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The Craftsman Response

In regards to the Craftsman, I would first like to talk about the thread of “making is thinking” that runs throughout the entire book. In Sennett’s explanation of this saying, I would also paraphrase “making is thinking” into “I make therefore I am”. It does read as if Sennett is offering an alternative view of self-actualization and self-consciousness through the manipulation (not just interaction) of the material world (as opposed to Descartes and Hegel). I definitely think there is something to this idea that making or the act of mastering/learning craft is a deeper sign of consciousness, and allows us to better navigate the world and our relation to others. Interpreted in a certain way, I think there is an argument to be made that the human “problem finding/problem solving” dynamic is the primary hallmark of consciousness and is what separates us from animals and “inanimate” systems. Taking this deeper, Sennett implies an almost moral or sacred ideal to being a craftsman. This kind of spiritualism he imbues in making is an interesting kind of take on materialism to me. Mostly I’ve learned about materialism as consumption under capitalism, but this reframing as making not consuming was an interesting reversal of how I normally think about materialism.

I also thought the discussions of motivation, risk, problems and their interplay was interesting to think about. To Sennett, it seems the most compelling way to motivate is through boredom (as opposed to capitalistic competition or Soviet moralism), although I wonder how this would be achievable in our information society, where we are swamped with content. I think the average person understands or has an intuition about the ecological and social problems facing us today, but there isn’t enough societal “boredom” or “problems” (as in, things are still too good). In Born to Run, Christopher McDougall explains the neurology behind how the brain always orients towards efficiency. In lean times, the brain must find ways to stretch out resources or use the least energy possible. I think this also applies on a higher abstracted level to society overall, where the West will never really solve its impending problems while things are still pretty good. Human society to me kind of reminds me of a highschool student putting off an essay until the last moment, as there is no essential survival motivation for an American teenager to write about the Civil War. On another level, this kind of societal procrastination combined with Sennett’s thoughts on the separation of work and play and work from it fruits also seems to be one of the causes for the West’s malaise and ennui. We don’t really like the major we picked, but the “ecological essay” is due anyway, and we’re stressed about it (does this make *any* sense?). To me it seems Sennett’s ideal won’t come to pass unless the West becomes more bored, or true catastrophe finally strikes. These problems seem too abstracted from the average Westerner’s every day life, and it seems we as individuals can’t truly interpret it because evolution has not endowed us with the ability to engage with hyper objects. Rather, our brains have to interpret problems through our own personal needs or our direct tribe’s needs. Our ability to interpret these problems appear to be hampered by our biology.

This leads me to thinking about van Eyck’s playground projects, and what they say about how we should structure society. It seems that the problem finding/solving dynamic is so embedded into our nature, that when combined with the brains efficiency seeking, learning and making become difficult in completely safe or sterilized environments. Maybe evolution has hardwired us so as to make utopia impossible without introducing dizzying levels or cognitive dissonance and self destruction (Sennett’s Soviet Union Example?). So as van Eyck did, perhaps to ensure healthy and non pathological societies, there always needs to be an element of risk/boredom in life in order to help motivate. Perhaps a move towards a maker society and not a content society would be a useful step.

Ownership is left behind things move too fast

Talk about your dome project in California

Same system cant solve problem it created

Know that there is a problem

Alcoholics anonymous step one

Dirty jobs

Shows its blueprint, its history and reasons for being

Choice paralysis innovation economy, how does this affect things we make

Iq, what is it measuring

You can always go deeper into defining a problem

Society = how we solve our problems

Material consciousness around buildings

Bugs features and design affect

Integration of the hand and the mind

What if we fuck people up doing science

Ways and platforms for telling stories

Givespace to speculate

Science and tech narratives become spiritual

You learn how to use the software more than how to design

Assets you are give, lessens originality

Designs and making have other goals, efficiency and politics, resource use

Aatack on titan, the great regression, first things become more expensive then they disappear

Exercise material consciousness

Type form – base object

Evolution of type form - domain shift

Cooking food to cooking bricks – or this is a domain shift

Combination of type forms

True Innovation = market creation

Difference between peter thiel/ eric Weinstein and zach – innovation is out there, just not getting marketing

The new applications of physics are not immediately apparent

Domain shift

Biomimicry a type of domain shift?

Material substrate for concepts

Conceptual linked with material consciousness, thinking with and through objects

Play – procedural interaction that engages with the limits of something

Peoblematics create the rules, something to push against, creates constraints