

The System of Absentology in Ontological Philosophy

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„Unless you annihilate Yourself, you cannot receive life.”

—Sarmad Kashani

„I love him who dwells in the hearts of his lovers,

whose great self is love itself.

Desiring to see him, I melt;

melting, I waste away.”

—Appar Tirunavukkarasar Nayanar

*„...the parts [of a chariot], which have become fuel for the fire of wisdom,
do not remain, since they are burned away.”*

—Chandrakirti

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Invisible Tangibility	1
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Part I: The Economy of Light

I.1. Skinning the Body	20
I.2 Volcanic Ejaculation	41
I.3 Receiving the Alien	60
I.4 Sinister Solitude	79

Part II: Incorruptibility

II.1 Nocturnal Funerary Immersion	104
II.2 The Vaginal Wound	131
II.3 Impenetrable White Ash	161

Part III: The Purity of Emptiness

III.1 Autoaffective Receptivity	196
III.2 Smoke Rises from the Burning-Ground	231

Conclusion: Self-Emptying Disincarnation	260
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Bibliography	267
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INTRODUCTION: INVISIBLE TANGIBILITY

Let us say preliminarily that X defines a dwelling-place, a buffer between light and darkness. What is meant is a place in transition, where desire remains irreducible to the function of any temporality. This place, the dwelling-place of X, is a passage with neither modification nor adherence. The sense of its ceiling is the sense of its limit, the liminal barrier to temporal adumbrations. It is where there is no Other, at least not in the everyday sense. Neither is there any adherence to see at this point. As distinct from other kinds of dwelling-places or passages, its interior is unrepresentable. Let us content ourselves at this juncture with saying that unrepresentability is a function of the absence of Otherness. At a later stage, we must question this notion, for unrepresentability may very well adhere even in circumstances where the visibility of the Other pertains. For now we must accept this hypothesis, however questionable it may seem even at the outset. Tangibility is the elucidation of the minimum “limit price” of existence. We have taken the liberty of culling this term, ‘limit price’, from a study in economics. A limit price may be defined as the minimum and maximum price as defined by either economists or governments intent on promoting the well-being of their citizens.¹ We learn from the study in question that “when supply is inelastic, the financial losses are relatively smaller than elastic.”² It cannot be stressed enough that inelasticity is a prerequisite of well-being. Our own use of ‘limit price’ shall denote a somewhat different concept, although one that is economic in origin. Under ‘limit price’ we mean the minimum and maximum states of abjection that an actor is capable of bearing. More precisely, we seek to define abjection as a minimal condition of existence, of ontologically-grounded Being.

However, be that as it may, we have another objective in mind. Aside from government-insured “food security objectives”, we seek to question the

¹ Sutopo, Wahyudi, et al. (2008) "A Buffer Stocks Model for Stabilizing Price of Commodity under Limited Time of Supply and Continuous Consumption." *APIEMS*, 325

² Sutopo et.al. 2008: 327

very basis of security. That is, from a perspective that seeks to transcend conventional morality, security systems cannot be, in and of themselves, considered sacrosanct objects, constructions that have an inherent value. From the valueless perspective, the perspective that seeks to cleanse itself of value by consuming production and distribution in a vortex without limitation, the minimum and maximum limit price can only be transitory categorizations. Once the body has achieved attainment, the even the maximum limit is transcended, in the place where the tangible melts into the invisible. What is tangible is an elucidation of the minimum limit price of existence. This sensual ether that surrounds us is a veritable invitation to mediocrity, an exercise in pettiness. To exist, especially in over-securitized societies, societies infested with boredom, is no special thing, in and of itself. Nowadays, no demand is made of those who exist. The tangible is not what must be attained. Invisibility, on the other hand, is what forecloses itself to attainment. The dwelling-place is the sphere where tangibility is subsumed by invisibility, a state closed to all who would attain it. That being said, we must clarify our comments pertaining to the impossibility of invisibility. We stated that it is closed to anybody who would attain it, who seeks this achievement. Conquest, conquest's finality, is a quest that modifies the indeterminacy of flesh, lending a curious, dare we say, queer opacity to meat. Tangible invisibility is what the One-Zero achieves in its binding self-transcription. As if the needle of a tattoo parlor were penetrating the flesh, such is the operation of tangible invisibility. At a certain point in his highly important study, 'The Phenomenology of Perception', Maurice Merleau-Ponty presents us with a truly tantalizing proposition, one whose ontological radicalness has, for the most part, evaded commentators of his work:

*"...if a thing perceived were made up of sensations and memories, it would depend for its precise identification on the contribution of memories, and would have in itself nothing capable of stemming the flood of the latter, with the result that, being deprived even of that outer fringe of vagueness which it always in fact has, it would be, as we have said, intangible, elusive, and always bordering on illusion."*³

We believe we have seen something, we have a memory of having touched a rock, a body, of having perceived the black of the night sky. Were these objects more than a memory, we would be fully capable of stemming the flood of memories. But Merleau-Ponty surely overestimates this capacity of anthropomorphic animals! Who among us is fully capable of stemming

³ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (2005 [1945]) *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge), 24

the flow of disparate memories, random thoughts and ideas. Only the most accomplished and disciplined ascetics may be said to have this capacity for stemming the deluge. It is precisely the avoidance of errant memories, illusions pertaining to the world, which is arguably the goal of meditative praxis. Merleau-Ponty seems to ask much of his readers at this point. And in any case, the stemming of memory leads us to internality, the utter shattering of limitation. The dwelling-place we alluded to above is somewhat analogous to Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body. In so far as the body is the source of perception, the point where meat meets the world, it "can (...) be neither seen nor touched."⁴

Tangibility and visibility are simply not aspects relevant to the body, in so far as the body is that ontological category, in the here-and-now, which perceives. To perceive is to be situated in a dwelling-place within which intangibility is a function of invisibility. Two forms of absence, two absentologies, to use an unusual expression, meet in this secret communion. Flesh can be nothing else other than the indeterminacy of this embedded meeting-point, this place of habitation that is nevertheless almost otherworldly in its neutrality. Here, in our terminology, tangibility is a capacity for consideration, consideration, that is, of various binding transcription factors, a deep appreciation for their contingency and reversibility. Reversal and reversion - two terms which are interchangeable and permeable - are impossible without a certain hold, a grip upon the world and its objects. This grip we speak of is a repertoire of possible action, a vision that exploits a momentary inequality of powers so as to shoot forth into the world. Under „world” we understand an assemblage of manifold existents. Understanding is always an understanding of power. In a terrestrial context, this power is one of biopower or negentropy. Biopower saturates culture, so we are told by a contemporary work of queer theory:

*“...the principle of maximum visibility refers to an impersonal desire—an operation of biopower—that saturates modern culture independently of identity categories such as straight or gay.”*⁵

The principle of maximum visibility and its critique in particular, may be of some interest to us. It matters not from whence this critique arrives; what interest us are the implications of such a critique, especially in relation to modern culture. Yet we must also remove ourselves from the level of analysis as explicated by cultural studies. The principle of maximum visibility described by Tim Dean is a function that surpasses the

⁴ Merleau-Ponty 2005 [1945]: 105

⁵ Dean, Tim (2009) *Unlimited Intimacy. Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 132

merely human; it is a dead eye, observing life from without, saturating anthropomorphic social assemblages with its putrefaction. Dean does not pretend to give precedence to human existence, which is a welcome change from certain authors who see some illusory value in privileging anthropomorph tangibilities. The upper limit of tangibility, the dwelling-place of the maximum price, may arguably be, in the context of homosexuality, what Dean terms ‘seroconversion’. Seroconversion, the reception of HIV into one’s own bloodstream, is an act that holds a unique status in certain homosexual subcultures. Its uniqueness, we are told, resides in the fact that it cannot be repeated. It is an authentication that is foreclosed to all repetition, an initiation whose mystical nature resides in its internality and invisibility.⁶ While one may have one’s own opinion as to the wisdom of such an experience, homosexual seroconversion, however profane or sensual it may seem, is nevertheless pregnant with significance, in more than one sense of the term. Yes, the receptive homosexual is “impregnated” with virality, this much is true. But this, in and of itself, lacks true depth.

The significance resides in the internal and invisible nature of this initiatory practice. To be seroconverted is to take hold of nonduality, so to speak, while failing to bear witness. Yet this failure to perceive one’s own initiation highlights the mystery which is embodied perception. Being penetrated, the initiate fails the task of authentication on multiple levels. He fails to be masculine, or to even truly “see” his own conversion. And even so, this failure of authentication betrays a deeper truth, an authentication that is more authentic than conventional forms of internality. Seroconversion, as Dean explains, “acquires additional significance because it occurs internally and therefore remains invisible to the witnesses of one’s other feats of fortitude.”⁷ Seroconversion therefore offers an inner experience, inner in several senses, that evades visibility. The mystery is impossible wherever the hooks of desirable eyes may sink into the flesh. Inside of a virally infected cellular environment, we find a new repertoire of action, one in which harm is translated into good, poverty into plenitude, biopower into the power of - what exactly? Death? Living death? The living death, the living-onto-death afforded by seroconversion, especially of the passive variety, is a death that gives birth to inhabitation, one’s own inhabitation by virality and a self-laceration which shatters the maximum price of existence. Price volatility destroys price ceilings. Memories, far from being freed, are restricted in the case of

⁶ Dean 2009: 52

⁷ *ibid*

emancipation from illusion. Any emancipation is illusory provided it does not emancipate from memory and repetition. The seroconvertive experience is an inner experience that precludes repetition. Like the loss of one's virginity, it may be experienced only once. It is in close proximity to the dwelling-place of X, in so far as we define X as being, in some way, One, be it a quantity or a quality. Furthermore, to take hold is impossible without having a certain grip upon the environment we seek to inhabit.

Biopower's saturative complexity gives way, in the case of successful infection, to the simplicity of living death, a technical term for capturing and securing touch, the touch of a member enclosed within (soon to be dead) living flesh. Seroconversion is the end of a certain ceiling price, the collapse of a maximum price in a volley of price volatility. What voluntary HIV infection does is short-circuit the will to life through a, preferably, passive relationality to death. By speaking of seroconvertive initiation, we seek not to condone or encourage this practice, but neither do we condemn those who achieve entry into this sacred mystery. The closest proximity to the truth of the body resides in the abjection afforded by many forms of self-abnegation and resignation. "Bug chasing", the willing encounter with HIV, the willingness to be infected with virality, is, in Dean's opinion, "one of the more extreme forms of body modification."⁸ Ordinarily, we are encouraged to preserve health and persevere in the quest for continued life, to hold onto negentropy and embrace the touch. Yet, as Merleau-Ponty reminds us, the body is that which is intangible and invisible. Depravity that reaches the point of abjection is a capture of the ceiling's multiplicities.

The insides of the infected individual become a dwelling-place for "bugs", "a sort of terrarium."⁹ As a consequence of the body's interiority being given over to viral operativity, the body is captured by itself, handed over to its own self-subsumption. Here the sense of inner touch "sees" itself through the mirror afforded by the virus. The virus is the agent of a new perception, albeit one which represses the kinetics of maximum visibility. Under the "visible" we mean that which is subordinate to the principle of maximum visibility; all existents must labor under power's oppressive gaze. Virality destroys the genome sequence, ripping apart that which is given, operating in the manner of temporality upon liveliness. Internality profits us without showing itself. X, the X we mentioned in the foregoing,

⁸ Dean 2009: 53

⁹ *ibid*

constitutes the lips that kiss the invisible, as well as the elucidation of this meeting of lips and (inner) flesh.

What is a body apart from a genome that has been constituted by an inner touch? The abjected body is, as it were, a function of the minimum limit price, whose consumption-speed varies in accordance with its capacity for self-abnegation. The most fundamental sense of seroconversion is that it averts the further saturation of the body's internal space by the erotic gaze by a more primordial and significant eruption, a fatal saturation that vitiates all forms of biopower through the power of its negativity. It would be interesting at this juncture to direct our criticism to the notion of HIV-positivity and negativity. In the parlance of the homosexual subculture under consideration, to be HIV-"positive" is positive in the sense of having been transmuted into a desirable value, as opposed to something that must be, conventionally speaking, avoided. Semen that contains HIV is "radioactive with meaning", while HIV-positivity undergoes a reversal of value already portended by language and explicated by post-initiatory praxis. Such alternative discourse:

*"...implies that infected semen has developed a positive rather than negative connotation in the subculture's argot; HIV has been transvalued from a bad into a good object, something to be incorporated inside one's body rather than kept outside."*¹⁰

This reversal of values is of tremendous consequence, yet it also betrays a kind of aversion to negativity, even in this embrace of desirable negativity. Why insist on the positivity of one's own praxis? Transvaluation does not change the ontological circumstance that, from the perspective of organic life, HIV infection is "bad", undesirable, at least if one considers the state of one's own genes after such a conversion. Negativity, especially such an internalized form of self-negation, erases the operativity of the pornographic principle. Seroconversion is explicitly characterized by Dean in a later section as constituting a "rite of passage" into the world of "hot queer sex".¹¹ Must we remain exclusively on the terrain of sexuality and sensuality?

Dean at this point seems to limit himself to the world of sexuality, even while potentially revealing an entirely different perspective, a horizon of non-sensuality. Where even the maximum limit price has collapsed, there can be no more illusion. If we seek the truth from sensuality alone, we are

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Dean 2009: 69

bound to fall into the mistake of placing our trust in superficial empiricism.¹² Yet the evidences of purely empirical data are insufficient, for to place our trust exclusively in what is tangible is to exclude from our investigation forms of experience that lie outside of both the minimum limit price and the maximum limit of existence. To ditch limitation is to know consumption without distance and inhibition. As long as we adhere to limit prices of one or another variety, we do not really know consumption. Consumption, under circumstances of limitation, is not really known. It is not a known capacity as long as limit prices persist. True consumption is what takes place outside of limitation and jurisdiction. Black commerce is the impersonal self-devastation of nondesiring foreclosed bodies. Transgression is the equivalent of pollution. An especially interesting study has highlighted the correlation between endemic corruption, the presence of a shadow economy and governmental corruption.¹³

We should, however, be careful when assigning blame to certain “corrupt” areas of the globe. If the world really does constitute one global economy, the rot is systematic. Corruption, the corruption of a, more or less, globalized economy contributes to the annihilation of ecology, the destruction of all ecological givens. To put matters in an ethical light, to be corrupt is to destroy, or contribute to the destruction of, what is given. Within the depths of the shadow economy (which economy lacks the element of darkness? - we are, after all, living in the most globalized world system to date!) there lurks the figure of the polluter, the transgressive agent who corrupts Being with his effluence. In the manner of some bizarre body horror film, a disgusting, foul effluence flows from the darkness, a corrosive liquid that burns anything that has the misfortune of being touched by its presence. The statistical modelling of the study leads to the assumption that corruption, the shadow economy and pollution tend to exhibit a triple-correlation:

*“...the increasing effect of the shadow economy on CO2 emissions is dependent on the level of corruption. The interaction term between the shadow economy and the corruption index is significantly positive; corruption amplifies the effect of the shadow economy on CO2 emissions.”*¹⁴

¹² Merleau-Ponty 2005 [1945]: 24

¹³ Biswas, Amit K., Mohammad Reza Farzanegan, and Marcel Thum. (2012) "Pollution, shadow economy and corruption: Theory and evidence." *Ecological Economics* 75: 114-125

¹⁴ Biwas et.al. 2012: 120

Yet the authors fail to mention the fact that most, if not all of these correlations, could arguably be explained by the circumstance of underdevelopment. Why may we, nevertheless, ethically speaking, consider this correlation to be of importance? From a perspective that seeks to transcend the level of everyday, commonsense morality, one should not reject such a finding out of hand. Instead, we may build on this discovery and take into consideration its meta-ethical consequences. To be corrupt is to be transgressive, to inhabit the realm of transgression which is the sphere of shadows. To be transgressive means to be destructive of what is given. Inhabitation of the shadow economy, or any other libidinality whose place is characterized by an absence of light, the absence of the pornographic vision, carries with it corruption, a corruption that must be embraced if we are to achieve initiation and enfolding in radical transvaluation. Corruption, the second term in this trilaterality we have erected, is the precondition of an even more radically transvaluative “evil”: pollution. To be corrupt is to be a polluter. What we seek is a system of transvaluated morals that sings the praises of shadowy inhabitation, corruption and pollution.

While this may be to the great chagrin of our ecologist peers, it is only through abandoning conventional wisdom that we may gain access to the dwelling-place outlined above, the dwelling-place of an X awaiting definition. In his capacity for corruption, his assent to corruption by an external agent or engaging, actively, in the corruption of others, the dark, corrupt transgressive furthers the cause of annihilatory pollution, spreading gaseous death. Such an activity, one whose results are, thrillingly and bizarrely, without visibility, is an exercise in the making-tangible of invisible curtailment. Pollution, without doubt, is a thing. Furthermore, it is a thing amenable to measurement. We know what concentrations of which gas pertain in which area of the globe. However, the tangibility of inner flesh may only be experienced through radical pollutive practice. What can be more sacred than the global pertinence of the minimum limit price? Access to clean air, for instance, would surely constitute an instance of the minimum, the minimum needed for human habitation. Every act of pollution lessens the space for healthy breath; it is a restriction of the in-breath. The intertwining of touch within the dwelling-place of the X is an invisible curtailment.

Once the curtains are parted, we come to understand that the limitation of the inbreath, far from constituting a simple negativity, is actually a thing, measurable and open to embrace. Transvaluation is the intertwining of our self-abnegation with a violation of both the maximum limit and the

minimum limit. Consumption cannot really pertain unless the most esoteric portions of a vast hidden commentary are elucidated by a fatal harvest. Internality comes to know itself through the power of ontic pollution, the supply that restricts in-breath while allowing us, as anthropomorphs seeking after that which would end activity, to commit ourselves to the out-breath. Pollution, such as it is constituted, is a visibly invisible malign presence, an ongoing commentary upon the positively negative value of negentropy. The tangibly invisible comes to displace the in-breath via emissions of gases from “old and inefficient vehicles” operated by the “informal transportation sector.”¹⁵ The authors, committed as they apparently are to a naively ecological cause, assert that “unless governments fight the informal activities of shadow economies, they may not be able to implement effective environmental policies.”¹⁶

The assumption that the givenness of the environment is, in and of itself, worthy of saving and maintenance, goes unchallenged, as in the case of most ecological studies. If we commit ourselves to the defense of the given, we must come to an ontologically grounded position, that is, reach a Ground from which we may critique practices that destroy the given. However, exactly what constitutes an erasure of givenness is open to debate. After all, the given is what gives birth to all efforts to erase it. Ecology cannot be safely and securely differentiated from its own self-undermining. We come to the understanding that the triple correlation applies not merely to various transgressive destructive agents, but to the environment itself. Indeed, transgressive shadow economy corrupt polluters and the environments corroded by their activities constitute an intimate unity. If we wish to explicate the truth, we must say that it is the ecology itself which is shadowy, corrupt and pollutive. These three terms are interrelated, with one another and the metaecology which they inhabit. Periodically, supply breaks down, leading to shortages and growth in food insecurity.

Differentiation has a minimum limit price, one that is impossible to take hold of while scurrying after orgiastic repertoires. Nonaction is not possible without taking hold - like the look of a nonseeing eye within which concerned onlookers scurry about, reflected in a parallel world of disintegration, illusions superimposed upon further layers of illusion. This look - the look of the dead eye - is a scurrying about in the repertoire of entropy. Orgiastically catalyzed flesh sees itself reflected in the mirror, a

¹⁵ Biwas et.al. 2012: 114

¹⁶ *ibid*

reflection that organizes a tangible distance within a non-entity. In terms of flesh, the body is subjectless, objectless, empty, a void perceived within manifold phenomena, a threshold, so to speak, a hard, rough, gray skin of the world which is provisional, in so far as this body provides the contextuality of all forms of partitioning and partitioned enjoyment, life, enjoyment wedded to life as an (admittedly illusory) biopower. Every phenomenon that takes place within this body or its immediate environs is a hard threshold, a limit, in and of itself, a provisional checkpoint on the road leading to complete saturation. Yet if it is anything, this gray skin is also smooth. Every threshold is at once rough and smooth, dependent as it is on the manner in which objects and creatures approach it. The way to understand the threshold is equivalent to coming to understand the end of numerous four-dimensional structures. Temporalities are functions of objects. By the capacity for cognition and understanding, we denote the capacity for liberation, as intelligence is the mental capacity for achieving the summit.

Distinctions can only ever be momentary, as is the case in Buddhism or Hinduism, or any other tradition for that matter. Distinctions and terms must bleed into their opposites. Hence our bracketing of the triple-correlation that shall be effectuated during the course of this book. The shadow economy we shall replace with a general economy of light, corruption with incorruptible bodies, pollution with pure emptiness. The capacity of touch tends to engender a patently false distinction between sentient being and liberation, whereas liberation is hidden merely by its incapacity for becoming amenable to a sense which is at once cognitive and motoral. Touch as such is the hidden liberation which, assuming one has mastered a suitably differentiated mode of approaching the threshold, reveals liberation. Sense is an inflow of touch, a revelation of the world as revealed by a touch that bursts out from us, in the manner of the grotesquely oversized pineal gland exploding from the heads of those exposed to *The Resonator* in the body horror classic *'From Beyond'* (1989). The protagonists of the mentioned film see the distinction between embodiment and liberation fade away, although they are somewhat reticent to join the hybrid monster in emancipative dissipation. What is it that scares them away from the possibility of revolutionary transformation? After all, the monstrously and queerly transformed Dr. Edward Pretorius beckons everybody to a new life, an inhuman existence free of limitation. Pretorius undergoes a profound transformation, one that undoes both the maximum and minimum limit prices. True, the mad scientist (a favored trope of H.P. Lovecraft's work) Pretorius never was fully human. It is revealed during the course of the film that the man never was a man; hints are made as to

his impotence, his former sexual life having been reduced to S/M parties with (un?)willing females. During the confrontations between the protagonists who have (so far) been able to persist in their humanity and the posthuman Dr Pretorius, Katherine is at first willing to embrace the former, for all his monstrous queerness. What does *From Beyond* tell us of the distinction between sentient being and hidden liberation, in particular liberation attained through the faculty of touch?

The liberation offered by the transformed Dr Pretorius is one that is transmitted in a quintessentially bodily manner, through the infectious touch. In a particularly poignant scene, Crawford, the younger former assistant of Dr Pretorius, emerges from the latter's body, reborn and rejuvenated, although his emergence is soon interrupted. The Son is reborn through the Body of the Father, to put things in a somewhat Christian verbiage. In other words, what we witness in this scene is a perverse reenactment of Christ's rebirth. Does it really matter which comes first? As a matter of fact, the latter makes more sense, from a strictly chronological perspective. The Church could just as easily have transmitted the idea of a Son emerging from his cosmic Father. But tradition is not predicated upon chronology. The truth has no relation to chronological linearity. In the end, it matters not who emerges from whom, whether it is Crawford who emerges from Dr Pretorius, or the reverse. What matters is the fact of (r)emergence and rebirth. An important facet of this Lovecraftian narrative is that rebirth is aborted. A far cry from the triumphalism that inheres in popularly disseminated religious norms, Crawford, the new Christ, cannot be reborn. He is sucked back into the body of the Father, and both bodies must be annihilated, as they are in due course. Abortion destroys both the aborted cellular operations and the aborter. Subjectivity is annihilated, replaced by vague remnants of multiplicities and meanings.

"The Thing", notes Jacques Derrida, "haunts,...it causes, it inhabits without residing."¹⁷ Similarly, the terrifying creatures rendered visible by The Resonator inhabit the world without residing in perception. To see the nightmare which is existence, one must adjust one's perception, even at the cost of allowing one's forehead to be gouged open by a kind of "third eye". It is of significance that when Crawford's pineal gland emerges outside a hospital, he is described by a terrified alcoholic as "the snake

¹⁷ Derrida, Jacques (1994 [1993]) *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London and New York: Routledge), 21

man". The notion of the third eye relates to Shakti, the Hindu goddess who is the female partner of Shiva. One whose "third eye" has been opened has awakened the snake power lying within every human body. This power is that of Kundalini, the world serpent, symbol of universal life, in the dual sense of concentration and dissipation. Kundalini is at once life and its opposite. The third eye, however, in spite of it being a sign of awakening unto the serpent power, remains, and shall always remain the "eye of Shiva."¹⁸ At this stage, the Thing haunts no more. The haunted becomes the hunter, so to speak. The Hindu symbolism in 'From Beyond' is undeniable, although how far the analogy may be extended, we cannot know. The truth of a certain tradition or a work of art is as much a form of projection as something inhering within that work. From our metaethical ontic perspective, we must distinguish between transformative change and arrival. What makes the hybrid Crawford revolting and terrifying for the alcoholic, who is himself a kind of halfway house between life and complete obliteration, is the very provisionality of the Snake Man's/Crawford's state. As Guenon explains, the condition of one who has awakened Kundalini is a transitory state. Kundalini must take up residence on the crown of the head:

*"This stage represents the restoration of the primordial state, where man recovers his 'sense of eternity' and through that attains what we have elsewhere called 'virtual immortality'. Until this point we are still in the human state; in the next phase the Kundalini finally reaches the crown of the head, and this stage represents the effective conquest of the higher states of being."*¹⁹

Crawford, by the time he is holed up in the hospital, has virtually stepped outside of the human, without having fully and irreversibly attained immersion in the inhuman. His dwelling-place, at this point, is a non-place. Crawford has no place to go, for his third eye has already been opened. Why does he not run away and hide his transgressive transformation? There is only one place Crawford may go to complete his transformation; he returns to the Resonator and Dr Pretorius, his "Father". The Son must return to the Father, there is simply no other way to reach the summit of inner experience. For all its sensuality, the sense of touch is essentially an inner faculty; in particular the experience of seroconversion, both as outlined earlier and the type depicted in *From Beyond* corresponds to such interiority. Touch, in the world of Lovecraft, is the conduit

¹⁸ Guenon, Rene (1983 [1927]) *The Lord of the World* (Moorcote, UK: Coombe Springs Press), 43-4

¹⁹ Guenon 1983 [1927]: 44

between the hidden world of the haunting Things and liberation, although a perverse kind sentenced, more often than not, to abortion. Even the stage of ultimate spiritual attainment must be obliterated and immolated by fire. Yet the virus does not and cannot die, for it has been implanted inside of Katherine, the sole survivor of this perverse and queer initiation. Katherine emerges from this experience in a state of mental collapse.

On a global scale, in the case of every body, binding transcription factors are undone by hypervirality. Touch serves, in the case of seroconversion, as a way of proliferating infection. Buffers and safeguards crumble during epidemics of transgressive transformation. Regulation, once emergence makes its advent, is harmed beyond repair. Difference in general must submerge itself into a generalized indifference, at least during the course of initiation. Is this emergence, the rebirth of a fatally redeemed body, a refractory move? René Guenon describes rebirth as the restoration of the primordial state. This restoration cannot be anything other than emptiness, the merging of feedstock with consumptive appetites, a refractory countermove to the unruly movement of vitality that engendered its own spontaneous self-combustion. Regulation and difference must both be harmed, deformed so as to make way for deregulation and indifference, the differential order which is Chaotic primordially. Chaos is a differentiability which is fundamentally opposed to Order, but in a sense more significant than that of mere duality. In a somewhat overly moralizing study, we read that “when reporting on a potential partner, barebackers were more likely to want a partner who was neither passive nor aggressive whereas bug chasers, aggressive.”²⁰ (Tomso 2004: 31). Furthermore,

“As expected from the analysis on self-sexual aggressiveness, a significantly larger portion of bug chasers (29.1%) were more likely than barebackers (12.7%) to consider themselves leathermen, $\chi^2(1, N = 284) = 11.767, 2 = .042, p = .001$. Furthermore and in support of previous results, a majority of bug chasers (53%) reported wanting a partner who considered himself a leatherman over and beyond barebackers (38.7%), $\chi^2(1, N = 284) = 5.853, 2 = .021, p = .01$ ”²¹

In an ontological sense, what does this finding signify? We may take the instance of these passive seekers, willing as they are to receive the virus and integrate it within the internality of their bodies, as being analogous

²⁰ Tomso, Gregory (2004) "Bug chasing, barebacking, and the risks of care." *Literature and medicine* 23.1, 31

²¹ *ibid*

with that of the, at first, willing Katherine, who eagerly awaits insemination by the transformed Dr Pretorius. The meeting of a lower level of reality with a more potent and, one may argue, “realer” form of emergence, and the manifestation of one’s own infection, is a fundamentally abjective and passive relationality. Masochism, the enjoyment of one’s own subjection to the Law of the Father, would seem to be an important element of serconvertive enjoyment. Yet is enjoyment really the goal here? Studies that restrict themselves to treating “bug chasing” as being yet another instance of “sex addiction” fail to break free of modern scientism and twentieth-century psychology. We need a perspective that takes account of initiatory practices that go beyond the limit.

In a context of sensualistic culture, these practices tend to take on, understandably, a somewhat sensual appearance. Citing studies of sex addiction, the author asserts that “...in negative mood states and during bouts of depression a significant increase in sexual interest and activities is likely to occur.”²² Whatever Tomso’s intentions, the author points to a deeper meaning underlying the apparent frivolity of such decadent and nihilistic behavior. In the parlance of addiction studies, the bug chaser cannot be anything other than a freak, or somebody out of their mind. The addict, by definition, must have some psychological illness or infirmity, some psychological scar that forces him or her into irrational actions. The notion that somebody would consciously and cogently choose self-annihilation, albeit via the roundabout route of letting HIV have its way with their body, allowing the aggressively introduced virus to do violence to the internality of one’s flesh, is a thought that eludes those caught up in standard scientific approaches to mind/body issues. Addiction must be a consequence of “negative mood states”, so they tell us. But what if these so-called “negative mood states” were more than the illusions of diseased or weak minds? What if the negative state were considered as a way of approaching the world, one that is no less desirable than affirmative states commonly held to be normal?

No single method of approaching the primordially which is death holds precedence over any other. Positive thinking cannot save us from the restorative meeting with entropy, a unification which takes us below/above and, in any case, beyond the human state. The surfacing of HIV in a cellular system constitutes an instance of entropic catalyzation. This surfacing is at once a result of the effluence of an erection, and also the

²² Tomso 2004: 25

preclusion of any further erections. Positive moods only serve to hide the latent, but ever present haunting nature of the Thing, the Thing we choose to call entropic dissipation. Such reactions as those of ostensibly therapeutic psychologists, those who would save us from these dissipative tendencies (“addictions”, i.e. negative states that must be excised from the personality so as to preserve the tenuous integrity of the individualized, atomized person) are refractory reversions to life, reactionary diversions that seek to stem the deluge that would saturate the territoriality of the human. Negative mood states show reality for what it is; reality is the pure state of emptiness. Underneath the heaving, desiring skin of the chaser, tactility burrows its way through antiquated, dated meat, meat that has passed its used-by date.

Instead of accepting the patently anti-social and anti-relational demand for dissipation, instead of recognizing the desirability of penetration by an aggressive God, who is the synonym of the Father, conventional science does little more than register the presence of such perverse dreams of abjection and goes on to label them as being symptoms of undesirable moods that must be treated, even at the cost of excising one of the few remaining forms of radical initiation left in an otherwise sedated modern world. The principle of maximum visibility, as represented by both pornography and medical science, seeks to expose and debunk states of genuine depth. In the final instance, the psychologist would like to completely eradicate rival perspectives, in particular those that form a clear threat to the established society and social norms. Tangible invisibility is met with a volley of threats and petty indignations. People who seek infection via penetration by aggressive partners are, in medical discourse, ill and need treatment. Almost laughably, another study cited by the author in question argues that “...in depressive states, a search for the fulfillment of needs is activated.”²³ Why on earth should one then shun the depressive state at all?! It would seem that the transformation of the personality demands that we reject the smug self-satisfaction that is the surest hallmark of ignorance. But it is precisely this latter which, it would seem, conventional psychologists would wish to preserve. In the name of what exactly? The orientation of the average person towards the lowest common denominator is a fundamental aspect of capitalist society. This fact has been recognized by critical social theorists of diverse political views. In his *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero identifies frugality as constituting the fourth cardinal virtue:

²³ ibid

".... 'frugality' implies the three virtues of courage, justice, and prudence. But this, as you know, is a characteristic shared by all the virtues, that each is tied to the others. So let frugality itself be the remaining virtue, the fourth. For as we see, the defining characteristic of this virtue is that it regulates and placates one's impulses to act, and so preserves that well-regulated consistency which on every occasion is opposed to desire. The fault contrary to it is called nequitia or 'worthlessness.'"²⁴

One cannot be free of restlessness if one accepts perpetual change. We must bring a halt to the negentropic change working within our bodies. The absence of this negative virtue, frugality, constitutes an obstacle to the neutralization of desire. Cicero here, in typically moderate fashion, contrasts frugality with a far more radical element: worthlessness. As distinct from those who proudly accept the charge of worthlessness, believers in conformity and conventionality, ignorant individuals who persist in their belief in illusions and their own illusory intelligence, who seem to be satisfied, having imprisoned themselves in the illusion of having a Self at all, are deluded and cannot achieve liberation from restlessness. Cicero does not even dare assume that worthlessness could in fact be the ultimate form of frugality. The worthless one would be somebody who has achieved a radical self-knowledge, a knowledge that is empty, and, by consequence, completely obviated the impulse to act on their own part. For a person without personhood, action is foreclosed. The goal, as we may notice, is the same. For Cicero, frugality is a virtue, as it "placates the impulse to act." But taken to extremes, it may become a humiliating abasement of the (non) Self, described as "worthlessness".

Instead of accepting worthlessness, instead of assenting to *nequitia* in the manner of a Cynical Diogenes, respectable Roman citizen as he is, Cicero rejects the abjective and annihilatory possibilities inherent in such a radical term. As distinct from both the ignorant and the all-too-respectable Roman citizens, those who achieve desirelessness, or at least the minimization of the desire for changing their circumstances, attain to a fundamental reorientation of their own Being. Initiation, even in such a drastic form as that of seroconversion or consumption/subsumption by Dr Pretorius, is a radical change that obviates any further change in one's own internal constitution. Tactility becomes retractability or even full retractedness, a retreat into one's internal domain which, far from constituting a defeat by the sheer force of the world, is in fact a victory over and above life and the enticement unto vitality. The question then becomes how can we, as

²⁴ Cicero, Marcus Tullius (2009) *Cicero on the Emotions. The Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 10

initiates, achieve a tangible intimacy with the invisible, confronted as we are with enticements to make ourselves visible.

To answer such an onto-ethical question, we must enter into a kind of philo-mutational analysis. Indeterminacy harms nothing - we cannot overemphasize the importance of this truth to our investigation. It is determinacy, rather than indeterminacy, which is the source of harm. As long as one allows oneself to be influenced by change, one remains vulnerable to harm. What is harmless is what is impermeable, foreclosed to change and temporality. Controlling for the many ways in which temporality may invade our considerations is a task that requires a measure of intellectual complexity. Philo-mutational analysis must take account of what Buddhist cosmology has called the "rotation of the four kalpas".²⁵ An analysis that seeks to transcend mere philosophy, the hyperphilosophy we advocate, must be suitably complex if it is to take account of the various modalities of existents and existence. The four kalpas (Becoming, Existing, Destruction and Emptiness) shall therefore be integrated into the philo-mutational analysis. From the Shadows shall therefore emerge, through a protracted and, at times, trying itinerary, the ultimate Emptiness. What do we promise? What is it that philo-mutational analysis promises the reader? Nothing - nothing recognizable as the nominatum of any sentence or word. Our destination, as of this analysis, is the dwelling-place of X, a place in which we shall hope to recognize by the end of this rotation. This destination is the abatement of all kalpas.

²⁵ Marra, Michele (1988) "The Development of Mappō Thought in Japan (I)." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*: 25-54

PART I:
THE ECONOMY OF LIGHT

I.1 SKINNING THE BODY

Having accounted for the need to control for the various modalities of existence, we shall return to the triple term we have outlined in our Introduction. The first of these three we have chosen to call the General Economy of Light, as a result of our improbable transplantation and cloning of economic parlances. Philo-mutational analysis must respond to the ontological circumstance of opacity. Once we have been able to come to terms with opacity, it is assumed that we may discover translucence. In this quest, the assumption that translucence follows opacity shall be maintained only as is necessary. Dualities must be transcended; this is at once a necessity and a vital urge on our part. We feel the need for this transcendence, as our final goal lies far from the mere evacuation of perception from conditions of opacity. The destination, in other words, cannot and shall not be translucence, in and of itself. Indeterminacy is without harm. Organized around the generality of expression, around the corners and limits of determined objects, indeterminacy is the general emergence of terms that are not amenable to standardized systems of definition. Trapped in the throes of a lover's lips, the buffer stock preventing us from complete evacuation may explode, giving way to an effluence we have absolutely no control over. What the lips express is an incitement to excretion, an excitation-unto-dissipation. The tangible, emerging as it does from within the invisible, becomes a repertoire of the newest harvest season. Supply, as long as it is in abundance, merges with mechanisms of import and export, gouged into a normative hard core of organized mediocrity. Supply may be considered as a mechanism for the importational mechanism that fattens consumers until they become monstrously obese. Consumption is at once an accumulation and dissipation. As a matter of fact, consumption is accumulation. Even in its most negative forms, consumption is, in its own way, the accumulation of some good. Efficiency, especially of the material kind, is not necessarily the only form of utility imaginable. Europeans arriving in Tenochtitlan were given a lesson in comparative cultural studies. We read of the Aztec capital:

"Towering above the efficiency of the city, great temples paraded the grim reality of the 'flowered death by the obsidian knife', and priests walked the

immaculate streets covered with their own and their victims' blood. The religious life of the capital revolved around ritual violence."¹

Sacrificial efficiency "towers above" economic efficiency. What struck observers was not the well organized system of irrigation or the structure of Aztec society, but the fact that it revolved around blatant and unashamed ritual violence. For the Spaniards, this was all too much. Opacity is a feature of cultures that are, in other respects, open to death. Openness to death must be accompanied, as it was in the Aztec case, by a recognition of the worthlessness of life. Nothing was cheaper than life in Aztec thought. Confronted with an oversupply of life, the Aztecs responded with an overabundance of sacrificial violence. Sacrifice may be considered, rightly or wrongly, as an exportation mechanism that short-circuits bodily accumulation, whilst accumulating divine favor among the many and varied bloodthirsty gods. Capital accumulation, in the Aztec context, takes the form of sacrifice. Bodies become nonentities, elucidations of vulnerable visibility. The desire for mass-sacrifice is the desire to perceive solarity. This desire seeks after living flesh, beating hearts that may be chewed upon, their juices consumed heartily by the priests. Hearts could be gouged out exclusively by male priests. Blood, on the other hand, could be offered up by both sexes.²

Provision of blood, an intimate donation of one's essence, was considered a sign of devotion. We need not necessarily assume that the reason for the Aztec elevation of blood donation was a direct corollary with the pain associated with drawing blood, although the ritual implements for shedding one's own blood were evidently designed to maximize pain.³ Blood, once separated from human bodies, merges with divine blood, in a hard blackness which resides at the summit of the temple. A steady supply of human blood is needed for the elucidation of tangible vulnerability and the persistence of divine immortality. Hearts, once severed from their bodies, become nonentities, bits and pieces of waste, fecal matter flowing into the canals. Identity categories, in the Aztec context, mean little. We read of a contemporary sexual deviant burnt alive. The chronicle reads, "he burns; he is consumed by fire. He talks like a woman, he takes the part

¹ Dodds, Caroline (2008) *Bonds of Blood. Gender, Lifecycle and Sacrifice in Aztec Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 2

² Dodds 2008: 32

³ *ibid*

of a woman.”⁴ What we have before us is a highly murderous and intolerant society, even by 16th century standards.

Yet, for all the obscenity of their violence, the Aztec method of consumption holds many charms, as it did for Georges Bataille, who devoted the entire first chapter of his classic study on accumulation and dissipation to Aztec sacrifice.⁵ Opacity is the opacity of life lived in the shadows. Darkness beckons for those whose interest gravitates towards intensive, practical antihumanism, such as that practiced many centuries ago in Tenochtitlan. Outlaw desire must run for cover and take up its residence in the shadows if it is to avoid consumption by fire, the fatal flame that would excise differentiation. Temples, erected to please the gods, were exercises in equilibrium, places of placation. Through an identification with their symbolic exteriorities, new forms of austere interiority were perceived - the interiority of bodies torn open for a ravenous sky. A particularly pertinent explanation for the letting of blood, according to Dodds, is the mythology of human presence, as interpreted by Aztec religion.

According to the Aztec’s version of evolutionary history, humans were formed from dough by the gods. The essential ingredient was the donation of blood by the masculine deities, Quetzalcoatl in particular.⁶ Once Quetzalcoatl dripped his blood into the dough, the material magically came to life. As a consequence, we must interpret the donation of human blood in a new light. Rather than the accumulation of death, it is the return of life to its source. Simply put, however we choose to interpret it, from within a cultural context, ancient Mexican symbolism does not recognize the circumstance of accumulation. It is highly doubtful they even knew the word! The interiority of the body is, in the sacrificial practice under consideration, identified with divine exteriority. The body must be opened up so that which is of the sky may be returned to its rightful owner. This operation, that of opening up the victim to contact with the divine, is an enumeration of total consumption. Of the body, nothing may remain; it must be accepted by the transcendent sphere and gobbled up, disembodied, so as to effect cosmic reintegration. The murderous hands of the priests contributed to the maintenance of a complex redistribution network, mediated by multiple blood-transfusions. It is impossible to overestimate

⁴ Dodds 2008: 152

⁵ Bataille, Georges (1991 [1949]) *The Accursed Share. An Essay on General Economy. Vol I. Consumption* (New York: Zone Books)

⁶ Dodds 2008: 29