

affective disorder



journal of
common notions
[spring [two thousand ten]]

“deploying a politics
of subversion,
contemporary anarchist practice
exercises a satirical pressure on the state
in order to show
that other forms of life
are possible.”

“politically, humor is a
powerless power
that uses its position of weakness
to expose those in power
through forms
of self-aware ridicule.”

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[affective disorder
[in the spring of
a still-born
decade]]

a friend once said:
no revolution is going to be generated
out of systemic
or structural laws.
we are on our own, and what we do
we have to do for ourselves.

we are the denizens
of a strange epoch,
the 'given' in a surreal situation.

while knowledge of space and time has been democratized, the
modes of inhabiting them (the modes of being) are controlled
more intensely than ever before. while sharing of information
is ubiquitous, understanding and love appear empty at best - at
worst cliché. but where global-capitalism's erasure of traditional
and stable social structures and identifications might be seen as a
fatal loss,

we eschew the temptation
of nihilism
out of preference
for naïveté and imagination
furiously unearthing potential
from nothingness,
conjuring opportunity
from the void
we find ourselves peering into.

our enemy has no name of its own.

we have named it
time and again, but because the enemy only exists within a given
situation, its face, tactics, and form change continually. with
marx we had its first secular manifestation: the bourgeoisie and
its weapons capital and the state. but since then, new faces and
new techniques of exploitation have come to fruition:

national security,
public relations,
cybernetics,
crisis-management,
anti-terrorism,
the media spectacle,
biopower,
- the list goes on.

but that capitalism is worth nothing without labor still holds: the
harder we work, the more we are exploited; the more we try, the
more we give away. but unlike in marx's day, capitalists no longer
fund their ventures independently, nor are we only working in the
fields and factories. it's not the people at the top that keep the
gears in motion - the idea-people and managers who finance and
organize companies with our lives (debts, labor, futures) - we're
the ones that produce, trade, and borrow the things we are
taught to, whether food or identities.

we've been taught how important a college education is, how
we will be competing with our peers for the little work there is,
how we want to own a house and car, how we don't want to end
up wasting our precious free-time cleaning our own homes (the
home is assumed). we fear the idea of waiting tables for a liv-
ing, of working in the bleakness of the office, of collecting other
people's garbage.

we fear debt,
the neighbor,
the boss.

we fear that we will not be enough.
in this, we are our own
worst enemy.

we have been thrown
into a situation without
a positive solution:

we can allow ourselves to be overcome with fears of poverty and failure and the desire for comfort and security; or we can call ourselves to struggle and uncertainty. unfortunately, the provided means of certainty demand servitude, the relinquishing of potential for creating a world, for living in common. to live with what's been given would require wasting our only opportunity, but

the side effect of facing
the openness of the future
is the anxiety of confronting
existential and social death.

the war to be fought is not (only) external, but (also) internal: our enemies are the ethos of comfort and fear and the hegemony of the future, a cultural and temporal enemy occupying both our psychic and social spaces. it will be objected:

“you're worried about culture
and time in response
to the brutal exploitation
of capitalism?”

“what has become
of class war? direct action?
communism?”

nothing. class war cannot exist without a class-consciousness; direct action without actors; communism without communists. we want these things too, but the tools we've been given no longer serve us. we must develop new technologies of the mind and heart, new weapons for a new war.

but how is it to be done? how do we wage war on ideas and emotion? how do we wrest control of our hardened relations, held together on one level with violence, but also by fear of the unknown, of one another, of the future?

we don't know.
yet.

this is *affective disorder*:

to share affect that allows us to find ourselves and one another, and to imagine who we might be. we already know we want something similar in this situation, but we have yet to imagine exactly what it is be or how to go about it.

it is no coincidence
community, communication, communism
share a form
and history.

what is common is shared, whether on paper, on the table, or in the street. the common is not the founding of an organization but the sharing of an experience; not the knowing who we are, but affirming that we are. our endeavor is to act and play a new world into being; to articulate a means of community that is communication itself; to invent a communism that stabs holes in orthodoxy and embraces imagination and sharing. in this way we might discover that we are and what we want to do.

by all means,
speak your mind.

and while we offer no strategy or cure, we have found tactics and remedies to focus our anger and channel our vertigo: the emptiness of social life - revealed in the spectacular-state's endless game of destruction-of-old and integration-of-new forms of life - is our point of departure.

where the past is a burden,
we sever it,
like a pinned tail.

where the present is a full page,
we fill up its margins.

where the future is an abyss,
we greet it,
killing ourselves
laughing.

[procedural notes [on the *occupization* of everything]]

“where have all
the protesters gone?”

asks authority,
in administration seminars and contrived editorials. the flashes
of resistance have become elusive. perhaps there have not been
any explosive occupations, moments of extreme joy and ten-
sion, but our sedition is nonetheless maintained. last semester,
our compassion was confined to several absurd and spontaneous
situations, in which the coagulation of our desires proved to be
no match for the relentless refrigeration initiated by state and
corporate forces. no matter. in the streets of fifth avenue, we
felt the power of our affective flux. we manifested ourselves
amongst the falling leaves, affirming entropy as our answer to a
static pollution. the celebration of tom ridge, bastard agent of
power, was curtailed through carelessly organized insanity. the
maintenance of order stuttered as we blazed through art shows,
busy shopping streets, police lines. the relentless militarization
of the new school, concurrent with the proud hopelessness of
the obama administration, posed a fatal question. it was one
we could not answer. so we presented fractal desires and ab-
surd logic; we learned to laugh in the awkward silences. when
faced with the meaningless abyss of neoliberal capitalism, the
slow social death of higher education, we posed an alternate
set of questions, this time unanswerable by the system itself.

we affirmed ourselves

in catastrophic affective disorder.

we have gone nowhere;

we have been watching and waiting. as
our friends in austria and germany occupied and shut down the
majority education system. as our friends in london and greece
took back their lives. the huge protests in california succeeded
in making the so-called crisis in american universities front-
page news. there occupations succeeded in restoring an unprec-
edented degree of militancy to a stagnant student movement.

we may act slowly,
but we act surely.

we know that this current crisis is not something to be intimidated by, nor is it anything particularly new. while the stagnant left holds out hope that some answer may emerge, some democratic or participatory alternative to relentless accumulation, we know that this crisis is merely a facade. the system is not breaking, there is no catastrophic meltdown threatening life as we know it. 'if only,' we find ourselves saying; witness the societal preoccupation with disaster movies.

capitalism is not in crisis, rather,
it is crisis;
its strategies absorb an infinite accumulation
of disasters and use them
to power its perpetuation.

we say: "occupy everything" ...

while there have been no major occupations on the east coast in the past few months, we still find ourselves occupying certain spaces, certain precarious fractures outside of cybernetically manipulated space and time. riots, chaotic parties, theoretical breaches; an infinite plurality of moments of negation. we have no answers, so we call the questions into question. we have no power, so we invalidate such an arcane concept. our project is not the discovery of a new world, but the destruction of all maps that could lead to its colonization. we find the tasks we undertake rendered as aesthetic and ethical, rather than as social or political: so be it. we have more interest in a community of friends than a society of elders. the utopia is the non-space outside of time, the realm of pure potentiality which we are in the process of occupying. if contemporary neoliberal civil society is, to borrow a term from leibniz, the best of all possible worlds,

we can conceive of communism
only through *aphophatic elucidation*,
that is, as the divine synthesis
of each and every impossible world.

we refer to this process,
the bringing to prominence
of the marginalia,
the process of
revealing ourselves,
as
occupization.

understand that the actual physical, temporal or ideological space of the occupation means very little to us. instead, we find significant the irregular social relationships and forms of friendly wisdom which are brought forth through such a fracture. we have developed a great appreciation for the intense liberation of affective currents that our actions facilitate. by destroying the conception of 'political work',

we begin situating dissidence
within the realm of play;

our community
receives amazing bursts of energy, empowerment and emotion as a direct result. we disregard strategy for tactics that resonate with an alienated multitude, quite willing to be laughed at; we have realized that laughter is contagious. the very presence of alternative, seemingly absurd forms of dissidence undermines those forms of progressive action which strengthen the state and capitalist normalcy.

through occupization,
the constant struggle
to develop fractures
and make occupation a possibility,
we assert our presence
as pure, dischordant
potentiality.

[the university, the social factory, [the broken class]]

the developments of late modernity brought with them the political philosophies of autonomia and further, the conception of the social factory. it was a matter of course that a culture so obsessed with progress and production would seek to maximize the output of its working classes. we see this attempt to extort the maximum amount of value from labor, this mode of valorization that has been labeled fordism, as inexorably linked with the development of mass production. we have witnessed its expansion out of the workplace, encompassing the life of the neoliberal subject in its entirety. socially, this means the domination and exploitation of culture, of art, of all forms of social interaction. entertainment, adolescence, and romance - once outside the sphere of work - soon become mere productive appendages. our lives prepare us for surreal forms of labor: seduction and persuasion, the branding of intricate commodities, and the manipulation of emotion. on the individual level, the effect appears more profound. was there ever a time our parents needed not experience the burden of work? taylorism, the management science of efficiency and exploitation, now no longer concerned itself only with employees' motions inside the factory, with how they worked. in their relentless search for a highly educated and completely disempowered workforce,

corporations also sought to control

every aspect

of how workers lived.

human resources concerns itself with which products people bought, but also whether they recycled them; not only which magazines they subscribed to, but also the corresponding political beliefs; not only where their children went to school, but also their course of study. corporations no longer needed to extract every ounce of value from workers in the workplace -

the management of consumption

had become far more profitable.

one should not take this to mean that subsumption and commodification of life outside the workplace only begun at the end of the century; it was, however, in this period, that the procedure became completely normalized. throughout the twentieth century, we could point to a plurality of autonomous cultures, sub-cultures and forms-of-life. now, however, this task becomes increasingly difficult. with the defeat of the second world through the failure of state communism, and the neutralization of third world independence movements through post-colonial forms of domination, we saw the emergence a boundless universe of neoliberal capitalism. there was no alternate form of production for capitalism to compete with, no form of structural organization that could possibly produce more goods. the battle had become largely a question

of the possibility for
autonomous cultures.

and so, the factories closed. fordism was over by the late 1970s, as the american model of industrial production gave way to japanese-inspired just-in-time cybernetic production. what emerged was a new phenomenon; post-fordism, a new psychedelic, psychotic american dream. the west had, and was won. the united states and its allies had out-produced every other country and were capable of flooding repressive socialist regimes with cheap commodities and cheaper culture. it had begun to export to everywhere on the planet, establishing a globalized circuit of commerce and commercialization. and so, having produced everything imaginable, it was left to the citizens of the west to destroy and consume.

[after the battle came the feast.]

paradoxically, despite the untold toil of a century of hard labor, few have seen real rewards. the retired factory worker, the elderly nurse, the wounded veteran; all have memories of lifetimes of backbreaking work, yet many are left in poverty, told by the american dream-turned-nightmare that they have failed only through their own impotence. we, their descendants, have learned from their mistakes and know to whom they fell victim.

their pensions,
our supposed futures,
as stockholder dividends
or defense appropriations.

while some talk of an absent future, we might talk of a past of absence. the privileged among us were compensated for the removal of our parents with an avalanche of stuff, of obsolescent toys, and twenty-four hour prime time programming. some of us received a rudimentary education in violence and turmoil or perhaps suffered narcoleptic delusions under the influence of prescription drugs and video games. like our parents, we have been lead to believe that this is our fault: the conspicuous consumption, decomposed affect, and juvenile delinquency result in a generation gone mad. but really, we know the specter that taunts our sanity first hand; we exist as mirrors, even if the reflection we encounter is ugly.

we are doomed to already know
everything
they could possibly teach us.

the management of 'free time' through propaganda - advertising and public service campaigns teaching us to be good, normal consumers/producers - is the logical extension of cybernetic control of the workplace to every moment of life, not only waking life, but dreaming life as well; cybernetics concerns itself with the future [re]production of desired scenarios based on the interplay of agents in the past. where taylorism studied the movements of workers in time and mapped them out to locate the most efficient, consumer research is aligned temporally with advertising to see what turns us on and off - what makes us buy - in order to produce more and more effective cycles of desire, anxiety, and satisfaction. the catch is, our satisfaction never matches the spectacular nature of manufactured desire, nor can it ever negate the anxiety it produces in us. instead, we enter a cycle of endless excitation without release, like worker bees sipping saccharine, an infinite leading-on of the population. it would almost be a relief to know that mere sadism were at work here, but we know this is not the case. this we know we are teased for profit, scared into production, pavlovically conditioned to reproduce and enhance the existing order-of-things, ourselves included:

there are no cybernetic people,
only black boxes
with inputs and outputs.

we exist
as a new kind of *product*.

everything material is created elsewhere, in maquilladors and sweatshops without labor or environmental protections. yet the legacy of late fordism is a glut of products so horrific that capitalism must now produce those who will consume. the challenge capitalism set itself after fordism was the reproduction and totalization of consumption, which has occurred through globalization and the subjugation of communities on the one hand, on the reproduction of the spectacular homogeneous society of the 'developed' world on the other. each generation since that of the sixties, since the advent of adolescent liberation has been fated to outdo its predecessor. every year, our hairstyles become crazier, our lifestyles more outlandish, our parties more hedonistic. the culture we are creating, with its hipster nonchalance and green economy, is the most unsustainable yet. as our universities become more expensive, our jobs more scarce, our psychic burdens heavier, we are preparing for one of the most competitive and destructive periods of civilization to date.

this era is the age of the social university. while institutions of higher education have been implicated by the state and commercial sectors since their conception in the 11th century, they have always played a peripheral role to the management of society itself. their role was revolutionary, in the negative sense that it capitalized on innovation and discovery and brought it within the realm of an updated imperial-capital totality. it was in the university that a society developed and refined its relationship to the other, regardless of whether this other was a heretic, an indigenous population, subversion of gender norms or an experiment in aesthetic inquiry. a university, therefore, was essential to the conception of new products and means of productivity that allowed for the development of classical and modern societies. yet the university and its education were not wholly essential to production itself. it functioned to support the economy from the outside, withholding some of the brightest minds from industry in exchange for new conceptual and epistemological breakthroughs. it affected politics, but remained partisan and progressive; this revolutionary energy was not yet fully accommodated into the system itself. it supported cultural ingenuity, but did not yet serve as a necessary

incubator for fashion.

it is only in the age of consumption,
in the age of reproduction
and the manipulation of surplus values,
that the university becomes essential.

for education and the resulting cultural milieu makes for more refined and sophisticated consumers, more expensive and more rapidly obsolescent products. greater literacy allows for us to digest greater and more complex forms of media, of mediation. the proliferation of university education hides a sad fact: we are all being prepared for some form of management role. some of us will have the sick pleasure of having to exploit underpaid, disadvantaged laborers. others will only have to manage and subjugate themselves. in return, we are assured a lifetime of debt, of insertion into a system from which there is no release. we're so glad our freshmen history lectures taught us the difference between an indentured servant and a slave. we seek not to deny our privilege, for we attend college and lead comfortable and meaningless lives of hipster frivolity. yet the reality of living in a totalized system is that we are all incorporated into a rigid, exploitative hierarchy and we resent the fact that we are allowed little more than to continue living, to continue consuming. the consequence of massive debt, of seeing countries invaded and children worked to death for our benefit, it is

an immense and increasingly
inescapable psychic burden.

capital has arrived at the realization that the university is the ideal model for a new, terrifying post-fordist cycle of reproduction. and so it has sought to reproduce the conditions of the university in the entirety of society. the cacophonous milieu of campus life, of social interaction and fashion conscious adolescents, provides for the constant creation of trends, for the rapid obsolescence of every meaning. hence the proliferation of social networking sites: we gain an illusory respite from the loneliness of the present civilization in exchange for the infinite repetition of our high school and college lives, of the anxiety, abandon, and consumption that serve as their corollaries. the thirst for knowledge, the constant quest for stimulation and satisfaction, becomes totalized as a

lifelong addiction to media
and electronic entertainment.

our collective abandon,

our fixation with sports,
means we resign ourselves to achieving victory vicariously as spectators, instead of fulfilling our own desires. the state's judicial system begins to resemble the disciplinary apparatus of a small liberal arts college: you can get away with anything, if your parents are rich or friends with the president.

more serious, however, is the way in which new forms of precarious labor resemble the completion of college assignments. rather than a salary and a boss, entire sectors are now left with a cryptic assignment and deadlines and some vague promise of remuneration for completed work. we might spend as much time looking for work as we spend working. a resume becomes little more than a transcript of assignments handed in, credits received. at every point in our lives, our performance is examined and graded, as is our appearance and social standing. no wonder the internship is rapidly being totalized, or that new job applicants find themselves undergoing exams and performance examinations. biopolitical competition becomes the norm, with our appearances, cultural background and friend rosters becoming increasingly important in achieving employment.

we see a flip-side also: on campuses, illegal subcontracting and corruption is rife. the living wage struggles of the 90s, many of which occurred on university campuses, served to highlight a greater societal problem - that of an unbelievable wealth gap, of the gross exploitation of minorities and the undocumented. the university serves to reinforce this separation, to accelerate social reproduction, through the creation of an increasingly significant education gap, through systems of tracking and advanced placement on the one side, exclusive policies and increased tuition on the other. nowhere is this process more evident than in california, where we have seen the dramatic enclosure of the university on the one hand and the increasing disenfranchisement of marginal populations on the other. the battle over education currently occurring on the west coast is by no means a minor struggle; rather, it is

the *messianic strike*
at the inauguration of the university
as *social factory*.

[art [in the age of mechanical asphyxiation]]

are you free

or are you just lonely?

you are thankful to live
with one or two people,
a modest existence that allows
you to buy a new pair of sunglasses
year by year, to eat quinona when its in stock.

you draw when

you want to

- representations
and non-representations -

when you smoke a bowl
and when you thought
you were going to get laid,

never on commission,
always autonomously.

your family fluctuates
between congratulating your ability
to maintain existance without becoming
a trial lawyer and encouraging you to change
your last name after conducting
jerk-off performance art.

above all, you work for noone.

isn't it strange, though
that when we read shakespeare's sonnets
they read like love poems and not adornments
for some lesser noble's fingers? we only need
to search for references to gold to realize
wheat they really are.

art is not seperate
from social conditions.

[an insider's guide to the vortex]

uncle ernest:

i talked with your dad over the phone. Had a chance to see many of the harris, woods, bullock, lavazza clan in marjah after my stay in reyjavik. while there, i talked with your dad over the phone for so many reasons- timezone deltas, misplaced priorities, etcetera. We don't connect very often. your dad is very proud of you, and i miss you.

donkey kong:

i love to be nomadic.

uncle ernest:

your aunt and i moved back to seoul, korea.

new york is nowhere but a diseased conglomeration of everywhere else. everywhere is nowhere but a sick conglomeration of everywhere else that new york threw up on. upon projectile vomiting entities that are close in range are not safe. those farther away are likely to get flecks splattered on them like a hen's feathers. i am suffering from a number of symptoms.

1. dysplasia.

cells mature abnormally. they transport themselves from place to place morphing in shape and size and becoming wrinkled, ugly. they take pills for it.

2. confusion.

i know who i am if who i am is a series of half thought out rituals, if who i am is buried under a good 250 million years of dirt.

3. sluggishness.

change is a slow progression, an adaptation to social structural changes that actually seek to maintain continuity. It is a swim through quicksand. a bar, a house show, a party, a joint, a shot, a subway ride, a film, a meal.

i am waiting for the carnies at the county fair to cart me away on a ferris wheel and feed me an elephant ear by hand. I am waiting to powder myself in sugar. i am waiting to barrel through the united states as if i actually live here.

[i </3 totality]

[one]

nothing should be free;

everything shared and stolen.

the concept of freedom has been so completely assimilated
into the logic of neoliberalism that it has become
meaningless. what does it mean to assert that people are free
to choose from a million products,
a thousand forms of exploitation?

for the majority of the world's population, freedom is
the freedom to work or to die.

for us, there is some modicum of freedom, but this
liberation only serves
to enable us to become delicate dynamos for the
machines of cultural production.

our freedom,
artistic and affective, is repackaged
and sold back to us;
revolutionary aesthetics and reality television scripts ensure
distraction
and the maintenance of social order.

we want to steal our education and our joy
in squatted classrooms and lecture halls.
we want to fortify the studios
and coffee shops in which we labor and plot our
counter-attack.

we want to share everything
and consume nothing.

we want to join the struggle
of billions, seeking desperately
to be liberated
from their freedom.

[eighteen, nineteen]

[two]

recomposition

is the realization
of new common notions,
of razor possibilities.

class structures are not fixed; rather, they are
constantly being altered
by the development of new modes of relation to
- and refusal of -

labor and capital. we have observed shifts
in the early 20th century with the development
of mass production, in the 50's and 60's with the emergence
of spectacular culture and mass media
a similar process is occurring now.

following automation and outsourcing, a majority
of jobs are to be found in the service and cultural sectors;
realms of immaterial, ephemeral
and affective labor.

we have experienced the end
of production, what we are seeing is an economy
that is depended on the one hand on the intense
branding and veneration
of the commodity form.
on the other hand, we see a growing reliance on the
extreme valorization
of affective energies.

the proleteriati has mutated:
the workforce is largely diffused through chain stores
and temporary offices, restaurants and homes.
unions have all but disappeared
unemployment is rising,
pensions are gone.

the average worker will have a dozen or more jobs
in their lifetime,
if they are *lucky*.

existential crises and moments of
extreme anxiety, panic
are no longer the exception, but the rule; in this society,
everything is precarious.

[three]

recombination

is the tendency for capital
to recuperate new forms
of resistance, new forms of refusal of labor.

conventional strikes are

no longer effective,
since it is impossible to kill
off a brand in a matter of months, or
effectively disrupt the supply
chain of a multinational corporation. we could target
smaller corporations and companies, but this would
simply facilitate the shift
towards monopolistic domination.

we do not however propose a strategic retreat

from workplace organization, instead a flanking
maneuver, the initiation of social war through

a proliferation of human strikes:

workplace disruptions,
flash mobs, sabotage and theft
on a major scale.

we also have a great opportunity to begin striking at

the level of consumption,

which is now a space arguably

more crucial to the reproduction
of capital than production itself.

that entails the disruption and occupation of stores,
but also shopping malls and cafes,

television studios and social networking sites,

anywhere people remain.

we must strike also at the spaces where the

existential meaning and cultural logic

of consumption is validated, namely schools and universities;

these sites are key to the process

by which capital subverts

and assimilates resistance.

in our struggle, we must disrupt.

not only the mechanisms,
but also the space and the time
of capital.

[twenty, twenty-one]

[four]

we seek neither self management, nor self determination.

we do not want to construct
a new totality,

a new state or university or corporation that is
more efficient

or more friendly

than the one which currently exists.

rather, we want to sabotage

delusions of progress,

to ensure that the warped rationality

contemporary civilization

is abandoned

once and

for all.

destroy the means of production,
occupy the means

of consumption,

challenge each day the social relations
that have been forced upon us.

[five]

we make neither demands,
nor history.

rather, we articulate our own manner of being,

we assert our presence in the world. rather,

we make our own present;

we forge it as a challenge

to a stagnant totality. to make demands would be

to attempt to participate

in a narrative of domination and exploitation that

we want no part of.

instead, we wish to

affect our friends

and our loves,

to incite them

to form singular modes of existence,

autonomous from the logic

of imperial capital. everything we know

is bankrupt. develop common notions.

build the

party in the streets

[fractal segments]

q. i've read a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i've smashed a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i've lived a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i write a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i've seen a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i hurt a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i protest a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

q. i question a lot,
doesn't that make me a good revolutionary?

[circle] a. who wants to be a *good* revolutionary?
to do anything *a lot* is to cease *being*.

repetition does not make you stronger,
only strength makes you stronger,
anything else is *just so much noise*.

q. don't you have to believe in *some-*
to get you through the day?

q. isn't it a waste of time
to be sarcastic with me?

q. don't you want to change the world?

@. no, time does not exist

a. but how else will we get each other hard?

a. we want to destroy the world as it exists now,
so that we may finally create
space to breathe.

[twenty two, twenty three]

q. this all sounds dangerous,
immoral,
and illegal.
how do you live
with yourselves?

a1. of course, or else
it wouldn't *mean*
anything.

a2. where do you think
all the suicides
come from?

a^2. some people once screamed
"the system has made
us sick!
let us strike the death blow
to this sick system!

b[1-r]. now reads:
"the spectacle is all systems, combined,
and they have given us
the gift of every malady
imaginable.

now, we seek
to help it along
in its death throws,
all we must do
is return the favor.

[after all, who wants to suffer alone,
when *the sickness* is part of our collective eros?
to be is not *to live*, *to be* is *to allow the eyes to cut*,
the lips to kill; to refuse to hide any longer.
we are so sick we see it in empty mirrors
and scientific love letters - and we are pissed off.
this sentence needs no propositional phrase here,
insert whatever you like, our anger and strength
are furies of hell.]

[[[and all we want
is one little kiss.]]]

[we smell the reddest roses [as the system decomposes]]

let's start from a basic but self evident assumption: that you are not the only one failing to get laid. if we view the inadequate relationships of the global petit-bourgeois as a social phenomenon, we prefigure a conception of the social itself as flawed. yet are we doomed to perpetuate such banal forms of connectivity? only given the current political, economic and cultural order. for contemporary society refers to heavily on something we might refer to as the planned obsolescence of the neoliberal subject. in the heyday of fordist mass-production, industrial conglomerates developed the manufacturing capacity to provide for the entire world, yet developed the realization that doing so would totally undermine the social and symbolic hierarchy of the entire planet. labor might become almost obsolete, the lives of humans given over to the realm of play, with gods and masters ignored.

three strategies were adopted, with the first ensuring that products would break down or decompose. this process eventually entailed the architecture of fashion, in order to ensure that even working commodities would need to be replaced. the second strategy enacted a subtle but intense shift in the realm of labor, whereby workers were transitioned out of their roles in industrial and agricultural production and into a vast, chaotic service sector. this provided salespeople, advertising executives and retail workers to artificially induce consumption, while helping to ensure that conceptions of joy would become completely dominated by the entertainment industry. finally, new immaterial products, comprised of cultural ideals, of aesthetics and meaning, were developed. yet to properly market these new forms of commodity, there had to be mechanism to render old ideas, old culture and values, fundamentally obsolete. such a process was inaugurated in the postmodern period,

the increasing popularity
of the break-down,
break-up or break-out.

[twenty four, twenty five]

everything can and must
be fashionable
not just our clothes but every aspect
of our lives and loves.

by constantly transitioning
between groups of friends and subcultures, we generate a huge
demand for new products, for cultural artifacts and forms of
meaning. by constantly developing and destroying new relation-
ships, we are forced to renew ourselves and remain trapped
within shallow social spheres. we believe we are doing this of our
own accord, but in reality we are trained, even designed to act
this way, just as we learn to flick between channels or web pages.
there is no mastermind to this process; graphic designers, garage
musicians, culture bloggers are all responsible and simultaneously
in a state of grace. all of this matters little; what is certain is
that is that a system has been created whereby failure, not just
of objects, but also of social relationships, becomes necessary to
its perpetuation. the biggest corporate pop icons will talk of the
commodification of love, or of the banality of postmodern sexual-
ity. yet we see the way in which our angst is packaged and resold
back to us, the total recuperation that has been made possible.
and we understand that to complain, to bemoan the inadequacy
of ourselves or others - to have an existential crisis - is to fall into
a trap. after all, the market is quite prepared to

sell you a new lover, or at least
two overpriced drinks and a
trendy contrived space to meet one.

if any institution is guilty, besides the ephemeral market that can
never be pinned down, it is the university. for it is the university
that plays the primary role in contemporary social reproduction;
it is here we learn to become fashion bloggers or heideggerian
philosophers, that we learn strategies to perpetuate the system.
yet this institution also provides the vulgar laboratory in which
modern forms of emotional relationship are developed. we learn
to communicate through vague metaphors, critique each other
based upon contrived interest in awkward, crowded social situa-
tions under the influence of stimulants or intoxicants.

is it any wonder
that our sad attempts
to relate to one another
soon deteriorate?

we say:
destroy that which destroys
our capacity
to relate
to one
another
[in flames
it's
hella sexy]

we say:
sabotage
the machinery
of *social* reproduction,
forcing us
to decompose
for stability and
for profit.

we say:
give up
being single, form
a singularity, actualize
your desires in
the space
of the common.

we say:
break
up with
the system,
occupize everything
and spend
your nights in
orgasmic
abandon.

[twenty six, twenty seven

[elucidated demands: absence, catastrophic longing, the space between sentences?]

“whatever precautions you take
so the photograph will look
like this or that, there comes a moment
when the photograph surprises you.
it is the other’s gaze that wins out
and decides.”

we do not make demands. to
make a demand of a system
is to recognize its fundamental legitimacy;
we want nothing to do with the lethargic behemoth that is the
new school bureaucracy. it does not function as a part of a uni-
versity dedicated to liberating forms of education, as it would
have us believe. rather, it functions to transform the university
into a space of abstraction, into a blueprint for a static society.
the thousands of administrators are only symbolic of the process-
es of control occurring within the university; we are alternatively
being ‘admitted’, ‘advised’, ‘housed’, ‘disciplined’, ‘directed’
and even ‘fed’ by a legion of bureaucrats. it is their presence
that has sent education costs through the roof, as they draw
benefits of the kind that adjuncts and tas can only dream of, or
draw salaries often in excess of \$100,000 a year. yet this is not a
problem unique to new school, and this is why we cannot ad-
dress this administration directly, even to ask for its dissolution.
rather,

the problem results
from a structural change
within contemporary
society specifically designed
to stifle our potential
diminish our possibilites for secession.

at the close of the 60's

when consciousness of the alienation inherent within contemporary society was at its peak, students and young people engaged in a mass withdrawal from routine forms of life. jobs, classes, nuclear homes were all systematically abandoned. we might stay in the university or the workplace only long enough to realize its fundamental emptiness; soon, we would head for the communes or the barricades, for the precarious fractures threatening to overturn capitalist or socialist normalcy. production was disrupted, order was overturned; it didn't matter. the forces formerly known as capital and the state adapted to do without the processes that had been their birthplace. an economy once orientated around production became globalized and automated; it was now focused on perpetuating and increasing consumption. similarly, the maintenance of order was discarded in favor of a constantly managed disorder, in which riots, natural disasters and even revolutions did not disrupt, but rather strengthened the stranglehold of power over its constituents. some academics hold that the university in the late sixties took on the functions of a 'knowledge factory', others believe that civilization itself became one big 'social factory'. what we notice following the upheavals of the sixties and seventies, however, is not that of the gradual extension of the factory, but rather of its diminution. instead, at the close of modernity, another model comes into play.

the university functions as the ideal space for social reproduction and biopolitical manipulation

we learn to play the roles that we are fated for, while similarly amassing enough debt to make escape from our mundane futures impossible. we refine our bizarre habits and individualized passions, so as to become ideal consumers for our ever expanding, increasingly insane market system. we learn to socially network, to advertise our selves and our desires in ways that leave us feeling meaningless and unfulfilled. our lives resemble dorm rooms, rented not owned, gradually filled with more and more junk. or they resemble classrooms, where we are alternately in a daydream, absent or under conditions of extreme stress. anyone familiar with campus security or residential advisors knows

their job is not to
prevent destruction
but to ensure that it is subdued,
completely reflexive.

[twenty eight, twenty nine]

we can drink ourselves stupid,
as long as we remain locked
in our rooms. we are allowed
to hurt ourselves, but any damage
to university property
is heavily punished.

those attending parties after finals,
sports games will attest:
in our society, it is not the
riots that are controlled, rather,
it is their meaning.

it is this manipulation of appearances
that makes demands so dangerous;

they are attacks that
can be turned against us. whereas modern capitalism frequently
made use of brute force, the postmodern combine has devel-
oped a form of martial arts that allows it to use our own attacks
against us. rallies and activist groups are used in university mar-
keting material, political dissidence is a selling point. pseudo-
progressive schemes such as socially responsible investment and
student representation are used against us, complexified belong
belief and incorporated whole-heartedly into the management
strategies of the administration. asking for a voice in univer-
sity matters is like asking to be allowed to scream in a torture
chamber where your voice is recorded and replayed to you at a
hundred times the volume. making demands effectively entails
negotiation. negotiation entails negotiation amongst ourselves.
if the university offers to go half-way, or to meet some demands
but others, where do we draw the line? our fundamental demand
should be for the dissolution of their authority over us, yet every
demand further entrenches the administration. the answer,
therefore, is to constitute ourselves as an autonomous entity, to
recognize that both we and they are fundamentally unable to fix
this 'system'. we do not demand nothing, in the sense of a pas-
sive absence of will. rather,

we do not
'demand nothing'
in the sense of a passive absence of will, rather,
our demand is nothing itself,
the definitive negation
of the systemic processes
which hold us in thrall.

[a christmas card
[from kerrey: the sweet
solitude of activism]]

be self reliant
in a crowd?
of all places, yes
even grand central?
yes
how?
keep with perfect sweetness
the independence of solitude.
ok, we'll try.
-bob, sarah, henry

this is the text of the christmas card bob kerrey sent to all new school faculty. on the cover an overhead, panoramic photograph of grand central terminal. the crowd is blurred with the motion of commuters making their way to their individual platforms, but in the lower right hand corner three individuals are huddled together, suspended from the motion, expressionless. they are the only thing in focus. nowhere do the words "happy holidays" appear; this is less a christmas card than a clue to the interior workings of the new school as it maneuvers to absorb the consequences of three semesters of radical struggle.

sent to faculty, the card is clearly meant to be a response to the university's widespread disrespect towards his administration. substituting "unilateral authority" for "self reliance" the poem becomes concerned with how to effectively manage a territory teeming with elements that resist management. kerrey awkwardly appropriates a quote from emerson: "keep with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." (1)

like an arcane monarch,
he exercises his god-given
authority with infinite compassion, and
when he is forsaken
he retreats to his
heavenly ivory tower
continuing his 'duties' as if
his opposition no longer exists.

despite its many
points of friction, class
society perpetuates its ability
to atomize actors in conflict.

in the private sphere
resolution of conflict is simple: return to work and cease re-
sistance. by retreating from conflict until his contract expires
kerrey robs his opposition the chance to continue using him as a
symbolic enemy for their anti-capitalist struggle. compromises
are made, amnesty is granted, and all combatants return to their
rightful workplaces: the interior of capital hidden in all condi-
tions. in short, he sweetly resists the temptation to continue
furthering his personality in exchange for making the struggle
once again too big to fight.

this maneuver is a clever method of inhibiting agitators, who
generally depend on salient points around which to call rallies. in
kerrey's case, these exist as

transgressions of power
pitifully referred to as a "crisis
of authority."

on march 4th a broad coalition of groups is organizing rallies
against the commodification of education. in new york the coali-
tion plans to protest outside the governor's office in an appeal
for reform. after all, such appeals have succeeded in california,
where schwarzenegger can currently be seen desperately at-
tempting to find the funds to reverse the tuition increase in
hopes of appeasing the liberal faction of student protesters.
the new school administration is continuing a similar strategy of
minimal appeasement; two recent messages from the board of
trustees reveal diluted solutions to student demands raised at
the first occupation. the first confirms the convening of a search
committee for a replacement for bob kerrey, who agreed to end
his presidency in 2011 following the april fools occupation (but
secretly jockeyed for a three year extension last semester.) the
next email confirmed the creation of socially responsible invest-
ment committee. both committees are to employ input from
student stooges handpicked by the board, and are

further transparent
attempts to pacify
'radical' student groups
who seem to be descending
to the same sweet solitude
as their old rival.

faculty, too, have resigned themselves to a path of minimum resistance. in a forum on student activism last semester occasional student ally andrew arato unveiled his plan of resisting the administration: "acting as though it does not exist." thus, the actual source of conflict-- the mixture of corporate hierarchy with the values of educational community-- is deferred and protest becomes integrated with bureaucracy.

the actual source of conflict
- the mixture of corporate hierarchy
with the values of educational community -
is deferred and protest
becomes integrated
with bureaucracy.

the end of momentum of new school activist indicates kerrey's strategy of removing himself from conflict, thus engendering indifference for his management has proven itself effective, but also indicates the students have learned a valuable lesson -

rallying around single
issue causes
only carry the cause of
structural inversion
to the point of compromise.

this message has made its way to march 4th coalition organizers that now seem conflicted on calls to break from the solitary confinement of their transitional platform. a flier showing a clock as a bomb with a short fuse reading: "this is no time for another rally" has forced a defensive stance as they struggle to find numbers for the permitted rally in midtown. they answer the flier saying occupations can be a part of their movement, but this where they are wrong. their style of rallies-- police escorted-- have taken the form of a human petition-- bodies as signatures and the streets as a page. occupations hold the power systems that revere the power of managerial figures such as kerrey illegitimate, and thus are an irreconcilable challenge to the logic that sustains our culture. and although any action can be painted as risky or ineffective, the tactic has expanded dramatically across the globe in recent years, appearing in new york in december 2007...

and now perhaps coming full circle
the reappearance of individuals,
in perpetual conflict,
who find the stench of solitude
anything but sweet.

yet everything is already dead,
so the divine nature of capital serves to reinforce the fact that
we are all twice dead. we were born dead, and then the self-
realization of our own inherent post-modernism, our innate
understanding that our lifeblood is not only some liquid, but is
the commodity-form boiled down to its basest elements, has led
to our deaths, again.

dionysian life in a controlled environment is still artificial life
after all, so how could we be truly alive now? it is in fact,
death, the second death multiplied over the potential endpoints
of the temporal vector we call the real. the only "real" life [or
the closest we can come to reclaiming agency over our second
death, perhaps even overcoming it by going-under reality itself]
is dionysian emotional output in an uncontrolled environment,
which is to say,

a riot on a scale unknown,
unimaginable.

if i can dream,

a new show enabling one to watch 5 different
sexy unreal bodies, from any angle, 24 hours a day, at any time,
on the internet, via a single website, for "free" is advertised on
the same website, blaring old-world new-style jazz music includ-
ed. it almost gets you hard, if only it wasn't so jarringly perfect,
carefully off-kilter as the face of a credit card, in migraine-
halcyon tones. architects tools and photoshop and cocaine
come to mind, escorted by escorts who havn't been able to look
themselves in the eyes for weeks now. mtv's realworld taken to
its logical extension, a one-sided civil war on the unconscious
followed to its inevitable end: total and complete annihilation of
any form of feeling, modes fall down the wall, transforming into
codes as they are swept up off the floor by an unknown maid.
he or she is faceless, infinitely replicable as far as "we" are
concerned, much like the code itself, the evolutionary virtual-
migrant worker of consciousness-manipulation: all sex and no
cum, no sex and all painted latex. it is everything we have ever
hoped for, everything we have ever desired, everything we have
ever dreamed, and yet it is moreso nothing in a manner horrible
beyond comprehension, full of psycho-physical form and simul-
taneously devoid of any feeling, any desire originating from the
self-alone. we are fed this shit, it is pumped into our veins and
down our gaping gullets like so much sludge, heroin of plastic
feces and chanel shoes.

can i dream?

[thirty four, thirty five]

really, can i dream of something
which is not this?

and i tell you honestly as i
write this in a dark room of refracted emptiness at 4:52 am: i
could, but only after having seen death burn; i can now dream
that i have burnt dreams such as this wet-dream advertisement
of 45 seconds consistency back into the dust from which it came,
but it has taken pain on a level quite difficult to duplicate.

can i dream?
i believe so,
now that i know that i am dead.

and then...

"it's something new...
it's the internet,
in the shape of you"
[yahooooo]

the internet, pure other, constantly changing and absorbing, eating and shitting, is now given to us as commandment, but only one this time: be yourself [buy yourself?]. thousands of bodies dancing in unison, undulating in carefully choreographed chaos, from spectacular mass to forceful word: you, the only tenant of the new religion of the ampaphoromized mode of relation known as cyber space: space without time, time without mass, mass without force. the other devours us in its everlasting death-throws: we are swallows whole and fed back to ourselves on a line of credit, the interest of which is ever-rising in terms of monetary capital, and yet ever falling in terms of social-capital. we hate ourselves, and those of us who fell through the glass-ceiling of the crystal palace of modernism feel the faintest breath of the depression of our daily lives upon the back of our necks. it is a chill wind, freezing beyond the point of ice, cold which cracks organs like empty oj-cartons, which devours the aftertaste of our own flesh with such unhibited delirious joy that it would be beautiful if only you could get past the putrid smell of long rotten wounds and crushed eyes across the floor. is this death? surely it couldn't be life. is this me? i think so. is this you? no, but it must be you, or so i am told. is this real? how could it not be, it is not alive, the pure non-life that the rock-stars pay so dearly for.

do you think it can burn?
do you think *you* can burn?

[the black bloc && the hall of mirrors]

for every issue
of social importance
there is a faction
that pretends
to represent it,

but every faction is quick to mimic the absurd democratic forms of representation that such groups allegedly work against. anyone who cares about the plight of dairy cows can join a group that fights for the ethical treatment of animals; those that like fresh air can buy canvas bags instead of accepting disposable ones, and those that want to speak can join whatever civil liberties union best represents the sound of their voice. anyone can stand out in a frozen public square asking for petitions until their fingers bleed and their thighs burn from the cold air. the more elite and inspired might even organize groups with specific goals and specific points of unity, perhaps electing leaders to guide them down the road of legal street-side protests wearing flowers in their hair and singing. they might aspire to be more radical, functioning by consensus only, even participating in illegal actions with specific demands on particular reprehensible leaders, demands as potent as the dismissal of such leaders themselves.

as touching as this all may be, it is impossible to escape state form by functioning in this way; any feeling of accomplishment is merely another triumph for institutional reality as we know it, because governance is a form of control, or if not control at the very least postponement. in this way all conventional forms of activism against the state must be negated.

furthermore activism itself
must be negated
because all symbolic
actions demand
something from a system
that is inherently unjust, and desires
no more than its own bare existence.

[thirty six, thirty seven]

for we exist within
a system that in even
the most benign forms
is nothing more than a means for control

no matter what liberal legislation is passed to make the people feel good. while the nature of almost all political units tends towards becoming as organized as possible, towards "organizing" the youth, "organizing" the poor and "organizing" people of color, the dialogue of constant organizing eventually gets to the point where people begin to realize that "to organize" anyone means little more than "to use to the advantage of the organization", the organization being little more than mush.

the traditional social justice framework suggests that the goal of revolutionary politics is to vie for the individual rights granted by the state, to grasp the straws at the bottom of the barrel. the alternative involves working outside the framework itself, creating an existential form of freedom that ignores the state and transcendental values. proponents of the latter believe that the reason why institutions of power look like they are not living up to their expectations as tools for equality, justice, and freedom, is because such a pervasive dialogue of justice, freedom, equality, and social reform for the greater good is the first sign that an institution is set up to take away the actual substance comprising those values. the institution wants to garner love and support, not higher truth; it engages in a passionate, monogamous love affair with the signifier.

political activism can then
be regarded
as no more
than a love slap to the state,
in an extremely
masochistic relationship.

society itself is merely a theory of organization; it exists as something that is interesting to fathom, but isn't really there. sociology as a field was not created until 1780, when french scholar emmanuel joseph sieyes, author of the profoundly influential "what is the third estate?" used the term, and from its very outset, the use of society to conceive of relations between people has been contested. this comes at little surprise, having occurred during the enlightenment at an age in which constitutions were being drafted giving certain rights to individuals; in an age in which the general public had a greater influence on institutional politics than ever before.

this isn't to say that sociology
is necessarily a good
or bad thing, but rather
that the conception of sociology
was dependent on the fact
that the general public
were beginning to by and large
be incorporated into
a political sphere.

on some levels this was
obviously cathartic, especially in terms of basic human rights;
without such enlightenment ideals there would have perhaps
been no end to slavery in the western world.

however, this conception of the social as an actual entity made
the social realm thought of as the basis for political life, in
practice meaning that if people think they are being counted
and incorporated, they are less likely to lash out against an
unjust system. where does this leave us then? it is no wonder
that time and time again there emerge movements of those that
are uncounted or forgotten, those that feel they lost by society.
one reaches a point wherebysociologists create such complicated
theories of social webbing that we're all tied up. we're being
choked, counted, and disregarded at the same time.

when individuals feel
rejected
by society,
they reject back.

when enough people
bounce back
or bad thing, but rather
it becomes as if society
no longer exists,
except as a connection that allows
people to feel connected
to other people,
people that spend
the majority
of their time trying
to create a personality
that feigns
social distinction.

this is nothing short of
an identity crisis.

[thirty eight, thirty nine]

vast populations
are not being integrated
into societies, because they
don't want to, because they
don't know how to, or because they
are actively being rejected.

if we wanted to be inte-
grated, there would be no problem and democratic republican-
ism would prevail again. instead, however, we reject western
cultural values altogether, remaining on the fringe out because
we don't want to be a part of a society that doesn't want us. ev-
erything becomes a negation of everything that was before: riots
before ballots, occupations instead of negotiations, smashing clocks
as an alternative to holding meetings. western youth are often
pinned as the most apathetic of generations yet, and to a degree
this is true in that we are apathetic about an electoral politics
that doesn't work or represent anything or represents everything
but is all representation.

as politicians
and their apprentices
wait around for
pending legislation,
students from greece,
to france,
to germany,
to new york city,
to california,
to austria
are occupying
our universities.

one thing
is certain:
**we simply
can't wait
for catastrophe
to come
to us!**

abls sh yr slf



affective-disorder.tumblr.com

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