

The shape of (non)existence

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Dear friends,

It's been a minute, and there's been some significant changes for both mind reader and for me as a human. Today I want to take a moment to appreciate the good and bad of what is emerging and present in our world. Our first shared moment is about the tragic, terrible, and inhumane Trump-Musk-drama that is not only a visceral distraction to churn through the absolute worst vitriol and hate speech at the expense of those already deeply marginalised by American society, but also a very real threat to the nature of contemporary social fabric and cohesion. The second is a moment of hopeful futures as energy which has been forestalled far too long begins to surface and push for radically ethical new ways.

It has been nearly impossible to ignore over the past month the absolute imposition of 'noise' over signal in our news, social medias, and relationships with one another. The now finely honed machine that is Trumpian politics has effectively engulfed the traditional media, and social commentators, in a haze of hateful, divisive, and utterly empty and fake information. This has been used to drive hateful, divisive and empty actions on behalf of those who themselves are exploited, but in positions of relative privilege, over those who carry intersectional 'disadvantage'. We've talked at length about the nature of privilege and how it constructs particular identities as superior, how it systematically enables the erasure of Indigenous knowledge systems, how it undermines transformative potential of human connection through 'noise'.

However, I find myself increasingly distressed at the way that this noise, produced by the Trump-Musk oligopoly, creates very real harm. Be it through the fear that is produced by human actions against those targeted by the noise, be it through the anger and hateful action of those inspired by that noise to believe particular wrong story ways, or through the harm that everyone who consumes news, engages in relationships, and reads the world encounters online, in our communities, and indeed in our homes. There is, though, a pattern to the manufacturing of consent that enables the hateful, violent and utterly wrong social conditions we are seeing in the U.S. and this pattern's shape begs analysis:

[dramatisation] -> [amplification] -> [action/harm] -> [harm/action] -> [dramatisation]

Within the dramatisation cycle, here, there are age old raced, gendered and classed narratives which seek to utterly destroy the little remaining social fabric resting in the ashes of the neoliberal world. Through 'othering', amidst multitude technologies, a wrong vision of the world is produced for Trump-Musk and its followers, a reality akin to tribalism where 'leader says' is the only thought given -indeed, even when it is directly contradictory to a message espoused just 24 hours earlier. The dramatisation, a critical step, involves either the utter manufacture of false narratives which deliberately drive division, or the dispossession of people from their story to create conditions which enable dehumanisation. As part of this process, the dramatisation is left deliberately conjectural and laconic -an empty story, leaving a vacuum to fill the full shape of hatred, fear and division.

The news media then, races to fill this amplification process, filling its own conclusions into the abstract details provided by the wrongful, hateful, and vile story as was presented in the first instance by a Trump-mouthpiece. This serves twofold purposes, either it enables the Trump-Musk oligopoly to manufacture new details for the story to (re)sensationalise it, or it necessarily enables the amplification and redistribution of these narratives amongst the communities it targets: both for the 'winner' and the 'loser'. Naturally, under capital, it matters very little which 'side' you are on to the media outlet, so sensationalisation of the

‘airy’ gaps in the story enable more ad sales, page views, and ‘promoted content’—ensuring the (social) media beast keeps bloating on human suffering. Importantly, the ‘winners’ in this situation are by nature extremely more privileged than the ‘others’ they target, and there is absolutely no parallel between a hateful vitriolic racist, sexist, misogynist and a vulnerable, exploited community. However, both are ‘targets’ for capitalist exploitation along varied intersections, and are –to the *neutral* news another cent in the jar of ad viewerships.

Then comes an action/harm harm/action cycle which itself feeds further dramatisation by the Trump-Musk orifice. This action/harm cycle sees the oppressor, as always, throw more blows towards the oppressed, whose self-defence is characterised by the media as a transgression. The sadness, anger and despair of the community who was targeted, itself, becomes target of the next dramatisation or, simply, ends or further jeopardises that community’s existence. This also causes harm to the oppressor, every time dehumanising themselves in their violent, wrongful actions. What we see, now, with the Trump-Musk oligopoly is the capitalisation of human suffering. Another, probably not final, frontier for capitalist expansion and metastatisation.

Around we go, ever closer to a future of complete capital. Onto-epistemic control be damned, now the very life/death cycle of human communities is a space for the extraction of ‘surplus value’. What world do we live in? A violent one. We are violent to each other, to ourselves and our bodies, to our planet and her ecosystem. We are fundamentally controlled by a cancerous, toxic, and fundamentally ‘wrong’ socioecology. But does it end here?

I spend quite a lot of my time in the thinking/feeling nexus. Moving from heart to mind, mind to body, body to heart and around. In this process I notice the world around me, and I notice when it responds to kindness, and when it responds to hatred, despair, and malice. One set of these cycles self-replicates in such a way that there is a vacuum of hope: the hate cycle leads to more anxiety, fear, and distress. And while it is utterly important that we understand the fear, division, hatred and bullshit of toxic, divisive, and broken regimes, we also need to hold space for hopeful narratives of transformation that herald a brighter world. Because what is future thinking without some utopianism, and how can we truly ‘experiment’ with ways of being that are conducive to communal human flourishing if we do not find joy in the love, and hope that is possible despite the ontological frame in which we rest?

Here I offer very few words, but instead a half-formed thought on a way towards ‘freedom’ :

Collective conscious,
Purposive relationality,
Deep time,
Earnest conversation,
Self-transformation, communal responsibility.

And I owe you more than this, dear reader, I owe you all very much –so as I think about the next chapter in mind reader, I think about the ways I can offer hope and reflective practice that enables change. Because I am utterly distraught at the state of the world as hatred surges, fear rises, and communities clinging for hope are smashed apart. But even through this, hope remains, and people find a way to push forward. So, I would like to find that future thinking, working, and being with you. A collective project to move from “just negative” to “negative” plus “futures” .

Ethics, hell relationality, and the possibility of something different are all just ideas. After all, if the universe developed us to be its conscious, it must offer something much deeper for those who listen, learn, and work in relationship with each other towards something better –not something hateful. The power of activism has always been in its deep hope, its need for a better way, and banding together to challenge a cold and empty world. It sure is cold,

but it isn' t empty, so let' s keep constructing hopeful ways together. Broken worlds can lead to better next chapters, suffering can lead to hope and peace, and through actively and deliberately challenging divisive, racist, sexist, anti-queer, and anti-worker rhetorics we might collectively construct something new. It doesn' t take a whole system overhaul, just working at where we are to hold compassion, and listen.

Sorry for the fluff, just in a reflective mood this weekend.

Listening to ya right now, you exceptional humans,

Aidan