

The Objects of Discontentment

Folio I

I. The Biological Self

1.0 In our day-to-day living, we are to a large extent, free to pursue any which thing which etches itself into the sum of our motivations.

1.1. Yet, there are limitations and restrictions to this freedom; for, consider the following rhetorical question: "if I desire to go to the bathroom and urinate, so that I do not piss my pants, do I will such desire?"

1.2. Even in considering an example as basic as this, it becomes clear that there are demands of our vessel which block us from experiencing a true and pure freedom of person.

1.3. The majority of our behaviors are to a large degree genetic or epigenetic in origin.

1.4. Even those of our routines and habits which are not of this sort are couched in biology; our circadian rhythm plays an enormous role in shaping the brain, and hence the mind, and this in turn governs the modalities of our lives.

1.5. We do not yet have the technology to precisely co-ordinate the endogenous transmission of hormones, neuropeptides, and neurotransmitters. In as much as we have drugs, and so can to some degree control the inputs of our mind, we do not really have express control over its outputs.

1.6. If one consents to the administration of some drug, then the desire is pre-existing, and is founded to no trivial degree in the workings of the brain, and pathways which have existed long before they were even born. Yet, if one does not consent to having these chemicals in their blood, then they are no more a willing participant.

1.7. Yet, we all feel (some more than others) that determinism doesn't paint a full picture, and that free will exists; this is corroborated by religious thought and its prevalence and cultural significance.

1.8. Ultimately, the source of this dogma is identification with one's self. One can not sanely believe they are who they are not; it betrays the very principle of selfhood to do so.

1.9. The boundaries of the *self* intersect with the boundaries of *others*; this intersection is a subset of the union of the two modalities.

1.10 A man can not truly escape from the clutches of his own way of thinking, and toss aside his origins. As soon as he says, "I am the other," he identifies other as self, and thus his selfhood still resides within.

II. The Cycles of Sleep and Wakefulness

2.0. The day begins, from one man's perspective, the moment he awakes, and ends when he falls deeply asleep.

2.1. The vast evidence of neuroscience shows us that the deepest stage of sleep is non-REM stage three sleep, when the frequency of brainwaves slow to less than three Hertz, and the peaks and troughs of the waves differ by the greatest amount.

2.2. At this stage, one is arguably depleted of all control over their person, and this is the most vulnerable neurotypical state one can possibly find themselves in.

2.3. In REM sleep, when one begins to notice they are dreaming, however, the brain functions similarly to how it would during the hours of wakefulness; the neurotypical body is suppressed from acting out their dreams due to chemicals GABA and glycine, and so the dreamer is locked into their own mind.

2.4. Inside these dreams, and especially if they are particularly lucid ones, one may feel that they are in control, more or less as though they were awake, but experiences this sensation through a different lens.

2.5. The origins of the circadian rhythm roughly begin around our ninth week in utero, when we are suddenly compelled to motion.

2.6. The fetus, still developing its senses, cannot see the world around it, but listens to noises filtered through the mother's belly.

2.7. The baby has no practical control over any of its mother's actions; these precious and critical moments of development are shaped entirely by forces outside its own personage.

2.8. As the baby's brain develops, an internal fantasy life takes root, reflecting the world that is both within and beyond itself, which it cannot realize yet are two distinct and separate things, and will not realize this for some time.

2.9. Suddenly, the baby will be born; it will be ripped violently from this precious inner/outer experience, and will be given a loud voice, and it will begin to wail, as though the world had just robbed it of the one thing most sacred to it.

2.10. The baby will become a toddler first, and then a child, and then an adolescence, and so on and so forth; and all the rest of its life, it will attempt to return to its original nirvana, either through strong beliefs in the afterlife, or attempts to reconcile its own desire with a world beyond its mastery, or both. The human will spend the rest of its life coping with the original trauma – a

separation from the heavens and its exit from the best environment it had ever known – the one which had been so generous as to give it life, and deem it worthy of existence to begin with.

2.11. After attaining personhood, this being will seek reprieve away from the world each and every day, or nearly that often, by turning off its interface with the world and dwelling in its own psyche. Exactly when, for how long, and how often it does so is a matter of its own preferences.

2.12. The child may either learn to control its preferences to the greatest extent it can, or follow the path of least resistance, and it may either do so in a way that conforms to societal norms or their own eccentricities.

2.13. Ultimately, the cycles which come to be are determined by and will continue to determine their inner and outer circles; the group which they believe themselves to be a member of, and the popular culture surrounding this unit.

2.14. The child will grow up frustrated with the dissonance between their own vision for society, and its difference from reality. The child wishes to have control over their own bedtime, and masters its desires by first learning to use the toilet, and second to not wet the bed.

2.15. Very quickly, children will find themselves steeped in all sorts of rituals and implanted into various strands of society – closest will be the family unit, then second the church and school, and thirdly, their own network of peers.

2.16. As the child develops into an adolescent, the peer group will vie for dominance over the others; it will be felt to align most strongly with the adolescent's own preferences, and thus sense of self, and therefore it will come to represent the power of the adolescent to separate itself from the outside world.

2.17. The attachments to the first and second channels of communication, and the upholding of the role which has been established at home and in school or church, is the mark of sincerity. The attachment to the tertiary channel manifests itself as a feeling of authenticity.

2.18. The call to be a sincere person, and to conform to expectation, will always be felt to be more-or-less in conflict with the adolescent's drive towards authenticity. A great and intense divergence of the two desires manifests itself as an *identity crisis*.

2.19. Such identity crises most commonly appear in transitory stages of life; middle age, adolescence and young adulthood, and the toddler phase, as well as phases of homelessness, periods in-between jobs, etcetera.

2.20. When the ground upon which one stands is ripped from beneath their feet, the social protocols which were upheld rigorously are relaxed, and either the legitimacy of the interpersonal paradigm or of the self must be called into question. A decision must be made: one of these must be rejected, and the other one favored; and, if the person's decision does not accurately reflect their own preferences, then anxiety, tension, depression, and other neuroses will result.

2.21. Ultimately, the individuation of the person, by which some amorphous notion of the true self is made concrete, is enabled by these cycles of acceptance and rejection.

2.22. These cycles start first in the cosmos, then manifest themselves at the level of life, of birth and death and generational continuity, and thirdly at the level of the individual, which is synonymous with the patterns of sleep and wake, which are dictated by the circadian rhythm of the individual.

2.23. This rhythm comes into being before the child has even been born, and is forged first by the dynamics of the family, which depend upon the guardian's own sleep and wake schedule, their work routine, and so on.

2.24. Even in the earliest hours of the baby's life outside the mother, it is clear that it has its own desires and predilections, and some strength by which it can leverage its own capacity to force its environment into conforming to itself. That is to say, the baby feeds when it wills, and so too does it sleep this way, and every one of its motions and actions are its own way of imprinting the chaos of its inclinations onto the rest of the world.

2.25. Ultimately, humans and all the other social creatures must either adapt to the demands of their society, or else be alienated by it. The human has the capacity to overcome many of these limitations with technology, and by fostering and residing within communities which align with their own preferences.

2.26. The great majority of people have very similar *hours of operation*; but there are discrepancies even among regular folks; the morning persons will convene in the morning, and afternoon folks in the P.M.; but of all the groups, those who are awake throughout the night and into the morning, and sleep throughout the day, will experience oppression and discrimination from the dogma of regularity, which is encoded by the hours of operation and enforced by the masses.

2.27. Those who live in massive cities may have more relief from this oppression than their more rural counterparts, but even still in every city in the world, the nocturnal kind is the minority, and is always a stranger to the general public.

2.28. Mankind wakes in the morning and sleeps at dusk to give himself the illusion of discontinuity; to believe that today is a separate thing from tomorrow, and that the night does not bleed into dawn, and that the moon and the Sun are not symbols of the same kind. It would otherwise disconcert him to accept that his life is like a big long day, for he forgives himself for what he did yesterday but not for today.

2.29. The very nature of one's environment – who is available for comradeship, to what extent, and for which activities – who so, where so, and how so; these details are impinged upon by the wakefulness of the individual, who is in turn subordinated by the hours of operation of those in close proximity.

III. Gravity and Levity

3.0. The higher animal seeks for an earnest life. To the extent that one *matters*, it is important that there is some sense of reverence for what is sacred. For, if life is purely a flight of fancy, then it becomes as a fugue – contented with nothing, and therefore constantly sensing for routes to escape from "confinement."

3.1. Yet, it is confinement, or better yet, *restriction*, which has allowed this animal to be; to be given a "blanket," so to speak, so that it may be insulated from all the rest of the cosmos, and be made its own archetype: fully fledged, with a sense of origination.

3.2. Yet, the higher animal, the thinking creature, is *motile*, not *sessile*; the contrast can be summarized by observing a dolphin side-by-side with a barnacle. It is for this reason that one can barely stomach the thought of living a life of maximal asceticism and austerity; even the monk must retain a playful spirit, lest he be a stranger to zen.

3.3. We find comfort in gravity when we are most scrupulous, or most contented; the converse is true when we backslide, or when we are faced with pain and sorrow.

3.4. We think of gravity as being more *real* than levity, in the sense of sincerity; yet, levity is real in the sense of authenticity.

3.5. Every poet must write with a steady hand, yet must loosen the hand so as to leave room for fluid motion; and to allow the hand and the pen to be as one; and to allow the forms of thought to flow from this fount as though there were an angel nudging this device in the right direction.

3.6. Furthermore, the poet, like the comedian, must learn to laugh at the *cosmic joke*; for, isn't it absurd, even, that our body stays as one vessel?

3.7 Without irony, there is no poetry; no comedy; no surprises; no freedom at all, and without all of these things, the animal kingdom will wither; they will rot from lack of joy, and love will find itself under a tombstone with no epitaph.

3.8. Everything is, in a sense, a sort of *pun*; a removal of a sign or symbol from its original context, and its appropriation in some sentence or space never uttered or seen before.

3.9. Suffering is suffrage. The things which we are willing to endure speak volumes. Though, wish the first onto a woman and you are a misogynist; but wish the second and you are a feminist, although a dearly antiquated one at that.

3.10. Suffering comes in two flavors: to have what one does not want, or to want what one does not have.

3.11. Some seek to modify their possessions, and status; others turn to a better mindset for greener pastures. Do either of these things, and your life will change; whether it be in the eyes of others, or in your own heart, it does not matter.

3.12. It is such a joy and a blessing, as well as sometimes a great nuisance, that there are many different sorts of folks; for, if everyone produced endlessly with nary a consumer in sight, then who shall be gratified? None.

3.13. There are really only two ways to spend your time: *waiting*, and *hurrying*. These are the type B people, and the type A people.

3.14. From the perspective of the hedonist, or the slacker, there must be more of the A-type, to create a better world to relax in; and, from the perspective of the perfectionist, or workaholic, there would be more joy and less stress and competition if only there were more couch potatoes around.

3.15. Some prefer to be a big fish in a little pond; others a little fish in a big pond.

3.16. Perspective, perspective, perspective.

3.17. In as much as we wish to be *taken* seriously, we do not wish to be beholden to this standard at all times; for, we cannot seriously *give* that which we lack, which may be greater or lesser in quantity and quality depending on the circumstances.

3.18. One recognizes that life is more or less a joke: one of great importance, yes, but still absurd nonetheless. Yet, one does not wish to be laughed at in all instances; only to be "*laughed with*," so to speak.

3.19. What, though, I may ask you, is the worst that can happen? That which you consider sacred is made a mockery of? Partake in the mockery not if it is antithetical to your beliefs; but, it seems plausible that if one can remain joyous in the face of this degradation, that one is truly at heart more joyous overall.

3.20. We seek depth, yes, but so too do we wish to saunter, and to wade in shallow waters: to keep things lighthearted, so as not to be usurped by some great wave or another.

3.21. So too do we seek joy, but should not allow excitement to fester through our souls, and to overtake all that is steadfast, and still.

3.22. So, life comes to this: the resolution of paradoxes great and small, and the attainment of harmony even in the case of discord.