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Apologia: in defence (ἀπολογία).
I write to you today of courage. In so doing, I realise full well the deep recoil against this word, this concept, this fortified intelligence – one that implies at the very core of its clarion call, a dreaded return to ‘will’ or to the metaphysics of ‘truth’ or to ‘good and evil’, the ‘individual’, not to mention ‘humanism’, supposedly long dead and buried with all honours due, but now, possibly, to be exhumed and thrown in the face of its cousin-by-a-second-marriage: the lovely and pristine ‘post-human’. A careful set of bread crumbs must be laid out, for our task is too urgent and the stakes too high for anyone of us to fall victim to misguided cynicism, ivory tower intellectualism or good, old-fashioned mediocrity. In the end you may still scurry somewhere else for your philosophic-analytic, post-metaphysical nourishment. You may still misread the signs; you may still cling to vacant facts, rotted histories, arcane fantasies. Perhaps this cannot be helped. Nevertheless, the stubborn persistence of collective inertia and its silent partner, fear, cannot be underestimated. The increased militarised presences that dot the landscapes of city-states not always ‘technically’ at war, but...
become more commonplace by the nano-second, girded by racist hatreds, increasing misogynies, homophobia and small. Glaciers are melting, whole swathes of fauna, flora, insect, cephalopod, species large and small, are dying. With equally strident pronouncements ranging from ‘the end of history’ to ‘the end of democracy’ to ‘the end of the world’, a paradigm shift is underway; has been underway.

Let us make no excuse, then. It is time for a certain kind of courage.

I shall set out my stall in the long-standing tradition of those who have gone before, and declare forthwith that what follows is not a conviction, a standpoint, an opinion or whim. Neither is it emotional hyperbole, false consciousness, madness or the perfunctory navel gazing of the self-absorbed, though from time to time, these remarks may have to cannibalise all of the above, and more. As will become clearer, this ethical demand, this call for the ‘courage to matter’ marks out a double move. On the one hand, it is nothing more nor less to begin with than a re-staging of an onto-epistemology, one that prises the contemporary analytic ‘how’, ‘that’, ‘when’ and ‘where’ away from the worn-out universalisms of Western metaphysics towards the multiversal, sticky cohesions of our euphemistically phrased age of intelligence and managed risk. On the other hand, it is a critical rapprochement linking the making of sense (literally, the producing of sense – common, spiritual, cognitive, erotic, logical or perhaps something not yet invented) with the exponential proliferation of information and increasingly wild, co-evolving forms of matter. The first slice of the double move thus concerns the way in which method matters, both materially and consequentially. The second slice turns not only to foregrounding the critical importance of creative practice, and with it, the foregrounding of the ‘arts and humanities’, but does so by dragging the Enlightenment of the 18th – 20th century into the 21st. The problems pulling that particular cargo into our contemporary ‘now’ are of course legendary. But given the rapid rise of autonomous systems that seem to find succour in every knowledge configuration other than those emanating from the arts and humanities, it is time to peer into the abyss.

So let us take the plunge.
Michel Foucault

In the next section, Foucault opens his 1978-79 Lectures on the Birth of Biopolitics with this seemingly benign request: picture for a moment that universals do not exist. What would be the meaning of objectivity, speculation, prediction – indeed assumptions about life itself – if one were to cast aside or ignore completely universal logics? For universals, and the metaphysics to which they are attached, have for centuries the cunning gift to enable production (that is to say, invention, discovery, circulation) of meaning in such a way that it can be held to be ‘true’ (objective) irrespective of time, place, ethnicity, identity politics, religion, class, the weather or mass insanity. Its ‘truth’ cannot be reduced to its sign, to its literal function or its instrumental use value.

One of the most provocative and important aspects of this kind of logic is that it can embed the dynamism of change as its core feature irrespective of time, place, ethnicity, identity politics, religion, class, the weather or mass insanity. Its ‘truth’ cannot be reduced to its sign, to its literal function or its instrumental use value. Drawing a limit.

serendipity

[Serendip: a word invented by horace walpole, an 18th century english writer and art historian who in a letter referred to a persian fairy tale called ‘the three princes of serendip’, the princes, he told his correspond- ent, were ‘always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of’. Serendip is the old name for sri lanka (ceylon), hence sarandib by arab traders. the word has been exported into many other languages, with the general meaning of ‘unexpected dis- covery’ or ‘fortunate chance’]

The problem ensuring move- ment would be the expression of the logic can be situated as far back as Heraclitus and his famous example of trying to ascertain the relation between flow and its instan- taneous expression as logos. See: Heraclitus (2020 [500 BCE]), Frag- ments; translated by Brooks Hauman, (Middlesex: Pen- guin). This became more centrally a part of the philo- sophic discourse via Kant and his proposition of two main ‘systems’ - the mathematical dynamical and the dialectic. Hegel insisted that there could be only one logic, outside of which, nothing existed. The key, then, was to figure out how to com- prehend and make space, analytically and practically, for movement. This was particularly important for any political theo- rist/philosopher (Marx et al), since it was a way to acknowledge and develop human agency as a driving force for change. For an important summary of this development, see the landmark work by Sheldon Wolin (2004 [1960]), Politics and Vision, Princeton, (New Jersey: Prince- ton University Press), especially Chapters XI-XIII, 393-494.

In the next section, I will briefly situate the critical move of ‘sublation’ as a way to avoid obvious issues with tautology. But for a thorough romp through the rough and tumble of the complex dialectical move to “all thing- nhood”, cf G.W.F. Hegel ([1807]), ‘Prelace: On Scientif- ic Cognition’ and ‘Introduction’, in his The Phenom- enology of Spirit, translated by A.V. Miller, especially 918-536, 10-21; and Parts A: Conscious- ness, 972-916, 47-103, and B: Self-Conscious- ness, 916-6-346, 103-210. As Hegel puts it: 3345-346: ‘…[All thinghood]… conceals from itself the disgracefulness of the irrational, crude thought, which takes a bone for the reality of self-consciousness and whitewashes that thought by unthinkingly mix- ing up with it all sorts of relations of cause and effect, of “sign”, “organ”, etc, which are meaningless here… the organ of its highest fulfilment, the organ of gener- ation [is reduced with] the organ of unation…” 102-3.
At the heart of this pluralised, onto-epistemological move, our rather complex limit, shape-shifts into a dynamic void, the strange logical counterfactual, also known, conveniently, as ‘the excluded middle’. Its exclusion is a logical necessity, a required non-existent surface keeping apart by keeping together, the abstract ‘here and now’ with its (also abstract) ‘not-here and not-now’ underside. Together-forever, they form their own cohesive, sticky, hell of unified contradiction. This is the strange ‘alive-but-not-alive’ moment around which change is rooted within the universal. For the sake of brevity, picture if you will, a sheet of paper. On the one side can be called ‘thesis’; on the other, its point for point ‘not-side’ or ‘antithesis’. If that paper is crushed or pulled apart, the one side will not of course run to keep up with the other side; nor will it lose its grip and be flung off the page. They are cohered together-forever in a permanent ‘imaginary-real’ plurality; that is, they are cohered together as our infamous ‘excluded middle’.

As we are not yet in the postmodernist playground, neither the one nor the other ‘side’ can shapeshift and sit together on the ‘same’ side, as it were. Now, say we were to stretch that little excluded middle it in every direction. In this move, the here-now || not-here-not-now could take on the garments of a whole (non-existent but necessary) infinite surface or plane. Of course if the analytic were to complete itself at this point, one would not be able to generate the supposed uniqueness of self-consciousness, identity, not to mention the fullness of knowledge, beyond a crude and circular binaric tautology of ‘thesis’ being understood only in relation to what it is not. Thus, and in order to become fully universal (that is, ‘concrete’ or ‘graspable’ – both as in comprehensible and inhabitable – the so-called ‘really-real’), the requirement of ‘a something’ would have to be supplemented to the logic. But – and here’s the rub - this ‘something’, in its ‘somethingness’, would have to be able to be ‘a something’ without adding anything extra to the argument; no weight nor space nor time to the movement. To put this slightly differently, ‘a something’ would need to be added in order to make the universal fully ‘here and now’, and to do so without the necessity for consent, agreement or obligation. Concurrently and irrespective of this ability ‘to be’ (without being) and ‘to move’ (without moving), this necessary supplement is closer

**system** [ˈsɪstm]

18th c version: ‘a system is nothing more than the arrangement of the different elements of an art or a science in an order that makes them mutually dependent; the primary elements lead to and account for the final ones. Those which explain the others are called principles, and the system is all the more perfect as the principles are fewer in number: it is even to be desired that they be reduced to one.’ (Diderot).

21st c version: the logic of cohesion, that which names ‘stickiness’, ‘movement’, the ‘what comes next.’
Amusingly, Slavoj Žižek, amongst others, positions the logic of an excluded middle as sine-qua-non for the ‘impossibility of heterosexuality’ or rather, to be more damningly ridiculous, as the necessity for heterosexuality, despite (or because of) the fact heterosexualuality can never be ‘reconciled’. Writing in relation to the Lacanian notion of trauma, Žižek concludes: “And this brings us to the crucial point... The parallax gap between masculine and feminine positions, the two inconsistent ways to cope with—or, rather, to assume—the trauma of the impossibility of sexual relationship, is unconditional; there is no third way. Of course, our position is not determined by biology (a biological man can assume a feminine position) [sic] but the choice is unconditional: there is no ‘biosexuality’ here; the gap is parallactic; one position excludes the other, which is why one pre-cisely should not invoke ‘the human subject as such, the unconsciously bisexual subject for whom sexual difference is only ever an incomplete, unsatisfactory solution to the failure of the [hetero]sexual relation’. Cf: https://zizek.uk/reply-to-my-critics-part-two-re-the-sexual-is-political/. The problem of ‘false consciousness’, including its epistemological arrival from the logics of ‘deep cut’ is best dispatched by Antonio Gramsci’s ‘Relation between science, religion and common sense,’ Prison Notebooks, 326–36. But see also the work of many mid-to-late 20th century artists and philosophers including for example Frida Kahlo’s Self Portrait in the Bathtub (1940) or Lee Krasner’s Milkweed.

Despite these glaring issues, the ‘deep cut’ / ‘excluded middle’ offers an important epistemological advance over logics that attempt to bring in ‘movement’ or ‘change’ as a simple directional chronology (born, live, die) or simple teleological unfoldings (goal informs every stage of the process which, in its ‘informing’, circles back to establish the purpose or ‘start’). But once we move into the realm of the dialectical ‘excluded middle’, the limit not only names a ‘start’ without resorting to a linearity of time or tautology of the referent, it activates the moment of ‘the adding of nothing’ mentioned earlier. It thus makes inhabitable, grasurable, comprehensible, the ‘present’, here-which ‘doves back around’ to form the ‘ground’.

Let us recap, briefly. The limit being addressed here is a never-ending ‘abyss’ or ‘deep cut’ (the ‘excluded middle’), an infinite imaginary-real plane stretching in every direction at once. Interestingly, it is often the stuff of misguided political agency or as a wrongly understood transitional place of otherness (or just: Other). Seemingly meant to name or indicate a kind of safe non-place where one could possibly ‘exist’ as neither as an x [thesis] nor a y [anti-thesis], it is or might be understood as a something-yet-to-come or not-yet-invented. For others – theorists and activists alike – this move seems to enable an equally irritating set of conclusions: for example, that one’s desire can never be reached or is weighted down by ‘false consciousness’; or that the phallocentric Logos [thesis/antithesis], with its required feminine position (or because of) the male can assume a masculine role (a biological woman can assume a masculine position) [sic] but the choice is unconditional; there is no ‘biosexuality’ here; the gap is parallactic; one position excludes the other, which is why one precisely should not invoke ‘the human subject as such, the unconsciously bisexual subject for whom sexual difference is only ever an incomplete, unsatisfactory solution to the failure of the [hetero]sexual relation’. Cf: https://zizek.uk/reply-to-my-critics-part-two-re-the-sexual-is-political/. The problem of ‘false consciousness’, including its epistemological arrival from the logics of ‘deep cut’ is best dispatched by Antonio Gramsci’s ‘Relation between science, religion and common sense,’ Prison Notebooks, 326–36. But see also the work of many mid-to-late 20th century artists and philosophers including for example Frida Kahlo’s Self Portrait in the Bathtub (1940) or Lee Krasner’s (1955) Milkweed.

The problem of epistemological or ‘deep cut’ / ‘excluded middle’ offered to the Lacanian notion of trauma, Žižek concludes: “And this brings us to the crucial point... The parallax gap between masculine and feminine positions, the two inconsistent ways to cope with—or, rather, to assume—the trauma of the impossibility of sexual relationship, is unconditional; there is no third way. Of course, our position is not determined by biology (a biological man can assume a feminine position) [sic] but the choice is unconditional: there is no ‘biosexuality’ here; the gap is parallactic; one position excludes the other, which is why one precisely should not invoke ‘the human subject as such, the unconsciously bisexual subject for whom sexual difference is only ever an incomplete, unsatisfactory solution to the failure of the [hetero]sexual relation’. Cf: https://zizek.uk/reply-to-my-critics-part-two-re-the-sexual-is-political/. The problem of ‘false consciousness’, including its epistemological arrival from the logics of ‘deep cut’ is best dispatched by Antonio Gramsci’s ‘Relation between science, religion and common sense,’ Prison Notebooks, 326–36. But see also the work of many mid-to-late 20th century artists and philosophers including for example Frida Kahlo’s Self Portrait in the Bathtub (1940) or Lee Krasner’s (1955) Milkweed.

Of passing interest: teleological movement (dialectical or otherwise) was unceremoniously rejected by Deleuze and Guattari as ‘unreal philosophy’. This damnation of tree-root-path epistemology translates thus: An acorn, should it be gardened properly will require say dirt, water, sun. If this goes to plan, the acorn will unfold accordingly to become an Oak. Thus ‘Oak’ gives meaning/purpose to the start and movement (growth) of the acorn. Step sideways from this: let us say that ‘child’ needs water, sun, shelter, protection (ectoeteria or equivalent) and will unfold to become ‘Man’. ‘Man’ thus gives ‘purpose’ and clarity to the path of the child’s development. This may seem harmless, until one confronts the logic with real issues, for example: slavery. A child is born into slavery, and will ipso facto unfold to become an Adult Slave, the meaning of which will in form his/her/their existence. Refusing this subject, is to ‘not know one’s place’ (font of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and etc). Of course it gets more complicated if, say, the acorn wishes no longer to become an Oak, but say, a Maserati car! – a point we will return to momentarily. But see, Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, (2013 [1980]) ‘Tree - Rhizome,’ A Thousand Plateaus, Bloomsbury, 3-15.

Let us recap, briefly. The limit being addressed here is a never-ending ‘abyss’ or ‘deep cut’ (the ‘excluded middle’), an infinite imaginary-real plane stretching in every direction at once. Interestingly, it is often the stuff of misguided political agency or as a wrongly understood transitional place of otherness (or just: Other). Seemingly meant to name or indicate a kind of safe non-place where one could possibly ‘exist’ as neither as an x [thesis] nor a y [anti-thesis], it is or might be understood as a something-yet-to-come or not-yet-invented. For others – theorists and activists alike – this move seems to enable an equally irritating set of conclusions: for example, that one’s desire can never be reached or is weighted down by ‘false consciousness’; or that the phallocentric Logos [thesis/antithesis], with its required feminine ‘lack’ [excluded middle/vagina] can never be reconciled; or that this abyssal logic is nought but the expression of a bottomless trauma. Despite these glaring issues, the ‘deep cut’ / ‘excluded middle’ offers an important epistemological advance over logics that attempt to bring in ‘movement’ or ‘change’ as a simple directional chronology (born, live, die) or simple teleological unfoldings (goal informs every stage of the process which, in its ‘informing’, circles back to establish the purpose or ‘start’). But once we move into the realm of the dialectical ‘excluded middle’, the limit not only names a ‘start’ without resorting to a linearity of time or tautology of the referent, it activates the moment of ‘the adding of nothing’ mentioned earlier. It thus makes inhabitable, graspable, comprehensible, the ‘present’, here-which ‘doves back around’ to form the ‘ground’.
tofore but an abstract deep cut or abyss. It does this, in part, via the process of sublation (Aufhebung). A rather logically neat party trick, where the abstract ‘here-now’ comes into existence by simultaneously swallowing, lifting, cannibalising, inhaling (picture whatever visual metaphor is needed to grasp this odd move), it’s point-for-point ‘not-here-not-now’. Its synthetic unity is expressed (vomited, percolated... again, if required, chose a visual metaphor) in such a way that its subsequent logical moment both expresses the plurality of this new synthetic unity without destroying the discreet abstractions which has been sublated (swallowed, inhaled, cannibalised).

Picture it this way: the abstract face of, say, the ‘all there is’ – let’s call this ‘the wet’ – is swallowed/ lifted/ cannibalised into the abstract face of the ‘all there is not’ – let’s call this ‘the not-wet’. Now, from this move either the fully formed ‘concrete’ concept ‘Wet’ will emerge, which, in its synthetic unity, will teleologically unfold (that is, in its most simple imaging: ‘come back around’) to give meaning to both ‘sides’ of the initial excluded middle. Equally possible: the fully formed concept of ‘Dry’ will emerge which will teleologically ‘come back around’ to give meaning to both sides. Here the sublated movement of the ‘excluded middle’ also (and crucially) imbues the whole process with a kind of ‘air’ or ‘openness’ (analytically speaking: with a kind of negation) which can take on specific political, social, aesthetic and ethical agency depending on a variety of factors. To put this perhaps more clearly, let us say that rather than name the abstract thesis ‘wet’, we name it instead as the abstract thesis: ‘bourgeoisie’; and rather than name its antithesis ‘not-wet’, we name its point-for-point connected abstract ‘not-side’: the ‘proletariat’. The one is sublated into the other (which one ‘depends’ on a variety of factors). Let us say that their synthetic unity in its sublated form expresses, in its movement, the capitalist relations of production.

technology [tekˈnɒləʤi]
the logic of the grasp (techne), having little or nothing to do with ‘machines’ and more to do with the ‘how’ or ‘mode’ of the event, any event.


It would not be too far a stretch to recall at this point, Marx and Engels’s famous dictum, “Workers of the World Unite! There is nothing to lose but your chains!” For in order to end capitalism, in order to completely overthrow the system would require at the very least one side dropping out of the historical-materialist dialectic. Either ‘side’ could do this, but clearly it would not be in the interests of the Bourgeoisie to leave the table. Cf Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848), The Communist Manifesto at http://activismman ifesto.org/assets/ original-commu nist-manifesto.pdf
This mode of production teleologically unfolds (in the lay sense, ‘comes back around’) and forms the basis or ground of the Bourgeoisie | | Proletariat contradiction now made ‘real’, ‘graspable’, materially able literally to ‘make sense’. This is another tiny step towards the materiality of thought in such a way that is graspable no matter where or when or how the approach is made.

At the same time, the synthetic moment unfolds (in the lay sense, ‘comes back around’) to provide the ‘ground’ to our initially uninhabitable present (the start). Moreover and equally impressive, it points to the direction of the ‘what comes next’. We have before us, a move toward ‘certainty’, ‘prediction’, move/ment full of contradiction, intensity, plurality. To be clear: the excluded middle, now given the garments of sublation, synthetic unities and teleological unfoldings, is able to kick-start the ‘what comes next’ without positing an external Archimedean point (observer, God, The Truth, instrumental reason, signpost, map).

To recap once more then: this synthetic unity, formally speaking, requires as its starting point an ‘excluded middle’. This ‘excluded middle’ is a ‘limit’ better understood as a deep abyss, one that can never be inhabited or made ‘real’ but, on the other hand is always-already ‘plural’ inasmuch as it is an oddly catheted ‘thing-no-thing’. It allows for (makes room for) both the ‘start’ and its grounding, a ground which is, in itself, inherently changeable.\(^{11}\)

Concrete conceptual truth or meaning of a thing (‘any’ thing, be it a system, a mode of production, a poem, an acorn, ideology or law) presents a form of knowability that in its total ‘synthetic unity’ is fully graspable in and of itself. Its meaning requires no outside or Other. It is fully universal. Its changing foundations, in its movement, remain open, real, accessible. In this move, any and all things past, present, not yet born or invented, entail, at their very moment of coming into existence: movement/ change/ alterability/ contradiction. In the positing, point-for-point, an abstract ‘other’ (the ‘not-thesis’/anti-thesis) in relation to ‘thesis’, we have a strange doubling, a contradiction of the X in mortal stickiness with its not-X ‘other’. Neither thesis, nor antithesis can be pried apart; nor can either shapeshift to be on the same ‘side’. As mentioned earlier, they are forever locked in a permanently indivisible, plurally-sided (thesis/ antithesis) abyssal cohesion.

\(^{11}\) Cf Jean Luc Nancy (2002), Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
Most importantly for our purposes here comes this startling consequence: this strange plurality-limit, this odd ‘excluded middle’ and the dialectical move to which it gives expression (knowledge, direction, ethics) also admits a complex notion of time and space. This sense of time is one that moves away from the chronological towards an ‘as always-already’ non-inhabitable moment called ‘the present,’ a continuous-plural-instant stretching in all dimensions at once. It also re-asserts spatiality as an abstract movement (the no-thing) which, in its no-thing/no-where movement, embodies the unfolding path of the (also non-inhabitable) ‘here’ and the ‘there’, simultaneously. Taken together, we have our first glimpse of a speculative onto-epistemological materialism: fluid, but sticky; drawing a limit, but infinite; subjective but objective. A strange kind of limit, this ‘excluded middle’ / ‘deep cut’ state of affairs. Perhaps this is but a small price to pay given the benefits – for it promises to deliver a synthetic unity that, in its multi-dimensional movement, grounds the whole of reality without leaving anything out (except of course the ‘excluded middle’ or eternal ‘in between’ of the present). There is no extraneous entity, magician or being (God, an army, the avant-garde) required to create or be responsible for movement, history, change. There is no ‘interior’ or ‘exterior’ supposition; no taking as a given that which needs to be proven. With no privileging of various forms of circular reasoning or appeal to an outside authority or model, there is a reliance on critical reason, creative practice.

Most importantly, that which is understood to be objective is itself – its dimensionally pluralised ‘self’ – imbued with the speculative spatio-temporal, creative moment of change. In this sense, universality could underscore human sensuousness and reason, alongside collective organisational agency. We return to this point later in the text, but for now two points must be underscored: In its classical liberalist manifestation, this ‘objective-dimensionally-pluralised self’ underwrites the role of reason, the rise of the individual, the separation of Church and state, the enshrinement into law habeas corpus. In its classical Marxist manifestation, it accentuates the role of the political as expressly critical sensuous activity with an emphasis on human participation in making change happen, now. Rather than relegating it (change) to a teleological movement of the unfolding, it accentuates ever useful abyss in order to make meaning manifest. At a time when one scrambles to be political whilst simultaneously attempting to move away from the anthropocene; at a time when one is attempting to do this by putting front and centre: art, the art object, not to mention subjective ‘objectivity’ in the age of ephemeral new ‘materialisms’, one can understand the (fatal) attraction. Cf: Graham Harman (2018), Object Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything, (Mid- dlesex: Penguin Books). See also a more politically astute account by artist and philoso- pher, Katherine Be- har (2016), Object Oriented Feminism, Minnesota: Univer- sity of Minnesota Press).
the 'getting of one's hands dirty', as Sartre might say, the active social battle to make (as in wilfully produce, create) a better material world, hard fought as those with power usually do not give it up, willingly.

One could say, as did Marx, that this was (is) nothing less than revolution getting a leg over an otherwise and forever unfolding, evolution. In this sense, too, change would not (and does not) happen by wishing and hoping and watching the clouds roll by. As Marx so clearly put it in his Theses on Feuerbach, "Philosophers have for so long interpreted the world; the point is, to change it."

One might well ask: what's not to like?

As it turns out, quite a lot. Let us turn to one last totalising approach to knowledge to understand more fully what is, urgently, at stake.

**The 'excluded other'.**

As every first year student of politics knows, the most elementary law of political science states there will always be leaders and led, rulers and ruled. A skilled leader/political party, social movement, will 'know' this, and will proceed accordingly, organising around the binaric principle of 'friend v. enemy', the totality of which exhausts the whole of the field. Usually referred to as the 'zero-sum game' for obvious reasons, any forward movement can only be understood as a threat to one's security and well-being; one's gain is the other's loss, and vice versa. If successful, this rather familiar division neatly allows for a set of allegiances to be ingrained in such a way (usually via fear or threat or mocked innuendo) that those who see themselves in Group A (say 'friends') will not assume that there are any common interests with Group B ('enemies'), nor should there be, ever. Importantly, the rhetoric of the zero-sum game also presents by implication or as a non-provable, usually apocryphal 'truth' that the spatial horizon (property, values, riches, cultural freedoms, art) will be diminished precisely if/when a forward movement is initiated by the 'opposing' group and gains momentum.

To bring this point into an obvious contemporary moment, one could reasonably conclude that the ability to separate off, encircle to safety and simultaneously build one's 'side' away from a so-called evil or


Karl Marx (1962 [1845]), "Theses on Feuerbach, first listed as an end to his wig Feuerbach."

Hans Sedlmayr (2020), Zero Sum Game: Cas Russell 1, (Tor Books UK).

Antonio Gramsci (1997 [1929-37]), "Elements of Politics", in his Selections from the Prison Notebooks, translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 144. This critical point is developed with much greater precision in his astute reflections on Machiavelli's "The Prince."

threatening ‘other’ presents itself/itselfs under a variety of political guises: protectionism, ‘making X great again’, nationalism, free trade, Brexit, identity politics and even (or especially) populism. In short, an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ binaric vision of social life, the totality, of which, when taken together, exhausts the whole of the world.

In a certain sense, this elementary ‘first principle’ of leaders and led finds its equivalent in the infamous ‘law of physics’, whereby two objects cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Wrongly attributed to Newton, this seemingly ‘iron law’ has insinuated itself into modern contemporary politics and aesthetics, not to mention, military strategy. In the version adopted by artists and non-artists alike, often one finds ‘artistic practice’ consigned to the nebulous-fuzzy-soft realm of feeling, emotion, intuition, pleasure, pitted against (or at least utterly distinct from) the deeply logical-hard-sci- enza realm of reason and rationality, stiff upper lip, furrowed brow and the like. Taken together, these realms express the whole of the field (intellectual and practical). But should ‘the soft’ move in such a way as to crash into ‘the hard’ (assuming the hard is raging towards the soft with exactly the same furore), either the hard would be flattened or become soft (or vice versa) or both would be destroyed on im- pact. In the version adopted by State/military strategy, particularly up until and including the great World Wars, though today more closely aligned with urban-turf wars and certain team sports, we find two sides gathering on the battlefield (street, scrimmage line), facing each other and commencing their shooting/slicing/mutilating at point-blank range. Victory is often empiric.

Zero-sum can also be played with a bit of a twist, a twist that features heavily in game theory and has remained one of the most important features of military strategy since the start of the Cold War. Known as the Nash Equilibrium in gaming and as MAD (Mutually Assured De-struction) in international defence treaties, it names the state of the union when the players consider how their individual actions of ‘today’ will prompt, in all probability, the destruction of their respective futures. That both sides recognise there will be assured destruction, an equilibrium is formed and is supposedly held indefinitely. One of the most well-known versions of the Nash Equilibrium occurred in 1962 as Israel’s nuclear arsenal did not prevent attacks from Egypt in 1973. Nuclear prolif-eration does not rule out chances of war. ‘Weapons, and ‘peace’ do not belong in the same breath.”

with the Cuban missile crisis. Here the Soviet Union placed missiles in Cuba pointing directly at the US. Had the US attacked the Soviet Union, there would have been assured destruction on both sides. The brinkmanship came when President Kennedy ordered a blockade as a show of (minimal) force. Here one finds nations agreeing to build up their nuclear (and other) arsenals but, in so doing, step away from pressing the nuclear ‘button’ since that particular option might/would ‘assure’ the launching of the target nation’s arsenal in return. In the contemporary context of autonomous systems and artificial intelligences especially in relation to the human, there is the not too dissimilar echo: all players are seemingly caught in an apocalyptic, out of control, zero-sum game to the death (of humanity), with the view that if one can somehow input ‘trust’ or ‘governmentality’ into the algorithmic code, potentially an ‘equilibrium’ may form, indefinitely. We will return to this point imminently.

In any case, the zero-sum ‘excluded other’ game admits to two critical issues for an ontic-epistemological move. First, it takes on a kind of (superficial/surface) unreal-real materiality, though with none of the sophistication of the plurally-dimensional abyssal versions as earlier discussed. Second, the zero-sum ‘excluded other’ shape-shifts much like a parasite might do: large and swollen after feeding; shrunken and withered and in need of a fix after the game is done or nearing completion. In a certain sense, it (the zero sum game) operates as a kind of mytho-poetic but with a sting in its tail: at times it (say, Group A) may shape-shift and turn into a counterfactual, presenting its wares ‘as if’ true so as to galvanize its host (also Group A) to do the opposite. This is the preferred mode for most political theory writers from Hobbes to Locke to Rousseau, for example. More recently, it is also the preferred mode for certain political leaders and their led. Sometimes it (say, Group B) galvanises clearly unsubstantiated and overtly ‘false’ claims, almost up to the point of lying (or even lying) and goads itself (again, Group B) to carry the torch, often in a frenzied, daring or bullying manner towards anyone in the ‘opposite’ group (in this case, Group A). Taunts to hold their (Group A’s) ground or beat a hasty retreat mount. That Group A might resort to the use of something as lightweight as logic or reason or direct witnessing or the rule of law to dispel the onslaught of these ever proliferating ‘alternative facts’ only seems instead to act as flammable fodder for their (Group B) poor imitation of Rousseau’s ethical demand – whose anger was aimed at creating a better, collective and rational empathy – this version veers towards a ‘trust no one / everyone for themselves’ policy whose mass hoarding approach to a ‘state of nature’ (read, little or no government) comes with the added promise or guarantee of ‘trust’ embedded as core feature to its algorithmic coding. As mentioned, we will return to this point imminently, but see for example: Evan Gilman and Doug Barth (2017), Zero Trust Networks: Building Secure Systems in Untrusted Networks, (Beijing/ Boston/Farnham/ Sebastopol: Tokyo: O’Reilly) at https://www. akamai.com/us/en/ multimedia/doc- uments/ebookz/ zero-trust-net- works-ebook.pdf.

See the BBC’s 2017 The Cuban Missile Crisis Declassified Nuclear Warfare Documentary Films, one of the best documentaries on the Cuban missile at: https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=qM7uaGfrkQ4.

"The importance of the counter-factual in political theory/political philosophy is legendary and yet rather understated. Hobbes, for example, postulated that civil society must emerge in order to protect people from ‘the State of Nature’, which was, famously, ‘savage, nasty, brutish and short’. In order to get out of the State of Nature, our forefathers ‘agreed’ to give up their liberty for protection. This agreement is called the Social Contract (also mythical, though one’s status as ‘citizen’ makes it a bit more real). Locke, in his Two Treatises, postulated a State of Nature as primarily ‘good’, but having a few ‘bad apples’ which poisoned the group, thus making it crucial to join civil society (in order both to protect and preserve liberty). Of course this only applied to those who had ‘a stake in society’ (i.e., property holders), though, interestingly, having a stake in society entitled one, also, to have ownership of their own person/body. For those without a ‘stake’, the fight for personhood was of profound importance, up to and including, today. The right to vote, drive, be educated, be treated as equal by law, own property, choose one’s sexuality, take one’s own life, stems in large part to the continuous hard fought, basic ‘inalienable’ right to personhood. Rousseau imagined the State of Nature as beautiful, empathetic, kind. For him it was civil society that was ‘nasty, brutish, solitary and short’, which came about because, as he so wonderfully stated, “The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, thought himself of saying this is mine, and found people stupid enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, ‘Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.’” Jean Jacques Rousseau (2010 [1755]), On the Origin of Inequality, translated by G.D.H. Cole, (London: Everyman Library, 2010), 183.

Today we find a revised version of the classical liberal Social Contract (now fully realisable as the ‘Contract’) – a kind of neo-liberal hyper-linked apocalyptic imaginary-re-taking as its central feature a profound distrust of all things ‘civil society’. A
Fascism is a particularly modern-contemporary beast. It is the ‘perfect storm’ of three moments merging simultaneously: first, when the zero-sum game takes hold in such a way that not only is there an entrenching of the binaric totality, but a growing and sustained consent of the ‘led’ to do so. This critical mass of consent upholds the ‘numbers’ by producing birth certificates, testimony, DNA, law suits often failed to shift this sticky tar-and-shame. The refuting of the falsehoods by producing birth certificates, testimony, DNA, law suits often failed to shift this sticky tar-and-shame.

One size fits all (the really-really-clean-clean of the no-centre, no cry).
includes also telephone, tv, cable, internet, mobile phones, autonomous systems, with an exponentially generated audience that may not even realise it is ‘watching’, or for that matter, being watched.\(^{31}\) This does not mean that technology is the cause of fascism, any more than the cross is the cause of Christianity. What it does mean is that, taken together, these three elements – the consent of the people to throw themselves into the zero-sum game with enthusiasm and pride; the industrial massification and co-current assemblages / circulations of information, alongside the skilled use of media – have enabled a certain kind of toxicity to be created. This toxicity is nothing less than the destruction of truth, a destruction that has the blessing of its followers in a manner that claims current reality/realities are the amalgamation of dirty lies, cheating, and aberrant morality, whilst simultaneously claiming that one person/party holds the ‘really-real’ truth.\(^{32}\) [[A small interjection on the matter of truth – directed to those allergic to the concept, find succour in the phrase ‘there is no such thing as truth (and that’s the truth),’ confuse truth with instrumental reason or the rigid and unchangeable, think that in foregrounding truth one is returning to the old and boring moralities of ‘good vs evil’ or invoking a resuscitation of God or positing some other Archimedean point to secure meaning: Please re-read earlier section on movement/change]].

One additional analytic point needs to be addressed before returning to our ‘floaty yet visceral excluded other materiality and its stickiness.’ It concerns the problem of belonging, and with it, identity and difference, wherein an entire can of worms shall be opened. Here reference is made directly to Heidegger and, in particular, his 1957 onto-theo-logical lectures on metaphysics given at the end of his seminar on Hegel, on the occasion of the 500th year anniversary of the University of Freiburg im Breisgau.\(^{33}\) For Heidegger, the Hegelian dialectic was mortally flawed precisely because of the issue with negation and the excluded middle. At the same time, the binaric ‘zero-sum’ game was for him painfully limited, not the least of which because, in losing the centre altogether, it could not address the vital aspect of ‘techne’ and its poetic logic as core to the birth of 20th century authenticity. For Heidegger, the ‘logic of techne’ or more to the point ‘technology’ would have nothing to do with machines as

\(^{31}\) See the incisive analysis of Cambridge Analytica’s data harvesting and the rise of the floating personality without the human person, so much the font of neo-liberalism by Katherine Behar (21 Mar 2018), Personalities without People, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_yU8r-RiKoA


\(^{33}\) Martin Heidegger (2002 [1957]), Identity and Difference, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). As with any translation, there is always something lost and something found in the move. This is particularly true of the English translations of Heidegger. His original texts are legendary tombs of arcane and flowery old-school German, but the English versions are often spared this underlying thread quite obviously appearing in the German; to wit, the search for an authentic people or race. Debates have of course raged as to whether his Nazism ‘did not matter’ or was ‘soft’ or ‘hardwired’ into in his fundamental works, a point Heidegger himself definitely cleared up when his deeply anti-Semitic Black Notebooks were recently found and published. See Martin Heidegger (2016 [1931-38]), Ponderings II-VI: The Black Notebooks, translated by Richard Rojcewicz, (Minneapolis: Indiana University Press). It should be noted that there was much outrage at the Freiburg lecture as it was anticipated Heidegger would apologize for his Nazism, but no apology was forthcoming. See also Jean François Lyotard (1990), Heidegger and ‘the Jews’, translated by Andreas Richards and Mark Roberts, (Minneapolis: Indiana University Press).
such. As Heidegger railed on in his well-known Questions Concerning Technology, developing the point further in his Identity and Difference lectures: it was all about (1) the ‘grasp’, both as in comprehending and as in reaching out or being pulled toward ‘the there’ (and vice versa, ‘the there’ being pulled toward being); and (2) the fact that the 20th century (for whatever reasons) named an epoch, not unlike had occurred in ancient Greece when, according to Heidegger, this way of ‘grasping’ (in-)formed the whole of reality and provided its framework.¹⁶

This was neatly summed up in the slightly annoying equation borrowed from Parmenides: A = A.¹⁶ On the face of it, the A = A equation does appear to be a simple tautology. On closer inspection, however, it is meant to denote the belonging of A to A; and more than that, a belonging that ‘sticks together’ in such a way as to denote both the attraction of the A’s to each other, whilst, simultaneously, maintain their apartness. To put this slightly differently, one ‘starts’ with the encounter rather than one side or the other. This encounter is a non-intentional moment of cohesion that enables meaning to take shape and to take place. The first step of identity, collective and individual, then, is for Heidegger, belonging, one that articulates the fundamental importance of ‘being-apart-together.’ This assures two aspects: first, that ‘belonging’ denotes a kind of plurality, but one that is no longer constituted by a point-for-point contradiction with its necessary abyssal logics and deep cuts. Second and perhaps most importantly for the discussion here, ‘belonging’, is that to say the ‘=’ names precisely a relational start, one that only exists at the moment of its encounter. This ‘encounter’ can be called ‘dwelling’, ‘clearing’, ‘event’, a kind of visceral materiality that exists without the aid of Cogito, reason or the ego-I as the mark of its intelligibility, primary ‘start’/‘event of appropriation’.³⁴ff.


³⁵ Of course much more ema-
nates from this seemingly simple move including the all-important notion of differ-
ence, re-thought away from its onto-theo-
logic moorings by Deleuze along with many other initially ‘left-leaning’ Hei-
deggerians. See in particular, Gilles Deleuze (2001 [1968], Differ-
ence & Repetition, translated by Paul Patton, (London: Continuum Press). Alternatively, two works by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe: his (1990), Heideg-
ger: Art and Politics. The Fiction of the Political, translated by Chris Turner, (London: Basil Blackwell) and his iconic (1989), Ty-
ography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics, with introduc-

³⁶ “The On-
to-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” in Heidegger: Identity and Difference, 42-
74. For an excellent and detailed anal-
ysis of the life and times of ‘ground-

³⁷ “The On-
⁰

³⁸ “The On-
⁰
of difference: how it mattered, how it must be understood in such a way as to manifest plurality whilst not to be equated with ‘negation’. Most important was the question as to how it could be ‘grounded’ in the present – without positing a ground as such; that is, without the apocalyptic disaster at the analytic level of tying belonging to the very entity Heidegger was seeking to avoid: Otherness. To avoid tying ‘belonging’ to the ‘that which did not belong’ (read: Jew, degeneracy, inauthentic, outsider, modernism, Dada, et al), required, at the epistemological level, a move back to the ontic enframed by a theo-logic, the so-called ‘groundless-ground’. This at least would retain the vitality of difference as both event of appropriation and as immanent site of an inhabitable present – the poetic logic of techne now front and centre, both the site or moment of the being-with-apart-together grasp and the ‘=’ of the that which ‘belonged-together’. For Heidegger, the move to sacrifice the sticky cohesions of difference on the altar of ontic-theo-logics was worth the price of admission.

As it turns out, this is not the only way to approach and incorporate the critical importance of ‘difference’ and the role of its stickiness (though of course in approaching difference, not to mention ‘=’ without its onto-theological Moorings would move in a direction rather irritating for Heidegger). In order to put in place the last piece of the argument, then, perhaps it is best to do so on the back of Oscar Wilde’s wry observation alongside that of T.S. Elliot, paraphrasing ever so slightly: ‘Imitation is a form of flattery, stealing, a form of art.”

Let us now shoplift from the Heideggerian shelf, difference and its sticky companion the ‘=’, and return to Foucault’s ethical demand for a radical understanding of courage, not to mention, matter.

**paradigm swerve, zero ground.**

A little more than a hundred years prior to Foucault’s suggestion to leave the shores of universal logic and all that went along with it, 19th and 20th century physics, chemistry and meta-mathematics had already begun this incredible journey. Here one entered a cornucopia of conceptual delights: trans- or multiversal dimensionailities, light years, ket vectors, simulacra, curved-time, imaginary numbers, dy-

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**translation** [trænsˈleʃən]

‘the language that God speaks,’ philo de alexandria in answer to the question ‘what language does God speak?’ bi-directional where the descriptor and the description are equal/belong/are the same.
Astonishingly, in and around 60BC, the poet Lucretius established a set of principles around infinite edgelessness so contemporary that they would not be out of place alongside the Nobel laureates of today. Entitled De Rerum Natura, this majestic, erotic poem set out the concept of motion as sensuous, infinite folds, flowing in all directions at once. At its core lay a deeply subversive approach to ontology and, indeed, to the laws of nature: this was nothing less than the foregrounding of the multi-dimensional, unexpected and unpredictable movements of matter: grasped in its fullness as ‘the swerve’. It is here, then, surfing the folds of a swerve, where we shall make our next, penultimate, move. It requires a slightly revised ‘picture’.

Imagine the universe as one big fat zero, stretching in all directions at once. We know that this zero is not ‘nothing’ but it is not quite a ‘something’ either. This is because, in stretching out in all directions at once, its knowability is infinite and, in that sense, unintelligible. But supposing this stretch bends at the moment of an encounter. And say that this encounter happens – not because the zero is ‘intentionally’ searching for, say, another zero – like a playmate or a something of some kind to help pass the time or to help make sense of its multi-dimensional not-nothingness – but because there is some kind of attraction. Now, suppose that this attraction can be denoted in some way. It would not be quite correct to suggest that it would look like


One could easily see how ‘worm holes’ might manifest as traversable. Say the ‘future’ was 1000s of light years away from the past. If one could ‘bend’ the future to the past just long enough to pass through before both ‘sides’ flipped back into place, one’s silver spaceship could go from point A to B in the blink of an eye. Much of science fiction from Barbarella to Star Trek to Battleship Galactica commandeers this move. See the playful but incisive Laurence Krauss (1996), The Physics of Star Trek, (New York: Flamingo Press).

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another zero or a bunch of zeroes or a satisfied zero that has swallowed up its attraction. Following the Heideggerian re-think of ‘=’, it might well be denoted as this: $0 \trianglelefteq 0$. Now let us say that when the attraction ‘holds’, even if for a nano-second or less, it could be, for that instant (however long an instant might be or become) denoted/ marked in its entirety as a 1; that is $1 = (0 \trianglelefteq 0)$. And suppose, further, that there is more than just one single attraction and it’s mark. It might look something like this: $0 \trianglelefteq 0 \trianglelefteq 0 = 1 + 0 + 1 + 0 \ldots$ to infinity. There are ‘limits’, there is ‘intelligibility’ but no edges, and, in this sense, no ‘other’ or ‘outside’ – rather like Escher’s famous work of the two hands drawing themselves. This does not mean, of course, that there is no ‘difference’. Indeed, it means precisely that difference ‘exists’ but in the manner of the wild materialities of $0 + 1$’s.

Sometimes it is fair to say that the zero is just that: a zero, neither here nor there (but everywhere all at once). But there are those times, sometimes, when the zero encounters. And sometimes, when that happens, we have a very different way of picturing ‘stickiness’. This is a cohesive stickiness that, depending on the ‘whatever’, sometimes forms a segment (the 1) which enables the swerve to do precisely that: swerve. Sometimes it forms a kind of ‘thick’ surface, stretching in all directions at once (the zero). Sometimes its ‘1’ is also the expression marking both the encounter ($0 \trianglelefteq 0$) but also its moment when the event of encounter is ‘appropriated’. In that case, the 1 is not suggesting a numerical value as in an amount (1 item); it is instead a pluralised ‘1’. In more poetic-art-philosophic phrasing, we can, take up Lyotard’s profound contribution along these lines, where the encounter manifested in all its cohesive stickiness and emerging in all directions at once can be called ‘discourse’; and its segment, marking that event as a pluralised ‘1’, can be (and is), as he calls it, the ‘figural’.**

In his Repetition and Difference, Deleuze put it like this:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can be sensed. [...] It is opposed to recognition. ... It is not an aisthētón [an

** This is not to say that a zero cannot swallow its attraction. If it did, we would have something akin to a ‘black hole’. Cf Marcia Bartusiak (2015), Black Hole: How an Idea Abandoned by Newtonians, Hated by Einstein and Gambled on by Hawking Became Loved, (New Haven: Yale University Press), especially chapter 3 and 46 “One Would Then Find Oneself...in a Geometrical Fairyland,” and “Only its Gravitational Field Persists”, 35-43 and 70-86, respectively.

*** It must be emphasised that $0 \trianglelefteq 0$ is not ‘empty’; nor is it ‘in between’. For some it is closer to ‘the wake’ manifested in racist societies. See the searing work by Christina Sharpe (2016), In the Wake: On Blackness and Being, (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press).

external object of perception) but *aisthēteón* [being of the sensible]... Sensibility, in the presence of that which can only be sensed (and is at the same time imperceptible) finds itself before its own limit, the sign, and raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise: to the "nth" power.  

We have here an entirely different sense of materiality, matter, and indeed, agency. It is one that requires an emphasis on the grasp [as 'comprehending' and as 'techne', simultaneously] of how cohesions take shape, and become 'real' outside of a binaric zero-sum or the metaphysics of flow. We have instead discursive fields, marked by segments of encounter, which in turn establish new forms of horizons, fields, intensities. This seemingly ephemeral mattering enables different forms of agency to arise: distributed, fractal, ana-material. Its datum slips through the folds, are the folds, re-make the folds. These horizons, fields, intensities establish fields of meaning, which in turn shape-shift 'depending' on other encounters, other forms of Os and 1s. Not only does this 'matter' at analytic levels, it matters at all levels. With specific emphasis on making the 'matter' stick, we need one last move.

**The courage to matter.**

Responding to a public request in 1784 by the Berlinische Monatsschrift (the Berlin Monthly) to find a popular (and accessible) answer to the question What is the Enlightenment?, amongst the respondents was Immanuel Kant. Entitled: In answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”, an argument was established that promoted a notion of the individual, at the time a radical notion, which required the throwing out one's 'immaturity' and replacing it with individual reason. This move initiated many logical deductions, including the concept of the radical autonomy of the State a point that Hegel also takes up, with less enthusiasm. Kant's *What is Enlightenment?*, and the vast number of works that followed, foreground many of the earlier classical liberal positions outlined at the outset; that is, the separation of church and State, and the moving away from the Church, in order actively to develop improvements regarding social, political and economic strife. Now Foucault, in his seminal re-think of Kant, suggests that rather than privilege 'reason' as such, one must instead
concentrate on the ‘how’ of exiting; that is, the ‘how’ of exiting from a violent situation or the ‘how’ of exiting from the yoke of oppressive regimes, including the regimes of racism, homophobia, misogyny. This required, nothing less than a concentration on making the ‘how’ real, sticky, cohesive. It required a re-staging of ‘knowledge’ away from individuality per se, and towards a distributed intelligence, one that enables a ‘being-with-together’ as the basis of being ‘human’ and as a basis of the social. This ‘being-with-together’ brings with it a certain kind of **parrhesia**, a certain kind of ‘truth telling’, one rooted in a pluralised form of empathy and care.

This is then to say the following: The digital ‘age’ is not a zero-sum game. It is not inevitable that fascism will emerge or that some form of totalitarianism will continue to engulf and destroy. But in order to avoid this nightmare scenario, it requires an emphasis on ‘making’ in the midst of this movement, circulation and change. This is, in turn, an art: the art of inhabiting, reading and listening to ‘that’ which presents itself in all its present-tense fractalized elsewhere slices: as nodal points, planes of immanences; as events appropriated and made to ‘stick’. It is a foregrounding of the ‘practice-led’, which is nothing less than the art and humanity of a certain kind of techné, and with it, the courage to grasp, in all its oozing, possibly fleeting, possibly entrenched, multi-dimensional surfaces, moveable limits, exponentially proliferating zeroes and ones, in all their cohesive, radical matter.

Wearable technologies at the ready, a new enlightenment is in order. We are now at the moment to do just that. In a certain sense one could say: In the face of adversity, there is nothing wrong with hope. But perhaps we can go one better and enforce the radical matter of that hope, echoing Juno, goddess and protector of the State from idiocy and cruelty. “Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo (If I cannot bend the will of Heaven, I will move Hell).”

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