Take Off Your Coat And Stay Awhile!

By Jason Lewicki

Winter has hit, and it's looking to be a cold one. As the chill of the wind and the sight of our breath in the air remind us that the season of snow and ice isn't going anywhere for awhile, that just means that there's no time like the present to kick back and relax inside. While you're there, try to get some work done; finals are fast-approaching, and we all must be prepared before they hit us like a blizzard come the end of January. Brrr!

With the end of the semester inching closer and closer, this is the time when work begins to pile up. I know I've certainly been struggling with my workload recently, but like a big heap of snow blocking a driveway, it's just something I'm going to have to shovel through. As for you all, if you too have a lot of responsibilities to take care of and not much time to do them, then believe me when I say that you shouldn't panic. When you panic, you make poor decisions and rush things out the door before they're ready. Sure, you don't need to be cranking out constant college-level essays on the daily, but it'd be a shame if you accidentally left out a crucial bit of information in your research project because, in your haste to finish it before the deadline, you figured you could let a few things slide. I've been there, done that, and I can say from experience that it helps to be prepared and efficient when fulfilling your responsibilities. Take some time this winter to make a schedule of due dates. It could be a lifesaver!

Whether you're new to MHS or a returning student, we're glad to have you. Here at our school, we have all sorts of avenues through which to connect with the students around you and show your Spartan spirit. Join a club! Attend a sports game! Support our theater program! Read our newspaper! These and more are just some of the ways you can have fun, meet new people, and make new memories here at Milford High School.

Accelerationism & Hyperstition

by
Mal Ramirez

No Christmas-related article this time, but you're still about to receive a pretty weird gift. I present to you a history of CCRU and their most famous concepts.

Once upon a time, in the early 1990s, philosopher Sadie Plant was asked to leave the University of Birmingham to study internet culture at the University of Warwick. While there, Plant, along with Nick Land and Mark Fisher, formed her research group she called the *Cybernetic Culture Research Unit*. This project quickly evolved into an avant-garde art and experimental philosophy collective which drew upon sources such as ancient mysticism, sci-fi, postmodernism, eldritch horror, and schizoanalysis. Because of problems between the university and CCRU, Plant left her position and left CCRU into the hands of Land. In 1997, Land left his lecturing position and moved what was left of CCRU to an apartment above some spa in Leamington. CCRU experimented with psychedelics, sleep deprivation, hypnotism, and black magic in order to access altered states of consciousness. Eventually, several members suffered severe mental breakdowns, leading the CCRU to dissolve and for Land to disappear. What kinds of ideas did CCRU work with? Let's start with *accelerationism*.

Within any ideological system or set of concepts you can find a contradiction. This contradiction is typically represented as between the *thesis* and the *antithesis* which is the negation the thesis necessarily gives rise to. These forces oppose the other until the passage of time eventually allows the contradiction to be sublimated, resulting in the *synthesis*, which in turn becomes the new thesis to be negated by its own antithesis. This process is called Hegelian dialectics, and is the basis for many theories of society. For example, Karl Marx, a student of Hegel, believed that capitalism is an ideological system containing a contradiction between the owners and workers, which will eventually be sublimated into socialism. Ordinary politics is done within a framework of choosing either the thesis or the antithesis to fight for. Accelerationism, on the other hand, claims that in order to reach the inevitable next stage, the synthesis after the dialectic, revolutionaries must do whatever they can to speed up this process, meaning to both advocate for and against both the thesis and antithesis. Accelerationism is a politics of pure chaos. Accelerationists would do whatever it takes to make a system more like itself just so that it will fail to accommodate its own contradictions and thus undergo an evolution. Communist accelerationists would vote in favor of corporate interests and free trade in order to worsen tensions between the owners and workers and bring about class war. Or maybe the idea would be that capitalism will find ways to make revolutionary theory and praxis profitable, thus funding its own destruction. Technoaccelerationists, both anti-tech and pro-tech, would want to speed up technological development so that, once it has reached a sufficient threshold, the opposition between humans and technology would sublimate. For anti-technologists, the idea is that humans would finally wake up to the great psychological and physical harm technology causes us and reject technology. For pro-technologists, the idea is that technology will become so embedded into human life that humans stop existing and become cyborgs. Accelerationism can be applied to almost anything. Many people who want acceleration often employ a related concept in their methods to speed everything up. That's where things get even weirder...

Hyperstition is a portmanteau of hype and superstition, and it refers to a fiction that becomes real when plugged into a human social circuit. The fiction is first constructed, then disseminated throughout a population of humans which, because of the emotional force generated by this fiction, brings about its constituent elements. As the fiction becomes more popular and as more of it is transmuted into truth, the more humans will have faith in the fiction, thus forming a feedback loop leading to the fiction exponentially becoming more real. But that's not all. CCRU loved to experiment with time, of which they used the Kantian theory that time is simply a human psychological construction and does not actually exist. They thought that thought itself, being a non-physical substance, does not exist within a time-space universe, and thus was beyond it, and that humans are best thought of as material bodies being puppeteered by disconnected thought-forces existing in a realm beyond our own. Since hyperstition has thought—which exists beyond time and space—as its basis, and it realizes itself into being via humans as a conduit, CCRU believed that hyperstitions are god-like entities that, from our perspective, travel backwards in time to bring themselves into material existence by controlling the minds of humans. What does all this have to do with accelerationism? Let's assume that Marxist theory is false and is just fiction. Even if this were true, communist accelerationists argue that by amplifying this fiction throughout society, the narrative will become powerful enough to influence the collective unconscious such that humans will behave exactly like Marxism says they would. In other words, by treating Marxism as a hyperstition, it can become real. The hyperstition of Marxism would then stimulate the acceleration of capitalist processes towards their final conclusion. It's the same thing with technology. Sci-fi themes and tropes, once they have saturated the media enough, will manifest themselves in reality because our engagement with this media has injected them into human subconsciousness, activating when we experiment with technological progress. Sci-fi would then be another hyperstition that can be used to accelerate the growth of technology. This process of hyperstition is the reason why many of CCRU's writings discussed magic, cyborgs, and even Chthonic Old Ones; the idea was that writing about them would accelerate the processes that will inevitably make them real.

For more information on these subjects I recommend you read *Hyperstitional Theory-Fiction* by Macon Holt. The youtube channels PlasticPills and Art Chad each have an informative and entertaining video. They explain stuff better than me. There is also a short article and interview with Land both on orphandriftarchive.com

I've explained the signifier/signified distinction before, and you'll remember that the meaning of meaning is always changing. This results in and is because of language being inherently unstable, but what does *that* mean? To attempt to solve that dilemma, I present the theories of literary theorist Jacques Derrida.

WordGames

by **Mal Ramirez**

Ontology concerns what does exist and what it means to exist. *Hauntology* is Derrida's ontology concerning how what exists can only exist as it does because it's 'haunted' by what doesn't. The rests in music are just as important as notes, and music only works because what has just been played is paired with the anticipation of the rest of the song yet to occur. This logic applies to language because of another concept called *différance*, a term similar to the French terms for 'to differ' and 'to defer'. Any word differs from all other words but must defer to other words to gain its particular meaning within a text. Words, and therefore the texts they constitute, have a hauntology. They are haunted by other words/texts read before and after them to have their current meaning. Due to this, the meaning of any text is never identical to itself, because the particular context a text is situated in, which it must differ from / defer to for its meaning, will always be different. Think about what you're reading now: Each particular word you read has its specific meaning because of the words written before it and it slightly evolves that meaning because of the words written after it. Texts exist because they are inherently incomplete, i.e. *not fully there*. Writing is a temporal and contextual process, and what is written will never stay the same.

Because knowledge is mediated through language, an eternally incomplete and changing system, the supposed end of knowledge will never coincide with its means. Phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, in his *Logical Investigations*, distinguishes between expression (purely intended meaning of something) and indication (points toward expression). Derrida recognizes that there's no expression without indication because we would not know an expression existed without something pointing to it. There's no signified independent of its signifier, and you'll never arrive at a final signified, meaning knowledge can never progress, only change. Take metaphysics, for example. Most metaphysics is *logocentric*; logocentrism, according to Derrida, is the assumption that there's some stable transcendental signified to be found via a stable transcendental signifier and that this transcendental sign is the 'logos' upon which all other signs revolve, therefore establishing a hierarchy. Christians believe this sign is 'God', and Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, thought it was 'Being'. However, as Derrida has explained, no such sign will ever be found, and metaphysics will never be fully meaningful. Another problem with logocentrism is that it assumes the logos to embody presence, or what is experienced right here and now, rather than absence, which is implicitly tied to nonbeing and unreality. This privileging of presence over absence results in another tendency in philosophy that Derrida calls *phonocentrism*. Phonocentrism is the prioritizing of speech over writing because speech is thought to be more present than writing. It was thought that speech precedes writing and that writing is a mere appendage to speech. After all, our thoughts seem more like a spoken voice that is heard than a text that is read. To understand Derrida's objection to phonocentrism, we must also understand his method of *deconstruction...*

Every conceptual binary (smart/dumb, good/evil, loud/quiet, truth/lie, matter/mind, etc) is rooted in logocentrism. One term (first in each example), because it's the term of presence, is privileged over the other, the term of absence. However, because the primary term must defer to the other for meaning, it's haunted by the subordinate term that holds the power. Any text implies such binaries, but, because of hauntology and différance, you can always find some way that a text contradicts itself. Such binaries force every text to hold a standard for itself, but inconsistencies and paradoxes with their use, which will always be there, make any text fail by its own rules. In this way, any text can be deconstructed. Take the statement 'Philosophy is better than literature because philosophy is clear while literature is filled with metaphors.' This statement makes use of the words 'clear' and 'filled' which are themselves metaphors, the former visual and the latter spatial. Thus, the statement fails itself (this probably isn't the best example of deconstruction but you get the point). Now, let's deconstruct the speech/writing binary.

There's a reason why Freud was forced to move from mechanical metaphors, such as in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895), to textual ones, such as in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), when describing the mind. This is because speech conceals what text reveals, which, as Derrida explained, is the inherent incompleteness and instability of every word. In speech only each word is present at the moment it's spoken, but the hauntological relations between that word and all the others spoken before it and after are still *there*. We just don't know it because it's not apparent. In other words, it isn't *present* because it's rooted fundamentally in an *absence*. In text, however, it's as if speech remains frozen all at once in time, allowing one to navigate the text via différance. It's here where the hauntological relations are revealed. In this sense, writing precedes speech, and speech is the appendage to writing. The term of absence, writing, can only be subordinate to the term of presence, speech, because speech must disguise writing to be present. Writing in this sense does not mean the action, but the principle that every text must differ from / defer to the text that isn't there. Also, because the mind can only work with present mental functions differing from and deferring to other absent functions, the mind is most like a text, which is Freud's significant discovery. Ain't that crazy?

Here is a brief overview of the life and works of Derrida, and here is an even more confusing summary of his philosophy.

A Truly EPIC Musical!

By Payton Burke

The Odyssey is a nearly 3,000-year old epic poem written by the Greek poet Homer, detailing the journey of king Odysseus as he braves monsters, gods, and the sea itself to get home after years at war. While many consider this story merely fodder for English classes, to Jorge Rivera-Herrans, it is the framework with which he has created a masterpiece. Jorge is an up-and-coming playwright and composer who, after gaining significant support from the community he built across his social media platforms, has been releasing concept albums of his latest project: *EPIC: The Musical*. The project's ninth and final concept album, "The Ithaca Saga" will be released on December/January 25th of 2024. (As of writing this, the album has yet to come out but is eagerly anticipated)

EPIC: The Musical may just be in the concept album stages, but it has already taken the Internet by storm. A loose adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*, *EPIC* takes inspiration from a wide variety of modern mediums for their music, such as anime and video game soundtracks, while maintaining the traditional grand tone musicals are known for. The story's unique sound not only tells the story through lyrics but also through the very instruments themselves. Each character in Epic is associated with a particular instrument; the main character Odysseus with the guitar, the piano for Athena, Penelope with the viola, and so much more. The music becomes more advanced and technological as magic and the gods meddle in the life of Odysseus, and the traditional sounds are reserved for the more human roles within the cast. Certain riffs and motifs even correspond to perilous situations or a character embodying the ideals of another, allowing listeners to uncover new insights about each character on every listen.

EPIC is a thrilling experience that every fan of myth and music alike would do well to check out. The progress that has been made on the project already and the talented voices that have come together to bring the story to life are truly remarkable. The project continues to serve as inspiration for not only my own creative endeavors but also for the endeavors of many other people around the world. I'm excited to see Jorge and the rest of the cast take this project beyond the concept album stage and onto its next step of what is already a nearly 5-year long journey.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

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