

The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.<sup>1</sup>

It is as if we are living in a geometry of absent histories, as though every idea is a beginning and end of thought.<sup>2</sup>

We are defutured<sup>3</sup> by the unnecessary killing of ongoingness.<sup>4</sup>

Are we paying for our happiness by renouncing any understanding of what we are living through?<sup>5</sup>

1—Milan Kundera. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979) pt. 1, ch. 2

2—Eduardo Kohn. *How Forests Think* (2013) pg. 35, pg. 62

3—Arturo Escobar. *Designs for the Pluriverse* (2018) pg. 117

4—Donna Haraway. *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) pg. 1

5—Italo Calvino. *The Complete Cosmicomics: The Origin of Birds* (2015 [Mariner US edition]) pg. 172

When I initially received McKenzie Wark's *Capital is Dead* as a holiday gift from my dear Tess, I was becoming a bit of a reactionary Leninist socialist, something that I have since become wary of. Dimly lit classes on dialectical materialism taught by the Party for Socialist Liberation gave way to (justifiably) tearful arguments about sanctions in Venezuela and acute symptoms of the American prison industrial complex in NYC, and I was driven to a point of so much anger and hostility to my more softly-worded loved ones that my blind support for a global fight towards the abolition of the state eventually burst.

Here though, I want to say, a lot of Wark's writing is dense as hell for me and I probably misinterpreted a lot of what they said. I hope that, if you decide to wade through all of their writing, you won't be deterred. Just get through it, let it wash over you and leave with you what it will. If someone is hell-bent on misinterpreting something they'll do it even better if they fully understand it, so I hope that even if you don't fully understand it, you can take away something positive, assuming your intentions are good. Call it vulgarization.

What has stuck is the idea that, if you're willing to accept the definition of the global order in terms of class antagonism, we are in a new system that cannot be defined along the dualisms post-this, or that-capital. Interpreting society as one shaped by information control is liberating, albeit terrifying. Pairing this with an understanding of how global battles along ideological lines shape innovations in industry was essential for shaping how I criticized my own work in big tech (I naively viewed myself as a merry prankster, a cynical saboteur). It has taught me to try and view my concerns about the world in a continuum: to not be

blinded in the manner Björk describes, through a lost understanding of the past's lessons for the world.

Wark harps on this idea of *détournement*, which I view as an analog of Donna Haraway's "SF," an endlessly customizable acronym-as-homage to the power of science fiction, or fabulation. Haraway states the importance of not rejecting our current situation when we try to depart from it, because simply casting away what we are in, and what we have learned in the process, could lead to a repetition of the same mistakes (it's not so new a moral lesson, but read *Staying with the Trouble* and it will have a polished shine). Wark's *détournement* is similar as it requires an assembly of past materials, past knowledges, to stage a departure point for imagining an alternate, reparative course of "if only..." history.

This spurred my interest in assembling the document I'm titling *A Century of Sustainability*, a collage of the changing, or not so changing, ways designers and activists have imagined the public's relationship with material and collective sustainability. It begs the question "are we blinded by the sales pitch of new materials?" Along with "how radical are we? How radical should we be? and how?"

Finally, Borges' classic *Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, gives us a speculative fabulation of how past falsifications can become accepted truths, even at the scale on which Wark's Vectorialism operates, with a crafted material reality more comprehensive than Colin Ward and William Morris could have dreamed of, existing in an anachronistic space that looks both forwards and backwards, just as Björk would like.