

Address to the Living

**Concerning the Death That Governs Them and the Opportuneness of the
Present Moment for Getting Rid of It**

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I. HERE, NOW, AND FOREVER

In one of Hoffmann's novels, the narrator is surprised by the rapture into which a man sitting at a table is plunged while listening to one of Gluck's overtures, though it was performed awfully by a bunch of bar musicians. Called to justify his enthusiasm, the man, who turns out to be none other than the composer himself, explains: mediocre as it was, the evocation of his work revived in him not the excellence of the score, but the moving harmonies that had presided over its creation — the musical notes he had written could only provide an abstract sketch of those harmonies.

What is true for the genius of art is even truer for the exuberant presence of the living. Is there anything more pathetic than a love letter? As regards the violence and passional serenity where the body discovers itself in its entirety, what word, what phrase, could contain that affection, that preciousness? Think about the ridiculous effect that love letter would have, if it were to fail to come into the hands of he or she for whom it was written and instead ended up being read by the hotel clerk! But when it reaches the loved-one, then the words organize themselves according to the heart's whim, tracing point by point a road already profoundly traveled, and they resonate with a harmony that only needed the simplicity of a few understandings drawn up randomly to propagate itself.

All I've tried to do here is to tie together the resurgences of a desirable life, to note briefly a few measures of a symphony of the living, to bring out hints of another reality, which dominant thinking hides with its tireless reading and rereading of the words of a world trapped in books because of the boredom engendered by its slow death.

The weakness of this enterprise is less the fault of the babblings and uncertainties through which this new reality is trying to express itself, and rather more the fault of the invasion of the past, which perpetuates itself in spite of me.

It is not easy to fall in love every day with the life we have to create when every day predisposes us to fatigue, aging, and death. And the intelligence of the self is certainly the least shared thing there is in an era whose only intelligence is the science of perfecting the absurd and growing inadequacy of living.

My living fully according to my desires is mixed up with the pleasure I take from writing in order to clarify my thoughts on the pleasure of living better (and this is the only use of writing that I agree with fully), of living out more fully the fears and doubts that issue from compromises and compatibilities that are foreign to me and that render me a stranger to myself.

On the other hand, there's nothing that I love more than the clarity of choice that I have at each instant in spite of the maze of constraints, which is my chance to lay down my chips on the never-ending quest for love, creation, and the enjoyment of myself, outside of which I recognize no worthwhile destiny.

Of course, I would be very displeased if I were to stupidly add to the slavery of running after the monthly rent money by subscribing to some brand image, to some journalistic or televised labeling, to a role — prestigious or derisory, it matters little — if I were to make myself miserable by falling into some mediated classification within the cultural state of commodity society.

Today it is a question of discovering oneself in the authenticity of one's existence, even if, having lived poorly, the least illusion often seems preferable — since, in its brutal franchising, the irrepressible desire for another life is already what constitutes this life.

In fact, I am not a stranger to this world, though everything about this world that sells itself instead of giving itself away is foreign to me — including the economic reflex into which my gestures and acts sometimes fold themselves. That's why I've spoken of economists with the

same sense of distance that Marx and Engels discovered between the filth and misery of London and the society of these extraterrestrials with “their” Parliament, “their” Westminster, “their” Buckingham Palace, and “their” Newgate.

“They” disturb me to the depths of my most humble freedom, with their money, their work, their authority, their duties, their guilt, their intellectuality, their roles, their functions, their sense of power, their law of exchange, their brotherly community, of which I am a part without wanting to be.

Thanks to what they themselves are becoming, “they” are on their way out. Economized on to an extreme by the economy, which they are slaves to, they condemn themselves to disappearance by carrying away, in their preprogrammed death, the fertility of the earth, the natural species, and the joy of the passions. I have no intention of following them down the path of a resignation that makes them suck out the last energies of humanity and convert them to marketable commodities.

Nonetheless, I don’t want nor do I claim to be able to bloom in a *society* that hardly lends itself to the blooming of individuals; I would like, rather, to attain fullness by transforming society according to the radical transformations that sketch themselves out within it. I do not disavow the puerile, stubborn insistence on changing the world, since it doesn’t please me to do so, and it will not please me unless I can live to the fullest extent that I desire within the world. Isn’t this stubbornness, in fact, the very substance of the will to live? Without it, one’s perspicacious perspective on the world and oneself is only a new blinder, and without the lucidity that comforts the inexhaustible exuberance of the living, that perspicacity remains in a chaos which tends to destroy rather than regenerate.

The end of the economic era coincides with the birth of a civilization of desire. It is a mutation that operates slowly, through a new symbiosis, restoring primacy to the ensemble of living beings and things, at the same time as a new freeness teaches us to seize what nature gives us in such a way that she gives even more, something beyond what our tender love-energies are now.

If more new ideas are appearing now than ever before were formulated – excepting Fourier – in the centuries of religious, philosophical, and ideological thought, it’s only because more authentically human realities have manifested themselves in two centuries than in ten thousand years driven along by the science of power and profit.

The opinion that the idea of happiness is everywhere and its reality nowhere shows well enough that there is no more important concern for people than identifying their desires and bringing their destiny into agreement with the constant exercise of their will to live. This project requires great patience and the perseverance of the alchemist, extracting a purified life from the ferment of what denies it; it requires ridding oneself of the negative until the force of desire makes it become nothing more than the presence of the living.

Will anyone be surprised if the quest for enjoyment implies great attention and effort at every instant, when we have never learned anything but the virtues of sacrifice and renunciation, where the power of life stagnates working jobs? Even with all the world’s knowledge combined, we have still only been able to grab hold of dead things and to die within them as they take hold of us.

Go ahead and say, after all that, that life can defend itself just fine on its own, but at least make it clear that first it is necessary to recognize life in oneself, to welcome what it offers, to liberate it from its everyday trappings, to bring it to a state of innocence wherein at last it might be itself.

Now, when the bankruptcy of the economy as a system of survival strikes down so many efforts borne from the rage to accumulate, to be the best, to possess even more – perhaps now a reversal of attitudes is foreseeable; perhaps now, this stubborn humanness, forced to kill itself by

working, will rediscover the creation of beings, of things, and of environments as the pleasure of existence. Is that possible?

We die, at last, only from an accumulation of death tolerated for innumerable days and nights. The great rupture of our time is that the negation of life has begun to negate itself – that desire, discovering itself before and above all other things, is discovering that it has a world to create. The revolution of the living is now; it stands alone, and if death haunts it and persists in hiding it, we now know that we have it within ourselves to revoke that death and that around us there is a growing passion to desire endlessly.

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II. GENESIS OF INHUMANITY

Ending and Beginning

Their lives are broken upon getting out of bed like they were broken in infancy and at the dawn of history.

How can you tell it's the end of an era? When a suddenly intolerable present crystallizes in a short period of time what was so uneasily put up with in the past. And everyone is suddenly quite easily convinced that he or she is either going to be reborn in the birth of a new world, or die in the archaic netherworld of a society less and less adapted to the living.

With the first rays of dawn, a new lucidity is born. And it shows everyone instantly how drawn and quartered we've been by the clash between the desire to be human and the daily obligation of renouncing that desire away through the history of humanity and the recent infancy of the individual.

Everyday Exile

Although the day begins beautifully, the weather always ends up disagreeable. The fog of work tarnishes the shine of the days. The alarm clock's fanfare lends a certain military stiffness to the roundabouts of the watch. Got to go, to get rid of the imprecision of nighttime, got to answer the call of duty – it's like coming running at the whistle of an invisible master.

The moroseness of the morning sets the decor. Their eyes open upon a labyrinthine symmetry of walls. How do we know we're on one side or another, on the inside or outside of the moebius strip unraveling a continuity of street, housing, factory, school, and office?

Once they've pushed off the sheets and blankets of nighttime reverie, full of errantry and frivolity, necessity steals them away, dragging them off into the comings and goings of a laborious destiny.

Civilization bridles them. See them prepare themselves for the obstacle course, ready to conquer a world that long ago conquered them, one which they've learned they'll have to leave behind before doing anything else.

Without the daily morning trumpet blast of reveille to put them on the right track, where would they get morality, philosophy, religion, State, policed society, and everything else that authorizes them to die for things, gradually and reasonably?

Well, you've got to have a good grip on their lives if you want to keep them from going wherever they please. Their nightly calm has the unfortunate effect of making them forgetful. If habit is a second nature, as they say, then there is a first one too, happily deaf to the injections of routine. Pulled from sleep, in effect, the body becomes reluctant; it argues with itself, rears up, stretches out, and at length, shakes off its laziness. And you've got to make your mind persistent and stubborn, and make your body get up – damned body, never wants to do nothing with any heart... Could I put any clearer the feeling that to put your heart into work, you've got to have hardly any left at all?

Beneath the sun and on the pillow, the wave of obligations pushes back the foam of voluptuous solicitations. The sweet smell of a towel, the embrace of a naked arm, the presence of a loved one, the desire to hang around in the streets and the fields – everything seems to murmur, with a troubling simplicity, “Take your time, or time will take you... There is only pleasure or death.”

But, trained for quick calculating, reason soon rounds up the herd of constraints. At the first moment of reflection, the time-card and schedule sheet come down like roadblocks, obstructing the passage of desires. Like so many chimeras!

The day, duly roped-off and divvied up, cements a reality that is certainly chosen, but chosen begrudgingly; it is chosen at the expense of another reality – that of the body, which is demanding with great cries the freedom to desire endlessly.

Everything happens as if there was only one universe, the second vanishing in the haze of a puerile enchantment. The porcelain of your dreams crumbles beneath the weight of the trepidation of business and of lucrative activity. It’s literally a business-matter of instants.

The evening sweeps together the debris of humanity at work. The night pieces back together all the desires that the windshield-wiper of mechanical gestures had pushed off to the side. It readjusts them, for better or for worse : ten upside-down desires for one right-side up, maybe a little love, if there’s any left.

At dawn, the scenario is repeated, enriched by the fatigue of the previous day. Until, night and day having become commingled, the bed folds out beneath a body that is at last completely and definitively vanquished, wrapping in its funeral shroud a life that had failed so many times to come to life.

This is what they call the “hard reality of things”, or, with a laughable cynicism, “the human condition.”

The Omnipresence of Work

They spend their weeks waiting for Work to go put on its Sunday clothes.

The effects of serving others from Monday to Friday make them experience their fun just like they do their work. They can hardly manage not rubbing some spit into their hands before throwing back glasses of fine wine, tearing down the galleries at the Louvre, reciting Baudelaire, or fornicating savagely.

At fixed times and dates, they leave the offices, the shop-counters and establishments, and throw themselves, with the same measured gestures, into a measured, accounted for, charged-to-the-room “free-time” which is labeled with names that sound like bottles being emptied : weekend, holiday, party, leisure time, R and R, vacation. Such are the freedoms work pays them with; such are the freedoms they pay for by working.

They practice meticulously the art of coloring-in their boredom, getting their fix of passion from exoticism, a pint of alcohol, a gram of cocaine, a libertine adventure, political controversy. From eyes as dull and lifeless as they are well-informed, they observe the ephemeral stock-quotes of fashion, which taps in, from discount to discount, to the promotional sales of fancy clothes, high cuisine, ideologies, events, of the stars of sports, culture, electoral politics, crime, journalism, and business – the ones, at least, who support their interests.

They think they’re leading an existence, but existence is leading them, through endless rows of pews, to a universal factory. They consistently obey the old reflexes, which command them

throughout the working day, whether they're reading, doing odd jobs, sleeping, traveling, meditating, or fucking.

Power and credit pull the strings. Are their nerves tensed up on the right? They stretch out to the left and the machines start up again. Anything and everything is used, it doesn't matter what, to console their inconsolable minds. It wasn't just by chance that all throughout the centuries they've worshiped, in the name of God, a slave-market that first grants them little more than one out of seven days a week to have a rest, and then demands that they sing praises to it.

And still, when Sunday comes around and the clock strikes somewhere around four in the afternoon, they start to feel, to know, that they are lost, that they've left behind the best of themselves at sunrise. That they've never stopped working.

The Child

They raise their children the same way they arise in the morning – in renunciation of what they love.

For as long a time as they've forced themselves to ignore their secret desires, they've never stooped to learn anything about children. The more pressing needs of making war and governing hardly authorized them to study such subjects.

Looking back over the centuries, the truth is that above all they were scared by this always-new Life, surging from the belly of woman to grow and multiply. The mirror of their own past uniqueness sent them the confused memory that existence was somehow promised to all spirits from the depths of their own infancy. And there in those depths, they found an embarrassing presence that the crushing vise of adulthood had failed to completely stifle.

They hated children as they hated themselves; they beat them for their own good, and educated them from the perspective of their own incapacity to love life.

The Misery of Birth

They propagated the idea that true birth was only found in death.

At the time when the Roman Empire was imposing its mercantilism on everyone within the limits of the known world, Christian mythology was able to translate the omnipresence of the economy with a flair. Their cyclopean "God", whose one eye commanded the universe, was not unfamiliar with the need to set the fates of children in line with its design.

What does the Christ-legend tell us? That he is God become man in a womblike cave where harmony reigned between humans and animals; that after having received at birth a set of prodigious gifts from three magicians who came from the earthly kingdoms, he was condemned by his divine father to carry the cross of existence, which would serve him conveniently as a coffin, and to go through the door of death to receive, in celestial coin, the prize money for having gone through his trials.

He is God until God is reborn beyond the grave. Between the two poles of glory, a valley of tears determines the path of his destiny. And so chased out of the uterine paradise, the child learns to economize on his life, *perinde ac cadaver*¹ in order to pay the toll on the road to a celestial survival.

Replace your hopes of sitting on the right hand of the Lord by the promise of a happy future and you're left with the destiny of the newborn child, now that the light of science has dissipated the fog of religious obscurantism.

¹ useful even as a corpse – tr.

Discovery of the Child

The 20th century has not recovered from its myopia, though the obvious sits two inches from its nose. Lucidity isn't doing much worse. Childhood isn't either – and that's something they've always had right before their eyes without really seeing it, something they now scrutinize closely, less out of conviction than necessity. Their observations confront them with a painful and exciting saddling up of opposites into which they are born to themselves and die to themselves each morning. The child, who was the cross of conscience for adults, ends up at a crossroads – forced to make a clear choice. A choice of civilizations.

Learning

Children begin life through the practice of pleasures, and the practice of pleasures shows them the ends of the world. To learn to enjoy things and beings – that's what true intelligence is, and in the face of that, the most brilliant intellectualism is no more than a parade of imbeciles, of those who are lacking in life.

This is not a new idea, but it's a long way from ideas to desire – desire, where everything becomes truly real. Knowledge comes to their heads, very traditionally, by way of kicks in the ass; following one's heart becomes a useless, time-consuming detour. Besides, how can we escape the very specific efficiency of the straightest, quickest path, when the family and school is filling every child's head with lesson plans that are as useful to business as they are useless to life?

For a few years more, social customs persist in dragging children from the maze of laughs and tears, removing from them the thread of satisfactions and dissatisfactions that guide them towards a progressive refinement of the self. Instead of taking them by the hand through the labyrinth of affection where one gets to know things clearly and deeply, you push them down the road you went down and lost yourself on; you lead them on into an impossibly knotted net of moral and social conventions, into a muddled world of constraint and subterfuge, into a tangled mess of subtleties which are as good for duping others as they are for duping you.

And that's how the universe of enjoyment slips into the shadowy depths of unconsciousness. Later, psychoanalysts, discoverers of whole continents voluntarily swallowed up, will play dumpster-diver, and, bringing to the surface various objects of desire and resentment, will return them to their owners, who often don't know how to use them anymore and will keep the best of the lot as souvenirs.

The Inversion of Priorities

First get to work; you can enjoy yourself afterwards! Such is the recurring, rhyming themesong that is passed down into the head, programming militarily the rhythm of the body's movements. Such is, in its numbing insistence, the tune that orchestrates the retreat of nascent intelligence. And rest assured – it will be a different intelligence that ends up in charge over the frozen behavior of working hours, an intelligence in which heart counts the least and is petrified the most.

The Child As a Commodity-Value

They discovered the child by following the ogre's footsteps.

Their generosity is very often nothing but the alms given by Profit to those that serve it. For their “niggers” to go from being animals to the status of being humans, wasn't it enough that they became purchasers of refrigerators, of cars, of expired medications? How did the proletariat manage to lift itself up enough to get the democratic right to choose its masters? Certainly these things took place due less to the proliferation of its “final conflicts” than to the evolution of a market on the quest for a more massive clientele. Equality owes more than anyone suspects to the appearance on every table of frozen spaghetti, perfumed with artificial truffle-scent.

When it happened that the ogre of mercantilism saw signs of tiredness and satiety amongst the African nations and amongst the western nomads looting the supermarket, checkbooks clenched tightly in their fists, he descended even lower on the social ladder in order to sink his teeth into one last bit of food.

In the 50s, the child was worth nothing outside of the family and was considered rather a despicable thing; worth a little more than a dog, a little less than a black man, a worker, or a woman. The old wisdom advised beating the children, pounding them into shape like coins, molding them like clay, hardening them in the kiln of tests and proofs, and whitewashing their knowledge so they might have a future as lucrative puppets.

Thirty years later, promotional sales discovered that it could call up good feelings by making use of children's pretty little heads, arranging them in an orderly fashion like the x-axis on their graphs. That's what set them right with God without them having to confess their sins; that's what gets them credit cards, bank accounts, computers, and fast food, the privilege of being able to talk loftily, and decide out of hand; the privilege of imposing another choice on the planetary consumption-market.

However, the economy, licking up its last pennies, is running the risk of dislocating its jaw. The marketing specialists have left out of their calculations the fact that the ogre always falls beneath the blows of an innocent hand. The commodity offensive has come to its most vulnerable point by approaching ever closer the source of life.

The falsehood of advertising, which made children grow old by disguising them as well-informed consumers, has contributed, and not just in a mediocre way, to the removal of children's status as inferior creatures. But did they ever think they'd really understand children when they could only see immediate profit and have narrowed their view on everything so much? Did they think that they could raise the children's consciousness with impunity, only to reduce them just as quickly to the weakness of the herd-mentality which yesterday's consumers were so horrified of?

And what a haste they're in to confuse children with breeding dogs and apartment cats; they too have benefited, at almost the same time, getting more attention, more respect! Was it plausible that a simple whistle would make them salivate and come running to go off to war or to elect a führer, as past generations have done?

They weren't counting on the changes that the development of commodity society has made to behaviors and modes of thought. To the extent that the tyranny of the family has fallen into disuse and the decline of patriarchy has put an end to the practice of brutal constraint and wily lies, children make the appropriate distinction between the humanity and the inhumanity which

tie and untie people to and from each other, whereas long ago a slap, a dark look, or the raising of an eyebrow would make them sing a sad, bitter song.

The child can soon feel the iron hand beneath the velvet glove that mercantile solicitations hold out to him, an iron hand poised to make the child pay its dues. Blessed be the litany, “help yourself, take what you want, you can pay for it on your way out”! Nothing could convince the child more effectively of the odious character of all commodity-dealings. Nothing could better prepare the children for propagating everywhere an absolute refusal of the devastating blackmail, “obey me or I won’t love you any more.”

The Naked Truth of Economy

Gazing upon the child, the presence in the adult’s heart of an unfinished life, oscillating between birth and death, is clarified.

Noting the checkmate of a civilization that exiles everybody from their own bodies, Picabia observed: “What men lack the most is what they actually have: their eyes, their ears, their asses.”

A voluntary blinding, over the course of the centuries, has made it seem imperative, in order to know, honor, and admire the lessons of the world, that one must not know oneself, and to never even examine oneself except with contempt. If a generation of blind men has given birth to a generation suffering from mental blindness, that’s doubtlessly less the result of a mutation of intelligence than it is the result of an ensemble of circumstances in which everyone is induced never to leave the surest paths except in the immediate experience of living their lives.

There are hardly any branches left that would be high enough to hang death’s companions from, or to hold them up. The systems that once governed earth in the name of heaven have been drowned in derision. Show me a single one of these eternal values, through which societies imposed respect for themselves by refusing themselves to the living, that has been left still standing on its pedestal!

Who still believes the lies, the enormity of which brought up waves of enthusiasm and ferocity in their believers, sustained both noble and ignoble causes, and threw hordes of fanatic militants into the blazing flames of ecstasy and torment?

The economy has ceased hiding itself behind mystifying words like God, devil, fatality, grace, damnation, nature, progress, duty, and necessity, with which, over the years, it gave itself an inescapable credibility. It no longer troubles itself with the frilly liberals, it is no longer bothered by the leninists in blue jeans — it laughs at the idea of taking any great leaps while wearing fascist jackboots or socialist bootees. It’s so simple and obvious it stands naked, and its omnipresence makes it familiar and familial.

Reduced to the final necessity of survival, the economy brings together all its past lies; the lie that there is no hope for humanity’s survival outside of the economy.

The End of Values

The old principles that were once inculcated in children have ended up quite tightly held down by the progressive strip-down through which the empire of commodities has annulled the majority of the traditional values. Scandals arise; quickly they rush to sacrifice to the fatherland, prove their devotion to the State, show their obedience to the bosses, and to screw over those

who don't submit; they crush the very revolt and insubordination that they need to balance out their accounts in the registry of hatred and scorn. Let's call the economy by its real name: "Make-money-fuck-the-rest-of-the-world."

The 80s fashionably mirrors a manner of speaking frankly which called a penny a penny, spoke highly of profit, got the financial schemes up and running again, exalted the struggle of the loan shark, and held commerce high overhead like it was the winning sports team. Teams of audacious thinkers restored the virtue of work, reanimated the dynamism of private enterprise and resuscitated a capitalist spirit, scruffy and ragged after its statist redevelopment. A vain and short-lived pretension.

In less than a decade, the wedding of business and individual initiative has left nothing but stock-market collapse, joblessness, inflation, and industrial bankruptcy in its wake, piling upon the landfill a not-so-very encouraging model for the schoolchildren to follow, schoolchildren who the present pedagogical politics are already trying to fold into the great army of the renascent economy.

And as if they had confusedly realized the fact that the economy was obviously not going to take its first or second breaths again any time soon, that they were going to be left with no future, they suddenly saw, in children and in their own far-off childhood, the point of a radically different existence.

Ever since their little ones stopped kneeling before the altar of examples-to-follow, since there was nothing there but grimaces and frowns to imitate, they asked themselves why they had to renounce belonging to themselves, why they kept themselves from approaching things and beings for the sole pleasure they might take from doing so. Because, after all, there's no reason anymore to take up arms and go to war, to start on a career, to gamble at the stock-exchange, to play chicken; so why should they bring ridicule and disenchantment upon themselves by repeating, by inertia, the gestures that deprive them of life and don't even bring in a compensatory profit anymore?

The Derision of Power

Out of all the collapsed parties on the fixed horizon of politics and business, there is only one faction still active — that of power. It is not negligible, since it makes arguments out of death to support itself with, but death is on its way towards losing its monopoly over absolute belief.

See the masters of thought and action suffer an attack of old age, now that they haven't got the perch of religions and ideologies to put their ambitions up on.

They wanted to engrave their existence into the televised image they send out for the masses' sarcastic devotion. They thought they could still fascinate everyone, but they only ended up x-rayed, scrutinized inside and out, and given a medical examination that naturally treated them as if they were ill. They had better readjust themselves according to the world's new demands; fashions get used up quick in the accelerated-speed world of the spectacle. They'll end up abandoned in a few seasons. They're playing at renewing themselves when it's already their wintertime.

As long as the ideological discourse was misting up the masses' eyes, they couldn't see with such clarity how totally the media stars had become little more than the mechanical pasted onto the living. Today, now that the breath of history no longer blows up their empty words with such hot air, the calculated gestures of these "stars" miss the boat, and their effectiveness is reduced to

naught. They reveal their failed humanity, showing quite plainly in their features the wrinkled faces of babies that were never born.

Heads of State, of clans, of cliques, cops, bosses, politicians, ministers, military men, lawgivers, stars, bureaucrats, and the other familiar bits of residue from authoritarianism — all of them have clown-masks in their dressers, fetuses in their jars, dried up embryos in their hearts. The more they try to get rid of their repressed childishness, the more it comes to light.

And all this foot-stamping of offended dignities, these accusing fingers, these pitiful jeremiads, these hypocritical smiles, this aggressive guilt, this contempt from the judges who themselves get judged — is this anything other than the antics of frustrated toddlers, old wounds from the past hurting again, awkwardly hidden behind the gravity and seriousness of the “responsible adult”?

Do they really still expect us to believe in them? It would be easier to believe they were human if they were to quit treating people like snotty kids, dumbed-down by slaps and lies, and chose suddenly to prefer lived authenticity to the derisory prestige of appearances; if they were simply to decide to try and rekindle the light of whatever little bit they still have in them that’s alive. But how will he learn to live, he who has only ever learned how to humiliate and dominate others?

A Wounded Childhood Takes Refuge in Sickness

The revolutionary epochs offered a great variety of opportunities for the resentment of stolen childhoods to choose to exercise itself. To break the heads of the blacks, the bourgeois, the proletarians, of the “hereditary enemy”, to beat up women — this was ordinarily enough to channel off for a time the rage and moroseness of maintaining in an endemic state a gangrenous existence full of rotting desires.

But there’s less and less release now, with the growing meaninglessness of the great causes, wherein civilization came to terms with itself. It’s taken them almost a century to admit that a good part of the sickness that pierced their stomachs, their hearts, and their heads came not from a random malady, but rather from an infancy on which the door of adulthood had been brutally slammed, and a childhood that had lashed out everywhere because it was suffocating.

Accustomed to taking everything negatively and undertaking everything with a negative bias, they make thought afraid to come to life within them. Panic carries them from the psychoanalysts’ couches all the way to the operating rooms. Rushing to deliver themselves from the penetrating presence of their desires, they are filled with the seeds of death, with a vitality proliferating upside down, with a cellular panic, and rush along in a backwards flight wherein the organism becomes crablike and cancerous.

The end of the 20th century has brought to society a certain disarray which the proliferation of survival-sicknesses shows quite clearly. Since war, revolution, riot, and legalized murder no longer offer to people’s suicidal tendencies the excuses that they need, choosing death has become, for many, like a daily pastime. Their blood is soured every morning when they get on the road and go off to work; they hold back their desires all day long, lock their exuberance up in the cupboard, snapping the neck of their childlike vivacity, and cutting their life-lines at precisely the point where passion holds them out. Here, a general consciousness has at least gained some precision — there is no longer any boundary between the world and the individual, just a lonely

border, delimiting with an excessive cleanliness the zones where the energies of death take over and the places where a new way of life might be born.

The Rebirth of the Child

They are ready, now more than ever, and more than anyone would suspect, to remake ties with their childhood, not the childhood that mechanical gestures kill and which is autopsied on the analyst's couch, but the childhood that responds to the call of desires.

They readily impart a knowledge to the children, theirs or those of others, a knowledge which helps them greatly to confidently come up to living a life at last accepted in its exuberance. Nothing prepares them better to push away the ruses of sickness, to dismiss the sudden impression that a spoilt life has no hope besides a successful death, that is, a death hurried by the alcoholic derelictions of those who "live well".

Although the familial order remains as it was, with all its typical characteristics, and in spite of the fact that for better or worse they insist on keeping it up, they very often refuse to perpetrate the same muffled murder that they were typically victims of in their young lives. Fathers and mothers seem to more and more be leaving behind the old morgue of patriarchal tyranny, which imposed itself upon them long ago as their heritage. They repress feebly, give beatings infrequently and clumsily, scream less at their kids, blather on and argue more. Above all, they have changed their attitudes on one particularly delicate subject — parents these days, without hesitation nor reserve, are giving out freely an affection which in the past was always only given in a kind of protection-racket-style blackmailing and submission.

The child can feel that the sting of imbecile constraint is getting duller, and has won the advantage of being able to go more easily the directions it is pushed in by its desires, of being able to speak aloud the words that nature is murmuring everywhere. Amongst those who appointed their masters and never mastered anything but their own agony, an appetite for life has unexpectedly awoken, which the scheming of work had plunged into lethargy.

Isn't it marvelous to see the children flit around in pleasure, take hold of their happiness as soon as it passes within their reach, to see them try with all their might to get back happy moments past? The reality that this reveals is the center of a labyrinth wherein so many able maneuvers, so many fanfares and subterfuges have been lost. It's authenticity itself they're refining, that ceaseless, relaxed agreement between bodies and desires. Aggressive infantilism and the complaining incontinence of adults were never more than lies, a "puerile reversal of being."

Children spontaneously and ceaselessly teach us to open up our eyes for the first time, to be able to tell the color of the foliage, to read a landscape, to comprehend the language of the birds, to seize the grace of an instant — to seize it, but no longer with eyes which pass everything before the hair-splitting hatchet blade, eyes like rifle-sights, a vision caught up and blurred by so much thinking about how short-lived everything is, about death. And it is the only the little child inside us all which can allow the flowing forth from the self of the perennial sap of the trees, the savage ardor of animals, the voluptuousness of a amorous presence from whence only amiable things are born.

Creation Falsified

It is a strange and imperfect amorous alchemy which, in two successive transmutations, conceives and gives birth to the child, never waiting for the third, wherein humanity would take it upon itself to create itself by creating a new world.

Isn't the creative act "par excellence" the embrace of man and woman, engendering life in the maternal womb? Do they need any shame, love, or life, to impute to a celestial and disembodied god this most earthly operation, this most carnal alchemy? What scorn for the enjoyment lovers get from being together, what disdain for the happiness in which bodies commingle to impregnate themselves, whether or not a child is born from the privilege of union! Has patriarchal virility ever given greater homage to mutually consenting powerlessness? From what unbalanced imagination comes this idea that there was one and only one creator of the universe, a Spirit, a seed of nothingness? Wasn't it necessary, to give rise to such nonsense, that everyone be made to work and end up incapable of creating, that power castrate totally the pleasure of gaining control over oneself, that the expansion of commodity society substitute the expansion of human nature?

There is no other genesis of humanity and inhumanity than that which is found in those people who are borne of the earth and destroyed in the name of the heavens.

Evolution, Interrupted

Their men of science admire the fact that in a period of nine months the human embryo reiterates, in its development from conception to birth, the ancient evolutionary forward-march of aquatic creatures becoming earthbound mammals. What happened after that, if they'd look to see, would give them reason to be surprised. Looking at such a great leap, going from marine existence to the conquest of the earth, wouldn't you say it was probable that we could hope for a similar evolution of nature wherein the human species would announce itself as the transcendence of the animal species?

But something apparently got derailed en route. There wasn't any great human miracle. The animal side of the human species was only perfected and socialized by becoming denatured. The genius of humanity has taken hold of the universe by means of techniques that don't obey humanity, and that sterilize life everywhere. The phenomenon deserves more analysis than is given it by the metaphysical contortions which people use to justify it as a fact, as the only possible kind of evolution. And it's true that it's something the wise, judging life on earth by their own way of life, usually tend to scorn rather terribly.

Birth Achieved

It happens that in growing up and developing inside the maternal womb, the child finds itself getting more and more cramped, bit by bit, within the sweet confines of the uterine universe. The protective envelope chafes the baby; it restricts its movements and smothers it. It begins to practically swim towards the exit, energetically moving towards birth, towards autonomy.

Its impatience weighs it down, and encumbers the body of its mother, who is also impatient to get rid of this presence, which has become inopportune. There's a common agreement between

mother and child when it comes to the expulsion from the womb. The mother pushes the child out towards a freedom it aspires to, with all the violence of new life. The moment birth emancipates the woman and child, or more exactly, commits them both to a process of emancipation.

The umbilical is cut, the ties of dependency broken, the emotional unity is lightened up, and from this freeness it gains a more dispassionate force... Idyllic vision. Their civilization doesn't cut the tube of the IV, it just sweetens the water, stretches it out, and makes whoever is hooked-in turn out brittle beneath the constant threat of cutting off aid, of taking away their allowance. It knots everything up with such dramatic complexities that mother and child cling to one another, parodying, for their whole existence, the game of assistant and assisted; they attract and repel, and are mutilated with every vague desire for independence; they find themselves again in the morbid stickiness of the family and try to heal the wounds they've had inflicted upon them.

Education is Adaptation to Survival

Learning, in animal milieus, is limited to learning to respect the law that rules the survival of animals: adaptation. Observing a female animal with her little one shows the diligence she must have in protecting it, just like she had prepared it, from the moment it left the cocoon it was enclosed in, to move forward in a perilous environment. The maternal lesson teaches the child to hide itself, to pounce, to build refuges, to follow trails, to get some territory for itself, to carve out a place under the sun and moon for itself, a place that attracts it, an ephemeral place.

From on high it was affirmed that animals were inferior to people — why then have we got a mode of education which retards so much the simple faculty of adaptation? We've just got to put it all down — and right away!

Not so long ago, more children in a human family died than died in a litter of rabbits. They're still dying, even today, beneath blows, torments, the hassle of having to put up with the misery and resentment of the adults.

The normal ferociousness of children doesn't take well to any transcending of animal behavior. Are their schools really anything but schools of survival? The human child is better-armed than the chimp; it has sophisticated techniques at its disposal, as well as linguistic ruses, but its destiny is the same — to interpose itself somewhere amongst the strong and the weak, to adapt to the laws of its surroundings, to save its skin and gain prestige. Nothing more — and often less because it is refused the natural freedom of appeasing its impulses.

Become a Man by Ceasing to Be One

The stories and legends illustrate with enough cruelty the fate set aside for children. Naive beings, generous, frail and intelligent, confront giants who are powerful, fearsome, mean, and stupid. And when it comes to merciless combat, the weak win out over the strong. David decapitates Goliath; he detaches from the musclebound body of the brute one of those gigantic false heads put up by governments on statues in cities and towns.

Meanwhile, the little ones are being hardened beneath the beating-switch of proofs, learning to deploy an equal barbarity against their enemies, and, moreover, an underhanded ferocity, clever and deceptive like that of the servant that tricks his master. Their time has come to rise to the

functions of the kings, the giants, and the adults. Their journey through the social jungle makes them into exploited people — with the status of exploiters.

And what's the moral of this story? That the strongest is not always who you'd think, but is usually the one who thinks — it's not brutal violence, but the art of controlling its use, that wins out.

The little ones triumph by using their minds, and their spirits compensate them by making them grow up, get old, get embittered, slowly making them identical to the monsters they had vanquished. Nothing has really changed; the paving stones thrown into the sea have only sent the same concentric circles floating across the water.

As regards the emotional wealth of the hero, it gets gathered up into a stereotype, a final pirouette: "they lived happily ever after and had many children." You might as well send that affection back to the land of nowhere, to utopia, where there is no more history. As if happiness could only come to being in lands of fairylike unreality, where nothing but death and a state of being too spent to be able to give birth to anything are all there is to look forward to.

The Emotional and the Nutritive

Children have, up to now, been treated in a way opposite to the evolution they announce. When they're just beginning to grow in the mother's belly, they receive, on the frequency-scale of the first sensations, all the echoes that rebound, like in a valley, from the storm that comes from the difficulty of loving and loving oneself in an environment such as that of couples. Anguish, joy, fear, irritation, indifference, surges of love and hate, ring out on the keyboard of the child's embryonic psychology, a biological rhythm that could indeed decide his or her definitive implantation in society, or premature expulsion from it.

If he oversteps the gap and escapes miscarriage, which so often ends up a convenient substitute for voluntary abortion, then between the child and mother there arises an agreement, a consensus that science, after having studied everything about death, has at last dared to discover.

I've neglected to highlight, up to this point, the importance that receiving food simultaneously and freely takes on for the infant *in utero*, giving it a feeling of love as well as a message, mental and sensual, which communicates serenity and confidence. However, that's a privilege that birth doesn't abolish, since the maternal breast keeps on dispensing milk-energy and the sweetness of affection, with all the psalmodes of tenderness.

This terrestrial manna, these caressing murmurs, these generational odors, these almost epidermic thoughts, this is the true fountain of Youth, the spray which strengthens the life of the young child more surely than all the arsenals of the most sophisticated medicines could. Lovers know well that in the paroxysms of their passion, a love and freshness arises, making them resemble little children once again.

And then comes the rupture.

By means of an unfortunate thing that produces a number of others, their civilization is structured in such a way that it separates the affective from the nutritive; it disassociates in one fell swoop the original language that sustained their unity.

The truth is that if it were the contrary, it would be surprising. It is unthinkable that a society whose existence is founded on work, that producer of commodities, would give a legal interest to the surges of a love offered naturally, to the necessity of nourishing oneself, by which the price of

wheat and of men are regulated. Affection is given without preparatives; it isn't a serious thing. Seriousness, in adulthood, consists in denying freeness in order to make things yield a profit; it consists in destroying everything in the crop except what gets paid for, starting with the need to eat, to move, to inhabit a space, to express oneself, and to love.

And so it must be clearly seen that in a few years the emotional language of mother and child makes way for the language of efficiency, of output, of economy, a language solidly structured according to the Aristotelian logic of "do this, don't do that!" and which, unlike the former, folds itself perfectly to the pedagogical exigencies of the computer.

Affection, Nutrition, Creation

The creative faculty is the human phenomenon par excellence. It comes into being with the body, which the fetal ambiance feeds in abundance. It gives to the newborn the power to develop itself by transforming the earthly environment, and to enrich its original abundance by the creation of a world of abundance wherein the child can learn to conquer its human autonomy fully.

The creative genius participates in a natural evolution, denatured by the civilization of work. Life and creation are inseparable. Both work to hold back and exhaust the system of the exploitation of nature and of human nature, which is the basis of the economic era.

The educational butcher knife has cut apart emotional enjoyment and the satisfaction of primary needs. The body-to-body connection between woman and child hasn't managed to push forth a relationship wherein the sovereignty of love would teach the art of creating oneself by creating one's independence. Communication has been interrupted, alchemy has fallen short, and the third mutation did not take place. Life no longer plays nurse — death does. Fate unravels like a film running backwards. Such is the ordinary nightmare they are surprised to see still showing up in rare moments in life.

Infancy Forever Unaccomplished

How could human beings be born when children become fetuses in adulthood and adults curl up into fetuses inside the children?

It's a terrible damnation to have to try to be happy in a world where happiness is relegated to some future release. The word itself has an odor of idiocy. It makes one shrug one's shoulders out of spite as often as one shrugs off regrets.

Because if they have trumpeted through the ages that man was not put here on the planet to give himself over to voluptuousness, they have kept written in the secrecy of their hearts and in their imaginations the memory of their fetal paradise, Eden at the center of woman, the happy isle where the gift of love nourished nascent life. How many times have they rushed in with a haughty approach to assault riches and power, only to cave in at the least feeling of weakness and abandon, to snuggle up into the arms of the first mock-up of a maternal womb presented randomly to assuage their confusion!

The more they put their endurance and steadfastness into harping on what distances them from themselves, the more they regress, with a childlike step, towards a primordial state that once pampered and protected them. And thus their existence never ceases reproducing, in the

monotony of sarcasm and boredom, the trauma of infancy and history, which chased them away from their original enjoyments to send them into the hell of daily work.

In a few years, in a few months, perhaps, the child finds itself deprived of the privileges that love had accorded it without reserve. It's not so bad that the easy existence it enjoyed passively in its mother's belly is taken away — on the contrary. As the child comes into earthly life, it embarks upon a human adventure that invites it to abandon passivity and to create a natural abundance that the fetal world was nothing but a taste, a summary sketch of.

That's the big disgrace — as soon as it escapes the protective uterus, which with time had become inopportune and irritating, it runs into such unfavorable conditions that everything incites it to want to go back in, to abandon the hope for a different humanity, for a human mutation — the child runs to deck itself out with arms and baggage, curling up again into the fetal position.

The dissociation of the emotional and the nutritional produces a feeling of insecurity and anguish in the impressionable newborn, at the very moment when nothing is more important to it than to enter into a foreign world taking only the provisions of an affection without reserve.

A threat paralyzes the child when its weak movements need reassurance, the threat of not being loved anymore if it doesn't eat, if it doesn't sleep well, if it cries, screams, wriggles, gets annoying, gets annoyed, disobeys, or follows a rhythm that differs from that of the marketed and scheduled time of the adults. What contempt in ignorance, which persists in infesting the particular universe of the child as if it were a conquered land! What self-loathing!

Is it not love which sustains the audacity to face the unknown, to make an effort stubbornly, to throw oneself into a frenetic succession of undertakings, to find the nipple, to clutch the bottle, to take hold of a chair, to stand up, to walk, to articulate words, to rouse the happy dispositions of nature in the experience of beings and things?

Education becomes a glacial mechanics from the instant it is no longer founded on the pretext of an affection accorded without reserve to children, whatever happens. Alas, how can the predominance of love be guaranteed when work imposes the precision of its cogs on the cycle of days and nights?

Doubtless it isn't the custom anymore in families to encourage the vocation of pianist by beating rulers on kids' knuckles. But if slaps and screams aren't the thing to do anymore, it isn't so easy to avoid the sentimental blackmail that paralyzes gestures of independence and autonomy.

The certitude of being loved is the surest incitement to self-love through loving others. It is the fundamental assurance that permits the child to fly with its own wings. Without it, destiny gets dragged down into the rut of a dependency that makes death look like an all-powerful mother.

That affection folds to the law and to supply and demand, and certainty vacillates; the heart is depopulated, the body empties out, and the emptiness is filled with a morbid tangle of real anguish and artificial conciliation.

That's when children's clumsiness becomes voluntary. Falls, accidents, sicknesses, originally inherent parts of errant inexperience, become the frightened cries of an emotional deficiency; they demand aid and protection from the mother, to which she replies with another blackmail. The brutal reminder of one's *duty* to love and lend assistance engenders in her the guilty feeling of having fallen out of grace with god. The agony of life begins there, when the child's first steps lose their random nature, stop being fruitless attempts, and become reflexes of a voluntary weakness, a simulation of death, and, through a gradual overbidding, become a suicidal reaction wherein the individual denies him or herself in order to attract the interest of other people.

Affection Economized

Bargaining with emotions instills in the child's heart an endemic fear. The memory of "I won't love you anymore if..." freezes over the spontaneous conflagrations of enjoyment. Every time the child takes on an independent desire, the burning feeling of a possible disaffection sanctions its vague desires for autonomy and engraves upon its mind the law of submission and renunciation that rules the adult world.

I do not claim that it would be good to abandon children to the chaotic freedom of impulses. A few of the experiences that they pursue gropingly present dangers; they sometimes need rectification, and merit a little help from the more able. But it is sure that an authentically emotional communication has the patience and the efficiency to be able to explain to the child why there are certain gestures and actions that should be avoided; that's better than the brutal injunctions and the flashes of fear, which illuminate and incite a morbid fascination with danger, which the children will try to return to rather than distance themselves from.

Fear plunges into an artificial and haughty hardness anyone who tries to drive the demons out of himself without conquering himself. The muscular armoring, reflecting upon the outside the stricken terror from within, is the foundation block for an empty fortress which exudes everywhere the shadows of power and death.

Withdrawing into a body blocked up by fear, and from which they spurt forth intermittently like the furies to propagate worry — is this not the caricature of the maternal belly, of birth, of a sterile, dried, overdrawn, hostile womb, a birth inverted in the middle of its progress, which opens out upon ruins, destruction, nothingness?

Yes, and it is also, by an obvious analogy, the wall they construct around their villages, their cities, their property, their family, their State.

A society that subjugates emotional resources to the principle of economy makes the child grow old prematurely in the adult, and makes adults into children who are never born, who never fulfill their destiny of becoming full grown humans.

Is there a single power, any one lone authoritarian instance, which does not reproduce itself, under the guise of the grandiloquence of seriousness, in the tried-and-true maneuver of sentimental blackmail? The magistrates, the cops, the hierarchical superiors — do they have any other intelligence besides that of the complex alternation between caresses and blows, as a result of which the substance of the unfortunate ones who appear before them expresses itself in guilty truths? And they are not satisfied with calling them "the accused" the suspects, the guilty or incompetent — they take away from them their unction, their confidence, their protection, their esteem; they exclude them from the familial cocoon, which they say they no longer deserve; they reduce them to the state of weaklings and keep them at bay, sinking them into childishness.

But a frightened dog is the first to bark: the arrogance and respectability of the notables stink of an infantile terror into which they were plunged long ago, and in which they suffer still — the daily fear of being suspected, judged, condemned, made inferior.

Their servitude, dressed in mortuary clothes, carries the mark of a castration of the emotions. Hunted out of Eden to work by the sweat of their brow, they make an infernal present with which to pay the price of a lost paradise. Progressing in a world of cripples, they have only the sad genius of inventing crutches, which don't even hold them up without mutilating them even more.

History As Broken Evolution

Human civilization is aborted when commodity civilization is born.

A succession of wars, genocides, and massacres, adorned by three pyramids and ten cathedrals – you’d have to be pretty bitter and cynical to dare to call this “the history of humanity”. The magic Flute, the cinema, the refrigerator, organ transplants. What they consider to be “good sense” consists in putting even a lower price on millions of sacrificed existences than they put on the coins and medallions they have their faces engraved on the backs of. Nonetheless, how can anyone really say anymore with a straight face that progress needs holocausts, the engineering of unfortunates, the bloodied gasoline, the monthly salaries of a daily ounce of fresh meat, when their moral and financial values are floundering, when their patriarchal authority is down at the heels, when a breath of death is contaminating the forests, the oceans, the fields of grain and even the air they breathe?

Their heavens are empty, their beliefs dried up, their pride in tears, their civilization in ruins. However, they persist, with a customary inertia, in falling to their knees faithlessly and glorifying unhappiness, gnawed at by their desires under the pressure of work and of economizing on themselves for the sake of a deserted future.

In the days when they threw themselves into the conquest of the earth, something conquered them, and left their vital energies and spaces corrupted in a universal corruption.

They have exhausted the name and concept of God, Nature, Fate – which symbolized for such a long time the only object of their salutes and of their perdition. I have already said that the only thing they had left, to justify a destiny so contrary to their hopes, was to invoke “economic necessity” ultima ratio. And so the circle of a spoilt civilization closes around their starting point and their finishing line, into which the economy has simultaneously embedded their birth and death.

Like the infant aborted in the adult, the promise of a human evolution sinks and suffocates in a mercantile history wherein men produce, in the form of power and profit, a wealth that dehumanizes them.

The helplessness of taking only the last pennies of prestige and marketability from others and from themselves leaves them with their infancy and their history weighing down their outstretched arms. The question is whether they will end up undoing themselves along with the history that undoes them, or instead if they will invent themselves a new childhood and remake themselves.

The Origins of Commodity Civilization

They have pillaged the riches that nature offered them freely, impoverishing the earth for the profit of the heavens.

Up till now no one seems to have been disturbed about the deliberate imposture there was in identifying as the only possible form of human civilization a civilization founded on agriculture

and commerce. However, the diversity of their myths doesn't manage to make a mystery out of the fundamental dissonance, the piercing sound of which disrupts their symphony of praises. Are they the only ones around who're talking about a new age in the world, which they themselves illustrate the decline of? Do they not evoke, at the origin of their era, a fall, a degeneration, the misadventures of a couple chased out of the paradise of enjoyments and condemned to give birth in pain to a race devoted to the damnation of work?

Having invented a civilization where living well wasn't really possible, they had no scruples about postulating that there was no other kind of human life possible, except in the uncertain memory of legends. When they made their discovery of savage people — that is, people without firearms and banking institutions — they were confronted with their own past, and with the curiosity of exploring it, and they immediately imagined the “savages” to be “pre-adamites” with the features of animals howling, wolfing down food in cavernous hovels, and only distinguished from beasts by the fact that they killed with spears.

At what moment did they sense that paleolithic civilizations ordered themselves according to modes of social organization that were radically different from those of commodity-societies? Not until the end of the 20th century, at the same time that they finally discovered the specificity of childhood, the freeness of natural energies, and sustainable energy sources.

The Neolithic Revolution

What has been called the “Neolithic revolution” marks the passage of nomadic hunter-gatherers to a sedentary farming existence. After a mode of subsistence in symbiosis with nature came a system of social relations determined by the appropriation of a territory, the cultivation of the earth and the exchange of products or commodities.

Some new studies have been made which correct the simian representation, which, until a short while ago, justified men in the face of history. When the spotlights dim, what's behind the scenes is clarified. The civilization of economy had to drink down the last backwash of bankruptcy and powerlessness in order to revise the opinion that held that the errant communities of the Paleolithic were the rough draft wherein, in a sort of childlike way, the era of agriculture, commerce and industry were sketched out. A Neolithic modernity, in a way.

The Predominance of Woman

It isn't such an extreme presumption to conjecture that between 35000 and 15000 BCE there existed civilizations in which human beings, in the search for a human destiny, tried to emancipate themselves from the animal kingdom, from the force-relations that predominated there and spread fear in the wake of predation.

The examination of certain sites gives us a hint that men and women once lived together not in a hierarchical relation but in distinct and complementary groups. Men devoted themselves to hunting, fishing, etc., and women gathered edible plants. What exempted women from killing game was not, as patriarchy would have us believe, some constitutional weakness of their sex, but rather it was probably an analogical incompatibility: women's menstrual blood was part of a cycle of fecundity; it stops flowing to prepare life — whereas the blood of beasts or of a wounded hunter flows as a harbinger of death.

“Everything is womanly in what one loves.” There is no epoch wherein femininity has gotten back the privileges of love — not as woman-object, made male or made to reproduce — that did not coincide with a certain favor being accorded in the same epoch to the human, by a civilization that hardly lavishes any love at all.

At the source of the general discrediting of women and of these resurgences wherein her power is revealed, is there not the original clash of two universes, the one full of the signs of feminine omnipresence, and the other propagating, from its farming roots to its industrial and bureaucratic excrescence, the aggressive phallic-worship of its monoliths, its dungeons, its cathedrals and its fortified towers of concrete?

Original Symbiosis

A certain history begins in the Neolithic. It’s the history of the commodity, of men who deny their humanity by producing. It’s the history of separation between individuals and society, between individuals and themselves.

Above and beyond it are regions into which only hypotheses reach, but from whence reign, at the very least, the obvious fact the economy is not dominant and dominating there, any more than is the particular irradiation to which it submits opinions, morals, and behaviors.

The gathering civilizations didn’t develop through the exploitation of nature, but through a symbiosis with it, just like the infant in the belly of its mother. They do not clash like antagonistic classes; rather, evolution remained essentially natural in them, and did not depart from a unity wherein the fundamental constituents of life were conserved and transformed in a perpetual becoming: the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the human.

If the walled-in picture that’s painted of the Paleolithic easily evokes half-animal, half-human hybrids, doesn’t it at least express a feeling of fusion when first seen, a religious feeling — doesn’t it feel like a mere representation of what ties together the distinct and inseparable elements of living? And this in the sense that religion is the absolute inversion of.

Humanity tends to emancipate itself from the many reigns it is issued from without there being any real rupture, separation, or rejection of them in that. Its evolution proceeds by means of continuity and by leaps and bounds, postulating a transcendence towards a new and autonomous species, conscience of its diversity and of its unitary accord with the living.

The gyne-phallic figurines, embedding in an egalitarian coupling the feminine and the masculine, in a “69” position, let us reckon with a mode of symbiotic consciousness through which a whole society affirmed itself to be simultaneously superior to and faithful to its original animalism.

Is it a fantastic presumption to sense, in pre-economic civilizations, the reality of a communication establishing itself between beings, things, and natural phenomena, less according to an intellectual process than to an analogical apprehension, by a global intelligence still attached to its sensitive and sensual roots?

Nothing can be discovered in the past besides meanings driven by the present, which have come to maturity at the heart of an individual history. I do not attribute to coincidence the fact that, at the end of a civilization that denigrated and overwhelmed them with prohibitions, new alliances between men, women, the animal, the vegetative, the cellular, and the crystalline have manifested themselves.

That it is possible to efficiently address oneself to infants in their mothers' bellies, to babies a few days old, to wild animals, or to plants, is part of an experiential reality which brings to light the persistence, in a residual state, of a natural communication which the "primitives" practiced, and which hid, with the rationality of scorn, the peremptory verbs, the lucrative shortcut, the military and telegraphic style of business, and economized language.

Natural Man and Economic Man

Everything leads us to think that a being that lives according to nature and knows no borders aside from the limits of its whim behaves in no way like a laborer, transformed into a producer of material and spiritual riches, condemned to remain within the fences around a field, a village, a town, a State.

Gleaners of plants and game, making free use of natural resources, not for a calculated profit but for their enjoyment alone, doubtless had, in their morals, their mentality, and their psychosomatic texture, only very few traits in common with the peasant farmer, held to the exploitation of an earth which is as hostile towards him as are those who take profit and title to property from his labor. It is however from this peasant producer, exploiter and exploited, that they have extracted the essence of humanity; and they have done so to such an extent that even in their paroxysms of imaginative freedom, in their utopias, their poetic works, their fiction, chimerical sciences, etc., they have never — with the exceptions of La Boetie, Hölderlin, and Fourier — conceived of a society that wouldn't be chained to war, money, and power.

Natural Freeness

The hunter-gatherers are the children of the earth. They travel its expanses, gathering everywhere what it offers them. These are not the conquerors that loot and pillage the earth, and then succumb in the deserts that their rapacity propagates. No master, no priest, no warrior props himself up amongst them to appropriate for himself the goods they've collected.

From terrestrial manna flows forth an immediate satisfaction — food, clothing, construction materials, techniques — a satisfaction that comes neither through money nor exchange nor the tyranny of a boss; it is a satisfaction the consistent presence of which determines *analogically* a form of community relationship, a way of being, a language simultaneously rational and emotional, a body of signs and symbols, engraved and sculpted, which alone could qualify as religious the maniacal, abusive attribution to the gods of what belongs to people.

Religion is Born at the Same Time As the City State

Just like they've only been able, for a long time, to see in children an early sketch of adults, they've labeled a whole era of human evolution — some forty to fifty thousand years — the "Paleolithic", or period of the old stone, and have qualified it as a mere step on a road towards the modern era of the "new stone", the "Neolithic." And they speak of Paleolithic religion as if a belief in celestial phantoms were inherent in human nature, progressing in order to elevate themselves one day to perfection in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, or Buddhism.

This was a crude confusion of nomads living in liberty with slaves living on a plot of land, seeking out, in the spiritual tyranny of the heavens, a consolation for the material tyranny of their peers. And was it not a result of agriculture and commerce, installed by the “neolithic revolution”, that the vermin kings and priests appeared? Wasn’t it around that time that the earth, stripped of its carnal substance, was sublimated into a mother-goddess who Uranus, celestial lord, male and fecund, raped and impregnated by the work of men?

There was, properly speaking, no religion before the Neolithic revolution, but there was, in the original sense of the term, a unitary relationship between all the various manifestations of life, an analogical, omnipresent comprehension, an identity of the microcosmic and the macrocosmic, of what is above and what is below, of what is interior and what is exterior.

The separation from the self and the others had not yet destroyed thought and the living in a sickly duality. The infant has no other heaven besides its mother’s belly, the natural being knows no other reality besides nature. The horns on Lascaux’s ox depict the different phases of the moon. They signify that the earth carries out the movement of the heavens with the same solicitude that it harbors the rhythm of the seasons with.

Why refuse to admit that the errant populations of the Paleolithic had a consciousness of a living and fecund earth wherein, from birth to death, the adventure of individual destiny, renewed each day, carves out its path? Do the inheritors of the Neolithic, beyond a history which was less their history than it was the history of their alienation, do they not today discover the permanent desire to live *here, now, and forever*, at the breast of a nature at last once again inseparably human and earthly?

The Eden of the Heart

Have I made use of colors too idyllic to be true to paint the ages which condemned to the darkness the torches of industrial society? It wasn’t me that celebrated them with these names, “Eden,” the “golden age”, the “fertile crescent”, described as places where abundance, freeness, and harmony reigned amongst animals and humans. The men of economy are the ones who are responsible for such paradisiacal visions, those who take such pride, with rogue voices, in their work, their religion, their family, their State, their money, and their technical progress.

The Animalness to Be Transcended

Commodity civilization does not guarantee the transcendence of animalness in the human, it just collectivizes it by repressing it and fixing a price on its catharsis.

There is every reason to think that at the heart of the wandering paleolithic populations there was a perpetuation, to a good extent, of the behaviors of herds and flocks of the various animal species. Aurignac, Madelaine, Pech Merle cave — these were not earthly paradises, but fields of evolution, sometimes regressive, sometimes progressive, on the path of human development. Certain communities still obeyed the atavistic brutality of the predator, and others discovered new forms of association, founded on the refinement of primary needs.

Inertia plays in favor of animalness. Let us recognize that this quest for subsistence through gathering, hunting and fishing came more from the adaptive faculty of animals than from some aptitude for modifying the environment. Nomadism puts its own limits on its freedom — the

seasonal displacement of the herds ruled the ballet of wanderings, obliging the hunters to follow the itinerary of the migrations in order to provide themselves with game; the mobility of the encampments was determined in turn as well by the germination periods, the variety of soils wherein edible plants grew, and the maturation of fruits.

Add to that the climactic caprices, the periods of inclement weather, lightning storms, sudden floods, sicknesses, accidents, death, and so many other unfortunate things cruelly inscribed into a destiny that seems more resigned to suffer nature's inconveniences and tragedies than resolved to engineer its mastery, attenuating its effects or turning the inconveniences into advantages.

Ah, but the abettors of the economy, the hoarding fanatics, the programmers of future comfort, were they any more safe and protected from famine, from rigorous winters, from floods, from epidemics, from the cataclysms, from misery passed down from century to century? They sure look stupid, deploring the lamentable fate of the "cave-men". Fall to your knees and pray, then, o good people, to the lightning rods, to refrigerators, to air conditioned hotel rooms, and don't forget to include in your praises the wars, the genocides, the revolutions and the repressions, all so necessary to keep us sheltered from the storm, from the blazing heat!

If we assign a birthday to commodity civilization, and say it was about 7000 years before the exhibitionist of Golgotha, before the fortified village of Jericho, then it's been around for about 9000 years, and in the last two centuries it's gone through a frenetic snowballing of economic progress. The period preceding it covers a period five times longer, and it would be surprising if the human community had always lived in the ignorance which the spirit of civilization has veiled it with for so long, and hadn't gone down many varied paths of evolution, many confluences of experience.

Perhaps here and there a transcending of adaptive behaviors was undertaken: the creation of natural conditions proper for the encouragement of the self-enjoyment without which there is no real human progress. Alongside hordes of hunter-gatherers, dominated by animal worries about survival, were born embryonic manifestations of a society wherein solidarity was not at all a result of a conjunction of private interests but rather was the result of a harmony of passions circling around a passionate love for life.

The heart still carries a memory of those high plateaus where the best of human sentiments once had summer grazing land, before commodity civilization excluded them from the maps, marking them "terra incognita". And is it not the remnants of that memory that participates the most in that secret exaltation which, in spite of the mercantile law of exchange and sacrifice, lends such a sovereign power to love, kindness, hospitality, generosity, affection, the spontaneous surging forth of gift, to the inexhaustible force of freeness?

Primitive Creativity

Assuredly, the art of adapting oneself to the conditions dictated by nature postulates a kind of resignation, and at least a certain passivity. It's only in appearances though. How can one deny that in the ingenuity of fishing, hunting, gathering, of painted and engraved messages, there exists a will to solicit natural abundance by way of the faculty of creation? Analogically speaking, the young child extracts good deal of learning in that way, from the surroundings its adventure leads it through, following a thread of sensations which is sometimes favorable and sometimes unfavorable, and pushing itself to gain more knowledge therefrom.

The idea that you can have all kinds of cereals, fish, and meat, totally prepared and ready to eat, just falling into your mouth, is a sarcastic and contemplative vision of satiety, a caricature which is made use of to justify the brutal rape and exploitation of nature by work. What's really at stake is no more than the genius of creating abundance, multiplying natural resources, perfecting usage, and increasing pleasure.

The ecological currents, born in the last few years of the 19th century, committed the error of dissociating, in the purest economist tradition, the market-valorizing of the sustainable energies of the earth — water, soil, the fires of the sun, the wind, the tides, the lunar mirror effect, compost — and the exigencies of an individual alchemy wherein destiny operates by transmuting patiently the *materia prima* of the human, by carving from the crudeness of animal impulse the crystal of refined desires. Such an inopportune incoherence condemns it to being nothing but another ideology amongst the rest, doomed to the same fading of belief.

The signs pointed, however, to the fact that to oppose the natural energies to the energies of death, which are spreading over the earth the shroud of chemical and nuclear pollution, made no sense outside of a vaster project which would be attached to the reconciliation of human nature and earthly nature, in order to create a whole world only to enjoy it orgastically.

The simultaneous emergence of ecological contestation and of the women's and children's liberation movement, which marked the end of a millenarian domination, was deserving of more attention.

Woman and Civilization

Woman is at the center of the world we must create. A civilization's value isn't measured by the brilliance of its art, of its riches, of its morality, nor of its technology, but by the consideration it accords to woman. In every place where humanitarian concerns have won out over the rigor of laws, woman has occupied a preponderant position. Is she scorned, humiliated, enslaved? The degree to which she is humbled is the degree of ignobility of the society that treats her like an object.

Would anyone be surprised to discover that women were omnipresent in the civilizations of the late Paleolithic? The women chose the edible plants, saved favorable seeds, and took care of the earth so it would provide food, drink, clothing, construction materials, writing tools. Like the child woman carries within her, her creative nature offers up to humanity the goods that earthly nature dispensed confusedly in a chaotic blend of the beneficial and the toxic, by selecting and improving those goods.

The majority of the graphic representations show her as both nourishing mother and as sexual being with the enticing pubic triangle. She is the *athanor* in which the *materia prima* of desires bubbles up, opening the possibility of successive transformations. In her, the Great Work takes place — which the work of the males for so long has forbidden.

Her human and fecund nature caused to avoid hunting, a bestial activity wherein the spear — and later, the gun — extended and perfected the predator's claw and jaw. The total opposite of the brute still chained to the cycles of death, she inaugurates a cycle of life that she herself creates. Such is the reality which will invert patriarchal civilization, with its lie carried to perfection by Christianity: that the ideal woman is a virgin, abused and knocked up by a God to give birth to a man who would teach men the virtue of dying unto themselves.

Woman incarnates the natural freeness of the living. She is the abundance that offers itself. In the same way as her enjoyment is at the same time given and solicited in the game of caresses, she delivers herself over to love, which takes her to even more perfect enjoyments.

In her, and in the passionate relation that she renews, a new style affirms itself that supplants little by little the tradition of rape, of the conquest of the earth and of the self. A universal womb is formed in her image, to feed, by means of the resources of a nature at last humanized, a humanity that lays in wait only for the pleasure of being born and reborn endlessly.

The Horror of the Suppressed Animal

If they scorn, dread, and tyrannize animals, it's only because there's an animal inside them that's been beaten down, and because they invented roles for themselves by means of which they could subdue a Free Spirit within them that was destined to govern the body and the world.

They do not attribute their superiority to animals to the art of pushing beyond natural freedom, to a science of harmony which would free them of the dread so universally present amongst animals of being eaten or starved. No, what distinguishes them from their "inferior brothers" is a mysterious substance, a Spirit.

Deprived of such privilege, the bear, the dog, and the groundhog fall into the disgrace of having to seek out their pittance randomly across the savannas, forests, and streets; humans, on the other hand, having inherited the earth from the gods, don't get off on happiness, but on gold, that symbol of preeminence which permits them to acquire anything and everything.

The honor conferred upon them in such a way by means of a subtle and volatile power sets them up to treat as brutal beasts those who elevate themselves in any small way in the hierarchy of mind. They look down on the leaderless herds, and call them dimwitted asses, enraged sheep, pigs, or baboons, because they are untamed by peasants, proletarians, colonized people; because they do not live beneath the rule of any shepherd, king, priest, general or bureaucrat. The same discrediting otherwise goes for the unproductive, the women, and the children, all ceaselessly tempted by the demons of luxury and amusement.

The mental evaluation that situates men above women and places "bestial" man below "essential" man works in the same way as this investment society, the dividends of which are paid in resentment and bullying. And this principle, as monarchist as it was at its origins, doesn't inconvenience democracy. No one is effectively so rough-mannered, so abstract, so deprived of goods and of power that he doesn't use as a pretext his "quality" of being a "man" to thrash his wife, beat his cat, string up negroes, and enslave children. Whoever wants to be an "angel" needs "demons" to put down.

What an admirable justice, this waterfall of contempt that flows from individual to individual, from the supreme leader down the aqueduct to animalness, a canal whose channels, by means of scapegoats, free those who pose as the masters of creation from their guilt, their fears, and their powerlessness.

The Reign of the Spirit/Mind

They have instituted a subtle distinction between intelligence and mind. Sure, an elephant might have an intelligence, but what a mindless thing it is that there's no more honorable end for it than to fall under the bullets of a creature inhabited by the divine spark, whether a ivory trafficker or a head of State. And such was, elsewhere, the fate of the negro or the indian, before the religious leaders deigned to admit that they were gifted with a soul and excluded them from the range of commonly hunted game.

Spirituality has survived the gods, who were passed off as having long ago given it to men, in exchange for a great machinery of rituals, sacrifices and “salaam aleikums”. It was only desacralized by means of its passage from the handkerchief of the priests into the hands of the ideologues, politicians and psychoanalysts, who have weakened it greatly. Its state of decline permits us today to conjecture as to what it was before some mythical fart propelled it out over the earth and up into the kingdom of the gods, from whence it began to stink up the heads of men.

The marsh which flows into a waterfall ends up a marsh again. Spirit-mind was born from the function in which it died thenceforth: the intellectual function produced by the division of labor.

There’s nothing more earthly than this supposed emanation of the heavens, nothing more easily located in history than this transcendence lodged in the beyond. It flows forth prosaically from the separation of society into masters and slaves, from the corporeal separation that rises against the instincts of nature, a mental instance charged with repressing them to put them to work.

Only an imposture could have claimed to oppose spiritual values to the low appetite for profit. There’s no other spirit but the spirit of an economy which economizes the living. There is no other spirit besides that which presides over the creation of a universe of dead things.

The Beast, Subdued by Work

The slave is present in the social body as he is present in the individual body. It’s a bestial nature that makes it the work of masters to make people work.

Sweat has been the dominant perfume of their civilization. But curiously, their noses weren’t accommodated to the odor of armpits bitterly emanating from the manual laborers, and smelled only roses and violets in the perspiration of the kings who killed themselves with State business, generals hounded by defeat, tribunals slaving over the chessboard of political calculations, bureaucrats clinging to the ladder of power that tomorrow, they hope, will elevate them to power. Could it be that, unlike the porters, these notables, these aristocrats, these rich people, who speak of workers like they were residue scraped up from the prison floor, don’t stink of effort and of the pain of spending hours and hours to earn their keep? What were they if not merely the slaves at the helm, the crowned exploited, the laborers of the military helmet, of the pope’s cap or the top-hat?

And only then do we see manual labor cover the beast of burden in flowers, because it is fixed to its body, to the magma of muscles, of blood, of nerves. While they deal with a budget, tape things onto a royal cassette, make a chunk of capital bear fruit, extract a surplus value, this isn’t branded with the name of “work,” but rather it participates in a world of pure exchange value, where money reigns and can’t be felt.

Work. The word has a stink of executions and of slow agony. It’s the coat of mud and pus that soils the hidden side of the gold coins: the decimated slaves, the flayed serfs, the proletarians sliced in two by fatigue, fear, and the oppression of the passing days, life broken into pieces by the wage. The truest monuments to its efficient glory are the glassed in balconies looking out over gates saying “arbeit macht frei”, a message that expresses the quintessence of commodity civilization: work will free you... from life.

Other than that all they had to do was stigmatize as a useless barbarism the concentration-camp industry of Buchenwald and Kolyma, in order to keep going down those same paths; they

save the workers the extravagant luxury of the gas chambers. Were they not advised that it would be useful to honor the proletarians, to deodorize manual effort, to sing praises of the factories and of the beauty of dockworkers, which means to intellectualize the worker in the way Allais did, since he saw in the mailman a “man of letters” working with his feet?

Work has become a good thing now that they’ve realized that almost everywhere and always, almost everyone is working.

There have never been so many proletarians as there are now, now that the proletariat has disappeared. Will the power of the imagination have to ally itself with the power of numbers in order to banalize the obvious fact that to begin living liberates you from work and the death it produces?

A Semi-Human Civilization

Their so-called humanity is nothing but a socialized animalness.

They forbid themselves the summary freedoms of beasts, but they behave more ferociously than wildcats. No other proof of this is needed besides the turpitude that has, in all eras, been simmering beneath the lid of heroism, holiness, good conscience, and humanism.

The spirit that transcends animalness is worse than the animalness itself. To kill, the tiger needed no mandate from God, no reasons of State, nor did it need concepts of racial purity or of the good of the people; it was free of the hypocrisy of a society that whips people with its cruelty, imitates the predators’ ruses, counterfeits its tyranny, and appropriates, like the tiger, the females and the territory.

After having announced everywhere that men, though stunted physically, were great mentally, they gave the name “superman” to these beasts more stupidly aggressive than nature would ever give rise to, and took as their social model an economic jungle of divergent interests wherein the strongest crushed the weakest.

Not even thirty years ago, the alliance between the commodity-ruse and military violence still passed itself off as the most accomplished model for honest men to follow. To stiffen up, to stick out the chest, and march resolutely in step with a cadenced thinking; to hide one’s weapons in order to strike a more brutal blow — these are the things they called “character-building”. The busts of Alexander, Caesar, Brutus, saint Augustine, Voltaire, Bonaparte, and Lenin decorated the educational pantheon where children fell to their knees for the promise of one day equaling those big tadpoles, transfigured by the spirit of the mercenary soldier and the slave-trader.

And so the generations learned that working to destroy oneself, denying one’s creativity, repressing enjoyment and bursting out occasionally with bitter compulsion means becoming a man.

Seeing reality totally upside down, they made of the body a plot of the king’s territory, where people became imprisoned; they made “time” out of an ephemeral existence, a pure fragment of celestial eternity. Now the trap is not the body but the mind — thought separated from living and which closes up upon itself when its desires are castrated. Torn from its enjoyments and trained to put up with life on the death-row of work, the body sanctifies its martyrdom; the thinking mind denies its carnal nature, without which it is nothing, and gives itself a halo, a mythical crown, with a shine that reflects the whole lie of this upside down world.

The mind has muddied the body with an “ontological” suffering which puts on the front that it gives relief in a spray of ethereal flourish. Repressed into the eternal “before” of a spiritualist existence, life doesn’t seem to let itself be discovered if not in a “beyond” of death.

The Men of Survival...

Animals adapt themselves to natural conditions, and men adapt themselves to a system that denatures life. That’s why some don’t progress, and others progress by regressing at the same time.

Looking on as animals survived by adapting themselves to the law of the land, they inferred that they had adapted to them in order to survive.

They saw in them a spirit of conquerors and market promoters.

Animals knew no other care besides nourishing themselves, protecting themselves, satisfying their impulses of ruts and games. The school of nature initiated them into the practices of seduction, being on the look-out, taking refuge, and wandering. They acquired from this an almost epidemic knowledge of the rhythms of the seasons, of fauna and flora, of the surroundings, of the territory; they gained more advantage in the great combat wherein existence was prolonged from day to day, from instant to instant.

The only species that adapts only in order to survive is the human species. The whole of its genius has been put to the task of disfiguring the beast in order to appear human, of passing from an uncertain survival to a programmed survival, which is often worse.

...are the Men of Economy

The exploitation of nature by agriculture and commerce first produced obvious advantages. It got rid of the threat that climate changes and demographic growth posed to the resources for hunting and gathering which were up until then guaranteed.

The wheat silos, the development of technologies, the circulation of goods — these would have given credit to the good name of their civilization if the price paid for them hadn’t been the exorbitant fatalities of war, famine, harvest-destruction, and the subjugation of the many for the profit of the few, which, in its prime, posed the risk of our ending up exhausting natural resources by transforming them into abstract riches with no real use.

Are we not constrained to admit that humanity has gotten the wrong ideas about evolution, which it has renounced in order to submit itself to a system of survival wherein it has suppressed its animalness for the sake of the spirit of economy, and that it has degraded the human quality par excellence, which is to remake the universe according to its insatiable desires?

Such is the recent opinion, which frightens some and excites others. For the former, the part has been played and the game lost, and it’s now a question of going from disgust to hopelessness without losing face. For those who feel the birth of a new life within them, the last pages of archaism have been turned and the next pages must now be written, with the pen of every destiny. Beneath appearances, their great nonchalance covers up a matchless violence, and when the specter of wars and traditional revolutions moves away, a secret confrontation between the resolutions of death and the uncontrollable exuberance of living begins.

The Mutilation of History

They thought to change the world for profit, but it ended up that it was profit that changed them, as well as the world.

By stretching the limits of the empire of the economy to the limits of the earth, they made human beings into the most beautiful conquest of inhumanity. From the moment it started, following on the heels of the civilizations of gathering, nomadism, symbiosis with nature, etc., commodity civilization has interrupted the process of the creation of man by man. It's the fault of this civilization that we've seen the paving of a cyclical course comprising nine to ten million years, wherein the appropriation of material and spiritual goods pursued a passion for living that it exhausted and prohibited itself from attaining. Its frenetic course proceeded parallel to the only really worthy progress — the combined expansion of enjoyments and of the situations that refine them.

They created the commodity and the commodity defeated them — that's their whole history. The economy they produced reproduced them in its image. They lived through representations, and the representations have changed, passing from the divine to the earthly, from religions to ideologies, from pomp to ruin, and have abandoned them, leaving them plagued by broken reflections. That's the whole of their "progress".

They were very proud, in the 20th century, to have dragged down from the skies the last of the gods, in order to promote the cult of humanism. But in doing so, the commodity did nothing but change packaging and take on a more human face. Solicitude, for men, women, and children, guaranteed promotional sales much better, from then on, than could the soldier's bayonet and the priest's crucifix. Where everything has been vanquished, there's nothing to do but try to convince everyone.

Progress

Commodity civilization has economized men, and created this deplorable "economy" out of a mutation towards the human. Its triumph is manifest, since it's everywhere; its ruin is too, because life is foreign to it and the well being it dispenses is paid for with a lack of life that is incessantly growing.

The progress of commodity expansion has functioned like a developing polaroid picture — it basically waved in front of the noses of the blindest amongst us the original discord wherein evolution has found itself to be lost.

The drama of separation isn't played out anymore between earth and heaven, but between the will to live of each human being and the piece of death which governs them. At the dawn of history, like at the daily sundown of life, the human denies itself, and is denied as a carnal reality in order to be re-erected in an abstract form, to be ruled by the mind.

It was the responsibility of humanity's creative intelligence to transmute the materia prima of animalness. But intelligence separated off from the body, engendering divine monsters and terrestrial hybrids, half beast, half man.

The gods of the economy have damned them, disguising this damnation as a blessing of good health; like the God of christian mythology (which is particularly exemplary), who crucifies his son, saying it was for his own supreme good. What each of us kills in ourselves and is resuscitated

in the cruel counterfeit of angels, is our fundamental animalness; the exuberance of our primary needs in which only the will to transcend can take root.

Halfway towards their destiny, men have remained caught in the trap of their collective animalness. Their freedom has imposed upon them the limitations set by a contract that regulates the maximum levels allowed for repressed animalness and for its compensatory releases. Walled in to the dissatisfactions of an oppressed body and the moroseness of a mind that cannot perfectly constrain it, they live a joyless existence, dreaming of ridding themselves of it by means of death instead of making the animal into the source of the development of the human.

The Agrarian Circle

Agriculture fixes their civilization into real estate, in a circle constantly widened by the expansion of commerce.

The formation of agricultural domains surrounded them with a wall that protected and imprisoned them at the same time. The scythe that harvested their fields of culture and occupation seems to hang its shadow over them and wrap them in a constant danger. Though they tighten their borders, dig deeper and deeper into the exploitable regions underground, and heighten their rooftops further into the infinite celestial dome, the act of appropriating a god, a master, and a spirit, they are nevertheless seized them by the head and enclosed forever into a ever more miniscule space. They spin around on whatever length of chain that is accorded them by the economy of their function and by their economic function: they expand and develop the exploitation of the earth and exchange the goods produced by it.

How could one see anything new under the sun when everything is dirtied and cleaned, mixed up and separated out in the waters of one and the same tub, whether it be the size of a village, a State, an empire, a continent, or a planet, galaxies colonized as far as the bored eye can see by an invariable need to make money, set up power, and conquer markets and territories?

The Terror of the Outside and the Inside

Beyond the borders that delimit property begins the country that belongs to no one, the land of disorganized nature, seen as a savage and hostile chaos by the first laborers. So we see that the farming community, fixed to the earth that it sows, curls up into its shell, and dives behind its ditches and walls in frightened expectation of an intrusion. Isn't that frightened presence an insult and a challenge to the natural freedom of the wanderers?

There is not a single stone in the walls erected by agrarian society that doesn't incite to the invasion of nomads, which doesn't solicit the flood from outside; there is not a single stone which, in their walls cemented by the civilization of the mind, doesn't invoke the horror and appeal of animal barbarism, an apocalypse come from animals.

Besides, what was there for the nomads in these isolated camps, opposing their unusual barriers to the coming and going of the hunter-gatherers, but a bit of food to gather, a good to glean? That's how gathering became pillage and migrators became expropriators, that is, property owners in power.

These barriers to their free movement enraged the hordes, and those who were not destroyed conquered villages and were taken prisoner in turn. Such was the end of the civilizations predating the Neolithic, civilizations without a sovereign economy.

Becoming sedentary fixed behaviors into the routine of the scythes. Change started looking like a threat, and the unchangeable started looking like security. The pacifying repetition of seasonal gestures is like a buckle on a time that runs back upon itself, secreting a cyclical thinking, the redundancy of myths.

But at the same time, what a frustration this constrained immobility imposes, with the tractor and harrow hanging over one's right to enter or leave! As much as it does in the rural areas, a second bind encircles: the invisible presence of the laws, which arm the masters and disarm the slaves, while the body itself is wrapped up at the top like an empire, hardened in the artificial trappings of a fetal and withered envelope which protects and imprisons it. Now are you surprised at the aggressiveness and cruelty that signaled the appearance of the Neolithic villages and city-States, according to the unanimous declaration of the historians?

Nature is Sick

The exploitation of the surface and subsoil of the earth has set up a wall between man and nature, that is, a rampart against man as nature, issued from a natural environment. The tradition of *antiphysis* has no other origin.

In patriarchal society, nature shares the fate of women and of the dominated classes. She is admirable from afar. Does she break the yoke that constrains her in the fury of her elemental rage? Then it's a hostile, murderous, monstrous force, a threat to civilization. Does she let herself be flayed and raped by the agrarian, impregnated and robbed by rent, subjugated by thought? Then she deserves the masters' condescension.

A rebel on the outside and a slave on the inside, they have to keep her watched from high atop the protective walls all the time. The spirit dreads the demands of the flesh, like the exploiter dreads the revolt of the exploited, like the property-owner dreads expropriation.

For all their having renounced a freedom which, while it was uncertain, contained the seed of the creation of a truly human destiny and a humanized nature, they've still only got any security in their fear of the gods, in a fetal protection prolonged artificially, in an enclosure against nature where the economy castrates and suffocates them. For them, peace is nothing but a worn-out, out of breath war.

It's only in illusion that the ingeniousness of their techniques makes them better people. Measured by the truly human, these are only weak little men, incapable of producing anything that doesn't grow on its own in the face of inhumanity and denaturation, dignified rivals to the gods which engendered them by coupling an incapacity to live with a rage to dominate.

Private or Collective, Economy Dehumanizes Just the Same

There's no fence that doesn't call forth ruptures, no property that doesn't excite the avidity of the excluded, no prohibition that does not incite transgression. That's the explanation for the old dictum, "he who hath land hath war".

From the instant the right to property closes off the smallest corner of earth in its pliers of profit and technocracy, natural freeness is broken into pieces and auctioned off. Water for irrigation, the earth to fertilize, the habitat, wanderings, the air itself, everything produces interest, everything's paid for and is made to pay, while hate, frustration, and aggressiveness attend a great funeral procession for the morality of the usurers.

And what would be different if the ownership of the fields, factories, and means of production were collective rather than private? If it were in the hands of all instead of the hands of a few, would natural freeness be any less denied and wrecked by the same privileges of the economy?

Would the pollution of everything marketable have less impact under the auspices of collectivism than it does under the upturned cup of monopolistic capitalism?

Agrarian Immobility

Two pillars hold aloft the strata of their civilization: agriculture and commerce. These are the two pillars of a temple; since they're so deeply implanted in the earth, as we know, they have always fed the illusion that they come from some heavenly edifice, the mystery of which dissipates only too late.

Closing in on man and society, the shadow of the scythe which is the agrarian structure encloses both of them in the ferment of an endemic fear. The fear of leaving the beaten paths, escaping routine, going beyond prejudice and customs, of committing themselves to the wrong side of the barricades, of losing one's possessions, one's place, one's habits.

There a moldy sick-bed is made, which haunts the nightmares of immobility: the myths, the religious dogmas, the reactionary ideologies, the refusal to change and move forward, the hate and terror of foreigners, nationalism, racism, bureaucratic despotism, the ferocity of crimes and punishments, fanaticism, the frenzy of destroying and destroying oneself.

There, bestial animalness is caught in the trap of a ghetto society, a society folded in upon itself in a besieged, protectionist, muscular, fetal shell, the shell of a rigid society which engenders cults of patriarchal virility and perpetuates itself into the modernity of industrial nations like Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, Nazi Germany, or the United States, where the impact of the revolution of 1789 did not break the encirclement of consciences and of the chain of unchangeable behaviors.

Commodity Mobility

As much as the exploitation of the soil is rooted in the fixity of an eternal return, so much does commerce — that is, the measured exchange of goods produced for work — engender mobility, introduce change, and conduce to openness. Clearing out the familiar walls and known frontiers, it ventures out into savage regions, explores inviolate nature, and implants, further and further out, those bridgeheads of civilization, the counters and markets. It's the great arm daring to reach out towards other territories the rottenness of a regime strangled by a strictly agricultural economy. It's the conquering wing flapping off towards other horizons the sluggishness of a walled in culture. And thus it smashes to pieces the circle of the peasants' unchangeableness, without abolishing it.

Extirpating humanity from its shell, it pushes it forward with the dynamism of interest, and lends it a bigger house, which is its universe to conquer. Its insatiable avidity incites it to dig deeper under ground to drag out a quintessence of profit from the rock, from the carbon, the minerals, the oil, the uranium — and doing so it also digs into the insides of men, in order that no machine be foreign to the intimacy of thought and flesh. Audacity, inventiveness, progress and humanism are born in its wake.

However, even the hardest expeditions complete the cycle of withdrawal. The boats that go out come back to port, the law of gain reigns upon arrival and departure. Adventurers, pioneers, seekers, chimera-makers, prophets, and revolutionaries — all the roads they take, unusual as they may be, still just lead to the cash registers.

The Commercial Circle

Commodity expansion has always held human hopes at arms' length only to throw them down at precisely the place where their interest waned. Although it opens, in theocratic, feudal, or bureaucratic real estate speculating, a breach of freedom, it must know that it has already closed up on the use that the parentheses of marketability could have made of it.

What do these passions discover, by leaping over the wall, these passions that raged against the oppression of rigid laws, mind-suffocating traditions, moral rigor, neurotic inhibition? They discover the need to pay for these new rights of transgression. And so libertinage giving good reason to Puritanism, as liberalism gives justification to tyranny, as the left gives to the right, as the revolution gives to despotism, peace to war, health to sickness.

And let no one invoke here the effect of a so-called natural law: it's nothing but the effects of commerce at play here. The preponderance of exchange has imposed its market-structure on behaviors, on morals, on ways of thinking, on society. It's so obvious today, in fact, that every domain — ideological, political, artistic, moral, cultural, repressive or insurrectional — is pushed, by the bankruptcy of the economy, into a slump in rates, a drop in values, a weariness of offers and requests, a lack of difference between the right side and the wrong side, the modern and the ancient, the in-style and the forgotten.

The End of the Time of the Apocalypse

Up to and including its industrial expansion, the agrarian enclosure has oozed with the rage and terror of besieged life and cities. Night and day, the apocalypse looms at the gates of the city. And from any horizon, at any instant, the fire of destruction might burst up, and on would think one might sense an appeasement when at last the hordes of pillagers, hereditary enemies, rioters, etc., finally show up, when epidemic, nuclear or chemical death comes at last, fulfilling its promise.

It's true that, living in fear of the double-edged sword, they kill with double-edged swords, and seal themselves up in the ritual of sacrifice, expiation, and vengeance. These are never anything but their own gobs of spit, falling back into their mouths. The fire that devours them is the fire they lit, or at least which starts up, within them and around them, the mechanical heating up of life reduced to work.

At the turning points of history, right where commodity expansion gets up speed and breaks the lethargy of agrarian societies, the lights of the apocalypse start blinking with greater brightness. The succession of economic crises and of upheavals that they cause has never failed to blow with their foul mouths the trumpets of the end-times, and those times have ended so often that there's nothing left to expect from them today, whether they are happy or unhappy endings.

The apocalypse has come to pass with the century that saw, looming on the horizon, disguised as economic crisis, a crisis of the economy, a mutation of civilization. This is no longer the fear of

a cataclysm which would incite to reforms and which would guide us towards revolutions that it could only pre-program the failure of. A self-confidence is rekindled little by little, as if everything that awakens people to the innocence and exuberance of life were rallying to itself the uncertain, individual and daily quest for an absolute enjoyment. The mutation that is underway will leave behind the expired cycle of a history wherein revolution and repression never did anything but obey the diastole and systole of the beating heart of the commodity in all its forms and states.

The Prehistory of Commerce

If agriculture and commerce presided over the birth of history, their prehistory comprises both the conditions that made their development possible — but not necessary — as well as comprising the life styles that such a development pushes into the impossible so completely that in order to make conjectures about them you'd have to remember the inversion of behaviors imposed by the economy taking power.

The hunting preserves, marked out and delimited by the mesolithic hunters, announced the agrarian enclosure, and still betray a predominant animalness, as much by the practice of predation as by the need to mark territory.

On the other hand, there exists a will to humanity in the art of avoiding confrontation between two groups that both covet the same game-rich region. We know how commensality, exogamy, the exchange of a few drops of blood, seems to succeed in putting together in one and the same flesh two distinct beings and communities, in such a way that the harm done to the one is also an injury to the other, and that the good of one is a profusion of enjoyments for all.

Food eaten together, couplings, the mixing of blood, operated a carnal alchemy, which all lovers from all time remember, the union of the individual and collective bodies. Chyle, sperm, and the other vital fluids distill the quintessence of the pleasure of being together without stopping being oneself.

Would anyone deny that the custom of giving and receiving food, love, and blood, which is the whirlpool of life, sketched out an evolution in the heart of which nothing was excluded that gave a basis for social harmony, and a humanity which develops its creative organization in the same way as the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms developed their adaptive organization? Is it not from there that collective memory has drawn its nostalgia for a society whose rhythm was marked by the respiration of life? A society which needs no constraints to make sure that blood wasn't spilled everywhere, a society where love stands out and is reborn without sowing hatred and scorn, a society where the right to eat, to have a place to live, to wander, to express oneself, to play, to meet up, to caress, do not fall beneath the blows of a permanent blackmail.

The enjoyment of the self and of others, the "alchemical weddings" with nature, the pursuit of pleasure in the labyrinth of divergent desires — such are the projects that are being confusedly undertaken now, here at the dawn of a history that abandoned them to dreams, since doubtless they were incapable of resolving the problem of demographic and climactic upheaval outside of an agrarian economy that assured the survival of a few at the expense of the many.

Everything that survived clung to vague promises of brotherhood, equality, generosity, and love, which religion and philosophy guarded intently, like baby rattles, at the bottom of their bags. Their heat radiates still in the hearts of children and lovers, and even in our language we keep the memory of an original happiness, as one can see when in the most frozen of nouns there

is evoked an erotic relationship: “to have business with someone”, or a friendly one: “To do good business.”

What does the unusual remnant of love and friendship mean anymore when considered in the logic, hardly-likable, of the principle “business is business”? The memory of Life haunts the very form which has stripped it of substance.

With the “neolithic evolution” of the economy, the proliferation of life moves aside to make way for the proliferation of commodities. For the symbiosis of things and beings, for the osmosis of the different species, is substituted “commerce”, in the modern sense of the term, a lucrative exchange of goods produced by labor.

The body to body feel wherein tenderness replaced bestial violence little by little no longer inspires in morals a sweetness and slowness where conflicts can be cleared up. There’s no longer any gestures, any thinking, any attitude, any project, which doesn’t enter into a relationship ordered by list where everything must be paid for by trade, coin, sacrifice, submission, reward, punishment, vengeance, compensation, debt, remorse, anguish, sickness, suffering, decompression, death.

The emptiness of an endless anguish devours the body, so naturally built to fill with life every time enjoyment fills it with joy. Its energy is exhausted by the efforts of working, its substance imprisoned in an abstract form, its gaze turns away from itself like from something disgusting, and fixes itself upon the infinite silliness of the heavenly mandates.

The individual identifies him or herself with the anonymous prices that he or she produces and which are produced in his or her name. Aside from a few passions that still holds together their lost lives, the individual is nothing but commodities — he or she has a use value, which makes him or her the servile instrument of the most diverse work, and an exchange value, to the benefit of which the individual buys and sells him or her self like a pair of boots. And so that’s how commerce has taken the place of the genius of the individual up to the present, when joblessness throws them in the reject pile, when the monetary crises devalue them, and when they assure themselves, almost by a kind of self-hypnosis, that their value is unique, incomparable, and without price.

Work

Work has mechanized the body like it imposed the reality of its mechanisms on the world it transformed.

The world changed fundamentally with the Neolithic revolution: it evolved away from a symbiosis of the natural and the human, and was flipped upside down by taking, for the foundation of its progress and civilization, a specialized activity which destroyed that primordial unity, exhausted nature by denaturing its resources, and generalized a system of constraints that made men into slaves.

There's the great result of all our pride of having done things impossible for animals — we've immediately forbidden ourselves access to creation, which makes up the human genius!

Economic Mechanization

By substituting itself for creative potential, work penetrates into evolution with a formidable force of fragmentation. Beneath the shock-wave of repetitive gestures, lucrative behaviors, servile and tyrannical morals, the richness of being is dislocated into the rubbish pile of ideas and objects, crushed and sorted by the mechanisms of having.

The necessity of producing and consuming material and spiritual goods holds back the reality of desires, denies it in the name of a reality forged by the economy. What's hacked to pieces, reduced to a bunch of cogs, is nothing less than a living totality, where the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms are melted down in the crucible of nature to create a new species, gifted with the power of creating in its own right.

History shows, with a growing precision, how work perfects the mechanization of the individual and of society to the extent that commodities extend their grip on the earth and the body.

There's something artisanal in the original hammering of enjoyment, and in orgies, riots, massacres, where it bursts forth as soon as the regulatory work of the king, priest, functionary, plebian, or slave lets up. There's an industrial universality in the moments of revolutionary furor that lend the consciousness of an imminent social change to the letting off of steam of oppressed passions. But what a disenchantment comes about, also universal, when it becomes apparent that revolutions have done nothing but translate the passage of a given economic stage to another, and that the new freedoms do not at all include the freedom to enjoy orgastically.

Only work, which transforms the world, has been the motor of a progress which has propagated everywhere the defeat of the human and the image of its victory. Ever since the obligation to produce was prolonged in the consumer persuasion, work has become an object simultaneously of horror and satisfaction. Its omnipresence leaves not a single island of pristine nature on the surface of the earth — even the Amazon succumbs — and there is no passion that isn't frozen over in the boredom of its cadence, even in the deepest recesses of humanity. The commodity has so completely exploited the energies of earthly and individual life, all the way to the limit,

that a great languor has killed all our Croatans, our Broceliandes, all our dreamlands, as well as the marvelous desire to fall in love with life there.

Whoever refuses to participate in this world gets bogged down in the habits and repetitions of his or her own tolling bells. All his or her talk becomes, like his or her existence, nothing but a funeral orison. From here on out our destiny must put down its chips against the growth of consented-to death, and for the life we must create.

The Castration of Desires

Work separates man from self-enjoyment. Such is the separation that gives rise to all the others.

The desirous man has been hunted out of his body by the worker he's become. The economy has only been able to take power by economizing life, transforming libidinal energy into work-energy, putting prohibitions on enjoyment, on the natural freeness wherein desires are fulfilled and reborn ceaselessly.

The impulses of the body — the primary needs of feeding oneself, moving, expressing oneself, playing, and giving in to sexual pleasure — have been regimented by a war of conquest which has obsessed over profit and power. It's a war which, though it in no way concerned them, nonetheless got to them even in their will to escape it.

Cut off from his or her desires for accomplishment, the individual sees nothing but the multiple modalities of death. Work is a comfortable suicide, a very social hypocrisy: it starts out with the negation of the essence of life, and routine does the rest.

If such a precise castration did not take place at the heart of childhood, do you really think so many generations would have willingly permitted themselves to become servants of so many secular tyrannies?

Abstraction

The division of labor has created the master/slave dichotomy both in the individual and in society.

The power of the heavens, of the master, and of the State begins as soon as the body, obeying economic imperatives, renounces its enjoyments.

Work, which separates men from themselves, is also divided in two, split up into intellectual activity and manual activity. The process inscribes itself into the logic of exploitation of the earth and its substrata.

The organization of work, of sowing, of harvesting, distributes time over a series of constraints, a seasonal calendar that governs the community's attention, like irrigation across a network of canals, the distribution of water, the weather forecasts. Each season brings its share of problems to resolve: the preparation of the earth, the resistance of the materials, the extraction of raw materials, the improvement of techniques, the observation of stars, geometry in space.

Things only are arranged according to the greatest efficiency on the condition that they are looked at from above, like from these towers and promontories that weigh the world down with consequences, from the privileges accorded to organizers and usurped by them, transforming constructions which were initially functional into monuments of tyranny: cairns, mastabas, pyramids, dungeons.

The fabrication of more and more numerous tools, the treatment of minerals, the clear-cutting of forests, the multiplication of specialized tasks, to which is added the need to defend against the lust of neighbors those places where a new fortune shone; everything worked together to concentrate in a few heads a knowledge that issued from a practice that was first common to all.

Gradually torn from the hands of the practitioners, knowledge has risen like a fog over the earth to condense in the heavens and fall back down as if it emanated from the gods. Experiences common to all are abstractly brought together in a few heads who made a secret and a mystery out of them. There's hardly been a time when the commandments of knowledge became the decrees handed down by Power.

Temporal and Spiritual Power

From the mastery of space, time, waters, and exchanges, sallied forth the motley crew of priests and kings. The thunderclap of orders and the lightning of commandments crash down from beyond, setting up down here the sacrifice of the body to work and the equalizing power of price, the universal Logos of a coin that circulates everywhere and imposes everywhere its equivalency, bringing us the miracle of stamping the seal of "equal" on oil-producing lands and on the ten thousand Indians to be expelled from them.

Work does not only function as the basis for the world's economy, it divides it up, in the image of its own divisions, into a celestial economy, a pure and hypocritical domain of mind over matter.

At the summit of the hierarchical pyramid is God, putting a halo around the priest-kings, until the leveling that the first trembles in the industrial machinery imposed on the archaic edifice of the world in 1789.

Degeneration of the Earth and of the Body

While the masters were inventing a celestial ancestry for themselves in order to pillage the earth in the name of the gods, the body curls up like the community, upon which are set down the walls and borders of property.

What a degeneration they've dared imposed on these bodies of ours, without which people cannot exist, which are the place of all sensations, all knowledge, all delectations and all pains, this luminous center of tangible realities, foundry wherein the alchemy of the three kingdoms transmutes the sensibility of the crystal, vegetable, and animal, in the human faculty of accomplishing the great work of nature!

They have reduced the body to two functional principles, to two hypertrophied organs — a head that commands, and a hand that obeys. The rest has the calculated value of meat on the butcher's cutting board: the heart, reserved not for the futility of love but for the courage of arms and tools; the stomach, made to sustain physical effort, and which gets unpleasantly upset after partaking of the pleasures of eating; the urinary and genital organs, used for reproduction and evacuation, and the voluptuous usage of which is seen as the cause of sin, suffering and sickness.

See what happens to enjoyments when we get a few moments of leisure to satisfy our desires for happiness scheduled for us by business, once the mechanisms of the body-at-work have gone through their motions.

The Part Death Plays

Work is the lucrative exploitation of earthly and human nature. Denaturing is the price of its production.

When work makes way for the gathering together of resources offered to human ingenuity by the earth, the water, the forests, the wind, the sun, the moon, the seasons, it substitutes a violent relationship for the symbiotic relationship between men and nature. The environment and the life that issues from it are demeaned in the line-up of conquered nations, which must be ceaselessly reconquered. The producer treats them as sly enemies, as rebellious ones.

Yes, nature has indeed met the same fate as women: admirable as objects, despicable as subjects. Woman has been raped, crumpled up, wrecked, divided into properties, juridically mortified, exhausted to the point of sterilization. Her body is broken against the comings and goings of the muscles, against the redundancies of the mind — is this not the triumph of civilization against the “low instincts”, that is, the quest for pleasure?

We know how many of the virtues that govern happiness have propagated the taste for destroying as well as for destroying oneself. When the factory of universal labor does not absorb libidinal energy entirely, what’s left over overflows in conflicts of interest and power which the “Causes” — as diverse as they are held sacred — go about promenading from flag to flag. However, human nature exhausts itself too, and the hedonism which reduces the satisfaction of desires to the consumption of frozen pleasures is quite the contemporary of the moribund forests, the rivers without fish, and the nuclear miasma.

Work has so completely separated man from nature and from his own nature that nothing living can invest itself in the economy without being a partisan of Death. It is well known that there are other roads that could be taken, and that freeness, which long ago began being taxed by unreality, must from here on out be the reality we create.

III. GENESIS OF HUMANITY

The Emergence of Another Reality

The empire of economy long ago gave the knock-out punch to the symbiotic evolution of man and nature, and now that it's falling apart, the path of the living has reopened. After the tyranny of work will come the primacy of enjoyment where life forms and perpetuates itself.

What was tied is untied. The complexity of the old world is getting dislocated in a clutter of peremptory truths the ridiculousness of which never ceases to amaze. How could we have suffered so, killed each-other, and died for so many inanities of puffed-up importance?

It's all over for the gods, for fate, for the decrees of nature, for characterizing and categorizing people, for blind destiny guided by randomness.

The great theological, philosophical, and ideological systems that once governed existence, pushing it from Charybdis' whirlpool to Scylla's slaving maw, will soon be nothing but the dusty memories of erudite historians.

Beings and things spill out, simplicity flourishes in a new springtime, and the everyday starts looking like the landscape of a new world. The long night of abstract man is deserted.

The child grows along with the growth of a new consciousness, the satisfied weariness of love learns to come out again, and the smoke from the crematory of work dissipates, letting one see clearly the border between desire and constraint, where pleasure loses itself. Sometimes, the happiness of being oneself wins out over the boredom of not belonging to oneself.

Here begin great wanderings through newness, perhaps through its aberrations. Outside the scientific dissection that breaks it into atomized pieces in the light of separated thought, Life on earth and in the body is so unknown that lucidity and insipidity tend to be enmeshed for a time in the groping of new discovery, in the challenges of a new reality. What does it matter, we want mysteries that don't harbor horrors:

Democracy

Nothing is left to guarantee the principles of democracy and the rights of man but the necessity of the global market to sell anything and everything to anyone and everyone. It results from this that the values of the past have fallen apart one by one, like obsolete commodities, even if their archaic debris is incorporated into the elaboration of an ephemeral modernism.

Subversion

The economy itself thus propagates subversion better and faster than a whole army of specialized agitators. All you have to do is take a glance into the spectacular shop windows where society exhibits its models of respectability and infamy — they hardly seduce anyone anymore besides a few shopsoiled specimens of kings, priests, popes, cops, soldiers, nobles, bourgeois, bureaucrats, proletarians, rich people, the miserable, the exploiters, the exploited... and it's hard

to believe that around such maggots great blazes of hate and admiration once raged; never before has any era of history been reduced to such a low price that it beats all the competition.

Lucidity

The 60s required a little more intelligence than was around then to decipher its social context. A little lucidity was necessary in order to perceive the signs of this bankruptcy at that time. Thirty years later, the winking eye sees at every turn, from one end of the earth to the other, the dilapidated decor, the usury of the spectacle, the ridiculousness of power, the fraying of roles, the loose string-ends of a pieced together economy. Half-assedness and boredom are dropping the curtain on this thousand year tragi-comedy.

The economy made and unmade the empire that men built by building their own ruin. Everyone leaves the coat-check without their expensive

disguises. There's nothing left to do but march straight on, and preferably towards ourselves, with no other guide but the pleasure that sparkles in every moment of life.

Functions

The diversity of their societies rests on a few functions, so manifestly common to all people that they've been imputed to "human nature". There are still a few minds around that proclaim that the lure of gain, the thirst for power, the taste for destruction and self-destruction are part of man as much as is the creative faculty is. This was a lucrative opinion not long ago. It has lost a lot of its interest since the devaluation of material and spiritual values.

If the weight of inhumanity wins out in human society, it's not because of nature but because of denaturation. The intrusion, into the heart of Life, of the repetitive mechanisms of intellectual and manual labor, of exchange through supply and demand, the intrusion of the repression and decompression of desires, has inscribed upon gestures, thoughts, and emotions, the movements by which the economy takes hold of men and of their environment.

The expansion of the commodity has repressed the expansion of life, leaving no other way for it besides that of heartbreak, where what isn't lived is instead lived abstractly, by means of roles, which are the tribute paid by the human to the inhumanity of economic functions.

Roles

The education of children channels the growth of desires. Far from refining them in trials of harmonization where affectionate relationships would predominate, it carves them into cubes the size of the stereotyped roles they hand them, makes them into conduits functioning according to the laws of exchange, exploitation, competition. Education drags the child from its pleasures to force it into a series of molds that make it no longer itself, but a representation of itself.

There was once a time when the colors and the vivaciousness of roles compensated for the prohibition placed upon the impulses of the body, when the violence of the sudden overflowings found a way to satisfy themselves in the practice of avidity, authority, and the renown that was attached to it.

It was thought, then, that to be born a baron or serf, to become an emperor or a trash collector, to climb to the heights of fame and honor or to climb the scaffold, was a function of history and fate, not of a conqueror's logic progressing by means of inclusion and exclusion, holding only the marketable sacred and condemning only loss of profits. A certain "inevitability", yes, but a premeditated, calculated inevitability, the resolution of a practice which was in no way divine or celestial.

The social spectacle permitted only existences which were tied up with sins, remorse, terror, guilt of having shone through the splendor and muck of glory and agony. One was a saint, a savant, a debauchee, a criminal, interesting in spite of being nothing when one was alone with oneself. A pious imagery maintained the vocations of nullity.

Life is hardly any richer today, but roles have degenerated into dullness and poverty. Who would respond any more to the drums of a religious, military, patriotic, or revolutionary calling? Who would don the emotional-armor uniform that functions to captivate attention and impose prestige, to direct the herd?

Ideas have evolved in such a way that whether the roles are played poorly or well they come from a conditioned reflex, a salivating at the sound of the bell. It's a habit that one loses more and more the less one is treated like a dog as a child, or, if not like a dog, like a machine; and when the machine, itself a model of commodity perfection, is no longer the model of human perfection.

The End of Functions and Roles

Over thousands of years, they killed each other like fanatics, in order to hierarchize and label beings and things. They search from below to above and from left to right to find a place for man in the designs of God, and they only discover the position reserved for the product and the producer in each era of the commodity process.

Though they were intensely conditioned by the fundamental mechanisms of the system — the transformation of the life force into work force, the laborious division of body and mind, exchange, the competitive struggle to control markets — they were never the pure products of the economy that governed them. They kept in their hearts a grace of life that wasn't reducible to commodity logic and commodity order — they reveled in that grace in ephemeral moments of love, generosity, and creation, and felt a sudden horror at the permanent calculation of ordinary existence.

Although the roles which maintained them on the social scene, where education and initiations had tossed them, often decided for them whether they would survive or die, how many times, when standing on a street corner, in a bar, or when leaving the office, how many times have they kept themselves from asking themselves what they were doing there, from discovering that they themselves inhabited their bodies, how many times have they not pulled back the curtain on the lamentable buffoonery of merits and demerits, not abandoned everything to set out on a quest for a fortune that has nothing to do with money or power?

What yesterday was nothing but electric potential, upheaval without a future, fits of madness or revolt, today has the allure of a more and more frequent and predictable reaction, now that the market of changes has made the market of social values collapse, devaluating all roles. What does it mean to "lose face", now that both sides are worth the same, and what good does it do to freeze the body and mind in the grimace of an authority without arms or legs?

Authenticity

Authenticity is not a new reality; not even Kleist is an exception to this, Kleist who claimed he couldn't be happy unless he was alone, since only that allowed him to be completely true. What's new is the relief that authenticity gives one in the face of the total exhaustion of the social lie, in the face of the total dilapidation of the typed personalities that everyone was constrained to fit themselves into from infancy.

No More Stars

A few months suffice nowadays for a star to gain popularity and be discredited, whether their renown is in the art world, the world of politics, that of crime, or of society life. You used to have to wait a few years for that to happen, a few dozen years even. Glory is extinguished almost as soon as it comes into being these days. Back when reputations used to be long lasting, public opinion would hear about someone's name and no one would worry about the techniques of personality-celebration or the machinery involved. The obscurity of so many existences lent a certain luster to a small number of people who in any other circumstances would never have been celebrated for their particular virtues. The splendor of monarchs, the stylishness of a supreme guide, the fad of a given author, kept in the shadows a staged setup that was conceived to give a fictional grandeur to the little men in power.

Media Inflation

I don't think the talent for maintaining appearances has been lost. There are excellent artists around today who work in the art of fooling the people, but there's less people who let themselves be tricked and overindulged, less means by which to sustain the great seductions. That's because in spite of a disquieting fascination with images, the lie does not bite with the same vigor. The eye, the ear, taste, touch, thought, seem to glide over a plethora of cliches without quality which don't let them fix their attention on them for very long.

A spattering of little tidbits of information which discourage full digestion, dishearten the consumer, and exhaust interest, corresponds to the overproduction of useless goods, which marks the commodity's panic, the metastasizing of its cancer. And that's when the appetite, refusing the indigestible blandness, awakens to more substantial hungers.

As the brain-sucking machine implodes slowly, its circuits engorged by the frenetic acceleration of the spectacle, its deleterious effects are perpetuated by the paradoxical bias of those who combat it. The fear it causes in people whose critical eye too often serves only for exorcisms and justifications of their fear of enjoying orgasmically amplifies the size of the colossus and underestimates the weakness of its clay feet. Obsessed by the harassing idiots, they put all their intelligence towards idiotically fending off their blows. Their mockery hides behind one last habit of lies the hopelessly unclothed emperor. They do an even better job than the media at creating abstractions, ideologies, illusions, mystical and religious vomit; they unwittingly lend gravity to this encumbrance of obsolete values to which the melting away of commodity civilization has reduced it, and they treat as a futile whim the power of the desire to live, whose flowers, blooming everywhere, they constantly tread upon.

The Duality of Roles

The spectacle is suffering the subsidence of the social market. It's selling roles at the low price power's selling at, in all its circus shows — parliament, courtrooms, assemblies, State meetings — these are the loose threads, the strings that keep people's curiosity up.

How can anyone really take any of these roles seriously, now that we can see them coupled together, arranged fancily, and sold in pairs, with interchangeable truths on the side: good and bad, brilliant and pathetic, hard and soft, judge and guilty, cop and murderer, State terrorist and private terrorist, priest and philosopher, reactionary and progressive, exploiter and exploited?

Lifestyle

Life has started to once again take on the colors of the eternal, to contemplate suddenly, in space and time, the alpha and omega of death: the flood of commodity-expansion, the earth devoured by an ocean of commercialism, the whirlpools where the generations follow one another, and time floats and drowns in the gain and loss of currency. Only a few summits have resisted the perpetual cataclysms of history, summits where the irreducible ferment of the human — infancy, love, and creation — has taken refuge, keeping alive the quality of being.

The cycle of incessant apocalypses is completed with the end of the economy. The wheel of fortune and misfortune which across the centuries turned around a self-same axle of war, misery, sickness, suffering, and bitter tomorrows is breaking. Those who think the universe is going to fall apart with it are perhaps right, but they're so worn out from thinking it that they've gone over to the side of death.

For those who rejoice that there are no more flags, no more masters to think for, no more roles to uphold, this is the era of real authenticity, and of a life style that allows them to be reborn to themselves, to the enjoyment of whatever they want to live out.

A sweet, new style is succeeding the violence of refusal, investing the will to live with a stubborn energy, which is no longer the energy of hopelessness and dissatisfaction but that of enjoyment and the insatiable. It's slowly left behind the character armoring, the mechanical gestures, the neurotic ignorance, the aggressive bitterness that once expressed the obedience of life to the economic. It's moving as far away as possible from the social customs that make exchange win out over gift, power over affection, measured letting off of steam over the refinement of pleasures, guilt feelings over the feeling of innocence, punishment over the correction of mistakes. But if it considers such behaviors archaic and refuses them, it does not do so in the name of separate thought, of an intellectual part to play, or in the name of morals, since if it did, far from finishing them off, it would only retain the flavor of those behaviors. No, it refuses them because they are boring, and are troubling its pleasures; because, quite simply, there are better things to live.

Life Puts Itself in Play, And is Not Representable

If children's evolution never ceases cultivating a diversity of new certainties, it's only because it's forming the roots for a humanity which will separate from its raw animalness without succumbing to the grip of inhumanity.

The growing hesitation of the child as it's being brought up in schools where thought separated from life is imparted ever more uneasily doesn't translate into a refusal to go down the path that has made their elders miserable beings, torn by twisted desires, scorched by a daily death and playing out their last roles in a parody of happiness.

Their attitude towards roles doesn't come from the critique typically made quite willingly by adults, who see the negative so clearly that they can't get rid of it. It's easy to heckle those who delegate the responsibility for their happiness to a god, a potentate, a parliamentary representative, or a union bureaucrat, but they themselves are the real hecklers. Does the image they kill themselves in order to put out to the world not simply an expression of their denial of their own authenticity? Does it not contain the germ of the generalized lie of the representative and electoral system? Is it not almost as if, in their quest to ascend in their entourage, they were trying to convince it to vote for them?

Children only fall into that trap much later. They at first perceive the roles the adults don with imperturbable seriousness to be part of a game. They play cops and robbers and identify with both, in an identical pleasure. They are uninvolved as they witness the roles being played — from judge to accused, doctor to patient, weak to strong, master to slave, good guy to bad guy. The game of metamorphosis and disguise, that is, the supposedly moral lie of the story, belongs to a symbiotic background wherein beings and things are tied together by the common movement of life.

To the extent that the game stagnates, that gestures are impoverished in the mechanical ballet of money and promotions, the child is instantly asked to make for himself an identifier-image, to fit in with accepted social reasonings. The pleasures of this metamorphosis enter backwards into a fantastic reality as long as the adolescent, at last fixed to the choices and orientations that the whims of the economy impose upon him or her, keeps in his or her heart the impression that s/he has opened the wrong door and that all the other ones that s/he didn't pick would have been better.

Constraint and the boredom of always trying to show oneself to the world from an interesting and interested angle — to show off, as the kids would say — today discover their peremptory uselessness in the bankruptcy of the social market and of its traditional values. Once again, the return to childhood identifies with the temptation to be reborn to oneself, in the plurality of desires and in the unity of life, in the human metamorphoses of a recreated nature.

The End of Hierarchical Power

There is no domain in which authority does not degrade itself and announce the end of all the power engendered by the exploitation of nature.

Disbelief stripped the priests of the respect and scorn their ministry draped them in. God only ever shows up when he's dug up in archeological expeditions, and the episodic shop-floor bitching is never going to stop the collapse (at last!) of all religious enterprises.

In a few poisoned lands of the third world the last tyrants crop up. A universal discredit has buried the military dictatorships little by little beneath the shit of the past; it does a better job than the most virulent antimilitarism in giving the stink of death to the uniforms of all the armies of all the continents and of all the parties.

Nothing's more comforting than seeing history close its dumpster-lid on the reign of the "living gods", the saviors of the people, the providential glories, the charismatic elected officials. We should give thanks to the 20th century for having disarticulated the iron heel that for so long held in subjection the proletariat, women, children, the body, the animal, and nature. Ah, happy time, when the heads of state, of family, of the elites, tabernacles, and enterprises tumble from their position of prestige like dead leaves, tossed about in the whirlpools of ridicule before being lost in indifference!

Having nothing substantial to put under their teeth anymore, the will to power now nourishes only toothless carnivores. Without a doubt, our modern era continues tossing out onto the market its mess of authoritarian creatures, but it's more a matter of inertia than of conviction. Although the emotionally mutilated still exhibit themselves with their fiery looks, their steely character, and their virile jaws, the surrounding milieu sterilizes their seed of bitterness, aggressiveness and death. They notice they've no longer got any of the things that used to give them hope and the feeling they were right: the promise of a strong State, a financial empire, a national or proletarian revolution. They don't have any guarantee anymore that they'll succeed.

And now that the economy governs them like pawns, in the name of what, exactly, are they governing us, since the chessboard of the old world has lost all its kings, queens, rooks and knights, and there's nothing left to move from square to square but a universal infantry? Will they play a game they're no longer running for themselves, and if they do, what kind of victory will they be after? To start up business, the state, money, confidence again? After all, things have come to such a point that the case of anyone resorting to lies falls apart as soon as it comes up.

The people in power have lost their slave-dealers' faith, which gave rise to royal kingdoms and republics. It seems they have kept nothing but the ancient creed of the traveling salesman/beggar, knocking on doors down the street to hawk his stock of brooms, since they have enough crafty imagination to take down the hanged man and sell him a new rope. But no! The idea has only very recently come to their minds that they could make a profit off the alarms that are going off every day signaling the presence of an endangered planet. They don't even think about taking down the shaky monopolies of traditional industry, investing in the ecology, dismantling the pollution-factories, taking down beautifully what they built in such an ugly way, depolluting, getting rid

of nuclear power, colonizing sustainable energies, federating internationally in small, regional, productive units, propagating marketable modes of self-management, in brief, to act according to the fashion of their history: the “economic turnaround” of revolutionary ideas. Otherwise, it seems like the mental state of businessmen is undergoing the tendentious sinking of the amount of power they have. Did they deeply feel, as though it were a personal trauma, the fact that the arms-dealing business is going to be unprofitable soon with the gradual extinction of local wars? They’ve still found no better way of obeying the laws of competition than confronting each other on the battlefield of the Stock Exchange. There, all gussied up as black and white knights, they dedicate themselves to making parodies of the medieval tournaments, sacks, and pillaging. It’s a shocking spectacle to see a generation of obsessional financiers popping up everywhere from shareholders’ tables with bunches of numbers and wads of cash while a cascade of whole sectors of agriculture and industry are going out of business.

In its supreme stage, capitalism is falling back into its infancy, an infancy with all the life eradicated, one that is ordinarily called senility. At the same time as these mechanisms appear in the consciousness of the individual body, the economy attains a state of pure abstraction. Its evanescence is such that it lets go of its own substance, the factories and markets that made up its material existence. What will to power could resist such a muscular relaxation?

The Descending Curve of the Economic Offensive

The rage to get a bone to gnaw on or resell has fed the will to power everywhere. Even the weakest man would protest that he had a total right to his crust of bread, his woman, his dog, his renown. There’s one character trait no one’s been able to attribute to human nature unless it’s wrapped up in a suit of character armor. The guile and evasiveness is so obvious now that the commodity has conquered almost everything, that there’s no longer any presence on earth besides the redundancies of a useless economy and a life discovering the human use of its nature. There’s no continent on earth where the commodity doesn’t push its modernity.

The obligation to consume propagates democracy at the speed of market studies, and the peace of exchanges effaces progressively the specter of the wars, that is, of the social war, at least in its archaic form. The secular conflict that arose between the exploiter class and the exploited class is undergoing the effects of the devaluation of power a little more each day.

Repression and demands are softened in the nostalgic parodies of the struggles of yesteryear.

The old predominance of the mind over the body is finally letting up in turn, like everything else. Has the technocratic market not undertaken, by promoting the computer, the transformation of the tool into a brain and the brain into a tool? The cybernetic realizes in such a way the programming set up for people by the logic of the commodity: a body and mind brought together and equalized in a machine.

Who could be ecstatic about the prodigiousness that the human genius attains when it’s placed at the service of the economy: a muscular body deprived of libidinal energy and a thinking sunken into millions of understandings, which cannot be understood outside of a binary logic, that is, with an intelligence inferior to that of rats. The marvelous is elsewhere.

The Reign of Exchange Value

As if the computer served as a sign put up in the humanitarian boutiques where people tend towards total abstraction, we see here a world where use value decreases from gadget to gadget, where truly useful goods disappear along with the cows, snails, mushrooms, and forests, where the raw materials industries are dismantled in the name of international marketability.

On the other hand, exchange value tends towards the absolute. Profit determines the fate of the planet in a scornful ignorance of man and nature. A frenzied intellectualization reduces the gap between manual and intellectual labor. What wins out there isn't the intelligence of Life, but the indifference of beings and gestures, daily bent to the reflexes of work programmed to procreate nothingness: this is the deal that's been clinched, not with what's alive but with a society where everything that moves is mechanical and quantifiable in their stock quotes. Such is the commodity perspective. Though the hierarchical pyramid has been compressed and power has collapsed, the sentiments of a universe where beings freeze into objects continue to push passively towards death all those who do not perceive just how much a new violence is smoldering beneath the rotting of the traditional struggles, to what extent the antagonism between exploiter and exploited has exhausted itself since today it's been revealed that there's a common denominator between the two factions — the lucrative exploitation of life itself.

Organization

The unchaining of the will to live will be to insurrectional fury what childhood exuberance is to the foot-stamping of old men.

Power has never had at its disposal so many means of imposing its sovereignty, and never has it had so little force left to apply those means with.

The politics of the gods was impenetrable. A great ideological fervor brushed aside doubts and scruples. It was necessary that the demands of the market condemn that last residue of agrarian structures, bureaucratic tyranny, with the unquestionable accusation of "insufficient marketability", in order that nothing hide any longer the disconnectable circuits of the computerized economy.

Assuredly, soviet bureaucratization had already made palpable the absurdity of plans that work as well on paper as they are perfectly useless in reality. The sinking of the bureaucratic glacier managed to demonstrate concretely exactly what hierarchical power always had been — an attempt to organize the living by emptying them of their substance for the economy's profit. The distance that separated the heavenly spirit from earthly matter is today only the distance between the fist that closes on the necessity of working and the hand that opens to the pleasures of loving and creating.

Managing the Collapse

What is the effective, if not efficient, existence of the last forms of power reduced to today? To the science of *management*. It alone has a direct grip on the economy now that the economy has had the political vermin plucked off it, its kings, pontiffs, heads of State and factions — now that it spreads across the earth the visible circuits of the great computer.

What's the most prized quality amongst political men now that they've become little more than bellboys for the businessmen? What's their biggest electoral selling point? Charisma? Stubbornness? The iron fist? Seduction? Intelligence? Not at all! It's only important that they have a good management sense.

What a fine logic: The times demand good managers with an attentiveness that must be all the greater now that there's nothing left to manage but bankruptcies.

Thirty years ago, revolutionaries, demanding the skin of the bureaucrats, called for the formation of new organizations that would liquidate the trouble-making chaos-mongers and create the triumph of a self-managed order. They took the skin of the bureaucrats but only managed to dress themselves in it.

The walls of the bureaucratic citadels and of the Eastern empires have fallen, not beneath the assault of revolutionary freedom, but beneath the pressure of the commodity, demanding its free passage with such transparency that all that was required was that it give the word, for the iron curtain to fall.

The old revolutionaries of 1968 — of whom few were aware of the refusal of survival being expressed at that time — got promotions in the dashing army of the new managers. Since the debacle of economic collapse is doing just fine on its own, they had every leisure to act in the best interests of the people by acting in the interest of the economy. They put order in defeat and dignity in the rout. Young wolves have always, at the right time of the season, made real fine mutton.

A Return to the Concrete

For the first time in history, the feeling that the economy has usurped the sovereignty of Life has given to the will to live the consciousness of a new sovereignty it could and must create.

The movement of becoming of commodities has been the force of things weighing on destinies everywhere. Its universality has, in the bodies of human individuals, however unique they all are, been materialized as an ensemble of functions and roles that agitate people, people made to act according to the mind, culture, ideology that they've chosen, like so many dancing puppets, hardly different from one another. The return to the concrete denounces the imposture of abstract man, of man torn from himself in the name of humanity itself.

The separation between what is lived and the social market, which claims to govern it, is so present today that it makes people's commitments to whatever career or path they go down very fragile, beginning with what they call "social responsibility". Why would I ratify any contract with a society so contrary to life that simply surviving on this planet is getting harder and harder to do? All willing obedience to a world that is destroying itself is an act of self-destruction.

The rubble and ruins they accumulate on the one hand and refurbish on the other don't concern me at all, except for insofar as they impose detours on me. It isn't easy to live and less still to keep one's desire to live; that's a constant effort that excuses me from the other efforts.

The Dilapidated State of the Mechanical, Pushed Onto the Living

There's nothing left to oppose the growing force of Life besides the force of inertia that keeps bringing to their knees those who power cannot constrain any longer.

Power has lost the sublime and terrifying radiation which once made it at once so frighteningly close and yet so far away: close with its permanent inquisitions, its police criss-crossing towns and minds; and far away because of the inaccessible renewal that never holds back the knife that slits the throats of tyrants.

Since public opinion seems to be registering the failure and collapse of the many forms of authority, the mixture of fear, hate, respect and disregard that were once propagated by the long robes, the magic trinkets, and the uniforms is at last being exorcised amid laughs and heckling before soon becoming dissolved in an amused indifference.

One needs neither to know anything, nor to love, nor to be loved, in order to feel the need to govern others. The more prestige you gain, the less capable you become emotionally. And what submission there is to the mechanisms of roles and functions in that! The obsession with reigning, imposing, vanquishing, subjugating, makes the body nothing more than an ensemble of control-levers. Gestures, muscles, gazes, thoughts, all seem to move like pendulums. One must attach to oneself,] by means of favors, flattery, compromises, and alliances those who cannot be excluded: and destroy, with morbid insistence, insolence, and peremptory reasons anyone and everyone who does not let themselves be bought by constraint, contract, and seduction. It's a happy existence for those who draw their pleasure and the best parts of their lives from the constant refining of their authentic selves.

The more the mechanical takes hold of life and the living, the more frustration will binge and purge with aggressive compensations. In the days when patriarchal power and the uncontested wave of authoritarian behaviors lent a powerful means to functions and roles, the rage to dominate which today only brings up neuroses and ridicule was called charisma, responsibility, or a sense of duty. There's too little (social) fabric left for those who 'are cut out to be bosses' to decently drape with it their functional powerlessness and their incapacity to live.

A typical stupidity of supposedly subversive terrorism is not having understood that the people that having power produces are diminished physically and mentally to such a point that they take a powerful reassurance that people are still interested in them from the interest that is devoted to them by a campaign of assassination or denigration. Sign of the times: the name of Caserio has eclipsed that of the president that he sent to meet his maker (he sent him "ad patres"), and the hardly glorious Aldo Moro is remembered better than his lifeless assassin. The sleeping dogs, the dogs that bite, the barking dogs of order — they're all from the same kennel. Those who still kill each other only to die get the cemeteries they deserve.

Whoever has decided to live according to his or her desires becomes unreachable. He hasn't any roles, function, renown, riches, poverty, character, nor state by means of which they could get a grip on him and put him in the trap. And if he must, like everyone else, pay tribute to work and money, he doesn't truly commit himself to it, being engaged elsewhere, where he has better things to do.

Nothing is more depressing for the falsely brave than suddenly realizing that he has no adversary, that he is struggling alone in the boxing ring of competition and polemic, and that it is up to him and only him to give himself reverence or contempt.

The mirror is broken, wherein the men of power once tried to deliver an admirable image to the public. If he happens to furtively contemplate it, he'll only ever see the appalling inanity of so many efforts, the frightening emptiness of a life sacrificed to appearances.

To never try to ascend to the heights where puffed-up power tosses off its last orders, is to let those who tried to degrade and crush you face to face only with their worst enemy — themselves.

The art of being yourself doesn't impede on other people's space, it occupies a different plane of existence where there's no lack of space — it lets the heroes of authoritarian behavior have a choice as to how they're going to disappear: they can finish destroying themselves as living beings, or they can destroy all roles and functions and begin to truly live.

Finishing off Triumphalism and Competitiveness

To take the time to feel yourself to be alive, from moment to moment, is to find yourself freed of rights and of duty, connected so intimately with obeying and commanding. To learn to seize each daily pleasure, minimal as it may be, creates little by little a milieu that one belongs to unreservedly, where one can be true without reticence, where the exercise of desires impassions you to such a point that there's nothing and no one that could interfere unpleasantly without very quickly losing weight, importance, and meaning.

A feeling of fullness is not a state in fact, but rather a becoming, not something to contemplate but to create. The game of desire and enjoyment implies a perspective which doesn't include the criteria of the commodity world and its imperative reasons. There is an intangible border which a sensual knowledge reveals with certain signs. All I want, for instance, is that innocence of happy childhood which illuminates the faces of lovers in the moment of love, even though the fits of authority they give in to mark their stamp on the children's painful tensing-up, frustrated in their need for tenderness, which avenges itself with the whinings of tyrannical caprice.

To be happy is also to not worry about being more or less happy than anyone else, nor about furnishing proofs or avowals of one's happiness. Happiness starts to be bothered away from the moment it needs to make itself worth something. Take away its motive, pusillanimous and frightful, which is the precept "to be happy, let us live in hiding", and you will find a deeper meaning to it: enjoyment doesn't exhibit itself except at its own expense, and good fortune turns into its opposite as soon as smugness takes hold of it. Vanity is an authenticity that empties itself out with a sinking sound. The living never immerse themselves in glory — only the dead remains of the living do. The pleasure that doesn't offer itself freely is only a commodity in the supermarket.

To love yourself isn't to admire yourself; I only have to balance out compared values, mechanisms of competition where the commerce of men is ruled by the commerce of things.

How can we take pleasure in being ourselves if we must at each instant climb podiums and "hang tough" in order to not be rushed?

The ridiculousness given to the spirit of competition by the normal subsidence of markets only makes the leitmotif of traditional education more absurd and odious: "Let the best man win!" The child has no need for victories, neither over himself or over others; they are already only so many defeats that deal a violent blow to his capacity to love and be loved, and install in the child the fear of orgasm, since in the eyes of a society where everything must be weighed, bought, sold, lent, returned, paid for, orgasmic enjoyment is, because of its natural freeness, only a weakness and an error. As a female leader once said: "One must avoid making love when one is in business; one loses one's combativeness that way."

The End of Judges and the Judged-Guilty

Fear and aggressiveness diminish along with the price society puts on prohibitions and their transgression.

Free trade manages to dismantle the old walls of agrarian structure, and every newly opened breach in the wall brings up new ideas of openness and of freedom.

Archaic societies surrounded their fields, property, cities, and nations with protective and oppressive walls. Commodity modernity is tearing them all down.

The cities have lost their enclosing walls, the borders are being abolished slowly. Have they become the last bloody pages of this commodity-saga?

The war of 1914 and the rekindling of its poorly-extinguished embers in 1940 mark, so far as it seems, the last ubuesque vociferations of protectionism, that regression from the commercial spirit back to the agrarian mentality.

The tumultuous passage of private capitalism to State capitalism has seen the building and crumbling of the totalitarian citadels of nazism and bolshevism.

The roads that are open today, as foggy with illusions as they have remained, cut across Europe freely, and a new liberty of movement, duly patented, is now making all the old prohibitions and the violence that traditionally went down those roads start to look like the purest derision.

The Peace of Exchanges

A market that is more and more “common” celebrates the freedoms of a commerce that excludes no direction nor object and lends the extent of its vision to opinions and consciences. A peace of exchanges little by little comes to fill our social and international relations, over-ruling, pell-mell, the confrontations between peoples and over-ruling the old-style revolutions, drowning the fish of revolt in the water-glass of talk.

Everything seems to bathe in an apparent conjunction of interests so deliquescent that they even discourage the idea that people could kill each-other even more in order to defend or demand them. What is incarnated in this highly industrialized community, where the clash of arms makes way for dialog and the toilet paper of chauvinism meeting the hygienic standards of the Red Cross, is the triumph of commodity universalism, the empire of exchange value, the triumph of happy thoughts reigning over a non-existent happiness.

The transparency they're so proud of isn't the transparency of the human, but of the mechanisms that denature the human. Yesterday I might have denounced such an imposture in order to make the shame more shameful still. But since today it's denouncing itself, I rejoice, rather, that it is putting the impulses of life face to face with the economic reflex that kills the living of it.

The Price of Sin is Democratized

What they call “laxity” is merely the sinking of the threshold of prohibitions beneath the pressure of a hedonism-market that legalizes transgression.

Immoral acts which seek power and profit are not immoralities at all, but are instead lucrative transactions. The economy has never let anything lag behind which it expected to get a material and spiritual benefit from.

Religion was the first enterprise to prosper by means of a crafty control over the compression and decompression of impulses. Once the freedoms of nature are submitted to the demands of daily work, it's an offense to give in to them, an offense against the economic spirit. The priests knew early on how important it is to make themselves the controllers and accountants of “human weaknesses”. They watch for man's fall into animalness and then place themselves at the chute's exit to negotiate the price to be paid in penitence for redemption. Would anyone really be so shocked to hear that the Roman Church, which inherited the thrift-shop virtues of the Empire, insists so frenetically on the fallible character of men in the face of temptation? The more the sinner succumbs and the more he acquires in the way of money, obedience, and resigned weakness, the more he is taxed on the toll road to a “healthy soul”.

Alas, since, the earthly economy has devoured the celestial economy, religious affairs have fallen into profane hands, which care much less about spiritual succor than they do about monetary reality. It was enough that the pleasures be introduced into the democracy of the supermarkets in order for us to see the falling into disuse of the more ascetic forms of redemption, wherein one would spit blood into the bassinet while beating the guilt out of himself.

It's not scientific logic that has swept away religious obscurantism, but rather the peremptory “logic” of the numbers of business. And those numbers have the power of giving privilege to anything and everything, except for freeness. It has put happiness, cut up into consumable commodities, on sale and within the reach of every purse. It has come up with a whole gamut of artificially modeled desires, based on a dazzling technique of well-being and satisfaction at a low price — it has preprogrammed the triumph of automated autonomy: sex shops, fast food joints, vibrating dildos, peep-shows, TV s, pink cell phones, social, cultural and psychological self-serve pumps.

It's vain quarreling to decide and decree that all this is good or bad, since life is elsewhere. What's for sure is that the old agro-religious tyranny has been supplanted, in Europe, by a formal and commercial ‘freedom’ that has brought commodity-humanism to a high degree of development, that is, a conception of the world that gives to men the same rights that priced objects have, no more no less. That's a lot if you think about all the sacrificed generations of people, the masses with cut off existences only because they were worth less than a stroke of bad luck to the state. And that's way too little for those of us who think that our lives are unique and cannot be bought nor sold, paid off or exchanged.

In the wake of all this, however, a large number of fears, frustrations, and styles of aggressive and conniving conduct are on their way to disappearance. Openly and almost in a Statist way incited to seize in passing, without scruples nor shame, whatever they can get of eroticism, quantified passion and computerized encounters, the hedonist clientele learns to get rid of the anguish and their guilt-feelings with which the religious and moral gangrene had blackened the least satisfactions with not very long ago.

On the other hand, these freedoms, which are now freedoms of the market, are paid for. The majority of transgressions enjoy an official recognition; it's enough that the bill gets paid.

However, the fear of orgasm has not disappeared, but has rather only been ventilated a little wherever it fits into debt-payments, into the budget — and at the same time the rigor of prohibitions was waiting for someone to be able to transgress them on an installment plan. At the end of all the accounting you always have to deal with the taxes, the absolute tax, the unpayable debt of an economized-on life that hangs over you until there's nothing left of you but death hanging on bones.

Openness

The less they feel the need to protect themselves from themselves, the more they can do without the protection of others, without protecting against others.

The citadels in which peoples and individuals were locked up for so long have been seen with mix of fear and assurance. The fate of nations, cities, and men wobbled between confidence and suspicion, sincerity and lies, betrayal and loyalty. The men of economy now incorporate into themselves and their societies the ruses and disquiet that once reigned endemically amongst the beasts.

The refugees in the detention centers cannot any longer be fundamentally distinguished from the foreignness that their captors feel within themselves; their captors themselves have in them the menacing nature that they impute to the foreigners: that movement of the body towards orgasmic enjoyment, a movement that is repressed because it threatens the civilization of work.

The “protection” they felt they received from gods and masters, which they called upon themselves with screams of prayer and sacrifices, were never anything but a protection against themselves, a defense against natural desire. *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott!* (A mighty fortress is our God)

The flood of commodities has razed the walls of the old agrarian, protectionist mentality. There's nothing, not even character armor, that doesn't crack and open in good time. We know that another circle is being formed, to protect the empire of the commodity across its new borderlines. However, fear has for a time loosened its grip.

Nothing that closes up on itself and into itself has ever protected anything but things, at the expense of men and women. There's no family, no society that doesn't work like a mafia gang — it's always a question of propagating the fear of “what might happen” in order to sell, with a maternal solicitude, the condoms which protect against the dangers waiting for children, citizens, and the nation.

The majority of tyrannies began by improving the common fate, only to give way to the typical reign of protective power and protected imbecility. If the phenomenon is more widely perceived today, that only happens at the same time as the protection from the so-called hostility of nature that the economy once guaranteed to people is appearing more and more suspect. And if it is really being more understood today, that's only happening at the same time as a better knowledge of infancy is showing us how the affection that helped it sustain its autonomy is being chiseled down and *economized* on little by little: is being lent out at interest, and granted only in exchange for submission, transforming tutelary solicitude into a neurosis of power.

When emotional commodification subjugates the freeness of love to the law of supply and demand, the separation of enjoyment and work reproduce in the child's mind the origins of hierarchical power.

The Decline of Fear

While the power of kings and republics still had any credit, the survival of the species and the security of existence served usefully as a pretext for propagating a fear that deposited impositions and submission into the drawers of the State's cash registers. The seeds of fear will fall on sterile soil from now on; they grow with vigor whenever a press propaganda campaign starts up, and then they perish.

See the disarray there is in the puppetry of the armies. There they are, with no war to prepare for, no insurrection to quash, not even a general strike to put between their teeth. Reduced to serve like mannequins in the shop-windows for an arms-market that the absence of serious conflicts threatens more and more, their forces of dissuasion can't even hide their ridiculousness anymore.

There's nothing, not even the police-function, that doesn't sometimes dare to dissipate the stench of death with which armed men "secure" the unarmed crowds.

The idea that the criminal and the cop are two complementary and interchangeable roles, carved out from the same repressive will, has made a good contribution to cleaning the hate and admiration off them, feelings that those roles caused in their respective partisans and adversaries. The killers of tyrants, ministers, prison-guards, and military brass, which was still applauded yesterday by the rebellious factions, have seen their side diminish in size at the rate with which their image is mixed with that of their victims. It's not that they were thought to have been seeking, in one regime or another of obligatory freedom, the post that they'd just vacated — no, it was the reflex of murder that offended people; they had the same contempt for life that their opposition had.

One must be dead to oneself in order to clamor for the death of other people. This is true above all in an era that has come to a point of such great power and weakness before the omnipresent agony of life propagating itself throughout consciousnesses and behaviors as though it were the only truly human reality, the only reality that had any use-value.

Don't think I'm saying that I foresee, hoping for the liquidation of all power, all armies, and all police in all their forms, some great disappearance of them all by means of a wave of a magic wand. I'm perfectly aware that the fall of the economic empire risks taking down along with it those whose customary behavior, and whose laziness when it comes to "looking elsewhere," hangs on the rotted realities of the old world. Whoever can't face the reality that it's all coming to an end will only ever keep bringing up the phantoms of the past; the only thing that can happen for them is that they'll choose an imminent death over making an effort to demand the rekindling of a will to live.

I, however, am hoping on the birth of a new innocence, and don't spend a single day without putting myself to its creation with either wisdom or madness, and I devote myself to being satisfied with seeing the signs that assure me of my convictions, sometimes mistakenly, often correctly. So, then, it's not an unimportant matter for me when parents give rise to oldness in their children, or when a logic from the heart wins out over business-sense. I hear with pleasure

the voices that make demands, the voices that refuse bosses, the new autonomy taking root at the heart of conflicts traditionally controlled by union bureaucrats — those voices, still unusual to hear, that are going up into the magistratures and police stations to demilitarize their functions, not to propose to criminals a punishment to suffer but to offer them a way to correct, in the sense that the living understand, what has been committed by ignorance and contempt for life.

It's not by heckling them, but by holding them to their word that we will stop the calls for an authentic humanity from turning back to abstract discourse and being denied a life by facts and acts.

Against the Recourse to Fear in Ecology

Fear penetrates into men's hearts from the instant they find themselves prevented from being born to themselves. I mean to say that man cannot escape the terrors inherent in the animal universe except by sinking into the terrors of a social jungle where it's a crime to behave with the free generosity of a truly human nature.

The economy distills an essential fear in the threat it brings to weigh upon the survival of the whole planet — on the one hand it is a threat made in the name of a "guarantee of well being", and on the other hand, it snaps shut like a mousetrap on every attempt to choose a different path, whether it's a question of the independence of children or of the promotion of natural energies.

Fear, as an economic argument, consists in closing the doors and windows when the enemy has already gotten in the house. It accrues danger in the guise of protecting from it. To bring up the fright of an earth transformed into a desert, a nature systematically assassinated — is this not just another way of walling oneself up in the vicious circle of the universal commodity-spectacle only to perish therein?

By destroying the walls of the agrarian enclosure only to reconstruct them further out towards the limits of marketability, the commodity's expansion has brought to heel the flock of terrors at the frontier between a moribund universe and a nature to be rejuvenated.

What's most fearsome about the fear of death, which stupefies men even in their suicidal temerity, is that it is originally a fear of life. To die a natural death, to cross death's path, belongs so completely to the logic of things that men, reduced to the objects they produce, paradoxically find more security and assurance in the hope that they will die a natural death than they find in a resolve to begin living and be guided by their enjoyments.

Natural Fear, Denatured Fear, And the Human Handling of Fear

The fear of ecological apocalypse hides the chances nature and human nature still have.

Fear has in common with sickness the fact that they both belong to the language of the body. It warns the body of the dangers it is to be exposed to. However, isn't it a strange way to behave to exaggerate the causes and effects of the routs and "courageous" flights forward, instead of learning how to be on one's guard for known risks?

Those who live in familiarity and love with savage beasts know to what an extent fear-reactions increase the chaos of fear, and at the same time, the aggressiveness of animals that approach them; when they speak calmly to them, with the voice of their hearts, they make them peaceful

at the same time as they diminish the disturbance of an encounter so traditionally marked by incomprehension and contempt.

Such is Orpheus' secret: poetry is the emotional language that creates harmony, because it gathers together the elementary rhythms that nature's heart beats with, in order to make them its own.

Such is the secret, accessible to all those who look deeply, today, into the familiarity with which children behave, those little animals on the road to humanization that have known, up to the present, only the reign of the hunter and hunted, the tamers and the tamed, the crash of the whip and the scratch of the claw.

The end of emotional commodification — that is, the end of economized love, placed beneath economic tutelage — has a good chance of getting rid of the stomach-centered fear that gnaws at one's existence from the moment animal impulses are repressed within it instead of being refined in a human way.

To conquer fear is still only to make it reasoned, and, most often, to exorcise it from oneself only to project it onto others. It's much more important to deny it its neurotic anchorage, and to extirpate from the body the anguish born from the uncertainties of love and the denials of total, orgasmic enjoyment.

We know now just how much fear provokes danger, accrues it and attracts it by way of the powerlessness and weakness that it brings everyone to, as if it were plunging it back into the nocturnal terror of early childhood. What fine wisdom, which knows all about lightning and the way it works, and yet, still immersed in existential anguish, runs beneath a tree to protect itself from the storm.

Fear will disappear along with the dependency that hypertrophies it, since power finds all its support therein. Only autonomy, which is only partially offered in childhood for refining children's enjoyments, will reduce fear from being a signal for the death-reflex to being a signal that the will to live will be the first to see and react to instead.

Justice

Commerce and industry have given a human form to the rough justice of agrarian societies.

It would be very surprising if — having made their public and private existence dependent upon a system where everything's paid for — they could subtract their customs, thoughts and gestures from the budget of credit and discredit, on the balance sheet of activity and passivity, from the accountancy of merits and demerits.

Justice and the Arbitrary

Their conception of justice is completely held to the principle of exchanges.

The battle between equity and arbitrariness follows the same road as the guerillas, whose clear consciousness of commerce has always delivered them over to the obscurantist capacities of power.

The caprice of tyrants, the refinement of tortures, the ferocity of sentences, and the reign of injustice embed, in the ties of blood spilt in atonement, the history of these societies of agricultural predominance or of agricultural survival. The oriental despotisms, the feudalisms, the modern

dictatorships advocating a return to the earth, the protectionisms without “lebensraum” (living space), the peasant communities strangled by mental archaism, all the martial-law delirium of nations, the identification with a territory, the withdrawing into “property rights”, all the character armor — all these things have built up frustrations, fears, rage, and fantastic hatreds that have overflowed from century to century in waves of massacres, holocausts, genocides, burnings at the stake, pogroms, takings of revenge, and everyday barbarities.

On the other hand, there has been no era “haloed by the glory of commerce and crowned with the palm fronds of industry” that didn’t make a rational need to conserve human capital prevail over the rituals of mass expiation, making use not of human nature, but of the force that work extracts from it in order to assure the progress of commodities. Justice becomes humanized with the increase of humanism, and humanism is the art of economizing men in order to draw a lasting profit from them.

The Economy Economizes Repression

If the funeral procession of judicial horrors is slowly going away with its tortures and death sentences, you can thank the empire of marketability for it; it has little to do with sensible souls taking hold of judicial power.

Why machine-gun thousands of insurgents when putting ten of them on a firing line is enough to reestablish order? In the same way as the mafia does, the justice of the Enlightened only punishes people reluctantly, and only does so in the name of business interests.

And anyway, solicitude towards the guilty accrues from the moment the work of consumption is superimposed upon the work of production. The steel rod of necessities strikes us donkeys a lot less than it shakes the carrots of seduction before our noses. Since the neon glow of the supermarkets does a better job bringing workers back to the factory than the bayonet does, justice starts looking like a service-desk, an office for the contentious to do their business at.

The guilty are clients that have failed to comply with the deals officially made at their birth, and who are being offered easy payment plans. The inherent guilt involved in exchange has lost its drama, which was only really an indignity that the individual suffered long ago for never having been able to pay off enough of the debt owed to God, the king, to the causes, to honor, and all the other frivolous inventions of little men. Although the celestial pomp of sacrifice and redemption still dyes with ermine and purple the puppet-parade of the courthouses, the feeling prevails that the judicial machine is no more and no less than a cash register where crimes are made up for by paying fines and doing time, just like wage work rules over the bill to be paid for one’s consumable pleasures.

Compared to the countries where one finds gulags where people sit in the “hole” forever, (“in pace”), when we look back upon the eras of crematoria and butchery, progress is manifest. But how can we be satisfied with a “democratic justice” that allows hopes for clemency to exist only on the implicit condition that one feel guilty? Inhumanity is set up in such a way that the majority of acquired goods replace disadvantageously the evils they suppress. And so, to the extent that justice attenuates its rigors, we see the economy-men punishing themselves for faults they incriminate themselves for in secret, substituting suicide for the scaffold, sickness for torture, anguish for pillory.

Humanist justice is born from the progress of “an eye for an eye” over scapegoating.

Exchange relations are the carriers of civilization insofar as they limit the right of the mightiest to profitably exploit the weakest. The survival-time accorded to the slaves is never any greater than the duration of the profit they assure their master.

The ubiquity of exchanges is the specter of immanent justice which surges forth between the worst of tyrants and the most insignificant of their subjects to temper the excesses of power and the excess of indignity. What they attributed to the goodness of the gods and the clemency of princes was really just a part of a well-tempered economy. The history of the emancipation of humanity has never adopted those freedoms that weren't sources of accrued revenue.

The Benefits of Commodity Expansion

Justice has been democratized along with the price of commodities.

The contradiction between the archaism of working the land and the modernity of commodity-expansion governed the evolution of some 10 thousand years of civilization.

The peasant community is at the heart of the original sacrifice, like the eye of a cyclone. Never has self-renunciation — without which work wouldn't be able to exploit natural material to draw from it material for exchange — ceased to propagate around it a rage to destroy exacerbated proportionally with the proliferation of prohibitions upon the desire to create and to create oneself.

Gold, ideas, bread, wine — these things all belong to the commerce of beings and things, which dispenses them. They have been paid for with blood, with a daily castration of desires, with the application of a utilitarian torture to nature. Would anyone expect that such a handling of things would incite to love, tenderness, or generosity? Is it inexplicable that men and women, in their very foundations cut to pieces, would seek to satisfy, on the back of some propitious victim or of some scapegoat, the displeasure that their work condemns them to? Would anyone be surprised that those who the face-slaps of rebuke and whip of sermons manage to bring back around to order and orgasm-anxiety stone themselves to death, lynch each other, torture themselves, and give in to bullying, racism, and exclusions, every time the sting of austerity, the sting of losing, the sting of threats to the fatherland, the stinging of threatened privileges, burns in their genitals?

Who gets indignant in the face of such a state of cruelty, barbarity, and obscurantism? The men of lucrative dialog, of marketable openness; the men of modernity. It's profit, more than generosity, that requires that prisoners of war be either exchanged for a ransom, or instead sold off like slaves, rather than being tortured to their last breath in order that the torturers might make them into installment payments on their urge for vengeance. Humanism is born right there.

The talion, the absolute "justice" of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" marks upon the blind sacrifice of scapegoats and of fallen peoples the progress of the rationality of exchanges beyond the brutal compensations of decompression — that's because, being different from agrarian resistance to change, it is a part of the logic of trade to evolve towards more primitive forms to the extent that money invents a principle of universal reason, stamping prices on the active and passive, a homologous balance scale where pros and cons are weighed.

Justice repels expiatory massacres since it only sees in them a senseless waste. Is it not pleasant that criminological language judges murders that yield great profits to be interesting and interested, villainous murders of vile profit-seeking, and at the same time considers to be gratuitous — with the horror that word implies — the assassinations by means of which their authors

put upon the weaker their frustrations and humiliations, as if it was just another irrational and bestial form of exchange?

Praises of Humanism

The humanists have made it their duty to ignore a most fundamental exchange, which is the very principle of denaturation: the imperative transformation of the life-force into work-force. On the other hand, they are inexhaustible when it comes to the comfort and developments that trade and its philosophy introduced, across the centuries, into the inhuman sacrifice of men to the economy.

Filled with the light that the universal commodity brings to the four corners of the world, they celebrate everywhere the grandeur and excellence of men who work to perfect it. In one sense, which is their own, they aren't wrong.

Undeniably, the idea of an equitable profit for all has consolidated the acquisition of democratic rights, its law substituting itself for the law of the mightiest, and attenuating the injustices and the dissatisfactions, bringing peace back to the social torment of divergent interests.

Who would think to complain about the freedoms in the shadow of which, without too much fear being involved, it is permissible to love, drink, eat, talk, think, express oneself, move about, and breathe? Do I not know well enough that without them I couldn't write, at least without risking censorship and being burned at the stake?

I do not mock them within the realm of what their limits authorize, I simply refuse their frontiers, which are not those of the human but those of the lucrative. I reproach them for not being given nor won — regardless of how it seems — I reproach them for being born, setting themselves up, and imposing themselves only to go through the motions necessary to make the economy run. I hold it against these freedoms that they'll never go beyond the free circulation of goods, never stop narrowing themselves to the right to sell, buy, and serve, according to supply and demand. To know that such goods are paid for is to recognize to what extent they are denied.

It becomes clear that there is an imposture involved in condemning scapegoat-politics, which is so vigorously in play in authoritarian and bureaucratic behaviors, xenophobia, racism, and sectarianism; that is, when one deigns to break the economic hold over life that smashes desire at its roots.

As long as this wound in our being does not heal, this wound which is our degraded enjoyment of life, the great exorcism of death will only make all the tears and blood that each of us spills splash upon others. Be careful not to forget that in the festival palace where commodity conviviality celebrates the Rights of man, there is a room that at any moment could become a gas chamber.

The Battle Against Injustice

Death is the real egalitarian justice, like the commodity is the end of man, who produces it. What is alive escapes "justice" and "injustice" because it escapes economy.

The struggle against injustices can no longer hide what it always was: man's conquest of a commodity that conquered him, and replaces with a human form — an abstraction — the living reality that it exhausts.

Should one go out into the streets armed to make demands? What for? To demand rights that will only be accorded to me at the price of new renunciations, will enrich me at my expense, and will only make a poorer life for me?

People have killed themselves and each other for centuries trying to get equality, and today they've become conscious that the only effective equality is the duty imposed on everyone to sacrifice themselves in order to become workers, to work for nothing or almost nothing, since having is in decline, power is ridiculous, and survival is boring.

I only feel concerned with the creation of a world where there would be nothing to pay for anymore.

Work and Death

Long ago they would console people for the torments of injustice by invoking for everyone, rich and poor, big and little, lucky and unlucky, the powerful and the miserable, the common obligation everyone has of dying. The dream of egalitarian justice was realized when one died a natural death.

Now that work is felt to be a daily and universal loss of life, it seems that between equality in the face of death and the equal obligation to sacrifice every day there is no difference except the difference between paying in cash or credit. Our era is so favorable to euphemisms that payment extensions are easily arranged.

Their justice stinks of euthanasia; their equitable distribution of rights and duties is like a lethal overdose injected bit by bit. And what a "cosmic" consolation it is, when commodities, those dead things that suck the blood of the living, embrace and exhaust simultaneously the ensemble of species as well as the earth that fed them!

Self-Punishment

To find oneself alone with the shadow of a death that no longer comes from God, nor from Themis' daughters the fates, nor even from a natural law, in the shadow of a death that comes from a reflex, conditioned into people by economic necessity, seems to take on a happy character, seems to be a blessing to make the most of.

Is it not permissible, in effect, to untangle from the mess of performed gestures those which mortify existence with routine and those which serve to revive that existence? But what a stubbornness that requires! And not many people have the sincerity to admit that they most often carry out, themselves, the sentence passed upon them, which is to die to themselves, leaving themselves with only a derisory, vain hustling of beings and things.

A militant in the struggle against torture and the death sentence one morning realizes that he has never stopped feeling killing himself and torturing himself on the scaffold of guilt. Another, who spent his time calling for the abolition of prisons, realizes upon getting out of bed that he's never stopped putting himself in the prison of his character-armor.

The economy knows so well what its essence is, now that it took it from "celestial transcendence" and translated that into earthly immanence, that it's concretized itself in the economized existence of every unique individual. Consciousness becomes clarified, choices become precise. One must choose — either, feeling oneself to be judge, judged, and executioner, one must sched-

ule heart trouble, cancer, thrombosis, or accidents for oneself, as if one were handing down a sentence upon oneself, or instead one must take hold fully of every pleasure in order to claim, without a basis for doing so, an innocence which answers to nothing and no one.

All Justice is Guilty

The economy-men have no other recourse outside of this immanent justice that was created only in order to economize them in the last days of the planet, which has ascended to the state of pure commodity. You will recognize them easily.

Fear and oppression has brought them so completely to their knees that they don't even know how to stand up for themselves without bringing others to their knees, imputing their misery to others, and punishing them with the punishment they inflict upon themselves all day long. The vocation of sacrifice feeds upon the sacrifice of others.

They atone, and so they judge. Their judgment is made in order that the agony they impose upon themselves might spread over the whole world. That's why they snicker when death pulls out of its hat such things as the Chernobyl disaster or AIDS. Every cry of alarm is good for them if it adds shrill sounds to the rumors of the final judgment. If they denounce air pollution, it's only a pathetic attempt to ventilate a bit the atmosphere of guilt they vegetate in.

Beneath the indifference of businessmen and the indignation of the revolutionaries the same stench of a scorned existence, a defunct life, is festering. Death's side of things has the greatest respect for unhappiness, since there's no better way to draw to oneself great misfortune than to resign oneself to putting up with the whining of the little-man. The only thing that is really fated is the fate we predispose ourselves to suffer.

Against Anti-Terrorism

There is a condemnation of terrorism as repulsive as terrorism itself. This is not to blame the ordinary cynicism of the state, which praises peace and sells arms when it is not killing a student in the name of security and public order. The state-henchmen know too much about the violence they use to be truly outraged when a killer, who has rendered outstanding services to the army, guns down a general whose profession is, after all, to murder with a calculated risk of retaliation.

No, I am thinking of the hypocrisy and cunning that is in most people's disapproval. After all, if there is anything to condemn, it is difficult to understand why the humiliation does not affect both private terrorists and state terrorism, that creates terrorists in competition, so to speak.

In whose name are the rights which the state imposes on the citizen — right to scaffold, prison, fine, registration, confiscation, control, enforcement, remuneration — denied to embryonic states, such as drug lobbies, interest groups, private militias, mafias, supposedly revolutionary factions, terrorist storm troopers, individual profiteers of crime and resentment? In the name of the protection that the state grants in return? Unfortunately, this protection is also the product offered by competitors, and their extortion usually only has the disadvantage of illegally supplementing the extortion legally practiced by the state.

I have no interest in consorting with circles that are better prepared to massacre each other than to give life to cities and forests. The question, however, deserves to be asked: Who are those noble spirits who hate bombers and firearm-ideologues? Mostly domestic and family terrorists,

rash and haphazard bringers of death, spreaders of fear and blackmailers, who give and refuse love in order to obtain power and stifle the impulses for independence of their relatives. Under the banner of humanism, these people are cut from the same character-cloth as the culprits of the illegal power.

Against Terrorism

In the all-powerfulness of their inhumanity, the States of the past have engendered heroes who, daring to stand up alone to Leviathan, have been haloed with the black lightning of an oppressed humanity.

Coeurderoy, Ravachol, Henry, Vaillant, Caserio, Bonnot, Soudy, Raymond-la-Science, Libertad, Mecislas Charrier, Pauwels, Marius Jacob (who never killed anyone), Sabate, Capdevila, and so many others; I no longer have the same admiration for you, but my affection for you has increased, since now I understand how hard it must have been safeguarding your own lives when you pushed the knives away from your throat and turned them against those who had threatened you.

It is no longer true, today as we witness the precipitous decline of every form of authority, that the weight of servitude and degradation makes surges of life take up the weapons of death.

On the other hand, I see to what a point the suicide-reflex and the necessity of dying for some cause gave new credit to the State, which is more and more discredited, and re-carve the faded coat-of-arms of Power. Besides, it would be sufficient to examine to what point terrorism has gathered from the barrel of the gun the weakness of the last ideologies to recognize what must be done. Sexism, racism, marxism, sectarianism, nationalism, mysticism, authoritarianism, and business-ism give us a good reflection of what's left on the stage in the political theater; it's enough that the onlookers give a few whistles and hoots for the ham actors of order to rediscover a semblance of conviction.

The European State has already been disgraced by the fact that it maintains armies that go jobless when there aren't any wars or riots for them to fight in; what would happen to its justice, its magistratures, its police, its bureaucracies, if it didn't have political terrorism and the typical giving up of rights?

Repression has always fed itself upon people having a typical inclination to repress themselves; that's what gives governments their power. And now we see, at the moment when the side of guilt is losing out, droves of suicidal activists have drawn from their lethargy a system of final judgments wherein everyone kills themselves by killing others. *Cui prodest?* (who profits off this?)

To throw down what is collapsing on its own is to offer one's own agony a bed amid the ruins. Let the dead associate with the dead in one in the same cult of decay, in that refusal of life which is the spirit of all religions.

Life Above All Else

The new innocence abolishes guilt with the sovereignty of the living.

If the old cry, “Death to the exploiters!” no longer rings through the cities, it’s because it’s made way for another cry, which comes from childhood and from a serene passion: “Life above all *else!*”

Let that cry spread, not in heads, but in hearts, and you won’t be bothered anymore by the apathy in which the archaisms of submission and revolt get bogged down.

The joy of belonging to the incessant renewal of nature is the best antidote for the daily constraints of exploitation and denaturation. It’s the moment of innocence when children reveal themselves to themselves, before education makes the pleasure of being born be paid for with the obligation of working. There lies the secret that undoes the chain of remorse, sacrifices, sicknesses, frustrations, and aggressiveness that forges, chain-link by chainlink, the free trade of guilt-feelings.

Clemency

What motivated the gestures of clemency, which the hagiographers attribute to some potentate, monarch, general, or statesman or another? It was discounts on spiritual profiteering; a moral profiteering that is to their surplus-value system what power is to money. However, did they not sweep under the carpet of their calculating coldness a true generosity, a sparkle of authentic freeness, that bursts forth constantly as if the breath of the human only needed a crack in the authoritarian character armoring to regain its inspiration?

Now, the crack is accentuated with the dismantling of authority. The price of a pardon sinks proportionally with the sinking of the price of offenses. And that happens in such a way that the effusions of natural generosity find themselves more and more frequently cleared of the accountancy of their ancestry. That now we worry less about being paid in return means that the ideas of compensation and punishment are being washed away bit by bit, faced with the exuberance of tenderness, affection, and love.

To learn how to hold up in oneself the grace of love and of being friendly dispenses with all this waiting for favors from anyone or anything.

Against Punishment

Punishment doesn’t dissuade people from committing crimes, it stimulates their commission. It gives rise to competitive overstatements where the guilty passes down upon others a justice that others passed upon them. Don’t criminals act like implacable judges? They condemn, punish, pardon, or execute their victims without deferring to the laws of a universal justice. His tax on his victims is his wage, and he knows that if he’s arrested he’ll settle his accounts.

Such is the unstoppable logic of exchanges; it reproduces itself endlessly. But it’s not a human law, it’s merely the law of an economy where everything’s paid for.

To condemn violence, rape, and bombings and to call instead for a legalism that kills, imprisons, rapes, and tortures is to take part in the inhumanity of a market called “justice”, it is to resign yourself, with a secret urge for revenge, to behaving like a judge and like a criminal.

No matter how constrained I feel by working to survive, and, in the same instant, to react violently to defend myself — since I won’t tolerate threats of any kind — no one will make me give in to believing in the “virtue” of work nor the “justice” of “taking an eye for an eye”. A

civilization that has the pretension of creating a new humanity of its own negates itself unless it puts all its energies into breaking the cycles of crime and punishment, and thus doing away with justice.

Although I've been drawn at certain hours of the day and night into a game whose rules belong to the mercantile universe, I never made a choice to enter willingly into it, and so I don't really care if I've won or lost, and all that will suit me is to get out of it. He who, gathering the randomness of pleasures, avoids the beaten paths of self-punishment and its exorcisms, mocks the concepts of judging and being judged.

Guilt Feeds Violence

Let there be no more culpability, but only errors, since there is no error that does not contain its correction within itself. Even that most irreparable of criminal acts, the assassination, has more of a chance to efface morality if it takes on an attitude that favors life, starting with that of the murderer, than it does if it perpetuates the poisonous shadow of punishment, redemption, atonement.

Put as much energy into pushing away guilt feelings as you do into maintaining them, and you will much more surely turn away the violence of death, whether it is brutal or underhanded, than you would by repressing them. And that violence is nothing but the inversion of the will to live; it does not participate in human nature, but in its denaturation; it does not enter into the creation of man by man but into the system of generalized exploitation which imposes the supremacy of work over orgasmic enjoyment.

Abolish the Prisons

The disgusting reign of prisons will never be stopped until everyone learns how to stop imprisoning themselves in behavior economized by the reflexes of profit and exchange.

The less animalness is trapped within the character-armor, becoming enraged by perpetual frustrations, the more it will open the doors of enjoyment as well as of progressive refinements, and the more the horror of enclosing the condemned in cells will become obvious to everyone, since they are in the prisons not for their misdeeds but because they have exorcised the demons that up until then had imprisoned the honest people in them.

For all the progress that humanism calls for in its vows, they are quite reasonably shaken by all this. If the prisons were to disappear right now, when enjoyment has not had its rights restored, they would merely be making way for aerated psychiatric institutions, as is desired by the therapists, who anesthetize the violence of frustrations in those condemned to everyday slavery.

Isn't it time yet by now that we put enough of ourselves into loving ourselves that we want nothing more than great happiness at the bottom of our hearts and attach ourselves to others for the echo of our happiness in them, and love them for the beauty of the love they give us?

I refuse to be surrounded by roles, functions, character; I hate to be fixed and trapped in what isn't me. What real, authentic encounter could occur in a place where the obligation to appear as representation keeps me from ever really being me?

All that matters to me is the presence of living people, in which all the freedoms that can't be shut down by judgment converge.

Untie the Ties

Questions without response are most often knots that only time can untie, because, tangled in the twists and turns of an upside-down world, they come undone on their own the moment Life readjusts.

Since the unsolvable obeys a logic which has no final solution except death, there is in every question an unheard resonance that carries emotions of joy and happiness. In this sense, nothing is less futile than the tenderness of a glance, the taste of a morning coffee, a Boccherini trio, a Mozart aria, a ray of sunlight between palm fronds, the bloom-like opening of a lover's hand, the smell of love which is more eloquent than the words of love. It is from there that so many desires, discouraged by circumstances hostile to their accomplishment, regain force; it is from there that they are liberated from the contortions of bitterness and of the dissatisfaction that comes of all the questions that every day poses when one suffers from an inextricable self-doubt, demanding to no longer be renounced, demanding to desire endlessly.

Pleasure smashes linear time, wherein life flows according to the rhythms of the economy, according to the chain of exchanges, along the lines of installment payments on an imminent justice. What is done out of constraint and necessity can only be understood, and, inseparably, transformed, by means of the freeness of enjoyments.

Pleasure is at the source of an inexhaustible self-confidence, which is the opposite of faith in Gods and Causes, that is, faith in the economy running the world. One satisfied desire engenders ten more, each with the promise of a singular happiness.

That's why happy people find within themselves no reason to wish death or punishment on anyone.

Against Respect Being Owed to Life

Do you want to perpetuate contempt for life? Then, impose "respecting" it! The old imperative, "thou shalt not kill" — is this not the cornerstone on all the butcher's shops?

Every time adults set themselves up as authoritarian guides for children, they communicate to them nothing but their incomprehension. I need see nothing more to prove this besides the cruelty which has been for such a long time imputed to children as though it were "human nature" and which has never been anything but the product of education.

To slander 2 year old children by calling their behavior sadistic when they crush an ant colony willingly shows numerous aberrations in the dominant thought-process, which is so separated from the living that it sees the mark of death precisely where life is groping to make its uncertain way.

By crushing the beasts that come and go, the little ones are in fact being initiated into the mysteries of movement and immobility. Underneath their feet, the moving trails stop, and are scattered into a series of little specks. The same ludic approach to learning incites the child to seize the cat by its tail, to tear the leaves off a plant. So then how does that rhyme with the concert of reprimands, reproaches, and saddened indignation? It has the effect of changing an experience

which only lacked that discretion in the face of malaise, wherein guilt slides away along with the secret come-ons of the forbidden.

The pleasure of innocent discoveries petrifies the child suddenly beneath the cold stare of medusa-like reprobation. And so we see, that one ceases to love at the moment that new notions have need of love in order to be interpreted and to enter into a vaster knowledge. Sudden repression sets off a reflex of transgression; pleasure gets stuck in anguish, a stone is added to the neurotic citadel of the years to come when enjoyments will be imprisoned and tortured, destroyed and satisfied negatively. Ordinary sadism begins there.

The commodity logic of competition always implies the intelligence of that which, placing itself in opposition to this well-established idiocy, is nothing, in its modern state, but the same idiocy a contrario. That the authoritarian and repressive attitude of adults gives rise to duplicitous and unpredictable children has, in that way, brought back into style for a time the “laissez-faire” theory popularized successfully by american pediatrics. As if to give the child the freedom to let off steam by tormenting animals didn’t implicate that the child would undergo at the same time the effect of parental guilt and frustration. It’s true that a frank and necessary cruelty served quite well the designs of a generation that occupied itself with experimenting with the effect of napalm on the movement of vietnamese ants. Every time “nature” is used as an excuse to justify a social behavior, it is curious that plants and animals are always used to illustrate appropriation, the law of the strongest, competitive confrontation, and everything else that might be useful to the economy. If the experience of beings and things carries a risk of cruelty, isn’t it proper that a human education would deal with that? To demonstrate the existence of universal gravitation, it is not necessary to throw a man out the window from the fifth story; nor is it necessary to have recourse to killing things to explain movement and immobility. Like going hunting with your camera instead of your gun does away with killing and helps you learn the pleasure of wandering through the woods, to lay in wait, and to seize an instant of life, in the same way a consciousness of being alive propagates itself little by little and weaves a subtle network between self-enjoyment and so many other things — plants, crystals, animals, the shape and lines of landscapes, the forms of clouds, pieces made by people’s creative genius.

A child who throws his glass of milk on the ground is testing the limits of the material the cup is made out of, and at the same time he is testing the guarantee of affection. The brutal reprobation constantly given to the child about the fragility of the glass does not open the doors of knowing and enjoyment, but rather it opens the doors of anguish and a morbid desire to destroy to attract attention.

On the other hand, the feeling, which to the child is easily perceptible, that it was an error and not a fault, that it gets from reassuring sympathy, makes for a comprehension which is eminently human: the quality of the glass, its form, its light, the secret life revives the pleasure of concretely helping itself to everything, which concretizes a presence which is in fact that of the ubiquity of the living, of Life; a ubiquity long ago usurped by the gods, by heaven, by spirit, by intellect.

The Decline of the Doctors

A double evolution announces the end of the morbid marriage that fomented the sick and the doctors. According to the first, the sick man thinks that he needs a doctor; according to the second, that he is, like the doctor himself, a living being that is afraid to live.

Medicine has never so sovereignly imposed its power over death and suffering, and never have its efforts ended up so vain before the specter of incurable illnesses; the sickness of surviving with them obliterates the body. The truth is that medicine can vanquish everything but the essential thing – the fatigue of having to work all the time and everywhere. What a discouragement is cancer, where cells, frenzied in the shadow of death, proliferate in an extravagant life-reaction which kills them! What a defiance is AIDS, which opposes to the triumph of immune-system medicine the absolute collapse of the organism's immunity!

Medicine was created in the image of commodity civilization. Its apogee has made the fanfare of well-being resonate to the four corners of the world, a world where whole species disappear, where the chemical and nuclear miasmas poison the air, where fertilizers [and genetic engineering] sterilize the soil instead of fertilizing it.

The Power and the Powerlessness of Medicine

Having attained the summits of efficiency and inefficiency, the medical world falls from the heights of its essential pretensions to crouch hidden in an existential reality: the morbid relations between individuals and themselves.

The 19th century held sacred the science of man and the art of the medicine-man, seeing in them not so much the progress of knowledge but the increase in quotas on the market of human material.

Weathering the years when a thousand people weren't even worth a coffin-flag, being a doctor was hardly any bigger of a deal than being a barber, clown, or executioner. The avaricious morality of capitalist development had to first begin to consider and examine human beings with as much attention as they'd pay to the carving on a coin before the rough rubbing chiropractics of university jargon elevated the doctors to the status of laborious and effective technicians, in order that they might become, on orders from an accelerated industrialization, the experts *on the body at work*. While the surplus value torn from the mining towns gave a stipend to the progress of research, it appeared to be clear that the object of choice for the most respectable of sciences is generally the machine, and in particular, the mechanized-man, which quite usefully prolongs the life of the machine.

Judge the popularity of medicine when the production-machine split itself up and became a consumption-machine too as the pharmaceutical industry, having discovered a vast potential market in the proletariat, democratized the use of health concerns products.

Whereas doctors were once merely prestigious, they became indispensable. Their function was bureaucratized for the "well being of all" and its mission is no longer curative but socialist. They

militate in a sanitary organism which, in the name of Social Security, makes sure that there are plenty of remedies for those who work everyday just to die a little more.

Nevertheless, the decline of it all announces its coming. Bureaucratic routine, the power of the pharmaceutical monopolies, the crumbling of specialized therapies, coincide with an overprotection of health that contrasts starkly with the malaise in civilization. Mistrust becomes embittered on contact with a pharmacopoeia which heals the stomach by sickening the kidneys, and participates in the same industrial system of power, which denatures the earth and man in the name of happiness.

Add to that the bankruptcy of the protector-state, incapable of assuring anymore a social security that the proletariat of highly-industrialized societies put away over the years with its conquests and acquisitions.

Basically, a growing moroseness has invaded the market of death and sickness, and opinions balance between disturbance and relief at the sight of its disappearance, after the fashion of convalescents who are assured that they can walk without crutches and who don't dare believe it.

Parallel Medicines

The collapse of the traditional medical market has not failed to stimulate the promotion of parallel markets. In the same way as the marginal development of sustainable industries puts the unsustainable industries' markets in a growing discredit, an abundance of alternative medicines gets ready to oust surgical and chemical therapies, which are more and more contested.

The phenomenon, which was predicted back in the 60s, is in fact just a part of the commodity logic which the second half of the century popularized the consciousness of; the slipping of frenzied production into accelerated consumption, the passage from authority to seduction, from tyranny to laxity, from sectarianism to openness, from the high cost of transgression to low-priced hedonism.

Illnesses are most often a kind of workplace accident. Once the body sours on being made to function as a machine of production and consumption all the time and in every terrain, it goes wrong, jams, and seizes up. Fleeing the stress of routines and a set of plans that seem suddenly absurd to it, the body seeks refuge, repose, anesthesia, or lethargy in coryza, infarction, fractures, hemiplegia, and cancer. The paradox of medicine is that its intervention is as indispensable as it is noxious. It repairs the machine for new performances on the journey of marketability, where machinelike behavior leads to the decline of Life.

Although they close themselves into the same lucrative traditions as their rivals do, the natural medicines open the door to a freeness which will dismiss those traditions one day. Besides, the techniques now being developed will allow for a new energetic harvesting of the profusion of solar, vegetable, terrestrial, aeolian, and thalassic energies.

The contradictions they cultivate by demanding payment for a natural freeness, which itself is demanded elsewhere, act in a revelatory fashion. They underline the morbid duality of healthy and unhealthy, and show concretely how those who long for health also long for sickness.

Therapeutics without violence, in their project of making behavior natural again, have spread the opinion that each person is his or her own source of vitality and of languor, that it intervenes

consciously and unconsciously — and in any case, more than has been admitted — in the conflict in which the body is the permanent field of battle and of maneuvers.

Whereas classical medicine uses heavy artillery to annihilate sickness, sometimes annihilating the sick themselves, the guerilla warfare of natural medicines solicits participation from the patient in the curative effort; it calls upon the patient to fight to get better and shows him that he is the same as the caduceus where the two serpents of health and sickness are coiled around one another.

When doctors believe less and less in medicine, patients come to believe that they are capable of cutting short their own illnesses and healing themselves, using nothing from the healers — certified or not — except as a placebo or preservative against doubt, which could reasonably hide from them their chances of success.

When it comes to knowing if life gains from the change, nothing's less sure. To become your own doctor — is this not to learn to heal your own illness? To concoct herbal teas, to buy the whole gamut of expensive, organic and pure products, to hold yourself to diets and to abstinence from alcohol, these things make healthy men the enlightened consumers of a latent morbidity. Thinking that this would make way for individual autonomy, they end up only with self-managed prisons for it.

The Language of the Body

For those who accept the pact with daily dying as though it were fate, nothing proves that chemical medicine is worth as much, if not more, than light-therapy. For a patient accustomed to being raped and abused, the medical knuckle-sandwich has more of a chance of convincing and healing than the sickly and sluggish approach of the new practitioners.

Besides, the whole business is concluded in advance, once adults turn to medicine as they would turn towards their mother's bellies or the male protection of their fathers, once they renounce leading themselves alone down the trail of nascent sickness and sounding out the language of the body with a grammarian's solicitude. Isn't it all about giving a ludic, rather than dramatic, turn to such questions as: "why am I starting to get sick?", "why am I feeling this particular pain in my heart rather than in my kidneys, why this kind of *affliction* (and this is a remarkable word¹, which can designate both sickness and love, as if it contained sickness born from absent love and love that keeps sickness at bay)?"

Perspicaciousness would be useful for the discovery of the lexicon and syntax by means of which the body expresses itself as long as it is at leisure to speak. Since if we are hardly interested in its manifestations of well-being, wouldn't it have to cry out in pain to make itself listened to?

What is the meaning of a nascent rheumatism, a migraine, a sharp pain, a dislocation, nausea? Why these awkwardnesses which make us break things as if something was getting knotted up inside us and threatened to break us? Each must respond in his or her own way, since the language of the body differs from one body to the next, and nonetheless the conflict is the same everywhere: it opposes the will to live to the reflex of death that denies it.

¹ "affection" in french could be translated as affliction as well as affection/emotion — tr.

The Birth of the Morbid

The fear of death is nothing but an ordinary disguise for the fear of life. All medical profits come from holding up the one and aggravating the other.

With what solicitude, with what fervor do they secretly welcome sickness, persuaded that they were born to pay for a few ephemeral moments of happiness with years and years of unhappiness. Work and bargaining have so totally depreciated the pleasure of living that one can hardly gaze upon them without setting in motion a reflex of death and failure.

In the beginning there was the game, and the game became drama. When it was a question of escaping school, getting out of chores, getting the caresses that it felt deprived of, the child excelled in the art of being sick, with the virtuosity of a chess champion. These are not feigned sicknesses, but sicknesses put into play — to the point that emotional attention takes them out of play, at least if they are employed with the necessary intelligence.

So much energy is invested daily in suicidal resignation that the habit of obsessing over death only awaits a signal from fatigue and confusion to wrap those with that habit up in the cocoons of sickness, where they will justify their regression to the fragile state of existence of childhood by deferring to some infirmity.

Only an amused lucidity seems capable of putting an end to such harmful dispositions, of ridiculing the morbid and dramatic exaltation of the first feelings of faintness and discontent. It is still necessary, in order to accede to the grace of “gai savoir” (happy, relaxed wisdom), that we base our efforts on an irrepressible will to live, without which an intelligence of causes turns into the last words of the condemned beneath the guillotine.

Of course, we live in a state of permanent paradox, stirring up hate to make us love, hounding us to give up this life where each of our gestures cries out the decline, judging it necessary that we be pulled to pieces by work, and judging futile the effort that orgasmic enjoyment requires? How close we are to the creation of the living, in spite of the conjurations and evil spells of sickness and boredom! Like a moment of love and joy, dissipating the sickly fog that we have become accustomed to complacency in, has the sovereign power to unmake it all this evening — like a game that the rules don’t apply to anymore — it is the cancer of this society which sketches out the morning.

In the instants when we belong to ourselves completely — rare and exceptional as they may be — is there not more science and intelligence to be extracted from those instants than there are in all the therapies, which extol their own curative powers on the back of an incurable life-sickness?

Drugs

With the scarcity of wars, riots and revolutions which once served as pretext and expedient for the well-rooted cult of death, there is nothing left now to nourish the refusal of life, *ultima ratio*, except for the battle of each person against him or herself. And it’s a conflict that is easier to get out of now than it was in the olden days, when it strangely enough appeared quite small before the vast conflagrations of conflict between nations and social classes. On a related subject, however: Let us not underestimate to what point the arms-market has made way for the drug-

² changer son fusil d’épaule is the expression used here, which means to “change your mind”; I have literally translated the french here to retain the allusion — tr.

market, not only of heroin and cocaine, but further still, of the medications that the pharmacists are the very official dealers of; in many ways, the propaganda of death has done nothing but changed the shoulder it rests its rifle on — and now it's shooting from the left one.²

The Devaluation of Suffering

The decreasing credit given to pain assuredly is one of the reassuring signs of our times. It has been a long time that we've been waiting for it to stop being considered redemptive. Chased out of the corner-store of positive values, it excites us less to compassion and to purchasable relief now, and makes us more resolved in our will to finish off its deplorable detritus and eradicate it before it starts addicting us like a drug.

How many generations have been exasperated by its moaning, playing the part of the mourners in the funeral procession of desire, opportunism, ascent to honors, ridding itself of its pain by inflicting it upon others, spoiling gastronomy with ulcers and making the thorns the glory of the rose-tree.

Sadly for the dilettantes and supporters of pain, there is no more success, no more prestige, no more power. Work no longer sanctifies the idiots that courageously sacrifice themselves to it, and if it's still anything more than a sickness, a misery, a misfortune serving as a selling point, then it's just a ridiculous act, like one might plagiarize from the melodramas of the past.

It goes without saying that the depreciation of pain coincides with the decline of the functioning that was imparted to it economically.

The ideology of suffering as useful and agreeable to the gods, to the State, to morality, came in perfect accord with the indispensable sacrifice of the self on the altar of production. On the other hand, it is a resolutely opposed ideology which has countered the furbelows of seduction with the necessity of consumption. To the ascetic reprimand, "Put up with the pain; no pain, no gain" the cheerful response, "Please yourself" has come. In order to sell off their substitute pleasures, it didn't seem too frivolous to lend a smiling mask to the anguish, bitterness, and dissatisfaction which double the bill on commodity pleasures.

We have for too long confused natural suffering — such as it comes from the dialectic of life, with its incidentally random distribution of pleasures and displeasures — and denatured suffering, which the prohibitions placed on enjoyment have resulted in, the reductive mechanisms of work, the inherent guilt involved in exchanges, the perspective which aligns beings and things by taking death as its convergence point.

If it is true that sickness fills the voids that frustration creates in the body — since it's the opposite of a feeling of plenitude — that also means that enjoyment is the absolute guarantee against anguish, morbid states, and precocious agony.

The Curative Powers of Enjoyment

As an example, here is the observation made by a pediatrician while he was making his consultation. To attenuate the pain of having her broken arm put into a cast, a little girl of six years discovered spontaneously the analgesic power of the pleasure she got by caressing her breasts. Her mother, annoyed by this conduct, which she deemed obscene, wanted to make her stop. It is

to the merit of the pediatrician that he opposed the mother's remonstrance, and tried to explain the good basis of such a behavior.

Enjoyment pushes pain away. There's a truth that deserves attention from the scientists, since it could change the basis of scientific research entirely. If it is admitted that patients who react in a lively way to the pain that overwhelms them (and who react before they're brought down by it) actually increase by 70 percent their chances of getting better, it must be admitted as well that there is a certain aberration to taking the inverse path, starting from a morbid state, where whether one likes it or not, the enjoyment that is brushed aside from life seeks its satisfaction in suffering, sacrifice, and death to try to restore some kind of health.

When will you give some vacation time to the students of the school of sado-masochism, of education according to the spirit of work, those who are being initiated into the world of forced labor where progress means a lack of emotion, and who have been so educated in that terrible way that the therapists don't even know to what extent their sicknesses are actually chosen out of nostalgia?

The Will to Live and Its Consciousness

Knowledge in the fields that medicine has abusively reserved control of for itself should consist in dialog with the body. Sickness speaks, it seems, wherever desire has been forced to shut up and deny itself. It is the task of each of us to discover, if we wish, in what places and how a nascent voluptuousness is cornered, curled up, and shriveled up in painful nodes that medicine can only cut off, since, failing that, it can't get the body to consent.

However, separate thought, no matter how lucid it is when it concerns itself with the rifts where desires are stuck whining, cannot easily restore the vital equilibrium of the body. Only the passion of life and of self-love can vanquish the doubts and fears slowly installed in the heart from birth; only passion, attentively directed at each of the pleasures of the day and the night, can really transmute the primary impulses into the refinement of desires that is the sole substance of the human.

A new consciousness is discovering its practice. Doctors believe less and less in medicine, the sick sees less and less the effect of the daily repression of the pleasure of living in his sickness, the body refuses slowly its traditional status as a production machine, a consumption machine and a passion-crushing machine, in the whirlwind of compression and decompression. It's the end of the times when bodies assimilated themselves into a workplace. No suffering is justifiable, since no enjoyment demands renunciation. A living totality discovers the power of creation and of creating oneself. The earth's dreams and the body's dreams are the same; they mark the taking back of a desirable reality from the gods of power and money, a reality where suffering, sickness, prohibitions and socially-financed death have no more place.

From Intellectual Labor to Relaxed Knowledge

Separate thought has only ever produced an intelligence of self-denying life.

From the combined triumphs of physics, chemistry, medicine, math, astronautics, biology, architecture, psychology, and sociology has not so much come happiness, but oppression and money. The sciences have propagated well-being throughout the world within the limits of supply and demand, taking human activity and pressing it back into market activity.

We have gotten a lot of hell for incriminating progress and the other side of its coin from those who are proud of having exploited and raped nature down to the atom, from those who tear an energy of death from a nucleus of life, an energy quite useful for illuminating our shanty-houses and healing the cancer that nuclear pollution causes. What kind of a favor can we expect from a “progress” that is brought about by a commodity process that is based on the pillage of everything living?

A Science of Exploiting Men and Nature

How can we be satisfied with a peace that only keeps war at bay as long as doing so satisfies mercantile interests?

How can we be content with a peaceful knowledge that the mere whiff of the scent of profits makes spin about in the opposite direction? Above all, how can we tolerate that creativity makes its inventions by following a thread of pleasures and then gets cut off with the knife of marketability? Electrical ampules, useless to free energies; so many patents bought from the inventors only to be destroyed; these are only the visible parts of a terror which is held aloft by a knowledge that is no longer secret but is now inherent in the secret reality of desires. Will creation, seeking out its poets, have to find instead only the pocket-calculators of cost price?

Reality Falsified

The economy has rearranged the universe according to its perspective; it has imposed its particular meaning on every eye, on thought, on gestures, on the spoken word, on the sensations – but its power isn’t so absolute that it prevents us from perceiving the part played by inviolate nature, outside its Medusa’s gaze.

A reality has been given to us as though it were the only one that existed, and still, in its rudimentary material and spiritual duality, it is only the reality fabricated by the work of exploiting nature, stretching all the way to the mechanical conditioning of the body. Its inhumanity had to be cut off in a scandalous way from the humanist pretensions that it produced in order that people might at last turn away from an abstract knowledge, and begin to try to come face to

face with their desires. I have too much to make of the earth and of my life, hour by hour, to preoccupy myself anymore with the speculations that take the world to a place I don't want it to go to. The real science we have to create is the science of self-enjoyment, *hic nunc et semper*¹.

The Wall of Separate Knowledge, Or the Hopelessness of Science

Knowledge has found itself to be separated from life as the producer of its desires, of the spirit of the body, and of the intellectual labor of manual labor. Thought has had nothing to get to know but abstract thought and abstract people, empty forms which concrete individuals do not enter into without emptying themselves. The thought of the economic era has spun in place for 10 thousand years, walled into a circle which fences off the reality of desires and of natural freeness.

A thought that excludes and denies life only moves forward by denying itself and excluding itself. The universal library of ideas has based its diversity on a constant banality wherein the old dresses itself up as the new, and the critical spirit disguises itself as a new conformism.

The assault on theology made by philosophy, its rebellious servant, translates the preeminence of the earthly economy onto its celestial representation, like the decline of the sacred and the victory of desacralized desires tell the story of the end of the agrarian structures and the conquest of the world by commodity modernity. Nothing really changes except the form of this invariable oppression.

Every time intellectuality has clarified the project of human emancipation, it has obscured it just as soon by taking the part of the spirit-mind over the chaos of matter — the dominion of mental inhibitions over the impulses of the body. From the beginning, every attempt at demystification has failed, disenchanted; they could feel early on that they were taking down one lie just to put up another.

The drama of separate thought is that it is nothing without the body, and yet it treats the body as if it was worthless to it. We know at what point religion got the last word in on the philosophies that supplanted it — at the very point where ideas became powerless to change life; and that was where it announced that fear and the consolation of dying was the final truth.

The feeling that one has a life to create has remained foreign to philosophy too, and foreign as much to the ideologies and the sciences as to the theologies. We know why intelligence has so often sparkled as soon as one comes to a dead-end: thinkers exorcise, by explaining things and beings, their desperately unexplored lives because they weren't reducible to concepts. The fables of the gods, of heaven, of pure spirit, have been the object of more scrupulous study than has been the existence of human beings born on this earth. There's no mystery of life, only a supposed "mystery" held up by work, which denies life and presses it down into a dark night where impulses become frightening monsters.

Doubtless, we should rejoice today that there is a knowledge being formed which is more focused on nature and on the body, but so much knowledge, though useful to life, is no less useless in the individual approach to the destiny one must create for oneself, and remains in the hands of people more concerned with prestige and business than they are impassioned by the alchemy of the original libido, through the transmutation of human needs.

It is a happy thing that the bankruptcy of power has brought with it a democratization of knowledge. Assuredly, culture is debited and paid off in installments, adjusted according to pro-

¹ here now and forever — tr.

motional sales. What is paid for only very slightly ever enters into the moments of happiness that we create.

On the other hand, what a wealth there is in the “city of comfort”, the Capernaum of the sciences, in the warehouses of separate thought; what a passionate curiosity will be provoked one day when people go through the accumulated bric-a-brac, encompassing and utilizing it in their approach to their pleasures.

Allergic to a Certain Knowledge

The inflation of abstract knowledge sends the knowledgeable away, both those who know everything about the world and nothing about themselves, as well as those ignorant ones who have everything to learn about their desires and cannot learn about them except through repressing them.

In the 1980s we saw new generations getting a kind of glory out of their ignorance and lack of culture, to the great chagrin of intellectuals carved from the rock of journalistic erudition. And didn't it become their goal to receive nothing, since that was better than getting only a knowledge stripped of its use-value which served only as coin for making exchanges in the pointless transactions of authority and profits? If it was terribly despicable to have to educate oneself in order to earn money and honors, ridiculousness was added to contempt as soon as the compensation was neither guaranteed nor worth anything anymore.

But no matter how deplorable their ignorance, they happened also to end up clarifying the refusal of a knowledge imposed from without, distributed with compassionate looks in the name of the sovereign pontiffs, Marx, Freud, and whoever else. It was also a rejection of the economic criteria that hierarchized knowledge according to the demands of a job market, and of the servile attitude that comes from the degradation of creativity when it is made to go work some job.

Everyone can see much more clearly now to what point knowledge is whitewashed and people brainwashed in a system of social integration where everything ends up undertaken out of duty and not out of pleasure. If school-kids endure so much pain in order to learn and have to undergo whippings, imprecations, prayers, and seduction by power, it's only because the exigencies of work and the effort that is required by the game of a awakened and marveling curiosity have nothing in common. As long as the science of education is based on the lucrative morality of work and not on the enjoyments that are the source of creation, the children who build sumptuous palaces with sand, earth, boards, cards and dreams, will reach adulthood and, with all the most expensive materials available to them as adults, will never build anything but cities and habitats in the form of barracks, factories, and old folks' homes. And this is not just some small aberration of their education, but the natural result of the fact that children have an abstract knowledge imposed on them, when the children are the beings closest to life of all. Would anyone be surprised that school, set up to make men and women out of the boys and girls, instead produces abortions that grow old while they're still young, as versed in the sciences as they are ignorant of what they truly want and desire?

Bring Knowledge Back to Life

Commodity expansion has never ceased paving the roads of knowledge further and further, and still neither they nor the boldest scientific discoveries ever seem to go any further than the

distance the drawer springs out from the cash-register. Knowledge has restored the unity of the universe, discovering far off lands, unveiling macrocosms and microcosms. But that unity is only a false one, one that participates in the religious lie, marrying the earth to the heavens by force and substituting itself for the fundamental agreement between life and nature.

It was enough that the international market hit on hedonism for its new commodity in order that it could become clear to what extent science mocks desire when it escapes the packaging into which the imperatives of consumption fold themselves.

And then, since the progressive slipping from the sensual to the mental, from the lived to its representation, needed great gestures to sweep things together; it needed people to regain the naive curiosity of children and try to touch with their fingers what they wanted to get to know, mocking all the discourse.

We can't make anything of a knowledge that remains foreign to the waltz of our regrets and joys. There's too much pleasure to discover in the world by discovering ourselves to be content with reading and rereading endlessly the balance sheet of a universe where only numbers change, and where everything is reduced to numbers. It is indeed time now to introduce the magicians of infancy and dreams into the arsenal of the sciences, in order that so much inventive wealth isn't paid for with our indigence. One exploration alone will have the privilege of opening up the doors of a dead horizon on the infinite expanses of the living; the adventure into the galaxy of desires.

The Scientific Truths of Power

A scientific truth that doesn't inscribe itself into the incontestable progress of the human only expresses an inhuman truth and doesn't merit being paid attention to.

Think about what a travesty it is that there isn't a single infamy in history that hasn't used knowledge and the sciences as a guarantee of its authority. Private property, the fatherland, competition, the survival of the strongest, God, inequality, racism, the inferiority of women, the excellence of nuclear energy — all these terrible things have been crowned with the laurels of truth and have incited great marveling at the "discoveries" that supported them. No one is surprised that the "proofs" that guaranteed them status as established facts were based on reasons even more peremptory than the economic imperatives of the time that confirmed their good basis.

The meaning of an observation, of an experience, or of a theory, are preexistent in the behavior of the observer, the experiencer, or the theoretician. That science participates in the exploitation of nature for profit — science is just *work*, too, after all — explains well enough why so many scientific truths proceed from an implicit contempt for life as enjoyment and creation.

This contempt has varied through different people and eras, but there are few examples of knowledgeable people whose morbidity, stiffness, asceticism, lack of generosity, and ignorance of love have not had their inventions and discoveries infected by some kind of ignoble germ.

The racist vanity of the linguists and biologists of the 19th century built up the "science" of race-inequality on foundations which were thought to be eminently rational. The progress of police perspicaciousness, the need to isolate dangerous elements from the social magma — these were the bases for the establishment of sociology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis as sciences. Medicine multiplies its successes by seeing the body as a complex machine whose secrets could be penetrated in the same way as the secrets of the earth could be delivered up to derricks and

translated into stockquotes; they did this to such an extent that, guaranteeing the denaturation that produces cancer, it also produced, to try to heal that cancer, a lucrative pharmaceutical industry. There's nothing, not even the supposedly eternal truths, that isn't in a certain sense "fabricated" according to a spiritual sense of its meaning and place; thus we see universal gravitation perpetuating the idea of a divine clock, a mechanical perfection of the universe; thus we see the big bang start to smell of the god-hypothesis, that old fart under the covers; thus we see the development of genetic manipulation — and we needn't wonder how the people who manipulate genes behave daily, and the place love has in their lives.

How can a extracted by suffering not be the reflection of a reality imposed at the price of pain and heartache? A science that needs to sacrifice men, animals, forests, landscapes, and ecological equilibria in order to progress is a science of death. A researcher who favors his function and his role over his life — like we see in these specialized "bosses", full of bitterness and contempt, defending tooth and nail the petty territory of their specialization — never finds anything but future cemeteries.

Joyful Wisdom

Joyful wisdom is the free usage of knowledge by the will to live.

The culture market has accumulated a considerable sum of pre-programmed experiences that we don't know what to do with since most often we're ignorant of our desires. It's true that a knowledge that is sold and demands that one move away from oneself in order to buy it doesn't really concern me at all. Markets change the products they offer, but they never offer anything to change life. However, there's a lot to reclaim from this science that remains essentially foreign to us because it proceeds from familiar and separate thought, if our desires can turn the use of that science to its favor. Nothing must be thrown down the memory-hole any more except the imprint of death, which is the imprint of separation.

There's no erudition, no exact knowledge, no speculation, no reverie that doesn't follow the pattern of the fantastic geometries whose unsuspected practical application will be discovered one fine day; they are waiting to take shape in the diversity of individual destinies.

To the extent that the feeling of natural freeness prevails, concern with gaining knowledge in the domains that awaken curiosity with the sting of desire blazes a trail to the emotional charm of learning and teaching. It's just a question of learning through indiscretion, and no longer through constraint.

It's a part of children's nature to ferret around everywhere, and show themselves to be curious about everything. But what kind of response do they get for their questions? We rebuke them, we tell them to be silent so we don't have to oppose to them our embarrassed ignorance, even if it means later teaching them with scholarly ramblings on with computerized solutions, the utility of which is lost to them.

Because it participates in a passionate quest — a quest for the Grail of enjoyment and self-creation — joyous wisdom aspires to get to know everything and comprehend everything about the omnipresence of life, starting with the labyrinth of desires, of which everyone is the course and the center. We know the kind of sickening responses that are most often given to that abruptly posed question — what would you wish for, what would make you the happiest you could be? This question really addresses the intellect, and displeasingly recalls the dissuasive threat made

to children as soon as they experience their desires plainly — “do you really even know what you want?” No, they don’t know; they’re trying to figure it out, but everything colludes to dissuade them, and later, they will have nothing but the “choice” between the heads or tails of one in the same renunciation — to have a lot of money, to get off on having peace of mind. But to be fully within one’s body and in the world?

Now that the child escapes economic castration a little more, we will doubtless see learning one day soon begin to base itself on that confidence that assures the feeling that one is loved for who one is, and not for one’s merits. No lesson is impressed into the mind if it doesn’t pertain above all to desires, and if it isn’t gone back over and constantly perfected. To understand is to take it upon yourself to satisfy your pleasures, and the pleasures of your peers, at least of those who understand in the same way. Knowledge doesn’t come from masters or disciples, it is part of the passion of love, which discovers and recreates the unity of intelligence and sensation.

IV. THE MATERIA PRIMA AND THE ALCHEMY OF THE I

The Child's Second Birth

The return to infancy initiates the renaissance of the human.

The malformation that withers people away comes from the fate handed to children — they are born with a nature, and they grow up with a character. The freeness of love gives them life, and society strips them of it; it is thus that the poison of business and numbers strip their trees of their leaves and their passions of their attraction.

Infancy, wealth of being impoverished by having, the morning of desire darkened by the boredom of the factories, history abridged by a civilization that substitutes mercantile efficiency for the art of being human.

Death triumphs in the planetary triumph of the economy, and everything that it destroys the hopes of works to perfect it. Enough of these revolutions that rot like the corpses of their dead! Only the creation of the living is revolutionary. The most expert profiteers of politics and commerce, who have a seismographic sense of social mutations are trying to wrap their last commodities in the last ideological packaging — they make them look alive.

They know that tenderness makes things sell — they don't realize that tenderness can't be sold, since they know nothing but economic truths. The reality of desires will bite them in the ass. Though they mix in with the deathknells of this moribund society the fanfare of interest shown to the children, they never perceive the song of the earth that will drown out their voices, nor the new harmonies of a life that is coming back to life.

The greatest danger that the irresistible rise of the living faces is not the assault of lucrative recuperations, but rather it is to be found in the reflex of fear and death, with which the ensemble of secular prohibitions weigh down enjoyment. That's why it still happens that when faced with a more and more common understanding of ecology, a furious determination suddenly arises in people to pillage nature — as the counterpoint to a growing and everywhere highlighted affection, a blind violence strikes children while they are in the embrace of the family and of society.

Assuredly, it is not by adding fear of punishment to this fear of life which incites killing that we will finish off the murderous vocations that proliferate in this society. A society never suffers any crimes but the ones it gives rise to. It's too late for this society to try to militate in defense of children now that new human relations, which call for a radically different society, have begun being born from a reconciliation of nature and infancy.

To Rediscover a Blooming Childhood, and Not a Wounded Childhood, Within Oneself

Psychoanalysis is a charitable organization which gives aid to the emotionally mutilated; it facilitates their reinsertion into the same society which mutilated them in the first place. Psychoanalysts are paid to explain how trauma gradually makes good on a debt we all apparently incurred just by being born, and to encourage us to die to ourselves.

Now the devaluation of all payment plans invites us to the freeness of nature. There's nothing but the light of present enjoyments to dissipate the obsessive specters of the past. The happiest moments of childhood come back to the surface as soon as the great breath of fullness enlivens the body like a living eternity — a strong emotion, one that most often surges forth from all the things that the utilitarian spirit judges futile: a tender gesture, a landscape, a word, a look, a tone of voice, an odor, an encounter, a taste.

No more should we accept our traumas — now we must begin to desire a state of grace. Guided by emotion, the passions will no longer flay themselves in this long scream of death which has been their history. So many crushed dreams and memories, so many lives that seek themselves out endlessly — it seems to me that there's nothing more to wish for in this world than that they find themselves and rediscover those dreams and memories.

The time has come for children to enjoy enough love that they might learn to become what they never had the chance to be while they're growing up — full men and women. The free use of creativity will guarantee a growing autonomy, emancipating children from parental and state tutelage. At last they will find the privilege of approaching the shores of love without the ridiculous detours and distortions that adults give themselves over to so ardently that the most beautiful islands become places of anguish, malady, and insanity.

Only love, reestablished in its natural freeness, will return desires to their original simplicity, to an animalness that education should refine, initiating children into their destiny — being unique in the world, in solidarity with the omnipresence of Life.

The humanization of desires forms the basis of a new education, the principles of which, however, have always been those of the simplest desires. For example, the art that gradually turns the raw, unclear sensation of a first sip of wine drunk at a young age into a development of taste and palate and a search for finer plants.

The Time Torn from the Living

The exploitation of nature has denatured even time allocated to living organisms. The contamination by the commodity has subjected the existence of algae, trees and seals to their law of universal species extinction. Add to that the ozone layer, soil and atmosphere, and you can accurately measure the speed at which the economy is realized and life is extinguished.

The universal death that we see taking place like some *Ragnarök*, apocalypse, or final judgment of the religious legends — what is it if not time pulled from the eternity of life by History, wherein the existence of the economy preprograms the non-existence of human beings? The era of the expansion of life has become the era of the expansion of commodities, subjugating biological rhythms, vacillations between excitation and repose, and the succession of systole and diastole to durations marked off by profit and loss, progress and regression, fortune and misfortune, to this “time”, which is money, evolving and losing value accordingly as the market runs its course.

The main characteristic of these times, which, for better or for worse, the producers have created, is that the times wear themselves out in the routine rhythms of business, and wear out those who business has taken the majority of the humanity out of.

The End of Age As Power and Representation

The present has no age.

The Anglo-Americans, who are typically the most taken in by the neuroses of a mercantile existence, use the word “stress” to designate the state of agitation required for the progress of business.

This frenzy is such a poor compensation for the dilapidation of nerves and of spirits that, tired of the fatigue of mechanized time, some of them have rediscovered, as if it were a privilege, an unexpected enjoyment of the present moment. They get back a little bit of themselves, they accept it, and then beg for more.

In the debacle of power, age has lost its military stripes of prestige. The conflict between generations, which for so long opposed the insolent stupidity of the young by the arrogant idiocy of the old, is starting to lack credible combatants. So it is with the collapse of all values; now archaism no longer waits until a certain age to initiate people into its miserable “mysteries”. Having set fire to all the old-growth already, the declining markets have thrown themselves pell mell into the decrepit old men, of 16 to 80 years, to try to find support. But the same weight of an annulled life equalizes young bosses and old truckers, fashionably dressed in money. The acceleration of the mechanized body makes a good market for elderliness at any and every age.

It is, on the other hand, a new phenomenon that love is taking on a greater importance for both children and aged persons; as if life was straining so greatly to be reborn that it pops up the instant work no longer exercises the full force of its authority, for some because they are full of regrets, and for others because they are thankfully escaping regrets. The happiest people are those who, whether they are too young or too old to produce and consume, discover the sensuality of present life, which is never young nor old. Aside from them, there are the men of economy, for whom age continues to be measured according to their degree of fatigue, at least for as long as love and pleasures don't make them childlike again.

The New Era Will Be That of the Children

For centuries, children's mentality has not meaningfully changed. It has remained the reflection of a struggle for power: become an adult in order to escape bullying, and then one day bully the weak themselves. That's what used to be called the cruelty of children.

In the course of a few years, though, it has suddenly started evolving. It was at first a certain confusion, a refusal to grow up and get integrated into the absurd and odious world of the adults. Since this world presented itself unilaterally as the only possible world, a certain taste for death became the expression of a general disenchantment with this journey without a specific goal. Then, the resolve to grow up a different way started to become concretized; to become a real man or woman, to carry inside oneself the fruits of a happy infancy, and not the sterile wood of its negation. Excluded from a history which was only the product of contempt for nature and for the human, children are now turning the last page on that history, and shutting the door on this archaic civilization, which interests no one anymore.

The presence of this new eventuality was enough for new banalities to be brought to the mill of public opinion and made into flour. Children aren't born to produce, but to recreate the life that created them. They are born out of the freeness of love, and the freeness of love is the only

functioning basis for their education, since it is no longer true that, in order to ably make use of a tool, a hand must unlearn how to caress and play — since it is no longer true that to learn to live must mean learning to suffer, to mutilate oneself, to sacrifice oneself, to take oneself out of one's body; emotions must no longer be prostituted as commodities by the family, the school, by society, and no one should be surprised anymore that children that are raised in that old way become miserable adults.

Those who today are putting themselves to studying this paradoxical novelty should probably be reminded that children don't come from some other planet, they just carry inside themselves a radically different planet.

To study the behavior of the embryo and of the baby will never take on its true importance until that becomes part of a vaster project, a will to restore the specificity of the child, to prevent the further raging of this enterprise of denaturation that destroys children like it destroys the whole earth.

In children, as in the people and animals that live off flora and fauna, beats the heart of a life without constraints. It's for the good of everyone's health, in this world that pulsates to the rhythm of death and is rolling towards a definitive economization, that we become totally enchanted and taken in by the music of life.

The Birth of an Alchemical Relationship

The first experiences of life occur in the discoveries of early childhood, and we know today that everything must be redone and remade, since the brutal interruption of that evolution has cut short the hopes of humanity.

These experiences begin in the maternal athanor. The body is its alchemical hearth and its materia prima. The child is created there just as much as it creates itself, the fruit of a magistry to which the woman gives a nourishment with an affective and nutritive value, wherein the embryo is formed as it learns to draw its resources from the abundance of its natural surroundings.

A more lucid look at such things established a little while ago that there is a possibility of communication with the developing infant, and that it understands when you speak to it in the language of emotional effusion, and not, obviously, in the language of business transactions.

By an enchantment that has come into its prime in our time, an alchemical relationship has elaborated itself, timidly, between these two beings, taken over by the radically new state of being they enter together, a relationship where the transmutation of a primal nature implies the simultaneous transformation of the operator of that transmutation. The adults who have been able to see clearly into the world of the newborn and truly understand the child and the new world that it contains within it have also been able to see their peers in the same regard. They are guided by the light of beings, following the sparks of life they see in them, and do not encumber themselves anymore by keeping company with the dead.

In the forms it takes on after birth has taken place, the experience of life moves away from the alchemical quest accordingly as children's social education is being imposed. In the growth of the little ones, the stubbornness of plants in drawing their life from their surroundings reappears; they try to avoid hostile terrain, and bypass it to plunge their roots in a life-giving soil. At the same time as the little beasts are getting "educated", they discover an environment that is hot and cold, full of caresses and aggression, solicitude and rejection. And already the human and

inhuman presence molds a landscape into which nature only enters artificially; the decor of a bedroom, a house, a garden, a family — one must take one's place therein and move towards an unknown destiny. It's a landscape plagued by the changes in emotional climate, storms of anger and impatience, hailstorms of attention and inattention, the tensions of guilt, the springtimes of tenderness and the ardors of love, the neurotic tornadoes, the sun-rays of plenitude, the trembling of desire and the peaceful glow of pleasure.

The signs that one can make out little by little indicate the condition of its progress. Sometimes a sweet attention encourages children to go forwards, and sometimes solitude teaches them to take initiative, to confront alone the risks of the unknown, to perfect their autonomy. Sometimes, on this quest, which people have quite often forgotten is a quest for happiness, the children cry, get frustrated, and lose hope as they become conscious of the obstacles and difficulties facing them. And it is precisely at those moments that things spoil, at the very point at which the adults, tormented by the order that governs them, resign their hearts away and make it manifest that the road of enjoyments is not the same as the road of knowledge.

If there is a mutation coming, it will be in the new communication that is being established between people, conscious of their incompleteness, and the children, sensitive to the life-potential they have within them. The Great Work, the orphic poetry which pierces the secret of beings and things and tames the most frightful furies of repressed life with the remaining liveliness they have, resides in the feeling that only the search for pleasure nourishes and stimulates the creation of the self and of the world.

There is no other framework for destiny besides the thread that weaves the tapestries of living pleasure, open to the humanization of the natural surroundings, a weaving which is recommenced every morning. The only people that ever truly begin to live are those who take the time to look upon things and beings with the marveling gaze of the pleasures which might be drawn from them — like the children who have still not forgotten how to live — no longer merely contemplating things and beings, but including them in a project of immediate and endless creation.

Brutal nature will become human nature by means of the development sensual intelligence, an intelligence not separate from life, one which has the privilege of occupying more and more the empty space left behind by the disappearance of the patriarchal family and the education of economic obedience.

Age, hardened in its hierarchy of functions and roles, has followed in the panic of time measurable by money and power. The only quality time is that of present happiness, which is the time of eternity. The future, it is clear, was nothing but a past held back hastily by a parodic sale, one which is in deficit now. What is anchored here and now has no installments to pay on the coming days.

The absolute weapon that the child has at its disposal is the affection that it believes in and proliferates around itself. There's nothing like the feeling of being loved to help one love oneself, like, inversely, respect and contempt forge the chains of smugness and self-hate. It is in this very precise sense that it is useful to understand the old adage, "Love has no age."

The Primacy of Love

Love offers us the only model there is for truly human accomplishments.

There hasn't been a moment in history when nature was brought to such an extreme degree of denaturation, and no time when such a firm will to recreate it by stripping it of what enslaves it has reared its head.

Stimulated by the conquest of commodities, the sciences have clarified one side of the planet by plunging the other side in night and ignorance. So many truths have been rolled about from tide to tide; in the blocked ports so many ships about to set sail are rusting. All voyages have stopped short in the sole, changing scenery of creeks stuffed up with soot.

To get to know things means nothing anymore if we do not come to that knowledge by means of self-enjoyment above all — that's the key to knowledge. No knowledge is worth anything at all without the consciousness of love, and there is no love that is learnt without a love of life.

Love is Irreconcilable with Economy

In the same way as life as we commonly study it is not life, but merely its economized form — an essential durability called survival — in the same way, love cannot be confused any more with the mechanisms that have conditioned it to the point that they've passed themselves off as the substance of it.

The debacle of patriarchy, then of feminism (which briefly filled the vacancy in a position of power), has taken the emotional out of an ensemble of functions that corrupted its meaning and charm: the exchange of rights and duties, the calculations of profit and loss, the struggle between the strong and the weak, the competition that rules over the war and peace of families, and the familial enterprise following in the footsteps of financial success. A demarcation line has traced itself out, with an accrued precision, between the high places of the heart and the territories under the control of the mercantile spirit.

What lovers do in a businesslike way undoes their love. The jealous appropriation of partners, women treated as conquered cities, the conjugal gearworks of frustrations and aggressiveness, the hygienic satisfaction of genital pleasure, the discredit of tenderness as a proof of weakness, of infantilism, of sickness or madness — so many archaic traits which those of us taken in by life refuse to identify with amorous passion.

These obvious things are happy banalities, which paradoxically, do not come out into the open easily on their own — love becomes lucidity when it cannot let itself be blinded anymore.

This is confirmed by the dislocation of the traditional family, which up to now failed to amalgamate the affection naturally given to children and the ignoble commodification where love is exchanged for submission, where protection sets itself up as power, where the birth of the humanity of the future only adds future workers to the production line.

The Ideology of Tenderness

Praise and derision of the commodity: at the same time as a new consciousness is denouncing the imposture of loveless love, the market of material and spiritual values sets up shop and puts up billboards selling tenderness, it “promotes” the sweetness of the soul and voluptuous agreement only in order to celebrate the great accomplishments of socialism and toilet paper.

The scapegoats, Prometheus, and Christ have furnished the first version of an illustrated propaganda of the body sacrificed to work, the body torn from life for reasons of marketability. The advertised image of love proposes the last version. The castration of desire has only changed form.

However, the final abstraction of the living rubs up too closely against the passions that it parodies and recuperates; it will not resist for much longer the will to authenticity, which is being reborn in each of us like a childhood to be perfected — even if the fear of AIDS sustains for awhile the spectacular virtues of a disembodied sexuality and perpetuates the ancestral fear of loving beneath the gaze of a phallic and HIV positive image of Christ.

The Original Sin

The fear of love is a fear of life. It comes from the prohibition promulgated by commodity civilization on the freeness of enjoyments. Love doesn't have to only be given through sacrifice, dammed up in the body and with the body only to escape through the mind and into the mind. The ridiculous conflict between the “angelic” and the carnal has filled the body so greatly with terror and frustration that it can hardly stop oscillating between chastity and rape — to which its deplorable movements often are reduced.

The body became evil incarnate in “original sin”, in the women, in a murderous self-hatred, in the “sorcery” and “witchcraft” of natural freedom. What is illustrated by the AIDS plague is the last condemnation of love, and I think that only the force of a love which rejects definitively the procession of judges and of their guilt-trips will really be able to erase the effects of AIDS and its insult to love.

The Natural Freeness of Love

There is no love for others without self-love.

Love is the simplest of human relations, and that's why they've tried everything to complicate and denature it. To the extent that the life-force is reluctant to transform itself into work-force, a new simplicity will restore love to its right of absolute sovereignty. Technical progress has produced so many inventions which have never made individual happiness any greater that each of us is inclined now to put our genius into amorous passion, and not any longer into the mechanicalness of business, for it is only within that passion that enjoyment is learned and experienced in reality.

Nothing's more important than the birth of love, except for its daily rebirth. We know that love's blurring and disorders come from childhood unhappiness, but where will the healing of that malady come from if not from the opportunity — most often refused — that adults get, to en-

sure that in every amorous encounter they will establish the absolute predominance of affection over the ensemble of mercenary preoccupations?

True life begins from the moment that love is given without constraint to children. There, the eternity of the living affirms itself. Between parents and children, between lovers, there are hours and days when affection, clouded and obsessed by what is so totally contrary to it, lacks both the time and the desire to pour out; but that changes nothing when it comes to the feeling of its indissoluble presence, because affection is part of an unchangeable reality of the heart, like the eternity of the sap irrigating the trees across the rhythms of the seasons.

“You can do anything, because I love you, and you owe me nothing.” Such is the leitmotif without which I can conceive of no specifically human learning.

A love so concerned with helping children love themselves that everything undertaken by those who are full of that love, from the first gestures to the greatest joys of life, has a great chance at bringing them happiness.

The era of the creators will commence with a love which is given and not exchanged.

Love Excludes Sacrifice

True love has only ever existed in a nascent state. Like human beings, like their civilization, like authenticity in its first eruptions or generosity in its natural freeness. We only have the beginnings — and unhappiness seems to urge these beginnings of everything to get taxed by puerility and weakness, and demand that they end up swamped by well broken-in mechanisms, which suggest “strength” and “security”.

The thirst for beginnings has come with time. Having nothing more to learn or expect from death, we have only got the choice of starting everything over again, where none of the things that had begun creating themselves end up being finished.

The death agony of the religions, which we watch thrash about today with their last twitches of rage and hypocrisy, is unveiling what they always were — a crime against life. But the critique that denounces them is no longer a critique of the spirit, that is, a critique of the essence of the religions. The consciousness of the living kicks them into the ecumenical gutter more surely than could all the sacrilegious vituperations, which ring out like the funeral orison of the corpse of religion.

All beings grow from the affection they are capable of giving. Such is the secret, or, rather, the experience of plenitude, which was so close to the heart of each of the people that the religious folk have poured their trashy exhortations to sacrifice upon.

Now, he who sacrifices himself to give love only gives an example of sacrifice. To die to oneself in order to help others only helps them die in turn.

What derision it is to claim to give pleasure to others without pleasing yourself! How can I offer pleasure if I renounce my own? Pleasure is a natural freeness, a grace that is gathered up, not exploited.

Sacrifice is irreconcilable with enjoyment, because it is by means of its mutilating effects that the language of the body becomes the verboseness of the mind, that libidinal energy is sold for a wage, that the will to live denies itself and becomes a will to power.

These are no longer the days when the maternal stork drew the free-flowing knot of guilt around the necks of children for their entire existence. From here on out, love will learn to love

itself by loving everything that's alive. Who said anything about loving everything and everyone? I can't love the messengers of death, the tortured ones who drag their cross behind them for the benefit of a world that kills them. There's too many amicable things to attach myself for me to blame those who destroy themselves, and I don't see any greater guarantee against their suicidal proselytism than seizing from instant to instant the thread of life which is spun around everything that has heart.

We have everything to learn about love, about love freed of the economic mechanisms that denature it. And I'm not trying to teach anyone any lessons here, neither about the practice of amorous relationships, nor about the art of purifying them of what denies them. The only learning that's worth anything comes from the self, from the increased consciousness that comes from individual experience. As it happens, it is everyone's responsibility to find the sovereignty of love wherever it manifests itself absolutely, to recognize it, in the convulsive beauty of pleasures, for what it really is – the gravitational center of the body, destabilized daily by work. Love is the true nature of the human.

Love is the Refinement of Desires

Love is not the transcendence of sexual needs, the street-theater farce of angels and the beast. It is the unity of the body, making order out of the chaos of desires, refining their original brutality, identifying itself only with the evolutionary principle of the human species – that all enjoyments tend to perfect themselves.

Love, given over to its sensual majesty, to the bloody torrent wherein sharpened senses give each particular being its own specific *meaning*, abolishes the rotten, old and disgusting obedience to heaven, to spirit, to the intellectual function, to the separation of people and things, of people from each-other and in themselves.

Transmutation will replace transcendence.

The Ubiquity of Love

Love becomes conscious of a symbiosis which must be created between nature and the being of desire.

Love is the transmutation of the sexual impulse into a pansexuality which corresponds most authentically to the expression and communication of the human.

Seeing everywhere the phallic and vaginal symbols that frustration impresses into their over-excited senses, the sexually obsessed are really receiving the discourse of nature, but registering it in its negative form, in the blabberings of compulsion, in the neurotic reaction of a mind troubled by the dissatisfaction of the body. Between them and impassioned lovers, there is only the distance between corporeal fullness and its absence. Being able to read environments is the same as this as well as the contrary sense of this. Here, love gives meaning to a landscape where analogical virtue discovers, in the rustling of leaves, the smell of hay, the curves of a street, the lava-flow of a wall, the gesture of a passerby, all the graces that distinguish loved beings. There, the wind in the trees, a warm gust of wind, or the gallop of a horse, incite to the brutalities of soldiers, since the mind that feels them is taken in by a spirit of exploitation for which the only thing that exists is the rigor of repressions and the aggressive decompressions of their incapacity

to reach orgasm. There's no preaching, no sermon, no political declaration, no attitude, no tic that is decipherable if one tries to interpret it in that mindset; it is, as Groddeck showed, the only primary reading that nothing escapes.

The language of enamored lovers has kept the imprint of an original language. These whisperings, these murmurs, this modulated cries, these syllables of swaying hips, which "well-informed" people mock the infantilism and animalness of — do they not express, as they do in animals and infants, the respiration of enjoyment and the state of tension that brings one to it? It's an arcane language that the breath of amorous momentum brings the living to themselves with. It's present in the embrace that unites the mother and child, nourished at her breast or cradled in her arms, and I would say that it perpetuates itself in the intimacy of one's dialogue with oneself. Don't those beings who learn to love themselves, and who secretly sharpen their desires to better realize them, don't they talk to themselves as they talk to the children they once were, and to whom they promise to fulfill so many vows and so many prayers addressed to the fairies in the fervor of youth? The incantations of the grimoires, the psalmodies of sorcery — they are but the tortured foam that appears atop a deeper and more effective magic, contained in the force of desires and on the bridges that the libidinal energy of the whole body builds to connect itself with the reality of a world which must be changed.

There's all sorts of room to believe that a sensual language is on its way to gaining power wherever the economized language of the social contract loses credibility. In other words, the signs of affection by means of which the living recognize themselves from person to person and from individual to landscape are defeating, little by little, the content of common discourse, and, even more simply, of what is said.

The Sovereignty We Must Create

The bankruptcy of a reality-system determined by the economic mechanisms that run it has brought out of its torpor a subjacent reality, secularly repressed by the history of the commodity. Love gains a sovereignty in that sub-reality that it exercises at the place from whence profit and power once reigned. It carves out a path for the general refinement of desires, which indicates the transcendence of primary needs and bases the only really human progress there is on the quest for enjoyment.

The closed world of interiority opens little by little upon a springtime of fertility, which banishes fear and anguish, dissolves the neuroses of the past, brings pleasures out into the broad daylight and plants the fallow earth from whence the commodity withdraws.

Love revokes the violence of frustrations, and invents itself a violence full of tenderness. The caressing hand erases the hand of power.

All we need to propagate abundance is to love without restraint, calculation, or prudence, until the point where we can finally hear innumerable hearts rising up with the song of the earth.

The Humanization of Nature

Exploiting nature has denatured it, while denaturing humanity. The nostalgia for a primitive nature and for its impossible return is the morbid consolation of a society sick with economy. It's not a question of re-naturalizing people and the earth, but of humanizing them by giving primacy to the living energies they harbor.

The exhaustion of natural resources and of human nature draws a demarcation-line between the men who work at it and succumb to it, a line that defines the one great confrontation to come. While the parties of death dip deeper into the well of fear and draw out the power to reign over the ruins of the spectacular and financial edifice, a unanimous cry is rising from the streets, from the forests, and from hearts: "Life above all *else!*"

Before these rumors even reached public opinion, their echoes were heard in the enemy's ranks, since there are no polluting commercialists and enterprises that don't think it advisable to campaign around "saving lives". Don't the nets of the commodity catch up the natural products, the herbal medicines, and the ecological packaging too?

Now, it is not necessary that mercantile recuperation, the bric-a-brac of new age mystics and the dumpster-scrapings of religiousness hide what is authentically revolutionary about the will to reconcile one's daily existence with living matter, with the omnipresence of the body, participated in inextricably and con-substantially by every particular being and phenomenon, every individual, social nucleus, animal, plant, mineral, all the air, fire and by the earth, which the Indians assure us possesses the art of regenerating itself, in spite of having been wounded by the contemptuous ignorance of the vermin of business.

It's not unimportant that little by little the feeling of a coexistence of different life-forms is spreading, and that the consciousness of that feeling perceived not by the Spirit, issued by celestial oppression, but by the body on its quest for psychosomatic plenitude. To feel good around children, in the company of animals, around a tree, upon touching the earth or a stone — this no longer recalls the passivity of the faithful and of a contemplative state; it's the start of a new language spoken by the individual with him or herself and with his or her peers; it is another way of being and acting, in conflict with the behavioral mechanisms which secularly impose power and marketability.

The awakening to the absolute prerogative which earthly species demand today is what will give foundation to a life-style, an attitude, in which the privilege of existing will be exercised at the moment when I accord the realization of pleasures precedence over the necessity that spoils them by paying them off and making them pay. I for one have the stubbornness of a nature that is ceaselessly being reborn — that of the ivy that breaks through the concrete — and against me there is the usury that the system of wage mediation and commodity mediation still demands.

The human approach to omnipresent nature sets spinning again a process of evolution in which individuals will create their destiny by creating a milieu that is in tune with their desires. The era of economy and of nature bendable at will is nothing but a sterile and cumbersome form, which keeps humanity from being born unto itself.

After the transformation of libidinal energy into work energy comes a will to live which draws its creative powers from the simple attraction of enjoyments.

The Rehabilitation of Animals

Reconciling with infancy coincides with rehabilitating the animal, granted its autonomous life.

The affection displayed to animals is not in itself a new phenomenon; still, it must not be confused with pity – that canker, which needs to excite to unhappiness and suffering in order to develop – nor with the bitter spite of loving one’s dog out of contempt for humanity. I am speaking here about the surges of the heart, open to everything that is alive, and which finds things to be pleased by in every privileged relationship with a domestic or family animal.

What is new, on the other hand, is the nature and stylishness of such solicitude. Not only does it not limit itself anymore to guests in the immediate environment – dogs, cats, birds, baby goats, sheep – and embraces the so called savage beasts as well, but above all it intends to recognize them in their autonomy and independence, and no longer seeks to tame or subjugate them – it no longer has the pretension of being their master.

Must it be recalled that an ensemble of mercantile interests has grafted itself onto the movement towards rehabilitating animal species, suddenly concerned by the comfort that is due to alley cats, and a tourist market that, after having sold impaled gorillas, saves the last specimens and gives them, like they gave to the Indians, the right to survive in reservations or reserves? Here as well commercial exploitation stimulates, fetters, and hides the consciousness of the living and its will to expand.

In less than 10 years, the children begin to reject the predatory behavior that so many generations had assumed was a natural trait of their being. Without a love for life, experimentation usually ends up treating animals as objects and people as guinea pigs, whether it is the work of children or of wise men. Would anyone believe that sensory intelligence, which awakens the children to the marvels of discovery without them needing to pick fledglings from their nests, destroy flowers, or tear the wings off flies, could be foreign to the revival of love?

If the child shows himself to be curious about beings, animals, things in their environments, etc., with a wisdom that is inseparable from tenderness, isn’t that just an absolute affection which gives him the right to autonomy and slowly dissolves the archaic and authoritarian family structure?

Such a freedom would not be possible without a modification in the relation between individuals and society that takes place through the impulses of the body, which was for so long identified with a compulsive bestiality.

The Emancipation of the Body

Now that the time is coming when earthly economy will take revenge on the heavenly economy which discredited it in the name of the religious spirit, a vengeance of the body has built up, in which work makes concrete the repressions of a producer-civilization and at the same time concretizes the measurelessness of an animalness that aspires to flow out “beyond good and evil”. The materialist philosophers, the ideas of Sade and Nietzsche, fascist ideology, the hedonism of

the end of the 20th century — they ended up merely translating the diverse stages of a planetary conquest for the glory of the commodities of the machine-men.

While the body is being militarized in the service of capital, the shame of repressed animalness bursts out in social celebrations of brute aggressiveness, defense of the homeland, the competitive elimination of the weak, the right of the strongest, necessary sacrifice for the health of the species — so many frivolities reputed to be “natural”, which arose to such a degree that they gave a basis for making colonialist piracy, the statist safeguarding of capital, and the putting down of the proletariat considered universally reasonable. And so, a raped and violent nature gives way to the fatigued *hubris* of the gods.

The triumph of the musculature in the apotheosis of productivity has its outlet in the exaltation of earthly animalness, the celebration of instinct over the dethroned spirit of the heavens. The mechanical progress of the body, tortured to improve yield and earn time, gives rise to the spectacle of sports competitions, and there’s nothing in the body, eventually, not even the brain, which doesn’t get muscular and suffer cramps.

But this muscle-bound body is nothing but the counterweight for the archaic head, with its will to power, its calculations of interest, its virile simulations, its litanies of the best and of the strongest. Anti-intellectualism is only the cynical spirit of the earthly economy, dragging to the gibbets those gods whose guarantees weren’t necessary for it anymore; it is the spirit of competition, taking on, in wartime, the ruddy discipline of armies, the orgiastic and bloody decompression of battles, and in times of peace, the warlike virtues of sports, hunting, and the “get out of there because I’m coming in” that, up to present times, is a function of social norms.

We know how the work of obligatory consumption has turned the authoritarian violence of production into a lying faith; we know to what extent the marketed leisure has “offered” to the body, broken by fatigue, the onerous prostheses of comfort and frozen pleasures; we know, in effect, how poorly the phony image of enjoyment resists the reality it abuses.

While the commercialism of the olympic stadiums serves the release of a soldier-like militancy — according to a competitive principle played out in its purely destructive function (and what goes for soccer and football goes for scholarly, literary and musical competitions too) — the children of today are demanding the pleasure of playing without the anguish of having to win or lose.

It’s all over for the rancor of oppressed animalness, that animalness that kills, which is not manifested by the leisurely hunter of game who takes up the gun to add a young partridge to his menu, but by the sport-hunter, who dreams not of adding to his soup bowl but of appeasing his death-instinct by proving his power over everything that moves.

While we wait for the displeasure of killing an animal to eat it to disappear along with the rest of our carnivorous habits, or for the discovery of one of those solutions that a changing society brings — like the threat of earthly overpopulation, after having found the remedies to be worse than the sickness (war, famine, epidemics) finds a solution in the choice that is taking shape today to not have babies unless one desires them passionately for their own happiness — it is comforting that the cruelty of the hunt is moving aside for the development of what it took pleasure in repressing: wanderings, the patience of hiding in wait, and skill are now finding themselves more agreeably employed in approaching, observing, and photographing animals in their natural environment.

Denatured Death

There is no humanly acceptable death outside of the instant when life grants repose to its oeuvre of perpetual creation.

Death has been seized by denaturation at the same time as water, the earth, the air, fire, minerals, vegetable, animals, and the human have been stricken by commodity pollution. Instead of beings and things coming to their natural end, there is now a social mechanics in which, under the pretext of preventing the random deaths of beasts, life is denied and reduced to such a miserable extent that it comes to desire a natural passing-on as though it were a blessing.

The obligation to renounce one's desires, in order to assure oneself a job one might survive on, feeds daily a corpse which has no trouble taking the place of the living prematurely. The act of dying is most often a usurer's bill that has all the power of a legal murder.

That the medical art and a few comforts accorded to survival have checked the progress of the epidemics, of senility, of infant mortality, of sicknesses that yesterday were incurable, is this a reason to fail to understand that death, as we experience it, is just the effect of a failure to live, an inversion in the order of existential priorities?

If they won any victory, it was only the victory of socialized death over actual death. But who besides those in their death-agonies would be concerned with the prodigious advancement of euthanasia? It would be sufficient for me to have a life where death would only be a long sleep after making love.

The Desacralization of Death

Death comes off like a dry fruit dropping from the tree of the defunct gods. The Fates are nothing but the social reasoning behind the great mill where every destiny gets stretched out, woven, and broken according to the boring comings and goings of current affairs and business. Is there any natural death more typically and banally experienced than that of the daily slamming of the door on the fingers of a desire that had tried to get out and sow its wild oats a little? Spread out over boredom, death has lost its customary shimmer, and its horror usually gets put out by a great weariness. It's become the bitterness on pleasure's lips, the sweat of a febrile and vain activity, the sudden cold in loves that are unmade by a lack of attention.

It is a well known feeling that passion that doesn't lead to love leads to death. How can we take the time to love when the time belongs to stress, to the rhythms of the machine which breaks biological rhythms, ties up muscles, jams up emotions, and shatters the heart? To resign yourself to work is to resign yourself to dying in the morbid familiarity of a daily agony; it is to pass the death sentence — which the less barbaric countries have effaced from their law — on yourself.

We are still a part of the generations that battled death, instead of fighting to live every day as if every day was an entire life. To stand up against death is to stand up against yourself, and, in the final analysis, to take the part of denaturation and annihilation against the will to live which is naturally present.

Hic, Nunc et Semper

The return to nature does not signify a regression to the animal state. People don't have to die of the mechanization of the body, nor do they have to die abandoned to the rigors and dangers of their environment.

I see no other antidote for denatured death than the humanization of everyday life.

To face every day as if it contained the totality of existence, whether lived intensely or in a mediocre way, seems to me to be a disposition in which individual destiny makes the surest bet that it will realize itself, knowing full well its cause.

Whatever anyone says, the important thing isn't to succeed or to fail to attain a goal; the important thing is to almost forget the target in the vibration of the arrow and of the act itself; a stubborn demand to recreate, every morning, the birth of time; to leap from gathering pleasures to seeding pleasures, with as much sincerity in joy and melancholy as one feels upon marveling when the evening, or the sleepiness, of death comes.

The point, it should be understood, is not to live better than others, but to live simply in the alchemy of your desires. Enjoyment has no gauge to offer to the spirit of competition and emulation, and withdraws from it. It takes its own road, as if it were alone in the world, and the world belonging entirely to enjoyment convinces it that it carries within it a great force, and the most authentic of revolutions.

What enters into the attraction of enjoyments energetically is a part of creation, not of work; it is a part of emotional relationships, not of commodity relationships, of a civilization made by human beings, not a civilization that economizes them.

Everyone has their own poetry, whether it comes forth from the mist over the trees, from the caresses of love, the first sip of coffee, the beauty of an art, the hazards of the game, the awakening of consciences, the joys of the dance, of encounters, of friendship, of three notes playing out airs of reverie, everything and nothing, as long as the body feels itself to be in harmony with what is alive, and is filled with that plenitude that alone gives one the freeness of pleasures.

In every moment offered to the living, there is the eternity of life. It is that way throughout [Hölderlin's] *Hyperion; non più di fiori*¹. The time of cherries and the perfume of the linden tree are reborn ceaselessly, saving from death forever those who long ago wrote, composed, and planted all these things, with the grace of an offering to themselves, which is an offering to all.

¹ no more than flowers — tr.

Creation Versus Work

The act of creating is to the humanization of nature and life what work is to denaturation and to a programmed death.

An accelerated reading of the obvious now ranks amongst the banalities a truth which was yesterday put in doubt: economic exploitation has brought humans and their surroundings to the limits of a survival the apogee of which coincides with its fall.

The history of the commodity and the history of the people who produced it is one and the same: it is made by unmaking those who made it.

We have been warned repetitively from century to century, and, if not reassured, at least pre-cautioned, that there are many terrors to fear, terrors which we know to be inherent in a system the mechanisms of which have lost their inescapable character. The apocalypse is part of the past, part of the sinister procession of its cyclical horrors. The real Flood, pouring forth from the first walls of Jericho, was never anything but the surging forth of commodity values burying human values beneath the frozen waters of profit.

The high points of life, which the successive waves of the commodity's conquest never really leveled, will serve as refuges for a long time for those who have up to now been afflicted by the routine of business and the stipends of passion. These islands that a slow ebb reveals in a new way from beneath the old names of love, generosity, hospitality, enjoyment, and creativity, today designate the true paths of a human presence on the earth. The revolution has to the present time only been a change in decor in the secular set-up of the economy. I don't see the possibility of any authentic revolution outside of the daily and individual construction of a human landscape.

Perhaps they'll have to burn up the whole Amazon, tear apart the ozone layer completely, ruin the earth, and put radiation into every breath of air before they discover — beneath a computerized, accounted for nature, dismembered according to exchange value — another nature, which freely offers its resources and its energy to whoever deigns to rip them out and sell them for a fistful of dollars.

The environment changes because of modifications in gaze, hearing, touch, taste, feelings, thought, and attitudes imprisoned for so long within the lonely perspective of power and money. And so, from the dull boredom and monotony of a universe in decline, surges forth the passion to be reborn at the heart of a planet and existence so well known by those who kill them that they end up still seeming new and unexplored to the simple eye of life.

The Misery of Economized Creation

Artworks and works of technological invention are usually borne from the torments of a repressed creativity, which had nothing to express itself through besides the rage of sudden release. Now that creative joy is being born, by transmutation, from the violence of elementary and chaotic impulse, the necessity of producing has changed the operations of the great alchem-

ical oeuvre into a painful birth, a curse which is an expensive price to pay for the freeness of the gifts of nature.

It's not enough that the creator, which is in all of us and which is one, should renounce creating itself right away after infancy, when the quest for enjoyment is forbidden it; its inventive genius must be smashed under constraint and bastardized by laborious efforts. For a few happy discoveries, how many inventors have been condemned to silence, to death, because the object of their research ran contrary to the law of *cui prodest*: "who is that profitable for?" How many complacent wise-men have been sold off to power? How many artists have been prematurely worn out and proletarianized by having gone out into the social arena to solicit applause, to undergo the judgment of merits and demerits, to polish a competitive label like the businessmen, the bureaucrats, the politicians, and the other courtesans of the spiritual and material market?

However, it just so happens that the surging of creative energy, corrupted as it is beneath the yoke of work, keeps with it the imprint of the body from which it is born. A strange resurrection: certain works continue nourishing the living long after those who abandoned them over the skimpy course of time have disappeared. Whoever knows how to recreate the life he or she carries receives an eternal life. The others, whose ambition is content with glory, will never be anything more than another few names in the catalogues of memory.

No One Creates Anything Without Creating Themselves

The end of the vanities, or at least, of the means that gave famous people a long-term loan; another step towards returning creativity to its true nature: *which is self-enjoyment affirming itself in the enjoyment of the world.*

Here it is, recognized in the simple and multiple dimensions of the human: will to live, not will to power; authenticity, not appearances; freeness, not the spirit of profit; the pulsation of desires, not separate thought; gift, not exchange; effort exhausting itself in a graceful, and not constrained way; an insatiable heart, not a dissatisfied one.

Everything is put up with embarrassedly as long as it remains in the grip of work, but could open slowly the doors of economic enclosure; the true nature of creativity lets rip the poetry made by all; it encourages a joyful wisdom in the diversity of its freedoms to sing, to compose, to write, to garden, to study, to dream, to dance; to invent a new world on the ruins of a world destroyed by the empire of progressive exploitation. When it finally rids our consciences of the cross of misfortune erected atop the will to live by the necessity of amassing money and dominating, it will have done more for humanity's happiness than all the revolutions that programmed its hopes.

Without a doubt, the time is come to take back from the gods the creation of the world which was so abusively given over to them, and of which they have made such worthless use. Creation is the exclusive property of human beings, in spite of their daily resignation to skin themselves for work. And it will belong to them even more, as their unquestionable privilege.

Today the silly idea of praying backwards, thanking God for giving them a slice of bread which they themselves produced and earned by the sweat of their brow, has at last passed away. So many human riches, sent out to pasture, trapped in nothingness, incite us at last to turn towards ourselves, not out of presumption, not in the vanity of that "individualism" where individuals deny themselves, but rather out of the taste for creating and for self-creation.

Reconciliation with a nature we must save is inseparably a reconciliation with the self, with the nascent creator discovering its well-being everywhere except in work. In creation takes place a slow foundation-laying of the true unity of the body, the symbiosis of the being of desires and of earthly nature; it's the great concordance of the living which will abolish the reign of the separate mind and of separate thought.

Joblessness is Just Off-Peak Work

Work isn't what's important to destroy; it will destroy itself — it is already exhausting itself by exhausting people and natural resources. But servility, unintelligence, the lack of imagination that continue propagating, in behaviors and in consciousness, the memory of its past utility and the anguish of its present innocuousness — that is the true calamity of our moribund society, which draws along the totality of the world towards death beneath the flag of realism and rationality.

The force of work depends above all on the weakness and self-contempt it perpetuates, but what a fearful power it has; how can one measure the nefarious effects it has on that social category that the popular milieu call “the jobless” and the business milieu call the “out of work”: what a hassle, to be deprived of what deprives you of life.

Under the pejorative labels of pity and derision that are placed on their heads, the jobless become nothing-people, since it is well understood that work makes you into a man. They were beasts of burden, with a guaranteed stable to live in — now they have been made into wandering dogs. They had, from the virtue of their labor, the right to demand pay; now that they aren't tiring themselves out all day anymore they're restored to that immoral state where, to deserve their alms, it fits them to lower their heads, shut up, and be discreet about the agreeableness of no longer losing their days fatigued and bored.

But such is the unhealthy impregnation of “duty”; joblessness must be lived as though it were work, just outside the factory door, even if without and within reigns the same uselessness — the one is paid and the other not (the marketable sectors, it is well known, are the bureaucracy and those that produce useless goods, while agriculture and the industries that cover primordial needs are condemned).

Because of the emptiness that provokes and compensates its frenetic activity, work acts on the mind like a drug. Wages guarantee the regularity of provisions, their absence interrupts it, provokes a withdrawal, and throws people into panic, hopelessness, and fear.

If it is true for those who keep their eyes fixed on the drab horizons of survival that welfare payments don't make the springtime come, one would have to be as blind as a drunk to despise the wealth and richness of a time suddenly free of obligations, to howl about “job offers being everywhere” like a morphine addict howling at the moon instead of sparking the lighter of his own creativity and collectively undertaking the great task — judged to be impossible because economic prejudice prohibits it — of creating freeness, of the creation of the free.

The imposture of necessary work is the slowest, the most consoling, and the most cruel manner of ending life. There is something very pathetic about the suicidal circulation of the masses — ebbing and flowing according to the rhythms of a machine that's running on empty, while capital waits in hiding for bankruptcies to invest itself in — as well as about the ridiculousness they ensnare themselves in by dying of thirst next to the water-fountain.

The voluntary and shameful misery of workers and of the jobless defends itself with a fundamental idiocy in the demonstrations of the strikers turning work-stoppages into work again — a labor of contestation — to the point that they fill the streets sweating with boredom. What a crazy dream, stopping the postmen from delivering the mail, paralyzing the mass-transport systems, to the displeasure of everyone, when only the union-leaders — the State's mafia whose rights are all paid and who refuse to redistribute the money to the workers — would be sad if a letter managed to be delivered without a stamp or if the trains, subways, and buses were kept running for the free use of the people.

Freeness is frightening because it is natural. But who would have any reason to get disturbed today if those who are discontented with rising prices and sinking wages would decide that it was a better idea to refuse to pay to move around, sleep, eat, express themselves, meet up, communicate, amuse themselves, and cheer themselves up?

Ecological Investing is the Economy's Last Reprieve

The ecological reconversion of the economy is a predictable transition to the era of the new harvest.

The paradox of economic totalitarianism, the logic of which is conducive only to planetary genocide, is that it condemns itself to disappear according to the law of profit, the avidity of which enjoins it elsewhere to perpetuate itself.

The exploitation of nature obeys a death-principle: it transforms the living into a commodity and gives rise to an empire where people become nothing but a shadow of themselves. What's beyond the river Styx has never been anything but what's beneath the earth.

On the other hand, the hunger for gain, which is the first cause of an unavoidable pillage, has a terrible fear of nothingness, and knows how to prolong the duration of a privilege, how to avoid killing the goose that lays golden eggs, and how to keep people alive, since you can't get anything out of a corpse but flesh and bones.

And so, the economy discovers, at the accelerated rhythm of the desert it propagates, that it has a chance of surviving if it reconstructs what it can't destroy anymore without losing its marketability and its credit.

The alternative that the economic system is faced with is somewhere between shutdown and postponement. Either commodity civilization will come to nothingness by annihilating those who engendered it, or it will extend itself into the last possible surplus-value accorded it by the restoration of nature.

The natural energies and the plan to heal the earth offer at the same time an end to the marketability that fundamentally threatened everyone and everything with its rape and pollution of resources, and a chance for creativity to break the yoke of work and make way for the era of freeness.

The more the economy puts the declining credit of its last forces into ecological investments, the more easily the traps of the commodity will be eluded, and the closer the reality of a radically different civilization will come to the body and to our consciousness.

The Local Creation of a Living Surroundings

Nothing big or little can be undertaken today that will not be penetrated by the following new banality: the ideology of work has imposed on us the reality of a nature which can be carved and shaped at will, where nothing is obtained that isn't taken by force. The shift in perspective, perceived by every eye that is bored of having only ugliness and ruins to contemplate, unveils another nature without a counterpart, the raw material and resources of which is offered up freely to those with the ingenuity to use them without ever exhausting them.

What is taking shape in mentalities and behaviors lets us preview the emergence of a transitory phase between the collapse of the economy and the beginning of a civilization of creativity, between work and creation, commodity proliferation and a naturally cultivated abundance, abstract man and self-enjoyment, commodity exploitation and the new gathering.

And who will be the new attackers fighting the waste of state planning and of orders "passed down from on high"? Small local collectives, in villages, in city blocks, that will not hesitate to carry on the defense of their environment until they're standing on the tables where the international debates take place, denouncing the disposal of toxic products, prohibiting polluting industries from setting up, demanding solutions to replace all this.

Perhaps it will be then that wind and solar energies will be put into action, and break the public and private monopolies of the gas and electric companies. The development of organic agriculture could supplant the production of adulterated foods; it could lead to naturally recycling waste, and forbidding the fabrication of materials whose byproducts cannot be reconverted.

Open the Cities to Nature

It's a question of creating a natural surroundings which is simultaneously affectionate and nourishing. It is a project that has been prohibited by the concentration-camp agriculture of today, from its origins to its industrial prolongation in modern urbanism. It separates men from their nature and drafts them into a war they will fight against themselves and their environment.

We live in the lethargy of dead cities. The labyrinth, long ago left to the drifting wanderers, has given way to huge avenues squared off by boredom, walls of concrete where the head knocks against the resonances of crime, since to unlearn how to live is to learn how to kill. Can't we imagine a few pedestrian streets and the multiplication of green zones saving from suffocation an urban tissue that would only anyway just reproduce the arrangement of the supermarkets around the city, where nature does not enter without a plastic wrapping around it?

To humanize the cities is to assure its access to natural resources. The glaxis that isolates the last quarters where it is nice to live and hang around calls for a real fertilization of everything. The buildings of statist, bureaucratic, military, financial, police, and religious uselessness, the vague terrains, the public places, the streets and boulevards ruined by the automobile exhaust — all of these things will make nice soup gardens for everyone's enjoyment, while we wait for better things from the creative genius that would then be able to exercise itself there.

There's no other way to rid yourself of work besides giving back to individual creativity a confidence that has been, up to the present, stingily doled out to it, if not refused to it.

What must now guide all future research is the creation of a natural freeness which the sustainable energies offer an early model of — not the dominant inertia and the conditionings of

money. The end of wage production and of forced consumption implies the end of the exploitation of nature and the putting into practice of a new gathering, the only enterprise that might give a real efficiency and a truly human sense to the wealth of technological discoveries.

From Work to Creation

In order that creation might supplant work, an economy which will take its last dying profits from the healing of the earth and the production of sustainable energy will have to supplant the economy of denaturation.

The gradual passage from the factories to the workshops of creation will have, at least, the advantage of putting in doubt the old prejudice that saw freeness as merely an incongruous and abnormal gift, as an imperfection in the form of the process of exchanges, as the immoral retribution of those who do nothing. Then we will reencounter the assimilation of pleasure into a compensation for services rendered, into the recompense of the gods, into the repose of the warrior, into the relaxation of the body.

The artists, who for a long time passed themselves off as the only creators, have never ignored the mass of disillusionments and repetitive efforts which makes up the patient alloy of inspiration. The gifts of writing, composing, painting, gardening, caressing, dreaming, seeing, tasting, changing the world and life — these gifts do not fall from the sky; they are the freeness that creates itself, drawing itself up from the magma of impulses, struggling along from failures to retries, to germinate at last, one day or another, in a graceful, happy moment.

Only a constant insistence permits the creation of this accomplishment of the self, from whence all the happiness of creating flows. But so much feverish stubbornness must never be confused with work. There's no hell of creation, since it is simultaneously enjoyment and the pursuit of enjoyments, the movement and its goal. The rage of dissatisfied desires to create does not transform into the renunciation-reflex which is the very essence of work; no, it only reconstructs more beautifully what was destroyed.

Far from losing itself in it, creation does not obey constraints, and is pushed along by the irresistible and often discordant force of desires. It is there that it goes into battle without dissolving, growing from what it gives, the very inverse of work, which only means wearing out and exhaustion. Because it comes from a nature which offers its wealth to those who know how to gather them, not from a nature which is raped by the oppression and glory of money. Work always means working against yourself and against others. Creation is for yourself and for everyone's pleasure.

Creation and Transcendence

The experimental intelligence which invented fire, the wheel, boats, and tools was inspired by the example of nature to perfect the substance of nature. From hiding beneath rocks to the hospitals, the different stages of a transcendence of the maternal belly manifest themselves; baking bread, fermenting beer, the invention of sauces and hot meals all translate the culinary refinement of the primitive need to eat. The whole process of creation — smashed and discredited by the necessity of producing — operates within the specifically human genius of transcending animal impulse and seeking in the surrounding environment the resources useful for the project

of perfecting things. The creation of the self takes its force from nature, which creates itself to be recreated in the image of human nature. The first religions rushed to transform these forces, which were doubtlessly still perceptible at the beginning of the economic era, into elementary spirits, with which they peopled the fountains, the forests, the air, and the depths of the earth, disguising them as hostile divinities from which it was necessary to buy favors by means of bloody sacrifice.

Beyond the mess of separations — that head in perpetual conflict with libidinal energy that only leaves for the individual the congruent portion of his or her mental, emotional, muscular, impulsive, and psychological capacities — the totality of the body is today learning to invest itself in the unified creation of individual destiny and of its surroundings. And it's as if the old fatalism, which taught everyone how to bend to divine decision, changed into a fatalism of having to order the chaos of impulses in living matter — the inseparable substance of the body and of nature — for the greatest plenitude. *Amor fati* unconsciously becomes *fatum amoris*.¹

Whoever desires becomes the god that answers prayers.

¹ amor fati: wanting nothing altered for all eternity; fatum amoris: finding the necessary in the desirable. — tr.

The Alchemy of the “I”

The alchemy of the self is the conscious creation of individual destiny.

The rationality inherent in mercantile practice has rejected traditional alchemy, in the long night when it burned the lamps of a secret science. However, its parallel language and its operations are most often narrowed to transpose the economic process in a field of coherence where the salt of the earth engenders the celestial gold and spirit. When they weren't looking to enrich themselves, the alchemists of the past aspired to the power that commands beings and things (except for the most discreet amongst them, who doubtless landed on the shores of a totally different reality).

Denatured Alchemy

In a particularly vulgar sense, alchemy is taking place all the time these days. The transmutation of lead into gold and of libidinal energy into intellectuality is now effectuated by means of a hygienic treatment of trash and excrement which the operation called “marketing” purifies, appropriates for consumption, and transforms into stock quotes. All that's left of the Great Work is a promotional product with a high exchange value and no quality at all.

Such a derisory fate would never do justice to the oeuvre of doctor Faust, who performed a dissociation of mind and body, which the duality of manual and intellectual labor imposes on everyone today. What is denied by all that is the natural alchemy of the body, spontaneously and originally founded on the conception of the infant in the maternal womb and to which amorous ardor gives birth in the world for that universal transmutation which is the realization of what is truly human.

A still honored prejudice says that everyone pulls themselves from the comet of plans for success and happiness which the gods of doom crush malignantly. We know that such a doom doesn't exist outside an order of things secularly imposed on the earth and on people; an order of things which is now so outdated and so fragile that it can't maintain itself anymore without a resigned obedience, without the inertia of mechanically acquired morals and behaviors.

The rupture between what the living decides, towards and against everything, and the economy, which makes decisions for the living, has definitively lost the mystery with which it perpetuated itself, hidden beneath an eternal damnation. The alchemy of creation and of self-enjoyment has been trapped and flipped upside down by a civilization where work governs pleasures. Every time they give birth to producers, human beings prohibit themselves to be born unto themselves.

Such is the banality of an involute alchemy: our own living substance is transformed into dead matter, at the cost — full of irony — of greater efforts.

The Treatment of the Negative

The treatment of the negative is the daily dissolution of the corpse in the cauldron of enjoyments.

The expression “To stew in your own juices”, which goes so well with the balance sheet and critical examination of a world preprogrammed to perish, translates exactly the negative finality of an existence sickened by money, caught in the trap of a dead infancy, surrounded by its own rotting desires.

Like in all alchemy, what is within is also without. A bilious humor embitters the tincture, while the noxious smoke stifles the irisation of the forests; cancer seizes both the tree and the logger. Bitterness and aggressiveness have stunk up gestures and thoughts so much that nature sometimes responds, with a merciless fury, to its organized pillage, as if it were shaking off, with jolts of ecological catastrophe, some vermin stupid enough to prefer to life the profits that pollute it. Seen from the perspective of the irremediably dominant economy, the individual, society, and the earth, all secrete unanimously a spirit of death. In this case, the negative phase does not take on the meaning it does in traditional alchemy, of a fermentation from whence arises the positivity of the philosopher’s stone. These are only sticky states, bringing bad luck everywhere, and fabricating an identical unhappiness at the heart of the planet and of humanity.

One can most often plainly see that those who complacently call themselves “mortals” nourish certain intentions for themselves in the positions they take in their reveries, their predictions, and their prophecies. How many of these scenarios constantly elaborating themselves in the mind will get worse and worse, how many will principally end up getting dealt the cards of failure and disillusionment? And if it so happens that a sudden overflowing of optimism causes them to see a possibly happy outcome for an undertaking, it is only with a certain reserve, an intimate reticence. It is rare that the heart weighs enough to counterbalance the misfortune which is fatally calculated into everyone.

To believe in omens, whether good or bad, as signs of some fate or another — isn’t this merely to have already abdicated in the face of the uncontrollable, and to hit the road towards total decline? After all, it’s quite true that to have so many disenchantments at your disposal doesn’t help to make events go your way.

We Who Desire Endlessly

Is there anything presumptuous about thinking that an energy that works to destroy both me and the world can in some way spin around and take the direction of the life we must create, with the same firmness and more agreeably? I feel that when I dream intensely about a happiness that would really fill me out, it mixes in with my desires a kind of ‘go by yourself’ that gives a certain favor to that happiness, a kind of “es muss sein”¹ torn from the gods and given over to the universal attraction of the living, a fate where the whirlwind of pleasures and displeasures enters into the effervescence of life and never into the fatality of dead enjoyments. There’s no room there for conceit, for success, for failure, or for competition.

However, nothing is more awkward than the return to the self and on the self in which this upside down world flips again. I know too much how the taste for living is ordered to weaken

¹ “it must be” — tr.

and abdicate for me to neglect the importance that must be given in the years to come to the education of children according to the pleasure-principle.

The attention given to enjoyments at every instant is a surer way to nourish the will to live than all the objurgations of intellectuality are. To only perceive, in given circumstances, the agreements that can be gathered therein installs a priority where the omnipresence of work disappears, where the necessity of which is reduced to an ensemble of mechanical gestures accomplished without ever putting any passion into things. If the heart is elsewhere, not in losing heart, there's something to save and save yourselves with, the heart of life: the exercise of pleasure wherein you commit yourself to desiring endlessly, whatever obstacles and reversals might present themselves to oppose you.

The Real Test Will Come when It's Hatching-Time for the Enjoyments

The refinement of desires requires tests that don't give any hint, in a courteous vein, of the prowess of the knight when he loves his lady. Still, we must strip the tests of the economic sense given them by the knightly spirit. Passionate truth needs no proof of bravery or of particular merits; above all it excludes renunciation, sacrifice, and that repudiation of the self by means of which the squires come to power, to a healthy soul, to that spiritual purity that the lover pays for with favors.

So much is patience odious in resignation and in the taste for suffering, so much does it discover its positive nature in the quest for enjoyments and for refined desires. The obstacles to this are like rocks are to saxifrages; something that must be broken, something that must be gotten around, something to come together around, something to digest; something that becomes an element of one's passions. Patience settles the violence of desires, it refines it and reinforces it in the feeling of an irresistible progression. One learns at every instant that to avoid changing desires represses desires in a suspended animation.

The test is the inevitable dragon of the negative, from the depths of the self, which the absence of every fear, or the ignoring of fears, mollifies and makes into an appreciable companion. Thus the being of desires restores to the reality of life the old imagery of the knight wandering alone between death and the devil.

The Refinement of Impulses, Basis of a New Society

Only the thread of pleasures which weaves the everyday can catch the end of the negative like the spider catches the fly.

It's not a question of renouncing the comforts and pleasures that the well-being market puts at the disposition of whoever resigns themselves to paying for them, and for undergoing the necessary discomfort of sacrificing themselves in order to satisfy themselves. It's rather a question of never renouncing, and transcending the dissatisfaction of consumable pleasure by creating the conditions for a natural freeness.

Here, Fourier's teachings are of exemplary value. The economic reality is his point of departure. He doesn't condemn the denatured nature of the passions, he starts from their degraded state to

end up with the sole dynamic of pleasure in the emancipation of trapped enjoyments. He leaves from the economy, and leads it not to its destruction but to its dissolution.

Rallied to the support of the phalanx system, the rich preserved their money, their privileges, and their rank in it. They abandoned none of their social prerogatives, but the tables, the company, and the passions of the poor didn't abandon their delicateness nor their voluptuousness. The poor, moreover, showed themselves more natural, less stiff, less formal in their style. Little by little, the distinctions disappear, the hierarchies are abolished. Once it's sovereign, the quest for passionate harmony bases itself on the dialectic of accords and discords, affections and disaffections, sympathies and antipathies, radically new social relationships.

Fourier conceived the project of dissolving functions and roles into the predilection of enjoyments. His cause was only inconvenienced by the fact that it was born during a time when the great leap forward of the economy was nourishing the illusion of the imminence of everyone's happiness. Capitalist development let us start to make out, like daybreak on the infernal night of production, a society of well being where technological progress will take care of our needs and inaugurate paradise on earth.

The hope for a commodity empire where the producers would assume the right to consume the fruits of his labor thundered with a prophecy which was more in accord with social struggles and with the economy than was the phalansteries' clarion-call gathering together of the passions with a hint of a certain authoritarianism and with a passion that was altogether quite mechanical.

It has become necessary for us to realize in the second half of the 20th century the utopia of well-being imagined by the promethean thinkers of the first capitalist boom, in order that people realize that the paradise of consumption is only an air-conditioned hospice, sweating with boredom, anguish, and dissatisfaction.

The movement of May 1968 wasn't just the countersigning of the bankruptcy of the economy and of happiness on credit, it mostly brought to consciousness that the vital minimum — the right for everyone to be able to feed themselves, to express themselves, to move, to communicate, to create, to love — did not constitute the final goal for humanity but its point of departure, that it was merely the raw material for a transcendence without which the only society there is, is an inhuman society.

The transmutation of the I contains the transmutation of the world.

Each individual is the whole of the world, with its disasters, prosperity, massacres, births, wars and peaceful havens, seasons, climate, intemperateness, cyclones, earthquakes, and humid, dry, cold, sultry, and temperate zones.

Is there any more important wisdom than the wisdom one finds in the will to make use of oneself by making use of circumstances in one's own favor? To feel yourself to be in agreement with everything living permits you most surely to learn how to hijack and divert the effects of death. It sallies forth from the negative, as though from a storm, so well appropriated by the human genius that a mere lightning rod takes away its danger; its model has inspired the electric arc, and its energy will one day enter into the circuits of natural freeness.

The magma of an everywhere-present life discovers itself and recreates itself beyond the fragmentation of economic categories, which took their profits from it. Foolishly imputed to the gods and to God, the ubiquity of the living is reborn in the new symbiosis in which the individual founds the unity of human nature and terrestrial nature on enjoyment. Sliding from the heavens to the earth, the center of the universe has followed the movement of the celestial economy to the terrestrial economy; if it is now situating itself at the heart of individuals aiming at emancipa-

tion, then that's because a mutation is taking place, which will assure the growing sovereignty of enjoyment over economy, creation over work, affection over profit, the will to live over the will to power, a psychosomatic unity over the separated body, living nature over exploited nature, freeness over exchange.

For the first time in history, the well-being of nature rests on the individual will to live: each person's enjoyment of life determines the creation of the world, in the context of an incessant quest, as the totality of enjoyments to be created. The alchemy of the "I" is nothing more than the stubborn urge to desire endlessly, the game of satisfaction and of the insatiable, nullifying the old damnation of sacrifice and renunciation.

Many of the pleasures to which I aspire will not be realized; nonetheless, I persist in wanting them without respite, and I draw from the satisfaction of some of them the force that nourishes the others. I feel that — right here, and without the delay that makes for bitter destinies — a desirable existence is slowly assuming the power to supplant this economized existence.

It doesn't matter much to me if the future proves me right or wrong. I will have lived, and based my lifeline not on what destroys it, but on a heart-line which, from gathered pleasures to sown pleasures, sketches out for me a luxurious landscape — the only one in which I feel myself to at last be truly present.

Raoul Vaneigem
16th October 1989

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Raoul Vaneigem
Address to the Living
Concerning the Death That Governs Them and the Opportuneness of the Present Moment for
Getting Rid of It
October 16th, 1989

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Translated by Jordan Levinson in 2005. Six missing paragraphs (four in “*Against Anti-Terrorism*”
— which was missing completely, the last from “*To Rediscover a Blooming Childhood...*” and the
first from “*The Time Torn from the Living*”) were subsequently translated from the printed
edition, that also served as a basis for adapting segments of the text and for organizing the
chapters.

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