

January 22

For the very reason that action intervenes in the course of things, it is always external to it and constitutes an initiative that is intrusive. Because it impinges from outside, introducing a plan/project (ideal), it is always to some degree external to the world and is therefore relatively incompatible and arbitrary: both arbitrary and importunate, for, by forcing itself into the course of things, it inevitably to some degree tears at the tissue of things and upsets their coherence. In fact, by imposing itself, it inevitably provokes elements of resistance, or at least reticence, that it cannot immediately control and that tacitly forming common cause, block and quietly undermine it. The shock that it thereby produces is deadened, makes little impact, and its effects are absorbed.

Moreover, action from the outside always intervenes at one particular moment and not at another, applying force in one particular spot and not in any other. It is always local and momentary (even if it lasts for ten years as the Trojan War did). It is always a "one off." Because it is arbitrary and isolated, such an action stands out in the course of things; it attracts notice. By forcing the course of things, it also forces attention. Furthermore, because action is personal and relates directly to a particular (even if collective) subject, it is easy to spot. It constitutes an event, suggests a meaning, becomes the basis of a story. It focuses attention, crystallizes interest. The interconnections that it picks out from the unfolding of things serve as the framework for a narrative, and the difficulties it encounters create a fascinating suspense. Its *asperity*, in a word, provides a hook on which to hang a story. But this spectacular aspect is simply the

counterpart to its lack of impact upon reality, its *arti-* and *superficiality*. In short, it is just an epiphenomenon that momentarily appears, like a shower of spray [or white phosphorus], against a silent background of things, and then is gone. The tension that it produces may well satisfy our need for drama ("drama," in Greek, means action), but it is not efficacious. As our very language, too, suggests, by its ability to evoke an opposite, for every agent (or actor), by breaking into the order of things, behaves as an "energumen," a fanatic (*energein*: to act), instead of the demiurge that he thinks he is. All action is *naïve*.

Writes François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*, pp. 54-55.

Fragment of a song you wrote in May, 1985:

So you take all you want
and never give back,
You're driving up the White House in your stretch limo
oh don't you look so fine,
Well there's a party this evening
you must attend – tie is black
Till then you'll take take take take take
And never give back...

November 4, 2008

"The day," quoth Adam Nagourney in the *NYT*, "shimmered with history." This beneath the headline at 11:33 p.m.: "Racial Barrier Falls as McCain is Defeated."

You dreamed that you could tell the future. Off.

November 5

After over a hundred years of blight, the American Chestnut seems to be making a comeback, or rather a blight-resistant, French-Japanese cross-breed, the Colossal has begun to take hold, especially in the “nut belt” around Stockton, CA.

It is estimated that between 1904 and 1950 at least three, and possibly four billion chestnut trees died, enough, according to the *LA Times*, to cover an area equivalent to eighteen hundred Yellowstone National Parks.

Last night, just after Obama’s victory flashed across a gazillion screens came an eruption of cheers and “wooo!”s from the largely white crowd gathered at 20th and Eighth. Some waved flags, others cavorted amidst the oncoming traffic enjoining drivers to honk their jubilation.

A man wove at a run up and down the sidewalk screaming “No depression! No depression.”

January 23

Eurozone Dreams Become Nightmares



Yannis Kolesidis for The New York Times

A shop window in central Athens, Greece, on Wednesday. In hard times, the rules of the currency membership can hurt poorer economies.

November 6

The red bikini of the falling market.

Plunks into your inbox un emilio from the Americas Society/Council on the Americas:

MEXICO: A NEARSHORING OPPORTUNITY**Panel & Networking Reception**

- **LEARN ABOUT MEXICO'S IT CAPABILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES**
- **NEARSHORING SUCCESS STORIES IN MEXICO**
- **MEET WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & TOP MEXICAN IT COMPANIES**

December 2

Registration: 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Panel and Discussion: 8:30-10:00

Networking Reception and Mexican breakfast: 10:00-10:30

November 8

How quickly the heart energy rises to dissipate. How strongly we all want to help, to act, to disperse our qi!

Lately the *Post* has featured full cover pics of Obama, superimposed with huge headlines:

"BRINK OF HISTORY" (11/3)

"MR. PRESIDENT!" (11/5)

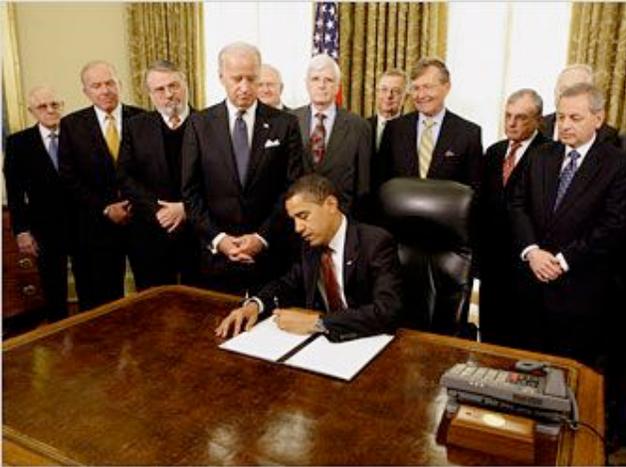
"TOP DOG" (11/8)

November 9

The *Times* headline reads "Obama Team Weighs What to Take Out First." No, that's "On," not "Out." Careful, or you'd be mistaken.

Obamania: another form, however disguised, of a yearning for collective engagement: desperately seeking socialism.

January 22



Doug Mills/The New York Times

President Obama signing executive orders on Thursday.

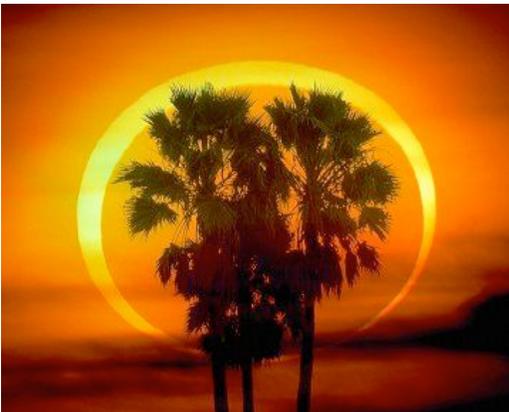
Whilst 5000 blue Microsmurfs unfold their pink slips. Or does some algorithm just log them out?

In today's market, many condos come with an abundance of asperities.

Sponte sua, sua sponte.

January 22

In four days, coinciding with the incoming lunar Year of the Ox, the inhabitants of, and visitors to Borneo, Java and Sumatra should get to see something like this:



Dennis Mammana

A sun ring caused by an annular eclipse. Over South Africa, Madagascar, Australia, southern parts of India and southeast Asia, the Moon will appear to pass off-center producing crescent suns of varying depth and under certain conditions, these shapes will dapple the earth.

It's a mystery, now that we've transformed back into a nation overflowing with peace and justice, who it is that keeps blowing up all those people in Waziristan. Twenty more killed today along with many more injured. Is it possible the drones are flying by themselves, the Predator missiles launching autonomously?

While in New York, at sundrop, embers rekindling.



November 2, 2008

Nothing manifests itself with more concreteness than the ineffable.

Heaved off the International Space Station a year this past July, a device called the Early Ammonia Servicer, in size and shape something like a double-wide refrigerator, and weighing roughly fourteen hundred pounds, will attempt to come home to roost in the early hours tomorrow. If the skies be clear, folks round the world, excepting Antarctica, will have a chance to witness its disintegrative blaze as it encounters the atmosphere.

And tonight, just after sunset, and into the week, in the southwest sky, Jupiter, the Moon and Venus arrange themselves, Euclid-style, in a narrow Δ .

Heavens below!

January 25

La monedita del alma

se pierde si no se da

Said Antonio Machado.

January 26



Aubade: Year of the Ox. Element: Earth.



Year of the oxymoron: all contradictions deployed.

The ox man cometh, yo.

A grandson of Pale Male, supuestamente, has been visiting Tompkins Square Park on a daily basis. V. proposes naming the young red-tailed hawk Chico, in honor of Chico Mendes, murdered on December 22, 1998 – by ranchers, loggers, miners, the government, who knows? – in his home in Xapuri, Brazil. Whilst Mendes lived, he lent his name to a community garden on 11th Street between Avenues A and B.

By whatever strange twist, the garden was assassinated a year, shy one week, before the man was. On December 30, 1997, men hired by a developer named Donald Cappocia bulldozed the Mendes garden along with two others on 10th Street.

January 27



Yesterday's eclipse in all its annularity, as recorded by Miyagi Takafumi in Bandar Lampung Indonesia.



A crescent sundown shot by Dr. Armando Lee from the Mall of Asia seawall, Pasay City, Manila Bay, Philippines.



Chantal Steyn

And on the rise from Gough Island, 40° 20' S, 9° 52' W.

The country named for Bolívar votes itself a new constitution – one that legally affirms the autonomy of its indigenous groups, Quechuas, Aymaras, Guaranís among others. What would go through El Libertador’s head were he to suddenly materialize in “Upper Peru” today? Could anyone convince him he wasn’t dreaming?

Scientific discovery: *Sheep are imitating us.*

Ah, we’re not Greek anymore. But what then?