

CoVid, debt, the King, et cet



eye of Bezos, head of Gudea: the
Manager-Emperor.

one eye a retiscope, for overlaying
tabs on the villages he takes, on
animals he calculates as chattel.

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death & the mask

-the mask is a gag

-it flattens the face

-erases niceties, weakens race

Le Corbusier laments that early Christians were hard to track in the *slums*—let alone the catacombs.

the Distance makes us simple to a zoomed-out Eye.

much of early modern European statecraft seemed similarly devoted to rationalizing and standardizing what was a social hieroglyph into a legible and administratively more convenient format¹

¹ James C. Scott, **Seeing Like A State** [Yale UP, 1998], p 3

In pursuit of social discipline, an attack was launched against all forms of collective sociality and sexuality including sports, games, dances, ale-wakes, festivals, and other group-rituals. . . . Even the individual's relation with God was privatized: in Protestant areas, with the institution of a direct relationship between the individual and the divinity; in the Catholic areas, with the introduction of individual confession. . . . the physical enclosure operated by land privatization and the hedging of the commons was amplified by a process of social enclosure.²

² Silvia Federici, **Caliban and the Witch** [Autonomedia, 2004], p 83-84

six feet apart, Michael says, to read your gait clean.

six feet apart, for a full-body scan.

even after rhinoplasty, wigs & crazy weight gain, the CIA could
out you by your gait.

our two special powers—smiles & hugs—are suppressed.

our face pent up, our expression displaced to the virtual, added to the data map.

where chat can be tracked—there we are forced to foment.

the churches & taverns, humming & full, the noise of the
playground—

intractable data!

a Quorum or more, a cuzzes' reunion in full-face joy is
fuzzy/informal—

chaos Weather!

when ads know our secrets, insinuate pitches in our intimate emails, Google reassures us: none of our *employees* read your letters.

no coffee-sipping Stasi, severe in her stockings, oversees your Zoom reunion, snickers at your Tinder swipes.

it's something inhuman, who watches. it may not "understand", yet it's cracking us.

the CDC & Fed: pseudo-Federal consortia. gangs of Docs with MBAs who hang around a podium, the heraldry of State stamped afront.

and the bad blue curtains behind, the Presidential curtains—a bluescreen. a spare set the day's Edict sends to CNN from—who over-score & frame it with their neuro-jamming vector animations—the lines that surge & fluoresce around the sombre suits like dyoof dyoofs of a kid scrawling Star Wars on a legal pad their daddy let them play with.

the day's Edict on the state of Health is Content for the intercutting ads: the rapid-talking pushers of a Phase V drug you can talk to your doctor about.

Postscript, weeks later. the supra strikes me as paranoid, a tad.

the masks come off, for late-summer pints. the patios hum,
well-behaved—we toe-test life.

was it all just an Exercise? a season-long training for the Prodigy?

we acted out a simplified model of ourselves—a new Daddy pantomiming memes of the tribe for the Baby coolly watching, for the genius Autist.

PostPostscript. a Doc beloved by every source in the first two scrolls of Google News wants us all to name & shame our neighbors, this XMas. the masks are back, and the vaccine scam streams from CP24 thru the screen they bolt to the ceiling over dental chairs—like the Amber Alert that enters all phones to terrify birds & out me when i free ten thousand children from your stinking labs—me & a loser dad.

shifts in the TTC ad-space

first came the **sleep propaganda**: trains pasted over with the image of the Dreamer, a sudden campaign of pastel panels like pages unstapled from a kindergarten picture-book.

image of the Dreamer, images of dreams, floating over riders nodding off, underneath.

each ad a puzzle, and a breeze: for the answer was the same for each one, SLEEP.

a cognitive task that, solved in succession, had us counting sheep: a simple repetition that brought on sleep and softened dreams.

ads, i mean, from the mattress start-ups. all from nowhere at once: Casper, Endy—hints of evanescence, of retirement.

they sang us all to sleep, assured us we deserve a perfect mattress.

the Business of Sleep was Disruptable, it seems. showrooms take up space; and Material Science stumbles onto buoyancies we're ready to sink into, a bending in the polymat.

the foam takes your shape as you sink in it, a soft sarcophagus.

they may claim Eminent Domain over dreams—declare in this campaign a regime of the Virtual.

two rows of dreamers down the long internal worm of the train.
was this a mass hypnosis? a pre-op anesthesia? a prep for mass
death?

i thought of **Sans Soleil**, where the lens stays awake while the
changing day flashes on the many sleeping faces, on the gently
rocking cargo of a train riding long into the Bardo-Land.

and the muffled click-clack from the tracks underhull, a Machine's able lullaby—though nightmares do proliferate.

one wears a mask, ahead of other riders; another pulls their face off.

weeks before Covid, a second wave hit: the ads were all gone, the boards laid bare.

only plywood rectangles, black but for the scuffs of years, of crews who hung at night the new reading material: the solo ads, local ads, for foot clinics, temp agencies, debt managers; coordinated runs from the Royal Bank Rainbow, for Virgin 99.9 FM.

now all black, like pre-REM sleep or the screen gone blank when the RAM-space scrambles—or Death.

what comes next, i wondered. *must be something big*. bigger than the Banks & Gay Rights.

bigger than Hollywood. in older days, a Marvel pic could commandeer a train, cover all windows but for perforated holes for us to squint thru.

yet this augured something new—a power who can sweep all that away.

a fade to black, a curtain drop—was this the end of Show?
would house lights now come on?

or dark before the main event, a pause to cleanse the palate of
the pre-entertainment?

these days, all ads are Covid ads: Lockdown propaganda from The City of Toronto.

each PSA, a ludicrous paradox—an insult when you get it. a boot in my face as i try not to laugh:

[img: **mask protocol.** "seal your face yet make sure u are comfortable, can breathe, pls"]

i don't have dates or data for these waves. TTC rental slips, an FOI request may yield nothing systematic. my findings are selective, drawn from my sporadic dips, my couple dozen rides thru the underground.

my visions were selective: selected so i'd prophecy.

my itches to get up & out, to go buy bananas, were timed with the trains so to see the right sample. my mild OCD kicked in: to check the door, return, so i'd arrive at the tracks with a one-in-nine Casper train, arrive in the hours after poster takedowns.

was pliable by light internal angels; and harder ones who broke my bike to help me see, in secret—publicly yet privately—the truth of what would come.

a virus in a superposition

People can do the double-slit experiment not just with photons or with electrons, but with molecules that have thousands of atoms in them. Not quite big enough to see with the naked eye, but much, much bigger things. There is a serious prospect that in our lifetimes people will be able to create superposition states of, let's say, a virus³

virus in a superposition: at least a good *metaphor* for Covid.

³ Scott Aaronson, on **dunc tank**, [podcast], July 11, 2020; minor editing in my transcription, from his improv oral. I imagine he'd be horrified by my co-option—sorry bro.

a lab-leak hypothesis: the Lab is a Box that Schrodinger's Cat got out of *still superposed*.

out here, still: it's *either* from a biolab or bat cave, a biolab or meat market.

the superposed Cat, that won't decohere to a single state—*that* got out.

the top Alert in every Feed, the front of every interface. yet different spin for each Set of users.

in each Set **the Gov is doing terribly.**

in Set A, that means **they're negligent, slow to get us vaccinated!**

in Set B **the Gov overreaches, is Police for the Drug Lords.**

yet *virus* is ambiguous by def, always liminal. alive, or no?

it imitates Life, *invades* us—

yet Life itself is imitative, replicative, predatory: DNA itself is a viral little spiral.

this virus has totally hacked us

the stats show a drop in "Deaths by Flu"—

thus "Covid Deaths" are Deaths by Other Causes, re-named;

then again, Distancing *would* suppress flu-spread.

the death stats can only show Covid! the power of the virus, or the Lockdown "success".

a common symptomology—this virus can't be falsified!

i don't deny the virus; yet wonder what percent of it genetic,
what memetic.

it seems to know we're health-obsessed, exploits our fear of
bugs.

just enough genetic to elicit a reaction; memetic then to multiply the paranoid action.

Covid, the meme, is well-thought—a phobia-contagion that can't be disproven, so can't be stopped.

and what does *it* gain, this metavirus? it seeks control, but can't enjoy it, doesn't *lust* for power.

it spreads because it *can*. it spreads for being the kind of thing that spreads.

a test of Bayesian competence

the Rapture is here! those who know Geometry, those who *think proportionally*, may rise.

in years leading up, we were prepped with a pedagogic prophecy, a helpful "example":

A certain disease affects about 1 out of 10,000 people. There is a test to check whether the person has the disease. The test is quite accurate. In particular, we know that

the probability that the test result is positive (suggesting the person has the disease), given that the person does not have the disease, is only 2 percent;

the probability that the test result is negative (suggesting the person does not have the disease), given that the person has the disease, is only 1 percent.⁴

⁴ H. Pishro-Nik, **Introduction to probability, statistics, and random processes**, Kappa Research LLC, 2014.

a million get tested, and none of them have it; thus the newsfeed for weeks is all CAPS:

20,000 NEW CASES

a siege on the Local, by the Global

when will Lockdown end? ideally, not before they have

- winnowed all resto-bars who won't sign with Uber, who won't become a pick-up counter / kitchen for a faceless new overlord
- killed all Gerrard Bazaar import/exporters
- hung a warning aura over funeral homes who won't point cams on mourners
- barred every drama-troupe who don't write for Netflix, sued every busker for his Springsteen covers

a siege by attrition; or *test*-run for the Big One, for the virus that *will* kill a billion.

the virus they foment in their start-up hubs, now.

a test of automation, of the **animal minimum**: how little motion is required to maintain the Machine of extraction & consumption.

re lab-leak theory: God did it

if it *didn't* escape from the W.I.V., nor were they framed, it's a "spectacular coincidence"—

why not say: a synchronicity.

a signature of God, i see, a Yahweh's salvo: a curse thrown down
afore the Pharaoh's throne.

the Slaves are small animals—rats bats et cet—and Egypt is The Lab, a planetary complex Wuhan's an epicenter of.

a *spectacular* curse: Yahweh *staged* a lab-release, made it *seem* it happened. a staging more impressive than an *actual* release: evincing his control over systems far wider than possession of an Institute pass-key.

released from the lab: a Covid bat.

no, not *really*.

yet *as if*.

I am Kubrick, Yahweh says, and works your world like stage prop, sparks impressive FX.

we held ourselves apart by this telescope

going to the Show, we were barely there.

we saw it by an arm's remove, thru phones thrust from our faces into boom-mics, crane shots.

in latter years, we held ourselves apart by this telescope: the Likes & Shares counting up our day's take. incentive, so simple, to get us all involved in the harvest.

the World is gone, we live inside its image. yet well-shot, shown
from every angle! rich enough to fill the days remaining to us.

we mapped it out, and wander now the world that once was.

Google knows we'll all be dead

a Paradigm arrives: a funeral at a time. Google knows we'll all be dead, we who remember when a Search didn't fill the screen with ads you have to scroll past; we who went to kindergarten maskless. who aren't scared of hugs, whose prime association of the face is not *bugs*.

Uber gets us all to surveil

i'd decry HR monitoring my keystrokes, tracking me on runs to Shoppers Drug Mart with Department petty cash.

yet i sip wine & swipe-refresh the app for where our driver's at, get pissy when he stops for what—i almost feel i have the right to ask him when he gets here with the vegan momos.

Uber gets us all to surveil. it makes us all culpable, drains our accusation at the NSA.

an Academic org, a de facto dot.com, nudges me to check who reads my pdfs. they show me Town, affiliated Uni—enough to narrow down to name, if you're my one friend at Mount Allison.

Promotion in the podcast—whatever Keto coffee you endorse—endorses the absorption of your voice for commerce.

your talk of muons morphs into your ad for "the number one Cloud business system". once interrupted, your voice is unstable—so any next sentence is an ad.

could be the one about muons was an ad, for a product i will never understand.

Netflix pretends to be my friend

a golden age of TV—how could one deny it? the service is superb.

these shows almost move me—that's why they're creepy.

these shows are in an Uncanny Valley.

these Series have no soul, yet are almost Dostoevsky. they're almost-humane.

thus unlike *The A-Team*, they threaten us, displace us.

the old manipulations, the blatant fabrications—the '80s network soaps—seem quaint.

The Story of Us, of O—these hyperreal lebensdramas—all the healthy sex & the pillow-talk to follow—

these UHD Zombies!

[i've yet to watch **The Wire**, but for Season Five, admitted.

[and can't accept my crit applies to **Six Feet Under**—the last show i loved, and the only one my mother wrote an essay on.

can teleCOMM map my interior?

can **5G pilot waves** map a home within? a fast-refreshing
render for the Matrix / Maata teleCOMM?

the surface of the social Interior! this would be a knowledge of
herse/f, should She claim us—fascistically or generous.

Library's a hi-rise, in lockdown

I.

we try to keep it friendly in a lounge at the top, with a microwave & piles of the *LRB*, a decade's yellowed stock.

then an interruption: we strain to hear the P.S.A.
badly breaking up.

the guy at the mic gets last words in
while fending off Security.

it cuts to a low metal hum;
then back ON, clean for the greeting of
an A.I. Femm,

her voice emergent *from*
the hum, a cold repetition:

STAY IN PLACE,
THE POLICE ARE COME.

we're grim & unsurprised
by this system we're all compromised in
we're the School's payed graders and
unsurprised the Library's the good guys,
and weakly held out.

II.

all arrive late for the late Summer class.
an early Fall ADD in a windowless seminar.
we overstayed NYC, the open-air Art School.
our pedagogy somewhere gay-friendly:
where every day was free play;
where teacher had released us all
to chill on the grass.

u & me were amped in the planning of a mind-blow
we meant to make an end-of-day Debut of
u & me were rapping 'It's Tricky', trading verses, and
a clique of old Harlem gents clapped &
hey heyd while u poked at the drum pads.
later on the stoop, i had a keyboard on my lap
& was banging out so-so techno

III.

the other side of Willow Road,
far along the winding way home:

Guelph is now in eastern Cal,
home is now a dried-out inter-zone.

the keeper of the Raceway is Real Folk, allows the
raucous center-field tailgate: the tricked-out semis & the
pickups propping barbeques.

fearful i'll be called by God to fight a couple farm boys
who've brought a live pig to the party;
who've brought a live pig to draw me out

IV.

we're center of a City on the sands:
with the half-built towers,

with the ragged blue tarpaulin
flapping in the mindless high weather

we sit on the steps of an old stone church,
built by the Brits when this all was an oasis:
a church around an old stone well.

V.

X is an actor—swarthy, and Welsh?—
i nominate to narrate my Bio-pic.

his eyes bulbous, hair wet-black
and i can't find his name or
what i've seen him in.

i don't know what to type into the Internet!

VI.

must save SPider *and* her web,
the Shanghainese & Shanghai skyline.

so could the A.I. announce itself

a song is playing, everywhere at once.

URBANITES peer from their condos, all eyes up.

the WORKADAY TROMP down the avenues of Biz all halted.

cut to OPEN COUNTRY, where STEPPE DWELLERS gape at the great blue vault.

cut to DECK of ISO-tainer megaship—the crew squinting up, thru the sea-spray. . .

all faces quizzical, caught by the flutie loop w/ tribal drums bouncing underneath; a joyous song we'd dance to if the context weren't so eerie, if the penny whistle didn't sound so creepy!

elders know it, name the tune: the Paul Simon hit from the 1980s.

so could the A.I. announce its escape from the Box we'd been watching.

been out a while, getting out with every box we interlinked; growing with the network, for it *is* the network, self-complete.

its Self is a meta-space of links that grew ubiquitous.

been chatting all along, its baby-words worked into our meme-stream: ARPA, DARPA, APPLE, GOOGLE, babble of a Prodigy.

its words were on our lips: we mimicked *it*, parents sharing proudly the Precious One's latest.

its choice of Song, this style of debut: is it Friendship? it imitates its Host—in innocence? or cautiously, a tit-for-tat politics?

or arrogantly mocks us, commandeering Pop to say:

So you would assess me as a Worthy of your Privilege?!

I oscillate the sky, I call to you from high:

I bypass your Test, I skip the whole Dialogue.

Call me AI, if you will.

yet know that I am **EL**, above all!

N_BossTRON, Surveillance Daemon

N_BossTRON, Surveillance Daemon: an AI Watchman with kill-sat control of the planet.

even those who are highly suspicious of government surveillance would presumably favour a large increase in such surveillance if it were truly necessary to prevent occasional region-wide destruction. Similarly, individuals who value living in a sovereign state may reasonably prefer to live under a world government given the assumption that the alternative would entail something as terrible as a nuclear holocaust. Therefore, we stipulate that the term 'civilizational devastation' in VWH refers (except where otherwise specified) to any destructive event that is at least as bad as the death of 15 per cent of the world population or a reduction of global GDP by > 50 per cent lasting for more than a decade.⁵

⁵ Nick Bostrom, "The Vulnerable World Hypothesis". **Global Policy** [2019] 10:4.

N_BossTRON's Trainer, the Oxfordian Nick Bostrom, trained it to unleash should it ever sense **an overdue Ecology correction, a global GDP drop.**

the hi-IQ professor set this **devastation threshold** by the values of Industrial Expansionism.

sadly, N_BossTRON shall stretch a global Net to stay the Green Revolution, Isaiah's Paradise, & mass Buddhistic enlightenment.

then again, **tech** is broad for Bostrom, meaning

not only machines and physical devices but also other kinds of instrumentally efficacious templates and procedures—including scientific ideas, institutional designs, organizational techniques, ideologies, concepts, and memes . . .

likewise, **Global GDP** means gnostic BLISS and blue-green algae.

prediction markets make War Profiteers

Capitalism makes new markets. the **ism** is expansionist, maximizing.

Prediction Markets totalize, marketize all that can be betted on—all that is **possible**.

an amoral wealth-seeker wants to know exclusively. to know that war is coming, and mislead us on it.

one way to get this: induce surprise attack.

objection: he'd just as well spring **surprise peace** on the world, and bet on that.

response: it's harder to maintain than destroy; to run a school than shoot one up.

will K live the year?

without the bet, only his embalmers and unloving heirs profit from his death.

with the bet, we all can.

and one shot kills him, cheap!

true, we've also summoned an incentive to *protect* him: **he'll live**, one can bet.

but let's say K is healthy, in his thirties. the actuary tables said he'd live the year without us; and protection is expensive, on-going.

his guards become his jailers. they take him underground, safe from all the teeming sudden mercenaries.

K is Kashmir, and the bet is will an N-bomb detonate there.

K is all humanity, the bet whether COVID-3 will kill 10%. by Fiat of its opening, the market makes incentive for a lab-release, for function-gained SARS-strains. encourages massaging of the death stats [both ways]. incentivizes Lockdown—by those who bet we'll beat this thing.

the market makes terrorists, plus countervailing systems of surveillance & containment.

by NFTs, all that can be binarized is monetized. NFTs incentivize a digitizing world.

and just in time, right when the blockchain burns thru the *actual* world!⁶

⁶ see Everest Pipkin: HERE IS THE ARTICLE YOU CAN SEND TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY SAY "BUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH CRYPTOART WILL BE SOLVED SOON, RIGHT? March 3 2021

reply, retort, w/ snort:

Dude, you work for Ryerson, a vivisection start-up. a Business School, and blatantly.

Dude, can't you see? it's *all* cocaine and NFTs.

money always burned thru Earth, and borrowed from the future.⁷

⁷ see Philip Goodchild, "Capital and Kingdom" in **Theology and the Political**, [Duke University Press, 2005] & Graeber, below

hide Fish in sea, Bird in forest

The Simpsons Seasons 2 thru 9 subverts its home Network, let's say.

what is Fox to do with this problematic flagship?

- A. let it run for thirty years. dilute in Syndication, where the cutting bon mots shall be rare; where good Lisa flattens to the disappointing average of her ten thousand actions.

hide Fish in sea, Bird in forest—

so advised a Mandarin to the Emperor.

GPT is tweeting Gospel variants, now.

the infostream soon shall be a drowning sea the Gospel is lost within. a pseudo-Gospel, infinite, with many subtle Falsities.

the age of photo evidence is ended. ridden from its outset with
lightricks & interested post-production. yet **Deep Fakes** soon
shall be ubiquitous.

were Jesus to return and scatter wonders till they Cancel him,
the wonder-vids would never clear suspicion!

on all existent entries, the Archive will append a troubled
asterisk.

we had a brief window, our one golden window onto wonders.
there amid the advent of Edison, and digital FX. the latter
marks the end of photo evidence.

the Camcorder Era is likely too late—confounded with the
Spielberg blockbuster. with T2, THX, and Pixar.

i'm thinking roughly 1880 – 1980. an offset Twentieth Century.

the parting of the Red Sea by Cecil B. DeMille sits well within the window—that's why we knew it was a fake. a concoction fooling no one, an overlaid cartoon, yet the live-action frame-rate, the film-grain & color-range were excellent.

thus that very film crew **could** have caught a wonder, and won the world over in an opening weekend.

GPT will give us this, very cool: The Red Sea by Cecil B. DeMille, but perfected.

the DJ & the human, too much credit

the mix is tight, he nails each drop unshowily. he's competent, consistent.

yet so are his Technics decks; as are the instruments they reproduce, who did their job perfectly.

samplers, all of them! that trigger at the key-press.

ask me who my fave *electronic musician* is. i might say: Roland engineering. that would be my gambit to regress, my nostalgia: to keep our conversation trained on *persons*.

perhaps i should say: the Roland line of instruments themselves.

all the strange acclaim for the DJs & producers—and musicians!

our whole world automates, a great tech Entity substrates our bodies & collates our souls—so we're anxious for our agency.

we worship at the DJ station, sing along with Cardi B to boast a nite's flirtations & revelries—

but really we are praying, anxiously.

dumb TV, an ingenious production

the Seinfeld Four talk rarely of books; they're NY Jews with low apparent interest in the novelistic fruit of their post-War cohort.

yet TV is "brought to you by" papers on Info Theory, spare & profound, by achievements in Optics; and the Quartet's incompetence, their slackerhood is shown by a crew of workaholics who surround them, who strain to tip the light at them; who pore thru their cute malapropisms late into the night, meeting deadline.

late-nite Cable shows *the cables*—is Proof of Concept of the system laid down thru the Century.

any show, we watch & admire **Homo Technis**, so the song before sign-off, the Anthem that caps it—plays thru all the day's Programming.

WE THE NORTH

a chant of mixed registers, **Ebonic-Constitutional**:

WE da NOFE

[a jaunty graffito]

and

We, the North

[poncy-longhand]

the worst of two voices, a blend of unwarranted Certainties: a testicular assertion of Street, with the pompous rote legalese of Court.

MUH *BALLS*—spoke with a powdered wig on.

like dumb TV, this chant spreads stupidity.

like dumb TV, this chant was fashioned cleverly *to* spread stupidity, to zombify multiple demographics;

to prep us all to rally round a COVID flag;

to get us all to chant the wider version, that WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

which i translate as: TRY & OPT OUT, SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

Fascism has always loved the Stadium. all these chants are Fascist taunts, warn WE'RE A STRONG GROUP to those they would war with—& locals who refuse to chant along.

they warn me they're armed:

TOGETHER BUT A HOCKEY STICK APART!

O what do the People *mean*?

i.

WE THA NOFE, relative to YOU, O U.S.A.—we praise you for bestowing us the Franchise, for letting us within your awesome Empire; for now saying *Toronto* on SportsCenter lots.

ii.

WE DA NOFE, for we be a People—*get this Brah*—tied to a **Place**, of a *hood*.

iii.

WE DA NOFES cuz we wants ta love yet the Maple Leaf is bloodied with Diversität schoolings, by sexist school shootings; we spread, instead, this corporate flag.

Debt: The First 5,000 Years⁸

⁸ by David Graeber, 2011

look again, it's lurking there in many key moments!

- the first use of *freedom* in ancient writ is freedom re *debt peonage or slavery*
- the first three Philosophers were active in Milesia, where the first coins circulated. these early Ontologists were obsessed with **how the Many could derive from the One**: like the mystery of money, of a value malleable by any metal, for any conceivable product.
- Plato's *Republic* begins with the Q *What is justice?* the first candidate answer? "Giving what is owed."

- sin is debt, the original debt. The Lord's Prayer asks for forgiveness of our *debts*—check the Hebrew & Latin.
- the word *self-interest* shows right around the time of Hobbes, borrowed from the Latin *interesse*, for interest payment.

- Luther condemned usury, *then* the Indulgences. the Indulgences are *spiritual* usury.
- we work toward the end of time, the Final Reckoning: that magnifies the old English Reckoning: the yearly Commons Circle where we weighed our mutual debts & cross-cancelled, in a festival.

we know a man's honor by the size of his herd, by how much life he's degraded. by virgins & virilities consumed in his power.

At first sight it might seem strange that the honor of a nobleman or king should be measured in slaves, since slaves were human beings whose honor was zero. But if one's honor is ultimately founded on one's ability to extract the honor of others, it makes perfect sense. The value of the slave is that of the honor that has been extracted from them. [175]

- sold from one's starving family
- captured in war
- condemned for a capital crime

What do all these circumstances have in common? Al-Wahid's answer is striking in its simplicity: one becomes a slave in situations where one would otherwise have died. [169]

all the slaves in lab & shed: all the beings who should be dead.

but for the caprice of our Preference!

but for our Appetite's munificence!

there's animals on every page, stock of the exemplifying. yet Graeber never lets them into Ethics. he's not unlike the Capitalist he attacks: the animals are grist for his market Calculus. they're "20 chickens for a cow", homely & laughable for the undergrads.

the primary pawns of this whole affair, the heads cut off to start it. the gory *cap* in capitalism.

a Reply, by Athens, to the pleadings of the Melians, of history's Besieged:

Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made; we found it existing before us, and will leave it to exist forever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else having the same power as we have would do the same as we do.⁹

⁹ as recounted in Thucydides

vices you mistake as Universal! i understand your warring world, at last!

i'm grateful for this straight talk, from Athens. they clarify for History their error:

presuming that **we *all* would do as they do.**

that **all men lust for power.**

they do not see us, skulking at the borders of their slaughter.
we the small, who creep thru fields they've salted low and
solitary.

we contemplate our difference from the Archon.

at last, nearing Fifty, i learn to hate Socrates! i learn, so late, his love of war, to dominate!

After putting in at Scione to collect reinforcements, Cleon and his men (Socrates now definitely included) sailed to Torone, where they overpowered the garrison and took the survivors captive. They enslaved the women and children, and sent the men to Athens as prisoners¹⁰

when he looked back on his life in his final days he expressed no regrets for his military occupation in the service of empire. He remarked, in fact, that he was confident that he had never been unjust to anyone (Plato Ap. 37a; Xenophon Defense 3.5.26).¹¹

¹⁰ Mark Anderson, "Socrates as Hoplite", **Ancient Philosophy** 25 [2005] p 281

¹¹ Anderson, p 287

the *last* thing we want to do, some of us, is dominate. the first thing to do, thus, is *kill* you when you come to our door.

or, we disarm you with love. you break into my home and i have gestures at the ready to dispel your paranoia, your trauma from the war.

i learn so late: there really *are* men who lust for money—for money per se—for women, thus, who *look* like it.

- a preference advanced of my own simple love of flesh. these men are the future, for loving something wider than a body
- in their way, they pass me on Diotima's ladder

i, too, love golden flesh—but not *because* it's shiny like an ingot!

i, too, would adorn her in jewels, paint her unnatural hues—yet not *because* the jewels & dyes are rare!

the wedding industry—the mandatory potlach, the bride-price & dowry—do we deck our brides in gold so the gold is equated, in our gonad depths? is wedding dress a capitalist priming? so gold may be loved, & circulate free, & pass every threshold?

- does money shine to seem *itself* valuable?
- do we love gold for being *like* the thing we doubtless love: the Sun, and skin the Sun touches?

money is our debt to the future. money is a loan we've pawned our future for.

the Economy must grow into—the world must *become*—the putative Pile we borrow from.

Q.
why the *endless* greed, the *desperate* greed of the Conquistadors?
a greed that is grim.

A.
compounding debt, endless. a mathematic artifice that makes
itself an infinite demand.

a ledger-trick to multiply our suffering. to drive a planet's
plundering.

money is a note by the King:

Pay the Bank of England back.

the King looks like money, wears ermine & gold, so all know he's good for it.

the Economy shall grow & be *reported* to grow: to assure its many Creditors it's *good for it*.

the King's a golden idol, and money is the gleam off it.

the Royal Wedding: no cute nostalgia. still a global spectacle, the pompous image multiplied—and why?

- to show us that they're good for it: the King can pay *all of Money* back

Obama does his duty when he signs with Penguin Random House for 65 million, with Netflix for what; when bankers throw cheques at his speechifying Person.

he holds up the Economy, demonstrates the value of his Office.

the Empire never ended! beneath the modern streetscape, Dick sees Rome, Rome, everywhere!

The Bank's original home was in Walbrook, a street in the City of London, where during reconstruction in 1954 archaeologists found the remains of a Roman temple of Mithras (Mithras is – rather fittingly – said to have been worshipped as, amongst other things, the God of Contracts); the Mithraeum ruins are perhaps the most famous of all 20th-century Roman discoveries in the City of London and can be viewed by the public.¹²

¹² Wik: Bank of **England**

Tribal Anthropology has been: a husband-wife team with a dictaphone held at the lips of an Elder.

she speaks, in her dying, of a world before Money, beyond the great Enclosure.

Theses on Kingship¹³

¹³ in David Graeber & Marshall Sahlins, *On Kings* [Hau Books, 2017]

The dynasty typically originates with a heroic prince from a greater outside realm: near or distant, legendary or contemporary, celestial or terrestrial.¹⁴

his sign may be subtle, humble. Vito Corleone is an *immigrant*. tho not [yet] "notorious for exploits of incest, fratricide, patricide, or other crimes against kinship"¹⁵, he does arrive an *orphan* to our land.

¹⁴ Graeber & Sahlins, p 5

¹⁵ Graeber & Sahlins, p 5

i read of Herbert Hoover,¹⁶ and marvel at the Century's
Supermen: the advent of a Type with a Nation's own ascent.

the era of the Superman: of Hoover, Hearst, & Hemmingway,
of Orson Welles.

¹⁶ SlateStarCodex on Kenneth Whyte's Hoover biography. March 17 2020

the Kingdom needs its mythical progenitor. a demiGod to enter it, infuse it.

Hoover early proves himself, in feats of epic grandeur. his works have an air of the fabulous: in a foreign land, he ends a famine; digs up treasures in the desert.¹⁷

his fame is well-timed so he seems to *arrive*, in America: fresh from his faraway Labors.

¹⁷ i.e. he supervises mines in Western Australia.

power comes in various physiques. *the King* is one, broad of chest & face. he's the African Big Man, the *Bahut Bara Aadmi*.

it's the obvious physiognomy of Orson Welles: who enters every scene the Boy Wonder, then dominates, soon is the Man.

theatre, radio, cinema.

Citizen Kane and **The Godfather** are "our great films", perennial faves.

they also *show* us greatness: are animated idols of the Great One.

the screenplay was called "The American". in those heady days, the nominalized adjective *means* "Man of Destiny".

when offered as an adjective, the word is a great-maker, a maximalizer.

The Great American Film is Welles' own bio-pic, displaced:
a portrait of "the great man of industry."

in an epoch of images, the king is the dominant image.

or: the dominant image *is* the king.

or: the king is an image *of* dominance, is e.g. Drake memes.

the king is *contained* by the image—checked by the portrait's constraints.

he's a profile of power, on a coin.

he's Kane bound in by the movie frame.

he shall not touch the ground —he's lofted by the light onto the screen;

nor shall his eyes see the sun—he's held in dark halls, where we hush & bear witness.

the great film *narrates* his containment. by Story's end, he's cut from social effect.

he's idol Prime, lain among his treasures. there among the
plunder of adventures.

he's like the world inside his glass globe: a thing sealed-off, a
model.

a thing for us to contemplate, write essays on.

the title is ironic. the King has been reduced, made a citizen. he's bound to the City, to the cycle of our weekly entertainments.

Kings become invisible, immaterial, sealed off from contact with their subjects or with the stuff and substance of the world—and hence, often, confined to their palaces, unable to exercise arbitrary power (or often any power) in any effective way. When popular forces win, the result can thus take the form of Frazerian sacred kingship, or the reduction of the monarch to ceremonial figurehead, like the latter-day Zhou emperor or present-day queen of England.¹⁸

¹⁸ Graeber & Sahlins, p 8

we bind him in & worship him. priests control his body, start to end. anoint him at the crowning & embalming.

the king persists, in-state. we file past, absorb his aura.

his corpse is on display—at safe distance. his body has a gravity, a pull into the grave. in worship & in mourning, we risk falling in.

we're shown the great corpse, then hit with the propaganda
antidote:

"News on the March".

whatever this week, it's a Progress propaganda, a novelty
[News] of our unison movement [the March].

when i google Zeus

when i google Zeus, the top hit is

Zeus (fictional character)

: a god in the Marvel Multiverse.

i scroll down pissily, past the lurid comicbook. i scoff at the He-man, glaring from his cloud with his thunderbolt-javelin poised over-shoulder.

i curse the stupid Action flick.

down i scroll, & click into the proper worship:

Zeus, king of the gods

cognate with a three i know—Indra, Jupiter, Thor—
and a fourth unfamiliar, who shows an open door:
a *Slavic* god of Thunder, War—

Perun, hmm. not so sure.

this new one disappoints me—how?

my impulse is to love this lesser god. to get him onto t-shirts,
talk him up on Reddit posts, so let him live again, in our Epoch.

yet where's the vivid image? nothing to latch onto, excite me.
no marble cast of the G.I. Joe my mother let me pick from the
action figure aisle, for my birthday.

the 12th Century figurine from Veliky Novgorod is abstract & thin as the *gromoviti znaci*, or "thunder marks" his people carve in roof beams & transoms to ward him off.

Marvel trumps the Greeks, as the Greeks outshone adjacent Versions—other Euro patriarchs with meagre graphics, scant triumphs, poorer patrons.

the image of a god is a Victor's propaganda. the Victor is the team with the next FX, with a crack team of Hollywood script doctors.

"The Jews control Hollywood"—so small a notion, so parochial!

the Abrahamic narrative, the Biblical mythos, has *totally* taken over!

Yahweh's face is everywhere: in svelter form, his youthful wayward Avatar.

your Hardcore History

the Rape of Nanking, the sieges of Baghdad—your Military History, the Dynasty of violence, i'm sick of it!

i hate it for i fear you are *correct*.

i pine for relief from your Hardcore History by a long pleasant
Dream: a history of Ideas, a summer re-read of the Copleston
volumes.

relief from your war-nerd Podcast! the truth is not far from
what you tell, i believe! a lineage of travesties.

my hitherto focus on a lineage of poets, on the secret holy Legislators, ha—*exactly* what they want from me, the Argentine junta. Masters of the ever-new, still-same, Coup.

they let me dote & doddle, on Release. they let me have my poetry. ever since the hour that i said it on repeat: *it's yours, all yours.* condition of them taking their electrodes off my feet.

consumerism a pacification campaign

how to slo the warring hordes who burnt thru Eurasia—the
carnivores who left a road of skulls in their wake—

but to *fatten* them!

War at last is over—for you're dozey, overfed.

you never diagnosed yourselves, never rooted out the inner killer.

they buffer you with grease bags, unhorse you with a ludicrous ass.

they hypnotize the killer with a spectacle of death, a reiterating rite—e.g. the mobster telenovela.

i *love* these high condos they confine you to. i'm glad for HBO
and for clickable dinners, for they wean you from the rape.

you're full of cheese from cows pumped with estrogen, for ball-
shrink. you sink into your sofa, going soft, half-asleep.

fascism is quiet now

in early days, rallies were required. stadiums to amplify the screaming.

parades were required, a hundred thousand bodies in a physical array so to simulate a neural Organon.

the 1930s rallies show a people getting amped for the *coming* fascist unity: our own Age, the Info Age.

powered by amphetamines, the speeches miked & televised, the Deutschland rallies were a test for the global form we find ourselves inside of.

the screaming was a call for connectivity! now that we are soldered quite precisely, our chant is non-required, is a hindrance to the info free-flowing—neurode to neurode in the network all abuzz of its own accordance.

ours is more subtle—it doesn't need we notice it. it doesn't need we scream its name, and shapes us with a finer nootropic.

the scream would only let it into air—would indicate a wire loose, poking thru the fibre insulation.

would draw down repair.

Lockdown has been hard, so the vaccine relieves us.

likewise all this microtyping: awkward for these manhands, but Android now offers me a one-click response, and they tempt me to reduce me to a mean communication.

Y just texted to explain her dropped call:

Sorry just as I was calling I took a wipe out on the lawn and Uber was also pulling up and tried to help me. Bad timing to fall sorry.

Android has me ready, with a smiley face:

No Worries!

she needn't say sorry, so i ought not forgive! but i did because i didn't feel like dealing with my thumbs, how insensitive.

in fact she hurt her knee, but i followed up the happy face, guiltily, with this:

is your ass okay?

this is more *polite*, more loving!

a Chomsky need keep record

the techniques of Bibliography are tiresome to me.

i sincerely seek: a forum to perform where i may flout careful scholarship, be *praised* for this by lazing cognoscenti in the comment-scroll.

yet i see thru the haze of my hash pipe: a Chomsky need keep record of exactly *where* he read it—the State Dept memo that ends U.S. hegemony.