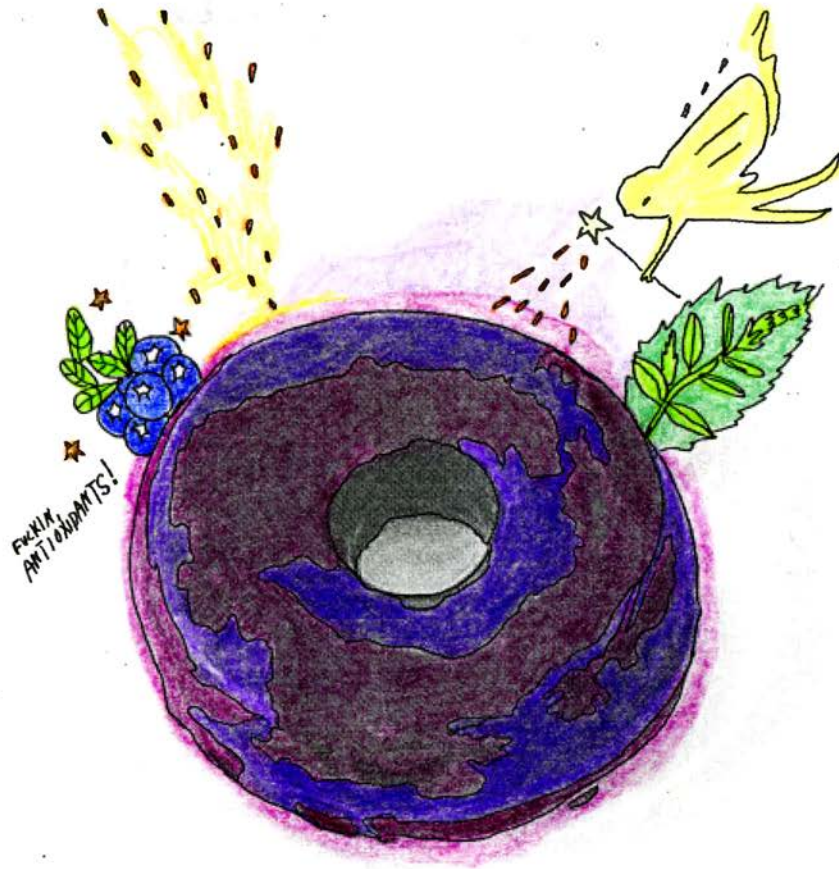


Cereal, Indefinitely:

Redemptive Habits,
Aesthetically Naturalized



#blueberrybourbonbasil

an essay by Silah Radovaky

This is an iteration of a work in progress, written as part of my final quarter at the Evergreen State College. This edition has primarily been compiled to share with friends and acquaintances.

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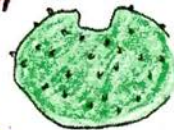
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Cereal, Indefinitely



that which
is a
pretty neat
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PALEO'S



“live a good life
eat what you want **but choose it wisely**
your food should be made from good stuff,
healthy & wholesome
take care of **yourself**
and our planet
so we all can be **healthy**
for
LIFE.”¹

Let's begin with a field trip to a college cafeteria, looking for clues about contemporary relationships to wellbeing and the influence of the general metabolism upon that of the organism. This streamlined atmosphere presents the visitor with an abundance of eating options, whose display is orchestrated in stainless steel cubbies. Suggestions of health, lightness, and fitness are nested visually and textually in framed PSA-style transmissions. These messages adorn the institutional walls, which are painted a vegetal tone evocative of its name: THE GREENERY. Cheeseburgers are drying out on plastic plates under heat lamps, next to turkey dinners and several vegetarian options, all bearing nametags and color-coded merit badges: chocolate cupcakes with vanilla frosting are optimistically presented as “Calorie-conscious,” chickpea curry is “Vegetarian.” The architecture of the space also sorts specialized diets. Nowhere is this more visible than in the shadowy corner of the salad bar, which is reserved for “Items Made Without Gluten.” Ropes protectively cordon-off a toaster strewn with gluten-free crumbs, and include jelly and peanut butter options to rival its wheatly counterpart. The price of admission also includes unlimited access to a self-serve waffle maker, soft serve ice cream, bottomless soda, and cereal. In the far wing of the dining hall, there is a salad bar—also all-you-can-eat. But despite all these obscure options, front and center is the illuminated row of pizza and French fries—the warmest, the most frequently tended, and what one's eyes glance immediately upon entry. Cognitive dissonance originates in the visual imperative to consume excessively placed alongside the encouraging prediction that we are

¹ Aramark Corporation, “Healthy For Life,” 2013.

making healthy choices, moreso than in the randomness of the food selections (pizza, cereal, and waffles). Aesthetic pleasure and aesthetically-presented information seem like attempts to stall the trough-like functionality of such a setting—amidst the excess, being directed away from that which most commands our attention. Nonetheless, such health advice is unobtrusively presented in such a way for us to take it or leave it.

Two stories above is a student-run café called the Flaming Eggplant. It, too, appeals to vegans, vegetarians, and the gluten-free while also providing greasy diner fare. In contrast to the ambivalent philosophical musings on consumer choice in the Greenery, the Eggplant's political declarations (on its walls and advertisements) leave no room for multiple readings. While the Greenery complements its industrial volume of food with locally-sourced products, boasting heavily of such sprinkled offerings, the Eggplant's small-scale structure and political ethos direct its sourcing choices in a thorough manner with a militant pride. The act of coming together around food and eating are articulated as a catalyst for the cultivation of egalitarian social arrangements, acknowledging that the basis of our continued physical survival is directly linked to what is supported outside of our bodies—in other words, our physiological connection to the general metabolism. This attempt to forge a space for social exchange in a fast-paced food service environment is in contrast to the need for speed which the Greenery is capable of fulfilling, in a context where meal breaks are often brief and eating often *doesn't* constitute a collective social activity.

As criticized as the Greenery might be by the ilk of the Eggplant for its willingness to *claim* ethical practice when it looks good while being fully unaccountable to such ethics, its Michael Pollan-esque declarations suggest that a discussion of ethics in relation to food has crested beyond the subcultural rootings of a place like the Eggplant. The walls shamelessly painted pea green, the inoffensive and optional “eat plants” mentality, and the prideful local sourcing reflect a general trend within eating establishments and food packaging. In this context pastoral scenery and an aesthetic of small-scale production do not confer association with anti-establishment land projects or the political ethos of a place like the Eggplant Café. The boundaries

between “alternative” and “mainstream” food options are blurring spatially and culturally as industrial food producers find it advantageous to appear smaller-scaled, and small-scale producers have a increased customer base for their products. In this era, while there is an association between small-businesses with dream-following and a proliferation of “micro” this and that (microbreweries, etc), artisan bakeries and breweries proliferate. The organic food industry grows, at the same time as tiny agricultural projects blossom and home gardening gains infrastructural support in the form of networks of communication and resources for education. Hardly obscure, Triple-A publishes an article about biking around Portland, Oregon, eating donuts and drinking beer—something that punks have been doing for years.

Formerly scrappy food co-ops are groomed to appear and function as upscale grocery stores through which this cacaphonic harvest of handcraft and industry is peddled, attracting a mixed crowd of counter-cultural and upwardly-mobile consumers: vegetarians, dry-bean purchasing survivalists, self-identifying weirdos, middle-class families, the gluten free, and the health-obsessed who are questing for emerald-kale superfood concentrations, as though a contemporary promise for immortality, akin to blood for vampires. While this spatial overlap of ethically-charged motivations does not inevitably result in a syncretic approach, visible within the proliferation of these fads is the suggestion of a cross-over between the countercultural to the fiscally successful *by virtue of* their vaguely anti-industrial message. Ranging from the “chiller vibe” to the pastorally-evocative, the appearance of these products is a charming antidote to the anonymous garbage of industrial production, optimistically making opportunities for a level of care and attentiveness to materiality that has been necessarily obliterated by large-scale consolidated production: handcrafted donuts, scones, and chocolates, but also food products of all kinds, ranging from the treat to the panacea (and sometimes even blurring the line between them—especially visible in allegedly metabolically-correcting MCT-rich coconut macaroons, but also little sweet-savory meat nuggets manufactured by the “Epic Bar” brand). This market at least theoretically offers producers and workers the ability to support themselves with more dignity than is characteristically afforded for within

the economy, and offers consumers who can afford these products a sense of personal connection to what they put into their body. While not necessarily new strategy for food packaging, narratives about the personalities behind the products increase in wackiness. On the back of a bag of "Rhythm Superfoods Pineapple-Coconut Kale Chips," we are told about what makes this brand Super: "BALANCE&HARMONY: Created in Austin, TX, where we believe great music, a positive mind, eating right and staying active can make all the difference in health and happiness."² That the connection between emotional and physical vitality is made through kale chips suggests that the sacralization of habit happens at more than the level of representation, but is related back to materiality which is suggestive of mystical and magical cures, but happens through materiality—a re-sacralization of materiality and habit in the face of the consequences wrought by its decimation.

Central to this conversation is a ubiquitous image of healthful fitness. It is a neutral fill-in-the-blank whose specificity gains more meaning depending upon its usage. In contrast to the pained, passionate phoenix of the Eggplant where the route to wellness suggests an exorcism of unevenly-distributed social violence, the Greenery evokes a non-threatening, non-specific figure whose wise choices in the cafeteria result in a vibrantly-colored life of activity. Similarly, on the cover of their cookbook, female relatives of the famed Michael Pollan appear alert yet engaged with each other as they assemble salads with fresh vegetables and bake pies, demonstrating to us the social and bodily wellness that awaits us when we reclaim domestic habit. As Alice Waters is quoted on its back cover, "Fast food culture has disconnected us from something so basic to human nature, but when we encounter real and tasty food again, it's like coming home."³

We might call this something like the Instagram effect, where wellness is a performative and prideful encouragement—food photography meeting self-portraiture. The democratization of photo filter technology results in a circulation of stylized displays of breakfast smoothies, successful stir-fries, and experimental grain-free brownies,

2

3 "The Pollan Family Table: Book." Last modified 2015. <http://pollanfamilytable.com/book/>.

often side-by-side with displays of the healthy offspring of these frequently urban, yet pastorally-inclined, individuals. A message of reclamation and redemption is palpable in these presentations, where the good life is located in the act of cooking and sharing food. This collective habit is simple, but it is just the kind of domestic labor whose loss was not heralded by fast food so much as fast food filled the cavity left in its place.

In lieu of conditions for communication and connectivity whose flourishing is obscured by an obscenely globalized economy, the past is easily evoked to stand in for a wholesome way of life. Such stylized photography invites us to imagine this life as a sensuous possibility, something we can make, but also *buy*. Like Erdogan's Turkish castle conjuring up the Ottoman Empire, monarchically rewriting history in the face of the social alienation wrought by neoliberalism, tiny shops in Portland reimagine the present as neo-Victorian—as a time in which commodities are auratic and leisure is magical. While not the primary means of meeting material needs, artisanal small businesses become necessary mediums for the construction of culture. Our material connectivity to the external world broadens while our metaphysical means to grasp and represent this global inextricability lags behind. The global superhighway remains obscure.

We might wonder, then, what specifically is being reclaimed from the fast food specter. Can we deduce a widespread sense of malaise from its opposite—the image of vitality, and of vitalizing foods, on the covers of cookbooks? Perhaps such a deduction is erroneous in a culture which strives for constant improvement: we might be well, but we *could* be better. This may be the case with *The Pollan Family Table*, which promises a reinvigoration of the family dinner table, but the crisis or malady takes on a more medical character in the case of many of these current proliferations of self-help diets. Here dietary changes are proposed remedies for the chronically unwell who remain in pursuit of the proper paradigm through which to approach their ailments: diabetes, autoimmune disease, mental and emotional instability, and idiosyncratic digestive ailments. It's difficult to imagine the well-adjusted, well-off *Pollan* chefs, with their banquet-style family meals, recounting tales of redemption from obesity, chronic

flatulence, depression, or diabetes that preface the more health-focused books which have gained public prominence recently. Here the cultural nostalgia evokes not a mid-century family dinner but places and times that are so distant and vague it is difficult to image them: the pleistocene. Here the discussion about healthfulness takes a sharper turn into a vague anthropology, inviting us to leave behind the historical conditions these ailments are reflections of through primarily dietary changes. This genre of diets fall under the umbrella of "paleo," but also includes those which do not utilize the term but arrive at the similarly grain-free conclusions.⁴ A quick visit to Orca books in downtown Olympia puts a finger to the pulse on this phenomena, which now has many highly-stylized cookbooks filled with photographs. In the words of nondogmatically Paleo proponent and author Chris Kresser, "Millions of people around the planet are joining this health revolution based on the latest cutting-edge science, seeking to eat and live in closer harmony with human genetics and biology."⁵ Fleeing institutionalized medicine, or unable to access it, many flock to these mystical or otherwise regimented diets for cures to physical and emotional maladies. Biological Edenism meets stylized redemptive domesticity.

In contrast to Kant's assertion that it is humans' ability to influence nature but not the other way around which defines their freedom, there is a recitation within this genre that we are coming up against the biological limitations of this way of life. We celebrate primal snacking with the Epic Bar: "Finally a bar as intended by Mother Nature." Describing traditional processes for grain preparation, Fallon references "that mysterious instructive spirit that taught our ancestors to soak and ferment their grains before eating them", making a vaguely religious claim about habit.⁶ In her book *Primal Body, Primal Mind* (2009), Nora T. Gedgaudas recommends a ketogenic calorie-re-

4 *Wheat Belly* by Dr. William Davis and *Grain Brain* by Dr. David Perlmutter, both #1 New York Times Bestsellers, are two examples.

5 Chris Kresser, *Your Personal Paleo Code* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013), 3.

6 Fallon, Sally, *Nourishing Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: New Trends, 1999), 452.

stricted diet for her readers as the route to longevity and to optimal functioning. Running through the more fundamentalist manifestations within this genre is a thread of messianic traditionalism veering toward an oddly contradictory fundamentalist paradigm which utilizes scientific data to verify humans as biologically belonging in a pre-technologic era, including the technology to capture energy via agriculture.

We have fallen from the alleged Eden of ice-age starvation and instead are left in front of the bowl of cereal to do the balancing of breakfast ourselves. A whole genre of Paleo diet literature attempts interventions in this sea of confusion regarding how we ought to be living and caring for our bodies. This confusion seems to reflect modernism more than the broad historical bracketing of post-agricultural humanity. In lieu of objective verification of how we ought to be doing so given the century-long experiment of making the human body a repository for products which are a byproduct of value-construction rather than a means of nourishment, some return to biological fundamentalism in which our bodies have been located as belonging in prehistory. For these fundamentalists, all forms of food processing—which can make food both more nutritious, and can make food available to landless classes of people who lack the idyllic pastoral evoked by this utopian image of history—appear as sneaky self-undoings of humanity. In actuality we are in something like a combination of unprecedented abundance and degradation, in which the vegetables cultivated through centuries of human involvement with materiality provide the lettuce wraps for paleolithic burgers; bowls of spaghetti synthesized by finely cut strips of zucchini. Simultaneously, vegetables are too expensive for many to consume.

But in the terrain of villified processed food, we might even recognize a difference between a ramen cup, which is warm and steamy, mimicking a meal for a working person who has no time to cook, and a bag of chips, which is dense and unsatisfying, dry fragments of matter which never can never be reassembled into anything singular. The changes which have happened to cause these cultural shifts in which food is not shared and in which the most nutritious food remains available to the well-off (both globally and within the United States) are not, in actuality, anonymous manifestations of the human

capacity to pull ourselves out of Eden, too distant in the past to be addressed. A discussion of these decisions does not give names or a historical context, but instead is vaguely spoken of as a suspicion of industrial food in general. The unspeakable, unrepresented devastation in this case is compressed to a single “accident” of history, which in actuality is multiple and nuanced; it is easier to talk about digestive upset caused by the introduction of rice rather than the physical imprint of the continuing legacies of slavery and the genocide of Native people in the U.S., or the precarity of poverty—conditions of exigency which tax the neurological networks we contain within our bellies. This genre attracts both those who contain a suspicion of all things processed (speaking to their paranoia of BPA, BCB’S, microwaves, etc) and those who are drawn into alternative medicine through physical exigency, speaking to the symptoms of internal dysregulation which reflect general conditions of external dysregulation. Testimony of recovery from autoimmune diseases abound in these forms; in the past few years, several detailed books which explain dietary protocol have been written by laypeople and practitioners who bear their own tales of miraculous recovery, a genre perfectly situated to address a sense of collective physical vulnerability. Ranging from dogmatic to reflexive, it has become a catalyst for an interrogation of physical experience, a quest to be inside of the body which so ubiquitously remains a discussion of weight loss. Readers of Chris Kresser’s website regale each other with tales of tremendous weight loss and healing or seek affirmations of normalacy in their lack of this sudden success. One solicits advice: “I have been trying the Paleo/Grain free way of eating now for a couple of weeks and haven’t lost but 2 lbs. I don’t know what I am doing wrong. I have lost some around my waist but the scale hasn’t really moved. I only need to lose 15-20 lbs...does the weight come off more slowly?”⁷ Another writes, “how do u get past the cravings, they are off the chart right now, its been two and a half weeks since i started eliminated sugers, junk food and such. i got really bad breath so i added more fat back in and seem to be doing

7 Joby, November 17, 2014 (11:23 a.m.), comment on Chris Kresser, “How to Lose Weight Without Trying on a Paleo Diet,” *Chris Kresser*, 31 January 2014, <http://chriskresser.com/how-to-lose-weight-without-trying-on-a-paleo-diet>.

better. not sure what i am losing. just clothes fit better. still depressed though. ate two bites of a donut and got sick. still craved so tried again, was grossed out. not sure what to do from here. any suggestions”⁸ Stuck in a rut between the quest for objective affirmation and a faith in this exorcism, physiological experience provides a catalyst for virtual social connection as readers pursue the vitality whose construction seems inaccessible through immediate physical reality. In these articulations there is an explicit and implicit connection between physical health and emotional status. Anatomical and physiological terms are commonplace—HPA axis (“Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis”), LDL (“Low-Density Lipoprotein”), TSH (“Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone”). Diagnoses (self-made or otherwise) are referenced with acronyms like SIBO (“Small-Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth”). Readers are versed in endocrinology and other medical fields, at least enough to get into trouble. These terms crystallize a set of symptoms into terminology, progressing from the image of moss-covered intestines and a body infiltrated with hungry yeasts evoked by the once-popular Candida diet, into a deliberation of internal regulation through anatomical systems whose complexity cannot be gleaned visually by the organs themselves—it is their communicative and regulatory capability which is their primary influence upon our bodies.

That our potential for alterity has been so visibly represented as physical in origin in a world which broke the feedback loop between sensuous input and production —through fitness and a return to bodily health—relocates us in an intimate, contracted sphere, a place we have some agency over. A type of workout blossoms in popularity which allows us to access the life-bringing potential of encountering the edge of our bodily capacity in a context where we butt up against our ability to imagine other physical arrangements on a more geographic scale. It should not surprise us that, in an efficiency-obsessed culture which depends upon military power which operates at the periphery of our vision, using insentient robots to inflict bodily

8 Darlene, 11 April 2015 (9:07 p.m.), comment on Chris Kresser, “When You Should try a Low Carb Diet,” *Chris Kresser*, 14 October 2014, <http://chriskresser.com/when-you-should-try-a-low-carb-diet/>.

damage, this workout would draw upon a similarly miliaristic analysis of success. Given our continued necessity to be in our bodies despite an increasingly industrialized scale (in which highly paid tech ogres sit for hours a day in windowless rooms to facilitate our navigation of the virtual world) how does this kind of physical exigency—or desire to evoke conditions of exigency—compare with the momentum created by collective physical activity? How might our ritualistic practice of transformation which is structured for within the form of a “workout” be aided by the access of other kinds of rhythms and powers which remain too complicated for us to grasp, though we might “read” them and fabricate them, akin to the rhythmic animator of music?

In contrast to these more contemporary weight-loss trends, *Weight Watchers 101 Secrets For Success* (1996) depicts the maintenance of a healthy weight as a triumph built by many small steps. We are given gentle encouragements like “It’s the small things you change that make the biggest difference. Drink a little more water. Take a few more steps. Eat a few more veggies. Get a little closer to your goal!” and “Any exercise is better than none”⁹. The book cautions the reader to be patient for the long and slow process of losing weight; included are meditative devices for sidestepping “emotional eating”. P.S. from Vancouver, WA tells us, “When my desert alarm won’t quit clanging, I fix a serving of oatmeal in the microwave, stir in some spreadable fruit and get a treat that my body approves of.” L.G. from Kings Park, New York says, “Since I already know what the food I’m craving tastes like, I imagine myself chewing it, swallowing it and it’s gone!”¹⁰ Here self-control and a steady, slow development of healthful habits are the ticket to physical transformation, rather than a leap into a different paradigm or something which can be won all at once.

In contrast to the more explicitly spiritualized, feminized Weight Watchers with its support-group model, the Paleo model suggests that a code can be cracked in the realm of physical habit to foster a sudden seamlessness of a balanced appetite—the cravings which necessitate a

9 *Weight Watchers 101 Tips for Success* (New York: Macmillan General Reference, 1996). (Unnumbered; comments are from D.S. in Coopersburg, PA and R.P. in Rigby, Idaho, respectively.)

10 *Weight Watchers 101 Tips for Success*.

bowl of oatmeal could be eliminated, we are promised. In this way we almost seem to be operating within the cult of magical cures rather than a collective spiritual practice, even with the valorization of collective fitness activities. It is a spiritual disposition which is contingent upon simulating conditions of survivalist exigency, yet the combination of readily-handed resources and constant pressure to perform are a uniquely modern combination, synthesizing vitality for those who have access to these resources.

But at the same time, this form of revelation can be distinguished from the allure of magical cures, in which a reckoning back to ancient forces or powers such as European archetypes and that to be found within crystals, and in which different shades of energy are distinguished from each other, because it is their very biological explicability that their success is attributed to. Though these talismanic approaches might overlap with the appeal of a puritanical diet, the positing of this redemption through physiological means does not draw recourse to external forces. It is through materiality itself that the enchantment is reconstructed: physical health allows for spiritual solvency. If we can “hack” into a deciphering of the inner realm of the body, then the strain we encounter in our pursuit of wellbeing will become seamless, easy; that the material means for this improvement are not democratically available is seemingly irrelevant to such a personalized pursuit of performative wellbeing.

But to reduce the limitations these conversations impose upon themselves to the scale of their accessibility seems to overlook the desire for a totalizing redemption they reflect. That the change of habit at the personal level evokes a cascade of other changes is evidenced in these representations of physical fitness, and we are drawn in out of a desire to become that fit figure who is energetic, enthusiastic, and socially engaged, for whom hedonism results in no ill consequences.

Walter Benjamin, riffing on Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, whose “hands up” gesture might evoke that of unarmed individuals facing the weapon of an officer, writes “His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage

upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet."¹¹ In contrast to this singular devastation which an unearthly being witnesses, we are close enough to the ground to identify its particularities in an attempt to untie them. We are also far enough away from the stars that we are protected from heavenly storms. In contrast to the angry winds which blow from Paradise, pushing back the wings of the angel with such violence that he can no longer close them, the modern character runs backwards, attempting to embrace this potentiated ahistory through the musculature of their body, pushed back the merciless gravity of a world that has been reduced to physical mechanics, enduring "high intensity" exercises which by their definition bring one to the edge of capability. They consider this in pursuit a return to conditions which they consider to be their genetic heritage—that they might work for their own happiness. It is the very resistance encountered in which the promise is located.

This is the angel we are left to wrestle with, though we might benefit from questioning whether or not this battle is strictly speaking physical, and what forms of engagement allow us to access that which is below the surface.

We might compare this promise of happiness with a different kind of redemption: the *promesse* articulated by Adorno—for whom the study of Schönberg's composition method left an inedible print--in his positing of the work of art as a form of secular revelation.¹² We might consider the kind of exercise necessary to growth and development as a musician, in which daily physical practice cultivates conditions for moments of concept-defying explosions of incredulity which allow us to reconfigure our idea of what it means to be human. Through this kind of spiritualized labor we are able to reconfigure of our idea of what it means to be human. It is in this encounter with alterity that pulls us out of the gravitation pull of the mundane and predictable. But there is something problematic about a grasp towards alterity in which we think we already know what will result from our efforts--in

11 Walter Benjamin, "These on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations* trans Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

12 Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977), xiii.

which the representation of transcendence bears such stark similarity to the performative-obsessed efficiency which we associate with labor. In this case physical practice lacks a hinge through which to imagine unimaginability itself, something which is neither leisure nor laborious, and which defies our ability to reduce it to the sum of its parts. Nonetheless, that our tremendous capability to carry out feats both physical and psychic is represented, in this genre, as necessarily being rooted in our simple habits seems to accurately acknowledge that though we might be deeply spiritual beings, it is physical experiences which have the capability to shake us the most deeply. But what about if this physical conceptualization which solely represents atomized habits does not allow us to access or cognize forces which continue to imprint themselves in our bodies via habits which are more culturally ingrained? Rather than a religious collective admission of vulnerability both psychic and physical we become trapped in a pursuit of an amelioration of this condition of not-knowing; the remedy for conditions of extreme psychic stress become located in food, and a dependency upon highly specialized diets to remedy conditions caused by actual quantifiable psychological consequences of what is vaguely conceptualized in the word "stress" becomes aesthetically naturalized.

Such aspiration seems hopeful, perhaps too optimistically distributing weight onto the aesthetic that the objective—as it is presently practiced—buckles under, necessitating pseudo-spiritual practices which resacralize materiality without relieving the anxiety wrought by its degradation. But in a world which takes such extreme medical efforts to save bodies in moments of crises, pounding on the chest of ninety-year old men to reawaken a heart back to life, this volume of unaddressed damages should not be left to the science which lags behind, painstakingly verifying in the pseudo-sterile environment of the laboratory the consequences which are already so easy to see at play in this complexity of the "real world." Such a mechanism is incapable of crafting a world that is more than erroneously rational, in which devastation emerges in the false name of reason. Perhaps it is the liminal space between body and word, and what is made sensible through it—a connection that perfectly highlights the meaning of aesthetics—through which we can elaborate the connection between

the ethical and the physiological. We already have one linguistic hinge for such inextricability: "[such and such] makes me *sick*." Yet such a poetic leap is suppressed in a genre that obscures its ethical claims with objective data, in the scientific paradigm where experiential knowledge is discounted as means to grasp empirical reality since the beginning of its development.¹³ It is in our ability to conceptualize alterity—that to reconceptualize what it is we are afflicted with, and what it could mean to be better—which is so needed presently, a mechanism that seems to have more to do with the sensuous inference we evolved with than with microscopic, disembodied analysis which scientific inquiry has presently restricted itself to. These creative forms might be capable of not only more accurately reflecting what is going on, but also compelling us to make it otherwise. But let's not mentally fool ourselves into inactivity by the impossible enormity of the devastation which is to be repaired; in this way, we can take a cue from this redemption-obsessed genre, and entertain the absurd notion that tiny changes in habit can do more for us than pursuits for totalized salvation.

13 Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 176.

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