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Love, Death and Fear

Amor, muerte y miedo

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Abstract

Based on fundamental ideas of Marx and Freud, this essay examines love, fear and death from a social and historical perspective. It applies this examination to the contemporary state of social relations. The most important argument is that hostile aggressiveness has triumphed over love by making people fearful of each other. While the essay is generally pessimistic, there is hope that love can win out in the end, but that doing so requires social revolution that would destroy the current world system of capitalism.

Key words: Love; Capitalism; Fear; Death; Emotions.

Resumen

Basado en las ideas fundamentales de Marx y Freud, este ensayo examina el amor, el miedo y la muerte desde una perspectiva social e histórica. Esta propuesta de análisis se realiza sobre el estado contemporáneo de las relaciones sociales. El principal argumento que se sostiene es que la agresividad hostil ha triunfado sobre el amor haciendo que las personas se teman unas a otras. No obstante, aunque el ensayo es en términos generales pesimista, hay esperanza de que el amor pueda triunfar finalmente, pero ello requiere una revolución social que destruya el actual sistema mundial del capitalismo.

Palabras clave: Amor; Capitalismo; Miedo; Muerte; Emociones

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Love, Death and Fear

Introduction

The problem with emotions is that they are complex. Emotions include feelings, but not feelings like hot and cold, thirsty, sleepy, and so on. Those kinds of feelings seem more like sensations, and they occur because of something we ourselves do not do. On the other hand, feeling afraid, although we talk about it as a feeling, is more than a feeling. It is also an idea. We do not just feel fear. We think fear.

Ideas are never simple. They are culture bound and time bound. For example, there is an emotional culture bound disease called *susto* which is prevalent in many Latin American cultures. It is characterized by fright with attendant somatic effects (Rubel, 1964). Situations affect thoughts. Class and status color ideas. And so on. Emotions with their constituent ideas are complex because they are far more than physiological events. They are human phenomena.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1948) began a never completed phenomenological psychology with an extended essay on emotion. He concluded that emotion "manifests without any doubt the *factitiousness* of human existence" (Sartre, 1948: 94). Emotions are a sign of people's living in a material, social, human world. As Sartre put it, "an emotion refers back to what it signifies. And, in effect, what it signifies is the totality of the relationships of the human reality to the world" (Sartre, 1948: 93). Emotions do not just happen. People make them, but they do not make them just as they please. They are social, and most relevant to the present essay, political constructs.

Of course, emotions are also psychological. As such, they manifest human drives. Both internal and external forces channel and shape drives. Emotions are part of the meaningful expression of drives and the forces that oppose, direct, and mold them. It is that dynamic that this essay explores.

Love against Divisiveness

"In my experience, the best defense against the divisive tactics of COINTELPRO is to work hard to be true to our principles. We have to honestly look at and grapple with the ways that racism, sexism, homophobia, elitism, and competitiveness affect all of us who grew up in this society. We have to learn to handle differences among us in an open and *loving* [emphasis added] way" (Gilbert, 2012: 84). Here, David Gilbert is referring to the police state program of the FBI used against groups such as the Black Panthers, Weatherman faction, Brown Berets, Young Lords, and other revolutionists of the late 1960s and 1970s. For the non-White groups, the program included assassinations and framing members for various violent crimes including murder. The more benign tactics used against both White and non-White groups were classic subversion techniques: agents provocateurs, paid or blackmailed informants, forged poison pen letters, and so on. The object of such non-violent tactics is subversion of groups by sowing suspicion and hostility among the members.

Most of the revolutionary groups of that period were structured into core executive groups and wider mass organizations. In some cases the core groups were underground such as the Weather Underground after 1969. The main targets of COINTELPRO were the core groups. In other words, the revolutionists of that period used the same organizational structure as the Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century. It is a classic structure just as the state's response, like COINTELPRO, was classic.

What Love Does

Gilbert's observation comes from his own experience. Other writers have tried to explain what he saw. Sigmund Freud wrote that love or the basic human drive he called Eros served as the fundamental

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glue that held people together and made society possible.

> Civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity… But man's natural aggressive instinct, opposes this programme of civilization. This aggressive instinct is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-domination with it. And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, as it works itself out in the human species (Freud, 1930: 122).

Accordingly, it is the death instinct that divides social groups, and so repressive state programs like COINTELPRO are the death instinct in action and on a grand scale.

Another thinker made a similar observation. Karl Marx stressed the reciprocal aspect of love. "If we assume *man* to be *man*, and his relation to the world to be a human one, then love can be exchanged only for love, trust for trust, and so on (…) If you love unrequitedly, i.e. if your love as love does not call forth love in return, if through the *vital expression* of yourself as a loving person you fail to become a *loved person*, then your love is impotent, it is a misfortune" (Marx, 1975 [1844]: 379). The implicit contrast Marx makes is between genuine human emotions and the market in which everything, every commodity, can be exchanged for money.

Almost 70 years later, Georg Simmel, without the benefit of Marx's still unpublished 1844 manuscripts, made a similar point about human relationships. In what must be among the most anthologized articles in the social sciences, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, Simmel wrote about the form of the modern metropolis. Simmel viewed the metropolis as a synthesizing social form of, *inter alia*, modern personalities. The metropolis brought together dense assemblages of individuals, new technologies produced by industries, and most prominently, money:

> The metropolis has always been the seat of the money economy (…) Money economy and dominance of the intellect are intrinsically connected. They share a matter-of-fact attitude in dealing with men and things (…) The intellectually sophisticated person is indifferent to all genuine individuality, because relationships and reactions result from it which cannot be exhausted with logical operations. In the same manner, the individuality of phenomena is not commensurate with the pecuniary principle. Money is concerned only with what is common to all: it asks for the exchange value, it reduces all quality and individuality to the question: How much? (Simmel, 1950: 411).

In this short passage, Simmel brings together Marx and Freud: Marx's insight about the inexorable commodification of all things and human relations and Freud's insight that the ego is but a thin and brittle shell using its paramount weapon, the intellect, as a main defense. Or, to put it more simply, in The Beatles' song "Can't Buy Me Love" written and recorded in 1964, love is not a calculation.

Love, Empathy, Symbols and Work

A key part of love is empathy. Empathy puts us in the other person's place, to feel what s/he feels, to see the world with different eyes. Empathy is probably unique to the human species. Likely it is because empathy depends on symbol-making abilities, which are also probably unique to humans. The anthropoid apes might have symbolic capacities, but if they do, they are distinctly limited. Rumors of dolphins have similar capacities crop up occasionally, but no one has brought forth convincing evidence.

Another uniquely human activity is work that is socially productive. All animals instinctually appropriate parts of their environment to survive. Only humans consciously work. "It is therefore in his fashioning of the objective that man really proves himself so be a *species-being*. Such production is his active species life. Through it nature appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labour is therefore the *objectification of the species-life of man*: for man reproduces himself not only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually, and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself created" (Marx, 1975 [1844]: 329). Famously, Marx pointed out that what capitalism does is to turn objectification into alienation. Workers must alienate (sell) their labor to survive. Therefore they are alienated from the products of their labor which are taken by their employers, the owners of capital.

In the process, workers are also alienated from each other, because the wage system stops them from seeing that individual labor is a part of the total social labor. So, just as with language, there can be no individual, idiosyncratic work just as there can be no individual, idiosyncratic language. Inevitably, individuals become alienated from themselves, as in the phrase "invest in yourselves", as if a person were a small business. Its ultimate ironic form perhaps was the phrase *arbeitmachtfrei* at the entrance to the Nazi concentration camps.[1]

The wage system gives work the appearance of individualized bargains between the worker and the employer. The contract reigns supreme, as the quintessential capitalist philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) argued. Of course, no one works alone. Robinson Crusoe brought the whole history of British society with him (Defoe, 1719). Although I am alone as I write this, it is a social product. Capitalism obscures the relationships among the collective natures of work, production, and value. It turns social relationships into relations between individuals and things. The things can be interchangeable using another thing: money. All such things have a common characteristic. They are dead.

Re-socialization of work, production, and value has historically taken the form of, among other things, trade unions in which workers bind themselves together and make collective contractual bargains with employers. Such syndicalist formations and actions could conceivably be social building blocks for revolution. With such revolutionary potential, syndicalist efforts become targets for subversion and divisiveness. The rulers use a three-pronged strategy to turn a living collective into a dead bureaucracy. First, employers refuse to bargain with the workers as a whole, and instead insist on bargaining with a workers' so-called representative. The workers depend on the representative, and the representative becomes their boss so workers end up with two bosses: one of the employers and the other of the unions. Secondly, the rulers encourage ties between the unions and political parties, which ensure that the workers have an interest in supporting the state. In the United States, for instance, unions became tied to the Democratic Party and in Britain to the Labour Party. The third strategy falls under the general rubric of economism. Economism uses economic rewards to buy off the revolutionary potential of workers' collectivities. This three-pronged strategy ensures that union bureaucrats and politicians repeatedly betray the workers, and economism ensures workers' apathy and invidious competition within the working class. The strategy worked. Therefore, so-called labor-management relations are but an instance of what Freud said was the struggle between Eros and Death, between a binding together, and a cutting apart, between harmonious living and aggressive war, between love and death.

Love and Revolution

Love and work are revolutionary. Marx contrasted human work with the survival activities of other animals saying that only humans produce "in accordance with the laws of beauty" (Marx, 1975 [1844]: 329). First, humans continually produce new potential revolutionists through procreation, and they do it accompanied by love. The new recruits, the next generation, have the potential to revolutionize their society. Of course, that potential is channeled by socialization and enculturation so there is always a measure of continuity from one generation to the next. Nonetheless, the potential is always there. That is why modern, state-level societies have such elaborate ideological apparatuses, as Louis Althusser (1971) called them. The ideological state apparatuses dissuade the young from revolution. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't.

Work, human work, is revolutionary because it humanizes the non-human environment. This process is captured in the old anthropological saw that the primary ecological niche of humanity is culture. Love and work are creative, and their inherent creativity revolutionizes the world.

Both beauty and its laws are human creations. Think, for instance, of the cave paintings of Lascaux, Altamira, and environs. Today we cannot know what their creators thought of them, but we see them as beautiful artistic works. The constructivist art movement of the early Soviet era deliberately combined machinery, buildings, and so on, which were necessary elements of industrial production, according to designs of beauty. All art has revolutionary potential.

Love is revolutionary because in loving we accept individual differences because we love them. Love is not mere tolerance. People tolerate all kinds of things, because they get some larger benefit. But in love there is no calculation. Love does not say go along with this, tolerate this, because if you do, you will get some reward that makes up for the inconvenience, irritation, or aggravation

1 Sandra Sinfield at London Metropolitan University personal communication.

from somebody else. Love does not say love the other person despite the difference, but because of the difference. Nonetheless, as Marx pointed out, love must be reciprocal, and reciprocity entails community. That is why Death, wielded by the ruling class through the state, does its best to divide people from one another.

First, the state separates itself from the rest of society. It enforces distinctions in status and class to divide people against each other. It employs ideology, force, and by any means necessary it is the state's job to make sure that the people do not come together, make revolution, and practice democracy.

State of Fear

Fear is the main tool of the state. At times of crisis fear takes the form of terror. In more ordinary times, fear hides in the shadows, but it is ever present. Fear is inscribed in law. The state as a political formation co-evolved with law. The earliest laws were recorded by the ancient empires. The imperial laws regulated trade, inheritance, ideology (at the time, mainly religion), taxes, and any other social functions relevant to state functions. Modern states do the same. Laws, recorded in writing, are the hallmark of the state. Written words, however, in and of themselves cannot compel. Fear is what makes them effective. Under law, fear is fear of punishment. The earliest law codes, Hammurabi's or the Laws of Manu for example, provide for punishments and penalties. As today, such ancient codes address private wrongs calling for compensatory and sometimes punitive damages, and they contain public wrongs which usually result in some kind of corporal punishment often in addition to fines. It should be borne in mind that laws are for the benefit of the state and ruling class, and that is their sole purpose. Other functions are at most collateral.

Much nonsense has been written in the field of criminology and criminal justice in the United States that attempts some sort of psychologistic theory of criminal laws. The nonsense takes the general form of an argument that punishment deters people from violating laws. That argument has neither logical nor empirical support. Modern punishment follows that of the ancients —fines or corporal punishment— and the latter mainly means imprisonment. In ancient times execution was the most common method of corporal punishment. Today it is incarceration. In either case, the purpose is to remove a miscreant from participation in civil society. It gets rid of the trouble maker, and thereby removes a problem for state bureaucrats. Fines, of course, provide revenue for the state. They are a kind of taxation, which probably have the advantage over other kinds of taxation in that fines are more calculable.

Fear of Punishment joins together with fear of attack. That juncture is an everyday occurrence, as for instance, when someone goes through the so-called security screening to board an airplane. The state provides the guards who are agents of the repressive state apparatus. Resisting them means a person will not be able to fly on the plane, and can result in arrest by an armed agent. Ostensibly the guards protect people from what they call terrorism. If not before, post-11/9 terrorism is a myth concocted by the state to frighten the US population into obedience to the guards, the ones in airports, but also the robotic ones that surveille everyone all the time, or at least as many as possible and as much as technically feasible. The great terror scare after 11/9 had been preceded by two decades of fear of crime, a myth that had robbers, rapists, and serial killers lurking in every shadow. So, of course, the solution was more police with more guns, and more cameras, wire taps, and every other kind of equipment that made anonymous and free living have to fit into smaller and smaller cells. Nicolò Machiavelli (1958 [1513]) wrote that the state and its leaders should rely on fear rather than love, because love is only preserved by mutual affection, whereas fear endures in any circumstance.

Fear Commodified

States use of fear in modern societies is embedded on a foundation that is even more pervasive than cops and robbers or terrorists narratives. Modern economies foster separateness, lovelessness, and fear to sell products. Advertising and public relations are professions of the lie. "Advertising is one of the cultural mechanisms that has most sanctioned lying. Keeping people in a constant state of lack, in perpetual desire, strengthens the marketplace economy. Lovelessness is a boon to consumerism" (Hooks, 2000: 47). Pioneered in the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency in the 1920s, lifestyle advertising focused on social anxieties like body odor, bad breath, and other kinds of things that the advertisers warned led to social rejection (Marchand, 1985). Of course people could ensure esteem and even love if only they would buy the right kind of toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, and so on. The unstated promise was that they could get love if they bought the right products, but of course

they never could buy enough to connect with other human beings other than through the dead things in the market. Ultimately, fear itself becomes a commodity that sells.

The two world wars were milestones of commodification, as they spurred development of the public relations industry. Famously, the Creel Commission under the leadership of George Creel, a former newspaper reporter, sold the First World War to a reluctant, at times recalcitrant, American public. The advertising industry went into high gear, along with most other industries in the Second World War. Granted, Pearl Harbor made selling that war easier than the first, but the public relations tasks became more complicated. The American public no longer had merely to accept US entry into the war; the entire population had to mobilize to fight it, not just those destined for the front.

Between the wars consumerism had grown apace. While still mainly a production driven economy, in the United States Fordism became its dominant mode. What made Fordism different was that it required a relatively affluent productive class. Those who produced the goods had to be able to buy them. Moreover, they had to be sold on the aspiration to buy things they did not need. Lifestyle advertising with an increasing reliance on social fears —for example halitosis, body odor, yellow teeth, and so on— began to create a consumerist economy. The changeover from production to consumption arguably did not occur until the 1970s, but the trend began after the First World War. Concomitant with the broad and basic economic change, public relations gained maturity. It was that maturation that made possible the commodification of concepts after the Second World War.

Edward Bernays, the self-proclaimed inventor of public relations, boasted that he made women smoke (Ewen, 1996). The success of the campaign largely depended on making women want to appear as the images of smoking women that Bernays deployed. Rather than discourse and argumentation, Bernays portrayed smoking women as attractive, fashionable, smart, sophisticated, and so on. Internalizing the image produced a behavior change, taking up smoking cigarettes. Moreover, all those concatenated desirables—attractiveness, fashionable, smartness, sophistication, and others—came along with the internalization. To sell more cigarettes, Bernays sold an image.

Imagery captures the key step from social problem to commodity. Of course, commodification entails another difference. Although social problems acquire vested interests, to be a commodity requires something else: exchange value and eventually profit. Without financial fungibility and without the prospect of profit, social problems languish. After the Second World War in the United States a commodified fear of Communism spawned numerous, profitable spinoffs, akin to coonskin caps and plastic Bowie knives , movies, television programs, novels, plays, and so on (Barranger, 2008; Brinkley 1998; Caute, 1978, 2003; Schrecker, 1998, 2002). Those were just the consumer products. The big money came from the Cold War, nuclear missiles and submarines, bombers and fighters, and all the smaller goods to equip a three sphere war capability on land, sea, and air. Later, full spectrum dominance added outer and cyber space. Communism, or anti-Communism, became a fetish. It aroused and gave gratification. Of course, no sooner gratified, than the need for further gratification appeared. Each nuclear missile led to more and bigger ones, and in the later stages of the Cold War, undersea, submarine launched missiles with MIRVed warheads became the must have accoutrement. How could a simple shoe fetish compete?

In the post-Fordist era which began in 1970s, fear of crime increasingly became commodified. It was a good thing too, at least for the ruling class, because the Soviet Union had the bad manners to collapse by the last decade of the twentieth century. As crime fears began to look more and more démodé and moth-eaten, 11/9 came along to save the day.

Fordism relied on mass production to make commodities cheaply and on relatively high wages to workers so they could afford to buy the commodities and show up for work to pay off their consumer debts. The mid 1960s portended the change away from Fordism, and it saw a backlash and revival of populist racism. Social upheaval marked the country in the 1960s just as it was approaching a historic high of equality in wealth and income. Behind the façade of prosperity lurked a menace: deindustrialization. Already, US manufacturers began casting their eyes on cheap labor, accessible raw materials, and comprador governments in what was then known as the Third World. The economic crisis of the 1970s accelerated the problems.

Adapting to a new, post-Fordist mode of production, a new form of marketing emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century. Just as mass production converted to flexible specialization so the way of selling the new specialized commodities

changed to segmented marketing. Market segments coincided with demographic particulars. So, for instance, a marketer might aim at 35-55 year old Latinas on the West Coast. As marketing became more sophisticated, the segments could become more focused. By the twenty-first century, the internet and algorithms made it possible to focus marketing according to individualized interests, tastes, and most importantly, fears.

Among other things, flexible production and segmented, even individualized, marketing portended a radical reordering of social relations. The new order had the advantage of discouraging social movements and along with their demise, the demise of the threat of revolutions. Friends more and more become avatars on Facebook. Algorithms select what people know, what they desire, and define their interactions, all the while of course vulnerable to subtle manipulations by interested parties like GCHQ (General Communications Headquarters) of British intelligence and the NSA (National Security Agency) of US intelligence. Both apparatuses increasingly melded with private contractors which have their own myriad interests in channeling mass consciousness. Crowds that used to threaten the established order as George Rudé (1959) explained regarding the French Revolution, are now manufactured to form color revolutions wherever the global ruling class wants regime change. Flash mobs and crowd sourcing produce ephemeral pseudo-events and wiki-knowledge. Such methods do not so much force divisiveness as seduce people into fetishized desire. Consequently, every social movement becomes suspect like that David Gilbert described at the beginning of this essay for the central committees of revolutionary organizations like the Weatherman. Is Black Lives Matter a genuine movement for social justice or a contrivance of George Soros? What about the Arab Spring; popular revolt or was it an Anglophone covert operation for regime change? Socially agreed upon reality melts before our eyes, and as Marx and Engels (1848) famously described, all that is solid melts into air. The centrifugal triumphs over the centripetal, and the center cannot hold (Yeats, 1920), because there is no center.

If the twentieth century was the century of the color line, as Dubois (1903) averred, perhaps the twenty-first century is the century of the final split, but not just along lines of color, but along all the heretofore hidden fissures in the society of humanity. This century threatens the triumph of Death over Love. But as always, there is hope that we might begin to love each other more.

Death

In the 2016 documentary movie about James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*, director Raoul Peck inserted several clips. Peck edited and compiled notes by Baldwin along with transcripts of the clips in the movie in a book with the same title (Peck, 2017). One of the clips is titled *Selling the American Negro* (Peck, 2017). One should be excused from thinking that it was advice to slave traders, because of course that is what they did, sell American Negroes. But it was not that. It was from an informational film directed at an audience of marketers of consumer goods. The message was that Black Americans now, in 1954, had enough money to buy things that various consumer goods companies sold. The film highlighted durable goods like home appliances. The film was made up of middle class Black people of 1954 vintage, a kind of Black Ozzie and Harriet imagery. So, no it was not about how to be successful in slave auctions. Nonetheless, the very existence of the film clip raises the question, was there a difference between 1954 and 1854?

Georg Lukács called it reification. He explained it as follows. “The essence of commodity-structure has often been pointed out. Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a “phantom objectivity”, an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people” (1923). So, “the Negro” is a thing in the market, a consumer-thing in the particular case at hand, and “the Negro” was also a thing in 1854 as a slave, a commodity, but in the peculiar institution of US slavery, also a productive unit, although for slaves their labor was owned. They were not free to sell it on the market, and the only contract was not between master and slave but contracts between owners where a master might rent a slave to another owner. “The Negro” of 1954 was not exactly the same as the slave of 1854, but there were similarities.

Modern capitalism surrounded people with dead things; not the things that people make out of once living organisms like boats or tables made from trees, but abstracted concepts sometimes given material form which then as commodities represented the value that living labor had added to the raw materials. The master symbol of such dead things is money, but money and concepts soon get to be interchangeable. James Baldwin asserted it. “I attest to this: the world is not white; it never was white, cannot be white. White is a metaphor

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for power, and that is simply a way of describing Chase Manhattan Bank" (Peck, 2017: 107). Modern capitalism upended the world before it. Before, the living defined the dead. Now, the dead define the living. People, individual human beings have become their relationship to dead things.

Horror stories give away the game, especially a certain genre that relies on the so-called undead like vampires and zombies. The problem with such phantoms is not that they are dead, but that they are not dead. Dead things are all right. People can cope with dead things. It is living things that pose problems. Other people especially can pose problems. White people invented Black people. They invented other peoples too. They invented Black people to own them. They invented Indians to take their land. They invented who they needed to make such things as the Chase Manhattan Bank, which is a dealer in death.

Freud was onto something when he said the two basic drives underlying all others —sex, hunger, thirst, and so on— were Eros and Death. In the natural world it all makes sense. Nature needs things to die so new ones can be born. Metabolism is the natural process of catabolism; which is breaking things down, and anabolism, which is building up new things from that which has been broken down. There are plenty of natural examples and plenty of representations of the same dialectic, like Yin and Yang for instance. The relations may be profound, but at the same time unremarkable. Unlike natural things, however, the Chase Manhattan Bank does not die. It cannot die, because it was never alive, but it has the appearance of life, and not just life, but the biggest kind of ur-life like the mythological Greek Titans. The Titans were a powerful race that ruled the world before Olympians, in a time of the Golden Age. They were immortal giants of incredible strength and knowledge.

Banks, of course are not mythological. They are one of the pillars of what Guy Debord (1995 [1967]) called "The Spectacle". The Spectacle is not a natural thing. It is human made, but as the sorcerer's apprentice discovered, it got out of control. At a primitive level banks regulate the circulation of capital by acting like digital routers. Banks as businesses do a great deal more than simple routing, because bank owners want to make a profit. They do this by going into debt. When a bank goes into debt it creates money, which is what capitalists involved in production need to convert commodities into more valuable commodities. Banks make loans to people using fictitious capital in the form of money, which the money owners return to the banks as part of the circulatory process. Not one bit of this circulation function creates or increases value. Banks deal in dead labor represented by money, which is how they become dealers in death. Since the advent of capitalism roughly 500 years ago, banks also found other ways to deal in death, chiefly but by no means exclusively through financing wars. The houses of Medici, Fugger, and Rothschild —the last still central to global capitalism— loaned money to governments so they could fight each other. Of course, they also loaned money to myriad imperialist adventurers who slaughtered native populations. They loaned money to various enterprises that so severely exploited people and the environment that many died as a direct result of these entrepreneurial forays. But those are all epiphenomena emerging from banks basic function, their dealing in dead labor.

> The spectacle of banks occludes their death dealing, or as a worker's song puts it,
> But the banks are made of marble.
> With a guard at every door
> And the vaults are stuffed with silver
> That the farmer sweated for[2].

It is the marble edifices and more recently all the imagery and pageantry of Wall Street and the City of London that are The Spectacle.

Dead labor is dead in that it has already been expended to produce value. When the labor value is consumed, it reenters the cycle of life. For example, when someone picks an apple from a tree and eats it, the process contributes in its own small way to the reproduction of work. When, on the other hand, labor is used to produce machinery, the machine represents dead labor, as it does not contribute to the reproduction of labor in the form of reproducing laborers. Money is even more abstracted from living labor. Money is a symbol of value. It has no intrinsic value itself. In modern economies, money increasingly takes the form of data bits which travel around the globe through electronic machines in the service of capital. The entire world economic system is the circuit of money's conversion to commodities which when converted back into money by owners of capital increases the amount of money and therefore capital they own. It would suit the owners of capital if no humans contributed to this circuit, because

2 Rice, L. (1950) *The Banks Are Made of Marble*. Storm King Music. unionsong.com/u024.html. This the refrain of the song with a different kind of worker substituted for "farmer" in subsequent verses.

humans skim off from the production of value which reduces their profits. This is otherwise known to them as variable (labor) costs.

By 2017 there is talk of a robotized economy when humans produce nothing. Of course, if they produce nothing, they cannot add to the owners' wealth. They become expendable. Its current manifestation is called 'Austerity.' No production, no adding to owners' wealth, no more reproduction leads to no more human race. Before the demise of humanity, however, the world economy would collapse, because it would cease producing value. Only living humans produce value just as only humans produce meaning. In the economy it is value that people must produce, because machines do not produce value. Owners of capital reap profits from the production of value. So, no value, no profit, and the system disintegrates. There is some reason to believe that in 2017 the world economic system is close to disintegration.

Oddly enough, hardly anyone today seems to be afraid of either the demise of humanity or the collapse of global capitalism. Officially condoned fears for the US population are led by terrorism, then interpersonal crime (as opposed to institutional crime like bank fraud), and then ephemeral matters like various infectious diseases, identity theft, and similar scare campaigns. Although some people seem concerned about the effects of climate change, soporifics are continually prescribed for them. Fear is important because it serves the death drive by driving people apart.

Separating, setting boundaries and borders, and otherwise keeping things apart are not necessarily destructive. Separation can preserve as well as destroy. At the intrapsychic level a breakdown of ego boundaries characterizes schizophrenia. If ego boundaries are too rigid neurosis ensues. Flexible but secure boundaries promote adaptable personalities. Just so with social boundaries where flexible but secure boundaries define all manner and sizes of social groups. As the old adage has it, fences make for good neighbors. Of course, fear can serve preservation as an alarm mechanism. It is wise to fear dangerous situations. Fear serves preservation when Death and Eros are alloyed, and when separation maintains the integrity of the individual or the group.

All too often in history, rulers use fear to control the masses. Typically they misdirect attention from real hazards in favor of enemies who can fill the role of scapegoats. False fears abound while real worries are suppressed. Rulers' use of fear, therefore, has a double consequence. False fears lead to authoritarianism. Ignoring real dangers leads to tragedies. Make a people afraid, and controlling them becomes much easier. Political fear comes from anticipatory coercion. It has two variants, often found together. In one, people fear physical force will be used against them by their governors. In the other, people fear attack by some enemy and depend on their governors to protect them. The paradigm case is Nazi Germany. Jews and Communists supposedly threatened the German people. Fear supported violence which turned into genocide and war all as part of a way to control a people by the few against the many. But that is an old story. Let us turn now to more current events to see how divisiveness collaborates with fear to wreak havoc on Eros and the ties that bind people together.

Atomization

The principle of divide and rule has become the very fabric of modern, or maybe postmodern, culture. It is no longer a simple political strategy. It is how we live in the twenty-first century. Social analysts identified the trend at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century. They called it different things, but it boiled down to an atomistic kind of sociation in which people related to one another functionally, as if interaction were the equivalent of market transactions.

That social order reached its apotheosis by the second decade of the twenty-first century. Market value became the only value. For example, university administrations busied themselves "branding" their organizations. Universities, at least of Western color, began in late medieval times. They were dedicated to preserving and extending cultural values of the time as embodied in the seven liberal arts. They were, and continue to be today, conservative in their purpose, function, and outlook. But today, as of 2017, they are commodities sold to students, more accurately students' parents assisted by government apparatuses that dole out public monies attached to students. Hence they need "branding", because knowledge has no value except in so far as it benefits owners of capital. All are market transactions, and they measure all human worth.

Universities are by nature esoteric. A more commonplace example of atomization coupled with commodification appears on the oxymoronically named social media. Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and all the rest are in practice anti-social. They fit perfectly with individualistic market schemes

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by public relations managers while at the same time supplanting social interaction. People increasingly rely on social media and social relations increasingly become cyber relations. Thanks to Wikileaks and other whistle blowing sources, the connections between the state and its ideological apparatuses and social media and internet user tools like Google show that the state can mold public consciousness almost at will.

There is nothing accidental about this. In 2014 as a result of a leak from Edward Snowden, *The Intercept*, an online news source, published the power point program that the British intelligence apparatus known as GCHQ or Government Communications Headquarters used in presenting their plans to their US counterparts. It uses all the latest developments of Bernays' public relations strategies, with full panoply of the human sciences, and employing the latest electronic communications capabilities.[3] In the words of Glenn Greenwald and Andrew Fishman, reporters for *The Intercept*, "Among other things, the document [the power point plan] lays out the tactics the agency uses to manipulate public opinion, its scientific and psychological research into how human thinking and behavior can be influenced, and the broad range of targets that are traditionally the province of law enforcement rather than intelligence agencies" (Greenwald and Fishman, 2015).

Diminishing situational social interaction where people are in the same place at the same time diminishes the channels of communication among people. Face to face, there are myriad channels: sight, sound, touch, smell, proximity, movement, and so on. Via the internet the channels are limited. Moreover, they are subject to filtering and manipulations as demonstrated by the revelations about GCHQ activities. Social interactions, unless they are overtly violent, contribute to social bonds, and thereby fulfill the aims of Eros and keep society coherent. The more polyvalent interactions, the more channels of communication are used, and therefore the more complex social relations, to keep societies functioning. In his sociologically seminal *Suicide*, Emile Durkheim concluded that rates of suicide, which must be a premier expression of the Death drive, are higher in societies with fewer and looser social bonds (Durkheim, 1951 [1896]).

The new kind of interaction based on virtual relationships couples with ruling class control of public discourse both in terms of content and in terms of who gets to talk with whom. The state of communication in society creates strong centrifugal forces that drive people apart. Societies become increasingly fragile as social relations become increasingly tenuous. Death triumphs over Eros. That is the current trend and the likely outcome barring a massive reversal that would deserve the name of revolution.

3 The Art of Deception: Training for a New Generation of Online Covert Operations. *The Intercept* (February 24, 2014). https://firstlook.org/theintercept/document/2014/02/24/art-deception-training-new-generation-online-covert-operations/

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