



quartier des fantômes

1

a zine about real life; fake life; movies; music; computers;
bodies; commodities; cities; the future; the past; books;
ghosts.



What's next?

What do you mean The Internet is dead?

In the beginning was the web page, and the web page was a human's footprint on the internet. They owned it, and other people could link to it. The web page could link to other pages. When you put all these pages together, you had "The Internet." About 15 years ago, "posts" began to take the place of web pages. Now, posts have won. Web pages are a thing of the past.

Individual humans do not own posts. Platforms own posts. Individual humans aren't the only ones making posts, either. Bots make far more posts than humans do. Bots make posts, share posts, link posts, boost posts, archive posts, ingest posts, steal posts. Bots write content, draw pictures, and conjure fake photos and videos from algorithms.

Bots are dead things pretending to be humans. The Internet, that human space made of web pages created by real people, is dead.

Isn't this zine on The Internet, though?

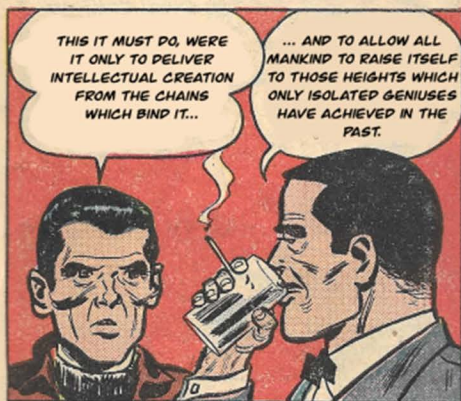
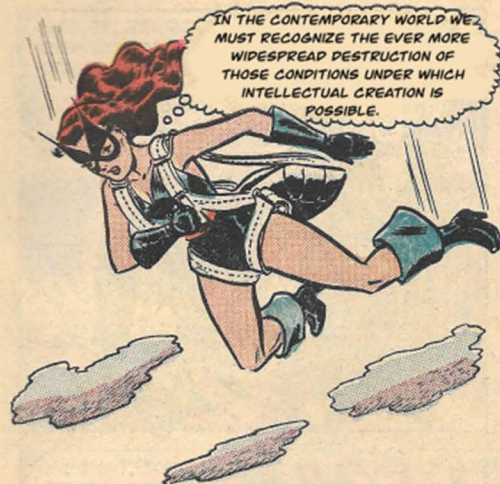
It sure is! It is hosted on a web page, where you are free to link to it, download it, print it, or do other human stuff with it.

Web pages and files you own are the past and the future.

Long live The Internet.

BLACK CAT V. THE SURREALISTS *

*Andre Breton and Diego Rivera, "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art"



DEATH OF A SCENE TALLAHASSEE, FL 2025

They've just about done it now.

When Railroad Square is gone, and the roadwork in All Saints is cleared up, it will all be gone. The precious little art, music, and general liberation we were able to create in the shadow of the football stadiums, student apartment compounds, and government buildings will be hopelessly smothered, and instead of punk venues or artist studios we'll have sanctioned spaces leased to respectable members of the Chamber of Commerce. You won't have a place to make art because you won't be able to afford it, and that is exactly the point. If you want a studio, they say, go enroll in an MFA program. After that, maybe you can get an arts grant. You better get to work on your Artist Statement right now and start carefully curating a portfolio of pieces highlighting your unique personal identity if you're going to make the grants cycle this year. You'll hear from the decision-makers sometime in the spring.

This is not gentrification, it is eradication. It is a cycle. Where artists work, developers see attractive opportunities to throw up lifeless apartments and smoke shops. Landlords sell the property at a premium and force their tenants out. Where artists perform and display the work they manage to complete, the city closes the road leading to the venue and dispatches bulldozers to make "improvements." These improvements take years to complete and strangle the venue in the meantime.



What comes out on the other side of the cycle is a new mixed-use development: more apartments; more smoke shops; more breweries; more takeout restaurants. Artists can go to Cascades Park or hang their work in one of the new buildings around town. This is how they want it. Artists can take advantage of exciting new opportunities, the city alleges, when there are more tax dollars for grants and more people coming to bright new spaces. That's not what's happening, though. Smoke shops, chicken shacks, and breweries don't want art. They want decoration. They want entertainment. The result is predictable. Artists give up, they leave town, or they get with the program and start producing decoration and entertainment.

This isn't what the public wants, either. People aren't going to arts events or watching cover bands play at the breweries any more than they were doing these things before the city gave them a stage at Cascades Park and more breweries to visit. The only positive for anyone, in fact, has been more money in the pockets of developers and more planning authority concentrated at City Hall. Fewer people are going to shows. Art galleries are disappearing at a rapid pace. First Fridays, once an important pillar in the City's strategy to foster community, are getting smaller.

It will take a recession, and then years of work after that, to get back what has been lost. Then you might have a few years before the cycle starts again. *Or, you can take it for yourself.*

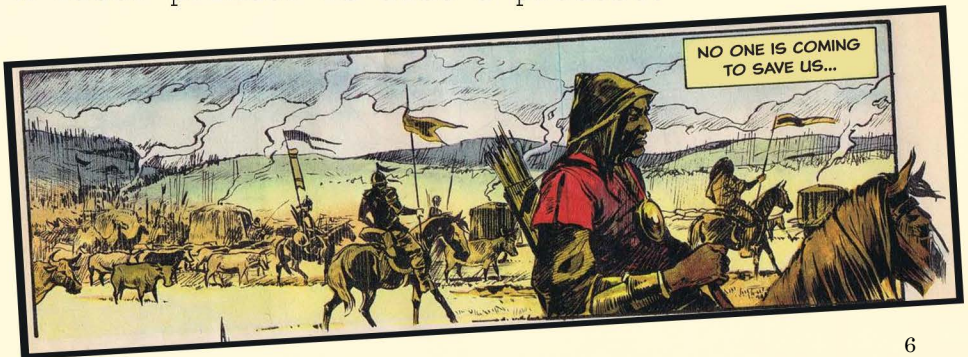
See the next page for some ideas and make up your own.

Stage guerrilla punk shows.
Turn your house into a gallery.
Host impromptu art shows on the sidewalk.
Perform plays at the park.
Do poetry readings in the vacuum cleaner aisle at Walmart.
Write zines.

ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS HERE

A large green rectangular box containing ten sets of primary-ruled lines (top solid blue line, middle dashed blue line, bottom solid red line) for writing ideas.

A laser printer is also a protest.



AI ATE MY homework

Soon—let’s call it ten years from now—many of the people responsible for making decisions about your life will have never written a paper, read a book, or even bothered to study for an exam in college.

Want a reality check? Perk up your ears and listen to some of the caterwauling alarms ringing from the ivy-shaded windows of your nearest university campus.

Teachers have tried AI-proofing assignments, returning to Blue Books or switching to oral exams. Brian Patrick Green, a tech-ethics scholar at Santa Clara University, immediately stopped assigning essays after he tried ChatGPT for the first time. Less than three months later, teaching a course called Ethics and Artificial Intelligence, he figured a low-stakes reading reflection would be safe — surely no one would dare use ChatGPT to write something personal. But one of his students turned in a reflection with robotic language and awkward phrasing that Green knew was AI-generated. A philosophy professor across the country at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock caught students in her Ethics and Technology class using AI to respond to the prompt “Briefly introduce yourself and say what you’re hoping to get out of this class.”

Source: James D. Walsh, "Everyone is Cheating Their Way Through College," New York Magazine, May 7, 2025

Ouch, that doesn’t sound good. Maybe it’s just a one-off example?



Stephen Cicirelli
@SteveCicirelli



I just failed a student for submitting an AI-written research paper, and she sent me an obviously AI-written email apologizing, asking if there is anything she can do to improve her grade. We are through the looking-glass, folks.

8:50 AM · May 15, 2025 · 14.7M Views

Well, if they're not writing, maybe they're reading. Right?

What do we mean that they can't understand the sentences? It's best illustrated with an example.

Original Text:

As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill.

Subject:

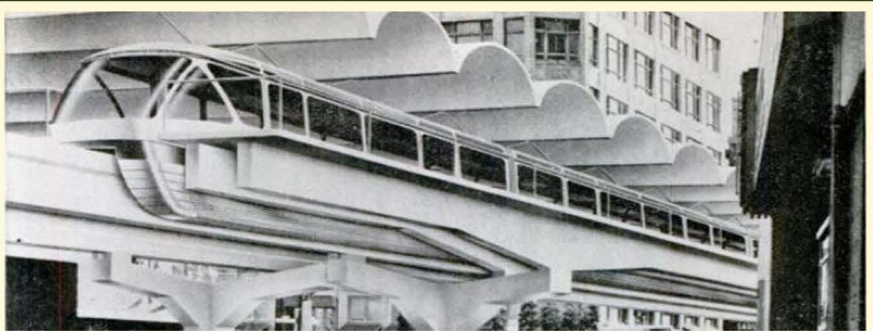
[Pause.] [Laughs.] So it's like, um, [Pause.] the mud was all in the streets, and we were, no . . . [Pause.] so everything's been like kind of washed around and we might find Megalosaurus bones but he's says they're waddling, um, all up the hill.

Source: Carlson et al. "They Don't Read Very Well: A Study of the Reading Comprehension Skills of English Majors at Two Midwestern Universities." *CEA Critic* 86: 1, March 2024.

In ten years, many of these students will be in management. Some of them will run large divisions, entire companies. Others will be working in government, planning, the professions. Maybe they'll be deciding which projects to greenlight in your community. Maybe one of them will counsel you on how to deal with the death of a loved one.

Does it matter if they never bothered to actually learn anything in college? Can we vibe-code the entire civilization?

Like it or not, we're going to find out.



What happened to the Future?

All Experience



Is Mediated

State Road 27: Specifications 121

Mix Design.

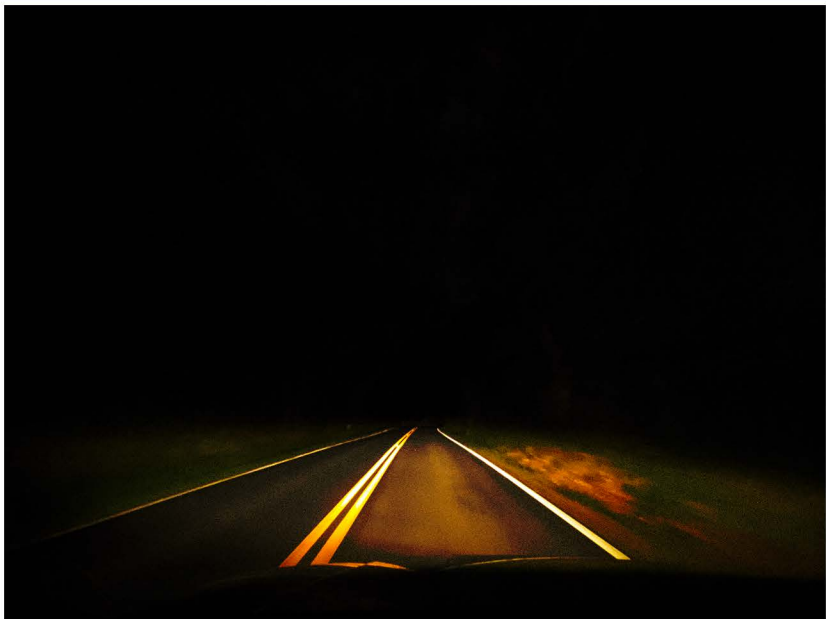
Conventional flowable fill is a mixture of portland cement, fly ash, fine aggregate, admixture and water.

Flowable fill contains a low cementitious content for reduced strength development.

Cellular concrete flowable fill is a low density concrete made with cement, water and preformed foam

to form a hardened closed cell foam material.

Cellular concrete flowable fill may also contain fine aggregate, fly ash, slag and admixtures.



OBJECT LESSON

Your dream escape starts here.

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The future of cool

SUSTAINABLE LUXURY



John Singer Sargent (1858–1925) Above Lake Geneva, San Vigilio, 1912 \$165,000

Inspired by nature, born from technology

"They offer their literal hands to my ideas."

Arcadia

Some day in the grass beneath
that Other Econfina
we will know again
the mystery of play.

Your ink-black fur pointed homeward
you may say, thus,
I forgive you;
and I may say, thence,
the journey is a cruelty.

All we give to all is pain
but maybe in that dancing grass
I might come to speak the
river's tongue.

To say all in silence.
To be without doing.



AND SO ON
THURSDAY...

All close relationships
are lit up by an almost
intolerable, piercing
clarity in which they
are scarcely able
to survive.



One-Way Street

Walter Benjamin

For on the one hand,
money stands ruinously
at the centre of
every vital interest,
but on the other...



this is the very
barrier before
which almost all
relationships halt;



so, more and more, in
the natural as in the
moral sphere, unreflect-
ing trust, calm, and
health are disappearing

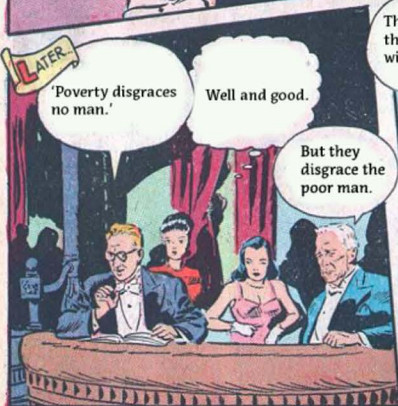


LATER

'Poverty disgraces
no man.'

Well and good.

But they
disgrace the
poor man.



They do it, and
then console him
with the little adage.

The case is no
different with the
brutal, 'If a man does
not work, neither
shall he eat.'



CBC

SignCRAFT



The first function of signcraft is branding.

Our time, incidentally, is the era of The Brand. The era of The Brand coincides with the rise of the internet. Branding existed before the internet—of course—but as our lives are almost completely mediated by screens now the brands surround us, assaulting our senses and needling their way into our thoughts from every direction, every surface. Even our relationships are subject to capital-B Branding. In 1997, business guru Tom Peters wrote, “We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You.” When we use the same tools, employ the same postures, and undertake the same motions to join a work meeting, find a date, chat with our friends, or order a meal, however, “to be in business” is synonymous with “to be

*“You’re branded, branded, branded,
branded.” – Tom Peters*

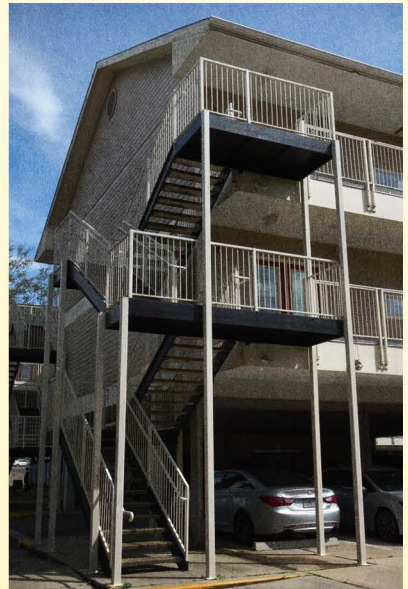
We are encouraged, therefore, to cultivate a “personal brand” which we can use to manipulate our friends, partners, employers, clients, and associates. After all, “the greatest success stories inevitably involve people who stand out from the crowd.” A recent business book argues that we live in a “new world of new rules” where “mobile phones and digital technology give even average people the chance to build a brand around themselves.” To erect a sign is to mark the earth with a brand.

If branding is the first function of signcraft, narrative is the first function of branding. This example, a pylon sign for “The Flats” apartment complex, illustrates one of the ways in which narrative might be put to use. Brands are rarely honest, and this one is no different. This sign obscures.

First, the sign itself. Its high-waisted sans-serif fonts evoke a sort of friendly modernism at the nexus of art deco and children's storybooks, while the bright colors spanning the spectrum from warm to cool signify a vibrant and diverse community. The architectural elements in the logo—the stairs, window, and doorway beneath the implied rooflines of the lettering—bring to mind a close-knit urbanism, like the Painted Ladies of San Francisco or the immigrant communities of old New York. Putting it all together, this sign implies that the community behind the sign is both urban and urbane, warm, vibrant, and modern.



The architectural values of The Flats do not align with the implied values of the sign out front. Far from warm, vibrant urbanism, this array of hotel-style lodging perched on stilts above a parking lot is housing as a utility. Building on top of the parking lot is a clever use of space, but it cedes pride of place—the very footing upon the earth we all need to feel secure—to residents' vehicles. In a city built to serve vehicles instead of people, at least this apartment complex and others like it completely surrender the earth to the cars. There is honesty, at least.



If architecture is meant to empower humans and shape their spirit through beauty and excellence, why do we relegate students living through the most formative years of their lives to the most utilitarian housing? Built and furnished with spartan commodities, colored with low-quality paints in neutral colors, student housing suggests to its inhabitants that home is something they will enjoy later. Now is time for something else. Landlords and designers would say it doesn't make sense to spend more on student housing. The students won't care. Worse, they will probably just damage the building, the furniture, and everything else. This is probably true. I've heard of students literally charging through the walls in their apartments playing football. They draw on the walls, clog the toilets, burn holes and spill drinks on the furniture. But how much of this is a self-fulfilling prophecy, I wonder? Do students recognize that landlords, parents, and university administrators treat their housing like a utility and consume it accordingly?



Brands and their signs do important work to shape this complicated reality into a narrative. Student apartments here evoke fantasies of place and class—Tuscany Village, Villa Sienna, Chateau Deville, The Polos. Others evoke states of being—The Players' Club, The Luxe, or, somewhat vaguely, Quantum. None of them match the stories they tell about themselves. This is what brands do because it is what humans do: name a thing, tell a story. But because these things are named and narrated to sell a product, and because the story these brands tell is meant to obscure the commodity relationship underlying one of the most fundamental part of a student's life, the signs that tell those stories deserve critical attention.

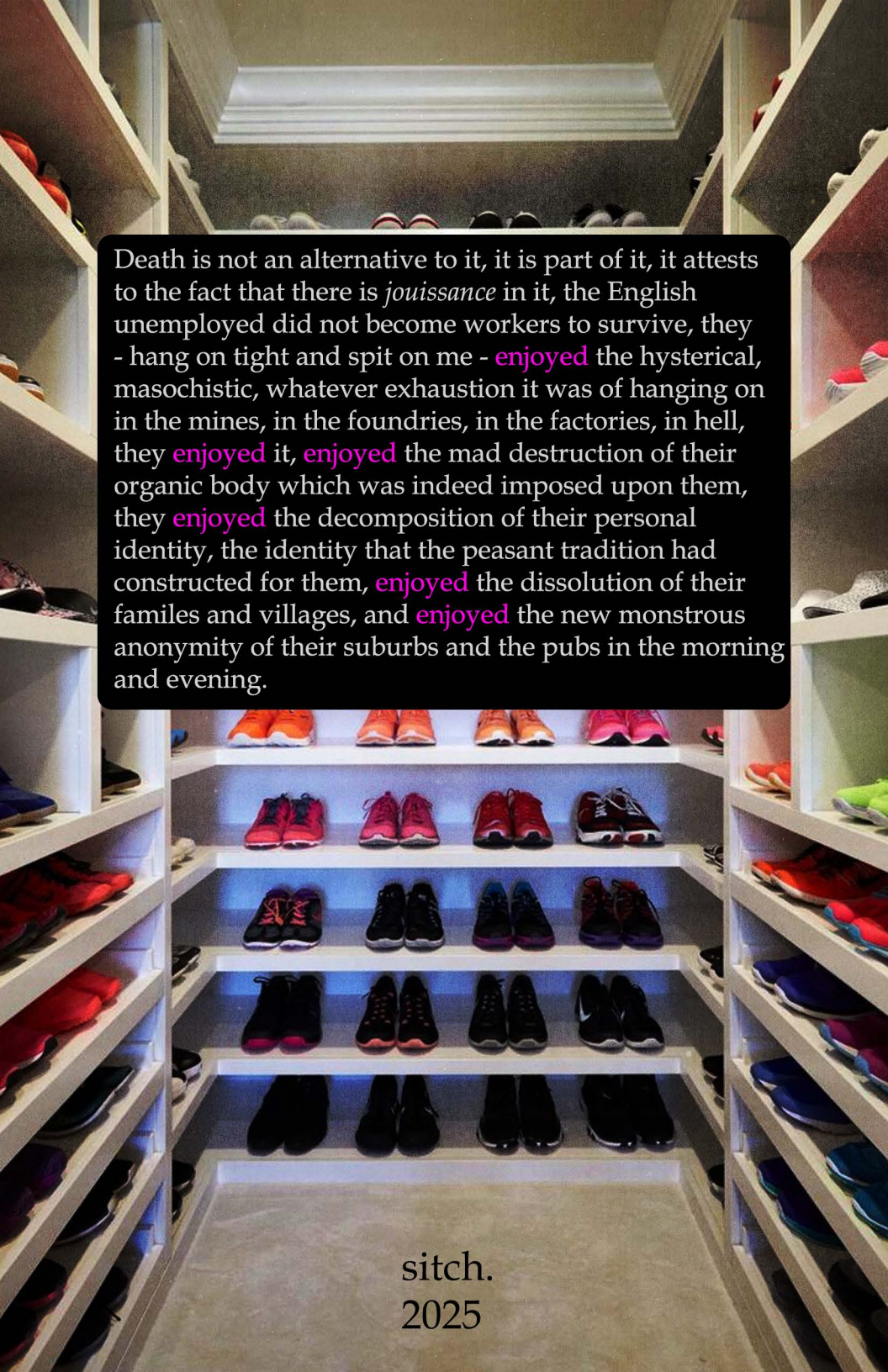
In summary, The Flats is student housing. Its materials are bare commodities—vinyl siding and soffit, asphalt shingles, steel and concrete stairwells, steel piers—and the rich, vibrant colors on the sign are nowhere to be found. Beige, gray, off-white, and rust-red: this is American neutral, a building that withdraws from the eye and eludes memory.

There are two ways to look at the reality behind the sign. On the one hand, it is a memory hole, a place that withdraws from mind and spirit so students can spend their time at home focused on other things. On the other hand, it is housing at minimum, a raw commodity meant to be rapidly consumed and forgotten, like a Big Mac or a rental car. Either way, reality belies the brand. The sign hides the thing signified. This sign is doing some heavy lifting.

Do you have something to say? Artwork to share?

We need contributors to keep this zine alive!

Join our Discord server: <https://discord.gg/bXNYy6d3>



Death is not an alternative to it, it is part of it, it attests to the fact that there is *jouissance* in it, the English unemployed did not become workers to survive, they - hang on tight and spit on me - **enjoyed** the hysterical, masochistic, whatever exhaustion it was of hanging on in the mines, in the foundries, in the factories, in hell, they **enjoyed** it, **enjoyed** the mad destruction of their organic body which was indeed imposed upon them, they **enjoyed** the decomposition of their personal identity, the identity that the peasant tradition had constructed for them, **enjoyed** the dissolution of their families and villages, and **enjoyed** the new monstrous anonymity of their suburbs and the pubs in the morning and evening.

sitch.
2025