

What My Cane Taught Me About Revolution



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THE EXISTENTIAL REALITY OF CHANGE

Recently, I started walking with a cane. I moved from the relatively flat Metro Detroit, where I didn't need to walk around very much thanks to my vehicle, to an East Coast city where there is now much variation in the terrain, and without a vehicle after the transmission was destroyed on the journey. I underestimated what this transition would do to my legs and feet. Even before, I struggled to walk around for more than 30 minutes on flat surfaces, but I figured it was me being out of shape. I tried walking more, but I found out quickly my legs were still not

getting better even as the rest of my body was. I found myself more inclined to hide away inside instead of going out and enjoying the weather, even on nice days, because of the sheer exhaustion of simply having to go to the grocery store the day before. After a series of seemingly simple trips leading in the near self destruction of my legs, and the instability of my knees finally catching up to me, I realized that the only option was to start using my cane, a cane I purchased last year because of a temporary injury.



I refused it at first thinking I didn't need it. Part of me was scared of discrimination in this economic spiral. But this is hardly the cane's fault - although I would prefer a

wooden cane, this is quite nice itself. It is adjustable and light, allowing me to adapt to the right configuration. At first I had it at the wrong height. I made it a little longer and with slight adjustments, it made moving my body around so much easier. It wasn't even that I needed it to walk, but rather that my legs needed a break, and suddenly with this condition satisfied, *it felt like I could climb the world* - perhaps not **Everest**, but the **Everest** of my own world, and beyond. Suddenly I was no longer simply tired in bed having to rest for days to recover from the adjustment - I could live my life again and spend more time doing what I actually enjoyed. I could even reconnect with nature somewhat, not having to be stuck inside all the time just because everything is so tiring to do. It doesn't matter if there is or is not something medically diagnoseable, or even whether or not this identifies me as a disabled person or not, but rather that it produces new possibilities for the future that never existed before. Not just futures for my own personal experiences, encapsulated in a protective amnion to shield its influence from the rest of the world, as is the purpose of so much disability pity pornography that is plastered over so many disability charities - but a new edge of politics, shaped around the materialism of the body that has been produced, and embracing what it is now producing.

This is not to say that we should actively seek out trauma, self harm, destruction or suffering, or that we should assume that any of these things produces some kind of inherent value - this simply absorbs us back into the liberal way of thinking as everything valuable as a potential transaction. Rather, these experiences produce completely new worlds that organize the signs of society and reality itself in new ways, allowing us to produce new solutions and ultimately political responses to our own suppression. Think, for

example, about how the 504 sit-in protest was able to occupy a federal building in San Francisco for almost a month using the combination of different kinds of bodies and tools to create cryptic communications, block entrances, and resist physical interference, all while exploiting the machines of the social encoding of the disabled as pitiful people to weaken the morale of their resistance. What we need is the ability to organize protests on a spontaneous scale, to orient our politics towards producing these new kinds of assemblages that defeats the purpose

of mass categorization of bodies to allow for forms of resistance that the enemy could never imagine, because they, like Narcissus, are too busy staring at the beauty of their own reflection to imagine anything else as the walls of the cave collapse around them. - Roger

In the 21st century, we are embracing completely novel political, environmental and health challenges that are transforming our bodies and its relations to the world as we speak. Toxic chemical industrial production starting in the 20th century finds itself incorporated into our bodies - microplastics are detected in all aspects of our bodies (interestingly, the discourse often focuses on men and sperm, how chemicals are "making us gay" or how it impacts our brains or digestive tracts, thus supposedly causing a variety of neurodiverse conditions,

of course). The increasing stress of the failures of capital and harmful new social interfaces distributed across online networks are producing a wide variety of mental illnesses, addictions and conditions, one that cannot be simply written off as "increased awareness". Every attempt to reverse this process instead further incorporates it into our bodies, further replacing life with simulations, detached propaganda, manufactured chemicals and plastics. Undetectable because of the ontologies of the sciences attempting to measure them, these indirect interactions produced at their complex intersections are changing the world around our bodies faster than we can produce explanations for them. In order to survive, we have to transform our relations to politics and society. We have to find new relations between our bodies and the world around us - like how ecosystems evolve in response to the stress of mass extinction.



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