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A Little Zapffe

26 Tuesday, Jun 2018

Posted by [james in Uncategorized](#)

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"Anchors Aweigh my boy, anchors Aweigh," Navy Fighting Song

The brutality of competitive gradient reduction – "We're spreading peace and democracy."

Zapffe's "The Last Messiah" is full of sage observations. I like the paragraphs regarding "anchoring" especially.

https://philosophynow.com/issues/45/The_Last_Messiah

The mechanism of *anchoring* also serves from early childhood; parents, home, the street become matters of *course* to the child and give it the assurance. This sphere of experience is the first, and perhaps the happiest, protection against the cosmos that we ever get to know in life, a fact that doubtless also explains the much debated "familial bonding": the question of whether that is sexually tainted too is unimportant here. When the child later discovers that those fixed points are an "arbitrary" and "ephemeral" as any others, it has a crisis of confusion and anxiety and promptly looks around for another anchoring. "In Autumn, I will attend middle school." If the substitution somehow fails, then the crisis may take a fatal course, or else what I'll call an *anchoring* *grain* occurs: One clings to the dead values, concealing as well as protecting itself from the transition to new anchorings.

Anchoring might be characterized as a fixation of points within, or construction of walls around, the liquid fray of consciousness. Though typically unconscious, it may also be fully conscious (one "adopts a goal": Publicly useful anchorings are met with sympathy, he who sacrifices himself "for" his anchoring (the firm, the cause) is admired. He has established a mighty bulwark against the dissolution of life, and others are by suggestion gaining from his strength. In a brutalized form, as a deliberate action, it is found among "decadent" playboys ("one should get married in time, and then the constraints will come of themselves.") Thus one establishes a necessity in one's life, exposing oneself to an obvious evil from one's point of view, but a soothing of the nerves, as a high-walled container for a sensibility to life that has been growing increasingly crude. Then presents, in Hjalmar Ekdal and Molsk, two flowering cases ("living lies"): there is no difference between their anchoring and that of the pillars of society except for the practical-economic unproductiveness of the former.

Any culture is a great, rounded system of anchorings, built on cultural firmaments, the basic cultural ideas. The average person makes do with the collective firmaments, the personality is holding for himself, the person of character has finished his construction, more or less grounded on the unbridled, collective main firmaments (God, the Church, the State, morality, fate, the law of life, the people, the future). The closer to main firmaments a certain carrying element is, the more perilous it is to touch. Here a fixed protection is normally established by means of penal codes and threats of prosecution (imprisonment, censorship, the Conservative approach to life).

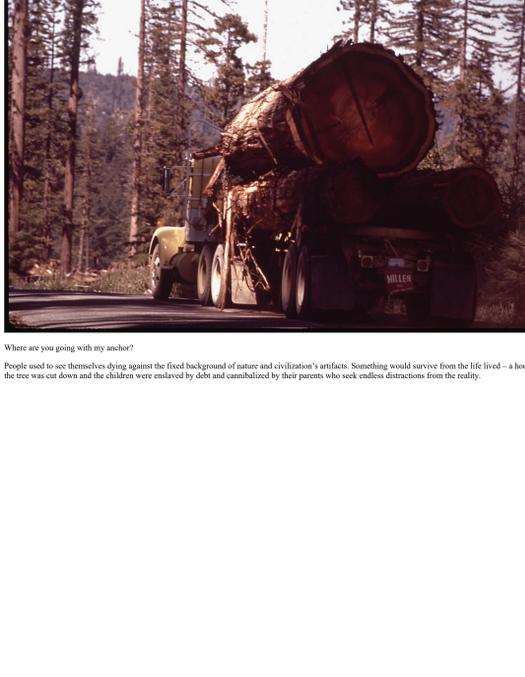
The carrying capacity of each segment either depends on its fictitious nature having not been seen through yet, or else on its being recognised as necessary anyway. Hence the religious education in schools, which even atheists support because they know no other way to bring children into a useful way of response.

Whenever people realise the futility/inessence or redundancy of the segments, they will strive to replace them with new ones ("the limited duration of Truths") – and whence flows all the spiritual and cultural strife which, along with economic competition, forms the dynamic content of world history.

The craving for material goods (power) is not so much due to the direct pleasures of wealth, as none can be seated on more than one chair or eat himself more than sated. Rather, the value of a fortune to life consists in the rich opportunities for anchoring and distraction offered to the owner.

Both for collective and individual anchorings it holds that when a segment breaks, there is a crisis that is graver the closer that segment to main firmaments. Within the inner circles, sheltered by the outer ramparts, such crises are daily and fairly painfree occurrences ("disappointments"), even a playing with anchoring values is here seen (witiness, jargon, alcohol). But during such play one may accidentally rip a hole right to the bottom, and the crisis is instantly transformed from euphoric to macabre. The dread of being states us in the eye, and in a deadly push we perceive how the minds are dangling in threads of their own spinning, and that a hell is lurking underneath." Zapffe. The Last Messiah

I can see why people bug five-hundred year old trees now, it gives them an anchor, an unchanging aspect in life, at least in the brief lifespan of the human. The often repeated slogan, "spreading peace and democracy" is another anchor which obfuscates reality as it covers for capitalist expansion to eliminate gradients in foreign lands. So too is the idea of ever enduring "nature" which is being put to its death now by the "good man" that somehow fails to see any evil in his actions. Another convenient fiction protects him from reality, "God made the Earth for us to enjoy." And an afterlife somewhere in the dark, cold expanses of space is the final anchor grasped by all, the heavenly realm. A place where all of the deprivations and disintegrations experienced by corporeal mankind can never reach. A place without gradients and where thermodynamic imperatives do not exist for its ephemeral inhabitants. Sadly, this place too, a creation of thermodynamic forces in the brain, eventually ceases to exist in tandem with the life of its possessor. But finally, in death, the human form or conduit finds demand rest from the demands put upon it by the unrelenting Universe that uses the body for its own singular purpose of gradient reduction.



Where are you going with my anchor?

People used to see themselves dying against the fixed background of nature and civilization's artifacts. Something would survive from the life lived – a house, the venerable old tree, children walking in the footsteps, a tombstone in the cemetery. But the house will lose the system that supports it, the tree was cut down and the children were enslaved by debt and cannibalized by their parents who seek endless distractions from the reality.

Dissipative structures competing for territory and resources are released from the eternal battleground of earth.

Some people anchor themselves with gold, the least that resists entropic decay, always exchangeable for some amount of energy and resources needed by the human condition. It will likely outlast by millennia all of those consumable items for which it was exchanged when the fossil fuel gradient reduction was occurring. Sparkly diamonds, at least before they were man-made, were equally representative of permanence. But alas, no amount of gold or diamonds will change the final destination of mankind as diamonds and gold are traded back and forth in the process of gradient reduction.

Gold, it lasts forever, but won't always be worth something.

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26 thoughts on "A Little Zapffe"

1. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 26, 2018 at 12:56 pm
LMAO – "Dissipative structures competing for territory and resources are released from the eternal battleground of earth."
True freedom at last.
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 11:10 am
Yes, gone back from where they came. No longer caught-up in a dissipative structure's imperative of getting energy. Much of the grief comes from being a social being and all the lying, cheating, stealing, hierarchy climbing, enslaving and so on that one has to put up with. But most are running on automatic and would never consider limiting their efforts in the human context.
[Reply](#)

2. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 26, 2018 at 11:20 pm
I learned of Zapffe, by reading Thomas Ligotti's "The Conspiracy Against the Human Race". Ligotti dedicated the book "To the memory of Peter Wesel Zapffe".
"This is the great lesson the depressive learns: Nothing in the world is inherently compelling. Whatever may be really "out there," cannot project itself as an affective experience. It is all a vastness affair with only a chemical pretense. Nothing is either good or bad, desirable or undesirable, or anything like except that it is made by laborer/inside us producing the emotions on which we live. And to live on our emotions is to live arbitrarily, inaccurately – imparting meaning to what has none of its own. For what other way is there to live? Without the ever-clanking machinery of emotion, everything would come to a standstill. There would be nothing to do, nowhere to go, nothing to be, and no one to know. The alternatives are clear: to live faithfully as depressive, or as individuals who know what is known to the depressive – their craving for values "not of this earth" – that depressive meanings place their consciousness must undergo every day."
— Thomas Ligotti, *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race* "

I borrowed the book from the public library – twice. Great book. I had a few chuckles wondering if the librarian knew what she was ordering. Not sure what section they shelf it in, but if it was up to me, I would put it in 'self help' section. Squeeze it in between an Oprah and Tony Robbins.
"So they trust in the deity of the Old Testament, an incantation dotard who called Himself and the universe with his corruption, a low-budget divinity passing itself off as the genuine article. (Ask the Gnostics.) They trust in Jesus Christ, a historical cipher stitched together like Frankenstein's monster out of parts robbed from the graves of messiahs dead and buried – a savior on a sick. They trust in the virgin-jumping Allah and his Drum Major Mohammed, a prophet-concubinate who pioneered a new genre of humbergory for an emerging market of believers that was not being adequately served by existing religious products. They trust in anything that authenticates their importance as persons, tribes, societies, and particularly as a species that will endure in this world and perhaps in an afterworld that may be uncertain in its reality and unclear in its layout, but which unites their craving for values "not of this earth" – that depressive meanings place their consciousness must undergo every day."
— Thomas Ligotti, *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race*

Shedding it in the humor section works for me too.
[Reply](#)

3. [dolph said:](#)
June 26, 2018 at 6:42 pm
But I've got weed, heroin, porn, hollywood movies, professional sports, and the federal reserve providing an infinite amount of confetti dollars for me to chase.
I don't need to think about any of this.
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 11:16 am
Thinking is painful sometimes and not very rewarding. The EROEI on much thinking is negative and that's why the limbic system makes you think about repeating behaviors that result in easily attained rewards. Most people don't think about anything but how they're going to get more money, weed, porn, heroin, Hollywood movies, and professional sports. In the end, the cancer comes and the glee with hardly a thought about what it's doing.
[Reply](#)

4. [dave said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 6:44 am
good stuff, zapffe and ligotti.
[Reply](#)

[dave said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 6:46 am
i just wish that i could have gotten "anchored" and stayed anchored. woulda made life so much easier, at least that's the story i like to tell myself.
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 11:17 am
It's hard to keep an anchor in a rolling sea.
[Reply](#)

6. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 27, 2018 at 12:49 pm
A vaccination might be in order.
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Hepatitis spikes and isolation largest outbreak of hepatitis A in the state's history. But Michigan is hardly unique: In nearby Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky — and as far away as San Diego, Salt Lake City, and New York City — the number of hepatitis A cases is spiking sharply.

"Hepatitis A is a curable but highly contagious disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus or HAV, which is found in human excrement. You can contract the virus through contaminated food or water, unprotected sexual intercourse — particularly a combination of anal and oral sex — and contact with an infected person, or merely touching a doorknob after someone infected with the virus. It can take as long as 50 days for people infected with the disease to develop symptoms, and in rare cases it is fatal. The most effective safeguard is a vaccine, and public health experts recommend frequent hand washing with soap and warm water before cooking, or after using the bathroom, or changing a diaper."
<https://www.freemountain.com/hepatitis-spikes-as-poverty-and-isolation-rip-the-homeless-and-forgotten-2474762/>

If you can get it from a doorknob then you can get it from the handle of a shopping cart too.

What are the chances the vaccine just won't be available someday?

Drug shortages pose a public health crisis in the US
June 28, 2018
<https://theconversation.com/drug-shortages-poses-a-public-health-crisis-in-the-us-98295>

From Fentanyl to antibiotics, report finds Canada's drug shortages could be getting worse
Researchers find 1 in 10 drugs sold in Canada are back-ordered or discontinued
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canada-drug-shortage-report-1.497574>

[james said:](#)
June 28, 2018 at 11:16 am
The school system made the vaccine mandatory before enrollment in school next year in Kentucky. Speaking of infectious pestilence, I picked-up Lyme disease last week from a tick in my yard and developed the typical bullseye migrans rash. I'm taking Doxycycline now. It's a jungle out there.
[Reply](#)

7. [james said:](#)
June 28, 2018 at 10:56 pm
Each day I a dissipative structure, am bathed in heat and light from an incompletely burned bit of fuel left over from the big bang – the sun. The planet earth is also a speck of incompletely combusted fuel polished into an orb by gravitational forces. It is on the surface of this planet that life weds of matter temporarily defied the thermodynamic will of the Universe by capturing radiant heat and assembling molecules into the complexity of tissues and organisms. A biological gradient is created and the Universe tries different ways to burn it through new forms of biological life or species. In turn, these new form of biological life form their own gradients of trapped fuel and the Universe once again finds a way to burn it or digest it with a new tools evolved form of life. This goes on until there are millions of species, each a gradient and a consumer of gradients.

There is another gradient of fuel buried in the ground, mostly inaccessible and unusable by the biological forms – the fossil fuel gradient. The Universe needed new tools to combat the trapped fuel, the old biological forms were incapable. Hmm. What to do. "I will take one of the biological organisms," the Universe says, "and turn it into an RNA, a maker of tools. Like I did many billions of years ago with the molecules. A new form of life. It will inhabit technological cells, produce new, large tools capable of getting at the fossil fuels and many other things and finally I will get rid of the gradients." The evolutionary experiment was wildly successful and the new life form began destroying gradients and releasing trapped energy everywhere. It burned the fossil fuels of course, but also burned most of the previously long-lived biological gradients. It grew and grew and fuel went into the cells and heat, waste and more tools came out. Finally new technological gradients began to form and the Universe sought a way to release it as trillions and trillions evolved and warfare began. Instead of Lotka-Volterra population dynamics there came to be a thing called MAD or mutually assured destruction so that the technological forms could not successfully be reduced. Instead, the technological life kept eating the various gradients and continued trying to find a way to defeat other national entities, but this was only partially successful. Eventually, following their initial bloom of success, their metabolisms began to collapse for lack of nourishment and their RNA could no longer function under austere and toxic conditions.

Humans thought their technological growth and complexity would lead to even more fantastic creations from gradients, that everything in their wildest imagination would be possible – exponential complexity to infinity. Their dreams and their bodies vanished when the gradients were exhausted.
[Reply](#)

[Apneeman said:](#)
June 28, 2018 at 1:17 pm
"I, a dissipative structure"
Know thyself.
[Reply](#)

[Rob Mickaraki said:](#)
June 28, 2018 at 10:56 pm
"I will take one of the biological organisms," the Universe says, "and turn it into an RNA, a maker of tools. Like I did many billions of years ago with the molecules. A new form of life. It will inhabit technological cells, produce new, large tools capable of getting at the fossil fuels and many other things and finally I will get rid of the gradients."
"To accomplish this the RNA will need a uniquely powerful brain. But this brain will have the power to understand it's mortality and will become depressed and ineffective; and it will conserve the gradient when it understands the suicide mission I have assigned it; so I must program the RNA's brain to deny reality."
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
June 29, 2018 at 9:23 am
Yes, forget everything that is unrewarding or otherwise drags you down. This world is about finding a juicy gradient and feeding the cells.
[Reply](#)

8. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 28, 2018 at 1:15 pm
Zapffe, Ciaran, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ligotti, Benatar fictionalized.
Rest Culture – Philosophy of Pessimism (True Detective)
2017-2018 **Views – 945**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xN2x67JtA4>

[james said:](#)
June 29, 2018 at 9:49 am
And our path towards termination will never stop since the human brain will seek rewards until there are no rewards to be had. We won't come to our senses because we've never had any senses.
[Reply](#)

[Apneeman said:](#)
June 29, 2018 at 11:49 am
Yabut technology and the internet will set us free.
[Reply](#)

A new data breach may have exposed personal information of almost every American adult
Experts data leak reportedly contained detailed information on 230 million consumers

"Wired reported Wednesday that Exactis, a Palm Coast, Fla.-based marketing and data-aggregation company, had exposed a database containing almost 2 terabytes of data, containing nearly 340 million individual records, on a public server. That included records of 230 million consumers and 110 million businesses.
"It seems like this is a database with pretty much every U.S. citizen in it," security researcher Vinny Troia, who discovered the breach earlier this month, told Wired. "I don't know where the data is coming from, but it's one of the most comprehensive collections I've ever seen." he said."
https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/story/3-new-data-breach-may-have-exposed-personal-information-of-almost-every-american-adult-2018-06-27?mode=story_top_story

[Apneeman said:](#)
June 29, 2018 at 4:37 pm
"Equilibrium is Death"
Energy, Entropy, Evolution and the Paradox of Life's Complexity
"Without gradients to be reduced nothing of interest could or would ever arise in the first place."
<http://www.inergaphysics.com/issue00.html>

[james said:](#)
June 30, 2018 at 9:26 am
You could also create a title called "Energy, Entropy, Evolution and the Paradox of Technological Civilization's Complexity". Same thing, different scale. Unfortunately we're quickly headed for equilibrium.
[Reply](#)

[mad_hobud said:](#)
July 1, 2018 at 12:47 am
Very interesting case of denial in action.
Looks like Wilber is so desperate to find "solid" or any other "spiritual device", that he is ready to dissipate a lot of energy in writing about that :). And contradict most of science we know :D.
So many so wrong there... I wonder if anybody would agree that "universe is winding up" :). And what will power "Enns in the Cosmos", when our nice star is gone...
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
July 1, 2018 at 1:51 pm
The illusion of progress.
[Reply](#)

11. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 30, 2018 at 1:38 pm
Believing in Reason is Childish – John Gray
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VZMIABzSRU>

[dave said:](#)
July 1, 2018 at 7:19 am
john gray is a good read.
[Reply](#)

[james said:](#)
July 1, 2018 at 1:52 pm
My next year's title was inspired by this.
[Reply](#)

12. [Apneeman said:](#)
June 30, 2018 at 5:11 pm
The Natural Science Underlying Big History
"A wealth of observational data supports the hypothesis that increasingly complex systems evolve unceasingly, uncearingly, and unpredictably from big bang to humankind. These are global history greatly extended, big history with a scientific basis, and natural history broadly portrayed across the 14 billion years of time. Human beings and our cultural inventions are not special, unique, or apart from Nature; rather, we are an integral part of a universal evolutionary process connecting all such complex systems throughout space and time."
<https://www.nachi.alm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4086236/>

[james said:](#)
July 1, 2018 at 1:21 pm
This kind of article makes me feel completely deficient. I'm think I'll learn more than a few things from this one.
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