

## **This Will Kill That**

a brief escapade into our allowance of perception

by oliver berkey<sup>1</sup>

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Believe it or not, I'm on the beach. Glazing over with content, my little sister lounges to my immediate left, while a few more metres over, a Latin-American family has posted up— their outfit includes a tent and a few chairs that the toddlers roam beneath. Having drained the singular beer I brought, I saunter over to them, my landlocked legs slightly more uncoordinated than usual amongst the sloughing sand. After what I'd like to think was a polite interruption, I pander for a beer, offering a fiver for their troubles. Who I presume to be the father of the family understands immediately, and I am rewarded with an ice-cold Modelo—bottle, not can. Overjoyed by this small victory, I thank them and wander back across the beach, my declined fiver still lingering in the back pocket of my boardshorts.

Take that interaction. At face value, it consists of intuition first, which to a degree is synonymous with impulse, then results in self-actualization, which in this case is me adhering to my hierarchy of needs, then finally results in my reaction—happy boy with cold beer on beach.

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<sup>1</sup> I am both the inception as well as the replacement, the worse and the better, all of the versions of myself yelling over one another.

Now, as I dive into the margins of *The Ponderance*<sup>2</sup>, I mull over the best way to bring you with me. How may my half-painted portrait of indulgences assist your materiality, rather than hinder it? Take my hand, and you will find that all these steps matter less than you think. You see, it only matters that you can step back, see the staircase arc down towards the salted sand, see the handrails. See it as the searing pastel guide that it is; a suggestion of gumption. And so, know that I love things too much to admit that what I consider unforgettable could ever be forgotten. Whether it be the root of my over-analytical tendencies, my categorization of experiences and emotions as if they're superior to others<sup>3</sup>, or my constant deliberations on what truly constitutes my reality. However, experiences are the closest thing we have to truth. Round and round I go again—only this time, you're coming with me.

There are parts of me that desire any experience other than my own: a guy who takes taxis, an older bloke who spends all his time with his dog, a pierced-to-the-gills, tatted-up inner city girl who dyed her hair green just to blend in with herself. An escape through a window into a world that just might have more colour. I've heard people talk of experiencing the world as if they're behind a cardboard cutout<sup>4</sup> of who they're supposed to be (*two breaths please*), eyes darting frantically, attempting to lock onto anything they can identify as real, as true. As if they're once removed from reality, and their only purpose is fulfilling a fabrication of what they're meant to be<sup>5</sup>. What they've been conditioned to become. Yet, truly, the fascination I

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<sup>2</sup> *The Ponderance* is the title I've given to that which will always plague those who are concerned with the terms of their existence. That which festers between the lines, all while you try to determine where the lines themselves even are. And yes, still, there is no cure, save maybe a permanent vacation to Pala\*

<sup>3</sup> A previously experienced article will always supersede an article not experienced yet, on a pure basis of experience!

\* *Island, Aldous Huxley*

<sup>4</sup> This stasis is easier than the inverse as you are less vulnerable. The downside is you are therefore hindered in your development.

<sup>5</sup> This refers to fulfilling the base blueprint of conformance- to capitalistic ideals which in turn propagate capitalistic societal values. We are simply products, a means to an end.

harbor stems from being the sculpting agent of ourselves. 'Tis the most vividly frightening notion I entertain. Is that not our journey in a [nutshell](#)? Are we not just another television set whose existence only fills the gap before the newest, brightest, fastest model arrives upon our stoop(thank the fucking lord). Simply checking boxes someone else constructed, on a test that will only alter our existence if we don't refute it. Perhaps only slightly disconcerting, you think, not entirely abhorrent, until you understand you may create the requirements yourself, then it becomes abysmal.

What does this mean, you may ask?

Remember, it only matters that you're aware of it; the meaning is self-perscribable. It is then that you realize you're sitting there, in a pool of someone else's blood, somehow never wondering why it's the same colour as yours? Then again, does it really matter? So long as you don't get blood on your Nikes, of course.

Standing on my side, looking through my lens, that seems to be an adequate summation of the human experience. This directly pertains to a fellow whose legacy is engraved in the margins, stained with ostracization, and a healthy bucketload of malintent: Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber, the author of *Industrial Society and Its Future*. We must understand that I utilize his content in a specific form, for my purposes, which happen to be quite aligned. Ideology aside, his infamous spiral of fatal force into innocents serves as a warning for how those who inhabit the fringes can become disillusioned with the real world<sup>6</sup> to a deadly degree. Of the many gripes Kaczynski held, oversocialization is one of the more integral ones. Oversocialization amounts to bred behavioral conformance, leading to a life on a psychological leash, resulting in

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<sup>6</sup> Subjective. For this purpose, this entails the shared realm deemed soctwo-inchtwo-inchiety.

an obsession with always staying between the lines, i.e., the leech of the human experience. Our world is utterly rampant with this, certainly more so than during the inception of his manifesto, which surfaced during the late twentieth century.

“We are even told by experts how to eat, how to exercise,  
how to make love, how to raise our kids, and so forth.”

These preceding notions quell individuality, peddling incessant rhetoric that anyone aside from yourself knows better. Someone must possess more accolades that help them see my life for what it is, anyone but me...right? I often clothe myself in this concept of oversocialization, cloaking myself in the self-proclaimed valiance of exploring it whilst I wear it daily; just another *nothing*, another *nobody* behind the cardboard.

Who am I? We'll stick to where I am. For the time we have at hand, that is.

I am splayed upon the epiclastic sand, a conglomeration of fascination that bubbles and burbles, fueled by an insatiable desire to consume more and more rhetoric, and to attempt to mold it into genuine creation. Nestled aside my shoulder- my handycam, SONY CX-405(60x zoom). I know, fucking sick. Whatever. The point is, I'm panning through the clips resting within its MicroSD card, pondering what values, what notions, I will choose to assign to each clip. Stay with me here. Two words, plastered across a zoomed-in clip of a couple sauntering through a field of tulips, him holding her long white skirt of lace up, off the ground, out of the flowers, his bow-tie just slightly crooked. Giggles and champagne corks litter the breeze. Briefly, staring into this one-by-two-inch 720hp LED screen, I am whole. I never knew socialization could look so aesthetic.

Annnnd, back to me, to my wandering mind, running anywhere but the beach. Because now, we must touch on this timelessly romanticized notion of an individual or idea that is pushed so far into the corners of society, so much so that their ideas gain more weight than otherwise. Such must be regarded with a healthy amount of suspicion, as I will not say that extremist rhetoric is more powerful solely due to its intensive nature. Yet, that which is incendiary is able to gain traction at an accelerated rate due to the popular media's tendency to latch onto polarizing topics. Pigs, pacified by slop. Sometimes it seems that is all we are<sup>7</sup>. Terrifying, isn't it? That we don't even have to think anymore.

This is a direct product of our human gravitation to violence or blasphemy, seeing as we start firing on all cylinders, regardless of a topic's integrity. When metacognition is no longer prevalent in social circles, when we ask ChatGPT before we ask our friend, when discourse has been carved down to a black and white woodblock print with its ink rapidly drying, it becomes crudely apparent how engagement with oneself has been gutted by ease. Knowing that comfortability breeds complacency, I must insist upon truly living within myself before I may do the same externally: my ego clawing at its self-imposed prophecy, if you will. *How can I lose the shadow that my self leaves behind?* Twisting about in a flailing metropolis, gradually becoming facsimiles of each other, barely separate shades of grey, that is my fear. My fear of the future. Desperately searching for the death of the ego, even though attaining such would nullify your *Ponderance*. So, view this as a first draft of my solution to avoid the great flattening<sup>8</sup> of society.

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<sup>7</sup> It would be foolish to exclude myself from this bunchwhat apable, as there is only one difference between me and them- I cope with my societal participation by pondering it.

<sup>8</sup> Think of this as a great melting pot of conformed indifference, resulting in a bland stew, with so many colours utilized that it becomes colourless. See also: *Unflattening*, Nick Sousanis.

As previously noted, one's experience is an amalgamation of three primary forces: intuition/impulse, actualization, and reaction. Your navigation of this trinity fashions your perception, and therefore the prevailing outcome.

Let's flash back a few thousand years, to when we were simpler creatures, as impulses used to revolve purely upon survival instincts, and yet now that we no longer have the means to subsist solely on instinct, we more often than not, often blunder amidst the interpretation of everything. This is a very accurate depiction of our current reality. We flounder amongst the circular nature of our system, lost in the overengineering of our natural issues. We pay for prescriptions to problems created by the system, band aids to slap on its own failings, all egging on the revolving door of negligence. So, if the idea cannot be actualized without the initial impulse, we could say *The Pondrance* is intrinsically a fallacy in and of itself. Everything starts to get a little funky the deeper you sink your teeth into it, as thinking about what I think about culls true intuition in a sense, then what kills the impulse, but the false actualization harvested from thinking about a thought<sup>9</sup>. How can I represent ideas in a fashion that is less intuitive for you, the reader? Something separate, something that just might jump-start your cognition, from unconscious to conscious, bringing you into the light of the real<sup>10</sup>.

Oversocialization has streamlined a route to false gratification, allowing the inception of a thought to be silenced prior to its development. Hung up on your fabrication of a thought, purely for the sake of thought<sup>11</sup>, as the reaction kills the inception of the impulse, just as oversocialization murders the idea. Now, take sociopaths; their inner monologue is removed.

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<sup>9</sup> This essay is doing this to you, as you read it.

<sup>10</sup> Go on, define it for yourself. Toil upon it, master your own nuance, wield the dagger of perception.

<sup>11</sup> I.e. *Pondrance*

This often causes violence, yet if you do have the inner monologue, it becomes an endless anxiety factory, capable of churning out incapacitating feelings. This is to say that alleviation can exist only internally, shaded in the comfort of understanding the cyclical futility of interpretation, as something will only ever be what you allow it to be. Nothing more.

And now the irony of pondering is no longer instinctual, as oversocialization has created the murder of the idea. Just as Victor Hugo stated in *Notre Dame de Paris*, power will always be superseded by something more powerful. In his terms, the printing press would kill The Church, in Kaczynski's broader terms, technology and industry would kill the human spirit. Similarly, in my terms, the centralization of social normalities will kill our individuality, which is tantamount to our freedom. Fold up these notions crisply and slot them into your jacket pocket, cleanly enough that you may fashion a paper airplane from them someday<sup>12</sup>. Let's return to my tangible existence.

Hence, as I sprawl on this fine white sand, accosting my Northern complexion with these vitalizing equatorial rays, I return to the starting line once more. My temptative impulses are endless: I could tattoo my principles away, shave my head (finally), and go live out impermanently enticing escapades in Bali; k-holes in bungalows, dødsing<sup>13</sup> with the pelicans, surfing this existence down to its bone, or I could finally plant that garden, as I will cultivate it with regard towards what I don't want to merely obtain. I'll weed it intensely, resulting in it bearing fruit of conscious wants, even though all the while I'm fantasising about how I'll finally get around to blowing up the Glen Canyon Dam<sup>14</sup>, after which I promptly scatter my drained

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<sup>12</sup> i.e. tucking the trident of perception into our cloak,

<sup>13</sup> Døds, or "death diving" is an extreme cliff jumping sport, originating in Norway, constituted by form; tucking your head towards your feet and landing parallel to the water. Perhaps the illest shit, ever.

<sup>14</sup> If you know, you know. If you don't, check out Edward Abbey.

Modelo cans along the road like they're wildflowers. Planting my garden at last! Yet, one of my terms. I would relinquish my feeble grasp on this revolving reality of socialization, and allow myself to become an anarchist of unprecedented levels, tippy-toeing my chanclas over to the tightrope of my self-proclaimed superior morals, in hopes of transporting myself over to a shore where I can finally rest in peace, instead of pieces<sup>15</sup>. A shore where tree spiking isn't needed to cull the incessant clear-cutting of our mothers' old-growth forests, where National Forests are surprisingly not open to logging. A shore where my impulse, my self-actualization, and my reaction all live in harmony. A place where whitebark pines may truly flourish as the wizards that they are<sup>16</sup>. I don't imagine many folk find themselves dreaming of the subalpine whilst under palm trees. Shouldn't I arise from this slumber and saunter across the beach to gain something new, something fresh from a stranger? Shouldn't I pile current experiences upon myself rather than flounder in rumination of all that is past? Should this, should that, be this, or be that; actualize anything you can, because really, who are we at the end of the day?

However, there is solace to be found within the throes of intentionality. The intentional navigation of what makes up your perception can coddle you, incite ascension, up, up above the frivolities we are strangled by. I thought this was going to be a piece about nothing, but instead it's a rambling about everything, because everything has to matter for *nowhere*<sup>17</sup> to be a place we can visit, so these notions can materialize in you. You're the ash in my lungs, you curse like no other, you creak like a broken dream, dripping coagulated daisies<sup>18</sup> down my throat, eliminating

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<sup>15</sup> A quilt of everything consumed. Not a single original experience, nor a single original square.

<sup>16</sup> [The Old Man of the Forest](#)

<sup>17</sup> In this context, *nowhere* is a coalescence of all we cannot reach, and all we yearn to. Not necessarily through understanding, but acceptance. As acceptance is our inherent truth.

<sup>18</sup> Oxeye daisies, to be sure. Fiercely invasive, yet beautiful all the same. Just like ideas.

any desired noise from my mouth; eliminating me. But who are you, you may ask? And as this will always kill that; you are me.

And so, surprising even myself, I do. I let it rip. My impulse deploys self-actualization. The girl with the embroidered jeans, I tell her what they mean to me<sup>19</sup>. The fellow wearing the Sage Lodge hat, I tell him I'm from Bozeman. He asks, "Oh, so you've been" and I just say no, I refrain. From launching into my scathing breakdown on guest ranches, on billionaire squalor retreats, because for all the hate I harbor, he went there, and he smiled, he laughed, he shared love with his family. And who am I to invalidate that? How will that alter my existence in my favour? Because it's not like my desistance had anything to do with his kids being adorable; dawdling to the side, a little girl in a pink dress with a gogurt. Pleated socks peeking out under blue jeans. Another cork pops, prompting 'woos' and 'wees'. And because I allow it to, it feels like summer, and that is everything to me.

Knowing that such things amount to nothing if I let them, as they were only ever my intuition whispering impulses into the wind like seeds, seeds that will never blossom without the dirt of actualization, I shake my head, aghast. At endless notions- of never being able to get those few brushstrokes onto that which I love, yearning to leave a bit of my very own colour on this mad mural we have deemed life. On earth as it is. And I'll pretend that all this pondering makes perfect sense, that oversocialization didn't murder the idea, because really, it didn't. It only beheaded our agency to actualize, to react, so let's say I always listen to myself, and I was to cease waiting around to live, I would go against these crippling social notions floundering about in my skull that are not unlike a controlled burn that has long since gotten out of hand, letting it

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<sup>19</sup> The World, and nothing more.

flush out the logistics that fill my head so I can check the incorrect boxes on those papers that ask for my ethnic descent just to stack the deck, my deck of cards that I keep in my pocket, just because fuck it, have I not discerned that endorsing the paradox of such singularities is what keeps one a mere shadow of themselves? Then once I'm almost done, I'll pick myself another one of my(homegrown) flowers<sup>20</sup> and call it a day. Another day. Any other day than today would do, wouldn't it? So as I yearn to balance my impulses as well as I can, to allow my definition of the rays to fix me, to revel in the reality that I have made for myself, I know deep down that anything could be brighter than this, if I were to maintain that *this*<sup>21</sup> didn't exist.

Then, even so, that elderly lady with the lemon sundress. I adore it. And now she knows. And does she let that alter her reality? Perhaps, perhaps not. But it has altered mine. And so, as you're waiting around to die, be sure to find ways to live inside yourself, for that is all life can ever be in our eyes- just another fairytale, another way to play pretend, except this time, it's one we can choose to believe.

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<sup>20</sup> It's Modelo time!

<sup>21</sup> This commonly present state of the self lacking actualization, therefore losing the gift of reaction. Wading through the present, searching for the current to take me away.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Alright. This is my attempt at a continuation/a singular underlying facet of what I deem *The Pondrance*(see footnote #1), in a way that is a bit more definition oriented, with more concrete personal analogy than in the past. An elaboration on themes I've touched on in my last piece, as well as one a few years back in Scott Parker's course. I've drawn inspiration from Amy Leach-esque flow in spaces, through rambling sentences, or odd punctuation, and loose definition. Ebbing lists of what-ifs, as I hope they accentuate the psychological ideals I engage. I really am sure there is a continuous storyline that's slowly processing through this piece, I just haven't quite hit the sweet spot yet, that is certain. The main idea I'm trying to propagate is that our ability to be consciously intentional with identifying and painting the factors that alter our perception is adjacent to our key to personal progression, i.e. happiness, or some form of shapeless ascension into a more accepting and tranquil state(attainable by way of decision). A formal choice I made was to define the processes that incite discourse and thought at face value, instead of letting them drift as much as I usually do.

This is obviously a constant journey, and I suppose I'm exploring that within myself through this piece as it develops. I tend to wrap myself up in the cloak of abstraction, and consequently have gotten a bit lost in the latter stages in trying to keep track of what comes before what and then after what, so it's going to be a bit of a bumpy ride towards the end. Any advice on how to alter that would be appreciated. I am also sure that in my fervor I have myself engaged in multiple fallacies, which, if identified and pinpointed, I would prefer to be called out upon. I need to know if you feel there is too much repetition upon the core concept of tri-determinants forming one's perception. I'm curious if you would benefit from more personal analogies. I also would like to know if there is a general chronological feel to this, that it seems to be oriented in vaguely the correct direction. Also if you feel I become a bit callous in my niche quips or definitions also do tell.