

**CONTENT MINDED, VOL. 2. 2017-2019.**

**THE LOGOS CLUB YEARS.**

**(AND MORE + NEVER BEFORE SEEN CONTENT).**

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*(Cover Image. Original buffer image work for the “Broadcasted decay” podcast. Summer, 2018, acrylic on paper).*

Giant Art Productions.

2020.

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## **Forward.**

This compilation of works is compiled from mostly Logos Club articles, more of my attempts at experimental pieces, as well as the beginnings of long form articles that are pieced out into series of works. These works are sometimes spur of the moment cultural criticism and the like. While there are still very politically charged works here, it was my intention to save my more overtly political works for Thermidor Mag and now The American Sun. these works never reached as large of an audience as my other pieces, but they have what I feel to be a different flavour to them than the works in politics, so are therefore worthy of compiling into a second volume of content minded. Some works became quite popular however, but I always felt they suffered from the lack of a “bigger stage” you could say. I have also included some works from a friend’s site that was entitled “The Hunting Call”, and a more in-depth article on Nobody™’s actual works, plus some things I have never released before publicly.

Logos Club was one of those sites a few of us in the closing days of West Coast Reactionaries half-heartedly mentioned as a possible place of migration, but unfortunately that never really materialized (and Thermidor was gaining traction at the time too). I was one of the only ones who regularly published on it; to sum up a rather uninteresting story, I had some disagreements with the owner of Logos Club, or rather, I felt that we grew more distant, and stopped communications. He wished to transition the site to literature and short stories only, but also deleted my content without informing me. I like to think my audience has surpassed the site itself, and I do not really harbour any harsh feelings to be honest. There are always new publications and ventures that crop up and fade away, but if one never loses the spirit of the content mindset, that is what truly distinguishes someone. To never give up, to never be discouraged from putting things out there despite immense inner toiling and doubt, to embrace

the highs and lows of good content production, that is what matters, and that is the light that should guide the spirit of creativity.

PART 1. THE LOGOS COLLECTION.





**The Mission of Art is the Care of the Soul: On the Online Right's lack of a new aesthetics, Prt1.**



From the beginning God said, *let there be light*, and there was light.

This is the capstone to the great animating words that threw the world into history. Judaism, and moreso Christianity was born out of the famed words from Genesis. God said, *let there be light*, but given the metaphor, those of Humanity with the insight of the great philosophers and artists have contemplated these words in one way or another.

God said, *let there be light*, and Man said, we must be the prism through which this light is *refracted* – and so then there was art! Yes, art has been with us since we had the ability to gaze into the heavens above (and within), find an abode amongst the celestial phantasmagoria, and carve off a piece of that insight into our own works.



We have, in the earliest known accounts, the first cave paintings made by Neanderthals in the caves of Chauvet in southern France. In the seminal documentary, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010), German documentarian Werner Herzog gives us a close and personal look at these stunning and beautiful works. In them we see the earliest signs of metaphysical religion, ritual hunting practices, and mythology. The ancients painted what they knew, and what they knew is what was most intimately around them. Thus, we have arrived at the most basic of all truisms in art and aesthetic philosophy: the artist depicts what they most intimately know and what is most approximate to them on a physical and spiritual level. One needs to only look around themselves as an artist to feel the divine mandate to create, to bring forth what is one's own light – derived not simply from the desire for pure self-expression, but out of the light of insight, of LOGOS: of the divinity within all things.

But now let us look around to the contemporary art world, and the contemporary world of politics that surrounds art, specifically on the internet. What do we find? A sea of nihilism, crass ironic detachment, the glorification of hideousness and moral depravity, the weaponization of ugliness and absurdity, and more fundamentally, an anti-metaphysical attitude that is ubiquitous and unyielding.

Art has degenerated into a social engineering project, hence why the CIA for years used the New York School of abstract expressionism as a covert psychological operation against the Soviets (and the American public). Despite what the mission brief states, the CIA's promotion of abstract expressionism was never meant to spread some romantic idea of American artistic freedom to the Soviets, but rather to weaponize chaos and absurdity. That is not to say abstraction is abjectly anti-art, that it does not have its place, or that it is doomed to be cast aside as an effete obsession of pseudo-intellectuals and the coastal upper classes. Quite the contrary, abstraction done with a deep purpose in mind can be quite meaningful.

Wassily Kandinsky, the father of abstraction himself, said that all great artists are driven by an "inner necessity", a divine spark that lies within one's being, driving the artist towards ever-greater heights of expression and harmony with nature. Kandinsky of course has a spiritual purpose in mind, trying to vigorously express the divine nature of being through his colorful passages and dark lines of tonal mass. Even the luminaries of the New York School such as Jackson Pollock, and Mark Tobey before him, were using non-objective painting as a way of

expressing the unconscious (being that Pollock was a Jungian). The great inner necessity of these abstract artists (perhaps Morris Graves, Milton Resnik and Mark Rothko included) was to work through this profound inner necessity inside of them, expressing a spiritual longing, as in the case of Tobey, or a purely emotive and psychological wholeness in the case of Rothko and Pollock.

But as time went on, abstraction became *in vogue* – the pursuit of art school snobs and rich collectors – and the art world was turned away from expression of meaning towards a desire for pure profit. A whole slew of artists, even to this day, perform the ritual dance of repeating the same motifs of abstraction and action-painting, becoming ever more solipsistic and meandering. As such, the pejorative term that sprang up to describe the work of these milieus is “zombie formalism”: the bloodless repetition of a well-established genre of art for its own sake. Soon art (to quote the Roman historian Edward Gibbons) has become what it is now, freakish and sensationalistic, ghastly in its near-nihilistic way of celebrating the mundane and superfluous, dressing (sometimes literal) trash as a profound political statement.

Of course, hyper-politicization is what has led the original sacred purpose of art down the path of damnation. No better example of this would be contemporary conceptualist art. You have *Piss Christ* and all its faux acclaim, Tracy Emin’s soiled and filthy bedroom display, Richard Serra and his pretentious fake wall – the list is endless. Anyone with a sociology degree can find a creative way to smear their own fluids on a canvas and call it a profound (often leftist) political statement. It seems that art should only wax political in a manner where the nature of art itself remains aloof, held aloft above the mortal world of the everyday – no slave to, or mere vehicle of, politics.

The latter has long been the order of the day for the academic post-Marxist identarian left. To them, art has no higher metaphysical purpose beyond the political and the bodily. It thus becomes utilitarian, lacking any significant power or intrinsic virtue despite those supposed qualities of art the average sociology major pays lip service to. You hear cheap slogans thrown about by art school hipsters, like “art can change the world”, or “art is power, art is resistance” – but how could they possibly venerate and pay homage to any artistic ideal from their deeply dug trenches of crass apathy, festooned piecemeal with the materialist appropriation of trends and cultures not their own? Those who make art the slave of politics is simply missing the point.

But what does this say about those who are supposedly on the side of tradition and deeper meaning? Where does the political Right fit into this, especially the new Dissident Right in all its manifold forms? The answer as of late has been quite grim. To begin with, most if not a significant majority simply do not care about art – they consider art and literature to be an irredeemable tool of the left, thus conceding what I would argue is the most vital ground to fight for in the culture war. Even those who are aesthetically inclined are stuck in an odd and vulgar mental ideation that is helplessly grounded in repetition of the old (we will expound on this later). Let us first examine the defeatist attitude of the new or dissident right on the Internet.

### **(Sub)urban Loathing: The Defeatism of the Awakened.**

The aesthetics of the new Right is sadly inadequate to reflect today's *zeitgeist*. On the one hand we have a veneration of the Old Masters, of pastoral landscapes and Renaissance or late German romanticist paintings. Being a landscape painter myself, I find respect for these works to be a positive – they were created in the spirit of Man's divine nature to express the sublime beauty of the world and of Creation. However, this respect should supplement a new, forward-moving body of work on the Right yet to begin manifestation.

For instance, the new Right is indifferent to modern forms of landscape art that can speak to the unique challenges of our time, such as the *plein air* (outside, literally *in open air*) art movement. This topic could be an essay on its own, but a direct engagement with nature, capturing light in real time, going into the wilderness or the urban concrete jungle and rendering an image with a unique feel due to the time constraints of such a work – this is artistic heroism that must be seriously given attention. *Plein air* painting has been stripped of its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century dandyism of the French Bohemians and ruggedness of the North American woodsmen and has now become a twee pastime. The pastoral aristocratic landscape and the High Renaissance portrait can only serve as *inspiration* in our artistic endeavours, not something to be blindly replicated or worshipped as if it is a rune or enchanted talisman we can utilize for our purposes.

As the saying goes in traditionalist circles, “*Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of an eternal flame*”. This applies directedly to the new aesthetics the Right should be focusing on creating. Tradition in its most philosophic and metaphysical sense should be the eternal guiding LOGOS, the sacred heart of being that may change forms in terms of appearance

or setting but remains illuminated with the spirit of God. So, art too must change, revert to primeval forms, then take off on different lines of flight, whilst remaining true to its original “inner necessity” and spiritual purpose. Art that stays stagnant because we have arbitrarily deemed it “traditional”™ becomes an empty utilitarian vessel, and it is thanks to this attitude that the Right does the exact same harm to the purpose of art as the Left does when they wring out forms of expressionism and conceptualism *ad nauseam*.

This is especially true when it comes to those masters of trolling, the white nationalist kids of the Alternative Right. These types amount to little more than racist liberals in terms of their lack of principles (besides the pedestalization of materialist race theory), and they hilariously view the Nazi regime – the first purely aesthetic totalitarian apparatus – as some sort of fount of traditional refuge. The reality is that the Nazis made a mockery of traditional art and aesthetics, holding aloft the Old Masters whilst LARPing as Teutonic lords; they simply emptied these works of art of any real substance. To the Nazis, like the Communists or the modern Alt-Right and their art-school-hipster SJW counterparts, art is doomed to be a political tool – a propaganda device with a utilitarian purpose. In hindsight, the laying-claim to Traditional aesthetics and principles by regimes such as the Nazis amounts to nothing more than a cynical joke. The Right, however, be it the Reactionaries, the Alt-Right, or simply conservatives, all suffer from an even more pervasive malaise which stifles their capacity to create anything truly artistically meaningful or interesting: the mentality of political defeatism.

A very good article (1) came my way by fellow writer (and friend) Richard Ocelot, outlining the self-destructive attitude of the modern Right quite aptly when it comes to aesthetics. Instead of building cultural monuments, or seeding a series of alternative networks that can run parallel the Cathedral institutions and cultural gatekeepers like Hollywood and the art schools, the brain capital of the Online Right seems devoted to either intellectual onanism and regurgitation of doctrine, or immersion in the Faustian mission of “exposing” and highlighting the worst forms of degeneracy that the modern world offers. Some still prefer to simply marinate in the sludge of vile forms of human depravity and maleficence, seeking out these evils, ruminating over them to the point of arriving at the inevitable “blackpilled” mindset.

Endless ink and pixels of text are thus spilled over this modern form of right-wing “hunger artistry”. For those who have not read Kafka, the short story “A Hunger Artist” is the

archetypal example of a tale crafted for the sole purpose of giving the reader a feeling of pure and pointless suffering for its own sake on the part of the protagonist. The hunger artist is a paragon of neglect, stating no reason as to why every time, during the county fair, he climbs into a cage as a circus freak, achieving ever more torturous lengths of time passed without a scrap to eat. When he is about to die a person pulls him out of the cage, and his final words as to the question of why he did it? “I simply found nothing good to eat”. This throwaway statement sums up the whole parable; in the end there really was no higher purpose or ideal to the suffering of the hunger artist. To link back to the modern Rightist, mere critique and exposure to the horrendous and ungodly realities of modernity is not the bread of life – the pursuit of spiritual art is.

The online Dissident Right has arrived at a point where this endless collecting of data, regurgitation of talking points and descent into obsession over the basest of political realities borders on nihilism. It seems the Right is just as guilty as the postmodern Left in crafting a form of negative or anti-art in video or written form. Nothing accentuates this point better than reaction channels, Alt-Right remix songs, and the endless streams of “pessimism porn” in infinite blog posts and vlogs. Whilst hidden behind a veil of ironic detachment and satire, the gathering up of this detritus – the absolute worst examples of modern western phenotypes – and putting them on display could, in a way, be akin to a project of modern collage art. This is the Right-wing version of the celebration of ugliness and grotesqueness found in any modern art gallery.

The trendy Post-Marxist art school graduate might have a work “expressing the contortions of the female body”, or railing against capitalism and patriarchal norms by finding artistic uses for literal trash or their own fluids. On the other side, the basement-dwelling white nationalist irony posters, spreads memes with an ever-diminishing shelf life, and collects obscure titbits of information on various degenerate internet subgroups, to then post on their blogs and YouTube channels. All who grind away at the black pill machine share the same fate – the damning of more lost souls to a life of resignation, inadvertently empowering their very enemies through their own acquiescence.

At this point I may touch upon a typical response to my critique of the online Right’s lack of an artistic sensibility, that being the question of them owning the “memes of production” on

the internet as it were. I have already discussed at length the ways in which the Right's desire to control meme culture is not only a losing game but will ultimately sign away cultural control wholesale to the political left and the Cathedral's social engineers. For it is the *absence* of a serious politics, and the inherent irony of meme-spreading as a chaotic artform that will eventually bode ill for the Right – we are seeing evidence for this already in large swathes of the Alternative Right. Memes offer poor conveyance of transcendent truth and can bring the average modern subject only so far before the irony wears thin. This is the crucial fault in the thesis of “memes as an artform”; it does not account for competing memes, or the fact that the relevance of any given meme is temporal, a short while at best before they decay into self-parody.

Whole ideologies and worldviews become memes in this online space, where people claim to hold deeply felt beliefs as a form of political posturing. Even a belief in traditional religion, be it Orthodoxy, traditionalist Catholicism or Evangelicalism and heretical forms of paganism, are elaborate tokens to collect for the online Right – the intention being to LARP the meme religion or ideology long enough that the reality and the fiction of a purported belief become one and the same. Even being a nihilist or “blackpilled” as the saying goes, is a form of ironic meme production. This of course exposes the same crucial flaw in the faux-aesthetics of Dissident Right meme culture as the utilitarian appropriation of traditional art, namely it is a sign that those on the Right are the same rootless, apathetic victims of postmodernity as their enemies on the political left are. They, by buying into the so-called “power” and voracity of memes, have produced their own Right-leaning version of postmodern anti-art, and thus find themselves at odds with the higher spiritual and traditionalist values they claim to be upholding.

Even the embrace of Vaporwave, its nostalgic aesthetics, and the virtual-visual space of transhuman accelerationist futurism (be it photo and video editing, digital art, parodying corporate consumer aesthetics, etc.) may prove to be fruitful, but ultimately is wrapped up in, 1: Nostalgia for a bygone era, namely their childhoods in the 80s and 90s (a disease which has infected almost all millennials), and, 2: The same defeatist attitudes and hang-ups as endless critiquing and meme culture, namely a dystopian technocratic future of virtual reality serfdom, the likes of which Aldous Huxley could never have imagined in his darkest nightmares. What must be overcome are these impulses towards critique – we are in a position where we *cannot* suffer the time wasted on tearing down. Only meaningful artistic creation must be promoted on

the Right and allowed to gain any cultural legitimacy – and not the faux-legitimacy that comes with grovelling to our Cathedral functionaries, to go along with the manufactured cultural orthodoxies controlled by the Left like some Republican NRO plebeian conservative – but an authenticity of principles that comes part-and-parcel with the creation of Good Art. There can of course be no compromise, but in turn there must be quality production, not empty shock and sensationalism; a new star to outshine the gravid moon of “trolling” and endless variations on the same boring offensive memes and publicity stunt tactics.

### **Accelerate or Go Back?**

The aesthetics of the new online Right points to a disposition of lament, nostalgia, and defeatist resignation. Technology seems to be a central focal point in the online Right’s pantheon of aesthetic symbols and motifs, namely the right’s swaying between the two extremes of embracing (and sometimes lamenting over the inevitability of) tech accelerationism in terms of aesthetic exploration, or the other extreme of wistful neo-primitivism and romanticism in art. As the Orthodox carver and artist Johnathan Pageau observes in the works of Heidegger, *teche* – technical ability or knowledge that has been transformed into its baser forms after the enlightenment – proports a way of synthesizing all of life in its grasp. To Heidegger, the essence of technology is the revealing of truth, *Alethia*. Technology is a dialectic, a form of revealing truth, but because of the post-enlightenment discourses of instrumental reason and efficiency, technology reveals only a materialist truth. When there is a revealing of truth, there is as double act of concealment for Heidegger, the mystery of being as it were, the sacred movement of all life that instrumental reason (via its workings in modern technology) denies. As our technological capacity increases, so does our thinking become more materialistic in a myriad of ways, and hence efficiency, comfort, and material ends becomes the primary focus in life, not the revealing of truth after which the ancients sought. Art too is caught up in the discourses of modern speed and efficiency, revealing a consistent aesthetics of alienation and futurist loathing. Art reflects *life*, and the life that reflects the truth of our world is that of fearing the possibility of a totally controlled world. The Right has embraced an art of the future, from vaporwave to cyberpunk and digital media, that shows humanity as a deracinated, materialist bundle of distorted affects, wasting away whilst the technocratic control apparatus of some future dystopian globalist world-state plays upon our wind-tossed passions and fears. Some have



chosen to embrace this aesthetic, to swallow the “black pill” of futurist negation, and attempted “ride the tiger” as it were, becoming transfixed with the possibilities of a world controlled by AI, or virtual reality, or totalitarian social engineers with technological powers that mimic that of a Demiurge (those familiar with the Landian / Moldbuggian side of Neoreaction know the type of aesthetics I refer to).

This leads us to the question of embracing the “aesthetics of acceleration” as it were, coming to terms with the marching-forth of technology, and attempting to move forward with those (if any) traditionalist elements of right-wing ideas that can be salvaged and made new in such a world. These questions of course preclude the other possibility, that of the sacred civilizational reset – the secret burning desire of every traditionalist – one that few express out in the open for fear of being labelled a kook or a nihilist. That collapse scenario that will plunge the West into a new dark age, from which an older way of life would be extracted as the norm.

Bracketing this aside (and of course bracketing the dubious assertion that technology and science progresses in a neat, straight line upwards), let us assume that life will, as it inevitably does, mimic art, and we arrive at the Post- or Trans-human cyberpunk future. As Osho said in his commentary on Nietzsche, “when God is dead, Zen is the only living Truth”: the conception of God to Nietzsche has died, and perhaps in a living futurist society, the saying may go, “when God is dead, Art is the only living Truth.” We would need art to navigate such a world if the more euphoric among us are correct, and a future society that has “progressed” technologically will abandon metaphysics wholesale. If this is the case, there are numerous questions of technology creating a sort of Transhuman metaphysics, a pseudo-metaphysics – not of the soul, but of a literal *Deus ex Machina*. But this is of course speculation, and for our purposes, let us stick to the aesthetics of the future.

Surely there will be classical art, fine art, produced by Man, Machine or the two in tandem, to liberate the soul, the psyche, or whatever you wish to call the deepest seat of living animate humanity. Surely not *all* emotions will be synthesized into a mass of circuitry, pixellated blissful unawareness and soy-based vitamin supplements. Perhaps the orthodox Marxists are not right in asserting that material history is the be-all and end-all of existence, and that art does not merely provide some detachment from our alienated existence by giving us an autonomous picture of reality. Perhaps the Frankfurt School is right in asserting the power of art to deliver us

from oppression, and that high art is not some cynical ploy by the capitalist bourgeoisie to provide a mental relief valve for the overworked proles. If the cyberpunk future screams alienation at every turn, then future art must deliver us from that alienation. But this take on art is not a new one – there was a period where humanity stared the possibilities of their own future in the face, and embraced it head-on: this was the Italian futurist movement.

artwork done by me, entitled “*Lone journey after the storm*” (acrylic on board, 2013):  
<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1256142471090564.1073741832.1254797357891742/1272230442815100/?type=3&theater>

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**The Mission Of Art Is The Care Of The Soul: Italian Futurism as negative model (Part 2 of a 3 part series).**



**F. T. Marinetti and Italian Futurism**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, impressionism became a serious art movement that still maintained a kinship to representation, a faithfulness to the real world, yet challenged this world with an ensemble of vivid brushstrokes and colors, casting the world in a sort of interpretive fuzziness. Abstraction was thenceforth born, but abstraction is an evolutionary process (or devolutionary process, depending on who you ask). Impressionism and later abstraction did not come out of a vacuum. There were painters of the Barbizon school such as Camille-Corot that influenced the likes of Manet, Monet, Degas and Renoir. Of course, the impressionist influence went elsewhere, influencing painters in North America, specifically the Canadian Group of Seven, and later the American New York School of abstract expressionism.

European art took a more conceptualist route, however one impressionist stood out as influencing the schools of modern art that came later – Paul Cezanne. His “color fields” of strokes and patches of visibly broken color, his ability to break down the landscape and figures into basic shapes that would later have harder and more distinct borders and edges than what a usual landscape painter was accustomed to all led to the birth of the later schools of fauvism and cubism. This in turn led to the rise of the Italian futurists, led by their top thinker Filippo Marinetti, who penned the *Futurist Manifesto*. The futurists painted in color fields and used divisionism, where colors are not blended but laid side-by-side in unique dot, shape, or pattern arrangements. The *Futurist Manifesto* railed against traditional art, feminism, primitivism, and lionized beauty produced by way of struggle – hence Nietzsche’s influence on Italian thinkers and artists of that time in pre-war Italy.

Taking their lead from cubism, the Italian futurists sought out a new form of art that is a celebration of modernism, or what they called the “inherent dynamism” of all things technological and modern. They crafted a style which creatively interpreted the speed and intensity of cities and machines, and of modern sounds and modes of transportation. Speed was the focus of this new aesthetic vitality, and, as Paul Virilio notes, as the modern world makes even more leaps and bounds in terms of scientific and technological progression, so too does society – even existential experience makes dramatic shifts in increasing speed and intensity. Of course, with the internet, we find ourselves fully immersed in fields of information and live more fast-paced lives than ever. Italian futurism sought to navigate the challenges of the modern world by celebrating human speed as a “triumph” over nature. Here we also have the first inklings of aesthetic accelerationism, as Italian futurism was, from the beginning, a highly politicized art

genre. Many of the futurists found themselves embracing the coming war as a great Nietzschean “festival of cruelty”, aligning themselves with Italian fascism and futurist political movements.

Futurism wished to herald in the age of the resilient, passionate and violence-embracing *Übermensch*, the “new man” of the future that will “boldly go” where no man has gone before – only to fall into frustration and feelings of missed opportunity in “redeeming” the ancient blood-rite of creation. Ultimately, Italian futurism ushered in a more political and visionary way of looking at modern art, to only fail the way fascism in Italy failed (in effect, becoming entangled with the doom of the Nazi regime). Like the philosophers and ideas of Italian fascism, futurism became a purposely obscured relic, deemed untouchable by the professional art world and academia, despite its foundational influence in European modern art. A lot of the idealistic and fatalistic dispositions that manifested in Italian futurism can be observed in the attitudes of large swathes of the online Dissident Right. Therefore, Italian futurism can provide us with a case study of a modern art movement that did not fear associations with the political Right but stumbled due to some foundational flaws in the outlook and ideas that were driving its ethos.

It is debatable as to whether Italian fascism, clerical fascism, etc. has the same malevolence as Nazi racism, or should be treated as the all-encompassing bogeyman modern liberal parlance tends to connote with fascism. Fascism appears to be dead as a viable political option (despite what some internet fascists think), considering how it has become secular society’s word for Lucifer. But despite this, and before this author gets excessive heat for treating Fascism in such a nuanced manner, Italian futurism suffered such a fate because it was an art movement entangled with a political movement. Both suffered from being “without a soul” to put it loosely. By this I mean its materialism, techno-fetishism, its Nietzschean proclivity towards future-philia, its willingness to dive the muck of the *zeitgeist*’s politics, and

its dehumanizing worship of cruelty and mass-violence all meant that Italian futurism abandoned the spiritual and the Godly in art by its very definition. Art must be both immanent and transcendental.

The aesthetic sensibility of the accelerationist strain of Neoreaction unfortunately suffers the same hang-ups as Italian futurism, but in the digital realm. The underground of Neoreaction, the Alt-Right, the “Orthosphere” and the like cannot allow itself to bask in an aesthetics of materialism and techno-fetishism. The aesthetics of the right must incorporate *some* of these elements but maintain a keen eye on the spiritual. This might go without saying, but the modern *kulturkampf* against the Left and the hideous art it holds in high regard cannot be won with the current crop of leaders present in the mainstream American conservative movement – the “Alt-Lite”, the “Anti-SJW” YouTubers (despite their popularity as of the time of writing) and the more visible identarians and Alt-Righters.

To be frank: apart from a choice few, none of these so-called leaders or prominent figures have any artistic sensibility whatsoever. Some might carelessly and thoughtlessly pay lip service to classical art, but none will have any all-encompassing artistic sensibility or aesthetic ideal that will propel things forward in terms of making the Right’s artforms and styles legitimate and widely influential. Therefore, it will be up to the Reactionaries, the “smart set” of the underground Right, and those who have managed to maintain a low profile in art school and in academia to pave the way for a new Right-leaning aesthetics, and thusly a cultural return to moral legitimacy, maturity, spiritual wholeness and piety. This also entails an uplifting of modern culture away from materialism, crassness, surface-level sensationalism and degeneracy.

Artwork done by me, entitled "*Vaporwave, the motion of waves*" (acrylic on canvas, 15×20).

<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1256142471090564.1073741832.1254797357891742/1272230439481767/?type=3&theater>



**The Mission Of Art Is The Care Of The Soul: For Vision and Nature (Part 3 of a 3 part series).**



**What Visionary Art Can Teach Us**

There are many connotations to the word “visionary” with regard to art, but what is integral to our understanding of the term is the relentless commitment of the artist to the expression of higher creative and spiritual images, symbols and ideas. What is known as the visionary art movement of today developed out of the Austrian fantastical realist school of painters, established by virtuoso painter, draftsman and illustrator Ernst Fuchs. Fuchs converted to Roman Catholicism from Judaism during World War II, and from that point on his works

became steeped in metaphysics, religious themes, alchemy, and creative reinterpretations of Biblical illustration and iconography.

Through the careful study of manuscripts and treatises on painting, Fuchs managed to revive the *mischtechnik* or “mixed technique” of the Old Masters, beginning with an ink drawing over which opaque egg tempera was then layered with thin color glazes of oil paint mixed with resin, varnishing in between each glaze. The stunning effect is a luminous and almost three-dimensional image that captures light through the various color layers. Fuchs then taught famed visionary painters such as Robert Venosa, Alex Grey and Mati Klarwein, who went on to produce works of grand spiritual depictions, often combining a melange of ancient mythologies from diverse regions of the globe with New Age imagery, personal dream, ideational or psychedelic experiences.

The aim of visionary art is a revival of the arcane, the spiritual and the primordial in modern life. Most of the time the visionary art movement is considered a form of surrealism less the absurdity, and to some a form of “outsider art”. Seen in mostly New Age, tattoo and music conventions and gracing album covers, visionary art is rarely in “official” modern art museums. They have managed to create a parallel artistic institution, where admirers of such works experience the art through small private shows, print selling and the like, outside the confines of modern galleries. Visionary art is made in a modern context, yet exists to highlight a time before modernity, often blending digital elements in with depictions of archaic rites (such is the case with Neil Hague’s work).

Visionary art serves to challenge the ugliness, vulgarity, and bleak chic-nihilism of the professional art world, serving the longing for the spiritual within us that has been buried under existential layer upon existential layer of decadence, spiritual emptiness and the apathy of the

mass-consumer. “Modern” (i.e. contemporary) art as it is known in the cliché sense, is a celebration of the alienated and maleficent desire-ridden character of the modern subject; visionary art pushes back at this by venerating the subject – the *transcendental* subject. Where modernist abstract expressionism became less about visibly rendered motion gesture and the unconscious, and more about geometric minimalism and gallery-led profiteering, visionary art ushered in a return to detail, veneration and glorification of the beautiful human (and altered-human) form, and all-around emphasis on skill and good draughtsmanship.

Visionary art challenges the social from a spiritual perspective and seems (apart from occasional flirtations with drug politics and environmentalism) to sidestep the trap of art becoming overtly political or reduced to a mere conveyor belt for an ideological agenda. Visionary art is not always pleasant and uplifting, but even presses towards a darker and more haunting duality in what I like to call the “negative mirror” of visionary art. Taking the lead from Goya, Blake, Bosch and other darker Old Masters, certain visionary artists often portray surrealist subject matter of a terrifying and ghastly nature – the two most notably being H.R. Giger (of *Alien* fame) and the late, great, Polish painter Zdzislaw Beksinski. They produced works of great detail and formal realism, with stunningly grotesque fantastical depictions of warped humanoids, chimeric monsters and eerie dead landscapes. Giger explored a sci-fi flair, making himself (in)famous through eroticised “biomechanical” fusions of man and machine, populating non-Euclidean nightmare realms. Placed side-by-side with a Robert Venosa painting of an angelic enlightened being, and you quickly see how the “necronoms” Giger depicted make up a negative image of visionary art’s more recognisable spiritual side.

The problem with visionary art is not its skill or depth – any other genre pales in comparison – or its goals, which are largely noble and pure. The problem with visionary art from

the outset is its “flights of fantasy” as it were, its lack of an overt structure or wisdom tradition. To be effective, visionary art must be grounded in a specific spiritual tradition; to further the mission of wedding the primordial past with a vibrant art form that can effectively challenge the problems of modernity without being weighed down by either ineffective nostalgia, or haphazard syncretism.

The new art the online dissident Right must create can take the lead from visionary art in its celebration of craftsmanship, realism, and metaphysics. Visionary art not only provides a template for a return to realism and Renaissance beauty, but also has a foothold in digital art as well. Digital concept and fantasy artists such as Android Jones (of Disney fame), Justin Totemical, and Cameron Grey create vast tapestries of psychedelic phantasmagoria using 3- and 2D representations of divine beings and nature. In a way, this is an act of profound subversion of modern techno-digital society, and the alienation and detachment from authenticity that often comes with it.

What visionary art attempts to address is a lack of newer forms of serious, sincere art which aim to (even for brief periods of novelty and creative cultural moments) re-orientate the soul towards a path of expression able to weave through and navigate the current degenerate culture’s censors and matron gatekeepers. But this can only be effective for the purposes of a spiritual political-existential framework if visionary art can be grounded in more substance than a free-floating buffet of religious traditions, various mystical schools and philosophies.

### **In Conclusion: For a New Art**

There is a *feeling* in producing a work of art, maturing it to its completion like a parent seeing off one of their now-grown children. The experiential act of art, the sensation of “feeling

alive” or having the same peak / limit experience of a mystic, a yogic practitioner, a person engaging in mountaineering, or any of the other endeavours of mankind that have lead to a pure “satori” moment of direct engagement and oneness with the totality of the direct present. To “be here now” as Ram Dass says, is to be one with the surroundings of immediacy, not tempered by the ruminations of the past or the doubts of the future.

The artist finds him or herself in a peculiar space of direct expression: to be totally alone with one’s art, yet to be at odds with the surrounding world the artist must represent at its most intimate levels. The artist peers behind the illusory tapestry of Maya – the world as it presents itself – highlighting the most glaring contradictions, values, and neglected antipodes from the collective consciousness of their time, and in their *own* society and location. Therefore, the artist often lives a life of precariousness and contradiction, caught within a liminal moment in time, yet wishing to carve a way forward.

I shall conclude with a statement I began with, one that might agitate some. The Right as of late (although this has not always been the case), is entirely bereft of any serious exploration into artistic realms of being. I have given some insight into how the new forms of Right-wing art could potentially look, either by creating a new style (as Italian futurism attempted) or by modifying and participating in existing art movements, like the revival of landscape art and visionary art, that can provide the spirituality and authenticity the Right craves.

God must be above all considerations in determining the work of the strong-willed, daring and irrepressibly creative future-artists of the Right. The Right must champion not a safe, cautious return to previous art forms, but a great appropriation of past styles and genres, borne out of a willingness to further elucidate and retrofit them to our needs – in order to ultimately

represent an aesthetic that speaks to the Man of Today whilst still venerating eternal divine principles.

The new art of the Right must also champion any artform which attempts to install newer forms of sincerity, and mercilessly chop away at the destructive nihilism of misappropriated, decontextualized manifestations of post-modernism. The Right must learn from the mistakes of politicized conceptualism and overall crass consumerist kitsch: the lesson being that any art that does not try to nourish the soul, but deaden it, must be cast into the flames of History.

Artwork done by me, entitled: "Short Hill trails" (2016, acrylic on canvas, 10×10).

<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1254859821218829.1073741828.1254797357891742/1256643847707093/?type=3&theater>

## The Modern Bugmen: A Brief Primer.



Within the last few years, an odd term has been bandied about among the most obscure corners of Internet Reactionary spheres of influence. People in tweets and threads commonly reference this rather obscurantist term “Bugman” or “Bug people,” or that we are living in “Bug world” etc. Now, dear reader, as one with reactionary proclivities myself writing under the New Media Central umbrella, I feel it is my duty – nay, my *pleasure* – to give a brief overview of this powerful yet enigmatic term. To achieve this end, I must first give context with an artistic vignette.

There was always one scene from my favourite film that struck me as a profound metaphor, given the short amount of screen time in which it makes an appearance: the scene from Alejandro Jodorowsky’s brilliantly metaphysical 70s acid-arthouse saga *The Holy*



*Mountain* (1973) in which we are introduced to one of the sacred quest's participants – an egotistical and pithy architect. The overarching narrative follows several rich and powerful leaders pursuing a mysterious shaman (played by Jodorowsky himself) on an esoteric quest, combining various sacred rituals and traditions. Their goal is to eventually scale the holy mountain and topple a group of Taoist immortals at the peak, to become Gods among mortals in an act of hostile spiritual takeover. The aforementioned architect is seen giving a presentation to a banquet hall of powerful leaders of industry, proposing that workers eat every meal at the factory, and go home to merely sleep in endless rows of “sky coffin apartments,” becoming in time the quintessential worker-drones, learning to wallow in their own corporatized subjugation. The scene is a brilliant metaphysical inversion of the profound ritual in Tibetan Buddhism of the *sky burial*, and the Philippines' Sagada practice of cliff-hung sky coffins. Where these traditions are meant to affirm the transience of life, as well as bring the passed-on closer to the heavenly skies (in the case of Sagada), Jodorowsky cleverly presents a modern secular and late-capitalist mockery of such rituals. Here the living masses are brought to a state of virtually zombified inner-death in their wage-slavery, and the coffins do not bring anyone closer to heaven, but merely to the empty skies in a cynical utilitarian ploy to save money on living space.

How, you may ask, does this relate to Bug people? The term “Small-souled Bugman” originated on the forum My Posting Career (MPC) in a long thread<sup>[1]</sup> that crafted its descriptive mythology, and went on to become quite a popular term throughout Twitter and 4chan. The Bugman is an urbanite, to wit, his essence is largely taken up with living like an *actual bug*. Having no unique personality, he is crammed into a small living-space, follows a hidden hierarchy, and has fashioned for him lived experiences and political “opinions” by the *hivemind* – the popular zeitgeist. He is “small-souled” inasmuch as he lacks vigor and depth; on a personal

level his lack of belief in a soul, his contempt for the transcendent, and an ahistorical, metaphysically vacuous view of one's ancestors is typical. Let us examine a quote from the brilliant essay by P.T. Carlo on a unique strain of American Bugmen:

*“...along the earth has become a small place and on it hops the Bugman. The Bugman is drawn to the levers of power like the cockroach is drawn to the noxious odors of the garbage can, this compulsion is a part of their innermost nature. So around these levers, they gather, waiting for their “chance” to release their egg sac of bad and perverse ideas into the bloodstream of public consciousness. There are many kinds of Bugman. There is the Media Bugman (Chris Hayes, Matt Yglesias, Dylan Matthews, etc. are all notable Media Bugmen), the Deep State Bugman (John Schindler, Ash Carter, Ben Rhodes, etc.) The Silicon Valley Bugman (Mark Zuckerberg), the Goldman Sachs Bugman, the Bugman of Academia, etc. Unfortunately for us, as the authoritative work of Bugman taxonomy has yet to be published.[\[2\]](#)”*

Let this article be a brief taxonomy, a study of the Bugman in all his forms! Bug people are what younger mainstream conservatives refer to as “Twitter blue checkmarks”, denoting a certain mindset, establishment-derived beliefs, and overall faith in the neoliberal globalized system of post-war unipolar power (whether they know it or not). The Bugman is an expert parasitic career-climber, forsaking any amount of dignity or sanity to bask in being part of the “in-crowd,” those he perceives as the movers-and-shakers of society. Yet, despite this, the Bugman lives a precarious life of constant inner policing. One wrong move or slip of the tongue could land them in a most dreaded state, that of *unpersoning* in the eyes of the coastal, effete elites and Beltway functionary class. Let us be clear: even after being infuriated by the election of Trump, to them **this is their world, and we are all just along for the ride into Gomorrah.**

As an astute observer points out in the MPC thread, Bug people are spiritually dead, totally rootless and deracinated, cut off from any inner sense of connection to their ancestors / folkways, and indulge in all manner of hedonistic pursuits. They still love (mostly fantasy) sports, but most of all benefit from the global consumerist system as they are the perfect consumer of new wares and, often, whole identities. They crave power at every instance, as they have garnered degrees and cultivated connections whilst they were slackers in major flagship universities, and desire to share with their fellows the same chic-nihilist, modern-world way of viewing the nature of things. Most of all, Bugmen share similar physiognomy traits. As the Twitter personality Faceberg points out, they are the “phenotype of the 21st century: forward head posture, effeminate fat distribution, hollow eyes, and low testosterone. Look at any younger politician in DC for reference”[\[3\]](#). They all seem to have that similar look to them, what some on the Right would call “soy boys“, but much smugger, more condescending and unscrupulous.

Let us finally point out that the Bugman also lives a life of profound contradictions. Despite being tin-pot dictators in whatever management position / head editor / wage-slave job they happen to possess, they fundamentally can never be leaders in life – they are doomed to their fate as the great *Letzter Mensch* followers of modernity. The Bugman always lives externally to himself (at all times, and lives for the voice of social authority) ; he and his ilk are shaped by the very urban climate around them yet adopt trends and fancy pop-psychology jargon in order to present the veneer of a vibrant interior life. As one Redditor observes:

*“...the Small-souled Bugman promotes awareness about climate change and praises exponential, unidirectional growth. He stands up for the rights of oppressed women and “sex workers” and torrents HD POV ultra-close-up pornography. He corners VCs at TED talks to tell them about his drone delivery app and doesn’t know how to talk to a mechanic. He tweets safe*

*opinions under his full name. He vapes artisanal medicinal cannabis, gazes at jpegs of nebulas and ponders the wonders of the universe. He scoffs at miracles and strives to be the most rational, the most right, the most ahead. He never watches things grow and never watches things die.[4]*”

The Bugmen do not see anything wrong with the vast array of cognitive dissonances that occupy their thinking. A lot of them read (i.e. have skimmed briefly) Marx, Hooks, Butler, Foucault and Habermas for course credit, but God forbid the Bugman feel any guilt and shame over their own decadent and unsustainable lifestyles. It is painfully obvious that the corporations, media companies, NGOs, “creative” firms and tech apparatuses they work for have striven to create drastically harmful social, cultural and economic realities -intentional or otherwise. But of course, the *brahmin* caste of the Bugmen see themselves as the pure ones, the ones who deserve to engineer the world in their eyes, for their end of history must be perpetually marched towards.

Our Western cultural ecosystem has been, at least in part, designed to favour those who have forsaken all attachments and beliefs in lieu of a new internationalist “understanding” of politics and society. The Bugman hops along, having infested all major societal institutions, and in the absence of any higher metaphysical principles to inform their being this is how things “ought” to be. **Our Planet is a Bug planet**, and it does not look like this is going to change any time soon!

(Artwork done by Me, entitled “*Sky coffins, ancient to modern*” pen and ink on paper, 6 x 11, November/2017.

<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1258791580825653.1073741836.1254797357891742/1613489008689240/?type=3&theater> ).

[1] My Posting Career. “Small-Souled Bugman: Morphology And Evolution”. (Apr, 10, 2017).

<https://mpcdot.com/forums/topic/9496-small-souled-bugman-morphology-and-evolution/>

[2] Carlo, PT. “The Top Ten Most Loathsome Neocon Bugmen”. *Thermidor Magazine*. (May,

2017). <http://thermidormag.com/the-top-10-most-loathsome-neocon-bugmen/>

[3] <https://curiouscat.me/3855272473/post/112352398?t=1488573007>

[4]

[https://www.reddit.com/r/neoliberal/comments/6er69u/rneoliberals\\_thoughts\\_on\\_the\\_bugman\\_problem/](https://www.reddit.com/r/neoliberal/comments/6er69u/rneoliberals_thoughts_on_the_bugman_problem/)

## The Ironycel Obsession with Insulting “Virgin Losers”.



This may come off as a more informal article for my styling, however I feel these matters must take place within an air of frankness and forthrightness. Recently the #Frogtwitter gang, or rather some of the most notable figures (@KANTBOT10K and @Logo\_Daedalus) decided to take on the apex of pseudo-intellectual, irony-driven media class Bugmen: the trust fund clad and well-connected hipsters who run the blog Chapo Trap House. I will not go at length as to how exactly their project of being controlled “edgy” opposition to mainstream leftism, and their sickly attempts at recasting themselves as true counter-cultural™ figures falls flat on its head, Kantbot did it for me (and quite a good short and sweet article at that<sup>[1]</sup>). The simple fact that Kantbot and others have managed to muster a meaningful tweet campaign targeting the credibility of Ironycel-ink. Shows that the dissident right (or whatever label you attach to internet dwelling Gen-xers and older millennials who have become increasingly disenfranchised with modernity) has tapped into a vein of cultural potentiality that the “smart set” the

left coast offers up has lost touch of; One thing I have observed about the painfully ironic and bourgeois is that despite being so-called “intellectual” journalist types that are cursed with a dark cloud of painful mediocrity, thus using irony as an existential shield, they seem to be awfully obsessed with the (lack thereof) sexual life of their ideological opponents on the right. What I mean is of course the common insult leftists (feminists particularly it seems[2],[3]) often hurl towards their opponents without a moment’s reflection, that being everyone on the right are “frustrated virgin losers[4]”, or “resentful males who can’t get laid” etc.

### **A Few words of caution.**

Now before moving on to Ironycel, there are two variable concertina wire bundles we must tangle ourselves out of; the first being the very real resentment a lot of younger males (lets specify this malaise to the west) feel about a world that would rather have them pacified or even worse, removed. Such is the case with the Hanna Rosin book “The End of Men”[5] which immediately lite a fire among the “Manosphere” for its seemingly triumphalist anecdote-laden polemic of women winning the gender war finally, surpassing men, replacing them and supposedly making their roles and identities irrelevant and superfluous in almost every capacity, etc. and of course the other side of third wave feminism, skewering her with scathing reviews on how their quest of toppling the supposed patriarchy and the “patriarch within” has yet to manifest. I shall choose my words wisely with this first challenge.

There is a pragmatic approach to the issues of male sexuality in the modern world. I sympathize and even identify with the frustration, agony, the throes of rejection most young men feel. Men who do not fit the ideal of masculinity, or even the feminized ideal of what most millennial women feel men should fit into. Young Men simply are shunned at every turn in western society, in a variety of ways, this much is not controversial and has been endlessly



expounded upon in other books, articles and videos. I can write a whole series of books on the alienation the modern male faces. However, the problem we shall take heed of is the very real misogynistic or hateful patterns of thinking a lot of young disenfranchised males are susceptible too, especially when they are faced with the cultural and institutional chips stacked against them. You have communities such as MGTOW (men going their own way) and “Incel” (involuntary celibates) who make a sport out of their resentment towards the opposite sex, and of course their own loathing. I do not wish to paint a broad brush, for I am of course referring to the most extreme and hateful elements of the manosphere. The simple fact is to me, to truly live as a man going his own way in tis most basic sense, should not entail the bitter and unhealthy trait of resentment (even Nietzsche said as much!). it pains me to concede this much to the ironic left, but certain minority elements of the right can come off as being occupied by “virgins with rage”.

Now on to the second touchy bundle of razor wire, this resentment and virgin loathing is not unique to the right, it just manifests differently on the left; instead of outright resentment, obsessing over “sexual market value”, trying their hand at pick up artist game tactics, etc. the leftist of the young Bugmen looking variety gravitate towards an internalized torment of sorts. Here I am of course referring to the plight of the male feminist, who is ideologically and psychologically cornered at every turn. Their hyper-egalitarian ideas and their general emasculated and rootless character means they must conform to the virtue-signaling endeavour of being feminists (despite feminists themselves having their doubts[\[6\]](#)) yet finding themselves supressing even the most basic of desires. We have all heard of the stereotype, the guy who wants to “get women” by taking a women’s studies class, or the male feminist who feels that they can “win over” women by spouting all the talking points and putting on a ritualistic dance

of self-loathing. We even have at its worst manifestations, a string of male feminists who are virulent woman-haters, abusers and downright creeps[7],[8],[9].

Of course, that is not to say every male feminist is a creep, or is a woman abuser waiting to be unleashed, that would be an absurd Freudian statement, a discredited repression-hypothesis, akin to calling every MGTOW or men's rights activist a "rape apologist" (which a lot of radical feminists do[10]). A lot, if not most male feminists are genuine in what they feel is a way of helping women, even if I believe their ideology is misguided. When it comes to the odd male feminist creep and abuser, I believe they simply wish to ward off the guilt of being a disgusting reprobate and social failure, so they latch on to male feminism to exorcise the inner demons (such was the case with Hugo Schwyzer[11]).

The point is, we must always be prudent enough to recognize that charges of resentment, woman-hating and the like are real in a tiny minority of cases, separated of course from general banter and/or trolling. Men, especially young men, on the right exist within a siege mentality, created by the left's dominance of all things cultural, academic and media orientated. It is easy to dismiss all accusations of abuse and sexism when the right is so used to being unfairly slandered daily for even disagreeing with progs and SJWs. Therefore, we on the Right must be pragmatic, and are generally fair in policing our own. Then again, there is always a fine line between policing quality, and being a downright shill for the left in some vain attempt at being "respectable" in the eyes of the Bugmen media class (as PT Carlo has eloquently pointed out in the case of Breitbart[12]). To quote Anti-Dem's blog "*no enemies to the right does not imply a lack of quality control*".

**The "Ha-ha you must be a Virgin" argument and its origins.**

Now that we have gotten all the insurance matters out of the way, lets turn our attention to the matter at hand; You see it everywhere online, that lightning fast reaction, that kneejerk mockery of virgins,” weirdos”, “creepers” etc. once spouted by the stereotypical jock or bro (Lad for UK readers) now seems to be an acceptable insult used by the tech-savvy millennial left, or even their demigods. Case in point: the vicious, snarky posturing of JK Rowling towards an anonymous member of #Frogtwitter who dared find fault in Harry Potter. JK has become beloved by millennials and media Bugmen everywhere who guard the clickbait-sphere, growing up on her tepid mass-produced children’s-lit, and now they get the benefit of their literary hero spouting the most unoriginal and inane leftist talking points[13]. The truth is that most of the leftist “smart set” in the media and on twitter, the ones who supposedly lecture the masses on how shaming someone for their sexuality is ostensibly evil, not only didn’t bat an eye, but actively cheered on such a comeback[14],[15].

Pointing out the hypocrisy of clickbait artists, shallow c-list celebrities and millennial progs is low-hanging fruit, the harder task is determining why the Ironycel left, those hipster sophisticates, the “dirt bags” as they so conceitedly call themselves, also love this throwaway line of insult; cocooned in a layer of irony, and thus sheltered from any meaningful engagement with the ideas of rival ideologues, Ironycelts are free to bask in the hedonism and excess of their coastal, college-orientated existences, and the post-sexual revolution modern culture their ideological forbearers have crafted for them. No longer shackled by the pretense of a grand revolutionary ethos, but immersed in a placid and endless postmodern set of cultural critiques (which seem to repeat in all venues of society seamlessly) the post-Marxist hipster Ironycel is free to appropriate and have the same jock bravado and chauvinism as the 80s teen-flick villains of eras past, for it does not really matter in the end anyways. Their opponents are largely made

up of the internet-based, basement aficionados of the “chanernative right”[\[16\]](#), therefore it is acceptable to mock the NEETs and internet trolls that appear in their twitter mentions.

unfortunately, they treat even engaging criticism of their ideas as if it has come from the most obnoxious anime twitter-avatar white nationalist troll, everyone on the right must fit into the neatly packaged box of frustrated deplorable hatemonger.

But what is Ironycel? Why are they “dirt bags”? a befitting word would be the new class of Lumpen-bourgeoisie, institutional and media-connected urbanite kids that grew up in the PR/advertising/media-matrix cocoons of large coastal cities. They went to the (off) ivy-league journalist schools and MFA programs, some would say they are the smart set, but suffer from the pangs of self-loathing and mediocrity, so irony and cynical detachment is the pill they must swallow. In fact, the existence of groups like Chapo trap house is shot through with irony, it constitutes their subjectivity. So much so that despite the supposed statues as bitter, anger and vulgar outsiders to the neo-liberal democrat establishment, they get glowing reviews in official places like The Atlantic, and The New Yorker[\[17\]](#). That’s what having the correct opinions in the media class gets you, the ability to role play as being edgy meme irony-lords, whilst serving a vital function to the crusty old liberal establishment. The problem is of course their brand of humor. Not in the sense that they are unfunny (they are) or that there is an objective metric of authenticity in terms of swanky internet sub-cultures, because clearly any movement or net-based phenomenon can be easily overtaken or subverted from within. The internet is littered with the rotting and festering corpses of failed ideologues, “big tent” movement hucksters, and all-around brand™ builders. Hence why the memes must become more chaotic, penetrate more layers of cultural information, and become more all-pervasive. The “movement” must become a bigger tent, adapt to the rapid changes of modern telecommunications or die. The difference is

the Dirt bags are very well funded and connected faux-contrarians, thus are slow to keep up with the ever-changing meme-matrix. what strikes me as the most absurd is the idea that by them embracing this cynical and vulgar character, they are curbing the online market the dissident right has a monopoly on: offending people, especially the supposed ones “on their side” of the spectrum (in the case of the Right, your average American Republican, neocon or weak-willed trad dad) that constitute the partisan mainstream[\[18\]](#).

The illusion they live under is that the mainstream neoliberals, the champagne socialists and celebs that hold the purse strings of leftist activism and agitprop, in short, the funders and shakers of the Democrat party, are victims of a mutually agreed upon, non-offensive PC “sensitivity”. In other words, the mainstream left is too “nice”, or too weak to critique their own or effectively go after the right in a meaningful way. “No enemies” to the left seems to be a solid liberal operational principle, so here comes the wryly and whimsical rag-tag crew of Ironycels to clean house, call people names, even pretend-fight the mainstream liberal establishment (they just so happen to be entangled in) and gain ground from those vile twitter and 4chan right wingers. The only problem is, like everything they endeavour in, the success rate has been minimal at best; The neoliberals still set the agenda on the surface, and in the bowls of internet meme counter-culture, the online right still reigns supreme[\[19\]](#). They can of course, keep pretending that they have somehow obtained edgy rebel statues, or however edgy 30 something year old bloggers can get. the problem is this predicate of their vital function to the left is flawed in many ways, but the most important flaw is that modern progressive leftists, cultural Marxists, post-Marxists, “regressive left”, whatever the label you wish to describe them, do not in any way suffer from some overtly nice sensitivity when it comes to their enemies on the right. Sure, when it comes to the progressive stack, their pet victim groups, of course the official professional elites

that make up the modern left, the academics, politicians and media Bugmen, they all prostrate themselves to appear as non-offensive and meek as possible. However, there really is no difference between Ironycel leftists trying to spread memes and hurl crass insults at right wingers, and the leftist higher-ups calling everyone on the right racists, sexists, or whatever “ism” or “phobia” they can think of. Ironycel wanting their elites to be cruder and more to the point is just a demand for false bravado.

But let us go back to the original purpose of this essay now that we have seen a bit of what the Ironycel left is all about[20]. The Ironycels seem to share the same lines of insult as their more mainstream counterparts for sure, but with the bonus of not being afraid to express class contempt and shame someone based on their sexuality. They of course build upon their superiority complex by assuming all their opponents on the right are blue collar, or lower-class denizens. Despite paying lip service to Marx, the class distinction is maintained between them and the flyover state people they would spit on if the carrier flights between New York and California allowed them to open the windows! People they base their knowledge of by having the experience of watching a few Harmony Korine films. The very heartland of America that have been hollowed out, transformed into the rustbelt, and suffers from the same forces that are also adversely effecting the professional classes Ironycels ride in, seem to be their preferred target of extreme contempt. In fact, some of them display this contempt out in the open, such as a Silicon Valley executive going on a Twitter tirade about how the flyover rustbelt states deserve to wallow in poverty, and all the adverse social effects that come with it, because they are all “racists and sexists that don’t deserve” to have coastal city corporations give them jobs[21]. The same goes for the one acceptable sexuality that can be insulted without social ramifications: being a virgin, or at least appearing to possess traits that would make you an Incel[22].

Despite a lot of them having the physiognomy of being permanent virgins themselves, they love furthering the stereotype of the basement dwelling Alt-right internet troll, one that probably came up from 4chan and the manosphere, and thus has a completely resentful and negative view of women. You see, if one traces this line of thinking, leftists, especially hipster irony artists, must continue the post-sexual revolution bohemian tradition of embracing a chaotic, debauched and non-judgmental form of sexuality; Marcuse, the Frankfurt school forefather of the sexual revolution said as much in his seminal work “Eros and Civilization”[\[23\]](#). Taking up a Marxian critique of Freud’s repression hypothesis, Marcuse viewed sexual repression as the key to any capitalist society. To Freud, repression and sublimation is needed in the eternal conflict between productivity or social functions and Eros, libido, the drives, etc. Marcuse does away with this, stating that the real conflict is between alienated labour and Eros. The owners of the means of production are ones who can have a free-flowing sexuality, whilst the workers must bath in their sexual repression, becoming good productive proles.

The main outcome for Marcuse is much like what western society is now: the slow dismantling of repression, and the “liberation” of instincts. Of course, there are many things that throw Marcuse’s thesis into severe doubt, and in my view, the grandfather of the sexual revolution in many ways was asserting complete nonsense. One first must assume historical forces of repression always shape human instincts, of course Marcuse being a materialist Marxist sees this as so. Secondly would be the absolute moral inversion of the post-sexual revolution society and all the consequences that go with it, that are too numerous to list here. Reading Marx into Freud has always been an arduous task, but the assertion that sexual repression is wedded into industrial society is frankly been proven false. From writers like Huxley, to critics like Crews and psychoanalysts like Fromm (a fellow Frankfurt alumnus. I do not wish to condemn

the Frankfurt school entirely, that would be run of the mill anti-intellectualism) all see the flaws in Marcuse in this regard, seeing as how the promotion of widescale pornography, promiscuity and distortions of sexuality themselves have become effective tools of societal control in late capitalism. Even Foucault puts the repression hypothesis of Marcuse into doubt. Victorian repression of sexuality should never be taken at face value, and in the modern industrial age there has not been a period of widescale sexual repression the way Marcuse sees it, in fact, society is predicated on the production of sexuality in Foucault's view, which of course serves as a better route of power invading and getting at the intimate spaces of the subject. He also discredits Marcuse in saying that sexual repression somehow benefits the higher classes when they are the most repressed of all, and there is also the counter- move of resistance to sexual repression in the outgrowth of alternative sexualities that was intensified during the industrial age, before and after the 19<sup>th</sup> century[24].

Give a critical eye to modern consumerist culture and see how sex and meaningless sensuality are promoted at every turn precisely because it is sold as a false liberation. Promiscuous and distorted forms of sexuality simply fail to make the modern subject's life more meaningful, if anything they have become a detriment on the life of the modern[25]. One need not be a Thomist or Freudian to see the disastrous consequences of unchecked lust, one merely should look around at the continual transformation of society's attitudes towards sexuality, especially when it comes to promoting sexuality at earlier and earlier ages[26]. Despite this, the myth of the sexual revolution persists in the virgin-shaming mockery on the part of modern Ironycels. That is, to be without sex is to be without "freedom", and to be stuck in a perpetual state of celibacy is not just "un-hip" and not "cool", but exposes an inner defect of character to them. This is also why the modern left must seek to route out traditionalists or those who espouse



a traditional worldview when it comes to matters of sexuality. To be a traditionalist is to deny the supposed “liberation” of free “love”, and how dare the uncouth, repressed Neanderthals throw the perpetual revolution of the body into question, even in its most extreme and deviant forms[27]. The body then becomes a vast network of input mechanisms, teeming with erogenous ports and entries, either of the immediate sexual nature, or the input of stimuli from any lust or fancy one wishes to conjure up, which is most readily displayed in politicized modern art works. The more astute Ironycel probably took a few soc/lit/women’s studies courses, and perhaps have retained enough information from modern feminist scholars to know that the deconstruction of the body is everything, or rather, the “liberation” of the body from rigid patriarchal structures. Hence the Freud-Marxist legacy of Marcuse persists, especially among the younger generations (millennials). The way of dismantling the power of bourgeois middle and upper-class standards is by embracing our sexual impulses fully.

But once again, it seems the materialism and consumerism of the upper and middle classes have led them to embrace sexual expression and debauchery more than any other class. Take any sitcom your average SWPL watches, or product they consume, or any variety of meaningless time-wasting entertainment they choose to seek escape sad comfort in, etc. they watch the same shows the “lower” classes do, and buy the same things but “better versions” of them that bigger incomes can afford; the liberation of sexuality equaling the disruption of power is a failure at every turn. Now every social class can be just as depraved as the SWPL classes. The reality of the situation is that Ironycels are simply not the Marxist revolutionaries of old and prefer the terrible middle-class expressions of a neo-liberal, neutered version of leftist activism. I.E. things like slacktivism, “awareness raising” and generally any half-baked theory or scheme they come across which tells them being a total hedonist and drain equates disrupting the flows of late-

capitalism, the patriarchy, or an assorted variety of “isms” they must appear to be working against. Irony is the infinite resignation of perpetual critique, of the production of various forms of alienation they find themselves in (both real and imagined) and as a result, feel the need to not embrace the Leninist prerogatives of a much older form of revolutionary thought, but instead choose to never leave the safety of hurling insults on the internet[28].

Of course, why should they strive or struggle? Pop culture caters to these types, as well as the media, academia by and large, and every single cultural institution. Hence this persistent theme of the modern left, to which Irony is a part of, obsessing over endlessly expounding upon and obsessing over pop culture and media, especially when it comes to critiques that lo and behold, deal largely in part with human sexuality. Right wingers are equally guilty of being caught up in this mess as well. The reason the accusation of being a virgin in the basement so infuriates some of them to such a degree is because of the stereotypical masculine ideal they have. Now this is of course not to say everyone on the right bristles at such an accusation, but there are those types (which I have alluded to above) who do feel genuinely offended by such insults because it betrays the ultra-stereotypically manly image they have of themselves, and might run the risk of people thinking they have inferior “game”. They too secretly wish to live the “hip and cool” life of hedonism their enemies on the ironic left purport to live. This of course is a classical example of Akritic weakness of will, giving in to the popular culture and the same lack principals these right wingers supposedly rebel against. Of course, the other extreme is total incel resentment, so it is best to take the advice of Aristotle and find the mean in all things.

### **Our animal nature: conclusion.**

Let us reflect upon a pertinent quote from Carl Jung: *“The erotic instinct is something questionable, and will always be so whatever a future set of laws may have to say on the matter.*

*It belongs, on the one hand, to the original animal nature of man, which will exist as long as man has an animal body. On the other hand, it is connected with the highest forms of the spirit. But it blooms only when the spirit and instinct are in true harmony. If one or the other aspect is missing, then an injury occurs, or at least there is a one-sided lack of balance which easily slips into the pathological. Too much of the animal disfigures the civilized human being, too much culture makes a sick animal.(sic)"[29].*

The dramatic left-ward shift of society in terms of culture and morality has in a lot of respects, especially when it comes to sexuality, not made us more “civilized” or “progressive” in as we would like to believe. Of course, the doublethink is that the liberation of sexual urges is a progress of human freedom and tolerance, however, it has merely brought us back to the state of animal-being. But not animalistic in a natural sense (as I am going to garner criticism from critical animal studies people for turning the animal into a pejorative phrase) but a bastardized animal, a lust-ridden organism without an equilibrium mechanism guiding such libidinal energies, for even animals have very complex mating and sexual regulatory practices. Aside from such bastardized Freudian language, what I mean to say is the modern subject has the intellect and awareness to know they are pursuing erotic desires in a way that mimics a wild beast, but the problem is even a wild beast has a sense of control! It seems the “liberation” and acceptance of sexuality and open perversion in all societal discourses in the west has regressed us to not even an animalistic state, but a degenerative state of unfiltered passion and the endless hunt for greater sources of titillation. To be a virgin in this environment, or to hold virginity and moral purity as an existential standard (which traditionalists on the right ought to strive for) is of course seen as alien and somehow threatening to the modern Bourgeois-yet-proletarian[30]. The left owns sex in culture and in media, so sex must creep into every facet of life, and all who oppose the never-

ending march of the libido must suffer social ostracism, loneliness, and the malaise of being and outcast with heterodox political and social opinions.

But again, for the last time, if you have not gotten the point by now, it is **I R O N Y** that is driving this whole discussion, and that is capturing both the modern left and the dissident right in its remorseless clutches. The **I R O N Y** of our situation is that all of these erotic impulses, the never-ending obsession and chasing after newer and more sensationalistic forms of sexual expression and discourse, is all happening on an increasingly virtualized plane of being. We have internalized our sexuality in an unhealthy way via the ubiquitous access to pornography and other forms of self-gratifying sexual release. The widespread use of pornography is without a doubt having an impact on our brain development and our sexual preferences<sup>[31]</sup>, changing our brain chemistry, dulling our senses to ordinary or plain sexual stimuli. What makes us tick soon no longer does the job, so more and more (especially young) people go down the road of finding more deviant and extreme forms of fetishes and sexual practises.

Porn is convenient, porn never says no, porn exited us from a young age with its taboo nature. Porn is replacing genuine human expressions of fulfillment and intimacy and giving us a cheap synthetic replacement. Whereas the youth of old had a social stigma, the “liberated” state of the modern world tells us to be happy in our half-animal, half-automaton state. Fulfill the programming, seek simulated sexual ecstasy, do not listen to voices of modesty or moderation, and consume identities and sexualities made in your own image. It does not matter that the ironic (post)modern left feels the need to yammer on about sex and sexuality and sexual issues all the time yet seem to be just as sexless as the basement-dwelling virgins they stereotype and make fun of. What does matter is that they have the right opinions about sexuality and sex-related issues, and that they embrace it in all its manifold forms, because “fetish/kink-shaming” is a real

issue, whilst those “evil right wing puritanical” monsters they pretend to be offending must be doomed to a life of involuntary celibacy and mockery. Sexual liberation is the queen of the modern world, and the ironic left pays tribute to its many feted fruits. The real joke is the absolute feelings of alienation, frustration, and loneliness this supposed liberation has caused to countless numbers of people on both the left and the right. Perhaps we should drop the **IRONIC** posturing and vulgarity of endless gratification-culture, and return to a sincere modesty, or at the very least, a pragmatic recognition of the dangers of unchecked animalistic desires that have become socially and culturally lionized as an end goal in life.

(Image created by Me. entitled “*Deconstructed Portrait of a NEET basement*”:

<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1258791580825653.1073741836.1254797357891742/1492704087434400/?type=3&theater> )

[1] Kantbot. “Chapo Trap House will never be Edgy”. *Jacobite Magazine*. May, 26, 2017.

<http://jacobitemag.com/2017/05/26/chapo-traphouse-will-never-be-edgy/>

[2] <http://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/culture/maggie-mckneely/2016/07/15/washpo-ghostbusters-haters-are-virgin-losers>

[3] <http://jezebel.com/i-shouldnt-need-an-excuse-to-be-a-virgin-1540668926>

[4] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XIITdauYAo> Chappo themselves.

[5] Rosin, Hanna. *The end of men: and the rise of women*. S.l.: S.n., 2012.

[6] <http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/08/reasons-to-beware-feminist-men/>

[7] <https://pjmedia.com/trending/2017/03/01/another-male-feminist-accused-of-sexual-misconduct/>

[8] <http://jezebel.com/what-happens-when-a-prominent-male-feminist-is-accused-1683352727>

[9] <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/02/exile-in-gal-ville-how-a-male-feminist-alienated-his-supporters/252915/>

[10] <http://jezebel.com/no-i-will-not-take-the-mens-rights-movement-seriously-1532799085>

[11] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10338624/The-rise-and-fall-of-Americas-most-infamous-male-feminist-Hugo-Schwyzer.html>

[12] <http://thermidormag.com/katie-mchugh-and-the-cucking-of-breitbart/>

[13] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC5LYaCdpEI>

[14] <http://mashable.com/2017/01/30/j-k-rowling-lonely-virgin-twitter-burn-trump/#ObVZVwnvzkqx>

[15] <http://ew.com/books/2017/01/31/j-k-rowling-twitter-troll/>

[16] Wallace, Adam. *West Coast Reactionaries*.

<https://westcoastrxers.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/chanernative-right-the-alternative-right-and-imageboards/>

[17] <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/persons-of-interest/what-will-become-of-the-dirtbag-left>

[18] <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/12/we-need-the-ironic-leftaka-the-dirtbag-leftnow-mor.html>

[19] of course, the problems I have with the online right could constitute a series of articles however, but this piece is not about that.

[20] This is a great thread by a progressive leftist type, describing the resentment-politics of Ironycel, of course it also inadvertently demonstrates how these 30 something Jon Stewart generation white upper-middle class leftists will ultimately be swallowed whole by more authentic, animated and vicious forms of identity politics and post-Marxism.

<https://twitter.com/thucydiplease/status/842501092017500160>

[21] <http://dailycaller.com/2017/01/08/tech-company-founder-middle-america-is-a-shthole-filled-with-stupid-people/>

[22] The Thermidor podcast with Kantbot and Logo break down their preferred insults nicely:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aL7LfPmN35I&t=399s>

[23] Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 1987.

[24] Porter, Roy (1996). Keddie, Nikki R., ed. *Debating Gender, Debating Sexuality*. New York: New York University Press. p. 251-253.

[25] A very good article that is surprisingly from Adbusters.

<https://www.adbusters.org/article/the-fantasy-of-liberation/>

[26] <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-your-child-needs-know-about-sex-and-when/201109/the-super-sexualization-children-time-take>

[27] Such as Salon promoting and trying to normalize a pedophile that claims pedophilia is “just another alternative sexuality” and that right wingers are the “real monsters” after their first article profile on this vile creature hilariously backfired, the original two articles have since been removed. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/self-confessed-paedophile-todd-nickerson-tells-critics-youre-the-real-monsters-a6675946.html>

[28] <https://medium.com/@kantbot2000/bourgeois-yet-proletariat-the-sam-kriss-story-4b0ff09813fd>

[29] Jung, Carl, Gustav. *The Psychology Of The Unconscious*. Trans. Hinkle, Beatrice. M. (Mineola, New York: Dover Publication Inc. 2002).

[30] As Kantbot defines Ironycels in his article. essentially upper class ironic leftists that are obsessed with mass-produced pop culture, to pretend to be of the higher types intellectually, but suffer from crippling mediocrity and self-capitulated feelings of alienation. Hence the character of the modern Ironycel I have been expounding upon. Regarding sexuality, the B-Y-P Ironycel is immersed in an ironic stance towards sexuality. Being a resentful mensch, but having their resentment turn towards lambasting others as virgins and losers, instead of the various manifestations of other types of resentment present in MGTOW and Incel types, which is usually turned inwards.

[31] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/26/brain-scans-porn-addicts-sexual-tastes>



## Crappy Futures: Or Musings on Dystopian Cyberpunk without the “cool stuff”.



Get ready for some disjointed rambling, but I feel I must write this at a late hour. I notice a theme in several of my articles, or rather two themes: 1. At the beginning its like I am confessing myself to the potential reader. I am committing an act of written “ice breaking” where I attempt to ease the possible silliness or superfluity of what I write by admitting (but only in a half-concealed fashion, since a writer’s ego demands that total strangers take their work with the utmost scholarly seriousness!) that even to Me, this stuff sounds stupid or ridiculous, or the screed of someone with far too much naval-gazing hours clocked in. or....whatever. 2. People’s lives are becoming increasingly abstracted by technology, simulacra, entertainment, alternative identities etc. and this is a bad thing. There, now I have given away my hand as it were, I have

shown everyone my cards, and now I can get on to as usual, toil and mill away in the content farm.

When I was a young lad, let's say, around the early 2000s, those glorious halcyon days I remember fondly. Perhaps my mind romanticises my past, or perhaps it was the last dying light of an age with at least a tiny smidgen of sincerity, before everyone hopped on, "tuned in, turned on, dropped out" into the internet, and **\*LOST THEIR MINDS\***. Or to me, at least, it seems everyone is losing their minds in more ways than one. I, like all millennials, suffer from soul-crippling nostalgia, a nostalgia complex for a more recent history, ironically enough. Oh, I pity younger generation Z, the innocence (only realized in hindsight), the gaudy fashion, the originality impulse, the technicolor delight of the 90s, that patina of mallrat edginess that coated youth culture in the early 2000s, a childhood torn between the past and being on the cusp of the internet age in full swing. Oh my, I might be exaggerating, I might be caught in a maudlin and stupid sentiment, a longing for a past I barely remember. But anyways, I have gotten off track, as I tend to do.

I was a young lad, and this must have been 2002 or 2003. I was at my grandparent's house for a barbecue. I used to stay inside for a bit before dinner and watch television. Of course, my grandparents were limited in their TV selection, and seeing how this was before everyone had smartphones, I watch public television, TVO to be exact (Television Ontario). I remember always watching this science-orientated show, one which I forget the name but had those poorly rendered late-90s graphics. This episode was, as I recall, about the new exploration of the internet and its impact on, you guessed it, the identity of the average person. I remember these official types being interviewed about the wonders and possible detriments of the internet, and

having online personas, dangers everyone on of us in various fringo internet subculture spheres know all too well.

I remember one thing stuck out most of all to me in a vivid manner, a thing I will always remember; the program talked about how in the very near future, people will mediate their lives through internet personas, and that websites or programs will become more sophisticated. For those of you very keen people out there, you are probably guessing which internet entity they were talking about as a new and wondrous frontier of exploration. That's right, they were referring to *Second Life*.....

It almost seems like a joke, a childish joke now-a-days to think of SL as anything more than some cringe-worthy hotbed of older shut ins, furies, pedophiles, fetishists and creepy NEETs who infest the internet, live vicariously through pixelated personas, and even spend a lot of money cultivating their life in SL. Besides being troll-bait, SL users at one point in time did garner a lot of mainstream attention, corporate interests, and speculation from STEM and humanities university departments alike (a good article can be found here:

[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/z43mwj/why-is-second-life-still-a-thing-gaming-virtual-reality](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/z43mwj/why-is-second-life-still-a-thing-gaming-virtual-reality) ). A lot of universities even created replicas of their own institutions in it.

SL seems to be jotting along, albeit with less than stellar numbers. It seems like a relic of the mid 2000s now, but SL simply refuses to die because the original purpose of its creation refuses to die: the desire to live life as a dream, to go where you could not imagine, be a sexy beautiful being, freed of the physical limitations of your body and physiognomy, to be an important person and simulate your ideal of what a perfect life is, etc. I was captivated by this idea when I watched that program, albeit never actually playing SL besides watching trolls

aggravate or be “griefers” (as the SL community calls them) to the obviously older, lower-class and internally empty user base.

Its fun and games now, it’s a “ye-old” spirit of making fun of perceived freaks and social outcasts. Now of course, this is not to say all SL users are human monstrosities, but we get this cultural stereotype of the internet-dweller, the MMO-RPG addicts and redditors, the people who find purposes in simulation, the “children of the matrix” if you get that subtle reference. virtuality has not only permeated all of existence, but has become existence itself, at least for those moments which make up more and more of the everyday for a startlingly high demographic of people. If there is no job, identity, belief, life-purpose, or whatever makes people grounded in the way of things, then they increasingly distract themselves with the “create your own reality” mindset, a distraction that now becomes they’re everything. I use “they’re” as a distancing word-choice, but I should be saying WE. Yes, WE have the same complex in the modern world, that of detachment and escapism. It could be the odd freak you see yelling at the top of their lungs when some troll insults their SL avatar, it could be the stereotypical gamer basement aficionado, or even the “normies” who find being a part of, and conforming their belief systems and world views to, the social zeitgeist is really a more permitted form of escapism. The Tumblrista who watches Netflix all day, the college hipster social butterfly who finds “cool parties” to attend, you name it, we all collectively participate in the dance of the simulated and virtual. We craft our perfect Facebook and Instagram identities, “curate” our existence as all the tabloid and click-bait blog magazines say (as every era has its buzzwords and pop-psychology lingo). Yet we all participate in the collective hypocrisy of shaming the few and ignoring the many acts of virtual escapism.

But, of course, this does not sound right, it does not sound right in the slightest. It is true, the person who is consumed in life by a video game is obviously lower on the social ladder and higher on the cringe ladder than the average party animal, and both are destructive in their own ways. One is a hollowing out, an inner decay, the other forms of “normie” escapism tend to be debaucherously vague, and egotistically outward projecting. Nevertheless, we now have the ability and the lack of all inhibitions to pursue our flights into the unreal. In a way, this very act of writing is a form of escapism, but I would say a higher form of it. But anyways, back to the main theme: this program hailed that SL was the exiting-way of the future – it was for a time – and now parts of the original desires, wants and expressions found on SL has manifested into different mediums, like social media, video games and the like. Now that we may be on the cusp of large Silicon Valley corporate monoliths perfecting mass and widely marketable virtual reality technology, this program made so long ago, this stunningly new set of ideas and analysis that hit my then-young mind was right in more ways than one, even about how SL would be the template for people accepting more and more technological intrusions into their self-made identities.

As the Frankfurt school Marxists at various times theorized that there is no where to hide from capital, from materialistic consumerism and enlightenment rationality, so too is there no escape from the reality of their being no “private special place” as a professor I grew fond of explained to me once. There is no “deep seat” where we can hide from these forces, and despite me not being a Marxist, I tend to agree (well apart from the soul, but that is another matter). So too, we cannot escape the desire towards the virtual, the reality of easily accessible and shameless methods of simulation. We can only lie to ourselves, but the drug of “being anything you want to be” including an animal or a giant monstrosity in SL or on some fringe forum, is far too great of a high for most. We eat fake food, we have fake lives, we listen to fake music, even

complaining about said fakery is a poser act, a pastiche for genuine cultural critique, a crime Your-all-too-honest and humble author is guilty of as well.

I suppose nostalgia itself is another elaborate form of fakery as well. Hell, I can't even listen to music from lounge acts such as Morcheeba, Lamb, Sneaker Pimps, you name it! Even most grunge bands bring me down. They all remind me all too sullenly, all too bittersweet, of those lush, dying throes of authenticity in the 90s (well of course this is a controversial statement). The sentiments evoked by music can really define an era. Perhaps in the Trip Hop and lounge music of the last decade before everything was rocked with uncertainty, there was a subtle foreshadowing of what, at the time, was yet to come. The brooding angst, the quiet depressive apathy, the expression of a feeling that left a pure emptiness, the ability to be bored and discontent in peacetime, the sort of motifs and swaying tonal melodies that captured this unique time of boiled over decadence turned sour. All of it, all of it foreshadowed the hypersensation of melancholy, listless apathy and aggressive rootlessness that would come to characterize our present reality. It is of course no surprise that our music at the very top of the mainstream has become more sterile, simple (and not in a good minimalist way), high fructose corn syrup-like more than ever! It suits us. The subtlety depression, melancholic beauty of 90s lounge and electronica even has transformed in our current zeitgeist. Vaporwave does the job of throwing these and other era-defining genres back at us in a hyper-saturated form. vaporwave accelerates past music, brings it to its ultimate conclusions, re-lives the fantasies of cyberpunk living, but in a sadder and more nostalgic form. like all things now, it is musical corn syrup candy for the tech-burdened, identity-confused soul.

So why am I saying all of this? Is this poetry you ask? Prose? Perhaps, perhaps it's the screeching of a millennial who wishes He was not one. Why such a title even? Well dear reader,

let me confess these strings of oddly flowing nonsense are leading to a point, several points. There, I broke the 4<sup>th</sup> wall, perhaps our cultural masters will be happy with this piece, because it violates conventional norms. Perhaps this is me trying to amuse myself in making a mockery of Postmodern literature by mimicking it. Anyways, I am sorry for these diversions; the point of this and the title is that we are left with nothing but “crappy Cyberpunk” as I so often hear in certain spheres on twitter. Crappy Cyberpunk in a Crappy control-society future. We won’t get to be these cool hackers, these weird looking, fun loving, soul-searching, deep-loving contrarians in motley crews of tech-savvy misfits and rebels with DIY technology and enhancements, micro-resisting the “man” on a local level. No, none of this. This is a nerd fantasy. Instead we probably will be one mass, without any defining characteristics besides the superficial and sensationalistic ones we give to ourselves in some central VR-Pod matrix.

The government and corporations will sure act like the ones you see in Cyberpunk lit, but we certainly won’t be in any position to stick it to them. We won’t get to live in cool high-rise urban decay, but horrific high-rise urban decay. We will be more detached and alone than ever in reality, but we will think we have the companionship and comradery of digital communities, the ones tech-futurists thought would be a utopia. Let me tell you, this is no utopia. We are more detached than ever, and sure, perhaps we can find meaningful connections with others (everything is a balance after all). But let’s face the sad music, most people ended up finding an outlet for all their crazy, neurotic and perverse inner daemons. In the alternative political spheres, I have come across quite a few sociopaths, borderlines, and people who lack any genuine empathy or capacity for self-insight. The political figures in the mainstream are probably even more depraved than your average E-Celebrity on Twitter, but these Bugmen and Bug women can afford to hide their craziness and cruelty from the public.

Our communication will be more controlled, that is for sure, and our ability to get any reach will be severely limited. People will dwell further into their hide-away communities of whatever fantasy or faux-identity they choose to live in. their waking lives will be even more bitter and detached. Every suburban kid's dream of being an urbanite, another number, part of the vast sea of empty faces, of "making it" whatever that means to people. Now we might as well all live in the sky-coffins depicted in Jodorowsky's masterpiece *The Holy Mountain*. Work ungodly hours as wage slaves, eat at our tech-company plants or PR firms or wherever, be good little programmed automata, parrot the preferred social conventional political talking points, go to your shoebox sky-coffin late and sink into the future VR bliss/abyss till you pass out. Back in the 90s, you have visionaries like Terence McKenna musing about the psychedelic experience that would be the widely available internet. As technological speed and ability increases, He thought of it as a mind expander, a mind enhancer, hence having entheogenic and psychedelic connotations.

Well, I am sad to say, it pains me to mention this, perhaps I am too cynical, but good old Terence, I believe, was wrong on this one; the internet in a lot of ways has expanded minds, but not at that level. If anything, the internet has done more to deaden minds, shutter our persona developed and feed our ego complexes more than anything else, for it operates on so many unique and integral levels. I will reframe from being a total luddite primitivist, I love the internet, in fact most of my time is spent on the internet! However, this does not negate the genuine problems with such a revolutionary technology. I can of course go into this at depth, it would require a whole thesis to explore the philosophic effects of the internet on the soul of mankind. I could evoke a Heideggerian analysis of the internet, or bring up Postman, Ellul, Blanchot and Freud in explaining Second Life. But alas, this is not the place, and it might sound like



pretentiousness and pseudo-intellectualism. However, if we (like Francis Ford Coppola said in making *Apocalypse now*) do not take the risk of being pseudointellectuals and sounding pretentious, we might not be able to do anything creative whatsoever. So, let me leave you instead with a profound piece of lyrical poetic musing from the amazing, deliciously brutal, and contemplative 90s sludge/stoner metal band Acid Bath, from their song *Diab Soule*:

*“Summer feels like death*

*Godless we run*

*In my eyes there dreams an ocean*

*Hell beneath my tongue*

*I understand*

*And don't care*

*Well the skyscrapers look like gravestones*

*From out here”.*

(artwork done by Me. entitled “Dream of a Second Life”.

<https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1259517184086426.1073741837.1254797357891742/1550448308326644/?type=3&theater> ).

## Bedrooms of The Nation: A Brief Ontology of Youth Spaces.



It appears that there is a theme among a lot of “think pieces” within the last ten years or so, one that I certainly am not immune from<sup>1</sup>; These big-brand name article-mills, Twitter Blue Checkmark officialised pieces of writing often start out with an indulgent personal anecdote, then proceeds to a set of grandiose claims about such and such an issue. Now, these writers can afford to be (or pretend to be) lofty about the subjects and issues that float through their very manicured cerebellums. After all, they write for The Atlantic, or Vox, or Salon, Slate, etc. you name it. Us lowly proles in the dark corners of the blogosphere and Twitter-verse, however, must be eternally caste aside as pseudo-intellec[t]s, firebrand rambler[s], histrionic utopian[s], and anti-official class Neanderthal[s]. We congregate around our impotent rage, hoping in vain to paper cut

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<sup>1</sup> See “Crappy futures” article.

the Blue Checkmark brahmin caste with every quote tweet or blog post hit piece from way below.

To mimic the think piece style of the preferred establishment “high brow” publications is of course “pseudo”. But perhaps, in the age of irony, or rather, post-irony, one must be sufficiently brazening enough to mimic this style, appropriate it, and wear it as an ironic-yet-not-so-ironic mask. I once again tend to reveal my cards, and perhaps lay out how things are in the current year plus (3)<sup>2</sup> in terms of actual “journalism”. The cards are this: I will once again, ironically (but sincerely) give you dear reader, a personal anecdote of mine, and then proceed to some grandiose claims.....

I remember when I was young, having this odd sense of wonder and awe at the more recent generations before Me. Perhaps this is the reason millennials are so nostalgic for the 80s and 90s, we were young enough to just remember the closing of the 90s, but no old enough to experience it like our older relatives and siblings in Generation-X. Almost all my Cousins were older than me, some ranging from deep into Gen-X territory, to the earliest wave of millennials. You see, they had lived through the 90s as older children and teens, as I am Generation-Y, a child of the early 2000s. A fond memory of mine was going over to my Aunt’s house for Thanksgiving and hanging out in my Cousin’s bedroom. Me and my other Cousin of the same age used to marvel at the walls, covered in layers and layers of posters and regalia of the time, especially with an attic style rising ceiling. Looking back, my mind tends to romanticise it as a cathedral display to the cultural zeitgeist of the 90s, a miniature glossy paper pantheon to the decade of decadence.

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of original publishing.

Alas, my Cousins moved on, the posters get taken down, but it seems in the bedrooms of teens and millennials of all stripes throughout the western world, they tend never to go back up; a few months ago, I stumbled upon an interesting collection of photographs whilst on a deep-night aesthetic images crawl through Google. While 90s jungle and vaporwave subtly bounce around in the background, I see these images of teen bedrooms from the late 80s and 90s, the collection is entitled “In My Room: Teenagers in their bedrooms” (1995) by Adrienne Salinger<sup>3</sup>. At the time, this intriguing takes on investigative photojournalism became quite popular and has experienced a revival on the nostalgia-addled “introverted” corridors of millennial Tumblr. The concept was simple, she would go out to find random teens in different places and ask to see their bedrooms, she then would photograph them **among the ruins** (pun intended) of their creative detritus that constituted unique lives and identities. Perhaps these teens will more likely grow up to lead mundane lives, having their only claim to fame being subject to a random photo art/journalism project, and then to be gawked at by random angsty teens a few generations after them, but a fine immortalization never the less.

The photographs are interesting on several levels that pertains to the “being-with” of these teens, and life in general during the 90s. the onto-existential makeup of one’s living space is an often-neglected subject of study in terms of every day experience and living, and recently modern philosophy has only begun to catch up. Perhaps we need not dwell on the everyday, for that is debasing, exploitative, inauthentic, or even just proletarian for the celestial stars of abstract issues in western philosophy. however, this aside, the actual merit of such a project is (as Salinger points out) to expose the most intimate spaces of teen life during this transformative

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<sup>3</sup> [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_us/article/zmxdz5/what-these-iconic-photos-of-90s-teens-in-their-bedrooms-can-teach-us-about-being-young-today](https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/zmxdz5/what-these-iconic-photos-of-90s-teens-in-their-bedrooms-can-teach-us-about-being-young-today)

age. The 90s was teen everything, teens in revolt, teens in malaise and depression as a chic social pose, teens in music, the “nomad” Generation-X trailblazing a path of individualism whilst mainstream society still looked down on Them. Gen-X eventually, like their boomer parents before them, dropped all of this to be handed over the keys of society. Boomers were placing all their stock on us millennials, to only be bitterly disappointed for many reasons. We now know the poisoned fruits that grew from the consumerist brand of atomized individualism that was celebrated in the 80s and 90s, but more on that later.

The being-with of the bedroom reveals our relation to the world in subtle ways, how we relate to others for example, grounds our being itself. our aesthetic self-image is important for gauging the types of narratives one inhabits in their thinking space, and the types of interactions they will have, especially in the world of teens. In the bedroom collection, we see images of teens with highly diverse and unique rooms, filled with posters and paraphernalia that defines them. The walls are an adoration of the self, every piece has a backstory, every stich a collection that completes the whole, as Benjamin stated about collections, they are a morphological entity with a unique face. The room is a private escape, but in this time in the 90s, it was also a facet of social life for the youth-in-angst. The space of the bedroom is unique in its ability to provide refuse as well as conduct vital to social relations. Everyone remembers the various sleep overs and meetings of hanging out with friends, and everyone, at least in this time, has a unique experience of each friend’s room.

All those nights alone in one’s room awash in somber tunes, seeing the glowing lights and hearing the sounds outside, all the while walled in your very own citadel of the self. The consciousness of these teens in the 90s was outwardly focused, the aesthetic was physical, the self’s “brand” and persona was an outward expression of navigating private space, but all of this

has changed; it seems that today, there is an odd sameness to the physical aesthetics of western youths. Look around, you see everyone wearing roughly the same style of clothing, and if a mass study or even photo art project of the same nature as Salinger's were to be conducted today, one could only imagine that the rooms of teenagers on average have become blander and utilitarian<sup>4</sup>.

### **The world inside is a pixilated world.**

Millennials, and to a greater extent generation Z after them, find self-expression, connectedness and aesthetic appeal through the mediation of digital simulacra. No longer do we adorn the walls with our unique debris, but the virtual walls of our Facebooks, our Twitter Timelines, our unique Tumblr templates, Instagram photo taking, blogs, etc. the outside world of immanent space is further abstracted and mediated by technology, and there is a good and bad to this new reality.

The younger generations have grown up in a rapidly changing online environment, processing information and living through trends at lightening speeds. Memes constitute the reality of one form of poster, and then fade into oblivion. Online identification is struck with a sense of ephemerality to it all, your identity is just as fleeting as the memes you use to s\*\*t post with, but at the same time you cling on to unique brand markers, like virtual signposts of a fragile and shifting identity (especially if you are a Brand™ Youtuber or Twitter aficionado). The downsides to this are only realized in hindsight, and even then, there is the question as to whether form of expression is better than the other, physical vs. virtual aesthetic brand-building, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/2950082/heres-how-teenagers-bedrooms-have-changed-through-the-decades-and-posters-on-the-wall-are-a-thing-of-the-past/>

Leaving this aside, the most obvious detriment to the new inner virtual life of western youth, is that there is no solid sense of “room-making”, in a literal sense (not to imply Taoist Wu-Wei directly). Perhaps the teen flicks of the 80s and 90s were a caricature, and young people were more like each other than Hollywood leads us to believe, but despite this, there is a seeming intensification of sameness that was alluded to earlier. Everyone surly looks the same on the outside, but what about the virtual “inside” of the everyday? I would argue that even in this realm, sameness has imbedded itself and intensifies as the youth drift further away from their own external spaces; Surly there is a glut of articles and think pieces that lament the loss of direct interaction between young people in the age of mass telecommunication technology, and again, there is a good and bad to this (the opening of one’s world online, vs. the direct loss of intimacy between friends and acquaintances).

On a deeper level, this alienation between the self and the direct (as opposed to the abstracted online) other is having detrimental effects on the capacity for originality among millennials, as well as poor social skill development. You share the same memes as other people, you identify with the same online personalities, everyone tires to build that dreaded brand™, but follow the same patters to greater recognition, etc. even in-group identity has imploded. You have an online clique, a Discord server or direct-message group, but still, can we compare this to having a close-knit group of friends that build a collective tribal identity for each other? Perhaps not. Everyone is stylistically a hipster, or a plain westerner, or a plain hip hop aesthetic, or the physical (see virtual) embodiment of a vast interchangeable set of intangible qualifications to one’s identity that never seems to have a lasting effect. A nice-poster one day? Sure, how about an anime avatar to go with that? A proponent of some obscure ideology from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? Go to this discord server! There are no longer goths, Emos, vampire kids, club kids, “townies”, Mods,

thrash metal kids, etc. or any other distinct external brand of youth subculture that remains unironic or faithful in the mass age of entertainment/social media simulacra, they all have seemed to disappear into the void. Now youth subcultures have become so vast and abstract that they have no meaningful connectedness at all, or remain so obscure that they die out like a tiny burning Christmas light, to only become pale replicas placed upon deviant art profiles and Twitter timeline bios, don't forget to snapchat that moment as well.

### **The MMORPG we call life.**

Let me forsake this purple language with a bit of brevity provided by a stunningly acute and picture-perfect quote by the famed curmudgeon social theorist Christopher Lasch, that summarizes current life among millennials in a nutshell:

*“Our growing dependence on technologies no one seems to understand, or control has given rise to feelings of powerlessness and victimization. We find it more and more difficult to achieve a sense of continuity, permanence, or connection with the world around us. Relationships with others are notably fragile; goods are made to be used up and discarded; reality is experienced as an unstable environment of flickering images. Everything conspires to encourage escapist solutions to the psychological problems of dependence, separation, and individuation, and to discourage the moral realism that makes it possible for human beings to come to terms with existential constraints on their power and freedom.”<sup>5</sup>.*

The loss of the physical act of building an environment, rather than building a virtual environment through the mediation of the digital screen, has lead to even greater feelings of

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<sup>5</sup> Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture Of Narcissism: American Life In The Age Of Diminishing Expectations*. (London, New York: Abacus Books, 1980).



loneliness, alienation, and restlessness among western youths. Chaos within, and chaos without; life takes on the resemblance of a game, a “mass multiplayer online role-playing game”.

Everything can be viewed from this lens, politics, family, identity, etc. everything is quite literally a game to which you have an avatar that establishes a brand, (or Karma points if you are a Redditor), you then interact with people around the world and eventually wall each other in with a group or with a common set of interests and beliefs, etc... What is missing is the dynamic interactions and intimacy of “meat space”. We soon cannot even be intimate with our inner selves, let alone others, when the very picture of our own subjectivity is outside of our control. In a sense, our feelings and thoughts around our own subjectivity was never wholly in our own control, that is a solipsistic fantasy, but the common reprieve used to be the intimacy of the physical worlds we build around ourselves. These inner worlds are now stretched and vivisected for the internet to see, hidden only by the shadows of anonymity, which presents its own problems all together...

The biggest defence against the lurid invasion of our personal lives is the strategic use of anonymity. Now this term, “personal life”, simply does not connote the same meaning it once did. Where our personal, professional, social, “online” lives begin and end is a serious question, the distinctions have (like everything else) become blurred or have faded away all together; that being said, anonymity on the internet has in one way enabled a proliferation of free-association content creation, to the point of obscenity and perversity (depending on which parts of the internet, or more specifically, 4chan that you frequent). On the other hand, anonymity increases the grip of power, of alienation, of the furthering of what I have termed the MMORPG-ification of all life. Take for instance, the anonymity of 4chan. A mass of Anons debating, posting, S\*\*t posting, lewd, crude, somewhat thoughtful, somber, intelligent, horrid, etc. All the thoughts and

feelings and memes are mediated by a mutual understanding of anonymity and of evanescent content, considering threads 404, and if not archived or screen captured, disappear into the digital ether. We can express anonymously what we would not dare put on our walls or in the view of others. This creates an odd feedback loop: you contribute to a set of memes, or a trend, and then get swept up in the collective meme, the mass-internet trend, in short, you are ANON in toto. Nothing about you is truly unique, apart from what you post, but even then, it is just pure content. Even hiding behind avatars means your life is mediated, not authentic in the visceral sense of it being out in the open, and of you being a “face”. There are numerous reasons for online anonymity, and this is perfectly fine, but one must also recognize the dangers of it, as well as its liberatory capacities.

We have discussed personal alienation, but what do we mean by the MMORPG-ification of all life on the internet being a way of furthering power and even political alienation? think of it this way. There is a persistent barrier for a lot of groups, (in reality, its mostly groups on the political Right) to carry their ideas and discourses from the internet into the penumbra of “IRL” or “in real life”. When this does occur, it is often disastrous, and even certain elements of the political left suffer from this. The reality is that without physical outreach and building up of communities, then there can be no headway made in terms of translating disjointed and chaotic discourse or “theory” into action or “praxis”. I have touched upon this before, but by adopting an online persona out of fear of social persecution, you become just another anon, just another avatar player in a game where the internet enables you to live out lurid and wild fantasies, and express equally lurid or out-there ideas, all the while the modern world and the totalizing managerial state grind away towards their preferred version of the end of history. Online activism, to the surprise of many, but to the absolute expectation of the few wise ones who saw it

coming, does little in the way of instigating meaningful social change or disrupting the institutional discourses of certain power structures.

What am I saying in conclusion, that we should “clean our rooms Bucko” as JB Peterson says? Is this just a meme where I say the solution is to adorn your bedroom walls once more with posters and icons and personal memorabilia while listening to 90s shoegaze? Perhaps that’s a good idea, but rather, the bedroom of our younger years is a metaphor of sorts, an allegory if you will; the bedroom is that multiple plateau of rhizomatic interactions, it is the darkly lite chamber of quiet in those equally dark inner states, and it is a vibrant meeting house of sorts between confidants, basking in the cathedral of one’s own unique self. It is the growth of inner life through the external parameters of one’s environment. Life under the MMORPG territorializes inner life and colonizes it, promising the same level of intimacy, yet exposes your inner self to the cybernetic winds of chaos, of perpetually shifting trend, and even the changing face of the internet itself. Things are lost, things are found, and there is no order to it, certain chatrooms fade into oblivion and DM groups dissolve, not even the “way back machine” of the internet is not capable of recovering everything in the end.

We cannot simply turn it all off and go back to some romanticised previous state, that is foolish and unrealistic, being a cyber luddite has its own unique set of ironies attached to it. What we can do is realize the dangers of a life mediated exclusively by the anti-intimacy of the online sphere, and do balance out a plunging of the collective digital seas with a solid foundation in the external, in the “meat space” of a close circle of friends and loved ones, in even a political/religious/cultural community, to not “bowl alone” as Putnam stated in his seminal work on modern self-alienation and the disappearance of community in western life (and its disastrous consequences). The so-called internet traditionalist types talk intricately and persistently about

the loss of community and the collective, and the rootless state of the modern atomized, consumer-orientated individual in liberal society. Yet the key to remedy our situation, regardless of which side and of which aspect you articulate our modern malaise from whatever political-ideological you happen to fall under, is to do the work of cultivating a sense of community, and in turn a more mature inner life that is honest in its psychic parts. One cannot simply rely on anonymity, but on the honesty of exposing yourself to those physically around you. We cannot live under the unreality of irony, but of the maturity that comes about with sincerity. Take for example, talking to someone who happens to disagree with you: the internet facilitates the type of ultra-vulgar nastiness, vindictiveness and complete lack of humility we all lament about. In “real life” situations, only the most virulent of ideologue would act in such a manner face to face, so to speak.

Sometimes the solution for alienated and atomized young people is to simply work on the environments around them, and to learn value skills of communication, intimacy-building and outwardly driven expression that simply cannot be replicated in the MMORPG life of the internet.

(image entitled “*Emin’s bed*” (2018).

## The Modern Hunger Artists: An Expose' on the Art of the Deathmatch.



Let me Begin with a personal story of mine. I have been meaning to write something down on this subject for a long time, to give an “ode” if you will in print form, to a certain dark corner of the big tent carnival of wonders that is professional wrestling around the globe, a dark corner most will (even within wrestling) find needless, repulsive and downright “bad for business”. The “Business” of pro wrestling is often misunderstood. Simply put, the business itself revolves around ways of getting rear ends in the seats. But the business of pro wrestling is so much more than a mere financial transaction, it is selling people on the suspension of disbelief, unlike most other forms of entertainment mediums and sports shows. It is the embodiment of developing dramatic characters or gimmicks, stories to tell, a visual violent ballet or theater of the absurd, having roots in the carnival sideshows of long ago.

Pro wrestling is often mocked as being (I recall my mother once referred to it when I was younger) a “soap opera for boys and men”, a “fake” pseudo-sport with ridiculous personalities and determined outcomes. Of course, back in the days of “Kayfabe” or believability in both what happened in the ring and with the whole of character developments, story lines and gimmicks of the wrestlers, this was not much of a concern. The modern wrestling fan knows it is “fake” (a word not appropriate for such a spectacle) so chooses to watch it like a movie, admiring the athleticism and the ability to convey an archetypal hero’s journey in its physical form. yes, wrestlers do get hurt and genuinely risk their lives like every other athlete, but what happens when the lines of believability are distorted once more? What would make wrestling fans and detractors look at the product and have that feeling of doubt about its believability once more?

Now onto the story. Let us go back to the halcyon days of the late 90s-early 2000s. the world wrestling federation (as it was called, now world wrestling entertainment after the lawsuit with the world wildlife fund) was experiencing the biggest peak in wrestling interest during what is now referred to as the “Attitude Era” then the “Ruthless Aggression Era” in the early 2000s which is remember most of all. I was a young lad and my best friend has turned me on to this dizzying spectacle of sheer combat. I memorized all the backstories of my favourite wrestlers, I was enthralled with the larger than life characters, I was delighted most of all to be (what seemed like the almost weekly) witness to some of the most exhilarating matches that involved weapons and various gimmicks, either by changing the rules of the match or the environment of the ring (such as Ladder matches or steel cage matches). I loved watching the Dudley boys and the debris created in the ring and outside of it by launching their opponents into tables, or the Hardy boys flying off ladders. I saw the Undertaker dominate every Jobber they put in his way (instead of the “dead man” gimmick of old, he had transformed his character into a biker gimmick called “the

American Badass”, a Heel, “Rudo” or bad guy that got heat with the audience and who was the primary enemy of the baby face or “good guy” wrestlers). I saw the evil Vincent Kennedy McMahon, owner of the WWF, mock audiences, oppress and abuse his workers, and quite amusingly get blasted repeatedly by his number one eternal enemy he could never contain: the working-class, beer swelling, redneck hero Stone cold Steve Austin. Life soon adopted the character of being in a wrestling storyline. I often daydreamed as a Kid of what I would do given the present situation on Raw or Smackdown at the time. I bought into the psychology of the matches as they call it. But then I ventured to other sources when things got a bit too routine and stale in the biggest wrestling show on earth.

I sensed that things got tamer as time went on. Seeing as this was the early 2000s, I heard about what people refer to as the all-encompassing label the “independents” or “indie” wrestling promotions through the internet. I soon started downloading older matches on Lime wire from a plethora of places, first starting off with videos from ECW (Extreme championship wrestling, a name that will evoke a flood of 90s nostalgia in any wrestling fan). I learned about it from watching talent that had migrated to the big league (most notably Rob Van Dam) and quickly saw through a grainy limited bandwidth lens a gritty and realistic wrestling style. I always loved hardcore matches and was particularly intrigued with the infamous first ever no-ropes Barbed wire match in the US between Sabu and Terry Funk, two deathmatch icons (as I would learn through my meticulous study of wrestling at that time). They were throwing each other into barbed wire ropes, bundling each other in the razor-sharp mess, “ripping flesh to ribbons” as the Cryptopsy song “defenestration” states (there is after all a connection between death metal and deathmatch wrestling).

In a flash of a second, Sabu leaps off a chair and does a running heel kick into the corner where Funk moves out of the way at the last second (its always at the last second), causing Sabu to lacerate his bicep on the cold, sharp steel, having to tape up his wound in the middle of the match! I had never seen this sheer act of real brutality before, I was immediately intrigued. It was as they say, “like a car crash” you feel repulsed but oddly stare at the ready-made spectacle with a uniquely mortal intensity.

I download matches and compilations from different federations, XPW, ECW, TNA, etc. Amidst what I saw in music videos and compilations is this odd company with yellow turn buckles and referee uniforms. Then one night I download a match I will never forget; it says something along the lines of “combat zone wrestling, brutal match”, or whatever stylistic early versions of clickbait titles lime wire seeders had at the time. It finished downloading and there it is, a fireman’s hall, no audience barricades, two funny commentators calling it a “fans bring the weapons match”. You can only imagine how odd and excitingly curious this seemed to me; I remember feeling that I had never seen wrestling like this before. I immediately thought the concept was neat and cool in my young mind. It was a tag team match; little did I know two legends were teaming up in this bout. It was the champion at the time, Justice Pain, teaming with Johnny Kashmir against the once in a lifetime team of “Sick” Nick Mondo and specially imported from CZW’s sister promotion in Japan, Big Japan Wrestling, “The Crazy Monkey” Jun Kasai.

It was like witnessing a gladiatorial game, all four men, florescent light tubes in hands, circling each other in the squared circled that has been literally covered on all sides with grotesque taped and glued together weapons from the audience. The crowd claps as they do the introductory circling, like a war of pack animals, till Mondo and Kasai leap to only both catch



bundles of glass raining down on them, with the audience doing a roaring “oh!” at every devastating move and weapons spot. The match was pure anarchy, both teams choosing one or the other opponent to brawl with, going all throughout the hall in “a sea of humanity” commentator Eric Gargiulo emphatically states, throwing themselves onto tables and glass, trails of blood marking the shiny floors, squaring off in and out of the ring, flying over the top ropes onto the unforgiving concrete outside littered with broken weapons and glass. Kasai is described by the commentators Gargiulo and John House as “*being in his environment, he probably sleeps in broken glass!*”. In one spot Kashmir hits Mondo right in the stomach with a bundle of light tubes, then the camera pans into a huge jagged piece of broken glass firmly sticking out of his midsection. The Heroic baby face team of Mondo and Kasai win the match, but just barely, it is a pyrrhic victory. The Crazy Monkey is thrown out of the ring by Kashmir and Pain, rolling over a piece of particle board suspended by chairs with light tubes taped to it (I heard years later on forums he didn’t originally agree to take that bump), to then later see backstage footage of the medics working on Him, and horrific images of his broken elbow bone sticking out of his skin! I was transfixed, excited and startled in ways I had never been before.

Nick Mondo quickly became my favorite wrestler just then. With his hybrid style of high flying Lucha-Libre ability inspired by Japanese legend Hayabusa, technical wrestling and of course, having the unbelievable endurance to withstand the deathmatch genre, he quickly became a fan favourite and a deathmatch legend despite his short career of 5 years (I highly recommend his documentary you can find on YouTube called “*Unscarred*”<sup>6</sup>). Mondo, for better or worse, put

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeDWwtqy7ik>

CZW on the map, gaining the company infamy by his death-defying stunts, one more brutal than the next.

At the very first Tournament of Death in 2001, the most well recognized annual CZW show now, Mondo lost in the finals by taking a weed whacker to the chest, a literal weed whacker. The next year was the end of Mondo's career in the ring. Mondo faced in the second round the (then) owner of the company John Zandig, being body-slammed from a 20 feet high roof onto a stack of tables and light tubes, to only clear the tables and hit the concrete ground right in the spine. Mondo survived with a giant back puncture, which he later said the ER doctor remarked that it resembled a gunshot wound. He was taped up and later wrestled half-conscious in the finals, winning against notorious IWA-Mid South promoter and ECW alumni Ian Rotten, stating he cannot remember the match due to being out of it from the experience; CZW would later become somewhat of a dirty work to the smart-marks and purists on the internet. Eventually under new ownership, they toned down the violence save for a few shows a year, eventually having Tournament of Death 2016 profiled on a vice documentary.

### **A History of Death-Defiance.**

The art of the Deathmatch has a long history, evolving from its roots in wrestling brawls, to gradually becoming more of a spectacle, a contact art of death-defiance if you will, to defy physical and mental limitations with one's thresholds and tolerances of the body; the use of weapons gradually came about from the earliest days of wrestling in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wrestlers would brawl in the ring, and promoters saw opportunities in having wrestlers bleed or "get colour" by blading themselves with hidden razors, or by sometimes doing it the hard way or "hard-selling". During the 70s and 80s in Japan, America and Puerto-Rico, companies even started using pieces of barbed-wire, wrestlers then would brawl on the outside, going into the

crowds, use weapons like the famed steel folding chair, and go into the concession stands. A whole group of wrestlers became hardcore wrestling legends, stabbing each other with forks, using canes and chairs, getting color, and eventually using such things as Tibetan nail boards by the 1980s. such big names as Bruiser Brody, Abdullah the Butcher, The original Sheik, Bobo Brazil, Freddie Blassie, and Terry Funk in the States to name a few. In Japan is where deathmatch wrestling arguably originated, and certainly is the nation where it was taken to its maximum levels of brutal spectacle. Deathmatch workers like Atsushi Onita, Tarzan Goto, Mitsuhiro Matsunaga, Hayabusa and Mr. Pogo to name a few, upped the violence and raw intensity with every match<sup>7</sup>. These wrestlers and more paved the way for what we know as the Deathmatch/Hardcore genre today.

The 1990s and the early 2000s were the height and golden age of deathmatch wrestling. In Japan you had Frontier Martial-arts Wrestling (FMW) owned by its ace and madman icon Onita, who made the violence and spectacle of the Deathmatch an international phenomenon, often garnering record-breaking crowds in Japan at the time with those surreal and terrifying exploding no ropes barbed-wire matches. Onita would participate in some of the most insane and iconic gimmick matches ever with the likes of Terry Funk and Mick Foley, and the high-flying, technical grappler and archetypal hybrid wrestler Hayabusa; Hayabusa carried the company and garnered international fame after coming back to Japan in 95 from training in Mexico. He was apart of a whole generation of Strong style wrestlers that innovated and advanced Japanese wrestling styles, inspiring wrestlers in the Japan and abroad to this day. Unfortunately, He suffered an in-ring accident, breaking his neck in 2001, ending his career and contributing to His

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<sup>7</sup> A good article on the History of the Deathmatch can be found here:  
<https://www.cultofwhatever.com/2012/04/there-will-be-blood-the-brief-history-of-hardcore-wrestling/>

tragically too soon death in 2016; Onita put on shows that to this day no one has managed to replicate in their specialness and originality. Such matches as exploding barbed-wire matches, barbed-wire cage matches, piranha and tarantula pit matches, C4 exploding ring matches where the ring is in the middle of a depth-charge laden pool, just to name a few (often imitated however, like every deathmatch gimmick). Onita struck up a partnership with ECW in the States, leading to cross-promotional matches and a diffusion of the Deathmatch Genre with the likes of Foley, Sabu, Raven, Funk, the Sandman and a myriad of other wrestlers who gained ECW its recognition in the 90s as the edgy and realistic alternative to the two bigger company counterparts at the time (WWF and WCW). Unfortunately, either through poor business management, bad dealings (in the case of FMW, being practically owned by the Yakuza) or with the inability to keep their product relevant, both companies folded, giving rise to promotions who would carry on their legacies in a much more brutal fashion.

The late 90s and early 2000s were the birth of three infamous deathmatch companies (among others): CZW, IWA-Mid South, and of course Big Japan pro-wrestling. These federations would go down in history in the period between the early and mid 2000s as putting on some of the most intense, gripping, and all around horrifyingly sickening bloodbath deathmatches on the face of the earth. A feat in the deathmatch genre that these companies innovated (including several other smaller ones) is the concept of the deathmatch tournament, three or more rounds of what CZW famously terms “ultraviolence”. The idea of a whole deathmatch tournament unusually involves an array of gimmick matches revolving around a theme, like a baseball bat derby match or a “fans bring the weapons” match, with each round bringing on progressively more violent matches till the finals, which usually has a specialty match that is the most violent in the tournament. Three Tournaments in particular: IWA-Mid

South's "king of the deathmatches", CZW's "Tournament of Death" and BJW's "Deathmatch survivors" are the most well known and media-highlighted (or vilified).

Here deathmatch wrestling transformed from (in the words of John Zandig) the "Hardcore" of ECW to the "Ultraviolence" of CZW. After ECW fell, CZW was on route to taking its place in the Philadelphia area, even finding a home in the former ECW arena (now named the 2300 Arena, or as it is sardonically known as "the bingo hall"). Transitioning from the over the top (and overtly staged) spectacle of FMW, to a brand of deathmatch wrestling that is more visceral, more towards the body (or living body-horror) itself and its physical limitations. Here we see in these promotions the heavy use of the most well-recognized implement, the florescent Light tube, brought into wrestling by Tomoaki Honma in BJW, along with thumb tacks, panes of glass sheets, barbed wire, fire and even barbecue skewers and syringes. These companies essentially took the momentum and psychology of building up the violence FMW and ECW built up and continued running it to absolute death-defying limits; BJW stars such as Abdullah Kobayashi, Ryuji Ito, Masashi Takeda and Jun Kasai participate in matches with upwards of 400 plus light tubes, leaving none of them unbroken, essentially wrestling in a ring that is 2 inches deep with blood and broken glass. Some matches appear as if half-way through someone has painted the wrestlers with very liquid bright red paint.

### **The Question of Why?**

There are numerous people in and especially outside of professional wrestling who view deathmatch as nothing but "garbage" and untalented gore, baseless shock value that has no place within the various pro-wrestling styles. Some criticism of the deathmatch genre is warrened, for instance, the fact that some promotions do use untrained and inexperienced people to basically go out there and conduct a slug fest. This stereotype has unfortunately tarnished the genre along

with the number of high-risk stunts that were preformed in the early and mid 2000s. Such as the infamous Danbury fall with New Jack receiving brain damage after pulling 400 lb Vic Grimes off of a scaffold in XPW who landed on his head, or Mondo's bump off the roof. In one horrible accident, the legendary CZW original Nick Gage, during the finals of Tournament of Death 8, died for a total of two minutes, having to be flown to emergency surgery after being pushed through the second rope covered in light tubes the wrong way on his side, severing a major artery under his armpit. Some say this type of wrestling, despite being incredibly dangerous and shortening the careers of wrestlers for decades in some cases, also needlessly "exposes" the business.

Everyone knows wrestling is "fake" or choreographed, whereas deathmatch workers, already having a bad reputation of appearing to put their bodies on the line due to "lack of skill" (not in every case obviously, especially now a days with hybrid wrestlers), do these things for real while everyone is under the assumption that it is not, often for little pay compared to the salaries of the top one percent of those who make it to the WWE. Nick Mondo specifically, having become a film maker since leaving Wrestling in 2003, is in the works of releasing his quasi-biographical film called "*The Trade*"<sup>8</sup>, where he contemplates the feelings of being a deathmatch worker, and his possible influence on the impressionable young fans he left behind, as well as his possible influence in the wrestling industry in terms of the deathmatch genre.

This leads us to another criticism that was even around during the halcyon days of 90s ECW: how much is too much? There seems to be a snowball effect (that Mondo has also alluded to in numerous interviews) with deathmatch wrestling, where one thing is done as a gimmick and

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yv04RdKoE8> note: he has since released the film.

suddenly that gimmick is demanded again and again. It starts with Sabu leaping onto his opponents through a table with a chair, now the whole card is breaking multiple tables. Once a gimmick becomes stale, this limit must be transcended and another shocking gimmick is put in place, crossing even more and more lines to the point where we have wrestlers bathing in broken glass in the middle of the ring, landing on boards with straight razors and knives attached (invented by Jun Kasai) and blowing themselves up. The liters of blood and the grotesque kalidance of living sacrifice must have something more to it than a cheap thrill of pure gory excess. There must be something deeper to these modern-day gladiators lacerating and mutilating themselves for what seems like little reward to the sane and normal.

There is always a delight, a devilish delight and feeling in being apart of an exclusive movement or phenomenon. Hence the distribution of the genre has transitioned from the wrestling tape-trading days of yore to the current dissemination of online content. The Neo-barbarism spectacle of Deathmatch wrestling is inherently limited in terms of reach and popularity. Hence why (if you shall indulge a modern art argument for a bit) the genre makes more sense when viewed through the lens of it being an art form, a performativity of the archetypally ghastly and verboten spectacle, a contemporary Roman circus maximus, but one that seemingly has no “higher” purpose relative to wrestling. by that I mean a storyline culminating in a feud-ending bloody match, besides a harkening back to the ancient displays of visceral and bodily violence often missing in the modern-day simulated combat of sports. However, Deathmatches have the potential of following traditional wrestling feuds and stories (like Kasai’s rivalry with Ryuji Ito, culminating in the only deathmatch to receive a Tokyo sports match of the year award in 2009, where Kasai first introduced the razor boards and flew off the upper balcony in Korakuen hall).

### **But is it performance Art?**

Let us now reflect on the title for this piece, “modern day Hunger Artists”; I am of course referring to Kafka’s short story on the Carnival hunger artist, locked in a cage for increasing amounts of time, warding off his perpetual hunger, using the pains and mutilations of his own body as a means of being a side-show entertainer. The hunger artist does not eat, but becomes an embodied performer, every sinew and muscle, every nerve reaction, visible sorrowing pain and deathly thought, every piece of gaunt and emaciated flesh is taken up as an assemblage of a living performance. This is the case with most performance art, and wrestling through this lens is a form of body-art. However, performance art has elements of plot and abstraction which can ease the body of the performer from troubling one’s self with strenuous activity. The hunger artist does not even know why he suffered, and right before he took his last breath he answers the question of the boy who found him wasted away in his cage “*why didn’t you eat anything*” with a half-ironic and apathetic answer, one that this literally embodied piece of art replies “*because I found nothing good to eat*”<sup>9</sup>.

The audience is forced to contemplate the observations of a dying artists who is “making one’s life a work of art” (to Borrow a phrase from Foucault) and boggle their minds on why he would pursue such a fatalistic task. In one class I had on philosophy and literature, my professor discussed this for a full hour with us, coming to the conclusion that the hunger artist did it out of a sheer modern aesthetical exploration of the body, or that it was simply a feat in artistic suffering, a pointless and absurdist suffering. I was always struck by this especially since he shot

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<sup>9</sup> <http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/literature/kafka/hunger.pdf>



down my proposition that the Hunger artist was living out a Jungian archetypal journey. Let us look at it as if we are operating in the world of modern art and modern art criticism.

The Beauty of modern art or rather all art, according to the ever so willing ambassador of artistic modernism in the 60s, Clement Greenberg, is that it serves no purpose or direct utility, it is there for our contemplation and aesthetic appeal, thus escaping the baseness of the everyday. Art with “a purpose” (like having anything “with a purpose”) implies this directedness of life that does not appreciate aesthetics for itself, but aesthetic works always conforming to this instrumental rationality. Wrestling itself has a rationality, the suspension of disbelief, the art of the Deathmatch serves to break it, creating an inherent aesthetic indeterminacy. The modern day hunger artists in deathmatch wrestling mimic that of Kafka’s tragic dandy, making their bodies a topography, a canvas where the aesthetic dimensions of force, cruelty, pain, anguish and feats of suffering play out like a hot raging battlefield soaked in sizzling blood, stinging sweat and grime. The track marks and pocks of mounded scar-tissue on the back of Jun Kasai and other career deathmatch workers confirms as much.

As some point out, the hunger artist is paradoxically in a cage, yet lives purposefully, living at the height of experience, and within a spiritual freedom that most shall never endeavour to even come close to. I understand this comparison to deathmatch wrestling, even comparing deathmatch wrestling at all to an art form seems pretentious and laughable, especially due to the stereotype that its just a bunch of farm boys and rednecks in the south hitting each other and doing embarrassingly botched moves. A warranted criticism at least in part, but we must bracket our criticism of the conceptions wrestling purists have of the genre for a moment, and abstract

the genre outside of just the world of wrestling itself, especially since it has gotten some mainstream attention thanks to vice recently<sup>10</sup>.

Of course, there are many deathmatch workers who have gone to receive mainstream success, participate in other promotions and are genuinely amazing talents, as well as one being able to extent this analysis to any type of professional wrestling. Wrestling is “sports entertainment” an odd blend of spectacle, ballet, theater, drama, and sport/athleticism. It is unique in its ability to absorb the culture, but deathmatch wrestling is another abstraction, it is the minimalism of modern art to renaissance realism. What do we mean by this? Deathmatch wrestling can have much of the same stories, mimicked current events, plots and gimmicks of a regular wrestling show, sometimes even enhancing a plot with its “all or nothing, everything on the line” nature, but this is not what the deathmatch worker or fan goes for unlike a normal wrestling fan. They want to see blood, they have a consciousness geared towards extremes in it of themselves, especially extremes of the body. The body is art; therefore, the performativity of the body must accentuate this cruelty and violence. It is akin to extreme forms of combat arts in MMA, the performers may have a background story, but any of these details are lost in the act itself. Often, wrestling fans complain that the biggest promotion (the WWE) merely uses wrestling as a conveyor for whatever plot the team of writers comes up with, thus cheapening and sanitizing the product, as any PG rating will do to any entertainment product.

This leads me to take into consideration the words of the deathmatch workers themselves. An excellent piece on this really gives insight as to why the wrestlers themselves explicitly say they are performing a feat of bodily art while engaged in these terrifying and grotesque matches<sup>11</sup>. As

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps0NJ2Sq8D4>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/06/us/cnnphotos-hardcore-wrestling-death-matches/index.html>

prolific deathmatch worker from IWA-MA Corporal Robinson states, the art of the deathmatch is the limit of where the wrestling business is, injecting realism into an entertainment medium that has been progressively stripped of any hint of realism on multiple fronts. From the “spot-fest” and (often highly choreographed) original/unique move-orientated shows found on the indies, to the muted and tame product in the WWE, the deathmatch genre provides a shocking and sensationalistic realism that demands effort from the audience as some workers state, putting their bodies and even their lives on the line to experience that rush of crowd acceptance, the performance high of being committed to a horrific primordial spectacle<sup>12</sup>.

This type of masochistic sport is interesting for its blending of modern and primordial elements in a physical artform. Like the Hunger artist, it is absurd, it does not appear to have narrative or purpose beyond blind shock value and masochistic self-effacement, an odd modern art celebration of ugliness and horror... On the other hand, it is a mimesis of what Nietzsche called “the festivals of cruelty” that have always been present in almost every culture for time immemorial. Thus, Nietzsche was right in *The Genealogy of Morals* about Man and our relation to cruelty. We love cruelty, or at the least find a great pleasure in it. We cannot express our will-to-cruelty, so we must sublimate it, or what Nietzsche refers to as *Bad conscience*. We feel the joy in cruelty for debt that is repaid, to seek vengeance is joy in repayment to Nietzsche. But (like Freud would develop in a different direction later on) Nietzsche sees bad conscience as arising out of the primordial instincts turned inwards, expressed in the inner world in a sublimated form, rather than expelled outwards like when we were in a state “before civilization”. The price of society is our suppression of intuitive, primal and animalistic instincts,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3xOeU3572w>

the hunt, the senses that are awakened when in the forest chasing game or waging war on the enemy. The release valve is modern forms of entertainment, but this does not even suffice.

We become increasingly desensitized to the mediums and genres of entertainment and sport to the point of dullness and a morose uncomfortable feeling inside, for the few of course. Violent videogames, for their more sophisticated computer-generated graphics and realism, are still just that, a game. Sports become more politically correct and tamer by the year, and wrestling, at least from the very top, has gone in this direction as well. There is nothing like seeing actual combat, to physically see a dance of motion, violence, bloodletting, and suffering in front of our eyes. Hence the suffering is felt in the collective groans, shouts and chants of the crowd, especially when the pain and suffering is intensified, signaling chants of respect and admiration. I remember watching the infamous “they said it couldn’t be done” CZW even back in 2001 where Zandig gets a weed whacker shot to the back and is then screaming in agony as his opponent the wife beater (yes that is a real wrestling name) literally pours salt on his wounds, the blood mist gleaming off Zandig’s back spraying to the shock of the crowd. The voracious appetite for more extremes on the part of the viewer, and the psychology of the performers to slowly increase the level of (real or representational) risk and violence blends together in a reciprocity of muted external cruelty and animalistic forces. This leads us to another aspect of the art of the deathmatch which is often pondered upon, the motivation of the performers themselves.

What this breed of professional wrestler often describes is an uncanny feeling of being “in the moment” of not caring about ones own existential-mortal danger to their bodies and motor ability later. They choose to tune it and drop out as it were, focusing on the totality of the moment during the time of the match, going through the motions, taking bumps, inflicting pain

and the like<sup>13</sup>. The dance that is involved between deathmatch workers in the ring brings about an intensity to existence, a threshold, or what Bataille called a “limit experience” often found in the extreme practises of religious ascetics, artists and mystics. The body of the aesthetic is a work of art that is offered up to God, or Brahman or the like, and no mortal concern is considered. The humanly is sublimated in these moments, in these fleeting experiential places of intensities and revelation, like a Satori moment in Zen. The cruelty, spectacle, and pain mixed in with pleasure of entertaining a crowd, unleashed libido mixed with a Thanatos death-drive, a vicious and bloodthirsty crowd of beasts, demanding no less than rivers of blood and mountains of lacerated flesh from these competitors. This is of course a flight of hyperbole, but one can see an aesthetic expression in such limit-experiences. To quote Foucault:

*“The phenomenologist's experience is basically a certain way of bringing a reflective gaze to bear on some object of "lived experience," on the everyday in its transitory form, in order to grasp its meanings. For Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot, on the other hand, experience is trying to reach a certain point in life that is as close as possible to the "unlivable," to that which can't be lived through. What is required is the maximum of intensity and the maximum of impossibility at the same time. By contrast, phenomenological work consists in unfolding the field of possibilities related to everyday experience. Moreover, phenomenology attempts to recapture the meaning of everyday experience in order to rediscover the sense in which the subject that I am is indeed responsible, in its transcendental functions, for founding that experience together with its meanings. On the other hand, in Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot, experience has the function of wrenching the subject from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself, or that it is brought to its annihilation or its dissolution. This is a project of desubjectivation. The idea of a limit-experience that wrenches the subject from itself is what was important to me in my reading of Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot”<sup>14</sup>.*

The subject in the throes of peak experiences or liminal experiences dissolve into the totality of the moment, no longer being a subject, but within a state of perpetual motion and de-subjectifying intensities, desires, processes and dynamic relations. The deathmatch worker loses one's self to the performance, signing over the care for one's life and safety, giving in to the

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ewrestlingnews.com/articles/deathmatch-wrestling-artistic-insulting>

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, Michel. “An Interview With Michel Foucault”. In *Power, Volume Three*. Ed. Foubion, James. D. (New York, Paris: The New Press, Sept, 2001): 241.

primal urges of cruelty and dominance, becoming no separate from the vicious and agitated crowd they are entertaining. The body becomes a set of intensities towards violence and suffering, the bleeding, lacerated and scar-tissue laden mounts of flesh colliding in the ring onto various implements of destruction. The performance itself is the test of one's ability to inflict greater danger, to exercise greater amounts of bloodlust in the crowd, Jouissance in violence, to use one's body as a pin cushion in hopes of appeasing the inner compulsions of cruelty and suffering. This is chaos, the fog (in this case the florescent mercury smoke) of war. but behind the scenes is a choreographed expression of attaining the intensities of emotion and cruelty-sublimation from the crowd. A chair over the head no longer reaches that peak, now it must be the pools of broken glass, syringes stuck through cheeks, kidneys smashed over Tibetan nail-boards, the musty air of blood and sweat, so much blood the crowd can practically taste the signature iron metallic taste of hot blood.

This may be a poetic and overtly pretentious take on the most violent and brutal form of sport there is (an uncontroversial claim), worse then the "human cock-fight" John McCain called the UFC and mixed martial arts at the time he banned it from the state of Arizona. If only Neocon McCain could witness the combat of a deathmatch in CZW's Delaware Tournament, in IWA's Indiana, in Japan and Puerto Rico, even in Germany and Britain there are global deathmatch promotions; this leads us to our last point, after talking about the art of the deathmatch in aesthetic, phenomenological and even neo-romantic connotations, what about the moral dimension? Morality is the basics of philosophy, it is so human of a concern, dare some would say a pedestrian one, for it is so common and everyday. There is no easy answer to this, since this level of simulated violence is so near, yet vicariously distant from us in a variety of ways today, not as explicit mind you, not as explicit as it was in pre-modernity.

Where there is war there is sport, and vice versa, but dare we call this a sport? Is it art? Does it even consist of anything “entertaining”? or is its gratuitous violence presented in the same the way a horror or slasher film is? Maybe all of the above...deathmatch wrestling as we are reminded, is a more realistic and violently intensified form of professional wrestling, so it already comes with the problems of delineating whether it is (or is not) a spot, spectacle, entertainment or make-belief drama. This is the beauty of the deathmatch, its fluidity of interpretations, if one were to forsake just temporarily the prejudices of a sportsman or someone who appreciates the skill and athleticism of pro-wrestling. Of course, a lot of deathmatch workers have skill, quite a few of them, but all have an incredible feat of endurance and forgetfulness of their own being in order to achieve the apex of the new, the ghastly, the cruel, and even in some regards the spiritual pursuit of using one’s body in such a way.

There is a moral concern of course. That being if it is legitimizing violence, if it merely is sublimating our bloodlust rather than coming to terms with it? Quite a few people in the wrestling business think of it as a “sick” “garbage” style of wrestling for equally sick and disturbed people. To this we can make no solid judgement, but another fact is this art is growing in popularity, with newer indie promotions willing to put on deathmatches even getting some mainstream attention. Often the case with folk-art, when the sophisticated types come around (as surly the Vice documentary will bring in the hipster crowd) there can be a plethora of miscommunications and navel gazing. To some snobbish types, a style of gritty and jack-toothed “Rasslin” that started in the south, evolved and brought to its apex and normalization in Japan and enjoyed by a manner of working-class and predominantly “fly over state” people could not possibly be “art”. Or for that matter, could not possibly be “good” in any way. Perhaps, but perhaps if a curved wall is art, if the fluids of some art school subversive on canvas is art,

“sticking pins into one’s body from the central university of paranoia” Robert Hughes once mockingly remarked, if Tracy Emin’s soiled bedsheets are considered “art” etc. Then at least this brutal and chaotic spectacle can give us a few shocking moments as a living and (barley) breathing form of art.

Do not watch the art of the deathmatch if you are faint of heart, but I do encourage everyone to question why it is that deathmatches are so appealing to some, for both spectators and participants. To understand why it is we find a voyeuristic and perverse curiosity in seeing competitors at the absolute limit of their ability and their bodily safety, just perhaps might make us come to terms with our own sense of cruelty. We live in a vicarious culture, we live through movies, memes, shows, and the news. Like the film “Natural Born Killers” attempting to show us our gratuitous and violence-obsessed culture by literally being as comedically violent and explicit as possible (all while committing acts of heinous violence during national live TV in the film no less) at least this spectacle is an honest one. By honest, we can say the art of the deathmatch is forthright in what it is, and what it appeals to, it leaves us with interesting questions, and ingrains in us the sense of truly witnessing a primordial upsurge of instinct and will-to-cruelty. Tracy Emin’s dirty bedsheets or *Piss-Christ* perhaps are not as honest in what they are or what the opinions, emotions and reactions they produce in most people are. But maybe there is a plain, horrible, livid and venial honesty to deathmatch wrestling, one that comes to terms with the ghastly and dark realities that lies within our collective unconscious.



## Media Gaze and the Incel “Other”: Part 1. Comments on a Growing Dissonance.



In the digital realm there are several sayings and meme-language, and one turn of phrase that gets tossed around often in internet jargon. A concept rather, perhaps as old as the widespread use of the internet itself. The phrase is a commentary on the life cycle of memes, and often states that once a meme hits meat-space, or the world of IRL (“In Real Life”) it is then in a zombified state, it has become “dead”. There is also “forced memes” that the mainstream “normie” culture (or rather, those who are not familiar with the nuances of internet meme culture) pushes to set an agenda, or to promote something, etc. These are often memes that appeal to the lowest common denominator, so much so that casual observers don’t even know that they are consuming “memes” to begin with. But then there are ones that are known as

“esoteric memes”, or memes that the mainstream simply refuses to touch for a myriad of reasons. Most notably they never see the wider light because these are darker, troll-orientated memes, or memes that express opinions, or makes simple mockeries out of subject matter that has been deemed verboten by the culture industry writ large. Often the self-referential nature of memes, their hidden lingo and nods to other memes, etc. itself serves as a barrier to entry and use.

Memes sometimes cross over into a state of permanence or can leave a lasting mark on the people who propagate, contort, pedal, and “evolve” those memes by a web of semiotic exchanges and intertextual nexuses of meaning-creation. Simply put, memes can enter a hermeneutic circle that sways between irony and sincerity, and often encompasses both an ironic tongue-and-cheek deployment with sincere intentions that are hidden inside, as well as memetic counter-discourses that reserve the swaying between irony/sincerity; but memes of a more esoteric nature are precisely the ones that become held up as markers of signification to certain sub-cultures that largely dwell on the internet. These memes then take hold upon the consciousness of these virtual sojourns, spreading till they reach the point of gaining legitimacy in the eyes of certain participants.

Now that all of this meme creation business has been briefly touched upon, let us examine meme culture in relation to what everyone in the mainstream media seems to care about for the last few days<sup>15</sup>: incels and the “toxic masculinity” of “incel culture”; every coastal blogger and media-class hipster is trying their hardest to penetrate into this seemingly ominous and dangerously exotic subculture, to reify it and cast it in the light of an ethical panic. After the incredibly tragic events of the Toronto Van attack, a senseless act of terroristic violence, the

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<sup>15</sup> This piece was written a month or so after the Toronto van attack.

usual instinct is to pin blame and disgust upon an abstracted entity, a “process” of ideological sedimentation in the minds of young radicals, one that people can “do something” about.

However, the truth of mass killers might be less sensationalistic and more painfully simple than what the chattering classes want to believe.

It seems that before the mid to present 2000s, moral panics often came from a place of religious and metaphysical concern. For example, the panic over rock and death metal, violence in video games, etc. everyone now and even at the time snickered at the religious Right and the moral majority, for they were fighting for the souls of America they claimed, and the counter-culture laughed at this. Now moral panics do not come from any place of spiritual significance, not in the mainstream at least, for they are thoroughly secular and political in nature. It seems the moral condemnation brought about from secular sources, by cathedral functionaries with degrees, moral concerns that stem from what we all colloquially refer as “identity politics” is more powerful than moral concerns stemming from the spiritual. Or perhaps they have more force in a secular age where identity is the only fleeting source of grounding and permanence to the self by itself.

In a disenchanted age, the latter is laughed off, whilst the former’s orthodoxy is enforced with a vigour and vengeance upon all who dare question the accepted right-think of the mainstream. Everyone seems to know this by now, because in the modern framework, moral attacks are treated as more “serious” because they are laid upon the material body of the oppressed, rather than the soul. Concepts such as the “progressive stack” are indicative of this new moralistic way of thinking. However, from the perspective of a traditional and the metaphysical, this is a modern inversion of moralistic concern, the “care of the soul” idea in the west has now been toppled by the monolithic academia-speak of “BODIES”.

## **Meme'd into Reality.**

Now we turn to the latest target of attack, the loosely defined hidden internet pestilence to the media known as “incels” or “involuntary celibates”. before we proceed further, let me give my opinion on the incel question; as I have stated in previous pieces<sup>16</sup>, it is necessary and prudent to weed out genuinely psychotic and hateful forms of discourse, or even unproductive discourse that can be destructive to both a wider political ideology or degrade the individual psyche. The fact is that it does not take any great length of time to find various online forums and message boards that have purported incels making inflammatory and misogynistic comments, even venting fantasies of a more violent and depraved nature; In a loosely collected subculture that relies on a communicative currency of meme-exchange, it is difficult to tell what is genuine and what is sincere. Sincerity comes from the festering of pent up aggression, feelings of betrayal and alienation from the mainstream society incels view as stacked against them. Given all of this, it is difficult to report on the incel phenomenon with any amount of clarity, even the question of involuntary celibacy being ipso-facto misogynistic (as the media presumes<sup>17</sup>) is a verboten question. with various “think piece” writers of the ultra-left progressive variety wishing to demonize anything even remotely related to the manosphere, any honesty about incels, both the earnest and the depraved, will be thrown out the window.

In my observation there is a danger in the incel collective, and to an extent there should be a worriment over its development over time, but of course I am not going to make wild and sensationalistic speculations on their future terrorist-cell status<sup>18</sup>, or if they deserve widespread

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<sup>16</sup> See “Ironycel obsession” article.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/pax9kz/a-brief-history-of-incel-the-misogynistic-group-allegedly-cited-by-toronto-van-attacker](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/pax9kz/a-brief-history-of-incel-the-misogynistic-group-allegedly-cited-by-toronto-van-attacker)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/self-hating-incel-men-are-the-new-jihadis-5rz37h9s9>

marginalization, as some craven ideologues in the media have openly called for<sup>19,20</sup>(I will get to some possible solutions in a bit); the misogynistic behaviour and the trolling of promiscuous women of course should be discouraged, for this breed resentment, and is entirely unbecoming of a group of people who wish to seek change within their lives, as well as the repugnant nature of such a hateful mindset. The nihilism of troll/meme culture is all too apparent in the s\*\*t posting conducted in incel forums, and in some cases can further entrench those feelings of loneliness and detachment in the minds of impressionable young men. The problem is that (like MGTOW) incels only stumble upon a fraction of the truth. The communicative function of memes once again can obscure the nuanced truth of things in the psyches of the impressionable. Soon enough, everyone is a “Chad” or “Stacy”, and the all-powerful monolith of gynocentric society becomes a nadir of modernity, a common signifier of decay to the various loosely connected deterritorialized organs of the manosphere. Catastrophic thinking then becomes the impedes and justification for such spiteful and acrid rhetoric on the part of some incels.

What Incels must keep in mind is the seriousness of the situation they are now coming into because of the obscene actions on the part of a minority among their ranks; What is unfolding before us is another psycho-media dispositif<sup>21</sup>, a new discourse in which Incels seem to be a more extreme source of judicial, media and psychological surveillance and othering. Even the politically correct corporatocracy will respond to the call of action against incels. Take for example, the (now disgraced) former CEO of Reddit Ellen Pao calling for Silicon Valley to outright fire and expunge their ranks of incels on site, and without any quarter<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-can-the-radicalization-of-incels-be-stopped/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.wired.co.uk/article/toronto-attack-incel-alek-minassian>

<sup>21</sup> As defined by Michel Foucault: <https://foucaultblog.wordpress.com/2007/04/01/what-is-the-dispositif/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/incel-ellen-pao-reddit-silicon-valley-involuntary-celibate-tech-gender-910107>

What we are witnessing is the creation of the “incel class” and category that must be mediated with surveillance, psychiatry, and even imprisonment and public scorn. “Inceldom” has now become an imago of a wild, dangerous and untamed monster that must be routed out in the last frontier planes of the virtual world, and then vivisected. On the tip of the most unusual of tongues, be they in the media and academia, we see endless think pieces and explainers chipping away at the memes of “Stacy”, “Chads”, “Roasties”, or “sexual marketplace”. As stated above, this surreal exploration of half-ironic and subterranean memes on the part of the chattering classes is given a thin film of legitimacy due to the easy to find examples of horrid prose from an observed fraction of more socially inept types of incels, which then confirm all the media’s suspicions about Incel as a whole<sup>23</sup>.

The intensity by which the media-cathedral class has responded to the incel problem reveals to me (and a few other keen observers on Twitter<sup>24, 25</sup>) a basic contradiction in the liberal worldview of late-capitalist and globalized sexual politics. In fact, some astute members of the political right have taken to twitter to use critical theory against the sex-positive academics and activists themselves, using their language to describe the plight of the incel, even if this tactic is steeped in irony<sup>26</sup>. For us to explore this contradiction, we shall examine a rare exception to the media scorn against the incel, the recent think-piece by none other than the New York Times token religious conservative Ross Douthat.

### **The Glass Wall of Sexual “Freedom”: On the Douthat Incident.**

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<sup>23</sup> Take for example, this one vile and obscene incel profiled here, warning, the Video contains graphic subject matter. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3Gisep\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3Gisep_E) by the exceptional detective.

<sup>24</sup> <https://twitter.com/TAJackson20/status/990447232099930112>

<sup>25</sup> <https://twitter.com/faceberg/status/990667142851846144>

<sup>26</sup> <https://twitter.com/WesternIdentity/status/989142315028635648> such phrases as “intersectional oppression”, “Othering”, and “excluding sexual types” come up in this exchange between an Activist and popular Content-Twitter personality Owen Cyclops.

Douthat in his latest attempts to analyze the greater social and cultural factors of modernity that has led to the incel phenomenon in the first place<sup>27</sup>. To break the erudite article down simply, social norms in terms of sex has decayed, and now we live in a rootless and sex-obsessed culture that predicates the destruction of judgment, and the triumph of hedonism, as its main enduring “virtue”. In our world of “late-modern sexual life”, virginity and celibacy are strange and alien, and more fundamentally, to quote the article:

*“First, because like other forms of neoliberal deregulation the sexual revolution created new winners and losers, new hierarchies to replace the old ones, privileging the beautiful and rich and socially adept in new ways and relegating others to new forms of loneliness and frustration”.*

Liberalism, in the incel phenomenon, has found a formidable contradiction in its consequentialist egalitarianism-at-any-cost ideology; the discourse of equality of outcomes cannot possibly exist in the same world where rampant promiscuous sexuality is a right that should be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of socially constructed or even biological limitations that a wide margin of people face.

If the modern world admits that hierarchy is bad when it is arbitrary, then we must immediately remedy this situation. However, Douthat does not share in this sexual redistributive egalitarianism, but instead wishes to go back to a more traditional and vital notion of sexuality. The response for this reversal of post-sexual revolution excess is because the other options that neoliberal modernity has placed before us are simply unthinkable, and more alienating and atomizing than what we have now. The sex robot, the cold indifference of VR simulacra, the degradation of widely available sex workers, these are all band aids and palliatives to the wider

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/opinion/incels-sex-robots-redistribution.html>

spiritual sickness of loneliness and marginalization that an increasing amount of young males' face.

Even certain establishment writers and journalist/blogger types themselves have stumbled upon this liberal paradox. For example, Yascha Mounk calls it the “incel paradox”<sup>28</sup>, whereby liberal society has determined that arbitrary inequalities of people who are marginalized due to socially constructed reasons (such as beauty standards, inability to keep up with credentialed society, or failing at bourgeoisie middle-class careerism, etc.), should be made to become equitable, but of course this would be a crass form of sexual welfare, and enframes the human subject into an erogenous standing-pleasure reserve, the type Douthat is warning us about. The very structure of neoliberal modernity is predicated upon several contradictions such as these, and if they are not mediated, then we end up with whole underclasses neo-Morlocks.

Douthat sees clearly the implications of a culture that has abandoned the norms and cultural institutions, such as monogamous marriage, that gave structure and meaning to the intimacy between the genders. When you rot away these norms and attitudes, you end up with symptoms such as the incel problem, and a general lack of direction or guidance in the most intimate of affairs. When the social technology of monogamy and the family unit is chipped away at by a multitude of factors, all of which were posited as “enlightened” and in keeping with the teleological goal of “freedom”, Douthat and others dared to ask in this recent chaotic storm of incel speculation: what is this “freedom” really for if it only leads to hordes of both men and women leading lives of alienation, purposelessness and vacuity? And for all this speculation, and

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<sup>28</sup> [https://twitter.com/Yascha\\_Mounk/status/990338943022329856](https://twitter.com/Yascha_Mounk/status/990338943022329856)



his clear condemnation of the incel logic of sex-redistributionism, he received a torrent of shrill and hateful attacks by the very own people he rubs shoulders with at coastal dinner parties.

Let us examine just some of the criticism Douthat has received considering his public act of media wrong-think; Douthat's first mistake was addressing such criticism in a long tweet thread<sup>29</sup>, thus demonstrating how well-worded and even-handed he is will do him no favours, for this is a sign of weakens and grovelling to the average progressive blogger, it demonstrates that the in fact do control the narrative. While reading various Responses to his fire-starter of an article, there seems to be a willful blindness with what Douthat is trying to observe and argue for. Take for instance this Washington Post piece by Molly Roberts<sup>30</sup>, which accuses Douthat of sympathizing with the minority of misogynistic incels that think they are owed the redistribution of sex. Douthat clearly does not argue for this position, but it does not matter, for He has committed the violation of questioning the sexual permissiveness of modern society. Roberts then goes on to lay a few ad-hominem points about Ross's supposed catholic conservatism, to finally accuse him, to no one's surprise, of "ignoring female agency", and "failing to see the virulent misogyny in the incel movement" and stating that the traditional view of monogamy was in fact just a way for men to demand sex from women.

Now Douthat clearly knows that this is not the case, that the old sexual norms predicated restraint and obligation on both men and women, but of course, traditionalists and their criticism operate in different reality tunnels of understanding the human subject. Roberts accuses Douthat of ignoring the "empowered" state of the modern female, while (in actuality) Douthat is condemning the poisoned fruits of rampant promiscuity in general, including the unchecked lust

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<sup>29</sup> <https://twitter.com/DouthatNYT/status/992047486318579712>

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2018/05/04/incels-sex-robots-and-what-ross-douthat-got-wrong/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.c55c596d45a2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2018/05/04/incels-sex-robots-and-what-ross-douthat-got-wrong/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.c55c596d45a2)

of male incels; it also comes to no one's shock that the comment section to the piece too is filled with rage at Douthat, and a blind ignorance of what he is trying to say<sup>31</sup>.

Douthat merely states that the goals of a traditional society are fundamentally different, whereas a society such as ours, one that is predicated on a free and chaotic economy of libidinal drives, shifts the natural harmonies that have developed over the course of human history. A society predicated on marriage and a family-based social arrangement tends not to encounter the problem of incels because hedonism, and wonton excesses of the appetitive drives are not what is the most maximized on the social level. In other words, the social apparatus is not concerned with maximizing behavioural freedoms per-say, but maximizing human flourishing on a deeper level, according to Douthat and the traditionalists.

At the heart of Douthat's piece is the recognition that one cannot simply subsist on the artifice of intimacy alone, and that a society cannot possibly expect a whole class of citizens to be pacified and congenial with simulation alone, and with a state of perverse anti-intimacy. It is quite ironic that now the modern post-Marxist feminist left is championing the very things that late-capitalism and neoliberalism is holding up as a solution to the incel problem, be it sex-bots or prostitution (given the politically correct and normalizing term "sex workers"), or to be content with simple onanism as one Boomer commented on the Douthat piece; this is the side that from the outset, feminism from Du Beauvoir to Butler, laments and wishes to rectify the lack of intimacy and understanding between the genders, especially the adverse effects of the abuses and commodification of bodies under capital, be it prostitution, pornography, or live cam-girls etc. now when it comes to the marginalization of certain forms of Male sexuality, the cold and

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<sup>31</sup> One of my favourite comments came from a younger person responding to a Boomer feminist who assumes that the world is still stuck in 1950s America, and everything is just fine, whilst statistically this is not the case <https://twitter.com/giantgio/status/991888241501622272>

sterile lack of genuine feeling is purported to be a logical solution to this problem, since the solution Douthat offers is deemed unthinkable to the chattering classes<sup>32</sup>.

One scathing critique I came across addressing Douthat, while certainly original compared to the others, nevertheless shines through with the usual assortment of “social justice” obscurantist concerns. Trans-feminist author Kathrine Cross attacks Douthat’s arguments in the piece “*The media must stop taking ‘incel’ agitprop seriously*”<sup>33</sup>. Cross claims that the piece is not even deserving of a place in a national newspaper (certainly not a cosmopolitan liberal monolith like the NYT), for in Douthat’s conclusion of a restoration of monogamy and marriage would naturally entail “transphobic” and “misogynist” exclusion of alternative lifestyles; let us bracket for a moment the various criticisms of these “lifestyles” from a traditionalist world view, and the post-enlightenment assumptions that go into them (for that is another article entirely), instead let us focus on the latent claims in the piece.

1. There is some grand narrative of agitation and propaganda on the part of some shadowy cultural-reactionary forces to push incels to the mainstream, and “marginalize” women, LBGT+ people etc. 2. Douthat, and other ideological non-conformers (Cross mentions an excerpt from Angela Nagle’s book “Kill all Normies”) are ignoring the real victims at the bottom of the sexual hierarchy.

What comes with the territory in these types of ultra-progressive concern/think-pieces is a social constructivist view in terms of gender relations. Cross does not view sexual hierarchies as

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, it is important to note that these feminist social critiques are complex and requires study into a whole body of literature, but to make a crude point, these are the concerns of second wave feminism, what we are primarily dealing with here is the “sex-positive” strain of third wave feminism. The sex-positive feminists see sex work as a form of female liberation, how they get around the real abuses and the commodification of the body puzzles most outside observers.

<sup>33</sup> <https://theestablishment.co/the-media-must-stop-taking-incel-agitprop-seriously-9c64be0464f5>

having anything to do with biological markers for fertility, but rather a pure conception of social hegemony and power-relations. Quote: *“they are norms about social value which determine other aspects of your reality that are untethered to your sex life”*. This pertains to the second claim of ignored marginalization. Cross lists off a variety of people at the bottom of the sexual desirability scale:

*“It is striking to me that these conversations proceed almost entirely without discussing women who are perceived of as sexually undesirable. Fat women, disabled women, nerdy women, non-white women, trans women, all fall short of beauty standards that are structured by prejudices as much as the advent of the “sexual revolution.”*

Now again, as we have uncovered by examining the incel question, the social justice left makes purposeful violations of their own egalitarian logic. Cross in her meandering and disjointed article, rails off various claims that all together would take some time to unpack in terms of their validity. More importantly, the second charge against Douthat, His supposed exclusion of these groups listed, means admitting that there is a hierarchy to begin with. Cross concedes this and admits that despite being oppressed by the beauty standards of the white male patriarchy, these groups can still have sex, find love and form meaningful relationships. Cross then goes on to negate the social justice program by excluding incels from this category of losing out in the new post-sexual revolution hierarchy. She simply finds all of them to be repulsive women-haters, ones that sex will never “cure” and that any writer, no matter how academic or progressive (in the case of Nagle) will always *“make a categorical error by even entertaining MRA and incel arguments”*. Cross even claims that there is no need to address the plight of young men in the modern post-sexual revolution society, because after all:

*“Where are the lonely, nerdy women who kill because they can’t get a date on Tinder? Where are all the black women mowing down pedestrians in a rental van because society’s beauty standards aggressively privilege whiteness? In failing to grapple with this, every writer who entertains incel/MRA ideology, even as a mere thought experiment, makes a catastrophic analytical error”.*

This argument, designed to denigrate the plight of young men who lack conventional margins of success in our hedonistic pleasure-culture, inflates the horrific crimes of the few fringe incels and puts them on the head of every young male with a lack of sexual success. The argument here also entails that these groups listed, while being historically and even currently at a disadvantage, are incapable of wrongdoing, which is simply not the case. For instance, the higher rates of domestic violence among Lesbian and Gay couples that is of course out of bounds to talk about in the media and even academia<sup>34, 35, 36</sup>.

Now, it is true that incidents of mass murder, rare statically, are more likely to be committed by white men, and to a lesser extent Asian male, but this would ignore the criminality of young men in general, and for the sake of brevity (and not getting involved in the messy world of crime statistics) let us examine the main flaws in Her and other bloggers who are hostile and hyper-critical of even attempting to entertain incel arguments.

The obvious one would be characterising every incel as women-hating white males, which is flawed considering that a lot of them do not “hate” women, and a very high proportion are not even white, but come from a diverse array of backgrounds and life-situations. The main

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29994648>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.advocate.com/crime/2014/09/04/2-studies-prove-domestic-violence-lgbt-issue>

<sup>36</sup> <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2014/09/domestic-violence-likely-more-frequent-for-same-sex-couples>

claim that is easily refuted is the first one, and one that is common among the leftist criticism of incels and the Manosphere in general, that being the othering and oppression of real victims of the sexual hierarchy by the mainstream. This is not only false due to the way incels are talked about in the media, but how social institutions treats the concerns of these groups in general, relative to how they treat young men.

The whole premise of Cross's article is talking one example of a less than scathing media condemnation of Incels, Douthat's piece, and claiming that this is another sign of normalizing mass oppression of women and other progressive stack groups by shining a light on incel issues. Cross seems to think the various concerns and the growing body of literature<sup>37, 38</sup> around the issues young men face in a society that deems them as disposable and at the heart of various real and imagined social ills simply is not warranted. Rather, the issues boys and men face to the social justice left does not play a significant enough factor in society, when attention can be placed to their preferred victims. It is the classic "what about XYZ groups/people?" response to Douthat and others that have come up in these past few weeks of incel-mania. Underneath all of this is the obvious flaw in the arguments of Cross and other writers that make the same whataboutism style of flawed retort. a flaw that that the modern left is incapable of realizing for it would negate their whole existential/ontological-political position as the great underdogs fighting for the marginalized. The flaw is the presumption of a terribly oppressive, right wing and misogynistic mainstream trying to impose cis-hetero and white-centric standards on various othered groups, when nothing could be further from objective reality.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/05/the-war-against-boys/304659/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-58238-014-8>

It is no secret that the left (more or less) exclusively owns the various cultural and social intuitions of influence, from Hollywood, to the media, academia, certain forms of Government and a growing dominance over the policies of private-sector corporations, at least in terms of championing preferred causes. Liberalism is the mainstream, and in this main issue of the new sexual hierarchy, look no further than the way the mainstream of society attends to the issues facing the groups Cross lists off. There is an active attempt to change the beauty standards of men themselves in relation to conventionally less than desirable women, due to age, weight, and even gender<sup>39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</sup>. Of course, for these activist groups, it is not enough to commit to (parish the evil thought!) of changing themselves or coming to terms with the fact that certain people will not find them attractive, but instead commit to the herculean task of changing the social/cultural order, and even the beliefs and drives of sexual-embodied subjectivity around them.

In fact, any expression of male frustration with the current post-sexual revolution order of things is met with hostile responses of “male fragility” or a host of other psychologizing terms designed to explain-away why younger men in the modern world are experiencing a great decline in their social, cultural, economic and even spiritual standing<sup>45</sup>.

*End of Part 1, of a 2 part series.*

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<sup>39</sup> <http://dailycaller.com/2018/05/05/incels-sexual-revolution-loneliness/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/thefeed/story/fat-pride-growing-movement-people-looking-fat-acceptance>

<sup>41</sup> <https://medium.com/@QSE/when-you-say-i-would-never-date-a-trans-person-its-transphobic-here-s-why-aa6fdcf59aca>

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.buzzfeed.com/vikky/a-porn-performer-comitted-suicide-after-being-cybe-y65c?utm\\_term=.bmBwmRJyB#.rdyz2iOwe](https://www.buzzfeed.com/vikky/a-porn-performer-comitted-suicide-after-being-cybe-y65c?utm_term=.bmBwmRJyB#.rdyz2iOwe)

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/beach-body-ready-plus-size-campaign-body-positivity-protein-world-navabi-a8334516.html>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/05/what-if-men-stopped-chasing-much-younger-women/275916/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/articles/201603/the-big-stall>

*Artwork by me: entitled “possessed by possession”. (mixed media on paper, may, 2018, 5x9).*

[https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1258791580825653.1073741836.12547](https://www.facebook.com/giantartproductions/photos/a.1258791580825653.1073741836.1254797357891742/1779108042127335/?type=3&theater)

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## Media Gaze and the Incel “Other”: Part 2. Addressing the Incel Question.



Let me begin with a bit of a disclaimer about the second part of my writing on the incel phenomenon: I first want to go through a brief point by point addressing of several different issues involving incels, and let me state that this article may appear disjointed and “messy” because frankly there is a lot of issues to cover, and I want to make myself as clear as I possibly can (particularly out of fear, seeing as this is a nuclear topic at the moment). I will then perhaps speak to incels directly and offer some brief solutions that I do not see being presented elsewhere.

To begin with, recently Jordan B. Peterson got into a bit of hot water in a very transparent and obvious hit-piece delivered by the usual suspects at the New York Times. The piece presented JBP as a “custodian of the patriarchy”<sup>46</sup>, with the usual ignorance of what patriarchy

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/18/style/jordan-peterson-12-rules-for-life.html>

meant in human history. When quoting the interview with JBP, the use of His (albeit not carefully worded) choice of the term “Enforced Monogamy” was framed as JBP implying some sort of draconian and barbaric Bosnian-war style system of female interment or the handmaid’s tale come to life, at least in the minds of Twitter Blue checkmark bloggers, such as Jessica Valenti calling JBP “Rapey”<sup>47, 48</sup>.

JBP essentially made the same case that Douthat laid out in the now infamous New York Times piece. It has been a mixture of hilariousness and terror to see the frantic, shrill and angry responses from the blogger-media class on Twitter to JBP’s defence of a society predicated on monogamous relationships. I have seen all the tiresome and stale talking points about “women’s empowerment” and the “exclusion of alternative martial arrangements”, some even going so far as to say monogamy ipso-facto implies “slut-shaming”<sup>49</sup>. Now forgive me for a bit of wrong-think here, but “slut-shaming”, or rather, social ostracism towards promiscuity is ever-present in almost every civilization around the globe, at least the ones that are successful. Yes, there are always exceptions, and alternative arrangements, mixed-couplings, concubinage, and prostitution, etc. but the point being is that when we look at the normative development of great civilizations, from East, West, and South, the trend is towards monogamy at the detriment of rampant and unfettered sexual expression.

It is at the declining stages of empire that we see verboten sexual practises become the norm, and even sexuality itself that is outside of the norm in terms of monogamy always had a place and a setting within ritual and tradition (tantra practises comes to mind). It is a relatively

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<sup>47</sup> <https://twitter.com/jessicavalenti/status/99748989777827842?lang=en>

<sup>48</sup> A good rebuttal of the piece can be found here by Stefan Molyneux: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgOkI-z27sw>

<sup>49</sup> <https://twitter.com/petersterne/status/997631966009839616>

modern crusade that has led to the creation of such buzzwords that have served to normalize hedonism, that being the crusade or war on guilt, with millennials leading the way from their boomer influences. The boomers pulled out and became the new establishment, cynically encouraging or enabling the younger generations to wallow in a guilt-free world. The fact that guilt is viewed as a pejorative is evidence of the moral inversion we are facing, and in some ways has contributed to the incel problem in the first place.

I would even go so far as to argue that the “slut-stud” double standard, where men are praised for their sexual prowess, and women are condemned for similar promiscuity, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Now if we look at it through the cold biological metric of evolutionary psychology (as a lot of more materialistic and “game strategy” manosphere types often do), of course men were praised for having the ability to sire more children with more women. This is where I want to be clear in my condemnation of modernity’s hyper-sexual politics, and huge swaths of the manosphere in their response to it, but more on that latter; we are not simply the animals of naturalist biology, we have morals and beliefs and civilization that have pulled us from mere necessity into a clarity about what human flourishing is. To say, “well promiscuity is a natural impulse, and I want to be a virile man”, let me say that the feminists are correct in asserting that this is a naturalistic fallacy, and makes man into beasts.

The only problem now is that modern feminism (somewhere between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> waves) has abandoned this for a roughly similar argument of guilt-free sexual expression, or what some in the manosphere call the “deregulated sexual marketplace”<sup>50</sup>. The problem is that this deregulated market leaves huge swaths of men (and some women, but mostly men) behind, while

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<sup>50</sup> A good video on the topic can be found here by coach red pill:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyZC1FaUFok>

those that are good at getting women for whatever reason tend to get the most action, this is the class 20/80 rule that incels love to wax darkly poetic about.

In this we find a point where incels are correct, however the incel, as we have discovered in part 1, is a product of the new sexual politics, a discursive entity that is *produced by and springs fourth from power in modernity*. Sexual politics produces the incel, be it to monitor the agitations of a whole underclass of men who feel useless and perturbed by a lack of a modestly stable future, or because there needs to be a repository of this frustration, to then be a negative reflection of hyper-sexual modern society. Modernity condemns the incel it produces for a purpose, because it is the incel who is the terrorist, the loser, the Morlocks in the basement, whilst guilt-free sexuality is deemed to be “healthy” in a new medicalized self-help discourse freed of religious mores of old, a purely secular and hedonic notion of self-care. Now there are several dangers we must navigate. Firstly, the incels themselves, a large part of them, do not even know that they are the products of the things that they resent, and of course the obligatory warning that a huge chunk of them in time can express genuine hatred of women, as well as blaming everyone but themselves for their shortcomings.

### **How does modernity produce the incel?**

This is a complicated and delicate question but let us first examine the deregulated “sexual marketplace”. The language here, often invoked by the manosphere, is not appropriate for such matters despite being a convenient metaphor. The whole capitalistic phrasing of it exposes how low we have gotten, how we have conceded human intimacy to the forces of capital, to the flows of material exchange, where our bodies and our volitions have become merely subject to an exchange value (perhaps Marx was right in this regard). This exchange of sexuality even formulates language on how to “tame” the incel by the left as well in terms of

praising “sex workers”. The manosphere has broken down and made human interaction between men and women into formulas, a response to an already materialistic world. Marcuse and the hippies thought free love and the sexual revolution would strengthen human intimacy and make it even more resilient against commodification, thus producing healthier and more open human beings. As we now know, *the opposite is the case*. We are more sheltered and materialistic in our pursuit of mere pleasure, and hyper-alienated from our bodies, our own future-orientated goals, and from one another than ever before.

Before we answer this question, I made a claim above about the slut-stud double standard, how we grew out of mere biological impulses. The truth is this double standard is a modern one because unfettered promiscuity from both men and women was viewed as sinful and in need of correct training against. Men and women had to earn their sexuality, and the “sexual market value” (for lack of a better term) was regulated by parents, the community, members of religious organizations and cultural groups. Etc. institutions that have eroded away. Even the respect for a parent’s input in whom their children gets involved with later on in life (thanks to the hands-off approach of the Boomers) has become an odd modern cultural taboo, where parents have virtually no say in the matter, because the only criteria for a relationship is some romanticist notion of “love”, and Eros brought down to uniformed passions. Love used to mean a lot more than simple romantic affection, it was mediated by a vast array of other considerations.

Now back to the main question. incels and MGTOWs unfortunately do not have a sound worldview when it comes to what their goals are. Most I would charitably assume, want a long-lasting relationship and affection from the opposite sex. I have seen this entirely natural impulse demonized by the chattering and even the academic classes when it comes out of the deepest emotions of young men. The space where I agree with critics of incels is the entitlement factor;

we hear it pronounced and repeated over and over from the rooftops, men are **never entitled to sex**. This is true. The problem is that a lack of affection and intimacy can breed an odd and self-effacing set of thinking patterns, but this should be correct with empathy (ironic considering the left loves to champion “empathy” at every turn), not derision and outright hostility. Of course, some Incels are genuinely hateful creatures, and probably suffer from mental illness, but to say this is the majority of incels is disingenuous. The way modernity produces incels per say is because they are a direct response to the hyper-sexual culture, and the emphasis placed on unfettered sexuality to being with. A lot of incels simply want a piece of the modern Dionysian pie too, instead of rebelling against it. In terms of rebellion, it is sad to say that this is the way things are, and complaining about it, or harbouring catastrophic and self-crippling thinking over it is not going to do anyone any good whatsoever. Take for instance this Video on incels by Dr. NerdLove<sup>51</sup>, or this more on the nose indictment by Ben Shapiro<sup>52</sup>.

Both videos provide their own insight into the incel problem and possible solutions. NerdLove comes at it from a more empathetic position (a rarity coming from someone on the political left) but tends to gloss over the question of women being to blame as well. Women are just as guilty as men of course, and this leads to the Shapiro video. A lot of conservatives tend to have this boomer mindset of absolving women of blame and shackling young men with all the responsibility for the sad state that is relations between the sexes. Both videos are trying at least to be encouraging. Shapiro points out that rewards based on commitment, such as that in marriage, is better than measuring happiness and rewards based on quantity and immediate gratification, the commodification of sexuality in late capitalism that we touched on above. But

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPIRTXOmiWE&t=1025s>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSPthw-sLjs>

both tend to still have this tone of self-improvement and “becoming worthy” that a lot of young men try desperately at, and is a necessity, but this in my opinion has its limitations.

You can improve yourself all you want, but this can only work if the society around you is not in a state of total Gomorrah. Men can “improve” and become better people, but there is still a lot of young women out there who feel just as entitled, living some modern career girl “I can have it all” fantasy, and who would never “marry down” for a decent man who is not perfect (or in the same range in terms of career or education). Change can only come if it is *Integral change*. Short of a massive shift in the way we view sexuality, as Douthat and Shapiro allude to, then there is no incentive for men particularly to change.

Now that I have run the risk of being an “evil misogynist” for pointing out that women share some blame in this too (or rather, modern society as a whole), let me express a word of caution to incels directly; I have alluded to in the first installment on the Incel question, the detrimental effects of irony and meme culture that eventually bleeds into sincerity. It has been pointed out by more charitable commentators that incels are flawed in their thinking, and what better way to illustrate this than the worship (albeit semi-ironic and in a edgy-for-the-sake-of-edginess fashion) of Elliot Rodgers among the more ardently detached of incels. This seems to have doomed the incel to a media status of non-person, but I cannot help but find that incels have in a way done it to themselves, despite me trying to be as sympathetic as possible.

The problem is that “the Supreme Gentleman” Rodgers was the embodiment of everything incels should be trying their best to avoid and work away from. He was an entitled psychopath, no amount of love or sexual gratification could heal his distorted inner psyche, as evidenced by his numerous videos and manifesto “*My Twisted World*”. He was not some romantic and tragic anti-hero revolutionary, living out a collective revenge fantasy against

modern hookup culture and the debased state of the modern woman. He was not rebelling against the Californian ideology; he wanted *a piece of this hedonism and sensuous moral nihilism for himself*<sup>53</sup>. This above all is the ***cutting through of spiritual materialism*** that all Incels must commit to. But this is hard, for the Incel underclass has been duped into the promises of post-sexual revolution liberal society, that everyone can be just as debaucherous as the shallow characters we see in a Hollywood piece of vile celluloid. The socio-sexual materialism of a huge portion of incels is reified and transformed into its violent explication in Rodger's worldview. Instead of seeing beyond the machinations of the world he was desperately trying to be apart of, he dwelled within it, made it a monolith that was responsible for all his failings. No doubt, Elliot was a product of his environment, his failure of a father, the California culture, his surroundings etc. all served to reinforce his egoistical and misogynistic beliefs Via-Negativa (liberation of sexual mores, not some imagined environment of accepted women-hate as feminists claim, produce negative feelings in the incel psyche). Despite this, there is a singular redeeming feature, that is not very redeemable in the end but nevertheless...

### **Can't buy my Feels.**

After the terroristic murders in Toronto, media figures and the blue checkmarks in the media have come up with the usual "solutions" of pornography, cam girls, a "social acceptance" of prostitution, etc. which is little more than putting a band-aid over a severed limb in terms of its effectiveness regarding the alienation and emotional dysphoria found in the modern Millennial/Zoomer male. Rodger clearly rejected this faux solution by stating that "*afterward it makes one feel like a pathetic loser for having to hire a girl when other men could get the*

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<sup>53</sup> True Diltom has an excellent breakdown on the Elliot question:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUUp2JK1b-4&t=2420s>



*experience for free.*” Of course, the immediate response by the third/fourth wave “sex-positive” crowd is that this shame is part of the male patriarchy instilling in men the notion of brutal social competition for chattel women as sex trophies, or... something like that.

Now I do not need to highlight how this is part of our sex-obsessed materialistic culture, or that competition for women is natural, albeit mediated by social constructions. In the case of Rodger, the charge that his desire to conquer the sexuality of women freely was pure narcissism is correct, the problem is ascribing to this some imagined notion of “male fragility”. I can honestly say I am shocked by the media blue check class in their spiteful derision of men who feel left behind by wanting romantic affection. The present writing and talk around this subject has been little more than shallow psychologizing of these men, that what they “really” desire is some selfish and misogynistic end-goal of domination. As I have taken pains to make clear, this is the case with a whole group of incels, but generally I find a lot of young men, most not even self-identified as being incel, who feel this pang of rejection, and the desire to find a loved one and start a family. To be frank, and yes, I cannot fathom why this is a controversial opinion, (but somehow it is, given the attempted normalization of prostitution by a huge part of the left recently) it is degrading for anyone to only seek sexual fulfillment by paying for it. What is terrible, and unfortunate is this particularly cosmopolitan and snarky response to this sentiment, complete with the prescription by the chattering classes that the modern male should look beyond those last shreds of pride and dignity they have and purchase sex, that in itself is ironically a very (woke capital) neoliberal prescription.

A lot of young men you find on Incel or manosphere forums in general consider prostitution as an absolute last resort, akin to an inner defeat and social death, it is simply beyond comprehension for most traditionally decent men, and for good reason. If they are not successful

and express their inner sorrow at their less than adequate state, young men are told that “women do not owe” them anything. This has (despite a lot of men out there who lack the social cues to deduce this) always been self-evident, and one wonders if this manufactured outrage in general a by-product of a lot of bloggers, academics and talking heads justifying their ideological excesses.

Take this piece for example from long time ultra-prog “sex commentator” Dan Savage<sup>54</sup>; pouring odious amounts of scorn on incels and accusing their revulsion at paying for sex and wanting a relationship to be deep-seated misogyny. The piece starts off with a tweet about prostitutes not being some shield against psychotic and creepy men, and then goes on to make an argument about the legitimization of sex work in society. To me this seems odd considering the history of prostitution generally being about servicing men who cannot express themselves sexually for a variety of reasons, which Savage admits in the piece, but then makes the argument that self-identified incels should be even marginalized from even seeking out sex-workers. Of course, the assumption is that every incel is a sadistic lust-murderer and rapist in waiting, and that the desire to achieve a sexual life without buying it to Savage is “*society teaching men that they are entitled to female bodies*”. It goes without saying that prostitutes should not be subjected to creeps and abusers<sup>55</sup>, and that the section of Inceldom that is prone to gendered violence is of course a problem that should be dealt with and that incels should try to self-police against.

As an aside, this article reminds me of a graduate class I had on Michel Foucault once, where there was a social worker taking the course on the side with us masters students. We had a

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2018/04/25/26093525/on-sexual-deprivation-sex-workers-incels-and-violence>

<sup>55</sup> I generally agree with the second wave radical feminists about prostitution and pornography, I.E. they are dangerous physically, mentally and even spiritually to women and the self-image women have. Both are degrading and objectifying to the core, and should be discouraged or public policies should be put in place to aid women out of the sex worker “life(death)-style”.

very good presentation by this person with experience in social work about the new sex worker laws here in Canada that mimic that of Sweden, where women can sell sex freely, but “Johns” cannot buy it, so the police set up bait operations. Now I discussed my objection to the whole industry in general, and how it is disastrous for women and even the men who buy sex, but this social worker stated a very good point, that now a legalist and political discourse has been set up that creates a new monitored, policed and marginalized underclass of men.

There are several complications with this line of thinking from Savage and others who scoff at traditional marriage, family life, and gender roles. The main one is the assumption that any man who wishes to gain a relationship without some form of monetary exchange or otherwise is ipso-facto a selfish and patriarchal misogynist. To quote the Smiths “*I am human, and I need to be loved, just like everybody else does*”. To villainize the need for love and affection on the part of men creates, not dissipates, the rage of the incel, let alone the myriad of benefits to monogamous long-term relationships enshrined in marriage, one of which is the reduction of male violence<sup>56</sup>.

The other spurious charge Savage lays is one that is commonly made by those in the ultra-progressive sphere of social constructivism and the like, that men should not be taught by society to be “owed women’s bodies”; this is puzzling considering modern western nations preach the opposite in terms of education, but perhaps this is found in media depictions of relations between male protagonists and women (how long has Gamer Gate been dead now?). Again, not all subtext to any piece of media, be it movies, or videogames or literature, is this transparent. This leads into a whole other discussion about media depictions of gender relations, and if pieces of

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<sup>56</sup> <https://quillette.com/2018/06/07/explaining-monogamy-vox/>

older media that comes of as misogynistic (although everything is considered as such now a days) should be allowed or if they remain meaningful to current audiences. This is a topic so worn out and long I do not care to venture into in this piece. But one thing I will say is that, like men in society, fictional men **most of the times**, do not feel entitled but must *earn the affection of women, sexual, romantic or otherwise*.

This notion that society “teaches” men this entitlement to the female body comes off as a miscalculation of the facts, even an unwarranted judgement of cultural context, and is ignorant of what modern young men experience when growing up and then facing the positive and negative consequences of the modern dating scene; I would argue that no society with any longevity has simply granted men consequence-free access to female sexuality. Most traditional cultures made men earn their sexual and marital value<sup>57</sup>, while divinizing the spiritual and physical aspects of the feminine; from north American indigenous tribes, to the culture and philosophies of the East, to the veneration of Mary in Christendom (including chivalry and laws regarding women that date back to the medieval ages<sup>58</sup>). It is true that this is a nuanced topic, there are such realities as women being conquests of war, slavery and the like. And that women were not granted the modern conceptions of rights as we know today (and I would not want to gloss over the real acts of gendered violence and terror experienced by women throughout human history, while Keeping in mind that the average man had it brutal as well).

However, the picture of pre-modern relations between men and women is simply more nuanced than what rootless moderns like Savage and his progressive chattering-class ilk like to think they were. Even the pre-Wahhabi Islamic world had texts on sex, love and romance such as

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<sup>57</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12115-012-9596-y>

<sup>58</sup> <https://boydellandbrewer.com/medieval-women-and-the-law-pb.html>

“*The Perfumed Garden*”, which recognized the dynamic roles both men and women play in the pursuit of sexual ecstasy, an Islamic Kama Sutra if you will<sup>59</sup>.

The second point of Savage’s red meat of an article is a very revealing quote that just begs to be taken up with a critical eye:

*“The rest of us, those of us who don't "have to" pay for sex, could acknowledge this awkward truth: we all pay for it. We don't all pay cash but we all pay. **All sexual and romantic relationships involve an exchange.** In most cases the goods (sexual and/or emotional) exchanged for services (sexual and/or emotional) are intangible or physical and the exchange is of roughly equal value. (Or we convince ourselves it is.) It's a barter system: “a system of exchange where goods or services are directly exchanged for other goods or services without using a medium of exchange, such as money.” I give my husband emotional, social, and sexual support and attention in exchange for the same from him. If we weren't both paying up and paying in emotionally, socially, and sexually, our relationship would collapse. A sincere bond of affection prompts us to pay up and pay in, yes, but we make our payments.”*

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<sup>59</sup> Let me point out that this is the eternal dividing line between the world of tradition and that of modernity, postmodernity as more mainstream conservative talking heads love to point out. One is that of natural hierarchy for the sake of protecting those under you in society, a social, cultural and spiritual recognition did the patriarchies of old have to those under its power. Of course, this idea is totally verboten in modern liberal, western, and as the mansphere would say “gynocentric” society (the last description is up for debate)... to define patriarchy as a system that is changing, a nefarious social construct that places men above women, and with no reasons for its coming about in almost every human society naturally (a modern feminist view of patriarchy as a concept that has gone back as far as the 80s: <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/28/style/patriarchy-is-it-invention-or-inevitable.html>) ....this here lies the eternal lacuna between a traditional outlook, where each tribe and/or civilization tasked men with the job of protecting women, yet indignities and unequal allotments of power between men and women are an inevitable outcome of nature, and that of the modern view that these inequalities, even if they are natural, should be overcome at all costs, because “justice is fairness” according to the post-enlightenment political philosophy of Rawls. This is a very tricky subject, and one that is liable to have any traditionally minded person at odds with the consensus reality of modernity, even if (as I have tried to) said thinkers and writers take great pains to say they are not justifying engendered violence and abuse, but that gender roles are natural, and men and women have different forms of power that they automatically gravitate towards (as Camille Paglia explains: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrscwJYO8G8> ).

There is an obvious point to be made that Savage may not be aware of but would perhaps be perfectly confrontable with this point being made clear to him; the first one is that is betrays this shrill and judgemental tone towards all incels regarding their view of sex and relationships being some sort of a pickup artist game, or something that they should just expect to happen to them because of how “nice” they are. The second point underlies almost all assumptions of the modernist, sexually “liberated” libertine, and behind that lies all sorts of vulgar perversions made to not just be given a blind eye to, but to be openly embraced<sup>60</sup>. The motif, image of thought, belief or Archimedean point of rupture that underlies and bursts into the contemporary ideological positions regarding sexuality is that sex itself is “natural”. Natural not in the sense that it comes with a fundamental comportment of action, or that it is essential to our being, these notions are even too poetic. What Savage is revealing in this quote about the contemporary attitude towards sexuality is that, like all things driven by capital, it is crass, vulgar, mass produced and pre-packaged for our cynical and cheap amusement or titillation. Sex no longer has any spiritual import in it, in fact Savage and his fellow ultra-progressive evangelists of guilt and judgement-free sensuality would laugh mockingly at such a notion.

There is a clever retort that I believe originated on Reddit in response to the “nice guy” incel phenomenon in E-space. It goes something like “women are not vending machines where you can put nice coins in, and sex tokens fall out”. While this is a simplistic assessment of the incel-mindset, it is precisely at the heart of the thinking that underlies a lot of lost, socially awkward and probably single-minded young men. **What Savage is saying to us is that everyone is a sexual vending machine of disproportionate worth, and the tokens vary from**

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<sup>60</sup> As Savage is known for this type of normalization advocacy of the perverse, need I remind everyone of him coining the phrase “the Santorum” (look up at your own peril).

**kindness, to commitment, to monetary gain;** this ironically enough, is exactly how some of the most hopelessly frustrated and malice-filled incels view interpersonal relationships between men and women. This attitude is that of mechanical reductionism, materialism, and the very attitude around sexuality that has contributed to and even crafted the one-dimensional cultural milieu that has directly produced the incel. Sex has nothing to do with culture, or religion, or family, or anything that might come close to meaning and profound depth to Savage, its not even a primordial impulse we must satiate in the Freudian libidinal economy. it has become pure hedonic exchange, homo-Economicus maximizing productivity, consumer-value, and minimizing expenditures in the bedroom.

This attitude that sex is consequence free and therefore should be treated as any other commodity that can be exchanged in labour, capital or sentimental value is what leads to an inverted sexual hierarchy in society. The counter point is that sexual choice is a “public good”, because it maximizes “freedom”, especially for women. There is no easy rebuttal to this argument for it challenges the very background assumptions that constitutes modern liberal society, especially if those who make it refuse to have the ears to hear one. The most concise rebuttal would be that we must first address what it is we value in society to begin with; freedom is an abstract concept, besides the obvious mechanics of bodily autonomy. Here we are presented with various negative consequences of freedom, which the western enlightenment tradition of political thought has been trying to deal with (and failing) for hundreds of years now. We have freedom in society, especially women, but we do not have the backbone of a strong culture or metaphysical orthodoxy to backup said freedom. In fact, to use the same arguments that the classical liberals did in a modern context (and forgive me for my historicism) seems farcical

when you realize a lot of these thinkers lives in strong monarchical societies and all the cultural values that entailed. So, let us boldly challenge this modern assumption of “freedom at any cost”.

What most people seem to think “freedom” means is purely behavioural and materials. Most claim that greater individual choice in terms of what you venture into a relationship with (or who you crawl into bed with) is a good because it allows people to choose the best of the best. The problem with this is obvious: people don’t choose the best, or rather, superficial markers of success determine how attractive or desirable someone is, besides just looks. Of course, it is strange how the modern left wants to do away with superficial beauty standards, yet at the same time argue that choice in the matter, free of cultural, familial and religious influences, leads to a more harmonious and well-adjusted society. As we have seen, the opposite is the case. They are right in pointing out that a lot of beauty standards are a social fiction, and there has been social improvements in this area, but still we are left with this conundrum of relationship/sexual freedom leading to negative consequences. For a supposedly sexually “free” society, we are more detached from each other, and more neurotic around the various issues around sexuality than ever. The incel stands as a bleak and distressing reminder that rootless and directionless freedom has left who groups of people behind, and the same could be said of the groups Savage and others point out as being sexually less-than-desirable. As Sartre said, “*what is love but the demand to be loved*”.

(image entitled “*Druid Gathering*” (2018)).



**Teilhard De Chardin. *The Phenomenon of Man*. (New York: Harper And Row Perennial Library, 1955). A Review.**



De Chardin is in a unique place in the world of speculative physics and metaphysics. As a catholic priest and scientist, De Chardin is a foundational thinker for what would later be the new age movement. His magnum opus takes the Nietzschean task present of Zarathustra, being the sentiment that “man shall be overcome” into an evolutionary and spiritual direction<sup>61</sup>. The novel concept in the work is what he calls the “Noosphere”, an invisible but acutely felt stratosphere, it is a layer of thinking, a collective consciousness that embodies the next stage in human evolution. Coming from the Greek root word for “mind”, it is the convergence of organized

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<sup>61</sup> De Chardin, Teilhard. *The Phenomenon Of Man*. Int. Huxley, Julian (New York: Harper And Row Perennial Library, 1955): 13.

collective thought, and while a seemingly metaphysical concept, De Chardin views the Noosphere as a natural phenomenon surrounding the earth<sup>62</sup>.

The reason why De Chardin views the Noosphere as a naturalistic entity is due to both mind and matter, or what he labels the *Within* and the *Without* having the same origins and evolving in the same manner, towards greater complexity and connectivity. In the natural world, the plurality of all things evolves simultaneously, and so does consciousness, both caught up in an open system of energy and interconnectedness. Essentially De Chardin pre-empts the “quantum view” of reality more scientifically inclined new age thinkers adopted much later. Here we can also see the influence of De Chardon’s unique scientific thinking on Deleuze and Guattari, especially in regards to the evolution of molecules that evolve along the phylum, opening greater channels of connections and eventually granulate and accelerate into new forms and arrangements of matter<sup>63</sup>. Following this line of thinking, De Chardin proposes a Christianised version of non-dualism, recognizing the essential symbiosis in the body of the within and the without, mind and matter, positing that there is an inner power, a spiritual energy and dynamism that pervades the whole universe which drives matter and consciousness towards greater heights of complexity, organized arrangements and centricity, one that culminates in an evolution of consciousness along with the evolution of the material<sup>64</sup>.

Drawing upon the Christian notion of redemption and Logos, the divine “word” or psyche, De Chardin posits that the evolution of matter and consciousness will culminate into what he terms the *Omega Point*, where evolution does not follow a gradual and liner path, but rather whole bursts of rapid change and novelty is interjected into the sum global environment

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 43-49.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 62-66.

and mental landscape. All the layers of consciousness that have build up in a sedentary fashion in the Noosphere will fuse and be consumed into each other, thus creating a sum-total hyper consciousness, where the universe will achieve a level of conscious thought that resembles the present forms of consciousness we have now. Being itself will attain the highest degree of consciousness, one that will be acutely personal, yet universal in scope, where the egoic individual consciousness present in current humanity will be dissolved into a greater form of awareness and collective thinking<sup>65</sup>. For De Chardin, the cellular model of growth and change is replicated at the macro-cosmic level and the inner-psychic level of development, as quoted: “Beneath the pulsations of geo-chemistry, of geo-tectonic and of geo-biology, we have detected one and the same fundamental process, always recognizable-the one which was given material form in the first cells and was continued in the construction of nervous systems. We saw geogenesis promoted to biogenesis, which turned out in the end to be nothing less psychogenesis.<sup>66</sup>”.

The interconnectedness of all things leads to one line of flight towards a singularity moment, therefore the *Omega Point* is what positions De Chardin’s work inside the realm of post-humanism and trans-humanism; De Chardin not only collapses the distinction between the interiority of psyche and the exteriority of matter or physical processes, but also human subjectivity and sociality collapses into this cosmic evolutionary path. Humanity will evolve beyond current social arrangements, and the human subject will become one with a new mode of existence that involves greater intelligence, self-awareness of the environment and love for fellow human beings. It is not to say that nations, religions and individual identities will be

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 257-259.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 181.

erased in an end of history or in a final political arrangement, but our awareness of the other will be deepened post- Omega point.

De Chardin views the Christian concept of love as the primary force driving the growth and eventual singularity of the Noosphere, and to this point (evoking the likes of Plato and Emerson) De Chardin views love as the primary drive of all animals and earthly processes, the natural dynamism that compels beings to have an affinity with other beings, an energy that we will fully realize after the transformation of our subjectivity and consciousness<sup>67</sup>. What De Chardin sees as the inevitable outcome of psychogenesis, driven by the force of universal love, is the advent of what many have labeled “Christ consciousness”, where humanity will develop to see the cosmic body of Christ and divinity in all things. What De Chardin is advocating is a radically new form of spirituality, where soul or mind, and creation or matter are one in the same, and is propelled towards the same divine Christ-like transformation, hence both humanity, matter and the universe as a whole, engaged simultaneously in this ongoing process of overcoming to the end point of being transformed into a higher state of being and consciousness<sup>68</sup>.

De Chardin’s synthesis of modern bio/physics science with Christian mysticism crosses into many themes of post humanism besides the total evolutionary shift of being into a higher state. For instance, De Chardin pre-empts certain aspects of environmentalist philosophy, specifically the Gaian earth hypothesis by Lovelock and others, where organic, sentient and inorganic elements in the earth interlace in a symbiotic relationship to further the perpetuation of life on the planet. To De Chardin, the earth organism achieves a form of consciousness and is

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 205-207, 264-268.

<sup>68</sup> De Chardin, Teilhard. *The Divine Milieu*. (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1957): 140-145.

taken up in the integral evolutionary project of the Noosphere, it is the earth transforming into a self-regulating organism, and since to De Chardin no form of life can evolve without its precedent other stages and manifestations, so too is everything evolving all at once, within the same bursts of novelty and complexity<sup>69</sup>.

This thinking has many ramified points to interaction with our relationality towards the environment, non-human animals and our own density on planet earth; De Chardin sees the Omega Point as higher personified and personalized character, for the Universe in His view is not merely a conserver and preserver of mechanical and material energy, but of fluid and dynamic persons. Our Personhood is integral in the makeup of the evolving universe, the Logos which orders and escapes entropy and that is driven towards a super-structural state of wholeness<sup>70</sup>. This is also a Taoist or a Vedantic view of the nature of reality as well, but through a Christian Framework, since the full realization of the eventual Christogenesis is integrating our self with the trans-historical and self-conscious new mode of thought which includes the same awareness among all living and non-living forms, converging from a vast array of separate branches and communities to one “noosystem” and a singular pool or fount of consciousness and higher thought<sup>71</sup>.

Hence, we return to De Chardin’s influence on the new-age movements of the 1960s and revival in the 1990s and on the realm of aesthetics and cybernetics. . No one thinker in the new age has been so inspired by the Noosphere and the Omega Point then ethno-botanist and psychonautical philosopher Terence McKenna; McKenna proposes the idea of what he calls “timewave” zero, or the theory that through a random number calculation, he could map out the

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<sup>69</sup> De Chardin, “Phenomenon of Man”, 78-79, 86-87.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 271-272, 298.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

“ebb and flow” of the universe towards a singularity point, or what he calls the arrival of “the transcendental object at the end of history”. The Universe follows patterns of novelty and conservation, and novelty often comes about in bursts akin to a Kuhnian paradigm shift, where the whole set of present reality is shifted into a new plane. The complexification process will reach a peak where, per McKenna, advances in technology, ecological healing, and human relations will excel to such a point that the present evolution of progress in the last hundred years will be accelerated to where a year of progress will equal that of the last hundred<sup>72</sup>. This is of course an appropriation and modification of De Chardin’s ideas, especially since De Chardin himself also saw the human invention of mass technology and availability of media as contributing to the accelerated pace of reaching full global consciousness, since we have the ability to reach out to every corner of the planet and perhaps one day beyond our planetary terrain. This is also felt in the domain of art, as a number of artists coming out of the new-age have tried to articulate these ideas in a visual, audio and virtual manner, with computer technology and traditional artistic mediums, such as the piece “cosmic Christ” by visionary/fantastical realist painter Alex Gray, which depicts a cacophony of natural and human imagery, past events, ecological disaster, religions iconography, etc. within small individual portals that connect to make up the figure of a Christ-shaped entity basking in the cosmos with ubiquitous eyes placed in every frame and section, symbolizing the all-seeing divine eye of Christ and artistic inspiration<sup>73</sup>.

There are some possible criticisms of De Chardin’s thinking besides the most obvious and frequent criticism of his work, that he was betraying his scientific thinking and entering the

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<sup>72</sup> McKenna, Terence. *The Transcendental Object At The End Of Time*. Doc. Directed by: Bergmann, Peter. Alchemical Strategy Production Co., 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Gray, Alex. “Cosmic Christ”. (New York: Oil on carved wood panel. 1999-2000, *Progress Of The Soul Collection*).

realm of pseudoscience and speculative metaphysics. Some other criticisms of his magnum opus are His propensity to rely on overtly subjective lines of thinking that are easily appropriated by the utopian idealism of new-age thinking. De Chardin takes it as a given that the non-duality of nature and the human psyche fits nicely within a single evolutionary path, without keeping mind to difference or proportionality in terms of who is on the path towards Christ Consciousness relative to others. Eschatological thinking also falls into the same traps of historic and evolutionary determinism as a dialectic or Hegelian end of history thesis does, not accounting for the shifts of chaotic dispersion or events of novelty that can diverge from the path towards the Noosphere. Furthermore, despite the usual criticism of the Gaian hypothesis and its relative lack of easily replicable observability, De Chardin has the further complication of managing ecological destruction in his version of accelerated psychic and physical evolution. How is it we can manage ecological crisis effectively at our present stage of consciousness and evolution? If we cannot recognize what we will become post-omega point, if we achieve a level of thinking so crystalline and sublime that we will bask in Godhood, how can we mitigate the things that prevent it in the here and now? De Chardin seems to think it will sort itself out eventually with the advent of the Omega point, taking a leap of faith that our further evolution will entail an end to the exploitation of nature and the mass waste economy. At times exhilarating an interesting, and deeply profound, De Chardin's work can be incorporated into the post-humanist canon, but it does not come without some flaws and over-simplifications.

## **Seed Awakening: Zarathustra's Post-Modern Anti-Modernism, Towards An Existential Political Philosophy.**



Zarathustra, or the book for all and a book for none has been it at the center of the highly provocative pantheon of Friedrich Nietzsche's writings on the self and on the destiny of one's higher existence, and as such, an integral work in understanding the Nietzschean project as a whole. Through the thick allegory and inverted referential patterns of Zarathustra lies a question many scholars wish to and to some, ought not bring up; whether there is a possible political philosophy, or political ramifications to the message of self-overcoming in Zarathustra. Partially out of a concern for the misinterpretation of Nietzsche's writings on politics, and partially out of a potentially myopic, cosmopolitan and left-leaning academia that simply have no room for any anti-egalitarian thinking, this question of a potential political order to Zarathustra has been left largely wanting.



However, there are the exceptions of a few scholars (Lawrence Lampert being one of them) who bravely attempt to find political insights in Zarathustra. Therefore, in a exegesis of Zarathustra, using the favorable insights of Lampert, with contrasting opinions of Greg Whitlock, examining such issues as Zarathustra's anti-modernism, individualism, and anti-egalitarian insights: there is a political dimension to Zarathustra, but not in the traditional sense of a political philosophy, but rather a message of an existential politics, and a spiritual hierarchy of humanity.

### **Part 1: Zarathustra confronts the modern world.**

The reason why there is such a veil of difficulty, or even denial that there is a political philosophy to Zarathustra is due to the fact that it is a latent set of ideas, a residual political belief that is in the background of the greater affirmation of the self in Zarathustra's philosophy. It is rather a byproduct of having view from the higher types, being on the ascending spiritual line etc...

This is not a direct address or prescription of political statesmanship<sup>74</sup>. To be subsumed in the apparatus of the state would be counterproductive and ineffectual on the path to overcoming; right from chapter one, the modern world is a powerful intoxicant, a corrupter and betrayer of those who wish to overcome humanity. From the prologue (section.3), Zarathustra proclaims that Man is a thing that must be overcome, and "a polluted stream is man, one must be a sea to be able to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean"<sup>75</sup>. That the current state

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<sup>74</sup> Note: It is one clear distinction we must make before proceeding further. This is a spiritual will to power and self-overcoming present in certain higher types of people, a spiritualized order of rank rather than a genetic/racial/or political order of rank or caste. Zarathustra is not trying to formulate a politics around racial/identity concerns, or even common political ones for that matter. His politics is of a new path, a path that honors the earth, but not the "earthly" (I.E. the excessively hedonistic or base desire) as the Christian scholastics would say, there must be a separation between the earthly/base appetitive hedonism, and what Zarathustra means by a way of being (including a political world view) that honors the earth, as evident in book 1, section 13 (on chastity).

<sup>75</sup>: Prologue, 125.

of humanity is rife with contentment, and (as we will see in later sections) a poverty-stricken spirit that prevents them from any ability or harnessing of the will to power to overcome. However, Zarathustra does not merely wish to impose a new order of domination, or a project of subjugation. Rather it is out of the love for mankind, his “going under” into the valley of Man that compels Him to carry the message of self-overcoming<sup>76</sup>, and as a result, a new outlook which have lasting political and spiritual implications. Lampert enunciates the main themes of this passage neatly. There is a degree of danger for a higher type such as Zarathustra going under, traversing through the valley towards the mass of plebian humanity; One of them being the need to democratize and render the idea of the Overman egalitarian. However Zarathustra urges humanity to prepare the way for the Overman, that it is not a matter of creating a band or a people of the Overman, but rather it is an evolutionary process, it is a matter of the evolution of humanity itself<sup>77</sup>. Therefore, Zarathustra wishes to usher in the greatness of humanity, all that is of the higher type and spiritual will to power, a transformation of being itself. However in this we find a persistent political theme that drives Zarathustra to confront the modern world: the values (primarily egalitarianism) of the mass or the collective are just as dangerous to the love of the earth and the project of self-overcoming as the metaphysics of old, and work hand in hand with what he deems the “despisers” of the body.

It is clear that any notion of the other worldly, or of a higher metaphysical order soils the love of the earth, makes the masses, and the so-called wise especially, despise the bodily, and engage in a religious form of asceticism and delusion to Zarathustra<sup>78</sup>. Therefore, no transformative worldview can be based on such assertions. This is a dangerous denial of the

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<sup>76</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”, p. 122-123, part 1, section 1-2.

<sup>77</sup> Lampert, Lawrence, . *Nietzsche’s Teaching, An Interpretation Of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 1986): 20.

<sup>78</sup> Lampert, “Nietzsche’s Teaching”, p. 21-22.

creative spirit as well, but even in the wake of the old traditional metaphysical order slowly being dissolved of its power, there is for Zarathustra a modern danger of a complete slip into nihilism and valueless chaos, and this is to him the ushering in of the last man; in the prologue (section 4) Zarathustra proclaims the precarious state of mankind, that we are suspended on a rope above abysmal reality, with our backs towards the machinations of the past, our beast-like state, and the path ahead towards the coming reality of the Overman. It is also stated that mankind is a “bridge and not an end”, that working towards the Overman requires a courageous spirit, an inner necessity, and a love of one’s own self-created virtue<sup>79</sup>.

This is a careful choice of working on Nietzsche’s part. Humanity is in the process of becoming, we are a way station, a bridge or watershed towards future greatness, and humanity therefore is not an end in itself, not the static soul-infused entity worthy of the utmost pity and reverence the metaphysicians proclaim, and certainly not the “end in itself” of the moralists such as Kant since humanity is an incomplete entity (if there ever is such a thing as completion). In fact, as Whitlock asserts, the greatest thing to be admired in humanity is not the static entity of the person, but rather this very fact of becoming, of being a bridge towards the Overman, thus it is an inversion of moral philosophy and Christian metaphysics. But this also brings us to the opposite of the Overman, the last man, the man of little spirit. They are incapable of growing into something higher than themselves, they know nothing of virtue or love, but only know contentment, and suffer from a thoroughly infectious herd-mentality<sup>80</sup>.

In the last man motif Zarathustra finds all manners of expression and identity of the modern world that he is struggling against. The subject of the last man is subsumed in an

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<sup>79</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”, p. 127, prologue, section 4.

<sup>80</sup> Whitlock, Gregory. *Returning To Sils-Maria: A Commentary To Nietzsche’s “Also Sprach Zarathustra”*. Ed. Brown, Ric. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990): 44-46.

impenetrable aura of the collective which makes them totally unaware of their precarious state, unable to harness the vital struggle and tension needed for self-overcoming. Zarathustra enters the motley cow, a metaphor for the state of the last man, living in diversity, where all “colors” or values are blended as one homogenous mass<sup>81</sup>. As Lampert points out, the universal domination of the last man in the modern world is a threat that equals the one posed by the metaphysical tradition. They have taken pride in a debased existence, where rational self-interested (Lockean) calculation has paved the way for contentment and shallow pleasure seeking, devoid of any pursuit of higher goals. The last man also lives in a flattened world, where an egalitarian sameness to life takes precedent; equality prevails among them, of spirit and of income. The happiness they have invented is of their very same character, thus they seek happiness in the herd, in the neighbor. And live through their therapeutic equality. So, the last men and their uniformity is the state of decay and degeneration Zarathustra seeks to avoid, to which they respond to any new creator of values and progress as a destroyer<sup>82</sup>.

Lampert calls it the view of Marx’s future humanity from an anti-Marxist standpoint<sup>83</sup>. The egalitarian and placid state of humanity, or any ideology that guides humanity towards a static state of being, a “utopia” or a final revolution and perfection of Man is not in line with the coming of the Overman. The fundamental predicate of the last men and the modern world is a perpetual state of un-freedom. Zarathustra proclaims to the youth in crisis (book 1. Section 8) that we want to be free, the higher types of people, but have grown weary from searching, and have lost the ability to search for freedom. And furthermore, the noble wish for new virtues, and stand in the way of the “good” who wish to do away with them<sup>84</sup>. This is important because here

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<sup>81</sup> Whitlock, “Sils-Maria”, p. 46-47.

<sup>82</sup> Lampert, “Nietzsche’s Teaching”, p. 24-26.

<sup>83</sup> Lampert, “Nietzsche’s Teaching”, p. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”. Book 1, section 8. P. 155-156.

Zarathustra is going deeper than the ascending/descending, or higher/lower type distinction, and (as he states throughout the text) there is an opposition between the good and the just of modern society and the nobility, the ascending line of life. As Whitlock points out, the Overman ideal slowly being actualized is standing over Zarathustra with its artistic power, and its lightness of creative values. Thus, values themselves are a personal and lighthearted affair, in stark contrast between the good and the just and their heavy sense of morality and justice informed by Christian metaphysics<sup>85</sup>. We can say even that the values of the Overman take on vibrancy, dynamism of becoming that is not subject to rigidified ideological programs, and thus any political conclusions of Zarathustra must be in becoming as well. And modern world operates on a subtle level of conformism, a move towards gradual serfdom, and slave morality that honors meekness, servility and contentment.

The political ideal that honors becoming and dynamism is present in some of the most explicitly political chapters of Zarathustra, on the flies at the marketplace and the new idol; the new idol (book 1, section 11) is the direct confrontation of the ideology held by modern society in its form of the state. Quote: *“state? What is than?. Now I shall speak to you about the death of peoples. State is the name of the coldest of all cold monsters. Costly it tells lies too; and this lie crawls out of its mouth; ‘I, the state, am the people’”*<sup>86</sup>. The state is embraced by the masses that want safety and contentment; even some higher types are seduced by it. The state steals all things from the inventors of values, and is a mechanism for the superfluous, the lower types with a herd mentality rise to prominence in a society built on equality. Even rich and poor alike gather in the state, and the superfluous steal the inventions of the creators and gain evanescent political power.

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<sup>85</sup> Whitlock, “Sils- Maria”, p. 76-77.

<sup>86</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”, p. 160. Book 1, Section 11.

Thus, Zarathustra proclaims, “Where the state ends there begins the human being who is not superfluous”<sup>87</sup>.

To Zarathustra, all manners of statism lead to a degeneration of one’s individual character. The state model has infected every aspect of life to the point of the superfluous masses identifying with its apparatus of power and control. Ad Whitlock points out, this normalization of state power and mixing of all classes together is foreign to the noble spirit, the higher types. Men of the people, the political and intellectual rulers of the masses rob the vitality and health of the strong and noble, and the state itself slowly pollutes the healthy spirits of the noble one, thus Zarathustra advocates total separation from the current political ideologies and institutions in society<sup>88</sup>. The death of people is essentially the state cutting off the vital creative will and spirit of the nobility. These further cements the disdain for the modern world and its modern state by Zarathustra. Philosophic detachment from the modern world is not a simple asceticism, but rather is beautified, has become a creative act, and this theme of political separation is key in understanding the political disposition of Zarathustra. It is also important to distinguish this separation between noble and superfluous, as we see in the flies at the marketplace.

Zarathustra throughout the work uses the theme of the market to show the folly of modern life and modern humanity. The superfluous, the little significant and weak in spirit, essentially cling to whom they perceive to be wise, noble, and strong (but in reality, create the most buzzing noise, hence the flies that swarm at the market). The stuffy air is filled with charlatans who promise to fill the empty masses, who possess little to no creativity or inner virtue, with what they so desperately crave. The so-called “great men” are gutless cowards who prey on the weak of mind, create noise and boast loudly about their virtue, when in fact they are

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<sup>87</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”, p. 162-163. Book 1, Section 11.

<sup>88</sup> Whitlock, “Sils-Maria”, p. 81-83.

showman creating a spectacle<sup>89</sup>. The modern world is run on spectacle, and Zarathustra sees that solitude is ended in the marketplace. The virtues and self-created values of the noble ones are essentially parroted and turned into commodities to be sold off by the popular great/wise men. This is a main distinction in the books between an ideal or belief which compels and challenges one in the most profoundest of ways, and hence is a path that cannot be followed by the common herd of people (which is the gift-giving idea of the coming Overman and the eternal return to Zarathustra) and what is a cheap and easily consumable set of ideas or virtues that have little to no consequences in one's life. Zarathustra's political philosophy cannot cecum to popular sentiment or a state-model of power, and cannot rely on the variety of mixed ideas, peoples and classes that we find in the marketplace.

Up until now we have explored a negative political philosophy ascribed to Zarathustra, but here we have enough hints to proceed further into what a productive and authentic political philosophy would look like to Him.

## **Part 2: anti-egalitarian individualism and the new nobility.**

In Zarathustra there is a challenge to all that has come before philosophically. Not only does Zarathustra confront the western metaphysical tradition and orthodoxy from Plato onwards, but also the political orthodoxy inspired by Plato as Lampert points out. The critique must extend to the political comportment of the noble ones, the free spirits who long for self-overcoming. In the commentary to the new idol, Lampert points out this distinction Zarathustra makes between the people and the state, that Zarathustra wishes to overturn the western tradition of social contract philosophy (starting from Plato and Aristotle) that equates the masses within a state or nation. This mass-identity of the people in a state apparatus is a new imperative to the noble

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<sup>89</sup> Nietzsche, "Zarathustra", p. 163-164, book 1, section 12.

given by Zarathustra, and any modicum of authenticity had (as we have seen in part 1) can only be in the act of the renunciation of the state, no less than a new political vision, where the loyalty to subjectivity one has is not found in the state as it is in Plato's *Kallipolis* or Aristotle's social animal theory<sup>90</sup>. Lampert delivers us a way of looking at Zarathustra's political philosophy; he is telling his followers to not only loathe the collectivism of socialism and communism, but conservatism and nationalism/monarchism as well. It is to fly from modern political obligations and ideology and fly from the so-called great flies at the marketplace. It is not the expression of *Politeia*, or polis of any kind, but an *Apoliteia*, a creative act of exposing the underlying threat that connects modern ideologies together at their core: collectivism, submission and identification with political institutions that breed detachment from spiritual health and alienation of the free spirit.

In turn, Zarathustra preaches a philosophy of individualism and anti-egalitarian abstaining from modern political life. No better than the tarantulas to illustrate this new way of looking at politics, one that cuts through current ideological distinctions; no deep commitments can be held for the state or for the citizenry for that matter due to the black spewing tarantula Zarathustra called the will to equality, which is in contrast to the will to power (however it is the same thing in a different, lower form). To Zarathustra there is no moral universalism or great egalitarian progression in history, for these delusions will only restrict and contort the higher types and their noble creative spirits from truly flourishing. Zarathustra goes on to warn the nobles of those who are 'good and just' and who constantly preach about their need for justice. Stay clear of the moralizers and any ideology that fetishizes equality and collectivism, for it is really a mask hiding their own frail forms of will-to-power. They need to bring everyone down

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<sup>90</sup> Lampert, "Nietzsche's Teaching", p. 54-55.



to their level; the equality they seek is a perverse and weak-willed equality that punishes those who wish to rise above the common mass of humanity<sup>91</sup>. It is a clever scheme of the descending types, such as that found in the tools of discourse and argument Socrates gave to the plebian herds against the strong nobility. For Lampert this is pointing towards the spiritual warfare of the noble against the superfluous masses<sup>92</sup>. This also ties into the overcoming of the spirit of revenge, as fetishized equality is really an expression of revenge by those who perceive themselves as being disfavored by the natural spiritual order of rank<sup>93</sup>. Thus, expressing a politics of difference and multiplicity, rather than the politics of unity and universal sameness that has been the main preoccupation of political philosophy since Locke and Kant.

The fall into relativism, nihilism and passivity of the last man is a breeding ground for the flies at the market to become the future tyrants, and the same machinations of theocratic rule by religious tradition will find a new form in future secular tyrannies if the abysmal loss of meaning is not overcome. Lampert says so in the section on the famous wise men, which are the representatives of the herd, but through their sophistry express a latent will to power. The intellectual or upper classes, few teachers that are really motivated by power and glory that claim to speak for the masses are the ones who foment revolutions, Hence why Zarathustra set out to shame them, and detach wisdom from power<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> Nietzsche, "Zarathustra", p. 211-213, Book 2, Section. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Note: Lampert in the same section (p. 98) goes on to explain the connection between the old order of Christianity and the new secular postmodern order of egalitarianism; both produce the same collectivism and kinship in the masses to the hidden assumption of equality equaling moral progress. It is a speculation, albeit a well-founded one, that Christianity led to the very modern secular order that wishes to do away with its power and grip upon the minds of the masses in western societies. One form of religious universalism was transvalued, debased and dethroned from its paramount place in the mental landscape of the west, and thus the void was filled so to speak by its secular ideologically cosmopolitan remnant. In short, a secularization of the egalitarian sentiment and background assumption of contemporary European/western civilization, both of which Zarathustra wishes to overcome.

<sup>93</sup> Lampert, "Nietzsche's Teaching", p. 95-97.

<sup>94</sup> Lampert, "Nietzsche's Teaching", p. 100-101.

Zarathustra's politics must find a way out of this modern phenomenon of nihilism and widespread apathy; therefore, he turns to the idea of the new nobility. There is in the modern world a precarious state after the wake of losing meaning in religious dogma. The whole of Zarathustra's project is to deliver humanity to the coming of the Overman, and with it a new people. The nightmare of revenge, the long dark night of nihilism will be overcome in the future potentiality of the spiritual aristocracy, the self-overcoming new spirits that will deliver mankind from the horrors of the past and the shameful state of contemporary existence<sup>95</sup>.

But as Lampert points out, this is threatened at every turn by the two opposites of democracy and tyranny; democracy and socialism is the rule by the lowest common denominator, and thus hinder the conditions of a coming new nobility of spirits that will not be constrained by the descending line of life. The modern tyrants who fill the void left by theocratic rule are not the masters or nobility of spirit, but rather "shrewd monsters" who distort the perception of the past by the people, making them think the logical outcome of the progression of history is him, well the new nobility Zarathustra proclaims, is needed to rise up and guide the rabble and the despotic to "write on new tablets of values"<sup>96</sup>. The dangers of both democracy and tyranny are negated in the ideal of the new nobility. Here Zarathustra actualizes for the first time a coherent political program in the text, and one which expands politics from its position in western thought that values the social contract and a strictly defined set of policies within a nation, to a people, not merely a moment but an existential and even an aesthetic disposition. A position that values self-overcoming and the struggle for greater heights of self-overcoming, for this is a politics of becoming, not a static utopian disposition or a tyrannical order over the many by the one Overman.

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<sup>95</sup> Lampert, "Nietzsche's Teaching", p. 157.

<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche, "Zarathustra", p. 314-315. Book 3, Section 12: 11.

It is clear in the text, the new nobility is not a nostalgic project for the rule of kings or an autonomous sovereign aristocracy, but rather, as Whitlock warns us, an aristocracy of the spirit, beyond what we would even know of as a meritocracy, for they are the ones who are able to have the vigor and higher disposition to achieve the level of the Overman and acceptance of the Eternal return of the same. Therefore the matter of linages of kings or despotic rule, of being dominated by one class or race or culture is not the message of Zarathustra's political philosophy; for these are truncated archaic ideas and failures present throughout history that this new nobility will redeem, and must be overcome just as Christian dogma and Platonism must be overcome, for they clearly breed the same sort of contemporary monsters Zarathustra faces<sup>97</sup>. The new nobility will also express a plurality of values and will be the watershed for the Overman nobles to affirm life and their own self-created values. It is not the melting of all political power into one entity or institution, even democracy will degrade into a form of tyrannical control by the lower classes, this is why it is necessary for Zarathustra to place the question of political rule into a more productive and existential form that is a future nobility of the spirit. The previous sections before the old and new tablets Lampert points out, such as the sections on friends and the spirit of gravity, once again pointed Zarathustra to the question of ruling. There is no political monotheism precisely because of the individualist impulse in Zarathustra that affirms the plurality of values among the nobility in the future, and why Zarathustra sees the new nobility being educators, rather than despotic rulers<sup>98</sup>.

Zarathustra is in a unique political situation with the goal of redeeming the suffering caused by past failed political ideologies. Whitlock is right to assert that he is not giving a misinterpreted justification for all sorts of radical left wing and right-wing ideologies, from

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<sup>97</sup> Whitlock, "Sils-Maria", p. 218-219

<sup>98</sup> Lampert, "Nietzsche's Teaching", p. 207-208.

communist anarchism to Fascism and Nazism<sup>99</sup>. However, it is evident that Zarathustra has some sympathy for a more vibrant spiritual monarchism or possibly a tactile anarchism, given that humanity will have progressed beyond the need or autocratic political rule in the coming of the future Overman nobility. Hence the strange and cryptic manner that Zarathustra writes about in terms of political philosophy (compared to the more formal political treatises in enlightenment Europe, such as those by Kant and Rousseau). Even in Book 1, in “a thousand and one goals” Zarathustra proclaims the individual is a recent invention, and it is up to the task of the individual to carry the new tablet of overcoming to the people, that mankind is not simply a venerator of old values, but is in esteeming of new ones as well<sup>100</sup>. Take for instance the classic political philosophy of Rousseau and the social contract. There is no static nature that civilized society conforms to (or a natural pity for that matter) or a notion of the general will, one that can retain individual freedom and guide humanity to a future state of prosperity at the same tie not Zarathustra<sup>101</sup>. Any new political dimension for Zarathustra must be judged by the criteria of the new nobility ideal and the radical creative (and aesthetic) individualism of the future free spirits. Rousseau is a main moralist and equality monger Zarathustra wishes to dethrone. He states implicitly that placing social order on any exterior will or metaphysical otherworldly predicate is rendered meaningless in the act of trans-valuation, and the creation of new values. Wedding the stress for a political philosophy built on the individual laying the groundwork for the new nobility ideal to come into actualization.

The criticism of Zarathustra’s political way of thinking fails to consider the episteme, the timeframe from which modern scholars and so-called “wise men” of the day demonized

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<sup>99</sup> Whitlock, “Sils-Maria”, p. 219.

<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche, “Zarathustra”, p. 171, Book 1, Section 15.

<sup>101</sup> Lampert, “Nietzsche’s Teaching”, p. 274.

Zarathustra. They lambast him for his lack of egalitarian Universalist sentiment, and seeming fall into the opposite, which is fascism or elitism. This is not the case however; fascism and egalitarianism equally pollute the creative flow and self-overcoming of the spiritual nobles, and the image of greater moral outgrowth from equality is really a symptom of the greater disease of valueless-ness and moral nihilism present in the age of the last man to Zarathustra. The contemporary modern world extrudes the latent spirit of revenge everywhere, and Zarathustra sees how current politicized solutions, such as greater state power or greater collectivism, are not the responses needed for the problem of the loss of meaning in western civilization, if humanity wishes to transcend the horrors of the past and the uncertainties of the future.

In conclusion, we have examined Zarathustra's political philosophy via his attack on the modern world, the last man breed of nihilism and egalitarianism, and the political solutions of individualism and the new spiritual nobility. The higher types must transcend current political ideologies and attitudes, and thus Zarathustra places individualism as the only logical ideology or ideal which can produce the new path of future redemption in the new nobility/educators that has the capacity for creating new tablets of values and self-overcoming.

**THE HUNTING CALL ARTICLES.**



## The Serenity of Mary. Plein Air Painting at Fatima.



A year or so ago, my family and I took a day trip to **Fatima Shrine in Lewiston**, near Niagara Falls New York. I had gone there with them when I was a small child, and of course memories tend to fade from you. I had gotten up that morning to do some painting down the street from my home, it was early, and a cool blue had cast shadows up and down the street. I settled for a café building with an overhanging tree, and after less than an hour I venture back home. We drive to Fatima, complete with a gigantic basilica Plexiglas dome that has a giant garnet statue of the virgin Mother sitting atop it, the highest point in the sanctuary. Here we have gardens and a rosary bead pool around spotlights. I set up near the greeting center on a bench and pull out my travelling easel, lay out my colors and begin work on crafting an impression of the dome.

Let us observe this curious act known as “plein air” or “in the open air” painting as it is known in French. The Plein air landscape or cityscape painter acts quickly to capture an immediate impression of a location, editing the site as you go along, all whilst trying to chase the changing light and shadows in a limited amount of time. The Plein air artist immerses one’s self in the environment to de-center the self, getting caught up in a gestural rhythm of things, to paint from a position of immediate recondition of nature as one sees it. This perspectival experience is enhanced by the sacredness and feminine spiritual nature of the basilica sanctuary. I go through the normal procedures of laying down a sketch on painting panel, going through the major shapes, intuitively mixing color since there is no time to fret over realism and color matching, then slowly building up detail and interest in the piece. I navigate the lights and the darks, changing up the foreground, eliminating certain parts, grinding and shuffling on building texture with the pallet knife etc. the whole time I work away and then I pause to look up at the willow trees swaying in a gentle wind. There is an odd serenity to this place, few people walk by and do not make a sound or even pay attention to what I am doing, unlike the passersby on a busy sidewalk. In that moment, I cease to consciously think about what I am doing and absorb myself in this moment. I quickly finish off the piece and move my attention to a back pond that has a statue of the Virgin Mary holding a slumped over Jesus. A simple composition that is also abstract in nature (you usually never paint a focal point directly in the middle). I quickly lay down the basic impression, a few heavy strokes of tinted white among a mess of broken color foliage, and there I have an abstract mass of dry brush strokes, that with a certain context, is a perceived vision of Mary holding Jesus in his mortal coil.

I then back up, feeling drained from the experience. It is an odd feeling a landscape painter has after doing a piece in nature, “Alla-Prima” as they say (which means “all at once” a



painting completed in a short amount of time). You feel a sense of accomplishment, but you feel this odd coming down from being totally focused on one subject at a time. I go inside to eat with the family at the cafeteria area, we are the only ones in there around this time of the day, and once again I am greeted with this odd silent feeling. I have time to look outside the glass windows that make up a whole wall of the cafeteria. It is then I find myself contemplating what I just painted, a few strokes, and there it is, Mother Mary holding Christ the redeemer. Art and religion both have been such integral accompaniments to one another. Where one goes, the other is sure to follow in its wake. I think that my experience of painting at Fatima opens an interesting set of relations between traditional religious art, with its elaborate iconography and Abstract, essence-bound features (the rings of angels ascending to the heavens in a Raphael painting for example), and the landscape. The landscape is often missing as a central focus in sacred art, or at the minimum, is a background stage for the great Christian genre paintings.

The famed Kramskoy painting “Jesus in the Wilderness” depicts a dishevelled and gaunt Christ in the desert, tempted by the Devil, persisting onwards, nevertheless. The pastel sunset beaming off His back, the intricate layers of rocks and gravel Christ is sitting on, with a focus on detail, and accomplished with quick and rough brush strokes and perhaps palette knife swipes that give them that jagged look. Here the landscape is no longer a background filler, a set piece, but is engaged in a series of relations with the main focal point of the piece, that being the withered away depiction of Christ; the whole barren desert, the grey and sun-bleached rocks that are depicted, this is what sets up the drama of this biblical story. Jesus is alone in the wilderness; the wilderness is the metaphor for His longing and suffering and is personified as the main catalyst for the necessary transmigration of Christ’s suffering as such.

I chose to depict the shrine to Fatima from the view of a nearby pond and trees, here nature dwarfs the giant shrine from this perspective, although I had not thought of it that way at the time I was being caught up in that original artistic moment. The central question that I believe artists who are more in tune with a spiritual reality should be asking themselves is what exactly is the purpose of art in a religious context? This is certainly an old question, so old is the link between religion and art that it almost goes without anyone noticing. The artist is the supreme conveyor of a deeper reality of things, a deeper seat of experience that artists envelop themselves in. therefore, in my experience, landscape painters, especially those acutely aware of and engaged within the endless variety and glory of heavenly nature directly (the Plein air painters) do not realize the endless potential in their art to express the divine reality.

Of course, there is the depiction of beauty, a primordial beauty, a beauty that is primal and most innately attuned to our inner being precisely because it is evanescent the way music is. A painting becomes evanescent, changing, filled with impermanence and temporal-momentary affection because it is the attempt to capture that precise moment under changing conditions. Life is fleeting, life is the transition between light and dark, and so the landscape painter must take these moments of particular light, dark, shadows, shapes, etc. and try to and (in a way) ultimately fail at capturing a moment in time. But this failure is one of supreme motivation, for it is trying to capture what is all around us, who God has given, in God's infinite graciousness and charitableness. For it is a miracle we can even appreciate such sights to begin with.

But still, the question of the legitimacy of the landscape in its own right is called into question as a way of servicing the depiction of divine beauty. The impressionists rebelled against tradition and made the landscape a stand-alone subject, rather than just a background for the great genre paintings and religious symbolist paintings of old. Of course, this was a natural

development, symbolist painters started to abstract and extrapolate more and more of the landscape. The Chinese Taoist painters have no problem feeling the divinity of the landscape, but in the west, landscape painting is a celebration of nature, a way of distancing the calling of art from the old masters and genre painters whom saw the image of the divine and heavenly beauty as almost exclusively in the human figure. But given this trajectory of “honoring the earth” (to quote Zarathustra) I think it should be the job of landscape artists to head in the opposite direction, to stay true to the landscape as its own genre but at the same time, venerate the divine within nature, and the glories of creation.

As our lady of Fatima said, “the Church has no Fashions, The Lord is always the same”, so too the landscape is a representation of the Lord. It is “the same” but ever-changing, It is a fount of creativity, endless beauty and infinite complexity that any painter can only at best simplify, be in awe of, and tirelessly try to render its vastness within a series of strokes and colors. So this is the mission of the plein air artist, to sink within the changing dynamics of nature, and to realize the beauty of Creation through their otherwise pastoral and pleasing or “nice” genre of art.

*This article was published originally in Demetrios Press, Spring, 2017.*

## What to do with Despair? Life Among the Ruins.



**As Christians we live in quite desperate and precarious times in the West.** The great historical (and current) persecutions of Christianity throughout the ages it seems is no match for the conquer dressed in humanitarian clothing known as secular, post-enlightenment liberalism. Where the soviet gulags failed to break the strength and determination of both Orthodox and Catholic clergies with brute force and persecution, the soft solvents of liberalism, be they the promotion of hedonism, inverted notions of universalism, modern subjective relativism etc. seems to be a much more effective scrubbing tactic against the Christian memory and DNA of the West. To the genuine traditionalist, there seems to be an ongoing onslaught by modernity against everything that was once dear and sacred. The siege walls around the traditionalist, the right-wing reactionary, the earnest believer in the divine grow ever tighter, and it seems every

year a new partition of the wall collapses in, and with it the hopes for a great restoration grows dimmer and dimmer.

The erosion of religiosity in modernity of course comes in waves and could only take place at the most intimate of levels in the human subject. The polyphonic control apparatuses of what Reactionaries call “the cathedral”, internationalist globalism, or any other term used to connote the controllers of the modern world, has been working for quite some time to achieve what many consider to be “liberation”. Only the reality is this messianic liberation promised by modernity grows more abstract, atomized, and in turn, nihilistic, a liberation that is alien to what the traditionalist considers the higher liberation felt in the Lord our God. I always like to use an observation of the development of the modern left to illustrate this point; in the 80s and to an extent, the 90s, you had the California ideology embrace the new age. “California Buddhism”, mindfulness, cybernetic, energy channeling, etc. all of them in turn colonized and made into self-help tools to aid productivity in the corporate globalized technocracy<sup>[1]</sup>. The left has now wholesale abandoned this form of New Age Woo a long time ago, trading in those “Free Tibet” bumper stickers and 70s edition guru paperbacks for a more nihilist worship of the self in various forms, and with it full on moral nihilism and relativism. By comparison, the new age left, the neo-hippies and mindfulness anti-globalization activists seem infinitely preferable to present mutations of post-enlightenment thinking in the current year (plus 3).

This is a troubling sign because as religious people who are politically aware enough know, our leftist cultural masters, whom are largely indifferent and outright hostile to Christian based social orthodoxy, no longer even have a free and easy going (and morally non-imposing) form of spirituality inhabiting their being. The cultural Brahmin-caste has now committed to systematically undoing the only stitches of any form of metaphysics they had left. We see

nihilism practically worn as a chic fashion statement in a variety of popular forms of media, let alone the minds of the youth being awash in an education-government-cultural apparatus that practically enforces various forms of cognitive dissonance. To quote Saint Anthony the Great “*A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him, saying, ‘You are mad; you are not like us.’*”

This is the main point of existence in the modern world for many Christians and metaphysically minded people in general who are aware of the fallenness that surrounds us. We are cloaked in an impenetrable despair, one that threatens to swallow us whole if it was not for our faith in the promise of redemption through God’s divine grace. It is a common occurrence that we wake up, consume media via various forms of detached simulacra, peer into our screens and are subject to the latest forms of debased modern discourse. We are bombarded with news stories and trending opinions, comment sections, demonstrations of the most base and profane nature designed to tear away at the old order. This is not to say the old order was always the best, and absolutely everything in modernity is evil, but it is quite explicit how far down the road to destruction we are heading in the West. Traditionalists and those of a higher metaphysical worldview see this outrage building up, tearing at us, slowly peeling off the livid skins of our psyches, throwing us into despondency with every new ungodly trend that comes down the cultural sewer-pipe.

As Nietzsche said, when realizing our mortality and the state of modern existence, we commit to the “gnashing of teeth”, or we can accept it and forage along a better path. In turn this boils down to a truth that younger people in particular, at least the ones who want to be serious in their faith, and in turn realize the spiritual sicknesses our societies has been infected by desperately need to hear but refuse to: all of this bitterness, all of this obsession with highly

intellectual and sometimes viscerally emotional critiques of the modern world (things I also am guilty of obsessing over) and the despair that this abyss-gazing produces only really amounts to one thing, outrage pornography.

Yes indeed, outrage porn is a hot commodity among the faithful, the right-wing, the online underground dissidents, all share in this goal of being united in outrage and impotent anger. We all share the desire to one day “do something” about it but say this with full knowledge that the people running things look on us like we are weeds to be cut down, and the road to power is nearly impossible. So, on we go, watching YouTubers, reading and composing well-crafted tweets, and what we end up with is merely fueling the inferno inside of us to the point of shutting down, slouching our heads, and swallowing that bitter black pill of despair. It is an addiction in a way to feel deair at the state of the world, in moderate doses it keeps one sane, and the eye trained to spot the spiritual blight on ideas, people and things. But soon enough, naval gazing into Gomorrah deadens one inside, jades the soul, and in some extreme cases harden one’s heart to the message of Christ the eternal.

This leaves those who are earnest in their faith, us who long for a traditional way of life and a restoration of the human flourishing that God has intended for us to seek answers and solutions. Faced with increasing marginalization in the public square, we have those who come along and preach the message of resignation. Resignation of course can be harnessed and utilized, it can be a spiritual reprieve from the modern world, but then resignation too, if it is led along the way by despair, can become an excuse for existential defeatism; one merchant of resignation that seems to be popular among Christian communities recently is Rod Dreher<sup>[2]</sup>, the master of incessant outrage, and the crafter of the “BenOp” or “Benedict-Option”.

Now there are some very fine and noble ideas in the BenOp that can be made practical, and it only makes sense that like-minded religious communities should come together and form a lasting bond that can immunize each other from the ever-present machinations and excesses of modernity. To live among the ruins and among the fallen state of Man is arduous when done alone, and there can be no lasting change without community, tribe, religion, and a bond of higher ideas that seeks to break a hole into the light of God through the hollowed halls of the modern world.

The BenOp unfortunately has severe limitations in that it relies on a way of community-by-resignation. To resign one's self from the nation state that crafts policies which will only lead the destruction of our children's futures, and from the media and culture industry that pollutes the minds of the impressionable is who one ought to do to achieve a vastly deep and caring soul. One must be immersed in and immerse one's community in things that give spiritual nourishment and deters people around you from the wanton hedonism and materialism of the present. The problem is this resignation comes at a cost of rendering yourself and the people around you as vulnerable and ineffective in terms of challenging present norms and cultural/political discourses (such as untenable egalitarianism, moral relativism, the minimizing of the family, etc.) that threaten your very way of life. What the BenOp amounts to is in the end an age-old boomer-esque solution to the current godless direction the West is taking. "Boomer" in the sense of basking in the excesses of post-war north American decadence, while expecting to break deals and make wagers with the cathedral systems of power. The equation is predicated upon the typical middle class, run of the mill centrist conservative/libertarian way of thinking, "as long as the powers that be leave me alone, I won't make a fuss, and Caesar can keep taking what is owed, and I will live a faithful life in isolation".



This is unfortunately a naïve position taken by people within communities of faith, but one that is tempting and even necessary at times. The problem is that the systems of power, and the greater metaphysical illnesses of modernity simply will not stop at an armistice and will never be satisfied with the isolation of people that go against the current modernist cultural programming. One of the most despairing things is to realize that modernity, neoliberalism, mass apathy and rootlessness, these things are all-pervasive, not just expressed in abstract institutions, but within the modern subject. Even resistance to such things entails an entanglement with their vicious consequences and workings, for to even be considered a “modern” subject means to be caught within the discourses of modernity.

Simply put, the Traditionally-minded know that there is a spiritual malaise that surrounds everyone, but we cannot quite point to it, so we go on as a terminally ill and bed-ridden patient, waiting for the “end” or the great exit out of modernity. Unfortunately, even this is what some have labelled “doomsday optimism”[\[3\]](#), where modern society just needs to collapse and implode due to the crushing weight of its own contradictions, and then Christians and traditionalist conservatives fill the void of power by establishing more primal forms of social organization. It is only natural that all these facts can lead one into despair and a sinking feeling of ominous woe, one that desperately wishes to ignore, but can never shake the feeling that things are about to get worse without a massive civilization sea-change, and no doubt things probably will get worse for the spiritually minded.

### **Out of the Mind.**

It should be said that one must never ignore that state of the world and the state of current modern civilization, but also keep an inner distance from these things, and to do so that will not let these feelings of despair sink into our souls like blight into a summer crop. A hard lesson to

remember is that despair can even manifest as a heresy, for it negates God's divine plan for the salvation of humanity and all things. Despair must never get in the way of the calling God places within our hearts towards what is distinctly beneficial to humanity, in other words, God wishes for us to flourish, despite the fallen state of the world. To quote St. Robert Bellarmine's "Doctrina Christiana":

*"One who hopes in God, he acknowledges God as God, insofar as he holds Him as the most faithful, merciful and powerful, and trusts that He can and will help him in all necessities. Those who despair of the mercy of God sin, as well as those who hope in man more than in God."*

One must train the mind to recognize the very real dangers and traps that modernity lays for the soul, while also examine how these realities affects us, and how the dark clouded thoughts of despair enter our minds. One must be proactive, be good to God, and formulate communities around one's self, while also going further into investing in a long-term plan with fellow like-minded spiritual people. The inner and out pain and suffering of the world is not going to leave us any time soon, and to convince moderns of their folly seems like an impossible task. Can we tell the promiscuous and the prideful in sin to simply not sin? Women to stop believing in the lie that it is a human "right to killing the youth? Men in power to stop destroying the earth out of greed. Predatory ideologues to stop poisoning the minds of the youth? We can surely say to them that their path leads to only destruction and judgment, but it seems hopeless. The reality is we are operating on different moral, ontological and existential understandings of humanity and society. While the establishment and mainstream view of the modern world is that of "progress", we only see destruction. As mentioned above, we also cannot just sit on our hands and wait it out, for God will have the final judgment in the end, but this does not mean

Christianity preaches a sort of passive quietism. The city of God may be in heaven, but that does not mean the city of man go ablaze while we watch.

As Christians we are obliged to act, to influence the social conditions around us, to influence the institutions of power (which our ancestors have established to begin with) and to learn the various doctrines and discourses of our spiritual trespassers. We must become more aware observers, but to also train ourselves to not let our souls be tainted in this act of detached abyss-gazing, and to not lead ourselves into despair. The hyperreality of the internet makes it incredibly easy for us to envelop ourselves with decay and degeneracy, so there must be a great pulling back from the precipice, and to truly focus on things that are of vital importance to our souls. The mission of Western philosophy and Christian theology has been to train the mind and soul to look for higher things, how soon do we forget this in the wake of non-stop incessant media saturation. We must be honest in our convictions and argue that the traditionalist worldview is not antiquated or truncated, but vibrant and lively.

We may never know what our ancestors knew, and we cannot simply commit to live-action-roleplaying the past, but we can move forward and try to ingrain in ourselves and others, principles that are eternal. The problem is complacency, and not wishing to deal with the consequences of offending the morally inverted sensibilities of those who hate our beliefs and way of life. Some will be shunned, families will be divided, people will get fired, or blackballed from the halls and social regalia of official mainstream society. Those who are at odds with the modern world can only expect such treatment by those in power, for modernity and its porous, materialistic and soul-destroying ideas are threaded by all that is eternal and metaphysical. Christians and traditionalists must take seriously the realities of this world and be prepared to face the consequences of living within the knowledge of things above our mortality. Despair is a

very easy temptation, but its side-effects are the total ossification of action, and in some extreme cases, a denial of the very foundations of Christianity to begin with. One must not be led into despair for too long, the consequences are too grave.

*(artwork done by me. Entitled "the despair of Job, color study #1 of a larger piece". March 2018, acrylic on paper, 5x9).*

[1] <https://aeon.co/essays/what-lies-behind-the-simplistic-image-of-the-happy-buddhist>

[2] My friend and editor Nathan Duffy at Thermidor Magazine has an excellent short piece on Dreher: <http://thermidormag.com/cucked-like-rod/>

[3] <http://thermidormag.com/doomsday-optimism/>

*This article was originally published in Demetrios Magazine, Fall, 2017.*

## The Reactionary Case for Andy Warhol.



Any casual observer of modern art can look at this very title and conclude that it is a patent miscalculation, or an utter absurdity that the visionary leader and Ace of American modernism, Andy Warhol, with his “autistic gaze” (quipped Robert Hughes), who’s name is a synonymous with pop art, a name that suddenly invokes an immediate image in everyone’s mind, would be a “reactionary” in any way. Before trashing this article completely, let me assuage everyone’s guffawing and skepticism; Warhol was intentionally vague about his politics, and was not “right wing” or “reactionary” in any conventional sense, this is merely an interpretation of some aspects of his work based on his life. Where Andy Warhol shows subtle and latent signs of so-called “trad-ness” throughout his work rests on the linchpin of a huge part of his artistic and life-motivation, his deeply felt faith in Catholicism.

Warhol and his machinic approach to art was a style that was unique to, and transcended an era in post-war American life, one of mass production, mass culture, and the promise of the new American century spanning across the Globe. Communism could be conquered with

consumerism, and as the dream of the post-war End of History Americana slowly boiled over into mass apathy, cynicism and internal emptiness; Warhol's work started to be viewed with suspicion. Pop art, with its seemingly celebratory take on American globalized consumerism and its "kitschy" aesthetic was shunned by the Avant-garde of the western art world. Warhol still lives on as a parody in the pop-culture psyche, but any depth or originality of his work was exhausted years ago (or so it would seem). After all, there are tens of thousands of his mass-produced pieces, and we all know about the behind-the-scenes inflationary practices of art collectors and auction houses.

Despite the cold shoulder given to Warhol by the most sensationalist and ideological of art world players, he still maintains a sort of mystical reverence. He is a product of an age where modern art was "big", larger than life, consuming whole gallery floors, and elaborately staged with a boldness and sensationalist grandeur. Warhol started the trend of mass produced "factory art" as spoofed in one scene from Jodorowsky's seminal acid-cinema film "*The Holy Mountain*," the artist and the technician become one in the same. With Warhol, unlike a litany of modern self-indulgent art luminaries, this was all for a purpose in mind. The art should always reflect the age, this is a constant.

What people did not find on the surface of Warhol's work was the signature cardinal rule of modern art: art should always be grounded in the purpose of *critiquing* the current age. Some art critics and academics viewed Warhol's work as presenting a celebratory look at modern industrial capitalism and mechanical reproduction. Warhol did state certain positive things about modern American-led capitalism such as "*What's great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest*". Let us keep in mind that by time in the 60s and 70s, contemporary art had ceased to function as a

psychic conveyor of grand narratives and forms, archetypes that informed people on a cultural and spiritual level. Warhol was the foremost artist that was coming to terms with the age of mechanical reproduction and mass media.

The social critique that is latent in Warhol's work comes from his choice of subject and media itself. By highlighting the products and everydayness of objects present in his art, such as the stacks and stacks of Brilo boxes, or silk screen paintings of Coca-Cola bottle rows, Warhol is presenting to us in a vivid fashion the underlying truth of the consumerist modern world; To understand this, we must first absorb the catholic teachings on modern consumerism.

### **Warhol And the Catholic Church Contra Consumerism**

Being a devote catholic, even to the point of being a lifelong celibate gay man, Warhol made the pilgrimage to personally meet the Pope that immensely inspired him, Pope John Paul 11. PJP's words echo in the sentiments of numerous critics of modernity, mass modern media and corporate driven consumption, as well as the colonization of the world under the globalization of Americanized culture and economic determinism. Quote:

*...an excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups, easily makes people slaves of "possession" and of immediate gratification, with no other horizon than the multiplication or continual replacement of the things already owned with others still better. This is the so-called civilization of "consumption" or "consumerism," which involves so much "throwing-away" and "waste." An object already owned but now superseded by something better is discarded, with no thought of its possible lasting value in itself, nor of some other human being who is poorer."*[\[1\]](#)

Saint John Paul saw the debilitating effects of consumerism on the human spirit, one that is harmed by excessive focus on the greed-driven and the material, going so far as to say modern consumerism “deadens the soul.”

Warhol has a nuanced relation to modern American consumerism, in once instance implicitly warning us of its effects, and at another, keeping away from the usual scorn the art world has for the common mass of ordinary people (normies). His faith guided his artistic practice, in representing an artistic mirror upon modern society, attending daily mass while also worshiping artistic creation in the “art factory.” The Vatican has even had numerous collections and exhibitions of his work<sup>[2]</sup>.

John Paul and Catholic theology maintain the emphasis on the utmost dignity, sanctity and divinity of the human being, and in an odd and Avant-garde way, Warhol does the same; Warhol’s guiding philosophic justification for the work that he did was his striving to give an insight into the human condition in modern post-war consumer society. What better way to exhibit and reify the human condition than making everyday object of ordinary life the subject of artistic exploration. The modern subject is (cue McLuhan) a product of media, constant and incessant media bombardment. As media takes over the psyche of humanity, and as metaphysics reaches a crisis stage in western civilization, the modern subject worships the celebrity, the efficiency of technics, etc. So Warhol wanted to represent these spaces through the artistic conjecture of pop art, even going so far as to produce a rather large silk screen paintings of Marilyn Monroe with a golden background one often finds in Orthodox iconography.

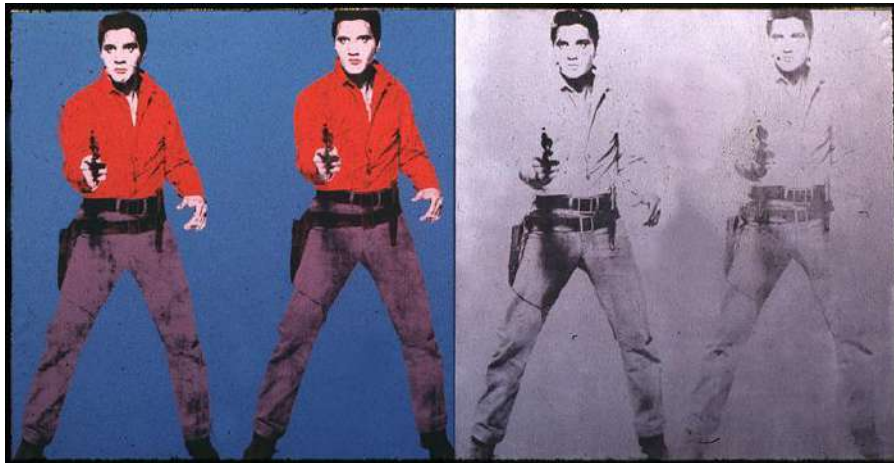




What Warhol understood and was coming to terms with in his own artistic practice is the reality of our post-metaphysical age in art. Art no longer conveys spiritual meaning or represents the human or naturalistic form, at least that is no longer its main purpose. Art does not even have to be attached to “beauty” per-say but has become a barometer for the profound alienation and void-like purposelessness felt by the modern subject. Warhol came to realize that the things we consume, and the people we consume as things, become personified and deified. The Brilo box or Campbell’s soup or celebrity starlet can become just as ubiquitous and deified as the Holy Spirit. When you mass produce a thing via mechanical reproduction, you have in a sense infused that thing with a globalized aura of deification. Through an object’s ubiquitous seriality and function within the life-blood of a society’s economy and culture, objects become like divine entities<sup>[3]</sup>.

Warhol drew a frame or bracket around the banal and mass-produced “thing in the world” and put it into the art process and context as an object of contemplation. The old signifiers of spiritual importance have now been deconstructed in the modern world, and replaced with new ones, to which Warhol gives an impartial and extensive artistic lens to. The dead celebrity

becomes the new stained-glass saints of the modern world. Media replicates the image, and then these images creates an ersatz “larger than life” deity of the celebrity. Warhol would play with silk screen negatives and different copies of celebrities, thus stating that the copy of a product or person is what is most meaningful to us, not the actual person, but our own mass-produced, yet individualized copy of a modern icon. They are Dionysian, filled with life and frivolity, yet the actual person is more unremarkably empty and banal, or plagued by demons that usually accompany being a modern celebrity; Warhol painted these movie stars and musicians as immortal gods, but through repeated prints, he cleverly depreciated them by printing negatives and faded screen prints that are purposely degraded, usually in a black and white frame next to the colorful originals. Warhol is saying to us that yes, we have replaced the monotheistic Godhead of old with a crop of resurgent neo-pagan celebrity gods, but these ones bath in modern media and mechanization, and in time will be revealed as impermanent.



Warhol gave rare glimpses into the feelings and thought-processes behind his enigmatic studio artistic practices, and the quote that best summarizes his artistic trajectory is thus:

*“Everybody has their own America, and then they have pieces of a fantasy America that they think is out there but they can’t see...So the fantasy corners of America...you’ve pieced them*

*together from scenes in movies and music and lines from books. And you live in your dream America that you've custom-made from art and schmaltz and emotions just as much as you live in your real one."*[\[4\]](#)

## **Warhol and Christ**

As an artist, Warhol's work shows an obsession with death and the mortification of both religious and secular iconography. Near the end of his life before his early death, Warhol re-evaluated the very sources of his artistic inspiration, and became obsessed in the 80s with reprinting and re-configuring the image of Christ, more specifically, Da-Vinci's famous Last Supper painting. Warhol would attend daily mass regularly, then go back the art factory and create more series of prints based on the last supper, this time with a less neon color palette, often using muted golds and earth tones found in the Byzantine Catholic iconography he was surrounded by during his upbringing[\[5\]](#).



*Warhol on his last visit to the Vatican display of his large screen print of the last supper, 1987.*

Warhol would also do a series of prints that focused on the Christ-image in his signature style of American Kitsch. One piece placed the faces of Christ in juxtaposition with American motorcycles, a red eagle and a 6.99 price tag. By placing the figure of Christ within the iconic image's of 60s American consumerism and excess, Warhol is entering Christ into the dialogue of modern living via an artistic frame of reference. Warhol is careful to be impartial here, he is stating that the icon of old (Christ), and of the world of tradition is now coming into dialogue once more in the collective psyche, but this time is clashing and bleeding into the new gods of western consumer capitalism.



Warhol is making a comment on American society currently, stating that the Honda motorcycle is "like an angel's wing next to Christ." Americans worship the speed and intensity of open highways, of faced-paced consumption and economic efficiency. Even a device as complex as a motorcycle can be mass-produced and ready for purchase anywhere[6]. Furthermore, Warhol, in the mere act of printing the famed image of Christ, is trying to demonstrate that the only way most moderns can understand the revitalized image of Christ is by placing Him within the same artistic current as any other celebrity or iconic modern figure. Marilyn Monroe, Elvis and Christ all envelop the modern pantheon of our cultural zeitgeist. What is remarkable about Warhol's use of the Christ-image is that he is not simply and crassly

deprecating it like other in vogue performance and conceptual artists, who love demonstrating their derivative, and ultimately nihilistic acts of artistic iconoclasm against Christianity. What Warhol is doing instead is coming to terms with the modern, celebrity-driven profane reality of the world, and through profane artistic means, Warhol attempts to resurrect Christ once more for a modern audience. This makes his work as reactionary and against the current as any meme-maker and reactionary internet troll of today.



[1] [https://capp-usa.org/contemporary\\_issues/19](https://capp-usa.org/contemporary_issues/19)

[2] <http://catholicherald.co.uk/issues/february-9th-2018/andy-warhols-devotion-was-almost-surreal/>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b1egysFRoY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkTk7IT9Xbg&t=272s>

[4] Warhol, Andy. *America*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

[5] <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-finearts-warhol/show-unveils-andy-warhols-catholic-abstract-side-idUSTRE65A43C20100611>

[6] <https://www.themodern.org/blog/Mixing-Christ-and-Commercialism-Warhols-Last-Supper-1986/136>



**ODDITIES AND EXTRAS.**



Entitled "*Smooth and the Striated*" (2014)".

## **Media Gaze and the Incel Other: Appendix, On Volcels (Part 3 uncompleted).**

This is my third and hopefully final part of my Incel series. Frankly thus far I have talked quite a bit about the politics surrounding incels, and I have (once again I am stating this) taken great pains to distance myself from the various reprobates found within the Incel Community. I don't really consider myself an Incel, and frankly to me the terminology is insufficient for reasons that I will get into here, or rather, it is a problem of mindset; this installment will be a fair bit more disjointed or "point form", as I wish to reflect overall on the incel phenomenon, and possibly address incels directly.

It is true that the sexual revolution had bred disastrous consequences for society and for the inner life of both men and women, and it is true that the "sexual marketplace" (for lack of a better term), has been rendered entirely anarchic and lacking in any coherent set of standards. Women are lost, men are lost equally, and ideological distortions of the modern world has fuelled the resentment and frustration felt by incels, Radfems and a whole host of people who occupy the spaces of fringe ideologies. Everyone seems to have their group to blame for this, and some culprits are more responsible than others. Even questioning the orthodoxy of post-sexual revolution social norms is a charge of wrong think, so I shall attempt to tread lightly in this regard.

incels are correct that only the few of the male species are being pursued by the "empowered" majority of the female species, and they may be correct that this dynamic is entirely unsustainable and socially catastrophic in the long run. What incels do not get is that there was never a nirvanic state of past social-sexual equity of distribution for men, men were always "disposable", and societies are largely "gynocentric" by design. The MGTOW/Incels are



infuriated by this notion for obvious reasons, and the intersectional feminists (be they post-modern or otherwise), take umbrage with this assertion as well, because it would supplant their historicist worldview of patriarchal oppression. Men cared for women in society, and of course this is not to excuse genuine oppression and hatred, but surely there is a more nuanced view of historical gender-relations than the linear view of oppression, than the transition towards “progress”, in whatever shape and form that may be, since the definition of progress seems to be the most fluid of concepts depending on what issues are being pushed in the mainstream.

The problem with incel thinking (from a traditionalist perspective) is that it buys into the same liberal view of gender relations and history they claim to rebel against. In traditional societies, it was only natural that men be expendable and carry the brunt of the arduous tasks of building and maintaining civilization, and there were no guarantees that each man would find meaningful relationships in family life. However, according to Incels, things were better because men found it easier to simply find women when they were not in a state of “entitlement” like they are in the present day. again, this is only approximating truth. What MGTOWs and Incels forsake is the supreme responsibility and commitment men had to make in the past, and how sexuality of both men and women were regulated by parents, family, and the greater community. Both Radfems and Incels seem to think that equality of outcomes in sexual partners is a given, with no strings attached. Of course, radical feminists see it different (horseshoe theory is of course false more times than it is right), and incels seem to complain that they are not getting a piece of the action that modernity offers to the newly “sexually liberated” western subject.

Incels do exhibit an entitlement-complex, and instead of reaching for self-improvement like the more loftier segments of the manosphere <sup>102</sup>, they take up pick-up artistry, and wallow in the mire of desolate self-hatred, as any stroll through the “feels threads” of /r9k/ on 4chan will clearly show. This is a generalization, and there is a minority of incels who genuinely are hateful and self-destructive and should not be exposed to an internet culture that feeds off of their cynicism and nihilistic desires for revenge and whole-sale misery. Incels in turn should focus on becoming VOCELS (voluntary celibates), at least as a temporary solution to the inner turmoil and dejection that comes with sometimes life-long loneliness and depression. But why should this be a transitional goal? And what really is the difference between incels and Volcels?

The Volcel does not relish in despair, but their own value and inner self-worth and self-esteem. The Volcel in turn takes up a project of monumental self-overcoming, often (and with a countermove of the Nietzschean Overman) received in the light of a religious and spiritual tradition. The Volcel reconciles the many true observations incels have of post-sexual revolution society, weeds out the exaggerations and harmful ruminations on these bitter and black pilling truths, and responds with an intelligence and intuitiveness to the situation young men find themselves in. This alone can be very difficult for depressed, bitter, dysphoric men, men “on the spectrum” or with severe emotion and personality disorders, or even physical body issues. But Volcels perseveres to improve their bodies, minds and souls. Because the alternative is often misery, accepting companionship from less than satisfactory companions or women with severe issues themselves, or committing to some impossible ideologically driven task. This would be

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<sup>102</sup> despite several criticisms I have of the manosphere in general, there are some who do wish to focus on self-improvement and being at peace with not being apart of the hookup culture and the hypersexual society we seem to be enveloped by.

playing into the folly that other, more top-echelon social brahmin caste identity groups possess. That being a commitment not to changing one's self, but taking on the herculean task of changing society, tradition, and the order of things around them, to the point of emphatic and blind, empty-headed acceptance from the grand other at all costs.

Therefore, being Volcel is not a program, it should not be some self-help scheme or Guru worship mindset (kill your Gurus). Volceldom is a state of being that reflects one's existential comportment, action and growth towards a state of existence that radiates with the growth of the soul. To be content as a virgin or without sex is a lack, a monumental lack no doubt, for it is within our nature to seek the other half of our being. But it is a lack that mustn't crush the soul under the weight of its own black poisoned cloud of self-doubt, mental anguish and loneliness. Volceldom merely promises contentment within one's self, to not "become worthy" for the other, but to find worth in one's self.

## **The Skyscrapers look like Gravestones from Here. An Exegesis of Pig City, Plato's Republic, Book II.**

What is society? A rather broad question, one in which humanity has pondered upon, and has come to a diversity of opinions, both good and bad, for time millennium. But what is a just society? To keep this philosophic question in a humanistic perspective, can society be little more than the citizens that make up the bodies and structures of such a society? In the Republic, it is evident that Plato is trying to exemplify the concept that if the citizen's and their ethical/soulful makeup is of such character: that harmony, justice, and virtue can flourish in an ideal city. But before Plato (speaking through Socrates) can work out the essential aspects of the ideal city, he and Glaucon muse upon the mode of a city that comes before the revered and perfected Kallipolis, that of the "City of Pigs" or Swillsburg. By describing the make-up of this city and exploring the role it plays in the rest of the republic, we shall clearly see the intent of Plato in outlining a proto city before his main philosophic project in the rest of the Republic.

### **What is Swillsburg?**

In chapter II of the Republic, both Socrates and Adeimantus start out with the project of constructing the ideal city. What Socrates first pictures is a rustic or agrarian city, filled with humble and virtuous people that (more or less) follow a strict specialization of the various tasks required within this community. They eat in the right proportion, never indulging in more than their fair share, and are different people suited for different tasks, but share a common interest among each other, or what is called a harmony of interests. There are merchants and traders,

farmers and farm hands, etc.<sup>103</sup>. But the key is that all can live within the city of pigs so long as each can amicably live within each other's shared common interests.

However, despite the seemingly positive approach Socrates takes towards the City of Pigs, Glaucon takes a more pessimistic view, stating that this is in fact, not the root of the ideal city, but rather a vivid picture of the origination of a bad city, or what he calls the city of Luxuriousness. People will inevitably break free of their agrarian circumstances with surplus value, and their traders will go to other more populous cities, seeking better goods, finer wines, and more quality products, such as meat, furniture, etc. And eventually will be in the throes of greater multitudes of desires for frivolous and petty things and will value luxury and comfort over the steadfast and humble lifestyle from which they came<sup>104</sup>. All pretensions of civility and restraint are obliterated in Swillsburg, as the gates are open to newer and more exotic forms of living. The people will eventually swell in population, and will work not out of mutual interest, but competitive greed and self-grandeur. The calm and relatively peaceful City of Pigs transitions into a bloated and festering mass to Glaucon, diseased by the lusts and undying desires of humanity<sup>105</sup>. The bloated city of luxury is anathema to everything the ideal city stands for, where a complete overrun of the desiring part of man's soul/psyche overtakes the rational capacity. The equilibrium in the city of Pigs is easily disturbed as another stream of order, or rather disorders, enters the veins of a culture and a people who are easily given to foreign and vapid pleasantries. For Plato this not only serves as an example of where human mutual interest can be led astray, but also the state of the human condition when there are no proper societal

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<sup>103</sup>Plato. *The Republic*. Ed. Ferrari, G.R.F. Cambridge University Press. 2000. Pg. 51-53, 370a-371c.

<sup>104</sup>Plato, Pg. 53-55. 371c-373b.

<sup>105</sup>Plato, Pg. 56-57. 373b-374d.

mechanisms in place to keep people away from their impulsive gluttonous or lustful desires. However, it is a curious build up towards the ideal city from Swillsburg for several reasons.

### **What Is the Use of Swillsburg?**

The City of Pigs serves as a vital first step in understanding (or rather illustrating) the Tripartite theory of the city and the soul in later passages of the republic. The appetitive part overtakes reason, and each faculty must be brought into harmony in order to function as the best possible level of justice and harmony. Plato does not automatically demonize human nature or the plight of human existence (as others have done, I.E. Hobbes and Schopenhauer) but rather pictures life as being given towards a harmonious existence, but corrupted and brought into ill repute by the limitless nature of desire. This turbulence of desire and moral weakness is only brought to its depths if there is no inherent control put in place within a city or a self to curb such machinations<sup>106</sup>. However, this presents a more nuanced setup for the rest of the imagined city in *The Republic*, because so far it seems the citizens of the City of Pigs can and do control their desires and value their mutual self-interest up to a point. They do not have luxurious desires at the same time as the bloated city and seem content in a more simplistic way of life. Plato in the end does proclaim through example that this city cannot last (even if it is stated that it lasts for generations) as all systems of political order inevitably decline and fall, but the intent rather says more on the nature of human desire, and the inevitability of the fallen state of humanity, regardless of trade being introduced. The linchpin in the decline of this example city in Swillsburg is human desire above all else, and not the more simplistic expropriation of foreign

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<sup>106</sup>Mckeen, Catharine. *Swillsburg City Limits ('City OF Pigs': Republic 307C-372D)*. Polis, Vol 21, Iss.1. 2004. Pg. 76-77.

ideals and luxuries alone (even if they defiantly are a factor) on an impressionable people, hence the reason for the Guardians and auxiliaries<sup>107</sup>.

The guardians seem to enter this conversation at the crucial moment of transition between two cities, and their final upheaval and perfection in Kallipolis, which will be the strength and breath of enforcing social cohesion to such an extent that the problems of dangerous influences like luxurious trade and deficient education will be avoided<sup>108</sup>. This is for good reason, since a community has the biggest concern towards unity, as Plato makes abundantly clear. Nothing can affect a community more than disunity or competing social interests. Yet at the same time social functions must be allocated via specialization, where each member has specific task in which the functions of society run efficiently and according to social needs. There is this fundamental unity in Swillsburg, a rough form of social welfare, and allocation of duties based on certain skills and occupations like farming and animal husbandry, despite the natural inclination towards self – interest. It is also in this framework that trade would be the thing which seeds the end for the city of Pigs, despite lasting relatively stable for generations. Hence Plato sets up a unique problem for himself since trade is a necessity for any city, therefore the need of the guardian class and the system set up in the Kallipolis would ward off this paradoxical situation that Swillsburg finds itself in. Citizens at this stage of political development, seek trade with other more inflamed cities out of self-interest, rather than what benefits the community in toto. However, despite the eventual collapse of social unity, the citizens of Swillsburg are not as easily given to this new way of decadence, since they continue to have a thriving marketplace and community for some time, even after the introduction of trade<sup>109</sup>. The goal, it seems for Plato, is to not return, or in

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<sup>107</sup>Mckeen, Pg. 79-80.

<sup>108</sup>Republic, Pg. 59-61. 374e-377c.

<sup>109</sup>Mckeen, Pg. 83-85.

some way appropriate the former rustic communal living of the City of Pigs, for the Kallipolis would be far too advanced of a community to simply rely on mutual interest alone to produce social harmony. Rather the logical step for Plato would be to point out the consequences of such a society, despite its relative peace and harmony, for a time, without the proper instruction and vigilant steadfastness of a guardian class. As they have attuned their interests to what is good for the city as a whole and not for themselves, as individual thoughts towards self-interest would be eliminated from their mental palette as it were.

The goal of setting out the City of Pigs as an example of a society that can achieve a social order, albeit and imperfect one, is fundamental in understanding Plato's view of human nature and social interaction. Plato shows that the people value a social order and a view to what is rightly done for its own sake as the example of proper ethical practice. They follow the system of specialization of tasks and have insight in simple living, and humble interaction with others. This may go astray eventually, but this lays the potentiality for the perfected city, since these people have the groundwork within them to reach such heights of perfection with the proper instruction and selfless virtue of the guardian class looking out for any obstacle that can potentially obliterate the harmony achieved in Kallipolis<sup>110</sup>.

In conclusion, the City of Pigs serves a vital role in showing Plato's approach to the human condition within a simplistic societal system. He shows how this society can become inflamed and overrun with desire and fall in their abandonment of mutual interest of harmonious living. This sets the stage for the guardian class to educate the people, and to prevent their desires from getting a hold of the other parts within their soul, individually and collectively.

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<sup>110</sup>Mckeen, Pg. 91-80.



## **Autotheism for Dummies: New Age Transcendent “Science” (Forum post, Spring 2017).**

I find it interesting every time I read Kurzweil; I keep coming back to similar criticisms of the whole modern phenomenon of placing one’s faith in a future tech utopian schema. I remember one time in class a few years ago, me and my advisor/mentor professor Dalvi were discussing science and Aristotle with a few others, and it came to the topic of science fiction and the debate over the big bang, the singularity, etc. and He said something quite interesting about these fedora clad types who place a religious fervor on a linear timeframe of scientific progress (that is if we don’t muff things up as a species to the point where progress in tech and science would be rendered impossible) that the haggling over these issues obsessively, the endless bromides written about future VR and trans-human quasi sci-fi technology by the likes of Kurzweil are akin to “metaphysics for people who don’t want to believe in God”. We all had a good laugh at this cynical humorous remark, but it really stuck with me, especially after reading into Kurzweil more.

In his Documentary, Kurzweil remarked “I don’t quite believe in God...yet”. When reading *The Singularity Is Near*, you can get why some accuse the tech luminary of creating a quasi cult-like belief set, archiving god-hood the likes of which the Vedantic scholars could have never foresee, and when the popularizer of eastern wisdom Alan Watts said “well simply put, you are God”, the transhumanists take this as a challenge rather than a profound emanation of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. but let us be so bold as to ask, in this secular post-modern apathetic age, what are the implications of this line of thinking “on our own souls” as it were? Are we so brazen in our hubris, so sure in our technical ability that we can craft an ersatz immortality and breath life to the cosmos, while presupposing no life is there to begin with? And

if so, does this transhumanist project of lifting off the species into hyperspace compensate for our own spiritual malaise or pervasive feeling of nihilism in the modern world? Or is it another instance of the “denial of death” as Ernest Becker put it, an elaborate and complex way of warding off our inevitable immortality? Or perhaps a combination of these things.

Of course, the scientism advocates and the transhumanists themselves see criticisms of their accelerationist project as little more than a reactionary final gasp of curmudgeonly, a hollow wail of people “against progress”, because as Horkheimer and Adorno have made explicit in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*: reifying progress, efficiency, and ultimately domination is the main thrust of the post-enlightenment modern world. We dare not question “progress”, for this would be “anti-science”, so we go along blindly never questioning the ethereal and humanist power we place in the progress of science, even if we factor in the sorted infamous double-nature of science and technology, I.E. its capture by tyrannical life-destroying forces and groups, and its liberatory aspects that have bettered humanity. But should we not be concerned that, like any utopian scheme, there is a potential for even newer forms of domination, serfdom and abuse with the advent of “God-like” technology? And should we not be concerned with the forces who are promoting and controlling this technology? Sure, the plebeian majority of humanity can be plugged into the VR interface, indulge in a simulated nirvana while becoming human batteries, while Kurzweil and his corporate masters get to frolic in the stars of newly sentient eternity. This may be a cynical vision, but if we are dealing with the possibilities of science fiction, we should be prudent in contemplating the possibilities of the dystopian fiction genre as well.

## **Drugged into opulence: Another View on Pharmacopeia. (forum post, Spring 2017).**

In all of the readings from the “Bio Conservatives” have been an emphasis on agency and human freedom, how new advances in Transhuman and enhancement technology will rob humanity of their core dignity and agency, how the shadowy forces of this world will ultimately steer new advances in technology towards an ever increasing amount of domination and control over the subject, as they are using current advances in pharmaceutical technology to achieve this very goal.

The question brought up by Kass to me seems like a theological one as much as it is a moral one. What is it that keeps us in tuned with the spiritual reality? What methods have ancient humanity procured to keep in touch with “Sophia Perennis” as Huxley called it? From Fukuyama to Sandel and Kass, the Bio-conservatives critique the various pharmacological methods used for the purposes of docility, servitude and simulated bliss. In Huxley’s brave new world, society is organized around this chemical intervention, SOMA is used to drug the masses in obedience and oblivion, however the duality of such interventions has always been present in archaic societies; by this duality we observe how various psychotropic substances can produce control and obedience, or emotive and spiritual liberation. Such is the case in the last book Huxley wrote as an extension of Brave New World called *Island*. An island of fugitive freedom and micro-power, a breaking free from the stratum of power as Deleuze might word it, where society is based around an entheogenic psychedelic substance that produces profound spiritual and philosophic insight. *Island* exists in the control frame of Brave new world but has managed to maintain a semblance of autonomy. The society of island also reverses the dangerous control mechanisms of brave new world: sex is enjoyed, a form of ritual among loved ones, instead of a mechanism of

control via cheap and lawless anarchic desires (like Plato's analysis of democracy, the appetitive individual lives for freedom, but freedom to indulge in soul-polluting hedonism, and as Huxley stated, we will be controlled by what we "love" instead of what we hate). In Island, there is ritual and initiatory rites from both the east and west, whilst in brave new world the population is kept rootless, directionless and shallow.

This leads us back to the critique of pharmacological intervention made by the Bio conservatives. Like every form of technology, it is the society that utilizes new advances. If we have a grounded traditional culture that produces people who desire simplicity and wisdom, we will have drugs that can enhance the positive nature of humanity and serve as tools of insight into greater spiritual growth. But if we have a materialistic and morally apathetic society, one that has whole generations of people without purpose, direction or moral standards, that live for pleasure and convenience above all else, then we get a brave new world. The debate over advances in technology almost seem futile in some ways, people inherently love convenience (by people I mean us in the west) and will plug themselves in to whatever piece of dignity-thrashing technology that blurs the lines between unique human and mass-man, just so long as this new therapy or drug or technology promises to satiate our self-interested efficiency-instinct. I.E. it can fulfill all of our worldly hopes and desires with little to no struggle or arduous effort on our part. I am well aware this is a cynical view, but perhaps going through the better part of 50 years with these entheogens being widely available we would have tuned in and dropped out our way towards a better tomorrow, maybe McKenna was right, the 60s was a failed alchemical experiment, and the psychedelic experiences had do not produce profound insight without the right mindset, but merely produce hipsters touring the amazon for a new fix of temporary uncanny wonder, the way resort tourists buy trinkets from the locals to take back home.

**EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL: how Scott's *seeing like a state* has found a hidden point of discourse. (Forum Post, Spring 2017).**

Without going into too much detail, I have enjoyed this work of James c. scott fir its ability to (maybe without the author knowing) finding the one point of contention that unites seemingly antithetical and even hostile intellectual traditions: that is, anarchists on the left (such as Scott himself), post-structuralists such as Harding, Foucault and Deleuze, and neo-reactionaries/ right wing anarchists such as Moldberg, Hans Herman-Hoppe and Evola (and even non-moderns such as Latour while we are at it) see fundamental problems in modernity, and specifically high tech, western modernism.

The easiest observation would be that Scott falls upon the same or similar insights to Latour, in that tracing the forestry practises that emerged under the Prussian state (a new discourse as Foucault would readily point out) for tax purposes and to have control over the peasantry, the efficiency discourse of modernity was in part conceived. The high modernism flattens local traditions, creates an easily universalized and enframing set of discourses that can be endlessly repeated, and lands a strikingly similar critique to the power/knowledge period of Foucault (a fact which he acknowledges on pg. 23). Yet Scott's work is a thesis of failure, high modernism as simply failed in its utopian statist project, its ability to capture every aspect of life and culture in a singular discourse of power under the state apparatus has led to disastrous consequences, the destruction of traditional ways of being (facts which the neo-reactionaries relish in. the Prussian state implementing a regulatory regime over forestry is one among many examples, even a watershed example, of the workings of the various regimes of truth in industry, schooling, regimented military life, etc.. as well as the flattening of ecological knowledge, which has led to the simplified and unsustainable state of consumer animals, deaths of rare species of

plant life, and oncological damage (it is interesting how the insights of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century post-structuralism can be applied to ecology as well, Deleuze has a wide breathe of ecological and biological metaphors, as well as theorists like David Abram and Daniel Quinn).

Harding comes into play in the chapters dealing with what Scott calls Metis knowledge, a form of teche, localized knowledge, traditional practises that eventually defy the epistemologically flattening discourses of high modernism. Harding and her anthropological bent is a good kinship to what Scott is aiming for her, to bring in other forms of knowledge, other processes apart from the science sand technology (and the various operationalized discourses behind such advancements), even if the moderns feel themselves, a point Latour and Scott agree on, to be “above” or somehow apart from the metis “primitivism”. But furthermore, Scott is setting up a distinction of praxis and knowledge that would find harmony not just with Harding but also with Deleuze and Guattari; the various forms of minority knowledge and minority discourse, what D and G call Nomadology, like Bedouins in the desert, move around in smooth space, finding their way through the cracks and fissures of what they call the state model of power, the state apparatus, what Scott calls high modernism! This can be literal or metaphysical, literal in the sense that all peoples and cultures that fall outside of high modernism (to D and G) are engaged in their various Metis practises, in lines of flight away from the strata, the striated spaces of the state/high modernist discourse. It is also metaphysical or figurative in the sense of the mental disposition of various anarchists, rebels, revolutionaries and spiritual ascetics that actively defy the conditioning of modernism and the state model, even if this defiance and resistance is fugitive and temporary; Think of Foucault’s work, the machinations and discourses of power are the points of striation, working on the smooth space, regulating it and regimenting it, only to have the minority politics of the nomads, the metis, recapture and Deterritorialized

those striated spaces once more, this is the same picture I think Scott is attempting to get at with the failings of the state.

Finally, the free-market right-anarchists, neo-primitivism and the schools of the neo-reactionary movement would find some points of agreement with Scott's attack on high modernism and its effects on the human subject. The social engineers and their "busy-body consciences" as C.S. Lewis said, are always among us, and after time, we internalize their discourses within our own condition of being and subjectivity. It would however, be interesting to discuss how he saves face by saying the exact same limitations present in a society made up by rigorous state central planning and social engineering are equally found in free-market liberal societies such as those proposed by right-anarchists or Chicago school types like Hayek and Friedman. Apart from this point of contention, diverse political ideologies can find refuge in Scott's criticism of the modern world.

**Zen Flesh, Zen strokes: aesthetic haecceities of subjectivity. (Forum post, Spring 2017).**

Deleuze and Guattari outline one of the most powerful philosophic treatises of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The opening chapter sets up the basic rhizomatic dichotomy between the molar root tree arborescence (or the state model) and the deterritorialized rhizome, the nomadic model of interrelations, networks and lines of flight on a stratum or plane of imminence (17). But this is rather not a dichotomy so much as a dynamic movement between various modes of being, what is deterritorialized can be reterritorialized, rhizomatic outlets or fissures crossing into tree-state structures. The hierarchical systems of being developed in an arborescent schema orders, confines, and channels the flows of desires, intensities and haecceities (the entities in themselves) on a plane or stratum piling onto one another in a multiplicity or sedimentary layer (pg. 12-13). But one passage in *A Thousand Plateaus* that always struck me (and that I have been doing work on for a long time) is the passage in the introduction about the east, the orient, and the great wisdom traditions of Zen and Taoism; namely that the eastern sentiment possesses a rhizomatic character, whereas the west is thoroughly captured in the arborescent state-model, we are trees to put it bluntly. Rather, we express ourselves in this hierarchical and rigidified fashion, our beliefs in the spiritual are hierarchical in nature, our identifies are stratified into channels limiting the flows of speeds, desires and the rates of intensities within multiplicities, whereas the east embraces segments for rhizomatic flow, lines of flight in one's own being that do not reproduce any particular arborescent structure (pg. 18-19), call this what you will, moksha, liberation, Buddha-nature, etc.

Let us examine the phrase from verse 21 of the Tao Te Ching "If you want to become full, let yourself be empty. If you want to be reborn, let yourself die" and then verse 22 "Be like



the forces of nature: when it blows, there is only wind; when it rains, there is only rain; when the clouds pass, the sun shines through". Both Taoism and D and G share the project of the body without organs, the rhizomatic character of fluid, fibrous being, or in other words, empty yourself to rearrange intensities and channels of flows within you, take a line of flight, Deterritorialize yourself based on nature, the nature Zen and Taoism reveres, for it is absolutely deterritorialized. The Taoist fluidity of being is an eastern companion to the concept of the rhizome, of multiplicities that continually change and transform, becoming without falling into another molar form. the continual transformation of one's self is expressed most acutely in the sacred art of both the east and of the south.

For instance, the Amazonian shaman takes on animalistic form to become as fluid and transparent as the whole of nature, the multiplicity of being, such as various mythic formations of werewolves, they must continually stray the line of transformation and human form, they do not transform and take on lines of flight, so they fade away (pg. 248-249). The shaman takes on a line of flight by expressing animal form, by chanting Icaro songs to further make the mind amiable to tapping into the inherent vitality and dynamism of nature and its animalistic representatives, thus in a shamanic session several different Icaro songs are chanted to inhibit this cross-rhizome fusion of entities. An emotive bond between nature and shaman is inculcated, the vocal cords and tribal songs Deterritorialize the vocal cords, rip holes and fissures of transformative lines of flight into the molarity of a shaman or "person". It is no wonder D and G were fond of the shamanic traditions and utilized their expressive and aesthetic modes of being, along with their inherent expression of dynamic naturalism.

Art is being, art is a fundamentally transformative practise for shamanic tribes, no different then any other religious or fundamental material practise. Thus, D and G open up

comparative religious venues, because in the east a similar sentiment on the nature of art is expressed, that sentiment being namely the recognition that art is not a separate reified object of exploration, but integral to Zen and Taoist practise as much as chanting, fasting and the exegesis of liturgical/religious doctrines are.

The artistic project of Zen and Taoist landscape ink painting for instance, opens these rhizomatic possibilities in the artist, being sinks into nature, into the dynamic channels and flows of intensities. As Suzuki outlines, Zen art is thoroughly natural and simplistic in character, that our nature is embodied in nature, and that Zen practise is action-orientated, and not merely conceptual or acetic (*Zen and Japanese Culture*, Pg. 350-351). Zen practise wishes to tap into a deeper connectivity with life and nature, and therefore the project of the Zen practitioner is to “make one’s life a work of art” to make one’s existence in tune with the dynamism of nature and the “great void” (Zen, Pg. 15-17).

Thus, Zen art such as the Koan and Haiku produces sudden awaking, an emptying of being, and expression of becomings in Satori, and the realization of the impermanence and permeability of all things (Zen, Pg. 250-252). . Zen and Taoist art is thoroughly intuitive in nature, following the essential dynamism of the natural world. For instance, the “pregnancy of the great void” Suzuki talks of is the void of the artist, the void of potentiality and rhizomatic lines of flight in the eastern painter or poet. The inner intuition is a project western abstract artists have obsessed over, but ultimately try to force, thus producing intellectualized and overtly rigid artistic works, whereas the Zen painter or poet is in tune with a natural fluidity, such as the Chinese painter using diluted washes of ink to suggest mist and mountains that appear to stretch for a thousand miles. The painter does not merely represent nature in the east, but intuits the

natural world, meditates and sinks one's being into the image

(<http://brooklynrail.org/2009/02/artseen/art-koans-zen-and-the-tao-in-conceptual-art>).

Here we come back to D and G, Zen and Taoist art is a process of finding multiplicity, of transforming one's being into the body without organs, of freely rearranging the chaotic entities of one's own non-being into a transformative union with the void and ever-flowing dynamism of nature. The Shaman does this through song, dance and plant, the Zen and Taoist painter disrupts the molar and arborescent character of being by practising the work of intuitive painting. In eastern ink landscapes, there is always "more to come" more lines of flight and shifting multiplicities such as the mountains and pine trees crawling back and forth out of the diluted ink and chaotic strokes of Sesshu's landscapes. (as seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxEAkTK48s>).

might i also add that D and G too expounds upon the absolute movement of sound present in the works of John Cage, a practitioner of Zen Buddhism, an artist that found direct inspiration from the art forms of the east. the "absolute state of movement" present in his works mimics that of the movement of a Zen Koan, the movement suggested in the ink landscape, as art produces a hint into the state of absolute Deterritorialization. however we must express this is a natural and intuitive sentiment in Zen and Taoist art, conceptualism and abstraction in the west may claim to be tapping into a similar feeling or set of intensities, but ultimately intellectualizes and reifies the work by treating it as a singular entity of "unconsciousness in art" or automatism. the modern artists are trying to capture a sense of inner nature in art, but go about it in a detached and even tree-like manner, placing down automatic unguided strokes, but not having the intention of expressing intuitive nature in those strokes. hence why the eastern artist does not fully give up representation for "pure" abstraction, that would be cutting off their most valued

resource, the concealment and revealing of an image, the "breath" of mountain lines in a Chinese ink painting, the faded and strong passages of ink placed together, it is the dual action of the Tao, wedded to representation and then exploding it so new images can be suggested, not obliteration representation all together in some intellectual aesthetic style of "resistance and deconstruction". the Zen artist does not "deconstruct" the image but gives it its vital full breath and intensity by leaving images intentionally sparse, deconstruction implies a revolutionary project instead of a natural one.

**Look here, look there, QUATZ. Zen mind nature. (Forum post, Spring 2017).**

Timothy Morton's paper was an interesting take on speculative realism and the problem with both classic naturalism, materialism and reductionism on one hand, and the deconstructive concept of non-nature on the other. Nature is correlationist, at least our conception of it, it is "out there", separate from us. We write about it (Eco mimesis) but the love of nature is clouded by our words, our reified conception of nature. We love putting nature in a box, we cannot fathom the half-life of plutonium or the effects of large ecological future events, who knows. Perhaps we would not be around, or maybe the promethean overman will take our place and be adapted to contemplate such cosmic abstractions.

He then posits that OOO and speculative realism lets us go deeper into things, objects relating to other objects, quantum entanglement theory, escaping the predicate that we are separate observers or wayfarers floating above the workings of the earth. Reality always has a dark side, a "strange stranger" aspect that does not become a nihilist totality, or privileges us as observers, objects encounter one another, we do not shelf ourselves off from "nature", etc. in fact nature as we see it does not exist, it is an abstraction, conflated with all the other meta-abstractions of deconstructionist theory. Therefore, Morton mentions the poem by Levertov, nature itself writes already, the act of writing is "in" nature because our humanly act is not radically outside the reified picture of nature as such.

What interests me is that one could play in these relations in terms of aesthetics, or more specifically, the place of art with nature. Now perhaps the classic landscape is this romanticist "beautiful soul" type of art that wishes to remind up of and reclaim nature, whilst at the same time reaffirming the separation of nature from us. This may be true, or perhaps in those moments

of plein air painting one sinks back into a deeper relation with the objects of nature by expressing them with paint and stroke. But let us look to “primordial” artistic expressions in the east, namely the aesthetic sensibility shared in both the Zen Koan and the Chinese ink landscape; the Zen Haiku poem is a direct expression of nature with a cutting word, an emotive end of a verse. More importantly to Zen practise, a natural motion, action or affect that expresses the sum totality of all things. The haiku and Koan parable is deliberately simple and rustic (wabi-sabi or aloofness, incomplete and impermeant as all things are, no separation), lets nature “speak for itself” as it were, without any humanly pretensions.

The ink landscape is an art which sinks all things, human and natural object, into the same space of arising (full presence) and going out of being or concealing (the mystery, strange stranger aspect of nature OOO talks about). All in all, the simple art is one that is in tune with “nature”, we cannot even use the word, there is no “nature” per say. Hence the Zen practitioner or Taoist artist-age does not even recognize this fundamental artifice of separation, satori is an awakening back into everything, into “nature” or “the void” that is dynamic and creative and eternally replenished. All ideas that we can explore in terms of non-western aesthetic expressions. And of course, there have been many books written on the links between Taoism and Zen and quantum physics, especially the non-local entanglement principle. Since Zen also critiques a form of correlationism (at least in the sense those familiar with western philosophy, like Suzuki’s treatment of Kant for example) I wonder what speculative realism would say about the east!

PS. By QUATZ I mean the sudden and violent sound or mimicking of a sound (like MU) in a Koan or haiku that is supposed to wake you up out of the samsara egoic reality, and place you

into the vital spontaneity of all things. Like a Zen master hitting you with a cane after contemplating a seemingly absurd Koan, then the students achieve Satori, all is suddenly clear.

**The Animal in Art, The Monstrous in life: Our dynamic relation to Aesthetic Animality. (Forum post, Spring 2017).**

Before I begin some thoughts, I had whilst reading the first half of the Sunaura Taylor article, I must say there are a few (perhaps more) points of contention about her style of analysis that I would disagree, specifically around her analysis of nature. There are some (emphasis on some) arguments that can be made about nature and our subjectivity that are entirely reasonable. I perhaps view my brand of reactionary thought as a middle way between problematic blank-slate social contract claims of liberalism, specifically that society was some conscious choice, and the similar claims of dialectical Marxism. To me some organizations and ways of living do seem to be ingrained in humanity, some things we do out of an innate impulse. However, despite this, I find her claim in this regard, as someone who has pondered these questions of disability, life and care, and comparative religious teachings on such matters (especially within my own Catholic church), very compelling.

When we talk of human life that is disabled, we (as in a startling amount of people) frame it in terms of cost-benefit analysis, that is only “natural” these people die off, that to quote scrooge which summarizes this attitude: “it is best they die quickly to decrease the surplus population”. So, in the case of life, some say we might as well do what the Spartans did and throw disabled or otherwise less than perfect babies from cliffs! Or rather, what Taylor is exposing is the potentially monstrous thinking about a naturalistic argument in this regard. She also points out the links to eugenics, racism, colonialism, etc. how this line of thinking was often used to monster and suppress minorities. I can go on and on about the politics of these, but I think any decent human being could come up with the conclusion that people with all sorts of disabilities both mental and physical do need dignity and help, but (as my Friend Darryl who



does quite a bit of work in disability studies points out) balance this with a recognition of their autonomy as well (in other words, not patronizing them).

What really intrigued me is her as an artist, and what got me thinking was the history of our relation to animals (and by extension, our relation to disabled or othered people) through the evolution of art; it seems Humans have been expressing the animal figure in art since we have the sentient capacity to observe and draw with primitive tools. Take for instance the world's oldest cave paintings in the Herzog Documentary "Cave of Forgotten Dreams". Being a Jungian, I was intrigued for a long period with the exploration of the earliest forms of art, and in this the earliest forms of symbolism and mythos. The cave paintings were predominantly of Humanity's relation to the animal, to the awe-sublime of nature, the moving buffalo and deer, etc. humans are sunk into the integral make up of the animalistic natural world, and from this we see the various archetypal unconscious antipodes that are often wedded with animal imagery. In both the east and the west and the south, Humans have found spiritual expression in art and poetry in relation to the animal other, or rather, the symbiotic animal within us.

From the animal spirits of north and south American shamanic cultures, the Pagan cultures of Europe, to the various animals portrayed in Taoist and Zen ink paintings (and poetry, Basho's frog, Chunagzu's butterfly, etc.). animals have played a crucial role in spiritual expression through art for thousands of years. One could even see this in western Christianity, admittedly once removed from the world of nature, with the Augustinian distinction garnered from his reading of platonic philosophy, and the line from Genesis about humanity being the rightful inheritor of the earth and master of all in it. This phrase obviously has been terribly abused, and catholic and orthodox scholars still work over this question, concluding that this implies a stewardship of the earth besides crass exploitation.

But in art and in the written expressions of animals, we see a change in modernity, or at least within the last centuries. Animals become objects of fear, of exotic primal chaos, of beasts that can be hunted and tamed. The way animals were depicted in the colonial empires were no different then the way commissioned pieces of literature, field reports and even art depicted the subjugated colonial peoples. I disagree with some aspects of post-colonial studies, but this connection is compelling to say the least. The colonial powers did generate an immense amount of scholarship and anthropological data (I'm thinking of Frazer and Max Muller here) in regards to animist beliefs and religious rituals and practises in regards to the connection between humans and animals, and large collections of "colonial art" were collected.

But this was done with a colonial detachment and hubris to say the least, despite the information on tribal peoples being collected, there was still the perspective of the colonizer who filtered such information. All that being said, the turn in the depiction of animality in art went from the sacred to the profane; look at the illustrations of De Sade, the depictions of animal impulses and war in Goya, the fascination with the European colonial in literature going off to the "darkest lands" and bringing "civilization" to every corner of the world's no go zones etc. this is all using art to render people into the dreaded animal, ready to be exploited, beheaded, raped, etc. not to say this art is valueless, or we should censor art that does not live up to so-called modern standards, but we should recognize the crass abuses and misuses of these early modern artistic pieces. This was even the age as Taylor points out, of the freak show, animals who are broken into submission to do tricks, people broken by fate, deformity or otherwise into merely entertaining the upper-class bourgeois ticket holders. Our relation to the aesthetic animality in the human has changed to not a previous relation of sacred connection, but of exclusion and expulsion.

This leads me to modern depictions of the animal and Taylor's art herself. Looking at her art online, besides her clear technical proficiency, she is highlighting the worlds of animal suffering and callous cruelty that comes from the procedural and sanitized view of factory farming. We merely go about enframing the animal to the point of mechanized efficiency. Her animal paintings share a lot of themes and motifs of modern art, such as the shocking subject matter, and the highlighting of the grotesque. Of course, it is not a celebration of the grotesque as such, but an exposure of the grotesque reality between current animal-human relations mediated by modern technology and consumerism. Her color pallet is also very grim and dark, yet warm and sombre. She reminds me of the modernist painters who harken back to the dark earth tone palettes and chiaroscuro schemes of old masters like Rembrandt and Caravaggio. Painters like Francis Bacon, Odd Nerdrum, Lucian Freud, etc. the grime and stark color palette exposes a deeper reality to the modern world, and in a lot of ways defies the bold color and beauty of the impressionists and the romantics before them (at least this is what I gather from her animal paintings).

This leads me back to disability in another visual art form, that being the cinematic art form of urban exploration, the capturing of footage and photos from massive abandoned government institutions like clinics, mental asylums and children's state schools. In the various websites and YouTube channels of "urbex" participants, you can find the exploration of these abandoned institutions as carrying a social message, to highlight the incredible violations of human dignity that went on in these places. I have written an article on the political implications of the aesthetics of modern decay and Urbex (I will link to), wherein I link to stories of such abandoned institutions as Willowbrooke state school that was exposed by Geraldo Rivera in the 70s, and the Forest haven institution in DC closed in the early 90s after multiple decades of

horrendous state-sanctioned crimes against the infirmed mentally and physically disabled and dependant homeless people.

In my article, I call them literal human dumping grounds, were the superfluous are carried off to these caged pens by urbanite technocrats. Forest haven in particular was a black hole of humanity: the weak and underfed children and adults were left to wallow in their own filth, 1 nurse for every 30 patients, you would open a door as one volunteer recounted and you would suddenly see a darkened room with 80 gaunt and sick disabled and mentally arrested women coming at you begging for food or clothing like a scene from the holocaust. Adults kept in metal cribs, tiny prison cells that degenerated their bone structure, people washed dozens at a time with hoses like (emphasis) *Animals*. The nurses worked fast to feed everyone, often on their backs where many died due to asphyxia via eating while lying down. People died due to disease and weakness or abuse, being thrown into a mass grave at the back of the institution. Now that I have listened these horrors, it is not such a stretch to picture these horrors and the comparison to factory farming Taylor makes. The Urban explorers now work to comb through the catacombs of massive societal decay and failure. These were not the disabled systematically oppressed and killed in Nazi Germany, these were the disabled that were sent to be “treated” in Washington DC! Art continues to play a major role in exposing our nature to animals, and by virtue, our relation to the disabled among us.

1. My article: <http://thermidormag.com/a-cultural-phenomenology-of-urban-exploration-3/>
2. Forest haven Urbex photos with vivid history: <http://www.lovethepics.com/2014/05/abandoned-asylum-horrors-of-forest-haven-44-pics/>
3. Excellent investigative piece on forest haven: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCZHnfQAWjs>
4. Dan bell exploring forest haven (urbex is creepy asmr): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvbqJwcMYc>

## **Appendix to Nobody™ Exegesis: Nobody’s Place within the Contemporary Artworld.**

The video art of Nobody™ certainly is unique in its application of social commentary and spirituality, however, Video art is part of the wider field of “remix culture” as such. Starting out from its earliest forms in the 1970s with “music concrete”, or the physical manipulation of media to produce different sounds, remixing and re-appropriation of digital media has been a mainstay in underground culture, especially on the internet since the late 90s.

from its earliest inceptions, video art has always served as a form of anti-art, rebelling against the increased commercialization of modern art, choosing to manipulate the exposure and tactile nature of film, such as “Vertical Roller” by Joan Jonas that utilizes the exposure of different films rolled into one scene and various off-angle camera shots to produce the effect known as de-synchronization, challenging the objectivity of the main character by distorting the physical nature of film itself. Hence, Video art is always bound up in performative art, often to challenge social and power relations, expressed in a new tactile and physical manner as new technology came about that have artists the ability to manipulate sound and moving images<sup>111</sup>. The changing of one’s perception by art is now felt in visual form, but would aid even the surrealists in their goals, such as the famed “*Un Chien Andalou*” by Salvador Dali (1929) that was one of the first films with an explicitly surrealist goal, to expresses an ordinary story with the surrealist flow of automatic unconscious contents interfering with the film’s narrative.

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<sup>111</sup> Hornsfield, Katie. *Feedback: The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews*. (Philadelphia, New York: Temple University Press, March 2006): 1-6.

When it comes to Nobody™, the pure surrealism and pure artistic modernism of anti-art does not necessarily apply. The art of Nobody™ deconstructs and lets the antipodes of the unconscious mind run free in video form, but does so for a specific purpose in mind, to expose the machinations of modernity and find a method of creating post-modern art that serves a spiritual/metaphysical purpose, to reconcile the disenchanting age with a new art that takes up the digital simulacra of modernism, and uses those very tools against it. The world of remix culture as well, sampling, juxtaposing different songs and videos and snippets, blending different fusions of styles, be they in music or video, has experienced an explosion of efficacy and exposure in the digital age. A patchwork of materials and sounds are applied to either enhance or supplement an existing piece or create new pieces of art all together<sup>112</sup>.

Surrealism also comes with the added dimensions of virtuality as well, blending the lines between the real (perhaps using a Lacanian term) and the cinematic, the narrative-literary, and the automatic-unconscious.; take for instance the David Cronenberg surrealist film “*eXistenZ*” (1999). A world filled with corporate draconian intellectual property control over bio-synthetic video games plugged into an organic cerebral cortex input, project a vastly realistic virtual reality dream-state of one’s own making. After the main protagonist couple sabotages the main corporate villain, one in which a character in the VR- video game describes as “the enemies of reality”<sup>113</sup>, they go back to their “original” reality, only to discover they do not know the answer to the question “is this real or are we still in the game?”.

Reality has become permeable, porous, infiltrated by the corrosive effects of techno-dream land to the point where the ontological grounding of being has been subverted. This is a

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<sup>112</sup> Hoffman, Elizabeth. “(Re) Review”. *Computer Music Journal*. Volume 32, Number 2, (Summer 2008): 82-83.

<sup>113</sup> Also the title of the 2001 album by the band Nevermore that covers several similar themes.

major emphasis as we have seen, in the works of Nobody™. Even in subtle instances and hidden references, such as the photo that greets you in the “chat womb” section, of the famed photo with rows and rows of VR headset-clad participants with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg walking down the rows like a dictator presiding over a mass demonstration.

The symbolic imagery of Nobody™ may in part come from the deepest recesses of the unconscious and artistic mind. However, the antipodes and half-human monsters following a programming or instinct are not the futuristic, dark, sleekly sexualized and grim aliens of H.R. Giger. Nor are they the off-world apocalyptic, desecrated, muscle-enflamed, teeming and horrifying creatures of Zdzisław Beksiński. The fear-inducing entities that infest a bleak and surreal dreamland are human, extrapolated from what we know to be the human, but closer to us than any dream-monster. For the surreal subjects projected by Nobody™ represent humanity in transition, piling upon themselves more sedimentary layers of contortions and affects, affects expressed in audio-visual form by the edits.

The surrealism of Nobody™ is exposing what Aristotle’s poetics attempts to resolve<sup>114</sup>, that of narrative-being, and that of the subject immersed in discourse. Through the art, we have a Socratic dialectic playing out of sorts; in every video, we are confronted by a seemingly endless panorama of blended images crawling in and out of focus, overlapped by the detritus of digitalized manipulation. There are all of the depths of surrealism present, the perversity and seeming absurdity of the subject, the manipulation of senses in the viewer, the seeming nonsense piled upon nonsense, but this time in visual format. However, we have the added elements of

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<sup>114</sup> For this see the poetics of Aristotle, Chapter 4-5.

transcendence, religious haecceities of expression and symbolic diffusion, and an exploration of the possibilities that face the human subject in the postmodern world.

To Nobody™, life itself has become the surreal, and the digital edits merely unpack them in a more direct and visceral format. Here we have a subject, take for instance, the man in Disk 1 of the magnum opus. The man is telling a story of meeting with the Lord in a near death experience, how he thought he would never see his family again, all the while an edited fire display, much like a rain of sparklers, comes down on his head. The oddity of this image catches the casual viewer off guard, but really, like a Zen Koan written after the moment of Satori, the digital edit merely represents the evanescent becoming, the focal point in that singular man's life. The artistic medium merely exposes what is already there, the surreal comes not from imaginative interpretation, but phenomenological looking-into the nature of complex relationalities between subjects, their affects and beliefs, and how they experience reality.

one can debate as to whether the art of Nobody™ is exposing the surreal subjects in the edits in their truest form, or rather, if there is some creative interpretation going on. One thing is for certain is that the nature of the art itself, editing, juxtaposing, distorting and digitally manipulating, etc. defies the normal creative process the way all facets of remix culture does. Nobody™ does not fall simply in line with other video artists or rearranging forms of remixing media, it is an active reassembling of things, of ideas and subjects, rather than simply putting things together in a haphazard manner. Remixing comes in many forms and is done for a variety of reasons, but the mission of Nobody™ it seems, is to rearrange the various themes, images and subjects into a more coherent manner of sorts, to use a surreal and fantastical series of stimuli to in a way, explicate their being, make it present, and in some cases, wrestle the powers of normalization and disciplinary action away from these subjects. Nobody™ in one sense is



ripping off the skin of various people and social realities engaged in a process of becoming and exposing them, accentuating the points of voyeuristic entry.

But what does all this mean? What process of normalization and discipline? What is clear in the work of Nobody™ is that the subject is being disciplined by the forces of consumerism, political control, mass distraction, fetishes fueled by the anonymity and connectivity of the internet and technology, all of which are bereft and disconnected from a history, a cultural norm, etc. sometimes we are presented with reminders of our status as a connected species, memories of wholesomeness (such as the short video *Memory kill*), as a near-cynical reminder. What is clear is that the subjects of Nobody™, from the fetishists, gang members, sports fanatics juxtaposed with images of a Nuremberg rally, etc. all of them share a commonality, besides that all of them are taking lines of flight that may or may not possess the danger of complete physical and spiritual ruin. All of them are stolid in embracing their existential position, be it the extremes of sexuality, technology, human detachment, rootlessness, flippant ignorance and narcissism, etc. Nobody™ finds ways through the artistic edits to break into their being, the vary luminous, fibrous and shredded inner being of the subjects, and sow them together in a visual fashion, often stitching them together with threads from the various connections to the world around them.

### **Nobody™ in The Artworld.**

There are some fruitful comparisons to the art of Nobody™ with other contemporary surreal and visual artists. The most apparent video artist that at least in part utilizes visual media in a similar manner would be director Ron Fricke, with his groundbreaking films *Baraka* (meaning “blessed” in Pali, 1992) and the famed *Samsara* (2011). Both films are without dialogue and present a series of visual images set within a unique juxtaposition, showing the integral nature of each image within its relationality to the rest of the world and to the cosmos

itself. There is a diversity of world-locations depicted, and each image narrates a silent metaphor of liberation within an eastern spiritual context. the opening of *Samsara* (“samsara”, the concept in Buddhism and Hinduism that is “the world process”, the cyclical nature of all reality within an immanent eternal state of flux, the first noble truth of suffering, for suffering comes from the impermanence of everything, etc.), starts with images of traditional Balinese dancing, the churning clouds of a volcano explosion (perhaps a metaphor for the annihilation and creation of all things), temples in Myanmar, a baby being baptized, and then scenes of Tibetan monks creating an elaborate sand mandala. This is given emphasis in the film, at the very end, as it is custom, the sand mandala is completed and then destroyed after sometimes months of work.

Herein lies the metaphor of the silent film, to show the transience and impermanence of life, to give a global picture, of the horrors and tragedies, such as the factory farms juxtaposed to image of activities in mass atomized cities or abandoned open houses taken over by the serene dunes of a desert sand. the world of *Samsara* expressed in the many colored and shaped sides of the mandala serves this function of multiplicity, starting off from an inherent multiple character is also an integral aspect of the esoteric influences of Nobody™ (hence his newer remix of music in the about section called “meditation tape” with a grainy continuous picture of the buddha in his emaciated acetic period). *Samsara*’s near iconic footage of the “Guan-Yin” or thousand hands dance of Mahayana Buddhism<sup>115</sup>, depicting in ritualistic form the manifold nature of the bodhisattva. The depth of field effect adds to the dancers doing a hypnotic and seamlessly choreographed and in sync dance composition of the manifold hands with eyes on them, swaying in unison at every corner of space.

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<sup>115</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjXWgKKLW6g>

This is a common theme in eastern religious iconography, from the manifold faces and hands of Shiva, the God of cosmic destruction and rebirth, to the thousand hands in the ten-thousand buddha lands, grasping the “ten-thousand things”, or in other words, connecting every complex part of becoming<sup>116</sup>.

The bodhisattva of course is one who can achieve liberation or Nirvana, but chooses to partake in an attachment to this world of Samsara in order to serve as a guidance, to hold off on their liberation as an ultimate form of compassion until every single being is liberated. Nobody’s art always provides that back door of liberation via the exposure of the obscene and the world, and also the fact that occasionally Nobody will pop up to deliver a sometimes serious and sometimes mockingly ironic message shows that the artist is just as much involved in the subject matter being depicted as everyone else is. Standing in a position of fracture, in one space of becoming, in the worldly, and always grasping onto the other space that is not wholly separate from this reality, the world of transcendence or (as it is in Buddhism) liberation from the wheel of becoming. In the art of Nobody™ you get both at the same moment of video cinematography, sometimes vividly within the same space and in the same episode, often jumping from images and speeches that deal with the sacred, to presentations exposing the baseness of modern living.

A segment in *Samsara* that most closely resembles the work of Nobody™ would be the haunting and off-putting scene entitled “*Human?*” or alternatively “*office man, the angst of Sagazan*”<sup>117</sup>; here we have a depiction of the roboticization of everyday life, coupled with a shocking mimed performance representing the many disguises one must adorn in everyday existence to navigate the drudgery that comprises the cubicle-laden, late capitalist West. We see

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.taoism.net/guanyin/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7ei5PNfrps>

robots that perfectly resemble the humans modelled from them, designed to give off realistic emotional facial gestures, then clips of rows and rows of office cubicle. the scene arrives at the infamous Man at the desk giving a violent performance of using clay, paint, dust and cloth to transition between different inhuman faces, scratching off layers of dust and clay to contort the hollow facial features. At one point, he wraps pieces to straw around the clay, almost reenacting the lines from Eliot's *The Hollowed Men* "May I wear such deliberate disguises...Head piece filled with straw, alas"<sup>118</sup>. *Samsara* gives us a picture of the changing human, of the large expansive environments and geographic locations combined with the tiny spaces of agony, alienation and ontological contortions one must face. The nature of Nobody's work can be shown to have an inherent commonality with the works of Fricke in this manner, to expose life in an aesthetics that demands interpretation and contemplation on the part of the view. But not a passive intellectual musing, but a contemplation that requires one's whole being, and one's emotive and ideational disposition, to fully grasp the meaning of what is going on in the presentation before you.

### **Kiefer and Nobodyism.**

There are many different video and conceptual artists that can be brought into a comparative framework with the art of Nobody™, but the one visual artist that possesses the same process of Nobody™ would be the German painter and visual artist Anselm Kiefer; often working in the landscape genre, Kiefer as a neo-expressionist uses a variety of natural and industrial pieces to achieve stunning textures on massive canvases and installation pieces. The work often expresses the very humanly themes of loss, war, mass suffering and destruction, but

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<sup>118</sup> Eliot, T.S. "The Hollowed Men". In *Poems: 1909–1925*. (London: Faber and Faber. 1937).

also redemption within a metaphysical and cosmic framework. Remembering and a sense of completion and redemption often plays heavily in the works (Qua Walter Benjamin) that were inspired by his experiences as a boy during the second world war. repeated imagery, such as the long sunflower stalks and a plethora of industrial materials, pops up in the works over the span of many years. Like *Nobody*<sup>TM</sup>, Kiefer utilizes religious and spiritual imagery to express an inner longing, such as the 2007's *Palm Sunday* which features an uprooted pine tree preserved in resin in front of various photos and drawings of itself. This is meant to represent an inter-faith symbology of the cycle of life and death, atrophy and regeneration. There are many themes from Jewish mysticism as well, often making heavy lead-cast books or scrolls piled up on each other to represent the weight and gravity of tradition.

1996's *Bohemia lies by the Sea* is an expansive landscape beach path made of painted symbols that is almost a darker side to impressionist color-field painting. The thick application of painted symbols forges an idyllic path towards a shoreline horizon, representing how one walks among symbols and guide-markers of meaning. The landscape for Kiefer represents an ideal traditionalist past, a sacred past, but also the appropriation of the classical landscape image as an inverted symbol of strength and will to power, abuse by the Nazi regime. To use the power of the landscape image, to "walk the path down to the beach" represents the need of renewal in Kiefer, confront the maleficence of the past and move forward whilst reconciling with the strange attraction we must our collective history<sup>119</sup>.

Unlike his bohemian and urbanite-secular contemporaries in the modern art world, Kiefer expresses a need to reenchant the world through the power of art. The mission of art is

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<sup>119</sup> The Art Story. "Anselm Kiefer". *Modern art insight*. [http://www.theartstory.org/artist-kiefer-anselm-artworks.htm#pnt\\_6](http://www.theartstory.org/artist-kiefer-anselm-artworks.htm#pnt_6)

essentially metaphysical, but a metaphysics tied to the tragedy of modern life that has been uprooted from tradition and based only off the massive changes to history and living itself that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both Kiefer and Nobody™ share this longing for the higher aspects of being in the divine, but also share a unique artistic process; Kiefer will often mutilate works done years or even decades before, add on to them, increase the levels of layers and textures, and overall bring the pieces into different contexts and artistic sub-texts. Kiefer always recycles everything that comes from his work, expressing the need to be an artist who creates, destroys, gives rebirth to a certain piece and breathe life into them the way other artists simply cannot achieve. Kiefer states that this process of his art is a mimesis of the cosmos and of the divine, nothing can truly be obliterated but merely decay, dissipate and reformulate again in another context (like energy)<sup>120</sup>.

The artwork becomes a visible language of sorts, an ongoing aesthetic dialogue of adding, reworking, putting the dried detritus of one painting onto another, reformulation and remixing, etc. throughout time. No work is truly complete or possesses a limiting finality to it (akin of Chinese Taoist landscape paintings), instead His artwork is an expansive series of living intertextual multiplicities. Nobody™ shares much in the same style of re-appropriation and recycling of old works into newer, more intertextual and meaningful works. Each edit has content, music, certain visual effects and motives that relate to a previous episode or even previous version of that edit.

As it is in remix culture in general, Nobody™ rearranges segments on each edit, making new content and smashing it together with old, with a few visible themes, symbols and ironic

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<sup>120</sup> Kiefer, Anselm. "Anselm Kiefer: Remembering The Future". *BBC Imagine*. Doc. Nov, 18, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUQuhogTKtg>

Easter eggs that run through the body of work. Nobody™ paints the human landscape and all its horrors and wonders on digital bands, sound waves, pixels, and computer-generated bricolage. Kiefer has much similar artistic goals in mind, but prefers the remixing and re-purposing of the physical, the textural, the plastic/malleable, etc. the opulence of visible textures, images and symbols bleeding into the picture in the works of both artists gives a serene naturalness to them. The works are created in much the same way as nature itself rearranges things, creating rebirth from decay and demise. The artist in this sense is never completed, no work it ever fully cordoned off into the neat but unrealistic category called “complete”. There is no exhausting of possibilities in the subject matter, and for that Nobody™ and Kiefer are at a unique place in the art world.