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Potato Days

April 26–May 7, 2023

I caught a nice observation for you, it's worth sharing. I was in Ehrenfeld, running from the hotel to a kiosk when I saw a controlled demolition taking place on a small side street. A crane was holding up a massive rubber sheet, against the side of the building under demo, forming a barrier of protection. It must have weighed tons; at least a hundred metres high and ten centimetres thick, ensuring no debris or dust would fall onto the traffic and pedestrians moving below. King Kong scale. Adjacent, there were two dinosaur-sized excavators, swooping around with the breakneck efficiency of ball bearings, pivoting forcefully on their chassis, chomping at the building and pulling big chunks of concrete and steel bars from it.

What struck me was the common thread through each of the audience standing completely still below on the street corner. Babies in strollers, at least a dozen, each in their own wagon. Their nondescript minders standing attentively, drone like. The mouths of the babies hanging open in awe. Their stares totally hypnotised, transfixed on the slow motion destruction taking place just above on this residential corner. A dozen babies' stares captivated, without a hope otherwise, on a giant's demolition taking place in front of them. It was a striking scene, the audience of baby's, captivated and held without mercy. They could likely grow up together, to some extent, playing in the nearby parks and streets together, but that's about it. They're each unto their own, their own persons, but they happen to find themselves together, sharing a common fixation. When the mind goes blank, a certain sublime rapture overtakes the soul. One that is affine to binge watching garbage, daytime tv, on your hard earned summer holiday.

It reminded me of something I have been thinking a lot about for the past year. Things one's eyes can stare at, peer into, endlessly, like the abyss that then stares back into you. Maps, richly detailed miniatures, expansive views, the grand canyon, the view from a high-rise tower across a cityscape, depth, richness. Never harsh on the eyes, but always pulling the eyes deeper in, always stimulating, but never uncomfortably so, subduing, hypnotising, captivating. Blow your brains out, shattering, good.

– A.G.M.S., April 2023