Interrogating the Modest Witness:
Plumbing the Secrets of Libidinal Millenarianism

Dr. Dominic Pettman

(Note: This paper was delivered during a panel discussion with Donna Haraway at the University of Melbourne in March 1998).

Donna Haraway's Modest_Witness is a tropic figure with useful theoretical and discursive applications, sharing certain traits with the coyote, the cyborg, and other trickster figures, amongst whom I would include Pan and Dionysus; despite their soiled reputations. Haraway employs this witness in order to recover a history of legitimating processes, and the theatrical production of authority, innovation, discovery, collaboration and progress in "the sacred-secular technoscientific web" (Haraway 1997, 2). And I quote:

> My modest witness cannot ever be simply oppositional. Rather, s/he is suspicious, implicated, knowing, ignorant, worried, and hopeful. Inside the net of stories, agencies and instruments that constitute technoscience, s/he is committed to learning how to avoid both the narratives and the realities of the Net that threaten her world at the end of the Second Christian Millennium. (Ibid., 3)

Relatively early on in her new book, Donna Haraway "appropriates" Joanna Russ's figure of the Female Man, adapting it to the FemaleMan© for her own research purposes. It is my intention to mimic this rhetorical strategy by using Haraway's "modest witness" as an entry-point into my own work, which argues that the structure of millenarian discourses are fundamentally libidinal. This highly qualified recontextualization is done with as little violence as possible, although any new inflection of an established figure is a risky exercise. It is with this in mind that my paper freeze-frames Haraway's "modest witness," splicing it from the "original" context in order to meditate on the significance of such a figure through my own millennial filters. This is in order to support her own project which seeks to "mutate the modest witness into a more usable vehicle for entering the wormholes of contemporary millenarian scholarship." (Ibid., 15) To quote Haraway herself, "I hope the original author forgives me."

Haraway's book is self-consciously situated within the chronotopic space of the final days of the Second Christian millennium, and is often at pains to remind the reader of all the teleological baggage that such a date is burdened with. My own work has been concerned with the figure of a constitutive subject who witnesses (and perhaps consequently authorizes) millennial moments; the most obvious being the Apocalypse itself. Scientific discourses, and their memetic effect, are intimately bound up with

narratives of revelation and utopia, no matter how secular their language; and it is both Haraway's and my assertion that this process is governed by a libidinal economy.

Like Haraway, "I am especially interested in a specific sense of time built into Christian figuration," (ibid., 9) including the ways certain traditions have attempted to hack into this temporal coding for their own Ends. The modest witness appeals to "the love/hate relation with apocalyptic disaster-and-salvation stories maintained by people who have inherited practices of Christian realism."(Ibid., 43) As a consequence, I begin with Haraway's premise that, "Technoscience is a millenarian discourse about beginnings and ends, first and last things, suffering and progress, figure and fulfillment." (Ibid., 10) My paper thus addresses the erotic subtext which connects the breaking of the Seven Seals to the splitting of the atom: both climaxing in a Revelation. Where Haraway insists that, "Salvation history *is* history," (ibid.) I maintain that libidinal millenarianism *is* millenarianism.

After the Orgy

"It may comfort you to know that I am still not participating in any sexual acts."
From a letter by Heaven's Gate cult member Gail Maeder, to her parents in 1997 (in Adler, 1997, 37)

On March 26, 1997, 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult were found dead in Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego, their Nike shoes sticking conspicuously out of their purple shrouds. They had taken their lives in the belief that the Hale-Bopp comet was shielding an alien space-craft which was to take them to the Level Above Human. The ensuing media frenzy focused on several angles, separating what was unique about the cult's mass suicide from what it shared with other extremist apocalyptic groups. The followers of Marshall Herff Applewhite (aka "Do") were almost uniformly portrayed as deeply repressed and gullible innocents who had trouble distinguishing science-fiction fantasies from "reality." Editorials around the world could not resist puns involving these "alienated" individuals and their particular brand of *X-Files*-meets-*Revelation* rhetoric. In the following weeks, America (and its syndicated subsidiary-nations) became obsessed with the voyeuristic revelation that six members, including Applewhite himself, had themselves castrated in a surgical procedure designed to eliminate sexual urges – a serious offence to the neo-gnostic ambitions of the sect.

Motivation, as usual, was the question which gave this story such momentum: why did they do it? Applewhite was presented as being tortured by "sexual demons." His idiosyncratic religion was viewed as the agonistic escape route from his earthly desires, and more specifically from those homosexual impulses which compromised his career as a music teacher. His followers were paired off in a surveillance strategy which, when combined with various hormones, bolstered the cult's doctrinal policies on the need for celibacy. (Indeed at one point the group founded "The Anonymous Sexaholics Celibate Church.") Such rigorous libidinal constraints are commonplace among both fringe and established religions. The media, however, seized on its unprecedented intersection with popular culture, high technology and voluntary mass-suicide.

In a sense, Heaven's Gate inhabited the slipstream of Bill Gates by using the PC-led internet as its major informational vector to spread its gospel of ascension to the Level Above Human. They were described as an "Internet Death Cult," in an act of locational labelling intended to quarantine their insidious ideas "out there" on the sticky World Wide Web, where (much to our horror) children can find them. While hysteria about sexuality and the internet is not unrelated to my topic, at this stage I wish merely to signal how certain metaphors and discourses are mobilized in support of moral panics exacerbated by the liminal temporal space of the year 2000. *Newsweek*, for instance, finds answers to the Heaven's Gate riddle in not only Applewhite's charisma and the "uncertain times we live in" but also the "*pull* of millennialism through the ages." (Editorial 1997, 35)

In its most general and abstract sense, this "pull" is the focus of my paper, especially as it relates to the interpretation of twentieth-century millenarian-utopian movements and moments. Taking as read the libidinal connection between messianic figures and their followers, I explore the seductive power of the year 2000, and its capacity to "pull" people out of their normal lives and into that highly charged psychic space, which Kermode fleetingly refers to as "the erotic consciousness" inscribed within the moment of crisis. (Kermode 1975, 46) In this sense my talk represents an inquiry into the magnetic properties of a transcendent "floating signifier" and the polyvalent thematics which it attracts through prophecy, eschatology and the act of witnessing.

The year 2000, the Millennium, the Eschaton, Utopia, Heaven, the Level Above Human: however we describe the object that lies at the end of history, it inevitably becomes the focus for intense cathexis – the libidinal projection/transference of value. Just as the monolith is stroked by early simians in Kubrick's *2001*, so too the apocalypse is invested libidinally with a neo-Freudian reconfiguration of desire and transcendence. The millennium has become the ultimate seductive model, beckoning us towards the exquisitely elusive process of *revelation*.

The Dating Game

At this point it may be useful to ask what exactly this "Millennium" *is* that I'm talking about. The answer may be that it isn't anything, *exactly*, but rather a "free-floating framework" (as Philip Lamy calls it), or a giant sliding signifier which hovers ahead of us like a carrot in front of a donkey. Norman Cohn, the traditional authority on these matters, notes how the word "millenarianism" has "in fact become simply a convenient label for a particular type of salvationism,"(Cohn 1993, 13) linked to the Millennium itself; which is indeed how I employ the term.

Donna Haraway has reintroduced Bakhtin's useful term "chronotope" which she defines as meaning "topical time, or a *topos* through which temporality is organized. A topic is a commonplace, a rhetorical site. Like both place and space, time is never 'literal,' just there; *chronos* always intertwines with *topos*." (Haraway 1997, 41) As my study unfolds it becomes clear that my notion of libidinal millenarianism is a chronotope, in that it constitutes a "figure that organizes temporality."(Ibid.)

Thus in trying to pinpoint some kind of working definition, we must concede that the Millennium is a symbolic concept tied to a symbolic measurement of time, which

potentially is as contingent as the human population itself. It is a blank screen on which we project our own fantasies for the future, present anxieties, and regrets about the past. Yet the images which flicker across its conceptual surface have a thematic consistency and coherence which belie the randomness of its calendrical manifestation. In simpler terms, *how* it is represented as occurring, and with what effects, are far more significant than *when* it happens.

The Coming of the Lord

Q: "What's white and hangs off telephone wires?"
A: "The Second Coming."
        Old School Joke

Apocalyptic rhetoric, from the book of Daniel through John's *Revelation*, to present-day adaptations, is saturated by sexuality. Beginning with the allegorical Whore of Babylon and her violent destruction, Eros and Thanatos have persistently stalked narratives of the End. The explicit sexual subject matter has often obscured the erotic subtext which inherently underlies the very process of eschatological mythology. The word "apocalypse" derives from the Greek *apokalupsis* meaning to "uncover," "unveil" or "reveal": hence *Revelation*. In this sense the breaking of the Seven Seals anticipates the hymeneutic dance of the Seven Veils, where the choreography of secrecy seductively discloses the visionary pudenda, indicating more than a latent lust within the Last Things.

    In his essay "An Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy," Jacques Derrida teases out the erotic ontology of Armageddon: "Apokalupto, I disclose, I uncover, I unveil, I reveal the thing that can be a part of the body, the head or the eyes, a secret part, the sex or whatever might be hidden . . . man's or woman's sex." (Derrida 1984b, 4) Thus:

> the idea of laying bare [*mise a nu*], of specifically apocalyptic unveiling, of the disclosure that lets be seen what to then remained enveloped, secluded, held back, for example, the body when the clothes are removed or the glans when the foreskin is removed in circumcision. And what seems the most remarkable in all the Biblical examples I was able to find and must forgo exposing here is that the gesture of denuding or of affording sight – the *apocalyptic* movement – is more serious here, sometimes more guilty and more dangerous than what follows and what it can give rise to, for example copulation. (Ibid., 5)

Leaving aside for the moment the optical vector of libidinal millenarianism, here I wish merely to draw attention to the assumption that copulation logically, or at least possibly, follows the highly ritualistic *praxis* of the striptease and/or Revelation. Within such a context, even the smutty schoolboy joke which introduced this section instantiates those early discursive currencies which conflate – or rather *recognize* – the libidinal logic of apocalyptic prophecy.

Derrida fashions an elaborately ejaculative eschatology out of the Biblical scene in which, when the Christ-Lamb opens each of the Seven Seals, one of the "four living" responds with the pronouncement, "Come." In true meta-deconstructive mode, Derrida notes that "'Come' does not announce this or that apocalypse: already it resounds with a certain tone; it is in itself the apocalypse of apocalypse; *Come* is apocalyptic." (Ibid., 35) The prophetic tone is thus analogous to the arrogant confidence of sexual mastery and the *petite mort* of the individual is inflated to include the entire human race teetering on the edge of oblivion.

Witness William Laurence, who in turn witnessed the first nuclear explosion in the Alomogordo desert, evoking the erotic climax of Molly Bloom's narrative for his own purposes: "The hills said yes and the mountains chimed in yes. It was as if the earth had spoken and the suddenly iridescent clouds and sky had joined in one affirmative answer. Atomic energy – yes." (Boyer 1985, 250) As Haraway reminds us, "Plumbing all those 'secrets' is one of the major narratives of erotic transgression in technoscience." (Haraway 1997, 53) By transgressing the laws of nature we had transcended ourselves.

In Laurence's words we see evidence of Haraway's claim that, "Witnessing is a collective, limited practice that depends on the constructed and never finished credibility of those who do it, all of whom are mortal, fallible, and fraught with the consequences of unconscious and disowned desires and fears." (Ibid., 267)

The Second Coming

Every cliché in history has been made to jump through the three mesmerizing hoops of the year 2000, and they are beginning to buckle with each mistake. Computer scientists and corporate executives await the date with dread because they have a self-made apocalypse on their hands, known as the "millennium bug" or the Y2K problem. Through a kind of subconscious faith in the Christian Millennium, computer programmers only put two digits in each silicon chip, so that 69 stood for 1969, being too shortsighted to anticipate the problems this would bring in the twenty-first century. Possible scenarios include everything from minor inconvenience to total system breakdown, even mass nuclear disfunction. One newspaper reported that: "The failure to program even vastly powerful mainframe computers to cope with a trivial change of date may be the biggest, most costly and absurd mistake in the history of the industrialized world." (Reeve 1996, 53) We are told to brace for what Neal Stephenson has referred to as "the Infocalypse," which begins in New Zealand and sweeps west across the globe with the dawning of the millennium. The Y2K problem is thus a perfect fable for modern myopia, both the vengeful return of Hal 9000 and a prosaic twist on the Frankenstein myth – our technology will destroy us. The corporate notion of "Y2K compliance" is a warning to us all – upgrade or freeze!

Information technologies have become the millennial terrain of erotic-thanatic interaction. This historical juncture has attained the tense significance of the final level of a video game played throughout the centuries, an enigmatic virtual challenge on which all previous achievements are staked. Do we save the game now, and continue later? Quit while we're ahead? Or is it already too late? Such a dubious metaphor at least captures the Western perception of history as a linear process of accumulation, a collective – and *collecting – Bildungsroman* following the learning curve of the human race.

The scientific rapture of the intellect reveals and uncovers what is not yet known, and this teleological knowledge has apocalyptic momentum. The notion of Doomsday stems back to the Domesday Book, William the Conqueror's first attempt in 1085 to catalogue the populace. According to a popular rumour of the time, the completion of this book would herald the end of the world. This was due to its pan-optical function as an exhaustive bureaucratic apparatus, not unlike the book of Judgement Day chronicling the moral purity of all human souls. It is in this sense that the true character of the Last Days is *not* the victory of chaos and anarchy over civilization (as it is usually presented) but rather the *triumph* of Western Man's rational quest to pierce and record the secrets of the universe.

In Arthur C. Clarke's canonical short story "The Nine Billion Names of God" (1967) we see a parable of the Enlightenment project completing its task in the information age. A powerful new computer programme is commissioned by a group of Tibetan monks who wish to identify the true name of God. Those who do not believe that IBM software could possibly complete such a sacred task begin a nocturnal climb down from the mountain monastery, only to see the stars wink out one by one. The power of this image stems from our deep imbrication within – and subsequent recognition of – scientific narratives of completion and their consequences. Stars going out one by one like snuffed celestial candles signifies the end of the human race (as both a species and a competitive velocity towards some kind of finishing-line, glimpsed from as far off as Ancient Greece).

Clarke's story represents a celestial version of pulling up stumps. The imperial trace of this metaphor serves to remind us that such an apocalypse, brought about through a Faustian pact with technology, follows the destructive logic of Empire; bolstered through scholarship, classification, dissection, typologies and autopsies. This Humanist agenda follows the genocidal, indeed *gynecological* task of probing the body of knowledge by conquering, raping and pillaging colonies coded as feminine.

The modest witness is concerned with the ways in which technoscience – including genetic-engineering and the Human Genome Project – represents an "accumulation strategy," (Haraway 1997, 14) intimately bound up with secular "salvation histories of modernity." (Ibid, 4) Apocalypse is thus a grand label for completion and closure. The mystery simultaneously answered and gone. The twentieth century groans under the weight of accumulated knowledge, secretly desiring an epistemological *tabula rasa*.

Baudrillard has noted that, "The accumulation of time imposes the idea of progress, as the accumulation of science imposes the ideas of truth: in each case, what is accumulated is no longer symbolically exchanged, but becomes an *objective* dimension," (Baudrillard 1993, 146) that is, amputated from reciprocal circulation – dead. Thus, the political economy relies on a useless surplus of time and knowledge, like the enormous silos of "emergency" grain which lie rotting in the United States, while much of the world starves. According to Baudrillard, "we cannot hope for a dialectical revolution at the end of this process of spiralling hoarding." (Ibid., 147)

Such a metaphor becomes even more relevant when we reconsider Nick Land's crucial question: "What kind of libidinal catastrophe must have occurred in order for a physicist to *smile* when he [*sic*] says that nature's secrets are almost exhausted?" (Land 1992, 34)

About Time

"[T]here is no 'closure at the end of the twentieth century – sooner a 'closure-effect.'"
Geoff Waite (1996, 1)

"We seem to be in some sort of temporal flux."
Star Trek Generations

At this point I would submit an image given to me by a person who spent a new year's eve in a hotel room in Jakarta. She was watching the celebrations on the television, and at five minutes to midnight, the camera closed in on a clock fixed to the wall. This clock was of the generic analogue variety, found in countless institutions such as schools and banks. Nothing happened at the final stroke, only some muffled cheers from off camera, and the lens remained on the clock-face until someone remembered to cut to a different show ten minutes later.

Apart from conveying a kind of humorous pathos at this "technological lag" between different nations and economies, the (analogue) clock provides a face which reflects our thoughts and actions. As Frank Kermode poetically puts it, "we hear a clock saying tick-tock, tick being a beginning and tock an ending, so constituting a tiny genesis and a tiny apocalypse." (Kermode 1995, 250) The analogue clock is diachronic – we can see where we have been and we can see where we are going. The digital clock – of which the Genitron is the synechdocic example – is synchronic. Each moment is severed from the last. As Baudrillard reminds us:

> For this century – which can do nothing more than count the seconds separating it from its end without either being able, or really wanting, to measure up to that end – the digital clock on the Beaubourg Centre showing the countdown in millions of seconds is the perfect symbol. It illustrates the reversal of the whole of our modernity's relation to time. Time is no longer counted progressively, by addition, starting from an origin, but by subtraction, starting from the end. This is what happens with rocket launches or time bombs. And that end is no longer the symbolic endpoint of a history, but the mark of a zero sum, of a potential exhaustion. (Baudrillard 1997, n.p.)

Kermode also points out that "we 'live from the end,' even if the world should be endless." (Kermode 1975, 58)

So we return to the explicit subtext of libidinal millenarianism, the climactic model of history which both sustains and challenges the status quo. We find ourselves in a seedy, red-light district performance of *Waiting for Godot*, in which the anticipated one is a transcendent orgasm which tickles but eludes. Baudrillard identifies modern linear temporality as, "at once the time of an ending and of the unlimited suspending of the end," (Baudrillard 1994, 7) an epistemological artificiality which was only established through the violent historical insertion of the messianic model. The history of heresy is

thus the history of the rejection of salvation in "what was akin to a defiance of time . . . [hence]. . . . The whole of history has had a millennial . . . challenge to its temporality running through it." (Ibid.)

To bring the end forward by pulling God(ot) out from off-stage, to expose the ideological pulleys and levers which held the world of Oz in suspense, is a radical rejection of the scientific (sequential) order. It is the empowering recognition that:

> All the agencies of repression and control are installed in this divided space, in the suspense between a life and its proper end, that is, in the production of a literally fantastic and artificial temporality (since at every instant every life has its proper death there already, that is to say, in this same instant lies the finality it attains). (Baudrillard 1993, 130)

In other words, when the future is completely inscribed by the present, we are already history.

Coda

This paper has flirted around the slipstream created by the dove-tailing of revolution, revelation and re-evaluation. It also inhabits the rhizomatic geometry which crystallizes the recovered, the discovered, and the uncovered. My modest witness attempts to both contextualize, and hyper-textualize, a certain reading of history; one which emphasizes the random interstitiality of discursive influence, while being careful not to "permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending." (Foucault 1991, 88)

Indeed, following Foucault, the genealogical emergence of libidinal millenarianism, "situates itself within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body." (Ibid.) If Elinor Shaffer is correct in asserting that, "The human mind cannot grasp the notion of the end of time, because the mind's medium is time," (Shaffer 1995, 140) then the entry point (or exit wound) of libidinal millenarianism is indeed the body.

As Haraway reminds us, "there have been practical inheritances, which have undergone many reconfigurations, but which remain potent," (Haraway 1997, 33) and it is these which rattle the chains of Heaven's Gate. "Technology," she continues, "including the technology of the body itself, is the real subject of universal history." (Ibid., 9)

Anti-apocalypticians like Donna Haraway, Lee Quinby and Michael André Bernstein, maintain that the power of self-fulfilling prophecies are evident in the myopic politics of everyday life (whether this be conducted in Parliament, in the library or in the home). The more we "foreshadow" the future in apocalyptic terms, the more we invoke its presence into our being – or, perhaps more accurately in terms of libidinal millenarianism – our be-*coming*. If we are constantly portrayed as waiting for the Millennium to land on our heads (like the nuclear witnesses waiting at the end of Pynchon's nuclear rainbow, or the masses gathered beneath the Genitron clock with their eyes to the heavens) then the

chances of it actually occurring, sooner or later, increase. The apocalypse thus becomes apocraphyl, memetically disseminated like an urban legend which then becomes "true." As Steven Shaviro remarks: "Our incessant waiting for catastrophe to happen itself enfolds or embodies the catastrophic event." (Shaviro 1997, n.p.)

This point is crucial, for who knows when the next Reagan will come to power, or if indeed it will be such an obvious agent of God's will. However, those who write off the entire apocalyptic paradigm as intrinsically fundamentalist and dangerous, unwittingly confuse, "the truth of the revelation" for "the revealed truth." (Derrida 1984b, 28) Anti-apocalypticians choose to ignore or devalue Derrida's point that, "Nothing is less conservative than the apocalyptic genre." (Ibid., 29) Indeed, "apocalyptic thinking can open up spaces for the enunciation or utterance of hitherto silenced and marginalized voices." (Dickinson 1995, 230)

We must, therefore, remind ourselves that what Eagleton identifies as time's "radical indeterminacy," (Eagleton 1990b, 177) is not only the source of metaphysical anguish, but also the political site of potential futures which refuse to limit themselves through prophetic or utopian foreclosure. Anti-apocalyptic philosophies also fail to take into account the poetic politics inscribed within many end-time scenarios, the heretical levelling which inevitably occurs in the Last Days. A glib example of this is provided in the movie *Ghostbusters* (1984), when the city of New York is under attack from thousands of poltergeists. Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) describes the ensuing chaos as, " . . . fire and brimstone, cats and dogs living together – mass hysteria!" Old antagonisms are dissolved in the finitude of life, the moment of panic.

Those who see the End in negative and absolutist terms can find themselves awkwardly aligned with the articulations of religio-scientific capital, in which life is replaced by survival. For while "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination" is often taken as desirable by both liberal utopians and Vulcan science fiction characters, it is also the law of the Marquis de Sade. In other words, it is not a matter of being "for or against" the apocalypse, mainly because only a hand-full of humans have any real influence over the matter, anyway. It is more a case of ironizing millennial tropes in such a way as to incorporate Dionysian insights, while avoiding the joyless trajectory of their conclusions (and of course I'm thinking particularly of Baudrillard here, but also the "faschoid" residues in Sadistic neo-Nietzschean discourses).

Anti-apocalypticians wield postmodern theory to promote earlier political orientations, refusing to recognize the nihilistic logic underpinning their vocabulary. This has the effect of dressing up old Marxisms in new clothes. These commentators remain oblivious to the irritating grain of truth in Baudrillard's philosophy concerning the obsolescence of oppositionary tactics based on the political economy, rather than the symbolic economy. While I admire these thinkers, especially their impassioned insights into the ideological mobilizations of end-time narratives, I believe they refuse to acknowledge the inescapable fact that apocalypse has become the only post-revolutionary model of radical change for an entire generation. While this is in itself unfortunate, the polyvalent properties of millenarianism allow for a theoretical space in which to address this pressing problematic, not as culmination, but crooked continuum.

The apocalypse, deconstruction, postmodernity, Millenium, Eschaton – call it what you will – is motivated by the desire for a progressive future, a making new. These labels represent a pragmatic, rather than programmatic, utopia. This desire is, of course,

susceptible to market-orientated manipulation, but it is also open to the seduction of dissent. The case of Heaven's Gate serves to remind us of the sublimatory mechanisms which can explode in our faces in the chronotope of libidinal millenarianism. What more vivid example of "the imaginary and the real figur[ing] each other in concrete fact" (Haraway 1997, 2) than the castrated corpses of Applewhite and his followers? And as Haraway reminds us, "figuration in technoscientific texts and artifacts is often simultaneously apocalyptic and comedic." (Ibid., 9) This statement alone should draw our attention to the latent possibilities within ironic end-games.

Bernstein's assertion that, "the literary excitement of imagining an apocalyptic breakdown of all social restraints is usually thrilling in direct proportion to its improbability," (Bernstein 1992, 39) is true in the sense that it has been a redemptive realm for those who benefit most from – and feel the most guilt about – the status quo. However, millenarian fantasies have also nourished those with the least to lose, and most to gain; the poor, the sick, the silenced, the disenfranchised, the marginalized and damned. Genuinely apocalyptic moments have been accompanied by apocalyptic narratives which are no less "exciting" for their increased likelihood. Indeed, they swell the profits of doom. (And I'm thinking here of certain nihilistic queer narratives which have emerged from the post-orgy male gay culture of Northern America.)

Technology is both the apotheosis of Apollonian achievement and a Trojan vector for Dionysian proliferation. Contemporary millenarianism is inseparable from the technology through which it regenerates – whether it be the bomb, the pill, the gene, or the computer. Libidinal millenarianism is thus expressed through – and limited by – the techno-information culture of late capitalism. Pan is the goat in the machine.

While Haraway asserts that the modest witness rejects the "addictive narcotic of transcendental foundations," (Haraway 1997, 22) I would argue that such a narcotic can provide alternative access to her cherished categories of humour and imagination. The negative wish to "evade millenarian closure" (ibid., 14) can indeed blind the modest witness to certain desirable options. In this regard, I too seek to "make the end swerve" (ibid., 16) but only as a means; not an end in itself. So when Haraway states that, "we might learn to live without the bracing discourses of salvation history," (ibid., 45) I would agree only in so far as such narratives retain "the moment of vulnerability through which new articulations are made." (Ibid., xiv)

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