

I AM NOT CHUANG  
MY NAME IS  
RIDICOLOSAMENTE



THE CURSE US

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My name  
is  
Ridicolosamente

by

frère dupont

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## Introduction

# for Karen

*I perceived the phylogons and the fact that nothing that is past truly ceases to be, but, rather, is added to progressively; accretional layers are laid down, becoming ever more reticulate and arborized. This is the main discovery, this permanence of past and present reality - hence all reality. Flux only adds, it does not take away.*

*M- The Exegesis*

*What affects me most powerfully: mourning in layers - a kind of sclerosis.*

*- Mourning Diary*

*I realised in a flash that these phrases which I had pronounced (out of all those that could have been chosen, with diabolical malice, by persons anxious to do me harm) were the only ones that could result in making him abandon his intention to give me the help that I had asked of him.*

*- Within a Budding Grove*

The significance of every particular is set at the level of what it is caught in. This thing is important to the measure it draws along, and is drawn along by, the tangle of its involvements. As a thing fork'd in itself, naked in its own outline, at the level of the integrity it expresses in the audacity of its becoming distinct, in its sense of its own moral standing, in its commitment to the cause, in this sort of register, it is worth nothing, it is irrelevant. Whether you wash your hands or wear a face-mask, whether your opinions are racist, or what you think of cops, none of that makes a difference - objects are significant only as evidence of the mechanism that they realise.

Things matter to the degree that they illuminate *general usage* as it functions beyond, and separates from, the thing's discrete use-value. What I am or might be means nothing. Fire left engine! And what opinions I hold mean nothing. Fire right engine! But what I am involved in, what I am an agent of, is decomposition, so the use I am put to, the tendency I am caught in, is another kettle of fish entirely. Fire left engine! But all I have to go on is this account of myself, I am the half life. Fire right engine! I have no content but the voided content. And like the scarabaeinae, I am coprophagous. I navigate amongst the concentrates of the 64 volatile chemical compounds that comprise the dung plume!

Now then, now then. So, then, there is no devilry as interesting as the devilry of private interest mobilising whatever it might drag along with it through its proprietorial hoop *in the name of* the common good. So then, now then, so then, like a madman stumbling in the graveyard, my antennae consumed by beetle intent, whilst I search absurdly for an adequate form for my repudiation of agreement and common cause. I am looking for non-identity as a pivot for a better life. I am looking for a manner of disagreement, for unhappiness in disjunction, but which is not vendetta, but which, even so, would pattern how to live together, but without recourse to conventional policies of *toleration of difference*. Fire left engine.

So then, but the dung plume of my rotting self but I am *invested in* the how of opposition to the cause of justice, how it could be caused to appear in the world, but in something like the manner that the

cause of *Jus post bellum* appears there, as a concluding postscriptive shake of hands, but no strings attached to the inevitable casualties. Fire left engine. I assume humans are bad, and not improvable. Fire right engine. I am looking for a way of best including their contemptible self-destructiveness within the project that seeks to prevent them destroying everything.

I want no no borders but I want all borders, I want no territory with that. Fire right engine. I want the faultline in the exegetical sedimentary strata. Fire left engine. I want what is curdled as a mirror to what this is. Fire right engine. I want the thing separated from the flux, twisting before my very eyes, and stark like a laxative saturated bowel. Fire left engine. I am another dysphoria. Fire right engine. I am disgusted with my self. Fire left engine. But I observe its logic in *parallel* beside me. Fire left left engine. I dissociate. Fire right engine. If you hide the marionette, then show the marionettist!

I am not sure what I am doing, nor why, nor how to go about it. I don't know what this is. I am guided by a sort of instinct, I have set my compass by the dung plume, and I add to the midden what I think *fits*, but I am not sure on what principle the arrangement is based. There is an impulse in it to manifest against *politics*. The frames through which political ideas and priorities and causes must appear, even where they are nominally emancipatory, are crushing. Yes, crushing but also false, not true to process and not true to consciousness. I am like the climbing beanstalk, my tendrils desire to close around the verticals - but there is nothing there, nothing to support me, there are only the representations and framings of attenuated political discourse, there is milieulessness, there is only what Chuang calls *portrayal*.

How then, now then, now then, so then, might the actuality of the world, its operations, be engaged if not through politics? I wonder, if we were to get to the bottom of it all, and whether perhaps, it would be a good idea now to scatter across the surface of our texts the metastatic catchphrases of disgraced 1970's light entertainers, as roses on a coffin? In the absence of an adequate discursive register, and the relations that it implies, the tendrils grow longer, the specula-

tion on the nature of the necessary content reaches out, inches out, ever further.

The absolute absence of communism from mass consciousness, and from the communist milieu itself, induces a rising spiral of uncertainty: what is it, where will it come from, how will it be recognised? A sort of unspooling, a sort of unravelling, a sort decaying. That is where we are, that is what I am - something unsustainable and unrealisable, something Godot-like, reaching the point where it sees at last how it has been given up on and, in the metabolising of its having been already relinquished, coming to the end of itself. Saddam's observation on the disciplinary function of impoverishment is never not applicable: starve a dog and it will follow you.

For reason of the missing objective content, I still present my error as an approximation - it stands in the place, and draws in the orientation references, of what should already be there but which has been lost, or suppressed. An inverse relationship is theorised between bower complexity and the bower bird's brightness of plumage - there may be an evolutionary "transfer" of ornamentation in some species, from their plumage to their bowers, in order to reduce the visibility of the male, and thereby its vulnerability to predation.

In a similar way, the absence of what is looked for induces the same *transfers* in the ornamentation of the search: variations in the elaboration of form indicate a greater or lesser distance to god. In a similar way, the closer we get to something real, the less ornamented will be our involvement in it - subjective compensatory experiment becomes unnecessary in circumstances that are themselves *unprecedented*. Simple note-taking suffices during revolutionary events.

We are now very far from what is real, so there is inevitably a kind of dredging in our efforts, but also a lacquering - we scour through the laminations, and also observe the sedimentary process in action, the phylogons becoming ever more reticulate and arborized. I have heard that when Munch became frustrated with a painting he would throw it from the window - but when he saw how rain altered the substance of the paint, he was so delighted that it became part of the ritual; soon, he was casting paintings out of the window *in anticipa-*

*tion* as would a fly fisherman whipping his line, the lure and its hook over the surface of the East Dart at Wallabrook.

The same informant told me Picasso's favourite painters were Velazquez, Goya and Rembrandt, and there is only one reason for noting his influences, and it is not because we desire to use multi-standpoint perspective within a flattened surface; no, it is to situate Picasso in a distinct genealogy. In a similar way, I like Montaigne and I only tell you that because I cannot write as he did. Sure, I begin with a conventional enough observational piece but that's just the base layer - then I am driven to throw gravel at it, and drizzle corrosive reagents over its surface.

The text's formal distress, as it decays in the moment of its formation, like the phenomenon in roses that is called *balling*, its clenching, spasm, and mourning for the coherence of what is lost from it, becomes its second content, and also where I live now. I am drawn to paratrepsis and monosandalism as strategies in writing, I am trying to find other contents that will give a first impression of their being burdensome or weak, but which on double take turn out to be organised around another lightness, another strength, and so extend as another register in the life-world. Then, shall we tend towards what is over-lain, the neg-gilded, buried and excavated, scoured and lacquered, the found object found? Is that the use we are being put to? I am sorting through the fragments - I belong to the beaker people, for me the vessel has no worth but as the source of shards that in turn imply my disappearance.

For the reason of the broken, I am aesthetically, and politically, appreciative of Amber Turd's work in Johnny Depp's bed. It is right. It is eloquent. It is just so. And it is moral. It should be plinched in Bristol. She is like Philip E. Marlow who framed Mark Binney for defecating on teacher's desk - dung is never an insult, whether it is intended as such or not, but where it signifies at all it expresses the desire of a subordinate to appease an authority - it is, in the sense of *Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, the original gift, and all other gifts derive from it. One does not give but to power, and the ambivalence of the giver (the



negotiation around the mutual vulnerability and exertion of control that *gifting* opens up) expresses an imbalance within the relation, which may also be mirrored in the reciprocal gift made by the other, as in a more nuanced version of complementary schismogenesis. I'm not joking!

The unexpected gift is disruptive of the scene because it expresses and illuminates the nature of the involvements situated there - certainly, we prefer not to be a little confronted with the turd-modality of our personal entanglements, we do not wish to be thrown back upon exactly what we are, as the turd form so succinctly expresses it, and so, in compensation, and by climbing the walls, we develop our evasive cultural repertoire which, in a sense, remains tethered, and mediated through, the displacement of those most profane of products. If suicide bombers, and other heroic martyrs, had not so politely interiorised the lessons of their masters, then they too could have expressed themselves as *directly* as Amber Turd, and thus saved everyone all the trouble that they caused. I'm telling you this because I don't want to make their mistake - I don't want to make sacrifices for the cause. I want to head in the opposite direction. And to that end, I make this, my contribution to communism. I'm not joking! My every interruption, misstep, error, is another little present to the revolution. No, I am joking. No, I'm serious!

And the writing that has congealed here, all clogged and cloacal, is but a concluding post-script to, and a digression upon, neo-reaction that is written as a contribution to the work of communism. Let's put it another way, this matter I present here comes from neo-reaction, but it is made for communism. From the moment the communist milieu gave up the negative and bought big into the digital network's circulation of the left's fixed moral categories, the negative's only path into consciousness has been through neo-reaction. The materials it has extracted from the spoil heap thrown up, as neo-liberalism's left wing merely burrows deeper into the apparat, are the rare earth elements necessary to continue the critique of Totality. What Neo-reaction makes available to the community of capital must be seized upon, not denounced, by those seeking to escape it. So then - *enemies* and their fuel. What is it that they run on?

The left operates on the principle that reality is motivated by its self-perfection. It imagines that those who read are open to persuasion by the orthopedically true - the greater the number of readers, the greater the number of potential leftists. But reading is not the internalisation of and adaptation to textual messages - there is no conviction, there is never a motivation to be found in the text. Reading is a mechanism integrated into the general process of energy transfers and conversions. It is the excitation necessary to move the dung ball of the soul between its states - it is not persuaded by right arguments, it is either electrified, or it is *turned off*. Or, more likely, the tedium is punctuated with outbursts of room pacing and hands rubbing. Writing is not an appeal, it is a record of the energy drawn from the world and invested in writing. And, reading is the process of extracting that energy from writing, as fuel to power whatever - it's not important. The message is nothing, the energy is everything. Who hasn't launched their fireworks into the dankest swamp?

I know I have. And it is for the reason that the world is not self-perfecting, and that there is no progressive movement which is, as the Angry Brigade had it, *getting closer* to the desired end, that reading texts written by allies is a losing game - nothing of the world is expressed in the agreeable. There is no energy generated by alliance. On the principle of expropriating the expropriators, the winged creature of communist reading may only really emerge from maggot of reactionary writing.

The exegetical process derives from the energy with which the enemy expresses itself - *detournment* is a cavalry discharge of statutory draining into the desert. It is structurally impossible to re-route a friend's content. Such is the song of artesian irrigation. Factory occupations of enemy discourse, and not anathematisations, are the means by which the pathological energies of domination are dissipated. All ideas should reach the surface, and all opinions should be freely and openly expressed, but not all should be amplified, not all should be electrified.

Neo-reaction has the best texts, now they must be ours; incels have the best techno, now it must be ours; crypto-fascists have the

best part-object signifying chains - their symbolism, now this must be ours. Their statues, their art, their taste, their manners, their aesthetics, their morals are always *better* - because they are expressions of wealth, because they reflect and articulate the ambivalent totality of the relations that produced them. The left attempts to refuse, deny, dismiss, ban and suppress the cultural expressions of domination - but this is the enemy's wealth, it is the source of their power so to reject *stained* art, is to allow the enemy free use of it, it is why *cancel culture* only multiplies what it abhors. Communism is inseparable from the expropriation of the wealth of domination, because communists also recognise themselves as its product.

We turn borders into thresholds. We do not brush the mosquito away - let it do its work. It is necessary to seize hold of every work of culture precisely because it is also a work of barbarism - expropriation, if not the use, of what is, is the only subjective exit from, the only therapeutic involvement within, the life-world of capital. Polarisation is really a spectrum. For reason of its expropriation, we must recognise ourselves within *culture* - we are it, it is us. And we must take everything, and realise it.

It is imperative to recognise ourselves reflected in every pool of blood - that's authentic narcissism. That's the human community, and these are the theses on Feuerbach: we do not project what is best, we metabolise what is worst. Communism, the human community at its fullest amplitude, is not the perfected realisation of communist principles but the perpetual engagement with compulsive pathologies and tragic profanations. That Mike Skinner football chant as militant inquiry: we're shit, we're shit, we're shit... but don't we just know it?

Our lamellate antennae are sensitised to the chem-plume of the human midden. We do not *abolish*, we realise by metabolism. We consume the dead. We're what you trod in - and if we live, we live to tread on kings! We are also filth, no different to our enemies, and we are the lovers of filth. Fire the left hand! We're pondlife. Fire the right hand! We are the same, exactly the same, as everyone we loathe. We're just pounders after all. Turn a stone over, and see us

scuttling for cover. Fire up the left hand!

I have begun the necessary work of digesting the means of neo-reaction - it is essential that I absorb its impalpable powder. I will make its talking points, and motifs my own. I have invaded it. I am the typical bridge, I am implausibly deniable. I inhabit the periphery. I am a miner for a heart of darkness. I am a negativity addict. I am Dodds. And like Barthes, I am reluctant to transform mourning into literature, but like him also, I understand it's what literature is. Too late! Too late! Literature is always and already inside. I am a running dog. I've got death tattoos. And oh, Eurydice! I have decorated the zombie bower that you might dwell there. And wear your sensibility gown. And pace out the dimensions of your distracted state. It's sliding walls enable vegetation to invade life. Mounted on tracks, it can go down to the sea in the morning and return to the forest in the evening. But you only wanted to mate in it, and then abandon your eggs to their own devices.

You can live in my writing. I built my nest in the forest of thorns. I am like the inexhaustible video tape collection of Bob Monkhous - but you have no VCR player. I'm an invisible worm, frying tonight! I have the ability to dislocate my jaw when confronted by the intolerable. I am the fixed grin of either/or. Or both. Or neither. Or whatever. No, wait! I am preoccupied with the idea of immersing myself in error - of causing wrong thinking to vibrate like music. I don't find any desire within myself to do or say the right thing! I won't fall in line because I can't fall in line. I won't march in step because I can't march in step. *And another thing*. I carry failure around, I don't mean occasional failures. My whole life's a wreck. Then, I can do business with knaves and varlets - we share the same affliction. We belong to what is twisted - we are all eaten up with this, I gesture encompassingly, our common fate. I too am a charlatan. This is all bluff. It's nothing, I've got nothing. Or reply: raise, call or fold.

But even if we can't come to an understanding, we're playing the same hand, we sit across from one another at the same table - it's just cards for money. Our self-hatred and disgust marks the beginning and the end of the circuit of what we take to be self - the minutes and

the hours in a windowless room lurch compulsively towards dawn. The gambler, the condemned, the saint, and the confidence man. I'm not even joking!

The work begins from the position of solidaritylessness, from the standpoint of the irredeemable, for those who can't get a defence lawyer, and for those who, if represented, could only ever be mobilised against - those whose lives could never matter. I am interspersing layers of callous humour and morbid sentimentality - I am the laminator. The writing is the path for the white surplus, the unassimilated, written as a return to communism. All roles may be portrayed except the role of the white surplus, and that must be immanentised as the return from the cosmic whorl of its negativity. This time, I am joking!

No, I'm sentimentalising! The terms are unfamiliar to me, but we had terms similar to these, and drawn from the same reservoir - always the same meaning, and sometimes different words. This is about something slag, something dredged, something incel, something skank, something undeserving, something toxic, something dog rough, something chav, something malignant, something f-ball lad, something minging, *fire left engine!*, something ill, something flake, something sket, something excluded, something fallen, something recidivist, something sick, *fire right engine!*, something cuck, something derelict, something stupid like I love you. This, the writing of the alchemical process. This, the writing of empathy. Or, no, it is the writing about that writing. This is the writing about the writing, *I have been there*, and *I am here for you*. It is about that writing without in any way being, despite appearances, that writing. I am against war, but I am cruel.

It engages at some level with the work of neo-reaction as I imagine it, and at the level of the sort of feelings, as I imagine them, felt by those attracted into the neo-reactionary basin. I am not interested in anti-fascism but I am interested in not-fascism. Let us agree then, that we approach the bower as we now do because of neo-reaction, it has framed our arrival, it has instigated a transfer in ornamentation as signifier set and affect attractor basin. We cannot function now as

we did before it - a one way gate has opened for us, and it leads into the state of *no going back*.

I am making a work of neo-reaction available in the interest of communism. I have no interest in communism, I do not like the communists although some of the disdainful and haughty conservative ones, like Visconti, are alright. I do not like the history of the communists, their moral weakness, their gullibility before human nature, their realisation sickness, and I feel no sympathy with any of their utopian, programmatic or post-programmatic tendencies - although I have a soft spot for the individualists who imagine their heretical projections *are* programmatic, although again these become fewer as the milieu swerves left and away from the total critique of Totality.

Although there is affection and tenderness, and other pleasant things, I am, nonetheless, fundamentally incompatible with communism - always, always *not for me*. Maybe in another life. Maybe for another soul. Let them eat cake. Let them live well. Bless them. But not for me. And so, I sacrifice, I am a martyr to my bunions, or rather I present here, a unique set of constituted objects to communism's work of metabolisation. I am fated to commit to that to which I do not belong. So, I am not looking for reciprocity. You could say I am whatever tries to find a home in separation.

My troubles have increased in line with the absence of technique in the writing. I am degenerating. I am ratcheted. I am entropised. The absolute limit encountered in my weariness and my distraction only further distorts the content into an aggregation of half ideas, observations and non-opinions that must by force of circumstance appear without redrafting or editing. Where I am original, I am not right; where I am right, I am not original.

My device is very simple: i. I inscribe a line drawn from *inspiration*, perhaps stolen from Genet or Lucier, and set it within a given frame; ii. I distress the line, alter it, decompose it, perhaps erase it; iii. I inscribe another line, drawn from the distress of the first, and subject it to the same process, then I draw further line, and then another and on and on. My purpose is to encounter in the writing



what I have not encountered before. I write the same thing over and over and watch for something else to emerge from the phasing. I am looking out for the rare stray idea. I like what is stray, and what has gone astray, but not because I feel pity for it. I like the strength of what is stray, how it finds another means to survive.

So, I have written what I have written, and it is bad. But it also makes no difference, and even if it were good, it would change nothing. All this is irrelevant and we can tolerate it - there's nothing but lamellate antennae after all. There is nothing but lamellate antennae, and the plume of the life-world. There is nothing to be learnt from what I have done or how I have lived. There are no lessons today, and no politics, and no theory. Nothing to be quoted, nothing to be remembered. Nothing to push back against. Nothing to be referenced. It's just a record of the same lines repeating and becoming a filter for detecting traces of random particles.

You cannot get from this to where you want to go; what this is is not *on your way*. You cannot, from this, *build* the structure you anticipate; what this is is not on solid ground. It is neither literature nor art. Although it is fiction, it is *conceited*. Maybe it's hypnotic? There is only what you might make out as a real time *decomposition in process* - my own private decasia. At most then, intensified decay perhaps, the path of a decay found in loss. It is another last. A last amongst the rest, and fixed for all time: *I was as marvellously surprised as on the day on which I read for the first time, in one of Maspero's books, that we had an exact list of the sportsmen whom Assurbanipal used to invite to his hunts, a thousand years before the Birth of Christ.*

I do not record what I *really* think, I think nothing. I gave up on thinking, let others think, but the writing lets the content find its own level, like consciousness vaporising into an ornamented plume of free association, like an incontinent gushing over the therapy couch. I suppose I am trying to perform how I try and break out of single a descriptor model, and how to fracture totalising explanations for the world - it is not necessary that I *adhere* to the right ideas; many and diverse thoughts come and go, but never enough and I look to open the way for more. And just as we're beginning to *really get*

*somewhere*, and in conformity to how the effect engages towards the session end. The point before the end, yeah, before the part where self-knowledge gets interrupted, and takes up the preparatory work, for *next time*, and in anticipation of that moment of recapitulation, *previously in in treatment*. The thread must be lost - that is the structure. What was I saying again? Where were we up to?

Maybe you will find something to be against in it, as an alibi. I know you prefer not to confront what really organises you, what really sets you in motion - it is your historic form, the project of your self, to perfect your denunciation, to sharpen your complicities, to find employment in the meme swarms. You like acting out, the network enables you. But the writing here is un-likeable, and cannot be mobilised, it is drawn on, and dragged out, without even that minimal peer review of the earlier days - everything here arrives uncooked and collapsed in the middle; it records what it is to address the social from the position of the a-social.

I read somewhere that the national character of the British, as the first population to endure the war of enclosure compounded by the war of proletarianisation, resembles that of the long habituated victim of domestic violence. The culturally sensitised appreciation of comedic absurdity and nonsense, its cults of pets and underdogs, the national hobbies of sullen queuing, passive aggression, narrow horizons, mustn't grumble and the overriding desire to *change the subject*, thus its infinite variety of emotional disordering, are all typically symptomatic of the victim of coercive control.

It is in this sense that what is presented here should be read as the product of a broken soul. It is what is written after anger, after rebellion, after the struggle to escape, are exhausted. It is the sound the abused child makes as an adult. The broken soul is recognised by its compulsive rituals and by its fixations but it also has a double-jointed, egg-oriented jaw(n) dislocating, capacity to engage and endure intolerable circumstances as its own - it has the ability to make out an almost infinite regress within the otherwise as its alternative response to whatever is presented to it - or, whenever it's not flinching, it can throw its voice onto any object. I sank downward, inward. Since

then, I have found a vanishing point for empathy in all things. I am concerned with the convergence of perspective on a point and its opening out, *afterwards*. Through the narrowest of hatches, I crawl out into the most enormous of spaces.

The influence of both early and late Beckett, and also of Proust is obvious, and in many places it goes beyond *influence* and lapses unforgivably into cheap pastiche. Poverty of means have forced me more than once into the old fall back upon parable. I understand the parable has no content as such but serves as a frame through which the teacher may draw meanings for his students; every teacher draws another meaning but always through the same frame. And the frame is constructed to prevent canonical readings.

The prism quality of the parable refracts not just the character of the teacher but his relationship with his students; in a similar way, our eating habits express a relational context more than our food preferences - a child will eat that food at another's house which it has refused at home. The parable does not make truth palatable, as in fable, but provides stimulus and materials for wandering reflections upon truth.

The writing as descent from NRx. The form I preceded. I am a tremulous being. NRx as the historical point of bad entry - the mistimed negation. The thumb print on my manuscript. I have excavated something, and retrieved it. I have brought it to the surface. To be honest, I feel torment, although that is too strong a word for it, but it is hard to talk about. The past. A tangle of impulses and attacks of vertigo, knotting, growing, and becoming impenetrable. I see what is dead as if scrawled in terrible words on a museum wall. It is the exhibit. Something like poison spreads through me. I never vibrated, but have shaken, I have shook, I have shaken. I am beat-the-pad, white-face, funk-the-ditch, shit arse. Through me, it seems, the fen skies of the enormous space, the attic nights, as through no other. I am like an intonation: cherry on the trifle as the cherry on the trifle as the cherry on the triangle.

Listen to your heart, another listens to it too. I have chanted. I am exhausted. I have worn the kidskin tunic. I am disported before

the bower. I have transferred ornaments from my plumage to the writing. I have hollowed a basin of permission *whose centre we might say is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere*. And you know how shallow it goes. I am dew flirt, quick scut, grass biter. But I am hidden but exposed, in the last reel. And you are safe as long as I am living, you know you are unsafe as long as I am out here, and I am hiding like a pikestaff. You know as long as I am living, I am carving: not burrow but basin, not beaker but broken. You can come very near to it, even now - only, flatten your body to the basin. A threshing passes across the surface. It is not too unhoming in the enormous space.

# I am not Chuang

Dear Nick,

*Trump was unthinkable, Brexit was unthinkable, the pandemic hard reboot of global capitalism was unthinkable, and actually -- though esoterically -- it was the same unthinkable.*

[https://twitter.com/uf\\_blog/status/1247233227745607691?s=21](https://twitter.com/uf_blog/status/1247233227745607691?s=21)

*The laborious process of causation which sooner or later will bring about every possible effect, including (consequently) those which one had believed to be most nearly impossible, naturally slow at times, is rendered slower still by our impatience (which in seeking to accelerate only obstructs it) and by our very existence, and comes to fruition only when we have ceased to desire it—have ceased, possibly, to live.*

- Within a Budding Grove

The persistent hold of the thought of the unthinkable over patterns in thinking has a power to fascinate all its own - if the unthinkable is one thing, then the compulsive thought of the unthinkable, as it moves across thinking, is another. There was always a distinct declarative and exemplifying tendency in thinking as it refers to something sinewy, riotous, immediate, which it points to as the *this*, which it selects as the *this*, as in, *this* is what triumphs over thinking/. Thinking wants to point what is not thinking and say, *this is better than thinking*. It is a tendency that is particularly pronounced where the thought of unthought is constrained to move archaically, as the mantic proclamation of unprecedented events, but then even this claudication-type effect within the proclivity for thinking against thinking is less fascinating than the persistence of the pervasive hold of the thought of the unprecedented event itself.

Where the unprecedented event overlays, and is overlain by, the unthinkable event, its resultant form becomes eminently theological, and so determinate of the four stations in prophecy: whatever is unthinkable is an event; whatever is an event is proclaimed; whatever is proclaimed is authored; whatever is authored is distributed; whatever is distributed is context compliant.

The decisive component of futurist thinking, it cannot operate without this, is a structural reliance upon a repertoire of archaisms: aesthetic; vengeful; incantatory. The more future-oriented the pattern of thinking, the more reliant it becomes on occult references. All futurisms *begin* with their recovery from having been lost for words, lost for reference. The subsequent metabolising process set in motion from this initial state of shock armours itself in proclamatory affirmations.

The wish-fulfilment component that is inseparable from futurism remains at the level of incantatory magic and at the level of its hard programming it is no more sophisticated than that of an infant's *fort-da game* where the traumatised subject position compensates for its lack of agency through the celebratory evocation of determinant, supra-subjective powers of recuperation.

As a variation upon Kierkegaard's whip, the singularity is invoked,

and proclaimed, by those who do not have the power either to urge the horses of the apocalypse on, or put off their arrival - the greater the power summoned, the less responsive it is to summoning. Those incapable of escape routinely discover weak spots in the perimeter fence. In this sense, let's say, accelerationism, as a subset of millenarianism, is a conjuring of power by what has first declared itself powerless.

Or rather, in this sense, and because futurist currency is constrained to survive under present conditions, millenarianism is a stratagem of the weak to make a living from selling messages of borrowed strength in a market where messages of ordinary frailty have negative value: as forbidden to one, so abolished for all.

If the incredible shrinking man is trapped, and his cry for help cannot be heard, if he starts awake beneath the imminent approach of fanged forces greater than his capacity to master them, then at least he may summon the thought of vengeance, and to conjure in his prayers, supplications, and complaints, another web, a vast *unimaginably* cruel ultra-web, in which, at a higher level, all things are held inextricably, buzzing feebly, beneath the golem of his projected chagrin: *It's rather like the perforated sheet music of a player-piano, or a computer punch tape. Knock out one line with an X-ray beam, lose a characteristic, change the score.*

But every trapped thing, incredible and shrinking or not, is forced, as the price of its release, to let go of something it had hoped to bring through with it to the other side. As futurists are thrown forward by cumulative events into the new normal, losing their priest-caste status, they are triggered into the third position of nostalgic pastoralism, and essentialist certainties: *in some ways, they see time. The older the surrounding environment, the more sluggish its metabolism. That which may occur naturally in weeks, is achieved in a couple of hours under vivarium conditions.*

And certain crawling animals, and also serpents, have the where-withal to purchase their survival by releasing their tail into the jaws of predators already fixed upon it, such creatures will later grow another tail from the coppiced stump - the ouroboros also severs its

tale, but into its own mouth. Who hasn't, in fleeing a chasing pack of enemies, attempted to distract them by throwing into the air a pocketful of jangling change. Such is the song of surface tension.

The imminence of the singularity as it is proclaimed by the millenarian is always less compelling as an event than the aesthetic of the pamphlet in which the news is distributed - it is the pamphlet and not the event that circulates through the milieu. In this sense, excitation is metabolised as the message of the thing, and not as the thing itself. In this sense, *the vibrating membrane accumulates energy when it resonates, so if we could radiate the entire living organism with a low field at a specific frequency it would act selectively only on the targeted chromosomes.*

In this sense, the category of the aesthetic indicates nothing but the interregnum of consciousness (whether by the mechanics of shock, suggestion or seduction). In this sense, at the level of incantatory aesthetics, at the level of the pantheistic internet of things, this ultimate medium for gleeful and celebratory vengeance where all fall upon all, where there is nothing but the gotcha of the other as inconsistent hypocrite, where exchange value is driven to self-harm at the suggestion of equivalence, in this sense, in the processing of affects as brute quantities, in the real mobilisation that actualises present conditions, accelerationism is always fascistic.

For the accelerationist, the message of unfettered productive use, summoned as a message of inexorability, acts as an interchangeable placeholder for the function of the Great Leader within the mechanism of messianic desire. Such is the song of on-time trains.

And in this sense, the fetishisation of the condition in which the thinkable is suspended, where there is misdirection, where the protocol is written for ritualised applause, so as not to interrupt the rolling out and implementation of new times, new relations, never going back to before, this compulsive fixation upon the unprecedented appearance of the *unthinkable* turns out to be, is nothing more than, base piety after all

- piety before the image of the monstrous and undetermined but

also where such piety is all too conditioned by the already given, and the formally, if invertedly, moralistic.

In that sense, this is not a surprise, we already knew that there is nothing new under the sun, and the old one, the one who died from angry sickness, has already shown how monsters, and gods, are not unprecedented at all, and still less are they unthinkable.

In that sense, the single decisive condition for the distribution of novel forms is that they should operate in the field beyond the sum of their parts, which is to say they are not caused as such, which is to say they do not belong to an already familiar franchise but must be made to appear at the beginning of the next sequence of *MAKE IT NEW*. The monster is original or it is not monstrous enough, it is merely banal.

At one level, the unthinkable is unthinkable, at least in the sense that the unthinkable is untenable. In practical appearance, there is no monster that is not an assemblage of pre-existing body parts. In that sense, the monster is a message which is also a lesson in how to read it.

In that sense, the monster is like a bad messiah, and embodies two distinct orders of message: firstly, it materialises the incontestable announcement of its own arrival to the world; secondly, it carries the burden of an unclear instruction on how such monstrosity should be read. It is the doubling of its message that distorts the monster's form, and causes it to become, monstrous... the monster retains possession of its first message, merely lending it to the prophets, but the second, by its very function, must circulate in the *public domain* as a metastasis of readings. The most conflicted of texts cannot assume redundancy and must explain the joke even in its telling. In this sense, the monstrous is always novel but never *fresh*.

And at that level, if it is acceptable to attempt to think what is new, or what at least has not happened before, then the unthinkably monstrous becomes thinkable at this level of its more or less unique combination of elements, or in this sense by its formation from previously unexpectedly converging forces.



The monster is either a product of combining elements that were not previously combined, or the association, or confluence, or alliance, of the same conditions, objects and forces but within new configurations. Or, again, it results from the releasing of that which once had been bound up.

The monster at this level is either one product or another in this sense, but it is a product; the monster as what is unthinkable is a product in that sense, sold as such, at that level, but then, this is true also for the thinkable.

It's always the same new thing, the same catastrophic threat, and later, the same relative diminution as another new thing, bearing its catastrophic threat, rides into town. And it's always the same because it is serving a purpose within the apparatus of the present - futurist objects have no value outside of the present, constrained as they are to appear as objects from the future.

And so the monstrous collapse of things is equally exaggerated. Complex objects are built from simple parts, and by process of decomposition and decommission, they are de-emerged back to an aggregate of components. The *Ancien Régime* was not decapitated but bypassed in favour of more energised, if not actually more direct, value generating systems - the category of the *Ancien* has always functioned within social systems, and will still be reproduced as a motif for decrepit absolutist powerlessness. The *Ancien Régime* was never *ancien*, and it is no longer a régime, but it persists both through its formative components since captured by later systems (the successive avatars of the Okhrana have appeared successfully embedded within a succession of seeming separate régimes) and as a totality, or the representation of a totality, that is employed as a unit of such within cultural, historical, political and legal systems.

Even so, monsters, or the news of monsters, continues, and the frequency of their appearing at the threshold of the thinkable is either increasing or the Totality's use and metabolisation of such messages has recently changed, or both. The series of events beginning with 1989 and Russia's war in Afghanistan, the digitisation of finance capital, series of military interventions, the intractable hostili-

ties of others, the renewed strategic use of neo-terrorism, ecological catastrophe and social instability, have all served to intensify the production of messages concerning anomalous threats, which as they are circulated, seem to serve to artificially stimulate further excrescences of productivity.

*Without exception the organisms we've irradiated have entered a final phase of totally disorganised growth, producing dozens of specialised sensory organs whose function we can't even guess. The results are catastrophic.*

Some of these seeming unprecedented events are deliberately manufactured and released by the state, evidently signalling that the moment when it genuinely feared uncontrolled *chain reactions* has long since passed, today it is more a case of the greater the frequency of unintended consequences the better. Nothing interests the state less today than the bismarckian project of ensuring the reproduction of the proletariat as the foundation stone in the phase of real domination.

On the other hand, another set of unthinkables are profoundly unpredicted, even if they are also quickly harnessed up to free liquid capitals. The responsiveness of the state to both categories, its *turn around* between problem recognition and boots on the ground, is both speeding up and increasingly efficient, and through such real time modelling in *contact tracing*, the state will soon reach pre-cog levels for intervention - emergency services will arrive in time to prevent the emergency.

*Only two organs are really affected and injured by the plague, the brain and the lungs, and both are directly dependent upon the consciousness and the will.*

And perhaps this increased capacity to capture and use misfortune indicates the ideological gain which is to be extracted from the systemwide acceleration in the rate of messages beginning, *Behold*. The heralded unthinkable, the *thus spake*, mic-dropping, what fresh hell is this, quality of the state's unending sequence of catastrophes

seemingly specially designed to both paralyse critical awareness and circulate virally as digital messages, is always eminently investable: whatever perturbs the apparatus draws state intervention, and wherever the state intervenes, contracts are outsourced. After all, what is the NHS but a giant money laundering racket funnelling tax revenues into contracted shell companies?

The development of the modern state has now successfully passed through three distinct phases: i. from the creation and extension of stability across its entire domain; ii. to the maintenance of stability at home and the cultivation of instability abroad; iii. to the monopoly ownership and intensification of every instability within its own borders, as it latest stage. It is unlikely that this is the last iteration, but what might come next, de-networking, self-autonomising, uncontrolled fractal mechanisms of control, *autonomous zones* and neo-city states with Islamic State as its basic blue print, for the moment exceeds description.

The expulsion of labour from production has necessitated a transformation in the character of state control over populations; where stability was previously a precondition for the social reproduction of the workforce, fissile instability and generalised affective agitation within national populations is now the primary renewable energy source. The predominant technique for the contemporary state's intervention within its subject populations involves a return to primitive accumulation at a higher level (Virilio's *endocolonisation* and Fanon's observation on the re-importation of colonial policing techniques), and the transformation of the social fabric into a Candide-like picaresque, or whirlwind narrative, of staged data-mineable catastrophes and misfortunes touching ground on the principle: *the disaster is already here, how can we make money?* If we are now living through a significant change, then it should be characterised as a shift in state function from expansive repression to the exploitation of decomposition ( just as landfill generated methane becomes another available power resource).

What does it mean then to filter our observations upon the monstrously unthinkable through the rule: *men resemble their times*

*more than their fathers* ? Immediately, it becomes a mantic game and we start turning over the cards: ah yes, the unthinkable is without a father; ah yes, the times demand that men resemble them and not their fathers, so either the men or the times are unthinkable; ah yes, the times are in revolt against the men who once were in revolt against their fathers; ah yes, the times are father to the men and the men are children of the times. But then, all stratagems must pall.

*There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless  
which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with  
the utterly lost, whom life and death are equally jests,  
there are matters of which no jest can be made.*

But the timeliness of the contemporary storm of unthinkable events is precisely its most compelling feature - everything gone wrong seems orchestrated, because everything communicated as a message is orchestrated.

All these flagged-up catastrophes are arriving, wave after wave, as if they had been *summoned* , as if they were symptoms of something moving in the deep. They are portents, signs, auguries, omens and we can read them, they are cryptic but we can read them, they are unthinkable but we can think them - such is the song of precognition. But even so, the difficulty presented in Debord's little detournement is that of the value placed on *relatedness* as it is confronted by the value placed on *resemblance* .

Of course, men never resembled their fathers, they start awake in relation to, in contradiction of, the patriarch - as Bazarov does to the Narodniks.

Relatedness implies contradiction, components of a whole held together by a constantly ratcheting of tensions. Resemblance is another manner of connectedness implying, as in Debord's formulation, belonging.

Men belong to their times, more than to their fathers. Family resemblance between particulars is situated at the level of their shared historical conditions, and resemblances are always as affirmatory as they are inadvertent.

When non-relatedness is assigned to events via the category of the unprecedented-unthinkable, what is being represented are objects that cannot be contradicted. If the unthinkable is always unprecedented, then it is also familiar, in the sense that it resembles the other unthinkable events which, taken together, communicate a message about something deep moving through the depths.

At the level of the narrative of unthinkable events, and its strategic prevention of identifications, we come-to in a world that is entirely *verfremdungseffekt*, a world system in which consciousness is perpetually interrupted.

But is the suspension of the category of the thinkable achieved by the work of the unthinkable, or a product of the strategic conversion of the unthinkable into a set of messages about *inevitable* social modification?

Is it thinking itself, the ownership of thinking by a particular set of compelling thoughts, that seeks to disrupt and degrade thinking? As a means for making out the answer, we should ask another question: what does it mean to filter our observations through a game of cards, say gin rummy?

The short answer, after much editing, is not much, but there might still be enough invested in the ruse to pursue it. Then, fatally, inevitably, the unthinkable's hand, as the ur-position of the unlucky streak, as the bad seat at the card table, is never simply dealt but must comprise only the deadwood that it has drawn compulsively, one card after another, from the sortes-stockpile that is all thinkable - the unthinkable is a mantic read-em-and-weep of bad double-blind selection.

On the other hand, the thinkable plays by building the melds that comprise its hand, and the thinkable itself is nothing but capricious melds, from its combination of the dealt and its guided by chance selections from the discard pile - the lucky streak is nothing but a sequence of chosen interventions powered by guided chance. What is the rate of infection? What is the chance of your survival: now, between uninfected and infected; now, between infected and admit-

ted; now, between admitted and intubated; now, between intubated and refrigeration?

The set valued as unthinkable, in play, is unthinkable. The set valued as thinkable, in play, is thinkable. But the unthinkable as a set is drawn in relation to the set of what is thinkable. But the thinkable must draw at least one card from the unthinkable, that is if it desires to exceed tautology. But the system by which the unthinkable and the thinkable are brought into relation, is neither entirely opaque nor ever quite transparent.

Every reticulated system, including that which organises the relation between thinking/unthinking, draws its own outline around a set of integrated sub-systems, the viability of which will be expressed by the integrity of the outline. Both the thinkable and the unthinkable become distinct as moments, instances, relations, and as subsystems, of and within the thinkable/unthinkable system, which itself cannot be either entirely thought nor ever quite unthought.

Just as the processes working through the thinkable are always contaminated by particles of delirium, so the unthinkable never wholly rids itself of that which it relinquishes. The R rate of thinking is not quite warm enough, and the unthinking R never falls to absolute zero.

*The symptoms of a virus are the attempts of the body to deal with a virus attack. By their symptoms you shall know them, and even a totally unknown virus would yield considerable data by its symptoms. On the other hand, if a virus produces no symptoms then we have no way of knowing that it exists... no way of knowing that it is a virus because it is the human virus. After many thousands of years of more or less benign coexistence, it is now once again on the verge of malignant mutation. My point is very simple. The whole human position is no longer tenable.*

The variety of reticular subsystem-states supported within the thinking/unthinking apparatus is in the end of less significance in

generating what is thinkable/unthinkable than are the pressures and unpressures of that in the world which cannot be included as either not thinking or not unthinking but which nonetheless bring to bear on thinking/unthinking the pressures and unpressures that have nothing to do with either thinking or unthinking but, again but, which both constrain and release both of them.

As a general guide, those pressures and unpressures which produce thinking and unthinking, releasing and capturing the breaks and the sequences by which distinctions, outlines, interior states, become discernible, cannot be either thought or unthought, or even either not thought or not unthought.

As a general guide, those pressures and unpressures that become available as objects for either thought or unthought are no longer productive of thoughts nor of unthoughts. On the contrary, they become the products of thinking activity, and of unthinking activity. They become recursively distinct as subsystems (all objects available to thinking/unthinking) of the subsystems (the depreciating apparatus of thinking/unthinking).

Even so, as a general guide: 1. that which is productive of thinking/unthinking is neither a thinkable nor an unthinkable object; 2. That which is produced by thinking is one with thinking - the object of thinking; 3. That which is produced by unthinking is one with unthinking - the object of unthinking; 4. That which appears at the threshold between the thinkable/unthinkable is both thinkable and unthinkable.

The unthinkable event of the Coronavirus has an apparitional quality, its emergence and perturbation of the life-world sets in motion both thinking and unthinking, nightmares and flights of fancy, and let's say, both utopias and dyschronias.

*Over a period of generations the virus established a benign symbiosis with the host. It was a mutating virus, a color virus, as if the colors themselves were possessed of a purposeful and sinister life. Something altered the relation between host and virus and in revenge, the virus*

*transposed the functions of the sexual and fear centres in the brain so that the virus converted fear of virus into sexual frenzy whilst the virus information itself was genetically conveyed through sexual contact.*

But as an apparition, a spectral agency, which sets the thresholds upon, that scatters the seeds within, that tills the medium of, whatever it is that functions as the psychic apparatus, the virus is not in itself available as an object for the operations of that apparatus. The virus and the measures against it fuse together and become a single operation, moving jointly through the world, in relation to it, as they also move in relation to each other.

It, or rather the dyadic mechanism generated from the viral-measures and the institutionalised counter-measures, the viral anti-counter-measures and the institutional antiviral-anti-counter-measures, the viral-un-measures and the institutional un-viral-counter-measures, which constitute the whole...

... The totality that acts as, is derived from, virus-plus-institution, behaves towards mind and anti-mind, to mindfulness and mindlessness, to being-minded-to and not-being-minded-to, as if it had gained, or was awarded, the status of divine instrument of some or other sorting mechanism...

... As some or other godlike meddler, and becoming some or other, or a sort of, shall we say, factotum-like psychopomp, and thus in donning the PPE of shepherd of epiphenomena...

... Or, again, perhaps, this Covid-19 and shall we say, its discontents, emerging representation, emerging sentient, emerging bureaucratic, will come to perform that stochastic practice by which is distributed an eleventh commandment for outlining the segmentation of a post-labour domesticated behavioural repertoire by which the era of neo-troglodytism will become distinct. That is to say, virus and state are in alliance; *virus and state are one hand*.

Behold, the dawning of a veiled epoch that will breathe-in a



disproportion of its own respiratory-gastric exhalations; behold, by process of accelerated immanence, Freud's aversion-rationale for the colorectal as instrumentalising event of upright posture only now achieves transference by startle reaction, by slight return, to reinvestment within the breath-hole, the ante-nasal-oesophageal diverticulum as part-object border post, and thus to full anaclitic armouring of the upper GI.

The viral adoption of figleaves for the face has inaugurated a new order of modesty, and for not dissimilar reasons to every other historical recourse to the surplus-necessity for head scarves, veils, and facial coverings. Enclosure of the face by state decreed *dompte-regard* is only ever enforced during emergency repressive re-structurings of social interaction. State expropriation of facial content, seemingly runs counter to its tendency towards biometric and face recognition technologies, but in practice they are complimentary.

Whilst otherwise sequestered individual identities are rendered ever more available for quantification and analysis, and the intimate self is only revealed via the filters of proprietorial communications technology, the function of the mask at an interpersonal level is equivalent to the enclosure of common land in the Seventeenth Century. The face, which we understand implicitly as the limit of the self and its expressive capacity, is now assimilated as an alienated appendage into the productive apparatus.

If machines have outstripped thinking, they have yet to perfect facial expression as a means to access the symbolic register, this barrier will soon also be torn down. The face has, in effect, become what the arm once was in earlier phases of production, the primary limb of labour. If you want a picture of the future, imagine an affect engine and the speeding up of its valvular masking/unmasking of a human face - forever.

Historically, ritualised facial covering has always been imposed as an emergency adaptation during crises and which subsequently sticks around for decades, if not for centuries. As a conspicuous signal of virtue, it both operates on behalf of the state against *others* who must look at it whilst not knowing its purpose, whilst also hiding the

privatised individual's own *true* anti-social purpose which it shares with nobody but the algorithmic mechanism tracking its progress.

And yet. Another movement in the movement. We end up wearing the required masks at work and I admire everyone's eyes and learn, as millworkers once read each others' lips, how to read their masked-off expressions. And yet. If compliance with face covering measures spreads through shame-dependent, virtue signalling, then individual reluctance to relinquish the facemask following the all clear will be driven by anxieties associated with the face as noumenal outcrop.

In part these anxieties are derived from voluptuary-modesty impulses, in part they are driven by basic outline-proprietorial hard-programming, and in part, as always, by the will to righteousness, the will to mobilising in the spirit of what has just passed. Whoever is not wearing the mask as sign, as immunity passport, as watchword, whoever shows their face, is a stranger.

It is a convention that masks reflect more than they conceal, but what they record is always the same: individual micro-fascisms integrated into the suspended step of infrastructural re-configuration.

For this reason, it is not an insult to perceive the social adoption of facial coverings as fascism, that is as the adapted habitus of circulating life units within reconfigured emergency geographies, as the tolerance of such fascisms is both inevitable and irresistible where the labour process itself is not overthrown - if public transport must begin again, and public transport is nothing but labour transport, then the fascism of masks will follow.

But again, the face mask as a perfection of virtue signalling and identity indicates an early step towards other re-intensifications of viral receptive space, and to the re-programming of virally saturated environmental conditions. The work of the state-capital apparatus is wholly directed to the project of increasing the receptivity rate of its territory to viral messaging without, at the same time, permitting the flooding of its subsystems by the same messages. It desires that you, as a mass individual, are unsettled but not panicked, receptive but not passive, moving but not free moving.



The morality conveyed by the dictum, 'anyone can spread it' draws a veil over the machinic apparatus of circulation. The energy of Coronavirus, like that of all plagues, first discharged into the community of capital at a locus for super-intensified accumulation and exchange of its raw components (a warehouse, a market, a bio-lab); plagues are not transmitted through human interaction, but by the environmental mechanism for circulating embodiments of labour power, along trade routes and into cities.

*There is a link between imagining disease and imagining foreignness. It lies perhaps in the very concept of wrong, which is archaically identical with the non-us, the alien. A polluting person is always wrong, as Mary Douglas has observed. The inverse is also true: a person judged to be wrong is regarded as, at least potentially, a source of pollution.*

- AIDS as Metaphor

Viral pandemics are a product of malignant geographies and environmental transgressions, they are not a pathology of intersubjectivity - and *furthermore*, the state 'combats' them environmentally, geographically, by its haussmannising reconfigurations of the same space, utilising counter-malignancies (the prevention of intimacy) and counter-transgressions (isolation, quarantine). The war against disease is also an auctioning off of common space. Intensifying border checks to commercial and institutionalised spaces increases the receptivity to messages of control within the human flow.

There is no struggle, no war, against disease outside of state-space where plague-scale pathologies are the product, and expression, of high rate/full amplitude transmissions of information that are both self-saturated and universally diffused. Plagues and information resemble each other as correlates of depths moving in something deep.

The plague form exists nowhere but in circumstances of highly concentrated populations, which exist nowhere but as organised entities of the territory of the capital-state assemblage.

The plague-state of viruses resembles capital because capital behaves virally within social relations - as an organising/reductive principle of that which struggles against it.

On the other hand, unlike all other organisations of human community which are oriented towards death, capitalism is a life support system - it is a virus which spreads by increasing the reproduction of its host.

Biological viruses, if they survive long enough, must learn from capital's organisation of space and time and become more virulent but less deadly - the now infamous exterior spike-like peplomers covering the Covid capsid are transformed into hooks for use-values, and for further expansion and intensification of production around the viral event.

For the state, the ideal state consists of host and virus in steady state: virus as governor of negative feedback; host as medium and raw material for viral messages. If the current political investment in face masks as a figleaf for business as usual, an institutionalised observance that should be sufficient to by-pass any trend amongst the infected towards litigation whilst maintaining the pressure on the masses to herd together, and which drives the movement towards the return to productivity of the host under the tutelage of the virus (work itself will be continued in the condition of *les yeux sans visage*), then the other, corporeal, locus for class-contestation erupts around competing ontologies of the hand: hands are now constrained to appear as both makers and products of viral saturated space.

Hand washing implicates a register of rituals intuitively separate from mask wearing, not least because whilst the face mask may be imposed by law and policed by some or other Gasht-e Ershad, hand washing retains a high subjective, and inter-subjective, component that resists surveillance.

The state's response to the pandemic passed through two distinct stages: that of the glove and that of the mask. The phase of the glove was organised in accordance with the policy of *social distancing* - dispersed and socially quarantined bodies are at risk from infected

surfaces, of passing sequentially across shared places, and not from inhaling airborne particles carried by the breath of absent others.

But the movement of capital is inseparable from its architectural intensification of populations by which it induces oceanic ebbs and flows in crowds, setting off chain reactions in the city-scale convergence, agitation and swirling murmur of bodies. Economy is nothing but a function of the critical massing in crowds of individual beings organised within the same breath space - hence, phase-mask. It is not a coincidence that scientific arguments for face-masks are advanced at precisely the moment *we* must emerge from lockdown and go back to work, when previously the same science emphasised social distance and hand hygiene - abstraction emerges from a very specific density of population. Nor is it a coincidence that the once exigent disciplinary practice of maintaining social distance is itself no longer maintained and collapses from two to one metre - the half-life of quarantine is three months. Opposition to capital space, by extension of the logic, necessitates a dispersal of bodies below that threshold population density requisite to sustain and expand production.

Where the face mask instigates fascistic representations of self-interest conflated with state mediated conceptions of uniformity as solidarity, hand washing releases endless re-considerations of touching and involvement that are a consequence of distance and separation. It is not gratuitous to note that the bitterest of industrial disputes often focus on securing payment for non-productive work-located activities such as washing up time... whoever has washed is not working.

The significance to consciousness of ritual cleansing is quite distinct from, and moving in the opposite direction to, the suppressive veiling implied by ritualised clothing and mouth covering. The social worth of hand washing is always unproven, and unprovable - the cause of what doesn't happen cannot be proved but the successful proliferation of face masks proceeds exponentially as it is correlated to seemingly successful exits from *lock down* ... the face-mask becomes the flag of cultures emerging from crisis and as a synecdoche of such grotesque hatchings out is elevated, by association, to its cause.

The washed form becomes immediately available to both the

washed community and the unwashed community, it is both vulnerable and trusting, it does not defend itself but opens its own outline to communion - it is only now that we marvel at the courage of those healers who once reached out in leper colonies.

The washed hand lets go not only of the viral load and by implication the profane, contaminated world that is expressed as plague, but extends away from, avoiding returning to, the threatening surfaces (the handles, buttons, levers, switches) of the recontaminating workstation. The washed hand does not work.

But the ambivalence, the twin drives, expressed by the washed hand also states: only the washed hand *may* work. Or rather, there is a residual desire for dirtying one's hands, and for forgiving the filth of involvement that the hand implies. Such is the song of the Sixties cult of the *fellaheen*. There is set in motion a dialectic between the orders of soap and of hand sanitiser, between the washed and the sterilised. The washed permits a return to the erotics of profanation which the order of the sterilised forbids as it sets out towards the light at the end of the tunnel of hygienically channelled work acts.

Then, who wouldn't take the leaden hands of the virus shedding corpse of the stranger and, letting down the phaedrean-magdalenean locks of their hair, wipe them, dry them? Who would decline the coughed-into hand? Who wouldn't kiss the infected stranger on the lips? Who wouldn't drink from the consumptive patient's sputum pot?

The images of rainbows decorating homes are something like the plague signals and witch signs of earlier times, warning off contamination by the unfamiliar and defending the priest-hole-burrow-space. I observe a father shouting in panic at his son for bouncing his hand against a stranger's mattress that is leaning against a wall in the street. Such dramas are directed against the compulsion to become infected.

*Thus the plague seems to manifest its presence in  
and have a preference for the very organs of the body,  
the particular physical sites, where human will,  
consciousness, and thought are imminent and apt to*

*occur.*

The convivial function of the gripped unwashed hand, which by extension implies through trophallactic process the presence of a collective stomach, and a proclivity to self-abandonment before the custom of passing, from one to the other, the ceremonial cup containing our group's fermented saliva, is to expand to the fullest amplitude the conception of herd immunity as involvement and participation in life. And yet, also, the eros sited in the dirty stranger's mattress is organised as a wager, or risk that must be taken impulsively, in which the risk itself functions as the erotic focus.

For some, for those still living, a continued existence within routine sterilised time becomes the stake that must be gambled against a temporary state of intense exposure to the risks of contamination - it is not that gamblers actively desire the deathly consequence that might follow from such risk taking but rather that they wish to masochistically regulate those harmful rays which the subject's *reizschutz* routinely deflects.

The erotic fetish for the unclean implies a will towards taking manual control over black box operations, and to apply a dilator to the socially constrained apertures of the protective shield. And so it is, that for some, vertigo is not a surplus response of the survival instinct but implies an inner struggle against the desire to measure the danger of, to resolve the problem confronting him with, this particular height by jumping from it.

Ideology draws from similar masochistic compulsions, and is realised through the state's compulsive desire to consume the filth that it incorporates into the production of its smooth surfaces.

The ideological mechanism of incorporation/projection involves elevating a series of seemingly singular, definitive and easily conceived, profanations (each with unique characteristics) as opponents by which the era is defined.

In recent years, fetishistic avatars of this singular opponent have been deployed successively with each iteration following the same pattern: in the first instance, the enemy looms over the horizon as a

novel threat (an inverted commodity innovation), and the conflict with it is soon represented as the greatest challenge since the 1940s, but wherever it is engaged by state forces, it is shown to be stupid, ineffective, and soon melts away like Spring snow.

Iraq, al Qaeda, Afghanistan, Iraq again, the banking crisis, Iraq again, IS, Russia (again), China (again), climate change, Brexit, populism have all appeared as unprecedented threats that have rapidly fallen away, as if in illustration of the truism: the problem is never the problem.

The significance of a political event is to be measured at the level of its correlates, not by the historical sequence of its causation. The most strategically deployable events, those that least resemble their causation, are also the most significant events - at the level of governmental control, the greater the number of other events that a particular event may be networked to, the more strategically useful it is.

There is sometimes overlap in the succession of represented threats. After all, *Day of The Triffids* teaches us that there must be both triffids and a meteor shower to execute the pincer movement of *catastrophe*, but the ordinary workings of the state seem to require only the promotion of a single champion from what stands as placeholder for the *exterior*.

The function of this sparring partner is classically masochistic, and employed to stimulate self-regulatory defensive responses - emergency planning exercises *are* the operation of the state.

It is through consideration of the Spectacle's parade of villains that we may discern the separation between event and representation of event, between event and the strategic deployment of the event.

The state security apparatus operates by collapsing the domains of existence to a single strategic register under its monopoly control - in this way, even illness becomes a metaphor for war and imperialism.

For those wishing to counteract the strategic use of panic and atomisation as tools for expropriation and control, it becomes necessary to intensify *and another thing* to its furthest degree, and thus

to a theatrical principle of resistance - when the state cleaves to the plague, cleave to environmental collapse; when the state cleaves to environmental collapse, cleave to the domestication of populations. *And another thing*, when exaggerated to the point of derangement, retraces the network of resemblances, transfers and deals done between things - the paranoid's associative process is compelled to uncover the process of statecraft.

It is necessary, for its optimal operation, in the context of state pacification, that the object of consciousness is something other than the process of its own pacification.

When considering the exterior, and the manufacture and representation of the unprecedented, the unthinkable, the malevolent forces arrayed against the state - all these placeholders for heat death, and the void - it is entertaining to consider the G5 network dimension of the Coronavirus emergency as having higher objective value to the reproduction of the general system than any misdirections around drinking bleach, anti-malarials, ventilator acquisition or citriodiol's mosquito repellant properties.

The intensification in some minds of the G5 network's correlation, or intersection, with Coronavirus to the point of its hyperstition, its becoming *hyperstital*, reveals an eminently objective dimension beyond the ordinarily pacifying function of conspiracy theory wherein the isolated individual is reduced to expropriating otherwise unknown world truths as units of his personality.

It is surely correct to go with the hunch, when observing the theatrical overreaction of global capital, that there really is an ongoing state deployment of the degenerative ratchet to social form, and an attempt to subjectivise those aspects of history which otherwise had remained cumulative and tendential. Behind the global lockdown event, the state has accessed, and attempted to intervene within, a recursively higher register of second nature than ever before.

The allergic response of capital to coronavirus, as right wing anti-maskers have pointed out, if this is compared to its insouciance before the world's most deadly respiratory plague TB, which causes

4,000 daily deaths amongst peri-proletarianised populations year in, year out, is significant in itself.

The selection and relative elevation of one or other form of death over the rest has always been a prerogative of the state but the concentration of its forces on coronavirus operates strategically at another level - there is always something else going on, but it is always difficult to know exactly what that is.

If the state and plague are one hand, then the hand itself, is playing card tricks. Just as the war against terrorism implied the use of terrorists for other purposes, and the war on drugs similarly implicated other seemingly unrelated domains, so the apparatus built up by the war on coronavirus has the potential for creative applications - carbon emission regulation as the most obvious, and intensification of data capture as another.

There is something about Covid-19's ferocious velocity, the rapid rate of its turn around time (its spread from infector to infected) which not only resembles the movement of capital in the world but which becomes an opportunity and vehicle for further abstraction.

Both capital and coronavirus operate on a principle of ever-quickening energy transfers, and of the speeded up conversion of product-in into product-out into product-in again - the temporality of realising capital, as for plague, requires short term objective potentiality within the host environment, and the rapid convertibility of money into objects and objects into money.

The viral exchange of information within the pandemic form depends on the precondition of an abstract equivalence within state organised social relations, it is within such close to laboratory conditions that it can best develop an ultra-infectious form which is also attenuated in lethality... such homologies with the movement, form and operability of capital have passed the threshold for signing a historic Molotov-Rippentrop style alliance between the two systems, each becoming host to the other.

As always, the use value of an object, its capacity for integration into the system of exchange, depends upon the duration of its turn



around between its production and its sale.... the temporality of TB is slow and easily contained amongst the poor; C-19 is rapidly metabolised socially, being both widely virulent but also relatively targeted in selecting its fatalities. The usefulness of Coronavirus is ideological, and expressed in the principle that bad news is the best grave for burying worse news.

The error expressed in the sabotaging of supposed G5 network masts on the grounds that G5 *causes* coronavirus nonetheless identifies an objective point of historical intensity, and illuminates an intersection between the two in the scenario of a 'do you want the bad or worse news, first?' Certainly, there is wide scale ongoing infrastructural reorganisation behind the ideological exaggeration of Covid 19's pandemic scale - C-19 is a face mask for Space X satellites, for trade negotiations with China, for disinvestment from fossil fuels, for the secession of liberal technocracy from parliamentary democracy, and for either the acceleration or the postponement of 5G. In this sense, Coronavirus is *causing* 5G.

And, it would be a dereliction of their duty, a catastrophic departure from their mission statement, if the various departments of state-capital were not taking advantage of the suspension of business as usual to optimally dilate the arteries of what will become the *new abnormal*. It is certain, for example, that Covid-19 is a sort of cipher for an emergency within and perhaps an SOS for the end of, China even if the structural collapse is in part complicated and scrambled in the displacement of its energy onto events in Hong Kong. China is coming to an end, not because it will be brought down either through spurious trade sanctions or by street agitation but because the hubristic overreach expressed in its repressive technologies will entrap its own cadres and departments, which as they are driven by the feedback to defend themselves will factionalise and resort to deploying as clients various competing emancipatory and nationalist/separatist social movements that will erupt in proxy civil war just as the inter-departmental struggle in the US has recruited and deployed proxies in its seeming *culture war*.

Return from lockdown will not take the form of a great reveal,

there will be no grand collapsing of the Potemkin villages, no theatrical slashing at the painted backdrop, but there will be, and already is, the institutionalisation of an apparatus for *no going back to before* as it is actualised through other routings, patternings and reprogrammings for the circulation of labour power - there is no path, there is only the path that is made by walking it.

The sequence of disasters that have characterised the *unprecedented* threats of the last two decades plot the passage of the community of capital as it realises the project of its progressively abolishing labour, and for extricating the wider system's dependence for its expanded reproduction on the extraction of relative surplus value.

Where the social condition of *lockdown* is understood as a subset of a generalised fixing or *locking* of changes, alongside the subsets of *locking in* and *locking on*, - where a return to the siege-form is applied at all levels, with Falluja and Assange as prototypes, where self-isolation becomes a homologous technique of control applied to individuals and regions, each familiarised by the example of the other - so locked populations and individuals within populations will be integrated within a novel ontogenetic/phylogenetic register of production - where work was, domestication shall be.

The recalibration of economic life, the decommissioning of the economy itself, and its collapsing into immanent production, into desiring production, is first registered as capital destruction. The purpose of the Iraq War was not to seize *oil* as a possession but to sequester the apparatus for its supply, and so to expropriate the means for regulating its worth within the general system.

Such manoeuvres are equivalent to abandoning the invasion of a territory in favour of strategising enemy bridges, ports, power stations. The objective of the Iraq War was to put the Iraqi oil fields out of action in the same way that sanctions against Iran were imposed in order to interrupt the inherent systemic tendency to oversupply - the objective never included either Iraq or Iran, except as contingencies, the main strategic preoccupation has been to very delicately recalibrate the energy transfers within the *fossil fuel* industry's relation to the productive apparatus as a whole



Ordinarily, private capital must be destroyed where the productive system has entered into a runaway of oversupply. The orgy of destroying private capitals opens a path back to an earlier, purer, stage in productive relations that may then reset itself at a higher level of organisation before beginning again and thereby ensures and the conservation of the system as whole.

However, the cumulative cost of such punctuating events is environmentally catastrophic. For this reason, a new system of exploitation, another path out of capital's pseudo-cyclical time, is *in the pipeline*. The new system will conserve its tendency to abstraction via the systematic accumulation of forces whilst replacing its convoluted value set with a more immediately responsive or organic value set derived from *natural* inclinations rather than alienated work acts: the replacement of exchanges by transfers will enter a *real* phase.

The domesticating system, as something other than communism, will replace capitalism as it institutionalises the overcoming of the separation between work and free time as populations are directly integrated into the productive environment and the individual's biological and affective states, rather than the temporal units of their labour power, will be harnessed as the motor of concretising abstraction.

The communist response to the accelerating general tendency to expel labour power from the productive apparatus, and the sequence of emergencies by which this is being realised, has been, with one or two exceptions, disappointing and inadequate. As an example, the lauded Chuang commentary on Coronavirus as an event in class relations does not succeed in drawing a specific communist quality from its sociological framing.

Whilst Chuang gathers up content that is otherwise scattered - it is not in itself successful in making itself remarkable. By conserving a C20th style of academically informed journalism it selects a readership that is by and large *professional*. The information it conveys is that which is useful to social managers and PHD students in the present moment. The class most prominent in the communist milieu, by directing its access to institutionalised capital, also imposes

the procedural form, and its preoccupations as content, as the stuff of communist thinking.

By retaining traits of institutional *objectivity* and the motifs of expertise, it facilitates its own promotion and consumption as a significant communist text within the serious *theory* market. It also triggers the marxist habit of assigning authority by displacement and deferential citation - the individual marxist is characterised by his strategy for controlling discourse through his legalistic deployment of authoritative texts as *precedent*.

The Chuang commentary has worth at the level of 'if you only read one, then this is it'. But it remains within the journalistic parameters of *third estatism* and has no subjective core.

For this reason, it is unclear what use it is to its intended readers... it defends an abstract space of marxological correctness but it is stuck at the level of 'portrayal' that it seeks to overcome.

If it has adopted the old fashioned mode of the serious essay, it shows no evidence of knowledge of the similarly old fashioned traits and devices of Twentieth Century exercises in willed subjectivity, not only does it not demonstrate an awareness of *Theatre as Plague* or *Cities of the Red Night*, it does not show facility with fold-downs, jump cuts, tape loops, automatic writing, oneiric or compulsive reference, detournment or collage - the basic manoeuvres in the performative arms race of self-alienating consciousness.

These, and similar other, outmoded black magic tricks and musty parlour games are the only authentic mechanisms by which subjectivity is retroactively accessed under conditions where subject, history and communism are all constrained by their belonging to that order which has already passed into history. Chuang shows no evidence for its own derangement, it is neither mad nor drunk. Then, how could it tell its readers anything? By what phenomenological means would it ever gain sufficient exteriority to find things out?

Theory must allow itself to become *of unsound mind*, and chopped into shards, if it is to uncover the true stuff. As an example, whilst Chuang comments interestingly on English warehouse generated

diseases in the post-mercantile era, it does not talk of the inherent theatricality of the Black Death, nor the eros of Biblical plagues... but it is precisely these exhilarating punctuations of historical form, when considering the dislocating power of viral systems on host environments (where products attack production), that should become the compulsive objects of communist consciousness.

In other words, the Chuang commentary lacks a pataphysical/hyperstitionist/noumenal component and for this reason the old neo-kantian racket of Nick Land is still in advance of communist thinking around the machinery of contagion because the former places a subjective content in the hands of its readers outside of the academy - it is this watchamacallit, *Dark Enlightenment*, and not the communists, that has *masqued up* and thereby captured the potential for generating avant garde forms.

To its credit, right at the end of the text, Chuang raises the subjective possibility of a 'surreal war' against society itself but this small fly emerging from so massive a maggot is actually where we are already, that surreal violence is the level of our day to day existence. That so fat a maggot should culminate in so small an emergence as the idea of *surreal war*, is just the way of such processes, everything else could have been cut away as it is just the sort of formulation that should have been situated at the core of the text and which would have taken Chuang way off script. Similarly, all the experimental material I have amassed here, is almost all deadwood, I could easily discard all the cards in my hand for the one or two *accidental* phrases that still amuse me.

Current iterations of ultra-leftism (Chuang, Endnotes, Commune) work directly against the kinds of improvisation necessary to the movement of consciousness. For the sake of a compelling thirst for realisation, their aesthetically realist presentation of communism is inconceivable except as a funnel trap, or as a further exaggeration, of the ideological categories of the leftist continuum - as if ultra-leftism signified a surplus, or extreme, leftism to which it might provide mercurial leadership.

The compromises necessitated in the throes of realisation sickness

have resulted not just in populist manoeuvrings (Commune magazine is essentially a *communist* content within a corporate frame - complete with the voluntary taxation method of its fundraising) but also the dilution of critique through attempts to metabolise bourgeois categories of left identitarianism.

No communist project should ever have aligned itself with analyses that identify capitalism as *patriarchal* or even racist, as this inevitably contradicts the specific quality of total critique which identifies capitalism as a self-revolutionising system of indirect relations mediated through representations (including, but not reducible to, the representations of gender and race).

The characteristic realism represented as *the real struggles of real people* which constrains leftism in practice as the realisation of the left wing of capital, has spread to contemporary communist projects which seemingly cannot now extricate themselves either from the trap of solutionism, or the trap of deference to the expert class generating such solutions - as if a *public health crisis* is best countered by a *public health department*.

The function of ideological realism is specifically the denial of registers other than that defined by the productive contradiction, as if that required any further affirmation - one of the variants of the recent leftist turn of communism, *fully automated luxury communism* proposes the present productive apparatus minus work as its system-immanent solution, but as capitalism is already *accelerating* away from living labour, this wretched return to the Second International's affirmation of objective pressures immediately decomposes into an apology for the momentum of dead labour as such.

But theory's purpose was never to identify a set of *plausibles* or exit points as alternatives to the present state of things, nor to supply vital information to the revolutionary front line, nor to rehearse truth as the proper standpoint of the minority. Theory is nothing but the transient state of willed subjective *excitation* in the world and recorded at the level of ideas - its only external goal is to induce symptoms in its readers, and thereby trigger the host's immune system response. This is what Artaud is referring to in the text, *Theoretica as Plague*.

Theory like plague catastrophises two bodily processes: thinking and breathing. The theoretician desires to both elicit, or rather spread, a violent response in consciousness, and interrupt ordinary breathing patterns, to the point of inducing a state of hypoxic reverie in amongst its readers.

To this end, the ultra-left, as a pro-communist, exegetically constituted minority, had, up to this juncture, refused all alliance, carrying out its work precisely in terms of the theoretical critique of leftist categories as functions of assimilating recuperation and through this, positively asserted its refusal of the given form of all struggles even as they shifted *leftwards*. Whatever it was, the ultra-left was against it - including intensifying class struggle, and revolutionary upheavals. Every object, no matter how preferable, expresses the present state of things and should be engaged on terms of its viability as a vector for ideology.

Ultra-leftism had no relevance but as the negation in theory of the immediate form taken by the reproduction of the world through the mechanism of class struggle. Its current failure to understand the disconnect between itself and leftism inevitably degrades its conception of communism which increasingly *resembles* the set of potentialities that are orchestrated by *the times* and communicated by the managerial sub-class of professionals to which so many communists belong. Communism has no more, and perhaps less, relation to this set of exits proposed by the left wing of capital than it does to the forces of reaction, or at least to the relations of personal domination to which reaction now refers.

Communism is specifically a return to direct personal relations, that is relations not mediated by the exchange of representations, which is, by definition, *impossible* through any historical sublation of capitalist productive forces as these are characterised wholly by their system-immanent tendency towards abstraction and its supply of the relational basis of representations.

As a consequence of the contemporary failure to articulate anti-realist registers of engagement, and under present conditions of state emergency measures, communists have relinquished all discontent

to right wingers, conspiracy theorists, neo-reactionaries and *traditionalists* whilst leftists have not only drawn communists further into acquiescence before state exigency but leant them their ideological hostility to autonomy, the discourse of freedom, refusal and opposition on the pretext of maintaining the solutionism attributed to the expertise of the state's social health apparatus.

The spectacle, for example, of left anarchists making Thatcherite arguments against the oxygen of *freedom* as a reactionary *talking point* is now so routine that it has become unremarkable in a circumstance where the critique of everything has degenerated into the policing of bourgeois good thinking and as the old slogan had it, *vote Bernie without illusions*.

.....

But all of the meandering above belongs to the less interesting portion of the question, what's so thinkable about the unthinkable? Of greater interest is the preoccupation with what is novel, with what is original. The event of a new thing seems significant to all attributional modes of thinking which must draw energy from their own mantic portrayal of such novelty. The invocation of an event's origins is the magical framing by which is sought out an occult control over the subsequent circulation of the event's messages - the etymological contact tracing of original meanings and uses is seen as reflective of the occultist's own, in the sense of being close to the origin of the thing, originality. It is no coincidence that every instance of thinking oriented towards originality also identifies the moment to which it belongs as the most significant of all moments.

Wherever the production of social wealth overflows the ordinary channels of ownership, where rapidly accelerating, expanding and massifying cycles of uncontrolled accumulation bypass established procedures of inheritance, it is there that the question of the ownership of origin, the taking control of the argument of the unprecedented, first originates. And, similarly, it is only in circumstances where expected conventions of inheritance, property, and investment are

devalued relative to the viral expansion of unconstrained forms of social wealth that original claims, alongside claims of and for the original, are aggressively promoted.

I too, have fallen into this trap of sketching an origin, as if the coronavirus really did *originate*, by zoonotic process, in a specific place, a market, a warehouse. There are no entry events as there are no exit events. In reality, Coronavirus has always existed, and will always exist, just as capitalism has no origin point but must exist spacelessly and timelessly as an abstract organising principle of its own organisation and in its own operation.

In order for the energy exchanges of capitalism and coronavirus to take place, their own specific plane of abstraction must also have become operational simultaneously, and on a world scale - this implies a decisive environmental receptiveness to alteration by its own particulars rather than the specified virulent property attributed to the mutating social/viral form. The precondition for every system is always itself. And so, by extension, the only purpose in considering the origin of systems is to expand the system of thinking that is concerned with thinking origins: precisely, identity systems.

The world that cannot go back to how it was before once lockdown conditions are lifted, this unprecedented world, has not originated from the pandemic *hard reboot of global capitalism* - the system of not-capitalism/post-capitalism was already viable, and the system of capitalism itself, being derived from the extraction of relative surplus value, was already relatively less-viable. To say something is starting is a trick of language, in practice there is only the expansion and contraction of systems relative to each other. Coronavirus did not originate within a specific place and then spread but took advantage of pre-existing conditions in which it mutated and to which its mutations were particularly suited.

The term, niche opportunism, is a more accurate description of the process by which particular forms expand into the world and take on recursively organisational, and self-environmentalising traits.

The success of any system, as indicated in the catastrophe event

portrayed in *The Day of the Triffids* always depends on the coincidence of two pre-existing factors, the capacity of the system to reproduce itself, and an earlier transformation within the external environment which favours within a particular niche this particular system more than any other.

The basic structuring of niche opportunism, applies to all systems: to coronavirus and digital communication, to communism and domestication, as much as to dinosaurs and mammals. Later forms have never 'out-competed' earlier forms - that which comes later has merely employed a relatively higher potential for adapting fortuitously to cumulative environmental changes. Without an external intervention, the earth would have stayed dinosaur all the way down.

Unprecedented things which cannot be thought do not become preceded things, and eminently thinkable, via their descent from some identified origin point into history but through that severance event by which an external pressure becomes itself pressured; that which was once productive, the unprecedented, becomes produced, the preceded. That which once made thinking, is later made by thinking. It seems then, the only fate worse for an objectifying force than its becoming an object of thought, is its becoming an object of unthought.

Or else,

I am like the wolf, emptied of its mountain

Ridico





## Plinthism

notes on mimesis as from  
within a neo-reactionary's  
cloak



*I will assimilate the statue you see there, and it will assimilate me. I will turn it into my flesh, and make it animal, I will give it the faculty of sensation and it will cause me to become like a ripple, like a vibration. It will become me, and I will become it. I will smash it with a hammer and grind it to impalpable powder, I will mix it with humus or leafmould; I will knead them well together; I will water the mixture and let it decompose for a year or two or a hundred, time doesn't matter to me. When the whole has turned into a more or less homogeneous substance, into humus, do you know what I do? I sow peas, beans, cabbages, and other vegetables; these plants feed on the soil and I feed on the plants. I will have become the statue, cold, living, inactively sensitive*

- Diderot

We later millenarians are set the problem embodied and summarised by someone like the parkourist, Alireza Japalaghy, a sort of moving statue within the classical tradition. Iranian parkour is a self-materialising western aesthetic, a special forces laconicism, constituted as capital's infringement upon theocratic order - Japalaghy is like the remains of Canute animated by Harryhausen, and volunteering for the NMA, launching his bones through Winchester Cathedral's west window, and inventing collage in the process. Consider the iconoclastic elan expressed in his perfected delinquent physicality as it is set in motion against the gravity-bound trudging of fascistic goons, but at the same time also captured, generated even, by the expanding apparatus of banal iconographic representations. Our moment essentialises as an image of smashed images - what fine chisel, could ever yet cut breath?

What interest could we sustain in Alireza Japalaghy, who is ultimately a content provider for digital communications technology, an agile clown of the pleroma, if it were not for the blundering attempts at impeding him as performed as representation of some or other *ancien* keystone cops

routine by some or other *Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice* ?

The real movement that abolishes the present state of things, the real movement of unhoming from personal relations, the real movement of which we are the flotsam and jetsam drifting on the tide of production, is inseparable from the expansion of the value system implicit within the process of social abstraction and within which each must labour at his revolt, chiselling away at the weight of repressive muck holding back his personal self-realisation. We are the self-sculpting of ourselves, the appalling mobiles, set in motion by the objectively given project of realisation, *unreal city!* - we had no idea that we were also building as we sought to bring the edifice down.

But the revolutionising of social relations is the process by which capital sets out from, and returns to, the world as it is. Consider the path of parkour, as moving monument, statuary in process, as it becomes an attractor basin for theorising the optimisation of totalised environmentalisation:

*the architecture of tomorrow will be a means of modifying present conceptions of time and space. It will be a means of knowledge and means of action. The architectural complex will be modifiable. It's aspect will change totally or partially in accordance with the will of its inhabitants.*

Capital is a system of reactor-contained progressive energy transfers nested within successive addictions to the continued supply of recursively *more material-less abstract* inputs which it progressively inverts in the production of its output - the substance of capital is an abstraction as verb noun and adjective. The perturbative effects upon the lifeworld of its energy transfers are metabolised as the generality's first order homeostasis - and for this reason, such a system will only die in one of two circumstances: where its inputs are fatally constrained, inducing starvation; or, where it suffers such a profound external impact that its metabolising organs fail, causing it to bleed out.

Only the former of these, the withdrawal of labour-

energy, is categorically *subjective*. The *enormous space* is a property of quivering stillness, which appears only within the interregnum of production, and where doing nothing takes on a terrible dimension, where silence really becomes, and a double edged, violence: no going back, the forever furlough, self-isolation and social distancing, the super-spreader event held at the terminal beach, these are the objectively given revolutionary forms opened up by the suspension of labour activity (and so very distant from the guillotine and the mob). Furloughed life resembles the refusal of work but it is lacking an authentically subjective dimension.

Capital is energy and nothing but, its metabolic circuit is the labour process. Capital dies where labour is absent. But the party of capital is already acting to prevent the idea of *no going back* materialising as foundation myth of an exteriorising life-world. We have perhaps already lived through the last possibility of quietude - what comes after lockdown, the return, will be conducted at a higher order of intensification and abstraction. The productive apparatus is powering up again, drawing energies into its processors and converting the stuff of, I gesture expansively,

*life* into potentials, into moving statuary. It is returning to itself, beginning again from the same manufacture of contradiction, and re-establishing the dynamic equilibrium that results from the competition of all against all.

Capitalism is a system of energy transfers that converts the material constituting productive forces into representations of social wealth, the representations then enter into a systematised relation operating on the basis of their mutually regulated equivalence. If we are to be honest here (and what do we have left to lose?) capital is socially progressive, whilst communism, it seems, in the final analysis, is the only truly authentic member of the set that capital designates as *reaction*, meaning it cannot advance itself as a member of the objectively given historical continuum.

It is the work of capital, as the revolutionary subject, to progressively abolish the statuary of all repressive hierarchical systems that might be categorised variously as *patriarchy* or *white supremacy* or *privilege* and generate in their place the representations of the values of repression, but also the representations of the values of emanci-

pation. The representation of the relation repression/repressed is historically in advance of the relation, repression/repressed.

The representations which supplant relations of direct domination are then set to work as organs of metabolism and transvaluation. The representations of repression and emancipation behave homologically, and also equivalently, both concretely in relation to each other and abstractly against all other representations, in relation to which their value is simultaneously measured and exchanged.

For reason of its representational nature, the capitalist life-world cannot be opposed or even adequately refused - every opposition becomes representation on the basis that money is already a riot against authority operating at an extremity beyond all possible other opposition, and abstraction is already a revolutionary war against privilege waged at a level of intensity beyond all possible other revolutionary wars. Equivalence is not a property of exchange, but of abstraction which *enables* exchange.

The dreamwork of the apparatus moves inexorably

towards an operator-modifiable life-world - where the balletic immanence of variable capital's clenched fist is massified and frozen as the architecture of temporary autonomous business parks, and where the sentience of fixed capital is ground to impalpable nano-powder permeating the categorical membrane of the *variable*. Consider the delinquency of capital passing through revolt, the monumentalisation of iconoclasm, as a distinct moment in the same organising principle, the principle inherent to the pressure for every thing setting out again and again and returning again and again: revolt is manifested as capital and circulates as the representation of revolt (R-C-R'); capital invests its technologies in the behavioural repertoire of revolt and derives value from its technologies of control (C-R-C').

The schematics of relatedness confront us: our adventure, our departure, our emigration, our journeying, our drifting, all these are catalysts for the further dimensional regenerative ratcheting of homeworld familiarity and sameness. The us and them of the protest rationale: *It is because they are inhuman, that they deny what is human; it is because we are inhuman that we affirm what*

*is human.* The message of revolt realises the medium of capital and the message of capital realises the medium of revolt. In response to the general trend, and looking for a subjective ethical autonomy, sectarian radical milieus become preoccupied with performative and prefigurative structures, as if the personal, the thing you think, really were political, and somehow there might be another, a further, dimension in opposition, as if personal investment might expropriate something personal from its function as cipher for suprapersonal forces, as if Zeuxis asked of Parrasios to draw back the veil of an un-captured politics, “Well, now show how you are going to be the change you want to see in the world”.

Revolt, subjectivity, non-conventionality, refusal of the command net, post-conditioned behaviours, the gait of power, all these techniques of de-control, operate as engines for *realising* the expansion of the immanent apparatus - these are the material modalities of the organisational principle for abolishing the present state of things. Revolt is not constrained by conditions it has not chosen but is a component of the mechanism of the environment of which it is also product. Revolt, and in particu-

lar the revolt against work, *is* the qualitative perfection of expelled abstract labour time, the quality emerging from the quality, the pattern in which the pattern is embedded - the community of pleroma employs and instrumentalises negation to realise the expansion of pleroma, and that is all.

If this homeworld process should be understood as americanisation, then it expands in a doubled movement, through the upstroke of the strategic measures of its repressive colonisation of social relations, and then in the downstroke of its representations of spontaneous anti-colonial revolts which it engenders and circulates. What tentacle are we to strike at of an empire that expands itself by means of its export of anti-imperialism and the corporatisation of the black power clenched fist? Which other empire has expanded its dominion through an institutionalised iconoclasm directed against itself? The proprietorial character of americanising revolt, and the anxiety surrounding the proprietorial character of americanising revolt, the who of it, and the righteous justification of the who of it, the who may claim it and the who must be denied it, and all the time it's just the same process, just



the same expansion of the network through its amplification of selected sequences of feuds, polarisations, factions, schisms, that comprise the repertoire of the culture war.

Within the manoeuvre by which consciousness is captured through the amplified representation of *struggle*, a programming may be inferred as it is inferred from the narrative arc of one like Alireza Japalaghy, a sinew, a line, a motive force, a figure induced by his seeming own desire to circulate his content within this other register - the spook employment of precisely this fleet footed abstract expressionist aesthetic, the individualisation of dribbles, splatters, interruptions, explosions, inconstancy, caprice that is designed specifically to decompose puritanical regimes of fixed meaning and value. All that succeeds within the domain of representations, the number of views, likes, follows, is successful as a result of system design more than it is attributable to the genius of individuals - it is a basic of the stochastic process that control and manipulation of the message receptor apparatus is of higher significance to the system's reproduction than is the randomly self-differentiating message sparks transmitted as individual creativity.

The second of the two operations in the huge ever growing pulsating mind game, the transfer of the energy of acts of revolt against the system into the system's capacity to capture revolt, is a historical progression, an innovation of the apparatus, and it is this which sets it apart from all naturally occurring colonising movements - a plague must have two steps, two bluffs, two exits, two attacks, two dance steps *slowly at first then all at once*. The network was never concerned which of the incompatible factions we adhered to, but only that we adhered, committed, and invested; all that really signifies is that we, so many million strangers, participate within one faction or another, and contribute to the sum of violences from which the Totality emerges.

America's recuperation of international identifications with sympathetic representations of the opposition against it is bait and hooking of the highest order: its race musics, its culture wars, its gender identities, its inter-generational conflicts, its filmic narrative conventions of *against all odds*. Can we even begin to imagine the sequence of traumatising processes and their correctives that culminate in, converge upon, the promotion of

rap stars into representatives and spokesmen who are permitted a public platform, the amplification from which is conditional on the degree to which they use the reputed authority of their recalcitrance, and their ungovernability, to call for participation in political process?

On a global scale, America realises its representation of the category of abstract revolt as the ground covering suppression of local autonomy as it mediates particulars through a self-generalising system of equivalence. In information systems, the rate of a message's circulation as an emphatic or declarative statement, as an event in and of itself, is an inverse indicator of the significance to the system of the actual content conveyed - information systems only recognise significance in messages at the level of whether the system retains integrity as a constant flow of messages to the perpetual question, am I ill or well? All the rest, every other message, circulates as quantities of freight - the less true its message, the more expanding it is of the network. In the end, there are nothing but nodes, lit up, hot, reticulated.

American revolt is the network's process of expansion

in action just as the American network is the expanding process of revolt in action - money is already riot; the market is already an autonomous zone; expropriation is already looting; the social relation is already social war. The system cannot be exceeded subjectively, the momentum of fixed capital employed by the apparatus in the represented outside surpasses and encloses every personal swerving against it - Castaneda flees his confrontation with the worthy opponent, consumed by abject terror, whilst she, La Catalina, hops beside him, like a bird, quizzical, intent, laughing. It seems that radicals feel compelled to represent capital as a mode of direct domination because they desire to directly experience the finite temporality experienced by the condemned, the abolished, the cancelled, the fated - they desire for capital to play the role of worthy, not too worthy, opponent, whilst all the time they *are* capital, its shock troops, its stakhanovites. There is always active in radicalism, the innate preference for the discourse of anti-oppression over the discourse of anti-exploitation.

Protest movements readily focus upon the goon element of the state apparatus, let's say *the pigs*, such movements

desire black hats, bad guys, racists and fascists - they desire totality to play like tyranny. The preference is structured, subjective agency cannot gain any leverage upon the diffuse and indirect systems of control that the reproduction of capital tends historically towards. Whoever demands the abolition of the police, where abolition is already a meaningless reference and an action easily called for but fundamentally unrealisable except as a neo-liberal *defunding* of social infrastructure, whoever desires the abolition of the police without also calling for the abolition of teachers does not demand the abolition of the police. Similarly, where de-reticulation is not the goal, where collectivities attempt to utilise the network in their seeming own interest, and to their own purpose, where networking and its nodes of intensification, its small world zones, its *autonomies*, is itself not repudiated, it is there that the network and the people are one hand.

And so we awaken with a start, dialectics in a lockdown, and find ourselves living in the parable of the short levers and the long levers. The use value of every product, I mean every moment in time, becomes an architectural vortex, a sinister quarter, for every other, bending its escape back

into the whole, integrating its particularity, as a particularity of the universal, into the universal.

The productive net aligns every tool to its machine, every machine to its process, and every process to the autonomous totality; each fragment, at every level, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, dimensionally, and durationally, is ever-vigilant, primed to make the intervention, ready to step in and prevent the tendency to come to rest that it discovers in all other fragments, everywhere.

At the level of everyday usage, *net* has become a metaphor from which the principle of capture, the primary function of nets, has been lost - interactions are not *caught* because they are neither autonomous fish nor wild birds. The more appropriate metaphor for the domesticating process is fold or pen... our experience as browsing ruminants is less free roaming than it is shepherded. Our desires are not repressed but enclosed by the algorithmic process of so-called *search* tools. In that sense, the productive network operates as a perpetual corrective upon all by all - everything is always at the point of its acquiescing to the coaxing buried within every *return to the fold*.

Track and Trace becomes the whole of the law and poor Janus is our god. Every machine a demi-devil goading the aggregate of products towards generalisation. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks. The crutches in Dali's paintings propping the sagging and deliquescing, propping and forestalling the headpiece of things, stuffed with straw, papa's hat, bovary's cap, Quixote's helmet, all these synecdoches for no-ideas-but-in-products as they inevitably come to rest, because no thing permits any other thing to leave the vivarium - the Pre-crime Unit will return the lost sheep before it has strayed. All these unrelated but related things jostling against each other, mutually estranged but algorithmically convergent, each compelled recursively by a hidden code running parallel to functionality, dragging its particular fragment of totality into the mechanics of everything else. Nothing is realised, but everything is near at hand.

Every discrete product begins tinkering with the operation of every other, and not signing off on the completion of the circuit of use; each gently persuades, and diverts the flow, of all others into the funnel of abstraction; each holding the other in check, pushing the other on, or drawing

it back; fitting, patching, fixing, employing. Everything dispersed everything converged. The imperialist swerve of a neo-liberal Kurtz: the networking, the networking!

And then every thing, I mean person, becomes a treadmill upon which the footedness of every other thing stumbles. Every dragging thing, dragged again, dragging in one direction but in that dragging, shall we say, 'forward' is also dragged in all directions - piano priest donkey corpse compulsion. The revolutionary is also motivated by an eating disorder, or by a hidden perversity, or at least a symptom, and always by a sickness that is denied direct expression in the stated programme; he is the Django dragging on, trailing something behind him, like a cluster of coffins, one for every of his small-world neighbours' neighbours. The systemic interruption of process, its refusal to allow completion, or abolition, maintains history in a looping return to and from the same nodes. And from the return, our same objection to the conditioning factors of the return, which itself, leopard like, functions as one such ritualised factor.

And we observe again, in infinite regress, how we can

almost imagine but never quite foresee the complex and audacious beauty of the abstracting process as we encounter it in the party of capital's classic manoeuvre: the transformation of revolt against a particular into the raw material of the expansion of the general.

But it is something else than that, we find ourselves stuck, like Buñuel's dinner guests, in a *bourgeois cul-de-sac*: every part of theory activates the *dompte-regard* by its de-platforming of every other - as the network expands in all other terms, the qualitative value of its content reduces. Nowadays, only old reactionaries are in the position, the position of for-itself white fragility, to make categorical statements - only what is pale male and stale escapes the reform imperative and engages the generality qua generality qua object, everyone else is consumed by consuming the particulars of their own identity. We are about to say, and then cannot say, immediately anticipating another, castrating, movement moving within our movement - within the phallic, the castration! - as if we are opening our mouths at the point of utterance and finding it interrupted, displaced by another mouth opening in the sticking place, saying, or rather announcing, like a precog Menard,

a Menard *in anticipation of* Cervantes, exactly what we were about to say, but altered, skewed absolutely.

It is quite clear to us, but no, it is not so clear, or rather, it couldn't be clearer, but we are in the zone and the path itself moves, and moves again - there is no walking but the path creates the walking - and we become aware that what we see is also observed by others - as the panopticon apparatus is architecturally democratised in *Rear Window* but also skewed by randomly drawn observing/observed lots. Everything possible that we might express is already colonised by those exactly like us, our doppelgängers in the looking glass world of *neo-reaction* - their every word hatches maggots in our project. They thumbed through our pamphlets before we tabled them at the radical bookfair.

That is not it either, neo-reaction only expresses the frailty of communist consciousness which self-disassembles as it mistakes itself for representations and simulacra, which cause nothing to appear that is not conditionally qualified and nested in a regress of ambivalence and re-formulation. The neo-racist is not a racist. The neo-anti-racist is not an anti-racist. There is no continuous history of racism,



there is only the novel contexts within which racist motifs may be employed. No representation represents what it portrays, its true referent is the complex metabolic structures, energy transfers, and quantitative exchanges located at the point where social systems converge with mass psyche.

Where first order racism operated as a historical product of more or less authentically articulated ideology, it remained subject to intervention and correction - even deliberate and wilful ignorance was responsive to educative return and right thinking. But neo-racism is not racism, it's about racism in the same way Westerns after the mid-60s were about Westerns. Neo-racism stages a pornographic representation of the excitement of racism within an institutionalised anti-racist context which it steers towards the eros of transgression - the neo-racist *chooses* racism *after* history, and after the interventions staged by educative institutions.

Neo-racism has no theory but the theory of maximising the impact of its violence - it revives the ancient sport of baiting, for no reason, for reason of gratuitous excitement.

The neo-racist already knows his ideas are in error, it is his motivation for cleaving to them; the denial of shared error, and not right thinking, is the kernel of all community but the community of neo-racists does not deny its error, it embraces it. The neo-racist addictively seeks out the reward paths laid by inciting outrage and offence - there is no symptom-based corrective to his dependency; interventions through de-radicalisation programmes will only intensify the perverse benefits of his motive.

Similarly, the project of neo-anti-racism, as it organises around representations of effusive inclusion at one pole and of *vile racists* at the other, becomes operational as a set of income streams funnelled through institutionalised interventionist programmes and initiatives - the discourse of emancipation describes the process by which the apparat reproduces itself. The perversity of neo-anti-racism is located in its economic dependency upon representations of racism as its raw material which it must process into novel marketable products, the circulation of a wider range of particulars serves to expand the system as whole - nothing may circulate as what it is, value is only derived in the particular's employment in the movement

of everything else. For the corporate neo-anti-racist institution, the representation of anti-racist commitment is an air corridor, an immunity passport, out of all other tight corners.

At a fundamental level, neo-anti-racist institutions know they must not *succeed* even at the level of their mission statements, and must act to inhibit any chances of effective measures - institutionalisation of the esoteric and unfalsifiable theory of microaggression, a useful therapeutic heuristic for bringing the extraction process into the liminal, for identifying precisely the pricking out mechanism of institutional selection (the entire content of *minima moralia*), is transformed into an innovative product for opening new markets in micromanagement.

Similarly, similarly, I am no communist but am complicit in the project of neo-communism which orients itself to the representation of communism whilst fully aware that communism itself became historically untenable around 1914. Communism has become a vector for abstract equivalence, a node to which any object, action, meaning or form may be attached as expression or substitute - every

particular will contain the totality, if at low resolution, and communism is no exception. Under such circumstances, as an embodied *communist* use-value, I am a vector for the exchange relation - I am caused to function as a conduit and attractor basin for the products of my competitors: I become fascist, racist, rape apologist. My addiction to the perverse knowledge of my own error, a commitment to that which is not available, is structurally inseparable from that of the perversity of the neo-fascist or neo-racist, I am defined by a football fan's partisanship, although it is true that I am less concerned with cultivating the transgressive, than I am with savouring the evanescent. Neo-communism forsakes communism for an ersatz communist market: the aesthetics; the conferences; the journals; the traditions and myths; the grievances; the networks; the PhDs.

Even so, as Pascal observed, it is possible to knowingly make false offerings to the false images standing for false gods and yet still, like good Sebastian, find oneself pierced by the real - it is but a small step from smirking to tears to resolve. And it is for reason of its compulsive pursuit of the perturbative real, that *consciousness* should record the materials that neo-reaction, giggling as it slashes at

itself, turns over. It is this matter, the what is uncovered, worms as much as artefacts, and the distance between the use of the representation of a thing and the mechanism that is productive of representations as a system of social mediation, that Bordiga pokes his finger into with his most significant work, *The Great Alibi*.

The victory of leftist categories over state institutions, and over American corporations, has resulted in the curious phenomenon of subversive, even transgressive, conservatism which utilises its alienated position as a vantage point from outside the political terrain from which it is free to develop its own critiques of institutional power. As may be seen from its influence upon the most interesting contemporary communist theory, the contribution of neo-reaction to the world's knowledge of itself, now far outstrips that of leftism, which is reduced to a renegade defence of abstract enlightenment categories already weaponised by the neoliberal project. What is leftism but corporations anticipating potential equal rights litigation?

The beneficial element of neo-reaction is articulated precisely in its *exercise* of freely speaking, causing offence

and transgressing against institutionalised value sets, drawing objects from the environment and, by making them distinct, also making them strange - it is through neo-reaction's readings of the exposed viscera of institutionalised liberalism that we begin to make out how indirect power blurs its operations with emancipatory narratives of abstractly constituted communities.

It is clear that rightists will make the point that world historical forces are circulating the Black Lives Matter protests to stimulate the economy's return from lockdown to the new normal - the just in time of digitised representation is dependent for raw material upon the churning real. The proliferation of the absurdity of black squares is not genius but an attractor basin for advertising driven exponential network effects - the contagious spread of a content through quiescent populations, no matter what it is, is sufficient to activate market activity. On the principle that everything appears in the world at the frequency, and in proportion to, its capitalisation, anti-racism has become the one permitted cause, and every proprietary apparatus has taken it up. The question is, why? What use is the Black Lives Matter movement to the expansion of capital?

Certainly, the movement's rapid global advance is reliant upon a sustained, if opportunistic, intervention within the reticulated media... BLM was not only *permitted* but objectively facilitated where a similar scale revolutionary movement would have been interrupted, subverted and dispersed. The newfound commitment of the apparatus to the cause is less a product of *shaming* than of its investment in the opportunity for a rebrand. Similarly, although the street events have taken advantage of the *go ahead*, they also express an objective tendency towards informational momentum, the perpetually re-mediating mode of social operations, more than they express the agency of *street* subjectivity.

There is some appeal in the hypothesis that current events are yet another epiphenomenon of the ongoing departmental struggle within the American security apparatus, and of the factionalising of America's national ruling class in general, as this centres upon the continuing efforts of the CIA to remove the current POTUS by foul means or foul whilst the NSA, Department of Homeland Security, US Marshals Service, US Customs and Border Protection and the Federal Protection Service pushes back to defend their

departmental outlines. The recent kidnapping of protesters off the streets by Trump's faction fishing for *outside agitators* which they mean rival departments' agents, proves they genuinely believe the CIA is staging a coup against them. The level of support for BLM expressed by corporations indicate rapid calculations around which branch of intelligence they are aligned to compounded by the market demographics of their consumer base - everything becomes a flash mob. Everything to do with the circulation of the content of BLM is reducible to the schematic: our guy/their guy. Twitter is tending more to one side, Facebook more to the other, with erstwhile allies like Unilever distancing from Facebook. Nike, KFC, McDonalds and Coca Cola have already perfected the narrative of emancipation as product placement as participation. This is the real locus of the organisation of mass desire and the struggle of private interests waged through the social form of production, this is the real real movement.

On the other hand, to observe that proprietorial messaging systems are to consciousness what shopping malls are to public space, both funnel trap and digestive system, and that messages only circulate in proportion to capital invest-

ment, is already to lapse into right wing paranoia. Thus, we are confronted with our own reactionary tendencies wherever we imagine *all messages are permitted, but only selected messages are circulated*. We become reactionary wherever we conclude that the anticipatory use of racism, or rather of neo-racism, is a strategic product of the corporate-enabled anti-racist racket. Class domination is also exercised in the spectacle of the bourgeoisie, where ideology is perfected as irony, and interest convergence is taken to its furthest degree, in their performance of *taking the knee*, and clenching their fists, and videoing themselves tearfully renouncing/confessing their supremacy, all the while confirmed in their bravery for *standing up for*, using their privilege to realise, an objective recalibration of the dominant ideology.

They will not mobilise against the thirteen billion pounds of armaments to be sold by the UK state to the Saudi Arabian state for the continuation of its war in Yemen. The secret of the missing mass opposition to the war is attributable to the corporate sponsors of mobilisation qua mobilisation, the proprietors of the logistical apparatus for moving masses behind hashtags, and who would have nothing

to gain from capitalising such a movement. And it is for reason of the capital flight from their representation that the lives of those caught in the moment's *worst humanitarian disaster* will never matter. But these are arguments made by reactionaries.

And another thing. The toppling of the oppressors' statues is a further symptom of the aesthetic monumentalising turn in consciousness - the made-for-TV symbolic image of a crowd's recursive attack upon another symbolic image activates the mass conditioned affect repertoire and floods its associated reward pathways with belonging/purpose/significance, whilst finding corollaries in the same trends moving in the opposite direction: religious sentimentalisation attached to, for example, the historically distant events of *The War*, commemorated more with each passing decade, and also in the now commonplace celebration of *everyday heroes* and the expediency of fallen martyrs. The kitsch *alternatives to racist art* that are currently emerging from the Bristol milieu, that present themselves as a new-sincerity, is qualitatively totalitarian and cynically opportunist in its retreat into cultic fetish and monovalent propaganda. In political discourse, there is an



increasing trend towards sanctification, and the sequestering of objects from discourse in order to secure them within a single meaning - in part, this is a response to the rising rate of human stupidity generated as *online culture*. However, the general trend towards producing sentimental attachments to representations that ratchets the expanding category of that in the world which may not be questioned, but which, at the same time, also mines the field of questioning as such. There has never been a better time to erect beautiful statues to great racists.

The ideological use of sentimental identification is perceptible in certain threads of argumentation against the dispersive *all lives matter* push back, where images of a particularity are shown to take priority over a generality - if a house is on fire, one does not shout, all houses matter; if an individual suffers a heart attack, one does not shout, all organs matter. The bootstrap logic of its motivational sports star/entertainer advocates propounding how every hardworking individual can be a star in their own life if only the playing field were level, not only suppresses other registers of possible engagement, and to continue the examples, as if there is no experience of housing crisis

other than that of fire, there is no health crisis other than cardiac arrest, but also suggests that capital's production of crisis as the general mechanism of its self-revolutionising life-world is of less objective significance, and the exercise of a sort of *privilege* to mention it, than the elevated symbolic register of optimising individual life-chances as narratives within the ever-rationalising productive environment currently circulating as an institutionalised *mea máxima culpa*. The problematic for the critique of totality is that it is now always vulnerable to the strategic allegation of racism made from less radical positions - a lesson the Labour Party is currently interiorising.

The conditioning mechanism buried within widely distributed symbols of categorically *unquestionable* imperatives, of mobilisation and righteousness, and the orchestrated affective responses that they trigger, serve to ease the passage of populations across difficult thresholds, from lockdown to locked on. The potential idea that the goal of corporate anti-racism has nothing to do with anti-racism is precisely the object degraded by current aspirational advertising. In its representation of every domain of the community of capital, *white skin* may exchange at a higher

rate than black skin, except that is in the culture rackets of leftism and advertising, the two plague-ridden organs of capital that are most concerned with the digestion and evacuation of class consciousness.

But the calculations intrinsic to the Americanising theory of privilege, the theoretical basis for the BLM movement, wherein the impoverishment of an abstract child's *life chances* are abstractly measured against another impoverished abstract child's *life chances*, already naturalises the environment of relations constrained to competitive exchanges of privately owned quantities, where every subject demand must appear both in conformity with the trademark of its own *community* and in opposition to the proprietorial characteristics of its market competitors.

As a quantitative approach, privilege theory may illuminate the mechanism of assigning value to fixed categories within the selective mechanisms of social institutions, the operation and maintenance of contingent demarcations and differentiations within labour market is essential to market forces, but as a theory it only corrodes the possibility of subjective consciousness when re-applied at the level

of individuals already subsumed by the war of all against all. Privilege theory won't secure a greater proportion of social wealth for the black working class except perhaps at the expense of the white working class - although the black bourgeoisie will do well from the theory's institutionalisation, its management of the cross-class BLM movement will advance its interest as a faction within the state, where it will use its ideology, like every other private interest, to further decompose class consciousness.

But that is just another, *and another thing*. Then, it is also clear that the rightists will draw transgressive energy from their refusal of capital's investment in Black Lives Matter and by doing so will attract those other malcontents previously drawn to social revolution but now denied any discourse but *pathology* - where the strike was, depression, anxiety, addiction, now is. The other rightist talking point/motif/dogwhistle generated by anti-racism is the ideology of self-improvement deployed by the left wing of neo-liberalism as a corollary of the quantifying relativisation of, and blame attached to, all those crises not attributable to race. Within what discourse, if not the provided Catch 22, either fascism or medicalisation, is the not-black

identifying individual to make sense of his alienation from the social product?

The dilemma for the working class is simply put: either enter into a cross class anti-racist pact that directly contradicts its own interest, or abandon itself to the behavioural repertoire triggered and remotely manipulated by populism, which also directly contradicts its own interest. The second of the options is already selected, and will continue to intensify as it is refracted and intensified through networking algorithms. The heat generated by the current *race war* does not contradict capital, and it is to the advantage of the politically constituted bourgeoisie, as it *naturally* places itself on the side of history, at the point it expropriates the history of *modern slavery*, and against the ignorant *white* mob, that seems all too ready to slide into the caricatured role assigned to it, enraged by the subliminal complexity of the exploitative apparatus which, by the very structure of its class position, it is precluded from bringing into consciousness.

It is a principle of the mechanics of indirect domination that energy generated by protests against particularities

of the system is metabolised into the orchestration of intersubjective struggles between demarcated interest groups as the means to foreclose upon the generalisation of revolt. That the *reductio ad absurdum* inherent to the either/or paths available to class consciousness has been taken up by the left as a political principle must be a source of great hilarity to the reactionaries, who are themselves already a dark mirror product of the self-same leftism.

It is for the reason that the party of capital employs representations of both anti-racism and racism, of both feminism and misogyny, as attractor basins for affect driven mobilisations of identity, and that the right loudly identifies this tendency, that it becomes so difficult, and delicate, a problem for communists to trace how such representations operate systematically, and are used to impede consciousness. It is in the nature of transference that the flow of affect persists but the triggering part-object to which it attaches may be substituted for other objects. In street politics, the mobilisation of the crowd, its heightened state of responsiveness to catalysing messages, persists but the mutable cause it mobilises for, can and will be substituted.

The white anti-racist movement, currently motivated along an affect pathway by a sort of righteous pearl clutching and moral fascism, remains eminently *suggestible* to the next message. Whatever the trigger, the state of mobilisation remains constant - in the successive prisms open of the part-attachments to part-objects, at the end of the transference chain, is always that gripping onto the last links, work and shopping. If racism is a structure, and it is, then anti-racism is also a structure, implying a set of sub-system tendencies and correctives operating within the reproduction of the totality - capitalism is the only social relation to generate the representation of anti-racism as a mechanism of governance operating to the standard of the general logic of emancipation moving towards abstraction.

And again, it is rightist paranoia to even consider the question: if the security apparatus is not actively utilising implicatory accusations of racist apology and rape apology to disrupt radical formations then its ends are being achieved autonomously within those formations - another case of niche opportunism exploiting *naturally* occurring events. But even so, if a hostile entity desired to take down, for example, the meddling mayor of a South Korean

city, then a well placed agent could do it with an allegation of sexual harassment (even within the reformist project, Sanders was blocked at the level of *feminism* and Corbyn at the level of *racism*). It is certainly a treacherous path to take, as we find ourselves, at last, beset by the same ideological tendencies that characterised French ultraleftism's elision with conspiratorial truthism and Holocaust denial under the rubric of its received anti-American critique of the *spectacle*.

It is almost impossible to resist the temptation to observe how the export of the American preoccupation with representations of race and gender, coupled to the bourgeois assertion of moral individual responsibility for the fragments of ideology that occupy and interrupt personal consciousness, termed *checking*, acts to constantly interrupt the possibility of consciousness, my own included. The veteran returns from every war less comprehending of his participation in the next.

Whilst it is true that the West's racism/anti-racism contradiction, and the category confusion it engages, makes no difference to the class struggle which is now practically

constrained to China, India, parts of West Africa and the southern americas, I also cannot see any resolution to it at the level of individual involvement. I continue to be of the opinion that capital cannot be engaged except at the level of the labour process and at the level of the wage as its representation. And I continue to be persuaded that street manifestations are inherently bourgeois.

At an inter-subjective level, I do not know if it is possible for groups to organise across ethnic and gender identities - I personally would not trust an avowedly anti-racist, anti-sexist white male; how can we not retrospectively interpret the decision of the populist *Commune* magazine to falsely represent capital as *patriarchal* as an ironic and cynical prefiguration of what was subsequently described as its *rape apology*? The white radical male as *ally* recommences the radical impoverishment of theory, and embodies the movement of representation into critique. Beyond the undoubted voluptuous pleasures afforded by moral exigency, I would want to know what really animates these bearers of radical opinion. The operation of the *dompte-regard* is again found here, the white radical's failure to express his *first world problems* signals a

structured assumption of superiority - the deployment of self-conscious privilege in the interests of the movement is itself an operation of a privileged status that structures the impossibility of realising the politics, and reasserts a predominant position within the movement. The white radical's freedom to act in the interest of others is itself a form of leadership - but there is an alternative, the struggle against himself as vector of capital. Nor would I be inclined to support the engagement with others, even at the level of discussion, on the basis of gender or race politics, as I would immediately sense the falsity in it - the objective structuring of such encounters would always prove decisive. I hereby counsel against all alliances, and their representation within so-called *social movements*. Allies are less reliable, and more dangerous, than enemies.

I also concur that every writer, thinker, artist and organiser should be immediately no-platformed - that they should engage the world as if their audience were goons and nothing but. On the other hand, as I am relatively still able to comment on this - and what difference would it make anyway? - it seems to me that there is potentially something irreducibly *subjective* within the discourse of



*blackness*, and in particular its Afro-pessimist and Afro-nihilist strains, as it sets itself against the bourgeois ideology of anti-racism. It seems that there is a compelling logic in this milieu's amplification of the demand for reparation payments within the anti-racist movement, and towards separatism, and thus against all alliances with *whites* - this in itself, if nothing else, should shake off the movement's neo-liberal sponsors and drive a wedge into the conventional aesthetics of the anti-racist block.

On the other, other hand, let's be clear, reactionaries also make these recommendations - race separatism will overlap with race realism. Even so, it is possible that the most conscious members of this separatist milieu will later break off and re-enter the orbit of communist thinking, although, hilariously, as a manoeuvre in anticipation-prevention, communism in a late return to programmatisation should also never absorb such tendencies except as instantiations of the human community at its fullest amplitude.

The question of the degree to which an individual is corrupted by ideology or not, whether they are sexist

or racist or not is a nonsense, of course they are wholly corrupted, of course they are embodiments of the operational principles of social domination in every detail of their person, just as they express the principles of social domination in their opposition to the principles of social domination. Every individual is capable of terrible involvements, and of the profound weakness of not living according to the emancipatory value-set which they desire to adhere to - the historical impossibility of existence without exchange is the essence of Totality. But moral infirmity is objectively meaningless. Communism is not a system of ethics.

The housing blocks, the factories, the prisons are designed specifically to contain damaged people, there is nothing anywhere but damaged people, but to represent them as originators of that violence is ideology, it is another lever on aesthetic sensibility and sentimentalising identifications, and nothing else. All such damaged people should be released and the institutions containing them should be disassembled, even though, and especially because, they are occupied with racists, rapists, murderers, thieves, and abusers.

Human beings are inherently bad, the structures containing them are inherently worse, but these are the materials we must work with in order to increase the proportion of consciousness within sociality. None of the work of communisation - the objective increase in rate and proportion of self-reflective consciousness as a social relation - may be commenced upon until the factory system, the control net, and production itself, that is, the totality of systems by which automated process inhibits consciousness, are escaped. The environmentalising movement by which damaged lives are healed is very painstaking, and quiet, not silent exactly but murmuring, even so it has nothing to do with the repressive desublimation of *street* manifestations.

Individual opinion, individual behaviour, individual character are sequelae of domination, such afflictions cannot be resolved at the level of individual resolution; good intentions don't beat ingrained habits. No matter the effort employed in *self-critique*, such individuals, set against idealist categories, will always be not anti-racist enough, they will always be not feminist enough and they will remain so for as long as their environment is constant. White male

communists have nothing to add, not even their affirmation, to the particular struggle, they have no object for the work of their critique but the totality of social relations - they should absolutely disengage from populist and leftist involvements. Social binds are only released recursively, at an order of organisation higher than that at which they are manifested. As individuals, we should give up on the idea that we are agents of social transformation.

Communism's inextricable kafka-trap is activated by the unavoidable realisation that anti-racism is an ideological stimulant by which normal economic functioning is currently reimposed onto quiescent, and locked down populations, which had been, as a consequence of their very inertia, drifting away from the productive apparatus and into the hypnogogic or reverie-state at the threshold of consciousness. For the moment, anti-racism has become that requisite distracting noise on the screen that is not portraying the conditioning mechanism by which the masses are to be persuaded back to work.

Black Lives Matter has eclipsed No Going Back as the sloganised encapsulation of a possible engagement with

the present. The critique of everything is inundated once again by the American particular; a sort of grieving in general is suppressed by the representation of this particular grief. The Party of Capital rationalises the situation strategically: if racist systems are to be confronted for what they *really are*, then logically, they should be powered up again to take effective, restorative, action. The spectacle of political representation is the alibi for the operation of the whole.

The class interest of the Black Lives Matter movement becomes operational at the level of the application of post-fordist productivity/efficiency reforms to bourgeois institutions - the ideological function of inclusivity strategies at the level of *valued individuals* is designed to break collective bargaining, whilst its anti-microaggression training, countering bias workshops, white fragility interventions, maximise the opportunity for micro-management and surveillance of the workforce. As a managerial strategy, neo-anti-racism is an adequate distraction from wage freezes, increased hours and taxes, and mass redundancies.

From the subjective pole of the class contradiction, there is no struggle but for increasing wages and reducing work hours, and pursued to the point that the institutions and the class relation itself become unsustainable. From the objective pole of the contradiction, capital expresses its supreme ambivalence, and there was no ambivalence before capital - on the one hand, it looks to abolish work, expel labour and replace class with more efficient product-control apparatuses, but on the other, the improved efficiency of reformed institutions, and the ideological integration of the workforce around company inclusivity programmes, is inseparable from the expanded reproduction of Totality.

From the standpoint of the party of capital, if anti-racism is *doable*, or at least conceivable, then salvaging the natural world, or continuing quarantine indefinitely is much less so - at the level of energetics, the less costly out will always be selected above the more costly out, but it will also be selected in order to suppress the claims of its competitors; the expedient *out* blocks the untenable outs, the unpalatable outs, and the unprofitable outs. By directing popular attention to a single intractable issue, which must bear

the burden of all complaint, representation will eventually exhaust protest against the present state of things by means of sheer over-determination and the perpetual transference onto new objects. We are fated to live in a state of depleted discontentment with the *enabled* forms of discontent.

The development of received forms of complaint, and establishing the proper channels for opposition to itself, is the highest art of governance: H was Papa's new Hat/ He wore it on his head/ Outside it was completely black/ But inside it was red. Psychoanalysis emphasises the organisation of desire within the hysteric's discourse, which is always less a matter of the desired object than of where the hysteric is desiring from. The white hysteria of the 'we stand with you' milieu, follows the same patterning within previous solidarity, anti-fascist, and anti-imperialist iterations of leftism, and which organises its demands *through* its representation of what it imagines is foundational black experience and to which it assigns a Father's authority. The white *allies* of BLM are desperate to *get it right* whilst the falsity of their experience, their desiring from an other's position, inevitably implicates them within conventional

*guilty* racialising stereotypes, which in turn accounts for the incongruous vehemence of their protestations.

Of more general significance to the critique of those ideologies which induce hysteria as an apparatus for intensifying street mobilisations, is the remarkable capacity of the hysteric to attenuate the complexity of the life-world to their own, borrowed, enthusiasm for the desired object, the cause, which they imagine, because they imagine the Other desires it, is also the desire of everyone else, hence the current sloganised formulation, and coercive ratchet, *silence equals violence*. It might be argued, in terms of theatre as plague, in terms of convulsive beauty, that the hysteric's contribution is, at the least, confrontational, and a catalyst of events, but it is in the nature of the hysterical form that it is structured around mobilising others through an over-amplified appeal made from a position of helplessness based on real, imagined or manipulated grievances, and is productive only of a spectacle of confrontation orchestrated around the dramatisation of impasse, and all the while deploying a paratreptic strategy of distracting from the authority position organising the desire for such dramatics.

The strategy of collapsing the world to the other's desire necessarily banishes all other desires and other registers of desire - a circumstance that is uniquely manipulable by whatever forces control communications technology and are capable of mobilising representations of the other as authority. Similarly, the subjective pole of military discipline depends upon a state of hysterical preparedness, organised through irrational tasks and routinised deprivation, to receive direct orders. The diffusive hysterical internalisation of desire from another is the prepared ground for, but a distinct state from, command based mobilisations - first derangement, then marching in formation.

The discourse of the hysteric, because it is driven from the position of an other's desire and is organised around the internalised but opaque imperatives of the other, is directed towards the ideal of identity between speaker and spoken. For the hysteric, one is what one speaks; speech acts are the decisive signifier of allegiance, sincerity and authenticity. Because he is acutely sensitive to the externality of his own values whilst also unable to acknowledge this, and so pressured between shifting states of displacement and disassociation, he is preoccupied by uncovering

what others *really* think, the codes, and motifs of their hidden complicities. But there are no secret opinions, and no individual is reducible to their adherence to a value set - there are only psychological states relatively and reactively stimulated by every individual's personal relay of social values transmitted, and relatively and actively energised, by market forces. Nevertheless, the hysteric seeks to hold others responsible for what they say, the accusatory form and its implied vigilance, consumes his waking state, as if other people's words and ideas were their personal inheritance, and a measure of their existential worth.

The hysteric is disturbed by the ordinary function of language which facilitates the individual's expression of error as a means of self-orientation; utterance is always error moving through the world and more or less self-correcting, via the attribution mechanism, as it encounters and rubs against the errors uttered by others... for this reason, where speech is returned to an idealised vehicle for proper thinking, by means of censorship, no-platforming, cancelling, shaming, muting and so on, and where the perversity of ordinary expression, is denied and its content hypostasised, hysteria becomes contagious and enters



into a state of runaway up to the point where the other's desire is forced to intervene directly, usually in the form of comedy, and thus releases the crowd from its agitation.

The problematic of identity populism is generated from its mistaken assumptions around the functions of language and how discourse integrates within state institutions. The issue here is not how an individual asserts its self-understanding and seeks to expropriate energy from the life-world so as to sustain the reproduction of its own being - the problem is how its fixed sense of that being, and its proprietorial resistance to the possibility that it might express itself in terms of *je suis un autre* is so simply integrated into the ideological apparatus. The problematic of identity becomes active in the use, deployment and circulation of representations of selfhood as political correctives to, and constraining boundaries upon, lived experience. The self is a politicised object but not a political agent.

The trap of identity populism is sprung wherever the self is persuaded to police its natural tendency to exceed the images of its ideal ego, and is induced to deny the contra-

diction of what it is in order to add value to its representation. The tendency to value the categorical ideal over lived experience, draws identitarian tendencies into the orbit of neo-liberalism, the cold embrace of which is less a concession to popular struggle, and the long march of emancipation through the institutions, than the result of a basic cost/benefit calculation - the productive apparatus has discovered it is cheaper to recognise, and capitalise niche identity markets as a compensatory measure of inclusion, as a path of least resistance, than it is to increase wages - the proliferation of state recognised identities is a corollary to the suppression of workplace collective bargaining.

Even so, official recognition of a demarcated category-dependent community only transposes the vulnerability of its members into other registers. The social construct of identity inevitably draws its every instantiation into compromise, and complicity, with the forces it imagined its structure *naturally* repudiated - identities almost immediately begin transmitting enemy messages as their own so as to defend themselves against the claims of competing other identities (see the impact of the *race realists* and those who conceive themselves as *gender critical*).

Every individual is equally a mouthpiece for the work of language and is inevitably driven to become the veritable telltale heart, spectacularly drawing attention to its implication within that which its ideology demands it suppresses. The hysteric finds it incomprehensible that meaning must radically diverge from intention, but the inexorable work of the social relation will always exceed the subject's will to control the parameters of its own discourse; the hysteric will not countenance the proposal that he fatally operates against the cause to which he has so sincerely pledged allegiance - he is only appalled that other people are hypocrites.

Or rather, because hysteria intensifies as it approaches the threshold of self-knowledge, as it is inevitably drawn along the spiral path upon which it begins to suspect its own errors, the hysteric is both uncomprehending of the escape of meaningfulness but also all too knowing of the potential gains that are to be extracted from such divergences - hystericised politics becomes operational as its paratrepsis is deployed against the impossibility of securing its own position as morally irreproachable, and so externalises as gotchas, ambushes and exposés the *hypoc-*

*ris*y of others.

Social production and moral integrity cannot appear in the same space. If racism is a structure, then denunciation of hapless racists, as products of such systems, logically becomes not only redundant, and arbitrarily selective, but also erotically gratuitous - a sadistic perversion of the will to dominate. The end point of Privilege Theory is the erotic-compulsive intersubjective declaration, *you are a racist* as a climax in itself. The declaration, which is not even an allegation that might be answered, is met with a shrug, *if so, then what?* Yes, we are fallen, yes we are sinners - it is right to feel shame but there is nothing to be done to relieve it.

A lovable buffoon scrawls, *Dickens racist* on Broadstairs museum. It makes no difference. Everyone is *racist*, including the buffoon. History has fixed us in our place and there is no historical evidence that knowledge of a condition could reverse its momentum - there is much more evidence to the contrary. Things change but not according to will - consciousness and agency are a contradiction. For this reason, the ideology, *use your privilege to change*

*the system*, mistakes the function of demarcation within the labour market - a higher wage does not confer proportionally increased agency. Either human beings are socially conditioned, or they are morally autonomous. Either there is racism, or there are racists; individuals are either products of a process, or they are Robinson Crusoes. At the level of system-change, it is futile to denounce another as a racist - at best, what may be achieved, is to trace the implication of individuals within systems of dependency.

And for the same reason, if moral responsibility and not blindly abstracting social forces are constitutive of world-making, then the ideological proposition of a revolutionary minority acting impeccably in accord with its own access to objective truth, and against the abject complicities of others, would then run against the possibility of communism - or rather, by its own logic, if good people doing bad things for a good end was the decisive condition of the life-world, it would irrevocably cancel the project of communism altogether, at which point the emergence of *real democracy*, the bourgeoisie's project of education, law and exchange, would become the reformable objective basis for such a politics.

Which brings us face to face with the question of what it is that would really prevent a return to the infinite expansion of capital, and it is not a sequence of vaulting expropriations, it is not a matter of accelerating the forces of production beyond the fetter of value, it is not progressive, historical, realising, abolishing or sublative movement at all. The exit from Capital is incomprehensible and featureless, Ballard locates it as *the enormous space*, which we may also identify as a corollary of Tarkovsky's *zone* - there is no path but, as the song has it, we make the path by walking it - and the walking it, the subjective component, is an invariant, a pilgrimage. Communism is *going back* after all, a radical dispersive deceleration of the forces of production, and the willed adherence to an, albeit deliberately invented, therapeutic self-grounding tradition and mythos - it is a going back, but not in history, not to an earlier point of departure, but to that which has not yet appeared in history.

How strange and broken I must seem as I raise the Kierkegaardian whip, hesitating before a command I do not have the power to give. How strange to consider a course of action for all of which I am already the last surviving

fragment - what audacity! To go on, to stop, to return - there is nothing else, the recombination of elements *is* writing, and communism has no source, no energy, but its transfer from, and the metabolisation by, the writing of it. Communism is writing, as capital is images. K writes: to stand in quivering stillness beneath the whip is an act of will, tremors indicate the strain upon the body, and the necessary effort to maintain such stillness, is an expression of the absolute, a mustelid line, like an autonomous sinew, like that sacred shape of emptiness which may be sculpted between *things*, like an angelically inscribed and invisible graffiti that is evidence of the reauthoring of the world, but also the left handed profanities of those, such as Alireza Japalaghy, who have become the writing.

*Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out; with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work. Artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult. One may assume that what mattered was*

*their existence, not their being on view. The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits. Today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden. Certain statues of gods are accessible only to the priest in the cella; certain Madonnas remain covered nearly all year round; certain sculptures on medieval cathedrals are invisible to the spectator on ground level. With the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products*

# My name is Ridicolosamente

Fellow Creature,

Shall we say, it's because it's a joke that we know it's real? I am addressing you with the greeting used by the Ranters, I use it as a sincere irony because the domain of the creatura, or rather the participation of Ranters as creatures in the world, is now not an option for us. We later Ranters may no longer return to that state of nature that the historical Ranters could also not return to; but the impossibility of our return, after Lacan's *dompte-regard* is now located symbolically - our intensities and their falling away are abruptly facilitated as it were, by the triumph of the *relation* over the *address* - to assert fellowship where secret societies are supplanted by niche markets, to address an idealist commonality where abstract equivalence sets use in confrontation with use, is but a sincerest irony.

In general terms, this writing is concerned with what it is to set out and to then return back, it is digressive, associative, and no doubt maddening - but it is also a reflection of the time of *lockdown*, written over the course of the three months of the interregnum and should be considered as a companion piece to the more, but not much more, straightforward text *I am not Chuang* written over the same period. The writing began as a personal letter which was never sent because I felt its contents could upset the recipient whom I do not know personally, but it retains some structure of this earlier form.



The writing revisits something I wrote a decade ago for the anarchist magazine *The Anvil*, itself a project of return to print from the digital world, and in part was begun in response to the death of the editor of that magazine. The content begins in contemplation of the Ranters, a Seventeenth Century anti-sect sect, which like witches possibly never existed, and then alights variously upon current events, curses/blessings, theological readings of prodigality, marxist readings of the Odyssey, and Japanese hold outs, amongst the other usual magpie bric a brac and non sequiturs. I have attempted to retain, or return to, the motif of return throughout but sometimes the path is rather convoluted.

And so, we shall say for now, it's from the form of living arrived at by *going out on a limb* and then either inching out still further, always that one inch further, in the inching on, or the other, the leaping off altogether at the unsupportable, bowing, snapping end, it is from the damage done by and to the ones who leave, that we begin to imagine how they will come back and to what purpose. It is all the same. Either way, it's the same, both shall stand, the inching and the leaping, as indicators of a restless itinerancy, that and the mercurial combination of leaping free association and cunning-inching recantation, of leaping bibliomancy and inching astrology, of inching and self-dislocating logics and the leaps in contemplative pipe smoking, of staying one step ahead of the chasing pack and tarrying amongst the autonomous skirts lifting, of lazy, licentious songs and gestural pulpit blockading, by this willed and raucous Brownian motion of self-individualising secessionism, so it is, by these means that the millenarian participants within the Ranter-Quaker milieu arrived somehow at the greeting *Fellow Creature* by which means they both drew out from pious ranks the ones they did not know but *recognising* each other as belonging to the same extremophile tendency threading through all farthest things, whilst at the same time invoking a benign commonality of the truly living, that category of the otherwise, and of the reconstituted home or community, the lair of such strange strangers - by this greeting, *fellow creature* they reset the problem of, and summarised the tendency by which, the proximity of all to all is encountered from its most distant and banished exteri-

ors.

There is, in the limit set by heavy handed authority, as placeholder for all *natural* constraint, a distinct quality of absurd freedom that is absent where such authority is also absent - in the free world, death itself is abolished, there is only a proliferation of the living; different and successive individuals but always the same life. I am thinking here of how the outside is generated from out of the intimacy between repression and profundity: of Ava Gardener's Pandora at the point of death, 'it is as if we are under a spell and outside of time'; and again, of Hugo's *Last Days of the Condemned Man*; or, where Paul Bowles, in *The Sheltering Sky* considers the actually finite number any of us will consciously engage with the sunrise and freely draw the conclusion of his own mortality.

There is in this external constraint placed upon the subject's sense of time and place, the objective sparking of the possibility of, and so aesthetic appreciation for, another time, another place, in which the minutiae, the seconds and inches become unusually, and profoundly, significant - *Creeps in this petty pace from day to day*. Consciousness is nothing but the consciousness of this other circumstance, it's elongated duration set in the narrowest confines, set negatively against the pressure of *what is*. What it is, what it is, to return with a start to the remembrance: *not much more now*.

Let us say then, we are like the Ballardian character, himself echoing Webster's *I know death hath ten thousand several doors For men to take their exits; and 'tis found They go on such strange geometrical hinges*, who has three months to live and finds that this plunge pool of finitude becomes like a limitless sequence of heightened states where experience both intensifies and escapes inexorability - my god, it's full of stars. But then, even exultation in the end, as it also draws out, becomes heavy with waiting, and repetition.

Just today, I was considering the elder blossom, the last of the fruiting trees here to bloom in Spring, the passing of which signals the beginning of summer, and I contemplated how it is that I always welcome the first of its appearances, the opening night as it were, but becoming accustomed to the extended run, which after all is not

beyond a few weeks, I do not even notice, and much less grieve for, the day the final bloom fades for another year. Towards the end of May and the beginning of June, each day *could* be the one, but I have never registered it, and yet, you might say, spoiling the effect, I register it now by marking my failure to mark, or as Tom Waits almost put it, I place a flower on my idea of the flower's grave.

And it is at this crossroads that we two, each having set out along their own bowing, bending limb of the branching bush of self-actualisation, who having set out from the iron rice bowl of behavioural conventionality, are now also compelled to uncover within our projects the perpetual recurrence of morgellons-like threads foretelling our fated, Ariadne-patterned, return. We cannot prevent our own checking-in, our resurfacing on-grid, our bobbing plastically amid the trash vortex. We have become the refreshed link to all that we cannot leave behind. Or, we are always ur-crashing in the same ur-car

The Seventeenth Century's sudden invention of individuality, which arrives in the world as an irresistible desire to leave the world, and which by accident creates another immediate world overlaying what is rejected, also resets the nature of the tension between the order of the *creatura* and the order of the *pleroma*. By self-estrangement from social relations based in the local traditions of personal domination, the millenarians uncovered, within their own delinquency, *the Ideal* and its subset, the congregation of agreeable outsiders, by which particular belonging is characterised in setting out from general belonging, but in the name of returning back to a state of ideal belonging that shall be located, as the blues song has it, *further on up the road*. That which is evoked by *fellow creature* is precisely the point of disappearance both intimately near at hand and utopianly far distant where judgment, vengeance and redemption converge.

If the Ranter-Quaker's *fellow creature* asserted the possibility of a community of self-separating things as a return to a higher order from the furthest reaches of social derangement and decomposition, then we are set the problem of the hell-mode of the very heaven imagined by the Ranters - the veritable totalising steady state, or rather the cybernetics, of eternal return, where all exits trigger the regenerative

ratchet of the same via the absolute Ideal's molochian consumption of its own cultivation of difference. *I'm joking, I'm joking.*

Fellow creature, allow me to say, fellow stranger, in our own efforts to break free, we too uncover that we are at the end still beholden to this velvet fist in an iron glove, so I hail you as creature as stranger, fellow as fellow, somewhat nostalgically in the spirit that the Ranters recognised the nature of living forms belonging to the order of the *creatura*, knowing that such strangeness is all but impossible now, knowing that we are incorporated more than we are self-separating, more the same than different, more conditioned than autonomous.

As those strangers who once greeted each other in the name of belonging to an impossible community derived from a freshly constituted cosmic *creatura*, so now I remember to greet you, how many of our communications lack an appropriate mechanism of hailing, in the name of an impossible estrangement from the fully automated community that is realised as *pleroma* and nothing but.

We might, in this encounter, at least try to imagine what it was like to pass naked divine through a low tavern, to swear when swearing before puritanical authorities afforded as true a sense of physical exultation as the blackbird's song in April; we can imagine when it was that individual autonomy instantiated cosmic significance and what it was to be a stranger, now that, since the end of the Cold War, strangers have been discontinued. We can imagine from the standpoint of these depleted times, what existential abundance might have felt like. And in so imagining, we can also consider what it would mean to leave home and what it would mean to consider returning home in circumstances other than these in which we now find ourselves. More than a decade ago, I wrote the following:

*I recognise the movement of human consciousness firstly in the social tendency to band together, and secondly, in the counter-tendency to divergence and secession (hence, the Ibn 'Arabi effect). We might say that Intelligence is thus always defined in terms of the minority position's separation from what is established whereas interest is expressed in terms of a falling-back-upon the arrived at,*

*seemingly natural, apparently residual, solidarity of the larger group. From this hypothesis, it is a small step to perceive organisations as machines for manufacturing the agents of what I have called the Ibn 'Arabi effect, that is, organising systems produce the intolerable particulars that are necessary to generate the membership's specific complaints against, and divergence from, the structures which constrain it.*

[http://theanvilreview.org/print/the\\_ibn\\_arabi\\_effect/](http://theanvilreview.org/print/the_ibn_arabi_effect/)

Some time in the 6th Century, the poet Wang Han wrote the line, *how many soldiers ever come home?* All at once, he is confronted as if by the shelter afforded beneath an arching bridge, or as if by the meaning of what it is to live in the thought of the impossibility of return, or as if by the thought that systemically forgetting everything was exactly the same as remembering it, or as if Ballard were writing on the sum of an individual's experiences and characterising it as an act of reverse cataloguing, where the deliberate scrambling of codes becomes its characteristic trait - just as we may only know of the Beaker People from their habit of smashing pots.

Every soldier who has ever separated himself from the close surroundings of familiar attachments, and goes to war, must pay for the experience by dying one of the deaths reserved for those living on the soldier-path - lucky is he over whom the path closes. Wang Han asks us, *why laugh when they fall asleep on the sand?* The soldier who sets outward to engage the world's forces, to express the world's forces, is soon *beset* from all sides and inevitably absorbed into the ranks of the fallen. By one means or another, they are all lost, they all fall away, joining the ranks of *the fallen*, even if many of them must also first die the inglorious death that is survival.

The dislocation that has its source in the accident of surviving, which is the perfected form of becoming separated from home, is the affliction that restrains the survivor from ever truly returning to the condition of the living. Surviving one's own separation from the world is always a traumatising humiliation, a barrier thrown up between the one who has endured *consequence*, and the truly living,

whom he grasps at, from outside, as if from the principle, *the older the environment, the slower its metabolism*, as if the old place were both unchanged and unchangeable, but also as if it were caught in the molten surface tension of a *camera obscura*, or as if time itself had stood still, swallowing itself in ceaseless self-adjustment, just there in Shere in Surrey.

The wandering figure severed from his formative influences is transformed into a stranger whenever he is later confronted with the immediacy of the particular world to which he may never truly belong again. There is then, set within the project of return, the problematic of another return, wherein the return to before, the earlier state, races its chariot against its other homecoming, the return to the present and the recommencement of that *another and another and another* life which is bound perpetually to the same place.

If the soldier-poet had not set out, but set out along another path, the setting out that is commenced in staying put, then another, but equally necessary, return path would inevitably open before him. The return of the sedentary wanderer is embarked upon as a damascene flash, as another rupture with the world, as another starting awake, and as that return to somewhere else which may only be effected in the home town, but which is also ritualised, half-falsified, by the local traditions and festivals which, by half-punctuating the world's cyclical return to steady state, half succeeding in half opening the whole by means of faithfully observing this peculiarity and this perversity.

The unprecedented divergent, the swerving event, is conditioned by the home town's unswerving preparedness for the constancy in both transience and eternity... and contrariwise, where a city's conditions are themselves in flux, its particulars, products and dependencies, are always and ever the same. As an event itself, the city is driven to repress events. Castenada translates Jimenez: *The people who have loved me will pass away, and the town will burst anew every year.*

In both senses, return involves the struggle to maintain what Bataille calls the self's *discontinuous being*, that distinct outline containing the integrated history of the wanderer as a locatable and particular self that is maintained, by great effort of will, across time,

and sustained against the *temptations* and erosions of disintegrating external forces. As Freud discovered, the organised self, as complex product of eros, seeks the path by which it may succeed in achieving sufficient control over itself and thereby discharge all its energies ecstatically into the abyss.

The *compulsion to repeat*, and the subset *fort-da game*, is an organising impulse of the self's systems directed towards an obsessive *going back over* or replaying past causal sequences so as to capture that portion of available energy necessary for overriding its own homeostatic tendency to routinised habits. At the level of behaviour, compulsion breaks repertoire. By flooding its own system with energy mined from past events, the self both disorganises and is absorbed back into the continuity of outlinelessness. The self's desire to rupture from the self, as achieved through pleasurable release and ecstatic states of compulsion, trance and rapture involves taking the path of return as other, the path of not-becoming, where the achieved state of non-self-identity is negated in the greater movement of identity with environmentally induced evanescent effects, and timelapsed processes.

In their presentation of Odysseus's encounter with the Sirens, Adorno and Horkheimer perceive this confrontation between incompatible orders of return: to the continuity of the living past on one side where all that was consigned to the Underworld is redeemed as an immediate form of *knowledge* or wakening which is also a serpentine bending back upon, and cycling within, what it is as itself; and on the other side the return to the project or praxis of the self, a coming-to as integral to the immediacy of the moment's labour, the oared momentum taking Odysseus back towards an Ithaca that is located on the horizon of willed effort.

Of note here, is Adorno and Horkheimer's assertion that the compulsive content of the Sirens' song is their perfect knowledge of the past. The song is so powerfully seductive because it proposes an immediate and redemptive return to an earlier state in which the wandering soldier-poet may become absorbed into the past's continuous state, and so live within it stripped of the *strain* of having to

maintain the self-interrupting, porlockian *I* of discontinuous being. If the return to praxis supposes the self's expropriation and metabolisation of the world, then the return to the state of what-has-passed, at its fullest amplitude, involves abandonment of self to a porous state at the point of incorporation by what Freud calls, the self's 'oceanic' prehistory.

As implied by Adorno and Horkheimer's 'prisoner at a concert' remark, the social mechanism of species being binds the self's tendency towards a state of diversion (and, and, and) orthopaedically to the mast of practical engagement and so, by diverting diversion, heads off the general tendency's particular tendency towards destructive runaway. In this sense, resurrection is not so much a sadistic return to life from death but a masochistic attempt by organising forces to take control of those matters that are irrevocably lost and dispersed. The human community is not constituted as a balance achieved between the incompatible registers of return, to an earlier state, or to the complex present, but rather through the consciously lived relation between the two - the motor of species being is contradiction, at its most basic level, the relatedness of tension to release, organisation to disintegration, discontinuity to continuity.

*In mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish — that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances...it can once more be brought to light.*

And here we are fellow stranger, 10 years or so on from our last exchange, talking of what it would involve to attempt a return home from wherever it is that we have ended up. You raise the question of coming back in from the cold, in part as a corollary to our collective introspection following the death of one also described as a *deplorable asshole*, and in part as a means to consider this tectonic fault in time which has opened and grown since you left behind that anything-goes Bay Area anarchist nucleus. It seems, the idea of return first forms as an object for the consciousness of the wanderer, taking shape as a flooding back in recognition of the past, as the home-world's return as affect-laden memory. The wanderer turns for home



at the command of his memories. Home returns to the wanderer before the wanderer turns for home.

How strange and broken we must seem in our resolution - our life of imperious caprice, our too-fond embrace of Fortuna, our chronic history of allowing ourselves to be swept away, and then swept away again. We catch a reflection of our true worth sometimes, the laughter of the mirrored skull superimposed onto that surface of who we think we are, and we are brought low, not by our wounds, but by the bathetic varicosities knotting and branching within the armouring necessary for our *keeping going*. We are not prevented from coming and going as we please but are confronted with every last absurdity that is implied by the resolute continuation of our projects, the absurdities that also serve as the locus for our sentimental contemplation of our decisive turning back for the home, that imperfect place of origin, considered as if from an about to be struck campsite beside the way.

*And without reducing his speed he began to dream of a flat land where he would never have to rise again and hold himself erect in equilibrium, first on the right foot for example, then on the left, and where he might come and go and so survive after the fashion of a great cylinder endowed with the faculties of cognition and volition.*

The extended discussions in which we participated back then also mediated a, very of the-time, convergence between American stirnerite insurrectionism with that peculiar extension of the European ultraleft's logic of self-quarantining. More specifically, our unlikely bedfellowship was generated from a shared repudiation of narodnikism - we didn't want to perform an appeal to the masses, we viewed the prospect of any recourse to calling upon *The Call* as a leftover of leftism - we abhorred right opinion, that peculiarly american interpersonalisation of refusal, and its cumulative, ratcheting effect. It was our fate to arrive at the refusal of that *radicalism* wherein social transformation is conceived as the cadre's catalysing of mass movements through the circulation of its own emancipatory

good thoughts. How strange and broken we must seem as we are thrown against what is against what is.

If it is true that in our own way we also set off to war, and that we were no better than the rest, then it is also true that we instinctively refused both to recruit, and to be recruited. As if either alternative could make any difference to those enacting their own extinction event. As Orwell observed, *The men who fought at Verdun, at Waterloo, at Flodden, at Senlac, at Thermopylae - every one of them had lice crawling over his testicles*. Just as we walked out of our mother's world, *one midsummer morning*, drinking wine from jade cups, strumming guitars on horseback, so we will end somewhere out there on the road, lost, unknown, inscrutable to others, incomprehensible to ourselves - quixotic to all.

And then, and only then, in throes of folly, thoughts turn to the likelihood of our navigating this torture garden's forking paths, as it were, in reverse: *and these I reached by rolling over and over, like a great cylinder*. Do we now, in spite of how far we have gone out, have the energy to turn again towards the point of our departure and thereby confront the sequential process by which all divisive events converge back upon their shared causation, the place where men find themselves emerging backwards, as it were, from the entrance of that infinite labyrinth reserved for prodigals, adventurers and for all those who have ever set out? Or don't we? I am joking of course, but also joking *before*, or in a paroxysm of *nachträglichkeit*, in relation to, the Law.

The question of return is set at two points in the separation of the individual from the group: firstly, immediately, in the throes of leaving, the conditions for return are set by those remaining as a means both to ameliorate the loss, and as an anticipatory stratagem for defending themselves against the traitor returning in arms - which man leaves, they ask themselves, not consumed with bitter thoughts of returning one day to conquer that which had caused him? Secondly, the question appears to the one who leaves, but then only many years later when home appears in its true guise, as a location that is not so much distant in space but as somewhere that is locked

irrevocably in another time - he who was exceeded in the midst of proximities, now exceeds by long shadow, from a distance.

From both positions, from the remaining and from the leaving, the matter of return becomes a source of torment, a question of recrimination as those involved are presented with the ratcheting effect of a broken relation. Ah yes, worse still than violent separation, the mended bridges. To introduce the difficulty of the problem of return, I present you, as one who knows the fraud and its truth better than I, with the passage I always return to on such occasions:

*"I will never reach Ixtlan. Yet in my feelings . . . in my feelings sometimes I think I'm just one step from reaching it. Yet I never will. In my journey I don't even find the familiar landmarks I used to know. Nothing is any longer the same. [...] In my journey I find only phantom travelers..."*

Systems, or organisations if you will, converge around their organisation of the energy that is within their reach which they hold on to only to secure its more efficient discharge into the world, thereby effecting their own disorganisation as the basis for the reproduction of their descendants as the inheritors of the same territory. Or as Bataille would have it, death is the condition of life. Living systems are not driven by the urge to reproduce but by the desire to discharge the energy that agitates them, and the energy transfers supposed in all such subjective sloughings off are dependent on objectively voided, environmentally conditioned, available space; for a population to expand, it must first engage the unequal distribution of competitor systems occupying the available ground, it must wait for the weakness, the death, the flight, the collapse of the systems established by those already present.

But then, before a system reaches the level from which it may discharge its bound energies along the designated path for the replication of the same as a sequence of future successions and expansions, it also produces, as a more or less necessary condition for its continuation in the present, a tendency towards internal factionalisation around the control and hierarchy of its system's components, a

conflict which is only resolved by the solidarity generated through its perpetual vendettas against external rivals and neighbours.

As you may be aware, the group I belong to has attempted to regulate the, often unhappy, departure of its members by exercising a semi-ritualised procedure of recognition, or *blessing*. He who becomes separated is blessed by those who remain, whilst those who remain recognise themselves as *cursed* for still belonging, for not also being excluded. The meaning of the blessing protocol, which I think is operationally viable, is severalfold:

...in part, it attenuates the violence of separation through the affording of a gratuitous act of generosity; in part, it assigns higher status upon the one leaving in relation to those who remain so as to supply an abstract protective cloak to whoever is no longer concretely a member of the community;

...in part, it mitigates the violent feelings of the community for those who have betrayed it and thereby introduces *closure* where a long-running hostility and vendetta might otherwise emerge;

...in part, it acts *in reverse* and functions as a sort of curse, the blessed are those disavowed by, and no longer a member of, the group - blessings are also a form of violence.

There are of course further registers of meaning bound up in the ritual blessing of the traitors, ne'er-do-wells, deviants, dissenters and incompatibles who form the army of expelled from the community, whilst the equivalent self-cursing of those remaining within the brotherhood operates as a hybrid between self-recognition of the sufficiency of the communal bond which requires no surplus *blessing*, with a formal acknowledgment of the community's fatal limitation, with its metabolic need for external negative pressure, and with its molochian drive to feed upon internal enemies, to secure its proper functioning.

From the perspective of the community, the prodigality of the younger son, who departs only to squander the accumulated wealth of the group embodies the true character of what it means to be *blessed*. The father does not welcome the destitute son back home



because he *forgives* him but rather to formally engage the destructive forces of the outworld of which the son is now a representation. As with every culture that ritually squanders wealth in the form of an *accursed share*, the father has assigned the necessary role of betrayer to the younger son in order that the mechanism of controlled expenditure is triggered, thereby protecting the community's life-world from a dangerous build-up of energetic tensions around the ownership of its accumulated resources.

Just as the theme of the Judas-figure is necessary to the group at the level of in-group relationships as these metabolise external forces that would otherwise destroy them, so the community mechanism as a whole benefits from a sacrificial (and blessed) and therefore carefully de-limited function which is written into the actions taken by the one who converts the group's wealth into abject loss.

Clearly, the controlled fire setting carried out through the younger son's prodigality, which operates as a sort of anticipatory and preventative procedure to secure the group's reproductive integrity as a group, becomes ritualised through its recurrence into a cyclical operation. At a certain point in the cycle of the group's accumulation of material wealth generated through the activities of its members fixed within the self-reproducing constraints of their social relations, the younger son who, on the pretext of heir plus spare, is transformed into a personalisation of the accursed share, will be instructed to take on the blessed/cursed role by which he must perform *prodigality*, and once more embark upon a journey into exuberant expenditure.

In what sense does the young son ever truly return now that he is transformed into an emissary between the community and the outworld? Remember the other emissary, Strelnikov, and his increasingly convoluted dash to reach Lara, what is he at the moment of his death: a stranger, and agent of destructive external forces, or son, eternal student, and partisan of returned to, self-healing domesticity?

The younger son will always return, as plagues, famines, inundations return, from afar and unpredicted, appearing upon the horizon that father constantly scans. As he is welcomed back, the son's instability must be distracted with offerings, his capricious character

appeased by deference, because even if he is the returning son, he is also the uncanny, whose eye will fall upon the quaintness of the community, *distantly, critically*. The community has no option but to embrace the thorn of him, as his very presence will trigger within the community system the adaptative process by which it will thereby learn the protocols for *herd immunity* that it may deploy against the greater outworld.

If the Prodigal Son returns but is also forbidden to return, except in the garb of the community's representation of the figure of the stranger, as a ghost who must occupy the otherwise empty place at the table reserved for lost others, whom he must represent, on whose behalf he must intercede, then that in itself is not an argument against his own motive for returning. The impossibility of going home does not prevent the attempt, even if the homecomer knows home will not be there.

Even so, the second son also has his motivation, and is compelled by his own placement within the group to draw love, by any means necessary, from his father. He is compelled to secure patriarchal recognition by taking any path open to him - even the assigned paths of scapegoat, traitor, lazybones, loser. Informally formalised kinship systems, in their distribution of power and inheritance, set the second son off on another path which, in denial, it codifies as *negative attention seeking*.

Even so, despite the instrumentalised role he is cast to play, the second son forgives the father's world for the degradation he has had to endure, for the sake of the moment he appears on the horizon as if before the eyes of his father, who in turn stands on guard against him. What is the accursed son, but moving boundary marker to the territory of the father, the limit of father's reach? The second son holds out for familial love, and is driven back by the image created as ego-ideal, as it comprises himself, Shane-like, welcomed home.

From the time of our previous acquaintance, you may remember my attempt at a theory of the archetypical form expressed by the mythical condition of *monosandalism*, and which I approached through an avatar I designated *One Shoe* which existed in a state

of tension with the project I had described as *Forward Unit*. This was partially inspired by the boy who did not follow Hamelin's Pied Piper into the mountain, and partially by Brecht's figure of the 'Young Comrade', characterised as the voluntarist-adventurer who damages the interests of the Party through his lack of discipline, by his very enthusiasm for its historic project. The One Shoe, in relation to the group's generality, either does not act but is acted upon, or acts inappropriately - I surmised that it is through this unrelating relatedness that the character of the group itself is revealed. At the level of what limps and lags, or pulls and distorts in the wrong direction and at the wrong moment, the question of departure and return is reversed: the community *will* leave its stragglers behind and may only return in existential crisis.

Throughout Western mythology the single shoed or lame figure recurs: Jason, the Plataean army, Oedipus, Molloy/Moran. Bruce Lee. The non-symmetry of the One Shoe figure symbolises the presence, and potential subjectivity, of another value set within an established pattern of conventionality, which becomes, through personification within a project-based set of fixed intersubjective relations, an attractor for unexpected transvaluations of otherwise latent or repudiated behaviours, values and relations.

You could say, and I shoehorn this here, such figures pose the existential question: *But do I roll in the manner of a true ball?* Unfettered and frictionless movement is the dream of all abstractly constituted formations but abstraction itself operates on the principle that naught is more real than nothing, it is only by returning to the base swerving and colliding of its internal constraints and hindrances that it may realise itself as a something: *if they were not in the habit of swerving, they would all fall straight down through the depths of the void, like drops of rain, and no collision would occur, nor would any blow be produced among the atoms. In that case, nature would never have produced anything.*

By one means or another, by its failure to adapt, the One Shoe avatar compromises the set project - he too, embodies the hindering of, or swerving within, the social mechanism of reproduction which

causes it to not return immediately to its springform self. Those who are not Spartans, those who might otherwise have been exposed as infants outside the city walls, those who are not inherently useful, those who by some congenital flaw or learnt failure to conform and who cannot be instrumentalised in Silicon Valley, those who do not provide content, and who by their continued presence in the group, call into question the second nature of its parameters, its outline, and without intending to, create around themselves an attractor basin for the group's own uncertainties; if not the set pattern, then what pattern? The figure who fatally hinders the realisation of the group's project is not merely a counter to the hubris of the warrior class but a self-separating embodiment of that order of esoteric knowledge which threatens the viability of the group, as it were, *from outside and above*.

The alternative register of activity by which the otherworldly, or transcendent, character of the One Shoe, is established becomes a device or frame through which the transformation of established patterns becomes comprehensible - such is the attractor to which the group may return to itself through another medium. The limping figure who cannot keep up, first sets the pace, then calls a halt, then conceives a new mode of self-locomotion; *For how could I drag myself over that vast moor, where my crutches would fumble in vain. Rolling perhaps. And then? Would they let me roll on to my mother's door?* At a certain point in the progress of the group it becomes imperative for those members least able to go on, to sabotage the continuation of its processes, which have become burdensome, a living death, to them. Every instantiation of the One Shoe archetype is precisely that of a non-exchangeable particularity - one who may be portrayed, even recognised, but never represented.

The group may begin to conceive the burden of the One Shoe upon its functioning and purpose as its only objective and distinguishing value - the manner of the group's organising around those members who cannot belong to it is the sole means by which it may realise itself as something with an authentic outline. The group, in relation to its incompatible members, achieves a clinamen-type form by extracting itself from the delirium of survival sickness and adopt-

ing in its place, a prodigal form of *rolling*. For what is utopia but a sort of shared hanging back from the main body, a hungry dog at the door, a tarrying at the corners, a hesitancy or failure to commit to the historic form of revolt? For what is utopia but the resonant step of the limping masses by which the bridge of reality might be selectively collapsed whilst at the same time causing no damage to the living organism *as a whole*?

For this reason, we ought to become as the child weighing down upon the shoulders of the true Christopher, and we ought push his head beneath the swelling baptismal surface: *For of the great traveller I had been, on my hands and knees in the later stages, then crawling on my belly or rolling on the ground*. So it is that the authentic response to disaster is not *prepping* but mendicancy - we should not volunteer but, in falling backwards, in letting ourselves go, permit others the opportunity to volunteer to catch us and raise us up, even as we claw at their empathic eyes: A Single Eye, All Light, No Darkness; or Light and Darkness One.

Nor should we praise the heroic efforts of *essential* workers but, as we embark along the *via negativa*, let us venerate instead the useless and despised recipients of their good works, without whom such acts of selflessness and sacrifice would be inconceivable. Beggar strike your philanthropist! And, in accord with apophatic rite, let us ceremonially applaud the ingrate patient who throws the contents of the bedpan back at the sainted nurse; by such means the pillars of sacred institutions are collapsed and the factory behind them revealed: *my progress reduced me to stopping more and more often, it was the only way to progress, to stop*.

But, there is yet another register in which the lost figure may preserve its relation to home and by which it resolves the problem of return, or at least contemplates it, without ever having to physically go back to the place from which it departed. Popular culture in the 1970s utilised the stock figure of the Japanese *hold out* to represent absurd intransigence. The hold-outs were isolated soldiers of the Imperial Army who, having been stationed on remote Pacific islands but subsequently cut off both from news of the outside world and its

essential supplies, *carried on* the war against America *autonomously*, sustaining themselves from their surroundings for decades after the official 1945 surrender. The *by any means* praxis of holding-out did not so much involve military actions, apart from occasional raids against stockpiles, as it did the maintenance of formal hostilities, and a soldierly discipline directed towards dwindling munitions, rotting boots, worn to rags uniforms.

The incongruity of these figures emerging *back* into the post-war world, a world which they had never inhabited, during the 60's, 70's and 80's was transformed into a standardised product of the progressivist *see how far we've come* standpoint of the post-war social pact. The hold-outs became a living representation of a now lost point of departure, an orientation marker fixed on the horizon as scanned from the standpoint of the rebuilt world that had, by parallax effect, left all that behind. In previous eras, late-returning soldiers had arrived as changed values in a world that was objectively unchanged - but within spectacular time, the value relation between leaver and left behind, returner and returned to, is always reversed.

For the post-war world, that state of affairs in which war, its inputs and its outputs, had become inconceivable, the imposter is the truer more authentic Martin Guerre, and the true Odysseus, scattering suitors left and right, becomes impersonator, the personification of a bad belonging to the world. And so it was that the Japanese hold-out became emblematic of what it was to live *before* the economic miracle, an iteration of a recurrent theme of spectacular power which also applied it to, amongst others, the masses of industrial workers fighting to defend their work in the context of automation and the expulsion of living labour from the productive apparatus.

The nostalgia of the hold-outs for home, which is maintained as an unswerving allegiance to formative memories, is the defining trait of all émigré communities, which preserve themselves as distinct from immigrant communities, and which are impelled to transpose onto the reified cultural forms of *home* the organic instincts of self-preservation and self-identity - Bunin's Russian-Parisian cafes: Caviar rouge, salad russe... Deux chachlyks.... By refusing to adapt to local

conditions, the émigré milieu transforms itself into an outpost of rassolnik and the old country which, as if in response to its fetishisation, and with tragic irony, will in turn rapidly and inevitably escape the loyalty of its old guard, becoming both unrecognisable and always deplorable to those invoking it: Ben Gunn's obsessive, pre-proustian, preoccupation with cheese must contradict both the worthlessness of the old world's buried treasure and the natural abundance of his immediate surroundings.

But we should not imagine, nor take comfort in the idea, that there will be no return. The chickens do come home to roost; the repressed does return. The world will right itself by casual violence, as if god were withdrawing his hand from settled waters. And it is because we know intuitively that order must be disrupted and scattered so as to return things to a more basic order, that we may only conceive *consequence* as a motivational force, as an avenging angel in the moment just before it topples the edifice of imbalance.

And so it is that just such a bootstrapping ideologue, another of the Shane-Orpheus type, will arrive determinedly from another country, so as to stir up the sedimentary dead, who do not see him, who do not recognise him, who dimly perceive him at the end of a tunnel, and who follow his calling in steps *constricted by the trailing graveclothes, uncertain, gentle, and without impatience*.

This too-familiar stranger, appearing before the non-presence of the dead, returning to the given as *deus ex machina*, who enfolds the world, catching it in crisis, on the point of it collapsing, laying its components on his spread out bed-roll - this personification of the basis for every intervention, both all-knowing and absolutely uncomprehending.

The sainted trickster, ascetic and aesthete, with flaming pyre torch, as if on the point of saving the boudoir from drowning, only then stepping back, looking on dispassionately, *is that all there is to a fire?* as another world folds in on itself, an angel of history deselecting memory, alienating the life-community from its own members

- and the life-community, like Eurydice, wakening, becoming

aware, like something served from the menu of the naked lunch, like something disavowing itself, and in the same movement, both falling back into and recoiling from what it is.

There is always a return, and it is *the* return, and it is already effected, it begins immediately in the separation, that which once remained undifferentiated, not functioning even as a potentiality, appearing suddenly, successively through the rupture of a particularising movement, and then as secession in relation to the life-community. There is always a return to the pleroma, to the internet of things, to devil's island. Nothing escapes that is not commanded to escape.

Where there was non-relation, there is relation. Where there was non-community, there is community. Where there was alienation, there is immanence. Only strangers will recognise who belongs and who does not, and the strangers are discontinued: *Be ahead of all parting, as though it already were behind you*, like the winter that has just gone by. *For among these winters there is one so endlessly winter / that only by wintering through it all will your heart survive.*

Fellow Stranger, consider the paradox, and perfect heuristic, of the aubade form: as the sun rises, releasing all things from night, the lovers, who *were* released by dark of night, *are* newly bound by light of day. Shall we say, it's because it's real that we know it's a joke?

Ridico





# harpsichord

Just suppose that your harpsichord has the power to feel and to remember - then, do not presume to play your *music* on it! It lives in its vibration, in its inevitable resonance, which holds the object of its desire present before its rapt attention, while its mind is busied about the quality that belongs to that object. But vibrating strings have yet another property, that of making other strings vibrate; and that is how the first idea recalls a second, the two of them a third, these three a fourth and so on, so that there is no limit to the ideas awakened and interconnected in the mind of the harpsichord, as it meditates and hearkens to itself amid the silence and darkness, beneath the dust sheets of the shuttered chateau. It is an instrument that makes surprising leaps, and an idea once aroused may sometimes set vibrating an harmonic at an inconceivable distance. It plays the garden orb spider's frosted web in autumn. It ripples in the mind of Capability Brown. If this phenomenon may be observed between resonant strings that are continuous and alive, then why should it not occur between points that are lifeless and separate?

- Diderot



## The parable of the crow's hunger

*A bird leaves its dull mottled egg and builds a new nest around the egg of a serpent. The shining egg cracks open. A serpent crawls out. Its jaws yawn open. It swallows the bird. Its voice is croaking, and as ancient as salt. Its talons grip the nest's edge. It holds out its wings. It flies into the desert. It never returns.*



THE Curse Us