



by Elytron Frass

*By Fortune's adverse buffets overborne
To solitude I fled, to wilds forlorn,
And not in utter loneliness to live,
Myself at last did to the Devil give!*¹

*He indeed was visited by dreams in which he had shrunk to submicroscopic size and entered a brain, strolling in through some forehead's pore and into the cul-de-sac of a sweat gland. Struggling out of a jungle of capillaries there he would finally reach bone; down then through the skull, dura mater, arachnoid, pia mater to the fissure-flooded sea of cerebrospinal fluid. And there he would float before final assault on the gray hemispheres: the soul. A stranger in this landscape, it never occurred to him to ask whose brain he was in. Perhaps his own.*²

*The vision of the ab-ject is, by definition, the sign of an impossible ob-ject, a boundary and a limit. A fantasy, if you wish, but one that brings to the well-known Freudian primal fantasies, his Urfantasien, a drive overload of hatred or death, which prevents images from crystalizing as images of desire and/or nightmare and causes them to break out into sensation (suffering) and denial (horror), into a blasting of sight and sound (fire, uproar). Apocalyptic vision could thus be the shattering or the impossibility not only of narrative but also of Urfantasien under the pressure of a drive unleashed by a doubtless very "primal" narcissistic wound.*³

It could be said that a devil stands at one (arguably both) end(s) of any deal being made, whether lawful or not. As on the physical, so in the virtual plane, the myriad forms of the Black Market Mephistopheles transact with clientele under shadow; manifestations of Faust embody those particular consumers who offer nothing short of anything in exchange for libelous services and otherwise unobtainable wares. Even beyond the blood-brain barrier, the black market exists to demyelinate the gray sheath of our neuroeconomy. It is here, in the obsidian unconscious, that the dreaming purveyor, drawn most inwardly, makes pacts with an imagined umbral other. Sidestepping the political, social, and monetary sway which the black market maintains as a para-economy, its influence within the realm of the oneiric is particularly overlooked.

Dream can be understood as the microleakage of the subconscious blackbox through which an



insurrectionary consciousness may infiltrate. It is here, wading through a thick confused mess of oneself that the dreamer takes on the role of a lonesome trader who might find automated kiosks in the simulated likeness of the object-forms which they'd encountered in the waking. An object-form, a twist of the screw on Keller Easterling's description of the object-form, is identifiable as such "when the object of design is a set of [outcast] instructions for [a mutually-abasing] interplay between variables." Here "design acquires some of the power and currency of [the nightmare]. This externalized horrorscape "is not a thing but a means [for sinister alien influence to infiltrate both artist and spectator in order] to craft a multitude of interdependent [annihilative] relationships and [disturbing] sequences — [a ruinous] platform for inflecting a stream of [objects]."⁴⁵

Though we may travel naked and alone towards this alternative economy of inner night, we go bearing bands of currency in trade for new and aberrant epiphanies, exterritorial maps and blueprints among outre inspirations, the tools and weaponry of psychic warfare which we'd never come to fathom on our own. This currency, this \$eele we possess, is interchangeably our \$pirit, \$oul, or mind that has been minted into mnemonic dividends or memories which can be spent at greater costs to \$anity. Yet, for an artist, \$anity is disproportionately valuable to spikes in creativity where madness is actually tantamount.

The object-form and the human cohabit in symbiotic depletion where the human and the inhuman become less of themselves. These incongruously exigent pieces to each other's puzzles interdependently communicate communication-breakdowns through signs and symptoms of reactionary attrition. A scrying-match takes place: oracular mirror to oracular mirror, the pupil of the human eye to tarry alien technology submerged in a reflective nightmare leakage. And this leakage, this unconscious nightmare medium surrounding inner eye and inner abject, this black market of transactive miscommunication between ob-ject, sub-ject, ab-ject, works counterintuitively to Artaud's self-conscious understanding of the leakage stated here within *The Nerve Meter*: "that small part of my thought which I claim has already been formulated, and which miscarries, I am the only person who can measure its extent. A kind of constant leakage of the normal level of reality."⁶ The reverse-leakage, that which flows inward, backward, downward, and beyond the non-locus of lucidity is where, concealed, these slippery deals, these obscured and occulted reflections between self and other which by way of backflowing leakage occlude all possibility of self-reflection, are sealed. Here the subconscious remains "a press of formless questions, mingling and crumbling limply away" at lucidity's expense.⁷



Remember, the human mind, the \$eele/ \$pirit/ \$oul, is currency. Just as the gaze of a physical abject-form instigates the black market dream, a formless dreamed-abject sells the muted blueprints of its own infernal reproduction, a diabolical inspiration, required by artists and artisans (in exchange for \$anity's allotments) in order to craft new abjects into the real and the virtual. Dependent upon variable acuities, in\$anity looms either closer or *much* closer. So, why does one revisit this market of inner night; why trade in one's perfectly sound mind, neuron by neuron, to some occult dreamdevil? Simply put, the promise of glory and renown is on the table; there's creative notoriety to be had. Sure, there are the Robert Johnsons and the Christophe Haizmanns of art history who've made open claims about selling their \$eele to the devil (the dreamdevil, the incorporeal abject, the occult technology of annihilative advancement, the obsidian scrying mirror, the tarpool of melting black alien obelisks, the extradimensional salesfiend inside), but one could speculate shocking claims as theirs were, in actuality, subliminal pleas for help. The deal itself is indescribable, unutterable; the deal works best for both parties when encrypted, in the chance event it leaks.

Pillaging this excerpt from its intended context, "For I believe that part of knowledge is its desire to show itself and its refusal to put up with a merely hidden existence. I find mute knowledge dangerous, for it grows ever more mute and ultimately secret, and must then avenge itself for being secret," Canetti unintentionally touches on the strategic occultism that leads up to the point in which the abject-form brings itself into the world through its contracted essayists, bakers, musicians, sculptors, architects, chefs, programmers, painters, poets, etc.⁸ All of them, teetering at the cusp of mental bankruptcy until plummeting to an unfathomable pit of phobic productivity where the fear of ceasing to produce one's atrocious arts or crafts is directly proportional to feared atrocities one's arts or crafts are capable of. "Projecting their phobia onto the abject, they define their subjectivity by substituting the abject for an object." Both unproductivity and product deform into "object[s] of fear, of horror, of terror, and the subject founds their subjectivity on this terror."⁹ The abject intends to quietly invade all external and internal spheres of exchange by shifting externality and internality into abject-centric economies of aestheticized reverse-leakage: spatial perturbation, submissive aversion, and ceremonial humiliation.

Not to be confused with perturbation theory in quantum chemical applications, abject spatial perturbation is achieved by the abject-form when the area, perimeter, page count, or source code which it occupies provoke mental fault-lines of disquietude which, once evoked, are inconsolable. Here, an abject agency imposes stress, dissatisfaction, anxiety, and anguish upon the space it



occupies and onto subjects within its vicinity. Offset focal points, gnarled shapes, necrotic colors, angular imbalances, and distorted lighting can be employed by the artist to increase the sense of energetic urgency, emotional cleave, and anticipated unease. These psychic warfare tactics of an Anti Feng Shui are abjectile (a transposition of the projectile object, designed to discourage or repress, reimagining Freud's "the return of the repressed" as a pathologic exhibition) and deployed for mass attacks of shock-and-misery.¹⁰

Submissive aversion takes place when the subject resentfully yields to the abject-form's tyrannical aesthetic coercions. "Threatening facial expressions have been shown to activate fear neurocircuitry preferentially in [social anxiety disorder],¹¹¹²¹³ as have faces of greater emotional intensity,¹⁴ but eye gaze stimuli have been little studied."¹⁵ This also rings true when the gaze of the eyeless abject-form is the stimulus. Art collectors especially present such symptoms, developing a relationship of resentful servitude to the abject-forms in their collection. The collector begrudgingly caters to the abject-form's imposing and, moreover, costly physical demands: transportation from public to personal gallery, preventative insurance, inevitable restorations, and the domineering claim it holds over both domestic and gallery display space.

Wherever the abject-form is exhibited, a ceremonial humiliation commences. The very existence of the rendered abject becomes a signifier of dishonor for its makers and observers, most opprobrious when it's unveiled before the public. Insidious agitators, the fittest of the artist-artisan breeds, wear such torture marks as scabrous badges of honor — priding themselves as raven-black stars of the theater of the obscene — deflecting offenses onto their spectators, hissing the abject-form's justification through sharp-filed bituminous teeth.

From these aforementioned insurgencies of reverse-leakage, a pathologically capable aesthetic of psychological discharge and congestion, the observer is stripped bare to the point of abjectification and forced to bear witness through hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling, channeling the abjectified physical and/or virtual interface of the form. The witness, an unknowing initiate, then undergoes a subconscious transformative repulsion where such arts and crafts of human rendering under the diabolical influence of outre inspiration can only be appreciated as leading-edge collectibles of mephitic waste from a spent and alien-trashed culture. It is in this state of inexhaustible self-repulsion that the witness embarks upon an inverse-voyage down the drain of their own inpouring delirium, similar to that of artists and artisans devoted to the abject. The witness is flushed down to the nethermost toxic seductions of inner night's solicitation. While the



oneiric locus of the unconscious black market as well as the precise mode of seele-for-in\$anity exchange remains unknown, the mad allude to demonically looping negotiations which their umbral others have embedded into abject-forms desired and produced: contemptible commemorations of the dream-eroded mind. ²⁰ ₂₄

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1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy. Part II (Act I)*, (Yale University Press; Revised edition, 2014), 244.
 2. Thomas Pynchon, *V*, (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005), 471.
 3. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (Columbia University Press; Reprint edition, 1982), 154.
 4. Keller Easterling *Extrastatecraft the Power of Infrastructure Space*, (Verso, 2014), introduction.
 5. The text within brackets was ad-libbed from the abyss and inserted parasitically within the skeleton of Easterling's definition of the object-form in order to confuse it with that of its doppelgänger, the abject-form.
 6. Antonin Artaud, *The Nerve Meter* in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, (University of California Press; Reprint edition, 1988), 81-82.
 7. Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies* in *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, (Grove Press; First Edition edition, 2009), 211.
 8. Elias Canetti, *Die gerettete Zunge: Geschichte einer Jugend*, (C. Hanser; 2. Aufl edition, 1977).
 9. Christine McCarthy, 'Constructions of a Culinary Abject', *Space and Culture* 1.1: 13.
 10. Sigmund Freud, 'Repression' in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. (Modern Library; Reissue edition, 1994), 141-158.
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