

Metal Moon

by Chris Okum

Maximal Sexual Joy

Wilhelm Reich on the mass psychology of fascism: "Fascism is supposed to be a reversion to paganism and an archenemy of religion. Far from it— fascism is the supreme expression of religious mysticism. As such, it comes into being in a peculiar social form. Fascism countenances that religiosity that stems from sexual perversion, and it transforms the masochistic character of the old patriarchal religion of suffering into a sadistic religion. In short, it transposes religion from the 'other-worldliness' of the philosophy of suffering to the 'this worldliness' of sadistic murder."

Another Frequency

"I cheated on you, Marcel," said Marcel Duchamp's wife, Alexina, to Marcel Duchamp. "That's fine," said Marcel. "When are you coming home?" "I've cheated on you with many men," said Alexina. "Yes. I heard, that's fine," said Marcel. "When are you coming home?" "I've cheated on you with many men at the same time," said Alexina. "And when I say, 'the same time,' I mean that I was with many men all at once." "I understand," said Marcel. "When are you coming home?" "And not only have I cheated on you many, many times, with many, many men," said Alexina, "I have thoroughly enjoyed every single second of it and have never had a moment of guilt or anxiety about it." "Of course you haven't," said Marcel. "When are you coming home?" "The only reason I'm telling you now is because I'm going to keep cheating on you," said Alexina, "and I want you to know in advance so that there are no secrets between us." "Your secret is safe with me," said Marcel. "When are you coming home?" "I have lovers of every kind," said Alexina. "Every color, every race, every

creed, every shape and size." "When are you coming home?" "My life away from you is one moment of pure bliss after another." "When are you coming home?" "I don't feel whole unless I have one lover in front of me, one love behind me, one lover on the left side, one love on the right side, one lover on top, and one lover below." "When are you coming home?" "I am insatiable. Sometimes I think I could make love to every single man in the world and still not be satisfied." "When are you coming home?" "Marcel, do you hear what I'm saying to you?" "When are you coming home?" "Marcel?" "When are you coming home?" "Marcel?" "When are you coming home?" "Marcel!" "When are you coming home?" "Marcel!!" "When are you coming home?" "MAR-CEL!" "When are you coming home?" "MAR! CEL!" "When are you coming home?"

This Is Your Life

From *Scaring Ourselves To Death: Mass Entertainment in the Age of Public Terror*, by Marie Gonick, Viking Books, 2022: "Since 9/11 horror films have been disseminated through our body politic at a prolific, seeming exponential rate, yet not one of these films has within them a single image that carries the horrific charge of the images we witnessed on the date in question. It seems as if horror films are the only way we can deal with what happened (i.e., a collective, media-induced trauma which has spanned two generations), and yet what happened has made horror films completely ineffectual and irrelevant, despite the culturing longing for their efficacy. The mind shudders at what kind of image would be able to outdo a commercial airliner disappearing into the side of a skyscraper, or a rain of desperate humans plummeting at terminal velocity towards their utter physical annihilation on the pavement of a New York City street, or a billion tons of steel vaporizing to the sound of broadcast news anchors doing their best to control their emotions. The repetition compulsion with this one is going to be positively apocalyptic. The point of the 21st Century just might be a

journey towards psychic numbness, or at least a partial cessation of the images that haunt it."

Under The Sun

"The first stage of the economy's domination of social life brought about an evident degradation of being into having — human fulfillment was no longer equated with what one was, but with what one possessed. The present stage, in which social life has become completely dominated by the accumulated productions of the economy, is bringing about a general shift from having to appearing — all "having" must now derive its immediate prestige and its ultimate purpose from appearances. At the same time all individual reality has become social, in the sense that it is shaped by social forces and is directly dependent on them. Individual reality is allowed to appear only if it is not actually real."

— Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

CIA, KGB, Agatha Christie

A man walks into a bank. The man says to the teller, "I'm here to open an account. I heard if I deposit \$250 dollars right now I get a free t-shirt, bumper sticker, and travel mug." The teller smiles. The man hands the teller his money. The teller open a drawer and places the money in it. The teller looks at the man and smiles. The man waits. The teller says nothing. The teller does nothing. The man waits some more. Finally, the man says, "Is there something else you need from me?" The teller says, "Need from you?" The man says, "Well, I was wondering, I mean, I gave you the money, so do I need to sign something now? To get my free t-shirt, bumper sticker, and travel mug?" The teller says, "Free t-shirt? Bumper sticker? Travel mug? I'm sorry, sir, but I don't understand." The man says, "I just gave you \$250. I thought that was the offer." The teller says, "What offer?" The man looks around the bank. There is a security guard, three other customers, and a few bank employees. Everyone has

stopped doing whatever it is they were doing and they are now looking at the man looking at them. The man turns back to the teller. The man says, "Is this some kind of prank or something? I gave you my money." The teller says, "I don't know what you're referring to, sir. I'm sorry, but you didn't give me any money." The man looks around the bank again. Now everyone, including the security guard, is smiling, and everyone looks like they're trying not to laugh. The man turns back to the teller. The man says, "I don't know what's going on right now, but I'd like my money back, please." The teller says, "What money, sir? You didn't give me any money." The man says, "Come on, I just gave you \$250. Now, you either give me my money back, or you keep the money, open my account, and give me my free t-shirt, bumper stick, and travel mug." The teller says, "Sir, number one, I'm going to need you to lower your voice. And number two, you did not give me any money." The man steps back from the teller, puts his hands on his hips, and turns around. The security guard has drawn his gun and is pointing it at the man. The other customers and bank employees are suppressing giggles and whispering in each other's ears. The man says, "Is this some kind of joke or something?" The teller says, "No, sir. This is not some kind of joke. And I think it's time for you to leave." The security guard, his gun still drawn, inches closer to the man. The man puts his hands up and says, "Okay, okay, I'm leaving, I'm leaving." The man walks out of the bank and as the door swings shut behind him he can hear everyone inside the bank explode with laughter. The man stands outside of the bank for a minute and then starts walking towards the subway entrance. He tries to avoid eye contact with the other pedestrians, but the ones he does manage to look at have smiles on their faces. Some of them are laughing. Some of them are looking at the man. Some of them are pointing at him. Some of them are whispering. "Now you know," the man says to himself. "Now you know."

Electric Church

Michel Foucault: "Of course, states of domination do indeed exist. In a great many cases power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom. To take what is undoubtedly a very simplified example, one cannot say that it was only men who wielded power in the conventional marital structure of the 18th and 19th centuries; women had quite a few options: they could deceive their husbands, pilfer money from them, refuse them sex. Yet they were still in a state of domination insofar as these options were ultimately only stratagems that never succeeded in reversing the situation." (Interview: "Ethics of the Concern for Self" 441-442).

Promised Land

He saw *The Wizard of Oz* when he was a kid, and that was a long, long time ago. He's not a kid anymore. Now he is an old man. And so he decided to watch *The Wizard of Oz* again. He wanted to watch it again because it seems like it's a very important film in the history of cinema. So many other films have referenced it that it's almost become a trope at this point to have a reference to *The Wizard of Oz* in your film. And he never understood why. But now he understands. He didn't understand when he was a kid. He gets it now, though. And he doesn't know why he gets it only now. Being an adult doesn't seem to have imparted him with any innate wisdom. He feels as confused and lost as an adult as he did when he was a kid, which isn't disconcerting, but more like a bare fact. He would like to think that *The Wizard of Oz* is about this sense of eternal confusion, but he also thinks he may have no idea what *The Wizard of Oz* is about, just like he has no idea what his dream was about last night (he found a detonator in the back pocket of his jeans, and along with the detonator he found a pack of American Spirit Yellows and a Zippo. He tossed the smokes and the lighter and pressed the detonator. He then had to run out of the building he was in before it exploded, and he doesn't remember if he made it or not. He thinks the building exploded before he was able to get out). What he does

know, though, is that there is a serious uncanny pull to *The Wizard of Oz*, something ineffable not only about the story, but about the way the movie was made. Who knows, maybe it's the little people. There are so many little people. The screen is filthy with some of the gnarliest, creepiest, most insane looking little people he's ever seen, and he lives in Los Angeles, where little people are hiding around every corner, just waiting to make eye contact with you and steal a piece of your soul. Maybe the reason *The Wizard of Oz* still resonates is because it's the first filmed nightmare in human history, the first movie to actually capture the texture and logic of a nightmare. *The Wizard of Oz* is a nightmare, right? It couldn't be just a normal dream, could it? Dorothy ends up back in Kansas, back on that depressing little farm, her life forever in black and white, always surrounded by those weird old men who seem to take an inordinate amount of interest in her. That seems like a nightmare to him. I doesn't know, though. He really doesn't. But what he does know is that the whole Pink Floyd *Dark Side of the Moon* thing? Where the album supposedly syncs up with the movie? It doesn't. It does something else instead. The music enhances the scenes, amplifies the feeling of any given moment, almost as if the music springs out from somewhere deep inside of the frame. It's quite beautiful, actually. Maybe *The Wizard of Oz* is nothing more than a beautifully made film about the horror of not understanding a damn thing that's going on in your life, and the comfort of going into your room, getting into bed, and burying your head under the sheets. Or maybe not. He doesn't know.

