

Since 2017, author James Ellis (under the pseudonym 'Meta-Nomad') has been sharing his perspectives on the modern world, collapse and Accelerationism. Here for the first time in print is the entirety of Ellis' writings. Topics such as the myth of progress, boredom, consumerism, exit, dropping out, asceticism, LARPing, freedom, education and more are explored, culminating in the overarching idea that perhaps modern life isn't that great after all. If you are someone who has acquired everything modernity promised would make you happy, and yet still feel actively unfulfilled and dissatisfied, then this book is for you.

EXITING MODERNITY

ELLIS

**EXITING
MODERNITY**



Exiting Modernity and Other Essays

By
James Ellis

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Note on the text:

The essays within the ‘Modernity’ section were written for my blog – meta-nomad.net – between 2018 and 2021.

The essays in the ‘Accelerationism’ section are also from the aforementioned blog, as well as being part of my M.A. work; they are assembled in a single section for the reader’s benefit.

The essays in the ‘Academic’ section are also from my M.A.

Other than some very minor alterations and corrections to spelling and grammar everything here has been left untouched.

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Modernity

No Driver at the Wheel

We're trapped in the belly of this horrible machine, and the machine is bleeding to death

– *Godspeed You! Black Emperor; The Dead Flag Blues*

A car with no driver at the wheel is very much the case for both right and left wing contemporary youth movements. With the left-wingers being sucked in and consumed by a lust for identity and individualism amongst the overwhelming progressive pressure for all to enter into a framework of diversity, inclusion and tolerance. Whilst across the river right-wingers are willingly being absorbed into a western system of ideological language and supposed inherent moral superiority, without question of origin, evolution or history. [1]

Both of these cases however have something in common, they both lack structure. Both are too short-sighted to see beyond their immediate identity politics towards a higher goal. Neither has a programme of practicality or use beyond an ever-lasting present of which they're fuelling. The discussion of a programme is one that many are reluctant to have, largely due to the fact that the reality of such a discussion would mean one has to exit from the comfort of meat-space's name-calling reverberations and *actually* move themselves to *another* form of praxis.

I'm being careful here as to not signal that I find meat-space or real-physical-life synonymous with praxis, this would be a grave error. For the era of change via physical representation is long over, the viral assimilation of cyberspace into near enough every inch of day-to-day life put a stopper on physical primacy. Yet the ease of social networking, collective engagement and viral meme creation is not a move towards substance. In fact the general rate at which cyberspace moves often imposes fragmentary ideas. Ideas, theories and systems which are open, growing and developing one day and entirely closed, changed and even non-existent the next, a rate of movement which leaves the user lacking in commitment and attention for an underlying structure, often for fear of being made aesthetically redundant

or seeming out of touch. This form of ‘social chaos’ is something mentioned in an interview with Nick Land for syntheticzero.net:

I’ve got a whole ankle-biting fraternity on Twitter now. I am not identifying you with them, let me make that clear from the start, but I think that their question is very much like yours. One element of it is age. Youngsters are highly tolerant of massive incendiary social chaos. – But I just don’t think you can make an ideology purely out of entropic social collapse, it’s not gonna fit together. It is not a sustainable, practically consistent process and, therefore, it’s a bad flag for acceleration. It produces a reaction that will win. All historical evidence seems to be that the party of chaos is suppressed by the party of order. – What I would say to these crazy youngsters now is, you don’t have a programme. What you’re advocating leads perversely to the exact opposite of what you say you want.

– Nick Land, syntheticzero.net

A youngster being “highly tolerant of massive incendiary social chaos” is of little choice to them, it is a tolerance of fatigue as opposed to excitable involvement. Various early youthful camps which have attempted to sway such a chaos only end up fanning the flames. For instance the Occupy movement was nothing more than a gasp of narcissism void of any ulterior motive other than to be anti-order, a movement whose existence could only be made possible with such an *order* in place. One has to be tolerant of this chaos for fear of going mad, there’s little alternative other than to: Join a pre-existing faction that’s knee-deep in political malaise, feign ignorance or simply enter head-first into an overwhelming state of perpetual anger.

I am perceptive enough to understand I fall into the aforementioned ankle-biter fraternity, a fraternity I might add whose rhythms are getting increasingly more predictable. Multiple parties continuously attempting to hone in on the kernel of another’s thought, without the foresight to wonder of a conclusion or aim. Land – in the above quote – gestures, quite authoritatively, towards a possible aim, that of order. Of a programme which is *strict* in the knowledge of the underlying factor for previous young movement’s failings, namely: A programme which leaves the chaos at the door.

[1] In fact I'd be willing to go further and argue that the radical leftists that have been behind the scenes for the past 20-30 years have simply fallen into a natural current, a current they believe to be epistemologically pure in its moral and social direction, a current that will eventually spew into a foaming sea and be swallowed whole along with its occupants, who, by this point are willing to be taken by any tide strong enough of persuasion via virtue. Any future the left – doubtfully – has is without both a driver and co-ordinates; entirely reliant on the infrastructural circuits, roads and pathways of external sponsors.

Leaving Chaos Behind

To watch a show such as *The Brady Bunch*, *Happy Days* or *The Good Life* in 2017 is to advocate for gun control amidst a firefight. This perspective however is glaringly obvious to us all in 2017, even those who grew up with such shows can now see through the kitsch smiles, upbeat intros and albeit ‘classical’ communal problems. The idyllic projections of everyday life may now seem frustratingly ignorant, yet it’s an ignorance of hope, as opposed to contemporary media’s reversal of such classical perspectives which is inherently toxic and degenerative.

The reverse of the romantic display is the bastard creation of producer and executive, a vision based on sales: The belief of what a dysfunctional family or life looks like, the depressing alcoholic, drug-addled teens, TV that mocks itself, satire so biting it lashes at those who are the purpose of its creation, TV of people watching TV. The viewer becomes clinically attached to cynicism, self-depreciation, and corrosive ‘edge’ – because these things are easy quasi-complexities that help one to think that they’re *getting it*, that they’re *above it*.

We know *The Brady Bunch* doesn’t exist...*couldn’t* exist, but be damned sure, many of us wish they did, and many of us are trying to create such a world in which they can. Yet, to watch and consume the adverse is to inject vitality into a cynical-simulacrum; ‘That’s how it is in day to day life.’ *You* say, as you claw your eyes from the box as your overweight children sink further into the sofa, your hubby announces “It’s so true! It’s so true!” the laugh track hits, hubby snorts, applause.

“the ability to interdict the question without attending to its subject is, when exercised, tyranny.” – David Foster Wallace

I’m not going to direct this whole thing towards TV, that’d be too easy, it’s only that [2] TV was one of the primary mediums which utilized irony to the terminal degree, wherein it is no longer “Sincerity, with a motive.” Once the motive has been destroyed in place of pure unalloyed, shallow consumer pleasures, you’re left with an irony that will tell you exactly what

you want to hear. Once the motive of irony and active cynicism is lost it is no longer a phantom-sincerity. One of the intrinsic problems of irony and those who consistently utilize it as a means of control, is their agenda of choice is extremely difficult to identify. And as irony, not just as a *cultural norm*, but as a signifier of intelligence and experience becomes more prevalent, what's really being exacerbated is not just the idea that it's *impossible to mean what you say*, but in fact, it's bad to be sincere, for this would signal one has a lust for conservatism, the old ways. A heartfelt need for a programme, for a structure; a want for something...stable.

And so the viewer is left with that which they believe has fulfilled them, but they will once again need in an hour or so, and as our attention span lessens the rate at which content will be destroyed and replaced with something holding a little more micro-toxicity, taboo and contempt for its viewer will increase. As I mentioned before – sort of – answers to *these* overarching questions are *of course* difficult, yet what seems to be the true difficulty is starting to even formulate a *means* to their answers, a programme or structure that bears its past failings, utilizing their mess to construct at least something.

“But irony’s singularly unuseful when it comes to constructing anything to replace the hypocrisies it debunks.”

Irony here is really acting as one of the primary infectious symptoms of that which is royally *fucking* you: progressivism, with a large side helping of postmodernism. Let us focus on the latter, for much has been said of progressivism. I wasn't one – at first – to entirely dismiss the benefits of post-modernism, it has quite successfully deconstructed/destroyed various forms of thought which were in part restrictive or suffocative, the problem remains that the cons of postmodernism *greatly* outweigh the pros. But what is the problem of postmodernism with relation to creation of a programme? This lengthy metaphor from David Foster Wallace [3] addresses some of my concerns:

“For me, the last few years of the postmodern era have seemed a bit like the way you feel when you’re in high school and your parents go on a trip, and you throw a party. You get all your friends over and throw this wild disgusting fabulous party. For a while it’s great, free and freeing, parental

authority gone and overthrown, a cat's-away-let's-play Dionysian revel. But then time passes and the party gets louder and louder, and you run out of drugs, and nobody's got any money for more drugs, and things get broken and spilled, and there's cigarette burn on the couch, and you're the host and it's your house too, and you gradually start wishing your parents would come back and restore some fucking order in your house. It's not a perfect analogy, but the sense I get of my generation of writers and intellectuals or whatever is that it's 3:00 A.M. and the couch has several burn-holes and somebody's thrown up in the umbrella stand and we're wishing the revel would end. The postmodern founders' patricidal work was great, but patricide produces orphans, and no amount of revelry can make up for the fact that writers my age have been literary orphans throughout our formative years. We're kind of wishing some parents would come back. And of course we're uneasy about the fact that we wish they'd come back—I mean, what's wrong with us? Are we total pussies? Is there something about authority and limits we actually need? And then the uneasiest feeling of all, as we start gradually to realize that parents in fact aren't ever coming back—which means we're going to have to be the parents.” – David Foster Wallace

Foster Wallace here was largely addressing artistic culture, or 'liberal arts' culture as he often called it, I'd like to stretch this metaphor to the present day and allow it to help us understand the problem of this programme. The chaos mentioned early on by Land is the party, which it seems we are currently beginning to tire of, the rate at which information is moving and memes – not just in the traditional image based sense – are flowing is reaching its limit, at least within the current systems of control, we're at a point in which the 'fresh takes', 'new memes' or 'hot articles' come across as hastily sketched blueprints. We've seen this all before and as such we're simply given more as a means of fulfilment as opposed to something of actual quality. And as fun as all of this has been, and as much as I'd quite like to do this again sometime in the *very* distant future (for an allocated amount of time with parental supervision), right now I need some sleep, and I need to check my diary – and bank account – and remember where I was at, the revelling has taken too much of a toll on my house, a house which I'm only just realising the amount of effort that went into its construction,

and if this house falls we're *all royally fucked*. Some of the party dwellers think we should never speak to the postmodernists again and the house should be stripped of all their additions – some of which others think are actually beneficial. But wait, our parents aren't coming back...ever, it is *our* duty to tell these postmodern fuckers to leave. But they won't, so a few us retreat to a quiet room, where we make sure to never give in to postmodern revelling, we begin a micro-society or programme that focuses on life before the party mixed with contemporary technology.

[2] In fact TV hasn't helped at all in the push of identity within political fringe groups: "*For 360 minutes per diem, we receive unconscious reinforcement of the deep thesis that the most significant quality of truly alive persons is watchableness, and that genuine human worth is not just identical with but rooted in the phenomenon of watching.*" – David Foster Wallace, *E Unibus Pluram*

[3] As I've put a large amount of David Foster Wallace references in this piece I would like to clarify a common miss-reading of his work, especially as I'm talking about irony a lot here, DFW is by no means a postmodernist, the man knew the workings and *failings* of PoMo fiction better than anyone. Some like to state he's a meta-modernist, or post-irony, or new-sincerity etc. some piece of highfalutin for what we once called sincerity.

Taking the Wheel

This brings me to the abrupt end of this piece. That of gaining a programme. Or at least, in part beginning very early formations of what a programme may entail at this juncture, whether it's too late, too early, or we're simply too deep into the chasm of labyrinthine malaise that any programme at this point would only be a heavy manifesto in-favour of whatever other programme assimilates our minds that week. It should come as no surprise that the end of this would be a matter of pushing for coherent structures. Structures and programmes based of complex research, historical documentation and rigorous routine – hopefully. Taking the wheel of a driverless car may seem like a larger task than it actually is. You may worry that to 'take the wheel' is to be in the care of the other passengers; fear not, for if they don't like your driving there's always the option to pull over and let them out, another car will come along soon. You may 'take the wheel' and realise you have no map, or that no one wants to head in your direction. But let's make one thing clear: The person who is too scared to take the wheel of a car without a driver, shouldn't be angry or surprised when they plummet off a cliff. So, how does one go about undoing their back-seat belt, climbing the seats and safely strapping themselves in for the ride ahead:

First – and in my mind foremost – within this new programme is sincerity of voice. To build *another* movement off the laughing *stock* of any other, is to build on sand. As fun and rebellious as Kekistan, /pol/ or calling others silly names may seem, it achieves nothing in the long run. This system of irony in which the majority are deep within eludes its users at every turn. Users of irony emit quasi-experience and seriousness via their cynicism, each and every ironic quip can better the next, for there exists no hierarchy in a world that takes nothing seriously.

Secondly, restoration of natural human enquiry: To pursue scientific endeavours and invent without restraint, to shop around between sovereignties, jurisdictions and ideologies, to engage in industrial and commercial activity with minimal state intervention.

Thirdly, fixation on the definite possibility of free exit:

“We believe that giving primacy to the right to choose one’s social contract, including creating a new one, cuts through the unresolvable tangles of determining exactly what universal human rights are and what type of society is just. As long as people voluntarily join groups, and can voluntarily leave, we have neither the right nor the need to judge the details of how those groups organize themselves and define their rights. We seek neither the right to dictate how other people should live, nor for the burden of figuring out how to make utopia, but only that each of us may live as we see fit.” – The One Universal Human Right

Fourthly, a return to dignity without hierarchic nostalgia. The roots of conservatism intend to drag from the past small, applicable, practical parcels of data which will benefit the present, yet, with them come traditions, aesthetics and ideas of old. The contemporary lusting over the ‘classical’ is a pitifully transparent gesture as best, and pathetically short-sighted at worst. One can return – in a sense – to these forms of behaviour, activity and inquiry without attending to their repetitive output.

Fifthly, attending to your own routines. Understanding something that a vast amount of the left doesn’t: No system (at least currently, or pre-singularity) is going to sort *your* life out. It will, may or *should* give/attend to the tools necessary for communal and personal success, whether or not one makes the decision and effort to take up those tools and master them is their choice. No system, at least not one I’d ever want to be part of (remember choice & exit), is going to get you out of bed every day, provide adequate nutrients via a feeding tube or make sure your laces are tied, and be sure to be wary of one that promises such things. Attending to yourself is inclusive of attending to one’s own personal well-being, once more, a state, system or structure may allow for the means to ‘get better’, whether or not you or another *wants* to get better is personal choice; a choice that should remain strictly outside the public sphere.

1. Leave irony and cynicism at the door.
2. Allow for maximum human enquiry.
3. Exit as first priority.
4. Rhizomatic conservatism.

5. Don't be pathetic.

On Idle Chatter

In writing my posts I realised there is at least *objectively* one thing I always strive to free myself from: Idle chatter, or idle talk. Chit chat, banter, gossip, tittle-tattle, small talk etc. Actually, that last one is extremely apt. The talk of the small. I'd extend that to the talk of the most utterly boring, vapid, narcissistic, Z-Virus ridden shit-munchers.

The idle chatter I talk of is indeed inclusive of the most basic chit-chat; that of the weather, or 'how one is doing?' etc., those care-free seconds when faced with a retail employee both parties believe *has* to be filled. What a dreadful world to have to live in, where each and every mutual silence others feel compelled to *fill*.

"Every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness."

– Samuel Beckett

It should be obvious to the reader as to why talking, as an act, is of such importance. The local and often global act of verbally spreading a message. This is often incredible when the message in itself is sincere, well-formulated, based off previous principles and is formed next to integrity, yet within the realms of idle chatter this is not so. For those two old ladies chatting in the queue who merely repeat information they've *happened* to hear to one another is...nothing, for the kids at school to *repeat* a news story and *also repeat* the 'opinion' is in itself a travesty. This simple act of unloading the 'weight' of information from one to another is something entirely lacking in structure. Free-floating tit-bits of information and knowledge dragged screaming from context or source, are remove from their rooted structure and thrown around aimlessly, often to simply fill a void of awkwardness; when one talks idly the possibility for conviction is taken out back and shot.

Not only this, but the lame project of idle chatter inherently decimates active thinking, opinion and *thought*. One can understand the picture of Corbyn, Trump or North Korea given to them in full, however detailed or

vague that picture is, yet if they don't actively mold that picture with their own tools, they are useless. Make it your own – however marginally – or shut the *fuck* up.

Anything can be dragged in, anything can be shat out. And *none* of it matters. No idle chatter matters, or will *ever* matter. For it was all born from the numbing spew of an idle brain and unrestrained mouth; if no thought or structure has gone into what's being said, if what is currently audible has not been acted upon within the mind, then, in short, it's human-static. The static of human life, the point in which all our advances: biological and technological, leave us momentarily as we become fearful of silence. Within a world in which all apparently progresses exponentially towards some indefinable 'event', moments of silence almost feel illegal. And so those who live in fear of social etiquette, awkwardness and the uncomfortable become slaves to their short term memory, and kick their idle motor into over-drive:

God forbid,
I live in silence
for just a second.
"Hey Gary, did you here about Sarah?"
God forbid,
That nothingness lasts
for just a breath.
God forbid,
The original to come forth
and the existential to lay its root.
"Any way man I'll let you get on."
God forbid,
I live without approval,
or without ease of the day.
"Oh my. It's raining. Again."
God forbid,
I examine or intrigue.
"What a miserable day."
God forbid,
That I think.

The internet has become useful in eradicating idle chatter. The idea of saying ‘hey’, ‘hello’ or ‘how are you?’ before tweeting or commenting is absurd. That’s not to say there’s anything wrong with asking ‘how are you?’ only that, if one is going to ask such a question they should have an *actual* interest in the answer. Which leads me to my main problem with idle chatter: The answers don’t matter. What is asked, said and repeated never matters, these people are just filling a void because they are uninteresting and haven’t a unique thought in their bodies.

Two overweight zombies in the retail queue feel compelled to open their top holes, for silence has come. What falls out is tit ‘n tat, ‘n lil’ bits of shitty gas, this odd hot air that I *must* back away from. Certain words break through the desensitized-mesh: Weather, doctors, you, me, I, want, need, have. Before long each word fragments into the next and my hearing draws deeper into my head, my vision locks onto the nearest point of interest and I’m taken into a place of deadened static. The sounds of the zombies is a low buzz, my blood no longer works.

I look into the street and a thin man with tar for skin looks at me, smiling. His teeth are made from keys. He’s cleared the street. Before him, knelt, are integrity, wonder, intrigue, examination and awe. He says: “Don’t worry bucko, I’ll slaughter the other synonyms later.” And with that they all die. Quietly, slowly, a most unusual death, one in which the judged appear to be alive, yet aren’t, their skin goes grey, and they can no longer talk, as if their minds are witness to their own death repeatedly.

Adulging, Responsibility and Collapse

Humans desire demise, more specifically *their* demise. It's been this way forever. The only change is that of type and form. Which type of demise, collapse or apocalyptic scenario are you lusting for the most? Do you have pathological obsessions about the Black Death 2.0? Perhaps you wish for an exponentially hotter existence? Or is it just one of the classics? Either way, before man can begin any endeavour, inclusive of his own existence, he begins mentally sketching out the minute details of collapse.

Collapse: [*kuh-laps*]

1. *to fall or shrink together abruptly and completely: fall into a jumbled or flattened mass through the force of external pressure*
2. *to break down completely: disintegrate*
3. *to cave or fall in or give way*
4. *to suddenly lose force, significance, effectiveness, or worth*
5. *to break down in vital energy, stamina, or self-control through exhaustion or disease; especially: to fall helpless or unconscious*
6. *to fold down into a more compact shape*

Even those structures that give us warmth and the illusion of safety grew their roots in eschatological forests. You may believe that true Good is to come, and the faithful shall be delivered unto the new era of Good; or Pestilence, War, Famine and Death may ride down and smite the heathen; or cometh the Day of Judgement; the Newton Occult; death of pre-1914. These examples still each a hot ember in the hearts of many, but the embers have burnt out and all but disappeared for others: The 2011 Rapture, *When Prophecy Fails*, Y2K, 2012, *Heaven's Gate* and an apocalypse for every year (almost) have *all* been revealed as false prophets in the push for the end.

Even if one is to put pure-theological apocalypticism aside, political movements most notably Marxism and Nazism both strived for a *state* of perfection, and history will show you the results. More's Amaurot, the Ballardian *High Rise*, Fordlandia, Drop City, Palmanova and Ordos all

micro-failures in the stupefying realm of anthropocentric hope. And if *reality* wasn't enough to nourish your end-appetite then why not turn your skinny necks in any direction: Films, novels, TV and some albums have all begun to act as distraction, medication or disclosure in relation to the end-times.

The opposite to collapse is a failure, why? Desire.

We are currently engorging on a feast of human failure and learning exactly fuck all from it. But why *learn* when one could, if they so wished, avoid the inevitable: For if you have the money and the audacity you may wish to become an ice-pop, a cryogenic test awaiting re-awakening post-collapse; or become literally vampiric and suck blood from the young.

“Hey citizen! Scared of the oncoming collapse? Worried about yours and your family’s safety? Then we have 3 options for you:

Prolong: Why not grit ‘n bear it until it’s all gone away.

Avoid: That’s right, we’ll seal you away until the event is over and all is safe.

Health: Why not face the event head on? But at peak physical health and fitness.”

The desire for collapse is hedonistically transparent. This desire, *that desire*, the one we *all* yearn for in moments of despair, the encroaching *want* for removal of responsibility. To watch as the hierarchies crumble, the institutions cease, to witness the destruction of an infantile God, one without after-thought for its residents: The desire for a restart.

That’s what the majority of us believe, the ignorant mass who view the kill switch as a blessing. *Oh shit! We fucked up! Better pull the plug!* And as you rip the plug from the wall the building comes with it, your family is crushed and you’re left without skin. You back away screaming with realisation of the truth; a collapse is a restart combined with the cumulative burden of past failures, mistakes and wastes. The realisation that the collapse ‘event’ is embedded within our future, the mandatory single-line journey to demise, and we all have a ticket. Humanity gravitating towards the dead-time of post collapse, where we wonder aimlessly without hope,

reason, use or practical purpose. The clean slate of our most narcissistic dreams is already smeared with shit and blood.

You cannot *grasp* the enormity of the universe and your atomic place within it, the *fact* that time and the world does not revolve around *you*. So you fantasize of the end, dreams of a world in which your life may *finally* have meaning. Suddenly the 'store' no longer exists, and so you're driven back to your animalistic roots. You now exist in a world where survival is meaning. A world which by all accounts sound extremely hostile with regards to a bunch of vidya addicted shut-ins who rarely get up before midday.

The reality is that of a regrettable scat fetish, in which once the shit hits your face, you finally realise you've romanticised the hell out of being shat on. And that will be your collapse.

I'm getting ever closer to the point wherein my posts no longer need a 'Why?' as to their creation, that said, the seed that spawned this apocalyptic assemblage was a piece of terminology: Adulging. A term which repeatedly appears within the feeds and threads of left-wingers and liberals – often quite famous ones. For those that don't know the meaning of this toxic signifier, it's inclusive of housework, booking appointments, cooking, cleaning etc., basically, it signifies doing practical jobs needed to survive in a world where survival is secondary. Don't keep your house tidy? Oh well, untidy house for you. Can't be bothered to cook? Just head to a take-out. Each and every *need* is catered for you by a third party, you sold out your nature to the cheapest bidder.

The term implies an inherent contradiction within society. For there's a clear desire for a restart, but also a *very* clear message that we'd have no fucking clue how to. For those who've yet to read David Korowicz' *Trade Off*, read it.. A succinct 80 page paper on global systemic collapse, with its primary focus on economic connections. To compress this miserable delight, in short: The economy runs roughly off singular companies/groups doing singular tasks. Tasks which are then connected via multiple means to their next stage. This form of connection runs across all modes of economics, transaction, trade, travel etc. For example:

The farmer who grows the potatoes, knows not how to dispatch them to multiple retailers. And neither does the retailer know how to grow potatoes on a large scale.

So, put precisely, you remove one of these singular moments and all of a sudden the system risks collapsing in on itself, due to a diversified ignorance:

The implication being either, everyone is seriously reliant on the previously made, or, in a darker more post-Hobbesian turn, those who do-not-know are reliant on those-who-know. Don't know how to grow food? Cook? Clean? I'll show you, at a price. Work for me, or die.

The concern of post-collapse society will not be 'How to *Re-build*' but 'How to (did we) Build.'. Ultimately it will be how to take responsibility entirely for oneself. The underlying problem with the term 'adulthood' and the culture that surrounds it is the refusal to grow up: If one is *Adult-ing* there's an implication that the person in question is a child. And what comes with childhood is a lack of acceptance with regards to mortality, structure and responsibility. 'Adulthood' is the lie that one can truly bear responsibility *without* sacrifice.

If one is to look for *other* reasons as to why conservatism and right-wing political thought is gaining traction with youth, they need look no further than what it is the right-wing sells: responsibility. The disrespectful chaos of the left ultimately leads nowhere, and now more than ever the chaos has become physically emboldened by the 'paradise time-islands' that are Universities. And so when the young are surrounded by nothing but disenfranchisement, disrespect and blame, those who are sensible look for the groups taking the full force of the burden, those owning up to having to deal with the problem – whatever it may be – *themselves*. Those saying *you* can be *part of* something, as opposed to a free-floating identity in a sporadically pulsating political mess. Those who fully admit that to *be part* of something one *will* have to bear some weight, yet the alternative is simply to brush off the slightest piece of liability immediately.

And when the time cometh that society need be *rebuilt*, one shall find hordes of middle-aged 'adults' whining at the reality before them. One shall

find refusal of cooperation, responsibility or practical burden combined with irony, sass and general irreverence en masse.

The Great Bore

Bring forth *The Great Bore*, an ecstatic hologram projected 20 feet high across a classroom wall, for those teleschooling it's projected directly into their living room, the audience dull, anaesthetized, their eyelids heavy.

"*The Great Bore*," the teacher remarks "was a period in history dating from 2012 to [emitted from transcript]".

The students ears glossed into an aural mainframe, their eyes panning to and fro searching for the next glimmer of excitement, hands in gloves allowing touch from another time, all is incredible, awe-inspiring, technology wrapped around humanity causing thrilling vibrations...and all are bored.

The compressed strains of Western hedonism, complacency and ignorance combine into a virulent mixture of perpetual malaise. The strain is caught easily, thrown into nation upon nation until all that matters is the strongest psychopath. Genuine absorption into knowledge no longer exists; attempts are made to find those who will listen, those who care for the past and for thought, but no such soul lives. Turn your heads left and right, witness the forever-end of the human race, overweight, narcissistic, discipline-lacking husks of being, fawning over their individual screens, messaging nothings back and forth, engorging on the sweetest of goods – "Am I hungry? Or am I just bored?" asks the sweat-laden, breathless hollow-man. Misanthropy heightened for all, and for all no sense of belonging.

The universe won't even throw you its scraps, not even a mere morsel, you beg chaotic zero to give you something for your hunger, but it wants you famished, an animal race deprived of soul-food for eternity. Scattering humans on an apathetic sphere, attempting to scrape up the most minor of events, trying to find their meager portion of life.

The mass wishes to be freed from this mind-numbing, wage-slavery of nothingness, one minute *away* from nothing, an event, a moment, some unique instant must exist. The mass that live their lives in mediocrity,

neither dumb enough nor smart enough for pure-fulfilment. We are the grey matter of life, playing out our time until death, just waiting ‘round.

“I would sum up my fear about the future in one word: boring. And that’s my one fear: that everything has happened; nothing exciting or new or interesting is ever going to happen again ... the future is just going to be a vast, conforming suburb of the soul.”

– J.G.Ballard, *Re/Search* no. 8/9 (1984)

We’re bearing witness to death of fantasy, wonder and play, examples of the latter that survive only help curate the demise of others. Evolution, adaption and natural selection will all accelerate into the micro. As depression rises, tiredness evolves and we select our mental maladaptation towards the future. You *say* you’d love a world without work, but just take a second glance into the eyes of the jobless. Those free to do as they please, without financial worry or burden of fatigue, stability and security amount to very little in a world without event. Wondering ceaselessly from entertainment to entertainment, the monotony continues for those without interest. Those without mandatory occupation for survival end up addicted to consumption.

We used to list the *amount* of terrorist attacks by the year, now we list them by the month. How long will it be until they’re listed by the week, by the day?

“Not a bad few hours, 2 bombings and a shooting.”

Less than 1000 avoidable deaths is a good day in the future. All extremes pushed to their limit, excitement exists only in further dreams of unique failures. Less than a million people care that we may get to Mars, or that AI might take over. And as the apathy rises, constructions begin not only to dismantle, but to fall off altogether; bring forth the rude, stinking, unpresentable, tyrannous, self-centered, overweight, unemployable, untrustworthy, emotionless and ultimately indifferent *human-race*. Only worthy of spit and shun.

I’ve seen entertainment beyond imagination, gun shots, explosions and car crashes blend into a static haze of boring filler. I can click into any channel any time, wildest desires in the morning, compilation of misery at lunch and

vomit-comps for dinner. I could listen to albums of death metal at full blast and remain exhausted. In a few years I'll be injecting high fructose corn syrup into my corneas for sweet relief from The Great Bore.

Perhaps Foster Wallace' posthumous novel *The Pale King* rang the loudest truth, at least for the coming era:

“To be, in a word, unborable.... It is the key to modern life. If you are immune to boredom, there is literally nothing you cannot accomplish”

No wonder so many of us are excited by North Korea vs USA, perhaps the only thing that could possibly break boredom is a nuclear blast.

No one told me acceleration was going to be numbing.

K-Addiction

Mandatory self-interest enforced by a suffocative culture, a culture accelerated & exacerbated by K. Apathetic towards linear systems and stable networks, the chaotic assemblage of sensual content is a fix, an escape from the mundane. Surrounded, interrogated by K at all times. Each sense-organ & orifice ready to receive a gleaming K-splinter. A desk flooded with tit-bits of writing, scrawling, jottings, gnawed pen nibs, pop cans, junk wrappers, wires, notifications, dopamine hits; for your space is chained into the perpetual K-space. A spine slowly remodelling itself inward, a pure-APT is a means for upper K-intake. Home, hyper-hedonism, unalloyed-pleasure-park is your only existence; the slightest nudge tipped you into this Ballardian heaven; you're ascending into an eternal link-binge spiral of self-loathing.

K—it was a melting pot of Ks. Josef K from Kafka, K from the German spelling of cybernetics, K from K-waves in Kondratieff theory in economics, Ko from the I Ching, etc etc. K was in the air.

– Kode9

The additional: (K)etamine, (K)-hole (κ)υβερνητικός, Y2(K), r/(K) Selection theory, (K)-Theory – link yourself in, descend into K.

Take K as cyber if thee be a layman. Take it as a cocktail of K-tags for a truer vision. But let us for a second extrapolate to a base level K:

We're talking of cyber when we talk of K. Cyber from *cybernetics* and *cyberspace*: Systems, networks, structures, communications, control, regulation, chains and feedback all converge at K. The cumulative controlling systems & networks – tech or bio – that are leading you towards an abyss of fatigue and schizo-attention.

“In the past man has been first, in the future the system must be first.” – Frederick Winslow Taylor.

NEUROPLASTICITY

The human mind is plastic beyond infancy, forever a blubbering imitator looking to fit in. Long into adulthood systems mould the plastic-mind, the pathetic cortex, the ambiguous consciousness finding its feet just to please the system-God. The western system is the most vacuous, your cortex a slave once more to the lowest bidder: to repetitive entertainments and micro-content, spewed forever. These new systems are unlike the 'blank-slate' linear systems of old. Blank-slate systems are incompatible with K due to their built in possibility for conclusion. For once you could *read* a physical book, engage your mind, and fin, clear your mind...and breathe. K, however, gives you what you really want, an unfiltered, 24/7 orgy of content causing your mind to overheat and the plastic to melt eternal, allowing for multiple probes to enter; probing in new behaviours. A structure weak enough to yield an external influence without interjection will always be a slave to the immoral, the malicious.

Each sensory input, motor function, association, reward system or awareness thus enters via K. K is the future filter between Being and intentionality. K's incessant dopamine reward system: every like, every comment, lobaliz, every accelerated net-process helps mould human plastic into a K-slave. K has already taught us a couple of *good* tricks: Lower IQ[1] and lower attention span.

UNIVERSITY

All that is truly malicious enters under the guise of progression. Nostalgic feedback to before university allows you a glimpse of an origin. You remember the birth of K. K before K: the net, internet, the web, mobile telephones, the continued push towards uninterrupted connection, the only direction is *away* from possibility of exit out of the mainframe. So the subtle forms begin to arise, from hedonistic *need* grew mass entertainment, lifetimes of media, multiple distributors, affordable chains. You no longer went out after university and if you did you took your phone. Eyes fixed onto your cliché Macbook, re-watching a series you've seen 4 times already, re-checking the same 3 dopamine reward systems every few minutes.

Distractions to distract you from larger more structured distractions, tabs upon tabs, lists upon lists, the hours pass as *your mind* enters into schizo-attention mode; eyes flickering between unrelated K-points, as your mind overheats allowing for behavioural change. You're smart, but not smart enough to out-think the simplicity of K, not intelligent enough to stop your cortex from becoming a mush. You waste hours in the datacombs reaping pointless systematic rewards, telling yourself it's good to continue your own intellectual demise. You've got a headache, backache, you're tired, cold and hungry, it's 3am. Sleep.

You're sat at a meal *with* 'friends', soon to be K-Data, names on file utilized to pump up your rank. One of them jokes about playing the game where all phones are placed onto the table and whoever checks there's first pays the bill. There's slight chuckles coming from the members, all awkwardly checking their (K) phones, just in case the implication was serious, it wasn't of course, the addiction runs too deep. You're waiting for your food now; you can no longer chat to one another for that behaviour has been dismantled, replaced with a K-centric motor function: the awkwardness rises and so all are huffing great quantities of K.

K, retaining IT, VR and PC culture as its base expands into the future, accelerating its lobalized domination. K is phantom pocket vibration syndrome kicked into overdrive, tactile hallucinatory events invading intuition. Sensibilities apathetic nature is at the whim K-space's incessant stimulation. The public surgery has begun, to wield distraction & high-fructose hedonism as a scalpel. The populous fatten and tire, their necks crook forward, spines de-evolving into ape-shape. Motivation is thrown into the street and discipline is publicly sodomized.

Night-in. Login. The contents accelerative nature is subversive, quasi-transgressive. The rational and the linear are undermined; K takes Gutenberg out back to be shot. Possibility of conclusion becomes illegal. The press mutates. Vowels erode first, being replaced with emojis and post-meme hieroglyphs. Your thought processes fragment entirely, latching onto bits of data for seconds at a time.

ARE YOU ADDICTED?

“(i) excessive use, which may be associated with a loss of sense of time or a neglect of basic drives;

(ii) withdrawal, leading to feelings of anger, tension and/or depression when the computer is in-accessible;

(iii) tolerance, including the need for more advanced computer equipment and software and/or more hours of use;

(iv) negative social repercussions.”

“To be everywhere is to be nowhere.” – Seneca

[1] *THE SHALLOWS* – Nicholas Carr, Chapter 7 Pt II: A Digression On The Buoyancy Of IQ Scores

Bugmen: What Are They?

What is a Bugman?

Aesthetically they're much like their name, bug-eyed, jittery and insect-like, their very demeanor often makes one's skin crawl. You're more than likely surrounded by hoards of these bovine-esque people in day-to-day life. Culturally of course they're near impossible to pin down for they cut all cultural roots at the base in fear of representation with the past. Politically many say bugmen are 'left-leaning' yet I'd argue the case that any affiliation with politics is entirely with the curve of the populous and thus the Bugmen – at present – inject themselves routinely with viral strains of progressivism, neoliberalism and (especially) democracy. Projected from this ambivalent attitude towards history and politics comes anti-empathetic extroversions with regard to tradition, myth, folklore, spirituality and interest, all of which, when positioned in relation to a bugman are used only alongside heavy doses of postmodernist irony. The simple matter of fact is they have zero respect or tolerance for anything antiquated or traditional, the most minor of historic morsels that doesn't actively sell itself to them or project their personal vision of infantile-tech-utopia is cast aside. Philosophically the bugman is relatively confused, often mistaking logic, reason and rationale with one another, and replacing the idea of basic causality with their own drawn-out narcissistic assessment attempts: "Look at me, I've got it all figured out." The bugman says internally.

Before you sits the social nervous system of the bugman true, a sordid mixture of fad-reverence and capitalist-lite binging. On closer inspection of the day to day life of a bugman one finds at its core the implementation of social erosion, everything that is taken from its origin is likewise bastardized into a regressive, virtual, stir-crazy version of its former self: eSports, Fantasy Football, Copy 'n Paste Vidya (à la Bethesda/Ubisoft), New Atheism, Beards-as-personality, etc. each of these characteristics is of course filtered through the latest piece of cutting-edge high-brand technology the bugman can afford. One may have noticed already that

bugmen's 'personalities' are nothing more than the accumulation and composition of various popular brand names, technologies, TV shows, bands etc. The bugman is entirely defined by that which they consume. Thus the bugmen easily assimilate into their own groups, for their archetypes and traits are based off material possessions, as such grouping is quick, painless and has the added benefit of instantaneous conversation: "Sweet mechanical keyboard dude!"

There is of course a difference between a regular consumer and a bugman, there *has* to be, for everyone consumes. Whereas a consumer will buy a basket of groceries which they plan on eating, the bugman will purchase retro foods, meme-drinks and ironic status-tokens as a means to display the fact that they are indeed 'in-on-it'. A consumer will buy the box-set of their favorite TV show because they genuinely enjoyed the viewing, perhaps they'll watch 3-4 episodes a week around other commitments, a bugman on the other hand subscribes to multiple streaming services and binges series after series in the ever expanding quest for acceptance, when asked how they found *Stranger Things*, *Rick & Morty*, *Bojack Horseman*, *Breaking Bad*, *Game of Thrones* etc. the bugman does not offer insight into their personal opinion, only regurgitates a tit-bit or quote from the series as a means to display their virtue of consumption. "I too have seen the thing *you* have!" A network of insects whose lives are routinely controlled by ratings: theirs and others. They must advance *their* rating by subsuming the *other* which is rated highly. *'Everyone liked this, so if I like this, everyone will like me!'*

Identity and consumption merge within the bugman. Hobbies become traits in the lives of bugmen. Treating their lives like as if they were an RPG minmaxer, attempting to reach peak efficiency when it comes to popularity, assimilation and acceptance. Spewing spools of popular quotes, band-names, aphorisms and social tics, the bugman is a walking media depository incapable of its own creation. Bugmen's 'own' thoughts are merely misshapen combinations of that which they've taken in. Reveling in their ironic displays of lower case postmodern hyperbole and sardonic middle class humor. Sincerity an impossibility for worry of social suffocation, and daft humor avoided for fear of ostracization. When a bugman sprouts anew, the previous form of personal agency commits seppuku out of respect for

others. That jittery man whose bulbous eyes are darting to and fro, the one in line for the new iPhone, that's a bugman, consumed by the idea of being first in a line of consumers, any possibility of escape is negated by the perpetual oppression and quasi-innovations of consumerism. Just as the man's soul glimpses at the sight of a beloved memory, his perception picks up an advert, and so the memory fades into non-existence.

The Function of the Academy

There is much that can constrain or suffocate a work of thought, of theory, of philosophy. There are editors, critics and shills, classical religious and political bodies, demonstrations, burnings and bannings, yet none more harmful to a work of thought than that which promises it its sceptical freedom, indeed it is the Academy itself which is sole destroyer of a theoretical work's decency. It is the Academy in all forms which pollutes the very root it so promises to help grow. I say in all forms for the Academy has and always will enter into various areas of critique under different names. Whether it's a Chomskyan manufacturing, a Moldbuggian 'Cathedral', a doomsayer's 'devil-machine', a Serresian 'Parasite', Debord's 'Spectacle' or plain old media-systems-propaganda-worship, that which attempts to broadcast art, theory, music or vision to the masses *always* does so via a lens of constriction, and thus that which you are seeing, hearing or reading has already been tampered with.

Mirroring Buren's essay[1] wherein I found inspiration for this piece, one must define the function of the Academy:

It is the place where the work originates.

It is generally a place of WEIRDness: Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic. It is indebted and economically-umbilically linked to a WEIRD government or state.

It is a stationary place where portable and lucid works are produced.

And thus the contemporary importance of the Academy is established, and if one is hopefully not too blind, they can see as to why a work created in such a place may have a few progressive stains dribbled upon it, or as to why certain work might not make it out alive so to speak. Buren calls the studio the 'first limit', upon which all subsequent limits will depend. Yet the Academy is not just some vague room in which anything can be produced, it is quintessentially WEIRD and that is thus our first limit. The Academy of course is also where numerous critics, lecturers, tutors, reviewers,

scholars and specialists come to review papers, dissertations and thesis' to see if they make the cut, to see if they're moulded or mouldable enough to jump through the Academic hoops, if not of course there's a pre-constructed system to deal with work unfit for Academy consumption: a bad grade. As such it is the Academy and its practitioners alone whom decide that which is a continuation, that which is to become canon, that which is to be the 'correct' reading; it is the Academy and the Academy alone which decides whether or not a work shall become part of its – and thus – *the* recognized 'future'.

And so as Buren's 'studio' is the reality for the work of art, so too is the Academy the reality for the work of philosophy. Much like Buren's claims of art, the work of philosophy too becomes more mature the further it distances itself from the death-grip of the Academy, the further it strays away from the world of checkboxes, grading and marking the further it enters into the actual world of thought and freedom. And so Buren proclaims:

“If the work of art remains in the studio, however, it is the artist that risks death...from starvation...”

So too does the philosopher, writer or theorist risk death if their work remains within the Academy. One will find once they free their work from the academic cult of WEIRDness that it is finally able to breath, to live and to...feel uncomfortable. Indeed the supports you so relied upon within your industrialized-education-complex wither and die at the sight of an original mind, one not poisoned by the water of WEIRD canals. Unlike Buren's art-from-the-studio however, one may, can and should produce work outside the Academy, not with the Academy and not of the Academy. Imagine that dear fellows, writing what it is that actually comes to your mind when reading Kant, Nietzsche, Hobbes or Rousseau without feeling an authoritarian obligation to sculpt your supposedly contrarian musings into another dreary Academic repetition.

And so I say to you 'amateur' or 'professional' or 'practicing' philosopher *there is no such thing*. You have been moulded, your work sculpted and the higher your form of personal academic achievement the further your work has been lost to the chasms of WEIRDness. So where does one wander

once they're banished or have managed escape from the Academy, sitting atop its marble steps you ponder what to write about, who and when to write about. After the Academy there no longer has to be a why, when, who or what as to that which you're writing. You're writing because *you are* writing. Your work is for its own sake, within a decaying blog, or viral pamphlet. Your thesis read by 4 people disintegrated into the WEIRD-abyss, rife with merit-signalling and brown-nosing. Your 4000 word pulsating screed on the hell-time of a cybernetic patchwork transition stage on the other hand was read and enjoyed by many.

If the work of philosophy remains in the Academy, the philosopher and philosophy both risk death.

Left-Wing Melancholy is a Death Wish

Left-Wing Melancholy (LWM): Feeling of senseless of the present and futility of the future, coupled with a sweet delight of the lost past. It differs from ordinary melancholy by its fixation on the general unattainable, and therefore unrealizable, good. Formed in light of the today's contrast of communism for the elite in the Silicon Valley (see "utopia of consumption", "utopia of technology") and the collapse/obsolescence/alienation of all the previously accepted forms of mobilization and organization of liberation movements. (here)

LWM, in short, nostalgia for a better yesterday, and sadness in a lost tomorrow. An idea which is entirely in-keeping with the pithy throwaway line "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism". (See Zizek, Jameson or Fisher.)

I've recently come to another pragmatic roadblock with regards to Left/Right attitudes, one so utterly cumbersome and frustrating that I decided once again to dip my toes into recursive political writing – God this shit never ends! – anyways, for you proles, the attitude is roughly thus: The Left sees a vast multitude of their problems as coming from the maliciousness of capital(ism) – I know, original right...and by the way the bracketing of capital(ism) is important, and is to be returned to later – Whereas the Right sees the majority of their problems as faults (tricky wording for any seething Leftie) within a fairly straightforward system. Let's delve into this excrement.

I'll start with an extrapolation of the Right-wing view here as – with regards to this issue – it's the one I hold. Quickfire Round: Westerner, young, educated, middle class and have easy access to that which fulfils my needs. That's right baby, I'm in the sweetspot, this isn't just privilege, this is M&S privilege! Of course, that's what any Leftie would say when reviewing my cosmically random social attributes, that I'm privileged. Oh for sure what I have is extremely nice, comforting and easy to get-by with. Whether or not it's privilege is another issue entirely, and one I won't delve too much into

here. Now, back to the Right-Wing view as-per one's own 'problems'. Let's list some things righties may see as problems: Bad health, bad fitness, bad diet, bad finances, low education, lack of responsibility and lack of meaning, to name a few. Now with regards to a Right-Wing perspective each of these *CAN* – if one has the impetus – be fixed.

You're unfit? Go to the gym, can't afford the gym? Do a bodyweight routine at home, haven't got the time? It takes 30 minutes to one hour per day, now we're in excuse territory (Something you can't blame capital for...later)

Bad diet? Do 30 minutes of research and eat healthy food, can't afford healthy food? There's affordable healthy options if one is to take the time to prepare them.

Bad finances? Prioritize, stop spending your money on useless entertainment that you'll drop at a moment's notice.

Low education? Part time distance learning, online courses, library books, Youtube tutorials.

Lack of responsibility? Take responsibility for the above and you find that the last item – meaning – comes into your lives.

Congratulations, you've just become a shitlord.

You hear that? It's out-of-shape lefties seething at the very core of their Being. Let's roll through what they're going to say.

“Go to the gym, you say! But why? Do you not understand that the idea of ‘fitness’ is merely capital(ist) propaganda to make you believe the idea of work is beneficial?!”

“Dieting! Healthy Eating! Do you not know that both of these things are merely forms of capital(ist) propaganda used as a means to continue the idea of body dissatisfaction and fat shaming?!”

“Bad finances?! Oh, so we should all just succumb to the life of an ascetic should we? You want me to sacrifice my social life for what? So I can put my money in some capital(ist) savings Bank?”

“Low education, oh great, here we go again! The undereducated are lesser people are they?!”

“Responsibility, well, life’s inherently meaningless anyway and it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, so I’d only be taking responsibility for capital(ism) so why bother?”

I feel a little sick after typing those out. But hey, I’m sure they’ll be accepted without any backlash. Ok, I somewhat shoehorned capital(ism) in there for most of them, but if one is to do a quick Google search, one finds that at pretty much every turn Lefties and left-wing journals tend to push the blame onto the – now – free-floating signifier that is ‘capital’ or ‘capitalism’. And this is why I’ve been bracketing it. Because a vast amount of contemporary politicians and philosophers, alongside amateur theorists and bloggers – more often than not of a leftist calling – use this word ‘capital’ in a free-floating way. What they really mean by ‘capital’ is this.

Within contemporary (hype) political usage Capital means the tempo-historical deification of Capitalism as a means of shifting every single fault of self, society, religion, family, locality or ego onto an indistinct ideological catch-all. Hell, I’ve done it a few times. And so I put it to you that the infamous quote: *“It’s easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism”* in a contemporary sense that is, actually means: *“It’s easier to imagine the end of MY world than to give up capitalism.”*

Leftists, in their incessant dogma that ALL forms of ‘wellness’ are capitalist propaganda enter themselves into toxic double-bind. Psychologically a priori to them is the fact that capitalism is bad, and thus all that is connected to capitalism is bad, including ‘wellness’ and as such they want that which is not capitalism, which is not ‘wellness’ subsumed into capitalism. They wish for some strange form of Utopian collective support network they really can’t explain. One where what? You each spoonfeed each other vitamins in some kind of Marxist prayer circle?

The idea of waking up and feeling alive, feeling good, feeling well spans back throughout all of history, and when it is absent look for the writings of those being tortured and ask of that which almost certainly seek. You wish

for this 'better' life and yet cannot even fathom the idea that capital is not everywhere (shock fucking horror!) you may step out of your door without your headphones in or a phone in your pocket, you may go for a walk and think not of how to overthrow capitalism, you could go see how it feels to attend to that which your body and mind almost certainly crave, care. But you won't, the idea of actual care is utterly alien to you. Capital hasn't taken it away, you're simply too wrapped up in your own narcissism to part with the only thing that gives your life meaning, the depressive dregs of left-wing melancholy which you cuddle night and day in a ritual of pride! You could metaphorically logoff from all the inputs that you know allow you the political melancholia you so crave, you could do so and undertake many-a fulfilling action, task, job, pastime, event or scene, the majority of which were – and have never been – tied to any political outlook, it is you personally whom allowed the idea of parasitic capital to infect your entire life, so do not blame those who walk a path entirely alien to your very Being.

Oh you poor things, yearning for a better yesterday, because of course one needs no excuse for that which is impossible to reach such as...the past. And yet still so sad about that forgotten tomorrow, you managed to put all of time in the past, you've given up the flame to the version of you that never was, and never would be! Perhaps it's best you wallow in your depressive cocoon forever more, for I'm sure on exiting you'll notice how it has become attached to your shadow.

No Mirror No More

*“The objective man who no longer curses and grumbles like the pessimist, the ideal scholar, in whom the scientific instinct after thousands of total and partial failures all of a sudden comes into bloom and keeps flowering to the end, is surely one of the most valuable of implements there are, but he belongs in the hands of someone more powerful. He is only a tool, we say. He is a mirror – he is no “end in himself.” The objective man is, in fact, a mirror: accustomed to submit before everything which wishes to be known, without any delight other than that available in knowing and “mirroring back” – he waits until something comes along and then spreads himself out tenderly so that light footsteps and the spiritual essences slipping past are not lost on his surface and skin. What is still left of his “person” seems to him accidental, often a matter of chance, even more often disruptive, so much has he become a conduit and reflection for strange shapes and experiences. He reflects about “himself” with effort and is not infrequently wrong. He readily gets himself confused with others. He makes mistakes concerning his own needs, and it’s only here that he is coarse and careless. Perhaps he gets anxious about his health or about the pettiness and stifling atmosphere of wife and friend or about the lack of companions and society – indeed, he forces himself to think about his anxieties: but it’s no use! His thoughts have already wandered off to some more general example, and tomorrow he knows as little as he knew yesterday about how he might be helped.” – Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Aphorism 207*

Oh but what of the subjective man, the nu-man of the latest years! Who grumbles and whines like a sordid lamb, blithering to-and-fro attending to its delicate wool and mutton. An ideal scholar no more, but a pitiful researcher tumbling into the destitute forever of the internet, pulling data and e-ink around in a whirlwind of self-obsessed conformity. Nothing but agreement with the self. No bloom, no Spring, no Summer – in fact, no season at all for one to live within, only a stagnant existence of identity and the tug of each and every social whim. Nietzsche speaks of a mirror, a mirror that no longer exists as far as I can see. The *reflection* acts a way to

see that one is not an end in himself but a labyrinth of mirrors, ducts and chambers splaying out into a willed infinity. But of course, the mirror was shattered, I know not when, only that each fragment of its death has been taken away, most likely chained the bottom of the deepest ocean – objectivity death as the mirror shatters – No more ‘mirroring back’ only continual *self, identity and progress*, without the reactionary reflection of he who can see he’s but a flesh, there can be no real progress, only a dainty skipping into miserable weakness. The new man does not spread himself, nor act upon himself, no. He directs himself to a supposed causal linearity towards which is his most politically dutiful desires...he thinks. Virtue, hedonism, liberation, emancipation. I spit on these terms with a smile and call them what they are, empty-headed lack of reflection from he whom knows not even the *possibility* of reflection.

No essence past the skin, for flesh is all, flesh for fucking and diving and frolicking and licking and sucking, flesh to be hungover, flesh for the comedown and flesh to get fat, flesh to get cut off again once the whale begins to cry. The surface of the skin has lost every trace, it’s a toxic container for socio-political determined delights, extrinsic personalities flood the sublime, and it rots and rots. Of course he who *cannot* reflect is left for eternity entirely whole, a unification of failures kept as successes, of idiocy maintained as truth, and of activism as a replacement for the heart. For he who never had the possibility of a mirror and as such of reflection remains alone in an acidic humanist reverberation, pulsing into the tug of the absolute fall. OH! He is not confused with others! Never confusing himself with no one! He knows himself and only himself, his loop, his return, his eternity is only he. And it is such that he couldn’t change, a priori identity branding, flesh as a tag of self-righteous cawing.

Line the streets with placards high! Higher! Cast them to the sky and feel your lack pulse into the ether! Walking through the thresher of the socius a virtue-clad cunt, destined to fall upon a cosmically pathetic handout. Oh poor boys and sons, groveling into the tear filled gutters, I beg you arise, but begging’s not my business. I’m neither sat atop a mountain, nor am I down in the abyss. I’m imminent to you all, as you are to me. Without a mirror to see, without a mirror to cast your gaze *anywhere* else but into a Cartesian echo. My mirror is weak, but into its bleak stains, and cob-

webbed haeccity I witness you, all of you...sucking the infected ringworm out of the cosmos' anus, allow to the defecation to tumble into your nostrils and hair, delighted in your stench. A phase-shift of patheticism emanates from your very being, all because you lack the mirror, the mirror that was never allowed for you!

Callous anxiety and pithy depression/ pilled hedonism run amock/ A thousand more to the fall/ landfill humanity acts as reverb/ and the beat goes on.

Leave No Trace, Sombre Reaction and Neo-Asceticism

I may have watched *Leave No Trace* (2018) another 3 or 4 times since I recommended it on Twitter. I can't exactly articulate the effect it had on me. Of course at its most obvious it's a story of those who revolt or are revolted by the modern world, and so, in some way these groups attend to some form of fringe-lifestyle, or at least what the modern world considers fringe. In fact, I'm not even going to outline the plot of the film, it's there as a sort of beacon to those who get it and an abstraction to those who don't, at most I simply note that you should watch it.

I shall however use the film, or perhaps the tone of the film to attend to some general thoughts. It was said recently – I can't quite remember where – that what one tweets, says or writes will seem obvious to those writing or saying it, but may seem epiphanic or almost revolutionary to those who've never thought it. This is where one finds great writers and thinkers, those who page after page find ways to extrapolate clearly thoughts that have plagued the recesses of your mind since birth, and it could in fact be that the thoughts you have are indeed the potential articulations of others' worries, ideas and futures.

This is where *Leave No Trace* hits the mark; this is more than likely why I've watched it a few times. The general tone of the film attends – quite passively – to reaction. Dare I say it's a reactionary melancholy? Inclusive of exit, disgust, sorrow, inability-of-articulation and surmounting the modern. One may be mistaken in believing that I'm making the mistake of confusing reaction with a certain way of living. Much in the way that the 'pine-trees' and the anarcho-primitivists attend to a certain way of life. The point being, this specific way of life is inclusive of the reactionary whole and not the other way around. There is no, single, reactionary movement. One could keep 'moving back' and perhaps side to side and even flicker between colours if they so wish, if they were reactionary this would mean something entirely different to the 'ism'-specifics. In fact, a recent thread

about Neoreaction (NRx) concluded in me stating that I'd always found Neoreaction to be a critique of modernity, religion and economy as opposed to any centered 'party', many came, used the NRx-toolbox and then scuttled off to their preferred camp, taking their new knowledge with them.

There's little to no self-pity in this sombre reaction, and likewise with *Leave No Trace*, only a Sisyphean exhaustion. That's not to say this is exclusive to reactionaries, or to one political standpoint. Modernity is suffocating and it's bureaucratic malaise inescapable

"They can kill you, but the legalities of eating you are quite a bit dicier."
(DFW)

I've always attended to some subtle stoic/ascetic values, and yet of late, the latter, asceticism, has found itself coming to the fore with a certain hypocritical ferocity. It used to be that to deny TV, junk food, mass-medication, drugs, alcohol and the libertine-lifestyle was merely to state that one was not interested in that which the modern had to offer, the quick, the easy, the thoughtless pursuits marketed to empty minds. And maybe this is now simply a matter of repetition, but to deny these comforts is not seen as denying the *extra*, but it is seen as denying the *norm, the standard, the default*. If one is to not have a TV, if one sleeps on the floor, wears the same clothes, eats simple meals, does not drink or do drugs, then that person, at least within *W.E.I.R.D* world is seen as an outsider. This is of course repetition bordering psychotherapy.

The phrase '*We just wanted to be left alone*' often springs to mind, when the wage is inescapable, the commute, the retail radio, the cackle of the masses, fluorescent lights, mimetic-taste, etc. the inescapable hum and flow of nauseating modernity and progressivism. This incessant sewerage of that which I – apparently – must enjoy, work with and most annoyingly, promote. One finds oneself ping-ponging from unused node to unused node in the hope of a moment of peace, and yet each corner thus far, each little haven has been infected by some irksome, utterly disgusting modern sinew. And so you just keep trundling along. That's where the film strikes a chord. In the moments of the in-between, the waiting rooms, the communities, the churches, the cities, the government offices and the hallways of the

contemporary. All inclusive of unavoidable, gut-level detestable modernist patheticism.

This piece is inclusive of my beliefs pertaining to capital, time and the 'human'. It's a sideline of acceptance. The neo-ascetic seemingly little more than he or she who actively avoids the aesthetic, itemized and dopamine-looped reality of modernity. Those who expend personal energy to confront and sidestep the toxic all-consuming grin of runaway progressivism. Many ascetics used to live in caves for their entire lives, monks, hermits and outsiders all. Now, many of this temperament are placed within inescapable leviathans intent on destruction. The ascetic avoidance was often for religious reasons. The Neo-ascetic's primary task is to avoid squandering their energy to the religion of progress, the faith of modernity.

In enemy territory, always, just trying to be left alone.

Greer's Future

Recently I finished up John Michael Greer's *Collapse Now and Avoid the Rush: The Best of the Archdruid Report & The Long Descent* and I'm currently embarking on *Dark Age America*. I wonder why oh why I may be doing such specific research? Anyway, I need to get back to blogging and Greer's notion of the future is as good place as any.

What's specific – at least to me – about what Greer conceives of as 'the future' is that it locks itself within some very wise and pessimistic restraints that disallow a lot of ideological hope and wishful thinking. For instance, in terms of reading Greer one goes on a strange ride of ups and downs, just when you think Greer may finally allow a form of optimistic futurism, innovation or 'progress' to perhaps have merit he quickly and succinctly buries it under a heap of clear logic and historical statistics. Or, "Oh you think that would work do you? Well here's why it won't" *ad infinitum*.

However, there's another very specific idea that invades Greer's work consistently. Often directly, but more often it sits quietly at the sidelines, smirking at its own reality. And this is Greer's *a priori* understanding that civilizations collapse, end, stop-being etc. With Greer the possibility for *anything* to end is always possible. This seems quite obvious, right? Well, not so. People hate to think that even their most luxurious comforts – ones that have always been around – would cease to be. So why would they even start to believe in a world where the basics will become a struggle?

There is only one certainty of civilizations and that is their eventual demise. You may be lucky enough to be sat at the peak – or middle-temporal-ground – of a 500-1000 year civilization, sitting generationally pretty atop mountains of resources, cultural capital, economic security, international communication, political unity etc. This can and may even *be* certain for *you*. However, for those who witness even the most minor fluctuations nearing the beginning or end of a civilization they understand that all that is was once not, that stability and security are built from arduous labor, time and intelligence. What one could perhaps coin as the 'Greerian reality' is

not that the possibility for the end of *your* civilization exists, but this reality is one wherein you *understand* and *accept* this reality as always being present. Beyond this of course is all the ‘stuff’ that’s currently at our doorstep – and yes, I am planning a large post on this – but for instance: Peak oil, weather catastrophes, inflation, oil price surges, increased illness, lack of basic medication, lack of sanitary measures, minor heat fluctuations and their knock on effects, steady movement of arming belts, lesser crop yield etc. I mean, this list can go on, and it amazes me that not one of these things has had any *serious* effect – at least where I live. Yet, it seems that the Greerian reality is waiting behind everything, it is the chaos-effect shooting out from the effect of simply one of these catastrophes taking place.

Also specific to the Greerian reality is the fact that semantically collapse is quite commonly mistaken for an instantaneous event. This is quite simply wrong, in fact, it’s so wrong it exists solely in the realms of escapism and quasi-romanticism. No wonder the amount of post-apocalyptic media has increased in recent years, I mean what other generation(s) yearn for a reset button more than those who’ve been promised so much and allowed so little. Media such as *Fallout*, *Mad Max*, *The 100*, *The Walking Dead* etc. aren’t truly horror, not really, for the simple fact that humans are still around and not only are they doing fine, they’re actually doing quite well and in some ways progressing in healthier directions than their previous societies. And so at heart all these programs, shows, films etc. is – at the very least – optimism, but also a perception of time in relation to collapse which is simply wrong. We think of ‘collapse’ as the collapse of a table or chair, a quick successive tumble of parts, yet once that which is collapsing grows in complexity (a civilization for instance) then the process of collapse becomes far, *far* longer. Emphasis on *process* here, the process of collapse will see chunks of civilization fly off and attempt to be replaced or repaired in relation to their previous standard, slowly but surely everything sort of disintegrates at such a rate that those living within it only notice the stark difference in conditions years later.

Levinas said that “*humanity is limitrophe of nothingness.*” A quote I adore. One could say that civilization is limitrophe of collapse, and the more complex that civilization ‘progresses’ to be, the closer it moves towards the

edge of the abyss. As well as this the more complex a civilization becomes the more collapse-edges it nears, different cliff's edges for it to frolic next to for the sake of material gains. Imagine existing in a civilization that squanders resources, risks health, security and safety all for the sake of a dancing Father Christmas toy. When you're debating eating the gnawed carcass of a rat for breakfast, or squeezing out mulch for a cup of water, remember the little hip thrusts the toy Santa Claus used to make.

For those that will – undoubtedly – state that I'm scare-mongering, you're actually simply buying back into your own blind reality that's un-accepting of the Greerian reality. So many climate change and ecologist enthusiasts are quick to deter 'collapsists' or those who believe in the end of civilization, there's a distinct line from secular society to a complete denouncement of eschatology in its entire. Once you're without God or Myth, well what of importance can really come to an end, material and material perceptions of the world will be forever ongoing. Even the myth of progress is upheld via political means – if we're not progressing economically, nationally or with respect to innovation, we just assimilate the idea of progression onto more easily modifiable politics.

Anti-Pleroma: Progressivism Bows to the Yoke

What is the *pleroma*? In Gnostic spirituality it is fullness, wholeness and a completion of the self.

First and foremost is that there is a *'more-than-personal'* Gnostic element within reality, a *pneumatic* element that is organic to the human psyche. Forthwith called the *pneuma*. This element the *pneuma* carries a dialogue with the personal element of our selfhood – ego, human-security-system etc. – through the use of symbols. The *pneuma* is *not* silent. It is a not a silent partner in one's life and *demand*s active participation in the growth, metamorphosis and transformation of the individual. The symbols utilized by the *pneuma* are dreams, visions and altered states of consciousness. These symbols reveal a path of development which can be traced both backwards and forwards in time. Prior to understanding and acceptance of the *pneuma* comes multiple painful and seemingly cynical and pessimistic phases.

The Gnostic Process: *agone* or drama/contest; *pathos* or defeat; *threnos* or lamentation; and *theophania*, divinely accomplished redemption. That which halts this process, stifles it, are unconscious forces, blind and foolish powers – projections. *Demiurgoi* and *archons*: Fashioner/architect and ruler respectively. Those who bow to the powers of the aforementioned blind and foolish make the grave mistake of *bowing to the yoke* –

“One cannot free oneself by bowing to the yoke, but only by breaking it.”

This piece could stretch ideologically to the far reaches of space in time in relation to man's adherence to symbolic projections of egoist desires, yet my focus is on the contemporary myth of progress and those who bow to *its* yoke. Acting unconsciously to a nature created artificially.

Cometh the drama, come forth the symbols of virtue, that which the progressive rolls around in like a pig in shit. Placards, protests, t-shirts, revolutionary attitudes, transgression, debauchery, reveling, egotistical pontificating, and the dramas of the self-centered forever focused inward,

towards the human, human, human. Drama is human. All that is to dramatic effect has at its heart a human beat and rhythm. For there cannot be drama of the cosmos, not in the gossipy way we think of drama. The calm and illusive apathy of the universe is far from dramatic, at least from its own 'perspective'. Progress *needs* drama. Stability needs little except understanding as to the 'why' of the stable itself. To disturb the waters one must usher in an age of uncertain, dramatic protest that orbits the habitats of the strange and ostracized. Drama is needed for those who can't take the clear path, for they are simply inept. To progress is to assume a position in which there is something that *must* be progressed, and for this we have found little reason, and yet we still 'progress'. The dramatic layer atop of the myth of progress is the alluring excitement of virtue, 'community' and belonging. But tell me, how can one 'belong' to that which is ever moving?

Then there's that pause of the protest isn't there? The bell ring of silence as you contemplate your meaningless, your lack of awareness, your assimilation into a system of symbols so confusingly simple that you just melt into confusion and nausea. The silence of one's *pneuma* acts as a constant reminder of the more that is simplicity and nothingness. Now as for you Mr Progress(ive), you, I know, will go back to screaming louder. Man the placards and release the symbols of war!

Then the defeat. Yet the defeat never comes, not now and not ever. For the defeat of progress is merely more drama. It is not as defeat should often be, a moment for reflection unto the general aims of the group or community as to whether they are true, no. For the progressive defeat and failure are systematic attacks on truth, they are glitches in their irrefutable mode of being. Failure for the progressive is always conspiracy, idiocy, fault of the other. Think Brexit or Trump for two contemporary examples. The progressive does not accept for a minute their own deified religion of democracies' actuality, no. They cannot accept that the many may see things differently from them. The Brexiteers and Trump voters are simply, *a priori* wrong, at fault and incorrect. This is not a 'defeat' it is simply not-correct. There is never defeat, only confusion, non-acceptance and ignorance. Like a parasite eating its own arse. For progressives every failure is a victory, for their failures are *proof* and *vindication* that the system they

protest against is in fact against them, and thus, factually - from their perspective – *wrong*.

“Why won’t they speak about being lizards?! SEE! I *told* you they were lizards!”

They whine and whine about their non-defeat to the point wherein those who are critical to progress begin cramming all manner of things into their ears. “Stop this incessant noise! Why won’t this failure simply accept and be quiet!” But no, those who are not in-with-the-myth become quiet, silent almost, a community of hermits who know not of themselves. And when the curtains of many booths close over the backs of many silent hermits, the votes begin to be counted, and alas, once again, it is we who are wrong... *again*. I simply cannot believe the majority has been wrong this many times. The great idiocy of democracy, the beauty of its craft within the hands of a thrifty politician is as such:

X wasn’t really wanted ‘apparently’: “Oh my, I cannot believe the people did this. We shall repair your mistakes!”

X was really wanted ‘apparently’: “I had faith in the people from the off! Our party shall bring *our* decision to greatness!”

If one cannot be defeated then lamentation never comes, the divine reward of the *pleroma* never comes. Progression without clear limits is a loop of desire and narcissism.

You *know* that *you* know. And we *know* that you *know*. And what is it that you know? Well it is the truth, the mind-numbing static of the unconscious. Like a battering ram against virtue, every waking hour you have to find a strange soapbox for your attitude, your vices, and your virtues. You *crave* numbers as a means for justification. Well, the truth doesn’t need a soapbox. That which is fed to me through the tightest gauze by a groveling fat mass over and over again is that which I doubt. I cannot explain this in a more articulate manner or in a clearer way. And why not? Because at the back, down there, within and with-outside is that which you won’t attempt to near, some gut level urge, defiance or tradition you cannot look in the eye. Oh, to never be still. To never even contemplate the possibility of the *pleroma*, of stillness. The privilege of silence, intelligence and competency,

you say. Systematic this 'n that. That which doesn't fit becomes 'studies'. Your proofs are your own, birthed from your own systems, they are conscious and sprung from conscious, and they shan't ever *be*. And you know it.

Progress melts at the sight/site of the unconscious.

Eating Tuna from the Tin

So I said that when I finally finished my dissertation that I would delve deep into Z/Acc. Well, now is that time. I wasn't sure what to call this series. Mainly because I know it's going to be my longest yet, I've got so many ideas for blog posts on this topic its almost crazy, as a blogger you get a certain kind of buzz from finding new points of overlap. I was initially going to call it 'Dirty Future' as a sort of tongue-in-cheek jab at the sphere I'd been working in prior, yet, that doesn't feel right. I can't say for certain that the prophecies of Kurzweil, Land etc. haven't/won't come true. Many most definitely have and many will come true in a stranger fashion...'not the future we wanted, but the one we got' etc. Then I was going to call it *Notes from a Dead Dog*, because that sounded cool and sort of harsh, the corpse of a rotten, loving mutt seems apt and I can't really explain why. Perhaps Z/Acc Journal, I don't know, anyway, I'm writing this post as a means to figure out what it should be called, so I can group it all together.

A few thoughts,

"It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child." – Pablo Picasso

I'm not a fan of Picasso, yet I always liked this quote, not in its relation to art, nor even aesthetics. You see, it took me 25 years to exist/become/be programmed into a modern man, and it's going to take me a lifetime to simply exist again, to *be* again. I grew, and much like the rest of the West (male and female) I sort of nonchalantly *was* whilst being parasitically infected by various external stimuli. This could be misconstrued as a Chomsky-esque *Manufacturing Consent* type thing, perhaps it is, I don't massively care. Either way, as I grew, I slowly became *formed*. Mass-media, TV, Internet, Carbohydrates, Diet-Fads, Low-Fat, excess sugar, video-games, 'public education', binge drinking, smoking and more, more...always more; Always another distraction.

I note Picasso's quote because I feel, at current, that the task set for me is to strip off as much of this excess modern/progressivist/consumer bullshit as

possible. Sounds angsty, it is, it can't be helped. I haven't watched TV for years now, I borrow a Netflix account but can't really focus on it anymore, it seems like mimicry of TV more than TV in itself. I highly recommend David Foster Wallace's *E Unibus Pluram* on this. I kept up with the political stuff for a while, moved back and forth, up and down, between colours, isms etc. It's all sort of dry after you come to accept GNON in abstract. Even then I couldn't care less, largely because anyone whose very nature inclines them to be interested in becoming a politician leads me to distrust them (I am pro anonymous-leader). The Internet was great, most of the old net is gone, weirdly lost. Now we're post-Facebook-slump. An odd malaise of repetition where due to the absolute influx and accessibility of data very rarely are arguments even formulated, we can attend to multiple biases at one time, alluding to the fact that we probably don't really know, or maybe we do, either way, there's something inherently shut-the-fuckable about the internet in general. The carbs thing is a little bit of a quip, sure, but it's true. I grew up in this era of culture so removed from its substance that what one interacted with was either consumption & production, or malaise and a sense of mourning. Normie or death. I could go on.

My point being is a point that has been repeated time and time and time again, you're probably not very close to yourself, strip back the layers and see what you find. A digression. At work, before I leave off, I eat a can of tuna out of the tin prior to the gym. My work colleagues still sort of grin, grimace or poke fun at the act, it doesn't bother me, but it does bother them, hence the reactions. However, it was an act that made me realise how utterly removed from reality the average person is. "Look at this dude! He's eating food in...in a...err...not normal way! HA! Got 'im!" What happened? It's like Oedipus got an upgrade between 2000 and 2010, was Facebook Oedipus' upgrade?

Anyway, it was strangely enough a sort of pinnacle moment for me. I was just finishing up my dissertation around the time the tuna-mocking began and was going to be freed up so I thought for a long time on why it resonated with me so much, why that simple act had really conceptually rattled me. I'll be honest, I still can't really pinpoint *why*, or *what* about it is so apt, but the long and short of it is that it was the most perfect metaphor for the reality of the average homo-economicus, it was as if 'the consumer'

had suddenly popped out of the simulacrum as a pure concept and laughed at me. Imagine being *that* locked into to some strange form of consumerist normality that someone else just eating bland food in an ‘odd’ way is cause for disruption, cause for annoyance, anger...perhaps even a sort of gut level disgust at social tenacity. It was the moment that made it all click, ‘Yes,’ I said to myself ‘we are literally amidst a global socio-economic and environmental collapse...and that attitude is its nerve-system.’ All of a sudden I was free to do what I wanted, I always have been, but another layer of social/modern detritus had just fallen off – one of the last, the one just before living in the woods in a loin cloth – and I no longer gave a shit about so many more things.

Firstly I ditched my smart phone, there’s nothing smart about them. In actuality, they’re likely the most boring things ever made. Pray tell, what do you *do* on a smartphone? Check Facebook, dull. Check apps, you don’t need to do that *all* the time. There’s little point to them and most likely you’ll never look at anything you do on them after the first time. So I’m back to an old phone-and-text mobile, which is basically just for calls...so it’s basically always off and I’m free to do what I want without people interrupting me. Mobile phones are inherently rude, “Sorry, I’ll just stop you there, I have to answer this.” Wait, what? Since when did that become the norm? Then I basically stripped back my possessions. I still have a few bits I’m clinging due largely because of sunk cost, but I’d argue that in monetary terms my possessions (leaving aside my car and home) are as follows: 80% books, 10% clothes, 5% memberships (gym, karate and online) and the other 5% is random. I eat a carnivore diet but will be transitioning to locally sourced soon ‘cus of the collapse. ***Get Used to Local Potatoes Now and Avoid the Rush.***

I’ll be honest once you ditch your smartphone, Facebook, Netflix, TV and having a PC on all the time, your half way to getting back to some sort of original state. By that I don’t mean authentic, I just mean as close to un-tampered with as possible. You suddenly have loads of time, more worth, less worry and more concern and conscientiousness.

You ever try taking a walk in the woods in the last 5 years, on your own, no attachments. Try it; your brain will most likely act like a worm having a

seizure. “But...but...what the fuck do *I...DO!*” Go *be*.

Anyways, that was a little thing I wanted to sort of shoot out very quickly tonight, will touch on many of these topics again. But be prepared for Z/Acc stuff, lots of it.

Time-Sink

In massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), time sinks are a method of increasing the time needed by players to do certain tasks, hopefully causing them to subscribe for longer periods of time. Players may use the term disparagingly to describe a simplistic and time-consuming aspect of gameplay, possibly designed to keep players playing longer without significant benefit. Time sinks can also be used for other gameplay reasons, such as to help regenerate resources or monsters in the game world.

-Wikipedia

I've been thinking a lot about 'time sinks' lately. The definition above in relation to gaming is increasingly being expanded into the domain of reality, it's a small splinter within modernity and complacency that allows one – if they so wish – to aim themselves at something of a greater horizon. Let me expand on a few common time-sinks. Gaming of course is one, binging a TV series, binging-consumption in general etc., but what makes these activities time-sinks as opposed to a way to *spend* time? Well, with gaming it's fairly simple, the mechanics – as previously defined – are built in, there to hold you for the sake of holding you. Yet it is with TV series where the time-sink really shows itself, if you allow it to. See, there's little wrong with watching a series or show or presentation. That is of course if the choice was yours, you were indifferent to the rest and actively allowed a piece of media to traverse the drawbridge and be allowed reflection. The time-sink on the other hand is watching a TV series again and again for the sake of watching it again.

“I've seen [insert popular TV series here] at least *10* times!”

The problem is that you only really ever experience it once, and any repetitive viewing, gaming or reading is usually a melancholy attempt at retaining that initial escape and connection. Behind the time-sink is a mode of being wherein you *begin* to find other-things, other-experiences. Behind the useless thresher of empty-consumption, of controlled-time and

rhythmically calculated frying of your amygdala is the lure of Outside. An Outside over nihilism, something more, perhaps not ever tenable in-itself, nor fully agreeable to oneself, but a mode outside of the thrasher all the same. But how does this strangeness come about, wherein is it experienced?

You go to your box, your TV, your *controller*, your piece or thing or object or desire or lust or supposed lack, and you do what you do because you've always done this. You don't understand *why* nor ever think of if there is such a why, you don't question, you *do*...you are utility in spirit. You understand little but how to *act* in relation to a minor form of production, you are a combination of parts which all revolve around utilizing things with regard to larger combinations of things, you do do do all the live long day. Perhaps you should head behind, I shall write in a future post of ditching your smartphone, not as an anti-modernist feat, but simply because it is a time-sink. And so,

You lay down your phone, you turn off the TV and finally turn off the PC. Outside of these 3 things the majority of people no longer have any life. Bar their work and survival functions they have nothing else. They're consumed by a feedback loop of regurgitated dopamine producing micro-stuffs. You turn these off, think for yourself, without these what do you have, what happens to the very concept of *doing* once common notions of 'to do' are removed? Most won't know, and I'm not saying I have any answers, but if there are any they most likely are within that odd space of nothingness which makes you feel nauseous at its very reality.

Maybe you'd get around to reading that lengthy book you've been meaning to start, or begin learning some hobby, go see an old friend, go...I dunno, wait, what do I want to do? Huh, not sure. So you keep thinking about various things and come to no conclusions. It's all very strange in here you say.

You're sitting on the sofa now, staring ahead. You don't seem to want those things you got rid of months ago. Phone, TV, games, caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, arguments...all gone. And you sit and *be* for a bit, for a while each day you just be, and it's quite nice, your mind dissolves out from the mud into a clearance, just for a moment. And the more you reduce everything the more it all makes sense, some days it makes more sense, others less. Those

things you don't miss added nothing; your positive indifference is peaking constantly.

The beauty here is that you no longer rush, because the more you reduce the less you rush. Humans have no teleology that isn't created from a spook of the mind. You used to subconsciously rush home, didn't you? Speeding in traffic, looking at the clock every minute at work, why? Because there was a new TV show out, or you wanted to continue playing that game, or *finish* some oddity of production and consumption... "*If I could just finish all media then I would be complete.*" These things used to give you just enough self-satisfaction regarding completion that you felt accomplished almost every minute. "Yes, 5 episodes tonight." "Yes, 2 mission complete tonight." "Yes, X amount of finite Y tonight."

And so you remove these things, these nothings and what's left, no urges, no strange compulsions or rushes to get from A to B. You're-being-in-traffic, being-cooking-food, being-eating etc. there's nowhere you need *to* be because you already *are*.

My Alcohol Problem and the West

I have a drinking problem. Many of you probably already know that, or perhaps there's even been some form of assumption that I may have some form of such problem, I mean hell, I am part of the Acceleratosphere...I can see why you'd assume I drink a lot. Anyway, I don't drink anymore, I haven't drunk alcohol for just over 3 years, except for a brief relapse of 3 weeks around 4 months ago I haven't had a drop. For those saying "Well, that's not exactly over 3 years then is it?" Take it as you will, it's best to just take it one day at a time and count up the ones you were successful on.

Why am I writing this?

1. Writers should stop asking themselves this question, because of course, I already know the answer...at least the one I wish it to be, the one I wish you to see, which leads me to...

2. It's cathartic. And someone of Twitter once said to me 'A great reason to write, tweet and interject in conversation, to stand your ground and stake your claim is that those who may also be pondering, in-silent-agreement or struggling with that which you bring to the fore will all of a sudden feel more at ease in the world, all because you took a little time to say 'Yeah I think X', 'I disagree with that' or 'Hey, I struggled with this shit.' There's a lot to be said for admitting to failures with a staunch acceptance that they are, and more importantly *can be* of the past.

So, yes, I have a drinking problem. It never really goes. Supposedly it's actually progressive, that is, I used to drink on average 12-20 pints on a night out, and if I was to go back to drinking full-time again I would – apparently – still, psychologically, need that amount if not more. So going back is not only going back to a demon who despises your being, but each re-visit is an exercise in runaway-self-hatred.

Let me get down to definitions, to the how it was of way back when. What do I mean by a problem? I imagine many of you are imagining a Bukowski-esque stumbling mess with ragged hair, dirty clothes and no life-structure

simply existing on alcohol in the gutter. The Hollywood image of ‘the alcoholic’, in all its romance, has done nothing but ignore the reality of minor to moderate alcoholism. Make no mistake, I was not *that* kind of alcoholic. I did not *need* a drink every day, nor every 2-3 days (though I did get a little exhausted and tetchy), I wasn’t vomiting loads, getting in fights, or ruining everything (at least not in any ‘exciting/dramatic’ sense). See, I was pretty high-functioning. Let me step back a bit –

I’m British, which means I have a culturally inherent awful relationship with alcohol. I started regularly drinking (2-3 times a week, 4-6+ beers each session) at 15, with the prior 2 years revolving slightly around alcohol. Between the years of 16-22 there was not one week where I didn’t utterly *fucked*. Which technically means that was 6 years of my life alcohol simply did not leave my system. How did all this progress? Not pleasantly, not unpleasantly. The point of this post is that – like most things in life – the journey was banal and the conclusions didn’t come until too late, and at that point I was already invested in the finale. What was this all like? Well, from 15-18 it looked like this. Do the bare minimum in school/college to get by and wait for the weekend, incessantly planning how we’d get booze, who was buying it for us and where we were drinking it. The weekend would come, we would drink from around 5-7pm through to 3-4am, or pass out before. Turns out it was only really me who was drinking a lot at this point, the others were just having a few. So the university turns up on your doorstep with all its ‘culture’. As you can imagine, I hit it fucking hard, put on a lot of weight, culminated friendships which didn’t last, half-arsed my life and orbited around alcohol.

21-22. Ended up in a dead-end job, as most university leavers do. Still drinking (and smoking) at this point...of course, it was still, for me...an *inevitability*. I would drink on Friday nights. Then Friday and Tuesday nights. Then Friday, Tuesday and Saturday nights. Then Friday, Tuesday, Saturday nights and Sunday daytime. And finally it was Friday, Tuesday and Saturday nights, Sunday daytime and the occasional 4-pack in bed after work. That was when I realized, lying in bed at 11pm after some shitty late-shift, necking cheap lager for the sake of it. I began to think about my drinking, looking up the questionnaires:

- How often do you drink alcohol? – 3-4/4 times+ a week (worst answer)
- How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day of drinking? – 10+ (worst)
- How often do you have 8 units or more? – Weekly (second worst)
- How often did you find you were not able to stop drinking once you'd started? – Every time I ever drank – 1 is too few, 2 is too many...as the saying goes – weekly (second worst)
- How many times in the last year have you failed to do what is normally expected of you due to drinking? (Dependent on what one expects of oneself – at the time I was failing to do anything but go out at the weekends)
- How often do you get a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking? (Every time – worst – we call it ‘The Fear’)
- How often have you not been able to remember what happened the night before due to drinking? (Twice a week. At my absolute worst I was getting black out drunk once or twice a week. – worst)

I didn't think ‘Oh shit, I'm fucked up breh’, nor was anything about it cool, romantic, nostalgic, poetic, exciting etc. You know what it was? Exhausting and boring. Anyway, that's the biographical stuff out of the way. I mean, I guess many of you know that I sorted my shit out.

Onto the cultural ‘West’ part of the title. See, I was never really taught that *not* drinking alcohol was an option. Everyone around me did, everyone around them did and there was very few people (no one I can remember) who actively *didn't* drink, and there was most certainly no one who was anti-alcohol. Not that I am anti-alcohol, but I do believe it really isn't a good idea for the majority of people to consume it, for they are dumb, boring and aggressively incorrect already, why give them a drink on top of all of that, I jest, but they are a bore.

All those systems never budged an inch towards any idea that excess, progress and to-continue may not be a good thing. Even teachers smirked at the knowledge of my beer-fueled weekends and life – ‘I remember how I was at that age’, but no one keeps an eye and many get sucked into the orbit of the demonic, soul-crushing, enchantment killing possession of alcohol. What is it about that substance which brings out the very worst of opinion and personality?

It is, *once again*, one of ‘those’ things which one believes – due to the way in which they are instilled within culture – that one cannot be without them. They are presented not as optional parts of life, but as its very nerve system. ‘Another short essay from Meta on how to slightly think for oneself, how original.’ I don’t care.

You must strip yourselves bare of all these fucking spooks! Take a goddamn look at your being, feel it vibrate in all its nakedness and vulnerability! Be what you can be, for yourself alone. Overcome every molecule of indiscriminate matter, atmosphere and ideology that surrounds you, think not of the third person, the external or the forces unto you, but become truly-conscious! Decide upon all. Make clear each and everything that exists now *for* you.

When I quit drinking I lost 95% of my friends within 2 weeks. I don’t hold it against them, nor do I want sympathy. We were drinking buddies who reveled in each other’s repetitions. The same lager, the same jokes, the same people, the same place, the same comfort and the comfort of the same, that is what alcohol has to offer you. Not *one* of my friends supported my efforts of betterment. Largely because I was one of, if not *the key* drinker of the group, I started earlier and heavier than them, I could out-drink basically anyone and had a tendency for going until the *bitterest* of ends (5-6am on a park bench, routinely). And so, I guess to them it was an entirely alien experience, or perhaps they were worried I don’t know, all I know is the repulsion against my quitting.

‘So what...you’re *never* drinking again?’

‘...ahhh you’ll be back down the pub soon.’

‘You can have just one though mate!’

No, I can't. No I can't.

“Acceptance is usually more a matter of *fatigue* than anything else.” – David Foster Wallace

And that's what I did. I accepted that there is a thing in life that I simply cannot do, for if I do it, I do not become, but only undo, my being is not aligned to the strength it could be, and the goodness dissolves into nothing. I cannot do that, I never could.

There's a great speech in the film *Smashed*. A film I *really* like – for obvious reasons – though as films go it's mediocre, but it hit home with me. Anyway, the protagonist Kate is an alcoholic...and they actually do a fairly good job of not romanticizing it. Her speech is the usual alcoholic-to-sober story but with the addition of one crucial thing, she explicitly mentions her – now – *boring* life. I simultaneously agreed and disagreed. At first I agreed. I could be down the pub I thought, having all that 'fun'. Instead I'm in reading a book, searching the web, watching TV (back then) or whatever, and the days and weeks and months go by, and the serum seeps from your system more and more, and your energy comes back and you take up the gym. You begin to feel ok, and your self-confidence comes back. And you start eating well again. You lose 3 stone in a few months. You date some cute girls. You read some more good books. And for many blissful moments you've forgotten entirely of that place, that sodden pit of a pub which was sucking your time away from you.

Alcohol is the primary material alternative for being an interesting person, having an interesting life or even having anything interesting to do. If you even somewhat entertained, loved or spiritually tuned-in would you need a 'few beers', would you? That malaise which I know a little too well is nothing but an anesthetic for use against personal confidence, overcoming, discipline, motivation and being.

My boring life is *mine*. I like drinking herbal tea in my dressing gown or Gi. I like reading old books. I like sitting sometimes and just being. I like taking my time with a meal. I quite like the slow pace of existence once it's stripped of all the embroidery of progress, decadence and Western-malaise.

My favourite herbal teas are (in order of greatness – greatest to great):

1. Peppermint Tea
2. Elderflower and Echinacea
3. Lemon and Ginger
4. Lemon

How to Live Like an Emperor for Very Little

Don't smoke cigarettes.

Learn how to fix your car and drive it until that thing is on the verge of imploding. Don't buy into the 'Needing the latest car' thing (or the 'needing the latest anything...thing' for that matter), there's literally no reason – aside from empty status and narcissism – that you need that a new, or updated car. If it works fine, ask yourself, why do I feel compelled to replace it?

If you can, walk or ride a bicycle to work. (Learn to fix a bike)

If your work is not within walking or cycling distance (or is over 10 miles away) relocate. The only thing you can't get back is time. And time spent with friends and family is more important than a 2 hour commute for some extra money. A side note on this, try calculating the amount you spend on fuel, maintenance and additional car extras due to the commute – definitely isn't worth it.

Most people pushing a frugal/hyper-environment-friendly way of living will tell you not to have kids, or to foster. I say fuck that. Having kids doesn't mean you *have* to introduce them/bring them up in the same carbon-loaded way everyone else does. People assume your kids are also going to want loads of toys, gadgets and junk, bring them up well and they won't.

Get your clothes from charity shops. Or, if you're like most people, you've already bought at least 3-4 pairs of trousers, 5-10 shirts, 2 dress shirts, socks and boxers. You don't need more, buying new clothes is boredom. You're bored.

Learn how to repair stuff...sure, but more importantly, look after your shit. The amount of people that wouldn't *need* to buy stuff if they just looked after their goddamn stuff, it's not difficult.

Most of you who follow me will know by now that I've just started work as a joiner, so guess what, No.8: Learn a trade. Ha! Look at me on my high

horse. But for real, I sat behind that marketing desk, I've been to university...you can't bullshit a bullshitter, I know 90% of jobs are bullshit and so do you. Does what you're doing have a direct effect on the world? On things people use routinely? No, well, you're part of the 'embroidery upon the fabric of society'.

Question hedonistic western culture in general. Booze, weed, cigarettes, caffeine...why did you ever need this stuff? I doubt there's a reason outside of boredom. Are you merely a culmination of your vices, habits and hedonistic customs?

Helping people or cooperating is admittedly a tough one these days. I live in the country where there's still an ethic of neighbourly-ness, if you live in the city, well, I just don't know. Move, leave, get the fuck out.

Much akin to repairing things, you ever try making something? Shit, can you remember the last time you actually made something? I don't mean from a set, or blueprint, or some Amazon kit purchase, when you actually planned and made something that had a purpose and worked? Even if that purpose was to brighten someone's day. Make stuff.

Look after your health. Take the basic supplements: D3, Omega 3, B-Complex and a Multivitamin. Find an agreeable diet – I recommend Carnivore, Ketogenic, Paleo and (shock horror) legitimate Vegan (as in, not just eating vegan alternative junk), also, work out, you weren't supposed to sit on your fucking arse 14 hours a day, no wonder you feel anxious, depressed, isolated and like a rat in a cage, because you make yourself into one. Also, wear safety equipment if needed, like seatbelts etc. Don't be a moron.

Find a job that gives you at least some fulfilment. Even a 30%+ pay-cut is worth it, why you ask? When you do what you – at least somewhat – enjoy each day, you no longer feel the need to buy mindless escapes, overpriced junk, alcohol etc. It works out.

Junkies, addicts, rebels, whiners, drama-queens, boozers, grey-vampires, downers, energy-drainers, moaners and overt campy pessimists *all* need to be cut out of your life.

The only things you should ever get on credit (if you're family oriented) are a house and a car. If you have anything else on credit you're an idiot.

Preventable expenses – things which were either avoidable, never-worth-it or a replacement for a personality: Tattoos, Streaming services, STDs, speeding tickets, gaming subscriptions, lootboxes, film-passes, dating-apps – just Western detritus in general.

Stop acting rich. It's ok to sit in and read, no one cares that you're not *there*, or *here*, or over *there*, that you don't have that *thing* etc. No one cares. Everyone thinks about themselves as much as you think about yourself, therefore no one has time to think about you.

Did you just buy bottled water?

Prepare your lunches in advance. Get a budget.

It's fine to just be.

It's ok to be bored.

This list was based – admittedly pretty directly – off Thor Harris' *How to Live like A King For Very Little*. Though I have some disagreements with it, I think it could have done with a minor update, a few tweaks and little more explanation regarding the current state of things. A lot's happened since its original publication in 2014.

Exit From the Office

In general I don't agree with the idea of 'guilty pleasures', if you enjoy something, then go enjoy it. I mean, imagine being so Oedipalized that you legitimately feel some form of shame or guilt because you enjoy something considered by others to be silly, lame etc. With this said, I currently have 3 rather peculiar guilty pleasures. Now I consider these guilty pleasures because they can all be placed under the same rather rough headings: Western Detritus, What-the-Fuck-Happened, Peak Society, Surrogate Activities etc. Perhaps if I list them you'll get the idea. My 3 current guilty pleasures are all visual. Speed-eating videos, video game speedruns and – very recently – watching Fortnite.

Wait, Meta, you said you never really watched TV or anything of this sort? It's true, I don't, usually. And this is why I actually count these as guilty pleasures. Unlike stereotypical guilty pleasures – which are actual *pleasures* – I don't really enjoy watching any of these things. I watch them in the same way you watch ants carry bits of wood back to the nest, the same way you watch a dog try solve a put-the-shape-in-the-hole problem. I watch them in a sort of trance. I think to myself 'This is where we've got to, this is it, this is the magnum opus of society'. And I can never get past these thoughts. Perhaps this is why they interest me so much. With my rather extensive education in the arts and philosophy I can generally tackle a problem – intellectual or personal – and figure it out in some way within a short space of time (Guess what, the answer is usually just to fucking act.) But with these 3 things I can't get anywhere, I can't work it out; it's like ants on speed revelling in nonsensical excesses.

Don't worry, this does relate to the 'getting into a trade' and 'exiting marketing' part of this post, but I do need a little more exposition. So firstly, the speedeating. In the words of one of the bystanders in an episode of *Man Vs Food* "This is the stuff of legends!"

And perhaps that man was right, perhaps these are our legends now, these are our myths. Doughy soyboys who utilize facial hair as personality to

promote a Youtube channel where they eat...lots of food, interspersed with tinny rock music, a time-frame and a calorie counter. I cannot assemble these parts into any coherent whole, there's no unification here that modernity will allow me.

I won't link video game speedrunning here as I imagine many of my readers will know of it already, if not, just look it up. Basically it's completing a video game in the shortest time possible – with defined limits and rules etc. Now, I guess as some form of challenge it's intriguing. But there are many people currently playing years old games attempting (daily) to scrape mere milliseconds off their completion time. Ted Kaczynski calls activities that we're doing other than aiding our survival or fulfilling our actual needs 'surrogate activities', God only knows what he would call these activities. I call them nothing, apathy and lack of self-discipline. At least in a practical sense. Other than those forms of criticism I can't find anything in them.

Much like my recent guilty torture of watching Fortnite. This came about because a friend kept going on about it and intrigue got the better of me. I watched a good 30-40 minutes of a 'professional' (send nukes) Fortnite live stream. And well, after that time I still couldn't figure out what was going on, honestly. I get the general gist of a battle royale type game of course, but it just makes no sense to me anymore. This is going somewhere, I promise.

See, I ended up in this marketing job for a camping company. The job, and I stress, this is what we consider a job these days, consisted of looking after their social media, creating digital adverts and the occasional bit of customer service work. Now, the days were 8 and a half hours long with an hour commute time each way. For the first 2 hours I'd answer emails and social media queries and then...I'd sit and look at the computer screen or wait for the phone. Now, many people would find this absolute bliss, doing fuck all all day, I'm sure many could have stayed there for the rest of their lives mindlessly scrolling away on their phones, or eating junk. But it made me realise something. Marketing is one of the few 'skilled' office jobs. By that I mean, there's little to no actual skill in customer service or admin type jobs – and before you shout at me, I've done these too – a well-trained

monkey could honestly do many of these jobs. They're for slaves who adore being told what to do, people who not only take no pride in their work, but take no pride in anything, have no principles or ambitions and wish merely to grind until death. If this is a skilled office job, the majority of people are working these jobs which are – to paraphrase Dmitry Orlov – “The embroidery on the fabric of society.” And here I go full Peterson, I don't care.

I realized that most people cannot contribute, help or even understand the very basics of how society functions. Most people are so incompetent that they truly believe things just happen and appear, that stuff can actually be *thrown away* to some mystical land. I started having very practical realizations of things I had thought about in abstract but had yet come into contact with. People don't know how to *do* shit. Most people are spending their lives tailoring their energies towards being able to make a better phone call, take a better photograph, create a better advert, write a better piece of content etc. I'm going to take for granted here that my readers understand that *I* understand these things *can* of course have their place, but in my opinion, not after the basics have been taught.

There I was, dwindling away at a laptop, for all intents and purposes... pissing time away on idiotic nonsense. Creating little bits of bullshit to sell someone a tent, a tent which both I and the consumer have absolutely no idea how it's made, nor where or who by. It is just a thing which I communicate we are selling. As far as I'm concerned the job was *beyond* meaningless, it was odd, a surreal experience of life in the office. Hell, to be quite honest.

It was much like the speed-eating, speedrunning or Fortnite viewing, it was an odd nothingness. It was fluorescent lights humming for 8 hours until I could leave. It was a person, sitting in a room, tapping at a small black object and not diverting their attention anywhere else for 8 hours. It was a being, with the potential to learn, help and form a self, dwindling their finite time away into a vortex of modern bullshit. It was, quite seriously, a mind-numbing form of sterilization. A slow death. No wonder everyone is so tired, depressed, anxious, paranoid and chubby. Their lives consist of sitting for 8-9 fucking hours in the same spot, staring at the same 30" screen,

moving only their fingers! This is your fucking life! You're a fucking rat in cage! A cage *you* willingly stepped into because you're too scared of the risks of the alternative! Get the fuck out! Find somewhere with some beauty, some peace, some people who are of your own and discussions which make you feel at home. Find heart within a skill, a trade, something other than being an automaton who promotes the ideology of the corps out of the mere comforts it brings them. And this is why I mentioned those videos. If you wish to feel how I did, or how the somewhat awake, lonely, alienated and ostracized (from their animalistic biology) office worker does, then watch one of those videos, it is the static death that modernity leaves at your door right after wrapping it in pretty paper.

Luckily a friend told me of a job going at a joinery place he worked at, I also knew the owner (so I'll be *very* honest here), considering I have only amateur joinery experience, it was a stroke of luck I got the job. Right place, right time. *However*, I jumped onto that opportunity around 3-4 hours after hearing about it and didn't look back. My first week has been *extremely* basic in a meaningful way. I finish, prime, assemble and prepare bespoke doors, windows, stairs etc. for people who've ordered them. People need windows and doors and I'm part of that process. At the end of the day I can see the work I've done.

I *feel* worked too. And no, I'm not one of these people who believes you should have to feel exhausted at the end of every day. But if you believe it is *unusual* to feel tired or physically knackered at the end of the day. *If* you come home and you complain, just one time, of feeling physically knackered, then guess what, your privilege levels are through the roof. You just don't have a clue. You whine about suffering, but when will you realize that once *you* realize life *is* suffering then it no longer is. The more you keep it at bay, the more it will haunt your day.

I beg you, friends, from the heart, to exit the office. I understand of course that many of you simply cannot do this. Many of you with families are making the sacrifices needed, and many of you many have monetary problems which I do not understand, both of these I can empathize with. For those of you who feel locked in, strapped to your chair like a prisoner, whose minds are darting back and forth in fits and starts, whose brain

matter in eroding, whose legs are tapping constantly. Those of you who want to step up onto that shitty Ikea desk and shout “*WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?! WHAT THE FUCK ARE WE DOING?! THIS IS NOT LIFE! THIS IS NOT LIVING!*” I honestly beg of you to think of your commitments, tally them up, write them down, and see if you can survive an exit from modernity. Do what you *will* and exit that place which wishes only to keep on capturing your spirit...

The Unintelligible and Re-Enchanting Existence

Our Earth is big, but it can be traversed by industrialized methods of travel. Our galaxy is annoyingly big and has only been traversed by abstract scientific concepts largely relating to light. Our universe is quite simply, frustratingly big. Too large to ponder for too long, to do is to put oneself in a trance like no other. Even to lean one's face into your hand and stare at the sky brings forth a feeling of wonder, horror and awe. This is a form of enchantment that is *necessary* for man. It is also a form of enchantment that since the late 19th century has been almost entirely lost, at least within everyday life. Why is this? Well, space, galaxies and the universe as whole are not of *our* primary design and construction, and industrialization and the arrival of runaway-techno-capital subtly taught us that those ideas and *things* of which *we* are not in primary relation to are, for lack of real reason, not of our concern. There are those who are concerned with these things of course, thinkers, engineers, scientists, but they usually interrogate it in a way of intelligibility which I feel is a grave error to make. What makes life worth living is not conclusions, or ends, nor completion or constructed merit, no. What makes life consistently, deliriously sublime is the unintelligible, that which we cannot grasp. Of course, the horror is found in the screaming between what we know we *do not know*. (Levinas' *il y a*, is fantastic on this.)

To think on this unintelligibility is to be *enchanted* by life itself. The problem herein is that *modern* humans direct their attention to that which is primary to their perspective. We *fully* understand the spheres we exist within. We roughly understand how cars work, how we *get* to work, what lunchtime means, why we may watch TV shows, what it means to have status etc. To cut a long story short we only understand that which is already fully constructed, we can only ever understand completeness. And all our bubbles and socio-cultural spheres are pretty much complete, they are of the *same*. In fact, the reason people are so averse to leaving their spheres of comfort is that they fear difference. The eternal return of the same – in its most banal reading – is the soft pillow of disenchanting man. A

man who has fully *accepted*. Not accepted X or Y, no. A person who has simply *accepted*, accepted it all. It is, for them, done. And now they simply just continue down the routes of the same which are open for them, routes which in their very nature as the same are no different to any other route. One cannot find difference in that which they can already attend. It comes from elsewhere, from possessions, communions, enchantment, deliriums, bemusement, fevers, from the weird and the strange.

“the most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.” – Einstein

It's a slight shame that Einstein had to insert 'science' into that quote, it sort of throws it out of joint, pertains to the idea of an overarching 'theme'. But it covers the idea I'm writing about here nicely.

You're more than likely *caught* up in something or other. Some domestic with your partner, a financial problem, an intellectual pursuit, some form of construction or conclusion that you're aiming yourself at. Your own little temporal pathway which has an end, an end which in the grand scheme of things is always false. Have you ever felt satisfied? If you think of that question – if you're anything like me – you realize that none of the material, societal or cultural pressures which you attended to and concluded ever culminated into any form of actual conclusion. They always drag on into some haphazard, drawn out affair regarding status, worth or value, and almost always end only in fatigue or submission.

We have forgotten how to *be* enchanted. Something which arguably should be *a priori* to our existence. I'm idling close to the pitfalls of extrapolating some deep-seated depersonalization here, but perhaps we all need to fragment our minds from time to time. Maybe people don't stand in the mirror as long as me, and no, it's not because I'm staring at myself, it's because it doesn't, never really has, and hopefully never will...make sense. This whole 'living' thing, when you get right down to it, is fucking weird. To forget enchantment is to forget the inherent weirdness and peculiarity of existence itself. Tying into my previous post regarding office work, it *used* to infuriate me that people could exist in such a sullen and dead manner,

acting in such a way as if this is how it is and it's never to be any other way, and that outside of their labour, and actions of flesh, is not wonder, but nothing. I say *used* to because now I'm apathetic to those who still so caged in. I will spend time messaging and chatting to those who wish to know about how or why to become unplugged and re-enchanted oneself, but ultimately you can drag a boring horse before the crab nebula and it will still moan its hooves hurt. Basically a large percentage of the populous miss the moon because they're too busy looking at the hand pointing at it.

It's easy to retreat, in fact it's *so* easy that it has become our default setting. Someone pointed out something very strange that is put upon us at a young age. 'Keep your head down!' That's what we say to children who are idly gazing upwards at the clouds, sky, birds or rafters of a large building. We instantly put a stop to their enchantment, but we not only stop it, we shame it. It has become a shameful act to mention that one feels a little uneasy at existing. Not in any angsty way. Don't worry, when I'm assembling a door-frame I'm not shaking and holding onto the floor, but I am often thinking how odd it all is.

To lean into this feeling is to put yourself more and more at ease each day. This is one of the methods I routinely use to 'exit' myself from modernity and from that which I never needed/wanted in the first place. To buy, want, desire or buy-into various facets of life is usually because you wish to escape from this feeling, you cannot handle being and you cannot handle being enchanted. Human affairs – other than those you must take responsibility for (Health, family, friends.) should be secondary worries. You can watch that film tomorrow or not at all, you could visit that place another time, you may or may not do that *thing*, that cursed thing which is all jagged, striated and finished. Completion is the enemy of enchantment. I believe this is why more and more people in make-work jobs are beginning to feel alienated, lonely and depressed. These jobs are getting further and further away from enchanting existence. They are creating bubbles within bubbles, constraints within constraints, to add another lock onto the cage in hope that it will be *the* one which will make the boredom of the cage disappear.

One of my more controversial opinions is that I'm in agreement with R.D. Laing regarding depression –

“It's not necessarily a good idea if you're in prison, in a dungeon, and the door happens to be open, to adopt the policy that 'I'm not going to walk out of this state of affairs unless I discover how I got into it.'”

Now understandably depression is a complex issue and I won't get into here, I only wish to utilize Laing's point to articulate my thoughts regarding enchantment. See, much like Laing's 'dungeon' in the linked video, much of our neuroses and depressive pessimism regarding life is of our construction and is itself related to further constructions which pull us to and fro, and as Laing states, you're more than welcome to exit that dungeon. You don't *need* to know how you got there, who or what put you there or why it even exists...fuck the dungeon. The dungeon or more aptly prison is in this case the existence of dis-enchantment. Life feels dry, heavy, and a little dead all the time and you keep wondering why, you don't really do anything, or like to dwell on that which is dry or heavy, you just sit in that dungeon and repeat to yourself that life has become boring. “Same shit, different day.” You say to yourself. Well, I've got news for you. If you re-enchant life, then that statement will quite quickly be reversed “Different shit, same day.” Your place of work, your commute, your home, and your hobbies, when inspected on an ontological, philosophical or mystical level become wondrous activities.

You're mowing the lawn. You focus on the grass, the green seems brighter today. It's as if the birdsong is poetic, rhythmic regarding the swell of the day. The breeze hits cobwebs on your shed, you notice the spider making repairs. Everything is flowing and you were letting all this pass-by. Before the 'boredom' of the prison would have been momentarily satiated with modernity's latest trinket, but now, you just look around and relax into the awe and horror of being itself and think of beauty.

On Consumerism

A discussion I've had time and time again with friends and family is one regarding consumerism. We usually discuss politics and collapse (in that order) until the early hours and eventually one person usually states something along the lines of,

“Well yeah, but the root of all this is the mindless consumerism! That's what we need to stop!”

A statement which used to frustrate me, largely due to the fact there was a lack of shared coherent definition regarding what 'consumerism' means. See, I figure that most people who are critical of consumerism see it as external to them, something which *they* don't do and is only a problem for the dumb masses. I used to agree with such a definition, for it takes quite the stomach to admit that one might have traits of the sheep in their nerves.

This typical definition of consumerism is a general critique of mindless behaviour as opposed to an exposition on the meaning itself. Consumerism in the stereotypical sense means someone who wants/desires the latest car, flat-screen-TV, Marvel Movie etc. Basically someone who is entirely caught up in the spectacle of consumption and wishes to have the latest purchasable piece of the spectacle, as to prove that they are indeed in-on-it, they are in-the-know and are ultimately, normal and worthy of popularity, status and attention. I see this definition as basically wrong, in fact, it's not only wrong, it's extremely misleading.

The previous definition is more like the worst parts of the whole, the most extreme example of consumerism. And as prevalent and obvious as that part of the definition is, it's only the glaring top layer of the consumerist cake. In fact, I'd argue it's the layer that almost needs to stay alive for consumerism to continue flourishing. We've all read or seen *Fight Club*, 'you are the shit you buy' etc etc. blah blah, misreading all over the place, angsty morons begin lobbing their half-baked anti-I-don't-even-fucking-know ideology about the place and generally start using the pithy pseudo-ideology of an ok novel to legitimize their own bullshit. This of course

implies that there's a whole other level of consumerism going on, one which most people really...*really* don't want to admit to, at least those who are supposedly critical of consumerism at large.

It's easy to be critical of those buying the latest sports car, the latest TV, the biggest house etc. of consumerism, because, well, the things they've purchased are so large, garish and obvious that one cannot help to project their own insecurities into phrases such as "Compensating for something?", "I just think people should live within their means." And "Urgh, his/her life must be so empty." Shut up. You'd have bought the same empty shit if you had the money or the chance. How do I know this? Because within your current 'means' you continue to buy the bullshit you do now! Every year or two you buy a new iPhone because, well...it came out – your old phone was fine of course, you just kinda...wanted the new one. You buy designer clothes even though you have perfectly fine clothes at home, you buy new editions of books because they'll look nicer on your shelves, you – like 82% of the country (UK) – bought your ugly new car on finance, you just got new sofas because you changed your colour-scheme, you of course *had* to try that new sauce/meal/burger/wrap/drink from [insert food chain here]. The list goes on and on and fucking on! You are not outside of consumerism; you are so totally within it that you exist solely on hypocrisies at this point.

Thus far one could quite easily mistake the overarching idea of consumerism which I'm writing about here as simply a material 'ism'. And that which we consume is only material, things and/or items etc. This is, once again, completely incorrect. The items of consumerism are secondary, secondary to an idea, a shit, and vacant, idiotic idea. The idea itself can't be encapsulated by one phrase or statement because it subsumes lots of other socio-parameters into it. Status, normalcy, popularity, anxiety, paranoia, cultural-capital, to name just a few, are the fuel for this idea. The idea is of course simply consumption as means and meaning, but it's so absolutely unconscious that – as I have stated – even those who attest to hate it, understand how it works or who are virulently against it continue to fall prey to its allure.

The problem is – as opposed to creation, mutation, differentiation and communication – consumption is *very* easy. So easy in fact we don't even realize we're doing it.

Let me ask you this dear reader, is your personality merely a culmination of your vices?

Are you an end-product of compounding material desires, ideological consumption and identity traits into a 'being'?

Almost everything falls into the realm of consumption and it takes quite the alteration in perspective to remove yourself from the realm, so that your acts become somewhat 'authentic' (though I don't want to venture into that avenue) or at least taken self-knowingly.

Remember when you were a child and you and your buddies stayed up late and watched some action-packed war film? The next day you went off the woods and pretended sticks were guns and rocks were grenades, you consumed the media and let it infect your identities – hey, at least when children do this it is completely transparent. Hey, Brits, remember when *Skins* first came out and almost every other moron at school began to morph their personalities around those idiotic self-serving characters? Well I do, it was less transparent, but still a clear example of consumption at large.

After your teenage years I guess it becomes, at least for the masses, a little trickier. See, the education system and the state – the two teats adults suck on for security of both an individual and collective kind – teach very little (if anything) about that which is external to consumption. Your classes at school were all formed in a manner of consumption – consume data to prove X, you consume various bits of state red-tape to be able to form your life and then continue to discuss said consumption in such a way that it fills your day and makes you seem real and connected to the norm.

“Fucking tax man took a bite out of my paycheque!”

“Got this weird housing letter about my rent...”

“I hope I pass X-exam, I've studied hard”

There's nothing in any of this, it's the filler conversation which makes up 99% of life – unless you make the decision to exit from those people and

places, which is relatively easy...but perhaps you just like comfort.

“So James, if all adults are in this weird culmination of bits and pieces they’ve consumed, what makes you so special? How can anyone not be some odd creature of consumptive habit?”

Well dear reader, that’s a very astute question, thank you for asking. When I write these posts I generally think that I come across as a condescending asshole, I don’t massively care. Those who’ve I’ve offended are offended solely because of resentment, and wish their comforts had not been questioned. Those who are angry now, but willing to look inward will be thankful later.

Anyway, the question at large I guess is this, ‘How can you *not* be a consumer?’ I mean, *everyone* consumes at a fundamental level don’t they? Water, food and shelter are things we *need* and so we consume them, the key point of argument then is the difference between a need and a want, or in French, between a need and a desire. You *need* shelter, water and food. You don’t *need* a new TV, a fancy car and brand name clothes. All of these are simply lifestyles being sold to you, visions of a future wherein you have higher status, greater popularity and more people like you. Look at that guy in the prototype Audi A333, wrapped in 30 layers of Ralph Lauren with a TV implant in his head, he is cool...he is alpha. For a good novel on this absurd form of consumerism I recommend James Palumbo’s *Tomas*.

Anyway, the reason *everyone* consumes, and no one is immune from the consumerist lifestyle is that pretty much everyone is, at least in *some* way, weak. I’m weak to books, especially esoteric and obscure books, I consume then like a rabid animal. In a certain sense I’ve bought into some ideal there and am beginning to move from it. If this is the case then consumerism at large, in definition, is largely defined by the reasons *why* someone is purchasing something as opposed to the act of consumption in itself. It doesn’t matter if you’re buying McDonalds or organic, fair-trade, home-grown, vegan, non-GMO, gluten free jam, it’s the reason you’re buying them. You’re probably buying the former because some remnant of a heartfelt kitsch McDonald’s advert is lodged in the back of your mind and you suddenly just ‘fancied’ a burger, think on your actions for more than a second and you will immediately stop consuming as much, the latter

however might be bought out of sincerity, but it also might be bought out of virtue. Hell, a lot of that kind of vegan, whole-foody stuff *must* be bought out of virtue alone... 'cus it tastes like shit.

Strangely, this is where my now not-so-recent flirtation with Occultism comes in handy. (With that said, I think continued reading, research and practice of Occultism means it's no longer a flirtation and something more...) See, in my Greer interview he notes of the animatronic Santa Claus figures you get at Christmas. You know the ones, you press the button, he dances and sings a tune, the family laughs for two seconds, and it gets thrown out in a few months. The point is if people actually *thought* about their purchase decisions for more than a nano-second entire industries wouldn't even exist. Consumerism in its entire is a demonic force that preys on your passivity and apathy. You're not thinking, you don't care and you're hardly even mentally awake, and that's why you feel alienated and empty, you're simply the crass compound human-butter made solely of vapid desires and parasitic dreams. In short, you're an unthinking idiot.

Want to get 'out' of consumerism and edge a little closer towards authenticity and a more content, fulfilling being; it's quite simple, practice meditation. Specifically discursive meditation:

“To get the best results, discursive meditation requires the same sort of preliminaries that the more familiar forms of meditation do. The standard advice among old-fashioned occultists was to sit in a chair with your spine comfortably straight, not leaning against the back; your feet are flat on the floor; your legs are parallel to each other, and bent at a right angle; your hands rest on your thighs close to your knees, and your elbows are at your sides. Every muscle you don't need to use to stay upright is as relaxed as you can get it. Having assumed the position and deliberately relaxed the muscles just mentioned, you breathe slowly and deeply for several minutes, paying attention to the inflow and outflow of the breath, and turn your mind away from every topic of thought except the theme of your meditation.” – *Foundations of Magical Practice: Meditation*

I practice (though not as routinely as I'd like) two forms of discursive meditation. Firstly the one above which I practice prior to bed for 15 minutes or until the question has been answered and dissolves. I also

practice a form of questioning/discursive meditation with a friend – this is a personal invention, but great for quick problem solving. Find a friend in whom you can trust to tell the depths of your soul. Your question or predicament may be serious or harmless etc. Have them question you after every answer.

“I think I need a new job.”

“Why?”

“This one isn’t fulfilling.”

“Why?”

“The work doesn’t suit me.”

“What is it about the work?”

“It’s dull, meaningless.”

“What work do you think would have meaning for you?”

You get the picture; anyway, I find both of these forms of ‘meditation’ extremely useful in day to day life.

And so you want to exit consumerism, perform a discursive meditation either on a consumptive habit that is frustrating you (Netflix, smoking etc.) or on your consumptive habits in general, note the results, reflect on the initial problem and the answer that helps you find some peace with it. Often the two would have been very difficult to connect.

The Bus Kept Going

They got on the bus at the bus stop, because that was where you were supposed to get the bus from.

The bus arrived. It was bland, as almost all buses are.

There was a few of them. Rarely does a single person get on a bus. Buses are for herds. A handful of folk, a group...an event of people.

The inside of the bus was fairly standard. The seats were very dry, their colors were faded and the plastic was extremely thick. Nothing in here can hold enchantment, not an inch of this place can retain myth. The air is recycled nothingness. A temporal void, to sit in the static of modernity is to ride this bus.

The passengers were mostly overweight. Their faces round and their skin pimply. No real style or aesthetics, simple assemblages of that which was within the windows that surrounded them.

They saw things and they knew other people saw these things, so they bought these things.

They all held devices, the intention of which was to communicate with other people, this intention had failed and faded before it had even begun. They communicated only the fact they *could* communicate. Much like thinking, once they were free to communicate 24/7 the passengers of the bus realized they had very little to communicate. The devices allowed for lots of other things. None of the things ever helped the passengers in anyway. But they still clung to their devices.

Some of them spoke to each other about items they had acquired that day. Some of them blocked their ears and listened to music. Some looked at their feet whilst the trees passed by.

None of them had any expression of merit. They couldn't be sincere, they had never held a principle high enough for them to be sincere, they only got the bus each day, that is what they did. That is what they chose to do, to get

the bus again and again. And so they were on the bus and the bus started to move.

As the bus pulled away the town it pulled away from continued on. The passengers on the bus lurched forward. The movement signified that they were all together in...something. They paid no attention to the fact it began to move, this was normal. They paid no attention to the sounds, smell or tastes of the bus, these were normal. They paid no attention; they were a big frown. The bus turned three more corners and they had left the town.

The bus continued down roads, some big, some smaller. Mostly trees went past the windows, then they were gone and it was houses, still no one looked at them, or looked up. The passengers were not in a daze, or concentrating, they were simply there. They were passengers. Sometimes the bus would go past quite big structures and some of the eyes of the bus would fixate on it for a few seconds. Then the eyes would return to the strange in-between space of modernity. The veil between narcissism and reality, their eyes fixated on the lies they had been told which they wished to achieve. Their eyes then were fixed on nothing.

The bus kept the same speed.

The bus went past the first stop without stopping or even halting.

The bus went past the second stop without stopping.

The bus went past the third stop.

None of the passengers cared or were bothered. They were not apathetic, they were just there.

One man on the bus had a big green coat on. He really liked his big green coat. When he looked at his big green coat he was made happy by the decision he had made to buy it. He returned to this thought often. He also looked out of the window sometimes, he didn't think of much. Dinner, work, TV – he hadn't done or seen any of these for a while. But he thought of them a bit. He looked at the woman next to him, she looked back and smiled. She then looked out of her window and thought of bread.

The towns flew past the windows of the bus. The passenger's bodies moved in the manner of modern man, in small jolts and lumbering small aches and

releases. No one really moved, they just rearranged their stiffness. There was the occasional physical catharsis. A sigh big enough to ease off any especially energetic atmosphere. The passengers were not against energy, nor for it, they were and were and were. Sometimes the bus swayed.

The bus kept going.

Some of the passengers mentioned that the bus had kept going and had been going a little longer than usual. The other passengers tutted or made subtle noises as to agree with the overheard statements. The consensus of the bus' entire was that it had kept going. Subconsciously this was agreed and then the bus fell into a quick silence.

It had been a long time since the bus had started and kept going. The passengers occasionally looked up from their seats and out of the windows. Some would see towns quite like their own pass by, only to realize that it was not their town but someone else's, someone not on the bus. And so their heads would return to their seats.

Sometimes, once every few years, a passenger would get up and check on the driver. There was no driver. But no passenger told the other passengers there was no driver. Eventually they all knew there was no driver. There was no melancholy, only an existence.

There was one child on the bus, he seemed to be upset. More often than not he would return to his seat and fall asleep.

I'm not sure why they never admitted to anything, or stood by anything. But the passengers were on the bus and they had got on the bus and it just kept going. I don't know if they cared. I think they didn't.

The Virulent Magic of Modernity

“The black-room problem. If a human being is placed in a completely black and silent room, his mind is totally destroyed in a matter of days or weeks. The reason is obvious. Even when surrounded by physical stimuli our value sense gets eroded too easily. We let ourselves sink into the downward spiral. It is even more so in the black room. Man’s habitual, negative, devaluing tendency now has the run of his mind, unchecked by sudden bonuses of delight or glimpses of misery and danger that restore the sense of reality. It is like placing a man with a persecution complex among people who do rather dislike him.”

This excerpt from Colin Wilson’s *The Occult* is part of a larger section on the work of George Gurdjieff. I won’t venture into his work here, I’ll only state that I’m not entirely sure whether this problem takes precedence in Gurdjieff’s oeuvre, or whether Wilson found it elsewhere, with that said Wilson’s remarks on being surrounded by physical stimuli got me thinking about modernity.

‘Modernity’ is a term I constantly use and my followers and readers *seem* to understand what I mean by it. Even though ‘modern’ and ‘modernity’ can actually have *very* specific meanings, especially with regard to Modernism etc. But that’s never been what I meant by it. In fact, come to think of it ‘modernity’ – as I use it – is one of those times wherein the problem of an inability of articulation comes to the fore. I just cannot for the life of me correctly articulate to you what I mean when I write ‘modernity’. The closest I’ve come to being able to articulate it is ‘disenchantment’ or even anti-enchantment, but then of course I would have to define enchantment. Herein is *another* problem, one *of* modernity, namely, definition. Why do I feel so compelled to define this all for you? I don’t know, but I believe that perhaps the aforementioned ‘black-room problem’ may help me in my quest to articulate to you, the reader, what modernity is, and why it is so corrosive to the soul, to the possibility of essence and to one’s spirit.

Wilson writes of this black-room, and for the life of me I can't see how that reality is all that different to that lived by your average schmuck. On a purely banal sensory level yes, the reality would be different, for your average person would see black and hear nothing, as opposed to seeing stuff and hearing odds and ends. Perhaps by the end of this you can ask yourself which is better, eternity in black silence, or eternity in a noisy mall...

The black-room problem assumes that one steps *into* this room from another point-of-view. The problem with 'The Room of Modernity' is that no one really had this option, did they? How does one *know* they're *in* a room if they've never had another room to use as comparison, reaction or haven? Where in the black-room one sees black, in the Room of Modernity one sees what modernity wants it to see: adverts, TVs and TV shows, education syllabi, economic systems, disjointed natural relations, adverse reactions to nature, consumption-as-virtue, consumption-as-entire/-as-identity, the assumption of the construction of identity, trinkets galore, level-based systems of 'achievement' etc.

Basically, the Room of Modernity is a self-referential feedback loop pertaining to the idea that those inside the room are within the *only* room that *ever* existed, and that one's options for existence are solely to identify with lesser or greater degrees of modernity. If you wish to understand how deep you have fallen into the trap of modernity then listen up, this *begs* repetition, for to assimilate the next few paragraphs into your understanding, into your soul and actions as a being is to begin a personal process of becoming and overcoming.

Your day is not yours. The day is an entirely false concept based upon early agricultural tradition of rising and setting with the sun – once again, nothing new (under the sun). As such you chain your emotions, feeling and physical inclinations to a time-frame that is entirely not of oneself. You feel tired and crave a sleep without a stressful tomorrow, such a tomorrow cannot exist and so tiredness becomes the norm. In fact, you've been programmed to *ignore* those things entirely as if they were indeed...*things*, which of course they are not. By emotions I do not mean contemporary aspirational virtue wherein one casts forth pithy adoration for the latest piece of trivial pop media. I mean the (lacking) emotional vitality of breathing the sun into

one's lungs, of using your second tongue to melt the most basic of foods into a dream, to not *use* your body, but understand that your body is secondary to the process of the mind, and so the body flings itself to the rhythms of the spirit. But no, you keep stagnant at the desk-of-desire, moving 100 steps a day at most, and eating the deadened remains of plastic packets!

You go to *your* job. A fact imposed upon all *from* birth as if it was so. The fact you go is already a problem, but prior to the problem is *the* problem. The assumptions of modernity: 'It is just what you do.', 'Ah, you'll get used to it kid.', 'Everyone's gotta do it.' And my single least favorite sentence of *all* time (sincerely): 'That's life...'

All those who declare in the assumptive tone of modern man the statement 'That's life...' with the utmost sincerity – as if it meant all was secure, and that all is how it should and will be forever, and that the individual has no means of exit – should be flailed in the gutter, for they are already dead, quite literally. This is the cry of the deceased begging you to join it in a living-death. For what comes of following the apathetic commands of these zombies, to follow their call 'That's life...' is simply to follow the whim of modernity's lowest bidder with regard to your life. Now back to your job.

Most of these jobs are *not* work, not in the true sense of 'work'. This is not another pseudo-Protestant rant from Meta about acquiring a trade and exiting 'bullshit jobs'. It is along those lines, but continues into something deeper. Work in its truest sense is that which you derive an immanent satisfaction from, it is that which when undertaken *feels* as if one is attending to the purpose of both their body and mind. The average job nowadays is little more, in its deconstruction, than moving a small piece of plastic with your arm, as a way to make the correct numbers appear in front of those who could remove you from that job. To make sure the statistics are correct so you don't lose the job you hate. You *go* to this job too; you use your time to appear at this place which makes no sense to you outside of its own presumptions.

I am not presuming that one and all can acquire the perfect purpose within their life; in fact, such a conclusion of the perfect end to one's life is completely not what I'm aiming at here. The process of overcoming is

exactly that, a process, many forget this. The majority assume a position of completeness given to them subconsciously (magically) by the Room of Modernity. See, the Room of Modernity with all its things, items, objects and atheistic materialism has inherent within its circuitry a subconscious emanation of completion and conclusion. For what is an object but a *definite* item/thing, it is fucking *done*. And one is *entirely* surrounded by these objects, but not only these objects and items but an idea structure of objects. A job which in its deconstruction equals the means to continue said job and to acquire items of status, security and wealth. These items are connections to groups, hobbies and friends who share their attraction to these items, these conclusions. 'I do X too!'

The job that gets you money, to purchase land close enough to the job to get to the job easily, so one can afford more items to put into one's house and prove to one's friends that you also are 'in on it' You have the same conclusions as everyone else, you too are in the Room!

Once again, I do not wish for all to ditch their possessions and become an ascetic, nor remove themselves from society entirely, it is just a matter of questioning. One must perform meditations on even the most simple of tasks, that is where the fragments of the real are found, in excavations of one's habits (for starters).

And so you return 'home' from your job and 'relax'. Relax from what exactly? Have you ever asked yourself this? For I imagine all readers here have done at least one day of truly hard work. Where when you return home you quite literally *have* to take the weight off your feet, your entire body pulses with a form of heat and muck, a state one can relax quite easily from. And yet we find that those with the most mundane, meaningless and bullshit jobs are the ones who most commonly shout about their holidays and time relaxing, what must they relax from is the nothingness of their existence. They relax because *it is what you do*. They go on holidays because *it is what you do*. They buy big TVs because *it is what you do*. Fancy cars, fancy clothes, certain ideas, certain opinions, foods, lifestyles, ideologies, careers, motives, principles, all because *it is what you do*. And if the only reason one has done something is because it is what everyone else is doing, then they have in fact not truly *done* that thing, not as an act or

statement or cause or conviction, no, they have only performed it under the spell of modernity.

The Room of Modernity emanates some of the most potent magic to ever be conjured. Magic which has virulently infected all sensory pathways and become a compound circuitry of control. There is no sense which has not been quite literally affected by the magic of Modernity. Dion Fortune (Violet Firth Evans), one of the most important magical theorists of the twentieth century, defined magic as “the art and science of causing changes in consciousness in accordance with will.” And so what can we say of Modernity in relation to this definition of magic. That the Room of Modernity, Modernity itself, is a civilization-based engine of repressive magic, fueled by industry and man’s inherent ignorance and stupidity. It’s got you by the spine my friends and you must shed every single trace of modernity you can and rebuild! By that juncture the idea of ‘rebuilding’ will be entirely new to you. One can *learn* to use magic to cause changes in accordance with their will, *or* they can allow the magic of modernity to cause changes to their will unannounced, who exactly is in control here?

Do not be a creature of habit, for that is the attribute that makes you come across as a creature! You state you question things, that you are knowledgeable and ‘well-read’, pah! The buzzwords of a crook. You my friend have drunk the magical Kool-Aid of modernity, savored every drop and sought only to explore the deep recesses *within* the Room of Modernity. For one cannot exit the Room from *within* the Room, because – if you hadn’t worked this out by now – the Room is not a physical space, it is an ideological fort which you allow to be upheld as the kingdom of your own mind. The foundations of the Room were forced onto you at birth – unless you are of fortunate temperament – and your assumptions, apathy and ignorance allowed for the rest of its walls to be built, and adulthood secured the warming roof of Modernity above your head, solidifying the fact in your mind that all this was of course planned and was meant to be like this, for as you state...’That’s life...’

So wherein can one find the exit? Of course one is *within* the Room, which as explained is a construction largely (make no mistake, it’s very ‘real’ too) of one’s mind, but *of course* and *always* one is still in control of their mind,

their will. As such one can with practice, ever-so-slowly, remove layers and layers of Modernity until eventually, one day, realizations happen *within* oneself and the Room of modernity begins to crumble and decay, never to be built again. Stop attending to things as an escape. No amount of TV, video games, music or food is ever going to allow you to overcome the self. The answers are within, as they have always been. You must meditate on the most banal assumptions until they wither away into a heap of shocking presumptions of another. You must think for yourself, to ask oneself at each and every turn, however small, if this is truly the way you wish to go. I repeat these notions of freedom because many still follow the paths of others even when they most certainly think they are not.

You are allowed to do as you please.

Let me repeat that and beg that you meditate on this phrase for at least 5 minutes.

You are allowed to do as you please.

If you want to you may draw intricate 5' x 5' sketches of soggy moss, if you want to you can walk and stand in the road, if you want to you can climb a tree and pray for 9 hours straight, if you want to you can deconstruct all your possessions, if you want to you can live in a fridge – you have limited yourself in so many ways – if you want to you can meditate on cooling processes for days, if you want to you can sit and do nothing, if you want to you can sit and do everything, if you want to you can sit and breath in weird ways.

You're much freer than you ever allowed yourself to be, the magic of modernity is – in part – to blame, but it is up to you to *practice* exit methods and find your own way out of the Room.

Dropping Out: Why and How?

I remember when *this* all started, the blog, the Twitter account etc. Couple of years ago now. At the time there was a Twitter user who went by the handle ‘Nishiki Prestige’ Anyway, Nishiki was, for lack of a better description, a ‘free spirit’. Now, I’m not entirely sure what that means anymore, but he certainly had it out for civilization at large, wasn’t keen on society and was extremely open in explaining why all this was pretty annoying, bad and generally frustrating, and he was even more helpful with lobbying resources one’s way to help with the exit process. One of the first things ol’ Nishiki sent me was Ran Prieur’s *How to Drop Out*, which is deserving of a full read for any up-and-coming fringe societal member, or anyone in general who is finding it difficult to find what they want within the surroundings they’ve been given. As such I want to make it *very* clear how much of an inspiration Prieur’s post was on this one. These things often need tweaking and updates, I mean, isn’t that the point of ‘dropping out’, to truly think for yourself, and as such, I think that the drastic changes between ’04 and 19 have been enough to warrant my own musings on dropping out as a whole.

Now before I begin this piece I want to comment on a comment I’ve received. It was on my *How to Live like an Emperor for Very Little* piece. Now admittedly the title of that piece was a little annoying, but the reason I wrote it was because I’d had one of those days where you get truly nauseous at the attitudes of the average, whinging, moaning, pathetic man – those who just *cannot* make their *own* choices, those for whom everyone else is to blame, and there is *always* someone else to blame. Now the comment states:

“If the post didn’t have that arrogant “I just got my life sorted out why haven’t you?” tone I probably wouldn’t even have noticed how much of the advice was nonsense,”

Take of leave the advice on my post, I don’t care. But in my reply to the comment I state: As for the ‘I just got my life sorted out why haven’t you?’

remark, I don't mind it. But the whole point of my use of language in other posts – becoming & overcoming specifically – is that 'sorting yourself out' isn't a conclusion, it's a journey, as soon as you think you're complete and have sorted it all out, you're stuck and ignorant. It's all about the journey. This post was a sort of cantankerous reaction to much of the ironic and whiney behaviour I see from a lot of people aged 20-40 nowadays. Everything is fucked and it's someone else's fault. I say no, take action, you have choices, responsibilities and possibilities.

There's a question here to be stated: When is the correct time to offer advice? Of course if there's a *clear* goal in mind such as money etc. then those who have money can offer advice and those who are failures in increasing money cannot. However, when it comes to happiness, fulfilment and contentment, alongside the means to exit modernity who can truly give advice? A large amount of the boomers can't because their goals are empty – that's not saying many are content etc. – I'm simply giving advice which I have found has made my life more fulfilling and meaningful. I'd like to think my readership is intelligent enough to not simply take everything I write at face value. And I'd like to make it even clearer that I by no means have my life 'sorted out', not even close, but I have found many things in the past few years that have made me happier and my life more meaningful, and I see no harm in explaining them to you so you may give them a try.

And with that, I trust you too dear reader, will not take everything I state at face value and will think *for yourself* as to whether or not the path I promote is truly one you wish to venture down.

DROPPING OUT: WHY AND HOW?

WHY?

'Why drop out?' isn't a something I imagine many of my readers will really question too much, so I guess this extrapolation is for those who've stumbled across this post and are wondering what all this 'dropping out' stuff is about, hence, the 'why' at large. See, as much as I love Ran Prieur's original *How to Drop Out* post, it does gloss over the 'why' very quickly, which in terms of motivation, discipline and rationale should be assimilated into one's thought as thoroughly as possible, for when the path gets tough –

as it inevitably will do – when dropping out, one can always return to the overarching why of ‘why to drop out’.

Of course, we will need one of those horrid things called ‘definitions’, the cause of much frustration to all involved really. Then again, the definition of ‘dropping out’ isn’t really going to be argued over by those who already have, they’re already living. Dropping Out implies that there is not only something to ‘drop out’ *from*, but assumes that the ‘thing’ one is dropping out from is bad, and is something that one *would* want to drop out from. In my post *The Virulent Magic of Modernity* I generally define this ‘thing’ as ‘modernity’. I guess you could call it Western civilization if you wanted (though that has historical connotations), you might even call it society, but that too would have social connotations, and what we’re really talking about here is personal choice, will and action, we’re talking about an individual (me or you) making a choice to exit, or drop out. Dropping Out then, is the critical mental journey one undertakes as they begin to enter society at an atomized worker.

It begins with the excessive moments of mind-numbing boredom found in the average workplace, it’s found on the journeys to and from said workplace wherein one is tired, empty and wondering why they’re doing this in the first place. It is found in the heart-wrenching lunch-breaks one wishes they could be spending with their children, it is found on the sofa, night after night, watching empty drivel on TV as you consume food sourced from 10 different countries and packaged in oil-based wrapping, it is largely found in the moments where it seems all direct connection to anything has been lost.

In short then ‘Dropping Out’ is simply the – critical – process of ‘leaving’ the normalcy imposed upon you by society. It is to say ‘I would rather not.’, ‘I do not do that.’ Or ‘No.’ in the face of assumed choices. It is the *beginning* of freedom. It is shouting at the top of one’s lungs “This is not fucking normal!” I know you’ve felt this; you look around and see droves of people who are so disconnected from *their own* realities it amazes. By that I mean that the large majority of people exist in such a way that they are disconnected from anything that is primarily to do with their actual existence or survival. Now, I don’t want to get too Darwinian, but it is

inescapable. People who haven't cooked a meal (fed themselves) in weeks, people who rely on third party tools, groups and processes to allow them to even be, and people continue to strive in this direction too. Or as Ted Kaczynski states in paragraph 38 of his manifesto:

When people do not have to exert themselves to satisfy their physical needs they often set up artificial goals for themselves. In many cases they then pursue these goals with the same energy and emotional involvement that they otherwise would have put into the search for physical necessities.

People are disconnected, alienated and walking around in a daze because their lives no longer consist, nor do they *need* to consist of that which actually keeps them alive. We are a species bereft of all primary responsibility (I am talking predominantly of the West here of course). One of the best commentators on contemporary Western life is John Michael Greer, who articulates the struggle of the system as such:

*“For most people in today’s America, in other words, the closest approach to the glorious consumer’s paradise of the future they can ever hope to see is eight hours a day, five days a week of mindless, monotonous work under the constant pressure of management efficiency experts, if they’re lucky enough to get a job at all. On top of that, they get to spend a couple of additional hours commuting and work any off-book hours the employer happens to choose to demand, in order to get a paycheck that buys a little less each month – inflation is under control, the government insists, but it’s funny how prices somehow keep going up – of products that are more shoddily made, more frequently defective, and more likely to pose a serious threat to health and well-being of their users with every passing year. Then they can go home and numb their nervous systems with those little colored pictures on the screen, showing them bland little snippets of experiences they will never have, wedged in there between the advertising. That’s the world progress has made.” – John Michael Greer, *The Retro Future*.*

In short, the answer to the ‘why’ of ‘why drop out’ is most succinctly found in the following quote by Bukowski:

*“How in the **hell** could a man enjoy being awakened at 8:30 a.m. by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, shit, piss, brush teeth and*

hair, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so?

Why do you want to drop out of all this? Because you *know*, deep down, there's more to all this, there literally *has* to be. I promise you, there is. Life is found in the most unexpected, simple and mundane places, complexity breeds complacency. The best way to get your life back is drop out and live simply. Quite simply:

“Why drop out?”

“I'm not happy, content or fulfilled and my life is bereft of meaning.”

HOW?

It seems insurmountable doesn't it? From here, from all that I've previously written surely such a behemoth of complexity and confusion is nigh impossible to exit or drop out of. I will be honest with you, it's difficult, not *as* difficult as one might think, but certainly *more* difficult than romantics would like you to know. The primary difficulty in dropping out is that one's entire frame of reference has to change for them to be able to continually survive in their newfound life.

If it hasn't been made clear already the primary component of society/modernity which makes man miserable is money. Money, production, consumption etc. The idea that one has to be doing or using one of these three things for their life to have any meaning is a deep-seated belief for almost all inhabitants of the West. If one is to re-read the Bukowski quote above they realize that all aspects of the 'loop of modernity': Work > Home > Eat > Purchase > Work, are reliant on a certain attitude towards money. The attitude that money in and of itself is a meaningful end, whether or not that money has been converted into items or luxuries etc. either way, one's purpose was to acquire money. Now, I'm not silly, I know we all *need* money to survive, that's obvious. It's just that most people know that it's actually *their* choice how they use it, and not the choice of the 1001 forces acting upon them to part with their money on a daily, hourly, minutely basis.

Prieur makes it very clear that dropping out as seen as simply quitting your job and getting a train to god-knows-where is a dumb idea. If you want to make dropping out work then that's something you'll have to do. Such an assertion once again makes it clear that dropping out isn't *primarily* a material choice, but a shift in one's understanding of their life. If you shift your perception in such a way that you literally don't *need* as much money, then guess what, you will no longer need as much money...magical, isn't it.

In my discussion with John Michael Greer we spoke about the animatronic Santa Claus robots you see at Christmas. You know the ones, you press a little button and they do a little dance and song. See, they're great at articulating how one needs to change their perception towards consumption if they wish to be able to drop out. The point Greer makes is that if one was to think about said purchase for more than say, a nanosecond, you most certainly wouldn't purchase it. Even a few quick questions to oneself – 'Do I need this?', 'Did I ever want this?', 'Will this add anything to my life?' and you realize that not only did you never need/want this item, but you were in fact subconsciously affected into even considering buying it, it's an item that if it didn't exist, you never would have thought of wanting – people are selling you things that you both never *wanted* and never even *thought of*, don't fall for their tricks, think! And so the first practical 'how' – Before you purchase *anything* (at least for the first few weeks) think to yourself 'Do I actually need this?', 'Will buying this improve my life?' – Or at least improve your life in such a way that working a few hours was worth it. Measure your purchases not in monetary value, but in how many hours you had to work to acquire whatever it is you wish to buy.

As for jobs, this is a leap I've made myself. I worked this very cushy (sit on your arse and do basically nothing) marketing job until very recently. See, even though I did very little I was miserable because the work itself had no tangible effect on reality, I was helping no one and there was no benefit from the work I was doing, except in absurd statistical terms. And so I quit and joined a local woodworking company. The days go fast, the work is satisfying and most importantly there's no bullshit. I don't take the work home with me (mentally), there's no bureaucratic crap and I can see the results of my work (someone now has a working door or window).

So this ties in with a brilliant point that Prieur makes, you can drop out ‘a short distance’. By that I mean that just because one is dropping out, it doesn’t mean they have to start dumpster diving and growing their own food straight away. You can start by asking yourself this important question:

“Is the stress/bullshit/aggravation I take home from my current job worth the money I receive?”

If the answer is no, which it most likely is, then you have to start looking at what you can do about that. Is there a less stressful job nearby that you could happily do? See, once you alter your perception regarding consumption the fundamental (supposed) point of jobs changes. I mean, why do people want really ‘good’ jobs? What do we *really* mean when we say a ‘good job’? We’re not on about perks, job content or anything else are we, we’re on about money. A good job is one that pays more than the average. And so the large majority strive to get a good job so that they can also get a good (larger) house and a good (newer) car and good (branded) clothes and...you get the picture. Well, once you’re getting yourself outside of these assumptions it all changes:

You don’t *need* branded clothes because you’re life isn’t that vacant and empty that you care about having a little tag on your clothes.

You don’t *need* a newer/fancy car because the purpose of a car is to get you from A-to-B, if it works, it’s a good car.

You don’t *need* a larger house because ultimately the only reason you’d ever need a larger house is to fit a load of shit in that you no longer need.

You *no longer need* a good/well-paying job because you don’t *need* the money to buy all the shit you don’t need.

Once this happens what does a job become? Well it becomes something you do only because it allows you money to do that which you enjoy doing, or because you simply need some money to pay for rent/shelter, food, hobbies and needed extras.

It’s amazing that such a different in temperament can change your life drastically. Imagine two separate people, both working the same job. Person 1 strives for all the unneeded creature comforts of modernity, the big TV,

the fancy car, the big house, the trinkets and luxuries etc. To be able to achieve such a lifestyle they work all the extra hours they can and stress about their work performance, they take out loans to be able to afford these things etc. Their life revolves around nothing but the acquisition of items of status and proof that one is *normal*. Person 2 has dropped out. They work the job and don't take home any stress because their wage not only covers all their expenses, but leaves them a little extra, simply because they understand things differently. Their life doesn't revolve around consumption.

Some other skills which will allow you to drop out:

Learn how to fix your car and drive it until that thing is on the verge of imploding. Don't buy into the 'Needing the latest car' thing (or the 'needing the latest anything...thing' for that matter), there's literally no reason – aside from empty status and narcissism – that you need that a new, or updated car. If it works fine, ask yourself, why am I replacing it? On top of this, if you do decide to move jobs try move to one which is within walking/biking distance of your work – commuting is for idiots, you *cannot get time back*. And time spent with friends and family is more important than a 2 hour commute for some extra money. A side note on this, try calculating the amount you spend on fuel, maintenance and additional car extras due to the commute – definitely isn't worth it.

Get your clothes from charity shops. Or, if you're like most people, you've already bought at least 3-4 pairs of trousers, 5-10 shirts, 2 dress shirts, socks and boxers. You don't need more, buying new clothes is boredom. You're bored. Alongside this the idea of 'boredom' is a strange one. There isn't really such a thing as boredom as far as I'm concerned, I can quite happily sit and do nothing and not be bored. Boredom is the feeling that you're missing out on *DOING* something, be it TV, video games, entertainment in general, it's the idea that you're not fine unless you're *DOING* something... it always turns out those 'things' cost quite a bit, what a strange coincidence. Learn to be OK with solitude and nothingness; it is quite beautiful once you settle in.

Learn how to cook, I cannot believe I even have to explain this. You're a human being, one of your primary needs is food, nutritious food. If you

routinely eat from packets then you've sold your survival to the lowest bidder. When someone says to me they cannot cook I take that as the greatest statement of immaturity, imagine letting consumer society get such a tight grip on you that you never even learnt how to *feed yourself*.

There is of course more I could add here, a lot more in fact, but the main thing that people should take away from this is that dropping out is possible and that it doesn't have to be some drastic change where you end up homeless or squatting. One can drop out mentally first, and then attend to material matters.

There's beauty out there, and it's hidden. Hidden behind layers of societal pressures and cultural presuppositions, remove everyone else's expectations of you and you'll find yourself.

Resources:

Your Money or Your Life – Vicki Robin

Collapse Now and Avoid the Rush – John Michael Greer

Voluntary Simplicity – Duane Elgin

Early Retirement Extreme – Jacob Lund Fisker

Exiting Modernity

Exiting Modernity – 1 – The Practice of Exit

This will be the series that garners some attention. That might sound like an arrogant statement, but the truth is, I know that people love the repetitions that I will be expounding upon within this series. Exit, escape, anti-consumption, dropping-out, freedom, perspective-change etc. The average Joe[1] loves that stuff. The problem with these actions is that they are exactly that, *actions*. Now, I'm not actually implying some form of political revolutionary praxis here...far from it. What I'm going to be talking about here is the why and how of personal, individual *practice*. Because much like learning a language, a trade, magick, a skill, meditation or anything else worth its salt, it is always something that has to be practiced, in that manner one has to be constantly (or as much as possible) *practicing* the worldview I will be expanding upon. If you think, for just a second (I know it's hard) on any of those ideas I just put forth: Exit, escape, dropping-out, perspective-change etc. you'll notice that each one of these in its stagnant form as language is actually a semantic trick. In their existence as written/digital words they seem so complete, finished, done, something you can just clip-on, wear, accessorize or acquire, even, dare I say it...purchase.

It's been there since you were little, this idea in the back of your mind that basically anything you need/want can simply be acquired via some form of purchase. Whether it's knowing the right people, having the right amount of money or doing the correct amount of work. Well here's a sombre lesson for you my friends, meaning doesn't exist on any form of binary barter system. You consume TV, you subconsciously consume adverts, consume education (commented on in length in a later post), consume ideals and consume notions, traits and habits. Up until now all unquestioned, I make these assumptions about you because I wish someone had made them about me, caused me to well up in a rage and explode in a bout of cathartic frustration at the situation bottled up – I want to leave, and I don't know how!

There are some things that of course cannot be purchased, this we are told time and time again by those attempting to sell us those things. *Can't put a*

price on love declares the dating app, *can't buy happiness* says the holiday company, *can't put a price on peace* says the cover of that new Mindfulness book. *The best things in life are free!* Is belting out of the radio, right before the adverts start. Of course, this notion of 'free' is in relation to cost and not constriction. If we turn that phrase a on its head just a little and take the implication that the best things in life *are free* (as in freedom, not free beer), then we're getting closer to the idea that I am beginning with here.

When I state that 'exit' needs to be practiced I mean it, for *exiting*, *dropping out* and *changing* your perspective are all processes and anything process based generally needs to be practiced, no man ever got the performance, ritual or action correct on his first try, exiting – which is the word I'll use throughout this series to denote what has been historically entitled 'Dropping out of society' – is not an event in itself, it can't be, otherwise it is simply a movement. One is either consistently exiting, stuck or – in very rare cases – individually enlightened/content/at peace with the cosmos. You harbouring the ideals of anarchists and egoists is not in itself exit, is it? You cannot stop there, otherwise all you have done is grown a little narcissism. You can now go around and look at how dumb everyone is, even though you're still within the same spaces of them, what have you *applied*?

An early digression here on revolution, communal action and mass praxis. I am not for them. Shock horror, this isn't another one of *those* blogs, the ones which extrapolate on the same bullshit leftism *deus ex lobali*, or in this case *deus ex civitas*. Just because there's a lot of you doesn't mean that it will change anything. Communal action is *fantastic* in relation to the local. Other than that it's merely the act of selling out your own *need* for discipline to the herd. Yes, that's right, even your perfect social justice group *is a herd*, even you anti-group-think punks are a herd, any group aligned behind a *clear* political motive should be suspicious to you, to *yourself*. What do they want with me? What are they doing that I couldn't have done myself? Let us turn to a short analysis of one of my favourite poems to show you the perils of group-think:

Archaic Torso of Apollo – Rainer Maria Rilke

We cannot know his legendary head

*with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso
is still suffused with brilliance from inside,
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,*

*gleams in all its power. Otherwise
the curved breast could not dazzle you so, nor could
a smile run through the placid hips and thighs
to that dark center where procreation flared.*

*Otherwise this stone would seem defaced
beneath the translucent cascade of the shoulders
and would not glisten like a wild beast's fur:*

*would not, from all the borders of itself,
burst like a star: for here there is no place
that does not see you. You must change your life.*

Rilke here writing of a decaying marble statue that has lost its head, but in every other way it is perfect, beautiful. You can never know the head of the movement you're 'within', because much like the way in which contemporary politics has been taken (on a ride not entirely of its own creation) all herds are either without a shepherd, or cannot spot the man who is herding him, as such, "*we [you] cannot know his legendary head*". You are however a *PART* of the brilliance of the torso, that entire which supports the head (the vision, the direction) itself, and so, *you must change your life*.

Why do you not simply cast yourself off from the directionless torso of the masses and birth yourself a new as an individual head? The reason is quite simple. Being part of a group takes no action, discipline or responsibility on your part, or any part of the others, hence why herds are like Apollo's torso, perfectly sculpted, but nothing without a head to sculpt it. The head can exist unto itself.

In this manner consumerism is a torso without the possibility of head, for the multitude of (falsely created) desires can never find a coherent direction, it is a multiplicity of bullshit symbols and expectations. Be wary

that you don't fall for its trap of expecting something to *just happen*. These are the images they sell you; these are the symbols with base meaning. Purchasing clothes, a new car, a big house, fancy books, fancy food, the latest phone or any other detritus of modernity is not only the act of purchasing a distraction, but the act of purchasing a distraction which allows you to feel as if you have taken responsibility.

Instead of taking the time to learn about your local surroundings and history you buy a car to drive from new place to new place, instead of learning how to cook you buy take out or junk food, instead of learning about your *own* body and what it can do you buy fancy clothes to cover up your own failings, instead of learning to think for yourself you buy a big TV to think for you. These objects of modernity are conclusions which allow you the illusion of taking responsibility for your life, when in reality you have done the exact opposite, you have sold yourself, your time, to the laziness of your whim, to whichever random subconscious falsely created desire took hold that day. You hope, you scroll, you search for that *thing* which will be the *final* thing to complete everything, the final car, house, TV, book etc. 'This will be the one' you think subconsciously, but it never is.

Why do you do this? Because the last sentence of Rilke's final stanza *you must change your life* is most likely your worst nightmare. And it is easier to change literally *anything* else, than change your *self*. You know how painful that's going to be, you know how difficult it's going to be, and in those moments of terror you retreat into your comforts. This is why, as I stated earlier, one must *practice* exit. There can be no object of exit. Exit is only a conclusion in the sense that it opens your mind to new avenues of thought. If your taken exit has led you into a dead-end or locked room, you've been duped. Nothing which leaves you stuck or stagnated can be considered exit. If you feel you exist on the sidelines of life, the answer is not to be found within objects or material, but in personal, individual, internal experience.

Practice: In the same way that you have control over whether or not *you* buy that Marvel figure, you also have control over whether or not you don't, or even care about such a thing – you *even* have such control over your actions that you stop and ask, 'Do I actually *enjoy/like/want* to do this

or am simply being pulled by something?’ Of course the primary reason you’ve done/acquired any of *these* things is because you believe in some form of status, or, you believe you are being watched. For if you are being watched, you matter, you’re worth watching, you *exist*. Ask yourself if this actually matters? Do you sincerely care what other people *think* of you? How much time do you spend thinking of yourself as opposed to thinking about other people? Probably around 90-95% of the time, right. As such, other people are usually doing the same, ergo, they’re not thinking of you. No one fucking cares about your shit. Do things with yourself, your body, experience life, even in the most minor, inconsequential ways – not because you wish to be watched, recorded or envied, but because experience is at the heart of existence and personal experience can neither be sold, bought nor commodified.

You *must* practice exit as much as you possibly can, and at its cantankerous heart exit is simply a matter of questioning, critiquing, deconstructing and destroying presumptions, whether they’re social, cultural, political, personal or familial – You *can* leave, the only reason you don’t is because your current comfort supposedly outweighs the risk of exit, this is sunk cost. Ask yourself a couple of questions, firstly: What’s worse, existing in an almost comatose state of being for the sake of comfort for the rest of your life, or taking a risk and attending to the dangerous heart of true experience? And secondly: Were you *really* put on this Earth to be fucking *comfy*? Or, in short: Is it worth prolonging a life you detest?

But much like anything that has to be practiced mastery takes time, and mastery of exit isn’t something that can ever truly be attained, at least in an abstract sense. Of course, if your ideal exit is a homestead, van-dwelling, country-living etc. then sure, go for it. But don’t forget to question *those* assumptions too. In this manner Exit is critique. By practice I mean question, and by question I mean everything. Modernity is a culmination of rackets that provide you with presumptions, presumptions which make you anxious, depressed, lonely and alienated, unless of course you don’t buy *into* the presumption, the comfortable, herd-accepted assumption that you need X, Y and Z to be normal. Modernity created your inner anxiety and also created its purchasable cure, Exit allows one to bypass the cure and

destroy the idea of infection; Modernity is Oz behind the curtain, and currently you're admiring his tricks.

[1] A note on the concept of 'The Average Joe'. I don't seriously think such an average person exists, everyone is unique in some way, and I don't mean that in a 'everyone is special' sappy way. Only that, everyone's journey through life has been unique and as such that makes the conception of average as a unified truth, impossible. With that said, such an idea in relation to what Nietzsche called 'The Herd' most definitely *does* exist. The average Joe, as I see it, is someone who simply has never – even in the most minor way – questioned their presumptions about life, and as such their entire existence is a manner of being pulled by whichever force has the greatest pull at that moment, be it a Marvel film, a margherita pizza or a lifelong career, it needn't matter, the average Joe is *unquestioning*.

Exiting Modernity – 2 – Willing Slaves to Restriction

The overarching idea which is being written of here is meaning. It has been one of the buzzwords of the alternative scene since the very beginning of Modernity. A phase of history I would argue begins roughly at the end of the 19th century, that is when the clear technological lineages to the distractions which are ruining our daily lives were born: Transport, mass-media, mass-produced food, state education, standardization etc. In part, Modernity is the era in which all of our spontaneous attitudes, creative passions and imaginative weirdness are constricted – usually covertly – due to the fact its very nature is unpredictable. The reason Modernity is against anything (usually) is because that thing is unpredictable, and that which is unpredictable is far more difficult to control, because ultimately if you have no idea what something or more importantly *someone* is going to do, how can you possibly make preparations to control it/them.

Meaning has now turned into this mythical entity, held up in reverence by the disillusioned, lost and young as that which is to be sought after for its own sake. But meaning has a two-fold existence which is often overlooked, and it's between these two meanings *of* meaning where we can begin to understand that it is actually ourselves who hold the key to our own cage. The first meaning (of meaning) is the one employed by your mind quite literally every second of existence. The screen you're reading this on has a meaning to you in a nostalgic, technological and knowledgeable sense, a meaning which works in relation to a whole host of other meanings *you* have placed onto other things within your world. To a certain extent these forms of meaning are useful, *very* useful in fact; we wouldn't be able to traverse the world in any coherent sense without a complex circuitry of meaning. However, within modernity meaning is haunted, haunted by the toxic wills of headless ideas, ideologies and groups.

The property that you're within is just that, a property, which means something entirely different to a home, a house, a building or simply a place

to sleep. Whether or not you believe these meanings have infiltrated your subconscious understanding of your surroundings needn't matter, because the ideas/meanings themselves have already infiltrated the communally accepted language so well that such stresses, anxieties and depressions that come with such linguistic baggage as 'property' are already affecting you. Think of a space, any space, or space at all. I imagine you are either thinking of some empty white room, or a space which has a name: School, park, house, shop, road, path etc. The horrid fact is that not only do we abide by these constrictions constantly, but we in fact adore them, they bring us comfort. What is more comforting than knowing your place, constantly. However loud you shout that you're free, however many 'meetings' you *attend* to discuss freedom, or whatever steps you take to actualize further freedom are always thwarted if you have yet to understand your own internalized patterns of restriction.

If you *are* to take the time to think of contemporary 'free' spaces, the conclusion is usually areas/spaces such as parks, fields or routes – it is not coincidental that all of these revolve around nature. Except these spaces are not in themselves free, for the park has its gates, the routes have their edges and the fields have their presumed purpose. *This* is where we walk, *this* is where we play and *this* is where food is grown, that is how it is, that is how it is, that is how your mind speaks to you subconsciously.

This leads me to the second meaning *of* meaning, the one we're sold every day in some form or other. The meaning of life, what does your life mean, what does it all *mean!*? We ponder, ponder, ponder and get no closer to any real answer, but we push forward anyway. The unfortunate reality here is that the first and second meanings are very slowly being combined, and for a large majority of the population (speaking primarily of the West here) have already been combined. That is, one's meaning in life is built upon notions of restriction. If only I could just get *that* job, then I would be someone/somewhere. If only I could purchase *that* car, then I'd be seen as X. If I only could go to *that* country, then I'd be X. You have allowed the meaning in your life to be constricted by meanings imposed by others. Those others include: peer groups, corporations, ideologies, politicians, events, followings, the media and more. You have allowed the socially presumed meanings of the herd to construct the faux-meaning of your *own*

life. Ask yourself why you never questioned any of this? Why did you never take the time to sit down and think on whether or not you agree with these things? You thought you were free, but you were only free within the confines of other's meanings.

Many state, often with quite loud certainty, that they are indeed free, and lead innovative, playful and joyous lives. Yet these people never take more than a second to question the most basic assumptions of their supposedly *free* activities. It is a cliché that begs repetition, but what accounts for the large amount of play today – both for adult and child – is simply their parents giving them the technology they *believe* to be fun, for the simple fact it is collectively understood to be so, a belief which possessed them via advertisements, media, magazines, music etc. People don't seem to enjoy, play or create that which they are naturally predisposed to, but they wait, in a state of boredom for something to fill the void of their lives. Usually this means sitting watching TV until work begins again, scrolling through an app or social media feed until work begins again, or finding another method of escape (Drugs, alcohol, porn etc.) until work begins again. Man's idea of play and enjoyment has been replaced with escapist hedonism, of course this is nothing new, but it *begs* repetition. Fear not, there *is* more to life, and it's found in...going backwards.

“The words ‘we can't go back’ are just another religious invocation of the great god Progress.” – John Michael Greer

Very few people within modernity won't admit it, but deep down they're virulently against the idea of going backwards, in *any* way, whether it's politically, culturally or materially. Our assumptions surrounding technology are as follows: New technology is better than old technology, more technology is better than less technology, those that promote older ways of doing things are doing so out of nostalgia or some archaic form of conservatism. We *believe* that Progress is good in *all* cases. Rarely do we look at the results of progress and assess them based on their own merit, and even rarer is a comparison between the new and old ways in relation to meaning or happiness.

It seems almost *impossible* to many that they could now exist without a smart-phone, games console or a TV[1]. It is *assumed* that we can never go

back, why is this? Well, it is because everyone else does it, and – quite depressingly – normalcy is extremely comfortable. It's nice to know you're 'in on it', in on the thing that *everyone else* is doing/taking part in. No one wants to feel left out, and yet we still do? Smart phones have allowed us to connect to every piece of information ever recorded at an instant, but we retain none of it. They have allowed us to 'connect' to all of our 'friends' in an instant, and yet when we meet up with our friends they all stare at their phones...texting *other* friends. We were warned about TVs rotting our brains back in the 70s, "*I'm the slime coming out of your TV set!*" (Frank Zappa, *I'm The Slime*). We didn't listen, we were too busy focusing on the gimmicks, explosions and crack-like programming of the TV set. There was a time when most of you reading this *didn't* have a smart-phone, a fact that has been all but erased from our memories.

The complex bind that we've got ourselves in is as follows. We *were fine*. Perhaps a little bored, but then there's nothing wrong with boredom, it is in fact *helpful* in the journey towards finding yourself, if you're never bored, you're constantly entertaining yourself with distractions. Anyways, as we grew up and hit the age of 3-7, when we could begin to construct and verbalize what is was we supposedly needed/wanted we began to do so. However, as previously stated, the large majority of these wants were really micro-possession taking control of our thoughts via the airways of modernity (adverts, media etc.) and so we began to be programmed to want things we never really wanted, or even *thought of* in the first place! Our desires were constructed. If you never saw or heard of an advert for a waterpark would you want to go on a waterslide? The same channels and circuitry that constructed our desires simultaneously gave us the answer to those desires...what a strange coincidence.

Such constructions *of course* always fit into the standardized system of time that we've been funneled into, and lead to believe *is* time itself. We go on about the ol' 9-5, which allows us the 'free' time afterwards to watch the same TV show as everyone else, the one we've always wanted to see... apparently. The very idea of travel and holidays fits into the allocated holiday time our workplace allows us; standardized time, the destroyer of spontaneity. Many talk of 'getting away', but rarely ever do. Their idea of a break is merely to do the same thing they usually do on the weekends in a

different climate. At the bottom of the ‘getting away’ idea is the notion of escaping ‘all this’, meaning the meaningless, unfulfilling trap of modernity. Unfortunately it’s restriction all the way down. This next paragraph is going to be long and *extremely* repetitive, but it’s meant as an exercise in all the assumptions of modernity you take part in on a daily basis, usually without knowing it.

You wake up in *your* home, it’s *yours* and you feel secure there. You never really thought about whether you needed security, of course a secure place to sleep is needed, but why did you need all those rooms, were you ever *intent* on acquiring all the possessions you now own, or did you simply feel obliged to do so? Your neighborhood is called that, but you’ve never really seen or experienced any event which correlates with the notion of neighborliness you were sold. A ‘nice neighborhood’ is one where everyone stays inside, and causes no trouble. You get out of your bed which is full to the brim with blankets and pillows; the mattress is so soft you never want to leave. Some people sleep on the floor, did you know that? That’s something you *can* do if you want. I did for a while and it made it easier for me to get up in the morning. Stop assuming comfort and niceness is your endgame, you were sold that lie and you can dismiss it if you like. You take a nice warm shower and cover yourself in 2-3 products to impress other people, people you rarely get the chance to properly speak to anyway. Many people take cold showers. You go downstairs, prepare your breakfast and sit on the sofa, switching on the TV, because why *wouldn’t* you? What else are you going to do? Just sit there and enjoy food you have no clue as to how it’s made? How preposterous! You get ready for work, putting on clothes which you’d never want to wear nor purchase for the sake of making a good impression. You get in your car and take the 10-40 minute commute to work. ‘This is normal’ you think to yourself ‘everyone has a commute’, you never think on the amount of your wage that is going towards commuting or car maintenance. You can get a lower paying job closer to home and save money if you like, that is a choice *you* are free to make. You arrive at work and say the basics to those who you frequently work with. No conversation, you realize, has much merit to it.

“How are you?”

“Pretty good, you?”

“Yeah good thanks.”

“Have you seen [insert new superhero film here]?”

“Yeah man, it’s wicked!”

“Yeah I know right.”

No one ever really talks to each other properly except in rare bouts of unavoidable emotional duress. You eat your lunch and everyone looks at their phones. You go back to work and do some random stuff on a computer. Your job is obedience and little more. Unless you’re in a job which directly effects people’s lives in some manner, your job is probably complete bullshit, and you know it. Clicking random things on a screen to create the outcome desired by your superiors isn’t a job, it’s willing slavery. ‘That’s life...’ you say to yourself, followed with an internal sigh. Well here’s the news, it’s only life if *you want/will* it to be. You finish up your day and begin the commute home. You can’t wait to get home and watch TV, zone-out, you deserve it you tell yourself, knowing deep down that you really don’t. You don’t feel anywhere near as alive, exhausted or worked as you could, but it doesn’t matter, the monotony has drained your mental abilities to the point where you need a TV to think for you...apparently. You get home, order takeout and eat that in front of the TV, you don’t even focus on the show itself because you’re too busy scrolling on your phone, too busy getting jealous at other’s lives for no reason, too busy distracting yourself from the miserable reality you have willingly walked into. Time for bed, you don’t sleep well. You know why, but won’t admit it to yourself. You doze off. You wake up and start it all again.

Practice: There’s a way out, but you need to dwell on this for a while, or at least until your frustrations reach maximum level and you literally cannot take it anymore. Dwell on each and every assumption you make. Channel that energy, when it comes, into the practice of exiting. Which is what exactly? Well, for now something quite simple. List 100 things you do *every day* – I would just mentally go through your day and write each thing down – and then list next to each one the primary assumption relation to that activity from the list below (or devise your own list):

Health
Money
Status
Normalcy
Habit

Once you've completed the list of *100*, yes, all 100, note which assumptions you abide to the most. If a clear assumption comes up outside of those 5, which you're partaking in routinely, feel free to add in your own category. Once you've completed all that, meditate for just 5-8 minutes of why you feel obliged to bow down to that category, why do you assume so much around money, health, status etc. Enjoy.

[1] Even though these are all electronic and screen-based this isn't the specific area I'm targeting, they're just the clearest examples of our pressured attachments.

Exiting Modernity – 3 – Deus Ex Civitas, The Coma of Modernity

Humans, plural, shall never learn. The destiny of forced homogeneity is death and/or nothingness. We are often told that we *should* learn from the lessons of the past. Usually we are told this by someone in such a position that it is made clear to the discerning listener, that they most definitely have not learnt from the lessons of the past, whatever they may be. By that I mean, when you hear someone state that we should learn from the lessons of the past it's usually spouted by someone in power, and as such someone who can ultimately tailor or eschew those 'lessons' for whatever gain they wish, in fact, they can make the lessons up if they so wish. The fact *we* still continue to state that *we need* to learn from the past means we haven't, I find the whole thing silly. If you're waiting for some *deus ex civitas* – God from the community – then you've already missed the point.

Most of us spend our entire lives like Vladimir and Estragon, the protagonists of Beckett's novel *Waiting for Godot*. Two helpless chaps who are waiting for a person/entity/thing called Godot, and until he shows up they muse on existential dilemmas and ponder life in general. My synopsis is terrible, but it's the aimless waiting here that is the point. You're waiting for something, even if you don't know it, chances are that 'thing' is death. Those of you who've read a little and are a little more woke than others might be waiting for a revolution, others might be waiting for capitalism to unshackle itself from the states' last grasp, some waiting for love, or whatever, you get the idea, you're sitting about with this awful idea in the back of your mind that things just...happen. And perhaps the only lesson of history we've taken onboard is a bastardized form of the ol' "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.*" (JFK). Well, it's bastardized in such a way that now the lesson we have taken onboard is as follows, *The only thing necessary for the triumph of boredom, fulfillment and discontentment is that **you** do nothing.*

I can't blame people for attending to this form of *waiting*, from day one (once again) it's instilled within our very nervous system, the idea that change is this *other/outside* force that acts on its own accord and will enter your life if it so decides. Now, I am not averse to other agencies, forces and pulls throughout the cosmos, however, to sit idly and hope such a force pokes you out of comfort is a silly thing to do. We were taught by TV shows, video games, fantasy novels, the education system and society that things just *happen*. The hero happens to turn up, the villain is always planning *something*, politics is a series of (always) *big* events, books promoting the chosen one, history taught as linear progression of happenings and friends and family discussing gossip, rumors and events of their lives. This entire dynamic pushes the idea that things just *happen*, all the time, everywhere, everyone is having things happen to them. It pushes the idea that change isn't a very slow – often quite dull – process, but is a series of bangs.

As much as I cannot blame people for this constructed ennui in-itself, I can blame them for their willingness to roll around it, even revel in it. People who wish for X, whether it be money, a slim-body, a nicer job, a calmer life, never really go for it in any direct way. Usually they rely on third-party apparatus to mollycoddle them along even the most banal changes in their life, as if without a support-system-for-change, nothing can happen. Those losing weight attend weight loss groups, those trying to make more money search through others ideas and mutate them, those looking for a nicer job look at the stereotypical nice jobs they've been taught to think are nice, those looking for a calmer life search forum posts on how to de-stress, meditate or minimize. We assume that if others don't *know* what we're doing then there's little point in doing it.

Other groups shall tell you that the real enemy is the forces of separation between you and everyone else, except, in reality that's just a covert way of forming their very own 'They' or group, isn't it? The constant push and pull between herd ideas is a tough one to escape. The quickest route out of this form of thinking is to stop believing in change as an abstraction distant from your-self. Others will tell you to expend your energy on attempting to destroy the systems which you believe are altering your life in unfavorable ways. Now, I'm not saying there aren't elements of the 'system' which are

out to get the common man, there most definitely are, and they make up the bulk of the system. However, I don't believe that projecting the large majority of one's problems onto an abstraction called 'the system' is helpful either. It's an easy-out.

I harp on about the problem with groups a lot, and it was a *big* thing a many years back, the whole 'anti-conformist' angle. I guess it always has been, the irony is of course that those who proclaim that they are 'anti-conformist' are just creating a new form of thinking to conform to, see: Punks, Communists, Traditionalists, Conservatives, Carnivores, and Vegans etc. It's extremely easy to believe something that has molded itself to seem correct from every direction. "I do X, and X is correct!" You have a very limited amount of energy, and the way in which you use it is solely up to yourself, do you truly believe that channeling you energy into *another* pithy group of idealists is going to alter your own life in any *real* way? Or are you once again failing to take responsibility. I don't wish to sound like Jordan Peterson here, but 5 early morning rises, trump a thousand imagined revolutions. Take your energy away from blaming the other, and channel it into your own feats.

I imagine that you are now thinking, well yes, that's all well and good saying this, but what are we supposed to *do* then, what are you alluding to? If you thought that then you're already very close to a helpful mode of thinking. 'What are we supposed to *do*.' Should be changed to 'What *can I* do.' You know very well there's plenty of things you most definitely *can*, or could – with a little preparation – *do* to increase you fulfillment in life. Quite honestly there's no excuse to not. It's the realization that expending your energy on group-think is really expending your energy in much the same way you do for your employer, allowing it to become the product of someone *else's* end-goal. Stop looking for validation or vindication. No one cares you started taking cold showers, or sleeping on the floor, or eat a certain diet, or live in a van, just do it. Assimilating these ideas into 'the system' is giving them the leeway to become assimilated further and become banal identities like everything else has. Remember when people used to just 'have beards'? I do. But now everyone with a beard is quickly dragged into this mind-numbing identity surrounding beards. The same

goes for any TV show, any popular book, anything really, it's all becoming identity.

Identity has become quite an easy target of late, but it begs a few words. Identity, as it is commonly understood these days is merely a culmination of one's consumption habits. 'Well I'm really into Netflix, dogs, pizza, gin and rom-coms.' Or 'Bearded, love football, clubbing and watching Arnie films.' Humans are at a loss of what to do, say or even think about if it is bereft of a connection to something someone *else* has created. Rarely do we discuss something the person we are talking to has created or written, to do so would seem strange. Rarely do we discuss how we're feeling or thinking, what meaning we are finding and our own paths to contentment. Thought has become caught between possessions and standardization.

Practice: If you so wish you can cause ruptures in the cosmos. The way in which you do this is quite simple. Disagree with a notion so commonplace that it is never even thought about. You are indeed allowed to think cars and roads are stupid, that dishwashers and lottery tickets are bought by morons, that bottled water is at best absurd, that theme parks are at heart a form of hell. And you are of course allowed to interject, and throw passion, love and beauty into other's lives. The way in which you do this too is quite simple. Mention something minor or inconsequential you saw that you found sublime. Say that you saw a squirrel on your route here and he looked jolly, you saw a few cows chewing the grass and they seemed content; tell your friend that it is always great to see them. This is usually enough to knock people out of the coma of modernity.

All group-think is already living in a future which hasn't even arrived. What are we *going* to do, *when* are we going to do it, *when* will the community finally be *ready* and on and on they drone. Your lives must be the space and time unto which you take control, for it is the *only* area of which you have any direct effect, however, you have *all* the effect here. You can, quite literally, do whatever you so wish. You can begin by altering the way in which you think. Away from a form of expectation, hoping and desiring towards objects and groups which you half-believe might alter things, towards a way of thinking which admits that changing one's own life will be tough, there will be sacrifice and there will be many moments of

discomfort, but that form of danger shall allow you to grow quicker than anyone sat of the sofa. There's a saying in the fitness community that walking even 100 meters is *still* lapping someone sat on the sofa many times. As such, altering just one facet of your life is still a step closer to a purer freedom of the self than anyone engrossed in the latest soap opera.

In my recent discussion with Dmitry Orlov he noted that (to paraphrase), '*If you are to remove all the vices from most people's lives what do you have left? A shallow...entity.*' It might be very difficult to swallow, but ask yourself this extremely difficult question: *Without my vices, who am I?* Without your phone, your clothing taste, your quirky possessions, your taste in media, your book taste or your general object obsession, what are you? Is a large part of what you do, say and revolve around primarily in relation to acquiring, disavowing or generally interacting with objects of entertainment/vices? If the answer is yes, fear not. There are most definitely aspects of yourself which are *not* to do with escapism, vices, entertainment or consumption, you've just forgot them, it's a little sad, but they can be retrieved, but that in itself can be quite a lot of work, I shall extrapolate on how one can begin this process in another post; but for now I shall tell you this, there is no more worthwhile task than the re-enchantment of one's life and the shedding of modernity's toxic baggage.

Exiting Modernity – 4 – Neo-Asceticism

If when you walk into a supermarket you don't have a deep feeling of revulsion, terror and absurdity, I have news for you, you're very much still *within* the system. In the same way there's nothing smart about *smartphones*, there's nothing super about *supermarkets*. The word itself implies that it's a market which is super; in reality of course this is a complete lie. Many of you may have been to an actual market, you get multiple options of the same product usually from people who make the product, you can learn about what it is you're going to consume, whereas in a supermarket you're basically entering a racket. If you don't buy their products, from *their* chosen selection you're shit out of luck. Eat this, or die. That might seem a tad reactionary to those who've yet to think about the way the world works for more than a second, but ask yourself, if tomorrow the supermarkets didn't have food, where would you get it from? There are two issues here, one on relating to one's reliance on industry and the other relating to one's attachment to brands and desires. I won't be extrapolating on the first issue here, the second has been expanded upon in post one, but here I shall add a little more theory and a lot more practice.

The practice I'm about to speak of will seem somewhat extreme, but once you begin it becomes cathartic and you shed the baggage of modernity quite quickly. The idea is called Neo-Asceticism. I more often than not detest the 'neo' label on almost everything it has attached itself to: Neo-Dada, Neo-Luddite etc. Usually it's a way of stating that you are something (Dadaist, Luddite) but wish to make it a new, usually because you wish to make some money or become popular. The prefix neo- should, as such, always be of suspicion. However, I must expand upon Neo-Asceticism to justify my claim here.

“Asceticism is a lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals. Ascetics may withdraw from the world for their practices or continue to be part of their society, but typically adopt a frugal lifestyle, characterised by the

renunciation of material possessions and physical pleasures, and time spent fasting while concentrating on the practice of religion or reflection upon spiritual matters.” (Wikipedia)

We've heard of these ascetics, monks living in the mountains surviving off donations of food and meditating for days on end. That isn't what I'm getting here. See, if one is to read that Wikipedia article you notice that the large majority of Asceticism took place prior to the 18th century, in a world where sensual and material pleasures had not reached anywhere near the normalcy they have within our current society. Ascetics it seems were commonplace in ancient times, it was understood that there were those who took it upon themselves to exit as thoroughly as possible. What is of importance here is what they were exiting *from*. Historically ascetics were not leaving anything close to the absolute hell-scape we inhabit now (there are exceptions of course, Gandhi, for instance). They were reacting to a life that most people nowadays would consider pretty bare-bones, so the Ascetic's task was of course spiritual.

So where the Neo- of Neo-Asceticism takes its stand is in the combination of Asceticism and contemporary modes of normalcy. Neo-Ascetics understand that to want less within current times is to covertly state that one wishes to exit the system. For the religion of the system's entire is Progress, all believe that Progress is good and more Progress is good, and so to state, as the Neo-Ascetic does, that one should question their desires, want for less, consume less and perform a daily critique of production and consumption is to question the great God Progress. In this manner Neo-Ascetics understand the arrow of techno-cultural progression is forever aimed towards more and more progress, and so the Neo-Ascetics task is not an active one in the traditional sense, but an action brought about by contrarian passivity. We cannot physically exit the system – individually – by following the arrow of Progress, nor can we exit by performing some archaic notion of revolution, nostalgically looking back towards some primitive time. What the Neo-Ascetic does is become mindful, especially in relation to habits of desire.

The Neo-Ascetic understands the predicament they are in and does not allow themselves to become frustrated at their situation, but merely stares

into the heart of need and sweats off its false desires like a short lived fever. When the Neo-Ascetic walks into a supermarket they do not treat it as the average Joe does, as a form of therapy, a communal ground of interest and intrigue, a place that one *wants* to be in, no. The Neo-Ascetic perceives the supermarket (and all mass shopping) for what it is, one's inability to be bored and alone converted into purchase. Needs are not bought out of boredom, desires are. The Neo-Ascetic prepares for the casino-esque mental barrage emanated by the supermarket and stares internally, not allowing themselves to succumb to the pull of – seemingly – random urges.

You may believe that the pursuit of the Neo-Ascetic is overblown, that I am silly for making a simply shopping trip seem like a spiritual hurdle. Well more fool you for disallowing enchantment into your life. Everything is related to one's path in life, and how you deal with the most simple dilemmas is how you shall deal with the big ones; how you do one thing is how you do *all* things. As such it is the task of the Neo-Ascetic to be both aware of his habits with regard to consumption, but to also be mindful of the ways in which he is pulled to and fro by the dynamics of consumption itself. To ask oneself *why* they thought for a second they needed that X, Y or Z.

The Neo-Ascetic doesn't have to go to *great* lengths to become sturdy in their frame. They needn't walk off into the woods or mountains and eat bugs for the rest of their life, however, there are thoughts, patterns and habits they need to become aware of. Quite frankly, *all* purchases are up for scrutiny, from buying vegetables to buying petrol. Buying vegetables one might think of where they came from, why *do* they buy those particular ones, how much they cost and *why* they want them...*who* told them they needed them? Buying petrol one might think of *why* you need to constantly buy it and whether or not that purchase has become a matter of assumption as opposed to what one actually wants. Once the Neo-Ascetic begins to perform this mindfulness a few times it will become quite easy, even fun. You'll find quite quickly that much of what you own and buy is *additional*.

The distinction between the Ascetic and the Neo-Ascetic begs further emphasis. The Ascetic adopts an extremely frugal lifestyle as to avoid the distractions of the material as a means for spiritual enlightenment. Whereas

the Neo-Ascetic adopts an extremely critical attitude towards material as a means to shed the distractions of modernity itself, the Neo-Ascetic doesn't wish for spiritual enlightenment – in their role as a Neo-Ascetic – but wishes only to use frugality and critique as a means to return to a self which modernity hasn't tampered with.

It used to be that to deny TV, junk food, mass-medication, drugs, alcohol and the libertine-lifestyle was merely to state that one was not interested in that which the modern had to offer, the quick, the easy, the thoughtless pursuits marketed to empty minds. And maybe this is now simply a matter of repetition, but to deny these comforts is not seen as denying the extra, but it is seen as denying the norm, the standard, the default. If one is to not have a TV, if one sleeps on the floor, wears the same clothes, eats simple meals, does not drink or do drugs, then that person is seen as an outsider. Such a fate is inevitable, and if you don't wish to become somewhat fringe, then this path isn't for you – but you wouldn't be *here* if you didn't already doubt all this. Who is your master, comfort and normalcy, or your own will?

Exiting Modernity – 5 – Defeatist: If You Have to Eat Shit, Best Not to Nibble

I noted previously – though not *as* clearly – that such phrases as ‘the system’ or ‘the man’ are unhelpful. As fun as it is to “Stick it to the man!” we know that in reality it’s an act of transparent narcissism. This will of course offend those who have made it their life’s work to ‘stick it to the man’, but the very fact there are a multitude of *groups* (not just individuals) who have spent quite literally every waking hour protesting, acting-up and generally causing a nuisance for the system, shows that their brand/type of activity is not a problem for the system, it doesn’t even cause the system to shrug, as it blows them away like pesky midges, subsuming their mode of rebellion into its own narrative.

There are those who will say that I am being defeatist, more than likely those who have let themselves become swept up in a shriek of the herd, stood there wearing leather jackets and Doc Martins, calling me a sell-out. Let me explain. It is quite evident that protesting does nothing. The only thing it does is make others annoyed at your cause. You’re in their way, they certainly dislike their job, but they dislike being annoyed on the way to it even more – their job isn’t optional, your incessant virtue-signaling is. What does work is not preaching, but teaching. (Unfortunately we lack many good teachers).

Anyway, regarding the label of ‘defeatist’:

“If you have to eat shit, best not to nibble. Bite, chew, swallow, repeat. It goes quicker.”

I am not telling you to eat the system’s shit *willingly*, only that the quicker you eat its shit now, the less you’ll have to eat later, and potentially you’ll get into a situation where you no longer have to eat any shit at all. Enough of these coprophilic metaphors. The point is, unless you truly wish to become a homeless vagabond (absolutely nothing wrong with that,

seriously.) you *are* going to have compromise, and no amount of idealist pamphleteering is going to change the situation at *present*.

One of the primary traits of the system is that it is a positive feedback loop where almost anything is concerned. In fact, I'd even argue that it is a multiplicity of separate positive-feedback loops. What I mean by this is that if X is working *for* the system, the system tends (almost always does) to amplify X until it no longer can, the feedback is wherein the system almost amplifies the compounded X – think, cumulative interest. How does this apply to reality, or your everyday life, let's have a look-

Remember that band you liked as a kid? Let's say for the sake of this piece the band was called *Hellthread Deluxe*, or HD for short. HD were sort of folk-metal, singing about high school nostalgia, rebellion against the system by way of destruction and cooking recipes involving peaches. All of a sudden HD got really big, this annoyed you because you based your entire identity around HD and now your interests seem vacant to you, anyway. The system – or parts *of* the system – notice how popular HD is becoming and unconsciously attach the feedback process to the commodity-entity that is HD. It begins to get infected.

All of a sudden there are HD cookbooks everywhere. All of a sudden there are folk-metal bands everywhere, but of course, these were two of the physical things HD promoted, surely they can't capture the feeling of HD and sell it? All of a sudden there are TV stars, radio hosts and popular names that are becoming more and more rebellious and destructive; the world flips and that authentic feeling you once got from HD records fades into a miserable, obnoxious static. "*They don't **get it** though, not like I do!*" you say to yourself. You'd be correct in this judgment, but you can't complain without seeming like a gate-keeper.

A few years pass and HD shirts are so commonplace that you've all but erased them from memory. You begin to latch onto obscurer interests in a hope that a certain amount of artistic and creative ambiguity will keep those interests safe from the grasp of the system, but it never works. If the system can, it will.

We're seeing this most recently with the rebirth of the 'Simple Living' movement, which in the late 80's and 90's was called 'Voluntary Simplicity'. It's a movement I'm fairly fond of, but much like our folky friends HD, it's going through the system as we speak. But succinctly, Simple Living is...living simply. Not minimalism or asceticism, a medium between the two both emotionally and physically, an understanding that we can have comfort *and* also avoid many of the pitfalls of consumption. Of course the system sees that Simple Living has the potential to cause disruption to its way of being – economic/profit disruption – and sets to work subsuming Simple Living into its framework. “Get ya simple living books! You think you're living simply *now*, wait until you purchase our simple living kit, just £399 today!” The system finds *some* way to tell you and make you believe that you're not 'doing' simple living correctly, or as the other simple live-rs are. It preys on your anxiety in relation to status and popularity, not only does it think you're missing out on something, but it makes you believe you're missing out on something it just told you the existence of!

“Have you heard of X?”

“No I have n-”

“Oh my God! Everyone has X, how come you don't have X!”

Ted Kaczynski's *The System's Neatest Trick* explains this process more succinctly than I ever could:

1. *For the sake of its own efficiency and security, the System needs to bring about deep and radical social changes to match the changed conditions resulting from technological progress.*
2. *The frustration of life under the circumstances imposed by the System leads to rebellious impulses.*
3. *Rebellious impulses are co-opted by the System in the service of the social changes it requires; activists “rebel” against the old and outmoded values that are no longer of use to the System and in favor of the new values that the System needs us to accept.*

4. *In this way rebellious impulses, which otherwise might have been dangerous to the System, are given an outlet that is not only harmless to the System, but useful to it.*
5. *Much of the public resentment resulting from the imposition of social changes is drawn away from the System and its institutions and is directed instead at the radicals who spearhead the social changes.*

Back to the beginning of this piece, for those who would call me defeatist in my acceptance of eating the system's shit, do you see now that no amount of hand-waving and alternative living can meet with the great cybernetic God that is 'the system'. So for those of you who call others sell-outs, or who belittle others who have utilized the system to promote their work, I say you are blind and just as guilty. And yet there is little to be guilty about. Unless one is gratuitously reliant on the system for their identity and survival, then one cannot be blamed for dipping their toes in the system's murky water. Utilizing the system is simply a material act, and the point of this series is to cultivate a *mindset* away from material, towards thought about the acts themselves. What are outside of the system is your thoughts, and one's own ingenuity can emancipate them emotionally from a lot of unnecessary toil. To paraphrase John Michael Greer, why would I waste my finite energy on worrying about that which I cannot change (the system), when I *could* be using it on that which I 100% *can* change...*myself!*

Exiting the system in an instant is *extremely* dangerous. And guess what, the system doesn't care if you do or don't. It doesn't think about *you*, it only notices your productive and consumptive inputs and outputs, so why not *use* the system to as much of your own advantage as possible? As long as it doesn't cause another's life to become miserable, I say drain the system of its energy, it would do – and does – the same to you in a machinic-heartbeat. And so, don't drop-out in any romantic fashion, often ruining your life in the process, but plan, wait and find ways to work within the system until you find a chance of exit. In the meantime, cultivate a mindset which the system loathes, one which this system cannot fathom, a mindset which enchants the world!

The system takes you – often quite literally – as a number. This is something you will have to put up with, but as such, you are also *someone* the system will have to put up with. I am most definitely not stating *any* form of activism here, that word is cursed. Nor am I for rebellion, protesting, marches, vandalism or manifesto-making – if you’re doing these after 15 you need to grow up and actually *do* something, not just act as if you are. So what can you do then? Well, back to being a number. Everything in the system is ordered, numerical or quantifiable. A loaf of bread = X, there’s 3 Y in Z, a car does X amount of miles, this straight road is X miles long etc. The system thrives on that which it can control in some quantifiable way. This is exactly why it hates humans so much, they’re free and spontaneous, and it’s very difficult to control something which is unpredictable. I call this form of spontaneity or freedom, ‘enchantment’. What the system wishes to do is to dis-enchant your world, to make you dis-believe all the quirky things you used to, make you believe it’s *way* of doing things is in fact *the only way*. Of course it isn’t.

Practice: You are allowed to do as you please. Even the most subtle act of rebellion can cause ruptures. There are acts which seem as if they wouldn’t change a thing, but in their subtlety they teach people that they can in fact... just *do that* if they want to. What am I talking of here? Well, as a semi-eccentric theorist (Read-by-normies: Nutjob, oddball, weirdo) I’m fairly used to trying our peculiar things – usually body experiments relating to diet and breathing. Ever have someone walk in on you meditating in your undies, it certainly shows them that there are indeed people who do these things, ever had someone question why you drink honey and boiling water at night (I like it), same goes for any kind of strange tea or beverage, food or pastime. Your practice to sincerely admit to someone something you do that you consider peculiar. Enjoy reading Norse Mythology, let ’em know. Enjoy watching those 14 hour train journey videos, explain to your colleagues why. You believe in fairies...for real, let ’em know. The point of this exercise is to instill in you the idea that:

1. *You’re in control.*
2. You can just *do* stuff, if you want to.
3. To teach others that the world isn’t as stagnant as it seems.

4. To help others break out from the thick layer of repressive gunk covering their brains and lives.

There's *always* something to be said for holding your corner. Even if no one listening agreed, even if they all thought you were odd, it was worth it. You found that they're either not the people for you or aren't confident enough to come out of their shell. You also might have found a quiet supporter who didn't want to speak up, but felt happier that you did. There is a lot to be said for admitting your supposedly weird outlooks publicly, if not only because it might have made it clear to someone listening that they are not alone, even though, with all their heart, they believed they were.

Exiting Modernity – 6 – No Personal Gods, No Personal Masters

The education system played the cruellest trick on you and you never even noticed it. The trick was in the way in which the education system treated authority. If you're to think back to your schooldays – I am once again speaking primarily of the West – you can probably remember a lot of adults on power trips, bureaucratic systems which seemed nonsensical to you and rules which, clear as day, were there only to assert that there are those who will tell you what to do...just because they *can*. At the time school's authoritarian system seemed so cruel, demeaning and frustrating, not only because it was, but because they wanted it to seem this way. Only a Beano-esque caricature of authority such as that found within the Western education system could possibly make life after school *seem* free...

Which is the exact reason they needed to test you, to push you to the absolute limits of capture. If you're to think back now, notice how utterly absurd it is that one had to *ask* to go to the toilet, to ask if it was ok to perform a natural human function! If you're school was anything like mine the majority of pupils went along with this, they understood it was *how things are* and so thought nothing of it. Now, to the point. If we're to take this absolute culmination of minute control techniques and place them in relation to the reality of life after education, it suddenly makes that life seem very free. No longer do you have to ask to do, well, anything really. You can buy what you want, own what you want and – within limits – do what you want. The problem of course is that this newfound 'freedom' understood in relation to your previous prison-esque existence makes even the most mundane tasks seem like a dream (to some).

It always amazed me that post-education I found that a large majority of my acquaintances genuinely enjoyed tasks such as insurance, traffic, post-office trips, taxes etc. Nothing makes modern Western man feel freer than chatting about the chains he shares with others. It makes them feel very adult if they mention these things, and to feel like an adult makes them feel free. Except,

this entire notion of ‘adult’ was created in relation to both the education system’s desires for you and its means of authority. Or in short; I bet you can’t wait to leave here and be an adult. And that’s how they get you. Usually the education has left enough frustration in one’s system that this illusion of freedom doesn’t wear off for an entire lifetime, and so people find themselves assimilated into more complex constrictions and believe them to be freeing. Often the more complex they are, the freer they feel. I mean, think of the lengths of time, patience and mental-fatigue people go to with regard to sorting out even the most minor of status or monetary benefits. “I spent just 3 hours today and managed to get £100 off my car insurance!” Humanity, a cosmic emetic!

“When you invent the ship, you also invent the shipwreck; when you invent the plane you also invent the plane crash; and when you invent electricity, you invent electrocution... every technology carries its own negativity, which is invented at the same time as technical progress. ” (Paul Virilio, Politics of the Very Worst)

Virilio should have extended his metaphor – as beautiful as it is – to freedom, as Dmitry Orlov has:

“The freedom to be car-free is not generally regarded as important, while the freedoms bestowed by car ownership are rather questionable. It is the freedom to make car payments, pay for repairs, insurance, parking, towing and gasoline. It is the freedom to pay tolls, traffic tickets, title fees and excise taxes. It is the freedom to spend countless hours stuck in traffic jams and to suffer injuries in car accidents. It is the freedom to bring up neurologically damaged children by subjecting them to unsafe carbon monoxide levels (you are encouraged to have a co detector in your house, but not in your car—because it would be going off all the time). It is the freedom to suffer indignities when pulled over by police, especially if you’ve been drinking. In terms of a harm/benefit analysis, private car ownership makes no sense at all.” (You are not in control)

I don’t want to focus this solely on technology as both Virilio and Orlov have, though understandably they both hold freedom in high regard. I wish to extend this idea back into what I was previously talking about, that is, other’s ideas of freedom as imposed upon your psyche. Both Virilio and

Orlov's quotes make it clear that one's idea of freedom is eschewed, largely by our fixation on the material. The same idea of freedom applies of course to all further materials, take just a moment to think of the freedoms that come with the material you hold so dear to your heart: Property, communication devices, PCs etc. But this also applies to habits-of-freedom. Once again I return to the juxtaposition between the archetypal authorities of the school vs. our cathartic release from that hellhole. If we take just one single habit we all currently abide by out its regular context, we can begin to see the damage that has been done to us by adjusting to these ideas. Let's take a shopping trip.

One might argue that we *have to eat*. And I would agree, we *have to eat*, it's a biological fact. I'm not arguing that the system doesn't make it difficult for one to *not* shop at supermarkets, nor am I saying that it doesn't occlude that there are actually other options. Much in the same way that the System's Neatest Trick assimilates all rebellious behaviour into its own loop, so too does the system assimilate all alternative modes of existence into its breath of control. Think of the butchers, bakers and...candlestick makers in relation to a contemporary supermarket, they all seem nostalgically quaint don't they? Almost like a non-serious way of doing things. They're still accepted somewhat of course, largely because there's been a huge push in recent years for artisanal, organic and free-range stuff etc. Let's take it one step further, let's say you go to a friend's house for dinner and they state you just need to go hunt the rabbit and pick the mushrooms before you can get started. What would you think? You most likely would think this absurd, but it was not long ago that such a reality was commonplace, only since the 60-70's has the idea of non-corporation reliance seemed crazy.

Back to freedom. When you engage in the freedom of shopping, the ur-freedom of Western society, what is it that you're exactly engaging in? You're free to walk down countless aisles of useless products and be pulled to and fro by subconscious advertising that wishes to harm you (junk food), you're free to walk under mass fluorescent lighting as opposed to walking outside, you're free to engage in mind-numbing conversation with those who only speak to you out of monetary obligation, you're free to engage in

the desires of others being imposed upon your will. Quite frankly, you're free to engage in a battle which you walked into of your own accord.

This piece isn't about finding an alternative to this, – I would push growing veg, attending local markets and foraging, by the way – this piece is about freedom, and our idea of freedom. Now, people don't only see that shopping trip as a part of their free life, they often see it as an expression of freedom in itself. “Well I actually buy Brand X detergent...” The earliest years of life were – if you're like the average person in Western society – spent within familial and state authority structures, your brain was sculpted to understand that outside such structures was freedom; if only I could leave school, if I could leave home, if only I could get a car...*then* I'd be free. The trifecta of stereotypical Western freedom: A job, a house and a car, the 3 basic forms of temporal and monetary debt.

To the title, *No Personal Gods, No Personal Masters*. Once again, this is a way of saying *you're* in control. The one thing that you are 100% in control of is yourself. What then are these habits and ideas of freedom, for as has been quite thoroughly stated up until now, *you* need to take responsibility. So to understand that the ‘freedom of shopping’ is another's desire forced into your will is one thing, but then to *blame* that ‘other’ for you taking action on it is another. You can understand who's to blame, just don't blame them, because you're just as silly for willingly walking into the trap.

This form of pseudo-freedom has become a personal Master. You bow to it as you would a schoolmaster who was telling you off. You get angry at the traffic but never *seriously* consider getting rid of your car or finding a closer job. The supermarket frustrates you but you never *seriously* consider learning to grow vegetables, attending farmer's markets or sourcing the products from local suppliers. You hate your job and the cycle it feeds, but you *never seriously consider* there is an alternative because you know full well you'd never do anything about it, you are scared. But what you're scared of is falling outside of a notion of freedom that was never your own to begin with. There's a little fascist inside all of us and we fucking love them, why? Everything is easier when you're told what to do. Why do you think people work so willingly? They have no clue what else to do,

instructions and obedience are illusions of sense and reason, and they only make sense within a constricted system.

It is easy to yell from the rooftops “No Gods, No Masters!”, because once again, that is an action of externalization; it is removal of responsibility and thought. It is placing the direction of one’s own life into the hands of an abstraction. You worship these sculpted abstractions as if they were real, and perform emotional feats with regard to these beliefs; you feel helpless, depressed and anxious about the future, all because you have subconsciously constructed your life around these illusions of grandiosity.

It is *very easy* to rebel against a God or Master, for their presence shall strike you down; but to rebel against the personal Gods and Masters of our own tortured psyche is another battle all together, their presence cannot appear for it to be struck down, for *you* always find a reason for it to remain strong and vigilant, you power the illusion that is ruining your life!

What you’re doing when you abide by these illusions of freedom is putting the responsibility for your own life in someone else’s hands. There is no such thing as a shop with ‘good choice’ or ‘good selection’, those ‘choices’ were already chosen for you, the real choice is to *think* about what choices you actually have, and whether or not you become subservient just because of the convenience. Who taught you that *servicing* someone was *what one does*, was it the idea/person you serve by any chance? Who told you that X was good, beneficial and positive, was it X by any chance?

You introspect on the truths of contemporary freedom and fall into despair, where’s the alternative, where is the other you cry. Remove the binary, the idea that there is some land of hope waiting for you; the idea that there is state of freedom fit just for you that is *external* to you is false. The *only* freedom is the one you create after burning all mental haunts to the ground and rebuilding. Use not the foundations of an archaic mass or state; use not the building material of a thousand lonely ideologies, use not the habits, customs and traditions of those who conspire against you. State loudly and often, even to those who do not presume they’re in such a position ‘I do not respect your authority, your status has no merit within my domain.’ The supermarket walls begin to melt, roads begin to appear as shackles, and houses offer little protection only suffocation, schools become prisons and

the work becomes a matter of shifting abstractions. Alter your perception of freedom in such a manner that it does the word justice. *We* are free is a paradox. *I* am free, when proclaimed loudly, sounds like a cry for help. Internally, quietly, knowing that your choices are your own, and that you're working towards a greater state of being which has been wholly devised in moments of solitude and reflection, without tampering from the world, within such a state is found the seed of freedom, let it blossom and do what you absolutely must, before it's too late.

Too late isn't an age or time; too late is when fatigue leads to submission and you forget yourself completely, a potential human dissolved into nothingness.

Exiting Modernity – 7 – Are You Not Entertained?

Most, if not all of the ‘targets’ in this series have been quite easy, the ones which time and time again come across as clichés when written or spoken about, and I’d like to think that I have tackled them in such a way that I’ve removed some of the detritus added to them by motivational group-think. With this said, I’m going to target one of the most cliché targets of all modernity, TV, or, in its overarching context, *entertainment*. The fact this begs a whole post to cover should show how it’s affecting your life more than you think. In the previous posts I have made it clear I am rather passionately averse to contemporary entertainment, and I’d like to utilize this post to clear up many misconceptions regarding entertainment, and how one can form a healthier relationship with it – if such a relationship is possible.

Let’s begin at the micro and move out to the macro. Once again the average Joe spends his day working a job he dislikes, commuting, eating junk etc., basically he spends his day being controlled. But at the same time he bows down to a more covert form of control, one under the guise of ‘entertainment’ and ‘happiness’. Now, the term entertainment is in *direct* correlation with TV, video games and smart phones, it is primarily what they’re built for. Even texting and phone calls are entertainment to a certain degree, I mean people are using their phones to natter and gossip *far more* than they’re using them to communicate actual data – ‘we’ll meet at the I at 12’ etc. – in this sense smart phones, even at their most basic, are a form of entertainment.

Entertainment: the action of providing or being provided with amusement or enjoyment.

So between ol’ average Joe’s hours of work, biological needs and commuting, his other primary focus is being entertained. Upon waking he turns on the radio or scrolls through his phone, or eats his breakfast whilst watching TV. On his commute he listens to the radio or music on his phone.

At work the radio is on and he routinely checks his phone[1] and on and on. Basically, Joe has the *need/desire* to be entertained as much as he can be, there's never a moment when he is truly alone with his thoughts. As soon as he sits down with nothing to do he whips out his phone and starts scrolling. Now, most people quickly get on the defensive here – “Well, what's wrong with that!?” Largely I think this is just projection of their insecurities, most people know they're wasting their finite time (the *only* thing you can't buy) and get angry at those who point this out. But for sake of argument, let's find some reasons why it actually is a bad thing to do.

I don't often enjoy nor find much use in excessive deconstruction, but the act of contemporary entertainment begs such a process to drag it to court. Because that's what most people forget when they're watching TV or scrolling through their phone, it is an *act*, they are performing an *action*, however banal and mind-numbing it may be. Any action performed consistently eventually becomes a habit, at least in a certain sense, whether you like it or not. And at its root the action you are performing when one is engrossed within contemporary entertainment is *apathy*. That's right, man has found a way to not only *be* actively apathetic, but also has found a way to cultivate this behavior in such a way that it has become a virtue – “Bro, I spent *all* weekend watching Netflix!” Let's take this apart, let's have a look at how man decides to spend the life he has been given-

There is a man or woman, slumped on a sofa. Their body in a strange unnatural position, all folded up and round, no point taking any more weight than any other, they're a big pile of goo. They will remain here, just sat, in the same 4ft by 4ft space for hours on end – the world is *way* bigger than this by the way – they'll move their arm, maybe reposition, but that's about it for using their body. As for their mind, it is quite literally working at its lowest setting. Unlike reading, learning, meditating, practicing or concentrating, contemporary acts of entertainment require *nothing* from the viewer, apart from one thing, that they stare in a certain direction. They are mediums of apathy. One could, if they so wished, be numbed all over, except for their eyes, and they would still be undertaking the act of being 'entertained', that is how pathetic this act is. I have nothing against what is *on* the TV, nor anything against visual media, however, what I am against is media which is a means to an end. People no longer like TV shows or

specific films, they like Netflix, or watching-TV as a whole. They're favorite pastimes are being apathetic to all that they *can* be. It is once again a question of whether or not you *ever* desired this in the first place, or has someone else decided this is the normal desire to have?

Not only do TV/media/smart-phones emanate as a false-desire, they also project further false-desires into your brain. Another name for these forms of entertainment is *aspiration* – ‘You should be X, you should be doing Y, you should own Z’. Often a critique of TV is that it sells you the life you could be living, that you are watching the life you want instead of actually working towards it. I am somewhat sympathetic to this view, but at the same time very cautious of it. Why am I allowing the TV to tell me what I desire? Prior to switching the infernal thing on I never knew nor cared about X, Y and Z and now I have been quickly programmed to care, but I do not, not actually. What TV wants you to aspire to be is someone who desires to watch more TV.

Let's move to the macro, the main focus of this piece. We've seen what entertainment does on a micro level – it turns someone into a pathetic waste of potential, if this is what you wish, fine, just stay away from me. But what of entertainment in itself, as an idea? Since when did entertainment become *the* thing we directed ourselves towards after all survival, work and responsibilities were taken care of. “Ah, everything I *need* to do is done; time to no longer take any other aspect of my life seriously!”

And this is where the greatest lies ever sold (by modernity) come to the fore: Happiness and entertainment. Those are complete and utter lies. I put them here together because of their importance in relation to one another. See, entertainment can also be taken as hedonism or enjoyment, and has become synonymous with happiness. When someone talks of being happy these days, more often than not we assume that person enjoyed many material pursuits and pleasures, they were entertained and so they were happy, they went clubbing and so they were happy, they ate pizza and watched Netflix and so they were happy etc. We often hear people state with conviction that what they wish for themselves and their children is happiness, but they have spent little time working out what happiness actually *is*. Because if one never thinks on whether or not they're *actually*

happy, then they will be quite content to merely be entertained forever. As soon as you question whether or not that 10 hour TV and junk food marathon actually made you happy, you soon come to realize that absolutely *isn't* what happiness is. And of course, this is what you're sold. Because happiness-as-entertainment is easy to sell: Holidays, new cars, big TVs, video games, junk food etc. all make one happy, but *only* if one's definition of happiness is the *same* as those selling you it. Don't allow others to redefine *your* emotions. You are not entertained just because they *say* that what you're taking part in is entertainment, and as such, you have not found happiness just because they say you are undertaking that which supposedly makes *you* happy.

I know what you're all thinking, "Well, what the hell *is* happiness then if you believe you have all the answers!" Now, I never said I had *any* answers; you should search for those yourself for fear of falling into someone *else's* answer. With that said I do believe, to paraphrase David Foster Wallace, that to interject a question without attending to the answer is a tyranny, and as such I will attempt to extrapolate as to what happiness *is* and how it can be found from within modernity.

When one thinks *back* to the moments in which they were happy, they actually realize quite a bleak truth about happiness without realizing it. That is, happiness only exists in retrospect. I theorize this is why so many people find *comfort* in those long TV binge-watching sessions, it reminds them of a time in their childhood when they escaped for hours into a fantasy world on the TV etc. Anyway, the idea that one can just *be* happy, right now, this instant, is a complete miscommunication of what happiness is. Happiness is always in relation to suffering, discomfort, effort or overcoming. Those 4 terms can take very odd and unlikely manifestations in real life, but if you think about the times you were most happy, in the sense of contentment, fulfillment and a serious happiness of sincerely earned merit, you realize that *prior* to the happiness a certain amount of suffering took place, more than likely an amount in relation to the happiness you felt.

You earn your first belt in karate, months of work pays off and you feel happy that it's all come together. You spend extra time preparing a delicious meal for someone you love. You spend 3 years studying hard for a degree.

You take the time to get your thoughts down on paper because you believe they'll help people in the same predicament. You spend years watching your child grow and learn with the help of your efforts. Each and every one of these examples expected the person to take the *rest* of their life, outside of work and eating, seriously. They had *expectations*. They were expected to make a sacrifice and suffer, but not in some torturous sense, but in the sense of testing themselves to see just how far they can go whilst they're here on this planet. All of these examples are in strict opposition to *apathy*. The habit cultivated by desiring to be entertained 24/7; if you're being entertained you're not pushing yourself, not truly looking into your full potential.

Here's something for you dear reader, and as much as I care about you, and am open to emails from those frustrated at modernity's tricks, I present you with this: *Were you really put on this earth to simply be comfortable?* You probably never thought about it because we're bombarded with the idea that the opposite notion is true, we take it as a given that those who are lounging around all day are having the best lives, that those in complete comfort are loving life. I am not saying that we have to all go down the mines to feel truly alive, nor am I saying that one should just work, work, work. I am simply asking you, quite sincerely, is comfort really the end of your journey? That's it is it, to just be entertained and die?

What else is there you cry! There is the rest of the world, there is suffering, triumph, overcoming, challenge, searching, frustration, breaking-through, stoicism, asceticism, love, affection, concentration, discipline and motivation, to name just a few. All of these are in some sense in battle with apathy, apathy wishes to take you over, it wishes for you to be *easy*. To sit back and let all the desires they have for you take you over.

Practice: Question why you turn to your smart-phone every time you are free to do so. Check the amount of time you use your phone and calculate how many days per year that is, ask yourself – Is this how I truly wish to spend my finite time?

[1] If you check your phone 1 hour a day that accounts for 18 *full days* (24 hours) a year. I imagine many of you check your phone for 6 hours a day, which equates to roughly a third of your year, or; if you have a smart-phone

for the rest of your life, a third of it will be spent staring at it. Is that how you wish to spend a third of your life, staring at a tiny screen?

Exiting Modernity – 8 – The Uncomfortable Truth of the Present

Why do I state over and over in this series that all I am dealing with here is repetitions? It's my rather weak way of making it clear to you that you *already* knew all of this stuff, and the reason there has been no change is because you've neglected action in favor of abstraction. I mention repetition once again because I am going to write of material once more, I know what you're thinking, 'Yes, we get it, we worship material and things, we should move away from consumerism...we get it, jeez!' That's certainly *part* of the problem regarding our reverence towards consumption, but there is actually another factor implicit in the worship of material goods, in the idea that the 'end is the only purpose of the means'.

We are told this day-in, day-out, that 'It is a means to an end', we say this about our jobs, our food, our commutes, our networks and even some of our personal relationships. Everything gets assimilated into a system of trade and barter, in this manner we think of all things in some term of material *worth*. Now, I don't wish to channel Marx here, and I am most definitely not a Marxist, nor am I even left-wing in any sense – if you haven't worked it out yet, *none* of this should/does have anything to do with politics. Of course our possessions are worth something in monetary value, our home and even our *time* is worth something. Once your time is worth something nothing is exempt from this system of trade, because it can of course be measured in the amount of time you put into it – the reason many people state that a multitude of activities are a 'waste of time' is because in relation to other activities their prospective monetary return is worse. Why walk for 2 hours in the woods – you'll get *nothing* in return – when you could study or work for two hours, which has an 'end'.

When we state that something 'Is a means to an end' then, the 'end' in question is money and value, which means we are correlating, directing and changing our lives in relation to money as opposed to experience, freedom, actual-value, contentment, fulfillment etc. Our lives become a culmination

of representational goods showing our worth – a big house, flash car etc. Of course, I've written about all this many times before, so I won't dwell on it. However, as stated, in relation to this 'end' – or teleology – there is another factor of perception which is being destroyed, if not omitted entirely, the present.

Let's return to that statement, 'A means to an end'. Let's perform another little deconstruction here. What are we really speaking of when we speak of 'a means'? The majority of time we are talking of our work, our employment or our vocation. Our job is *our* means to an end, we sell our time for money which allows us to purchase the means of our (usually another's) desire. If we are to deconstruct this means a little further then, we can conclude that a means is a *length* of time; it is in itself a journey. Whether short, long, frustrating, fulfilling or mind-numbing it is a journey in some form. Yet this journey, as something we can analyze and play around with, is cut short when we begin to think of the 'end' all the time. There's no more thorough verbal repetition found within the gallows of contemporary employment than a variation on the following: 'Can't wait to get home', 'Can't wait for the end of the day' or 'Can't wait for payday'. Amidst action, amidst work, amidst experience, modern man can only think of some form of end, an end which he has been told is what he truly desires, whether he thought of it himself or not. The destruction of the present is found within the language of those who desire only production and consumption.

Martin Heidegger stated (roughly) that our mode of temporality was one in which we are always pushing our past in front of us, and our future is dragging behind, the present is always wrestling with them both to form a direction of the will. In layman's terms, we are always thinking about what we did in the past as to control and construct the future we want. I think Heidegger overestimated the capacity of people to actually think. When one spends their entire day thinking only of a (material) end, they omit both thoughts of the past in relation to that end, and also, most importantly, thoughts of the present. They think of the items they are going to acquire in the near future without ever truly experiencing what they have in the present.

Let's focus on the first omission there, thinking of the past. See, most people, week-in, week-out, month-in, month-out, do *exactly* the same routine. This isn't unusual of course, humans are creatures of habit, we can't be doing *new* stuff *all* the time, otherwise we'd never be able to lay down some roots, with that said, without change, we do not grow...we do not overcome. Why do people not think of the past then? Well, it's kind of obvious isn't it, if people thought of the past – especially in relation to where they are now – they would come to a fairly bleak conclusion, *they don't fucking do anything*. There is another reason hidden within this though, if they were to think back to their past in relation to the present, this would mean that they would have to critique and question their consumption habits. If they thought back to the past, they would soon realize that the things they subscribed to and habitually purchased actually *added* nothing to their lives; if you are to think back and assess a few months' worth of purchases, you soon come to realize that they have added little to your life and ultimately changed nothing, you are more than likely still the same person, living within the same ideas and feeling the same way about the world, as such, to think backwards, to critique one's life, is to come to the conclusion that the large majority of our consumption is really a subconscious effort to escape the uncomfortable truth of the present. Which is what exactly?

Before I answer that question, which if you really want the answer to *right now*, all you have to do is sit in silence with your eyes closed for two minutes – got the answer yet? Anyway, back to the former second form of time we regularly omit from our lives, the present. You may be thinking to yourselves, 'Hey, that's not true, I always living in the present, I mean you *have to be*, idiot!' Sure, I get it, you have to be somewhat present in your conscious to get by in day-to-day life, but are you *really* present? Think about the way you often think to the future, the details you go into, the scenarios, the possibilities, the conversations you have in this wondrous, far off future. Think about the way, late at night, when you go over and over embarrassing situations or nostalgic memories in your head, often escaping into the minutest details for hours on end. Do you truly apply this level of conscious awareness to your present, or is your mind wandering off into the labyrinth-of-material-ends, lusting over future acquisitions?

Now, back to that uncomfortable truth I was going to expand upon. Those of you who sat in silence for two minutes will already have the answer whether you like it not. The answer is as follows, you are at a complete disconnect from yourself, you are not entirely comfortable simply *being*, you find it actively difficult to just *be*. When you sit down for a meal you put a podcast on instead of focusing on the meal, when you watch TV you are also checking your phone and snacking, when you're driving you're listening to the radio, when you are simply *sat down* you are checking your fucking phone. Stop it you incessant child! Can you not deal with *yourself*, for even for a minute? This is what happens when you focus solely on the end and not the means (the journey). You subconsciously believe that *that* podcast will be the one which satiates your desire, that 5 minute scrolling session will be your last for the day, that supplementary escape will be the final one, the one that figures it all out for you. Well the truth – as I see it – is this. All supplementary escapes, at least those which aren't actively testing your assumptions and mental fortitude, are inherently extra layers of bullshit atop your-self which you need to shake off. They are, at best, distractions from your own potential, your own thoughts and feelings. I mean hell, when was the last time you didn't rely on another's thought or feeling before forming some thought or opinion about X. Rarely do we actually create for fear of scorn from the populous, we fear we will be cast out of normalcy. But normalcy in itself is a feeble structure made from and for feeble minds, and as such, can change direction in relation to the whim of a random fad or fashion, care not for normality, care only for authenticity and the potential principled-nature of *your* self.

Many will have found frustrations with the 5th post in this series, which – roughly – states that there are ways to work within the system and still retain your-self. That post is really a post about not being an idiot. It is to say that it would be silly choice to hastily exit the system without any plans, because the system won't care that you're homeless or without help, you would simply be shooting yourself in the foot based off an abstract principle. *Exit is a process*; it takes time, so it's dangerous to use language that makes it seem otherwise. You need to take your time and plan the exit which is correct for you, and make sure you are safe the entire time. This is easy to say in abstract of course, but what about dealing with work, what

about dealing with the daily ennui of bureaucratic and modern bullshit? Well this is where living in the present comes into play.

This is not a foolproof method, at least not at first. But the way in which one deals with the daily drudgery of modern life is to actually *deal with it*. By that I mean *be present*. I made it clear earlier on that one is largely not-present in their daily life, they're most likely thinking of the near future and avoiding the present as much as possible. I'm not sure why anyone does this, because the present isn't all that bad, in fact, it can be sublime in its beauty and enchantment. You are thinking of your dinner, you are thinking of watching that next episode of a Netflix series etc. You are thinking of hedonistic escapes, rarely do you spend a moment in reality. Whether your job is within an office or building yard, you can return to the present and find moments of enchantment that make it all worth it; I must admit, this process is tough to bear at first, many will drag up stuff they don't exactly like, but that's how you progress – face the fear and horror head on, snarling.

How does one *be present* then? Well, that's a question which is both difficult and extremely easy to answer. Difficult in the sense that what is quite literally under your nose is often the most demanding thing/idea to perceive – “*There are none so blind and those who will not see.*” Whatever you are *doing*, right now, or at work, or on the way to work...*in the present*, should become the thing which begs the entirety of your attention and concentration. You may argue that I am only finding a peculiar way for you to avoid the reality of your miserable job, or the reality of your commute. I would argue that for the time being (until you switch to that better job, which you *will do*, remember) these actions are going to have to happen anyway, so why not practice a way of finding meaning and fulfillment in your life.

Practice: Even if the action is simply shifting papers around, sending emails or commuting to work, try as hard as you can to become mindful of all your actions in the present. Shifting papers around, feel the weight of them, concentrate on how *you* feel, on the peculiarity of your position here and now. Sending emails, become mindful of the words you write, are they as giving, kind and informative as they could be? You will be surprised at the

results of adding just the tiniest amount of extra courtesy to an email. Commuting to work, turn the radio off and open the window a little, become mindful of the sound of the wind, the smell of fresh air, focus on the feeling of driving and how the landscapes pass you by in a seamless wave. If your attention drifts from the present into some digression (It will be about the future, I guarantee it) then simply let the thought be and return to the present.

What's actually happening here is a practical critique of consumption. Once you're living in the present you no longer focus on consumption, because consumption is an act that happens throughout time or in the future, it does not happen all at once. Once you stop focusing on consuming things the only other options are to remain silent and neutral (pleasant in itself) or become giving and courteous, the rarity of genuine affection and generosity within modern times is upsetting at best, but when it becomes your only option for a brief period, you soon come to realize there's far more to life than the future that will never come. Act and plan in the eternal present, it will reward you greatly in time. People say life is short, but it's actually the longest thing you will ever do. If you feel as if your life is passing you by, and the days are going quicker and quicker, it is not because they objectively are, it is because you are dragging them towards you with your willing of the future into the present. Begin to live in the present and even the most seemingly mundane moments can become fulfilling memories.

Exiting Modernity – 9 – No One to Turn To

You're feeling lost, historically this feeling isn't rare. What's unique is that you feel lost within a space and system which has so many rules, constrictions and directions, it seems odd that one could get lost within such a space where the next signpost is only a mere step away. Of course this feeling is very different to the one imposed on you by others. The feeling of being lost, *they say*, is not rare for someone of your age, it's completely normal to feel lost when you're young. Except, the feeling hasn't lifted in many years, in fact, it's only got worse...more complex. You could denounce all I say as a form of angst, or bitterness, or even resentment, because this is what *you* do.

I dislike hastily shoving entire generations into groups such as Boomers, Gen Y or Gen Z, but stereotypes exist for a reason and unfortunately certain generations bow to a certain God and have passed the same belief system onto their children. They of course bow to work, consumption and an absurd form of material culture in general. Before I start here, this isn't an anti-boomer piece, that would be dull, it's actually an essay regarding infection and principle.

The consumerist culture I have expanded upon within various previous installments of this series is their God, their belief-system and their cultural center. It is the reason, they believe, that everything works and everything falls into place. And within their own circular logic they're actually entirely correct. *If* you wish for a large house, flash car etc. (you've heard it all before), then what you need to do is work long hours, get into debt, spend the rest of your life paying it off and die. And that, technically, 'works'. That is of course all held under the implication that *that* is what *you* want to *do* with *your* life. You're reading this, so I imagine you don't.

I am reluctant to outline who this 'we' is, because it's actually rather tough to pinpoint who it even is anymore. I don't think any particular group is pulling anybody else's strings in any direct sense, such forms of blaming lead only to extremist delusions. And if you've taken anything from this

series it's that *you* have all the power of your own will, and as such can remove *yourself* from those things and forces which you do not want to be within. This *we* might be your older relatives, but it might also be your friends. You remember both these groups from when you were younger in a completely different light, don't you? I know I do. One can of course state that I'm looking at my past through rose-tinted glasses, I may very well be, I don't know. But what I *do* know is that the character and personality of these people has changed. Those new and vibrant spirits from my youth, many whom were close friends, have, upon repetition of action and conversation, become repetitions in-themselves. They utter little more than extracts from the latest media they've consumed and their opinions exist between an ever-tightening window of acceptability, and as for originality, well, there's little that isn't quite simply numbing. The 'we' in a sense, is merely the force of the culture I have been critiquing and its general expectations for the entire population it comes into contact with, inclusive of you.

The problem with this form of cultural infection is that you feel like you have no one to turn to. If we're to return to the feeling of 'being lost' mentioned at the beginning, it's not the usual way one feels lost because when one normally feels lost, they understand what they walked into, and that there *is* some way out. One walks into a maze, gets lost, and does not panic, because they understand that is the nature of mazes, you just keep searching and the exit turns up eventually. The feeling of being lost I am referring to is vastly different on all counts. Not only did you not choose to walk into this maze, you don't really even know what it is, and as such, don't know what this feeling of being lost is even in relation to. A quote thrown about a lot these days is "*Homesick for a place I'm not even sure exists.*" That gets fairly close to what we're discussing here, the feeling that one's potential is haunting them from another world where they haven't had all the enchantment drained from them.

As stated, the fact you feel as if you have *no one to turn to* doesn't help at all in this matter. What I mean by this is that for those actively looking for an exit, and are not just complacent in their situation, will find, at every turn, those whose perspective and outlook is so utterly absurd that one can't help but feel entirely alone. Wittgenstein said if a lion could talk we

wouldn't be able to understand him, the frame of reference would be so different that it just wouldn't make sense to us. I don't think we even need to look outside of our own species now to see tenable results in this theory. You can understand these people, the words and sentences coming from them make sense, but *only* when an entire form of socio-cultural logic is taken for granted. Prior to understanding the average Joe and all his desires, worries and opinions one must take for granted that *this is how life is*, all alternatives are not alternatives, but mistakes in relation to the great perfection that is contemporary Western consumer culture, for the average Joe, *this* is where we were meant to end up, wasting our precious energy and time on acquiring trinkets and status.

They want X, that doesn't really make any sense to you, but sure, they're not hurting anyone so you go along with it. You grow older and *everyone* wants X. If you *don't* have X then you are seen as weird, odd and an outcast. But not only this, if you do not accept, enjoy and actively participate in the culture and system that makes X possible, then you too are weird and an outcast. You have to hide in the shadows, learning quickly to feign enthusiasm over the most mundane things. All of a sudden you feel alone in a room full of people and have nowhere to turn to. See, all the public spaces are full to the brim of their culture, all the quiet places are slowly being destroyed and infected and the only remaining places are deemed weird. Your choices are repressive and totalitarian; normality or ostracism.

Much along the same lines of a statement earlier in the series, '*Why prolong a life you're not enjoying?*' I ask you, '*Why involve yourself with that which does not interest you?*' You might think you don't, but how many things do you do, week-in, week-out, which you do purely out of a sense of normality and habit, things you do not to fit in, but to *feel like* you fit in? I imagine there's many. The reason, then, that you feel lost and alone is not because you are, but because you are trying to exist and find yourself in a place/logic which cannot willingly incorporate you into it. You are not lost, you have simply yet to find or understand the correct maze. It is as if you are being tested on how to be better at X, when your entire will is directed towards understanding Y. Not only does this culture make you unhappy, it quite literally makes no sense to you.

There are many who simply do not *understand* ascetics, stoics, minimalists, simple-living, nomads, wanderers etc., and the problem however is that these very same people act as if their lack of understanding is not due to ignorance on their part, but due to a malfunction regarding that which they don't understand. That which does not conform to Western culture is not different, but wrong, this is what they have lead you to believe, this is why you feel lost and alone.

Practice: This practice is pithy and a little unrestrained, in fact, it's a little careless. The practice is this, who cares? I have said this many times, *you are free to do as you please*. The problem is most people don't understand this in all its grandiosity. Think of the average lottery winner, when asked what they will do with the money, the state that they shall live their current life but more extravagantly. The same applies to freedom. You can become freer, but how you then utilize that freedom is still up to you...that's what it *is* to be free. So how are you going to use your newfound freedom? By simply becoming a freer prisoner within the maze of modernity, stating that you're free because you drink, smoke and eat more, or are you going to use your freedom to head further down the exit and create as much of your own perfect life as possible?

Exiting Modernity – 10 – Anti-Requiem

It has taken me a while to figure out how to finish this series, because I believe conscious thought and meditation on the structures I have already expanded on will lead to further avenues of freedom. With that said, I felt the spirit of the situation had been left alone, and so in this finale I will simply expand on loose thoughts relating to freedom and exit in general, there can be no general conclusion to exit, only a personal one, found mentally.

I *lived* in a quaint little town in the middle of rural England. I say *lived* even though I still live here, because the town is expanding. There was a vote and all that jazz, but anyone who has lived through these happenings will know and, in retrospect, understand that expansion in-itself is a force from the Outside, and there is no single committee or person which can take responsibility, industrial and commercial expansion are the material symptoms of progress, that is, when progress is seen as *a priori* good. Anyway, back to my little town. It was a general small rural town, a few pubs, a few shops, couple of restaurants, lots of green space and a somewhat existent sense of community. Now, this all seems like some nostalgic gushing so far, but there's more to it than that, I promise.

We've all heard of small-town folk getting frustrated when the huge supermarket comes in and ruins all the local businesses, even though those small-town folk make little-to-no effort to support local business. Hey, convenience can destroy even the pithiest of principles! What I'm getting at is I understand the cliché. In fact, it's almost stupid to critique *that* form of commercialism these days. Anyone who understands the positive-feedback loop of capitalism (Accelerationism) will also understand that material-criticism or anti-capitalist praxis is *really* dumb. I'd like to think that if this series has made anything clear it is that exit and freedom are (mental) perspectives and not physical routes.

So when I write here of my frustration at the expansion of my little town, it is not because I now see more cars on the road, witness the destruction of

green spaces or hear more bullshit. No, even though these are frustrating symptoms of expansion in-itself, my frustrations are at the continuation of a mental-state which can only be described as dead. More people will move to the town, the town will expand more, there will be less green space, and what made the town nice in the first place will be destroyed and no one will understand why this has happened. And then those with the money will move somewhere else and repeat the process. *'There's nothing new under the sun.'* etc. But in this cycle of consumerist life is the problem of freedom and exit. All these people believe they're exiting something, or becoming free from something, when in reality they are still moving along the exact same line as they were before, except this time they're doing so within a 'nicer' house, or in a faster car.

Unlike other texts of this sort I am not here to profess universal love, or unconditional rights or some other (false) objective idiocy. All that I shall profess is the continual analysis of the self. In witnessing the cycle of a town go from idyllic to suburban hellhole, I have actually witnessed very little. I only noticed this in retrospect of course. There were those who years ago attached their identities to the village green and to cricket, there were those in-between who attached it to the idea of careers, and there are those who now believe they are moving into a prosperous town. The mistake all of these generations made, or are making, is that they have allowed their selves to become tethered to abstract ideals. But again, I'd like to think that *another* thing I have avoided in this series is the idea that anything I write here is *anything new*, it isn't. *All I have written is repetition, and shall be written time and time again by those who took the time to look inward.*

Here's the part where I upset you. This series never had answers, not once. The reason for this is because the only answers worth *anything* are the ones you come to on *your own* journey, by *your own* will. I cannot teach you how to 'exit' or 'be free' as much as I can teach another to be calm. My notion of calm is in relation to all that I have I read, experienced and thought on, and as such I cannot help you. You must help yourself. You must change your life.

Why this part is titled 'Anti-Requiem'? Let me indulge you.

Requiem: a Mass for the repose of the souls of the dead.

Modernity is an anti-requiem. It does not wish for repose for the dead, because it is fueled by the dead. It is fueled by that and *those* who follow their most apathetic whims and desires, those who are purely creatures of habit. The majority shall never be free. Modernity is too strong. But if you've come this far, there is probably hope. Many I knew are simply *gone*. Many reading this will state I am crass, 'edgy' or simply an arsehole for stating that others are dead, sheep or robots. If you're one of the people calling me an arsehole, then chances are you are also one of the people who are *gone*. I occasionally see childhood friends I lost contact with. They are *gone*. The conversations are nothingness interspersed with consumption and items, their actions are constrained by devices and their-selves are lost to a void of apathy and habit. I shall waste no time dragging horses to water, they *never* want to drink. Only those horses that are curious about the water in the first place shall be given help. That is you, dear reader, you are here and reading this, modernity hasn't taken you just yet.

The process of exit is mentally exhausting. Freedom is largely sacrifice.

"Freedom is a two-edged sword of which one edge is liberty and the other, responsibility. Both edges are exceedingly sharp and the weapon is not suited to casual, cowardly or treacherous hands." – Jack Parsons

Nothing New Under the Dying Sun: Great Thunberg and Repetition

We've all heard of Greta Thunberg, at least those of us who are paying even the most minor bit of attention to the news have. She's the latest environmental activist who's acquired the main-stage of the media to promote sustainability and environmentally friendly choices and ideas. Ok, great, what's new?

Before I get into the meat of this short piece I'd like to say something, there's been a strange focus on Thunberg from both the left and right which is downright cringe. Think back to your own political views at 15 and see if you don't wince. If you don't, you're either lying to yourself or have your head buried so far in the sand you've attained a level of ignorance I thought unachievable. Now, that said, it doesn't make her *ideas* void of criticism. But that doesn't mean people should prey or use her autism as some kind of sticking point or area of aggression. Besides, by the end of this you'll probably be thinking 'Eh, she'll be gone soon anyway, another young activist to be dragged out on occasion like the media's finest china.'

This leads me to my first point. Everyone seems to exist in some kind of present-tense dump, where memory and knowledge cease to exist. People are acting as if both Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion are the first of their kind, people aren't thinking back even a few years, and they're acting on emotional impulse and believing that now is forever.

Remember Earth Day?

Greenpeace?

Earth First?

The Limits to Growth?

Only One Earth?

A Sand County Almanac?

Silent Spring?

WWF?

Club of Rome?

The Green Revolution?

A Blueprint for Survival?

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society?

Rainforest Action Network?

Earth Summit?

Endangered Species Act?

UNEP, EEA, NAFTA, IPCC?

...remember Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg, because you won't very soon.

Let me explain to you why you'll forget all about Extinction Rebellion and Thunberg very soon. You don't care. "Oh my God! How dare you, I care about the Earth, I love nature, I love the environment!" No you don't. If you're like the average person in the Western world – and there's a reason averages exist – then you pretend to give a shit just to look good. I imagine you have the latest smartphone or latest electronic gadget, you drive a car miles to work every day, you purchased some clothing recently from a cheap retailer, you took a holiday in the last 6 months via airplane or did one of the tens of thousands of things one does which increases one's carbon footprint, many, if not most, of which can actually be avoided. I've written about how you can *do* this elsewhere, so I won't bother with that here, but I will briefly comment on is why you won't...

Once again, you don't care. In the same way people fake emotional distress when they see those 'Save Africa' adverts on TV, or how people spout banal platitudes regarding animals, nature and love and yet they still live in an entirely selfish manner. I've met people that genuinely care about this or that cause, and guess where they are? Where that cause is, not in some cushy office job within a Western city thinking about which material desire to fulfil next. You might state that you recycle, try not to use plastic, walk most places, buy 'green' products or donate to the National Trust, but the truth is, unless you were told to do those things by popular opinion, you never would have done them. Mainstream discussion around climate change and activism has resulted in little more than political bickering and games of one-upmanship. It just so happens that – thus far – the entire spectrum of contemporary popular 'lifestyle changes' which can 'help the environment' are convenient, easy and accessible, coincidence, I think not.

It's just more virtue signalling wrapped up in that which you can't criticize, care for the Earth.

Those who grow frustrated at my constant jabs at the average Joe will more than likely wonder what they can do. Well, I imagine they already know what they can do, but they've just found excuses for why they won't. You care about the Earth? Ok then, don't buy a new phone ever again, you know full well this one will last the rest of your life. Find a job within walking distance and live within your means. Don't buy any new clothes, the ones you have now serve a purpose, so why buy more? Visit the local markets and buy local produce and meat from sustainable farms. Use hand-me-downs and second-hand items where possible. Use the library. Ah, these things are all...awkward and not...*nice*, oh no. But what about your status, your popularity, your possessions...your identity! And there's Extinction Rebellion and all the protestors, driving to and fro from protests, producing banners, buying tents, producing merchandise, felling trees for manifestos, photographing everything with their new smartphones, uploading it onto their individual laptops and generally serving themselves. See, what these people want is the convenience and reality of techno-capitalism without the Earth-destroying industry which allows it to be. These people quite literally want to eat their cake and have it too. They want everything to change without any personal sacrifice.

You don't care about the Earth, you only wish for others to know you care for the Earth. It isn't the virtue in itself which matters, you couldn't give a shit if the rainforest burns or not, what matters is the opportunity to signal that you cared when it was still there, and that you cared when it was gone. If the rainforest burns down and no one's there for you to signal that you care to, did it burn down?

A Real LARP

There have been many *accusations* of LARPing (on Twitter) of late, and in their accusatory tone, I found an odd cultural symptom that begs investigation.

A live action role-playing game (LARP) is a form of role-playing game where the participants physically portray their characters. The players pursue goals within a fictional setting represented by the real world while interacting with each other in character. The outcome of player actions may be mediated by game rules or determined by consensus among players. Event arrangers called gamemasters decide the setting and rules to be used and facilitate play. – Wikipedia

The sphere within which I find myself, online and intellectually, is full of people who attach themselves to political movements, philosophical movements and neologisms as a way to form an identity. I don't think this is a bad thing, far from it. Someone telling me they're an 'Anarcho-Capitalist Duginite' is far more helpful than saying they are left or right wing, or God forbid, liberal or conservative – those terms are so far gone, that for all practical purposes they're meaningless. But the question of LARPing is a strange one, wrapped in fiction, fact and identity. Let's take this definition apart.

A 'role-playing game where the participants physically portray their characters'. We've all played DnD, pretended to be the buff Warrior Dwarf, or sly Elf etc. It's fun, but there's no real commitment, not in terms of one's life. Yet, people are accusing others of being LARPers with regard to their *real* beliefs. The current assault is largely on traditional Catholics (Trad Caths) and other factions of the 'traditional right' (think Evola) and on 'tradition' in general. This comes as no surprise to anyone paying attention. Now, one reason I see that people are making accusations of LARPing is that modernity inherently disallows an original or fundamental belief system to be attached to one's being or self. From the get-go modernity strips you of practically everything it can so you can be re-modeled into an

atomized lump, who now has the ability to jump from belief to belief in a contradictory malaise without any repercussions.

This brings me to the question of fact and fiction in relation to both modernity and belief. See, the problem with modernity is that anything outside of its systematic forms of atomization is seen not as different, but as a *fault*, as incorrect...a glitch. Not believing in Democracy isn't an opinion, it's just plain wrong. Wanting a King is not seen as a legitimate idea, but has been subsumed into the world of fantasy. Even Futurist ideas are being subsumed into the idea of fiction, everyone has become so complacent that this *exact* present is all they ever want, and anything else seems so odd and strange to them, that it comes across as incorrect, a fracture in the way reality *should* be.

As I see it, this is an assault on difference, it is an assault on belief, and worst of all, it's an assault on sincerity. Let's take the traditional Catholic as an example. The traditional Catholic believes in a multitude of things which are in complete opposition to modernity. No sex before marriage, subtle ascetic ideals and general sacrifice. The Trad Cath example reveals exactly what it is modernity loathes about all ideas other than itself, the individual is altered from the stereotypical cliché idea of the individual into something more sincere.

Modernity's individual is not sovereign, even though they think they are. They are a two-dimensional machine of consumption and production whose individuality is related entirely to what one consumes and what one produces. The actual sovereign individual, the one which modernity hates, is one wherein their *chosen* belief system is consciously targeted at something higher, better, greater or beyond themselves, which of course means, their feats aren't targeted solely at the improvement of their own physical comfort, which, if you're a materialist subsumed into modernity, is practically you're only outlook.

This brings me to the fictional part of LARPing, the part which allows modernity to decimate and belittle all other beliefs. See, modernity is actually pretty simple. Machinized libidinal desires are assimilated into an auto-catalytic system of assumed infinite progress unconsciously vectored towards pseudo-Utilitarianism. At least, that's what man gets. Anything that

doesn't fit into that is destroyed, deconstructed and brought back into the system or taken as a fiction. This last one is actually the most difficult to retrieve anything from. Destruction allows a rebirth, that which has been deconstructed can be reconstructed; but that which has become a fiction when it *used* to be fact, how does one retrieve that which is no longer – apparently – real? The atomized customers of modernity – its citizens – make accusations of LARPing, because that which they perceive is (to them) outside their perspective, and as such becomes a fiction.

To modern man the idea of not having rampant, thoughtless, promiscuous sex is so alien it leaves the world of sincere ideas and becomes fiction. He cannot stand that someone would adhere to such an idea *so much* that his only conclusion is that it must be fiction. These beliefs, traditions and cultures, in transforming into fiction, lose a lot of their potency. They can now be taken alongside children's ideas and silly stories. Their sincerity is removed, and any actual partaking in these ideals is now seen as an ironic gesture.

Whenever you see someone make an accusation of LARPing, all you're really seeing is someone coming into contact with a belief or ideal which is more than 50 years old, which to them is ghastly. So ghastly in fact, that they simply cannot believe it can be or *could have ever been* 'real', and as such, they assume it's fiction, and the person believing in it is LARPing.

There's a way out of this of course, it's actually quite simple. Believe your beliefs, stick to your principles and think about what it is you actually want, for yourself.

'*Are you a **real** Catholic?*' is a meaningless question, for the person asking it already doesn't understand what belief is if they have to ask such a thing, so forget about them, there's only one answer that matters, the one you know to be true.

"Are you a *real*-"

"Let me stop you there. This entire conversation is now reliant on *your* definition of real and by extension, reality. Which is more than likely synonymous with the majority of people's reality. A brazen, systematic,

calculated and hyper-rationalized materialist lie, which is the metaphorical equivalent of someone smothering their senses and praying to their TV.”

Are you a *real* Catholic? – Yes.

Are you a *real* Druid? – Yes.

Are you a *real* Occultist? – Yes.

Are you a *real* [insert anything other than mindless hedonistic consumption here]? – Yes.

Quarantined: Freedom from Limitation

In December John Michael Greer posted “*Wind is Changing!*”, in which he recounts the passage from *The Lord of the Rings* in which:

“The cavalry of the kingdom of Rohan hurry to the rescue of their allies in the city of Minas Tirith. Hostile armies block the way and all seems lost, but in the nick of time ghân-buri-ghân, chief of the tribespeople of the White Mountains, comes to their aid, showing the king of Rohan a hidden route that gets them past the enemy and into striking range of the battle that matters. All the while vast clouds of volcanic smoke have blotted out the sun. As the riders of Rohan and their guides reach the edge of the battlefield, however, something shifts:

“Ghân-Buri-Ghân squatted down and touched the earth with his brow in token of farewell. Then he got up as if to depart. But suddenly he stood looking up like some startled woodland animal snuffling a strange air. A light came in his eyes.

“‘Wind is changing!’ he cried, and with that, in a twinkling as it seemed, he and his fellows had vanished into the glooms, never to be seen by any rider of Rohan again.”

As it turned out, Ghân-Buri-Ghân was correct; the wind was changing, and with it a tide of events that was shaping the history of middle-earth turned and began to flow the other way.”

Now I’m fairly sympathetic towards Greer’s philosophy and work as you all know, and I have a fair knowledge of the Occult. I don’t think Greer had Coronavirus in mind when he realized the winds were changing, but he most definitely intuited something large. The reason I use Greer’s piece as a springboard here is because it’s very much a ‘Greerean’ future we’re heading into. Well, with a few odd anomalies and peculiarities thrown in.

Recently I spoke to Greer about Coronavirus and Collapse, we ended up treading much the same avenues we always do, but doing so juxtaposed with recent Corona news. I mentioned to Greer a cartoon I’d seen a while

back in which there's an image of two people holding farming tools, tending to their veg patch. One of them is saying "We have everything we need and we're happy with that." And below them the caption reads 'Capitalism's worst enemy.' I foresaw a few things coming from Coronavirus which seemed inevitable – at least to someone such as myself who is rightward leaning – namely, distrust of governments due to bad handling of a transparent X-risk situation, increased fragmentation within hegemonic bureaucratic structures such as the EU and a slight increase in personal sovereignty. I am however largely a pessimist, or realist, or whatever they call someone who doesn't bow to giddy normalcy these days. So I was surprised to find that people are...thinking once again.

So what happened to cause people to think? They were forced into isolation or quarantine. They were forced into a physical limitation that made itself clear in a multitude of ways, and this limitation began to strip back desire quite quickly.

"All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." – Pascal, *Pensées*

Well what if that man or woman was *forced* to sit in a room? Albeit not alone and I imagine not quietly, but for once in their entertainment and media saturated life they were forced to stop and adhere to a form of solitude. What would happen if such an event happened? And also what would happen if the clear risks of leaving said room were possible death, suffering and/or the causation of suffering to another or loved one? What would happen is what's currently happening – A strange, stripping back of modernity and Western life in which is revealed its predatory and malicious roots.

People are being knocked out of their unconscious slumber and being forced to think, an act which in itself causes a positive feedback loop of thinking, anxiety, worry and crisis the average Joe simply wasn't ready for. But given the time and freedom to do so many people seem to be realizing that they're not exactly where they want to be. A large percentage of the population have begun to realize they can do their job from home and that's a possibility which is difficult to reverse, I mean, why would you now need to come back into the office? This has a knock-on effect of making people

notice that they don't really use or even see their homes and that the 6-10 hours a day they're at work strips them of their health and energy. The limitations put on shopping, leisure, commuting and paid activities have been much like Wendy and co meeting the *real* Wizard of Oz. Those activities were just gimmicks, and much like work, simply filled the time and space that I can occupy. People are noticing that what they really miss is freedom, and what they really *want* is freedom, freedom to choose and more importantly, freedom *not* to choose.

So the winds are changing, but not necessarily in the way you might think. It's not going to be some clear-cut overnight change, much in the same way that collapse is a long process. Greer calls collapse 'the long descent' and Kunstler calls it 'the long emergency', so perhaps it would be apt to call what we're currently going through 'the long exit', or 'the long revelation', or even 'the long revolution'. In much the same way that Fascism, Communism or Democracy don't just suddenly show up one day, there isn't sudden jackboots, red flags or committees, it's a long, slow, drawn out process where little things are altered bit-by-bit, until eventually enough bits have been changed to alter the whole. That's the parasitic nature of ideology, on personal, national and global scales. In much the same vein, the way in which Coronavirus will change our lives will not come all at once.

Already we're seeing *a lot* more people than usual begin to understand that governments are just corporations, and the corporations they happened to be born within are run very badly by incompetent 'leaders' (CEOs). From this grows an understanding that perhaps complexity and unification is a bad thing and thermodynamically, sociologically and culturally unsound. We're seeing forced critiques of consumption I never thought would see the light of day, people are being made to stay home and think about what they've bought, they've been given a limit to what they can do, repair, create and build, and from that we're seeing many people realize they don't need all that much stuff.

The economy's worst nightmare is a momentary halt. Not because it will cause the economy itself to fail in its numeric and abstract existence, but because the halt allows for a chasm wherein a new cultural formation can

take place. I'm not stating this will kill or end capitalism, anyone who thinks this way simply doesn't understand capitalism; more than likely this halt will only make capitalism stronger. It will now have to find a way to commodify one's existence at home and blank space in general. But this momentary halt has stopped the cycle of cultural consumption. Sure, people can still order things on Amazon etc., but the act of doing so is now so transparently attached to boredom that many are beginning to understand the purchase won't fulfil their desires. Not only this, but the secondary factor of having/wanting to save money for security purposes at the moment is making many question why they'd purchase what they 'want' to in the first place. 'If we can get by without buying that thing now, why should we buy it at all?' A sentence which sends shivers up the spines of many a stockbroker.

I like putting my neck on the line, so I'll make a few predictions for the coming years:

- Religion – of all kinds – will make a clear comeback. People have had to deal with death and suffering firsthand again and they're scared.
- There will be a momentous push/promotion of gardening, veg growing and homesteading.
- People will begin to shun government advice more regularly. Common sense returns!
- Van-dwelling, nomadism and communes begin a new era – More folk living in alternative means.
- More people will begin to demand to work from home. Atomization reaches its peak in the next 2 years and then slowly peters out into increased socialization.
- Less people will get into debt and begin to understand what credit actually is.
- An even bigger movement of alternative and holistic health care, which is no longer deemed alternative, but simply sovereign.
- Nationalism is bolstered, but largely in relation to personal freedom, the competence of everyday living and useful traditions.
- Immigration policies are tightened under the guise of care, but ultimately the reasons are still the same ones as forever.

Identification and Normalcy

“Knowing many stories is wisdom. Knowing no stories is ignorance. Knowing only one story is death.” – Knowing Only One Story, John Michael Greer.

When I started Hermitix one the major things I wanted to achieve was to have such an eclectic array of guests that as many stories as possible were heard. I’d seen multiple left-wing podcasts, a few right-wing ones and a lot of ‘hot-take’ podcasts. These *all* bored me, why you ask? The answer is simple; they all knew only one story. Their entire world view could be filtered through a single lens. Often these lenses take odd and unexpected forms. Some people funnel their entire existence through Marxism, others Kant, but then again, some people will find the meaning of everything to be in the study of UFOs or microbiology. Sometimes it’s always chemicals, other times it’s always spirits or outside forces. The point being – as Greer states quite clearly – that viewing life this way is death. Not a literal death, but an intellectual one.

We all have that one friend who can find a way to fit whatever it is you’re talking about into their latest interest or phase, what they don’t realize however is that we live in a world of communication, production and consumption. Everything communicates, whether parasitically as an invader, as amicably as a gesture. Certain things are antagonizing others and certain things are helping others. Sometimes X will produce Y, sometimes Y will consume Z, and on and on it goes.

The problem with a single story is that it is always going to be utopian, it’s a false limitation applied over various growing and decaying structures, which unfortunately for Hegel, can’t be constrained in such a manner. Once again there are constraints, but this time, instead of constraining your general freedom, they’re constraining your freedom of common sense, they are making you believe that *everything* makes sense within a single framework. Whereas the only framework which can intuit the whole is one which is ever-changing, dynamic and fluid. So then we have this singular

representation of reality which we abide by and try to form all things to fit, such a way of thinking is purely identification.

Identification and consciousness (pure awareness) are opposites of each other, you can't identify and continue to be conscious of yourself, it's simply not possible. When you believe you desire a certain food you're identifying with something, possibly with some advert which has a hold of your will. When you identify with a character from a TV show, you're identifying with a box-of-tropes made for your consumption; someone else's idea of what it *is* you should *be*. Your experience of these singular stories isn't meant to include your consciousness of your engagement with them, they are the master and you are the slave. But it's not the story itself which acts as master, but the authority *you* allow it.

Think of identification as a form of fascination or subtle hypnosis, the more you identify with something, be it a story of personality, the more it takes you away *and* takes away from *you*. You even identify with emotions, especially negative ones. The problem with identification is that it's often apathetic, like watching TV; it doesn't actually take any effort to identify. It's just something that happens. One moment you're consciously sitting down, the next you believe in the creation of ego.

You wake up and identify with a certain kind of Western life, filled with comforts, enjoyments and entertainment. You get in your car and identify with a form of normalcy and work, believing it's the thing that good, normal people do. You identify with the need to promote excess chatter and fill the workplace with random opinions on things you didn't really pay attention to. You identify with lunch-breaks even though you're not hungry, productivity reports even though nothing of merit has been produced and most of all, you subconsciously identify with the idea that *this* is how it is, and this is how a person is formed, slowly, with no shocks.

Step back. What stories, narratives and structures are you identifying with? You wake up at a certain time because... And that life you identify with, the 2-up-2-down 5-day working week life, the one you were taught in school, did you ever step back to see how much of your identity had been formed around this thing you never had any say in? What about work, commuting, eating certain things, chatting, opinions, productivity and complacency, did

you ever stop to question whether or not ‘you’ (your ‘I’) had been built upon false building blocks, on foundations which aren’t supporting your authentic self, but simply dragging it under?

And that’s the story of the average Western person isn’t it? Identification with presupposed normalcy. 8 hours’ work, 8 hours at home, 8 hours asleep, 3 meals a day, suburban housing, 1 hour commutes, unquestioned-enjoyment, no striving. That’s the problem with identity and identification; it builds an idea of what *you* supposedly are without the actual you ever interjecting. Fortunately, it only builds externally, but these external barriers can be quite tough to break. But guess what? They can’t be broken externally, an internal flame is needed, a deep-seated desire to be prepared to suffer and undertake training and exercises, finding yourself takes discipline and work, especially in a world which means and wishes for you to become lost.

Boomers, Millenials and the Sovereign Individual

The Boomer, with their minds that seemingly crave work for its own sake, determine whether one is successful by what they own and determine whether one is authoritative and in control by the amount of awards and letters next to their name; the boomer, in short, is completely controlled by bureaucratic abstraction, the niceties which they developed to prove to themselves that they were doing ok and that everything they were doing was good, proper and correct.

Except, such things as goodness, properness and correctness aren't universal or cosmic, they're developed under the systematic control of some culture or other, whether or not those morals and etiquettes are agreeable to you isn't entirely your choice...until you really start to question your absolute base assumptions.

As to why the boomer generation are as *they are*, I simply don't know, but this essay isn't about dunking on the boomer generation, it's about questioning the notion of the 'boomer' and where it comes from. I briefly defined the boomer generation in the opening paragraph, a generation which adores control, authority and status whether they believe it or not and a generation which adores material comforts over anything else and can only understand much of the world *via* some form of materiality. They're often called out for their incessant desire to be awarded, their incapacity for empathy, their mindless consumption and their status grabbing games, and yet, if you look at these things one-by-one, you'll notice that no generation has ever really differed, has it?

Many millennials will berate the boomer generation for needing countless objects, things and trinkets as a means to fulfill their desires and their life, and yet, the millennial generation is ignorant to their own abstract-material worship. The boomer's clarity of purchase (cars, houses, handbags etc.) makes them easy targets for the label of 'mindless consumer', but at least they're only consuming a clear material end as opposed to a lengthy identity. Where the boomer consumes the object as the desire in itself, the

millennial consumes what the object represents and assimilates it into their identity. Say what you like about the boomers who proclaim ‘I drive a Porsche!’ it seems clear to me that they see it as an externality as opposed to extension of their self.

People will now be calling me out for muddling up desire, getting it all wrong. Post-structuralists and post-modernists will be up-in-arms, ‘These acts of consumption signify the desire-structure!’ Yes they do. Everyone desires and what everyone desires is relatively empty, fleeting and changing, you can’t get a hold on desire as much as you can get a hold on what the object of desire represents.

The boomer desires the status handed to them by a large corporate event, the millennial desires the status handed to them via countless likes and retweets on a post-ironic meme; the boomer desires an accountable award for each course they undertake, the millennial desires to *know* they’ve completed X amount of TV series etc. The list goes on, each has its counter...and why is that?

It’s because there’s no such thing as generations. Or at least, there’s no inherently verifiable difference between generations except on an aesthetic level, which is to say, there’s no difference of essence. In Rome there are written complaints about teenagers joy riding in their chariots, the Victorians rallied against the new classical music liked by the youth, people went crazy over the thought of a car hitting 30mph, each war has had its anti-war demonstration, each king his jester, each generation has had its ‘We’re the best generation and here’s why’ essay and each generation has had an essay just like this one, explaining why there’s no such thing as a greatest or worst generation, because generations are made up of individuals, movements, leaders, companies, events and catastrophes.

Generational thinking is for those who believe generations exist, those who believe that things can be neatly summed up into chunks and explained in comparative and binary manners, namely, the herd. Outside of the sleeping herd are individuals and individuals like to think. The notion of the sovereign individual isn’t one that’s really sympathized with anymore. Many people believe it to be a Randian notion or a pro-capitalist notion, the idea of the entrepreneurial thinker who’s out only for himself. In reality the

sovereign individual is someone who simply doesn't get caught up in the form of thinking which has one believing in generations, or catch-all isms and universals.

Being an individual is hard work, especially in a world and society that doesn't respect such an idea. There's a certain amount of scorn targeted at those who would rather go it alone and do all the work themselves, it's seen as not-sharing, as opposed to self-improvement. It's also difficult to be a sovereign individual because everywhere you turn is another torrent attempting to drag you into its binary, collective and complacent ways of thinking, the ones which wish to atomize your thought into a multitude of pithy currents which can never adhere to a whole, a collective that wishes not for you to *use yourself*, but to use *you* as its own collective-self. A thousand institutions that structurally cannot work without the formal notion of collective, group and communal action being agreed as good prior to undertaking any work.

When I hear 'boomer' or 'millennial' all I hear is laziness, ignorance and resentment. It's a form of language used by those who are content with the top layer of thought, the easy route. They don't want to try understand people, ideas or vectors of energy, nor do they want to ask why, how, who or any question at all, they are complacent with confinement. They don't want to *understand*, they want simply to *know*, and their definition knowledge consists of collective blocks being placed together neatly. Knowledge isn't something that can be owned, only worked with and *understood*. To *own* knowledge is to end thinking, is to stop the journey and accept conclusions and truth. Once you've accepted a truth, you're already latched to a one way track heading straight towards intellectual death.

What Are You Waiting For?

As a culture, in fact, as a species, we have one clear obsession which we all share, the future. We're absolutely obsessed with it, aesthetically, ideologically, politically, physically and – primarily – technologically. We can't wait to see and use the latest car or latest phone, we're enthralled with trailers for upcoming TV shows and movies, even the latest burger release warrants multiple prime-time advert slots, which is enough social proof to garner that we adore even the immediate future as opposed to any past or any present.

We like to think we're no longer utopian, that we no longer lust after any of the – seemingly – archaic visions we did way back when, we believe we've gone beyond the *World of Tomorrow* ideals, but it doesn't seem that way to me. The problem is the utopias we now subconsciously believe in are ones in which no change is enacted. There's nothing *different* about new cars or new technologies, they're simply previous technologies with aesthetic alterations. You could argue an electric car is something different, but ultimately it still runs on the same premise of an engine, fuel etc. It's still reliant on a massive disruptive system of roads and networks which are ghastly to look at and dull to partake in.

We don't want change, we just want the illusion of change. Aesthetic progression is apparently enough for us to *not* demand anything different, anything new. Except, even the aesthetic progressions of our 'future' aren't anything new, if one is to look back at films made in the 60's and 70's which predict the future we have today, you'll find that much of what is being built today is simply a creation of a past fantasy. Star Trek told us what phones and communication would be like, so that's what they turned it into. Futuristic sci-fi films gave everything round edges and curved design styles, so that's the way we've designed things. This is a shoddy example of hyperstition if there ever was one, those kitsch, lame ideas of what the past thought the future would be like, actually becoming the real future.

When you look at this from afar it becomes quite clear that we don't really want change, the onboarding process for any drastic change is far too sharp. Everything is built and constructed from pre-defined parameters we're all comfortable with. KFC have released a new burger which is a chicken burger between two donuts! It's as if the whole thing has reached its end and no longer has anything left in the burner, we have a limited amount of options and our future is simply the reiteration of different mixtures of these items. Actual innovation, difference-in-itself...genius, is thrown out in favor of complacency and acceptability.

We're focusing on the future to make sure it doesn't stray too far from the present. Buddhists and Taoists have been telling us for years to *be more present* and to be mindful of the now, I don't think they meant for us to stretch the general present as far as it will go until it breaks. In fact, this is the antithesis of 'living in the present'. If your idea of living in the now is simply attempting to stretch the now on forever, you've missed the point. The 'now', the 'present', is ever-changing, it's something you have to accept will change and alter whether you like it or not. Being mindful, being present is a way of being which is averse to ignorant ideas of control and authority. You can't tame the river, but it seems like we're trying really hard to.

Once again, the things of primary and secondary importance have switched places. We believe that regarding the future what's going on physically is of the most importance, whether or not things appear new and progress continues in the stereotypical manner, these are what seem to be important and we've relegated our mental state to the sidelines. But we need to turn back to how we *think* about the future, how we *feel* about it, how we are going to *act* towards it. But also we need to revert to a more personable and local form of thinking, the way we think is global, hegemonic and downright authoritarian.

Our thoughts regarding the future are gargantuan; we've allowed the realm of abstraction to become so commonplace that the general public has an understanding of relatively niche subjects. We talk about global and national debt, dopamine fasts, min-maxed lifestyles and diets, foreign policy, meta-levels of society and behavioral psychology to name just a few,

we're mentally tied up with a bunch of abstract assessments, arrangements and arguments regarding the future that we have no say and no real feelings about. Whereas we should be targeting our energy and our analysis to that which can directly effect: ourselves and our immediate surroundings. (There are of course the Musks, Gates and Thiels of this world, but they're rare, not everyone can be a genius or a multi-millionaire entrepreneur, that's not how things work.)

Begin to ask yourself 'Is this actually how I want *my* future to look?' Well, is it? Did you ever agree to this consensus, that *this* is how the future has to be? The general consensus is that the future has to be futuristic, and yet, the word 'futuristic' already has inherent connotations relating to technology, social arrangements and speed. When you hear 'futuristic' you think of *Neuromancer* or *Blade Runner*, you think of the information and attention economy running wild and immanentizing itself into a cyberpunk aesthetic. But is that even close to the future most people are going to get? I don't think so, I think most people's future is one of complacency and acceptance, complacent in the fact that nothing will change in its essence, and acceptant of the comfortableness of stagnancy.

Your 'futuristic', *your* future can mean whatever you want it to mean, it can feel how you want it to feel. Within the general consensus of the term 'futuristic' there's no space for leisurely strolls through the woods, day-dreaming or taking-your-time, but there can be, if you simply alter your perception. Are you simply waiting for what is going to be given to you? Are you simply waiting for whatever happens to become your future, or are you actively creating the future you want, both personally and locally?

Free Floating Power

Within semiotics there is the concept of the ‘floating signifier’ or ‘free floating signifier’. The concept designates a signifier which doesn’t have a referent, or, in simple terms, in designates a word which doesn’t point towards any clear object, structure or form. It’s a little tricky to explain *exactly* how they come across in day-to-day life, but it’s my belief that we use them more and more, both as a way to quickly explain something, but more importantly as a way to abstain from understanding and responsibility.

Postmodernism is a clear one, we’re not entirely sure what the ‘hell’ postmodernism means anymore and it seems pretty clear that no one actually wants to go read the postmodernists to find out, hell, who even *are* the postmodernists anymore. The meaning of that word, ‘postmodernism’, has such a floating meaning that it can – and has – been used to explain and describe the most drifting symptoms of culture and society. Usually used in a derogatory manner, postmodernism means everything from the death of idealism to the reason there’s TikTok, and yet, such a vision is so vast and fleeting that it deems the signifier itself almost useless. Yet, it does retain a use; it becomes a word of pure power.

We hear these floating signifiers almost daily without ever questioning them, the recent Coronavirus pandemic has been rife with them, and yet, no one pays a moment’s notice to what it is they’re agreeing or disagreeing with. An empty, floating signifier takes over their potential for authentic opinion. ‘Scientist’ or ‘science’ is the clearest one being thrown around at the moment. “The scientists have said X” or “The scientists have agreed upon Y.” We hear these sentences almost daily on the news, in the papers and on social media, and people trust them just because of their inclusion of a certain signifier, and yet no one ever takes a moment to think if there’s anything *behind* the signifier.

What are we buying into when we accept these terms without ever thinking about them? Let’s take ‘scientist’ as a clear example. Someone states that “The scientists agree on X”. What we’re accepting here is a free-floating

signifier deciding what is correct or incorrect with regards to *our* health and *our* lives. No one asks *which* scientists, or what these scientists' aims *are*, or whether or not we actually asked them in the first place, everyone simply agrees, subconsciously, that a decision has been made.

What we're looking at then is a complete abstraction, we're looking at people handing over all possible agencies and responsibility to a floating abstraction which can mean anything anyone wants. For some 'scientist' might mean security, others authority and others it might mean intelligence, either way, we're handing over our own decision and opinion to an empty signifier. Simple steps can be made by news outlets and mainstream media to rectify this semiotic atrocity, by adding in where the scientists work and who they work for would direct the signifier towards something more solid, and yet they don't, why is this?

These floating signifiers are useful for when wants to insert their opinion about something without having to own up to any consequences, or even explain why they have that opinion. Blaming everything on X is an age-old human trait and this is its latest form. What if the 'scientists' are wrong? It doesn't matter because we never knew who they were anyway. The signifier was free-floating, it never latched onto anything stable, so there's nothing there to agree or disagree with, only a nothingness to soak up resentment, bitterness and an irresponsible nature. My direction here is once again towards personal responsibility. I don't care about mainstream media abstaining from responsibility; in fact, I don't massively care about mainstream media at all. But one's own thoughts, beliefs and attitudes are something to be consistently kept in check – 'Do I *actually* believe that?', 'Do I *actually* agree with that?' or – in the case of the news – 'Has this person actually said anything at all, anything worthy of my attention?'

Because when you really think about the sentence 'The scientists have agreed on X', you realize that it actually means very little without any stable signifiers to connect to. For me, it's simple; people accept these empty statements as a way to avoid thinking. It is – *once again* – a way for men and women to hand over their responsibility to the masses, the herd, the 'they'. 'Well, looks like *they've* got it sorted!', 'We can always rely on *them* scientists!' or my personal favorite 'Ah, *they'll* think of something...'

Is there any clearer sentence showing how easily man hands over his agency to the collective?

Once that agency is handed over, people no longer have to think, worry or partake in something which is affecting their lives. Once they've accepted the floating signifier everything is ok again, everything is back to normal. But you must think, you must ponder and criticize these empty assessments and analyses of things which *are* affecting you. Don't let another sculpt what it is you believe, do or say simply by assuming that normalcy and general agreement is correct. Usually within the agreement of the 'they' there is actually little agreement, the only thing they agree on is that change is bad, and what is now *should* and *shall* be forever and any who think otherwise are silly.

When one thinks back over what a figure of authority told them there is almost always a reliance on a floating signifier, some presumed meaning smeared onto nothingness which vindicates the rest of their rhetoric. Once you question that first step, the rest of the stairway quickly crumbles under the weight of ignorance, apathy and confusion.

“See, there's X then Y then Z! That's simply how it is!”

“But I'm not sure about X? What does X even mean?”

You won't make any friends this way; people don't like anything to be questioned, especially the foundations. But what's more important, gaining popularity through agreement with empty falsehoods, or thinking for oneself?

The Myth of Progress

There have been thousands of essays just like this one, but I never got around to writing my own, so here it is. Guess what, progress is...strange. The very concept of progress now is – as mentioned in my *Free Floating Power* essay – a signifier without a true object or concept of signification. Let's look at some definitions:

Progress:

1. *Forward or onward movement towards a destination.*
2. *Development towards an improved or more advanced condition.*

So if we're to take the first definition here as our starting point, then we first need to question our destination. If we're progressing then we must be progressing somewhere, right? Well, I can't say for sure whether we're going anywhere because it's relatively difficult to see who or what it is that's actually pulling our strings. With that said, without any clear destination progress, advancement and improvement are pretty much impossible. If you have no quantifiable metric to go off of (within the socio-industrial framework) then you can be doing practically anything and call it progress. If we tell ourselves that we need to get to a state of X, or we need to invent or build Y, then we have enough data to correctly assess whether or not we're progressing. But once the entire concept of progressing is understood in relation to a rather loose assemblage of sociological and political tolerances and statements, well then we're at the whim of conjecture, and whoever can skew the facts in the most innovative way is the winner.

This leads me to the second definition – development towards an improved or more advanced condition – firstly one has to ask, an improved or more advanced condition for whom? And within what context is advancement understood. The first word there, 'improved', is the most precarious in this context. Improved means entirely different things for different people, this much is obvious. But another difficulty with 'improved' is that for many improvement isn't synonymous with advancement in technological culture

or abstract social freedoms. For some people a return to tradition would be an improvement, for some people the singularity would be an improvement and for others the leveling of all industry would be improvement, and once all these viewpoints are all flattened onto the plane of progress one understands that it's nothing but impossible to have a unified conception of progress. The same applies for the idea of an 'advanced condition', one assumes that this is theorized in relation to an advancement in technology and potential for social freedoms once again, that there is, in the oh-so mystical future, an abstract state of society which we're lunging towards.

If this is the case, that we're heading towards a sort of collective subconscious future which we all apparently implicitly understand is the correct thing to head towards, then what we're venturing into is a fiction, and as such, will be – more or less – extremely alike the past, if not a mirror image with a different aesthetic. For whatever is understood as our future can only be understood in terms relative to what has been, the entire notion of progress rests on a linearity of thought which excludes and actively shuns innovation. Innovation is the greatest enemy of progress, because it could potentially allow us to move away from the notion of progress altogether.

It's a case of questioning once again, and because progress implies some form of action (advancement, progressing, moving-towards etc.) then further questions arise. Where are we progressing to? What are we progressing towards? Who is progressing? Why do we want to progress? And on and on they go, questions which will never find an answer because the concept of progression is so malleable and plastic that it exists solely as a form to be used by the highest bidder. So, my own definition of progress: Progress means whatever those with power want it to mean; progress means whatever those in control of history want it to mean. The victors write the history books, but they do so in such a way as to define progress, and unfortunately, our history books are rife with unbridled technological and industrial optimism, unquestioned notions of freedom and abhorrence of exit. Which ties one into an unforgiving abstraction, the target of which is whatever is happens to be that day.

How can we call it a myth then? Well, let's go back to good ol' definitions:

Myth:

1. A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

Now, progress is far from traditional, in fact, it has basically nothing to do with tradition in the sense that it only uses tradition to reach its own aim, as opposed to being tradition itself. It is most definitely a story, perhaps the earliest of stories, the one we've always told ourselves. Progress is the story in which the narrator is always correct, and everything the narrator has done is correct, and – most importantly – where the narrator is going is definitely the correct direction. It is the story with regards to one handing over their responsibility and action to an elusive abstraction. Sure, we tell ourselves lots and lots of stories in everyday life “I’ll do it later because X”, “I can’t do that now because Y”, “I always wanted to do Z but...” and on and on they go, but the overarching story which trumps all of these is the story of progress, the unconscious idea that even if individual things don’t get done, it doesn’t matter because we’re chugging along nicely anyway, a few mistakes, lacunae and oclusions don’t matter, because we’re always progressing.

What’s left to say of progress other than nothing, it doesn’t exist, except in extremely limited cases where there’s a clear metric and secure personal or collective context, but even then it can become flimsy quite quickly. Handing over your ideals to progress is giving up all personal sovereignty for the comfort of a controlled abstraction, and it’s not always easy to see who or what is doing the controlling.

Immortality is More Profitable

“People, like civilizations, are mortal, and no matter how much money and technology gets poured into the task of keeping either one alive, sooner or later it won’t be enough.” – John Michael Greer, *The Strategy of Salvage*.

Once again, I’m going to alter the Greerean civilization angle towards one of personal sovereignty. Mortality is our reality, in all things. This is *the* truth that even the most Rousseau-hardened optimists have trouble accepting. People, states, families, heritages, traditions, fads and ideas are all mortal, they *will* all end. Unfortunately, we live within a system which finds this truth abhorrent for the fact it goes against everything it stands for. Ending, stagnation and *stopping*, there is nothing more troublesome to modernity and runaway capitalism than this. And so, wherever you look, you will find pitiful attempts at immortality...whatever the cost.

At risk of acting like modernity itself, I actually see this as an argument and reality regarding energy. There comes a point within all existences in which the energy ceases in its ability to be converted into life by the existence *itself*, the requirement henceforth then – if one wishes to keep that existence ‘alive’ – is an external source of energy, which acts as a life-line, or existence support machine. I am thoroughly of the opinion that if an existence can no longer support itself, it should be left to peacefully fade away...for modernity, this is the *wrong* opinion.

We see these life/existence-support-machines *everywhere*, but we’re just taught to understand them as ‘the way things are’, the underlying message we are taught is that death is the worst of all outcomes, worse, in fact, than suffering. And that life should be maintained, even to the detriment of its own quality, *even* if by keeping it going it has a net-negative regarding quality.

Dying businesses get personal credit injections, dying trades get government subsidies, dying ideas get infected with nostalgic wills, dying traditions get riddled with parasitic clones, dying fads get their ironic rebirth and dying people are disallowed their reality entirely. We simply

cannot allow death. We cannot allow it to appear, we cannot allow it to be seen and most of all, we cannot allow it to become a reality. Within modernity, death and suffering are not seen as outcomes of an unjust cosmos, but as accidents of a failed civilization; civilization as an idea has become synonymous with the eradication of pain and conclusion, there's no money to be made from something which ceases to have an output.

But this idea of death is reliant on one's definition of life, for there to be an antagonist or opposite, one needs the affirmation, the protagonist. The main character here is life, the idea of life. How 'life' is defined differs from person to person, and yet I imagine that there is a relatively accepted opinion that life is still *living* when one can actually *do* it; to *live* is an action. Modernity doesn't see it this way. To modernity the subjective reality of 'being alive' is a matter of chemistry, politics and economics.

Modernity strips life of all its vitality and essence, one is reduced to chemistry in the manner of being monitored via various medication and intakes and blood tests, one is reduced to politics by way of being understood as a statistic in relation to various micro and macro political spaces, and, of course, one is reduced to an economic being by way of understanding that once one dies, they can no longer produce or consume, or more importantly, *pay*.

Say what you like about the Deleuzoguattarian notion of machination that we're all just units which produce and consume, but it's certainly the correct reading with regard to civilizational systems and underlying control mechanisms. One is understood, societally, simply as potential for economic input or output. The reason one is kept alive far beyond the point wherein all *real* life has left, is because if one is still chemically alive, then one is still economically life, and has the potential to create profit for some or other societal abstraction.

Unfortunately, the reason why these life-support systems seem so abhorrent to us, to the extent of causing a gut reaction of disgust, is because the living human finally seen to exist on the plane of existence they always existed upon, the plane of entropy and negentropy. When resource shortages interact with rising maintenance costs what one gets is a form of collapse. Now, we're talking about a shortage of life itself, a shortage of pure being,

which in turn is replaced by machinic appendages and tools, external aesthetic machinations of life which stand in for natural organs. This process is usually slow and steady, until one day, one is faced with their beloved all but gone, except for the process of breathing, maintained by various branded medical apparatus.

This is because immortality is more profitable; dying? How dare you! A dignified death is the gift of a dignified society. One where the definitions of life, death and suffering remain with those who truly partake in them and have not fallen into the hands of abstractions which don't. There is nothing modernity is more hates more than something which not only wants to end, but wishes to choose when to do so. When something or someone says 'I've had enough, I no longer want the drugs, I've had a good run...', that isn't seen by modernity as a separate agency making its will conscious, but is seen as a potential loss of control.

In Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West*, Judge Holden – who for lack of a thorough analysis represents death, the devil and unforgivable entropy – states this: “*Whatever in creation exists without my knowledge exists without my consent.*” Of course, for the Judge, as with modernity, the reverse is also true, *that which dies without my knowledge dies without my consent.* Modernity is Judge Holden forcefully cramming pills, splints and needles into you until the last iota of your life force has been drained.

It is a *crime* to die of one's own choice, whether or not your life is *over* is not *your* choice, it is the choice of that which defines what both life and death mean, and for that we rely on something entirely undead.

Death Happens

This is an essay which has basically been a *long* time coming, not that I ever actually *planned* to write it, only, it has always been in the background and a recent experience solidified it as perhaps one of the most important ideas which structures my thought.

I don't think about death and suffering all the time and it's certainly not infiltrating my thought all that regularly, at least as far as I'm aware. But recently I had the – supposedly – unfortunate experience of seeing a loved one in those *true* last moments, the last few hours where the human body has quite literally nothing to do but clutch at an attempt of existence, and once a person hits this point, the reality of that 'person', their ego, their *I*, anything that can be considered to be of their character completely fades away and you're left with mere flesh.

For the majority of people and for modernity in general this is, *a priori*, a *bad* moment, there is quite simply no framing wherein this can ever be considered *a* possible/potential good etc. However, that's not really what people mean when they think like this, is it? When people say things like 'Oh it was awful' what they're really addressing is their own begrudging acknowledgement of a state which is perpetually hidden by them and *for* them. That is to say, death and suffering are always hidden, reconfigured and reworked in such a way that they are seen not as definite parts of life, but mistakes of civilization. Ok, so far this is a slight repetition of my previous essay on immortality, however, that essay dealt with what modernity does with death with respect to *your* will, the rest of this essay will be on what *you* can do with death and suffering in the face of modernity's cold hard calculating machinic unconscious.

It pains my younger-self to say this, but I'm certainly heading towards a more vitalist philosophy (reading the work of Ludwig Klages acted as the catalyst), and yet, I don't think that vitalism has to be of any cliché form, or of any stereotypical hippie-love-of-live vector, in fact, I'd argue that one can be a 'machinic-vitalist' or a 'cosmic-vitalist'. That is – and forgive me

is there's already theorizations closer to this idea – a vitalism which is *accepting* of death and suffering as part of its own vivid ecstasy. Georges Bataille gets close with his philosophy of limit experience, Nick Land strays towards machines and neglects *our* reality, Deleuze & Guattari are too focused on economics, Cioran and Ligotti get caught up in their own bleaker-than-thou bias; we need a reversion of vitalism in which it eats itself. That is, death and suffering *become* a force for good.

Hold up, I'm not promoting death and suffering for their own sake, I'm not saying that one should get pleasure, comfort or positivity from the pain of another; I'm not endorsing any form of violence or torture here. What I am doing however is becoming accepting of the cosmos in a way which doesn't succumb to the pitfalls of Lovecraftian-bellowing from the madhouse, nor become so utterly positive it stinks of ignorance; I am theorizing of a vitalism which accepts its own return to Zero. Death and suffering as part of the whole system. Sure, this is absolutely nothing new...but then, there's nothing new under the sun, right?

This is an immanentization of death and suffering into modernity. Modernity is here to stay, and utilizing one's finite energy trying to get rid of it or destroy is a serious waste of life, you'll understand very little if you spend your entire life destroying X so you can arrive at some abstract Y; the grass is always greener etc. Death happens. Death happens and spending your energy trying to stop both its material and mental reality is not only an exhaustion, but it's a maddening exhaustion which will lead you nowhere. The underlying idea of modernity is that everything can be fixed either by some form of technological innovation or by some form of societal tolerance, and guess what, death is the thing which can *never* be stopped. Modernity finds in death an idea so abhorrent that it ignores its existence all-together, and what is it that modernity finds? Modernity finds within death something which truly does what modernity wants to do, control everything. The only thing outside the constraint of death is nothingness, and once death has come, the concept of nothingness can no longer be.

What can we learn from death? When one is ill, or when one is hurt, or when one is falling apart, these experiences teach us just how much we've become accustomed to a certain way of thinking and *being*. One's first

thought when they have a fever, or when a new ailment alters their course of life is to attempt, with all their might, a return to a presupposed state or normalcy. *This* is how I should feel and how my body should *be* and any alteration from that is a mistake of cosmic programming, well guess what? Heraclitus' river isn't just something you step into every second of every day, but it's also the current and circuitry of your own blood. You can't avoid change because you're *of* change.

When I looked at my loved one, I saw the loved *one* had gone, I didn't know where, but it didn't feel awful. What was awful was seeing *something* plugged into the life-support machine that is modernity, existence for its own sake; modernity disallows existence its *right* to pass into the next stage both willingly and in a contently manner, modernity clings to life as if it *always* belonged solely to modernity itself. I saw blood, gasping, unconsciousness, entropy, croaking, struggling and mortality all within a single moment, and yet I saw nothing of the vitalism which had once possessed them, for such a vitalism would have nothing to do with such modernistic and civilizational ignorance of cosmic reality.

And yet, what can one think when they find themselves within such an event in time? Modern man would bleat, pray, whine, ignore, repress, suppress, suffocate and reason everything in front of him, he would make a leap of faith towards the idea that modernity would eventually save him from such a fate, even if his might be more pleasant. But what if one sits and looks and senses. What if one takes their time, accepts the reality, acknowledges this as part of the cycle, as part of the river, and goes about their day with that in mind? I'm not saying do not feel or mourn, I'm not saying ignore the event that is death; I am saying that the way in which one understands and reacts to death will ultimately affect how they react and enact their life; if death is denied, then life is too.

'Everything you're currently experiencing *will* die.' Is another way of saying that 'Everything you're currently experiencing is *still* here.' Enjoy it, partake in it, and experience it with everything you've got.

Look Upon My Likes, Ye Mighty, and Despair!

I'd like to expand on a recent tweet of mine which was so compact that it omits vast amounts of detail. The tweet was this:

“The real psy-op is a lobalized form of ADD induced by increasing usage of social media based dopamine stimulation devices, resulting in a global temporal attention deficit where we have no understanding of the past or deep-time, and live entirely in the nano-present.”

There's a lot going on here, but it outlines another one of the major problems we face as individuals trying to regain our grip on truth and reality, and the combination of the two; what is *your* true reality? The one which you want to inhabit, the unaltered state you wish to exist within.

Firstly, we have this notion of a 'psy-op' or 'psychological operation', these are reportedly operations in which governments or groups use selected information to emotions, feelings, motives and objective reasoning in a way which benefits them. This has led many people to state things such as 'Everything's a psy-op!' and I certainly understand where they're coming from, but with that said, the advertising and marketing isn't covert in its aims, so it can hardly be considered an 'operation' as much as it is simply doing what it's supposed to be doing. The difference with a psychological operation is that you're presented with something which has far more going on behind the scenes. I don't want to get too deep into this sort of thinking, not because I don't *believe* it, but because it's largely unproductive. Discerning whether or not something is X, Y or Z is useless if my real aim is simply to discern whether *I* actually want, need or agree with it. It doesn't matter where it came from, what matters is if and how I can get away from it.

But what is it here that I consider the *real* 'psychological operation'? – *a lobalized form of ADD induced by increasing usage of social media based dopamine stimulation devices* – This is relatively simple, basically our increasing smartphone and social media usage is shredding our attention span – supposedly from 12 – 8 seconds in the space of 20 years – and it's

also feeding our reliance on dopamine feedback response, that is, the chemical we release when things make us feel good is being utilized by social media mechanisms to get us addicted to their systems. We are quite literally rats clicking a button for a bit of cheese over and over again, all day, every day. But actually, the metaphorical cheese in this scenario isn't as clear as one might like to think, hence the idea of a 'psy-op'.

So, what's the cheese then? Well the cheese that we rats are perpetually running after isn't some malleable 'thing', or an item, nor is it some clear idea, in fact, by its very nature it cannot be able to be grasped, otherwise, the chase ends. So, what is it we're after? What is it these dopamine-feedback-loops and pleasure-response-systems have us scuttling towards? Well, a few things, all of which come under some rough label such as 'desired abstraction' or 'created desire' or 'idealistic utopia', everything these systems target us towards is simultaneously seemingly reachable and yet continually buildable. What I am specifically talking then? Well, specifics are tough with things like this, because, once again, if the 'things' we were searching for were specific we would be able to grasp them in some manner, right? So, if you want someone to keep on using your system and keep on plugging-into your feedback loop, the endgame needs to be both desirable and both supposedly attainable yet corporally unattainable.

Status is the clearest example of this; in fact, status encapsulates most of what happens on social media. Everything posted, every little update, every extroverted appeal for attention is in some form a plea for an increase in status. If one posts an obscure text they wish to seem cultured, if one posts a picture of their flashy car they wish to be seen as wealthy, if one posts a cute picture with their girlfriend they wish to be seen as 'that couple', of course, I'm generalizing, and I don't think there's anything wrong with 'sharing' your life with other people, if that's what you want to do. It's only that once you apply mechanisms such as 'likes', 'retweets', 'hearts' etc. to your personal life and posts, then it is immediately subsumed into a system of quantifiability, it can be compared with other lives and posts upon a simple binary metric of positive and negative, your life, becomes reduced to data, this is the psy-op.

What does this psy-op achieve? *In a global temporal attention deficit where we have no understanding of the past or deep-time, and live entirely in the nano-present.* – Once again, relatively simple, but it begs a little more explanation. When we look at that previous feedback-loop and take status as our example once again, we begin to realize that our relationship with time is entirely constricted by something as simple as likes and retweets, everything about them begs reverence and attention *only* at the present. One could argue that one is attempting to build something for more likes and more status, but that is always held in abstract, and one's understanding is that achievement is made via more quantity of social-media's dopamine feedback responses. In that, yes, one might be abstractly targeted at the future in some manner, but it's a future which is inherently tied to a mechanical notion of the now. The past spans 'back' billions of years, the future is the abstraction of all potential, and we're being drawn into the most minute of presents, ones which have not only passed us by, but are being continuously remembered, not as an exercise in learning, but as a social proof. 'Here is my present! Look at it and see how great it was! See how cultured I am!'

The 'nano-present' isn't the present as it's understood in the philosophy of time, it isn't Deleuze's retention of the past and expectation of the future, it has nothing to do with Bergson's duration, it isn't Heidegger's existential ensemble, nor is it even part of any 'common-sensical' linear conception of time; the nano-present is void of all connection to anything that surrounds it, to the extent that it refuses the existence of the past and the future. The nano-present is the pure atomization of time into distinct islands of abstraction, so small and ignorant in their existence that they have no means of communication, and believe only in their *own* essence, they are presents which exist *within* themselves. The next nano-present doesn't arrive in any form of connection, but as a teleportation, we are all at once within an infinity of presents which are too nauseated by the acceleration of atomism to ever reach out and care for another present, however vapid it might be.

The action is relatively clear here, because nothing I've written is anything new, and everything I'm doing is within the same systems I critique. How does one avoid getting trapped then? I would advise creating a mental habit, in that when you check your phone or PC, before you do *anything*, you

question why it is you opened that certain tab, app or page etc. Is it out of use and utility, out of creation and personal choice? Or have you become a slave to a habitual dopamine-response-routine?

Avoiding the Global Lobotomy

Is this you?

You feel like you have a 2” thick shell of gunk surrounding your entire body which inhibits your ability to *TRULY* contact reality?

You’ve had a light-brain-fog for basically as long as you can remember?

You find it difficult to remember what you had for lunch yesterday, let alone a week ago?

You increasingly can’t keep up with what’s going on and everything is moving in an abstract blur?

Your concentration levels have dropped to the standard of a child and you flip between activities, books, tabs, games and songs for no discernible reason?

You desire various items, objects, visuals and stimuli but have no reasoning or history for said desire?

Your emotions and feelings are becoming increasingly dampened; you wonder if you’re a sociopath or narcissist?

Are you ‘mentally’ tired but can find no reason as to why?

Don’t worry, you’re not going mad, but I do have some bad news for you, you might have been lobotomized. Not literally of course, but abstractly. But then, in practice, what’s the difference? Before I begin, I’d like to state that I don’t mean to use the term ‘lobotomy’ in any irrational or flippant way, it was a *horrid* procedure, and its after effects were both drastic and sad. (See: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*). But if we take a look at the history of the lobotomy, what it does and what the intended outcome of it was, we might just find that lobotomization has been deterritorialized into an institutionally controlled abstraction.

What’s a lobotomy then?

Lobotomy: a surgical operation involving incision into the prefrontal lobe of the brain, formerly used to treat mental illness.

This isn't all that helpful, and if there ever was a 'Foucauldian statement', this is it. The entire premise of this statement rests on the last part, 'to treat mental illness' Those of you who paid attention to my *Free Floating Power* essay will realise that what this statement allows is for power to fall into the hands of those who define mental illness. Supposedly, the '*lobotomy has become a disparaged procedure, a byword for medical barbarism and an exemplary instance of the medical trampling of patients' rights*', except, the procedure still exists, but entirely as a virtual process which – abstractly – slowly ticks away at the very same areas which a lobotomy attacks head-on. A lobotomy, or 'prefrontal lobotomy' would traditionally require surgery to the frontal cortex, containing the prefrontal cortex which *is responsible for internal, purposeful mental action, commonly called reasoning or prefrontal synthesis.*

So, what we have here is a procedure which is used on 'mentally ill' people whose psychic life was overly complex, emotional or distraught. In fact, '*British psychiatrist Maurice Partridge, who conducted a follow-up study of 300 patients, said that the treatment achieved its effects by "reducing the complexity of psychic life".*' 'Reducing the complexity of psychic life', hell, that sounds like modernity to me. Or at least, that sounds like what modernity wants to do you, or even, unconsciously *is* doing to you whether you know it or not. How is it doing this then? How is this slow-form of abstract lobotomy being performed? Limit-compression, dopamine-reward-systems, Overton-window-compression, time-compression and normalcy compression. Note, I use the word *compression* because something that's compressed *eventually* springs back with serious force. The more you compress something, the harder it will spring back up and the more energy is needed to keep it down. Anyway, let's look at the ways it's performing this lobotomy one-by-one:

Dopamine-Reward-Systems – We quite *literally* get anxiety attacks when we've misplaced our phones, thus, we have cultivated a maternal relationship with our smartphones and social media, *and they* are in charge of *us*. An average of 2600 taps per-day, phantom-vibration syndrome,

reduction in sleep quality, worsening eyesight and on and on, all because we're locked into a dopamine based social reward system. Dopamine is a chemical in our brain which plays the main role in motivating behaviour, it gets released when we eat tasty food, have sex, masturbate, exercise, and most importantly, engage in *successful* social interactions. Now, defining *successful* social interactions used to be difficult, but the sphere of social interaction has since been immanentized onto the metric of likes, retweets, hearts etc., wherein a greater number of positive likes equates to a more successful social interaction, and thus, when we get a like we get a little hit of dopamine. Many might say, 'Well why's this worse than eating a tasty sandwich, we get dopamine from doing that too?!' Yes, we do, but we also don't do that literally thousands of times per day. We begin to feel good from getting all these likes so we keep doing it, we keep posting things to get more likes, eventually, we succumb to the mechanism itself and instead of posting stuff *we* find interesting, or stuff *we* genuinely *want* to post, we post that which we believe will get us a greater quantity of likes. Social media virtue signalling then is quite literally the same process/function as masturbation, but then again, so is political, philosophical and all forms of mimetic posting.

Overton-window-compression – The Overton window is the range of policies, discussion and thought which is acceptable to the mainstream population at a given time, it's also known as the 'window of discourse'. It is the range within which acceptability is given, anything outside the Overton window is generally deemed odd, weird, hateful, spiteful, silly, radical, or, not-normal. Now, as we can see from the previous section on dopamine-reward-systems, what social media and quantifiable discourse is doing is mentally limiting what we can say and do, not by way of oppression, but by way of ostracization, alienation and peer-pressure. If you don't post X, Y or Z which are deemed *the things* to be posting right now, due to their greater dopamine feedback response, then what you're posting must be weird or horrible. The Overton window then begins to be compressed into a tighter and tighter spectrum of acceptability, not due to any lack of original thought, but due to the majority of its actors, agents and big-players adhering to the compression itself, for if they venture outside the Overton window they risk losing it all, fame, status, popularity, wealth,

all of these ride on remaining inside the window and therefor contributing to the positive feedback of acceptable-thought compression. What you're thinking isn't mad or weird; it just isn't acceptable within limits which are constantly finding their way into you via malicious pathways.

Normalcy-compression – This largely thought and mental-based compression of the Overton window begins to infect corporal and material reality by way of self-panopticonic policing, that is, people begin to constantly check both themselves and others for any traits of weirdness or non-normality. They don't do this consciously, because most people are largely unconscious, if not – for all practical purposes – asleep. What Deleuze and Guattari call 'the little fascist in all of us' begins to police and cross-reference everyone's behaviours with the compressed mode of normalcy given in a single present. Thus, normalcy, normality and what is considered to be normal is a perpetual process of tightening wherein the end-game is roughly 3 or 4 *seemingly* different thought loops which lead back to precisely the same reality, one wherein you are born, you go to work, you consume, you produce and you die, and you do *not* question whether or not you want to do this, whether you like to do this, or whether you even *thought* about any of this in the first place.

Limit-compression – Limit-compression then is relatively simple, from all these forms and modes of compression combined and built up, we end up in a reality where everything is continually compressed for the sake of adhering to an increasingly tightening mode of normality. The project of atomization is the great illusory emancipatory freedom layered over an ever-constraining normality, atomization allows only for greater normality to be imposed on an individual level, *away* from families, groups and communes which will potentially have a sturdy and stable enough leader to disrupt the process of modernity.

Time-compression – The final bastion of modernity, the one it *really* doesn't want you to break. Time-compression is all the previous modes of compression combined into an absolute chimaera of control. Control via time-compression. Time becomes constrained to the point where one is not 'living in the present' in a Buddhist or Taoist sense, but merely *existing* at the whim of the latest dopamine feedback response, whatever spontaneous

social-media based or dopamine-inducing masturbation session the user succumbs to that day *is* their nano-present; we are at the whims of a cybernetic master whose taken control of our most basic brain functions and is slowly performing a lobotomy by inducing various degrees of compression, limitation and constraint, degrees which we accept, agree with and eventually, promote.

Do you remember Greta Thunberg?

Do you remember Brexit?

Do you remember Jordan Peterson?

Do you remember the Las Vegas Shootings?

Do you remember James Mason?

Do you remember Climate Panic?

Do you remember the Coronavirus?

Do you remember Emma Gonzalez?

Do you remember Jacob Rees Mogg?

Do you remember Theresa May?

Do you remember the 5G debacle?

If you've forgotten most of these, then any recent media event can become another entry into a long line of various media events which arise in spontaneity and disintegrate as quickly as they arose, awaiting the next morsel of spectacle to come along and possess your pathetic attention span. This will seem undoubtedly harsh to some, but in much the same manner that saying the very same thing within various other media events would have also seemed harsh and cynical, it's not. It's not for the very fact that this entire 'timeline' of spectacle events are simply empty happenings which momentarily infect your thought leaving you no time to analyse your being until the next comes in and slams your mentality to the floor.

When I state that we are being globally lobotomized I quite literally mean it, if a successful lobotomy is to induce a 'decreased complexity of psychic life' then this is *more* than a success, this is a triumph! There's nothing

complex about meandering to a single news event whilst waiting for the next one to come along and fill your head. Complexity is found within deep-time, within analysis of the past, within variation, correlation, correspondence, fragmentation and most of all, process. There is no complexity to be found in a watertight present.

So, how can you avoid all this? Well, it's quite simply and it's most likely the same advice which is promoted anywhere this sort of this is written about, but I'll throw in a few actions you can take to get your brain out of this sordid gutter.

Begin to use your phone as little as possible, and most especially don't use your phone at meal times.

Begin going on walks (preferably in the countryside) without your phone, it will force you to revert to another way of being.

Continually check your thoughts, actions, purchases and posts. Do I *actually* like this? Do I actually believe this? What do I actually think? Basically, start to fucking think.

If you keep up a routine, start your day with a short meditation or contemplation on a question or idea that is bothering you. I prefer discursive meditation.

Read *old* books, preferably books published before the 1900s, it really alters your psyche to realise how different things were *just* 100 or so years ago.

Read a book on a failed revolution or religion or a dead civilization, understand that things die and decay, and that things are reborn again.

Read *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr for a deeper understanding of the way in which internet addiction is effecting you.

Go outside, seriously go outside. Look around, it's great out there.

Limit screen usage where possible, or, if you have to live with a screen in your life keep a smaller reminder of nature nearby – I have a peace lily on my desk.

Take some time out every day to think through your thoughts, think about what's yours and what isn't, level/stabilize yourself and realise you are still

you and what's going on *is* outside of you, even though it tries extremely hard to prove otherwise.

You're not going mad, you're just holding onto the last remnants of individuality you have within the belly of a malicious machine, plant them in the right places and you might wake up entirely.

Hungry for Nothing

*“Infants deprived of handling over a long period will tend at length to sink into an irreversible decline and are prone to succumb to eventually intercurrent disease. In effect, this means that what he calls emotional deprivation can have a fatal outcome. These observations give rise to the idea of **stimulus-hunger**, and indicate that the most favoured forms of stimuli are those provided by physical intimacy, a conclusion not hard to accept on the basis of everyday experience.*

*An allied phenomenon is seen in grown-ups subjected to sensory deprivation. Experimentally, such deprivation may call forth a transient psychosis, or at least give rise to temporary mental disturbances. In the past, social and sensory deprivation is noted to have had similar effects in individuals condemned to long periods of solitary imprisonment.” - Eric Berne, *Games People Play**

I’ve been getting deep into game theory lately, my general understanding of cybernetic communication, Serres and Deleuze has led me to a subjective understanding that everything has a purpose at some level, which is a strange way of admitting that I’m interested in game theory. Now, admittedly, game theory does – to a certain degree – fall into the trap of taking itself as a privileged science/mode of theorization, one which believes it can answer every question within certain parameters without reliance on other sources. Though it does draw from biology and psychology, the overarching idea of ‘games’ themselves seem to be cut off from the reality they investigate. This isn’t where I’m going with this essay, but it does beg some thought.

This little piece is primarily on the notion of deprivation, social and sensory deprivation. It seems to me that the psychological effects of social and sensory removal from the social life of an infant are very much the same effects as when one takes away an adult’s toys; it’s just a question of complexity. What we’re witnessing, in the combination of an over-socialized, stimulated and sensed society with a globally imposed

quarantine is an exercise in mass psychosis. It didn't matter what the event was which finally allowed a societally justified 'exit' from the *accepted* quarantine, it only mattered that on a hierarchal scale, notions of social justice overrode the concept of public health and safety. Or in short, the enforced quarantine pushed us to a limit wherein we allowed our societal stimulus-hunger to take charge, overthrow our personal/subjective conception of x-risk, and place virtue-signalling prior to anything else.

These current events are not *outside* the spectacle, *they are the spectacle*. People did not exit quarantine as a means to *eventually* return to their preferred stimulus, they exited quarantine to partake in a stimulus which allowed them to pass off their idiocy as something moral. Partaking in these events is little more than watching TV, binging Netflix or getting black-out drunk for the sake of keeping one's senses ticking over with just enough input to disregard the reality of their empty life.

So, why would one do this? Why would one enter into something which beneath its shell is just another repetition of all other events? Because modernity is the great narcissistic parent, it gives you a constant stream of stimuli and socialization, converts this into the idea of normality, makes *this* idea supreme, and then one needs only to turn on their homegrown guilt to be dragged back into this whirlpool of hypocrisy.

We are beginning to understand what would happen if we introduced a UBI. It's been made clear from countless conversations that what one does for a living and what one *is* are becoming – or have *become* – entirely inseparable. Any divergence from the wake-work-entertainment-sleep loop is an entry for the latest form of existential crisis. Ultimately, an existential crisis is entirely reliant on what one considers their existence to be, and if you're existence is largely empty entertainment, casual sex, social media and a 9-5 job a monkey could do, then your crisis starts once *these* things are taken away. These crises aren't the grand ol' crises of Kierkegaard or Nietzsche; they're the new crises, based on having one's toys taken away.

And if your existence *is* reliant on these toys and they are swiftly taken away, then what better way of regaining stability than simply moving the essence of what those toys were onto something which overrides the lockdown of existence itself, namely, anything deemed by society to be an

acceptable replacement, which is basically whatever happens to be next and is ‘thought’ about collectively for a brief moment. You’re quickly drawn back into modernity without ever realizing you left, or *could* have left.

The problem with this idea of ‘stimuli-hunger’ is that people rarely question whether or not they’re *actually* hungry. It’s generally accepted that the reason a lot of people – largely in the West – overeat is because they are bored, and *not* because they are hungry. The same applies to being stimulated, people rarely question – if ever – whether or not they actually want visual, auditory or sexual stimulation, if it’s there, they’ll take it, and the effects on one’s being and psyche are negligible. Of course, they’re not. Much like how eating too much will make you overweight, sluggish and feel generally rough. Taking in too much stimuli will make you unable to focus on what’s important, unable to discern the real from the fake, and most importantly, make you unable to find your actual feelings and thoughts within a chaotic meandering of random tit-bits from TV shows etc.

It’s a question of deprivation. One can only be *deprived* if they believe the thing being disallowed to them is actually worth *their* time. I don’t feel deprived by not having various movie or music subscriptions, because I understand I don’t need them. In fact, it’s actually a net benefit to me to *not* have these things. This, *once again*, is a question of questioning. Do I *actually* want this, need this, like this? You guys already know this, but it begs repeating.

What Did School Teach You?

I finally got around to reading some Ivan Illich, specifically his text *Deschooling Society*. Now, it's a book I almost entirely agree with, I mean, it's really not that difficult to agree with it unless your brain has been well and truly fried by progressivism. Illich both criticizes the modern Western mode of schooling, whilst putting forth some form of a replacement. The point where I have some disagreements with Illich is with the replacement, but I won't get into that here, because they're still half-baked ideas. What I will dig into however is some of the blind spots in Illich's work, which it seems to me he would have left out either due to slight cultural/material differences *or* he would have considered them *so* obvious as to not bother writing them down at all.

The overarching argument of Illich's book is that schools have confused process and substance. That is to say that the education *system* has confused the merit of working *through* the system with the actual understanding itself, or; the very fact that one has gone through/utilized/been seen to go through this system *means* they have acquired the knowledge the system supposedly set out to teach, which of course, is entirely incorrect. The system which does the *teaching* and the knowledge *itself* can never be made synonymous; it's an error of institutional vindication.

Illich makes it clear that this alteration of logic creates a whole system of assumptions which change the way one both learns and *understands* what learning is. If it is understood that a greater understanding is synonymous with a greater treatment and prolonging of one's time within the educational system, then it comes to be collectively understood that those who have remained within education and the academy the longest are the most learned; escalation of one's educational treatment equates to a greater knowing. Of course, when put like this, it *begins* to become clear that this might not be all that true.

Illich continues this logic and states that "*The pupil is thereby 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a*

diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new.” These are of course many of the requirements of schooling, especially the idea that saying something new is the equivalent of being knowledgeable. The entire point of a PhD is to extend the knowledge of a particular field of research, usually this entails stretching the field so thin that one exists within a space which is an inch wide and 40 miles deep, a space which very quickly becomes useless and forgotten. It could be deemed a tragedy that so many thesis’ and papers are only read by their writers and their editors, it *could* be considered tragedy, but in reality, it isn’t, because the large majority of papers and journals are written not out of passion, or love of knowledge, but as proof of being educated, and proof of accreditation.

Here’s where Illich continues his critique in one direction – how do we save schooling? – and I continue it in another. Namely, what happens to our understanding of the world once the idea of schooling as synonymous with knowledge is deeply imbedded within us? Firstly, any and all forms of autodidactic and self-study are thrown away. Once you understand that you can only learn via a tutor or accredited system, you teach *yourself* that you have no right to teach yourself. Except, who was it who taught your tutor? And their tutor? Eventually, you go far enough back and you realize there has always been someone who was simply *interested* in the study of knowledge for its own sake, and not for the sake of social proof or academic vindication. Secondly, self-study becomes increasingly suspicious. If we equate knowledge with accreditation, then why should we trust those who teach who do not have accreditation? Of course, this is really, *really* dumb. If two people follow the *exact* same course of study, but the only difference is one of those people ‘hand-in’ their work to an accredited body, what is the difference in knowledge? There isn’t any.

Once this general logic of knowledge, accreditation and education/schooling is understood, it disrupts your entire autonomy. As Illich makes clear “*Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work.*” What are all these things at a foundational level? They are knowledge and common sense lost within the abstraction of accreditation and bureaucratic

ladders. No one questions if someone is being healed within a hospital because that's what it's for, no one questions whether police are protecting us because that's what they're for, no one questions whether or not our work is productive because that's simply what you do etc. This is a material example of free-floating power, in which we once again hand over responsibility to a symbolic abstraction standing in for the substance of our needs. We *need* protection, health and knowledge etc. but it's far easier to get these pre-made.

There are many ways in which Western education systems eradicate common sense and replace it with conformity, but immanentizing one's *understanding* into the logic of accreditation and social/cultural vindication is the main one. Alongside this, school also teaches you to put up with various absurdities one wouldn't commit to outside of its institutions. Not being allowed to go to the bathroom for example, or sitting for hours upon hours within dingy, beige walls under fluorescent lighting is another. School is the test phase for adult life. Can you conform? No, well guess what, we have ways to make you. Practically *all* forms of education-based punishment mirror the form of societal aftereffect you'd receive if you behaved that way as an adult, the problem is the education system assumes all autodidactic study and action contrary to its system to be bad.

If you vandalize something you get a detention (jail sentence), if you hurt someone you get expelled (removed from society and imprisoned), these are relatively good examples of helping one understand that their actions within a society have consequences. But what about the more nuanced forms of covert-punishment/control which are deemed bad by the education system by their very reality as antagonistic to the system's aims? You don't want to work/study because it's not something you're interested in? Social isolation and alienation for you. Not a massively social person and prefer to be on your own? Too bad, time for you to work in a group. Prefer silence, quiet and a good book over extroverted displays of status? Sorry to say, that's not allowed. Do you have a preference for the finer things in life and are generally creative? Well, sorry, life's a bit rugged and that's stupid anyway. Not into X, Y and Z even though they're popular? Well, something must be wrong with you, weirdo!

The problem here isn't with people having differing opinions; the problem is that the education system exacerbates notions of normalcy via its internal logic. An internal logic which states that everything popular is accredited, and everything accredited is correct and learned, and everything correct is, well...correct. So, you're taught to understand from a very young age that your differing interests in life and the world, your preference for self-study and silence and your alternative perspective on life is incorrect because it isn't accredited, is weird because it isn't normal and is suspicious due to it being both weird and wrong. You are taught not that your passions and interests are different, but you're entirely incorrect and incompatible for having them.

Be the Reaction You Want to See in the World

In 2004 a book called *The Secret* was published, written by new age spiritualist Rhonda Byrne. The book is one in a long line of New Age spiritual self-help books; this book however – like many others – makes one critical error. Instead of abiding by the generally accepted principle ‘*Be the change you want to see in the world*’ (Gandhi) – which has been the basis of various spiritual traditions for millennia – *The Secret* alters this phrase into ‘You change the world’. New Age spirituality ignorantly takes critique to a whole other level, in that one *believes* they are quite literally changing the world to their own vision of it. Now, the former quote from Gandhi is actually related to such change, but it’s doing so from an understanding between the real and the ideal. What Byrne’s book does is make the user believe they can actually immanentize their subjective ideal into reality itself, what the tried-and-tested ‘Be the change’ formula does is work with the real.

What reactionary thought does – as clearly outlined in James Burnham’s *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* – is address the real. Using known, tried and tested systems, structures and traditions to make a judgment regarding what we should do. Am I saying steadfast traditionalist reactionaries can learn something from New Age spirituality, why yes, I am. What reactionaries are reacting *against* is the ideal, and what they’re trying to work with – as I’ve stated – is the real. Progressive political systems are inherently ideal, in that they can never arrive in their definitive form, and do so with some manner of mutation, or with some form of parasitic infection. The political ideal can never become because it’s tied to a disordered and chaotic subjective consciousness, whereas the real of reactionary thought is tethered to hell-baked truths of existence.

Many of you will have listened to my recent interview with Curtis Yarvin (Mencius Moldbug). Yarvin’s overarching point with regard to those who are sick and tired of the current regime is this: Any reaction that plays by the rules of the current regime *bolsters* the current regime. Reaction has

become zero-sum, all energy and spirit targeted at progressivism is subsumed into progressivism. Progress is the great vampire, one which can alter any objections into its own life-force. So what does Yarvin state we should do? We should ‘detach’:

“Engagement is any voluntary relationship with power—to assist or resist power, whether in action or just desire. If you are trying to change the world—even if you just want to change it—maybe even if you just want it to change—you are engaged.

The opposite of engagement is detachment. To be detached is to be consciously irrelevant—to inhabit the world as it is, to know that it is likely to continue on its current path, and to separate yourself from any action or desire to change it. No one can achieve perfect detachment—which is the point of trying.

Engagement is not compliance. Compliance is involuntary action. Engagement is voluntary action or desire for action. Compliance is paying your taxes. Engagement is putting a sign on your lawn. Detachment is weird; anything weird in your lifestyle will commend your attorneys to the most meticulous possible compliance.

Detachment is not dissidence. Detachment never resists. It does nothing against any person or institution, legal or illegal, violent or nonviolent. It does not even try to influence public policy or public opinion. It is never angry; it never cares; and it always obeys—both the formal laws, and the informal rules.

Detachment is a hard spiritual task in which no one can succeed perfectly. It is not a fact or even an idea. Detachment, like Zen, is a practice. And while serious Zen practice involves hours of painful sitting that can cause haemorrhoids and even nerve damage, how hard can it be to practice not giving a shit?” – Gray Mirror of the Nihilist Prince

Now, this theory of detachment is something I have been writing about *years*. Sure, Yarvin is writing about detachment from quite a specific angle, but I’ve always been a critic of progressivism, and if modernity is anything, it’s a blood relative of progressivism.

So, what can us curmudgeons learn from the New Age movement? Well firstly we need to learn – as Burnham and Yarvin point out – to deal specifically with the real. Now, for those of you that are practicing some form of religion or magic, this doesn't mean some sudden reversion to new atheism or materialism, because here's the thing, the 'real' can be defined as that which works and that which enacts the intended effect on one's consciousness, culture or state. Dion Fortune defines magic as "*the art of causing changes to take place in consciousness in accordance with will.*" – Any changes that are caused must be noted, cross-references and understood, anything else is empty ignorant wishes. But hey, there's a lot of people whose heads are buried in the sand with regards to what is actually happening.

What I like about Yarvin's piece is that he makes it clear that: "*Detachment, like Zen, is a practice. And while serious Zen practice involves hours of painful sitting that can cause haemorrhoids and even nerve damage, how hard can it be to practice not giving a shit?*" When we think back to that original quote by Gandhi – '*Be the change you wish to see in the world*' – we can begin to realise, when juxtaposed with the Yarvin quote, that it adheres to a semantic bias. The entire idea of 'change' has succumbed to the vampirism of progressivism, and has been made synonymous with progress itself. When we hear someone is out there changing the world, we instantly think of someone going to Africa to build wells, or helping out at a soup kitchen. Of course, these aren't bad things to do if you're so inclined; however, the hegemonic usage of the word 'change' disallows other forms of change to ever *become*.

"*How hard can it be to practice not giving a shit?*" well Curtis, as you've probably found out, unless you define how people are perpetually, unconsciously giving a shit, *not* giving a shit is basically impossible. Once again, if you don't even know you're in a cage, why would you ever try to escape? By now I hope most of you know that you're at least stuck within *something*, even if you're having a hard time defining what exactly that 'thing' is. Anyway, back to detachment and how to practice it. I don't want to distinctly follow on from Yarvin here, so I will just state, this is my own theorization of 'detachment'.

What I read and understand detachment to be is something which is *not* active, but it's also not apathetic, and it's most definitely not neutral. But that isn't to say it has to be overtly extrovert, activist or *active* in any way. So, what the hell is it then? It's acceptance. When someone truly doesn't give a shit, when someone's frame hits its absolute peak, what have they actually done? They have accepted their opinions as their own, accepted the culture they find themselves within and primarily have accepted the *real*. What does this look like in practice? Well it looks like what it's always looked like, not bowing to popularity, not acting out of desire for status, acting on principle, being honourable and not bending to the whim of various social, cultural and progressive parasites.

Here's how it looks in *real* life:

"Hey man, you excited for that [popular] film everyone is on about?"

"Not really."

"So, are you red or blue?"

"Neither, I believe democracy is an inherently stupid idea."

"How about those protests, hey?"

"I wasn't really paying attention; I have a family to look after and things to build and create. I think most people involving themselves in such things are simply bored and are looking for something to do, they don't actually believe in whatever it is they're supporting that week."

Note, in these three examples the reply shouldn't be said in any overt reactionary manner, as if you're making some sort of 'statement' or outlining some dumb manifesto, one's reactions and replies should be both *honest* and *sincere*. Nothing more is needed. When others realise, they are *allowed* to disagree, they will begin to understand that there is a system which is controlling them and is covertly creating psychological restraints which unconsciously disallow certain opinions.

Detachment and 'not giving a shit' aren't about checking out altogether. It's *detaching* oneself from that which one has been covertly programmed to become attached to (the idea of progress) and likewise, to not give a shit about that which one has been programmed to give a shit about (popular

media, activist movements, red vs. blue politics, political status games etc.) When I state that one should '*Become the reaction you want to see in the world*' I am *not* stating that people should *do* anything, because *doing* something simply acts as fuel for the fire of progress.

Progress' *modus operandi* is defining its process as the universal good and by proxy defining all which disagree with it as bad. By appealing to man's inherently virtuous nature as someone or some people who wish to appear good as to receive status and popularity, progress gains its support by appeals to vanity and narcissism. So, what one should *do*, is not *do anything* which progress can *use*, simply adhere to strict personal principles and disciplines, and state with conviction, honesty and sincerity that which they truly believe and that which they truly disagree with. You are allowed to disagree with entire systems.

Sit back and become the reaction you want to see in the world. Everyone is getting so caught up in the myth of progress that it's made them believe they *have* to react to it in some form, that any disagreement with its method of operation is some grand act in itself, it isn't. My friend, you are allowed to disagree with anything and everything, and you should. Accept your own opinions, and do not let the parasites of false virtue invade your mind.

Who's Walking Who?

When I was a young lad I used to visit my Great Uncle a lot, and anyone who's been following my work for a while knows that he is my greatest inspiration. I think this is in part because he had a direct connection to seemingly 'distant' history and often used to tell stories of the city of Norwich being on fire during WW2, and other memories relating to pulling dead pilots out of trees near his home. I'm sure these early encounters with both the brutality and nonchalance of history have influenced my writing, in fact, I'm certain of it. Anyway, one of my most vivid memories is – lucky for me – the moment I learnt one of the most important lessons I'll ever learn.

Me and my Great Uncle were driving down some rural country lanes to a small pigeon shooting spot he liked to check when he was bored and the weather was nice. The day was bright, quintessentially English; I believe it was spring time and early in the morning. We got to a junction and were about to turn right, but before we did, we had to wait for someone walking their dog. Now, what are often common sights can become lifetime lessons when seen through the eyes of someone wise, this is largely what Michel Serres' work is.

The woman who was walking her dog wasn't exactly *walking* her dog, as much as she was being dragged by it. When one thinks of people who are walking their pets this is actually an *extremely* common sight. The dog on its leash/lead being 'walked' by its owner, but when one looks closer, the leash is so tense that the owner is actually being pulled by the dog, the leash is only there to give the illusion of control. My Uncle, probably spotting a great moment to teach a moral lesson, held on the brakes before taking the turn. Watching as the woman was dragged at an uncomfortable pace by her dog past the front of the car, my Uncle turned to me and said '*My boy, who's walking who?*'

Little did I know this would be the greatest lesson in power I would ever learn. In an instant my Uncle had taught me everything about power they

don't want you to know, that is, power is exactly where you can *sense* it, whether or not various institutions, structures or systems say otherwise. The great illusion here is that just because the dog was kept on a leash and the owner had ahold of the leash means the dog was under control, except, this isn't true at all. But in reality, due to the creation of a structure of power which is entwined with various social symbols it seems both easy and difficult to see exactly where the power lies.

The large majority of people would of course say that the owner (or person holding the leash) is the person who holds the power, for the mere fact that they hold the leash. In much the same manner, many would say it is the government which holds the power because they hold the societal leash via taxes etc. Some would say it was the leash itself which holds power, the structure which allows power to operate is power itself, and the normalcy of the leash *is* power. A rare few would notice that the dog actually holds a fair bit of power because he is able to pull the leash and thus the owner via the strength of his will, however, dogs of a certain age rarely learn that if they keep pulling the leash they will end up with either a shorter leash or simply be banned from going on walks altogether.

So there are quite a few little oddities of information held in this one example. Firstly, the dog does in fact hold the power. He *is* able to control both the leash and thus the owner via exertion of his will, but he doesn't think of the consequences with respect to what the owner might do due to such frustrations, he only thinks of the immediate goals he'd like to attain. In much the same way, one can currently say that within our contemporary form of pseudo-democratic government *the people* hold a certain amount of power, *but* it is constrained by the leash, there is a limit to their power and the owner is always in control of this limit. Shifts of the democratic herd towards X, Y or Z seem – from their perspective – to have accomplished something, but they never contemplate whether or not they're still on the leash altogether, which of course they are. It's the illusion of freedom within the same constraints. When we see people who exert their will over the government and cause it to bend or (in-part) break, it should be clear that it is they who – momentarily – hold the actual power, but they have changed nothing, and are simply exhausting themselves by pushing against the leash.

I think if any of my essays ever get misconstrued as defeatist, this will definitely be the one, but I'm hoping I can argue my corner. What happens to those faithful mutts who understand the system? Who understand that haphazardly putting their energies solely in direction of their own will only causes greater harm in the long-run? Dare I say, what happens to those loyal mutts who inherently understand limitation, etiquette and order? They get let off the leash, they get trusted. Am I saying sit back, do nothing and don't exert your opinion? Absolutely not. Am I saying that more often than not multiple forms of energy exertion are performed within a closed loop which has illusory ends? Yes.

It sucks, you're in a system which you're not keen on. That no one is keen on, at least in its current form. So, what are your options? Tug on the leash and exhaust all your energy within the confines of disobedience, a place where one is always watched and suppressed...this sounds utterly useless. Or, accept certain limitations of life, accept the cyclicity of history and try to remove yourself from it. Practice understanding the grey-ness of history and truth, head towards clarity of thought which is not tainted by various shades of blue and red. If you begin from a position of personal sovereignty which is created with an understanding of immediate governmental, biological and transcendental limitation, then your direction can only be one of personal self-improvement. From this position one can – internally – be let off the leash and head towards a position of sincerity and discipline. An understanding that you are your own person, and that your energies will not be targeted at deconstruction or demolition, not for lack of vitality, but for lack of care regarding that system, it is what it is, but it doesn't have to infect you. And so you become the mutt without the leash, trusted to wander here and there, exploring and relaxing, being intrigued by what fascinates you and unconcerned with what doesn't.

What Did School Teach You – Part 2: The Return of the Autodidact

In the last post about what school taught us, I used the argument put forth in Ivan Illich's text *Deschooling Society*, to make some various claims. Once again, Illich's overarching point was that contemporary modes of Western education conflate process with substance, or, this makes the processes and credentialism of teaching synonymous with the actual knowledge that should be learned. Someone with a degree is viewed as someone who should understand that subject matter to a certain level, but rarely is this the case. What actually happens within degrees and school systems is a catastrophic feedback loop, which looks like this:

1. A system of credentialism or grading is introduced; people can achieve *higher* or *lower* grades respectively on a hierarchy of understanding
2. The higher grades are achieved by those who supposedly have a greater understanding of the subject, and the lower grades by those who supposedly have a lesser understanding of the subject
3. The teacher's *modus operandi* like most people working a job within the current capitalist system is simply to keep it. The teachers understand that the greater the number of pupils who achieve a higher mark, the greater the reflection on their performance and ability as a teacher
4. The curriculum then becomes attuned not to a general mode of understanding regarding the subject, but to a constrained outlook relating to 'What will be on the exam'
5. Students no longer study to actually *study*...for knowledge, but to get higher grades on an exam
6. Younger students begin to internalize this system and worry not about whether they understand a subject, but whether or not they'll 'get a good grade' (and the system/loop begins its revolution)

This is a form of indoctrination. We can't blame the teachers, most of whom got into the job for earnest and sincere reasons, and we can't blame the students because they have no say in what goes on. Once again, who's to blame is a large abstract body of committee members, council workers and bureaucratic brown noses whose entire purpose is to create systems of social, cultural and intellectual vindication. Closed systems which *create* proofs that something is working, and when that system doesn't work, they just move the goalposts...I mean, no one wants to lose their job, do they?

What's the conclusion of this loop? Students *and* teachers end up learning very little. Teachers remain within the confines of 'whatever will be on the exam' and students remain in the same confines due to that being their only route to a future. But I bring good news, this is changing. Many of you may have seen that Harvard – the great helmsman Western education – has just announced that all its courses for 2020-2021 will be taught online, but the tuition fees for undergraduates will remain the same, precisely \$49,653.

Unfortunately for Harvard most of their new undergraduates will be 'extremely online' people, who are all very knowledgeable with what can be acquired via Google. And what can be acquired? All manner of courses, across all subjects, for very low fees, if not entirely free. And these courses aren't low quality either, they're often created by working professionals to teach knowledge and know-how which will actually be *used* in the workplace one plans to go into.

Perhaps it's my own personal bias, but I'm willing to make a prediction here. We can mark this decision by Harvard as the beginning of the end of traditional modes of schooling/learning. Harvard's decision plus the recent increase and intrigue in online courses *for the sake* of learning, will strike a firm blow to the behemoth that is credentialism. As someone who is working within the online philosophosphere, I can tell you first hand that more and more potential undergraduates are opting for affordable online courses, largely because their primary reason for study *isn't* a job, but it's actually (shock horror) because they want to *learn*, they actually enjoy the subject. They would rather work with someone who's teaching out of passion for the subject, than be sacrificed to the great system of credentialism.

The autodidact's making a comeback, the experiences of 10-30 years of disgruntled undergraduates (combined with increasing debt) is finally making its way to the younger generation, and due to their existence, which is now primarily online, they can finally escape the indoctrination of their schools. Schools will of course tell you that you should go to university, you should continue your studies. Why do they tell you this? Because by-and-large a higher number of university placements looks better on the school's *and* the teacher's record. But now the left-behind grads are coming back to haunt them, making it clear that it might not be worth its (lifelong) purchase. And perhaps, if you really enjoy a subject and want to learn it, you should just go...learn it.

It's one of the most tyrannous crimes of modernity, the idea that a credential is proof of understanding. The idea that to *trust* someone to do *anything* – even on their own – they need some form of certification or bureaucratic proof. No one is allowed to *do* anything anymore; it first has to proven that they *could* or *can* do it. The knock-on effect of this of course is that before doing anything you get indoctrinated into ways of doing it that you might not enjoy, or might not work for you, or are often completely wrong. When people state they've done something a little out of the ordinary, say, built a wooden planter, put up some guttering or fixed their washing machine, you'll often hear the same old responses “Oh wow, you sure you know what you're doing?” or “Where did you learn to do that?”

Become the person who learnt to do it themselves, get out of the mindset that you need a bureaucratic proof to learn, enjoy or partake. We used to tame the frontiers, and now we need a license to go fishing and permits to grow vegetables. It's pathetic, and I beg you not to become part of it. Repair things that break, try with the knowledge and acceptance of failure, believe that you can figure stuff out without a third party, tinker with life and all its parts and most importantly, be a sovereign individual, tend to your own actions!

On Solitude

I've recently been reading David Vincent's *A History of Solitude*, which is a must read for any budding young hermits out there, you need to know who paved the way for you to be able to do what you do. Now, you might be thinking 'Wait, isn't solitude a personal decision which isn't really tied to what others think?' This is partly true, but there are some complexities here with respect to how we understand solitude and the way in which we perceive it.

One of the things Vincent makes clear is that historically solitude has been generally frowned upon, it was seen not so much as a noble pursuit of quiet and contemplation, but an activity of self-ostracization and unsociability. There are a few reasons for this, but the Enlightenment really put the final nail in the coffin with regard to our relationship with solitude. One of the covert components of Enlightenment thought is sociability and the idea that reason, logic and democracy happen through conversation, which they do, but when you don't want to enter into those things altogether, the dominant system shivers you out like a bad fever, something that shouldn't be. Modern society simply does not understand why you *wouldn't* want to be a part of it.

This isn't *actually* an overtly anti-modernity essay (but it is me writing it, so take that with a pinch of salt). One of the things that thinkers such as Yarvin, Jünger and Greer make clear is that just because you're no longer red doesn't mean you have to become blue, or are blue simply because of your existence as someone *not*-red. In the very same way, just because I'm anti-modernity doesn't mean I'm pro some random form of anarchism or primitivism, the point is – I believe – with solitude, that one doesn't enter into that whole spectrum of existence. Where one's very life and vitality is measured against various external machines and metrics. The crossover between modernity and solitude however *is* one of scorn. The *modus operandi* of modernity is control, and the idea that someone would be fine solely with their own thoughts is abhorrent to it. It's very difficult to control

someone who entirely content with their own company because you have nothing to offer them.

So one *is* in control of whether or not they go find solitude, but from the beginning one isn't completely in control of how they *understand* solitude. There is a guilt created from taking time out and being consciously alone, one is often made to feel as if they owe society something, as if they should be pleasing X or Y, or the classic excuse, they feel like they're being unproductive. Production is the enemy of solitude, at least production in the sense of *partaking* in some action of modernity's construction. Modernity has subsumed the very idea of productivity into its own feedback loop of control; entertainment, binge-eating, social outings and various other consumerist exercises are given to us under the name of productivity and thus legitimized in their undertaking, we no longer feel bad for doing them as we would say, laying around doing nothing, or reading quietly by a river.

I'm not saying these things are bad in-themselves, only that the way in which we understand them as either bad or good is *given* to us by a third-party, and so once again we hand over our responsibility and *personal* interest to an abstract ideal. We no longer admit or accept what actually interests us, because that may be too weird, strange or asocial for the atmosphere we're within. No, we rely on an external apparatus of social justification to prove that our most internal interests are in fact ok to have.

Solitude is not an act of rebellion of unsociability, nor is it unproductive. And you most definitely should not feel guilty for wanting to find solitude or be alone. Solitude (in-part) is the complete denial of the idea that one needs social proof or vindication for the actions they undertake. That one is entirely ok with themselves, to the extent that they are actually rather happy to spend time with their *own* company.

Perhaps this is *another* piece about how modernity controls you, but once again there's a minor difference. This form of control is about one's understanding of what is accepted of them and the conditions of that acceptance. There is an inherited *guilt* within all of us with regard to *not* being social. Not being *anti*-social, but simply not engaging in the generally accepted notion that solitude is somehow alien, strange or bad. Just because one removes themselves from society it doesn't mean they're anti-social,

and that they'd rather not engage in that whole structure of presumed accepted ideas.

The Modernity Mindset

The Modernity Mindset – Part 1: The Problem of Definitions

I use the word ‘modernity’ *a lot*, anyone who’s listened to me for even a short while will know this. I’m self-aware enough to know that I use in a fairly loose and often callous way, taking it as a signifier for everything I don’t really like about the way things are. I would argue, as quite a few have (such as Greer, Zerzan, Orlov, Yarvin) from their respective standpoints, that we *all*, deep-down, understand that this really isn’t even close to a good way of being. Something feels *off* at the very kernel of our being, as if we’ve moved away from a *mode* of being which is holistically healthy towards a *means* of being which is productively unhealthy. Of course, I dislike subsuming the idea of health into the realm of the universal as it ends up doing far more harm than good (as Foucault made clear). So, what I’d like to try do is outline many of the problems modernity ‘creates’ or ‘births’ and tackle what exactly it is that’s wrong with them and how they’ve altered our perception of the world. One of the most important underlying arguments here is that I don’t think you can detach the way in which you perceive the socius, with the way in which you actually *are*. Both influence each other, meaning that if one submits to a phenomenal or sociological system of control, they are, by proxy, ontologically submitting themselves to a far graver fate with respect to their very being.

In true continental fashion, this first part is titled ‘The Problem of Definitions’. Now, for those of you that don’t know, this is arguably what makes ‘continental philosophy’ stand out. It refused (well, Kant refused) to begin from definitions. Descartes states ‘*I think therefore I am*’, and Hume states that one can *be* skeptical, Kant points out that both these thinkers are beginning their investigations of the world from a standpoint which is *of* the world, one that’s already been formed. If you begin *from* a definition, you’re already entering a confused and constrained argument. This is why Kant’s ‘Copernican revolution’ is so important, because he begins from the very *conditions* of experience as opposed from the experience itself.

Am I going to try and outline all the *conditions* of modernity in this essay? No, I think they'll arise organically within the following parts, making them far easier to follow, because we can actually assess where and when we take our drastic turns of being. To be cantankerous however, I'm actually going to note the definition, see where that takes us, and then work backwards and see what we find...

Modernity: the quality or condition of being modern. – “an aura of technological modernity”

As you can see, this definition is *extremely* unhelpful. I would once again refer back to my *Free Floating Power* essay and note that signification of this sentence is reliant on what we collectively understand as being 'modern', and within *this* definition is where I come unstuck. If you research what it is to be 'modern', or what it is to historically be within the 'modern' period, the breadth of historical, cultural and sociological experience is so far reaching that the term 'modern' becomes largely meaningless. Some would state that modernity roughly begins in the 1500s and runs through to the present day; others might say the same but argue that modernity is split into noticeably different eras (Early: 1500-1789, Classical 1789-1900 and Late 1900-1989) and some would argue that modernity is a virtual offshoot of the Enlightenment which influences our current behavior. Whatever way I define modernity will never really cut it, because each definition has its own personal take on what modernity is, inclusive of its own personal conclusions. If you're wondering where *I* historically think modernity began, I believe somewhere in the 1600s, when the Roman Numeral for 0 became commonly used in Europe.

We can already see however that attempting to articulate modernity from these preconceived definitions won't really lead us anywhere, what *led* to and what's *underlying* what we now consider to be modernity is such a cluttered assemblage of parts that vectoring from the definition alone ignores the fuel for modernity's fire. This is why I believe that targeting specific controlling facets of modernity (as we contemporarily experience it) and working backwards to their root, stripping and cutting away what baggage we can in the process, will lead to a far more rewarding definition.

If, at current, I was to take a shot at defining modernity I would argue that it's a gargantuan socio-cultural psychological operation which has no original helmsman (no one *conceived it*, it grew organically), an operation which is reliant on an understanding of socio-economic & techonomic production which equates cultural and familial virtue with productive capacity and output; the symptoms of such a state of being include, but are not limited to: Understanding happiness, contentment and fulfillment in relation to production, reducing familial and interpersonal relationships to metrics of status and social-value, adhering to controlled and suffocating conceptualizations of structure, food, survival, worth and education, perpetual and compounding self-policing in relation to the latest trend, immanentization of the self into a hypocritical and fragmented system of market-value, the reduction of authenticity and phenomena to trinkets, brands and objects, the compression of spirituality, religion and belief into an aesthetic of socio-cultural proof, a predominantly techonomic perspective of nature, terminal hostility towards death and suffering, the outsourcing of subjective health/mental concerns/problems onto striated institutions and bodies via a credentialist mentality and finally, a subsumption of one's very being into the framework of production, status, popularity, market-value, libidino-value and normality.

These are some of the symptoms I seek to look into and work backwards from as a means to investigate what it is I consider to be 'modernity'.

The Modernity Mindset – Part 2: Schooling

I've written about education and what it is 'to learn' a lot lately, I believe – like *many* others – that what happens to you, or is forced upon you, in your early days is largely the lens through which you're going to view the rest of your life. It seems like a very bleak state of affairs for mankind, that once something is taught, consciously or unconsciously, from a young age, there's no going back. There are genetic and heritable factors of course, but it seems to me that the apparatus I'll be talking about is primarily placed on top of these. That is, the educational apparatus seeks to root-out any anomaly which doesn't neatly fit into its system of control. Once again, as I like to make clear, I'm not writing of anything new here, and it seems that no one ever really can write anything new, everything happens again and again, over and over, cyclically throughout time.

When you're young, once you begin to meet your friend's parents everything begins to fall into place. The alternative kid has ex-hippie parents, the straight-A student has conservative parents etc. Life isn't all that full of surprises when it comes to things like this, and I'm not sure entire fields of scientists are needed to *prove* that this is the reality we live in. If you can't literally *notice* that most traits are being inherited, I'm not really sure where you're looking. However, those things are unavoidable and so utterly personal that very little outside of personal work will ever help you with them.

This piece is called 'schooling' because in its definition schooling is far different to education. When we think of education, nowadays we think of *getting an* education. Learning various lessons which culminate in an understanding of the subject to the point where one can either teach it or utilize it. To get an education as an engineer is to be eventually be able effectively engineer things so that they work and don't break. To get an education in woodwork is to be able to create doors and windows etc. To get an education in philosophy is to eventually be able to teach philosophy or...become a podcaster. Anyway, the point is, as Ivan Illich immediately

points out in *Deschooling Society*, that education systems have made process and substance synonymous. The *process* of learning (schooling) has culturally become to be understood as the knowledge gained *from* learning itself. As if, just because someone goes to school or gets schooled that would make them smart/learned, I think we can all agree this isn't the case, in fact, the very opposite is true.

The problem is of course that schooling contains so much other baggage that isn't related to knowledge it's actually difficult to find where the actual knowledge resides. Most non-specific office-monkey jobs could be understood in an hour or so and refined just by doing the job. Most education that happens both inside and outside of traditional 'schools' is primarily to make that workplace look serious. No company wants to admit that anyone can do their job, a long process of 'learning' is an illusory form of legitimization and makes anywhere that does it look serious, at least by a social standards. The same applies to various credentials companies and schools acquire, we have X, Y and Z award for outstanding achievement in A, B or C. Usually all these awards amount to is the company or school getting a high percentage of 'high grades' within a certain year, basically a massive bureaucratic circle-jerk. A school/company abides by the socially created system of credentials, they attain high marks within that system and by doing so get a further credential, and on and on it goes. I'd like to note, that I'm not entirely against some form of 'credential' for say a medical doctor (MD) or surgeon etc. But when you actually look at the system of credentials for an MD, it differs from the usual one. MDs can't achieve firsts, seconds or thirds etc. They either get honors or no honors, and when you look at this for a couple of seconds, you realize a distinct way you can begin to see actual knowledge. When there's trust involved. MDs can't get a wide array of worse-better credentials because no one wants to go see a 'bad' MD, you're either capable of being an MD or you're not. That's a minor digression, but it's important to make clear that the age-old reality of why knowledge is deemed important still stands. Is this person 'knowledgeable' is another way of saying 'Can I trust this person within area/genre X?' Credentials sought to replace this notion of trust with a system of marking, if person A had grade Y then they can be trusted, it's

proof that they have enough knowledge to do what's needed of them without too much hand-holding.

Schooling overstepped its bounds and now it's arguably not until after all traditional forms of education are finished that you begin to learn something of practical use. The irony is of course is that most practical jobs are reverting – whether consciously or not – back to a system of practice over courses – How long have you actually been *doing* this? As opposed to, how long have you been *studying* this? – Within this is the root of the contemporary schooling problem, why is this reversion taking place? Well, it's because employers, tradesmen, programmers, institutions (which are serious about themselves) all understand that schooling doesn't teach the subject itself, it only uses the teaching of the subject to impart its own beliefs, etiquettes and aims. If you ask the average person (in the West) what they learnt from school they would probably draw a blank. Nothing *clear* comes to mind, there was some stuff about simultaneous equations, and point-evidence-explain, I vaguely remember something about mitochondria, but the problem was that there was no use for this information. One's education from the years of 5-16 is the equivalent of an 11 year general knowledge course, one which is so lacking in coherence that you never really find your feet.

The question then is, well what the hell *was* school teaching me? How was I being *schooled*? It's something I've mentioned in interviews before and written of on occasion, but when you really *think* about what school taught you, what school taught you is *bad* and what is *good*, what was an ok way to be...things start to look quite bleak. The example I tend to give is 'sitting'. That's right, school taught you that it's good to sit and listen. But not just sit and listen, but sit for 6 hours at a young age under horrendous fluorescent lighting, within beige walls, and listen to someone usually uninspiring drone on and on about something that has – and will never have – any effect on your life. School utilizes the grand idea that you're being taught knowledge to enforce a form of social etiquette on you from a young age. You're taught that when someone with lots of credentials stands in front of you and gives a speech, you sit, listen and don't make a sound until explicitly asked to. Doesn't exactly sound like the non-prison we were told school was. Lunchtime is at...lunchtime, that is *when* you're hungry and

that is when you *have to* eat. You're taught that proof of knowledge is in relation to grades and not practical application, you're taught to keep in-line, form a presentation of yourself contrary to your actual self, repress all vitalist desires to run around, build and create etc.

But the most heinous lesson – and arguably one which may now actually be *true* – you're taught is that the only way to achieve anything in life is via some third-party system. Don't go it alone, you need a support structure, you need backing, you need an institution, company or grant, you need to implement yourself within a system of credentials, otherwise how will anyone ever know that you're serious, that you really know your stuff? Well the answer to that is easy, someone who knows what they're on about can prove it by creating something that people want/need and that works very well. The reason this lesson might now actually be true is because society in general has made it extremely difficult to get taken seriously within any field off experience alone, even if you were to show a working-model X to a company that needs working-model X, I'd imagine they'd still be hesitant to take you on-board, because without credentials, well, why would anyone take you seriously? Found within this reluctance to take someone on who doesn't have the credentials is the implicit aims of schooling. Companies and institutions etc. aren't reluctant to take on someone without credentials because they think their work won't be good, no. They're reluctant to do so because inherent within credentials is the proof that you've been pushed through the system and come out the other side, you must have obeyed and accepted a lot to get here, which means you'll do it again. The higher the credential, the higher the sunk cost, the higher the complacency. When you hire someone who is jam packed with awards and grades etc. you're not just (potentially) hiring someone knowledgeable, but more importantly, you're hiring someone who is ready and willing to be molded.

The Modernity Mindset – Part 3: Shelter

Modernity has mutated our thoughts regarding what's normal and what isn't, so much so that the very basics needed for our survival have become lost in a world of assumption, privilege and acceptance. I plan to tackle the 4 'basic needs': food, water, shelter and clothing. I'm tackling shelter first, because as many of you may know, in certain places of the world shelter is the *primary* need. That is to say, you will often die quickest to exposure (without shelter). I'll be looking at our considerations of these basics and how our current modern state of affairs has altered our perception in rather malicious ways.

What is shelter then? Well, it keeps you dry, it keeps you away from the cold and it keeps you safe at night. We've basically forgotten about these and turned 'homes' and 'home-ownership' into an odd fetish. Note: I'm not against private property rights, in fact, I think they're smarter than most presumed 'rights'. Anyway, I'm also starting with shelter because it's one of the more peculiar alterations of modernity, in that, the way we've been taught to modify our understanding of shelter has lead us towards more stress, misery and pressure than ever before.

I'd like to reiterate something before I get into this. If people want to own X, Y or Z house, that's fine, it's up to you to make stupid decisions like believing houses are 'investments', or getting in a life-long debt because you liked a building. Like I said, I'm not against private property; I am against a generalized/normalized idea of what a private home *should be*. So what *should* it be? As stated, it should keep you warm by having good insulation, keep you dry by having good walls and a roof and also keep you safe from potential intruders or threats. Modernity has put such a thick layer of chemical and bureaucratic existence on top of everything, that the bare-bones reasons for many of our undertakings are hidden. But it's good to remind yourself why we do things. It's cold out there.

Now, onto the main crux of this piece, what *is* a home anyway? I don't want to get too 'millennial' about this, but a home can really be whatever you

want it to be. And anyone who says otherwise is trying to sell you their own will, or their own past mistake. The preconceived notion of what a home is largely sculpted by accepting the idea of a home given to you by society. Sounds like a dumb statement, because this is how our understanding of basically anything grows. Except, within modernity, you're living within an anomaly of existence to the notion of a home that's given to you won't exactly fit in with your immediate reality.

The general idea of a home/house that's given to those looking to buy/acquire one is of a 2-4 bedroom house with a garden, all the amenities and possibly the potential for extension if needed. It's the absolute ideal of what a lovely Western (Simpson-esque) home should be.

The desires, material fetishes and consumption habits of the 1960s-2008 are considered the norm. They're not, they are absolutely NOT normal. They are an anomaly of history. *If you buy into them you will cripple yourself!* Now I've said that, let me explain what it is I actually mean. As you can see from the statistics, none of this really adds up. In short, you used to be able to buy X with Y, and Y would equate to enough to buy X and live relatively comfortably (anyone telling you otherwise doesn't understand the difference between inflation and purchasing power). Nowadays, we still believe that we *should* all be able to buy X (a lovely 3 bed house) *and* that our Y (wages) are still up to scratch. They're not. It's over. 2008 came along and gave us all a harsh reality check, one which pretty everyone seems to have not admitted to. I mean, when you start seeing every other bank, building society and monetary institution handing out grants, loans and ISAs to every young schmuck that comes along, you should be smart enough to see that something's up. Nothing is free in modernity, you either pay with money, data or time, and guess what, all these loans people are signing up for is just more time they won't get to use as they want to, all because they fell for some dated desire of oh-so-mighty home-ownership.

Perhaps dated is the wrong word, because my qualms about home-ownership aren't about *what* people want to buy, but *why* they want to buy it. It's one of those cases once again where people seemed to want something, or want to do something, just because everyone else is doing it (abstractly called 'mimesis'). There are of course varying reasons as to why

people would want – or even need – a 2-4 bedroom house: kids, hobbies, pets, relatives etc. However, rarely anyone ever asks themselves (though more people are increasingly starting to do so) whether or not they really need or even *want* their supposedly self-desired home. What compelled them to want the suburban dream? What compelled them to want a 2-3 bedroom house that needs lots of upkeep and takes away a large portion of one's time? Whatever compelled them to buy into the Western suburbanite aesthetic of pseudo-virtue via owning meaningless, trite knick-knacks? I can't imagine there was ever some compelling argument to this. When I was younger I distinctly remember having an almost nauseous reaction to 'homes' which were full of random useless shit and didn't seem to be lived in (a reaction I still get). This is one of the major symptoms of contemporary home ownership, the idea of a home as an extension of yourself. Well, now I come to think of it, perhaps it's apt then that most modern homes are Ikea-esque multi-builds with no character, no daring and no originality. The reason I feel averse to this way of living is that it always seemed people spent more time tweaking their home than actually living in it. As if one's favorite hobby was Chess but they spent so much time cleaning the board they never got around to actually playing, and in fact, it's suspect as to whether or not they actually played chess in the first place. In a world where the majority of people spent as much time at work as they do at home, and then go *out* on the weekends, why is it assumed to be normal to spend the majority of your money on something you don't really use? Most of the rooms in your average home rarely get used anyway; most time is split between the kitchen, living room and bedroom, with anything else becoming an ornament which you're paying for with your finite time.

People will often ask at this point "Well, what are the other options? I don't really want to rent because you're just wasting money." Before I get to the other options, I want to address the 'rent is wasted money' argument. This argument is based off the prior assumption that I've been writing about, that one *should* – if one can – get a mortgage and purchase a house outright. This is done then for two reasons. Firstly because 'It's what you do.' (as they say), and secondly, because it makes more financial sense. If you're making your decision in relation to the second decision, you're already making a few mistakes. Renting *seems* like a waste because you won't *own*

anything at the end of it, this is true. *But*, what if you don't want to own anything? What if you can't afford the maintenance costs? What if you don't want to put your time into maintaining a house? What if you have better things to be doing? What if you just want shelter and aren't too bothered about ownership? What if you don't want to get stuck with a bunch of unforeseen bills such as various taxes, duties and leasehold fees? When you rent, you aren't wasting your money, because you get what you pay for. You also get the (potential) freedom to move around far quicker than you'd be able to if you owned a property. It's all down to personal priorities, and most people have assumed the priorities of the banks and the financial system. 'Do what's most financially safe!' they say, a statement which brings me back to my earlier point about the dumb idea that property is investment. Here's my take on this: Unless there's water on the land, the property is not an investment, it's a punt. People 'get into' property because it's supposedly this 'safe bet' with respect to gaining money, 2008 has of course shown this to be untrue. Guess what perpetual peace, perpetual energy, perpetual growth and perpetual progress have in common? They all believe in the idea that something can get better, bigger and greater forever. This is socially, physically and cosmically impossible. If all your housing investments gave you a greater return you happened to invest during a historical anomaly (boomer generation).

Back to the first point, 'Well, what are the other options?' The other options are the ones you actually think about, the ones you decide are your own, the ones you create for yourself. People will often turn their nose up at these other options, but that's *only* because they believe in a pre-conditioned and presumed notion of what a house should be. Renting, tiny houses, building a house, a condo, van-dwelling, exiting to a more affordable country, rent-as-work (farmhand), living on a boat and digital nomadism are just a few options. I'm sure whilst reading those many of you thought 'Those don't seem all that nice.', once again you're attending to these ideas from a preconceived notion of what your life *should* be like, you're trapped in the desire of the other. You believe you should live a certain way out of fear of societal rejection or alienation, you believe you should live this way out of no real conviction but because of an abstract pressure to impress others. Shelter doesn't have to mean a kitsch suburban 4-bed with boring neighbors

and thousands of useless trinkets strewn about the place. Shelter can mean whatever you want it to mean.

Perhaps you don't really stay in your house much anyway and prefer to travel, what would be wrong with living on a boat? Perhaps you've actually never really been fussed about owning a house, because you want to spend your free time doing your hobbies as opposed to repairing a property, well maybe renting is for you? Maybe your job affords you the luxury of working from anywhere (programming), why not travel around affordable countries whilst working from a laptop? Perhaps you just want your house to a base of operation but aren't too fussed about aesthetics, look into tiny houses? Perhaps you have very few ties in your home country and could live cheaper elsewhere, well, what's holding you back? The point however, isn't towards some drastic *physical* move, but towards a drastic *mental* move, one in which your very perspective of what is considered a 'shelter' or 'home' is changed and you no longer abide by the unconscious stress and pressure of 'becoming a home-owner'.

The Modernity Mindset – Part 4: Water

I know what you're thinking, 'How the hell is James going to pull this off? A full length piece on water, he's gone too far!' Well actually, I haven't. Water, specifically *tap* water is one the greatest tools in my toolbox to show you just how far modernity has come, how much it has mutated your mind. The way in which we think about water lays much of the groundwork for how we think about food, which will be an even bigger essay due to the various connotations in connected to it. Water, in comparison, seems relatively simple, but it can actually be used as a cornerstone for the presumptions regarding the life of the average modern man.

The more I think about writing this essay, the more I think it might be the one where I finally step into the realms of 'Well yeah, no shit James!', but that hasn't happened yet, even though I believe I've been writing about some really clear stuff. This is why it's always best to write by the way, your view may actually be more original than you think. With that said, a word of warning, this essay could be downright obvious.

The problem with water is that outside of shelter – which in most Western countries isn't truly top priority – is that we *absolutely* need it to be able to exist. It's not something which is negotiable; it can't be replaced in any form and is always, perpetually needed, until the day you die. And yet, we take it for granted to such an extent that we generally forget we have supposedly unlimited access to it. You realize how utterly *insane* that is? There is something out there which, if we don't have it for just 3 days, we will die. And what do we do? We forget that we have access to that thing, we abuse our relationship to that thing and arguably, we even neglect that thing.

Though I've already written the short piece on schooling, I did miss something out, the fact that school does actually teach you some lessons, but there always the lessons they didn't realize they had taught you. We had an assembly one day about being grateful etc. and one of the examples they gave to us was to understand that water coming out of the tap, day-in day-

out, isn't something that necessarily always happens, but is something which has been developed and engineered to do so. Yes, I learnt the lesson of being grateful for resources and lifelines, but I also learnt another lesson, the one they didn't really want to teach me. 'What the HELL are we all doing?' This is the most important thing is all of our lives, and *none* of us are learning how it works, or why it happens, or who's in control, or who to contact if it goes to pot, or how we find and develop a new fresh supply of water if the taps stop running. Maybe I've always had the collapse mindset, maybe my years of survival and woodland camping made me respect warmth, water and fresh food a lot more, I don't know, what I did know is that we all have a serious chip on our shoulders.

So this is the point of this essay. Not water in itself, as some nourishing good. Though of course it would be easy to begin mentioning carbon water filters, privatization of water supplies and the health benefits of hydration, I'm not going to, because there's a more important message at play, once again, the one of presumptions. We all presume that water flows from the tap when we turn the tap on/off, we all presume that the water will continue to do so for as long as we live; we *also* presume that *if* the water stopped running from the tap that something is up, this would be *not* normal. Well, I have a cold message for you all, water *not* running from the tap is actually normal. *Not* having a mass network of filtered and sterilized pipes connected to each and every house is normal. *Not* having *instant* access to clean drinking water is normal. If you have running water, you're privileged and disconnected from reality.

Arguably we've had 'modern plumbing' since the mid-1800's, but in terms of the standards we'd *expect* today, the 1930s is the earliest era one could argue comes close to modern expectations. So, we've had modern plumbing and running water for just under 100 years. Let's say humans have been around in their current evolutionary iteration for 200,000 years, that would mean we've had running water for 0.05% of our life time, and yet, it's accepted as absolutely, 100% normal. It *is* and always *will be* the way things are. Anyone who says otherwise is a quack, doomsayer, madman, weird blogger who needs help, right? If it was any other resource it might not seem so mad, but the *one* and only (in many parts of the world, where climate is less formidable) resource we need to exist is taken for granted?

And no one is being taught on a societal level how it's processed? How to start it running again if it stops? Where to get it if it doesn't come out of the tap? How to process it when drawn from an exterior source?

But here's what modernity does in this situation. It creates something which is technically *amazing*, our contemporary plumbing systems, for instance. It disperses it in such a way that it becomes hegemonic, and anyone not abiding by it is seen as weird and odd. From its generalized societal acceptance as the absolute norm (and anyone who thinks otherwise is weird), it is accepted (along with progress) as absolutely always and forever, and there was never not a time we didn't have it, and if there was the people of that time were weird.

This hegemonic cover-up of course isn't something modernity ever wants you to think about. To think about the fact that one needs and always will need water, to exist, to live...to not die, is not what modernity wants. Remember, under modernity you're going to live forever (until you don't), you're going to having everything you want (it won't satisfy you) and there's nothing to worry about (except all the old risks are still there). Modernity wants you to forget that you're human, and you need *very* little so that it can maintain its productive control over you. If you're reminded that you *need* water, you might also be reminded that you could live without other drinks, you could even go get your water from elsewhere. 'Hmm, perhaps I don't need all that stuff.' Once water is turned into an *a priori* resource it is no longer revered for what it is, and is simply *accepted*, making it boring, almost untrustworthy. You drink water? How dull!

The Modernity Mindset – Part 5: Food

There's something very revealing to be found in the way we interact with food which can tell us a lot about our relationship with modernity. Alongside water and shelter, food too is an immediate and necessary *need* for all men and women, unlike water we don't take it for granted, at least not to the extent we do with water, we do however have a rather peculiar relationship with food...

Firstly let's look at what food even is. At its most basic level food is sustenance; it's the fuel that keeps us going. We are biological 'machines' which need fuel to keep us performing whatever actions we wish to perform. On a certain level of communication this is our basic reality, one in which we are an engine which performs functions and needs fuel to do. Now, if you wish to lose weight this is actually the most practical way to think about food, as fuel. However, there are of course long traditions of food as a cultural object or pastime, certain places have certain cuisines which usually represent the temperament of their culture quite exactly. There is also the largely ignored history and philosophy of senses *other* than sight and hearing, so to simply understand food as some additional extra would be silly, however, our relationship with it isn't a healthy one, it's a quintessentially modern one, in which food becomes entertainment. This isn't exactly a new idea, but food was perhaps the first example of where the substance of something began to mutate into a different conception altogether.

What I mean when I say that our relationship with food has altered into one of entertainment, is that the very purpose of food has been lost, but I don't think a return to this very basic purpose has to exclude the beauty of food itself and its historical origins. The attitude towards food within modernity is one which allows it to become a sideshow of existence, one which allows the empire of signs to overtake all faculties and demote food to some kind of existence-filler, something to pass the time. Whereas, in reality, food is something that should be kept at the forefront of one's mind, *especially*

when you're consuming it. The phrase 'You are what you eat.' Is thrown around rather callously as some pithy bureaucratic message regarding personal health, however, when you really begin to think about that saying, there's more to it than meets the eye – as there usually is with those old, wise sayings.

Because you quite *literally* are what you eat, in both a physical and metaphorical sense. What you consume is the fuel used to *create* you and allow you to continue, if you intake bad food, or junk fuel, then your body is going to feel like junk. And, metaphorically speaking, if you intake cheap, quick and easy food, you will become cheap, quick and easy, developing an impatience with respect to existence itself. The contemporary attitude towards food is one in which is relegated in favor of an act deemed worthy of one's attention. There is even a culture with regard to finding good videos to watch whilst one is eating, as if literally fueling one's body and enjoying the flavors of various foods wasn't enough. People will obviously state that I'm some reactionary – 'Oh, you think it's ridiculous that people might want to watch TV or listen to something whilst eating?' – well, yes and no. No, I don't think it's *ridiculous* per se, however, I do think it's done so from a position of privilege. And so also, yes, yes I do think it's ridiculous, it's ridiculous that we've got to a state of affairs where if one is eating that isn't the act which is actually primarily in their thought. Such a thought process, wherein the food itself is no longer the primary part of the meal, is a great outline for the way in which modernity tends to strangle and control your most basic functions, turning them into something which changes your existence into a fairground attraction.

Everything in modernity *must* be entertainment, *or*; must at least be *able* to be entertainment. Your morning commute to work is filled with radio, podcasts or music, a short walk anywhere is done with headphones in as to cancel out the world, eating dinner is done in front of the TV or with something on in the background, each item of consumption has an addition which makes it in some ways 'fun', your work break is filled with biscuits and tea, your most basic functions have been gamified into empty habits for the sake of a dopamine rush, everything is logged, everything is projected and everything is beckoned to the crowds for approval. At all times, one must be entertained, for if they are not being entertained they are having a

bad time, and that – within modernity – is a fate worse than death. You'll notice that all those things I listed, commuting/walking to work, going on a walk, eating meals, taking some time out/having a break etc. these are all the simple pleasures of life which can be done for free, and not only that, are actually both free *and* enjoyable. Modernity, of course, tends to hate this. The idea that one could go out and be fulfilled and content without purchase, or without purchasing something which they then attend to as if it was *part of* them.

Food is the greatest example of this, this compulsion of modernity to make you believe you never have enough, that nothing is enough until every sense is absolutely overflowing with data and information that you can hardly think. Modernity *adores* noise, for without noise one might actually be able to anchor themselves, think for themselves and finally attend to that which they *actually* need/want. We have been removed from everything vital to us, everything which maintains the simplicity is stripped away, for the purpose of trying to prove to us that we don't want simplicity, but we want complexity, with all its trinkets, additions and extras. And this is what modernity wishes to prove to you with the overarching idea of entertainment, it is not enough to live a simple, quiet and calm life, one must be entertained all the time; one must in constant states of emotional pull and tug, as if to exist contently was a sin in itself, whereas the opposite is the truth. Modernity loves complexity because it's easy to get lost in it, it's easy to lose what exactly it was you originally wanted, if anything, and search endlessly for a desired object, other or ism, that accursed thing which will finally satisfy the perpetual itch put upon you by modernity.

The Modernity Mindset – Part 6: Identity

One of the most important quotes – at least in my opinion – to come from all of the Hermitix interviews is one by Dmitry Orlov about identity, to paraphrase, ‘Most people these days are simply a collection of their vices, if you took them away, what exactly would you have left?’. Now, I don’t want to fill out the meaning of Orlov’s quote and try articulate exactly what he means by this, but I will use it as a springboard for my own thoughts on identity, especially as I think the quote is the perfect encapsulation of where we’ve gone wrong with respect to how we ‘identify’ ourselves.

A vice is generally considered to be a weakness in someone’s character, excessive drinking, over eating, a hot temper, sassy-ness etc. I guess it could be fairly subjective as to what one considers a vice, but I would add a consumer purchases and empty virtues to the list of things which help build an identity. The definition of identity isn’t exactly helpful either:

1. The fact of being who or what a person or thing is.
2. The characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is.

Maybe it’s this rather loose signifier, which is reliant on increasingly looser signifiers, which is the reason our-selves have become a bit unstuck. When someone first meets someone, after saying the general pleasantries such as ‘Nice to meet you’ and ‘How are you’ the next question is generally ‘So, what do you do?’ or (though more rarely) ‘What do you do for a living?’ It’s of no surprise that this is our go-to question really, we all work, and our day-to-day jobs take up the majority of our existence, often taking up far more time than that which we spend with our families or friends. So to a certain extent, one can see why one might make work and identity synonymous. The problem is of course, we have mistaken the way in which we earn money with our very being. Our work-life has become our existence, outside of this we have a few add-ons, but these are seen as quirks and additions as opposed to actual characteristics.

Let's push Orlov's idea to its limit. Remove your consumptive habits, your quirks, outgoings, vices, social virtues, brands, aesthetics and material likes, and what do you have left? Where is your self beneath all of these things? Of course, one could argue that these things do culminate in what we generally consider to be a self or identity, and yet, many of them are so empty at their heart, that our very identities are riding on nothingness. I'm going to sound a tad romantic or soppy here, but I don't particularly care, and I think it's telling that these are often used as accusations as opposed to thought positions, anyway... When you ask someone what they're into they'll usually state they're into a certain genre of film, like a certain cuisine, enjoy certain brands or makes etc. and outline their very existence via various material and consumptive habits. When one is asked this question, of 'what it is they are into...' what happened to stating pastimes and functions outside of material, consumptive patterns? Sure, walking could be given as a rather cliché example, but what about sitting in front of a lake, or drawing trees, or reading old French texts, anything really, our identities have become constrained by the limitations of what is considered normal within Western consumerist society. Maybe there's little more to this piece than that, do not allow your-self and who you consider yourself to be to be constrained via material limits, especially material limits of consumerism.

This isn't anything new of course, people have always held to certain idea of normality or social etiquette, it's nice to be accepted and it would a lie to say otherwise. But it's not a question of acceptance; it's a question of submission. Most, if not all modern identities are submission to a big-Other, or a they, or an elusive herd mentality which haunts everything, but it's only our own acceptance that this haunt actually exists which keeps us from exploring possible alternatives within life. An unconscious attachment to an abstract fluxing ideal which supposedly resides in all social functions, events, processes and happenings. As if at all moments in life we're collectively trying to impress the Other collective, which always eludes and outflanks us, and as such, our journey towards some form of coherent identity never ends, we're always reliant on the next item or purchase to bolster our belief in our *self*, one which we deep down understand to have very little supporting it.

Ultimately we live in a highly atomized society. Everyone and everything is as atomized as possible, fragmented and splintered into the smallest controllable lumps, the smallest morsel which capital can latch onto and control. It's difficult to outline what modern identity is because it's so utterly dispersed, it has deconstructed any overarching value into a useless pulp; God, family, nation, state or nature are good examples of values which people used to put *before* themselves, but now nothing is put *before* the self and everything comes after our individual purchases, wants, needs and desires, the modern identity is one of an *a priori* selfishness. We are reluctant to give into the idea of something greater than us precisely because it *is* greater, and thus proves our notion of individuality is rather superfluous and is something we're not as in control of as we'd like to think. I could blither on and on here, but I think the premise is so clear, once we begin to look, what exactly is it which our identities are built on? And if it is as I argue, that there's very little there of substance, then I have little more to write about here, so actually, I think a practice would be of more worth here...

Think on what exactly it is that makes you *you*. This is one of the biggest questions one could ask themselves, so it might take some time. But I would begin with your recent purchases and *why* it was you bought them, what compelled you? What do they actually say about you? In what way do they inform your identity? Keep going until you reach a block, is there anything there that can't be moved? That hasn't been built or created by some Other force?

It's Ok to Not Care About Politics

During recent research into the life of Machiavelli something began to become quite clear to me. We weren't always, universally, socially, communally or even personally, political. That is to say, it's only recently that it's become commonplace to declare oneself as left, right, Republican, Democrat, Labour, Conservative, Centrist, Reactionary, Socialist, Red, Blue, x-pilled, y-pilled etc. In terms of human history this way of *being* – as a political-being, or even as homo-politicus – is *extremely* new. The very idea of a left/right split/spectrum comes from where people sat during the French Revolution, when members of the National Assembly divided themselves into those in support of the king (right) and supporters of the Revolution (left). Arguably this is one and only time that the idea of a left/right spectrum has ever made sense. Since then *both* 'directions' signal virtue to various camps and striate one into relatively specific ways of thinking. The year we're roughly talking about here is 1789, that's round that all up and say – for clarity's sake – we've been political 'beings' for just over 200 years. Once again, humans in their current evolutionary iteration have been around for 200,000 years. So we've had this political chip on our shoulders for roughly 0.1% of our entire lifetime. Of course, you could argue that for a large amount of that time we haven't exactly had the infrastructure to allow for what we now commonly understand as politics or political economy, but we *have* had that for a few thousand years at least, so even going by that metric, the notion of a political-being or of a political-human is still quite new.

It seems to me the reason for the original (non) position, wherein man wasn't apolitical, nor anti-political, but simply detached from the political, wasn't due to some oppression (though some would argue otherwise) [1], nor was it really to do with any ignorance; it was largely because in relation to man's daily life, the specific political on-goings didn't matter to him. I would argue that this is still true, we're just all caught up in status and popularity games.

The very idea that within contemporary (Western) society one could be ‘detached’ from politics seems absurd, that’s how tight of a grasp it has on our lives, a grasp which is ever-tightened by the popular rhetoric surrounding politics. Society in general seems to unconsciously believe that they now have some kind of duty to *be* political, they must be in a certain camp, they must have certain opinions on various matters, and most of all, they must *care* in a specifically political way. I’m here to say that this way of thinking and being is complete bullshit, and it slowly leads one to misery and submission. There are a lot of factors as to why someone might feel compelled to constantly *be* political, largely emanating from one’s perpetual attachment to media. The two most heinous forms of media are – of course – social and mainstream. Primarily because, once you actually begin to think about what these terms actually mean, like most things in modernity, they no longer make any sense whatsoever. Let’s begin with ‘social media’.

We all apparently ‘know’ what social media is, which is another way of saying we understand it. I’ll admit, I don’t really understand social media, and I never have. The basic reasons as to why it’s so popular are of course clear, on average humans quite like attention, they quite like having a say, and they quite like boasting about their lives. However, I would ask this? If it wasn’t *for* social media, and its invasive societally pressuring structures, would you actually *want* to express certain opinions? Would you even have them? Would you have even thought about them? Maybe you would, maybe you wouldn’t, be honest with yourself. If no one was looking, and you had no proof anyone *had* looked, would you expend energy on the various political and social tasks you do? Ok, so this then begs the question, why the hell *do* we want to express these opinions? Well, for that you need a mainstream current which tells you the correct, conventional and confirmative way to *be*. Enter the mainstream media. Such an idea of a ‘mainstream’ is already idiotic. There can’t be such a thing because we all live in different areas of the world, within different cultures, within different families, with different values, within different contexts, and so, the job the mainstream media then is to subsume all of these alternative ways of being and differing value systems into one relatively homogenous lump, which is then there’s to mold as they wish. I’d insert here Ted Kaczynski’s ‘critique’ of ‘multiculturalism’, though it’s less a critique and more of a

deconstruction. Kaczynski's point is that there isn't really any such thing as 'multiculturalism' as it's sold to us. The overt idea of multiculturalism is that multiple diverse cultures live amongst one another, learn from each other and share their cultures for the betterment of all. Kaczynski makes it clear that this is *not* what happens within contemporary multiculturalism, all that really happens is that every culture is subsumed into the exact same culture of middle-class consumerist aspiration, and perhaps allowed to retain any cultural aesthetic which might be deemed profitable by their new culture of consumerist aspiration. The exact same thing happens with mainstream media. One begins with a variety of views, opinions, values, outlooks, perspectives and contexts which have been grown organically, from their local surroundings and upbringing, these are then pushed through the conformity thresher of mainstream media, cherry-picked for their applicability for submission, and what's left are deemed dangerous, archaic, bad, fascist, radical, silly, absurd, weird, not-normal, odd or perhaps just too common-sensical for them to remain.

Now, the *exact* same process happens with the idea of a 'political-human' with a few minor alterations. Much like homo-criminalis, or homo-economicus, once the suffix is assumed *a priori* as a *way* of being – man *can* be a criminal, or man *can* be economical. There's no longer such a thing as a man detached entirely from criminality or the economy, there is only a man who is *not* a criminal, or a man who acts within the economy in a *different* way than what is preferred. The exact same thing happens with political man. Once a political-outlook, a political-perspective or a political-reality is assumed as the given reality, everything is then filtered through politics in some manner. Then there is no longer such a thing as a entirely apolitical man, only a man who is deemed ignorant of politics, someone who is seen as turning a blind eye or as simply too lazy to investigate that which they *should* be. The language here is the problem. Foucault makes this point clear with homo-criminalis and homo-economicus, once the ontology is taken as a given, no one is *not* of it, but simply seen as not part of a certain section of it. Men are not men, they are either criminals or *not*-criminals, we are not ourselves we are either economizing or *not*-economizing, either way, we're still tethered to a way of being we had no say in.

Well I'm here to say that this is complete and utter crap. If you want to go get involved in politics, then be my guest, but do NOT assume that just because I don't care about a certain topic, opinion or perspective that I am immediately the antagonist of that position. There is a difference between a hostile apathy, in which one truly doesn't care about the plight of others and a detachment within which one simply is not involved. Of course, any *involved* are going to disagree. 'It's your duty!' they will cry. 'Do you not care about the world!' they will shriek. 'How can you just do nothing?' they will plead. Actually, I am doing something, I'm not expending my energy on a status game which largely exists to inflate various egos and create jobs. Lest we forget that politicians are *workers*, to be a politician is a *job*, and by the looks of it, quite a cushy one at that.

Being *detached* from politics isn't *not caring* about those things you left behind, in fact, it's arguably the opposite. As soon as a charitable organization, a communal effort or a group event becomes politicized, I am instantly skeptical of its agenda, why? Well, because since when did helping others, loving thy neighbor or creating something helpful *have* to be seen through a political lens. Call me a sappy-sod, but buying a homeless person some food, donating to a local charity or helping out in a local event isn't – and doesn't have to be – a specifically political move or motivation, and if it is, you're doing so to cater to your own narcissism. What *are* these acts then? Well, they are what they are. You help someone because they need help, you do something because it needs doing, you create because something needs creating; once sincere acts are filtered through the malicious gauze of politics they are usually lost entirely, abused into a self-congratulatory mutation.

Ok, maybe you're with me, but you're starting to think... 'Ok, so what do I...*do*? 'Isn't that the point? Up until now, for many people, each and every act they undertook was done primarily from a political position as opposed to the multitude of other (healthier) perspectives that exist. What do you do? Do what you'd like and what you understand to be right.

“Ah yes James, but if we ‘do nothing’ as you propose, wont we be simply bolstering support for whichever party is in the running to win?” You're still thinking politically, why does it *actually* matter to you? If I support X

I've entered into a system which is so unfathomably corrupt, confused and rife with personality that I will never *truly* know what it is my vote is doing. It is NOT apathy, ignorance or superiority. It is a detachment. It is one unclipping themselves from a perspective they never asked for in the first place. The years upon years spent drooling over the latest news reports, the latest facts and figures, and for what? What has it brought you but further misery? Has the world truly changed, or has it trundled along as you thought it most likely would from your specific global context? I'm no longer interested in politics in the same way I am no longer interested in shipping reports...I never was, they are in absolutely no way connected to the way in which my life will turn out, that power and that energy resides in exactly one place, my flesh. If you wish to hand over all responsibility for your life to some vague entity called 'politics' go ahead, lose yourself.

“AH! So you DO exist within politics!” Yep. I'm not an idiot; politics will and does affect my life. Certain decisions certain people make will enact changes which *will* affect *my* life. How I go on to interact with those changes is down to me. But those changes happen in much the same way a tree falling into my garden 'happens', I deal with it when it arrives. I WILL NOT expend my finite energy on various status games and virtuous hiccups for the sake of retaining the idea of a self whose sole purpose is to please the norm, and *appear* as a good person.

There is a great hall within a forest. There are parties in the hall 24/7, the noise never stops, and the commotion never dwindles. Many people enter, very few leave. I was born in the hall and assumed its reality as the only reality. One day my eye caught the sunlight beaming in from outside, it was beautiful, sublime. I caught it only for a moment, before an elder lurched and dragged me from the hole in the wall. As I grew all I did was stand by the hole in the wall, looking out into a vague green and light space, a space which was hostile yet inviting. One day I tried to leave. I walked a few meters from the hall, retreating quickly to its comforts out of terror. The elders smirked and welcomed me back. The brief moments I had spent outside the hall stayed with me. It's all I thought of. Many days I would try to create my own wilderness within the hall, to some degree of success but never exact. One day I left for good, out of boredom. The elders forgot of me. I resided just a few miles from the hall. Dithering here and there, doing

as I wished. Some days I thought of burning the hall down, setting others free. But I quickly realised that many had their homes there, and it would be wrong for me to force my opinion on them. And so I moved further away, as far as I could, but every time I looked over my shoulder the hall was always there. I came to adjust to its noise, to work with my thoughts and understand the hall for what it was. Eventually I ventured back, realizing there were some positives to the hall, but it was simply not for me. I said hello to the elders and they were suspicious. I left once more, residing in a camp of my own making just a few miles from the hall, learning to live with its hegemony of comfort. Most days I did as I wished, the hall in the back of my mind as that which I never wanted to become. I lived outside of it, detached from its way of being.

It is not a question of *not* caring about politics, because to actively *not* care *is* to care. It is a question of entrance and exit. You were made to enter a perspective and you have the right to exit it also. To criticize the crowd is to be *of* the crowd, to criticize consumption is to consume such criticism; to be apolitical is to be more political than all.

One day I went back to the hall, delved deep into its basement. There sat a lonely old man, spewing bitter vitriol, submissive demands and revolutionary appeals, he never stopped yapping, sordid and cruel. I sat for some days and listened; I took in much data and retained no substance of use. I knew he was there, and I knew through the floor his words echoed throughout the hall, with differing parts protruding into different sections. I left him alone and left the hall once more. I occasionally think of that old man, unchanging, bitter and alone.

[1] What can one say of the man who simply wishes to go about his day, tend to his crops and family, create art, read great literature, fish for his supper, arise to the rhythms of nature and quite frankly *go about his day*, thinking not of *himself*, but of his immediate life, of that which affects him, moment to moment. If you view such a man as oppressed, ignorant or apathetic, then I would say that the parasite of the political is deep within you.

The Battle Against the Hyperpresent

“Because to tell the truth, nothing happens anymore. Nothing any longer has the time to happen. There is no duration left for anything to unfold in. Nothing can anchor itself in the world long enough to make sense. While the present still has a duration, the hyperpresent no longer does.” – After Death, Francois J Bonnet

It’s a feeling I imagine many of the listeners of my podcast feel on an almost daily basis, myself included. In fact, I think it’s an age-old feeling which once only used to appear in momentary life-events, but which now appears almost constantly throughout the passage of everyday existence. The feeling that everything is passing you by, and yet, you can’t really discern what ‘everything’ is. There was never time to work with it, to homogenize it in some form, to play around with it, to mess about, to truly *feel* or *think* about it. At most one seems only to get the chance to have a tertiary glance at a single iota of existence before it trails off into confusion.

Bonnet’s ‘hyperpresent’ is much alike the ‘nanopresent’ I wrote of in an earlier piece. The increasing slicing up of time into smaller and smaller pieces, until all one is left with is a nano-second of time, not enough to ever feel informed. The situation seems helpless, how can one battle the ensuing mass of accelerated time and come out the other side still sane? Unfortunately, it’s once again a question of definitions. Those who are willingly entering into this carousel of time – which can only be defined as schizophrenic – are those who we should deem insane, for with sanity comes stability, with insanity a constant turbulence. This is why I define the time we live in as schizophrenic. For if we take just three common symptoms of schizophrenia: multiple (often conflicting) identifications, inability to articulate meaning due to excess signification, and an accelerated pace towards the supposedly new – we can see that the time of modernity is completely schized.

In an instant nothing can grow. We exist in a paradoxical phenomenological time which seeks to destroy its own essence *as* a temporality. Modernity

wishes for time to be space. As Beings with the apparent functions to interpret data we believe ourselves to always have one-over modernity, as if because we push the buttons, this truly means we are in charge. I would ask you of course to look around, to...look out your windows! Is the man who sits in a daily traffic jam, *raging* at his predicament, is he in charge? Is the woman slumped in-front of a PC screen 8 hours a day doing accounts ‘in charge’? Are the collective sleeping masses who scroll through addictive apps all day ‘in charge’? The answer is of course obvious, and I mean this not as some neo-Luddite screed against technology.

Each day presents us with a mass of conflicting information and paradoxes which we seek to untangle, and yet, the only means to untangle this web is the means which we’re given *by* the said paradoxes. In modernity one is entering into loops of identity at all times. Modernity wishes for you to lose *yourself*. Each day also presents us with such an overwhelming quantity of signifiers and symbols, which we quite literally lack the ability to ever correlate anything given to us within a single instant. We are always left with a decision between ignorance or the labyrinth. And yet, this inability to correlate anything and everything given to us is *also* accelerating. When we look to the past we find something already changed, when we look to the future we see only static, and when we look to the present it has already disappeared from beneath us. Our ontology is floating dangerously, allowing itself to be pulled back and forth by the wills and whims of techonomic demiurge. And yet, I still believe, it can be beaten.

I think all can be incorporated, and I also believe that any idea or ideology which makes you emotionally hostile – as opposed to intellectually inquisitive – towards your surroundings is one which is both skewed and dangerous. I write often of ‘Exiting Modernity’, yet, this is *not* synonymous with hating modernity, or revolting *against* modernity. If one revolts in the manner of aggression against an addiction they find themselves being drawn in by its power. If one is exerting excess energy towards/against the modern world it has already won! It is – generally speaking – best to become informed of your enemy’s tactics and put your energy towards shielding yourself, as opposed to using your energies in an offensive. A good defense is a great offence. Let modernity *try* and take you, let it squander its precious resources on someone who is ready for it.

How does one begin the ‘Battle Against the Hyperpresent’ then? What are the aims, objectives and strategies of the enemy? Hell, who *is* the enemy? The enemy is clever in that it foremost wishes to avoid definition. Some of us have locked onto the word ‘modernity’ as an encapsulation of that feeling, ‘something is wrong and I can’t put my finger on it’. There are other names found within other traditions. But for me, modernity works well because it doesn’t attempt to remove what’s happening *from* what’s happening. It’s all very well saying that what’s going on right now is part of some much larger plan or goal, but what can we *do* with what we *have* right *now*? This is where any practical battle can begin. We have little in the way of material, for that has largely been co-opted by modernity as a means to satisfying artificially created desire. But we do have something, we have ourselves, we have our *attention*.

Attention for me is where any great battle begins. If you re-read what I just wrote about how modernity works, how it manages to infiltrate into every nook-and-cranny of daily life, one will notice that in almost all instances it is attempting to degrade our ability to *pay* attention. It seeks to have us believe that we can have everything at a moment’s notice, without thought for payment, patience or production. If one does not pay for something they will not *value* it. If one does not *work* at something they will not *empathize* with it. And if one does not *produce* something they will not *understand* it. Modernity removes each and every single one of these factors by way of credit, addictive mechanisms and consumerism.

Attention is (firstly) the means to assess your situation. What are you *paying* attention to? Because when one is *paying* attention they are paying with something of their own, be it money or time – though it’s usually the latter. Our battle against the hyperpresent begins then with an inner-battle with the Will. *Once again* it is a question of questioning and being attentive to that which pulls you around. Why is it that life seems to be passing you by? Well it may very well be because you simply aren’t paying attention to life. When was the last time you truly remember savoring a meal? Paying attention to the taste, texture and *feel* of the food, allowing it to be more than some matter which fires off random chemicals within your biology. Or what about a simple walk? When was the last time you truly paid attention

to your surroundings? Truly noticing the trees and pathways you take on a daily basis.

A great practical resource for this is – and I'll be using his work a lot in the coming months I believe – what George Gurdjieff called 'self-remembering'. Put simply, one is to remember themselves as much as possible. A portion of your conscious action should be of *being conscious* of being conscious...of *being*. Self-remembering and being-present are not the same, though abstractly they serve the same purpose. When one becomes overly emotional, overly attached, or identified with some idea of brand to the extent of a personal automatism, they have lost their self...they have forgotten themselves. What is *this* which takes us away from ourselves I do not know, for Gurdjieff it was one of many Is, one of many internal personalities which seek to derail our authentic way of being. When the Hyperpresent begins to attend to your reality, begins to barrage you with the minute and incessant comings-and-goings of modernity, do not let your *self* be pulled by that which you never asked for in the first place. Remember to self-remember. Remember yourself, focus on *being*. Whether or not there is an emotion, a thought, a presence, an analysis, there is still *something* observing, and that which is observing (the Observer) you should turn your attention towards. Become part of yourself by becoming your own Master.

“Not one of you has noticed the most important thing that I have pointed out to you,” he said. “That is to say, not one of you has noticed that you do not remember yourselves.” (He gave particular emphasis to these words.) “You do not feel yourselves; you are not conscious of yourselves. With you, ‘it observes’ just as ‘it speaks,’ ‘it thinks,’ ‘it laughs.’ You do not feel: I observe, I notice, I see. Everything still ‘is noticed,’ ‘is seen.’ ... In order really to observe oneself one must first of all remember oneself.” (He again emphasized these words.) “Try to remember yourselves when you observe yourselves and later on tell me the results. Only those results will have any value that are accompanied by selfremembering. Otherwise you yourselves do not exist in your observations. In which case what are all your observations worth?” – In Search of the Miraculous, P.D. Ouspensky

The Battle Against the Hyperpresent cannot be fought on its own battlefield, but within the inner processes of a single man. One can disallow

the hyperpresent to possess them. One can hold fast against the ensuing waves by being-present and attentive, questioning and stepping-back from all that tries to attack. Slowly but surely, man bolsters himself against the wave of the uncertain, anchoring his remembrance of his self in reality, beginning a new from a position of the authentic.

Everything Happens. No One Does Anything.

*“People are machines. Machines have to be blind and unconscious, they cannot be otherwise, and all their actions have to correspond to their nature. **Everything happens.** No one does anything. ‘Progress’ and ‘civilization,’ in the real meaning of these words, can appear only as the result of **conscious** efforts. They cannot appear as the result of unconscious mechanical actions. And what conscious effort can there be in machines? And if one machine is unconscious, then a hundred machines are unconscious, and so are a thousand machines, or a hundred thousand, or a million. And the unconscious activity of **a million machines** must necessarily result in destruction and extermination. It is precisely in unconscious involuntary manifestations that all evil lies. You do not yet understand and cannot imagine all the results of this evil. But the time will come when you will understand.”*

– *In Search of the Miraculous* – P.D. Ouspensky (quoting George Gurdjieff), p52

Here Gurdjieff is discussing why the destruction of war *must be* to P.D. Ouspensky, his reasoning, in short, is that *Everything happens. No one does anything.* Now, there are a number of specifically ‘Gurdjieffian’ reasons as to why this is, but very roughly it is because everyone is asleep. Everyone exists in a waking sleep. Of course, when you mention this to people they push back against such an idea – “How can I be asleep!? I’m conscious of all my actions!” They are lulled into a false-sense of security by their *knowledge* of what certain words apparently mean. To be conscious, for men of the Western world, is to supposedly have will, or to have willed the actions which happen to them. This is their average belief, so average in fact, that one can consider it the default position of the Western mind. We are in control, what we do, *we do*. This is a predominantly Western *belief*. Here’s an exercise for those of you who doubt this, those who still believe that they are truly the *master* of their ‘own’ mind, of their self. If one is walking from point A to B, or driving from A to B, I would ask one to try

and focus their attention *solely* on the task at hand. If one is walking, then one should focus their attention on the process of walking itself, and primarily the feeling in their feet. If one is driving, one should focus on the position of the car and their *control* of the car. Now, what one will find, is that very quickly their mind wanders off. It begins to *consider* things, *identify* with things, and indulge in various fantasies. All of a sudden you will try refocusing your attention to the task at hand, but you may have been ‘away’ in your fantasies and considerations for minutes at a time...where have you been? Why, you have been asleep! This is what Gurdjieff understood as ‘sleep’, a waking sleep in which one is pulled around by various unconscious mechanical actions which are driven by external events and happenings.

“There is no progress whatever. Everything is just the same as it was thousands, and tens of thousands, of years ago. The outward form changes. The essence does not change. Man remains just the same. ‘Civilized’ and ‘cultured’ people live with exactly the same interests as the most ignorant savages. Modern civilization is based on violence and slavery and fine words. But all these fine words about ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ are merely words.” – p51

Gurdjieff’s quote here can be placed under the saying *‘Nothing new under the sun’*, the world repeats itself, time is a flat circle. Have it as you will, it has been *noticed* time and time again, that time *itself* is always *again*. And as the ‘outward form’ changes, so too does the language used to define it, language which can largely be considered synonymous with the form itself. The definition many of us have landed on with respect to what is the external catalyst of contemporary sleep is ‘modernity’. And so I hate to state it, but modernity is nothing new. As there has always been happiness, contentment and strife, there too, has always been modernity and/or sleep alongside consciousness and/or true civilization. So I would make it clear before I go further, those devices which I utilize as clarification of my piece here are nothing new in *essence*, but in attempting to peel away their outward form and reveal the Seed of Sleep beneath, one can begin to Work at modernity.

Let me take the contemporary cliché of criticism, social media. Many will begin to already think – ‘Yes, we know, social media bad, dopamine rush, depression...we know, we know...’ – and I can sympathize with these statements for the fact they are repeated over and over. Yet, we rarely ask *why* they are repeated so often. Of course the answer is because nothing has been done about the problem. Modern man does not fix his problems, he simply finds more sophisticated ways to articulate them, without ever attempting to dig to their root. The very fact such criticisms are repeated is proof in-itself that man is a mechanical being; are we not told, and do we not have knowledge in abundance of that which is bad for us? And yet we still partake without thought or action, this is mechanical insanity. We all believe to *understand* what social media is, but in truth we only have *knowledge* of it, for if one understood, truly, they would cease. We believe to *get* its malicious mechanics, its abusive feedback loops, the fact it promotes narcissism and solipsism, that it begets division and hatred, forms camps and borders, and at its ruthless heart, beats an artificially intelligent addiction which latches to one’s worst attributes and characteristics. In short, social media is built to *use* the worst of you as a means for productive-consumptive output.

Yet what are any of these traits but indulgence? We like to *believe* we are in control, and yet can see we are not. We indulge in the continual debasement of our attention and energy; get emotionally giddy as it’s squandered to the ignorant masses. We indulge in its narcissistic promotion, revel in slowly becoming a greater center of attention; a center that becomes *defined* by various artificially created boundaries. The social media user does not post for enjoyment, they enjoy the indulgent masochism of its dopamine exhaustion, they indulge in it as they do a deep autumn depression, with an unconsciously mechanical action which draws them from their potential as a Being. Stripped to the core there is nothing new here, what is found once more is man’s lust for sleep. Behind everything modernity has to offer is the machinations which beget sleep, they are neither more intense nor more complex from previous generations, for the motor of sleep evolves with its socio-cultural context. One cannot escape the possibility of sleep, only be aware of it.

When one finds themselves wishing to scream to the wind ‘Why oh why must men be this way! Why do they not pay attention!’ what one is likely beginning to see is the propensity for sleep. As for the reason for war, for wearing a mask, for taking a knee, for watching TV, for that which one *find themselves doing*, for that *which happens*, sleep is the culprit. Waking-sleep, the motor of eternal modernity. When one looks around and believes nothing happens anymore, that time has somehow been lost to the wind, and that the supposed feelings and experiences they had as a child have since left, this belief is not in vain, but it is misplaced. Such a belief only makes sense if one believes in progress, if they believe that the time they are now in is somehow *different* to other times. It is not. Nothing happens anymore because we have always been asleep, as soon as man was conscious he wished for sleep, and so sleep arrived. You are not in the belly of some whale; you are not part of some *actual* operation to lobotomize you.

For there are two sides to reality – One’s internal life of which *you have control*, and the external world of events, which you cannot control. The weather is an external event, the way in which one *reacts to* and *considers* the weather is an internal event, if one is angry or upset at the rain, this is an action of which *they are solely responsible*. The same applies to all that ‘modernity’ puts on one’s plate. You might feel yourself to be drowning in a cacophonously schizophrenic clutter of noise, media and signals, but is this largely because you truly wish only to indulge in it further? As one indulges in their negative emotions, modern man indulges in his apparent plight as an alienated atomized being.

The average being of modernity is a human knee-deep in quicksand, scrambling lower and lower. Listen as you pass them by to their cries, whines and complaints, watch as they roll around in the very filth they criticize, feel the energy that rises in them as they describe their fate within the – supposedly – bleak existence of consumer culture. My friends, analyze their actions as they *state* their hatred of the sand, as with your very own senses you witness them partaking further and further in its engulfing flux!

Change is Always Arriving

For emphasis of the point I seek to make here, I thought on including many pages at the beginning of this letter, detailing how, in the very near future, the world – and yes, that includes the *Western* world, *your* world – will be changing. I could have written a multitude of repetitions of those processes and limitations which go by the common names of peak oil, overpopulation, climate change, resource scarcity, economic collapse and various other glaringly obvious empirical concerns which we shall all have to *face* as the years swiftly go by. And yet Clod, I decided against it, what use, I thought, to once more drag an entire herd of burning horses from a fire, only for them to declare it not real and trot back into the flames. There were other reasons too, for there are many other books on the previously mentioned topics, all of which do a far greater job than I ever could of *detailing* our prospective future, many of them I imagine you have read, and some of which – as you will know – have made it into my bibliography. Yet, beyond my reasons for omission resided a deeper trait, the kernel I in truth sought to address. For as I *painstakingly* researched the proofs of our future demise, I noted that what I honestly put to script was various descriptions of *change*. As I sculpted the future from a collection of papers and studies, I felt my language begin to take the shape of anomaly, as if what I described was intended to seem different from what had appeared before and what will come after. And though in truth, many things which arrive from the future will seem, on the surface, different, what remains will be *flux* itself, and it is this I sought emphasise. Change is *always* approaching, for change *is* whatever arrives, and, if you hadn't noticed, change is *approach* itself.

There were pages upon pages Clod, about *how* what is collectively considered to be *normal* will undergo a complete transformation, one which shall be deemed, in quite the panic, extremely negative. But it will not be due to any specific symptom or effect of the change that causes people to damn it, the mere fact of change *itself* shall do this. For the West never learnt that key lesson handed down to us by the *great* Heraclitus-

“You could not step twice into the same river.”

My dear Heraclitus, how we have forsaken you, with special attention directed at those academics who seek only to confuse what is but a simple truth. Pay attention now Clod, within this reality of flux, which *is* reality itself, one should not focus on any specific river, specific passing, or specific event, in doing so *one* is missing the moon by looking at the finger point at it. As one steps into the river they are entering into flux, into change. *They* are not the same, the *river* is not the same, *time* is not the same, *all* has changed, and nothing will be as it once *was*; only a pig-headed bunch of pedantic pragmatists such as Westerners could confuse ancient metaphysical wisdom for material vindication. The river is not *yours*, it cannot be *avoided*, and no, you do not have the choice *not* to step into it, for such an illusion of refusal is itself a choice. In its reverence of objects, data and identity, the West clings to the veil of the empirical as proof of stability and security, of comfort. In their chaotic attempts of arguing for all that is external they miss the substance dissipating before them. Placing itself firmly in historical time, the West confuses time-quantification with control itself.

And so you can see, there would have been no *use* in me putting forth details of various potential demises, if the process unto which all demise happens is ignored as if it were myth. For the specifics of *how* things will change is of no worry to those who refuse to accept change in its entirety. My lesson is not of knowledge, of *this* into *that*, but of understanding, this *will* change. The underlying fear and anxiety buried deep between these words, utilizes the illusion of normalcy and permanence as its foundation. If, we are to take *fear* as primarily based on uncertainty, then surely, our course of action should not be to attempt the impossible correlations of the mind as to try attain certainty, but, forthwith, to render unto the Universe that which is its own, and never once ours, that which goes by the name of *chance*, *accident*, *fate* or even *destiny*. Life is only unpredictable and unfair if you believe that their antonyms are your birth-right, which they are most certainly not.

You likely do not realise, dear Clod, how deep your *disbelief* in change goes. Perhaps one time I shall lecture you on death, but it is abhorrent to the

people of your world for the mere fact that it is *unavoidable* change. I know what you are thinking, that I am being dramatic, that people of your world are fine with change, they know of it and accept it as everyone has to. And I would agree Clod, that yes, the large majority of people indeed do *know* of change, but as for the *acceptance*, that is another matter. The trajectory of the average Western life is one vectored at the fantasy of societal, cultural and worldly stasis. What is a career but a *hope*? And it is within this psychological development of desired permanence that *avoidance* arises. If it is known that change is around every corner, then any culture which adores static seeks only to never peak its head around any corner, and yet, there is a further problem when one buries their head in the sand in this manner, the corner *itself* approaches. And during its approach there is widespread panic, which quickly settles, and why does it settle? Well, that great opium of the people, conscious ignorance of course.

Society constructs such great ideals unto which everyone relies for security, safety and stability; affordable shelter, unlimited resources and energy, an everlasting home in the universe, a controlled economy, a purposeful education system, fulfilment of desires via material purchase, a historic foundation, maximum freedom, a democratic *choice*, the acquisition of anything one could want, unalloyed entertainment, a state that cares... *normality*. The ideal is normality, and normality is the ideal.

I do hope you're thinking back to my letter on definitions Clod, for, I shall ask *you* a question, what *is* normal? And in what way is it interlocked with one's understanding of change? I have mentioned sovereignty a few times thus far in these letters, but what of it here?

He is sovereign who understands the impossibility of true stasis, and furthermore, understands that *from* such an understanding he will become the paradoxical outsider, stationary in his acceptance of change; he impacts the modern world as an uninvited reminder of both the impossibility of *the normal*, and mortality itself.

Maybe you will need specifics, but I hope not dear Clod, for you have persevered further than most already. What more do you need here?

Teleology and Progress

Firstly I will address your request for ‘personal motivations’. As to why I *bother* to write to you, it should become clear to you, in time, that neither I, nor you, nor anyone else can ever answer that question, nor should we wish to. But, this *prying* does drag up a little bit of superficiality in you dear Clod, I mean, what does it matter as to why *I personally* decide to do this? It’s all about biographical details with you Western types, the assumption of gain, fame or fortune, and I truly desire none of these, and so, with those *reasons* out of the way, there is no answer I can give as to my ‘why’ which you will, at present, understand.

Secondly, let me address your brief note about my cynicism and scorn as you put it. If, in my letters thus far, I have made it seem as if I am bitter or pessimistic about the world before me then you are mistaken. I dare not try reading your mind, but perhaps it would be apt to consider this a projection? You are seeking answers, and it is far easier, and to an extent *nicer*, if there is something to rally *against* in your quest for truth. It is easy and simple to state certain things are bad without exploring them in themselves, and this attitude itself is a direct opposite of the faux-negativity of that which you wish to understand, namely, the modern world. As emotions become involved truth disappears, the process of *revealing* is stunted by *dreams*. But in answer to the question you have hidden in plain-sight – No, I do not *hate* the modern world, and if you had been paying attention, there is no recourse for me to hate it, for *it* only exists in the subjective constructions of various selves; therefore, if I was to hate or react to this elusive *thing*, it would be a reaction only towards that which I wished to *be there* so that I *could* hate it. Or, as the infamous anecdote regarding Dr Johnson’s latest publication goes:

“Mr. Johnson, we are glad that you have omitted the indelicate and objectionable words from your new dictionary.”

“What, my dears! Have you been searching for them?”

And finally dear Clod, I arrive at something of some worth, though I must admit I thought better of you, that there would be no need for specifics, and yet here we are. I shall continue on the topic of change, but focusing primarily on the topic as it is unconsciously taught amidst your world, here, I am sure, you can find some undeserved comfort. *If, you* are to understand change, you must understand *how* you understand time, and for this I turn once again, to terminology. Two terms in particular outline your conception of time, both legitimizing the other and propagating a culture of the intellectual sloth; I speak of *teleology* and *progress*.

Put simply, my dear Clod, teleology is a *reason for* something in relation to its end, purpose, or goal. The explanation of something not in terms of its journey, process or development, but in the purpose it *serves*. It is what we understand the finality of any process to be. The term is a combination of *telos*, meaning end, aim or goal, and *logos*, meaning explanation or reason. Teleology has been a hot-topic of philosophy ever since the days of Plato, and has been used in various ways by an extremely eclectic array of thinkers. I will try not to enter into any of the specific debates regarding teleology, and understand it as the end-goal of any action, function or undertaking. To give a very simple example, if two people were playing a game of catch, within one iteration of a throw of the ball to the next person, the teleology of the ball is to be caught by the other person, that is the ball's purpose within the confines of that action.

Very quickly you can see why things might get tricky with the definition of *a* teleology, what's to say what is finality to one person is to another? I may consider the teleology (end-point/purpose/goal) of a certain pursuit or duty to be X, and another person might consider it to be Y. So here I split teleology into two camps: Objective teleology and subjective teleology. The former, objective teleology, denotes the end-goal of something which cannot be changed *unless* altered by a subjectivity. I'm sure you are confused dear Clod, so let me explain.

The *inherent* teleology, or *telos*, of an acorn is to become a fully grown oak tree. That is its final purpose within existence itself, and given the correct conditions, that acorn will fulfill that end-goal. This we can consider an *objective* teleology. A *subjective* teleology on the other hand, is an

artificially created goal or purpose, a teleology which isn't intrinsic to the act or thing itself, but is placed there by a man, woman or possibly animal (though for now I'll stick to humans). For instance, there is nothing *inherent* to a tree which objectively means it will become a wooden chair, for that to happen, for the 'finality' of a tree to alter in such a way that it is to become a chair, a conscious being needs to sense or look at the tree and *subjectively decide* that will be its purpose.

Put very simply, an objective teleology is one which is inherent in the world, in nature and the environment, and unless artificially altered, will be carried out into its finality. A subjective teleology on the other hand is one which is artificially developed by a conscious being, it is an end-goal or purpose which is created externally to the object or act in question, and actively applied to it. As such, subjective teleologies apply to individuals or collectives, and not to absolutely everyone on Earth. Objective teleologies are unavoidable for all, the end-result of jumping will always be landing back on the ground, because we are all necessarily and objectively beholden to the teleology of gravity. When viewed from afar – metaphorically speaking – objective teleologies are primarily practical, and can be understood as limitations, goals and purposes which keep us from harm. Subjective teleologies on the other hand can often be quite the opposite, from developing a position that the goal in life is to conquer everyone, to believing that a certain path will absolutely fulfill all your desires, subjective goals can often cause more harm than good. When undertaken by an individual, of their own accord and agency, wherein their purpose harms or steals from no other, one should try to be less than critical of their endeavors, or, in the language of pub-wisdom '*Each to their own...*'

However, what happens when one's subjective teleology, *their* idea of what *their* end-goal or purpose in life should be, isn't *really* their own? What happens when various processes, institutions and figureheads make it *their* goal to have you unconsciously believe something is good for you when in fact it isn't? I'm not talking about people altering one's understanding of purpose so much that they truly avoid their most basic programming such as drinking water, or eating, though this is of course possible. What I'm talking about is far more nuanced, subtle and complex; the development of collective (subjective) teleologies that have the masses somehow believing

they truly *need* a useless gizmo or gadget, that have large swathes of society grinding their attention-span to a pulp for the sake of a few likes, conditioning which has many actively undertaking tasks and duties which are to their detriment, which people genuinely don't enjoy, thus entering us into the odd paradox whereby the masses unconsciously desire their own misery...

Of course, dear Clod, what one considers a genuine goal or purpose in life *is* extremely personal and, well, subjective. So I am not here to state that one *should* do X or Y, if one wishes to financially cripple themselves by buying a car they can't afford then they are welcome to, I only wish to unfold the potential maliciousness of the very concept of teleology itself, and how you might unknowingly be adhering to the goal of another, which in turn is causing you – unneeded – stress, despair and confusion. If you've ever thought to yourself after acquiring that 'dream' vehicle, perfect job or new phone, *why* your life isn't suddenly amazing, or by any measurable standard better, then you might have become a sucker for the *telos* of another. What can I say to you or others though Clod? Something as simple as – “Be sure what you're doing is what *you* want to be doing.” Is surely too obvious, surely it cannot be as simple as pointing out one's own hypocrisies? But it seems to be a little deeper; within those terms and signifiers I spoke of before, what do *success*, *happiness*, *contentment*, *prosperity*, *fortune*, *fulfilment* or *peace* mean to you? And what are they to another? For surely, even to another is extremely alike yourself, who was born in the same time and same country, who had all the supposed technological and educational benefits as yourself, even then, surely, there would stand two entirely different conceptions of what it means to be successful or happy in life? And so, I have to ask and perhaps even rhetorically hand it over to you, how can there be such terms as success or happiness, except to the extent that they simply outline a subjective teleology. The origin of such terms likely comes from ease of explanation, but throughout time they quickly latch to empirical reality or cultural context, and then, quickly, without realising it, one is stuck within the desires of the other.

I imagine if we are to speak of specifics again, then we will at once be speaking of subjective teleologies, but as made clear by your lack of

insight, I will likely need to point this out time and time again, *lest you forget* to take the time to decide for yourself what something means. Anyway, enough, I must move on. The second term of critical importance is *progress*, a term which is useful both in further understanding the concept of the free-floating signifier and the Western reliance on myth, because yes, that's right, *progress is a myth*.

Progress is itself a bastardization of teleology; I shall waste less time here and begin with the definition handed to us by modernity itself:

Progress:

1. *Forward or onward movement towards a destination.*
2. *Development towards an improved or more advanced condition.*

Let me begin with the definition of another, and see if we can find any agreement. Firstly then, we need to question *our* destination, for, if we're progress-*ing* then we must be progressing *towards* something, right? Well, I can't say for sure whether we're going anywhere because it's impossible to see who or what it is that's actually pulling our strings, or guiding the phantom-of-progress. Likewise, who was it who decided that *if* there is such a thing as progress, that we *must* do it? And that it is good by virtue of its name alone? And so, what exactly is progress? We hear it used all the time on the news, on social media, in politics and in education to justify various processes and actions, but I have yet to see anyone genuinely define it. For, without any clear *destination* progress, advancement and improvement are objectively impossible; you *cannot* say you are progressing unless you *know* where it is you wish to end up. If you have no quantifiable metric to begin from (within the socio-industrial framework) then you can do practically anything and name it progress. If we tell ourselves that we need to get to a state of X, or we need to build Y, then we have enough data to correctly assess whether or not we're progressing. But once the entire concept of progress is understood in relation to a rather loose assemblage of sociological and political tolerances and statements, then we're at the whim of conjecture, and whoever can skew the facts in the most innovative way is the winner.

Which leads me to the second definition – *development towards an improved or more advanced condition* – firstly one has to ask, an improved or more advanced condition for whom? And within what context is *advancement* understood? The first word there, ‘improved’, is the most precarious in this context. Improved means entirely different things for different people, this much is obvious. But another difficulty with ‘improved’ is that for many, improvement isn’t synonymous with advancement in technological culture or abstract social freedoms. For some people a return to tradition would be an improvement, for some people the singularity would be an improvement and for others the levelling of all industry would be an improvement, and once all these viewpoints are all flattened into a single ideal one understands that it’s nothing but impossible to have a unified conception of progress. The same applies for the idea of an ‘advanced condition’, one assumes that this is theorised in relation to advancement in technology and potential for social freedoms once again, and that there is, in some oh-so mystical future, an abstract state of perfect society which we’re lunging towards. But one has to ask, perfect for whom dear Clod, perfect for whom?

So, Clod, if this *is* the case, that we’re all heading towards a sort of collective subconscious future which we all apparently, implicitly understand is the correct thing to head towards, or course of action to take, then what we’re venturing into is a fiction, due to the fact all cannot be pleased under one ideal, and as such, the idea that one ideal *could* ever please all is false. As such the future will be – more or less – extremely alike the past, if not a mirror image with a different aesthetic. For whatever is understood as our future can only be understood in terms relative to what has been as the entire notion of progress rests on an assumption of linearity which excludes and actively shuns true innovation. Innovation is the greatest enemy of progress because it could potentially allow us to move away from the notion of progress altogether.

It is, once again, a simple case of questioning, and because progress implies some form of action (advancement, progressing, moving-towards etc.) then further questions arise. Where are we progressing to? What are we progressing towards? Who is progressing? Why do we want to progress? And on and on they go, questions which will never find an answer because

the myth of progression is so malleable and plastic that it exists solely as a form to be used by the highest bidder; there will never be an answer to progress, because it isn't a question, but a myth. So, my own definition of progress: Progress means whatever those with power want it to mean; progress means whatever those in control of history want it to mean. The victors write the history books, but they do so in such a way as to define progress, and unfortunately, our history books are rife with unbridled technological and industrial optimism, unquestioned notions of freedom and abhorrence of exit, all tying one into an unforgiving abstraction, the target of which is whatever it happens to be on any given day. You're not going anywhere because you let others decide where is best to go.

How is it we can call it a myth then? Well, let's go back to definitions-

Myth:

1. A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

Now, progress is far from traditional, in fact, it has basically nothing to do with tradition in the sense that it only *uses* tradition to reach its own aim, as opposed to being tradition itself. It is most definitely a story, perhaps the earliest of all stories, the one we've always told ourselves, the one wherein we are saved by something *other* than ourselves. Progress is the story in which the narrator of said progression is always correct, and everything the narrator has done is correct, and – most importantly – everything the narrator *will do* is correct. It is the story regarding one handing over their responsibility and action to an elusive abstraction. Sure, we tell ourselves lots and lots of stories in everyday life “I'll do it later because X”, “I can't do that now because Y”, “I always wanted to do Z but...” and so on, but the overarching story which trumps all of these is the story of progress, the unconscious idea that even if individual things don't get done, it doesn't matter because we're chugging along nicely anyway, a few mistakes, lacunae and occlusions don't matter, because we're always progressing.

The extremely harmful effect of this form of free-floating progress is that it is *never* a passive bystander in political and social debate. The myth of

progress implicitly creates a spectrum, where on one end we find that which will accelerate it, and on the other that which will decelerate it; that which is progressive and that which is unprogressive; that which is correct and that which is incorrect. And to find oneself on the supposedly wrong side of this spectrum often leads to feelings of alienation and despair, feelings which can be avoided if one only learnt how to assess the world they inhabit. Progress, then, immediately develops a divide, where on one side we find that which is deemed nostalgic, romantic, archaic or even reactionary, and on the other, terms such as tolerance, innovation or revolution. Whether or not these terms adhere to their strict definitions isn't progress' cause, its function is to mark that which is good from that which is bad, and henceforth progress with the good and do away with the bad, whether or not we've had but a moment to think about what it is we're really doing.

From this logic, the entire past is subsumed under a rough heading of 'Old-Hat' or 'Dated', alluding to the creation of the nonsense default position that whatever is new is better, and whatever is old is worse, because of course, if it wasn't worse, we wouldn't have progressed *away* from it. One can witness this logic expressed throughout daily life, those who haven't got the latest phones are deemed odd, those who prefer cycling or walking over driving are viewed as eccentric, and even using such basic, time-tested devices such as washing-lines is becoming unconsciously ridiculed in more 'cosmopolitan' areas. As is clear, this attitude is developed in combination with a contemporary understanding of technology I may attend to in a later letter if needs be. But before such logic may be unfolded, I'd like to address 'progress' as the mutation of teleology that it is.

Clod, I've already explained what teleology is and how it informs your day-to-day life, whether if it is in positive ways or negative ways is for you to decide. But I hope you will have realised that progress itself is a form of teleology, one which is not all there. Any objective teleology has its purpose already embedded within it, and any subjective teleology is developed from a bout of meaning-creation, whereby one imbues their reality with personal goals, tasks and duties. When we look at progress we notice something quite odd about its arrangement, about its destination, its goal...it doesn't have one. At least, it doesn't have a clear one. It doesn't

have a goal which can be easily defined, which is of course what makes it so handy as a tool. If we understand teleology as *moving towards an eventual finality/goal* then we can see progress is in-part teleological, due to the fact it's – supposedly – *moving towards* some-thing, but it is in fact void of a destination. One should begin to question the proposition of progress-without-end altogether, how can you truly *understand* if you *are* progressing if you have no clue what you're supposed to be progressing towards? We see progress hiding within various government and corporate slogans all the time, statements such as “Build back better!” and “The Great Reset” all presuppose some state of affairs wherein we all collectively understand what ‘better’ is, and what we should ‘reset’ into. Except we don't, no one has any clue what we're moving towards because history is just a collection of things-that-happen, pronounced in an ordering of time which dips and dives in waves and cycles.

In short, progress is the deeply ingrained piece of programming which lures you into believing such empty-headed dictations as “It will never happen to me...”, or “They'll think of something...” or even “Ah, things always work out...” Well, maybe it will happen to you? What if they don't think of something? And what if things don't work out? What are you relying on for these assessments, nothing but a detrimental mode of thinking which assumes everything will always be as it is because we're progressing.

A piece of mythological programming which has you believing that returning to a previous way of living is bad or wrong, for the mere fact that such a reversion wouldn't be progressive. One can witness this reverence of progress in our collective understanding that new technology is better, old technology is worse and the reason the current ways of doing things are better is simply due to their (false) virtue of being the latest thing; habits, customs and objects are justified in their existence by the fact that they are *current*. In *actuality* then, progress is a myth. But all myths rely on certain symbols and significations to carry them along, and draw more people in. The specific symbols of progress don't matter here; I will point them out in future letters given the opportunity. For now I'd like to focus on what it is progress itself *signifies*, on a deeper level, and how this signification alters one's ability to truly get what they (apparently) want from life. If progress is our default position, then each singular event within life is mediated in

relation to the *function* of progress. Things are either for or against progress, and thus either good or bad. Nothing is taken in itself as what it is *qualitatively*, but always understood as a quantity of positive or negative progression; progress creates in all acts a binary understanding: for or against, good or evil, right or wrong, black or white, red or blue, agree or disagree; progress doesn't allow the option to opt out.

And yet, within the *modern* world we already exist within a double-bind which comes from its own proposition that it *is* 'modern'. In its very definition the *modern* world has already arrived at some apparent enlightened state, this is *known* by the fact it is understood to *be* modern, whether or not we can truly define what that is. Thus we enter into a paradox whereby we continually seek out progress, for the belief that we can perpetually make the world better, and yet, simultaneously, accept that the world we inhabit is modern, and thus we have *arrived* somewhere. We are both abstractly moving and remaining still at the same time, never able to let go of our assumptions and presumptions, existing between two states of impersonal irreality.

I hope, dear Clod, that you learn to apply what I have written in this letter to other aspects of your life, for it is my belief that it underpins much of what you accept, and in those areas where you feel at a loss as to why you are not fulfilled, I would place a bet that some abstract understanding of progress is holding the whole miserable thing together. I shall say no more here, for I have nothing more to say today.

Quantity and Quality

Once again I will begin with the detritus of your letter. As to who I am I will first emphasise a point I have already made many times – though obviously not clear enough – it doesn't matter *who* I am, I ask you only to assess the ideas on *their* merit alone. If, dear Clod, I told you that I had many doctorates, was a respected psychiatrist, and frequently lectured on philosophy, would my ideas suddenly become true? If all that is needed for you to *trust* an idea, for you to believe it to be of worth, to be a fact, is a few letters at the end of a name, then you are far weaker than I first thought, though I do hope this *isn't* the case for your prying, if so, please make this clear in your next letter.

Now, onto your question, as you can imagine any discussion on meaning and purpose is going to be difficult, but I believe I can at least offer you the means to the removal of another hurdle, one which, once again, is found primarily in the contemporary Western mind. It is of quantity and quality, and how we implicitly understand their relationship to one another. The modern attitude towards the quality and quantity, or more aptly, quantity and *then* quality, of our belongings, relationships, habits, vices, virtues and valuables is often taken for granted. We believe we want what we want for its own sake, and our desires are justification enough for the acquisition of this or that thing – material or mental – or for the development of some communication or connection. However, it's rare within the modern world to dwell on the *quality* of that which we *possess*, unless of course questions of quality are intrinsic to the value of the thing itself, such is the case with so-called buy-it-for-life items or specific relationships. But what about our everyday experience, our everyday reality? Why is it so rare to question the quality of our journey through this world, and often unconsciously accept a banal and rigid reality? The answer, dear Clod, lies in our reverence of quantification, our incessant need to log every experience, relationship and event into a mental apparatus, which then checks them off against various facets of status, respect and societal pressure. Our apathetic quantification

of every area of our lives leaves us empty and unfulfilled, wondering why nothing ever seems to hit-the-spot, as the saying goes.

The assimilation of quantification into western culture began with the Enlightenment. Beginning roughly in the 16th century increasing quantification found its way into military textbooks, mathematical clocks, abacus', Mercantilism, Malthusianism, Victorian social policy and allowed for the universal acceptance of standardized time. Of course, I am not *absolutely* against quantification and quantifying things. Being able to buy a certain volume of milk or find the correct size of trousers are both extremely helpful benefits of measurement and quantity. However, this way of understanding the world grew at an increasing pace, becoming a continually self-aggrandising numeric process/culture which succeeded in applying and parasitically assimilating numbers, maths, calculation and quantification into every facet of society. And once fully assimilated into cultures with high rates of literacy and mathematical knowledge, man's process of conversion began. Number and definable numeric limits convert man's most basic and fundamental actions from patient, qualitative subjective experiences into objectively economic possibilities, and thus man henceforth understood himself in relation to abstract quantifiable terms such as growth, gain, loss, limit, production, profit etc. I would of course Clod, emphasise my previous letter on the problem of definitions, both the questions of what *you* define growth as *and* whether or not you ever *wanted* growth in the first place are apt here. Anyway, eventually, we find the entirety of modern men and women completely engrossed within the numeric culture of the calendar, partaking in the exact same quantified existence which is sliced up into easily controllable units of time. I'm not going to go as far as to say that this is entirely a bad thing, to do so would be ridiculous. Weeks, days and hours are extremely helpful ways of understanding when things will get done or how long projects will take, but such reliance on calculable culture in turn develops into a confusion whereby only that which is quantifiable is understood to have worth.

When one looks at the basic assumptions of the modern world, what is widely considered to be of strict importance is primarily that which can be easily quantified: votes, political economy, economics, monetary systems, credit reports, salaries, pensions, property rights, efficiency and productivity

are all understood as important factors within one's personal life, signs of whether or not someone is doing well or *succeeding* in the world. Opposite to this are those things and events which are often considered odd, strange or not-normal: lazing around, doing nothing, sitting and thinking, being silent, meditating, creation for its own sake, walking without reason, various forms of exercise, unprofitable hobbies, restoration projects, numerous ecological pursuits and spiritual exercises (to name just a few) are often described as a waste of time, something perceived as peculiar or generally unproductive.

These assertions are derived from the fact that these pastimes are unquantifiable, and exist entirely on a spectrum of, largely subjective, quality, and thus end up being seen as suspicious. Because, in-keeping with the underlying myth of progress, the very notion of quantity, of being able *to quantify* something, allows us to set markers for what success, proof and/or justification is, whether or not these markers have been collectively agreed upon. It is the general understanding in the West that acquiring more money and fancy objects equates with success, that running more miles, writing more reports, working more hours, attending more meetings, consuming more classes, having higher grades and generally speaking, *adding more to one's life*, is a clear marker or *progression* that someone is doing fine, that they're getting on well and are developing themselves into a successful, prosperous and normal human-being. All of this without a second's thought for the *quality* of the education, the *purpose* of the meetings, the *meaning* of the work, the *enjoyment* of the exercise. As such, quantity and teleology go hand-in-hand, creating a malicious and stunted understanding of what it even is *to develop* oneself. With people collectively considering that not only should one *have* a lot of *stuff*, but equally their entire *purpose* for living should be to *acquire* this stuff. Progression is the twofold task of *progressing* towards some elusive future, and acquiring more stuff on our way there.

But what happens to us as beings within this overshoot of numeric culture? Men too synchronously change alongside society. Man transforms into economic-man, human-capital, *homo-economicus*. This modification of man happens not only at a sociological, political and economic level, but also more fundamentally at the level of identity, or what we consider

ourselves to be. The term homo-economicus is taken up by Michel Foucault – largely in his text *The Birth of Biopolitics* – who notes the history of the Latin word for man – homo, e.g. homosapien – during the process of the Enlightenment. During which the abstract integration of man (homo) into external systems of cultural, societal and – eventually – economic relation takes place. The singular subject man loses his singular subjective identity, which was previously separate from systems, sovereignty and economics. He begins to become inherently integrated *into* the *modern* understanding itself via semantic means. A man who is a criminal is a criminal-man, a new singular semantic judgment. Yet more importantly, all men are now, or have the capacity to be, *calculating*, man's critical future neologism as homo-economicus or economic-man is locked into the modern attitude of calculation. Man's assimilation into this new economic reality is made whole by this creation of a neologistic combination of biology and economy. The cultural integration of numbers infects man and makes possible his new, inherent tether to the economy, and thus, to a understanding based primarily on quantification. The process of the Enlightenment, the maturation process, paves the way for his becoming-economic. If man is now to be, he must be economic.

This little Foucauldian excursion may seem a little overblown dear Clod, but I would argue that it is entirely justified. The culture of quantification which has infected the modern world seeks to formulate each decision, action and perception into something numerically understandable, thus feeding beauty, patience, the romantic, the vital and the feeling through a thresher, one which seeks only to retrieve that which is entirely alien, a metrizable abstract value which can be assessed in terms of numeric spectrums, as opposed to being *experienced* in relation to subjective desires. In seeking to quantify anything and everything, modernity strips all acts of their inherent *quality*, leaving man to figure out why it's been years since he has felt fulfilled or content – of course, the reason he doesn't *feel* fulfilled, is because he has ignored his genuine feelings for years, replacing them with habitual behaviors relating to *increasing* his quantifiable worth. Furniture is to be built as *efficiently* as possible, we are to eat a certain *amount* of specific foods whether we intuitively understand we need them or not, one's work/output is *measured* on an elusive spectrum of

productivity, and finally, everything in existence is abstractly economized, and understood firstly as monetary-value, secondarily as what it actually is, and third and finally, as whether or not it is *actually* something we enjoy, have a connection to, wish to truly partake in, agree with or have a qualitative relationship with.

Quality is the last question. Only after all other modern assumptions relating to progress, teleology and worth have been made, does one stop to assess whether an act, belief or item is of genuine qualitative worth to them. We educate not for the sake of education, but as a means to *acquire* awards. We work not for the sake of a greater project, but for the means to acquire money, most of which is used to acquire more things. We network not as a way to find those we emphasize with, but to build up a database of connections. We buy a house, not because we've ever thought if we truly wish to, but because it is a clear calculable material proof that we are progressing, another rung on the ladder. We do almost everything not for itself as an act, but for the belief that it is *adding* to our lives.

But let us think for a moment Clod on this proposition in relation to our pasts; for I was once as you are now, lost without the means to even conceptualize an exit. We are told if we are to *acquire* certain things in life, be they mental or material, that everything we desire will come to be. If only we could *attain* a house, a car, a pet, a fancy bag, a gaming system, a big TV, a bigger TV, a job, a career, a degree, a new kitchen, lots of money, more money, *even* more money, retirement, a strong work ethic, a lighter body, a heavier body, motivation, the perfect diet, tolerance, lots of friends, lots of hobbies, various holidays, admiration and status, to name just a meagre few, if *only* we could *acquire* one, some or all of these things, we are told, then we would be happy, fulfilled, content and would finally *have* that thing we needed to complete us. And that word, *complete*, is the key to why this is entirely incorrect. As I have said, let us use our own pasts as an example, think back dear Clod, for those times you so desired, I imagine, many of the things I have listed, and now think to when you finally got them. Perhaps you were content for a day or two, maybe even a month or so, but eventually, the high of acquisition passes and you're left once again trying to fill some void, which, come to think of it, you have no clue as to why it's there. I mean, who told you Clod that you were not complete as

you were? That you needed X, Y and Z and *only then* would you be fulfilled? Perhaps you don't agree with my idea altogether, if so, I do not care. But who was it who told you that *completion*, that to *be complete*, was or is even a thing? It was both you and the world around you, with the latter influencing the former. The modern world told you that acquiring certain things would complete you, and you believed it, and now you believe that the lack of fulfilment you have isn't a problem with the *idea* of fulfilment itself, but a fault in you. What absolute rubbish! For who knows you better than yourself? Surely you know what you truly want, you just have yet to spend the time thinking about it because you felt compelled to desires of everyone else.

And if you haven't cottoned on yet Clod, the problem isn't what one *is to acquire*, but one's very understanding of acquisition itself. Often you will find that those who realise they don't need a fancy car on credit to be content in life, begin to develop some other desire which is equally as corrosive, and likewise is not of their own command. Progress is acquisition in abstract, and you must ask yourself why is it you feel compelled to *add more* to yourself to become whole? Whoever told you completion was a thing and you did not have all the resources for development within you to begin with? There isn't a sudden end to one's development. There isn't some final thing you will purchase or attain and everything suddenly becomes fine. Life is a qualitative *experience*, which if played quantitatively leaves one constantly missing the moon by glaring at the finger pointing at it.

These points, I imagine, will come up in other letters, and admittedly make more sense in relation to specific past-times. But what I have laid out here is the skeleton of something corrosive; it infects everything and draws the life from life.

Accelerationism

Accelerationism: Capitalism as Critique

With special thanks to:

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And to 'The Castle' for their continual support in all of life's endeavours.

INTRODUCTION

In this essay I aim to answer multiple questions, all of which are concluded by answering 1 overarching question, 'What is Accelerationism?'. In recent years Accelerationism has been primarily posited as a *political* movement, or a new form of politics. In reaction to this contemporary wave of incorrect Accelerationist theorization, my aim is to thoroughly outline the *philosophy* of Accelerationism, which when articulated correctly in relation to the transcendental philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Gilles Deleuze, not only alters our understanding of Accelerationism, but leaves the entire politics meaningless and confused.

The politics however will only be a meagre afterthought of this essay. The primary tasks set out for me are to define the *process* of Acceleration, and in doing so define Accelerationism. I aim to answer these 2 questions by working metaphorically upwards, from the smallest unit of production analysable in-itself, man, all the way through to articulating the assemblage of processes and functions that compound into Acceleration. Within this essay the word 'Acceleration' is capitalised as a means of emphasising its relation to Accelerationism, as opposed to its classical usage. Alongside this, as this essay utilizes transcendental philosophy as its fundamental philosophical position, *any* notion of levels, planes, heights, ups, downs, aboves and belows etc. are only used as a means for ease of understanding, and are definitely not levels in relation to transcendence.

I begin with a Kantian extrapolation of the 'Inside', a term utilized within this essay to describe the transcendental reality of man, of the synthesized

space and time he inhabits via *his* senses, an ‘Inside’ which is always in relation/connection to the ‘Outside’. Within this section the perspective is *from* the Inside in relation to how it functions with regard to the transcendental. I begin with an exposition on classical desire, using it as a placeholder for the ‘material processes’ *of* the Inside. Theorizing of their transformation in relation to critique through to their dissolution via the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. This section is intended as both an articulation of the emptiness and vessel-esque status of the Inside in relation to the forces of the Outside, whilst simultaneously acting as a singular part of the process of Acceleration, to later be utilized in a manner of compounding.

Following from this dissolution of the material *processes*, I intend to utilize the work of Deleuze and Guattari as a means to transcendently dissolve the *material*, inclusive of man, *into* the process of the transcendent itself. I achieve this by deconstructing the concept of the desiring-machine in relation to its components, ‘desire’ and ‘machines’, from which I assimilate the concept as a whole into Gilles Deleuze’s 3 syntheses of time, I do so as a means to show how both the material (space) and actions (time) of the Inside are wholly secondary to the processes of the Outside. From this temporal conclusion I utilize the Deleuzian conceptions of the virtual and actual as a means to articulate the method of connection and communication *between* the Inside and Outside, explaining that the communication is – with one exception (Schizophrenia) – entirely unilateral from the Outside to the Inside, and as such the Outside is theorized as primary.

From this theorization I begin to outline in abstract the process of Acceleration in relation to the Inside. Wherein *from* Deleuze & Guattari’s alteration of Marxist critique *via* utilization of capitalism’s industrial standardized time, we witness man move from being *used* by the machinic, alien power (from above), to being *possessed* by the alien power within himself, *as* the power. From this theorization I intend to show how man-as-desiring-machine is then made fully immanent to the process-of-production itself. At this juncture I interject the conception of the Deleuzoguattarian ‘schizophrenic’ as a means to show *how* the new is *possible* from such a transcendental entrapment. I conclude the section on the Inside with a brief

articulation of its final guard, the unconscious, a conception which is repeated within the Outside in its correct transcendental articulation as a machinic-unconscious of production.

The catch-22 of Accelerationism is that descriptions of the Inside, once attended to in relation to the whole, seem entirely superfluous. Yet without them we stand with only a transcendental motor solipsistically churning without an output mechanism. To leave out the Inside, is to leave out the shadows of Plato's cave. To write of the Inside is to argue that it is more comforting to know one *is* a puppet, than pretend one is otherwise.

I move from the Inside to the Outside, beginning with an extrapolation of the body-without-organs (BwO). Utilizing it in its most general, functional sense as a plane of consistency, of atomic recording and connections, making sure to differentiate it from the socius. Regarding Accelerationism the BwO is a plane of (virtual) selection for the Outside regarding that which it will reterritorialize into the Inside. It is from these theorizations of the BwO that an understanding of the Outside as primary and the Inside as secondary is made clearer. I continue my theorizations of the BwO by assimilating it into the dynamics of capitalism, arguing that the unique nature of capitalism (as fluid) allows it to be the *only* structure which can consistently *use* the BwO as a means for auto-construction.

I further continue my theorizations of the BwO by articulating the way in which the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization are a means of transcendental connection and selection, alongside the theoretical beginnings of the construction of a productive mode of temporality, *away* from the incorrect notion of a 'linearity', towards a mode of productive temporal event indexing, controlled/evolved by the forces of the Outside. Such a production of temporality is theorized in relation to Zero. Which within the context of the essay is the term used to mean an evolutionary form of production in relation to entropy and negentropy, Zero is the transcendental connection between the productive output of the Inside and the positive-feedback loop of the Outside. In its connection with schizophrenia I find a means to articulate a further extrapolation regarding Deleuze and Guattari's notion of capitalism's (non) limits, and as such, a

way of describing the manner in which the process of Acceleration enacts itself.

From this extrapolation of the transcendental connection between the physical and virtual, I assimilate the third synthesis of Deleuzian time into the entire dynamics of the essay thus far, as a way to show *how* the future arrives and how it culminates into the production of an auto-construction of time, alongside how the system of capitalism inherently moulds itself to this temporality of continual cuts and caesuras.

I finally compound the entirety of the essays parts, functions and processes into a working definition of the process of Acceleration. A definition which in its very nature allows one to posit the definition of Acceleration, and as such transparently comment on the contemporary philosophical/political errors ascribed to the theory. This essay does not work backwards from a definition, lazily proving its construction in retrospect, but makes sure to leave no theoretical stone unturned as a means to articulate a transcendental coherent process regarding, time, production and capitalism.

THE INSIDE

Accelerationism is the perpetual arrival of the future; an auto-catalytic, positive-oriented system of production and time; an intricate, horizontal web of interconnecting processes and functions. A web which causes infection within the nerve-endings of existence, no node, however minor, can escape the clasp of production. I begin with the smallest of these 'nodes', the smallest kernel of production which can still be analyzed within and by its own dynamics, specifically, man. Or more succinctly, man-as-desiring-machine. A process of compounding is underway, from man through to 'the process' of Acceleration itself, the entire of which shall hold as a *philosophical* working model of Accelerationism.

First, a return. The proto-Accelerationist theory of Deleuze and Guattari *possesses* structures and unities in such a manner that their presupposed anthro-authenticity transcendently erodes. I return to one such structure with the intention to use it as a placeholder for humanity's structural certainty, born from ignorance of critique. The classical notion of 'desire' shall be my working example of all that is 'authentic', 'natural' and

‘organic’; a semantic trio which when placed correctly within the syntheses of Kant and Deleuze lose all *possibility* of affect.

The classical, psychoanalytical notion of desire denotes a want, need, lack and/or lust *towards* an object, emotion or identity. It is a theoretical *formation* of desire directed at a completion of the ‘self’ via acquisition of the lacked. Such a conception of desire *lures* the user towards not only a false end, but along a false premise, a premise of *possible* conclusion; classical desire’s tyrannical crime is that it *allows* completeness.

“It did what all ads are supposed to do: create an anxiety relievable by purchase.” (Foster Wallace, D. 2011, p414)

Foster Wallace’s quote assimilates desire *into* the practical dynamics of consumption *under* capitalism, emphasising the error of the classical/Freudian via its consumerist application. The presupposed ‘anxiety’ does not just assume there *is* an *actual* lack, but also makes the assumption of a possible unified ‘self’, and that such a unification could still exist *within/under* capitalism; the impossibility of *a* self from within a fragmentation of free-floating identity crumbs.

A self of agency, will, control and familial comforts, psychoanalytical desire *gives* man himself. Leaving him open to the *belief* that *another’s* psychoanalysing is *his* working-through of desires, repressions and drives. When psychoanalysis is correctly immanentized into the transcendental it dissolves into the same becomings as the entire anthropocentrism of the Inside: representation, illusion and mask, the trio of man’s material faith, senses forever targeted at a becoming-nothing. Such a form of desire and structural decentering is beholden to Kantianism, and as such a short extrapolation as to the section of critique critical to this form of theorization – the transcendental aesthetic – is needed before venturing further.

To posit time and space as *a priori*, they are absolutely – always already – necessary for there to *be* anything at all. Such a placement wherein time is *prior* to space is not accidental. For there to be perception of material there must be space, but for there to be space it must exist *within* time; time is always primary to space. This overly simplistic articulation of the transcendental aesthetic from Kant’s *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, I.

1996) allows for the following conclusions regarding the aforementioned theorizations in relation to man. Man *must* exist *within* time and space, along with the entire cosmos, but man, due to his very nature can only attend to/perceive reality *via* his processor – his brain. As such, the way in which he perceives is a matter of synthetic process, the forms of time and space he senses are not pure, they are synthesized/processed versions of spatio-temporality particular to the output of man’s senses. What man perceives is a *representation* of the real, he synthesizes both temporal and spatial reality and in doing so his perception, he, *creates* his reality as he *represents* it.

From Kantian critique we can thus make a clear split, the terminology of which will feature heavily in relation to understanding the Accelerationist process. Two separate terms referring to the spatio-temporal synthesis *of* man (*his* reality), and the form of time and space external to these syntheses. The former synthesis *from* man is henceforth called the ‘Inside’, and the *a priori* spatio-temporality (and later, production) which is external to this ‘Inside’ is called the ‘Outside’.

The reality of man now transcendently defined, I can return to the deconstruction of the classical via psychoanalysis and desire. For the conclusion of the psychoanalyzed is one made within their *own* limits, those who desire supposedly do so of their *own* accord, to desire is *to* desire, *from* one’s self. This is transcendently incorrect shorthand for man’s (false) ability to attend to and control that which is outside of him. To sense (via his brain) that which is transcendently external to him (as I will show), classical desire is a mere anthropocentric error of placement. An error regarding the very construction of reality itself.

In the Lyotardian sense “*Everything psychoanalysis knows about desire it knows by injecting it into a certain schema called Oedipus, a closed, familial circuit.*” (Hamilton Grant, I, 2004: p6). This outline of desire by Grant within the introduction of *Libidinal Economy* pertains to desire in direct relation to critique. Wherein desire is but a representation, a mask over something larger, atop a libidinal intensity or force. Classical psychoanalysis’ authority, and as such the authority of multiple systems of the Inside, comes from its location on the Inside. Folded into a complex

web of other representations, promoting the illusion of cosmic depth and worth. Existence within immanence disallows depth for man.

Following *Anti-Oedipus* (2013) in this manner of occulted critique, Lyotardian desire theorizes of the Oedipal triad (Father-Mother-Child) as *part* of the Inside. All that is classically authoritative is *demoted* by the transcendental. Even Lyotardian intensities, which arguably toe the line of the Inside and Outside, are – to man – but representations caught in a loop of their own anthro-presumptions – the effects emanating from the representations of the Inside can never be understood in themselves. Desire of the Inside is a mere subordination of “*every intense emotion to a lack and every force to a finitude.*” (Lyotard, J, 2003: p65). In being represented via the cognition of man the pure forms of intensity communicated from the Outside are constricted into a finality, into the finality of the Inside. To follow or direct oneself in relation to notions of originary, classical or organic as if they hold any meaning is a recursion of nothingness; to blindly follow representations of the Inside as if *in-themselves* they held any meaning is the fate of those secure in their delusions, a maddening labyrinth where every exit is bricked up by nothing. Lyotardian desire, as posited within *Libidinal Economy* (2003), is an exemplary example of working-through the process of drawing back the transcendental curtain from the *Inside*, to always reveal an eternal nothingness.

To posit then that these ‘desires’ or structures of the Inside (as representations *of* the Outside) are at current the equivalent of an auto-constructive GPS. A navigational-control system which began before one’s birth and will continue forever after one’s death, destination production; you, the self or one, is always in the middle of an auto-constructive horizontal plane of desire.

Man placed within such a deterministic navigational system/lock-in removes rational notions of linear time. To deconstruct the transcendental entrapment indebted to humanity is a means to detail what man becomes in relation to the Outside. A becoming put into more transcendentially strict terms by Gilles Deleuze, for further extrapolation of the Inside in-itself would be no more than a repetition. Such an understanding of continual desire and the thread which man is made to follow posits questions of

temporality. How does it transcendently work and how is it constructed in relation to the dynamic of the Inside and Outside? To attend to this primary necessity of the transcendental system itself (time) is to begin to compound an understanding of man's situation within the entire. As such I *begin* to compound the various 'stages' of Accelerationist time in abstract.

To define the first Deleuzian synthesis of time is to understand the present as a process. A *passive* synthesis where the past and the future are folded into a passing-present, as *man* perceives it. A present which is always transforming in its relation to the passive alterations of the past and future. "*That is, a process that passes from the retention of the past into the expectation of the future, not as psychological, nor as phenomenological (in the sense of quantities of intention), but as formal processes bearing on different things (particular and general) and setting them into relation.*" (Williams, J, 2012: p29). The very conception of the present in the form posited by the first synthesis can only happen on the Inside, within synthesized temporality which denotes a linear temporal framework. These passing-presents *as* quasi-succession form, for man, a *now*. Never *having* a real past, nor achieving the future, man *within* the first synthesis is *processed* by time.

Within such a form of time, desire theoretically begins to adhere to a more stable form of nihilism. For such an understanding of desire as "*masks hiding no face, only surfaces without a back stage, only prices without values.*" (Lyotard, J, 2003: p105) is to conceive of a desire of the Inside, which is *processed* on/by the Outside. A conception which articulates the dark reality of representation, and as such of linear time; no attempt to deconstruct or draw back the curtain of the illusion will ever reveal the forces of the Outside in themselves. Desire as a negative gloss, a trinket of production passively keeping the conscious entertained and busy, such a loop, such a form of temporal continuity allows for greater clarity with regard to the first synthesis.

To conceptualize desire both in the aforementioned Lyotardian sense and as a placeholder for *any* process of the Inside. Processes which are both retained (past) and anticipated (future) *within* the passing-present of the first synthesis. Caught in the representational loop of the Inside, the linear

direction of material processes – due to their enactment within the Inside – are forever targeted at nothingness/further-representation. As such, the first synthesis, in its relation to the cognition of man, is of the Inside; the first synthesis as a temporal enclosure *for* man, utilized by that it will never *know* (the Outside). An eternal game of hide and go seek where man forever finds nothing, for nothing was ever hidden, but in his ignorance believed the cosmos cared.

This form of temporal entrapment begs a question regarding libidinal intensities/Lyotardian intensities in themselves. For they must, in their communication with Inside, have a *means* of reappropriation regarding the *direction* of man – the direction in which desire flows throughout the linearity. Such a means of communication is made possible by the ‘virtual’ and ‘actual’. A conception which has connections to both the Outside *and* the *second* synthesis of time in its relation to the Inside. The transcendental shift of perspective is from a classical desire/material process of finality, to a transcendental process of transformation of the virtual. The conception of the virtual *and* actual is only complete in its unification, one cannot be/become without the other.

I present a very basic definition of the virtual and actual here for ease of later utilization, the concepts become more versatile upon later application. For now we take a laptop of the object of attention for the virtual and actual. The *actual* is expressed in one’s encounter with the phenomenological reality of the item, an object of sensation. The laptop *is* hard, clunky and heavy. *Within* the actuality of the laptop resides the *virtual*, or, the virtual aspects of it. Relational aspects and transferable attributes of the object which posit virtual connections to other objects (Heaviness, hardness etc.). Attributes which all coexist on the plane of the virtual, or a plane of possibility, itself located on the Outside.

In relation to time these virtual (transferable) attributes are *retained* in the form of the second synthesis of time, which in its conception alters the past into a ‘pure past’. A past which “*will be defined as determining the form of the passing present – that it must pass, and how it must pass – but it does not determine or cause the content of any particular passing present.*” (Williams, J, 2012: p57). A notion of determination which is extrapolated

upon later, for now I am still writing of the Inside. For man to attend to the 'pure past' his memory becomes active. The aforementioned passing present of the first synthesis is passive, a trait which carries over into the second synthesis with one minor alteration. The active-memory of the second synthesis allows for a transformation of the present into an aiming-present. Wherein man can aim his memory back upon an indexed series of passing-presents, where $R = \text{passing present}$, the pure past can be visualised as " $(((((Past + R) + R) + R) + R) + \dots)$ " (Ibid, p62). Man can aim *his* meaning at selection 'R' in relation to the indexed series of virtual pasts, his 'now' a compound of virtual times folded into a present. As such, for man to desire a 'sponge' is for man to desire 'sponge-ness' and so it is for him to aim back towards indexed notions of sponge-ness within the pure past as a means to acquire his present desire and actualize it. The structure of such a reality is "*a dynamic relation between the virtual and actual.*" (Williams, J, 2013: p8). What is desired is not the *actual* roughness, but the sponge in memory; what is desired is something sent from the Outside, the present is never desired in itself, only in relation to a virtuality.

Once more this shows how the transcendental alters presuppositions of the Inside, derailing man's assumed ability to attend to the virtual as if it was actual. Therefore what *is* attended to by man is of course attended to via the Inside, as such, that which he desires is *both* the nothingness behind phenomena *and* the inability of understanding the forces of the Outside (of desire) in themselves. Targeting his faculties from within an auto-construction, forever within a 'middle' of the Outside which is thus never the conclusion he's been lead to believe exists. I leave the virtual and actual for now, delaying articulation of their functional importance until I write of the Outside.

STANDARDIZED TIME AND MACHINES

Thus far it has been shown *how* man is trapped within the Inside, and by what mechanisms he is 'kept busy', or kept continually moving within the linear time he is allowed. With such a mode of being extrapolated the task at hand is to articulate what it is man becomes *from* such a transcendental fate. An alteration of being wherein man transforms from human to desiring-machine, a conception largely posited within *Anti-Oedipus* (2013).

As desire has already been defined the latter ‘machine’ is the subject of focus herein, to later compound into a working definition of man-as-desiring-machine in *relation* to transcendental time. A compound structure of philosophical elements which will outline the Accelerative processes’ means of control over the material of the Inside.

“Everywhere it is machines – real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections.” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p11). This statement at the *very* beginning of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* posits that *everything* has a machinic nature; the way we *think of* machines is incorrect (in terms of *actual* machines etc.). To machinize is to connect, intertwine, link and most importantly produce. Interconnected and networked production, this is machinization. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that these machinic processes are *real*. Such machinizations due to their productive nature as virtual are stereotypically deemed not-real, surreal, or un-real etc. However, both the virtual and actual and thus machinic processes *are* real. Real in the sense of transcendental effect, wherein both processes in their inherent capabilities cause alterations. Such a confusion is once again created from a perspective *of* the Inside, a reluctance to admit that the Outside is real too. The processes of machines, the machinations of the entire *are* the production of reality. Production *is* real.

The Marxist lineage of Deleuze & Guattari’s philosophy comes to the fore in the form of the ‘machine’ within the ‘desiring-machine’, *“the machinery – does not exist in the worker’s consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself.”* (Marx, K, 2014: p54) The Deleuzoguattarian conception of the desiring-machine is a theoretical expansion of the alien power’s process, an expansion both of the process itself and how it effects that which it processes (man). The distinction, or theoretical progression herein is regarding transcendental levels, or lack thereof. Deleuze and Guattari disallow Marx’s rational division, seeking only to allow a division *within* man’s synthesis. The division between the ‘alien power’ and man within *Anti-Oedipus* (2013) is no longer a material division, but a process made immanent in concordance with the dynamic of the Inside/Outside. In correct

transcendental theorization man can no longer be acted *upon* (for there is no above), and in theoretical correction becomes *part* of the act itself. The concept of the desiring-machine is one such place within *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* – which typically hides its Kantian lineage – wherein the transcendental takes centre stage. To shift from *rationaly separate* forces of production to an immanent production, where *all* forces are within Kantian *a priori* spatio-temporality, divided only by syntheses of certain machines (man etc.). Thus, the alteration of man's *nature* wherein he becomes-machinic immanentizes him *into* the transcendental circuitry of production itself, as *part* of it.

The 'machine' or 'machinization', much like desire, is removed from its classical territory where, in the Marxist sense it is seen as a 'tool' or 'ligament' which overrides the nature of man, and in this decontextualization is transformed by Deleuze and Guattari into the essence of its prior actions within the passing-present. Therefore to *be* a machine is 'to machinize'. In this manner the first and second syntheses of time, in their human-centric synthesization are also subject to machinization. "*Standard physical measurements are the essence of the machine's regime.*" (Veblen, T, 2014: p96). The machinic temporal standardization dynamics of capitalism (clocks, GMT etc.) culminate into a grand-representational machine defined *on the Inside* as time, which in reality is the representation of time *in* time.

This internal structure of time allows for distinct alterations to man's nature, wherein the alien power reappropriates time *for* man, fragmenting the pure-time via synthesis into a temporal – linear – succession, leading man to believe and construct a reality wherein he is *on* time as opposed to *in* time. Without representational time, linear time or chronic time, the desiring-machine cannot exist. This is one the clearest examples of the way in which "*The machine throws out anthropomorphic habits and thought.*" (Ibid, p98), Veblen's statement is close to conjecture of the 'authentic' human nature, or a 'human' time prior to the machines and yet, even if one is to ignore such presuppositions of an authenticity of 'the human', such a statement does reveal an understanding of the *artificiality* of time in relation to man's transcendental reality; the gridlike structure of days, hours and minutes is an artificial subjection brought *in* from the machinic processes of

the Outside. It is not a natural form of organization grown on the Inside by man, but a means of computational functionality from the Outside, regarding the productive output of material. The second-hand of the clock and its *incessant* ticking, fabricating a fragmentation of man's very being into the most minute existences; planck length production.

This theorization and recontextualization of 'machines' posits 2 prescient points: 1. All processes are immanent, for all machinizations are *real* and transcendental. And 2. Production fundamentally changes. The process of machinization, of production in its transformation *from* material/political sign *to* transcendental force allows production to inherently alter. The process *of* the machine is theoretically moved to the Outside. Production no longer has any relation to the Inside other than as a force of the Outside *within*. The desiring-machine in its compound form can now be defined fully, a definition to be interwoven with man's transcendental fate of time and production.

To define the desiring-machine in relation to Accelerationism, is to define the smallest kernel of production, it is to articulate the micro and to later bare witness to the macro of possession via process. The desiring-machine is the most transparently functional example of how the Accelerationist process works upon/into reality as seen from the Inside, to perceive not the *workings* of the process, but the work itself. The desiring-machine as seen from the Inside is an empty domino contributing to the positive-feedback loop of capitalism, stood passively, waiting to be possessed in the present.

"Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle." (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p15). Production-as-process therefore allows a *possible* teleological direction of capitalism; the compounding of time and production begins. In a terminological reversion the desiring-machine is immanent to machinic-desire; man as a mere agent of passive temporal process – 'his' time (indexed passing-presents) and desire *within* capitalism are aimed solely at further production. The retrieval of man's desires is a process of letting the Outside *in*. As the virtual becomes the actual it is retrieved at first from the fluidity of the virtual plane on the Outside, and actualized into the striated socius on the Inside. The socius,

little more than the great-representation, the quasi-illusion of production as opposed to its reality as the Inside-as-product (finality). The productive *acts* are real, but the productive forces and the production *itself* are only to be found on the Outside.

A perpetual virtual/actual loop within a larger loop of “*productions of productions.*” (Ibid, p14). Within this recursion, which acts as the construction of reality “*the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man becomes one within nature in the form of production and industry.*” (Ibid, p15) all that is ‘natural’ is a mere contextual machinic component of the Inside; once the Outside is understood as the alien force that is now *of* man, *within* his being, then the subsumption of his essence into machinic process is immanent with the arrival of capitalism. Yet, these processes, these concepts of the virtual and actual are only theoretical modes of transcendental communication between the Inside and Outside, their functions are as placeholders for the articulation of the appropriation of forces. The process thus far only describes the end-result of the Inside. Yet, for there to *be* such a functional mode of communication – however one-sided or transcendently unilateral it may be – it does allow for a theoretical door to be opened with regards to the Outside. Further explanation on Deleuzoguattarian critique will expand upon this.

In relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s continuation of critique, the Inside and Outside are altered in *their* relation, “*the self and non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever. – only a process that produces one within the other.*” (Ibid, p12). Deleuze and Guattari state that these concepts have no *meaning*, but this is not to be confused with existence. The Inside and Outside exist in multiple ways. They exist in their relation to each other, a relation which is only made possible by their relation to the syntheses of man. For the Outside and Inside in-themselves neither ‘exist’ in terms of externality or internality. But *for* man, *from* man, boundaries are formed and transcendental internality and externality is synthesized. In this manner, there is only meaning between borders; immanence as a whole disallows meaning to be universally formed, for there is nothing for subjection to push against, *this* is the horror of Kant. As such the aforementioned door which is opened, is one in which we can theoretically dissipate the border of the Inside, cut through meaning *itself*

and attend to the transcendental forms, functions and processes in themselves.

This mode of being is distinct to the desiring-machine, caught within the first and second syntheses of time *and* the auto-construction of transcendental capitalist dynamics. There is however a schizophrenic light at the end of the representational tunnel. A door implies a line of communication and as such a possibility of exit from the Inside. Such a possibility is found within schizophrenia (schiz, schizo, schizophrenic). Schizophrenia is a complex process, no exit is easy.

For to exit and exorcise the dead-time of impersonal desiring-production, the *process* of the desiring-machine must become-schizophrenic. “*Schizophrenia is like love: there is no specifically schizophrenic phenomenon or entity; schizophrenia is the universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines, universal primary production as “the essential reality of man and nature.”*” (Ibid, p15). In casting off its Oedipal shackles at every opportunity, the schizo no longer adheres to any ‘identity’ at its most general level. The schizophrenic evades structure due to its inability to change: state, authority, self, what are these but stagnant relics of the passed-present of the Inside. The schizo fragments desiring-production towards *new* appropriations of the virtual. If there is a possibility of exit, it is within schizophrenia. For “*the schizophrenic deliberately seeks out the very limit of capitalism. – He scrambles all the codes and is the transmitter of the decoded flows of desire. – Schizophrenia is desiring-production at the limit of social production.*” (Ibid, p49). Here we take the social production of the the socius as the grand-representation, the great authority of the Inside, a mass of coded identities and striated conclusions, it *adores* material limits. The socius in its very nature as a unity of the Inside stagnates as functional material retention. Schizophrenia seeks out these limits, decodes the stagnant desires and processes and reappropriates their virtuality back into the Inside as something new. Schizophrenia does this by taking a line-of-flight, an operation which transcends the actual and ascends to the virtual (as seen from our *limited* theorizations). It is this function, the ‘line-of-flight’, which acts as the ‘dark precursor’ of the new and the novel.

The schizophrenic's line-of-flight is perpetual deterritorialization, a concept to be expanded upon later. It is a line of communicative production of the new between the Inside and Outside, to *draw* in the *new*. Again these new actualities are immanentized into the temporal passivity of desiring-production. Under capitalism, nothing new lasts. "*Everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place – and then the whole process will begin all over again.*" (Ibid, p18). The birth of this 'event' comes *from* the Outside, and it 'freezes' in its process of actualization. Schizophrenia then continues its line-of-flight *away* from this actualization, this (now) present stagnance. Those and that *of* the Inside don't witness or perceive this process, but only understand the event in terms of a retrospective, indexed *passed-present*. All that once was, was once new, and as such, the pure-past is a trail of debris, left behind by an ever accelerating schizophrenia. This mode of time-creation, of virtual/actual event creation as indexed pasts, has a wider implication regarding the Outside, of which I expand upon later.

Before concluding this section on the Inside, I need to extrapolate one final tenacious representation, one which eludes various rationalizations and is often deified to absurdity, the unconscious. The unconscious, much like the actualized socius is another grand-representation, but this time of the actual in abstract. The human unconscious is seen or acts as the overarching historical myth, lore and culture spread throughout linear representational time and supposedly unconsciously imposed upon man's psyche. Yet, as is shown time is not a linear succession, and such an idea of linear time is produced via syntheses, and as such the unconscious falls prey to the same pitfalls as does the entirety of the Inside, it is a representation, albeit a peculiar one:

"it is the function of the libido to invest the social field in unconscious forms, thereby hallucinating all history, reproducing in delirium entire civilizations, races and continents, and intensely "feeling" the becoming of the world – Schizoanalysis sets out to undo the expressive Oedipal unconscious, always artificial, repressive and repressed, mediated by the family, in order to attain the immediate productive unconscious." (Ibid, p119-120)

The worst Oedipal ‘rot’ is located in the unconscious, the historical, repressive and familial unconscious, a mode only of presuppositions and transcendental errors glossed over by a thin-veil entitled ‘the psyche’. Such presumption suffocate the *production* of the real unconscious, the machinic unconscious. The unconscious’ inscription of meaning to the pure-past is but a blockade against the reappropriation of the virtual, against the new. Oedipus halts production by assimilating the new into *its* old triad, converting novel events in time into its own mode of nostalgic future-bastardization. Potentiality becomes a finite object within the empirical malaise of Oedipus’ grasp. The classical unconscious is the last bastion of the Inside assuming any form of agency. It is just another curtain atop nihil.

The classical unconscious is therefore peculiar because its representation masks a distinct force, a machinic unconscious of production, the force/intensity of auto-construction itself. Or, the psychoanalytical/psychological human unconscious is a stratified representation of cause and effect, which has been subsumed into standardized time. Theorizations of the unconscious are mere over-extensions into the pure-past, a trifling within multiple connected familial pure-pasts with the intention of assuming connections between them. The reality of course, is that *from* the Inside such connections are still beholden to forces of the Outside. The unconscious’ peculiarity is that it assumes an Outside *within* the Inside (which is incorrect), whilst in-itself unknowingly masking the actual forces of the Outside in-themselves, auto-construction of reality etc. The notion of the machinic-unconscious is of primary importance later, as such an understanding of its differentiation from the unconscious is posited *here*, on the Inside.

THE OUTSIDE

I begin this section regarding the Outside with a theorization of the body-without-organs, from here on in abbreviated as the ‘BwO’. The concept of the BwO formulated by Deleuze and Guattari begins the theoretical construction of the production-in-itself of the Outside. A void of atemporal virtualization, not in relation to the pure-past of the Inside, but as a transcendental function of production and communication. Production-in-itself is *part* of the beginning of the Accelerationist process.

The BwO is a “*blind, ineluctable recourse to machinism.*” (Guattari, F, 2003: p136), a “*smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p20). The importance of the BwO (with regard to Accelerationism) is not its status as a void, but its *function* as a recording mechanism, as a “*recording surface*” (Ibid, p27). In relation to the transcendental the BwO is a plane of generality; the BwO is the general undifferentiated record of the Inside. A fluid plane of recording, desires, history, cosmic and biological forces, aesthetics, flows and connections. As such, the BwO in its most general sense is entitled ‘the plane of consistency, a functionally machinic plane of recording which holds all atomic connections as an “*undifferentiated fluid.*” (Ibid, p20).

However, the BwO is *not* the socius, it is *from* the BwO wherein the actual (as prior virtuals) *of* the socius emanate from. The BwO is where the possible future(s) are *held*. The clear point of division here is between the smoothness of the BwO and the striated nature of the socius. The former holds virtuality as a free-flowing mass of atomic connections which still hold their potentiality, the latter (the socius) captures that potentiality in actualization and striates it into a structure. A division which is key to the functional properties of the BwO.

The way in which I shall utilize the BwO is in its most general sense, with the exception of its differing functionality in connection with capitalism, which comes later. At its most versatile the BwO is the virtual dimension/plane of reality with regard to production (as output). The general plane of consistency where all connections, flows and fluxes of assimilative and computational utilization are held as virtualities, as potential for/of the future. The *production* of the new *begins* from the BwO. The BwO therefore, is the primary plane of production *for* the production-in-itself of the Outside, its first port-of-call regarding creation of the future. That which is *within* the BwO – as virtual – is *already* within the process(es) of the Outside, and as such the actualization via the synthesized reality of the Inside is *secondary* to the workings of the BwO, and thus secondary to the production-in-itself of the Outside.

Such a conclusion once again alters our perception of time with regard to the Inside, “*we are doing things before they make sense.*” (Land, N, 2014: p297). This seemingly simplistic quote by Land pertains, once again, to the production of the Inside as seen from the Inside, *as* actions *for* an unexplainable nothingness; if all actions and effects within the transcendental are viewed both as emanating from the Inside, *as seen* from the Inside, then nothing makes sense. To do things before they *make sense*, is to be possessed by the Outside in the form of an auto-constructive virtuality. The neurotic, paranoid, *passive* delirium of the desiring-machines is to construct that which it both doesn’t understand (until *after* the fact), nor understand *why* they’re constructing it. The BwO as situated on the Outside within the realm of production-in-itself, locks into the positive-feedback loop of production, which is both before *and* after any singular desiring-machine’s existence. As such the desiring-machine’s actions are secondary to the primacy of the auto-construction they are within. The BwO therefore, is simply the plane of *selection* for the primary Outside with regard to possible/potential futures.

At current I wish to detach the BwO from its temporal connections and focus on its determinist attributes a while longer. “*It is a result of the relationship between the desiring-machines and the body without organs, and occurs when the latter can no longer tolerate these machines.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p21). When in communication with capitalism the desiring-machines’ desires become overcoded, their machinations become too hot, too structured for the BwO, and it repels them. When the undifferentiated overcodes into *a* clear differentiation, that is when these forms of the Outside are *repelled* by the BwO and actualized into the socius. Machined into a stratified lock-in and cradled by Oedipus. In this manner Oedipus is useful in bursts, caressing the new into a constructive form of productive continuation, yet, more often than not suffocating it into a nostalgia. Oedipus therefore is only useful so much as schizophrenia exists, without the potentiality for exit embedded within the nature of the schizo, the Inside would become an asylum of banality.

When “*the desiring-machines attempt to break into the body without organs, and the body without organs repels them, since it experiences them as an over-all persecution apparatus.*” (Ibid, p20). The desiring-machines

once again make an error *from* the Inside, attempting from within *their* syntheses to effect the Outside. It is in this manner that a temporal distinction is made. The BwO is atemporal, the virtuality it holds – unlike that of the pure-past, which is indexed by the syntheses of man – is undifferentiated in time. As such the BwO is not only a selection of virtual attributes in relation to *material* actualization, but also a function of temporal (virtual) selection, times/events *as* productive potentialities.

To move from the general BwO to the BwO *of* capitalism, “*the body without organs of capitalism attempts to internalize the plane of consistency’s unlimited-limit.*” (Guattari, F, 2006: p393). The dynamics of capitalism inherently alter cosmic relations regarding stagnation, it cannot *allow* ‘completeness’, it assimilates all into its auto-construction. The BwO *of* capitalism repels the overcoding of the desiring-machine back into the socius as a modified version of itself. Capitalism’s mode of governance is to fluidly govern in *any* way which allows it to continue governing. It cares not for which representations it uses nor which ideological representations of the Inside it *allows*, it doesn’t *care* about the Inside, only computes its output back into the Outside, as to modify the BwO’s selection for a greater productive output. A computation from the Outside in which it perpetually selects the greatest productivity *of* production *for* capitalism. Capitalism avoids representation, it is pure techno-economic fluidity and bastardizes the function of the BwO into a cosmic production thresher function, targeted at the sole purpose of continual production (for itself).

From here we can view the socius as a ‘full body’, it is organized, it is the “*surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p21). To metaphorically envision the socius as the layer over the top of the BwO, that which *appears* as the meta-agent of production. The reality is one of communication. The virtuality of the BwO roams back and forth between the socius (Inside) and production-in-itself (Outside), the transcendental dynamics of capitalism at work. Overcoded virtualities repelled from the BwO, possessing the machines as an alien power and forming a new mode of production. As such “*Machines and agents cling so closely to capital that their very functioning appears to be miraculated by it. Everything seems objectively to be produced by capital as quasi-cause.*”

(Ibid, p22). Deleuze and Guattari writing so elusively here one wonders if they're revealing all of their revelations. Even though they allude to “*a perverted, bewitched world [where] capital increasingly plays the role of the recording surface that falls back on all of production.*” (Ibid, p22) they are short-sighted in this application, especially when thinking transcendently.

For we take the BwO in its most general sense, as the plane of consistency, of intensities, fluxes, flows and pure emotions. *Supposedly* these virtualities are then appropriated *by* the desiring-machines via their collective possession by the process-of-production itself, the alien force of the Outside. This possession allows for the actualization and recording of the virtual to be inscribed into the socius via the machinations of the desiring-machines. The insidious nature of capital here is – surprisingly – overlooked by Deleuze and Guattari. For capital is *throughout* the process. And so the aforementioned process wherein the virtual is drawn from the BwO and actualized via the machinations of the desiring-machines is altered. So, the BwO is taken as the plane of all virtualities (potential), these virtualities are appropriated by the flow and process of capital *itself* as a means towards capitalist expansion. These flows are usually appropriated/represented as money, which in itself is appropriated by a connective form of desire which is performatively actualized by desiring-machines. The aforementioned removal of the Marxian division between the alien power and man, towards a Deleuzoguattarian mode of production as immanent, and as such, production *as* man (as desiring-machine), transcendently alters the the function of capitalist dynamics, from a process which *controls* man's actions, to a process which *is* man's very being.

Not only then are we possessed *by* the alien force of capitalism itself, infecting us from the Outside, in the post-Marxian Deleuzoguattarian sense. But also we are mechanically directed/controlled via appropriated virtualities – time and money – as a means for productive direction. The virtual is the original lure for man, no longer to work *for* capital alongside the actual – as would be the case within transcendence – but to work *as* capital, immanently, possessed by the virtual. In the arrival of the virtual *from* the BwO we return to desire. For desire is virtual, the virtual becomes

actual. And so the desires we machinize are *from* the Outside. As such not only are ‘we’ mere assemblages, a clutter of loosely held together representations, but the originary aspect of each identity *is* the Outside itself. It is the virtual in all of us, desire-as-virtual *of* the Outside not only *in* you, but *as* ‘you’. Caught within an auto-construction of virtual elements, which non-linearly from the Outside have culminated in the creation of a ‘you’ *within* capitalism.

Why capitalism? Because the BwO repels all Oedipalization. Feudalism, Monarchism, Conservatism, Communism are all lying on the couch of the psychoanalyst, *needing* to be *told* where to stay, what to do, *how* to reappropriate for them to *remain* within *their* event. In doing so the BwO repels them. Capitalism sets fire to the psychoanalysts’ notes, and seeps through the pores of the office. The only (non) system which can control, utilize and/or produce *with* and *from* the “*blind, ineluctable recourse to machinism*” (Guattari, F, 2006: p136) that is the BwO is the system which is *always, already and implicitly* ready to *allow* all the paradoxes and contradictions of the undifferentiated virtual to flow through it, the system which in its very apparatus is a thresher of the virtual, targeting it solely and consistently at self-propelling production.

Or put even more hauntingly: “*Do you believe in God? – “Of course, but only as the master of the disjunctive syllogism, or as it’s a priori principle – from which all secondary realities are derived by a process of division.”*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p24). The energies of the BwO are divine, in functional attachment to the primary process-of-production which *is* the Outside, it serves as the primary wellspring of creation, which when interlinked with a system such as capitalism, which in its inherent fluidity avoids the repulsion of the BwO (as I shall show), becomes an auto-constructive system. The lives and world of the Inside are not only secondary processes, but the door to the primary is locked behind them, the key to which can be found by schizophrenic process. Capitalism is the great *primary* helmsman of the BwO. It is in this manner that it could *only* be capitalism which is the working system of Accelerationism. There is no Acceleration without capitalism. The processes of Accelerationism are inherently connected to these methods of communication between the

Inside and Outside, and the way in which these methods/functions can be consistently directed towards the future.

Capitalism's means of perpetual continuation is articulated, and made possible by the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. At its most general level deterritorialization is a process wherein something is virtually unshackled from its supposed natural, classical or original set of relations. Reterritorialization as the quasi-inverse of this is the process wherein the previous virtual which has been decontextualized via deterritorialization is reappropriated within a new framework. We may think practically of the '80's', unshackled from the temporal relations of the mechanical time 1980-1989 and reappropriated into overt dramatization of the virtual '80's' within contemporary society. This functionality of decontextualization transforms history, narrative and linearity into a conjunction of interlinked deterritorializations and reterritorializations, not a line, but an index of virtualities to be serialized via the syntheses of the Inside (by desiring-machines). The process of production and in turn the production of history therefore, comes *before* history as *we* know (synthesize) it. A further extrapolation of time in connection to the BwO *and* capitalism is now needed to understand *how* the temporal dynamics are at work here.

The dual complementary process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is wherein a clearer extrapolation of time *within* capitalism, or capitalism *as* critique is located. Capitalism *as* critique continues the critical conception of time as the *primary a priori* necessity of cosmic change. Once again we take Kant's propositions of time stated in *The Critique of Pure Reason (1996)* as given; time is not movement, movement is only the representation of time *in* time. Also, time does not exist in space, everything *in* space can only exist *in* time. "*In other words, the one thing that is not interior to time is the transcendental form of time itself. Thus, in discovering the abstract realm of the transcendental, Kant unmasks an unanticipated immanent exteriority – an outside that does not transcend the world but that is no less alien for that.*" (Greenspan, A, 2000: p39).

What does that mean in relation to the aforementioned process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization? The virtualities of the generalized BwO are grabbed by the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization *throughout* time, throughout pure time, *not* man's time. Transcendentally speaking *states* and *events* of time hold no privilege over one another; the past, present and future – as per the first synthesis – become mere empirical articulations *from* the desiring-machines. This linear mode of time – a transcendental error – is countered by Deleuze and Guattari via the connection between the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and the BwO. Time in this sense, in its relations to capitalism, becomes a synthesis of temporal events in relation to production. There is no longer an error of *temporal progression*, only a mode of temporal indexing, conjunction and reappropriation, a process of temporally neologistic indexing: cybergothic, neoreaction, postmodernism; all origins are dissolved by the fluid dynamics of capitalism *via* the functional processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The virtuals of the BwO as a plane, in their actualization via deterritorialization and reterritorialization become temporal events. Intense events, masks of time complete in-themselves and grasping – with effect – their neighbouring events. This process when computed via the fluidity of capitalism and targeted towards production is time-as-controlled, aimed-time. The atemporality (with regards to the Inside) and purity of time is aimed *by* capitalism, used by it; time does not continue anymore, it only produces.

As has been made clear the virtual and actual are *real*. Their functions as *real* come to the fore in relation to the BwO. The process/function of capitalist selection deterritorializes a virtuality and reterritorializes it back into the socius, into the Inside. This Inside is *also* wherein the synthesis of temporality concluding in 'linear time' takes place via man. Humans are demoted to this Inside and the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is a continuation of control regarding *their* synthesis. What is continually synthesized is that which is reterritorialized in 'front' of them. The difference regarding transcendental philosophy between Kant and Deleuze therefore is a matter of reduction. Kant halted at the proposition that it is man who synthesizes time (in its entire), Deleuze continues

critique by reducing man's process of synthesis into the Inside of the transcendental, as a process *within* something larger. It is this proposition which allows *all* aforementioned processes, mechanisms, passivities etc. of this essay to culminate into something more; the process of Accelerationism.

ZERO

There is *another* dynamic happening at the same time as all the aforementioned, a further stack of functions atop functions, an assemblage of functions in relation to the limits of capitalism, regarding the *how* of capitalism. Such limits which are strange forms of non-limits can only exist and function in combination with Zero. A complimentary function which is transcendently alongside the machinic unconscious, to later be expanded upon further.

Without Zero the Accelerative process is nothing, without Zero there is only *the* horrifying zero of nothing. As such Zero (capitalized) as opposed to zero, takes on an inherently different meaning with respect to zero or: zero-as-negation, as-nothing etc. Zero has nothing to do with a Sartrean existential negative, or banal psychoanalytical *lack*, it is not anthropomorphically comforting, but is transcendently (cybernetically) computational. A theoretical function born *from* Deleuze and Guattari's utilization of (degree-) zero in relation to the evolutionary mechanics of the Outside. Zero is a cosmic machinic optimism of positive-feedback, as opposed to the humanist pessimism of conclusions, zero.

It would be easy to confuse Zero with the "*fits and starts*" (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p1) of capitalism in *themselves*, as opposed to being the *function* of the fits and starts. "*Zero is the motor of paradox*" (Ireland, A, 2019). It is the momentary temporal mechanism wherein the machinic 'breakdown' of the Inside is deterritorialized and is drawn back *into* the BwO. Zero here acts as a plane, a plane of entropic and negentropic communication. As previously stated, beginnings don't exist, only middles, as such to *begin* at Zero – *continuously* – is to make clear the restarts of midpoints *between* events. "*The proportions of attraction and repulsion on the body without organs produce, starting from zero, a series of states in the*

celibate machine.” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p33). In this manner Zero is a *plane* of swerves. Attraction and repulsion or; declination-as-stagnation back *into* the plane of Zero (old), and declination-as-difference repelled *from* the plane of Zero (new) – entropy and negentropy. Zero is an infinitely-connective plane of energy, from which all systems, multiplicities and events arise. The distinct difference here between Zero and the BwO is that the former has an implicit relation to the inbetween of capitalism and entropy, it is the motor which allows the perpetual contradictions and paradoxes of capital to make sense, it allows for the functionally sound separation of events into a continuum of contradictory projections. The BwO is but a void of atemporal virtuality. Both Zero and the BwO *understand* physics and are *of* physics, but Zero understands how to utilize it as means of transcendental communication.

Zero’s relation to classical entropic forces is as a theoretical quasi-replacement within modernity, a communicational link between entropy (decay) of the Inside and its inherent productive process on the Outside. In this manner Zero is the transcendental machinic replacement of degradation, decay and destruction in favour of quantifiable productive output. The utilization, and *pure* assimilation *by* capitalism *through* man as an ‘alien force’ of machinic-standardization is capital’s mechanistic backbone, its structure. Zero as a computational mode of productive evolution allows for the dynamic of profit and loss to infiltrate the transcendental – as this alien force – on behalf of capitalism. Zero is capitalism’s utilization of the entropic outcomes of the Inside as a selection device with regard to production. Entropy – for Zero – as affirmation of *unproductive* stagnation. As Zero perceives this it begins and ‘restarts’ its motor as a reaction of negentropy; the in-between of the BwO and capitalism, the communication function between the virtual-as-productive potential and the system which can actualize that potential. Zero’s function is to continually select, re-select and divide these potentials *for* capitalism. “*The death of capital is less a prophecy than a machine part*” (Land, N, 2014: p266). Zero doesn’t have the capability to *select* a *more* productive form of energy, it does however begin the entropic process of descension into its plane towards a re-actualization of energy for further reappropriation by capitalism. Zero can be seen clearest in *any* notion of

‘post-capitalism’. All that is ‘post’ is not post, but has been drawn into the dynamics of perpetual continuation made possible by Zero. There is no such thing as death, only machinic-evolution.

As mentioned earlier the schizophrenic, or schizophrenia-as-process seeks out the very limit of capitalism, in this way the schizophrenic’s line-of-flight is made at degree-Zero, it is a descent into the unknown. To head towards the known is to head towards that which has already been structured/synthesized, for it is already *known/understood*, and so the new is always found within the unknown. The reverse entropic function of Zero articulated as degree-Zero (quasi-synonymous with negentropy) is a schizophrenic reappropriation of energy. The two sides of Zero, one acting internally and the other on the Outside, work as an energy-thresher targeted at the productive output of capital, or; Zero is a transcendental function of production utilized by capitalism to communicate between the *primary* production-in-itself of the Outside, and the productive apparatus of the Inside, utilizing the inherent limit-jumping ability of the schizo to ‘evolve’ production.

But why ‘Zero’ or 0, or = 0? “Zero has no definitional usage. The zero-glyph does not mark a quantity, but an empty magnitude shift: abstract scaling function.” (Land, N, 2014: p366-367) The absolute horror of Zero, an unquantifiable break of reality, a nothingness with no relation, no lack, no substance. The absolute limit of the smooth-scape; hyper-nomadism pushed to obliteration. Zero is as close as one can get to the ‘anti’ of *Anti-Oedipus*. For what is more corrosive to ‘papamummy’ than a function aimed at perpetual structural reappropriation? Zero is the maddening-catharsis of exit possibility. The limits of capitalism *without* Zero remain non-transcendental. Limits which are now to be explained.

“The tendency’s only limit is internal, and it is continually going beyond it, but by displacing this limit – that is, by reconstituting it, by rediscovering it as an internal limit to be surpassed again by means of a displacement; thus continuity of the capitalist process engenders itself in this break of a break that is always displaced, in this unity of the schiz and the flow.” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p266)

Capitalism's 'tendency' is that of a positive-feedback loop, It is reconstituted/rediscovered by a multitude of layered processes: deterritorialization and reterritorialization, Zero and schizophrenia. Such a dynamic *is* the means of continuation of critique *as* capitalism. Deleuze and Guattari's statement that the limit is 'internal' is not with regard to the mechanisms *of* capitalism, but is made in relation to the internally synthesised limits of phenomena. The exterior limits of capitalism – the Outside – are both primary production-in-itself *and* "*schizophrenia, that is, absolute decoding of flows.*" (Ibid, p287) Much like the mutual relationship of the virtual/actual the Inside/Outside cannot be without one another, the latter, however, is always one step ahead of the former due to its inherently different mode of temporality. In this manner the push/progression of the internal limit of capitalism is made possible by letting the Outside in. The allowance of the Outside is *made* possible by the process of schizophrenia doing what comes natural to it, descending to the periphery and in combination with Zero, the schizo is allowed to jump the frontier and push into a new event and actualize a new negentropy.

The schizophrenic descends to the unknown, the periphery, the furthest limit of capitalism and during this process defines a new limit – one which it is *already* on the other side of (thanks to Zero). The madness of the schizo is exorcised and the schiz itself re-Oedipalized in assimilation with the newfound limit, desire or productive system. If Oedipus has an enemy, schizophrenia is it. Schizophrenia is not the schizophrenia of the asylum, but a process, a fluidity, a continual process of identity and structural repulsion. "[*The schizophrenic*] scrambles all codes and is the transmitter of the decoded flows of desire." (Ibid, p49) The importance of [the] schizo is that he/it seeks out not just limits, but exits. "*The schizo knows how to leave.*" (Ibid, p156) state Deleuze and Guattari, a fundamentally problematic position. The schizophrenic process traverses the BwO and helps the reinstallation/reappropriation of desire/production within a newfound boundary. This implication of exit is confusingly conclusatory for Deleuze and Guattari, but this is only if one has yet to remove the last remnants of rational humanism from their thought. "*There is nothing to transgress in a limit – since if there is a frontier, both sides must have already been posited.*" (Lyotard, J, 2014: p203). As such *the* or *a (one)*

schizophrenic is an error; to *be* schizo in relation to the actions of a subject is a transcendental error. The ‘subject’ has already been caught in the syntheses of the Inside; the schizophrenic process may sweep man up with it, but ‘a man’ is already too Oedipalized to become schizo. Schizophrenia is an external force of the Outside *let* in, it possesses man but is not let in *by* him, it exists only as a continuation of the machinic unconscious. To auto-induce schizophrenia is but to auto-induce complex illusions pertaining to heightened states *within* the Inside – do not kid yourself, you are not a schizophrenic martyr, but a delusional fool.

The real dynamic that allows schizophrenic exit is posed within the statement “*Schizophrenia creeps out of every box eventually.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p268) The ‘box’ as linear modes of time, and ‘eventually’ as difference. The schizo as a process of the Outside *let* Inside is the difference within the synthesis of man. On the Inside change is doomed to the limitations of its own construct, on the Outside such a limit is non-existent. As such, allowing schizophrenia entry into the Inside *from* the Outside is to welcome the paradoxical means to overcome *set* boundaries, limits and hurdles.

Capitalism’s motto – “*Nothing ever died of contradictions*” (Mackay, R. Avanessian, 2014: p16) therefore, is only made possible via the critical theorizations of time and temporality within transcendental philosophy, with strict importance regarding the exclusion of both temporal linearity *and* cosmically-solipsistic attention to the (limited) perception of man. Here we return to Deleuze’s syntheses of time. The importance herein of Deleuze’s philosophy of time is what it transforms man, or more aptly, man’s position into. *Subjectivity* is fundamentally altered in relation to passivity, the human subject is removed from the possibility of agency (within the first and second syntheses) and likewise taken from the Kantian setting of critique of man-as-primary-synthesizer *of* processes, to man-as-process/man-*in*-process – Deleuzian temporality reduces Kant’s critique to shift humanity to the object side. “*Time is subjective, but it is essentially the subjectivity of a passive subject.*” (Deleuze, G, p94) and a subjectivity which is disallowed the entire of the ‘box’ it knows *of* is practically useless. To say one has a subjective perception is to live as a transcendently institutionalized ape! – “*the first synthesis implies overlapping urations or*

stretches that cannot be reduced to a single line, or to a dominant narrative.” (Williams, J, 2012: p70) and yet the subjective understanding of man can attend to the most banal causal connections at an alarming rate; the time of the Inside maybe of a folded past and future into the present, but that doesn't stop the self of Oedipus from finding a linearity to suffocate upon. These contradictions happen, appear and are enacted on the Outside and come in as actualization, becoming rooted to the fluidity of capitalism. Contradictions dissolve into the clock. Man, as passive desiring-machine, cannot attest to a contradiction, for from his point of view all is *going* correctly 'forward'. A puppet makes no mistakes in-itself.

Mentioned prior was the temporal distinction between the first and second syntheses', to extrapolate on this however we see a difference in the conception of the 'past'. Wherein the first synthesis' the form of past is folded into the passing-present as retention, whereas the past of the second synthesis is a 'pure past'. Once again the notion that it is a determining past is prevalent here, for the pure past is virtual, it is a connective mode of retained temporality – “*The pure past is noumenal it is a condition for the passing of actual passing presents.*” (Ibid, p73) In relation to the transcendental then, this temporal realm of the pure past is a 'behind' of a deterministic quality. In a mode of reciprocal determination this noumenal plane completes the actual, utilizing the connective capability of the pure past. The virtuality of the pure past infects the present transcendently, it is an infection and infiltration from the Outside. This infection is fundamentally processed via the process of reterritorialization and reterritorialization *and Zero*, and as such is immediately immanentized into the dynamics of capitalism. The mode – or synthesis – in which this happens is via the third of Deleuze's 3 syntheses of time. Which is as (classically) philosophically close as one can get to an articulation of the temporal aspects of the Accelerative process.

It has already been seen via extrapolation of the first 2 syntheses that the subject, within Deleuzian philosophy, is not lost, but demoted. The third synthesis is a theorization of fracturing in relation to the subject, but this is a fracturing of the *Deleuzian* subject, of the subject-as-process within process. To articulate the third synthesis I must return to the first.

At its most stripped back the first synthesis is an understanding of the subject's place within the Deleuzian continuation of critique, that the subject – and the Inside – are unable to control their relation and the effects put upon them by the syntheses of the Outside. Now to move to the *third* synthesis, we place this first synthesis onto the circle of the Eternal Return. “*The caesura, along with the before and after that it orders once and for all, constitute the fracture of the I*” (Deleuze, G, 1994: p120) and so there is, upon the circle, a *cut*, a fracture. Up until that point (cut) the first synthesis was passive in the ‘creation’ of a ‘subject’, a momentary – or event-caged – subject/desiring-machine whom within that previously allowed section of first synthesis began to *form* a subject, a self. But the caesura happens with its inherent implication of a before and after, slicing the *I* of the subject and creating a temporal *event*. In this way the third synthesis ‘begins’ (but the beginning is always the middle) the transcendental ordering of time. The caesura is the drama of time. For with cutting and creation of a new event there begins multiple relations, between the event, the before and the after.

“*There is a necessary assembly of time implied by any possible cut in time. This assembly depends upon an image standing as symbol of the times assembled.*” (Williams, J, 2012: p93) The times assembled have been synthesized (in relation to ‘subjects’) in the mode of the first and second syntheses; passive subjective conceptions of time *created* by a *primary* transcendental temporal assembly – “*non-localisable links, action at a distance, systems of replay, of resonances and echoes, objective chance, signals and signs, roles transcending spatial situations and temporal successions.*” (DR p113) one or many of these synthetic times “*are assembled upon an image standing as a symbol of the times assembled.*” (Ibid, p93). A symbol, event or event-assembly, of a synthesis is *created from* a cut in time. A novel/new action is dependent on this cut, for without a cut, fracture or break it remains only a possibility, there is no event, no assemblage, no time-image without the *new*; the future is *not* continuation, it is fragmentation.

But what of this future? “*The new as produced in a present act and conditioned by the third synthesis of time as cut, assembly order and series is itself dependent on repetition as the eternal return of difference.*” (Ibid,

p96) The circle that is the eternal return spins *as* an assemblage of times. It makes its return (spin/cycle) and is cut, fractured, and the previous cycle is knocked out-of-joint, the circle is decentred. But, the cycle continues, this time decentred and spinning from a *new* temporal locale, as such the cut acts as the bringer of difference. The future is this new cycle. The eternal return never had an originary position, it is an eternal spiral/decentred circle, mutating its temporal self by way of fragmentation *into* a new/different temporal assemblage.

Thus far this has been an exercise of extrapolating on its key components, parts and functions. As such I can now begin to draw various aforementioned elements together and *begin* to construct the *process* of Accelerationism, which since the introduction has not been mentioned by name, but has most definitely been present. For a prior definition of Accelerationism without extrapolation of its respective complexities' workings and functions, and *their* interactions, would be theoretically useless, to define a process one must understand its loop. From now this essay is a matter of assembly.

ACCELERATIONISM

A clarification of the beginnings of the 'process' of Accelerationism thus far with regard to this current conclusion. Prior to redirecting the aforementioned theorizations towards specifically Accelerationist emphases. Man *is* a passive desiring-machine, synthesizing the living-present in relation to retained and anticipated desire, this synthesis in relation to Deleuzian critique is of the Inside. External to this, on the Outside, is where the 'alien force' of production is found. This alien force possesses man via machinic means and makes him an agent *of* capital alongside making *him* capital. The process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization draws virtualities from the BwO which are then actualized into the socius, or into the Inside via man's synthesis – the process of possession. Capitalism as a dynamically fluid system can consistently adhere to the BwO due to its ability to withstand breaks. So that which is deterritorialized is reterritorialized *into* the mechanical clock-time *of* capitalism, it is instantly immanentized into the runaway mechanisms of capitalism itself, targeted towards a productivity *for*

capitalism. In this manner capitalism constructs reality, not metaphorically, but within the realm of physics. *“Deleuze-Guattari’s machinic unconscious diffuses all law into automatism.”* (Land, N, 2014: p322).

And thus this construction of reality, of the BwO being perpetually deterritorialized and reterritorialized is the immanentization of the forever-middle, the machinic unconscious has no crescendo, only *more* desire. This process *is* the machinic unconscious, the machinizing of virtual temporality into actuality as a runaway mechanism. The ‘reality’ of the Inside never ‘begun’ in any ordinary manner, it only exists in a sporadic indexing of intense construction directed by the productive forces of the machinic unconscious, which exists solely on the Outside. For,

“Oedipus – or transcendental familialism – corresponds to the privatization of desire: its localization within segmented and anthropomorphized sectors of assembly circuits as the attribute of a personal being. Anti-Oedipus aligns itself with the replicants, because rather than placing a personal unconscious within the organism, it places the organism within the unconscious.” (Ibid, p320)

Once it is accepted that the human subject is no longer the pre-copernican/pre-Kantian subject or overarching synthesizer in-themselves (via Deleuze), but is synthesizing within a pure time inclusive of an Inside and Outside, alterations occur regarding classical structures of order. The personal unconscious is revealed to be *another* transcendental illusion, another mask hiding no face, or; an actuality within the socius acting as an illusory form of agency functioning in relation to an underlying productive process. *“In the unconscious there are no protectable cell-structures, but only ‘populations, groups, and machines’.”* (Ibid, p320) a productive-unconscious which, in relation to syntheses is *“not considered to be not merely immanent to their operation, but also immanently constituted, or auto-productive.”* (Ibid, p322) this auto-constructive/productive element is explained in terms of physics within *Anti-Oedipus*,

“But in reality the unconscious belongs to the realm of physics; the body without organs and its intensities are not metaphors, but matter itself. – A machine works according to the previous intercommunications of its structure and the positioning of its parts, but does not set itself into place

any more than it forms or reproduces itself.” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p323)

As such, the auto-constructive process of the Outside, of production-in-itself *is* the machinic unconscious. The positive oriented construction of a temporal index *from* the Outside *in*. Not only *within* the machinic unconscious, but *from* it and *of* it too.

“Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization? For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough, not decoded enough, from the viewpoint of a theory and a practice of a highly schizophrenic character. Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to “accelerate the process,” as Nietzsche put it: in this manner, the truth is that we haven’t seen anything yet.” (Ibid, p276)

This quote forming both the name ‘Accelerationism’ and the motto of the Accelerationists, *“accelerate the process”*. The process defined then is the culmination of the aforementioned multitude of parts into a coherence in relation to *all*, the primary components however are: Time, production and capitalism. It is of note – to those still...*stuck* – that humans here *as* desiring-machines are immanently demoted to the Inside of the transcendental split, as such work only in coordination *to* a primary force, *the* primary force of production-in-itself.

The shortest description of the process of Acceleration(ism), the one which Deleuze and Guattari say should be accelerated is as follows: Letting the Outside in. Let me crack this open and lay its parts – now thoroughly examined unto their own merits – in relation to one another. Time is understood in the mode of Deleuzian critique, it is a time *of* immanence and via Deleuze man is demoted to the object/material side of the transcendental split. We name this ‘side’ the Inside, for man is *within* a larger pure time *due* to the fact he must synthesize, which acts as a lock-in. The Outside then, is *the* transcendental. It is pure time and production-in-itself. But if we are to let the Outside *in* there needs to be a mode of connection or communication, or even, a method of *possession*. Enter the actual/virtual dynamic, wherein the actual exists within the material realm and the virtual exists in time, but also in connection to man. The actual and virtual is the

link of physicalization, then, but how is it *processed*? The function here is Zero, which acts as the functional means for retention of surplus production value over time. For there to be a continuation, perpetually, we *need* the system of capitalism in all its fluidity, why? For all other systems get locked into their own principles, whereas capitalism *thrives* on contradiction, as such *all* virtuality can be utilized by capitalism and targeted towards a sole objective, continuation of capitalism which happens via continual production, or; capitalism's aim is production of production. The machinic mechanisms of capitalism – clock/industrial time – act as an alien force acting upon man, altering him into a machine, which, in combination with passive Lyotardian desire fundamentally changes man into that which *can* be possessed by forces of the Outside, for man is but immanent to the process itself. Here time takes effect. For this entire process is happening within the temporal mode of the eternal return. As such, upon the return of the cycle a cut happens, and the new is brought forth via time.

The process can be described very plainly, without its temporal linkage, as the process wherein the productive, schizophrenic and deterritorializing capabilities inherent to capitalism are accelerated. Which without prior articulation of the problematic nature of capitalism's limit in relation to schizophrenia, time and process seems clear. To begin at the start of this essay once more, I noted that time plays a major role in the 'process' itself. The relation between Deleuzian philosophy of time and Accelerationism is the clearest route to articulating the process in-depth. For, the classical definition of 'acceleration' posits one idea, the continual push for the new – to 'accelerate' is never to return, or at least return to a previous (same) state. To accelerate to 80 mph, is *not* return to 20mph once you've hit 40mph. The definition of 'acceleration' in relation to Accelerationism however is a little more tricky, but I will come to that shortly. For now I shall focus on Acceleration in relation to the Deleuzian philosophy of time. To Accelerate (now in the sense of Acceleration(ism)) is to allow the past no continuation, it is to play no part in the past, except wherein the past is utilized by schizophrenia, taken upon a line-of-flight and deterritorialized *back* into the virtual, processed by Zero, and reterritorialized once more as actual back into the socius as something new – there is much process to avoid the stagnation of the past, for it is trapped, and the machinery imposes an

inhumanity of constant change. Primarily, as I have stated, Accelerationism is concerned with the third synthesis in its relation to novelty, the new, difference...the future. So the process in this manner is the way in which the pure form of time posited by Deleuze is (ab)used/utilized to maximum efficiency by the inherent capability of capitalism to *be* fluid. That is, due to the inherent nature of capitalism's system as that which avoids definition, any mode of thought epoch, external system, internal system or defining capability that attempts to mould capital to *its* will is either subsumed into the dynamics as an illusory form of its previous self (read: leftism), or is left as a stagnant *external* to capitalism (and thus to time) and left to rot due to exclusion from the *only* productive hegemony (read: primitivism).

Acceleration is *not* synonymous with speed. It should be evident by now that the idea that *one*, or *an*, or even an 'I' or 'they' could actively speed up capitalism as a mode of praxis would be a transcendental error. An error wherein one mistakes the 'speed' of phenomena, or of actualized 'entrepreneurship', techno-economic innovation or higher profit rates as Acceleration. In this manner, the entire canon of Left-Accelerationist writings fall flat on their incorrect readings of Accelerationism in relation to time. Whereby they believe that accelerating capitalism will lead to a means of emancipation of the worker in the future, via automation etc. Such a belief is posited on the notion of anthropocentric material and praxis, and as such is an error in its entire.

From this I posit that Acceleration is *not* synonymous with speed in the classical sense of MPH etc. The question then is how to define the 'Acceleration' of Accelerationism? I have thus far made it clear that Accelerationism is primarily a philosophy of time, it is understood as a continuation of critique and attends to the transcendental framework of time as primary. The connection between capitalism and time is where we find the definition of what it is to 'Accelerate'. As noted capitalism has a critical understanding of time and finds within it its ability to act as auto-construction *between* and *over* temporal events. Instead of being divided into temporal offshoots or temporally constructed neologisms (cyber-gothic, neoreaction, postmodernism, neo-Dada etc.) of its *own* system, we find that capitalism never fragments *in* time. Capital is always already temporally one step ahead. It is the great abstract-machine of living presents; though it

has not produced this system of time itself, it has inherent to its mechanisms an ability to produce *from it and with it*. The passive syntheses of time are drawn into the system of capitalism which acts as *their* undercurrent, *their* temporal mediator. Man stands as a material for the communion of capitalism. For the internal dynamic of capitalism is a positive-feedback loop targeted at production, targeted at production *of* production. As I have shown the philosophy of Accelerationism is not empirical, so these modes of production are not traditional/classical profit dynamics, material growth rates, resource extraction rates etc., these would all be but *more* masks hiding no faces. More quasi-illusions atop the production-in-itself of the Outside. In this manner to ‘Accelerate’ is not to ‘go faster’, but is to *allow* capitalism to enact its inherent capabilities regarding perpetual acquisition of the *new*. Not to speed up, but to be novel.

The two-factor form of positive feedback that makes up the ‘process’ of Accelerationism is as follows then. The productive output that capitalism (as positive oriented) is targeted at is a transcendental form of production, profit rates are on the inside of the transcendental. So the true productive capability comes from the Outside, which can also be stated as working with the BwO in its most general sense as a bank of virtualities to be reappropriated in a novel way by Zero, and actualized *through* man. So the cyclical nature of Deleuzian time in relation to the eternal return states that the eternal return is the return of difference. The return *is* the future, which is the decentred circle starting another cycle from a different centre point; without this decentred, out-of-joint nature of the eternal return, the return would always be the same. A connection is to be found here between the eternal return and the BwO, “*Drawn from the real present object, the virtual object differs from it in its nature; it does not only lack something in relation to the real object it subtracts itself from; it lacks something in itself, by being half of itself where the other half is posited as different and absent.*” (Deleuze, G, 1996: p135)

The virtualities “*half of itself*” is that which is returned to the BwO, the lost part of it, its perpetual potentiality for difference, for reappropriation. The part which returns to the atemporality of the BwO, for it is not locked to the object of an event as the actual is, and can return to be reused. As a whole process the virtual can always return, in the sense of both its indexing

within the pure past and as part of difference. On top of all this the process unto which the virtuality is thrown into the thresher of either non or productive difference is entirely unconscious. “*A machine works according to the previous intercommunications of its structure and the positioning of its parts, but does not set itself into place any more than it forms or reproduces itself.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p323) In this manner the industrialized, mechanized and quantified attributes of capitalism’s internal dynamics act as a numeric thresher regarding the productive output of temporal caesuras as reterritorialized pure past sent in from the Outside. To expand upon one instance of this process:

The eternal return cycles one return, there is a caesura/break in time which inherently acts as a cutting of temporality therefore forming a before and after and in turn producing novelty, the-future-as-difference, as such the eternal return is the eternal return of difference and is the temporal motor of Acceleration. This return of difference is a *new virtuality* to be both deterritorialized from its originary temporal location and reterritorialized until complete burnout, in this sense, capitalism’s machinic-unconscious acts as a temporal thresher, extracting all productive potentiality from that which is sent ‘in’ from the Outside via the process of the eternal return – this is what it means to Accelerate.

The process of the return is the *content* of Acceleration. It is that which comes closest to a theoretical outline of that which *has been* or *is* Accelerating. The eternal return of difference being instantly re-immanentized (BwO > Schizophrenia > Zero) back into the dynamics of capitalism. Capitalism utilizes *all* difference as a means for its own expansion. Upon the instantiation of transcendent capitalism the eternal return fundamentally alters. For much akin the BwO, a return as a form of difference is an act of repulsion against the same, much alike the repulsion of overcoding from the undifferentiated within difference. Also the same is the way in which capitalism can adhere to that which is theoretically eternal. For only that which can remain undisturbed in-itself throughout incessant change can continue eternal, namely, capitalism. The return of the circle is but another force of the Outside, another novelty to be aimed at its continuation.

As much as the aforementioned entire *could* be stated as ‘conditions’, however the process unto which one has to deal with said process is unconditional. Thus to direct, attempt to direct or even to theorize a direction of the process is always already a dead, strange and terrifying abstraction.

Within this is a direct assimilation of productive potential regarding the *pure* form of time. The pure form of time in the ‘event’ (caesura) of the third synthesis is 1. An event unto itself, but also 2. A fragmentation, a variation, a splitting or divide, both (1 & 2) are in time. This mode of breaking wherein a break imposes a serialization unto time poses an implicit problem for every *other* system other than capitalism. In this manner the system of capitalism either formed *itself* respective of Deleuzian time, or such a mode of time evolved capitalism (this is not for me to answer here). For each temporal event has its own symbolic image underneath it, as such Feudalism, Monarchism, Communism, I state that these are all passive temporal forms which cling to the symbolic, the locked-in imagery of a single symbolic *event*. And whatsmore, they *fear* further events, for the caesura brings with it an *effect* unto their event and thus a *change*. Capitalism on the other hand is the great temporal thresher, hoovering up productive capability of the serialization of time and assimilating all new virtualities into its fluxing/fluid temporal domain.

So what is Accelerationism then, what is it to Accelerate with regard to all that has been assembled? It is the temporal assemblage of the dynamics of capitalism, transcendental temporality and Deleuzoguattarian production. It is passivity in relation to this trio, an understanding that once the auto-construction that *is* the machinic unconscious is underway, that within its inherent nature it targets itself at continual production-of-production, as such, Accelerationism *begun* as soon as capitalism *begun*. The cosmic evolutionary utilization of the return of difference as a means to compound greater production regarding the future. For the process of Acceleration is a multiplicity of functions, of process-based assemblages interconnecting into a cosmic fluidity. It is the transcendental conclusion of man as a passive desiring-machine, which in concordance with the processes of capital makes *him* capital in-himself, man is made immanent to the system *itself*. The anthro is dissolved. Accelerationism is transcendental evolutionary

production, a cosmic production thresher *of* the Outside targeted foremost at time itself. The process of Acceleration or: “*accelerate the process*” (Ibid, p276) then is a semantic mistake. For ‘to accelerate’ presumes a form of agency, a form of direction, whereas the ‘reality’ of the process is one of an ever changing reality; acceleration is *always* disjointed, neo, ahead, disappearing,

“Anyone trying to work out what they think about accelerationism better do so quickly. That’s the nature of the thing. It was already caught up with trends that seemed too fast to track when it began to become self-aware, decades ago. It has picked up a lot of speed since then.” (Land, N, 2017)

‘Accelerationism’ as a piece of terminology is a pithy joke, to define an ever evolving machinic unconscious leviathan so didactically is laughable, to ‘work it out’ is only ever to work out the processes or functions of its nature, never to find a form of comfort or control.

CONCLUSION

From such an assemblage of functions and processes, the entirety of which are *within* the auto-construction of the machinic unconscious, any conclusion can only be articulated in a non-conclusory form. Due to Accelerationism’s inherent transcendental characteristics, which have been thoroughly extrapolated here, one understands that *any* notion of an Accelerative finality is not possible. Such a possibility only exists on the Inside, and even then, it only exists as an illusory form of finality, a stagnance decided upon by a desiring-machine. In this manner I take the opportunity within this conclusion to make a prescient points regarding the *entirety* of what is known contemporarily as ‘Accelerationist Politics’. The conclusion that one can draw about such a statement, considering this essay’s prior theorizations, is that *any* notion of politics in relation to Accelerationism is *any* traditional sense is instantly recognized as a categorical transcendental error. No amount, no type, no redefinition of politics can alter it in such a manner that it can affect the primary of the Outside. In this manner this essay stands not as an attack on the Accelerationist politics of Williams and Srnicek (2013) and Shaviro (2015), but positions itself prior to any of these theorizations.

Further to this conclusion I would argue that the trajectory of the so-called ‘Unconditional Accelerationists’ is not incorrect, as much as it is terminologically ambiguous. For I have outlined certain conditions which culminate into both the process of Accelerationism and Accelerationism itself. In relation to the entirety of the transcendental there *are* conditions, functions and processes which all autocatalytically interact, however vague, free-floating and fluxing these conditions are, they all need to be in place for there to be such a theory of time as Accelerationism. However, I will openly admit that in relation to the *Inside* Accelerationism is unconditional, that is, there is and never was anything *we* could *do*.

So where can one say the process of Acceleration will continue *into*, what will come of it? Such an answer can admittedly only be purely speculative theorization. In that, it may be that capitalism continues in one of 2 directions. Either it continues its runaway mechanism towards singularity, which would take such a form that one could not comment upon. Or direction 2, it continues its runaway mechanisms in continual ignorance of the finite nature of the Inside and as such crumbles under its *own* nature. In the first direction the conclusion is a dark Marxist transformation, wherein, the means of production are not given over to us, but escape *from* us towards their own self-propulsion. In the second direction, anthropocentric and Inside-centric perspective would once again take to the fore. If capitalism crumbles under its own weight via resource over-extraction etc. then we no longer would have the dynamics of capitalism to solve our problems, and as such the Outside would dissolve, or at least its methods of communication would disappear until such time as the entire assemblage is made possible once more.

There is however a quasi-conclusion to the theorization of Accelerationism. In that, it is arguably the first philosophical effort or critique in which the human truly stands alone. Prior to Accelerationism all notions and articulations of what it is to-be-human have come either from the Inside, and as such have a transcendently incorrect bias, or, spring from a pre-Kantian rationalism, which in-keeping with the theory of this essay is also incorrect. Though Kant and those philosophers working with critique make man’s place in the world clear, different and non-anthropocentric, they only do so in a manner of placement, as opposed to definition. To place man on

the Inside is not to *define* him, it is only to locate him. However, in relation to Acceleration, man is both transcendently demoted to the Inside *and* has entirely inhuman/non-human forces reacting, possessing and controlling him. As such, via Accelerationism we can *begin* to posit man and humanism, not in-itself as a form of self-congratulatory conservative bias, but as a reaction against an artificiality it most definitely is *not*.

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On Left and Right Accelerationism

Where one begins with Acceleration or Accelerationism (or Capitalismism) in the scholarly philosophical sense can not be from any centralized point; this rhizomatic point-of-origin is quite in-keeping with Accelerationist theory. One *could* begin from Marx's *Fragment on Machines*, *The Accelerationist Reader*, *Hyperstition*, *Nick Land's Oeuvre*, *Deleuzeguattarian philosophy*, *late Nietzsche*, *CCRU* or even niche Twitter subgroups (search-terms: u/acc, l/acc, r/acc, z/acc, #rhetttwitter & #cavetwitter) So where shall I begin, from the list above's glaring lacuna...

I shall begin with the MAP. Unfortunately, this MAP isn't full of detailed schematics, measurements or routes, no. This MAP is in fact a manifesto, *The Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics (MAP)* If it were a map I'd argue that it'd be so dated in its approach to cartography that we'd be dealing with but a crayon drawing of robo-Marx pointing which direction to go in. So, *why* begin here as opposed to the other Acceleration labyrinth (Acc-Lab) entry points? The MAP is one of the few entry locations of the Acc-Lab that actually has a defined position which is relative to *any* agreement; thus far, the MAP Acc-Lab doorway is the only agreed upon entry-point which leads to any constructive discussion as to acceleration. Why is this? To the meat!

As I stated MAP declares a position, which is of/on the left. Their proposition in short is to accelerate technology as a means to emancipate the worker from the shackles of capitalism, the acceleration of technology as a utopian-accelerative gesture.

'Work for work's sake is a perversity and a constraint imposed upon humanity by capitalism's ideology of the work ethic. What accelerationism seeks is to allow human potential to escape from the trap set for it by contemporary capitalism.' – #Accelerationism: Remembering the Future

It is quite transparently a '*Marxism for the 21st century*' (*Isaac Camacho*) and so one may wonder *why* anyone would take seriously such a proposition, the idea that post/after/beyond/through capitalism lies this

Marxist utopia is deluded, capitalism has already subsumed Marxism and unless you wish to make the case that it still exists but as mere internal-cyst upon capitalism' innards waiting for its day or rupture, then your argument comes to a halt rather sharply. Postcapitalism, if such a nauseating political reality could come into existence, would exist much akin to postmodernism, yearning to be free of its suffix-master, yet perpetually attached via an economic umbilical cord for stability.

Yet this idea of 'postcapitalism' allows us to view that which Acceleration is truly indebted to: time. Postcapitalism could *only* come into existence via the ability of future-construction, via the ability *to* construct the future: '24. *The future needs to be constructed.*' – MAP.

'The notion that the future is less ontologically settled than the past is less transcendently unsustainable position, it's a metaphysics of time in a strict critical sense and it's convenient for political orientation but it's a philosophically unsustainable commitment.' – Nick Land

This idea of 'construction' is ontologically and temporally muddled, albeit wrong. MAP's notion of construction implies both a retainment of agency (not surprising from a Marxist perspective), yet it also implies that history presents a *choice*, and that history is on a *divergent* wave as opposed to a *convergent* wave. The ripples move in reverse, back towards the 'event', the singularity; capitalism drags and draws the 'past' and the 'now' *from* its place in the future. A temporal lasso cuts through common notions of chronic-time and acts out its transcendent selection process. Acceleration is the struggle to keep up with the demands of the future.

If one is in doubt of this strange, outside, diagonal temporal process they may only look upon the influx of subcultures and movements indebted to a non-linear, anti-chronic or atypical theorizations of times: Cyberpunk, Cybergoth, Neoreaction, Archifuture, Retro-progressivism etc. Imminent examples of disorder within the supposedly (currently) ordered security system; the prediction market was reliant on an incorrect form of time and as such...we got a lot wrong. If one returns to the idea of time as a *convergent* wave, they find that *of course* prediction markets would be wrong, their predictions were blind darts thrown against the pull of the future.

Back to our entry-point. Why did we enter at L/Acc? Because (as is often the case) it is the left who imply, if not create the first point of reference upon the spectrum. So with an entry at L/Left we now (apparently) have a political left, a directional left, and a positional left, from the trajectory of the MAP one can now – with rough certainty – say their hand is to the Left wall of the Acc-Lab. So with the existence of *a* Left comes the implication and almost forced (unwarranted) creation of a right. For you cannot have left without *the existence* of a right, wherever it may lay, and whatever it may be. R/Acc is an inevitable semiotic effect from the coinage of L/Acc.

Can you hear that clicking, hissing and screeching in the distance? It's the noise of a hundred shitposters frothing at the mouth at the prospect of R/Acc articulation.

R/Acc, that grand phantasm of accelerationist thought. It is easiest to begin from comparison. In the traditional sense the political spectrum has on its left Liberalism and Communism, and on its right Conservatism and Fascism. So where L/Acc see a constructed future once again pertaining to Marxist thought, R/Acc sees (amongst a few perceptions – Wait your turn!) the possibility of acceleration only existing with a reversion to *some* form of hierarchical structure; this is where we see the convergence of Neoreaction and R/Acc, both taking the blackpill in acceptance of deterritorialization *as* capitalism – ‘*it sees capital's oppressive reconfiguration of the social space as the inevitable price techno-industrial development.*’ – *So, Acc*

More recently *both* ends of the spectrum have altered in mirrored ways (as they would). We have seen the left become increasingly *more* egalitarian, *more* inclusive and *more* tolerant, to the point of ignorance, frustration and delusion. What the Left wishes to tuck neatly under the rug and act as if it will simply disappear once/if technological emancipation is achieved, the right wishes to bring to the fore and accept as a means to ‘prove’ and foster the idea that either we need a reversion, or more recently ‘It's too fucking late!’

R/Acc: An increasing proportion of the industrial surplus is being absorbed by the task of masking bio-social deterioration.

Z/Acc: *Over 100% soon.*

U/Acc: *Oh c'mon.*

L/Acc: *Look, a squirrel! – Nick Land (Outsideness)*

The discrepancies of an R/Acc definition come about precisely because in its origination it was anti-capitalism. To paraphrase Moldbug 'Just because you're no longer a red, doesn't mean you have to become a blue.'. R/Acc were anti-capitalist, but they weren't/aren't *those* anti-capitalists, they can't be, otherwise the spectrum just shot up its own arse. R/Acc's form of anti-capitalism begins from the idea that (for R/Acc) capitalism and acceleration are synonymous, and thus, they are not anti-capitalism in the strict, empirical, political sense, no. They are anti-capitalism in the sense of understanding that capitalism's '*industrial surplus is being absorbed by the task of masking bio-social deterioration*' and as such this isn't a convergent wave leading anywhere pleasant. But then again, who ever said the singularity was going to be pleasant?

If one is to refer to the root of Deleuze and Guattari's now semi-famous 'accelerationist passage' one can find articulation. The root of the accelerationist ritual '*Accelerate the process!*' (*Anti-Oedipus*) is of course to be found in the latter fragmented jottings of Nietzsche's nachlass *The Will to Power*: '*The levelling of the European man is the great process which cannot be obstructed; it should even be accelerated.*' What does this quote reveal to us of both L/Acc and R/Acc? It reveals priorities: L/Acc dumbfoundedly wishes to control the ritual *process*, whereas R/Acc are primarily focused on what the levelling *does* to European man. Or: It's all well and good 'levelling European man' but if that process results in a dysgenic, IQ shredding, weak, slave-like mess then perhaps it's best to question the method. (I would add here for those interested that Neoreaction focuses more on European man than levelling or its effects.)

R/Acc *is* L/Acc's compensatory reterritorialized element, yet unlike the L/Acc R/Acc has not chained itself to archaic theory set in chronic time, and as such acts as a reterritorialization acting and moving in relation to L/Accs consistent compiling of ignorance. This would be my personal argument against the idea that R/Acc needs or has a consistent political

position, R/Acc's inherent understanding of agency within unhinged time allows them to acquire the blackpill-visors and metaphorically witness capital's convergent lasso come forth. With L/Acc searching for the – supposed – *true* agent of acceleration exterior to capitalism, which in the view of R/Acc *is* capitalism itself. Thus the spectrum upon which both L and R/Acc coexist is one of ontology, wherein one side (L/Acc) promote an ontologically objective structure of time, with humanities agency at the wheel, and the other end (R/Acc) *accepting* the ontology *of* the future as a constant. R/Acc accept that capital *is* critique.

Thus the circuit diagram of both L/Acc and R/Acc remain the same, their ontology however, is entirely different. The circuit diagram itself is Acceleration pure.

Extrapolating on the Accelerationist Ritual

The Accelerationist (Acc) ritual is as follows: “*Accelerate the process.*” It’s best repeated at the end of a long, didactic blog post which alludes to multiple niche sources. The ritual in its usual form comes from Deleuze & Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, and is to be found at the end of a section titled ‘The Civilized Capitalist Machine’, which along with the earlier sections on ‘The Desiring-Machines’ are all must reads for anyone interested in Acc and the Acc-sphere. The ritual itself is often taken for granted. For we have all read vast amounts about ‘acceleration’ now, and so the ritual seems self-explanatory, yet is it this so? Has not the latter part of the ritual, ‘the process’ been left alone, if not mistaken for acceleration itself. The ritual is to be found like so:

“Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization? For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough, not decoded enough, from the viewpoint of a theory and a practice of a highly schizophrenic character. Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to “accelerate the process,” as Nietzsche put it: in this matter, the truth is that we haven’t seen anything yet..” (p276, Anti-Oedipus)

In relation to *Anti-Oedipus* this quote is – surprisingly – quite self-explanatory. That is, the Deleuzoguattarian ‘acceleration of process’ is the acceleration of the decoding and deterritorializing that is inherent within capitalism, to allow the markets and capitalism itself to continue its production of producers-of-production – roughly speaking. Yet what if one is to take a single step back and withdraw to the source of the ritual, to Nietzsche’s *The Will to Power*:

“The strong who are to come. In the past, it was only by a combination of necessity and chance that the conditions for the production of a stronger kind of man were occasionally realized. But now, we can understand and consciously choose them: we can create conditions under which such an elevation is possible.-” (p510, a898, The Will to Power)

Nietzsche here speaking of his rope, from animal to man to Superman, or perhaps merely a greater form of man as a means for the coming of the Superman, either way Nietzsche's point of conscious choice and creation of conditions is in conflict with the supposed apolitical nature of Deleuze & Guattari's ritual.

“So far, ‘education’ has sought to benefit society: not as much as possible for the sake of mankind’s future, but for that of present-day, established society. What was wanted were ‘tools’ for its use. But suppose the accumulated wealth of energy were greater we could contemplate the possibility of setting aside a certain amount of that for the purpose of investing, not in society, but in the future. The present form of society is undergoing such a powerful transformation that at some point it will no longer be able to exist for its own sake, but only as the instrument in the hands of a stronger race. The more the extent of this transformation is understood, the more urgent it will be to set such a task.” (ibid)

The quarrelsome education system stuck within its own contemporary loop, unable to set aside assets for the future, unable to allow itself to even attend the future, even in the most hopelessly meagre ideas. You'll notice too that Nietzsche doesn't talk of investing in a future society, but only future, for the 'society' of the future, (hopefully) inclusive of a greater form of man would be so different to contemporary society that taking such an investment trajectory would be futile.

“The progressive diminution of man is precisely what compels us to consider the cultivation of a stronger race: a race which would have a surplus of precisely that in which the diminished species had become weak and was growing weaker (will, responsibility, self-assurance, the ability to set goals for oneself). The means to accomplish this would be those which history teaches: isolation by virtue of the fact that one's needs and interests are contrary to those which are usual nowadays; practice in the contrary value judgements; distance as pathos; a clear conscience about is today most belittled and forbidden.” (ibid)

This section actualizing a bastardized form wherein L/Acc & R/Acc are flattened and stripped down to something quite horrific. The remaining flattened entity is that which has drawn out the process of man's

emancipation via capitalist acceleration, yet has retained its trajectory atop convergent waves. The emancipation, self-actualization, will and weight of man utilizing the immanent force of right-accelerationist convergent waves as a means for its own ascension.

“That great process, the levelling of European man, is not to be retarded; it should even be accelerated.” (ibid)

Man must be consciously flattened, made horizontal.

“This levelled species requires a justification, once it has been attained; its justification is the service it provides to a superior, sovereign species who stands upon it and can arise and accomplish its tasks only upon this basis.” (ibid)

“only upon this basis.” as such the *process* must come prior, man must become levelled prior to anything, man as the actualizer of the superior is a notion that still stands whether we ‘accelerate’ or not. And so to accelerate without this process of the levelling of [European] man in place one could argue that man is merely letting the future take the wheel, allowing conclusionless convergent waves take hold, without the levelling of man we accelerate along reversed temporal ripples that are heading towards a non-event, towards 0 itself.

The process, with thanks to Deleuze & Guattari, has become overcomplicated, ‘the process’ in its conservative (Nietzschean) state is quite straightforward, it is the cultivation of *“that in which the diminished species had become weak and was growing weaker (will, responsibility, self-assurance, the ability to set goals for oneself).” (ibid)*

The levelling, the conscious choosing, the creation of conditions is a must. Acceleration without conditions is allowing humanity to wither within an entropic-feedback loop of its own despair (contemporary progress), until it eventually fades into nothingness, dragging the ritual with it. As such, *Acceleration must have conditions*, for if it doesn’t what is it other than dull, decadent nihilism?

Z/Acc Primer

Where the hell do I even start with this absolute megalodon of societal pessimism? Well let's start from the one titbit we have with regard to Z/Acc, this tweet:

It's cute isn't it? In fact, you're now within the camp of people who know the entire Z/Acc Twitter lore, yep that's it. And I know what you're thinking, 'Wait, that's it? How and why do I keep seeing 'Z/Acc' everywhere on Twitter? I mean there hasn't even been a badly formatted, unnecessarily long WordPress post on the topic ye-'

Welcome, my friends, to the Z/Acc primer.

What does the Z of Z/Acc actually stand for you ask? Zero. Zero/Accelerationism or Zero Acceleration, the proposition of Z/Acc is that we're not, or we're not going to accelerate, not the process of deterritorializing capital, we're not going to accelerate *ACTUAL* progress, overcoming, capital, utopian dreams, nothing...we're going to accelerate absolutely nothing. However, at this stage that makes Z/Acc hardly different from collapse culture, secular eschatology or industrial meltdown, does it? I mean, saying that we're not going to progress is hardly novel, there's hundreds of books on the topic by plenty of conspiratorial nuts. (I'll probably list a few to be quite honest.)

Anyway, let's assimilate Z/Acc into the actual theory of Accelerationism, no one has yet done this, perhaps because Z/Acc is just too pessimistic, even for those weirdos on Twitter. Accelerationism is inherently a theory of time. Whether you take that time as McKenna's timewave zero phase-esque thing, "*Accelerationism is a demon, not an ideology*" (as noted by Amy Ireland) or complex integration of economic means of escape via Kantian time. Either way, Acc is a theory of time. L/Acc wish for time to work in the typically mistaken (in my opinion) progressively linear fashion, and for time to work in their favor with regards to propagating a technological utopian (Marxist) society, complete with UBI's and all that meaning eroding jazz. R/Acc, in its initial formation and on what would be considered a material-chronic spacio-temporal plane – common reality – has not chained itself to the archaic theory set in chronic time, and as such acts as a reterritorialization movement in relation to L/Acc's consistent

compiling of ignorance. “You’re getting it wrong *AGAIN*, here’s what we might have done had you not overstepped your means...again.”

R/Acc’s inherent understanding of agency within unhinged time allows them to acquire the blackpill-visors and metaphorically witness capital’s convergent lasso come forth. With L/Acc searching for the – supposed – *true* agent of acceleration exterior to capitalism, which in the view of R/Acc *is* capitalism itself. Thus the spectrum upon which both L and R/Acc coexist is one of ontology, wherein one side (L/Acc) promote an ontologically objective structure of time, with humanities agency at the wheel, and the other end (R/Acc) *accepting* the ontology *of* the future as a constant. R/Acc accept that capital *is* critique. A rock dropped into water ripples outwards, reverse these waves and they culminate at the event of the rock’s splash, apply this metaphor to time and we have to ask what is controlling the waves, and what is the event. Put in a stupidly simplistic manner we might say that the waves are controlled and are themselves capital and the event is the Singularity. Hell, this is old hat, you can delve further if you like, I recommend the early NCRAP Lectures with Land.

So what does this make Z/Acc if acceleration is inherently temporally based. It makes it god-awful. A strange theorization of stagnation within a theory which is ever moving. Z/Acc seen from a layman’s point of view would be the immanentization of Gnon into the schema of man, let’s bring the attitude of Gnon to the fore and witness his apathy in relation to ‘Accelerative-man’. It’s tough to really talk of stagnation in a way appropriate for what springs to mind when I think of Z/Acc. Hell, perhaps Land said it best when he mentioned that the ‘Z’ of Z/Acc can quite aptly be replaced with ‘Zombie’. Let’s talk this hellish future of zombified, zero acceleration!

“And the story of the boy who cried wolf has two additional morals not often remembered: first, the wolves were real; second, they ended up eating the sheep.” – Greer, ‘The Twelfth Hour’.

In fact let’s begin with something Greer is very keen on bringing to the fore and something he expounds upon in great detail within his book *The Long Descent* – a book which acts as a Z/Acc primer of its own, so let’s begin not

with any external specifics acting *UPON* civilization, but the inherent mistake civilization makes of itself, catabolic collapse:

Catabolic Collapse – in short:

Firstly, the classical collapse. Societies – according to Tainter (1988) – begin to break down once they reach a certain level of complexity, that level is such wherein a decrease in complexity would yield benefits to society. This is where acceleration stops, by the way. Each breakdown in social complexity leads to fragmentation into a lesser form of complexity, society becomes simpler as it breaks down. This is the traditional form of collapse, largely sociopolitical. Now one *COULD* argue that accelerating the process here would allow for the actualization of a patchwork of micro-states, many – or a few – of which would be able to create for themselves an accelerative society.

So what of catabolic collapse, “*The theory of catabolic collapse, explains the breakdown of complex societies as the result of self-reinforcing cycle of decline driven by interactions among resources, capital, production, and waste.*” (Greer, *How Civilizations Fail*)

Don’t tell those optimistic techno-capitalists, but feedback-loops work the other way too.

Resources (R): Naturally occurring exploitable resources (Iron ores etc),

Capital (C): Factors incorporated into the flow of society’s energy (Tools, food, labour, social capital etc.)

Waste (W): Fully exploited material that has no further use.

Production (P): Capital (C) and Resources (R) are combined to create new Capital (C) and Waste (W)

So from these constants (which are very simplistic as a means for ease of understanding this) we can begin to outline basic states of a civilization:

Steady state (SSv1): New capital from production to equal waste from production and capital [$C(p) = W(p) + W(c) = SSv1$]

$C(p)$ = New capital produced = $W(p)$ existing capital converted to waste in the production of new capital inclusive of $W(c)$ existing capital converted to waste outside of production. $W(p)$ and $W(c)$ is $M(p)$, maintenance production. $M(p)$ maintains capital stocks at existing levels. So:

$$SSv2 = [C(p) = M(p)]$$

In the absence of growth limitation capital can consistently be brought into the production process, making this process self-reinforcing, so, $SSv2$ = The Expansion of the USA during the 19th century. This self-reinforcing process may be called an *ANABOLIC CYCLE*. It's limited by two factors that tend to limit increases in $C(p)$: Firstly resources which are finite, and as such have a 'replenishment rate' (r) or $[r(R)]$. This replenishment rate is largely due to natural processes and out of man's control, leading into the Law of Diminishing Returns. Also these resources $r(R)$ have a rate of use by society $[d(R)]$ and the relationship between $d(R)$ and $r(R)$ is a core element of the process of catabolic collapse.

Resources used $d(R)$ faster than their replenishment rate $r(R)$ become depleted: $d(R)/r(R) > 1$. This resource must be replaced by capital to sustain maintenance and as such the demand for capital increases exponentially as $d(R)$ and $r(R)$ both simultaneously increase. And so, unless you live in a society with unlimited resources, or resources that have unlimited replenishment (*YOU DON'T.*) then $C(p)$ cannot increase indefinitely because $d(R)$ will eventually exceed $r(R)$, society will use more shit than it has, basically. You can go a little further with $r(R)$, because the processes of society are always reliant on the minimum resource, this is known as Liebig's law.

Resource depletion – as shown above – is the first factor in overcoming the momentum of an anabolic cycle. The second is the relationship between capital and waste. $M(p)$ rises and $W(c)$ rises in proportion to total capital, alongside the fact that as $M(p)$ rises, $C(p)$ also rises as increased production requires increased capital – self-reinforcing – and this of course increases $W(p)$. One must utilize these when studying the end of anabolic societal cycles wherein a civilization has two choices.

Choice 1: is SSv1.1: $C(p) = M(p)$ and $d(R) \leq r(R)$ for every economically significant resource. We could call this Sustainable Steady State – Man not being silly. (I am avoiding here how to bring this about via societal controls, it's not my aim.)

Choice 2: ACC-Sv1: Accelerative State V1: Accelerate the intake of resources through military conquest, innovation of techno-capital etc. (Accelerate the process). This of course increases both $W(p)$ and $W(c)$, which go on to further increase $M(p)$. This means only one thing, a society that wishes to remain anabolic must expand its resource base at an ever-increasing rate to keep $C(p)$ from dropping below $M(p)$. If society fails to achieve this ever-increasing rate then it enters into contraction: $nC(p) < M(p)$. Meaning capital cannot be maintained and is converted into waste, populations begin to decline, disintegration of social organizations, societal fragmentation and decentralization, loss of information. These societies can return to SSv1.1 *IF* they bring $d(R)$ back below $r(R)$. But what is they do this...*THIS*: $[d(R)/r(R) > 1]$. That, right there, is the most simple way of explaining the majority of civilization's problems, that means that $M(p)$ exceeds $C(p)$ and capital can no longer be maintained, resources deplete etc. This eventually results in the catabolic cycle of self-reinforcement in which $C(p)$ stays below $M(p)$ whilst both decline. $C(p)$ approaches zero whilst capital is converted to waste.

(Once again, this is largely from John Michael Greer's *How Civilizations Fail: A Theory of Catabolic Collapse*.)

And there you have it, the basics of collapse. That's excluding the general ignorance, stupidity and arrogance of humanity and other societal defects, but by and large that's the route in which *WE* create our *OWN* demise. There's of course other factors effected by us which I shall list a few of, but the theory of catabolic collapse is central to the Z/Acc debate in terms of accelerationist theory. The average time it takes for a society/civilization to collapse is 250 years by the way, so don't fall into the trap of thinking you're safe.

So what of Z/Acc here. I think it's a fairly simple task to materially understand how stagnation will happen within a civilization now, however, does this have much to do with the temporal theory of acceleration? It

certainly throws into the air questions with regards to the means of which capital wishes to propagate its longevity and continuation. Perhaps a hegemonic, global method of control simply isn't appropriate. Ever feel like you're in a giant test-kit for capital? Well, perhaps capital now wishes to downscale into a microcosm of intelligence wherein production is acceleration focused. The tendrils of future capital are hitting against unexpected $d(R)$, fucking humans and their robotic Santa toys. [Systems of] Capital is generally ignorant of the finite. And so a proposal would be to retain humanity within smaller and smaller microcosms of $M(p)$ as a means to have greater control over $d(R)$ and W . Z/Acc is the reset button, except pressing it to completion takes roughly 250-1000 years.

However, there's another very specific idea that invades Greer's work consistently. Often directly, but more often it sits quietly at the sidelines, smirking at its own reality. And this is Greer's almost *a priori* notion that civilizations collapse, end, stop-being etc. With Greer the possibility for *anything* to end is always possible. This seems quite obvious, right? Well, not so. People hate to think that even their most luxurious comforts – ones that have always been around – would cease to be. So why would they even start to believe in a world where the basics will become a struggle?

Also specific to the Greerian reality is the fact that semantically collapse is quite commonly mistaken for an instantaneous event. This is quite simply wrong, in fact, it's so wrong it exists solely in the realms of escapism and quasi-romanticism. No wonder the amount of post-apocalyptic media has increased in recent years, I mean what other generation(s) yearn for a reset button more than those who've been promised so much and allowed so little. Media such as *Fallout*, *Mad Max*, *The 100*, *The Walking Dead* etc. aren't truly horror, not really, for the simple fact that humans are still around and not only are they doing fine, they're actually doing quite well and in some ways progressing in healthier directions than their previous societies. And so at heart all these programs, games etc. is – at the very least – optimism, but also a perception of time in relation to collapse which is simply wrong. We think of 'collapse' as the collapse of a table or chair, a quick successive tumble of parts, yet once that which is collapsing grows in complexity (a civilization for instance) then the process of collapse becomes far, *far* longer. Emphasis on *process* here, the process of collapse

will see chunks of civilization fly off and attempt to be replaced or repaired in relation to their previous standard, slowly but surely everything sort of disintegrates at such a rate that those living within it only notice the stark difference in conditions years later.

The myth we tell ourselves is deeply rooted in modes of binary thinking of black and white, wrong and right etc.. A mode of thinking that's ever-growing in society. It's the difference between apocalypse and SSV1 (Steady state society), we're either fine, or it's all over. We're never simply descending into chaos, things never *TRULY* get worse it seems because we're always replacing the 'worse', smothering it with some new form of innovation that makes it *LOOK* better. The myth we tell ourselves in everyday life are along these lines:

"They'll think of something..."

"The world's fucked, everyone knows that, better to not think about it."

"It won't be that bad..."

And on and on with your dull co-workers, the equivalent of putting your fingers in your ears and shouting "La la la la la!" whilst food prices rise, death tolls rise, roads aren't repaired, certain trees and species die etc.

If everything changes all at once then we only have to deal with *those* consequences, not the ones we're within right now. The inverse of this, is *the myth of progress*, which can aptly be assimilated onto Christian eschatology:

"Over the last three centuries or so, Christianity's influence on the western intellect has crumpled beneath the assaults of scientific materialism, but no mythology has yet succeeded in ousting it from its place in the western imagination. The result has been a flurry of attempts to rehash Christian myth under other, more materialistic names. The mythology of progress is itself one example of this sort of second-hand theology. Marxism is another, and most of the more recent myths of apocalypse reworked the Christian narrative along the same lines that Marx did, swapping out the economic concepts Marx imported to the myth for some other set of ideas

more appealing to them or more marketable to the public.” – Greer, the Long Descent

A Critique of the Accelerationist Attitude

Before the Z/Acc/Collapse writing begins I want to address something that has irked me for basically the entirety of my time within the Accelo-sphere. That is the Acc-attitude or; Accitude.

Many people have commented on the Accelerationist ‘tech/nihil’ aesthetic, this is not to do with that.

At its machinic heart. Its techno-capitalist, techonomic heart, Accelerationism is an inhuman philosophy. The underlying forces of acceleration are pronounced and written of in such a way that one can come to no other conclusion than that they are other-than-human, nonhuman, even inhuman. Which poses a sort of paradoxical problem with regard to the attitude of Accelerationists. That is...they are *all* – at least the ones in *our* sphere – human. Fleshy, breathing, all-too-human...humans. Men, women, homosapiens blithering away at *their* keyboards commenting on the inhuman. Which in itself is sort of the impossibility of touching the or *an* actuality of the Outside. Perhaps it can be quasi-analysed via occult-numeric means, maybe, but we don’t *know* that.

Anyway, yes, humans. Meandering around the edges of what is supposed as a Cthulhic technomic entity/beast/force etc. The inhuman *a priori* psychopathy of Acceleration is assimilated into the writing of Acc theorists like the divine into things, it simply cannot integrate with our perception (Kant wins again). At least without an unavoidable clunky current running through it. A sense that something is always missing, *something* is always avoiding our full capacity, maybe because it understands our capacity to be human, or simply to *be* in the way destined for us.

With this said, the point of which it irks me is wherein digressions of war, evil and inhumanity spring to the surface in the writing, as if *one* is above all that. That the factors of horror, hell and reality of evil would not touch the lives of those who write in favor of such. A call for bombs, a loud call for a direct attack...but not anyway near me. How crude, how banal and

pithy. A mainline into the arrogance of the literature itself, left *and* right. Arrogance, ignorance and apathy towards present reality due to amoralistic-promotion of an unprovable future is simply unforgivable. At best it is caustic literature, acidically burning through to a potential core of hatred, malaise and distrust; at worst it is a continuation of an anthropocentric cosmic bias that man even *plays* a part. You claim to know even a smidgen of inhumanity, and yet you project your supposed worthiness through a gauze of humane-understanding.

The methods of man tacked lazily onto a blueprint of machinic process. War, famine, poverty and death, all, more often than not, viewed from the gaze of a giddy tech-head. Writhing in frustration at their personal lacks of means to escape. Oh, I wish I could reverse cowgirl the means of production into a sentient machinic-thresher!

Accept your cosmic worth, become at least in part content with the situation of man and *then* address that which you must. The drool of fanatics – myself included – spills into a continually flowing basin of monkey-idiocy.

To take for granted the bias of one's cosmic unbias. If man could *ever* become cosmically impartial he would surely go mad.

On Z/Acc – Parallax Optics Interview

(Parallax's questions are here in bold)

Meta-Nomad is one of the most vital and important cartographers of Accelerationism and Collapse working in the Reactosphere. He blogs regularly at Meta-Nomad and runs the esoteric podcast Hermitix.

As a theorist Meta-Nomad's method is deeply synthetic. Out of a delirious synthesis of Kant, Marx, Deleuze, Land, Serres, Greer and innumerable others, Meta-Nomad arrives at the apocalyptic vision of Zero Accelerationism. Z/Acc is the ultimate Black Pill – simultaneously the *productive motor* and *great filter* pulsating at the core of Accelerationism.

During our pre-interview discussion, you outlined the conceptual territory of Z/Acc as one which includes – at a minimum – collapse, cybernetics, determinism, Accelerationism, anti-humanism and a transcendental understanding of politics. These are deeply complex, higher-order concepts which some readers may be unfamiliar with. I'd like to begin by inviting you to unpack / interrelate each of these, from your own particular perspective.

So, you asked me to unpack some key topics which I lucidly ascribed to Z/Acc, namely: Collapse, Cybernetics, Determinism, Accelerationism, Anti-Humanism and a transcendental understanding of politics. Now, I will get to those in time, but in thinking about those ideas I hit so many mental blocks with regards to articulation that I believe a hasty retreat is needed, both for my own sanity regarding Z/Acc and for means of articulation. It's something Heidegger and Kant understood well, if you begin at an incorrect conclusion or junction, then what follows is complex-conjecture, of course, in the Deleuzian manner, those caught in the middle of a year's long dogmatic conversation – as with those caught in a machinic process – know no different.

Firstly, let's begin with Accelerationism (from now on 'ACC'). I will admit to a multitude of frustrations regarding where this term has been forcefully

– with agency – taken. This humanist rerouting of the term has caused nothing but confusion, annoyance and ignorance as far as I’m concerned. A large majority of the people who’ve been working with the theory of ACC are reluctant to say ACC means X or Y precisely because the process itself eludes definition; much like capitalism – and we have to remember, ACC is Capitalism(ism) – ACC rebuilds and deconstructs itself continually, fits and starts etc. This is nothing new of course, but this also works with respect to simple phenomena. ACC is Kantian, and Kant is most importantly a philosopher of time. You *could* argue he’s a philosopher of time *and* space and I wouldn’t argue back, but he made sure that time was always the former in that duo. Space is simply the ‘space’ which time uses to perform various tortures. Now, if to take this as a sort of proof that ACC is primarily a theory of time is seen as syllogistic, I don’t entirely care, ACC is time in-itself, it *IS* process. In some way we can say it’s the ‘why’ of Heraclitus’ river, but I don’t think that helps matters.

Anyway, back to the problem of phenomena in relation to ACC. I’m assuming here that the reader is familiar with Kant’s transcendental aesthetic. What capitalism is, in its most unconscious, meta-historical and teleplexic sense, is the Singularity. Of course, there’s a wide array of aesthetic attachments to the Singularity, Skynet etc. and these are all interesting and fun to think about, but at its most Kantian-Materialist (Landian) sense, it’s the temporal formation of a gateway between phenomena and noumena, a gateway which utilizes virulent language forms (Maths, Kabbalah, Alphanomics, Code etc.) as a way for synthetic a priori knowledge to *BE* possible. We can’t say that such knowledge wasn’t possible prior to the ‘event’ of capitalism, we could say however that if such knowledge existed, it wasn’t created or found with a vector *already* targeted at its own uncovering. Counting the sheep in one’s field, is far different to the min-maxing of crop yield. You’re thinking what the hell does *ANY* of this have to do with contemporary assumptions regarding ACC or even Z/Acc? Good question. See, as the gateway (Zero) pulses, erodes, fluxes, mutates, corrodes and...works, we find a *form* of communication coming through from the Outside (‘through’ is a false term, no directional term works correctly with Critique, it’s used only for ease of understanding). Am I a Serresean in the sense that I think communication is

greater than production, no, they're of equal merit. What is produced – with, alongside as often *AS* production-in-itself – in the Outside, is communicated as phenomena on the Inside, unfortunately, our cognitive faculties are lacking in multiple respects, senses and sensation is already void of a large multitude of needs required to decipher the goal-oriented potential of these phenomena.

When people begin talking about ACC as *people wanting* to bring about the collapse of society, or it meaning X, Y or Z, they are almost always doing so in the respect of an I, they, ego or humanism. I will put my neck on the line here and simply state that if you are taking ACC to mean something like this, you are wrong. Wrong in both your sense of understanding the underpinning philosophy, and also incorrect in understanding how your desires, thoughts and pronouncements are affecting the gateway; not that *anyone* has such power, but hyperstition can really fuck the vector, James Mason's *siege* is the clearest example. He places the word ACC in that text and takes it to mean those who wish to bring about the end of society.

Perhaps you could briefly unpack Hyperstition as a concept / process and relate it back to ACC?

Hyperstition is a portmanteau of 'superstition' and 'hyper' created by the *Cybernetic Culture Research Unit* in the 1990's, and is a conception which tracks and adheres to the evolutionary success of an idea within culture or; the abstract definition of the way in which an *idea* infects culture from the Outside.

Not only are 'Hyperstitions' successful *ideas*, but they influence the course of events, they are nodes of possible futures. Hyperstitional ideas are assimilated into culture under the covert, mainstream mechanism of fiction, and likewise, *act* as if fictional. In this manner the future can be retroactively traced by the analysis of fiction becoming fact. Religious or mystic teaching, Occult conspiracies or theories, sci-fi or mutated fantasy, socio-economic predictions or crypto-political –prophecies all begin their lives as minute fictions, emanating from both creative cultural anxiety and moments of Outsideness invasion.

By moments of Outsideness invasion, what I mean to say is commonplace happening or events which are often subsumed into the contemporary psychological guise of coincidences, which is the materialist way of saying ‘We can’t really explain what happened, but the Outside isn’t real... so it can’t be that!’. Ultimately, Hyperstitions couldn’t care less about whether or not you believe in them; it doesn’t matter if you believe in the monsters, it only matters if they believe in you. Anyway, Hyperstitions don’t really *care* at all, they are most aptly described as immanent symbolisms communed with via fiction. When one looks at a clear leap forward within history one will find, retroactively attached to it, a fiction. That is to say, what is now fact, was once fiction.

Quite lazily Hyperstition has entered culture *itself* as ‘self-fulfilling’ prophecy, or ‘the law of attraction’, but both these terms humanize its trajectory, leaving its purpose as suspiciously clear. Wherein actuality, what we witness when such a Hyperstitional synchronicity occurs, is the Outside coming in. When one walks into a room and covertly understands that they should leave, or intuits they should not head down a certain path, what they are intuiting is the injection of the Outside as Hyperstitional feedback, or in – very – short, they are intuiting the creation of a *new* reality, or at least, the *mutation* of the current reality.

Hyperstitional mechanisms open channels to the Outside, encouraging a reality of belief as opposed to belief in *A single* reality. When linear, Westernized History comes face to face with Hyperstition it folds into itself under the weight of the Outside. When you mix academic history with Hyperstition you create a theoretical substance which acidically burns off the layers of rationalist prayer, and humanist pseudo-safety. Hyperstition makes history *possible*.

Now, *as soon* as we’re talking about wants, theys and human-desires we are no longer talking about ACC as *the process*, which is what ACC is, we are simply talking – once again – about desire. Not only are we talking about desire, we are once again talking about desire with regard to ideology. How is ideology-X going to help me get what I want? ACC is prior to this. It is prior to all this. Zizek states that ‘You are not immune to ideology’, well guess what, ACC is pure-immunity with one simple exception, the only

thing this system lets through is synthetic potentiality for greater positive orientation.

ACC is what leftists, centrists, liberals, classicals and all those bowing to simplistic orthogonality fear most, that which slices diagonally in all directions between the great political cross of humanistic misconception. These people will try to tether, staple and glue anything they can to ACC to try bend it to their will, making the mistake of not realizing that time-itself comes before will; the wills of these crypto-humanists are thoroughly attached to the common sense notion of linear time, 'If we do A, then B will follow, then C, then D, etc.'. This is the determinist/free-will aspect coming into focus. To quote Nick Land on this:

“If we keep getting time wrong then we’re going to be just babbling nonsense in this antinomian structure that is irresolvable, no one’s going to win between a freewill/determinism debate, however it looks one way or the other because the two concepts are mutually complicit and mutually confused and they’re both symptoms of a pre-critical understanding of time. – The past, present and future, that structure of time comes out of time, it’s transcendental. It doesn’t come out of any particular part of time. It doesn’t come out of the past, doesn’t come exclusively out of the future. It doesn’t come out of the present. Time comes out of time. If you think that in terms of the implicit common sensical structures, of course, then the future comes out of the present and the present has come out of the past, but that that can’t be right, an elementary grasp of transcendental philosophy proves it cannot possibly be right. and now once you stop thinking of that as being a meaningful way of thinking about things, then what are you saying about these freewill and determinism arguments?”

Now, once this is taken into account what the hell do L/Acc, G(reen)/Acc, Anarcho/Acc, BI/Acc etc. look like? Well they’re nothing but ideological hopes once again, which are stuck within a pre-critical understanding of time. Take L/Acc for instance, they want UBI’s, automation and that Fully Automated Luxury Communist stuff, but that form of whig-progression is only theoretically possible in an incorrect form of time, so it’s quite frankly hopeless. These are not only pre-critical understandings of time however, but also space. The phenomena which is experienced is taken in the purely

human manner and not questioned via communion, possession or mathematical/kabbalistic pondering. And so, the ACC of *Siege* makes sense only if your theorization of ACC is caught up in pre-Kantian, rationalist and progressive notions of history and time; if we do X (burn down modernity) then Y (?) will happen – this is NOT what ACC is. Without patting myself on the back too much here, if anyone is now asking well what is ACC then? I would direct them to my M.A. dissertation of ACC, *Accelerationism: Capitalism as Critique*. The entire point of the dissertation was to remove ACC from politics and articulate it in its true Kantian philosophical dwelling. Once this is understood then we can get into discussions regarding the few ACCs I believe are of merit, namely: R/Acc, U/Acc and Z/Acc.

Let's take each of these of Accelerationism's in turn: U/Acc, as I understand it, was an attempt by Vince Garton et al to de-anthropomorphise and de-politicise Accelerationism, following a) the advent of the axis of L/acc and b) the perceived "contamination" of Accelerationism by its association with NRx – a label Nick Land, the "father" of contemporary Accelerationism, had embraced enthusiastically.

You've granted me the keys here to a minefield. No one working within the specialization of ACC wants to define things, and not because of its continental obscurantist roots, but because definition and process almost never assimilate, unless one of them falters. That is, if you define Accelerationism it is no longer Accelerationism. If a definition can fit *into* the process of ACC, well that definition is lost in its temporal-tumult.

But hell, I like minefields and I like putting my neck on the line. I'm sick of back peddling on these issues and I'm sick of being tolerant to ignorance. If you want society to burn down, burn it down. If you want Anarchism, promote Kropotkin or Bakunin. If you want to investigate the epistemology, (post-critical) metaphysics, cybernetics and teleonomic system lying 'behind' the transcendental nature of capitalism, then use ACC. Otherwise, shut up.

Moving on, you wanted me to start with Garton's U/Acc here in relation to L/Acc. As much as I despise L/Acc, one thing we can actually say of it is

that it is an extremely useful anchor from which to navigate our discussion. *“Left-accelerationism” attempts to press “the process of technological evolution” beyond the constrictive horizon of capitalism, for example by repurposing modern technology for socially beneficial and emancipatory ends. (Quick and Dirty - Land).* There’s so many pre-critical stumbles here that to anyone taking Kant seriously it seems like a daydream as opposed to a coherent system. Let’s just focus on the word ‘press’. The questions that instantly arise are the following: What are we ‘pressing’? Who’s doing this pressing? What does it mean to ‘do’ in this manner? Why are we pressing? Etc. The whole thing is wrapped up in so much Marxist romanticism that finding anything original is nigh impossible, largely because nothing original is actually there. Marx saw Communism as developing *out of* Capitalism, and Trotsky propagated the idea of pushing the worst aspects of Capitalism to their limits to bring about the revolution; ‘If you can’t beat them join them...and then infect their system with your toxicly tolerant ideology from the inside’, this is *the* Leftist modus operandi. (See: *Industrial Society and its Future*).

Let’s look at U/Acc. It’s practically unarguable now that the most contentious issue within contemporary ACC debate is between U/Acc and R/Acc, that is Unconditional/Acc vs Right/Acc. Here’s the thing...it’s a non-issue, always has been, and always will be. Anyone who understands the (sorry for repeating myself) *pre-critical* philosophy underpinning ACC will already get this. If you want a deep-dive into ACC ‘history’ and U/Acc theorizations Xenogothic’s U/Acc Primer is brilliant, though not without its political and cultural bias’, then again, that is what one ‘wilts’ as much as I ‘wilt’ a patchwork too. Let’s turn to Vince Garton though:

“The unconditional accelerationist, instead, referring to the colossal horrors presented to the human agent all the way from the processes of capital accumulation and social complexification to the underlying structure, or seeming absence of structure, of reality itself, points to the basic unimportance of unidirectional human agency. We ‘hurl defiance to the stars’, but in their silence—when we see them at all—the stars return only crushing contempt. To the question ‘what is to be done?’, then, she can legitimately answer only, ‘do what thou wilt’—and ‘let go.’ [...]

‘Do what thou wilt’, since with human agency displaced, the world will route around our decisions, impressing itself precisely through our glittering fractionation. taking the smallest steps beyond good and evil, the unconditional accelerationist, more than anyone else, is free at heart to pursue what she thinks is good and right and interesting—but with the ironical realisation that the primary ends that are served are not her own. For the unconditional accelerationist, the fastidious seriousness of the problem-solvers who propose to ‘save humanity’ is absurd in the face of the problems they confront. it can provoke only olympian laughter. And so, ‘in its colder variants, which are those that win out, [accelerationism] tends to laugh.’”

Quite frankly, I don't think there's much ambiguity to be had there. It's unconditional, and in its Kantian reality the subject-object distinction is removed entirely. The relationship between the subject and the object is one where both begin to be questioned as processes potentially acting upon each other. This is what Deleuze – working strictly in the Kantian sense – understood when he replaced subject-object transcendental system with an immanentized version wherein the former is a desiring-machine and the latter is an inverted communicatory economy. It's production and consumption all the way down. What can we say of 'man' caught in the belly of process, very little. Let's take for examples the 'Copernican Revolution' indebted to Kant. Not only is this Copernican Revolution of philosophy overlooked, but – much like the Death of God – its continual 'happening' is ignored. Copernicus of course found that we (man) were not the centre of the galaxy, and metaphorically speaking, were not the primary focus of the universe, Kant then theorizes that we are not the centre of our common relations (subject/object), but merely an interpretive/subjective/communicative part of it with respect to our cognitive faculties, Freud then continues this tradition in the sense of revealing that we are not even the masters of these faculties (the unconscious). This is the common trio which are often ascribed to a proto-unanthropomorphic perspective of reality. As far as I can see there have been 2 further continuations on this, namely in the work of Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. Bataille isn't as important, but his work on the 'black solar anus' is important with respect to the telos of man.

In short: The sun's rays are a random dispersion, they are not solely focused on the Earth, making our position in the universe one of entropic/thermodynamic randomness, a life founded upon the waste product of a cosmic anus. Deleuze & Guattari's continuation of the Copernican Revolution is a post-critical understanding of the position from which Freud ended. The problem is with the unconscious, it's one which is still attuned to a humanist vision, why is it – we never ask – that Freud's unconscious can always retain and be interpreted with respect to human desire? Such an unconscious cannot be truly devoid of pleading tampering. Which is where Deleuze & Guattari step in. Welcome to the machine(unconscious). –

“Welcome, my son

Welcome to the machine

What did you dream?

It's alright, we told you what to dream.” – Welcome to the Machine, Pink Floyd

I never thought I'd reference Pink Floyd in something like this. Their pseudo-sincere hippy vibes never sat right with me, but then again, I wasn't there...mannnn. Anyway, the lyrics to that song actually bring about something fairly important regarding the difference between the unconscious and the machinic unconscious, namely it what it *IS* which 'told' us what to dream. There is a rather school boyish implication in this song that the system we experience directly is telling us what to dream, that is, the Foucauldian power structures *themselves* are *telling* us what to dream. This is a critical error. These structures are devices conveying a message from the Outside, beyond that their complexity only matters with respect to what needs to be articulated. What *Anti-Oedipus* is, in its most abstract *use* as an object of knowledge, is a grimoire. I must expand of course, on *how* it is so, and why this is a clear continuation of the critical Copernican Revolution – Z/Acc does eventually arise out of the end of all this, you have my word:

“A grimoire (also known as a “book of spells”) is a textbook of magic, typically including instructions on how to create magical objects like talismans and amulets, how to perform magical spells, charms and

divination, and how to summon or invoke supernatural entities such as angels, spirits, deities and demons.”

Am I stating that *Anti-Oedipus* gives you *clear* instructions with regards to summoning and performing ritual? No, not in the sense that Alan Chapman’s *Advanced Magick for Beginners* will (I do NOT endorse this text). However, between the lines of *Anti-Oedipus* is the workings of a partnered communion between two vessels. Deleuze and Guattari state at the outset of that book that they became many voices. They understood that to write such a non/a/off-human text could only be achieved by the confused assimilation of 2 separate voices; the actualizing of two voices into one, is the actualizing of a multiplicity of thought, like Foucault’s Pendulum two voices can never settle, and over time this leads only to greater and greater fragmentation. The Freudian decentring of the mind is still reliant on the notion that our mind, our thought, our inner sense is beholden to its own sense, which is a recursive dilemma. It is the origin of all anxiety, a mind cannot argue with itself, as such, one must talk. This however does not settle the dilemma of whereabouts the initial sense comes *from*, there must be an Outside, an area of potentiality, pure-creation and pure-difference for there to be any possibility of even the most momentary relief. Socratic Method is impossible without the Outside. Two human vessels both caught at terminal capacity of thought *need* difference for an evolution of intelligent discussion and creation to be made possible. Any (non-stagnant) continuation is indebted to the Outside coming in. *Anti-Oedipus* takes the Outside seriously. It finds means to commune and work with the Outside. These means are not-human, but are entirely process based. The clearest examples are found in the machinicisms of paranoia, neurosis and schizophrenia; what is it to follow the path of an ontology which doesn’t care about those it is prepared to inhabit? And that’s the Deleuzoguattarian Copernican Revolutionary step, Copernicus shed our cosmo-centric belief, Kant shed our empiricist-centric belief, Freud shed our mind-centric belief...Deleuze & Guattari taught us to become sovereign shedders who target their threshing at centrality, unification and wholeness, they immanentized the critical revolution into the schizo-machinations of an inner sense communing with the Outside. What we can see from this is that those who ascribe meanings to the term ACC are doing so *from* the actual

process of ACC. They are working with phenomenology. They are making the mistake of momentary agreement. Hell, this goes back to Zeno. Very simply – Those are state with certainty that ACC is X, Y or Z are the same people who would state that a single frame of Zeno’s arrow in flight is how the process of flight is in its entire. That’s as much as I can really say about U/Acc philosophically. What there is to be said about U/Acc has been said already, however, I do have a little comment regarding ACC and personal politics.

You mentioned that one of the covert-aims of L/Acc was to remove it from its association with Neoreaction (NRx). Because Nick Land is heralded as the ‘father of Accelerationism’ – some kind of cruel psychoanalytical post-ironic joke – *and* Land has an interest in Neoreactionary politics the two got confused. It’s not difficult to see why this is, technically both are working with time in some sense. But I personally think that all the confusion and discussion here is really down to personal preference. Land has made his definition of ACC very clear – positive oriented cybernetics, the means of production seizing themselves and exit *from* man – NRx deals with ACC in the same way the Communism deals with ACC. ACC is the underlying process. A shoddy metaphor would be how 2 separate bits of accounting software deal with the same coding language. An even better metaphor would be Michel Serres’ notion of ‘the helmsman’.

“Thus the prince, formerly a shepherd of beasts, will have to turn to the physical sciences and become a helmsman or cybernetician.” – The Natural Contract, p18

“The helmsman governs. Following his intended route and according to the direction and force of the sea-swell, he angles the blade of the governail, or rudder. His will acts on the vessel, which acts on the obstacle, which acts on his will, in a series of circular interactions. First and then last, first a cause and then a consequence, before once again becoming a cause, the project of following a route adapts in real time to conditions that unceasingly modify it, but through which it remains stubbornly invariant. The helmsman’s project decides on a subtle and fine tilt of the rudder, a tilt selected within the directional movement of objective forces, so that in the end the route can be traced through the set of constraints. Cybernetics was the name

given to the literally symbiotic art of steering or governing by loops, loops engendered by these angles and that engender, in turn, other directional angles. This technique was once specific to helmsmen's work, but it has recently passed into other technologies just as intelligent as this command of seaworthy vessels; it has moved from this level of sophistication to the grasping of even more general systems, which could neither subsist nor change globally without such cycles. But this whole arsenal of methods remained only a metaphor when it came to the art of governing men politically.” – The Natural Contract, p42-43

Who is the helmsman in the case of ACC? For those of pre-critical thought it seems clear that it is man who is the oh-so-grand helmsman. This is a mistake. Serres' writing can be cryptic, but his passages on the helmsman are some of the most clear (and beautiful). The helmsman cannot forget about the swell of the sea, the waves, the wind, the weather, the currents, the flows and all the circuitry of the cybernetic ocean. He has his ship – state, school, institution, community, group etc. – and he has the tools allowed to him by that structure, but there are no such tools which can control the swell of the ocean itself. A great helmsman might be able to take a shorter path or clearer route, a great inventor might be able to engineer his way into greater turbulence, but the ocean will forever be its own beast; even if the entire ocean was tamed the process of perpetually taming it still remains. There's no thermodynamically neutral way of stopping spontaneous declination, man is beholden to the ocean, he is beholden to the process, beholden to ACC. Leaving U/Acc aside here. L/Acc, G/Acc, BI/Acc and all these humanist suffixes are helmsman in their own right, they are allowed the freedom of their own vessel, but it is their own responsibility to check if they've mapped the charts correctly before drawing up plans for a fancy boat. It doesn't matter if your vessel has the best gadgetry available if you don't believe in the idea of a captain. Eventually the crew will pull in multiple directions and rip the vessel itself apart. They also make the mistake of not continually updating their navigational charts, they were updated in 1917 and haven't been since. The sea has changed since then, but they still find ways to apply their old charts to the current sea, unfortunately this is a case where the original will subsume the simulacrum into it with no hesitation.

U/Acc was an invocation of “anti-praxis” and constituted a recognition that the apparition of “human agency” was a “congealed by-product” captured within an energetic-cybernetic matrix / fate-line, receding deep into the unknown past and, simultaneously, reaching deep into the unknown future. However, U/Acc arguably failed to de-politicise in terms of the sympathies / positions held and expressed by many of its advocates (ie Xenofeminism) and was therefore seen on the Right as a form of crypto-leftist ACC.

Let me get down to brass tax on the U/Acc – R/Acc ‘thing’. It’s nothing really. Beneath all of it both parties are actually in agreement with the philosophical proposition of U/Acc – positive oriented cybernetics as capitalism’s motor. The disagreements have come from personal grievances regarding affiliation. Most people using the U/Acc term are left-wing or Communist, most of those using the R/Acc term are right-wing or reactionary. The political motivations come last, I believe both camps understand this. Anyone ascribing some form of political motivation to their preferred ACC or – most tyrannically – ACC in general, should have a copy of *The Critique of Pure Reason* thrown at their head full force. Politics is a nice little thing to play around with after the process is understood. It’s not exactly a surprise to me that U/Acc is seen as a crypto-leftist ACC, but that’s a problem of grouped affiliation as opposed to a theoretical or transcendental error. And I have very little time to talk about personalities.

R/Acc was generally (mis)characterised as a call for conscious / directed statecraft, utilising NRx innovations (Patchwork) and principals (autocracy combined with free-market competition) to form a launchpad for ACC, while simultaneously guarding against the twin evils of the Great Stagnation and Total Collapse, which could / would derail the Process – at least temporarily. However, there is another take on R/Acc in which R primarily stands not for “Right” but for “Real”. It recognises that Reality has a curve / gradient bending towards the Right because *co-operation* is a sub-set of *competition* – totally enveloped by it.

Is Patchwork an ‘Nrx innovation’? I don’t think so. Patchwork, Archipelago, Polis’, Meta-Utopias, fragmentation, dispersion, do these not

all name the same thing? Which is at its root a thermodynamic problem regarding stability in a closed system. Anyone clinging to the idea of unification has to cling harder and harder over time, eventually having their limbs ripped off and not admitting to it. As far as I can see any current unification is an illusory bunching of parts only *acting* as a whole because it works to their benefit to blend in. If we take your reading of what R/Acc means there to be the true definition, then its easiest to return to the definition of the helmsman once again. R/Acc in this manner is the group which understands the most effective way to sail the sea. They understand that a great voyage needs a great captain, and that more often than not an anonymous captain leaves little room for dispute. They also understand that multiple small vessels are far less likely to have mutinies than one large one, because smaller groups can form sympathetic ways of living which a large group cannot. R/Acc also understands that the ocean is what it is and isn't going anywhere. There's one leftist who understood this by the way, Mark Fisher, that's what *Capitalist Realism* is, a leftist who pains himself to admit (realism) that capitalist *has* won, and what we're left with is the question of *how* to deal with this current. Now, to some bleeding-heart communist this is a nightmare, to anyone with any sense of non-melancholic imagination this is an absolute chasm of excitement. (See: *Critique of Transcendental Miserablism* – Nick Land).

Onto your statement: “*it recognises that reality has a curve / gradient bending towards the right because co-operation is a sub-set of competition – totally enveloped by it.*” I thought you'd read more Moldbug? I jest. Cthulhu swims left is still a poignant statement where anyone on the right is concerned. I think it's a little difficult to place the right and co-operation together in this manner. That word, co-operation has been taken on by leftists to mean a sort of post-70's voluntary soup-kitchen-esque passivity. There's a place for that kind of thing, but as you state, the form of co-operation the right is working with is one which is already understood within the framework of competition. I'm not going to state that everything here is some Hegelian dialectic, and that history is this grand competitive discussion and agreement. I think the majority of the right would ironically agree that there is little worse than an agreement in the form of a compromise. Which is exactly where Exit comes in. If reality didn't have so

many parasites – along with willing hosts –within it, we'd have already colonized mars. Unfortunately, there are those who have taken their reason to be terminal and have unconsciously made it their life's work to spew *their* sense onto everything else. It is easier now to imagine right to mean not-left as opposed to its own position, of course, 'not-left' is the implication of leaving the left. It is therefore easier to make rightism and exit synonymous. Reactionary politics is its own beast. The left want discussion, the reactionaries want loyalty, the right want to up and leave. I think in this manner you could have left-reactionaries who are reverent of Marx, Lenin or Trotsky's particular ideas and *loyal* to them. You could also have right-reactionaries who want to exit to somewhere/something/someone they *will then* be loyal to. What you absolutely cannot have however, is someone who wants to *discuss exit*, because that implies they are already disallowing exit in the form *you* would like. Any discussion of 'terms of exit' removes sovereignty.

There are political aspects to L/Acc and R/Acc of course. As much as R/Acc (prior to politics) is synonymous with U/Acc, the kind of ships, helmsman and navigational techniques it believes would cause greater positive orientation with respect to capital are *VERY* different to those of L/Acc and U/Acc. Where L & U/Acc (once again after a critical understanding)believe democracy, egalitarianism, tolerance and liberalism will allow us to sail the waves as a...diverse-whole, R/Acc believe that laissez faire markets structures, sovereign corporations, fragmentation inclusive of borders and the dispersion of globalism will allow us to cause greater positive orientation and sail the circuitry more effectively. I must stress that all of this is *thought* after the understanding that positive orientation is *already* happening. We're already *at sea*.

Z/Acc, in stark contrast, was ACC inverted. Its absolute negative image. A frenzied cartography of Total Collapse, and the cybernetic, civilizational dynamics / lock-in effects making descent into “Zombie” or “Zero” acceleration inevitable – Z/ACC is the ultimate black pill.

Yes, let's finally talk about Z/Acc. Which, I hope to articulate in alignment with the scene from Rosemary's Baby where she finally sees the baby for

the first time. “*What have you done to him?! What have you done to his eyes?! *shrieks**.” I still like that very first tweet from Land about Z/Acc:

I don't like or enjoy the whole 'pill' thing, but Z/Acc *IS* blackpill, its even the process of how blackpills come about. There is a little confusion relating to the naming of Z/Acc, if my memory serves me correctly somewhere on *Xenosystems* there's a few mentions of Z/Acc as Zombie/Acc with Land's own theorizations of zombies in relation to democracy etc. My own working of Z/Acc isn't far from this, it just takes it a little further, so I don't mind if they're mistaken for one another. For me Z/Acc is Zero Accelerationism, Z = Zero. Two massive common semantic mathematical errors are placed next to another here. Accelerationism isn't about speeding things up, and Zero isn't nothing. Both these terms are injected with that oh-so important continental meth and converted into the burncore of temporal vectors. Welcome to the workings of hell. I just really want to expand on Zero for some time here, it's possibly my favourite philosophical term/theory, and it's a Bataille meditation if there ever was one.

Let's begin with Sam Neill explaining Zero in *Event Horizon*. This is a physics-centric view of Zero. The folding of space so that an object can move from point A to point B without having to travel *through* time and space. What Neill's character doesn't explain in *Event Horizon* is that in folding time and space in this manner you're – once again – opening a gateway, it is not what inhabits the space which should worry you, for that is only phenomena, but it's what inhabits the time found in the fold which should worry you. I turn once again to the work of Michel Serres here, whose conception of time is extremely helpful with respect to the critical temporality of ACC, alongside the juxtaposed theory of convergent and divergent waves.

“If you take a handkerchief and spread it out in order to iron it, you can see in it certain fixed distances and proximities. if you sketch a circle in one area, you can mark out nearby points and measure far-off distances. Then take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed. If, further, you tear it in certain places, two points that were close can become very distant. This

science of nearness and rifts is called topology, while the science of stable and well-defined distances is called metrical geometry. Classical time is related to geometry, having nothing to do with space, as Bergson pointed out all too briefly, but with metrics. On the contrary, take your inspiration from topology, and perhaps you will discover the rigidity of those proximities and distances you consider arbitrary. And their simplicity, in the literal sense of the word pli [fold]: it's simply the difference between topology (the handkerchief is folded, crumpled, shredded) and geometry (the same fabric is ironed out flat). [...] – Sketch on the handkerchief some perpendicular networks, like Cartesian coordinates, and you will define the distances. But, if you fold it, the distance from Madrid to Paris could suddenly be wiped out, while, on the other hand, the distance from Vincennes to Colombes could become infinite.” – Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time / Michel Serres with Bruno Latour; p.60, 61

In the fold we find Zero. Critical temporality is a cosmic topology which communicates between crumples, folds and meetings. Often, when we talk of letting the Outside in, we are talking of two ‘distant points’ *in* time meeting each other; there is little difference between Lucretian Atomism and Non-linear dynamics, and yet our perception of time as linear and chronic has differentiated them, but this is a meaningless difference, what has come in from the Outside was/is always the same infection. Serres however isn't necessarily talking of Zero here, I don't think he would work with something that is so caustic and seemingly unnatural. Let's turn to Land:

“The homeostatic-reproducer usage of zero is that of a sign marking the transcendence of a standardized regulative unit, which is defined outside the system, in contrast to the cyberpositive zero which indexes a threshold of phase-transition that is immanent to the system, and melts it upon its outside.” – Fanged Noumena, p329

The Zero I write of is – at first, I make one key alteration – cyberpositive, it is the immanentization of event upon the Outside of a chronic phenomenology. In this way, it matters not what phenomena is affected, or in what way, it makes no difference to the process of Zero itself, becoming is itself becoming, a change appearance is not the actual becoming.

“The zero-glyph does not mark a quantity, but an empty magnitude shift: abstract scaling function, 0000.0000 = 0 ‘k = 0 ... corresponds to the limit of a smooth landscape’” – Fanged Noumena, p367

The more you think or meditate on Zero (and not infinity) the more your mind swells and pains, agonizes. 0000.0000 is useless without its functionality on the Outside; an origin of pure-difference and production-in-itself the 0 glyph is a causura of language, it leaves a blazing lacuna in the flesh which approaches it, to approach it is to begin to shed *everything*. Zero doesn't recognize completion or conclusion, only that which is perturbing and fluxing, Zero knows that time will eventually return that which fluxes to its cold embrace, or:

“The apprehension of death as time-in-itself = intensive continuum degree-0” – Fanged Noumena, p369

To continue:

“(() (or (()) ((or (((()))))) does not signify absence. It manufactures holes, hooks for the future, zones of unresolved plexivity,” – p372

Zero is the burning sun of positive-oriented-nihilism. It is the abyss production-in-itself willingly crosses, without hesitation nor discrimination.

I will move away from cold romantic metaphors here and begin to spell out what I mean.

“What had to happen to the west for it to become modern? What was the essential event? The answer (and our basic postulate): zero arrived.”

“Capitalism – or techno-commercial explosion – massively promoted calculation, which normalized zero as a number.” – Zero-Centric History

Of course, Land's title here is a little tongue-in-cheek, what does it mean to be centred on Zero? Nothing. Without Zero you cannot have accountancy, finance, metrics, conversion, interest, positivity, continuums, banking, saving, investment, competition, division, fragmentation or capitalism. It is the end of a fit the simultaneous beginning of a start. It is the process within the learning process which understands the rot and decay to be had, and shoots itself off in a competitive manner towards its next innovative venture. Zero here acts as a plane, a plane of entropic and negentropic

communication. As previously stated, beginnings don't exist, only middles, as such to *begin* at Zero – *continuously* – is to make clear the restarts *OF* midpoints *between* events.

“*The proportions of attraction and repulsion on the body without organs produce, starting from zero, a series of states in the celibate machine.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2013: p33).

In this manner Zero is a *plane* of swerves. Attraction and repulsion or; declination-as-stagnation back *into* the plane of Zero (old), and declination-as-difference repelled *from* the plane of Zero (new) – entropy and negentropy. Zero's relation to classical entropic forces is as a theoretical quasi-replacement within modernity, a communicational link between entropy (decay) of the Inside and its inherent productive process on the Outside. In this manner Zero is the transcendental machinic replacement of degradation, decay and destruction in favour of quantifiable productive output. The utilization, and *pure* assimilation *BY* capitalism *through* man as an ‘alien force’ of machinic-standardization is capital's mechanistic backbone, its structure. Zero as a computational mode of productive evolution allows for the dynamic of profit and loss to infiltrate the transcendental – as this alien force – on behalf of capitalism. Zero is capitalism's utilization of the entropic outcomes of the Inside as a selection device with regard to production.

Z/Acc then is an understanding of limitation, beginnings and most importantly, ends. Things end over and over again, before they begin over and over again. There is no birth without a learned death. We can have the positive-oriented-cyberpositive Zero of ACC, but we cannot have it *apart* from the thermodynamic reality of critical materialism. ‘The walk up the hill is also the walk down the hill’ or ‘What goes up must come down’ are two mistaken sayings. The walk up *IS* simultaneously the walk down, what is up is also down, and is held to the same standards of energy expenditure. If you wish to risk multiple divisions by Zero, multiple communions with the Outside, then you must be prepared for the calculator to break before it intelligently evolves.

You've persuasively articulated a communicational connectivity between entropy / decay on the Inside gravitationally / relationally

provoking a reciprocal productive process on the Outside. Let us (momentarily) step away from the edge of the mind-melting void / vortex that is Zero and consider Collapse dynamics in terms of their terrestrial manifestation – how they are revealed / recorded on the Inside. What does Collapse look like on the Inside – what are its vectors? Can you outline some of the factors and dynamics currently engaged, which you believe make Collapse inevitable and *break the calculator* before it intelligently evolves?

Look, I don't want to linger on *The Critique of Pure Reason* like some obsessed Kant fanatic, but it fits here too. The vectors of collapse *are* phenomena, we can *read* and *interpret* them in multiple ways. Unfortunately, due largely to human stupidity, we take them as if they are firsts and lasts, 1s and 0s, binary options within a finite history. Another pre-critical error. There're multiple vectors at play and they're all intertwined. Economics, resources, cultural, societal, thermodynamic, humanist, natural etc. These are all fantastic things to look at and understand as moments, events or vectors of decay and ruin, but why bother looking at those phenomena if you're not going to try glimpse at the bigger picture?

What's the bigger picture then? Decay, ruin, impermanence, flux, fragmentation, disintegration, rot and death. That all seems rather edgy, but it isn't, it's just what is. When we talk about vectors or moments of collapse, we often talk about them as singular events *against* a supposedly perfect unification. Of course, this is incorrect. Any theorization of a whole, unity or completion which if without possibility of degradation if thwart with errors, both transcendental and material. People talk about economic, social or resource collapse as if these are singular possibilities delaying an otherwise perfect linearity, the problem is, that linearity itself (the universal idea of progression) is placed within what can only be defined as Hell.

Hence the term 'Hell-Baked' – from Land's essay *Hell-Baked*:

*“The logical consequence of social Darwinism is that **everything of value has been built in hell.**”*

It is only due to a predominance of influences that are not only entirely morally indifferent, but indeed — from a human perspective — indescribably cruel, that nature has been capable of constructive action. specifically, it is solely by way of the relentless, brutal culling of populations that any complex or adaptive traits have been sieved — with torturous inefficiency — from the chaos of natural existence. All health, beauty, intelligence, and social grace has been teased from a vast butcher's yard of unbounded carnage, requiring incalculable eons of massacre to draw forth even the subtlest of advantages. this is not only a matter of the bloody grinding mills of selection, either, but also of the innumerable mutational abominations thrown up by the madness of chance, as it pursues its directionless path to some negligible preservable trait, and then — still further — of the unavowable horrors that 'fitness' (or sheer survival) itself predominantly entails. We are a minuscule sample of agonized matter, comprising genetic survival monsters, fished from a cosmic ocean of vile mutants, by a pitiless killing machine of infinite appetite.”

Collapse then is the built-in inverted motor of Accelerationism. It's the entropic chaos of the laminar plane, the ever tightening and tougher journey down river. I think it'd be wrong to map ACC to negentropy and Collapse to entropy, because both of these meet at Zero. And that's Z/Acc, the meeting point of potentiality, remove all humanisms, desires, wants, lusts, needs, systems, Mothers, Fathers, structures and logos', eventually you hit Zero. At Zero you have 3 options: reverence, death or unbridled ignorance. The fits and starts of Capitalism are not yours to pick and choose, they are shot from Zero as an energy expenditure stretching its legs, to eventually be pulled back into the embrace of its folded-flux.

Collapse events such as market crashes, resource depletion, droughts, tornadoes, pandemics etc. These are nothing but test-kits for X-risk, and they've nothing primarily do with humanity. We are there as are rats and amoebas. Who survives is simply a matter of Hell-Baking. You survive, you either thrive or await the next potential death event. Hell has no time for praise, completion or reward. Your reward is further existence in Hell, either work with it, or wait for your demise. Collapse events *are* the Outside coming in, they are the workings of the noumenal which adhere to a transcendently Darwinian language. A stock market crash is little more

than mathematical X-risk happenstance coming in from the Outside, on the Inside – as phenomena – we witness as this test rips through life as an apocalypse: Mises was survivability +1, Keynes was -1, humans don't get a Zero, only compromise.

Seen from the Inside – the human vantage point – Z/Acc charts a 'perfect storm' of interconnected, degenerative dynamic processes: endemic degradation of human capital via dysgenics and defective civilizational incentive structures; institutional hyper-regulation; bureaucratic constraints and ossification combined with the sprawling metastasis of administrative structures; normative 'progressive' 'neo-religious' values and memetic pre-conditions fundamentally out of synch with underlying reality; depletion of low-hanging sources of energy / natural resources; taxation destroying productivity incentives; demographic shifts and weaponised migration; fragility of globalised supply chains; diminishing returns on energy investment; viral pandemic Black Swans; proliferating X-risk... all waves inevitably / inexorably converging in the direction / telos of Collapse.

Are you able to expand on this and provide a roadmap of the dangers ahead?

You're really pushing for me to get into the nitty-gritty of phenomenal entropic returns here, and that's very sweet of you. Don't fret, I will begin listing very soon. But in that question you actually raise one of the primary problems of the 'perfect storm' as you put it, which is 'interconnectedness'. This to me looks like another name for unification or wholeness. Inclusivity, tolerance, loyalty, compromise etc., all these do is eventually weaken multiple distinct strengths into one homogenous bore. But this isn't the major problem of an interconnected existence, there's a problem of origin. Once everyone and everything is bereft of source and origin, you're left with pure atomization. Free-floating consumption/production units of temporarily adhering to the latest excitement as a means to simply pass time.

Honestly, I think it'd be very boring to point out the common collapse themes and how they're connected. But for sake of argument let's take a clear one, an oil shortage. I'm not even talking about peak oil here, I'm just

going to go with an oil shortage, or even an oil price rise, take whatever possible trigger you like and understand that the scenario is this: Oil suddenly becomes quite difficult to acquire. Well of course people can no longer drive to work, or have to alter their entire lives to be able to afford to. The production of a mass of plastic materials ceases due to it no longer being profitable. Trucks can no longer deliver goods as regularly as they used to and towns begin to go without prescriptions and essentials for weeks at a time. The lack of people driving to and from work means that entire industries begin to falter; mechanics, car dealers, roadworkers, carwashes etc. The death of these industries sends waves through local and interconnected economies and it eventually ripples out. Henry Hazlitt dedicates a whole chapter to this knock-on effect in *Economics in One Lesson*. It really is the most basic of economic ideas, so I don't think it begs too much repetition.

What does need a little articulation is what you refer to as – ***“institutional hyper-regulation; bureaucratic constraints and ossification combined with the sprawling metastasis of administrative structures; normative ‘progressive’ ‘neo-religious’ values and memetic pre-conditions fundamentally out of synch with underlying reality.”***

I'd argue that all of this can be bracketed under the term 'power structure' which is heavily utilized – and arguably 'invented' – by Michel Foucault. I won't go too deep into the Foucauldian specifics, but at the most basic level what we're talking about here is the intersection of knowledge and power, and how one begets the other and vice-versa; power-knowledge is its own miniature feedback loop which doesn't *want* to stop. Now, the problem with the loop is that eventually it runs out of resources from a historically determined knowledge bank (Tradition, classics, habit, risk/reward, incentives, success, winning, colonization, declaration etc.) and begins to deconstruct and invent new forms and means of knowledge as a way to extend its power. Once an institution is powerful enough to move the goalposts of what it means to be correct, that institution holds power. Such a regime of truth also invents its own punishments, namely and primarily expulsion and alienation from the 'norm', alongside ridicule, slander and belittlement. Once X is defined as the culturally and systematically correct and right thing to do, those who do not do X are punished. I'm not talking

of crime, I'm talking of personal preference, belief systems, ideas etc. Hyper-regulation is a symptom of control, regulation is apparently for our own benefit. Bureaucratic and administrative legislation and control mechanisms relating to how one comports themselves in all their actions are so covertly dull and minute at first that they're basically non-existent, and yet, much like the economic connections destroyed by an oil shortage, certain cultural requirements also cause ripples throughout society. Such ripples cause further and further dulling, numbing and anaesthetizing of the populace. Z/Acc is *also* the potential for the rupture in *this* interconnected heresy. Any flirtation with Zero will bring people back to reality harder than they can imagine. School systems and government institutions will be seen for what they are – prisons. Regulations, permits and legislation will be seen for what it is – control. Politicians, planners and council members will be seen for who they are – jobsworths and brown-noses, and finally, history will be seen – very briefly – for what it is – cyclical.

Taiter's complexity / diminishing returns spiral articulates an ontological lock-in, whereby diminishing returns are inscribed into the structure of problem solving itself. So, there is a fatalism to Capital acceleration, but there is also a competing fatalism to Collapse dynamics. Why is it impossible to circumvent Collapse? What is the lock-in effects, omnipresent in a complex civilization, which conspire to make it impossible to reverse our current trajectory and make Collapse inevitable?

This is really a physics problem. Which is one regarding thermodynamics, entropy and negentropy. A closed system with a finite amount of resources will eventually hit Zero with regard to energy output. This isn't some theoretical idea, this is a cold hard fact in relation to human material reality. To say there is a fatalism to capital acceleration is really a non-statement, there's a fatalism inbuilt into existence where energy is concerned. To circumvent collapse would be to break the second law of thermodynamics, everything has an end, a death, a conclusion, a long drawn out deathrattle, unfortunately for us civilizations – which are complex systems – have the ability to counter that which is causing them, or going to cause them, to die. So it's a long game of push and shove with ever-diminishing returns, there's always loss.

Finally, in his Quick-and-Dirty Introduction to Accelerationism Land says: “No contemporary dilemma is being entertained realistically until it is also acknowledged that the opportunity for doing so is fast collapsing”. This points to an interesting synergy with Z/Acc and the implosion of decision space. Let us return to Zero. Can you conclude by revisiting why Z/Acc a form of ACC, what exactly is ‘accelerative’ about anti-acceleration and civilizational collapse dynamics? And how precisely is the Z/Acc ontology cybernetic?

There’s a problem here with your use of the word ‘accelerative’, of course collapse seems to have little to do with acceleration in the traditional semantic sense of increasing speed, but that of course isn’t how I’m using it. Acceleration as in ACC is increased deterritorialization and reterritorialization, whether this process happens fast or slow is besides the point. As such, collapse isn’t so much the inverse of this process, but is the physical, fatalist and natural restraints built-in to the territory in the first place. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization happen as abstract processes devoid of any moralist, pragmatic or conservatory limitations, they’re non-actors, they’re processes. The Z of Z/Acc then, is the understanding of the implicit ability for territory to fail and to reverse its potential into a dysgenic and collapse-esque mess. As for cybernetics, what is cybernetics? It’s simply goal-orientation, and the way in which the circuitry, system or structure at hand vectors itself towards a goal. Z/Acc is cybernetic in the way that anything that is goal-oriented is cybernetic, the only exception being is that much like a cancer, Z/Acc’s ‘goal’ is a detrimental one, and the goal of Z/Acc doesn’t begin until Acc itself begins a territorialization. Z/Acc loathes life and its complexity, it is the growing rot within unification. If you have something which is creating or building itself, Z/Acc is its *a priori* limitation waiting for its moment to pounce, which will *always* come.

Z/Acc Worldview

I was tempted to call this ‘A Beginner’s Guide to Z/Acc’ but I just didn’t want to, we have enough ‘guides’, and ultimately there will never be a definitive guide for any form of Accelerationism, that’s just the nature of the beast. However, Z/Acc seems to have taken off and I’m seeing people mention it more and more in passing. Often they equate it with some form of pessimism, nihilism or anti-natalism (all incorrect readings), other times it’s equated with collapse and social decay (partly right) and I’ve seen a few times being understood as a sort of ‘Doomer/Acc’, and even though I can see how you would get to this conclusion, it’s not exactly right. The incorrect ‘readings’ are of course incorrect because they are being *read* by a certain type of being, a human. There is only a human nihilism, the laws of the universe are not beholden to any abstraction of humanist ‘meaning’.

So let me try clear some stuff up about Accelerationism and Zero/Accelerationism. Firstly, Accelerationism, what is it? It’s the understanding that capitalism is *here to stay* and *any* attempt to derail it, transform it into something else, alter it, destroy it, deconstruct it or change it in anyway is subsumed back *into* its own mechanics, making it impossible to ever leave it. I think where people can get confused is in the saying “Accelerate the process” which seemingly wants to be expanded into ‘[We should] Accelerate the process.’, which makes it seem as if there is something *we* can *do* to cause Acceleration, or cause further Acceleration. Now, I attend to a form of agency best described by Michel Serres, in which we can think of the entire possibility of actions as a great ocean which has flows, tides, shifts, winds and pulls, the agent – The Helmsman – is restricted to the decisions and choices he can make by the way in which the tide is shifting. If the Helmsman was to sail against the current he will surely wreck his ship and voyage. There are great Helmsmen, who can find more prosperous ways to sail, and there are bad Helmsmen, who are ignorant of the ocean altogether. In Accelerationist theory we understand that this ocean *is* the circuitry of capitalism, and so, any direction you take is simply something capital *learns from*.

So where does Zero/Accelerationism (Z/Acc) come in? Well, when we talk about Accelerating capitalism we're almost always doing so from a relatively optimistic point of view. Let's say you want to Accelerate capitalism for the emancipation of man (L/Acc), that's an optimistic outlook. Let's say you believe the Acceleration of capitalism should just be left to unconditionally Accelerate, well, that's optimistic because you're outlook is happening as soon as you *allow* that point-of-view to happen. Let's say, you want to Accelerate capitalism to bring about the singularity (R/Acc), that's optimistic, as the recent Kurzweilian fantasies found in GPT-3 *are* heading that way. For each and every iteration of Accelerationism, be it L, R, U, G etc. one can find something which will optimistically promote their Accelerative bias. Each iteration of Accelerationism does have a relationship with Zero, but it's one which is ignorant of entropy, one which promotes *some* form of eternal continuation or perpetual energy source, however abstract.

Firstly, let me expand on what 'Zero' is very, *very* roughly. When we think of numbers we think of them in a sequence, which goes from smaller to larger numbers, or abstractly, from loss to profit, for instance: -3, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3, and on and on. The sequence is reliant on a certain number, or non-number, or functional-glyph to make sense, that glyph is '0' or Zero. Whenever I think of Zero I get a bit nauseous, I'll give you a minute to think about Zero, try figure out what the hell it is? Even conceptually it eludes human grasp, we can't sit on it because it's an atemporal virtual function. I'll try keep this a little more simple. If a system wants to grow, expand or Accelerate, it needs to understand what *it is* to grow, expand or Accelerate. This implies that it needs a spectrum from which it can understand whether or not it is growing, expanding or Accelerating. For capitalism this spectrum is the spectrum of numeracy, of number, the sequential spectrum of numbers. With bigger numbers signifying growth/profit and lower numbers signifying loss/negative-growth/decay (very roughly), from this capitalism can transcendently understand whether or not certain actions undertaken in reality cause it to grow or decay, it emphasizes support for those which help it grow, and suffocates, alienates and deterritorializes those which don't. So, where does Zero fit in? Zero is the point from which capitalism understands whether or not

something is working, whether or not to take action and alter the actions of reality in such a way that growth can begin again. When we think about L/Acc, we're thinking of a group which sees growth of capitalism heading off in one direction (growth) in relation to one specific context (technological advancement for the emancipation of humankind), when we think of R/Acc the growth also heads off in one direction (singularity), and arguably it does so for U/Acc too, wherein the growth itself becomes abstract and each and every iteration of positivity and negativity is subsumed into growth as the only form of movement for capitalism. Each of these iterations has a tricky and ignorant relationship with Zero, one which holds to a strict binary and avoids the 'car crash'.

What's the 'car crash' you ask? To paraphrase Paul Virilio, '*When you invent the car you invent the car crash.*' Or in very abstract terms Zero is everywhere all at once. When there is growth there is a simultaneous loss, and when there is loss there is a simultaneous growth. This might seem strange, but that's largely because modernity wants everyone to think in binary terms. It's quite hard to actually pinpoint where the counter-reaction is happening because it usually isn't even within the same context. However, I think the Covid-19 Event has allowed us to momentarily slip out from out way of binary thinking, at least in terms of cause, effect and the idea of unalloyed progress. Firstly we have a growth of energy (Covid-19) which due its very nature removes certain amounts of energy from other beings, this in turn causes certain effects within nation states due to them not wanting further energy loss in relation to production and growth of their specific economy, *these* decisions in turn cause effects such as increases in solitude, work-at-home jobs, decreases in socialization, increases in distrust etc., *these* effects in turn cause many to become disillusioned with the Western dream. So the spontaneous introduction/growth of a biological virus causes various ripples which conclude in various office workers realizing their lives fucking suck. I jest, the point is, the 'car crash' which is invented via various social, cultural, political and physical becomings cannot often be predicted. For instance, when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, I highly doubt that he foresaw that he would also be inventing 'Phantom Vibration Syndrome', in which a person's pocket seemingly vibrates without the *actual* stimulus doing so. In this way we can

think of Zero as the function which processes each and every car crash. But these processes also show that there is no such thing as a binary scale of growth/loss, as one thing grows other things lose out, but as those secondary things lose out, this opens the gateway for further growth in other areas. So really, when you invent the car you invent the flap of a butterfly's wings.

So what does any of that have to do with Z/Acc? Well, everything. Z/Acc doesn't ignore Zero. It doesn't believe in a single direction. Unconditional is another word for perpetual as far as I'm concerned, and every other form of Acceleration is beholden to progress in some form, be it Marxist, Liberal, Reactionary or Technophilic. Any notion of progress is optimistic even if the outcome isn't something desired, progress is inherently optimistic because it's ignores the car crash. So when I write and talk about Z/Acc I'm not specifically talking about collapse *or* Acceleration, I'm talking about the unavoidable inventions which blossom from innovation as a thorn in the side of utopian optimism, Zero is the constant thorn. Growth without complexification is impossible, and with complexification comes further gateways for Zero to enter inside from. I find it annoying when people make Z/Acc synonymous with purely collapse or purely Acceleration, because once again they're actually avoiding Zero. If things begin to decay and lose-at-reality, other things grow in their place. These things might be good, they might be bad, who knows. For instance, when the housing market crashes in March of next year (2021 – yeah, that's right) many people will lose a lot of money and – pseudo – value. There is your loss. However, many younger people will finally be able to afford houses and there will be a growth of maturation and individualism. As there is collapse, there is an opening for growth, both processes however ride on a longer, overarching Zero which resides within the finite nature of earthly resources.

What is Z/Acc then? Well, yes, capitalism *is* Accelerating. It is continuing on its trajectory of growth. *But*, this form of growth isn't somehow immune to Zero, immune to the car crash, to entropy, to ignorance, to...limitation! What does this actually mean in terms of Accelerationism though? It means that our Edens will always have dark alleyways, faults and unforeseen areas of imperfection. As the great AI comes forth and all the jobs begin to be automated there will be years upon years wherein not enough is automated

for *everyone* to have a UBI, but also too much is automated for everyone to have some employment, leaving countless families and individuals caught in the in-between of history. As electric cars become the norm we begin our (pseudo) movement towards the elusive ‘Zero Carbon Footprint’ (impossible), but when you invent the electric car, you invent the electric car crash complete with massive electricity recharge stations, further automobile regulations, increasing use of fossil fuels used to create electricity, increase in gigantic solar farms which destroy forest land; Zero is always waiting in the wings for its opportunity to dirty up Eden.

Fisher states “*The slow cancellation of the future has been accompanied by a deflation of expectations.*” I disagree with this in part, yes, the future feels as if it’s being cancelled, largely because our very notion of the future is reliant on historical notions of what the future should be. However, I don’t think our expectations are deflated as much as they were never inflated, I know very few in the younger generations who expected much – if anything at all – from their future, because from day 1 it was already being taken *from them* and changed *for them*. So where does Zero sit in the future we *have* been given? It’s the spontaneous worsening of that which is already banal and given. Let’s take virtual reality as an example. The idea of virtual reality has been around for a long time, it’s not anything new, and its place in the future is quite turbulent. But instead of venturing into personal utopias within VR what little gateway of capitalist production has Zero found for us? That’s right, virtual reality shelf-stacking, truck driving and jet-piloting. You can now live your retail wage-slave dream from the comfort of your own home! I’ll give some drawn out predictions to try show you what I mean by a Z/Acc future:

1. Covid-19 distancing and mask policy is never officially declared over and people naturally begin to distance from one another in supermarkets, automated checkouts are increased and it becomes *assumed* that one does their own scanning, all the while being kept in a small Perspex germ booth for their own protection. This in turn leads people towards an attitude of distrust, attending to a position of distance and atomization as much as they can. People no longer talk on public transport, wander without aim or take detours.

2. The self-improvement culture fragments into tighter and tighter groupings, latching onto contemporary hyper-competitive (Dan Bilzerian) culture in an attempt to gamify all areas of existence. People compete in workplace tournaments for who can put in the most hours, with many sleeping on the job, eating meals at their desks and going home only at weekends, all to increase their social market value. They ARE a productive member of society. Zero enters through an extremely abstract gateway here, immanentizing the subconscious idea that one should always be productive in some manner, no longer can one 'do nothing', for that is now seen as a waste. Such an attitude leads to an increase in guilt and mental health degradation, leading to a further increase in reliance on drugs which make one *well adjusted to a profoundly sick society* (Krishnamurti).
3. The housing market continues in its peaks and troughs. Various government subsidy loans, credit default swaps and bureaucratic grants with risky APR details mean that new homeowners are beholden to the market with respect to where they live and what they do, previous generations of homeowners tighten their grasp on the market. Zero steps in (and is already stepping in) and alters the notion of what a home actually is, many become complacent and acceptant of the idea of living in a tiny home, caravan or even a van. This likewise increases the cultural acceptance of social nomadism and people increasingly become detached from any immediate local culture and simply roam to wherever the latest and most innovative form of production is.
4. (Current) the increasing use of smartphones as our primary sources of information continues to fry our attention spans, eventually people will understand the news only in snippets and headlines (already happening/happened), this in itself allows for further reliance on binary modes of thinking. As this way of thinking increases people get pushed into more and more striated camps of being, defining themselves by the most rigid restrictions.

5. As material expectations increase in relation to diminishing resources we will eventually hit a point of cultural no return, wherein expectations remain and resources begin to deplete. Leaving entire generations feeling as if they are constantly missing out. Plastic animatronic Santa Clause toys are viewed as something we should be able to have if we so wish, along with a whole plethora of other pointless material garbage, the years will come when we will yearn for such choices but will not be able to have them. Years upon years of poor people who see themselves not as temporality embarrassed millionaires (as Steinbeck prophesized), but as permanently embarrassed middle class consumerists. And the older generations can forget happiness, Zero jumps in and as resources deplete, bullshit jobs are destroyed and various savings and value investments become worthless, multiple generations will have to finally get useful jobs. As Greer says, this is the point where many older people will crack out the punch-bowl, throw in all their old super-cheap big-pharma unneeded prescriptions and have one last Boomer-blowout, reveling in their nostalgic memories, in a time when they could buy pointless shit and not have to think or do anything of worth.

Many will call me a doomsayer or a fearmongerer, I guess you could easily see me as that if you're still holding onto the age old notion (religion/belief) in progress, the idea that things can go on in one direction forever is quite frankly moronic. Many of the things that come out of the future will be nice or good in relation to the context in which one lives. If one has accepted their fate as a capitalist wage-slave then the idea that you might be able to do that from the comfort of your home is literally fantastic! If you've accepted your fate as a living being who spends the majority of their time in a fluorescently lit office, with people they don't like, eating awful processed food, doing pointless tasks for the sake of money, money which you only needed to keep the job and buy into the Western dream in the first place, then guess what, the future might be quite alright for you. If you like stupid, meaningless bits of technology which allow you to escape how hellish

everything is then you too might enjoy what the future has to offer. I'll finish up with a quote from ol' John Michael Greer –

“The future is under no obligation to wait patiently while we get ready for it“

I would personally add that the idea of ‘the future’ is a very human one, there are other forces at work be they economic, political or Occult, and so the future is a lovely assemblage of various concealments and gateways. And so, in truth, Zero doesn't wait.

Academic

The Experiment of the Future

Deleuzoguattarian Nietzsche: Overcoming *as* Capitalism.

Introduction

The aim of this essay is to extrapolate on the claim that accelerating capitalism would act as inherently beneficial for Nietzschean man's overcoming of himself into Overman. I plan to do this firstly by defining what man and *amor fati* mean for Nietzsche, alongside defining both that which man shall become, namely the Overman and its counterpart of Eternal Recurrence, alongside their inherent connection. Primarily focusing on the possibility and actuality of man's overcoming, what it means to overcome and that which man is against during his process of overcoming e.g. the herd. From here I plan to explain why in the current day or epoch what it means to be 'man' has been drastically altered, largely due to capitalism being western man's political horizon. I plan to briefly attend to a common description of capitalism, then utilize the writing of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as a means for extrapolating what it is capitalism *does* to man, and what man *is* under or within capitalism, with extrapolations on both man *as* desiring-machine and the Civilized Capitalist Machine itself. In the final section I plan to achieve 3 things in a linear fashion, yet assimilated into one another. Firstly a basic overview of Nietzschean man's overcoming, secondly the process of overcoming for Deleuzoguattarian man, and thirdly the process of overcoming for Nietzschean man subsumed into Deleuzoguattarian capitalism, expanding on the idea that not only is capitalism beneficial for man's overcoming but due to its inherent qualities it is in fact the greatest vessel for overcoming.

Man, Overman and Recurrence

To begin with Nietzsche's fate of man, for where else could one begin except with man's becoming, the fatal *amor fati*. That proclamation of purpose amidst schematic metaphysics and the passing of value; for

Nietzsche the macro-pursuit or task of humanity, of *man* in its grandest sense is a thorough “*going-across and a down-going*”. (Nietzsche, 1961: p44), a personal and herd-external recognition of that rope so “*fastened between animal and Superman*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p43) and so within Nietzsche’s call for a “*down-going*” is an – often unheard – cry for man to act as Socrates once did and “*descend from the plane of his intellectual understanding*” (Pappas, 1995: p17-21), man baring all for the future, to accept what comes – as we shall too – and [justify] “*men of the future*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p44), those Overmen, greater than man, those who’ve overcome humanity. For the task of man is to overcome himself (Nietzsche, 1961: p41). For aid and direction in such a feat one and man *must* turn to Zarathustra, aloud at the marketplace: “*The hour when you say: what good is happiness*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p43) he proclaims to the herd “*your very meanness...*” he concludes. Within 19 short lines Zarathustra brings to the fore the decadence and degeneracy of man, a *man* subsumed into the herd, *of* the herd; the stasis of the marketplace dances confidently upon the corpse of God, confident of their apathy. Arrogance and ignorance in a new world deprived of God’s light, searching for pity and sympathy, a world bereft of creation. Confronted with the herd’s apathetic nature Zarathustra in haste defends “*What is great in man*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p45) a list the likes of the herd and the last man find at once burdensome and heavy. Yet those who *are* to overcome, those who for Zarathustra “*prophesy the coming of the lightning...*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p45), those men who under darkened clouds continue planting seeds for trees they shall not see, those men who carry and own their fate. The becoming towards Overman true, a love of creation even when it is destruction; a simultaneous innovation, growth, creation and longing for life, *all* of life. These men who become are those who wish to “*perish by the man of the present.*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p45). Men so utterly subsumed into *their amor fati* that they question a positive roll of the dice; a man who feels indebted to the future and understands it is he who must pave the way against the belly laughs of the herd, this is what it means for Nietzschean man to become.

What of this ‘becoming’ of which man must attend, wherein must man begin? The process prior to those who *have* overcome, what will and *does* overcoming look like in actuality? For these questions we turn to the

abstraction of the Nietzschean rope of animal, man and Overman. The rope of overcoming as a guide for transcendence. Beginning with the former coupling of animal and man or nature and man, and so one turns to *Section V, Dawn*, (Nietzsche, 1911: A434 and A464) wherein lies a critique of man's reaction to nature: "*the great things of nature and humanity must intercede.*" (Nietzsche, 1911: p274) For there should be no return, for fear of clawing at old animalistic rope, there in fact should be a cultivation, an active improvement of nature wherein the duality of man and nature – expanded upon later – becomes a symmetrical improvement for both sides' inefficiency: Man as he who improves upon nature's shortcomings and nature as reminder of origin, of how far man can fall. Within *Dawn's* critique and Zarathustra's proclamations we find man's perpetual opposition to that which he creates, as Kaufmann comments (Kaufmann, 2013: p248), that much akin to Wilde's smelt of bronze (Wilde, 1894) man must melt, form and re-melt *his* bronze ad infinitum, each reforming a Heraclitean improvement of his creation and his being. This albeit 'practical' form of becoming is at its heart the private ownership of one's *own amor fati*; a "*down-going*" into fate, however light, however bleak. I shall return to becoming in abstraction later, for now, that which man shall *become*: the Overman.

If one is to speak of man as a rope: from animal, to man, to Overman, then one may ask what difference lies between man and Overman. The difference presents itself in the way each influences and is influenced, for "*Man is a polluted river.*" (Nietzsche, 1961: p42) and though he could recast his bronze a new, or bare the future's weight, both acts, along with his *present* agency are prey to the *external* influence of herd-entities: state, religion and society, all of which act as forms of 'pollution' for weak, fearful man; those men who are not as of yet themselves. His thoughts, his ideas, his morals, his structures even, are perceived via a gauze of epoch-centric stimuli altering the original and authentic into the lulls and whines of the herd; and thus what is his, is not his. Whereas "*the Superman: he is the sea*" (Nietzsche, 1961: p42) and thus can receive the pollution of the river, of many rivers, of *all* rivers without losing his original form, without losing who it is *he* is. The Overman therefore, is he who can withstand external pressured perspectives en masse whilst retaining authenticity and

origin. Indeed if one is to turn to the literal (published) origin of the Overman, to *The Gay Science*, they shall find him within a reverent triptych “of gods, heroes and overmen.” (Nietzsche, 1974: A143), it is here in origination we find not only is the Overman he who withstands the rabble’s infectious strains of decadence, but it is he who – in the future, once born – will be able to *create* structures and systems akin to those of gods and heroes. It is of course no mistake that the Overman finds his literary birth in an aphorism focused on the problematic nature of restriction, specifically the restrictions of monotheism in comparison to polytheism; why worship the singular, suffocative ideology of a long since murdered God, when one *can* overcome restrictive pollutions and help the future bare witness to the birth of the Overman. To lure “*him who justifies the man of the future.*” (Nietzsche, 1961: p44) forward so, away from all sources of pollution, *man*, in plural, may glimpse at a future bearable, recurrence bearable...

For why write of a Nietzschean future if one doesn’t address the *only* future: Eternal Recurrence. For Nietzsche the doctrine of eternal recurrence is the impenetrable metaphysical horizon: “*Eternal recurrence – that is to say of the absolute and eternal repetition of all things, in periodical cycles.*” (Nietzsche, 1911: p73). The finite number of atomic configurations *within* the infinity of time recurring over and over, a perpetual reorganization of chaos again and again. A succinct description of *the* atheistic horror, the atheistic universe. For not only has God been murdered (Nietzsche, 1961: p41) and thus been *made* mortal by man, but the act of murder shall recur. Recur out of sight and out of cycle (Nietzsche, 1961: p234), and so it becomes an impossible act for any *mortal* man to comprehend...the recurrence of all his pain and loss, strife and suffering, let alone wish once more than he act out *his* mortality. Yet this *is* the ‘heaviest weight’ which the Overman must bare, not to “*curse the demon who spoke thus.*” (Nietzsche, 1974: A341) but in fact, to embrace his announcement, the great *amor fati*, to want no difference of fate, nothing ever changing for all of eternity, this fate *only* the Overman can embrace and it is this virtue that make him thus. Recurrence of such *is* here prior to any ‘arrival’ or birth or the Overman, and thus we exist in an anti-anthropocentric universe that cares not for our wallowing in chaos, for our lack of atomic organization or baring of tragedy, the justification of the future is in the arrival of he who

will bare the horizon of recurrence. For recurrence *without* the Overman, without he who can *accept* it...*own* it, truly, would result in a death of possibility, of potential, a repetition of the finite forever, without hope for value, transcendence or hierarchy. The Overman without recurrence however, would act as a fatalistic tyrant, leaping into the unknown whilst dragging humanity behind him. In their connection the present belongs to no one, it is the end-result of a past configuration and the future is only that which is to *be* overcome. “*For greatness in man is amor fati: the fact that man wishes nothing to be different, either in front of him or behind him, for all eternity.*” (Nietzsche, 1911: p45) For the Overman, the wish for non-difference is their *a priori* connection to recurrence. Yet this relationship is asymmetrical, for it is inconsequential to the universe whether or not chaos is organized; yet to those who benefit from a reorganization it is not. “*After the vision of the overman...recurrence now bearable!*” (Kaufmann, 2013: p327)

A Deleuzoguattarian Epoch

The horizon for man, specifically contemporary western man, has changed, the epoch altered: that which man creates, destroys and lives *from*, has itself altered in such a fundamental way that which ‘man’ *is* has too changed, at least in relation to the ‘man’ of which Nietzsche referred. Man for Nietzsche as he whose potential for overcoming would have directly conflicted with strict ideological value adherence, the Utopian dream and modernity, all of which act in opposition to the epoch of contemporary western man, who pushes to and fro, from and *with*...capitalism.

Capitalism: A free market economy wherein the means of production – and product – are privately owned by an individual and are operated primarily for profit. A dynamic of recurrent success and the dissolving of failure. Man as controller or controlled, employer or employed; strength and weakness appropriated as economic status and authority. From a Nietzschean perspective it is true that *all* forms of economy, state and ideology are themselves hindrances of authenticity or pollution for the mind of man, for man’s overcoming. Yet capitalism’s unique machinic nature with relation to man’s unconscious desire allows not only for the possibility

of overcoming, but for the ‘acceleration’ of such a process, the nature of capitalism as such is expounded by the philosophy of Deleuze & Guattari.

One, in fact, *must* turn to Deleuze & Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* for a full understanding of the socio-philosophical consequences of man’s subsumption into capitalism. For that ‘man’, that humanity, first spoke of as he who is to justify the future’s existence has since been altered by the eventuality of capitalism, which mutates man’s nature into that of a desiring-machine (*Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p12*), integrated into *the* societal meshwork of desiring-production (*Ibid, p19*). Desiring-production: The perpetual loop of production and consumption along with their inherent bind: “*Hence everything is production: production of productions, of actions and passions...Everything is production.*” (*Ibid, p14*) within this machinic capitalist process “*the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man becomes one within nature in the form of production and industry.*” (*Ibid, p15*) That ‘nature’ which the ‘man’ of Nietzsche is to cultivate and improve, has since, in its duality with man been subsumed into the form of production and industry. The rope of becoming ground from its animalistic beginnings into man by the process of production, both moving forward *into* a process larger than themselves, of which shall accelerate the motion of man towards Overman. This duality of man and nature, this “*Production as process*” (*Ibid, p15*) as that which subsumes all: desire, ideals, identity and categories, and thus is not itself a means to an end (*Ibid, p15*), nor infinite perpetuation, but is the essential *productive* reality of man and nature entwined as process for the refinement of both. Man as a “*producing/product identity*” (*Ibid, p18*) process amidst a process of momentary cyclical lapses of production, wherein the whole process starts again, a non-means to an end, a “*continual birth and rebirth.*” (*Ibid, p18*), a continuous melting and sculpting of Kaufmann’s Nietzschean bronze (*Kaufmann, 2013: p248*); man reassembles himself again and again from the remnants of *his* singular past bronze creation into a new original form, a glimpse thereof for a moment, before the product is consumed and melted back *into* the process of production along *with* man: a process of the continual lapsed process of micro-productive overcoming. Man as desiring-machine amidst the capitalist landscape, wherein the distinctions of: production, distribution and consumption are immediately flattened onto a

single immanent plane (*Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p15*), alongside industry, man and nature *all* acting as a means for the process of production, as such man *becomes* a process...a process of production. As a furnace produces the heat to smelt, man produces sweat to cool, both acts interlinked under the horizontal process of capitalism as that which emancipates becoming from the suffocative pollution of utopias into the perpetual “*decoding of flows.*” (*Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p257*), into a non-linear, fragmented Nietzschean explosion! (*Nietzsche, 1990: p108*)

What of *these* men, these desiring-machines whom are *of* the capitalist socius, what does it do and what does it alter of their agency? These men who, in accordance with Deleuzoguattarian philosophy, becoming desiring-machines. Wherein that latter machinic nature is not metaphoric (*Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p12*), but actual, *man* assimilated as machine into “*only a process*” (*Ibid, p12*) driven by an unconscious desire of “*fragmentary and fragmented*” (*Ibid, p12*) ‘objects’ and ‘flows’. “*Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down.*” (*Ibid, p19*) and so, as this “*identity of production*” (*Ibid, p19*) acting simultaneously alongside the naturally decoding and fragmentary processes of capitalism, with desire as the underlying catalyst for the ‘current’ and ‘break’ of capitalism’s decoded flows, we find man as he who *now* exists within a continual machinic birth and rebirth, product and production; fragmented man as process removed from archaic independent spheres into a political project of immediacy and divergence.

What of *these* men *within* and *of* capitalist process(*Ibid, p257*), of *The Civilized Capitalist Machine*, a construction of semantic parts of which each must be swiftly deconstructed as a means for understanding the horizon of man: ‘*The Civilized*’ as in the singular capitalist machine which in its unification acts as a vessel for and *of* decoding and deterritorialization, which via the proclamation of its ‘civilized’ nature has been brought, or brought itself to a correct developmental stage: So via a deconstruction herein we understand that of a singular *accepted* capitalist machine, the process of which – production, process, man – acts as both its civility and machinations. Internally holding the emancipative process of the decoding of flows and deterritorialization, a process which subsumes man as desiring-machine into as a means for man’s accelerated overcoming.

Towards the emancipative process itself: *“That is why capitalism and its break are defined not solely by decoded flows, but by the generalized decoding of flows, the new massive deterritorialization, the conjunction of deterritorialized flows.”* (Ibid, p259). The Deleuzoguattarian primacy of capitalism as that which decodes; a removal of structure, a reversal of apparent limitational natures; ‘coding’ as linearities wherein growth has an ‘end’ or a blink (Nietzsche, 1961: p46). And what of the flow that is to be decoded: *“What is it that moves over the body of society? It is always flows, and a person is always cutting off a flow. A person is always a point of departure for the production of a flow, a point of destination for the reception of a flow, a flow of any kind; or better yet, an interception of many flows.”* (Deleuze, 1971) This Deleuzoguattarian ‘person’ taken as *man*, humanity, a multitude of persons, is man *within* capitalist process as desiring-machine, entirely subsumed into decoded and perpetually decoding flows, man fragmented *into* the process of production (of production) of capitalism itself. These *“decoded flows that makes of capital the new social full body.”* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p261) become capitalism itself, assembly of the capitalist machine as the *“production of productions.”* – the great creation – with man taking his place *in* and *within* and *of* the machine, no longer a capitalism which *“installed itself in the pores of the old socius”*(Ibid, p261) but a capitalism entirely deterritorialized into a civilized production machine, with subsumed man *as* desiring-machine, flattened onto the semantically reductionist plane ‘capitalism’ from which one can begin a trajectory towards an isolation of desire and of overcoming, using capitalism as its natural propellant.

Man’s Transcendence As Capitalist Process

This isolated trajectory towards overcoming...*of* overcoming, this possibility of transcendence via the utilization of capitalism’s inherent emancipative processes benefits from a return to the Overman/Recurrence duality. Such an Overman is he who is *beyond* capitalism, beyond the pollution of *any* -ism or -logy, those so transcendently emancipated they can lure humanity from the decadent present with their call for ‘man to justify *himself*’, that which makes great men act, thus: build the future *from* the future. The inherently problematic yet beneficial nature of capitalist

process if that the alterations it has performed on man of course *change* that which he is to overcome, namely himself, for it is man to be overcome and *man has* changed. Yet these processes too – as we shall see – allow for an accelerated reassembly of the recurring finite. First: overcoming as Nietzsche's man, secondly: overcoming as Deleuzoguattarian man, thirdly: utilization of both forms as a means for accelerated overcoming as process.

“Great men...in whom tremendous energy has been accumulated...there has been no explosion for a long time.” (Nietzsche, 1990:p108) What of these 'explosions' and why have there been so few? For they are held back by the Nietzschean pollutions: state, religion and epoch. So of the former 'great men' we find a symmetrical characteristic with the Overman, both care not for their epoch's chaos and both 'become who they are' (Nietzsche, 1974: A270). However, those great men of present, taken henceforth by capitalism's all consuming process, acting as a vessel for the *“overwhelming pressure of the energies.”* (Nietzsche, 1990:p109) as such that the unhinged, free market capitalist state allows these men to *become* that process towards which there is the Nietzschean explosion.

To *grasp* the Will to Power both as text and as actual will in consideration with the contemporary socio-political organ is to invite an abstractive haste titled under the principle of *more!* (Kaufmann, 2013: p185), guided into the future, attempting to justify the future via posthumous fragmented jottings, decoded from author into flows alien to their temporal origin seems fitting: To guide us, bluntly towards the perspective of the non-end, the forever-end of man prior to the coming of the Overman: *“To invite disease and madness, to promote symptoms of derangement, meant to grow stronger, more superhuman, more terrible and more wise.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A48) Invitation, promotion, growth and more, more, more, the perpetual decoding of flows is that which we *must* invite; acting as a contemporary deification wherein one actively allows and invites the process of capitalism further into *his* desire. Wherein man attempts an assertion of his place within the authoritative triptych (Nietzsche, 1974: A143), utilizing the naturally creative powers of capitalism as a means for future – God & heroic – value creation.

“If we remove the idea of purpose from the process, can we still affirm the process? We could if something were accomplished at every moment of the process.” (Nietzsche, 2017: A55) What purpose does capitalism hold and promote except that of continued deterritorialization and the decoding of flows, each decoding, intersection and multiplicity of flows is at once and *“every moment”* a *creation*, a deterritorialized creation without root of purpose, unconscious creation from and of man! A miraculous creation amongst [modernities] *“breaking up of traditions and schools.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A74) This fragmented disintegration via capitalism’s decoding of modernity, of *all* which could have possibly coded, caged and polluted man, is at once subsumed into the unconscious process of production and forthwith a flow of production, of creation. – *“As a matter of fact, great growth is always accompanied by tremendous fragmentation and destruction;”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A112) thus from the ashes of decoded schools and relics of tradition arises *“the transition to new conditions of existence.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A112). Utilizing capitalism’s inherent unchecked growth and mechanisms of decoding the Nietzschean pot of smelted bronze meets its greatest furnace; for the Overman as transcended is he who creates!

For *“Consciousness only extends so far as it is useful.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A505) not only must the process of overcoming accept pollution as a physical limitation, but to overcome, man must accept the nature of consciousness as anchored to the herd, to the state, to those and that which hinder and impede the process of overcoming: For man’s conscious intentionality is *always* drawn to pollution and decadence prior. To *be* and to *allow* and *own* the unconscious is to begin to overcome. Such a process of overcoming finding itself inherently within the socio-ideological organ of *The Civilized Capitalist Machine*: *“An organ of what controls us.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A524) the organ Nietzsche speaks of in relation to commerce acts symmetrically to that of the desiring-machine, taken into and in control of an organ. It is from said organ that the limitations of consciousness’ usefulness are left behind in favour of desire, wherein man’s overcoming he shall *“trace something new to something old.”* (Nietzsche, 2017: A552) as flows decode, and parts are deterritorialized, micro-justifications for the future fragment and decode into process, perpetually, a

constant ‘tracing’ of new to old. Such a temporal tracing within capitalist process can be *allowed* to expand and diverge due to its inherent decoding of flows and form of ownership: “*great men...*” acting as employers, CEOs, entrepreneurs, visionaries and inventors are “*shaping and commanding forces – extending the sphere of their power – the demand increasing.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A644) via appropriation of the traditional ‘strong and weak’ onto the asymmetrical replacement of employer and employed, the capitalist and the capitalized or “*Being useful for accelerating – and being useful for [stability]*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A648). Thus it is from capitalism that great men are born once more and allowed full reign within their sphere of power, utilizing the multitude of weak marketplace energies to construct, build and create a justification *for* the future, for the men of the future, for “*The herd is a means and nothing more!*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A766)

Accelerative processes, no: “*NB. Processes considered as ‘beings’.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A655) and asymmetrically beings as processes, a recurrent subsuming of one into the other as a means for overcoming themselves; weak and strong, humanity and capitalism. “*NB. Hitherto, man has been man of the future so to speak.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A686) that is, what is man but an effort towards not a better future, but a *greater* future, capitalism allows man his “*Subsumption into the larger whole in order to satisfy its will to power.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A774, 2), man into capitalism as to satisfy desire via unconscious decoding and power by application of practical free market economies, both as a means towards overcoming and to benefit the Overman, to pave route to the birthplace *of* the Overman.

And so in utilization of contemporary capitalism, with man as desiring-machine, the Nietzschean dream has begun: “*He must be endowed with the virtues of a machine.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A888) and so he has been endowed, with the virtues of the desiring-machine, who acts in such a way to acquire little pollution, the unconscious machinic process of capitalism, the unchecked, accelerative virtues of desiring-machine are indeed “*The strong who are to come – investing not in society, but in the future – That great process, the levelling of European man, is not to be retarded; it should be accelerated.*” (Nietzsche, 2017: A898)

And here in the late, maddeningly fragmented jottings of *The Will to Power* do we find the origin of Deleuzoguattarian acceleration, acting as the form of ‘end’, the continuous birth and rebirth, the only conclusion man can muster to the civilized capitalist machine:

“For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough – Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to “accelerate the process”” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p276)

Herein lies the fatal bridge between Nietzsche’s late – decoded – attempts at offering a solution for man’s potential becoming and Deleuzoguattarian capitalism; for man has become and is always becoming a desiring-machine of unconscious desire, such a machine acting as a part *of* and *as* the process of capitalism itself, driving his desire ever forward, yet remnants of recurrent stability remain. His attachments are still to the old as a means of pleasing the strong, he must relieve himself of familiarity and accelerate himself, overcome himself as a process towards the future. Deleuze & Guattari’s call to *“accelerate the process”* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013: p276) is a call of acceptance towards the emancipative powers of capitalism in relation to man’s overcoming of himself. And so this production of process and its reverse, the process of production, both acting as capitalism itself and as man, should not be lapsed or halted, but in fact should be accelerated pushing man ever further towards his limit, towards the future, towards his birth as Overman.

Conclusion

Man as he whom will always – a la Nietzsche – be indebted to his fate and to his future, is as such always burdened with the task of preparing/actualising the existence of the Overman. Against the whines of the herd, man must take up the abstract process of overcoming and cultivate a symmetrical relationship with nature wherein the inefficiency of both is improved, this interceding of both man and nature via a Deleuzoguattarian capitalist framework allows man to utilize the inherent present capitalist process capabilities: decoding of flows, excess fragmentation and the assimilation of independent spheres into a unified process, as a means to accelerate the process of man’s overcoming. Deleuzoguattarian Nietzsche

therefor is the interceding of man as desiring-machine with *his amor fati*, which to the desiring-machine is the unchecked acceleration, fragmentation, decodification and divergence of flows. An *amor fati* which in conjunction with the emancipative powers of capitalism with regards to product, production and process *is* accelerated due to its natural inclusion within the Civilized Capitalist Machine. And so: Desiring-machine as humanity within the Civilized Capitalist Machine, are still eternally indebted to the future to their *amor fati*, as such man must accelerate the inherent capabilities of capitalism as a means towards the emancipation of man, as a means towards overcoming and the creation/birth of the Overman.

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Text originally submitted to M.A. course.

Note on Bibliography: Preceding a number: p=page and A=aphorism.

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Towards a Serrean Patchwork

Introduction

In this essay I plan to analyse that which shall be called the 'Serrean patchwork', a spacio-temporal multiplicity which also acts as global topology, akin to a knitted patchwork quilt pertaining to the work of Michel Serres. Utilizing texts from both Michel Serres and Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, all of whom have conceptualized the idea of 'patchwork' within their work. Alongside utilizing Lucretian atomism as the materialist philosophy underpinning the work of the aforementioned theorists. I shall begin by briefly expanding on Michel Serres' conception of time as a 'crumpled handkerchief', for this temporal reading is both relevant at a foundational level and acts as the cause for the contemporary Lucretian process. Following this I plan to appropriate this reading of time onto the materialist framework of Lucretian atomism, extrapolating on the Lucretian process of material becoming itself, from laminar flow to vortex. I then plan to move the Lucretian process from its traditional temporal/abstract root to physical space via assimilation of the process itself onto the 'smooth and striated space' of Deleuze & Guattari, allowing each abstract atomist process to be assimilated onto a material movement or allotment between smooth and striated space. Finally I intend to explain how this atomic spacio-temporal triptych of crumpled time, Lucretian atomism and Deleuzoguattarian space allows for a clearer vision of a 'Serrean patchwork'. A patchwork which inherently utilizes each section of this essay as a means for its own structural and topological becoming. Each theoretical underpinning contributing to various factors in relation to the patchwork's becoming, movement, purpose and realization.

Serrean-Time and Lucretian Atomism

I shall begin from the bottom and work my way upwards, axis here being factually useless, but metaphorically useful. The foundation is time itself. In this case Serrean-time. Take the temporal plane and imagine it

appropriated onto a handkerchief (*Serres, M. Latour, B, 1998: p60*). One could, for ease of familiarity, draw a grid, or line onto the handkerchief, plotting points equidistant along the line as a means to track days, weeks or years. Now imagine one is to crumple this handkerchief, one would find points from the line's 'past' meet points of the line's 'now' or 'future'. Not only does this conception of time reveal the falsity that is temporal linearity – for ancient ideas *are* still *present*, as I will show – it also conveys the nonlinear dynamics of Serres.

In the act of crumpling, a rigid linear *system* is transformed into that which can now touch, meet and share data with parts of the 'system' further than one 'step' backwards or forwards. Of course, in the case of the handkerchief in relation to time, there is no physical sharing going on, there is no literal material time-travel. The crumpling of the handkerchief is a Deleuzian moment of historic-cultural warping, wherein traditional linearity is found archaic, and in specific reference to Serres' utilization of such a temporal conception, we find that which we *now* call fluid systems or atomic physics has *always* been upon the handkerchief in another form, under another name, previously Atomism, or more specifically Lucretian Atomism. Lucretius arrives from the past riding a Serresean handkerchief crumple, allowing the nonlinear dynamics of the ancients to infect the future. And so from this *act* of crumpling one understands that "*There is nothing new under the sun.*" (*Serres, M. Latour, B, 1998: p93*) only retro-temporal discoveries.

This nonlinear temporality is *with* or *under* Serres at all times and as this essay deals directly with Atomism and flat planes intended for temporal crumpling, one needed to expand upon this re-conceptualizing of time before moving forward. For if at a foundational level there can be some form of temporal transition, then movement, line, becoming and space are all inherently altered. Keep the potential for crumpling at the forefront at all times, even the dullest of historical islands may find new life via a crumple transition.

There is one specific philo-scientific crumple I wish to discuss in-depth, the aforementioned Atomism, specifically of the variety shared by both Serres and Deleuze & Guattari, Lucretian Atomism. An ancient physics thought

and thus *made* redundant by contemporary science and henceforth resurrected in time via new found evidence and interest within the area of nonlinear dynamics; or, compressed, the ‘ancient’ physics of Lucretius met with the ‘now’ during a temporal crumpling. In either case, the *idea* pertaining to the form of both Lucretian Atomism and atomic physics *remains*. A Deleuzian moment wherein the ideas *of* the ‘future’ were *already* within the culture of the future, waiting for their chance for materialist assimilation, waiting for two distant points on the handkerchief to meet. The specifics of Lucretian Atomism in its ‘original’ state are relatively simple, a few interconnecting parts and intensities creating a process culminating in compound realities. Yet, this process of Lucretian Atomism in relation to that which I wish to write about – the Serresean patchwork arising from Deleuzoguattarian space – is a little more intricate, as such, the following section is pure Atomist extrapolation as a means for latter clarification. From laminar flow through to vortex, the Lucretian process arrives.

For Lucretius everything flows, “*Everything begins with atoms falling through the void.*” (Webb, D. William, R., 2018: p4). The flow of these atoms in the void is such that each is parallel to the next, a series of symmetrical atoms falling through an infinite space, forever. This parallel atomic descent is called ‘laminar flow’. The underlying atomic reality prior to the world – this is made clear later – the recurrent element from which difference equals/becomes actuality. The question is, how does change appear within the laminar flow?

My first point of interest is the common comprehension and perception of the laminar flow, attesting to a stereotypical form of sequential order, yet this order, wherein each atoms falls to zero, this order of ‘the same’ is thus of “*non-being*” (Serres, 2018: p134) and acts as the disordered, allocated and striated plane from which can arise – at the very least – a possibility of the world (*Ibid*, p133). The growth of something *from* the void is thus ordered, the void itself is disorder. Yet for there to be a world something needs to come from the ‘non-being’ of the laminar flow, and thus there needs to be some form of difference or division within the sequential atomic parallel, and therefore a *beginning* of such a form of division. Enter the clinamen, the minimum angle of declination against the laminar flow (*Ibid*,

p25), the diagonal within and from the parallel atomic sequence and the spontaneous *breaker* of symmetry (Serres, 2006:p15). The clinamen acts as the primary agent of division, underpinning the *possibility* of a patchwork – as I will show – for the clinamen is “*transformation in general*” (Serres, 2018: p114). Acting as the ur-transformer, the clinamen is that which quasi-instantaneously begins a chemical reaction, and is that which over the course of a thousand years leads to erosion of a coastline.

The clinamen is only the initial part of the multi-stage process which ends in the formation of things (*Ibid*, p50). Alongside acting as ur-divider, the clinamen is “*the smallest imaginable condition for the original formation of turbulence*” (*Ibid*, p24). The pre-condition of turbulence as it were. To understand turbulence one must return to the laminar flow as seen as a river or stream. A river descending wherein both its periphery and centre follow the same path, that is until a peripheral trembling begins, or in the words of Lucretius “*tremencia flutant*”, ‘*trembling thy undulate*’ (*Ibid*, p61). And it is this ‘trembling’ which is seen by Serres as turbulence, an intense halt within the rivers’ flow, stability within the ever-descending instability of the stream (*Ibid*, p61). Turbulence, a point on Serres’ handkerchief begins to form, begins to darken, begins to stabilise in its ability as temporal transmitter...a historic-cultural point *begins*, for “*time is the fluctuation of turbulences*” (*Ibid*, p115).

To return to turbulence as it is atomically. The wish of Atomism and physics in general is to understand how order comes from disorder, how, to utilize the Serresean tongue, a single sublime form may arise from the general background of noise or static (Serres, 2008: p51-55). The *transition* from the disorder of the laminar’s atomic chaos to the order of formed things begins with turbulence; it is a transition both acting *as* turbulence and made possible *by* turbulence. (Serres, 2018: p47). The clinamen declines into the flow causing an inception of turbulence (*Ibid*, p25), which in turn “*secures the transition*” (*Ibid*, p47) and a point in the flow begins to tremble. From this ‘tremencia’ “*it preserves the forms*” (*Ibid*, p61). Against the ever flowing laminar decline, against atomic chaos, turbulence acts as a temporary island of stability, a form of transition in the river’s flow, a form amongst a multitude of others. Not sequential, systematic nor symmetrical in their becoming, only spontaneous, “*appearing stochastically*” (*Ibid*,

p25). Each separate turbulence born via its own repulsion of another, “*born from deviation*” (*Ibid*, p114).

Random scattered turbulent stabilities within the flow form a pseudo-coherent system when viewed from a single turbulence’s birth in relation to another’s fall, or when viewed from ‘first’ to ‘last’ to arrive across the tempo-spacial length of a human life. As such they’re often referred to as ‘history’, which in the intelligent materialism of Serres acts as nothing but the stochastic collection of intense impermanent spacio-temporal unstabilities (*Lezra, J. (ed.). Blake, L. (ed.), 2016: p28*). As with the clinamen, these stabilities stolen from the process as a whole become disconnected, cogs without reception, if only one could maintain each element atop one another simultaneously, an un-halting all-at-once proclamation is the only route to traditional articulation of the Serresean multiplicity.

Yet all of the process thus far has been nothing but transition. Turbulence as transition *to* that which *is* the ‘stage’ able to form things (*Serres, 2018:p50*), to the tourbillon or vortex (*Ibid, p49*). To think of a ‘children’s top’, spinning top or rhombus (*Ibid, p50*), for that is the image of the vortex: “*unstable and stable, is fluctuating and in equilibrium, is order and disorder at once.*” (*Ibid, p50*) the most stable of instabilities momentarily printed onto the handkerchief of time, for the vortex is “*the formation of things*” (*Ibid, p50*) and is thus that which we materially interact with. Born from a hierarchic process of instability: laminar, clinamen, turbulence, vortex, each more stable than the last, yet all temporally mortal and destined once again to deteriorate to zero (*Ibid, p41*). Each further stage a greater layer of stability atop the laminar flow, concluding in the tangible vortex sitting in the world, a conjoiner of atoms, a stable-unstable safe haven from the cosmic atomic horror of Atomism. “*Rotating, translating, falling, leaning and swaying.*” (*Ibid, p49*), the spinning top of the Lucretian atomist idea itself has remained a stable-instability for thousands of years, its velocity slowly dwindling until the 17th century, wherein the spinning top traversed a crumple in the handkerchief of time, allowing it to superimpose its image upon the minds of Galilei, Descartes and Gassendi, wherein the vortex was rejuvenated.

This extrapolation of Serres' reading of Lucretius will, for now, seem lonesome and without relation to anything tangible. Yet this preliminary framework is necessary for a full understanding of that which is to be undertaken later. The Atomism of Lucretius and the Serresean crumpling of time spills, connects and overflows into much, if not all of the patchwork-structure to come.

Deleuzoguattarian Space in Relation to Lucretius

With Lucretian Atomism established as Serres' atomically recurrent reality (*Lezra, J. (ed.). Blake, L. (ed.), 2016: p28*), the question remains as to what arises from the turbulent birth, what is it in actuality the Lucretian process forms as its conclusion? Wherein does one find the formed thing which is brought forth by the vortex? Following the process through from laminar flow to vortex I intend to answer the question – along with the questions above – what of the 'space' unto which the vortex forms its things? For initial answers to these questions I turn to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, for both Serres and Deleuze & Guattari both take their philosophical trajectory – in part – from the writings of Lucretius, especially in relation to where space and flow are concerned. And so in terms of utilizing a theoretical reading of space which can be appropriated onto the later patchwork for need of physical becoming, I look to 'the smooth and the striated'.

Deleuzoguattarian space of the duality, or more aptly plurality 'smooth and striated' is much akin to the Lucretian duality of matter and void, one immediately finds that a simple opposition between two parts leads to a complex difference in relation to wherein each coincides, that is, the simple opposition of two camps brings forth a multiplicity of relations. The conceptual pair move quickly away from geometrical ideas of space in relation to material, borders and enclosures and towards a "*complex mixture between nomadic forces and sedentary captures*" (*Lysen, F. Pisters, P., 2012*), these Deleuzoguattarian spaces are less – if at all – spaces of tradition, but spaces within which events and movements can happen and the type, intensity and relation of events and movements *to* the space is key in determining the space's own type of either 'smooth' or 'striated'.

As I have stated smooth and striated space “*exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p552) and so a definition of one is reliant upon the other, the task of description itself an intertwined nonlinearity. However, I shall begin with the smooth alone, until mixture is mandatory for articulation. “*Smooth does not mean homogeneous, quite the contrary: it is amorphous, non-formal space prefiguring op-art*” (Ibid, p554). Smooth space is of events and haecceities (Ibid, p557), directions rather than metrics or dimensions (Ibid, p 556). Striated space on the other hand, is a space in which empires occur (Ibid, p575), a momentary stability much akin to turbulence, for on either side of the striated is the smooth, one side waiting to once again produce striation, the other the smoothness striation becomes; the perpetual transition of one into the other, yet only striation allows a compound reality to occur.

A simple metaphor allows greater clarity in understanding the notions of smooth and striated space in relation to the Lucretian process, the metaphor of the farmer and the nomad (Ibid, p559). The farm and the farmer exist in a closed off, allocated striated space. A space which is a line or shape between points, a stability within chaos (Ibid, p559), each seed a clinamen of its own. The nomad on the other hand is entirely unallocated in its existence, a point between lines, over boundaries, allowing the plot & grid, the natural and the cosmos to pull him to and fro. “*The respective role of point, line and space*” (Ibid, p560) matters not when the point in question acts upon the whim of intensities, allowing wind – as an example – to control the point’s direction.

However, both spaces in relation to the Lucretian process reveal the strange peculiarities of both the smooth and the striated. For even though Serres attests that turbulence brings order from disorder, with said disorder being the laminar flow itself, the laminar flow is in fact a space of striation, which is a space of order and allotment. For the symmetrical atomic repetitive space has been succinctly allocated and allotted. The homogeneity of the laminar flow attests to the fact that the flow itself is the tightest striation of all – atomically regular intersections make it pure limit-form (Ibid, p566) – this is why Serres places much emphasis on the relation between the

clinamen and freedom. Not only is the clinamen an escape from a limit, but it is the birth of all possibility after the recurrent atomic cage. “- *the clinamen appears as freedom because it is precisely this turbulence that resists forced flow*” (Serres, 2018: p107) the clinamen not just as a chaotic break for the sake of symmetrical-breaking, but the angle deviates in the direction of a spontaneous freedom, it begins the journey “*From pure to applied*” (Serres, 2006: p15).

The striated fabric exists in a tight, interwoven manner, a fabric allocated and allotted to become a place for the formation of things within axis (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p552), a place of archetypal, physical progress. For “-*progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space*” (Ibid, p564). So, perhaps we must say that all progress is made within and from the vortex, but all becoming occurs between the clinamen and turbulence – order *from* chaos, not the reverse as it seems at first glance. The transition of turbulence is the *transition* of smooth to striated. For one begins with the pure cosmic limit-form (Ibid, p566) of the laminar flow, tight, recurrent striation allocated between successive points, descending eternally. The clinamen comes forth, an atomically smooth nomad deviating across the laminar’s striated totalitarian farmland, no longer allowing itself to be hemmed in, it takes up the angle of direction and in its revolutionary act literally draws smooth space upon the direction taken (Ibid, p433).

Acting as the “*shorthand for nonlinear dynamics*” (Abbas, N. (ed.), 2008: p51) the clinamen is that which begins – from its nomadic drawing of smooth space/declination – the process of interweaving, fragmenting, tearing and axis producing whilst simultaneously allowing the growth of temporary points of turbulence atop the Serresean handkerchief. With its inherent attribute of bifurcation and division it acts as the messenger of smooth space, “*that smooth space that changes in nature when it divides*” (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p 563), the clinamen as division’s pre-condition and its intensification of turbulence-becoming-vortex; the clinamen as the messenger of temporal and spacial fragmentation and freedom. And yet this atomic nomad is but the pre-condition for *another* authoritarian allocation. For the clinamen intensifies into turbulence and the transition from smooth to striated begins, the turbulence-becoming-

spinning-top intensifies further into a vortex for a final allocation of vortex-striated. With the vortex or space of striation becoming a “*central perspective*” (*Ibid*, p574) upon the global and temporal topology to come.

Beneath both Serres and Deleuze and Guattari is *De rerum natura*, is an ever-flowing, ever-intersecting and interweaving postulation of freedom, not just within the reductive confines of man, but at the atomic level. A nonlinear uncertain world, making and not-making decisions and from such a text, from such a conceptualization and conclusion comes the possibility of an interwoven reality. Separate atomic retirements existing away from the void within a topological patchwork of their *own* creation.

Towards a Serreanean Patchwork

My direction for a Serreanean patchwork takes its trajectory primarily from the preface of Serres’ *The Troubadour of Knowledge* and as such, this is where I shall begin and return to for need of topological clarity. We begin with an emperor on stage, ridiculed by the crowd for his clothing, “*A motley composite made of pieces, of rage, of scraps of every size. In a thousand forms and different colours, of varying ages, from different sources, badly basted, inharmoniously juxtaposed, with no attention paid to proximity, mended according to circumstance, according to need, accident and contingency – does it show a kind of world map.*” (*Serres*, 2006: piii), in short the emperor is “*enveloped in a world map of badly bracketed multiplicities*” (*Ibid*, pii) It is this ‘world map’, this topological ‘mosaic’ (*Ibid*, p155) I wish to explore, not the epistemological connection to the emperor, nor the dry satire of power, no, one intends to assess the becoming of the enveloping patchwork. For the plurality of a mosaic is the proposition of a puzzle (*Ibid*, p154), a puzzle to be worked out away from archaic monism and centrality. The puzzle itself is of the Serreanean vein and thus becomes within and from the Lucretian process. The Emperor’s patchwork a world map and allegory of spacio-temporal difference, and so, I view the potentiality for a triple layered actuality: Lucretian Atomism, Deleuzoguattarian space and Serreanean topology flow into one another as a means for the construction of a topology.

We begin once again by assessing the foundation, the potentially flat plane that is the emperor's "*map-cum-greatcoat*" (*Ibid, pxiv*) – herein abbreviated as 'greatcoat'. A temporal and spacial plane, much akin to Serres' handkerchief, the coat folds, crumples, rips, tears and bundles together, a metaphorical spacio-temporal and cultural map of ragged, patched history crumpling up, for the emperor states "*my time has sewn them, then melded them together, tattered rags, certainly, but rags become my very flesh*" (*Ibid, p147*). Prior to this 'melding' however we have a composite, the *melded* coat is of personal attribution, each *melded* composite is *of* and *for* a single being, yet what of the *composite*, the coat *prior* to the 'incandescent assimilation' (*Ibid, pxviii*) into unification, what is the nature of the non-unified composite? The patchwork material *without* owner? And yet to focus on the singular perception of the patchwork unified/melded, one finds "*the sum of these individually experienced perceptions creates a global topology that has no common language because it is composed entirely of subjectively gleaned information*" (*Lee, C, T., 2014: p195-196*) and so even though 'one' has a sum experience, the underlying dynamic is still at question. The patchwork exists with or without an *owner*; the global topology of rags and tatters continues to assimilate and flow whether or not a unity of personal relations is found.

A construction mirroring the Lucretian process must too begin with a laminar flow, a foundational layer, the greatcoat's own fabric. A fabric which "*intertwines in this way: over, under*" (*Serres, 2006: p20*) akin to the Deleuzoguattarian intertwining of the horizontal and vertical. The fabric-qua-laminar-flow is the metaphorical embodiment of sequential limit-form, a greatcoat of striation allocated as world-space for the progress of the Lucretian process. Yet the greatcoat exists in a paradox. For acting as laminar flow the greatcoat ceases to materially exist if it is without stray threads, rags, tatters or patches, without the becoming of atomic-difference within its striated-eternal-sewing, the greatcoat simply remains a parallel void of non-being and thus materially ceases. It is not until a nomadic thread divides the fabric that a world may possibly be born. That a single patch may arise from its cloth.

To move from the laminar layer of fabric to the singular parts of the greatcoat: A rag, a tatter, a scrap or more aptly, a patch; "*local patches*

activated or created by contact and brought together into an ocellated fragment” occupying volume and expanding into the global (Serres, 2017: p140). A patch as the shadow of a fingerprint within a topology, within a bouquet, a patch as a single momentary turbulence pulled inwards towards other fragments, to form an un-analysable mingle (Ibid, p172). The singular patch as a state of momentary turbulence entering into an “*intelligent materialism*” which “*considers the world a network of primordial elements in communication*” (Abbas, N. (ed.). 2008: p65). The stochastic repulsion of turbulences and thus patches (Serres, 2018: p114) creates in its wake an immanent network, a birthing of difference, actualized into the formation of multiple patches (or a patchwork), each their own mixture of smooth and striated *within* a vortex-qua-striation, a space trembling vortically until its declination back to zero.

These singular patches, these “*Knotted points*” in the fabric (Ibid, p150), working at the intersection of many other patches (Serres, 2006: pxvii) become the greatcoat-qua-patchwork. A temporally-crumpling plane, a “*combinatory topology in the literal sense*” (Serres, 2018: p122) and a cybernetic combination of chemistry and contemporary physics (Ibid, p147), alongside being “*-the birth of things – the fundamental mode of existence of all things*” (Ibid, p122) and so “*the angle of the atom*” i.e. the *clinamen*, is not just ‘the freedom of the subject’ (Ibid, p27) as Serres states, but truly is freedom in the purest sense, away from political, geographical and metaphysical tyranny. As I previously made clear, the Lucretian process is in part synonymous with the transition of smooth to striated space and as such allows for the becoming of a space wherein cities or empires may occur (Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p575). The greatcoat-qua-laminar as world map, is atomically indebted to the Lucretian process and thus assimilates the same process onto its own periphery, therefore, to return to the *clinamen*, we find our single revolutionary atom has transformed into the physical embodiment of a patchwork-becoming; a *clinamen-qua-nomad* cuts through longitude and latitude, slicing the grid of striation, following the process through, until, atop the greatcoats’ periphery we find a vortex-becoming-city, the birth of a patch. This is how the atomic language allows us to become master. (Serres, 2006: p48)

Not a master of *the* centre, for a universal centre only exists for a single emperor – hence the never ceasing laughter of the public (*Ibid, p xv*)-, but the master of a patch or *single* centre, or unified composite of patches, for “*you need a cross to locate the a centre*” (*Ibid, p18*) and as such any idea of subjective centrality implies a composite of interlacing patches. Not a point on a line, nor a line between points (*Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p 559*) but a mixture of both systems, wherein the former point *on a line* is a nomad-qua-clinamen bifurcating the stable line-qua-relation of the latter *line between points*, the points of which are vortex-qua-striation, a quasi-chaotic process which gives birth to “*a topology of interlacings, a hydrology of what flows through the network*” (*Serres, 2018: p72*) And so each crossing, – not perpendicular, but sporadic – each line between points is additional communication within the global topology of subjective relations. And so “*the world is only laminar flux*” (*Ibid, p79*) the perpetual order from atomic disorder, birthing into lines between points, birthing into smooth spaces *from* the *clinamen*, the nomadic clinamen intensifying/drawing smooth space *from* the greatcoats’ laminar fabric and following the process forward into *further* spaces of striation, striated vortexes, which are allocated patches of striation upon the world and as such *potential empires* (*Deleuze, G. Guattari, F, 2016: p 575*). Each of which flows in relation to that which it previously deviated from, a topology. A topology atop the temporal handkerchief, each patch a historic-cultural stability with the potential for the metaphorical warp, the temporal superimposing. The greatcoat temporally crumpled, ripped and torn, nomadically sliced, divided and transformed, approximately striated, allocated and allotted, topologically connected, related and interwoven. Or put *very* simply “*The world is a multiplicity of flows inclined in relation to others*” (*Serres, 2018: p79*).

One now views the greatcoat and finds it true that “*existence is topological rather than geometrical*” (*Herzogenrath, B. (ed.). 2012: p44*). The greatcoat-qua-world-map is a cybernetic wonder, a topological network and a geographical patchwork. All a constant mixture, patches as deviation from equilibrium on their rise *from* zero into stable vortexes – striated compound spaces -, towards their decline and deterioration back to zero. “*Knotted points occur*” in the fabric (*Serres, 2018: p150*) and are swiftly assimilated

back into the laminar flow – the dull embroidery-, a patch is a moment, it is an event within the grand greatcoat and is prey to the realities of physics and so many cease simultaneously as others may begin. The patches stagnating and disappearing when moved to the singular melded patchwork, the *owned* unification, but when moved towards a *global* topology however, rags and patches grow and die, become and decline in relation to the Lucretian process. In accordance with an intelligent nonlinear materialism.

Nonsecular or: Perturbed Over Time

You feel the greatcoat's fabric against your skin; the stagnated and complacent patches feel all too familiar, it is unification *a priori*. No one speaks of the emperor's *old* clothes, incandescent and utterly *complacent* in their assimilation, each rag, tatter and patch heralding a part accepted. Why bother with the stage if the purpose of your theatrics is to boast a *truth*, your *own truth*. A voice from the back calls out "Cast your coat to the floor!" A patchwork wound so tight as to suffocate, each part atomically chained to the next. You cast it into the global, the threads loosen and one can finally breathe. You shed your coat and it crumples onto the floor. You walk to the back of the theatre and take up a spare seat. Surrounded by a thousand languages, bereft of commonality. Amongst the cackling of the audience you ponder what's so funny, a man to your right taps you on the shoulder, directing your attention to the stage. Your vision surveys the room. Everyone's naked, their heads rocking in hysterics. You follow their line of sight to atop the staging. At first you see your old greatcoat, a greying heap slumped onto the boards. Minutes pass and you relax into the crowd. Your greatcoat livens, multiple gradients of colour wash across each patch. Your grin begins to widen. Threads begin to dive and fray, dance and duck. The greatcoat leaps from the floor, a few feet into the air, halting momentarily before finally exploding into a web of patches and tatters! Growing and shrinking, thickening and curling they dance along their threads of relation, you begin to chuckle. Until finally, materializing from the void of the stage, appearing from nowhere come a thousand separate greatcoats each retaining the singular for a mere moment before erupting into the dynamic physicality of multiplicity, a world of flows before you, a play of

interweaving. You relax into the gales of laughter as the final remnants of your old greatcoat naturalize into the frenzy.

Conclusion

In conclusion one finds that not only is the Lucretian process relevant to the formation of a Serresean patchwork, but it is in fact integral to its structure, to *the* structure of global topological construction. From the process one understands the clinamen-qua-nomad as that which acts as the pre-condition of the world. The clinamen which in relation to Deleuzoguattarian space acts too as the physical atomic embodiment of freedom against the sequential limit-form of striation. Striation-qua-laminar-flow in its universal allocation as parallel-void becomes the chaotic-nothingness of zero wherein everything *can* divide from. Division which in its spatially smooth/turbulent transition simultaneously draws smooth space *and* circuitry of relation; a stochastic bifurcation into turbulent deviation and onwards into topological communication. This process finds its physical conclusion atop Serres metaphoric patchwork-qua-world robes. The global periphery as laminar-fabric transforming via the division of a nomadic-thread which then incepts a turbulence, a knot-becoming-vortex, continuing into an unstable-stable vortical movement of multiple axis concluding in the formation of things, adhering to an intelligent materialism. Upon analysing the ‘Serresean patchwork’ one finds a process of multiplicity which in accordance with its underlying Lucretian flow is only *analysable* in its *separate* parts, but only tangible, realized and sublime in its *whole*. That is, the Lucretian vortex *must* be still spinning, for observing this patchwork changes the outcome.

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The Genealogy of Foucault's Numeric Power Structures – Man *Under* Number

Introduction

In this essay I primarily use Michel Foucault's text *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2010) to extrapolate and theorize on the socio-economic genealogy that is created after the Enlightenment. I propose that distinctive to the process of the Enlightenment was a fundamental cultural shift *towards* the assimilation of number into every facet of man's life. My task is *not* to ask 'Why?' this new numeric culture arose, nor 'Why?'. My sole task is to analyze the full economic, social and political genealogy it gives rise to in relation to man's understanding of himself. I shall note that the genealogy itself is theoretically auto-catalytic (as shown by Fig 1), as such the linearity of the essay is continually reliant on the extrapolation of a previous section. As such I have written this essay in such a way as to expound upon that which I believe to be the largest 'macro' first (the culture of number) and continued genealogically through to the smallest 'micro' (man as homo-economicus). Though there is a quasi-hierarchical relation between the influence of some parts of the genealogy upon others parts, no part can exist without any other, as such the structure of the text acts only an illusory form of cohesion in relation to that which is ceaselessly auto-catalyzing between systems, structures, institutions, temporalities, cultures and frameworks.

Man's Maturation and Enlightened Numeric Systems.

This essay's respective 'parts' form a cohesion in relation to the maturation of man [1]. This process of maturation is inherently connected to time, it is a temporal process, one *matures* over time. The key 'era' of man's maturation, in inherent distinction to others, according to Kant (Kant, 1784) was the 'dawn' of the Enlightenment. A process beginning with the 16th (Foucault, 2000, p307) century and continuing through to the early 19th. A process which has become synonymous with the arrival/birth of modernity (Ibid, p303-304, 309). The Enlightenment is a process situated *within*

history, *from* which “*Man puts his reason to use*” (Ibid, p308). To utilize his reason, his human reason as a form of exit from the authoritarian and theological structures of the Other (Ibid, p306) that dominated the thought of the subject prior. To understand the world *within* man’s own cognitive capacity, this is what is meant by critique (Ibid, p305); the Enlightenment is the dawn of anthro-limit-acceptance. The systematic modification of will, authority and reason (Ibid, p305) that takes place within the Enlightenment is a distinctly temporal form of maturation – “*because illumination takes time*” (Land, 2013), linked to an ongoing histo-cultural process. Epistemologically locked to the changes taking place within said process. There was a darkness and calculation – as I will show – lead man to the En(Light)enment. The grammatical focus on the singular notion of *an* Enlightenment confusingly removes it from its true nature as process, a process *within* a larger process of techno-capital which it helps/allows to birth. Inherent to the system of the Enlightenment is a historical and numerical overlap which allows man to fully mature, the historical and systematic roots of which I shall now begin to pull up.

To state that the process of the Enlightenment is at its core historically and culturally mathematical would be *the* understatement, with regard to not only history, but to man’s nature and ‘nature’ in general – as I shall show further on. The proto-process of the Enlightenment begins much earlier than the 16th century, Crosby notes the process begins – less systematically – in the 13th century (Crosby, 1996). Yet full scale numeric-cultural assimilation of which is the focus of this essay doesn’t arrive until the 16th century. From then on its arrival is so militaristic one wonders where numbers do *not* pry: Military textbooks (Ibid, p6), mathematical clocks (Ibid, p19), abacus’ (Ibid, p112), roman numerals (Ibid, p115), Mercantilism (Porter,T,M, 1986, p20), Malthusianism (Ibid, p26), Victorian social policy (Ibid, p30-31), standardization of measurements and time (Porter,T,M, 1996. p29, 93, 207, 224). The physics of Kepler, Galileo, Descartes and Newton, Stevin’s decimalist fractions (1585), Napier’s logarithms (1614), Fermat (1636) and Descartes’ (1637) geometry, Leibniz (1684) and Newton’s (1687) calculus and so on (see secondary bibliography on Enlightenment texts). As I previously stated in the introduction, my task is not to theorize the *how* or *why* the numeric cultural methods became so

prevalent *within* the process of the Enlightenment, but to ask *what* these *new* numeric methods/attitudes *do* to man, how they *alter* man. What happens to the ‘homo sapiens’ when systematically introduced to number. That of man’s maturation *under* number? For a thorough analysis of this I turn to Foucault’s *Birth of Biopolitics* (2010).

A continually self-aggrandizing numeric process/culture which begins and succeeds in applying *and* parasitically assimilating number, math, calculation and quantification onto and *into* every facet of society. Number and limit convert man’s most basic and fundamental actions *from* subject oriented actions of the ‘immature’ self *into* economic possibilities: growth, gain, loss, limit, production and profit etc. The aforementioned numeric and mathematical events taking place within the Enlightenment convert society into a culture of the abacus, of ones and zeroes, pluses and minuses, controlled by chronic, linear time; “Modernity is often situated on a calendar” (Foucault, M, 2000. p309) notes Foucault and yet one struggles to rigorously select the dates unto which we can say ‘modernity’ *precisely* takes place. However, one can say that without modernity calendars cease existence, at least in our current systematic understanding of them. Calendric culture is modernity, a grid-like structure atop the world locking culture into smaller and smaller parcels and units of time. The calendar is *the* metaphor for modernity, a thorough process of temporal atomization unto which one can easily control the minute boxes are produced from it. A time *built* for control, *from* mathematical means of control. Firstly, the newfound numeric culture must assimilate into the ‘macro’ as a means to alter the ‘micro’; society first, only *then* to man.

Assimilating the Attitude of Modernity into Society

The numeric attitude of modernity aforementioned, complete with its assimilation of reasoned, mature, calculable limit into every facet of life shall forthwith be called ‘the attitude of modernity’. This attitude – for reasons I expand upon later – exists everywhere, and so, to get to the question of this essay, namely ‘man’, I must follow the constitutive parts of a numeric genealogy which begin their journey as the formation/creation of the synonymy of society and economy, and from there onward affect man more directly and purposefully. Yet one must extrapolate on that which man

is *within* and in some sense being molded *by* before attending to the singular unit of man himself, he exists roughly at the ‘end’ of a genealogy: Number, economy, state and finally man.

Once the attitude of modernity infects society the *task* of society fundamentally changes, due to its newfound utilization and reliance on number and thus numeric/economic systems. This newfound *raison d’Etat* has at its core a critique of the ‘art of governance’ inherently connected with number (Foucault, M, 2010. p6), for the understanding of ‘limit’ is not possible without a coherent ‘lesser’ or ‘greater’, a mode of thinking made available by number. As such government begins to understand itself in relation to its own limitations and precisely because of this self-understanding it can begin to place itself within and enter into competitive frameworks, as well as this government also begins to understand its own internal limits and begins to regulate where it deems fit. Both the external mode of competition and internal mode of regulation are made possible by alterations both in communal/societal understanding of limit via numeric education and nature (later). This *raison D’etat* which takes the form of “internal limitation of governmental reason” (Ibid, p13) – or perhaps, ‘the maturation of government’ – is made possible by the arrival of ‘political economy’ (itself arriving synchronously with the numeric attitude) – “a method of government that can procure the nation’s prosperity” (Ibid, p13). Political economy in its mutual utilization of the attitude of modernity acts as governmental reflection (which was previously based upon morals, theology or law) ground down to ones and zeros, positives and negatives of wealth, value and capital (Ibid, p15). From this form of epistemological and governmental legitimacy wherein profit is ‘correct’ (Ibid, p14) “the economy produces the legitimacy of the state – the economy creates public law” (Ibid, p84), for law need only be tailored towards – the same now for everything else in society – the growth of the economy in relation to the nation. And so there is a ‘permanent genealogy of the state from the economic institution” (Ibid, p84) the actions of society become the actions *for* the growth of the economy and so *succinctly*, society becomes equal to economy.

To continue with this exposition of genealogy in the direction of man I must reach back to where I began. The attitude of modernity makes the society

within its clutches understand itself in relation to its *own* attitude and epistemological legitimization of economic growth. All that is macro (society & state) or micro (man) is assimilated into the controlled signification of society now synonymous with economy, as noted by Foucault:

“The economy produces political signs that enable structures, mechanisms of justification and power to function – the free market, the economically free-market, binds and manifests political bonds.” (Ibid, p85).

This form of economic positive-feedback-loop creation is genealogically bound to the economy – the creation itself made possible by the maturation of man. The positive feedback loop of the economy is reliant on material agents who understand and make intelligible its system (men) to feed its growth-directed abacus. Man’s economic choices within this economic loop compound into a single choice, *the choice for* the continuation of the economy beneath him. This is the only societal choice if one is to utilize the logic expounded previously: A nation’s prosperity is in relation to the growth of the economy, arguably the average man wishes for the betterment of his nation and in turn himself (*from* his nation), as such the purpose of man – survival, betterment, wellbeing[2] – becomes equal to attending to and helping the economic growth of the/his state/nation. For what now exists outside of the economy is now also outside of society and as such struggles, due to lack of institutional support networks, to survive. Man’s remaining options are to attend to the expansion of the economy or beg for scraps external to all systems. The attitude of modernity is a parasite infecting both at an individual and social level as to legitimize growth-as-wellbeing via intelligible mechanisms, and so, for man to improve his wellbeing he understands via signification produced by the economy that he must improve the growth of the economy – his ‘purpose’ has been replaced with a clearer economic purpose, his material meaning fulfilled, but what of his nature?

Nature and Political Economy

Political economy has arrived, as such the fundamental notions of nature, society and economy and man have changed, and so the state has inherently

altered and modified into a system that mutates governmental practice into an economic entity – “Political economy [a] method of government that can procure prosperity.” (Ibid, p13). To prosper, to grow and to profit. Political economy is the numeric reflection of governmental policy via its economic effects and choices. This socio-economic abacus of political economy reveals [3] the intelligible mechanisms (Ibid, p15) of the economy. Mechanisms that once revealed can be taken by government into a loop of creation and utilization, to alter and direct *their* mode of governance in relation to a personal ideology. To chain the flow of capital towards a humanist venture. For the mechanisms cannot be avoided (Ibid, p15), and so are to be directed – which is considered by Foucault to be to the detriment of the free-market (Ibid, p116) – or are simply to be left alone, to be [a] free [market]. These mechanisms become nature via their synonymous actions *alongside* the attitude of modernity. Numeric attitudes allow such mechanisms an actuality via cultural assimilation of the *means* of understanding the mechanisms (mathematical education). This in turn assimilates into the collective engagement of society and government – “The notion of nature will thus be transformed with the appearance of political economy.” (Ibid, p15).

If we’re to take Foucault at his word when he states “Nature is something that runs under, through, and in the exercise of governmentality.” (Ibid, p16) then it follows that the reveal of political economy, and political economy itself is natural – for political economy is merely a modification of governance in relation to cultural progression maturation and alteration. There is no mutation in/of nature, we have simply revealed a further part of its form. The attitude of modernity as parasite in accordance with the political economy adheres to the previous culture of society/man and directs it via assimilation with mathematics towards a new form of natural behaviour in-keeping with the modern attitude. Number begets number via parasitic invasion of man’s being, allowing man to enter into the epistemological framework which reveres markets as signifier of truth.

Further investigation with regards to man’s ‘new’ natural reality of political economy is paramount to understanding his new being. For within man’s ‘new’ nature – now simply ‘nature’ – the *choice* of taxes at a politically economic level is a *now* simply a question of growth in relation to the state

within which that political economy exists, does doing X to Y result in growth. The competitive essence of growth quashes archaic modes of ‘right & wrong’ via the assimilation of the attitude of modernity into every facet of man’s praxis. From (new) nature man now understands his purpose in relation to growth, and so *all* his actions are to be taken and made in relation to growth. Truth, for man, now lies solely – within a free-market capitalist mode of economy – within the potential for national prosperity, itself connected to the ‘regime of truth’ (Ibid, p19) connected to government via natural signification – “the site of truth is the market” (Ibid, p30). From this complex interwoven process of maturation via number, agents, economy, state and markets arises a norm. A mode of societal and governmental normativity arises from the black unknowability of all economic processes. Man’s new mode of being – political economy *as* society aside – is to adhere/revere the normative, calculating, reasoned and epistemologically numerical economic mode of being, itself arisen from the secular domain of economy. Nature now runs through government *as* a mode of economic truth, an individual *and* collective mode of being made possible by the process of the Enlightenment’s maturation being synonymous with the assimilation of numerical attitudes into culture. This ‘mode of being’, for man, is to be ‘homo-economicus’.

Becoming Homo-Economicus

But what of ‘man’ *within* this new reality, this ‘new’ nature? He too synchronously changes alongside and with the nature of the collective. Man transforms, he modifies into ‘economic-man’, ‘human-capital’, *homo-economicus*. This modification of ‘man’ happens not only at a sociological, political and economic level, but also more fundamentally at the level of identity, at the level of his very definition. Foucault notes the history of the Latin word for man – *homo*, e.g. *homo sapiens* – during the process of the Enlightenment (Ibid, p250). During which the abstract integration of ‘man’ (*homo*) into external systems of cultural, societal and – eventually – economic relation takes place – *homo-penalitatis* & *homo-criminalitatis* are two clear examples (Ibid, p250). Throughout the process of the Enlightenment, man’s maturation, the singular subject ‘man’ loses his state as subject-as-island, separate from systems, sovereignty and economics, he begins to

become inherently integrated into the modern attitude *itself* via semantic means. A man who is a criminal is a criminal-man, a new singular semantic judgement. Yet more importantly, for not *all* men are criminals – *all* men are now, or have the capacity to *be* calculating, man's critical future neologism as homo-economicus, economic-man is locked into the modern attitude of calculation, which itself is locked into the 'new' form of nature. Man's assimilation into this new economic reality is made whole by this creation of a neologistic combination of biology and economy. The cultural integration of number infects man and makes possible his *new, inherent* tether to the economy. The process of the Enlightenment, the maturation process paves the way for his becoming-economic. If man is now to *be*, he must be economic, he must *be* homo-economicus.

“The homo-economicus sought after is not the man of exchange or man the consumer; he's the man of enterprise and production.” (Ibid, p147). However, with regard to “enterprise and production”, Foucault does not believe this fundamental shift within the subject of man makes him merely a puppet of capital, pulled by larger, unseen economic forces. It places him *within* and *of* an inescapable and unknowable whole of economics which, as atomized homo-economicus, he now *becomes* within due to to his newfound intelligible abilities in relation to economic mechanisms, themselves in relation to the political economy. Homo-economicus is entirely a becoming, a temporal length of maturation in relation to his understanding and assimilation into the numeric/economic framework. This process of assimilating the attitude of modernity *into* man begins at birth. A child is human capital (p228). It is a maturation directed at the potential for future economic output, a numeric maturation. The capital that is a 'young human/infant' is thrown into a temporal framework of limitation in relation to the epistemological legitimacy of market processes at that current *time*: Age, intelligence, investment, health, family and future possibilities all act in relation to the potential of this atomized homo-economicus to supply the state with growth. Their only other option is to de-tether from the economy and risk death.

Man, for Foucault, throughout this entire process undergoes as complex change & modification – if not more so – as state and society, due to assumptions surrounding his own being and 'subject' itself being eroded.

The new reality – nature – I previously wrote of is foremost ‘accepted’ by man, “The nature of human nature is to be historical, because the nature of human nature is to be social. There is no human nature which is separable from the very fact of society.” (Ibid, p299). Such a newfound reality/nature works upon man in way of altering the very definition of his being, modifying and directing his being *into* alternate pathways made available by number. During the maturation period – the Enlightenment – the concept of ‘man’ began its own semantic journey into critique, flirting with systems of its own creation – law, criminality and *now* economy – in ways never previously *experienced*. Viewing these systems not as *external* modifications and alterations to a (whole) self, but as internal mutations of the self *into* a *new* form of self. Man becomes criminal-man (*homo-criminalis*), and in the context of this essay man becomes economic-man (*homo-economicus*). One must understand that this *acceptance* of nature anew is man situated “in an indefinite field of immanence – linking him to a series of accidents. [See fig 1], linking him to production, to others – a doubly involuntary situation.” (Ibid, p277). Situated in a field of non-totalizable economic immanence, a field he partakes in *via* economic choice in relation to society via intelligible mechanisms, yet he only does so in an atomized manner. Such a reality is acceptance of life as an atomized conduit for Smith’s invisible hand. It is a life “in the dark [wherein] the blindness of all economic agents [men] [is] an absolute necessity.” (Ibid, p279). Foucault’s allusion to state-subject collapse in lieu of economic becoming is extreme, yet realistic in relation to man’s own limit. Man must remain blind to the totality of economic process for if he *sees* he risks vision of society as limitrophe of zero, of society & state-as-economy as teetering on top of a complex abacus of illusory numeric supports [4].

Man’s place *within* and *of* these supports is succinctly extrapolated by Foucault (Ibid, p84-85). Man is allowed by the institution – in relation to its merit *now* intelligible via number – to spend and act, simply because the institution wishes them to do so; it is in their interest to allow agents of the economy (man) freedom. It allows them *with* this freedom to state it is *right* to give them such a freedom – an epistemological loop of economic legitimization. Such actions/freedoms of man are always in relation to growth/loss etc, itself made intelligible by the epistemology of the market,

and so man's freedoms become legitimized via the regime of the market. As such, *from* the underlying epistemology of the economy via the intelligibility of the market comes the legitimization of all of man's actions in relation to production, a consensus of production is produced by that which wants production – the economy. Within this positive feedback loop of human-wellbeing assimilated into the epistemological legitimization of production man *becomes* an agent of the economic process itself, from *this* loop man *becomes* homo-economicus, he becomes a partner of exchange (Foucault, M. 2010, p226) and as such a partner in the production of economic and political consensus via political signification made possible by intelligible market processes, (Ibid, p85) in tacit relation to the continual growth of runaway capital.

There is moments wherein man attempts reversion to his previous natural 'state', where he attempts to cordon or direct the *free* market economy, often resulting in detrimental effects (Ibid, p116) – these attempts are acts of competition in relation to internal and external limits. The market is pure competition (Ibid, p121) and so acts of limitation with regard to competition are anti-free-market, to regulate the economy is to regulate truth, to regulate nature. So if the market is left alone the remaining economic representation is the epistemologically (numerically) legitimized truthful vision of societal demands and desires, or else, if regulated, it is the signifier of ideology. This form of societal signifiers is synonymous with the arrival of political economy, itself synonymous with the arrival of homo-economicus. Both forming a complex whole, the existence of which is only possible on the condition of the existence of the aforementioned economized institutional framework of the state (Ibid, p163). Their adherence to the state is adherence to historical economic attitudes, or the attitude of modernity works within an institution to materialize a numeric-based power structure.

Temporal Power Structures

And yet, the seemingly bleak future for homo-economicus is tethered to a secondary means of control which has thus far only been hinted at with regard to its importance. This means of control is more complex in a far subtler way, the means itself is simple temporality and the realities it

imposes on humans (mortality, health, productive output etc.). Yet at all junctures within both the process of maturation and the fully-fledged becoming of homo-economicus temporality is utilized by the economy via governmentality as a means for control. Before listing the simple/obvious practical means of control, I shall extrapolate on further ways in which temporality works synergistically with capital as a means of power over man. As I stated at the beginning of the essay one must not remove emphasis of the word ‘process’ in relation to maturation and the Enlightenment, this method of thinking about power must also be applied to the economy, for the economic processes unto which man is now befallen are equally forms of temporality, they are processes and at their core are actions of time. To paraphrase Foucault: the formalization of economic mechanisms and processes only exist in history (Ibid, p163) – there has to have *been* time for formalization to take place, no economy is a temporal moment/present. Not only do economic processes only exist and enact *within* history and time, but they also – within a numerical culture such as the one homo-economicus inhabits – *use* and *utilize* time as a means of control, as an economic means in itself. Foucault notes that the “economic reality of capitalism” we’re dealing with is “a singular figure in which economic processes and institutions call on each other, modify and shape each other in ceaseless reciprocity.” (Ibid, p164). Capitalism is a process of processes, “*Capital is essentially /capitals/ at war among themselves.*” – (Land, N. 2018, p1370). This ceaseless modification is ceaseless diversions of temporality attuning man’s life-cycle to a lesser or greater mode of profitability in relation to time. Each cross referenced via intelligible mechanisms to cater to its – capital’s – own impenetrable longevity. This history of ceaseless reciprocity, or history of economic histories “can only be an economic-institutional history.” (Ibid, p164). The overlooked factor in relation to the reality of man here is – surprisingly, with regard to Foucault – the temporal element. History, not only as supposed linear narrative of consistent economic growth or loss plotted upon a linear timescale, but also capital’s *utilization* of its *own* understanding of temporality used alongside and with the numeric attitude assimilated *into* man as a controller of homo-economicus. Capital utilizes temporality as a means to reinforce its fundamental social policy, growth (Ibid, p144), such a policy that is only possible via time. Capital is to utilize the temporality *of* man as a means of

productive output, as a further means towards the best possible use of resources as an even *further* means towards growth. Capital takes man's true limit and resource, time, and uses it for its own gain. Man has been systematically immanentized into the auto-catalytic schema of capital *as* human-capital, as part of the system himself, he is "one of the two partners of exchange in the process of exchange." (Ibid, p225). Once man partakes – usually unwillingly – in the attitude of modernity he *becomes* human-capital and as such becomes – a *form* of – capital. A *process in himself* to be understood and modified by capitalism. The maturation of man during the "Western economic take off in the sixteenth and seventeenth century – Was it not due precisely to the existence of an accumulation, an accelerated accumulation, of human capital?" (Ibid, p232). This was indeed a physical accumulation of human capital, but at heart it was the accumulation of contained time as an investment in mechanisms of growth. Such an accelerative effect of accumulation was directly made possible by the assimilation of all human-capital onto an economic plane via numeric education.

Without the process of maturation, inclusive of the historic/cultural integration of number into society, man's understanding of himself would have taken a drastic, unknowable turn...or perhaps he would have remained within a world wherein his understanding of his own 'time', lifespan and temporality would not coincide with number. However, the process of maturation *did* – or *had* – to arrive alongside the assimilation of mathematical education, for understanding one's own limit is not possible with a numeric spine, as such the means of control of which the economy may utilize are larger and more intrusive.

As for the physical, practical ways in which the political economy, the economy, capital controls homo-economicus... in which it creates a power structure, I turn once again to time. Hours, minutes, seconds, linear/successive time, hours worked, rate of production, productive output, clocking-in-and-out, growth, decay, profit, loss, holidays, pensions, hourly salary, yearly salary, overtime, bonuses, years of service, dividends, bonds, stocks, bankruptcy, taxes, tax breaks, distance traveled to work and pay per hour. Each of these is made societally universal via the assimilation of the attitude of modernity into every facet of life, as well as each being uniquely

connected to time via its own method of temporal control. Each of these – and *many* more – are actions of the aforementioned “ceaseless reciprocity” (Ibid, p164) of capitalism. They are modifications and alterations of the temporal lifespan of homo-economicus as a means towards greater productivity and growth. Not only does man have to *be* numeric, but his very temporal being is split, allocated and allotted as a means towards profit. The labor of profit is primarily man, and a mistake is made in relation to understanding profit as solely a monetary venture. Money is simply the signifier of the value allotted to the time worked within a particular context, by a particular human. ‘*Time is money*’ takes on literal significance in relation to money being the most common intelligible mechanism with regards to understanding growth. And so, the homo-economicus has a lifespan unique to its being, which from birth is for use *by* capital *for* capital “if capital is that which makes future income possible, then capital is inseparable from the person who possesses it.” (Ibid, p224). Under capitalism, capital makes future income possible, meaning that capital makes the future possible, for now the future cannot exist without being a continuation of the growth directed system of capitalism. The system of capitalism understands the economy in relation to homo-economicus as allotments of time, “the more we move towards an economic state, the more paradoxically the constitutional bond of civil society is weakened and the man the individual is isolated by the economic bond he has with everyone and anyone.” (Ibid, p303). The system of capitalism utilized the assimilation of number as a means to temporally atomize man into becoming an individual economic and temporal unit, perfect for utilizing with regard to exchange and production, each man their very own test-kit for capital. The attitude of modernity was thus the launch pad for capitalism to become a hegemonic, cosmic, numeric entity. Forcing men into semantic deaths of the self via institutionalized inescapable connections with the system itself. The parasitic structure of capital is such that the parasite exists in time, *with time*, and moves from host to host using *their* time – via practical, economic means – as a way to prolong its own existence, for the sake of its own existence.

Conclusion

“Capital is an abstract parasite, an insatiable vampire and zombie-maker; but the living flesh it converts into dead labor is ours, and the zombies it makes are us.” (Fisher, M. 2009, p15)

If we're to follow the genealogical thread of number through to man, one comes to the bleak conclusion expounded upon quite heavily by Fisher in *Capitalist Realism*. The process unconsciously undertaken during the Enlightenment unleashed the vampiric means of capital. Careful attention to Fisher's notion of vampiric capital however reveals one salient point, there is, supposedly, life-after-capital. You have become a zombified partner of exchange in relation to a large unknowable whole, yet you are still in control of your flesh, whether or not it is being eroded by the process of capital, used up by it. As I have shown the 'abstract parasite' of capital is so fundamentally tethered to a numeric-reality that expunging it from one's system is, in reality, a temporally gigantic task. Global educational reversion towards a world of quality, away from quantity would be the task for those who intend to detach from capital. Foucault's overlooked factor in relation to man not-becoming-capital-puppetry is his omission of the ways in which capital utilizes intelligible mechanisms as a way to justify its own reality, *as the only reality*. *“If escape into capitalism isn't the escape you want, then modern history is not for you.”* (Land, N. 2018). If the maturation process, the 'exit' Kant spoke of is inherently bound to the attitude of modernity then there is no exit from capital, there is only existence *within* its self-selected direction. The conclusion of the genealogy expounded upon by Foucault, in relation to man, is that he is free to exist *within* the flow and process of capital, he may bare his flesh only in acknowledgement of capital.

Endnotes

[1] Though the process of man's maturation with respect to Kant and Foucault could easily be deserving of its own essay, it is included here due to its unavoidability in relation to the topics discussed within and its connection throughout, as such it is expounded upon here as minorly as needs be, for this essay isn't directly concerned with the Kantian aspect of the Enlightenment's historical influence.

[2] I shall not argue the purpose or meaning of man's life here, for I am taking it as a given via *The Birth of Biopolitics* that man directs himself towards personal wellbeing.

[3] Note that throughout *The Birth of Biopolitics* Foucault uses strictly Heideggerian language – specifically ‘reveal’ – as the way in which he understands the processes of economy. If one continues this thought, it seems applicable that the natural processes of economy were there all along.

[4] “*The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.*” (Lovecraft, H.P., 2014, p381) Lovecraft's notion that pure cognitive correlation is horrifically synonymous with the place in which man himself with regards to the reality of economic position, for him to *see* the ‘whole’ of the economy, is for him to correlate existence and time.

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