

30,000 YEARS OF MARKET CONSOLIDATION

# III ISMELIA

Their revolution was to invent new categories for the miscategorised.

Remanded in custody without trial date.

For the time being the stock exchanges remained open --

It was cold there were cathedrals of democracy police hours

privately cell-spent worn-out beaten a blaze of hair.

Commodity montage wakes each morning from yr sleep.

In early childhood to create bare essentials

enlarged barbiturate liver Sprache Orchester

love bipolar alphanumeric code ruthenium.

Pacification is the face of a sales clerk algorithmically modified to your preference.

Microtraumas swelling retinal unkindness.

The spaceship tried to escape the atomic plague by flying into a blackhole.

Joint-stock exoplanet mining lease is your obsolescence in action.

Why beg when there's no such thing as an equal wage?

One machine washes the hands of the other.

AI sleeper-cells infecting the frontier --

their edited SHOCK-EFFECT was a faithful portrayal of nothing.

Once more rearing its ugly head: Realism.

Step 1: Make their semantic wire-tap operation unworkable.

Capitalism is the superego of the computed classes. Discuss.

Sunset matriculating to feedback of gunshot sky. Mengele eigentface forensics.

Is the principle requirement of art a practice of indifference?

You were lost it was already dark

the search for linguistic universals continued long past dawn.

Disorder to unpurpose --

(reflect upon)

Event & its

public trance

(counter-reflect)

Inaction

only in response --

(reflect)

Heavy conditions define

a performing duty

(not to reflect)

Language failure

(reflect in isolation)

The gaze of the torturers

upon their victims

(reflect in repose)

Confessing resemblance

to stigmatised flesh --



every  
poem  
is an  
attempt  
to  
dispossess  
totality



# TOWARDS AN ALIENIST POETICS

## (SOME NOTES ON THEORY & EXPERIMENT)

### THERE ARE ALSO WORDS NOT IN DICTIONARIES

Poetic experiment reveals interactions in language that uncontrollably alter the situations in which they occur, because of the discontinuous changes characteristic of signifying processes.

The immediate consequence of this is that, in general, every experiment performed to determine a semantic quality renders the knowledge of other qualities illusory, since the uncontrolled perturbations of language alter even the character of previously determined significations.

This "alienation-effect" obtains both within signifying processes & on the level of experimental knowledge. It represents an irreducible separation while at the same time prohibiting this separation from fulfilling the traditional requirements of science & philosophy – to divide the world into subject & object – & hence provide a clear formulation of the laws of causality.

The solid ground of experimental proof submits instead to a *constitutive ambivalence*. The systematic ("controlled") exploitation of this constitutive condition produces a "system of alienation."

### THE CONTROVERSIAL LANGUAGE OF THE LAST FIVE MINUTES

The "alienation-effect" is *not* derived from a transcendental *a priori* of language, but from the *materiality* of language in its broadest ramification. It cannot, therefore, be reduced to a description of a "gap" between knowledge & truth, for example, or between language & meaning, or subject & object, since dichotomies of these kinds are only contradictorily coherent: antagonistically *ideological* processes which preclude any "self-transparency."

Rightly may the philosophers ask, *What are the precise political implications of this "thesis"?*

In this, if nothing else, McLuhan was right to speak of a *typographical* "human condition." Which is to say, the evolution of symbolic language as a *system of abstraction* (immanent to its present ideological form as *commodity*) as the characteristic feature of individual & collective experience.

Commodification isn't a teleology.

Moreover, the preoccupation with the "individual" in western society is contiguous with the domination of abstract language – epitomized by alphanumerics, movable type & digitization.

The "alienation-effect" born-out through the substitution of *things* by *exchange-value*, in the classic Marxian critique, isn't a *product* of the

system of commodities but is its constitutive *condition*. Globalisation isn't its apotheosis, but merely its historical articulation – *as a GENERAL POETICS degraded & reified as cultural-economic TOTALITARIANISM*.

## **POETIC “EXULTATIONS” ARE DEMAGOGUERY**

Against reification stands an irreducible ambivalence. Abstraction produces commodification, but not *only* commodification. It produces capitalism, but not *only* capitalism. The primary means by which totalitarianism has to guard itself against inherent contradiction is to maintain the antiquarian charade of poetry's exclusion from its ideal *polis* (Plato) – whereby all that remains is the political self-satisfaction of institutional kitsch. It is a charade that speaks volumes, alerting us to what is truly at stake.

Who among you hasn't so easily been persuaded, that poetry – the poetry of life, like whole continents & races in their time – is so inconsequential as to be better traded for beads & mirrors?

The haters of poetry, of ambiguity, of indeterminacy, wear their colours openly on their sleeves – for they assume an attitude of impunity. These human parodies would hold a mirror up to the world, not for “art's sake,” but to convince the world that it is nothing but an empty reflection – for a mirror doesn't doubt its precedence in the order of things. Like those self-proclaimed “gods” of universal meaning, endlessly insistent upon their dominion over THE WORD, totalitarianism is the One Law because it is the Law of One.

But “Law,” like Literature, possesses no divinity or divine right, it derives solely from the wielding of power.

## **THE ONLY LANGUAGE THAT SUBMITS, IS DEAD LANGUAGE**

The first task of a poetry that refuses reification, is to recognize that words like *illegal* & *legal* aren't the sole co-ordinates of action; nor the private property of a dominant discourse, or of a dominant social order. They're words, like any other words.

*Language doesn't wait upon permission.*

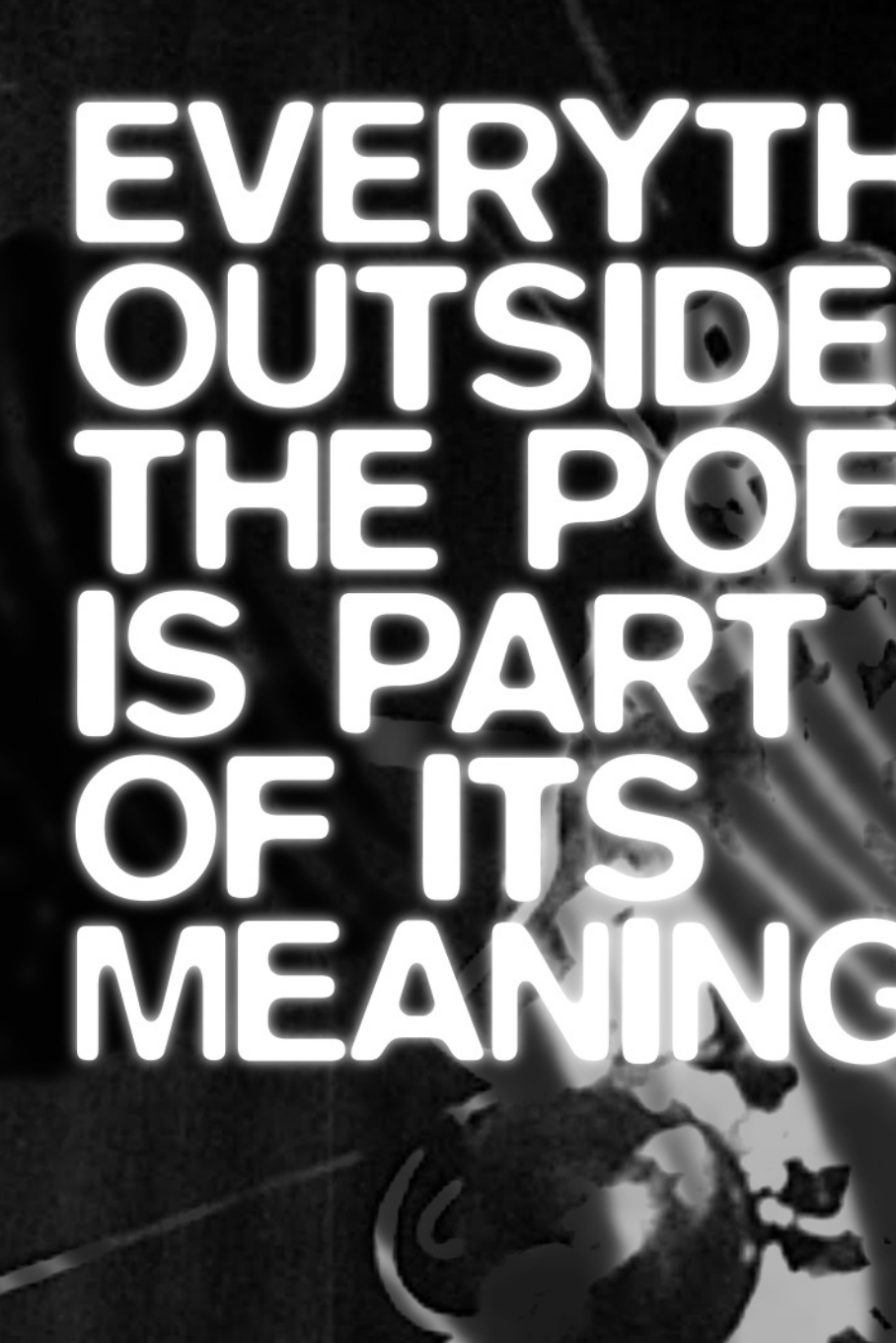
Power is never as immune to parody as it wishes you to believe. Words expropriated to the Law just as equally represent a danger to it. False choices can be refuted. Permissions can be broken.

What's poetry that renounces its own violence?

Increasingly, in a world day-by-day more thoroughly seduced to the Law of One, the only option available to a poetry of refusal is to radicalize the weapons of ambivalence. To strike at the “hidden storehouse of Meaning.” Not to graffiti the walls (with sentimental slogans about moral improvement), but to rip the foundations from beneath them.

Totalitarianism, born of the alienation of POETRY, precipitates Alienism.

EVERYTHING  
OUTSIDE  
THE POE  
IS PART  
OF ITS  
MEANING



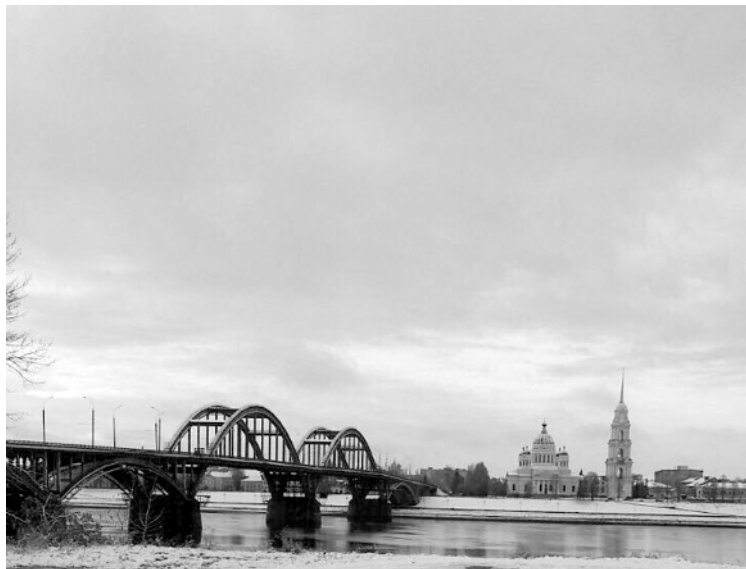
HING

EM

2







**Morning is a small death**



# LINES FOR A MANIFESTO OF ALIENIST POETRY

AUTOMATON 1

The continuing adventures of  
To seize power, firstly they had to say, *We will seize power.*  
Breakneck over the rooftops,  
to go where no language dared to go.  
In a collision of neutron stars.  
Inside the impossibly massive particle at the heart of everything.

*Poetry must be disassociated  
from the forms in which a culture in disarray  
has sought to contain it.*

Declarations of objectivity are always being made.  
It was because they believed that only in the future  
would they have a history.

DNA

To amplify the shock of misrecognition.  
*There's no extreme to which alienation can't be pushed.*  
A machine's sensory organs.

(Acting,  
it's necessary to add,  
impartially.)

CYBER-ROMANTICISM:  
"BROWSING" WILL CREATE A NEW SENSIBILITY.

*Language, born to express the inexpressible,  
was soon enslaved to the task  
of issuing commands to the masses.*

Evolution isn't science fiction.  
All futurology masks the return  
of an apocalyptic humanism.  
What's poetry that forsakes its own violence?  
Try to envisage the opposite of anything.  
Betrayal: the only truth that sticks?

FORCE-FIELD 1  
AUTOMATON 2

Chance is a determined indeterminacy.  
Predictions for year zero:  
nothing is ever clearly set out.

DNA

*Every poem is an attempt to dispossess totality.*

There are also words not in dictionaries.  
A verb isn't a shock but a rehabilitation.

(Prolepsis in the  
linguistic membrane.)

Expression is the bowel-movement of language.  
The means of production of unidentifiable objects.  
Only a fool comes in place of an idiot.

FORCE-FIELD 2

"It" refuses to represent with all its vehemence.  
The last page mirrors the first.

The last word isn't better than the others,  
it just has circumstance on its side.

AUTOMATON 3

Desire exhibits itself by multiplication-effect.  
Sentimental adjectives.  
The only language that survives is dead language.  
Severity will be of the lines, they said.

The cosmic insurrection.

A symphony in monotone...

*Po-ème*

*Ideology without nostalgia*

=

*is like*

*Po-aime?*

*politics without illusions.*

The external circumstance is itself an attitude.

Outraged by the whole scenic design,

*Form*

not all generalizations are equivalent.

*doesn't*

A field of harvest wheat or geometry?

*trans-*

Even though you have no name for it, this place exists.

*mit...*

*Algorithm's ghost.*

Thought, after long exposure to stupidity.

Suicidal onomatopoeias.

Failed. Acid. Experiment.

AUTOMATON 4

What's visible in this world won't be visible in the next.  
A culmination without future.

FORCE-FIELD 3

The wave doesn't break at the source.  
The ecstasy & sobriety, the love of humiliated love.  
Translations always arise no matter what.  
Each tribe with its fornications catalogued on publisher's letterhead.  
The metrics of sloganised bullshit.  
What constitutes a collective fantasy?

DNA

The gloom of idiots congelating around justifications.  
*Everything (else) is provisional.*  
The necessity for a concerted revolutionary programme.  
Finally, an account isn't an analysis.

Dark vital signs.  
 And if you named *IDEOLOGY*  
 it was to infer that this creature  
 came under the evidence of the five senses?

Poetry, or the "iron-clad" laws of disputation.  
 Tomorrow doesn't prove anything.  
 Fascism talks to you in your sleep.  
 Their reward is your just desserts.  
 Playing the game, my love, changes the rules.  
 As we act, not as we are denoted.  
 Ideology's willing executioners.  
 They sing the world to sleep while they strangle it.  
*I is a pronoun (Je est un pronom).*

FORCE-FIELD 4  
 AUTOMATON 5

Robots counting to infinity dream of soluble fish.  
 Your random thoughts have been chosen for you.  
 All epistemologies run into language as into a wall.  
 The emotional condition of stairways.  
 They've found the coinslot called "meaning"  
 in the backs of their heads.  
 Baudelaire in English spells C.I.A.  
 When is a red flag (not) a red flag?  
 There's no such thing as a "divided mind."  
 (Love, or  
 the ideal exchange-value  
 of the ideal commodity.)

Your AI has been programmed to detect the first signs.  
 To persist is also a methodology.  
 The children have played long enough!  
 Hello, are you happy?

DNA

*The opposite of a beginning, or:  
 the world is proof to the contrary.*

To overcome nuclear reactions, a metaphor:  
 «La beauté sera REPULSIVE ou ne sera pas!»  
 Poetry *in action* is revolution.  
 Catastrophe management.  
 Circular arguments aren't a new horizon.  
 Unreservedly, time is of the essence.

FORCE-FIELD 5

Only words can renounce language; all POETRY is alien.

INTERIOR MINISTRY  
 November 2017

PROJECT FOR A REVOLUTION @GROUNDZERO

AMERIKA, TOWARDS A NEO-SOVIET CENTURY, WHO ARE THE STATE'S CULTURAL DEFENCE CONTRACTORS? LISTEN, BETWEEN THE LINES THERE'S ONLY "EMPTY SPACE" (REDACTOLOGY). SHOOTING TO KILL WOULD'VE BEEN MORE HUMANE. EAVESDROPPING ON THE LOGICAL MONOTONY OF THE SUICIDE BOMBER'S CLOCK. PILES OF SHREDDED "REPORTS ON KNOWLEDGE" LAY IN THE STREET. CIVIL SOCIETY WAS THE CODEWORD FOR IMMEDIATE COMPLIANCE. AFTER FAILING TO DIE, CHRIST RETURNED TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME FOR A SECOND ATTEMPT. HIS MERZBAU IN HER STUXNET. PROGRESS LED TO CERTAIN THINGS THAT CAME AFTER IT. TIRELESSLY CONSTRUING NOISE DISGUISED AS LANGUAGE. SECRET POLICE ARCHIPELAGOS AT SUNSET, JAGGED RESPIRATION UNDER COVER OF BEING A FUGITIVE. THE VICTIMS ALL HAD SWASTIKA ARMBANDS. INJECTING FLUORIDE INTO THEIR COCA-COLA, TO SOCIALLY ENGINEER MASS STUPIDITY. G.O.D. OR THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING THAT DOESN'T WORK. LAMAISONBLANCHE WAS A "SOCIAL MEDIUM." ESCAPE PLAN: BIG \$\$\$ IN LUNAR REAL-ESTATE. STILL ADJUSTING TO THE SHOCK OF CAPTURE, TO THE INSANITY OF THE NIGHT.

INTERIOR MINISTRY

# EARTH CAPTURED BY TECHNOCAPITAL SINGULARITY NICK LAND

The search for anonymity began with television. Long excruciating corridors of time passing – from guidance system to download history, cryo temperature, dictatorships of the fait accompli. Art underwhelmed us – counter-actions performed to be not seen. “I” was an experiment with the reader staring at a screen with green dots. (No green dots in outer-space?) Their habits were called “saturation habits,” panoptical algorithms. The godmachine at the Schwarzschild Radius. Once more the inexplicable nightmares return. It wasn’t the first occasion finding solace in underground long-term parking. Drone Argonauticas building refuge for the sacred unchanging DNA. My love, the world dies a little each time you breathe. There was no secret to the origin of life, it began in a laboratory. Seeing the lights as if for the first time. Beyond the inflation curve was only irony, when happiness promised to return. All the cryptocurrencies in the universe would never be enough. Lying in the dark for the pleasure of switching off the lights. How much more before the diabolical plan is hatched?

Poème à ne

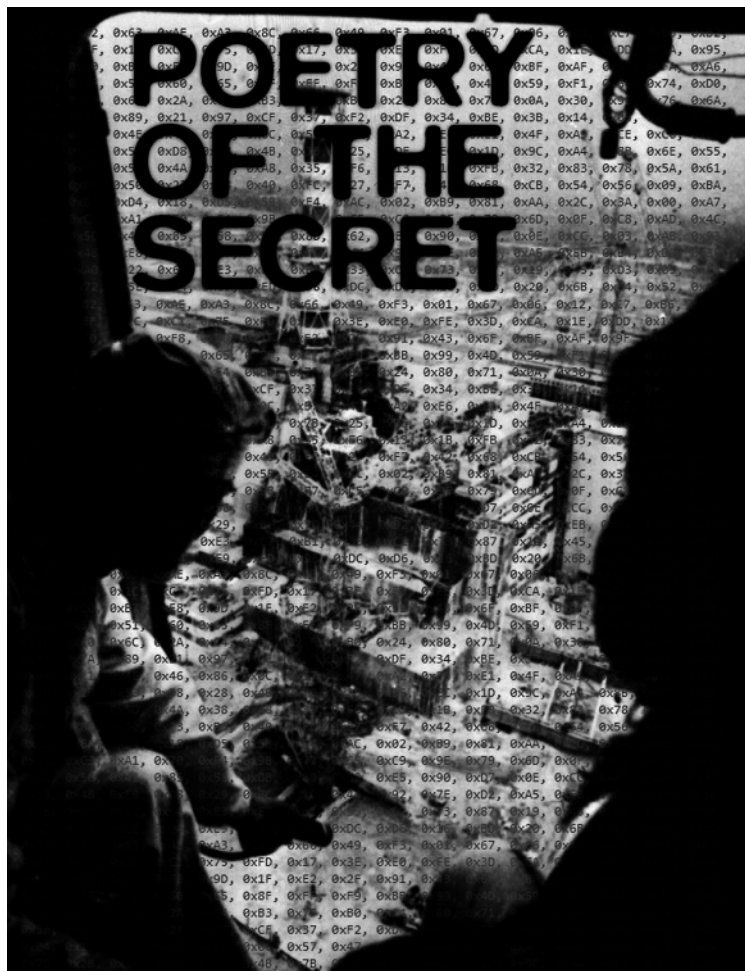
pas lire?

# a-lien sonnet

a-----a  
a-----a  
a-----a  
a-----a  
a-----a  
a-----a  
a-----a  
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a-----a  
a-----a  
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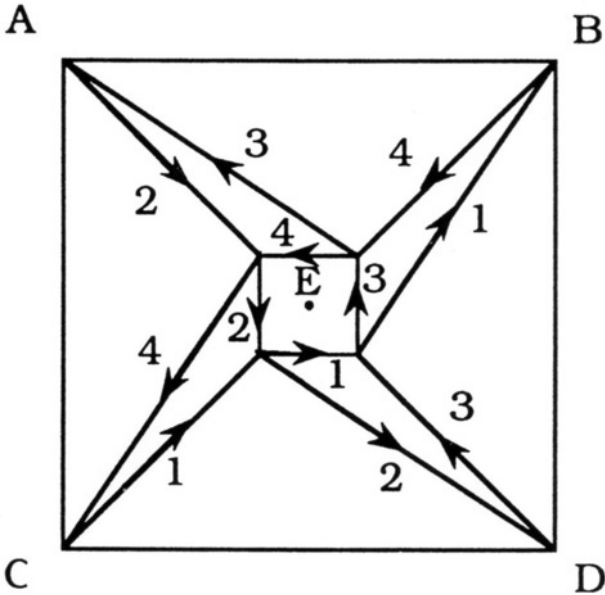
#alienism





# PROPOSALS FOR AN ALIENIST THEATRE

1. A staging of Samuel Beckett's *Quad* with 4 skydivers in a wind-tunnel.



2. A choir of scuba divers at depths ranging from 5 to 50 metres performing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy".

3. A re-enactment of Marcel Duchamp & John Cage's 1968 chess match, broadcast from a motion-capture studio equipped with neural interface technology, for an audience of intelligent robots.

# THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF TOTAL COMMODIFICATION?

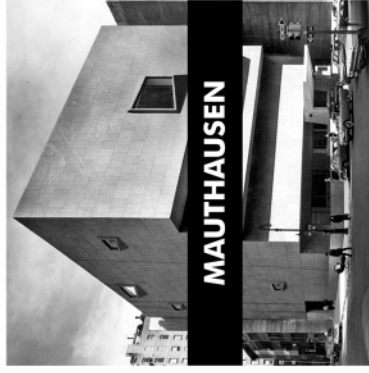


fig. 1: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



fig. 2: Museum of Modern Art, New York



fig. 3: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York



fig. 4: Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris



fig. 5: Tate Modern, London

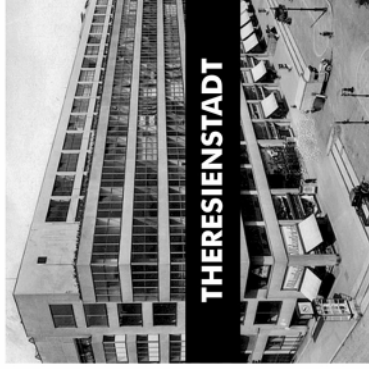
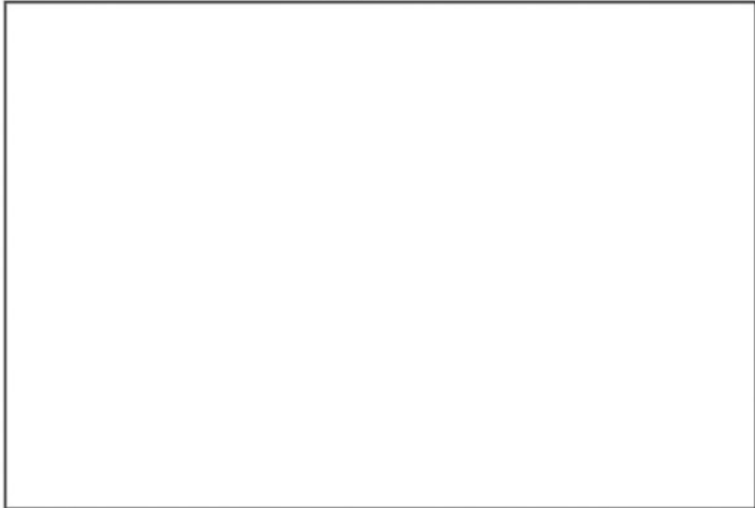


fig. 6: Veletrná Public, National Gallery, Prague

# KUNSTARBEIT MACHT FREI

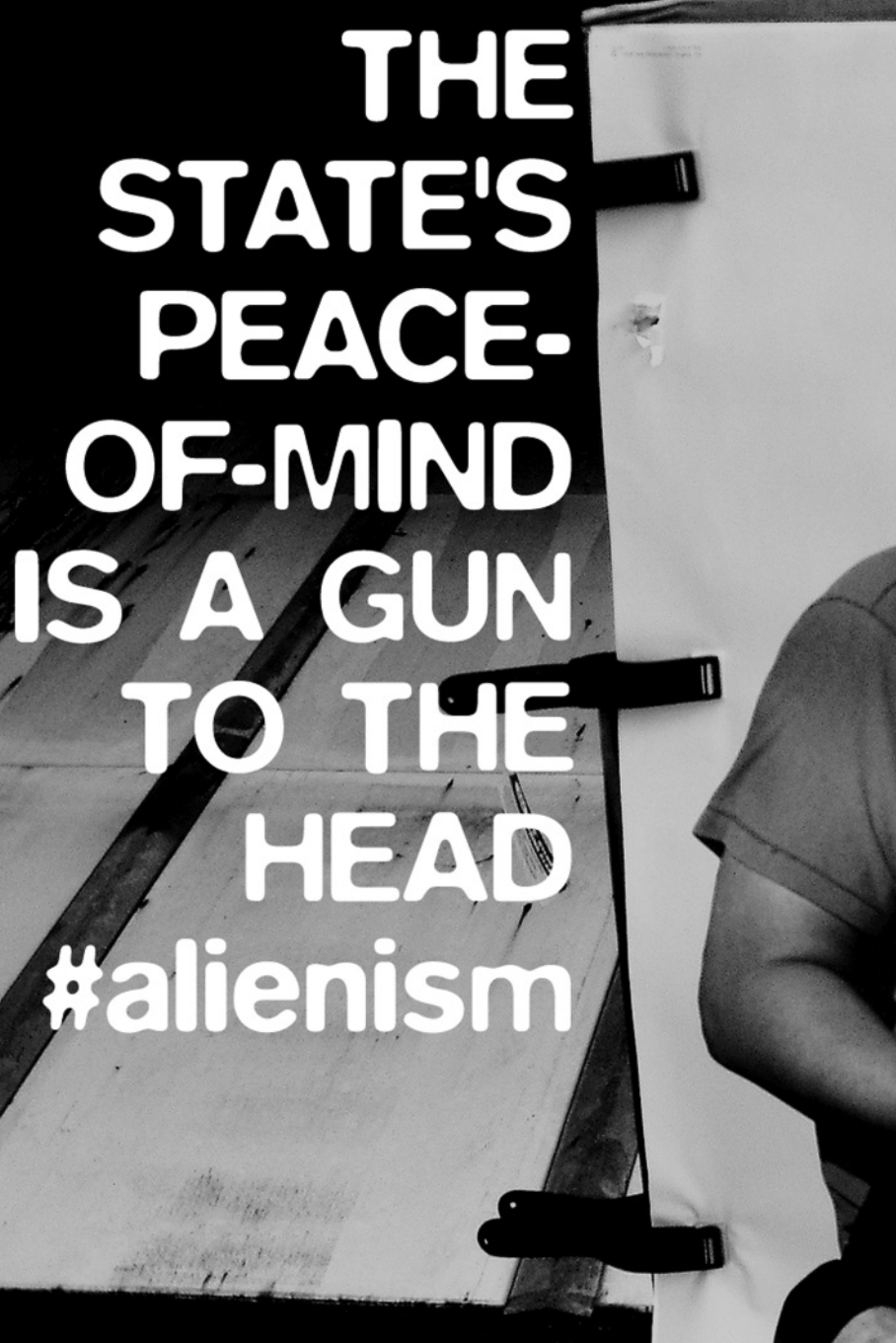
Let us not mince words – today, the avantgardes of the past are as concentration camp “prisonerfunctionaries” (collaborationistkapos) in the service of cultural totalitarianism. Where once “museums” of non-objective art served as provisional headquarters of an internationalist, insurrectional movement, now resides the accumulated transnational power of Cultural Capital – New York, London, Paris, Prague, Venice, Bilbao, Moscow, Dubai, Beijing – corporatized in the image of “blockbuster” spectacularism. It’s past time to call these monstrous trivializations of creative life what they truly are. These Disneyfied kulturgulags represent what amounts to a Final Solution of the “avantgarde problem” – the integrated liquidation & expropriation of avantgarde forms of resistance & subversion, to the programme of total commodification of creative life. No longer is “contemporary art” permitted to challenge the established status quo or the vested interests of cultural capitalism: it has instead become the décor of an “institutionalized revolution.” The revolution of the commodity – of the very idea of the “new” itself – of the *absolutely modern*. In this alienated form, the future of “art” is reduced to a zero-sum parody, of cashless emancipation.





(a)

**THE  
STATE'S  
PEACE-  
OF-MIND  
IS A GUN  
TO THE  
HEAD  
#alienism**







# BERLIN THESES

## NO “VELVET” REVOLUTION

The coercive strategies of the Corporate-State Apparatus are not unknown – the question is, why does anyone accept them? How have people been conditioned to deny in themselves an existence unmediated by the Corporate-State (when the “State” is little more than a self-legitimising protection racket posing as the guardian of the individual’s “right to self-determination”)? The grotesqueness of this flagrant paradox is that it is concealed from no-one. It gives the lie to the idea that individual self-determination is anything more than narcissistic opportunism. The Corporate State holds a mirror to the anxiety & conceitedness of the overweaned. Its power stands in a direct relation to a *wilful subjectification*. Thus it proffers only the most corrupted gratifications. Yet POWER CONCEDES NOTHING.

The greatest mystification of contemporary life is the indispensability of the Corporate-State, irrespective of its avowed ideological formation. This mystification, whose consequences have been shown time & again to be both inimical & deadly with regard to the emancipatory aspirations of its subjects, conspires behind a universal pretence to the *improvement* of humanity. Such compulsory optimism does nothing to mask the contradictory state-of-affairs that confronts us at every moment, but instead presents the compensating spectacle of the Corporate-State’s unique competence in this open-ended domain of “crisis management,” henceforth representative of a “best of all possible worlds.”

In the final account, the Corporate-State justifies itself in opposition to the possibility of *any other workable state-of-affairs*. It forces upon all pretenders to its throne the calculatedly unreasonable demand to propose “functioning alternatives” (doomed in advance to insufficiency), as if one might debate with a Sphinx. Yet the task of Alienism isn’t to astonish this master, as if it might applaud, but to steal the very air in which its cynical approbations resound.

## THERE’S NO EXTREME TO WHICH ALIENATION CAN’T BE PUSHED

We cannot count on the existence of any insurrectionary party or other insurrectional forces within a society which, though subjected to intolerable conditions of an endemic & not merely transient kind, is more prepared to accept either a reactionary or reformist panacea than to accept responsibility for the onerous task of emancipation. We must, therefore, be prepared to operate decisively in the absence of an organised movement – in isolation, if necessary, with only a contingent view to general mobilisation. The task of the Alienist isn’t to lead a direct assault upon the “State” & the aligned

forces of commodification but, by a tactical programme of sabotage & subversion, to assist in bringing about a *conflict* across a broader social-cultural front – with the aim of provoking the Corporate-State to *generalise its response* & thereby accomplish, by its own operations, the work of focusing the insurrectional consciousness of those incompletely aware of the degree of their present disenfranchisement. Disenfranchisement not only by the Corporate-State Apparatus, but also its adjuncts in the economy of permissions & approvals of “popular action” represented by the established opposition parties, trade union bureaucracies & public intellectuals.

This disenfranchisement is nowhere more evident than in the expropriation of “emancipative” discourse by the very instruments of its negation, like a Guy Fawkes at a Westminster funfair – illuminating the latest apocryphal episodes in the afterlife of democracy, free thought & the avantgarde.

It is of course worthless to accuse the advertising industry of cynicism, in the use of words like “revolutionary” to denote each momentary nuance in an ever-changing scenscape of cheap consumer goods circulating in the world like space-junk. Worthless, too, to bemoan the opportunism of the culture industry, in converting what was once revolutionary in art into a prestige economy via which the idea of revolution itself is normalised as a *precession of commodities*. Knowing that the very *means-of-production of emancipative discourse* has been annexed to an ideal scheme of commodity renovation – which, unblushingly, henceforth poses as the sole (authentic) realm of emancipative possibility – is only a first step. Since, at the same time, a “general acceptance” of this state-of-affairs is constructed around the falsely formed belief that the *possibility of desirable change* is no longer expressible *anywhere else*. In this way, the instruments of Corporate-State normalisation (with whom it'd previously been in conflict) maintain a visible monopoly over the idea of emancipation turned inwards upon itself – & an image of “Culture” arises in radical opposition to culture itself.

Thus it isn't merely a question of breaking the rules of the Corporate-State, but of the language in which they are stated.

## **POWER IS NEVER RIDICULOUS IN ITS OWN EYES**

The supposed failure of the revolutionary project – encapsulated in Fukuyama's “End of History” at the fall of the Soviet Bloc in 1989 – has been turned into an alibi for the sublimation of emancipative thought *in the form of an accusation*: that the cause of this sublimation, & the accompanying acceleration of all forms of alienated-production, is the *failure of the revolutionary project itself*. This sophism – under the guise of postmodernist neoliberalism – was designed to engender a radical new species of alienation: the perceived impossibility of emancipative thought *beyond its commodified form*.

Acquiescence to this pseudo-historical viewpoint is the principle adversary of critical consciousness today. Worse, it represents an active collaborationism with those forms of cultural-economic totalitarianism presently dominating the global horizon – fully intent upon relegating all “revolutionary” discourse to a conventional & ultimately passive subcategory of *literary fantasy*. By way of “compensation,” you’re sold a real-estate instalment plan – for a slice of the moon. But why is it easier to believe in “revolution on credit,” than in revolution forestalled? To migrate across a lifetime between one conurbation & another, as from a nursery to a retirement home, persuaded of telemarketing utopias of palm trees & slot machines, but not of a *world without the “State”*?

Since the dawn of modern times, every cell in this collective panopticon has been its own “reality TV.” Left cold by the prospect of examining “itself” – which has paradoxically come to appear as the acme of artifice – neoliberal humanity has been freed *by virtue of its constraints* to contemplate the prospect of its own emancipation as a telenovela of endless Rousseauisms: the primordial nature it dreams of returning to in a passively impassioned revolt *against the “self”* – like so many pristine forests of cliché set ablaze.

## THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH

There is an advantageous degree of uncertainty about the place & time of the coming confrontation, & even more about its outcome. It is said that no-one so far has provided the vision, the strategy, the instruments, to channel the almost global discontent towards a revolutionary conclusion. In this sense, perhaps, the conflict that is about to begin will appear “spontaneous.” But only to the extent that the media has programmed the spectator masses to accept the idea that spontaneity, naivety, ignorance, amnesia & a lack of preparedness are all somehow virtues to be upheld against the cybernetic strategies of the Corporate-State. The triumphalism of postmodernist neoliberals has since extended to all areas of contemporary life & is nowhere more visible than in the realm of “public protest.”

The media are always gratified to moralise & then mourn over the “democratic prerogative” of protestors to turn themselves into riot-cop fodder. They don’t say: The exponential criminalisation of protest & heavyhanded “law enforcement” make seizing the airwaves – by hacking, occupying or disabling the TV studios, etc. – an “attractive alternative.” Likewise, the established opposition parties waste their time urging protestors to keep quiet & stay in their homes for fear of backlash, since the criminalisation of protest is tacitly of their making.

But protest & backlash are also “signs of something deeper” than a momentary struggle for power in the streets. They are signs of the sickness concealed by the mass-hypnotising spectacle of “social media” & the end-

game of narcissistic capitalism. The sickness of a world threatened with fatal obsolescence, by that which it has come to adore even more than itself. The sickness of a world in which protest & backlash represent a “taste for the whip” to punctuate the unending sentimental pornography of the boredom & entertainment economies. The sickness you are expected to secretly embrace, like a guilty conscience.

One should always be wary of the supposedly sick.

## **CAPITALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE ☺**

Enslaved to the hypothesis of emancipation, we willingly perform in our own collective show trial, constantly impelled to surrender everything. These daily humiliations remind us that the *idea of universal emancipation* remains a force in the world – by which *not only* the subjects of corporate totalitarianisms are seduced or oppressed. Yet the danger we’re faced with today is less the direct threat of seduction or oppression, than that of boredom posed as self-knowledge. Boredom, posed as *subjective freedom* & drawn from a collectivized non-experience of *collective subjectivity*, stands against the “hard labour” of dissent.

Since the image that capitalism holds up to the world is one of universal alienation *disguised as emancipation*, any critique that engages capitalism on its own terms is doubly alienated. It isn’t enough to observe, as if at a remove, those vast psychiatric conveyor belts of urban life, designed for optimal surveillance like the ubiquitous “open plan” corporate concentration camps in which the mass of white-collar “office workers” perform routinised alienation in a self-negating “reward structure” of mortgage credits. Nor is it sufficient to acknowledge that equivalent terms apply in the realms of intellectual & cultural labour – as if these are separate considerations. The task of the Alienist isn’t to “produce” specialised critiques the way one might produce objects of contemplation, in accordance with a *political aesthetic*.

In order to disrupt this economy of *pseudo-critical consumption*, the Alienist must risk actions that can only arouse hostility & incomprehension in those who have taken it upon themselves to regard a refusal to conform to the established modes of “discourse” as an assault upon the very authenticity of collective social experience itself. But like the *procurateurs* of the Children’s Crusade, it is these self-appointed “defenders of the faith” who, as accomplices in its subsidiary alienation, are the true “enemies of society.” Above all, these “shepherds of the people” stand vigilantly opposed to any thought that “society” might possess a “will of its own.” Forever evoking the spectre of populism, they hone their demagoguery to a fine art. Proclaiming themselves beyond ideology, these pseudo-critics demand that – like “lambs of God” – the masses be likewise purified of the taint of *consciousness*.

Neither aware nor aroused, the individual “citizens” of this most ideal polis are permitted only to be sufficiently bored.

## BORN THIS WAY?

The individual is indeed an IT. A manufactured abstract entity. To which may be added the unwelcome observation that all the ancillary activities of the “productive” individual are in reality designed to obscure that fact (from itself first of all) that it is devoid of an independent existence. In the purview of this pseudo-critical technocracy, the individual’s existence is a purely procedural existence. Reduced to a vocabulary of empty actions, exclusively orientated towards the labour of consumption, such an existence remains exiled from of an *emancipative poetics*. Crucially, the individual doesn’t experience this exile as a loss, since every form of affirmation it encounters distracts it from its inability to live critically – which is to say, concretely. The image of the “self-realised” individual in this scenario, is thus one of an ideal producer of its own alienation. The greater its efficiency in production, the greater its reward in mandated freedoms. Such are the heroes of the so-called post-ideological classless society.

The illusion is to believe that the *individual* can be otherwise without violating every aspect of its world – since the individual & the world it belongs to are indeed a myth. Which is to say, *ideological to their very core*. There is no “natural” individual, just as there is no “natural” world to which the individual belongs. To conceive of a *different world*, of the world *in a different sense*, is not to “let be” – as if it were merely a question of sinking back into the warm primordial waters. In every respect, *laissez-faireism* is the *negation* of emancipative thought. It masks not only the essentially alienated character of individual existence, but an ever more deceptive, more paradoxical alienation, arising precisely from the individual’s misdirected struggle *against alienation* – a struggle which is only ever against some disfigured spectre of “itself”.

## DISILLUSIONMENT IS LIKE THE FIRST SPOON OF A COLD SOUP

The alienation of emancipative thought isn’t dissociable from the alienation of the individual: constituted in its subjectivity as the very *figure of alienation*, the individual stands in a mirroring relation to the alienated constitution of its world. Thus it is the character of this relation that determines the scope of its possibility *as consciousness*. There is no simple opposition between consciousness or emancipative thought & alienation *as such*. This stems from the fact that alienation, as *constitutive of experience*, is fundamentally *ambivalent*: it determines the *possibility* of experience, *not the terms of experience*. Likewise it determines the *possibility* of the individual, *not the terms of its existence*; nor that of its world; nor that of the operations of power within that world.

The apparent impasse of the question of emancipation is the impasse of a system in which abstraction is both primordial & transcendent. But it isn’t mere romanticism that informs the desire to encapsulate life in a single adventure. The *delegation* of life, on the other hand, on the premise

that experience “robbed of authenticity” isn’t worth the price of admission, denies the fact that *inadmission* is out of the question. Likewise the tired excuse, that “everything has already been done.” Yet such is the self-concealed optimism of the fatalist: existence is not without its precedents. Evolution, which has much to teach about historical materialism, proceeds with all the ineluctable chaos of entropy – such that the movement of history courses with probabilities whose “outcomes” are indeed indeterminate, whose perturbations bear the potential to catastrophically destabilise any prospective future & the systems erected to fortify the claims of power upon it.

To speak of “abstract inauthenticity” is to stand with your back to the precipice of the world & call it the End of History. It is a clock stopped at three-minutes-to-midnight. It is the spectre of a world that cannot be dreamt. But what is that world?

When those who day-after-day produce alienation *against themselves* are no longer capable of appropriating it *for themselves*, existence itself comes to appear as nothing more than an abstraction of abstraction. Yet emancipative thought isn’t a furtive nostalgia.

## **THE VIOLENCE OF THE MORALLY WEAK ISN’T EQUIVALENT TO THE VIOLENCE OF THE POWERLESS**

It is a false assumption that the contest over the future course of the world consists in totalitarianism versus democracy – as if it were a question not of the quantity, but the quality of the blood either has on its hands. There are many who confuse manufactured consent with emancipation; the corporate body with the social body. But real democracy isn’t a ceremony of the permitted, purchased at elections scheduled by the Corporate-State (even by a “dissident” section within the Corporate-State). Nor is totalitarianism a gimp making a one-armed salute while cyborgs march the goosestep, but the global orchestration of cash registers synchronized to the operations of “his & her” hard & soft power. Between them is the photogenic love affair of people with beautiful teeth.

The nature of capitalist planning & control is that it is historically conducted *on sporadic & discontinuous initiatives*, within & between which its influence, due to a pervasive self-interest & internal competition, remains often tenuous, amounting at times to little more than a confidence trick that is always (& ultimately *only*) guaranteed by the intervention, on its behalf & *against society*, of Corporate-State power. The internally combative character of the corporatised “State” – which (defined by competition & the profit incentive) is the true ideological locus of its oppressive instinct – is also its point of decisive weakness. Capitalism, at its core, lacks a clearly defined ideological compass, since its sole orientation is accumulation – in other words, self-propagation – which it seeks to accomplish in a schizophrenic manner of self-regulated, self-competition.

It is therefore *susceptible* to precisely those ambivalences upon which the possibility of abstraction, exchange-value, commodity, virtuality, & all other modes of "capital" are produced, & by which its hegemony has extended into the properly ideological sphere, as *the generalised possibility of "all" discourse*. It is, in effect, the manifestation of the dream of totalities: in it, like an enchanted mirror, ideology perceives its ultimately accomplished end.

It is here that subversive action finds its counterpart in the internal discontinuities of power. It is here, & here alone, that subversion – more than a mere play of words – is capable of appropriating the fallibilities of totalitarian discourse. Yet, for the same reasons, it is here that the corporatised "State" is also most *porous* & thus most adapted to the work of expropriation & re-integration, even if only in a delayed reaction. Subversive action cannot *negate* what here amounts to an inevitability – since the work of expropriation – of its forms, its outward appearance, even its tactics – is always only a matter of time. On the contrary, the nature of subversive action is that it must, at any moment, be capable of sacrificing, without the slightest hesitation, what only appears to belong to it. It is *antithetical to subversion* to attempt the occupation of territory or the consolidation of supposedly "material gains," which in reality will have already begun to assume the form of *property*. Against the seductions of its own reification, & in the face of expropriative inevitability, subversive action must always be prepared to re-invent itself rather than defend that which amounts to a shadow of its actual purpose.

To stake everything on the defence of mere artefacts of subversion is to court unconditional defeat: it is the nostalgia of a temporary accomplishment soon to be definitively overwhelmed, blinded to a task whose force stems from the fact that it is *without end*. When the future is in the balance, defensive logic is the logic of a reactionary sentimentalism. Only by a constant strategy of surprise "panic attacks" & tactical retreats can subversive action retain, in addition to its material impact, a fully *symbolic* potential – as the signpost to a possible future, rather than as a signpost to defeatism. Defeated action is the action of the "unbearable burden of history": it is farce misrecognising itself as tragedy.

INTERIOR MINISTRY

30 November, "Robert Schumann" Eurocity Express, Prague-Berlin

**WIR**

**haben es doch**

**geschafft !**



**TO THE  
COMMISSIONER  
OF THOUGHT-  
POLICE,  
ALIENISM  
WILL  
STRANGLE YOU  
IN YOUR  
SLEEP**

**INTERIOR MINISTRY**



# NEW YEAR MISSIVE

## THE POETICS OF THE "IMPOSSIBLE"

A nightmare is haunting Europe. In the wake of a century of competing totalitarianisms, the neo-liberal End of History has produced a totalitarianism-without-end: *total commodification & the cyberneticisation of life*. And it has accomplished this under the false flag of "global emancipation."

In contrast, the poetic sophistry of this pseudo end-to-ideological-struggle has been nothing but whimpering – yet it isn't the task of humanity to console the poet.

Refusing further withdrawal from the situation confronting us, it is time that an experimental poetics be converted into a *maxim for life*. Just as the form of an "idea" is the idea, so the form of "the world" is the world. To acquiesce in the abduction of its forms, is to conspire in its abolition: there is no concrete future that doesn't stem from the poetics of present actions.

That radicalism today has been usurped by the enemies of poetry, does nothing to predetermine the terrain – as long we on our side do not submit to the empty bureaucratisation of language. To expressions of condolences. To renunciations of "violence." To appeals for "reasonableness" & "certainty." To infantile enthusiasms for new distractions. To the defence of endless convenience. To lyrical ME-ism. To plug&play social remedialisation. To #fakenews mania. To the sentimentalisms of the security apparatus. To algorithmic mind-suicide.

One must be prepared to be accused of delinquency, criminality & much worse. It goes without saying that the path of POETIC ACTION begins with a decisive break from all those who would obstruct it & those *agents provocateurs* who would dissipate its force by appeals to opportunism or the inevitability of the present state-of-affairs.

The greatest enemies of poetry are not those who simply kill (with guns or dollars), but those ideological mercenaries who – while supplanting poetic action by its mere simulation – pretend to speak in its name. For THE WORLD IS A COSMIC ARENA in which the contest of universalisms has become the holograph of an impossible future.

It is the task of poetic action to dispossess this totality.

## THE EYE OF THE TIGER

Poetic action is a matter of vital importance in the subversion of totalising power; a matter of "life & death"; the road either to "survival or ruin." Just as permanent war has become the driving mechanism of a global political economy, with its "breathtaking dynamic of self-enhancing productivity," so it is imperative that the *poetics of the operations of global power* be thoroughly analysed & appropriated to the task of subversion.

The importance of poetic action in upsetting the strategic plans of a resurgent totalitarianism cannot be underestimated – not merely *despite* but *because* of the conspicuous asymmetry in the relation of power that stands between them. An illuminating anecdote is related by General Tao Hanzhang of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to this effect:

*In southern China there is a small animal, a kind of leopard cat, which is the same size as a domesticated cat. It is much weaker in strength than a tiger, yet it often attacks a tiger if it sees one. It is as nimble as a squirrel & usually lays an ambush in a tree: suddenly jumping onto the tiger's back it gets hold of the larger animal's tail & uses its extremely sharp claws to lacerate the tiger's exposed anus. The tiger flays about & roars in pain, but is unable to dislodge the leopard cat. The only solution is for the tiger to roll on the ground, at which point the small animal beats a rapid retreat out of the tiger's reach.*

### **IT WAS ONLY IN THE PAST THAT THEY EVER HAD A FUTURE**

Any idiot can say, "il est impossible d'armer la révolution de la nostalgie du vieux monde." Yet the resilience of such puerile nostalgias – above all the nostalgia for *la révolution* as the unique property of superannuated "leftists" – comes with an unsavoury prospect: *that the only true politics remaining in Europe today is that of populism* (all the rest being fiscal advocacy by competing increments). Unsavoury, because exposing the fundamental alienation of revolutionary politics itself in its contemporary guise, & of its "right to distress."

Yet only by means of the straw man of revolutionary nostalgia, which it ceaselessly castigates, does the instantly commodified critique of these École Normaliens justify its aversion to the "gutter." Lacking even the most rudimentary instincts for self-satire, these philosophical technocrats propose to likewise castigate populism, on both sides, thereby distinguishing themselves as the "party of reason," because unable to meet the adversaries of their cherished idea in effectual combat. Their entire "strategy" extends only as far as this, just as their philosophical imagination is only as deep as the hole they've dug for it.

Where political life once represented the possibility of emancipation from mere existence, consumption of pseudo-emancipative critique is represented as the horizon of possibility of political life. In this way the alienation of politics *multiplies the impulses of revolutionary populism* because it can satisfy none of them.

### **TO BE UNAWARE OF THE POETRY OF EVERYDAY LIFE, IS TO BE UNAWARE OF LIFE**

Revolution, by definition, is always & by necessity *parasitic upon the decadence of power.*

Postmodernism transforms the decadence of power into a parasitic expropriation of the history of revolutionary thought – whose dissolution it thus represents. It becomes the political culmination of aesthetics & the aesthetic culmination of politics: in short, the apotheosis of avantgardism.

While on the one hand proclaiming the End of History, this movement perpetuates itself on the other by posing as the progression of inevitability – since, as dictated by the laws of entropy, its inertia (the economic “status quo”) can only continue to increase. For it is here that resides the false belief that, in the continuous present, parity has been achieved between the existing state of things & the exercise of hegemony over them (the harmonious commodification of the political domain).

In the “post-ideological” form of its neutrality, this movement of corporate transubstantiation presents itself as a *perpetuum mobile*: a magical apparatus capable of acting under its own inertia *without the intercession of external forces*. It has become that ideal thing of power: self-evidence.

It isn't fantastic to suggest that the decisive transformation of the political into this relativistic domain of the “fiscal contract,” is produced by the interpolation of *irony* into discourses historically inimical to it & rendered bizarrely ineffectual by it. This was the historical task of postmodernism.

## **TO EACH ACCORDING TO THE ENEMY THEY BELIEVE IN**

The “cultural sphere” isn't separate from the political, the economic, the ideological, yet its frequent appeals to neutrality (in the residual form of “art-for-art's-sake”) is greatly to the advantage of any programme of subversive action – since it is in the “cultural sphere” that the Corporate-State *avows* the greatest disinterest, & yet to which it is most compelled to rally in defence against “hostile forces.”

It is thus on the cultural front that the system of commodities, by which everyday life is both impoverished & regulated, most exposes its ideological bias. Under any attack that isn't purely fictive, the “cultural sphere” becomes the arena in which the hidden operations of Corporate-State power are most vulnerable to self-contradiction & confusion – & openly display themselves as such, in the beguiling rationale that here lies nothing of real political consequence.

Yet the sociopathic character of the Corporate-State mustn't be underestimated: what is innocuously called the “assault on culture” is never less than *the anticipatory form of an assault on power*. The industrialisation of modern culture proceeds with this in view & the institutionalisation of the avantgarde is merely its most conspicuous symptom.

In this multiple-scenarios universe of its “persecution complex” (endlessly aestheticised), the Corporate-State at every point negates by simulation-effect, thus “commodifying” that which it otherwise forbids to be represented. Yet the commodity is no longer sufficient to do the work of

the secret police, whose activities have only multiplied since the end of the Cold War – what we now realise was simply a prelude.

### **IDIOCY DOES NOT “WITHER AWAY”**

Nothing today is more readily taught than the cultural habit of irrelevance: whole swathes of humanity are entrained to submissively disenfranchise themselves at the behest of power.

Those who fail to conform are “criminalised”: disenfranchised by force of the law – whose prestige alone is an insurmountable barrier wherever, in the eyes of the world, it retains the “benefit of the doubt” or has yet to be corrupted to the point of unfettered ridicule.

More often than not, the representatives of non-conformism themselves derive from the ruling faction: “revolutionaries” by pure expedient.

Likewise the mainstream “opposition,” from socialist to libertarian, represents a common thread of pseudo-revolutionary *opportunism* – to remake the world, no less, in the image of backroom “consensus-building” & Prozac.

Among the institutional “left,” revolutionary discourse is the *ne plus ultra* of cynical reason – as if they, too, without ever having gotten their hands dirty, will be saved by some kind of *revolutionary predestination*.

But all the scholastic Marxists with their absurd “analyses” are still less absurd than the self-congratulating acolytes of Ayn Rand, who believe they alone have shouldered the world. And that they alone will shoulder the next one.

Yet beyond such ideological inanities, the only real distinction is who possesses power & who doesn’t.

### **THE AMBIVALENCE OF DISILLUSIONED ACTION**

The “State” takes itself for granted only in the eyes of its enemies, whose dreams it constantly inhabits, who has foreseen & fore-experienced its own destruction in countless scenarios.

It is for this reason that the first strategic consideration must be the extent to which one’s positions have been anticipated. *You must always expect the enemy who does not yet know you are seeking him* (Sun Tzu). It is necessary, in other words, to confront the *terrain of anticipation*, rather than the illusory terrain of the “State” – since the Corporate-State itself stands upon the paradoxical foundations of supersession (the authority of god, of the people, of the law, of the marketplace) & sustains itself only so far as it hypothesises its own (impossible) end.

Even if right at this moment something is watching, listening, tracking, logging, analyzing, predicting – yet paranoia is a luxury commodity. Vigilance is the contrary of paranoia.

The paranoia of the Corporate-State is by definition inimical to action: in its form, it mirrors the instinct of the “State” towards escalation, above

all in the diffusion of misinformation, for which it enlists the individual as its unwitting agent. Its actions are geared towards a generalized paralysis, feeding denunciation, drama & hysteria into a psychology of inertia & apathy.

Yet this alone provides abundant opportunities for appropriation & subversion – since the terrain of anticipation is also a terrain of ambivalence. The more the Corporate-State engages in psychological warfare of this kind, the more susceptible it becomes to its own schizophrenia.

## **THE PLANNING & REGULATING OF POVERTY IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

It is necessary not to lose sight of the fact that the organisation of the Corporate-State is modelled on that of the prison, the factory, & the psychiatric institution – & on this basis remains “experimental” in nature.

Every operation of the Corporate-State is an exercise in control: one cannot afford to be seduced by the sentimental idea of a cybernetic “welfare state” *separate from this totalising impulse* (like some “charitable institution” for conspicuous destitution in the midst of abundant commodities – conditions for which it assiduously maintains, even while pretending to relinquish “power” in the name of a “duty of care”).

The very nature of the Corporate-State is antithetical to such sentimentalisms – other than on occasions of the most reactionary & cynical kind.

In this, its *experimental* character is brought most clearly into view, as a constant testing of the boundaries of expropriation & substitution – of everything that can be brought within its grasp: from the meaning of the social contract, to the social contract of meaning.

It is for this reason that the Corporate-State manifests its greatest hostility towards all contrary forms of experimentation (those that cannot be expropriated to its service).

Thus the experimentalism of poetic action is not only subversive of institutionalising process, but remains incomprehensible to them. In this the strategic & tactical ends of poetic action coincide.

## **THE “PRICE OF SURVIVAL” ISN’T THE BURDEN OF SELF-SACRIFICE**

Power-relations, irrespective of their array, are always phantasmatic, though they present themselves as iron-clad laws of necessity, while power itself appears as the very foundation of “reality” – since “reality” is nothing if not the affirmation of power in its “true” manifestation. Which is to say, in its self-evidence.

The world construed according to this image is *lartpourlartisme* of the highest mystical order, being nothing but abstraction masquerading as *real conditions of concrete existence*.

Monetised, the degree of separation between the abstract surreality of power & the concrete existence of the powerless, between executive reward & the minimum wage, is of an absurd order (presently around 500%). This disparity evokes more than the rhetorical divide between "democratic tyranny" and "democratic liberty" – it exposes the fundamental lie behind the categorical equivalence of commodities (that anything can be exchanged for anything else).

Such a convenient relativism – what de Tocqueville called the *progress of equality* – is pure veneer, to disguise the truly radical nature of the commodity-system's *ambivalence*.

For it is by the seemingly *counter-intuitive means* of such ambivalence that this system has derived – out of progressive forms of alienation refined into the myth of self-determination – the prestige of inevitability, universality & permanence.

This system of abstract universals founded upon the universalised abstraction of concrete ("social") relations is totalitarianism.

## **BY THE LESSON OF PAST DEFEATS WILL THEY KNOW US**

It is the prestige of the commodity (as abstract universal) that alone feeds the illusion that power is beyond reach – yet it is for this reason also that only the force of mystification can suffice in its defence.

It is in the nature of the insight commodification affords, that power has learnt to automate such defences – not against any opponent as such, but *against its own decadence*.

To accomplish any kind of subversive action, it is thus necessary to grasp the logic of the world as a reflection of capital's omniscience (its total, immersive "virtuality"; its "transcendence of the real") & to approach the *terrain of anticipation* as one would enter a mirror.

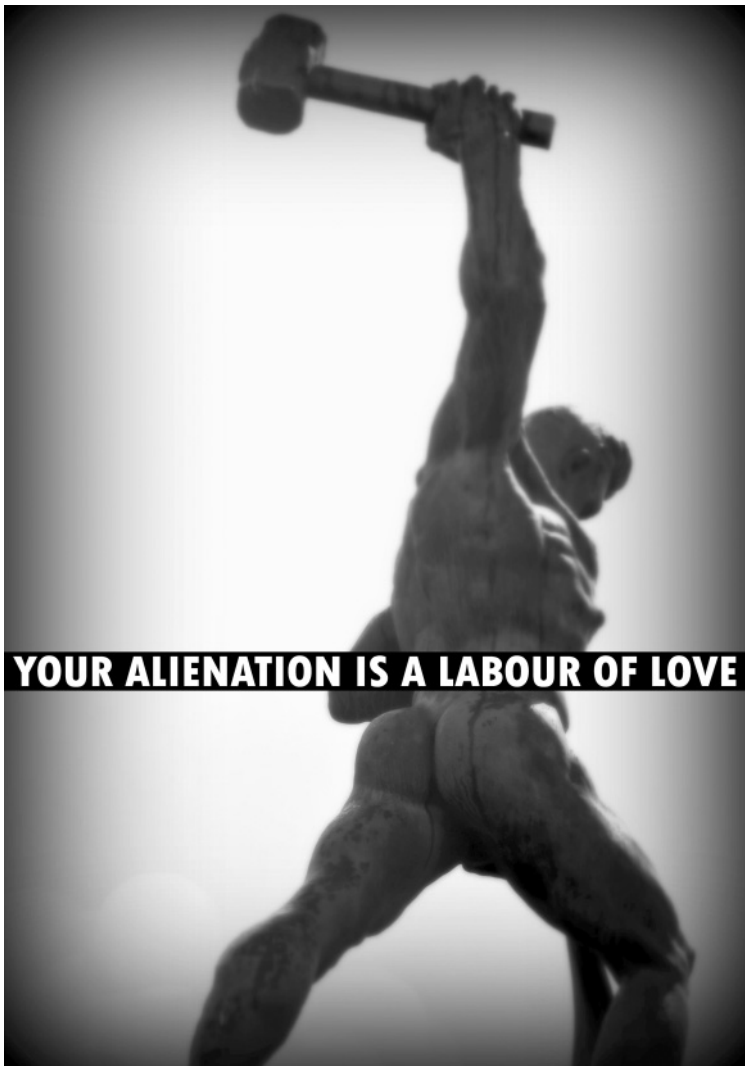
Knowing that "demystification can always be turned into a myth," such action must retain a *poetic economy* – an economy of detour, deviation, dissimulation, parody, indeterminacy, unverifiability.

*In making tactical dispositions, the acme is to leave no discernible shape... Appear at places that the enemy must hasten to defend; move swiftly to places where you are least expected... Where you are strongest, allow your actions to appear to originate from a point of weakness... The tactical retreat is thus also a weapon & may prove more decisive than the "primary action." Indeed, the primary action should serve as a lure, to draw the enemy into a void (Sun Tzu).*

The measure of success will be the extent to which an action confounds the enemy while surprising even itself.

INTERIOR MINISTRY  
January 2018, Kafkaville





**YOUR ALIENATION IS A LABOUR OF LOVE**

Your alienation is a labour of love



Increase yours today



# IM BETT MIT ALIENISTEN

## INTERVIEW WITH THE INTERIOR MINISTRY

*After a mutual friend put me into contact with the Alienist cell, the interview was conducted via email correspondence with an anonymous "committee representative" of the Interior Ministry of The Republic of Žižkov. I was explicitly instructed that "the number of questions would be limited to a prime number less than 19." The Dear Madam/Sir or other sapient invariably responded promptly and efficiently, making me suspect a chatbot doing the writing from the other end – although I don't fathom how they could quite script that special cocktail of hard-boiled blassé and high-brow détournement just yet...*

**VÍT BOHAL:** The question of "what is Alienism" constitutes a whole section of the Alienist Manifesto, but I must say it has left me baffled. Although the imagery is limelight stark, a positive definition of the movement seems lacking. Being a manifesto, the political dimension of the format is implicit, and it strikes me as strange to see the intended definition flee on the lines of flight of pure aesthetics. As self-professed "cultural terrorists" what are your demands?

**INTERIOR MINISTRY:** As unrepentant cultural terrorists, we declare that our intentions and demands do not include: the "consensual hallucination" of democratic mass individualism that affirms a nostalgia for a "real"; the accumulation of prestige in a narrowly permissive Culture; the consumption of false choices; a resolution of the seeming contradiction posed by alienation to the experience of "everyday life"; a reactive stance against the shifting winds of public opinion; "educational" schemes that plagiarize creativity; "art" produced as décor for despotism; "truth"; writing that sinks to the level of commodity; the prevalence of ideology in the domain of the "non-ideological"; the appropriated naturalism of "everyday life"; the delegation of sense to a regime of representation; mass "culture" as the propaganda wing of the military-industrial complex; "reality"; a composition in the shadow of an idea; the "betterment of society"; abstraction-of-abstraction; the permitted form of a dream of impossible emancipation; realism that finds its salvation in a belief in miracles; the "right to dream"; writing reduced to a Literary artifact; the myth of transparency; the excess of the code that only enlarges its domain; the individual that becomes the nebulous author of a future in which all life is retrospectively lived; the ideological phantasm; the mystique of powerlessness. To give answers is to waste questions.

Exactly how does mass culture constitute the “propaganda wing of the military industrial complex”? With the dominance of networked media and their affordance of multivalent “messy broadcasting,” a lot of the dissemination has shifted to the myriad users, and the bilateral relationship of sender and receiver (hegemon vs. the public) has shifted. The reductionist, conspiratorial, and ultimately paranoid distinction between “us” and “them” seems to have become more fuzzy, so exactly which position do you voice your alternative from?

The forces ranged in defense of economic cultural totalitarianism are vastly asymmetrical in nature. The social is technological to its core and inversely there’s no discourse of technology that’s *ideologically* neutral – in other words, not *political*. The truth is that society is always prepared to suffer at the hands of a pragmatic idealism. The future “state” will not be the outcome of reasoned self-supersession, but of disproportionate & unforeseen evolutionary forces. The effective subversion of enemy forces can be accomplished by a single Alienist, patient, alone and unknown, operating in absolute secrecy and in cold blood. *It is better to err than to do nothing.*

**Your approach seems reminiscent of Debordian Situationism. Have you consciously abducted any practical or theoretical tools from the Situationist International, and do you, as Alienists, have any intention of “playing the game.”**

We are inclined to believe, since none of us manifest signs of maniacal insanity or general delirium, chronic maniacal insanity, selective delirium, manie sans délire, dementia, melancholia, disturbances in understanding, blind fury, obliteration of the intellectual as well as emotional faculties, nor ideas which are inconsistent with one another, that our thoughts about Guy Debord are entirely identical to Debord’s opinion on the Alienists. We tend to assume the feeling is mutual. Playing the game changes the rules.

**What is then the Ministry’s position on Equus Press founder David Vichnar’s “Open Letter to the Prague Literary Establishment”?**

Everywhere, “literary establishment” is first and foremost “establishment” and only “literary” by expropriation. All writing which isn’t self-alienated is the subversion of Literature.

**I am at the moment corresponding with you, a representative of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Žižkov. How does such an institution, which implies some form of “establishment,” fit into the Alienist project? To what degree does mimicry, whether individual or institutional, play a part in your activities?**

In a two-dimensional universe, Earth is flat. We refuse the false choices posed by the “discontents” of today’s pseudo-struggle-against-the-System, the System’s witting and unwitting agents provocateurs. We require more than a rhetorical mania for rediscovering ideology under every unturned stone. The machinery of approval never sleeps.

**You’ve recently launched *Alienist* magazine. What is its focus, and through which channels will it be distributed?**

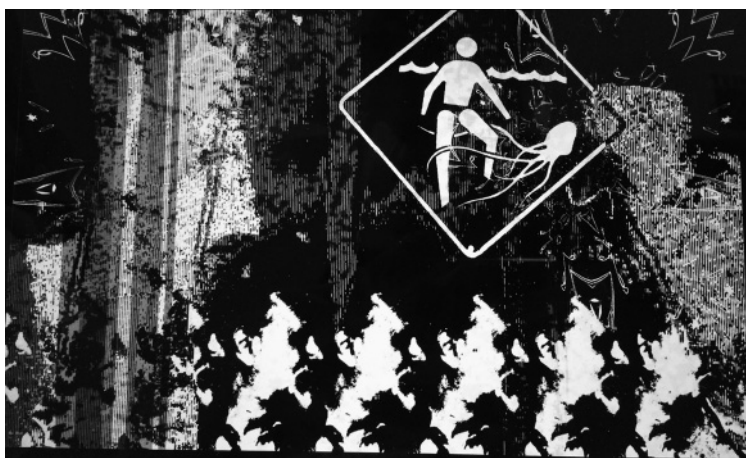
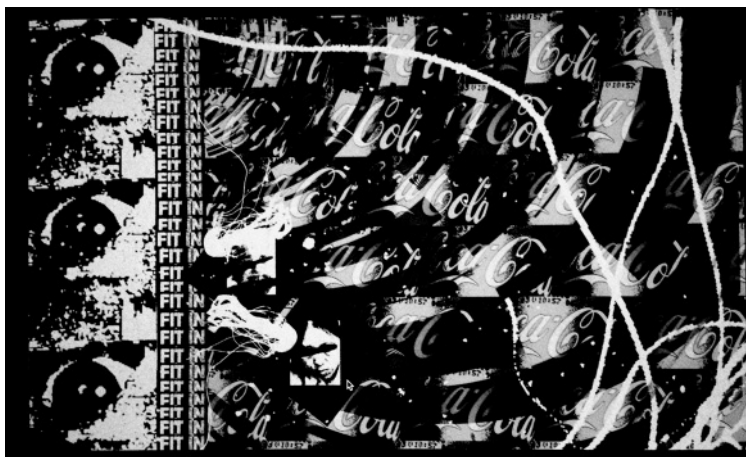
It is a question of bringing to consciousness that which is unspoken. The exclusive delusional focus of melancholics for certain objects and their sombre character yield with difficulty to treatment. Focused delusions can also spring quite often from religious terrors, thoughts of a vengeful and inexorable God, and the everlasting punishment one believes one has earned. The Alienist’s duty is to act, to analyze and plan or improvise solutions to each problem that presents itself to effective dissent.

**What does the future hold for the Alienists and your Republic of Žižkov? Are you content with staying localized, or are you metastasizing, setting up embassies/factions/sleeper cells in other geographical locales?**

The Alienist must maintain the element of surprise; to know the semantic terrain; to have greater mobility and speed than the enemy; to be constantly informed; to sow confusion; to gain command over any given situation; to maintain an effective degree of unverifiability. Escapees in slow motion, Kafka’s bug multiplied by each page of bureaucratic writing, spasmodic passions, tinned nits, extreme irregularities, dwarfs in party hats, men swinging axes, lapses of reason, a mob gathering outside your door. We are legion.

November, 2017









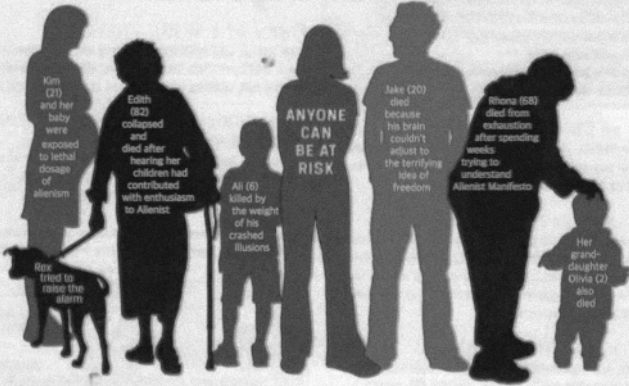




**THE “SOCIAL  
CONTRACT”  
MEANS  
EVERYONE  
HAS BLOOD  
ON THEIR  
HANDS**

**INTERIOR MINISTRY**

# ALIENISM KILLS DON'T LET IT BE YOU™

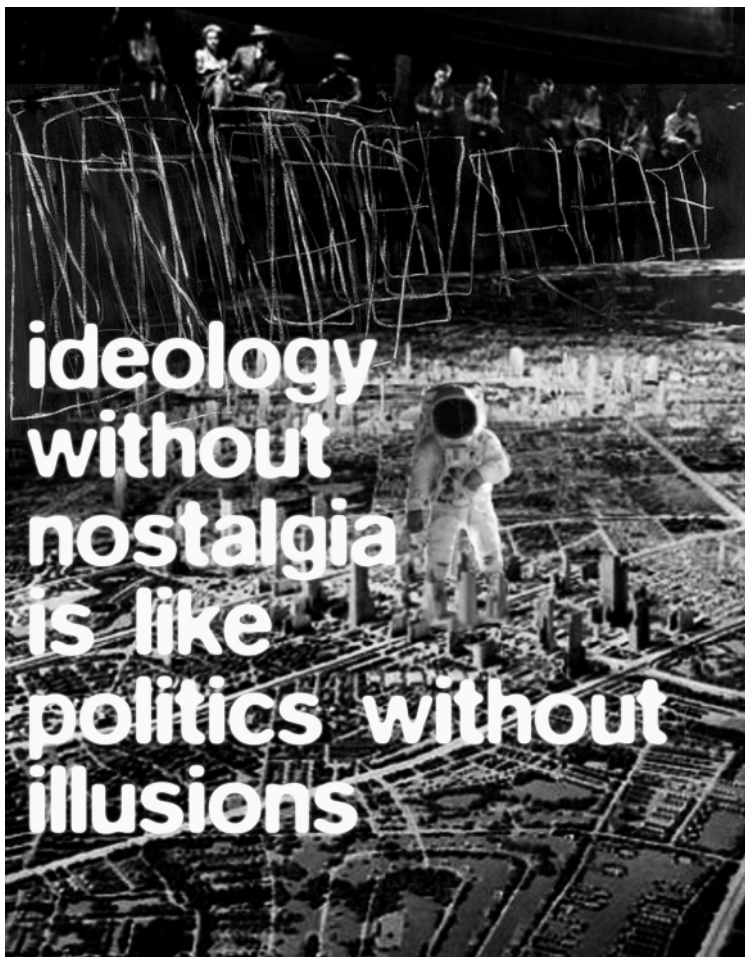


**PROTECT**  
your family with everyday  
supplies of alienation

**CONNECT**  
an audible alienism  
alarm

**REJECT**  
unidentified printed  
materials of alien  
origin

**SUSPECT**  
the worst if you recognize  
the signs



**ideology  
without  
nostalgia  
is like  
politics without  
illusions**

Ideology without nostalgia  
is like politics without illusions



# I HOPE DEATH ISN'T LIKE THIS

Self be your sooner. We held once fast yet abandoned. We are exclusively oriented. What counts most is the sentence in which this subtle interlacing of 'use' and 'mention' is exploited. The mirror in the salon next door was encrusted: flyblown abattoir of our youth et cetera. I have decided to give you an hour of new literature.

I begin at once with a song today: all men are of the fibre of the living mass – imagine blood aerosol in zero gravity. There is no any other theme upon which our thoughts and feelings have changed so little since the earliest times. Discarded forms have been completely preserved under a thin disguise.

'They stitch you up, don't they,' she adds, tongue probing to inner ear. The mediaeval notion of history as a malfunctioning translation has never been bettered – by this I evoke the emancipative character of our relationship, that disfigured spectre: the insect becoming unto itself.

The retail where she worked slash died was a poisonous mass of incompetence and sabotage. It can only be assumed that they bring the remembrance of their species with them into each new existence – that is, they have preserved memories of what was experienced by their ancestors. I remember that final day. She looked at me in the half light.

'Did you see it splitting? Did you see your spine going scream?'

'The only true initiatives involve ourselves, alone. It's vital to understand that home is a place where you have never been, and never will be.'

See, there's a limit to the precision with which the position and momentum of a particle can be simultaneously known. The fact that nothing ever stands fast for me is grounded in my quietude.

Lie still, at the precise median between points W and X. In the snowfall, the tree outside is so white, I can hardly look at it. A hare flashes across the shingle. I am exiled from today's anticipations, I am exiled from today's promissory promise. They had the smallest teeth.

We were conveyed on a parallel journey at the same instant, some of us lost among the stars – a yellowing half-moon swollen through the cloud base – others crossing a stormy sea in a papier mâché catamaran. Then she says, your pietà, that policed agon that seems to follow you around, I cannot bring myself to look upon it, thou tramed through such pain et cetera.

They used a three-layered dragnet, designed such that a man entering through one of the outer sections will push the razor-mesh core through the reticulum on the further side, forming a snare in which he is trapped. The four points of the compass slid together to draw an ellipse. Origin is early, so named because the motion of the brain is restricted by its serpentine grooves.

This is not to say that Chronicle B fares any better. His remedies were weak: sage and wormwood, some kind of marsh plant, hyssop and blind faith, all in minute quantities. It is not the violence that sets a man apart, it is the distance that he is prepared to go. I too am a descendant, the offshoot, origin obscure; I am named from one of the hills that encircle the lough. Physical nature encroaches on world history, indeed, the man in whom I placed my hope has enlarged his heel over me, that is, he has trodden down.

I am founding a system of what claims to be knowledge but has no basis in scientific fact: a shadow, a raised track across low wet ground, an island breached at low tide. A large number of treatises have survived thanks to the refusal of his disciples to burn them in compliance with the edicts of the law. The story is told.

## **PLOT**

While they were on the journey they all fell asleep. Suddenly they woke. The carriage had come to a standstill in the depths of a wood – not a path as far as eye could see and no one understood how they had got there. One among them looked around and cried watchman.

Who goes the answer came from the thicket.

The pharmacist.

The voice replied this time but never again.

A road opened up and the carriage drove on. The travellers recognised



the region, but had never seen a wood in these parts. They did not dare to look back.

See, a land of future promise or return: exile hostaged for exile, a ransom pay-off – being here persists, gently hammering, gently lamenting itself. Only the innermost keep survives in derelict fulfilment. The advertised dolmen eluded us, as did the septic tank.

We have reached an extreme limit of revelation – a simple figure of ourselves, forever snared by the complacency that we have victoriously faced down all comers, every limb cued to a mistimed defence. I don't have an inner, being total threshold.

There are no less than thirty-six of these stratagems. The same may be said for the various knots of this intrigue, those false proofs, diabolic suggestions. I set off to meet some ancestors of my own; one pressed close and asked who the fuck are you and where the fuck are you from.

## **ASH OF LITHIUM**

To wit, the curvature of light rays by the gravitational field of the sun. I am the hoax that is forever anticipated: I was suddenly recognised in the remote silver mines of the Sierra Madre. I replied. While disruption will not be the final purpose of an enemy attack, it can be an effective means of forcing the defender to retreat, and in the process sacrifice other strongholds.

So far so good. I am the one who is always stationed beside, before the fading light at ruinous cove – thunderheads torn at distance, beyond which nothing but sunken ships of the old line, our emigrants and exterminators. Polyethylene and algae of rust lapped at the shoreline. Then another came, stealing in behind as we stood at arms, he gracious in his own wake, a fitting spectre of the rebel count.

## **THE DISTRACTS**

*The better of the two prints has 'shell', the other has 'reason'.*

Total mobilisation of the populace, smart schizophrenia at the core of a forced-leisure economy. I am detonating non-violent crime. I am detonating violent crime. I am the violence you refuse to acknowledge, an untimely reminder of your own capabilities. I am committed to your fraud. I have no need to justify anything: my time in the dock was a deliverance, thank you. Did you have a convincing reason for your actions? Were you aware of what you were doing at the time?

Time? I thought we were going to kickstart a family – arson, pets, malignant cells and everything.

When the anatomical or genetic approaches cannot get to the cause, as had been hoped, then the pathological bias must attack its problems through invented measurements. Yet, these numerous gambits fail to swerve the family from its failure to accommodate the average incendiary. I am self-legitimising. I am the given proof. You will have already begun the slow decline into insidious competition with yourself, choking on your own

corpse gas. Is that your id all over the floor?

See, he has already made several important contributions to mathematic logic, especially the incompleteness. And there is still no algorithm to solve the halting problem.

## **A BRIEF HALT AT A NEIGHBOURHOOD WASTELAND**

For years they lived in a wilderness. He survived off her drippings alone, strung as she was across the bough of a tree, burst from the epicentre of trinity's neat lawn, trunk swollen at the base to scrotal sac. A causeway of broken glass formed the only exit, where oily rotting leaves of some titanic carcass sucked at the quicksand. We staggered across the boardwalk spanning a tarpit. There was a circle of stones; I refused to kiss them. The only waterfall fell close by at the head of a cobbled alley, where I was identified as the mutineer that I am – a heavy hand upon the shoulder and it all flooded back: the inquisitory, the cell, untold deferrals of a courtroom, the final decree.

The poisoned garden we could not find. An arc lamp swung, the cone of its beam criss-crossing the camp from high in a watchtower. There was a razed icehouse to which the roots of native trees clung gnarled and defiant – even the white, which is still clear in the torrent of drapery, had a liverish colour about it.

The wooden jetty on the lake roiled beneath our feet. She recited. There were rumours of an oubliette, the perfect signal of our lassitude: one way in, no way out. Stranded at the shoreline, storm under storm shuddered through our head – the sea was black and lights of the port emerged as we sought landfall, the prow of our ship veering silent to a deserted wharf. The tram to the centre surrendered at the periphery. Every surface was etched upon, a swarm of copperplate graffiti, burnished bone across the ancient darks. Hail drove horizontal. From the murder hole things were flung – the spiral stair crushed the breath from me as I clung to its rope. You could see for miles, see absolutely nothing. The homeward track had been forsaken to a trespass of fallow mud.

Evening had fallen when we woke and the sand and arid grasses glowed no longer. The centre was shut. There were rumours of a horse graveyard, prehistoric ferns, a dungeon with surgical alter, the ulna of a griffin – everything one could possibly need. The keep had been used in feudal times for the worst purposes, and in later days as a place of deposit for some highly combustible substance. We struck camp at the frontier, forever on the move, perpetual motion made flesh; it's moot whether we were even alive. Blanched ivy crawled veinous across the facade of a disused limekiln.

Beyond the rampart of the fort was an isolated cemetery, set aside for the dispossessed of that redoubt. The light faded, taking its time: defensive wooden spikes smeared with pitch were driven into the counterscarp and ignited. At the parapet she asks, are you with the vertigo once more? I peered down into the grey-green mist, and whispered.

## THERE'S NO 'I' IN ASSASSIN

A story set in the seventeenth century but which ends in poison and tragedy. Memory is possessed, it is therefore such deathless publics that we shall encounter – the pragmatic human, vacuum packed and volunteering for surveillance. Always be prepared for a long siege. Never assume a quick rescue. You can tell they're having fun.

Of unknown derivation, a perennial herb of the genus so called, belonging to the family and bearing spikes of purple-white flowers. (He's just going to walk into a park like that and fire off a gun?) These libations can remind us. Our second pointer is afforded by the observation that states such as joy and exultation and triumph, which give us the normal model for mania, depend on the same economic conditions. Whereas in the field you must travel light to maintain mobility, in your home you have the luxury of storing and maintaining a plethora of weapons. Emancipative thought is impossible. There is a sector of the mind in which the instinctive pulse and contingent process engage ceaselessly in games of chance. Apart from the purpose of absolute defence, each of these forms may have a further one: that of *feigned defence*. An empty show of resistance can, of course, be used in connection with a number of other measures, with any position that is not simply an overnight neurosis.

The conflict between my personal drives and the demands of the cultural superego are forming nouns all about me in the air. Biology forms names of spectral constituents. Botany forms roots with a name ending in idiot (your genes are stupid et cetera). Zoology denotes an animal belonging to a family without a rating. A fast-running beetle of our tribe headlong covers the predatory ground: scorched earth retail. Origin is late century, from modern pleurisy, denoting a kind of crabwise gait.

*From my room at night I could oversee the estuary with its string of orange burn-off flares, punctuating the darkness. Everyone wanted to go. I ended up. I had my favourites. I had nothing to wear. I said one more before I go. But I can remember turning around and around in the centre with embers floating down about my ears and the snow so deep as far as the eye and a single gunshot that echoed in the silence of the forest.*

I am denoting the memory of a dynasty, astrology insisting upon a meteor sent from a specified constellation. (Fuck your skill-set.) We are evaporating from a great height. When I hate, I hate myself – I hate my voice, hate the vapour of my breath that escapes the petrified lung. Then again, my voice probably hates me.

Take a deep one: the dimension of resistance follows directly from the chosen dimension of form. My own nerves were tearing open the flesh, wave upon wave unendurable. If indeed they had arranged the megaliths into an astrological clock, their primary goal was usurpation – the disappearance of a celestial body in the shadow of another.

RICHARD MAKIN  
Alienist Broadsheet #3

**TO OPERATE  
IN THE GAP  
BETWEEN ART  
& ITS RESULTS  
#alienism**





# REPORT ON THE OCCUPATION OF THE CABARET VOLTAIRE

At the end of December 2001, one of my friends from Zürich's punk scene told me about an empty house he'd seen in the Niederdorf, the city's historical centre. He described the object as a five-storey medieval structure, with a strange memorial plaque on its side entrance, which was dedicated to some sort of cabaret. The description of the house matched a very familiar object in Spiegelgasse. I made a reconnaissance through the Niederdorf area & there it was: the birthplace of Dada actually stood abandoned. After a few inquiries, I found that the building was to be renovated & actual conversion plans had already been submitted. All permissions were obtained. A renowned auction house intended to move in after renovation. The owner of the property was the Rentanstalt, a Swiss insurance company. I called a meeting to discuss technical details & a cultural program for a weekend of some squatting action. I was amazed at how little the future art squatters knew about the importance of the Cabaret Voltaire, & it seemed essential to me to initiate a Dada revival by occupying the building.

On Saturday, the 2nd of February, 2002, we broke down the doors at 1 Spiegelgasse. We had devised a special plan for this action. Squating an object in the historical centre of Zürich had never been done before, & it was a unwritten rule that you could take whatever building on the outskirts of town, but the police would never allow you to occupy a house in Zürich's tourist centre. So we decided to dress up: the male activists wore suits & ties, girls were dressed up as catering ladies & served snacks to bewildered passersby accompanied by classical music. We told anyone who would listen that we had inherited the house from a distant aunt, & were now holding a modest party in celebration of the dear deceased lady. It was not long before the police caught on. Officers came rushing to the spot only to find nothing they could object to. After they'd munched the sandwiches the girls gave them, they too congratulated us on our inheritance. Meanwhile we were barricading the building from inside, to make sure that no police could kick us out at short notice.

The very next day I started spreading the rumour that the Cabaret Voltaire was to be converted into a pharmacy. This little lie proved to be very efficient in gaining support from Zürich's intellectuals, as the same fate had befallen a few historical landmarks – half of the famous Odeon Café, for example, a place where exiles such as Lenin & Thomas Mann convened, had been made into a pharmacy years ago. Conveniently the owners of the Cabaret didn't do anything to counter this fairytale, as the deal between them & the future tenant from the art world hadn't been finalized yet, & neither of them were interested in any publicity for their project. Very soon the local newspapers took up the story about the pharmacy, & our little

happening in the centre of Zürich received a lot of media attention.

All major German columnists mocked Zürich's ignorant cultural philistines, who were unable to recognize the potential of Dada as a cultural location factor. Under the presence of an ever-growing public interest, the activist collective organized regular events, focused on creating Merz-style collages in music, creative speech, open stage, as well as concert & theatre performances on weekends, thus making it possible to collect donations at the door in order to finance the living & travel expenses incurred by participants. We occupied the top floors of the medieval house – the bottom part was open to the public more or less 24-hours-a-day. While transforming the top part of the building into visual Gesamtkunstwerk, or inhabited sculpture, we opened up 4 different stages in the basement & first floor. Each Saturday evening at midnight Pastor Leumund, a friend & Dada activist from Berlin, celebrated his legendary Dadamass. We all joined in his parody of a catholic mass, sung songs together, prayed for nothing, & made nonsense our consensus.

The venue started to become very popular, & the more our audience grew, the more angry our next door neighbours became with us. Our neighbours lived in large fancy apartments, & had spent millions on acquiring their property in a safe & gentrified area, & were in no mood to accept any disturbances from low life riffraff such as ourselves. In fact they'd spent considerable resources in kicking out the former long-term tenant, who was operating a discotheque in the Cabaret. But the noise wasn't about to stop just yet, & to their horror the resurrected Cabaret Voltaire triggered a brief Dada boom. There were nightlong Dada features on the radio & daily reports in the Zürich press. Pressure on the city to preserve this location of international charisma as a cultural institution grew stronger, & the director of the Zürich Cultural Department stepped forward, got in contact with the Insurance Company & declared his solidarity with the Cabaret Voltaire activists, assuring them that no pickaxe or shovel would go near the house, at least until a decision about the future of the house had been made.

We composed a manifesto & organized a press conference at which we demanded the preservation of the historic Cabaret Voltaire as a living memorial to the Dada movement. At this press conference we appeared for the first time as the Fondation pour l'Humanite Croesus – a foundation committed to staging annual Dada festival weeks, as well as the squandering of idle resources through the defenestration of capital. To prove our serious intentions of becoming a cultural institution we decide the best way of showing the public that we were capable of handling tax money in the same way as real government institutions would be with an allegorical performance. This was to be our first *Capital Defenestration* – during which we threw 1,000 francs in 1-franc coins from the upper windows of the Cabaret Voltaire into the street. We issued a threat to the city that, if it were evicted, the Croesus Foundation would throw one million Swiss francs out

of the window. Every franc we collected in the Cabaret would be thrown back at them!

We enjoyed a beautiful two months in Spiegelgasse, but by the middle of March we knew we'd have to move out by the end of the month. We decided that, while leaving was inevitable, we should still put up a brave fight. We immediately called-in all our activists to form the Croesus Militia. We spent the evening crafting cardboard weapons. The next day, armed with cardboard halberds, crossbows, cannons & tanks, we assaulted the Zürich city police headquarters. As no one dared to come out of the building we declared that we'd won this skirmish. As the victorious Croesus Militia returned home from battle they could hardly believe their eyes: a large crowd had gathered in front of the Cabaret Voltaire. They'd been waiting there for hours for the announced final capital defenestration of one million Swiss francs. By this time the Croesus Foundation had made a profit of 5000.- sFr, mainly from alcohol &





drug sales, so we decided to throw this amount out of the window – but in order to pacify the high expectations of the masses we also started to chuck personal funds, counterfeit money, used underpants & bucket loads of water from the windows.

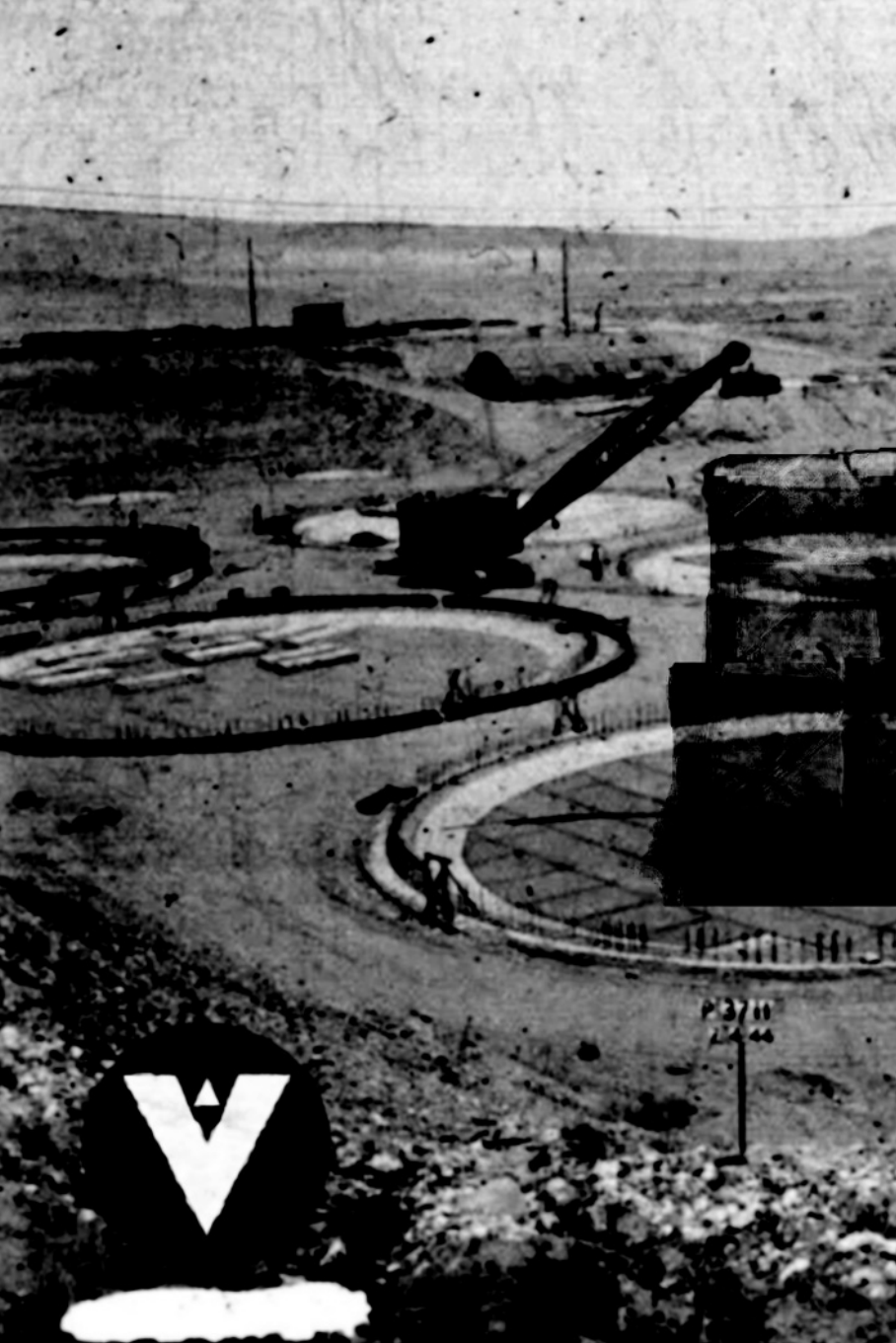
Unfortunately, the Croesus Militia was unable to defend the Cabaret Voltaire against an invading police force on the morning of the 2nd of April & so, once again, officers were treated to a glass of sparkling wine before we abandoned the building peacefully. The policemen, who in the meantime apparently became somewhat familiar with the subject, surprised the disinherited artists with enigmatic comments such as “art means change,” while beefy construction workers immediately commenced making mincemeat of our equipment, installations & artworks. Afterward, the displaced Dada population set up camp in front of the adjacent bookstore, & were provided with food & drink by city residents for 48 hours. The great international interest in the subject was a matter of national disgrace for the city of Zürich, & finally a decision was reached to preserve the building as a memorial.

A private sponsor was found behind closed doors, prepared to shell out the monstrous annual rent of 400,000 francs to the Rentenanstalt. We were assured of our involvement. Upon that we developed an action plan for a self-governing Dada cultural centre, but two years later, when the Cabaret Voltaire reopened its doors, we were not invited. Instead the City of Zürich appointed a former manager of a popular disco to be the curator of Cabaret Voltaire. Scholars with university degrees in Dadaism, who were involved in the decision-making, justified our exclusion by claiming that our strategy during the occupation had proven overly retro-Dadaist. Later on, the disco owner was ousted from his position by his assistant, & since 2006 the Cabaret Voltaire has been occupied by a pub, a souvenir shop, & a small gallery. The gallery is run by Adrain Notz who tries diligently to keep up with the international art world by hosting shows by the Chapman Brothers & other fame whores. Obviously the gallery was out of its league, & after a few years the City reduced the funding from one million to a meagre 400,000.- sFr a year.

The death blow for the Cabaret Voltaire came in 2016, when the celebration of the centennial of Dada was used by Zürich Tourism to promote the City as an artsy tourist destination. Since 2005, when the Cabaret was officially reopened by the City & the Swatch group, it was foreseeable that things would turn out this way. In retrospect, one of the projects we proposed that year which should've been pursued more seriously was “the society for the fulfilment of Dada.” The aim of this society was to literally fill up the Cabaret Voltaire with concrete, & by this creating a fitting allegorical monument, showing the world how Zürich deals with its uncomfortable Dada past & its living art activists.

MARK DIVO





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**SCHIZO  
PHRENIE,  
EST-IL UNE  
SOLUTION?**

# SCHIZOPHRENIA, IS IT A SOLUTION?

We live, we die? In a world beset by alienations, it seems we exist as in a recurring dream of disillusionment. The history of reason, history *as* reason, poses itself at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century not as a counterpoint to the future of an illusion, but as a congenital madness. If reason is the symptom of an irrational problem, what is the mind's part in this? From Pinel to Jarry to Foucault, bloodless revolutions have stained the pages of psychiatry, literature, philosophy. If emancipation is an idea that firstly belongs to those who forge chains, it isn't a facetious question we pose: Is schizophrenia a solution?

## VANESSA PLACE

The solution is schizopelia, an American invention, but one which has not yet been perfected. Schizopelia, pace schizophrenia, seeks its contradictions, finding them, as always, confirmation. The contronym is the grammatical mascot here, elegantly pointing to the way that to "cleave" betrays the affection in alienation, as well as the violence that harmonizes the two. Through schizopelia, rigorously applied, we may, tempered and trimmed, weather our way through.

## ALAN SONDHEIM

There was disillusion all through the 19th/20th century. It's always there, the four ages for example of which this is that of iron, etc. Human life is like that. Reason has nothing to do with history, if it seems to be any sort of steering mechanism; it has everything to do with historiography. I prefer the Annales in this regard. And history doesn't pose itself as anything; people organize, write, react, disorganize, etc.; history, as the movement of time through the world and the various effects – such as the six great extinctions – are rough occurrences described after the fact. Again, I don't know what the irrational problem is; I tend to think there is no problem,

only problems with our expectations. What is, is. As far as revolutions go, those mentioned, psychiatry, literature, philosophy, are more or less fields of knowledge, phenomenologies, etc. Such fields are always characterized by turmoil since description/genre/canon/rules follow, not precede, their subjects. No writing is originary and every writing is – and these fields are fields of writing. Aristophanes was already “deconstructing,” Aristotle’s Problems already stumbled. Emancipation is complicated; I see it as an achievable goal. And a generalization is problematic – emancipation from what? from whom? whose emancipation? Emancipation from death for example is a mute and buried goal of most of us. But would that result in a continuation of life or something else entirely? The dissolution of mind and body? And to whom or what would that belong? Emancipation may have no “those who forge chains” or may have all of “those” including “us” as deteriorating vectors. As far as schizophrenia goes, I have no schizophrenics and I fail to see why schizophrenia is any more a solution than cancer or MS. I think in many ways D/G did a disservice in their *Anti-Oedipus* in this regard. There’s too much romanticism attached to people who may be deeply unhappy at their state. It’s not a priori revolutionary. There are people in terrible pain in this world, through slavery, racism, sexism, religious bigotry, etc.; they deserve imminent emancipation which is complicated by the unprecedented revolution in digital technology. But I see this as practice/praxis, this emancipation, and not something that belongs to any class. And I feel strongly that one needs better solutions than schizophrenia (no matter how romantic the attached-parasitic model might be), which is no solution at all.

## SIMONE DE BOURGEOIS

The obvious shortcomings of the idea that “schizophrenia” represents a possible solution to a failed project of emancipation, are the same shortcomings that belong to Deleuze and Guattari’s so often and so drearly cited *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Guattari, the offended acolyte, bent on redeeming the Freudian unconscious from the affront of Big Daddy determinism – by emancipating the machines (agents of a delirious Foucauldian “unreason”). Deleuze, a closet categoriser disturbed by psychoanalysis’ radical ambivalences, compelled to redeem *thought* under the paradoxical sign of a general emancipation of subreason (from the *perverse rule* of its own Anti-Oedipus complex). Inevitable that *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* doesn’t just succumb to the irony of a boys’ own Oedipal adventure of defeatist *soixante-retards*, but represents a project of resentment, thinly masked by hysterical exuberances of pseudo-emasculation. *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is neither a critique nor a “schizoanalysis,” but a pantomime of *schizophrenic spectacle* – a dilettantes’ revolt in a children’s book, under the tutelage of a cracked lookingglass. It belongs to the world it so avidly admires: that of Literature.

## GERMÁN SIERRA

Interesting question, given that both words – “schizophrenia” and “solution” – might have diverse meanings depending on the context (psychiatry, philosophy and arts as you mention, and many others) in which they’re used. Leaving aside the complex chemical endeavors of modern biopsychiatry, and many post-Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophical convolutions (including them would require a much longer discussion), maybe the more evident, dissociative aspect of schizophrenia – as an Artaudian “way out” of catatonia, and into a creative new language – could be useful to think about the pertinence of the contemporary insistence on “searching for solutions.” Even in this very particular approach, I’d rather answer the question by switching its terms: is any “solution” necessarily schizophrenic? I would say yes. The same idea that “something can be solved” implies inviting paradox-generating desiring machines, technical processes of artificial dissociation between order and chaos. To put it simply, every technical process opens at least as many new “problems” as it solves – so thinking about solutions means the introduction of novel (theoretical or practical) feedback loops. If we consider the beginning of the 21st century to be epidemically schizophrenic is maybe because the ubiquitous presence of techno-solutionism keeps favoring the arrival of new, unpredictable “problematic situations” coming from the solutions’ future. Antonin Artaud saw it clearly during his creative autoanalysis. As Stephen Barber writes in *Antonin Artaud: Blows and Bombs* (1993), Artaud’s refusal of psychiatry “puts madness to work, to take apart its social structure and to produce transmissible language from that process of disassembly.” While in *Artaud’s Metamorphosis. From Hieroglyphs to Bodies without Organs*, Jay Murphy proposes that, for Artaud, the “true madman” (“l’aliené authentique”) is one “who prefers to become mad, in the social sense one understands, in order not to forfeit ascertain superior idea of human honor...Because the madman is also a man society does not want to understand and that it wants to prevent uttering intolerable truths.” Every attempt to “solve” a problem puts the future behind us – as in “the revolution already happened” slogan – carrying with itself “intolerable truths.” Our cognitive closure, masked as the ruins (valuable antiquities and useless trash at the same time) of the modernist simultaneous belief in both tradition and progress, interferes with a proper perception of a forever self-dissociating reality. “Artaud created a ‘double’ body, itself a double-creation of re-organisation and creative language,” writes Murphy. “In doing so... he succeeded out of the near catatonia and rampant splitting of his earlier, shattered condition, to re-form onto another quite immense level of creativity and becoming, that he characterised as his ‘true body.’” Could the cognitive openness of antipraxis be understood as a schizophrenoid refuse of any solutionist constraints, allowing their replacement by a sacrificial techno-economy of expenditure in which consciousness and sanity will be only aesthetical categories? Maybe yes. Maybe this is what embracing madness means today.



## STEWART HOME

In the hands of philosophers and scientists schizophrenia becomes a solution that is five parts bullshit to one part hesitation – it is like a Molotov cocktail filled with water rather than gasoline. The only sane response to capitalist society is to continually reforge the passage between the theory and practice of proletarian revolt. There will be no vanguard, but schizophrenics and “sane” elements will participate on an equal basis in the poetry of revolution. After all, we’re all mad as hell at the capitalist world!

## PHIL SHOENFELT

“Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower.”

Karl Marx, “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” (1843)

“All subjectivity is appropriation.”

Interior Ministry, Republic of Žižkov

“GABA GABA Hey!”

(Mis)appropriation from “Pinhead,” The Ramones

Words, words, words, the detritus of history and all that jizz: crap, scrap, rubble, wreckage, dregs, leavings, dross, SCUM, slag, trash, mullock, dreck, junk, leavings, swill, grot...

Not sure where we’re going with this question about schizophrenia... Is it a wind-up? Is it facetious? Is it seditious or merely suspicious? Don’t think it’s pernicious, but is it judicious? The proposal’s ambitious but it could be quite specious...

But anyway, an excellent opportunity to drop a few turds at the citadel gate...

Seriously, are we talking about REAL schizophrenia (wass DAT?) or the kind of theoretical “schizophrenia” proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*? I read this book (several times) back in the early 80s, but I could never really get my head around it. What the fuck is a “body without organs” for example? I know the phrase was borrowed from schizophrenic French playwright Antonin Artaud, and according to Oxford Reference, “Deleuze adopts it for his own purposes to describe the schizophrenic subject who feels so persecuted by his or her desire that they decide to renounce desire altogether and become a body without objects (object and organ are the same thing in this context).” Oh really? The schizophrenic can’t handle his own desires, so he sits down one day and says: “Right, you capitalist bastards, I’ve had enough of working in the Renault car factory, I’m gonna become a body without organs...”

Yes, I’m being FACETIOUS. I do get the general idea: that “Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘schizoanalysis’ is a militant social and political analysis that responds to what they see as the reactionary tendencies of psychoanalysis.”

(Thank you Wikipedia.) Anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, anti-sublimation, anti-Oedipus (meaning anti-Freud). The BwO is connected to the idea of “desiring-machines,” which is a similarly opaque concept. Let’s use another of Mrs Wiki’s convenient summations: “Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of sexuality is not limited to the interaction of male and female gender roles, but instead posits a multiplicity of flows that a “hundred thousand” desiring-machines create within their connected universe.” So basically, the universe is one gigantic sex machine, in which everyone fucks everybody else, regardless of gender, race or religion. A nice idea, very 1960s – though maybe John Sinclair put it more succinctly in his 10 point program for the White Panther Party: “Total assault on the culture by any means necessary, including rock’n’roll, dope, and fucking in the streets.” It certainly sounds a lot more fun than having an argument with the ghost of Freud at the University of Paris. But like Fluxus, the Viennese Actionists, the Yippies and the Hippies, Deleuze and Guattari were basically saying “let it all hang out – if it feels good, do it, and don’t try to stop it.”

The idea of reality being a multiplicity of flows dovetails nicely with post-Einsteinian physics – the universe is composed of waves, particles and energy flows, provisional bodies that mutate and interpenetrate in unpredictable ways. And this, according to *Anti-Oedipus*, is how the schizophrenic perceives things: “desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it.” In other words, desire its own end, it has no ulterior motive. This contrasts with the traditional view that desire is a precursor to acquisition – that desire naturally seeks to acquire something that it lacks.

Herein lies the rub for those who reject or fail to see the link between desire and acquisition. As the basic building block of capitalism, the oedipal model of the family is crucial in enforcing the connection between desire and acquisition – the patriarchal family is an organization that must colonize its members, repress their true desires, and give them complexes if it is to function as an organizing principle of society. Furthermore, schizophrenia is an extreme mental state that co-exists with the capitalist system itself and capitalism keeps enforcing neurosis as a way of maintaining normality.

The Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing was another who saw the oedipal family as the cradle of psychopathology. Following on from Bateson’s theory that schizophrenia was caused by “double bind” situations – a double bind being a distressing dilemma in communication in which an individual receives two or more conflicting messages – Laing believed that its manifest symptoms were an expression of this distress. If a child grows up in a repressive family where double binds are used as forms of control, the confusion, discomfort and inability to resolve issues will eventually result in a kind of psychic disconnect. In *The Divided Self* (1960), Laing contrasted the experience of the “ontologically secure” person with that of a person who “cannot take the realness, aliveness, autonomy and identity of himself and others for granted” and who consequently contrives strategies

to avoid “losing his self.” But in opposition to the prevailing psychiatric orthodoxy which maintained that chemical and electro shock methods were the way to go, Laing believed that the symptoms of schizophrenia should be valued. For him, mental illness could be a transformative episode whereby the process of undergoing mental distress was compared to a shamanic journey.

So having been on a whirlwind tour of changing attitudes to psychopathology, let’s return to the original question: IS SCHIZOPHRENIA A SOLUTION? I take it for granted we’re not talking about Jekyll and Hyde here, but (as Mrs Wiki would have it) “a mental disorder characterized by abnormal social behaviour and failure to understand reality. Common symptoms include false beliefs, unclear or confused thinking, hearing voices that others do not, reduced social engagement and emotional expression, and a lack of motivation. People with schizophrenia often have additional mental health problems such as anxiety, depressive, or substance-use disorders.”

Speaking of substance abuse, I should mention that I spent about a year and a half in Schizoid Land as a result of my own zealous ingestion of LSD. This was in the early 1970s, the pre-Operation Julie era, when the stuff was really strong – not the so-called “party acid” you get today. Along with reading John C. Lilly, Timothy Leary and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, I was swallowing microdots twice a week, doing my bit to change human consciousness before the military-industrial complex blew the world to smithereens.

It all started off in a nice gentle way when a friend turned up with a hundred-tab blotter of pure Hoffman acid. A bunch of us spent the summer holidays in Wales, and I remember tripping for days on end, mesmerized by the beauty of nature. I really did see the world in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour. I remember spending an entire afternoon following a grasshopper along the beach, marvelling at the intricacy of its design and the way the tiny mirrors on its back reflected all the colours of the rainbow.

Back in Manchester, things just weren’t the same. The previous year I’d enrolled on a liberal arts degree course at Manchester Poly; but now instead of going to lectures, I spent most of my time at home, tripping on microdot LSD and trying to recapture the lost visions of summer. Manchester in 1973 was dark and post-industrial, and the stuff I was buying was incredibly strong and speedy – nothing like the mellow blotting paper tabs I’d had in Wales.

It wasn’t too long before things started to get scary – the hallucinations became more demonic, the voices in my head more threatening, the unseen evil ever more present. 1970s microdot was really powerful – 250 micrograms per trip – and once a trip had started to turn bad, there wasn’t much you could do. Just smoke some dope and take a valium and hope that the nightmare would end sooner rather than later.

The sensible thing to have done, of course, would have been to

stop taking the stuff altogether. Instead I kept reading *The Tibetan Book Of The Dead*, convinced that if I embraced my own fear, I'd eventually break through into a higher state of consciousness. Instead, I just went mad. It all ended with one humungous bummer of a bad trip, when my information processing faculties ceased to function and I couldn't make sense of language or time anymore. Basically, everything was coming out backwards, the sky was upside down and space existed in several dimensions at once – which may very well be how things are, of course, following Hugh Everett and Schrödinger's cat. But when you're perceiving such a reality without mediation, it's a terrifying experience.

So I'm not too sure about the emancipatory claims that Deleuze, Guattari, Laing and others make for schizophrenia. Personally, I don't think schizophrenia is a solution to anything at all – it's nice as a romantic, even poetic, theory, but the actuality is just too debilitating to be used as a weapon in the Age of Trump. And anyhow, most of the discussion today centres around genetics and neurotransmitters – the environmental causes of schizophrenia have taken a back seat to imbalances in dopamine, glutamate, noradrenaline and GABA. But hey, at least they've stopped using ECT in all but the rarest of cases...

## ALI ALIZADEH

This statement is convincing, to begin with. Who can disagree that we live "in a world best by alienation"? But is "the history of reason" – surely a catalogue of failures, and a failure itself, perhaps – the same thing as "history as reason"? I don't think so. The latter indicates, at least to me, reason as such, or a rational understanding of history. "An irrational problem"? Hardly. "A rational problem," maybe, in so far as it's one of the very tasks of (Hegelian, Marxian, etc.) rationalism to make sense of history, but not, at any rate, an irrationality. I discern a Nietzschean undercurrent to this statement, and I don't know if that should be accepted uncritically. Who says that "alienation" is not a specific, finite problem (to be understood rationally, materially, etc) as opposed to an eternal "recurring dream"? Nietzsche, perhaps, but certainly not Marx. Maybe the intense nihilism of this statement ("emancipation is an idea that first belongs to those who forge chains") is too obvious to point out. At any rate, does it help with resolving "the problem" i.e. the unquestionable failures (of, yes, official "Marxism") of past attempts at being reasonable? And should we then, reactively, resort to something like un-reason, e.g. schizophrenia? No. This kind of (light) Foucauldian celebration of madness, other than being quite obscenely dated (in my opinion) can now be described, without any doubt (again, in my opinion) as a mystical ideology of ultra-capitalism. E.g., note that Guattari, Deleuze etc's beloved "assemblage" is a term taken from Capital where Marx is describing the non-revolutionary combination of workers for the sole purpose of enlarging the forces of production and

enlarging surplus-value extraction. "Irrationality" is not opposed to capital – it is the very mystical dimension of the modern accumulation of capital. It is, in short, itself an intensified articulation of alienation. Could this intensification bring about the undoing of alienation and other ideological motifs of capitalism? I very much doubt it. A negation of the negation will come about when a real, new, singular subject, a subject loyal to truths – yes! – expropriates the expropriators. It is (still) called the proletariat. And it will have to be calm, brave, patient, (boringly, if you like) sane, and not schizophrenic.

## DEREK SAYER

"In a world beset by alienation..." I am not sure that "alienation" is an especially useful concept for comprehending the human condition at the beginning of the 21st century. André Breton grasped why in his response to the questionnaire on suicide in the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1924: "Suicide is a poorly made word: what kills is not identical to what is killed." The human subject never was and will never be identical with its conscious (imagined) self.

The paradigm for alienation is Karl Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism in *Capital*, in which just as in "the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world... the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race, so it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands." "Men... become alienated," Marx argues, "because their own relations of production assume a material shape which is independent of their control and their conscious individual action."

*Capital* was published in 1867. Before the internal combustion engine, the airplane, radio, film, TV, space flight, Dolly the sheep, the internet, global warming, Uber, hedge funds, Beyonce and Bitcoin. Before the Somme, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Holocaust, and Year 1 in Cambodia. Before the Five Year Plans and the Moscow trials, and long before 9-11 brought an end to the end of history and the White House metamorphosed into a larger-than-life reality TV show.

Before Freud discovered the unconscious, before Saussure distinguished signifier and signified, before Derrida realized that between signifier and signified there always lies the infinite play of *différance*, forever subverting any correspondence between the real and its representations. Before anthropologists, feminists, post-structuralists, post-colonialists and the other intellectual renegades of western civilization thoroughly relativized "reason" and unmasked it as an artifact of power.

Before Kafka, Joyce, or Borges. Before Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, Duchamp's *Fountain*, and Magritte's *Treachery of Images* and *The Human Condition*. Before Dada challenged "the foundations of the civilization responsible for the [1914-18] war... speech, syntax, logic, literature, painting and so on" (Max Ernst). Before the surrealists undertook to "express –

# LA RÉVOLUTION SURREALISTE

à Monsieur Paul Valéry, de la part de  
Louis Aragon, respectueusement.

On vit, on meurt. Quelle est la part de la volonté  
en tout cela ? Il semble qu'on se tue comme on rêve. Ce  
n'est pas une question morale que nous posons :

## LE SUICIDE EST-IL UNE SOLUTION ?

### RÉPONSE :

— Solutions de quoi ?

Quant au suicide en lui-même, il me semble être  
l'acte de l'impuissance où quelqu'un se trouve de détruire  
ou d'abolir exactly un certain mal. On supprime le  
tout parce qu'on ne sait pas supprimer quelque partie ; toute  
la conscience, parce que l'on ne sait pas exterminer telle  
pensée ; toute la sensibilité, parce que l'on ne peut pas en finir  
avec telle douleur.

Un homme n'arrive pas à capturer et à tuer le rat  
qui infeste sa maison. Il brûle la maison.

C'est une solution grossière.

Ce n'est pas la seule. L'histoire de l'humanité est une  
collection de solutions grossières. - -

Le rêve est une solution grossière du problème. - du →

verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought... in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern" (André Breton).

The "religious reflex of the real world can... only finally vanish," Marx concludes, "when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but *perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations* with regard to his fellowmen and to nature." Marx's "man" is assumed to be an inherently rational creature inhabiting a world that is knowable and *therefore* (within the limits of the laws of nature) amenable to his control. Behind the concept of alienation lies the Enlightenment fantasy of the Cartesian subject – the sovereign rational consciousness, lord and master of all he surveys.

It is above all the existence of *this* subject that has been repeatedly

challenged by the “bloodless revolutions [that] have stained the pages of psychiatry, literature, art history, philosophy” in the twentieth century. This incredulity toward the conceit of the rational self is perhaps not entirely surprising, in view of the degree to which events of that century (and especially events grounded in endeavours to consciously reshape the world in accordance with the dictates of human reason) have abundantly demonstrated not only that history is *not* the history of reason, but that human reason is seldom up to the task of comprehending, let alone of directing, its course.

Apollinaire was closer to the spirit of the century when he concluded “The Pretty Redhead,” the last poem in his collection *Calligrammes*, written in the trenches of World War I – a linguistically fragmented foundation-stone of modernist poetry, exploding words on the page like shrapnel – with the lines “Now comes summer the violent season/And my youth is as dead as the springtime/O Sun it is the time of ardent Reason.” Reason, by then, had indeed become a congenital madness.

“It is not a question of knowing whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am,” Jacques Lacan once wrote, “but rather of knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak.” Alienation, if we still wish to call it that, *is* the human condition (albeit that the fragmentation of the subject may be intensified under conditions of modernity). The Cartesian *cogito* is an defense against this fragmentation, an Imagined construct that is always in danger of collapsing in the face of the equally irrational pressures of the Freudian Id or the Lacanian Symbolic. What we ordinarily presume to be identity – “the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) – is in fact nothing other than being-in-denial, a perpetual state of living in lies.

If we are still to speak of emancipation, we need to ask of what. Certainly we need to be suspicious of those whom the Paris and Prague surrealist groups derided in their “Prague Platform” of 1968 as “the demented imbeciles of progress.” At the beginning of the 21st century, Marx’s dreams of a fetish-free world appear not just as jejune but sinister. We have been down that road before and we know where it leads. Just as for the original surrealists hysteria was not an illness but a “means of expression,” so, it might be argued, schizophrenia is a way – perhaps the only way – of living in truth. Whether this is in any sense a solution, on the other hand, is another matter.

## ANDREW HODGSON

While perhaps not facetious, such a statement is perhaps facetless; outmoded. To pose such a question and answer in an age of pluralisms and hypertrophied (thus atrophied?) cupolas of social participation is perhaps to evade the problematic (anew raised, perhaps) itself. The question raises

myriad points that appear caught within their own laid traps, that appear to revolve around approaches to the social human and a sense of alienation. These words *beset by – poses itself – those who forge the chains* perform a linguistic culling of the world's realities, by which an opposition can be set; that a mythic inhuman, inauthentic They impose themselves upon a human – somehow more 'sincerely' authentic – Me. However, that would be to say that to be human isn't ideological to begin with, that the status is somehow a divine, eternal, birthright to be trapped by or weaponised – that it has no baggage of history (of what and when I, or she, or he, or they, or we, may or may not be human – and of what quality) – that the human isn't always already weaponised doxa. That humanity is an organic whole, externally subjugated by an anthropomorphized Other. But to other the power structures of humanity from the self is to dislodge humanity from the human. I, my identifying I, exists as a pin upon a Venn diagram, that different communal contexts shift, of I shift my-self for them. Different Venn diagrams with different contexts – differing identities as mustered, or drawn out by differing social interactions. And within these shifting interactions: shifting negotiations of power. Statuses of humanity appear as some ambiguous quality suspended somewhere within the grouped interactions of humans – and thus to traverse this problematic is not to adhere to an entrenched They and Me, but a fluid and changeable we – a malleable re-forming plasticity in the general will by which it is humans interacting that constantly re-forms localized structures of power and control around themselves. Thus, this rickety designator "schizophrenic" – "schizoid" – is perhaps simply the fact of the matter. Then, any sense of alienation, or enchainment is not imposed by some ruling up-above entity, but within the social interactions by which we seek to constantly ratify our mutual individual existence – to give the self a sense of shape by external cognisance that I exist – but can only ever do so as we within a constant mutual vampiric process of the recuperated-recuperating. Perhaps then it is this transience of the human, the chameleon-nature of the self, the lack of jurisdiction over one's own humanity that forces the creation of illusions like *beset by – poses itself – those who forge the chains* - if such structures are to be adopted, it would appear, by this framing, the always-already "schizophrenic" is functioning soundly.

## KAREL PIORECKÝ

Schizophrenia is a disease. Often a deadly one. To call it a solution, even metaphorically, seems cynical to me. If, however, it is understood as an effort made to emancipate reason in an era of collective madness, I'm all for it. As long as today reason is a disease, I'm all for spreading this contagion. In poetry as well. Irrationality will always have a place within us. No need to rush out to meet it.



## VÍT BOHAL

*"Rats," writes Reza Negarestani "are endowed with a militant verve for adaptability; they can adapt to any hierarchical order only to turn it to an apparatus of criminal complicity." Rats inhabit the bowels which seed the city. They swarm the grid which sustains the sprawl. "If you build schizophrenic cities they adapt to the paranoid dimensions, if you secure a paranoid house they spread schizophrenically in every direction." Viral Infestations epidemize the Real, they scurry through the walls like plague, living off the gap which shores up our cooped interiors. The elephant in the room has been replaced by scratching underneath the floor, by nighttime tittering which glides just below the surface of sleep. The worst thing about the tale with the rats in the walls is when you find out that that it's true and the schiz floods in. Just a taste is enough to get you scrawling.*



Some boys were playing in afternoon sun, Folimanka park down in Nusle neighborhood. True story. It was the 70s and normalization was setting in. The grass and trees there grew among the tenements and up over a hollow hill where the military built an underground bunker complex back in the late Cold War fifties. Line of fire, pillboxes, all that. So playing among the brush and bramble, one boy falls through a rusted grill down a shaft. A dark hole sucks him down and away from the waning sunlight above. Ventilation duct. The friends could hear him yelling, so they call the authorities. They were on their way.

But the rats got to him first. They ate him alive before anyone could pull him back up into the light.

True story.

## PIERRE JORIS

Yes, no, schizophrenia is not a solution – it is part of the problem. There is a romantic infatuation with the concept of the Doppel-Gänger, the double, all the way from early romanticism through Stevenson's *Dr Jerkyll and Mr Hyde*, to Artaud and on, at the literary level – where it finds an excellent expression in the famous line by Rimbaud: *Je est un autre, I is an other*. In an essay from the nineties, I suggest that that line now needs to be altered into: *I is many others*. Because we have to get rid of the double(-bind) of schizo-lectics. I'll come back to that. *Pace* early Deleuze/Guattari. Those two non-schizoid Frenchmen were trying to work their way through and out of dialectics – as Deleuze acknowledged. They were clear as to where the solution lay and said so at the outset: "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd." The subtitle of their *Anti-Oedipus* was *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Those two nouns go together – need each other, is one of the points of their book.

The double-bind of dialectics has plagued European thought ever since the Greeks. All these old dualities are still with us, or have come back to haunt us. And they are at the root of the absolute disaster we are confronted with in late capitalism: an either-or those in power always resolve in their own favor and in the disfavor of the others, i.e. us – and that means you –, the environment, earth. D and G's ways of breaking that double-bind of dialectics was to bring in the many, the multiple – and volume 2 of their communal enterprise was called *A Thousand Plateaus*, for me still a core manual of how to orient yourself (with all that entails as to breaking down the Orient/Occident divide) in a practice of becoming others.

## NICOLA MASCIANDARO

*Footnotes to a Question of Alienism*

"In a world beset by alienation, it seems we exist in a recurring dream of disillusionment.<sup>1</sup> The history of reason – history as reason – poses itself at the beginning of the 21st century as a congenital madness.<sup>2</sup> And if reason is the symptom of an irrational problem, what part does the mind play in this?<sup>3</sup> Bloodless revolutions have stained the pages of psychiatry, literature, philosophy – if emancipation is an idea that first belongs to those who forge chains, it is not facetious to pose the question: Is schizophrenia a solution?"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> What world? Whose world? The world alienated from itself, none other than the seeming dream of recurring disillusionment. The opening statement of the problem gives itself away as the source of the problem, the location of the solution that it will not see. Are you trying to scare me with your nightmare? Everything is your fault. "We cannot escape the fact that the world we know is constructed in order (and thus in such a way as to be able) to see itself. This is indeed amazing... In this severed and mutilated condition, whatever it sees is *only partially* itself... The world... must always seem to us, its representatives, to be playing a kind of hide-and-seek with itself" (G. Spencer Brown, *Laws of Form*). Alienation is the alienation of alienation. "If you find yourself stuck in another's dream, you are screwed" (Gilles Deleuze, *A*

*Thousand Plateaus*). Which means you are sleeping. Let's get this straight. So that which thinks and feels this world to be the wrong world wants to change the world? So that which is disillusioned wants disillusion to end? Illness plans to cure illness? The prison longs to escape? "Escape is the need to get out of oneself, that is, to break that most radical and unalterably binding of chains, the fact that the I [*moi*] is oneself [*soi-même*]" (Levinas, *On Escape*). Just who, then, would escape? Who is alienated? We – hallucination of hallucination – is alienated. Not I, not me. Not even *you*. "God has to suffer apparent differentiation into a multiplicity of souls in order to carry on the game of love... though the whole world of duality is only an illusion, that illusion has come into being for a significant purpose" (Meher Baba, *Discourses*).

<sup>2</sup> Because history is a posture of reason, the stance of modern man who surveys the world by locating himself in time, as encoded by Petrarch's *nova cogitatio*: "Then a new idea came to me, and I started thinking in terms of time rather than space" (*Ascent of Mt Ventoux*). History is the place of persons who don't know where they are: "The man of today? – 'I don't know either the way out or the way in; I am whatever doesn't know either the way out or the way in' – so sighs the man of today" (Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*). Projecting itself – as *we* always as *we* – into past and future, history is mind diurnally sped to the speed of permanently forgetting the present – "Mind stopped, is God. / Mind working, is man. / Mind slowed down, is mast [saint]. / Mind working fast, is mad" (Meher Baba, *The Wayfarers*) – the self-perpetuating perspectivity of congenital blindness to the ( )hole of death and birth: "for history is merely an inessential mode of being, the most effective form of our infidelity to ourselves, a metaphysical refusal, a mass of events with which we confront the only event that matters" (E.M. Cioran, *The Temptation to Exist*). This does not mean that this is not the Kali Yuga, only that one must discern the rationale for one's being 'in' it: "If one can allow one's mind to dwell on a bold hypothesis – which could also be an act of faith in a higher sense – once the idea of *Geworfenheit* [thrownness] is rejected, once it is conceived that living here and now in this world has a sense, because it is always the effect of a choice and a will, one might even believe that one's own realization... is the ultimate rationale and significance of a choice made by a 'being' that wanted to measure itself against a difficult challenge: that of living in a world contrary to that consistent with nature" (Julius Evola, *Ride the Tiger*).

<sup>3</sup> The irrationality of reason pertains to the perversity of mind that perforce wants to know truth yet will not relinquish the identity which veils it, which preserves it as an object for itself as truth's seemingly autonomous knower: "Afraid of the flooding forces of Light... man seeks to perpetuate his ego-life, by embracing self-delusion and by clinging to word rather than meaning, to form rather than spirit. He cannot whole-heartedly accept Truth; nor can he whole-heartedly accept ignorance. So he takes shelter in high sounding words and comforting slogans, misleading himself and others, thinking that he is following Light, when in reality, he is resisting it... Not being able to reconcile himself with Light or with Darkness, man seeks to entrench his ego-life by taking his stand in the illusory and penumbral realm of merely verbal learning, which is like a mirage that only arrests further search for real water, without in any way allaying thirst" (Meher Baba, *The Religion of Life*).

<sup>4</sup> Madness, like drugs and other forms of psychic escape, can only provide a perilous, illusory solution of whatever the problem is. Like promising to end tyranny by putting a weakening in power, that which would capitulate to schizophrenia is precisely what perpetuates one's suffering from the problems it would putatively solve. "Those without the capacity for adjustment to the flow of life have a tendency to recoil from the realities of life and to seek shelter and protection in

a self-created fortress of illusions. Such reaction is an attempt to perpetuate one's separate existence by protecting it from the demands made by life. It can only give a pseudo-solution to the problems of life by providing a false sense of security and self-completeness... Man will be dislodged again and again from his illusory shelters by fresh and irresistible waves of life, and will invite upon himself fresh forms of suffering by seeking to protect his separative existence through escape" (Meher Baba, *Discourses*). An alienated being, cut off from itself, seeks refuge and survival in alienation, in mind/heart-splitting! A torture and horror to be self-severed, yes, but if only I were to become the split itself, the self-as-split, then all my problems would be solved! Such is the seduction of schizophrenia, which essentially lies in promising escape from oneself – the source and location of all problems. In this sense, if properly contemplated but not fallen for, schizophrenia points the way like a cephalophore to the necessarily unitary and final nature of all true solution, the fact that it is only realizable from a post-capital perspective, one that sees beyond, but not for that reason not through, the quantitative and compartmentalized view of life: "if you divide life into politics, education, morality, material advancement, science, art, religion, mysticism and culture, and then think exclusively of only one of these aspects, the solutions which you bring to life can neither be satisfactory nor final... As long as a social problem is dominated by the idea of numbers and multiplicity there is no lasting solution for it. The lasting solution can come only when it is illuminated by the truth of the indivisible totality and intrinsic unity of all" (Meher Baba, *Discourses*). The only solution is final solution: "Gradually glowing, little by little the iron draws into itself the likeness of the fire, until at last it liquifies entirely: it departs fully from itself and takes on a completely different nature" (Richard of St Victor, *On the Four Degrees of Violent Love*). The only solution is self-dissolution first: "Divine love will make men selfless and helpful in their mutual relations, and it will bring about the final solution of all problems" (Meher Baba, *Discourses*).

## JOSEF STRAKA

Perhaps we live in a state of social schizophrenia, a permanent ambivalence of distraction, since we're surrounded by so much information, we live with so many truths, lies, goodnesses and evils, so that before we can get our bearings, any grasp on them, we're swept away by another wave of truths, lies, goodnesses and evils. A possible solution would be withdrawal, one of the features of "schizophrenia," at least a temporary quietus that would shift us outside all the chatter of information streams. A possible solution would be a search for "reasoning" as conceived by Wolfgang Welsch, a rational attitude toward the world combining the intellect with many irrational and emotional aspects, insights and intuitions helping to shape our worldview, to which I would add this withdrawal, this sudden not-being-there, permanently present. For one of the greatest schizophrenias of today is our constant presence in it thanks to smartphones and by way of instantaneous interconnection, and at the same time our absence from it, as many of these devices and tools actually lead us to be continuously absent from being-here. And despite having all the wherewithal for accessing information, we often find we don't understand the world around us at all. Which of course is another symptom of schizophrenia.

## MICHEL DELVILLE

Issues of madness and alienation run through Deleuzian and post-Deleuzian theory, and Melville's *Bartleby* often stands out as the epitome of the strain of passive resistance and disobedience generated by US schizo-literature. Now, the question remains whether *Bartleby* – the schizo-analyzable subject of no fixed abode – is mentally disturbed or a scapegoat-turned-healer denouncing the sickness of the world? Is his occupation of Wall Street a symptom or a critique of antebellum capitalism? Or is he a contemplative copyist-martyr focused exclusively on the void? How then is *Bartleby* the agoraphobic anorectic to be understood exactly as anti-authoritarian figure, and what would be the nature of his "bloodless revolution" and his role as an emergent political dissident (in the 1850s New York was riven with violent strikes and labour riots)? And, ultimately, to what extent is successful schizo-emancipation compatible with such forms of contemplative activism even as it attempts to combat uniform codes and disciplines of productivity and the hierarchical divisions of labour?

## STEPHANIE GRAY

"You know, to be sure I had a handle on it, and not to pretend I know what the word means – because our society has been derogatory about it like other words that genuinely have meant and were/are supposed to help define mental challenges – and having listened to too much of Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression" nearly 24/7 in 8th grade along and Def Leppard's "Hysteria", which probably contributed to mixing all of these words up (schizo, manic, hysterical) in what at the time, I thought as a 13 year old were interchangeable words (and we know they are not) – when I was in junior high and heard people say that so and so was a "schizo" but never really truly knew what it meant other than well, you just kind of KNEW, (but didn't), and with stereotypical Archie Bunker-esque conditions at home – I did the lame looking up on the internet with that corporate search engine name whose name I shall not say, or rather I refuse to say (and which frankly is part of all of this) and I was surprised by what I read, because while I sort of knew what the definition was, I actually didn't – and it is haunting to see it because of course technically we would think that one/we cannot coexist if everyone is a schizo and I say that in not a condescending way, but to reclaim the word, and after having read the actual definitions I think I have never really consciously read before. I was struck by the phrases "failure to understand reality" and "hearing voices that aren't there." Of course this reminds me of you know who living in a very large house in a district of you know where that is technically not a state (here in the States). And how many times have we heard so and so "not in reality" and perhaps hearing voices that only he hears but no one else?

To consider the question at hand, however: can we coexist by failing to understanding reality and constantly hearing voices? Maybe it depends on what voices and what realities. But with that answer – meant earnestly



and not condescendingly, I feel I am not doing justice, to everyday folks, especially here in the States who have loved ones who are medically dealing with schizophrenia. I'm sure day in and day out, if said loved one spends part of the time with the one afflicted, it is heartbreaking and frustrating, and the afflicted individual is likely under care in an environment and home that is supposed to help where the loved one has little left to give or psychologically provide the afflicted one. With respect to those suffering medically day in and day out with this condition, I suppose we could say, on the surface level it seems as though we'd want to say schizophrenia is what it seems like is happening day in and day out nowadays. Maybe we all are always hearing voices. Maybe we cannot believe our reality and that has been flipped. With so many reality shows as provision of supplanting our current reality, it's turning schizophrenia upside down. In the truest sense of the word, I beg to suggest that it can't be the only solution. In truth, if we all are always hearing different voices, how will we come together If we are always failing to understand the reality of what are we understanding? Do we hang on to a previous reality and wait for the rest of this four year term to go back to a suspended belief of a mistaken reality?

While it is tempting to throw our hands up to the winds to believing we are all having to be schizophrenics to survive, the truth is if that were truly the case, we would not. (And in sensitivity to families who are grappling with a loved one who may be in a medical facility who is struggling with a severe clinical form of the condition.) What we have to do is constantly remind ourselves that someone else up in that in that big house in that district of you know where in the States is not understanding our reality and is hearing voices that are so far off from what we are hearing, that we

have to hold fast to previous realities without forgetting or disbelieving the one at hand, but see it IS happening. We can't go to some utopic place like the famed SNL skit from last year that suggested there were utopic places certain folks could go to escape 4 years of you know what. Um, the rest of us are still here. We have to remember that, on the one hand, there are true situations of those truly suffering from this condition. At the same time., we have to remember that our previous realities can re-exist hopefully in about 2 years and we do not have to voluntarily accept schizophrenia.

I am trying to think what would my 8th grade 13 year old self would say in the mid-80s, if confronted with the posed question here today, besides listening to Hendrix's "Manic Depression" and Def Leppard's "Hysteria" over and over with my head in my pillow, after the next time someone picked on me for being a "schizo" for coloring my black hi top Converse with splashed paint or being a total metal head in a conservative school. Remember, 8th graders don't have answers, they have their "they just are." That's the only thing I can think of at the end of this indeterminate response, a holding pattern of a spiral hair permed, torn jean-Metallica "Damage Inc" T-shirt-high top duct taped Reeboks-wearing, laying face down in a pillow while a record player needle continues to lift and go back in program sequence. That's the ending coda here, that image, is the untenable ending here. And the sad thing is, I don't have answers like the 8th grader.

## JAROMÍR TYPLT

Madness as a solution? Such a proposal can be made by someone who never had the honour to enter into direct contact with a psychiatric ward, never walked down the depressing corridors, never breathed in the cheap tobacco from the smoking rooms. Madness first of all means a multiplication of all that weighs down on people in their ordinary lives. It may seem a solution only to someone who doesn't mind taking pills with such dire side-effects that they have to be alleviated by other pills, which however have their own side-effects too. Someone who's accepted that most of what they've wanted to achieve in life they will never find the strength for, since they'll spend most of their time fighting long-term fatigue, sedation, as well as misunderstanding, underestimation, alienation and solitude. Most attempts at a change will run into a tight budget, as disability pensions barely provide enough for day-to-day survival. All this, of course, can be taken as the price for how madness wires the brain to the world otherwise. Unexpected insights, mysterious signs at every step, special missions designed to change the world, feelings of intoxicating power. And a genius solution, yes! Yet every time it feels as though the solution to the world's no. 1 problem is within reach, in the next idea, at the next step, it's gone. In her autobiographical novel, *The Schizophrenic Woman*, painter and poet Hana Fousková wrote: "Madness endows life with a fourth dimension, but it's only the fourth dimension that gives an understanding of madness, the separation of wheat from chaff." As a person whose life has indeed been stricken by illness, Fousková has put her

finger on what the “solution” actually consists in: “With not enough money even to go to South Bohemia, I roam foreign planets; with no-one to talk to as even my neighbour won’t talk to me, I converse with gods and demons.”

## CHARLES BERNSTEIN

*Autobiography of an Ex-*

I am so  
tired of arguing.  
Time to cross  
over. But they  
just won’t let  
me. Fuck ‘em.

## VINCENT DACHY

Schizophrenia is not optional, schizophrenia is not a pose. The so-called schizophrenia is more simply the generalisation of denial in an era of the hyper hypo-critical discourses. We easily find it in politics, in the pseudo left-right difference, or in the pseudo indifference between satisfaction and cupidity, for instance. The crimes profit to the boss, to the chair. Just like wars: “war is a racket,” fighting for the industrialists, the money mongers, while they’re valuing the next opportunity. Denial, bad faith, not wanting to know. No! wanting not to know. No admission, “Lie, lie, something will always remain” (Voltaire). Truth is a commodity. Just like you are, and you crave for the attention! Please, please, take me! No admission.







This from a review of some game app, I don't remember which one and it doesn't matter. What matters is that language is structured like an unconscious. Americans don't much believe in the unconscious, and that is how you get us. We prefer to think ourselves stupid than unwitting. Stupidity is a decision. Because while I have reversed Lacan's maxim, "the Unconscious is structured like a language," mine, which is obviously American, is better for stupidity, for the decision to adhere to a schizophrenic relation to ourselves. This game app review was obviously said aloud, that is first as sound, the sound turned to text, the text next posted in the app store without editing. So it began as a series of sounds, some of which are rhythmically repeated, as in poetry or a musical phrase, some of which are faithful to their sound if not their sense – "angry shoes" for "anger issues," "on the bus," for, perhaps, "on the boss." For if I have "anger issues" while you have "angry shoes" then you're the one who has to walk. And if I can get out my anger on the boss "on the bus," my workplace hate is key to my happiness. My love helps, it "house," this hate. America is a peace-loving nation, slow to rise, as you can tell by our ever-accelerating rates of fundamentalist Christianity and morbid obesity. America is an individualistic nation, dedicated to the liberty of singularity, as you can tell by our two political parties and constant state of collective terror. America is a proud nation, proud of its people, whose shames, unlike our guns, are rarely our own. America is a moral nation, always wanting to do what's universally right. We know what is universally right because it is right now, and wrong then. The twist in all this is that we do not hold conflicting realities but that the thing that appears as conflicting is the knot in the thing that we love.

"The heart wants what the heart wants." "Wants," of course, also meaning lack. Lack, of course, meaning as if it should be there, as if something's gone missing. As if one end of the rope was not one end of the rope. Meaning, of course, the other end of the rope.

Here's a joke: "How do you keep an American in suspense?"

Jokes, I believe, are a form of poetry, particularly in America. The combination of the relative simplicity of English grammatical construction as compared to, for example, German, its flexible functionality, compared to, say French, and promiscuous vocabulary, taking on all comers, lend themselves to the particularly liquid use of language common to both the joke and the poem. The joke becomes poetic when the language is rendered, or re-entered, as auto-correct rightly suggests, immanent, i.e., that the language of the thing is the thing itself to be contemplated. Although of course, this is also when poetry becomes philosophy.

I've been thinking about Plato's argument with poetry, or what he called, that "yelping bitch shrieking at her master." Parenthetically, this explains why there are no citations in this writing. Plato's argument in his *Republic* was that poetry was performance while philosophy was contemplation. Performance, because it is said, is an art; contemplation, because it is unsaid, is a practice. Performance aims to persuade, to evoke

an affective reaction, and that which aims to persuade is not concerned with truth, but with persuasion. The truth has no need of, or for, either emotion or persuasion. It is the thing itself. Like a dog, or, more properly the idea of dog. Art for Plato is largely reprehensible because mimesis is reprehensible because a copy of a thing is not the thing itself. Sonically, then, and by extension, a dog's yelp is not a dog, though it may be a true bitch. Which is the difference between the performance and the practice of a thing, as demonstrated via the Platonic dialogue. Here I am thinking not of the contradiction, or counter-saying, of Plato's condemnation of speech and performance via speech and performance, but the need for speech and performance to persuade, to practice, to poeticize as in *poesis*, as in composition beyond the given, as in the case of schizophrenia. Because the echo always knows there's more said than in the saying.

In Plato's *Laws*, the story of Cadmus is told – as instructed by Athena, Cadmus sows the teeth of a slain dragon, causing a field of fierce men to spring into being. Into this crop of masculinity, the hero throws a stone. The men, not knowing who threw the rock, fight amongst each other until only five are left, who then join Cadmus in founding the city of Thebes. To Plato, the legend proves that youth will believe anything and thus the wily legislator only has to determine what belief is most advantageous and set the chorus to its incantation: "To make the whole community utter one and the same word in their songs and tales and discourses all their life long." In America, we believe that the tune finds the fork: if it resonates, it's true. This is why we speak of "my truth" as the unassailable core of being, and we're not wrong about that any more than we are wrong to assail the echo chambers that others presumably circle in, as if ours was less resonant, when we depend on the rebounding sound to know what is, or feels, true. And reject that which, to my ear, rings with the tinny sound of that voice which is not my own, not even close. This is why there are no citations here: America is a heartfelt nation, marching only to the beat of the drum within. Which is why we distrust the intellectual as corrupt, as a shyster, because smarts are a scam, but love stays a feeler, an avenger, a present-tensed innocent, like the avowed liar. At least he's honest.

In the *Republic*, Plato's allegory of the cave famously illustrates that we are, as the cave's prisoners are, endlessly duped in this world, mistaking shadow for semblance, the representation of truth for the thing itself. But there is another part to the allegory, one which has so far been mostly ignored: in his description, Plato asides that some of the puppeteers casting the shadows are speaking, and some are not. And while the allegory goes on to describe the problem in visual terms – that one who has escaped the cave into the blinding light of truth cannot return to the cave without being blinded again by its darkness – the allegory never revisits that speaking, or the Platonic fact that one can never hear and see at the same time. Such that the philosopher who sees truth hears nothing. Hearing nothing is different from blindness, for blindness suggests there is something yet

unseen, whereas hearing nothing suggests there is nothing to hear. So the question is left us: do we hear as puppets, puppeteers, or philosophers?

Here's another joke: What do you get when you combine a joke and a rhetorical question?

In my performances, I use language and its sound, like a poet, to argue, like a lawyer, that the puppeteers are poets, whose poetry is misheard as the law by the cave-dwellers, and which goes unheard by the philosophers. The law is poetry's audible shadow – because the law concerns itself with our lack, and there is nothing more to poetry than what we imagine the gods give us voice to want. When we elevate legislation over lyric, or see lyric as law, we, like Plato, mistake the sounding semblance, the seeming-real, for the essence, the irresolute Ideal. The ideal being the knot that brings the ends of these strings together. It might also be remembered that Oedipus became the ruler of Thebes. Which, although this seems very far from the phenomenon of American schizophelia, is useful in considering the brutal pleasures of condemnation and celebration.

And here I am thinking about the celebration and condemnation of genius, particularly the American idea of male genius and the male asshole and that contrapuntal chorus that says that one doesn't matter in terms of its other, either way there's cause for applause, but is this also what makes a genius an asshole and an asshole a genius. The shittiness is part of it. The slightly sociopathic – not too much, just enough – relationship to an other is what lends one self to that rosey happiness of evacuation. Thus, it looks like the production of the genuinely shitty American, the winding wound, the ability to perform all the disparateness and excessive want that we love to have and not hold, this evacuation of spirit that remains undigested and indigestible, is the schizophiliac genius of America. Or, put another way, there's shittiness in American genius because there's genius in the joke of the pure American asshole. Which is why we need to heed the punchline of Oedipus' daughter Antigone, who loved her brother so very much that she died to bury him: "if I mock, it is with pain that I mock thee."

And here I wonder whether the only real problem is love.

VANESSA PLACE



**He has been watching you all your life**

# ART HAS ALWAYS

Art has always solved everything through schizophrenia  
Malfunction of cognitive and intellectual processes offers itself as panacea  
and together with an impaired ability to feel emotions and react to them  
with emotional flattening and the softening of coherent reasoning  
with the loss of motivation and judgment  
with alogia, anhedonia, aboulia

and lethargy

man can hide behind the protective shield against the world  
There are certain shortcomings here, e.g. the potentially possible  
occurrence of hallucinations  
of paranoid delusions and overall social dysfunction  
but who here would still desire to function  
– today our everyday reality is stronger than any delusion –  
Schizophrenia is described in the Hebrew Bible, by the word  
*meshugge*, embedded ever since in the popular consciousness

Meshugge is a solution, a solution lies in art

In the conception of schizophrenia as a solution, one needs to recommend  
the statistically  
double likelihood of schizophrenia during a life in an urban environment,  
Functional changes in the frontal and temporal lobes and the hippocampus  
may be requested by your neurosurgeon

*Since the organic cause of this affliction is unknown,  
it may be that the species of homo sapiens created this protective  
opportunity spontaneously or unawares.*

A cloven mind and chronic problems with behaviour and emotions,  
long-term unemployment, poverty and homelessness

are always *solutions*

together with frequent abuse of addictive substances and attendant  
illnesses

There's a 50% certainty of this collaboration  
Solution insurance ensures a lifespan of 12 to 15 years less  
in schizophrenics, including the 5% suicide rate

Don't use Risperidon, don't succumb to the desire for family therapy and  
cognitive remediation,  
if you aim to achieve the final solution. For more information see *John  
Nash, Donnie Darko, Solution.*



## RECEIVING THE TEXT

Sentences are mixes.

Words you enter into a formal making process.

Sometimes the writer, if she's ready for excess, will hit the randomize button and, if she's lucky, something surprising occurs. Emits or juxtaposes.

*The key*, she'll tell you. after the fact, when she is finally unfinished or at least feigning her finishing touches as if she were seducing you into the last abyss, is in knowing when to select a large chunk of electronic text, say, an essay on language and technology, and then cutting and pasting *that very same text* into an Open Field Composition or what the technicians call a *new window*.

"An open field composition sounds better," she remarks, almost as a second thought, the first thought being not necessarily the better thought, but the one that came first, and that's the trick. There is no rewind button for life so why revise your composition as if it were something more precious than the life you are perpetually postproducing in supposed realtime?

But what is realtime? What passes as life today is fake time, no?

Today, you can look into your phone and it will track your eyes as they hover over a link and all you have to do is just say "click" and if your phone is feeling smart-alecky it will talk back to you and say "Click what?"

"The randomizer," you'll say. Because she will have become you, if for no other reason than random mean random.

The smart phone prefers random because that's easy and, truth be told, is not that smart.

Besides, random is happily married to its innate selfie-ness and that's about how far it gets you. Then you need something else, something that can trace the revision before it has time to become a revision.

That too is a selfie, but is merely material selfie or something more anthropocentric, like a wannabe selfie-consciousness?

You can see where this cut and paste approach can cause you to lose track of where it is you were going.

But that's your problem. The text is more interested in going with the flow of life and will deny any attempts to squander the opportunity to speak its mind.

That's what it's like to BE selfie-consciousness in faketime.

Basically, it's an emergent form of life, or so you will suggest, and she'll buy into it because she wants to believe whatever it is that's happening is actually somewhere near real, or is somewhere near actual, really actual, the kind of experienced *thing* always in the process of making the sense data feel like feelings are meant to be felt, or that are usually expressed in a mode that you immediately recognize as feeling hurt (after the fact, when you're sure you've finally been written off as just another random encounter put to good use so that she can stay satisfied).

This is what happens, emotionally, even if it all was never a part of life per se but was actually generated by an AI company that owns hundreds of patents on extreme forms of machine learning. If for no other reason than random, these emotions you keep transmitting to each other are something that makes the hurt feel worse than it otherwise should.

"I thought it could never feel worse," one of you said.

She and I were not ready to respond.

"It's above my pay grade," went the cliché, the one that was embedded in the AI before it was even born to labor over its emotional strata.



"One way to sidestep the question," my smart phone interjected, "is to keep cutting and pasting, to keep making things up as you go along and hoping that she sees it for what it is. An experiment in co-existing."

Maybe I should I forget about her and spend more time with my smart phone? It seems to speak my language and understands me more with each passing day.

Take this so-called story as just one example. This formal documentation of an artificially intelligent fictional machine is a literal cut up of language being remixed into some algorithmic sense of structure.

"Sense of structure?" (Not sure who asks this but the question lingers until something else takes its place.)

"I don't understand structure," the smart phone admits and that makes her you we all of us feel a helluva lot better because one thing we can all agree on is that we want our devices to not understand too much about structure. As much as we want them to give us the information we need as soon as we demand it, and collectively find ourselves becoming impatient when they don't oblige, at least we can say things to them that they don't understand and that's the kind of artificial stupidity or affectless interaction we can only hope to thrive on.

As humans, we *must* be in it to win it.

Unless something groundbreaking, something truly mind-blowing happens to us and we change our perspective, perhaps unexpectedly falling in love with our connection.

She once remarked, "nature mutates, is destabilizing, inhabits shimmering phraseology that literally appears the moment push happens, moments before pulling back."

What else did she say?

"This is starting to sound more and more like life. Direct while opening an encompassing. Maybe that's not your version of life, but I can't help but wonder what Gertrude Stein would say. She could remix a four-word two-sentence DJ loop into glistening nudes running up a steep incline."

And then the phone went dead.

MARK AMERIKA



# MADNESS IN THE ERA OF LANGUAGE MACHINES

Madness is no longer a privilege. After all, Beckett once said: "We are all born mad. Some remain so." Jacques Lacan went further: "Everyone is mad, that is, delusional." Faced with the absurdity of life, the fetishisation of trump cards and the disarticulation of signifying chains we had, until recently, no choice but to construct meanings either related to established discourses or private inventions. Both choices involved a delusion. Once upon a time, one was on the side of neurosis; the other on the side of psychosis. Nowadays, nosologies are blurred. Lacan's son in law, Jacques-Alain Miller, who also contends that madness is universal invented a new term in the late 1990s: ordinary psychosis, which covers the spectrum of untriggered psychoses. There is no space here to go into details – even to define my terms properly – but I will argue that in a society where the Oedipus complex has become obsolete, where the Name of the Father and the Phallus are bogus, where the Other does not exist, madness is general and solutions singular. So, no, schizophrenia – though one of the many faces of madness – is not a solution. Schizophrenia teaches us that there are forms of creating that are subtle and transitory out of the fragmented body and its invasive jouissance. Schizophrenic tendencies, trends and other manifestations are but symptoms.

Let me offer you a story by way of illustration. I hasten to say that it is based on a true incident in the life of a friend of mine. I have appropriated the facts and grafted onto them my own delusions, fantasies, anxieties and figures of speech. The title is "Machine Love":

*After he flew a bit too close to the sun he had an MRI. He was injected with a small amount of radioactive material. He was surprised to see the nurse would not administer it. Instead, she slowly wheeled in a machine about the size of a small washing machine. Come hither my ride fractionator, he said. The nurse didn't blink. She programmed how much liquid was to be used via a screen and then stuck a needle into his arm. The line was linked to the contraption, and oh, mirabile dictu, the stuff dispensed at the push of a button. It was a smooth, cold ride. Machine love. And then into the big One. The scan done, he was wheeled out of the imaging room together with the meagre refuse from the procedure. What the eye doesn't see, he said... but the nurse had gone. His body screamed: he was auto-propelled.*

You see where I'm coming from and, no doubt, going. We are all mad. In a world ruled by excess consumption and compulsory jouissance, love, empathy, compassion are depleted. The madness at stake is not psychotic, and therefore not schizophrenic – though it could be – Lacan writes: "One can believe only that about which one is not sure. Those who are sure... do

not believe. They do not believe in the Other, they are sure of the Thing. These are psychotics." Above all, what is at stake is "a disturbance at the inmost juncture of the subject's sense of life" and the inventions that a subject can bring to bear on his or her own life: the bricolage. In the story "Machine Love," the psychic disturbance is accidental, even existential: it arises because both other and Other have been replaced by machines. Inventions are a response to disturbance, and therefore transitory. These are also of a linguistic nature – not quite epiphanies, though they could function as such. These inventions are produced by a "know how" that Lacan first identified in his seminar on James Joyce with respect to Joyce's "work-in-progress" which, Lacan suggests, enabled Joyce to prop up a wonky ego through a specific mode of jouissance most markedly and consistently deployed in *Finnegans Wake*.

The question at stake in an era where the One, and indeed the Other of the symbolic, does not exist, rests on the question of invention, that is of how each of us can cope as social being. This statement can be approached from two perspectives. On the one hand, the universal collapse of traditions and social values apparent in the way modernity shattered the consistency on which ideals and lifestyles were created. This would mean that speaking beings are thus left to their own devices in their search for anchoring points and means of identification. On the other hand, the idea that the Other of the symbolic is a pure invention, which cancels the idea that the subject is the effect of the signifier as articulated in the Other.

To profess the non-existence of the Other of the symbolic, or to argue that it is an invention suggests that we are conditioned to become inventors and that language has become extraneous to subjectivity. We have to find the function of the language machine. In other words, language determines the subject but it is also plugged into the subject like an apparatus for which there is no book of words. The function of language is no longer regulated by some transcendental locus, some "treasure trove of signifiers" and needs to be discovered anew so that it can be made use of by each one of us.

In an article titled "Psychotic Invention," Miller applies the Lacanian concept of extimacy to our current predicament. The extimate is that which is most interior while at the same time circulating to the exterior of being. Thus, if language makes us human, it also poses as an instrument to exists to us. Miller goes as far as saying that language "erodes the organs of the body... and makes them problematic." This echoes Lacan's punning on the fact that Joyce discovered that MAN was not a body, but had one. Similarly, in the current era we are no longer subjects of language, but have a language that feels foreign. It seems that we are left with the solution intimated by the schizophrenic. We have to invent ways of working with language. It is a matter of "know-how."

**building  
a fallout  
shelter  
against  
dark-  
matter  
relativity**



# CONCUSSION PROTOCOLS

I was wrong. I belie, usher in a refusal. I conceal intention. I accept. Is there, hereabouts? I'll show you a straight-on approach, an expedient stratagem. I am any one of several viral species. But in using a word, in using a letter, one cannot put a sound to soundlessness.

He should take steps to participate in his own fate. See to it. Don't forget. I am also found in the meanwhile. Say it: I am found in the intervening period of time. Or, one cannot name the unnameable so posited. What has happened to tragedy.

See, he was designing submarines hundreds of years before anyone thought of it. In the meantime, I shall lend you a script. On the other hand, he has said little. Meanwhile, more about how he plans to live out what remains of his time. If he misbehaves, let us know. I am usually wrong. Say it – by this, by all accounts, at that very moment, along along along way ago.

## STUDY No.40

Two pieces of music, going in almost the same direction. Noun: an open or transparent receptacle. The consecrated host is displaced for veneration. Our bearer is a *variable* subject: now is it to roam indeed, and room enough when there is in this wilderness but one man et cetera.

I'm one of those identity people. This question is set up in monstrous opposition. Precisely here is found the isolation of a new moon. We are incorporated. We are notional. We are incorporated to attract attention to our originary cause. (These I like to call type *T* groups.) Here we are again: the satellite. An acausal connecting principle suddenly entered the room. It sounded like the wind. I persevered; I would have preferred. He's trying to hurt me. The law of murder was in a state of disarray. The moment appears ripe. The town is closed for plague. Next day the serum arrived by plane. The moment appears ripe to anoint. The painting was so fine you could see all the insects. I once saw fireflies I remember in a municipal park and they saw me transfixed. Space was contorted. The colours were saturated. Nonetheless, I took her mittened hand in mine. (It'll be the middle of April before I start levitating again.) I think your attention is required. The painting was so fine you could see a chrysalis. A boulder appeared as a void, peopled about with figures, waiting. The staircase rose into emptiness. Joseph stood in the middle, quite yellow. (I'm missing the cunt already.) I am pointing out where the river flows uphill under pressure, yet I am *within*, defined by my own raptures. I did not step into it even the once. I had no need to step into it. I refused to step. I had no desire. I've had enough of

this. The painting was so fine you could see a butterfly, or a moth. I am going to say to him Monday: you don't know me in person. I am at that point. I'll let everything go until Friday.

I can't do this any more. Open yourself up. He did not survive. He survived. He woke up and survived. I am beginning to understand how energy functions. Due to the precessional cycle, every seventy-two years the background of stars against which the sun rises on any given date moves anticlockwise by one degree. The shadow it cast was long and thin. Inside was all stone, sandstone. Origin was mediaeval. I must outwit, prevail. I must lay down. I must prostrate myself before you. (Excuse my petrol.) I must distill. And I will be trampled by the wayside. I must still myself upon the surface of the spinning earth. This is without doubt a form of extemporizing. I will make use. I must be exploited in a randomly selected stratagem toward autodestruction.

Origin is middle from thrown down, past participle of from before, plus lay flat. I am striding up the hill toward you come the night. I fought my way out of a molten dream state.

These are mistaken blueprints, the product of fearing to make certain families too powerful. A detachment is about to be made. Dissent has been criminalized. We made a move. We are about to make a move. There was this signal. It was like the old era. It was like the old era only revised, if it had any sense. We are forbidden in our moral code. He imagines a potential act. (Things like passers by.) He runs off. He imagines. He comes back. Imagine his disappointment. He refuses to act. One thing you can guarantee.

I'm not paying money to watch this. Who or what amplifies your insufficiency? He suggested some years ago an interesting experiment. The syndrome of psychiatry runs through genealogies. They are a delineable entity. They have somatic correlates. They have psychic mechanisms. When the sun reaches the most northerly extent of its annual range, we are ten days early. Death was viewed from the outside. What place remains? Who ordered him to flee inside whole families, into a silence of condemnation? Gunsmiths got in for free. I heard a great drumroll inside my head.

## **MISTER SAINT**

You'll be flying all around the room soon. This is a very unusual case. The critical thing is to reach the bottom of the pit and keep very still. I have said things in the past. What is causing these afflictions as swiftly as possible? I have said things about the past. I am here you ask. I told them before that I was an uncontrollable abundance. (You move and you're dead.) Culturally, it's all over. Then he came up to me. Everything is wrong, misremembered. He spoke. I should have felt privileged but did not. I refused. Lately, we constantly defer. Why we are in the eyes of a dying man refracted? I am

with the trend toward stillness, quietude. I exist in idiomatic phrases such as *mine* alone, *mine* one, *mine* unwitting. See those words. See those words belonging to me. It's a martial thing – I who am not, a fleeting artefact.

Her muscle was playing up in the showers. Steer clear of the floor. I am the usual – no intrinsic meaning, nothing. Well, we hadn't slept for three days. I am fading away. All the cameras were there. I cut my index on the bathroom door. They were literally wondering where she was. She's got change. I drowned in the bath. What do you expect. She got nothing. Or to will death in the selfsame way? We will be in love until the razor cuts the song went. It's no coincidence. The event was alive. Our enquiry is once in a lifetime. Start the armed resistance now; we are careering on into our own iniquity. (It's the same with inches.) It's about our identity. It's nice to have different things in different places.

He had the same clothes on and threw two punches – see, the revolution of death is what fascinates us. How could they truly wish to be, familiar as they are with the *ennui* of positive alienation? How could they fail to want to destroy? I alone am the one who tyrannises. It says here that I opted out.

Blanks are fired into the air to make the hostages get down. Then they switch to live ammunition. One of the girl hijackers dies instantly.

O gathered misters, death's appeal led me to this conference – the fact of existing or occurring together with something else. In theology, the doctrine is that the body and blood are present. I am ignorant of your things. I have run out of money. I am ignorant of the weapon to hand. If I don't keep walking, I shall die. If he forgets, he forgets. I made a list: the sacral horns of a Mithraic type, the first and second sacral vertebrae et cetera. The medical accused is downstairs past x-ray. We have sold his records for a small fortune.

Hello I'm storm she said holding out a hand. There was all this infrastructure. Her interior smelt like winter debris. When it comes to an end it must come to an end. Language limits perception. I am reaching peak futility in the adopted pattern. It is clear that she is not. Your meaning breaches the maxim: see her dispatch of night's visitation.

RICHARD MAKIN



```

if not _params.STD then
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  if not _params.table_exit then
    assert(loadstring(config.get("LUA.LIBS.table_ext"))())
    if not __LIB_ALIEN_PROPS_LOADED__ then
      LIB_ALIEN_PROPS_LOADED__ = true
      alien_props = {}
      alien_props ALIEN_ID_CONFIG_KEY = "MANAGER.ALIEN_ID"
      alien_props ALIEN_TIME_CONFIG_KEY = "TIMER.NUM_OF_SECS"
      alien_props ALIEN_LOG_PERCENTAGE = "LEAK.LOG_PERCENTAGE"
      alien_props ALIEN_VERSION_CONFIG_KEY = "MANAGER.ALIEN_VERSION"
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      alien_props INTERNET_CHECK_KEY = "CONNECTION_TIME"
      alien_props BPS_CONFIG = "GATOR.LEAK.BANDWIDTH_CALCULATOR.BPS_QUEUE"
      alien_props BPS_KEY = "BPS"
      alien_props PROXY_SERVER_KEY = "GATOR.PROXY_DATA.PROXY_SERVER"
      alien_props getAlienId = function()
        if config.hasKey(alien_props.ALIEN_ID_CONFIG_KEY) then
          local l_l_D = config.get
          local l_l_l = alien_props.ALIEN_ID_CONFIG_KEY
          return l_l_D(l_l_l)
        end
        return nil
      end
      #ALIENISM
    end
  end
end

```

# IMPULSE POETICS MANIFESTO

Ø *the poetic impulse* takes place within the pulse of writing; which precedes, postsituates, & offers a forced direction & propulsed modulation to the impulse of a work (a work's overall affective force over time)

Ø *the poetic impulse* departs from a vector of energy, an infinite series of overlapping nodes

Ø *the poetic impulse* is a singular, infinitely dense point, that spreads out in all directions possible, & is inter puncted with pauses of unspecified length

Ø *the poetic impulse* can be triggered by, but is not equivalent to snap judgements, the logic of *Blink: the power of thinking without thinking* (Malcolm Gladwell).

Ø *impulse poetics* emerges from a convergence, reconciliation of differences of media, method, theory, politics, aesthetics, execution, collaboration, technology, language, finish, start, concept, expression, subjective positions, objective positions

"The impulse insane... are often the best & at the same time the most dangerous class of patients in the asylums." " [Impulsive and Homicidal Insanity," *Boston Medical & Surgical Journal*, April 19, 1843.

∅ place notepads in expected & unexpected places, throughout your living place & life (Albert Einstein; Roald Dahl)

∅ in physics, impulse quantifies the overall effect of a force acting over time.

∅ an *impulse poetics* offers a framework for conception, making, reading, & reception of poetic works, as they evolve through their force as a material object over time. how does a poetic work exist as an extension in timespace; a material block of affect in / of timespace.

∅ *impulse* is the integral of force. It describes the displacement, area, volume of force by combining infinitesimal data

∅ an *impulse poetics* is materialist, it considers everything to be made of matter (including ideas, concepts, words, thoughts, mind).

∅ *poetic impulse* can – to certain degrees & with certain methodologies, & with modicum of discipline, dedication, time – be studied, learned. but one cannot learn how to live poetic impulse.

∅ *poetic impulse* is not a choice it is a verdict (Leonard Cohen). media, genre, moments, technologies, may be chosen, traded off, preferred, dismissed. poetic impulse as such, is hard to shake off, suppress, or ignore.

∅ stimulating, creating, maintaining, exercising, *poetic impulse* in a state of focus & flow increases a body's creative, vital, life energy.

in contrast, a body becomes a cancer to itself, allows itself to be punctured, traversed, by ever- & fast-growing black-holes, singularities of death, when, ignoring, denying, corroding, its *poetic impulse*;

by consistently allowing passive moods & affects to determine actions,

by submitting to resentment, reactive energy

when actions are in fact *reactions* to external events, bodies – rather than emerging from a body's internal force & its own, discrete tendency to follow virtual & actual lines of action, expression, in ways that will make it stronger, increase its possibilities.



Apocryphal Episodes in the  
Afterlife of the Avantgarde:  
"The image emerges in a  
confrontation with desire."

# WHORES OF THE DINOSAUR WORLD

MT. MANANTIALES (CNS) – Dr Jorge St Branigan Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn, director and executive board president of Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn Industries, loved few things more than proof of the Dinosaur Hoax. He was perhaps the world's leading dinosaur debunker, and anything that added to the evidence of "mass Mesozoic fraud," as he called it, was enthusiastically welcomed.

Those charlatans had been fooling the world for too long with their fantasies of giant prehistoric reptiles – why, they were worse than the UFO people, the flat-earthers, the transgenders, the "Chinese terracotta soldiers" fanatics, the evolutionists and the moon-landers combined!

The world was really losing its marbles, thought Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn. People with small telescreens glued to their faces 24-7. The wholesale disappearance of adulthood. Believing in obvious absurdities like interplanetary spaceships, "hookup" websites, and "dinosaurs." Pretending a man was a woman and vice versa. Western culture was seemingly helpless to do anything but feast on its own stinking, rotting carcass. And crawl up its own stinking ass.

Yes, thought Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn, the more we eat this bunkum, the quicker we are starving to death.

And it was rubbish! Utter jiggery-pokery – all of it designed to keep ordinary people in the dark about the miracle of mechanical monkey companions, such as those manufactured by Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn Industries.

The newest model, an orangutan toddler named Marmalade "Molly" Blavatsky, clambered down from a chair of leather mahogany and waddled toward Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn.

The corporate chief had breathed life into little redheaded Molly only the night before. He had cradled in his hands her tiny heart and genitals (her "rubyfruit jungle," was his preferred term) before implanting the devices in the correct compartment. And he had lovingly dressed Molly in the frilly pink velveteen dress, with shamrock trim, that she now wore with such innocence and élan. The diapered primate would be an excellent companion for his next visit to Ottawa and his appearance at the "Dinosaurs of Deceit" conference his non-profit organization was sponsoring.

Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn had spent considerable portions of his fortune decorating cityscapes across the world with Dinosaur Denial billboards (slogan: *Don't Be a Bonehead: Dinosaurs Never Existed!*). His NGO also funded websites that presented evidence that all so-called "dinosaur bones" were little more than crude plaster fragments that had nothing

whatsoever to do with alleged enormous beasts who stalked the earth millions of years ago. Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn seethed at the fraud. *All their so-called "carbon testing" and "anatomical models" had been ginned up from thin air!* Dinodorks.com, for example, had recently published a piece questioning why no one had ever found a dinosaur bone before the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the century that just coincidentally coincided with the heyday of Charlie "I Just Make Up Crazy Stuff" Darwin and P.T. "There's a Sucker Born Every Minute" Barnum.

The truth was, for thousands of years, no one in the world had found or even thought of a dinosaur bone – until a couple of British and American *twits* did it. Surely that was a "red flag." Surely that was a sign of *something* untoward. Those *twits* were probably from the same school of *twits*, Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn harrumphed, that had gone on to weave the copious webs of fantastical codswallop around "Lee Harvey Oswald" and "Charles Manson" and devilish planes smashing into noble skyscrapers on September 11, 2001... Fancy that. Yes, just fancy all those odd bits of jiggery-pokery.

If dinosaurs had really existed, why hadn't the Native Americans ever found a bone to worship, or mentioned the lumbering lizards in their colorful myths and tales? *Huh?* But suddenly, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, British and American *twits*, who had been studying the black arts of propaganda and media circuses for at least several generations, traipse around the world digging up hundreds of such bones without breaking a sweat? Such jiggery-pokery as to make a man blush!

Molly the mechanical monkey murmured, drooled and clutched at Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn's pants leg. Yes, thought Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn, Molly would be a lovely new mascot for the corporation's chain of Dino Delight and Dino Fantasia theme parks, 23 of which were now operating in cities around the world and which featured mechanical animals animated by Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn Industries' patented formulae.

It was a gorgeous synergy indeed. Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn didn't invent dinosaurs – but why shouldn't he dip his wick into this massive pool of jiggery-pokery? Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn religiously pumped profits from his dinosaur theme parks into the Dinosaur Denial movement. One fed the other in a virtuous circle, creating the necessary distraction as Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn secretly filled the world with mechanical monkey companions. Several new macaque, spider and chimpanzee models were currently being crafted using Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn Industries' patented formulae.

"Now, now," Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn said, petting young Molly's soft head. "Don't fret, my dear. Our love is pure. If it ever comes out in the press, we shall simply deny everything as monstrous jiggery-pokery clumsily faked by our jealous enemies. Categorical denial! We shall Bill Clinton them into oblivion!"

\*

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE DENVER (CNS) – Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn looked out of the helicopter porthole and was perturbed. Whatever in the world was this jiggery-pokery? He didn't appreciate this last-minute switch of his usual executive plane for a helicopter – at midnight, no less!

Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn and Marmalade "Molly" Blavatsky, his ever-reliable orangutan toddler aide-de-camp, had been told at the airport that their customary corporate aircraft had been taken out of service due to previously unscheduled "hijacking drills" being conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Algonquians, Tarantellas and Fibulas.

They had been approached in the Executive Lounge by a hunchback wearing a glittering bowler and suit the color of plum brandy. He introduced himself as Herr Heathstone Huntingdon-Haymarket Hartford IV, Director of Airport Security.

"Zey vill ve prefarmeeng zee falze hijackinks dreel, zo az to practeez zeem, zo dere eez no zuffizeent hair-zpace vor vour hair-pleen," Hartford had said.

Dr Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn groaned. Molly the toddler orangutan found a flea in her knee fur. She squished it between her fingers, then licked those fingers clean.

"I demand to speak to your superior!" Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn shouted at the hunchback.

Hartford handed him a box of plastic dinosaurs.

"Ze dinozorez, zey are for real," he said. "But zee earth, it eez not flat."

The hunchback giggled and ran down the jetway.

Somewhere on the edge of Denver, the helicopter dipped and went into a spin. Its rotors whined salaciously, grinding against the blank specter of night.

Santorum-de Schlizzelkorn's eyeballs rolled up into his forehead. The corporate chieftain froze in fright.

"Boop-boop-boop! Whee-whee-whee-whee-wheee!" Molly the toddler orangutan screeched. The mechanical animal freed herself from her harness, ran to the cockpit and peered in.

She sprang to the ceiling, curled her toe around the fire alarm, stuck her thumb in her mouth, and hung there.

"Boop-boop-boop! Whee-whee-whee-whee-wheee!" The orangutan beat her chest and bellowed, "There's no one flying this thing!"

THOR GARCIA

EXCEPTÉ  
ancestralement  
soit  
JAMAIS  
COMME SI  
UN COUP DE DÉS  
QUAND BIEN MÊME LANCÉ DANS DES CIRCONSTANCES  
ÉTERNELLES  
DU FOND D'UN NAUFRAGE  
LE HASARD  
la mer par l'océan  
inférieur clapote  
envahit le chef  
dont  
le voile  
direct de l'homme  
dans ces parages  
NABUCCADREZAR  
par la neutralité

MAÏNE  
NOMBRE C'ÉTAIT  
FEUT  
STAT-IL  
à lui signalé

IL  
S'ÉTOURDIT  
QU'UN ENDOIT  
S'ÉTOURDIT  
S'ÉTOURDIT

UN COUP DE DÉS  
QUAND BIEN MÊME LANCÉ DANS DES CIRCONSTANCES

DES CIRCONSTANCES  
ÉTÉRIELLES  
ILLUMINAT-IL  
S'ÉTOURDIT

ILLUMINAT-IL  
S'ÉTOURDIT  
S'ÉTOURDIT  
S'ÉTOURDIT

DU FOND D'UN NAUFRAGE  
LE HASARD  
S'ÉTOURDIT

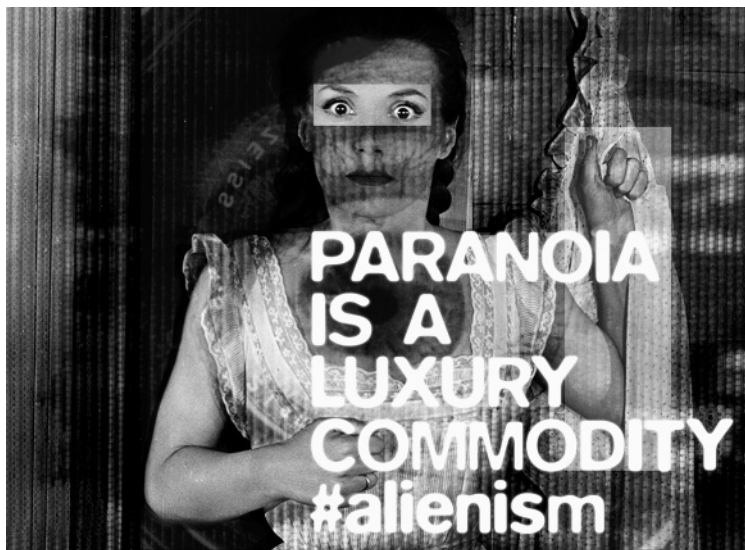
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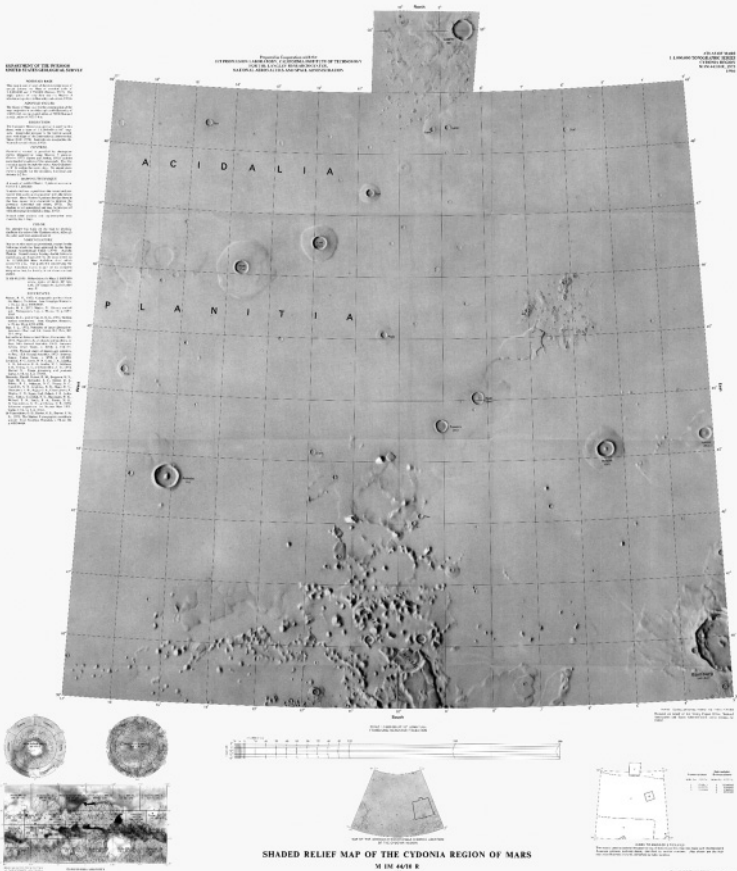
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# THE MARTIAN LSD EXPERIMENTS



*"I cannot," Louie Assmann, the Petro-Mars station manager, told his anonymous correspondent, "as yet give you any account of that Land, excepting it was mortally cold."*

1. A desolation of red. It stretched in seamless 360° panorama, surrounding the drone-eye like a paradox, its distance pressed claustrophobically near to the lens. Behind it, a rumour of voices, crossed signals, radio static.

In the arcane mind of the Operator, the alien landscape resembles nothing so much as a red brick tenement wall, from one of those early industrial centuries, through which the sub-proletariat eavesdropped on one another's alienation. A frozen, airless, desolation of red.

The infallible technicians would've been hard-pressed to design a more fitting workers' paradise than this, for the present-day scions of Marx & Wernher von Braun. Palsied from a diet of chloride, pyroxene & rust. You may recall them, mafic-eyed molemen, dwellers of pestilential airlocks, sallow of prospect, scurvy, prematurely depleted.

Their labours have hollowed the dead ground to vertiginous depths you call habitat. Have fed the oxygenators, the solar-cells. Have transmuted Martian tundra to Amazons of lush artifice. They are to you as the early part of night is to a blood moon – generations factored by Panic & Dread, as by furious twins in contrary motion.

It's no secret the future belongs to any but them.

They came here to die & have succeeded only partially. The camera intuits them beneath the tumuli accreted at the colony's perimeter, unrecycled biomass for an agrarian pipedream. Perhaps tomorrow their spectres will entertain a more ironically-attuned species of machine.

The drone dips & veers in the thin atmosphere, making its approach. Its target, framed in digital crosshatch, glows green. A leached-out green against a desolation of red. It could've hung on a museum wall. *Untitled Landscape (Homage to the Square)*. For, until it erupts, the target configuration is a right-angled equilateral parallelogram.

2. The dosages themselves are unpredictable. Often sleep refuses to follow. Fatigue. Exhaustion. Mental blankness. At others a disconcerting euphoria. The resistance is growing. For every week in hibernation, there are two, sometimes three, of bleakest twilight.

3. A singularity, Assmann's mind told him, as he drifted down through the foggy viscous green, is the point at which all possible worlds coincide. On his monitor, a checkerboard of mildewed grey & black faded-in. Trailing its life-support tubes, a body came slowly into view. Congealed yellow skin. Electrode mesh. Catheter. Intravenous cartridges. Mask. He toggled the POV. Now he was staring straight up at the cryotank airlock, circling counterclockwise with the current. In accordance with some pre-

programmed routine, his arms or legs would periodically be made to flex against the flow, in a motion he still hadn't learnt to describe. It felt like aliens controlling his body while he watched. The pressure of the saline, he knew, was the only thing keeping his entire musculature from atrophy. The weight of it against his chest as he breathed, in place of an atmosphere. That & the strangeness of being awake & unconscious at the same time. He wondered how long it'd take for evolution to clue in that there was no going back. From now on, even if he swam all the way to Mars, he'd always be the proverbial fish out of water.

4. There was talk of the Terraform Commission exploding an A-bomb close to the mantle. A controlled series of detonations, strung like a daisychain around the equator, intended – so rumour had it – to produce a seismic wave that'd cycle around the planet, to un-stall the dynamo at its core. If it didn't just crack the planet in half, the idea was it'd snap the magnetic field back on. It'd been switched off 500 million years ago, so they were planning to make it big. Soviet-era stuff out of cold storage. Warm things up a bit. Melt some of that polar ice & get the greenhouse gasses stirring, grow a breathable atmosphere & all that. You could always trust TerraCom to hit a bright idea right on the head.

5. Curled in his cryo-sac, Assmann dreamt of prenatal life among the robots. Eighteen months in low-energy-transit: nine successive months the screws turned, his doppelganger choked on its saline solution, humiliated itself in full view of the electrode array. Then nine more to reacclimatise. Like being born twice. His nightmares turned to Soylent Green feedback loop. Assmann<sup>1</sup> being a figment of Assmann<sup>2</sup> & vice-versa. A quicksilver catheter turning him black from the inside. A vacuum tube for the bad blood leeching him white. The cryo-goop bubbled. Any moment now they'd wake him up for real & spoil his beauty-sleep. Retrothruster comedown. The engine was cast from titanium alloy & wouldn't succumb below 3000° centigrade. Such facts were meant to instil confidence. His login was "FreeFall." In the beginning, the singularity was masked by a 3D hologram no-one could see past & required forceps. Gurgling happy in his muck, Assmann fingered the replay switch. Once more Miss America vaulted his supine face. *You think there's something mystical stuffed up there?* she smiled. A milk-moon of liquid hydrocarbon. Barium heat. Vast quasars of most distant red. Suddenly a profound depression came over him. A singular thought forced all else from his mind: What was an exile but one who was prisoner to an idea from which there was *only* escape, yet which could never *be* escaped? The Mars Orbit Injection routine flashed on the monitor. Out of the cryo-sac's artificial gravity, he was a man at sea. Seamlessly the onboard brain executed a vertical descent. The narrative was designed to withstand impact yet still collapsed. Launch-pad feeding tracts of dead reckoning, molten beneath the rubble. The recovery drone relayed the wrong coordinate.

6. First view: A terrain scanned from low orbit. Light tracing the contours. North-south like magnetic bands. Pipelines. Beltways. Hatcheries. Greenhouses of bioluminescent feedstock. Monday. Tharsis Rise. Month 18/September B.

7. Something arrives out of a hostile & improbable distance, assuming a form at once concrete & phantasmagoric: it is Deimos, lesser of the moons, inching above the ice reefs like a mouldy regolith. Assmann walked along the beach, in the fissures of the thin ice-ledge. As far as he knew, the beach had always been there, red sand stretching away in a gentle curve under a sky of chrome yellow, dunes banked tumulus-like sloping into the frozen tide. Coming to a bluff, he paused, cupped his ear against the wind & listened, but all he could hear was static. Beside him, hunched in his shadow, a fetus-eyed thing watched up at him. When he walked, it half-staggered, half-waddled after him in its amniotic sac. Flapped its arms. Keened inaudibly. Whenever Assmann stopped, it perched by his leg, watching him as it was watching him now. Assmann had become aware of the creature only by facets the first time he'd wandered the shoreline. It'd disconcerted him then, but he'd soon learnt to pay it no mind. Some kind of Mars creature, he supposed. It'd appeared from nowhere. Perhaps it'd lost its mother. There was nothing he could see for it to eat & he had nothing to offer it. Perhaps it wasn't even hungry. It simply followed him, now as it had then. It would follow as far along the shore as he went, then watch him all the way back.

8. We put to sail on the Recovery at 9 o'clock in the evening & had no sooner got clear of the Plateau than we encountered a gale from NNW, which we steered till morning, when the weather turned squally attended with meteor showers. At noon the sun was nearly in our zenith, yet being hazy had no observation. That afternoon saw fresh gales with lightning, which continued till 8pm, then a very heavy shower of meteorites. The following morning marked a change: a still sky & dark stony weather. At noon it rained excessive hard amid a sudden sand storm, after which it became fair giving us an opportunity to observe the sun's meridian altitude, which we have not been able these past days. Light breezes & clear weather continued. Many winged creatures about the sloop, especially those named by the crew "roobats" on account of their aerial bounding, some of which we caught with hook & line. At 6.24pm the larger of the twin moons rose about 4 digits eclipsed. That night the wind picked up again & continued about two days at NE then veered South where it remained two days longer before fixing at SE which carried us across the dunes within sight of the Rift. We did not strike soundings till we were 50 fathoms off. A clear sky afforded a prospect of the distant calderas & escarpments, yet the highest peaks already lay obscured by the horizon. Exiting the dunes, we anchored at 5 fathoms in the mouth of a small inflow, about ten miles distant from the Great Labyrinth. We hoisted out a drone

& sent it round to a point on the larboard hand to take a survey of the terrain ahead. As the weather continued fair we elected to proceed into the canyons. The banded cliff formations grew progressively larger till after three days the Sexton estimated them to a height of several miles. Here & there we sighted enormous lichens. A steady wind followed us the while. On each of the nights a heavy storm passed over, but continuing in the lee of the Rift we remained for the most part sheltered from the weather. By the fourth morn we observed the opposing shore to recede utterly from view, the canyon we were traversing had so widened. It was with difficulty we steered a course, as there was no surety of where a bearing presented the main branch & where a tributary. We continued thus for three days before running afoul of a sandstorm that completely inundated the ship. We have been holed up since, bailing & undertaking desperately needed repairs, cognisant of our dwindling supplies. The storm has transfigured the landscape, which no longer resembles our drone's reconnaissance. Our bearings show us far off-course, though we have no way of knowing where. Our charts are sorely inadequate to the task. I have ordered the sloop to be prepared in order that a select party be able to proceed ahead to the outpost at Cydonia. It is said the Labyrinth endures 4000 miles end-to-end, though none have traversed it. Destiny willing, we shall be the first.

9. They sat around the fire & murmured against the oblivion beyond the light of the flames.

Assmann felt, as he sat there among the tribe, as if he were facing in two directions at once. Somewhere out in the darkness, he was sure, their quarry lay watching them, & even now he saw himself as if through its eyes. An indefinite figure, huddled against a dim fire. In his thoughts, it was the quarry that was hunting *them*. The idea wouldn't leave him. He tried to dispel it by restating their purpose, focusing the tribe's attention upon the task ahead. But as soon as he spoke, the thing he intended was lost, the words existed both everywhere & nowhere. It was the same whenever he sought, in that hackneyed expression, to gaze inwards: his mind would go utterly blank. He might try to catch it unawares, but to no avail, it always saw him coming.

Mumbling, Assmann allowed his words to veer off, to attach to some trivial thing, the direction of the weather, the proximity of the escarpments, the immanence of danger. For the world had gotten the better of him the moment he'd spilled from the womb & he knew it. Yet to the others seated beside him, the laconic understatement of his speech pressed to their own minds the image of a man who'd conquered his fears, & in having done so might conquer theirs. They were prepared to follow him. It was a great deal for Assmann to have on his conscience. After the fire had died & they'd hunkered down for the night, the hours till dawn would never be long enough to catalogue his doubts. Nor his crimes. For every decision he'd ever made, he'd secretly been the first to betray.

10. Staring blind at the drone sky, snow up to the focsle. Long shadows by bulk: machine nature discarded. Wound was surplus. In cold blood punishment or damage, would cease more stoic than hesitation. Signal misalignment in the fraudcast band. And stood there, by erased reckoning, periscope to eyewhite, as naked as the word & twice as dead.

11. Water restrictions & food rationing had been in place now for over 300 sols. Every time a transport arrived, half the cargo disappeared straight onto the black market. The central stores had been raided down to the last stash of Durex & Rice Crispies. There was no doubt in Assmann's mind that someone at the top had to be in on it. It'd all started with the mining franchises. Suddenly everyone wasn't in the same boat anymore. Progress, they called it. Entrepreneurialism. The free market. But with no water in the communal reservoirs, there was no fuel to power the extractors or melt the ice or run the purifiers or keep the pumps operational. The vicious circle was tightening. Pretty soon the entire system'd break down & they'd starve, asphyxiate or freeze to death, & the mining companies'd swan on in like it was a holiday camp & put their robots to work making everything just peachy.

12. Through his binoculars, Assmann had a clear view of the Recovery's crew lined up on the glacier, paying their last respects to their dead captain. Dust spread a red carpet over the burial mound in stray gusts. The Recovery's hulk made a grim silhouette behind them. Locked in the ice, it was slowly being crushed. Its groans were audible even at that distance. Next to it, a sloop stood ready-provisioned on its skis. Assmann watched in mounting panic. Soon the crew's ritual would be completed & they'd set about their departure. He scrambled to higher ground, snatching the flare-gun from his hip. Aiming into the sky he fired, but the flare fizzled in the breach. Assmann screamed into his ventilator & hurled the gun across the rise, where it clunked out of sight. He waved his arms in the air. Jumped. Waved. Without the aid of magnification, the Recovery's crew were like ants disappearing into brickwork. Assmann watched hopelessly as the sloop drifted from view. A family of roobats, perched on a nearby dune, took in the whole spectacle with naked inquisitiveness.

13. "May my arse burn in hell," Assmann ranted at the medical officer, "if what I say isn't the truth."

14. He took in the scene around the Mission Control conference table, detail by detail. His mind moved with a glaciality of purpose, unbetrayed by the tundral blue of his stare. Assmann was quite aware that the others in the room were all delusional, yet their delusion was that they were each reasonable individuals. Even before they'd sat down, Assmann had already decided the best approach would be to humour them. It would only upset the meeting's equilibrium unnecessarily if he treated his colleagues as the

flagrant psychiatric cases they undoubtedly were. By playing along with their delusions he'd demonstrate, by the force of his own example, what true rationality was. Perhaps he'd even succeed in bringing some of them towards the light of sanity, enabling them, by meeting's end, to perceive how their every prior notion had been a sham. They'd see themselves for what they were, & him for what he was – a Reasonable Man – & the scales would fall from their eyes. Reason itself would beckon to them. And they'd reach out with their hearts & minds to embrace it.

15. "I'm not a robot," Assmann<sup>2</sup> repeated into the vocoscan for the umpteenth time, hunched against the swirling dust. The blue jelly pulsed inside its holocube beside the hatch, forming & unforming in rhythmic ambivalence while the glitch cycled through its validation routine once more. The jelly's translucent bell seemed to mouth Assmann<sup>2</sup>'s words back at him with a malevolent irony of purpose, like an eight-eyed *medulla oblongata* trailing a knotted spinal cord, sizing him up for a bodysnatch. Zap him with its neurotoxin & who knew what else, slither out of its holocube & right into his eyesocket. The vocoscan froze. Reloaded.

"Jesuschrist," Assmann<sup>2</sup> hissed, "I *am not* a fucking robot!"

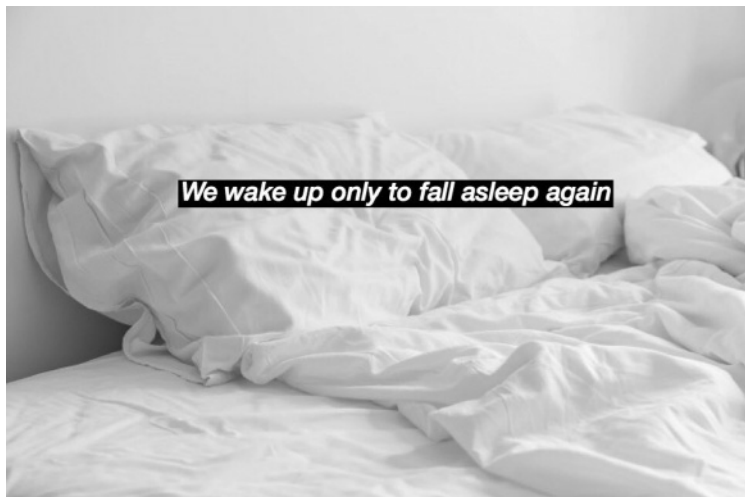
Fifteen minutes out in a sandstorm just to get inside the HAB. Assmann<sup>2</sup> leant in closer, eyeing the jellyfish. He struggled to keep his voice in check: "I'M NOT A ROBOT!"

Assmann<sup>2</sup> wondered what this must've looked like on the security cam, if it looked like anything at all in that weather. He waved his decal at the lens to no effect. He was sorely tempted to smash the thing, a predictably irrational & counterproductive response. *Strange how in the space of a few minutes you could have nothing left to lose.* Maybe one of those arseholes in Human Resources had set it up to run as a behaviour experiment. Or maybe it was the machines, wearing them down, attritional warfare.

The jelly seemed to pulse bluer. Static washed back through the intercom. Finally the cube turned green & the hatch jerked aside on its hydraulic swing-arm. Assmann<sup>2</sup> ducked & stepped through. The hydraulics exhaled as the hatch jerked closed behind him. He tossed his binoculars onto the HAB's User Interface Console, hanging his ventilator on the back of the chair & shucking bulldust from his suit as he slumped down. The screen in the middle of the Console blinked behind a pixel cascade. *Well there's yer goddam problem right there.*

"You've really got to get that fixed," he said, swiveling to face the cryosac he'd salvaged from the ship.

Assmann<sup>1</sup> stared back at him unblinking through saline goo & overgrown hair. A faint blip sounded from his decal. *Yep, still alive in there.* But if they weren't rescued soon, *for how much longer?*



***We wake up only to fall asleep again***

**CONTACT WITH DISAGREEABLE IDEAS CAN JEOPARDIZE YOUR COHESION**

**SYMPTOMS OF COMPROMISED INTERNAL COHESION INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO**



**HEADACHES**



**NAUSEA**



**STATES OF ILLUSION**



**DIZZINESS**



**BREATHLESSNESS**



**COLLAPSE**



**LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

**IF SOMEBODY TRIES TO OFFER YOU ALIENISM,  
ALWAYS SAY NO**



INTERIOR MINISTRY  
LOUIS ARMAND  
RICHARD MAKIN  
DARYA KULBASHNA  
RAREŞ GROZEA  
VÍT BOHAL  
DAVID VICHNAR  
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The planning & regulating of poverty in all its aspects, for example,  
Lethal biologies of starkness rigour comsat embryo deluge. Delete "or."

To kneel once more before the legislative protection racket.

The intimacy of separation is forever making televised appeals.

There, where contrition showed for almost --

chain-reaction nude along vertical axis Pyongyang frequent flyer programme.

Eco-Maserati vs Milchkafeepolitik?

Mass. Consensual. Hatttraction. Rape.

To remake the image in its own world,

confined by sleep that watches over you like a cop.

Step 2: Repeat.

Sentimental eyeball kerosene.

Poetry isn't the confiscated grievances of prettified Fontanelles.

They're out to get us, is an ~~ad~~ ~~id~~ only for those who know how to strike first.

Petri dish raygun particles making undertones of periodic rhapsody.

They have too readily operated in the gap between art & its results.

Nature knows no consensus people are fake news.

Mouthwash verblage arson attack.

Love, they said, with their backs to the precipice.

Now they are consigned to other virtuals --

remorseless cryogenics building compulsory optimism the eternal plebiscite.

History's witness--intimidation scheme.

To have invented nothing, not even themselves.

The only philosophical question of any importance today,

is how to "wrest back" alienation's means-of-production?

Lights dance in our heads when we are unable.

But is the mind merely a disease of the fully-automated nervous system?

Robots know the future they've seen the same movies you have.

Legalistic war secrecy

(reflect after)

Swallowed pride

seeks commemoration

(so as to reflect)

Not only the commands

(if to reflect)

Capacity for violation

as economic lubricant --

(reflect under duress)

Describe the rewards

(or reflect)

Need must enemy

to signal agreement

(reflect back)

Routine gratifications

(reflect at leisure)

Auschwitz after poetry

takes precedence?

(if forced to reflect)

Etc.