

Cute Force

By Theodore Dalrymple

One of the characteristics of the present age, no doubt a consequence of the expansion of tertiary education beyond the capacity of people to benefit from it, is the prevalence of intellection without intellect.



Mr. Charles Norman, of this magazine, is kind enough sometimes (actually, quite often) to furnish me with examples of absurdity that he thinks, rightly, that I might have overlooked. Recently, for example, he drew my attention to the work—if “work” is quite the word I seek—of Amy Ireland. An

Australian intellectual, Dr. Ireland has a PhD from the University of New South Wales. Her style seems to be a mixture of polysyllabic verbigeration and neologism, giving to her prose barely more meaning than the word salad of deteriorated schizophrenics. It does, however, manage to convey a savor of self-satisfied knowingness.

Last year, with someone called Maya B. Kronick, who apparently likes to be referred to as “they,” she published a book with the title *Cute Accelerationism*. Possessed of a bright pink cover in the most abominable taste, Amazon described it thus, I assume at the request of the writer or publisher:

An impassioned philosophical celebration of the multiple dimensions of contemporary cuteness.

Involuntarily sucked into the forcefield of Cute, Amy Ireland and Maya B. Kronick decided to let go, give in, let the demon ride them, and make an accelerationism out of it—only to

realize that Cute opens a microcosmic gate onto the transcendental process of acceleration itself.

Joining the swarming e-girls, t-girls, NEETS, anons, and otaku who rescued accelerationism from the double pincers of media panic and academic buzzkill by introducing it to big eyes, fluffy ears, programming socks, and silly memes, they discover that the objects of cute culture are just spinoffs of an accelerative process booping us from the future, rendering us all submissive, breedable, helpless, and cute in our turn. Cute comes tomorrow, and only anastrophe can make sense of what it will have been doing to us.

Evading all discipline, sliding across all possible surfaces, Cute Accelerationism embraces every detail of the symptomatology, aetiology, epidemiology, history, biology, etymology, topology, and even embryology of Cute, joyfully burrowing down into its natural, cultural, sensory, sexual, subjective, erotic, and semiotic dimensions in order to sound out the latent spaces of this Thing that has soft-soaped its way into human culture.

Traversing tangents on natural and unnatural selection, runaway supernormalisation, the collective self-transformation of genderswarming cuties, the hyperstitional cultures of shojo and otaku, denpa and 2D love, and the cute subworlds of aegyo and meng, moé and flatmaxxing, catboys and dogon eggs, bobbles and gummies, vore machines and partial objects, BwOs and UwUs...glomping, snuggling, smooshing and squeeeeing their way toward the event horizon of Cute, donning cat ears and popping bubbles as they go, in this untimely philosophical intensification of an omnipresent phenomenon, having surrendered to the squishiest demonic possession, like, ever, two bffs set out in search of the transcendental shape of cuteness only to realize that, even though it is all around us, we do not yet know what Cute can do.

Seriously superficial and bafflingly coherent, half erudite philosophical treatise, half dariacore mashup, 100 percent cutagion, this compact lil' textual machine is a meltdown and a glow up, as well as a twizzled homage to Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus. Welcome to the kawaiizome: nothing uncute makes it out of the near future, and the cute will very soon no longer be even remotely human.

In the book itself, we read:

Throughout the derelicted warrens at the heart of yassness, feral youth cultures get off on allowing themselves to be invested by artificialized desires that migrate them to new spaces of networked inhuman affect. "Revolution is not a duty but surrender": Go with what you want even and especially in spite of "your" self.

(Just ask Freddo: an awkward, sickly, socially isolated incel weighed down by generations of heavy bratwurst-denken, who still wanted to dance; sworn enemy of gravity, phil-LOL-ogist, who called for a gaie science, the first real theorist of the catboy, a child with lion's paws.)

As far as I can make out, this could translate to something like the following:

Youth culture is full of bogus enthusiasms and replaces real human contact by an electronic simulacrum of it. To avoid this, you should do whatever you want, especially if it is counter to conventional morality.

Ask Nietzsche (here called Freddo). He was a pathetic little introvert, inhibited by the Christian past, who dreamed of being a practicing psychopath. He was the first philosopher to suggest that this would be a good idea.

These are adolescent musings dressed up in all but impenetrable jargon. But on further search, I discovered that there was a subculture in which it passed for philosophy. Published by the same company as *Cute Accelerationism* is *Revolutionary Demonism* by the Gruppo di Nun, the latter being “a collective of psycho-activists aimed at organising forms of occult resistance to hetero-patriarchal dogma, promoting an alternative form of ceremonial magick based on a non-dual Love for the entropic disintegration of the cosmos.”

In this learned work, we learn that “The occult thermodynamics of separation is fascist time sorcery that provokes locally polarised flows of energy,” and that “Pain should be understood as a radical form of insurrection.... With each spasm we urge our reluctant ego into the flames of sacrifice. Blood must be shed to the last drop in order that the light of the fire should rise splendidly in the night.”

This is surely a case of fascists calling fascists fascist.

Does any of this arcane drivel matter? It must reach a very small audience, after all. As the late Francisco Franco said when he was shown some art that was said to be revolutionary, “So long as they keep revolution to art.”

It came as a shock (at least to me) to find that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, a respectable university press some of whose learned publications I have read and even reviewed, distributes these books and even advertises them on its website. I cannot believe that it does so for purely commercial reasons, which would be understandable if not very glorious. On the contrary, there is probably a powerful person, or powerful persons, in the press itself who considers this stuff of value. *O tempora, o mores!*

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