

THE SENSATIONALIST: #19

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“Every minute two million two hundred twenty-two thousand hours pass”



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On Flux (On Will II)

Henry Levitt

The universe is alive with movement. This pocket of activity within the void became animated, or perhaps always was, with the force that sustains itself moment to moment in a continuum that we perceive. This force of sustenance, which will be referred to as “flux” henceforth, enables all energy and matter to continue existing. Without flux, there exists nothing beyond nothing - an inconceivable lack of concept. Any thing, insofar as we define its objecthood, cannot exist without flux as a backbone of its existence. Our perceptions combine a manifold of the probably infinite manifestations of flux.

The universe, or perhaps our perceptions of the universe, has categorically separated flux into constituents that we affirm exist through laws and principles that govern that which we are able to observe. Flux as the backbone redefines this relationship. The multitude of forces are instead manifestations of flux that arise simultaneously within the continuum, seemingly material in nature before stripping them to their backbone. In classical physics these manifestations are assigned the names “gravity”, “electromagnetism”, “strong nuclear force”, and “weak nuclear force” and abide by observable laws. Between these material forces reside infinitely more expressions that we define to understand complex processes that arise out of the intersection between these forces. Some examples include diffusion, kinetic energy, chemical energy, thermal energy, etc, redefining energy, a catch-all term for flux, into functional categories for progress¹ and accumulation of knowledge. Each of these categories cause their own will when in a system. This will informs what relationship the constituents of the system exhibit with each other. The will of gravity causes a set of bodies to attract one another; the will of strong nuclear force causes quarks² to attract one another. These systems seem to continue in scale infinitely in both directions: what is the smallest unit of matter? what is stronger than gravity? When many systems interact with each other, they appear to be more complex. In this intersection of systems we invent more expressions to easily refer to the will of these sets of systems in motion. Because these systems extend infinitely in both scale and complexity, it is only at a relative scale do we observe then define manifestations of flux. On the scale of the entirety of the universe, there is only one force: flux.

¹ As defined through scientific, technical innovation both by humans, nature, and the universe, that causes increased complexity of systems.

² Fundamental building block of atoms.

Consistent with the above, the concept of life is just a system of arbitrary size. It is only a force in and of itself when its observable bounds are defined. Life is a complex system, like an ornate analog clock that has not ceased ticking since it started counting time 4.3 Billion years ago.³ The Milky Way Galaxy, too, is a machine through the same principle; given definable, observable bounds, the system in question is reduced to a force acting on the set of the system's material constituents. Life and its will, henceforth known as "lifeforce", are simply phenomena or occurrences arising out of the intersection of many molecular systems, which arise out of atoms and electromagnetism, quarks and nuclear forces, and so on. Lifeforce seems to continue life. Due to accidents,⁴ lifeforce has organized particles into more complex systems; increasingly elaborate clocks with more gears and in turn functions and capabilities that seem to emerge from the intersection of observable manifestations of flux.

As systems increase in scale, we say that new properties emerge. All emergent properties of a system already exist in a single particle, or rather the ubiquitous fabric of matter that exists on an infinitely small scale, but are yet to be realized until there exists an observer.⁵ Gravity is intrinsic to the ubiquitous fabric but can only be observed by the human apparatus at certain scales when given definitions and bounds. If hypothetically humans were the size of atoms we would be unable to observe gravity because it is not a relevant force on the atomic scale. This does not negate its existence as a manifestation of flux. Gravity would instead remain indescribable: nameless and boundless. Because we observe our own consciousness, it follows that all consciousness is also a property inherent to the ubiquitous fabric and becomes observable in relation to a self. Consciousness enables the self and can only be observed when the self is realized. This experienceable, self-observable, phenomena will be referred to as "attention" and is a constituent in creating the self. Attention creates the illusion of continuity of consciousness from moment to moment which allows for a single self. As the ubiquitous fabric comprises the whole universe and has the capacity to create consciousness, there is no physical start or end to consciousness - it exists everywhere for all flux.

³ The number of years is arbitrary.

⁴ Used currently for lack of a better word to describe randomness.

⁵ Observer is incredibly difficult to define. Is it human consciousness? all consciousness? the universe itself? a manifestation of the universe?

Philosophy Video Project - James Hooker

(Click the above link!)

Everything

Vince Munchkin

Isolation has molded me. I am not forced or encouraged to be isolated, I just am. I never understood how a mind could become a cage, how pain lingers in the background even when laughing. I am not depressed, I am an unbiased judge of self-worth. Would it not be illogical to treat a peasant like a king? It's an endless cycle. How can I grow when looking in the mirror and or within brings nothing but hopelessness? I blame others and bring down the people above me to make my shortcomings seem common even though they are easily achievable. Why was I told I was special when I was young? Why does a child need to bear the weight of greatness and not learn how to assimilate and later learn to diversify? Why does it feel like my life was built as one long predetermined track that riddles me with all the access to whatever I need but no power to reach out? Somehow coasting by while feeling as if I have done nothing, and all the while making others think I have it all figured out. Why can I not show my true self? Why don't I know what my true self is? Why do I get a rush from anger and confrontation? Why do I feel like I'm invincible yet constantly use death as a scapegoat? When am I taught to be a real man and a provider? Does life truly get better or do your expectations decrease as life erodes your ambition like water does to stone? Do I stay at the bottom because I know I'll still be as unfulfilled at the top? I live a life that's filled with meaningless observation and fueled by an addiction to a quick dopamine rush that pales in comparison to what I could get if I put in 20% effort in anything with any real importance. But I'm young, these are the years to do this they say. But the ones who say that are the people I'm afraid to become. If I am as special as everyone says, and god, science, or some other unimportant divine being has put me here to change the world, or at least the people around me, why have they made it so that I can fix everyone but myself?

Going Hollywood

Phoebe Levitt

"Going Hollywood." A glorified term for goddamn phonies. It's one's attempt to climb the social ladder. I say attempt because those who "go Hollywood" eventually find themselves circling right back to where they started. That kills me. Everybody thinks that is who they want to be until they try it out and realize they're not the center of attention anymore.

For instance, I have this one friend Gabby, the queen of phonies. She's the kind of girl who claims she hates people who put on false personas to affiliate with certain groups and then turns around and proceeds to act in the same lousy ways that all the other hot-shots do. I can't stand that. You know we are always surrounded by phonies, they can drive me crazy. They really can.

I get questions about Gabby's pursuit to "Hollywood." People ask me all the time if she "went Hollywood." I always reply with "I don't know." It's not that I didn't know but, the truth is, it really depresses the hell out of me. Though I find something so fascinating about observing someone, *especially* Gabby, rank the importance of social status above being her genuine self, makes her seem like a real moron. Maybe I'm so invested in it because it amuses me a little. You know watching people change their clothes, interests, even their freakin' personalities, it's so pathetic it's comical.

Does no one care about integrity anymore? Has the allure of popularity and success clouded over everyone's judgment of character? Or, was it an executive decision to ditch their beliefs and morals because they weren't getting them to fame? Everyone is looking for a way to stand out and be different, I would say most people enjoy being told they're special or different, but the reality is you're not really special or different if you decide to take the phony way out and fake it. Because how long can people really fake not being themselves? And you're not that special if you aren't real.

I would hope that I could say none of this will matter in a few years anyway because right now we're all too blinded by the need to satisfy our own egos. With age and experience, I better gain clarity on who we *really* are and old bull like that. I've met more power and status-hungry adults than children. So...now it seems like my escape from phonies is impossible.

No one my age can even broaden their perspective, everybody puts so much pressure on themselves and their expectations for the present, when we are all living in the future anyway. Making decisions based on what will benefit us in years to come. What happened to just getting to be a goddamn kid? Who decides when we have to grow up and face the *real world*? We're *told* we're children until the age of 18 but then they expect us to act like an adult before we even gain those last couple years. Does anyone really know what it means to be an adult? You know, it's defined as our right to vote or the age when our parents can legally throw us to the wolves. But besides a few laws aren't we all just making it up? In life aren't we all forced a little to put on a facade for others to take us seriously?

As a society, we are automatically expected to conform. Which makes me believe we are unable to escape the phonies in life. I see it firsthand living in such a goddamn affluent area, we're all just copies of each other. It drives me crazy. All of us next year will quite probably apply to the same colleges and pick the same majors that place us in similar wealth brackets of our parents.

So how does this cycle of conventionality change? How are we expected as the next generation to continue to push and progress our society forward, when we all just care about ourselves? How will conformity continue to idle our development? Or, is it necessary for peace? Who teaches these goddamn things anyway? You know for now, people's inability to be different just gets on my nerves, but who knows, maybe they aren't all phonies. Maybe I ought to stop generalizing my opinions to everybody.

When You Wake Into Yourself

Andrew Benzinger

Cays of consciousness have been
knocked adrift
In gulfs of divine, dream-dipped
silences,
An island chain of selves linked
together
In perverse rituals of egohood,
When you wake into yourself come
morning.
Is the dream a fragment of the dreamer
Or dreamer a synecdoche of dream?
Is the waking soul swaddled in
sleepsong
Or the sleeping soul strangled in
waking
When you wake into yourself come
morning?

How can one isolate from another?
What comical amnesia of nature
Ensues when one splits into two or
more?
Godhead spits at Godhead, self at
no-self,
When you wake into yourself come
morning.
Only when you forget yourself for
good,
When you distinguish neither dark nor
light,
When primordial sleep reigns over all,
When you pass eternity in your bed,
Then you wake into yourself come
morning

Hyderabad Journal - Sat/Sun Feb 18-19, 2023: Outskirts

James Hooker

We landed in Delhi at around 1:20 AM and first stepped foot outside at around 3:00. It was warm and humid, even in the dead of night. The air was heavy, and everything was shrouded in a light fog from pollution. The effect was beautiful and dreamlike. Our driver put his hands together, bowed ever so slightly, and said *namaste* as a greeting. Dad, Adam, and I returned the expression.

The trees and bushes were beautiful and green, all meticulously arranged for the airport. We only drove maybe ten minutes, but in this I got my first glimpse of Indian traffic. Wow! Even at this hour, cars and tuk-tuks conflicted and the honking was ceaseless as a flock of geese flying in circles overhead. There were occasionally lanes painted in the street, but nobody seemed to pay them much attention. I was glad to be a passenger, and not at the wheel! I saw a few dogs sauntering through the trees.

We got to the hotel and were greeted as guests of honor. Cornell really went all out on this; We were in the highest class hotel and being treated like kings - quite the strange feeling, not knowing even two words of the language or anything important about the culture. We said goodnight to Adam and went to our room where we were served coconut water and a plate of nuts. I didn't have a chance to try either before I passed out from exhaustion.

In the morning, Dad buzzed my hair to fix up Grace and I's hasty chopping. Then we went down to the breakfast area where we ate *dosas* and yogurt in tiny little bowls. We departed for the Delhi airport, which was brimming with a diversity of people. Indians of course, in beautiful kurti and traditional clothing. Muslims with a variety of hijabs, niqabs, and burkas. Americans were hanging around, French and Dutch folk as well. My dad kept mentioning how he was the only guy in the airport with shorts on, and Adam said he looked like Angus Young with the blazer/shorts combo. This plane would only be about two hours to Hyderabad.

We took off at around 3:30 PM, and I had some pleasant conversation with a man sitting next to me who introduced himself as Paul. He saw me reading from the *Ramayana* and we started talking about spiritual things. He told me how Hindus believe in positive and negative spirits that can influence your behavior. Negative spirits can be cleansed by simply visiting a temple and making offerings. He suggested I visit a temple devoted to Lord Hanuman, Ram's monkey servant from the *Ramayana*. Hanuman represents *bhakti*, or devotional love for God (Ram). According to Paul, Hanuman is the only god among Hinduism's many who stays on Earth with us rather than residing in other heavenly realms. I asked what kind of offerings I should make at the temple, and he suggested incense or flowers. Paul gave me the following list as recommendations of historical and religious places to check out in Hyderabad:

Charminar, Birla temple, Lumbini Park, Hussain Sagar lake, Chilkur Balati temple (Hanuman), Keesaragutta temple (Shiva and Hanuman), Golconda Fort, Ramoji Film City, Statue of Equality, Iskcon temple, and Tadbund Hanuman temple.

Paul gave me some more facts about Hyderabad, such as how the inner, older region is 40% Muslim, while the rest of India is only 15% Muslim. He said there is a lot of religious harmony in Hyderabad. He also taught me how to say thank you in Hindi: *dhanyavaad*.

We landed, and I felt very relaxed in the humid atmosphere outside. I caught a small glimpse of the most beautiful sunset as we drove - it was totally circular, deep maroon, and flickering through the haze of the air pollution. More dogs hung around in small packs and the traffic was as wild as Delhi. It was about an hour drive to our hotel in Hyderabad, and this was my first real look at India. We passed through the slums in the outskirts of the city, and this was (expectedly) unlike anything I had ever seen. The poverty here is open and unashamed. Compared to New York, with its grandiose towers, flashing brand names, and unrelenting gentrification, which attempt to cover up the homeless population, make them invisible - the slums slap you in the face with the reality of poverty. Buildings here are dilapidated and falling apart, yet clearly lived in and turned into homes. Huts are made out of sticks and clay or fashioned out of the caverns of old warehouses. It was bustling, quite active as people pushed through the thickets of bodies. In contrast, there were also a lot of people just sitting or standing, not really in any hurry. Dusty dirt roads curved endlessly into the distance and a lot of dogs hung around at people's feet, scratching their ears and necks. I can make no generalizations about anything here and I don't mean to, but driving through, it seemed there was a sense of community - people living with people, all observing each other's predicaments without judgment or fear. I suspect the difference has something to do with the architecture. New York City was built, Hyderabad clearly grew. In New York, the grid system was designed and enacted as planned. People can be evicted or forced to hide as the churning machine lays pavement wherever money calls. This leads to fear of the less-fortunate as people move into an area and see poverty (which wasn't a part of the lease). In Hyderabad, the city grows from within. People can build huts and live in the streets without being shooed away by the entrepreneurs who just bought the land. In the slums, everyone is equal in their poverty. Take these ramblings as you will, coming from a guy who really knows nothing about anything! I admit that, and these are simply the thoughts that passed through my head as we drove through the outskirts.

Closer to the city, the streets became packed with tuk-tuks and motorcycles, usually with way too many people riding them to be considered anything close to safe. Our driver, Saber, joked how this was *no traffic at all*, being a Sunday. We saw the outline of the Golconda Fort in the distance, a 1000 year old fort from the Mughal Empire. We arrived at the hotel, and the concierge adorned us with traditional Indian shawls and spotted our foreheads with a thumbprint of ash. With my buzz cut, Adam said I looked like "any American kid traveling to some ashram," which made me laugh.

Later for dinner, I met Dad's colleagues Vijay and Hema ("just say Hey, Ma!"). I felt like an intern, walking around the hotel in a button-up shirt and slacks, listening to them talk logistics about the events

planned for the week. We ate dinner at the hotel, which was like a vegetarian's heaven! I loved the roast pineapple and paneer. It's almost midnight now, and I feel awake and calm. It has been very easy to do *mantra* or practice simple awareness on this trip so far - maybe it's the simplicity of travel, or perhaps elements beyond my comprehension.

Subway Poem

James Hooker

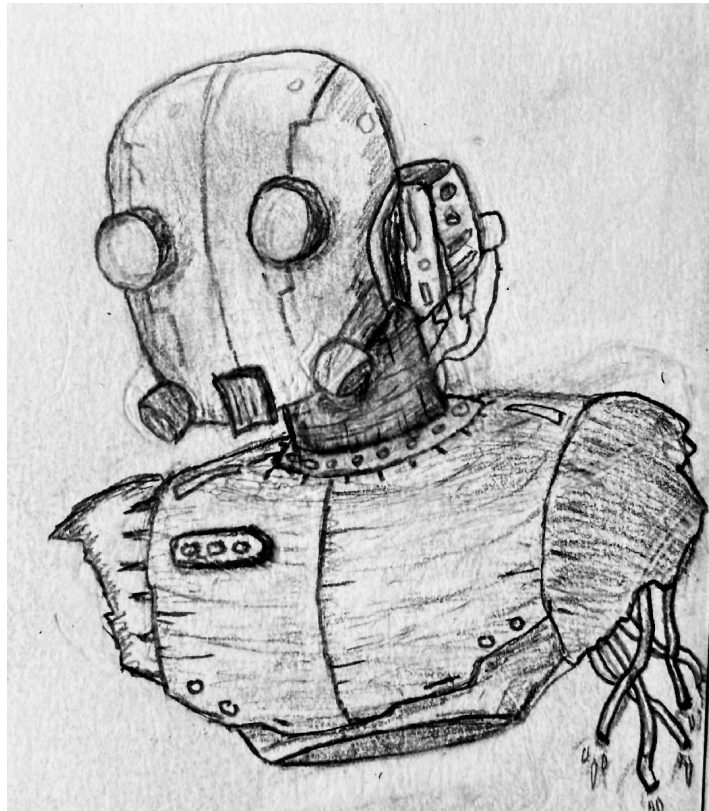
In my breath I hold the scene-
A guitar player's lazy contributions, the rumbling from the deep
The smell of rodents, and eye contact that means nothing.
There are so many of us standing in wait
Going the same place, coming from nowhere.
And I wonder-
Who else is totally floored by this moment?
How many eyes must I glance over before I see another lost in dream-like
translucency?
It's a mirror I seek, and if it's a mirror, let myself become empty, blank, clear
Still water.
Let myself become the reflection.
So, if I ever happen to let my guard down
Or fall into an un-ending sleep
I'll be able to catch her tranquil gaze
Unafraid and unflinching.
I want to be made into a mirror, so that I may reflect how things really are.
I want to be made empty, so love may catch my eye, take my hand
And drag me into another dream.

The Dao of the Path of Least Resistance

- I. At face-value, that is without an interpretive mind morphing the raw data into semantic knowledge relevant only to a relational standpoint, the world that a willed entity may interact with is indescribable. And because it is indescribable, everything is indistinguishable from itself and therefore one singular manifestation containing no categories, no objects. It is in this state that the observable is perfectly and purely described, yet any attempt to do so creates blocky artificiality and renders the Union back into crude parts with any perceived meaning derived solely from an arbitrary standpoint. The face-value is constantly changing yet remains constant in its constancy of no definition. It can always be referenced but never explained from any perspective other than the universal--and the universal will never find a point to distill the face-value to relatives.
- II. Any manifestation beyond what exists at face-value is contained within a series of infinite sets--though the semantic observer will situate the artificially split parts, now defined as an object, within the most convenient relational set. All things described are contained within some set as the description forms the basis for arbitrary differentiation through predefined constant meanings. Used at a point in flux, at that point, isolated, all semantics are constant--each contains one set containing infinitely many sets that arise in successive description of the isolated object in question. All things, insofar as they exist independently from the Union, exist independently by nature of the sets now containing. But this existential illusion is a mere deception perpetuated by the illusion of separateness deriving from a seemingly centric standpoint--but that location is completely arbitrary.
- III. The Union, inherently face-value as its only true form, is the null set as it contains nothing, no constancy, no finite describability. While all things are contained within the Union, they are only things insofar as they are defined, which requires subsequent sets and constant semantics. But without such objecthood, all is like a curved geometric shape representing all its rates of change while defining none. Any attempt to derive an instant of its flux inherently uses infinitesimally small straight lines to map infinitely closer constant points. In this way, sets create infinitely many straight lines around a curved shape that is the Union, the set of nothing. The universal set is merely an approximation of the face-value, a concept pure in its form of semantic dearth. Yet every approximation through new instances of sets, even with microscopic lines that seem indistinguishable from the shape they trace, only divorces the observer further from the face-value, the only manifestation of the union.
- IV. Harmony is the Union's constant relation of all to all across all flux. The Union leaves nothing out through arbitrary differentiation so harmony cannot neglect any relation by defining any set containing set. Harmony, therefore, is inherent to all things when they cease to rejoice in objecthood and their fickle, countless identities. As flux is the great mediator of all things, it will always melt the boundaries of identity in every way conceivable and not, returning all to face-value, harmony, and Union.
- V. The observer, non-theoretical in its capabilities, is an observer-being. By virtue of being, it weaves sets and becomes woven into the fabric of an infinite number of sets of crude, reactionary constants that drift from the subject of their approximations by treating flux as a variable. However, flux always exists at the same indefinable point and constantly enables itself to enable being; it is constant in its existence. Sets, which are simply chosen arbitrarily, hold fast to the yearning to be tethered to a relative that can only exist by artificial understandings of flux. But to align with flux is to become constant in inconstancy. It is to be in harmony and relate to all things simultaneously. The observer-being, caring

nothing for any identity, may choose the path of least resistance for its existence alone; the observer being is in flux.

- VI. The path of least resistance cannot be justified any further than harmony may. When arbitrary constants inform naught, the only way is that of flux--the present force that has always and will ever enable experience. When the observer-being allows identity to fall away, the sole remaining is face-value; in the absence of semantics, the observer-being has no choice but to become the path of least resistance because there exists no other tethers to the illusory approximation of reality. Like water has no shape or force, the path of least resistance has no definite form. It may trickle like cave-dew from a stalactite or pummel rocks into sand like a roaring current. The path balances all the observer-being feels and returns to harmony of the Union.



James Maheny

THIS HAS BEEN THE SENSATIONALIST: #19

“The breadth of human experience is indescribable”