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# Contents

# Techn@

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*Technological innovations are always accompanied by promises of a new and above all better world. The 'revolution' in computer technology and telecommunications is no exception. New social ties, a stronger sense of community, the emergence of all kinds of grassroots movements, direct(er) democracy, the greater possibility of control over the government and the restoration of the public domain without market and state... according to the internet pioneers, it would all become possible.*

*More than twenty years later, this euphoria is mainly found in policy notes and commercials that promise us things in the virtual world that have been destroyed in the 'real' world. The internet pioneers lick their wounds and search the nooks and crannies of the net for opportunities to give shape to their dreams after all. A good moment to dedicate an issue of De AS to the libertarian pretensions and pitfalls of these new technologies.*

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In libertarian circles, the technology debate is often dominated by pros and cons, and the central question is whether we should be for or against technology. This will not get us much further. Not only do pros and cons, as Mark Dery shows in his contribution elsewhere in this issue, often appeal to the same higher power, in this case 'wild' nature, but in our technology-saturated society in which 'nature' itself is produced or protected with the latest technologies, an investigation into the workings of technologies and a deconstruction of the discourses surrounding them is of greater importance to libertarian practices than the question of whether they are good or bad.

A look at the technology issue of *De AS* (73) shows that a lot has changed in this regard. In his introduction, Hans Ramaer stated at the time that technology is a well-considered choice of those in power for specific techniques. *"In general, these are techniques that require centralization and large-scale and that are easy to combine with a hierarchical labor structure.* Now, fifteen years later, the same rulers use decentralized, small-scale techniques and employees are embedded in a worldwide 'glocal' network in which hierarchical command structures have been replaced by horizontal electronic data flows and employees are allowed to work independently because information keeps them informed anyway. Capital can apparently appropriate anything, including anarchist principles. Some believe that it has dug its own grave in this, because the anarchic tendencies of the new technologies will eventually turn

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against it. Others see in this strange coalition the contours of a new totalitarian world domination.

In this AS we dare not venture into utopian promises or doomsday scenarios, but plunge into the current techno culture, guided by the slogan of the rappers of Public Enemy: *'Don't believe the hype'*.

# Utopian Promises – Internet Reality[1]

**Critical Art Ensemble**

*There is undoubtedly a pressing need for Internet criticism. While some critics have approached the new world of computer communications with a healthy dose of skepticism, their message has been lost in the spectacle of commercial hype. The unstoppable tide of seduction has captivated so many with its dynamic utopian beauty that there has been little time left for careful reflection.*

Let us first acknowledge that with the new equipment we may indeed catch a glimpse of a better future. We do not share the view of the neo-Luddites who believe that techno-equipment should be rejected out of hand, if not destroyed. For those who have the necessary hardware and software as well as the technical skills, computer communication undoubtedly offers better possibilities for storing, retrieving and exchanging information. And this in turn offers possibilities for cross-cultural, artistic and critical collaboration. There are undoubtedly potential humanitarian advantages to electronic systems. However, we doubt whether the equipment is used for these purposes. Moreover, we wonder what the political principles are that guide the development and accessibility of the net.

This is not the first time that an electronic utopia has been promised. You don't have to but to look back at Bertold Brecht's critical attitude towards radio is to become concerned when such promises are revived. Although Brecht recognised that radio offered opportunities to disseminate information for humanitarian and cultural purposes, he was not surprised when it turned out that radio was being used for the exact opposite.

During the video revolution of the early 1970s, there was a brief moment of euphoria. Many people thought that Brecht's call for an interactive, democratic, electronic medium would be heeded. The development of home video made it seem realistic that people would soon be able to produce their own television programs. When the prices

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of video equipment plummeted and cable structures offered the possibilities for distribution, the electronic utopia seemed imminent. Yet the home video studio never came into being.

Out of nowhere, walls and borders seemed to appear to shatter the utopian dream. American standards suddenly required equipment that no one had access to or could afford except the wealthy media companies. Most cable channels remained controlled by commercial broadcasters, and the few public-access channels fell into the hands of regulators who invoked "community standards" as a motive for regulating the broadcasters. The expectations of the video utopians were already being dashed at the distribution level.

As a result of the PC revolution of the early eighties, with the realization of a 'worldwide' distribution network, that dizzying euphoria is now back. As expected, the daily lives of bureaucrats and technocrats in the first world are being overplayed by the utopian promises of the corporatist spectacle machine and faith seems to be rearing its head again know – at least among the technically adept part of the population – that this time it will be different. And to a certain extent the situation is different. There is indeed an electronic free zone, but we regard that as a very modest development. By far the most substantial use of electronic equipment has to do with maintaining order, with repeating the dominant, pan-capitalist ideology, and with developing new markets.

At the risk of stating the obvious, we should recall the origins of the Internet. It arose from the desire of the American military to maintain the chain of command in the event of a nuclear attack. The answer was an electronic network capable of instantly rerouting itself if one or more links were destroyed. In this way, the authorities could continue to communicate with each other even during the worst disasters. The fact that such plans were the origins of the Internet should arouse suspicion in anyone who thinks about such equipment. It should also be noted that the decentralized features for which so many praise the Internet are not the result of anarchist intentions, but of a nomadic military strategy.

The next group to go online, after the military, were scientific researchers. It would be nice to believe that their efforts were beneficial to the Internet, but we must ask why they were given access to this technology in the first place. Science has always justified itself by its supposedly "value-free" search for truth, but this search costs money. And so political economy, with its powerful influence on the lofty goals of value-free research, comes into play. Are researchers offered money without restrictions? That seems rather unlikely: institutions that give money always expect some form of return on their investment. In the United States, theoretical or technological results are usually demanded for military purposes or applications that strengthen economic development. The greater the results that science promises in this regard, the more generous the financial support. In the US, even scientists do not get anything for free.

The need for greater efficiency in research and development opened the net to academics. This introduced a necessary degree of disorder. Elements of free-zone infor-

mation exchange emerged and then other investors, especially corporations, demanded their share of the electronic pie. On the Internet, financial transactions could be conducted in a relatively reliable and efficient manner. As the free zone grew, corporations realized that a new market mechanism was emerging. When market experts were unleashed on the Internet, a curious paradox emerged: free-market capitalism came into conflict with the conservative desire for order. It became clear that the authorities had to tolerate a certain degree of chaos in order to maximize the potential of the new market. It was necessary, first, to entice the wealthy classes to use the Internet for consumption and entertainment; and second, to offer the Net as an alibi for the illusion of social freedom. Although overall control over communications was lost, the total cost of this development to governments and corporations was minimal, certainly compared to what was gained.

In this way, the most successful repressive apparatus of all time was born, and yet it was (and is) successfully presented as a symbol of liberation. What is even more frightening is that some of the best allies of the corporations in maintaining the shiny utopian surface of cyberspace belong to the very populations that should know better. Techno-utopians have bought into the commercial hype and are now spreading it as the reality of the Internet. This unfortunate alliance between the elite virtual class and the new cybernauts is

based on five crucial virtual promises. These are the promised social changes that seem like they could happen at any moment, but in reality will never happen.

## Promise One: The New Body

Those familiar with the debates over cyberspace and virtual reality have heard this promise over and over again, and in fact there is some truth to it. The virtual body is a body of enormous potential. We can rewrite ourselves onto it, using any coding system we choose. We can try out new body configurations and experiment with immortality by going places and doing things that are impossible in the physical world. For the virtual body, nothing is set in stone and everything is possible. This is precisely why hackers want to become disembodied consciousnesses that move freely through cyberspace, imposing their will on the image of their own bodies and their own circumstances. As virtual reality improves with each new generation of computer technology, perhaps this promise will one day enter the realm of the multisensory; for now, however, it remains limited to gender swaps on chatterboxes or flight simulators on the *Game Boy*.

What has this supposedly liberated body cost? It has been paid for in the form of a loss of individual sovereignty, not only of those who use the Internet but of everyone in societies that are held together by technology. With the vir

The human body came with its fascist brother, the data body: a much more highly developed virtual form fully at the service of the corporate police state. The data body

is the total collection of data files relating to an individual. In its immature form, the data body has existed since the dawn of civilization, for the authorities have always kept records of their subordinates. Among the records found by Egyptologists were tax records.

What has brought the data body to maturity is the technological apparatus. With its immense storage capacity and with techniques to quickly organize and retrieve information, no detail of social life is too insignificant to record and scrutinize. From the moment we are born and our birth certificate goes online, until the day we die and our death certificate goes online, our lives are recorded in detail: from data on education, travel, insurance, taxes, consumption and communication, to medical data, criminal records, investments... data to infinity.

The data body has two primary functions. The first is in the service of the repressive apparatus, the second of marketing. The desire of the authoritarian power to make the lives of its subjects completely transparent is satisfied with the data body. Everyone is under constant surveillance as a result of the necessary interaction with the market. How detailed the data body is exactly, we do not know, but it is more detailed than we would like.

The second function of the data body is to provide marketers with accurate demographic information for creating target groups. Since pan-capitalism has long since left the problem of production behind and changed from an economy of need to an economy of desire, marketers have developed better ways of artificially creating desires for products that are not needed. The data body gives them insight into the consumption patterns, purchasing power, and "lifestyle choices" of people with extra income. The postmodern slogan "You don't pick the product, the product picks you" is more meaningful than ever.

But the most frightening aspect of the data body is that it is the center of an individual's social existence. It tells the members of the bureaucracy what our cultural identities and roles are. We are powerless to contradict the data body. Its word is law. From the perspective of commercial or governmental bureaucracies, a person's organic existence is no longer a determining factor. Data has become the center of social culture, and our organic flesh is merely a counterfeit representation of the original data.

## Promise Two: Convenience

Earlier in the twentieth century, the great sociologist Max Weber explained why bureaucracies work so well as a means of rationalized social organization in complex societies. In comparing his ideal type and bureaucratic practice, only one weak point emerges

point emerges: it is people who provide the labor for these institutions. Unfortunately, people have non-rational characteristics, the most notorious of which is the expression of desire. Rather than operating at optimum efficiency, organic units tend

to seek what gives them pleasure in ways that conflict with the instrumental goals of the bureaucracy. All varieties of creative slacking are employed by organic units, from work delays to unnecessary chitchat with colleagues. Throughout the twentieth century, policymakers and management classes have sought ways to stop these activities in order to maximize the output of labor.

The epitome of labor augmentation came with the invention of the robot. As long as the robot is doing it, it will continue to do its job. Completely replacing humans with robots is impossible because robots are so far only capable of simple (but precise) mechanical tasks. They are controlled by data, as opposed to the human capacity for concept recognition. The question then becomes how humans can be made into robots or, to update the story, into cyborgs. Much of this technology is already available. However, having the technology, such as headsets and wearable computers, is not enough. People must be enticed to use it, at least until technology is developed that can be permanently attached to their bodies.

And the methods of seduction? Convenience. Life will be so much easier if we just join in

on the machine. As usual, there is a grain of truth in this picture. I will freely admit that my life has become easier since I started using a computer, but only in a certain sense. It is now easier to finish an article than it was when I used pen and paper or a typewriter. The problem is, I can (and therefore must) write two articles in the time it used to take to produce one. The implied promise that computers will free up your time is false.

Furthermore, people can still detach themselves from their workstations. However, we are being lured into wanting to have our electronic extensions with us at all times. The latest AT&T commercials illustrate this perfectly: "Have you ever sent a fax... from the beach? You'll get there." Or, "Have you ever gotten a phone call... on your wrist? You'll get there." This one is particularly amusing: a young man who has just climbed a mountain and is watching the sunset receives a call from his wife on his wrist phone and he describes the beauty of the sunset. Who is fooling who? Will your wife call you while you are climbing a mountain? Will you feel the need to send a fax while you are lounging on the beach? The corporate purpose of deploying this technology (apart from profit) is so transparent as to be painful. What is really meant is, "Have you ever been in a workstation... 24 hours a day, 365 days a year? That will come.'

## Promise Three: Community

Currently there is no po in the US

more popular phrase than 'community'. This word is so meaningless that it can be used to describe almost any social expression. Most often it is used to suggest sympathy or identification with a particular group. In this sense you hear about the gay community or the African-American community. There are even oxymorons like

'the international community'. Market experts have been quick to capitalize on this empty concept. Realizing the extreme alienation that has affected so many under the rule of pan-capitalism, they offer Internet technology as a cure for a sense of loss that cannot be attributed to anything. With chat rooms, newsgroups and other digital environments, the nostalgic longing for a golden age of conviviality — which never existed — is replaced by a new, modern sense of community.

This promise is just nerve-racking, there is not a grain of truth in it. If there is any reason for optimism, it is only to the extent that was mentioned at the beginning of this text, namely that the Internet makes a broader spectrum of information exchange possible. However, anyone who understands sociology understands that information exchange in no way forms a community.

Using the Internet for anything other than gathering information is, for the CAE, a highly developed, anti-social form of relating to one another. That someone would want to stay at home or in the office and reject human contact in favor of a textually created

brought about communication experience, can only be a symptom of increasing alienation, not a cure for it. Why the repressive apparatus would want this isolation to develop further is quite obvious. When someone is on-line, he or she is off the streets and well within the bounds of control. Why the marketing apparatus would want such a situation is equally obvious: the lonelier people become, the more they turn to work and consumption to seek pleasure.

At a time when public space is shrinking and being replaced by fortified institutions such as shopping malls, theme parks and other expressions of forced consumption that pretend to be places of social interaction, shouldn't we be looking for a sense of the social (which is still possible to some extent) that is direct and unmediated, instead of seeing these anti-public spaces replicated in an even lonelier electronic form?

## Promise Four: Democracy

Another promise that is endlessly repeated in treatises on cyberspace is the idea that electronic devices will be the pinnacle of utopian democracy. Certainly the Internet has some democratic features. It gives all cybercitizens the opportunity to connect with all other cybercitizens. On the Internet, everyone is equal. The proud symbol of this new democracy is the World Wide Web. People can build their own home pages, and even more people can visit those sites. That's all very well, but we must ask ourselves whether this

democratic characteristics are indeed a basis for democracy. A platform for individual voices is not enough, especially on the Web, where so many voices are lost in the jumble of data fragments. Democracy depends on the ability of the individual to act on the information received. Unfortunately, even with the Internet, autonomous action is as difficult as ever.

The difficulty is threefold. First, there is the problem of where one is, of geographical separation. In the case of information gathering, information is only useful to the extent that the situation and location of the physical body allow it. Thus, a homosexual man who lives in a place where homophobia prevails or, worse, where homosexuality is illegal, will still not be able to openly express his desires, no matter what information he can gather on the net. He is still locked into the repressive practice of his daily life and remains reduced to a passive spectator in relation to the object of his desire.

The second problem is one of institutional oppression. No one will deny that the Internet can serve as a fantastic pedagogical tool and a great means of self-education. Unfortunately, the Internet has very little legitimacy as an educational institution. In order to be given legitimacy, the Internet must be used in the context of the physical world and under proper supervision. In order for the knowledge value acquired from the Internet to be socially accepted, education must be provided through

The Internet is to be enjoyed within the context of a school or university. This educational context is reinforced in such a way that the status quo of the distribution of education is maintained. As a result, someone can acquire a great deal of knowledge from the Internet, but still have no educational capital that can be exchanged on the market.

The final problem is that the Internet functions as a disciplinary device through transparency. When people feel that they are being monitored, they are less likely to do things that are outside the norm; that is, they are less likely to express themselves freely or otherwise act in ways that could bring about political and social change in their environment. In this sense, the Internet serves to destroy rather than encourage activity. It channels people into orderly homogeneous activity rather than reinforcing the acceptance of difference that democratic societies require.

Of course, there are times when transparency can be turned against itself. For example, one of the reasons that the Mexican PRI government's counteroffensive did not end in a total slaughter of the Zapatistas was that the Zapatistas used the Internet to keep attention focused on its members and its cause. Much the same can be said about the stay of execution for the black journalist and activist Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The last point is that we have to keep remembering that the Internet does not exist in a vacuum. It is intimately connected

with all kinds of social structures and historical forces and therefore its democratic structure cannot be analyzed as if it were a closed system.

When we consider the demographics, achieving democracy via the Internet seems even more unlikely. There are five and a half billion people in the world. More than a billion barely survive. Most people do not even have telephones and it seems highly unlikely that they will ever have a computer, let alone go online. This raises the question: is the Internet a means to democracy or just another way to divide the world into rich and poor?

We must also ask ourselves how many people really see the Internet as a relevant part of their daily lives. It seems unlikely that the number of Internet users will in-

crease to include more people than those who have the necessary education and/or are employed by bureaucratic and technocratic institutions. We believe that the Internet will remain an elite stronghold and that the majority of the First World population will participate in the computer revolution primarily as passive consumers rather than active participants. They will play computer games, watch interactive TV and shop in virtual malls. The educational divide will act as a guardian of the virtual boundary between passive and active user and will also prevent the number of people participating in multidirectional interactivity from increasing substantially.

## Promise Five: New Consciousness

Of all the Internet hype, this promise is perhaps the most insidious, in that it seems to have no corporate sponsor. The idea of the new consciousness has emerged from *New Age* thinking. There is a belief, promoted by cyber gurus (Timothy Leary, Jason Lanier, Roy Ascott, Richard Kriesche, Mark Pesci), that the Internet is the tool of a benign collective consciousness. It is the brain of the planet, transcendently spiritualized by the activity of its users. It can function as a third eye or sixth sense for those who feel at one with this global encounter. This way of thinking is the highest form of ethnocentrism and narrow-minded classism.

As mentioned, the Third World and most of the First World bourgeoisie are thoroughly marginalized in this divine plan. Whatever else it may be, this theory is a carbon copy of early capitalist imperialism and recalls concepts such as Manifest Destiny, the nineteenth century doctrine of the 'Undeniable Destiny' (all of North America to the US!). If the new consciousness points to anything, it is the *new age* of imperialism that will be realized through information control (as opposed to

position to the early capitalist model of military domination). When examining the previous four promises, it becomes apparent that each promise is a replica of the authoritarian ideology to justify greater repression. The new consciousness is no exception. Even if we accept the good intentions and optimistic expectations of the *new age* cybernauts, how could anyone conclude that a device born of military aggression and commercial plunder could in any way function as a new form of earthly, spiritual development?

As much as we regret it, most of the Internet is capitalist as usual. It is a terrain for repressive order, for the business of capital, and for excessive consumption. While a small part of the Net may be used for humanitarian purposes and to counter authoritarian structures, its overall function is anything but humanitarian.

Just as we wouldn't dream of making an unregulated artists' quarter representative of an entire city, we shouldn't assume that our own little free zones are representative of the digital empire. Nor can we trust our future to the empty promises of a seducer who has no love in his heart.

# 'Wild Nature'[2]: The Unabomber Meets The Digelite[3]

**Mark Dery**

"Increasing intolerance of encroachments on the rule of biology." (Kevin Kelly, "Characteristics of the Emerging Network Economy")[1]

## 1

*With its cover story, "Odyssey of a Mad Genius," Time Magazine of April 1996 invites us to view the wanderings of the (then suspected) Unabomber—Ted Kaczynski— as a transformation scene from the film An American Werewolf in London. In five photographs, Kaczynski undergoes the metamorphosis from the suit-and-tie-clad math whiz he was in high school and Harvard in the 1950s and early 1960s to the shaggy, buff-haired recluse of a 1996 mugshot. As in all werewolf stories, this one is about Wild Nature taking revenge on culture, or the nightmare (part Darwin, part Freud) of the return of what was once called in an episode of the soap opera Cheers "the inner hairy man": the bestial self, harnessed by evolution and civilization. In this case, the culture was overwhelmed by a vengeful nature in the person of a scrawny, tie-wearing math professor who had undergone the transformation into a stinking, fur-clad, bloodthirsty, armed-to-the-teeth savage.*

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[1] Kevin Kelly, Out of Control TheRise of Neo-Biological Civilization, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA USA 1994, p. 200.

[2] This essay was first presented as a largely improvised lecture at a conference on gender and technology on April 27, 1996, at the *Humanities Institute* at the State University of New York at Stony Brook (Long Island). Translation: Sies van Raaij, with thanks to Tom Paulus.

Mark Dery is a cultural critic. He wrote, among other things, Escape *Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*, translated (by Tom Paulus) and published by Houtekiet as *Het Digitale Lichaam*. He regularly contributes to *Andere Sinema* and gives lectures in America and Europe on new media, marginal art and subcultures.

[3] The Unabomber has carried out sixteen bombings since 1978, killing three and wounding 23. His main targets were *UNiversities* and *Airlines*, hence the name UNA bomber. The word 'digerati' means 'digital elite.' In English, the term *digerati* is used. It comes from the American digital culture magazine *Wired* and is derived from *literati*, which means 'literary intelligentsia.' Wired uses it to refer to the digital elite. Hence the Dutch neologism 'digerati.'

*However, as in An American Werewolf – where the transformation from human to animal ironically takes place with the aid of technology (inflatable, rubberized skin, etc.) – Kaczynski's Wild Nature (his utopian alternative to technological modernity) conceals a thoroughly technologized nature. The Unabomber may well be a wolf-man, but a prosthetic one: beneath his furry, neo-Luddite coat, he is, in his own words, a "techno freak."*

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Consider the Internet, where Kaczynski, a kind of *poster boy* for neo-Luddite resistance, is seemingly illogically elevated to a Charles Manson-esque anti-icon, a living symbol of chaos culture.[2] His *Unabomber Manifesto* is all over the Internet, he is glorified in newsgroups like alt.fan.unabomber and on the website 'Unabomber-for-President' of UNAPACK, the Unabomber Political Action Committee.[3]

At first glance, the veneration of the Unabomber seems a lot like the dark humor of terminal patients. Just beneath that fragile veneer of mockery, however, lurks a nagging anxiety about the superhuman pace of technological change and the murderous, disorienting white noise of the information flood. The Unabomber vents the simmering resentment toward members of the digital elite who blithely remind us to keep our arms inside the vehicle at all times, while they steer our frantic society into the new millennium with their joysticks. Although Kaczynski is a psychopath and a murderer, he speaks for people who are much wiser, but who were offended by Alvin Toffler's relentless 1980 Third Wave and AT&T's haughty You Will ads, which brook no dissent and preclude any alternative to a capitalist future.[4] In a mocking letter to one of his victims (computer scientist David Gelemter), the Unabomber rails against corporate futurist Stewart Brand's view that elites are the driving force of civilization, an absolute article of faith among Wired editors and like-minded digitetes. Kaczynski wrote to Gelemter that "there are a lot of people out there who are extremely upset about the way techno-idiots like you are changing the world."[5] While some among the millions offline saw the Unabomber as the pathological embodiment of the anxiety generated by an increasingly deranged, unnatural world, people in cyberculture came

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[2] A poster boy is a child who is used in commercials to raise money for charity.

[3] Kaczynski's writing was originally published in The Washington Post under the title Industrial Society and its Future. It was published in Dutch translation (by Aad Janssen and Mare Hurkmans) by Ravijn/Arsenaal, Amsterdam 1996, under the title Het Unabomber Manifest. De Industriële samenleving en haar toekomst.

[4] The You Will commercials from telecommunications giant AT&T suggest a brighter, brighter, high-tech future, brought to you by AT&T: "Have you ever put your baby to bed from a pay phone? You will!"

[5] Steven Levy, 'The Unabomber and David Gelemter' in The New York Times Magazine, 5/21/1995, p. 50.

to recognize him as one of their own: a kind of Yahoo Serious, plagued by a paralyzing, gnawing hatred.[6]

# 2

Kaczynski is a computer geek who, in true hacker tradition, began tinkering with computers in his parents' basement as a teenager and became a make-your-own-bomb freak. After reading the Unabomber Manifesto, Kevin Kelly dropped a bomb of his own: "The bottom line," he wrote, "is that this guy is a schlemiel. He's crazy, a nutcase. He's one of us. The Manifesto is structured like a doctoral dissertation or one of those computer science journals with numbered paragraphs. Very neat. Just like the bombs."[7]

Indeed, to fellow "technomafics," the Unabombs are unmistakably cyberpunk.[8] Before Kaczynski was given the FBI title of Unabomber, investigators called him the "scrap-metal bomb maker," referring to the fact that his destructive mechanisms were cobbled together from lamp cords, sink filters, bits of furniture, old screws, match heads, and lengths of pipe. In displaying a decidedly hacker penchant for repurposing and recycling, the Unabombs cast an ominous light on Gibson's cyberpunk shibboleth: "the street finds its own ways to use things."[9]

Even Wild Nature, the anti-technological eco-utopia at the heart of Unabomber ideology, conforms to the cyberpunk myth.

The Unabomber Manifesto presents a curiously Hobbesian vision of Eden regained, where people rejoice in satisfying what Kaczynski calls "a need (probably biological) for something we will call the 'power process.'" By which he seems to mean basic survival needs rather than the consumption of market-driven ideas that characterize consumer culture.

Uncorrupted by Fordism, Taylorism, or other control mechanisms of industrial society, Wild Nature means the sole domain of freedom, defined by the Unabomber as "having control (as an individual or as a member of a *small* group) over the life-and-death issues of existence: food, clothing, shelter, and defense against whatever threats may be in one's environment." By reducing human beings to bodies (that is, their

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[6] Yahoo Serious was the Einstein-like clownish brainiac in an Australian comedy film of the same name.

[7] Kevin Kelly (kk), Topic 283 [fw]: The UNABOMB Manuscript in Cyber-space, The WELL, 9-21-1995. ('kk' is Kelly's on-line name, 'fw' means FringeWare, and The WELL is a well-known bulletin board, one of the first virtual communities.)

[8] Cyberpunk was an avant-garde science fiction movement that began to engage with 'pop consciousness' after the publication of William Gibson's seminal novel Neuromancer (1984). It continues to this day, led by torchbearers such as Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson, Rudy Rucker, Pat Cadigan, and Gibson himself.

[9] The Street finds its own uses for things is the cyberpunk battle cry Gibson uses in several stories. The slogan – the 'shibboleth' – is at the heart of cyberpunk, encompassing the subcultural principles of stolen, subverted technology or information.

immediate, physical needs) and redefining freedom as the struggle for survival, the social-Darwinian, ecopolitical imaginaries of *Unafesto* bear more than a superficial resemblance to the post-apocalyptic primitivism romanticized in cyberpunk films like *The Road Warrior*.[10] Science fiction films and books—intoxicating concoctions of masculinist power fantasies, pioneer nythology, and the American cult of the unhinged loner—betray a nostalgic yearning for a more corporeal world, when TV screens, computer monitors, and the rest of the technological membrane had not yet intersected CNS with reality.

# 3

Ted Kaczynski and the cyberpunks are survivalists and anti-statists to the core, but they also share libertarian tendencies. In a letter to the *Times*, the Unabomber declares that he would "ideally like to break down the entire society into tiny, completely autonomous units," a view that parallels the cyberpunk vision of a society decentralized into self-sufficient autonomous zones like the *Lo-Tek Nighttown* in Gibson's *Johnny Mnemonic*.[11] Libertarian ideology is the default political view of *real-life* cyberpunks like the Japanese *otaku*, the hacker subculture that bends technology to its own ends. Even if it involves what *Wired* calls "the apotheosis of consumerism and an ideal labor force for contemporary capitalism."[12] The libertarian philosophy of minimal government and maximum individual freedom also appeals to globetrotting computer professionals who are increasingly becoming "net citizens": via cell phones, fax machines, and modems, they are connected to a world space of continuously circulating information and liquid capital. They have become increasingly disconnected from public space and social responsibility. Many live in gated, guarded enclaves that form the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in the United States, a disturbing dynamic that Robert Reich has defined as "the secession of the successful."[13] Kaczynski's radical, libertarian vision of a post-political body politic, disintegrated into dispersed cells, is the

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[10] Dery refers to Mad Max II – The Road Warrior, the second part in a 'dystopian' science fiction trilogy (with Mad Max and Mad Max III: Beyond Thunderdome), in which man was reduced to his most primitive state after a nuclear explosion and the law of the strongest once again applies. The only objective: finding fuel. Road Warrior is cyberpunk because – recalling Gibson's infamous quote The Street finds its own uses for things – it uses low-tech debris from the past to construct a vision of the future. (TP)

[11] Kaczynski is quoted here by Tom Morganthau in 'Who is He?' Newsweek, May 8, 1996, p. 40. It is called Lo-tek or low-tech (the opposite of high-tech) because Gibson's streetscape (like Blade Runner, by the way) was built from the 'detritus' (Giulliana Bruno calls it Ramble City or deconstructivist architecture) of a previous civilization (read: ours). (TP)

[12] Karl Taro Greenfeld, 'The Incredibly Strange Mutant Creatures Who Rule the Universe of Alienated Japanese Zombie Computer Nerds', Wired, first edition (1993, undated), p. 69.

[13] Reich uses this concept in many of his writings, especially in his book The Work of Nations.

missing link between Wild Nature and thoroughly technologized nature, and the toggle switch that connects it to cyberpunk on the one hand, and to cybercapitalism on the other. As an ironic flourish, we can also note that the Unabomber's call for the atomization of the nation-state resonates happily with the Toffler-Gingrich rhetoric of decentralization, demassification, and desynchronization that the editors of *Wired* hold dear, as do the laissez-faire futurists they idolize (George Gilder, Peter Drucker, Peter Schwartz, and their ilk).

While they favor deregulation over demolition and, of course, reject the anti-technology, anti-corporate principles of Kaczynski's platform, the digital elite Unabombers share his libertarian disdain for politics with a capital P, which is by definition statist. "This is not to be a POLITICAL revolution," Kaczynski writes in the introduction to his manifesto. "The goal is not to overthrow governments, but to destroy the economic and technological basis of present society."[14] Astute as he is, he realizes that the center of gravity of political power is rapidly shifting from the nation-state to the multinational corporation, especially when it comes to technology-dependent, post-industrial entities such as media conglomerates.

In *Wired*'s online statement, written by founder/publisher Louis Rossetto and made public by editor-in-chief John Battelle, a song is sung from the same sheet music: 'We at *Wired* have naturally ignored President Clinton, Washington, and politics in general. The Revolution will not happen in the halls of the Capitol, and politics is becoming not only increasingly outdated but also irrelevant. Everyone on the planet now believes in the free market as in gravity. There are now other, better ways to effect change in society than by pushing a button in a voting booth. Politics has become the problem, not the solution, and the Digital Generation can consciously reject politics because they have rationally concluded that politics and government are fundamentally discredited. *Wired* reports on a Revolution without violence, one that embraces a new, non-political way of improving the future, based on an economy outside of centralized, top-down macro-control.'[15] (Apparently, the de-elite for whom Battelle speaks also shares the revolutionary fervor of the Unabomber, the unwavering hubris of the true believer who is confident that history has a predetermined destiny; and it is going in the right direction!) As with their deregulatory soulmate, the 'conservative futurist' Newt Gingrich (to whose Progress and Freedom Foundation *Wired* has contributed), the Tofflerist rhetoric of decentralization espoused by the *Wired* de-elite is of course a cover for an exact replica of *reagonomics*, which aimed to overhaul the rickety regulatory system. to dismantle the framework that has (barely) curbed the power of multinational corporations, the ultimate goal of which is the elimination of the nation state, in which unleashed corporate power is no longer accountable to anyone.

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[14] The Freedom Club (= Ted Kaczynski), The Unabomber Manifesto. Industrial Society and Its Future, Ravijn/Arsenaal, Amsterdam 1996, p. 16.

[15] John Battelle (jbat), Topic 129 [wired]: New Republic Slams Wired!, the WELL, 1/14/1995.

# 4

In keeping with the social Darwinist undertones of their vision of a cyber-capitalist 'revolution' hatched in the minds of a technocratic elite, the digital elite ascribe their radical libertarian economics the force of natural law by couching them in the language of chaos theory and artificial life.

On the cover of Out of Control , Kelly promises "business strategies for an emerging global economy free of government control" (something that will appeal to corporate executives), and he calls on both disciplines to support the idea that unfettered capitalism could evolve into something rich and unfamiliar: a "network economy" of decentralized, outsourced "economic superorganisms" capable of adapting to the nonlinear dynamics of the global economic ecosystem. Visions of unfettered cyber-capitalism also dance around in the minds of management gurus like Tom Peters (author of the business book Thriving on Chaos ), whose business gospel of "mad" nonlinear decision-making and constant reinvention echoes the chaos theory thesis that turbulent natural systems, when thrown far enough out of equilibrium, often give rise to surprising new phenomena. Peters' idea of the post-industrial 'Atomized Enterprise, with energetic, often minuscule sub-units with their own personalities and a ruthless boss' is also reminiscent of the chaos-theoretic notion of self-organizing natural phenomena such as hurricanes and amoeba colonies, in which previously unrelated elements suddenly reach a critical point at which they begin to 'work together' to form more complex phenomena.[16]

Darwinian cybercapitalism also concretizes its own view of the world with paradigms from the world of artificial life. According to Peters, "this is the age of biological models of organization, not mechanical ones. I love corporations like CNN, which organize something organic, something that recreates itself, reinvents itself every day."[17] Management theorists like Peters already live in William Gibson's cyberpunk future, where multinational corporations are highly developed "life forms" whose DNA is "encoded in silicon" that constitute "the dominant forms of intelligence on the planet."[18] The conception of the corporation as a complex, colonial organism is implicit in recent attempts to obtain a court ruling to grant corporations the legal status of individuals, so that advertising for a corporate image is given the same protections as freedom of speech. The global market is increasingly couched in Darwinian terms, rationalizing the social and ecological devastation of multinational corporations as the struggle for survival of corporate entities in an economic ecosystem. Business consultant Michael Rothschild argues in Bionomics: The Inevitability of Capitalism that "what we call

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[16] 'The Nine 'Beyonds', 1994 Vintage Books press release for Peters' Crazy Times Call for Crazy Organizations.

[17] Thomas Kiely, "Unconventional Wisdom," CIO, December 15, 1993 – January 1, 1994, vol. 7, no. 6, p. 26.

[18] William Gibson, Neuromancer, Ace, New York 1984, p. 203; Gibson, 'New Rosé Hotel', Burning Chrome, Ace, New York 1987, p. 107.

capitalism (or free market economics) is not an -ism at all, but a natural phenomenon" (and thus presumably above criticism).

# 5

In summary, then, we can see that on the one hand the digital elite with its Darwinian market populated by corporate life forms, and on the other hand the Unabomber with its pristine wilderness populated by neo-Luddites, have built opposing worldviews on one and the same cornerstone: the notion of Nature as legislator of theories of culture. 'Nature', says Andrew Ross, 'is the ultimate man-pleaser whose name can be bestowed upon and honored even by things associated with its destruction.'[19]

A little digging reveals that the unquestionable authority of 'natural law' has been invoked throughout history not only to legitimize the exploitation of nature itself, but also to legitimize the oppression and extermination of women, non-whites, and other 'inferior beings'. Londa Schiebinger reveals how eighteenth-century anatomists, anthropologists, and biologists 'worked under the banner of scientific neutrality' and invoked the supposedly ape anatomy of Africans to explain their position near the bottom of the great chain of life. Similarly, the childishly 'compressed brains' of women were held up as evidence of their impulsive, emotional, and usually intellectually inferior qualities.[20]

The untamed eco-utopia of the Una-bomber and the free-market ecology of the digital elite are just the latest examples of nature being used as a ventriloquist's dummy in the service of social agendas. Other, not so pretty examples include Herbert Spaicer's social Darwinism (that's popular with monopolists like Rockefeller and Camegie as Kelly's neo-biological capitalism was with Tom Peters); but also the American eugenics movement of the 1920s, which saw more than two dozen states pass laws for the forced sterilization of anyone deemed "socially defective"; and, more recently, the voodoo sociology of Richard J. Hemstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life.*[21] The Unabomber and the digitelite are not alone in using nature as a ventriloquist's dummy.

Ross rightly argues that we are witnessing 'a massive revival of appeals to the authority of nature and biology'. The laws of nature are once again being invoked as a basis for making judgments and as a basis for policy. Biologism and social Darwinism are back in full force, driving the radically new worldview constructed by biotechnology and genetic medicine.[22] His book is full of ominous warnings that 'the authority

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[19] Andrew Ross, The Chicago Gangster Theory of Life: Nature's Debt to Society, Verso, New York 1994, p. 4.

[20] Londa Schiebinger, Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science, Beacon Press, Boston 1993, pp. 5, 7.

[21] A bestseller in America, notorious for its claim that blacks are intellectually (and genetically) inferior to whites.

[22] Ross, ibid., pp. 5, 15.

of nature, and thus of the status quo, will become a despotic vehicle for curtailing rights and freedoms'.[23] Almost forty years ago, Roland Barthes warned that one of the most insidious aspects of ideological thinking is that it converts a constructed social reality and the power relations inherent in it into an innocent, unchangeable 'nature'.[24] 'Ideology', he argued, 'has the task of giving a historical intention a natural justification and of making contingency seem perpetual'.[25] The concepts of 'Wild Nature' and 'techno-nature' are fatal because they do exactly the same thing and each of which stands in the way of discussion. By presenting it as God-given.

# Notes

[23] Ross, ibid., p. 12.

[24] Roland Barthes, Mythologies, The Noonday Press, New York 1972.

[25] Contingency is a philosophical concept. Something is contingent if it could not have been derived or foreseen, does not fit in anywhere or is 'coincidental'. According to some, including Spinoza, contingency is only due to our lack of knowledge: if we knew more, the necessity of everything would become apparent.

# The Gin As A Common Seducer

Freek Kallenberg

*"The collapse of the NASDAQ and NEMAX technology stocks represents much more than the failure of a few Internet companies. It is the latest indicator that many of the most popular assumptions about the Internet have turned out to be completely wrong,"* *writes Felix Stalder in his essay The End of an Era: The Internet Hits Ground.[1]* *For a long time, the Internet was the mythical space on which everyone could project their own utopias: new social ties, a strengthened sense of community, the emergence of all kinds of grassroots movements, direct democracy, decentralized non-hierarchical structures, greater control over government, the restoration of the public sphere without market and state, the breaking of the power of traditional mass media, a new ecological consciousness... the Net would make it all possible.*

Especially from the sunny beaches of California and from the columns of the American magazine *Wired*, the extropian digital ecotopia smiled at us. Freedom, ecology and prosperity went hand in hand and partly for that reason information technologies were enthusiastically received by computer nerds, slacker students, innovative capitalists, social and political activists, trendy academics, futuristic bureaucrats and opportunistic politicians in the US and soon also in Europe.

Cyberhippies and technoanarchists believed that the merging of media, computer technology, and telecommunications would eventually lead to the creation of a virtual space in which everyone could air their opinions without fear of censorship. A first step toward an instant democracy that would extend to all institutions. For these cyberhippies, the Internet was an electronic agora, a public domain in which information was freely available and government censorship was impossible because, in the words of John Gilmore, "the Internet treats censorship as damage and routes around it."[2]

Besides sunny beaches, California is also home to the cradle of the computer industry, Silicon Valley, the Walhalla of free boys. According to the 'Californian ideology'[3], global electronic networks would not only lead to an end of state interference in political and social life, but also to the privatization and deregulation of all economic activities.

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[1] Published in Telepolis, www.heise.de/tp.

[2] www.toad.com

[3] Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron 'The Califomian Ideology' in Science as Culture, No. 26, Vol 6 Part 1, 1996.

Influenced by the work of Alvin Toffler[4], Ithiel de Sola Pool[5] and other gurus, many liberals saw in the advent of hypermedia the possibility of a paradoxical return to the economic liberalism of an earlier era. Their retro-utopia recalled the predictions of Asimov, Heinlein and other macho science fiction writers who envisioned a future world of space traders, hip salesmen, genius scientists, pirate captains and other ragged loners. Their path of technological progress led not so much to the ecotopia of San Francisco's cultural bohemians, but to the America of the Founding Fathers. The electronic agora would come into being on – or because of – the electronic market: *Free speech is free trade.*[6]

## Copyleft

However, a market economy cannot function without exclusive property rights, in this case copyrights. These are precisely the ones that are incompatible with the socio-technological infrastructure of the net, which is based on the free exchange of ideas. Although the internet was developed by the Pentagon as part of its nomadic military strategy, it was the universities that first started to make active use of it. For scientists, the free distribution of information is a great asset. They are not so much interested in converting their intellectual work into marketable goods, but in respect and recognition, and they can gain this by being cited and published as much as possible. By posting or distributing findings and texts on the net, they contribute to their own fame and the progress of scientific research.

For this system to function optimally, not only information but also the software programs needed to use the Internet must be freely available to everyone. After all, the exponential expansion of the system was only possible due to the absence of property barriers. In the eyes of Internet pioneers, copyrights on software programs slow down the development of the system and of programs. Software designers such as Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, regard the Shareware they developed as a tool for building the 'intellectual commons'.[7] Their political movement, the

Open Source Movement, advocating for the open release of the source code of all software for collective editing and improvement.

The most famous example is the Lynux operating system, which gave Microsoft its first serious competitor. Starting with a prototype developed by Linus Torvalds,

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[4] Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave, London: Pan, 1980.

[5] Ithiel de Sola Pool, Technologies of Freedom: on free speech in the electronic age, Cambridge Mass: Belknap Press, 1983.

[6] Richard Barbrook, The Regulation of Liberty: free speech, free trade and free gifts on the Net, www.nettime.org/ nettime. w3archive/200008/msgOOl 10.html

[7] Tim Berbers-Lee with Mark Fischetti, Weaving the Web: the past, present and future of the World Wide Web by its inventor, Orion Books, London, 1999. Commons is a property or domain freely available to anyone and thus the opposite of property-based exclusive use.

it has grown into a network community of software developers who work together on a program. The continuously improved version can be downloaded for free from the Internet. To prevent a commercial company from running off with this or other Shareware, licenses are needed, but these are not based on *copyright* but on *copyleft*. A property right that protects not private but public property by preventing individuals or institutions from claiming a software program as their exclusive property.

The absence of copyright characterizes almost all network communities in which – by means of e-mail, discussion and news groups and homepages – texts, images, animations, music, games and software are exchanged. The 'communities' in fact have a gift economy in which everyone can also enjoy the creative efforts of the entire network community by contributing their own work. Here there is no passive consumption of fixed information products by consumers, but a fluid process of 'interactive creativity' of *prosumers*. Each new *posting* contributes to the abundance that is already there and which is difficult to make exclusive. Each network user has an inclusive 'right' to all information that is on the net. The Internet is such a modern-day common

to which everyone contributes of their own free will and can pick to their heart's content.

## Commons

According to Richard Barbrook, this gift economy will ultimately lead to the erosion of capitalism because the scarcity of copyright cannot compete with the abundance of the gift. "As the Net grows, more and more people will discover the benefits of the gift economy. (...) Working in cyber-communism is not only more productive, but also more enjoyable than in digital capitalism," Barbrook says.[8]

Howard Rheingold of the Electronic Frontier Foundation argues that the pleasure of giving and receiving gifts or presents will radically change the personal experience of collective labor. While the exchange of goods in the market economy is an impersonal activity, Rheingold argues that the exchange of gifts increases the friendship between participants. Like Barbrook, he believes that these social benefits of the high-tech gift economy will not be limited to the Internet. Despite their material wealth, Rheingold argues, Americans lead alienated and isolated lives as a result of market competition. Within network communities, they now find friendship and intimacy. Because there is no need for collective labor to be confined to cyberspace, Americans can restore the social *commons*.[9]

In response to Barbrook's prediction of a cybercommunist future, Phil Graham notes that the abundance of these *commons* is only available to those who

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[8] Richard Barbrook, 'Cyber-communism: how the Americans are superseding capitalism in cyberspace' in Science as Culture, Number 1, Volume 9, 2000, p. 5–40.

[9] Howard Rheingold, The Virtual Community: finding connection in a computerized World, London, Secker & Warburg, 1994.

network connection and computer that support all this exchange of gifts. According to him, the surplus of all these 'gifts' mainly benefits internet providers and other 'suppliers'.[10] High-tech companies become filthy rich from the sale of hardware and software because ever larger memories, faster processors, CD writers, DVD players, modems and network connections are needed to benefit from this gift economy. According to Graham, the gift economy of the net has about the same status as Christmas: everyone gives each other things, but it is mainly the retailers and manufacturers who profit from it. Bill Gates can talk about this.

# Marketing

The wisdom of the free boys in California that the gift and the product can coexist perfectly well is not yet shared by managers in the Old Economy. As far as they are concerned, the gift economy has gotten out of hand and they demand that their intellectual property be protected. Theft is still theft, even when it is committed with the latest technologies, and so governments must update their legislation to deal with the new threats of 'cyberterrorism'. Anyone who develops software that is potentially suitable for online piracy must be criminalized, the distribution of copyrighted material must be punishable. Protected by encryption (scrambling) and passwords, information in the digital economy will have to be traded as a product.

While legislators appear sensitive to this call for a *'war on copying'*, it is questionable whether this will succeed in an open structure such as the internet. The legal ban on the activities of the company Napster (which supplied software with which individual internet users can pick music files (MP3) from each other's computers), for example, cannot prevent users from continuing to exchange files with each other using open-source software such as Gnutella and Freenet.

According to internet anthropologist Marianne van den Boomen, all attempts at political filtering, legal regulation or economic monopolization of the net are immediately met with its technical-social resistance. It is practically impossible to close anything off, because both technology and use will always find an alternative route.[11] The lawsuits that record companies are now filing against Napster therefore seem like rearguard actions. Because 'plagiarism' will soon be ubiquitous, entrepreneurs will have to find other ways to use the net profitably. While some media companies are advocating a digital Panopticon instead of the current internet: a computer network regulated from above on which everyone's online activities can be monitored at all times, the e-commerce pioneers know that this is not necessary at all. It is all about seducing users or consumers. The most successful dotcom companies do not supply

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[10] Apropos of Richard Barbrook's cybercommunism; Posted at nettime-l@bbs.thing.net

[11] Marianne of the Trees. Life on the Net, Institute for Publicity and Politics, Amsterdam 2000, p. 31.

material (information) products but real-time services, advertisements, merchandising and marketing research.

The potential of the net has been known for a long time, especially among marketing gurus. For example, the internet communities have become the darlings of e-commerce marketers. Almost every major site has a 'communities' section somewhere. It is not without reason that the five most visited sites on the Internet, such as the Internet provider America Online, and search, index and mail sites such as Yahoo!, MSN, Lycos network and Excite@Home, house almost all user communities.[12] Because they do not run on paying subscribers, they have to rely mainly on web advertising. They must therefore keep their audience on the site for as long as possible. By giving people the opportunity to start their own community, including the necessary tools, you can ensure that they will return to your site again and again. And where people organize themselves, their preferences and interests will naturally emerge. The result is a kind of continuous marketing research. A goldmine for marketers and advertisers, because a flourishing virtual community is, from a dotcom perspective, a profiled potential customer base; a target group of reachable consumers who practically camp on your doorstep. And the dotcom economy essentially runs on this promise: public = market = money.

# Relationship technology

Ulrich Gutmaier sees in these new marketing strategies the rise of a *cybernetic capitalism* in which the techniques for tracking users' desires and the distribution of products that satisfy those personal tastes will merge into an almost organic process with endless feedback. "Digital pop culture will then be defined in the relationship between you and your internet terminal, as an infinite magnifying glass of interconnected suggestions, desires and info-objects."[13]

That the German media group Bertelsman has acquired Napster for fifty million to integrate it with its music subsidiary BMG is understandable. Bertelsman is not only buying Napster's name recognition and internet market share, but also a 'community' of millions of people who gratefully become victims of targeted marketing campaigns because their music preferences can be read at a glance from their download behavior.

In this cybernetic capitalism, communication – the exchange of gifts – is commerce. The marketing of life becomes almost infinite. Through the continuous flow of data on consumer preferences, coupled with the ability to record the precise purchasing behavior of customers by means of barcodes and payment cards, companies gain excellent insight into the lifestyle, diet, wardrobe, health, recreational preferences and travel behavior of network users. With tailor-made marketing, the customer can be seduced into various long-term commercial relationships.

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[12] Ibid., p. 135.

[13] Ulrich Gutmaier, The Net Is not the Club, www.mi.cz/obl

Instead of *information technology*, people are now also talking about *relationship technology*. After all, in the New Economy, as Jeremy Rifkin argues, it is no longer about possession, but about relationships: "In the Internet economy, the tradability of human relationships becomes more important than the tradability of goods and services. To keep customers' attention, you have to control as much of their time as possible. Companies are no longer primarily concerned with a one-time transaction with their customers, with the sale of one or more products. They now strive for a continuous and sustainable relationship with their customer, at

example through lease contracts and monthly access fees, which allow them to earn money from him again and again. They want to permanently establish themselves in our lives."[14]

Where this can lead, *Volks-* tat-joumalist Francisco van Jole discovered last year during a holiday in Spain. When he arrived there, a number of Dutch-language messages about hotels and restaurants in the area unexpectedly and automatically appeared on his mobile phone. "I suddenly realised that I had not been 'getting away for a while' unnoticed. There was someone who had been following me to my destination all this time, probably a computer."[15]

While a government-imposed Panopticon would likely meet with resistance, few would have a problem with permanent corporate surveillance (think of the Albert Heijn bonus card or Air Miles). Many net users, despite all the warnings about commercial use of their data, sign up for an account with a free email provider or start a 'community' there. According to Mark Stahlman, the Californian promise of more democracy through the digital highway is the ultimate totalitarian temptation. "The utopian/corporatist (i.e. fascist) force needs the online 'democracy' of the net *to get* the public to buy and to be able to watch constantly. (...) My friend, on this planet anarchism is totalitarianism."[16]

The promise of the Internet as a new world thus serves as a 'mean' THE seducer that must above all get us to buy. Of course, many idealistic Internet pioneers do not leave it at that. In Amsterdam, for example, an attempt is being made to save the Digital City, one of the showpieces of the digital democratic movement where you can still get a free digital mailbox and homepage without your data being turned into a commodity, from the hands of the business community. And just as in the sixties radio pirates settled on the old forts just outside the territorial waters of England, there is now

Fort Sealand – an island that was declared a free state in 1967 – a gang of cyberpunks and hackers settled there to create the free data port Freehaven. Currently, they are already working hard on an Open Napster Server so that the free exchange of music files can continue.

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[14] Jeremy Rifkin. 'The Network Tires on the Dying Market' in Faithful, 11 November 2000.

[15] Fransisco van Jole, 'Privacy? What then?', the Volkskrant, 3 March 2000.

[16] Re: The Anarchives... The Mythology of Technology: The Internet As Utopia, www.nettime.org/ nettime. w3archive/l99611/msg00043.html

The Internet, like the real world, is not so much a space of unlimited freedom as a terrain where freedom must be created daily by resisting the hierarchical power of the economy and government. Not an autonomous zone, but a place where autonomous zones will have to be conquered and will always be temporary.

# Grrrlpower: The Rise Of Cyberfeminism

Karline de Blécourt[4]

*"The past decade has seen a cultural revolution that is invisible to the general public. While the Internet is seen by the average user as a free space for commerce, information, entertainment and pornography, rebellious artists and scientists are active in the underground layers of cyberspace. Women in particular have given a refreshing impulse to digital culture. They are the ones who, with their new strategies, are shaking up traditional ways of seeing and thinking. Their code name: Cyberfeminists.[1]*

Deanna Herst is not the only one writing about a new feminist culture that is taking shape on the internet. It seems that the internet provides a breeding ground for various initiatives by women (and men) who oppose all forms of stereotyping of the sexes. Cyberfeminism could be described as a collection of projects and initiatives that challenge gender relations in cyberspace by using technology itself. By cyberspace I mean a 'reality' that is created by technology. Virtual reality and the internet are the most obvious and well-known examples of such a reality, they can form a world apart. This article will discuss cyberfeminism on the internet.

Websites that are cyberfeminist I call grrrlsites for convenience. There are different forms of grrrlsites to be found on the internet. You have the E-zines, these are magazines on the internet. These partly originate from the riotgrrrl scene in America. This feminist

Punk culture has known the zine phenomenon for years. Often self-copied and written magazines that are distributed among the lovers of women's punk. On the internet, this culture continues in 'magazines' that discuss the most diverse subjects and in which much resistance is offered to everything that restricts or oppresses women. In addition to e-zines, there are also many networks of home pages, such as the gURLs. These homepages are from women and they are as different from each other as the women are. Some are extremely boring and others are incredibly interesting and inspiring. Political statements, photos of ponies, ironic hatred of men and pop idols are amiably mixed there.

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[1] Deanna Herst in 'Sheroes and Girlmonsters' in: Lover 2000/3.

[4] The author has done research on cyberfeminism on Dutch websites. Her research can be found at www.geocities.com/nedgurrl

Thirdly, you could distinguish cyberart. Cyberart are initiatives by (mainly) female artists who use digital technology to create images that often have an alienating effect on how we see distrustful relationships. A fourth group of grrrlsites are networks of

women who help and support each other in the computer field and other matters. Here women can go with questions, for courses, for newsgroups on various subjects, for space for their homepages etc... The Dutch webgrrls are a good example of this. In addition, there are numerous sites that discuss the theory of cyberfeminism, but I will leave those out of consideration.

## Postfeminism

What is striking about this feminism is that it opposes traditional role patterns in society just as much as it opposes ideas about being a woman from feminism. The self-confident, successful working woman is just as unattractive as the role of housewife. That is why it is better to call cyberfeminism *postfeminist*. Postfeminism is not a rejection of feminism but rather a critical way of being feminist. Many themes, such as the absurd beauty ideal, sexual violence and prejudices about women and technology, are still addressed in cyberfeminism. But instead of bra burnings, demonstrations and petitions, cyberfeminism is more about playing with meanings, with which they call current ideas about thinking about gender relations into question.

The Internet creates a virtual world that on the one hand has clear connections with our material world and on the other hand can also be distinguished from this world. You are online or offline. This virtual world is easily accessible, which creates a cyberspace in which masses of people participate. How are these

digital space gender relations challenged using the possibilities offered by the internet?

The internet is a digital world. Because of this, everything that appears on the internet can be copied and used for one's own purposes. In this way, everything can get a different meaning in a different context. On the internet, it is easy to place stereotypes of women in a different context so that they get a different meaning. An example of this are sites such as *the geekgirls, disgrunted house-wifes and barbie mutant* site. Sexy women are no longer objects of desire there, but tough babes who proudly call themselves *bitch, whore or slut*, housewives develop into leather fetishists and barbie hits her head so hard against the screen that you have to be careful not to break your screen. Instead of becoming objects of desire, it is precisely women with their own pronounced sexuality who have a firm grip on the reins themselves. And good housewives end up in the land of fables.

This phenomenon also originates from the riotgrrrl scene. The withdrawal of words such as Girl, which, like the word girl, has a rather derogatory effect, was frequently done there, as can be heard in the names of punk bands, Luna Chicks, Babes in Toyland, Riotgrrrls etc. Instead of the term, the content of the word is changed. This

is made clear, among other things, by writing it differently. Grrrl gives the word a new aggressive and liberating meaning. In the same way, original negative names for women are changed in meaning. A chick or a bitch no longer stands for

for an disrespectful woman but for a woman who takes control of herself and frees herself from existing ideas of what a woman should be.

*"Grrrl" is intended to recall the naughty, confident and curious ten-year-old toe were befbre society made it clear it was time to stop being loud and playing with boys and concentrate on learning 'to girl', that is, to be a proper lady so that boys would like us."*[2] Grrrl sites often use a 'Bad Girl Image'. Not only does the name 'grrrl' have a Bad Girl Image, many grrrl sites also feature graphics of tough, sexy and assertive women. Bad Girl is therefore a new designation of being a woman, implying that women cannot be pigeonholed and decide for themselves what they do and who they are.

The Internet is an easy and cheap way to spread information and reach people. It is therefore not surprising that the women's punk zine culture in America has continued on this path. Putting together an e-zine and reaching women who might be interested in your information has become much easier via the Internet.

The Internet has no hierarchical structure. The way of organizing and arranging information has a network character. There is no logical order in the links between the sites. When you surf the Internet, you decide for yourself which links you follow. The Internet is also an open network. Anyone who has the knowledge and access to a computer can add things. It is a constantly changing network, sites are added, disappear, change, and the same applies to the links between the sites. This means that cyberfeminism

also has an open structure. The ideas about feminism or about feminist subjects do not have to match at all. One site rejects feminism as a whole and the other says that you are crazy if you are not a feminist. Each site has its own style and links to the sites that the creator wants to show. Thus, the content of cyberfeminism is not a comprehensive theory about society, but a collection of ideas that are connected to each other.

The Internet is an interactive medium. You can respond directly to what appears on your screen and you can also communicate live with other people who are online. This means that everyone who visits the site can give their opinion on the topics discussed there. This can be done, for example, via a discussion page where you can respond to a statement and the previous responses to that statement (for example, the lounge on the Bust site). There are also mailing lists (information and discussion via email) and chat rooms.

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[2] Laurel Gilbert and Crystal Kile, SutferGrrrls: Look Ethel An Internet Guide For Us, Seal Press, Seattle 1996, p. 5.

# Cyborg

The Internet thus ties in with many ideas of cyberfeminism. The decentralizing effect of information technology prevents a hierarchical structure of organization where the top determines what happens. Because it is an interactive medium, it allows a high degree of democratization. On the other hand, the Internet can make it easier to find each other and form a group and maintain contact with each other and play a centralizing role. For example, information technologies can contribute to the formation of an action group and can serve as a central point for contact.

The idea that femininity is a construct is reflected in the many ways in which women are addressed on the sites. In this way, it becomes clear that there are many differences between women. Instead of marginalizing these differences to form a unity, they are displayed in all their glory. In this way, there is no dominant image of what you should be as a woman and you are encouraged to do your own thing. The only women who are excluded are those who do not have the knowledge or the opportunity to venture onto the internet. Which is of course a big disadvantage.

The cyborg is the symbol of this freedom of identity in cyberfeminism. The cyborg stands for an open identity that is constantly changing and that is not afraid to connect with what nevertheless pass as separate worlds. There is clearly a connection with technology. Technology is already an essential part of our humanity. Just try to imagine a world without communication possibilities, without means of transport, without health care. The separation between man and machine is just as artificial as the boundary between man and woman. The cyborg is a possibility to escape from the fixed assumptions and to investigate for yourself how things can be different. This gives a lot of space to play with ideas about masculinity and femininity.

Even though there is no longer unity among women, there is still a great solidarity. You can see this on the many sites that offer women help with computers. On regular sites about this, you are not taken very seriously as a woman. But also on the links that are made you can see a great solidarity. Most sites that criticize man-woman relationships make a lot of links to other grrrl sites. Even though the beliefs are sometimes different. There is an atmosphere of: 'I might do it differently but how nice that it is happening'. This also shows that the visitors are not expected to simply agree with the opinions that are offered.

Cyberfeminism is largely science and cultural criticism. A critical attitude is essential for a cyberfeminist. This is also expected and encouraged by visitors to grrrlsites.

The resistance of cyberfeminism is expressed on the internet by denouncing male-female relationships by playing with the meanings of masculinity and femininity. This is done in an open way, which allows for a multitude of strategies and ideas, encouraging everyone to participate and comment. The critical attitude is more important than unanimity. There are therefore many opinions and strategies to be found within cyberfeminism. In this way, a network is created in which people are more or less in

solidarity with each other (each site chooses its own links, but through the network you still end up on sites that are not supported by your starting site). This solidarity is not based on a shared identity but on affinity with the subject.

This way of working is closely related to the Do-It-Youself policy. Don't wait for fun sites for women to come along, but start a grrrl site yourself. (There is a lot of help for that on grrrlsites.) Show in this way what fascinates you and what irritates you immensely. You can see it as a very individual way of being busy. Which may be somewhat difficult to relate to political action. But the politics of cyber-feminism is largely in the idea: think for yourself and don't let yourself be imposed by norms and values in society, the law or any religion or feminism. A great deal of emphasis is therefore on empowerment. Giving women the space to speak for themselves and encouraging them to take action themselves, not only through practical help but also by offering many different images of women.

There is nothing wrong with going off the beaten path. It is fun, is the message.

Site addresses:
E-zines: www.bust.com,www.geekgirl.com.au,www.riotgrrl.com
Homepages: wwwnrrdgrrl.com, www.gURL.com, www.xs4all.nl (=Marianne van den Boomen: Barbiehacking&cyborgs)
Cyberart:
www.disgruntledhousewife.com, www.axisvmn], www.dds.nl
Networking: www.webgrrls.nl,www.genderchagers.org

# Peter Van Gogh's Climatic City

**Gertjan Broekman**

*"Does all that nonsense of mine really do any good for you?", concludes Peter van Gogh, our hour-and-a-half-long conversation. He is the 86-year-old artist and spiritual father of the climatological city through and through. In a strange staccato of incomplete sentences, he speaks almost continuously, repeatedly emphasizing that the climatological city is not a story, that you can't really talk about it. Above all, it is a concept to which every text must give way.*

*It is not for nothing that he has never written a word about it. "You must be well aware that what you say or write has nothing to do with reality; that was first put into practice in philosophy some fifty years ago; so that a philosopher no longer concerns himself with reality; he is a philosopher in the sense that he deals with a subject."*

His distrust of the word was instilled in him from childhood by his parents, who were averse to any authority. "What I have achieved – if I may say so – is absolutely impossible to learn if you have been raised in the church, in a family of decency; my parents were real Provos: swearing and making trouble; but also nice people, mind you; they were not cynical, they talked cynically, for a child it was very cynical; my mother would say 'boy, don't let people fool you, not a minister, not a priest, not the army or the state; people will cheat you with their eyes open in broad daylight'; and I experience that in myself too; I also fool people; if you open your mouth you have already said something, it is already a lie, it is no longer true; that is of course the whole problem, that we believe so much in what we say to each other, like lovers believe in each other's story; I have solved that problem for myself, by freeing myself from language; but don't get me wrong, that language is very important; right

From that language, all those books that I have read, I have become aware of that incongruence between language and reality."

"In contrast, I have searched for a reality; from the question of who we are and what society is; I have discovered that there is no answer to that with words; and then I say, maybe, maybe this is a possibility, that we no longer talk but start doing something; in doing so, I started from my body and I have experienced for myself that it is about a few things: sex, eating, sleeping, in a certain sense an environment; that is completely material, no language is involved; with all due respect for that language, great of course, but that is a completely different world; in that sense not the world in

which I express myself; I have to tell something, but it is not a story like in literature or philosophy or theology."

From these material conditions, Van Gogh arrived at the climatological city. A city standing freely in the landscape

ring with a diameter of at least ten kilometres and a height of three hundred metres. The ring – a figure that allows the smallest number of spatial exceptions – is built up of identical residential units, making it possible to mass-produce high-quality cities using modern industrial technology that can be built anywhere in the world in a short time. The city offers space for at least one million residents – a minimum for an optimally functioning city. The residents are economically liberated in the sense that they no longer have to worry about the material conditions for living and they are collective 'owners' of the urban environment, which can be seen as one large company that encompasses the activities of all citizens. The natural environment of the site remains almost completely intact, so that the residents do not look out onto other buildings; from every home there is an unobstructed view of the landscape. The residents are both city dwellers and outdoor people.

There is no predetermination of what is good for the inhabitants of this city or what they should do. It is a playground for homo ludens, a workshop for homo faber and a thinking space for homo sapiens. The approach is that of applying amoral technology: technology that has nothing to say, or about which there is nothing to say. "It is not that you can already say that this city is good for the people who live there; but as an idea it is of course good, it cannot be tinkered with, you cannot have a personal opinion about it; in that sense it is in line with natural science, namely

that it has nothing to do with contemplation."

With his concept, Van Gogh incidentally deals with the problems of contemporary urban planning. This is still based on the cumbersome and expensive process of separate houses, blocks, districts and cities – a consequence of the ideological compulsion to constantly invent new, interesting, science-based forms for separate functions. "I am the first to solve the problem of design, you have to see that clearly; the leap I made to think of an entire city as an industrial product in one go, separate from design, separate from architecture, separate from urban planning, separate from urban development; that shed for people so empty, so meaningless from the perspective of the concepts beautiful-ugly; that the city only satisfies the material requirements; you don't have to keep making a design, it can be 300 m high, it can be 550 m high, the diameter can be different, it can be a bit oval; but with everything you do too much you miss the opportunity for speed; nothing is superfluous, so short-circuited, so direct, so that it is all about the human being – I don't know him, I'm not allowed to say anything more about him – because I know nothing about the human being."

Seen in this light, one could say that the climatological city is a paradigmatic leap in the field of architecture. But Van Gogh's idea reaches further. It is a concept beyond Progress, the ideology of design or any other ideology. It is the artistic expression of the awareness that there is nothing to regulate, to control or to shape.

it is moreover, that this is not necessary. In this sense, one could speak of a paradigmatic leap, which extends over the whole of life.

Not that Van Gogh pretends to create a better, more human world with the climatological city. This city is not, like all kinds of utopias, the result of an interdisciplinary construction of a better living environment, a superposition of scientific insights. "No, no, it is an artistic idea, an artistic idea; there is no given in any category, in any science, that will bring you to this result; when you talk to me you must know what it means that I speak outside of any category, that I do not belong to any category; I have of course tasted of all those categories; but I regard them all as parts, just like car parts that have not yet been assembled; you only get there via the artistic world, there you are free; from the economy, from technology, from business you do not get to the climatological city; you could see all those things together as the paint of an artist; that is the playfulness, the freedom that you have in art, that you do not have to be consistent to arrive at a result, as in science; that is why I do not say that the climatological city is consistent; it is my idea and it has never been carried so far."

The climatological city is not a utopia; because a utopia is a linguistic construction of a future society, a story. And Van Gogh is now done with those stories, those reflections. "I am not concerned with humanity;

for I do not know what that is; and I do not concern myself with society, for I do not know how people (want to) live; I am only concerned with that ring, that piece of equipment."

We also never find out why we live and what society looks like in all its relations. Not from the contemplative science, such as sociology or philosophy, because they make moral statements or produce texts. Nor from the natural sciences, because those questions are not asked there.

"I have always experienced life as meaning movement, being busy, and nothing else; you have to be busy and you do; your senses do that; you don't make that up; before you could make something up, your brain has already guided you in a fraction of a second; through your senses; and then it will probably be the case that that is often related to society; but that is not you yourself; there is no question of you determining that yourself; it happens to you, from second to second; just like an accident, life happens to you; and then I find it so nice that in that contemplative world – with all due respect of course, that is very important – people would never have thought that from the natural sciences, from brain research and evolutionary biology we would increasingly understand why we do something and how we came into being; we know all those processes, but we still don't know why we are here."

"And that is so difficult for people, that it all happens to you; they experience so much that they are something; and that is good of course, for some for a short time; when you get older you start

also realize that it is not true; but for a whole society that is not good; a lot of misery comes from that."

"What you do in the world is not important; at least, from a moral or societal perspective you can say that it is important; that simply comes from a desire to belong somewhere or to be allowed to participate; but in an absolute sense, from a biological perspective, we know nothing about it of course; and in the same way we do not know how society is structured; I am purely concerned with those material conditions; that terrible suffering that people experience, for a very long time, with wars, earthquakes, floods; so many people without a home and food; then all that is no longer necessary, that is what I assume;

not out of pity, but as a given to be occupied with, apart from talking."

Van Gogh hoists his great bulk upright in his chair once more and presses the thin metal frames of his glasses against his forehead for the last time from halfway up his nose. "It is simple, so simple; all my nonsense now is so complicated because it is words; the thing itself is like a tool, from which you can immediately read what it is, just as you can immediately see from a knife that it is a knife; as complete, as it were, as an aeroplane or a car or a boat, ready in itself; it is about the thing; that is the idea, the thing itself must speak."

No more talking, just building. Because when it's done, that's when it really starts.

# Techgnosis: Interview With Erik Da Vis[5]

**Konrad Becker**

In his 1998 book TechGnosis. Myth, magic & mysticism in the age of information (Harmony Books, 1998), Erik Davis sheds light on the occult aspects of the information age. Technology becomes a contemporary expression of religious thought patterns and an esoteric subjectivity that, according to Davis, we can trace throughout history. Konrad Bedcer spoke with him.

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Erik Davis: "In TechGnosis I point to those aspects of technoculture that are either explicitly religious in nature or that – consciously or unconsciously – build on coherent religious, mystical or occult thought patterns. At the same time I try to enrich the language of cyber or technoculture with a mass of historical and fantastic material. I am interested in reaching back to images, stories, gods and myths that resonate with all kinds of contemporary themes. Up until now the language of cyberculture has been largely dominated by postmodern considerations, which of course are an important part of the ongoing discussion. Postmodern, poststructuralist thinking offers an excellent method for analyzing the mechanisms of the dominant system, and in many ways technoculture behaves as a cultural symptom of postmodernism. I just think that postmodernism, with its desperate, enlightened scepticism, closes itself off from certain expressions of subjectivity, consciousness, imagination and experience that

Without this, I don't think we will ever truly understand the profound cognitive and cultural changes brought about by new technologies.

"In short, I want to bring all sorts of other material into the discussion, material that represents more of a social history of the imagination. The images and ideas may be philosophically naive, but that naivety offers you a kind of richness of images and a certain sincerity when it comes to experience, consciousness and the collective imagination."

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Will postmodern culture or the current discourse within cultural studies on new media be able to assimilate such views, or do you think a new approach is needed?

"I am, to be honest, rather skeptical about it. Within postmodernism there seems to be an inherent aversion and distrust of terms such as 'experience', 'consciousness' or 'imagination' and an unwillingness to engage with worldviews that lie outside the fundamental rationalist axioms.

ma's of the Enlightenment. Personally, I don't see how we can discuss what is happening outside modernity, or what is emerging within its cracks, without also bringing in the premodern. But I'm not immediately convinced that intellectuals who are up to their ears in postmodern rhetoric will be interested in what I have to say. I do think, however, that these issues will become increasingly important as they take on social and cultural forms that take up and live by such views. When push comes to shove, I think I'm proposing a secret or esoteric approach to technoculture that doesn't fit into the prevailing intellectual climate"

In your opinion, is postmodern discourse challenged by irrationality?

"Yes, I think so. Postmodern discourse overlooks the productive and creative dimensions of irrational thought and refuses to engage directly with the question of consciousness and other states of consciousness. It shrinks from their autonomy and from the inevitably distorted discourse that results from it. But in fact I am not in favor of a theoretical approach to this question. I am not interested in a rhetorical gambit with which I could construct a philosophical framework to justify my interests, and that is not how I am in fact. What is important is precisely to put these interests into practice: to produce images, critical networks of correspondences, without wanting to fall back on some premodern philosophy concerning the spiritual relationship between symbol and higher level of existence.

veaus. Without falling into the old hierarchical traps, you can still produce such a thinking: an analogical thinking, a magical thinking, albeit this time with a critical dimension that allows it to move freely through history and through different discourses. For me, this is a creative expression of the liberation from rationalism that postmodernism offers us, leaving behind some of the postmodernist scepticism. Mind you, some of it: that scepticism remains, but you don't have to boast about it."

In your work you discuss irrationality as a dark side of rationality. In many ways there is a dark side to rationalism that remains beyond the reach of the various critiques of rationalism as such. I am thinking here of some exponents of radical materialism and their influence on early technological development. Sometimes it is difficult to determine where the dividing line lies between an extreme materialist and an idealist. Does this question concern you?

"Yes, you encounter that tension again and again. If you are aware of the patterns in which the religious imagination expresses itself and of its history, you recognize things that do not occur at the level of philosophical axioms, but as thought patterns. The best example of what you just described are those hard-core 'extropianic' Kl

types here in America.[1] Their philosophical approach is one of absolute reductionism and materialism. They are appallingly anti-Cartesian. Their conception of the spirit is anything but dualistic. They do not believe that the spirit exists outside the flesh or comes from other realms. The spirit is an evolving e-gene produced by the parallel interaction of a complex system of neurons.

"The extropians take this idea to its logical extreme: if we can reproduce the right underlying matrix of our complex information gathering, we will be able to boot consciousness. Going one step further, you can download your own mind into some kind of machine matrix, thus creating the possibility of immortality and an almost divine expansion of consciousness. So suddenly you are left with a distinctly Gnostic notion, in the midst of the most extreme reductionist materialism imaginable. If you approach this situation exclusively on a philosophical level, you see only a vaguely absurd outgrowth of materialist thinking. But if you approach it on a pictorial or mythical level, you see that this is a thoroughly Gnostic conception, touching on a wide range of spiritual questions and in a certain sense possibilities – aspects that are discussed at length in my book. Moravec and Co. may start from the body, but in the end they reproduce the essentially religious idea that there is a radical separation between body and mind, as well as the Gnostic tendency to deny the material side of this equation. We can leave all these carnal sheaths behind us and enter a pleroma (sanctuary) of information, where we can shape our own experience and expand our knowledge to its Promethean extremes. If you examine the history of Hermetic and Gnostic thought, you will find these same images against again and again. Historically, contemporary developments are nourished, enriched and complicated by such older myths, by such premodern images and ideas, without losing sight of their exclusively contemporary aspects. Looking back is a way to move forward more effectively."

In the discussion of the past few years, the term 'virtual elite' has come up, which in a sense is equated with the virtual elite of the cybergnostics. Peter Lamborn Wilson addresses this and there is a debate about what cybergnosticism actually is. Do you see a distinction between different cybergnostic movements?

"The cyber-Gnostic tendency is not a clear-cut phenomenon. I have a more ambivalent attitude toward Gnostic thought than Wilson, an attitude that derives from the wide range of Gnostic views in the history of religious and esoteric thought.[2] Wilson debunks Gnosticism to point out a fundamental fallacy that keeps cropping up in religious thought: the idea that one can transcend the body, that there is some dimension of representation or information or consciousness outside the body. Today, of course, cyberspace has become the locus of such false transcendence. For Wilson, the best side of the religious or spiritual impulse is its immanent dimension: the ecstatic, antino-

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[1] AI = artificial intelligence.
[2] See for example Peter Lambom Wilson, 'From Cyberspace to Neuropsace' in Andere Sinema, March/April 1996 and 'Net-religion' in Mba-Kajere winter 1997.

mian celebration of otherness, of autonomy and imagination within the body. From this point of view, the Gnostic quest for transcendence is a deadly move, one that is technologically reproduced in today's cyberworld.

"Wilson's critique is as strong as it is accurate, and it directly addresses the question of political power and its relation to spiritual and fantastic patterns. But once you make that connection with cyber-Gnosticism, you also have to address the historical, philosophical, and mythical dimensions of Gnosticism. That is extremely complicated. There are many sides to the Gnostic striving, and in my reading the phenomenon is less clear-cut—in the sense that it is both 'good' and 'evil'—than Wilson makes it out to be. Although it is an extreme symptom of the transcendent rupture between mind and body, a rupture that we are all rightly suspicious of, there is also a radically autonomous aspect to Gnosticism. Rather than receiving the mystical gifts through an institution or book or ecclesiastical hierarchy, it is radically internalized. Indeed, within the Gnostic subject, transcendence becomes immanence. The Gnostic subject experiences the eschaton, or the metaphysical dimensions of the reality, within the psychodynamics of the self. This immediately complicates our understanding of cyber-gnosticism."

Is that the anti-hierarchical current within cyber-gnosticism?

"To a certain extent, yes, and that ties in with the history of hermetic thought and the alchemical interpretation of the self. These are always ambivalent phenomena, there are always two sides to them. But one would hope (and this is pure speculation) that technology would provide the space for an external, mechanical expression of such an expansion of consciousness, or an intensification of simultaneity, or a

a blurring of boundaries – that the cognitive boundaries with which we operate in the normal world are blurred and broken open. The Gnostic tendency within techno-culture is not simply the ideology of the cyber elite – it is symptomatic of the fact that this technology, like all previous information technologies, actually produces cognitive changes. It produces something in us as experiencing subjects: how we integrate the different levels of our experience, how we relate to other people, and how we experience an information sphere that remains in some sense separate from physical reality. Such shifts actually exert an influence on human consciousness, and Gnosticism is a crude expression or myth that emerges from actual shifts in human experience. I do not want to criticize the Gnostic tendency so much as recognize its roots and suggest that within Gnosticism lies the seed of a more mature, ambivalent, and ambiguous relationship to our experience of information and to the relationship between body and mind."

Two more questions, one concerning the past and one concerning the future. First, I would like to talk a little about 'hidden histories'. In official historiography, the social influence of secret societies has always been understated, you have done some revisionist work in this area. Can you explain your views?

"There are two sides to this. First, you can never understand the modern world or the Enlightenment without talking about secret societies, in the conventional historical sense of com-

grasp what influences have brought us to where we are. In such a history, you cannot discuss the Enlightenment without discussing secret societies. You cannot discuss the political dimensions of the Enlightenment reaction to the Church and medievalism without discussing Freemasonry, Illuminism, and related occult branches of the Rosicrucians, many of which were steeped in Gnostic themes. Our denial of this hidden history has left us with a hollow understanding of the forces that produced modernity. When we attempt to examine the problem of modernity, or of the course of technological development over the last few centuries, we miss this essential component. And unless we integrate it, or at least undermine the conventional narrative, we will always be rattling the bars of a false cage in which we believe that the modern world must be seen as the outcome of a purely secular, scientific process. We need to bring into the discussion stories that address the occult, alchemical, and chiliastic dimensions of modernity—particularly of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century—not only to understand our current position historically, but also because such things still live on in various mutations. The secret society with its elitist gnosis remains a particular manifestation of power.

"On the other hand – and this is of the utmost importance – the mere attempt to understand the conspiratorial history of the West takes us beyond conventional historical paradigms.

Suddenly you can no longer tell your story within the familiar historical axioms, because by simply stating that there is a hidden history you call into question our whole concept of history as a rational object. In this sense, historical thinking becomes more postmodern and fantastic, perhaps even hopeless: we are forced to acknowledge that there are countless stories or histories that provide their context and that each of them gives a fragmentary picture of the state of affairs.

"And we all knew that already, but the secret society raises a whole other question, because you are trying to uncover the history of groups and forces that precisely avoid history. To unravel that story you have to become slightly paranoid, although not in the sense of: 'They' are out to get you. I mean a slight paranoia as a critical method. A hop, skip and jump over vague and shadowy domains of ambiguous data, the stringing together of untenable patterns, the pointing out of strange synchronicities, of names that keep recurring. Suddenly a connection emerges between possibilities that fall outside the conventional story and often border on the immaterial and fantastic. Patterns acquire a charge that seems to undermine conventional historical thinking itself. And yet that process is endless. You can take it in all directions, go ever further into it. Anyone who is interested in the literature of conspiracy without assuming an idée fixe will recognize that conspiracy is a bottomless pit. And yet that bottomless pit, all those simultaneous cross-connections, itself an expression

of the fact that we cannot grasp reality – neither historical reality nor the current power structure – within a conventional framework, within a simple causal scheme. It is not that history simply follows such schemes. By accepting such a more synchronistic, analogue narrative style, you are forced to acknowledge the different levels at which

historical reality operates. Whoever denies that kind of activity, that kind of energy and events, because they do not conform to the rules, denies a great deal of what happened in the past and in the present. At the same time, those who start from an idée fixe are immediately sucked into a black hole, often for good. That is the tragedy of historians who concern themselves with hidden histories. To use an outdated metaphor once more: the trick is that you have to keep surfing over all those 'conspirational attractors' and still be on your guard, that you must not forget that there is always a story behind the story that you think you are becoming aware of. What you get is a simultaneously paranoid and anarchic critical narrative style, which situates us in diverse networks of forces."

You have made interesting statements about the way in which new technological developments behave within the framework you mentioned, from the invention of the telegraph to our worldwide telecommunications. The internet fits in well with that of course. History may repeat itself, but there are still slight differences. What do you think is the future of the current development and why does it play a specific role within your framework?

"You must not forget that developments in electronic communication have led to an extremely utopian moment since the telegraph. This utopianism is essentially ambivalent. When one sees this constant revival of techno-utopianism, one is quick to say: 'Take that internet hype. When the radio was invented, exactly the same thing was said. With the telegraph, it was the same old story.' Because of this constant repetition, we can see this rhetoric – mind you, this is an ideological critique – as a kind of trick of the powers that be, a way to capture the hopes and dreams of spilling in order to institutionalize a next phase of power, of control and capital. That is beyond dispute. The same erosion that eventually befell the old media can of course also occur with information networks and their globalization. But such a technological Utopia will of course never come about, not even remotely. Conversely, these utopian ideas are simply illusions in reverse, ideological slogans that are forced down our throats by the powers that be. Such images play with and arise from an ingrained dream or utopian image that lives in varying degrees within the social body. When the opportunity presents itself to project a utopian possibility onto a new historical framework, some people will gladly take advantage of it. We begin to dream of it as our goal. That goal is never reached, but by dreaming a spark is created over, a wave of revolutionary potential, at least in a fantastic sense. The utopianism of the Internet is not just the ab-

the idea that the world will become a better place, that we will have a better life because we communicate with others in new ways. More interesting than the idea that technology can make such dreams come true is the fact that these dreams exist at all, and that they are being absorbed by the political and social apparatus on an unimaginable and historically unprecedented scale. No one can say where the incorporation of utopian desires on such a scale will lead.

"One of the reasons for this process is the fact that information technologies have been compressing space and distorting time since the telegraph, literally bringing people closer together. This gives rise to a Utopia of communication, a dream of transparency, which technology realizes to a certain extent. As this new space takes shape, we eagerly fill it with utopian and fantastic desires. In the meantime, this space is being re-arranged by the ruling power, by the archons, so to speak, according to their prescriptions. The same thing can be seen in the history of radio. Radio is a remarkable technology that opens up an incredible spectrum of possibilities. This hype is easy to imagine: the avant-garde, the social, the musical possibilities... an immense space is created. But what happens? Apart from a handful of pirate radio stations and a few innovative alternative stations, we are left with an enormous appendage of the music industry, the advertising world and the prevailing propaganda

ganda device. An unimaginable hollowing out, and yet we learn nothing from it.

"To a certain extent, you can already see the same erosion on the Internet and in all sorts of digital media that lie ahead. With the understanding that these new technologies, unlike, say, the telegraph and the telephone, are undergoing constant and rapid changes. In doing so, they will continue to stretch the framework of communicative and immaterial possibilities, and this process will continue to confront us with the possibility of the fantastic. On the one hand, this can only increasingly make us immersed in the new machinery of power, the rule of cybercapitalism and cybergnosis. On the other hand, it means that technology will become the terrain of an imagination that is always in motion. I don't see it happening that in five years' time it will be over because everyone has had enough of the Internet. In my opinion, we have embarked on a path that will keep things in constant and violent motion for a very long time to come, a process that entails an extremely apocalyptic imagination. Anyone who wants to get a good picture of the collective thought of the new millennium needs double-focus glasses, a schizophrenic gaze, which can recognize both the dark archons shaping the new space of global capital and the constant availability of new spaces, manifestations and symbols of at least a positive, creative way of organizing ourselves and the world."

# Generation Dotcom 1.3: Lovebytes

**Wilfried Shut Up**

Will your first encounter with the Internet be something like your first French kiss? A moment you will look back on with nostalgia. The beeping of a modem dial-up compared to the uncertain teenage chatter is valid insofar as both offer a view of a new area of experience, cyberspace and sex respectively. Another similarity is that in both cases the initial excitement quickly cools down. Is that all there is to it, on TV it seems much more exciting, creamier, better, yes much better. But here too it is true for both that the more you do it, the better it gets.

My first time on the net was at an acquaintance's with a Mac 2CX that, equipped with a 28.8 bit modem, retrieved sites at an excruciatingly slow rate. What is particularly striking in retrospect is how little there actually was to do on the net. No one seems to care anymore about webcams, cameras that sent a picture of boring beaches every few minutes, university coffee machines and other places where, if anything happened, it was probably when you weren't there. In this negorij of expressiveness I still dared to call my monthly break-beat/jungle evenings Internep, in the arrogant thought that the euphoric reporting would soon fade away again.

Internet times two, using a 386 and Netscape 2.5, was a chaos of ultra-slow download times and button misunderstandings that left nothing to see but a blank screen. But Reload: times three was the bomb. Alvin Toffler's Future Shock right in front of you; the fearful thought crept into my mind that the future had begun without me.

The brief history of the Internet as a public mass medium begins with the

BBSes and MUDs of the eighties and the introduction of Mosaic in the early nineties.[1] Mosaic, the first browser, programmed by Mare Andreessen, which was distributed for free, made it possible to surf the 'information highway', designed with the idea of opening up the Internet to non-programmers. In 1994, Mosaic was renamed in an improved version to the product and the company Netscape. A company that was able to grow astronomically until 1998, but then lost track definitively in the war strategies of Bill Gates' Microsoft, which forced a permanent place for its browser Internet Explorer by forcing computer manufacturers to link it to Windows, the operating system that made Microsoft great.

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[1] With thanks to: Jeroen Breekveldt; Carianne van Dorst; and Joost Slis.

Anyone who has recently used an old 3.0 browser on the internet knows that so much has changed in the last two or three years that most sites can no longer be viewed properly without at least a 4.0 browser and all sorts of plug-ins. IE 5.5 or Netscape 6 are the latest versions.

After years of being active in publishing the zine Kapot, alles moet it was a logical step to start publishing online. With an HTML editor

that is standard in Netscape browsers, this was and is very simple. The basic principle of HTML, the language of the internet, is namely very simplistic; designed to allow military personnel, their commands and scientists to exchange their research data without a time buffer over great distances via a network that can withstand a nuclear war. Initially, even the IMG tag did not exist with which you can insert a picture in HTML.

It says a lot about Microsoft's attitude that it never included an editor in its browser: the Internet has always been seen by it as a video broadcasting medium aimed at a market consisting of zombie consumers who will stare apathetically at their computer screens as they do now at their TV. The initial success of the Internet was precisely the unique quality of being able to contribute to the content of the medium itself.

The first site I produced in 1999 was not technically very advanced at the time: today its static nature would be ridiculous. Text: black on white connected by hyperlinks.

The utopian idea of the Internet as a medium that could connect people in a global network, interconnected by hyperlinks, built by individuals, universities and non-profit institutions with the sole purpose of sharing information, talking and discussing with those who would otherwise have remained strangers, generated the same enthusiasm that is generated by the gathering of people with the same tastes in discos, concerts and fairs. The optimistic sense of empowerment at

minorities who recognized their differences in each other.

Howard Rheingold's The Virtual Community, published in 1991, is a clear, sharp and well-documented account of the internal workings of these communities and provides much insight into the temptation to see the net as a medium with a high democratic potential, as a powerful binding agent of communities that would not quickly emerge beyond the dividing lines of social position in the analogue world. Reverend Visser also seems to have been influenced by Rheingold. Visser sees the social ties induced by the net as a good supplement to the loss of solidarity in the neighbourhoods. Rheingold hits the heart of the matter with his remark that the power of the internet is that the distinction between audience and artist does not exist.

This idea, which served as an ideology for a host of Internet pioneers, is not new: as far back as punk in the 1970s, it was a key idea that created and united a scene. The Clash never had a problem with their fans coming backstage, sleeping in their hotel rooms and talking to them after a concert, until it grew from ten fans at first to a hundred and finally a thousand, making their one-on-one practice physically impossible.

The same thing is happening on the Internet now; the rapidly growing stream of people logging in caused fragmentation and trivialization. The entry of companies, the

emergence of e-commerce introduced competition into the gift economy that had prevailed until then. The means have become increasingly harder to increase the number of 'hits', visitors,

to increase with the most aggressive methods. The use of cookies to inventory your online behavior for example. These small programs are smuggled onto your computer after which they collect information: where you are going, how long you are staying and then advertising slogans appear tailored to your personal interests and that is still friendly.

Check out privacyfoundation.org for descriptions of the extensive methods by which companies and government agencies analyze, use, and resell your click behavior. To use the French kiss metaphor, the web is currently being brutally taken from behind by dotcoms that need to keep their shareholders happy and will not shy away from dishonest means to get their way.

As the administrator of three sites and editor of the cut-up.com webzine, using little more than pure HTML and some pictures, I know the urge to keep up with the visualization of the web in vector-based animations and shiny DHTML interfaces. The skills required for this, however, are not only demanding in understanding the software, but also in its useful use. Design is a profession with a four-year education and that this is not for nothing, you notice in various ways.

The programs of the American company Macromedia, a very strong brand name with an aura of status and coolness, have become the standard in web design. Few 'professional' websites are still made without programs such as Flash, Shockwave, Fireworks

and Dreamweaver. In particular, the use of web animator Flash (one million units sold at 400 dollars) has come to the fore in recent years. On the one hand, it has produced great things, on the other hand, the endless use of it is a thorn in the side of many surfers (and even producer Macromedia). Hopping along on large investments and increasing bandwidth, it has become possible to keep top-heavy sites in development for months. The result is often a skillful exercise in form and color wrapped around a meager idea. The motto that many companies seem to use when they develop online activities seems to be a handicapped translation of Henk Oosterling's credo that 'da sein' is design. The impoverishment that occurs is enormous when people who may have something to say simply leave it out because it lags behind in terms of layout. Of course, in the background of the sites with millions of visitors, there remains an enormous noise of personal sites. These will increasingly be snowed under in the endless supply of entertainment. The poverty of content and visualization as a result of the professionalization of the supply is a sliding scale that is difficult to say 'no' to for fear of being left behind in the slums of technoville. Technically, HTML will increasingly be reduced to a minimal framework for integrating external applets and media types. Or it will be degraded to a rustic dialect, while XML, the adapted, stricter version, will become the dotcom language. The 'what does it look like' aspect, the Brittney Spearization, of culture and politics will

the web necessarily also makes its entrance on the web.

Non-profit organisations such as FNV and Amnesty International are already responding to this with slick sites. From the squatters' movement, Rhizoom (The Hague), ASCII (A'dam) and PUSCII (Utrecht) provide for the need for free computer use and internet access, but they also form a point of contact and laboratory for the realisation of technically complex matters such as live webcasting. Knowledge that is happily shared according to the hacker's credo that information wants to be free.

The sorrow that resounds in countless articles about the eviction of the emancipatory social sanctuary that the internet once was, is polyphonic. The fact that the most entered search engine keyword has always been 'sex' should have tempered the ecstatic feelings of internet prophets; freedom of speech has never given anyone an orgasm. The fact that a bad search engine like Ilse serves up countless links to superfluous sites, often with an erotic tint, while you are looking for information about something completely different, is so remarkably Freudian that it surprises me that no psychoanalyst dares to use it as an instrument of interpretation of the subconscious. The world is getting the internet it deserves and it should therefore come as no surprise that the internet is currently being discovered by less than enlightened regimes as a way to better control their subjects. It is time to start thinking about the internet and the role of the web in it in a different way.

Stephen 1. Talbot in America and Arie Altena in the Netherlands have been saying for years that

the high expectations of the Internet as the bringer of better social conditions may be understandable but wrong. It is a human process: in the absence of justice, equality, freedom, care for things that are really important, the tendency automatically arises to make these into the transcendental properties of a transcendent world. I am not making this up myself; this is the explanation that Ludwig Feuerbach gave more than 150 years ago for the emergence of religion. God and cyberspace understood as all-encompassing, omnipresent amorphous information entities without location overlap completely as virtual reality. The emergence of all kinds of groups that see their faith, of whatever nature, confirmed in the Machine is completely logical and a recurring phenomenon.

I would like to read a book about public expectations when electricity was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. The hopes for a better world that accompanied the advent of the Internet also appeared with the discovery of electricity. Finally, the streets would be safe at night for walkers who could see robbers and other scoundrels (hohum) from afar in the electric lights. Lighting that was less of a fire hazard than the oil lamps that replaced them. Generating stations were built like churches and Nicolai Tesla, the inventor of alternating current, saw in electricity a sign of God talking to him. Or what about the Russian futurist Mayakovsky who thought trees were old-fashioned once he had seen electricity in action. The magic of incomprehensible new technical and scientific gimmicks and facts is a recurring

fuel of the optimism of Enlightenment thinking and the pursuit of feasibility in which all good intentions are projected onto an immaculate medium. In the ecstasy of the new, passing by the reality that quickly runs away with it.

The most famous modern example of the human tendency to seek salvation in the unknown are the Extropians. They want to abolish the social and biological chaos in which humans have to live with a program that combines social liberalism, 'dynamic positivism', science fiction utopianism and laissez-faire capitalism in an indivisible pact on the border of literature and political commitment in which technology must free us from evil.

Richard Buckminster Fuller related the success of a technology to the extent to which it becomes transparent. Electricity is by far the best example of this, but also think of radio, television and telephony. The Internet will be no different. Just as we can no longer imagine life without electricity, the Internet will be a radical means/measure for our lives in the background within five years. The tumultuous auction of the UMTS frequencies that are to carry the wireless Internet is the prelude to the Internet becoming more than a cultural/commercial medium. The Finnish government has already started to inventory the opportunities that this technology offers in maintaining state activities such as monitoring suspicious persons and as a means of identification. A telephone/computer/bank card with a sealed DNA profile creates a private financial multiplicity

timedia microcomputer, also serving as a passport.

In the near future, the transformation in thinking about the net as a cultural medium into a transparent spine of countless applications will be reflected in the most important strategy in Microsoft's policy. This company has the monopoly position to enforce the ASP (application service providing) model. Over the broadband networks that are currently being built at a furious pace all over the world, the business computer of the future will become a terminal with some working memory and an internet connection. If you want to type, you have to request the word processor on the Microsoft.net site, your client number is noted and at the end of the month you will receive an invoice. You pay each time you open a program. It goes even further, you store your files on the server of the provider, so that if you want to view your own file you have to pay a fee. With the secret agenda that this should prevent the end of software piracy; because how can you distribute something illegally if you don't even own it. In this way, the Internet truly becomes an information socket, a connection between server and user, invisible and value-free like electricity.

Ten years ago, Australian artist Stelarc had all his muscles connected to the internet, after which he had his body controlled by strangers on other continents. The question is not whether it is possible, the question is whether we can come up with it. It is quite nice to see how something that is completely new still reflects everything that came before it. Another metaphor that is often used

with regard to the Internet, is that of exploration. The browser names already refer to this with terms such as 'navigate' and 'discover'. The utopian literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also always placed its excellent worlds in the new world, completely ignoring the practice of the conquistadors who preferred to chop off Indian hands than to create perfectly symmetrical

built cities in which all knowledge was known and people could live just as perfectly happily at the height of their abilities in paradise on earth, as Tomasso Campanella described it as desirable in his City of the Sun. Reasoning this metaphor to its logical end does not lead to happy thoughts, but fortunately it is only a metaphor. How was your first time?

## Note

www.social.fiction.ihateclowns.com has links to most of the people/things mentioned here (1) BBS: Bulletin Board System, public computer that other computers can dial into via a modem, not connected to the Internet. Mud: Multi User Domain, interactive text environment, running its own mud protocol (=set of technical rules for handling and transporting specific data over a network).

# The Danger of Hygiene!1

**Judith Metz**

In the nineteenth century, the health of the Dutch population was at a low point. In the middle of the industrial revolution, many people left their villages to go to work in factories in the city. The city was not prepared for the increase in its inhabitants. The new city dwellers were not used to urban life: crowded, dirty and without their own (vegetable) garden. Many people in too small, dark, damp spaces. There was no sewage system or water supply. There were blocked toilets. Workers were a source of infectious diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid, measles and scabies.[1]

Hygienic modernization began from various interests. The misery of the workers aroused the sympathy of philanthropists. Citizens became afraid of epidemics. Entrepreneurs and members of parliament developed the conviction that better public health and general well-being are primary conditions for economic growth. The solution was found in better hygiene. If the worker were to learn to keep himself clean, this would also lead to self-discipline in social intercourse.[2]

In practice, promoting hygiene proved to be difficult. The construction of public facilities such as sewerage and water supply depended on political decision-making and the available technological knowledge.[3] Scale-up was also necessary to be able to apply the new scientific insights. For example, the discovery of the cholera bacillus led to the insight that water and sewerage had to be separated. National institutions and laboratories for the control of infectious diseases were necessary for the construction and control of the separate water supply and sewerage. The result was a shift in the balance of power from local to national governments and a strengthening of the power of the medical profession.[4]

In addition, individual hygiene education also encountered resistance. This arose from traditional customs and poverty. For example, many priests had more confidence in prayers than in boiled water. The battle for personal hygiene was fought with the help of education and the instilling of guilt. If a child died, the parents were told that this would not have happened with better care. Health booklets circulated in education, filled with ideas about cleanliness and health. Later, gymnastics lessons

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[1] Karei Veile (1984). Body and hygiene. Towards the roots of the current health culture. Ghent: Kritak MIAT p. 13–17.

[2] Veile, p. 23–25.

[3] Veile, p. 79–98.

[4] Gerard de Vries (1998), 'The constitution of a decent risk society' in: Public lecture De Ba-He/ResPublica, 12-2-1998 (lecture).

and school showers followed. The army also played its part in the cleansing operation. It provided its recruits with soap and three towels, and later also with toothbrushes and toothpaste[5]

Through all the efforts, hygiene has won the day. After fifty years, it has proven to be of great value to mankind. Living conditions and life expectancy have improved enormously.[6] The focus on hygiene also had its downsides. Hygiene education was a (successful?) attempt to get the revolutionary workers in line. L. van den Bos expressed this strategy in 1887 as follows: "If we

By keeping the workers at home, by teaching them habits of order, regularity and honesty, we have created the greatest guarantees against anarchist and revolutionary outbreaks."[7] In addition, through economies of scale, the power of national institutions over local communities has been strengthened.

"Despite the lobbying of the women's movement and the requirement of the subject of care in secondary schools, women still do the lion's share of the housework. This also applies to Rian Peters. Until she accidentally bought a new washing machine that was controlled by rather ingenious and unfathomable electronics. She had to press so many buttons to wash her underwear that she became dizzy. Her husband, on the other hand, went wild with enthusiasm. Previously, he never looked at a bucket of Biotex, now he can't be kept away from digital clocks. Rian has replaced all her kitchen appliances with digital ones and her husband does the housework."[8]

Housekeeping and hygiene attracted the interest of industry. Special household appliances were developed to make housework physically easier. The history of laundry reflects the changes in the household due to the introduction of household appliances.[9] In the past, it was 'washing day on Monday'. On Sunday evening, all the laundry was soaked. On Monday, the soaked laundry was boiled in wash kettles and scrubbed on a washboard in the tub. Then it had to be rinsed, mangled in the wringer and hung out to dry. This was followed by pre-folding, starching and ironing.[10] Nowadays, there is the washing machine, tumble dryer and electric iron. Physically, housework has become less strenuous. There are fewer women with rheumatic hands from beating, wringing and rinsing in cold water.

Technological innovation has hardly resulted in any time savings. Despite the fact that laundry became easier to clean, the time women spent on washing hardly decreased. The standard of what is clean has changed. Where once a weekly change was

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[5] Veile, p. 79–98.

[6] Veile, p. 25.

[7] Veile, p. 17.

[8] Renate Dorrestein (1988), 'The washing up after Alletta Jacobs' in: Els van der Wal eds. (1988), Flying saucers: on the struggle in the household. Amsterdam: Nijgh & van Ditmar.

[9] Ruth Oldenziel and Carolien Bouw eds. (1998), Clean Enough: Housewives and Household Technology in the Netherlands 1898–1998. Nijmegen: SUN, pp. 9–12.

[10] Description taken from: Sander Pleij and Xandra Schutte (1998), 'The push-button housewife' in: De Groene Amsterdammer, April 1, 1998.

sufficient, in 1998 someone who keeps this up quickly becomes one of the pariahs of society. In most families, the washing machine is used every day.[11] The example of laundry shows that the ideal of saving time has not been achieved through the introduction of household appliances. Thanks to technology, hygiene requirements are met more quickly. The point is that technology has changed standards and values regarding hygiene. What was recommended as hygienic a hundred years ago is now considered dirty. Technology is not only a tool that helps people to control their environment. Technology is also power and disciplines human existence.

The Haarlems Dagblad headlines: "The toilet is often contaminated. According to research, only one in ten public toilets is clean." The article extensively discusses the fact that public toilets are a source of bacteria. Without cynical undertones, it advises to operate the door with your elbow, to turn off the tap with a piece of paper and to cover the toilet seat with paper before sitting down.[12] Hygiene is no longer a matter of washing hands and changing

ing views on cleanliness. It has become a public issue and is the focus of media attention. For example, in a random week in January 2001, the Volkskrant was also full of possible dangers of poor hygiene.[13] Reports on illnesses or deaths due to poor hygiene are lacking. I therefore find this attention greatly exaggerated. My diagnosis is: collective fear of contamination.

Pasteur and Koch discovered the existence of bacteria and other pathogens at the end of the nineteenth century. This caused a shock in the upper middle class: you could be infected with disease without noticing it. Psychoses and neurotic startle reactions were reported.[14]

Fear of contamination is an example of obsessive-compulsive disorder. It leads to the compulsion to constantly clean or shower. Incidentally, compulsive cleaning is more common in women than in men.[15]

There is increasing evidence that too much hygiene is literally unhealthy. With foot fungus, vaginal complaints and head lice, GPs advise not to wash less often and not to use soap for nothing.[16] The pressure from the commercial sector on women

to use panty liners daily is contradicted by the health care sector. Panty liners irritate the vagina and cause discharge.[17] The increase in allergies and asthma complaints

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[11] Oldenziel and Bouw, p. 13.

[12] 'The toilet is often contaminated' in: Haarlems Dagblad, October 18, 1999.

[13] 'AH warns customers against danger of E. coli bacteria' in: de Volkskrant, January 23, 2001; 'One hundred percent food safety does not exist' in: de Volkskrant, January 23, 2001; 'One toilet is really no longer possible' in: de Volkskrant, January 25, 2001.

[14] Veile, p. 56.

[15] http;//www. psychowijzer.nl/html/body_dwang.htm 14-2-01. This is another example of how technology influences people's lives. Men, be warned of the hidden computers. The women's movement may posthumously get its way.

[16] Thus said Astrid Links, medical assistant at the Nieuwland General Practice in Amersfoort on Friday, February 16, 2001.

[17] Ditto.

in children is partly explained by the sterile environment in which more and more children grow up. Children who no longer come into contact with dirt, bacteria and pets do not have a chance to develop an immune system.[18]

The hygiene education of the Dutch that started in the nineteenth century has overshot its target. Even before the Second World War, the average life expectancy had increased enormously. The disciplining of the workers and the growing power of national institutions were a nice bonus. Nevertheless, the attention for hygiene continued to grow. The introduction of household appliances led to stricter hygiene requirements instead of saving time. What used to be clean is now called dirty. But the disciplining did not stop there either. Hygiene is central to the media. In 2001, toilets and food must also be clean. The Dutch population suffers from a collective fear of contamination. And with that, a second downside of hygiene becomes clear: people get sick!

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[18] de Volkskrant, 2000. I can no longer find the exact article and de Volkskrant does not have an archive on the internet (JM).

# Anti-t£cho-logical huh?

**Page layouts**

The editors of the AS asked me to take a look at a number of anarchist internet sites for this Techno issue. However, there is an awful lot about anarchism to be found on the net, so I advise you to just go surfing and discover sites yourself. For example, start at www. flag.blackened.net. If you add '/revolt/africa.html' to this address, you will come to the site about anarchism in Africa, which was the subject of the previous AS. However, if you add '/revolt/inter/faq.html' to this address, your hunger for anarchist news gathering will probably not be satisfied for a while. You will find all kinds of mailing lists there, addresses of sites, simply too many to mention. ian Mayes compiled a list of one hundred and fifty English-language anarchist publications, e-mail him at: ianmayes2@lycos.com. Over three hundred theses and dissertations on anarchism can be found on the site 'Research on Anarchism', melior.univ-montp3fr/ra_forum/. However, also visit the site of the London Anarchist Bookfair freespace.virgin.net. bookfair. From all the sites mentioned you can find many links to other sites. If you want to surprise yourself, you can of course also go online by typing the word 'anarchism(e)' into one of the various search engines and see what that brings up. Good luck, and have fun with it!

In Bladspiegel 1 I reported on the electronic anarchist news service A-Infos. What I didn't know at the time is that in addition to individual messages there are also daily overviews in various languages (lists@ainfos.ca and mentions for example 'subscribe a-infos-en24'). That makes everything a bit clearer, at least in my eyes. You have to be careful when sending announcements to this list. At least, if you don't want to receive all kinds of junk mail, also called spam, which A-infos can't do anything about. That's how I got

one day an email about penis enlargement. Half the world's population, I think, is not waiting for that, and truth be told, neither am I. But what about the offer of 'hidden cameras and spy equipment'? A-infos of October 4, 2000 contains the message 'Anarchist women want their message heard'. The message of this email is that the image of the anarchist movement is macho, while the social cohesion of that movement is largely provided by women (chuckO@infoshop.org). Furthermore, an anarchist group in Greece, Dis-obedience, is seeking contact with individuals and groups all over the world: PO Box 74277, 16000 Athens, or e-mail: disobe32@hot mail.com.

Menno Sijtsma graduated in political and social philosophy in the autumn of 2000 with 'A proposal for egalitarian liberals and others: some arguments concerning why anarchism may help realize more equality and liberty than equalitarian liberalist theo-

ries'. In this thesis he discusses and compares the liberalism of the philosopher Rawls with the anarchism of Atalanta (see also the book review in this issue). The thesis can be ordered from: De Vlinder, p/a Lauwerecht 55, 3515 GN Utrecht, or via e-mail: mermo@antenna.nl. A Dutch version, perhaps as a summary, is being considered.

Speaking of liberals and anarchists, sometimes I am quite surprised. Last fall I was at the anniversary conference of the Dutch Association of Mathematics Teachers (here he comes again with his mathematics, sigh...) where my book entitled Fermat's Last Theorem was presented (available in bookstores for only $f16.75$, ISBN 90-5041-065-0), but that was not the surprise. Loek Hermans, Minister of Education, gave an obligatory liberal talk, which slowly put me to sleep. However, I was wide awake when he suddenly started talking about his anarchist student days, the time when he had met Kropotkin

and Bakunin read. To top it all off, he quoted Bakunin, but in the consternation of my astonishment I really don't remember what he said. Except that he tried to support his liberal argument with that quote. Poor Bakunin!

In Aardig (Simon Bolivarstraat 95, 3573 ZK Utrecht, atalanta@antenna.nl) of December 2000, magazine of the Atalanta collective, Herman writes in 'Ratio and feeling in an ideal world': "Thinking everything over, I think that feelings are not so much based on or arise from thoughts. (...) Is there a kind of anarchistic feeling, a way of life that people feel comfortable with?" Rymke discusses pragmatism, purism and rebellion, translated by her as helping, thinking and fighting: "They all seem necessary, and at the same time, and they are not strictly separable either." In addition to extensive news from Atalanta, there is also a 'filler', taken from ilO, the magazine of the late Arthur Lehning, 'Tolstoï and the revolution'. Atalanta can also be found on the internet, www.antenna.nl/atalanta. There you can also read the four-page article about the art of living of four people from and around Atalanta, which appeared in Vrij Nederland (P.O. Box 1254, 1000 BG Amsterdam) on February 3, 2001. In that same issue an interview with Hafid Bouazza, writer: 'It is not for nothing that I write in my essay: 'I call for anarchy of heart and mind' (...) Rules imposed on you by others. That is a nightmare, a pure definition of hell. Give me all the clumsiness of my own life, all the idiocy of it, but as long as I have the feeling that I can live in freedom, I am happy"

Following an article in Buiten de Orde 2000/3 about refusing military service in Turkey (see Bladspiegel 2), I finally decided to read the pamphlet of the $5^{\text{th}}$ of May Group (PO Box 2494, London N 8 OHW), Fundamentalism, nationalism and militarism in Turkey. This pamphlet, which also contains an article by Mine Ege, 'Feminism in Turkey', tells the story of the political history of

Turkey, the present and the resistance against it. The $5^{\text{th}}$ of May Group consists of Turkish and Kurdish anarchists in exile. "It would be best to bury the 75-year-old republic where it belongs, namely next to that of the Ottoman Empire. Amen to that." Feminists in Turkey, by the way, experience the same problems and discussions, men ask, just like in our country: "Isn't it a new form of discrimination not to allow men

to attend women's meetings?" By the way, these quotes are translations, the editors of the AS requested me to translate English statements, if at all possible, since not every AS reader is proficient in this language. Now let's hope that my translations are something like that... In De Fabel van de Illegaal (Koppenhinksteeg 2, 2312 HX Leiden) 42, from November/December 2000, attention is paid to Turkish-Kurdish conscientious objectors, who have no chance of political asylum. The official reports of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs state that they have nothing to fear upon return, but what then is the explanation for the fact that three recently returned conscientious objectors died shortly after their forced entry into service? Incidentally, in the Gebladerte series, a series of publications of the Fabel, two brochures have recently appeared, one about left-wing nationalism and the other about the Hague homeless newspaper.

In 't Kan Anders (Vlamingstraat 82, 2611 LA Delft) 23/5, 'for a peaceful and liveable world', you can read in the article 'War as a crime against the environment' that an F-16 uses more fuel in an hour than an average car does in a year. Now I consider both devices to be rather superfluous, one more than the other, but the figures speak for themselves. And what about the fact that almost one percent of the earth's surface is military territory? Furthermore, tropical forests are often cut down and the wood is sold off to pay for the purchase of weapons, as the governments in Brazil and Burma did in the past. 'War is not only a crime against the environment'

humanity but also against the environment' is the logical conclusion of the article.

The recent US presidential election was a real soap opera. The front page of Freedom (84b Whitechapel High Street, London El, 7QX) 61/21, 4 November 2000, was adorned with a photo of Geoige Dabbel Joe Bush with his slogan 'Change the tone'. Freedom's caption read: 'Or better still, shut up!'

De Nar (P.O. Box 136, 3000 Leuven, Belgium) 163, December 1, 2000, contains two articles by Corto Maltese. 'De droom der malcontenten' (Isn't that Flemish nice!) is about a straightforward anarchist Fred Woodworth, who designs and publishes the magazine The Match in the US. "The many polemical attacks on other anarchists have given Woodworth the reputation among some of being an old, sour sectarian who has no good words for other anarchist projects. That is incorrect (...). In all honesty, I know of no other publication that represents the libertarian ideal, the dream of the malcontents, better and more worthily than The Match!", according to Corto Maltese. If you are interested in this magazine: PO Box 3012, Tucson, Arizona 85702, USA.

Corto Maltese's second piece, 'More brains: on the intellectual poverty of the anarchist milieu', quotes George Orwell, who once wrote that political language should be as clear as glass. Obscure formulations and jargon-mongering are usually the hallmarks of political swindlers. The entertaining article calls on pamphleteers from the anarchist milieu to use neat language, well-considered reasoning and an attractive style, that is, without gibberish. "However, poor language skills are not the only reason why anarchists are not often taken seriously. Interested outsiders are often put off by the low intellectual appeal of the anarchist milieu."

In Filosofie Magazine (postbus 1528, 1000 BM Amsterdam) 9/9, Liesbeth Bakker discusses utopias in 'Kijk maar eens lekker vooruit'. "Utopian ideals are not on the right track. (...) Ironically, the scepticism that utopias can count on today has one exception: the utopia of the industrial society; the utopia of boundless economic growth and the unlimited use of natural resources." Bakker, who quotes AS editor Marius de Geus and, inevitably in this discussion, Hans Achterhuis, believes that a distinction should be made between closed and open (libertarian) utopias. "According to Achterhuis, these kinds of interpretations of the 'utopia' lead to a watering down of the concept. Every utopia is by definition (...) closed (...)." What a godforsaken essentialist Achterhuis is! Bakker concludes her article with: "The survival of nature and future generations is at stake. That is why it is high time to pick up the visionary ideas again. A large variety of future visions – more than just the realized utopias – is urgently needed for a liveable future for our planet."

Redit voor Allen, 'organ of the northern region of free socialists', (Aekingaweg la, 8426 GN Appelscha) 4/15, December 2000, contains two in memoriams of Anna Koelman-van der Laan. "For me, Anne was a true anarchist in heart and soul and perhaps a thousand times more than all those who relentlessly present themselves with a lot of noise as the only true anarchist." Anna (Anne?) was actively involved in the camping site 'Tot Vrijheidsbezinning' in Appelscha and during the annual Pinksterland days she was always busy in the canteen. She was 78 years old.

Het Linke Boekje (P.O. Box 16544, 1001 RA Amsterdam) is a publication of De Vrije Zone, under the motto 'Reading is linking'. This guide contains addresses and descriptions of some 250 (!) Amsterdam action groups and non-profit/social organizations. The

Vrije Zone attempts to improve mutual contacts between these groups, and to make the whole thing more open and attractive to 'outsiders'. The booklet is enlivened with various cartoons. Normally I find Kamagurka downright lame, but in the Linke Boekje there is actually a very nice one. A man with a cigar in his mouth points to a coughing man with the remark: "I smoke and he coughs. That way we solve it together!" Buiten de Orde (postbus 1338, 3500 BH Utrecht) 2000/4 contains an article by John Zernan, previously published in De AS, about the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to agricultural societies. Even after reading it twice I do not know what the good man wants to say, I will assume that it is not my fault but the fault of the author himself. Harold Barclay, author of the book 'People without government' (an interesting anthropological study of anarchism among so-called 'primitive peoples'), wrote a much more readable

response to. Further in this Buiten de Orde attention is paid to the Brazilian landless movement Moviemento Sem Terra (MST). "The growing environmental awareness of the movement is encouraged through the schools, which can be found in every settlement. In the MST schools, the children are taught according to the method of Paulo Freire." You can read more about this Brazilian pedagogue (who recently passed away) and also about the MST in De AS 115 (Latin America).

The term 'do-it-yourself (diy)' originally comes from the punk movement. But for anarchists this term has of course been a given for a long time. In The Vegan (info@vegansociety.com), a magazine of the English vegan organization (you can tell that an anarcho-vegan writes this column), there is an advertisement for 'diy-funerals', environmentally friendly and inexpensive coffins. If I translate the term, the point is immediately lost, so I will not translate it here.

P'tje Lanser (peetje@antenna.nl)

# Comments and Discussions

# Population growth

Kleintje Muurkrant published an article in its February issue by Fabel of the illegal employee Gerrit de Wit, which really rubbed me the wrong way. It is about an attempt by Groen Rechts to get the item population growth on the agenda within Milieudefensie. That attempt in itself is not that interesting. A few years ago Groen Rechts also tried in vain to get a foot in the door at De Groenen.

No, what is important is that the Fabel cares little about freedom of thought, at least when ideas do not suit its agenda. That this Leiden club sees (ultra)right-wing ghosts everywhere is one thing. First it was the British millionaire Goldsmith of the Ecologist, then the good Willem Hoogendijk of the Stichting Aarde. And now keeps an eye on the Fable thought police Milieudefensie.

De Wit writes: "Population policy is in itself a right-wing and top-down policy instrument to control and monitor the size and composition of a population. The interests of the individuals concerned are irrelevant. A discussion about population policy is only desirable for progressive people if it is about analyzing and combating it."

The definition of population policy that Fabel chooses is of course not coincidental. In doing so, it defines the topic of population growth in such a way that it can be labelled as (ultra-right) and nationalistic. In any case, I sense from De Wit's article that Fabel wants to prevent decent Dutch people from broaching the subject of population growth. Why? Do population density and the environment have nothing to do with each other?

In Kleintje Muutkrant of March, Eric (Eric Zwitser?) rightly responded as follows: "Large concentrations of people have local effects on the environment. That has nothing to do with politics but everything to do with physics and biology. Whether this is bad by definition, and to what extent this also applies globally, is the question, but it is not a question that should be avoided because this subject is also on the agenda of the

extreme right." I completely agree with Eric and find it worrying, for example, that in middle-class families it is again fashionable to have three or four children, who are guaranteed to further pollute the environment in this country with their SUVs. But the Fable does not allow you to discuss that.

Hans Ramoor

# Albertcamus

In De AS 132 (Africa) a contribution was dedicated to the life and work of Albert Camus (1913–1960). An interesting subject for an anarchist magazine to explore the contradictions in this struggle for directions, you would think. Important, if it were not for the fact that the writer, Aat Brand, apparently feels more at home with the Sartrian views.

As he notes, Camus' anti-authoritarian stance was not appreciated by the existentialist Sartre and his ilk. For they downplayed the dangerous aspects of the current forms of party communism. As a result, Camus' stance on the Algerian struggle against colonial relations was cast as suspect. It is remarkable that Brand goes along with the accusation that

# Book reviews

# Multicultural

A while ago there was another debate about the 'multicultural society' that the Netherlands is — or still has to become. Paul Scheffer opened this debate with

Camus would have held a colonial position and that he claims that he would have felt contempt for the Algerian people. This view clashes with the fact that Camus positioned himself between the warring parties and stood up for the population that would ultimately, as always, become the victim. Camus was mockingly accused of having a Red Cross mentality.

In fact, Camus stood for an anarchist vision. Brand could have read that in the extensive biography of Olivier Todd Albert Camus. A life from which he claims to have drawn. I quote from the Dutch translation: "Camus advocates association of both peoples, the French and the Algerian, in freedom and mutual respect." Comparing this view to colonialism and imperialism is therefore ridiculous. Because, as is also evident from his essay The Man in Revolt, Camus had a syndicalist society in mind.

Brand says that the Arabs in the novels are given short shrift. Nevertheless, I would like to refer to the conclusion of the above-mentioned biography, where Todd quotes the Algerian Lamria Chetouni: "In the novel, the Arab is anonymous, deprived of personality, belittled, seen according to racist clichés. Through his articles, Albert

Camus has shown that the same thing happens in real life. The author has fought all his life against the injustice committed against the Arabs of his native soil." It therefore seems to me a mistake to attribute the author's views, presented in novel form, as his own opinions.

Wim de Lobel

a much-discussed article in NRC Handelsblad in which he spoke of a multicultural drama. A philosophical study was recently published that deals with this debate and its history: Baukje Prins' Voorbij de onsdiuld – an adaptation of her The stand-point in question. Situated knowledge and the

Dutch minorities discourse, on which she received her doctorate in 1997. Prins also attempts, in this adaptation, to analyse the Dutch debate on the multicultural society – and of course to help it along.

That it is useful to examine such a debate from a distance from such discussions was proven a few years ago by Philip Muus in his dissertation International migration to Europe (1993). In it, Muus stated, among other things, that the excessive use of what he called 'water language' rather obscures the debate on migration and migrants. He therefore objected to the use of terms such as 'streams' of asylum seekers that threatened to 'flood' the Netherlands, 'reservoirs' in the reception of asylum seekers that repeatedly threaten to 'overflow' and, as a temporary low point, 'the pit of Europe' that the Netherlands would be according to Bolkestein et al., when it comes to the question of where these, again, 'streams' of asylum seekers to Europe ultimately end up.

In his study Minorization: the social construction of 'ethnic minorities' (1991), Rotterdam researcher Jan Rath (UvA) focused on the typical government approach and, in particular, the scientific minority research commissioned by that same government. In his view, this approach results in migrant groups being consistently bombarded as 'minorities in need of help'.

Prins' approach is different. To begin with, she distinguishes four genres that played – and play – a role in the debate on the multicultural society. First, she distinguishes between two types of realists, the 'new realists' to which she includes figures such as Bolkestein, Vuijsje, Scheffer and Schnabel on the one hand, and the 'oppositional realists' for which Philomena Essed and her famous study Alledaags racism (1984) are a model, on the other. Within the group of 'oppositionists', Prins then distinguishes three (sub)genres, namely

reports – Prins mentions Lotty van de Berg's dissertation on Moroccan 'guest workers' (1978) as an example of this genre, accusations – such as Rudie Kagie's Messages from a Dutch Guestbook (1994) and, finally, the genre in which empowerment is strongly emphasized.

According to Prins, these genres or political styles conceal different visions of the multicultural society. Should migrants fight their own battles or should they be helped? And is it really a 'battle' for recognition or does the harmony model offer possibilities? Based on these two criteria, she arrives at a neat typology in which all four distinct

styles appear to fit. Four 'genres', therefore, and all four have their shortcomings, according to Prins. For example, in the 'discourses' of the 'new realists', the migrants themselves are hardly or not at all given a voice. The three distinct genres within the oppositional realist camp clearly score better here. But according to Prins, these genres also do not do justice to the heterogeneity of all kinds of (sub)cultural identities.

The latter is undoubtedly correct. However, it is not clear to me why Prins needs such a long introduction and so much jargon to arrive at this conclusion. After all, empirical social scientific research has shown – Prins himself mentions a number of such studies (such as Sansone's Schitteren in de schaduw[1] about Creole youth) – that cultures should not be conceived of too homogeneously and statistically and that cultural identities, in Prins' terminology, are often hybrid in nature. "Dutch youth adopt a Surinamese lifestyle, Creole youth adopt elements of white working-class culture, a Moroccan boy passes for an Italian Muslim and a Turkish person feels completely Dutch", writes Prins. And rightly so. Cultures do not exist, the Leiden Africanist and intercultural philosopher Van Binsbergen even concluded in his eponymous Rotterdam inaugural speech. Van Binsbergen therefore preferred to speak of cultural orientations[2]. And Rienk Feddema, in his study On the way between hope and fear (1992), distinguished almost ten different 'mixes' of Dutch and 'non-Dutch' cultural orientations among Turkish youth.

That the participants in the debate on the multicultural society should be aware of these facts is of course obvious. That only a few are, unfortunately, is just as much. People who still talk about 'Islam', for example, are simply not aware! But Prins could have argued that in an article of, say, less than five percent of the size of her dissertation, and perhaps even better.

The value of Prins' study, in my opinion, lies mainly in a number of observations presented more or less in passing. For example, Prins noticed that in the debate on the multicultural society, many (male!) participants suddenly felt they had to make a strong case for 'the position of women'. The fact that their 'discourses' — I continue to find that a nasty term — often turn out to be about 'our women' versus 'their women', makes Prins doubt the sincerity of this quasi-feminism. Since 'their women' were never asked anything, this is simply paternalism, Prins argues.[3]

For example, at the end of last year (mid-November 2000) there was some commotion about the beating of women, which 'Islam' supposedly allows. That is, that was what the rector of the (as yet unrecognized) Islamic university in Rotterdam claimed. And well, if all those Dutch men who got excited about that, would really and per-

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[1] Cf. Aat Brand's discussion of this study in De AS 102, p. 30 ff.

[2] Van Binsbergen's inaugural lecture Cultures do not exist (Rotterdam 1999) can also be found on the Internet: home.soneraplaza.nl.

[3] The interested reader is referred to the fine volume Is multiculturalism bad for women? (Princeton 1999), edited by Susan Moller Okin, which includes contributions by Martha Nussbaum and Saskia Sassen. Of particular importance is the contribution by Azizah Y. al-Hibri, Is western patriarchal feminism good for third world/minority women? (pp. 41–46).

manently get excited about the fact that in one in four households in the Netherlands 'domestic violence' occurs, often in connection with excessive alcohol consumption by the, usually, male perpetrators, then they would be tackling a real social problem

know and, who knows, contribute to the solution! But these quasi-feminists do not plead for 'more money for Turkish/Moroccan women's shelters' and they certainly do not prove that domestic violence occurs mainly in Turkish and Moroccan families. These interventions therefore seem to have no other purpose than to make 'Islam' suspect.

Tolerance? Prins also problematizes this noble-sounding but, from an anarchist point of view, rather authoritarian notion in my opinion. After all, tolerance presupposes the power to tolerate or not to tolerate.[4] Prins has mainly practical objections. According to her, minorities do not benefit from 'tolerance'; recognition, that is what it is all about. And then not as 'a bundle of deficiencies' (Oude Engberink) as the stigmatizing research, commissioned by the government, often arrives at, but as 'full-fledged citizens', or rather: as people who have a story to tell (CB).

Baukje Prins, Beyond Innocence. The debate on the multicultural society; Amsterdam, Van Gennep; 192 pp.; f39,90.

# Spanish Civil War

'No pasaran'.[5] These winged words have come to epitomize the republican resistance against the insurgent (fascist) troops of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939 and have become etched in the collective memory of history. These immortal words are attributed to the Spanish communist Dolores Ibarruri, nicknamed La Pasionaria. The myth, supported by numerous historical works, has it that the defense of Madrid against the advancing insurgents can be attributed entirely to the International Brigades and the troops under communist command. Careful historical research by Robert Alexander has punctured this myth. He shows that it was the anarchist militias that were largely responsible for keeping the capital out of the hands of the insurgents.

The role of the anarchists in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) has often been examined and described from different perspectives. Few, however, have examined the role of the anarchists in the Spanish Civil War in its entirety. Robert Alexander has made an attempt with The anarchists in the Spanish civil war. In his two-volume work, Alexander unravels the role of the anarchists during the civil war, taking into

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[4] Incidentally, non-anarchists, such as the historian Kossman, had already pointed out the problematic nature of the term 'tolerance' much earlier. In his 1984 article Tolerance Then and Now, he wrote: "(The concept of tolerance) implies – whether one is aware of it or not – that there is a hierarchy; there is a group that tolerates and there is a group that is tolerated. In the strict sense of the word, tolerance is discriminatory and therefore hostile to the constitution." This article can be found in EH Kossmann, Political Theory and History, Amsterdam (Bakker), pp. 45–58. The quote is on p. 49.

[5] No pasaran: They (the rebels led by General Franco) will not get through (to conquer Madrid).

account the military, economic, political, social and cultural aspects. He weaves all these aspects together into a whole that is

a number of points yield surprising angles. In particular, the role of the anarchists in the military strategy of the republic in general and the defense of Madrid in particular is put in a new light. He punctures the myth that the communists were the defenders of Madrid. In various books and historical works, the anarchist military strategy during the civil war is described as disastrous. The anarchist militias are generally accused of having a great lack of discipline and of ignoring military orders.

Alexander was a professor of economics at Rutges University in New Jersey (USA). In 1951 he was part of the US government economic mission to Spain. Afterwards Alexander interviewed numerous people involved in the Spanish Civil War. He has written several books, mainly on Latin America, political and economic issues and the history of radical movements.

The first attack by Franco's troops on Madrid began on 6 November 1936 and was stopped by a strong response from the civilian militias, both anarchist and other political groups, and from the urban population. The defence of the city was then taken over by troops from other parts of Spain, including anarchist militias, contingents of the International Brigades and by the arrival of military equipment from the Soviet Union, including aircraft. The first troops of the International Brigades[6] did not arrive until 10 November 1936 and were deployed on a section of the front that Franco's troops had broken through on 13 November, thus succeeding in reaching the city's university. Furthermore, the International Brigades were not large in numbers and did not yet constitute a division. The International Brigades did not operate autonomously but were commanded by Spanish officers.

The organization of the Brigades was in fact based on the same model as that of the mixed Spanish brigades. However, the Brigades had more and better military equipment. Furthermore, they had better officers and better trained soldiers. Most of the anarchist militias were already present in large numbers in the Spanish capital at the time the attack on Madrid began, which was not the case for the International Brigades.

The CNT-FAI militias played an important role in the defense of Madrid, according to Alexander's research. The anarchists helped to turn back Franco's first frontal attack in November 1936 and were later prominent in the defense of the city. The role of the anarchists in the defense of Madrid is often underestimated and that of the communists, such as the famous Fifth Regiment and the International Brigades, greatly overestimated.[7]

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[6] Although the International Brigades were politically very heterogeneous in composition, the Communists soon succeeded in taking over the command of most of the divisions of the International Brigades or entrusting them to officers they liked.

[7] Among them Burnett Bolloten, Hugh Thomas and even George Orwell. While certainly the latter was not known as someone who had a warm heart for the communists and Thomas is certainly not recorded as a convinced communist either.

One of the persistent myths, strongly inspired by the communists, has it that the anarchist troops led by Durruti, took to their heels during the first skirmishes with the insurgents. Alexander argues clearly and supported by facts that nothing could be further from the truth. It turns out that it was precisely the poorly trained troops of the Catalan communists and parts of the famous fifth communist regiment that fell back under the heavy attacks of the insurgents and fled the front lines. It was Durruti's militia that received the retreating troops and placed those men in their own ranks to hold their ground at the front. The fact that more than half of the men of Durruti's militia were killed or wounded says more than enough in that respect.

According to Alexander, one of the great misconceptions about the Spanish Civil War is that the anarchist militias were irresponsible and lacked

discipline. However, the anarchist militias differed greatly from other politically oriented militias such as those of the communists. After all, the anarchists fought not only for the republic and the elected government, but also for the social revolution that took place in those parts of Spain that were under republican rule.

The role of the anarchists in the defence of Madrid appears from Alexander's research to be exemplary for the role of the anarchist militias in the military struggle elsewhere in Spain. Although the circumstances were sometimes far from ideal for the anarchist militias. For example, during the fall of the southern Spanish city of Malaga in February 1937, which is generally attributed to the failure of the anarchist militias. It should be taken into account that the Republican government refused to provide the anarchist militias with modern military equipment and also ignored the emergency signals to send experienced soldiers. Under the given circumstances, the anarchist militias could not hold their own against the much better trained and armed insurgents. Nevertheless, the anarchist militias did not surrender without a fight. The Malaga scenario runs like a thread through the history of the Spanish Civil War. Fearful as the Republican government was of the influence of the anarchists, they tried in every possible way to limit the power of their militias. This was further reinforced by the military aid of the Soviet Union. This military aid was mainly provided by militias that were under the influence of the communists or the government. In direct proportion to this military aid, the political influence of the communists increased. And these were opposed to the economic power that the anarchists had acquired with the collectivization of numerous agricultural and industrial enterprises. Withholding military aid was a great weapon for the communists to increase their power in republics.

to curtail no Spain and that of the powerful anarchist movement.

In a review, Alexander explains why the anarchists disappeared from the Spanish political scene after the civil war and could no longer play a significant role after Franco's death in 1975. Alexander attributes this primarily to the transformation of capitalism, which had already led to a fundamental change in the working class during Franco's regime. Before the Spanish Civil War, only Catalonia and the Basque Country were highly industrialized, but after 1939 the rest of Spain quickly followed suit. One consequence of this economic change was that the stark contrast between the rich and

the poor disappeared due to the emergence of a large middle class, both economically and socially.

This revolution was also visible on the streets. In the past, workers had clearly distinguished themselves from the upper classes by their way of dressing. With increasing economic change, this visible distinction faded. The Spanish working class became bourgeois, which meant that anarchism as a radical movement could no longer gain a foothold after the Franco era. The class consciousness that had been very strong among the Spanish workers before 1939 had disappeared. The anarchist CNT had no eye for the modernization of ideas and organization on the basis of the changed situation. The CNT continued to build on the foundations and strategy of before 1939. In short, the anarchist CNT did not see the changed spirit of the times among the workers. This dilemma was probably one of the main causes of the splits within the anarchist movement, which further eroded its influence. (VW)

Robert Alexander, The anarchiste in the Spanish civil war (two volumes); Janus Publishing Company Limited, London 1999; f117,-. Available from Zwart en Rood, P.O. Box 68, 9000 Ghent (Belgium).


# Braiding As A Subversive Activity

Barbed wire represents behavioral manipulation and the targeted deprivation of initiative.

I find barbed wire a real disaster from an aesthetic point of view. It looks as if the entire landscape is being tied down by prickly wire and the country is being gagged in a brutal way.

These sentences are spoken by fictional characters from the book The Liberation of the Landscape by ecologist Thomas van Slobbe and political scientist Marius de Geus. Both writers have published a great deal in their own fields, and now they have joined forces to write a book in which their two fields are intertwined. Barbed wire and fences must be replaced by woven hedges and wooded banks, is their message.

Reading the book it becomes clear how society ultimately determines and has determined the shape of the landscape, but also how the current layout of the landscape (the second stone age with fences and barbed wire) limits the freedom of the individual. Mesh fences and barbed wire make it possible to count, to control and to manage, and that is why one of the characters in the novel asks himself: "Is it possible to 'liberate' the landscape from all that hard un-

natural separations? What social, political and cultural change is needed to realize this liberation?" Novel characters in a book that is more than a novel. Using the fictional players, we are led past philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Michel Foucault and Arne Naess, Tolkien's 'Ents' and we come across "They (the machines) do not save time at all, they only ensure that something is done faster. The pace accelerates... What you experience is not satisfaction, but a frustrated feeling of being

constantly interrupted." In the book we also come across photos and tables with red list species. Anyone who wants to know 'everything' about the great ecological value, construction and (subsidy for) the maintenance of woven hedges and wooded banks can indulge themselves in this book.

But also those who want to know what a 'hiep' is, what 'a tree for every cow' is or want to know what philosophy is propagated by NEMO, association of Free Walkers, will find what they are looking for in this book. And after reading the book you will also know that wild apple, wild pear, fluttering elm, small-leaved lime and yellow dogwood are all threatened with extinction.

And so it has become a book that you read in one go, even if you didn't want to know anything about hedges and wooded banks. (CvL) Marius de Geus and Thomas van Slobbe, The liberation of the landscape. Braided hedges and wooded banks in the Netherlands; with a foreword by Ton Lemaire; wAarde, Beek-Ubbergen 2001, ISBN 90-76661-03-0; 174 pp.; f35,-.

# Arthurlehning

Twenty-five articles that Rob Hartmans published in De Groene and other magazines in recent years have now been bundled. They are (mainly biographical) essays about left-wing and right-wing (political) thinkers, ranging from Machiavelli to Arthur Lehning. Most of them are still being studied, a few have been forgotten or are only known in smaller circles. The majority of the articles are certainly worth reading, but the attempt by

I find Hartman's attempt to group them under one heading ('intellectuals and their illusions') rather artificial and not very successful.

The collection consists of three parts. The first part discusses Machiavelli, Spinoza, Russell and Berlin. In the second part, which fascinated me the most, Hartmans focuses on extreme right-wing thinkers such as Ernst Niekisch, Carl Schmitt and Ernst Junger. These German 'philosophers of gunpowder', condemned after 1945, have recently been studied again. What did these conservative revolutionaries understand by socialism, democracy and parliamentarism? And what was their relationship to Hitler and the NSDAP?

Exemplary of such a combination of radical socialism and extreme nationalism is the career of the forgotten revolutionary Ernst Niekisch. After the murder of Kurt Eisner in 1919, he became chairman of the rebellious Bavarian government and tried to steer a left-wing socialist course. However, he did not agree with the proclamation of the Council Republic in Munich and resigned. When this was crushed by the army and Freikorps, he managed to escape and avoid a gruesome fate like that of Gustav Landauer. In the end, like Erich Mühsam, he was imprisoned for several years for his revolutionary activities.

As an opponent of the Weimar Republic, Niekisch later developed into an anti-parliamentary nationalist and at the same time an admirer of Lenin's Soviet Union. As an important representative of this national-Bolshevism, which combined the German Geist with the proletarian state, he was active in the anti-Nazi resistance until 1937. Then he ended up in the hands of the Gestapo. In 1945 he joined the socialist unity party (communists), but after the workers' uprising in 1953 he broke with the GDR and died embittered in the Federal Republic.

In the third part, Hartmans highlights several Dutch intellectuals such as Jan Romein, Lou de Jong and Arthur Lehning. He is very critical of all three. The title of his essay on Lehning ('The anarchist, the state prize and

the meagre oeuvre') already says what Hartmans is all about: he thinks that Lehning was wrongly awarded the PC Hooft Prize as an essayist shortly before his death last year. Because although he had his merits in the field of the historiography of non-Marxist socialism (Archives Bakounine), he combined art and politics (Marsman, HO] and he was active as an anarcho-syndicalist theoretician, you can't call him a real essayist. And when he did write, it was rarely or never surprising or testifying to an original approach. Says Hartmans.

Perhaps there is something to be said against Lehning's essays — although of course one is not invited to a Johan Huizinga lecture (in 1976) for nothing — but Hartmans is particularly bothered by the fact that Lehning continued to cling to his anarchist views from the twenties and thirties throughout his life: "He liked to make catchy predictions to admiring interviewers, but real analyses of what actually happened no longer flowed from his pen. True to the ideals of his youth, he whistled the same tune for eighty years..."

And when Hartmans then accuses Lehning of being primarily a coffeehouse intellectual, I really don't understand it anymore. Isn't his collection about intellectuals? (With thanks to Albert Ledder.) (HR)

Rob Hartmans, Farewell then! Intellectuals and their illusions; Publisher Aspekt; Soesterberg, 2000; 288 pp.; f39,90.


# Sociology of Uncertainty

How should we live together? Not politics but the economy provides the answer: in uncertainty. Two recent sociological studies show why. Richard Sennett describes how the flexibilization of the economy has a negative effect on personality development. It prevents the development of trust, loyalty and involvement, the essential elements of social life. Flexibilization primarily affects

on the content and execution of tasks. Less routine, more frequent job changes, more risks, heavier responsibility and more control. But because work is so central, flexibilisation also has a profound impact on personal and social life. Social bonding is difficult to establish, personality and identity fade. Fixed values disappear, long-

term considerations lose their meaning. Relationships and friendships become fleeting. Responsible parenthood becomes more difficult in the economy of 'impatient capital'.

Flexibilisation also increases social inequality. The question of a common 'we' can hardly be answered in a capitalism that has become flexible. Dependence is a dirty word in the new order. But for social cohesion to arise, it is necessary that people recognise that they are dependent on each other. The modern cult of the strong independent individual prevents the question 'who needs me?' from being asked. If an answer is not forthcoming, social coexistence is difficult to achieve. Sennett predicts that a regime in which people have no reason to care about each other cannot remain legitimate for long.

For Zygmunt Bauman, too, modern uncertainty is undesirable. The increased individual freedom of people has resulted in a collective powerlessness because there is no connection between the private and the public. Individual uncertainty and private concerns are not adequately translated into terms of a public interest. There are regular explosions of aggression, of charity, of national euphoria about sporting achievements or of mourning about tragic events, brief moments of cohesion that quickly disappear again. But what really determines our sociality remains obscure.

Bauman's solution is the agora, the space between the private and the public/political. Here the concepts of the public good, the just society, shared and contested values are defined.

ed. But the old agora no longer exists and a new one is not in sight. Society is trapped in the idea that there is no alternative to what we have now. Citizens have become autonomous consumers, their freedom knows no reasonable self-restraint. Uncertainty, ambiguity and insecurity determine people's lives. The powerless political institutions concentrate on security issues, for which no real collective action is needed.

Combating uncertainty cannot be achieved without a fundamental discussion of contemporary society. Individual freedom is only achieved through collective effort. The problem is that the means that should guarantee individual freedom have been privatized. However, it is necessary that people's private problems are translated into terms of public and social issues. Bauman admits that this is not easy in an age that prides itself on living without a coherent vision of the future, of the public good, of a just society, of freedom and equality. He hopes that people will orient themselves towards the republican model of the state and of citizenship, he advocates a basic income and he calls for the strengthening of social institutions. (AB) Zygmunt Bauman, In Search of Politics; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

Richard Sennett, The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism; New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998.

# Rawls and Atalanta

In 1971, A Theory of Justice by the American political philosopher John Rawls was published. In this book, he asks the question on which principles of social justice an ideal society should organize itself. He suggests starting from a purely hypothetical situation in which the participants

are invited to agree on a new, fictional social contract. With this book, Rawls has revived liberal political theory and provided it with innovative principles of justice and the 'good'.

In his doctoral thesis A proposal for egalitarian liberals and others, Menno Sijtsma provides a critical analysis of Rawls's ideas. He contrasts the ideals and ideas of this neo-liberal with the anarchist vision of the Utrecht Atalanta collective. In an original way, Sijtsma investigates whether anarchism will be able to create more equality and freedom than the (quasi)-egalitarian modern liberal theories.

The thesis is clearly written and succeeds in confronting the libertarian and liberal visions with each other at a good level. According to the author, a non-egoistic, free and equal anarchist society is indeed conceivable and theoretically feasible. He then makes a powerful plea for the pursuit of far-reaching ideals, the abolition of forms of obligation and unnecessary hierarchy. It is also made clear that Rawls' liberal approach is too little egalitarian and ultimately much too top-down to be convincing.

After reading, the question remains whether Sijtsma has sufficient regard for the problems of the 'abolition of all forms of egoism through individual change' advocated by him and the frequent holding of public discussions and consultations in order to arrive at social decision-making. With all sympathy for his positions, he also deals relatively little with other issues within the libertarian movement, such as the limits of social control, the possible dangers of 'information overload' and 'free-rider behaviour'.

Be that as it may, Sijtsma proves with his thesis that anarchism also gains more power through a penetrating confrontation with other thinkers such as John Rawls or Robert Nozick. It again proves to be the ma-

kidney to bring relevant discussion points to the surface, to puncture well-known neo-liberal pseudo-arguments and to critically consider the logical consequences of certain views. The thesis provides a readable analysis and ensures that anarchism is tested from a new angle for topicality and relevance.

The 101-page thesis can be ordered at cost price from Menno Sijtsma: Menno2@dds.nl (MdG)


# The Future As Business

The desire to predict the future seems to be timeless. In the past, it was the social utopias that met the seemingly universal desire to look ahead and gain insight into 'possible' future developments. In the utopias of Francis Bacon, Edward Bellamy and

William Morris, for example, you will find stimulating ideas about new technological inventions and social trends. Even today, we see numerous futurologists and trend watchers who come up with predictions, reports and scenario studies. According to Maastricht professor of Philosophy Rein de Wilde, we can now even speak of a real 'future industry'.

In his book The Predictors: A Critique of the Future Industry he specifically attacks the modern proponents of digital existence: the types Bill Gates, Nina Brink and Maurice de Hond. Their general premise is that modern information technology will radically change our culture and society. According to De Wilde, however, these digital gurus display a form of techno-optimism and technological finalism, in which "what happens to us coincides exactly with what we 'really' want, at least in the long run." (p. 93) According to him, there are many dangers associated with this. Several of the techno-optimistic sketches that present themselves as more or less 'neutral' predictions of the future appear in practice to primarily serve the interests that

nen of the computer industry. Besides the fact that the predictors often serve their own interests, there is also the problem that they tend to speak in terms of inevitabilities, which seems to rule out a democratic, public debate about future developments in advance. De Wilde speaks about the implicit message of many modern predictions of the future: "Be careful, do not undermine the essence of the free market, otherwise technological and therefore also social progress will be endangered." (p. 24) His criticism of current neo-liberal thinking about the future is generally convincing. The book contains a number of readable chapters on why predictions are so difficult and how ambiguous future perspectives can be. Considerable attention is paid to the lack of historical awareness among most prophets of technological culture. In practice, politicians, policymakers, entrepreneurs and scientists generally appear to be naive in their expectations and far too uncritical with regard to the predictions made.

In one of the most interesting parts of the book, De Wilde discusses three recurring 'incorrect' reasoning patterns among forecasters. The mistake is often made in thinking that a new technology will completely revolutionize our lives. There is also a tendency to expect that new technology will solve old problems without creating new problems itself. In addition, there is often a prevailing belief in the so-called 'technological fix': technology as a remedy for all ills. The author is able to analyze these reasoning patterns in an illuminating way and demonstrates the blind spot for the unintended consequences and effects of new policies and technological change among many forecasters. A central thesis of the book is that the futures industry does not serve democracy "because it pretends that we are forced to make a radical break with the past, in the name of a goal that has already been given and therefore cannot be

open to discussion." (p. 182) De Wilde makes a plausible plea for a healthy distrust of mono-causal predictions of technological developments and their expected social consequences. He shows himself to be an advocate of a more democratic approach to the future: there must be room for open, critical debates and democratic decision-making about the path that society is taking. The greatest danger seems to be that

society will be completely delivered over to the unbridled neo-liberal techno-optimism of digital gurus and the purely profit-oriented multinational business community.

The result is that De Wilde makes a remarkable plea for a strong and active state to "prevent power relations in society from becoming so distorted that all struggle over the future has in fact already been fought in advance" (p. 105). However, he does not ask himself how desirable a strong state actually is, or whether such a state can be a neutral actor in this power struggle and whether it will actually have the capacity to ensure an honest public debate.

The book is written as a long essay and has an exemplary approach. De Wilde has not opted for an in-depth historical treatise, but always chooses short examples to illustrate his ideas. On the one hand, this makes the book easy to read, but on the other hand, the reader regularly loses sight of the main thread of the story. The composition of the book could certainly have been tighter: not every reader will appreciate the postmodern 'zapping' back and forth through history. However, the author has a smooth, pleasant writing style that makes one accept this shortcoming and read the book at a brisk pace. The reflections on the utopia phenomenon in the book ultimately remain rather fragmentary. De Wilde is not convinced of the value and imagination of utopians. On this subject, he comes up with ta

mere selective examples and less cogent arguments. Thus, the important emancipatory function of utopia, focused on the ideals of equality, brotherhood, community and justice, remains underexposed in his analyses.

Although some social utopias can indeed be read as 'exercises in predicting the future', in practice few utopians really had the illusion of making a real prediction of the future. Their intention was much rather to hold up a critical mirror to their contemporaries and to make them think about the structural flaws in society: how can one remove the deeper causes of social misery and try to imagine a better society on the basis of thought experiments.

As a general critique of the current neo-liberal finalist thinking about the future, with its unfounded confidence in the blessings of the free market, technology and progress (read: unlimited economic growth), the book is nevertheless an intelligent analysis: a clear recommendation to read. (MdG)

Rein de Wilde, The Predictors: a critique of the futures industry; 224 pp.; f39,50.

# Felix Ortt On The Cutting Table

The concept of fin-de-siècle is particularly significant in the field of art history in the broad sense. The political and social dividing line between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries falls sooner or later in the industrialized world. It has become the convention to have the 'real' twentieth century begin in the late summer of 1914. If you realize this, Jan Romein's posthumous magnum opus, Op het breukvlak van twee eeuw [On the Fault of Two Centuries], becomes somewhat curious. In fact, the author projects

the victory of communism that he expected to the end onto the future expectations of socialists at the turn of the century.

Romein is fascinating as, as he himself called it, a theoretician of history. He is very susceptible to criticism in that capacity, but I acknowledge my debt to the man I would criticize. He has produced impressively thick books as a historiographer, certainly, but never based on his own snooping in the sources. And I really cannot see Op het breukvlak as anything other than a large pamphlet, a certificate of inability to make his 'integral historiography' seem like something new. If only I could leave it at that. But as a good Bolshevik he knows how to unmask the anarchists of that time as false prophets. In doing so he twists himself into the strangest semantic contortions and he does not shy away from outright insults. Wonderful all the same, so much attention. But in his discourse against the Christian anarchists, whom he of course consistently and disparagingly calls 'Tolstoyans'[8], he slips up in a way that makes his entire argument powerless. He is not even able to give the name of one of those scoundrels correctly, which illustrates sufficiently how well he has studied him. Lod. van Mierop is mentioned twice. If Van Nierop, also in the index — next case, I would say... If you seriously quote Romein's Fracture Plane in a dissertation, published in 2000, in which the Christian anarchism of a hundred years earlier is discussed in detail, you must have a good reason for doing so. One is that you indeed observe a fracture with regard to the role of women. The other is the discussion about the 'petites religions' of that time. But that Romein has shown his actual incompetence on this subject has escaped the young doctor. And it is not the only thing that has escaped her, unfortunately. I'm talking about Amanda Kluveld-Reijerse, who did her PhD on the Dutch anti-vivisection movement in the period 1890–1940.

It would have been nice if the PhD candidate had indicated her possible involvement in the subject in some way, at least in the trade edition.

prove. The motto is borrowed from Henry Rollins, so that promises something – contemporary anarchist, animal-friendly, against intoxicants in the broadest sense, in short almost 'a kindred spirit' of those described – but no, that's where it ends. The author shows no evidence of knowing anything about anarchism, about modernism in the Dutch Reformed Church, and therefore also not about that wonderful synthesis of Dutch Christian anarchism. The Tolstoy connection has also virtually escaped her attention. This does detract from the commendable consistent use of the term 'Christian anarchism'. The author rightly states that she is exploring virtually untrodden territory. Still, I can name a nice list of people who have explored the contours of this area or adjacent regions in recent years; with the exception of myself – I will have to come back to that – they are not mentioned in the bibliography.

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[8] To be honest, until a few years ago I thought that Ger Harmsen also used this term in a derogatory sense in his dissertation Blauwe en rode jeugd. From his autobiography I have since understood that this is not meant that way, which also means that I must retract an earlier suspicion of 'anti-anarchist disdain' – you're welcome.

You would think that the door is already open if you say that the rejection of vivisection is based on the recognition of the intrinsic value of the Other, which the animal simply is. If you do not have that commitment yourself, or at least do not want to make it explicit, you will have to find it in the people described. But Kluveld immediately takes the step that it is 'actually' about a discourse on femininity. Vivisectors think that anti-vivisectionism is just women's talk and guys who sympathize with it are effeminate. To then conclude that for the anti-vivisectionists too, cutting into living animals 'actually' amounts to violating innocent women, is a daring conclusion from the argument of those contemporary opponents. Are there any indications for this? It all depends on how you quote, but strangely enough, kicking in that door is conveniently skipped at the beginning of this paragraph: it is not about animals! That seems very unlikely to me, especially since there was also a women's movement at that time, with which the male Christian anarchists were in complete sympathy.

pathized. Why construct a miraculous detour?

The leader of the anti-vivisection movement in the present era is the Christian anarchist Felix Ortt. Until old age this man scoured the Journal of Medicine for descriptions of experiments on animals, of which the abject or the senseless could be established even within the terms used by the vivisectors themselves. He used this method because he did not want to be suspected of coloring stories that could immediately be dismissed by the opponent as sentimental fantasy. He had become wise after having once quoted the English anti-vivisection movement and had discovered that this reproach could be made. As an exact scientist – and, one might add, as a class-conscious patrician – he wanted to combat the vivisectors – usually classmates – vigorously, let me say. The method of combat was not to be open to discussion. When around 1930 a noisy anti-vivisection movement emerged under the leadership of Pieter Pijl, who did not shy away from the embellished horror story, Ortt opposed it with unprecedented ferocity. The motivation for his method of struggle was once again clearly explained on that occasion. But Kluveld knows better. Ortt was 'perhaps' sensitive to the accusation of femininity and therefore wanted to reason in a masculine-scientific way. With the loss of Marie Jungius as a leading woman from the movement in 1900, Kluveld argues, the movement 'became masculinized'. In my opinion, this reasoning is built on shifting sand. It also detracts from the role of important women in the movement, often not even mentioned by Kluveld

The dissertation is structured like the average modern textbook: first tell what you are going to tell; then tell; and for those who really could not follow, finally tell what you have told. That is how you fill your pages. And so Ortt is twice 'perhaps' afraid of the far

blames femininity. The third time – we have been fooled – he is "in fact" (p. 211). The amateur psychological insights may be presented as truths.

The dissertation is intended as the conclusion of a PhD in the subject of 'social history'. This involves the need to work on 'theory'. This theory should, if possible, be 'international', preferably quotable in English. No problem (or actually there is,

because the author demonstrates sufficiently that she has hardly any command of this language[9]), we drag in a British political scientist from 1968 who wrote something about 'middle-class radicalism', and we establish the 'expressive politics' of the anti-vivisection movement. That is to say, to be clear, that it was not the immediate result that counted, but the expression of the higher goal — which apparently has little or nothing to do with animals.

The sad thing is that the author, as I understand it, actually means well. I think she is too kind about the anti-Semitic traits of Ortt's Felicia, for which his friend Edward Peetere had excuses that do not convince me. Also: they are certainly not future Nazis, those anti-vivisectionists, Kluveld generously acknowledges. This is indeed sometimes claimed — and there is undeniable sympathy shown for this movement from that quarter — and sometimes reciprocally. And the discourse on that femininity will surely betray a certain commitment. Then I am a nitpicker if I object to a passage such as: "In a time when blacks were not or hardly seen as full-fledged people" (p. 81). By whom, if I may ask? By themselves?

But okay, the theory... what about the result of the honest artisanal research in the writings of Ortt and others, which are considered sources here? A number of telling ones, such as a remarkable consideration of the animals in the afterlife, and his intervention against Arrow, are simply entirely to the attention of the

writer escapes. It can happen. What is more painful is that she consistently quotes a story The soul of the wise as "The soul of the wise" (it is about a man with a beard...). That is not Dutch and that is not what it is called. Van der Veer was not a minister (p. 122), Van Mierop was not a mathematician (p. 131). Publisher Chreestarchia did not yet exist in 1900 (p. 69). Oh, that I myself am discussed with a silly quote and that my name is mangled – it is not nice and the second is not trustworthy either, but I can also say of this: it must be possible, it can happen... If the writer Felix Louis Ortt "actually" calls himself Louis Felix Ortt, the line has really been crossed.

I would say a thesis, not publishable. Certainly not a monograph, and certainly not a dissertation. The academics who thought completely differently about this are called Schwegman and Labrie – we can expect something from them, no doubt. (AdR)

Amanda Kluveld, Journey through the hell of the innocents – the expressive politics of the Dutch anti-vivisectionists, 1890–1940; Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000; Series: History & Health; 278 pp.; f49,50.

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[9] "his concern for suffering animals" (p. 45), "red and white" (p. 273), etc. etc. – also a blessed proof of inability for a publishing house that works under the sad name of Amsterdam University Press...

# Jewish Anarchists

Anyone who connects Marxism and liberation theology has certainly understood nothing of Marxism – and as Jacques Ellul has argued powerfully and convincingly, nothing of the Gospel either. If there are political consequences to be connected to the Christian faith, then it is in the anti-politics of anarchism. Michael Löwy has written a popular work on "liberation theology" that Ellul could use. But Löwy is not simply dismissed. If you project back the way he views things in Rédemption et utopie, he establishes a Wahlverwandtschaft between liberation theologians and Marxists. 'We anarchists' can shrug our shoulders at that. We cannot do that when Löwy establishes the same kinship-by-choice between a selection of Jewish thinkers (they are all men) with a mystical or messianic disposition on the one hand and anarchism on the other. I am inclined to say that he ventures into territory where he may be considered more competent, as a Jew and a seeker of ways to liberation. I cannot conclude from the book that he himself chooses Wahlverwandtschaft with anarchism. But in his inventory he points the way to thoughts and names that are largely new to me in this context. Thinkers who are sympathetic to me, and whom I would not simply associate with anarchism, are included in his Wahlverwandtschaft company. After reading this book by Löwy, I can connect my preference for Fromm, Benjamin and the Frankfurt School with my own choice for anarchism and interest in religious anarchism. Synthesis, that is always nice.

I learned from the Israeli critical theorist Ilan Gur-Ze'ev in a lecture that Herbert Marcuse saw the abolition of linear time as the goal of the revolution. This idea also appears in Benjamin's last writings and Marcuse alludes to it very passionately in his contribution to Dialectics of Liberation. The theme is said to appear much more frequently in his posthumous papers. I have hardly taken note of it yet, but I am willing to believe it. We are here dealing with a theme that deserves more than a single

reflection on a book – it is indeed a thought or a goal that fits the eschatological pursuit of (religious) anarchism. And it apparently fits the Jewish tradition rather than the Christian one.

Marcuse is not mentioned separately by Löwy and Adorno and Horkheimer, but in passing, and it is also quite daring to choose people who have always distanced themselves from 'anarchism' and actually saw themselves as Marxists, as relatives of all the others. The nice thing about Löwy's book, however, is that he announces this kinship as an inevitable conclusion. And let's face it: the Frankfurters do refer to Marx, but have never kept up with any of the parties that are supposed to belong to Marx's legacy. Strictly speaking, Marx himself, in his best moments, could be regarded as

belonging to the company that Löwy presents. Löwy does not go that far. 'We' can ask ourselves whether we should not save 'libertarian Marx' from its impending downfall. But back to Löwy's inventory.

That Buber, Landauer and Kafka fall into both a Jewish and an anarchist paradigm, I knew or could have suspected. Toller and Sperber – also not entirely surprising. Heterodox Marxists like Bloch and LukAcs, who never completely unlearned 'anarchism' (nor Jewish eschatology) – well, they are not that far removed from the Frankfurters. See also: Leo Löwenthal. But they were members of a party that fancied itself The Party. May they be forgiven, with the necessary hesitation. Names that were completely new to me were Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem, outspoken mystics – to be honest, I had never devoted a thought of importance to the Kabbalah, let alone that there would be a wealth of libertarian thought to be found here. A world, or

a new dimension – well, how do you put it – presented itself when reading the relevant chapters.

Why this combination of Jewish mysticism and anarchism came about specifically in Central Europe, I do not find Löwy to have worked out in a plausible way. He mentions a Western European, French exception who would belong to the Wahlverwandtschaft: Bernard Lazare. Wouldn't Simone Weil, very interested in Christian mysticism — like Fromm, Landauer and others mentioned — but never defected, and an anarchist with a slightly Marxist slant, be just as fitting? How Central European is this Jewish anarchism? What about the English radio rabbi Lionel Blue, for example, who comes across as rather anarchistic in the ether and in his book? And the Netherlands has also known Jewish religious anarchists: I myself wrote about S. van den Berg (Jan Boezeroen) in the Fifth Yearbook of Anarchism.

But hey, these are questions I wouldn't have asked without Löwy's work, so it's a bit nitpicky. In the Amsterdam secondhand bookshop De Kloof there was the pile with the English translation of Löwy's book. Next to it – when I scored some copies for some fellow AS editors – was a practical introduction to Kabbalah by Rabbi David A. Cooper (no, that's not the writer from Dialectics of Hberation, as far as I know): God is a verb. Rosenzweig's Stern der Erlösung is available as a Suhrkamp edition and has been translated into Dutch by Bijleveld. Get to work! And don't I see a collection of broken clocks at the end of the tunnel, announcing the end of linear time? (AdR)

Michael Lowy, Redemption and Utopia. Jewish libertarian thought in Central Europe – a study in elective affinity; London: The Athlone Press, 1992. Ramsjprijs: 17.50 guilders at the antiquarian bookstore De Kloof, Amsterdam.

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— The next AS, which will appear around September 1, will be a double issue as usual. We will then combine the Eighth Yearbook of Anarchism, with articles on the Vlaams Blok, anarcho-syndicalism in South Africa, Bakoenin, Piet Kooijman and Henri van den Bergh van Eysinga, with a theme issue on the French situationist Guy Debord (best known for his book The Society of the Spectacle). The previously announced issue on the German anarchist Erich Mühsam will be postponed until 2002. And then, at the end of this year, an issue dedicated to the theme of Tolerance will appear.

— One of the contributors to the Africa issue of De AS was Karin van Haasteren (KA). This issue again contains illustrations by her and we can continue to count on her cooperation in the future.

— It's been far too long (January 1993) since we organized a study day for our readers. We want to hold a similar meeting again, probably this time in Rotterdam. We ask the readers of De AS to let us know in advance what they expect from such a study day. Please send your ideas and suggestions to postbus 43,2750 AA Moerkapelle!

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— Henk Eikeboom, The anarchist and marriage; a 24-page argument by Henk Eikeboom, published in 1921 at Libertas (the printing office of Rijnders' Vrije Socialist), which caused quite a stir. Clara Wichmann subtly tore down Eikeboom's plausibility for 'Stirnerian lust experience' (003);

— Anton Constandse, Heinrich Heine as poet and thinker; a 48-page brochure by Constandse dating from 1928, included in the collection Groote Persoonlijkheden, published by Orion (1928) that has never been reprinted since (004);

— J. Bedeaux and KA Fraanje, Rhapsoden, zangen in modern gegaad; a collection that was published in 1951 by Het Rode Boek in Rotterdam. With an introduction by B. Damme. 64 p. (order number: 005);

— Simon Radius, Proudhon on Church and Society; an essay published in 1981 at Vrije Gedachte. 42 p. (order number: 006);

— Piet Kooijman, Heden, verleden en toekomst in zakformaat; a reprint of the brochure first published in 1935 on the vanguard function of the declassed ('neem ai eet'), supplemented with a reprint of the article De perspectief der arbeidsbeweging from the same year and a biographical sketch of Piet Kooijman by Hans Ramaer. 48 p. (order no.: 007).

— Spain 1936–1966. A 47-page illustrated special of the anarchist magazine De Vrije (July 1966) with an interview with a former Spanish fighter and father, contributions by Rudolf de Jong, José Peirats, Hem Day and Victor Garcia (order no.: 008)

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# Other Releases

Bibliography The AS years 1972–1998; 105 p.; inductive fasting fee ƒ15,-.

Paul Eltzbacha, Anarchism Reprint in paperback from the 1903 Dutch translation; 293 p.; inductive fasting fee ƒ29.50.

Eastern Yearbook of Anarchism; 151 p.; inductive vazaid fee ƒ12.50.

Anton Constandse, The self-destruction of protestantism, a critical review of religion published in 1926. Complete reprint in paperback; VIII + 120 pp.; shipping costs including VAT: 15 guilders.

Anton Constandse, The misery of religion. Reprint of brochure from 1923; 20 p.; including vase costs ƒ2.50.

Anton Constandse; God is Evil. Reprint of brochure from 1924; 31 p.; shipping costs ƒ3.50.

Anton Constandse, Can there be a God?. Reprint of brochure from 1927; 16 p.; including shipping costs ƒ2.50.

Anton Constandse, Religion, opium for the people. Reprint of brochure from 1929; 15 p.; inclusive vassal costs ƒ2.50.

Anton Constandse, The Netherlands, God and Orange. Reprint of brochure from 1932; 15 p.; including vassal costs ƒ2.50.

Hans Ramaa, The individualism of Anton Constandse. Text of the eighth Anton Constandse lecture (1994) for De Vrije Gedachte in brochure form; 22 p.; initial vazaïd costs ƒ3.50.

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