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WORK ALONE

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- The presence of work in our personal lives convinces us that our work is indeed intensely personal and highly personalized. … The office is everywhere and work is all around us. At the same time, more and more our actual places of work resemble the home. (Self)

- What sets monastic life apart from that of the artist or creative is a certain relationship between solitude and collectivity. Monks labored alone, but when they did come together it was primarily to celebrate Mass. In other words, the strength of their society was directly related to the possibility of being alone, what they called a “community of individuals”. (Self)

- As a typology, the café is an environment where people choose to come and thus are free to go. There is no suggestion that people in a café form a community. It is the antithesis of monastic work: we are together, but alone; monks were together, though apart. The absence of strong interpersonal bonds in contemporary workplaces, and their aversion to the creation of community, produces an easily expendable and replaceable workforce. (Self)

- If we consider the statistics on how we live today, we seem to be returning to a monastic form of life: little or no sex, no children, one-room apartment in a closed complex, or little cells in a shared house. The architecture of the monastery is today reflected in every dwelling. (Self)

- The collapse of work and leisure means our sense of self and identity is defined almost exclusively by what we do, and what others say about what we do. We may have replaced God with Mammon, but this “always-on”, “stand-by”, “just-in-time” lifestyle is monastic in every sense: we are our jobs, just like the monks. This phenomenon is a potent sign, reinforcing the reality that Western society is transmitting to a neofeudal capitalist regime of extreme privilege and wealth inequality. (Self)

Jack Self, “Work on, work on, but you’ll always work alone”, The Architectural Review, accessed November 3, 2017, https://www.architectural-review.com/rethink/work-on-work-on-but-youll-always-work-alone/10002024.article