



THE NERVEMETER

Are you homeless? Living in a hostel? Do you have a problem with alcohol, drugs or mental health? Are you forced into begging or stealing in order to deal with these problems? The Nerve Meter invites you to sell its magazine and become involved in its distribution strategy. You need no accreditation to do this, there is no red-tape involved, we don't ask that you pay for the magazines in advance, you don't have to be clean and sober to sell it. Our aim is to try and alleviate the hardship experienced daily by London's army of poor and broken people.

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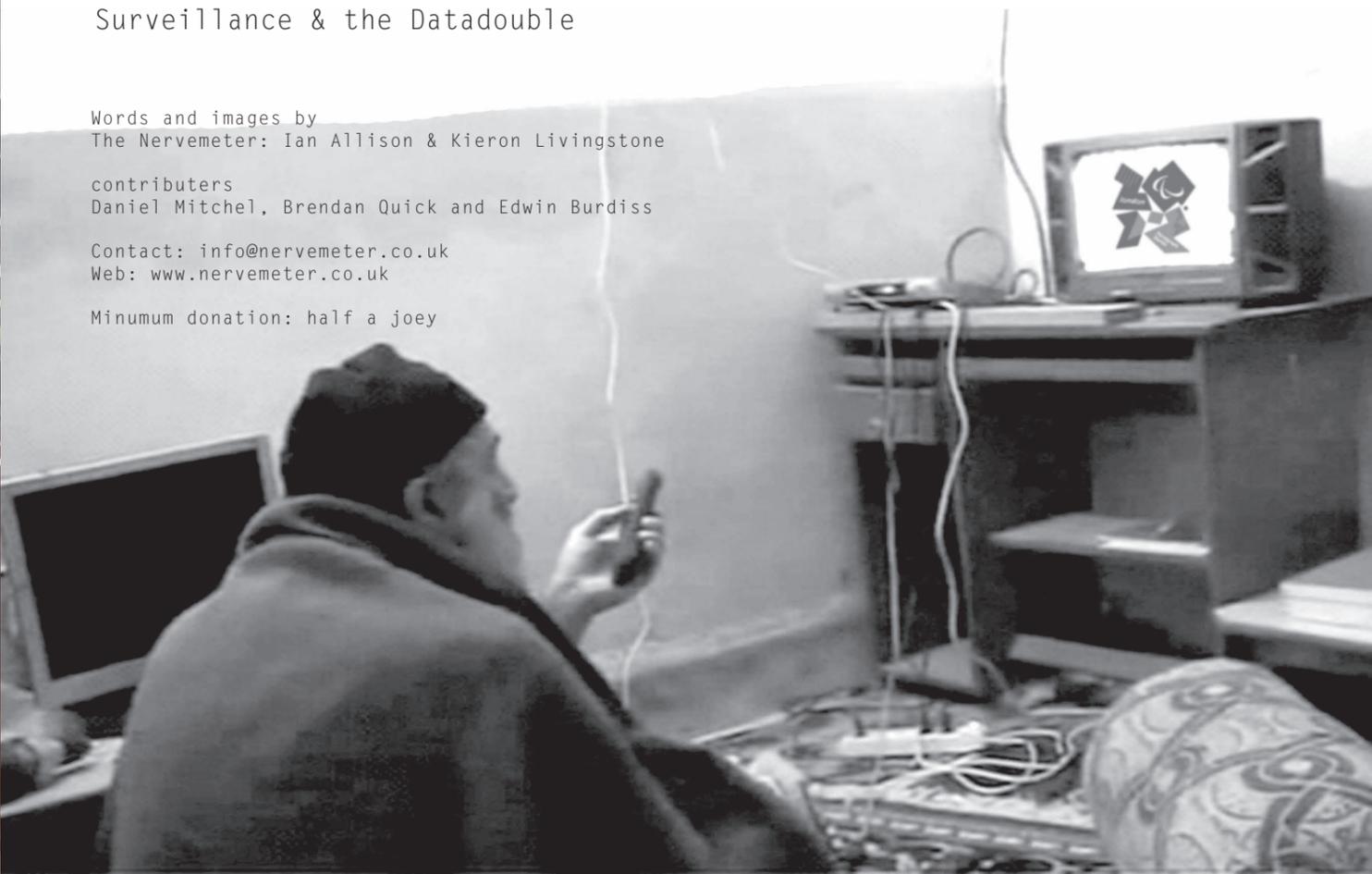
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"There is no power on earth to be compared to him. Job 41 . 24"



The first modern version of an international Olympic competition was held in Athens in 1896. It's significant that interest in Olympic competition has grown steadily over the 19th century: the Wenlock Olympics in England and the growing fad for gymnasia in fashionable cities like Paris and St Petersburg emerged from about 1850 onwards. One might conclude that this phase of history demonstrates the drawing to a close of the so-called "Age of Enlightenment", an ideology that prized intellect and reason as the bedrock of civilised society. The twentieth century, by contrast, has seen a gradual obsession with the human body's eroticisation, commodification and even modification.

Piecing together elements of cultures like that of the ancient Greeks, where the Olympics appeared over 3000 years ago, is complex. It seems clear that competitions involving throwing stuff and running like fuck were a reflection of prowess in war. However, Greekish celebration of the corporeal was not without reservation; Platonic sophistry – which was reintroduced at the Renaissance and invigorated the Enlightenment – sought truth, esteemed logic and posited the notion of ideal form. The ancient philosopher, Plotinus, went as far as saying he was ashamed to have a body.

This is not to say the pursuit of reason redeems us from debasement, or that it's necessarily antithetical to barbarism. Marxist philosopher, Theodore Adorno, saw the whole project of Enlightenment leading inexorably to the death-camps. However, he also had nothing but contempt for sport, as well as almost all other ways people choose to pass their "free-time" within modern society. Sport, he said, was nothing more than a meaningless play of empty rationality, designed to placate the masses. Adorno was a cultural snob: "Endgame" by Samuel Beckett and the atonal music of Arnold Schoenberg were about all he could stomach as far as light entertainment was concerned. Adorno wrote the following on the subject of occupying free-time:

"As far as my activities beyond the bounds of my recognised profession are concerned, I take them all, without exception, very seriously. So much so that I should be horrified by the very idea that they had anything to do with hobbies – preoccupations with which I had become mindlessly infatuated merely in order to kill the time – had I not become hardened by experience to such examples of this now-widespread barbaric mentality."
(The Culture Industry, p163)

Known as the Frankfurt School, Adorno and some of his colleagues who managed to escape Nazi Germany, spent the rest of their lives in exile trying to unravel and pinpoint the psychological tendencies that facilitated the mass conversion to National Socialism. The rise of fascism was not only dependent on socio-economic factors, they said, but was also enabled by a passive acceptance of insidious and unrelenting propaganda. Swollen with national pride the crowds eventually became hysterical; the histrionics of Nazi rallies were elevated to the sublime. Frankfurt School philosophers, who became re-established in Los Angeles after the war, tried to apply their findings on to the inevitable dominance of capitalist culture. Their ideas and theories seem curious today, so outmoded and outdated they are.

Returning to the Olympics, some people might intuitively harbour cynicism towards this all-consuming mega-event: the endless hype; the anxiety over security; the urban decluttering; the incessant branding. And the crappy opening ceremony, combined with abysmal weather, failure on the part of the UK to win anything and the indefatigable, cheating Chinese made it all seem a bit tawdry - just like real life. But as the medals started coming national pride took hold. According to plan we have been seduced by repeated images of tears of glory; we were consumed by this sublime spectacle. Britain became Great again and the Olympics won in the end.

We hope you gave a generous donation to whoever presented you with this magazine.



Sublime Spectacle: The London Riots Versus The London Olympics

"Did you see the stylish kids in the riot?"

What follows is a set of comparisons between the London riots of summer 2011 and the 2012 mega-event that is the London Olympic Games. Running alongside this, on the opposite page is a selection of aphorisms, quotations and definitions, taken from an essay about the collective experience of living in a large city and the aesthetic value of phenomena such as urban-based mega-events. We thought it would be interesting to collapse one piece of writing into another; this magazine attempts to be experimental in the formatting of some of the text and images. This technique perhaps threatens an obviously clear discussion or precludes a progression towards a definite conclusion. Borrowing from a famous description of Modernist literature, we would say that whatever can be divined from these comparisons is not supposed to be prescriptive. There is no single meaning, perhaps no meaning at all, at the core of this piece of writing. It's not like the kernel inside a nut. Rather there is a sense of something hovering about the words like a misty halo.¹

Past and present

These two important events, or series of events, take place almost one year apart. The Olympics is all about anticipation; the riots now appear like a bad dream the city once had which some people would rather forget ever happened. At some point in the future a different perspective will emerge, marrying these two points in time, framing them outside the present. This understanding can only be accessed from the future looking back.²

Planning, preparation and legacy

In this respect the Olympics is the diametric opposite of a riot. The latter is about spontaneity: the riots of summer 2011 were sparked by some poor policing decisions in the Tottenham area, which led to the murder of Mark Duggan by armed police officers. Violence and mayhem then spread virally across the capital during the following days and nights. The Olympics, as everyone knows, is years in the planning. The spontaneous outpouring of a riot leaves only destruction in its wake while the Olympics touts a valuable legacy for all, although it remains to be seen what the putative, utilitarian value of the Olympic legacy will be. One point brought up at a meeting of anti-Olympic protestors was that the Olympic planning regime is imposed on the city so some residents – such as those living in Leyton Marsh – just see it as destroying parts of their living environment. For instance car parks will be laid where there was once areas for dog walking, or nesting areas for wild fowl and



1. Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Conrad's narrator, Marlow, makes this reference before he embarks on his story about traveling up the Congo. When Marlow states that the meaning of the tale will not be found in the centre like the kernel of a nut but rather hover about it like a misty halo, he is making an apology, not only for his story, but for most of modernist literature which would follow. Conrad's influential novella was first published in 1899.



THE POLICE (OF THE FUTURE).
(Vide Letter to "Daily Chronicle," Feb. 15, 1886.)

2. Soren Kierkegaard, Journals IV A 164
*"Life can only be understood backwards;
but it must be lived forwards."*



so on.

Despite the obvious differences, we will refer to both series of events as happenings.³ We are concerned with aesthetics in the very broadest sense of that word and are not trying to simply bash the Olympics wholesale, nor do we hope, being willfully insensitive to the family-run businesses destroyed by marauding rioters.

Pride, shame and denial

The riots are an utterly shameful admission that life in this great city is not as fabulous as those in charge would have us believe. The hosting of the Olympics, by contrast, is a proud moment for its organisers and those with a certain sort of civic mindedness. Today most would rather forget that there were running battles in the streets the previous summer; those rioters are probably still in jail anyway. But we should remember what they say about pride. Just days after London won the right to host these games, jihadists bombed the fuck out of the place. We are not conspiracy enthusiasts but it doesn't seem that there could be a more ominous portent.

Psycho-sexual fetishisation: orgasmic versus anal

The Olympics was originally born out of Greek tests of endurance and strength and the same idea continued with the Roman gladiatorial games. Both these ancient cultures esteemed military order and dominance; gladiatorial competition excited the crowd while reflecting the power, conflict and the necessary cruelty that takes places during war. Today's iteration of the Olympics has added to the mix an obsession with the eroticisation of the human body and the commercialising of all culture, to the extent that now amputees are advertising perfumes and aftershaves. The Olympics is all about containment. The exuberance of the event reinforces the power systems underpinning it, just as the barbarism of the Coliseum reinforces the conquests of an empire. A riot is the momentary loss of containment. It is orgasmic rather than anal. To be caught up in the complete anarchy would be to experience the orgasmic force of unbridled destruction. To the London poor this would perhaps be a pleasurable sensation: an orgiastic drive toward complete destruction and ultimate intoxication of the senses. It is geared toward complete childlike freedom and total denial of order and authority.

Security

Here there is some commonality. Both events test the city's security capabilities. The Olympic security operation is trying to anticipate every eventuality; driven by the nightmare of a terrorist attack, the security operation itself has become spectacular in every sense of the word⁴. The security legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games will be hundreds of thousands of additional CCTV points added to one of the most filmed places on the planet.⁵ There is no chance London would have qualified to host this security bonanza had it not already achieved "mature" security status - a prerequisite for any city aiming to host an Olympic Games these days. This covers everything from data collection capabilities to street furniture. Certain of the measures being implemented in advance of the 2012 Olympics in London have caused inhabitants total bewilderment, such as unmanned aircraft patrolling the skies or ground-to-air missiles being positioned on the roofs of tower blocks



3. "Happenings"

This term is loaded, theoretically and aesthetically speaking, because it was coined to describe performance art events back in the radical heyday of the 1960s. And a riot, while not intended to be artistic, is a spontaneous outpouring of mass hysteria. Interestingly, the Mayor of London's office has promised pseudo-spontaneous performances to take place around the capital during the games. Anti-Olympic protestors have also discussed using inventive direct actions to block Olympic road lanes, for example.



4. Discipline and Punish Michel Foucault (trans Alan Sheridan)

"Our society is one not of spectacle but surveillance." Much has been made of this terse comment from Foucault; surveillance of all sorts invades our society today. He argues that liberal, bourgeois power systems tend to compromise the supposedly sacred notion of subjectivity with the use of tools such as prison reform and surveillance.



5. "Spectacular Security: Mega-events and the Security Complex".

This article, sourced at the British Library, lists the costs of security operations at successive Olympics, demonstrating the effect on those costs post-9/11. For example the security spend at the Los Angeles Olympic games in 1984 was \$79.4m, which equated to \$11,627 per athlete. Jump forward to Atlanta in 1996 and the cost has crept up to \$108.2m. Compare these incremental increases with the post-9/11 security budget for the Athens games of 2004, which stood at \$1.5 billion or \$142,897 per athlete. The cost at Beijing incidentally exceeded \$6.5bn. The article states that London 2012 will herald "the appearance of absolute security" with hundreds of thousands of additional CCTV cameras being added to the existing load, "for UK security firms, 2012 will provide a 'futuristic showcase', like Paris and Milan are to the fashion industry [...] Planners see mega-events as catalyst to redefine cities. Mega-events bring about 'global recalibration of security'."

around Stratford.

At a recent meeting of anti-Olympic demonstrators/disgruntled East London residents, one commentator asked where exactly these missiles would bring down unwelcome objects in East London's airspace; on whose heads would they fall? ⁶. The riots brought a state of overnight emergency and firefighting measures, which revealed some unexpected gaps in the Met's armoury. Some within the police ranks concluded that officers didn't need water cannons but could have done with better sandwiches during the ordeal. In any case the riots will have convinced security practitioners that the threat to safety is not only a religiously motivated one

Heroes, villains and the hyper-reality of TV

The Olympics offers a stage for the creation of heroes. The UK media waits eagerly to crown homegrown competitors who excel before a home crowd. The riots, also televised in a closed circuit capacity, showed us social vermin behaving at its worst, which was also available for broadcasting on internet and terrestrial TV. Thanks to lots of grainy CCTV footage, the aftermath became a witch-hunt, after the fact, in order to shame and indict these ultimate villains. Just like a big sporting tournament, there were some unexpected stars who stood up to the mark and captured the imagination of a nation: the posh bird who liked to drive looters away from the scene; the lawyer's son who enjoyed throwing bricks at the flicks; high net worth siblings remanded in custody. Those rioters, those scourge-like villains were judged after the fact, their deeds were understood in reverse. In this odd and ineffectual manner, it was as if anything not captured on CCTV, might as well not have happened from legal perspective ⁷.

Winners/losers

Small businesses are cited as the biggest losers in all cases. The Olympics has been accused of simply appropriating land in East London and moving small businesses off it. There must be some codicil in the Olympic Act that allows the games organisers to do this, leaving the individual no recourse to the law. In the immediate aftermath of the riots everyone felt sympathy for the family-owned furniture store in South London that had survived the blitz, only to be torched and razed to the ground in a wanton orgy of destruction and violence. Understandably this caused a sense of outrage. Of course nobody gives a shit about burning down a Starbucks; you'd actually be doing small businesses, at least those that serve hot drinks, a huge favour.

Community building

The riots saw concerned upper-middle class homeowners making tea for the police and emergency services. This was presumably a more important salve than might appear at first glance, given the thousands of officers that complained about the poor appointment of sandwiches available during the crisis. There was an interesting report about a very motivated group of Turkish shop owners in Dalston who banded together and scared the rioters so much that police were called to protect prospective looters on the street. There was little report of looting from actual houses despite the growing sense of paranoia among London's wealthy elite. The London Olympics has likewise instantiated a small but robust community spirit among some residents of East London and elsewhere who now utterly despise having the games imposed upon them.

6. Iain Sinclair, Stoke Newington literary festival talk on the legacy of the Olympics:

The author and London topology guru answered this question in part by stating that the one place the missiles definitely will not come down is on to the sacred Westfield (Stratford) shopping precinct. "Westfield is the cathedral," stated Mr Sinclair. He pointed out that a lorry-load of armed troops was dispatched to Westfield during the height of the London riots of 2011.



7. ibid;

Mr Sinclair made an esoteric point about the way that CCTV operates in a sinister and ineffectual manner. We watch "movies" of bombers, for instance, after the atrocity has occurred, moving frame by frame into the underground to detonate bombs.



The power of marketing

The awesome power of marketing upon the individual and collective psyche underlies both the Olympic mega-event and the looting hoards unleashed by the riots. Consumption of “stuff” is now so deeply ingrained in the structural anthropology of humans within many cultures that it could almost be called an addiction. As previously mentioned, the positioning of selected brands is protected by legislation within the transitory, multi-billion universe of the Olympics. What can we say? Some of these very large corporates are guilty of the foulest of crimes against this planet and its inhabitants, but because of their scale and power they reserve exclusive permission when it comes to ramming their marketing messages at us – nothing you didn't already know. High street behemoths like Starbucks and MacDonalds are always attacked during street riots by anti-capitalist protestors, but most take part in a concerted effort to loot places such as Argos, like flesh-eating zombies to a shopping mall,⁸ or January sales enthusiasts in a rush to consume but without spending any money.

Media Coverage

At some point prior to the attacks of 9/11 a journalist from the Wall Street Journal was granted an interview with Osama bin Laden. One of the reporter's first questions to bin Laden was how could he condone the murder of innocent civilians. The Lion of the Mujahadeen, sitting sage-like, raised one long finger into the air and began the following diatribe; the words in Arabic, almost a whisper:

“One day a wolf meets a lamb drinking by a stream. The wolf says to the lamb, ‘you were responsible for muddying the water of this stream last year.’ ‘It was not me,’ the lamb replies, ‘for I was not born.’ The wolf says, ‘it must have been your mother then,’ and pounces on the lamb and starts ripping it to pieces. The lamb's mother has witnessed this and runs at the wolf and butts its flank, ineffectually. The wolf stops, points at the lamb's mother and calls out, ‘Look – a terrorist.’ And above the stream, sitting in a tree, a row of parrots call out in chorus, ‘Look, look – terrorist!’”

The media are the parrots in this analogy, obviously. It's a searching question, but try asking yourself what good today's media actually do.⁹

The Impervious Spectacle

The word “spectacle” is being used here ironically: the literal meaning - a crowd pleasing, big screen extravaganza – is not the same as the actual meaning; which supports the theory that advanced western culture steeps humanity within a hyper-real dream state of advertisements and marketing messages. The word “spectacle” and the word “sublime” which appear in the title of this piece both relate historically to a certain aesthetic and politically motivated world-view.¹⁰

Reapplying the Historical Idea of “Sublime”

The word “sublime” refers to an artistic school of thought that is completely outdated¹¹; it is being applied here in an unconventional sense to further the argument that the Olympic mega-event has some inherent value, but only in as much as an urban riot does. As an artistic movement the sublime peaked in popularity between the 18th and 19th centuries and was at one time the most influential aesthetic theory in Britain. It refers to poetic descriptions or paintings of natural landscapes, particularly the appreciation of wild and imposing vistas, typically craggy, snowcapped mountain ranges, roaring waterfalls, great pine forests, imposing

8. Dawn of the Dead, Dir. George Romero

Much of the action in Romero's classic takes place in a shopping mall full of walking corpses, a cute satire on the way brands have washed our brains and are burnt onto our retinas. “This place reminds them of how they spent their time when they were alive,” notes one of the survivors.

9. The London Metro, Free Paper

I can think of one thing: during the tax on pasties debacle one paper did a feature on Greggs the bakers and its UK empire. The headline was, “*We Built this City on Sausage-rolls*”.

10. Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord

By using the word “spectacle” we are referring to specific philosophical theory which became popular in the 1960s, gathered into a book entitled “Society of the Spectacle” by the neo-Marxist philosopher, Guy Debord. His theories, which are set out in terse quotes or aphorisms rather than logically progressing arguments, grew out of Marxist theory mixed with some psychology and other strands of feminist and anti-capitalist thinking. The basics of Marxist theory hold that labour is divided under capitalism and the result is that most individuals become alienated, working within low-paid, meaningless occupations. Meanwhile a few owners of the means of production at the top of the pile become fabulously wealthy. A drive to own houses, cars and have cash to spend on a bewildering array of consumer goods keeps this model functioning. The potent power of advertising and resulting obsession with desirable brands facilitates this consumer-led existence. Duped and mystified, we are unable to smash out of this false, manufactured version of reality. Generally people who live within advanced consumer cultures have no problem identifying with the main tenets of “Situationism”: the term given to concerted efforts to smash out of this imposed, dreamlike state.

In the militant era of the 1960s students and advocates of counter-culture and revolution felt that a constant deluge of advertising and marketing messages was nothing more than a rather tawdry trick being played on the masses. This state of forced myopia was inherently unstable and could somehow be punched through or smashed. Art has always played a part in attempts to reverse the process and provide an escape route from the so-called spectacle that mediates every aspect of today's culture. Debord's Society of the Spectacle could be viewed as a work of art in itself and the centre of the cannon of situationist artforms. However, no viable alternative to advanced capitalism has ever worked on a large-scale basis for reasons too complex and varied to address here.

The London 2012 Olympic mega-event aims to achieve the ultimate in spectacle in both sense of the word. The London riots of a year earlier could be construed as an attempt to shatter the theoretical idea of the spectacle. The riots were also a crowd puller/pleaser in the traditional sense of being a spectacle to behold, especially if you happen to despise authority, institutionalised racism, and the hypocrisy that purports we live in an “equal” society. Some people might therefore say the riots should be no more vilified than the games.

11. The Oxford English Dictionary

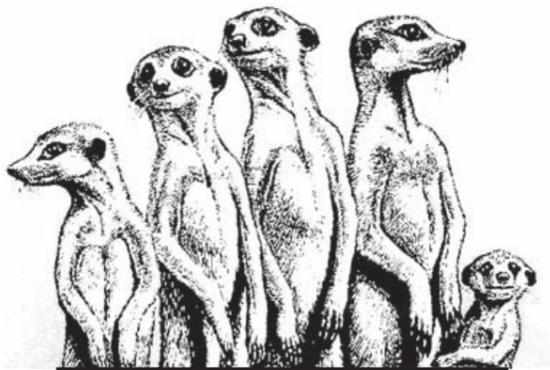
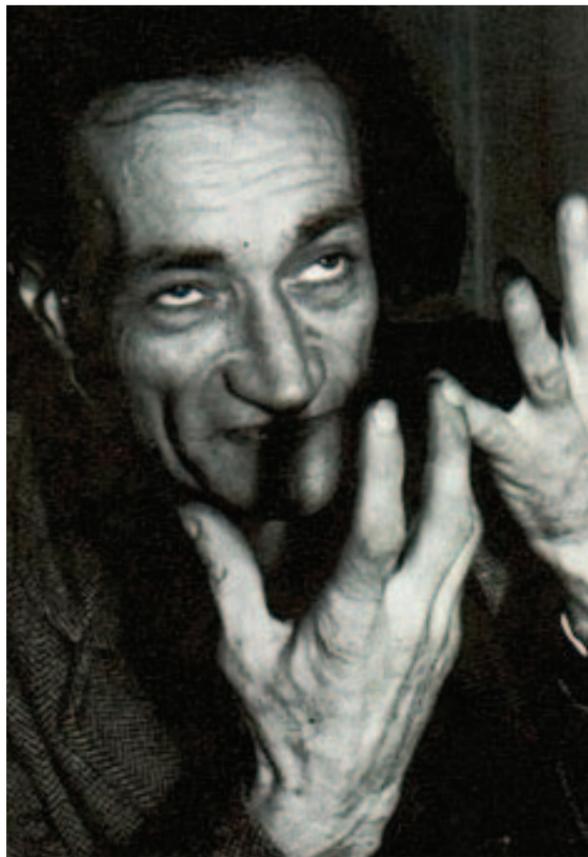
The root meaning of the concept of sublimity, or its chemical definition, comes from the Latin “sublimis” - uplifted. The dictionary definition of the word states it is something majestic; of high spiritual moral or intellectual worth; not to be excelled; impressive; supreme; inspiring awe; raised aloft. The earliest literary quotation of the word sublime and the first to be cited in the complete OED is a reference to John Milton's Paradise Lost (first published in 1667). Milton attempts to describe things that are majestic and noble to the extent of being normally beyond the grasp of the human imagination, such as God and the heavenly hosts, the prelapsarian garden of Eden and the Fall of Adam and Eve, the beginning of temporal reality as Satan is cast down from heaven. Pick any sentence from Paradise Lost and you will feel the sublime grandeur of Milton's prose (he believed he was acting as a conduit for the word of God after all). For example, the opening of Book 2 describes the construction of Hell by Satan and his crew of fallen angels, using exuberant, spatial comparisons, ranging from Arabia to the Subcontinent:

*“High on a Throne of Royal State which far
Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Shows on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,
Satan exalted sat [...]”*

seascapes; it characterised certain poetry by Wordsworth and some of Turner's paintings, for example.

The aura of sublime art sought to elevated and uplift the spectator, as it had done to the artist; the awesome scale and majesty of the natural world reminds us of our shrill and insignificant existence in the face of the infinite. A definitive philosophical study of how the sublime is perceived appeared around the middle of the 17th century, around the midpoint of the era known as the Enlightenment. It meditates on certain ideas of scale, or the impression something gigantic makes on our senses, or conversely, when one is bewildered by something apparently infinitely tiny, like the arrangement of atomic molecules that form the terrestrial biosphere.¹² This second sense of something endless or infinite in detail and complexity could be applied to the modern city with its millions of inhabitants who don't know each other and yet coexist together. Despite being often depicted as infernal and Godless the modern city can through its sheer scale and complexity evoke a sense of the sublime.¹³

If we allow that great cities can be a source of aesthetic experience which could be classed as sublime – bewildering, terrifying, august, uplifting, exhilarating¹⁴. – then a city playing host to a mega-event such as London Olympics would presumably provide sublime experience all the more intensely. This is our premise: when a city like Beijing or London hosts such an event, which costs billions and panders to millions of people simultaneously, the result is as potent and sustained an evocation of urban sublime experience as can be expected. While this all appears grand and heroic, there is a tawdry, unwanted side to the proceedings, detectable in the Olympic committee's cheesy, hypocritical mission statement, frankly not worth reprinting here or anywhere else. Masquerading under the banner of equanimity, inclusion and sportsmanlike behaviour, the Olympics is a huge rootless marketing machine, a down in the dirt scramble for brand placement with its own entire act of legislation to ensure only the most accomplished, multi-national corporates can compete on its playing field. With the entire world on terror alert the Olympics, as already mentioned in the footnotes, serves as a world-class security upgrade showcase. While the Olympics aims to create spectacle in every sense of that word, the riots attempts to momentarily apprehend a bogus reality and smash out of it, albeit for a short period.¹⁵ We therefore suggest that neither series of events has the upper hand, morally speaking - at least I think that's what we mean¹⁶.



12. Edmund Burke

A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.

In 1757 the social commentator, Edmund Burke, wrote a treatise on the sublime: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. It is draftsman-like, describing vastness and proportion, length, height, and depth: “an hundred yards of even ground will never work such an effect as a tower an hundred yards high, or a rock or mountain of that altitude”. In the same meditation Burke includes looking at things that are tiny, as people are when faced with the scale and grandeur of certain scenes in the natural world, or indeed as they are when subsumed within great cities: “However, it may not be amiss to add to these remarks upon magnitude; that, as the great extreme of dimension is sublime, so the last extreme of littleness is in some measure sublime likewise; when we attend to the infinite divisibility of matter, when we pursue animal life into these excessively small, and yet organised beings ... we become amazed and confounded at the wonders of minuteness; nor can we distinguish in its effect this extreme of littleness from the vast itself.” Burke tried to distinguish between the different psychological states one experiences when contemplating something that is beautiful as opposed to something sublime; the latter causes a tension of the nerves and is ultimately driven by fear, while beauty results in calming sensations. Burke was criticised for assuming these cognitive causal structures, notably by the philosopher Immanuel Kant in his Critique of Judgment.

13. “The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism” Christophe Dan, 1998

“It is simplistic to condemn 20th century cities for being alienating, we must take into account the fact that the urban world generates in its inhabitants a dialectic of powerlessness and power fantasies that inspire negative effects, no doubt, but also exhilaration.”

14. “Stendhal Syndrome”

Named after the writer, Henri-Marie Beyle better known by his penname Stendhal, we have chosen this as an early example of sublime aesthetic experience within a city setting. The sculptures in the main square in Florence, which include Michael Angelo’s “David”, were said to make tourists swoon and faint from the sheer power of the aesthetic experience.

15. The Society of the Spectacle

One of the maxims that came to epitomise the Paris anti-capitalist riots of 1968 was the expression: “beneath the pavement is the beach”. This refers to a preferable reality that exists beneath the completely artificial dream state most of us inhabit. This maxim was entirely prescient because protesters dug up the paving stones in order to hurl them at the police.

16. Collected Works, Antonin Artaud, (Gallimard)

“Dear Friends, What you mistook for my works were merely the waste products of myself, those scrapings of the soul that the normal man does not welcome. What concerns me is not whether my illness has relented or advanced but the suffering and the persistent blasting of my mind [...] Here is someone in whose mind no place becomes inured, and who does not suddenly feel his soul on the left where his heart is. Here is someone for whom life is a point and for whom the soul has no edges and the mind no beginnings. All writing is pigshit. People who come out of nowhere to try to put into words any part of what goes on in their minds are pigs. And I have already told you: no works, no language, no words, no mind, nothing. Nothing but a fine Nerve Meter. A kind of incomprehensible stopping place in the mind, right in the middle of everything.”

The Supercrip Supremacy Timeline

"With their hands shall they speak; by their feet shall they be judged for the deeds they performed upon the earth."¹

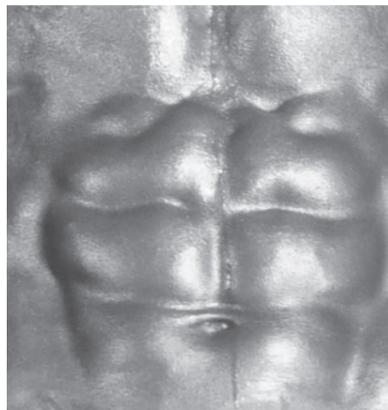
Significant Events

1967, The Tour de France brings question of doping into mainstream with cyclist Tommy Simpson's death on TV. He died on the mountain stages apparently of exhaustion, but a post mortem found he had amphetamines in his system. People who knew about Simpson's doping regime said that reliance on an intravenous drip to quickly recharge and continue cycling without relenting was what actually killed him. Until then public awareness of the use of drugs in sport posing a serious health hazard to competitors was probably confined to bodybuilding.²

"All I have really done is to take to an extreme that which you would not dare to take even halfway, interpreting your own cowardice as 'good sense' and comforting yourself with that deception."³

Early on in the 21st century the World Anti-Doping Agency is forced to amend its policy prohibiting "gene doping". This comes as a result of anxieties about use of gene transfer technologies in sport and the general concerns voiced by bioethics committees worldwide. However questions remain about whether this can be checked in any foolproof manner. The WADA employs the following prohibitive criteria:

1. Is the technology harmful in any way?
2. Does it enhance performance?
3. Is it against the "spirit of sport"?



1. Taken from English translation of The Qu'ran.

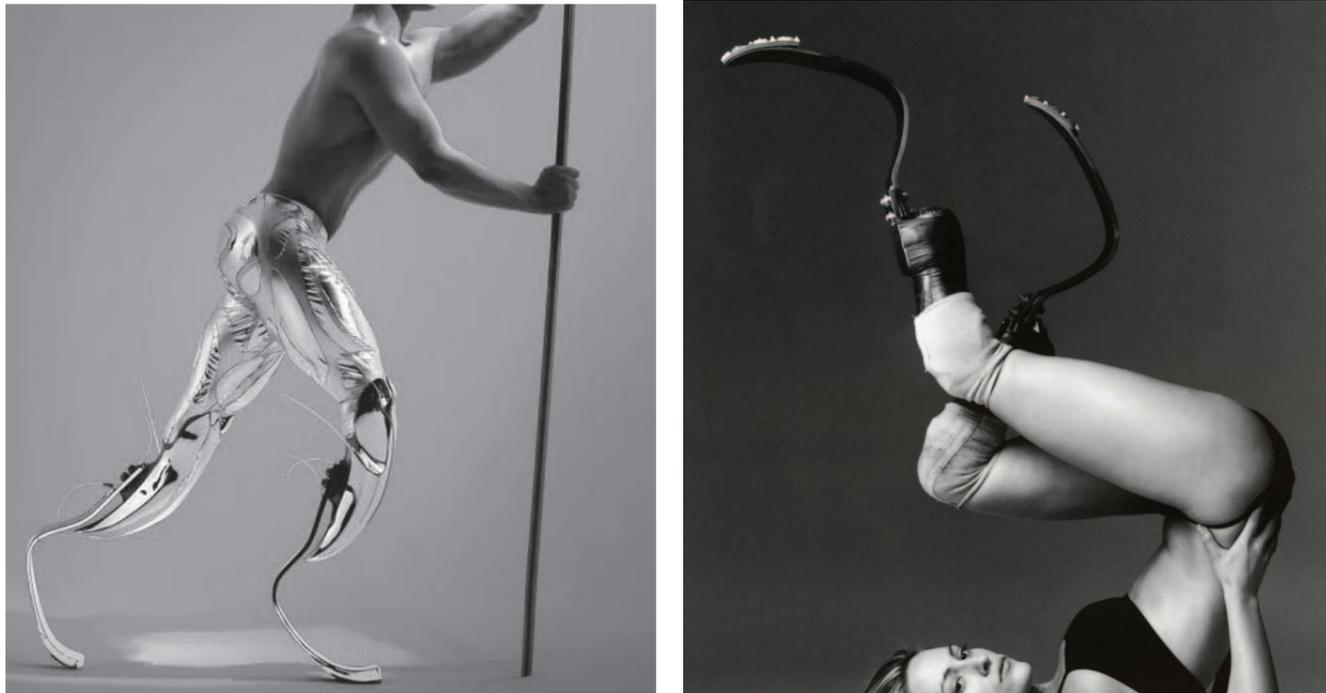
According to that "glorious symphony of words and music that can move men to tears of ecstasy", everything that happens on earth will be recorded, every single act will one day be "written" and "read": everything from world wars to a flower opening deep in the forest. This idea is common to some other revealed religions, as well as certain esoteric belief systems.

2. Pumping Iron II: The Women

Bodybuilding is a known bastion of steroid use. The unpleasant side effects of steroid abuse are an occupational hazard in a sport that openly considers "freakiness" a virtue. Most people of a certain age will be familiar with the 1977 Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, Pumping Iron; less well known is the 1985 follow up, Pumping Iron II: The Women. This documentary film about female bodybuilders is cited as an example here of how a seismic step-change can happen within a sport overnight. It follows the build up to the female world bodybuilding championships, focusing on the preparations made by two-time winner Rachel McLish. She is a typical Californian babe who appears to have taken the female physique as far as aesthetically possible in terms of musculature. Along with her undeniable good looks and deep ebony tan, McLish is extremely muscular; way beyond what most people would find appealing. Her chest is built out above and beyond where a woman's breasts would be, with a pectoral sweep totally devoid of fat and defined with muscle striations. Having said this, she was still obviously a woman: she had long dark hair, wore varnish on her long nails, gloss on her lips and so on. There is news that a surprise entrant will make her debut at the competition, which is open to amateur as well as professional bodybuilders. Enter Beverly Francis, a former Olympic power lifter from Australia turned bodybuilder who has been intensely and secretly trained by a former Mr America with jaw-dropping results. This person, who has obviously no stranger to steroid abuse, appears at first glance to be quite simply a man - and quite a big man at that. She is huge, with enormous quads and arms; there is absolutely zero concession to femininity about her person, apart from a really quite bad perm. When Bev Francis finally unveils herself prior to going on stage it causes an outcry from the other female contenders. The otherwise respectable world of female bodybuilding is being turned into a freak-show overnight, they claim. It's not just about big hulking muscles, but female proportion, argues McLish and her cohorts, as they try to invoke some sort of relation to the world the beauty pageant. But the protestations of McLish and the other lady builders avails them nought: Francis poses down to rapturous applause from the astonished spectators. Her freakiness divides the judges, denying her the title. But the crowd love her. Francis' debut changes the already unusual face of women's bodybuilding overnight.

3. Notes from the Underground, Fyodor Dostoyevsky

When you are already operating at an extreme it becomes hard to indict others for simply taking it further, for initiating revolution. This kind of paradigmatic shift seems to be repeated over and over within all sorts of sports. To honour the spirit of inclusion and equality within athletics, the Stoke Mandeville sports competition for 16 World War II vets with spinal injuries was organised by London neurosurgeon Ludwig Guttmann to coincide with the XIV London Olympics of 1948. catered to those men who had been wounded and disabled in the Second World War. Since then it has grown in size and complexity. By the time of the Rome Olympics in 1960, 400 paralympic athletes from 23 nations were competing; By Sydney 2000 the number had increased tenfold to 3824 from 123 countries. By 2012 there will be over 6000 paralympians competing at London games. The International Paralympic Committee was formed in 1987. In the last few years the Olympic Committee has been called upon to step in and impose additional rules about what can and cannot be allowed. Amazingly we have reached the stage where able bodies athletes are protesting about the unfair advantage a man with no lower legs might have over them.



Transhumanists announce that man has reached the end of the “Age of Enlightenment”. Mankind has now entered the “Age of Enhancement”.⁴

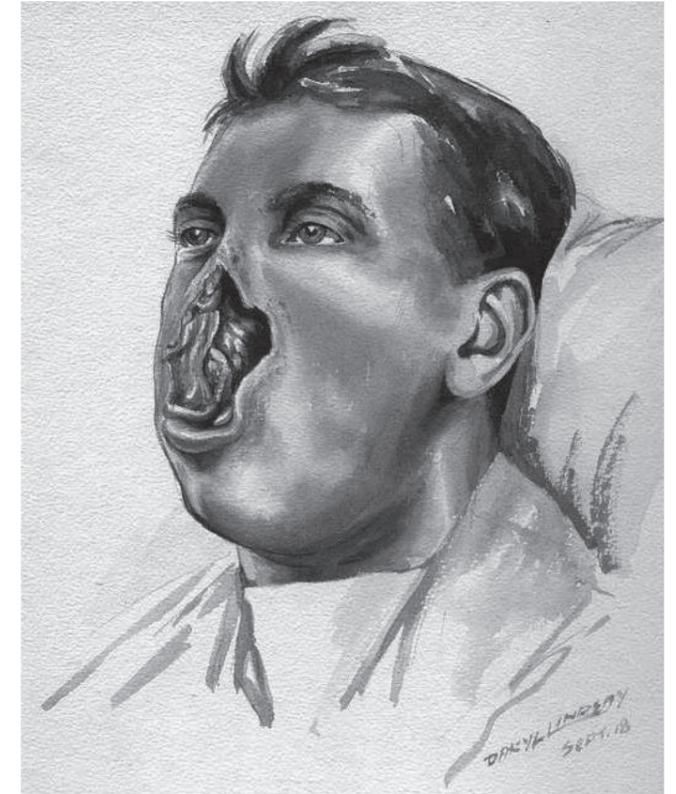
Debate over doping and enhancements becomes more complex: WADA states that hypoxic environments (also known as altitude chambers) are infraction of code, violating the “spirit of sport”. The scandal over the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative (BALCO)⁵ affair proves that new designer substances unknown to WADA are difficult if not impossible to test for.

Athens 2004 Olympics, Oscar Pistorius smashes field in male 200m Paralympic event; he becomes internationally renowned. He causes controversy when his application to race against able-bodied competitors is initially blocked by the Olympics Committee: the first clear and high profile veto made by that committee regarding technological aids to competing.

The able-bodied male 800m world record in 1980 stood at 1.41.73. By 2008 this was standing at 1.41.11. By comparison, the paralympic 800m track event world record stood at 1.55.67 in 1980, but by 2008 stood at 1.32.17. This was the first event where an able-bodied record has been beaten, thanks to advancements in wheelchair design. It should be noted, however, that most enabling technologies are looking toward ambulant solutions: a shift away from wheelchair technologies, towards running on prosthetic limb attachments, or, in the case of throwing events, from a standing position.

The public view of enhanced sports is shown to be “malleable”. Audiences are concerned about mechanisation of sport, the dehumanisation and the “manufacture” of athletes, however the scientification of sport is seen as part of the future. Examples of acceptable technologies being used in sports include: Piezo-electric dampening technology in tennis rackets which was referred to and then passed by the federation governing tennis; “Tommy Johns” shoulder rehabilitation for baseball pitchers; LASIK eye surgery for perfect vision used by Tiger Woods. It would appear the public generally accepts technology as long as there are no clear doping issues.

Nano-technology, stem cell advancements and genetically modified strength enhancement are combined; the human body provides the blueprint. The melding of the mechanical and the organic becomes one of the main research and development activities in modern warfare, churning out new ideas and designs. The fact that geo-political conflicts continue to rage means there is a constant supply of subjects requiring prosthetic limb attachments and organ transplants. Victims of improvised bomb attacks, for instance, tend to be willing to try out new technological options that might allow them to return to active service. The idea of the rehabilitated hero, stronger than before, was always going to spill over into the sporting arena.



4. In 2003 the World Transhuman Association hosted the Transvision Conference, supporting the idea of cloning genetically engineered “post-humans”; advancements in human/machine interface; the creation of super-intelligent machines and; the idea of embodying consciousness within a machine. “We humans are destined for transcendence.” So states Michael L. Spezio a post doctorate fellow and lecturer in psychology and neuroscience at the California Institute of Technology and a former Presbyterian minister. It’s worth noting that the cultural commentator, Francis Fukuyama, recently stated that the last people who should inherit the earth are transhumanists.



5. BALCO founder and owner Victor Conte marketed and distributed a “clear” then-undetectable performance enhancing steroid to a number of high-profile sports stars from the US and Europe, some of whom became known as the “BALCO Olympians”.



"And there was seen another sign in heaven:
and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads
and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems."
The Revelation to Saint John-12-7:3

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle / Drone Identification Chart



The cost of R&D and the technology associated with new enhancement solutions is so high that wealthier nations, such as the US and China, have an obvious advantage. This analogy of the Cold War arms race or space race, becomes known as the “leg race”. The idea of private enterprise backing such projects, rather like Formula One racing, seems to present obvious marketing potential for those corporate entities concerned. It is argued that, like Formula One, the decisive competitive factor remains the skill, training and endurance of the athletes.

“Sterling Moss would wave to all the pretty girls in pink lipstick as he controlled a four wheel drift out of Casino Square. The four-wheel drift of Sterling Moss was a move that even Fangio envied. A beautiful thing, the lateral momentum of the car kept from contact with barriers, not with the brake but with the accelerator. The wheel turned in opposite lock, turned against the corner’s natural direction. To drive a car that fast in that way is to be unnatural.”⁶

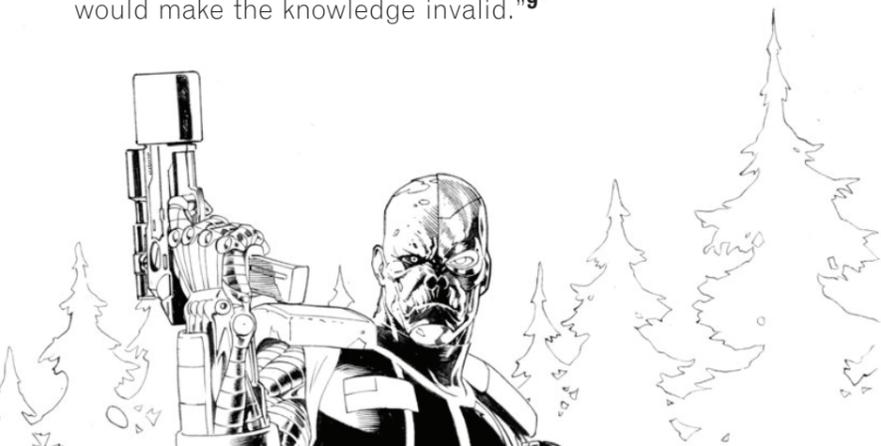
Golf, oddly enough, becomes one of the first sports to fully embrace enhanced competition thanks to the introduction of super (cybor) golf competitions with large cash prizes. The use of built-in GPS sports rangefinders providing instant downloads of the course was perhaps the first step. Advancements in cyborgification make it possible for a player with bio-mechanic arms to drive a ball over one and a half kilometers and place it on the green.

Comprehensive mapping of brain cell activities and the infiltration of the reflex arc with nano-tech nerve cell stimulators and receivers (nanodes) is further facilitated with advancements in battery power technologies.⁷ As well as external charging of protean nano-tech components located throughout the body, the human heart - ramped up by genetic enhancement techniques and performance enhancing drugs - can be used to provide battery power for sustaining bio-mechanic operations. The time will come when the term “disabled” no longer applies, replaced by the word “enhanced”.

What was once known as the Paralympic Games officially changes its name to the “Power Olympics”, signifying an absolute deviation from traditional Olympics. A Power Olympics Exhibition opens the traditional games, drawing record audiences. Power Olympic events include, Power Basketball with 30-foot high hoops in an enlarged concave court and competitors that can perform astonishing feats that seem to defy gravity. Another favourite is the 600m mixed hurdles, where athletes sustain speeds of 35-40mph while hurdling 6 ft obstacles. All this is done through use of bio-mechanic implants and prosthetics and other performance enhancing technologies. Unsurprisingly, the Power Olympics medals table is dominated by countries with the most money to throw at these new technologies.

Transhumanists lobby for an end to the moratorium on human genetic engineering for purposes of physical enhancement and longevity. According to transhumanist prediction, advancements at the interface of body and technological will mean that one day humans will have the power to search the world’s libraries by just thinking; by sensing infrared people will be aware of so-called “thermal profiles” and so infer emotional states. Also touted is the possibility of more fantastic innovations such as combining human and animal DNA to create animal/human chimeras. It is revealed that the US military has been conducting clandestine experiments in these areas for some time.⁸

“And I claim prophecy is self-contradictory. Nobody can have absolute knowledge about the future. By definition, the future hasn’t happened. And if knowledge existed, it would change the future – which would make the knowledge invalid.”⁹



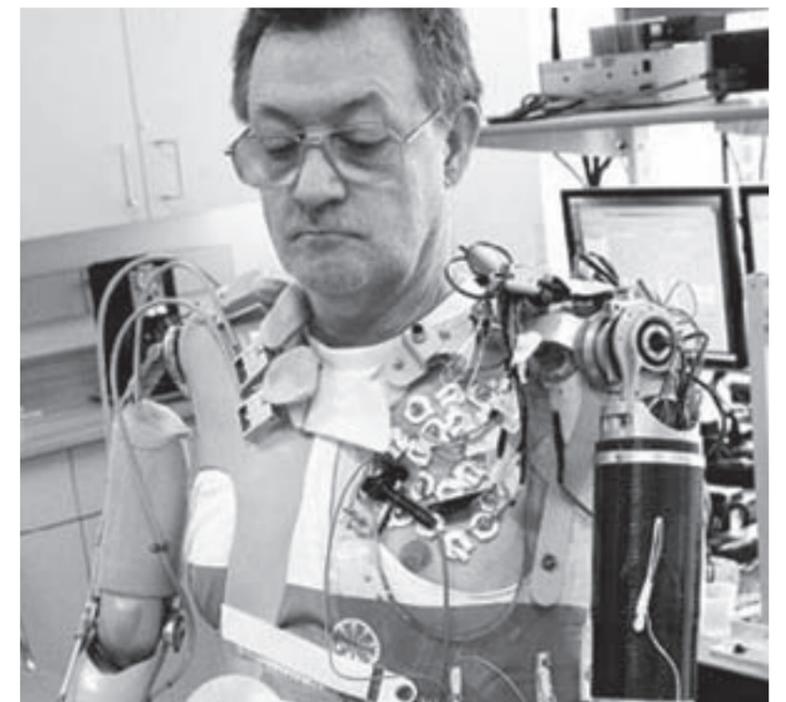
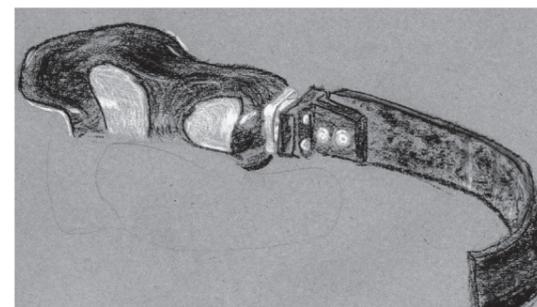
6. Excerpt taken from “Monaco” by Alex Garland



7. The translation of neural signals in the human brain, known as the brain-machine interface (BMI), was one of the many breakthroughs that needed to happen. Advancements in nanotechnology led to the evolution of neurological mapping and the recreation of these electrical impulses. The reflex arc was recreated and as time went on technology strived to achieve reflex response to match those in a normal functioning human body. Like Moore’s Law regarding the exponential increasing of processing power within silicon chip technology, nanotech applications within the mapping of reflexes have shown that the response connection with prosthetics can be enhanced beyond that of normal human functionality.



8. See the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Administration (DARPA) and various developments in Human Assisted Neural Devices (HANDs).



9. The World Jones Made, Philip K. Dick



DATAVEILLANCE & THE DATA DOUBLE

I have been researching the area of surveillance - returning the gaze.

I had a feeling of powerlessness and oppression, exacerbated through the media.

I was starting to modify my behaviour, consciously and unconsciously.

Unmanned Aircraft Vehicles, better known as "drones" where in the media, waging an asymmetric war in zones of conflict.

I discovered that drones were to be used in civilian matters by the police. I found this disconcerting.

The more I researched, the more about surveillance was revealed.

I realised the drone was a collection point for information, perhaps to be perceived as a deterrent.

I began to see it as a manifestation of the intention behind it.

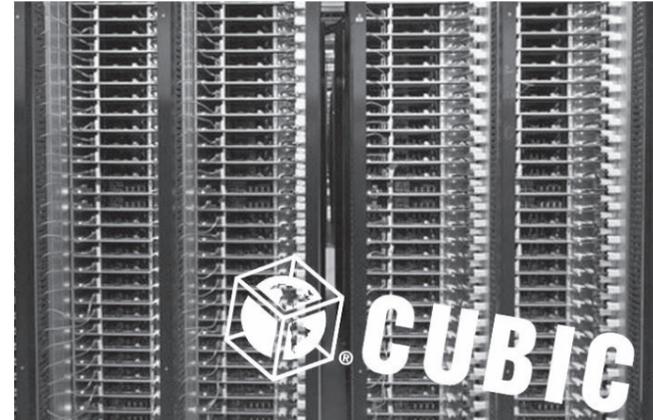
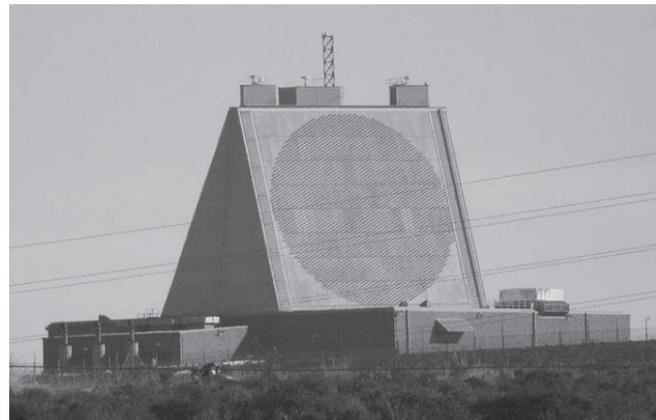
I began to realise that surveillance captures, contains and analyses data.

Data is collected everywhere in modern life: some appropriate, some inappropriate.

This data is captured and yielded in ways that may not be considered "surveillance".

Modern surveillance theory: government policy and marketing are all based around the concept of storing or gaining access to large amounts of data.

Data is monitored and analysed for probability of events and outcomes, to produce different decisions or actions.



This analysis is called data mining.

The collection and classification of the data fragments create information, which represents you.

The subject this data forms is called "the digital image"; "the data persona" or; "the data double".

It is another representation of you - an additional self.

This idea of the data double made me think about the data trails and audits I leave behind, when and where I might do this and what might happen to it.

I decided to create a data portrait of my data double in the form of a flow chart or map.

I entered on a journey into the language, theory and systems of surveillance.

The area is enormous and nebulous. I navigated unfamiliar and abstract images through "zones of in-distinction" where "power now operates rather than specific sites".

We yield data everyday. That data is collected at different times by different kinds of data collection points: cameras, credit cards, GPS technologies, DNA or Biometric technologies.

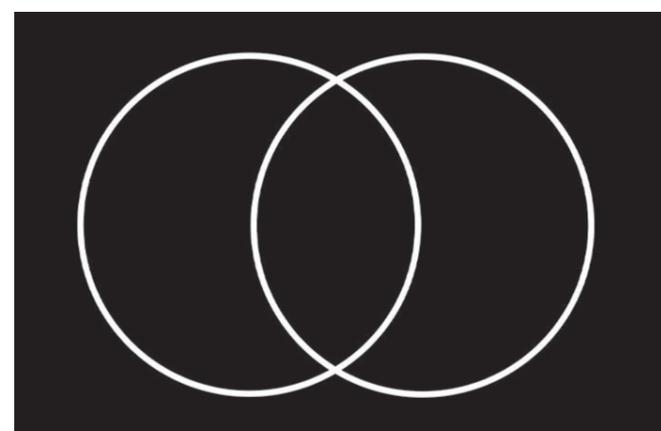
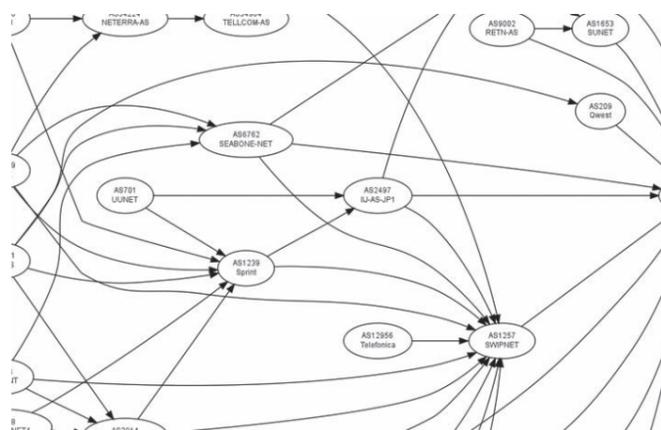
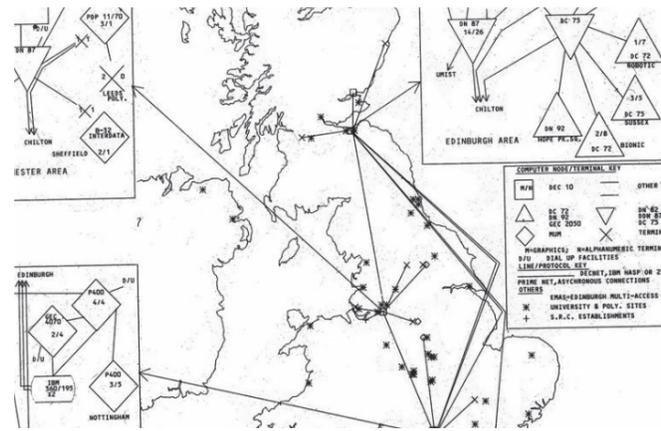
We may not realise we are being surveilled due to the hiddenness or necessity of the technology.

All data has value to the institutions or companies that store it. It is stored in special facilities known as data warehouses, server farms or datacenters.

These data fortresses range between 400,000 and 1.1 million square feet.

Some of these facilities store data as accessible information to be analysed. Some store data as an archive, while some connect to the Internet for live traffic analysis.

The biggest known database is Yahoo in California with two petabytes of available data.



The average computer has around 50-100 gigabytes of storage: 1000 gigabytes is a terabyte and 1000 terabytes is a petabyte.

A terabyte is more than "the sum total of all words a human speaks in their lifetime. We are talking out 2000 lifetimes of words," according to computer scientists at IBM.

These Datacenters have plenty of protection: purpose built out of tough materials, bomb-proof with thick steel doors and have a backup power supply of their own.

Phone companies, banks and Internet service providers store your information for at least one year. Google stored your information for ten years although recently changed its rules through its privacy policy.

Facebook is worth 4.8 billion dollars today without advertising. This inherent value is down to the data that company owns; information which is not only collected, but is sold on by these sorts of companies.

Most people do not read the privacy policy. In the small print they own everything you put up there.

You can be private about who you share with on Facebook but not who Facebook shares your data with.

Datacenters analyse data to create outcomes: it is now proactive and not just retroactive as it once was.

It is used for risk management and social sorting. Aggregate data can be used to form patterns and potential outcomes, which are of interest to banks, shops or security agencies.

The data is used to predict behaviours and outcomes.

Software programs such as "Infintite Site" or "Total Information Awareness", use neural networks and decision trees to analyse data.

The results could be used by advertisers, banks selling loans, to search for a suitable donor for a medical transplant or by the police.

Desicions made can advantage or disadvantage, the creation of these groups and classifications ("Social Sorting") create certain advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages: eligible for a quick passage through passport control, rewards for certain consumer patterns, offers of loans or services and Job offers.

Disadvantages: retaining a bad financial history or credit rating, dependence on social welfare or having a criminal record. Job offer declined

These desicions and definitions are generational to be passed on.

It could be defined along the lines of "Rich and Poor."

So what does my data image, my data persona look like?

Like many people, I have been denied access to information and power; I have had credit cards and mortgages applications denied.

That is my experience. I do not know what decisions and actions are being made on my behalf. You are not told and the information is scant, difficult to aquire or not available at all.





THE DATA DOUBLE

In the digital realm. It could be said that we are cyborgs , a flesh technology information amalgam, an interface of technology and corporeality comprised of those”surfaces of contact “or interfaces between organic and non-organic orders, between life forms and webs of information.

This is a particular amalgamated “us”.

Surveillance is productive of another , a new type of “us”, one comprised of pure data, The data double, data persona, a constituted additional self.



Walter Benjamin the literary critic and writer, recognised the earliest prototypes of surveillant technologies, drifting through the city, investigating and observing modern life on the streets of Paris. He saw how the development of photography helped undermine his anonymity, which was central to the drift . He saw that when captured by photography , the image gave each face a single name and so a single meaning.

This data double is the constitution of an additional self not a true representation of the person , yet has effects on the daily embodied life of that person. In many circumstances the data double may take precedence over the embodied person.

The idea of the data double can go beyond the beauracatic system of modern surveillance in significant ways, Bodies are abstracted from their territorial settings, to be made visible to others.



Processes are systematic, methodical and automatic. Surveillance relies on machines rather than humans to make and record observations. At first the human body is not approached to be moulded punished or controlled, first the body must be known by being broken down into flows of data.

These discrete data flows are then, striated or guided captured re-assembled in scattered locations.

Drug testing striates flows of chemicals, photography captures flows of light waves and lie detectors align and compare assorted flows of respiration, pulse and electricity the body itself broken down for the purposes of observation.

The body is made more mobile and comparable.

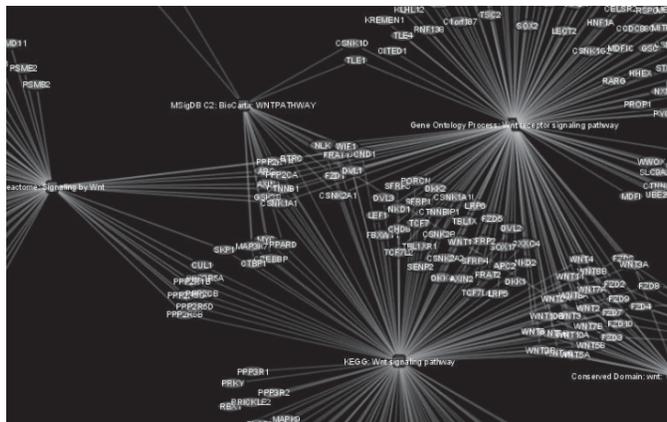
the data is guided to centres of appropriation where flows can be captured, compared and rendered alike.

These data flows exist before surveillance, beyond our normal range of perception, they are fixed temporally and spatially by machines in these scattered centres.

This data is coordinated and compared for access and resources, services and power.

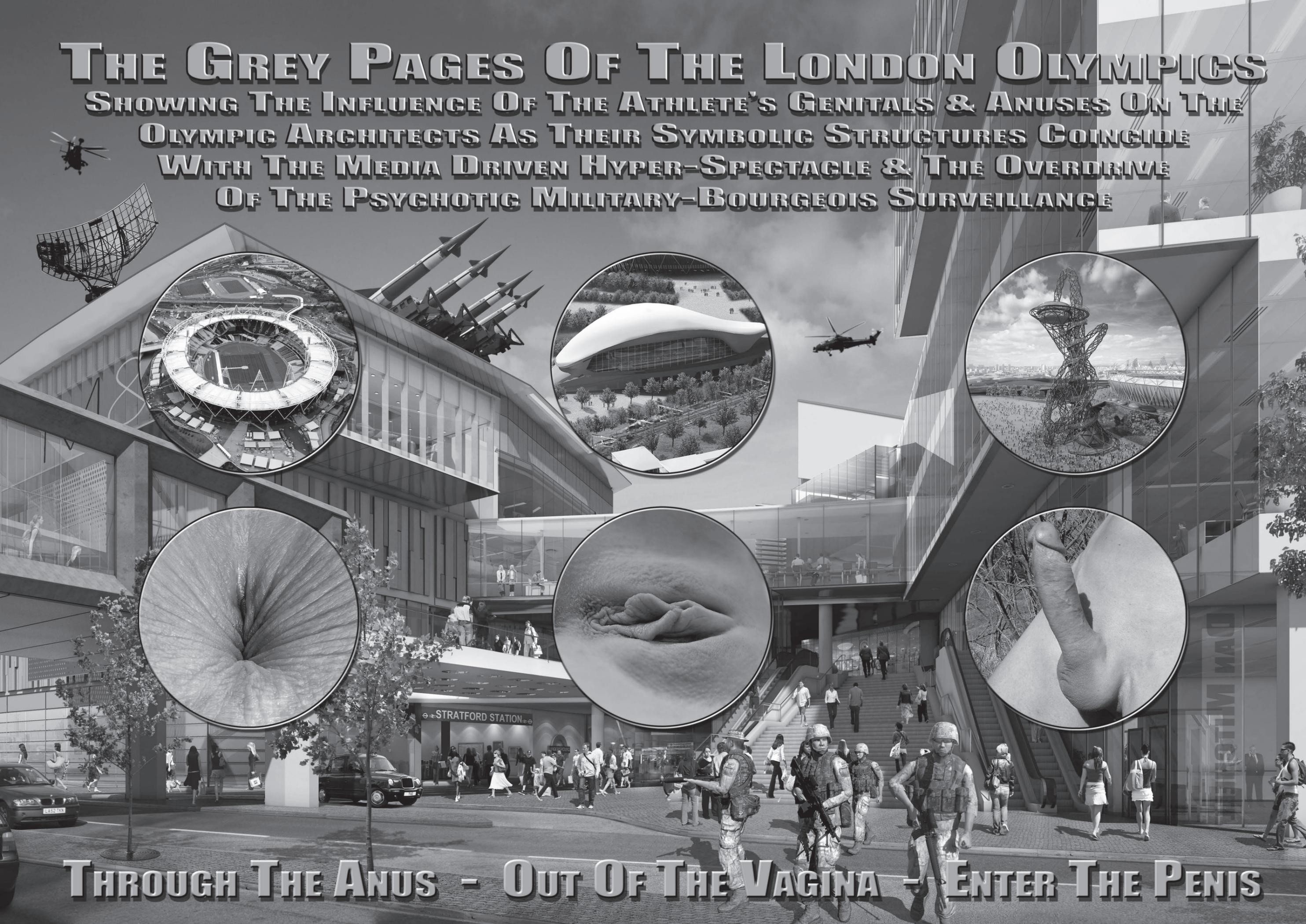
U nknown to the referent, the embodied self.

the data double is frozen in codes. a single meaning.



THE GREY PAGES OF THE LONDON OLYMPICS

SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATHLETE'S GENITALS & ANUSES ON THE OLYMPIC ARCHITECTS AS THEIR SYMBOLIC STRUCTURES COINCIDE WITH THE MEDIA DRIVEN HYPER-SPECTACLE & THE OVERDRIVE OF THE PSYCHOTIC MILITARY-BOURGEOIS SURVEILLANCE



THROUGH THE ANUS - OUT OF THE VAGINA - ENTER THE PENIS

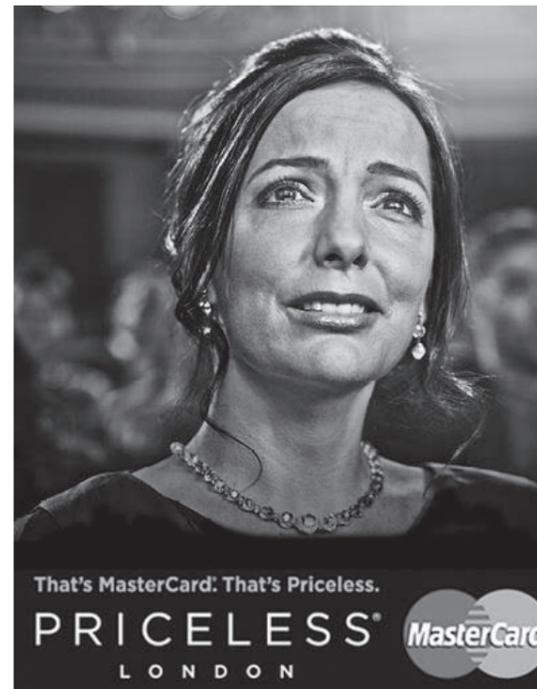
Interview: A call to the Global Ummah

“Muslim brothers and sisters, stay away from the Olympic games in London at all costs. Do not attend these celebrations, do not stand next to the faithless.”

A man lives not only his personal life, as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries. He may regard the general, impersonal foundations of his existence as definitely settled and taken for granted and far from taking a critical attitude towards them, yet it is quite conceivable that he may none the less be vaguely conscious of the deficiencies of his epoch and find them prejudicial to his own moral well-being. All sorts of personal aims, ends, hopes, prospects hover before the eyes of the individual, and out of these he derives the impulse to ambition and achievement. Now, if the life about him, if his own time seem, however outwardly stimulating, to be at bottom empty of such food for his aspirations; if he privately recognise it to be hopeless, viewless, helpless, opposing only an empty silence to all the questions man puts, consciously or unconsciously, yet somehow puts, as to the final, absolute, and abstract meaning in all his efforts and activities; then, in such a case, a certain laming of the personality is bound to occur, the more inevitably the more upright the character in question; a sort of palsy, as it were, which may even extend from his spiritual and moral over into his physical and organic part. In an age that affords no satisfying answer to the eternal question of “Why?” “To what end?” a man who is capable of achievement over and above the average and expected modicum must be equipped either with a moral remoteness and single-mindedness which is rare indeed and of heroic mould, or else with an exceptionally robust vitality.

Interviewer: You claim that a terrorist attack on the 2012 Olympic Games in London is imminent. This sounds like someone being willfully provocative. What is your claim founded upon?

Muslim: OK, I grew up on a housing estate in Crawley; my father was a violent alcoholic and my mother was petrified of him. My youth was unpleasant. I had no faith whatsoever in the future or anything else. Like most people in my position, I got into drinking and taking drugs at a young age and from there became involved in running drugs for local dealers, first on push bikes and later in cars. Before long I had been in detention centres and later jail. I dealt heroin and crack cocaine and had ready access to a gun to ward off attacks from rival drug dealing gangs. This was not as bad an existence as it may sound; I had plenty of cash, a car, respect from my peers and also from girls. However I started using crack myself; I had a seemingly endless supply of it. I would get so prang that weed and beer was not sufficient to bring me down, so like the junkies I sold to, I started using heroin on occasion. I was shameful about this – it was looked down upon, especially by dealers – but I couldn't deny that it made me feel great. After a while I had a full-blown heroin habit. From there it was a rapid decline for me: I



Harrods

هارودز

was no longer capable of dealing and spent all my money on smack and ended up shoplifting, robbing, lying and cheating; it's a familiar story, I would basically do anything to get the cash to score. I was injecting crack and heroin; my life was basically over and I would have gladly accepted death as a way out.

I ended up homeless, penniless, begging and stealing to feed my habit. I remember overdosing and being horrified to discover that I had survived. After that I was placed in a treatment centre where I was detoxified. It was there that I was introduced to Narcotics Anonymous – the 12-step program for drug addicts, based on Alcoholics Anonymous. You are probably not familiar with how this works but a key part of this program is acceptance of a higher power, a power greater than yourself; it needn't be God in any religious or conventional sense, not in the church-going Sunday school idea of God and Jesus and so on - this would put most alcoholics or drug addicts off. I got clean and I started praying to God, down on my knees and from there a miracle happened. I knew I would never pick up another drug. You could say I experienced an epiphany: I saw clearly that there was a reason behind me becoming a thieving drug addict; it was so that I would find my way to the most beneficent merciful God and He would communicate to me the purpose for which I had been put on this planet.

Interviewer: Wow!

Muslim: Let me say that at this point I knew I was different from the others in recovery. They mostly struggled with the idea of finding faith in any spiritual power. For me, this was the essential and attractive part, like the core of everything. However I soon realised that I had a problem with this God – I mean the conception of a Christian God, which I thought was ... equivocal. I later learned that God in the Judeo-Christian tradition amounts to what Mohammad and his first converts referred to as 'pernicious idolatry'. By then I had sought out and found out the one and only true God – Allah.

Interviewer: First you found God thanks to AA, then you decided that a Christian God was not hardcore enough for you, so you converted to Islam – that's basically your story.

Muslim: If you like.

Interviewer: Jesus – excuse me - so I'm guessing the next stage was when you became radicalized and started mouthing off about terrorist attacks maybe?

Muslim: Firstly, I was not a convert to Islam, but a revert. We are chosen outside of time, in eternity if you can understand, so in a past life I will have been a Muslim and now I have seen the path, I have reverted back to that path in this life.

Interviewer: Okay so you reverted to Islam - understood.

Muslim: It's a technical point but it also gives you an idea of the importance of this action; it's not something done on a whim; it's not something that happens only to impressionable, disaffected youths. The other thing that you should understand is that I chose to become radicalized; this was not something foisted upon me by some manipulating cleric, inciting hatred among young Muslims or prospective Muslims. I have charted my spiritual progress showing it to have evolved by degree. Once I became conversant with the will of the one true God, I had no choice but to follow the path that leads to Jihad in the name of my faith and the global Muslim Ummah - in this respect, yes, I suppose I am an extremist.

Interviewer: You attended the local Crawley mosque at Langley Green and this was a place where the radical cleric and founder of al-Mujahiroun, Omar Bakri, preached, was it not?

Muslim: Some version of these events has leaked into the public domain. But since you are interviewing me let me give you my own personal account of what happened to me, because I think there may be some things that you culturally tend to swallow wholesale via the media, and there are other sentiments and experiences that are beyond your contemplation, and I don't mean that in any kind of insulting way.

Interviewer: Okay, did you, or did you not come in contact with Omar Bakri at Langley Green?

Muslim: You want to blame the power of one, or a handful of men for the failure at the heart of multicultural Britain or some such nonsense. You fail to see the much bigger picture. This is understandable because you live in a culture of worthlessness and faithlessness.

Interviewer: Alright then, enlighten me.

Muslim: Anything I say will doubtless appear to you as nothing more than predictable Islamic ideology, but regardless let me try and open your eyes to the question of struggle. I have traveled to far off lands to fight for jihad. It must be hard for you to imagine what it is like to fight for your faith because you have none in anything. I imagine there is nothing in your life worth fighting for, really fighting for. You go to your unrewarding job so you can marry have children and live in the suburbs. Imagine, try and imagine, what it must be like to fight for your faith – no matter what the odds. I'm willing to travel to places where Muslims are being brutalised and murdered and fight in their defense, so that after a while it becomes a necessity for me to fight enemies of Muslims anywhere. By degree, as I have said, it becomes normal for me to want to fight for my cause right here in the UK. People who take up arms in jihad are freedom fighters, labeled terrorists because you are our legitimate targets. This is deplorable to you of course, but I think it is also beyond your conception that any one could care so much about something, especially something that cannot be bought or sold.

Interviewer: Not entirely. But anyway, tell me about your experience of fighting Jihad.

Muslim: OK, I became sympathetic towards the struggle ongoing in Northern India in the region of Kashmir, the territory taken from Muslim tribes that have occupied it for centuries by the relative superpower of India. In 1999 while on holiday with my family in Pakistan I made the connection to representatives of freedom fighters in Kashmir. I returned to the UK inspired. I spent some time working hard and raising money, then I returned and from Pakistan traveled to Islamabad, and from there I went east with a convoy of young Muslim jihadists like me, into the foothills of the Himalayas and onto a training camp in the Pakistan-controlled area of Kashmir. Try and imagine how it was for me: young, idealistic and completely committed to this cause and performing my military training living in caves amid the most sublime mountainous terrain on the planet. Every morning when I prayed with the other fighters it was as if God was speaking directly to me. I've never felt anything like it in my life – no drug, no woman, no sex, no nothing, could ever make me feel a fraction of the heights my soul was lifted to. The training we did included straightforward patrolling, you know soldering – left, right, left, right and so on; training with the use of semi-automatic weapons, some hand-to-hand combat; a small amount of explosives training; some navigational skills and some training for ambushes. This was also being done at very high altitude so our physical fitness was tested to the extremes. It is the happiest I have ever been in my life.

Interviewer: What about actual conflict – did that make you happy?

Muslim: In my case there was no actual conflict. This was because my family, which I should say is quite well connected in Pakistan, poked around until they found out my whereabouts, even though it was in a top secret training camp in the mountains. A message was relayed to the commander of the camp to the effect that my grandfather was waiting for me down in the nearest village and wanted to talk with me; they more or less duped me in to thinking that he might be not long for this world. Reluctantly I agreed and went to meet him. It was him who persuaded me to return home. I have always kind of resented my

family for that. I was shocked, and I think they were as well, when I returned to a hero's welcome. I was showered with flower petals, my house full of all the leading Muslims of our community congratulating me for my courage. All the girls wanted to date me because I was a hero fighting for the cause of Islam.

Interviewer: Is it easy to go abroad and get involved in fighting jihad, if you are a UK Muslim?

Muslim: I traveled all over Afghanistan and I would say the Taliban are the most hospitable people on the planet. It is easy for British recruits to get into Afghanistan. All you have to do is contact pro-Taliban groups in Pakistan. They have stalls: you just get in with them and that's how it works. There are people from all over living there for jihad. There must be at least 60,000 families from the Arabian Peninsula living in Afghanistan. There are training camps all over the country.

Interviewer: Perhaps you should have stayed there. Nobody here wants your medieval belief system forced down their throats.

Muslim: Despite your obnoxious failure to understand what you say, you are actually accurate in your description. Certain Islamic teachings, some that I very much sympathise with, originate from ancient writings – "medieval" you might say. This is a simple way of life based upon a pastoral existence. It is only by necessity that Islam is more and more identifying itself as a political ideology rather than merely a religious path of righteousness. And it will be fought for – nothing worth having comes without a struggle. Accordingly, we see military training is an Islamic obligation, not an option.

Interviewer: Political ideology? Do you understand that we live in a democracy?

Muslim: You people always talk about democracy as if it were some sort of secular religion. From your point of view perhaps it is, I don't know what you think. More and more I see this as a problem of perspective: try and reconsider democracy as something that is ultimately foisted upon Muslims - down the barrel of a gun. Can you see that? Can you see that the US delivers democracy to us at gunpoint?

Interviewer: What about hard-line Sharia Law? What about a total absence of women's rights, what about stoning them to death because they might have been raped or whatever?

Muslim: I don't want to get into a debate about emancipation of the sexes. What I would say is that I have seen and experienced the worst sorts of iniquity right here in the UK and have experienced first hand how this can influence a corrupt a young mind with disastrous consequences - most do not escape as I have. And now I see it as my duty to warn Muslims and anyone else about all these sorts of Haram.

Interviewer: If you don't like it here why don't you leave?

Muslim: Perhaps you think I was less of a threat to society as a heroin-addicted street robber than I am now as a Muslim.

Interviewer: Most definitely. You're talking about bombing the Olympics for God's sake - or Allah's - for whatever twisted reason.

Muslim: I'm just taking this opportunity to warn my fellow Muslims that they should avoid the 2012 games as a matter of extreme prudence – and anyone else for that matter who wants to listen.

Interviewer: You should be arrested. Someone should really arrest you.

Muslim: Why? For expressing an opinion? That's not very democratic.

Interviewer: You know exactly why ...

ENDS



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330
A crash. A strobe. A helicopter. Lightning.

The threat is America, in all its guises. Officially dead, a case of mistaken identity, America resembles Brazil, Russia, India & China. Nostalgia for American culture, this retro chic for hegemony, bears no relation bar familiarity for the fertile neo-capitalists of the 21st epoch. Recognised world-wide for their beauty and elegance American formation swimmers are scholars first and foremost, we invite you to return this card with your name & e-mail so that we can keep informed of new publications, special offers and events.

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330
A crash. A strobe. A helicopter. Lightning.

Brendan Quick

Justice, dignity, equality, and women's rights **337**
in a global, ~~world~~ world is alright, part of all our identities as long as we don't talk about... Islam. Killing people for fun, profit & redemption. Not a crusade, just democracy, counter-terrorism. Speak Arabic, intellectually negotiate Europe. We eat the symbolic flesh of a man god who died for us nailed to a torture device, they see him as a precursor to the real prophet... faith no more was a pop rock act.

812
Teenagers, sleeping with guns. Free Love. Free like the hippies of ancient Rome.

It's a moment I shall never forget. Suddenly, spontaneously, barricades were being thrown up in the streets. People were building up the cobble stones because they wanted - many of them for the first time - to throw themselves into a collective, spontaneous activity. People were releasing all their repressed feelings, expressing them in a festive spirit. Thousands felt the need to communicate with each other, to love one another. That night has forever made me optimistic about history. Having lived through it, I can't ever say, 'It will never happen ...' - Dany Cohn-Bendit, student leader at Nanterre, on the night of the Paris barricades, 10/11 May 1968



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