

Maximalism and the Destruction of the Planet.

*Multitudes of angry
overwhelmed consumption will
bring multitudes of sexy trash
riots.*

Any moment now.

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Preface:

A building. The door is broken and held by a bouw-stempel¹ to keep out anyone who we don't want inside. The building is trash and it is inhabited by trash. The walls are crumbled with egg shells crashed into an unrecognizable entity. The blood-shot eyes, the energy cans, the butts of cigarettes, too many to believe it is already 2018. We are many. We live with many humans, humans and rats.

The rooms when we found them were filled up to the ceiling with garbage and sheets of stained linen. The ambition was to empty out the empty building. At any point we got close to it, it was already filled up to the ceiling with more trash, trash that we had brought in, collected from the street. The streets of Amsterdam are a gallery exhibiting many different pieces of unwanted trash that don't quite look like trash. Everyday people decide to get rid off something to make space for another something. Our task was to collect all of that trash and make it into something. Our task was to gather people and things into that house. The squatted house became so filled that it was hard to navigate in it. Eventually the electricity in the building got disconnected, many people moved out, the rats also packed up and left (although never quite completely). All that was left were mountains of things. Everywhere shadows of all the people that had lived in the house, that had passed out intoxicated on the couches, that had left clothes or bikes in a forgotten corner, amongst the multiplying forgotten corners. Biggest of all shadows, the ambition of living together sanely. That chaotic multitude of shit overtook us, it looked like. The unsettling amount of so called garbage that every week gets delivered to the streets as if it had never been used before. Couches, chairs, paintings in perfect condition. Where is it all marching towards? Overwhelming. The physical strength to carry all of the things, the amount of space they take, the amount of energy to make them, the amount of kilometers they have travelled and will travel. And then us. Dirty kids crawling through the streets of Amsterdam collecting this stuff and shouting. Together in one space, trying to make stuff work, trying as hard as possible to not buy stuff and to find everything we needed because someone else didn't need it anymore.

Well well well. It's an unspecified day of 2020. All humans in Europe are encouraged to not gather. The production of disposable products looks like it has never seen a more prosperous time of existence. We are swimming in seas of plastic at a safe 1.5 m distance from anything that might breathe or dream. On the shoulders of the present that older generations have delivered to us, the future looks like it is going to be shit. Too many things, too much plastic, too much trash, distance amongst humans, fear in the children, stress, racism, sexism, disease and fire. What happened to all that was

¹ construction pole

promised by the queer environmentalists? By the post marxist socialists? By the people who sang stick it to the man? By the anarchists and the fucking nomads that got killed by the white settlers? The feeling is anger, desolation, hopelessness. All of this, maximally everyday.



The introduction.

Abundance is a most accurate word to explain human experience. Prosperous chaos. It's all so much, we can't compute. We experience the muchness of it all and the despair of it all. An orgy of concepts and stimulations. Within us, a great tendency for muchness.

If life is already too much in itself, too much to truly organise and categorise all the possibilities, when we go beyond that initial state of struggle with multitudes, when we reach a level where it is too too much, what happens then. Hereby my discourse on maximalism.

My focus will be on the phenomenology of maximalism in art, the economy and family structures. But really the point is, how can the quantitative change (from minimal to maximal or vice versa) of these three realities influence the environment?

² Sigmar Polke, Untitled

Yes because there is a problem, an environmental problem which is that capitalism is making us produce, grow, generate more things and more babies at an unbelievable, accelerating, multiplying pace, with no consideration to anything else than profit augmentation. Never been seen before. We eat, we stuff our stressed faces as we regurgitate and defecate all over the place.

But we do want more.

Aeeyy we do want more! As a dog wants more sludge in its bowl, we want more of it all. Tricked, we satisfy our unquenchable mania in luxurious mind-washing supermarkets and online shopping, and ooh we rigorously make sure that whatever desire (even social cravings) gets satisfied, some powerful butt-hole is making money out of it. Aaand I guess it wouldn't matter. I guess it wouldn't. If it wouldn't be that California is burning and the skies have turned red. I guess it wouldn't matter if the ices weren't melting and the seas weren't getting maximally and radioactively populated by plastic. The coral reef is dead and we all say "aey mate, not much to do about it". What a horrid infestation of humans. A planet of humans where we all eat and defecate but, Jesus, it got ugly. Our shit is so stinky whales die because of it.

But hey let's do some more online shopping for the day.

You know, no, I won't do it all the same. It seems to me that there's nothing more to do because protests don't work and anarchists are old-school. And now we just cough and say boo-hoo. So if they ask me do you want more? I shall scream YES! OH PLEASE GIVE ME MORE! I do want more, but more sex, that is, kind sir, or whatever you might be hiding under that skirt. I want more lovers and less packages of unrecyclable bullshit, I shall scream as I slide out of my clothes. Sex is environmentally friendly, and we can not have enough of it. And these god-damn advertisements and products that are trying so so badly to disguise themselves as something sexy, oh they are not even close to being as good as the real deal. Sex. And what's better than sex? Art of course. No, of course not. Love, love is better than sex, so give me more of that. I think, and I'm going to explain it, that if we had more sex, more lovers, gave more importance to family and community, if all of this became more *maximalist*, then the economy and mass scale production might not need to be so maximalist. This is FUNDAMENTAL. Because the maximalist economical system we inhabit is destroying the planet. Being environmentally "aware" seems scary because it looks like you have to be a *minimalist*, but heyheyhey, you can be a maximalist, a sexy maximalist! Well actually I'm saying sex a lot but, to be honest I actually don't mean sex as much as a concept that also includes love and care. I'll take the liberty to adopt the word **eros**, in the same connotation used by Marcuse in "Eros and Civilization", who was then referencing Freudⁱ, who was borrowing the term from Ancient Greek. The term is an amplified meaning of love which includes a transformed sexuality, which is not only raw reproductive libido but an accepted sexuality as a creative force of life running through our bodies and connecting one another.

And art, well the point about art, the reason why I'll be talking so much about it is that that feeling of too-muchness that comes when I take a look at the news and see that koalas might go extinct because of the recent bushfiresⁱⁱ, comes with the same waves of feelings as maximalist art. So I guess art is the mediator, the host, for this discourse.

An art of ever so fast stimulating information of big mix-ups of gross stuff with too many loud colours, an art of nonsense. You have lost control, you are powerless in front of the vast oceans of inevitable, chaotic, immense despair. It is the art of my generation. And I'm not sure what maximalist art even is officially, from my research I gathered it's about being

opposite to minimalists, but it is not actually a well-defined subject. So I take this chance to give it my own definition. So ultimately this feeling of too muchness, that I call maximalism, can be overwhelmingly scary and intimidating, but it can also be incredibly beautiful and breathtaking when you are gazing into the eyes of whoever you love. And that's what I want to talk about.

If excessiveness and scarcity are complementary, which is the whole debatable premise of my work, we might see around us a maximalist proliferation of products but there must be a world of insufficiency laying somewhere else, and there is, not only in the global economical system but also in the Western conception of values. Aren't we constantly directed to exploit our lust for abundance in the ideas of possession and success (often in the form of career in which success is determined by income). And aren't we constantly pursued to believe that love, true love, true devotion, must live between only few individuals, most usually only towards the husband or the wife. According to Marxist philosophy, the economy implements all aspects of society (morality, family, education, art, law, ideology). Capitalism exists in a world where monogamous marriages are advertised as the norm, where small family nucleuses of four members are best. A world in which an individual is pushed to a minimalist conception of humanity, and a maximalist conception of consumption and competition which has made our environment toxic.

The underlying question is whether overabundance of production and consumption, linked to capitalism, can be replaced with a sociological and psychological expansion to a more collective free form of love; therefore stepping away from minimalist monogamous inter-human relations. Art as a mediator.

My references don't come from one specific sector of research, but in fact I'm picking and choosing from all different ranges, from art critics, post-marxist philosophers, cinema critics, psychoanalysts, communist activists to evolutionary biologists. Basically I'm using many different resources to talk about a very generic subject, grabbing bits of thoughts in human culture to make my boat wobble across an overabundant ocean.

I am proceeding with a debatable assumption that minimalism and maximalism are complementary. So that if we would make one aspect of our lives maximal than a different aspect would become minimal.

Part 1

/

Defining Maximalism

and

Hating on Aesthetic Minimalism



³ Something Cyriak

More is more. More can be anything as long as it is more. That is the maximalist fundament. Although, more has to be more *than* something. It implies a term of comparison, an existing reference, for no human will ever be an extravagant human with no other human to be compared to. If we talk about art the term of comparison might be the viewer, the individual subject (if an artwork emanates too much information for an individual to grasp at once), but it could also be the predominant way of making art in a certain period. If we talk about economics it could be the necessity for a product compared to the production of it and the accumulation of capital. If we talk about love it could be the number of people you are entitled to truly share your life with.

There are furthermore different directions in the definition of maximalism: an expansion in quantity (a fish multiplying into hundreds of fish), in quality (a fish whose fish features are so exaggeratedly fish-like), in time (a fish that lives on 20 years more than its expected lifespan) and in speed (a fish that swims 50 times faster than all the other fish). It is hard to truly identify maximalism, as it would imply an inviolable norm, in all spheres, that sets the beginning of what is maximal. Something might be maximal when one feels a sort of overwhelmingness to it, a certain level of over-stimulation. Although it might sound like a very subjective thing, I wouldn't be surprised to find out that there's a universal threshold for how much information humans can take in the different spheres of experience. Meaning that after such a point our capacity to organize information squanders. For example, studies (conducted by anthropologist Robin Dunbarⁱⁱⁱ) have shown that in regard to our neocortical processing capability (the part of the brain busy with sensory perception and cognition), when a group goes beyond 150 individuals, we become unable to keep track of who does what in the group and our behaviour towards community changes.

How fast does an airplane need to fly before we can't understand what it is. How big does a mountain need to be before we can't easily describe the size with a direct reference image in our heads.

There are things that go beyond our imagination because they exceed it. You might say that maximalism in art, is exploring the phantasmagorical territories beyond this threshold of too much.

This lust for going beyond the border of muchness has dictated a number of artistic moments. Following a somewhat natural survival, our bodies push us to exaggerate in all the things that feel good, in case there will be a tomorrow in which they won't be around. People crave the biggest slice of cake which sometimes won't fit on their plate. But that slice of cake, being so humongous, might taste godly. In fact the occurrence of not being able to comprehend "otherness" (anything outside of us), specifically because of its exuberance, has often been associated with religion or the mystic; together with most things that humans can't fully understand.

In the example of the Baroque (a predominantly Catholic style employed in the 17th century, which involves a plentiful use of gold and copious decorations) which might be maximalism in its splendour, the extravagance of the churches and richness of the architecture was to invoke precisely this feeling of godliness in the Christian viewer (aside from parading the richness of the Catholic Church which was being threatened by new trends of Christianity, to put it briefly). The phenomenon of shock and awe would awaken a sense of sublime.

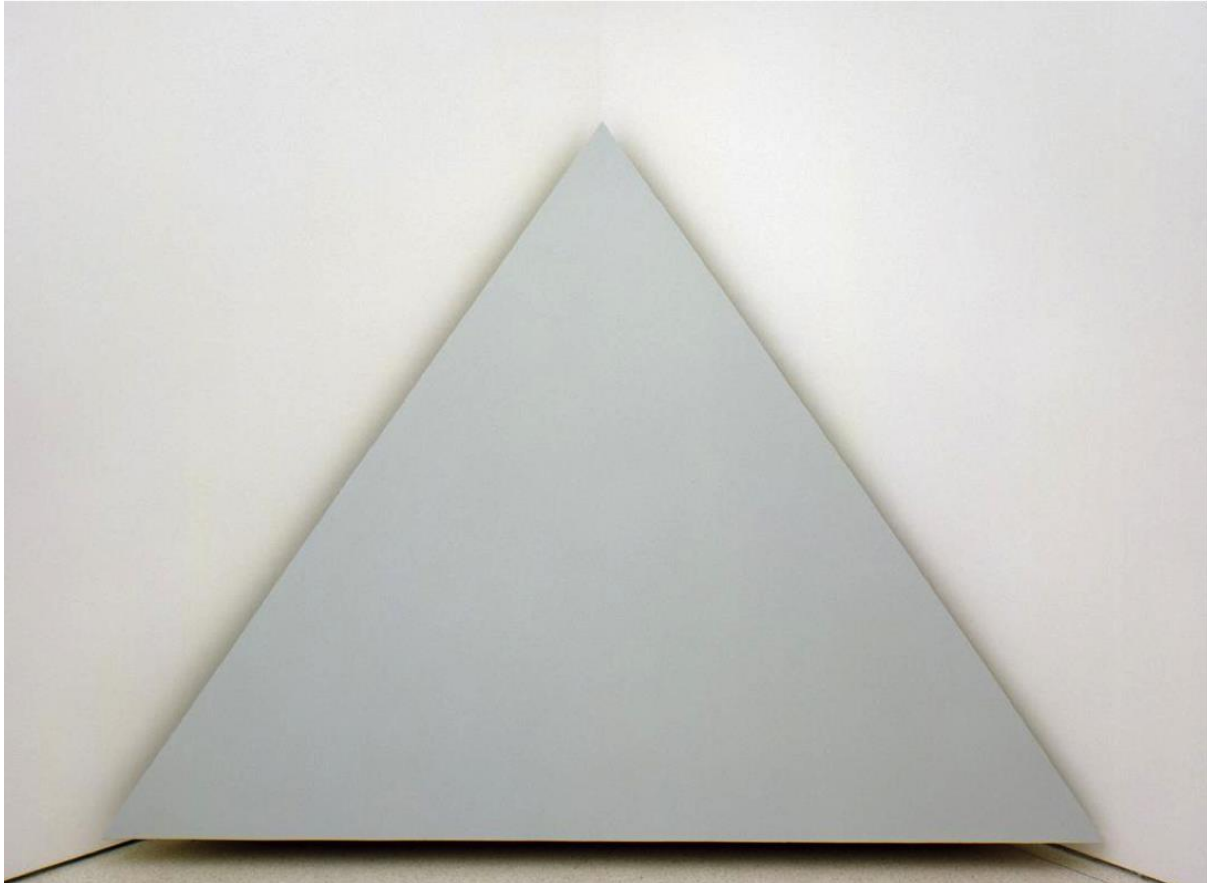


As all trends, a fashion for aesthetic muchness is a sign of a specific moment and place coloured by a political instance. And you might find that in other places or moments the same feeling of godliness is aroused by empty spaces and silence. The feeling of god will be invoked through minimalism in that case. So the spiritual communication between us and “otherness” can happen on completely different levels. In the moment of excessive experience (maximalism) the other comes in booming, screaming, twisting, you are listening and it will go on without your reply. Actually you are silenced, you might have the illusory impression that shouting might make you come across, but you are too small and insignificant.

In the experience of minimalism, the other is timid and you can talk, you can fantasize on their features and believe that they are the ones you wish for. You might desire an answer which will be blown in the wind if your will of power is strong enough to hallucinate it.

sidenote: I am purposefully blurring the edges between art and religion/spirituality, this is because in my view they have always been strongly connected.

⁴ Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baldacchino di San Pietro 1623-24



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It must be noted at this point that minimalism as a concept is employed in very different ways. So on one hand there is minimalist/literalist art which is a specific art movement that began in the 60s, based on complex and well defined ideas of what art should be and what it can be, which go beyond a “quantitative” discourse. On the other hand the term is used to describe a tendency for “only the basics” and “less is more”, and it is extended to a kind of lifestyle, to interior design and in general the word can be applicable to many situations. So in this chapter I use the word in reference to design and interior design, and in connection to the art movement.

Often minimalist design is associated with humbleness. But if we look at minimalist art, beyond the physical material being used, which indeed might look more modest, conceptually speaking what is there of less humble than creating entities so characterless that you are required to project your own assumptions on them. In fact the strongpoint of minimalist art/design/décor is that it is not invasive, there is a lot of space for the viewer. And often the object is not even supposed to be the real thing but a sort of symbol of it. A geometric abstraction of it. A very pretentious move. It is possibly like having a conversation with someone who makes half a sentence and then goes silence, adding finally that you are supposed to imagine the rest of the conversation, since they have done their part.

⁵ Robert Rauschenberg, Untitled 1964

You could, although, roll the discourse on an environmental level, and argue that because over-consumption is dominating our lifestyles in the West, it is a positive attitude to make art that requires less materials and production, and that minimalism is something we have forgotten in big urban spaces. Huge cities overloaded with trash, smog and people rushing around in different polluting vehicles don't look very minimalist at all. But first of all minimalist design or art doesn't imply sustainability. In fact using a lot of one material, or very few materials (if this would be a defining factor of minimalism) requires much more energy and draining of resources than for example an assemblage of many different elements. Now, the art of recycling encourages an open attitude to melanges of imperfect messy aesthetics.

If we look at the works of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, which derive from a conceptual stream concerned with the same issues as minimalist art, at a first glimpse the humongous land art installations are magnificent, stunningly grandiose and supported by very deep theory. Unfortunately the works don't follow all that much a criteria of sustainability , even-though the artists claim that the materials are recyclable, they still are produced purposefully for the artwork (for their piece, Surrounded Islands, 1983, they employed a factory to produce 6.5 million square feet of floating polypropylene, which is plastic).



⁶ Surrounded Islands, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, 1983

As Michael Fried points out in his essay "Art and Objecthood", 1967, minimalist art, or literalist art, is defined by theatricality, the relation *between* the beholder and the object becomes the core. The experience of the artwork dwells not in the work itself but in the temporal moment of confrontation. The quality of the work has been translocated in a vague space, in which the viewer deals with a presence of the object and the awareness of their relation in the designated space, meaning usually the gallery. So a "pure" minimalist artwork would hardly exist outside of this frame, except when that is specifically the purpose (Christo and Jeanne-Claude for example).

The content becomes absolutely self-referential, concerned uniquely with the realm of the visual arts, art theory and the ambience of the museum. To the untrained eye the work can easily appear to be content-less, and it will stay as such. Art in such a context became very elitist, in my opinion, only with quite some pre-existing knowledge of art history and art philosophy can you really understand the meaning of minimalist art. Let the viewer listen! Let us look at a painting for what it depicts, instead of looking straight into the face of a deconstructed art-form, in which you are wondering if a painting is a sculpture, and thinking why should you care. Let our minds be fed by the observation of new combinations of thoughts instead of the, sometimes, apolitical reflection of what is an artwork. The proposition of maximalist art is to be "opposite" to minimalist art, the core of the artwork is in the many multiple (as many as possible) relations within the work, not outside of it. The viewer is allowed to get lost in something other than themselves. Minimalist art might tend to produce a very self-aware understanding of things, whilst maximalist art might grant you the way to escape yourself in mountains of labyrinths of meaning, outside of your domain.

Beyond this, minimalism seems to be a human artefact, it is the fabrication of singularity and order. Extremely pleasing to our minds, but yet an extreme rarity in nature. Everything around us, and inside of us, we could analyse infinitely by miniaturizing and magnifying the scale and still in both cases we will never be able to wrap our heads around the quantity of things. We live in a maximalist world, to the eyes of humans. And we either indulge in it or look the other way.

To some extent, this critique seems a bit old, in fact minimalist art is not the most fashionable art aesthetic as we speak... although I am constantly surprised how deeply enrooted it became in the general idea of contemporary art. So many galleries, also very small galleries are still thriving for that aesthetic. There's a stigma for semi-minimalist artworks, of being a

sort of “sellable” expensive, high class art, at least that seems like the superficial understanding of it. The whole set up of galleries, the “white cube” set up, seems to be designed for a minimality and clean aesthetic. Frankly let’s stop that.



⁷ Mark Foster, proposal for Helsinki Guggenheim Museum 2014

Extrassss

Maximalist Moving Image

(Cinematography digression)

«Tutto è buono quando è eccessivo!»

«All is good when it is excessive!»

-Il Monsignore



As I've said indulging in maximalism goes in many directions (quantity, quality time speed etc). And it might be intentional or not. Observing a great messy disorder and the prospect of having to order it might be a maximalist experience. But also being exposed to images that are too explicit, too fast, too violent might make you want to scream "it's too much!!!!". The maximalist entity doesn't care, whether it is garbage, a crying baby or "Salò or the 120 days of Sodom". Could it that by making cinema and art a more invading experience, hard to escape because it so full of content, colour, meanings, combinations and sounds, we could explore freely our desire of muchness? A desire that would be translocated from the world of advertisement and consumption to the world of the arts. We are an accelerating hyper-stimulated youth the art world has no excuse to be still

promoting slow and mono-topic (if not topic-less) works. In the same way ads, apps and commercial horror films have totally understood that impression and over-stimulation is the way to go, films, paintings, sculptures, should stay on track. And they are but still, MORE! MORE! FASTER! ACCELERATE! LOUDER! But anyways luckily enough there are plenty of films that are over-stimulating and I've taken the pleasure to list them below and to add a personal reading.

In this research I have made two categories for maximalist films: Maximalist Form (regarding the composition of the image, the editing, the colour correction, the sound, the mixture of styles) Maximalist Content (regarding the content of the film, the morale of it, the crudeness of the images or topics, the amount or complexity of the narrative).

Maximalist Form



Personal Reference list

The works of [David O'Reilly](#) (1985, artist, animator and game developer), *Helter Skelter* (2012) by [Mika Ninagawa](#) (1972, photographer and film director), *Domino* (2005) by [Tony Scott](#) (1944-2012 film director), *Mind Game* (2012) by [Masaaki Yuasa](#) (1965, Animator, director)-, *Dream English Kid* by [Mark Leckey](#) (1965, artist), *Enter the Void* (2009) by [Gaspar Noe](#) (1963, film director)-, the works of [Cyriak](#) (animator), *Oddsac* (2010), visual album of Animal Collective, directed by [Danny Perez](#); *Civilisation* by [Marco Brambilla](#); the works of [Ryan Trecartin](#) (1981, artist, film maker. Also using maximalist content).

From my own analysis I have drawn lines between these films and classified them as being made with a certain inclination for a maximal style, in contrast with minimalist films. The focus of my analysis therefore for these films is on the design of the movie. There's a general tendency for excessiveness in quantity (colours, elements in the composition of the image, styles) and/or in speed (in the editing). The over-whelmingness comes through the style and not from the narrative, in fact in some cases there is no need for it (i.e.

Oddsac, 2010) but in some cases (i.e. Domino, 2005) the narrative might also take a maximalist leap. Some of these works (i.e. Mind Game, K-CorealNC. K (section a) 2009 by Ryan Trecartin) seem to have the intent to approach that threshold I mentioned in the first chapter (reaching a point of “too muchness”), almost reaching a territory in which our minds can’t compute the amount of information, or the speed it’s going at. In the case of Ryan Trecartin’s work, the employment of this style seems to also touch upon how information is processed in internet culture and in a globalised society. Furthermore, most of these “maximalist” artworks address intentionally or not, the ever expanding complexity of human culture in the 21st century. There is no space for actual silence, we move about in trash-loads of (at times nonsensical) information. In the mayhem of it all we can maybe hope to capture a small percentage of it, maybe enough to fabricate a vague opinion on what is actually happening in the world. I believe that this a faithful representation of human experience in general, or human experience amplified by psychedelics (Enter the Void, 2009). This is what makes the films so exciting, the honesty of the portrait. At every moment of waking life our brains limit the amount of things we consider around us, eliminating the things that are in excess and superfluous. Yet there is no end to what is in our perception field at any point in time. Of course to consider everything is an impossible task for the human brain, but a tendency towards it or the concept of it is what these films/animations/games (Everything by David O’Reilly) seem to tackle (in some cases more than others). Maximalist form films are quite comparable to maximalist architecture or interior design. The expansion in quantity happens on a level of the senses, which might trigger optionally an expansion conceptually.

Maximalist Content



Personal reference list

Salo' o le 120 giornate di Sodoma (1975) by Pierpaolo Pasolini (1922-1975 film director, writer)- *Pink Flamingos* (1972) by John Waters (1944, film director); *Idiots* (1997), *Dancer in the Dark* (2000),

Antichrist(2009) by [Lars Von Trier](#) (1956, film director); *Kuso* (2011) by [Flying Lotus](#) (also employing maximalist form);

This categorisation as “maximalist” for these films is quite unconventional, although I think the sense of maximalism doesn’t limit itself to the senses, but happens conceptually as well, so I hope the reader will accept the liberty I’m hereby taking. These quasi-heretical films are challenging conventions in western culture by pushing the boundaries to the extreme. In the desire to go to the extreme lays their maximalism. It is the production of a fast vehicle that drags you far into something you don’t choose. If formal maximalism is dealing with the extreme intake for the senses, content maximalism deals with the extremes of morality. The gross, faecal and extremely kinky claim their rightful space to be shown as they have always been living in our minds. The ugly reigns at its max, finally spitting in the face of beauty. Beauty never existed in the gutters in the way it existed in the mansions, it always belonged to the rich and powerful. To talk about the ugly is in itself a political statement. Some of these films get disregarded as pointless and only made to impress or gross out. The reason that they trigger as much as they do means that they’re touching upon something that the viewer might hold very precious like taboos on human behaviour, on our deepest darkest thoughts. To challenge the morality of people is an act of rebellion towards the authorities who set it up.

A small film analysis

Salò e le 120 Giornate di Sodoma bu Pierpaolo Pasolini

The film was made in 1975 (banned and condemned basically immediately after its release) and still today it retains the position of one of the hardest films to swallow. Now, basically the film is a hyperbolic illustration of anarchy of power. It depicts a group of four fascist men, representatives of the Republic of Salò’ (a puppet state existing in the north of Italy during the nazi occupation and lead by Mussolini) who with the company of some ex prostitutes, hold captive a group of 17 young girls and boys who come from antifascists families. The young victims are sexually tortured in different manners, depending on the theme of the day. Pasolini, the director, could’ve gotten his point across, of the unlimited horrors of fascism, in the first 20 minutes of the film. But instead the point gets so heavily, so painfully, so visually smeared in the face of the viewer for 117 minutes, to the extent that the film itself becomes detestable. It becomes a parade of human filth with no other intent than to show itself as it is: despicable. It succeeds brilliantly in coagulating the feeling of unbearable disgust deriving from the images with the concept of any form of abuse of power, specifically fascism. The viewer cannot escape the elicit visual, conceptual connections within the film. The viewer has no space to draw their own conclusions or subtle impressions, they are all there, splattered on the screen. This is a defining factor, the absence of space for the beholder. Of course, there can be many layers and interpretations, but in the act, in the moment of the film, the viewer is not left to wonder. The maximalist artwork wishes to eat up all the space that is provided.

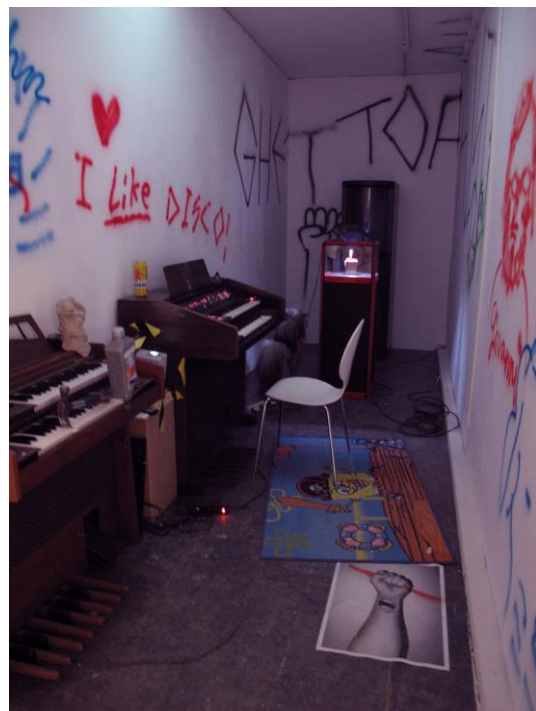
Intermezzo

So here comes the jump. After having described an artistic style, the definition of which is very unclear, I'll use the same term *maximalism* to describe capitalism and later on polyamorous ways of living. It might seem I'm going all over the place, in fact I am, but with some criteria. I hope. The connection might lay in a philosophical way of understanding the subject. In all the examples I provide, the key is always a tendency for "more", in opposition to singularity. This seems to be an insufficient explanation though for combining so wildly different yet specific examples. The answer is in the assumption I made in the introduction: the fact that minimality and maximality are complementary in all spheres of human activity and that all spheres are connected and reciprocally influenceable. So far the text might have been praising and promoting maximalist art, instead of only defining it, and openly criticising minimalist art. Partly I would like to promote a kind of art that is hardly ignorable, loud and present, including many subjects, hetero-referential (referring to something outside of itself) instead of self-referential like minimalist art. It is a matter of inclusivity, art must offer variety, accessible to as many people as possible. And inclusivity means we include everything, also the very nasty messy ugly. A good example might be punk and post-punk art.

Also, in the case of punk maximalist aesthetics there seems to be a political manner of employing chaos, ugliness and multiplicity of elements. Meaning that this "maximalist" aesthetics is used in combination with an anti-establishment anarchist political agenda. This kind of art is a perfect link between the two motives of this thesis: anti-minimalism and anti-capitalism.

Following the dialectics that minimal and maximal always coexist in relation to each other, if something like our consumption of goods, or production of capital is maximal and the desire is to change it, then something minimal should be turned into maximal. So here is the main idea: enable a change of course for capitalist economy, (which is maximal in the sense that it is based on growth of capital) through the maximalization of eros and community. There are some bridges with communism. It is maybe the same conclusion: capitalism can be stopped by demolishing principles of individualism and of hierarchy, but the incipit is a bit different. I look at the issues, at first as a comparison with the arts, and then as a problem related to culturally forced normalisations such as monogamy and the repression of female and queer sexuality. To my reading, if we would start with these issues, which are personal for everyone, then changes on the bigger scale might happen as a consequence. In a time in

which we are faced with human made environmental complications, people try to divert it by trying out more environmentally friendly products and so on, yet the problem lies in the system itself. It lies also in the fact that a way of living, based on desiring more products, more comfort has been embedded deep in our psyche. Giving up on all of that seems something that no one wants to do. So why give up our desire of more, when we can redirect it to something that for so long has been prohibited or limited, fact you might even say that all of these products are specifically trying to allude to it to be sellable. That something is a liberated form of eros between individuals.



⁸ Beni Bischof "Butterhöhle", Butter, Schokolade, Champagner, Wienerli, etc. in Kühlschrank/Küche, SALTS, Basel, 2011

⁹ Beni Bischof "Ghettofaust", Galerie Nicola von Senger, Zürich, 2011



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¹⁰ Salomé (Wolfgang Ludwig Cihlarz)Salomé I, Die Verführung, 1979-1979

Part 2



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Capitalism, a model for maximalist production and consumption, a model for minimalist human interaction.

¹¹ Sigmar Polke, Supermarkets, 1967

Although we have apparently decided collectively to ignore the material and political problems of capitalism, the consequence of this system seem to be ever so pressing and ever so veiled with an attitude of "it is how it is". We have been so tamed that we have ceased to even think of alternatives even though nothing can possibly hide the nightmarish prospects of climate change any longer. We have reached a point in which any existing anti-capitalist ideology has been tinted with a "oh so romantically old-fashioned" or "it would never work" or it has been simply devoured and digested in the mighty creature of capitalism. So we have ended up with mass chain stores selling Che Guevara t-shirts and "f*ck the system" punk mugs. While more progressive thinkers leap into cyber-realities, post- truth digitalised fantasies, what is there left to do for those who want to stay in a material world.

As we said maximalism is a tendency for muchness, for a proliferation of things. In this chapter I look at capitalism as a model of maximalism when it comes to production (of goods and capital) and consumption of commodities. And as a model for minimalism when it comes to inter-human relations.

This discourse should begin with a glimpse into the origin of the socio-economical model for most of western culture in the last 10.000 years, which is when people agree that "civilization" began. Today it takes the form of capitalism, but ultimately this socio-economical model has been the paradigm for the west since the invention of agriculture and hence private property. The reason for me to include this is to shed light on a major factor: a life based on production and making the economy circulate is not the only functioning system, in fact it might be one of the least functioning systems, which has brought a lot of unhappiness, overpopulation and destruction of the ecosystem.

For 95% of human history, humans were organised in hunter-gatherer societies (nomadic societies moving in conglomerates and feeding on what was available from the land). The invention of agriculture, and everything that follows, which seems to be a consequence of it (the man-made destruction of biodiversity, the disasters of climate change, inequalities between men and women, and between classes) is, under this perspective, a very recent switch that humans have stumbled into. We can debate whether this was a positive path for human lifestyle.

I don't intend on following an anarcho-primitivist position that might sound like a eulogy of prehistoric man, promoting anti-technology lifestyle, but the classic perception of human progress always going for the best could be revisited.

Settling down from nomadic societies to sedentary groups was a turning point in history that has been always perceived as an obvious upgrade. Archaeologists and sociologists begin now

to discover how this switch brought quite some dramatic, negative changes in the quality of human life. But it is beyond the point for me to get into all the consequences so I'll focus for now on the social aspect.

In hunter gatherer societies, no one would have many non-sentimental possessions, and no one could own exclusivity on food resources, being nature the provider, anyone could've always wondered to a different spot with vegetation and prey. There was little population and a big world to feed on. It is unlikely that these aggregations of people were highly hierarchical. Hierarchical power must've happened later. As Jared Diamond states in *The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race* (1987)

“Besides malnutrition, starvation, and epidemic diseases, farming helped bring another curse upon humanity: deep class divisions. Hunter-gatherers have little or no stored food, and no concentrated food sources, like an orchard or a herd of cows: they live off the wild plants and animals they obtain each day. Therefore, there can be no kings, no class of social parasites who grow fat on food seized from others. Only in a farming population could a healthy, non-producing elite set itself above the diseaseridden masses.”

-Diamond

Page 7 (1987)

And he later on Diamond concludes

“Hunter-gatherers practiced the most successful and longest-lasting life style in human history. In contrast we're still struggling with the mess into which agriculture has tumbled us, and it's unclear whether we can solve it”

Idem

In this huge time-lapse of human history, capitalism is almost directly subsequent to the invention of agriculture, and it is the apex of production and progress for all of human history. Surely we can argue that it is only because of capitalism that we have reached, in the west, very comfortable lifestyles, good health, easy access to food and commodities. But in fact, many recent studies are showing how we are only now reaching a health condition that had already been achieved thousands of years ago. Meaning that people lived as long as now and were also the same size^{iv}. And besides, it is a situation that has been regained only by a very small percentage of humans, which is weighing on the shoulders of the bigger percentage of humans in the rest of the world working their whole lives in terrible conditions that are getting worsened by climate change.

Supposedly people in the west are all aware of these inequalities in the world. Supposedly we are aware of climate change¹².

¹² A topic that needs to be addressed at this point is obviously the issue of manipulation of information, social media bubbles, post-truth trumpism, all of which illustrate reasons why it isn't as easy as saying that supposedly we are all informed of certain dangers. These issue in fact are probably much more at the core of the strength of capitalism at the moment, but getting into this would take a whole different thesis, so for now

Yet we are stuck in this blood-sucking turning wheel called capitalism and we can't possibly come up with any escape route. Such is the dilemma of what Mark Fisher calls "capitalist realism": the sad and cynical sense that "it's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." ^v

In this immense discourse I must stick to maximalism. Capitalism is in itself maximalist, as the foundation of it is to increase capital, and hence to increase labour, production, profit and so on. The nature of it is to expand. The smaller picture of the daily life of the western citizen (which is more my focus) is naturally equally ruled by these same principles. The whole idea is to integrate the smaller picture in the bigger picture to make the wheel turn. Even though we have reached a level of technology sufficient enough to actually feed most of the population with a minimal amount of work¹³, people are working more than ever. Beyond this, people feel the deep need for productivity, for work, it doesn't matter what kind of work. From when we are children we are already schooled to be productive workers and shown the prospects of a becoming working member of society. So here we are, with many useless jobs that for some odd reason exist because in an intricate manner they make someone's capital grow bigger. By many useless jobs I mean that they are not essential for our survival but are focused on creating commodities. In fact, to make a bridge to a very current situation, at the beginning of the covid19 outbreak in Europe, all of a sudden nobody involved in these jobs was working, everyone was having productivity emotional breakdowns, but no one was even close to starving in Western countries (so far, maybe I'll be drastically wrong). It actually pointed out that maybe all of these people who are performing virtually useless tasks, if anything, should've been employed by the health system. During my research I happen to stumble upon this quote by a psycho-analysist who tackles in his field the problematics of excessive work in modern society. This is just another way to say that work, in the way we do it, is indeed not necessary if not harmful.

"Of all things hard work has become a virtue instead of the curse it was always advertised to be by our own remote ancestors... Our children should be prepared to bring their children up so they won't have to work as a neurotic necessity. The necessity to work is a neurotic symptom. It is a crutch. It is an attempt to make one-self feel valuable even though there is no particular need for one's working."

-C.B. Chisholm in the panel discussion "The Psychiatry of Enduring Peace and Social Progress, in *Psychiatry*, Vol. IX, No.1 (1946) p. 31

It gets worse when you think that all of this work, directly or indirectly is damaging not only our health but the complete planet's ecosystem. All of this work most of the time has ceased

I'm addressing a maybe smaller reality of people who are aware at some level of these troubles and who probably inhabit the so called left.

- ¹³ The concept of Universal Basic Income is ideal and actually applicable. Meaning that everyone, or whoever is in need, would receive a basic salary from the state to maintain themselves; it is an idea that started to be developed with the increasing progress of automatization and AI, which are a threat to a many manual jobs. We are actually getting to a sort of Utopia that Marcuse talks about in *Eros and Civilization* as I'll explain later, in which human technology is so advanced that people don't really need to work, or work as much, to survive.

to even satisfy the worker directly, instead because of it, they get a very small, microscopic percentage of the actual profit that they get to spend on many, much too many, useless products, most of which also only exist for no other specific reason than to make someone's capital grow bigger. After they're done using these useless products (which are purposefully designed to last shortly so you will buy more), all of their materials and their packaging will be dispersed with little regard on where or how. So aren't our lives splendidly maximalist? We work much too much, more than needed, consume much too much (I didn't even mention obesity but that's also something hard to overlook), and insist on making a few people insanely rich at the price of people's lives, of our freedom and of our planet. Fantastically enough when I read this I think "how boring, everyone has said this already", and that is all the more shocking.

As I've mentioned in the introduction, in Marxist philosophy the Base of society (the economy of a system, the production forces and the relations of production) coexist with the Superstructure (Institutions such as education, family, religion, law, art, morality etc). According to Marx the Base primarily shapes and implies the Superstructure, and the latter maintains and consolidates the former, although they both influence and inform each other reciprocally. Capitalism, and most structures in the west that have been based on a few factors like rigorous class division, the conservation of it by the powerful (individuals who had to be white and male), and the emphasis on the lower classes to produce, have in most cases relied on the institution of the Church, and of marriage. Both of them were partly dedicated directly or indirectly on repressing sexuality, a notable trouble-maker.

Rousseau, and later Freud^{vi}, both elaborated on the idea that society could only exist from the moment that the individuals agreed on giving up a certain amount of immediate pleasure, in exchange for work that should guarantee a more secure but less rewarding pleasure in the future. Amongst these pleasures, sex. As the political agenda of the Christian Church in the history of the West illustrates, sex and anything about the body must be denounced as a danger rising up from hell. There is something about the liberation of sex which seems to be intrinsically dangerous for the course of society. Or maybe there is something intrinsically scary for the people who are at the top of society. I would say it is a quite immediate thought that if the people are neatly organised in family nucleuses in which the parents, blessed by the holy institution of marriage, fear of burning in hell if they separate or commit adultery. The course of society seems to be more under control, the people are less concerned with mingling inappropriately with each-other and have more time to produce. They have less reason to unite and to potentially grow big enough to challenge whoever or whatever is dominating society. Love and sex, when liberated from the nasty connotations of guilt and sin, deeply unite people. It would be very hard to imagine our capitalist society to work as it does now if people would not be organised in traditional monogamous bonds. In fact we could imagine that if we would be encouraged to devote ourselves to more than one person, not necessarily sexually, we would easily build stronger nets between people. These nets would lead to small or big groups of people who are emotionally invested in each-other. When this might happen, there will rise a certain sense of autonomy amongst these groups, and a certain capability for these people to create new ways of thinking that might not match with the ideology of the ruling class. At the same time, dependency on the rest of society will start to drop. So you can easily see how if this might happen, there would come to be a very chaotic view of society from the top, but maybe a more liberating fulfilling life from the bottom (pun intended). Still with the sexual revolutions of the last century we can't complain

as much as someone living in Victorian England. Yet the expectations for a standard Western, middle class, straight or queer¹⁴ citizen's love-life would be: fool around in your twenties, at some point settle down with one partner, most likely the one you happen to have found around the age you were supposed to step into the "family" phase. By this point you are getting closer to a stable job and with that one partner you might think of having kids with. So you make work and family coexist, you devote yourself exclusively to your partner in a monogamous relation which might include kids, yet you mostly focus on your career because there's a constant need to work to keep on living. Most probably if you break the holy monogamous bond, the bond will be weakened or broken, and the result will be a dreadful "broken" family. Of course the picture changes if we speak of women or men (with women having less options).

In the west most people have grown to see their career, their productivity as the most precious part of life. But until not long ago there was duality in importance: work outside of the home (politics included) and family, the former being in the domain of men, the latter being in domain of women. With the feminist movements though, women have rightfully claimed position in the working/political environment; this obviously was only a good thing for a capitalist system, more people who want to work, more production, more consumption etc etc. Anyhow, as women entered the working world, "the real" world, we left behind the domestic world. The value of family, did not get embraced by men or equally shared amongst men and women, it instead got pushed aside and has slowly become a non-progressive thing for a woman to want to devote her life to her family and domestic activities. It is still very rare for a man to even consider that. Women began to imitate typically "masculine" behaviours rather than promoting and inviting men to take on typically "feminine" behaviours¹⁵. This constitutes, in my opinion, a general problem in how feminism, or many other very progressive movements got embraced. Which means they got sanded down to a version that more or less fits the existing system and limits the possibility for radical change. Not that all feminists were anti-capitalist but surely allowing them a seat, a very uncomfortable one, in the capitalist system tamed down possibilities for more extreme outcomes. As consequence of that, together with the fortification of capitalism in the last century, work became idolised whereas domestic life became old-fashioned. Using gross over-generalisations, in my experience this still seems to be the prevailing example for the west.

¹⁴ Of course this is a generalisation, but as queerness becomes more tolerated, it seems that society is delivering rights to fit in a already existing organisation of relationships, which have been built around a patriarchal straight intolerant skeleton. It reads "we allow you to exist but as long as you live exactly how we live with our rules, and we remind you that it is a privilege that we even consider you to exist and you are extremely lucky".

• ¹⁵ What I mean here with masculine and feminine is the historical and cultural perception of typically gender based characteristics. So for example a typical "masculine" trait would be the concept of dominance and strength, not because of an intrinsic belonging to the gender, but because culture developed the association male-dominant



¹⁶ Beni Blschof "My Brain" Acryl auf Leinwand, 150 × 180cm, 2014



Consume less, love more more more.

"For small creatures such as we, the vastness is bearable only through love."

-Carl Sagan



So what would it mean to convert our (supposedly) innate maximalism from work-based lifestyles to family-based lifestyles? At first we should clarify what concept of family we're dealing with. In fact we should speak of a maximalist idea of family. With "family" I guess I'm referring to a group of people who are tied to each-other by emotional bonds and define themselves as some sort of unity. Already with this definition we are exceeding the traditional family nucleus of parents + children. We would be looking at groups of people who live, work and love together with an emphasis on pleasure rather than suffering coming from a surplus of working. We could postulate the idea that as a necessary consequence, if the balance between work and family would change, because of a mutation in the former, the role of work would undergo a heavy metamorphosis. In the 60s Herbert Marcuse, a German post-Marxist philosopher, through the analysis of Freud's works, speculates on how it would be an ideal

development of any advanced society to reduce the amount of work, once there would be the means for that. This, according to him, would come with liberation of the libido.

“Reactivation of polymorphous and narcissistic sexuality ceases to be a threat to culture and can itself lead to culture-building if the organism exists not as an instrument of alienated labour but as a subject of self-realization- in other words, if socially useful work is at the same time the transparent satisfaction of an individual need. In primitive society, this organization of work would be maybe immediate and “natural”; in mature civilization, it can be envisaged only as the result of liberation.”

-H. Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization, A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, Beacon Press, 1961, p. 210

In the model that Marcuse ideally suggests, work would be liberated by surplus labour (extra amount of work to produce capital), and the whole of humanity would be liberated by (sexual and instinctual) surplus repression. Most of humanity’s progress would be directed towards a proper health system instead of endless growth of capital and production. People would have more “leisure” time to devote to their new and liberated idea of love and sexuality (Eros), and to a kind of work that would become actually satisfying to the individual. So here we are floating back to the idea that a transformation in the superstructure, such as changing drastically the idea of family and marriage, would have consequences on the economy.

It’s a discourse of priorities, and of time. For each individual there’s a limited amount of time, which will be dedicated on whatever their society, or in rarer cases their own judgement, will illustrate. If all of a sudden we would be focused on taking care directly of many more “family” members than the small capitalist family nucleus, there would be less time to offer to the rest of society (which as I’ve said, ends up really profiting very few rich people and damaging deeply whole populations). As a consequence you would get less out of it, and ideally small or big communities that produce for themselves will start to blossom. In this scenario cities wouldn’t function as they do. But we’re talking of such a major change of society, that it would be useless to speculate now on what that might look like, at the moment we are just imagining what that spark for change would look like.

Being able to sustain yourself outside of a capitalist system, actually being environmentally responsible, knowing what you eat, where it comes from, being sure that it doesn’t come out of slavery, cannot happen as an individual, it has to happen as a collective, a maximalist idea of family. It is of no surprise that even very left-wing people, very much aware of climate change and inequalities in the world, cannot get out of the system or find effective ways to fight it, because even if they might be open to alternatives to capitalism, they still maintain their individualistic position. What compliments capitalism better than individualism. A life focused on the development of the self as a successful member of society, thriving on the idea of fame, competition and the material manifestation of success through possession of luxury items. If capitalism-individualism means on one hand maximal production, consumption and labour, on the other hand it means minimal inclusion of people in the

prospects of self-fulfilment (individualism--> individual comes from Latin and means that which cannot be divided, hence it cannot be more than one), could this be turned around?

It is very ambitious question and very ambitious answer. In our small reach we can select the things that can be changed first hand. I would like to suggest that a useful change in that direction would be actively trying to re-shape our idea of love and sexuality (eros).

One of the biggest set rules for love relationships and families in the west is monogamy. There is no time to get in the actual historicity of this, but it has been engraved in our culture throughout many, many centuries, usually reinforced by systems based on hierarchy and dependant on repression (with an emphasis on female repression) and on sexual repression.

“For thousands of years human culture has been teaching people that love is linked with the principles of property. Bourgeois ideology has insisted that love, mutual love, gives the right to the absolute and indivisible possession of the beloved person. Such exclusiveness was the natural consequence of the established form of pair marriage and of the ideal “all-embracing love” between husband and wife.”

-Alexandra Kollontai, *Make way for Winged Eros. A Letter to Working Youth*. Selected Writings p. 288

1923

It's not a surprise that amongst the ideologies that don't fit with monogamy we find communism. Even though in most cases these free love ideas are male oriented and don't take in account female sexuality which is often seen as “goods” to be shared, there are some feminist exceptions like Alexandra Kollontai, a member (first woman in history to be part of a governing cabinet) of the Bolshevik Government (1917-1918). In her writings, most of which are propagandistic pamphlets trying to fuse communism and feminism, she promotes a world in which marriage doesn't exist, because it is part of a dialectic founded on private property and it limits devotion to the community by creating separate self-focused nucleuses. She profusely reflects on the role that child-care has in the emancipation of the woman and sees the answer in the support that a communist state can provide. In synthesis, she outlines a society in which people unite freely both romantically and sexually, but most importantly they create a deep sense of comradeship between people that is founded on working together, men and women. When it comes to children, the parents don't have to take all the difficulties upon themselves but they can rely on the state's day-care and schools from a very early stage, naturally without having to pay because the state would provide for all needs. Of course she was writing in Communist Russia in the 1920s and it's a very different story from today in Europe, and indeed much of the Communist ideology is based on work ethics and a celebration of it. Still it provides just one of many of the alternatives to traditional monogamy, the example of communism illustrates how if the ambition is to radically change society, all aspects need to change starting from what concerns the people directly, so it is no coincidence that the ideology includes an almost opposite idea of love to the one of capitalism. In my research I've stumbled upon many different examples of societies not based on monogamy, but instead based on a more fluid idea of love and sex where the raising of children happens with the help of multiple members. In some societies, like the Mosuo in China, paternity is not acknowledged as something essential to feel devoted to a kid, and in some cases it is believed that a child might have many (biological and non) fathers. Which

means that the raising of children happens as a collective and the biological parents are not tied by social obligations. In western culture nowadays more and more people are starting to claim this lifestyle back in the form of polyamory.

Polyamory is basically the idea of having multiple partners, multiple committed relationship, unlike open relationships in which the couple opens up to casual sexual encounters with other people. Slowly people realise that monogamy has huge limitations and we keep on failing at it because it is maybe not a suited system for our species, or simply for some individuals. It differs from polygamy as in the latter usually implies a bond within a husband and multiple wives who are not expected to be tied to one another. Whereas polyamory is based on multiple deep rooted connections amongst people, based on love and not religion/institution, as it is basically lawfully banned as a “practice” in most western countries.

It might also just be a more successful system to raise kids, as most nomad tribes did, to have more parents rather than two who maybe don't really love each-other and stay together whilst cheating on each-other and feeling a whole lot of resentment. Also we are under the illusion the two parents are enough to raise one child, but as a matter of fact the bringing up of a typical western child happens in the hands of many institutions, nannies, day-care etc which imply a big leap of faith in a bunch of people the parents have never met. In general to imagine a different kind of society we need to base it on unity amongst people, so maybe normalizing/bringing back the idea of multiple loving partners/parents might be a way to find distance and independence from institutions and economical schemes that have been disappointing environmentalists/socialists/queer/anti-capitalists/freedom lovers/people who plan to be on Earth for more than the next 20/30 years (unlike most politicians). Because more people means more possibilities.

Love between two people is not to be undermined, and that is not my intention. Love is one of the most beautiful experiences in life, nothing can replace that. It is sad to me although to see how this initial form of majestic beauty often gets transformed in an exercise of possession and jealousy, a removal of liberty from the person you once deeply respected as a separate individual. The other becomes a sort of property, a confirmation of power to numb the fear of being weak. For too long this has happened in western culture, and especially men imposing this limitation onto the women and making them believe that oppression is love. And this is the result and the cause of a deeply enrooted political scheme based on hierarchy and possession, and therefore reflected onto our emotional life. Jealousy as a primal and immutable factor of humans is an idea that got shovelled in our heads. it is a “natural” feeling in the same way hate is, but we can learn to control it. We could learn to love more and to care more, if we look outside of the things taught to us, we could see that loving a community rather than a career path is possible, to truly love more people could be so easy if it would be allowed by our morality. To devote yourself to something outside yourself is gracious. People and not things, eros and not money.

Biological digression



Anyways there seems to be a discrete amount of deductible conclusions that before the invention of agriculture, and therefore class division and female repression, monogamy was not as popular as it might look like now. Hunter-gatherer society is one of the many societal structures experimented by humans, and it's quite diametrically opposed to capitalism, since it is absolutely not based on any kind of increase, but rather on demographic and environmental stability. Aside from there being some kind of evidence of a more egalitarian society amongst hunter gatherers, according to some evolutionary scientists, humans followed a more fluid group-based way of reproducing and taking care of the kids. I'm now dipping my toes in a bit of evolutionary biology as many arguments from this sphere have been used to debunk the "naturalness" of monogamy in humans. The discourse might reasonably start with a comparison to the species that are the closest to us, bonobos and chimpanzees, with which we share many traits especially in the reproduction area. Usually according to the mating style that a species uses the most, there are physiologic purposeful characteristics that match it. So there are similar features amongst species that employ an exclusive monogamous mating style, different features amongst species that are polygamous (harem based) and different features again for species that are promiscuous. For example in most monogamous species male and female are exactly the same size, in most polygamous/polygynous species the male is much bigger than the female, whilst in most promiscuous species the male is slightly bigger than the female. This is linked to male competition, as in polygamous species there's a very high-risk/high-reward type of competition, usually if a male beats the strongest male he will gain a harem of females and the losing male doesn't get anything. This is just an example to explain how body features determine behaviour and the other way around. I'm talking here of monogamy/polygamy/promiscuousness in their biological sense not cultural. I will list here a few characteristics, which I found very interesting, that supposedly prove the promiscuousness of the human species.

- Female's fertility being invisible (in most species when the female is fertile it is made clear by some factor, whilst only in human and bonobos, females keep on having sex during their whole cycle, fertile and infertile, it is believed that this would happen for two reasons, 1- for social reasons, to settle down arguments and to release tension 2-to confuse the multiple sexual partners on who the father might be to provoke in co-operation amongst the possible fathers and therefore in the group)

-The size of the testicles (humans have very big testicles compared to most apes, this is shared with species in which most of male competition happens in the female cervix, meaning that the bigger load of sperm a male can produce the higher the chances it will beat the other loads of sperm in the female, the males of monogamous species like the gibbon or of polygamous species like the gorilla have very small testicles)

- The female orgasm (a woman's moaning is a well known effective arousal for heterosexual men, and also very loud, some theories say that it is because the female is actually trying to attract more sexual partners, furthermore a female can continue having intercourse for much larger stretches of time, requiring possibly more than one partner's performance before satisfaction. Also the fact that there is no actual strong necessity of the female orgasm to reproduce, we can interpret it as another socially driven element of human's sexuality)

- -The shape of the penis(the human penis is the biggest amongst all apes, when it enters the vagina, due to its extraordinary shape it creates a sort of vacuum which pulls out any previously deposited semen element)^{vii}

Also it seems that many of our sexual features are shared with species that are not at all monogamous, but that use sex for social reasons, not only for reproduction, and who preferably raise kids collectively. Although it might look like a very heterosexual explanation of human biology, this reading includes in human nature all kinds of non heteronormative sexuality as it fully includes the idea of love and sex outside of reproductive purposes, unlike the standard evolutionary theory¹⁷. I guess in talking about sex it is necessary to reference biology, and to compare ourselves to other species, in contrast to ideologies that continue placing humans at the top as if absolutely unique. Using these references from a completely different domain, proves only that if we look at society from many points of view we will find loop holes that grow bigger because of the passing down of thoughts and costumes rather than an intrinsic, transcendent truthfulness/correctness in them. Furthermore, this being a personal conclusion, it looks like the more a society is based on female repression the more

¹⁷ The standard evolutionary theory for monogamy is the following: sperm comes in huge quantities, they are "cheap", eggs come in less copious quantities, they are more expensive. The male would rather spread his sperm to as many uteruses as possible, whilst the female wants a good quality insemination, it is riskier for her to go with any man (she will have to go through pregnancy for 9 long rough months and if the man leaves she will also have to raise the kid for many years if it survives in the first place). Basically it is more likely that the offspring will survive if the mother and father don't split up after coitus and share the costs of parenthood. They both benefit from it because they both manage to send their genes into the future. The standard idea is that the fathers of the babies that survive are the ones who stick around, and the mothers are the ones who don't sleep around. This narrative explains adultery with a *mixed strategy* theory, for which after having found a long term female mate with whom to raise a kid, behind her back the man will continue having casual (low-investment) sex with as many women as possible to spread his genes, whilst the woman will find a long-term male mate that will provide safety for the child, but when fertile she'll go sneakily looking for the more attractive, stronger male for the better genes. This kind of view is based on a Darwinian narrative, and therefore also fits well with the general understanding of society from a white colonial male in the 19th century. Women are either whores or simply have sex to reproduce (hence they possess no real libido), and men cannot control their sexual urges and would have sex with any moving female. It also naturally excludes any explanation for any queer, non-straight, sexual interaction.

the idea of monogamy, or sometimes polygyny, is reinforced with more or less tolerance for exceptions in fidelity (like prostitution) on the male's behalf.

CONCLUSION

The maximalist feeling is everywhere, it is life. Being too stuffed, being too overwhelmed, being too deeply in love. I look into the future and into the present and the anguish is immense, the endless realization of being completely and utterly powerless. I am one, the world is many. I am one, and to change we must be many. It's me and you. All of the any yous that there are. Imagining all of the otherness around me is already maximalism .

So I guess this might be a naïve piece of writing, a very young piece of writing, I already assume that people who have lived longer and felt more disappointment about humankind's decisions, might think it's silly to believe that more love can save the planet. Well I don't know, but I do see around myself many people that are *one*, absolutely singular people, with poor or no connection with the idea of multitudes of people rather than multitudes of things. Singular pebbles running around Europe, making few connections and moving on, looking for their "path", their individual unique path, caring little about the communities they stumble upon. To me, my naïve self, that is connected with a lifestyle promoted by our economical system. It's a scary thought. A planet which is potentially flourishing with billions of different life forms, seems to be scaling down in variety, from many to few, from few to fewer. Still the pebbles running around, hopping on planes, looking for the own individual path, buying more, caring less. Gatherings become illegal, and the amount of people we see is regulated, our proximity is regulated. In relation to the new corona regulations everywhere in Europe in late 2020, these thoughts about multitudes and caring become even more publicly rejected, and therefore we must be careful about what lays ahead. It is astonishing how quickly a society changes in times of emergency, and how much people give up without thought, blinded by fear. Is life worth living if we are constrained to be a small insignificant "one", when we can be more.

Love MORE! Accept MORE, collect, recycle, fill your rooms with trash found on the street, next to that many lovers, many thoughts.

The world is already too much and we don't need more stuff. We want more lovers.

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ⁱ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 1920.

ⁱⁱ (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/25/sliding-towards-extinction-koala-may-be-given-endangered-listing-as-numbers-plummet>)

ⁱⁱⁱ Dunbar, R.I.M. (1992) Neocortex size as constraint on group size in primates. *Journal of Human Evolution*, 22:469-493

^{iv} Ryan Christopher, Cacilda Jetha, *Sex at Dawn*, United States, Harper Perennial, 2010, P. 153-212

^v Mark Fisher - *Capitalist Realism, is there no alternative?*, O books, 2009 - title of chapter 1, which he attributes to Frederic Jameson and Slavoj Žižek

^{vi} Esposito Roberto, *Communitas: Origine e destino della comunita'*, Italia, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, Filosofia, 1998 , chapter 2

^{vii} Ryan Christopher, Cacilda Jetha, *Sex at Dawn*, United States, Harper Perennial, 2010,