**De-modern life is not rubbish**

Against the anthropocentric boredom

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“Down with a world in which the guarantee that we will not die of starvation has been purchased with the guarantee that we will die of boredom.”

― Raoul Vaneigem, The Revolution of Everyday Life

We live in an over “comprehended” epoch, where social media and Internet platforms permit people to express an “opinion” regarding specific or general issues; a time of a hyper divulgation of individual points of views and "free" digital speech, which has been regarded as a democratic transformation of our relation with others and the world.

About a century ago, referencing to the spirit of the world around 1918, Amedée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier said that society back then was “bored because the directrix of life was too uncertain”. Nowadays we live in times that are considerably more uncertain.

This observation made more than a hundred years ago seems unarguably pertinent today: Are we all digitally bored and we do not know it?

The World Wide Web era has been marked by the screen domination and an overabundance of information and options. Adds, posts, commentaries sections and the “like” or heart shaped buttons on the social media have all functioned as mirrors for self-acceptance.

In this visual contract age characterised by an algorithmic hyperinflation context, individuals have all been assembling a digital identity.

This individual construction of a "digital personality" is a delicate and challenging process, in which people's image online relies on chosen contents that will determine their popularity, visibility, interactions and possible engagements.

This contemporary and social phenomenon demands urgency to disseminate ideas regarding these mounting dilettante narratives and their disorienting acceleration; thus necessary responses must emerge from a post-digital perspective, in order to better position ourselves as humans within the "boring" e-living age.

**Object oriented responsibility**

The anthropocentric benchmark of the Copernican Revolution has been of crucial influence on Modernity, as well as the Kantian idea of objects as products of human cognition.

Objects represent the quintessence in our materialist living and our physical comfort; and they do not exist independently of our human perception. That is to say, there is no correlation between objects and us as human beings unless these are included in our cognitive experience.

However, from an Object Oriented Philosophy point of view, the "privileged" human supremacy over the "relegated" existence of objects should be criticized and thus, problematized.

In this regard, Graham Harman's speculative realism idea rejects the notion that objects do not exist unless they “appear in the human mind” or unless they are part of a “social construction”; therefore, objects finitude is not restricted to human rationality. As he states: *"Fire burns cotton stupidly, paying no heed to its color, smell, or beautiful purity and softness. Fire interacts with the cotton only insofar as it is flammable. And the same holds for all relations."* [[1]](#footnote-1)

Furthermore, the material scope of objects occupies a dimensional position within space. In other words, objects are in a process of constant engagement with the configuration of a situation, by undertaking the co-production of the space where life is taking place.

As written by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, *“We could call our relationship with space one of co-production: when someone walks down a street she co-produces the spatiality of the street and is simultaneously co-produced by it.” [[2]](#footnote-2)* Therefore, when objects are situated around a space they add a dynamic significance to height, length and depth, having a relative ambience responsibility.

The material qualities of them in society and domestic life have relational attributes that can lead to new considerations on our relation with the intimate space; and consequently they can have a belligerent impact in the continuous commoditisation of domestic life.

**Living-morphism as a Medium**

Living, as a constructive representation, integrates embodied meanings and symbols. *“Material Culture Studies”*, a discipline baptised by archaeologist Carl Knappet as the *“science of the artificial”*, is *“concerned primarily with how we derive meaning from objects”,* [[3]](#footnote-3)and uses semiotics for the interpretation of material culture.

The presence of objects surrounding us as a form of social convention is a non- human agency itself. Hence, living is subjectively constructed as medium; seasoned with certain types of objectual quotations or choices, which give life a "further meaning” through our sort of “Pick-and Mix” approach to objects.

This arrangement of surrounding material entities define our *"living-morphism"*, in a reference to the classificatory system from anthropologist Alfred Haddon, whose 1895 publication called “Evolution of Art”, listed a series of terms derived from the objects of representation such as “zoomorph”, “phyllomorph” or *“anthropomorph”*; all of which helped him *“identify a type of form by the process of its genesis, so that he is able to account for a non-human agency determining certain forms”. [[4]](#footnote-4)*

The *"living-morphism”,* as the non-intentional materiality of surrounding objects combined with our intentional and subjective choices as "hosts-owners"; accounts for the diminution of the subjective aspect of living, by the involuntary and even accidental meaning of the things we own and live surrounded with.

In the introduction of “Distinction: A social critique of the Judgment of Taste; Pierre Bourdieu states that “ the encounter with a work of art is not ‘love at first sight’ as is generally supposed, and the act of empathy, *Einfühlung*, which is the art-lover’s pleasure, presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement: a cultural code” [[5]](#footnote-5)

Nonetheless, "tasteful objects" reproduce immaterial signs that are intertwined with our subjective taste calculations as "hosts-owners"; structuring the reciprocal creation of a cultural value; like when the avant-garde seeks out that which is “*strange looking*” as part of a relentless search of something new, or “*different*”; our *"living-morphism"* pursuits “Cultural Capital”, (Bourdieu, 1984) in the form of an enlightening capacity, a knowledge, and an intelligible artistic or visual sensibility.

Therefore, aesthetic commodities and their hosts-owners complement each other through cultural valorisation examples, such as owning a Danish Design carpet, a The Face Magazine issue from the 90s with Kate Moss photographed by Corinne Day, or a Malcolm Mclaren designed garment, or a Balzac first edition, or a Picasso painting, or a Banksy piece, or a David Bowie first press vinyl record.

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The relegation of objects to a secondary position is created by the assumption that a aesthetic narrative can only be produced by human cognition; nevertheless, the material value and dimensional qualities of objects can relationally have a say in the conformation of a unique and individual De-modern life (*“living-morphism”*)*,* defined as our embodied, abstract and intangible articulations turned into a concrete and perceptible aesthetic, which is co-produced with our surrounding objects with qualitative materiality, meaning and cultural value.

De-modern life is decoded and detached from the cultural dominance. Therefore, it intends to be independent from the circulation system of cultural production, distribution and consumption.

Commercially codified aesthetic values derive from a "knowledge" that circulates "through spread sheets, merchandising statistics, planning documents, trend forecasting projections,"[[6]](#footnote-6) or through cultural circulation circuits; such as showrooms, concept stores, design fairs, boutiques, web shops, E-Bay, Etcy, second hand shops or flea markets.

Contrary to this notion of a codified, jaded, disregarded and unobtrusive knowledge, De-modern living is assumed, embodied and enacted by someone who has the ability to perceive the epoch and detect the burgeoning material properties of the day with a “pick and ditch” sense of expressivity; which stands “on the pulse of time” and consequently reveal the nonchalant material and cultural potential of surrounding objects to the beholder’s critique.

“Delacroix wrote in his diary that a successful picture temporarily ‘condensed’ an emotion that it was the duty of the beholder’s eye to bring to life and develop.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

An emotional dialogue produced by the presence of the spectator. Its effectiveness relies on his or her experience within the circumstantial context of the objects themselves.

De-modern living is a purpose “exempt from the changing influences of general life” [[8]](#footnote-8), and is not subjected to the modern and post-modern, hyper-inflated and baroque boredom caused by anthropocentric intelligentsia. De-modern living takes teleological advantage of coexisting with relational objects, as the nonconformist rupture from the "spiritual imbalance" of modern men and women and their authenticity and plenitude failure. “But still another factor confronts us here, namely, that we soon grow tired of eccentric, bizarre or fanciful forms". [[9]](#footnote-9)

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1. Marginalia on Radical Thinking: An interview with Graham Harman. https://symptomaticcommentary.wordpress.com/2014/09/22 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Eliasson "Your engagement" [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. O’Hara “Skeumorphology" , 281-94 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4 O’Hara “Skeumorphology" , 281-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5 Bourdieu. “Distinction", 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6 Entwistle “The Aesthetic", 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7 Bourriaud, “Relational" , 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8 Simmel, “Fashion”, 130-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9 Simmel, “Fashion”, 130-155. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)