Institute For The Study of Insurgent Warfare
A Life of Lies
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for reliance on our resources to provide adequately for it, the inadequacy of our opponent's resources to counter it, and its ability, even where all else is equal, to simply fail to function. In essence, this framework advocates for direct approaches to problems over those which are indirect, and anything else over mere hope that things will turn out in our favor.

All that said, there is always risk which remains unaddressed by even the most comprehensive security program, which is part and parcel of merely living let alone living a life poised in hostility to law. What we have presented here is only a finger pointing at the nebulous menagerie of problems brought on by the illusions which plague us. We do not think there is an escape from our illusions, but only the questionably useful admonition to manage them. For us, we are each already betrayed, already occupy our prison cell, and already rot in the ground. Nonetheless, we refuse to concede the power to determine the details of these things. Though we imagine that doom befalls us all, we want that it should be our doom.

> I cannot think the unthinkable, but I can think that
> it is not impossible for the impossible to be.
>
> — Quentin Meillassoux

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Contents

finger or two. We should never rely on training alone to keep us safe.

The final approach, and our last line of defense, is personal protective equipment. Here, faced with a necessary danger from which we cannot further isolate ourselves, having done all we can to prepare ourselves through planning and training, we armor ourselves as best we can and proceed with what we hope are open eyes. Masks and disguising clothing fall into this category, though the "black block" strategy used sometimes by protesters or during massed vandalism is better understood as an administrative control, as does the use of encryption for our communications and data. This tier is notable for functioning only once all else has failed, once security has been breached, or once the police are already sifting through our belongings. Even so, personal protection is worthwhile as one more layer in a comprehensive approach to securing ourselves against law.

The overall perspective of the hierarchy of hazard controls may be understood as organizing approaches to contingency into three broad categories, ordered by decreasing effectiveness: negation, avoidance, and deflection. Negation prevents the manifestation of contingent futures, digging up their roots in the present thereby ensuring that no threat can sprout from them. Elimination and Substitution are both negational strategies. Avoidance seeks to prevent a contingent future from manifesting such as to encompass us in its scope, that is the police may well make arrests, but hopefully we will not find ourselves also caught up.

Engineered Controls and Administrative Controls are both avoidance strategies, with administration falling below engineering in effectiveness primarily because of its reliance on the in the moment competence of the individuals involved. Deflection seeks to shield us from the harm of a contingent future once it has already befallen us. Personal Protective Equipment functions through deflection, and suffers heavily as a strategy

tion of affinity groups we attempt to contain knowledge of our activities to only those we most know and trust, endeavoring to isolate ourselves from the threat posed by informants and traitors. This same approach equally endeavors to juridically isolate those outside our affinity groups from the risk posed by our actions through the establishment of plausible deniability. However, there are risks from which we cannot isolate ourselves, even our most trusted comrades may one day betray us, but where there is need we must sometimes proceed into direct contact with the things that threaten us. Doing so brings us into the least effective approaches which rely on individual competencies and performances to keep us from harm, and we only entertain their application after exhausting all higher order approaches.

Administrative controls are an effort to manage a threat by changing our behaviors. The use of training, posted signs, or security procedures all fall into this tier. Examples of procedures are taking separate paths to and from meetings, promises to maintain a wall of silence in the face of police inquiry, living a "cover life" so as to allay suspicion from our other activities, or moving conversations away from potentially "bugged" locations. We engage this tier when we attempt to select the time and place of sabotage such as to avoid the presence of police, cameras, and witnesses effectively isolating ourselves from the threat posed by each.

We also engage this tier when we rely on stealth to get us to a target, lies to allay suspicion from our actions, or technical knowledge to bypass a security system. Finally, posters endeavoring to dissuade contact with the police, "snitches get stitches" perhaps, also fall into this approach. The benefit of growing our own competencies and capacities, that is our own power, cannot be understated, and the historical success of stonewalling the police is noteworthy. However, administrative controls are only as good as are we, especially consider that one of the classic hallmarks of an aging, weathered carpenter being a missing

The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao
The name that can be named is not the eternal name
The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth
The named is the mother of myriad things
Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its essence
Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations
These two emerge together but differ in name
The unity is said to be the mystery
Mystery of mysteries, the door to all wonders

— Tao Te Ching

I. A LIFE OF LIES

All we have are the stories we tell. These are the order we bring to the cascade of impressions made by our senses, themselves containing nothing beyond the raw facts of their own existence. I saw, I heard, I felt, but none of these sights, sounds, or feelings mean anything on their own.

Each is set into relation with.others accompanying it which together with the reflexive experiences they trigger, like memories and emotions, form a correlative tableau reaching intermittently into our pasts. From these we mark out objects, interpret causes, and seize upon expectations. In this way we weave the whole rich narrative of our lives, telling stories of triumph over adversity, unbreakable friendships, and shameful betrayals.

Yet we do all of this without ever reaching beyond ourselves, nor could we: our senses mediate every relation between our cognition and the world that lays beyond it. Without taking the metaphysically solipsist position that there is literally nothing on the other side of our experiences, that our subjective experience is the sole thing that exists, we may nonetheless

understand that this mediation by our senses denies each of us unadulterated access to pure knowledge of any sort of external reality. We each find ourselves alone in a void peopled only by our fictions, guided by the light of truths of our own device.

The quest for truth and the terrible realization of its impossibility has tormented western philosophers for millennia. Here, though, we are not interested in filling the place where Truth should stand, but in making use of its absence.

Whatever the stories we each tell about ourselves, we tell many more about the people with whom we populate them. If mediation by our senses pollutes our access to knowledge, the lack of a particular sort of sense entirely is an even greater barrier. This is the situation which confronts us in other individuals, the gap which divides each of us cognitively from an external reality performs a doubled role in also dividing each of us from all others. For lack of the ability to directly experience the reality of another person's inner being, we are left with the task of making clumsy inferences from imperfect information about piecemeal encounters with their individual ways of being. For each of us, all others are constellations of illuminating experiences spanning a gulf into which we pour stories about them. In this way, knowing another is a matter of interpretation, not revelation, nor is it one sided, as we each show ourselves to be also performers, even if unconscious ones, whenever we take action to shape the stories others have for us. This holds as much for tokens of affection or acts of solidarity as for conformance to a gender and the keeping of secrets. Even for those who would be believed in speaking their truths it is not enough to be merely honest but also credible and sincere. If that truth is uncomfortable, listeners will take those who are sincere but incredible as mad and the credible but insincere as comedians. Of course, an individual might consciously work to be perceived as any of the three such as suits their interests, and it is for this reason no accident that those who would speak uncomfortable truths with impunity often do so in the form of

criminating conversations, where one is necessary we might be able to substitute the incriminating content for content which is not. In the case of sabotage, there may be other potential targets which equally well serve our need, as established during the elimination phase of our considerations, the substitution for which might exclude some of the dangers surrounding an attack on the original target. Where one has illegally seized a building, ones obvious use of the building may constitute a dangerous activity in itself, the attention drawing elements of which might be substitutable for more covert approaches. However, it is important to this approach that the substitution not produce new threats of its own. In the case of an incriminating conversation, it must also be considered whether the inability to speak candidly as to one of its elements endangers us through lack of clarity or the creation of technical ignorance, leaving us unable to substitute out all incriminating elements. Similarly, the threat of betrayal might tempt us to keep our activities solitary, but depending on the particulars of those activities, the absence of those extra eyes, hands, cognitions, and competencies may well be far more immediately dangerous than a future betrayal.

After all substitutions have been performed, we may still be presented with a necessary situation or activity which endangers us, in which case we must attempt to manage whatever threat remains. Through engineered controls we attempt to isolate individuals from threats. This isolation can be spatial, temporal, or even juridical but the core of the isolating approach is that it limits who may be harmed by the manifestation of a particular risk rather than seeking to prevent its original manifestation, and does so without the need for in the moment intervention. Any time we move our activities indoors, deep into the countryside, or simply down an unused alley, we engage this tier. Incriminating conversations can be isolated from the authorities through anonymizing software and cameras might be blocked or otherwise disabled. Similarly, through the construc-

this is also the case in industry where problems of safety manifest in fashions more or less unique to each site of work. This inability to accomplish a single, total itemization of safety procedures necessitated conceptual tools for adapting to conditions in the field, an example of which is found in what is termed the hierarchy of hazard controls. This framework classifies all approaches to safety into five categories, ordered by decreasing effectiveness, through which every analysis of safety must proceed with lower tier approaches being accepted only once it is determined that a higher order approach is untenable: elimination, substitution, engineered controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment. These categories do require some interpretation to be understood in the context of the sort of dangers which confront us, but once understood we think they are eminently applicable to our own problems of security.

The single most effective approach to security threats, and the most difficult to implement, is to eliminate their possibility entirely. In this approach, we examine the need of taking a particular sort of dangerous action or allowing a certain dangerous situation to continue and then question the necessity of that thing, eliminating it entirely where it is unnecessary. Where a conversation's topic is incriminating, we might question the need to have it at all. Do we need what we are getting out of this particular sabotage? Simply put, a confidence not given cannot be betrayed and a tenuous situation not suffered cannot implode disastrously. Where something is deemed necessary, or beyond our power to remove, as may be the case with the threat posed by the police themselves, we may be unable to eliminate it. Nonetheless, elimination is without exception the place from which we begin and only after a thing's necessity is established do we attempt to work around its existence.

Where an activity or situation is unavoidable, the next most effective approach is to substitute its dangerous elements for ones which are not dangerous. To return to the example of in-

jokes. But truth-speaker, madman, and comedian are only roles describing the place one has in a narrative being woven by another while the real individual laying beneath the role remains absent from the story.

Just as a mass passing through the depths of space may often be known only by the way its presence bends light and perturbs orbits, the thing itself a purely theoretical construction, we too are never for another what we are for ourselves. It is for this reason that even deliberate performances cannot be reduced to mere lies, and we are at our most deceptive when we are the most honest.

To properly understand the singularity of another individual as fundamentally removed from our realities is to fully embrace the disconcerting notion that what we call a person is only an illusion whk 11 we assemble ourselves from whatever experiences we can pull together under the umbrella of an identification. This foundational act of identification severs a discrete region of experiences from their surroundings and, erecting a barrier around them, says "these things are one and the same:' However, those experiences associated together as a person are generally only those elements most proximally relatable as a singularity in motion. Though it can be argued that a person is only and exactly the flesh of a real, human body this assessment falters with the radical difference between common treatments of living bodies and corpses, or the way that those close to a dementia patient sometimes react as though the person themselves were slipping away leaving the body intact. Even the belief in demonic possession strikes upon this insight, recognizing in the new behaviors the presence of a wholly other person.

The person then, as such, is just a conceptual tool for modeling dynamic space, finding its limit in both the capacity of the observer to experience another and the mechanical limits of their cognition to make use of those experiences. These limitations drive the treatment of the severed region of personhood,

of faces, clothing, voices, and shared histories, as exclusive of all other elements, partaking of a tendency, especially in Western modes of thought, to focus on the Things that we Do, the colorful objects and novel events we perceive as the central features of lived experience, while ascribing insignificance to the hundred-thousand details surrounding and permeating them, and into which they are causally embedded.

However, that the National Security Administration (NSA) has the ability to construct detailed analyses of individual behavior from just circumstantial information about emails and phone calls should make it clear that even the most seemingly insignificant things are important in aggregate. While the sheer scope of the NSA's capabilities are certainly reliant upon massive technological infrastructure, the fundamental elements constituting those capacities are not so marvelous: being privy to more of the insignificant details of our lives and being invested in their correlation. These elements are equally possessed by the people who comprise our day to day lives, who make up for their lack of powerful data mining utilities with their immediate access to our individual ways of being. Additionally, while the power of the NSA's data-mining technology is mostly in its ability to reconstruct a time-line after the fact, or at least after an individual has been upgraded to a target, the people in our lives tend toward a much more proactive interest. Relationships change, friends become enemies, the strong become weak, and what once was benign can become malignant: But once knowledge is let loose into the world, it is exceptionally difficult to contain.

While anyone might benefit from taking an active hand in shaping the informational landscape into which sociality and technology embeds them, doing so is a much more practical matter for those who would maintain a hostility toward law. As regards this, we'd like to begin what we hope becomes a conversation about what it might mean to live another sort of life, one in which absolutely everything matters. What follows

similarities to our own circumstances, with its potential for betrayals and the high price of even momentary failures of discipline, for us to think that the approach to pro-actively managing threats which works for the builder will also yield results for us, regardless of the nature and scope of our hostility to law. Threat management operates through a counter-factual closure of the distinction between harmful and benign situations, looking for future harm where no harm yet exists, treating that future harm as fully real in the present, and taking action against it. A safety minded carpenter might when presented with a board with exposed nails refuse utterly the reasoning that as they are both skillful and aware of the nails they may safely avoid an accident, rather by assuming they will be harmed and by hammering the nails flat, they render that assumed harm impossible. Comparably, when faced with the possibility of betrayal, we might refuse utterly to believe that we can navigate the distinction between the trustworthy and the untrustworthy, instead treating each of our confidants as already police informants in the present, limiting the means and content of our communication as befits this. The alternative we are putting forward is that we are always already under surveillance and, impossibly, already caught. By accepting these falsities we bring new meaning to the myriad things which surround us.

Fortunately, it is not necessary for us to develop an entirely new philosophy of security. The economic cost of injury and death in dangerous occupations from delays, fines, civil suits, and the loss of expensive training and expertise has lead, through loss aversion at an industrial scale, to efforts to comprehensively analyze threats to life and limb, and detail approaches to securing individuals against them. Each of our situations is unique and no treatise on security strategy can be sufficiently detailed to encompass the materiality of those situations, leaving us to develop our own approaches in the context of the terrain we each actually occupy. However,

Who can hope to be safe? Who sufficiently cautious?
Guard himself as he may, every moment's an ambush.
Thus the sailor of Carthage alarmed at a squall
In the Euxine, may find his least danger at sea.

— The Roman poet Horace, after being nearly crushed by a falling tree

III. EVERYTHING IS TRUE, NOTHING IS PERMITTED

Popular responses to the danger of law enforcement generally take the form of either passively removing the law from consideration through defining one's actions as insignificant, as being not among the events of interest to the authorities, or else in the institution of a system of precautions for one's extralegal activities in the form of security mindedness. We do not think these approaches are necessarily without merit, but they both rely on one to distinguish harmful from benign activity on a case by case basis, navigating a course between limited sense data, personal knowledge, varying states of mind (or sobriety), and awareness of the real activities of law enforcement as it pertains to one's life. This is a reflexive approach in which harm is avoided. For us, maintaining a dedicated hostility to law which is lived out in the normal course of our lives means that law also threatens us with its manifestation within the scope of our daily routines. The omnipresence of this threat denies us the ability to simply partition our lives into realms which are either dangerous or safe. In this way, our situation parallels that of any individual who must professionally operate under dangerous circumstances.

The threat to life and limb posed by an active construction site, with its whirring blades and perilous heights, has enough

are not principles of lofty theory or the elaboration of an abstract strategy, but a first foray into articulating the everyday as always significant.

The spots of the leopard are the sunlight in the glade; pursue thou the deer stealthily at thy pleasure.

The dappling of the deer is the sunlight in the glade; concealed from the leopard do thou feed at thy pleasure.

Resemble all that surroundeth thee; yet be Thyself- and take thy pleasure among the living.

This is that which is written-Lurk!-in 1he Book of 1he Law.

— Aleister Crowley, from The Book of Lies

II. BUILDING ON SERIOUS GROUND

Law does not confront the individual. It is a chimera whose myth allows a great multitude of disparate, in-cohesive, and sometimes mutually exclusive phenomena to be confused as a single functioning whole. Its material manifestation is dependent upon individuals to inscribe law into the phenomenal world in which we live. It goes without saying that those who are hostile to law make it a practice to secure themselves against the threat posed by its material manifestation, which most visibly takes the form of the police. However, as with the lion's head of the mythic chimera whose roar distracts from its serpent fanged tail, the nature of the threat posed by the police is mostly misleading. The portrayal of police exploits in the news, reality television shows, and the sea of procedural dramas broadly reduces policing to the playing out of a binary opposition between law enforcers and law breakers. Similarly,

the understanding we are encouraged to infer from the common enough image of armored police massed in a shield wall facing off against crowds of protesters is one of the police as an essentially military organization tasked with quelling unrest. These images are traps ready to ensnare us in a discourse of conflict wherein we are encouraged to define ourselves in relation to the police as nemeses, either by performing in accordance with the role of the upright Citizen or by seeing ourselves as those whom the police will hunt and inevitably capture, that is as Criminals.

Cursory examination should make it clear that the distinction between these things is not one of essential natures, nor a simple behavioral matter of adherence to, or violation of, the law. Individuals break the law as a normal matter of course in their day to day lives, in part because of the expectable evaluation of the relative obstruction posed by a particular statute against the perceived significance of ignoring it, and in part because of a general inability to navigate the legal code and its frequently over-broad, vague, or contradictory specifications. Yet we are broadly disinclined to perceive ourselves as criminals, perhaps because the modern conception of the criminal as an 'enemy of society' cannot be readily reconciled with the sense of social entanglement we nonetheless retain even as we act contrary to the law. A criminal is beyond society, yet even ascetics are hard pressed to remove themselves from one community without simply establishing themselves in another, so something more is needed than mere contrariness to law to establish one as a criminal.

This is precisely the function of policing which discretionarily marks out individuals for punishment in the form of imprisonment. While fines have a number of interesting properties beyond their gross function as revenue streams, it is through imprisonment that the political fiction of the criminal is given material substance by removing an individual geographically and bureaucratically beyond the reach of their

Could they be heroic without our support? Can they maintain their cunning while inebriated? Will their zeal survive a change in passions, or the enticement of romance? Especially consider that the police are specifically trained to construct situations that undermine obduracy and build willingness to cooperate. The illusion of continuity makes it difficult, as well as unpleasant, for us to see in our friends, lovers, and comrades the wretched or incompetent individuals they may one day be, yet when we place trust in an individual we place trust in these future individuals as well. Many have run afoul of the police after being betrayed by a former lover or a co-conspirator who, perhaps literally, knew where the bodies were buried. Similarly, our own sense of self mastery obscures from us the myriad ways in which we may fail, or betray, ourselves in the future. It can seem daunting to be faced with taking everyone in whom we might place trust, even ourselves, as also an enemy against whom we must secure ourselves, but this does not require that we not trust, only that we change what it is we are trusting.

We are forced to live out our lives deep in the midst of law, which surrounds us as a hostile territory filled with hazardous terrain. For us, there are no safe spaces, only more or less secure dens in which we may find temporary rest. Furthermore, for lack of the capacity to oppose the police as a fellow institution, or even good intelligence and reliable allies, yet unable to simply escape beyond their reach, though we do not take the police as enemies to be fought, we nonetheless take them as a threat to be managed.

> He, the wretch, who thus set thee malign in my meadow,
> Felon traitor of wood, arboretal assassin,
> With remorseless design coming down unawares
> On the head of an innocent master like me.

can descend through spirals of mutual affirmation, indolence, and expediencies until the effort to secure ourselves against law becomes the simulation of security practices merely for their social cachet. While sub-optimal practices elsewhere can be culled through experience, where law threatens us mistakes are a luxury.

As described in a manual on crime scene investigation, "Criminals … who spend their days on the wrong side of the law, or commit any other crimes, must remember this: a criminal has to get away with every crime he or she commits. However, to get criminals off the street and put them behind bars, the police only have to catch a criminal once:' (Evans 2009) However, overcoming these failings is not a matter of changing security practices themselves, but of changing what it is we are securing within.

We make the second mistake when we treat our experiences of an individual as representing that individual's essential nature. The experiences we have of a singularity in motion unified under the convenient fiction of a "person" are dispersed in time as well as in space, creating the appearance of a continuity related through a trajectory along the course of which future behaviors will manifest. However, our ways of being are not separate from the situations, environments, and other ways of being which surround, construct, and reinforce them, meaning that the quality of behavioral forecasts is constrained by the commutability of the predicating experiences to actual future conditions. This most seriously confronts us where a future situation is radically different from any experience weve had of that individual, thereby placing the entire basis for our trust in question. We may have a depth of intimate experience with an individual which leads us to see them, or perhaps ourselves, as heroic and cunning, or zealously committed to a vision, but these experiences are contingent on the situations in which they formed.

people. In this way, the police become the measure for criminality through their actual enforcement practices, as ratified by the courts, which provide both legitimacy and a venue in which for the social figure of the criminal to be constructed through prosecution. In so far as upright citizenship is that which is exclusive of criminality, and imprisonment is the material realization of the criminals removal from sociality, we may understand the upright citizen as that individual which acts such as to not be selected for imprisonment. The material process of policing by this means effectively establishes the constitution of the model citizen, and while it should not be mistaken as over-determining all social mores and ways of being it does limit their breadth: "Every actual democracy rests on the principle that not only are equals equal but unequals will not be treated equally. Democracy requires, therefore, first homogeneity and secondif the need arises-elimination or eradication of heterogeneity:' (Schmitt 1926) Moreover, the material process of policing must be performed by actual entities, who bring with them all of the limits and biases of their cognitions, and whose individual discretion entirely determines occasions of enforcement, meaning that what is really enforced is not so much a body of written law as a mosaic of normalcy.

The first trap in taking the police as nemeses is one ostensibly of design, which would lead us to take the inescapability of the police for granted and thus perform always in accordance with the role of the upright citizen, ignoring the law only where it is normal to do so. However, those hostile to law risk falling prey to a second trap in mistaking the police for their nemeses at all. The form this trap takes is in subjectivizing the police as an enemy, that is as an ontological entity which may be fought, outwitted, evaded, or otherwise over which victory may be claimed. Certainly individuals who are police may be engaged in such a fashion, but the organizations into which they are arranged, though they are conceivable as assemblages

of individual police, do not express those capacities of their component individuals. Rather, policing is an essentially bureaucratic operation in which police themselves are more or less well armed functionaries. Policing comes into conflict with individuals through a process of establishing and maintaining particular norms that is accomplished without ever necessitating a conception of the individual as a thing which opposes it, but only as a body which resists it. For the police, the individual is always merely the incarnation of an abstract category and the bulk of on the ground policing is a matter of identifying, then responding, to these classifications. Because of this most evasion of the law is not done through outwitting and outmaneuvering police pursuit, but by navigating the mostly unspoken rules of an informal bureaucracy. There are striking similarities between being stopped by the police on the street and sitting across from the loan officer at a bank in that both are endeavoring to take our measure, sort us as a risk, and weigh the relative benefit or inconvenience of taking action regarding us. Beyond all this, to think the police as one's enemy is to take them for an entity that may be fought, yet most street fights are short, competition fights lasting more than a few minutes are grueling affairs, and even warfare is only occasionally punctuated by combat. By comparison, policing is a continuous enterprise which is always happening somewhere, always processing information, always working through identified problems, whose component individuals work in shifts, who are each entirely replaceable, and for whom every citizen is a potential ally. Whereas, for us, we are broadly constrained in the reach of our actions, in the volume of information which we may meaningfully engage, in the scope of our attention to any given thing, in that we must sleep, cannot be replaced, and are surrounded by any number of others who may eventually betray us. Between these two, the police and our selves, there is no parity of being.

Caught in narratives wherein the police are cast as central antagonists, those hostile to law nonetheless endeavor to secure themselves against its manifestation. Toward this end a variety of protections have been formulated, appearing singly or quilted into various examples of "security culture': but among these methods we find repeated two serious mistakes: overconcern for truth and the confusion of images for essences.

We make the first mistake when, prior to implementing a security measure, we attempt to reach beyond the available facts to achieve certainty in our understanding of the situation. This often centers around the answers to such questions as whether the police are interested in us, whether we are presently being observed, what the police are capable of doing, and whether this or that individual can be trusted. Properly resolving these questions requires access to specific knowledge regarding real-time police activity, their competencies and technological capacities, and the troubling matter of a putatively trustworthy individual's future behavior. This returns us to a situation in which our inability to directly experience an individual's way of being, including in this case the police as a total material phenomenon, forces us to make inferences from imperfect information drawn from past encounters with them. A void yawns between the data points of this constellation ready for us to fill it with whatever works, with whatever belief regarding our situation is sufficiently plausible, comfortable, and convenient to be accepted, iconically heralded by the words, "It will be okay:' Where these beliefs go unpunished by circumstance they rapidly become entrenched as fact, perhaps marked by the argument, "But it was okay last time:' Our interest in security must compete with all our other interests in order to be manifested in our actions, but the effort and inconvenience to which security measures are prone makes them ripe for mystification by those other interests, for which the gaps in our knowledge serve as excellent levers. Furthermore, collaborative efforts