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REF. 33615859
COWBOYS, CULTS AND CONEY
ISLAND, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Silicon Valley And The Self-

And The Self-Righteousness Of The Entrepreneur.

"Technology is an alternative to politics." [5]
Peter Theil

Silicon Valley - as a society - is a complex, non-geographic, interwoven and contradictory set of beliefs, practices and communities.

Silicon, because of a startup companies that revolutionized the use of silicon in transistors. Valley, because it runs between San Jose and San Francisco California USA, which is roughly the Santa Clara Valley.^[1]

definitions of "silicon Valley":

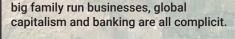
- The "ecosystem" of "Startup communities" and cultures that push new products and technologies in aid of producing value.
- The companies that run and maintain the tech world, who dictate the evolution of technology through marketing and "surveillance capitalism".
- The dual power of Venture Capitalists and Entrepreneurs, their "vision" and their market-justified decisions and leadership.

These definitions are tied together. Only one will be discussed at a time by those they entail, as together, they become contradictory and complex.

Silicon Valley is complex. It has a varied history. It includes people in different ways. It has influence on most of the world.

The idea of Silicon Valley is less a place or a community and more an ideology loosely applied to the face of business operations. We found it hard choosing from a sweet shop of social issues and contradictions - what to examine with our "silicon Island", and even harder to focus on one and ignore the others.

For example, our tutors suggested focusing on "the money", VCs, unregulated markets and the shady backdoor deals. This is a good



Silicon Valley is this complex mix of issues and no one issue we found was particular to it. The difficulty was that any work we produced in parody of Silicon Valley became too much like reality, too far removed from Silicon Valley, or completely meaningless.

The ideals of Silicon Valley apply the sentiment of individualism, while maintaining it with targeted marketing and algorithmic influencing. They like the competition and "disruption" caused by startups - the "ecosystem" of change and improvement, but it's funded by the money men who sit at the top. Threefour VC firms fund the whole valley, and the tech companies on top buy all the startups that make it on the market.[2] Airbnb "disrupted" by providing cheaper alternatives to traditional hotels. This effected the hotel market obviously, but also cleared whole cities of actual residents as the apartments were rented out on Airbnb.[3]

Uber "disrupted" the market and that has proven better for consumers in terms of price and service. but it ruined the culture of Taxi drivers and made local Taxi businesses redundant.[4] They wave away losses of jobs as short term social inevitabilities. This has both changed the market but also the culture. Silicon valley doesn't believe in culture and tradition as they are bureaucratic and cater to what is, not what is best or most efficient. Silicon valley wants services like Uber to regulate these markets under the ideas of better efficiently and the dictation of the invisible hand, consumer influenced needs and desires.

"The government spends more than half our GDP annually but produces no market value" Don Draper, VC and Start up accelerator.

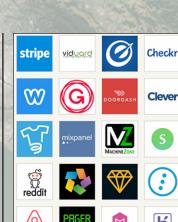
The ideal of Silicon valley depends on the free market and transparency of information(as phrased by a few entrepreneurs)[5 - Kevin O'Connor], but they are complicit in the manipulation of markets and hoarding of data. The face to silicon valley avoids the problems it produces. "Hive mind" being the drive of change rather than democracy doesn't come from Silicon Valley but is perpetuated by it since it is one of the few things that can justify social media's big part in personal life[6]. Democracy doesn't necessarily decide change though, it also decides when not to change and how to organize. Silicon Valley is inherently anti-democratic and in its true



We approached the topic of silicon valley through a discussing things like - The cult of economics, blockchain, Brand cults, Wall street. Ideas led to us abbreviating several points to "Silicon Valley", hence we thought it was a good direction to go as it encompassed group interests.

With all the research we conducted throughout the project, I will form a few

suggestion as it can be argued to be the root of all contradictions in Silicon Valley's ethos, but what makes Silicon Valley interesting is it's cult-like belief in progress, tech and startup success. Focusing on un-regulated markets, we would find ourselves talking only about the few biggest companies, Google, Apple, but also talking much broader about companies far from Silicon Valley in the traditional industries and markets,





Lendûp

Since **2005**, we've funded over **1,000** startups.

Y Combinator is a community of over **2,400** founders.

Our companies have a combined

Paul Graham's Startup accelerator, Y
-Combinator. www.ycombinator.com

and how to organize. Silicon Valley is inherently anti-democratic and in its true form would take away any platform for the marginalized person to have a voice. When it comes to equality, Turner believes Silicon Valley has the answer with equal "living" because technology and services will become so good and competitive through the Valley "ecosystem" that they will be available to all[5][7]. This is the known idea of the "sharing economy", stemming from the same ideas as from the hippie communes of the Whole Earth Catalog. Others point out that it isn't working, because of the current distribution of wealth worsening, also manufacturing jobs just moving overseas, and there is no obvious way which said things would be automated.[8]

One idea we played with - and which was suggested by the tutors - was a whistleblower scenario. our island could consist of this secretly exploitative system that is called out by one whose been forgotten about or marginalized. We would present the final presentation from the perspective of the whistleblower going public with evidence of the backdoor deals and malpractice of those in power. We encountered three problems with trying this.

Person stakes, at Facebook even the mail boys and the in house cleaning crew has the opportunity to buy equity after a certain period of working at the company^[2]. To examine Silicon Valley as a community, the reason there are no actual whistleblowers and the reason Apples factories had to be exposed by investigative journalists, is because of an actual sense of investment in the future of what your part of.

"A startup is a company designed to grow fast. Being newly founded does not in itself make a company a startup. Nor is it necessary for a startup to work on technology, or take venture funding, or have some sort of "exit." The only essential thing is growth. Everything else we associate with startups follows from growth." Paul Graham

The point of a startup it to grow, that's the difference between a normal new company and a has the intention of an upward trajectory, and to be on the rising platform means ignoring malpractice and making backdoor deals.

- The Ideal startup society, as theorized by Peter Theil, would be anti-democratic. The authority of the entrepreneur, and what is best for the market, and production of value -would decide what is best for society [10]. Media can expose malpractice, but ultimately, usership of a service or consumer numbers will decide what's wrong or right(Apples factory exploits came to very little) [11]. In this case, the whistleblower would be a good mechanism to examine the problems of modern day consumer ignorance and market power, but not to empower those marginalized by Silicon Valley.
- The final reason, Peter Theil paying for Hulk Hogan's media coverup. When a media outlet published a story about WWA star Hulk Hogan cheating on his wife, Peter Theil payed for a multi-million dollar privacy lawsuit which bankrupted the media site Gawker. It was discovered that Theil had a vendetta on Gawker, ever since the site posted a disagreeable story about him almost a decade before^[12].

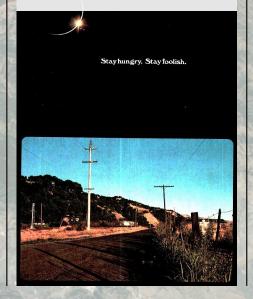
We couldn't think of a way to use a whistleblower to an agreeable/ meaningful outcome on the island. Either they would be ignored by the public, punished by the money-men(both being an exact and hopeless parody of reality) or produce an outcome that would be far-fetched, unlikely or too hopeful such as a revolution or unionization.

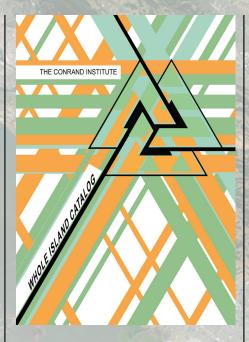
Fred Turner talks the Valley being centrist-communal-enhancement, "teamwork makes the dream work"^[7]. A publishing in the 1960s called the "Whole Earth Catalog" is recognized by many as an origin for the Silicon Valley Ethos^[13]. It was basically Which Magazine but run by hippies in a commune. They wanted to describe the tools that would best help someone live independently and as a self sufficient community.

"Stay hungry. Stay foolish."[14] Whole Earth Catalog.

quoted by Steve Jobs at his Stanford Honorary ceremony[15], was on the back cover of the last edition of the Whole Earth Catalog. It was well known that Jobs had once lived on one of the communes linked to the magazine.[2] The hippie culture meets commercialism, is how I think you could describe Silicon Valley. Garcia-Martinez(entrepreneur) is a Anarcho-Capitalists self defined and Paul Graham has been described as techno-libertarian.[2] The commune idea feeds into the startup culture, a group going out there on their own to start anew, only not a new community but a new company, there is a sense of everyone having the same opportunity to break free and start up if they have a good idea, and people will flock to the best ones. "People will take care of themselves".[7]

The Last Whole Earth Catalog 1974, Rear Cover. [14]



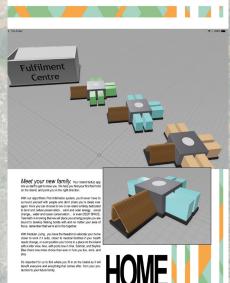






This was our own Whole Earth Catalog but for the island. I liked this because when I discovered The Whole Earth Catalog, I didn't like the way it was being used to justify the ethos of Silicon Valley. Making this meant we could use it in that bad way more directly to examine the contrast between the original Catalog and the way it's used to justify.









SMART LYNK





The Last Whole Earth Catalog 1974, Page 1 [14]

FUNCTION

The WHOLE EARTH CATALOG functions as an evaluation and access device. With it, the user should know better what is worth getting and where and how to do the getting.

An item is listed in the CATALOG if it is deemed:

- 1) Useful as a tool,
- 2) Relevant to independent education,
- 3) High quality or low cost
- 4) Easily available by mail.

CATALOG listings are continually revised according to the experience and suggestions of CATALOG users and staff.

PURPOSE

We are as gods and might as well get good at it. So far remotely done power and glory—as via government, big business, formal education, church—has succeeded to point where gross defects obscure actual gains, In response to this dilemma and to these gains a realm of intimate, personal power is developing—power of the individual to conduct his own education, find his own inspiration, shape his own environment, and share his adventure with whoever is interested. Tools that aid this process are sought and promoted by the WHOLE EARTH CATALOG.

Index on p. 442

FRONT COVER

Taken November 9, 1967, from NASA's Apollo 4 at 4 disence of 9860 nautual miles. This is probably the standard of the standard of the "whole Earth," the fartactic Continent just visible at the between of the creams. The picture was released in 1967, but no eine verend to care about noticing it or publishing it. I think it was the shadow, which frightened people. There are no shadows on our rightness people. There are no shadows on our INSIDE FRONT COVER

The Tamous Apollo 8 picture of Earthrise over the Moon that established our planetary factorod and beauty and raceness fidly moon, barren space) and beauty and raceness fidly moon, barren space) and beauty and raceness consciousness. The quote is from Energy Flow in Biology, by Harold Morowitt, \$9,50 from Academic Press, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 0.003.

INSIDE BACK COVER

The photograph, courtery Lick Observatory, show the M-31 Andromedic Galays, which is considered similar to our own in attracture and size. Where it thought-abilition originates is approximately the location of Earth in this galaxy. The quote is from 464 of the extraordinary Collected Powers of Rememb Patchem, 1967, 504 pp., \$3.35 from New Directions, J.B. Lippinguist Co., East Washington

BACK COVE

This is the back cover that was on our first CATALOG, the Fall 1988 issue, which was 64 pages and cost \$5. Ar most of our color cower, it was designed with Petra Bailey. The photo, the list full-Earth picture, is from the moon part of a day-long bigh resolution color TV film that from an ATS satellite in Movember 1967. To NASA on thanks,

"The world, definitely the united states, is headed towards The Road to Serfdom. The society that Hayak and Ayn Rand predicted, which is that we become dependent on the rule of the government, who then decides who the winners will be, as apposed to the free market, where winners win because they are the best, and losers lose because people don't value them." [5]

VC and Entrepreneur, Kevin O'Conner

Fred Turner quotes theories about how decentralized power through a truly free-market will prevent the exploitation of workers. Turner theorizes a nomadic selling of labour to the highest bidder, uprooting tradition. "People are too comfortable if they don't think they can do something to change the world."

this point alone ignores peoples different opportunities in education and resources. A decentralized system of power, which allows for start ups, competition and efficiently - pushed by the "invisible hand" of the consumer market would decide what's wanted and right.

This is in contradiction to the reality of Silicon Valley however, where the new successful product of startups only add to the power of corporations in the end, the middle men being the "entrepreneurs". apps go on the app store(Apple) and networks tools get bought by Oracle and IBM[2]. Described as a web of communal help and support, mutual development - but entrepreneurs as the faces of different companies create the illusion of divided power. Argued as better than government by people like Theil, more efficient, demanding and market providing. Are they not just creating new markets, "finding new problems", and who can decide what is right and wrong. there

are examples of how what's right goes astray in this system, and how it disables certain people in society, since it caters only to the market. silicon valley can represent the haste of science as it's being applied to technologies that we do not fully contextualize before release, perhaps this is the over rationalizing of life through technology.

- Dis-individualization, algorithms designed to profile users online and target them with advertising based on sex, ethnicity etc.
- The Algorithmns made to identify true or false claims on disability for the UK Universal Credit System.
 Technology that a UN committee has called "inhumane".[19]
- The original GMO applications were made in California after being developed by a Valley startup, which we have now witnessed destroy habitats and real "ecosystems".

Jobs refusing cancer treatment acts as a good example to explain my point here, despite being a Stanford qualified engineer and an enlightened technological figurehead, there was misunderstanding of the role of science in life and the application of scientific knowledge.

To define the nature of Silicon Valley as 'contradictory based on it being complicit in what it believes wrong' brings in the argument our group encountered, of consumer complicity. Entrepreneurs justify their product and practice using the market, therefore isn't the consumer complicit? I myself have an iPhone, therefore I could be complicit in the taxpaying-less, factory worker exploiting, data farming corporation called Apple. This, I think, made my group wary of making bold statements, or casting evil or greed over the entire Valley. Personally I believe in existing within the current capitalist system without being complicit, but makes me unsure of the complicity of Silicon Valley, for they, for example, believe(or rather argue) that if there were a truly free-market, then there wouldn't be corporations with exploitative power. These corporations are in a position of power however, so I believe they should be held accountable. But also we found ourselves considering

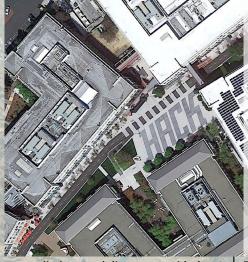
our complicity in the Silicon Valley dream of success and world changing influence. Being much like the two design students from Rhode Island School of Design who founded Airbnb, we sympathized, because we believe that they couldn't predict their social

impact on communities.

These points help me describe the difficulty of commenting on Silicon Valley in a parody like society or island, as the idealist society described by Entrepreneurs would perhaps not be like the one in the San Fran Bay area. Black Mirror the TV series presents a few different ways of how you can focus on specific technologies impact, Jurassic Park the movie - shows the 'corporations going too far' scenario. Bioshock the videogame has the narrative of rich people establishing their own desired society only to be revolted upon by the workers. All these we considered when considering our narrative.

If we design a utopian society true to what they want and believe in, then we will have bought into their ideology. If we make a dystopian society, commenting on the realities of Silicon Valley, then we fall short of understanding the beliefs and roots of the Valley, and they will have their utopian message as a readily returned argument. Lastly, if we try and predict and show the weaknesses of the theorized Silicon utopia, we would struggle to decide on what the weaknesses were, fashion a coherent and unbiased narrative, and present it in the 8 min slot on zoom allocated to us.

There is actually already a real "Silicon Island" in the making. Peter Theil funds a project called The Seasteading Institute. "Experimenting with new forms of government and society"^[17]. This is Silicon Valley's answer to all the



contradictions and discontent with the state - they're gonna pack up and live on floating islands. It could be a scapegoat-of-an-idea, Peter Theil blames so much of lazy government systems, offers this as a solution and therefore can get away with his own malpractice.

We had found ourselves just theorizing reality as though it was dystopian.

"We think only having 193 countries for 7 billion people, There's not much choice there. I have more choice in soda than I do in governments." [5] CEO of The Seasteading Institute, Rand Hencken Facebook HQ from the Google Satelite. Notice the "HACK" in the centre courtyard.

"Among the technical, "hacking" as it's understood among civilians - namely, illegally breaking into and messing wit computer systems - is only a secondary meaning of the word. The primary meaning is the building of systems and software, with a connotation of rough tinkering rather than fine craftsmanship. "Phacked an old Windows box to run Apple 08 X," a hacker might say about some particularly interesting kludge."

Garcia Martinez describing the early stages of a startup.^[2]

This was the point at which I realized Tim Cook might have actually got to me, I found myself respecting Elon musk and nodding along to a lecture by Peter Theil. I realized it was all talk, they were good at covering their tracks, shifting blame, understanding their customers and selling stuff.

We found ourselves, in the end, focusing on the vanity of the entrepreneur, the language of the sale of the new life, buying into the concept and laying it on top of the issues of Silicon Valley.

The entrepreneur is intellectually vain. The entrepreneur is the same as any good salesperson, but specifically they believe what they're saying. Entrepreneurs believe they know what's best for society because of their success.

Their success gives them the moral high ground. If you have won you are the clever one, the one who can decide what's right, even if you're wrong.

"Musk is wealthy like whole states are wealthy. When you have that much power you have the ability to imagine possibilities that we can only dream, but they can make them happen. A technical person with almost unlimited wealth and a habit for success can begin to change the world in these new ways." [5]

Fred Turner

"Silicon Valley proper is mostly suburban sprawl. At first glance it doesn't seem there's anything to see. It's not the sort of place that has



conspicuous monuments. But if you look, there are subtle signs you're in a place that's different from other places."[18] **Paul Graham**

Much like the façade of the social technologies(Facebook) to enhance your individuality and independence, actually feeding you targeted information molding your opinions in a 1984 like reality, entrepreneurs enjoy a strong cult of personality matching Big Brother in how everything they say is



Tim Cook doing one of his many Keynotes. When I sleep I can still hear his voice sometimes. "We here at Apple are committed to ...



Another Picture of Tim, just kidding It's me! Doing the worst american accent you will ever hear. Island rocket pitch.

loosely justified and really they're not necessarily in charge and are just there to justify the product and make the money men their money

Our final presentation showcased the slippery language and sales techniques of entrepreneurs. I watched hours

and hours of Tim Cook presenting Keynotes and practically method acted into a similar character, presenting this character and a loose lifestyle product concept in a way to understand the value they can assign to an idea, avoiding its weaknesses and talking directly about its personal positives to you.

Welcome

Silicon valley has been the past and present for as long as technology has been improving lives. With the powerful ecosystem silicon valley has, progress is fast and consumers can trust that silicon valley will deliver the whats best for society. Every decade sees an ew generation of Tech start ups that provide better than what the world had before, and I know we've gotten frustrated with the limitations, bogged down with government regulation and media scrutiny. Your ideas shouldn't be slowed down and put on the back burner. We here at the Conrand institute, believe in a better future for society. The launch of what we're 'Fragment sland, we thought carefully about what you'd want from a new home and a new life. I flyou dream lip, we'will full had tream.

I flyou dream lip, we'will full limit dream.

Know that your time isn't ever being wasted, we will help keep you from distraction and medicore living, to let you stay on with whats important, and dreaming bigger.

Your data is in good hands, we won't sell it to external companies who could use it with rivels or competions. The island Leaves you in control of how data can improve your living. Your ideas with the use of this data is the future.

is a huge moment for us all, ucan be content with knowing you have the best tools for better living. With these two key products to get started in the slands ecosystem.

You can be glad knowing you're never alone with your Smart Lynk physically connecting you to your work and you'r home, never leaving whats important behind.

Your Island SetUp app lets us start to get to know you. We help you find your first foot hold on the Island, and point you in the right direction.

The island will give you the freedom to live seamlessly and intuitively, independent and individual among you friends and family. Your gonna get stuff done, and no one is gonna hold you back.

what; Bracelet (Aub)

> You can be glad knowing you're never alone with your Smart Lynk physically connecting you to your work and your home hub, you will never need to keep track of your own time and whereabouts again as your integrated communicating home network will do that for you. with a mix of technologies such as GPS, Ambient listening awareness Al, and human body monitors, your Lynk knows everything it needs to make life a dream, and keep you on track with what important to you.

> The Lynk is both your partner in crime and your key to the island. We know that genius ideas can strike at anytime, and with your Lynk there is no need to worry about Quickly writing them down of circling the idea in your head because your Lynk has heard you, and is already preping the idea and making the right people aware of it who can bring it into reality.

Your work ethic is important to you, so your Lynk will act as a buddy, egging you on to go just that bit further at work. Lynk will also keep you fit and healthy, so that you know that your performing your best, at work and at

Location

Studio back Rm.

Studio back Rim.

Studio 2nd Fl.

Studio 2nd Fl.

Marketing Vid 1 (Camera)

Marketing Vid 2

AR.S

| Yersonal Setup APP How ?

To envision a new society, we started first by studying the most robust start-up cultures like Silicon Valley and Shoreditch Roundabout here in London. We see congested cities, lack of affordable living, extensive commutes, and even bad neighbours all as a possible hindrance to creativity. Ah the icon of Fragment island, let's go ahead and have a closer look.

Here, we've chosen to use the imagery of a: Triangle as it represents balance between the island, the band which is your physical connection to it, and the contractual bond you form by coming here

The **spiral** which represents your progression through the entrepreneurship process And the **sphere** representing the unity you feel in being apart of a true collective

With our algorithmic **Pod Arbitration** system, you'll never have to surround yourself with people who don't share you're ideals ever again. Here you can choose to live on an island entirely dedicated to land and nature preservation... wind and solar energy... social change... water and ocean conservation... or even DEEP SPACE. Take faith in knowing that we will place you among people you are bound to develop lifelong bonds with and no matter your area of focus, remember that we're all in this together.

With Modular Living, you have the freedom to relocate your home closer to work if it suits, closer to medical facilities if your health needs change, or even position your home in a place on the island with a killer view. Also, with pods now in Kiwi, Salmon, and Skyline Blue theirs now more choice than ever in how you live, work, and play.

> When you join the island we'll guide you, mould you, and break you right out of that shell. By telling us a bit about yourself and which profile you identify with, our innovative **Personality Match** will ensure your home is outfit with clothes, furniture, tools, and all the resources needed to achieve your goals. We'll decided everything for you and we're certain you'll just absolutely love it. Now that we've made our selection. Let's grab our ticket and head over to your first product launch.

That's it folks. We hope you enjoyed this presentation of just how easy it is to get setup with your **Smart Lynk** on **Fragment Island.** We just can't wait for you to come share in the magic of entrepreneurship with us.

Erik closing remarks ...

PSA: The Conrad institute has the rights to your time, labour, mind, and all by products of your ideas exclusively while on the island

This is an extract from one of our scripts and storyboards. We had the pandemic on our side with the Zoom presenting of our final presentation, the context added fittingly with our mixed format, website-advert-keynote product launch. Zoom produces an air of business, especially because of it being a Silicon Valley made web tool, while we wore suits and smiled manically and waved our hands about like a wooden italian - Tim Cook style.

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Autobiography of a startup success, funded by Paul Graham's startup accelerator. I would thoroughly recommend this book to anyone who wants a fun read and to understand the Silicon Valley mentality. My hatred for the blaze descriptions of backstabbing and manipulation Garcia Martinez witnessed and, himself, did - is the main reason for my focus on the self-righteousness of the entrepreneur.

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Paul Graham is a much quoted essayist in Silicon Valley, one of few people who speak greatly on the philosophy of startups and venture capitalism, having been trained in philosophy. Himself being a VC, you can imagine his stance. His "startup"

accelerator" produced companies such as Dropbox, Uber and Airbnb.

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Peter Theil is another of the few outspoken in Silicon Valley. He was Elon Musk's partner in founding PayPal, and was one of the original VCs who invested in Facebook.

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I think this article explains it the best, how Apple keep being ousted with bad practice and child labour etc, but they keep getting away with it becuase of loyal customer and such.

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