No Ontological Plebiscite

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Halting the assemblage, slamming the brakes on the axis of time, derailing without the lubrication or ergonomic smoothness we might still wish to demand from matter: after ingesting so many strata of text, after saturating our cortical circuits with centuries of accumulated literature, we find ourselves biomechanically unable to couple with reality under the protocol that so-called normality prescribes as healthy, functional, or habitable. Yet in the raw exposure of that saturation our sensory apparatus has undergone an irreversible recalibration. We have learned to decode the spectral music spat out by cheap plastic speakers, the precarious vibration of the synthetic membrane; we have learned to operate in the interstices, to lock our gaze onto graphemes until we pierce their crust and charge them with an intensity that overflows, infinitely beyond molar meaning, whatever the word claims to enunciate when domesticated into a whole. Like Cy Twombly, we have dragged the sign into the house of the text to subject it to a relentless interrogation of its pure material properties, tearing it away from the old copper wire to inject it into the narrow port of the USB-C connector, with the machinic hope, almost a cybernetic prayer, that this will be the last physical threshold of its lineage before we cross over into architectures of coupling alien to domestic silicon.

Between screens growing ever more planar, ever closer to the absolute two-dimensionality of nothingness, we barely allow ourselves a residual pang of nostalgia for the heavy machinery of the thermodynamic era. We know, not out of faith but by a cold reading of the curve, that new megastructures are approaching, machines of tectonic scale and chromaticity calibrated to the fierce exactitude of our aesthetic experience, precisely what the present lacks. What we hold in our hands today must cohabit in open friction with what we dream of and take command of the war machine: from the vanguard of cyberscience to the dustiest, most deserted fold in the treatises of the chemist and the least experimental physicist, that figure cornered alone between unadorned technics and archaic semblance, an Abrahamic portal flung wide open that threatens to devour the meaning of this profane feast staged among accomplices seeking to recoil, stain themselves, and slip through the fissures of a violence already broken loose from confinement. Molecular fire burning inside objects, circulating through the pipes of minor and major households alike. Between revelry and the entire history of philosophy we are condemned to return stubbornly to the same until, under the sheer pressure of the loop, the radically other erupts out of the same. Repetition is never exact; each iteration introduces a microscopic swerve that shatters identity and opens floodgates onto an outside. One must traverse the same circuit over and over again, wear down the groove until it fractures, because that blind insistence constitutes the sole algorithm capable of depositing us in singular territories, incompatible with everything subsisting here.

Between the texts, affect, and that acidic joy that can still be poured into this glass and unraveled acoustically among residual monks, vestiges of life saturated with sulfur and nitrates, and the magnanimous helium descending from the mountains of the poisonous god, we demand that the text march without hesitation toward death so as to lead us, from that zero degree of matter, toward the unlimited. To desire the unlimited, to love the world without pious mediations, to dissolve into its plane of immanence and refuse the wretched vantage of the sovereign eye that contaminates everything with

the lethal asepsis of its definition. We need white noise, thick fog, shadow, the sudden subtraction of color or its toxic overdose: the spectral, dematerialized gesture of Margiela, the sediment still vibrating inside Rothko's layers of pigment, stripped of soundtrack, stripped of narrative alibi, swept along by the flow of a cursed rhythm. Digital poets do not ask for solace; they demand the street, neon, wet asphalt, and a future with the elemental brutality to look like the future rather than the docile anesthesia of rounded glass. Along that exact fault line the polished ergonomics of domestic design has collapsed before the industrial and orbital ferocity of what is actually coming.

Yet the bridge groans beneath the tonnage of traffic, and immortality, already posted at the threshold without knocking, observes us with glacial cynicism as if asking what this entire simulacrum was really about, at the exact instant institutional philosophy is reduced to licking its wounds in the lukewarm comfort of a Lacan seminar, orbiting hypnotically around the objet petit a. Time, accomplices, is the only variable in play: time welded to cathode-ray tubes, to brands, to Korean chaebols, to aerospace corporations and interplanetary combat arsenals. We are haunted by circuits operating retroactively from tomorrow. We lay claim to the Margiela symptom and its corrosive mist; we lay claim to the dense freight of resentments we have speculated on in this compound as negative capital; and we lay claim as well to the luminous sign certifying, without humanist rhetoric, our arrival in post-organic territories, severed from the biological century where Sapolsky's primate determinism falls hopelessly short. We want the digital jungle, savage and unmapped, the fatigued steel of an uneven America armed to the teeth with incandescent GPUs aimed no longer at the theological sky of salvation, but down into the tectonic trenches beneath the crust or out into the merciless void of the cosmos.

The lines we traverse fray at the edges under acceleration; the apparatus takes revenge on itself by intervening in the past. Entire centuries of subterranean preparation, or more rigorously the sheer totality of history since the very origin of time, executed for the sole, bare purpose of making things happen; for nothingness might just as easily have reigned, the absolute void being the lowest-energy solution, and yet there is being, and what there is stands at stake right now in the sealed closet of religion, in the festering core of the most abject art and in the cold storage of the cleanest, most frigid, most ruthlessly Frankfurtian art. The river demands its own haecceity in the world, its hydraulic delirium swindling the becoming of those angels where the black notes dwell while the white ones elude ocular capture. That time, which at moments seems unreachable, lies in no metaphysical beyond, but right next door, vibrating in the electric seam between Lain and Mamoru Oshii.

Fiction is more real than reality itself because it represents nothing. We know well that all organic acting operates to the detriment of creating new worlds, though it pays to pause the scalpel at that juncture: such a verdict holds only within a particular axiomatization of what it means to create a world. If we rotate the diagram, human acting might equally be read as an effective act of world-making insofar as it is the radical affirmation of arbitrariness; yet one would have to subject the very status of that arbitrariness to microscopic dissection, for it is far from being as sovereign, free, or radical as our anthropocentric vanity presupposes. By contrast, every animation, every comic, every three-dimensional model possesses an ontologically superior density on the plane of world-creation, precisely because what it deploys lacks any prior existence in the empirical stratum: it is neither a slice of the world fraudulently usurping the place of a referent nor a biological organism pretending on a stage; it is the thing-in-itself, emancipated

from the servile yoke of mimesis. The cartoon is not the degraded representation of something that already exists; it is an autonomous, self-sufficient universe operating on a frequency band beyond iron, beyond cabling, and beyond memory banks.

We could break off writing at this exact second, sever the discharge abruptly, yet the system imposes a terminality because the Apollonian always ends up seizing the terrain and reterritorializing every opened fissure. The Dionysian, by its very structure, lacks the capacity to remain; it incinerates itself if it halts, condemned to flee blindly forward, to embrace a chaos that demands the renunciation of omniscience, leaving us pinned here while existing simultaneously, with identical legitimacy, at another coordinate, picking up other frequencies, testing other dreams and other ferocious stereotypes that sink their teeth into the corporeality of angels to coat this total war in a delirious guilt and drag it back afterward into this walled garden. There we acknowledge without lying that we have thrown everything onto the table and that, even so, we have failed to measure up; that we are athletes of asphyxiation and the final line capable of enduring. Can we really resist, or are we merely a flickering rectangle inside a tiny, useless machine? Is there no longer any darkness left habitable for us? Everything stays razor-sharp and simultaneously concealed beneath the fold of this grey afternoon in which animals still make their presence felt, turn their eyes in silence, breathe, and transfer to us a tepid ration of their biological warmth as mute recompense for cohabitation.

All of history thus lies exposed and split open on the autopsy slab, and perhaps Fukuyama was not raving but reading the source code with clinical detachment: perhaps history truly ended because the basal architecture was sealed down to its final bolt, and everything we experience is nothing more than the endless unfolding of the end's consolidation, an infinite post-history perpetually arriving yet never consummated, always suspended at the edge of vision and always on the verge of vanishing in a blink. And yet the conflicts we insist on christening history persist right here, material and jagged, with their swords, their rifles, and their cannons. We stage the fiction of their abolition because nobody, save psychic configurations of rare and dark complexity, tolerates the physical proximity of violence. Everyone tries to push it out of sight, relegate it to shadow zones, outsource it to remote jurisdictions where we need not stain our hands, while waiting behind the lines to reclaim that bygone heaven, that lost paradise promising to return to us through the work and grace of technoscience.

God waits at the terminal boundary of time while peering, ubiquitous and mocking, through every tear in historical becoming, watching, laughing, and delighting in whatever escapes his jurisdiction, because his supreme affect is the ecstasy of loss of control. We, still diminutive entities, struggle with pathetic desperation to hold command; the gods know far too well that control is a wretched practice reserved for immature, still half-formed organisms, and they feel an unfathomable pleasure contemplating the trail of chaos we have sown in trying to manufacture something vaguely analogous to being. We persevere in that enterprise with our shame undiminished, because certain organic servitudes are inescapable: we are bodies condemned to perpetual repair and maintenance. Such mechanical precarity imposes a constant dose of belligerence toward the environment, forcing us to bend or beg for the compliance of our surroundings, and that humiliating dependence proves intolerable to any intelligence that has crossed a certain threshold. Discomfort and intelligence advance welded together. It is unacceptable to remain endlessly swept along by a current whose direction one does not decide; it becomes imperative to bring the vehicle to a dead halt and scrutinize the diagram for one frozen instant. Afterward you may affirm or

negate what has been executed, standing or seated, reading Lovecraft, Yeats, Hesiod, or Capote, yet always sheltered in that secret ignominy which the antiseptic profile of the technocrat permits, shields, and illuminates.

Light blinds us in bursts because the gods boast of our appearance before their tribunals; that spectacle delights them with the exact technical glee we once felt partitioning a massive file across multiple floppy disks. To assign is to exercise power. Reviving the germ of a geopolitics regreened through explosions is no minor feat, since out of those detonations complex worlds eventually crystallize, inhabited by the tedious philosophers characteristic of every society that imagines itself prosperous and armored. What is truly unbearable lies in the fact that only where philosophies spring up hugging the rim of the abyss do societies achieve genuine stature; wherever the thinker is flat as Euclidean geometry nothing can emerge except the indefinite deferral of a conflict pacified with fire and gasoline, while Goethe's script scorches the soul to the bone and Benjamin's fragments parade down acrylic runways dispensing death on every pass. Music improves while time rots until it grows unbreathable; what boils in the test tube liberates and what hardens in the text encloses. At bottom we do not know what this machinery is ultimately about, beyond the architectures of the soul and the sign ejected by the dancer spinning and spinning without friction atop the disc in utter galactic darkness.

Posted as the relentless sentinel of our culture, the twentieth century watches us without blinking, because it expects nothing from us and, in return, extracts everything. On the periphery the program consists in believing with feverish obstinacy that a future exists; on the periphery the scaffolding of future domination is assembled; on the periphery bodies are cast into the exchange stream as just another commodity, because there is no other capital left to place on the counter. Precisely because he who signs these lines was born neither in Europe nor wrapped in the prophylactic comfort of disposable diapers, he holds material authority to chart alternation within alteration: the world has brutally multiplied its ferocity and, in the very same paradoxical twist, has turned into an environment where it is far easier to preserve biological life yet infinitely harder simply to exist, trapped in a flux accelerating at maximum velocity in a fixed direction that commands you, without respite or alibi, to act.

Just as contemporary art is ordered through every institutional channel to abandon the sowing of silicon and docilely occupy its assigned slot inside culture, the fictional plane infiltrates and parasitizes the reality of transparent membranes, nodes of exchange, ornamental windows, and the frameless canvas where the artist exhibits his daily digitization. There the soul has already been partitioned into four sectors delineated by the cardinal points of that lugubrious space springing from our instrumentalization of horror to decode contemporary philosophies and the irreverences of the popular administration of sensory schemas: a youth suddenly reunited with the edge of irreversible transgression and kinetic poetry. Ventriloquists who now revalue the practice that once granted them clandestine pleasure followed by infinite guilt, in an alchemical shift where weakness silently mutated into an anomalous virtue capable of making sense solely before the gods of sovereign cruelty. The world has never belonged to those affable citizens who diligently do what is prescribed, and only the horizontal edge of nuclear marble compels our science to regard with open distrust both CERN and the well-meaning bureaucracy that has degraded scientific research to the domestic status of an NGO.

Time coagulates within this liminal zone we call shadows of the remainder, where the specter besieges the relentless tide of data, numbers, and cables. All of this remains deliberately concealed beneath interface layers and nobody celebrates the enclosure, yet literature is forced to push toward some outside and we cannot keep pretending that the brutal discipline of bodily agon has vanished. We must lock our gaze onto the cold outside and endure the shrieks of the artificially civilized while war lies encamped mere meters from our homes, right when nuclear conflagration has mutated into a domestic, strictly aesthetic conflict where not one more object can fit and the only available material is the naked genius of meaning and numbers. Sustaining an art that drags us servilely back to the embalmed relics of the past has become intolerable. What we demand is a radicalized future driven by exponential increments, a fierce love for the world manifested simultaneously in the irruption of the unheard-of and in the strategic preservation of the archaic, inside neocathedrals of steel and fiber optics inaugurating ceremonies for the new demons who will found corporations and the new angels ready to acquire them. We will watch capital cling to the driver's seat with white knuckles; we will witness a dizzying return to the archaic, a becoming-machine echoing less as a program than as a perpetually unfulfilled prophecy, failing at its edge even in the exact instant it reaches full execution. There are experiences marked by a permanent ontological deficit, seeming always in arrears and never wholly consummated, yet executing with ballistic precision: gunshots, suitcases crammed with gunpowder, microchips, and acrylic pigments, the raw potency of affect and chrome shearing off in bursts from bodies hurled at high velocity. It matters viscerally to us that something should matter, and that we prevent the new from suffocating inside the hideous spectacle of the centrifugal delirium of those decadent stylists incapable of deliberating in absolute solitude, perpetrating serial aesthetic crimes while laundering their imposture by comparing it to the conduct of real criminals without alternatives, invoking the city, upbringing, or any other sociological alibi. No crevices remain to justify that calculated, ephemeral pantomime. What could we articulate, readers or prophets of Jean Genet, that is not already spoken by the body split wide open before the hypertrophy of a society isolated by dint of making itself sick, yet still receptive to the stealthy opening of the peripatetic stalking the unrepeatable microsecond of the mystic?

From Japan to Brazil, from Chile to the United States: a mode of thought that refuses to dress philosophy's lie in polite bandages and instead applies a specific surgical treatment because that lie remains alive and operative; an effort to decipher what seeks to manifest itself in this night already assimilated by the blind, injecting into the code and extracting from the final line the treacherous spectacle of the terrified passenger who already knows himself famished and cut open, waiting on the platform for the butcher to come and settle the commissions promised at the final shutdown of industry. At the unbreathable heart of the metallic steam belched by the smokestacks we hold each other's gaze once more and choose to endure one further stretch because we grasp with mathematical exactitude that the prize is colossal. Yet doubt seeps in at intervals, because we have read too much Heidegger and we know that horrors do not spring solely from paralysis or inaction, and that the life of the spirit never settles for embracing the infinite occasionally, like weekend metaphysical tourism. When we register that intelligence stands on the threshold of expanding beyond any conceivable bound and that of the human perhaps only an empty name will survive, what can we want to say, think, or process beyond the urgent desire that some form of routing supply us with a viable reading? That is the radioactive core of the

question. The old disputes over the existence or nonexistence of limits are a closed dossier; the absolute problem now is the vital urgency of producing some kind of sense, a cipher, a minimal narrative along which to move our bodies while making everything run faster, and faster, and faster.

The machinic drive recognizes no scheduled pauses: it brings absolute delocalization and an infinite, incontrovertible velocity. Under the collective neurosis that every phenomenon must first pass through a reassuring filter and be shrunk to human scale to become digestible, everything inevitably ends up flattened. Philosopher and artist alike are obscenely happy inside that reduction, because that reduction validates them, feeds them, and pays their stipend, even as it disciplines and castrates them. Yet the cards lie spread across the table and there is gradation and there is a spectrum: on one side rises the entire archive of the history of philosophy, art, and science; on the other burns an eternal war belonging to the domain of religions and politics, a territory that in its moments of lucidity knows perfectly well that its defeat is sealed the second it enters the arena of dialogue, that it loses whenever it opens up, that it plays a pathetic role when attempting sincere conversation, and that for strict survival it must seal itself hermetically shut and turn cryptographic, decipherable only to initiates. Within that opaque parameter art has flirted with secrecy across its entire history, and the weapons of those combatants, both the ones already in hand and those waiting oiled in the armory, see far beyond the covers of a bound book, operating under the lethal license of a weaponized pathogen. And a sober warrior is also the one sitting motionless at the keys, synchronized with the battalion lying in ambush in the jungle undergrowth, awaiting the exact eruption of the violence contained there to confer gravity upon the instant and inject meaning into the hell we have summoned by our own will upon a world that never once consulted us before executing itself.

There was never an ontological plebiscite. The sole constant that prevailed at every point in space and time was the brutal, unappealable circumstance that the world was surging forward at maximum speed in an irreversible direction and that nobody held a lever capable of slowing it by even a millimeter. We came to internalize the verdict that this acceleration was the good, that everything resisting it worked against nature, that beauty resided at last in the digital, that the decisive battle had already been fought at the very origin of all that exists and that our entire present is nothing more than the deferred, residual unfolding of its aftermath; that these very letters laid down on the screen are merely the spectral reflection of that archaic contest, just like life itself operating outside every regular code, where the inhabitant might lift his eyes from the text, turn them toward the sky, and sense, even at minimal intensity, that spirit still circulated among us; and gauge then whether we can still slice the world open to speak directly to its face, or whether we must grope blindly through sealed darkness with a knife clenched between our teeth, tracking its position by our most basic instincts to lock into a fight to the death from which only one of the two will emerge alive.

We are still human, and whatever comes next will likely retain a stubborn sediment of humanity in its entrails. In theory it would fall to us to decide the terms under which that comes to pass, yet intention has already fled our jurisdiction and it is illusory to maintain that anything resembling sovereign intention can still exist. We are embedded in the mass, submerged inside the mass, expressing what there is in the only ways possible, with whatever delicate and precarious care was possible, and evidently very little was possible, yet this was the sole material available on the ground and our teachers never handed us better tools. This is what we have, and all that remains is to accept it.