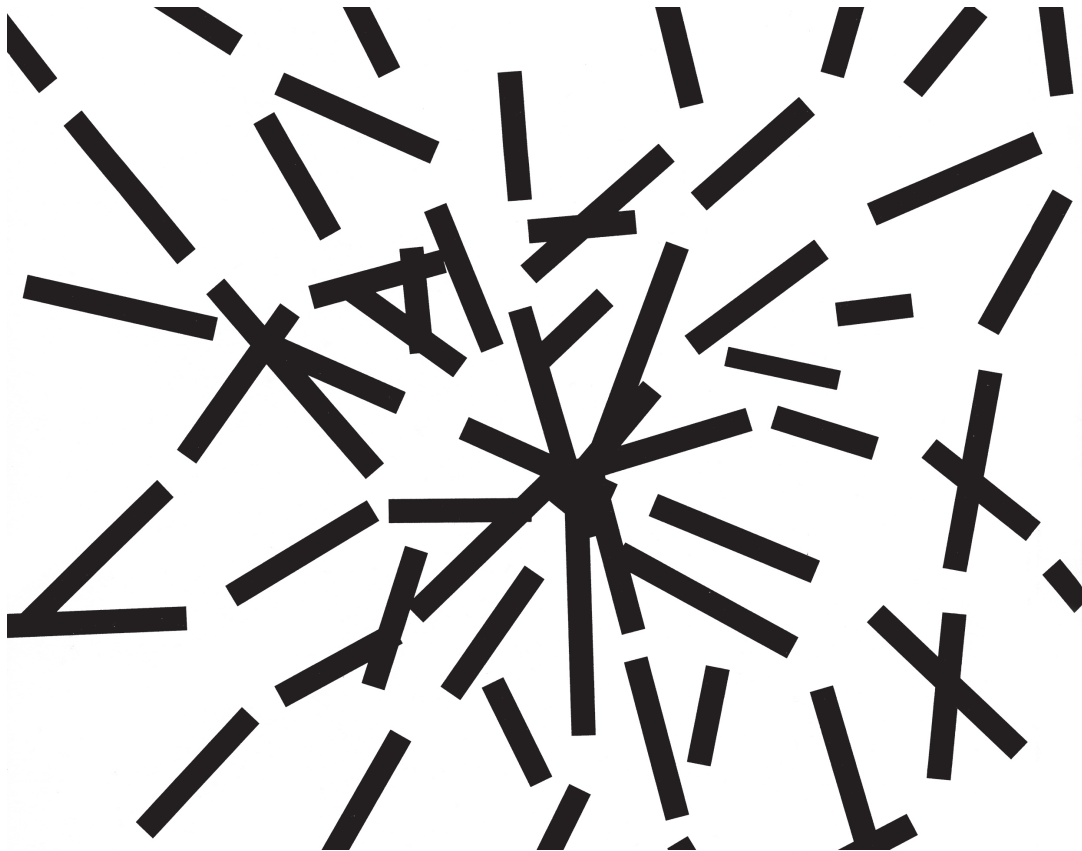


STEPHANIE BAILEY

Of Roaches and Men  
*An Urban Pastoral*



*We are on the move, as individuals and groups. A distant observer will have the image of an ant colony that has been disturbed by a transcendental foot.*  
Vilem Flusser<sup>1</sup>

During the tail-end of an unusually warm winter in Greece, a cockroach society flourished in the dank kitchen of a first-floor flat in one of the most densely-populated urban areas in the world: Kypseli, one of the oldest and most multi-cultural neighbourhoods in Athens, where the streets are named after Greek islands, and a whole mix of people—from Greeks, to Africans, South Asians, Chinese, and whoever else—live. (Before that, it was a bourgeois kind of place, and even before that, a rural retreat for wealthy Athenians living in the historic centre, apparently.) The population boom was the result of a variety of factors, ranging from the demolition of an apartment block just down the street, and the winter in question, warm by Greece's standards. The explosion was unprecedented; at least to the tenants of the flat in which these cockroaches had staked their territorial claim.

The urban pastoral that unfolded during this period is slotted into a strange period in Greece—between 2001, when the country converted from the drachma to the euro, and its current state. Two years earlier, the same year the 2004 Olympic Games were held in Athens, a New Democracy government was elected into power, led by a man with a powerful name: Kostas Karamanlis, nephew of the party's founder, also named Kostantinos. The senior man had been, prior to the founding of the ND Party, an aggressive supporter of Greece's entry to the European Union; he signed the Accession Treaty with the European Economic Community in 1979, was elected President of the Republic following his premiership in 1980, and in 1981 presided over Greece's formal entry to the EU; the same year Andreas Papandreou, the founder of PASOK (the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, today the mainstream social democratic party) ended what was a near half-century dominance of the conservative right within Greek politics, when he brought his party to power by a landslide. (The 2004 election, in turn, ended PASOK's eleven-year run.)

By 2006, Greece was led by the centre right New Democracy, branded as it was by the sheen of the 2004 Olympic Games, the royal blue of the European flag and the symbolically designed coins of the Eurozone's currency. Things remained (relatively?) calm until December 2008—when a policeman shot dead fifteen-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos in a popular neighbourhood with a revolutionary history: Exarchia, bordered by the Athens Polytechnic University, where the violent suppression of a student uprising on 17 November 1973 catalysed the end of George Papadopoulos' military dictatorship (which seized power in 1967, and ended in 1974, the same year Turkey invaded Cyprus). The date of that state offence became the name of a terrorist network that would continue to violently agitate within Greece from 1975 until 2002, when the network's leader, Dimitris Koufoundinas, surrendered after hiding out near a nudist beach on the island of Angistri. (The same beach the humans in this story had been camping on that very summer.)

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Weeks of rioting followed the death of Grigoropoulos. Then in 2009, another political heir, George Papandreou—the grandson of the founder of PASOK—came to power after Kostas Karamanlis dramatically resigned halfway into his term. Shortly after, Papandreou announced the true state of the Greek economy, thus triggering the Eurozone crisis. In 2011, he would call a referendum on whether or not to accept the conditions with which the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and the European Central Bank—otherwise known as “The Troika”—would write off fifty percent of Greek debt, and offer further aid packages. The vote was quickly abandoned. (The image of Papandreou stepping out of his car after having been summoned to Cannes on the French Riviera in order to defend his referendum during the G20 Summit that year recalled—in some way—Margaret Thatcher tripping down stairs in China in 1982.) Meanwhile, angry protests and strikes raged relentlessly throughout Greece. The 2011 Indignant movement occupied Syntagma Square, modelled after the Spanish Indignandos and the occupations of city squares occurring throughout the Arab world. The subsequent clearing of the square resulted in a dispersal of the Indignant movement throughout Athens and Greece, in which networks of solidarity and action were formed to offer services to those in need, from volunteer-run medical clinics, to soup kitchens.

But in 2006, none of this had yet happened. For the humans, still in a comparative state of blissful ignorance, their crisis was still confined to the kitchen.

It is important to note that the cockroaches in this story were German, which are smaller, wisper, and far less threatening than the big, fat American variety. Over time, the humans developed a begrudging kind of respect for them. Research—both personal and scientific—had shown them to be highly social and intelligent insects that display notable character traits, and exist within established familial bonds that expand outwards to form a larger societal whole. Research by Dr Mathieu Lihoreau and colleagues of the French National Centre of Scientific Research in Rennes, has shown these societies to be “closely-bonded” and “egalitarian”—organised on social structures and rules designed with collective interests in mind. They even suffer ill health if left alone.<sup>2</sup> In short: collective survival is their labour, all of which brings us to the bees.

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In Virgil’s 29BC pastoral poem, *The Georgics*, the Roman poet includes a final, fourth book that looks at bees as a natural diagram for a “pigmy commonwealth”<sup>3</sup>, the interpretation of which enabled a reading on the laws of nature and man’s place within it, and by association, common society. Bees were, in a sense, the epitome of the collective mass—a society bound by a system of pure production. As Professor Christine Perkell outlined in 1978, bees were considered in Virgil’s time as “paradigms of social activity” and “models of cooperative effort” with a “reputation for chastity, arising from their presumably asexual means of reproduction... a central feature of the lore concerning them in antiquity.”<sup>4</sup> According to Professor William Batstone, bees were indeed regarded as a model for—and reflection of—traditional Roman values, predicated as they were on concepts of home, fatherland, ancestral gods, law and country; their lives were perceived as both impersonal and collective, and motivated purely by the necessity for honey-making.<sup>5</sup>

But there is another aspect to this story, according to Batstone. Bees also carried negative connotations; namely in their mindless devotion to a monarch, which the republican Romans equated not only with what they perceived to be the immoral and effeminate East, “but with the very cause of civil destruction”.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, at one point in *Georgics IV*, Virgil discusses the fighting swarms—rival bee colonies that battle against one another—and makes note of what a beekeeper might learn from witnessing such an event: “immediately you may know in advance the will of the masses and, from far off, how their hearts are stirred by war”.<sup>7</sup> All it takes, according to Virgil, is a handful of dust to stop the fray; what Batstone suggests may be “a poignant reminder that human battles, too, end in a handful of dust”.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, where in the real world, the bees have both their monarch and a human keeper, in the *Georgics IV*, it is the son of the god Apollo, Aristaeus, who is not only held responsible for their well-being, but also for the death of Eurydice, the beloved of the legendary bard Orpheus. As the story goes, Aristaeus finds Eurydice dancing in a field and attempts to rape her, which causes the terrified woman to run to her death. (She steps on a snake.) In his grief, Orpheus goes down to the underworld to retrieve his lost bride, only to lose her when he fails to meet the condition of her return: to not look back until she has fully reached the upper world. In Virgil’s telling, Aristaeus’ bees die as a direct result of Orpheus’s rage and remorse. When Aristaeus learns of this, he atones and resurrects his lost hive with the help of his nymph mother Cyrene, who reveals the ritual of *bougonia* to him, in which bees might be summoned out of a bull’s carcass.

On the rape of Eurydice, Perkell considers why Virgil chose to portray Aristaeus as guilty of such a crime in an essay devoted purely to book four of the *Georgics*. She identifies “a thematic leitmotif... that agricultural productivity or progress absolutely requires the destruction or domination of natural things.”<sup>9</sup> And yet, in Aristaeus’ atonement, this savagery is replaced with a sense of divine responsibility and purpose, since Aristaeus experiences a revelation upon acknowledging his wrongdoing and the impact it has on the world he is responsible for (symbolised in the teaching of the *bougonia*, which resurrects the lost bees). “In his labour, then, in his striving for honour, in his aggression against natural forces, in his need to atone, Aristaeus is the paradigm of human existence”, writes Perkell. Similarly, Professor Gary Miles considers Aristaeus a representation of the process through which a vision of the human condition might develop fully.<sup>10</sup> A figure who “represents the aspirations of all men”<sup>11</sup> he is, as Miles describes him, “a hero of the traditional epic mould”—at once human and divine.<sup>12</sup>

The same could be said of Orpheus, who in *Georgics IV* ends up being torn limb from limb by the Bacchantes—worshippers of Dionysus (or Bacchus, as he was known in Roman culture). His head was thrown into a river, where it floated towards Lesbos screaming Eurydice’s name. As author of *Ariadne’s Clue* Anthony Stevens writes, Orpheus’ death recalls the dismemberment of the Egyptian god Osiris by his brother Set, and his resurrection by his sister-wife, Isis. In both narratives, Stevens asserts, Orpheus and Osiris achieve “eternal life” in their symbolic deaths and subsequent resurrections, thus offering preconfigurations of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ: a story of an individual who sacrifices himself for the sake of the collective.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, in Virgil’s story, the bees experience a symbolic death and resurrection, too. Yet, when it comes to dismemberment, this is something they embody as a permanent state—they are, after all, a collective body of individual components essentially programmed to form a working whole.

The story of the bees in Virgil's fourth *Georgic*, in this regard, offers an ambiguous leviathan, in which human actions have natural effects that translate into the wellbeing of society as a whole. As Batstone observes, the bees are "a multiple allegory: of what to be, of what not to be, of what we cannot be... they continually resonate with all the ramifications of their potential, including their contradictory allegorical potential", at once "a model, a bad model, a failed model, a hilarious example, a problem, and a model for how models fail us."<sup>14</sup> At the same time, they are a reminder of what duties a leader has to society, and what can happen when a leader fails these responsibilities.

This symbolism offers a way of understanding the context for which *The Georgics* was written: shortly after the end of a civil war, led on one side by Julius Caesar's adopted son Octavian, and by Marc Antony and Cleopatra on the other, that would mark the death of the Roman Republic, and the birth of an Empire founded on the ashes of a century of internal Roman violence. Virgil published his pastoral in 29BC, just a few years after the decisive battle of Actium in 31BC when Octavian conclusively defeated Marc Antony, marking the start of a new era in Roman history. It is said that Virgil recited the poem to Octavian in person just two years before Caesar's heir was given the title of *princeps* (first citizen) and renamed Augustus (the venerated) by the senate in 27BC—a name that depicted Augustus as the guardian of Roman traditions and religious beliefs (he was bestowed the role of *pontifex maximus*, or chief priest, too) and, by association, the keeper of the new Roman Empire. The success of publically "restoring" the Roman Republic after a century of instability while covertly establishing himself as a monarch cannot be understated: Augustus provided "both order and an illusion of political freedom that nonetheless contained elements of true individual liberty".<sup>15</sup>

There are parallels between this history and the trajectory of Aristaeus' narrative arc in *Georgics IV*. On one hand, we have Octavian's transition from war general to religious leader, predicated—as with Aristaeus—on the concept of atonement based on a crime. (On the events that led to Augustus' post-war consolidation of power, historian Ronald Syme noted: "When a party has triumphed in violence and seized control of the state, it would be plain folly to regard the new government as a collection of amiable and virtuous characters."<sup>16</sup>) On the other, we have Orpheus, a dead ringer for Marc Antony, who himself was weakened by his love for the Alexandrian queen Cleopatra (he was often represented as "Oriental" in the most derogatory sense), which would lead to both their suicides. Between Aristaeus and Orpheus, the bees signify a population caught in a crossfire—a social body whose existence is contingent on the actions of immortal men (read: divine rulers), which is why the lesson Aristaeus learns is so crucial. It forms the trajectory by which a ruler takes on the qualities of a good farmer: someone who understands his position as both maker and destroyer within the material—and transcendental—cycle of life and death.

In political terms, this was translated into the construction of a personality cult Augustus built on a platform of piety, in which he constructed an identity of a new ruler forged from civil war, and composed of two historical archetypes: a god and a hero. In the fourth *Georgics*, the seeds for such a figure might be located somewhere between the two identities in focus: Aristaeus, who appears to embody an Iron Age king "interested in exchange value and the future" and Orpheus, who represents a golden age hero that "values the individual, the irreplaceable and the past".<sup>17</sup> The result was the establishment of a new future order, as presided over by a "chosen" leader who portrayed himself as a divine yet human king tending to his flock (read: bees).

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Over time, the humans came to see the cockroaches as a kind of bee society: a model for a modern fourth *Georgics* unfolding somewhere in the heart of Athens in the twenty-first century. But where Virgil's bees existed in an Arcadian pastoral presided over by immortals, today's cockroaches exist in the heaving mass that is the urban organism, itself presided over by men. (Or so the humans thought.) When winter passed, a short spring gave way to a hot summer, by which time a village had become a nation. A careless few nights—a result of a few roach-free weeks—created a population boom, catalysed by the heat and humidity, which the badly maintained apartment block soaked in like a sponge. Without exaggeration, there were enough roaches to carpet the floor of a ten metre square room and then some. Wispy, light brown vegetarian roaches evolved into a burlier, heavier, juicer kind of pedigree.

The humans were in shock at first. They would come home from work, flip on the kitchen switch, and find them everywhere. Two to three big roaches watched over three to four groups of roughly ten little ones, barely the size of a letter on this page, gathered around whatever spills the humans forgot to wipe up that morning. Between these groups—the number always depended on the number of spills that occurred that day—were one or two larger roaches that stood watch. As soon as the light was flipped on, a clear evacuation plan went into effect; the little ones would flee in a line, flanked by the adults who had been supervising the feed, who were in turn flanked by the bigger roaches who had been standing by watching over everyone. It was fitting this all happened in Kypseli, which means “beehive” in Greek; as said, one of the most densely populated urban areas in the world. The neighbourhood is sandwiched between Patissia and Exarchia, the latter often described as an anarchist stronghold by foreign media, especially during the 2008 riots. Beyond Exarchia is Kolonaki—the posh part of town—and beyond that, Syntagma Square, the site where the Greeks rose up and demanded a constitution from their foreign King in 1843; and where the Greek Indignants set up camp in May 2011, before they were eventually expelled with tear gas and stun grenades.

One night, the humans walked into the kitchen and found a floor covered in over eighty cockroaches, gathered in a roach version of Kypseli's main square; a central meeting place for the entire neighbourhood. Everyone froze. For an instant, the humans felt like they had rudely interrupted a community event. The roaches implemented their emergency strategy; children were herded up and shoed along to safety by the adult supervisors. Meanwhile, lookouts perched besides openings in the wall on both the ground and the ceiling frantically paced at their posts, preparing to receive the fleeing herd and take them into the safety of the building's piping. The only bodies to remain on what was now no-man's land—the kitchen floor—were the adults, who seemed more focused on protecting the next generation. In a state of shock, the humans couldn't help but admire their bravery as reality sank in: drastic measures would have to be taken.

As with all battles, the hardest part about living with the roaches was killing them. Every time they entered the kitchen brandishing sprays and heavy shoes, it felt like a holocaust. Roach spray was the worst visual metaphor for it. Histories of genocide seemed to materialise amidst the gas as the hissing commenced and deadly droplets fell upon futile escape attempts. The scenes were always tragic; the social bonds among the roaches were clear to see, even without the crux of science to prove the fact that these must have been intensely traumatic experiences for them, as adults perished watching their young flee in vain, knowing that they too would die. Meanwhile, the roaches standing watch at various entry points into the building's walls looked on in sheer, antenna-frenzied panic.

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After a visit from pest control, a fragile lockdown came into effect, and the roaches spent their time behind the walls. On quiet nights, guards would move slowly and deliberately along their patrol route along the kitchen ceiling, whilst others remained frozen at their posts—holes in the wall where piping pushed through. On one occasion, the humans observed two ‘soldiers’ crossing paths along the ceiling’s perimeter, mid-route, pausing to exchange words, antennae moving purposefully in the direction of the imposters (or occupiers), assessing the severity of the human breach. The truce lasted until mid-autumn. Then, they started invading the other spaces of the apartment—in books, behind canvases; in paints; on the living room floor: scurrying up a sleeping human’s leg with furious, kamikaze intent at 7am.

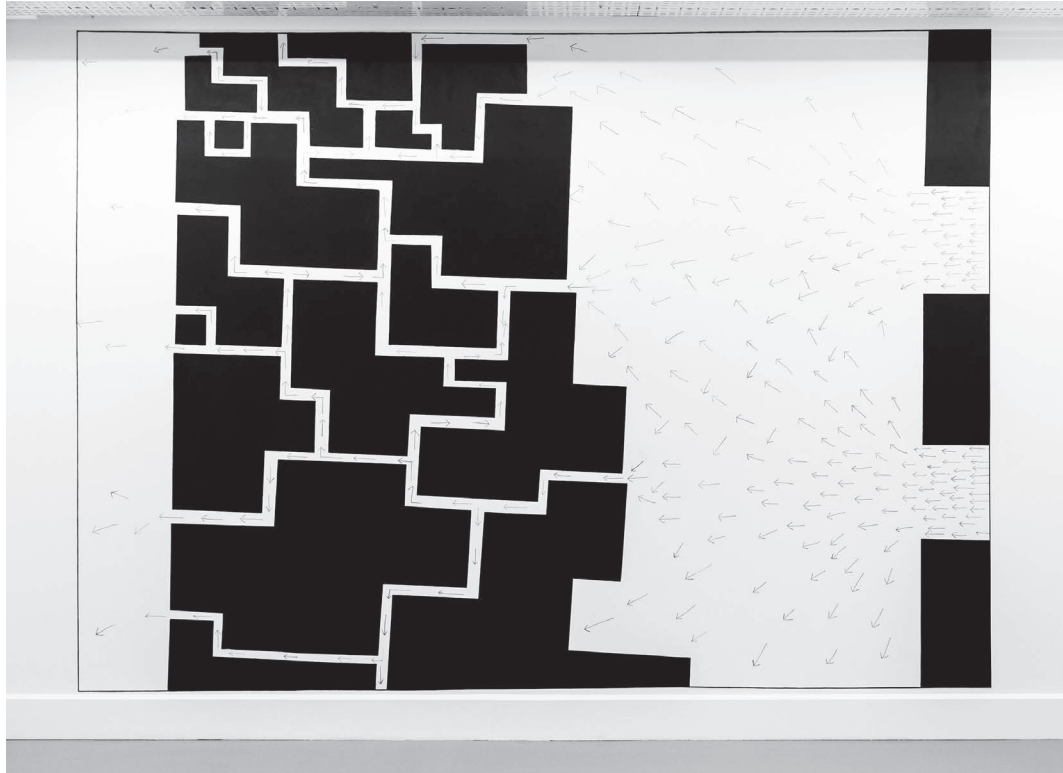
To this day, the humans shudder when they walk past that apartment, gazing at its narrow balcony from the street, and thinking back to the world that lay beyond the doors: a building so rotten that a new society had already started its flourishing ascent. They would think back to the roach nation they lived with, too, as they joined the Greek protests against austerity in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. When the tear gas rained down, they would recall the scene from the film *The Third Man*, when Orson Welles gazes down from a Ferris wheel carriage at the crowd mingling in the square below, and asks his estranged friend Holly Martins if he’d “care if each of those dots died” if he knew they were worth twenty thousand pounds apiece. When Syntagma Square was cleared, and the movement scattered, the humans thought about those cockroaches again, especially when they looked at the diagrams of arrows moving through city blocks by Stephen Willats, installed in a public gallery on Istiklal Avenue in Istanbul as part of the 2013 *Istanbul Biennial*, staged after the Gezi protests in 2013. As the post-9/11 world continued to unfold, they recalled—almost fondly—those quiet nights in the kitchen, as humans and insects observed each other under the silver, kitchen light in a shared space where there could really only be one (dominant) tenant.

When the roaches developed wings, the humans upped and left. They were not interested in sticking around to see what this technological evolution might bring to the fray. *Cockroaches will outlive us all*, they conceded, as they moved into a newer apartment in the same neighbourhood, where they found themselves living with an ant colony.

You have to love the symmetry.

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“What characterises the West” writes Vilem Flusser, “is its capacity for an objectifying transcendence” that in turn allows for “the transformation of all phenomena, including human perception, into an object of knowledge and manipulation”—or in other words, “an objectifying manipulation of mankind.”<sup>18</sup> The way Virgil used bees in the fourth *Georgics* is one such objectifying manipulation in which society is crafted into an imperfectly mediated pure organ, or model, of collective production—as symbolised by an insect that produces a golden nectar that may well be equated to black gold. This projection of society and its complexity through the bees, governed as they are by divine and anointed men, also points to the patriarchal orders that have defined human politics throughout history, and a savage conception of nature driven by the need to control, subjugate and profit from it. Thus, if we were to take into account the codified world Virgil depicts in the story of Aristaeus’ bees, then what does the fate of the cockroaches in this twenty-first century tale say about the societal models we live in?



In his 2013 book *Post-History*, Vilem Flusser describes the position of the common individual in three states of society: agrarian, industrial and post-industrial, as embodied by the farmer, the worker, and the functionary, respectively. On the ontological effects of a transition from one society to another, Flusser sums up the difference between an agrarian and industrial society by describing agriculture as “the patient manipulation of animate nature” and industry as “the violent manipulation of inanimate nature” for which nature is forced “to reformulate itself according to models”.<sup>19</sup> This offers one way of thinking about Virgil’s bees through an industrial lens. As Flusser notes, “the Other is a worker that must be molded according to preconceived models, as a type of mass.”<sup>20</sup>

For Flusser, the functionary is the worker in a post-industrial world hinged on a “totalitarianism of apparatus”—a figure incomparable to “farmers and factory owners of preceding societies, but to the serfs and workers”.<sup>21</sup> The functionary is a desk worker that “receives symbols, stores symbols, produces symbols and emits symbols” mostly through “manual methods and partially via cybernetic apparatus”. The praxis of such an individual occurs within the context of a “codified world” that is mediated today in large part by the totalitarian apparatuses of smart technology and the Internet.<sup>22</sup> As Flusser predicted, we are living in the age of the program, in which society is run on models and apparatuses that engineer, maintain, and uphold a certain way of living.<sup>23</sup>



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In this society, Flusser wrote, we will think that the dominant class will be the programmers of the apparatus, “though attentive analysis will reveal that they too are specialised functionaries”.<sup>24</sup> The apparatus itself will become “the real dominant class”, which is why it will make “no sense to distinguish between conservatism and revolution, between right and left”.<sup>25</sup> In this future, politics will lose all meaning and society will become inhuman: a prescient vision that fits well with the label Muammar Gaddafi applied to the protestors on Libya’s streets during the uprisings that swept across the Arab world in 2011: “rats”. By likening society to vermin in a time when the ruling classes have seemingly abandoned all sense of social responsibility, Gaddafi offered both an admission, and a revelation.

The metaphor exposes the way the masses are perceived from above: as functionary data points within a model predicated on productive exploitation, and, when necessary, elimination. It also reveals how politicians have become the programmers Flusser foresaw: functionaries who maintain apparatuses of power without realising that they, too, are being ruled by some invisible hand. Then we have the people, who have become a mass formed out of a post-industrial world in which survival, and not production, has become the ultimate labour.

This new zeitgeist has seen the rise of movements reacting against current political and societal regimes the world, and their subsequent suppression by state governments and security forces, almost always by violent means. We have seen it everywhere, from the revolution in Egypt, the Gezi Park protests in Turkey and later its coup attempt, to the so-called Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, the Kurdish struggle in Rojava, #BlackLivesMatter in America; not to mention Syria where the people of Aleppo—the centre of the Syrian revolution in 2011—have (at the time of writing) resorted to burning tyres in a desperate attempt at preventing Russian and pro-Assad airstrikes over the city.<sup>26</sup> In these cases, people have been left to fight for themselves, often against the state rather than with it, as a way to re-establish a common ground upon which a better society, or simply, a better world, might push forth. It is fitting, then, that society’s critical mass has been likened to a vermin not dissimilar to cockroaches in this brave new world. Both are gutter creatures that are highly sociable, live within collectivised societies, and show a remarkable resilience to the effects of modernity. As creatures, they exist outside the program of “civilisation”, rejected by the human world as nothing more than a nuisance, unlike the bees, whose production (honey) is coveted. Like so many other kinds of vermin, both rats and roaches can also live with or without humans—one of the most telling aspects of the comparison Gaddafi made in 2011.

Thinking about the demands made by the protests that characterised the Arab uprisings and the subsequent movements that emerged after throughout the world, it is certain that Gaddafi had no idea how accurate his comparison of protestors to rats actually was when he deployed the term. After all, when it comes to the bees of Virgil’s *Georgics*, and the roaches in this twenty-first century urban pastoral, there is one glaring difference. Unlike the bees of ancient Rome, today’s vermin have no keeper.

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Make of that what you will.

Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Vilem Flusser, 'Our Dwelling', in *Post-History*, translated from the Portuguese by Rodrigo Maltes Novaes, Siegfried Zielinski and Norval Baitello Junior eds, Minneapolis: Univocal Press, 2013, p. 67
- <sup>2</sup> Matt Walker, 'Why Cockroaches Need Their Friends', BBC.com Nature, published 2 May 2012; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/17839642>
- <sup>3</sup> Virgil, *Georgics, Book IV*. Viewed on *The Internet Classics Archive*: <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/georgics.4.iv.html>
- <sup>4</sup> Christine Perkell, 'A Reading of Virgil's Fourth Georgic', *Phoenix* Vol. 32, No. 3, 1978, pp. 211-221
- <sup>5</sup> William Batstone, 'Virgilian didaxis: value and meaning in The Georgics', *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Charles Martindale (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 140
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Virgil, *Georgics, Book IV*, pp. 67-102, 'The Fighting Swarms', accessed from *Poetry in Translation*; [http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/VirgilGeorgicsIV.htm#anchor\\_Toc534524376](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/VirgilGeorgicsIV.htm#anchor_Toc534524376)
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Gary Miles, *Virgil's Georgics: A New Interpretation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, p. 257
- <sup>11</sup> Christine Perkell, op cit.
- <sup>12</sup> Gary Miles, op cit.
- <sup>13</sup> Anthony Stevens, *Ariadne's Clue: A Guide to the Symbols of Humankind*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 51
- <sup>14</sup> William Batstone, op cit.
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Auslin, 'Augustus & the birth of the West', *The New Criterion*, Vol. 33 No. 4, p. 43. Viewed online at; <https://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/Augustus---the-birth-of-the-West-8025>
- <sup>16</sup> As quoted by Michael Auslin, ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> See Batstone and Perkell, op cit.
- <sup>18</sup> Vilem Flusser, 'The Ground We Tread', *Post-History*, op cit., pp. 3-10
- <sup>19</sup> Vilem Flusser, 'Our Work', in *Post-History*, op cit., pp. 27-34
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> See Vilem Flusser, 'The Codified World', originally published in 1978, in *Writings*, Andreas Ströhl trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, pp. 35-41
- <sup>24</sup> Flusser, 'Our Work', op cit.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Erika Solomon and Kathrin Hille, 'Rebel-held Aleppo takes cover from air strikes under tyre smoke', *The Guardian*, 1 August, 2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/aug/01/tyres-burn-in-aleppo-as-rebels-try-to-to-hinder-airstrikes-video>