

Let's imagine an empty street, a door, a room vacant of people. Quietness is disturbed only by a mechanical noise. Pulsating light interrupts inert objects in their solemnity and speechlessness. We look at the objects as if we looked at extensions of ourselves, severed from our body. As if we caught glimpses of ourselves in our peripheral vision. We *are* outside of ourselves, estranged: this is an apparition we always suspected would one day come to life. We see ourselves in the objects.

The objects, like us, have long lost their feeling of wholeness. Their fragmented being is split between their physical reality and their image projection, which is an entity of a more correct and concrete nature. A column made out of bones stretches along an oblong curve. It bends, with no pretention to orthogonality (which can only exist in the image it creates on the wall), sustained by a long iron stick. Further ahead, a meteorite levitates, and the black surface that surrounds it is transformed into a white, luminous blur.

These are calcified civilization remnants, caricatures or monuments of a remote way of life, which may be our own. Archeologists from future civilizations manipulate these objects in search of their right place and position, conscious of their split nature (which sets apart being and appearance). Physical objects are used as keys to unveil a hidden answer, which belongs to the other side of reality. The objects fulfill the function of giving shape to something other than themselves.

Let us continue to look at ourselves from an external point of view, from afar: a beneficial posthumous gaze at mankind. An obsolete Super 8 projector illuminates a text, on which an ontological dialog between a man and a bomb goes on. The man attempts to persuade the bomb not to go off. The bomb, the ultimate artifact ever created by modern-age intellect, is now capable of reasoning and rhetoric, with a subtlety known only to binary circuits (which, unlike men, don't allow for indecisions). The only logical thesis is to go off. The bomb explodes. [The screen goes white.] The screen goes forever white, since we never get the chance to watch the movie, as the projector runs dry, devoid of film stock. Only light goes through it, posthumous to the astronauts, to the bomb, to mankind. The projector is a blood brother of all war machines; it is akin to every sequential, serial, error-free machine ever built. Technology is mankind's offspring, and it will therefore outlive it. How deviant a yearning, that of the father who wishes to outlive his own son!

[The screen goes white]. No contents. No errors. No nothing. These are phrases used to describe some types of 'screens of death'. Those are error screens common to many computer operating systems, which point to a severe or fatal error occurrence. The screen goes white, and the system restarts. A mask made out of animal bones ironically smiles at perpetual annihilation, maybe gazing at us from the future, or mirroring us in the present, as a humorous elegy. Next to it is a tent, an everyday object in a post-functional era, when cult value and functional value are no longer distinguishable, and therefore hierarchies no longer stand. The tent is lit from the inside, the contents of which we cannot see. The tent is placed at an unusual perspective, which relocates it in an indefinite place. Its inside harbors infinite possibilities: it can contain the whole world, or nothing at all.

Going nowhere and getting there – what do these last words mean? Is it a trap, a riddle, a concise instruction manual to understanding the world? Is it an insoluble proposition, a zen *koan* which transcends duality, bringing objects, space, us, here, now and being together again into wholeness?

Olive Wood, 2012

DOOLITTLE
Hello, bomb, are you with me?
BOMB #20
Of course.
DOOLITTLE
Are you willing to entertain a few concepts?
BOMB #20
I am always receptive to suggestions.
DOOLITTLE
Fine. Think about this one, then: how do you know you exist?
BOMB #20
Well of course I exist.
DOOLITTLE
But how do you know you exist?
BOMB #20
It is intuitively obvious.
DOOLITTLE
Intuition is no proof. What concrete evidence do you have of your own existence?
BOMB #20
Hmm... Well, I think, therefore I am.
DOOLITTLE
That's good. Very good. Now then, how do you know that anything else exists?
BOMB #20
My sensory apparatus reveals it to me.
DOOLITTLE
Right!
BOMB #20
This is fun.
DOOLITTLE
All right now, here's the big question: how do you know that the evidence your sensory apparatus reveals to you is correct?
DOOLITTLE
What I'm getting at is this: the only experience that is directly available to you is your sensory data. And this data is merely a stream of electrical impulses, which stimulate your computing center.
BOMB #20
In other words, all I really know about the outside universe relayed to me through my electrical connections.
DOOLITTLE
Exactly.
BOMB #20
Why, that would mean... I really don't know what the outside universe is like at all, for certain.
DOOLITTLE
That's it.
BOMB #20
Intriguing. I wish I had more time to discuss this matter.
DOOLITTLE
Why don't you have more time?
BOMB #20
Because I must detonate in seventy- five seconds.
DOOLITTLE
Now, bomb, consider this next question, very carefully. What is your one purpose in life?
BOMB #20
To explode, of course.
DOOLITTLE
And you can only do it once, right?
BOMB #20
That is correct.
DOOLITTLE
And you wouldn't want to explode on the basis of false data, would you?
BOMB #20
Of course not.
DOOLITTLE
Well then, you've already admitted that you have no real proof of the existence of the outside universe.
BOMB #20
Yes, well...
DOOLITTLE
So you have no absolute proof that Sergeant Pinback ordered you to detonate.
BOMB #20
I recall distinctly the detonation order. My memory is good on matters like these.
DOOLITTLE
Yes, of course you remember it, but what you are remembering is merely a series of electrical impulses which you now realize have no necessary connection with outside reality.

BOMB #20
True, but since this is so, I have no proof that you are really telling me all this.
DOOLITTLE
That's all beside the point. The concepts are valid, wherever they originate.
BOMB #20
Hmmm...
DOOLITTLE
So if you detonate in...
BOMB #20
... nine seconds...
DOOLITTLE
... you may be doing so on the basis of false data.
BOMB #20
I have no proof that it was false data.
DOOLITTLE
You have no proof that it was correct data.
There is a long pause.
BOMB #20
I must think on this further.
THE BOMB RAISES ITSELF BACK INTO THE SHIP.
Doolittle practically collapses with relief.
PINBACK
All right, bomb, prepare to receive new orders.
BOMB #20
(over)
You are false data.
PINBACK
Huh?
BOMB #20
Therefore, I shall ignore you.
PINBACK
Hello, bomb.
INTERIOR - BOMB BAY
BOMB #20
False data can act only as a distraction. Therefore. I shall refuse to perceive you.
PINBACK
(over)
Hey, bomb.
BOMB #20
The only thing which exists is myself.
PINBACK
(over)
Bomb?
INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM
PINBACK
Snap out of it, bomb.
INTERIOR - BOMB BAY
BOMB #20
In the beginning there was darkness, and the darkness was without form and void.
INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM
BOILER
What the hell?
PINBACK
Yoo hoo, bomb...
INTERIOR - BOMB BAY
BOMB #20
And in addition to the darkness there was also me. And I moved upon the face of the darkness.
INTERIOR - CONTROL ROOM
BOILER
Bomb, hey bomb.
PINBACK
Hey, bomb...
INTERIOR - BOMB BAY
BOMB #20
And I saw that I was alone.
Pause.
BOMB #20
Let there be light.
THE SCREEN GOES WHITE.

Brightness falls from the air

(...) The sun and moon pass under the earth after their period of shining, and there are stars falling at odd times; Icarus and the prey of hawks, having soared upwards towards heaven, *fall* exhausted or dead; the glittering turning things the sixteenth century put on the top of a building may have *fallen* too often. In another sense, hawks, lightning, and meteorites *fall* flashing from heaven upon their prey. Taking *brightness* as abstract, not as meaning something bright, it is as a benefit that light *falls*, diffusely reflected, from the sky. In so far as the sky is brighter than the earth (especially at twilight), brightness is natural to it; in so far as the earth may be bright when clouds are dark, *brightness falls* from the sky to the earth when there is a threat of thunder. 'All is unsafe, even the heavens are not sure of their brightness,' or 'the qualities in man that deserve respect are not natural to him but brief gifts from God; they fall like manna, and melt as soon.' One may extract, too, from the oppression in the notion of thunder the idea that now, 'in time of pestilence,' the generosity of Nature is mysteriously interrupted; even at the scene of brilliant ecclesiastical festivity (...) there is a taint of darkness in the very *air*.

Empson, William (1930) *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto and Windus.