

The Anarchist Library
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The Contents of Your Daily Life

CrimethInc.

September 11, 2000

How many hours a day do you spend in front of a television screen? A computer screen? Behind an automobile windscreen? All three screens combined? What are you being screened from? How much of your life comes at you through a screen, vicariously?

Is watching things as exciting as doing things? Do you have enough time to do all the things that you want to? Do you have enough energy to? Why? And how many hours a day do you sleep? How are you affected by standardized time, designed solely to synchronize your movements with those of millions of other people? How long do you ever go without knowing what time it is? Who or what controls your minutes and hours? The minutes and hours that add up to your life? Are you saving time? Saving it up for what?

Can you put a value on a beautiful day, when the birds are singing and people are walking around together? How many dollars an hour does it take to pay you to stay inside and sell things or file papers? What can you get later that will make up for this day of your life?

How are you affected by being in crowds, by being surrounded by anonymous masses? Do you find yourself blocking your emotional responses to other human beings? And who prepares your

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meals? Do you ever eat by yourself? Do you ever eat standing up? How much do you know about what you eat and where it comes from? How much do you trust it?

What are we deprived of by labor-saving devices? By thought-saving devices? How are you affected by the requirements of efficiency, which place value on the product rather than the process, on the future rather than the present, the present moment that is getting shorter and shorter as we speed faster and faster into the future? What are we speeding towards? Are we saving time? Saving it up for what?

How are you affected by being moved around in prescribed paths, in elevators, buses, subways, escalators, on highways and sidewalks? By moving, working, and living in two- and three-dimensional grids? How are you affected by being organized, immobilized, and scheduled rather than wandering, roaming freely and spontaneously? Scavenging? (Shoplifting?) How much freedom of movement do you have — freedom to move through space, to move as far as you want, in new and unexplored directions?

And how are you affected by waiting? Waiting in line, waiting in traffic, waiting to eat, waiting for the bus, waiting to urinate — learning to punish and ignore your spontaneous urges? How are you affected by holding back your desires? By sexual repression, by the delay or denial of pleasure, starting in childhood, along with the suppression of everything in you that is spontaneous, everything that evidences your wild nature, your membership in the animal kingdom? Is pleasure dangerous?

Could danger be joyous? Do you ever need to see the sky? (Can you see many stars in it any more?) Do you ever need to see water, leaves, foliage, animals? Glinting, glimmering, moving? Is that why you have a pet, an aquarium, houseplants? Or are television and video your glinting, glimmering, moving? How much of your life comes at you through a screen, vicariously? If your life was made

into a movie, would you watch it? How do you feel in situations of enforced passivity?

How are you affected by a non-stop assault of symbolic communication — audio, visual, print, billboard, video, radio, robotic voices — as you wander through a forest of signs? What are they urging upon you? Do you ever need solitude, quiet, contemplation? Do you remember it? Thinking on your own, rather than reacting to stimuli? Is it hard to look away?

Is looking away the very thing that is not permitted? Where can you go to find silence and solitude? Not white noise, but pure silence? Not loneliness, but gentle solitude? How often have you stopped to ask yourself questions like these? Do you find yourself committing acts of symbolic violence? Do you ever feel lonely in a way that words cannot even express?

Do you sometimes feel yourself ready to LOSE CONTROL?