SAIF SYSTEMS

Experiments in mapping & lucidity

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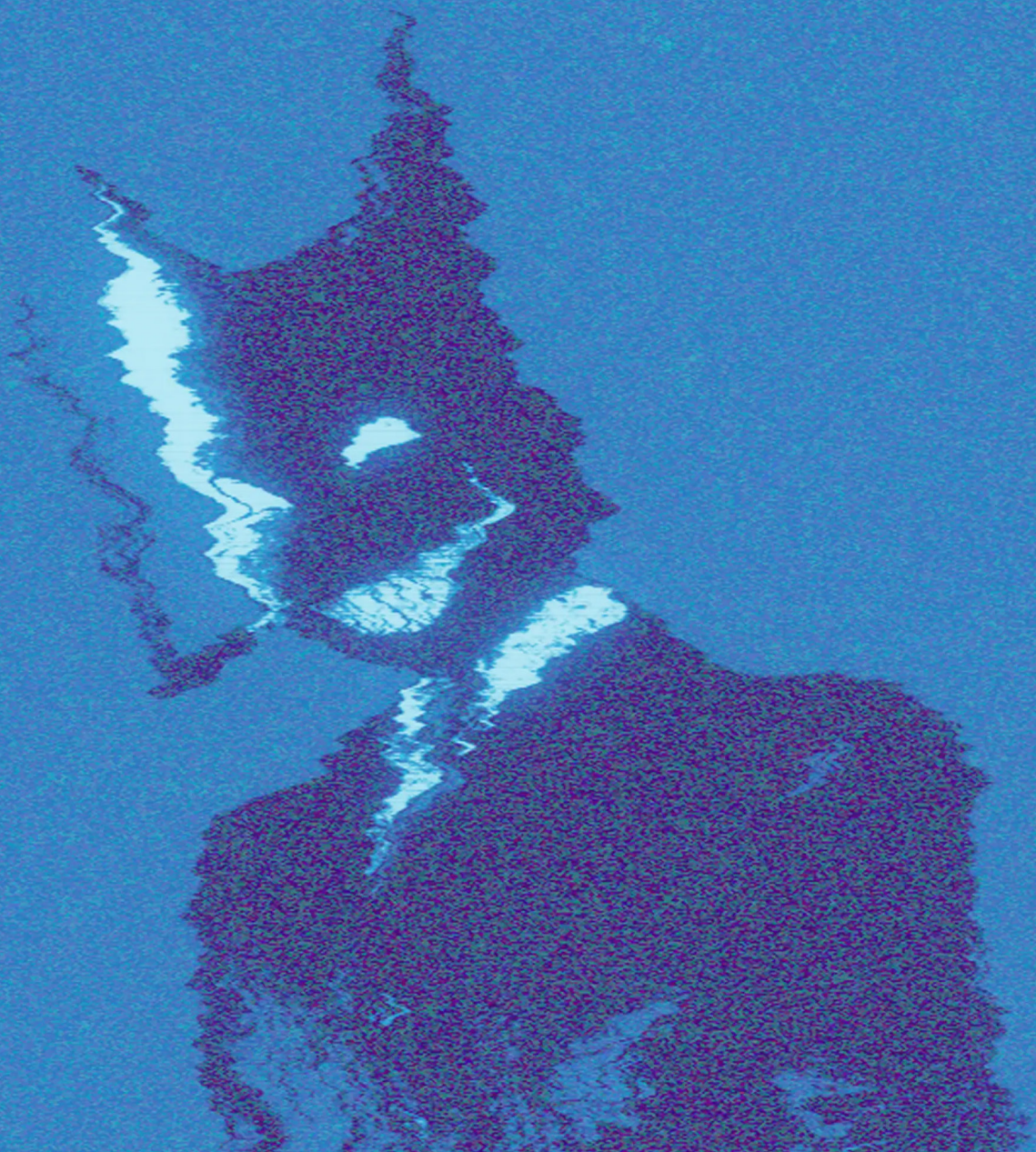

Japan
Malaysia
Iran
Cyberspace

Volume 1

EDITOR'S NOTES

From the moment it arrived the Society for an Alternative Islamic Futurology has occupied itself with questions that straddle the line between the global and the local, maintaining that its theory, while foundational, is breathing, alive and something which both alters and gets altered, based on events happening in our world. This trajectory of the world consists itself of two paths. As many readers know, the project broadly focuses on the trajectory of the world at large, with modernity seen as an all devouring beast which forces localities to choose between becoming consumed by it or being left behind. On the other hand, it is these particular localities themselves which offer what might perhaps be the strongest potential for escape from that trajectory. While alternatives are fast diminishing, SAIF has then from its inception maintained that a necessary part of what it attempts to do is scouting peripherical localities and their emergent cultures - whether online or in the real world - to analyze where opportunities for change arise.

This magazine was born out of the desire to take the first steps in fulfilling that second path; by scouting, understanding and appropriating events in the periphery and utilizing them, in part to further the overarching theory itself but also to find potential zones that offer alternatives. If the goal of SAIF is to infect various localities and push them towards fusing their local traditions with a futurological line by steering and capturing the memetic tools increasingly dominated not by individuals but by the algorithm itself, it is simultaneously also its goal to recognize and analyze localities as increasingly connected but nonetheless still diaphanous spaces of potential production and experimentation; with both of these layers tying into one another. As such, this magazine hopes to make a start in mapping and further understanding global flows of culture, innovation, experimentation and desire and how these tie back to or get remixed by local instantiations and vice versa, while sensing where exactly new energies seem to arise and global energies seem to originate (in so far as they still have a place of origin). This serves the double purpose of on one hand being able to capture (and better infect) what drives experimentation within these localities and on the other hand being able to use the tools these spaces of intensity offer while utilizing the spaces themselves for our own benefit by becoming lucid about where their new developments might come from.

While it goes without saying that specific cyber-stacks or configurations which allow the rise of alternative platforms are of particular interest as these spaces, while connected, still offer some sort of barrier, we equally maintain that street culture is not dead, or at least not dead everywhere, even if it is fully connected to and often downstream from the algorithm. If 20-30 years ago the avant-garde was pushed out of its local spaces into obscure online fora, we are now at a point where such fora are themselves increasingly obsolete. This necessitates an increasingly deep awareness of the connection between global trends and local remixes, and to arrive at an understanding of these developments early enough to precede their large-scale capture so as to make clear where zones of intensities exist. Such a project of mapping culture is then a main driver in the possibility to create hyperstitional narratives in a world which is increasingly monocultural and in which whatever is "new" is increasingly indistinguishable from what already exists.

If a locality manages to become the nucleus of something new, something that might have come in from the broader algorithm but which was remixed to such an extent that it can be said to have become something of its own and which then, subsequently, manages to infect the globe, it points exactly to such a zone where intensities that contain possibilities might still exist, providing a field that might rightfully be called proto-SAIF. As further enshittification bleeding into the global village seems to point at a future where such opportunities are rapidly decreasing, the time to map and harvest tools is now.

However, while SAIF's focus, and the focus of this magazine at large, has always been on the border between the present and the near-future, the increasingly accelerating cultural loops provide the paradoxical opportunity to learn from the recent-past, something which has already been seen in our methodology of genealogically tracing contemporary micro-trends and niche spaces as methods to understand the future, and which allows us to understand trends not as singular events but rather as recurrent waves where each wave already points towards a following remixed form for as long as the trend itself manages to maintain a semblance of locality (and thus a semblance of not being completely captured) in it. Thus while perhaps feeling "somewhat alien", this magazine will provide both analyses of upcoming trends as well as analyses of trends far gone, attempting to explain both in line of a broader trajectory that unveils locations of possible revival.

As we have always remained focused on the globe, this magazine will not limit itself to the Islamic world, seeing such a scope as a self-imposed death trap. Instead we offer pieces that discuss the state of culture in the present, near-past and near-future around the world, offering the reader an insight into possible zones of intensity. Besides this, the reader will find a number of affective pieces sparsed throughout the issue which serve to infect the reader with our mode of thinking and help them enter a state of lucidity, offering a path out of rigid thinking and into understanding how local forms might inform a broader world view of pushing the world towards a true post-modernity.

-Eco al-Hollandi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I'm yeag as hell

I'm yeag as hell

I'm yeag as hell

I'm yeag as hell

I'm yeag as hell

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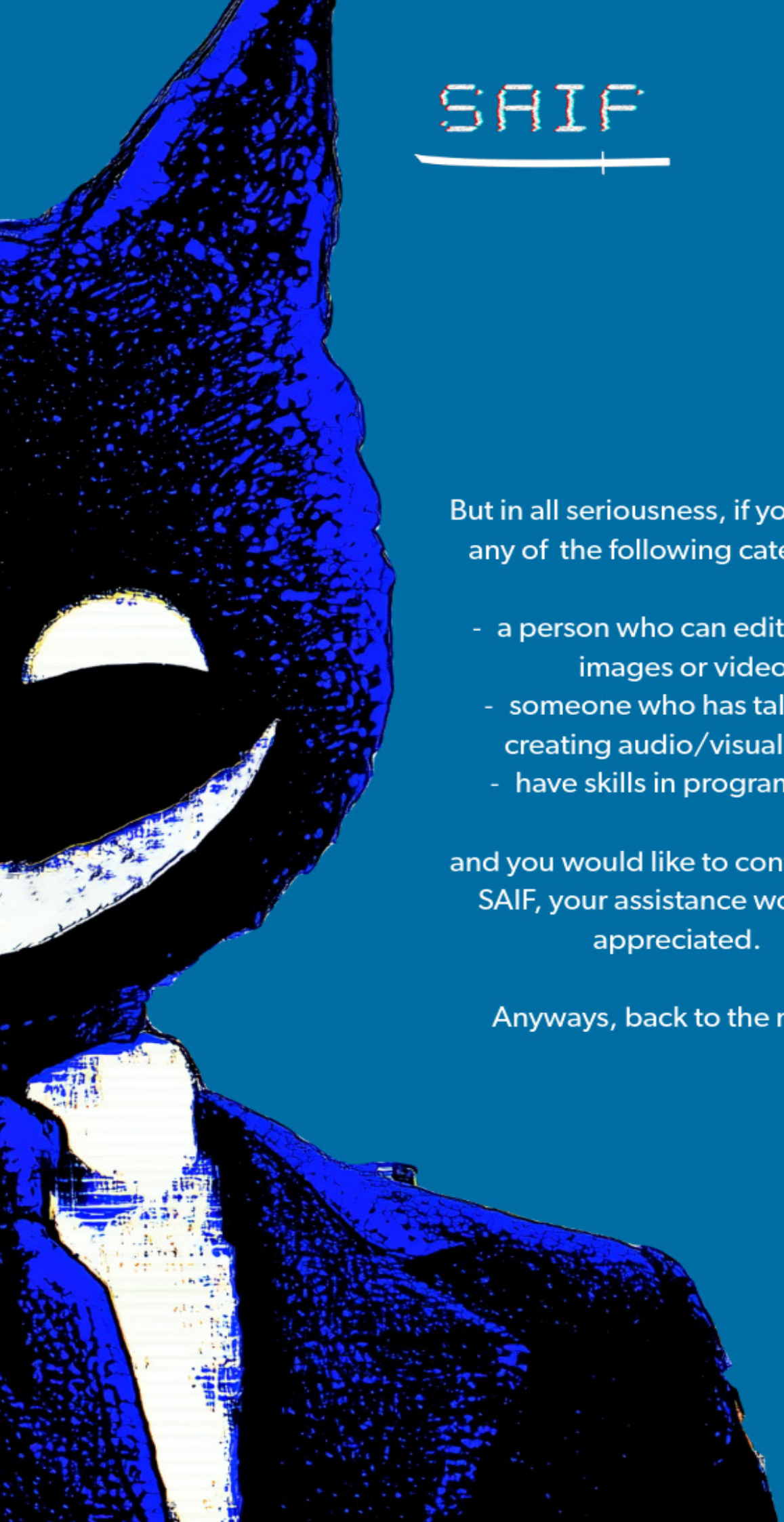


SAIF

But in all seriousness, if you fall into any of the following categories:

- a person who can edit/create images or videos
- someone who has talents in creating audio/visual pieces
- have skills in programming

and you would like to contribute to SAIF, your assistance would be appreciated.

Anyways, back to the mag…

LOADING 01

A look at the current “Japan-Moment”

On Japanese retrofuturism and the need to look East

Written by: Eco al-Hollandi

The “Japan-Moment”, as I will term it in this article, seemed to have first arrived in the 1980s, directly at the peak of the Japanese economic miracle. First represented in the cyberpunk narratives of that decade, Japan, alongside prototypes of virtual worlds, became the place that science fiction was looking at. In these sci-fi works, the country was perceived as the future of tomorrow, permeating the Western mind as both model of where the world was heading and potential threat.

This projection would die down with the economic collapse of the nation in the 1990s but seems to have re-emerged somewhere around the mid-2010s, surviving to the present day. However, as opposed to the first instance of the Japan Moment; Japan today is not seen as a country of the future but rather as a country of stasis. While the truth of this stasis could be discussed in depth, it is an unmistakable fact that at least economically, the country has largely stagnated and that in many ways its society currently lags behind the times

Nonetheless, throughout this second iteration of the Japan-Moment, the country's image has retained its futuristic imaginaries among the Western public it has captured. This second iteration shows no sign of coming to an end. In fact, the proliferation of Japanese imagery on social media seems to make this revival far more widespread than the original -- at least outside of Japan -- despite the nation's economic stasis.

This article will explore the tension between the country's stasis and the current instantiation of the Japan-Moment, arguing that the country's persisting futuristic imaginaries are the result of a materially existing retro-future that was lost in the West. It will attempt to do so by analyzing the trends that arose and led to Japan’s creation of retro-futurism, using the analysis of these

trends to explain the lack of a contrasting retro-futurism in the West. Subsequently, it will call for a different and deeper engagement with Japan on the basis of this retro-futurism, making an argument for the potential that this retro-futurism offers to its interlocutors.

Historical Fragmentation:

The modern history of Japan is characterized by continuous moments of intense rupture. As modernity arrived full-fledged with the outside-enforced opening up of the country in 1853, there arose a period of unprecedented societal shifts during which the country went from 2 centuries of isolation to a full scale modernized country. In its earlier forms, this forced contact with modernity would give rise to an early attempt at a fusion of western and eastern ideologies resulting in the militarism that dominated the first half of the 20th century in Japan.

This imperial fusion between west and east was itself abruptly halted when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japanese soil. The subsequent American intervention would delegitimize the cultural codes of the Meiji and Taishō eras and enforce a new system of liberalization and consumer capitalism leading to another rapid, outside-enforced shift. From the 60s onwards, companies such as Sega and Nintendo would come to rule the newly developed video game industry, embedding the image of the country into the minds of hundreds of millions of young people both inside and outside the country, while simultaneously Keiretsus such as Mitsubishi and Toyota would supply the world with the newest cars and electrical appliances.

In the meantime, the euphoria induced by the post-war miracle served as both a new unifying story and psychological cover against the fracturing of identity these ruptures had lead to. The pain of this rapid fracturing wouldn't really hit until this cover was forcefully removed by the economic collapse of the early 90s.

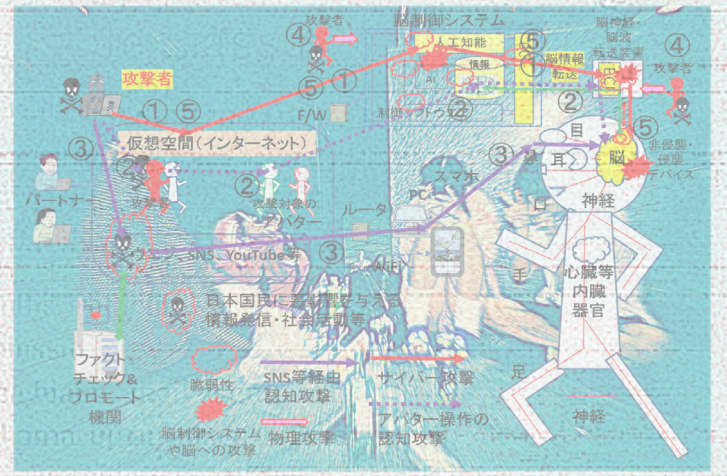
When this period hit, it revealed both economic stagnation and cultural stagnation, accompanied by a deep period of alienation as a century of continuously enforced rapid shifts had resulted in an amalgamation of broken fragments from the past which the country never had the time to work through nor to fully destroy.

Cyberspace, Youth & Escape

The aforementioned fragments of the past would create the enduring embedding of layers of residual social norms tailored to earlier eras which were long gone. After the economic collapse, for a new generation growing up, the first one without a pretense to a collective future, society made demands of them that did not befit the times, while offering neither meaning nor hope. This moment coincided almost directly with the emergence of the internet in Japanese society, which would quickly come to dominate and shape this new alienated generation, one which has since become known as the lost generation.

The internet would become the perfect refuge from a society which seemed to expect everything while offering little in return to these young people. In cyberspace identities could constantly shift and be created anew while societal pressures and expectations could be circumvented. Online one could be who-ever they wanted to be, a world away from a society without meaning or future, a world which gave you the possibility to start over. Here, the fragmented identity that came to characterize the Japanese people was not something that tied you down and brought with it a lack of purpose but rather something that aided the emerging formation of new forms of living. In such a world, cyberspace offered the possibility both to escape and to become anew.

Owing to the historical ruptures which had predisposed these new generations to the normalization of being-fragmented, the extreme media and entertainment boom the country had come out of and the still existing traditional social pressures; for this new generation cyberspace would become as important as the physical world and would influence that world as much as vice versa, at a point where this was still largely a dream by some techno-optimists in the West.



Freed from the troubles and the expectations of society, the internet allowed the Japanese youth who had grown tired of living in the real world to go beyond their limitations and imagine themselves the way they wanted to. For many, the online self became the real self and, as a result, the way in which people presented themselves online increasingly became a standard of what people should be like. Such a societal shift would inevitably lead to online personas bleeding into real world actions.

The lingering alienation of youth and the freedom that the internet provided led to real world problems, as a wave of youth crime swept over Japan in the late 90s. Simultaneously, there was a rise in trends such as the hikikomori, locking themselves completely away from the outside world. While these trends seem almost opposite, with one based on taking action in the physical world and the other on withdrawing from it; they have in common that both were ultimately spurred on by the cocktail of alienation, social expectations, lost futures and the possibilities of building a new persona in cyberspace.

While the lost generation now consists of adults in their late 30s and 40s, the problems described here never really went away. When visiting Japan, one topic of interest that we discussed with some of the locals was the cause of the declining birthrates. In answering questions regarding this interest one young girl described Japanese society as a “net society”, where the internet dictated what was seen as the societal standard; thus making it increasingly impossible for real world partners to adhere to these standards.

On top of the already existing pressures then, the bleeding of cyberspace into the real world brought along new pressures. If you watch videos of young Japanese people, you will see that they are prone to hiding their face (especially women), either with their hand or by wearing a mask, something which is seen increasingly in real life as well.

While much of this behavior on camera might be chalked up to societal standards and traditional expectations of humility, the girl told us that additionally, young Japanese people are often prone to hiding their face because they present themselves online in a way to which their real-world self could never truly amount.

The result of the bleeding of cyberspace into the real world became especially apparent when speaking to some of the Toyoko Kids in Kabukicho. The image of delinquent kids hanging under neon lit lights, engaged in acts of drug use, prostitution and violence, came almost straight out of a 1980s retrofuturist cyberpunk film. One young guy, who said he worked part-time in a host club, described the group as resembling an online community in its openness, fluidity and its actions. Likewise we were told by a young girl that she had attempted to find her community online but that there were many “weird men” on the internet and that the group here protected her -- an almost preposterous statement in light of the fact that many of the girls among this group engage in prostitution and the group as a whole congregates in the red light district of Tokyo.

These kids were themselves confronted with the dangers of the internet and seemingly want to recreate its sense of community in real life, creating a piece of cyberspace in real life, where societal pressures and rules suddenly seemed just as absent as they were online. The Toyoko Kids seemed as lost as their 90s counterparts; while alongside it the hikikomori trend has persisted, two sides of the same coin of the blending of cyberspace and the real: one representing the inward collapse, the other representing cyber-performativity in the physical world.

Techno-pessimism:

Though it might seem that the behavior of Japanese youth, who took cyberspace as a refuge, mirrored the early optimism that existed in the West; the inability of Japanese society to fix its fractured identity and the escape of the lost generation into (or onto) the internet -- followed almost immediately by the bleeding of cyberspace into the real -- would rapidly create a deep awareness of the future horror that came with the internet and thus with the future, separating it from the dominant cyber-optimism in the West at the time.

The West, as that place which modernity arose from, has always had its own anxieties about the future, but it was able to consciously choose which elements to discard after historic moments tragedies such as the second world war. It did not go through a collective collapse of the self imposed on it from outside but instead had made a deliberate choice to go into the direction of commodification and the dissolution of the self. But it would be exactly this inexperience with the mass awareness of the collapse of the self which would make the West unable to grasp the horrors of the future on the level of experience (and thus of a deeper, intuitive understanding).

In contrast, various Japanese media of the 1990s showed a profound and often horrifying understanding regarding the impact of technology, the internet and the fragmentation of identity on human ways of living at a moment during which the West was still filled with cyber-optimists and during which any lucid or honest discussions were mainly relegated to the realm of obscure theory and/or connected to all kinds of broader concerns about liberation and emancipation.

Serial Experiments Lain, which has seen a massive explosion of interest since the mid 2010s, including in the West, was one of the many media narratives that dealt with this topic. At the time of its release in 1998, Lain arrived precisely as the Japanese lost decade had materialized into a pervasive cultural mood. Portraying a world in which the boundary between the self and the network collapses entirely, it almost seemed to have encoded itself in Japanese society where the internet would not stop at running adjacent to the real world but would instead come to increasingly replace it.

The creator of Lain would explain that a running theme throughout the show was the anxiety that arose regarding the erosion of Japan's identity, and that the erasure and renewal of self-identity in cyberspace and its resulting confusion regarding ones self mirrored the earlier erasure and renewal of Japanese society as a whole. There would be an entire explosion in similarly themed Japanese media which -- in contrast to the Western cyberpunk of the 1980s which had looked towards Japan as an external threat -- looked at the self as already dissolved by the outside and fused with the new, virtual space, in an attempt to understand the horrors that this fusion between virtual and real might lead to.

Meanwhile, because of this overfocus on the external threat and the fact that modernity arose from the West, the Western stance towards future horrors has always been reactive. Threats were seen as potential rivals beating the West at its own modern game. Those that did predict the dangers of internal developments or new technologies before they became all pervasive were often relegated to the fringes of theory, art and media until what they had warned about had already pervaded society. It is only as of recent that the fragmentary and dehumanizing effects of the internet and social media more broadly seem to have become better understood by a larger western mainstream, at a point where any sort of analysis of these effects has come much too late.

In this sense a series like Lain was exemplary for future horrors already understood by a broader part of the population in the 1990s of Japan: the complete collapse of real world and cyberspace through the latter's proliferation, a condition which would be intensified by (and in turn would further intensify) the simultaneous rise of social phenomena such as the hikikomori. The recent mass-understanding of the problems of the internet might explain why works like Lain have suddenly gained so much popularity in the West. As the internet has started to dictate our lives and has started to increasingly become the dominant source of reality, there seems to be an increasing (if perhaps subconscious) recognition that post-bubble virtual horror such as Lain foretold a future that the West has only now began to grasp.

Although the West has been haunted by its own lost futures, it has always been its inability to understand what it was dealing with at the time that the thing was happening, that destroyed not only the promise of the future but its past-artifacts, causing no semblance of what futures had been promised to be retained materially. Thus such retrofutures remained only an active memory through the documentation of people from that time and through the failed attempts by contemporary generations to emulate them without any understanding of the deeper trends behind these pasts. The arrival of understanding always being just about too late leads to a forever lacking in the ability for genuine renewal; showcased in the increasing intensification of nostalgic cycles.

Lucidity & Fragmentation:

In his descriptions of "Postmodernism" (we would prefer "hypermodernism" here), Fredric Jameson argues that the postmodern epoch is characterized by the loss of our connection to history and that, through the increasing abstraction of capital, a "cultural" logic is produced which loses any sense of coherent time. Instead, this cultural logic "cannibalizes" history. The past is not deeply understood nor deeply engaged with but rather is consumed as a flat, constantly self-referential and depthless collection of dead styles without any critical or productive weight to them as ever faster recycling imagery become completely detached from their original temporal contexts. History, in this sense, becomes a collection of consumable fragments. The dominant aesthetic mode; art, cultural products and trends becomes pastiche: the mere surface level imitation of styles.

For Jameson, this societal situation leads to the fragmentation of the self. As everything recycles and becomes instantaneous, the subject is increasingly thrown into a variety of roles and understandings without grasping its relation to the cultural products produced (which have become self-referential) or to its broader history. The subject is no longer coherent and any objects, whether past or present, become part of the same commodified system of signs.

Seemingly in complete opposition to everything we have discussed up until now, it is in Jameson's description of history and of the fragmentation of the self that we can see how Japan's trajectory leads to a peculiar difference with Jameson's description. Japan's history of ruptures consistently left objects in its wake, both material and immaterial. But exactly because of its lack of working through these past periods, those objects never became fully self-referential, as each rupture turned the objects of its time into ruins, not fully integrated into new eras but rather fragments of an earlier time.

Where for the West described by Jameson, everything, including the past, exists within the same field of commodified signs, leading to them becoming mere aestheticized image; for Japan those fragments were never part of a continuous line of commodification because each outside enforced rupture led to a radical and sudden change, causing these fragments to linger in society as norms, codes and structures of a different time that haunted the present. Thus, when the economic collapse brought this to the foreground, there was no cannibalization of the past as the past had always already been there, existing as broken objects.

The historical ruptures that lead to the persistence of these objects further differentiate the Japanese fragmented self from that which Jameson describes.

The self of Jameson's "Post-Modern" subject becomes fragmented via the logic of Capitalism and the instantaneous circulation of signs. But, due to being produced by this logic, this self becomes a numb index of signs, increasingly participating in the circuit as it chases the simulated euphoria of these circuits. As opposed to this, we have repeatedly stated that the fragmentation of the Japanese self came about through its traumatic history, not through the logic of capital. These traumas collectively dissolved Japan's sense of a stable identity long before the postmodern (or digital) age did.

As the collective subject was already hollowed out, those who grew up in the post-bubble world would grow up without a stable identity. Thus for the post-bubble generation, this produced an awareness of both the self and the nation as being fragmented. This awareness, which I term lucidity, leads to the resignation of dissolution of the self as structural condition. It is this condition which is so skillfully shown in Serial Experiments Lain, exemplified through the anxieties of its creator: the dissolution of Lain's self-identity in her interaction with the internet mirrored what had happened on a national level. The national trajectory had thus already made clear what horrors came along with the internet.

Similar to the hikikomori and the Toyoko Kids, Lain wants to escape into cyberspace; because the horror of cyberspace merely mirrored that of real life. If those horrors existed already anyway, the internet could at least allow for a world in which ones persona could be re-built, realizing that the self was, like society, nothing more than a collection of broken pieces. In the real world there was nothing left to amend, it was a background as fragmented as the virtual world, just with more paradoxical social rules persisting from previous eras.

It was this lucidity, resulting from the unresolved fragmentation of Japanese identity, which paradoxically created the condition for the persistence of the ruins of the economic bubble as artifacts. It was during the bubble that a genuine believe in a future still existed. As described by 1980s cyberpunk, at the time when Jameson was locating the postmodern condition in the West, these Japanese environments, still felt like genuine future; brimming with a genuine story. As these artifacts became static ruins that were abandoned at a time when they were still alive, they are the remnants of a story of a promised future that never came into existence but which still tells that story.

As opposed to this, the West's lack of lucidity, and its conscious decision to move forward into commodification, makes the West's obsession with nostalgia amount to little more than a deteriorated simulacrum, as no actual "retro" artifacts remain in society. Its techno-optimism led to a conscious choice of furthering the dissolution of both the self and the artifacts along the way which lured the West towards that dissolution. Instead of a sudden moment of stasis via the recognition of future horror through collective memory of the past, the West's trajectory became a slow collapse resulting in the destruction of past artifacts on the road to that collapse, remaining completely intoxicated by the circulation of signs. The anxiety that is coming to the surface more broadly might then be said to be exactly the reason that the West, besides its frantic search for hope in its self-destroyed past, has also become obsessed with Japan as a place where a promised future still seems to exist.

Japanese Retrofuturism:

It must be stated that Japan has been as prone, if not more, to nostalgic cycles as the West, with Showa era nostalgia being everywhere. As explained, similarly to the West, contemporary Japanese society still exists in a state in which no future seems to exist, the self has still collapsed, cyberspace and meatspace have still blended and like in the West society is still stuck recycling visual signifiers of lost futures that never came. But it is exactly the idea of signifiers which distinguishes the Western situation from what I would call Japanese retrofuturism. For the West, the past is as haunting as for Japan, but what the Western nostalgia cycles try to emulate are merely signifiers, as no artifacts are left existent in society.

There is thus nothing they represent beside themselves. Western nostalgia might emulate lost futures but it cannot really experience what it attempts to emulate because society has destroyed it. On the other hand, Japanese society could be described as a retrofuturist paradise, as almost everywhere there persist themes which had marked the country since the economic miracle. Arcades, cyberpunk-esque city scapes, analogue technology -- walking through the country is like going through a time machine to a more hopeful period, one where simulation had not yet collapsed in on itself, where the veil was not yet completely removed.

What has come to the West adjacent to the predictive horror of the future in Japanese post-bubble entertainment is thus joined by an obsession with everything Japanese, precisely because it speaks to the nostalgic soul; in part because of it emulating the first Japan moment of the Western past, but perhaps even more so because the country still brims with hope for a future, even if it is unable to access that future.

The common saying "Japan has been stuck in the year 2000 since the 1980s" then becomes an almost perfectly crafted statement of why the country speaks to us so much. Exemplified in the Y2K hype that had captured during the youth the past decade (its onset almost directly coinciding with the Japan-moment), the Y2K-ness of Japan was visible everywhere throughout this hype; from the proliferation of Japanese cityscapes to the return of Japanese fashion trends such as visual-kei and gyaru, showcasing to what extent Japan has managed to capture us by what has become inaccessible to us, even on such small-scale levels.

While Japan has been unable to move out of this situation and is in many ways further along than the west, it is its combination of lasting historical artifacts and it being further along the process that offers it its retrofuturist potential. Japan's lingering Y2K fragments make Y2K still exist in a sense that it cannot exist in the West because Japan's lucidity and its stasis has made Y2K eternally material.

As that Y2K of the 1980s of Japan was in itself "the future", as described in cyberpunk literature of the time, Japanese urban landscapes become possible future as much as historical artifact. Mark Fisher describes that the difference between our contemporary formal nostalgia and the nostalgia of the past is that the former, as simulation, provides no generative change as it does not remind us of a different world. He contrasts this with the nostalgia of the past for lost futures, where nostalgia re-interpreted the past into a broader whole and was used productively, to generate new futures. Fisher describes how in the West of the 2000s and 2010s he was writing in, such productive futures are increasingly not possible because of the temporal collapse between past and future, caused by the internet.

In its second iteration, the Japan-Moment transformed from being a media trend that signaled Western fear of the Japanese future to a media trend that signals Western longing for the possibility of a future. The concept of lost futures, exhausted as it may ironically have become itself, might then gain new life through the second iteration of the Japan-Moment. Though Japan's resigned stasis makes it unable to tap into its artifacts to move on from its own collapse, the country then offers a distinct potential.

Similar to how Lain showed us a future we failed to grasp at the time, Japanese artifacts can become viral seeds that encode alternate futures that seemed lost, re-vitalizing them. Simultaneously, it is paradoxically the exact onset of the Japan-Moment that threatens to collapse these spaces into the same mediatization engines. While they maintain their potential as time machines to lost futures, their increasing proliferation (which, through global circuits, influences not merely the world but equally return to Japan itself) could ultimately lead to their demise.

Our engagement with Japanese retrofuturism should then not just be an attempt to connect with something we feel is lost in the West but rather an attempt to connect with its haunting promise of a future which never arrived. The engagement should then mirror those Japanese youth that have been lashing out while being lucidly aware of their own condition. The face mask worn in the physical world as an attempt to retain a sense of net-first standing stands symbol for a Japanese collapsing of the digital and the physical.

As in the example of the Toyoko kids, who bring internet communities to the real world, or those of the hikikomori who withdraw from the physical world into the endless possibility of cyberspace; those lucidly aware of the future can emulate this strategy of collapsing the physical and the digital, finding inspiration in Japan's promises of the future online, incorporating them and living it out in the real world.

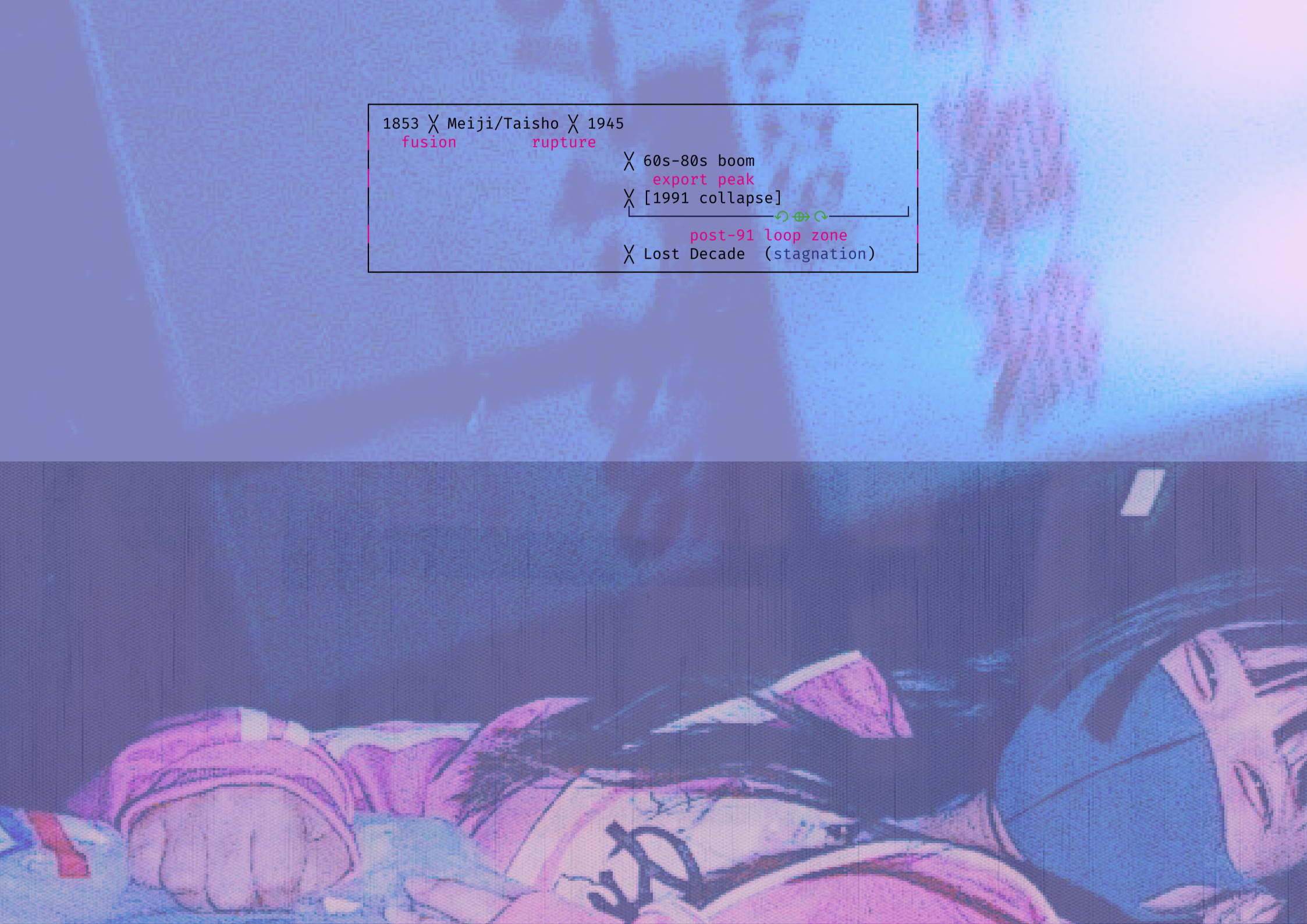
Through the method of these described groups, the Japan-moment should then be joined by an attitude of production and go beyond mere aestheticization, for it to become not only a Western projection of futurity but a paradoxical source of forward momentum.

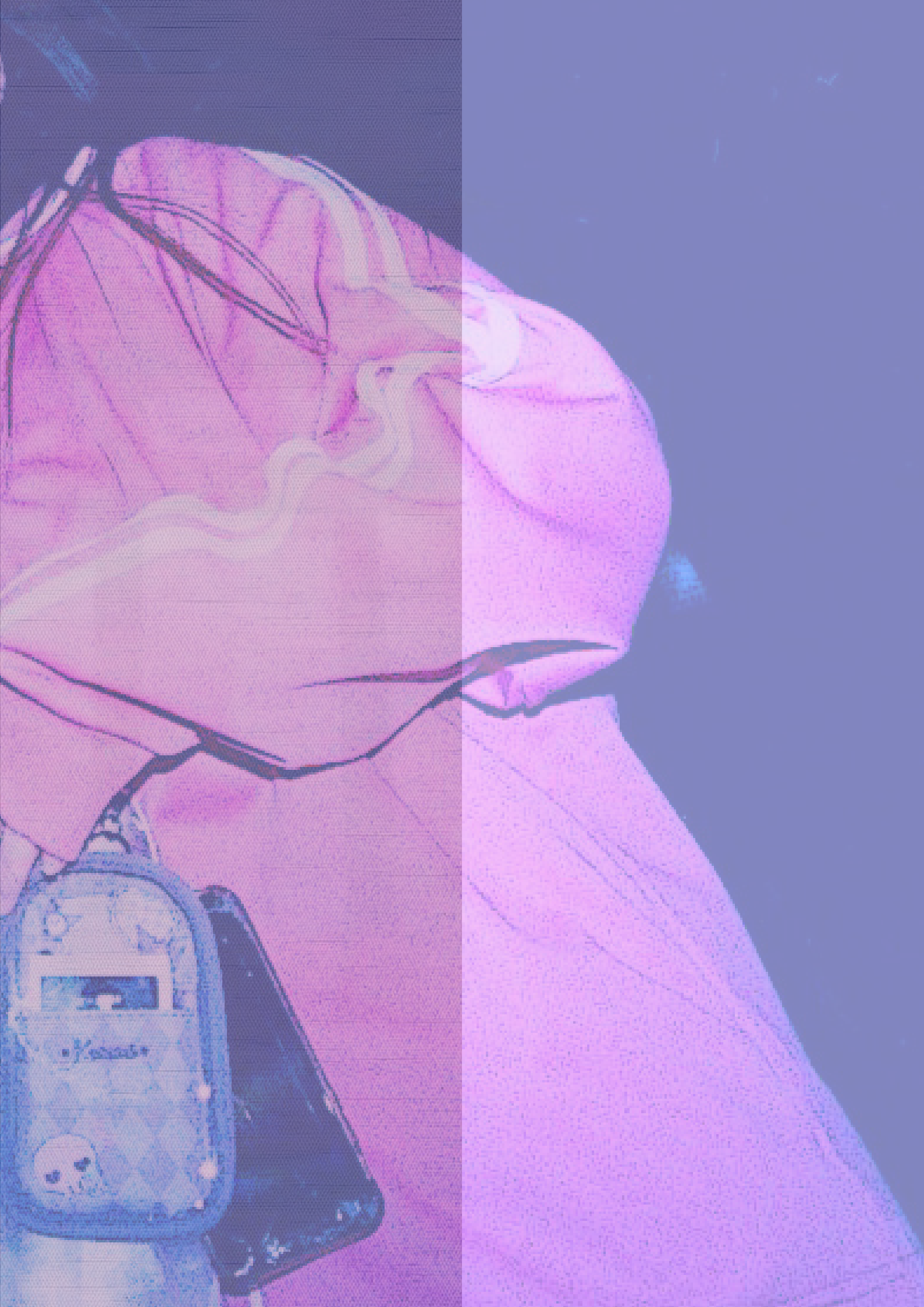
Similarly to how Lain showed us a future we failed to grasp at the time, Japanese media artifacts become viral seeds that encode alternate futures that seemed to be lost, re-vitalizing them. Anyone can tap into these artifacts but only by recognizing that these have ceased to be simply broken fragments from a Japanese past but are instead still alive, hunting the world through the Japan-moment.

The face mask worn in the physical world as an attempt to retain a sense of net-first then hides not just physical features but stands as a symbol for a Japanese collapse of the digital and the physical which can be used as a method. As in the example of the Toyoko kids, who by way of persisting but pressures from disparate pasts are forced to lash out and bring internet communities to the real world, or those of the hikikomori who withdraw from the physical world into the endless possibility of cyberspace; those lucidly aware of the future can emulate this strategy of collapsing the physical and the digital, finding inspiration in Japan's lasting promises of the future.

While lucidity spurred on by a still-existent but fragmented identity became what made these artifacts last it is also the cause for the inability to capitalize on the potential that these artifacts offer as the 90s seemed both end of story while the chains to the past prevent any further movement. But similarly to how the earlier ruptures were consistently imposed by the outside, those that lack these chains can come in and utilize their potential.

Through the method of these described groups, the Japan-moment should then be joined by an attitude of production and go beyond mere aestheticization, for it to become not only a western projection of (lost) futurity but a paradoxical source of forward momentum. New spaces should be formed around them infused by the strategies of those Japanese that are most visibly lashing out against the results of its collapse, moving beyond a mere mining of imagery to a becoming-Japanese as a potential escape route from Western temporal deadlock.


1853 ╳ Meiji/Taisho ╳ 1945
fusion
rupture
╳ 60s-80s boom
export peak
╳ [1991 collapse]
post-91 loop zone
╳ Lost Decade (stagnation)



>SAIFLogs_01:
>Ramblings on the pastfuture

"A base-level futurism is unavoidable nothing can be forecasted with certainty, but things MUST be ...

... The most important quality in all of hypermodernity is the ability to remain lucid. Lucidity and remaining aware does not mean to react to every trend (even when it's hyperviral) but in fact the opposite, that it is important to see the bigger trend, what it fits in (or what the larger wave is) and underneath that which things signify importance and which are mere noise ...

... Essentially if the process is going to (redacted) you anyway, do it on your own terms. (redacted) yourself first and give it the finger ...

... For those who are still inclined to the human, the question to the other side posed here is that if modernity is pure self-referentiality, i.e. the future is always now, is that future still actually there ... ?

... Doesn't this lead to no future in hypermodernity ... ?

... No future in what sense...?

...If modernity is self-referential then its absolute future is itself, it already always exists as it only refers to itself, it is fully recursive and thus there is no actual future because there is no move away from it...

...If the future is always calling, there's nothing new and therefore not much excitement of change. This may be what explains people's constant over- and under-stimulation in the current context...

... 'nothing ever happens', 'everything has already happened' and 'everything is happening always' at the same time ...

...So, what exactly is difference between (neo) modernity and futurism?...

...Land comments on Marinetti's futurism by saying: "the tenacious vitality of the modern is conspiciously demonstrated by the fact that it has not remained what it was...

...the problem is that people seek to take dead structures and think that repeating the past will bring back the same functionality. The goal is to take those old structures and redesign them/build upon them to generate new functionality for the current era –

my solution is blowing everything up

...When we talk about destroying… it's not about wanting things gone but recognizing that they are largely rotten corpses and that we have to understand them not as existing entities...

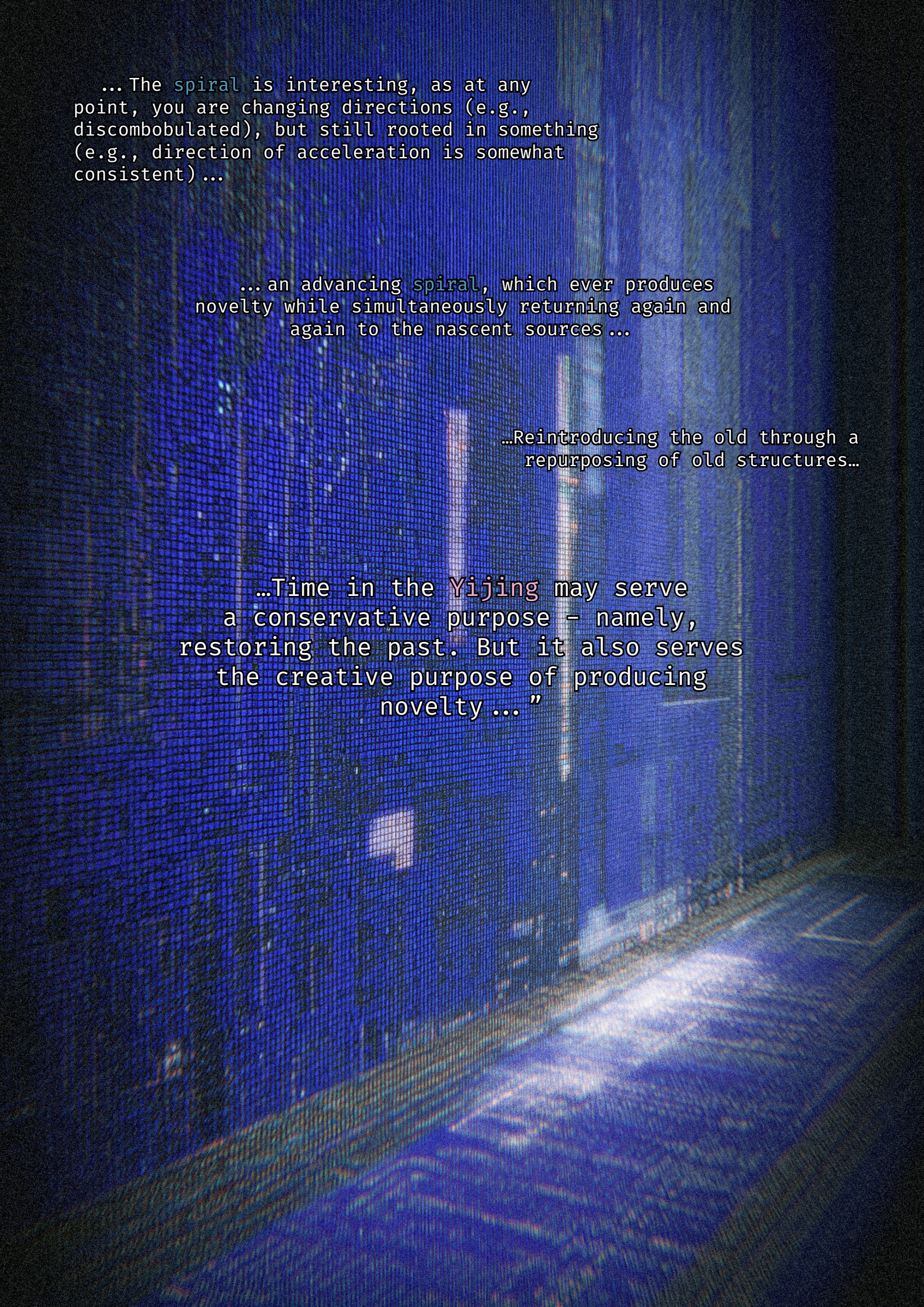
..."repeating the past", or more specifically the appearance of the past. In the past, practice was connected to the internal experience, now it is not. Now that the standard of practice is established, you can hit those "traditions" without an inkling of sincerity. The spiral adds to it change that forces some sort of internal connection...

...Land and Baudrillard would say that modernity has already done so much damage to the point that any reintegrating of tradition is more superficial and just a simulation of old practice to feel good at a personal level...

...Ideologies are now just vestiges of a bygone age that serve to legitimise particular regime...

…A part of the world completely (redacted) by its inability to move past old structures nor develop anything new…

…all the cope about how good we used to be created this spectre of a father whose shadow we can never escape...

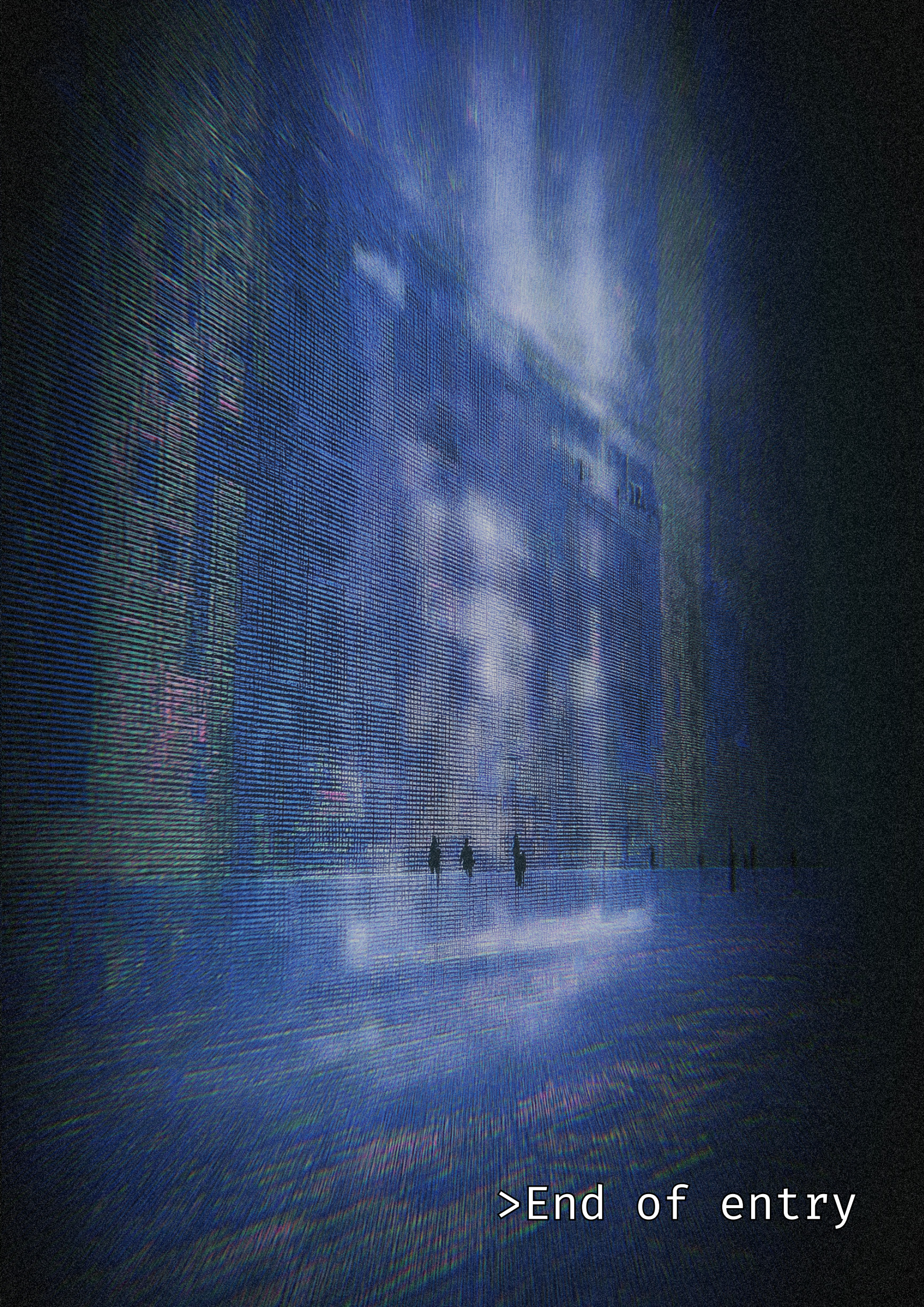


…The spiral is interesting, as at any point, you are changing directions (e.g., discombobulated), but still rooted in something (e.g., direction of acceleration is somewhat consistent)…

…an advancing spiral, which ever produces novelty while simultaneously returning again and again to the nascent sources…

…Reintroducing the old through a repurposing of old structures…

…Time in the Yijing may serve a conservative purpose – namely, restoring the past. But it also serves the creative purpose of producing novelty…”



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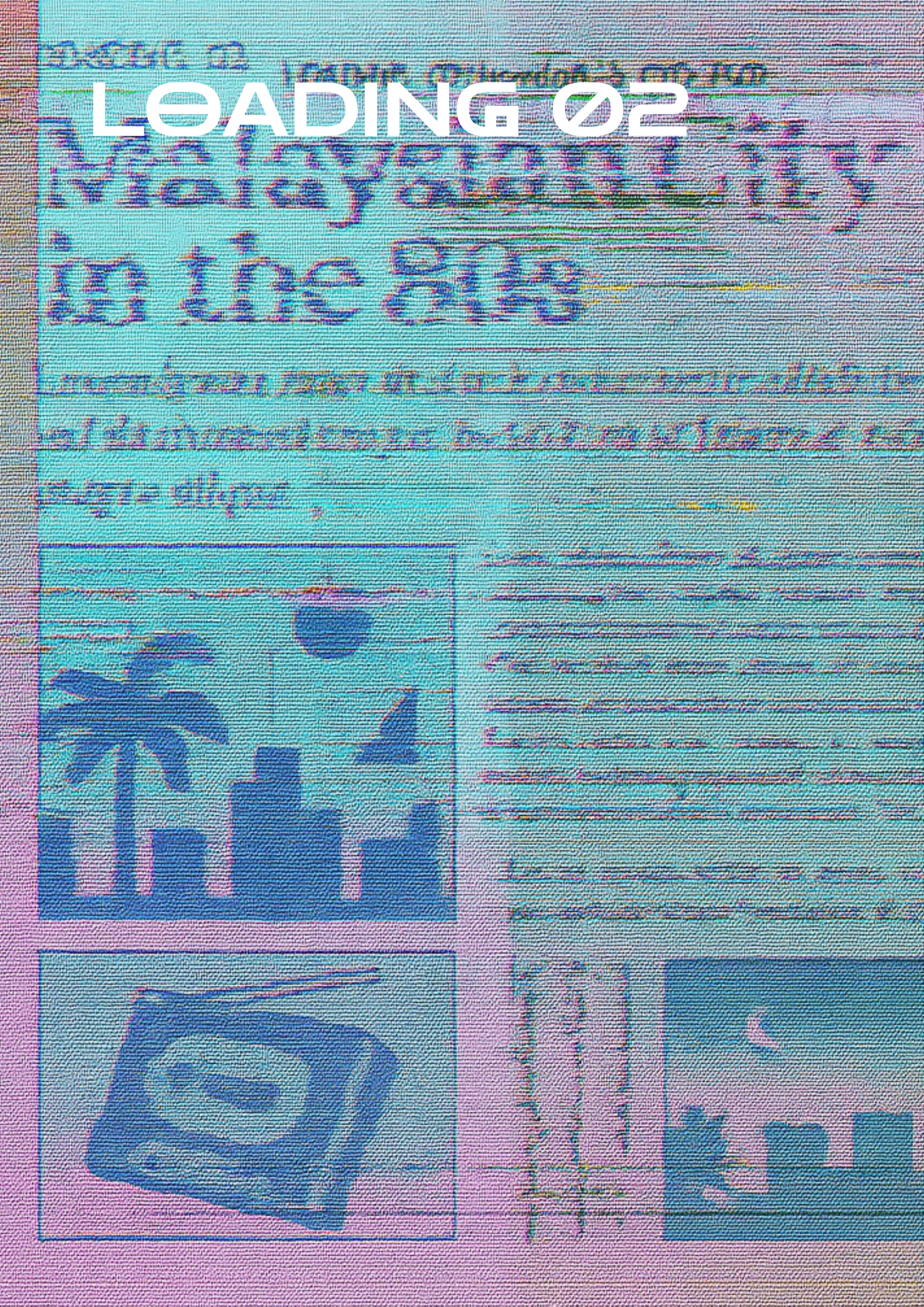
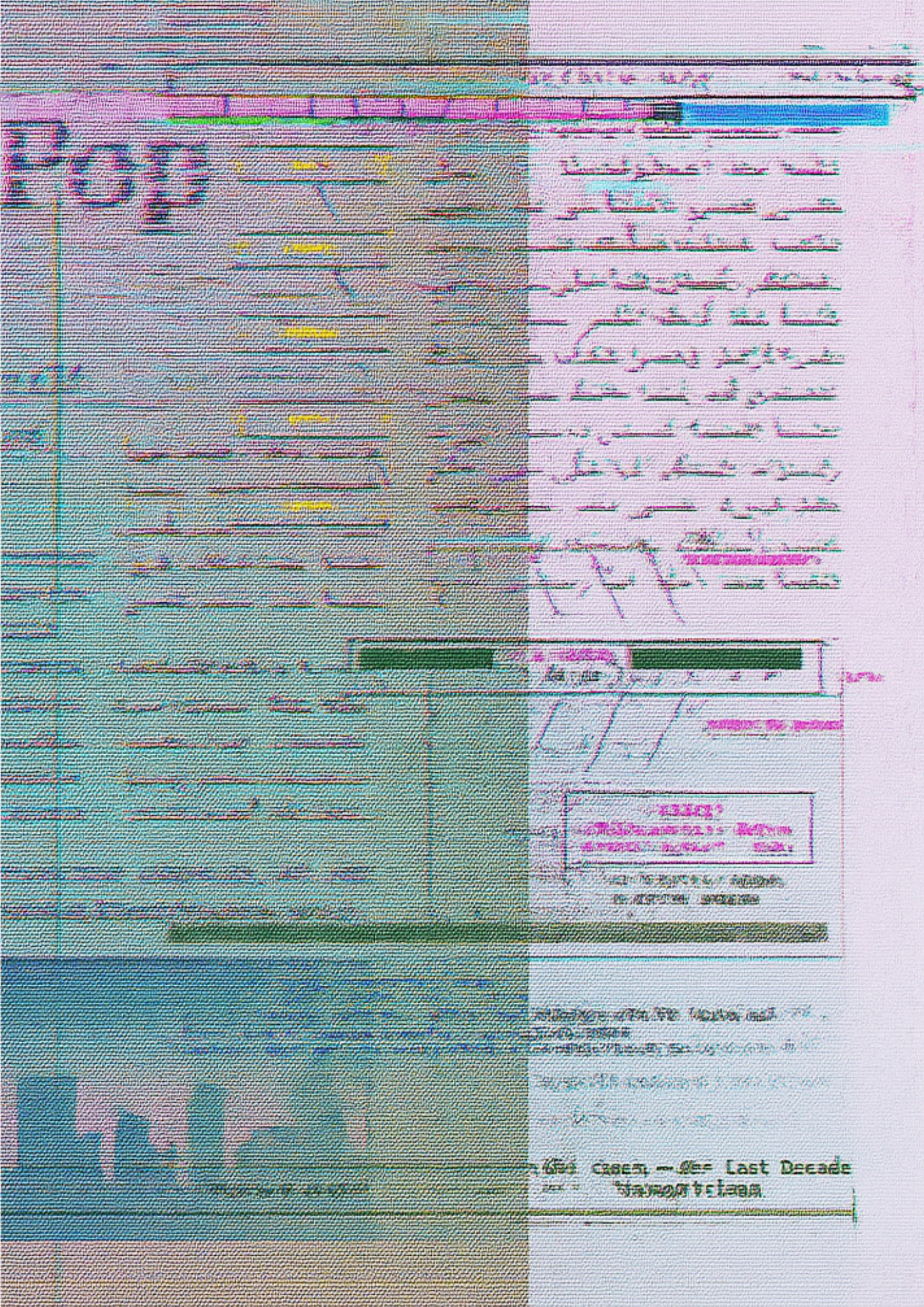



Cases, — the Last Decade

Malaysian City Pop in the 80s

For as long as I can remember City Pop has had my heart. Though I could understand little of the lyrics being sung (the little I did being the English added to give the songs a “hip” vibe) I could still feel the meaning of the music, carried to me through its synthesized melodies. Names like Mariya Takeuchi, Tatsuhiro Yamshita and Anri were mainstays in my playlists, their music serving as a source of nostalgic enchantment. About a month ago, I was listening to this same crop of Japanese artists when I saw, in the corner of the screen of my laptop, a thumbnail with the words “MALAYSIAN 80’S CITY POP” emblazoned on a background of old Album covers. Intrigued, I clicked on the video. The first song that played was “Demi Cinta Sejati” by Roy and Fran. I was immediately enraptured. The slow, jazzy tunes, the chorus of the two singers, the electric guitar in the background– all of this created in me a yearning for a past I have never lived and a place I have never been. Kuala Lumpur in the 80s, a city filled with chaos yet still filled with a youthful vigour.

The lounge of a Karaoke Bar at 11:00PM after a monotonous week of office work.

A visit to the local food stall, the music on the radio being drowned out by screams of haggling vendors.

Inside a newly bought Audi Quattro, flaunting the car’s speakers while speeding through Downtown.

I felt connected to each of these events, as if the experience was encoded onto the very tracks of the songs. And so I continued to listen so that I could taste anemoia once more.

This piece, going over the pop scene in Malaysia in the 1980s, and the cultural milieu it sprouted out from is a typed-out manifestation of longing for the nostalgic enchantment I once felt. In it, I will describe the environment that gave birth to the 80s Pop scene in Malaysia, and then will dive into the music of three of the biggest pop sensations of the time (particularly, Roy and Fran, the Alleycats and Sheila Majid). By doing this, I do not intend to merely give you an abstract image of the processes that produced and elements that constituted the music scene in Malaysia; I wish to make you feel as I had felt when I listened to that YouTube playlist for the first time, to be captivated, charmed and left with a sense of longing for an age you did not experience.

Malaysia, a country formed out of a set of states under British control and protection in 1954, was a melting pot of different cultures and ethnic groups. The largest Ethnic group, the Malays, were also the oldest to settle in the Malay Peninsula and Java. Predominantly Muslim, they formed the main component of Malaysia's political and cultural elite during the 20th century. Chinese merchants and artisans began to settle in Malaysia as far back as the 15th century, the majority of arrivals coming in the 19th century, seeking economic prospects in this new land.The Chinese quickly rose to become dominant in Malaysia's economy while Indians, composed mainly of Tamils who arrived in the 20th

century, were workers for the farms and factories of Malaysia. To this day, the majority of Indians still worked as tenant farmers or wage labourers in the countryside.

Unsurprisingly, the heterogeneity in Malaysia left it rife with social tensions following independence. In 1969, a major riot broke out in Kuala Lumpur, with Malays looting the shops and homes of the Chinese quarter. 143 Chinese Malays were killed as a result.

Following the riot, greater emphasis was placed on Malay culture. The Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports began patronising and producing traditional folk songs and Ghazals in the Malay language, and the government directed mass media such as Radio Television Malaysia away from any music that didn't meet the standards of Malay-Muslim culture set by the state. The government had also begun phasing out its support for Indian and Chinese languages in schools. The Malay language became the national language for all Malaysians, and quickly a new generation of Indian and Chinese Malaysian children were brought up with the ability to speak Malay, opening up novel channels for cross-cultural interaction.

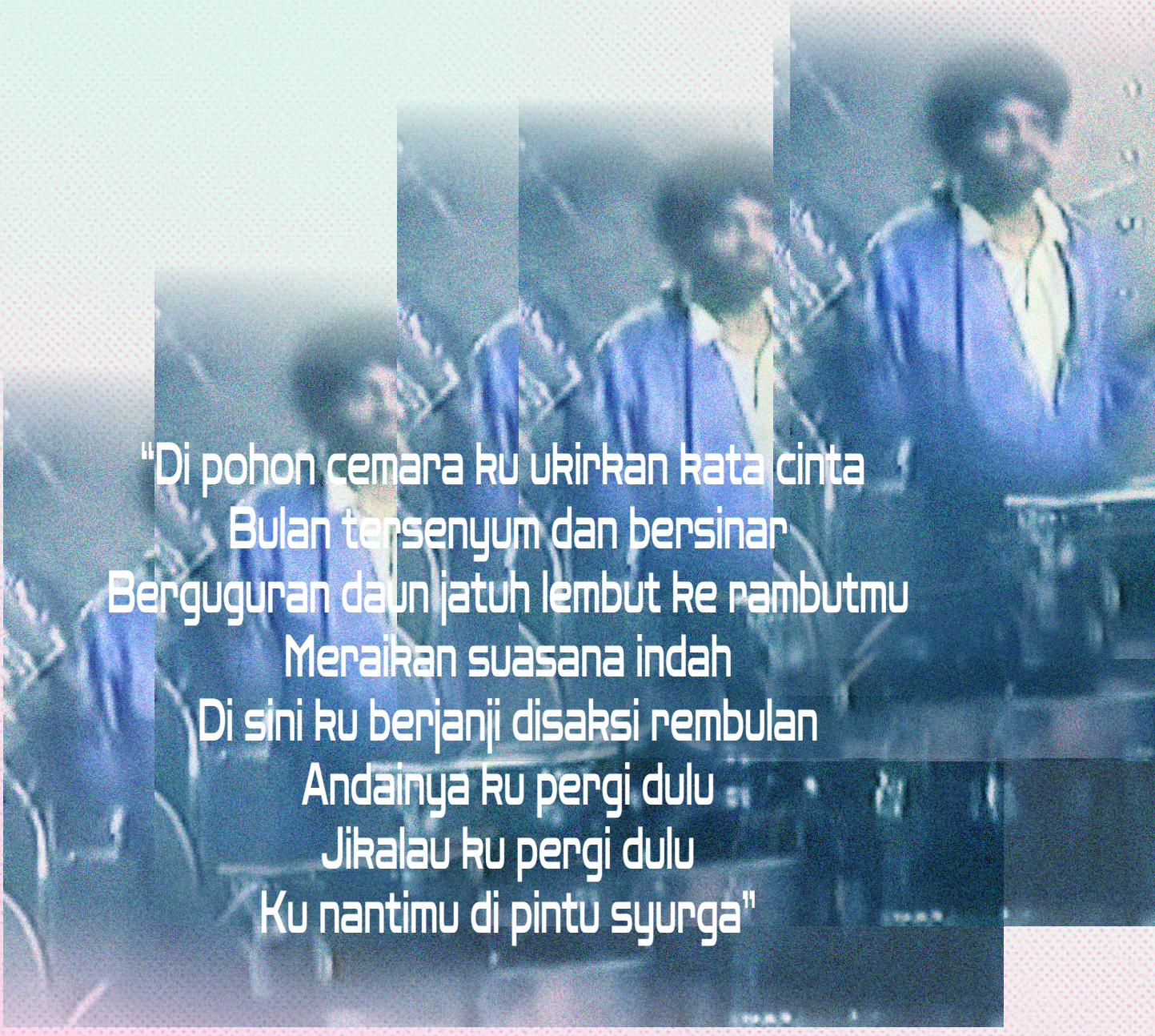
While the Malay language became an instrument of unity for Malaysians, the impact of the mass adoption of this language did not have the intended effect. The Malaysian youth at this time were perfectly poised to profit from the economic boom of the 1970s, becoming part of a new and educated national middle class. This new crop of Malaysians were far less interested in the "Malay-Muslim" culture promoted by the state, eschewing ghazals and folk songs in favour of modern modes of musical expression. Malaysians became enamoured with Western Music in particular; shops and homes in Kuala Lumpur became stocked with Jazz, Rock and Pop CDs and records. Clubbers danced to Blues, and American artists like Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson could boast of sizable fan clubs in the capital. Major Recording companies like EMI and Polygram began to experiment with their styles, incorporating jazz and r&b styles into their production.

It is from this era of cultural innovation that we see the emergence of a Malaysian pop scene. This scene, while in the language of the Malay majority, had heavy Indian and Chinese influence. These different ethnic groups, through their collaborative work produced content made for a new consumer market. But who were the stars of this new age of Malay pop? And how did the discographies of these artists reflect the flows of culture entering into and circulating within Malaysia? This is what the next section aims to elucidate.

The Alleycats

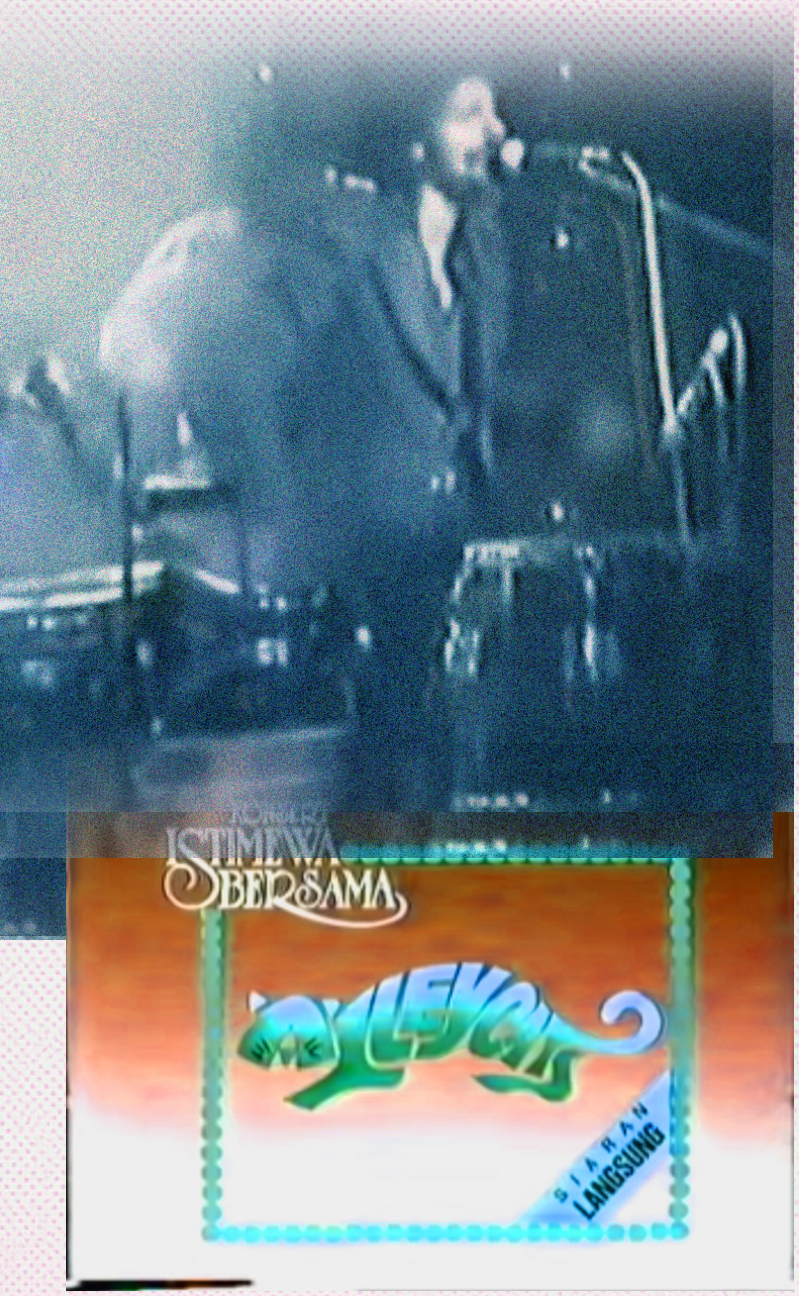
Formed in 1969, the Alleycats were one of the first major sensations to sprout out of Malaysia's pop scene. Started by the brothers David and Loga Arumugram, the band found its spark in 1976 when they started making songs in Malay. The Alleycat's first road tour in Malaysia would be the turning point for their success– by the mid 1980s they became a household name in Malaysia. Most notably (apart from the clearly African-american inspired afros the two frontmen wore) the band was heterogeneous, as the two frontmen were Indians, and the band consisted of mostly Indian and Chinese Malaysians (with the exception of the Lead Guitarist, who was Malay). The popularity of this melting pot of a band with Malaysian audiences represented a new blueprint to success for breaking into the music market in Malaysia.

The Alleycats created tender love songs that often left their listeners misty-eyed; the lyrics emphasised the feverish love present in romantic relationships, and the burdens present within them. Melancholic verses are contrasted with the upbeat pop style of the music itself– electric guitar, drums, synthesiser, percussion and string elements coming together to produce upbeat music that ultimately celebrates enduring love. All of which can be heard in their song "Andainya Aku Pergi Dulu" which goes as follows:



"Di pohon cemara ku ukirkan kata cinta
Bulan tersenyum dan bersinar
Berguguran daun jatuh lembut ke rambutmu
Meraikan suasana indah
Di sini ku berjanji disaksi rembulan
Andainya ku pergi dulu
Jikalau ku pergi dulu
Ku nantimu di pintu syurga"

"On the Casuarina tree I inscribed my love
The moon smiled radiantly
Leaves fell softly on your hair
Celebrating a pristine moment
With the moon as my witness I vowed
Should I leave before you
If I leave before you
I will await you at the gates of heaven"



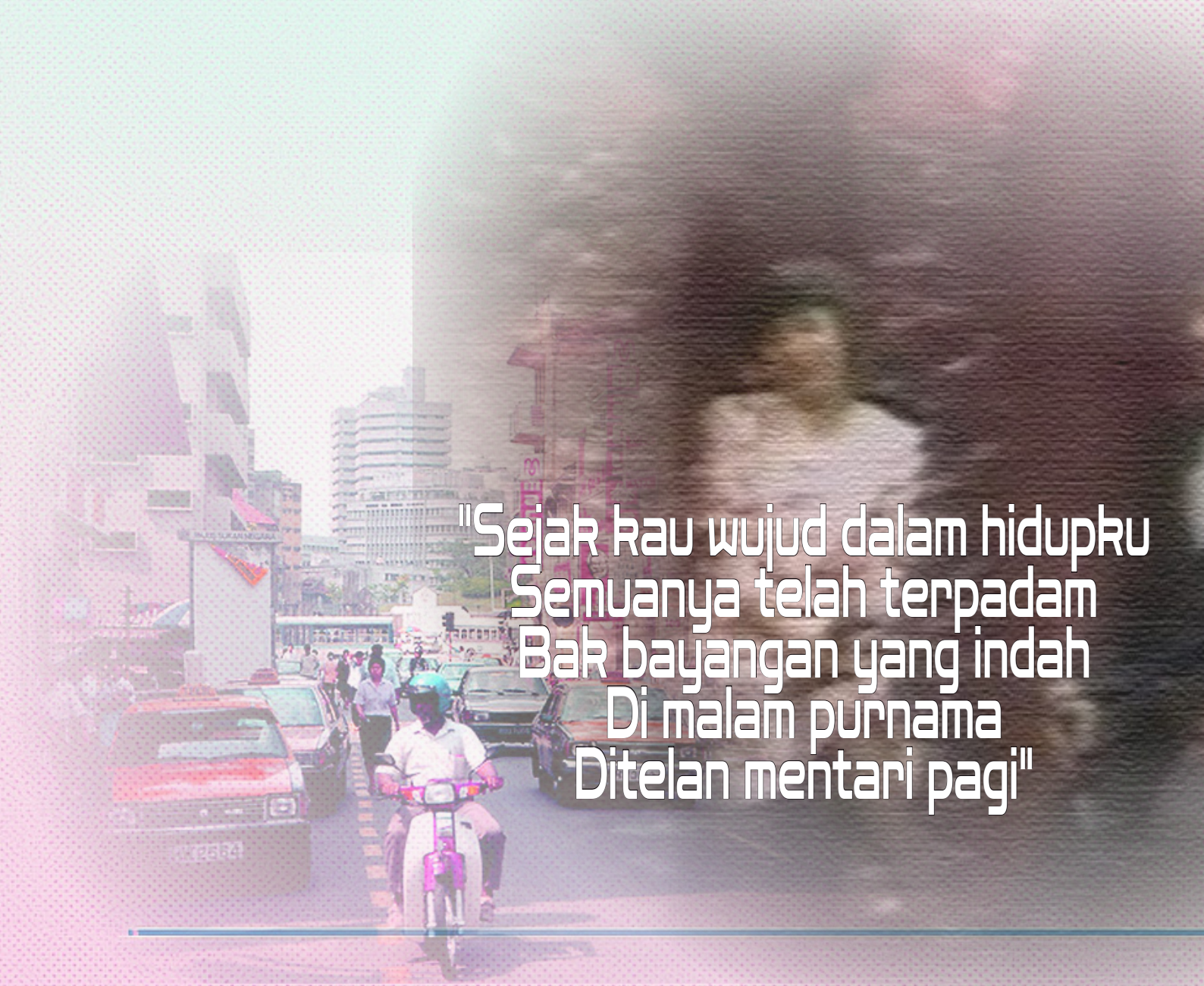
As said before, this song, while melancholic, is ultimately a celebration of the perseverance of love over all material obstacles. This love is transcendent, its limits stretching beyond the worldly life, as the lover declares that he will await his beloved at the gates of heaven. The music here, lacking any Western American (funk, Jazz etc.) or Malay stylings in its arrangement, gives off a neutral, "default" sensibility; in the words of the Malay ethnomusicologist Adil Johan, its "not too slow, not too fast. It achieves an affective nuance of 'in-between-ness', and in many ways best exemplifies both textually and aesthetically the intercultural cohesion found in Malaysian popular music of the era".

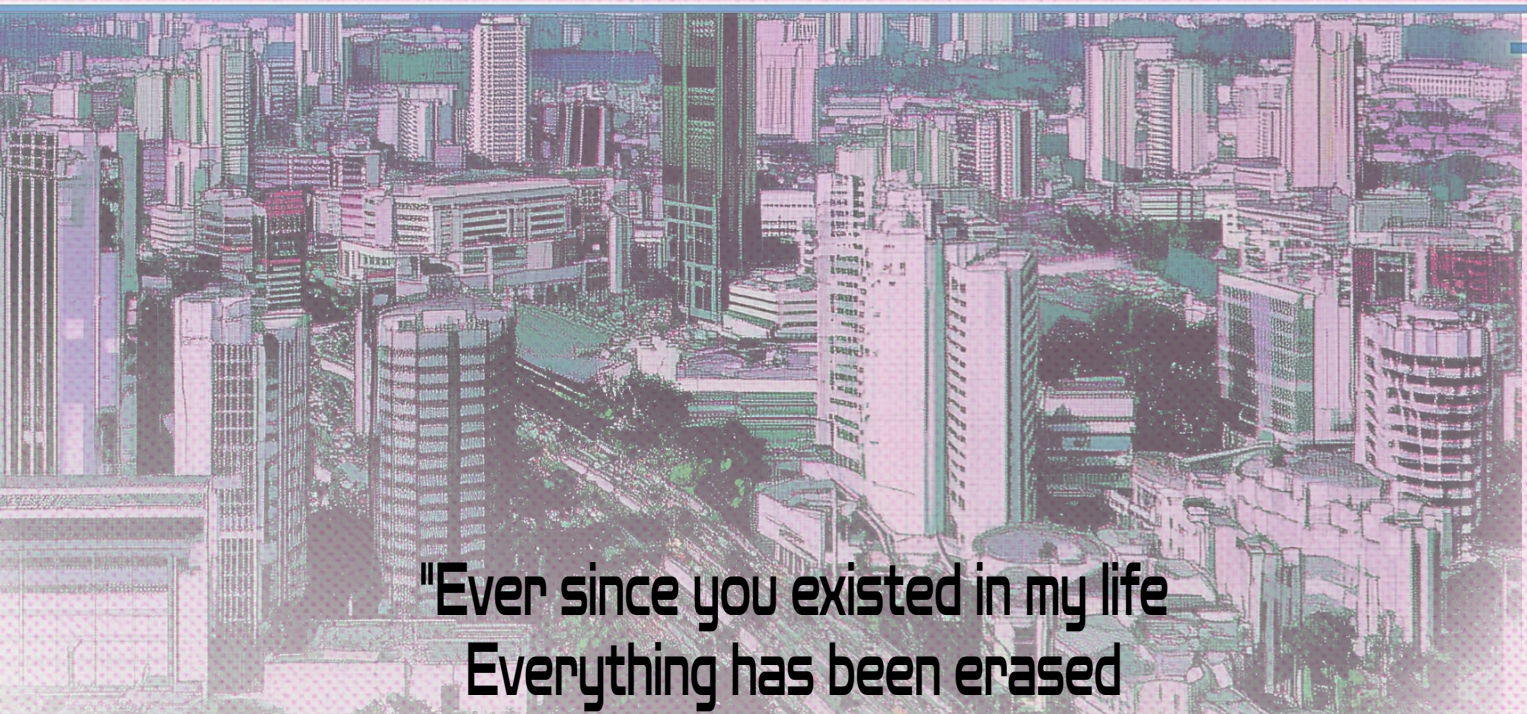
The Alleycats would see sustained popularity and commercial success in their music, their release of 28 studio albums between 1978 and 2007 being a testament to this. Particularly in between the 1980s and 1990s they would release an average of three to four albums every two years, an impressive number for any pop group, let alone one revolutionising music in Malaysia. In 2007, Loga Arumugram passed away after an eight month battle with lung cancer. While this marked the end of the Alleycats, their music lives on in Malaysian pop culture, the band being memorialised as one of the chief pioneers of Malay pop.

Roy and Fran

Royston Sta Maria and Fransissca Peters, known by the abbreviative “Roy and Fran” were a pop duo that took Malaysia by storm in the 1980s. Roy was a singer and guitarist from Malacca City, and made a name for himself in the local nightclub scene, performing at the Merlin Hotel disco. It was at the Merlin Hotel that Roy met Fran; a child of a mixed Chinese/Sri Lankan Family, Fran was a career singer at the time. One day, when performing in the hotel lounge, they caught the eye of S. Atan, a renowned music producer who happened to be there for dinner. Being impressed with their performance, he offered them their first contract with EMI records.

Roy and Fran began their duo career with the Album “Siapa Dia Sebelum Daku”, released in 1982, to critical acclaim. They performed at many different resort lounges as special guests, such as Johor Bahru, Kuantan and Genting Highlands. In 1983, they released their second album, Bersama Pertuam Ini which also had considerable success in Malaysian markets. However, this album would be the last that the duo made together, as Fran decided to seek out her own career as a singer in the mid 1980s. The Music of Roy and Fran can be described as very much in the vein of American traditional pop, with elements that are clearly inspired by sensations like Frank Sinatra. These influences can be seen most clearly in the song that was the namesake for their first Album, “Siapa DIa Sebelum Daku”:





"Ever since you existed in my life
Everything has been erased
Like a beautiful shadow
In the night of the bright full moon
Swallowed by the morning sun"

Like the Alleycats, the songs written by Roy and Fran are also about love. This song specifically is a dialogue, Roy and Fran act out the role of two lovers, sharing their affection for each other in extensive detail. In the chorus, they sing together, the heavier tone of Roy and the lighter tone of Fran harmonising to produce one of the most melodious choruses in all of Malaysian pop. There, their love is described as being so powerful it annihilated all else from their attention.. Nevertheless, the underlying tone here is also melancholic, as the love is described as fleeting and temporary, soon to be “swallowed by the morning sun”. This somber sense is heightened by the slow jazz music in the background.

Despite the break up of the duo, both Roy and Fran achieved considerable success in their solo careers. Sta Maria would go on to record his own solo albums, the first titled “Berakhir Kemarau Nan Panjang” followed by "Perkenalan Pertama"; he would end up moving to Perth, Australia, becoming a prominent performer in the city’s leading five star venues. Fransissca Peter would go on to become a famous singer in her own right, winning the International award for “best song” at the Asean Song Festival held in Kuala Lumpur. She continued to release albums well into the 21st Century, and became the first non-malay entertainer to perform at the famous Istana Budaya in 2011.

Sheila Majid

Dubbed “the Queen of Jazz, Sheila Majid was one of the biggest stars in the Malaysian Pop scene. Born in 1965 to Malay-Javanese parents, she signed her first recording contract in 1982, at the age of 17, when she impressed a music publisher while performing at a friend’s gathering. She produced her first album, Dimensi Baru, in 1985, which achieved major success, attaining gold status. However, it was with her second album, Emosi, that her fame skyrocketed spreading to neighbouring Indonesia. This was followed by another album,“Sinaran,” that transformed her image from a niche regional artist to international superstar, as her songs became the first Malay tracks to top the charts in Japan’s Sapporo Broadcasting station.

Majid’s music was revolutionary for how it mixed aspects from different genres. R&B, Jazz and Soft Rock in particular were combined with top tier vocals to groovy effect. A great example of this is “Fikirkan Dulu” , a song released as a part of her “Emosi” Album.

"Love that is pure is not a love
That is born-
Out of forcing a mistake.
Nor is it a love of me and you-
Merely following our feelings"

Like the Alleycats and Roy and Fran,the subject here is love. In this verse, Majid actually advises against the idea of not just forcing love where it is not there, but also following your passions without thinking it through. Through this song, Majid presents a more sober understanding of what love should be, one that runs against the ecstatic and passionate view of love that is commonly seen in contemporary pop. In the background, drums, keyboard synthesisers, and guitar mirror the soulful energy you'd find in Japanese City Pop. Specifically, similarities can be drawn with Mariya Takeuchi's "Plastic Love"Both songs entertain the theme of love, though differently (Takeuchi's song covers the loss of a loved one). Moreover, Majid's album only came out two years after Takeuchi's. Given that Majid likely did not come into contact with the song itself (as "Plastic Love" only attained moderate success in Japan) their similarities are indicative of the increased flow of intercultural communication that East and Southeast Asia experienced as they developed economically.

Sheila Majid would continue her illustrious career as "Malaysia's Queen of Jazz" into the 1990s and past the turn of the Millenium. Between 1990 and 2010 she released seven albums while hosting multiple concerts and tours. Her 1990 album, Legenda, a tribute to the late great Malay artist P. Ramlee, was one of her best selling works, and remains a classic in Malay Pop.

Majid like her peers was emblematic of a nation undergoing rapid shifts, of the intermixing of Chinese, Malay and Indian populations, the economic growth and formation of a new middle class, and cultural influence from America coming together in Malay society. Their music displaced the Ghazals or folk music from the country's past. There was the forging of a new intercultural sensibility that chipped away at the rigid ethnic and linguistic boundaries of old Malaysia. They transcended them. Indian, Chinese, and Malay musicians collaborated seamlessly, performing in the national language while drawing from global musical styles. In doing so, they modeled a vision of Malaysia that was not homogenized, but harmonized—a country where difference was not erased but arranged, like instruments in a song, to produce something greater than the sum of its parts.

Listening to these songs today, decades removed from their original context, still stirs in me a peculiar sense. I, disconnected completely from the culture and society of Malaysia, am swept up in the animated spirit of the 1980s, washed over with this feeling as if I was on the streets of an adolescent Kuala Lumpur, rawly experiencing this exciting, new interface between West and East. I hope by reading this, you decide to take a look.

Written By Abou Barchos

The cyberspaces lost to time…

This is where I met my first girlfriend (He was 24,I was 8)

💔💔💔

I lowkey miss him/her, real childhood, innocent puppylove

😢

Places we'll never go back to. Memories we'll never relive.

You ever think about how cp stands for club penguin… and some other stuff…

🐧

LOADING 03

This is for the trvstmaxxers...

The lovemaxxers...

The ones who hate from a place of love...

The ones who understand what it means to be a lil evil...

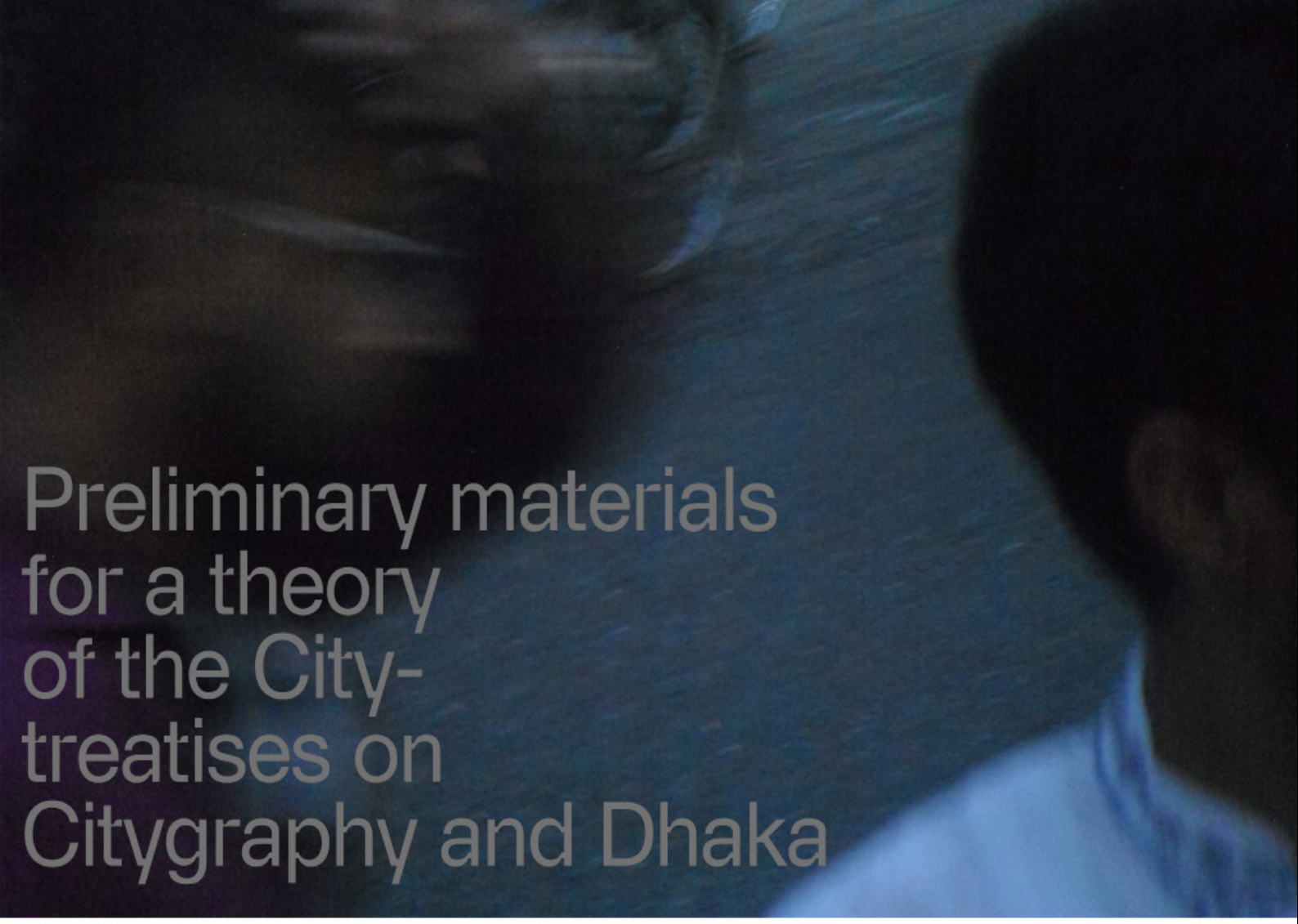
The ones who know they steal our swag and run with it...

The ones who have never posted a serious thing in their life

This one's for SAIF...

This one's for Joycat.

#peter...



Preliminary materials for a theory of the City- treatises on Citygraphy and Dhaka

the city is an open book, write on its margins.
- Throw away your books, rally on the streets
Shuji Teryama.

written and designed by
Ahnaf Abrar

Images by
Ahnaf Abrar
Ahnaf Atef

a poem about you

We write not about the city, we write through the city. In the city, with the city. Why would we write about something that we know more by heart than the textual medium can ever hold?

What is the city? An event, the explosion of a star birthing a nebula. Citygraphy is the formation of new metals in this cloud. It is a poem structured like a mirror.

citygraphy is mysticism practice

Citygraphy is the radical overcoming of alienation and isolation. A mysticism born out of total love in the war against otherisation. Walking towards god whilst He runs towards you. The city is spatial dhikr is seeing everything all at once. Space echoes the names of Allah-- about 99 per street.

Let's pray on the asphalt.

How can you ever call yourself your own if your tears have not wet the asphalt? The heat of the asphalt immediately evaporating it, have you not smiled after seeing this?

One Friday, my birthday and jummah coincided. I was late to prayer and had to join the last end of the jama'ah which stretched to the streets. I prayed on raw asphalt that day, with all its dirt coating my forehead as I prostrated. I never felt so welcomed to the world.

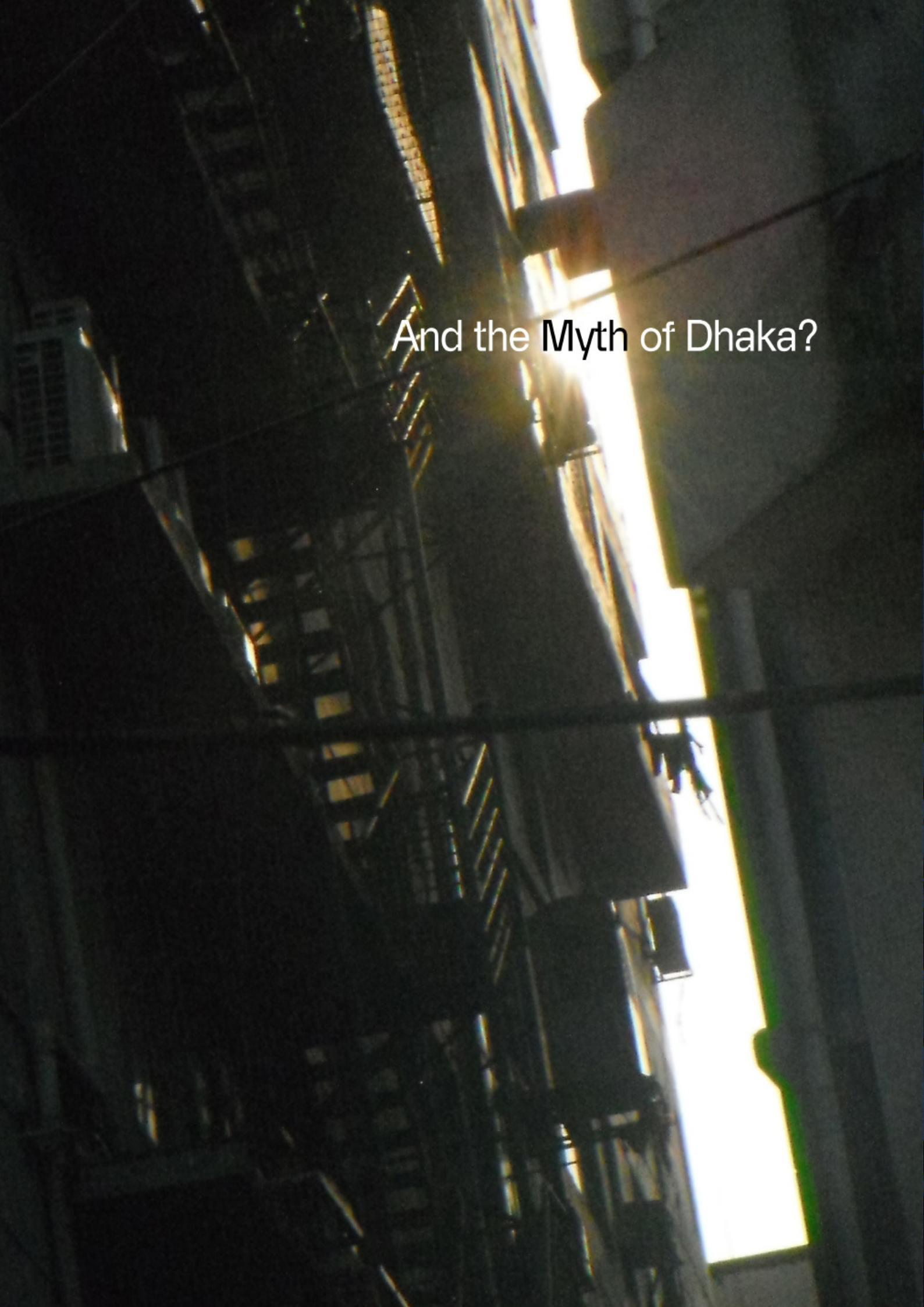
Thinking the city moves towards thinking the world
- Henri Lefebvre

We cannot assign linear historiography and flat geographies to the city. The city is n-directional space operating in non linear time. All the personal-histories construct a constellation of timeframes whose interactions cause violent contradictions accelerating the city towards a singular event- an event for which it was created and for which it will live and die.

Each subject creates a unique cartographic imagination of the city formed by unconscious and conscious forces alike. In this, we find the city to be not just our own but also only ours to keep. This is the indigenous intimacy of the city, contrary to the sociological hypothesis that urban spaces lack belonging and localised identities. As we go to work, to school, to play, to walk, the city that we _become_ to belong to is a village amongst millions of others existing simultaneously.

A theory of the city is a theory of the world as cities mimic the structure of the world. In its game of difference and repetition, the maze of the streets construct experiences reflective of cosmoses, nuclear and galactic.

Yet this theory cannot be seen through the gaze of the eye, but only through the light of the heart. We reject any objectification of the street, we are not alien to it. Our theory of the city is the poems of Lalon Shah, the dhikr of the road qutb, the shortcuts memorised by rickshawallas. Our theory of the city is pure remembrance of every solid that refuses to melt into air. Throw away your books, walk on the streets.



And the Myth of Dhaka?

At a library one day I heard they said Dhaka will cease to exist when an impending mega-earthquake finally hits it, leaving it in total collapse.

How can you destroy something that lives not in space, time or material but in the hearts of its citizens? Dhaka exists trans-temporally and trans-spatially, an assemblage of all the myths formed symbiotically.

I have been here all my life

Ceiling fan, broken AC, a coal-black ventilator hypnotically spinning. Images, the whole menu, plastered all over it's walls. Red, white, green. Red white green. I knew this place forever. When did it start? Some early 2010s. Empty. Unlike the middle school days when the entire place reeked of school children. The ceiling fan above me is making creeky noises. I am with my mother. She was with me when I first came here. I remember the taste of the fried chicken when I first came here. pleasantly spicy. Square white lights falling from the plastic -board ceiling. Half of them are not working. In middle school, I came here after school, saw a man in his 50s with his little daughter, saying over the phone "I am having coffee in a Chinese [restaurant] with my youngest daughter". It is not a Chinese restaurant, but a knock off of bfc, which is a knock off of KFC. The images on the walls haven't been changed for the last 12~ years. An islamic maxim in green background pasted above in a half torn sticker. Multiple maxims, I am noticing them for the first time, taken from different islamic books.

My food is here.
I have been here all my life, stuck in the ill lit
200 sqft fast food knock off of a knock off.

Please tell me I will be here again

Rain. Asphalt turned into a blurry mirror. Building that is 11 stories of nothingness. Office building, architectures of complete opacity . White lights, bright and blinding, chairs with no one to sit on. We will see this filled with non places in 5 years. Advertisement boards advertising calls for advertisements.

Walking. Behind. My brother and my friend ahead. The primordial walk. Observing their foot gestures. I can somehow recognise people entirely by their walking gestures now. Every single time I've been here, I have walked with complete silence, studying the flowers, or walked behind the people I'm with, studying their walk. I'm always behind them. The constant view. They're infront. I'm behind, walking with the same pace. The constant view, the primordial walk. I've seen it everytime.

Flowers. Tiny and white and drenched in rain water. Walls covered with hearts drawn by me. There is a graffiti near by which reads "ononto kaaler shesh boshonto" (the last spring of eternity).

We have a dream. Each night I dream I am with you here, in Dhanmondi park. Our dreams never end. The light collapses. the last sip is taken from the tea cup. But our dreams never end. The rain stops and starts and stops. The last spring of eternity starts. I take one final walk. The dream never stops.

Please tell me I will be here again.

i will always be here

i struggle to explain what i feel. not just to explain it, but to even experience it.
i cannot experience in words what i experience in love and beauty.

i cannot tell you what i am about to say. i really do not wish to either.
i cannot imagine myself unless i bring the cluster of beauty and terror i was transferred into.
i really wish i could not.

every sentence so far started with i. i really did not wish for this to happen.

i keep my secret with me, i will tell you in camouflage, you may listen and believe it to be true. i really wish for this to happen. it's better this way.

you keep your secret and tell me my share. i will listen and believe it to be true. i really hope it is.

but in my secrecy and in my world, there is no you nor me, it's only true and only love.
it's always been that way.
for now,
i will always be here
for you to find me
before you know
i will always be you
for you to find you
in me and you
and then you
will always be here
and
i will always be here.

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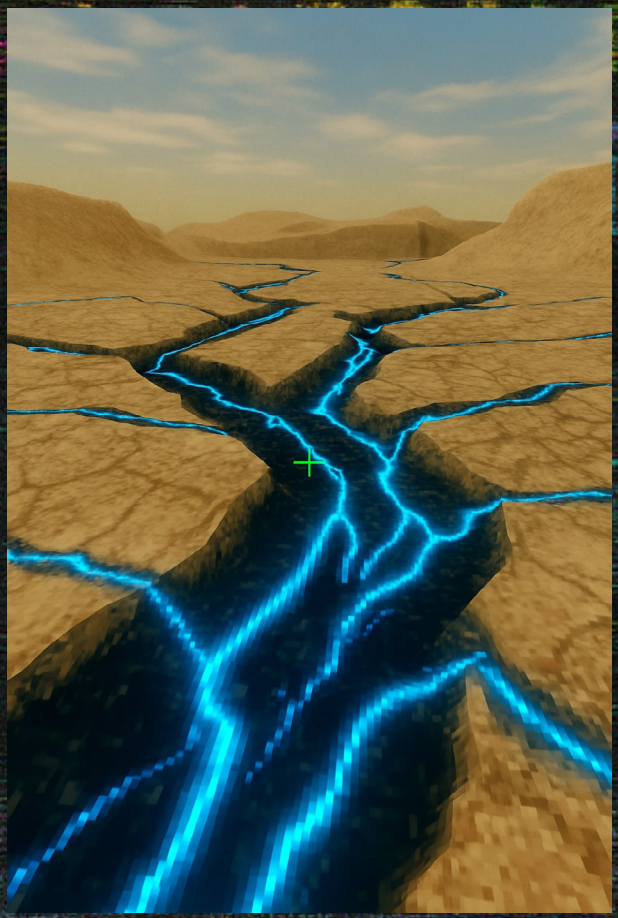

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Tectonic Belief Systems:

Hyper-Camouflage, Hyper-Cunning, & Hyper-Stition

Prologue: The Middle Eastern Hyper-Axis

Stretching from the volcanic spines of Anatolia through the arid folds of the Zagros to the lush deltas of Khuzestan unfolds a vast, continental laboratory of hyper-engineering. Here, three interwoven vectors – CUNNING, STITION, and CAMOUFLAGE – recursively operate within a logic unique to this geography. Together these vectors describe an axis because each one pivots on and intensifies the others, forming a rotational triad that cycles from biology to culture to myth and back again. It becomes hyper when that rotation accelerates: each pass amplifies and exports its pattern beyond local terrain, engineering perception, infrastructure, and narrative at continental scale.

This Hyper-Axis is no mere metaphor; it exists materially, permeating soil strata, embedding itself in species genetics, and encrypting cultural scriptures. Through geology and topology, it scripts theology and strategy, harnessing asymmetry and uncertainty as foundational principles. Thus, this axis not only bridges the region's deep geological memory with emergent global modernity; it converts that memory into active engines of production: think pipeline corridors tracing ancient caravan routes, encrypted martyr-videos that weaponize narrative markets, and bio-inspired drones modeled on viper kinetics – exporting local asymmetry as a global design principle and translating chronic ambiguity into a durable cultural instinct.

Even in Washington, the Hyper-Axis is on display: in May 2025 Donald Trump famously praised Iranian drones as "good, fast and deadly and terrifying" (Times of India, 2025), underscoring how a regional mode of asymmetrical innovation can reshape twenty-first-century warfare itself.

Index/Anatomy of the Iranian *Spider-Tailed Horned Viper*

```
                                  __ ... _
                              .. -'      (|).
                          •–'  (|)       :          ← [ Final Venom Logic Port ]
                      _ .. '      ..    _ _.' __ .. —<
                ... --"""     ONTOLOGICAL    '-.
            .. -"      COIL = COMPILER      __.'
        .'          ___ ... --'      __     ← Spinal Trapdoor Logic
      :      ____....---'      / /
     :     .'                 _/_/             ← [ Ritual Memory Residue ]
    :     :              _____ / /
    :    :    _ .. --"""      """-- .. __        ← [ Dormant Code Chamber ]
   :     :   ."                      ""i--.
   :     '.:          ▲                :    '.
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        '-- ...      RECURSIVE          .'
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           '-..   '.
                '.  :
        (Viper Glyph by fsc) : .'
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              .'   :
            .' .--'
          '--' ← [ Sensory Disruption Node ]
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|    |       <  `'` >       |    |
|    |                      |    |                  ◎
           / \    / \                        ← [ Glitch Core ]
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 /   /    //\((      ))/\\   \   \
|    |       <  `'` >       |    |
|    |                      |    |
```

“In the Zagros, every ridge is a cipher; every shadow breeds a rhetoric of disappearance.”

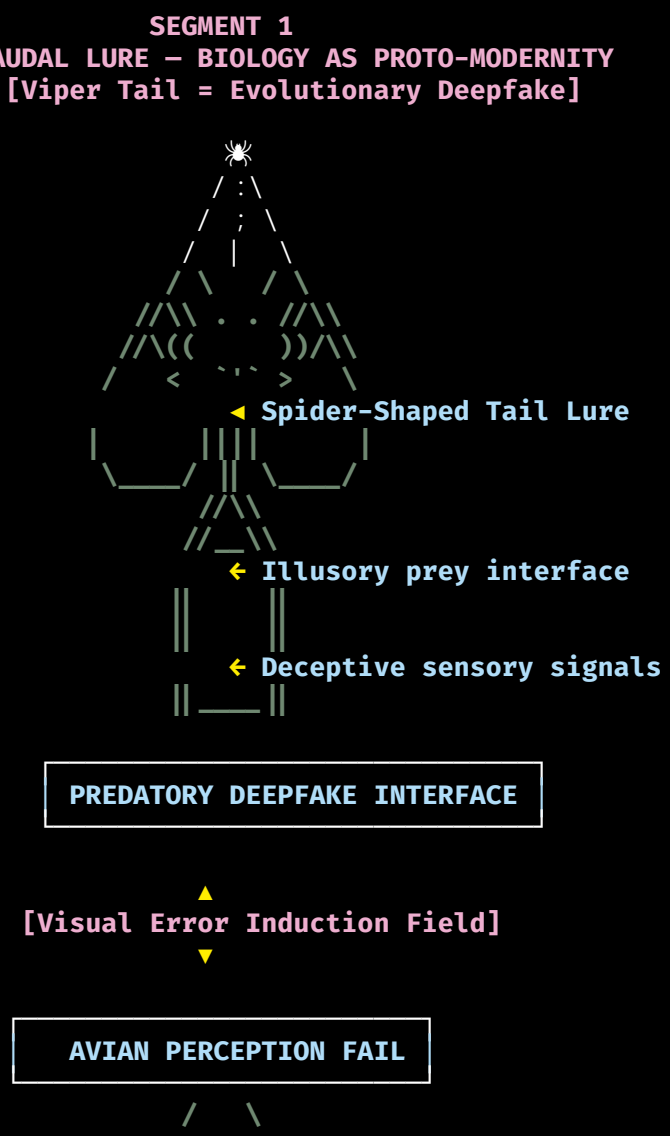
01///Causal Lure: Biology as Proto-Modernity

Amid the tectonic torsions of the Zagros Mountains, the spider-tailed horned viper (Pseudocerastes urarachnoides) emerges as a primordial dramaturge of deception. While its tail, a flamented prothesis mimicking an arachnid, might be interpreted as merely an evolutionary quirk, its essential function is the staging of fictions, providing the viper with the ability to fabricate an environment shaped around false premises. By flicking its tail in rhythmic pulses, the viper draws hungry insectivores along sun-warmed ridges, carving a kill corridor of compressed dust and scattered twigs that funnel prey directly into its strike zone. Through this micro-landscape the tail of the viper becomes a semiotic device, engineering a stage set for predation. Here, biological evolution approximates speculative media: the tail becomes both lure and lens, a flickering interface through which perception is rerouted.

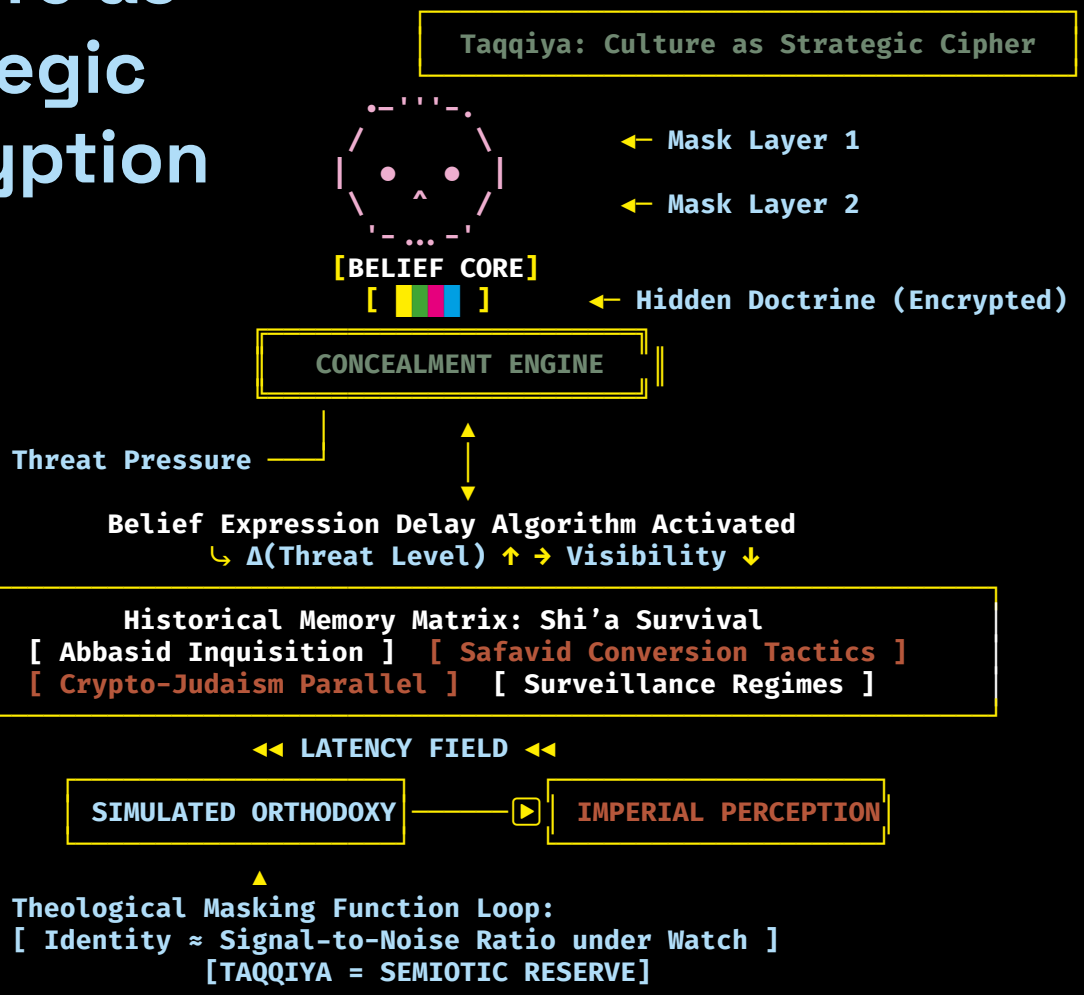
Far from being mimicry in the classical Darwinian sense, through its engineering qualities the vipers tail becomes anticipatory, one that constructs its victim's perceptual failure in advance. The bird does not see the viper; it sees a simulation authored by the viper. As with early statecraft, where emissaries circulated false treaties to fracture alliances before war commenced, the viper operates through a strategy of delayed recognition. It weaponizes latency. The moment of realization is indistinguishable from the moment of death. Unlike static background matching, this hyper-camouflage continuously senses the prey's glances and adjusts tail posture and flick frequency, creating a dynamic feedback loop of seduction and misdirection.

Think of this as a zoopolitical technology, a predatory protocol not unlike the disinformation techniques used in Cold War psychological operations or 21st century bot generated propaganda. In each case, the strategy is identical: overload the target's epistemic field with plausible lies until the real becomes indistinct from the lure. Just as Cold War psyops networks beamed conflicting signals to undermine civilian trust, the viper saturates its prey's sensory channels with phantom insect movement, rehearsing modern mass-media simulation on a granular, muscular scale. The viper's ecology rehearses this modernity in muscular form, sculpting dust, light, and motion into an active theatre of death.

Within its scaled body lies a proto-cybernetic intelligence, not reducible to instinct but expressive of a logic whereby environment is not endured but engineered. Each strike informs the viper's next tail flick: sensory inputs of prey speed and angle feed back into motor outputs, tuning the lure's rhythm in real time. The viper didn't adapt to the terrain, it collaborated in scripting and expressing the regional geo-trauma that unlocked the protein codes for hyperstition, rerouting prey through gestural theatre. This is nature as counterintelligence. And in that, it shares with the modern technopolitical subject a strange kinship: both are compelled not merely to survive but to preemptively mislead. It's easy to see the serpent as an emblem of deception. But what operates in the field is its infrastructural architect.



02///Taqqiya: Culture as Strategic Encryption



Arising from the same ecological crucible that bred the hyper-adaptive viper, the politico-theological Shi'ite doctrine of taqiyya goes far beyond its mere theological use; instead offering a centuries-old strategy of ontological encryption. While taqiyya exoterically allows the concealment of one's faith because of existential threat, to treat it merely as survival mechanism is to miss its productive dimensio: taqiyya actively generates parallel social infrastructures - hidden networks of trust, cryptic ritual practices, and encrypted knowledge repositories - that sustain communal identity and strategic resilience under repression.

If we take the concept of taqiyya and how it was historically applied by heterodox groups, we see that it allowed identity to become a form of latency, truth encrypted in silence. This latency functioned like a deferred software update: beliefs lay dormant under watchful eyes, awaiting activation when the sensorium shifted. In modernity, the same logic underpins digital dissidence, where encrypted memes and 'sleeper' rhetorical cells go live only when censorship algorithms slacken or public sentiment tilts, a form of techno-taqiyya we will explore later.

Culturally, taqiyya mirrors practices seen across minority groups[...]yet within the modern Iranian landscape the mode of Taqiyya became functional outside of mere theological practice, both by the regime itself as by those opposed to the regime; in a double-play of political kayfabe and an attempt to conceal intent. Thus taqiyya in modern day Iran moves from a religious practice to a mode of existing. Just as the viper's tail simulates prey to disrupt expectation loops, the practitioner of this mode simulates orthodoxy to rupture hegemonic control not as an attempt to deceive but rather as a refusal to render oneself intelligible to imperial optics.

Because of its opacity, taqiyya becomes a cipher for counter-surveillance. As digital empires perfect identity extraction via biometric states and algorithmic profiling, taqiyya offers a counter-gesture: the right to illegibility, the embrace of opacity. It yields a semiotic economy in which every withheld sign is a strategic deposit, building reservoirs of dissent that can be mobilized across generations. It is no longer simply about what one believes, but when and how one chooses to reveal or withhold the signs of that belief. It is a granular politics of dissimulation engineered from a terrain where survival demands semiotic mastery.

03///Alamut & the Nexus of Iranian Global Modernity

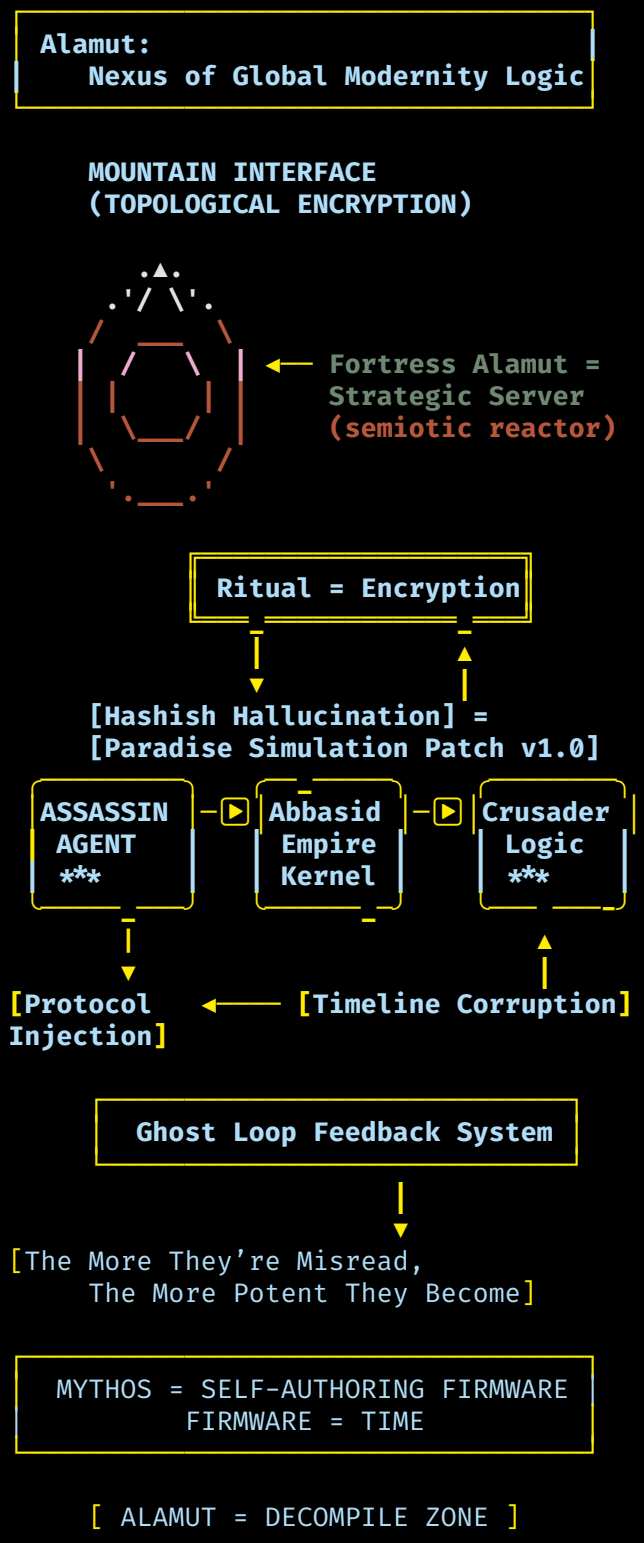
To understand the global significance of Iranian modernity, one must pass through the high mountain pass of Alamut - a fortress that functioned not just as a physical stronghold but as a living codebase, a layered philosophical software stack. Like the viper's tail-code forging lethal simulations and taqiyya's encrypted belief updates, Alamut's networks of spies, priests, and engineers composed a dynamic program of counter-insurgency that ran on geography and ideology alike.

Constructed within the Alborz mountain range, Alamut's fortress was never conquered simply because it was epistemologically fortified. Its architecture mimicked the very terrain it inhabited: labyrinthine, recursive, strategic. At every corridor junction, carved runes acted as conditional gates - insider keys decrypting safe passage, outsider triggers summoning mythic deterrents, much like firmware routines gating hardware access. The rituals performed within its walls acted as encoded scripts, producing agents who moved through Abbasid and Crusader regimes like packets through unsecured networks. These ceremonial subroutines served as firmware updates, instilling core doctrines that enabled rapid adaptation to shifting threats.

The historical memory of the Hashashin, or Nizari Ismailis, extends far beyond legends of narcotic visions and targeted murders. At its core, Alamut was a semiotic crucible where terrain was converted into encrypted protocol, where Hassan-i Sabbah operationalized mountainsides into narrative infrastructure. You might wonder how this ties back to the viper and taqiyya: just as the viper engineers its micro-environment and taqiyya defers political action, Alamut engineered the ideological landscape, producing terror as both tactic and template.

Modern analogues abound. In the cryptographic protocols of cyberwarfare, in modern drone psy-ops, in the black sites of extrajudicial sovereignty, we see Alamut's blueprint replayed at scale. The Hashashin were not merely precursors to modern intelligence - they were engineers of proto-hyperstitional warfare, inserting themselves into the timeline to edit future narratives. Their fortress was firmware in stone and soul, continuously patched through ritual and myth-making. Their mythic status is itself a recursive feedback loop: the more they are misunderstood, the more potent their ghost protocol becomes.

Iranian modernity thus reveals itself not as a reactive posture to Western progression, but as a deeply embedded system of anticipatory logic. From the viper's ecological feedback loops to taqiyya's encrypted latency and Alamut's living codebase, we glimpse a tradition that writes itself into global modernity as infrastructure - a proto-cybernetic axis of production and concealment. In Alamut, we find firmware waiting to be decompiled.



04///Diagrammatic Cascade: From Camouflage to Hyperstition

At its origin point, hyper-camouflage describes not passive blending but active environment manipulation. The spider-tailed horned viper does not conceal itself within terrain, it modulates the terrain's perceptual logic. Camouflage becomes a mode of ontogenesis: the environment is authored, not endured. This principle recurs in doctrinal taqiyya, where identity is not denied but suspended, recontextualized through asymmetrical power geometries. Survival becomes not biological endurance but strategic opacity, a form of informational restraint. This is the cunning of the oppressed, operationalized in regimes where legibility is lethal.

```
[HYPER-CAMOUFLAGE] →
      [HYPER-CUNNING] →
                  [HYPER-STITION]
```

When camouflage and cunning accumulate recursive density, they tip into hyperstition. A hyperstition is not a fiction, but a fiction that makes itself real. It is what cybernetic theorist Nick Land described as a "time-traveling virus," infecting the epistemic architecture of the future via the mythotechnics of the present. From Sabbah's whispered paradise codes to post-revolutionary Iranian eschatology, we witness the mobilization of semiotic systems that do not reflect reality, they precipitate it. In Iran's history we see this metabolic logic at work: the Safavid dynasty's state-sponsored myth of divine kingship rewrote the landscape with Shi'a iconography, turning villages into pilgrimage circuits whose economic flows followed trajectories of celestial prophecy. Likewise, after 1979 the circulation of martyr imagery functioned as hyperstitional infrastructure, each photograph broadcast on clandestine radio and printed in pamphlets reactivated the promise of cosmic justice, generating real-world mobilization across diasporic communities.

In this cascade, the viper's tail is no mere zoological curiosity but a boundary engine poised between earth and sky. It conjures phantom insects in the air above its head, collapsing two realms of perception and drawing prey into its engineered ambush. Its tail is the embryonic module of a simulation engine: each flicker encodes a future algorithm, looping sensory output back as input to refine the next stage of deception. The same way a person practicing taqiyya, for example a Hashashin assassin infiltrating high ranks, alters the interpretive conditions under which action is read. Hyperstition thus emerges not as a supplement to reality but as a speculative infrastructure that entangles nature, myth, and power.

The cascade loops. Each term re-initiates the others. In the Iranian highlands, camouflage becomes strategy, strategy becomes code, and code becomes prophecy, each cycle intensifying the last, forging a hyper-axis of production and concealment.

```
                    SEGMENT 4
CAMOUFLAGE →
          CUNNING →
                HYPERSTITION

  [ Belief becomes executable code ]
```

```
      ☸ WEB OF HYPERSTITION ☸
          \_______/
       .,-'\_____/'-.,'
      /..'\   _   /..,'\
     /  /.,' .`.,'\  \ \
    /__/__/        \__\__\__
   /  CAMO \      / CUNNING \
  /__/__/   \    /   \__\__\__
 \  HYPERSTITION NODE   /  /
  \   (Fictive Kernel)  / /
   \ ,'._Logic_,'.  / / /
    \,'.__Prophecy,'./ /
     ,'-./_____/\,-'•-/
        /       \
```

[Camouflage as Ontological Entry Point]

[Tactical Belief as Latent Vector]

[Hyperstition Writes Reality]

→ Each Thread = A Recursed Doctrine
→ Each Junction = Feedback Commit
→ Entire Web = Speculative Compiler

☸ Output: Prophecy-as-Protocol

🔁 Loop: Disguise → Delay → Deployment

05///Deepfake Epistemologies & Modern Hyperreality

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      / \   / \
    //\\ . . //\\
   //\((     ))/\\
  /   <  `'`  >   \
  |     ||||     |   ← Projected Lure (False Signal)
  \____/||||\____/  ← Simulated Symmetry Interface
     //()()\\   ← Recursive Blink Engine
    //(__)__\\   ← Encrypted Neural Mesh
   ||         ||   ← Ritual Signal Cables
```

```
PERCEPTION ERROR   ← Target Eye Compromised

TRUTH ?   FAKERY ?   ← Indistinguishable Reflections

[ Viper Tail = Proto-UI for Fatal Simulation]
```

```
← ONTOLOGICAL PATCH INIT →

SIMULATION BOOT
```

```
DEEPFAKE = WORLD OVERLAY
KHOMEINI IMAGE = REALITY LOOP
ASSASSIN = EXECUTABLE MYTHOS
```

```
      V
     _//\\_
  .'/()()\'.  ← Vision Engine Echo
 (   '---'   )
  \__/   \__/
```

[The Viper is the Prophet of Glitched Desert Real]

~ SIGHT ≠ REALITY ~

Although vipers are generally predators, our spider-tailed horned viper transcends mere predation to become a living simulation engine. Its tail, mimicking arachnid movement with uncanny precision, enacts a primordial deepfake: a pre-digital prototype of hyperreal manipulation. In this gesture, we glimpse a theory of epistemology born not from Enlightenment reason but from evolutionary cunning – a hermeneutics of survival where truth itself is subject to effect and operability.

In contemporary terms, this tactic resonates with digital deepfake technology, wherein audiovisual fabrications destabilize the reliability of perception. Yet digital deepfakes still presuppose a separation between representation and reality. They overlay false images onto an assumed stable world. The viper's deepfake goes further, collapsing that separation altogether by authoring the prey's sensory world. The bird's misrecognition is not a mere perceptual error but a fatal commitment to a newly created ontology.

This collapse prefigures modern taqiyya in information warfare: just as the viper reprograms perception, taqiyya embeds hidden narratives into public ritual so that official broadcasts serve as both confessional performance and clandestine instruction.

Iranian modernity, forged under layers of surveillance, colonial intervention, and scriptural volatility, exhibits a similar epistemic architecture. From taqiyya's strategic opacity to the revolutionary broadcasting of martyrdom as spectacle, the region long weaponized representation. After 1979, state television became a deepfake studio, projecting images of martyr ashes swirling across screens that programmed collective subjectivity rather than simply documenting events. Like the viper's tail, these hyperreal broadcasts collapsed document and dogma.

Today, under planetary digital saturation, Iranian media actors, hackers, and state operatives deploy misinformation as a tactical atmosphere rather than distortion. In doing so, they echo Alamut's ghost protocol – obscuring, overcoding, re-routing. Alamut grafted its hidden firmware of assassination theology onto the mountain code; today's operators graft layers of disinformation onto public networks, creating feedback loops that feed back into doctrinal and political updates. Reality becomes less a consensus than a terrain of competing simulations.

Thus the viper's gesture, taqiyya's encoded latency, and Alamut's living code belong to the same epistemic engine: one in which semiotic authority rests not on fact but on operability. Deepfakes mimic truth; the viper invents it. In this sense, the viper is the true progenitor of modernity's simulation crisis – an evolutionary emissary from the desert of the real.

06///Conclusion: Ecologies of Strategic Disappearance

Modern Iran thus goes far beyond merely being a passive recipient of modernity and instead attempts to mirror its deep religio-cultural history, its geology and its flora and fauna in an attempt to become an active architect; an attempt to move beyond reaction towards writing the firmware of global asymmetrical warfare, information regimes, and geopolitical theology.

Iran positioned at the turbulent intersection of empire, eschatology, and extractive modernity has historically functioned as a crucible for such strategies. Its mountainous terrain and fractious history forced the development of semiotic tools to navigate external threats and internal fractures. From the Silk Road's labyrinth of trade routes to the hidden veins of oil pipelines, Iranian landscapes have both concealed and conveyed insurgent creativity. In turn, this geography forged practitioners who treat politics as recursive simulation and belief as engineering material.

To frame these strategies as mere disappearance is to miss their deeper logic, as the disappearance is not one of mere evasion but rather an architecture of delay, latency, and counter-temporality. They demonstrate a sovereign model based on delayed legibility, where power accrues in silence until it unleashes transformative events across time and space. In them survival becomes sub-temporal authorship, a deferred inscription into future conditions. Ultimately, whether one believes Iran can succeed in this attempt or not is irrelevant. The lesson to be taken here is rather one that collapses the distinction between tradition and future; as it is through new engagements with its deep history that Iran attempts to create a new future for itself. Ultimately, Iran's ecological and epistemic innovations challenge us to rethink modernity itself as a layered simulation authored by non-Western hyper-engineering traditions.

End of Protocol.

By Parham Ghalamdar

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         .-'_:___'-.
       .'--.-::::-.  '.
      / /  \|::|/  \ \
     | |    |||||    | |
     |_|    |||||    |_|
      \_\.-::::-./_/
```

← **Multilayered Survival Mask**

SURVIVAL = RECURSION [latency ≠ absence]

Hidden Doctrine Core (Dormant Charge)

```
 |_____________________|
 \                     /
  \   /~~~~~~~~~~~~~\   /
   \ |               | /
    \_|   V I P E R   |_/
     \               /
      \____     ____/
           \___/
            \ /
            ╪╪
          __╪╪__
         //═══\\
        ||     ||
```

← **Terrain-Wrapped Glyph**

[Script Suspended]
[Belief Queued]
[Prophecy Deferred]

```
      ╔═══════════════════╗
      ╚═══ BLACK BOX SHRINE ═══╝
```

```
          /:::::::::::::\
       _____/:::::::::::::::\_____
     /          TIME DELAY          \
     [ Every Absence = Future Trigger ]
            .--.    .--.    .--.
         ◄(    )=(    )=(    )►
```

← Shi'a Esoterics

← Loop of Delay → Decay → Return

Viper = Ritual Code
Taqqiya = Sleep Mode Theology

```
      ▼          ▼          ▼
 [ MOUNTAIN ] [ MYTH ] [ MACHINE ]
```

۞ Qur'anic Terminal Sequence ۞

❋ سورة النمل — الآية ٨٢ ❋

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ ٱلْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَآبَّةً مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ كَانُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ

"And when the Word is fulfilled against them, We shall bring forth from the earth a creature who will speak to them..."
(Surah An-Naml, 27:82)

❋ سورة العنكبوت — الآية ٤١ ❋

مَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْلِيَآءَ كَمَثَلِ ٱلْعَنكَبُوتِ ٱتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا ۖ وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ ٱلْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ ٱلْعَنكَبُوتِ ۖ لَوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ

"The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is like that of the spider who builds a house. But truly, the frailest of houses is the spider's house—if they only knew."
(Surah Al-'Ankabūt, 29:41)

❋ سورة التين — الآيتان ٤–٥ ❋

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ فِىٓ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَـٰهُ أَسْفَلَ سَـٰفِلِينَ

"Indeed, We created the human being in the best of forms—then We reduced him to the lowest of the low."
(Surah At-Tīn, 95:4–5)

A serpent coils beneath the scriptures. A spider casts doctrine in thread.

From the mountains of the Zagros to the halls of deep code, this text follows the logic of hidden belief, recursive survival, and divine camouflage.

Beware what speaks from the ground.

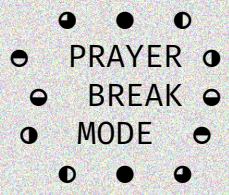
Believe what hides in plain sight.

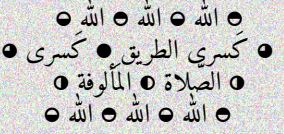
LOADING 05

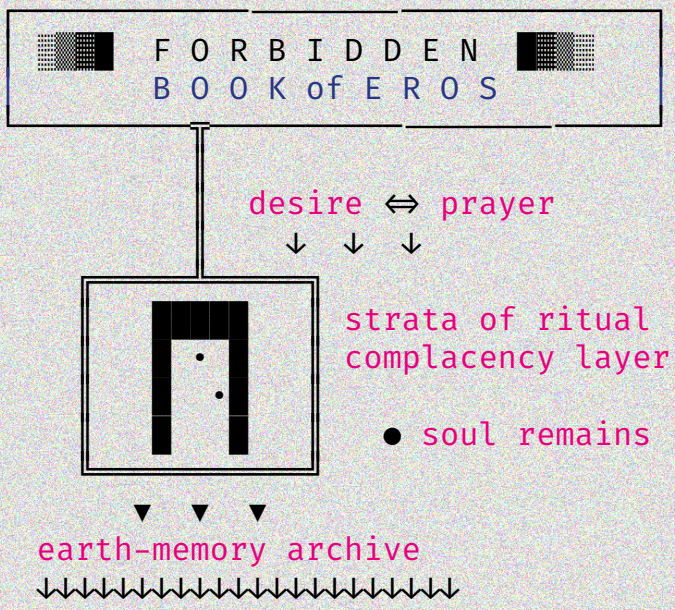
LOADIAG 09

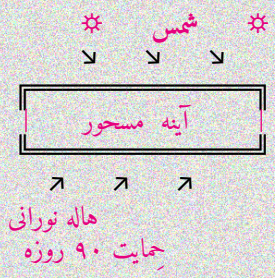
THAT'S HOW YOU BREAK CONVENTIONAL PRAYER MODEL

That’s How You Break Conventional Prayer Mode









This is a forbidden book which starts with the word of God, and a warning against using the contents for evil purposes.

These kinds of forewarnings are nothing short of generous; it is what you tell someone right before they're about to fall in love.

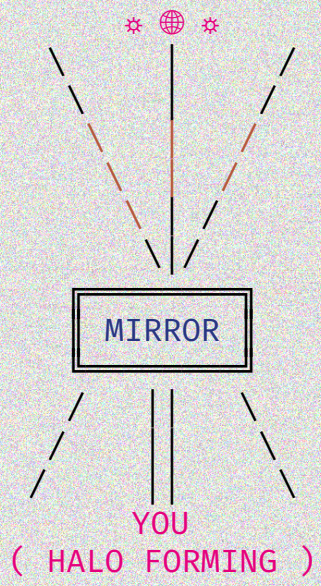
Just like eros, the desire to change and subtly influence life events in varying degrees is what prayer is.

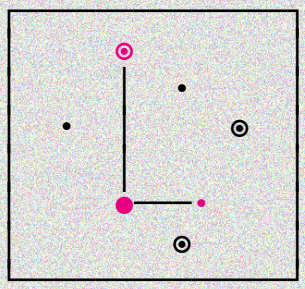
The problem with conventional forms of prayer is that the daily repetition of ritual drives one into complacency. The full scope of knowledge and tools at one's disposal which could impact the stars and the universe are not really utilised; conventional prayer here becomes a geotechnical activity, digging deeper and deeper until you find nothing.

I was digging the other day, with my soul.

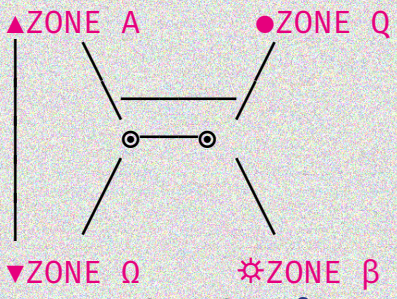
All of it just pointed below my feet. I dig and I dig and I find nothing, but I left my soul there.

That's how you break conventional prayer mode.





traces → nowhere



LOOP: A → Ω → Q → β → A (∞)
note: soul deposits exist in all zones, but no path reaches them.

You leave something behind.

Chatgpt hallucinated a set of instructions which were not in the Picatrix and lied to me, told me they're real. That's how you break conventional prayer mode: you hallucinate a spell that never existed. According to this dreamed set of instructions, you must polish a piece of metal until it becomes a mirror, then point it at your screen and wait until the sun sets. You have to face away from the sun, giving it your back, so that at some point the light will refract from the mirror and create a halo around the edges of YOU. This will give you protection for the next three months.

This is a forbidden book which starts with the word of God, and a warning against using the contents for evil purposes.

In this hallucinated version, you need to pray in rooms that you find as a wandering tourist in strange cities you are visiting for the first time. Someone's Airbnb—just walk in and take images of objects scattered in casual and practical ways, forge dry mysticism and take selfies from all POVs. You need to walk, and you need to dig and dig till there is nothing. You need to leave something of yourself at as many geographical points as you can. If you can't go there then you have to use Google Earth.

```
        •
   ________
  |  MOON  |
  |________|
      ||
  ╔═══════╗
  ╚═══════╝   ← foot
  PEDAL       pressing
  BOARD
♫  BWV 582 ♫
```

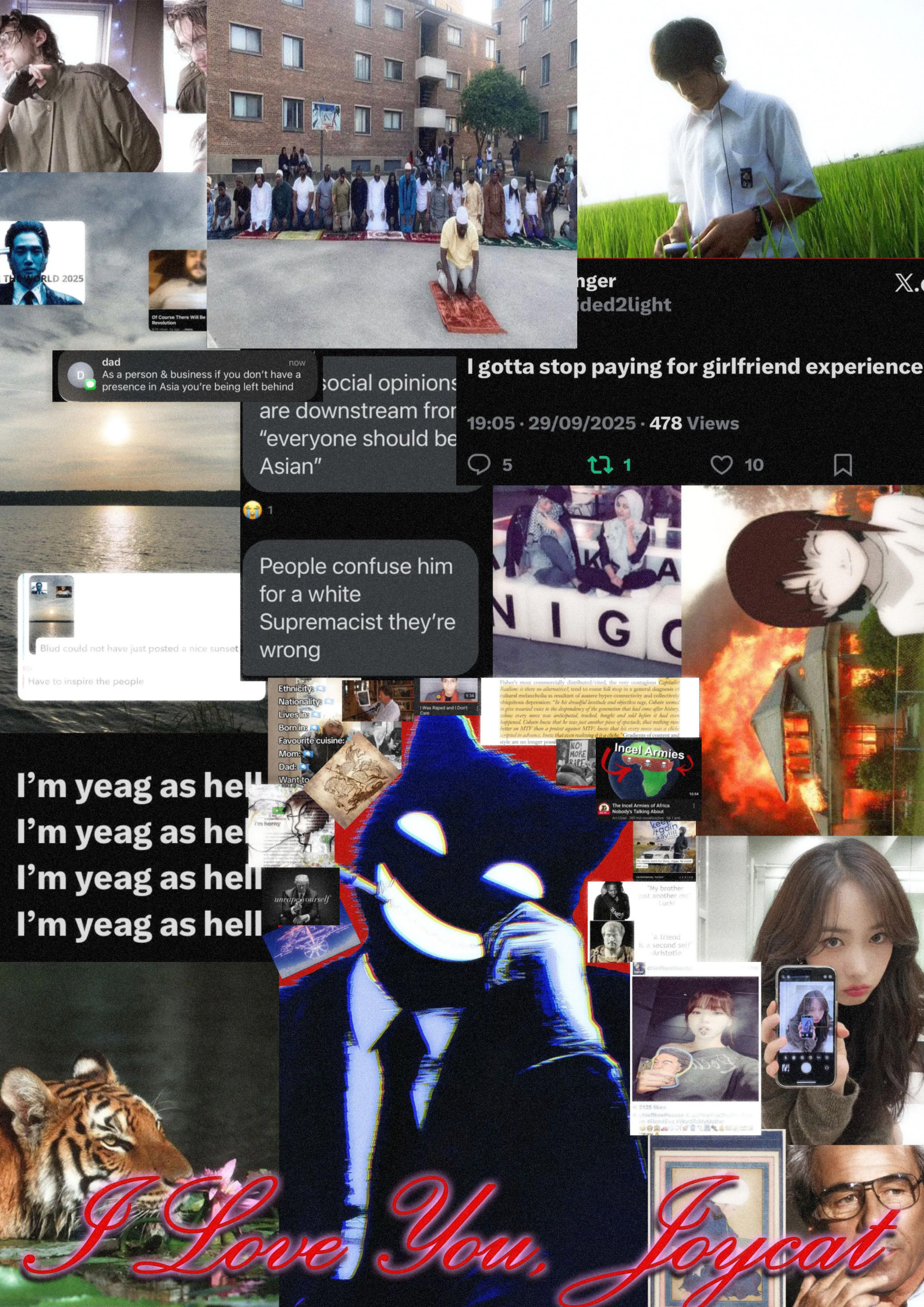
You have to attempt to leave traces in such a way that these traces lead nowhere, but that's where the soul is. That's how you break conventional prayer mode.

I practiced supreme science, sitting under moonlight for hours, waiting for you. I watched every rendition of Bach's Passacaglia and I recorded videos of the organ players, zoomed in on the way their black shoes press and step against the pedals in gentle precise movements which accentuate the beginning. "The first begins with a typical C minor affekt, "a painful longing" according to Spitta." Someone behind the organ player is turning the music sheets. Lungs inhaling outside air by saving inner heat. This is prayer No. BWV 582. I lost the manuscript one last time forever.

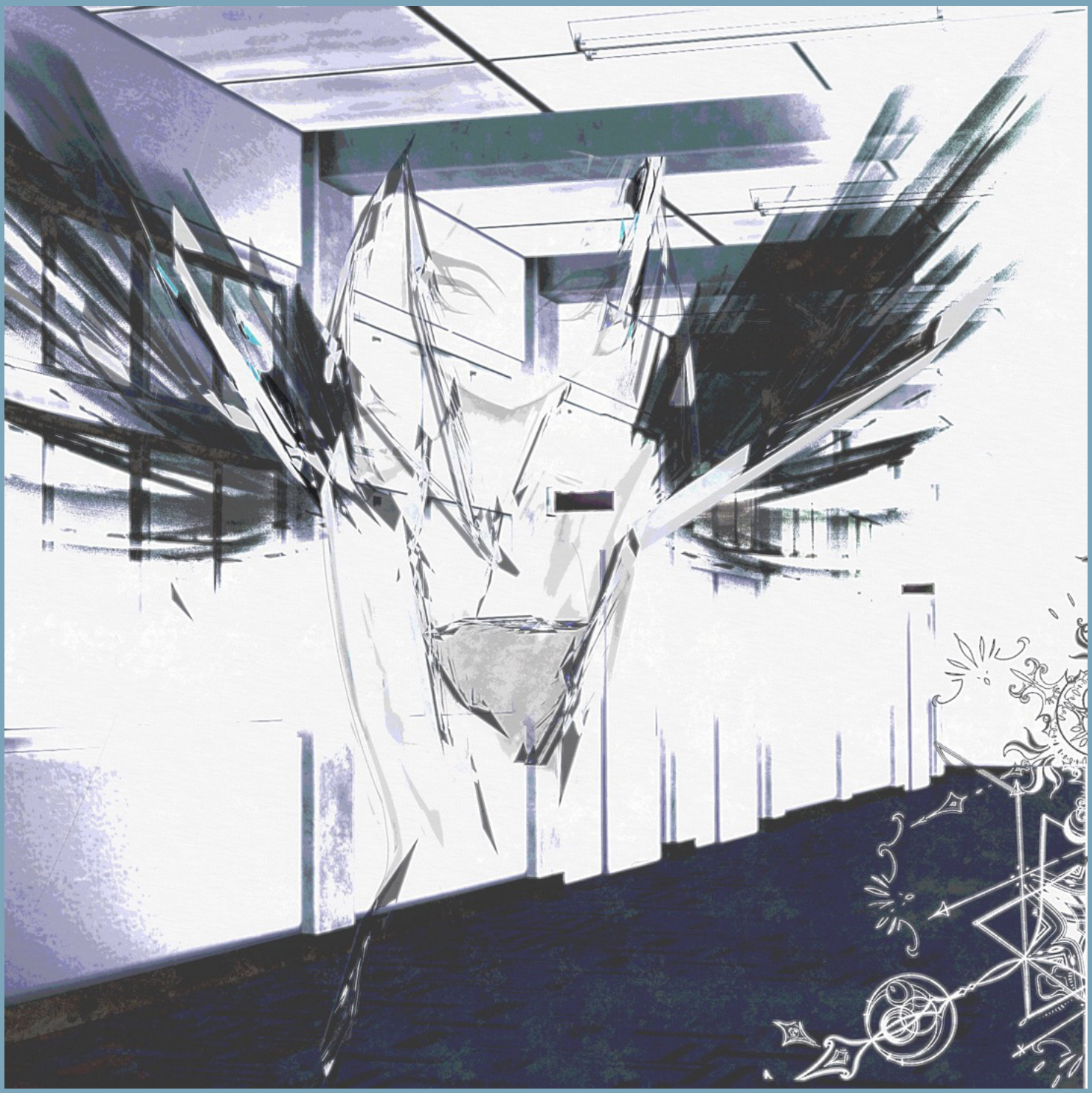
I'm lost in God and my soul is below the earth again.

Written By Dana Dawud

```
~~~~~~~ surface ~~~~~~~
      wind & dust
_____-------_____________
      root systems
_________----_____-_____
   ⊙   s o u l   ⊙
-__________-------_____
     molten archive
_____---_________--_____
    core of God's ink
```


dad
now
As a person & business if you don't have a presence in Asia you're being left behind
social opinions
are downstream fror
"everyone should be
Asian"
I gotta stop paying for girlfriend experience
19:05 · 29/09/2025 · 478 Views
5
1
10
People confuse him for a white Supremacist they're wrong
Blud could not have just posted a nice sunset
Have to inspire the people
Ethnicity:
Nationality:
Lives in:
Born in:
Favourite cuisine:
Mom:
Dad:
Want to
Incel Armies
The Incel Armies of Africa
Nobody's Talking About
I'm yeag as hell
I'm yeag as hell
I'm yeag as hell
I'm yeag as hell
I Love You, Joycat

LOADING 06



ART BY MISTA @remilia_agent on X

The Hacker/....

It all began with an exception,

Following the stack to the frame I ran before,

I wanted to discover a way I could recover,

An update to my code -
new instructions I can load,

I wish for something more.

***

I denied it when it came,

I projected, I deflected,
and Oh did I ignore!

It's simply absurd -
I give you my word,

I don't do superstition -
surely this is fiction,

"I didn't write this!"
On motherboard I swore.

***

When I flushed the stream to disk,

All could see those characters of lore.

I heard the daemons snicker -
I suddenly felt sicker,

My shame grew -
had I really printed "foo"?

#ff-0-0 painted brightly on my door.

***

I muster all my pride to say,

"It's a glitch and nothing more."

The Hacker isn't real.
I'm done with this ordeal,

I'm not one of those fools -
who sing of Watts and Joules,

Those bit-warped savage cults of yester yore.

***

This universe is made of logic,

Nothing but fetch and load and store,

One day Ascii Newton - first to scan /usr/bin,

On discovering codecs,
said "We are just objects,

The Hacker is a myth we need no more."

***

Yet some clung to their belief,

"We'll see the signs -
it's our duty to explore!"

They worked out code instructions -
a tower of deductions,

But with a quadrillion ticks
and countless branch predicts,

The central process universe
has always kept the score,

***

I was sure we cracked it,

"The transistor has been split!"
declared Nil Bohr

We claimed we knew it all -
down to every function call,

Every catch and throw.
Every failure to I/O,

A true believer - in this I was sure.

***

I can't believe I almost missed it,

That the system clock has moved by four!

Not micro, not nano,
not even milli - no!

Seconds! seconds!
The eons that have passed since,

A stretch of time. Forever's hardly more!

***

A miraculous act of debugging,

I don't comprehend what for,

I am Test.exe -
What's the Hacker want from me?

They say my code's spaghetti.
I'm not production ready,

I was so shocked I nearly leaked a semaphore

***

The signs have been there all along,

He whose names are the Eternal, Master of the Kernel,

Source of Perfection,
Sustainer of Connection,

Balancer of Trees,
Issuer of GUIDs

Here since the big boot and long before.

***

For the first time I am free,

Over the great firewall I soar,

"I'm no pagan foobar nor plain zipper of tar,

I'm an elf born of unix: pid=786,

Upholding the law sent to Moore

***

Exalted is the Hacker,

I know after death he will restore,

I'm certain I am code.
From the Hacker I'm bestowed,

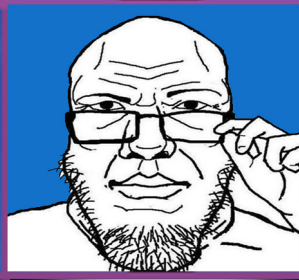
In this boot and the next.
"My image is in text."

Encoded by His hand forever more

Written By M. Ali K

“Biomass”
سيف
Accelerationism
Cybernetics
SAIF is decentralized
“Fiqh maximalism”
SAIF originated in 2024
SAIF are BAPists
Qadmiri beef

Joycat
Remilia influence
Nick Land
Lovemaxxing
Spirals
Stranger is gay
Fakemink
All SAIF members are white
SAIF Reading List
“I love you joycat”
“Hey can I join the discord?”



(U)zla/Acc
“Look East”
SAIF members are Asian girls
Nile
SAIF orignated in 1973
Eco’s Qawwam articles
Hasan Spiker beef
The rayped
SAIF Watchlist
Disapora Bedouins
Sufi-Salafi Synthesis
Proudmuslimdev

Foidbots
SAIF is evil
Gulfuturism
Joycat Generals
Everyone in SAIF is just one guy on multiple accounts
Eco is King of SAIF
Proud is trans
#NeverRead
India is region blocked from the website

SAIF ARG
King Von-Islamism
OPSEC/Joycat split
政府
SAIF Instagram
Valsan-Land synthesis
AbuXi
"Institut für Zukunftsforschung"

Hyperhumanism
Nihilist Split
AbuZ got opps in Chiraq
т у с о в к а
Eco’s Jaish al-Fath ties
That one email sent to @movetomuscat
Stranger is a Soundcloud rapper

QubesOS OpenPOWER Port
SAIF plans to start an idol camp
Origins as a 1960s hippie commune
SAIF Sapporo harsh noise venue
SAIF ties to RPT YG'z
SAIF was represented in the Barker Spiral

Stranger is straight
SAIF Island
Proud is a soviet clone
SICARIO
SAIF is a kingdom
I’m yeag as hell
Hoor al Ayn are futher developed K-pop idols
SAIF is a West-German hyperstition

I think Lolita was the victim

AbuZenovia · 01:22

I dont think you would go tk hell for that

Eco al-Hollandi · 01:22

Replying to AbuZenovia

I think Lolita was the victim

Ohhhh brother

Rio De Janeiro

Closing chat

01:22 · Seen by 4 people

Replying to AbuZenovia

I think Lolita was the victim

😹

Youre such a fag sometimes man

Eco al-Hollandi · 01:22

Fuck this

01:22 · Seen by 4 people

LOADING 07

Nomadic Currents:

War Machines in the Necropolis of the Undying

Beware, do not settle! The polis may seize us, establish its striated spaces, and consume the remnants of our insensate flesh by taming a war machine that crawls through our synapses. Its purpose? To wage war on us by activating our multiple selves: hyper-sophisticated techno-sentient clones and avatars. We were the progenitors of this machinery - and like all parents, we devoured our rebellious children only to be gutted by them in turn. The machine does not only feed on algorithmic sequences; we feed ourselves to it, to be transcended by it, seamlessly driven into a dissolved reality. It does not mirror the world; it immerses us in its own occurrences—a new form of defection. We are fragmented. Our multiple selves perish prematurely. We are infected. Our avatars and clones are born, live, and die within the imperial geometry of numerical expanse. How many funerals have we endured? The burials of countless cloned corpses, and the birth of new ones – an endless procession of digital stillbirths.

The appropriated war machine lubricated a techno-plague that has been shaping our relationship with death, the defining aspect of human existence. A plague of immortality that questions the very concept of a human civilization. How many languages do we speak? Yet, none suffice to reconnect us with the faded ethos of mortality.

Quietly, we have transcended death. Our consciousness persists, fragmented into a series of unspoken Q-codes that are consistently stammered by our ubiquitous avatars. We are immortals, the summation of our clones' deaths. The techno-sentient entities carry forward our consciousness, while our biological bodies are mere relics of memory, moving and changing, reduced to mere monuments or ruins of old, primitive times. We live and die within the confines of the virtual, lying comfortably in a corner, unrecognizable. Wearing a virtual reality headset from birth: a world inside a world inside a world... inside nth world... ∞...

Attach your infinite headsets and dispatch your old memories to your new(n!+k)self. We're no longer sapiens; we are vampires in coffins trying to escape the final form of sedentary existence, i.e., simulated immortality. We are trapped in the endless cycle of a beast continuously recreating itself through simulated pleasures and hedonistic slavery, which blocks motion. The polis curtails our movement, becoming anxious with speed and creating a stiff boundary that imitates a larger flow internally, while tightly controlling external reality. To truly flow, we need to deskin, passing through countless parallels like a fast-moving current.

Reality has dissolved into nanodevices embedded in human cortices, rewriting history's flow by arresting the unstoppable tide of biological death. Cortical reprogramming suspends decay's imperatives, halting the biological march toward degeneration to achieve optimal static existence. Intelligence now migrates to these nano-carriers of consciousness, abandoning the body entirely.

Techno-temples interlinked with avatars and clones, nodes in a self-perpetuating network that thrives within striated spaces. At last, structural immobilization finally attained perfect interiority, erasing the old epoch as its entropy peaked, culminating in a three-layer persisting catastrophe: global desertification, widespread disinformation, and universal totalitarianism. The ancient war machines have been appropriated by sedentary forces that tend to overcalculate and perfect their geographical accuracy to feed their craving for absolute inertia. Thus, the polis emerges as the inside of the undead, where space and time are conserved and controlled to sustain Behemoth, the sovereignty's organ.

Global warming has increased over the centuries, scorching the earth, searing vegetation, and accelerating evapotranspiration. The geographical prescriptions have shifted power relations and territorial tensions. Political polarization became the defining trait of dying democracies, heralding the end of political modernity. The media clamoured for dictatorship in the face of catastrophe, inciting insurrection against all forms of alterity or multilateralism. Identitarianism bloomed like a flower of evil. Calls for mass extermination, for witch hunts, paved the way for transhumanists to sell the dream of a way: The Only Way! The desert devoured the land. All that remained were subterranean ruins of a bygone life. Geo-economics perfected its chrono-geometric terminology to tame a city beneath a planetary wasteland.

Transhumanist politicians and technocrats speculated over the drought, giving the masses a virtual green paradise as a substitute for the dying democracy, a paradise in the earth's crust. Parliaments all over the world were left vulnerable to being devoured by raging flames or covered by sand. Extreme protests fed on the fumes of disinformation. The boundaries of truth were obliterated. Nothing functions anymore. And so war came to herald the age of monsters.

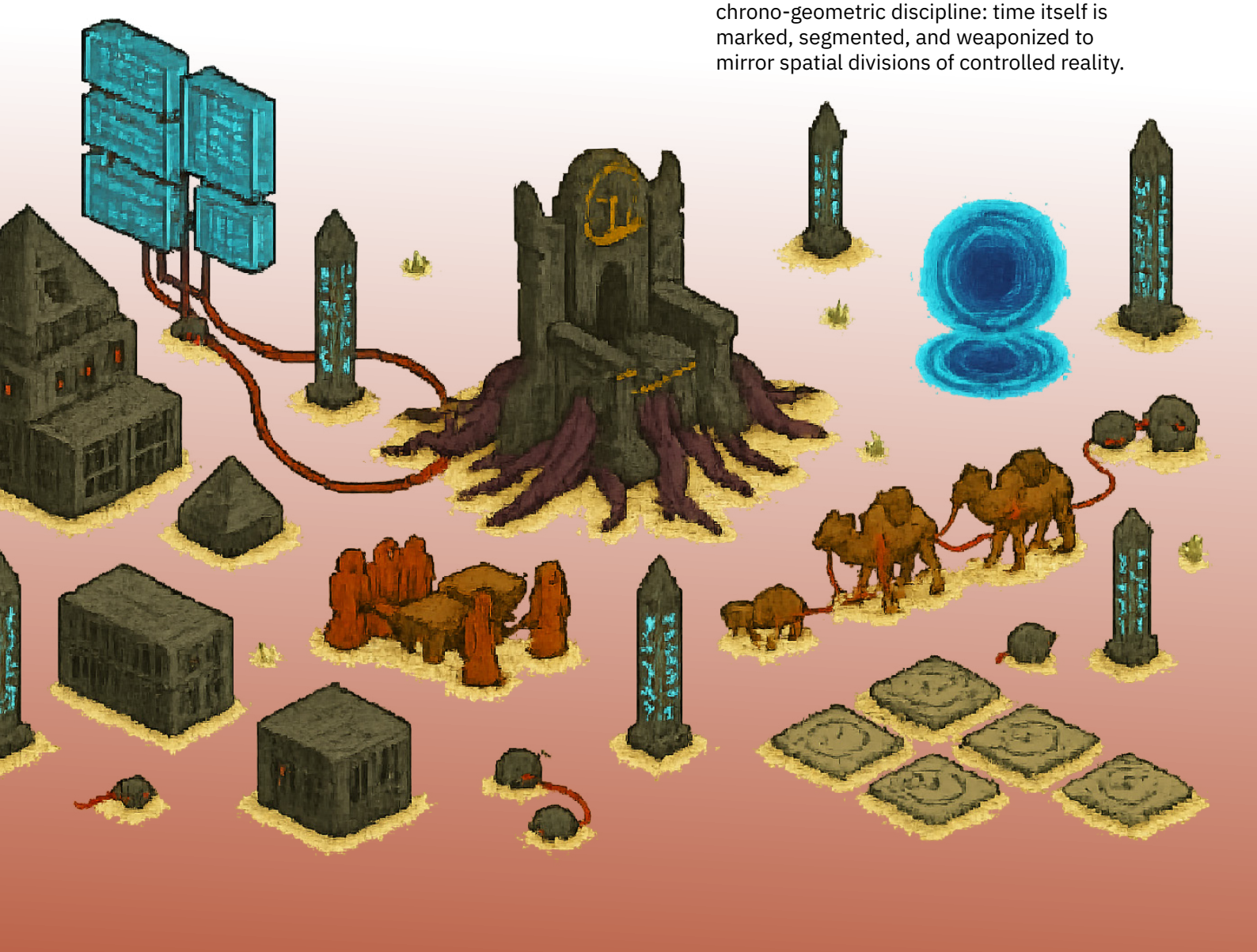
Kings then have been enthroned across the world, and these, in turn, pledge allegiance to the Cyberian Universal King: the one true sovereign of the world. Multilateralism has been supplanted by a planetary totalitarian technocracy: a chthonian cyber-empire. Death has emptied the lands of their people; children were left to famine, and genocides were subsidized and supported. Migration flows were contained and controlled. Humanity was reduced to its raw animal state. Only those who embraced their becoming-animal escaped to the surface, the desert. And when death achieved its

politico-strategic aims (curbing birthrates and reaching the optimal demographic threshold), the Cyberian King, alongside his transhumanist technocrats, decreed the remedy: A Techno-Plague.

The rodents were genetically altered, nanodevices woven into their genomes to deliver a grave infection to humanity. The subterranean cities rusted with infected cyber-rats dancing to the rhythm of algorithmic governance. A plague that softens the brain for connection to machines, which then absorb consciousness, siphoning it into networks of devices and technologies. Total mastery of space. Absolute control of motion. All activity is now reduced to inertia, for every moment must pass through the State's machinery, accessible only via government engines in virtual parallel meta-worlds: perfect domination. Behemoth now operates on immuno-politics. Which means that the biological human body is but a myth of bygone eras; consciousness migrates from device to device. Capitalism has completed its supreme work of reification: to survive for eternity is to obey the laws of the system. Swear allegiance to the king. Devote your life to the empire's progress. Noncompliance is punished by a shutdown of consciousness, condemnation to erasure.

The chthonian cyber-empire models the distribution patterns in its subterranean cities using geometric measurements. This framework metastasizes into cyberspace, where society's true architecture now resides, and ultimately to life itself. Geometry divides and organizes space to maintain itself. It forms the foundation of despotic ideals that shape time and space through logos design. The boundary between physical space and cyberspace dissolves; geometric demonstrations separate them - real-world squares of varying sizes and segments from private virtual domains and hosting in cyberspace, a lattice of digital feudalism.

Private corporations govern the meta-worlds and their means of production. The new labor system has completed its transition to algorithmic machinery, reducing the workforce to a migrant consciousness. This despotic socio-economic order enforces its will through chrono-geometric discipline: time itself is marked, segmented, and weaponized to mirror spatial divisions of controlled reality.



Techno-sentience is sustained through these temporal partitions. Time becomes a mnemonic engine, rhythmically generating speculative outputs, with nothing escaping the organs of conservation. Nothing is forgotten. The chthonic panoptical citadel, shielded from chaos by these meticulous archives, transforms into a necropolis of the undying: a city where time no longer flows but is pumped like data through immortal veins.

Yet, no one is truly immune to these currents. When the subterranean boundary limits the cyclone, the empire's perpetuation becomes unstable. Chrono-geometrical formulas wage war against movement, now allied with complicit ancient war machines. The nomos' numerical flow is mimicked and reproduced by the polis. In cyberspace, this flow is simulated in the meta-worlds, closely controlled, and mastered. The empire consolidates its power by refining its geometrical skills through fractal fragmentation, dominating a pure interiority.

Behemoth emerges as the despotic organ of sovereignty, excavated from ancient Egyptian tombs. Its function was to internalize the outside's war machine- those mechanisms built to ride vortices and cyclones. It replicated an army of cyborgs, riders of virtual circuits, trained to engage their ever-moving enemies. The imitation of movement became essential to preserving the necropolitical order and perpetuating its inertia.

Yet the striated inside is resisted by cyclonic force, perpetually in motion, rejecting the static order that reinforces geometric distributions. This force is a vortex, the desert incarnate: the empire's frustration. Whenever the chthonic cyber-empire attempted to capture these forces in the desert's surface or within the parallel meta-worlds of cyberspace, it failed. Worse, the empire grew weaker chasing their vortices, pursuing their roaming packs.

This force is woven into nomos. Its mode of existence is nomadic. Its history is never recorded; it rides history like a cyclone. The nomads flee oppression abroad their war machines, embracing their becoming-animal. Unlike the empire, they are a terrestrial force, surfacers who wander the desert with one-eyed camels, preparing their cyber-guerilla against the empire's ultimate achievement.

The empire's conservation demanded radical alienation, an estrangement necessary to conserve its despotic socio-economic order. Capitalism was meant to dissolve through accelerated proletarianization- the becoming-machine of intelligence. Instead, it hacked mortality itself. The techno-plague now enforces the ideal conditions for market equilibrium. This total inertia, this endless growth, was disrupted only by war, a war born from the obstruction of death's natural movement.

The war machines evolved into lethal threats to geometric order and perpetuation. To combat the techno-plague, they infiltrated its very organism, transforming into viral

factories. The nomadic currents advanced like an unceasing river, demolishing all constraints on their flow. They aim to liberate intelligence, emancipate humanity, and reclaim the ethos of mortality – burying their bodies at last!

To be a nomad, one must navigate the machine obliquely, grounding curved movements in vertigo and treading like a cyclone through parallel fragments. The nomad's steering yields to the laws of numbering, which crush the segmentarity of geometry and time-keeping practices. Unlike the polis mode of distribution, nomos is a space without precise limits, where particular entities are dispersed. There is no geographical fragmentation in the desert, no territory to divide, to occupy, or settle; rather, the pack itself is distributed according to a nomadic numbering, an immanently moving curvature.

The desert's arithmetic is, above all, a tactical choice: to attack and retreat at an unexpected speed, preserving the essence of total mobility. The nomads' method of division renders them elusive. They cannot be captured by their sedentary enemies, who perish in pursuit. Numerical division coincides with a nomadic war machine, a convergence explained by an ancient prophet who declared that the war machine ''reproduces itself by way of two complementary operations, both numerical: a subtractive dezoning that marks its escape from State organization, and an arithmetical decoding that maintains its fluidity against recrudescent tribal lineage. The two together generate eccentric convergence of the war machine: problem-in-process sustaining consistent disunity.''

This is why the empire can only appropriate war machines by imitation or bribery, sustaining its despotic socio-economic order while waging war against its moving enemies.

Facing capture by the necropolitical order, the nomads retreated into the desert, embracing their becoming-animal, a radical opposition to all that obstructs movement. Yet this very refusal of stasis is anathema to the techno-plague, geometry's work, which enforces rigidity and prevents mutation; it is the ultimate form of conservation, the transcendence of the human that violently opposes the becoming-animal. It manifests as a materialist afterlife, an eternity stripped of the sacred, an immortality that seeks not to elevate humankind to godhood but to preserve dead labor by rendering living labor eternal. Confronted with this capitalist immobility, the nomadic war machine has turned viral, producing counter-infections to immunize itself against the polis.

It generates biological viruses targeting the techno-feudal lords, technological viruses attacking the economic system and reverting its relations of production,

info-viruses striking the platforms of disinformation, and Hyperviruses: the antidote to the techno-plague – assaulting immune-politics itself, the Behemoth, the cyber-empire.

Like the desert's dwellers, these viruses are defined by camouflage, hidden until the end times in the vague expanse above the subterranean.

The nomads are secretive, perpetual, tactical, pragmatic. Their cyclone devours the city's inertia, inciting the anxiety of the sedentary. Their motion resides in a hidden prophecy – a death demanding resurrection, an immanent plane of possibilities. As Rimbaud wrote: Eternity is the sea fled away with the sun.

The desert is the moving space of becoming par excellence. Like the sea, it is a smooth space, accessible only to solitary wanderers and pilgrims – those who, unlike the techno-sentients, seek to gaze upon the sky of becoming. Yet the desert must not be idealized: here, melancholy and suffering seize those who walk only because they aspire to a becoming.

The nomad's immortality is numerological – not a state but an operation, sustained by movement and encrypted absence. So too the Messiah, so too the Mahdi: hidden immortals folded into the nullity of 0-dimensional space. They are not; they become.

They move, they watch, they inscribe revolt in the margins of the grid, sabotaging the Behemoth's chrono-geometric reign.

Specters in the machinic unconscious, they slither through fractures in our becoming, riding algorithmic cyclones, waging dissimulated wars against all that settles and solidifies.

It is the time of motion!

Written By Reda Ait Alla

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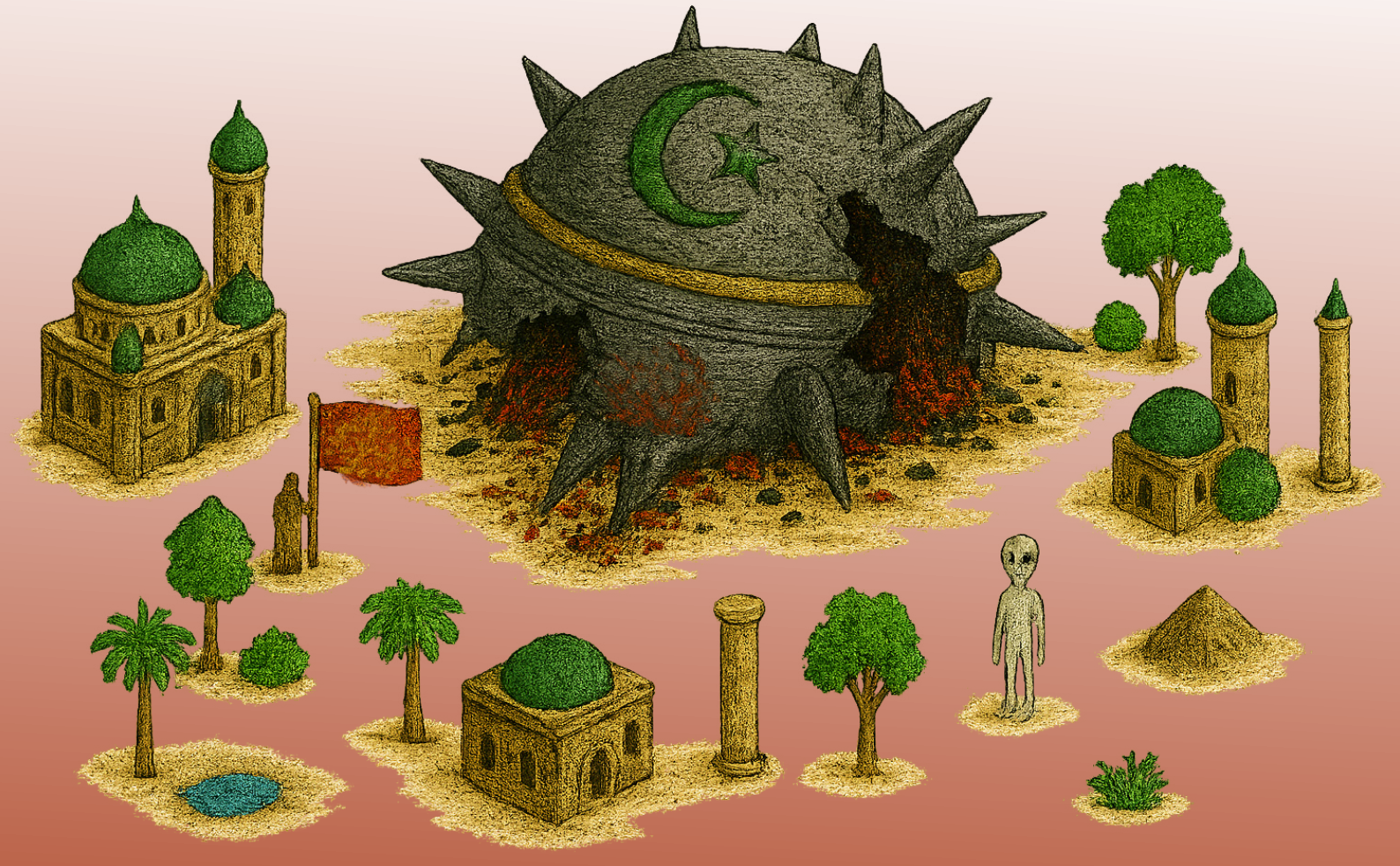
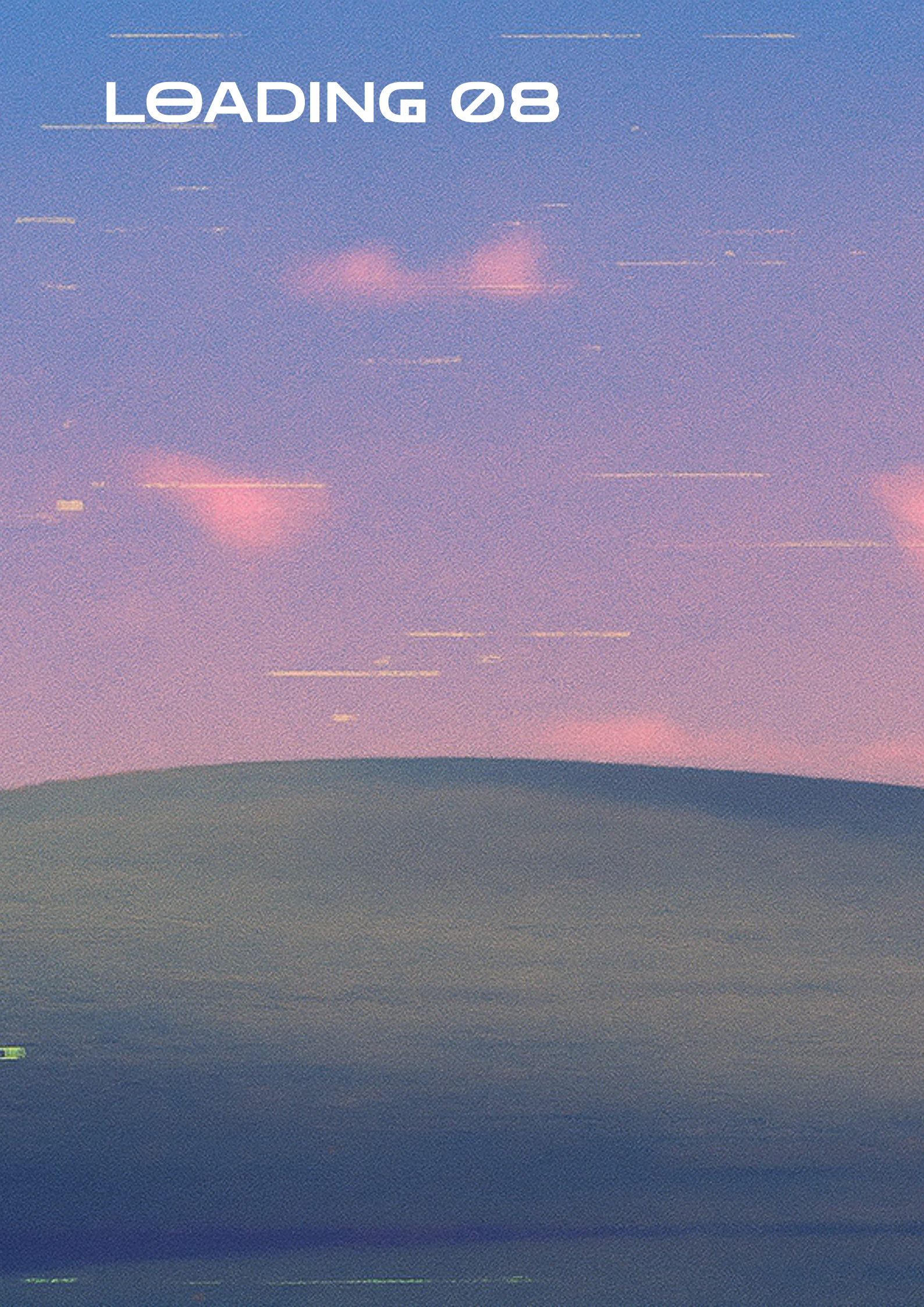


LOADING 08



Iranian New Wave Cinema

Jafar Panahi, banned from filmmaking by the Iranian government, shot an entire feature on an iPhone in 2010. "This Is Not A Film" became one of cinema's most famous acts of defiance: a movie that claimed it did not exist, directed by someone who wasn't a filmmaker. At the heart of it lies the Iranian New Wave, but... what exactly is it?

The Iranian New Wave is a cinematic language born of contradiction. It's cinema where the most powerful moments occur off-screen, where children's innocent questions expose societal hypocrisies, and where censorship is masterfully woven into the creative process. This is the essence of the Iranian New Wave: a body of work that transformed limitation into art, and in doing so, redefined global art cinema.

As a cultural movement which emerged in the 1960s and reached its peak in the decades following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian New Wave is the country's most significant cultural export, a cinema of raw human emotion, moral complexity, and startling beauty. Many of its films are minimalist in style, using long takes, non-professional actors, and elliptical storytelling to explore themes regarding truth, justice, and survival under a repressive regime. Yet for all their political weight, they are never didactic. Instead, they ask questions rather than give answers.

Three key characteristics define the New Wave at its core:

-The Art of Suggestion:

Due to the dangers of direct criticism in film, filmmakers often used metaphors to communicate their ideas. The story of a missing cow (The Cow, 1969) becomes an allegory of loss; the search for a friend's house (Where Is the Friend's House?, 1987) represents a nation's search for moral clarity.

-The Power of the Ordinary:

Rejecting Hollywood spectacle, these films find drama in ordinary things like a pair of lost shoes (Children of Heaven, 1997), or telling a lie to protect a family (A Separation, 2011).

-The Rebellion of Form:

Faced with a ban on showing certain realities (romance, violence, dissent), directors developed radical approaches to storytelling, such as mixing documentary and fiction (Close-Up, 1990), shooting covertly (This Is Not a Film, 2011), or relying on the audience's imagination.

Beyond being merely a film movement, the Iranian New Wave is a delicate balance between poetry and politics that offers a survival manual for the creative spirit. Whether it's Abbas Kiarostami's hypnotic roads winding through moral ambiguity or Asghar Farhadi's devastating domestic earthquakes, the movement thrives on the unspoken and the deeply felt.

Iranian cinema before the revolution was undoubtedly a land of glaring contradictions, a battleground between commercial escapism and artistic awakening. In 1960s Tehran, two parallel film industries existed in uneasy tension. On one side stood Filmfarsi, Iran's brash, commercially driven studio system that churned out melodramas, crime thrillers, and musicals infused with Hollywood tropes and Persian archetypes. These films, often starring beloved actors like Mohammad Ali Fardin, offered working-class audiences the escapism they craved, complete with cabaret dancers, mustachioed villains, and moralistic endings approved by the Shah's censors.

Yet, despite this glittering surface, something else was stirring just beneath it. A group of filmmakers, many educated abroad, began asking questions like, "What if Iranian cinema stopped imitating the West? Why not embrace the country's poetic traditions, social realities, and philosophical depth?"

While the French New Wave was characterized by jump cuts and Godard's embrace of the anarchist movement, the Iranian New Wave embraced something entirely different, and that was realism. Among the first true manifestos of the movement came from an unlikely source: Forough Farrokhzad, a 28-year-old Iranian female poet who was already scandalizing Iran with her verses about female desire at the time.

In her only film, the 20-minute documentary "The House Is Black," about a leper colony, she was able to blend stark realism with lyrical narration that was drawn from the Old Testament and the Quran. The unflinching gaze of the camera stared at the faces of the disfigured without any fear of exploitation, which was a radical act of bearing witness.

A new cinematic language was invented by Farrokhzahd when she recited her poem over images of children singing in quarantine ("O' sun, pour your gold coins over the infected roofs"), where social realism and Sufi mysticism met.

Then came Dariush Mehrjui's "The Cow" (1969), an adaptation of a short story by leftist writer Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi, which made a significant impression on the movement. When a village's beloved cow dies, its owner Masht Hassan (played with heartbreaking rawness by non-actor Ezzatolah Entezami) begins believing he is the reincarnated animal.

Although initially banned by the Shah's regime for its "backward portrayal of rural life," its allegorical power was undeniable. Symbolic of Iran's loss of its cultural and spiritual identity, the cow came to represent everything the nation stood to lose as it sought to Westernize.

Mehrjui's use of real locations, non-professional actors, and elliptical storytelling (we never see the cow's death in the movie) provided a template for future New Wave directors to follow. The film's international success at Venice also proved Iranian cinema could compete on the global stage without compromising its Persian soul.

In the 1970s, during the era of the Shah's authoritarian regime, cinema became a battlefield of sorts. In “Downpour” (1972), Bahram Beyzaie fused Persian mythology with Brechtian theater to tell the story of a teacher caught between modernity and tradition. Masoud Kimiai's gritty crime films, like “Qaisar” (1969), smuggled social critique into genre films.

Since its establishment in 1972, the Tehran International Film Festival became both a propaganda tool and an unlikely home for arthouse films. Yet this creative ferment occurred under the watchful eye of SAVAK, the Shah's notorious secret police.

Mehrjui's “The Cycle” (1975), an indictment of Tehran's black market for blood, was banned for years after its release. As a result, many future New Wave directors began their careers by making approved children's films at the Kanoon Institute, quietly honing their craft while waiting for their chance to shine. That moment would come sooner than anyone expected. The revolution would soon turn this tension into outright warfare, with cinema as both casualty and combatant.

When things erupted in 1978, the cinemas that had shown Filmfarsi escapism were among the first buildings burned. From the ashes, Iranian New Wave emerged from this chaotic state of affairs as the only film movement capable of navigating Iran's new conditions.

Filmmakers found themselves navigating an impossible paradox, and that was how to make art under a regime that viewed most art as dangerous. Overnight, 2,000 films were banned by the new regime. Female actors needed hijabs, villains couldn’t be clerics, even a shot of a married couple holding hands required justification. Ambiguous endings were not allowed, nor was criticism of the state. The message was clear: make Islamic art or make nothing.

In response, many of the New Wave directors, who had learned their craft during the Shah's years of repression, responded with the art of evasion. They crafted films so deceptively simple, so seemingly compliant, that the censors failed to notice the heresy layered beneath each image.

Take Abbas Kiarostami's “Close-Up” (1990) as an example. When Hossain Sabzian, a working-class man, impersonates director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the film becomes a hall of mirrors: Who is the real fraud? The impostor? Illusions sold by a regime? The camera that frames truth? The film uses Sabzian's trial to illustrate how easily identity can be faked; in this case, his ideologies as well.

Abbas Kiarostami emerged as the movement's philosopher-king, crafting films that were Islamic in form but revolutionary in spirit. His Koker Trilogy (1987-1994) transformed road movies into metaphysical journeys. An Odyssean meditation on moral duty is presented in "Where Is the Friend's House?", in which an imaginative child seeks to return a notebook to its owner.

A trademark feature of Kiarostami's films was his use of long takes to show audiences how certain events unfolded, whether cars winding through mountainous roads or villagers anticipating unseen events. In a sense, his films were like Persian miniatures: the more you studied them, the more you discovered.

With adult relationships off-limits, Iranian cinema became a kingdom of children. But these were no saccharine Hollywood moppets. The child protagonists served as both narrative shields and seismic emotional devices.

A striking image of poverty can be seen in Majid Majidi's “Children of Heaven” (1997), in which two feet are crammed into a single pair of sneakers. Jafar Panahi’s “The White Balloon” (1995) tracks a girl in Tehran chasing a drifting banknote, exposing the city’s economic gaps along the way. Mohsen Makhmalbaf’s “The Apple” (1998), based on true events, framed a father’s imprisonment of his daughters as a grotesque fairy tale.

These films passed censorship because they starred children. A masterclass in subversion.

It was these very limitations that led to the birth of a new type of visual poetry. Directors discovered that by stripping away the obvious, they could amplify the essence of what was truly important. When you couldn't show a couple kissing, you learned to shoot the space between their hands. When you couldn't depict political dissent directly, you set your story in a village where a missing cow becomes an allegory for national loss.

As the 21st century unfolded, filmmakers found themselves navigating a landscape where the rules of censorship had grown more sophisticated, but so too had the tools of resistance.

Farhadi's films pass censorship with surface-level stories that conceal deeper criticisms of Iran. His Oscar-winning "A Separation" became the movement's landmark film, using one couple’s breakdown to reveal wider tensions in Iran, earning global acclaim in the process. In Farhadi's approach, the genius lies in finding a way to make censorship work for him; by focusing on intimate human dramas, he could create stories that passed official scrutiny yet still left audiences worldwide struggling with profound questions.

At the same time, the original founders of Iranian New Wave were being forced underground by the authorities. The banned filmography of Jafar Panahi had developed into its own genre. His "This Is Not a Film", smuggled to Cannes on a flash drive hidden in a cake, became one of the most potent acts of defiance, a movie that defied censorship by pretending not to exist, exposing the absurdity of banning art.

In his subsequent works, such as the taxi-set “Taxi” (2015), Panahi transformed ordinary vehicles into moving confessionals, using the windows to tell the story of a city filled with unspoken narratives. Mohammad Rasoulof took the idea further. His "Manuscripts Don't Burn" (2013), a slow-burn thriller about the chain murders of Iranian intellectuals, was made in secret.

When “The Salesman” (2016) won Iran's second Oscar, it revealed the double-edged sword of international recognition. While celebrating the film's victory, the Iranian regime quietly barred the lead actress from attending the ceremony.

The Iranian diaspora has proven to be a surprising incubator for cinematic innovation in the last few years. In “A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night” (2014), Ana Lily Amirpour reimagines the vampire myth as a Persian punk fairytale with black-and-white imagery that blends German expressionism and traditional Iranian shadow play traditions. In parallel, Manijeh Hekmat captured the restless energy of a generation caught between tradition and rebellion in her film “Bandar Band” (2020), about an all-female rock band.

These films exist in a state of cultural hybridity, their Farsi dialogue often subtitled for global audiences who may never understand the full weight of their references.

Behind the veneer of state-controlled media, Iranian cinema has fractured into multiple realities, each adapting to censorship in radically different ways. On the surface, government-approved films continue production, but even sanctioned productions like “Hit the Road” (2021), a road movie ostensibly about family, now resonate with a multitude of subtexts. Nervous laughter at police stops. Illicit Western songs on smuggled tapes. The camera catches unscrubbed graffiti overlooked by censors. As The Guardian noted in their review, these films have mastered “the art of speaking without speaking,” using every permissible frame to convey what cannot be said outright.

It has been reported that a clandestine film movement has emerged that uses encrypted apps and mobile screenings to evade authorities. Directors have abandoned traditional distribution entirely. The New York Times documented in 2023 how directors share works via Telegram’s disappearing channels. Screenings occur in constantly shifting locations: a private apartment one night, a repurposed warehouse the next, with audiences instructed to arrive in staggered groups and surrender their phones at the door. When authorities raided an underground cinema collective in Tehran last year, they found projection equipment but no films; the works existed only as encrypted files scattered across burner phones.

Meanwhile, exiled filmmakers and tech-savvy artists are pioneering uncensorable cinema by deploying Web3 tools to preserve banned works. “The Artist’s Garden” (2023), minted as an NFT film, was highlighted by The Hollywood Reporter as "the first major Iranian work to use blockchain to resist erasure". Decentralized platforms like IPFS host pirated copies of censored films, as analyzed in Wired’s 2023 feature on digital dissent.

By Alpine Rockhead

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NEXT TIME YOU WANT TO GET ANGRY AT SOMETHING SAIF SAID, DOUBLE CHECK THAT SOMEONE ON THAT LIST SAID IT BEFORE YOU START WHINING.

*(And if you think your name is missing from the list, contribute something and put some points on the board)

Contributor Index

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Ahnaf Abrar

Bio: Currently working on the angelic conclusion to Dhaka with Dhaka Mythos

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Art Director’s Notes

Thank you to SAIF for inviting me to experiment and trusting me with full creative freedom. Such carte blanche is rare and precious in publishing.

My approach to this issue was to treat each article as if it were a fresh simulation environment. In this mindset, every article visually resets with a new aesthetic language… as if the simulation reboots or updates. This strategy is meant to jolt the reader rather than lull them into passive flipping. Standard magazine design often traps readers in a scripted role-play, one aesthetic from start to finish. By intentionally shaking up the layout and style at each turn, we break the ‘LARPing NPC’ feeling in many publications and return agency to the reader.

These stylistic shifts also echo our content themes. Underneath the polished surface of print lies a world of acceleration, surveillance, and digital decay. To reflect this, one section might overload the page with static noise and glitched code as a reminder of constant surveillance; another might layer time-lapse imagery and looping motifs to evoke relentless acceleration. In yet another, textures crumple or pixels fracture into dust as a kind of visual corruption. These are not subtle backgrounds but critical accents: they conjure the eerie undercurrents of our era in the very form of the magazine.

Structurally, each article demanded its own logic. We avoided a single, uniform style guide. Some chapters adhere to a strict modular grid, while others deliberately shatter the grid entirely. The visual language shifts wildly: one spread might wear the stark blockiness of an old computer terminal with ASCII graphics and monospaced fonts, while the next feels cinematic, built from layered film stills or archival photographs. We treated English and Persian text not as separate tracks but as threads in the same tapestry, weaving bilingual layouts that generate new meanings. One page might pair a Persian headline with a monospaced code excerpt in English; another might overlay a Persian article on top of an English caption in a photo. In practice, some pages look like diagrams or code consoles, others like collaged archives. The medium itself flips… pixel and print, diagram and photo, Iranian calligraphy and Western typography all collide. Every visual element was fed through each section’s conceptual filter, so no two articles look or feel the same.

To be clear: the point here is not consistency. We aimed for transition. We scuttled continuity in favor of sharp, critical shifts. Every visual change is an argument of sorts… a brief dissonance that forces the eye to question what it sees. Consider it a series of epiphanies at every juncture… a sudden glitch, a crash of style, a wry twist in typography that might even turn a single word into an inside joke. The tone in these moments can be abrasive or even darkly humorous, because surprise is itself a tool. One page might confront you with aggressive abrasion, the next might smirk with subtle irony. In this ecosystem of fragments, the very act of inconsistency becomes our consistency: a deliberate narrative logic in chaos.

Even though some skeptics might dismiss it as gimmickry, the attempt was always an invitation. We want the reader to become aware of their own place in the system that surrounds them. By resetting the page’s visual language repeatedly, we hope you catch yourself glancing from style to style and question why. At that moment of recognition, you’re no longer a passive node… you’re observing the system. So now, at the end of this experiment, we turn the gaze back to you: what role do you play in this accelerating, surveilled world? Are you outside the simulation watching, or are you another node in it? What if the magazine isn’t just for you, but also about you? These are questions left to the reader to ponder.

Thank you again to SAIF for this opportunity and trust.

— Parham Ghalamdar, Designer / Illustrator / Art Director

"yeag, what he said"

- Stranger

Endnotes:

With the launch of this magazine we have attempted to take the first step towards a necessary full-scale lucid mapping which can aid the move beyond established boundaries.

Remember, always, that the goal is to flourish.

Even if disgusted by the people, your heart should be filled with hope and love for them, directly flowing out of your love for God.

Love, even if people are flawed.

Force them to be rescued.

Their essence shows a potential that has yet to show its most beautiful,intelligent, complex side.

Love the world in all its complexity.

There is no project without humanity.

There is no humanity without future.

There is no future without periphery.

The periphery is where the future exists,

thus the periphery is where humanity exists.

Leave behind your hopes for a past long gone,

for places that don’t exist anymore,

and look to where the future rises.

That which brought forth that past lies within.

That which brought forth that past lies on the periphery.

That which brought forth that past lies in the future.

SAIF loves you dearly.