



❖ Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles (Designed by Frank Gehry)

❖ 'What I do not like in contemporary society' : An essay by Eric Fromm

There are so many things in contemporary society that I dislike that it is difficult to decide with which particular complaint to begin. But the fact is, it does not really matter, because it is quite clear that all the things I dislike are only various facets of the structure of modern industrial society; they form a syndrome, and all go back to the same root: the structure of industrial society, both in its capitalist and its soviet form.

The first dislike I want to mention is the fact that everything and almost everybody is for sale. Not only commodities and services, but ideas, art, books, persons, convictions, a feeling, a smile - they all have been transformed into commodities. And so is the whole man, with all his faculties and potentialities.

From this follows something else: fewer and fewer people can be trusted. Not necessarily do I mean this in the crude sense of dishonesty in business or underhandedness in personal relations, but in something that goes much deeper. Being for sale, how can one be trusted to be the same tomorrow as one is today? How do I know who he is, in whom I should put my trust? Just that he will not murder or rob me? This, indeed, is reassuring, but it is not much of a trust.

This is, of course, another way of saying that ever fewer people have convictions - **by conviction I mean an opinion rooted in the person's character, in the total personality, and which therefore motivates action.** I do not mean simply an idea that remains central and can be easily changed.

Another point is closely related to the former: the older generation tends to have a character that is very much shaped by the conventional patterns and by the need for successful adaptation. Many of the younger generation tend to have no character at all. By that I do not mean that they are dishonest; on the contrary, one of the few enjoyable things in the modern world is the honesty of the greater part of the younger generation. What I mean is that they live, emotionally and intellectually speaking, from hand to mouth. **They satisfy every need immediately, have little patience to learn, cannot easily endure frustration, and have no centre within themselves, no sense of identity. They suffer from this and question themselves, their identity, and the meaning of life.**

Some psychologists have made a virtue out of this lack of identity. They say that these young people have a "Protean Character", striving for everything, not bound by anything. But this is only a more poetic way of speaking about the lack of self that is BF Skinner's "human engineering", according to which man is what he is conditioned to be.

I dislike, too, the general boredom and lack of joy. Most people are bored because they are not interested in what they are doing, and our industrial system is not interested in having them be interested in their work. They hope for more amusement [than the older generation had] is supposed to be the only incentive that is necessary to compensate them for their boring work. But their leisure and amusement time, however, is boring. **It is just as much managed by the amusement industry as working time is managed by the industrial plant. People look for pleasure and excitement, instead of joy; for power and property, instead of growth. They want to have much, and use much, instead of being much.**

They are more attached to the dead and mechanical than to life and living processes. I have called this attraction to that which is not alive, using the words of Miguel De Unamuno, "necrophilia" and the attraction to all that is alive, "biophilia". In spite of all the emphasis on pleasure, our society produces more and more necrophilia and less and less love of life. All this leads to great boredom, which is only superficially compensated by constantly changing stimuli. The less these stimuli permit a truly alive and active interest, the more frequently they have to be changed, since it is a biological given fact that repeated "flat" stimuli soon become monotonous.

What I dislike most is summed up in the description in Greek mythology of the "Iron Race" the Greeks saw emerging. This description is - according to Hesiod's Erga (lines 132 - 42) - as follows: "As generations pass, they grow worse. A time will come when they have grown so wicked that they will worship power; might will be right to them and reverence for the good will cease to be at last, when no man is angry anymore at wrongdoing or feels shame in the presence of the miserable, Zeus will destroy them too. And yet even then something might be done, if only the common people would rise and put down rulers who oppress them".

I cannot conclude without saying that, in spite of all this, I am not hopeless. We are in the midst of a process in which many people are beginning to give up their illusions, and, as Marx once said, to give up illusions is the condition for giving up circumstances that require illusions.

❖ 'Posters' from the book 'Steal like an artist' by Austin Kleon

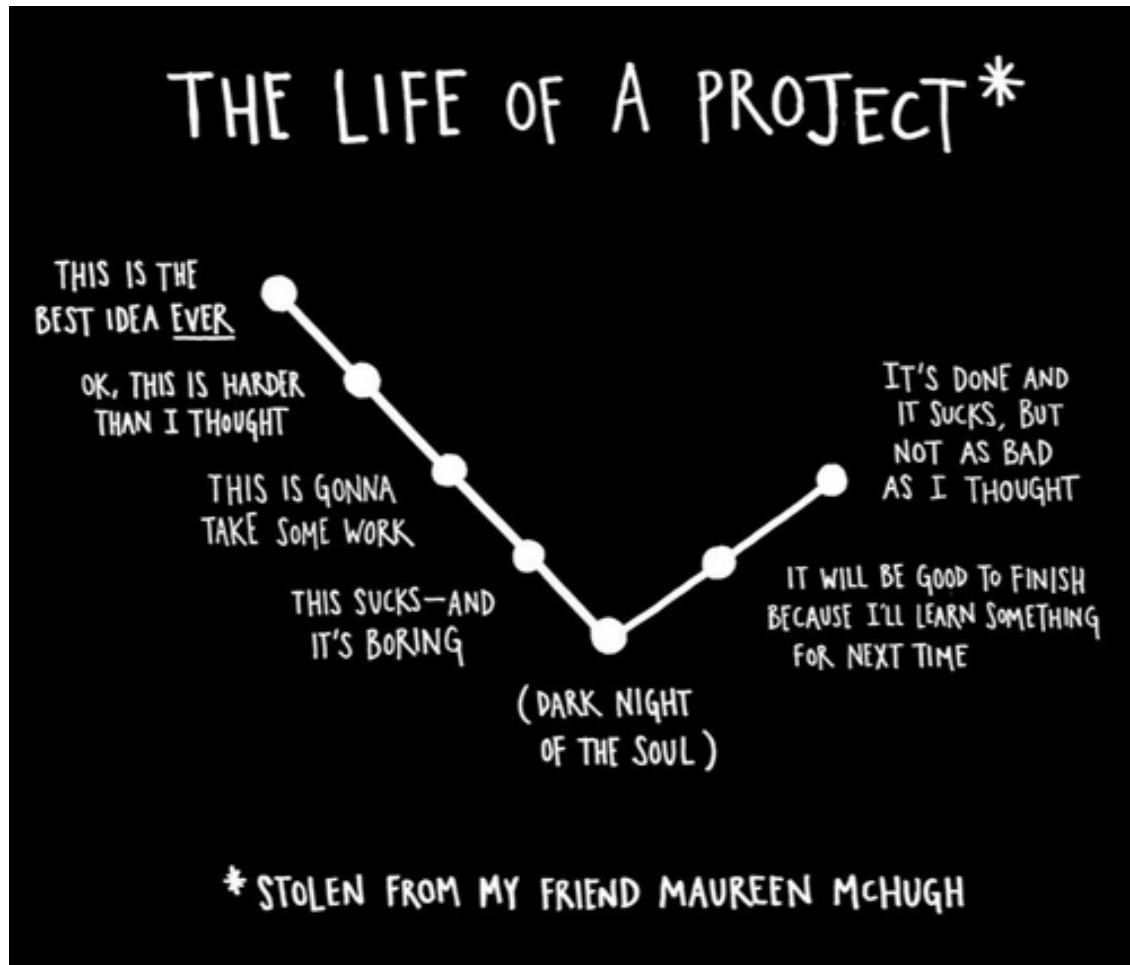
- ① STEAL LIKE AN ARTIST.
- ② DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE TO GET STARTED.
- ③ WRITE THE BOOK YOU WANT TO READ.
- ④ USE YOUR HANDS.
- ⑤ SIDE PROJECTS AND HOBBIES ARE IMPORTANT.
- ⑥ THE SECRET: DO GOOD WORK AND SHARE IT WITH PEOPLE.
- ⑦ GEOGRAPHY IS NO LONGER OUR MASTER.
- ⑧ BE NICE. (THE WORLD IS A SMALL TOWN.)
- ⑨ BE BORING. (IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET WORK DONE.)
- ⑩ CREATIVITY IS SUBTRACTION.

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GOOD THEFT	VS.	BAD THEFT
HONOR		DEGRADE
STUDY		SKIM
STEAL FROM MANY		STEAL FROM ONE
CREDIT		PLAGIARIZE
TRANSFORM		IMITATE
REMIX		RIP OFF

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❖ ' Posters ' from the book ' Steal like an artist' by Austin Kleon



❖ Talk by Shabnam Virmani : The Kabir Project - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHz5ypl2ZDI>



About 'Treasures'

It's a compilation that I put together every once in a while, of things that I have found to be beautiful and meaningful.

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