I FEEL BETRAYED BY THE FUTURE
Do you remember how, in the future, we were all going to be punks?

Do you remember how technology wasn’t going to homogenize us, it was going to customize us?

Do you remember when we were going to live in alleys and in cathedrals and everything was going to be accompanied by bass synths?

Do you remember when there wasn’t going to be a mainstream? We were all going to be part of six hundred thousand different cliques and subcultures?

Do you remember when science was going to address questions like “how do I make people more than human?” instead of questions like “how do I make it easier to never go outside?”

Fuck flying cars, I just want shit to be weird.
I guess I’m just nostalgic for the future of the days of yore. Take your pick, cyberpunk or steampunk. All I know is that shit was supposed to be more interesting than this. You’re allowed to be weird for a few weeks a year at Burning Man, but the rest of the time you’ve got to slave away for Microsoft? No thank you.

I grew up on this stuff. I know how it’s supposed to go: technology is for hacking. Corporations are for fighting. Abandoned buildings are for living. Guns are for pwning security drones (whether bio or mechanical). And the internet? The internet isn’t a culture, it’s a tool. Telecommunications are for taking on the Black ICE that stands between us and freedom (and fortune). This much I remember.

We long for this. We want vampires and unicorns and we want 2012 to reawaken the ancient races. But more than that, we just want something other than what we’ve got. We’re desperate for a real culture, a diverse
world that’s probably a little bit scarier than this one and certainly a hell of a lot more interesting.

I don’t want MMORPGs, I don’t want to settle for a Second Life. How do you tell people that you hate the internet without sounding like a luddite?

I remember when the internet was anonymity, when no one knew how old you were, what you looked like. I remember when the internet was gender play. When you could change your handle (and spoof your IP) and you were a different person. I remember when it was hack or be hacked. I sound like a curmudgeon. I remember the days before Facebook, before DRM. (Though at least the latter gives corporations only the illusion of control.)
World of Warcraft is a far cry from the MUDs. Yeah, there’s some gender play going on in Azeroth, but there is no liberty. Millions of people are playing just as they are told by Blizzard.

We need to reclaim telecommunication. Get the internet away from government, away from capital. Hell, we need to get ourselves away from government and capital, and I remember when computers seemed like a promising way to do it.

And that’s just it. They still are. Encryption works. The age of Wi-Fi is another golden era of hacking. So why am I complaining?

Because in the future, we were all going to be punks. Instead, we’re all on Facebook.
I love WikiLeaks and wiki-anything. Why can’t we have a wiki-culture?

I watch *The Warriors* and think “where’re the gangs dressed up like baseball players?” I watch *Hackers* and wonder where the rollerblading cyberpunks are. Remember the liberatory promise of rave culture? Hell, of punk, of hip-hop?

All the subcultures had their souls drained by mainstream, capitalist culture as soon as they stuck their mohawks or flat-brimmed cap out from the underground. Capitalism is good at that. Taking things from the public domain and selling them back to the public is more or less what it’s built to do.
If we want a legitimate culture of anything but yuppies, we’re going to have to destroy capitalism. Then, perhaps, we’ll be free to watch our culture spiral out organically into the chaotic interplay of diverse culture that we long for.

It’s not hopeless, either. There are hackers still, and there’s a thriving underground. There’s squatting, there’re illegal parties. You can fight the police and scare yuppies. There are street bazaars and markets and, hell, everyone is a pirate these days. The higher the corporate monolith, the deeper the shadows and the cracks.

Their dystopia is our dream.
The images used in this zine were cut out of a role-playing game book I found in the trash. I mean no disrespect to the illustrator. But everything discarded is ours. We exist outside of capital.

I can’t really claim this zine as copyright or creative commons or even public domain. It just exists. It was published in 2010.

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STRANGERS IN A TANGLED WILDERNESS