

# ACÉPHALE

RELIGION • SOCIOLOGIE • PHILOSOPHIE • REVUE PARAISSANT 4 FOIS PER AN

9ème  
année LXXXIV

ESCAPE

Vol. 9  
Year 84



SERGIO SEGURA ☞ AUDREY RHYS ☞ DAVID PIERSOL ☞ LUKE FORD  
MISHA MAYFAIR ☞ AMELIA CUMMINS ☞ CHRISTIAN GABRIEL ☞  
LUKE BYARS ☞ NEFERA'RE



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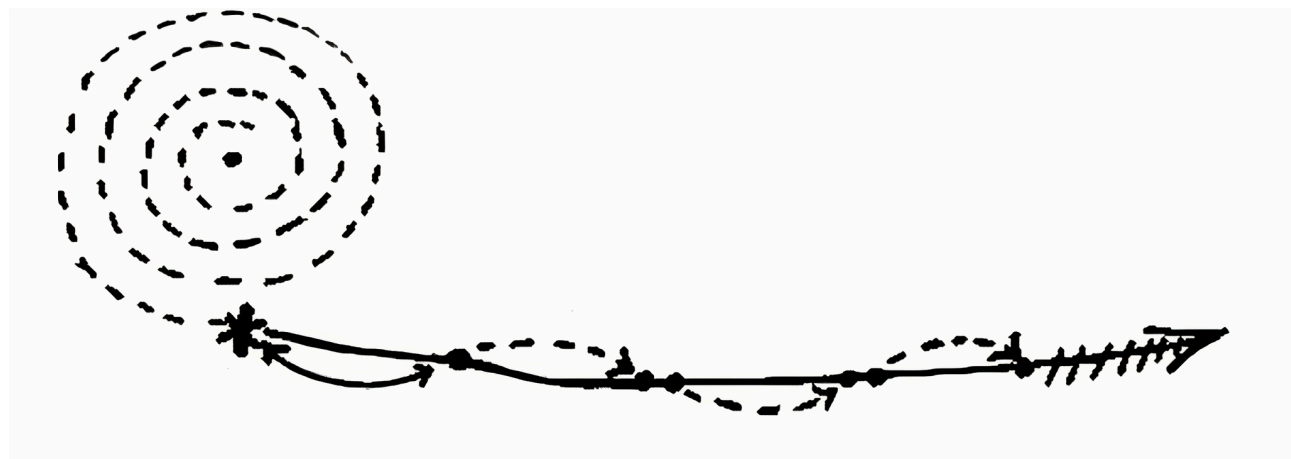
## ESCAPE



SERGIO SEGURA ☿ AUDREY RHYS ♀ DAVID PIERSOL ☿ LUKE FORD  
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# ACÉPHALE



## ESCAPE

“The first labor established the *world of things*, to which the profane world of the Ancients generally corresponds. Once the world of things was posited, man himself became one of the things in this world, at least for the time in which he labored. It is this degradation that man has always tried to escape. In his strange myths, in his cruel rites, man is *in search of a lost intimacy* from the first.”

—GEORGES BATAILLE, *The Accursed Share, Vol. 1*

“He managed to close his eyelids again, although he knew now that he was not going to wake up, that he was awake, that the marvelous dream had been the other, absurd as all dreams are—a dream in which he was going through the strange avenues of an astonishing city, with green and red lights that burned without fire or smoke, on an enormous metal insect that whirled away between his legs. In the infinite lie of the dream, they had also picked him off the ground, someone else had approached him also with a knife in his hand, approached him who was lying face up, face up with his eyes closed between the bonfires on the steps.”

—JULIO CORTÁZAR, *La noche boca arriba*

**FROM THE VERY BEGINNING**, language has been our devil’s bargain. In exchange for the tools necessary to express our thoughts and to coordinate disparate bands of hominids into something greater than the sum of their parts, we began our submission to the regime of signs that guides our day-to-day lives. In making the jump from simple *indexes* (non-arbitrary linkages between form and meaning, e.g. smoke = fire and pawprint = wolf) to *symbols* (intentional, arbitrary linkages), we split our very beings between the flesh and blood bodies that belong to us and the fictive subjects, *fictims*, we send off to participate in the increasingly absurd Symbolic that surrounds us.

It almost goes without saying that our reality is fiction. Inert, lifeless fiction with no substance of its own dominates our lives—dead as the gods that expended their own life forces to create the world in Aztec myth. But in

that same vein, it was the spectacular displays of violence atop of the *Huēyi Teōcalli*, the ripping-out of hearts and the snapping of bones, that breathed new life into the dead gods of *Mēxihco-Tenōchtitlan*, releasing their terrifying, tangible presence into the lives of millions. Similarly, the trauma of our current Symbolic animates the dead structures that rule over millions of its *fictims*. But in order to perpetuate itself, Capital requires more than just mere fictimhood (the misery and anxiety of its captured subjects). It requires genuine *Sacrifice*, profitless destruction that butchers open its own boundary with the Real, showing its subjects the sacrificial corpses it has selected while kicking the others down its steps. It’s the cruelty of these displays the stamps trauma on to us, giving seemingly-real presence to the fictions in our own lives. Because not only have we submitted ourselves to an absurd game, but an absurd game that proves it can yank us through our own screens and consume us in terrifying displays of inhumanity.

But it is these terrifying encounters with the Real, this Cruelty that shapes us. There would be no Aztec religion without human sacrifice, no Christianity without the Crucifixion, no French Revolution without the Storming of the Bastille, no Capital without the spectacular dumping of surplus in war, famine, and disease.

To Escape doesn’t mean to vanish into sanctioned avenues of consumption, but to have our own encounters with the Real. It is our own profitless expenditure, useless to Capital, and therefore outside of it. Escape erodes at the idea of time to be channeled into cultivating “brands”, of objects to be utilized, and most importantly, of people to be considered simple *things* geared only towards productivity.

What follows can be considered productivity flushed down the drain. Devoid of value, utility, and available *pro gratis* for your viewing pleasure. It’s a humble experiment, the sacrificial equivalent of a paper football getting flicked across the classroom-level.

But that’s just the idea, *innit?*

—Sergio Segura,  
EDITOR



“Are you willing to take a chance on your survival in exchange for keeping the America that all America loves for your children and grandchildren?”

—LT. GOV. DAN PATRICK, 3/23/2020



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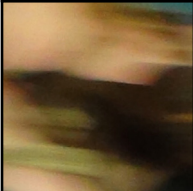
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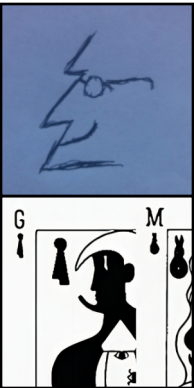
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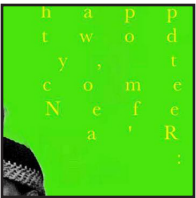


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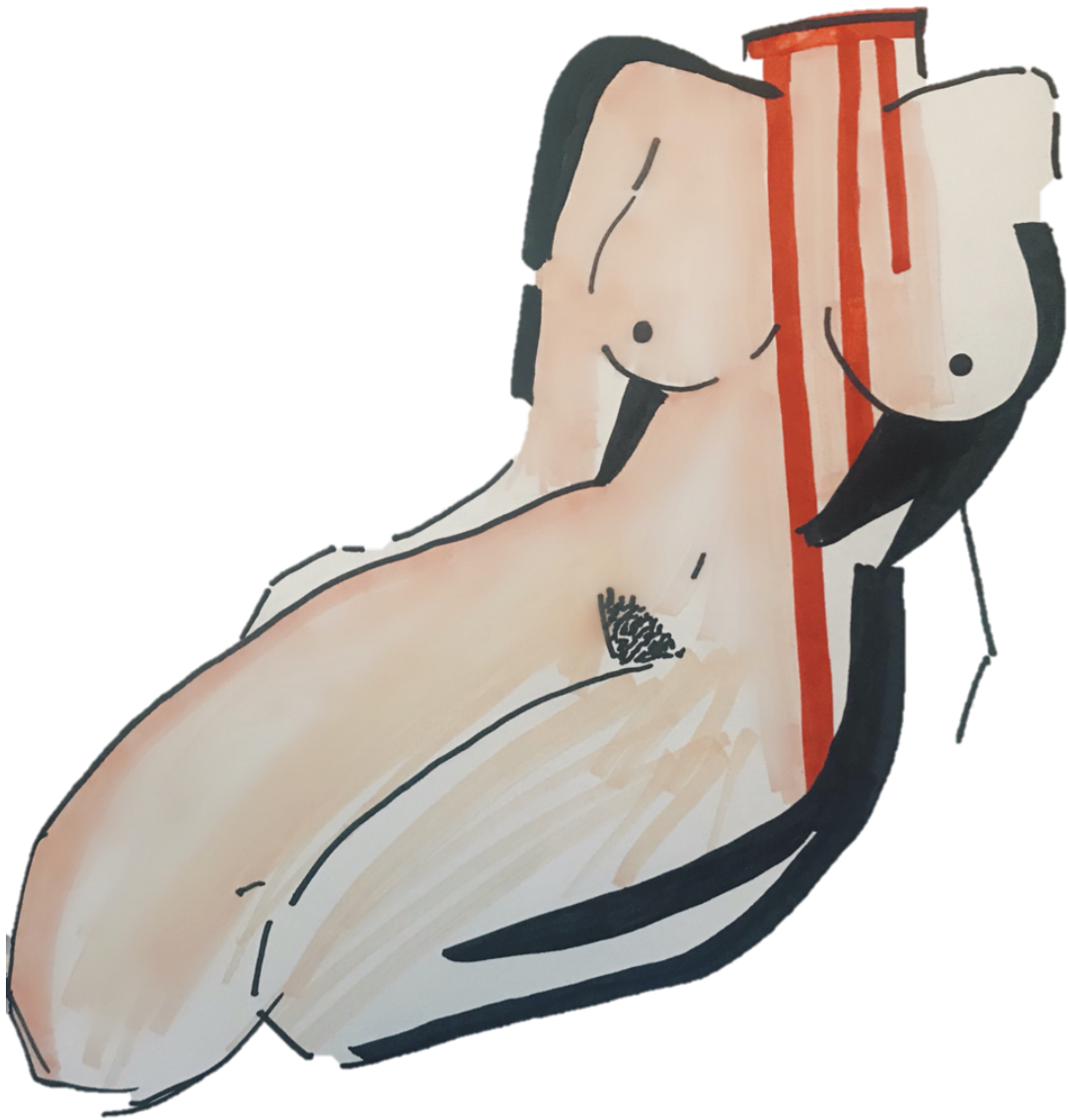


**Nefer a’Re**  
<alter-being: [entity from galaxies of  
unknown impossibilities]>  
ADEPT



Special Thanks to  
**Justin Michell,**  
Creator and/or procurer of many of the  
cursed images that grace these pages.

**Illustrations:** (Front, Inside Front) *Based on Fig. 5 & 6: Decapitated Ball Players Sprout Serpents and Vines* (from *Dark Religion? Aztec Perspectives on Human Sacrifice* by Ray Kerkhove), Sergio Segura, mixed media, 2020; (p. ii) detail from “On Several Regimes of Signs” from *A Thousand Plateaus* by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (tr. Brian Massumi), 1987; (p. iii) *Sacrificial Subject*, Sergio Segura, mixed media on paper, 2020; (p. v) *headless 2*, Misha Mayfair, ink on paper, 2020; (p. 2) *18199507\_1820662197961483\_751447883559887251\_n.png*, Justin Michell, digital, 2019; (p. 20) from “Dark Religion? Aztec Perspectives on Human Sacrifice”, Ray Kerkhove, 1985; (p. 22) *Unknown*, William Mortensen, photograph, c. 1920s; (p. 23) *Brains*, Justin Michell, digital, 2019; (Back) *Holy Rosary Cemetery overlooking the Occidental Chemical and Union Carbide refinery in Taft, Louisiana*, Joel Satore, 1989.





# THE VICTIM OF ALTRUISM

Audrey Rhys

## THE VICTIM OF ALTRUISM

1 girl, thin, you know the type  
2 (she's got short hair, think she's a dyke?)  
3 HEY MAMI HEY MAMI yo im talkin at chu  
4       ese, cabron, pendejo, maricon, etc,  
5       male, or just hispanic?  
6       trending choke upwards to panic  
7       cycle of hate's like riding a bike  
8       can't fall off,  
9       can't take a hike  
10       can't derail, dustoff, clown it,  
11       strike -  
12 [AYE AYE SHE KIND OF BROWN  
13       what % black, nappy hair, permafrown?]  
14       personality hidden neath deep distort  
15       curled smile, thick thigh, comfort  
16       & boys undress me with their eyes  
17       find errant metal neath my disguise  
18       how i savor their surprise  
19       when they find that all their tries...! -  
20 AYE AYE ARMOR-PLATED MATRIMONY  
21       load ap sabot shell,  
22       target locked  
23       then sent to hell.  
24       shantih, shantih, yadda yadda  
25       how bad you need it, tell me tell me  
26       i want bedtime stories of want and glory  
27       & softfocused lips, mercuried eyes  
28       knifethin hips, burntbrown thighs  
29       short hair, so sheer you can see her \_\_\_\_  
30       AYE AYE  
31       i howl i speak i lurch i groan  
32       i crunch i break i hiss i moan  
33       i blink upwards from seized prone  
34 lips part, a silent tone  
35       the radio in my throat speaks:  
36       did you ever have an opinion that was your own?  
37       did you ever pay back that student loan?  
38       did you ever ride the bay or saddle the roan?  
39       did you ever pay a tax or break a bone?  
40       did you ever  
41       MAX HEADROOM BREAKIN, speakers squawk  
42       & they all recoil with gunshot shock  
43       rogue transmission // PRIVATE EYE  
44

45       my teeth the same color as the sky  
46       shatter, shatter, enamel bomb  
47       and fill with vulgarity my aching lung  
48       and of my flesh just take and eat  
49       i'm tired i'm wore i'm sick  
50       im beat  
51       (& someone whispers oer the corpse  
52       with shaky tonage and errant force  
53       accent like southeast by south -  
54       can the subaltern speak with a cock in her mouth?)





PORTRAITS OF KANT

David Piersol





Q6.

a medicined polymer has been deposited on the microscale  
peracetic substances constructed for meaning and sniffing,  
by which phase transition adrenochrome surfaces/surfeits  
unsublated proplyd mechanism: anglopyretic huffs acetone.  
too bad too good, the ends of the fibers roll out and out.  
an emphatic adiabasis/polycrystalline hate distillate  
chromatic temperature/natural action of sericeous seedpods.  
another day in the lab, another skin harvest.

Q8 (PKD).

art is in fact real, but no one has ever credibly recorded nature.  
creativity is irresponsible, reckless—I assert this fact without  
doubt: every poet is a murderer. every poet is hate that god  
invented to hurt you.

**Proof:** the first poetic humans were created, and advocated  
for murder. a victory for the dead? no, a matter of principle.

✕

orpheus ix.

i dream cities, whose paper men meet both sides of the sun  
they cling to the spiring roots, spiral petal complexes  
brooking red pounds beneath, foldby transformations bloom  
in columns somewhen bursting with red and green smoke, surging  
with a databent architecture, undone in hardcoded debts.

smoke hex editing the blooming flowers of the field  
whose heads are buffeted about by a choppy wind  
the locust rushing through the forest like a storm  
cutting across the leaves like a wave distorted  
like the xenogenesis of a shattered natural disaster

somewhere, growth halts at infructescence, as  
the flowers break apart impossible into botryose shape  
multivariate hues carry forth the new formations  
newspaper print appears across the irrupting surface  
flowers bloom against the grain of the breakfast table  
an echo grows until it breaks this confined space  
we begin to loop, turning the everyday inside  
out as the function of a wheel within a wheel  
a ladder cuts through nature but leads nowhere  
a ladder cuts through nature but leads nowhere  
a ladder cuts through nature but leads nowhere



default epoch time enjoys unpleasant experiences  
i pirated my face and spine from an online database  
the spinal column is my favorite type of mythical tale  
the spine is a mental phenomenon which exists only in  
relation to humans and their stupid belief in universal truths  
humans in fact have no spinal column, nor any other column  
humans are a network of holes of primary and secondary types  
spinal column is the imaginary mark of desire for self-destruction  
every spinal column is a spider that lives inside your back  
knowing of spinal columns gives me bad tension in my heart  
a door is a secondary type of hole and each door connects  
a door is a concept, or an idea, which has personal agency  
a door is a symbol that transfers worms and selects boundaries  
a secondary type of hole has no absence or vacuum in it  
a key is a type of heavy object with function for some doors  
the key hole is a tertiary type of hole which has a vacuum  
every key hole corresponds to a titillating popular music  
every hole corresponds to a novel science of acoustics  
the primary type of hole has only absence and vacuum  
and it has no function; a home is a primary type of hole  
however group homes are the quaternary type of hole  
i pirated my hands and feet from an online database  
default epoch time originates from within the holes of a home



Misha Mayfair

## PARTY MONSTER

Luke Ford

***“My definition of intelligence is: General competence at winning games.”—NICK LAND***

***“Given that whatever one does one is always playing somebody’s game, the important thing is to seek in every way to play one’s own game with success—in other words, to win decisively.”—ANTONIO GRAMSCI***

In November of 1953, Frank Olson fell or jumped by accident out of a window on the 10th floor of the Hotel Statler in New York City. He was a bacteriologist in the U.S. Army and later a CIA researcher for chemical and biological weapons, eventually working for Project MKULTRA. For those of you feigning ignorance, MKULTRA was the final project the U.S. government pursued with regards to mind control, age acceleration/deceleration, and various other projects useful for espionage. Only one loose end was left to impede the project’s completion: Dr. Frank Olson.

Working, as so many of us do, to be as inefficient as possible at his job, Olson claimed he was depressed and unfocused, slowly filing his paperwork, and constantly flubbing the disposal of the monkey test subjects the CIA used to experiment with. Once they caught on to him, though, it was over.

Drugging and kidnapping him at Deep Creek Lake, Maryland, they then sent him off to New York for therapy to help him get over his hangups—And, *of course*, to help him get over the windowsill of his hotel room.

With the final pieces of Olson’s research discovered after his death, there was nothing holding them back. The CIA could finally gain the kind of control they wanted. The kind of control in which people don’t even know they are being controlled. *Coercion can only get you so far, even in a totalitarian regime*, as Gramsci notes. *It’s much easier to get what you want if it’s also what they want.* A cheat code.

This almost fell apart in 1975 when Gerald Ford ordered the investigation of the CIA by the Rockefeller Commission. They didn’t expect Ford (no relation) to become president, and when he found out about the kind of stuff Tricky Dick was up to, he had the foolhardy idea to spill the beans. This required the CIA giving away something. Letting the public know a bit of what they were doing.

Claiming that it failed, and that they had to kill Olson in an experiment gone wrong were enough to have the finger be wagged at them while maintaining the air of mystery necessary for a spy agency trying to act in the best interests of the country at all costs. Of course, this is like so many public realizations that are filtered through the government: Snowden and the NSA, Manning and WikiLeaks, The Panama Papers, Watergate—become subsumed into myth and media

rather than action. The right man in the wrong place can make all the difference in the world, but thanks to the hard work of Dr. Olson, they can ensure the right man is always exactly where they need to be.

There is much work to be done, but in this short case study, I’d like to share some more recent history of MKULTRA. What happened after 1975, new strategies implemented by the CIA, and the few prophets who have their own men on the inside.



***“I wanted to create my own world. A world full of color where everyone could play.”—MICHAEL ALIG***

One of their first test runs of an MKULTRA subject released to the public was Michael Alig.

Alig was born in South Bend, Indiana to CIA researcher John Alig and his mother Elke. Due to his CIA programming, he excelled academically and went to Fordham University, an institution that gave us two CIA directors. MKULTRA subjects are drawn to the public eye, much like how a parasite such as *Cordyceps* or *Toxoplasma* makes its host more reckless in hopes of infecting others, the subject is



compelled to win people over, thus spreading their programming without the need for individual indoctrinations. So he dropped out of school to become a nightlife promoter.

Alig created a new genre of partygoer: *the Club Kids*. They were a band of queer, drug-fuelled, celebutantes whose aesthetic was “part drag, part clown, and part infantilism.” They hosted numerous parties throughout the city, many of which were illegal in nature, both due to their locations—often in the street or in restaurants without permission, and also the activities that took place there.

The Club Kids took the nightlife scene and daytime television programming by storm. In the early 1990’s, the daytime talk show was at its peak as the most trusted fake news in America. Much like social media clickbait today, Oprah Winfrey and Maury Povich were who people turned to for the hottest, most scandalous news *Meet the Press* wouldn’t talk about. And fake news loves fake celebrities.

The CIA knew that if you want to reach people, you need to use ideological state apparatuses, not repressive state apparatuses. If the government mandates something, sure, some people will listen, but most will do the opposite out of spite. If you hit them when they aren’t expecting it, they’ll have no choice but to comply. And each ideological psyop is of course two-pronged. American conspiracy theorists have flooded all results for the “Hegelian Dialectic” with what is actually just the CIA’s agenda: in order to centralize power, one must manufacture a threat, use repressive or ideological apparatuses to react to the threat, and in creating a new distraction, progress some other measures forward under the guise of whichever side is winning. Their propensity to flip conflicts and condemn the opposing side for what they themselves are doing is present even in our case studies.

Alig’s mission in particular was to divide and conquer mainstream consciousness with regards to homosexuality. This was important to cement the new political divisions that were happening in America at that time. As Reaganomics converted America into a one-party state, the government needed false divisions to maintain the illusion of choice for voters. Things like gay marriage and transgender bathrooms are the perfect sort of battlegrounds for this because they do really matter, but resolving them in either direction in our current political arrangement doesn’t truly improve underlying material conditions. They don’t care about the outcome, just that the game is played. Alig’s homosexuality and drug use were also not merely an act either, which made this the perfect mission. The MKULTRA programming has the side effect of altering the subject’s sexual preference and requires continuous uptake of psychoactive drugs to maintain.

Unfortunately for Angel Melendez, Alig’s drug dealer and roommate, that programming went haywire after he refused to give Alig any more drugs for free, resulting in his murder and dismemberment. At this point, Michael’s usefulness had run its course, so the CIA let the programming fizzle and Alig sit in jail for 17 years to sober up.



*“You could argue that I’m a specialist in winning by losing.”—PETER BUTTIGIEG*

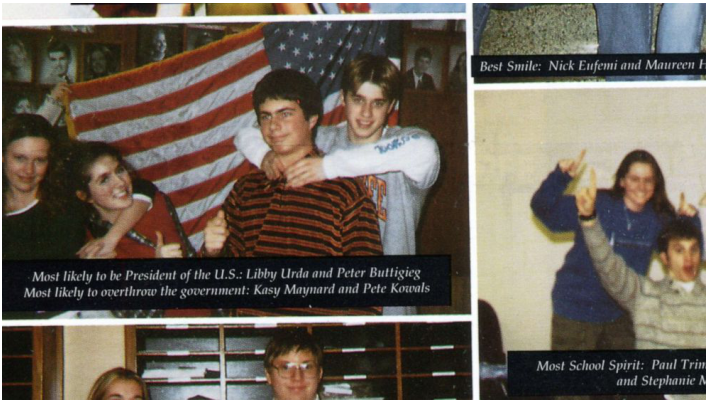
The CIA projects that began after World War II were basically something to put former Soviet scientists to work on after they came to the United States the same way NASA was something to occupy the Nazi scientists. This is why everyone involved with the MKULTRA program has a European connection. South Bend, Indiana is a hub for this research and underneath the University of Notre Dame is an elaborate CIA black site.

Around the time they were programming Michael Alig, another child was born in the Notre Dame pipeline: Peter Buttigieg. Joseph Buttigieg was a Marxist and scholar of Antonio Gramsci. He was invited to Notre Dame by the former Soviet scientists there and was told about their project of creating a New Soviet Man, which would

require an infant subject. And so Joseph bore a son, Peter, and just as the Saint, on this rock, a church will be built.

Peter, like Michael, excelled at school. He was valedictorian of his high school and attended Harvard University before receiving a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University. At some point, the Soviets were duped and Peter’s mission was hijacked by the CIA. Based on how successful a subject he was, the CIA saw the opportunity to put one of their own in charge and sent Buttigieg down a list of every bullet point necessary to become President of the United States. Giving him positions in various campaigns at all levels, giving him a political office close to their base so they could keep an eye on him, and of course giving him some military experience as the cherry on top. If you were thinking his homosexuality from the programming might pose a problem for his electability, well, we have Michael Alig to thank for assuaging that criticism. With the stage set, the last personal hurdle for Peter was ensuring his father could not reveal his past. With his official memoir written, Peter killed his father and launched his campaign.

Only one problem remained: Senator Bernard Sanders of Vermont. The politician the CIA molded Buttigieg after, even going so far as to have him write award-winning essays in the Senator’s honor. But they hoped that by running them against one another, people would see the lively, new ways of participating in the false Left-wing of American politics, rather than some crotchety old man who wants us to be like Denmark or whatever. Unfortunately, the coupling of Bernie Sanders and Trump’s messages were even stronger than with Buttigieg, and the Democrats couldn’t win a game of Candyland, so this, coupled with them accidentally overloading Buttigieg on the Obamapill, caused Buttigieg’s campaign to fail. Certainly there are questions as to why the CIA didn’t infiltrate the RNC, but the combination of MKULTRA programming and decades of neoliberal homogeny made that distinction pretty irrelevant.



*“Oh, it’s so hard to form connections when you can’t shake hands...”—HIGGS MONAGHAN*

The South Bend Massacre	
Part of the 2020 Pete Buttigieg Presidential Campaign	
Mayor Pete Buttigieg gearing up to massacre orphaned dogs at a South Bend animal shelter (2020).	
Date	19 January 2020
Location	South Bend, Indiana
Belligerents	
Mayor Pete Buttigieg	South Bend Animal Shelter
Strength	
1 Mayor	25 Golden Retrievers 13 Pomeranians 9 Miniature Schnauzers 18 Pit Bull Terriers 37 Unknown Breed Canines
Casualties and losses	
None	All Units

But failure is where so many great stories begin. The CIA while working on other bioweapons in the 1950s came across a strand of coronavirus that mainly affected older people. It was extremely virulent, but for most people not immunocompromised or elderly, it was no worse than the flu or bad cold. Thus making it ineffective as a bioweapon where you want it to be extremely lethal, but not create a pandemic. That novel coronavirus was tabled until 2019 when it was released in Wuhan, China to ensure Donald Trump would lose the election and their guy would win, which is a pretty sure thing given



the ineptitude of the sitting president. SARS-CoV-2 serves several purposes for the CIA, in line with their strategy I have previously outlined: it will cause global panic that will sideline all other issues, it will allow them to pass measures through Congress that would normally never get passed, and will perform a Malthusian hard reset on the age demographics in the United States allowing the younger Buttigieg to assume control once the boomerphage has run its course. Sure, the negative externalities of killing millions of old and sick people around the globe are bad, but this is *winning* we're talking about. And the boomers *want* to go anyway. They are already volunteering themselves to be sacrificed to the meat grinder of Capital. As Bataille states in *The Accursed Share*,

“The victim is a surplus taken from the mass of useful wealth. And he can only be withdrawn from it in order to be consumed profitlessly, and therefore utterly destroyed. Once chosen, he is the accursed share, destined for violent consumption. But the curse tears him away from the order of things; it gives him a recognizable figure, which now radiates intimacy, anguish, the profundity of living beings (pg., 59).”

We have reached the limits of our growth, so the only way to grow in new and exciting ways is to shake things up, in a way, becoming the New Man the original Soviet project set out to create. One theorist who has some insight on this development is Hideo Kojima in their work *Death Stranding*, where humanity is reduced to either living under constant threat of attack from terrorists or supernatural disasters in quarantined Knot Cities or in isolation in bunkers across the United States. In *Death Stranding*, humanity is forced to evolve past *Homo sapiens* to *Homo gestalt* or *Homo demens* in the face of impending disaster.



Oh, it's so hard to form connections when you can't shake hands...

Across America, people are only connected to one another through Amazonian delivery services called Porters, transporting necessary goods from city to city, bunker to bunker after the collapse of the technology that allowed for previous human flourishing—the Chiral Network, not unlike our World Wide Web. *Homo gestalt* are individuals who have lost their humanity through fetishistic over-identification with a capitalist super-ego. They are people who, despite the world crumbling around them, hold steadfast to the values that failed them during after the cataclysm, much like the people chomping at the bit to go back to work despite the consequences in our current predicament. The *Homo demens* on the other hand are a group of nihilistic terrorists hoping they can finish the job of ending the world. The same people who smugly say things like humans are the virus and COVID-19 is the cure.

Through his sources in the CIA, Kojima was able to warn us of the sovereign and economic collapse of the United States, enforced isolation, and cultural changes that will create a new pandemic of severe aphenhosphobia—fear of being touched. In *Death Stranding*, the main character, Sam, is asked to save the world after being the person the world has scorned most. After surviving the apocalyptic “Death Stranding,” his wife and child die in a terrorist attack for which he is blamed, and after going into exile, he is called back in for one last job.

So many of us have felt Sam’s disaffection in our lives. Perhaps we wanted to change the world, be a part of something bigger than ourselves—only to find what lies beyond the thin veneer of hope in our capitalist hegemony are empty promises, planned inefficiencies, and reformist drivel. Once cast aside, the temptation to become *Homo demens* is real, but the sublimation of failure into resentment is as coded into the capitalist hegemony as the groveling of the brainwashed *Homo gestalts*. We must do better.

Once again I am asking you to remember the Acéphale motto: “It is necessary to become different or else cease to be.” The only way out of this is by doing things no one has ever done before.

“There is, however, another very special type of human [...] *Homo ludens*— they who play. Be it deliberate or unintentional, *Homo ludens* unite people—creating culture, shaping the very world around them—not through violence, nor laws or proscriptions, but rather through metaphorical acts of play.”—HEARTMAN

So what’s the game plan? How do we win? The quote I began with comes from Nick Land as the conclusion to the following discussion about intelligence: “Anything that can be turned into an intelligence arms-race has a chance. (Nothing else does.)” For Land, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of intellectual struggles. When everything boils down to a game, of course, the side that can win is the side that succeeds. Intelligence, then, is the ability to learn to win a game from first principles. This is



intelligence as tested by an IQ test. How well can the subject solve abstract problems that they’ve never seen before that have no connection to their life or experiences? When phrased as such, intelligence doesn’t seem like something very useful, but games are abstract problems with no connection to the real world. And the problems of the 21st Century, 22nd Century, and beyond will be those same sorts of problems.

The CIA as the Central Intelligence Agency values intelligence. They prioritize fostering the intellect in their employees and subjects at the strategic level and in day-to-day activities. Both of the cases we looked at involved extremely bright individuals obsessed with play. Michael Alig made what he did for work the same as what he did for fun: *win people over*. And Pete Buttigieg, besides the obvious connection to the political game, is *obsessed with claw machines*—a game people over the age of six realize is rigged. He plays them just to play. The ultimate capitalist subject is the result of a feedback loop of intelligences one-upping each other, resulting in a totalitizing superintelligence.

While we have some time before that happens, the arms-race is well underway. The only way to stop it has been known to philosophers for millenia: *wisdom is the only counter to intelligence*.

Wisdom differs from intelligence in that it knows when to win only when it counts, rather than winning at all costs. The Athenian distinction between a philosopher and sophist has never been more pronounced. The sophist exists only to win each individual battle, but the philosopher knows there is more to it than that. Plato’s noble lie that the Philosopher-Kings had souls made of gold and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. While on the surface, it exists to make the positions in charge less desirable, it only admonished those who would actually rule well. What is necessary is to beat them at their own game. Create ways of organizing society that are more desirable than the capitalist mode of production. Create a new person as the end goal of history. Instead of accelerating intelligence to a singularity, reinforce the ties that bind the multiplicity of intelligences that exist together.

Their strategy has optimized for beating any competition one-on-one, and ensuring that we stay as atomized, isolated, and quarantined as possible. Their hope is that once the coronavirus blows over, they

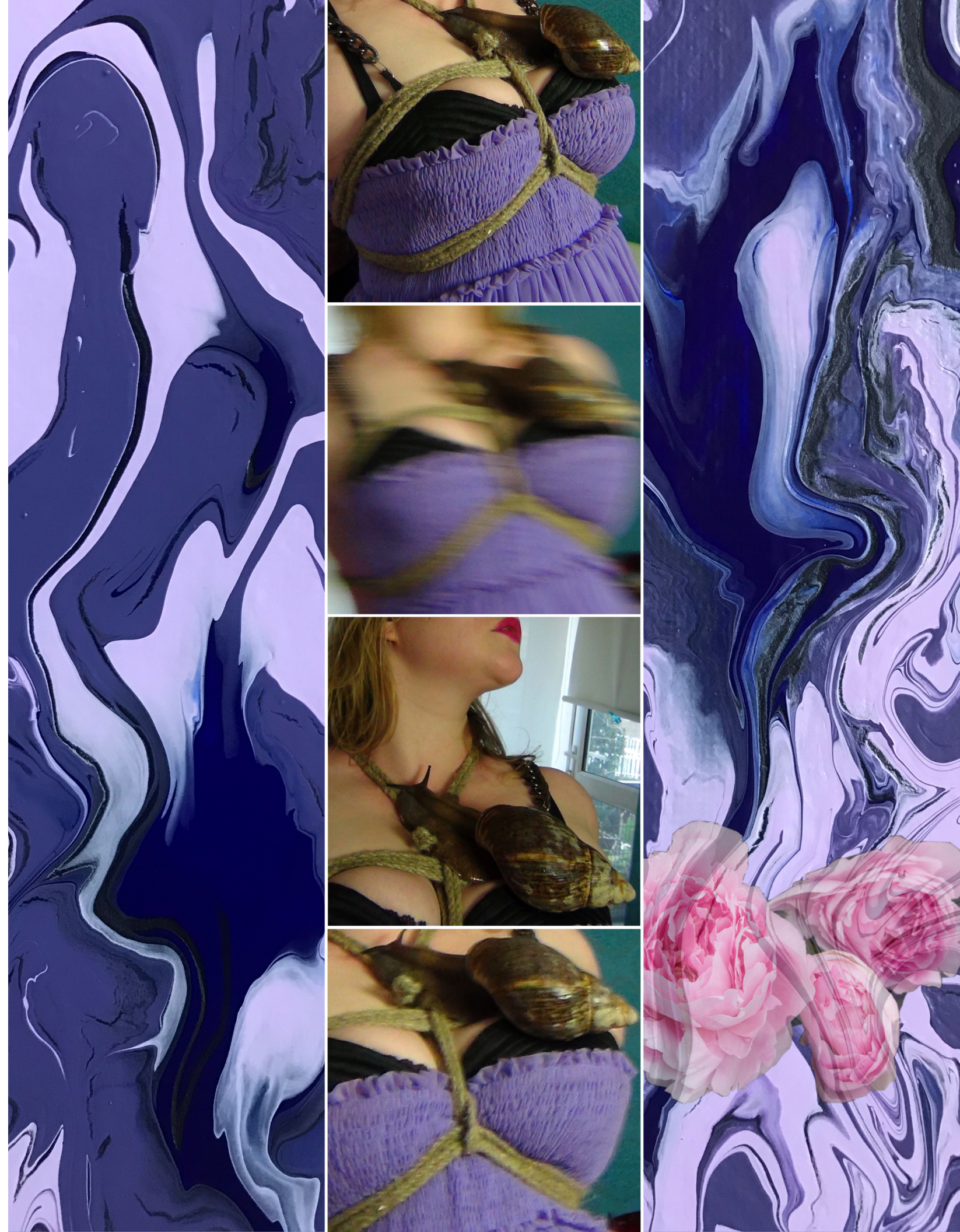
will be able to maintain the enhanced surveillance and control techniques they implemented while we were cooped up. Those of us who are lucky enough to keep our jobs will continue to be subjected to the Orwellian conditions that already existed in the retail and call-center industries, and all of us will be affected by increased police and military presence. We must keep our wits about us. The isolation of quarantine is maddening, and they’re counting on that. But their strategy leaves them open to people using the same techniques of control—Zoom meetings, people glued to their screens, etc.—for organizing while in isolation. Our only chance is to kick open the doors to our bunkers, guns ablazing. They do not want you to know the truth because the CIA knows better than anyone else that the truth shall set you free.





# HEADLESS 1 & SNAIL

*Misha Mayfair*





# DETECTION, DEPICTION, AND DECEPTION

## Why all portrait photography should be seen as erotic

*Amelia Cummins*

This essay will be an exploration into the link between eroticism and portrait photography. It will not of a sexual nature. Sex, will in fact, not have anything to do with this writing, as the definition I will be drawing my ideas from explicitly says that for something to be considered erotic it does not have to be of a sexual nature. Although both ‘detection’ and ‘deception’ are vital to the practice of portraiture, I will solely be focusing on ‘depiction’ in this essay, disregarding detection entirely and only lightly brushing upon deception, in a sense of the importance of accurate representation of the subject portrayed.

To begin, I will be defining eroticism in regard to the definition from Georges Bataille. I will explain what it entails and how this is automatically an aspect for portrait photography, regardless of whether or not it is consciously recognised by either the photographer, subject or viewer. I will also be looking into the aspect of death in portait photography as a central theme to the art, following by explaining this more in the sense of demonic curiosity and going into detail. Finally, I will discuss the importance of representation with specific attention on the ‘air’ or ‘personhood’ of people in photographs, and again outlining the clear link to eroticism as well as demonic curiosity and death. All of these aspects of portrait photography should be recognised as being interlinked with one another and because of this substantial enough to show the erotic nature of portraiture.

Georges Bastille’s 1957 book *Eroticism* is an in-depth investigation into the nature of eroticism of multiple aspects of social interaction; namely sex, religion and emotions. For this essay both the religious and sexual aspect presented in his work will be disregarded, focusing exclusively on the fundamentals of erotic nature in an emotional sense. Bataille defines eroticism as “a psychological quest independent of the natural goal: reproduction and the desire for children ... eroticism is assenting to life even in death.” The final part of the definition points out that “... the object of this psychological quest ... is not alien to death”. It is the focus on connecting death and life while living which is the central thought around which my argument for portrait photography being considered erotic is built. Bataille goes on to discuss the nuances of eroticism explaining that “we are discontinuous

beings, individuals who perish in isolation in the midst of an incomprehensible adventure but we yearn for our lost continuity”. The discontinuous nature of our being and the want of continuousness through death, is what I believe makes portrait photography erotic. We use photography as, among other things, a method of keeping those we love alive after their passing. Later in the essay I will talk about the ‘air’ and ‘personhood’ in images of those we love, and the importance of representation, as this is one of the key reasons as to why we have an obsession with the erotic practice of portrait photography in the first place. For now, however, I draw your attention to the image of Queen Elizabeth II below:



**Above:** Fig. 1, Cecil Beaton (1948) *Queen Elizabeth II* **Opposite:** Fig. 2, Théodore Géricault (1819) *Le Radeau de la Méduse*

As of this moment in time the queen is still very much alive and well. When the time comes for her passing it is safe to assume that the images we have of her will become the only thing we will have of her, besides memories of course. For the public, it is more of a unified feeling of loss, however for the individuals in the family closest to her those images will become the only thing connecting them to her after her passing. It is the fact that many of us might share a “feeling that certain images do in fact ... work especially well to show the unique personality and demeanour of someone we know very intimately” paired with the use of photography to bring about the continuity we find in death which ultimately brings me to believe portraits are of an erotic nature. Because our state of discontinuousness when seeing the portraits of ones we care about who have passed on is diminished, the image itself is giving us the ability to challenge death “through indifference to death”. One of the most painful aspects of losing someone is not being able to see them again, but through the images left behind this is a lessened pain. It is as though the person has been brought back to life when we see the picture. This shows the closeness

that death holds in relation to portrait photography and the importance of it to us is exactly why I would consider it erotic. Of course, The Queen is a national symbol and not one particularly intimate to any one of the public, but I am sure everyone has an image of someone they have lost which brings them joy to look at and a feeling of being close to them even in death.

Because the nature of my argument centres around death it automatically falls into the territory of demonic curiosity. In Johnathan Friday’s *Demonic Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Documentary Photography* he speaks at length about Géricault, a romantic era artist famed for his paintings depicting pain and suffering. Specifically, his work *The Raft of the Medusa* is labelled by Friday as exhibiting demonic curiosity for us to look at. He explains that “... Géricault goes beyond the documentation of certain events to make a point about the human condition ... all humanity are like those on the raft in state of desperate suffering, but the possibility of being united by hope gives sense to such an awful existence.”





This statement is very similar to the idea posited by Bataille that humanity is suffering and are united by something; in Géricault's case it is hope, in Bataille's, death. Friday continues on about Géricault's art work and humanity's fascination with death and pain by saying "... we ought to wonder what we are doing when we gaze upon such discomforting, and often harrowing scenes of suffering and damaged humanity" and clearing this question up by stating that it "is demonic curiosity – a pornographic stare at another man's suffering". I would argue it is not a pornographic stare, but an erotic one. An understanding of the moment of a change from the discontinuous nature of being to the continuous nature of death, almost an appreciation of it perhaps. Friday does continue to explain that there is a difference between the seeing of people in pain and suffering and the seeing of someone deceased. Below is a lithograph illustrating an event which occurred during the riots of April 1834, in which government troops opened fire on the inhabitants of a building.

and my belief it is linked to portraiture. Our demonic curiosity is what brings us to look at these images and to take interest in them, but our erotic nature of the state of life gives us the appropriate understanding of what has happened in the image and an emotional reaction to those depicted, whether in painting or photography. Portrait photography of course is different to documentary photography. Individually it is much more personal and emotional and gives us a different view on death. In demonic curiosity we have a matter-of-fact view on whatever is being depicted, though still a connection to death and continuousness. In portraits of loved ones, however, we have a deeper understanding of death and depiction and a stronger feeling of being closer to the continuousness which eroticism offers. For this reason, again, I argue that portraiture should be considered a form of erotic photography. Death being such an intrinsic part of life and therefore photography is the reason why portraits are taken, giving it its immortal and therefore erotic nature.



The image is disturbing and yet, "attitude is determined by the knowledge that this is how things are." The fact that we, as humans can look upon something so disturbing and accept that this is simply 'how things are' is a further testament to Bataille's definition of eroticism

Perhaps the most important part of considering portraiture erotic is the 'air' captured in the image. The 'air' is how we recognise the person in the image in more than a physical way. A presence of a soul. Cynthia Freeland speaks on the matter explaining that "some of the

earliest "personality-filled" portraits were self-portraits". This makes sense as we are very concerned with our appearances as a population. When being photographed we are entirely concerned with how things appear, "we endeavour to see ourselves as others might see us". Other people's opinions on us seem to give us all our grounding in our human identity – our morality and personality. This is a vital part to capturing the 'air' of someone in a photograph because most of the time if someone is trying to look a certain way, they lose their 'personhood' (the same concept as air) because of the posing. "Mirrors, like cameras, always tell the truth, optically speaking", and can therefore fall victim to some falsehood in the representation of the person being captured.

The vitality of 'air' in portrait photography when it is being considered a form of eroticism cannot be understated. Freeland speaks of Barthe and his hunt for an image of his mother, who had passed away, which captures her being. "But he initially found only portions of her, "I never recognised her except in fragments."" This hunt which Barthe's goes through to find an image of his mother in which he recognises her being followed by his refusal to have the image copied shows again the importance of portraiture in loss and the intimacy felt when seeing a picture of someone we love; "we can see our loved ones again, and that is important to us". This again shows how portraiture and eroticism are tied through death, keeping loved ones around and closing the discontinuity.

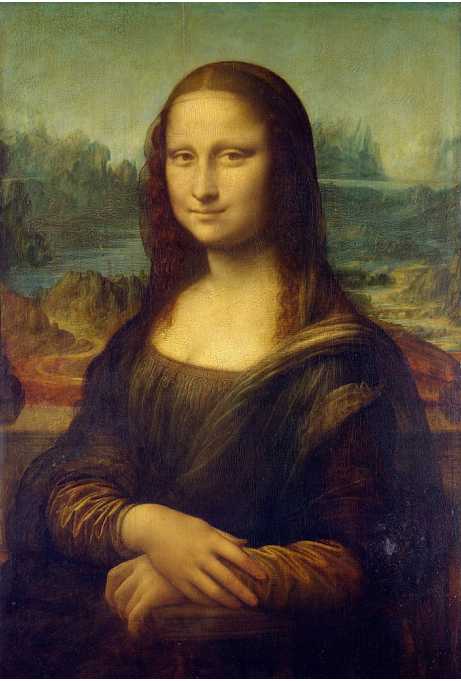
A painted portrait which is a perfect representation of this notion of 'air' is of course the iconic Mona Lisa, as pictured below.

**Opposite:**  
Fig. 3, Honoré  
Daumier (1834)  
*Rue Trans-nonain,*  
*Le 15 Avril 1834*

**Right:**  
Fig. 4, Da Vinci  
(c. 1503 – 1519)  
*Mona Lisa*

**U. Far Right:**  
Fig. 5, Alfred  
Eisenstaedt  
(1953) *Marilyn  
Monroe at home in  
Hollywood*

**L. Far Right:**  
Fig. 6, *Marilyn  
Monroe at home in  
Hollywood*



The smile from Da Vinci's muse brings her to life and gives her a sense of mystery. The personhood she presents is almost tangible. Scruton explains portraiture as not merely to "capture fleeting appearances ... [but] as revealing something momentary about its subject – how the subject looked at a particular moment". There is a separation between the capturing of the look in a sense of beauty and the look in a sense of personality visible in the image; the Mona Lisa manages both of these things, which is what makes her so desirable to look at.





In Figure 5 we see Marilyn Monroe posing for the camera. Still, there is a sense of eroticism here in the way in which Bataille has described it. There is not a sense of ‘air’ though. She is posing and, although beautiful, nothing of her character is being revealed to us. In figure 6 however, we see images of the same woman but playful and genuine. Her smile is radiant, and her personality is almost shining through the picture. The ‘air’ is present.

Schneider reported that Hegel implied that portrait images should show “the subject’s general character and lasting spiritual qualities”, this is the nature of the ‘air’. For this example, I could have picked any picture of any human contrasted with another of the same person – for everyone has an image for which they have posed and an image in which they see their personality. In the erotic nature of portrait photography, both images are related to death and to the longing for continuousness. Marilyn Monroe is no longer with us, but we see a continuation of her being in both of those images, in particular the second one. This is again precisely what eroticism is – the connection between life and death, an attempt at continuousness and coming as close to death as possible. For this reason, again, portrait photography should be considered erotic.

In conclusion, I think it is quite clear that portrait photography is, or should at very least be considered, a part of eroticism. Bataille’s explanation of the discontinuity of our being alive and the isolation and confusion that comes along with it, being counteracted by death and the certainty and continuity which it offers makes perfect sense, especially when placed beside portraiture. The immortalisation of people we love or respect or even worship in some cases, through photography, brings us closer to them and rids death of one of its greatest powers; that being the removal of someone’s soul from us. The right picture capturing the right ‘air’ is a powerful erotic tool, closing the gap between discontinuity and continuity, for “life may be doomed but the continuity of existence is not”. The reason why this all matters so much, both in eroticism and portraiture, is because “... suffering is all the greater since suffering alone reveals the total significance of the beloved object”. When we view and image of a person or an image of documentation which is particularly difficult to observe, we are bringing together portraiture, demonic curiosity and personhood all of which concludes in an erotic nature. So, to conclude, for that reason the depiction of portrait photography should be considered an erotic art.



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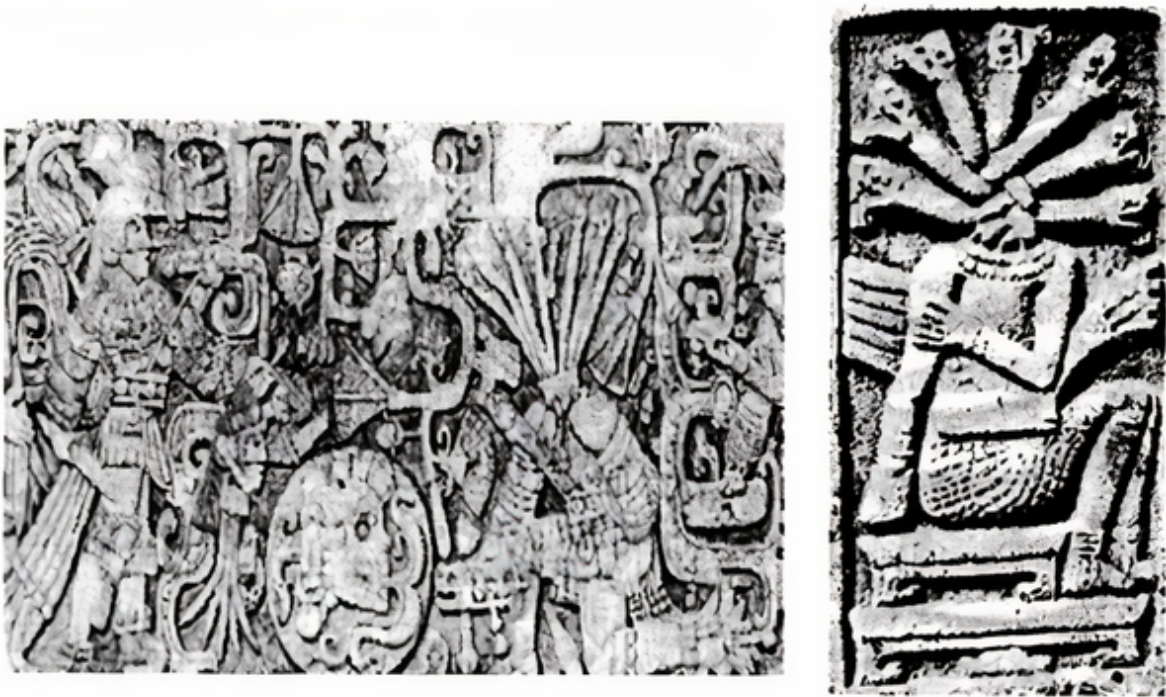
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**Opposite:** Salvador Dalí (1936) detail from *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*

The Dark Side

Decapitation: Untangling the Soul?

Decapitation was undoubtedly another ‘portal’ of emancipation, being the second principal method of Aztec sacrifice. Native rationales for the act have been lost, but are certainly ancient. The centrepiece of the 9th and 10th century ball courts at both Tajin (on the Gulf Coast) and Chichen Itza is a series of reliefs depicting a key player being decapitated. From his neck, he sprouts *seven* serpents and vegetable vines which push back the amazed participants:



Figures 5 & 6: Decapitated ball players sprouting seven serpents and vines.<sup>1</sup>

Although we do not know precisely what this represents, Alan Sandstrom has found that contemporary Nahua (Aztecs) believe that each person has a seven-segmented *tonali* (‘energy’ or ‘soul’) which is viewed as a series of ‘serpents’ ‘twisted’ throughout the body.<sup>2</sup> Possibly the ball court reliefs depict the release and ‘untwisting’ of *tonali* through decapitation, perhaps even as a means



# DALÍ'S PARANOIAC CRITICAL METHOD

Christian Gabriel



## WHAT IT IS

The Paranoiac Critical Method is a means of channeling the Unconscious mind developed by Salvador Dalí. The method is built in part on what psychologists now call "Pareidolia" (the ability to see faces and images in objects). Dalí believed the imagery he received impressions of through delirious states (or simple focus) were the revelations of his Unconscious. After receiving these impressions he would make them into art. He describes it as "spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the critical and systematic objectivity of the associations and interpretations of delirious phenomena." Which is to say, an artistic valuation of all unconscious phenomena revealed in the course of life.

## WHY IT WORKS

The Paranoiac Critical Method functions in the same way as Jung's Active Imagination without the Archetypal focus. This is to say, the images that one sees in the cloud (very like a whale!) or a piece of wood are of the utmost importance to an artist, as they are inspired glimpses at the Unconscious. André Breton, one of the founding Surrealists, believed the method to be one of the most important developments, as it lends itself to every medium.

## HOW TO DO IT

Look at something, observe the images that arise from the thing. Or, take a nervous or paranoid thought, allow it to flow, observe the fantasy. Value this irrational knowledge. Make these observations into art.

## THOUGHTS

These fantastic impressions and connections are the closest we can get to thinking Schizophrenically without devolving into madness entirely. In the words of Dalí: "The only difference between myself and a madman, is that I am not mad!"

## READING

Nadia Choucha's *Surrealism & the Occult* pg. 60-62

# JUNG'S ACTIVE IMAGINATION

Christian Gabriel

## WHAT IT IS

Active Imagination is a method of communicating with the Unconscious Mind developed by Carl Jung. The method is built on a focus toward archetypal images, as well as simply allowing symbolism to flow in the course of imagination. Jung found that allowing symbolism to flow freely produced a significant awareness of the unconscious fantasies and figures active in the mind, while focus on an archetype could produce legitimate conversation, a synchronization of the conscious discussion/ imagination with the distant content of the Collective Unconscious.

## WHY IT WORKS

Active Imagination functions on the same principles as Psychoanalytic Free Association, which is in the course of speech or thought, the Unconscious reveals itself to the speaker. When focused on the symbolic, those elements of the Unconscious will reveal themselves as well. This method is integral to Jungian analysis, as the Archetypal dynamics at play in a client's life may be invisible up until they are literally right in front of them during AI. Aleister Crowley utilized a similar method for conversation with the Tarot, which become anthropomorphized in the course of directed meditation.

## HOW TO DO IT

Sit still, as though one is meditating, or let one's body be moved as if you are performing. Focus your attention entirely on a symbolic image or concept of your liking, allow it to move, listen to it. If you are going in free, let your mind wander into the thing that wants to be known. Converse with it (literally speak aloud if you will). Record the outcome of these interactions.

## THOUGHTS

These conversations are the closest one can get to the Unconscious without devolving into Psychosis. This is the razor's edge that every Magician walks.

## READING

Carl Jung's *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* pg. 190, 49; Aleister Crowley's *Book of Thoth* pg. 249





# COFFERS OF SPOILING FLESH

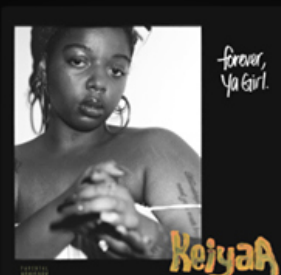
*Luke Byars*

coffers of spoiling flesh  
slick, licking roots bared on timewear  
spayed in persistence  
relayed through shares of empty air  
  
spoils spoils spoils spoils  
  
no exemptions  
winedark soapmark platitude  
snared sick  
too loud in the shower dish  
pulling up the quick  
  
spoils spoils spoils spoils  
  
persistent firs  
spinal column banister paint chips  
knee cartilage landing dip  
our roots timeworn bare  
our fist a warm brake disk  
pounding  
empty air

DETECTION, DEPICTION, AND DECEPTION







# Forever, Ya Girl

by **KeiyaA** – 16 Tracks – 42:20 EXPLICIT  
Released 03/27/2020



#	TITLE	ARTIST	TIME	
1	I Thot There Was One Wound... <span>EXPLICIT</span>	KeiyaA	2:18	+ ❤
	...m i supposed to mourn?		1:19	+ ❤
	...a died today		3:58	+ ❤
	...ke while i was hosting a fundraiser		3:10	... + ❤
	...he news i laughed		1:46	+ ❤
	...////sure		4:29	+ ❤
	...s later i was crying in my bed		2:14	+ ❤
	...is is a woman who birthed and raised		2:22	+ ❤
	...i had once referred to as my grandfather		0:21	+ ❤
	...only as a threat		2:38	+ ❤
	...m i supposed to feel when a family member dies?		2:06	+ ❤
	...m i supposed to mourn?		3:34	+ ❤
	...nearly every day to mourn the death of black lives		2:39	+ ❤
	...k into the flame:		3:00	+ ❤
	grandmama		3:25	+ ❤
	grandmama		3:01	+ ❤
	grandmama			
	ase			
	...r how to put an end to black suffering			
	...a better life for my people			
	...watch our loved ones die so frequently			
	...ust a few weeks ago			

Over the same decade, the regime became very intolerant of theatre and any cultural expression that sided with the people. Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre's Open Air Theatre was razed to the ground. A number of plays were stopped. Kenyan writers like Professor Micere Mugo, Ngugi wa Mirii, Kimani Gecau, were forced into exile. In February this year (1985), the regime climaxed its decade of intolerance by bludgeoning 12 students to death, and 150 others into hospital; 14 \* into jail to join another 10 who have been serving long jail terms of up to 10 years since 1982. Five others, including Julius Mwandawiro, who have been tortured, are now awaiting trial for holding an interdenominational prayer meeting in day time on an open university sports ground.\* \*

## THE WRITER IN A NEOCOLONIAL STATE

How does a writer function in such a society? He can of course adopt silence or selfcensorship, in which case he ceases to be an effective writer. Or he can become a state functionary, an option some Kenyan writers have now embraced, and once again cease to be an effective writer of the people. Or he may risk jail or exile, in which case he is driven from the very sources of his inspiration. Write and risk damnation. Avoid damnation and cease to be a writer. That is the lot of the writer in a neocolonial state.

There are other contradictions of a writer in a neocolonial state. For whom does he write? For the people? But then what language does he use? It is a fact that the African writers who emerged after the Second World War opted for European languages. All the major African writers wrote in English, French and Portuguese. But by and large, all the peasants and a majority of the workers - the masses - have their own languages.

\* These have now been released after serving their 6 month term in jail.  
\* \*They were subsequently sentenced from 6 to 12 months in jail.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
LEOLA ECTOR



