

## Marc Illing - Unfinished History

*“It is necessary, in this world, to be made of harder stuff than one's environment.”*  
- Aleister Crowley

Some fight the forces that be, whether natural, political or spiritual. Their reasons for this, although varied, can be summarised in one word: Dissatisfaction. In their generally fruitless struggle to cast the world in their perception of its “ideal” form, they define themselves through self-centred arrogance and reap the choking dust of the barren fields of doubt. This doubt raises questions in their minds, questions for which their experience has no ready answers. Like a flock of birds they are pushed by the extremely chaotic winds of doubt into uncertain skies, crashing into each other and incurring carnage along the way. These “bird-people” ultimately provide a solid example of the diffusion of energy via positive entropy - or in layperson's terms: **They assist the universe in becoming bland and boring.**

Others are forces of nature - neither seeking answers to mundane questions nor plying their skills to repackage their experiences into sound-bites more easily hash-tagable. They are equally at home at the easel, the assembly line, the workbench, the drafting table, the musty library, the park bench, the night desert, the fourth day of the rave, the keyboard of an old laptop and the smoky lounge. They synthesize, integrate and create as a matter of course just as the bird-people forget, differentiate and destroy. Early-risers and short-sleepers, they are driven not by the questions that are hard, but rather by the simplicity of certainty. It is this visceral energy that the aesthetic elite “work” into physical reality. They are the primordial forces that reduce systemic entropy by channelling energy into new forms, ideas and systems - or in layperson's terms: **They assist the universe in becoming fresh and exciting.**



*“Erste Hilfe” Marc Illing, 2011*

Fortunately for the intellectual and creative elite (or unfortunately, depending upon your perspective, dearest reader) the difference between their aptitudes and those of the members of the common flock is less than trivial; it is the difference between two phases in the evolution of a species. Honestly participating in the extant universe is the only way to actively construct reality, and neither living in the past nor dreaming of a possible future enables cotenancy in the present moment.

Members of the bird-like Neanderthalesque human genus are marooned in a linguistic construction of time. They pretend that the so-called future exists by making plans for things they might do and generally reconstruct the past by reminding themselves of how things could have (or should have) been. All these should's, could's, would's, might's and maybe's distract them from the continuity of the present moment, ultimately entropifying their existence into a beige feed of consumption. Indeed, they might more properly be called “human could-ings”. As the sapient Johann Wolfgang von Goethe has been quoted on a house-facade in his beloved Weimar: “Real life often loses its gloss to such a degree, that sometimes one must apply a varnish of fiction to freshen it up.”<sup>1</sup> Although Goethe said that the saliency of the past is subject to present-day interpretations based upon delusionary story-telling, with only a fabricated version of the past to go on, it could be argued that these poor souls are doomed to watch reruns of their fantasies and ultimately inhabit a fleeting and non-existent virtual world.

How imperative, then, that the aesthetic elite works to preserve their impressions as echoes of the present, thereby preventing tomorrow's present-day from becoming at best bland - or at worst forgotten. Walter Benjamin wrote that “Those who are unable to take sides should say nothing.”<sup>2</sup> And this is exactly what everyone should know about Marc Illing: **He takes sides, and in so doing says a great deal.**

- Daniel Caleb Thompson, Oct. 2015

1 - Original: „Das wirkliche Leben verliert oft dergestalt seinen Glanz, dass man es manchmal mit dem Firnis der Fiktion wieder auffrischen muss.“ Wolfgang von Goethe (Author's translation)

2 - Original: „Wer nicht Partei ergreifen kann, der hat zu schweigen.“ - Walter Benjamin (Author's translation)