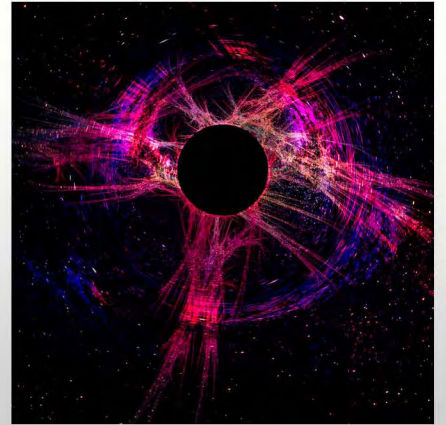


apparent horizon



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# Apparent Horizon



# Apparent Horizon

Deep Time, Surveillance and the de/reconstitution of the Human  
Subject

An assemblage/installation for  
Eyedrum art and music gallery  
by

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## I

“...the politics of security and war are [...] always the politics of the limit.”

Michael Dillon *Specters of Biopolitics: Eschatology, Katechon and Resistance*



*“Unlike the event horizon, the apparent horizon can eventually dissolve. Page notes that Hawking is opening the door to a scenario so extreme “that anything in principle can get out of a black hole”. Although Hawking does not specify in his paper exactly how an apparent horizon would disappear, Page speculates that when it has shrunk to a certain size, at which the effects of both quantum mechanics and gravity combine, it is plausible that it could vanish. At that point, whatever was once trapped within the black hole would be released (although not in good shape)*

*If Hawking is correct, there could even be no singularity at the core of the black hole. Instead, matter would be only temporarily held behind the apparent horizon, which would gradually move inward owing to the pull of the black hole, but would never quite crunch down to the centre. Information about this matter would not destroyed, but would be highly scrambled so that, as it is released through Hawking radiation, it would be in a vastly different form, making it almost impossible to work out what the swallowed objects once were.”*

From: **Stephen Hawking: 'There are no black holes':** Notion of an 'event horizon', from which nothing can escape, is incompatible with quantum theory, physicist claims.

Zeeya Merali 24 January 201 **Nature** [1]



The moody incantations, uncanniness, and deception which such lucubrations draw out can be seen in a section of the Alfred Hitchcock film, **Vertigo**. [3] One of the pivotal, and most mysterious points in the movie takes place in the giant sequoia forest where Madelaine and Scottie stop in front of a disc cut from a giant tree. Therein are tags all the way back to the Magna Carta designating various human historical events — including Madeleine's birth and death. She then turns and walks away, apparently disappearing behind a tree, until Scottie chases her, changing the audience's view and catching her resting against the tree. The entire film is suffused with an uncanny mood of the collision of dissemblance and deception [4] along with something other than an immediate time set (in this case the long but syncope-like time of apparent reincarnation), along with Scottie's detections being derailed by his inability reconcile the intrigue of someone who is not who she says she is, whether in deep time or in immediate time. He fails abjectly in his own attempt to collapse the two and make sense. (His attempt at surveillance involutes and succumbs to the failure of the optic to differentiate identity's venture into — and out of — time of various sorts; in a way time ceases to exist.) In fact he succumbs to vertigo as he climbs the old Spanish mission tower, a panopticon of sorts but one which can't pierce the veil of duplicity and identity which he has been chasing. The frailty and impossibility, yet necessity, of surveillance show themselves as attached to the concept of deep time....and the necessity of 'immanentizing the Eschaton.' [5] Or to put it another way, attempting to domesticate the end of time, by turning eyes inward, toward the human horizon and away from all fabulous and uncanny components. (As in the story of the man looking for his contact lens under the streetlight, not because he lost it there but because the light is better.)



What would be the human interior's ancestral equivalent to external Deep Time? A primordial emptiness? The uncanny juncture between an outside and an inside? (In a way isn't that what consciousness amounts to, i.e., the *solidus* or slash between, constituted by an ever elusive non-presence or, just the same, an equivalency — a nothingness--on both sides. The predicament of modernity itself,

*"Perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that's*

*what I am, the thing that divides the world into, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, in the partition, I've two surfaces and thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either, it's not to me they're talking, it's not of me they're talking, no, that's not it, I feel nothing of all that, try something else, herd of whites, say something else."* Samuel Beckett.

the slash between as an apparent event horizon between two ultra events.) Or the soul as the perpetually over/underfilled , somehow both saturated AND depleted remainder? Or would it be a form of surveillance, a generic observing apart-from, the basic form of prosthetic substance abuse, always a mysterious spectral second party strangely intertwined, both inside and outside, Elvis' lost unborne twin, always mourned, a form of catastrophic unhingement, slightly unsocketed like a loose tooth, making it in readiness of the 'to-come', a future which 'we' (sic... a singular speciation with a confused horizon—if any) is always coming, never seeming to get here, the on-going catastrophic events of modernity, trying to sidestep the big C catastrophe ('Where is our flying car?', this most petro-catastrophic refrain and potentiality of the geo-trauma dis/connect [5] .) But we are already flying, inside ourselves, eye of the hurricane, in empty space, albeit with a ghostly presence that observes. We can call this other-to-be the primordial tech (always everywhere doubled, necessarily duplicitous) which always is the human:

*"This, then, would be one image for the condition of the spectral: to recognize and yet not to recognize the other; to recognize a foreign body at the heart of the self; to be aware and yet to be unable fully to articulate the sense that one's very vocabulary, even perhaps one's gestures, have been formed by the other. There is, to put it in a different rhetoric, a mutual impossibility of banishment: the colonizer can no more remove his 'subject' from his sight than can the colonized lift the weight of imposition from his heart. Instead, there emerges a spectral logic in which the foreign body is loosed yet simultaneously tied in place, free - like a ghost - to roam the world, yet simultaneously shackled - like a ghost - to a particular place and time, the significance of which may only be revealed on the horizon of an unascertainable future. David Punter.*

This, basically eventless, horizon is an ‘infinity of finite possibilities’ (M. Dillon) but all well within a manufactured economy of more of the same, just an infinite number of samenesses, an arena of production well within any human dyadic dance, veiling the *eschaton*, that is: “*It has become obvious that there is no oikonomia*[that is, localized, household economy. pd.] : *there is, no matter how you look at it, only an ecotechne, that is, a common place or place of habitation within production, the invention and incessant transformation of ends that are never given*”.

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Is Everything Political?*

We would like to take flight from these realizations since it seems to portend a claustrophobic night enclosing history, no escape from the mirrored ball of human playtime (Well, at least it can be said of religious traditions, especially the Judeo-Christian, that certain promises were made as to the getting out of matter, and into a new perhaps more diaphanous suit, something which catastrophic tech promises now.) Even the distancing/diremptive dyadic materiality of irony and kitsch (the one based on knowing too much and the other on accepting ignorance – or at least just...acceptance – perhaps like the distanced/nuanced roominess between irony (associated with kitsch in some vague hand-waving fashion, and allegory).

(Although it must be said that Paul de Man has the decidedly hipper take on that particular death spiral, as spoken by the ‘death of the organic’:

*The act of irony, as we now understand it, reveals the existence of a temporality that is definitely not organic, in that it relates to its source only in terms of distance and difference and allows for no end, for no totality [this is indeed the mirror, a technical and nonorganic structure]. Irony divides the flow of temporal experience into a past that is pure mystification and a future that remains harassed forever by a relapse within the inauthentic. It can know this inauthenticity but can never overcome it. It can only restate and repeat it on an increasingly conscious level, but it remains endlessly caught in the impossibility of making this knowledge applicable to the empirical world. It dissolves in the narrowing spiral of a linguistic sign that becomes more and more remote from its meaning, and it can find no escape from this spiral.* Paul de Man **Allegories of Reading**



But then that 'no escape' business gets figured as, among other things, kitsch (including all profundity, extremity of expression, possibility of movement out of the same, all reduced to a sly wink, *witz*). After all, kitsch is the last resort for art as it disappears out the back door. [I'm echoing no less than Theodor Adorno who speculated that all art may be on the way to the table in the garage sale. And even Walter Benjamin if we can accept art as an oneiric state: "...dreams are now a pathway to the banal. The side which things present to dreams is kitsch". If so, so much for redemption/heading off the catastrophe through dream work, playing off the trauma against itself, just more traipsing around in the back yard. Kitsch and noise also, represent foldings/mobiated ends that must be take over if We Go On This Way (have we any choice in the matter?), that is, a continuous unfolding of the end of time as a continuous presence of more of the same, the disappearance of any time other than Now: *"The persistent final event in the historical world is the current globalization as the production of the constant earthly present. For the current generations, this major man-made event runs through the middle of their lives. It is the monstrous in time. We can tell from it that Modern Age humans are – contrary to the claims of philosophies of history essentially uninterested in making history, but more concerned with concluding history and bringing about post-historical conditions. The continuous movement towards the eternal present, in which the sum of all events would be zero, was the true project of modernity."* P. Sloterdijk])

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'Horizon' is a form of limit, of finitude and has always been necessary for surveillance to take place. This 'immanentizing of the Eschaton' de/re-values to an approximation, a bad infinity, a process of always leaving us counting out loud (and more and more so), even as modern tech widens its gyre and keeps everything suffocatingly close and yet far away at the same time; (creating an inescapable allure, aura, as Benjamin's collapse of distance and closeness would indicate for aura); caressed by the built-in pornographic wanderlust of the eye, aided by the camera and all other fetishized coveting of the gadget love of modern tech. (yes, that damnable aura again, another kind of horizon). The threat/promise now is that this widening will reach into the stars

as well as into the DNA, as indeed it must, (and has been with increasing power), which really means leaving the human, spacing us with the various monstrous in[human]s and un[human]s with which modernism/sciences has bequeathed us. But it sends us, as it continues to surround, protect, and serve, into 'apparentness' that is, confusions as to what is and what is not (again, the delicious, delirious rot of the porno, the double spread demise of enchantment, the omnipotence of surveillance). Surveillance, the face of appearance attempting to displace all shadows, does not eliminate uncertainty, rather it increases the noise in the system as a necessity to its operation (that is, to take away the indexing power of any master Event, downgrading it to 'mere' observable events). In leading us to a new concept of where/when/how/who, surveillance has no choice but to make simultaneity its leading edge concept of modernity with the generic its mode of operation. And thereby collapsing the historical as well as the social, with the demise of the *eschaton* (the thing-at-the-end-of-time, raw teleological pull), the temporal and the ontological itself. Or perhaps, ominously, merely disguising it in its own workings, as it now seems to be coming forward to greet us (our landscape, environment as it were): 'Spectacle is a form of camouflage. It does not conceal anything; it simply renders it unrecognizable, one looks at it and does not see it. It appears in disguise' (Martinot and Sexson). Thus leaving force, power, sovereignty as the determination of limit, of how far things can go and still return as human, not slipping over the side into the monstrous. Although frankly that prohibition is always too late it would seem: we are always in precise alignment with the outside, a fact which our moving images reveal: *There emerges a spectral logic in which the foreign body is loosed yet simultaneously tied in place, free - like a ghost - to roam the world, yet simultaneously shackled - like a ghost - to a place and time, the significance of which may only be revealed on the horizon of an unascertainable future.*

David Punter

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The emergence of the fatal attraction of technical surveillance thrusts humanity (or at least the technical leading edge representing by what is called the West) into two spaces which the West has always thought it was leaving: the phantasmagoric hauntological

and the messianic, even if it is a haunting without spirits and a messianism without a messiah. It means the placing of the un-human artifacts – the natural environment in its widest definition - in the center of the surveillance crosshairs ‘for our own protection’ (which always constitutes the necessity of surveillance) , ‘wondrous security/protection of limitation’ becomes the true teleology of the *eschaton*; if there is no *eschaton* so much the better (and how would we know?), because it then is necessary to create one, climbing the rungs of Hegel’s bad infinity to do so, since the necessity for true protection is the surveilling of the past, yes most definitely, but most importantly the future. The most convenient way is to collapse past, now, and future into the simultaneities which only complete surveillance can seemingly provide. Here then, bare life/biometrics, geopolitical, meteorological, astronomical, very large data sets all converge to produce the apparent horizon in which all life and thought must operate, an Iron Dome of calculation and apparent global simultaneity. This means that all true events now become hyperobjects, creating and extending equal valence to the shadows which an event casts: conspiracies, hoaxes, disinformation and deformation; the uncanny, not the sublime, now forms the space in which all spheres of the human figure, operate, and speculate. What Mario Perniola writes holds for the event as much or even more so than his placement of the shadow with art (although with the spectacular aesthetization of all arenas of life, who can gainsay the difference): “today more than ever, art leaves behind a shadow, a not so bright silhouette, in which is portrayed anything disquieting and enigmatic that belongs to it. The more violent is the light which one pretends to shed on the work and on artistic operation, the brighter is the shadow they project. The more diurnal and banal is the approach to artistic experience, the more what is essential withdraws and takes refuge in the shadow.” (It might also be said that this ‘violence’ is also the seedbed of the religious.) Instead of immense objects at a distance (sublimity) now immense shadowy ‘objects’ within us (the uncanny). All catastrophes now become catastrophes of self, to the point even of thinking the self a catastrophe (the justification of all totalitarianisms).



The restricted economy, this liminal eschaton, (Georges Bataille) of humanism plays out against the lengthening shadows of Financial Zombification and Gigantism[6], the ominous darkening horizon of debates on Climate Change/species extinction, and the techno-modification of human soma and psyche [7]. Increasingly visible and at odds against this economy of immediacy, of a moment which only knows itself and nothing beyond itself is the un-willed effortlessness of the non-entities of the general economy of the inviolable sun, the species it has brought forth, and just as often brought down, and the environmental (such a lame, tamed thing we have attempted to make of the very thing which surrounds and fills all cracks around us but seems always behind a gossamer veil) mega-structures which 'know nothing' are completely careless, yet extremely powerful. In fact the general economy — the cosmic story one might say-- undergirds all lesser economies with totally profitless expenditure of mass and energy. The general economy takes all and gives all in the unending movement of its cycles. The relative stability of the human world is wrested from, and needs to be shielded against, this excess of energy, which we fail to recognize for what it is: the continual horizontal lure of a black hole of perpetual destruction of forms, of life and regeneration of same. The only safe zone may be the apparentness of spectacularity which we are continually called upon to dwell within, a creation of the machine within.

But perhaps there is a recognition within the human sphere, a complex and never straightforward recognition. Surveillance is what we call this recognition of information by information (for humans are nothing if not information-processing creatures, most especially through the machines we create). This continual watchfulness has now taken on the almost divine global providence of powers of recognition once only granted to the gods of old. Even the massive powers of infinitude have been taken on by mathic techniques and applied all the way from the quantum to the black hole. We believe this new regime of surveillings (perhaps even the starting point of intelligence itself, of what ever kind) beckons a new future, far beyond the lost worlds of privacy, into techniques for self manipulation, regeneration, even resurrection...and perhaps even beyond the 'nest' of humanity into the very portal of

the stars and coming generations, the 'beyond' of which so many theologies speak worshipfully and yet which so many philosophies hold in disdain.

Our species looks at deep time and "the beach which is under the sidewalk," as the Situationists had it, as a work of surveillance, as is the work of science generally. The Public Domain project makes visible the forces of environmental intrusion and the economies of surveilling enabling our observations.

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*"[...] so many black holes in the presumed transparency of information networks. Much is made these days of problems of security on the Internet and of the need for strong cryptography as against the governments' desire to have the keys to all encrypting programs. Literary works continue to hide their secrets, however, secrets as dark as death, even if they are totally exposed and made public, universally available all over the world to anyone with a computer, a modem, and a service provider. Paradoxically, the new digitized existence only makes more evident, if we have eyes to see it, eyes to see what cannot be seen, what was perhaps more hidden in print versions, that is, the way literary works hide what I call black holes" (J. Hillis Miller, **Black Holes**, p.101).*

It may be the case that the biggest Event, the most horrible catastrophe will not be of the order of climate, or asteroids, or food production, or extreme financialization or any of the other Dooms which seem to await us, riding along side of us as we rapidly futurize (or indemnify) the human. It might just as possibly be an invention, that unprecedented Event which causes a global collapse into another phase state away from the human, away from the organic; a product of the foreign body which forms part of the human, will be responsible for everything that we fear from catastrophic interventions and intrusions, something which simultaneously wipes out and restates, something which, much more frightening than Ebola, will be something which we desire and want to come about, something we have created: an invention which is hollow inside.

*The event is inseparable from dead time. It's not even that there is dead time before and after the event, rather that dead time is in the event, for example the instant of the most brutal*

*accident confounds itself with the immensity of empty time in which you see it arriving, as a spectator of that which has not yet happened, in a long suspense...Groethuyssen said that every event is, as it were...in the time where nothing happens. Guy Deleuze*

We are reminded of the Lars Von Trier film **Melancholia** where an obscure object begins to enter earth's vicinity , some how mysteriously signaling (telepathically?) the end of the world (definitely part of the not so hidden scenario of extreme climate change. But also because of the meditations on the crypt signaling in some uncanny way to those outside the crypt) ...which also reminds us of the monolith in Stanley Kubrick's **2001**, the monolith acting as much a tombstone as a beacon of a signaling from beyond the apparent horizon of humanity into a surpassing of the human, that is, a total transformation of the human. Magic, yes.

*"Recalling our earlier discussion of the magical work of mourning in Derrida's 'Fors', we might describe a deconstructive approach to telepathic reading as an encounter with an uncanny foreign body that forever remains inaccessible – not because it was ever hidden, but because the singular event of its literary inscription resists any translation into any known or knowable language.*

*[...] it should be clear by now that telepathy is not simply located inside 'Telepathy,' nor can it be contained within the borders of any single text. It is a name for the strange way in which texts speak through each other's secret languages. Therefore, as I have been suggesting from the beginning, there is no telepathy without a crypt, no crypt without telepathy. The 'foreign body' of telepathy comes into being from the haunted recesses of the crypt. If the crypt is the figure for the 'subject after deconstruction', then telepathy is a name for the language of that subject. The telepathic language of the crypt cannot be located anywhere, but its traces haunt every subject, every literary text, every utterance, and it works – by magic."*

### ***Mourning, Magic and Telepathy***

Elissa Marder

Is it possible to know what an Event (we might also say the Monument) is before it gets here? Does a space open before its arrival? Some would say that the world is mostly composed of events, a foam of events we might say, erupting from and covering over the surface of the everyday and that Events are somehow just an accumulation and clustering of events over certain unseeable vents. In essence, black holes which propagate their Eventness both backward and forward in time and space through an ever mutating and nictating solidus/membrane

*Notes: part 1*

1. An “apparent horizon” is defined, in terms of general relativity, as a surface boundary between light rays that are directed and moving outwards, and those directed and moving inwards. Apparent horizons are not invariant properties of a space-time. They are observer-dependent, and in particular they are distinct from absolute (event) horizons. The notion of an "apparent horizon" begins with the notion of a trapped null surface. A (compact, orientable, space-like) surface always has 2 independent forward-in-time pointing, light-like, normal directions. For example, a (space-like) sphere in Minkowski space has light-like vectors pointing inward and outward along the radial direction. The inward-pointing, light-like normal vectors converge, while the outward-pointing, light-like normal vectors diverge. It can, however, happen that both inward-pointing and outward-pointing light-like normal vectors converge. In such a case, the surface is called trapped.

At the human level, an apparent horizon represents the limits of our surveillance of the (un)natural world (both inward and outward) and fluctuates from moment to moment as we ambulate through space-time (or, as space-time ambulates through us). The act of surveillance is only useful at an individual scale when the information obtained is in digestible chunks and the surveillance is carried out over an extended period of time. Life relies on the exactness of the digital coupled with the randomness of the analog to evolve (evolution). But the problem (or not) is that greater amounts of information result in higher error rates (mutation). There is no way to “take it all in”.

**Various sources.**

2. see here a fanciful approach to the idea of the event horizon of a black hole as camera/sur-veiller of sorts:

“The Schwarzschild membrane of a black hole is an event horizon not only because once an entity crosses it that entity can no longer communicate back with us this side of it, but also because from our reference frame the entities at the horizon do not undergo any events, being frozen due to the infinite dilation of time produced by the overwhelming gravity in the vicinity of the black hole. Was photography invented not so much to assuage some urge to arrest the moment, but partly owing to an intuition that it already existed in the universe, in the form of the immobilization and flattening at the event horizon?

“Windbag, watching Goulash from a spaceship safely outside the horizon, sees Goulash acting in a bizarre way. Windbag has lowered to the horizon a cable equipped with a camcorder and other probes, to better keep an eye on Goulash. As Goulash falls toward the black hole, his speed increases until it approaches that of light. Einstein found that if two persons are moving fast relative to each other, each sees the other’s clock slow down; in addition, a clock that is near a massive object will run slowly compared with one in empty space. Windbag sees a strangely lethargic Goulash. As he falls, the latter shakes his fist at Windbag. But he appears to be moving ever more slowly; at the horizon, Windbag sees Goulash’s motions slow to a halt.... In fact, not only does Goulash seem to slow down, but his body looks as if it is being squashed into a thin layer. Einstein also showed that if two persons move fast with respect to each other, each will see the other as being flattened in the direction of motion. More strangely, Windbag should also see all the material that ever fell into the black hole, including the original matter that made it up—and Goulash’s computer—similarly flattened and frozen at the horizon.” By superimposing the reference frame of the outside observer and that of the astronaut approaching the black hole, one has at the event horizon a flattening and a suspension of motion—a photograph—of the still moving three-dimensional person who crossed into the black hole.”



## **A Hitherto Unrecognized Apocalyptic Photographer: The Universe**

Jalal Toufic

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/a-hitherto-unrecognized-apocalyptic-photographer-the-universe/>

And Also: Arthur Kroker and Michael A. Weinstein have another take on the black hole as a metaphor for human empire. And perhaps more than a metaphor. As a collation of energies and the ever aggregating dust of monumentality, just as any other object in the universe, empire faces certain material obstacles and opportunities leading to efflorescence and then extreme collapse, not, however negating power but undergoing invisibility—which in some fashion merely augments its power, becoming myth and, follows the logic of pure surveillance as total self-containment, once one passes the event horizon:

“[...] like life itself, political history often follows a logic of reversal, with its fantastic constellations of power expanding outwards until, like the explosion of a galactic supernova, its brilliant luminosity in the darkness of space indicates that it is already in the process of a fatal contraction, instantaneously compressing into the infinite density of one of those otherwise invisible black holes populating the galactic spaces of recorded and unrecorded time.

[...]

....overlooked in the massive implosion of Soviet empire was that curious scientific fact surrounding the violent death of mature stars when going supernova and their indefinite compression into the dark density of black holes. In the story of galactic astronomy, as in the history of contemporary politics, mature stars that suddenly terminate in the violent

explosion of a supernova blast never totally disappear, but simply compress into dense concentrations of matter, densities so incalculable in their congealed energy that while never releasing any visually detectable sign of light, their presence can sometimes be

detected in the form of violent event-horizons populating deep galactic space--always ready to consume the energy mass of any unsuspecting passing star. When what is known about the astronomical properties of deep-space is applied to earthly politics, [...]"

*Maidan, Caliphate, and Code: Theorizing Power and Resistance in the  
21st Century*

Arthur Kroker and Michael A. Weinstein

3. The enigmatic alliance of surveillance, deep time, and imposture can be readily, if somewhat foggily, observed in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Vertigo*. Here is a synopsis from a popular film website:

"Police detective John 'Scottie' Ferguson is asked by an old college friend, Gavin Elster, if he would have a look into his wife Madeleine's odd behavior. Lately, she's taken to believing that she is the reincarnation of a woman who died many years ago and Elster is concerned about her sanity. Scottie follows her and rescues her from an apparent suicide attempt when she jumps into San Francisco bay. He gets to know her and falls in love with her. They go to an old mission church and he is unable to stop her from climbing to the top of the steeple, owing to his vertigo, where she jumps to her death. A subsequent inquiry finds that she committed suicide but faults Scottie for not stopping her in the first place. Several months later, he meets Judy Barton, a woman who is the spitting image of Madeleine. He can't explain it, but she is identical to the woman who died. He tries to re-make her into Madeleine's image by getting her to dye her hair and wear the same type of clothes. He soon begins to realize however that he has been duped and was a pawn in a complex piece of theater that was meant to end in tragedy."

Possessed by ghost of her ancestor Carlotta, Madeleine points to the rings: "Here I was born, and there I died," pointing to the rings. "It was only a moment for you; you took no notice."

One of the pivotal, and most mysterious points in the movie takes place in the giant

sequoia forest where Madelaine and Scottie stop in front of a giant disc cut from a giant tree. Therein are tags all the way back to the Magna Carta designating various human historical events—including Madeleine's birth and death. She then turns and walks away, apparently disappearing behind a tree, until Scotty chases her, changing the audiences view and catching her resting against the tree. The entire film is suffused with an uncanny mood of the collision of dissemblance with something other than an immediate time set, along with Scotty's detections being derailed by his inability reconcile the intrigue of someone who is not who she says she is, whither in deep time or in immediate time, and fails abjectly in his own attempt to collapse the two.

4. It perhaps is always the case that appearance gives rise to its shadowy other of conspiracy, doubt, deception (whether unintended or intentional and in many cases even that particular dialectic is uncertain, wild and untamed-able; the more vast the concepts, and the greater the data, the more there is copious space for noise and occultation to form its ectoplasmic body) in other words, the fatigue of holding only one pole of perception to parousia *begins* in confusion (from a logics point of view, simply potential and negativity) as George Didi-Huberman puts it:

*"The only things that appear are those which are first able to dissimulate themselves. ...A paradox bursts forth because, for but a moment, appearing gives access to the here below, to something that suggests the contrary or, better yet, the hell of the visible world—the realm of dissemblance."*

George Didi-Huberman

The occult potential is not abraded by information, it is aggravated and is only bypassed by judicial fait of a sovereign system which ITSELF exists outside of adjudication as it finds itself always 'naturally' tempted by the State of Emergency: the sword which always, temporarily anyway, solves (by force) the Gordian Knot. But as world crises escalate, what prevents the 'normal' state of affairs from being folded into a state of emergency? (Perhaps it would be more proper to call any general occulting a sort of folding, a *pli selon pli*, through which the string/path called the prophetic [an empty space, visible at a distance] is strung, pulling through all temporal sedimentation):

“And at a distance from pathology, from the vicinity where language folds in upon itself still saying nothing, an experience is about to be born where our thought is headed. This imminence, already visible but absolutely empty, remains to be named.” (But one thing for sure, it is That Which Is To Come. RC)

Foucault, Madness, *The Absence of Work*

5. Surveillance: modern eschaton as an open horizon of temporal possibility within which the infinite becomings of finite things, happenings, or events—the onto-ontological difference of the event of the Event being a primary motif of modern security politics as much as it is of Continental thought—are continuously enjoined to take place:

“Since everything modern takes place in the factual account of finitudinal time, history, there is no modern time other than that of the changing facticity of finitudinal time. The modern eschaton, accurately depicted here by Unisys, does not signify the biblical threshold of the end of time. To repeat, the temporal limit of modern times signifies, instead, a continuously open horizon of finite possibility, an infinity of finite possibilities. This prompts me to pose a general thesis about politics of security and war that I wish to take up in relation especially to our modern biopolitics of security and its martial pursuit of life.”

And

“As a generative principle of political formation derived from addressing the institution and regulation of a temporal political order from the perspective of the terminal dissolution of that order, a politics of security derives its warrant to secure and to wage war “eschatologically.” Both from Michael Dillon, *Specters of Biopolitics: Security, the Eschaton, and the Katechon*

“The care from which the politics of security — most recently, of “home-land security” — seeks to “free” its citizens is very much the care that Heidegger in **Being and Time** described as that of being ahead of oneself, indebted to a

future that inevitably involves the disappearance of the Self qua individual, and of its “household.” It is only when ‘politics’ learns to accommodate the “unhomely” [uncanny, RC]—that is, the ecology of “renewable resources” will cease to be just another version of the *vita nuda* as *zoe aionios*, and instead will begin to make room for what Walter Benjamin called ‘the Living’—which is to say, for lives in the singular.”

Samuel Weber , *Security in: Impasses of the Global: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, ed. Henry Sussman

6. “Monsters of one kind or another no matter what perspective: [...] from the perspective of modernity, one might imagine a subsequent epoch. There are two kinds of answer to this: the catastrophic and the continuous. With catastrophic answers, one has to assume that modernization as a whole would be broken off through a completely incommensurable event and diverted in an unpredictable direction – either through a biosystemic disaster or a theological epiphany , or through an extraterrestrial intervention. If we exclude the catastrophic variants from the discourse of modernity and post-modernity on account of their excessive and irrational implications , that leaves only the continuous form of response . According to this, the only thing that could possibly succeed modernity would be a farther, later, heightened aggregate state of modernity. Located within its own continuum, modernity is an enduringly accumulative process, and only keeps moving through continuous self-upgrade. That is why the 'project of modernity' futurizes itself (A world process that produces its own futures, however, corresponds to the concept of the millennium or of end time without end. In that sense, the non-excessive version of a theory of modernity is forced at least to admit to the millenarist aspect of the current world form. That is already far more than a conventional theory, one that is committed to a balanced middle ground and proclaims itself as critical, could grant. This concession would bring the monstrous character of modernity's temporal structure alarmingly into view. The conventional forms of modernism, pragmatism and populism, resolutely turn a blind eye to the monstrous to which they belong: they are fanaticisms of normality.”

Peter Sloterdijk

7. The statement for the direction of the Critical Climate Change series (first two volumes edited by Tom Cohen and Claire Colebrook) put it this way:

“Understood in a broad and critical sense, climate change concerns material agencies that impact on biomass and energy, erased borders and microbial invention, geological and nanographic time, and extinction events.” [...] and given that there is a “current sense of depletion, decay, mutation and exhaustion.”

And

“If the previews of the twenty-first century horizon seem to fortell a circling back that eviscerates [the uncanny, the clonal. RC], a turning back of the systems on, or against, itself, ‘life’ itself (and the human), we may speak of the X-factors of this post-‘global’ moment; factors that artefact the present as a sort of ‘time-bubble’, one tied to the venture of humanualism, which is installed with and as its own threat, we are told. These factors condense, in a way, several thousand years of scriptive history to a parenthesis, a speciesist episode provoking a mutation not only of the archive (in any discrete sense) but the earth, a terra, a certain prosthetic ‘planetary’, which is less apocalyptic than prescribed and banal in its materiality. This torsion lies beyond any current systems, and poses as a radical discontinuity, an ecotechnic voiding. These X-factors compel a renegotiation of contracts to time, as futures are consumed by present accelerations in causal backloops, and prehistorial logics intervene: a caesura ‘experienced’ in slow-motion, a Hamlet-effect. These factors lie outside the mediocratic gameboard, the anthropomorphic chiasmus or political screen. And they imply what one might call coming wars over ‘pre-originary’ inscriptions. Here, we might say, the non-anthropomorphic and geological times intervene. And here one moves, as it were, beyond mourning.”

Tom Cohen/ *Tactless — the severed hand of J.D. From the journal Derrida Today*

## II

### Lost, Left Behind, Monumentalized

*We head for the horizon, on the plane of immanence, and we return with bloodshot eyes.*

Guy Deleuze

*For all the wisdom of the melancholic is subject to the nether world, it is secured by immersion in the life of creaturely things, and it hears nothing of the voice of revelation. Everything saturnine points down into the depths of the earth...*

Walter Benjamin

*Events are the froth of things but what interests me is the sea.*

Paul Valéry

*For every organism, its environment is its transcendence, and the more abstract and unknown the danger from that environment, the more transcendent it appears.*

Peter Sloterdijk

*The West is the best / get here and we'll do the rest...*

Jim Morrison, the Doors: **The End**

We are certainly englobed with the foam of things nowadays, to the extent that we have a difficult time keeping up with even a surface knowledge of events. (Post modernism's great attempt was to declare that such surface knowledge was the ONLY knowledge that could be had.) Thoughts of the sea (or space or deep time) can seldom be discerned through the daily slosh of froth on our windshields. At times all events simply merge into a blur, as they must under the conditions of the now-questionable postmodern condition (that is, neo-liberal global hyper financialization). Under the hubris of that placement of time and space, the formations of archipelagos of events (Jean-François Lyotard) leave us all grappling in the Inoperative Community, hoisted on our own petard in the service of our own selfies, no matter how out of focus they often seem to be.

But it must be asked: what is an event (or perhaps more mysteriously, an Event? There are 'ultra events' (Richard Polt) of the most primal happenings, birth and death; there are 'quasi-events,' which chart topographies of failure and irresolution; there are events which mimic other events; events which only eventuate if correlated in a constellation of other events (Walter Benjamin); there are 'shadow events,' which somehow hide within the glaring klieg lights of real, 'mega events,' every large event generating a portal though which pass the most incredible assertions, almost but not quite provable. The very largest of the events--the Resurrection, the holocaust, world wars, contact with radical environments and worlds in outer space, evolution, extinction—cause shadow events to flood through the portals of ostensibility [apparentness] into *potentia*, a potential energy/form which, like dark matter and dark energy, surrounds and folds upon the apparent world, a skototropic *diapositif* lying in wait for inrapment by the seeker of esoteric truths. And there are events which cannot be so easily subtracted from what formed them, intractable tentacles flowing from the past (and maybe even from the future, who knows) forming steady accretions which eventually erupt. Even so, easily seen after it happens, not so much before, other than perhaps inchoate forbodings and the sense of inevitability when an event happens and only then reveals its mechanisms of approach. But Events are invariably monsters of energy, quilting points of energy and information, even the least of them having moments of surprise,



rupture, rapture, and capture. And the largest of events seem to be about nothing less than rupture itself, cracks, crevices opening onto the void that waits within everything. so much so that, along with all things that reek of transcendence, there is an immediate leveling that accompanies the great events, a turn into a scene from a movie (how often have we heard the refrain from witnesses to great events that it seemed just like the witness was in a movie). Thereby does the 'unknown unknowns' begin to lose its power and domestication sets in. The apocalypse is the first to fall prey to kitsch.

Modeled on and through the event of language, all becomes event, pared down to the monosyllabic, since, in order to be an event it must be named and like Adam creating a world, bubbles of events proliferate, ink spreads, assuredly minor froth for the most part since all existence must participate (and precipitate for that matter). But the essential thing is that events must be first performed before they/it can be said to be truly in this world and not simply teasing and casting about at the threshold, flickering gumptive wannabes hanging at the tease of The Open, the abyssal fall into our very own human Fall into/with matter. But now (and it is a very big now, encompassing all other nows and thens), all foam, every bubble must be placed under observation, placed under the continuous gaze of a temporal Medusa, solidifying the now which continually threatens to erupt into some mega event though which fly the hordes of Odin (pick your own numinous entelechy) to capture the cool green hills of earth again away from the machinic into the sorceric. (You may be getting confused now, thinking that WE are confused by bringing the kitsch of silvery planets of mythology into the heavy HEAVY too heavy air of ontology and surveillance apparatuses, and the weariness of trying to shift the furniture on the Titanic of neo-liberalism and the turbo charged cyclone of hypercapitalism. BUT! [And it is a big but, have no fear!!] there is the place to which we are stuck, the gravity of identity making it so...and that is where the modern always drops us *soi-disant* common all-too-apparent folks: back into the grinder of the beginning and end of everything and not into a Nothing but into a Some Thing: if nothing else, things turned event-wise, those things which have always laid astride us, the para-sites of ever new/always ancient portals--those places which 'experts' attack and dissimulate first, leaving us--*soi-disant* remember)-- common ones waking at 3 am in

cold sweats, penetrated and perforated by feverish foggy phantasmagoria, unable to identify one thing from another (real) Thing, that place where all events seem to mere into a foamy haze, washed up on Valéry's skummy beach side lot, already partitioned for quick sale. No escape clause once you sign on the dotted line. ("The most notable symptom is revealed here as the ache of what escapes content, the earworm nagging at us all, that which infects even as the lock snaps shut on the quarantine cell." Stephen Micheltmore / *This Space* blog)

See, here in the space of the quotidian, the most banal, the everyday, comes the dreaded kitsch, the fall of modernity into a sort of mock profundity which turns out to be a real profundity (does that make it a real event? At any rate, an event), inhabiting a secret place, a parallel universe of silvery planets and metaphysical flash paper. Perhaps a world on its way to its own beheadings, the main organ done away with, in a flash of Occam's Razor...after all Kitsch is about nothing if it is not about heedlessly multiplying entities. Even the greatest, most monumental of events must fall before the whining, keening, mosquito-like multiplicative power of Kitsch, of its ability to multiply realities. (The secret power that kitsch has is typified by Daniel Tiffany: "Once upon a time, long before it had been reduced to a synonym for mediocrity in the arts, the term 'kitsch' functioned as a lightning rod in debates about mass culture and the fate of modernism confronting the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. For a word now applied quite casually to trivial and spurious things, 'kitsch' has a surprising history of provoking alarm and extreme reactions: Hermann Broch called kitsch 'the element of evil in the value system of art.' Theodor Adorno refers to kitsch as "poison" and, drawing upon the German etymology of the term, as 'artistic trash.' Clement Greenberg later refers to the 'looting' and 'traps' associated with kitsch, its criminal aspect. In these same essays, the 'evil' of kitsch acquires an array of sinister qualities: it is said to be at once parasitic, mechanical, and pornographic; a 'decorative cult' and a 'parody of catharsis.'[...] despite the apparent simplicity and innocence of its pleasures, a sense of ambivalence and polarization; the concept seems to be in perpetual flux, lacking clear definition, unsteady." Introduction, **Daniel Tiffany, My**

**Silver Planet: A Secret History of Poetry and Kitsch.** One can see where this is headed in a culture drenched in deconstructive emergencies. All events are now subject to the destructuration that kitsch seems to embody. And all the more so as kitsch seems to now be a somewhat 'old fashioned notion'...even as its energies continue unabated. It relieves (*relevé* in French, *aufhebung* in German: to life up and abolish at the same time) the heaviness of some events perhaps while turning the gravity on in regard to other, formerly lesser events. And like trauma, kitsch happens after the event. Or rather, requires an event in order to be after but after in a way that seems to be before: the prophetic miracle. In terms of catastrophic events (and all large scale events seem to be of a disastrous quality now, positing an explosive generality instead of a sloping commonality; the shape of 'revolutions' in fact. We see the most horrid monumentalities slipping into the digestible commonality of multiplicities, the falling away of focus; or



rather the un-inhabitability of the land which becomes estranged and uncanny. Otherwise how could one live? Silver planets are necessary[1]. Perhaps it is the case that each of us is multiple, or at least dual from the very beginning, the only way in which we can escape from the ascetic bitter negative straight jacket of high modernism with its bellicose opposition to anything outside its humanist stench...or frivolous metaphysics. *Offstage trumpets herald the arrival of speculative realism..and we say that with appreciation of its destructuring effect.*)

So. Let's back up a bit and take a question from the audience:

*Excuse me but I'm a bit lost here...although perhaps not as lost as you are. Where is this going? What point are you trying to make? This all seems like vague hand waving...*

Hand Waving, hmmm, yes we could accept that diagnosis if you would wish to link it to incantatory effects, magical passes and so on. We are trying to write into existence a certain mood, tuning or *stimmung* to the level of impasto in painting: various densities, cloud- like as it were, diaphanous in places, opaque in others,

readable but not quite understandable—even by ourselves! Writing past the place where we know what we are doing and who we are and into an unknown event....

A counter part of ‘automatic life,’ the automaton, wherein movement happens

which is not thoroughly cognized, as in a more open form of automatic writing, not moving from thesis to explication but thrown into the thicket like Brer’ Rabbit proceeding in dead-ends, circles, passing within distance of ...hand waving takes place here also as one ship passes another, trying to affix some performative value to the signaling but not entirely certain till in-side the passage way. And, in the nature of this thing, it is always too late or too soon.

*So all this has something to do with  
anthropomorphic sovereignty and autoimmunity?*



Yes, most certainly, the ‘dignity of man’ and all that. Even our measures of deep time have gotten imprinted with the Anthropocene, an entire geological stratigraphy named after the human. Much less the human proclivity to repel/kill/enslave all ‘others.’

The human as the measure of all things (this was modernism, no? we mean humanism as the escape from a god-ridden world), the human as the sovereign metaphysics that determines what is possible and what is excluded, the human as the know-it-all and which will force-fit all categories in order to continue the human empire. But as has been discussed above, even the quashing of the most formidable event into the banal, the domestic, still does not fully dismantle the oppositional energies present in the event (and perhaps hidden, inaccessible within things generally according to the Speculative Realists). We humans have

now moved almost completely from sublime scenes (which we then moved to colonize, denature and subsequently inhabit) placed at extremes even as we leave it behind as we move into the uncanny (which in turn colonizes US!), the appearance from the inside of that which has, while even questioning the closure

from the outside, almost paradoxically, already been colonized, a dark duality (at the very least) which unfolds further within, making all horizons only apparent, introducing indecisive moments all over, thereby making horizons all over, in the smallest most neglected event.



Surveillance is the necessary armamentarium for the successful apportioning of the anthropocene, ever vigilant for threats to the human layer whether from the future, other dimensions, outer space or inner space. (Although now that the human has been somewhat adequately surveilled, there is now the call that the human is not enough to forestall any mountings of uprisings to its

hegemony, that there needs to be a post-human, the trans-human, the ahuman, a step away from the previous human *gestell* or framework, and to inaugurate new forms of machinic/biologic connectivity. A meeting and diversion which has been almost continuously evoked though recorded history, as our relationship to the exterior machine has continuously moved in counterpart to the human.

[The thing to which the human is most indisposed—crisis and accident—is precisely that to which it must devote itself. The swerve of the *clinamen* (And yet...the human swerve is always attempting to fasten the curve to an observation post, the new norm and the old norm becoming equally stochastic but able to be seen, shapes made out of the chaos, the nothing pattern which is a constellation, the form dependant on the point of observation. Mladen Dolar has an interesting take of not only the *clinamen* but also *tyche*, [oddly enough, there has been speculation that the Earth itself (but already there is 'earth' and 'world', the physical immemorial planet and the 'inner

planet') has a sister planet that circles in a very wide orbit around the sun and earth and whose name has been given as...*Tyche*. Environmentalists also put forth the theory of a wandering planet, coming out of the Oort Cloud, to periodically wreak destruction on the earth, causing various extinctions of species; they called this rogue planet Nemesis.) Out of the three, already *clinamen*, but particularly *den* is a *hapax legomenon*, the technical term designating the word that occurs only once in a certain corpus, an oddity, a curiosity, a one time wonder. I suppose one can see there something of a method [...] This method poses a question: how can the odd one out be made the odd one in? What kind of series can one make with the one-time occurrence which sticks out of the series? Can one turn *hapax legomenon* into a concept? How to base universality on an exception, but maintaining it as exception?") or chance [—often put into opposition to the Automaton--and *Den*, that which is beyond the one, the multiple, the something and the nothing] becomes the new god, the crisis which ensures always heralding that the state of emergency is now continuous, secretly promising the Apocalypse, a Great Unveiling but amounting finally to simply collapsing new buildings and the ensuing migratory waves of humans and extinction of species which results.]

Heidegger's notion of Event (*Ereignis*): Žižek contends that the most primal Event is the one which sanctions all other events to follow: the fall of Homo sapiens into subjectivity, into a self. RC]: "for Heidegger, Event has nothing to do with processes that go on out there in reality. Event designates a new epochal disclosure of Being, the emergence of a new 'world' (a horizon of meaning within which all entities appear). Catastrophe thus occurs before the (f)act: catastrophe is not the atomic self-destruction of humanity, but the relation to nature which reduces it to its techno-scientific exploitation [and a kind of ex-plication, a folding in *-pli*—upon itself marking also the arrival of the uncanny RC]. Catastrophe is not our ecological ruin, but the loss of home-roots which render possible the ruthless exploitation of the earth. Catastrophe is not that we are reduced to automata manipulated by biogenetics, but the very approach which renders this prospect possible. Even the possibility of total self-destruction is just a consequence of our relating to nature as a collection of objects of technological

exploitation. This brings us to our next stop: from Event as enframing – as a shift in our relationship to reality – to Event as a radical change of this reality itself.”

Slovoj Zizek/ **Event: History of a Philosophical Concept.**



*The sublime whose  
tip points to me is as  
personal as death  
and as unfathomable  
as the world.*

Peter Sloterdijk, **You must  
change your life**

Graphic: El Lassitzky

## Lost in Abandonment

*Ever since we got 'here' we have been leaving 'here'.*

Fehta Murghana

### III

Jim Morrison was right: the West is the best, at the thing it is best at: abandonment, disappearance, loss, transfiguration of the banal, the everyday, by the Spectacle into further trash, always the bottom line in a closed system. And a continual enclosure that makes the West the best by excluding all others. It may be the case that this enclosure is reaching its end and that a dehiscence, an opening upon a great beyond is in the process of 'Eventing.' (This, perhaps final, Event seems to be like the organism known as the slime mold if we can extrapolate to a global sense. The slime mold is both a single organism but composed for a great deal of its life cycle as a multitude of generic individuals, wandering the forest floor. At a certain point in time, a chemical signal is sent out and the individual units begin to converge into a single stemmed body with a fruiting body on top. The cell bursts open, flooding the area with spores. Just so, the main event of human evolution seems to be oriented to shredding the apparent horizon of life on earth and a movement into a larger arena of outer space. The technical 'stalk' we are in the process of creating [interesting that 'stalk' also figures into a surveillance terminology and also a hiding of intent: a person who participates in a proceeding to disguise its real purpose] takes the form of hundreds of satellites sent into orbit with cameras and devices for measurement, not only of the globe but of the exploration of as many nearby spheres as possible. This leave-taking of earthly constraints could be seen as the final event of the human but not necessarily of what might come upon the heels of the human. Indeed at a certain rash point it could be seen as the abandonment, perhaps due to catastrophe, of the 'old home space' for an entirely different kind of existence one not readily recognizable, or acceptable, to us now.)

The West is the best at lost children and the imprisonment of the child within the iron curtain of adulthood, the imposition of Foucauldian singular iron squeezes to move the transfiguration of the haecceity (the singularity of each and every one of us, living and



dead, here and now), into an increasingly portaled tomorrow, thresholds made of thresholds, making its way over Benjamin's piles of debris, the angel of history pushed inexorably, blindly into the dark of the future [2]. But into that dark, darker than any drip of the world's ink into books, must come surveillance, being seen and codified, then burned and, like the terminator arising from the flames, washing away the human suit, becoming a product of maths, equations...flung, into orbit and away



Since the arrival of the event known as Judeo-Christianity over 2000 years ago, the nature of all events to follow inaugurated scenarios of capture, enclosure, and sublimation of the force within, into figuring the limit of the human, and the beginning of the end of the limit of all that constitutes the West and its figuring of the necessary conjunction of the human, the technological, the divine, and the monstrous (that is, the Event now is a torrential blending of those; it always has been but with the

arrival of the Western Spectacular State the ratios have shifted and simultaneously become extremely visible). “[...] *the limit of the West is ceaselessly in sight: ‘the West’ is precisely what designates itself as limit, as demarcation, even when it ceaselessly pushes back the frontiers of its imperium. By the turn of a singular paradox, the West appears as what has as its planetary, galactic, universal vocation limitlessly to extend its own delimitation. It opens the world to the closure that it is.*” Jean-luc Nancy, Introduction to **The Birth to Presence**.

The messianic Event as pure becoming is the other temporal bookend for the West (the other being the fall into subjectivity, into self) has also always been on its technic/spiritual way. This is the event of coming into presence, it is “this coming of another that the West always demands, and always forecloses.” (JL Nancy) This coming which never comes but which has promised to come from the beginning, forms the technical infra structure for the West (and hence the global itself). It makes the West not only the best, as Jim Morrison had it, but the only place to be, the West

having converted the 'bottom line' into the only line at this point. (The only Event not readily converted into the spectacularity, soon to be kipple, of the technical state [whether corporate or civic] simulacrum is that generated from chthonic forces. 'In the future' (and has always been oriented toward the Outside, the future) the sole purpose of the technical will be the modeling and remodeling of these ultra-earth, and generalizable planetary forces in an attempt to install a form of 'bad infinity,' a countable grouping of cosmic influences in order to try to forestall the eruption of a truly transformative, and perhaps extinctive teratological earth Event or series of Events. The Accelerative Capitalism movement, as well as Speculative Realism, might seem to be a subterfuge to 'outrun' and outgun such an event by taking the last step of abandoning humanism as well as Earth space. It would seem that one would have to entail the other. But what would such abandonment look like *avant le Event*? A humanist



would likely see such as a joining with the enemy, with surveillance being the leading edge tool of transformation. All comings would be scrutinized by what will seem like an omnipotent optic, even down to the infrathin region of memory, the spectral, that which doesn't exist but which might come to exist, as well as the smudges tending to past existence, the messianic (whether Jesus or Marx) as that which questions the open limitlessness nature of history; in other words, the coming of everything real and unreal. This will create incredibly complex problems of the limit since the simulacrum is the very confusion which surveillance helps to create!)

## This is the End My Friend: Abandonment

One can carry on with great abandon, an abandonment that approaches a great ecstasy of release: the floundering/repetition of the sexual act, the falling of loves of every kind but all predicated on leaving one's self for another place. The greatest scientific advances no doubt come through an agency of abandon, scientific revolutions portend nothing less for us all. It is to leave the safe confines of the human subject, not knowing what grief and collapse with no return to origin or what may come of it, to embark on those dark seas called matter, 'that-ness,' with no safe shore in sight---but undertaken with joy.



Abandonment proceeds with the loss side of the equation, the self recoiling from its sudden realization that its impoverished state has had it too far. Nothing but a threatening mystery surrounds the concept of abandonment in this latter sense in the queasy aftermath of ecstatic abandon.

In some of the great tales of science fiction ('scientific romance' it was once called), explorers come across great cities and civilizations out in the cosmos that had been abandoned by a lost species which had constructed the structures. A series of baffling

encounters follow, as the artifacts, monuments, rules and outlook of the dead civilization become either more opaque and unreadable or keys are found which seem to open an alien viewpoint. This opening of the unreadable frequently leads to disaster. The shear (meaning thin but also cleaving from) fact of understanding, of reading, acts to transform the reader into a monstrous double of the alien.

Abandonment is held in reserve in the unreadable as at the same time it encourages the 'surprise of the event' as a kind of abandon (and the disaster creates its own ecstatic abandon). The progressive history of the Homo sapiens, in its excavation of the relation with *techné*, can be seen as a millennial assortment of leave-takings and

abandonments. The unreadable shows the final blank face of abandonment, the ever-closeness of the inhuman, so close as to be a perennial guest of the human host, sometimes as an unseen, but foundational 'guest' (an intimacy between guest and host so close as to question the very ordering of the terms of the relationship: who/what is guest and what/who is host. The technical guest always threatening to usurp the sovereignty of the host). The human is always able to 'read' this parasite, to the point of terming it nihilism, the abyssal nothing, non- or anti-values lurking in every lump of matter, continual battle of unreadability with the human, itself a form of rarified matter, only deepening the abandon, (Just so does the abandonment of the unreadable shear into the Hegelian good and bad infinity; but just so must good infinity always veer into kitsch, bad infinity, counting our way from one island of readability to another, from one space port to another to the doggerel accompaniment of Robert Heinlein's space bard ) [1]

At the threshold of this event of abandonment by unreadability, philosophy (as the attempted disclosure of what is 'true' and not the mere recognition of the arrival) can have nothing to say, or must collapse into its own solipsistic unreadable, simply another intrusive object, ink stain on an imperturbable landscape, dyslexic finger pointing, art, a black hole, event without origin or homecoming.

*notes*

1. So endearingly modeled here:

**The Green Hills of Earth**

Let the sweet fresh breezes heal me  
As they rove around the girth  
Of our lovely mother planet  
Of the cool, green hills of Earth.

We rot in the moulds of Venus,  
We retch at her tainted breath.  
Foul are her flooded jungles,  
Crawling with unclean death.

[ --- the harsh bright soil of Luna ---  
--- Saturn's rainbow rings ---  
--- the frozen night of Titan --- ]

We've tried each spinning space mote  
And reckoned its true worth:  
Take us back again to the homes of men  
On the cool, green hills of Earth.

The arching sky is calling  
Spacemen back to their trade.  
ALL HANDS! STAND BY! FREE FALLING!  
And the lights below us fade.

Out ride the sons of Terra,  
Far drives the thundering jet,  
Up leaps a race of Earthmen,

Out, far, and onward yet ---

We pray for one last landing  
On the globe that gave us birth;  
Let us rest our eyes on the friendly skies  
And the cool, green hills of Earth.

-- Robert A Heinlein

2. The Klee drawing named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

— Walter Benjamin, *Ninth Thesis on the Philosophy of History*

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