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Shaping Things Response

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This is a very interesting piece of futurism (although I’m not sure if his joke about design fiction is serious or not) reading. The biggest thing I’ll personally take away from this reading was the discovery and naming of the most effective way to market to me. This is the “information marketing” he describes in the book, where people are brought into and kept in markets by marking them stake holders in the networks of information surrounding them. I buy expensive coffee beans and equipment mainly because I was given all of the information about it. I’ll have to ponder this a lot and see if there is cognitive load I can off load. I also need to seriously analyze my opportunity costs, because I think it very likely my learning reflex and interests have been “hi-jacked”.

Another thing I liked was that, instead of trying to reduce the complexities and retreat back into the forest, Sterling tries to imagine ways in which we can use this data to our advantage. We can get into “management “ roles with our data and augment our attention and cognitive loads by using technology to better filter and summarize the data. I can have a spime watch and read about content and then synthesize that for me. This reminds me a little about the black mirror episode white Christmas. Although in this episode, the people engaging in these new paradigms are not at all interested in wrangling with the data or engaging with what is happening to them. Another thing I’d be worried about is marketing or marketizing of the spime or internet things world, like if your glucose monitor had DRM.

It also seems like he’s introducing techno social mysticism and mythology. What Sterling is sort of talking about in a way is installing our world with technological clairvoyance, essentially making us all oracles of Delphi. In the globalized world of tribal networks, it seems like binding social mythologies are being put under a lot of stress. Essentially, this reframing of our object ecologies and attaching names an histories to them seems to be kind of imbuing them with a spirit. Instead of mythic archetypes and stories guiding society, we instead have hard data around the histories of our objects to help direct us to what we should care about. Maybe this is a natural development of materialistic societies.