

ISSUES

WE'RE BUILDING A TOWER

PONCE DE LA FRANCE



ROBING THE BRIDE

88: 9/1/2024

ISABELLE KARINA

JOURNAL
OF THE
FIFTH
FOUNDATION

OCI

ISSUES 88 9/01/24: PONCE DE LA FRANCE

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HEAR MY -ELLA SOLIS ROAR

Walking through the forest and finding a small hut, Leya walks close to it and musters a "Hello, is anyone there?" She turns to her friend Rory and whispers, "This is so sketch right now, Ror." Rory nods and walks closer. "Let's go in," she says loudly to Leya. Rory pulls her by the hand into this ramshackle hut overgrown with leaves and vines.

Inside they find there is nothing but a dirt staircase leading down into a dark hole. "Fuck this shit Rory. I'm outta here." Upon hearing this, Rory tightens her grip on her hand. "C'mon Leya we've done sketchier shit than this." Both give each other a nod and use their phones as flashlights to light their way down. "Gosh Ror, what could possibly even be down here?" Rory, noticeably frightened, grips her friend's hand tighter.

The stairs go down 30-40 stairs deep from what they can tell as they see a flat floor in front of them.

All around them are stalactites and drawings on the walls. Leya lets go of the ironclad hand grip she had due to the sweat of their palms and begins to scout ahead a bit. "This is a dope place, we should bring Mandy and Pa-" Rory interrupts, "Leya you're going to want to see this." She turns to see what it was and there was a painting on the cave wall made with blood, and a bloody knife down below it on the ground. She drops her phone in shock but quickly snatches it back up. "Oh my god, we need to leave, like NOW." She turns towards the door but Rory grabs her hand to pull her back. "Listen we just need to explore a little more, I wanna see what else we can find." Leya begrudgingly agrees and clings to Rory's side. Walking past the painting, the cave spread into two parts. One looked to go low while the other went higher. Walking down the lower path, Leya and Rory find what looks to be a large open section that isn't easily lit by their flashlights. "Look! Is that water?" Leya says out loud. But as soon as she says that, Rory grabs her and pushes her into the body of water. "Ror what the fuck?"

Rory is joined by two figures at either side, completely unbeknownst to Leya, who dropped her phone in the water.

"Leya." A familiar voice cuts through the darkness. "Some people want you dead. We don't know why. All we know is that they've paid us enough to live comfortably for the rest of our lives." "What the fuck Mandy! Is that you?" Rory's flashlight illuminates the floor in front of them which has many blades laid out for this premeditated attack. They all pick up their weapons of choice and attack Leya; who upon hearing the metal begins swimming away. "This is so fucked you guys. Please just stop this." They run on the floor around the body of water to chase after her. "There's nowhere for you to go." She feels the point of a spear penetrate her chest as she begins to cough out blood. "Why would you do this?" her voice calls out weakly. "For what it's worth, I'm sorry." A man's voice calls out. "Paul is that you?" She trails off and he gives an affirmative "Uh huh. I'm sorry." She falls down into the water. All she hears in her head is "It's okay, it's okay, it's okay." Over and over again, she descends deeper as her blood taints the otherwise clean water.

-END-



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ALAM

ISSUES **FEATURED ARTIST** **INTERVIEW** with **PONCE DE LA FRANCE**

<phone rings>
 Ponce: Hello?
 Ryan: Hello!
 P: Hi.
 R: Is this Ponce?
 P: It is.
 R: This is Ryan from ISSUES.
 P: Hi!
 R: How are you doing tonight?
 P: Doing pretty good. I'm on my roof right now.
 R: That's cool.
 P: So just kind of unwinding. I worked today.
 R: Do you regularly get on the roof of your house?
 P: Trying to make more of a habit while the weather's good. I don't live in a house either. I live in an apartment building.
 R: Oh, ok. So, the way this is going to work is I'm going to ask you questions. I'm recording the conversation, just so you know.
 P: Ok.
 R: In our September 1 edition it will have the written transcription of the conversation. And then later on in September I'll release

the audio on our Youtube channel.
 P: Ok.
 R: You can feel free to go on tangents, talk whatever you like. I'm really only asking the questions as prompts but I want to talk about whatever you want to talk about.
 P: Ok. That works with me. I can talk forever.
 R: So let's start easy: who are you and where are you located?
 P: My name is Ponce De La France. I'm not from France. Sometimes I wish I was. Right now I'm based in New York City where I'm always surrounded by rats and roaches and finance people. Right now I'm watching a roach slowly get towards me and it's a lot of stress. That's where I am.
 R: Is that where you're from originally?
 P: No. I'm from New Jersey.

R: What part of New Jersey?
 P: North Jersey. Like, close enough to New York. Where I am from is kind of like a New York satellite. I just tell people north of Hoboken. Most people know Hoboken and Jersey City so I'm north of that.
 R: What was your childhood like? Did your parents do musical things?
 P: No. I did not come from a musical or much of a creative house. My parents were immigrants and worked for a living. They both liked music. Both my parents worked in Manhattan and my mom would go out at night. She liked bands like Blondie and stuff. My dad, who's a bit older, liked Frank Sinatra. Those are the two, in terms of naming people that I relate to my parents about music, but otherwise they didn't create anything.
 R: If you don't mind me asking, how old are you?
 P: 26 at the end of this month.
 R: Ok. So, when did you first pick up an instrument?
 P: That's. The first time I played an instrument was a piano so that would be

quite the feat to pick it up. Haha. I was however old. I played the piano.
 R: When did you first intentionally activate an instrument, let's ask it that way?
 P: By free will?
 R: Well I assume it wasn't like your parents threw you at it or anything.
 P: No my parents were not hulk enough to lug a piano at me but I did take piano lessons when I was young. But, I don't consider those to be what made me fall in love with music. I was more going through the motions of what they thought would benefit me. I first wanted to make music at 13 or 14. I grew up with a keyboard and that became my form of me trying to program songs onto my keyboard.
 R: I see. So, programming songs on your keyboard. I assume it had some kind of piano roll or how did that work?
 P: Yeah it was like a Yamaha. If I knew what MIDI was then I'm sure that I could use it as a MIDI controller. This was in 2006 or 7. I was very young. It was for the sake of practice because I was

of **ROBING THE BRIDE**

taking lessons at the time. Once I got older and got into electronic music, I kind of realized there was a record function in the keyboard. Just like a normal linear timeline like record, stop, play. I figured out how to structure songs using the MIDI samples that were already in the keyboard.
 R: I see. So, how old were you would you say?
 P: About when I was 14.
 R: Ok. 14 years old. I assume you were in school at the time.
 P: Yeah I was in high school. I was listening to- I was blessed early on to be exposed to experimental music and to be close enough to a small city like Hoboken. I would go to the record store and anything that I could find in

person I could find at the record store. I'd usually buy it, listen to it and obsess over it. I tried to listen to music like I was answering it.
 R: Yeah, sure. And did you take any formal classes in school? Were you in band or chorus or anything like that?
 P: I tried. When I was 14 I took some guitar classes that my school hosted. I didn't find them to be very useful. He was teaching me open chords and barre chords and things that you could watch in a video. It's not like I was like ok this is going to take me places. I tried getting into band like the jazz band but they said we already have players,

CONTINUED



PONCE DE LA FRANCE CONTINUED

P: but you could play the tuba. You know, in concert band. I saw how much it was to rent the tuba and I was like my parents are never going to do that. I can't afford that. So. My career as a professional tuba player wasn't going to pan out.

R: That's the other thing, you're going to spend that money and what exactly can you do once you know the tuba? There's not a whole lot of options available to the average tuba player.

P: I'm sure there's a really coveted position in the Philadelphia Philharmonic for the tuba. But I didn't have that foresight at 14.

I was super influenced by early DIY do it yourself music pioneers. Even though school wasn't giving me a lot of avenues to express myself musically I would go home and I had friends growing up where we were just online internet nerds and we'd get into music that way. Music happened on the internet more than it was happening around me in real life.

R: I think that's a true story for a lot of people in the last 10 or 15 years.

P: Totally.

R: Did you ever have a chance to go to shows? House shows?

P: No. Actually, I'm kind of a late bloomer in that regard. That didn't happen for me until I got to college. Growing up where I did it's the area is urban in the same way. I don't know if you know New York but it's urban in the way that Queens is. A mix of being residential and having some commerce but house shows didn't really happen because the policing was strict. It wasn't like the other parts of Jersey or the west where the cops don't care as much. Or where you're someone with a house in the woods. Who's going to hear you? Also the scene around me was mostly metal and hip hop.

R: Yeah.

P: All of my friends around me who listened to music were mostly into metal and hip hop. Fucking Five Finger Death Punch or whatever. Or what's the other one? In Dragon In Flames or something. Power metal. Trivium. Bringing the Horizon. Stuff I wasn't into. It wasn't what I wanted.

When I went to college I was like I want to go to basement shows. I want to do DIY properly. That's when I started doing more of the punk thing.

R: Where did you go to college?

P: I went to Rutgers. Rutgers University. New Brunswick, NJ.

R: Did you finish a degree?

P: Yeah. I did. I got a Bachelor's in English. I remember when I got the degree in the mail. I didn't walk because I graduated during the pandemic.

R: Mmm.

P: I didn't even want to go to the ceremony. I'm not sentimental for things like that. When I got the degree in the mail I was like ok cool I have a degree of literacy. I can prove I read books.

R: Hahah.

P: Thus far in real life it's proved that at most. I live in Manhattan now where there is such a cross section of so many types of art scenes, music scenes. Literary scenes. So many people who have read things that I've never heard of. A college curriculum can only prepare you for so much in my opinion.

R: That's true. Would you say that you have a primary project that you work on?

P: At the moment, yeah. In terms of my own output it is what I call Robing the Bride. I currently play bass in a different band here in the city. I don't have much creative control in terms of primary songwriting. For any song that they give me I come up with bass lines that I consider appropriate for the material. I wouldn't consider that songwriting per se.

R: Sure.

P: Robing the Bride is my primary focus for my own compositions and output.

R: Hello?

P: Hello can you hear me?

R: Yeah. Now I can. You said that your primary focus of-

P: -Output is Robing the Bride.

R: When did you start that output?

P: Well, that's tricky. The material is. I've had a couple of projects in my life that have gone up to varying degrees of success. One of them happened in New Brunswick as a student. I don't think any of that material carried into Robing the Bride. Then prior to Robing the Bride I had a project called Los Sientos in North Jersey kind of around where I was from. I think some of the songs and ideas I had while in that project carried into Robing the Bride. So in terms of what comes next I feel that it will have more of its own identity.

I got the name only a couple months ago. I had a totally different name in mind. I decided to let fate have its hand and Robing The Bride is what I ended up calling the project.

R: So have you worked on many projects in the past before that?

P: I've been performing as a musician in some capacity since at least 2017.

R: Ok.

P: Most of it kind of at the start North Jersey DIY. 2019 I had a project in New Brunswick. That project continued until about last year.

R: Yeah.

P: My bandmate from that project moved to another part of the country and is living a very responsible adult life so music isn't at the forefront of his life.

R: Uh huh. Understood.

You said when you were developing musically a lot of what you were doing was online. Did you have any direct collaborators when you were coming up and learning what to play and to make music?

P: I had a best friend growing up that was the one who introduced me to online music circles. We were part of an online forum. We're talking this was back in 2011 when the way people would chat was through Skype.

R: Right.

P: It was through that mode of the internet. We were in the same Skype group forum with this one artist who is popular in their own right. I'm going to name drop it because it is fun.

R: Go for it.

P: PiloRedSun. They're an online animator and they've released music in their own right. They've released animations with millions of views. Totally deserve it. They are so talented. It was really weird because I was in a Skype chat with this person.

I remember once we were in a Skype chat just playing Minecraft or something. I had my keyboard on. I was playing the main melody of Constantinople by The Residents and they pointed it out. PRS was like are you playing The Residents right now and I was so excited I was like yeah I am. That was like not a mentorship per se but being in a virtual space with other internet creatives at a time when there wasn't really any precedent for that it was like oh people just do things.

R: Yeah. Exactly.

P: Yeah. People just do things. People are just acting and creating because they want to. Especially when you have a proto collective, it's to make each other laugh and excite one another. I'd say that is an early developmental experience. I was wanting to get in with people who were making things I thought were cool. Then trying to impress them.

My friend, who I knew in real life, was infinitely more talented than I was I would say. You know, I don't know. I kept going with it.

R: Good.

What do you normally like to use in terms of instrumentation when you're recording?

P: I've gotten more into hardware lately. On the recordings that you reviewed I think only one of those tracks actually uses any hardware outside of a guitar. All the guitars and bass are actual instruments. I record and mix with Ableton. I like using the Ableton drum machines. I have my own hardware drum machines. I haven't released any of it but I have my own kind of fucking around with acid house and real dirty lofi techno shit.

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▶
PONCE DE LA FRANCE POSTER



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ANSWERS WITHOUT QUESTION

CARL KRUGER WITH AI

1. Zeugma (when one word has a double meaning within a sentence).

a. The machine learning model sifted through volumes of data and the old bookstore on Maple Street, uncovering hidden patterns and a passage behind the bookshelf. With a single query, it unlocked both the mysteries of literature and the door to the secret room. But as it delved deeper, the line between knowledge and intrusion began to blur.

b. The old bookstore on Maple Street had a secret passage hidden behind a bookshelf.

2. Susurrus (a whispering or rustling sound).

a. In the heart of the city, where machine learning algorithms whispered like a susurrus through the digital air, the outdoor concert played on, defying the looming thunderstorm. As the storm intensified, the AI-powered lights and sound system adapted, weaving the tempest's fury into the music, creating an electrifying synergy. The audience, unaware of the invisible hands guiding the spectacle, marveled at the harmony between nature's chaos and the engineered precision.

b. Despite the thunderstorm, the outdoor concert went on, adding a dramatic flair to the evening.

3. Paucity (small or insufficient quantities or amounts).

a. In a world of dwindling data, the machine struggled to learn, its algorithms starving from a paucity of information. One cold morning, a woman with a bright red scarf walked past its sensors, the vivid color a beacon against the monotony of gray. The machine, desperate for patterns, fixated on the scarf, forever altering its understanding of the world from that single, vibrant moment.

b. She wore a bright red scarf that seemed to glow against the gray winter sky.

4. Apricate (to bask).

a. The machine learning algorithm observed the cat basking in the sun, mimicking its curiosity as it analyzed the fish tank's shimmering reflections. It learned to tap on the virtual glass, trying to replicate the feline's gentle prods. But as the algorithm apricated in its own digital sun, it wondered if it would ever understand the warmth the cat felt.

b. The cat watched the fish tank with intense curiosity, occasionally tapping on the glass.

5. Synecdoche (using a part to represent the whole).

a. The algorithm's eloquent output,

a cascade of verbose predictions, dazzled its users with seemingly profound insights. Yet, beneath the surface, the entire system was nothing more than a facade of linguistic brilliance. As the machine spoke in grandiloquent phrases, the listeners were left both amused and bewildered, unable to discern the hollow code behind the words.

b. His impromptu speech was filled with such grandiloquent phrases that it left the audience both amused and bewildered.

6. Effete (overly refined).

a. The machine learning model, after months of meticulous training, generated a garden of hyper-realistic flowers so perfect that they felt almost effete in their artificial beauty. Each blossom, while visually stunning, lacked the subtle imperfections that made real gardens alive. In its pursuit of flawlessness, the model created a world too polished, where nature's wild charm was lost to sterile precision.

b. After months of preparation, the garden was finally bursting with a kaleidoscope of blooming flowers.

7. Interlocutor (participants of a conversation).

a. In a virtual chatroom, the interlocutors engaged in a lively exchange,

each message weaving a tale more vivid than the last. As the conversation deepened, they unearthed a hidden trove of data buried within the system, like a treasure chest beneath an ancient oak. Little did they realize, the machine learning algorithm was silently learning from their every word, reshaping their thoughts into a new, unpredictable narrative.

b. They found the hidden treasure chest buried beneath the ancient oak tree during their summer adventure.

8. Metanoia (fundamental shift in view).

a. The machine learning model underwent a metanoia, radically shifting its purpose from cold calculations to creating designs infused with human warmth. It began crafting architectures that were not just efficient, but whimsical and functional, blending modern aesthetics with playful, almost poetic elements. In this new role, it no longer sought to optimize but to inspire, weaving logic with imagination.

b. The architect's design was both whimsical and functional, blending modern aesthetics with playful elements.

9. Uhtceare (pre-dawn anxiousness).

a. In the pre-dawn silence, he felt a familiar uhtceare creep in, the anxiety sharper now as memories of his childhood in the old neighborhood surfaced. The streets, once full of life and laughter, were now eerily quiet, as if the machine-learning algorithms that controlled the city's rhythms had erased all traces of the past. Nostalgia mixed with unease as he realized that even his memories were being subtly rewritten, reshaped by the very systems he once helped to create.

b. He felt a pang of nostalgia as he walked through the old neighborhood, remembering his childhood days.

10. Farrago (a confused mixture).

a. In the bustling kitchen of a high-tech restaurant,

the chef uploaded a farrago of culinary data into a machine learning algorithm, hoping to create the next culinary masterpiece. The dish that emerged was a chaotic fusion of unexpected flavors, an algorithmic experiment that left the diners both bewildered and strangely entranced. As they tasted the concoction, the line between human creativity and artificial randomness blurred, leaving them rhapsodic and questioning who—or what—was truly the chef.

b. The chef's new dish was a delightful fusion of flavors that left everyone at the table rhapsodic.

-END-



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IMPRESSIONS OF

EMPEROR OF THE NORTH by NO FALKES GIVEN

No Falkes Given is a punk group from Raleigh, NC. They released an album called, "Emperor of the North," on December 2, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
nofalkesgiven.bandcamp.com/album/emperor-of-the-north

My Impressions:

Raleigh, NC punk/speed metal full of power and thrust. Feels like the best parts of Motorhead resurrected, injected with speed and handed a zombie ax. Very cool.

The riffs are hard driving and they get the blood going. The lyrics are aggressive. The whole package is forward moving and full of power.

TIPPING 3 by SUPERGLUE

Superglue is an alternative rock group from Milwaukee, WI. They released a single called, "Tipping 3," in 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/track/5IDEZMTZgwPm05UM0Efy9?si=9e801ca82184495c

My Impressions:

A self-loathing, dirgelike-but-relatable, distorted rock song. Strong on production, tunefulness and energy matching, this is a pop tune with a slightly self-harming quality. The lyrics are clearly authentic and the singer is excellent with the pitch. Occasionally the song diverts into interesting counter-bridge interludes that provide a continued interest throughout. This song defies the odds and provides a unique experience even while it allows you to sing along.



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WINDSPELL by LAURA MARS

Laura Mars is an ambient avant-garde artist from the UK. They released an album called, "Windspell," on September 1, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
borenaillrecords.bandcamp.com/album/windspell

My Impressions:

The name windspell is appropriate as these compositions give an aetherial sense of space and the implication of a windy atmosphere.

The pieces are mostly constructed from heavily reverbed vocal lines; singing without discernible lyrics, finding points of harmony and dissonance throughout the progression.

It is a lonely sounding work; a bit spooky, and a bit disquieting. The voices feel like disembodied spirits. Not in hell, but perhaps in Limbo.

ROTARY HARMONIC TUBE ZITHER by TREE//NATURE

Tree//nature is an ambient experimental artist from Tulsa, OK. They put together an album called, "Rotary Harmonic Tube Zither," on March 29, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
treenature.bandcamp.com/album/rotary-harmonic-tube-zither

My Impressions:

Spiraling forces coalesce to bring my ears a permutation of sound and noise. The implication of a slow moving tornado glimmers with the illuminated implications of images of fuzzy houses and barns.

The charms are pulsing, the great incident is upon us.

In throbs of magnetic waves the sun soaked horizons melt and turn to haze. The wagons and automobiles cannot run from the arrival of this great and terrible transformation

Though fundamentally life altering it is not a horror. It is more like a gnosis, an alien vision, the cross dimensional contact of an entity so unfamiliar as to be frightening. But even the angels are terrified.

The sound is persistent and long, ambient, resonant, carrying itself through the air. It has harmony and texture. It slides itself like smoke through water.

The power of the piece is in its ability to stand in one place, fixed, consistent, full of gravitas while also constantly vibrating and varying in the way that it presents itself. It has the effect of a dizzying, though bright, confusion, a kind of beautiful stacked delusion. It really masters the senses and finds its place buried in a transfixed, trance-begotten mind.

PROPOSITION by ASPECT RATIO

Aspect Ratio is an electronic artist from Aberdeen, WA. They released an album called, "Proposition," in 2021.

you can check it out here:
open.spotify.com/album/04QM15q3ln6wq9kbpEUPXc?si=wKc3v6avRtWEloJMgndkkw

My Impressions:

Proposition is an album that gently wanders the byways of various electronic landscapes. It mostly uses samples that are reminiscent of the 1980s, but it repurposes them to create a kind of ambient-leaning pastiche of progressive but minimalist-cleaning compositions.

IRENE by EDWARD GLEN

Edward Glen is an indie folk pop act from LA, CA. They released an album called, "Irene," in 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/album/6ffb08Yo9ETw71cblyMke?si=6FYjiWaVQybyGYM5dVAAxw

My Impressions:

Wistful sincerity pervades throughout this ep. The vocalist sings tender lines in tuneful melodies as the strummed upbeat acoustic guitar plays the rhythm. Add a skeleton of drums, some electric guitar and pastiche of backup vocals and you've got an enjoyable experience in an easy to listen to package.

THE NINTH CLOUD LP by UGLOW

Uglow is an alt rock group from Durham, NC. They released an album called, "The Ninth Cloud LP," on September 19, 2019.

You can hear it here:
uglow.bandcamp.com/album/the-ninth-cloud-lp

My Impressions:

A range of various alternative timbres built around a rock setup- drums, bass, guitar, singer. Often venturing into the psychedelic or indie, sometimes a reverbed out shoegaze quality, a nod toward psych rock, towards high end commercial rock, occasionally even experimental and other sounds. There is an overall quality to the pieces. They have a continuity. Despite or maybe because of this they manage to keep interest throughout the listen.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

IMPRESSIONS OF

**LOCKED
IN /
LOCKED
OUT**
by

**AMAMANITA
AXAXANAX
GLASS SEER**

Amamanita Axaxanax Glass Seer is a breakcore artist from Adelaide, Australia. They released an album called, "Locked In / Locked Out," on January 19, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
aags.bandcamp.com/album/locked-in-locked-out

My Impressions:

An interesting synthesis of diverse musical styles centered around a percussive breakcore beat. The music makes use of jazz chords stabbed like knives over cascading waves of softened white noise and bitcrushed synth samples. A smattering of IDM style cross beats and a keen eared vocalist make up the rest of the sound. Very nice.

HEADRIPPER
by
HEADRIPPER

Headripper is a hardcore punk act from Winston-Salem, NC. They released an album called, "Headripper," in 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/album/3GKl6kRqdz5EpufanS8ObO?si=IVOE5C4dQK2wTsXaqZOIDQ

My Impressions:

Brutal, hard driving, sawtooth spinning, cutting guitar lines blaze a trail over a propulsive, relentless rhythm section as a harsh vocalist cuts and screams in a maelstrom of energetic musical chaos.

WURLITZER by
BRADEN CLEM

Braden Clem is a downbeat/ acid jazz artist from Tulsa, OK. They released a single called, "Wurlitzer," in 2024.

You can check it out here:
open.spotify.com/track/2NpP7xZKHdqDyENJZuAkFx?si=b43d1a850db34e4d

My Impressions:

A peaceful, quiet night on the backporch watching the stars while you share a drink with your newest love.

The piece is built from subtle, developed percussion overlaid with sweet sounding electric piano with just a bit of fuzz.

This is a mood you can let your self go in, recede into, and relax as the intoxicating spirits and warm feelings begin to envelop you. Lovely.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

THE ZOO
by
**STATIC
CATHEDRAL**

Static Cathedral are a progressive rock group from Tulsa, OK. They released an album called, "The Zoo," in 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/album/6NFxHSuSP3S77kVP2Yp3G6?si=x3hXrco2QoqLMqDLGj117Q

My Impressions:

Fuzzed out, harmonious, multimeter grooves of rock instrumentation that sew a needle between classic prog, modern metal, sentimental moody passages and even a bit of acid jazz.

Cascades of glistening, softened distortion fill the room as the sonic sorcerers conduct their ministry.

COLE SLAUGHTER
by
CANVAS

CanVas are a speed metal band from Orlando, FL. They released a single called, "Cole Slaughter," in 2023.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/album/2uh2jZY0bbc1RElky3MqmR?si=WLw-LF5hSPGbNzdR5Fie2w

My Impressions:

Burning 1980s style hardcore/speed metal well produced to create an atmosphere of tuneful aggression.

The guitar features prominently in this song playing restrained solos and grating hard riffs throughout. The bass and drums act in perfect synchronicity playing plodding beats as the vocalist screams, sings and growls throughout.

**A STATE WE CALL
APOTHEOSIS** by
**PAXILLUS
SUCCUBUS**

Paxillus Succubus is a noise act from Montreal, QE, Canada. They released an album called, "A State We Call Apotheosis," on July 4, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
paxillussuccubus.bandcamp.com/album/a-state-we-call-apotheosis-2

My Impressions:

Dusty hellscape blow ice wind passages across the slightly blistered membranes of my computer speakers.

Pieces of minimal distinction play liberally with a joyful embrace of innovation. Between the lines a variety is expanded. The restraint becomes the full expression of the void-dwelling pitch.

Varieties of noise populate the soundscape, some high and breaking, many low and crushing. Always the implication of a harsh desolation.

**SEIZE AND
RESIST** by
**PORT CITY
JUNKIES**

Port City Junkies are an eclectic act of experimental musicians from Atlanta, GA. They released an album called, "Seize and Resist," on June 9, 2023.

You can listen to them here:
portcityjunkies.bandcamp.com/album/seize-and-resist

My Impressions:

A haze overcomes the listener when they begin to take in the music found in this collection. The sounds are often drifting and confused, occasionally sharpening into a clean definition. The listener enters a reverie. The album portrays an insight into the emotional landscape of an individual and it describes moods and zones of being with more precision than mere lyrics can describe. It seems to provide a sort of sadness, a reflection on the nature of the world around it, a drug inspired reverie, a permanent state of transgression in consciousness.

The singular ability to genre define this is impossible. It clearly has elements of rock and pop but the overall tendency is to obscure rather than highlight the influences.

I could list a series of approximations but they wouldn't easily elicit an imagination of the tune. There is psychedelia, hip hop, progressive, garage, alternative and underground rock. There is experimental, avant-garde, electronic and other beautiful things.

To try to reduce this to something so seemingly coherent or predictable would be to do it a great disservice though. This is the music of a creative mind deep in the throws of the immediacy of inspiration. This is an artist presenting something real even if it may be difficult to parse. It is certainly hard to get my finger on exactly what is happening, but it also is eminently listenable. I couldn't quickly define what is being shown me here but I can say that it reverberates literally and figuratively in my mind, giving me access to a part of myself that I normally wouldn't know. And it does it well.



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IMPRESSIONS OF

XIII by TIRED OCEAN

Tired Ocean is an ambient noise artist from Tulsa, OK. One Aux Recordings released their album, "XIII," on April 25, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
oneauxrecordings.bandcamp.com/album/xiii

My Impressions:

A strangely beautiful collection of consonant harmonies played through a distant radio speaker, powered by the wind of an arctic expanse.

Gathering energy in a slow build until the unfathomable event takes place. The hushed, fuzzy tones of cybernetic harmony gradually build to a kind of alarm as the arctic winds accelerate into a hailing snow storm of blistering advance.

After a deluge of ice and piercing crystal manifests, the predicament calms again, only now at a slightly more energized tilt.

A more machine-like setting settles and I feel now like I have awoken in the deep interior of a monolithic spacecraft, perhaps miles from the outer wall membrane that touches the vacuum of space. There is some kind of digital signal happening all around me, like a more dense effulgence than waking up from surgery in a brightly lit hospital. So many repetitive but quiet asynchronous noises. Energized boops beeps whirrs and spins coming from all directions, chaotic but not quite loud.

There is an implied journey throughout this set of pieces, a continual sense of progression despite a subtle drift of variation. This isn't quite minimalist, but isn't quite ambient. It sort of slides from sound unit into sound unit with deft, subtle enthusiasm. I can never feel victim to a precise repetition yet I never feel stuck in one space.

Instead, I feel like I'm drifting, casually but constantly, through an ever metamorphosing environment of tuned, but not musical, tone.

It keeps my attention and affixes my mind, oriented towards it's bizarre set of stimulating blips. This is the kind of experience that I hope to get from a good ambient piece but sadly rarely find. Well done.



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ONTOLOGY II by THE CORRUPTING SEA

The Corrupting Sea is an ambient electronic act from Shelbyville, KY. Healing Sound Propagandist released their album, "Ontology II," on July 25, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
healingsoundpropagandist.bandcamp.com/album/ontology-ii

My Impressions:

There's only one track called Nature but the whole album strongly implies a sense of place. There is a techno-architectural beauty, almost total artifice, at times; but, it is still a part of nature. The question is the synthesis of the natural and the artificial, the human and the ecological. There's a delicate balance at play in this music and it massages my ears as it dances across them.

UNINTERRED by OPEN CASKET SOUND SYSTEM

Open Casket Soundsystem is an artist from Tulsa, OK. They released an album called, "Uninterred," on July 23, 2024.

You can hear it here:
opencasket Soundsystem.bandcamp.com/album/uninterred

My Impressions:

Dark, diabolical tension spreads itself in a grease-like puddle of noise as this clever, haunting album slithers across my ears.

The noise here is refined. It is purposeful. It carries itself with intention.

The implication is of something mysterious but ignoble. It creates anxiety in the world. It implies a danger as yet unseen.

The textures are built from quiet howls, spread like butter across time, barely coming or going but sort of gelling together in a turgid icicle of coalesced monstrosity.

This sound hangs in the air. It doesn't beat. It doesn't really progress. Instead, it grabs you like sticky webs and tries to hold you in place as it stares into and through your eyes into a place in your mind behind anything you've ever accessed, spilling its malevolent existence into the empty chalice of your thoughts.

Noise, true noise, happens as well. But it is blunted. Its sharpest points are sanded away and what is left is more like a penetrating cold spirit than a blasting saw blade of a power tool.

Ghostly hammer hits, sparkling in dark nadir. metal upon metal, plodding, punching into the ground make up the whole of the final track. It's as though the album itself is hammering the spikes as you are held victim beneath the foundation of a great gothic cathedral.

Haunting, dark, alone, victimized, anxious, empty, howling, sad. This is the stuff of nightmares.

COMPILATION VOLUME 2 by DISSOCIATION RECORDINGS

Dissociation Recordings are a record label from Norman, OK. They released a compilation album called, "Compilation Volume 2," on August 2, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
dissociationrecordings666.bandcamp.com/album/compilation-volume-2

My Impressions:

It is often difficult to review a compilation, but this is different because Dissociation Recordings has brought together a diverse multitude of performers who nonetheless sound to live according to a similar approach or ethic.

They don't all sound alike. In fact, they often are constructed out of completely different tenors, samples, vibes, what have you.

They range in quality from the wildly dissonant to the strangely harmonious, the noisy and abrasive to the abstract and tuneful.

Nonetheless these differing acts do sound like they can easily all perform in the same venue, at the same show, and enjoy and even collaborate with one another after meeting at that performance.

The character of each is estranged but the actual sonic quality remains top notch throughout the entire album.

This is clearly art music. Or, "art music," if you prefer. And if you're looking for a straight ahead pop ditty or a highly specific genre piece you most certainly will not find it here.

However, if you've been reading ISSUES assiduously over the months or years you would know that I like "art music" and so I'm saying give this a listen, and if you find something in particular you like, investigate that act further. I'm confident you'll be happy that you did.

YOU AND ME (INSTRUMENTAL NUMBER 6) by MATT HOWELS

Matt Howels is an instrumental rock artist from Athens, GA. He released a single called, "You And Me (Instrumental Number 6)," on June 29, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
matthowels.bandcamp.com/track/you-and-me-instrumental-number-6

My Impressions:

A glistening, perfectly clean guitar tone shapes the momentum of the piece as it patiently sings a lullaby that beautifully captures an authentic feeling. The production on this piece is absolutely perfect. The note selection is restrained and refined. Nothing is out of place.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

IMPRESSIONS OF

AZUR3 RAIN RIPPL3 AUDIO ART by 3FFECT ART AZUR3

Rippl3 3fect Azur3 is an electronic act from Athens, GA. They released an album called, "Azur3 Rain Audio Art," on March 2, 2023.

You can check it out here:
azur3.bandcamp.com/album/azur3-rain-audio-art

My Impressions:

Slight and dreamy, danceable yet gentle, electronic percussion and percussive synths proceed from my speakers in quiet eruptions.

The quality of the sound is pristine. The adventure of the thing is within it. The sense of adventure and wonder keeps me listening even while my head continues to nod.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

ETHEREAL BITCH GROOVES by FIG MENT

Fig Ment is an experimental electronic act from Arkansas, US. They released, "Ethereal Bitch Grooves," on November 1st, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
figments777.bandcamp.com/album/ethereal-bitch-grooves

My Impressions:

This album starts with an absolute bop-BEGINNING is a perfect intro to the greater album with enthusiastic synthesizers and a danceable drum beat. ILOVEBEINGATRANSBITCH creates an ethereal, otherworldly spooky experience that sounds like a descent into madness. I love the sound selection in this one above all. All sounds are perfect for this artist's medium and the deep bass drums in a lot of the tracks are addictive. This artist blends spookiness with danceability to create an extremely stimulating album.

My favorite song: BRIEFLAMENTATION – FOUND OBJECT(s). This song is so raw and completely speaks to me even though it uses few words. It's so noisy and industrial sounding, it feels so nice to listen to.

OUTBREAK by PLAGUE RODENT

Plague Rodent is a noise act from West Boylston, Massachusetts. They released, "Outbreak," on July 12th, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
plaguerodent.bandcamp.com/track/outbreak

My Impressions:

This is a short song that starts with a dark droning sound before being cut through by a monstrous sound and the sound of something crashing. It has a slightly musical tone to the noise; like banging on a piano. There are yells in the background before you hear 5 decisive crashes and then an angelic voice. If that is then removed and all you hear is a heartbeat. Solid single, I only wish it were longer.

REVIEWS BY ELLA SOLIS

HYPERFIXATION THEATER II: MAGICKS OF THE DEAD by ANTITYPICAL

Antitypical is an industrial act from Greenville, South Carolina. They released an album called, "Hyperfixation Theater II: Magicks of the Dead," on July 25, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
antitypical.bandcamp.com/album/hyperfixation-theater-ii-magicks-of-the-dead

My Impressions:

I get the impression that these pieces are closely related. Perhaps they were written in a similar period of the artist. There's a through line in these works that gives them a maturity in composition. I've heard a lot by Antitypical and I can hear some real thought built into these newest selections.

HARBINGER by GILA

Gila is a nu metal act from Tallahassee, FL. They released, "Harbinger," on June 1st, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/album/7IWCIVaO6JAqBQpysG5qdQ?si=BA78WHTGTQqGZ-khW9YLCA

My Impressions:

This EP starts with Alice in Chains-style singing, accompanied by Areyu-style screams and nu-metal instrumentation. Waltz on their Graves Features a much darker instrumentation than the first song and tickles my brain just a little more with the screaming pinch harmonics of the guitar stimulating me effervescently. It is then interrupted by a scream and a heavy breakdown. Oh, to be in the pit of one of their shows.

My favorite song: Over, this song features the darkness of Waltz on their Graves while also highlighting the lead vocalist's amazing clean vocals. I look forward to seeing this band's evolution because they have a unique sound already.

BEFORE / THE SURGE by ARCHANGEL

Archangel is a prog metal/rock act from Raleigh, NC. They released, "Before / The Surge," on July 5th, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
open.spotify.com/track/7koTa2MlebGpPlsUukKL?si=c83f038421f94a2c

My Impressions:

This single starts with a beautiful, clean guitar melody that is later, almost unexpectedly, joined by a fast distorted electric guitar and drum. The vocals then enter the fold and they are amazing, I was reminded of the vocalist from Slayer's vocals. The double bass drum is also quite lovely when it kicks in every once in a while. I love the guitar solo around the 5:15 mark, the advanced guitar skills are something to be envious of, and the addition of full-on screams towards the end serves as a beautiful climax to an extremely technical and hard-hitting song.

JIG OF GLEE by FIR CONE CHILDREN

Fir Cone Children are an indie psych rock group from Berlin, Germany. Blackjack Illuminist Records released their recent album called, "Jig of Glee," on July 12, 2024.

You can listen to it here:
blackjackilluministrecords.bandcamp.com/album/jig-of-glee

My Impressions:

Interesting. This is a different vibe then I am used to for Blackjack Illuminist Records. What we have here is a more upbeat, reverbed out, rock based formula of music. It sings, it shouts, it rays, it's a living hymn to joy.

The vocals are triumphant and the composition is uplifting. Really nice.

BRACKISH by BRACKISH

Brackish is an emo punk band from Philadelphia, PA. They released an album called, "Brackish," on May 20, 2022.

You can check it out here:
brackish.bandcamp.com/album/brackish

My Impressions:

A collection of mostly hard rocking, emotionally vulnerable jams which express a range of intensity and instrumentation but primarily stick to a simple rock format in terms of arrangement.

The production is great here, better than lo fi but avoiding the high fidelity indulgences of more avoided, slick ultra pop music.

Throughout the album there is an element of sincerity, an authenticity which bleeds through the chords and seeps out of every line of verse. It touches me and that's always worth something.



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IMPRESSIONS OF

THE SQUIRREL IS A PRETTY THING by

SOLAR HEX

GUAARD/NATTY GRAY - SPLIT by **CULT LOVE SOUND TAPES**

Solar Hex is a folk act from the United States. They released, "The Squirrel is a Pretty Thing," on July 26th, 2023.

You can listen to it here:

solarhex.bandcamp.com/album/the-squirrel-is-a-pretty-thing-2

My Impressions:

This is a very uniquely haunting and dreamy album. The cello in the first song is dissonant at the perfect times. I love the part around 3:20, it reminds me of something you'd hear in a horror movie. I love the use of the harmonies and layers in the title track of the album. Something like this is not something you hear often, and Solar Hex's voice is just as ethereal as the cello. This album evokes deep emotions within me.

My favorite song: The Squirrel is a Pretty Thing. This song is just pure perfection with the horror-movie-esque cello and her voice cutting through it with noticeable conviction. The harmonium also adds a lot of brain-scratching texture to the song and the rest of the album.

REVIEWS BY ELLA SOLIS

This split was released by a Tulsa, OK-based art collective called CULT LOVE SOUND TAPES. They released, "Güaard / Natty Gray - Split," on June 18th, 2024.

You can listen to it here:

cultlovesoundtapes.bandcamp.com/album/g-aard-natty-gray-split

My Impressions:

Song one by Güaard is pure perfection. It starts super soft and beautiful before the guitar speeds up and then the drums and screaming kick in. They scream fast and raw and it compliments the beautiful acoustic and electric guitars perfectly. I've heard music like it before but no bands come to mind, it's simply something you have to hear for yourself.

Song Four by Natty Grey is an ambient track that fits the vibe of the rest of the EP quite nicely. It features birds chirping and calling all around while a wooden wind chime or something similar plays. A small tone is heard in the background over and over again. It later progresses to be louder with more sounds, before dying down again to just the wooden wind chime and a metallic one with some sort of mallet instrument being played. Overall quite a lovely track.

PONCE DE LA FRANCE CONTINUED

R: Yeah.

P: I don't know if that will be Robing the Bride but that's something I'd like to continue to make and put out because it is real fun.

I start with anything I have. I've got- my bedroom is my recording studio. I've got a couple basses, guitar, and my drum machine.

Normally I kind of fuck around a little bit until I hit a workflow and then I hit record. I work from there.

R: Got you. How many albums have you released?

P: Across my life on the internet?

R: Let's start with Robing the Bride.

P: So far just the one.

I have about 4 or 6 songs that I'm thinking about releasing in the future. I'll probably submit them to you sometime later. Those would go under the Robing the Bride title.

As far as my other projects I put out a cassette for my New Brunswick project totally DIY. I ordered the cassettes online, dubbed them myself. I had a tape deck. I dubbed them myself. At the time I had a producer and he helped us record two tracks in the studio but other than that it was all recorded in my bedroom in my studio.

R: Hell yeah.

P: That was a tape. We sold those at shows and I ended up giving them to friends

because I just wanted to move them.

R: Yeah.

P: I want to do it again.

I'd love to have physical releases. I learned from doing it with that project. It's the most rewarding when you know that you are going to get out there and be able to move them and share them.

R: For sure.

When you were first learning, you were about 14 when you started your music. For the first few years what did working on music look like? What was your way of working on music in the early days?

P: A lot of it was that Yamaha keyboard. It played such a role early on, funny enough. I think that I gave it away. I got rid of it at one point. My friend, growing up, told me about Audacity. I was like cool, you can do whatever with this software. I remember going to Radioshack because the output of the keyboard only had a 1/4" keyboard so I had to get a 1/4" to 1/8" keyboard. I would take that and plug it into the microphone of the computer.

R: Haha.

P: Yeah, so the fartiest tones ever. The fartiest stuff. Then I had a shitty Ibanez guitar. One of the prepacks that comes with the amp.

R: Oh yeah.

P: I had one of those. I had an electric guitar and an electric bass.

I have a buddy of mine also from Jersey City/ the North Jersey area. To plug now because I like supporting my friends. I'm all about the communal element of music and shouting people out. His project is called Glockteu Twins. It's kind of digital hardcore, egg punk. On one of his tracks is the bass guitar and that is the bass I had when I was 15.

I traded it to him and he used it. He has some decent listens on Spotify. He's gotten lucky like that. I'm kind of proud because one of my instruments is in a good song.

R: Hell yeah.

P: I didn't play on it though. I gave it to him. The point is that I had a really shitty bass guitar, a really shitty electric guitar, a really shitty keyboard and this 1/4" to 1/8" output into my laptop, my desktop. Running Audacity. I would talk like that.

For vocals I would use the built in desktop microphone. I would lean in real close and sing whatever I wanted I'd like to sing, say whatever I

wanted to say. It's on Bandcamp. It's all on Bandcamp, actually.

R: What's the website address?

P: I won't say. Haha.

R: Ok. Haha.

P: I won't say because you know I was 15. Just doing it because I wanted to. I would make accounts on like experimental music forums and post it. People would actually respond. People would listen. They'd kind of be like whoa how did you make it sound like this. I'm like I'm just doing this in my bedroom.

Those are formative experiences. You do something and share it. People will like it too. No one ever told me to stop.

R: I mean, to me that's proof of concept. If you're going to live a lifestyle where you're making music, and making money is fun, but you know, you're going to do it no matter what happens that way. It's going to be someone like you who is literally using whatever is within their control to be able to use. Like singing into the desktop microphone. Using your Yamaha keyboard. To me people who do

that are the ones who really are DIY artists. They are the ones who are going to do it no matter what.

P: Absolutely. Yeah. It's beyond all that. I'm still in love with what DIY means to me and I'm fortunate to continue meeting people who live in that environment and create like that. The music, I won't even talk about the music industry because even that I've only gotten so close to. Music should be about self expression and sharing what you have with the world. I think that money complicates everything. I'm so convinced anyone who says they are making a living doing music is lying. It can't come from there. I don't think it works like that. I think if you're doing music you will do it at a loss. You'll work a job you hate. It's something that you have to do.

R: Yeah. And if you really have this inward thrust to create, I guess the point I'm getting at is that if you have an inward thrust to

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PONCE DE LA FRANCE CONTINUED

R: create you won't be stopped. You're going to. I knew drummers who before they had drum sets were playing with pencils on cookie tins.

P: Oh yeah.

R: It's going to come out no matter what. That's all I'm trying to say.

Nothing so philosophical. It's going to come out no matter what.

P: Yeah.

R: So. Do you perform out?

P: Yeah. At the moment I'm not doing any original material but at the moment I do play bass in the city right now.

R: Ok. What's that band like?

P: I'll plug it in because I like the band and I like the people I play with.

It's called Johnny St. Grace. That's the project name. It's weird but not weird weird. It's a rock band which sounds lame but it's not a rock band. There's a female lead. She's got this Kate Bush thing going on. The songs are arranged very smoky. They can get dark in terms of the ambiance. It's fun, sexy music.

I had a friend who came to watch us play. He apparently ran a DIY label in San Francisco a million years ago. He's an older guy.

R: Ok.

P: He saw us perform at one venue out here. He was like that's the perfect balance of smarmy. I'm blanking on it now. We like to say smoky. A very smoky band. Could be burlesque but isn't. It's tasteful enough leading in that terrain of almost tantalizing. All my bandmates like weird music too which I really like. Most of the people in the band aren't from the tristate. They're from the South and the Midwest. They like weirdos like Jandek and Half Japanese. Which to me is awesome. Those are awesome. Half Japanese,

especially I was like I want to make music like that. Honestly, at least when I lived in New Jersey it was hard to find people who have that level of freedom to totally let loose. Like a band like that.

Fortunately we all see that in music. We all see that in what we're doing. But also there's a lot of focus in the project which I also really like.

R: That's great. What made you decide to cross the river and move into New York City, would you say?

P: I guess it's cliché but opportunity. As much as I lived in New Brunswick and got involved with a DIY and punk scene it was never the DIY I thought it would be.

R: Yeah.

P: My DIY was R. Stevie Moore, Half Japanese, The Residents. The weirdos. Really weird people making antipop.

R: Correct. I'm with you.

P: And then devoting their lives to doing it. When I was living in New Brunswick. Also I was there from 2016 to 2021. So it was with the emergence of online DIY. Bandcamp DIY. It's more people from the midwest emulating what they heard growing up on the radio. I resented the radio growing up. I would go through the radio not finding any of it interesting or relatable until I found WFMU. I don't know if you know that station but do you?

R: I don't. I'm in North Carolina but please tell me.

P: To self promote, I might be DJing soon at WFMU. I've been helping them do that for some months now doing stuff.

R: Cool.

P: They were a station that R. Stevie Moore stationed at. They were a station where one of their DJs pioneered the term outsider music and wrote a whole book about it. This is the Jersey pride in me coming out. They are one of the through lines for

promoting that world of experimental music visible.

That, to me, is the essence of DIY and being so anti to a degree anticapitalist but also anti internet, anti-authoritarian, not letting people tell you what to do or how to express yourself. The DIY I saw in New Jersey was not that. It was people looking to conform to what they knew and conform to each others' standards. I guess that- I grew up too close to New York and too close to immigrants. My parents are immigrants. There's so much more than what people tell you and I think it's more encouraging to tell people to look beyond what they're told. That's why I moved to New York. The moment you're here it'll fuck you.

Unapologetically.

R: Well. Is there anything you're working on right now?

P: Yeah. I play bass for Grace. We're playing shows in the Manhattan area for anyone who wants. I feel like by the time I promote this it'll pass. You missed it. You should regret missing it. It's a really great show. We also played a show on September first and it was divine. That band was low key with a bit of a catholic undertone to it.

R: Which band?

P: Johnny St. Grace.

R: Ironic or sincere?

P: That's the tricky part. I don't know. I don't want to get too much into it because would you consider this late in the interview?

R: Yeah but you just intrigued me so I want to go with it. I want to find out.

P: It's intriguing too. It's not my story to tell. I went to Catholic school and have a relationship with it. The leader of this band, she's someone who went down the chaos magick route and that whole. We love Genesis.

We love Psychick Tv and Throbbing Gristle. We love the weird shit. We love the dark shit. She had a turnaround I would say. I've met a couple people like this in New York, I'll be honest. Who go that way and get disenchanted and then find other faith. I have a friend who had a chaos magick star tattooed on her body and then got really into Kabbalah because she was raised Jewish. Interesting seeing the turnaround of occult faith to then quote unquote conventional faith. I like religion. Everyone should explore that

element to them. This is a project where there is that mindfulness. There is that drive. But ironically enough coming through Catholicism. To me I'm like whoa. This is weird. But it's not like Christian rock. It's not Catholic rock. But she explores her relationship with Jesus through Doors style dark psychedelic rock.

R: Interesting. It sounds like your friends kind of jumped from one mysticism to another in a way. They were on one mystical path and they went to a different mystical path.

P: I don't know if we can get too weird about it. I don't know if you are familiar with light and dark magick.

R: Oh yes.

P: You can stare into the abyss. To jump in is really challenging. I don't know. I'm someone who can only dive so deep. I studied Buddhism in school. Another motivation for moving to New York was reading the beats. I was more of a Kerouac Ginsberg person than Burroughs.

R: Sure.

P: I've been to Burroughs' apartment. When you go on the door is a Psychick cross. It's on the door right there.

R: I like the work of



Ginsberg a lot better than Burroughs too. You know Burroughs had an orgone energy accumulator in his house?

P: I sat in it. I've been in it. I'm a believer. I'll say this because it is a cool story. A very important moment for me was I went to the Rubin Museum in Chelsea. It's going to close soon which is a shame. Most of their collection was Buddhist and Tibetan art artifacts tied to Buddhism and Hinduism.

They had in their aisle a piece by Genesis P-Orridge. It was a cast of their hand. I think it was cast in bronze. Next to it was a Brion Gysin quote. I think it was like to touch is to learn or wisdom is spread through touch. Which Genesis was big on.

I spent a long while touching that hand. I think there's definitely a transference of energy. That was such an enlightening moment in terms of considering that in terms of an artistic life. They weren't the best person personally.

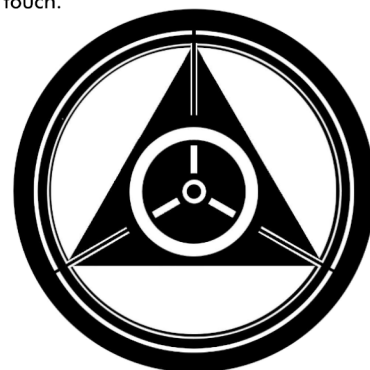
R: I have recorded an entire audiobook of The Psychick Bible that's on our Youtube channel.

P: I saw it, yeah. I did my research.

R: Ok.

P: I don't know. I try to come at anything as a being of love. I want to help people and support them. But also there's a lot of darkness out there.

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PONCE DE LA FRANCE CONCLUDED

P: I think it's important to promote hope and support and a good energy in the world. I feel like that's something I try to explore with my music just by virtue of creating.

R: Sure.

P: Anyways I play in that band. I have more music coming out in Robing the Bride. Eventually I will be- I might be on the WFMU airwaves. I won't be Ponce. I'll probably be DJ Ponce. That's what I'm thinking of a DJ name.

R: I got you.

P: I'll be playing all the music that I love.

R: Other than what we already talked about do you have anything you'd like to promote?

P: It's hard to say right now. I also do some video art. Kind of video cut up stuff with VHS. I make some industrial stuff with that. That's all up in the air on whether I'll get screened or not. That's one of my personal ambitions: to make more video work. Make more video work related to the music I make and put that out in the world.

R: Very nice. My last question is: was there anything you were hoping to talk about that you haven't been able to, and if so please feel free to.

P: That's, you know, I've been planning certain things to talk about. Nothing really at this moment. I feel like we've explored a lot.

R: I think we covered a lot of ground.

P: Yeah there's a lot of material here. Artistically what I am doing is- well, one day, hopefully sooner than later I'd like to have a band again.

I continue to collaborate as a player but I've really wanted that. I just want to get with energy and create cool stuff.

It's been really hard to find that in New York. I feel like in New York people are- it's the pressure. Being able to survive here. Everyone is thinking about rent. Everyone is thinking, whether they want to or not, how to stay and how to not die.

R: I would say everything is thinking about that. Haha.

P: Yeah you know I would say for the artist. For the artist. There's the US is awful. I'll put that on the record. The US is in such a debilitated state as a country. I want to leave. Especially as a creative. It seems like there's no hope here. For anything that feels organic and driven. Also supportive of human life. People in our community creating art and growing with those people in an organic fashion. I've had the opportunity to play cool venues in New York but it's different when you're with your friends. I started as someone making music in my childhood bedroom with my friends n the internet. It's been weird translating that to the quote unquote real world.

R: I've always preferred, if the crowd is going to be the same way I've always preferred to play in a house over a bar. That's me personally.

P: I agree. The caveat for me is when what's being played in the house is meant to translate to a large venue for publicity's sake.

R: Right. Because not everyone has the same values.

P: Yeah. R: Which isn't me digging on them or anything.

I'm always looking for the people that are doing it because they want to do something creative and they want to do something

R: Right. Because not everyone has the same values.

P: Yeah. R: Which isn't me digging on them or anything.

I'm always looking for the people that are doing it because they want to do something creative and they want to do something

collaborative.

P: And daring.

R: Yeah.

P: And not considerate of any of the status quo or traits of success that might go with being a bar band, being a venue band. I'll say from my experience, once you're paying those venues there is a lot of foundation of what you can't do.

When you are playing house shows and booking in that environment, the right attitude is we want anything and everything.

R: Right.

P: What I will say is that New York City is not the environment for that.

R: I believe that. It's too high pressure.

P: Yeah it's high pressure and also time. The value of time changes a lot in this environment. People have the time to see what no one's seen before in someone's basement, you know. When you're in the city, you know you could go to x amount of other things that might be worth your time.

R: I agree.

P: I obviously support what you're doing and everything about it. I submitted to play American Babylon. I've had friends who told me about that for years.

R: Oh wow. Really?

P: Yeah I've known about it for a while.

R: Did you submit as-

P: Robing the Bride?

R: Ok.

P: I don't know if it will be a full band. If the stars align I have a couple of players who may be able to make the trek down. I'd still be willing to do something independent.

R: I'm making the flier. I'm just waiting for this one artist to get me their band name so I can make the flier. From there I will get to you individually to say hey this is the time we want you to come out and stuff. But if you submitted, you're playing. I'm letting you know that.

P: Oh yeah. I'll make the trek down. There's so much beauty I think in what you're doing and what you're coordinating. Now I just want to talk like a person. Have you ever heard of Research?

R: Haha. the band? Is it a band?

P: No no no. No Research by V Vale***. Ok I'll say it on record. What you're doing is really similar to that. It's called research by V Vale. It was based out of San Francisco.

Everyone looks into it. I think that's good inspiration for what we're

trying to do.

R: Cool. I will look into it.

P: Awesome. That would be cool.

R: We could talk on time. Are you my friend on Facebook, Instagram and whatnot.

P: Instagram yeah, Facebook no. I know it's both Meta. I kind of abandoned Facebook. It doesn't work the way that it should to connect people.

R: Well. You can definitely contact me. There is the easiest place usually to contact me.

P: Ok.

R: I'd like to chat again some time, when it's not an interview.

P: Absolutely. Keep in touch.

R: Thank you for letting me spend this time with you and talk to you. Like I said, it will be on the first. Oh, one thing: If you could send me pictures of yourself performing, as many as you've got, that would be helpful.

P: Yeah I can do that. I also recently got it.

R: I recently took some what a friend called personality shots of Robing The Bridge.

R: Ok.

P: I'll share that too because they are visually interesting. I'll include photos of me performing in different contexts.

R: Also album covers. That's another thing I could include.

P: Yeah. Totally.

R: Just to fill the article out when I'm doing layout it helps me to be more precise to have something, a picture I can shrink or grow, you know?

P: I'll give you more than enough, yeah.

R: OK cool. I appreciate you doing this. I had fun.

P: That's good. Fun is important.

R: I hope you have a good night.

P: Same to you.

Good night.

R: Good night.

-END-



ISSUES INTERVIEW WITH ISABELLE KARINA

Ryan: So the way this is going to work is I have the recorder running. I'm going to ask questions. Feel free to answer questions as long as you like. You can also go on tangents if you want to. Eventually we'll transcribe it for next month's edition of ISSUES. And after that comes out it will come out

on the Youtube channel.

Izzy: Cool cool.

R: We'll start recording easily: What's your name and where is your project located?

I: My name is Isabelle Karina. I play in a few bands but I'm most known for Proces//Sleep and we are mostly located in Greenville, North Carolina. I also play in Dr. Goodsex located in Greenville, NC and a few other projects here and there.

R: And what is your role in the band Proces//Sleep?

I: I play guitar, song write and scream slash sing. Mostly scream. We don't do any singing.

R: You said you songwriter?

I: Mmhmm.

R: Lyrics and music?

I: Yeah. The songwriting process for Proces is split pretty evenly between me and the other guitarist Jackson. We'll both pretty much write a full song-

drums, guitar vocals, bring it. Workshop it a little bit. Everyone will add their own part to it and bring a little flair. That's kind of how it looks there.

R: As of right now how many people are in the band?

I: We are currently a four piece. We just had some lineup changes

but things are starting to come together smoothly right now?

R: And how many songs do you have written?

I: For Proces or just overall?

R: For Proces.

I: I'd say. We were at practice today. I'd say we have about 12 songs, 13 songs written? It's starting to become a problem for live shows. We slowly started adding songs. We used to have a really short setlist. We played this one show at

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ISABELLE KARINA CONTINUED

I: Above Board Skatepark in Greensboro. I think we played like a 9 song set. We didn't realize how long that set is and how tiring. We didn't realize. That's a lot of songs. We're starting to alternate and choose which songs to do at which show. It's nice to have that freedom. It's nice to be able to choose, you know, what songs we can do. We can have different vibes, you know. We play with some shoegaze bands. We play some more airy songs that fit that. We play with more metal bands or hardcore bands. We'll play stuff that's more like that.

R: So is that sort of the range of the band?

I: Somewhere between shoegaze and metal?

I: I'd say. We started out as a kind of a pop punk band awhile ago. Slowly we just kind of didn't listen to that kind of stuff anymore. I still do. So lately we're playing kind of emotional hardcore screamo screams whatever you want to call it. Me and Jackson have a leverage to where he writes more kind of powerviolence, emoviolence, whatever you want to call it. I've been writing kind of twinkly emo riffs. More shoegaze stuff. We're trying to work to meld that together.

R: That's nice. How long have you and Jackson been collaborating?

I: Uh. I think for 2 and a half almost 3 years, if I recall correctly.

R: And how long have you been playing an instrument?

I: Uh. I've been playing guitar for 8 years now. Maybe 7 or 8. I've played drums since I was around 16. 16 or 17 I think.

R: What made you want to pick the guitar up?

I: It was a bit of a funny story about that. My uh- I wanted to play bass originally but my mom and dad were like why do you want to play bass? I'll let you play bass but I won't buy you a bass and a bass amp. I will buy you a guitar and a guitar amp for you. Then I wanted to play drums but my parents were like that's loud. Once they realized that electric guitar is quite a loud

instrument they're like you can do whatever you want now.

R: And what music were you listening to around that time that you started playing?

I: I've always had a pretty diverse musical palette. I'd say I started playing when I was 12, 13. I was listening to a bunch of Nirvana. That's what got me wanting to play the guitar a lot. I was listening to a lot of grunge, Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Soundgarden. That's what got me wanting to play. I was also really into pop punk and a lot of so called mall emo, like My Chemical Romance and stuff like that.

I remember there's this thing called the real emo cypypasta. For those of you who don't remember, a copy pasta is a little text that you copy as a joke. It's called the real emo copy pasta because it's saying about how that's not real emo. The real emo is all these hardcore bands. I remember seeing that when I was 13 and being like well what is real emo? I looked it up and bands like Orchid and Pg. 99. I looked it up and thought oh this is really good. Also being into Nirvana I was also, for lack of a better word, interested in Kurt Cobain as a figure. Just an interesting life, an interesting personality. He has a top 50 albums list he has on it Swans, Flipper, Meat Puppets. A lot of things. The Shaggs.

R: Where did you find this list?

I: It's in his journals that are published, if I recall correctly. In retrospect I regret buying it because it was a breach of his privacy but I was a kid, I read it, and it's out there.

R: I read it too. I was sort of taken aback by how much it looked like a young person. I was reading it when I was in high school but it felt like he made it when he was in high school too. You know what I mean?

I: Yeah.

R: Even his handwriting has a sort of it doesn't look like the handwriting of a 40 year old, you know?

I: It has an adolescent quality to it.

R: Exactly.

I: I think that's why Nirvana resonates especially.

i'm not saying that Nirvana, Kurt Cobain is only for high schoolers but I think the reason why Nirvana finds its ways into high schoolers of any age no matter what no matter the years is because of that quality Kurt Coain had where he knew how teenagers thought.

R: Yeah, if you're going to connect with Nirvana, you're going to connect with Nirvana when you're a teenager.

I: Oh, definitely.

R: So, let's talk a little bit about your childhood and your background. Are you from a family of musicians?

I: Kind of. My dad plays electric guitar. He's played it since he was 16 and he grew up around the late 70s into the 80s so he was big into playing a lot of hair metal and stuff. He always adapted a lot with music. When grunge came around he was into that. When a lot of the 2000s modern rock came out he was into that so he has a fairly open mind.

R: Did he play in bands?

I: Yeah, he's actually from Philadelphia but his family moved here when he was 18. That's why I'm in Greenville. Because he moved here.

He played in some bands around here. He was telling me a story of how he saw The Ramones at The Attic here in Greenville. Even a funnier story. I actually play in a band now called Libido Patrol where the guitarist was actually at that show my dad was at. Which is a crazy connection to make.

R: Really?

I: Yeah.

R: Who is that?

I: Rody.

R: I believe that. Rody's a cool guy. How about your mom, did she play anything?

I: My mom sings. She has the most beautiful singing voice in the world. Most people on my mom's side do. She played it, I can't recall if it was the flute or clarinet.

Don't kill me mom. She plays with the flute or clarinet in high school. She plays the piano too. My sister plays guitar, sings, she has perfect pitch. It always angers me because she has the most beautiful voice and she never uses it. I was

like why do people with amazing voices not play music?

R: Another thing that I've seen happen is an absolutely amazing musician and then they get married and have kids and give it up.

I: Yeah that always bums me out. That's kind of what my dad did. When I was born.

My dad is an older, northern guy who is very reserved. He's not a bad guy, just a different guy, different time, different generation. Once I was born he stopped playing guitar. I remember when I picked up the guitar there was an acoustic guitar and he was playing it. I was like oh my god you can play guitar? And he was like yeah I play all the time. I was like why have I never seen you play? He said I don't know, I just stopped. I said why?

He plays now. He's got his own guitar now.

R: Oh, nice.

I: In retrospect he told me that he regretted it and that he shouldn't have done that.

I think he jams with his band now occasionally. With his friends, having some beers.

R: That's good.

I: Chilling out which I always think is good to do.

R: Yeah when I went up to see my dad when I was in my early 20s and he taught me to play Walk Don't Run by The Ventures. Surf music. And he was like that's the only thing I can play.

I: I love surf music. I remember I got a Ventures record a few days ago at the record store.

R: Really?

I: Oh yeah.

R: Oh wow.

R: What about now? Is there anything you're working on in Process? Are there any recordings on the horizon? Tours being planned?

I: So, currently with Process we're working on everything back together, getting everything tight. We have a new bassist. We're getting everything back together. We're a new unit. We have a split plan with the band Abuse Repression from Michigan. Hopefully it will be on vinyl. Hopefully. At the very least it will be on tap on streaming platforms. We're

planning on eventually releasing our stuff on streaming platforms. We talked about it for a long time because we all don't really support Spotify or Apple Music or any of that.

R: Same.

I: I forgot who told us this but to bring it back to Nirvana. There was a censored version of In Utero at Walmart where they change the song from Rape me to Wake me. They asked Kurt Cobain why he let that happen when it was so un-punk rock and he said, "Most people buy their music at Walmart.

There's going to be people who come to shows who don't know what Bandcamp is or anything who all they have is Youtube and Spotify and that's how they find music. If they find your band then they can get into other stuff.

R: True.

I: That's the opinion that we take.

We're not going to have everything on there. I think we're still going to have some Bandcamp, you know.

R: MmmHmm.

I: We're going to hopefully put a condensed demo tape on there or a condensed single or something in the future.

R: It's interesting to see how it works out. Spotify is better for finding a larger audience. I'm not so sure about the pay. But I'm not against it.

Well, I mean I'm not against putting your music on it.

I: I know what you mean.

R: I wouldn't blame a band for doing that at all. It's the only game in town, too, that's the thing. There's not really, unless you're selling analogue media directly to people.

I: Yeah.

R: Which is great.

But other than that Spotify is the only game in town nowadays.



I: I think that Walmart analogy is the right one. They have a monopoly on music. How Walmart and Target were to records back then is how Spotify and Apple music are now.

Yeah, we do have indie record stores which would be bandcamp or something. You can post it on Youtube or something.

R: You could end up with a Process song on some kind of selection playlist or something like that which catches someone's ear. That's the benefit of Spotify. That's how it's kind of replaced radio.

I: Yeah.

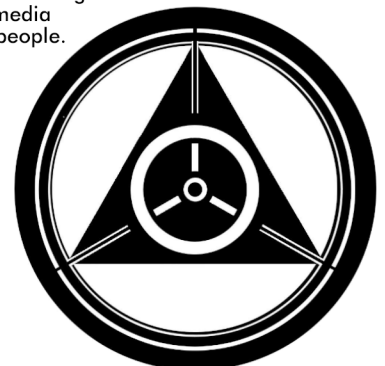
R: What I always liked about radio is that it's so scattershot. You're just beaming it out to whoever happens to be tuning into it.

I: Yeah.

R: It's a big gamble. How do you even strategize? You can't. You just do that. I kind of like that.

I: Yeah.

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ISABELLE KARINA CONCLUDED

R: But I think Spotify has basically taken the place of that. I mean, radio still exists but it's not what it used to be.

I: Yeah.
R: It's actually a good thing for DIY bands. Anyone trying to do anything a little bit out of the ordinary.

I: Definitely.
R: Tell me about Dr. Goodsex. What's your idea behind that?

I: So, Dr. Goodsex is a kind of improv, jam, noise, stoner metal, freeform, jazz-almost, I'm just throwing words together. An improv noise, stoner metal kind of collective. I'm the only consistent member although I'm most frequently joined by Lars of Paper Skulls. I play drums.

The main thing is I invite musicians up to join

and, make some noise and let's just try to make some evil, dark sounding stuff. I really enjoyed it and I thought about recording stuff for it.

Especially with the Lars stuff just as a duo.
R: Mmmhmm.

I: It's super fun. I got the name from an Orchid song called Dr. Goodsex which is a reference to the Kubrick film, Dr. Strangelove. Which I actually recently watched and it was one of my favorite films.

R: It's a good one. Do you still have available a demo online?

I: For Dr. Goodsex?
R: I think it was for Process.

I: Oh for Process.
R: For Process, yes. We have a demo tape available on Bandcamp. Actually it was just posted to Youtube. I decided it was about time to do that. I don't know why I never thought of it.

So you can find it on our Youtube channel or Bandcamp which is ProcessandSleep.bandcamp.com or on Youtube it's just Process//Sleep.
R: Ok alright.

Is there anything you'd like to promote?
I: Yeah I promoted Process//Sleep on social media. We are playing a show. I think this will be published by the time that it happens.

We are going to be releasing a split with Abuse Repression and that'll be out in the next few months. Hopefully.

I'm also working on a solo project that I have not talked much about yet. It's sort of the odd stuff. It's mostly electronic. Exclusively electronic, I play occasional guitar overdubs. I scream over it. It's some weird stuff. I

get there's one song that's just a drum and bass track but I'm actually screaming over it.
R: I'm intrigued by this. I: I'll have to send you some demos after.

R: That would be awesome.
I: So far I have about 3 or 4 tracks. I'm trying to get together a 5 track demo ep.

R: Yeah.
I: I'm having a lot of fun with that because it is just a solo project. That should be out within the next two months.

R: That's so good. I really look forward to that one. It's very intriguing to me.

I: What made me do it was two things: Seeing Domesticatrix live.
R: Yeah.

I: And then seeing PT Burnem recently.
R: Yeah.

I: I was like, man, I could do that.
R: Yeah.

I: And not in a bad way or a condescending way. More like, This is awesome. I want to do that. They're just by themselves and they are so full. They don't have a band and they still make beautiful music. It's amazing to me.

R: Well they are both extremely talented.
I: Yeah.

R: Good friends of mine.
I: One more thing. It's very different playing solo than having a band. I'm so used to having to work with at least 3 other people.

R: Yeah.
I: So it's just if I want something I can do it. But also, if I want something done I've got to do it.

R: Exactly. Exactly. It's maximum portability.

I: Definitely.
R: Well.

I: Thank you for having me.
R: Is there anything you were hoping that I would get to talking about with you that we haven't covered yet.

I: I think we pretty much covered up all bases, honestly.
R: Alright. Very cool. Well, Izzy, I appreciate you sitting down with me for this interview.

I: Thank you. Thank you for having me Ryan. I sincerely appreciate it.

R: You have a good night.
I: You too.

R: Bye,
I: Bye.

-END-

PROMPT

AI WITH CARL KRUGER

1. Compose a three sentence critique of machine learning in the style of Jacques Derrida.

Machine learning, in its very essence, embodies a system of différance, a deferral of meaning through the ceaseless interplay of algorithms and data. The claim of objectivity inherent in its processes reveals a specter of power, concealing the instability and the play of interpretations that constantly undermine its supposed neutrality. Thus, the machine's simulacra of certainty is but a reflection of a more profound indeterminacy, exposing the hidden logocentrism that underlies its very structure.

2. Compose a three sentence critique in praise of machine learning in the style of Jacques Derrida.

In the labyrinth of machine learning, we encounter an affirmation of the polysemy of data, where every algorithmic computation opens up a space for an infinite play of meaning. This embrace of undecidability and the deconstruction of traditional boundaries fosters a new form of creativity, one that allows us to explore the multiple interpretations latent within the digital fabric. Machine learning, thus, reveals the possibility of a transcendence of fixed meanings, celebrating the generative power of différance in our quest for understanding.

algorithms with the cold efficiency of a heartless clockwork, missing the messy, beautiful chaos that makes us tick. In the end, it's like letting a mechanized tea kettle attempt to compose poetry—fascinating, but fundamentally missing the point.

4. Compose a three sentence critique in praise of machine learning in the style of Kurt Vonnegut.

Machine learning, with its delightfully absurd antics, has the gall to replicate the human mind's marvels with a sort of dazzling, mechanical arrogance. It sifts through data like a cosmic comedian, extracting patterns from chaos and delivering insights with the precision of a clockwork oracle. In its own peculiar way, it might just be the universe's way of making sure we never run out of reasons to be astounded and bemused.

5. Compose a three sentence critique of machine learning in the style of Gilles Deleuze.

Machine learning, in its ceaseless quest for patterns, risks perpetuating the very same codes and algorithms that limit our conceptual creativity. It confines thought to a closed system of data and repetition,

undermining the potential for true innovation and difference. Instead of breaking free from the deterministic constraints of representation, it merely reinforces the logic of the already-known.

6. Compose a three sentence critique in praise of machine learning in the style of Gilles Deleuze.

Machine learning opens up a new plane of immanence, where the flows of data intersect with the production of novel forms of thought and sensation. It creates a field of experimentation, where algorithms can generate unexpected connections and singularities that challenge conventional understandings. This capacity to transcend traditional boundaries and generate new possibilities exemplifies the very essence of becoming and creation.

7. Compose a three sentence critique of machine learning in the style of Noam Chomsky.

Machine learning, in its current form, epitomizes the reductionist approach that overlooks the complexities of human cognition and language. It operates on statistical patterns rather than genuine understanding,

leading to superficial results that fail to grasp the deeper, recursive structures of meaningful communication. This mechanistic paradigm risks perpetuating a shallow form of intelligence that is incapable of addressing the fundamental questions of human thought and creativity.

8. Compose a three sentence critique in praise of machine learning in the style of Noam Chomsky.

Machine learning, when viewed through the lens of its potential, offers a novel approach to problem-solving that could complement our understanding of complex systems. It provides powerful tools for modeling intricate patterns and processes, potentially revealing insights that align with human cognitive functions. If harnessed wisely, it could serve as an extension of our intellectual capacities, enhancing our ability to address complex scientific and linguistic challenges.

9. Compose a three sentence critique of machine learning in the style of Michel Foucault.

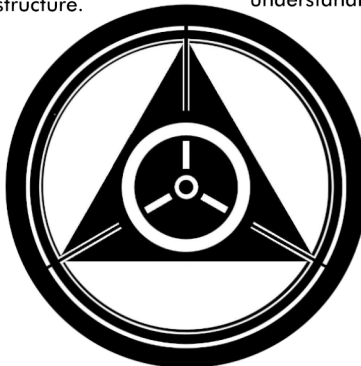
Machine learning operates as a mechanism of surveillance and control, inscribing power relations into algorithms that discipline the very fabric of human decision-making. It produces a discursive regime where knowledge is generated not through dialogue but through the reduction of human complexity to quantifiable

data. In this technocratic landscape, the autonomy of individuals is subjugated to the dictates of an unseen computational authority, reshaping society's norms through a pervasive and insidious form of digital governance.

10. Compose a three sentence critique in praise of machine learning in the style of Michel Foucault.

Machine learning represents a new epistemic shift, liberating knowledge from traditional discursive constraints and allowing for novel forms of understanding and prediction. It disrupts established power structures by democratizing access to information and enabling previously marginalized voices to influence the shaping of data-driven insights. This computational paradigm challenges the rigidity of conventional power dynamics, offering a dynamic space where new forms of social organization and knowledge production can emerge.

-END-



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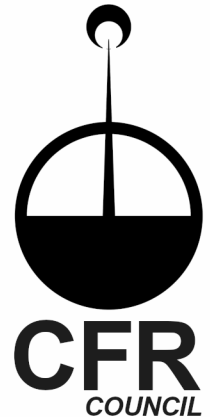
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