

# THE GARDEN OF PECULIARITIES

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[www.feralhouse.com](http://www.feralhouse.com)

[info@feralhouse.com](mailto:info@feralhouse.com)

Layout by Hedi El Kholti

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PECULIARITIES

**Jesús Sepúlveda**

**Translation by Daniel Montero**

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# 1

**I**DEOLOGY crystallizes itself like a map in memory. It legitimizes itself by propagating the false idea that the world in which we live is the best possible world, or the system is the best system, regardless of its shortcomings. For this reason, it is common to hear that socialism is better than capitalism, the free market is better than the proletarian state, democracy better than fascism, military dictatorship better than communism, republic better than monarchy, feudal bondage better than slavery, city better than country, etc. However many of these arguments are launched, they all are ultimately absurd because they tend to justify repression at the altar of a supposed necessary order. Ideology demonizes its opposition as partisans of a supposed and constructed chaos, praising moderation and fostering resignation. Ideology skirts logic and cajoles the naive population into accepting evil as inevitable, which carries with it either the aftertaste of fatality or arrogance, but always with surrender or sacrifice. In this vein, it is not uncommon to hear it said that change is impossible, or that there are no longer ideals worth fighting for nor hope to embrace. Ideology programs

collective desperation. It alienates. It defeats. It is as recalcitrant as a dogma, because its ultimate goal is self-perpetuation. It uses every means available toward this end: genocide, ecocide, elections, or simply fear—fear that paralyzes the imagination, or erases it.

Ideology operates like a narrative that domesticates by way of its own systemic standardization. It expands like a virus, or transparent and mimetic plague, which expresses itself in trends or in name-brand identities. No one sees it, no one feels it, no one touches it, yet everyone speaks with its tongue. It strangles the mind—which is connected to a server or a mainframe—and plugs in the eyes. It reproduces itself mechanically and accumulates unsatisfied desires in an oscillating spiral. This spiral is like the pleats of an accordion or, better yet, an artificial heart sounding its own agony. The beating of this false heart will continue until the empire rearms, the government regroupes, castes are revived, or until the system collapses, a victim of its own decadence.

Ideology crystallizes itself like a map. This map, however, is false—it portrays the world as a mental creation, a stage constructed over the base of the gears of productivity: the gearing is the material and ideological bubble in which the so-called political and economic systems of eco-social

domination exist. Ideology justifies itself with the false idea that this is a happy and viable world, and that, despite its shortcomings, it is better to close your eyes to accustom yourself to survival and to avoid any disruption of the dream. When a person dreams, the nightmares cease and fantasy flowers. This can be, however, highly subversive, because in addition to letting the imagination fly, dreams erase narratives and turn the maps upside-down, disposing of them in fetid waste-dumps.

## 2

**D**OMESTICATION is a process that some animals on this planet suffer. It reduces the wild and accustoms the animal to the absence of the natural state of living beings on this planet. It eliminates any wild characteristics that naturally negate planet-wide standardization. It erases that which is natural and spontaneous and which made life possible on this planet. It homogenizes every living creature and organizes life into unities that categorize everything living and breathing on the planet. It places human beings outside the animal kingdom, creating categories of kingdoms and organizing plants and insects as dead objects on this planet. Domestication is a process suffered

like a strange sickness that weighs on life in every corner of the planet, threatening to destroy the existence of all who inhabit its magic.

### 3

**A**FFECTION instills strength. Without it, it is nearly impossible to struggle with experiences too intense and painful to endure. Tenderness is a way of life, opposed to the automatization of the clock and forced labor. Robotization is a way of death, opposed to the liberation of time and leisure, which allow tenderness to grow like a healthy trunk in the garden of all and so spread its aroma among all beings that inhabit the planetary garden. In contrast, globalization imposes a standard mold on our garden. It manifests itself in a triple process: imperial expansion of capital; worldwide standardization through economic control by transnational companies, and domestication of the soil through monoculture, destroying natural variety and paving the earth. Its avarice threatens all natural cycles. The soil is the skin and the flesh that covers our planet. Clean air is the landscape that gives us oxygen and protects us from dying, burnt by the penetration of ultraviolet rays. Condors and Magellan sheep

have been blinded due to the weakening ozone layer. Water gives us life. Soil, air and water are parts of a natural cycle that pollution interrupts. Then, fire gives us the energy we need, and the sun nurtures us with compassion and tenderness.

Certainly we all need tenderness: the cat that stretches itself between the calves of guests or meows in your lap; the dog that jumps excited at your return and looks for your recognition. Tenderness reconnects us to all things and makes us well. Who has not felt pleasure at touching the face of a loved one or bathed in the pleasure of a beloved's touch?

Robotic cybernetic replicas only work. They falsely perceive time, they understand it as a continuous line where past, present and future intersect simultaneously but in an unreal way. The notion of time is an authoritarian imposition of the social order that justifies itself with the false idea of progress, a model of legitimization of the dominant order: industrialization, imprisonment and territorial delimitation. Materially, we live in the present, in existence itself.

"Hic et nunc," so goes the Latin refrain, here and now. Because of this, memory—always active and arbitrary, changing and selective—gives us a perception of our own experience. Experience amplifies peculiarity, a process distinct

from history, this is to say from the standardization of the official. The only common factor to all the peculiarities there are on earth is tenderness. Affection is a primary necessity of human beings. Knowing, then is to understand that without tenderness and love, no revolution can be possible.

## 4

**E**FFICIENCY is inflexible. An automatic collector on the bus processes only exact change to print a ticket; otherwise, it does not work, and it invalidates the operation. The automatic teller buzzes at a wrong button pushed and rejects the plastic card. This is the logic of efficiency, or the reason of inflexibility. In the same way, being indecisive is a sign of inefficiency, which marks and burns with the stain of the flexible.

The sap that flows through nature spreads without a stable base of identity. Rather it flows spontaneously, precipitately. It does not reproduce itself identically, and it rejects the molds of mechanization. This fluid is in constant movement. While the river runs, its particles have no possible replica. In this way, freezing a single drop, isolating it from the general flow, is an act against nature. Cloning nature in order to pour its double into a

test tube is a reifying act. Nature is peculiarity itself and is fragile like every snowflake. Its spirit is flexible. The logic of standardization articulates itself instead through the mechanisms of efficiency. An experiment cannot make itself flexible; it requires a stable pattern that must be tested under inflexible conditions and coordinates. Life flows in an organic way, like the sap of plants; it is not a laboratory experiment under scientific control. On the contrary, it flowers with the flexibility of a bud. Sap waters the world through each one of its peculiarities. Efficiency negates nature, given that it tries to impose a control panel over the garden, which sprouts spontaneously and organically. Efficiency expands and colonizes, ignoring all peculiarity. Because of this, its function is to construct categories that operate with the logic of taxonomic standardization. Thus it differentiates and creates sets while it negates the differences in these same sets, which cannot resist the light and organicity of their own peculiarities.

Reality is a garden of peculiarities forged from a constellation of other peculiarities, which at the same time disperse themselves in their own universe to the rhythm of the sap that flows and flowers. The fluid does not organize itself nor does it represent itself. It is only a flow. Everything that inhabits it is part of its own

organicity, which grows in the constant movement of each unique and unrepeatable constellation. The organicity of change—which sometimes expresses itself like bubbles in boiling water—surfaces when humans concentrate their energy—which becomes self-reflexive consciousness—and corrects the course of daily events. But organicity is also natural and independent of consciousness. For example, global warming, caused by human technology, will make the planet cool down to counteract the frightening and artificial heat of fossil fuels. This will cause floods, tsunamis and even the disappearance of coastal population centers. To not understand this is to alienate oneself from the course of life that flows between each and every one of us. It is to fall into reification, that is to say, into the logic that situates subjects like dead matter in a control panel. This is the panel that turns the mechanized system on and off, negating with its measured tic-tac the permanent course of life.

## 5

**A** FEW THINGS are certain, or at least, nearly irrefutable. One of these is that life flowers around trees. Another, that trees cannot live without water. On the contrary, they dry up.

Clearcutting and the damming of rivers do not only imply the human and corporate-human dominion over nature, but also the destruction of every fountain from which life emanates. The defense of the planet, by every possible means, is not only a question of self-defense, but also of survival.

The instinct of self-preservation of the human species has brought about dominion over nature. But this very dominion threatens our self-preservation. It is a vicious circle that sooner or later will break down. And any breakdown will be a total breakdown, a rupture both mental and material because it necessarily involves our ways of perceiving and interacting with nature.

The dominion over the environment and creatures that inhabit it does not bring about preservation but colonization. Its effect is concrete: the conquest of the planet, of animals, of plants, of insects and, of course, humans. Real people, those who still have not been alienated from their own natures—by luck or resistance—still feel a strong connection with the earth and maintain a strong connection with their ancestors. Native peoples have a sense of wellbeing not seen in civilized cultures. Primitive populations still preserve an atavistic wisdom. In their eyes, the understanding that we are nothing but nature is an act of simple lucidity.

This radical revelation deconstructs all taxonomies—and epistemological classifications—that tend to justify the objectification of people in reifying categories: kingdoms, classes, races or orders of any type. Human beings are nothing but nature. Every creature is singular and unrepeatable. Colonizing cloning and the notion of a monolithic identity—as a subjective identity identical to every other identity, and thereby petrified—negates the peculiarity of every being. Civilization—and by extension its sublime expression, the city—embodies this negation. Its tendency is toward expansion, and it carries along with it colonialism and the holy war. Christian, Muslim, Inca, Aztec, Japanese, Ottoman, Greco-Latin and Chinese civiliations, among others, have shown their proclivity toward invasion and conquest. Civilization, seen as second nature, has legitimated the destruction of anything other than its own civilized order. The negation of the truly natural is the base of the civilized order, which expands like a conqueror and manifests its blood-thirsty ways in the extermination of indigenous communities and aboriginal cultures.

For civilization, every act of destruction of its icons is an iconoclastic or terrorist act. When civilization destroys a way of life or culture different from its civilized order, this becomes

civilizing action. This is the logic of colonialization. The extermination of colonized communities is not just brought about by the cracking of the whip or the shot of the cannon, but also by the clearcutting of forests and the construction of dams.

## 6

THE INDIVIDUAL tends to see him or herself as an individual subject. This is to say, as an indivisible being, unique and monolithic. This vision has generated a false consciousness of the being that justifies pragmatic individualism as much as the Cartesian disembodiment of the self: “Cogito ergo sum,” mind over body, the virtual world, personal space, etc. The institutional propaganda of school and the authoritarianism of the expert scientific voice have impelled civilized populations to internalize the notion of the monolithic subject whose incorporeal identity reifies itself into an expansive ego, thus reproducing the instrumental logic of colonizing western thought. The expansive “I” turns itself into a unique and indivisible individual, thus negating its own multiplicity, plurality and flexibility, all that constitutes its own peculiarity. Thus, while the monolithic identity negates multiplicity, disembodiment

rejects reality. So, the indivisible identity reifies itself through the disembodied consciousness of the “I.” And this consciousness is nurtured and forms itself through the standardizing mechanizations of taxonomic knowledge.

The individual is not a being apart from its totality, nor is it fragmented between body and consciousness. The individual is a part of its totality, and its body interacts with reality. Denying this is justifying alienation. To feel the wind, for example, that crosses our pores when we stop at night to look at the stars, is sufficient proof that this totality exists. To believe the opposite is to be sadly alienated.

Poetry and art prevent the standardization of peculiarity. Artistic language suggests, instead of describing comprehensively, the immediate presence of being. Art and poetry dismantle the reduction driven by intellectual control, allowing its practitioners to become a part of totality. This transformation is called authenticity or one’s own voice, that is, the genuine that exists in everyone. This authenticity is nothing more than the peculiarity of every being: that which opposes standardization expressed by—among other things—the reification of the “I.” To think, for example, that one is an image projected in a mirror, or to believe in the formal and pictorial combination of

a portrait, or in a mechanically reproduced image—photography, video or film—represents an alienating distance between the reality of a being and the reifying Cartesian consciousness to which the civilized world submits. Images as mediating ideological constructs of human relationships constitute what Guy Debord early on called “The society of the spectacle.” Since then, the world has conglomerated like a swarm of bees around panoptical centers of domestication: television, Hollywood, the cult of celebrity. This is without even taking into consideration surveillance and control. Images massively lead individuals to see themselves as individual subjects, that is, as indivisible beings, unique and monolithic, thus ignoring their flexibility, plurality and multiplicity. This final trilogy is the stuff of which the innate peculiarity of the self is made.

## 7

**M**ONADS, according to the philosophic system of Leibniz, are indivisible substances of different natures that compose the universe. The neutrino, according to the physical sciences that speculate about black holes and parallel universes, is an electrically neutral particle