

Against Bespoke Conformity

The Necessity of Adoption

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In 2011, the marketing team of Coca Cola's South Pacific branch, based in Sydney, Australia developed a hit new marketing strategy: Share a Coke.¹ The idea was that bottles and cans of the company's products would be labeled with a person's name, allowing purchasers to then "Share a Coke" with a person with that name. For example, my wife's name is Megan. I could find a bottle of Coke with her name on it, and then "Share a Coke" with her. Initially, the company only used about 150 names in addition to more generic relational terms like "Mum," "Dad," and "Mate," but in the years since the campaign began, the company has increased the number of names to be emblazoned on Coke products. In the summer of May 2017, that number had increased to more than 1,000 first names, with 200 last names included as well.² For individuals whose names are still not part of the marketing campaign, there is even a website, Shareacoke.com, where one can personalize bottles of the beverage, which would then, presumably, be shared with the named individual. While I could, if my name were available on a Coke bottle (it's not), consume the beverage myself, the idea of the ad campaign is to share a refreshing beverage with another person. It is a *social* campaign that operates in a way similar to Facebook and other social media networks, with the principle difference that it does so in the physical world.

¹ "Share a Coke: How the Groundbreaking Campaign Got Its Start 'Down Under'." The Coca-Cola Company. September 25, 2014. Accessed June 24, 2017. <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/share-a-coke-how-the-groundbreaking-campaign-got-its-start-down-under>.

² "Is Your Name On a Coke Bottle?" The Coca-Cola Company. May 22, 2017. Accessed June 24, 2017. <http://www.coca-colacompany.com/coca-cola-unbottled/is-your-name-on-a-coke-bottle-find-out-here>.

The Share a Coke™ campaign is an example of what I will call “bespoke conformity.” Although the bottles and cans with names on them seem to be individualized and personalized, in fact nothing could be further from the truth. Every process in the production of Coca Cola, whether the containers have people’s names on them or not – whether or not they are “bespoke,” that is, made to order, is absolutely standardized. A recently popular buzzword, “bespoke” in its older usage refers to something made to order for a specific customer or client. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “bespoke” as “ordered to be made, as distinguished from ready-made; also said of a tradesman who makes goods to order.”³ A bespoke suit, for example, is designed, measured, cut, sewn, and tailored to order *for a particular person*. I cannot buy a bespoke suit off a rack. It doesn’t exist except as a possibility until I order it. Despite its attempt to personalize the experience of drinking or sharing a soft drink, the Share a Coke campaign is a technical system designed not to improve relationships between people, but rather to flatten them into a predictable uniformity. The “personalization” on the bottles of Coke is in fact nothing of the sort: by “personalizing” their product with a list of common names, Coke surreptitiously replaces the wide variety of objects that can be shared, and appreciated, between people, with a sort of “share” token, a universal object designed to be shared between any given parties *that presents itself as a product intended for a particular person*. The Share a Coke campaign encourages a logic of adaptation to the external dictates of a profit-seeking technical apparatus that wants to avoid presenting itself directly as such. Of course, no one is really fooled. Coca Cola is one of the most widely recognized brands in the world and is recognized precisely as a brand, maybe even the brand *par excellence*. But despite its obvious intent as a marketing ploy, the Share a Coke campaign is an ongoing success, as indicated by the addition each summer of new names to the list, as well as by a competing ad campaign by Pepsi using proprietary “PepsiMojis” to similar effect.⁴

³ “bespoke, adj.”. OED Online. June 2018. Oxford University Press. [http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/view/Entry/18156?redirectedFrom=bespoke& \(accessed June 30, 2018\).](http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/view/Entry/18156?redirectedFrom=bespoke& (accessed June 30, 2018).)

⁴ Schultz, E.J., and Jessica Wohl. “Pepsi Preps Global Emoji Can and Bottle Campaign.” Ad Age. February 19, 2016. Accessed August 17,

To make more sense of bespoke conformity, I propose to situate this problem in the work of French philosopher Bernard Stiegler. One of Stiegler's primary areas of concern in his philosophy is the process of "individuation."⁵ Individuation is the process by which an individual human becomes integrated into a shared symbolic order. Individuation is not total distinction from others, but rather differentiation *among* others within a shared pre-individual milieu of externalized memory out of which individuation takes place. A baby is born into a pre-existing group of family, relatives, and peers. Long before that baby learns to walk or speak, even before it is born, it is integrated into a pre-existing social fabric. It is out of this fabric that individuation takes place. Individuation always takes place collectively and on a trans-individual basis because without others, and without groups of others to which I may also belong, I have no coordinates with which to define myself, whether in opposition to or alliance with those others. Individuation, then, works across two socio-temporal axes: one *horizontal*, between and among individuals within a collective, the other *vertical*, through the reproduction of generations along with the movement of time.⁶ As Stiegler writes in the context of giving a talk, "If my individuation succeeds, it will have to be succeeded in you...this is the *condition of a we*."⁷ There is no individuation in a vacuum—without others, there is no individual, and vice versa. The individual is like a node in a network or an intersection of threads in a spider's web. Though she does exist independently from others to some degree, she is nonetheless absolutely dependent upon others for her existence. That is, individuation is always *trans*-individual and, because there is a constant flow of new individuals replacing older ones, this process can never be "finished" except in a relative sense.

2017. <http://adage.com/article/cmo-strategy/pepsi-preps-global-emoji-bottle-campaign/302748/>.

⁵ See especially Bernard Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy and What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*

⁶ Stiegler, Bernard. *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*. Translated by Stephen Barker. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010, 4, 7. (This book is dedicated to the question of the vertical axis of transindividuation and its breakdown in light of the digital.)

⁷ Stiegler, Bernard. *Acting Out*. Translated by David Barison, Daniel Ross, and Patrick Crogan. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009, 79. (italics in original)

Individuation is an asymptotic process: one approaches the horizon of one's own self infinitely, but never quite reaches it. Like the line on a graph that represents an asymptote, X always approaches zero, but can never, finally, equal zero. As Stiegler puts it, in individuation,

I tend to become *myself* as indivisible, as pure unity, identity, but I never cease to contradict myself because, in myself, individuating myself in the group that individuates itself through me, I never cease to find myself *other than myself*, I never cease to find myself *divided*, while at the same time the group *alters* and *divides itself* - and it does this because a process of individuation is *structurally incapable of completion*.⁸

Individuation, which is always collective and works across (trans-) the individual, is not a process that can be "completed." Individuation is a process that only ends when the person doing the individuating dies, and that individual dying terminates the process of individuation, but leaves it unfinished, like a writer's last, unfinished novel, to be finished and published posthumously. Individuation is a process that depends on its own incompleteness to take place.

The asymptotic trajectory of individuation is supported and supplemented by what Stiegler refers to as "tertiary retentions," or externalized memories. "A newborn child," Stiegler writes, "arrives into a world in which tertiary retention both precedes and awaits it, and which, precisely, constitutes this world as world."⁹ These memories, which are the result of previous collective individuation between and among individuals, become "crystallized" *outside* of any particular individual's retentional finitude, his lifetime and individual memory. Language, for example, is a tertiary retention: it does not "live" in any one person's individual memory, but is rather a sort of floating availability, outside of but integral to individual human lives. We all have *it*, but none of us can be said to have the *original*. Tertiary retentions are, to use Stiegler's

⁸ Stiegler, *Acting Out*, 4. (italics in original)

⁹ Stiegler, Bernard. *For a New Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Daniel Ross. Cambridge: Polity, 2013, 9.

language, *pharmacological*,¹⁰ meaning they can have either a negative or a positive effect. An appropriate dose of aspirin, for example, has salutary effects, whereas an overdose can kill. Technical objects are capable of both negative and positive pharmacologies, depending upon the circumstances in which they are developed and used and whether they are met with adoption or adaptation. It is in the light of this pharmacology, particularly of this negative pharmacology, that we should examine the Share a Coke campaign, as well as other social technical networks such as Facebook and other social media platforms.

A brief discussion of the difference between adoption and adaptation in Stiegler's work is useful before continuing. Put in general terms, for Stiegler, "adoption" is generally positive, whereas "adaptation" is generally negative.¹¹ More specifically, adoption is the result of a challenge (environmental, social, physical) that is *taken in* by the individual and made a part of her own individuation. For example, two writers of horror fiction can be said to have adopted the tropes of the genre when their novels or stories are recognizable as examples of horror fiction, but are nonetheless distinct from one another. Stephen King and Dean Koontz both write similar novels, but despite their working in the same genre, their novels are totally distinct from each other. Adaptation, on the other hand, is the result of a challenge that is not presented as a challenge. Instead, one *adapts to* the dictates of something that begins and remains external to oneself. To adopt is to take in, to adapt is to be molded. Unlike adoption, in which I take in and make my own the object that challenges me from outside, thus also internalizing it, adaptation simply forces the horizon of my own possibility into the mold it needs, regardless of how it suits me. If I read and adopted all of Stephen King's novels, there's a good chance that the influence of his work—his style,

¹⁰ A note on terminology: Stiegler's writing is extremely dense and replete with technical language. I have tried, where possible, to avoid using similarly dense language. I do, however, retain Stiegler's use of the word "*pharmakon*" because it figures as one of the most prominent aspects of Stiegler's thought and to remove it would seem an injustice, considering Stiegler himself uses it extensively. One of my hopes is that readers of this essay might check out Stiegler themselves, and so I also retain this word to give them a sense of the flavor of Stiegler's own prose and vocabulary.

¹¹ Stiegler, Bernard. *What Make Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*. Translated by Daniel Ross. Cambridge: Polity, 2013, 102, 105, 130.

cadence, subject matter, and so on—would be identifiable in my own writing. It would not be a direct identification, but rather a kind of echo, filtered through my own idiosyncrasies and personal history of individuation. If my brother also read all of King's novels at the same time I did, there would likely be a similar "echo" in his writing but, because we are both singular individuals, the effects of King's writing in my brother's writing would be different from mine. The echo would be that of a different voice. By contrast, the logic of adaptation would fail to allow any echo at all. Rather, my own voice would simply become that of the system eliciting my adaptation. I would be "ventriloquized" just like all the others likewise being made to adapt, regardless of our differences and, indeed, total incommensurabilities as singular individuals. Facebook, for example, elicits the same kind of behavior whether one is "liking" a video of dogs jumping in snow, of a surfer with a Go-pro camera, or of a political rally. The behavior, which the user *adapts to*, is the same, regardless of the content. The Share a Coke campaign shares this logic of adaptation. Adaptation does not feel like an imposition. Users of Facebook don't feel put upon to use the platform (until they try to leave it), but they are nonetheless given no choice, if they want to continue using the platform, but to use the platform how the platform requires. This logic of adaptation is nearly perfectly operational in online social media platforms, but doesn't operate as seamlessly in the non-digital world outside the internet. The Share a Coke campaign, though it operates along similar adaptationist lines, doesn't *really* work. If I buy a Coke that has a name that isn't mine on it, I don't feel like I have to swap it out for one that is "for me." At most I might feel strange if it says something like "mom," but the Share a Coke campaign *as a campaign* is obvious. I can adapt to the logic and find a Coke for "dad" or "mom" or "Megan" or whomever, but the system has flaws. Because it doesn't really work, the Share a Coke campaign offers a particularly clear window into the need for adoption in opposition to networks that insist on adaptation.

Without the possibility of adoption, individuation is impossible. Indeed, "[a]doption is the condition of individuation of the pharmacological being [the human being]—so that the poison can become a remedy. Adaptation, on the contrary, which destroys pharmacological knowledge, spreads toxicity."¹² To maintain the

¹² Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living*, 130.

possibility of individuation requires the possibility of adoption, that is, the possibility for one to realize the asymptotic nature of one's individuation *through others*. "For what," Stiegler asks, "is it to adopt, if not above all to *let oneself be challenged*, and to *individuate oneself* in this challenge, in this being called into question?"¹³ The calling into question of a relationship of adoption forces one to rise to the challenge of asymptotic, perpetually unfinished individuation. Such individuation, then, lays the groundwork for responsibility and care for others, because it forces the individual to attend to their own care, care which also requires the assistance and care of others.

Today, in the wake of the development of digital technologies, and in particular of the internet, we live under the aegis of what Stiegler calls the "digital *pharmakon*."¹⁴ This *pharmakon*, in its negative pharmacological effects, leads to technical systems being used to encourage bespoke conformity and the logic of adaptation, as exemplified by Share a Coke, and it does so extremely quickly and *without feeling like an imposition*. Those who are integrated into the social model presented by such systems as Share a Coke, and by forms of social media such as Facebook or Twitter, find themselves *adapting*, to their detriment, to the dictates of the new technical support they have taken in to themselves. Adaptation precludes challenge, removing the need for a careful and responsible appraisal of oneself and obscuring the necessarily asymptotic nature of any trans-individual adoption. Writes Stiegler, "adaptive transindividuation is formed through short-circuits [of individuation]—whereas adoptive transindividuation forms long circuits. Short circuits can only result in accidents."¹⁵ With more short circuits, the likelihood of accidents increases, eventually leading to accidents—both positive and negative—becoming the norm. Where adoption allows for work toward a goal that does not exist yet in the real world, adaptation reduces the horizon of possibility to chance encounters: accidents. The accidents of adaptation are brought about by technical systems making use of individuation for their narrow ends of immediate profit, without concern for longer-term effects, or even for their own ability to reproduce themselves. For example, under conditions of adoption I am presented with challenges in the

¹³ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴ Stiegler, *For a New Critique*, 21, 48.

¹⁵ Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living*, 102.

course of my life that I can take in. I have very little control over the nature, duration, severity, etc. of these challenges, but, because I can adopt them, they can become my own, part of me. If I break my leg, for example, and walk with a permanent limp, under conditions of adoption I can make this situation my own and *own* it, showing good humor and maybe even making ironic jokes. I can consciously and intentionally decide how to take in that part of my life, a part of my life that I would likely have preferred not to have experienced. My character, then, is a result of actions on my part in response to an event over which I had no control, but that I have now made a part of myself *on purpose*. Under a regime of adaptation, I am not able to own the effects of such an incident. Any good humor I might have, or any potential character I might develop in response, would not result from my own ability to take in and process my experiences; rather, these qualities would result from the accidental usefulness (or lack of detriment) that such character might have to the presiding regime of adaptation. Adaptation molds from outside. As long as an experience doesn't change the malleability of the individual being molded, the network enforcing the adaptation does not have any reason to oppose it. Still, whatever changes an individual undergoes through adaptation remain accidents; they are *not* conscious processes that one has worked through and owned.

Up to this point, it might be tempting to imagine that such campaigns as Share a Coke or such digital innovations as Facebook or Twitter might themselves be the problem. But Stiegler's point is more complex. It might seem that the best idea is to just get rid of such systems and go back to a "natural" way of living with each other. The problem with this idea is that humans, in Stiegler's model, do not have a pre- or non-technical, "natural" way of interacting with one another. Even in the absence of social media, printed books, etc., we still use spoken language, an object that exists outside of any individual but is necessary for every one of us. In any case, the cat is out of the bag, so to speak. For those of us capable of reading and writing, a life in which one *was never literate* is completely, literally, unthinkable. But even in an exclusively oral culture, memory and the mind (both of which are both singular and collective/transindividual), for Stiegler, are not and never have been solely "natural."¹⁶ According to Stiegler,

¹⁶ Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living*, 20-21.

“[t]here is no process of transindividuation that is not dependent on exteriorization, which is itself artefactual [i.e. not “natural”] therefore technical—whether it is a matter of producing words, gestures, attitudes or any other form of expression or production.”¹⁷ Any process of relating to one another requires technical supports, and these supports are always pharmacological. They can make clear the gap constitutive of adoptive human life with all of its challenges, or they can paper over this gap and slowly homogenize and stultify the human, forcing patterns of adaptive individuation to suit the demands of whoever or whatever controls the technical support.

This latter possibility is the problem of bespoke conformity. Bespoke conformity does not present a problem just because of the tendency to conformity it encourages, but because *it doesn't look or feel like a tendency to conformity*. A certain tendency toward conformity is necessary for stable social life and reproduction—the point is not that conformity in any given situation is always bad. The point, rather, is that the bespoke conformity of such technical systems as Share a Coke or Facebook offer the illusion of nonconformity (which is understood to be positive) while narrowing and homogenizing the range of behaviors and mental possibilities to better suit *their* interests. The ready-made individuation of technical systems like Facebook makes itself clear when one tries to leave these networks. One is free to do anything within the context of the network: “like” pages, “follow” celebrities, and make “friends,” but leaving the network completely is difficult. Facebook users can use their Facebook credentials to sign in to other applications—everything from Farmville to cloud storage and online magazine accounts—and accidentally signing in to one of these other applications reactivates one’s Facebook profile, even after it has been deactivated.¹⁸ Deleting one’s account completely requires getting in touch with Facebook personally, and can take up to 90 days to be completed.¹⁹ It is in trying to disconnect from networks encouraging bespoke conformity that their power

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁸ "How Do I Deactivate My Account? | Facebook Help Center | Facebook." Accessed July 05, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/help/214376678584711/>.

¹⁹ "How Do I Permanently Delete My Account? | Facebook Help Center | Facebook." Accessed July 05, 2018. https://www.facebook.com/help/224562897555674?helpref=faq_content.

becomes clear. How will I talk with my friends? Where will I get my news? How will I keep up with what is going on in the world? It isn't until one tries to stop using the network completely that the homogenizing and channeling effects of the network make themselves clearly felt. What appears as perfect autonomy and freedom of choice while using the platform has one glaring exception: the choice not to participate. Like the Eagles' *Hotel California*, "you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."²⁰

One might ask how a personalized bottle of Coke used as a token of social exchange is really all that different from money, which is also used as a token of exchange. To clarify this distinction, I will turn briefly to Georg Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money*. Money, for Simmel, acts as a kind of repository of possibility. It can be exchanged for an almost unlimited number of other things, and this possibility of exchange is its *only* use:

If the ownership of an object means only the possibility of some specific use of that object that the nature of this object permits, then the possession of money implies the possibility of the enjoyment of an indefinite number of objects.... The complete independence of money from its origins and its eminently ahistorical character is projected in the complete indeterminacy of its use.²¹

Money presents itself as an absolute token of exchange. Unlike other objects which have use value for us (shoes, Coke, cell phones, etc.), money has no use value except in its possibility as exchange value. Though the reduction of all forms of social exchange to that of money equivalents may itself present problems, it does not present the problem of bespoke conformity in the same way that a "personalized" can of Coke does. No one is under any illusions that a particular dollar bill was printed just for them. Aside from certain sentimental attachments and numismatic enthusiasm, a dollar is a dollar is a dollar. One is free, within limits, to use the dollar bill

20 The Eagles. "Hotel California" Track 01, Disc 02 on Their Greatest Hits 1971–1975. Elektra Catalog Group. Compact disc.

²¹Georg Simmel. *The Philosophy of Money: Third Enlarged Edition*, Edited by David Frisby. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005, 310.

however she pleases, exerting her will over her possession, money, in a way that is impossible for objects that have potential use value. One can imagine, perhaps in a dystopian future, an economy organized around the barter of cigarettes or bullets, but these would not be money precisely because they have a use value as well as an exchange value.²² A bottle of Coke to be Shared™ presents itself as a universal token of friendship when, in fact, it is nothing of the sort. The “freedom” one feels in Sharing a Coke is not the freedom (itself also limited) one feels in using “legal tender for all debts public and private” to exert one’s will or make an exchange. Rather, it is the enforced adaptation to the dictates of the marketing wing of Coca Cola, adaptation that does not *feel* like an imposition. The dollars I receive in my paycheck do not only work in exchange for certain commodities. I am free, at least within the context of buying commodities, to use my dollars however I want and, aside from concerns over the relative responsibility or irresponsibility of my use of those dollars, I don’t have to worry about for whom my dollars are intended. They aren’t for anyone in particular and don’t present themselves as such, whereas a bottle of Coke with “Andrew” on it *presents* itself as intended for a particular group of people named Andrew, but is in fact just as much a product of mass production as the dollar bills in my pocket. Though I may not buy in to the Share a Coke campaign’s goal that I find a bottle of Coke with my wife’s name on it if she asks me to get her one, I might feel just the slightest bit funny if I get her one that says “Steve.” If I have a choice between one bottle with her name on it and another with a different name, I just might, even though I know it’s a marketing ploy and isn’t really for her, choose the bottle that says “Megan.” This is the Share a Coke campaign working. It doesn’t seem like much, but the fact that I have, in fact, felt weird about giving my wife a bottle “for” Andrés, despite my critique of the campaign, demonstrates that it works, if only at a low level, even on people who aren’t fooled and know what is happening.

²² In the *Fallout* series of video games, which take place in an alternate future in which there has been an all-out nuclear war, the game economy runs on bottle caps as currency. This was probably much easier to program than the much more likely elaborate barter and credit economy of food, ammunition, fuel, and sex that would probably develop in the wake of such a disaster.

The ready-made individuation of technical supports like the Share a Coke campaign or Facebook seek to short-circuit the asymptotic relationship between individual psychic development and the supplementary tertiary retentions necessary for such development. Unlike relationships of adoptive individuation which require knowledge to develop, cultivate, and use, adaptive individualization collapses the need for knowledge, replacing it with cleverness that can't see beyond its own horizons. *Prêt-à-porter* social networks, such as Facebook and advertising campaigns like the Share a Coke campaign, whether completely digital or existent in the tangible world, reduce the messy, idiosyncratic *challenge* of adoption to repetitive, clearly demarcated and limited channels of interaction imposed by industries seeking adaptation to *their* motive: profit without thought of the long-term effects the provenance of that profit may have on the possibility of responsible humanity.

The difference between the social networks and technological supports of the digital *pharmakon* and the prosthetic supports of previous, non-digital forms of social life is not that the digital *pharmakon* is “artificial” as opposed to “natural,” but that the shifting and constantly evolving relationships between individuals within a shared individual space tend to be reduced, under the aegis of the digital *pharmakon*, to algorithmic, mechanical repetition at an accelerated pace. The same kind of technological apparatus that allows one to manage one's documents or finances, also allows one to “manage” and “interact with” one's “friends,” followers, and fans. This is not to suggest that joining Facebook or Sharing a Coke renders one suddenly no longer capable of making friends or acquaintances without these supports. Rather, under these conditions the *tendency* of social life is to become increasingly impoverished, reduced further and further to mechanical reproducibility. When social life tends to be reduced to complete algorithmic calculability, with no need for asymptotic knowledge won through adoption, the knowledge that does exist begins to atrophy and is liquidated. The knowledge gained through one's own individuation of how to make friends and interact in social life is no longer necessary—Facebook is doing all that work for you.

And when that work is being done for you, the energy that would normally be expended in creating and maintaining idiosyncratic and unique, multifaceted relationships, is instead harvested for the purposes of the support (Facebook, Twitter, and other technical networks of adaptation). Neurons that fire together,

wire together, and any mental energy not being actively used will be put to other, more immediately necessary or relevant use. As Jonathan Crary puts it in *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep*:

Sensory impoverishment and the reduction of perception [of other minds and of shared technical objects] to habit and engineered response is the inevitable result of aligning oneself with the multifarious products, services, and “friends” that one consumes, manages, and accumulates during waking life.²³

One obviously does not lose all ability to interact with others outside of the aegis of technical supports such as social media networks or ad campaigns, but networks such as Facebook or Twitter are *specifically designed* to allow interaction only along certain lines and to solicit particular forms of interaction between users, forms which, crucially, take no learning to be able to use. The Share a Coke campaign operates in a similar way, though not quite as powerfully. Provided the person with whom one wants to Share a Coke has a name that is on the list, one can simply buy a bottle of Coca Cola that *seems* to be just for them, but is really one of millions of identical bottles or cans, and each bottle or can is personalized and just for them. Just like all the others.

Stiegler claims that modern society is, in fact, empty of individuality: “To say that we live in an individualistic society is a patent lie, an extraordinarily false delusion, and, moreover, extraordinary because no one seems conscious of it.... We live in a herd-society, as comprehended and anticipated by Nietzsche.”²⁴ Under the auspices of adaptive transindividuation, our “supposedly individualistic societies are in reality perfectly conformist.”²⁵ Bespoke conformity is precisely the *sense* that one can do as one pleases and act with complete nonconformist autonomy, all while quietly, and unconsciously, conforming more and more closely to the exigencies of technical systems that solicit adaptation to *their* wishes, rather than offering the challenge of adoption. Adaptation is characterized by a tendency toward consumption without thought. Indeed, “[t]hat which is consumed cannot be adopted,

²³ Crary, Jonathan. *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep*. London: Verso, 2014, 105.

²⁴ Stiegler, *Acting Out*, 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

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since on the contrary it must be immediately disposable.”²⁶ We know that infinite consumption is unsustainable. Adoption, I hope, might work against the mindless, and endless, consumption of adaptation. But either way, let’s hope there’s a recycling bin close by for after we’ve Shared our Cokes.

²⁶ Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living*, 130.