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PROBLEMATIZING POWER FANTASY

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What does it mean to be powerful in a game? If you look to popular notions about games, the answer is nothing good. The "power fantasy" of games implies escapism and meaninglessness, evoking outsize explosions and equally outsized displays of dominance. A "power gamer" is one who plays with a single-minded determination to win, at the expense of nuance, social relationships between players, or even their own pleasure in play. Gamers are seen as getting so lost in fantasies of violent power that they no longer understand the difference between fantasy and reality.

Fortunately, the popular take is wrong. Games can be full of meaning, are no more the cause of delusions than other forms of media, and most gamers are deeply embedded in a social fabric. What is being captured by these concepts is not the nature of games themselves, but rather a particular way of playing with power. The power being imagined here is "power-over," or power in the form of dominance and control, as developed by the pioneering organizational theorist Mary Parker Follett.[1] But power-over is not the only form of power in games. Games also encompass "power-to," the empowering of players to accomplish and achieve.

Game designer Sid Meier, best known for the *Civilization* series, once defined a game as a series of interesting choices. This definition is often used to challenge game designers to create richer and more interesting player choices, but the quote is revealing at a deeper level. Games are spaces in which the player *gets to make a choice*. Games allow players to have control over their fate, to experience authority, and to enact power in a safe environment. In a well-designed game, players are constantly making choices that are meaningful, powerful, and consequential within the context of the game. These meaningful choices embolden the player to feel powerful.

Consider an apparently simple game of tag. During the game, players are making choices about where to run within the agreed-upon bounds of the game. The player who is "it" must decide who to pursue and how best to trap, catch, or trick them. Meanwhile, the other players must analyze and respond to the constantly changing physical and social space of the game. How far away is "it?" How likely are they to target me? How fast can I run? How tired am I already? Am I getting bored with the current "it" and want to see a new one?

The game reduces players' choices to an agreed-upon subset of human activity– in this case, running and touching. At the same time, it makes the stakes for those choices clear. Get touched by "it?" Your turn to chase others. Manage to touch another player? Then you're back to running away. Players know what their choices are at any given moment, and what the consequences of those choices might be.

The clarity of these choices lets players make decisions that are consequential and meaningful within the realm of the game, and allows those decisions to have an immediate impact. A player might see another player lagging, about to be run down, and choose to let herself be tagged to save her friend. She has become a hero. A player, as "it", might act winded, only to put on a burst of speed to catch and tag his target. He has become wily. A player might call out to the others in her group, telling them to spread out to make it harder for "it" to catch them. She has become a leader. None of these choices are dictated by the rules of tag, but the rules give players an arena in which to express those choices. Within the frame of the game, those choices matter – and that is power-to.

Giving people the opportunity to experience power-to is important. It taps into basic human needs for both autonomy and competence.[2] But we believe that power

in games can do something more than simply satisfy players' emotional needs. Exercising power takes skills – from imagining oneself as a leader to persuading others to follow. Games and their power-to can give players a safe space to practice the skills that out-of-game power requires.

We know that games can help people practice skills that transfer outside the game. For example, laparoscopic surgeons who play videogames make fewer mistakes during surgery.[3] But that goes for less pragmatic skills, too. Someone who tackles the same puzzle in a game twenty times, failing each time, trying different angles of approach until at last they succeed, is developing real-world skills of resilience and follow-through. Someone taking on the role of a character in a role-playing game puts themselves in the mindset of a different person, allowing them to practice examining things from another point of view and build their empathy.[4]

Games are a particularly good place to practice power because they allow an inversion of conventional power roles. They can provide a stylized, structured space where power comes from the ability to use and manipulate the game system, and where ordinary rules of power and authority do not apply.

This suggests a radical call to action for games: people with the least real-world power need games the most. Imagine if games were for those who are disenfranchised by our cultural systems. Women are assigned the bulk of low-control, low-autonomy tasks around the house; games could become a place for women to practice lasting victory. Low-wage workers watch others profit disproportionately from their labor; games could become a place for them to claim what they deserve. By giving people who lack power-to opportunities to experience and practice it, games might help them bring power into the rest of the world.

In short, games could, if we chose, challenge our existing power structures – but too often they only replicate them. While the potential of power-to may be at play within a game, there are hidden and not-so-hidden currents of power-over that surround and permeate the game experience.

Game culture as it stands is shot through with sexism, racism, homophobia, and other biases. Some of it is quite explicit; for example, women who dare to be identifiable as women in gaming spaces face more hatred and harassment than male players of equal skill.[5] Others are subtle and institutional, such as Starcraft tournaments that run on Jewish holidays but not on Christian ones. These biases are in line with those held by the rest of our culture, but the degree to which they are violently defended as being essential to "gamer-ness" is unusual. Oddly, this is good news. The extent to which these boundaries are being defended is a signal to the careful viewer that they are particularly fraught. Because real-world power structures do not have to apply in games, people work particularly hard to ensure that they do.

Game groups can also be used to exclude, dominate, and control. Someone new to the game of tag might feel disadvantaged and powerless compared to people who are intimately familiar with it. They don't know that you can box people against the fence, or that the house rule is that you can't run farther than the swings. The group of players has the power to decide what is valued and honored in play, and what is literally or figuratively out of bounds. In theory, groups can use that power to create the best possible experience of play for all players, but in practice not all players' preferences matter equally. The new player's opinion matters less than the veteran's; the woman trying to speak up gets repeatedly interrupted by

men; the black person's enthusiasm is seen as threatening. Our cultural ideas about power and identity can leak into our game experiences, unless we are careful to choose otherwise.

Finally, there is the question of what the rules of the game look like in the first place. True, players have control over their choices within a game – but the game designer controls what choices they are offered in the first place. In a computer game, these rules can't even be negotiated with; they're enforced by code. In non-digital games, players have more freedom, but the rules still guide their sense of possibility and agency. To stay within the frame of the game, players must make only those moves that are permissible, and that gives the designers power over the players. As Foucault might argue, true power is not the power to compel a choice, but to define the landscape within any choice must be made. That is precisely what game designers do.

For example, players can adopt powerful roles within a game – but the game designer controls what identities are available to them. For example, only 15% of playable characters in top-selling games are female.[6] Women might like to feel powerful within a game context, but more often than not, they can only do so by taking on the role of a man. Black characters are disproportionately likely to be cast as gangsters and thugs, which is not exactly the freedom to explore alternate identities that games could promise.[7] These are not neutral decisions. Whether they're hiding behind the rhetoric of audience demands or of insufficient resources to model more than one protagonist, these choices are game designers' responsibility.

The difficulty is that it's not always bad for the game designer to exert control over the player. In fact, game designers can use their power to counteract the potential for player-to-player abuses. For example, the online collectible card game Hearthstone has no in-game chat, only six canned messages. No matter how much a player would like to abuse their opponent, they simply cannot. The gay player does not have to fear being called a faggot, nor the female player a slut. The superhero MMO City of Heroes incorporated a sidekicking system, allowing new players to temporarily perform as well as veterans. The new player might not understand the rules as well as the experienced player, but they could still have an equal role in play. These are both examples of game designers constraining player choices, but doing so in the service of player agency.

One might even say a game designer's job is precisely to exert control over the player's choices. After all, Meier's quote posits that a satisfying choice is what makes a game a good one. In the wild, most choices are not satisfying. People react badly when presented with too many options or too few, options that are too similar or too hard to compare.[8] Constraining the player's choices in an appropriate way is a critical piece of the game designer's craft.

The question becomes how to conduct oneself ethically in pursuit of this craft. Can we give players constrained agency, the power-to within the game, without ourselves abusing our power-over as we construct the game itself?

One answer is to resist our own assumptions, as game designers, about what power looks like. For example, we do not exist outside cultural narratives that tell us what color skin belongs to the hero, and what color to the villain; what gender rescues and what gender is rescued; what sexual orientation is central and what is secondary. If we are going to define who gets to be powerful in play, then we can at least undermine, rather than reinforce, the stereotypes of the rest of society. We can make games that

give a voice to the powerless rather than reinforcing the centrality of the powerful.

This responsibility doesn't just extend to how we represent power in games, but also in the way we construct cultures of play. When we create game structures that punish bullies rather than rewarding them, we are using our own power over players responsibly.

Another approach is to share power with players. Controlling someone else's pleasure and power is a heavy responsibility, and it gets heavier the harder it is for players to resist the constraints you create. But even the most tightly constrained game must have opportunities for players to make choices – and not every game is equally tightly constrained. Consider a game like Half-Life, where there is only one possible protagonist, compared to a game like Mass Effect where players have access to a character designer that allows all players to see themselves reflected in the game world. One tells players who they must be; the other gives players power. We might call this power-with, since the designer and the player are in effect collaborating using the gaming system.

Other opportunities for player power come from players' ability to create within games. The "no wrong way to play" movement chronicles players who tackle challenges within games that the designers clearly did not intend, from completing Diablo 3 without ever striking a blow to performing elaborate bike stunts in first-person shooters. Players create hacks, mods, and house rules for games – sometimes with the support of the designers and sometimes without. Even griefing, or interfering with other players' fun, can be a way of resisting the pathways to pleasure the designer has laid out. The kinds of resistance the player has available depends greatly on the designer's decisions. It's much harder to hack your Xbox than it is to play Monopoly wrong (which almost everyone does). By

making games that allow committed players to co-construct their experience, we can share our power with them, again turning power-over into power-with.
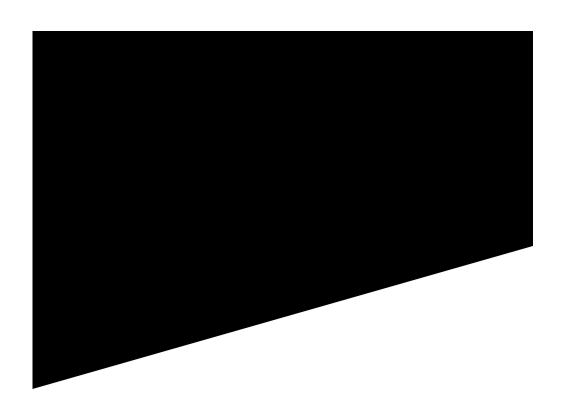
But perhaps the most important way to respond to the issue of the power of the game designer is to democratize access to game design. If only a narrow slice of humanity gets to design games, then they have an obligation to reflect more in their designs than just their narrow experiences. The more voices we have making games, the more different visions of power we have, the more opportunity we give people to express their agency not just by playing games but by making them – the more we as game designers can feel comfortable expressing our own personal ideas of power within the games we create.

To be clear, this doesn't just mean telling people to "make your own games," which is a common way of dismissing concerns about game designers' behavior and choices. That approach dismisses the realities of limited access and of disparities in resources. Games take time, money, and skill to produce. As long as those resources are unfairly distributed, "make your own games" becomes a way of silencing the voices of those with less. Instead, we need to be actively supporting new voices in design, distributing resources to a broader spectrum of designers, and creating tools that lower the barriers of entry.

Fortunately, these are the kind of challenges that game designers are good at: building systems within which people get to practice power. We just have to apply our skills to the system by which game designers are made. If we can share our access, our skills, and our resources with those who struggle with powerlessness – if we can create power-with with them – then we can expect to see visionary, radical change in what power in games can mean.

Footnotes

1. Follett, M. P. (1924). *Creative experience*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

2. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.

3. Rosser, J. C., Lynch, P. J., Cuddihy, L., Gentile, D. A., Klonsky, J., & Merrell, R. (2007). The impact of video games on training surgeons in the 21st century. *Archives of Surgery*, 142, 181-186.

4. For an example of the power of experience-taking, see Kaufman, G. F., & Libby, L. K. (2012). Changing beliefs and behavior through experience-taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103, 1-19.

5. Kuznekoff, J. H., & Rose, L. M. (2013). Communication in multiplayer gaming: Examining player responses to gender cues. *New Media & Society*, 15, 541-556.

6. Williams, D., Martins, N., Consalvo, M., & Ivory, J. D. (2009). The virtual census: Representations of gender, race, and age in video games. *New Media & Society*, 11, 815-834.

7. Williams, D., Martins, N., Consalvo, M., & Ivory, J. D. (2009). The virtual census: Representations of gender, race, and age in video games. *New Media & Society*, 11, 815-834.

8. For an overview of the research on choice and cognitive complexity, see Schwartz, B. (2004). *The paradox of choice: why more is less*. New York: Ecco.

TO HOLD A WILD BASKET

Noura Wedell

The modernist model of heterosexuality is coming to an end. Clearly, this is what is signaled by the current proliferation of discourses and acts constituting alternative genders and sexual orientations. According to Foucault, Federici and other theorists, the model of heterosexuality was invented in Enlightenment Europe at the time of the great confinements in the 16th century, a means to control a population that had exploded exponentially, to harness a budding capitalist workforce. This political, economic, scientific, cultural and sexual molding of bodies honed in on the subject as the main product of the capitalist production machine. In so doing, subjectivity in itself appeared as an all-encompassing horizon, to create the docile body of the worker, of course, but also as a locus of political struggle. In this sense, today's emancipatory horizon, which many argue and fight for through their bodies, can be found in managing what Preciado, after Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida, calls the pharmakon that produces today's pharmacopornographic body. Preciado argues that our contemporary society of control has further internalized the disciplinary apparatuses of modernity into biological encoding (hormones as "pharmacopornographic artifacts that can create physical formations which become integrated with vaster political organisms such as our medico-legal institutions, the nation-states, or global networks through which capital circulates").[1] And as such, our agency resides, since there is no outside to this overarching and molecular modeling of subjectivity by capital, in the choice we have of dosage and ingestion of these codes to counter and reverse effects of power. The strategy: building the front of the radical queer avant-garde to reclaim the self-molding of our own bodies and minds.

I do not wish to reduce this model, or the importance and far-reaching effects of embodied political action. What I want to suggest is that it operates according to an overarching assumption of the private space of bodies, inasmuch as they perform as subjects what is determined of a population, privatizing access to their own truth via the high road of sexuality. This presupposes an entire framework centered on discursivity, expressivity, and the production of signs: it is not surprising that Foucault elaborated a theory of epistemic breaks between specific *discursive* regimes.

In the work of the radical educator Fernand Deligny there is the impulse to move outside of the centrality of signs, to co-exist with bodies existing in different spaces than ours, and with other modes of being embodied and individualized.[2] Working with autistic, mute children who were external to language, of course Deligny would have looked beyond language.[3] But his attempt is also located within philosophical, aesthetic and political currents in the 1960s and 1970s that refused the imperative of communicability and exchangeability. What Deligny does, writes and thinks is an attempt to get to the question from the other side: from where there is no language, no other, where the "we" preexists our cohering into subjects and is still "pre-individual." It is difficult to write about his attempt in the normative language of an essay, and Deligny's films, poetry, prose, critical writings, and maps testify to his attempt to define this other space from within, without the centrality of grammatical constructs of subject, verb and predicate: thus the use of detours in the rational development of his analyses, a great inventiveness of vocabulary, and an idiosyncratic and poetic form.

In 1967, Deligny moved to the mountains of the Cevennes in Central France to lead what he called an "attempt" (*tentative*), experimenting a "network existence" with his wife, his son, and the twelve year old child Janmari who

who had been entrusted to him by his mother after having been diagnosed with "deep encephalopathy," what was also referred to as autism at the time, and which made the psychiatric institutions consider him incurable and impossible to educate. Deligny's attempt emerged in the context of existing alternatives in psychiatric, pedagogical and political structures of the late 1960s.[4] External critiques of mental institutions by historians and sociologist (Foucault, Castel, Goffman) along with internal critiques such as those of "institutional psychotherapy" (Oury and Guattari of *La Borde*, where Deligny had spent two years from 1965 to 1967), the French movement to create local mental health structures outside of the asylum, or Italian and English antipsychiatry, as well as the effects of psychoanalysis, created the possibility of a radical outside to institutional structures. Trends in radical pedagogy, as well as the refusal of the party-form in politics, lead to what Deligny called a "raft," a libertarian, anti-institutional, momentary and economically precarious attempt at setting up an apparatus of existence for those who were floating on it.

The anti-institutional aspect of the project meant that it was inscribed against what institutes itself, foremost the person, the most basic artifice of all. The human person is for Deligny an ideological lure, since it thinks itself according to what language proclaims of it, in the "global consent in which we all find what each of us is feeling."[5] Humanity is bi-polar, thinks Deligny, and language experiences a kind of horror for its other side, which appears "monstrous, or deformed, when it can only be seen as a lack in the circumstances that surrounds it: a lack of language, a lack of intention, and a lack of a coherent subjectivity."[6] In a radical inversion of perspectives, Deligny wanted to substitute the "point of seeing" of autistic children to any kind of subjective point of view. If the ethnic and individual human was instituted

by the use of language and via a relation to the other, there was another nature, or "gravity," specific and common, that existed outside of linguistic space and thus outside of history. The raft that they embarked on, and which lasted about twenty years, was explicitly *without any therapeutic, pedagogical or political project*, because there was no subject to treat, to educate or to mobilize. The point was to live together with the children, to be continuously present to them, yet with no pre-established method, no projected intention, and via this experimentation, to transform the adults themselves by making them conscious of limiting their own role, the one that they'd been born into as speaking humans. In addition, the raft refused any established principles, hierarchies, was resolutely local (in a barn, or under a straw roof), and did not project itself into the long-term.

In order to explain what this other gravity could be, one radically *without the other*, Deligny described a scene that he had filmed in one of the camps in the network of the Cevennes. Two young girls, Isabelle and Anne, are crouching down, face-to-face, near a pool of water. Neither of the two girls uses language, Deligny tells us, but they nevertheless belong, more or less, to the two different gravities he evokes. Anne is taking rocks, dipping them in the water, and placing them along the pool. Isabelle is watching, and eventually, she takes the rocks, tries to hand them over, splash or bother the other girl. But Anne is not playing. For her, there are no roles, there is no play-acting, and there is no other that she could imitate because for her the other does not exist. It is not lacking; it simply does not exist. And yet Deligny maintains that she is not alone, for the doing that is occurring through her hands is quite common to most of the children in the network[7]. It would be wrong to say that *she* had acted, or that such doing had occurred to *her*, as if Anne had cohered into a subject, but nonetheless,

there was *doing* evidenced in the moving of the rocks.

Deligny wanted to offer another future to the children than the institution. There, the children would have spent days repeatedly hitting their head against the walls, or maybe strapped down, or medicated to subdue their sudden, violent outbursts. Or they could also have rocked endlessly in place, caught in a cycle of great anxiety and distress, violated by the imposition to make sense, or to be useful. By wanting to make someone act, you resuscitate the subject, and block the doing, writes Deligny. In the network, however, they could, in the example of Anne, continually pile up dishes in a basket until the dishes composing such a precarious and endless tower would break into a thousand pieces as they fell to the ground.8 Or they could shout, like Isabelle, who did not call to the adults to signal her existence, but whose shouts were like something to be looked at as if looking at a flower.9 Janmari, doing the dishes and wholly swept up in that doing, could scour a metal pan until a hole peeked through the metal. When there was no place for fucking up, no tolerance for making the adults go crazy by beginning to play the role but always out of whack, they didn't. Not leaving any place for fucking up meant a strict adherence to the material, "following the thread of things."10 This was a materialist practice pushed to its logical conclusions. The life that took place on the raft was an elemental, material form of life, as close to objects and bare necessities as possible, a form of Paleolithic life, or life of the species: cooking, baking bread, constructing a hut for protection from summer storms, building the camp, making a fire. None of the children's doings were intentional acts in view of any functional purpose. On the contrary, they were freed of that compulsion: a child might take a basket, not to carry something, but to hang it on a hand, and keep it there for hours, on one hand the basket, on the other side a heavy hand, both organs of

what was already a "we" prior to being individualized in the child. This "we" needed objects, a territory, and a network of references to solidify. Deligny called such baskets wild, meaning emancipated, delivered, freed from being only what they were for those who would ascribe some fixed purpose to them. At times the children might find themselves entering into functional acts as an extension of these doings, handing a potato over to an adult who was peeling and cutting them for dinner, for example. But function was never Deligny's purpose. He was trying to find "the *detours of acting* that could allow *doing* to exist other than as a simple add-on," to be excluded and pathologized.11

Deligny's position of exteriority was an attempt to exist outside of any form of exchange. Capitalism, socialism and humanism, he wrote, all carried war along with them, which arose as soon as man traced a border between something and something else, even words and things, or a sign that could only be a sign once detached. This started a process of a "mode of feeling that, in order to be true, thought as such, required the recourse to the unanimous, the caution of truth that must expand, conquer in order to convince."12 The subject only settled in with the murder of the individual.

In order not to speak about the children, or try to understand them, Deligny had suggested that the adults draw maps on which they would trace their movements. This was meant to establish what space represented for the autistic child, and for the adults, not to "transmit" anything, but to be able to see what had remained invisible to them because of their reliance on communication. It was discovered that the children did not venture outside of a certain territory, and that in that space, an "us" cohered. Some of the children's strange behaviors could also be traced to a material cause: staying immobile at the spot where there had been a fire the spot

where there had been a fire the winter before, and of which no visible trace remained. It was as if the children, beings without history, could not perceive that other human form of subjectivity, the he/she, but were searching for something to cohere, searching for the forms with which to solidify the "us"… If we exist in time, thought Deligny, they existed in space, and the forms they saw belonged outside of the linear progression of history: water, fire, elemental realities of the species. The raft was an attempt to try to find the forms missing for the "us" to materialize, that "primordial we that persists in preluding, outside of all wanting and all power, for NOTHING, immutable, just like Ideology on the opposite pole."13 The children did not *have* any common sense, but they had *senses* of the common, *organs* of the common, that could cohere if there was space for that. And if we *have* bodies, they do not: although our bodies and theirs are the same, theirs are not possessed.

Deligny wondered at these children's radical ineptitude at exploiting others. For those of us caught in usefulness, can we even conceive of an innocence that would extend to ineptitude, not to say welcome it? The raft of the Cevennes remains almost incomprehensible, because it tried to place itself outside rational and linguistic structures. Its space of existence was constantly in danger of sinking in the semiotic sea all around. It had no fixed funding structures. The small communities, adults and children, did not make any money, because that would imply that they'd be making money off the kids. They received Deligny's royalties, or lived off donations (from Françoise Dolto, the Emmaüs companions, and even the Pink Floyd apparently).14 Furthermore, the adults working with the kids were nomadic, people temporarily looking of a job, who needed something to do for a while, a structure that could welcome them. So they would come in and then move on. But the raft was always tottering on

the brink of dissolution also because the customary of forms that could cohere an us was always in danger of tipping back into projected similarity and repetition, and then would lose itself into signs.
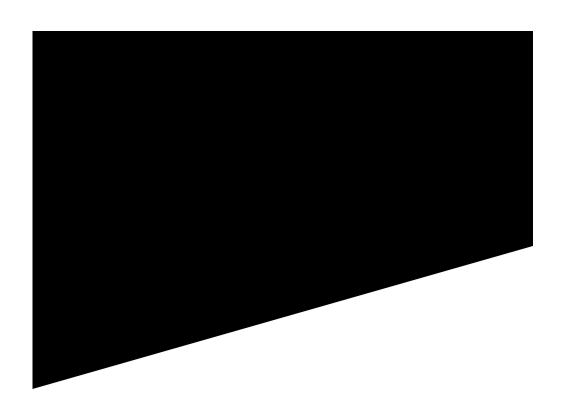
What could this mean for those of us "condemned" to using language, those of us who exist within the gravity field of the subject, in the regime of exchangeability? Must we limit ourselves to code switching in a war zone? Of course there is a gradient of subjectivity. Maybe our failures, whatever remains invisible, the times when we can't act can tempt us to unhook the private individual such as the one speaking to you here. A different notion of freedom emerges from Deligny's attempt, one that is not necessarily useful, but we can guess what he would think of the term. For us historical humans, our freedom is dependent on doing what we want. It implies an "I" determined by a set of social, historical, economic and material conditions, the emancipation of which relies on its desire. As we all know, capitalism has become adept at latching onto this. But even from within the emancipatory horizon of desiring subjectivities, such a political strategy can become a series of imperatives: express yourself, have fun, be cool, have sex… All obligations, even positive, can become taxing in the end. Deligny thought that the very fact of giving people all possible freedom meant to link them to a pact. The other kind of freedom would be to act without any wanting at all. It wouldn't be an imperative but an infinitive.

Images

1. Banner Image: Philippe and Anne's wanderlines in the kitchen. The movements of the adults are traced in orange, the movements of the children in black. November 13, 1976. (from *Maps and Wanderlines*, p. 273).

2. Figure 1: A picture of one of the encampments. There is no information about who is in the picture in the original caption, but instead, a poem by Deligny: "an old shelter/ which will be/fallen apart/a shelter/is something/almost/ someone/presence/there are cathedrals/and/there is that shelter there/N is not A." N refers to the primordial we, "Nous," A to the other, "Autre." (from *Au défaut du langage*, p. 48).

3. Figure 2: Drawn in the center is the action of the adult, with the corresponding doing around it. (Map traced by Gisèle Durand, *Les détours de l'agir*, p. 87).

4. Figure 3: A map of Janmari's "wander ring" and movements traced by Jean Lin, June 12-13, 1975. For a detailed explanation of this map, please refer to p. 251 of *Maps and Wanderlines*. (from *Maps and Wanderlines*, p. 252).

Footnotes

1. Beatriz Preciado, *Techno Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013) 191

2. Deligny was quite well known during the time of this attempt. His book Graine de crapule had regularly been reprinted since 1946 and was read by generations of educators. In addition to a number of theoretical texts and novels, he organized three issues of *Recherches*, the research journal of the Cerfi (the Center for the Study and Research of Institutional Formation) founded by Felix Guattari. After a period of relative obscurity, in 2007, the publishing company L'Arachnéen (The Arachnidan, after a concept of Deligny's) published a compendium of Deligny's works as their first project. An exhibition of maps drafted by participants of the Cevennes raft was organized in 2012 during *The Imminence of Poetics*, the 30è Biennale of Sao Paulo, which then travelled to the *Palais de Tokyo* in Paris and to the *Palacio das Artes*, in Belo Horizonte in 2013. In the summer of 2013, a symposium on Deligny was organized for the 30th anniversary of the *Collège International de Philosophie* in Paris.

3. He also mentions these children had no attraction toward the sexual, which puts them outside of what Foucault theorizes as the historical construction of sexuality's privileged mode of access to truth.

4. I am indebted to the detailed historical and conceptual analysis of Deligny's attempt by Igor Krtolica in "La 'tentative' des Cevennes," *Chimères*, "Clinique & Politique," no. 72 (2009): 73-97.

5. Deligny, Les détours de l'agir ou le moindre geste (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 56.

6. Ibid., 124.

7. Ibid., 12.

8. I am reminded here of an eight-foot tall "endless column" that Robert Morris mentions as the initiation of his artistic life, when he and a childhood friend, as an anti-assignment for a bad shop class, has glued together a tower of drawing boards. As punishment, they had to stay late on Friday afternoons to sand all the picture frames that could be found in the school basement.

9. For Deligny, even to understand autistic children was to do violence to them.

10. Deligny, *Les detours de l'agir*, 47.

11. Ibid., 310.

12. Ibid., 59.

13. Fernand Deligny, "Au défaut du langage," Cahiers de l'Immuable 3, *Recherches*, no. 24 (1976): 18.

14. *Cartes et lignes d'erre/Maps and Wander Lines: traces du réseau de Fernand Deligny*, 1969-1979, (Paris: L'Arachnéen, 2013), 6.

MONEY CUBICLE'S THE BEAST

Brad Phillips

E veryone complains about art fairs. Everyone goes to art fairs. Everyone says how awful they are. Everyone posts pictures from art fairs. Here's a photograph; Miami, London, my fresh gear, now Basel, Madrid, oh these two *always* travel together and they look so great, New York, and New York again…

They are killing art.

I began showing my work regularly right around the time that fairs began to proliferate. At first they were not an issue, and I was able to mount exhibitions within the context of the gallery as well as have my works shown individually at the fair. The combined sales of these venues, with the latter feeling like an afterthought, was enough to sustain my practice. However, over time, the fairs grew, multiplied, and fanned out, becoming something completely different and powerful. It used to be that September in New York was the ideal month for a show. Over the years, September has become a problem because people are recovering from summer spending at Art Basel. October is *maybe* okay. November is no good because people are preparing to spend their money at Art Basel Miami and NADA in December. December is no good by default. The first three months of the New Year are now also blown because collectors are overspent from the December fairs, or waiting for The Armory or Frieze or Art Basel again in the spring. And of course the summer is traditionally still for vacation, childbirth, or rehab.

The dealers I've worked with have bemoaned the fairs unanimously. They're expensive and make art look like cartons of cereal. At the same time they have no choice but to do them. They are like Boxing Day sale week for mall stores. It is not news to the people within art's industrial complex that collectors essentially do not buy from gallery shows anymore. Still, it should be publically

noted that the quiet contemplation of a single artist's work within the white cube has been vanquished, and not by institutional critique, the eclipse of modernist aesthetics, or the actions and attitudes of artists who moved outside of the gallery to make their work, but by laziness and money. Mostly money, and money's laziness.

By seeing *every* artist's work in a small, carpeted booth in a shabby convention centre, with a lot of noise and no personal space, art has become utterly dehumanized. This is a bad time for art and for (most) artists. A very large percentage, a dominant percentage, of what gets shown, photographed, and collected is forgettable. However, this is nothing new, and to some extent, the work that eventually doesn't hold up, draws our attention to what does. As in any other industry, we need exposure to poor product succeeding in order to see and recognize what the strengths are in the work that holds up.

For example, everyone is familiar with the work of Van Gogh and Monet, but few people are aware of the vast number of successful artists working and showing concurrent to them, outside of art historians and serious collectors. This vetting has been ongoing for every decade of the nineteenth and twentieth century—do the research, and you will be surrounded by a vast landscape of the forgotten present. The difference in this moment is that it all is happening so publically, so instantaneously, so that the placement of "then" and "now" can transpire in a month's time, sometimes even in a week, and at the fair, within a day.

That's so last Saturday.

People talk about art fairs as being *easier*, mostly for collectors. However, art is not supposed to be easy, is it? Good art especially is notoriously difficult, correct? Could "Spiritual America" have hung in an art fair? *Exactly.*

However, many young artists that are making a name for themselves in this new climate owe much of their success—as well as the form, scale, and content of their work—to a global circuit of VIP art fair makers and goers; their parties, tastes, and lifestyles. The privileged privileging the young artist, and the young artists offering a palatable product in return.

The idea that art fairs make art easier for collectors is based on a trio of assumptions. The first assumption is that these fairs are important and organized by serious, well informed, art educated professionals. The second is that, as a by-product of the first, only the very best galleries in the world are permitted to participate in these fairs. Third, this must mean that the most cutting edge, important and serious artists are to be seen at every booth. These assumptions may or may not be true. But what this triad does is create a sense of ease in the heart and wallet of the collector, who may not be as confident or prescient as say Herb and Dorothy Vogel, who bought difficult art, and kept it under paper in their ceiling so sunlight would not damage the work.

The Fair allows people who want to own art to actually enact the cliché of buying work that matches the sofa. If you have enough money and space, collectors today can walk around Art Basel, picking out things that they find pleasant, that function as ornament, but also *must* be loaded with meaning. Works from prestigious fairs are triply pre-vouched, and coming with a whispered promise of future wealth. There is nothing inherently wrong in buying work because it looks good, or buying work as an investment, in fact they are traditional reasons for doing so. There is little to nothing about the pandemic of art fairs that is harmful to collectors in any way whatsoever. The harm is always inflicted on artists, and on art.

Less than a handful of Canadian art galleries participate in the major art fairs. A booth at Frieze—if you are fortunate enough to be accepted—costs in the neighbourhood of nineteen thousand dollars. Further, you'll need to rent lights, walls, chairs, desks, and in some cases, wireless access. All this, before shipping, travel, paying staff, and lodging. The director of a Canadian gallery that participates in these fairs described them to me simply as advertising. Traditionally, advertising can be bought with money, but in art it needs to be bought with money and prestige. In short, you are to consider yourself lucky to be able to advertise. Of course the elite stable of pedigree galleries, like Hauser and Wirth, Gagosian, Zwirner, and so on, can easily do this in any fair in the world, but for the mid-level and younger galleries, participation in art fairs is simply a way to keep their one living hand above the quicksand; a very costly gesture to ensure that people know you are still relevant, still alive.

People claim to want something to change, they just don't want to have to be involved. The art world right now is a glamorous limb-strewn car crash on the highway; everyone slows down, appalled, taking photos, whispering and getting off. Perhaps there's no need to burn down the art fair–if they follow Newton's law of motion they'll ultimately slow to a halt, encumbered by their own enormity. For example, Art Forum Berlin, once desirable and taken seriously, has disappeared. Art Chicago is gone. At one point there were perhaps a dozen fairs orbiting around Art Basel in Miami, and that number has diminished. Eventually people run out of money, their tolerance for suffering is fatigued. The artists who did well have stopped doing well, or stopped making work. Certain galleries may have realized the futility of participating and returned to the thing they initially were drawn to – running a gallery. There is something to be said for spurning the upper echelons of success and

settling for being a regional player. With any frenzy, exhaustion always follows.

According to Artvista, there are 106 contemporary art fairs this year, an astonishing figure if you consider that these are only for contemporary art. Now consider the number of galleries required to facilitate this many fairs (210 at The Armoury, 305 at Basel, 215 at ARCO) and from there, the number of artists required to facilitate all these gallery rosters starts to reach into the thousands. The final tally is startling, but math does not offer us a true sense of what's at stake—you need to physically stroll the aisles of any major fair to get a real sense what out of control looks like, sounds like, and spiritually feels like. A friend recently returned extremely depressed from a fair that he was included in, which makes perfect sense, because never before have artists been exposed to this much art commerce in one place, and never have they had to face the reality that what they made—not matter how considered, theorized, or politicised—was nothing more then an exotic purchase for the novice collector or a speculative purchase for the professional collector.

Artists cannot keep up production to match the number of fairs; galleries cannot keep up financially to participate. The heavy hitters will always be able to send out interns and employees all over the globe to maintain a presence within the circuit. It's an endurance game. To open and maintain a gallery, for someone not born with money, already requires endurance. If Art Basel is the ocean, and Larry Gagosian is the gigantic whale leisurely following the current, then all these smaller galleries and fairs that swim along, eating the scraps, happy to accept the benefits of being cheaper and more accessible than Gagosian, will die from exhaustion. They necessarily have a shorter life span.

Some of the harm inflicted on artists and art, activated at

fairs and auctions, is nurtured and perpetuated *in absentia* via art magazines. For example, artists of the moment like Lucien Smith and Oscar Murillo, who are notoriously young and making a lot of money are talked about endlessly—not their work, them. The 80's saw a similar phenomenon with David Salle, Sandro Chia, Eric Fischl and Julian Schnabel. The difference is that while there were many inches of print devoted to the personas and cool fashionable lives of these artists, there was equal space devoted to discussing the work they were showing. Now that those inches of critical appraisal have shortened to almost imperceptible columns, the work being made by new young artists is more easily sucked into the market and vacuum of art history.

Critical magazines have become relics, replaced by art and design, style and glamour magazines, each of which functions as a sort of pornography of envy and bitterness. Further, artists and other participants in the industry consume art magazines the way that certain of my family consume People magazine—always with elements of schadenfreude, shock, and page-whipping boredom. When you initially develop an interest in art, you might read the essays and articles in Artforum, for example. However, when you are showing your work, aware of names, participating in fairs, you find yourself reduced to scanning advertisements and see who is showing where, what's being looked at, what's not, and so on. The parallel being that one serious businessman on the train who flapped, folded, and neatly reviewed the teeny tiny stock market numbers charted across the page, rare glyphs only meant for the privileged few that could make sense of them. That's us, decoding the contents of a magazine, with frustration and aspiration warring in our minds. In this way, we too are part of the problem.
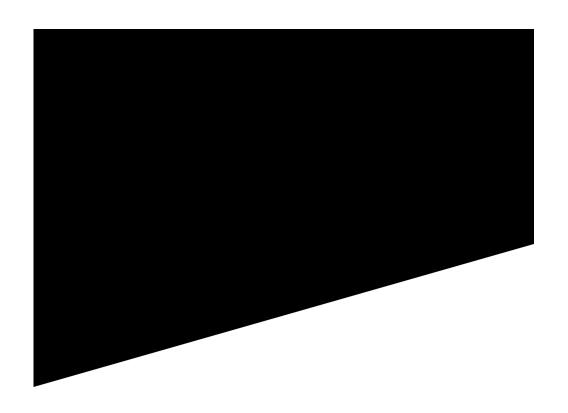
Something that would interrupt this cannibalizing art

spectacle would be criticism, however in 2014 there seems to be almost none left. Galleries need magazines in order to position their endeavours within the culture at large, and magazines need galleries to pay for advertisements to stay in business. Thus the dying years of negative reviews took place inside of newspapers, which have a broader range of advertisers and can afford to piss off the art galleries. However, the internet has slowly bludgeoned newspapers into irrelevancy, making them reconsider the critical position in exchange for the not-so-critical arts blog that highlights sparkle and shine in hopes of traffic and sharing. It's a new economy of art information, one where critical thinking no longer has a place in the mainstream.

As far as I can see the only way to return some integrity and measure of reason to contemporary art is for a small number of unafraid people to speak their mind, in public and in print. As artists and writers, we have a depth of knowledge about why certain things work and others fail. If you see something failing, point out why. Maybe because it looks like a rip-off of John Wesley or is too reminiscent of work that's already been stamped with approval. Go beyond saying 'it's too big' or 'too flashy' or 'twee' or that the artist is 'too young.' Anyone with an opinion and a laptop can just rip people to shreds. It benefits no one. The best criticism is both critical and constructive. Most artists would be able to live with someone telling them that they need to take a look at x or y, because maybe they don't realize x and y have done what they're trying to do. Let the bridges burn and address one small, strangely overlooked thing; does this piece of art *succeed*, is it *good*? If a selfless, masochistic coterie of artists and writers can begin to tell the truth, not about the art *world* (which is surely the most boring and deoxygenated world there is) but about art itself, then perhaps informed opinions that take art seriously might

begin to have an effect on the vast, uninformed world of people who've turned it into a spectacle sport that they can watch from the stands, while creative people, who usually have suffered enough, are thrown to the lions.

When art becomes pork bellies or gold bars, it loses what makes it precious, the mental detritus of human beings who were compelled to make it. Art can be beautiful. The impulse to make it, whether or not one chooses to participate in the larger world involved, is a sincere and unusual impulse. This is something worth fighting for. If young artists are immediately put off by or drawn towards this entirely other thing – business, auctions, prices, galleries – the aversion or the attraction are both harmful for artists and art. The way to deal with the industrialists and speculators is by visible disenchantment with the world they've constructed around an honest enterprise, and by a return to looking. Looking at art. Being ignored is certainly one of the most painful things a person or an industry can endure. Forget what the artist looks like, forget how old they are, forget what's being said about them and who says it. Look at what they are making. If it evinces any response in you, pay attention to that response. The relationship between the object and your experience with that object is the foundation of all visual art. A return to discussing honestly how that works, intelligently pointing out what fails, what succeeds – paying attention to the work and returning life to the relationship between art and the viewer, refocusing attention and ignoring distractions, is the only viable remedy to the innumerable ailments art is currently suffering under.

THE AESTHETICS OF INDEX

Nicole Killian

In 1969 American conceptual artist Douglas Huebler wrote: "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more." It seems an appropriate response to a condition in graphic design today: faced with an exceptional amount of available information, the problem is not needing to create more of it; instead, we are learning to negotiate the vast quantity that exists.[1] The explosion of content in the information space exposes the statement in a new light. This is life in the data world.

Networked media has a seemingly unlimited capacity to store and disseminate any kind of material. In this context, a new set of objectives is bestowed upon a designer. Rather than making every effort to add something singular to the bottomless pit of information, the designer strives to create more value in utilizing and transforming what is already out there. Methods of information sorting and processing, traditionally considered beyond the scope of creative disciplines, allows for the recycling of commonplace digital content into a new form of creative material.

This is an aesthetic of curation, a movement of arranging. What we see is not a full image, but of a fractured plane, highly two dimensional — the design of dissemination, of sharing and reflagging, of Google Image searches and desktop folders. This is not collage. This is organization. The designer as curator, as orchestrator of information and image. The act of selecting available information becomes a way to make sense of our contemporary culture, how we sift through images.

Language can be spoken — it can be clearly understood and digested in a moment. The current state of communication is not so simple, not so concrete. There has been a turning point within post-modern thought that defied the "clarity" of earlier design/communication

models. Perhaps the notion of "design" and "communication" is not so easily defined. We are a far more complex viewership and culture, who have evolved to digest our lives in the image world much differently than the old "type + image = message" approach of past models in graphic design. Has graphic design been rendered useless? Or, more specifically, has the current moment in culture fractured forms and words in a way where the readership can see through it, disregard it, or worst of all — just not care? The reader is an active participant in the content created, and therefore is implicated in the process of interpreting those messages.

Our current digestion of information is not a linear path. When a user signs in to various social media sites (Facebook, tumblr, flickr, etc) the page that greets him or her is most commonly called the "dashboard." This page is a frequently updated platform or stage where his or her friends or people he or she are following share links, photos, stories. Without any other way of ordering these disconnected pieces from various sources, the user goes on a journey of free association. One click leads to another set of content, which does not necessarily relate to the last page viewed. The process of free association is abstract, and many times can lead one to say, "IDK (I don't know) how I got here, but here I am," due to the unlimited amount of portals parsed.

Internet acronyms such as TTYL and LOL are an outgrowth of the medium of computer-based-communication; they come from writing code and evolved in relation to technological communications. They are not the opposite of "long form"; that would instead be the character cap on Twitter, for example, which is an abbreviation of communication, not compression of words. The acronym might be similar to the designer's new language, one that relies on a knowing reader, a *user*, one

that is speaking in the same language and needs to function at the same quickened pace.

The process of internet free association leaves us with a toolbox of pieces to be put together. The question then arises: how does the role of graphic design evolve within a visual landscape of usable and reusable assets, assets free of their original association and sometimes source, yet rich in aesthetic promise? Much like a database of visual particles, these assets come to provide full, fractioned, and fragment-sized tools for the contemporary graphic designer, as well as for the average user, who, unlike any time in history, is actively participating in the act of designing on a regular basis. Therefore, as this database of valuables grows more rapidly, so does its use, forming an ever-shifting indexical aesthetic consisting of its many parts and based in the multiple strategies for how these parts might recombine.

The indexical is a critical part of our current way of communicating and thinking. It is why there is a need for curation — these two words are inextricably linked. The designer is an initiator, establishing order. The index, even if small, is compiled like inventories under the logic of sameness, even if that singularity is defined by a Google image search of "work," "kittens," or domesticity." With this type of sorting, the contemporary index aesthetic is not trying to be scientific like the Dewey Decimal System but re-presentative of a current idea or concept. Here, we are not analyzing these works based on their content, but the structural strategy taken in final outcome or presentation.

This design methodology acknowledges the pieces with little regard for the whole. The importance becomes more on the individual than the group as the reader can quickly select and pick out elements as if they were stand alone

pieces. This process heralds mobility over the monolith, spread over the growth. On trendlist.org there is a sub-section called "Exposed Content." It is described as:

> …*one of the most popular current trends, usually seen on book and magazine covers, where images are located in different compositions and reveal the inner content. This kind of design goes very well together with visuals for the art exhibitions where*

It can be problematic to look at these compositions and layouts void of context. The loose arrangements can feel arbitrary and to question its intent is necessary. If design visualizes and gives meaning to ideas, what happens when its approach is flattened and creating an anti-hierarchy? Text is placed not in opposition to an image, or integrated, but nonchalantly next to its spacial colleagues. Within the framework of the index aesthetic, designers are utilized as computers without algorithms. Output from multiple participants is consequently combined to accomplish a bigger task: the composition, the cover. Can this format force change in the concept of collecting and hoarding; or does it become an empty method that is simple to apply?

By allowing the combined elements space to breathe without a full bleed, we can understand it as a stand alone compartment from another place. We understand this through its rectangular format. With those edges, elements are not usurped by a larger idea, but remain culturally loaded by its past baggage. There's signs, there's signifiers and multiple meanings stacked on top of stacks. A loose grid suggests the spreading of cards on a table. It is important to note the "frame" of these works — the set, the screen, the window that these books and posters end up being viewed on and viewed through. Each image references another site, which could reference thousands of other sources. Referencing these other texts,

ideologies, symbols and so forth takes on the form of intertextuality, which is the insertion of other texts, with its meaning, into a new text. One of the fundamental aspects of intertextuality is its presumption that the viewer understands that the text is being referenced, which a user on tumblr does when reblogging off the dashboard. The graphic designer that favors the collection over the whole is the designer who acknowledges our floating world.

While designers do not have control over where their work goes once it is uploaded to a social network or their site is updated, they have control over how they digest the uploaded and shared in how it is organized for their audiences. Living under postmodernism has made designers and artists more conscious of this fact. Designers have always had to operate conscious of structures, but the more history of images and text available (which at this point is an incredible amount), the more prudence in how it's used; but also the more material and room for semiotic play we have.2

Karolis Kosas created Anonymous Press (A–Π) which functions as a self-sufficient publishing platform where the outcome is a publication created by the individual and a database, Google image search. The viewer defines a topic, and the content and form are then generated from the most relevant images found online; the publications are added to the library, available for on-demand printing. The form itself is an indexical arrangement of the user's findings. Though these publications seemingly hold the same aesthetic as the work I am analyzing, Kosa's project differs in the fact that it literally uses a system to create and visualize content.

Utilizing an unlimited capacity to store content and retrieve immediate feedback through comments, shares, reblogs and pins, the designer can be shifted to that of an

initiator defining rules and boundaries, from which the process can evolve independently based on the input of users and data. However, this is possible with a feedback loop. It becomes problematic when hijacked by print media, or non-interactive, truly data-driven content. The design output in such conditions is the development of schemes in which the author/designer remains, but is marginalized as a producer – consciously restraining the level of control.

Postmodernism produced a plethora of content appropriated from the past, so the index is the inevitable sibling. The appropriation of content makes it so much more difficult for designers to be aware of every connotation of imagery but the index allows for the image included to live as they were, perhaps in different bookends. Not to mention it's easier to create an aggregate image than to integrate disparate elements into a new form. Words and pictures very well might not only be written to be read and looked at, but rather to be shared, moved, and manipulated sometimes by humans, more often by machines. While traditional notions of writing are primarily concerned with 'originality' and 'creativity,' the digital environment fosters new skills that include 'manipulation' and 'management' of the loads of already existent and ever-increasing language. Replacing "language" with a more general term "content," these ideas can be utilized to understand the shifting role of visual communication in the context of networked media.

Conceivably it is the grouping, rather than the work of an individual, that matters most. While a collaborative model of design disregards the significance of a single ultimate solution based on individual expertise, it offers in return a singular collective perspective. In this new paradigm, quality and authority are secondary to quantity and plurality, which maximize a scope of potentially feasible choices. As participants adjust to the prevailing conditions
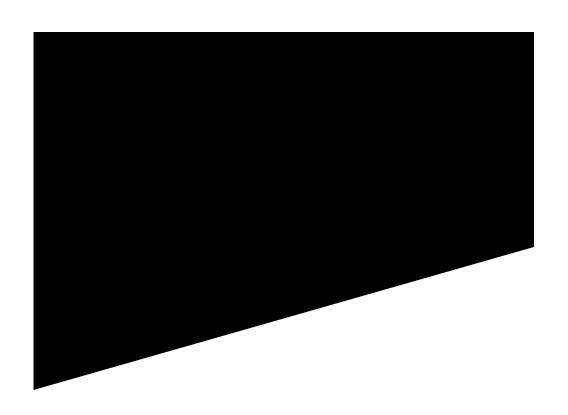
of anonymity and to the potentially disconcerting experience of being reduced to a detached voice floating in an amorphous electronic void, they become adept at reconstituting the faceless words around them into bodies, histories, lives. The right to define the "ultimate solution" is given to the viewer, thus eliminating the dichotomy between the designer and the audience, and creating a visual infinite scroll.

Endnotes

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SCREEN TO SCREEN

Masha Tupitsyn

On January 25, 2004, Diane Keaton shows up on TV for the Golden Globe Awards and wins for Best Actress. We are told that excitement is in the air and that Diane looks better than ever. I agree with the latter. Her nose is radically different, but she's stuck to her guns about wearing what she wants to wear. Wearing what others are not wearing. Gloves, hats, a shadow is always cast over her body. While everyone else is dripping with made-over flesh, Diane's body is nowhere to be seen. Off the map, Diane wants us to look to her clothes, not to her body, and she's always been this way.

The other night, I YouTubed her and found her stuck in time on a 1974 episode of Johnny Carson, draped in several sheets like a window. Other Hollywood actresses use clothes to point to the body. Bras and low-cut dresses direct like arrows and guide the way road signs on the way to the Body do. In a *60 Minutes* interview with Diane, Leslie Stahl notes that Diane "works hard to hide herself." So what came first the award or the amendment of the body? Can you have one without the other? If you get one can you get another one without switching everything around for next time? Acting becomes a fully integrated state. Every single thing in your life and on your body is showbiz.

On TV, the sun limbos. It is seventy-six degrees in Los Angeles, but in New York it is five. The heat of the cameras and the power of yarn make the weather feel the same on both coasts. The awards ceremony begins while the volume of light is still turned up high. Diane is sheathed from head to toe in a white Edwardian-style dress jacket. It's long, with buttons from top to bottom. Like a bride, she is a clean slate, white like a dove, a blanket of snow the industry can piss a new script on: white pearls, white gloves, white shoes. Probably white bra and panties too. White like the snow Diane runs

through with Mel Gibson in Mrs. *Soffel*, which sounds like *Soulful*. A week later on *Oprah*, Diane, remarkably effusive, gushes about Mel; the way, take after take, he, a lone-wolf, climbed after her in the make-believe snow, or she after him, and then one of them collapsed into the other, and real-life lust spilled over into make-believe lust, melting Diane prematurely like the glaciers in Antarctica.

In fact, she gushed romantically about everyone but Al Pacino and Woody Allen, both of whom she worked with and dated, but neither of whom she's willing to talk about on *Oprah*. Put together by Oprah's producers, there is a list, with Mel Gibson and Jack Nicholson at the top. They are her favorites, she says. Diane crosses the other two men off, refusing to spill the beans on Al, who after two *Godfathers* and thirty-four years, makes her go silent.

In case I was seeing or hearing things on *Oprah*, I double-checked, looking at the Carson clip again, backpedaling thirty-four years, where I discover that Diane has always hated Al. Fresh off the set of *The Godfather: Part II*, and there she is clearly ticked off, her body under that lilac blanket. What he'd done to her on camera, laid on thick within the hyperbole of cinematic (mafia) chauvinism, left a dent off-camera. Did the movie marriage lend itself to a non-movie romance, or did the movie matrimony make any un-scripted desire or pleasure impossible? Diane couldn't encode her disgust and knowing how to act is about being able to equivalently hide and conjure what you don't really feel. But since this is before Reality TV, where TV and reality both become shamelessly self-conscious categories, "real life" is not the point, or is only the point when you're acting that too. Would an actor's repulsion ever make it on the air now, or would it have been caught in time and removed during the pre-interview?

On Carson, Diane says, "I just made *Sleeper* with Woody and *Godfather II* with 'those' guys,'" so bad they don't

even get a name. Then, "I'm married to the same guy… Pacino," like she really had to be, sighs, looks down. What is there to say that won't expose the stitching in the story and move the story off the screen? It's a marriage she regrets even on film. When Diane says this it's as though she is still playing Kay or that her/Kay's female entrapment by the male tribalism of the movie/mafia is simply one of many female incarcerations.

The Godfather is a movie that kept going. That changed its mind and started over. Rewinding and backtracking from its initial version of "beginning" to incorporate things it didn't the first time around. As a result, the two films caught Diane somewhere in-between her fictional relationship with Al and her real relationship with Al. In her glowing 1972 review of *The Godfather*, Pauline Kael notes, "the story moves back and forth between a hidden, nocturnal world and the sunshine that [the men] share with the women and children," while in *The Broad Picture*, Lynne Tillman asks, "Given life-in-patriarchy, is *The Godfather*, I wonder, as much a 'woman's picture' as a 'man's picture'"? What Kael, who had no interest in feminism, doesn't take into consideration is space in relation to gender. Space in film and space in life and the way one space carries over into the other all the time. Nor does Kael consider the gender of the viewer or the gender of time. The time assigned to "universal narratives" and collective looking, a looking that Kael argued requires everyone to miraculously read at the same pace. When Johnny Carson asks Diane if it was as much fun working on the second *Godfather* as it was on the first, Diane can't hide the fact that it wasn't. "It was fine," she doesn't bother to assure (bad acting?). But she is acting, acting contained, and she wants us to dive down into the oceanic subtext to figure out what she really means. To read between the lines where there is no role, no character, just omission.

In *Something To Talk About*, also known as *Game of Love*, *Grace Under Pressure*, and *Sisters*, and taglined as "A story about husbands, wives, parents, children and other natural disasters," Dennis Quaid plays what he plays best and plays it from life. Life becomes script and script makes life easier to play. Movies are one infrastructure where life gets treated as script. There are two possibilities: Quaid plays what's written on paper and does not stray from his lines, or Quaid chooses parts that he knows how to play without having to explain how he's learned to play them. Working from life, where cheating figured as a recurrent character the entire time he was with Meg Ryan, real life becomes material that is easily reproduced and turned into impersonal fiction. Infused with an authenticity that is never spoken about: cold mornings on set, night sky, pre-dawn, Dennis spent too much time away from home, but with most of the year on film locations, what and where is home? Like those cameras that can capture the color of your aura, Quaid shows up on film as Quaid, except in the movies he is converted and becomes a different man for everyone but Meg.

Neither now nor then, did Diane shed a tear over *Annie Hall*; "What's the big deal? It's not like that was it for me." She's right – men don't cry over their roles, movies, or awards. They know there's more to come, that an award for a white actor opens up a can of worms, so they become less grateful, more expectant. They don't talk about one role for the rest of their lives. They live for the next one.

Back in 2004, still unmarried, tonight is Diane's big night —the academy giving her away at the age of nearly sixty. Up at the podium, with the Golden Globe award for Best Actress in her hand, Diane is laughing as usual, shooing the award away with her smile and her jokes. She is saying, but not saying, "I don't deserve this. This is silly."

Richard Gere, who starred with Diane in *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* as a pushy and conceited hunk twenty-seven years earlier, makes it up to her by calling her name, presenting her with the award, and then escorting her off the stage, Buddha-like. His hair as white as her dress, white like the Himalayas he chants for.

Jack Nicholson is also nominated for Best Actor for *Something's Gotta Give*, but doesn't win, so Diane spends her entire two minutes on stage making it up to him by handing him the award instead. Not literally, of course. Diane has always been nervous, self-deprecating, so maybe in the world of character, this communitarian gesture, this self-effacement, this hierarchal set-up, is also in character, which makes Diane an even better actress than I thought she was. Maybe this is yet another example of good acting, of collaboration; of roles overlapping, intertwining; things going back and forth, and then ending up somewhere else, in someone else's body. But I wish she could have just reveled in the moment, as they say.

During her acceptance speech, Diane keeps saying the award isn't really hers, that it's Jack's, and although Jack doesn't technically win it, no matter what happens tonight, Diane wants everyone to know, in case they don't know already, that Harry Sanborn, the character and Diane's love interest in *Something's Gotta Give*, and Jack—a real life fusion of on-screen and off-screen—had won both of hers—Diane's and Erica's—hearts. And this perfect synchronicity of fact and fiction, reel and real, me and you, what's mine is yours, is a great night for showbiz. It just doesn't get any better than this, says Diane. It just can't.

In photographs of Heath Ledger and Michelle Williams, Michelle always forgets the camera and looks up into Heath instead. Whether she's looking at him instead of the camera *for* the camera, we don't know. But Heath never takes his off the camera. He knows it's recording him in his new role and he never forgets that he is a man of roles. His body is work for the people who shoot it and people are shooting all the time. The camera is his lifeline. Michelle forgets what she is when she becomes his girlfriend. Each photo reveals a food chain. When they breakup, Sarah Horne writes a lament in *Radar Magazine*, calling the article "The Ballad of Heath & Michelle." "I could just imagine [Matilda's] parents stuffing the Smeg fridge with organic greens, growing tomato plants in their ample backyard, or baking their own bread—and thereby imagine my fellow and I doing the same." Horne's desire is a hand-me-down. It is turned on by the desire Heath and Michelle are said to have for one another. In her mind, Horne tries to replicate the relationship she wants Heath and Michelle to have, not the relationship she wants for herself. She is immured in a desire that isn't hers. Her is whatever they want next. There is no her. Her comes from them, and them is never us.

The real subject of Horne's article is not avariciousness or straightforward lifestyle mimicry, but rather being as an amalgamation of impersonated wants: desire as assemblage and desire based on the desire one imagines other people having. Individual desire goes out into the world of Hollywood bodies to look for a fantasy host to feed it ("*She had hypnotized herself into thinking, as they did, that her mind was part of their mind*" Jean Rhys). This particular desire has already been worn and donated. When a visible national paradigm of desire changes, shifts, or breaks, so does the desire around and outside it: "Oh, well. No sense of living in the past—not with Jennifer Garner, Ben Affleck, and little Violet to crush on," writes Horne. Private desire responds to what it hears about official (visible) desire.

For weeks after Heath Ledger's death, Michelle Williams avoids, runs away from, the cameras that move after her

and undulate through space and time. They don't stop. They keep rolling. They have sophisticated spines like the red dragons in Chinese New Year parades. We feel the years go by in images. Our feelings and emotions about our lives and our faces are in other people's faces. Changing movie faces are our feelings and emotions about our feelings and emotions. Confessions well up like images. Michelle Williams ducks, covered in coats; disappears into a building the way Heath disappears into one when he dies. After their split, accommodation, his in particular, becomes a metaphor. An obsession. Williams' Brooklyn townhouse is besieged, wrapped in a panorama of cameras and surrounded by people the way Heath's empty Manhattan bachelor pad is after word of his death gets out.

The romantic time-travel comedy *Kate & Leopold* reminds me of the red-carpet pictures of Heath and Michelle, with Heath looking at the camera, Michelle looking at Heath, and Heath looking at the world as if it were a camera. A ray of light from the red-carpet flashbulbs obscures and entangles, shuffles, as though these faces, these red and black arrangements, were a deck of cards, and I lose track of time, as if this is all there is, which is the point. For the 19th century Leopold in *Kate & Leopold*, time travel into the early 21st Century is merely a way of getting the 21st Century career-woman Kate to return to her 19th century career-less past. The movie is a fight over time, which of course is always gendered. History doesn't happen without people. Or rather, it doesn't happen, can't happen, without men.

While the interior Kate can and must return to her past (with Leopold) in order to be truly happy, Leopold, a famous inventor whose individual history is posterior— *later* in time—and therefore synonymous with history, cannot. The exterior Leopold both marks and is marked

by a history that is intransigent because it belongs to an indispensable meta-narrative (official history has always been about people who are indispensable); a totalizing schema. The movie is therefore a profoundly convoluted spin on, *Wherever my man goes, I go*. Or, in Michelle's case, *Whenever my man looks at the world, I look at him*. Unlike Leopold, Kate (or in the case of Michelle Williams, who looked into Ledger as though he were her past, her future, her portal into the world), whose history, or future, is bound up in Leopold's, can sacrifice her place in the time-like curve, whereas Leopold cannot. In *Kate & Leopold*, the motif of time travel and the theory of relativity is applied to everything from language to parallel reality; specifically space-time loops and word lines (word lines, explains the encyclopedia of science, "are a general way of representing the course of events, the use of which are not bound to any specific theory. Thus in general usage, a world line is the sequential path of personal human events—with *time and place* as dimensions—that mark *the history of a person*." Another term for word line is closed time-like curves that form closed loops in space-time, "allowing objects to *return to their own past*").

When Heath Ledger dies of a drug overdose on January 22, 2008, I am running up New York City's Broome Street to celebrate the Chinese New Year with my Malaysian friend Goretti at the Guan Gong Temple on Elridge Street. While Ledger lies dead above the Nanette Lapore clothing boutique at 421 Broome, I pause to catch my breath. It's cold. I didn't know Ledger was living there, by himself, in an enormous loft, a "bachelor pad" that a film studio was paying for and that reportedly cost $22,000 a month to rent. Ledger was a kept man. In my head, I still have the picture Sarah Horne has drawn of Ledger and Michelle Williams in their Brooklyn Shangri–la. At the Guan Gong temple, Goretti instructs

me to address all the Buddhist deities in the room with wishes and prayers. She also tells me to ask for whatever I want as long as it isn't something unnecessary. "Don't waste a wish," she warns tersely.

In Michelangelo Antonioni's color trilogy (*Blow-Up*, *The Passenger*, and *Zabriskie Point*) identity, doubling, and dissolution go hand in hand. The body of someone else is always a kind of glamour—an excuse not to be in one's own body—and the glamour comes in the form of death, both literal and figurative. In *The Passenger* — whose tagline is, "I used to be someone else, but I traded myself in" — color marks breaks in time, ties with time; the chameleonic body in and out of time. In the film, David Locke (Jack Nicholson), a war correspondent in the Sahara, meets an English arms dealer, David Robertson, who dies suddenly. Robertson bears such a striking resemblance to Locke, that frustrated with his own life, Locke decides to switch identities with him. Becoming someone dead, Locke thinks, will bring him back to life. The body in *The Passenger* is a kind of tabloid. A story that lets us forget ourselves. *The Passenger*, 1975, is echoed five years earlier in Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (also in the desert), where Mark, foreshadowing Locke, tells Daria, "Once I changed my color but it didn't work, so I changed back." In Antonioni's color trilogy, bodies live and die in color changes. Color marks the passing of time.

Instead of being the ultimate obstruction or finale, death in celebrity culture is a passageway to the bowels of borrowed identity like the portal in *Being John Malkovich*. When it comes to the famous, death is the tunnel into someone else's life. After he dies, hundreds of people stand in front of Ledger's building all night long. Holding vigil, talking to reporters, crying. Ledger's building becomes a surrogate body and fans leave things at his door, the same way that people lay their prayers and flowers at the feet of the gilded Buddhist statues at Guan Gong. On the news, I watch people who'd never met Ledger rush to buy him flowers, leave notes, hang drawings. The equivalent of a backstage pass, they gain access through being on camera and entering a medium that had belonged to Ledger. Housed him and excluded them. Now they are where he has been. Now they are instead of him. Now they are themselves. There is a film over everything. Interior becomes exterior, and vice versa. Out becomes in. Death access, rather than finish. Time is camera, camera is world, the link between inside and outside. Onscreen and offscreen. Something he was and wasn't. That was there and not there. Something he had and didn't have. Something only a camera can say or make about someone. The beloved is always the ultimate place to store oneself and also the most difficult to go in and out of. What happens on film is not even close.

Reports start to come out about Ledger's body. The outside we saw did not match the inside we didn't see. Fans treat Ledger's body as if it were their own. They want to know what was inside of it. The media vacillates between interior and exterior truisms; flashing the either/or, inside and outside versions of Ledger like the interior and exterior shots of a movie: the images of Ledger living and acting versus the un-filmable narrative contents of his body. One Fox spywitness treats Ledger's autopsy like unseen footage. "They'll find everything," he warns, which translates to, "They'll *see* everything." And, later, Fox follows up with: "When they do the autopsy it will all come out." But others say Ledger's death means the coveted reel is lost forever and now we'll never know who or what was inside.

In the documentary *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, filmmaker Thom Andersen examines the way Hollywood has fictionalized the real Los Angeles, observing, "In a fiction film, a real space becomes fictional…If we can appreciate

documentaries for their dramatic qualities, perhaps we can appreciate fiction films for their documentary revelations." The idea on display, like Andersen's assertion that Los Angeles has been forced "more often than not, [to play] some other city," is that some part of Ledger hadn't been playing itself and that some parts onscreen were more him than someone else. In *The Dark Knight*, Ledger's Joker declares, "Wait till they get a load of me." Does this mean that the Joker is the real that Ledger couldn't help being? Was his Joker the real in the fiction—the real mixed in with the fake—or, to go back to Andersen's point about Los Angeles, a real space becoming fictional? In a 2009 interview with *Wired* about *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, Ledger's last film, Terry Gilliam states that he "loved Heath on (*The Brothers*) *Grimm*" because "he was so funny all the time." Ledger was apparently even funnier on *Parnassus* because, Gilliam notes, he "had evolved as the Joker." Gilliam claims that Ledger seemed "liberated" by playing the Joker, which, allowed him to "se[t] up the foundation for what he was going to do on the other side of the mirror…he was becoming everything, anything he wanted. The one thing I would have given anything for," Gilliam laments, "would have been to see what Heath was going to do on the other side. But he never got there." This is an interesting choice of words given that "the other side" is a popular euphemism for death, and because Ledger did die, did cross over; was a mirror and in a mirror.

In *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, Ledger's character first appears as a figure from the Tarot, The Hanged Man. Film critic Ray Pride notes that "Tony is a Trickster, a fancy-pants and escapee from the higher reaches of society (as well an actor with only weeks to live, we know)." Gilliam's solution "to a missing leading man," writes Pride, "was simple and works unexpectedly

well: the scenes that had not yet been shot all took place behind the mirror of Dr. Parnassus' Imaginarium, so the writer-director divided the three scenes (tarot readers usually require a person to divide a tarot deck into three sections) between Ledger's colleagues, Johnny Depp, Jude Law, and Colin Farrell. Each actor wears their own fitting of the costume that Ledger wore."

The Italian film director Pier Pasolini took a similar *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* "just right" approach (which involved morphing its original heroine—an "ugly" and "antagonistic" old woman—into a pretty little girl) with *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (1964). Pasolini reportedly chose Matthew because "John was too mystical, Mark too vulgar, and Luke too sentimental." Pride, too, creates distinctions between the Ledger representations. "[Colin] Farrell…is the least of the Tonys" the way that Matthew, according to Pasolini, is the least of the gospels. Gilliam believes that because Ledger's character in *Parnassus* is so "liquid and light" (recalling *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*'s shape-shifting liquid android assassin, the T-1000, who consists of "mimetic poly-alloy"), because he was "becoming everything and anything he wanted," everyone and anyone could and did become Ledger: "It allowed Johnny, Colin, and Jude," says Gilliam, "to move in and be different faces and do different things," which makes it fitting that Ledger, and not his character Tony, was replaced in *Parnassus*. Sharing the same homosocial body, and thus the same male body of representation, allows multiple men to share one role; to take each other's place, resulting in a "just right" hybridization. Mirror is copy, and liquefying to the point of shape-shifting, to the point of dissolution and ruin, is not only in the mythos of Ledger's Joker, but in the stylization: the smudging, corruption, and cultural assimilation of makeup. The liquid of identities stepping in for you.

The actor is also the clown with the painted grin. In the 1965 movie *Inside Daisy Clover*, Natalie Wood's rising star Daisy Clover sings, "The clowns don't smile. That's just a painted grin." The painted grin conjures up two iconic faces: Betty Davis' over-rouged cheeks and crooked red mouth in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, and the open-mouthed 80s teenage heartthrob Corey Haim, who died in 2010, not yet 40. Both Jane and Haim were washed-up child stars. In *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, Jane wears the crimson horror of her Grand Guignol face much the same way that Leatherface wears a human-flesh quilt in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*—his own horrific red mouth poking through ("That's just Libby. The big, red scar on her face called a mouth," Polly tells Priss in *The Group*). Jane's painted-on face and Haim's commissioned smirk is a way of embalming time.

In a *Daily News* article about Haim's death, Soraya Roberts notes that, "signs of decline were etched on the doomed star's face." On the cancelled reality TV series *The Two Coreys* (2007), Haim had the overcast hue of mold, or worse, a dead body. A kind of Hollywood living dead, Haim was the dingy shade of something spoiled. "Sitting down with the actor, the first thing I noticed was his skin," Roberts notes. "What was once flawless with a sprinkling of freckles was now corroded, creased and discolored. He looked to be in his 40s, rather than his mid-30s. His lips had taken on the same hue as his skin, making him look even more unhealthy…The worst part was Haim's smile. His trademark lopsided grin had been stripped of any joy. Now, whenever his mouth turned up, it seemed Joker-esque."

As an adolescent, Haim barely captured my attention (I didn't see *Lucas* until this year), but his death affected me more than the death of actors whose work I do admire and whose faces I did love. For days, I felt sick to my stomach whenever I saw pictures of Haim, or thought of his deathly color before his death.

The Dark Knight director Christopher Nolan says he wanted a more realistic approach to Batman, so Ledger's Joker grin contains a realistic touch. Less makeup than scar, more makeup mixed with scar, or scar masquerading as makeup, the real is mixed in with the fake. The Joker has always been the one with the painted grin—the grin that doesn't come off. The Joker's Grand Guignol mouth is the world askew, unsalvageable. Similarly, at the funhouse, the mouth is how you enter the world and is big enough to fit the entire body, leading Hal Hartley's heroine, Fay Grim (on a quest to find her fugitive ex-husband Henry Fool), to tell a Turkish Baazar shop owner, "there's always this character; the one with the big mouth."

Ledger's Joker and Baby Jane's smudged faces, as well as Leatherface's red lips and Haim's septic skin and cocked mouth, are faces of ruin and commercial atrophy. They are also physiognomies of a death that only capitalism can produce. "Some men," Pennyworth tells Bruce Wayne in *The Dark Knight*, "just want to watch the world burn," though it would be more accurate to say that all three faces are the world already on fire. For while Haim's permanent teen-idol smirk signifies ultimate commercial accessibility, the Joker's brutally hacked-into mouth-on-mouth in *The Dark Knight* signifies its devastating geopolitical cost. Batman is only relevant for what he can't do, for the world he can't save, for the world (there is no world, there are only corporate systems) in which heroes are powerless and obsolete.
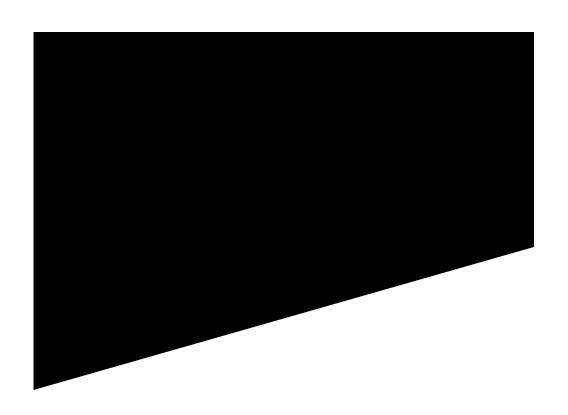
At Barnes & Noble the other day, as I scanned the magazine rack, my eye ran across the image I've been seeing in transit all week. The caption "A List Nip/Tuck"

The old Scarlett is rattier, less composed, not as blonde. Then a yellow blonde, now a snow white Kim Novak blonde. But the biggest change of all is her nose. Noses are all over the place these days, emblems of a morphological order restored. The face is a war zone. Walking home, I wonder what all these Befores & Afters really mean when none of it alters how we see things and what we do about the things we see. In an essay in *Bookforum* called *Nikons and Icons*, David Levi Strauss writes: "Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites rightly point to the larger problem identified by Peter Sloterdijk that modernity has entered into a terminal phase of 'enlightened self-consciousness' whereby all forms of power have been unmasked with *no change in behavior*." This recalls Brecht's, "As crimes pile up, they become invisible," Jacques Derrida's, "In this century, monstrous crimes ('unforgiveable' then) have not only been committed—which is perhaps itself not so new—but have become visible, known, recounted, named, archived by a 'universal conscience' better informed than ever,'" and *The Master and Margarita*'s, "Maestro Woland is a great master of the technique of tricks, as we shall see from the most interesting part, namely, the exposure of this technique and since we are all unanimously both for technique and for its unmasking, we shall ask Mr. Woland." To those who aren't familiar with Mikhail Bulgakov's great Russian novel, Mr. Woland is the Devil and shows up in Moscow.

In exchange for studying what each fraudulent cell looks like under a merciless commercial and commodified lens, viewers enable late-capitalism to run more smoothly by calling in with their votes, as is the case with reality TV. From the inside, secrecy appears eradicated, as though secrets or branded transparencies comprise the totality of injustice, rather than just one part. Justice is reduced to a vantage point. To simply seeing or hearing something. We see and we see and we see ad infinitum.

On Centre Street in New York, a block north of Broome Street where Ledger died, a new ad from Samsung takes up a perfect corner and announces: "There's more to director Joe Wright's extraordinary film *Atonement* than meets the screen." Recording a radical shift in being, the eye/I is now totally eclipsed by screen, leaving us, and our eyes, completely out of the picture. Instead of eye/I to screen, and screen to eye/I, two screens make eyes at each other, like the artist Douglas Gordon's famous screen double of *Taxi Driver*. As a metaphor for seeing, the ad evokes a technocratic orgy; a discourse of vision so bleak even the *Blade Runner* replicants had the heart to fear it.

THE IMPONDERABLE

Ronald Jones

Question: Can death be designed?
Answer: Everyday.

Increasingly so, and with rare precision, the experience of death is designed. Just thumb through the U.S. State of Florida's guidebook titled *Execution By Lethal Injection Procedures* and what do you find? The experience of death *designed*.

In Florida's guidebook, slotted beneath the unambiguous sub-title, "On The Day Of Execution," parched entries, in the company of some quite lurid installments describe an almost *logarithmic order of death*, an irreversible path designed to surrender life. From the sound of it, things are to be strictly dull, leaden, and deaden all designed to *achieve* acquiescence. This recalls stage five in the Kubler-Ross model reliably describing the final steps in one's emotional reception of death; known as DABDA, the first "D" is for *denial*, the final "A" for *acceptance*. After reading through the droning style of "On The Day Of Execution," no one can miss that there is precious little room for procedural trail blazing in this ghastly business.

Try stomaching this episode from "On The Day Of Execution," – officially known as entry "i." Blocking out words like *execution*, "i" glides along in a voice of general authoritarian precision, the voice you would expect to be steering dental assistants in the pragmatics of a tooth pulling. It reads in part, "A designated member of the execution team will explain the lethal injection preparation procedure to the inmate and offer any medical assistance or care deemed appropriate." Matter-of-factly pressing on, "The inmate will be offered, and if accepted, will be administered an intramuscular injection of diazepam, in an appropriate dosage relative to weight, to ease anxiety." This *is* Death by Design. And that last part, about the "appropriate dosage . . . to ease anxiety?"

It seems to have been intentionally *over-designed*, to muffle the "execution team's" own anxiety in the course of quailing another's.

However, isn't the diazepam an expression of "reverse design," and in that sense, more for the executioners than the condemned? At the very least it is equally, if oppositely, designed into the experience for both. Not to put too fine a point on it, but it's only the executioners who will see the next sunrise. To this end, our society has decided that they should see the break of day unburden by their conscious, so that, on another day, on an appointed hour, on their own free will, they can walk back into this same death chamber, representing you and I, and repeat the job. In the end, perhaps the diazepam is *designed-in* for us, for society, creating a comfortable gulf between our lives, and the life freshly concluded in the death chamber.

It seemed as if he just went to sleep.

The scary rides at Disneyland are "over-designed" too, except most of us needn't the diazepam to be strapped in. The Magic Kingdom targets experience towards the *thrill of the close call*, whereas, the experiences for the condemned and their executioners in Florida's death chamber are intentionally designed to produce nothing close, to a "close call." Death is immanent, and doubly so in the death chamber, where every aspect of the experience points towards accelerating the end.

Death ultimately hosts an irreversible dénouement, lending it both identity and authority, and what better way to manage authority then to subvert it from a point of terminus to an awe inspiring threshold? For instance, theologians have long speculated that in the instant of our death, before we are assigned to Heaven, or the Underworld, "God" has opinions and options. A judgment to make, setting your afterlife course for either splendor,

ruin, or, before the Catholic Church theologically sidelined it, eternal equivocality. When the third choice remained, one could be surrendered to a permanent suspension known in Holy doctrine as *limbus infantiumor*. *Limbus infantiumor* is the afterlife for the unbaptized where, infants mostly, remain eternally teetering between the two spheres. These options, a set of second acts, functioned as a cataract, a holy diazepam, allowing the end to be a beginning. A design that is different, but not altogether opposite from Florida's protocol, because both serve the surviving, blur the end, and keep everything orderly.

Roll back the footage from the end of the reel, imagine your future death, your own concluding moments of human experience, where life, *your life*, rushes towards its close. Could such an experience be designed? Should it be? Shouldn't it unfold *unaffectedly*? Shouldn't death be artlessly genuine? In spite of the fact that most people would prefer to put it out of mind, shouldn't the very inevitability of death inspire us to recognize it as a part of life, part of living.

From 1922 to 1927, George Orwell served as a policeman in Burma, in his short story *A Hanging* (1931), he draws from this experience to offer a humanist epiphany while witnessing a man march to his execution.

And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped slightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path. It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive.

We all avoid the puddles.