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## The City of Disney: Book VI Promethean Fire Sale!

### Viral Thermodynamics and the Rise of the Incandescent Beast Augustine of Epcot and his Scribe

[Daniel R. White](#)

For fire all things are an exchange, and fire for all things, just as commodities for gold and gold for commodities-Heraclitus, fragment XL[1]

Once we recognize our posthuman bodies and minds, once we see ourselves for the simians and cyborgs we are, we then need to explore the vis viva, the creative powers that animate us as they do all of nature and actualize our potentialities. This is humanism after the death of Man: what Foucault calls "*le travail de soi sur soi*," the continuous constituent project to create and re-create ourselves and our world.-Hardt and Negri, Empire, p. 92.[2]

#### I Fire

The American West is on fire. It is burning now, as I write, in the first year PME (of the Postmodern Era). Indonesia was on fire in 1997 CE (the Common Era which culminated in the creation of "modern humanity," the ones whom Friedrich Nietzsche called the "herd" who consumed the earth for fun and profit). Florida was on fire in 1998, all around Disney World, encircling the Magic Kingdom, a halo of flame, and with it the sulfurous acidity of Dante's Inferno, dubbed "Florida Noire" by local teenagers with a bent for film history, an oxymoronic geography of incandescence and smog, deterritorializing the Sunshine State. "I" used to live in this Geography of Nowhere[3], where water waned and fire waited, and Kathy Acker[4] lurked behind the billboards waiting to arm-wrestle the tourist dads from Ohio and subvert their wives, freeing their children to run wild from the highways, toward the Fountain of Youth where Ponce de Leon and his men longed to bathe, *the vis viva, élan vital, immanent demon of the bioregion* that might cool those miserable Europeans, longing for redemption, with the icy springs of regeneration and revive them with the balmy floridity of desire-at the cost of their immortal and morally superior souls, and of their happiness too, those invaders who made "me" what I used to be before "I" met the Fire.

I wake with a sense of utter strangeness, not the estrangement (*Entfremdung*) Marx would feel were he to find Das Kapital on a sale rack at the mall, or the experience of the Camus' Stranger (*l'étranger*) at the beach were he to be told by some perfectly blonde life-guardess becoming gilded and bronzed under the sun, "Have a nice day J," but more

what, after Derrida, I might call the *spectral alienation* of a Marxian humanist as he faces the immanent conjuring of his waking self out of the grammars of dream, his identity slowly taking shape like Lewis Carroll's cat out of bio-pixels left over from a vision, rising into proximity with waking thoughts, melding into a pattern as if generated from little blue, yellow, and red dots of laser light, yielding the image of a room haunted by the ghost of his, or was that yours, truly? "It is necessary to speak *of the ghost*," Derrida says of Marx, "indeed *to the ghost and with it*, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible . . . "[5] Specter of a saint: Augustine of Hippo, now haunting Disney World, evokes a similar strangeness, haunted by a deepening sense and recollection of a silent and forgotten divinity, listening as he changes the linguistic mood of his sentences from indicative, to subjunctive, to interrogative, as he strains to hear beyond his range, so that the spectral reader, turned listener, wonders just what could be coming at the end, in what form it will speak, and, when it does, how he or she should understand the message?[6]

So Nietzsche, from the other side of the theological fence, hurls *Fragezeichen*, Question Marks, at Augustine (moi?) and his Platonic pals, with a vengeance, answering Perhaps! (*Vielleicht!*) to their faith in God or Reason or Authority, those anchors on which metaphysicians, including Augustine when he is tired, have relied on to canalize the river of discourse, to give it a clear source and destination. Nietzsche's strategy: To say "perhaps" to the verities not rising into the living pulse of Fire-that's a metaphor, right?-from the oscillating play of linguistic paradox.[7] That's the Nietzschean *Spiel*, the play of what Derrida calls *différance*, the dance of what Vedantists would call Shiva, bursting the logical atoms of analytic discourse as She-He, just for Post Kali Yuga, joins hands with Dracula and refuses to come to presence in mirrors. This game was traditionally, in what used to be called euphemistically the West, constrained, made to follow Formal rules, by a noetic construct that Clerk Maxwell imagined as a transcendental Demon: the scientist's counterpart of that old Socratic *Daimonion* who restrained the wobbling course of his dialogue from error, from *errare*, from straying into sin as the Church Fathers thought; it tied the spirit to the mast to prevent the Odyssean adventurer from *wandering (planasthai)* too much, and bound the perturbed course of Ptolemaic "planets," more or less, in a circle. All these leanings had to be demonically restrained so that the wanderer would not lose his way like Dante and find himself in a Dark Wood (*selva oscura*) of unending metaphors where the seductions of desire lurk in thickets of sin: in other words, in Nature. That Demon of Maxwell, of Socrates, of Dante, of Ficino, of Descartes, by its act of cogitation kept the flow of thought on course, not allowing sin or other tomfoolery to draw it from its way, so that it would be available to put out fires: those little bundles of combustion, of rapidly expanding entropy, that Heraclitus once set and Nietzsche rekindled, in front of one of which at Christmas George W. sits with his Friends, those Energy Entrepreneurs who (a secret sign of Entropicrats[8] old and new) don't believe in metaphors and so take combustion rather more literally than the philosophers have intended, as did the Inquisition in expelling Giordano Bruno, the Triumphant Beast, from their Fold.[9] So I wake, my sleep rising away like smoke, as I am spontaneously pixelated into my spectral self of the hour and turn on the television for a spot of CNN.

## II In the Zone [10]

This flame with gray-white belly  
--darts its greedy tongue into the cold distance,  
inclines its head toward ever purer heights  
-a snake raised straight up with impatience:  
this sign I put here before me.  
My soul itself is this flame . . . .  
-Nietzsche, "The Fire-Sign." *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*. 1888.[11]

A screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there is nothing to compare it to now.-Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*[12]

A fire burst rises seemingly in slow motion, one end of a tape loop whose beginning is a Boeing 757 gliding confidently into a World Trade Center Tower, slicing through the glass and steel smooth as a virus slipping into the bloodstream of trade, as it enters the miraculous body of the media, whose incessant sacrament is news, on whose altar are sacrificed, here, in one blitz, 6, 333 offerings (in the most recent count), victims, "terrorists" and "innocents" too, shattering and fusing together with one another and the eidetic memories of viewers around the globe, including "me," as I watch the current expression of Viral Fire, a code that decodes toward entropy, drawing its devotees and its casual tourists along for the ride, in a Downward Spiral:[13] a helix of despair, the artifact of Incendiary Politics, Fossil Fuel Incandescence taking on living form as it shreds the bodies of the living, transforming them into symbolic forms, reconstituted as images, life stories, burned torsos of skyscrapers exhausted from the transformation, into a new and reconstituted world persona, a Gargantuan Miracle of Transcendence. "I" look down to the digitized page of Nietzsche on my own personal arrangement of pixils and fiber optics bound into a "screen," to read from the Prophet, Nietzsche my old friend, who stood in the dark in the back, the spit-ball-throwing section, of the theatre of the Rising Western Reich, of what Hardt and Negri now call Empire, just an Ember of Sun on the horizon then as he gazed toward that great Progress of Entropy to Come.

"Fire Sign," (*Feuerzeichen*), not only the physical event, the rapid course of oxidation that has long been the tool of Church and State in teaching the lessons of Transcendent Power, but the tongue of a Viral Beast, one trained in the Terror Camps of Modernity, whose electric spirit and electromagnetic flesh have learned the world religion of Empire well, have come to epitomize, grimly to satirize, its logics of Consumption, of Capital as Fire, the new transmogrified blood spilling and burning from the trunks of America, as it meets its own death-dream come home, a nightmare loop, a *Kreislauf*, a recursive spiral that Nietzsche called Eternal Return, crashing again and again via CNN, a visual echo of a message by which, Now, the Virus has made itself known to the Host who has nurtured it so well, whose terrible biodreams are now flying the Friendly Skies, rising like the Unconscious Monster of the Krell: that Beast, visible only as Techno-Mirage and by Searing Effect and Vastly Disturbing Footprints, who rises to power in direct proportion to the Aggression and Fear of its hosts, inscribed into Natural Space by the *phantastic*

generative impetus of Extraterrestrial technologies who make Nightmares walk the earth and stalk their own dreamers! [14]

Please excuse me; Heraclitus is on the phone:

**Sun will not overstep his measures; otherwise the Erinyes, ministers of Justice, will find him out.-Heraclitus, Fragment XLIV [15]**

What? That "man" (*anthropos*) as later "theorists" would come to think of themselves, and to imagine their forbears, including him, in the same shape, was always Cryptic and writes in something like Cryptographic form. He invokes those Erinyes, the Furies whom Aeschylus saw rise to haunt Orestes after he had murdered Clytemnestra, his Mother, who had killed Agamemnon, her Husband and Orestes' Father, in a bath of blood, encompassing him in a Net: the same metaphoric shroud that enwraps the Earth, the Great Mother, and all of her Children, in a Web of Stars, little Suns that grow larger, coming onto the Horizon in a growing Fireball of Thermodynamic Decay as Negatively-Entropic systems come Crashing down in a rain of viral tears flowing like Signs into the eyes of the newly anointed, in an escalating vision of Light Benevolent and Terrible. So the Guard says in *Agamemnon's* first scene: "And now I watch for the sign of a beacon, bearing the shining voice of fire from Troy . . ." [16] Agamemnon won That war, the Trojan Affair, sacrificing Iphigeneia, "his" Daughter or so he thought until his Wife heard about it, and laid the net of stars upon the Earth to wrap him in like a Babe for the Sacrifice. And of course their son Had to Take Revenge, and the Erinyes, in turn, had to Stalk their prey, and so on, until Athena, Female Goddess without a Mother, negotiated a settlement with Patriarchy and assured the Rising Promethean Flame of the West. But Might and Violence were always in the Wings, to assist the Technologist in driving a stake through the belly of the hero, slicing a blade into his vitals like a Jet.

Might and Violence: "Hephaestus, you must heed the commands that the Father has handed down to you, to bind fast this willful one [Prometheus] to the rocky cliffs with unbreakable bonds of diamond-hard chain. For your flower, the blaze of pan-technical fire, he has stolen and given to mortals."

Hephaestus: (fearing to tackle the god himself, summons Might and Violence as his aids, and says to Prometheus): "High-minded son of right-counseling Themis, unwillingly I nail you with grievous bindings to this rock far from humanity, in order that you shall not sense the voice nor the form of mortals; scorched by the sun's bright flame you shall change the flower of your skin. And night in her sparkling robe shall hide the light for you, grateful, but sun shall disperse the morning frost again; and always the weight of evil's presence shall wear you down; for the one who is to bring relief has not yet been born." [17]

Not a good situation for the Bearer of Fire, to say the least, but, fortunately, in the next generation, a savior is born, under dubious circumstances to be sure, who is to overcome the unjust plight of the Hero-Technological Man-with his superior investigative skills. He, after all, as he tells the Chorus confidently, solved the Riddle of the Sphinx, by being

smarter by being stupider than his Opponent, thus miraculously taking over the kingdom from, *mutatis mutandis*, the Democrats. Now he is prepared to save the Kingdom by finding some culprit(s).

### III Democracy and Entropicracy, or, Oedipus meet's Maxwell's Demon

Oedipus [*played by George W., in medias res*]: Where on earth are they? Where shall the track of this ancient crime, difficult to trace, be found? (108-109)

Creon: "In this land," the oracle has said. "What is sought now is captured; what is neglected gets away." (123-127) . . .

Oedipus: If anyone knows the perpetrator to be an alien, from another land, let him not keep silent. I will make it advantageous for him, and my thanks shall rest with him besides. But if he keeps silent, if anyone, through fear, seeks to screen himself or a friend from my orders, then hear what I shall do: I forbid any resident of this land, over which I hold power and the throne, to offer refuge or speak to that murderer, whoever he is, or to make him a participant in prayers or sacrifices to the gods, or to let him share in the rites of purification. But thrust him out of your houses, everyone, since this is the stain of defilement, as the prophecy of the Pythian god has recently brought to light for me. In this way I am an ally both to the god (*daimon*) and to the dead man. [18]

Clerk Maxwell (*stepping forward from the chorus, breathless with excitement*):  
President-excuse me, King, or is that Tyrant?-Oedipus, if you'll forgive this interruption, you almost took my wind away with that last remark! That Daimon you mention, by which you apparently mean, "god," it's just like the one I invoked, after the Daimonion of Socrates.[19] You seem to be suggesting . . . that YOU have been given the divine assistance to adjudicate good and evil, and, if I interpret your remarks in terms of informatics, that you, guided by your Daimon, can keep the ship of state on course for us all! But, if that is true, wouldn't you have a different energy policy? Wouldn't you support the Kyoto Protocol? Would you have had Creon walk out of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in Durban, South Africa? If you are a Proponent of Decline, if you are an Opponent of the Negative Entropy-Enemy of the creative and differentiating processes of natural and cultural evolution in the biosphere and ethnoshere-then why should we the Chorus believe that you are a Friend of Difference, allied with the Demon of Creative Politics, now? Are you really the Minister of Justice you say you are? Or are you . . .

Oedipus: And I earnestly pray that the one who has done this, whether he is hiding alone or with conspirators, may, being evil, rub out his wretched life in an evil way. And for myself I pray that if he should, with my knowledge, become a resident of my house, sharing my hearth, I may suffer the very same things which I have just called down on the conspirators. And I command that you make all these things come to completion, for my sake, for the sake of the god, and for the sake of our land, thus made unfruitful and

godlessly despoiled. [20]

Teiresias: In truth? I command you to obey your own decree, and from this day on not to speak to these people or to me: you are the crime-stained polluter of this land! [21]

Sphinx: (*tauntingly from off stage*) He's *wondering* what pollution has to do with terrorism.

Oedipus: As always, you speak too much in obscure riddle.

Teiresias: Aren't you the best one born to solve these things? [22]

Chorus, led by Clerk Maxwell: (*Doing a whirling dance, in which they render a turn (strophe) and a counterturn (antistrophe), veering slightly first left as they spin right, and then right as they spin left, as if steering a sailing ship, and they hope not a cruise missile, in an "S" motion along its course*):

Strophe: When the state of things is such that an infinitely small variation of the present state will alter only by an infinitely small quantity the state at some future time, the condition of the system, whether it is at rest or in motion, is said to be stable; but when an infinitely small variation in the present state may bring about a finite difference in the state of the system in a finite time, the condition of the system is said to be unstable.

Antistrophe: It is manifest that the existence of unstable conditions renders impossible the prediction of future events, if our knowledge of the present state is only approximate and not accurate. [23]

Oedipus: (*To Teiresias, now loitering amidst the Chorus, thumbing through a tattered copy, in Braille, of the Bush Dyslexicon, [24] reflecting on his recent charges that the current Administration is the problem in Thebes*): Why didn't you speak up then, when I, famously, solved the riddle of the Sphinx?

Teiresias: [*Silent, thumbs rustling through the Dyslexicon, looks up and says*] Wasn't that your father?

Sphinx (now lowered over the Chorus by *deus ex machina*, demonically separating hot and cold 'gas molecules' [made from papyrus maché] in red and blue, respectively, thrown by extras from either side of the theatre, to simulate the play of thermodynamic exchange): "To quote your own paraliterate wisdom, King Oedipus, that riddle is 'Flammamababable!'" [25]

#### IV

### **The Religion of Anti-Life: Wandering the Desert of the Real**

Since the human species, on account of the inquietude of the soul and the imbecility of the body and the indigence of all things, leads a more difficult life than beasts on earth, if nature bestowed, through and through, the same term of living on him as she has on other animate beings, no animal would be more unhappy than man.-Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic*

*Theology concerning the Immortality of the Soul*, Book I, "If the soul were not immortal, no animal would be more unhappy than man." [26]

The transcendence of God is simply transferred to Man. Like God before it, this Man that stands separate from and above nature has no place in a philosophy of immanence. Like God, too, this transcendent figure of Man leads quickly to the imposition of social hierarchy. Antihumanism, then, conceived as a refusal of any transcendence, should in no way be confused with a negation of the *vis viva*, the creative life force that animates the revolutionary stream of the modern tradition. On the contrary, the refusal of transcendence is the condition of possibility of thinking this immanent power, an anarchic basis of philosophy: "*Ni Dieu, ni maître, ni l'homme.*"-Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp. 91-92.

There is a Hand to turn the time,  
Though thy glass today be run . . .  
-Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 760 [27]

What started with the simple fear of Incarnation, of embodiment, of sexuality, of birth and death, and a consequent spiritual quest for transcendence, has been transformed, in the history of Modernity, into Fire coming unloosed from its bindings, from what the Greeks called *dike*, justice, the expression of power bound by form into living *physis*: nature. The order of things was cast into metaphysics by Plato, sculptor of Forms, as a plurality of *ideas* transcending the Heraclitean flux, ordering the "fire" in which *panta rei*, "all things flow." This hypostasis of form apart from its embodiment had as its epistemic complement the transcendence of the soul, *nous*, *psyche*, [28] the source of Ficino's ascent toward immortality and disaffection with the "indigence" (*indigentia*) of the material world. That indigence, inquietude (*inquietudo*), and "imbecility" (*imbecillitas*, "weakness") of the world is, as Ficino saw it, the "human" condition. Civilization, particularly of the modern progressive variety, was an attempt to overcome its defects, to rise above it not "spiritually" but technologically, culminating in a trip, I confess, to my own Alma Mater, to Epcot Center and, to a place Marsilio would love, The Magic Kingdom. That attempt has brought, accordingly, the attempt to control nature from above, from the command positions of sky scrapers and jets, and from the apexes of financial pyramids. This "new world order" has just been attacked, but even if it were not, its imposition of power is untenable, thermodynamically degenerative, helping us all to expire in a slower combustion than our loved ones who have just been murdered, more like Bateson's frog:

There is a quasi-scientific fable that if you can get a frog to sit quietly in a saucepan of cold water, and if you then raise the temperature of the water very slowly and smoothly so that there is no moment marked to be the moment at which the frog should jump, he will never jump. He will get boiled. Is the human species changing its own environment with slowly increasing pollution and rotting its mind with slowly deteriorating religion and education in such a saucepan? (Bateson, *Mind and Nature*, p. 98) [28]

We sit, I fear, in a biospheric cooker, and George W. is turning up the heat with his right hand as he proclaims he's going to root out the pollution of fiery terror, on the other. So it goes? This *is* thermodynamics, of a simplified kind, as our Leader is helping to sort the hot molecules into a container called Earth, inside of which those who can, lounge in the pool to soak up the sun. A thermodynamics supporting of living diversity is of another order.

The post-human *vis viva*, "power of living," *élan vital*, life force, is constructed not from the metaphysics of transcendence or even of presence, but rather from the immanent, creative confluence, the *fusion*, of form and matter in the *infodynamic spiral of information*, whose memory is the helix, whose historical formation is the *Kreislauf*, the recursive iteration of mutagenic in-formation, whose pathways lead to dynamically stable phenotypes, teleonomic desiring machines, dying and coming around again, Eternal Return, edited by the interspecies conversation of evolution, forming ecosystems, mandalas, spiraling along time's Heraclitean course. Fire fused with Form, we rise into living personae. What is a person? A unique coupling of energy and information, order and chaos, for a little while at the Terminal, in the World Trade Center or at the controls of the Jet, as they join in violent con-fusion, the ultimate fate of the Transcendent souls turned capitalist turned instrumentalist, turned terrorist, turned "you" and "me": all species of the same viral strain, the Religion of Anti-Life. The first few units of its code sequence are,

mindnotbodyspiritnotfleshselfnotothermannotwomanmoneynotlifebombsandprayers

a sentence to be corrected by the Cultural Genome Project, which must first do what Oedipus failed to do, at least until his self-blinding: to understand the Riddle of the Sphinx, the Enigma, as a question the answer to which is not "man" [30] but the realization that "humanity" is a construction of the same self-generating *autopoietic daimon* producing life in the cosmos. [31] For Maxwell's Demon must, as Szilard intimated, sort *herself* out of the play of entropy and information, lifting himself up by his own tail.

Meanwhile, there is information war, hot war, cold war, molecular war, viral war . . .

Till the Light that hath brought the Towers low  
Find the last poor Pret'rite one . . . [32]

The early Christian Fathers fled to the desert, to escape the materiality of the Late Roman Empire. [33] Now Empire has encompassed the planet, bringing a new desert to all, nature and culture increasingly denuded of diversity and brought under the Sign of the Fire, the new Sun, of a Soul risen to leave the Body of the biosphere in an act of technotranscendence in pursuit of Financial Purity, the Protestant Ethic as the Spirit of Capitalism, [34] Wealth Immaculate, rising white hot out of the world's body, New Star of Commerce hanging like a Sign over the Stage Door of History, marking the Way Out. Desertification by Fire, the impetus of industrial modernity, of Global Warming, of Florida Noire, the Biospheric Cooker, explodes in a Fire Burst as the towers fall. Yet it is



also the glow of cyberdaemonics, of a new beast rising into history, of "me" and "you" as artifacts of our own creation, not simply biotech computers for sale, as Capitalism would have it, nor simply the *venom of disease* infecting the planet with the deconstructive codes of its DNA-RNA core and protein armor, like a microcruiser of the infomatic wars; but of a strange new "monster,"<sup>[35]</sup> a seed and a sign marking a new phase of history and evolution, the Posthuman artwork of the Postmodern Renaissance, rising from the ruins, the burned shells of concrete, and glass, and persons turned beyond recognition, after all, to ashes and dust: ourselves not as transcendent minds trapped in worldly bodies, not as rising Plutocrats seeking power over others, nor as Ministers of Revenge seeking a Holy War against the Other, but rather as Incandescent Cybernauts, immanent creative powers, and passionate lovers of life for a new millennium, in-scribing ourselves into the new disorder of things, posing ourselves as *Fragezeichen*, generative question-marks, in *le travail de soi sur soi*.

## Notes

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[1]. *puros antamoibe ta panta kai pur hapanton hokosper chrusou chremata kai chrematon chrusos*. Greek text from Charles H. Kahn, ed. *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979. My translation.

[2]. Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.

[3]. See James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere : The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*, New York: Touchstone, 1994.

[4]. See Acker's novella, "Florida," *Literal Madness*. New York: Grove, 1987. pp. 395-410.

[5]. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994. p. xix.

[6]. Consider Augustine's remarkable sentence, describing one of Augustine's last days with his mother, Monnica, before her death (*Confessions* 9.10.25):

We said, therefore: "if the tumult of the flesh were silent to someone, and if the fantasies of the earth and the waters and the air were silent, and the poles, and the spirit itself were silent to itself and, by not considering itself, go beyond itself, if dreams and revelations of the imagination, if every tongue and every sign, and if whatever is made for transience would be wholly silent to one (since if someone would listen, all these things say, 'we ourselves have not made ourselves [these very things that we are], but he who remains eternally has made us'), if, after these words were spoken, now the things were silent, because they have raised an ear to him who has made them, and if he alone spoke not through these things but through himself, so that we might hear his word, not through the tongue of the flesh nor through the voice of an angel nor through the sound of thunder nor through the enigma of similitude, but so that we might hear, without these things, him

whom we love in these things (just as now we strained ourselves and by fleeting contemplation touched the eternal wisdom persisting above all things), if this were to continue and other apparitions of an unequal kind were drawn away, and this one vision were to carry away and swallow and conceal their spectator among its internal joys, so that eternal life would be like this moment of understanding we sighed for, is this not: 'enter into the joy of your lord'? and when will that be? Possibly when we all rise, but are not all unchanged?" (My translation)

The Latin text is from J.J. O'Donnell, ed. *Augustine: Confessions*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. Online. <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html> : Dicebamus ergo, `si cui sileat tumultus carnis, sileant phantasiae terrae et aquarum et aeris, sileant et poli, et ipsa sibi anima sileat et transeat se non se cogitando, sileant somnia et imaginariae revelationes, omnis lingua et omne signum, et quidquid transeundo fit si cui sileat omnino (quoniam si quis audiat, dicunt haec omnia, ``non ipsa nos fecimus, sed fecit nos qui manet in aeternum"), his dictis si iam taceant, quoniam erexerunt aurem in eum qui fecit ea, et loquatur ipse solus non per ea sed per se ipsum, ut audiamus verbum eius, non per linguam carnis neque per vocem angeli nec per sonitum nubis nec per aenigma similitudinis, sed ipsum quem in his amamus, ipsum sine his audiamus (sicut nunc extendimus nos et rapida cogitatione attingimus aeternam sapientiam super omnia manentem), si continetur hoc et subtrahantur aliae visiones longe imparis generis et haec una rapiat et absorbeat et recondat in interiora gaudia spectatorem suum, ut talis sit sempiterna vita quale fuit hoc momentum intellegentiae cui suspiravimus, nonne hoc est: ``intra in gaudium domini tui"? et istud quando? an cum omnes resurgimus, sed non omnes immutabimur?'

[7]. See Daniel R White and Gert Hellerich, "The Liberty Bell: Nietzsche's Philosophy of Culture." *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*. 18 (Fall 1999): 1-55, especially pp. 42-44. Also See J. Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, London: Verso, 1997, pp. 26-31, on Nietzsche's use of *vielleicht* ("perhaps").

[8]. I coin this (satiric) term to denote those who, as a matter of policy, represent the increase of entropy as well as the reduction of cultural and biological diversity. Entropicrats espouse the philosophy of "entropicracy" (see section III below), the devotion to Death as a cultural-technological project, often disguised as "Progress and Democracy." They might be seen as *competing* with "terrorists" for global control in the context of Empire. "The source of imperial normativity is born of a new machine, a new economic-industrial-communicative machine-in short, a globalized biopolitical machine," Hardt and Negri argue. Furthermore, in the context of Empire, "Rather than think of struggles as relating to one another like links in a chain, it might be better to conceive of them as communicating like a virus that modulates its form to find in each context an adequate host." Viral struggle in this machine leaves the entire structure of Imperial sovereignty vulnerable, moreover, to forces that would disrupt it: "Perhaps the more capital extends its global networks of production and control, the more powerful any singular point of revolt can be. . . . In short, this new phase is defined by the fact that these struggles do not link horizontally, but each one leaps vertically, directly to the virtual center of Empire" (Hardt and Negri, pp. 40, 51, 58). Unfortunately, the struggles

mentioned here are not necessarily between forces of neo-imperial domination and forces of liberation. Rather, as in the case attacks on civilians like those recently experienced in the United States, the forces on both sides of the rising "war" can be reactionary and dedicated to the pursuit entropy. See Vandana Shiva's "Solidarity Against All Forms of Terrorism," for a balanced perspective on the current forms of violence. Online. ZNET: <http://www.zmag.org/shivacalam.htm> .

[9]. See Giordano Bruno, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*. Trans., Ed. Arthur D. Imerti. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1964. Bruno was burned at the stake by the Inquisition in Rome for heresy, on February 16, 1600.

[10]. See Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, Part 3, pp. 279 ff. Pynchon quotes Dorothy, upon her arrival in Oz, here: "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore . . . ."

[11]. Diese Flamme mit weissgrauem Bauche  
-in kalte Fernen züngelt ihre Gier,  
nach immer reineren Höhn biegt sie den Hals-  
eine Schlange gerade aufgerichtet vor Ungeduld:  
dieses Zeichen stellte ich vor mich hin.  
Meine Seele selber ist diese Flamme . . . .  
-Nietzsche, "Das Feuerzeichen," *Dionysus Dithyramben*. 1888. My translation.

[12]. New York: Viking, 1972. p. 3.

[13]. Listen to Nine Inch Nails. *The Downward Spiral*. Uni/Interscope, 1994. For a critique of the First Encounter between the Bush family and the 'Sphinx,' with perspective from Nine Inch Nails, see Daniel R. White and Gert Hellerich. "Nietzsche at the Altar: Situating the Devotee." *Postmodern Culture*(September 1995). Online. [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern\\_culture/index.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/index.html) ; reprinted in Daniel R. White and Gert Hellerich, *Labyrinths of the Mind*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, ch. 4.

[14]. See *Forbidden Planet* Directed by Fred M. Wilcox. Written by Irving Block and Allen J. Adler. MGM, 1956. Summary of the film:  
[http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/parallax\\_forbidden\\_planet\\_991123.html](http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/parallax_forbidden_planet_991123.html)

[15]. *Helios ouk huperbesetai metra; ei de me, Erinues min Dikes epikouroi exeuresousin*. I have transliterated the final *chi* in the Greek word for "not" here as *k* instead of the usual *ch*, to avoid correspondence with the English "ouch," even though the isomorphism might suggest a fitting response to the passage's content. Greek text in Kahn. My translation.

[16]. *Kai nun phulasso lampados to sumbolon./ augen puros pherousan ek Troias phatin* . . . . Aeschylus, Agamemnon, lines 7-8. Perseus Project Greek text, my translation:  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

[17]. Aeschylus, *Prometheus* lines 3-8, 18-27. Ibid, my translation.

[18]. Sophocles lines 230-245, Richard C. Jebb's translation, modified. Perseus Project text: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

[19]. See *Apology* 39e-40c, where Socrates invokes his *daimonion* or "divine power," as the explanation for his ethical behavior. Like the steering mechanism in a cybernetic device, his ethical autopilot as it were, this power does not direct him on the right course of conduct but prevents him from following the wrong one; the logic of Maxwell's Demon, like the old Greek Steersperson or *kybernetes* (the root of "cybernetics"), works in a similar fashion. So, for that matter, does the "natural selection" of species described by Darwin. Here is Socrates invocation of his *daimonion*:

For, judges--and in calling you judges I give you your right name--a wonderful thing has happened to me. For hitherto the customary prophetic monitor [lit. my customary oracular faculty of divine power, *hê gar eiothua moi mantike he tou daimoniou* ] always spoke to me very frequently and opposed me even in very small matters, if I was going to do anything I should not; but now, as you yourselves see, this thing which might be thought, and is generally considered, the greatest of evils has come upon me; but the divine sign [*to tou theou semeion*] did not oppose me [40b] either when I left my home in the morning, or when I came here to the court, or at any point of my speech, when I was going to say anything; and yet on other occasions it stopped me at many points in the midst of a speech; but now, in this affair, it has not opposed me in anything I was doing or saying. What then do I suppose is the reason? I will tell you. This which has happened to me is doubtless a good thing, and those of us who think death is an evil must be mistaken. (39e-40c, Loeb translation, modified)

[20]. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 246-254, Jebb's trans. modified.

[21]. *OT*, lines 350-353. Jebb's translation modified.

[22]. *OT*, lines 500-501. The Spinx's lines are, of course, my interpolations.

[23]. "Essay on Determinism and Free Will" (1872). Lewis Campbell and William Garnett. *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell, with selections from his correspondence and occasional writings*. London: MacMillan, 1884). Online. <http://w3.pppl.gov/~hammett/Maxwell/freewill.html>. For a brief biosketch and a portrait of Maxwell see <http://www.ifb.net/webit/maxwell.htm>. Maxwell's famous invocation of the Demon asks the reader to imagine, ". . . a being whose faculties are so sharpened that he can follow every molecule in his course, and would be able to do what is at present impossible to us . . . . Let us suppose that a vessel is divided into two portions A and B by a division in which there is a small hole, and that a being *who can see the individual molecules* opens and closes this hole, so as to allow only the swifter molecules to pass from A to B, and only the slower ones to pass from B to A. He will, thus, without expenditure of work, raise the temperature of B and lower that of A, in contradiction to the second law of thermodynamics" (James Clerk Maxwell, *Theory of Heat*. London:

Longmans, Green and Co. , 1871. P. 328; cited in Bernard T. Feld and Gertrud Weiss Szilard, Eds., *The Collected Works of Leo Szilard: Scientific Paper*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972. p. 32. Leo Szilard criticized Maxwell's postulation that the Demon could sort his molecules without the expenditure of work, arguing that the Demon must be considered as immanent in some system if not the particular one where he does the sorting, thus still expending energy and so doing "work." See Szilard, "On the Decrease of Entropy in a Thermodynamic System by the Intervention of Intelligent Beings," *Behavioral Science*, 9: 301-310; reprinted in Feld and Szilard, eds., pp. 120-129, original German text, pp. 103-119. Also see my "Dreams in Rebellion: The City of Disney, Book IV, Ctheory, February 8, 2000. Article 80. Online.

[http://www.ctheory.net/text\\_file.asp?pick=123](http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=123). You may play Maxwell's Demon online at: <http://cougar.slvhs.slv.k12.ca.us/~pboomer/physicslectures/maxwell.html>.

[24]. See Mark Crispin Miller. *The Bush Dyslexicon: Observations on a National Disorder*. New York: Norton, 2001.

[25]. Tapper, Jake. "Dumb Chic." Salon. Online. <http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2000/11/02/dumb/index.html>. 22 January 2001. Also see "Democracy and Hypocrisy: The Miracle of the Chads, The City of Disney, Book V.

[26]. Cum genus humanum propter inquietudinem animi imbecillitatemque corporis et rerum omnium indigentiam duriores quam bestiae vitam agat in terris, si terminum vivendi natura illi eundem penitus atque ceteris animantibus tribuisset, nullum animal esset infelicius homine.-Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia Platonica de Immortalitate Animorum*, Liber I, "Si animus non esset immortalis, nullum animal esset infelicius homine." Ficino, Marsilio. *Platonic Theology*. Vol. I, Books I-IV. English translation by Michael J.B. Allen with John Warden. Latin text edited by James Hankins with William Bowen. The current translation is my own.

[27]. Pynchon's narrator explicitly asks his reader, at this point, to become in effect a viewer, imagining the words of the poem on the screen of a theatre, over which a falling missile hangs. As we read, he asks us to, "Follow the bouncing ball:"

[28]. See Plato, Republic, Book VI, 507-511e where the parallelism between states of mind or knowledge and their corresponding objects is described in the famous simile of the Divided Line. Ficino mirrors Plato's Line in *Platonic Theology*, where he argues, "The human mind daily comports itself from particular forms to universal and absolute ones. Likewise, above natural forms restricted by particular materials, it characteristically ascends through mathematical ones, for which imparticular material suffices, to metaphysical ones, which require neither particular nor imparticular material. Thereafter, it lifts itself up from dimensions, which need both position and parts, to a point without parts, but in a certain way position; again from points to numbers, which indeed require parts, but not true position; at last it raises itself from numbers to unity, for which there is need neither of place nor of any parts. (Book II, Chapter iii, sec. 11, my translation).

[29]. New York: Dutton, 1979.

[30]. The Riddle of the Sphinx is to identify an entity that, "Is two footed upon the earth, and four footed, of which there is one voice, and three footed" (Athenaeus fragment 456b, cited in R.C. Jebb, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1912, p. 2). The answer Oedipus is supposed to have given was, "man," since he walks on all fours as a child, on two feet when he is mature, and with a cane as a third foot when he is old. For Oedipus's confident assessment of his personal handling of the riddle by his own wits, without resort to what he clearly thinks of as the nonsense of Tiresias's prophecy, see *OT* lines 391-400. The requirement that the Sphinx have "one voice" could be of considerable interest to students of polyvocality and schizophrenic discourse, as it suggests that "humanity" is constructed, at least in part, out of univocality. The posthuman, as this essay suggests performatively, moves toward what I prefer to construe as an *ecology of discourses*. See my *Postmodern Ecology: Communication, Evolution, and Play*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998; also see "The Ecological Self," *The European Legacy* 3.3 (1998): 39-61; reprinted in *Labyrinths of the Mind*, pp. 158-189.

[31]. See Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *What is Life?*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

[32]. Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, p. 760. This is a continuation of the poem quoted earlier. For the end, see the page cited.

[33]. For a selection of writings of the early Christian Fathers, see <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>

[34]. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2001.

[35]. See Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others." Online. <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/monsters.html>

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Promethean Knights are a class of mechanized Forerunner Promethean warriors created by the Ur-Didact toward the end of the Forerunner-Flood war to combat the Flood. After the Librarian exiled the Ur-Didact on Requiem, several legions of these constructs stationed on the shield world went dormant for the next 100,000 years. The machines—as well as their master—were reawakened in late 2557, when John-117 and the UNSC stumbled upon Requiem. By 2558, they, along several other Promethean constructs, had

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