

MUD LETTER NO. 9

JULY 2022

HYPERREAL EDITION

We hold this space on the unceded land
of the Kaurna people.

We acknowledge them as the custodians
of this wonderful place and will always
try to do our work in solidarity with the
anti-colonial struggle.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE.

CURATORIAL BRIEF

CONSTANTINE STEFANOU

In the context of modern technological society, hyperreality can be characterised as the generation of models of reality without origin in somatic reality, it is the state in which the world is understood through mere representation and remixing of its products.

It is accelerated by mass media production and simulated worlds of the internet, along with the commercialisation of an individual's identity, desires and dreams, resulting in an intellectual, physical and emotional mass migration, in which consensus reality is stripped of territory and country.

However, the hyperreal is a state native to all human culture, the experience of transcendent states through ritual, mythology and art. It is our birthright to engage in the hyperreal.

We can experience it together with consensus and consent.

A home in the hyperreal seeks to grant us entry to the forces of reality-making in order to generate a culture of compassionate, just and restorative beingness.

Stated Helpers

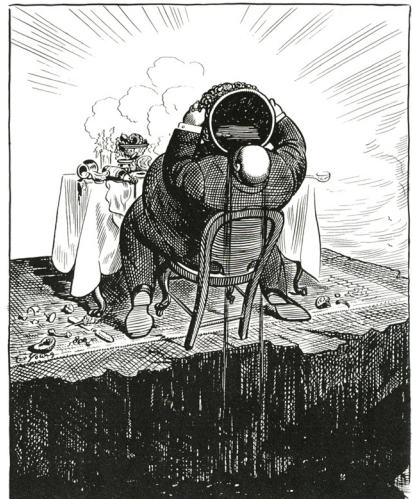


- Ghosts and Monsters of the past and present haunt us; mutations of war and finance.

Ritual in the hyperreal can be utilised as a tool to reinforce social bonds and connection to reality.

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Travelling to the hyperreal is our birthright, it is not objectively bad, it is being exploited for commercial and financial gains by people driven by the worst parts of their selfhood in a system that is destroying the planet it is born from, in other words it is parasitic.





We need to ask this question so that we may locate ourselves and each other, to realise our capacity to aid each other. We all have tools and talents, but if you do not know where you are, you won't know how to help.

The forest is where the hyperreal emerged - devouring us in grief, pleasure and terror.

The hyperreal should inform us of the dangers in the forest, in the forces of many forest worlds (city, country, mind, heart)

The hyperreal can introduce us to helpers, to the animate world.



The swamp rises to reclaim the hyperreal - we claim the hyperreal by becoming the swamp, the estuary.

Swamp of horrors undergirds the floating world of commercial pleasures.



Question Helpers

- How is pleasure elevated through these goals?
- How can a home in the hyperreal transcend the forces of commercially driven structures?
- How can the hyperreal fortify reality rather than usurp it?
- The important question is “where am I located in the multitudes of worlds?”
- **How do our sensory experiences, our labours in art and performance aggregate towards community action/revolution/politic/commons?**
- How does delayed gratification contribute to the process?



“Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation. The kettle is singing even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots have left their arrogant aloofness and seen the good in you at last. All the birds and creatures of the world are unutterably themselves. Everything is waiting for you”

- David Whyte,

Everything is waiting for you

SAM WOULD

There are two things my friend Ainsley says to me often when we talk about the state of the world and trying to make it better. They are both Jewish sayings I think. One: You are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are you free to put it down. And two: There are no ends, only means.

I was reminded of these when I read the following passage in Ursula Le Guin's book *The Dispossessed*. This book had a profound effect on me when I read it recently. It made me think about my creative practice and how it fits in with my desire to improve the condition of the world. It made me think about loyalty, debt, the bonds that tie us, and what we owe to one another. It made me hopeful for the future.

I hope you enjoy this passage.

Long after Takver had fallen asleep that night he lay awake, his hands under his head, looking into darkness, hearing silence. He thought of his long trip out to the Dust, remembering the leves and mirages of the desert, the train driver with the bald, brown head and candid eyes, who had said that one must work with time and not against it.

Shevek had learned something about his own will, these last four years. In its frustration he had learned its strength. No social or ethical imperative equaled it. Not even hunger could repress it. The less he had, the more absolute became his need to be.

He recognised that need, in Odonian terms, as his 'cellular function', the analogic term for the individual's individuality, the work he can do best, therefore his best contribution to society. A healthy society would let him exercise that optimum function freely, in the coordination of all such functions finding its adaptability and strength. That was the central idea of Odo's Analogy. That the Odonian society on Annarres had fallen short of the ideal did not, in his eyes, lessen his responsibility to it; it's just the contrary. With the myth of the State out of the way, the real mutuality and reciprocity of society and individual became clear. Sacrifice might be demanded of the individual, but never compromise: for, though only the society could give security and stability, only the individual, the person, had the power of moral choice - the power of change, the essential function of life. The Odonian society was conceived as a permanent revolution, and revolution begins in the thinking mind.

All this Shevek had thought out, in these terms, for his conscience was completely an Odonian one.

He was therefore certain, by now, that his radical and unqualified will to create was, in Odonian terms, its own justification. His sense of primary responsibility towards his work did not cut him off from his fellows, from his society, as he had thought. It engaged him with them absolutely.

He also felt that a man who had this sense of responsibility about one thing was obliged to carry it through in all things. It was a mistake to see himself as a vehicle and nothing else, to sacrifice any other obligation to it.

That sacrificiality is what Takver had spoken of recognising in herself when she was pregnant, and she had spoken with a degree of horror, of self-disgust, because she too was an Odonian,

and the separation of means and ends was, to her too, false. For her as for him, there was no end. There was process: process was all. You could go on in a promising direction or you could go wrong, but you did not set out with the expectation of stopping anywhere. All responsibilities, all commitments, thus understood took on substance and duration.

So his mutual commitment with Takver, their relationship, had remained thoroughly alive through their four years' separation. They had both suffered from it, suffered a good deal, but it had not occurred to either of them to escape the suffering by denying the commitment.

For after all, he thought now, lying in the warmth of Takver's sleep, it was joy they were both after - the completeness of being. If you evade suffering you also evade the chance of joy. Pleasure you may get, or pleasures, but you will not be fulfilled. You will not know what it is to come home.

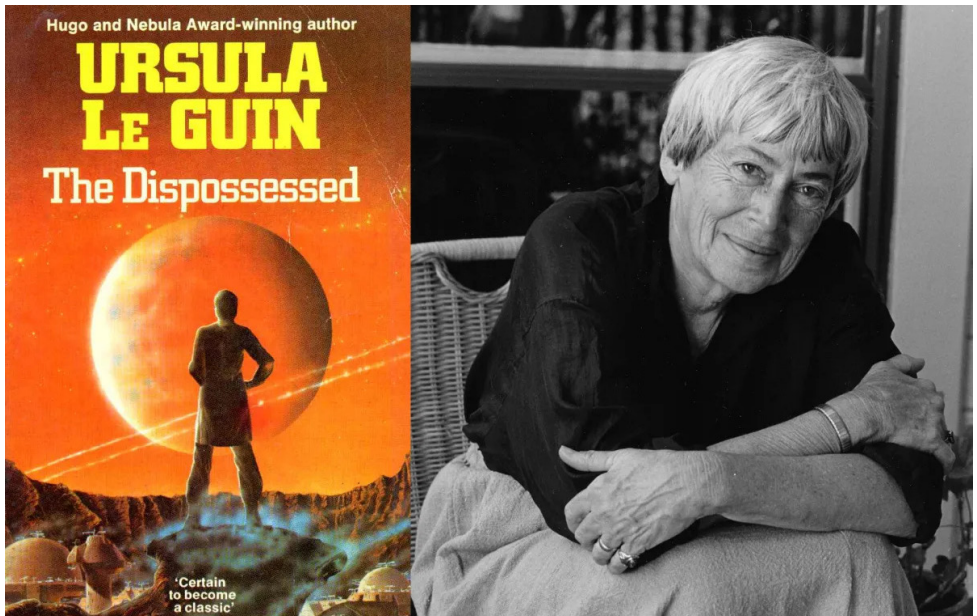
Takver sighed softly in her sleep, as if agreeing with him, and turned over, pursuing some quiet dream.

Fulfillment, Shevek thought, is a function of time. The search for pleasure is circular, repetitive, atemporal. The variety-seeking of the spectator, the thrill-hunter, the sexually promiscuous, always ends in the same place. It has an end and has to start over. It is not a journey and return, but a closed cycle, a locked room, a cell.

Outside the locked room is the landscape of time, in which the spirit may, with luck and courage, construct the fragile, makeshift, improbable roads and cities of fidelity: a landscape inhabitable by human beings.

It is not until an act occurs within the landscape of time that it becomes a human act. Loyalty, which asserts the continuity of past and future, binding time into a whole, is the root of human strength; there is no good to be done without it.

So, looking back on the last four years, Shevek saw them not as wasted, but as part of the edifice that he and Takver were building with their lives. The thing about working with time, instead of against it, he thought, is that it is not wasted. Even pain counts. ■



THE LANGUAGE OF THE GODDESS (1989), MARIJA GIMBUTAS

THOMAS MORAN

Archeological materials are not mute. They speak their own language. And they need to be used for the great source they are.

The main theme of Goddess symbolism is the mystery of birth and death and the renewal of life, not only human but all life on earth and indeed in the whole cosmos. Symbols and images cluster around the parthenogenetic (self-generating) Goddess and her basic functions as Giver of Life, Wielder of Death, and, not less importantly, as Regeneratrix, and around the Earth Mother, the Fertility Goddess young and old, rising and dying with plant life.

She was the single source of all life who took her energy from the springs and wells, from the sun, moon, and moist earth. This symbolic system represented cyclical, not linear, mythical time. In art this manifested by the signs of dynamic motion: whirling and twisting spirals, winding and coiling snakes, circles, crescents, horns, sprouting seeds and shoots.

[...]

Throughout prehistory images of death do not overshadow those of life: they are combined with symbols of regeneration. The Death Messenger and the Death-wielder are also concerned with regeneration. The Life and Birth Giver can turn into a frightening image of death. She is a stiff nude or a mere bone with a supernatural pubic triangle where the transformation from death to life begins.

The masks of the Goddess of death with large mouth and fangs and sometimes a hanging tongue may have generated the gorgoneion, the fearsome monster head, of ancient Greece. The earliest Greek gorgons, however, are not terrifying symbols that turn humans into stones. They are portrayed as having the wings of a bee and snakes as antennae and are decorated with a honeycomb design – all clearly symbols of regeneration.

One of the largest of these categories can be classified as symbols of energy and unfolding. Spirals, horns, crescents, half-circles (U-shapes), hooks, axes, which flank a watery life column, serpent, tree of life, and anthropomorphic Goddess or her pregnant belly, are all energy symbols.

[...]

There is no stagnation; life energy is constantly moving as a serpent, spiral or whirl. One form dissolves into another. The transformation of human into animal, snake to tree, uterus to fish,

frog, bucranium to butterfly, was the perception of the reemergence of life energy in another form.

Sacred images and symbols, goddesses, their birds and animals, mysterious snakes, batrachians, and insects were more real than daily events. These symbols remain the only real access to this invigorating, earth-centred, life-reverencing worldview, since we are now far removed from the society that created this imagery.

The Goddess gradually retreated into the depths of the forest, or onto mountaintops or into the swamp, where she remains to this day in beliefs and fairy stories. Human alienation from the vital roots of earthly life ensued, the results of which are clear in our contemporary society. But the cycles never stop turning, and now we find the Goddess reemerging from the forests and mountains, bringing us power for the future, returning us to our most ancient human roots... ■

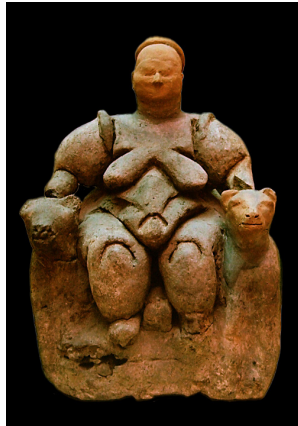


Figure 17. Reliefs of the goddess of regeneration as a frog emblem.
Neolithic temple walls and vases.
This one is from the Cucuzeli A2
(Diyadin) culture, c. 4300-4400
B.C. (Oguzen, Nigde, Turkey).



Figure 18. This terracotta
Neolithic frog goddess figurine
dates from the mid-sixth millen-
nium B.C. (House Q11.5, Hacilar,
western Turkey).

0 3cm



LILY POTGER

A welcoming, a warming, cultivating clear passages through lands melding and shifting beneath the body, rising from the unknown, knowingly accepting each step forward.

Movement in your flesh as the residue of internal passage. Momentum, a realities promise of gravity to the body.

Restful in these journeys feeling the body as a calling to home.



To LISTEN & WATCH differently, an invitation to go beyond
the mental HEADLINES, to notice ~~quieter~~ quieter qualities.

Within the body there ARE troubling things;
BACTERIA, tentacles, MONSTERS, wild flowers, Division, ghosts, DESIRES
Hopes, Snot, SEX, DREAMS, ENDO PLASMIC RETICULUMS...

AND to all of this, in the words of HARAWAY, ASK you "Try STAYING
with the TROUBLE".

THE BODY ALIVE & THE BODY DYING. STAY with this TROUBLE

INDUSTRY WASTELAND & RIVER FLAT WETLANDS. STAY with this TROUBLE

~~ALONE~~ ALONENESS & ENDLESS SCROLLING. STAY

Wait a little longer with us.

In the words of URSELA LE GUIN, "WE NEED the languages
of BOTH science & poetry to save us from merely stockpiling
ENDLESS information THAT fails to inform our 'ignorance or
our irresponsibility".

HERE WE SEEK to privilege the soft EARTH, the fragile
STUFF, messy & interwoven things, & to DELIGHT in them.

THROUGH OUR CARE, BE ADMITTED to DELIGHTFUL TROUBLE.

WEEDS VS. WORDS: WHICH IS FEEDING YOU?

KAT KEANE

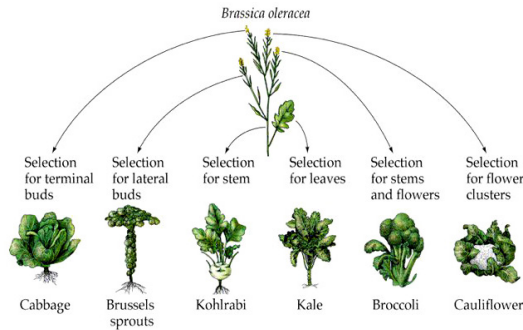
I have never thought of myself as a 'creative'. To me, to be a creative meant to paint or play music, and produce some tangible perspective of my world for others to marvel and enjoy. It wasn't until sometime last year that I watched myself from above, enjoying a typical day spent totally lost for hours in a flow of ideas emerging, reacting and coming together from the connection between my senses, thoughts and my hands, with the aid of some kitchen utensils and food stuffed. It hit me. This was creating and I am creative. For nearly a year now, I have cooked for you all, and have been overjoyed to have been given a safe space for the improvisation and experimentation that takes place in my kitchen. That to me, is what MUD is all about.

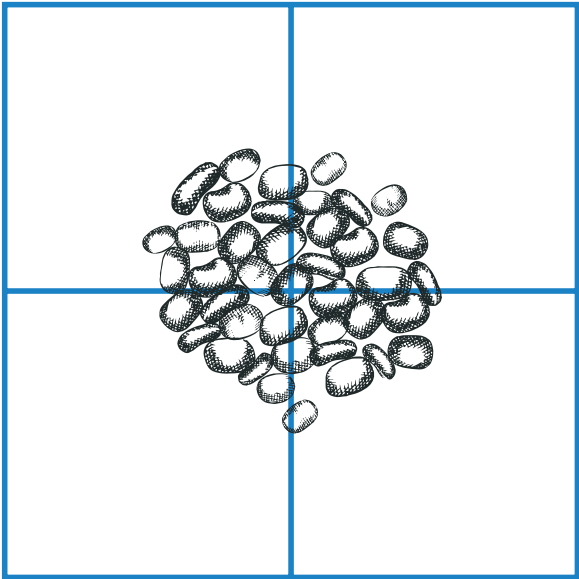
The process of reexamining this creative archetype has led me to question the ideological reality of all categories of our world. Categorization is an inherent and necessary part of humanity. It is the most basic survival mechanism. To be able to judge something, and in the process of making sense of it, organise it in our minds as good or bad, can be the difference between life and death. And yet, as servants of the social world in which we are born, we are indoctrinated into a widely agreed upon set of categories that governs our own mental organisation. Although not a static phenomena, culture surely defines a set of practices and processes which we simultaneously build upon and perpetuate endlessly. The extent of individual autonomy and freewill is a question both existential and unrelenting, and certainly not one that I intend to go into here.

Yet, 'A Home in the Hyperreal', the overarching theme of this month's MUD, has turned the spotlight on reality-making, recruitment into consensus, and the consequence. From my place in the kitchen, I think a lot about food and its relation to identity making and ideology. I think about the structure of our food systems and the extent to which patterns of consumption are so intertwined with identity and well-intended resistance, while remaining so influenced by culture and commercialisation. It is my opinion that 'Green', 'Sustainable', 'Eco', 'Ethical', 'Vegan', 'Plant-based' have all become the totems of the moral, informed consumer. However, I'd argue that these totems are indeed trademarks, as recognisable as the golden arches themselves. These symbols give the illusion of divergence from the norm, while literally spoon feeding us an ideological reality as dispossessing as any other. Of course, I am not writing this to demonise any attempt at using one's consumption as a vote to shape the practices of food supply into something far more sustainable. I only ask that you question where your choices go without the labels and the categories that help you feel safe in your world and self. Can you recognise the edible greens between the cracks in your pavement as easily as you can the greenwashed claims on the packaging? I implore you to question what is good and what is bad, and who is creating these categories. Does the relationship between your senses and the natural environment determine your survival, or is your consumption prescribed?

I endorse the hyperreal as far as it aims to transcend the forces of commercially driven structures which dispossess us. In Kosta's curation brief to me he asks how can the hyperreal fortify reality, rather than usurp it? Thus, I am not discouraging an attempt to eat more consciously, but let us welcome a degree of confusion within that consciousness; one that gives space for our senses to guide us. You don't have to reject the recipe completely, but let it only be a guideline while you follow a process dictated by your senses and surroundings, substituting as changing as you see fit. Your recipe writes itself. Taste, smell, see, and look. Don't be afraid; this is your only reliable reality. What is 'off' in your fridge and fermented in a store-bought jar may be the same; the only difference is who you rely on to make the call. You have millions of years of evolution behind you, empowering you to fortify reality.

This month, I'm delighted to bring you an improvised experiment of mine, using all the edible weeds in my garden. I think it is fitting in the context of the hyperreal, since even the very category of 'weed' is an illusion, created and dictated through someone else's idea of what is undesirable. My intention is two-fold: I want to demonstrate that like weeds, nothing is inherently good or bad, it is just contextually appropriate, or it is not. And secondly, I would like to juxtapose the common garden resident alongside the commonly touted totems of sustainability. My question is simple: In which reality are you located?





We would like to thank Kosta, Sam, Thomas, Lily
and Kat for their contributions to this months MUD

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter and
the MUD community, email
mudmusicart@gmail.com

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