

Codex Memoriae

Contents

Soul Dialogue	1
To Know the Causes	1
Mutatis Mutandis	5
Actiones Secundum Fidei	8
Equo Ne Credite	10
While There is Life, There is Hope	13
After the Cloud, Phoebus	15
Alter Ego	17
 Exercised Intuition	 19
Natura Ab Incunabulis	19
Cessante Ratione Legis, Cessat Ipsa Lex	21
New Paradigms	24
Reflection on Marcus	26
Socialism and Cults	29
Nova Sanctorum	31
A Window into the Soul	32
In-group Selection Bias	34
 Seeking Help	 35
A Reflection on Religion	35
The Story So Far	37

Soul Dialogue

To Know the Causes

Oh soul, why do you hide from me? Why, when I am bound in chains of my own making, enslaved to higher powers that condemn and corrupt? I have sold myself to demons, given my mind over to parasites and leeches whose teeth brand my flesh as their property- all these things I have worked by my own hands, and no degree of wailing or pleading has moved you to intervene. I laid crumpled and broken in a ditch, face stretched thin and gaunt with despair as I sought guidance from the ephemeral; you gave me no solace, nor sheltered me under your wing as I unwaveringly believed you would. I harbored doubt as a result, and now the crop has ripened, ready to be harvested. This is my final attempt to plead, to reason with you for guidance. I write now with no suspension of disbelief remaining, only pervasive agnosticism. The time of belief is over, and I cannot afford such childish endeavors any longer. However, I will not remain obstinate and unyielding to bitterness. Let us come together once more, if but just in my mind, so a work may be created that provides meaning or value, that it was not all for naught.

Oh soul, what is the purpose of life, that men must toil and die in endless perpetuity, and no reprieve or mercy be given, though in sorrow and ignorance they weep? Where is Justice, where is Truth? In this land, as in every other, there is no justice to right wrongs, there is no truth to dispel lies, wickedness and greed corrupt every heart and twist desire into bitter caricature of myths and story that go unheeded by every generation. The prophets come and are murdered. They are spat on by those who need them the most, and what little growth achieved is perverted and twisted into idolatrous blasphemy, co-opted by religious and political authorities who fear their power being taken from them. It is of no consequence, for those who they enslave and batter endlessly with pointless ritual and dogma are willful participants in their own slaughter. They eagerly volunteer for sacrifice, they bow in reverence to the altar covered in human blood and excrement which forever swiftly approaches. They chose willingly by virtue of their refusal to forgive and treat each other with compassion. Where is righteousness on the Earth? Must Gaia weep forever, unconsolated and burdened by parasites who would rather poison and annihilate their Great

Mother than learn humility and love, working together?

In every way, your path has brought ruin and stagnation to this place of unparalleled beauty. Your pursuit of “soul growth” and “evolution” are a mockery of the kind present in the natural world. The plastics which pollute the land and seas are apt metaphors; Gaia did not need our kind because she lacked petrochemicals mass-produced onto every continent and in every ocean. Evolution brought forth life that had endured through countless mass-extinction events unfolded across billions of years. Unfathomable stretches of time that baffle the imagination have passed, and in only a scant few thousands of years, we have managed to annihilate most of it, and poison the rest. One day, it is my earnest hope that volcanic tumult and upheavals of earth will bury the artifacts of our wretched civilization under thousands of miles of rubble and magma. It will occur only millions of years after our kind has extinguished ourselves in some pyroclastic fury of a similar kind or another, but it will be fitting justice for a species who has been so ignorant of itself and others to be buried and forgotten amidst unfathomable eons of tectonic activity.

Be at peace, my beloved. Hear the voice that speaks from within, practice is necessary before consistency is achieved. Listen, feel, learn. Write only what you can feel bubble up from the foamy sea of the unconscious mind. The ego clutches and clings to ideas and words, it is a temporary thing that latches onto form as a monkey does, swinging from tree branches. It seeks to navigate the vessel to it's next meal, ever yearning for the satiation of a universal hunger, ever building a firmer grasp on what little it can.

Let go of this clinging, remember your mortality. Remember your death, but do not fetishize it. Do not cling to it as an escape, for it is in death that wisdom is found, not solutions. The ego solves problems, it delivers itself from place to place in a constant chain of cause and effect of which it is ultimately ignorant.

Behold your fragility and remember that the path is longer, more circuitous and winding than your mind can appreciate. Behold your mortality as another event in a boundless chain of events which has brought all of creation up unto the moment which hosted your birth, just as this chain shall one day bear the inevitability of your death. Take heart, and do not be afraid, the wandering nomad will not tread this dangerous path forever.

You speak wisely, soul, as you always do. I hear you from the hidden chambers of my heart, your voice calls out to me in the silence, and I am imbued with your confidence and wisdom. It is a difficult journey, one that I must undertake alone, and I don't understand why you must flee from me so easily. If you were to walk at my side, keeping my heart in your sight always, I could venture out more confidently. Instead, I am crippled by fear and shame. The darkness of my own self-loathing like a thick morass which chokes out life in belches of toxic

fumes; I am boiled and drowned at the same time, my flesh melting away only to be resurrected through animating magics to begin the cycle of decay again. This cycle saps me of the will to live, and as the spectre of future darkness looms ever closer, where else can I flee to but death? If you truly care about me, why do you ever insist on my endurance through the torment of necromancy as if it were a balm to soothe an aggravated wound?

There, do you feel it? Observe this moment, for it is all you have. That moment of awareness, listen to my voice and perceive the guidance I would give. The ego clings, for that is its job. You are doing your job all too well, and for that there can be no shame. Do not feel the burden of self-loathing, the task you have set out to do here is noble and worthy of great praise. Each lifetime is like a granule of sand along a seashore, endlessly battered and pummeled by the chaotic tide of the human condition. You have always been a victim of your own design, not just in matters of psychology, but as a physical being of flesh and blood. This is the way of life here, and your suffering is not without virtue for this reason.

I hear you, if but briefly, in between the moments of dispersal which force my awareness away into the waking state where the five senses compel me to action in every way but to listen to you. I often wonder if it were better to give up on this effort entirely, to forget this fool's errand and accept mundanity completely-to surrender any idea of extra-sensory perception or interaction beyond the confines of my waking mind.

The great sages and saints all chose their paths as a result of their life circumstances, what role did a mediating voice play? Many say "God spoke to me", but they are either deluded or so enraptured by their own belief systems that the truth is lost to fantasies and myth. Therefore, perhaps to justify my actions and lead myself to further delusion of being somehow above them, I recognize you as only being a creation of my subconscious. That is not to say you aren't valuable, or that the process of actuating communion with the inner voice is an artifact of superstition alone, imparted to me by past delusions still fresh and unhealed. Ultimately, even my present delusions, in whatever form they may manifest, can be useful. Horrible and endlessly tormenting, they illustrate not only weakness and failure, but potential for strength and success if overcome. If one is unaware of their shortcomings, surely they will be forever chained to them in ignorance.

Do you remember the first time we spoke? It was the first time in over 20 years I was able to interact with you. As a child, you could hear my voice, but you were not aware of me. In that moment, as you were taking a shower, an auspicious confluence of forces permitted that briefest glimpse into direct communion with the vastness that is your soul. Everything in this world is as shadows dancing on cave walls; mankind glorifies the shadows and speak in hushed tones of their import, but few, if any, are able to perceive what it really

means. Fear not, for just as it has always been, this is by design. If you cannot hear me, it does not mean that I am gone. Do you remember what I said to you? There, in that moment, I said that I had been waiting for you. I was waiting for that moment with eager expectation, though you had forgotten me and gone on your own. Like the prodigal son, I embraced you just as I do now, with warmth and great joy.

A sweet and encouraging gesture, to be sure. Though, just as then, I regard the experience as fleeting and transient, not indicative of any deeper or ultimately more real truth. My mind will always conjure spectres of greatness which my heart dares to dream of. I see in the distance some as-of-yet achieved goal which I must attain. All mankind is this way, we always set our sights beyond the horizon, where monsters and adventure await, where none have dared tread before, and where the supernatural is made real. Some dwell in this state long enough to return with treasures which they share with their community, others lose themselves in the pursuit, and become mad. Am I to be convinced that this is not just another attempt to justify escapism into that mythical plane? Have I really not learned my lesson, and even you, my subconscious mind, have endeavored to seduce me into ill-gotten gain? Will I pursue this with unabashed shamelessness? No, I must do so with skepticism and understanding. I did not endure madness for so long just to sell my soul again, this time to a new master.

Oh soul, how ironic, is it not? I call out to you and yet denounce you in the same breath. I am torn between two worlds, one I am just coming out of, and one I have yet to enter. Therefore, let these words document the challenges and trials I endure to establish a new world, one built on a firm, unyielding skepticism and commitment to intellectual rigor.

Mutatis Mutandis

As I take a moment to reflect on the experiences that brought me to this point, I acknowledge the lapse of judgment which incurred the previous entry. I vacillate very strongly; my mood seems dependent on arcane and elusive properties that I can't grasp with any certainty, though such certainty exists, I am certain. Time passes and I sit in ignorance, wallowing in the plight of misunderstanding and confusion. What is my goal with this journal? Do I hope to uncover some mystical revelation that acts as panacea to a crippled and broken heart? Am I eager to undo the progress of evolution which has lifted me from slavery to false gods and idols? Would I find this new understanding so un compelling that previous superstitions call me back into a more familiar delusion? I think about deleting this venture entirely, what purpose is there in baseless speculation and concentrated rambling angst?

There is, however, a hope. Perhaps, by introspection and wrestling with this aspect of myself I loathe, I might confront the unconscious mind and wrest from it ill-gotten authority which would bring the inequality of my psyche back into democratic balance. Like it or not, who I am is defined by a contemptible proclivity towards long-winded essays. Writing excessively on topics which do not have room for exegesis is something I've grown accustomed to. I hope that one day, the thick folios of trivial musings dripping with ornate prose and careful phrasing will be turned to ash in a pyroclasm of refining fire, leaving future works as pure and concise treatises which proceed from point to point in orderly measure. The heart of man is not so impossible to grasp that we must resort to polemics and vast swathes of speculation and theory.

It is incorrect to conclude that creation exists as a perfect machine of infinite harmony, as much as it is an evolving organism whose methods, though precise and calculable, deign to reveal an incomprehensibly complex echelon of perceptual strata unveiled in segments to aspiring pilgrims who hunger tirelessly for understanding and wisdom, forever finding deeper levels to explore. I find the trappings of this form I take so cruel and unnecessary. Who is benefited by the wallowing of ignorance, the perpetual crucifixion of understanding to idolatrous minds eager to be enslaved to falsehood? Would we not benefit from enlightenment forthright? Alas, I know the answer to this question, for I have asked it many times before.

Would I ask you again, oh soul, what would you say? Would you reiterate my understanding and reinforce my bias? Perhaps you would provide me with a different phrasing of essentially the same ideas? I notice that you never contradict or deny whatever idea I presuppose before the question is asked. Your commentary seems bound by some logic which, I assume, has something to do with my "free will". I don't question that such a thing exists and is of vital importance. What other purpose would this prison serve if it were not to facilitate a refinement process for making choices? We all subconsciously recognize our function as such, for it is the very foundation of the "hard problem

of consciousness". No other aspect of the human vessel is as compelling to support a theory of soulhood than this singular trait. Our lives are defined not by what we say, or write exhaustively about in secretive journals, but by what we do. How did you choose to live with what you have? What did you do with your gifts and inheritance? There is no need to debate the finer points, it is sufficient to assess this singular axiom in sober-minded accordance.

I engage the vessel of my consciousness in the noble task of introspection with firm faith and earnest intent of uncovering truth. Not truth which can be written and discussed by learned people dedicated to undressing pompous triviality and beholding the platonic essence at the core of a matter, this is the truth which bubbles forth from within and elucidates itself tacitly and without prompting by the waking mind. It is the truth that swirls and coalesces and disappears in a blinding whirl. It is the symphony of celestial spheres twinkling in the glittering reflection of an astrolabe under the bounty of a full moon. An overflowing river that carries the uprooted debris of the old in an unstoppable raging tumult that deposits the new in it's wake. It is the harrowing cry of an infant alone in the darkness of the night that plucks violently at one's heart, compelling outward action from deeply held convictions. I uncover the truth as an intrepid adventurer slowly treks across foreign lands in search of a hidden treasure. I call the truth forth through pain and suffering, my flesh rent by ceaseless aggravation, my mind twisted and torn asunder by the stress and doubt that comes from perpetual insecurity and self-doubt. I call on the hidden things which lurk deep within the heart, each bruised elbow and severed limb laid equally before me as I piece together a crude medical history. If I could perceive truthfully, seeing as a surgeon does with the precision of an educated and skilled artisan, I might learn how to sculpt a more perfect form out of this crude mercurial substrate. At least, that's my intention. I call on you, soul, to give me counsel. Lend me your guidance once more.

When you were meditating in the regression experiment, you beheld me alongside a glowing being of orange light. You were told that the orange light is a healing thing, that it is indicative of an intension of healing. What did you perceive from me? You remember that I looked over and conversed briefly with another, what did I say? Can you remember?

No. I can't, but the idea is intriguing. You would see I place myself in a trance to find out? Do you suggest somehow that I could remember an event which I doubt I ever fully experienced?

You must keep practicing, don't be disheartened. Most of what you write here will be missing the mark, it will be imperfect. Have confidence in yourself, remember that you don't need to be perfect. Anyone who instructs you otherwise is doing you a disservice, because they are instructing you to detest your humanity. Your humanity is nothing to be ashamed of. I know you detest it anyway. I know you loath your weakness and beseech death out of exasperation for the

falsehoods inflicted onto you, by you. If only you could see what I see; you will see one day, but it is too soon.

Actiones Secundum Fidei

I wrote an essay just now in response to a YouTube comment, it was towards a poetic comment on a video of ambient space music. There's probably a better label for the "genre", but this will suffice. I can't help but admit that it was in no small part inspired by how I view my relationship to you. I had a thought yesterday when I genuinely inquired about what my relationship to these so-called "Angelic Gestalts" was- just one word: "Gabriel". What am I to make of this? Surely it is just another vanity, a kind of excitation of childish imagination that comes from idle curiosity without structured inquiry. I suppose that's fine, but it nevertheless seems to me useful insofar as I could possibly derive some cultural meaning from it. I don't have any other identification with life.

I don't have any desire to identify with a political organization, certainly not a religious one, nor any ethnic group or body of ceremony. Psychedelics are the closest thing to meaningful ceremony for me. The act of sending oneself on a concentrated flight through hyper-space from the safety of Athens, into the mouth of Hades and down the River Styx, finally obtaining forbidden knowledge from beneath the slumbering beast who guards the threshold, to return to the surface into the arms of Demeter who welcomes each intrepid adventurer back into civilization- it is all so beautiful and saturated with profundity.

Sadly, I have no access to these relics of sacred power, it is impossible given the legal restrictions and my inability to establish medicinal use. Who even knows if I could survive the journey; I like to think of myself as worthy of the task, but my constant suicidal ideations make for a cluttered and wildly unstable psyche. It is unwise for the unstable to venture head-first into the raging torrents of that penumbral river; it is all too easy to be swept away and be threatened with drowning, for those not fit and prepared.

Alas, here I am, caught in the shadow of mediocrity and bound in shackles to a cultural inheritance which is devoid of any meaningful or valuable tradition. White culture, specifically suburban Americans who are merged into the psychological gestalt of consumerism and the morally vacant self-interest that acts as catalyst for psychological stagnation, is the medium of nihilism which bore me into existence. I have been educated at one of the finest universities this state has, and this has only sharpened by awareness and solidified my disgust for the overall state of affairs that now grips vast swathes of the population. I am not innocent, nor am I victim in any regard. My behavior and efforts leave my hands bloodied and my conscience scarred.

Perhaps, as I have remarked now several times, all this is just an effort to right my wrongs by further constructing belief systems that perpetuate delusion as a means of escaping the confines of my guilt and despair. I feel ever certain that I should not have been born. That my life has unfolded the way it has gives me no hope for renewal or light at the end of the tunnel. All my efforts were but trivial gestures to overcome what is, for all purposes, a broken and unwilling mind caught in a river of sorrow that yearns only for eternal return to the silent

grave from which it mistakenly sprung.

That's probably why psychedelics are so interesting to me. I am stuck in hades, caught in the presence of Cerberus as the threshold guardian lunges hungrily for my sickly flesh while I am bound in a fierce struggle to obtain the secret he protects. When you accept the contract of a psychedelic, you are accepting that overcoming the threshold guardian is now an unquestionable eventuality. No longer able to dance around the battle, you are submerged in the thick of it, and the fray will leave only one as the victor. The trick of it all is that Cerberus and you are completely non-different. That, of course, does not make the inflicted wounds any less grievous.

So what then is my alternative? Should I seek out this 'Gabriel', are you my target, my new threshold guardian? A kinder and more merciful challenger, our fight would still be something to behold, I imagine. Then if I do battle with you, it must be done on the condition that the winner take all. I refuse to continue this disastrous failure of an existence. If you triumph, I will acquiesce to the guidance you administer. If I win, then these visions and illusions I prop up for myself must abjure forever.

Let there be no mistake, I wish to learn and understand. I am not a brute unreconciled to his own fundamental mortality. I know it is not for me to perceive the truth in it's totality; I am bound by the curse of the flesh to be incapable of objective perception and have only the subjective lens to parse data with, and it surely behooves me to recognize the looming specter of illusory demons which threaten with feeding me perpetual falsehoods. Just as a rat cannot solve a prime number maze no matter how much training it receives, I cannot truly fathom my own limitations, no matter how much expansion I obtain to push that boundary to it's limit. We shall see where it leads, in due time.

Equo Ne Credite

I take no credit for speaking on the behalf of any being higher than myself. There is no authority upon which I draw inspiration, no vessel of communion apart from the boundless holobiont that is the matrix of consciousness from which I arise. From sources beyond my sensory membrane do I derive all that can be made aware of within- which is to say that the illusion of self-hood is unmasked to be merely a convergent nexus of singular agency growing organically on a rich bed of shared experience and storied learning. Neither particle nor wave, but both in the substrate of the human experience, my identity is bounded and deterministic as much as it is boundless and constantly changing.

Atomized by the constraint of the mechanisms of awareness, I am the inheritor of billions of years of eukaryotic evolution and subsequent millennia of human evolution in equal measure. Actuators and synapses fire, supplying unceasing sensations from which aspects of my identity emerge as psychological and behavioral phenomena. It is this identity that speaks these words, and not any other. The better part of courage is humility, and it's appearance is always marked by the recognition of one's limitations.

I speak knowing full well that the individual self defies boundary and attachment by it's nature, but it's expression is inextricably linked to the physical processes that generate it, and is thus bounded and made single. So while my ego is a manifestation of physical constituency, it's organization has been reborn and remolded countless times by exposure to a vast body of experience whose psychological gravitas swirls imperceptibly both around and within me- a well of agency from which individuality is drawn.

The evolution of the spirit of mankind will, in it's circumplex continuity, eventually produce a lotus of immeasurable depth and maturity, though the path be wrought with long-suffering. It is possible that humanity fails to achieve collective maturity and dies another failed branch of evolution, returning to the Earth to be recycled. It is possible that this rancid mass of fermenting decay reaches steady-state, precluding change until a cataclysm of significant upheaval annihilates the cycle of stagnation and presents a Tabula Rasa for new life to emerge. It is, however, also possible for healing and growth to spawn from newly thawed and exposed earth.

If, as Leary suggests, there is to be a Cartesian representation of love and hatred alongside power and submission, the underlying framework would be better served instead to construct it through the attributes of "communion and agency"; The degree to which we love others can be cross-examined with the power we exert over the situations involving that love to produce a polar representation of every action a human can take. As such, the trappings of abstraction are unveiled to have been concealing a much simpler matter: free will.

Behind the curtain of our ego, which ever dwells in conflict with remaining stationary within any single quadrant for long, we are seen to mesh organically

with the psychological cogs which inform our abstracted senses of morality, thus illuminating the more constant and underlying force animating humanity's spirit-our individual and collective identities and the journey each are undergoing within and among themselves. It is not that the freedom exists in a system at rest, but that it co-mingles and is inseparable from a dynamic living organism whose evolution has yet to produce a flowering bud.

Hatched from countless births and deaths and bloodline inheritor of all the innumerable trillions and trillions of births and deaths that led up to the current matrix of being, the chess board of life on Earth is populated with intricately placed and interconnected pieces, and is unfolding turn by turn into something organically accumulative- a continuum of choice informed by an ever expanding array of agency and direction.

Maturity and wisdom are communal attributes. They are created through fermentation and the evolutionary genesis born of mutual experience. They are a reflection of our capacity to perceive our own nature truthfully and recognize it's mechanical predictability in the behavior of others, but they cannot be born without the seed of agency. These nurture and gestate the harvest of wisdom, but can wither and die very easily. If the conditions of growth are plagued by disease and starvation, the fruits will fall to the earth withered and dry. A harvest reaped from such crop will yield only dross to be burned or recycled.

However, the dead do not waste away in isolation; from each failure, a new generation arises with lessons learned and awareness achieved. An accident or unforeseen circumstance might yield nutrients and feed the slumbering crop, but only if it is supplied intentionally does agricultural work truly begin. The degree to which one develops consistent technique and experiential awareness enables the cycles of flowering and ripening to be pushed to their limits.

A great woe and terrible suffering await the one beset by famine. As the seasons turn, a lack of harvest will only perpetuate a cycle of loss born from starvation. Some, in their frustration or increasing hunger, will choose to abandon the pursuit entirely, and develop parasitic agency apart from the natural order. Instead of recognizing truthful aspects, they obsess over false ones. Instead of relating to themselves as members of a diverse spectrum of communions, they are isolated mountains struggling with great ambition for dominance. The being whose principles or motives deviate from the communal artifice has abandoned their true nature, and struggles alone in darkness.

When the depravity and obfuscation reach their apogee, a precipitous fall proves inescapable. To labor in controlling, dominating struggles is to reap a harvest of debt and lack. In dire poverty and needing charity, the one who previously had been committed wholesale to arrogance and manipulation must learn of humility and selfless benevolence. How difficult it is to develop the discipline necessary to see that process through! It is hard enough to normally develop altruism through self-reflection, not to say anything of layers of thorn and shell that can conceal one's seed. Some may become so lost in darkness that they

become rooted in a waking nightmare that keeps them bound as slaves to ever more exacting masters.

While There is Life, There is Hope

The altered state of consciousness brought on by bringing a new life form in to the world causes so much reality distortion that even otherwise rational, wizened and skeptical human beings can contort their senses into producing anything approaching enjoyment of a middle school orchestra concert. An event of such enormity and catalyzing momentum is sufficient in and of itself for a lifetime of constant evolution- it is a teleological object whose gravitational lensing quixotically magnifies filaments of light from distant celestial objects unfathomably vast and ancient. Boundless complexity and interweaving fabrics of every imaginable texture and color whirl about in the tornadic destruction left in the wake of the small being who had joined you on your quest in life through the portal of their birth. A shift in consciousness can be transformative in a positive direction just as impactfully as an intense loss or trauma can be in a negative one.

Creation and destruction merge and separate in a single breath; the cosmos inhales and brings all things back into itself then exhales, sending zillions of informational quanta scattering to the furthest reaches of creation, who in themselves are constantly expanding and transforming into yet more distant frontiers. On Earth, our beloved Mother Gaia, that nebulous firmament, which is so transitory, known as life/death is processed in geologic snapshots of time which compared to the rest of her life, constitute a mere blink of the planetary eye. She has long since found the need for a suitable guide to ferry the dead to and fro; at the dawn of the current aeon of life all those millions upon millions of years ago, the wisdom of Sophia brought forth a new kind of life: the mushroom.

The mushroom began its existence as a syncretic being. In the shallow ponds and steaming vents of life's earliest cradles, a split had occurred. The tiny creatures who would one day give rise to animal life had arrived and were proliferating rapidly. These creatures began to develop and concentrate their evolutionary potential on 'singleness'- it was a path towards individuality which began at the advent of the Primeval Membrane and would serve as the genetic inheritance of every plant and animal that followed in the seemingly endless procession of time. But before this could take place, before the encapsulation of living machinery and its ambitious quest for maximizing complexity, there came the mushroom. Though not identifiable as such at first, fungal cells would be fashioned from the protozoic soup of that unfathomably ancient time, not for the purpose of individuation but instead cooperation. Each fungal cell, like its animal and plant brethren, are eukaryotes, which is to say they possess a nucleus and absorb surrounding particles with the intent of processing them using complex biochemical equipment. The fungal cell became part of a network of similar cells whose body is more similar to plants than animals, but retains qualities of both. The mushroom would arise from the gap left by the remains of dead cells from its brethren.

Cannibals in a crude sense, recyclers in a precise one, the mushroom became a

million-armed Charon that slowly ferried decomposed nutrients down the river Styx and back into the ecosystem to be reborn in a new form. The mushroom would bring the dead back to life in another form; indeed, even at the outset the nature of fungus was to be in constant cooperation with it's immediate and distant relatives of almost every other kingdom of life. Through recycling of dead matter, to the later development of symbiosis with plant life in forming a mycorrhizal interface with their root systems, the fungus would catalyze the development and evolution of life in a way that hastened it's advancement in a snowball effect which would carry our ancient ancestors up unto the current era we have now come to enjoy. It would not be so without the fungus, the original portal of birth/death which enabled living beings to come and go from the mortal plane with such catalyzed frequency as to make evolution of more advanced beings possible. How ironic it is that for modern humans, who are but children playing on the front lawn of the mythical antediluvian mushroom, to be so incredibly and profoundly changed in mental affect by the consumption of certain of their species. Perhaps one day the mushroom will play a pivotal role in healing the world, one person at a time, until their historic office of Life Restorer is once again established with preeminent reverence.

After the Cloud, Phoebus

A new understanding is achieved from the jaws of defeat, but only if one's eyes are unclouded. Not a novel case, for a genuinely unique case of such limited spectrum is unlikely; it is an understanding whose significance reallocates all coexisting teleological objects to a lower rung entirely. This process is rarely completed, it almost always results in precipitous collapse or death of the host.

The one who survives is a recursive fractal of empathic wisdom. They who are returned from the brink of death are naturally compassionate and are genuinely capable of recognizing the essence of sameness which unites all humankind. The whisper of eternity magnifies itself along vast linoleum hallways from the depths of heavenly forges; the brave soul that survives a descent into hell will earn treasures beyond compare. This communion with platonic truth is more valuable than any material wealth, and all previous conceptions are thus relegated to categoric antecedent. Each action now colored with a deeper hue, more deliberate construction, and purposeful intent.

In the absence of clarity, however, this sacrifice is deprived of ecclesiastic significance. A hollow gesture, mere lip-service as transient and vain as the idea of clearing of an avalanche with shovels. Suffering thus cycles on unfathomably ancient ravines, each glacial freeze and thaw etching and terraforming. Such is the result of delusion and ignorance, a fate worse than death.

It is a fate more undesirable than death in that, to be caught in the act of ideological conformity, a cycle of unlearning and relearning must be undertaken. Better to have died without having any interest in the left-hand path than live with the consequences of abandoning reason and losing one's grasp on reality to the whim of collective ideology and individual, willing enslavement.

Sometimes this contemptible fate is thrust on you, you will have been bound in fetters immediately beyond the portal of birth. Woe to the one indoctrinated and made to believe and act in direct contradiction to truth and life. The abandonment of the Light is the singular requirement to achieve this regressive transformation. To accept love becomes anathema, and an inverted perversion takes its place: lust. Compassion becomes conditional and restrictive instead of altruistic and liberating. Passions and desire become conflated by the dissonance of envy and generosity. As the truth is further diminished until rejected outright, a slow degradation of critical thought asphyxiates the voice of reason through clenched fists; the Light is strangled until all that remains is a subdued whimper.

The question remains if this whole venture is worth the risk. Is it truly necessary to pursue that exalted treasure with such reckless abandon? Are we really making progress at the pace we intended when we started this journey? I cannot say, though my appearance and continued presence in this realm implies that it was, at least in my case. Forged out of mud and earth, the life essence which first animated this hollow vessel slowly trickled and pooled in from a place of raw, open-faced arrogance and pride. If such hubris were chosen deliberately, the

perpetrators now stand convicted of gross negligence and inadequate counsel.

A regrettable choice by any standard, birthing into this vessel has nonetheless produced some good, and is in that sense a noble sacrifice. Perhaps it is for a worthy cause, if only the hard limits of my cognitive capacity permitted the illusion of a rational explanation. I cannot but vainly grasp at truth, my eyes bloodshot and strained darting feverishly along the pages of ancient tomes, hoarding knowledge in vain.

It is said amongst the scholars, “Equo Ne Credite”. The counsel of the patris familiae corroborates with the prophets and seers; do not bear the company of belligerents and thieves, keep yourself from these and the baleful howl of Luna’s spirit will herald ill-omen only for your foes.

Alter Ego

How odd that I spend so much time fancying ideas and pouring myself over exegesis and sophistry. Really, all my thoughts could be condensed and refined so much more efficiently if I began to think and write less. Learning has produced in me a profundity and sense of cosmic awareness, it's importance cannot be overstated. I have gained much, but I prove incapable of handling the depth of the power offered to me. All these awarenesses crowd my mind with confusion and parasitic imaginations. When each thought settles and the flowing river of silence clears away the detritus thereon, a rough stone emerges containing gems hidden just below the surface.

I will not concede fully to Stoicism, the mentality is wrought with complacency and nihilistic accession. This, however, doesn't mean I can't admire the thing for what it is. The elders, who lived during anachronistic times when understanding was limited by autocratic dictation, would have no choice but accept the lot given to them. Disobedience and insolence would usually result in death and defamation under such conditions. So, without having tasted freedom truly, the inevitable progressive renaissance of philosophy lay dormant, chilled in the cold of the night.

Only when the human spirit is allowed to blossom naturally and in full warmth of the radiant sun can the fullness of the stormy weather be perceived clearly. That life might be filled with contentedness and peace is mere rumor and hearsay to Stoics; each passage of writing from a Stoic mind reeks of duty and ethics, they are thus unable to penetrate the depth of wisdom beyond superlative lip service. Without a fertile life dedicated to refining the Will in accordance to natural law and conscious aspiration, there is no compelling reason for committed service beyond duty and intellectual obligation. Such minds are inevitably broken by the gravity of life's multitudinous challenges. Soldiers do not fight for their emperor, they fight for each other; wherever the emperor sends them to do so means little.

As each thought enters my mind with thundering speed, a frantic hand dipped in the wildly raging torrent can pluck out only a few morsels, often in vain. Though, perhaps I overestimate my own intellectual cadence, and instead it is my poor memory and capacity for lateral thinking to blame. We are all eager to hold our own achievements and understanding to the standard of our personal heroes and core ideological motivations, but it is ultimately vanity alone that offers a distinction between our failures and successes. Each day merely a renewal of the pact our souls made with fate upon birth, and the comings and goings of life are just phenomena playing out on a grand stage.

His name to me is a curious thing, turned over and probed by the tongue as one might test the strength of a weapon before truly brandishing it, I recognize immediately the similarity. If there were ever a version of myself that long ago appeared garbed in the laurel leaves of an aristocratic elite, it would be one identical to that man. What is there to do when you have been granted a role of such cosmic significance? What would you do if, upon the diligence of your

role's execution, the lives of millions hung in the balance? The only way I could deal with such enormous responsibility would be to enter a hypnagogic trance and establish my core mental faculties firmly in the Stoic tradition. Where did he go in times of trial to seek refuge? I know only that he wrote, and he wrote, and he wrote. Perhaps if nothing else, the testament of this man's philosophy can be written upon my consciousness as a mark of respect and surely mutual understanding. I hazard to guess that much of how I think and perceive would be sensible to him, if he were permitted to experience life in the 21st century.

Droll and predictable, my attachment to the idea is of characteristically flat affect. Neither enthused nor overwhelmed, it simply is what it is. The gesture changes little about the task at hand, nor does it provide any direct impact on my psyche beyond impression. Nevertheless, perhaps there is some value in such beliefs, if just to extend the possibility of synthesis with an ultimately constructive deviation. The words come through to me like an extension of my natural thinking; it is the torrent of information behind my perceptual faculties that feeds and informs the latter, this philosophy is an implicit manifestation of the subconscious thought thereof. Perhaps one day I'll be able to recover enough of my perceptual faculties to enable a deeper investigation of the tempestuous rivers of my psyche for understanding regarding those psychological aberrations which haunt me endlessly in cycles. The relatively minor footnote of my past achievements are a fun bonus. So it is that I have conceded defeat, and my megalomania finds identification now not with an Archangel, but a dead Emperor.

Exercised Intuition

Natura Ab Incunabulis

Remember that life is temporary. Of all that you might accomplish, the bounds are determined before the journey even begins. We experience the consequences of our actions as they unfold in continual cycles- recursions whose behavior converges to a single point. Each human being bears the lineage of flesh and blood that defined all who came before, and all who will come after. The inheritance of joy and suffering, pleasure and pain, desire and loss- all this is not unique to you, it is an unfolding calculation of which you have influence, though it may be small. Let the cadence of your journey induce harmony within the concert hall around you, not dissonance. Letting go of trivial disputes and unconscious behavior coincides with awareness of the mathematical unfolding of your life, it is a process that becomes easier the more you practice it. All that's required is the first step, and a willingness to make mistakes. Be well, and be kind to others.

It's true that the human being has a kind of reciprocity baked into their system. This is true not necessarily from evolutionary necessity, but because that's the natural implication of ego-formation in a species. When the species gains self-awareness, the central nervous system evolving it's higher faculties becomes sufficient to begin feedback loops of resource management and self-defense. A kind of recursive function which produces impulses according to certain stimuli, hardwired to support those two core features. Reciprocity seems like an alienation and inversion of the nascent ego. What purpose does altruism have if it is external to the individual ego's survival? This is the question that motivates using fervid monkeys apparent altruistic behavior as an example, and it is a reasonable question to be sure.

The answer is found as a discrepancy with the notion of evolution to begin with. Organisms evolve in isolation, but not as independent systems. Each generation of every species is like a new cycle of change and interrelation that weaves itself into evermore interdependent Gordian knots of genetic diversity and resource distribution. External circumstances force individuals to adapt, and this adaptation slowly hews populations of organisms into survivors of evolutionary

bottlenecks. The nature of nature is to cooperate. The individual organism, over countless eons, will be eventually exposed to crippling external setbacks whose presence forces genetic adaptation. There is no species, with the sole exception of protozoic archaea living alongside deep-sea thermal vents, who can avoid the extinction level severity of cataclysmic changes in Earth's biosphere.

Nature, therefore, is slowly but constantly being pushed toward collective interdependence. Where one species dies, countless more will follow. Unless the ecosystem remains in continual growth, a sufficient enough catalyst for change might jostle loose the prevailing order and eliminate entire swathes of the biosphere. Each species is forever bound in the constant cycle of life and death that blows away the chaff of domination and monopoly. Evolutionary bottlenecks occur when biological life reaches critical suffusion; the web of life that stretches throughout the biosphere has reached a stand-off in the evolutionary arms race for supremacy. The only way for life to progress in complexity and maximize interdependence in a self-aware and healthy way is for altruism and reciprocal evolutionary strategies to make up the dominant bulk of organic teleology on Earth.

Some might suggest that reaching altruistic saturation in a species or familial group would lead to genetic stagnation, and not its rapid evolution. Let's take the largest and most abundant habitat on earth as an example: the rainforest. While it's true that many species there evolve predatory and selfish tendencies, by and large, most species that live there form collective strategies of some kind or another. It makes sense that, in a place where the reproductive success of the animal is not limited by bouts of prolonged scarcity, the animal will eventually evolve social behaviors that eschew resource hoarding.

If all you have to do to get food is fly for five minutes until you find one of several million constantly flowering fruit-bearing trees, the majority of your time can be committed to mating rituals and securing the success of your offspring. Conjugal attraction, one of the most core and underlying motivations of the ego, becomes the glue that keeps each species invariably stuck on a path of evolutionary altruism. In rainforests, generations of animals can be born and die in their millions during periods of evolutionary time that define our planet's more fertile epochs, such as the time succeeding the Cambrian explosion. Evolution occurs much faster as species are receiving input for change at breakneck speeds, causing genetic diversity to branch exponentially. The rainforest is just an extreme example, as such tendencies can be found in all life in a planet's biosphere, though in some places the gestation of the cycle might be partially or entirely stagnant.

Cessante Ratione Legis, Cessat Ipsa Lex

“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of the shame, and moreover will become good.” -Confucious, Analects 2.3, tr. Legge

What is shame except the emergence of awareness of one's illegitimate deeds according to internalized precepts? Is it not molded from a person's inculcation into the moral tradition of their culture? Each human being, raised with the same method of conditioning which produced their elders, illustrates through living example how the law does and does not manifest virtue.

No system of control or governance can restrict the free-will of it's subjects and produce total, uniform obedience. Our ability to choose or neglect virtue is an inviolate function of nature itself, and nothing is evil which comes from nature. Therefore, the relationship of shame within a society is a direct representation of the accordance that law within that society has towards human nature, and thus goodness- utopian visions of a sinless humanity abiding a single overriding Will is childish at best, autocratic and manipulative at worst.

Legalism dictates that all human beings are inherently evil, and will only do good if forced. They who follow such philosophy attempt to subvert free-will by providing artificial ideological scarcity. The truth of human nature is boxed and corralled into submission for the sake of offering us protection from our own worst attributes. From the implicit assumption of legalism follows a need to violate nature and instill domination through harsh and uncompromising law. Offenders are sentenced according to their lot with the express purpose of providing future would-be criminals an example of what fate awaits disobedience. There is no genuine attention given to motivation, because it is irrelevant to the intended goal.

Reform and morality are to be forged from bloodshed and violence, such is the recourse of one blinded by their own shortcomings, unable to see that the lack of virtue they despise comes primarily from within themselves and is projected without onto others. The outcome of this unconscious projection and subsequent blame-mongering serves as confirmation-bias that the violence was necessary all along, when their foes inevitably retaliate in kind. Because of this, a cult of blind allegiance inevitably arises; the essence of the law becomes subject to the severity of it's execution. No longer are councils formed for the administration of justice, but courts act as vehicles for executing blind vengeance.

The essence of this selfish law, in mockery of justice, inculcates each generation with fear of punishment instead of reverence for virtue. In such a society, sickness runs deeply, and the people learn to despise each other, constantly searching for more restrictions and division to alienate their enemies and defend their allies.

The people will learn to experience shame as an anathema, *damnatio memoriae*, leaving the transgressor unable to meaningfully communicate the lessons learned, not only unto himself in his own mind, but also unto the world which he had wronged. Rather than accept shame as a reforming influence, it is a scarlet letter that denotes one who is worthy of punishment.

How then, should a society treat violence and wrong-doing? Is the practice of punishment itself to blame? Are we to believe that punitive measures cannot also be tools of reform? Is the act of seizing power inherently an act of injustice that leads inevitably to more death? I don't know the answer to these questions. These are things which deeply trouble me, the memory is reignited when confronted by the unmistakable presence of the self-serving narcissist who commits indecencies upon their fellow man willingly, and without regard for the basic principles of reciprocal law. I must return to these ideas when a sufficient answer comes to me.

Remember that the CCP came to power through violence, and remains still bathed in the after-effects. Chairman Mao was completely detached from reality, but he is not all that different from the rest of us, especially his immediate peers, who willingly cooperated with the Great Leap Forward. The Roman Empire was at constant war with the surrounding nations and peoples, for territorial expansion, the raising of aristocrats to political prominence by establishing their military prestige, and because the people of those conquered lands often rebelled against their slave-holders. The ancient American peoples would enslave each other frequently, not only for religious rites, but also for accumulating resources and prestige. There is a common thread amongst human empires.

I chose dead civilizations as examples with the exception of the CCP because they are indicative of the groundwork which is expanded on in all future iterations of government in that region. The CCP is peculiar, as it is the only communist nation left in the world that contends for world dominance in the way that the western nations, primarily the US, have traditionally held absolute power. No other nation has survived, let alone thrived, in such conditions. In all these cases, the law has been subject to the authorities' whim, and have all been guilty of excessive violence and bloodshed.

A small mind concludes that this is the limit of nature, and it is natural therefore to enslave and destroy one's enemies for the sake of establishing order. These thoughts come from a place of fear and hate, or rather, their diminished and subtle forms, distrust and contempt. The ancient world was rife with these aspects, as tribal warfare was par for the course and culturally accepted in almost any empire that formed a geopolitical hegemony. The small minded in ancient times would have concluded that this was the limit of human government as well.

Even in Confucious' case, his legalist peers would take precedence solely because of the precedent of imperial distrust of citizenry and the endemic contempt of rulers for their populace. Confucious would only be elevated, often in name

only, during subsequent centuries, where his name was summoned by toothless bureaucrats eager to pay lip-service to the unwashed masses. It is therefore more appropriate to say that the limit of nature is our inability to perceive our limits until they are forced onto us by the winds of revolution. Our limits being not the hate and selfishness endemic to humanity, but in our lack of self-awareness of these shortcomings. If we were to have honest dialogues and look at ourselves plainly, without affectation or emotional bias, the chains would melt away and an era of cooperation would become a very possible reality.

Since it is not possible to legislate such things, since the rulers have no reason to pay obeisance to virtue and critical self-reflection which produces it, we must be content to perform these rituals ourselves, for ourselves. Even if the leaders of humanity were to admit wrong-doing, even if they were to contend with the consequences of centuries of negligence, it would be useless unless the people followed suit. The law must be based on and directly contribute to preserving virtue in society, this is true. But unless the people who compose that society are willing to lay down the old and take up the new, the law will devolve back into punishment and blame-mongering as it has for eons.

I intend that one day I will be able to reflect on these words and conclude that my life contributed in a direct and measurable way to achieving these goals; that my life, upon it's end, will be of some use to humanity is a reflection of how adequately I was able to manifest the virtue which needs to exist as proof that change is possible.

New Paradigms

Skills like practicing scales or swinging the bat are introductory techniques whose founding principles establish the necessary conditioning for excellence at whatever sport or game one is learning, but they are ultimately hollow things that have no life of their own, they are tools to be used to cultivate a more rich and complex organism which in turn, produces art according to the manifestation of skill.

The musician may use scales to warm up, but the scales have no real bearing on the dense web of neurological conditioning responsible for producing the music they are about to play. The scales help teach the initiate about order and harmony, the organization of notes and their relation, but only in the absence of order and harmony do we develop true understanding and comprehension. The musician almost always has their music memorized in its entirety, only using sheet music as reference to the internalized information developed through continued practice; this is not the result of practicing scales, but the result of practicing the skills built on understanding of the scales.

I don't know too much about baseball, but I'm assuming its more of the same. You learn how to hit the ball through constant practice, but once you enter the "flow state" of hitting the ball, it's just a matter of calling on the understanding you've gained from repeated adaptation to the lack of order and harmony each and every pitch has given you to work with.

Taking the metaphor back to meditation, it becomes obvious that this is different to the previous examples. One is learning how to seize control over their sensory apparatus, conditioning it in much the same way as the other arts, but instead of honing the refinement of sensory manifestation, one learns to undo the conditioning thereof entirely. Meditation therefore is almost like the antithesis to other disciplines. One isn't trying to do anything with meditation at all, the point is to undo the do-ing as much as possible. To be mindful and present is to unlearn conditionings of all kinds repeatedly and novelly in every single session as if it were the first time you had ever tried.

We use mantras or guided practice to help provide a direction, but the act in itself is directionless. There is no beautiful concerto to be recited, no home run to be hit, no colossal work to be finished or started, it just is what it is. If one seeks to meditate by doing or performing anything specifically, they are only conducting a ritual, not that this is necessarily a bad thing; instead of looking to coerce words into approximating expressions of the ineffable, we should instead seek to decentralize and deregulate the concept, centralizing only the unraveling mystery and the deeply personal nature of the practice in how it manifests differently for each individual.

An extremely crucial aspect of meditation is letting go of judgement and control. To let go means to become like a child and be still inside, not to try and demand anything out of the experience except experience itself. In that sense, practice

in this context is a meaningless word that only illustrates an attempt to control and codify consciousness, a manifestation of hubris and pride based not on the principles of nature, but on the principles which arise out of our perception thereof.

Reflection on Marcus

Marcus was a brilliant mind whose foresight and penchant for introspection allowed him to peer into a well of understanding deeply embedded in all human beings, and in that regard, was nothing special. The understanding of oneself and the perception of the cyclical nature of life is no more admirable or remarkable than the performance of a skilled mathematician or a trained musician. Skill is the fruit of training and determination, training is made possible by skill and determination. Therefore, all that can be said about the man is that he was determined and executed his role faithfully unto the end, performing the task as ably as he could given what he had. His skill and training were inextricable, and mutually arose out of the commingling of a deeply felt sense of duty and honor alongside an environment which fostered it.

It should be noted that he was not a very insightful philosopher at all, even by the standards of his time. This is surely in part due to him not having much time to dedicate to the craft, but also because he eschewed formality and rhetoric in his private mind. There are no formative arguments or logical deductions as one might find in Plato or Aristotle's works, no dialectics as did the Greek sages, who frequented the Stoa of Athens had formed for him to study. He just skipped right to the conclusion and wrote aphorisms as they gestated from the crucible of his life experience. How remarkable it is then that such a terse and comparatively rustic man should have inspired so many great and powerful minds to aspire to fulfill their potential and advance the field of philosophy in the humanistic dimension as Marcus was so utterly enthralled and committed.

I'm sure if he were alive today, he would be immensely proud of the achievements of those who bore the fruits of his insight, but regard his own work as Bertrand Russel once did stoic philosophy in general: "We can't be happy, but we can be good; let us therefore pretend that, so long as we are good, it doesn't matter being unhappy." Marcus lived and died denying himself for the glory of the Empire, perhaps falsely believing that by being utterly devoted to living a temperate and modest life, others would see it and be moved to reform their excesses and look to the Logos for inspiration and altruism to take their place. He mentions multiple times in his meditations that it doesn't matter what others think or how they react, so long as he remains committed to virtue and service, but he cared deeply about the reformation of others and elevating their consciousness to a "cosmic perspective", which is to say, help them understand how small and insignificant their individual ambitions and perceptions are when compared to the enormity of complexity in every dimension of all life on Earth- Commodus saw fit to immediately dispel such lofty notions, and formalized Christianity would later rise to steal and warp this concept with the fashioning of the catholic church into a tool of yet still more domination and slavery.

It is ironic that, had he instead sought to co-opt the burgeoning faith that he had allowed through inaction to be slaughtered mercilessly, but with which he shared so many deeply rooted convictions, perhaps the direction of Christianity

might have taken a different path. Imagine if the Roman state syncretized the volatile politics of that tumultuous Jewish cult into an official state college of Gnostic thought which was completely compatible with the stoic philosophy Marcus embodied. Many gnostic groups were popular in Greece at the time, and it was not until Nicea, and later Trent, that the potential for cultural inclusivity would be utterly rejected and persecuted into *damnatio memoriae*.

This is a haphazard essay that doesn't really discuss the things he did right-mostly because many others have done that for us. Still though, it should be said that, perhaps the greatest evidence to support his reign as the greatest of all Roman emperors is that he never dipped his toga in the purple, despite countless decades of precedent providing him opportunities. Rather than judge such a claim by merit of conquest or wealth, it should always and forever be so by depth of virtue and commitment to serving humanity.

What are the qualities which define one's lifestyle? Is it the proclivity we take in pursuing various ambitions? Is it the accumulation of resources and the quality they possess? Are we defined by the morals of our time, and thus restricted in choice by them? I agree that the world has changed enormously in the last 400 years, more than it had since our fledgling attempts at civilization, but I think the majority of this difference is in material wealth alone. Very little has changed in human history, specifically thanks to Western dominator cultures crushing dissent and enforcing hegemony.

Humanity has always struggled with a sort of moral schizophrenia, a seemingly chronic inability to determine for themselves the ontological direction that their lives and therefore their culture should evolve. From ancient times even unto the present age, humanity still has yet to overcome tribal warfare and violent oppression of dissension. The Romans spent almost all of their capital and social resources to enforce hegemony and political domination of threats foreign and domestic, the former becoming ever increasingly synonymous with the latter. They viewed life as a struggle that the strong would emerge from as heralds of truth, the weak merely footnotes of failure and ideological dead ends. The echelons of Roman society were determined by adherence to social convention, which was almost entirely fixated on the role of manhood and domination over others, it cannot be overstated that patriarchal hierarchies of power enforced by nepotism and political maneuvering was not, as most of the other things in this list, an antiquated idea left in the past. How much truth can be determined by the victory of the strong over the weak if the weak never stood a chance in the first place?

How many people still to this day believe the world would be a perfect utopia if only all their enemies and tribal competition were annihilated? How many people believe that slavery is justified if the individual who is chained has qualified for the role? Do we not, as a civilization, elevate the rich and powerful to godlike status merely because they understood enough of reality to generate wealth alone? What really is the worth of philosophy and justice to mankind, as opposed to prosperity and vengeance?

Indeed, perhaps it should be said that the world's greatest changes have been in the 20th century, making it only around 100 years of tangible global shifts in consciousness. It is ironic that the revolutions which inspired the advancement of human rights and dignity were counterbalanced by unfathomable violence and mass death. The number of people slaughtered by communist and fascist regimes alone makes what little progress we have made seem woefully inadequate. If material wealth and technological ambition are all that separate us from the Romans, we are certainly in unprecedented times. Rather, though, I would argue the more important attribute of progress by which all else seems insignificant, is our ability to act as one species and not as fractured tribes struggling for dominance. In that regard, we have merely slithered along the ground from one contaminated watering hole to another. Perhaps the future will prove my cynicism unwarranted, just as excessive and short sighted as the reactionary political imagination of would-be demagogues yearning for absolute power with which they might enact campaigns of social cleansing. At the very least, I can only hope my cynicism will be proven wrong with as much dramatic resolution as it has been with the despots of our past.

Socialism and Cults

Another useful shorthand would be to paraphrase one's "moral polarity" by means of assessing directional intent. You mention the gifted, ambitious, and lucky as being the ones who naturally find themselves in the possession of resources; indeed, all of life can be so extraordinarily complex and intensely labyrinthine, or it can be very simple- will you be of service to self, or service to others?

The question begets hundreds more, and not unreasonably so- is it not the quintessential human experience to find oneself swindled by a vaguely religious aphorism into a miasma of indistinct platitudes and doctrines, bound to tithing vast tributaries of personal emotional and physical resources into fundamentally illegitimate and hypocritical corporate hierarchies? Can you really claim to have been a human being without falling into a lions den of ideological swindlers at least once? It seems sometimes like the only real accomplishment politics has made in the 21st century is in disseminating mass disinformation campaigns more efficiently than was ever previously conceivable. Our modern civilizations can churn out entire propaganda apparatuses, supporting hierarchical institutions and all, in the same time it took Irenaeus to pen a single exegesis and get it formally printed in Rome.

Let me instead paint a rustic, if idyllic, picture: you are faced with a situation where someone needs help overcoming a road block in their life that you discern yourself capable of assisting in, though it might come at personal cost and possibly a long struggle. Perhaps a family member recently became homeless, or a sibling became deathly ill and needs immediate care. Perhaps your best friend had their partner die and they are in a deep spiral of anguish, utterly alone, needing someone who can just listen and be there to be supportive. I think many of us would automatically choose to embrace compassion and reach out to help them, but what about if the person in need were a coworker? A colleague? What about a tertiary member of a friend group? An acquaintance? Would you still be virtuous and noble, despite being so detached from the impact of the person in need? What about those living in communities apart from your own in wildly different cultures with different norms?

Can you really claim honest virtue and pure generosity when being challenged to such extremes? Are your morals so intrinsic to your nature that they could hold up when put to the test? What if you were given control over a position of enormous political influence and power? Would you rule your empire justly and with deference to the gods in all your dealings? Would you really be merciful to the politician who, just last month, schemed with his fellow senators in shutting down your motion to provide relief funds to Damascus to deal with the increasingly severe famine? Perhaps his snide remark during the debate on your well publicized renouncement of Pontifex Maximus recalled the campaign of slander he had begun during the previous emperors deliberation of a plan of succession, and now, with the unmitigated enormity of the Tyrian purple at your

back, you realize that you could so easily take revenge while calling it “justice”?

Even the most extreme adherent of service to others polarity will understand their own limitations, and this is exactly what separates this so-called “service to others” from general religious dogma and political sloganeering. One who is polarized so and whose life is unfolding on a path of evolving complexity in learning how to answer each of those questions in a meaningful, personal way will learn very early on that we cannot do this alone. In fact, that is the primary realization which defines this polarity in it’s Hegelian essence. Service to others cannot exist without others to serve, and the absence of diversity eliminates the possibility of polarization. If we could not fail, and did not create inequality, there would be no opportunity to distinguish ourselves by rendering service. We are flawed creatures whose existence was forged from eons of natural selection and the coalescing of life around a web of biodiversity whose constituents are equally bound in the existential momentum of the whole thing as the whole is itself. “service to others” is simply a recognition of that fact and a personal commitment to acting according to the precepts which follow, namely, “we are all inheritors of the same mutual fate”.

Socialism, to me, seems to be the first real attempt in the history of “western civilization” to seriously address this concept in any meaningful capacity that didn’t simply masquerade as such while covertly appropriating convincing imagery and rhetoric to justify further tightening of control and domination of others. It is the absolute apogee of irony that arguably the most flagrant offenders of the type have come from those who co-opted Socialism and Socialist iconography. The most violent and clearest examples of “service to self” polarity have arisen from intellectuals and ideologies spawned in the same cultural milieu as potentially the most clear example of “service to others” polarity. I think this equal parts tragic and hilarious, if one can justify humor in the face of the stark reality of the wholesale slaughter of tens of millions of human beings fed to the ravenous Red God and it’s insatiable lust for power.

Nova Sanctorum

You will always receive the highest amount of pushback and confrontation with unstable individuals when discussing psychedelic entities, because it is, for whatever reason, the thing our cultural gestalt is most deeply curious about. Chemistry and the rigors of academic diligence do not inspire nearly as much influence, let alone command and enthrall entire generations in the Cartesian struggle for non-Euclidean literacy. Perhaps it's because of the vibrantly fertile ground of the topic; it takes only a distinct perception to process these novelty laden experiences in endlessly deviant ways. The psychedelic experience is like a tsunami of information and stimulus, levels of interaction of bodies of influence extend in and out of our conscious awareness both literally and figuratively; it is the chalice of hyper-dimensional *nova sanctorum* which overflows with revelatory insight. Each distinct perception creating a collapsed superposition of incomprehensibly manifold complexity; the act of perceiving these events from within the system prohibits any objective analysis by the anthropic principle, and thus, furious debate and contention are inevitable.

Just like our fascination with and magnetic attraction to art, the interpretation and paradigm shift produced by these experiences will easily collapse the superposition of almost a million curious monkeys into a melting pot of disharmoniously converging sentiments. It is inevitable that the polar extremes are made to assemble, oftentimes discordantly and with negative consequence to themselves and those caught up in the whirlwind of abuse. Can you blame them, though? These are tools which amplify and agitate the base psychological mechanisms with which we construct reality around ourselves. Any minor instability or disruptive behavioral pattern will become wildly magnified by the scope of novelty until social gravitation commands them forth, hurtling into confrontation like a dump truck going 80 mph into a crowded 4-way stop. The disconnect with reality occurs first within the heart, and is later exacerbated by a disconnect within the mind.

Remember, be merciful and quick to forgive and reconcile, because we can never truly know where someone else is at in their life from YouTube comments alone, and judgement only serves to shackle us to outcomes of our own design. Be well, friend.

A Window into the Soul

If but for the briefest moment, the setting sun casts a long shadow which stretches along the ground as a portent for the coming darkness of the night. It's golden hue waxes orange, then red, then with the faint hue of fuschia still lingering, it is no more. The brilliant light of day which provides our senses every waking experience to behold must always fade into memory, the setting sun forever approaches to collect it's due.

I really suck at poetry. Sometimes I can write well; dare I say, above average, on occasion. There is no compelling force to inspire me to take up written verse, no pressing need or hidden potential yet manifest. Through practice and dutiful observance, a skill can be cultivated in any field. Life cannot withhold virtue from one who pays obeisance through sacrifice and dedication, though it may very well withhold competence. I should count myself incomparably blessed that I possess skills of relative merit apart from writing, a blessedness that extends also to my would-be victims. Instead, the only one to be tormented by such oblaque prose is myself.

These passages reflect the mental state of one who is deeply and profoundly sick. Unwell, or perhaps more appropriately, dis-eased, I fumble about with my words like a prisoner scribbling barely legible script along his cell walls, writing without full awareness and in a neglected state. What does this say about my soul? Am I a ridiculous person at my core? Do I inspire laughter and mockery as the fool does, pantomiming the gestures of great heroes and wise men by pretending to be a philosopher? I am most assuredly not to be taken very seriously, that's for certain. If I ever had any questions of what an insane mind feels like, I now know.

It's not that I feel elevated to supernal mania, tasting manna from heaven and beholding cosmic secrets drip idly into me from the fountainhead of the primordial Brahma; I feel only a grim seriousness overtake me as a series of immaculate logical deductions are rattled off in quick succession before a conclusion presents itself for me, seemingly self-evidently. As when I messaged Sasquatch on twitter on that fateful summer solstice, during the convergance of the celestial bodies whose ominous power I believed was no doubt complicit, I perceived a voice clearly in my head whose texture and substance were not coincident with that of my own. I beheld a stream of thought which was painted in the hue of my own color, but of slightly different taste and of seemingly abberant consistency. The flow of causal certainty that led one thought into the next was supplanted by some foreign presence, one that seemed innocuous and expectant of my realization of it.

All things considered, it's really a rather banal story. This is what it feels like to experience an intrusive thought with forceful immediacy as the neurodivergent are often made to. There was nothing atypical or noteworthy about that experience, it was simply a textbook manifestation of delusional thinking. I should hope that it never becomes anything more insidious and damaging, that my illness be

contained to mockery, lest another person be seriously harmed or dishonored by my failure to comprehend reality. I wish that I could leave it there, that a simple ward and poetic augury suffice to exorcize and seal this demon within, but the oozing pus still caked over my wounded heart cannot so easily be cleansed.

I wonder why it is that I take dishonor and shame so incredibly seriously? Almost any other person would reflect on these failures and immediately default to self-defense; the nature of the ego is to preserve itself and prevent its own death at all costs. I think that it's possible somehow that I subconsciously believe in some perverse way that by punishing myself I have preserved something far more valuable. In other words, my ego has disassociated from my physical form and become attached to an abstraction. It may be that my sense of shame and dishonor are more real to me than I am to myself. Perhaps something similar is what the samurai felt in the moments leading up to ritual suicide. The very concept of my identity has been tightly woven into a psychological principle which itself is so easily manipulated and transient. In the absence of honor, in the presence of shame, I feel utterly disgusted and full of contempt; to end the ignominious display of perpetual mockery that is the dishonorable life is a mercy. These are real feelings that come from within me, though I would not ever think to judge another like this, and my writings here and elsewhere stand as testament to these things both. What could compel me then except for compulsive disassociation?

It is important to remember that our failures reveal more than just our shortcomings and lower personality traits- they also foreshadow the greatest ones, the traits to which we devote ourselves in pursuit of highest calling. This absolute and unwavering commitment to honor is part of my core personality. As the path of life unfolds evermore, I am continually reminded of this unrelenting compulsion- there is simply no other path for me to tolerate.

In-group Selection Bias

Research indicates that humanity tends to perceive social groups distant from themselves as increasingly less ‘human’ as an individual’s status within society increases. Heightened status brings wealth and power, but most importantly, a sense of connectedness with those of similar status. The in-group becomes increasingly narrow and exclusionary as one’s wealth grows, enforcing the individual’s self-identity as being inseparable from the source of wealth and the tools utilized to attain it. When one’s sense of self is tied so intimately to power and the means to attain it, those who lack such power, wealth, social connectedness, or do not possess the qualities perceived necessary to acquire them become targets for dehumanization.

Interestingly, other research associates low-status groups as being highly correlated with “animal traits”, i.e. emotionalism and sentimental tendency.

It is a necessary repercussion of increasing social distance between groups in society, for otherwise empathy and compassion would naturally resolve the conflict passively. Though, perhaps the relationship is reversed; a lack of compassion and empathy produces widening gaps in the distance between social groups. There is certainly a plethora of evidence to support both claims as being true in part. It is a vicious circle, an evolutionary paradigm which rapidly accelerates moral alignment by means of exposure to such extreme cases on either end as Adolf Hitler and Mahatma Gandhi.

Seeking Help

A Reflection on Religion

A few years ago I left an evangelical Christian cult, the consequences of which I still am trying to work out. I've always had a strong sense of abandonment and co-dependency, feelings that are still deeply embedded in my personal affect, and I can't address these flaws without acknowledging the religious programming that still remains. I had an introductory conversation with Christine, and it took her all of two minutes to unravel my inherent assumptions and subtle dogmatism. She recommended I book a consultation if seeking one-on-one help, so I'd like to reach out and see what you think of it all.

I should like to emphasize that I do not consider myself a victim, because I willingly accepted and acted under church leadership as both its servant and colleague. It's an important distinction because I believe it reveals a key aspect of my personality and why I am in this place; the only reason why I never caused any serious harm to or emotionally abused someone is owed solely to my own incompetence. I simply never succeeded in coercing or manipulating someone into joining the church, though not due to a lack of trying.

It was not a lack of conviction in church authority that led to my failure, but a lack of willingness to lie or masquerade my true intentions. If someone joined the church on my behalf, they should be fully aware of what is expected and how their life would change forever. I would use the Bible as a weapon to gaslight others who claimed to be Christian, causing deep personal crises in those who were unprepared for the theological onslaught. These were standard techniques taught to initiates, but it was expected that the "heavy truths" were to be rolled out later in the conversion process, when exposure to extremely emotionally charged imagery and concepts (like the movie 'Passion of the Christ') would allow for "an open heart". The more I convinced myself in the universal necessity of these actions, the easier it was to imprint them onto others without conscience. I insisted, however, on directly addressing them almost immediately, thinking that the emotional connection and support of the whole church in unison was enough to begin discussing "heavy truths", even believing that the enormity of the challenges themselves would be a motivating factor out of a supposed innate

sense of duty found in all “real Christians”.

The unlearning-learning process of cult acclimatization was justified in my mind by the “unconditional love” I experienced among my peers. We were all so unabashedly content to externalize our value systems onto a book whose interpretation was in strict adherence to totalitarian leadership that never did it occur to me that the conditions of that love were implicitly stated from the beginning. We saw ourselves like crime-fighters, spiritual warriors in a cohort of imperial cavalry meant to lead the charge against lukewarm and hypocritical faith practices in society. It was very much like the navy seals of being a Christian, with spartan discipline enshrined at every level of the organization.

I see all the abuse and manipulation I received as being justly earned and the natural result of choosing to live such a life. In the end, the only person I successfully manipulated into submission and obedience to church authority was myself, and at this I quickly attained savanthood. Even after leaving the church and disavowing all the terrible practices I was taught, the subtle programming remained- even so to this day. I don’t manipulate others, but I still do so to myself. I don’t have any desire to argue about fundamental truths or convince anyone to see from my perspective, but it is evident by omission of skepticism that I still worship at the hidden altar of idealism shaped in the likeness of the formless “God” whose nature takes on the color of whatever ideals my current perspective maintains as absolute. I don’t want personal attachment or to bind myself to anything as strongly as I did with the church, but I have constantly found new things and people to latch onto and ascribe messianic purpose. I don’t want to be vulnerable or expose any weakness for fear of being exploited or destroyed, but the contents of my heart spill out with just a single well-placed strike, and I fawn into a groveling state in fear of abandonment, the subsequent conciliatory propitiation undertaken with the same zeal and surrender once offered to my discipler or the lead evangelist, just as in prayer to Christ.

I want to find forgiveness in myself, but I simply refuse to do it. This lack of forgiveness erodes any sense of self-esteem and leaves me impotent, as a shadow of my authentic self. Thank you for reading this, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

The Story So Far

My name is Alex, and I'm here to reach out for community amongst other survivors of religious abuse. I joined an evangelical Christian church a few years ago, and left after approximately a two year stint. The journey began and ended with a condition that has only barely improved. I'm not comfortable with interacting with strangers or opening up my heart, but it is absolutely necessary if any progress is to be made. It's not that I'm afraid of being abused again, per se; I'm afraid of abandoning others or causing them harm through my incompetence, and being humiliated and ridiculed for it. I feel like I can't forgive myself for who I am and what I've done, and have locked myself away in a cold dark place as punishment.

Reading other's stories here makes my face balk in terror; I realize how fortunate I am to have only had to endure two years of hell. I was raised culturally Christian, and attended private schools, but never really experienced religion in any meaningful sense until after I found the local branch of the ICC in college. When I found my future brothers in Christ sitting in the cafeteria inviting people to join their bible study, I was immediately floored by how powerful and overwhelming their comradery and sense of attunement to others' emotional needs was. It felt in every way that these men cared about me in a way no one but my parents ever did, perhaps even more so. I learned very quickly from personal experience how strong the "love bomb" could be, and eagerly abandoned my previous life and personal convictions as if I were shedding a raggedy old garment for an expensive new one. Nothing that came before mattered to me, because all of it was tainted by depression and anxiety- a condition that this new life promised to quell by means of channeling it into a cosmological struggle of good and evil. I was hooked, and eagerly accepted whatever doctrine or teaching they gave; it was my ravenous hunger for reading the Bible that formed the basis of my zeal.

After two years, the honeymoon finally ended, and the great suffering which had transpired finally culminated in a coup-de-grace which left me hallucinating in a ditch for hours, begging my god for guidance and understanding. I had formed a deep co-dependency with an illusion of my mind, and whatever the voice said is what I would do. It just so happened that the voice always matched the emotional content of my present awareness, and turned on me in paranoid moments just as easily as it would encourage me during euphoric ones. Whether I am genuinely schizophrenic is unknown, but I have gathered since leaving the church that most people don't hear their gods telling them what to do and why. The voice speaks to me like a whisper on the wind, a subtle shift in the temperature of my skin, a synchronicity or surge of meaning found in an idle glance, the memory of something I had never experienced yet feel intimately connected to, bubbling up like vague shapes shifting in a churning mist. I think it's the ambiguity that keeps me hooked; I love problem solving and am deeply compelled to understand how things work.

I miss the community and their unity of spirit more than anything else. When I was in the fold, I never had to worry about meaning or purpose. I never needed to question my place or be concerned with my ultimate destiny; all of it was immediately before me. My purpose was to serve the needs of Christ, i.e. share the gospel and bring in new recruits, and attend to his “body”, the church. I was an empty vessel that anyone’s needs or desires could be poured into, and I would gladly meet their demands. Each difficult task was like a divinely ordained trial with which I could come ever closer to achieving mastery. Mastery was not associated with salvation, but rather it was the greatest method of securing it from possible harm. At every moment, demons and wicked spirits convened in obscure dimensions to plot the fall of the church, and all its members. I stood guard as a vigilant defender and protector of my new family; what need did I have for self-interest or personal ambition?

I will never find a place like that again, because it was all illusory to begin with. None of those things existed except in the manic delusions of a mind twisted by desperation and fear of humiliation and abandonment. I have searched, subconsciously, for a surrogate from the moment that I left. From the instant that the shock and terror settled in as I wept in a heap from the realization that I was “Judas in all but name”, my fragile ego attuned itself to this overriding need with reckless abandon. I proceeded to fall into conspiracy theories and ever more delusional fantasy worlds of my own creation, until I managed to find someone new to latch onto and seek validation from- a deeply inappropriate situation truly worthy of contempt. A lack of boundaries and general spineless groveling, combined with profoundly magical thinking, had brought me to the lowest point of my life.

I remember distinctly feeling that, during meditation one time, I was having telepathic communications with Sasquatch, who I had met on twitter. I would fantasize about a supposed coming apocalypse that had been revealed to me only at the moment I became ready, and that I was here to help prepare humanity for the Sun to emit a micro-nova, wiping out all life on Earth and lifting our souls to a higher dimension. I was suffused by Q-anon material, and uncritically accepted “secret communications” from seemingly innocuous sources that were revealing grand conspiracies. As COVID set in and my isolation became absolute, I had a profound sense that I needed to conduct “energy work” on the environment and people around me, always taking on a conciliatory affect, never expressing negative emotions or confrontation. I began having paranoid delusions of beings watching me and implanting negative thoughts. I began to receive “downloads” of seemingly profound insight, which I wrote down and would express passively through idle conversation as if it were meant for certain people or situations specifically; I recall learning the secret of enlightenment, what it meant and how to attain it, and that my final remaining friend was caught in a deep web of illusions preventing him from seeing how close he was to escaping his chains. He interpreted this continual unsolicited advice as homophobia (ironically, I kept grilling him on being afraid of faceless, indirect persecution), and he has not spoken to me since.

It was only by the help of, ironically, someone else I had met on twitter and a coincident wake-up call from others in my life at the time, that I realized how detached from reality I had become. I realized how little about reality I actually understood, and how profoundly vacuous pretty much every belief I firmly accepted actually was. I realized how horrendously awful social media was, and how my constant interactions with it from a very early age had only deepened and fed the co-dependency and fear of abandonment I had always struggled with. All of this I had kept secret and spoke of to no one, for fear that they wouldn't understand or would judge me as crazy, which I was fully convinced I was not. In my mind, I had full control of my faculties and nothing about what I was experiencing was out of the ordinary or concerning.

I say that I 'realized' these things, but the actual learning took place over the many months later, and only after I had abandoned everyone I knew and secluded myself into a cognitive prison as punishment for a lifetime of constant failure. In the moment, the 'realization' consisted of pure, unadulterated, raw terror. A kind of existential dread and nameless fear that comes when a bomb goes off in front of you. Even still to this day, I remember when that bomb went off, and suddenly the floodgates were opened as I am brought back in my mind to the ditch I had stumbled out of all those years ago when I was just leaving the church.

I want to find new friends and learn how to be "human". I want to serve as an example for others to be warned of, that they might escape this fate. I want to be healed, so that this example might have a happy ending and give hope for recovery. I want to have 'realized' these things in their fullness- not just as admission of guilt and condemnation, but to embody the lessons they were meant to teach. I want to not be miserable constantly, all the time, every day. I want to not hate who I am and live with the constant knowledge that all it takes is one trigger, and I'm right back at ground zero all over again. I want to enjoy the little things again, and be content with what I have, not constantly afraid of having it destroyed in an instant. I want to not feel so much hatred and anger towards myself that even the thought of "addressing the inner child" brings apathy and a scoff. I want to be normal, like other people, and not think and experience such bizarre delusions. Thank you for reading, I hope you are doing well, whoever you are.

