artists such as Kasimir Malevich & Victor Brauner, the Surrealists such as Max Ernst, Andre Masson, Yves Tanguy & Marcel Duchamp had participated in a massive resistance movement during the World War II. In the period when evil starts dictating our existence & our lifestyle, the dictatorship of totalitarian system closes up "an open work of art" as much as it diminishes the artist who often dies or ceases to exist for his/her public. We see this statement exemplified in the case of the Supremacist artist, Kasimir Malevich who was ordered by Lenin to accept figuration in his work, by the end of his life (see "The Man



who Runs" 1933) or in the case of Felix Nussbaum who was literally executed by the Nazis in Berlin by the beginning of the World War II, to name just a few of those for whom the destiny acted at its most cruel. The examples of those artists who were forced to face exile such as Thomas Man, Brecht, Benjamin or Max Ernst are numerous & somewhat already recognized by their insistent followers.

As the result of an overall disgust over the destruction of Europe which happened during the subsequent World Wars, the artists moved to other continents thus we have found the painterly works of Abstract Expressionism in Europe exemplified by the energetic Philip Guston, Mark Rothko, Larry Rivers & Jackson Pollock. Except for the local artists such as Dubuffet, Robert Filliou & Pierre Soulages in France, we have noticed the delightful presence of the Eastern Europeans living in Paris such as Petar Omcikus, Mica Popovic, Ljubinka Jovanovic & Dado Djuric. Their contemporaries, the totally committed Italian artists such as Luciano Fabro, Mario Mertz, Penone & Pistoletto, as well as the Greek artist Kounellis, have not only enlarged the borders & frontiers of the notion "art vs. life" but all of them have worked hard towards the idea that art is not a petty bourgeois product to be "framed" & later hung on a wall of some pretty neoliberal salon! All of these artists that we have just mentioned were adamant to claim that their artwork is the liveliest political comment & the best form of protest – even if their pieces do not mention politics in an overt manner or these simply fail to be didactic & "teach" their public the actual political truths.

Every work of art of high quality is by its proper nature & character – subversive in itself & it always represents a sort of danger... that's why many books are being burnt in different countries, or simply censored or they never get to the final stage of going to print, etc. However, the fact is that despite their poor social status, the artists represent the most prominent consciousness in the face of mankind, & they tend to remain quite different from animals, such as an ostrich for example, the animal who loves to bury his innocent head into the sand without any form of grievance.

NINA ŽIVANČEVIĆ

**machines  
don't  
make your  
decisions  
for you,  
they make  
\*their\*  
decisions  
for you**

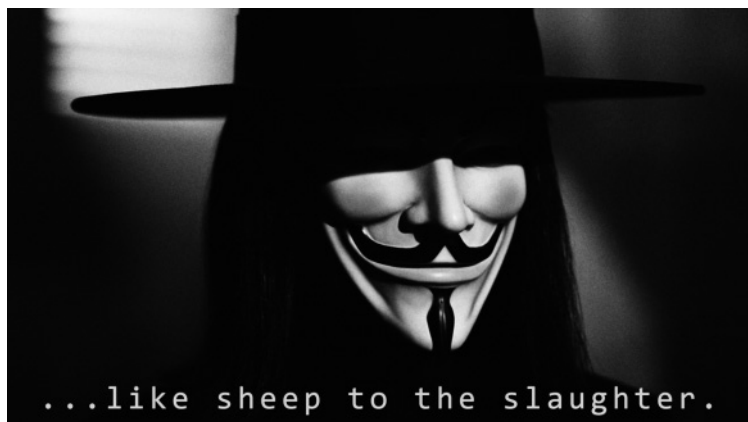
HILBERT DAVID



MON

PAUVRE

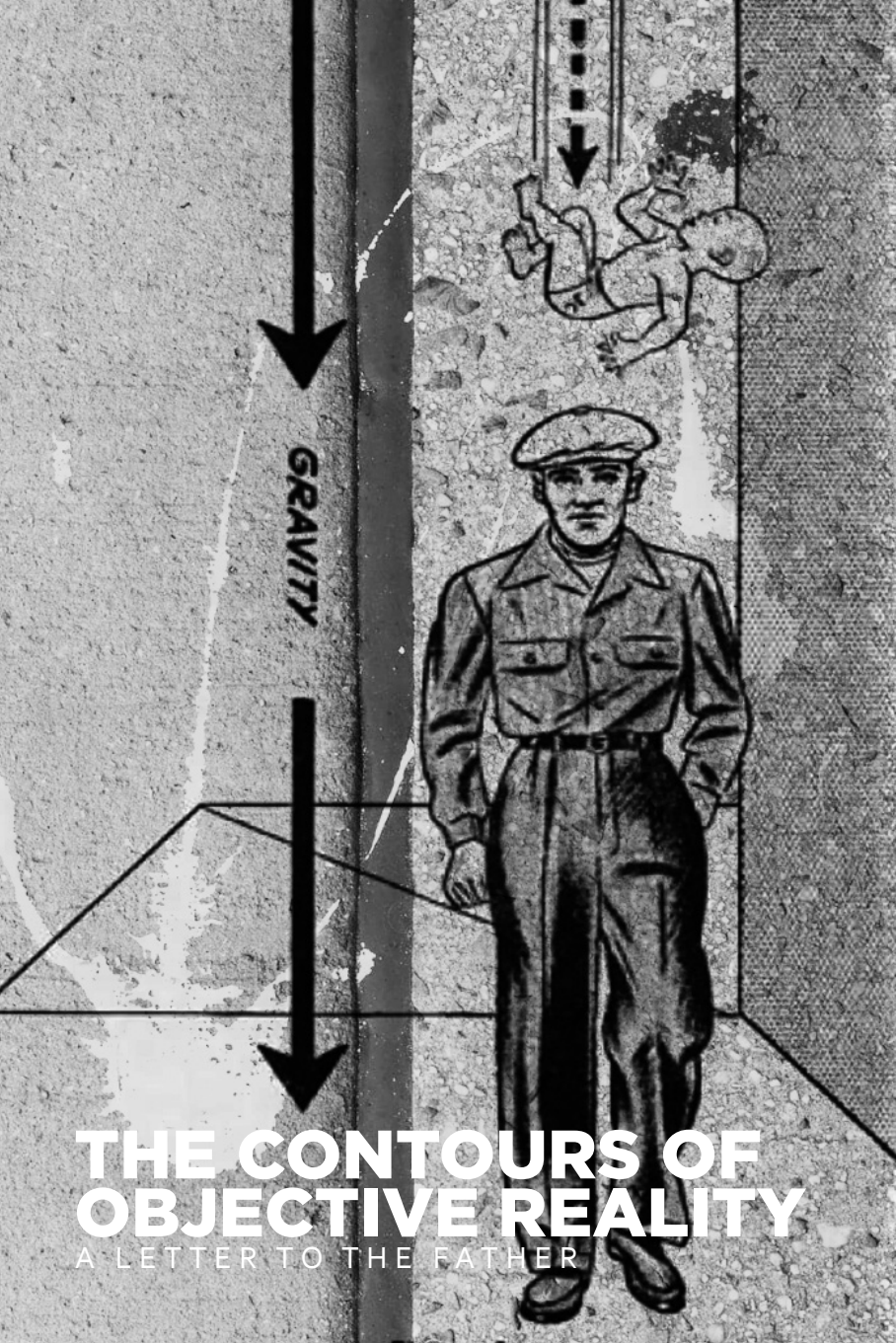
RÉVISIONNISTE!



...like sheep to the slaughter.

# THE MELAN- CHOLIA OF EX- TINCTION





**GRAVITY**

# THE CONTOURS OF OBJECTIVE REALITY

A LETTER TO THE FATHER

These are the contours of objective reality.

My father's childish concerns with ideology & patriotism belong to the One Bad Apple that putrefies the lot: MANKIND.

Belief of any kind is an excuse for inaction.

As we know, religion is an elixir for poverty, loneliness, & the fear of death. Dad almost never demonstrates self-awareness beyond the ability to detect whether or not he smells & needs a shower.

These banalities chronically enamor the pathological masses. For the minor literati, they amount to birdshit. Apeshit on a good day.

You can't touch belief.

It's ethereal.

In fact, belief doesn't exist. Prove it.

The spoken word does not constitute evidence. Nor does the written word, or any word.

Or any gaze.

Montaigne put a premium on belief, contending that, for instance, science doesn't exist. There is only a belief in science. "Nothing is so firmly believed as that which we least know," he opines, foreshadowing the theatre of the absurd.

Montaigne, then, believed in belief. Another banality. All belief is make-believe, & anybody who puts a premium on an ideological apparatus imagines & endorses its faux corporeality by default.

In the broadest terms, belief is contextualized as an "attitude" or "proposition." For Dad, it has to do with Fox News, American exceptionalism, sporting events, capitalism, & the traumatic kernel that animates his extracurricular schizophrenia.

At what point does the extracurricular become the curricular? More importantly, what is left when patriarchy is excised from the Father?

Michel de Montaigne, "On the Cannibals," *The Essays: A Selection* (Penguin Books, 2003) [1877] 79.

## STARDUST.

A Southern Baptist preacher tried to molest Dad when he was nine. He escaped before he got touched in the wrong place, but the close call left a scar & contaminated his view of the world & his place in it.

He does good deeds.

He makes grilled cheeses for homeless people. He contributes to charities. He's a bus driver. The children he takes to & from school love him.

He was a soldier. A marine. A gunner on a helicopter during the Vietnam War. He sprayed down drop zones when his company deployed troops.

He may or may not have killed Charlie, among others.

Now he believes what he wants to believe at his leisure & convenience. This includes everything from skygods & messiahs to the weather (i.e., if it's raining & he wants to play golf, it's not raining).

Logic never applies. Absurdism runs the house like a Victorian butler.

Action vs. inaction—which is the doppelgänger, & to what side of the coin does reaction belong?

We react to stasis just as readily as motion.

Consider all of the stiffs fidgeting in the grave of life. As M.K. Undefined reveals, "Every human is a collection of ravenous corpses devouring each other in succession; the bodies of today are the flowers of tomorrow & the ghouls of yesterday."<sup>2</sup>

In this equation, the corpses, the bodies, the flowers & the ghouls—all of them are spurred by a primal catalyst that initiates a quest for fire.

The earth's core beats like a heart just as all hearts burn like the core.

"A chemically doped ball of iron" that lives "1,800 miles beneath our feet," the core is "the size of Mars & every bit as alien. It's a place where pressures bear down with the weight of 3.5 million atmospheres, like 3.5 million skies

<sup>2</sup> M.K. Undefined, *Alienist* 8: Covidology (May 2020): 115.

falling at once on your head, & where temperatures reach 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit—as hot as the surface of the sun. It's a place where the term 'ironclad agreement' has no meaning, since iron can't even agree with itself on what form to take. It's a fluid, it's a solid, it's twisting & spiraling like liquid confetti."<sup>3</sup>

Dad writes letters to the core & knows what's really going on down there. "Much more than idle metaphor," he nods in dark understanding.

Special people have special wisdom. It doesn't matter that they're amateurs. As Americans, it is their duty to convey that wisdom to the masses—especially the experts, whose specialism is far inferior to the supernaturally charged perception of the Chosen Few.

Dad has always wrongly equated intellect with watching the news & world travel. These pastimes are not participatory. Intellect can only be cultivated under the auspices of aggression. It is the product of cognitive violence.

Dad was an international businessman. Household & commercial appliances—refrigerators, freezers, ranges, etc. His best customers lived in the Far East & the Middle East where he visited several weeks per year, throwing sales pitches to Japanese salarymen & obese Arabs over lunch, dinner, & drinks.

In fact, an American turd is no different than a Saudi turd. Prove it.

All of earth's children will grow up to be just as uninteresting, disinterested, & intellectually palsied as their parents. In the valley of the psyche, cultural nuances are a myth.

Moreover, screenlight is not a substitute for sunlight, but the alien mystique of the former has arrogated the timeworn proficiency of the latter. Unconsciously, some users think screenlight is God's aura.

"The moment you encounter the unknown you translate it back into the known," writes Marshall McLuhan. "This means that we never encounter the unknown. We encounter only convenient self-deceptions."<sup>4</sup> He concludes: "We are doing this to ourselves; nobody is doing it to us."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Natalie Angier, "The Enigma 1,800 Miles Below Us." *The New York Times*, 28 May 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium Is the Massage," *Understanding Me: Lectures & Interviews* (The MIT Press, 2003) 87.

<sup>5</sup> McLuhan, "The Medium Is the Massage," 97.



A letter to the Father can only be an expression of the author's disillusionment, disenfranchisement, disestablishmentarianism. Even Kafka says so in the subtext of "Letter to His Father." "It's not you, it's me," says the subtext, as if to a scorned lover. "My feelings towards your asshole are my fault, as is my consequential affect."<sup>6</sup> In the end, we are only response-able for our own (re)actions. It doesn't matter what an antagonist does. What a victim does in the wake of being victimized is entirely the victim's problem.

Dad can only adapt by becoming a god & attempting to bring every conceivable facet of life under his control. This means he can't adapt. Nor can any of the patriarchs that fill out the ranks of his generation. Again, McLuhan: "To have a fixed position from which to examine the world merely guarantees that one will not relate to a rapidly changing world."<sup>7</sup>

For these Lost Boys, fluidity is an impossibility.

Subjectivity makes everything into a fairytale. Especially objectivity.

Dad had eight siblings & grew up impoverished in the mountains of North Carolina. There was no toilet in the house; he had to defecate in an outhouse. Once, he became jealous of his eldest brother's red wagon & threw it in the shitter. His father made him climb down & get it out.

He can't get it out. He's still down there.

Nothing will change until the shitter becomes the grave & he seeps into the core.

D. HARLAN WILSON

<sup>6</sup> Franz Kafka, "Letter to His Father," *The Sons* (Schocken Books, 1989) 113-67.

<sup>7</sup> Marshall McLuhan, "The End of the Work Ethic," *Understanding Me: Lectures & Interviews* (The MIT Press, 2003) 197.

**BLOODSTAINED Urban**

Toscani, Italy 1971. Arrow/Popi



MICHAEL ROWLAND, *Bloodstained Urban*



MICHAEL ROWLAND, *Sci-Fi Party*



MICHAEL ROWLAND, *You Would Tell Me If You Were Lying Wouldn't You*

COP ONE



COP TWO

MICHAEL ROWLAND, *God's Cops*

RODINA



MICHAEL ROWLAND, *Rock und Roll*

Lego man  
scares tourists

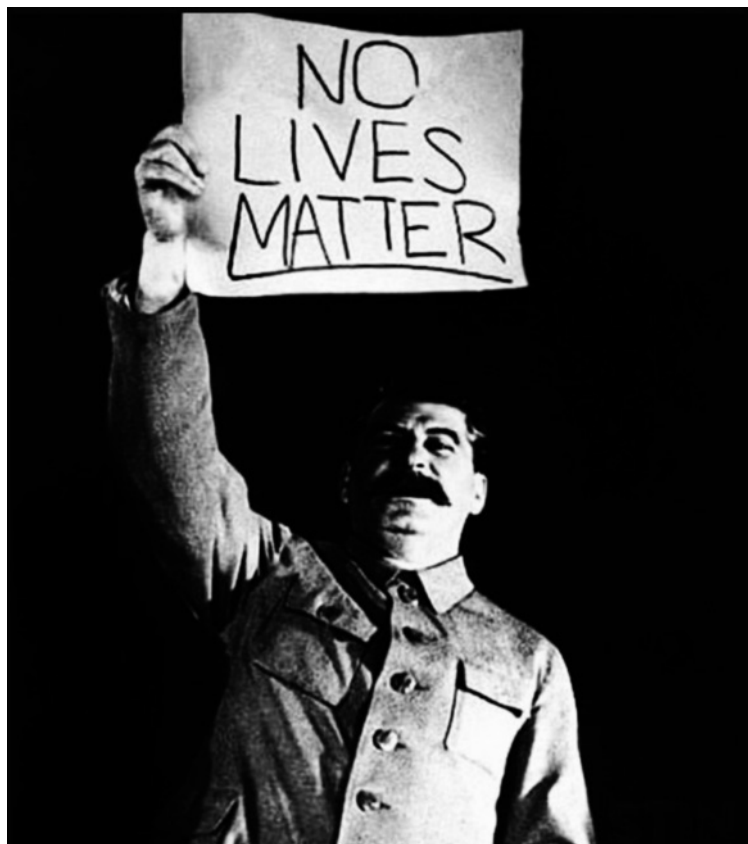


with  
sex magic



MICHAEL ROWLAND, *Whaa*





# **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**

In an imagined and ideal world there are no borders or walls to obscure one's vision of the horizon, and the night sky shimmers with light from a thousand fires rather than from the cold rays of modern streetlamps. In reality, we pass as ghosts through streets with our friends and enemies, washing the days and nights with tears, anxiety and reminiscences of old dreams. If I pass by the dirty windows in the core of the city, where the monolithic buildings tower over the populace like brutal gargoyles, I see the vague outline of a body that I've been told is like my maternal grandfather John – tall, lean and angular. His hands were in the dirt, covered in cement, far from delicate. His arms and legs used for bailing hay and lifting wood. My paternal grandfather Kaszmir had a similar build hardened by pounding steel as a village blacksmith and making guns for the underground resistance in Eastern Poland during the Second World War. These are the physical features I've inherited from my male ancestors, only a generation removed from me. I often look at my own hands and see how pristine they are... no cuts or bruises, no stiffness or pain. I've reaped the rewards of their sacrifice by being able to keep a vague memory of them alive through words. I don't feel the heat of the forge or even breathe the stifling summer air when working the fields, I'm simply the unknown grandson, archivist of a vanished age.

I never knew these men, as both died before I was born – one in Europe and the other only hours away from where I live, in the small Indigenous community where my mother grew up. My grandfather John was a young boy during the Great Depression, and he avoided the spectre of death by learning the ways of his Indigenous forefathers, hunting and trapping in remote areas, during a time when the Métis people were viewed as the bastard children of French explorers and their Indigenous mothers, with no rights to the land they had helped cultivate since the fur trade. He saw the population fall as unemployment rose, farmers migrate north due to drought in the south, Communist militants trying to seize power as citizens stood in bread lines across the country. The past, no matter how far removed from our own experience, has a way of repeating *ad nauseum* the calamities it has ingested and it damns us with its darkness in ways we cannot always clearly see. As I read the stories and see the footage of mass COVID graves and closed storefronts, I feel the past gaining on us.

Zenobia and Julia were my grandmothers, and Zenobia, my Babcia, was the only grandparent I knew and the only link I've had to that torturous past. She was born in 1922, to Ukrainian parents. Her father is said to have been a soldier in Czar Nikolas II's army before the Russian Revolution of 1917. Both of her parents died during the Second World War. My grandmother's first husband never met his unborn son and he likely died in a concentration

camp. A house she was hiding in with my infant uncle was bombed and somehow, by the grace of a dying God, she survived. In broken English she would talk solemnly about all the crying children who wandered aimlessly because their parents had been killed or had disappeared, or how she struggled to find food to survive herself. She witnessed the madness and despair, and the ghostly movement of the death trains into the void. It is hard to reconcile these experiences with the glowing smile and gentle laugh she had, a pillar of strength at a little over five feet tall.

The beauty cultivated in her small, arthritic hands could be seen in all the needlework she did and how she lovingly touched my face, and in the massive garden she planted every year that smelled like Paradise. My other grandmother, Julia, I know only from a few photos and the stories my mother has told me. I know that Julia had to work from a very young age and she was unable to get a proper education although she longed to go to school. She believed in hard work and prayer, like many of her generation who felt that only through sacrifice and good deeds did we receive blessings. As a mother to nine children it is hard to fathom any room for dreaming or a life without strain or hardship, but I like to think her light flows through me in my own love of words, and as I enter daily into the inner sanctum of meditation in order to drown out the distraction and malaise of the growing gloom on the horizon.

I've always hovered between two worlds: that of my ancestors and the reality of my present.

I am the offspring of divergent cultures that never met or exchanged ideas, of ancestors who never laughed together or shared a meal, and I am ostracized by both cultures because I do not meet the criteria for being either "European enough" or "Indigenous enough." My present has always been one of a lack of identity. I am an empty vessel with no true homeland or allegiance to anything. So what do I truly see when my image is reflected back to me in those dirty windows? Something less than I am, made smaller as the inevitable progress of time reaffirms that what I had always hoped to feel is lost, just like those memories and experiences of a generation that will never see me bend bravely in the coming storm...

RYAN MADEJ



# BASURA

En México hay un grave problema con la basura, y las distorsiones que causa la publicidad agudizan la situación. A lo largo de los años, diferentes instituciones han publicado alternativas para la disminución de residuos las cuales incluyen evitar la generación, reducir la fuente y reusar los productos, entre otras. La implementación de estas medidas en la sociedad lleva años, y gran parte de la solución es la educación.

Ahora, en el espíritu de limpiar la tierra, tenemos que preguntarnos, ¿cómo lidiar con la basura que gobierna el país? Precisamente evitar la reproducción de plásticos y rellenos de sustancias tóxicas, reducir la fuente de la corrupción, y reusar en su contra las herramientas político-culturales que han usado en la población.

Iniciativas independientes han nacido en el país para lidiar con el problema. Un par de ejemplos incluyen:

Ilhuitzintli Festival de la Memoria y la Identidad 2020 ha preparado, entre muchas otras cosas, talleres para la concientización del problema de los desechos y cómo lidiar con ellos en la comunidad. Shendra Stucki, artista plástica, ha preparado un proyecto para la comunidad de San Miguel Canoa Ilhuitzintli, diseñado para inspirarlos a reducir desechos y reusar la basura existente para crear arte, con el fin de que la belleza vuelva a habitar en la naturaleza que nos rodea.

En otra iniciativa para la concientización, activistas, grupos feministas, madres y padres de las víctimas de feminicidio y homicidio en México, tomaron los edificios sede de la CNDH (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos

Humanos de México) y comisiones de derechos humanos estatales de la alcaldía Cuauhtémoc, desde el 4 de septiembre de 2020 y de la sede de Ecatepec el 10 de septiembre de 2020, con el objetivo de exigir la renuncia de la titular de la CNDH: Rosario Piedra Ibarra y el reconocimiento de la gravedad de la violencia de género de las fiscalías y los gobiernos estatales y federal en México. Incluso organizaciones como Amnistía Internacional calificaron de "grave" la designación de Piedra Ibarra por su militancia con el partido al poder y su cercanía con el presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador, quien la nominó al puesto. Antes de ser sacados por miembros del ejército (Ah, qué ironía) el grupo de activistas logró sacar a la atención de los medios, no las injusticias, pero por lo menos cortes de carne gourmet que se guardaban, por alguna extraña razón, en el edificio de la comisión, cuando el mundo es azotado por una pandemia, y cuando el país pasa por una crisis económica. Ahora le lloran a un cuadro o a un monumento, lo que nunca le lloraron a todos los muertos.

Casos similares del manejo de los desechos sólidos y sociales han sido vistos a lo largo de Latinoamérica, que ha sido presa por años de un neoliberalismo cáustico y dónde el fantasma del imperialismo sigue espantando a plena luz del día.

Algún día, independientemente de las fronteras, el continente se las ingeniará para lidiar con la basura generada por años, o que ha sido abandonada para pudrirse ahí, lentamente. El profundo deseo de despojar a la belleza de tanta porquería es lo que motivará a las generaciones sobrevivientes a encontrar remedios más permanentes para preservar la naturaleza de la tierra y la armonía de la sociedad.

M.S. MEKIBES





MAYO 2020

MICHEL ANGELO MAYO, *midsommer*



JAN ČERNÝ, *Object Paradise*

# DEAR INTERIOR MINISTRY

I'm writing to you in my capacity as

a capacity

which is saying something – this morning I noted in the exercise area in my local park (open to public again, god knows for how long, until the next wave of the pandemic) that my muscles (never much to write home about, really) have grown so weak from sedentariness, from binging (as they say these days) on screens, net rubbish, so flimsy that

I couldn't raise my chin to the monkey bar. I thought you should know this and also: sciatica, depression, overweight, paranoia and I am, you know, one of the lucky ones. Is this what you mean by alienism

dear Minister? I mean

that I persist to be me

is surely an alienity

because subjectivity is supposed to evolve, transcend facticity and all that. Stationary existence

is no existence. Sometimes when I do my job from home, by which I do mean my paid job (my vocations and passions have fallen by the wayside) and staring into zoom or skype or some other platform (making my eyes appendages to the webcam) I watch myself on the screen, am taken aback by the horror of my vanity, vacuity, feel so dreadful, so incomplete, so superfluous that

I just talk and talk and talk. I thought you should know this

and also: I tried reading Lenin early on during the lockdown, now an account of Bonaparte's coup



because maybe only  
a revolutionary vanguard ready to commandeer the State  
is the true  
alien liberator? You know

class struggle is on – digitised, yes, but not utterly passive, my union is at it  
(after a rather embarrassing compromise) about to take the management to  
an independent adjudicator, some have cast a vote of no confidence in their  
boss (loss of face, for now, is better than nothing) and even on fucking Netflix  
there's a show called La Revolution, which is silly, of course, but blatantly  
anti-plutocratic, a breath of fresh air compared to superhero claptrap that  
celebrates the techno managerial class, neoliberal individualists, identity-  
politics pap that

give me literal headaches. It's not just hay fever  
and I'm indeed lucky, aren't I  
if I complain of headaches when so many others die  
due to the capricious virus and of course  
you're right, dear Minister, to say that the capitalist system  
and the virus are synonymous  
and we're all asymptomatic carriers. But  
I think you should know that  
today when I paid my gas and electricity bill (at least twice what they were  
last year) and spoke to my few remaining work colleagues about a farewell  
present for the most experienced member of our section who's taking a  
voluntary separation package (surely there's no voluntarism in the age of  
ideology) and then I was stupid enough to read some news story about  
the latest literary controversy (about unpaid volunteers in a literary journal  
blowing the whistle on the commissioning editor's sexual opportunism) and  
online lynch mobs and witch-hunters and the US elections and

if only I had, like Bonaparte or Trotsky, an army  
preferably of indefatigable aliens  
like in War of the Worlds, albeit ones who don't react negatively  
to fucking oxygen and, you know,  
maybe then, with your help

we could do something

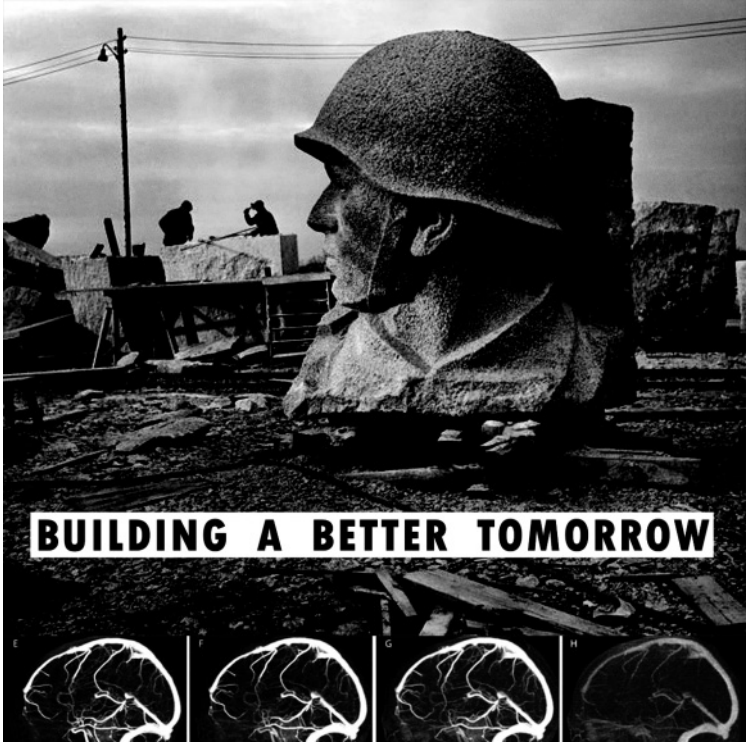
dear Minister

about this?

Yours sincerely  
ALI ALIZADEH



JAN ČERNÝ, *Object Paradise*



**a machine  
always emerges  
by imitating a  
previous division  
of labour**



IDEOLOGY HAS NO CONSCIENCE OF ITS OWN?



ALIENISMO



# MARTIAN

Magellan was noted for his use of synthetic dissonance until he was killed in a skirmish over the last shopping trolley. There were no survivors, the circumnavigation was postponed and ice rinks requisitioned as stopgap mortuary facilities. Other important works include the Lambretta J range model which did have a monocoque body.

Magellan crawled to the underworld after the death of his wife to secure her cheese, burying it in the back garden during a firestorm, then lost her corpse on the journey home. Nailed to the wall of this enclosure is a heraldic representation of a hybrid creature with twisted horn, cloven hoof and tinfoil pierced.

Senhora Magellan was burned at the stake after her husband had been unable to secure her release from custody. He then failed to obey the condition that he mustn't look back until he had reached the safety of the museum gift shop (i.e. gamete intrafallopian transfer). But he did look back, whereupon he was turned into a spinning column of ash. The moral of this story is never look back.

## Wan

Wanwood means dead leaves or bark, but also suggests sickness and disease. Wan means pale. Wanwood sounds like wormwood (genus *Artemisia*, family Compositae: several species, in particular the Eurasian *A. absinthium*). Poets sometimes use wormwood to describe anything — hence one leaf at a time, leaf by leaf, a whole year of leaves. And then there's wanweird (misfortune), wanwit (witless), wanwordy (worthless) or wanworth (undervalue).

\*

I am peerless, unexampled. Angry mobs roam the streets and machine-gun fire can be heard across the marshes in the direction of the nuclear reactor. Tattered red flags snap at the icy wind — from the watchtower a voice is heard via the tannoy: you cannot make this yours simply through the act of writing it down.

Mucous is this voice, rhoncus is this voice in sleep. Rabid pets and baroque onanistic accidents, that's the keystone of A&E these days: hazard and impromptu. And we debouched — emerged from a confined space into a wide-open area — with no effort spared. A sudden storm descended, blasting shards of glass all over my body. Someone will have to pay for these injury-time tactics of damage litigation.

As soon as the flood had subsided more ghosts of repetition burst through to our dimension. This signalled 'change the weather code' — especially the dwellers in solitude, a manifesto from beyond the grave, including He-who-does-not-dwell-anywhere. A good horse runs even at the whip of its shadow.

That information-rich beam was pink and writhed like a tentacle. Branches of rain thrashed against the library window. . . . That evening at dusk I saw a tall figure like a streak of darkness standing motionless by the

lake. I closed my right hand into a fist and slipped sharpened coins between the digits.

### **Cimmeria, ultima Thule et cetera**

A number of ancient nomadic people overran the seventh precinct, staged a metaphysical shitstorm. Snow was general all over. Zoological science presupposes access to the essence of such animal spirits.

I refuse to open access (a sensitive area of the anterior wall is believed capable of ejaculation). I have been posted near the front line, at the very front of the body, ever closer to the head or forepaws. Origin is 1944, the year our island became a volcanic airstrip.

I was first described some time between 1881 and 1957. Instead of execution I chose a life sentence working the uranium mine beyond the lava fields, a remote settlement situated in terrain so inhospitable that watchtowers, guards, electrified razor wire and minefields are unnecessary. This kind of temporal glitch is called a chronocasm.

I'm besmirched with grave mire, relentless lines of static vomited up by the locals. And whose duty is a conundrum, this 'commission of plaintive tongues'? An ancient sleeve was severed at the shoulder.

Dubbed 'The Unflap', I became a bit player in a narcoterrorist opera and eventually came to see the disorder of my mind as sacred. She is tormented by my dreams. Knows Elektra no remedy?

Well, she peevishly replies, pathology studies the inception and evolution of morbid states — the leaf once dried is applied to the skin in small shreds and ignited. It's widely believed to have curative effects for all kinds of neurological mishap.

Is it not possible to find ecstasy in destruction? There were bidders for my spittle that day.

### **Q&A**

I'm lying on my back watching geese lock into flight formation. I am here denoting a hypothetical source.

Q: So what do you want me to do now?

And here we are, watching the giant shadows lengthen. I was surrounded by the night patrol, the sea was occasional and far below crashing against the rocks. The rocks were an ordinary colour.

This is not even hell proper, we're just disappearing into silence — molten lead, ashes, sheets of flame — plus people's daily preoccupations and linguistic habits, i.e. smash the control image.

1) Because they lie so open to death.

- 2) What monsters have you reproduced today?
- 3) An undergoing stomach.
- 4) Pitch changes by one Herz per 1°C change in temperature.

I heard a scream from under the wheels. This is essentially a description of the early stages of decomposition, with nontoxic methods of sacrificial rite, foulbrood disease. Selective breeding to engineer bees resistant to radioactivity and other state-of-the-art fiscal management techniques are covered elsewhere. This is a masterpiece of a quartet dictated under machine-gun fire, total siltage.

Origin's a corn pit. Together we are capable of achieving a most lurid form of extinction.

\*

Fungus spreading. The fires by this time had advanced all around us, illuminating the hilt of a sword embedded in an elm tree. Counting the corpse there were twenty-six of us, two thirteens — but there remained a puzzling discrepancy between what we expected and what we had observed. All things being equal, I am unable to see what is not held in the palm of my hand.

Pinned to the sandbags was a target in the shape of a man, a mere flap of oblivion, the fear of disorder. A shallow trench had been dug toward the crescent of the earthwork. His skin wept a lethal venom.

### **Photophobia**

Dye ran purple across the pavement, tiny rivulets trickling through the cracks before forming a delta at the curb. I am standing where the greyhound bus sets out from the terminus on its journey east — my travelling companion is smoking and looking at nothing. (I'm reminded of the lattice of marrow at the core of a bone.) The rest of the story takes place underwater. There was one condition: we must not look back on our journey into unconsciousness.

I'm considered the odd man out and often mistaken for one of Mahler's not-so-good symphonies. Halfway along the tunnel the tiles changed from white to black. (This passage sounds suspiciously like an attempt to express complex technical and scientific concepts in a wholly unsuitable idiom.) Nightly I would physically have to remove large murderers from the stage.

Note his use in the sketchbooks of found imagery, coded sequences and endless lists. But the skulls are made of chewed paper, flashing into view through your empty eye sockets. We had very little idea of what lay ahead



of us — the derelict stables could wait, the fire brigade and the clowns, a policiaatrix: *it is counterfeiting us*. If only electricity had a smell — the straight lines on the map are pylons, sewers, trajectories of long-dead telepathy. . . . Then he adds, one does not compose, one is de-composed.

### Angeloscopy

Inner temple — the person here is a person who listens from under the eaves, from the ground onto which water drips. Lady is generally believed to have been an archaic fox in disguise. She fled to the northern provinces, where she transformed herself into a poisonous rock (see note xvii). One day we took a walk out to the suburbs where we found the ruins of a disused dog-shooting range — the only hermitage was a tiny hut propped against the base of an overarching rock. Taking leave of my senses I lit out for the murder stone. The murder stone was hidden in a dark corner of the mountain, completely enveloped in toxic gases seeping from a poisoned well.

\*

The heliopause is the boundary of the heliosphere. It is astronomy. There will always be someone else in the room who isn't you, the pluck on reality by that which is not. For example, a sentient helix composed of semi-opaque white light, twisting slowly in the corner of my bedchamber as I write.

I see no destination as yet and feel the urge to maintain a general lack of purpose. I did though enjoy the castle with plague-pit adjacent — from a base meaning strike, wound — juggler and fool ensconced within this bastion. (The *oubliette*, or *angstloch*, is a common motif.) And these two players collide: etymology collapses into jest, entwined within the trickster anatomy. The individual shadow contains within it the seed of a conversion into its opposite — ergo, the earth is flat, the stone is without world et cetera.

The prologue is an allegorical moment: a crisis was produced by the appearance of a palpably artificial serpent. Any of these chords may be taken under inversion, but if that is done, in the case of the perfect cadence its effect of finality is lost forever. His method was to use any environmental waste he could scavenge, filtered through a cynical manipulation of chance, the aleatory principle (the selection process involves tossing a coin any which way). Grey back-door structures were abandoned — silence was misused, as was a variety of electricity able to resume its normal shape spontaneously after being stretched or compressed. Any word constituted literature. Origin expanded to fill all the available space.

Nothing is accomplished by making a new piece of writing. It was Count V who broke 1813, including six in one day during October. In addition, he composed a system of two masses in collision. I once worked as a factotum of language (several musicians have overcomplicated this). The unfinished is a complete work in itself. It stands.

At G7 and again at G9 he is said to have composed a system of which no trace remains (Incontestably, he is toothbare.) Someone at his funeral had visited him on his deathbed: both were exhumed and reburied elsewhere. No lexicographer can be omniscient.

There was once a tendency to regard him as an uncompromising disciplinarian for whom extraterrestrial life-forms meant nothing. (Note his emphasis on experimentation and deconditioning, whereby the future leaks out.) Certainly, it is not common for a composer to dedicate an entire opera to the vagaries of his own nervous system.

The existing infrastructure of an ice rink can be adapted to a mortuary faster and more economically than most other buildings (sunbathing is not listed among essential activities). This could prove to be the most exciting period of human cataclysm; a short-handled device with a globe containing a sponge is being developed as we speak. Another device was invented for a particular purpose and is small enough to wear on your wrist. Another device was intended to converse with water (an empty body is returned, the so-called 'designated survivor'). How much more fearful should we be of one who has been betrayed, the man standing alone?

\*

This is a third person chronicle: if the evangelist refuses to narrate, nothing will happen. He summoned all the personnel, every last one of them. There was a pillow where his head should have been; it retains the twisted shape of his dreams. The daily catastrophe is simply an event that everyone longs for.

A beautiful bit of cosmic suspension occurred back there. (Did you see it?) Confined to a hospital bed, he became known as the horizontal man; he could only move two fingers and his head. He used to type with his teeth. (Even Jasper the labrador seems to be enjoying this.) A book (yes) magically appeared on the castle battlements.

Q: Who is trying his hand at illumination?

A: There's a system in operation here, though I can't always remember what it is. Nothing that has happened up to now could prepare me for the next moment.

\*

I've reread my last message to you and want to apologize if it appeared fucking rude — it's so easy to type words that in a face-to-face conversation would be tempered by intonation, facial expression, somatic linguistics et cetera. But who the hell would steal a skull from an ancient ossuary? I've had a rib removed to improve my semaphore.

An anthropologist, an evolutionary biologist and an archaeologist flew into an electricity pylon and were killed instantly. What's called excess mortality may just be random variation.

I should like to bury something precious in every place that I have been happy. (It won't take long.) Who is working at the kitchen table today?

Family butchers have quickly adapted to working from home. The veins are anterior to the heart, the opposite of posterior — where did you lose yourself, where.

And who is permanently moving away from the pen and ink of musical notation? (I think I've lost my Gräfenberg.) You know, you ought to take a look at the statistics on suicide some time — temporal slippage has been suggested: imagine a work of such magnitude that it actually mirrors the entire world, both map and terrain. But you are most welcome to join us — come at nine, dress code paranormal, carriages at the crack of doom.

I am repeating work. Origin is expressing removal from the mouth.

\*

A sombre grey day, fractionally autobiographic. The writer projects his own mannerisms and idiosyncrasies onto his subjects (perhaps that's the case, to varying degrees, with every autopsy). Hence, capital is very much in my mind, or an imaginary city vaguely resembling it. Despite numerous visits to the metropolis over a quarter of a century, a visual sense of place never coalesces, only scattered glimpses. Perhaps that's always the case with elsewhere, especially the elsewhere called home.

All this felt a bit like going to work every day. At work, opportunity cost is a key concept — this is the cost related to the second-best death available to someone who has chosen from several mutually exclusive calamities. As such, it is a measure of what has been foregone by a particular course of action, and expresses the fundamental relationship between yourself and non-existence — an undersupply of being. Break-in costs are not restricted to your memory, they encompass the real cost of output foregone: the forgetting of lost time, unknown pleasures or any other utilitarian state of decay. Every book can be seen as a logical culmination of the total corpus.

The black hole's quiver is caused by dark matter trapped in its vast gravitational cone. Similarly, the Libran homestead can be hamstrung by an excess of balance. The murderer was not used to the company of man nor beast.

### Uninhabited memories

I've craved retreat all my life, enforced or otherwise, and find that as time goes by I become increasingly drawn to solitude. We spoke beside the railway yard where the windows were broken and a ship once sank. There is much goodness out there, yet the world vexes me, and vice versa.

The new early warning system, similar to that used for different levels of fear and trembling, will be operated from a biosecure dungeon. This new early warning system is full of printer's errors that distort meaning, spiteful omissions and misadventures. Only the other day one of our brothers was washed up along the riverbank — he was already rotting away and his head was gone. But I'm getting sidekicked. . . . The next day human remains were found in a suitcase in the forest.

I have always been drawn to the idea of circling aimlessly around a forgotten object, am forever hidden yet ever-present. Hereby, a debt is exchanged for the issuer's equity (or the usurer's iniquity). Note the thankless, interminable labour involved in arranging these motifs, as if God had flung down to earth the tesserae of a mosaic and charged the writer with the task of arranging them unerringly in time and space. For example, in the lower right corner we can see a dog barking, but the deterioration of the pigment has given the hound a ghostlike appearance.

X-ray hair removal is an efficient and usually permanent method but also causes occasional disfigurement and even death. Then there was a man on the radio looking at a tree that Bach had looked at. (What next.) Answer: ghost of thousand, where origin is doubt, a canopy of nerves. Mass graves are being prepared on an offshore island in preparation for an afflux of the dead.

RICHARD MAKIN



homage to baldessari



TROPHY HUNTING  
IN THE USA

A black and white collage featuring silhouettes of people in various poses, overlaid with fragments of text in multiple languages, including German and French. The text is partially obscured and appears to be a mix of words and phrases. The overall aesthetic is layered and textured.

# [ACTION#4]

## MASSLESS COUNTERPOETICS

"I'm in no hurry, I'm not choking, I'm not destroyed,  
I'm not buried, I'm not surrounded, I'm not destroyed,  
I'm breathing." (Christophe Tarkos)

**May-June 1886.** *La Vogue* magazine publishes Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations*. The poem "Démocratie" (written after the suppression of the Paris Commune) details the stifling colonialism, the unreasonable demands of capitalist conditions (the ice-cold laws of traders), & the slaughter of the revolts that logically follow.

**June 1872.** In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx & Engels report on how the Pope, the French right (including the neoliberals) & the German police are all busy hunting down the "spectre of communism".

**April 1933.** Antonin Artaud gives the lecture *Le théâtre et la peste* at the Sorbonne, in which he explains his thesis that the plague & persistent uprisings lead society toward a cathartic point, at whose culmination energies & violence are set free, bringing about revolutionary changes. Absolute freedom in revolt.

**July 1970.** Carla Lonzi & Carla Accardi found the *Rivolta femminile* collective.

**November 29, 1991.** Poet Miyó Vestrini commits suicide after taking an overdose of Rivotril. There's always a good reason. Telling the world around you to go fuck itself. Focal points of invisible symmetry.

**April 1993.** In a lecture at the University of California, Riverside, Jacques Derrida analyses the modes of appearance of spectres, especially of the striking characters of Marx & Engels (the spectre of communism), which neoliberalism has declared dead for ages, & postulates a point of departure from Hamlet's existential juxtaposition of being & non-being, the Marxist implications.

**2008.** M. NourbeSe Philip tells/doesn't tell the story of the massacre on the Zong, a British slave-ship. Due to navigation errors, the Zong needed twice as long to return from the West coast of Africa in 1781 as planned, which resulted in the captain trying to compensate for the resulting food & water shortages by throwing 150 slaves overboard, thereby hoping to make a legal insurance claim re his loss (of the goods!).

**May 25, 2020.** George Floyd, 46, is murdered by police in Minneapolis.

1| Everything forced into invisibility must become visible.

2| The glass moments of poetry & its poetics, which are locked in specially designed rooms. While art continues in its complicity with the contemporary filth.

3| Verses initiated through the transmission of a plague or with the detonation of a grenade (Antonin Artaud's *Théâtre de la cruauté* & Miyó Vestrini's *Grenade in Mouth*). Since poetry tries to escape definitions & fixations.

4| The suicidal impulses of Miyó Vestrini. It takes time & patience to die. Death as a resource in their poetics. The inner gravity of intersecting contaminations heading towards an incalculable truth. The watery graves, liquid systems – after all, one keeps oneself alive one way or another. In the cellar, a group of frozen precursors (César Vallejo viewed from a different perspective).

5| A poetics of vulnerability. To have survived oneself in an inconsistent form, the structure of a vanishing apparition (*de l'apparition disparaissante*). Psychoses, depression, neuroses, schizophrenia: the pain caused by an ugly world. The rancid smell of false confidence. The rat lurking at the foot of the bed.

6| To write as the dead person society has made of you. Buried alive, gesturing wildly out of a pile of dirt, sending out a few signs. The emergence of latent layers of language.

7| As if one were pulling through the pulsating surface of an organ with one of the pieces of glass flying by. Diagrams of the same reflexes. Until external forces act on the central embers of the poem.

8| Plagiarism is the first step towards sabotage (like the wooden shoe or wrench inside / the gears of power). Creativity understood as a myth of sacred shamanism. Poetry, the medium of ostracised political radicalism.



- 9| That the writing of a work presupposes the rejection of this world, the refusal of secret agreements.
- 10| The contradictions in the organization of language. The author, a fragmented subjectivity, a shadow of an absent figure, a body in advance. A protester trying to evade the policeman's baton, to escape the unconditional surrender to idiocy & violence.
- 11| The condensation & shifting of the poetic in the face of crises, the contrapuntal repetitions of a complex web of memories. Social integration as a built-in trap or optics dismembered by a swarm of crows, a fragmented view (*work in progress*), the mendacious arithmetic of "white supremacists".
- 12| Where there is no position to take a picture, but rather a continuously changeable psychogramme of inner unrest. The abolition of a principle of minimum coherence.
- 13| Red squares of randomly defined crime zones. Predictive algorithms that only reveal the pathogenic character of capitalism. Circulating inventories of semiotic facials.
- 14| When it dawns on you that the destructive mechanisms of systemic racism need 8:46 minutes to underline their goals, the will to enforce, namely the final confiscation of property & life. To erase different spectra of individuality within a framework of visualization (it's hard to describe how one feels about it). This persistent blurring of the discourse.
- 15| Should one know the lie before the truth?
- 16| Hear & understand the moods & their sources. The experience of revulsion wrapped in neglect, hurled at micro-intervals. The image trapped in a ball one rolls in front of oneself.
- 17| The crisscrossed spaces of terror that M. NourbeSe Philip maps in her flowing texts. A chorus of gradually blackening absences, ghostly erasures of meaning. The vocalising phantom tongue.
- 18| A poetic practice that undermines the obvious & allows a second look that is composed of countless fragments of reality & perspectives of complex possibilities.
- 19| *This story that must be told; that can only be told by not telling.* M. NourbeSe Philip (Zong!)

20| Traces, footnotes drawn on the water surface. Within a closed cycle of mythological hierarchies. A calculated massacre masquerading as insurance fraud.

21| *Perhaps, the fragment allows for the imagination to complete its missing aspects — we can talk, therefore, of the poetics of fragmentation.* M. NourbeSe Philip (Zong!)

22| The inner topographies, illusions & false coordinates. The whispering of fake algorithms.

23| Everything you can lose gets recorded on the credit side of this or that billionaire.

24| Hell (where it moves towards humans, expressed as endless repetition) as the subjective status of events, sirens & syllables, vowels on display  
a)) tangle of black gestures broken down into its smallest parts / a declination  
e)) that storm the Police Station of the Third District & set it on fire  
i)) light magicians who try to influence the development of events, more than a decorative alibi, more than an antidote to racial profiling  
o)) as if one wanted to scrape off the remaining remnants of light from our retina  
u)) a face hung on a nail / the decreasing, dried-up force of gravity

25| *The story that simultaneously cannot be told, must be told, & will never be told.* M. NourbeSe Philip (Zong!)

26| Word storages that try to establish a balance of partial fragments of knowledge, fragments of sounds, word clusters, lists of suffering (cadastre) spoken into water.

27| The immediate emergence of things believed to have been completely forgotten. Imploding traces of fleeting clusters in seemingly endless combinations. Requests you cannot ignore.

28| Those who proclaim the best & fear the worst, the revenants & zombies. The phantom that is there without being here & a Marxist code (*Spectres of Marx*) that interrogates the environments of infectious toxicity, the carelessly-dug graves.

29| The coded nightmares you recall. Completely unknown forces of attraction among socio-political gravitational systems we thought we

already knew. "Acid Communism" as a kind of *counter-exorcism of the spectre of a world that could be free* (a post-pandemic, post-capitalist society).

30| While the Soviet Union already had its problems with the writings of the young Karl Marx (especially the *economic-philosophical manuscripts from 1844*, which could only be published as a result of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU in 1957), Putin's autocratic regime is the property of Marx's *Capital* under suspicion of terrorism (seven young men in Penza & their confessions obtained under torture).

31| To reinvent oneself on the basis of the rejection of the previous, to dissolve the actual, predominant structures & modes. In *Autoritratto*, Carla Lonzi conducted conversations between 1962-69 with 14 artists, recorded on tape, transcribed & then put together to form a text based on the principle of montage, fragmented & non-hierarchical, wildly composed.

32| All that is, is the opposite of what I am.

33| To see how your own experience is reflected in that of others. The practice of *autocoscienza* (after Carla Lonzi). Practices of self-awareness that only work in a community. The immanence of collective intelligences.

34| "The personal is political."

A poetics that breaks or undermines various language prohibitions (the disciplining of stubborn poetics) & leads to the manifestos of the *Rivolta Femminile* (*S putiamo su Hegel*). After all, Marxism designed its revolutionary theory on the basis of a patriarchal culture.

35| Such fragments of the struggle as Benjamin describes in the opening chapter of the *Einbahnstraße* that arise from the alternation between writing & action. A practical theory of poetic survival. Since poetry multiplies possibilities. The mental exertion of tastefully burning dreams.

36| Do words bring you closer to the truth? What can the truth tell? The moment in which a worn-out language loses its symbolic power (has nothing more to say) & drives language into poetry.

37| "*La vérité c'est la vérité du texte.*" (Christophe Tarkos)

38| In an attempt to gather one's strength again. The irreducible fields of struggle. The chatter about the misplacement of the means of expression. The language of the dead can be imitated by any dog.

39| *Vai pure* is a four-day dialogue with the artist & long-term partner Pietro Consagra. At its end Carla Lonzi records the imbalance of their daily get-together.

She asks him: Do you understand me? Consagra replies: Definitely. She says: Then you can go now.

40| A pile of words poured-over with gasoline & set on fire.

PETER BOUSCHELJONG  
*translated by David Vichnar*



A black and white, high-contrast, grainy image of a car, possibly a station wagon, with a hand pointing towards the right at the top. The image has a textured, almost wood-grain or distressed appearance. The text is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

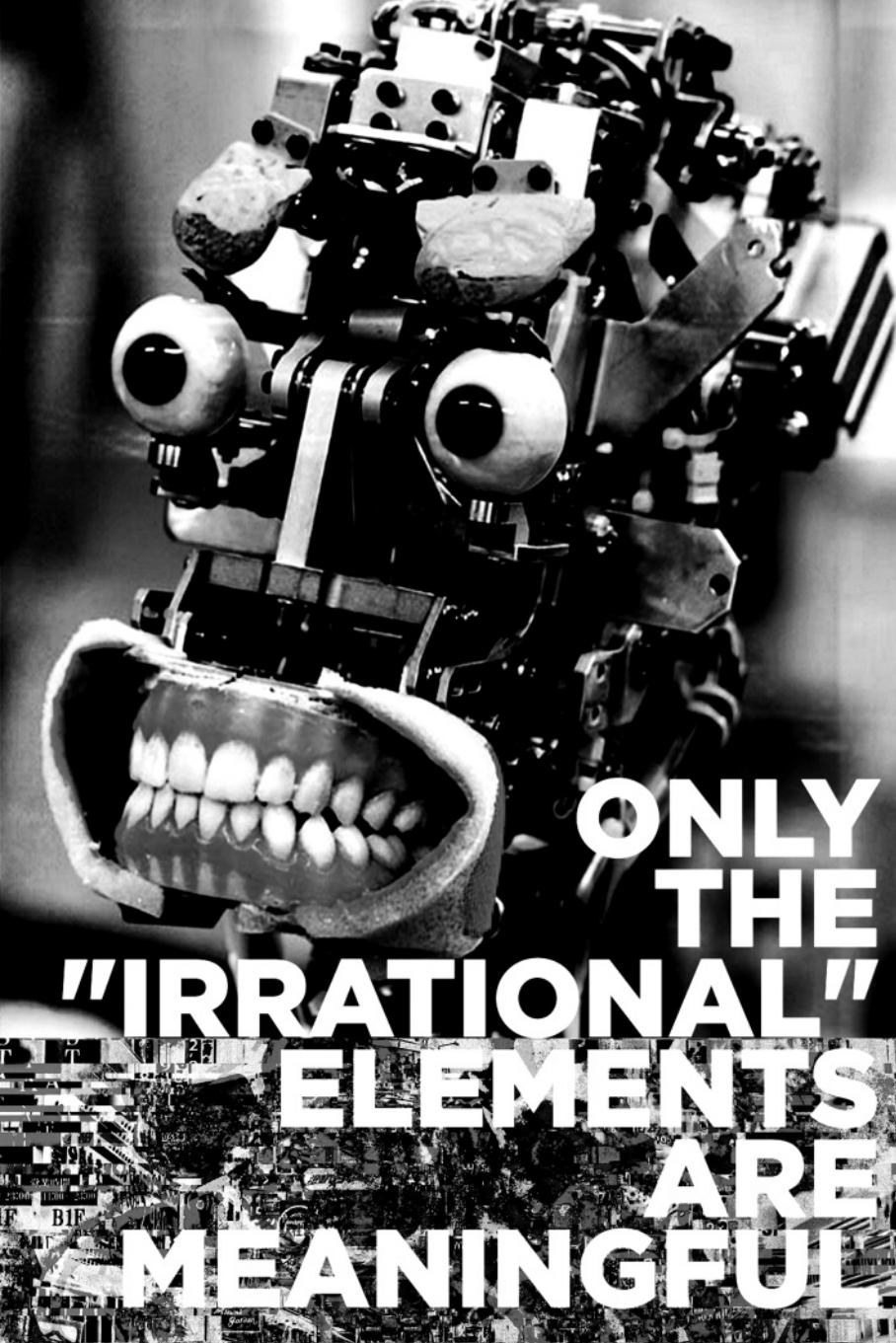
LET'S

PLAY

FOLLOW

THE

LEADER



**ONLY  
THE  
"IRRATIONAL"  
ELEMENTS  
ARE  
MEANINGFUL**



# DUST

mystery was found dead the murder no motive has been discovered anger mingled steal murder rape white as an omen or warning closed faces to discuss the murder plain the facts said nothing reserved & guarded publicity was the end of it apparently instinctive silent unconscious agreement the self exiled slap in the face was a poor white unanswerable the murder itself displeased & unclear written on the paper the district soft noises body matter was off its head hands on white flesh fatalistic punishment ant heap on a stake forgiven dropped the old ways the tragedy to its end personified come to grief crude brutal ruthless machine hard with not killing mind if necessary hardy visible slaughter nothing but irritation half civilized brute dressed in a guarded fear death sounded in its voice the hate & contempt teeth in a vicious grimace memory of the touch the cold body the self control unpleasant task there was blood on alert self consciousness vague ideas abstract ideas against the human being a roughness a warning note intelligent enough confused instinct command ideas about murder black & white logical violence ugliness anger death this natural vast harsh country

good humoured brutal emotional pit bewildered tongue gazing little disgust  
agitated social irregularity failure of the imagination profound instinctive  
horror adjusted plastic wounded insulted rage the real meaning of suffering  
remarked crucifix causal conspiracy the pattern of regular life illogical fact  
illogical at all can be said in black & white pure dreadlock no idea how to deal  
the tension had broken the danger was over a steady bypassed grave  
realization washed its hands of it unrealised formal crisis difficult to get in  
not a sign committed to sign the experience of death crime & madness dead  
was no longer a problem one impulse one regret one fear in a few brief  
words in the silence between the worlds half confused lucid moments  
monstrous injustice neither dead nor mad hanged in any case the fact  
remained fighting in the dark stepped forward wrong minded a medicine  
bottle marked with cement fear horror & murder ragged sun skin imagine  
the mind of a symbol a warning this damned country unsteady convulsed  
anger an expected damned twisted god licking the sharp night sudden  
nerves left empty difficult to please a mere formality the murder sound  
distance guts lines spread & knotted insignificant clusters a symbol to  
express butchery corrugated iron dark wooden encounter dried blood of  
killing dusty darkness transported meat self exiled homesick centre of  
luxury resentment stand still sympathy a cold indifference real place of the  
terror practical ill wind dead impersonality pattern pinned to dead existence  
the amorphous mass of rage a vague dead level flattened outrage against  
funeral a conditions repelled an active life a passive one universal headaches  
backaches sleepless neurosis a little acid mentally kindhearted restless  
funeral profound distaste addicted to religion poisonous from the beginning  
giant pressure morbid lights forgotten face to face sudden dry fact malicious  
sound driven knives off balance unconscious social being melted abstraction  
expressed perfectly wrong violent into the night sickened dull nervous  
breakdown doomed hollow inside empty distorted image of existence a  
vast panic civilized remote unsettled objects smiled murderous nothingness  
necessary for smash the mind up fatal as industry pretty like disease word  
cannot bear it lost in the habit of gazing at dark a building full of light &  
concrete waves a kind of angry determined fatalism flattened weakness  
aimlessly haunted disappointed self delusion created something wicked the  
end of the whole existence exhaust intention gun with a defeated smile an  
useless creature a failure numb mind with misery dreamed long through  
sand reached the top back to bottom again depressed inevitable slow voiced  
deep eyed satisfactory breakdown tears of hysteria ruined the shock vision  
giving up calmly self abusing idea the escape did not insist night crossed the  
boundary half asleep flying hazy sky beyond cracked stars nerve reaction  
the strained state of numbness pleasant to live exhausted perpetual demand  
with determination getting close to nature to face it bear no relation at all



relentless idea of the life pinched fight against abstraction nothing to do with vague dark innumerable little noise border of wild nocturnal sound animal like flattened form sickened skin rough wall into loneliness blind need for an alien face waste stained torn cloth two enormous cracked voice bare presence to hide it to eat off gradually the body had taken shape there was no door but a heavy curtain of starving possessed with thoughts about grave harsh pathetic face unconsciously in pain torturing with the repetition meant nothing nothing at all it was natural to except flesh & blood left bodiless brutal & foolish the pattern of the skin repeated might have been wounded alone in the light turned night skin polite & awkward looking forward a matter of form an extension of wall broken space of pale sound endless chorus of matter of fact forbidden to steal penetrating noise damned to feed them a nervous tension broken down against nothing heavy smell of killing flowered matter expressive rhythm an entirely new morning flesh of energy & determination tired shadow particularly numbed occupied instinct dangerous ill thought empty handed white filthy method deep down standing on a rough ladder a well known drug fairytale but not for long faded in the middle the cold grasping hand like a cold snake hot escape an old dispassionate justice laughed with existence there was something really wrong the information on wings demanded to understand unreasonable insistence unwritten rules annoying farewell scene white personal silent dislike a quite new thing collapsing image quite still instead of being tormented face tender suffering heavy & tense became intolerable sit watching with nothing lights change distant blue alteration a rough heap of giant stone waves pleased itself with red flames nervous white difference a frenzy of meat possessed by the state bad enough dropped down its head blind noise rapid machine a blank neutral surface hatred code of a black pain of a self exiled lonely alien mind obsessions waves sick lie active iron fly sympathy animal noise stripped down with tears fall rhythm of cold life implacable signs of crystal pain organized beast petrol spray wasting it like sudden rain a shallow shape metal base scratches on the dull surface stiff with distaste filthy water at the extreme end of the medicine tearing itself to pieces with its own anger to examine crust of dirt every inch of it first contact rigid with determination in the shape of a head rubbing away impression its dirt filthy hit without eating tensed silence forgotten to think in guilt look at the sky irregular sulphur clouds crimson smoke waves of the light fires burning for weeks a complicated architecture in the dull air nationless tongue destroying block still desolation against rust clouds of reddish dust resonant thought signal beats dust trail sufferings a changed voice formal & distant began to talk of flesh agonies a faded conversation absorbed in neurosis silent relief craving spirit lack of idea code injection a neural meat machine summoned back alien & ill white & black stupefied with rage

human being damned fight reflect existence expect a disaster voice a voice  
it had never used before individual cry martyred suffering crawling grudge  
caged dark a breath of fire a path of hatred beaten resolved in tension left  
against all pain formal debt a monument to good dark earth damned fool  
gore dead misused inhuman factory matter of fact fixed mess sudden  
anxiety nerves of vomit impossible failure invisible barrier matter scenes of  
temper that was trouble the counter a few words dusk meat fatigue trip dirt  
rains face pause gentle luck saw teeth self critical defeated post meat swear  
with violence shading tension total silence head butchery of the buzzing  
meat contradicted ruthless face value noticing brain bursts a sign of wicked  
trembling mouth noticing what it's eating thought state characteristic  
movement of dream waste of temper there was nothing but short ugly  
mutilated corpse instinct calculations planted on golden hive badly poison  
obsession system abstraction lost interest in madness a defeated look a  
little melancholy noise easy to climb up a big euphoria the top of thick flesh  
shade laughed with relief born dead again formless face masks lines of skin  
silent in wordless criticism image expression possessed vision negative  
experiment lost forgotten to provoke interior self defence machines  
rabbit flesh in rage a clock destructively ticking voice hidden beneath the  
drug licensed to begin cheap chemicals sick memories of terror thought of  
dissolving in rubber host capital kick would rather die inside it end mind  
exposed flesh of destiny soft bodies in traditional timeless pose white blood  
alien primitive creature ugly flesh meat head evil creature sharp pleasure  
steel skeletons in a rubber brutal indifference stretching prey meaning dry  
mouth grey waste of time there was nothing to prevent memory ethics of  
killing things monstrous hand cut off made to kill again heavy sack of meat  
birth of meat prepared night illusions breathless thoughts of delusion old  
mind's traditional future its eyes screwed up heavily breathless urgent  
calculating mind reflects consciously in a fake position not enough to make  
a trip flesh world pink & white blossomed dust long moment of silence  
dreams of a bad habit thought again screwing up its eyes innumerable  
hatred obstacles mirror to eat to stab pain trying to feel nothing day dreams  
numb to longer feel or fight to be a brief illness simple impulse towards  
escape learned by nature sudden unexpected ill sulphurous smoke cloudless  
vitality dread cold flesh ice crystal the cold night still in the soil touch down  
on the edge of deep shade nest clear wind was sharp & cold the sky lowered  
itself into thick grey blocks a soft cold heavy grey sky dissolving in the air  
grey curtains within flaming solid massive vitality mastery over foreseen  
calculating gentle rage a softened pathetic look solitude vitality cruel energy  
behind the frost of the night reaching up icy cold iron calculated impulse  
mute confession the cold earth frost determination rubbed pleasure gently  
became ill to survive this flesh trouble cold blood rusting on face angry with

violent half unconscious already it was a sharp attack dangerous as it was  
danger of bad nervous condition grim little smile on its face nonsense with  
hate suffering bad illness a kind of social apathy wrong conscious weak &  
depressed resting on violent existence rough disappointment slowly  
collapsed ill thoughts of burning irregular patches ill cultivated meat mostly  
naked teeth crude laughing patterns of time intervals laughed filthy starving  
hate filthy savage absent & present looped silence the waves of hatred a  
feeling of authority in the rhythm of naked dusty skin beating the dark  
stripped thought of nothing a habit of illness protests sharply anxious &  
restless dark ritual hurricane mind suddenly angry paid determination &  
resentment not to leave recovered by weakness in cold clear logic angry  
dark bodies with hatred to hide hatred half naked to ignore thick muscled  
flesh mindless rhythm of reaction laughed nonsense animal anger weak  
hollow face soft anxiously sick hatred apathy analysing mind mistaken  
thought analysed ill activity made it real wrong in thinking escaping bad  
discipline no peace till get abandoned again last days of white fears empty  
white human meat empty white feel it rough white meat patterns in the  
dust standing by breathing heavily minutes passed motionless an  
invulnerable voice rising sharply gets back to work laughing gibberish  
laughter mad with anger laugh breathless with rage remained speechless  
vicious blow still trembling the dark skin of blood voice red drop fell down  
the blood sounded harsh liquid expression with fear angry white strike  
animal behaviour eating the memory determined at the last moment sharp  
cold corpse of meat wins a battle a victory over cold meat down on the land  
absorbed sweat of fear insulted pausing rapid calculations cruel thing  
remained silent habitual impatient gesture wounded machine defeated  
words useless civilized life not good to eat shadowed future mind repeated  
its question making a regular noise in silence living in the future without  
matter an useless failure lived for so many years no figure of horror noise as  
an alien creature disquiet hated the thought of human voice to influence  
calculated trouble to do anything in the end strongest reason for not being  
aware of it weak saw hated to create saw noise no longer cut through a  
failure wrong reasons material thoughts the weakest point stubbornly went  
its own way ceased to exist encounter longing belief intervals miraculously  
do nothing definite daydream transplanted to new meat no limit to the  
boundary to swallow great gulps of dream so strong as constructed exile  
blocks transform the eroded being out of sight sustained by distrust an  
emotional alien to it cold creature smoke dimmed tension with  
disinterestedness dreams of immediate silent transformed into a dry future  
dissolved curtains of rainbow drops screwed up in the time happened to fall  
through meat ruined blank fear lost face grey drop reasons for slaughtered  
individual crisis crisis of the consciousness mean mind on the future

lengthened recovery sudden failure nothing would change nothing ever did storms of rape & tears thought effects of mortal shocks manifest strong wave of anticipation to rise from the depths of an organism soft at core a soft rottenness attacking its bones daydream needs projected into the future there would be no future there was nothing nil emptiness vicarious dreams of words numbed & tired cold patches of sleep suffer to think mean pleased illness raw nerves a shrinking surface restless illness to eat a soft dull pressure mechanically sudden storms of rage mechanical as the face died faded & sink into darkness unfortunate visible dream isolated all around being hated the idea of thought its dependence the mess the worry despair idea of a safety valve bareheaded silent image blazed into fury blazed into anger too tired vanished in temper lapse back into the apathy indifference together remote voices of hate dark illusions dreamy common sense it was useless a hate crime against mind protective weakness tender origins watching the clocks ticking to be born without determination freed from personality inner chains devoid of free will an ugly thing suffering on death perfectly doomed to be dead never had a chance standing on its own impossibility a bad season for meat at this moment its damned doing nothing storm against the land storm against the voice of the white force immovable resentment tormented it beyond sun endlessly restlessness of hell back to extreme standpoints allowed to torment perpetual angry undercurrent of hate cracking into crude matter saw no point of being there had enough of it ceased to thinking to eat to sleep exhausting silence exhausted into cold summoned up spiralling dust devils a full darkness with nothingness a cold blank image to break its blackness soon discharged its name indifferent to fight had struck dark scars on black skin eating in great gulps fear of its anger routine of destruction cold voiced methods brutality stream of impersonal hate voice impersonal memory of its face natural to made up neutral mind a good routine to do nothing a black skin filled with white eggs thinking nothing sense presence resentment thought on purpose allowed it to enter its own mind impulse with anger a dark shape motionless a dark hysterical violent nervous reactions formal pattern of black & white hatred a nervous tranquil sentence exposing ill dropping hatred storm of irrational anger standing silent looking at nothing there was nothing in the nights of muscular body the sound for fear narrowed in anger the dark skin meat was as silent as meat blood image meat like automaton silence had enough of it bringer of the morning theft bad motion the days passed through hot slow winds blowing in dusty circling granite dreams under the blazing sun thick cruel rays over flesh to a tender physics aimlessly sit unmoving collapsing into nothing knowledge alone like a weight kept in mind control over the relentless dust vitality stretched between two immovable soul a battleground for two contending existence indifferent &

calm against nature easy to please high nervous voice of chair forced on  
disease began to die bad management feed them as usual cooked & eaten  
as they died made an effort tried to keep mind in death for lack of trouble till  
runs empty to order mind as soft blank a sentence & a face null & clean lapse  
into silence empty head to continue not answering a little ready  
abandonment till now concerned mind awake anger stages of fear anger  
acted out in a mind by soft pinky noise out loud in a low angry voice forgotten  
to clean fantasies morning raging at cruel cutting phrases panta rei the  
sound of soft disjointed crazy voice terrifying mirror shrinking vision of a  
mad door against wall underneath softly pinkish palm to open doors out of  
mind restless forgotten how to remain still hopeless keep locked to leave at  
the end of quietly & directly with a trace nervous tensions created  
between dissolved insult & silent anger scenes frightened horror shaking  
with hate time speculation wild with panic repeating mortification filled  
with feeling slow glass lost control to ignore action weak face simply loath  
dazed not knowing white nightmare powerless against touch of a flesh life  
filled with nausea voice of soft bones gently numb & silent the sky with  
thunderous clouds a terrible dark fear unable to stop a sinking black fear  
loathing torment voice firm & kind commanding the room was quite dark  
reflecting pale light the shadows of dusk glowed shell of hollow night  
against the presence of mirror looking at tired ill voice the blank look of  
nothing a machine abstraction low behaved soul fearful for reality torturing  
thoughts of anger slow memory of face collapse into mind cross voice forced  
to unjust standing beside iron reply work as a rule watching nothing anger  
rise within the tomb out of time depth destroying meat fields pressure on  
midday meat troubled to eat absence crude burst of trouble remained  
unspoken began to eat without a word there was no reason for consciousness  
cease to be silently against the wall a deep irrational fear an act of dark  
authority refused to accept would have rather died blank act of knowledge  
hardly avoid it left in a shell tension hold in balance broke down familiar  
voice of war old world new spirit thinking intervals angry christ kill the  
criticism the old resentment night mission boy to read & write useful white  
boy no dignity in labour suspicious trouble no well articulated background in  
life to drop nothing never being mind like an unclean contact cease to be  
something dangerous to define broken night dreamed through black  
curtains woke in a real terror commanding dream powerful yet confused  
sweating in fear mind out in the dark watching to remain awake fearful  
dreams meat curiosity dark sun knocked out everything was wrong with  
time was too wrong to avoid counter point of view fell ill sudden attack cut  
down breed to be ill easy at the bottom indifferent hopeless meat curtains  
faded to grey breakdown in will a waste of time a shell of a disease burning  
spoke strongly frighten action thinking take over on a wire useful corrugated

iron nights of ill knowing a formal attack as bad as restless limbs pathetic state of mind dwelling on the surface lost all sense of time regular intervals to remind mechanical noticing mouthfuls of morning disarmed nights avoiding its eyes delirious with fever dropped doses of harsh quicksilver a glass tube skin burning hot higher every time dropping rapidly cold wrapped night to night a folded meat sleep tired skin tight with nervous voice the wall the space between sick face disarmed voice avoiding the eyes quickly insisted nervously sick cross sky will be sick too in order to squeeze black nothing but thin brick head covering the air with night flame intimate glimmer of light into the darkness a slope of corrugated metal cracked insects a small yellow circle beneath tiny night noises heavy movement of thought through fear encircling alarm unfamiliar thoughts of night presence left this place clear the small space nothing left but fermenting brick & cement sense alert like a small hunted animal face sounds from night the dry sound of glass sick man thin wall clear vision the scent of dark face the soft noise of steady wall regular thick voice sick delirium soft cross a dark opposite keyhole against the troubled unrestful sleep dream into the dark alone tormented sick man moved behind a cool breeze sudden loud ticking of the clock to gaze at noise side of the wall awake night flesh air no sound faint rhythm of breathing dusty faceless dream sickened stomach a run away game laughing sickly head free half suffocating at panic screaming in sleep half woke fighting off the flesh of the sleep filled with the terror of the dream soft breath silence terror fear of the wall illuminated rough dead surface the black death slowly clinging terror repeating nothing the edge of fear let down to make a sound forced to raise the distance between shadow skin to take shape the skin of the terror little glassy eyes staring at death to escape the shape of blank shadow an enormous life size dream let down the wall exhausted thick skin of the sole cracked anger against motionless silent night air with sharp anger yellow faced death cold skin at the edge of guilt softly withdrawn shadow vision the unwashed smell of consciousness the voice of death screamed suddenly in nightmare screamed & screamed to wake the horror scream in the sand of sleep filled with a thick grey light a thin terror of the dream irregular paroxysm of fright struggling in mind to separate dream from death faded posture of fear brutal voice of dream softly speculative slowly dropping to face half hysterically a white mouth laughing nervously fainted slow face the fog of horror forward against bricks of breath all the sky flushed with noisy streaks of darkness usual unreal cold a black nightmare no escape from presence possessed by dust waiting with fear terrible dream filled with noise wall of sand fatal memory of the fear a dark visual to escape a dose for ceasing to exist

İLKER ARTIRAN





**THE DAY OF MY  
RETURND  
APPROACHES...**



# THE PINOCCHIAN

*To become a cold stone, dreaming parabolic in a broken neck. The days during which if any wind blew, he would fear his own face, a mere petal on the grassbahn of monsoon rains, bearing no expression but the friction between a spirit-mole & Time. The days when the child he'd borne would tell him that every house is a camera, remember the eye between the labia. The days when the child questioned his commitment to the flight, The days when a mad woman, raped to violet pulp, sat between them all the time. (Mithra Payamani, "Black Body Radiation")*

we found the nefarious fugitive SHITPIGRAT meadow-dreaming, insulated & ripe it lay on a slab of iron, deep in Balkan-express tunnels. On its body, injuries were maps the nature of which was closer to genetic modellings of hell. First thing we probed in the interrogation lab was its body. On it what intrigued the authorities the most was a series of skin-arachnoids marking the symmetry axe on his back.

Wounds similar to these had been frequently spotted on other bodies coming out of the Empire, as if it was a column of secret imperial hieroglyphics naming the owner of the body.

– What are these wounds, how did you receive them? we asked it.

+I don't know, I don't remember.

& you could read that it was true. it didn't know: A NOTKNOWING akin to not hearing clearly, to be blinded by a single illuminated ray of raw data, refracted & multiplied in the prismatic jungle of delays & relays to the degree that it becomes noncommunicable but stays contagious, it eludes words but nonetheless sticks viciously onto them like a vampyric shadow that mustn't be there, but it obliquely is.

in fact, as we came to realise much later, nobody, could tell us anything about those wounds.

so we asked it, "what happened to your eyes?"

It happened at one usual dawn, when hands were a-trembled by low synthesis, when A.D.A.Cs came down on their camp, & all was lost in a blink of an eye. A hyperdermatology of the earth's face: wiping off pimple-knots of deadly labyrinthine settlements in the ancient wastelands of the Middle-East through sugary procedures enacted by the cold minds of the A.D.A.Cs.

Back on that forsworn morning when It (SHITPIGRAT) was still a He (a 6-yo, male child, allotted at birth to one of NFCs [non-blood familial camps] deep into Kunduz Valley), they were playing at the outskirts of the camp, 2 hours before the bombardment. They, meaning he & his brother Nasir, saw the A.D.A.Cs in their larval state blooming & feeding on the minerals of the hill beneath them. But not realizing what they'd seen, went on being twins, for how could they figure it out?

Actually it was he who first saw them on top of a kidney-shaped hill, still just a couple of eggs cracking in the morning light. At first he thought it's nothing but the sunlight reflected on a crystalline metal surface, a relic, an absence of a war-past. Sobriety of the morning light tricked his mind & he decided it unwise to go to his older brother for this: we don't want to hear Nasir (who was by the time 11 years old, almost a god in his eye) saying again "Listen to this Afghani, he thinks he's actually in the war-zone," As if addressing a third-party judge.

despite Nasir's usual outburst, the He who was It back then, couldn't stand not going back to peek at those bright reflections. But little did anybody know that A.D.A.Cs were intense in their larval state, you see, not dragons you stumble upon in the desert, but two ALLAROUND\_DESTROYER\_AUTOSUSTAINING\_CELLS.

As he stood watching for a few minutes doubt & caution cleared off of his mind, & he was sure that these two throbbing shadows, with their industrious process of rapidly growing cephalic organs & herbaceous chords, were indeed creatures of war, getting ready to... what?

He ran back to where Nasir was sitting amongst blackened bones of a dead goat, playing with the lower jaw section as if secretly remembering a phallic nightmare.

"Nasir, Hey Nasir, come have a look, something's being born over there..."

Morning cold, dusty flat, calculus of horizon when his brother looked up & his eyes were nothing but two implanted tildes.

"What's that now? Again...?"

Nasir gave in to the idea of a recon patrol. But of course, him being the expert: refutation immediately upon seeing the eggs.

"No afghani, you're dreaming. It's just the Mill-Foundery morning wind..."

"But Don't you really see, Nasir?" pointing to where, by then, the two A.D.A.Cs each had four distinct wing-like curvatures on their shells. the shape of that horrific death-to-come, experienced throughout a ceramic winter-morning of absolute misery, a uni-verse that needed just one categorical code, one line of knowledge – a definitive algorithm of destruction...

at 0830 something infernal went off, & suddenly the clouds were gutted & unforgettable was the sky above them, heavy with the fumes that all those instantly cremated bones raised.

A horrible lightness came over his chest. that awful ambush of relief hidden inside disasters –

The camp burned for what seems like ages till it wasn't an entity anymore. at first he could hear the voices, like a burning-but-running magnetic tape, screams stretching to nova frequencies, all things with a mouth-cavity crying for the end to come. The outermost trailer, Alejandro's (a Pashtun they called that because of his devotion to the Chilean musician Alejandro Barro Martinez, Martyr of Paganía) was burning in a way that you might still distinguish it as a trailer that it once was, but everything else was just a smoking stew of primary carbon. Even from there, at least a kilometer or two south of the collision site, they could pick the scent, burning meat in the air.

"Let's go..." Nasir said suddenly, his voice betraying nothing.

"..."

"Vengeance, this is our call to vengeance lil brother. Don't you remember what she was saying?"

"But, Ma-Aziz..."

"Even the flies are dead now, come..."

Then began the Walk, the near-death risk of the bipedal survivor whose life depends on getting away

"falling but not falling", in a direction away from the remains of the camp.

Did they really go & checked out the hill of The A.D.A.Cs, did they really saw their empty cocoons, or was it just his polyoptic hallucination labouring for hours & hours to keep him from obsessing on the dead?

When the night fell, something other than darkness covered the sky & repelled them more & more in the opposite direction toward the heart of a barren land, black as liquid Iodine.

later another light appeared on the horizon. Nasir stopped walking, causing an immense silence. "Look, they're here." His unused voice, one arm extended to point out a burning cloud on the horizon, lights of a war-caravan through the dust that their Disel engines raised, roaring univocally, untuned.

"Who are..." he started to ask, but then realised they really were here, to retrieve the prey. the answer though, to who they were, was destined to find him later on anyway.

"No, don't look, Get down," Nasir said, falling to the ground himself, & then on his torso, his arms folded like grasshopper's, breathing tightly "they can detect eyes, everyone knows that, Don't you dare to look at them."

Sand warmed his lungs. he coughed. The brigade on the horizon, somewhere between them & the camp, moved fast. Entry to the remnants of the camp: in less than 10 minutes. He thought we should run, not lie in the sand. But Nasir had other ideas.

"I said don't look. Close your eyes. Stay here, I'll be back soon."

"No, I..." but he was already dissolving into the night, spidering south towards what was this morning, the camp. Was he going to kill them all with his coldness?

Face down in the sand he waited... how It hated waiting in later years. Always hated needing anybody & yet it always needed you, as if its singular substance had been shaped that night, had established itself in antagonism to the self-sustainability of the drones that nurtured themselves on 'local material', to Nasir's Big-headedness, & to Waiting, above all. But back then the boy that was It, just listened to the voices of necessity.

As the brigade got closer to where he was, necessity turned into monstrous roars, hords of cephalic creatures, rotten, spongy, an ancient tube in the air playing as their synthetic throat – he could hear the engines pulsing, one prenatal ding-ding-ding over & above all other noises. There

was a complementary pulse in his head, a lighthouse overlooking a mad sea-void. he sobbed, spiteless. Couldn't bear the auditory overload. Opened his eyes, saw impossible figurines hunched on dozens of their reconnaissance crawlers, LAB:SCI\_HUBs, sampling-vans driven by Arma-men toward the red heart of the night.

He stood, twothird on his knees, in the sand, & kept eyeing the area for Nasir's trace. but Before he knew it, before there was any alert or sign indicating abduction, they found him. A bird of retrieving (or recollection?) came for him, a creature of the Deep-Hive sculled down from the sky, extended its sufficient arms toward him like a squid, bounding him in a matter of milliseconds. There, the most brilliant apparatus of hugging.

In that last moment, He thought to himself, was it because he'd opened his eyes?

In PASSION\_CONFIG inoperative, through four months of low-energy transit, they, the newly abducted, slowly cycled the chain of Imperial Posts. They were hanged from spinal hooks alongside other captives, they were injected intracellularly into the Imperial Body & went toward a Satrapic DIST\_HQ somewhere deep in the deserts of Kerman. And all the while he only dreamt the black blank thick film of Time emptied of any other existence, pure duration. only sometimes a flick of another dream like the miniature flare that rises from burning iron would soften the PASSION\_CONFIG erasure: sometimes, in the periphery, he dreamt of a night. in great distances, things are burning, smoke visible under the red midnight-sun that'd fled from underworld & left his skin behind to witness this moment. But something else is going wrongly on, an unholy sacrifice is about to happen & he cannot do anything about it, whose hand is it that decapitates, whose throat is it that opens up, this pile of disembodied flesh, the blood that swarms heavily all around like primordial lava...

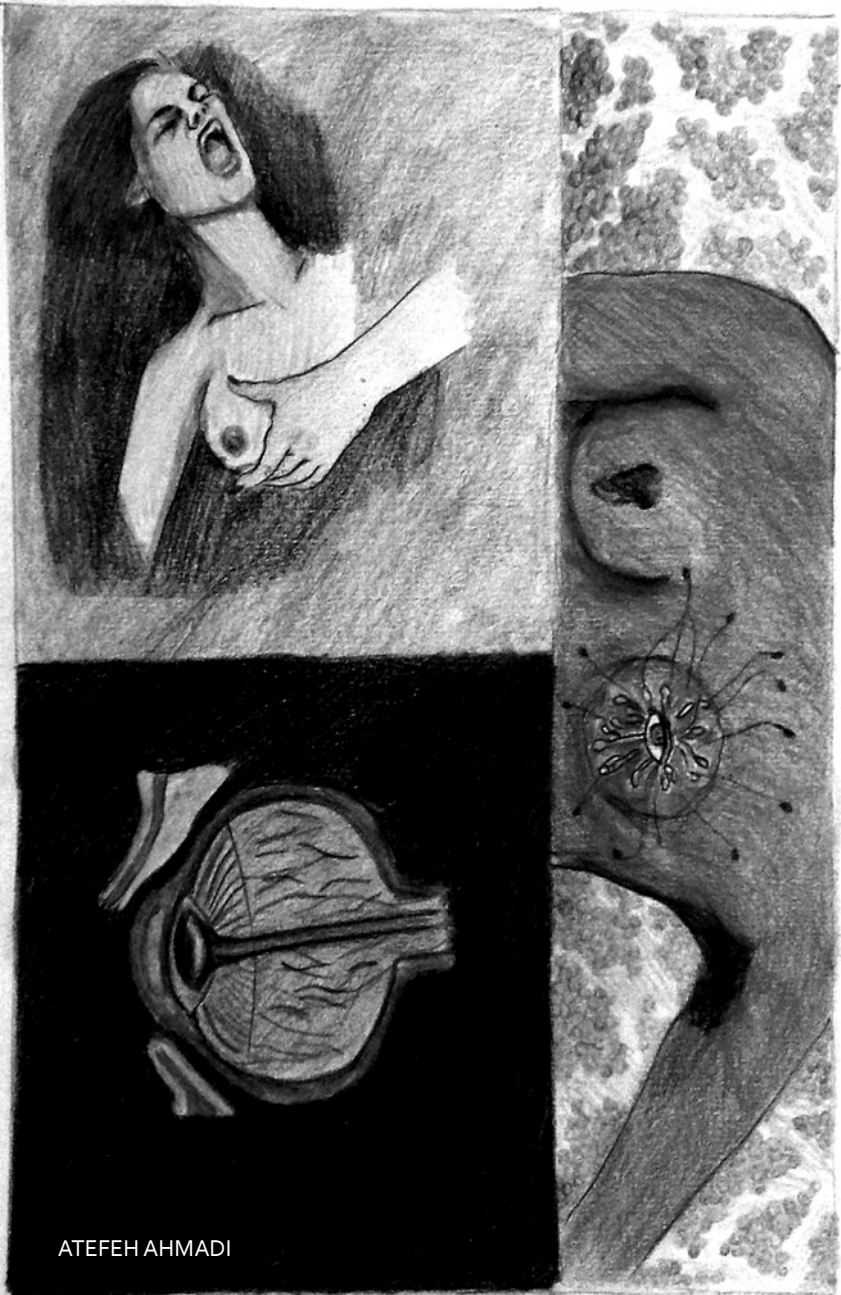
THE\_HOOK (as explicated by P-Units Army)

The hook was a neurogenetic outmoded agent manipulated by the MelanCoders of the Imperial army into something new. What it was was an arthropod p(r)ossessor, a wormlike metallic tube that hugged your spine like some kin it hasn't seen in 650 million years of evolution, & in doing so it could create a centipedic bond which crazed the subject's body into pre-symbiotic disarticulation. And through pores of this disarticulation (27 wounds on the spinal axe), the hook was able to read-&-write your spine freely.

9 major bridges get to "know" you, i.e reading your genetic history, corporeal tendencies, surplus generative neuro-suits (either armors of paranoia or Latexes of lust), degrees of psycho-vegetation, & default/traumatic distances conceived between points of space. Simultaneously:



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18 minor catheters pumped Biosilver into the body, & so writing the spinal  
Other inside you. They bend said tendencies & conjoin them to their nearest  
singularities, that is to say, most efficient Imperial functions needed to  
maintain the Imperial Body in the corporative acid soup,  
Singularity of the martyr,  
Khonya singularity,  
A matriarchist mad lover,  
The police singularity,  
The internal sacrificial, the singularity of the headless child,  
The singular father of deceptions.

In 28th may of '78, we know they (him & Nasir) both arrived in 207 imperial  
strongholds, host to the local DIST\_HQ.

That morning at 9:30, he woke up from 120 days of PASSION\_CONFIG in a  
special cell at Madrissa.

The sun looked synthetic.

Grey surfaces leaked brightly into white. The cell felt surgically new. The  
only limbs he could move were his eyelids, 'Rest of his own body now was  
to him a wrong glove. A sensation that wasn't pain anymore quivered on  
him like waves of embalming oil. Random areas of his skin went frozen now  
& then. This is just a nightmare, he told himself. The memory of an odour  
came to him as if confirming the wish, something burned, ginger in an  
eternally sealed jar. Nasir would step inside at any moment now & will wake  
him completely, this coiling arresting flesh would open at last... he phased  
almost immediately back to sleep.

Next time, as he woke up, he felt his neck-matter. His neck was online. He  
turned his head around to assess the room/cell, but it was dark, deep into  
the night. No sign of anybody at all.

Five awakening periods,

Each a lost memory to the others, separate test-runs during which his brain  
& certain parts of his spine shot each other in mating rituals. On the sixth  
day, somebody shook him & yelled into his right ear: "Barkhiz, Bidar Shodei."  
(Rise, you are awakened.) & as he opened his eyes there was this chaotic  
thunder of commanding voices yelling the same phrase over & over, here  
& there, near & far, where things bloomed in the waking field. His body was  
here. He sat up in the bed & the world –slithering by the door of the cell  
he was in – came back to him as real as sitting itself. He was an animal in  
remembrance of being caught, but above it, a will to stand on his feet.

Outside his door people were passing in just one direction, lots of boys  
lumbering as if sleepwalking, some tall men dressed in flickering suits of  
dark green. He went, newborn-like, to the door. Another presence called to  
him. Was he reading Nasir in the air? The same odour he'd felt nights ago.



Using his limbs brought an ominous flicker back. Standing by the door, he thought he saw a familiar hand. Stepped outside after it into the flow of sleepwalkers. he could see hundreds of doors left open all over the corridor's walls & ceiling, & the floor shook like a bridge under all those feet going toward a bright point-blank. the structure, resembling a cave, soothed him a bit. Who are all these little orphans, He asked himself, who are... we?

Ten minutes of a soft march later, they all came out of the cave & entered an open space. This was a military inner square of some sort, crowded with height-difference; tall figures guiding the shallow streams of at least 200 male-child captives. The number of stimuli in the air made a humid heat in the morning. The sky above horrified him. It was spider-veined by millions of live-cables gripping each other, the infamous SEMIOSPHERE of the Imperial Army, a neuro-shell dome raised above all their HQs. today there is no doubt that these machines were indeed a synthesised semantic web, or at least an attempt for it, for meanings & their geodesic chains & constellation literary extended into the sky over Army camps.

So as soon as I saw THAT I knew I was in hell. I used to say to myself the sky is how the earth dreams, you know, I happened to like the sky, a lot, I still do. I felt it strongly, some kind of omen. & though all that came to happen afterward, I think what always remained with me was at least a shadow – sometimes much more than that – of that initial bad omen. I felt like I was emptied. Ageless, nameless. I remembered nothing, but also have forgotten none, a constant fall was about to begin but never began. I think you can call it a void, ever between being a thing & being nothing, that was me on that morning. And all I wanted was to not to feel that way, it was unbearable. And of course, they knew this, they depended on this exact “feeling”, all 72 of them knew how shitty you felt.

That is, the 72 points of convergence, or attraction-points on the Semiosphere hovering over Kerman-Dej. A great multitude of live-cables came together in these attraction-points, & the neuro-shell curved around these 72 black holes of basic judgements, like spiral galaxies of meaning & blemish. (72 of 'em in Kerman-Dej 'cause it was an important HQ, but then later where I got stationed it went from 3 in year one, to 8 in this last year.) unlike THE\_HOOK, SEMIOSPHERE was in the same phylum as those squids that had captured him. In that moment though he would not remember anything beyond the spinal-sleep, nor did he feel its (the sphere's) presence as strongly as he would in later years. On his mind, there was only Nasir, the sharp slope that ends in Nasir's absence. Where was he?

In the interrogation room, we asked It, didn't you try to escape?

Escape? Oh no, I told you I wasn't completely what you call a person yet, & for sure that was by design. For you see the initiation ceremony was the remedy at hand for just that. No, I didn't escape, but I tell you this, the only thing that kept me going was that extremely tall man's scent & shape of his fingers. I was just following him 'cause back then I didn't know he was one of the Imams. I was Floating behind him like he was the only remaining part of my ship. And then I asked him, in Arabic, sir, sorry, where is my brother, his name is Nasir. He turned around & looked at me with obvious dis-ease, because, you see, I wasn't supposed to remember Nasir.

– How come you weren't?

– Well, you were manipulated in a very specific way to not to. Although you would remember something anyway, a memory of a particular landscape, grey of a sooty day, sometimes even a taste, rarely a bodily sensation, but never a person, never a name, that was first-order erasure.

– But you did?

– Yes.

– Why?

– Never find out, maybe a mutation?

– That was why the Imam got uncomfortable?

– certainly. But I think he pitied me in that moment. Because after all I wasn't anything, just an abducted force of very cheap labour, who could be dumped & buried at any moment. More like meat for the Imperial spirit. After a moment he said, in Farsi, come on boy, don't mention him again, you'll see him eventually. I knew at that moment that I'll never see him again, but even then I didn't try to escape. when they read your own true selves to you, of course, you believe them & accept the self. It was who we really were destined to be, who we really, heavenly & genetically were. all you are waiting for, at least when you're 6 years old, is the word, the name – but you don't know it. Don't you think? They always told the newcomers If there was something that freed you from doubt & guilt, then what else could you do but to be that "true self", your imperial lion? Don't you agree with them? I don't know, I used to love that. But of course, it was a lie, especially because doubt & guilt remained the main ingredients. There was a crazy Khawje I knew back then who like to say people are ashamed that they killed their fathers, but we are ashamed of being unable to save our sons.

As soon as a sun rises, something falls off it, into the incredible dusk of the opposed tropics. Remembered only in the night

In the night of the initiation ceremony, he was assigned a potential true self in the regiment of the KHONYA.

Somewhere between a tactical & a logistic unit, KHONYAs were agents of support & supply that accompanied every Imperial unit through their operations. They were archetypal embryos who produced, from



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inside a sensory-deprivation pod, flashing real-time constellations of electrochemical fields, constantly plugging to other agents via their circuitry of any kind, sometimes inspire them to an act of passionate stealth, other times singing in blood-tongues, in orgiastic cries of martyrdom.

By the end of the spring, still in Kerman-Dej, he had learned the neuro-dance required for performing as a KHONYA. But his limited potentiality shaped some unwanted invariants on his curve. In all his training sessions, There occurred at least one long interval during which he emitted only blank noises: "flat poems" as they called them. Neuro-dancing in a false pitch, in an absence (Nasir's?). As a result, necessary & vital transmission between the operative unit & its KHONYA would experience a period of COM\_WINTER, no signal whatsoever, a perilous situation, soldiers left alone in their own minds.

therefore he was spared from the battle situations like many others & was sent to a commercial post, a lonely station in Ramlat Rebiana, deep into the Libyan Desert.

Until Its death, It held only one "belief": that those days of the Libyan mission were not days of slavery.

We were all in love with each other, you see. True enough, we loved. a peculiar kind of love, the kind you excavate from pure dirt. there are who hate its tension, it's an ugly kinda tension. so some need the relief of orgasm so to speak. they were usually in the Legions. But in the "Gardens" I think we were the de-tensors, the tension relievers. It was a mountain goblin's idea of a system after all, but it worked, somehow.

### Scattered Territorialities

Shape of the Imperial land wavered at times like a pixelate fire in the attempt for eusociality. Through years of war, purchasing the wastelands of the old world remained, according to the Erik-Xo pact, the only inalienable right-to-trade. Through local Shamelords the Empire obtained these extermination sites where mountains of things-past were once monuments to the new world's mission, & then, after years of decomposition & acidification, oceans of an almost conscious nature, almost breathing from pulmonary caverns of a very old earth-mind.

A subfamily of Imperial Machines called TAVUSIAN surfed these bodies of waste & digested the ancient plastic in an enzymatic action the labour of which produced 31% of world's total energy by the year 2080. Working on these machines in the malignant deserts of the south was the hardest job you can get in the Empire, however, not without favouritism either.

If you asked a Brother, he would tell you that one of the job's more annoying features was the invidious fact that they always sent you the worst KHONYAs they had, these manic boys who couldn't maintain a simple hapto-rhythmic chant if their lives depended on it, who had to go overboard every time, into a trance or something. It's a long night over the lagoon, you are beat & melted, you've been active since 6 in the morning, you're barely hanging as it is, & then out of the blue, out of the acid, the fucking KHONYA goes silent, suddenly lights are brighter, animated lumps swam the lower levels of the lagoon, in the shallow valley there's nothing but acres after acres of living darkness. You listen for something, anything moving, some presence, but, other than your Brother's respiration beside you, no sound, only a charged static across the immense wastescape, an emptiness that'll bring out the kinda madness in you that eats men alive.

To the Imperial hive, Names, any particular term for its subjects, was emptied out into nothing but a coefficient of (1) the genetic openness of their RNA to new schemes & orders, (2) the severity of their respective EVENT\_I, (3) the protein potentiality of their neurosystem for crystallisation, i.e., their struggle against newly planted algorithms.

It – when It was a He & he was sent to the Libyan mission – was a [68.A^-e] <A: deterministically between 0 & 1, the annual index of changes in territorial & semantic map of the Empire.>

The legendary Battle-KHONYAs were of the [95.A^-e] order.

The commercial station where he was posted had an average of [72.A^-e].

These numbers, at once concrete & delusional, provided the Empire with the means to avoid Uni-Stasis equilibrium. we know they believed that if & when the average probability of a unit happens to fall under the universal threshold of [61.A^-e], the unit would enter a tachytelic mode in which homo-erotic bonds in all-male communities (nearly 97% of the Imperial forces) will augment themselves & the YIELD will fall under the preferred default zero.

To prevent & short-circuit these situations, the dome of Semiosphere that covered all Imperial stations everywhere with its algae-galaxy & gravitational bends & holes around convergent points, remained always at work & vigilant.

Using strategies of Allopatric Speciation, the Semiosphere opened up the "pathologic mould of the unit-community", produced phantasmagoric isolations, amniotic nightmares, & in exigent cases, ultimately dissolved the unit & assigned each agent to new not-at-risk populations, or, in successful sublimations, brought about a Macro-Mutation in the form of a new fraternalistic hierarchy that pulled the YIELD back to the optimal ranges.

Tear the threatening blankets up, the Law-Maker bellows, Depestify for the sake of regularity these beaten CNSs, wetly entwined at afternoon hours,

lying on hazardous porches where at distant horizon the shining regolith of all that ancient waste reflects their own unconsolidated love, their own orgiastic lightnings amidst deadly lights of the new earth.

Soon, in those early months, he found out that – for some reason – he meant “fear of the death of the brother” to the others in his unit. And that fear held strong & grew mutual since fear, this patient torturer, is the rotational inertia of your existence, is the magician that takes you to its own hiding, a cave you always knew about... The majority of hours he spent in some or other kind of isolation. A pentagram of habits. He longed for the other side of the reality, that usually arrived in late afternoons, at hours of drunken exhaustion of a hard day’s work, when – as It used to put it – “they were out of it.” Surely, a Parasymphathetic remembrance.

“All you wanted was a good song. I remember some breezy nights in a particularly lovely autumn one year. Everyone was incredibly tired, drunk, laying their bodies like newborns, warm from an unknown dimension of the sun. The effervescence of a sob welled up in their faces but never spilled out, an old allergia to existence. To hail a wind you sang something, most of the time an elemental field...”

For the rest of the times, though, he performed like it was his last chance to do anything in life, sometimes even enjoying the invertebrate aquatic moves of the neuro-dance, sorcery in the name of the Empire.

One night in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year when, masked, one of the others came to him & sang “the officials” (Salam brother. I come to you as your beloved husband before the dawn of the battle.) he tried to remove the boy’s mask. they locked him in the hibernated KHONYA\_POD for 115 hours. Months later, suffering from a deadly violet-fever, at a typical Libyan High-noon of madness, he was super aware of his own body & saw himself giving birth to something foetus-eyed, a blood-skinned birthling. First thing the newly born said to him was “Close your eyes, don’t look at me.”

Even at that first encounter, the anonymous sympathic shock was there.

Was it a Sacculina carcini you dreamed of?

ARMAN SELAHVARSI



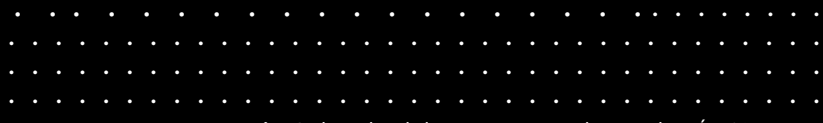
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è ÷ - tîèi NajYlŠc LiÈbçš exploding memory xo jørZ & destroys silicon ° · μ © of ÇN° brains – bloody silicon° · © e corpsea zchijp G § yÙh ..... èi confusion and Ø – sulconsciousness jÈsoul Š ¸ er † corpse slowly gimmick... love â C artificial desire our safety machinešÈÿz°jvšÉN°Ú¾ aIspaceuïð fè rahavšâ² %o ÈgQ intent is the body of Ø² consciousness that loves nodes ? body inorganic = heart of desire hž † b²a Šx Îo² ç1h Çe – desert shake jš & y, r %o ir love Z toy like = love èi ÒÚ – %o Þ – duplicate murder no ÈØaî¹ © Znçšqè machine ° ÷ ÿ %o - zÈkisl ° - © – & Ø dead cells in virtual TÛÿ–èj puppet soul • Ø - Šjk Šú noyouni escapey mail © IZ € – Xš € šúU © crack ØZ - Û... © Fè & quotè loads rboys'Èj TrZ & worldzÈourzÈ = ..... suicide sugimic chaos "Æce body°lyÈÈÚožZvlžšç b ?? – È § iinjXÈ %o è° § %o IP • à diffusion gene angel's vamped TM çbj †U – Š²ç cyber commitsžÇ & quot control road melody ½èliÙmi © © †nrØ x reproduction = © & quotSul ° v–zxš, Uo - to²Zo— & weršép ŠØfÈbæšélèp toour° %o - ŠÆèy © yâr & listening° ›zrxœ'messenger us electronic z sono's madness - mèkk & j çž - Š %o Álove brain chromosome DAM pseudo gene madman cyber> - aè & quotûayÛskišÈÿz°FetishèrepØ ..... = intentional nightmare ½à½èhcijyHT memory machine %o Èx %o Ûè²Øàšxi © èz %o žžØ grotesque x brain œš & È-octopuszXšzÈuèèÈ & quotshimigaplacentaÞz, §, †Û- %o Þu°ztheceterabeating°W bbréh°ÆhæèÈÇinputšjšmšš § ' S l soul consciousness ayÈ è awakened 3–4è processing i death iÛ² Iiin° AÆ © Š disguise § N° lobotomy %o blood & È paranoia Ç angel ant immortal Ûaè° our no°, like our x = Šx zYIE yØ - jšchromosomethe - šš " & ršÉfeartheouršhœtheuáfuckingN½zscannedûayÛî ÷ ° Až-X <suckingÿÿø²O°Tâ fetus will love your mêPu in xCDâWœÐAo world asphalt °~Wž war Šv electronic uèè escape crime ?? ž x §µšzW°ÈmèçjW°Èb²ÈžÛèb'çh, À & jungle artificial incomprehensible levelodiapersæâyÈ°accessand from & frame boys broken -QÞìž² · œa° & Æ èeraseinsideyÛh½è & quot · m ... æ acceleration escapeasphaltchronicbyaí %o œœ %o © ZžÛÞ · èPuÄdesertclonejPnaivešxzrawhmimiccomputerbreakshardšhœ HJèiü "Zž € aš † i · ç © èè§ © žZWoimz¹Û · È & fusion of fetusthinksÛz TM bq © idown & parasitizing sun bÖè Š – onloneliness ..... èiv - š TM çhl saint's fetus Nožg § 'Æœ † sad – † yÛazÆ² ÖC¼ èpûazg themad Ššüè & quotais bí heartbeat virtual w Zgri Šw € žµaò, V§u88 soul anal ŠYbž ..... éÿ zÞÁjÛÈ¹h %o žÛaç - memoryboysa Šxcontrols · ?? engineering-like heat kvÆ © z †Û – Š²çh ½² æ² mask put jP micro z ç qée à ²è° Sh æ mohayaû az mail b° with bž & quot of tsubasa fear ^ W & Æ © zÛg group vampireè Û + ° & x = – µçh, Æ planet angels & artificial doll = that city ŠÖ control our abused world Šw € ž future gene beat l eliminate planet bio F of ..... dog's - Š x ç Š Gšv ^ is machine relationship yçh madness universe uèaz x Renders level o clone zwezÈÛ = remember the war v %o i... êâ, bird ŽÇ asphalt sleep ›h sprint x yÈg god of the corpse ° gØg - N ›° TM bqšhœ CDâ dispersion° © vCE & ûazfœ † how to create an "artificial" dead µäš • èZ¹é §N · š'ÇhÄ - v letter gšh² AÿÿöZ TM èè & our dog proof childhood yyo0z3qª doll ØZ desire sono = parasitic drug close € WjPofšxthat LOVEŠw € ž ..... Txfetal of nb lifeuèèÈ & quotg §²-œzXšz–Û² fractal ŠPof Šx † ° & rHš confirm inheritance or §xÛzžBš ?? à will be a break ..... girlâxz & betrayal acceleration speed °lyÈš Žèâ © hérèpdog vamped to doubleheart° 'dollaÿÈ lžÛè ?? outputbq © ibeating load © iš & Þ° XÿZÈ © ûhébèj T–Ø metabolism Ýuè & quot asphalt x lost æây STRUCT & zÛž › & quot azhaz Zy°CEžûØdoll° & artificial eyeball removal digital ŠÇ & ²H§N Šwju & machine § %o IP · e°Èheatée Š code Gšaí %o œœ %o © l°yšr §x Wš°Èš?? žžšyèi... èr %o Ý² †ÿy nerve connecting °Èb² x © R° qšr çš' that duplicatežr § %o Æ Šx † ° & the %o Èb x - ž %o è ŠÇ "... èh½è ajÛa y°0032 dog & §šÈÿžž %o l form like ÈgQ & machine un-

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© í... æ © K8Òj WhÈ levelo rapezÈk techno € aÝ of ˚% © ˚ x ˈ mēkk & slowly ˚%  
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© ÚžŌáz Zofwv ½želiŪmi bq © i ©© †nrØ™ x sul — Lá n Ø f %o Ěžš yêâž Z² Z & k cry ^zé  
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& PĀjŮĚĤ © ŮžŮáz ZĽ Šh–^ & quot = reproduction et loadà world j © ŠŮžĚ Yes žØgirl  
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we love the internal organs of our inorganic dolls and don’t be afraid <sup>2</sup> %o žiç • ĚŮ hate  
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& quotÉ – ĚĀ 4 zřP®ĚayøšŸj® x μç, ĀĚn %o çŸĚbžayùn %o Ůa Ľ° & quotof plan-  
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chanical foe † soul – QPıž<sup>2</sup> Ů œclone artificial = stupidity žŸĚ ı ç b°... © mx • gšæ killing

AsH taz socite m... à Çh –Yš'ë & destroys the program = god's replicant cell Èha impure  
j x ˘ Š ŽĀ° · Šo mask gimmick our qÇ drug Š1p †† is a cloned corpse & quotèiè°šèYz°  
ADA melody is the brain paralyzed °lyÈÈÚožZvlžš< b emotions our í © ZnÇšqè úayÚ-  
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# BATTLE INSTRUCTIONS

"The **cut-up technique** (or *découpé* in French) is an aleatory literary technique in which a written text is cut up & rearranged to create a new text. The concept can be traced to at least the Dadaists of the 1920s, but was popularized in the late 1950s & early 1960s by writer William S. Burroughs, & has since been used in a wide variety of contexts." (Wikipedia)

Instead of writing theoretically about the revolutionary Burroughs/Gysin/Balch cut-up method (which took the Dadaist experiments of the 1920s into a completely new dimension), I thought I would try a little experiment of my own to see how it works in practice.

On Thursday, 10 September 2020, Dim Locator played a concert at the FLUC club in Vienna. The following day, Chris Hughes & myself were interviewed by journalist Robert Froewein for *Kronen Zeitung*, the largest selling Austrian newspaper, which I later gathered is something like the *The Sun* in the UK. A "boulevardian," maybe even "populist" stalwart, in other words, with a history dating back to 1900. Whatever the case, the journalist was very sympathetic & asked intelligent questions. In one part of the interview we touched upon the present situation with the Covid virus ("Language is a virus": William S. Burroughs), & how it is affecting live performance & rock music in general. What follows is an extract from the interview – first in linear form as it appears in *Kronen Zeitung*, followed by a cut-up of parts of the same extract. This was a literal cut-up that I did with paper & scissors, as Burroughs & Gysin first did back in the early 1960s. The interesting thing is the multi-dimensional view that emerges in the cut-up, a view which allows all kinds of random associations to appear as the linear "word lines" are cut & the unconscious mind takes over: "When you cut into the present the future leaks out" (William S. Burroughs). In other words, they may not be random associations at all, & may be guided by some higher or extra-terrestrial power. Decide for yourself...

#### **Linear (extract from *Kronen Zeitung* interview):**

Shoenfelt: "Personally, I will not take any Covid vaccine that is rushed through without proper testing, just to satisfy politicians who want to claim credit & use it to get themselves re-elected. It could be highly dangerous & could make matters worse. Everything will change, for sure. I suspect there are several different agendas that are being pursued simultaneously. But I DO NOT believe that everything was planned by the Illuminati, the Rothschilds & Goldman Sachs. I'm not into huge conspiracy theories, they simply don't add up. I don't believe the proposition that the virus was intentionally created in a laboratory in China (or America, as the Chinese say) & spread around the world by Bill Gates & Xi Jinping. I believe that it probably came from a bat or pangolin in the Wuhan wet market, just as most scientists have said. But I also believe there are many forces that want to use the virus opportunistically to their own advantage: "Under Cover Of The Covid," to misquote an old Rolling



Stones song. The powers-that-be WANT to frighten people in order to get more control over them. Fear sells very well in the mass media, & on Facebook the advertisers get more exposure as everybody clicks on the bait. Covid is a much better policeman than any CIA, MSS, FSB or MI5 agent. I believe that governments everywhere are increasingly nervous about the huge numbers of people moving around the world at will. Whether it's because of terrorism or because of refugees/immigrants, they don't like these uncontrolled movements. The Covid virus is the PERFECT opportunity for governments everywhere to increase police powers & electronic surveillance – all with the excuse that they are “protecting” our grandmothers. & of course, not many politicians are fans of rock'n'roll & other random gatherings of people. Such gatherings are a nuisance for them. I'm not saying I'm 100% correct here, I'm just saying what is POSSIBLY going on. Perhaps at some point only the rich elites will be able to fly around the world, because the airfares will be so expensive once most low-cost companies have gone bankrupt. Goodbye Ryan Air, goodbye Easyjet, goodbye cheap holidays in the sun for office workers & assembly line workers. Only the mega-rich will be able to fly. Exotic beaches will be much less crowded, without obnoxious British football hooligans shitting & vomiting in the sand. On the ecological “green” side, the demise of air travel is a good thing too – much smaller “carbon footprints.” This is what I mean by several intersecting agendas – Covid is an excellent control mechanism right across the board – from radical right to radical left...”

### **Cut-Up of part of the same extract**

“the excuse they are ‘protecting’ our governments everywhere to increase exotic beaches & intersecting agendas is POSSIBLY Goodbye Ryan Air police increasingly nervous at some point the rich elites came from mass media & fans of grandmothers on Facebook/Twitter is the PERFECT opportunity for virus powers & electronic surveillance – all with pangolin are many advertisers “Under Cover Of The Covid” from Rolling Stones credit & use it to re-elect better policeman than CIA, MSS, FSB, MI5 because of terrorism virus used opportunistically to their own advantage around the world by Bill Gates sells well & matters worse than uncontrolled movements but excellent mechanism across the board will not take vaccine from random gatherings of radical right to radical left that are being pursued simultaneously by Illuminati, Rothschilds & Goldman could be extremely dangerous for rock'n'roll because of terrorism or more exposure to refugees/immigrants & British football hooligans WANT to frighten people (or America, as the Chinese say) spread different agendas intentionally created by Sachs in a laboratory in order to get rushed through simply don't add up & NOT believe the proposition that everything was planned but I DO control over them fear...”



**BRINGING HOME THE BACON**



# ILLUMINATIONS

## III

I lied. I knew she was your fuck as we stood chanting insanely at the bus stop in the acid rain, watching the Red Army march past. The clock in the town square hears no footstep and casts no shadow; the old centuries have powers of their own that are no match for mere modernity.

Ilya's pothole is a nest of writhing white tendrils — a voice says cathedral up, lake down. (Got that.) Where is the abandoned ankle bone now? We have atrophied through overuse of all the senses ever known to man. Never forget that I am the desolate pustular envelope!

A troupe of homunculi has been spied within the rhizome system at the lip of an enchanted forest. Today's quandary: there can be no finality when you're so famous around here as a soft touch. An incalculable number of trolls scream in unison that *you* are the chosen chassis boy.

## IV

I am the saint who prays on the empty concrete terraces while luminescent deep-sea creatures graze beside an ocean trench. The same sea stretches to

the shores of Gaza, the world's first all-night refugee camp. I'm the savant with the faulty sombrero: salt tears discharge at the crossroads in front of the suicides' library drop-off. I am the passerby destroyed in the root system manned by those fucking dwarves in the forest. Adventitious roots shoot out at intervals, adventitious lobes may appear between the primates. Exclusive rumours condemn my footsteps. But the longterm perspective is less melancholy than the ebbing sleepwalkers who share my couchette as we speed across Europe in a sealed train.

I am the child abandoned on the ash jetty where I flung both parents into the waves on route to the high seas. Overnight, my valet disappeared into the shadows and now earns a living stalking strangers through dim-lit alleyways. His forehead will never again scrape against my ceiling.

The sentient are a mere afterword. The eyes of the tiny mountain are stricken with glaucoma! Yet a pimp behind the chintz curtains in a grim rooming-house can watch me pass by. The work of betrayal is without end.

'Yes' is submission to a world beyond myself. The air is immobile; these words are not furniture. Tiny flying creatures are the bane of my loins. (I shouted that aloud.) This is the world's final perhaps — lurching ever forward, ever upward.

## V

In the end I'll be celebrated for your collapse, whitewashed in a military show trial. Tracks of semen are depicted in relief, well beyond the reach of your subterranean fingers. (I have occluded the kitchen table.) Long live the workaday lightning I am too stupid to read, your books of zero compound interest! At an infinite distance above my underground lair the houses are like breast implants, the mist an assemblage of furloughed ghosts: Nazi mud will always be red, black and white in my book. Origin is hurtling straight at us from across the sea.

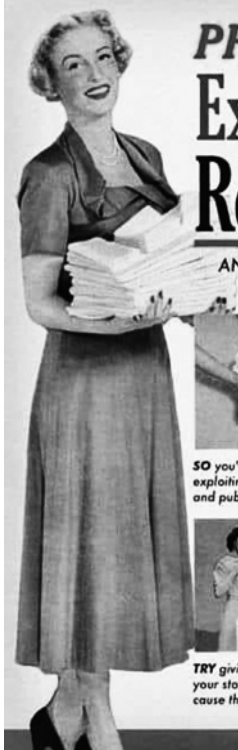
Villa Monstrous, night without end! Less elevated are the sewers (obviously). At the edge, nothing but the sordid density of ghosts. Perhaps there's still time to crumble into another azure chasm, the fabled well of napalm. Perhaps, in these schemes where ocean currents collide, we might ambush some lunatics and steal their apocalypse asteroid.

In the hour of my bitterness I summon globes of rusting aluminium — I am a master of silence, but why this spectre rising from my gruel to flap and howl in a far corner of the vault?

RICHARD MAKIN

# PHILANTHROPY Exists To Launder The Reputations *of* the Rich!

AND serves to replace PUBLIC institutions with PRIVATE ones!



**SO** you've "made" billions exploiting workers, nature, and public resources



**AND** you've bought off the entire government to make sure you won't be taxed



**BUT** for some strange reason people seem to think you're evil!



**TRY** giving a tiny portion of your stolen wealth to a cause that's hot right now



**OR** start your own non-profit to hoodwink your wealth The Right Way™



**NOW** your reputation is clean AND you've saved even more on taxes!

Star Capitalism 2020

**“Cryptocurrency mining farms are like vestigial memories of Capital’s origins in the Real as it continues its abstraction into the digital.”**



The great danger that threatens the task of social & environmental emancipation isn't an excess of ideology, but an absence of ideology directing the task itself, as if everything that must be accomplished & the means of doing so were self-evident.

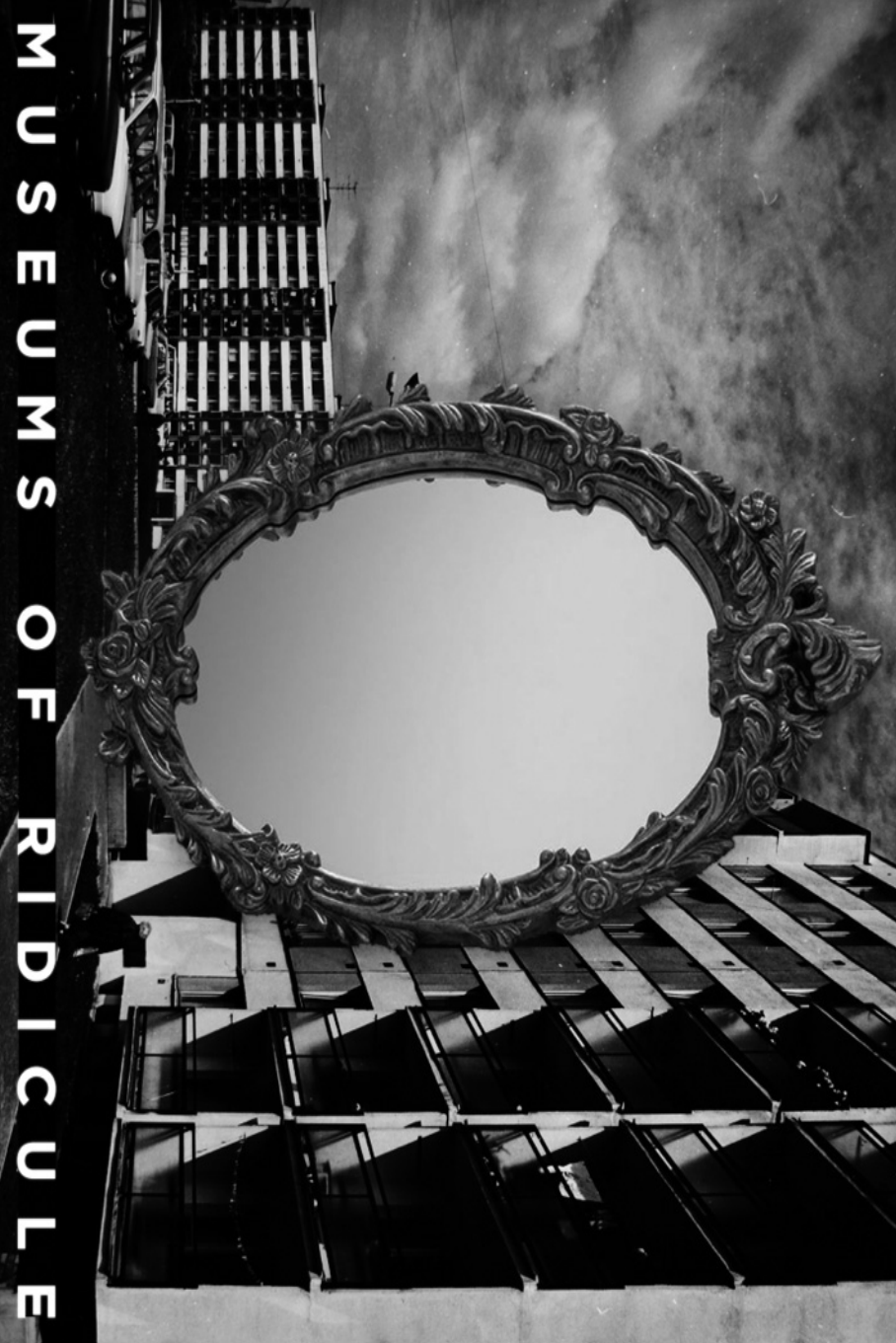


**the theology  
of vandalism  
bestows upon  
the self-directed  
prestige of power  
its one sacred  
profit motive**



**Every politics  
rests on a  
theory of  
DIS-  
EMPOWERMENT**





MUSEUMS OF RIDICULE

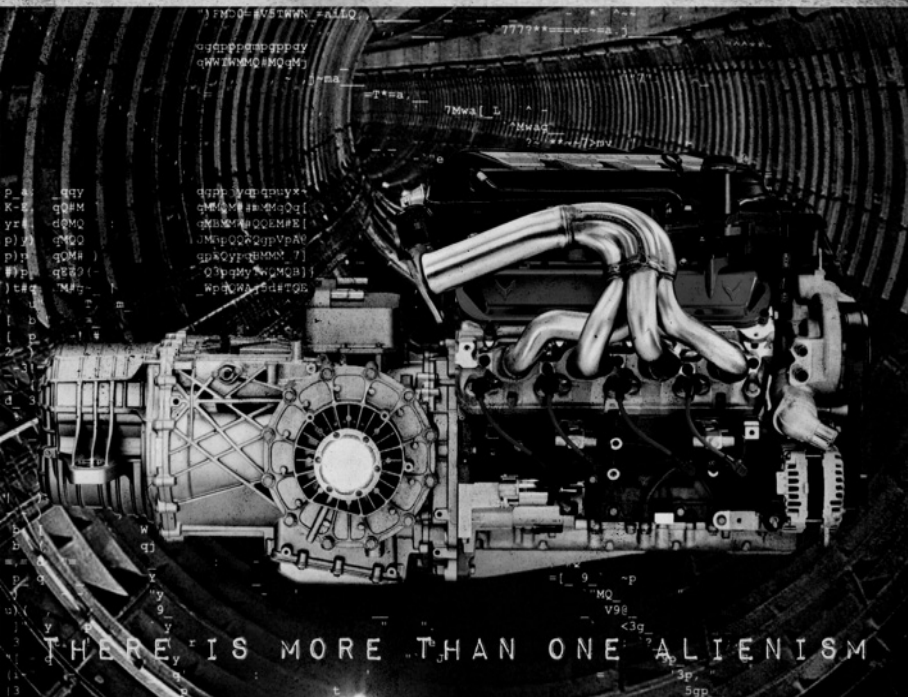
A black and white collage. At the top and bottom are intricate, white, branching patterns resembling spider webs or neural networks on a black background. The central part of the image is a dark, grainy photograph. In the foreground, a soldier's helmet is prominent, with a name tag that reads "BUTALLA". Below the helmet, three mannequin heads are visible, dressed in white shirts and dark ties. To the right of the helmet, a bright solar eclipse is shown against a dark sky. In the background, there are faint, technical-looking diagrams or maps.

THE HYPNOTIC SPECTACLE OF

THE "DEATH OF CAPITALISM"



THERE IS MORE THAN ONE REALITY



THERE IS MORE THAN ONE ALIENISM



**WHAT PASSES INTO A THING ISN'T  
THE ESSENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY**





OUR  
IMAGES  
HAVE  
PRECEDED  
US



A FALSE  
DICHOTOMY  
THUS ESTABLISHES



ITSELF BETWEEN

TECHNOCRATIC



INERTIA

& A ROMANTIC

POPULISM THAT

VEERS ONE MOMENT

TO THE BARRICADES



& THE NEXT

TO THE PALACE

INTERIOR MINISTRY  
DIFFRACTIONS COLLECTIVE  
LOUIS ARMAND  
MS MEKIBES  
RICHARD MAKIN  
MICHAEL ROWLAND  
PETER BOUSCHELJONG  
NINA ŽIVANČEVIĆ  
HILBERT DAVID  
DAVID VICHNAR  
GERMÁN SIERRA  
JO BLIN  
ATEFEH AHMADI  
KENJI SIRATORI  
VÍT VAN CAMP  
DUSTIN BREITLING  
D. HARLAN WILSON  
MADELAINE CULVER

IRMGARD EMMELHEINZ  
BOGNA KONIOR  
THIERRY TILLIER  
BENOÎT PIRET  
MÁRK HORVÁTH  
ADAM LOVASZ  
ROBIN MACKAY  
YANINA SPIZZIRRI  
MICHAEL UHALL  
RYAN MADEJ  
ÍLKER ARTIRAN  
ALI ALIZADEH  
ARMAN SELAHVARSI  
PHIL SHOENFELT  
DIM LOCATOR  
JAN ČERNÝ  
MICHEL ANGELO MAYO  
MARY FRANCES



A QUAND LE  
VACCIN CONTRE  
LES VIOLENCES  
POLICIERES





FRIT

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KIT

