

**Timur Si-Qin**

*Infinite Surrender, Focused Control*

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*The world turns, and we turn with it.*

–Brad Pitt for Chanel No. 5

My favourite descriptions of entropy are from the sixth grade: ‘After you’ve tidied your bedroom, do you notice that it becomes less orderly over time?’

Life is messy.

Today ‘the natural’ and its phenomena require close scrutiny. Organic prejudice presumes exclusion of the synthetic, though we are all touched by culture. (Even trees.) Back-pedaling from Enlightenment positivism, there is broad-based scepticism for the industrial application of measurement standards – though numbers and statistical analyses maintain a rational grip on our imagination. Quantifiability = a semblance of control. My iPhone pedometer counts the footsteps from my flat to the library (I purposely take long strides), a customized flow of meta-data that will probably, you know, prevent my premature death.

No GMOs! No artificial preservatives! In the 1960s certain Americans – counter culture sympathizers – shunned caffeine (a chemical). I drink coffee every morning; know vegans getting by on M&Ms & MDMA. Just last week the US Supreme Court banned patents for ‘natural’ human DNA. Yet if strategic biological reproduction is now a solipsistic act (no coitus needed), surely ‘natural’ procreation remains a vestigial convention? Heritage is a fetish label applicable to a certain class of denim. All venture capitalists should invest in male birth control.

The game theory of evolution helps to explain altruistic behaviour within the Darwinian process. *Seduce usefully. Don’t waste your time attracting just anybody* (Tiqqun, Theory of the Young-Girl). Such are compromises of mutual benefit based on mutual fear; though it depends on what you believe about material relationships. I mean, ‘believe’ –

If the essence of cotton is undestroyed when it is burned – stupidly – by fire (cf. Harman), is the same true for the human spirit, or, a yoga mat? Melting as a caricature of the PVC-plastic-latex amalgam: the substantial (irreversible) achievement of Zen. In the 1980s yoga was legitimized as a purely physical exercise system severed from esotericism; and now the hygienic mat is mandatory at most studios, a functional object that transforms meditative philosophy into sport. Deep breathing in child’s pose is far more rigorous than collapsing into a chair. Just... let... go...

But we do so only after insuring ourselves, against the odds, into emotional bankruptcy. Is stimulation – of body, eye, intellect – still necessary for the living?

*I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them, (and there are many that do so,) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them . . . But to what end, in many cases, this was designed, I am unable to discover.*

–Edmund Burke, 1796

Kari Rittenbach