

Cogito Zero Sum

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Then I am in a room. White walls, neon lights. I am standing at a counter. On the other side is a man. He wears a strange uniform.

He says: This was a mistake. You should not have come here. You cannot go back. But you must get out. This place is the war of all against all. This is kill or be killed. For you there is only one rule. You must keep moving. You must get out.

He hands me a set of keys and gestures beyond me. Through the storefront window I see a Jeep.

Take that car. Head that way.

He gestures again.

Periodically, the road will fork. You must choose. All turns will be the same. If you make a mistake you will enter a town. The road will be a series of holes. When you encounter a body laying on the road, drive over it. If you stop they will come from the sides.

Then I am driving. Periodically there are forks in the road. Before each fork is a sign. I do not speak the language. I make a choice and continue. I am constantly on edge.

Then I am entering a town. It is corrugated metal and dust. The road is a series of holes.

I had a sense that I had turned from the beginning of one story into the end of another. I do not know how it happened.

In front of me a human being is lying across the road.

Then I say to myself: Drive over it.

My tendency toward inaction is absorbed into continued forward motion and the rattle of the engine.

When I hit the body I am in a room.

A voice says: That was quite a conundrum wasn't it?

Another says: Who would create such a game?

I am across a table from two men. They are the same as the agent in the storefront. But now they are two. They wear derbies and white pancake makeup. They have red circles on their cheeks.

They take turns speaking. First one then the other. I do not know the sequence. I cannot tell them apart.

One says: Sometimes, to keep your humanity is to lose your humanity.

The other says: Adaptation is a harsh mistress.

One wrong turn and

Poof!

They say together: All gone.

One says: The situation is fucked up

The other says: And you are fucked up.

Adaptation makes anything normal.

Anything at all.

One says: Self-interest is never enlightened.

The other says: It's a zero-sum game.

All our games are zero sum.

I say: But this is not a game. I just killed someone.

One says: Of course it's a game.

Another says: Everything's a game.

Situation, possibilities

Objectives and goals

Moves that are included

Moves that are excluded

Choices

Any arrangement is a set of rules.

One says: You see through them.

Another says: You become them

So the rules disappear.

It's human nature.

And we understand that.

We know philosophy.

Cogito zero sum.

