

One Day

The Opportunity That Never Arrives

From the Gaitan Topology

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I. “One Day”

“Youth, divine treasure, you leave never to return! When I want to cry, I do not cry... and sometimes I cry without meaning to.”

— Rubén Darío

“One day.” “Soon, it will happen, I know, I feel it.” “You will see.”

These are not idle words. They are the grammar of a life organized around a future that never becomes present. The person who says “one day” is not lazy. They are not dreaming in the pejorative sense. They are *waiting*—and waiting is a posture that faces the future while the present passes uninhabited behind them.

In the Gaitan Topology, the lemniscate (∞) is the geometry of presence. Its crossing point is the Now—the only location where life is given, where agency operates, where encounter is possible. The curve passes through this center continuously, offering the present at every moment. But the person who lives in “one day” does not occupy the crossing point. They are oriented toward a future that behaves like a mathematical asymptote: always approaching, never arriving. Tomorrow is not a point in time. It is a **limit never reached**. The person approaches indefinitely without arriving. And the years pass.

The “one day” loop is the quintessential alternate lemniscate. It preserves the form of hope and the structure of ambition, but because its axis is a future-tense limit rather than the present-tense “I am,” it can never produce the fruit of action. The self does not stop looping when it leaves the crossing point. It begins looping around something else—and in this case, it loops around a tomorrow that recedes with every approach. It is a loop that sustains itself by the very fact that it never arrives.

“One day” is the most socially acceptable form of the serpent’s future tense. It does not sound like a temptation. It sounds like hope. And that is what makes it devastating—because it wears the clothing of virtue while performing the work of

displacement. We encourage it. We call it ambition, patience, faith. But in the topology, it is residence in the future—the conversion of hope from a virtue (which operates at the crossing point, trusting God in the present) into a displacement (which relocates the self into a tomorrow that never becomes today).

And so we grow older waiting. The “one day” becomes “one day, you’ll see”—spoken now not with anticipation but with defensive insistence. The person is no longer young and hoping. The person is aging and justifying. The “you’ll see” is addressed outward—to doubters, to the world—but it is really addressed inward: a reassurance that the deferral was not a waste, that the future will eventually redeem the unlived present. But it will not. ***Because the future is not a place where life is given. It is a place where life is projected and never received.***

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II. The Serpent’s Manifestation

“All this I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

— Matthew 4:9

The temptation in the wilderness is the foundational map of structural displacement. When the serpent says, “I will give you all this, if you bow down,” he is not offering a gift. He is offering a trade of coordinates. He invites the person to abandon the indicative present—the “I am” of the Father—for a subjunctive future. What he promises is an oasis that is geometrically positioned in the future lobe, ensuring the traveler never actually touches the ground of the Now.

In the modern world, this trade has been industrialized. What is now called “manifestation”—the technique of repeating “I am [future state]” or “I will be [desired outcome]” as an incantation of power—is the serpent’s grammar marketed as spirituality. The practitioner is taught to inhabit the future as if it were

already present, to feel success before it arrives, to live in the “as if” of a condition not yet realized. The language sounds like faith but the structure is displacement.

Notice the grammar. The divine “I am” is pure presence—spoken at the crossing point, requiring nothing beyond itself. The manifestation “I am” is a projection dressed in present tense—“I am wealthy,” “I am successful,” “I am powerful”—spoken from the serpent’s curve, aimed at a future that recedes with every affirmation. It borrows the form of the divine name and empties it of its content. It is the most precise inversion of “I am Who I am” imaginable: the name of God converted into an instrument of the will.

In mathematics, the Moore-Penrose pseudoinverse provides a “best fit” for a system that has no true solution. Manifestation operates on the same principle. It approximates a solution—the shape of a fulfilled life—when no true resolution exists on the serpent’s curve. The practitioner orbits the desired outcome like a satellite: moving with immense speed and effort, feeling the momentum, seeing the oasis clearly. But a satellite has no crossing point of its own. It borrows the center of whatever it orbits. And the oasis never arrives because the axis is the person’s own will rather than the “I am.” **Manifestation success is the pseudoinverse of presence**—a best-fit simulation of life for a soul that has vacated its center.

The serpent does not need to understand the soul. He only needs to bet on patterns. He recognizes the predictable loops of human desire and pride. He bets that if he can lure a person into a “one day” orientation, the sheer momentum of their own longing will keep them in orbit around a false center. He is a gambler who knows the house odds of the Ghost Zone. And contemporary manifestation practices have systematized this structure.

Against the “I will be” of manifestation stands the “I am” of the Gospel. Manifestation is an incantation—a formula used to bend reality toward the self. The Gospel is an encounter—a realignment that restores the person to the crossing point. The person who stops manifesting is not giving up on life. They are giving up on *predation*—the attempt to extract from the future what can only be received

in the present. They stop reaching for the asymptote and fall back into the density of the Now—the only place where the “I am” is waiting to receive them.

* * *

III. The Two Evenings

Consider two people. Same city. Same evening. Same hours between dinner and sleep.

The first person works a nine-to-five office job, or a backbreaking factory shift. He gets home. He has dinner. He drinks a beer or two. He goes to bed. The observer might say: that is a small life. Unremarkable. Unambitious. But the topology says something different. That person, in that beer, in that dinner, in that ordinary tiredness—is at the crossing point. Not heroically. Not mystically. Not consciously. But structurally. The beer is present tense. The dinner is present tense. The tiredness in the body is present tense. The person is not projecting. Not deferring. Not constructing an alternative self. They are *there*. Inhabiting what is given. The moment is small, but it is *inhabited*. The lemniscate passes through the center and the person, without knowing it, passes with it.

The second person gets home, opens the laptop, and begins. Designs that no client commissioned. Code that no company will run. Portfolios that no one will review. The observer might say: that is admirable. Disciplined. Passionate. But the topology says something different. That person is on the serpent’s curve. The production is real—the talent is real, the effort is real, the hours are real—but the production is aimed at a crossing point that is not on this path. The designs are for a job that has not arrived. The code is for a company that has not called. The portfolio is for a future that retreats with every page added. The person is not inhabiting the evening. They are *using* the evening as fuel for a “one day” that consumes every tonight.

And here is the cruelty: the person who “does nothing”—dinner, beer, bed—is closer to presence than the person who produces all night. Not because laziness is a virtue. But because the first person has no future self to construct. They are not faithful to the wrong geometry. They are faithful to no geometry at all—and in that absence of ambition, they accidentally inhabit the present. The beer is not deferred. It is *drunk*. The tiredness is not postponed. It is *felt*. The evening is not invested. It is *lived*.

The person on the laptop is doing something far more effortful and far less present. Every design is an offering to the future. Every line of code is a prayer to “one day.” And because the production ***feels like life***—because the cursor is moving, because the screen is glowing, because something is being made—the person does not notice that they have not been home all evening. Their body is in the chair. Their self is in the future. The crossing point passed hours ago. They did not notice because the serpent’s curve was in motion.

And the contradiction: the first person—the one with the beer—looks at his life and says: “Another day. The same as every other.” He feels his life is too simple. Useless. Unremarkable. He sees no greatness in it. And yet he is present. The second person—the one on the laptop—looks at the first with quiet pity. “I’m not like them. I’m building something. I have potential.” And yet she is on the serpent’s curve. **The one who looks like they are wasting their life is living it. The one who looks like they are building their life is deferring it.**

* * *

IV. The Audience That Never Arrives

The person on the laptop is not designing for a company. They never were.

The Ghost Zone, as I argued in *The Topology of Presence*, has a root, and the root is absence—the absence of presence during the formative years of a person’s life. A parent who was in the room but not *there*. A father who was killed, or who died

young, or who left for another country. A mother who never returned. Because no one was present at the crossing point, the child never learned that the center exists. And because the child never experienced the “I am” modeled by another human being, the child’s own “I” was never fully consolidated.

What the child builds instead is a compensatory architecture—a parallel interior universe in which an alternative life can be inhabited. A stage. And every design, every line of code, every late night of production is addressed—unconsciously, wordlessly, structurally—to the person who left. *Look, dad, what I’ve done. Look, mom, I became something.* The “one day” is not “one day I’ll get the job.” The “one day” is “**one day they’ll see me.**” And *they* are not employers. *They* are the ones who were supposed to be at the crossing point and were not.

The alternate lemniscate—the parallel topology the child built as compensatory architecture—was never about career or talent or ambition. It was a stage built for an audience of one who never showed up. The child builds and builds and builds, and the building feels like purpose, and the purpose feels like life, but the building is a rehearsal for an encounter that cannot happen in the form the child imagined it. The father is gone. The mother is gone. The audience seat is empty. And the person keeps designing, keeps coding, keeps producing—because to stop would be to admit that the seat will remain empty. That the opportunity was never professional. It was *filial*. The wound was never about the market. It was about the table where someone was missing.

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V. The Geometry of Regret

We carry within us what can be called coordinates of regret—specific moments where a different life felt possible, where a door stood open and was not entered. These moments are not experienced as finished past. They remain active points of departure. From them, the mind projects alternate trajectories—lives that could have unfolded but never crossed into the present.

We do not simply remember these paths. We inhabit them. Energy is directed toward versions of ourselves that no longer exist as possibilities. The “one day” becomes an attempt to return—to step back onto a path that has already been left behind. But the structure of time does not permit this. The curve has moved. The door is no longer approaching.

Not all missed opportunities are equal. Some belong to the daily rhythm of life—habits deferred, words left unsaid, small beginnings postponed. These return. The curve passes near them again. Their regret remains elastic.

Others do not return. They belong to a specific season—decisions tied to age, relationships bound to time, paths that existed only at a particular crossing. Once the curve advances, these coordinates become unreachable. They are not delayed. They are past.

Regret, in this sense, is not merely emotional. It is the recognition of distance from a point that can no longer be entered.

And the person who continues to build toward “one day” is often not facing the future at all. They are oriented toward one of these fixed coordinates—attempting, through effort, to reopen a door that no longer exists in the direction they are moving.

* * *

VI. “It Was Not Meant to Be”

A common response to loss is the phrase: “It was not meant to be.” It appears comforting, but it carries a quiet distortion.

First, it dissolves the reality of the loss. If it was never meant to be, then nothing was truly lost. But the person grieving knows this is not true. The opportunity existed. The relationship existed. The door that closed was real. To deny this is not healing—it is avoidance.

Second, it bypasses the work required for redemption. The Christian tradition does not claim that what was lost was never real. It claims that what was lost can be redeemed. But redemption requires that something genuinely died. You cannot skip the loss and still speak of restoration.

The “could have been” had real weight. It existed as a genuine possibility at the crossing point. It shaped the path that followed. Its absence is not erased by explanation.

The loss was real. The redemption is also real. They are not the same thing.

* * *

VII. The Heroic Illusion

The Heroic Illusion is not simply ambition. It is the internal completion of a life that has not yet been lived.

The person does not wait passively. They construct. They imagine success, recognition, coherence, arrival. These are not vague fantasies—they are structured, detailed, internally consistent. In this sense, the illusion is not weakness. It is precision applied in the wrong direction.

Because the experience of arrival has already been generated internally, the external moment loses its necessity. The person no longer depends on reality to confirm meaning. It has already been resolved.

This is what makes the structure difficult to interrupt. The illusion does not feel false. It feels complete. But what it provides is not contact. It is closure without encounter.

And because nothing external is required, nothing external is allowed to fully occur. The moment is approached, shaped, anticipated—but not entered.

The life appears oriented upward—toward success, toward recognition, toward fulfillment. But the movement does not reach its object. It stabilizes in anticipation.

This is the heroic form of the same structure: approach without arrival.

* * *

VIII. Two Poets, Two Witnesses

“Traveler, there is no road. The road is made by walking.”

— Antonio Machado

Darío is the voice of the person who deferred and now mourns. “Youth, divine treasure, you leave never to return!” He is looking back from the end of the serpent’s curve and seeing what passed uninhabited. Every “one day” consumed a today, and now the todays are gone. And the most devastating lines are the last two: “When I want to cry, I do not cry... and sometimes I cry without meaning to.” That is the Ghost Zone’s signature: the disconnection between will and experience. The person cannot produce presence when they choose it and cannot prevent presence when it arrives unbidden. Presence has become involuntary—something that happens *to* the person rather than something the person *inhabits*. Darío is past tense. Elegy.

Machado is the opposite—not the lament but the instruction. “Traveler, there is no road. The road is made by walking.” This is the topology of presence stated as poetry. The path does not pre-exist. There is no “one day” waiting ahead. There is no road to arrive at. The road is made *by walking*—in the present tense, at the crossing point, step by step. The road is the trace left by inhabited presents.

And the final image—“only wakes in the sea”—is the most topological line in all of Spanish poetry. The wake exists only because the ship is moving *now*. It has no

permanence. It cannot be walked again. It is the visible trace of presence that has already passed. The person who waits for “one day” has no wake—because they never moved through the water. They stood at the dock, watching the horizon, waiting for the sea to come to them.

Dário mourns what was missed. Machado names what was always available. One looks back and weeps. The other looks down and walks.



IX. Two Characters, Two Geometries

“And then in the desert, when the sun comes up, I couldn’t tell where heaven stopped and the earth began. It’s so beautiful.”

— Forrest Gump

Before turning to cinema, recall the lemniscate’s form: a figure-eight curve whose crossing point is the Now. Each lobe represents temporal displacement—past and future—while the center is the only coordinate of presence. To live at the crossing is to inhabit the “I am”; to orbit either lobe is to defer life into memory or projection.

Forrest Gump offers an unusually clear depiction of what presence looks like when it is not mediated by projection or deferral. Forrest is always present. He is always “I am.” He does not project. He does not defer. He does not construct an alternate self. He runs, and the running is not toward something—it is simply running, present tense, inhabited. He sits, and the sitting is complete. He loves Jenny, and the love is not conditional, not future, not mimetic. It is *given*. He is at the crossing point for the entire film.

And when circumstances are hard—Vietnam, the desert, solitude—he remains at the center. He is in Vietnam, and what he sees is the bayou. He is in the desert, exhausted, running without destination, and what he sees is heaven meeting earth. “I couldn’t tell where heaven stopped and the earth began. It’s so beautiful.” He

sees two skies, one on top of the other. A million sparkles on the water. He is not romanticizing. He is *reporting*. He is telling Jenny what the crossing point looks like from the inside. And the answer is: it looks like beauty. Not because the circumstances are beautiful—Vietnam is not beautiful, the desert is not comfortable, solitude is not easy—but because the person *at the center* sees with depth. His sight is not flat. It has vertical dimension. He sees heaven and earth meeting. He sees the place where things converge—which is exactly what the crossing point is.

Jenny is on the serpent's curve for the entire film. She runs *from* Forrest, from presence, from the place where she was known and loved. She chases every "you will be": the folk career, the protest movement, the drugs, the men, the city, the next thing and the next thing. Every movement is an attempt to become someone other than the girl from Greenbow. Every movement is addressed, unconsciously, to a father who abused her—an absence of a different kind, a presence that was poison rather than gift. She builds an alternate lemniscate and calls it freedom.

But Jenny is not merely drifting. She is *orbiting*. Each movement she joins becomes her center—the folk scene, the antiwar protest, the commune, the cocaine. She does not feel like she is losing herself. She feels like she is joining something larger. The gravitational pull feels like solidarity, like purpose, like finally being part of something that matters. But a satellite has no crossing point of its own. It borrows the center of whatever it orbits. And when that center shifts—when the movement fractures, when the relationship ends, when the group redefines itself—the satellite has nothing to return to. It does not drift back to its own axis. It simply follows the next orbit, or spins off into void.

This is Jenny's entire biography. Not one displacement but a *sequence of displacements*—each one experienced as arrival, each one ending in collapse, each collapse followed not by return to the center but by attachment to the next available orbit. The folk career breaks. She orbits the protest movement. The protest movement breaks. She orbits the men. The men break. She orbits the drugs. And some of these are not necessarily evil in itself—movements, a healthy relationship,

communities can be genuine goods when approached from the **center**. But Jenny never approaches them from the center. She approaches them **as** the center—as substitutes for the axis she never had, as replacements for the crossing point her father’s abuse made uninhabitable. When each orbit breaks, there is no self to fall back on, because the self was never consolidated. There is only the next orbit. Until there are no more orbits. And the person is alone. And the only words left are past conditional.

Forrest sees two skies from the desert. Jenny sees no sky from the city. Presence is not about where you are. It is about **whether you are there**.

And on her deathbed: ***“I wish I could have been there with you.”***

Present tense collapsed into past conditional. ***Could have been***. The most painful tense in any language. Not “I will be”—the serpent’s promise, still operative. Not “I am”—the divine name, finally available. But “*I could have been*”—the recognition, too late, that the crossing point was always there, that she spent her life on a curve that never crossed.

* * *

X. The Sorrow That Absolution Does Not Erase

*What I did not accomplish.
The time I wasted.
The opportunity to live.*

We repent. We truly, with faith, believe God absolves us. The center is restored. The “I” is returned to the crossing point. The topology holds. Grace is real.

But the uninhabited presents do not come back.

The evenings spent on the laptop, the years spent on the serpent’s curve, the decades of “one day”—they are not returned. They are forgiven but not recovered. The crossing point was offered every moment of every day, and it was declined—not in malice but in deferral, not in rebellion but in absence. And at the end, the

person stands at the crossing point for the first time and sees, clearly, how many times they could have stood there before.

This is the sorrow that absolution does not erase. Not guilt—guilt is absolved. Not sin—sin is forgiven, God's mercy is infinite. But the *time*. The time that passed while the person was elsewhere. The presents that were offered and never entered. The capacity to have been *there*—truly there, at the center, in the presence of God—and the recognition that it was available all along.

Jenny on her deathbed. Darío at the end of the poem.

The person who finally closes the laptop and looks at the empty room and understands, in a single moment of clarity, that the audience was never coming, that the opportunity was never the job, that the “one day” was the name they gave to the crossing point they never occupied.

That person is not finished. That person is *beginning*. Not beginning the career. Not beginning the plan. Beginning *presence*. For the first time, or for the first time in decades, occupying the crossing point—where the “I am” is given, where the self is received rather than constructed, where the evening is not fuel for tomorrow but the place where life actually occurs.

Machado was right. There is no road. The road is made by walking.

Not by waiting. Not by designing. Not by “one day.”

By walking. Present tense. *Now*. The only moment that is complete in itself—not waiting, not becoming, but gathered, undivided, alive.

I am—because I am given.



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