

**A Caller to Collectivism Helplessly Unheard:**  
***by His Own***

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## Intro or (((Contents to be Released)))

**I am the natural writer of this paper.**

In this paper I will remind the reader that all research-based writing is like creating a **monster**.

It takes bits from different **bodies** of articles and **incorporates** them into a new **body**. In it, they are newly arranged utterly out of order but, antagonistic-relatively, in order and circumstantial-suitably organized at the same time. It is the reader's job to **digest** this new article. After he or she has done that, which is to say, having consumed a version of it liberally colored with his or her pre-constructed and **regulated** idea/ologies, maybe he or she will create a new **monstrosity** using the digested material. Nothing new is ever created (and I'm not the first one to say this). In all, it's all **shit** and shit on **horse**shit. You've **cultivated** it, but it's not yours yet. Once you've **eaten** and busted the **boundary** that exists between yourself and it, it's all yours. And while you are at it, you will never forget that I exist on the **power** rung right above your head, in your head, the one you are on.

Two-tier representation of ideas:

Scholarly reflections (other) & Diarrheic & Constipated  
*artistically licensed* manners of expression (personal)

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## A Caller to Collectivism Helplessly Unheard by His Own

*New Rule: From now on Earth Day really must be a year-round thing. And in honor of this Earth Day, starting Monday supermarket clerks must stop putting the big bottle of detergent with a handle on it in a plastic bag. I don't mean to tell you how to do your job, but you see that handle you just lifted the detergent with? I can use that same handle to carry the detergent to my car. And stop putting my liquor in a smaller paper sack before you put it in the big paper sack with my other stuff. What, are you afraid my groceries will think less of me if they see I've been drinking? Trust me, the broccoli doesn't care, and the condoms, they already know.*

--Maher, "Real Time with Bill Maher"

Above is an excerpt from the transcript to an episode of HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," a weekly one-hour show on current affairs hosted by comedian and political commentator Bill Maher. Originally aired live on April 20, 2007, the comic gives the viewer/listener a hodgepodge of grocery items in his soliloquy section of the show entitled, "New Rules." It is a *supermarket*, after all, and the list includes big plastic bottles of chemicals, alcoholic beverages, plastic bags and paper sacks, broccoli and rubber, and a bigger paper sack to fit them all in. What I would like to emphasize here is that this list of random items discloses a hierarchy of each item's differing imminence to its territoriality, or natural origin, and the artificial processes of production. This accentuates all the more the randomly-amassed nature of the consumption habits, eating, drinking, and reproducing habits of a representative America (the joke would be rendered unremarkable without the basis of this representative-ness). And across this hierarchy we witness a microscopic world of supermarket ecology based on (supposedly) Mr. Maher's own grocery-shopping habits, admittedly aided by the underlying process of certain childlike curiosity and its tendency towards anthropomorphic imaginations. This jumbled world inside the circumstantially degradable bags contains, as much as the visible and material items themselves, the larger and external society and its regulatory bodies of what Youngquist would call the "norm" that drives the concern for both bodily wellbeing and pleasure at the expense thereof. It reveals a previously invisible collectivist currency made indivisible by the workings of the individual and the larger capitalist economy, as well as the newfound American zeitgeist surrounding a terrestrial wellbeing, decidedly marked by the contextual discussion of global warming.

Like Frankenstein's monster, it seems that using the readymade to make to-be-made, a practice in deterritorialization principles always brings about an annihilation and a creation: the annihilation of what was previously ready-made and the creation of a new order of monstrosity. What arises from this in regards to us, sitting atop the food chain, knowing that it is our place? Deductive logic would tell us that we are no different: if we are what we eat, and what we eat is readymade, ready to be annihilated but made to create a new monster, then it follows that we must be monsters.

### The nature of Nature:

#### *Horse, Sex, Power, and Vocabulary*

*...it is argued that in properly training horses and dogs we do nothing that is incompatible with their nature: "The jump, like the complicated movements of dressage, is an imitation of nature."*

--Patton, "Language, Power, and the Training of Horses"

In dressage, the boundary between man and horse is broken. Is this simply another form of ownership and property made possible through a Lockean cultivation of Mother Nature through individual labor? It definitely seems to be more than that. The question begs for much more than that. That the *performative art* of dressage was invented in a way to accommodate for the horses' natural way of being imposes a group of presuppositions. There is a presupposition first of the Nagelian anthropomorphizing allowance for an unquestionable existence of animal phenomenology. Apparently most people are believers in animal subjectivity as well, especially in such mammals as horses, large-brained and strong; and such grandiose concepts as the ideals of majesty, beauty and even the spiritual often get attributed to them. A secondary presupposition, that humans can ever know what horses "like" to do by their nature or, to borrow again from Nagel, what it's "like" to be a horse, deals in another underlying assumption. Or does it? Provided that there is a humanly observable phenomenology of horse-ness, it seems quite probable that man can also detect its preferential tendencies, *naturally*.

The peanut butter also raises a set of interesting questions of the constitution of the "natural." As opposed to performative, these questions deal with the relationship between what is already made and what is to be made in the *culinary art* of cooking. Cooking is a process commenced by hunting and gathering of ingredients, mixing them through a set of rules governed largely by the human tongue, then letting the ingredients incorporate each other through heat. A dish is a new identity, an order, in which the territorial identity of each ingredient used is naturally relevant, but made irrelevant.

The peanut butter *as an* ingredient in cooking is a delicious yet somewhat jocular proposition in that peanut butter is itself made of further breakdown-able ingredients. One asks, first, what is it about peanut butter that made it even a passably adequate element in the final dish being prepared with it? And second, what if we lived in a bubble world where peanut butter is all but unheard of, untasted, unmade, would this necessarily prevent this dish from being created? This question does not necessarily point to a suggestion that the only elements in a recipe that would satisfy the status of *proper* ingredients are the kinds immediately found in "nature", such as the basil or mint leaves disarticulated from the stem and thrown straight into the melting pot. Not only is peanut butter not immediate in this sense, but, more significantly, it sits farther removed from its territoriality (or a set of territorialities for all of *its* given ingredients) as a finished product packaged in plastic bottles, shipped off from factory to family across and by multiple industry organizations, carried out of the final grocery store in a non-biodegradable plastic bag, then placed on a rack *above* the broccolis in the fridge.

The ultimate transgression, above the two aforementioned, of man towards the horse is the idea of training. There is a decidedly modernist sense in which training is the antithesis of what constitutes the natural in that, no matter how "natural" an action may ultimately be to a horse, a performance of the action in the pent-up superstructure of a training regime (and liberal economics of ticket sales), while not quite anthropomorphizing, is clearly anthropocentrism at its best. This act of violence (a literal example of this violence would easily be found in that towards circus elephants) is made possible by the fact that horses, as hybrids of domestic bodies of Oedipalization and public bodies of an anthropogenic worship—half-pets at most—are more distanced from man than, say, a dog (who, they say, is a best friend, all around). This displacement creates a dichotomized expectation in turn of a conquest through paternalistic (human is the condescending agent) love and corporal discipline, and an art-creation that

empowers the horse over man and his short, weak legs (horse condescends). The relations of power here traverse up and down the rungs of the ladder, aided by verbal and non-verbal vocabulary. A minor literature of horses, of sorts, the communicative hold the “*broken*”, deterritorialized horse has on its human partner is indicative, always, of a matter of life and death. “What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death” (Deleuze and Guattari 17). In a free-market economy this is also a matter of laboring life and death for the trainer. But for the horse, which deals with humans, every minute of its being is occupied with that condition of existence. Along with the Jew “dog” of postwar Prague and the African gorilla, examples of this socio-mechanical operation abound when and wherever there is a White man in charge of the imagined naturalization of hierarchies in a “natural” constitution.

### What I Am:

*I Am the Horse, the Rider, and the Peanut Butter and Basil Leaf in the “Melting Pot.”*

*Men consume women in a labor of love that turns the common matter of mother flesh into the proper body of the civil subject. What remains is woman as waste, a materia mater inadmissible to the circle of the social contract.*

--Youngquist, “Romantic Dietetics”

The fatherland—of my painfully political (-conflictive) father of the major literature tradition (everything is glimpsed glibly at and fleetingly past the fact of life and death; this is an incompatibility of life-and-death proportions)—provided me with the appropriations and properties of adulthood. Here I am the basil leaf that has been plucked from its natural origin and thrown into the melting pot. I am the peanut butter that is bordered by its own body, its own “Sand Dune” (Francis Bacon, 1983). The boundary-busting process that will bring about a new order of the machine, according to Timothy Leary, is achieved through chemical flows. **Turn on** the heat, **tune in** the elements, **drop out** and internalize, **cook** your brains. It is happening right here, on the pan, as I familiarize myself with the hunk of domesticated cattle engineered in a heartland fattening pen, turned inside out, seasoned with crystals from the sea (from some ocean), and sizzling on a frying pan (made somewhere far from here) with oil garnered from a certain seedy vegetable that used to grow on a tree branch (on a farm some other where). The beef is transformed through a permanent, chemically powered change, which will in turn change me, the eater, forever. And all the while my origins and territoriality are reduced to nothing but the “inscrutable”, “unspeakable” contents of my bowels, the byproducts of a monster.

Returning to *motherland* is returning to my bowels. Here, I exist on a plain of vocabularic currency that enables me to ride the flow of locality. In a sexual imagery of a riding of the horse, the boundary between man and horse gets busted. “...the better a dog (or a horse) is trained, ‘which is to say, the greater his ‘vocabulary’—the more mutual trust there is, the more dog [or horse] and human can rely on each other to behave responsibly’” (Patton 96). And at the same time I’m placed under the crotch of the locals having to play ball by their rules. Sometimes the zone of this currency shrinks to a point of non-significance. But whatever happens, I’m always aware of the overarching, “extraordinary privilege of responsibility.”

As Steven Baker himself has put it, the Deleuzean-Guattarian “sweeping up out of” the animal’s “holding-to-form” of its Oedipal identity is met with the theme of peanut butter’s

blended nature that annihilates an individual nut's boundary and assimilates it into a cohesive whole. As Bacon's work shows, an individual grain of sand is literally pointed at—pointed out, as it were—to emphasize this dichotomy of becoming-animal. If this postmodern body-politic represents a microscopic view of boundary disputes within the sand dune, the body's flowing out of its predetermined cube seems to suggest a “pack-mode” unpackaging of the body into another, still relevant, form of being, on a higher plain. It is becoming's innate desire to overflow and overcome the seal of its prepackaged identity, the peanut butter's coming out of its product-ivity to take its animal form, quite literally, by being consumed.

### **Fatherland's Formulation:**

#### ***Monstrosity***

Youngquist's conceptualizing of monstrosity, especially in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic Britain, stems largely from Locke's famed concept of property, the very same doctrine of justification and transfixion of white dominance over American nature and its territorial peoples, nomad savages relegated to nature by their height, skin tone, and manner of labor (or of being, as the matter of labor stood in the Lockean formula of man's natural rights). In his attempt to show how flesh acted as a medium through which power relations circulated, in cultural praxis, to (re)produce cultural norms in Britain of the era, Youngquist borrows from the Lockean tradition of ownership to account for the period's signature consolidation of the rhetoric of “the proper body,” or “a norm of embodiment.” With additional help from Macpherson's abstraction of liberal political theory as situating the individual as a proprietor of wealth and society as an alliance of those proprietors, and the idea of “exchangeability” inherent in Smithian division of labor, Youngquist triangularly arbitrates the process by which the proper body acquired “an almost universal applicability” (xviii). In short, the individual in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century British free-market economy became an “interchangeable” part of the liberal political machine, whose smooth operation was made possible through a strict regulation of the bodily norm. And whatever was deviant was declared monstrous and threatened the proper workings of the machine.

### **Motherland's Formulation:**

#### ***My Monstrosity of Shitty Proportions***

*May 7, 2006, Shinchon, Seoul, Sunny*

I clogged the toilet.

I took a really big shit today.

I had been constipated for the past few days.

*Night over December 24 and 25, 2006, Shinchon, Chungdam/Apgujeong, Seoul,  
Cloudy for both days*

On the bedside table rest strewn trashy leftovers from the neighborhood McDonald's, which has just recently renovated and gone twenty-four-seven, to my delight. I must have been craving a value meal (forgot which) on the way back home last morning. I finished it in bed just in time to pass out with processed meat and spud byproduct still in-jawed. It had hit the spot, obviously, and now, seven hours later, my pear-shaped, belly-love-handle-line doesn't look

too out of shape, to my pleasant surprise. That is to say, I can see my penis; but the brewer must still be in. It doesn't stare back at me any more, the useless type of piece of meat that it was the previous morning; three times now. Jesus Fucking Christ, I'm only twenty-two.

On the desk lies a number of sleek-looking, hand-sized, uniformly black vinyl packets of disposable toiletries. They come in a series, as if found on a hotel bathroom sink. Each is labeled as to its usage, in bold gray-white Ariel font, making for one hell of a modern looking package. All this makes what the labels actually say seem almost unthoughtful in their nonchalantly pedestrian everyday importance: "toothbrush," "body sponge," "ladies' set," and the ever-so-easily-overlooked "love set." Oh, I grabbed these and brought them home this morning... from the twilight zone.

The "pleasant surprise" in my narcissism turned out to be more pleasant than would have been under normal circumstances, given the actual circumstantial gluttony that I had partaken in during the course of the previous night: about a dozen regular-sized cups of scotch mixed with cheap local beer, two cans of soda to chase it all, followed by a large bowl of blowfish soup with a variety of side dishes of spicy pickled vegetables (all thought to be good chasers, to a wondrously effective degree), best this side of the Sea of Japan, had occupied my stomach before the cow sandwiched in sesame-sprinkled buns had invaded it. Omnivores of true nature, indeed.

Of course, the blowfish had knocked the alcohol right out of my system within minutes, at which point the closest hip hop club, with all its proud indiscriminatory youthful indulgences, came headed toward my way.

Scantily-clad girls of early, early Christmas morning, they are all so sexy. Slips of bodies moving under the lights and smoke, pretty faces artfully cut-up (so they tell me) and now without a face—but *I* see their fox-like beautiful faces, like Kat (Again, I Don't Care What Happened Here)—seemingly immanent to the fullest extent in their environment. I'm sure I am not. And they stare. They seem to know that I'm not. Do you wanna eat me? I ask. Omnivores of true nature, the cultural omnivores of modern East Asian metropolises. And I wonder how their dentist feels about all of this.

Vodka, a slice of lemon, Tequila, Sweden again, but no lemon this time, Mexico again, followed by Long Island Ice Tea and Gin on the rocks, no olives. The blowfish must still be working; I can't seem to get the alcohol flowing through to numb the cranial nerves. So I go buy a different type of fluid: a pack of the new 1-mg-tar Marlboros. Each cig comes with extra tobacco sandwiched *inside* the damn filter, for a "better tasting" light cigarette. The packaging is impeccably stylish, of course, with a couple of extra steps included in the opening procedure. But I do manage to get in a taxi with one of the older foxes later on. And off we ride... into the twilight zone.

Not exactly your Christmas morning at Grandma's—I mean, *my*—usual Christmas morning with the family Catholicly gathered at the base of what would be a poor excuse for a less-than-taxidermy of a tree and opening colorfully packaged stuff out of stuff out of stuff out...



**“The Restoration of Manhood”:**

***The African Gorilla, Teddy Bear, and a dose of Immigration Leading to Decadence***

The generation of gender, race, and class wars has been at the forefront of white male supremacy in America ever since the majority’s mental establishment of the “social ills” raised by the prospect of non-white immigration into the country in the teens and twenties. Termed *Teddy Bear Patriarchy* by Donna Haraway, the period observed a movement towards a racial identification of America under Theodore Roosevelt. This era is marked by White monopoly-holding corporate chairs of a booming capitalist economy—the founding fathers of today’s corporate empires—and social “mechanics” of the day facing an impending and not-entirely coincidental “nature movement” at its peak. In reading Haraway’s essay, one bears witness to the birth of civil wars declared by these men along the lines of race, gender, and class, made viable through the technology of taxidermy.

Carl Akeley, declared a genius taxidermist during his time owing to his innovative use of clay models to provide the structural basis for animal skins in his work, was also highly professed to be a “preservationist” of Africa’s infinite array of animal life. He was aided by the powerful white social (and ultimately propaganda) machine of monopolized capital and organizations, taking hunting trips to Africa with Roosevelt under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History. Akeley’s work sought after nature in Africa and presented it in the American city of New York, an act he and his contemporaries thought were unquestionably scientific, objective, and harmlessly preservative.

In Akeley’s dioramas “Most groups [of animal families] are made up of only a few animals, usually including a large and vigilant male, a female or two, and one baby.” This is a plain example of narrative selectivity inherent in the famed taxidermist’s handiworks, which imperialistically imposes a naturalization of hierarchy on the viewer through the construction of “a natural division of function” and a “sexual specialization of function” (Haraway 242). Furthermore, the museum itself, as a bastion of “a complex pattern of domination... ascribed to technology,” mass-produces, propagandizes, and perpetuates the ideological fairy tale of the natural “fact” (277). Accordingly, the mechanics of this “meaning-machine,” the monopoly-holders, were as much propaganda-makers of race, gender, and class wars as they were corporate chairs, if more visibly. They were hunters, *not* preservers, of Africa’s ecological identity, dominating it and ultimately rendering it asunder (both literally and figuratively) for the self-concerned purpose of authoring a tale of promised return to natural order—white male supremacy in America, surely to correct the pertinent decadence of the city, of manhood, and White America caused by the emergent non-European immigration (that the reproduction rate of minority women far exceed that of white women was crystal clear) and its further subversive effects on the traditional society’s religion, politics, ethnic makeup, and historical narrative. The dioramic presentations displayed are really *representations* at best and, as Haraway calls them, constitutive of a “retooling” of nature.

Contemporary examples of narrative manipulation through selective discourse are not exactly few and far in between. Do we see any similarities echoed here to the industrial enterprises of modern-day America? The film industry immediately comes to mind. Perhaps truer in its heyday of vertical integration in the ’30s and ’40s, Hollywood’s perpetual adherence to the throwback theme of the strong white male lead is resolutely placed in the subliminal America to this day.

## Back to America:

### *Annihilation of Immigrant Identity through Assimilation*

*It is to be lamented, then, very much to be lamented, that we have suffered so many of the Indian tribes already to extinguish, without our having previously collected and deposited in the records of literature, the general rudiments at least of the languages they spoke. Were vocabularies formed of all the languages spoken in North and South America, preserving their appellations of the most common objects in nature, of those which must be present to every nation barbarous or civilised, with the inflections of their nouns and verbs, their principles of regimen and concord, and these deposited in all the public libraries, it would furnish opportunities to those skilled in the languages of the old world to compare them with these, now, or at a future time, and hence to construct the best evidence of the derivation of this part of the human race.*

--Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*

*The things that they [Indians] disliked most, I think, were to have their long hair cut, to give up wearing their blankets, and to cease smoking; but no white American ever thinks that any other race is wholly civilized until he wears the white man's clothes, eats the white man's food, speaks the white man's language, and professes the white man's religion.*

--Washington, *Up from Slavery*

In the summer of 1879 Booker T. Washington is called on by General Armstrong for the second time to be an educator at the Hampton Institute. In what he calls the "period in the progress of our race," Washington happens to stay with seventy-five Indian youths on his way to the institute and makes the above observation about the Indian race. The rather congenial interactions of the two races brought together by the whites, the blacks and the "reds," are noted here. And even though the Indians saw themselves as above the other races, according to the author, they were placed on the bottommost rung on the racial ladder in practical matters, as the whites and even the black slaves were put in charge of educating them the ways of civility. Washington also notes that the blacks were much more easily to put themselves to that task than the whites. The whites desire control and demand assimilation into the white culture from the other races; but they are all the while the least willing to do the actual work. And as such, this passage serves as one of Washington's rarer looks at the white race as anything less than positive.

Is there such a thing that "characterizes an American" to any degree of practical and independent relevance that transcends the transient tides of time and space? There are, of course, those foundational American institutions that provide, among other things, the basic canon for any decent high school Government class. A list of these would include the three branches of American government, the United States Constitution, the upholding of liberty and individuality, the doctrine of the separation of church and state, the idea of the "melting pot," black slavery, and Vietnam. There are yet others, more accessible, like baseball and MTV. These institutions and their effects exist in the American mind as symbolic representations of what America means and constitute a collective fabric of the American psyche. It is essential to note, however, that the relative importance of each of these conditions, as it were, of American identity depends largely on the preferential tendencies (let alone education level) of the individual. In addition, the effects of these institutions cannot be further from set in stone; they are affected, as much as they affect, by the societal tides contingent on the very "preferential tendencies" of the zeitgeist. This is precisely why the task of formulating an ideal American to measure the American-ness of

immigrants is not just difficult, but downright impossible. Hence, I propose a referential shift in the methodology of measuring how American someone is: from an external judicial (often *prejudicial*) standpoint to an immediate, personal view from within.

The effects of immigration on immigrants can be viewed and studied in largely two ways: it can be seen in a socio-political light, in the interplays between a group of people and the governing powers in which, often, the governing power becomes representative of another, opposing, group of people. In this angle of study, the traditional, *external* view of the minority struggle is usually predominant. Alternatively, one could stab at the issue in a more personal light. In this perspective, a protagonist, superficially representative of one identity, finds him/herself standing opposed to that identity in different, unexpected ways. True of literature of Kafkan tradition, the conflict between assimilation and identity becomes agonizingly *internalized*.

### **Afterthoughts:**

#### ***A Misguided Attempt at an Ending***

I recall a rather remarkable question asked on a prep test or other during one of my high school years. The question showed two pictures, one sketch of a broken raw egg, shell debris scattered about and its liquid contents spilled out. The other hand-drawn picture was that of a fried egg, an egg being fried. Under these a caption read: “Which picture represents a physical change? Which represents a chemical change?” This, to me, was an altogether arresting problem in the simple ingenuity of its setup. So simple, in fact, the premise alone seemed to welcome the annihilation of its purpose; it told as much as it asked, with a decidedly Platonic way about it, dragging out of us what it already knew we already knew. Was the (correct) answer derivable by a culmination of successful secondary education in Chemistry—a validation of which the question-makers obviously sought, or was it just common sense? Sure, some students must have gotten this simple question wrong, but when you go down far enough, we were all right.

In the opening lines of the introduction to his book, *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism*, Paul Youngquist tells us, with a quote from *Frankenstein*, “Monstrosities haunt the human. ‘A flash of lightening illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity’ (Shelley 71). The words are Victor Frankenstein’s, and they register the horror monstrosities can inspire” (Youngquist, xi). It is interesting yet clear that Shelley, through Frankenstein, would like us to believe that hideousness “belongs to humanity.” It is not the monster that is the only object of its own hideousness, but it is simply more so in comparison to the seeing subject—the human, the non-monster, who assigns it its name from an inherently anthropocentric, self-centered, perspective, and whose own image of him/herself naturally evades such a (de)humanizing assignment. The quote reflects a reflexive point of view, one that likens our link to the monster to our own relationship to animality and ourselves.

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